

Winners and losers in sales of new car sales in Britain...

Published: February 5, 2019

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Online version: <https://www.wheels-alive.co.uk/winners-and-losers-in-sales-of-new-car-sales-in-britain/>



In second place (behind Ford) for car sales figures in the U.K. in January was Volkswagen...

Robin Roberts reports on the latest car sales figures...

Sales of hybrid and electric cars soared over 26% last month and slowed the fall in registrations of recent months, according to figures from the car makers.



The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders say registrations were only 1.6% down in January at 161,013 new cars, with private buyers leading the way as business and fleet models continued to fall.

Diesel cars registered fell over 20% compared to January 2018, and petrol rose 7.3% but the biggest gain was in electric, plug-in hybrid and hybrid models which saw a dramatic 26.3% rise.

The SMMT said the rise in alternatively fuelled vehicles would be greater but for the need to have more charging points and buying incentives, which the Government withdrew in the autumn after saying it was up to the car makers to offer more.

Mike Hawes, SMMT Chief Executive, said that it's encouraging to see car registrations in January broadly on par with a year ago as the latest high tech models and deals attracted buyers into showrooms.

"This, however, is still the fifth consecutive month of overall decline in the market. To restore momentum, we need supportive policies, not least on vehicle taxation, to encourage buyers to invest in new, cleaner vehicles that best suit their driving needs - from the latest petrols and diesels to an ever-growing range of exciting electrified vehicles. This would be good for the environment and good for the industry and those who depend on it."

Among the car makers, leader Ford took just over 10% with 16,629, VW recorded 13,224 for 8%, while Vauxhall and Mercedes Benz were an almost identical 12,250 and 7.6%, but the Griffin badged marque has slipped 3.1% and the German star is shining with a rise of 3%.

Jaguar Land Rover has seen sales slide 2.4 and 1% respectively but the worst performance in the luxury sector is Infiniti which suffered a 66% fall in sales in January with just 32 cars registered.



January UK top ten

Ford Fiesta

Ford Focus

Nissan Qashqai

VW Golf

MB A-Class

Vauxhall Corsa

Kia Sportage

VW Polo

Toyota Yaris

MB C-Class

FURTHER COMMENT

Seán Kemple, Director of Sales at Close Brothers Motor Finance, said, "These figures, and recent news from Nissan in Sunderland, highlight the damaging effect of uncertainty on the industry.

The entire sector is screaming out for a resolution, with all eyes on Parliament in the hope of some clarity on the way forward. Until we have this, the current scene is set to stay.

However, once we have a new way forward on this issue, there remain other issues that will



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continue to exist from consumer confusion around fuel type to a global market slowdown.

During this period, the opportunity is there for dealers to demonstrate their expertise and reassurance to customers. This will be key in bolstering bottom lines over the coming months. Having the right stock is vital, and the right after-sales support will support bottom lines as we begin a cold winter”