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The used-car listing that sells, a 9-point checklist for UK dealers in 2026

This is the checklist we use when we take on a UK car dealer, applied to every vehicle you put online. It is built around one plain idea: a car is a considered purchase, so the listing has to answer a careful buyer's questions before they ring. The photos, the mileage, the specification, the total price, the MOT history and the way to ask about finance or a part-exchange all belong on the car's own page.

A GUIDE FOR UK OPERATORS

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Audience
UK used-car dealers, independent traders, and garages that sell vehicles.

The checklist is opinionated. Where we say "do this", we mean we would not let a vehicle go live without it. Where we mention finance or part-exchange, we are describing what a listing can carry, not telling you which lender or valuation tool to use, and we do not advise on your FCA permissions or the wording of a finance promotion: those are yours. The checklist applies whether the car sits on your own stock site, a marketplace, or both. Where the source of a rule is quoted, it is listed at the end with the day we checked it.

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01 The 9-point listing checklist at a glance

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
1	Ten-plus real photos, well lit, inside and out	Photos
2	The exact mileage, shown as text	Mileage & spec
3	Full spec: year, engine, transmission, fuel, MOT, owners	Mileage & spec
4	An honest description that names the flaws, not just the good bits	Mileage & spec
5	The price shown plainly, not "call for price"	Price & finance
6	A finance enquiry on the vehicle, and any figure in your and your lender's wording	Price & finance

#	ITEM	LIVES UNDER
7	A "value my car" part-exchange enquiry on the vehicle	Part-exchange
8	Click-to-call and an enquiry form on every listing	Trust & contact
9	Trust signals: real reviews, your address, a complete Google profile	Trust & contact

If a listing does all nine, a careful buyer has fewer questions left to ring about, and the ones they do ask arrive naming the car.

02 Photos, the thing a buyer judges first

For a car, the photos carry most of the listing. A buyer cannot walk round the car online, so the gallery has to do it for them, and thin or dark photos leave them guessing.

2.1 Ten photos, not two

Shoot the whole car: front three-quarter, rear three-quarter, both sides, the interior front and back, the dashboard with the odometer visible, the boot, the wheels, and the engine bay. A buyer wants to walk around the car with their eyes before they walk around it in person. Two photos is a listing that hides something. Ten honest ones build trust before a word is read.

2.2 Clean it and light it

Wash the car and shoot it in good light against a plain, uncluttered background. You are not trying to fake a studio, you are trying to let the buyer see the vehicle clearly. A clean car in even daylight photographs as what it is: a car someone has looked after and is proud to sell.

2.3 Show the honest bits too

If there is a scuff on a wheel or a mark on a seat, photograph it. A buyer who finds a flaw you did not mention feels misled and walks. A buyer who sees you flagged it yourself trusts the rest of the listing. Honesty in the photos does more for the sale than hiding the scuff ever could.

03 Mileage, spec and the honest description

After the photos, the buyer wants the facts. A considered purchase means a careful reader, so the facts have to be complete, accurate and easy to scan.

3.1 Mileage as text, and exact

Show the mileage as real text on the listing, not baked into an image, and make it exact. A buyer can check it: GOV.UK's MOT history service shows the mileage recorded at each test, and all it asks for is the number plate. A rounded or missing figure reads as evasive. The precise number, from your stock system, reads as a dealer with nothing to hide.

3.2 The full spec, in a scannable block

List year, registration plate, engine size, fuel type, transmission, body style, colour, number of previous owners, MOT expiry and service history. Put them in a clear block, not buried in a paragraph of prose, so a buyer comparing cars finds each fact at a glance. Beside the registration, link GOV.UK's MOT history service, so the buyer reads the record on the government's own site, not in your words.

3.3 An honest description that names the flaws

Write a plain description that tells the truth: what is good about the car, what has been done to it, and what is not perfect. "Two owners, full service history, small stone chip on the bonnet, drives beautifully" sells better than three lines of empty superlatives. Naming a flaw costs you nothing and buys you the trust that gets the call.

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04 Price and finance, the questions a buyer asks first

Price is not a detail to bury, and the law has something to say about what the price includes. Finance is the other question a listing should be ready for.

4.1 Show the price, do not hide it

Put the price on the listing, plainly, as the total a buyer will pay. Section 230 of the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024 puts the total price on its list of material information for an invitation to purchase, and says it includes any fees the consumer will necessarily incur. Section 225 counts omitting material information as an unfair commercial practice. Both have been in force since 6 April 2025. So an administration fee every buyer pays belongs inside the figure on the screen, not added at the desk. What you charge, and how your terms word it, is yours to decide, so take advice on both. If you are open to sensible offers, say "or nearest offer", but show the figure.

4.2 Answer the finance question on the vehicle

A short finance enquiry form on each vehicle, which reaches you with the car named, lets a buyer start that conversation from the listing. Any rate, monthly figure or representative example beside it is wording that you and your lender or broker supply, and the permissions are yours. The FCA's regulatory guide for credit brokers says its readers could include motor dealers, that any promotion must be clear, fair and not misleading, and that a firm must clearly state that it is a credit broker, not a lender. In its example of good practice, a small car dealership that mentions a

weekly or monthly credit payment in an advert includes a no less prominent representative example. Read the guide, and take advice on your own wording. We lay out what you supply and make no claim that it meets the rules.

