

2025 sales of UK EVs lag behind true interest, as conversion remains the biggest challenge

IMAGIN.studio data from over two billion image views shows strong electric interest among UK car buyers, despite sales figures not meeting government targets

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, January 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- New data from IMAGIN.studio's Quarterly Insights Report has indicated that nearly a third of British car buyers were interested in buying an EV in 2025, higher than official sales figures suggest.



IMAGIN.studio

The report, built from over 2.3 billion views of its images listed on UK car-buying sites last year, including retailers, brokers and motor finance companies, shows that 29% of all searches were for battery electric vehicles.

Internal combustion engines led the way for the most searches, accounting for 43% of the 2.3 billion total. Overall, nearly 60% of all vehicle searches had an electric powertrain of some kind, with hybrid vehicles attracting a quarter of total views (25%), reinforcing the idea that many UK buyers still see hybrid powertrains as a bridge technology between petrol and full electric.

Electric SUVs drive strongest interest

For cars with internal combustion engines (ICE), interest in hatchbacks was similar to SUVs. Of the 1 billion searches for ICE cars, 38% were for SUVs, closely followed by hatchbacks at 33%. Yet for EVs there is a marked difference.

Throughout the year, electric SUVs made up 60% of the searches in 2025 – with 4 of the top 5 searched cars being SUVs, including the Dacia Spring, the Kia EV3, the Skoda Elroq and the Skoda Enyaq. In comparison, hatchbacks made up 22% of electric car searches.

Interest not yet translating into sales

Despite encouraging search figures, demand for EVs is not keeping pace with ambition, based on the latest sales figures.

EVs accounted for 23% of 2025 new car registrations in the UK according to the SMMT, but fall noticeably short of the 33% target for 2026 under the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate. IMAGIN.studio's data suggests that interest is more closely aligned with this target, with EVs taking up nearly a third of all searches (29%) - but conversion remains a key issue.

Buyers are still hesitant to commit to EVs, and while curiosity is strong, real-world uncertainties, including high upfront payments, the UK's new pay-per-mile EV tax, and unclear resale values are slowing adoption.

The SMMT notes that the return of grants for EV purchases has helped towards EV uptake rising by 24%, but only a quarter of electric models are currently eligible for the incentive, suggesting that more can be done to encourage EV adoption.

Commenting on the data, Martijn Versteegen, CEO at IMAGIN.studio said: "Our UK data shows that public interest in EVs is broadly aligned with the government's transition targets, but the real challenge lies in converting that online curiosity into actual sales. Enthusiasm is clearly there, but buyers are still cautious, and that hesitation is understandable. Moving to electric is a big decision, and buyers need complete transparency to feel confident they are making the right choice.

That transparency starts with helping car buyers understand which vehicle best suits their needs. The UK market is becoming increasingly crowded, with more than 160 BEVs available and even more arriving this year. Brands must work harder to connect the right vehicle with the right buyer. With so much choice, bringing EVs to life through high-quality, dynamic vehicle imagery will be critical in building trust, answering unspoken questions, and reassuring shoppers who may still be sceptical about going electric."

-ENDS-

About IMAGIN.studio:

Autotech SaaS company IMAGIN.studio is the world's leading platform designed to elevate the automotive retail experience through its real-time image API, providing services in 100+ countries. It generates consistent, high-quality visuals for every model, in every color, in every angle - providing the crystal-clear imagery that builds consumer confidence and boosts conversions.

The platform leverages sophisticated AI within a fully compliant framework, ensuring no copyright infringement. This process ensures every image is 100% commercially safe for any use. Unlike a static library, IMAGIN.studio creates each visual on the fly, ensuring the imagery is always current and perfectly on-brand.

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