FlipTrack UK

FLIPTRACK RESEARCH | JULY 2026

UK Car Flipping Profit Report 2026

A transparent scenario report showing how purchase price, preparation, sale value and time held shape the result of a UK car flip.

MODELLED DEAL 02		
Purchase	Total cost	Net profit
£4,250	£5,095	£1,055
ILLUSTRATIVE SCENARIO	ROI 20.7%	30 DAYS

IMPORTANT: This first edition uses modelled scenarios, not customer averages or guaranteed market returns. Every assumption is disclosed in the methodology.

01 EXECUTIVE FINDING

The buying margin is not the profit.

A large purchase-to-sale gap can become a modest return after preparation, selling costs and uncertainty are included.

PURCHASE-TO-SALE GAP	MODELLED NET PROFIT	MODELLED ROI
£1,900	**£1,055**	**20.7%**
Before any costs	After recorded costs	Profit divided by total cost

The starting scenario

A vehicle bought for £4,250 and sold for £6,150 appears to create £1,900. After £845 of preparation and selling costs, modelled net profit is £1,055. A £250 cost overrun plus a £500 sale-price reduction leaves £305.

> **The useful number is not what sits between buy and sell. It is what remains after every cost and every assumption has been tested.**

Three conclusions

Finding	Why it matters
Track total cost	Purchase price alone understates the capital committed.
Pressure-test the sale	Advertised values do not guarantee the final transaction price.
Measure time	Two deals with the same profit can use capital very differently.

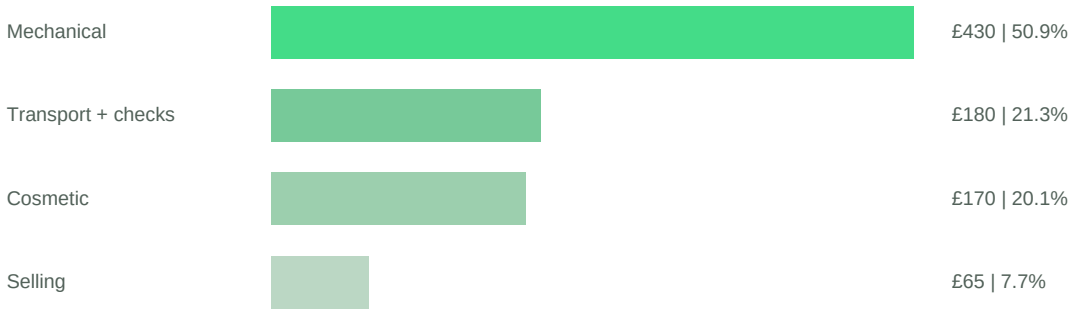
02 DEAL ANATOMY

Where £6,150 goes.

The model separates the headline transaction from the costs required to make the vehicle ready and sell it.

Component	Amount	% of sale price
Purchase price	£4,250	69.1%
Mechanical preparation	£430	7.0%
Cosmetic preparation	£170	2.8%
Transport and checks	£180	2.9%
Advertising and selling	£65	1.1%
Net profit	£1,055	17.2%
Sale price	£6,150	100.0%

Preparation cost mix

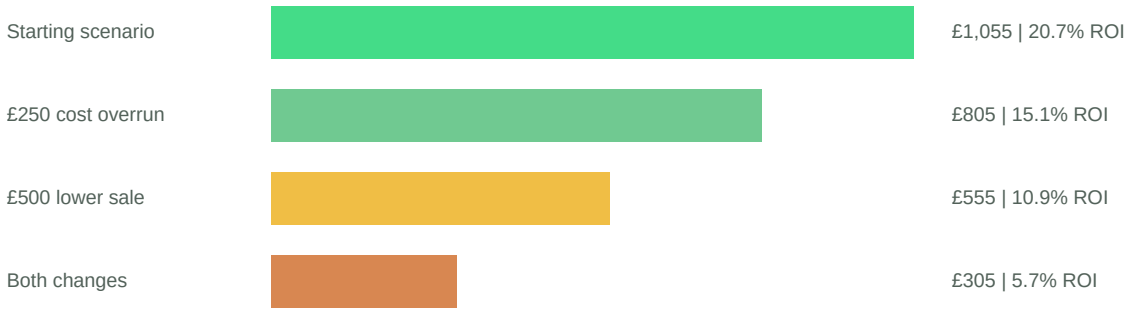


The cost mix is illustrative. It excludes tax, finance interest, insurance allocation, premises, the trader's own labour value and post-sale liability unless these are entered separately.

03 SENSITIVITY

Small misses compound quickly.

The vehicle does not need a catastrophic failure for the return to deteriorate.



What changes

Scenario	Total cost	Sale price	Net profit	ROI
Starting model	£5,095	£6,150	£1,055	20.7%
Cost overrun	£5,345	£6,150	£805	15.1%
Price reduction	£5,095	£5,650	£555	10.9%
Both	£5,345	£5,650	£305	5.7%

The decision test

Before buying, apply at least one realistic preparation overrun and one price reduction at the same time.
If the deal becomes unacceptable, the maximum buying price or the expected sale value needs to change.

04 CAPITAL BANDS

Cash profit and ROI tell different stories.

These four independent scenarios demonstrate the arithmetic. They are not market benchmarks or vehicle recommendations.

Modelled bracket	Purchase	Total cost	Sale	Profit	ROI
Under £3,000	£2,200	£2,875	£3,500	£625	21.7%
£3,000 to £5,000	£4,250	£5,095	£6,150	£1,055	20.7%
£5,000 to £8,000	£6,500	£7,750	£9,100	£1,350	17.4%
Over £8,000	£9,200	£10,850	£12,400	£1,550	14.3%

How to read this

The higher-price examples produce more cash profit but a lower modelled return on total cost. Neither measure is sufficient alone. The decision also depends on preparation uncertainty, buyer demand, days held and the amount of capital that remains unavailable for another purchase.

30 DAYS

£35.17

Profit per day on £1,055

60 DAYS

£17.58

Same profit, twice the time

90 DAYS

£11.72

Before additional holding costs

In practice, insurance, finance, storage, depreciation and opportunity cost can make a slow sale more expensive. Those costs are not added to this simplified comparison.

05 PURCHASE FRAMEWORK

Five questions the margin must survive.

Use the report as a repeatable pre-purchase test rather than a prediction.

01	**Can the expected sale price be evidenced?** Use close comparisons for age, engine, trim, mileage, condition, location and seller type.
02	**What is visible in the MOT history?** Price recurring advisories, major failures, mileage progression and the remaining test period.
03	**Which preparation costs are diagnosed?** Replace broad guesses with inspection evidence, parts prices or written quotes.
04	**What happens when two assumptions are wrong?** Apply a sale-price reduction and a cost overrun together before setting the maximum purchase price.
05	**Is the return strong enough for the time and capital?** Judge cash profit alongside ROI, days held and profit per day.

Core formulas

Metric	Formula
Total cost	Purchase price + every preparation and selling cost
Net profit	Sale price - total cost
ROI	Net profit / total cost x 100
Profit per day	Net profit / days held
Maximum purchase price	Expected sale - prep - selling - contingency - required profit

06 METHODOLOGY

Transparent by design.

This first edition establishes a repeatable framework without presenting constructed examples as observed market results.

Scenario basis	All monetary results are constructed examples using the disclosed formulas. They are not averages calculated from FlipTrack users or the whole UK market.
Rounding	Currency is rounded to the nearest pound. Percentages are calculated from unrounded values and shown to one decimal place.
Excluded costs	Tax, finance interest, insurance allocation, premises, labour value and post-sale liability are excluded unless expressly entered.
Future editions	Aggregated platform benchmarks will only be added with sufficient genuine completed sales, minimum sample thresholds and privacy protection.
Limitations	Actual results depend on vehicle condition, specification, history, location, buyer demand, legal status and costs not known before purchase.

References

HMRC, Business records if you are self-employed: www.gov.uk/self-employed-records
GOV.UK, Check the MOT history of a vehicle: www.gov.uk/check-mot-history
Interactive report and calculator: fliptrackuk.com/reports/uk-car-flipping-profit-report-2026

Run the numbers before you buy.

Use the free FlipTrack calculator to test your own purchase price, costs and expected sale value at fliptrackuk.com/calculator.