

Britons 'Looking To Purchase Smaller Cars'

Super minis are the most popular form of used car, new research indicates.

November 28, 2007 (FPRC) -- According to figures released by Experian, sales of such types of car, which include the Nissan Micra and Renault Clio, surpassed purchase levels of small family, or "lower medium", vehicles during the first six months of 2007. Although lower medium automobiles, such as Ford Focus or the Vauxhall Astra, have been the country's favourite type of car for more than six years, the sales gap between these models and super minis have been increasingly shortening. Over the course of the first half of this year, purchases of super minis, including those which may have been bought via a personal loan, accounted for 1,108,051 - some 0.2 per cent above than lower mediums.

Overall, the Ford Fiesta was not only the most purchased super mini car during the first half of the year, but was also the most popular of all second-hand vehicles bought throughout Britain. Meanwhile, the Vauxhall Astra was the highest-selling lower medium automobile. In addition, the Ford Escort, Fiat Punto, Peugeot 306 and Renault Megane also proved to be popular models for used car buyers, with a personal loan one possible way of funding such purchases.

Kirk Fletcher, managing director of Experian's automotive division, claimed that as the financial strains placed upon consumers increases, both the environmental and economic benefits of buying a smaller vehicle are being realised. He said: "With growing levels of personal debt, higher running costs, increasing tax and pressures to reduce our impact on the environment, the benefits of a smaller car are becoming more apparent to car buyers. It is not surprising that super mini sales have topped the popularity list in the used car world."

In addition, research from the firm indicated that just over three-quarters (78 per cent) of super minis sold between January and June are at least three years old, as Experian suggested that the older the car consumers choose to purchase, the more likely it is to have a hidden history. As a result, Ian Clark, operations director for AA Vehicle Inspections, reported that prospective buyers should get a history of a car to see if there is anything which could affect their purchasing decision such as it being stolen or previously written-off.

By doing so, he suggested, consumers can make sure they are purchasing a car which is right for them. "It is a small price to pay to be certain that the small fortune you are about to spend is worth it," he said. Should they fail to do so, however, they may find themselves coming under financial pressure as they could unexpectedly have to pay for expenses such as repairs.

For those looking to buy a second-hand car, in addition to raising funds to have the history of the vehicle checked, consumers may wish to apply for a loan, which can often prove to be more competitive than a forecourt finance deal. Earlier this year research released by Halifax indicated that about half of consumers who took out a loan to help purchase a car last year were aged between 30 and 49. Meanwhile, January and August were revealed to be the two most popular months in which to apply for a loan for the purposes of getting a car.

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