MOTORISTS ADVISED TO SPEND TIME DOING THEIR RESEARCH ON THE CAR AND RETAILER AHEAD OF ’67 REGISTRATION

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The Motor Ombudsman is urging motorists to do their homework when it comes to narrowing down their ideal car and retailer ahead of the introduction of the new ’67-registration on 01 September. With so much choice on offer, which can be daunting for some, *the* automotive dispute resolution provider has compiled the following top tips to guide motorists through the new car purchase process.

Shape your future

There are many different body styles on the market today, spanning a two-door city car to a seven-seat SUV. Therefore, it’s worth thinking ahead as to how you plan to use the vehicle, whether it’s for pleasure, carrying the family around or if it’s simply for the daily commute. Equally, if you live or drive in an area where weather conditions can be challenging, a car with all-wheel drive capability is another consideration. Furthermore, models will often come in several variants, with different sized engines and a choice of whether the car is powered by petrol, diesel or an electric motor, or is even a combination of both i.e. a hybrid. As this will impact the longer-term running costs, check the fuel economy figure (mpg), the annual road tax (which is based on CO2 emissions) and the insurance group classification.

Do your homework

In the digital age, the internet makes it simple to compare and see first-hand customer feedback about a car or a retailer. Therefore, read and watch some road tests to get an idea of what a make or model is like, and shop around to find out what you can get for the money that you have put aside for the car.

Look for the extras

When buying a new car, there are often added incentives to lower the initial cost of ownership. This can come in the form of free servicing for a specified period or a vehicle warranty which can be for as much as seven years. Nevertheless, it’s advisable to understand the price of an intermediate and full service, as well as that for tyres and brake pads.

Know the charge

With electric vehicles fast gaining popularity, there are different factors to take into consideration compared to when buying a petrol or diesel-powered car. Look at what range is covered between charges, where the main charging points are along your regular routes, in addition to what the cost is to replenish the battery from empty, and how long it takes. This can determine which models will best suit your lifestyle. Get a quote for having a charging system installed at home if you have off-road parking, as government grants are available.

Try before you buy

After you have narrowed down your selection, taking a car for a test drive is one of the best ways to find out whether it’s right for you, and to get a feel for how it performs on different types of roads, from motorways through to country lanes. Being at the wheel is an ideal chance to gauge the level of comfort, visibility and space, and how intuitive the built-in technology is, such as the infotainment and satellite navigation systems.

Money matters

There are many different ways to buy a car, and speaking to the dealership directly or browsing their website will help to point you in the right direction when choosing the method that is right for you. This can vary from paying outright, to opting for a personal contract purchase (PCP), hire purchase or leasing through the Motability Scheme if you qualify. Ultimately, you need to ensure that the car falls within your budget and any monthly payments will be affordable throughout the term of any finance contract.

Check the delivery

On the day of collection, take the time to have a walk around the car before leaving the forecourt. The

bodywork should be free of any scratches and scuffs, and the specification should be in-line with what you ordered. Just as importantly, make sure that you are given all the correct paperwork, including the final invoice, a receipt of any payments, the V5C registration certificate (the logbook), the drive away insurance policy (if it's been offered by the dealer), plus the handbook and servicing schedule. The handover is also an opportunity to ask for a refresher on the car's controls.

Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: "In-depth research is critical when it comes to buying a new car as it's a significant purchase. It's therefore essential that the vehicle itself ticks all the boxes, and it's just as vital that consumers have the confidence that the retailer will provide them with the highest level of service and quality during the purchase process and beyond. This is where being accredited to a Code of Practice can make all the difference for a business versus the competition."

Visit The Motor Ombudsman's Garage Finder (TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder), which will allow you to view useful ratings and comments from consumers on a dealer, as well as their accreditation to the Vehicle Sales Code of Practice.

ENDS

Notes to editors

About The Motor Ombudsman

The Motor Ombudsman is *the* automotive dispute resolution body. Fully-impartial, it is the first ombudsman to be focused solely on the automotive sector, and self-regulates the UK's motor industry through its comprehensive Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Codes of Practice. Thousands of businesses, including vehicle manufacturers, warranty product providers, franchised dealers and independent garages, are accredited to one or more of the Codes, which drive even higher standards of work and service, and give consumers added protection, peace of mind and trust during the vehicle purchase and ownership experience.

For more information on The Motor Ombudsman, visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org

About the Vehicle Sales Code

The Vehicle Sales Code provides guidelines on the sale of both new and used cars, as well as the supply of finance and warranties. Any independent garages or franchise dealers who adhere to the Vehicle Sales Code are voluntarily agreeing to operate to the highest standards during the sale of new and used vehicles and when offering associated products and services.

The Vehicle Sales Code covers nine different areas. These include the transparent wording of adverts and pricing, clear and transparent invoicing, and the sale of a used car which is supported by a vehicle provenance check to ensure that it has not been stolen, written-off and is free of any outstanding finance payments. It also highlights that retailers should provide test drives, avoid high-pressure selling techniques, supply accurate advice on warranty and finance products, and deliver a vehicle with a full handover, complete with all historic documentation, the entire service history and a valid MOT certificate**.**

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