4.3 Make the enquiry land where you can act on it

The finance enquiry should drop straight into your inbox with the vehicle and the buyer's details attached, ready to follow up fast. A buyer who asks about finance has told you which car they want, so the enquiry has to reach a person who can reply.

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05 Part-exchange, starting the trade-in early

A buyer with a car to trade in needs to tell you about it before you can give a figure. A general contact form gives them one empty box, and the details arrive in pieces.

5.1 A "value my car" enquiry on the vehicle

Put a plain part-exchange enquiry on each listing, so a buyer can start the trade-in conversation while they are still looking at the car they want. Ask for the make, model, year, mileage and registration of their current car. That gives you enough to come back with a realistic figure and get them booked in, rather than trading several messages first.

5.2 Set the expectation honestly

Make it clear the part-exchange figure is subject to seeing the car, without making the buyer feel it is a bait-and-switch. A short line, "give us the details and we will come back with a realistic figure, confirmed when we see the car", is honest and keeps the buyer engaged. A trade-in conversation that starts online arrives on the forecourt half-done.

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06 Trust and contact, turning a listing into a visit

Before a buyer travels to view a car, they want to know you are a real dealer, and when they are ready they want to reach you in one tap.

6.1 Click-to-call on every listing

The phone number is a `tel:` link so one tap dials it, and it sits on every vehicle page, not just the contact page. Do not make a buyer who is ready to talk hunt for the number.

6.2 An enquiry form for the ones who will not call

Some buyers would rather send a message than ring, and some are looking when the forecourt is closed. A short enquiry form on each listing, tied to that specific vehicle, catches them. It should ask only for what you need to call them back: name, number, and the car they are asking about.

6.3 Trust signals a buyer looks for

Show your reviews, quoted as buyers wrote them and linked to where they were left, your address on a map, and an honest "about us". Fill in your Google Business Profile as a car dealer, with your address, opening hours and photographs of the forecourt, and keep it saying what the site says. Google says its local results are mainly based on relevance, distance and popularity, and that there is no way to request or pay for a better local ranking.

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07 Where the listing lives, your site and a marketplace

The same nine points apply wherever the vehicle is listed. What differs is where a car is entered, how soon a sold one disappears, and where an enquiry about it goes.

7.1 A marketplace: ask before you sign

A marketplace puts your stock in its own pages, under its own package. We name none and quote none of their terms, because what each one charges and does is its own to state. Before you sign or renew, ask it what the package costs, how long you are tied in, how each enquiry reaches you, and what happens to your listings if you stop.

7.2 Your own site: every car at an address of its own

On your own stock site, each vehicle has its own page and its own address, which you can put on a windscreen card, in an advert or in a message, and every enquiry about it reaches you naming the car. The site and its care are quoted in writing, and your stock system is billed by its supplier. Many dealers use both, and that is your call.

7.3 Enter each car once

However you split it, enter each car once, in your stock system. Where it offers a feed or an API, the site builds a page for every vehicle from it, and a car marked sold comes off at the next update. Where it offers neither, find out what that means for the site before you commit. A car that has sold and is still listed wastes a buyer's time and yours.

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08 What we do NOT do, the anti-checklist

A few opinionated negatives. These are positions we take when building the dealer's presence.

- **We do not hide the price, or the fees inside it.** The figure on each car is the total a buyer will pay, with any fee every buyer pays already inside it. If you take offers, say so, but show the figure.
- **We do not write, buy or filter reviews.** Reviews are quoted as buyers wrote them, linked to where they were left.

- **We do not put two dark photos up and call it a listing.** A vehicle with a thin gallery reads as a dealer hiding something.
- **We do not write your finance wording.** Any rate, monthly figure or representative example on a listing comes from you and your lender or broker. We lay it out as supplied, we do not advise on it, and nothing we build is a statement that it meets the FCA's rules.
- **We do not lock a dealer in.** The site is quoted in writing with no lock-in, the stock system stays on your own account, and we take no share of a sale.

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09 Sources + further reading

Each source below was opened on 29 November 2026, and the checklist says of it only what it says.

- GOV.UK, Check the MOT history of a vehicle, checked 29 November 2026 · `gov.uk/check-mot-history`
- Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, section 230, checked 29 November 2026 · `legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/13/section/230`
- Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, section 225, checked 29 November 2026 · `legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/13/section/225`
- FCA, Regulatory guide for credit brokers, checked 29 November 2026 · `fca.org.uk/firms/regulatory-guide-credit-brokers`
- FCA, Regulatory guide for credit brokers, Section 2: Promoting your business and finding customers, checked 29 November 2026 · `fca.org.uk/firms/regulatory-guide-credit-brokers/section-2`
- Google Business Profile Help, Tips to improve your local ranking on Google, checked 29 November 2026 · `support.google.com/business/answer/7091`

If you would rather we did it

Everything in this checklist is yours to use as it stands. If you would rather we built and ran the stock site for your forecourt, tell us what you need at `veryseoly.com/contact` and we will send you a written quote.