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EV readiness shoots up as Chinese cars shake up UK market.

AA UK EV Readiness Index rises for fourth consecutive quarter, but significant barriers remain to mass adoption

- **AA UK EV Readiness Index reaches 60/100 – its highest level yet**
- **New EVs took 29.8% of the new car market in August, but remain below the 33% ZEV mandate target for 2026**
- **Government reviewing the ZEV mandate as AA calls for realistic targets, certainty and a clear direction of travel**
- **Chinese brands took 15.8% of the UK new car market in August – almost three times their share a year earlier**
- **42% of AA members would not consider buying a Chinese-made car, but younger drivers are much more receptive**
- **Almost half (47%) believe increased competition between Chinese and established manufacturers will benefit consumers**

The UK is becoming more receptive to the electric vehicle revolution, with the [AA UK EV Readiness Index](#) reaching **60 out of 100 for the first time**, as Chinese manufacturers bring greater competition to the market and battery electric vehicle sales continue to rise.

The Q3 2026 Index increased from **58.8 in Q2 to 60**, marking the fourth consecutive improvement. However, the AA says the score also demonstrates that significant barriers remain before electric vehicles are accessible and affordable for all drivers.

The Index tracks eight key factors affecting drivers' ability and willingness to switch to an EV, including purchase price, charging, running costs, insurance and maintenance. The latest improvement comes as battery electric vehicles accounted for **29.8% of all new cars registered in August.*** This was the second-highest monthly share of 2026, although August is traditionally a low-volume month and the figure remains below the Government's headline **33% ZEV mandate target for cars in 2026**.

The Government is currently consulting on the ZEV mandate, including its annual headline targets and potential alternative policy approaches. The existing trajectory rises to **80% zero-emission new cars and 70% of new vans by 2030**.

Edmund King OBE, AA president, said:

"The EV Readiness Index reaching 60 is another significant milestone. It shows that the conditions for going electric are steadily improving, but a score of 60 also tells us that we aren't there yet.

"The AA supports the transition to zero-emission vehicles, but targets need to be realistic, achievable and supported by consumer demand. Whether the 2030 mandate remains at 80% for cars and 70% for vans or is adjusted, drivers and manufacturers need certainty and a clear direction of travel.



"Ultimately, the transition will work when consumers want and are able to make the switch. That means affordable cars, reliable and convenient charging and incentives which give drivers confidence rather than confusion."

Chinese brands changing the market

The latest Index also examines one of the biggest changes taking place in the UK car market – the rapid expansion of Chinese manufacturers.

Chinese brands captured **15.8% of UK new vehicle sales in August 2026, almost three times their 5.5% share a year earlier.**

AA research, based on **10,594 responses from AA members**, suggests drivers remain cautious about Chinese-made cars but that attitudes could be changing. More than a quarter of drivers would consider buying a Chinese-made car, while **42% would not**, including 16% who say they would "never" buy one.

There is a significant generational difference. **Four in ten (40%) 18–24-year-olds** would consider buying a Chinese car, compared with **22% of 65–74-year-olds**. Data security is a particular concern. Just **3% believe data captured by a vehicle would be handled better and more safely by a Chinese manufacturer than an established brand.**

However, established manufacturers cannot necessarily rely on a perceived quality advantage. While a quarter of drivers believe established brands offer better quality than Chinese manufacturers, **66% are unsure**. Similarly, 77% do not have a view on whether Chinese cars are safer. Consumers also see potential benefits from increased competition, with **47% believing competition between Chinese and established manufacturers will benefit drivers.**

Dean Keeling, AA Managing Director Roadside Services, said: "China has demonstrated that the transition to electric vehicles can happen at extraordinary pace when government, manufacturers, infrastructure and consumers move in the same direction.

"Having visited Auto China and manufacturing facilities in Beijing, the pace, scale and coordination of the Chinese automotive industry is both exciting and scary, depending on where you sit in the industry.

"Chinese manufacturers are bringing increasingly sophisticated, competitively priced vehicles to market at a speed that should make the established automotive industry sit up and take notice.

"The lesson for the UK isn't simply to impose tougher sales targets. It is to create the conditions that make consumers want, and are able, to buy electric vehicles.



"The arrival of new manufacturers also changes the traditional automotive model. EVs generally require less conventional servicing and more work can increasingly be carried out by mobile technicians. Nationwide organisations such as the AA, with EV-trained patrols and mobile mechanics, can help provide the roadside, maintenance and aftersales infrastructure these new entrants and their customers will need."

Home charging retains major cost advantage

Disrupted energy markets continued to affect the Index during Q3.

Petrol increased to **161.5p per litre**, compared with 159.6p at the end of May and 132.5p in February.

For drivers able to charge at home, electricity remained **66% cheaper per mile than petrol**. Ultra-rapid public charging remained around **15% more expensive per mile than petrol**, highlighting the continuing divide between EV drivers who can charge at home and those dependent on the public network.

There are now **123,677 public EV chargers**, equivalent to around 41% of the Government's 300,000 target for 2030.

EV purchase-price gap continues to narrow

Affordability also improved during the quarter.

New EVs were on average **25% more expensive than comparable petrol cars**, improving slightly from 26% in Q2. In the used market the gap has almost disappeared, with used EVs averaging just **1% more than petrol equivalents**, down from 3%.

EVs also continued to perform strongly when breakdowns occurred. **88.1% of EV callouts were fixed at the roadside by AA patrols**, compared with 83.5% for petrol vehicles.

Running out of charge accounted for only **1.3% of EV callouts**, compared with 8.3% in 2015 – further evidence that traditional "range anxiety" is becoming less of a practical problem for EV drivers.

ENDS

Notes to editors

* **Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT).**

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About the AA UK EV Readiness Index

The AA UK EV Readiness Index tracks eight factors influencing drivers' readiness to switch to electric vehicles and combines them into an overall Readiness Rating from 1 to 100. A score of 1 indicates that barriers remain too high for virtually all drivers, while 100 indicates clear and significant advantages to EV ownership.



The Q3 2026 Readiness Rating is **60**, up from **58.8 in Q2 2026**.

AA member research

Yonder received **10,594 responses from AA members to its online poll between 18 and 24 June 2026**. Yonder is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules.