

# Boost for UK car manufacturing as Nissan ramps up in Sunderland

Japanese car giant chooses North East plant to build luxury Infiniti model in £250m vote of confidence



Nissan currently produces the original Juke at its Sunderland plant



By [Ben Marlow](#)

10:58PM GMT 29 Nov 2015

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Nissan will begin making its luxury Infiniti cars in Sunderland this week as part of a **£250m investment in the factory**, a landmark move that heralds a massive triumph for British industry.

For the first time, the Japanese carmaker has chosen to build an upmarket model in Europe, a decision that represents a huge vote of confidence in the north-eastern factory, which has become one of the country's biggest manufacturing success stories.

**Sunderland** is now the most productive car plant on the Continent, with vehicle output dwarfing that of the whole of Italy. Every Sunderland worker makes an average of 118 cars a year and the factory has been at its 500,000-unit annual capacity since 2011. In Italy, 401,317 cars were built last year.



The Nissan Infiniti Q30

Production of the Infiniti Q30 hatchback, designed to compete with other “luxury compact” cars such as the Mercedes GLA, BMW 1 Series and Audi A3, is expected to result in an additional 60,000 vehicles rolling out of the factory doors, providing a big boost to the area’s workforce and skills base.

As production of the Q30 begins, Nissan is expected to say that several hundred new positions have already been created at the factory to expand the production lines in order to ramp up activity, taking total employment to more than 6,700. As many as 4,000 workers have been retrained to help to build the new model, and a further 1,000 additional jobs have been generated among Nissan suppliers in the local area.

It follows the carmaker’s recent decision to assemble its successful Juke model in Britain. The Sunderland plant fought off competing claims from other parts of the Japanese manufacturer’s empire, including its Barcelona operations and underutilised facilities around France owned by Renault, its partner company.



Nissan built more than 300,000 Qashqais in Sunderland last year

The Q30 launch comes as a power struggle between Nissan and the French government, the largest shareholder in its partner at Renault, intensifies over decision-making and boardroom control.

The French government is seeking guarantees over jobs and investment in France, while Nissan is fighting to retain management's autonomy to expand at such highly efficient and competitive factories as Sunderland.

**Writing exclusively in *The Daily Telegraph***, Trevor Mann, Nissan's chief performance officer, and the carmaker's highest-ranking British employee, said: "Our ambitions underline the competitiveness of Britain as a manufacturing hub and a bridgehead to European markets... Our UK operations are playing an increasingly critical role in Nissan's global operations."

Nissan has invested £3bn at its site, built on a former RAF base, since 1984.

