



Dacia Sandero Stepway



New Model Launch Coverage Programme

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(Sample Content)

The New Dacia Sandero Stepway

GET READY FOR A STEP INTO THE FUTURE

BY JONATHAN CROUCH

The New Dacia Sandero Stepway really is a step into the future for this rapidly growing brand. Its a car designed and developed to really push the barriers of technology, while at the same time offer a stylish alternative to those buyers who previously might not have considered a car from this marque.



Local dealers are excited about the new opportunities for conquest sales that this model will bring and have been gearing up to make sure that potential buyers are well looked after, both before and after purchase.

How Were Bringing The Car To Market

'This is one of the most significant cars weve seen from our franchise in many years says' ...[name]... , ...[position]... of ...[name of dealership]... 'It really enables us to tap into a whole new breed of buyer within its market segment'.

'Weve spent a great deal of time and care deciding on the best way to make people in this area aware of the car, something which clearly will be an ongoing process. In designing the format of the launch evening for example, we worked hard to create an opportunity in which potential customers would not only get a chance to see the car but also to get behind the wheel and drive it too.'.

'It was also important to us to have a complete range of demonstrators with a wide range of spec and trim options, rather than perhaps the normal approach of just having a single car on hand which might or might not be available and which might or might not match the customers particular specification wishes.'.

'Staff preparation has also been key. My experience is that people, by and large, dont want to buy cars over the internet. The want to talk to someone, not tap in questions and click on a mousepad. With that in mind, weve made sure that all our sales staff have been exhaustively trained on every aspect of this new car so that theyre ready for any conceivable question. Weve also come up with some pretty sharp finance package to go with it too, suiting both private and business buyers'.

'In terms of local publicity, weve looked at all kinds of things, the emphasis being to take the car to places where potential buyers are likely to be'.

The People Who Will Be Selling This Exciting New Model

The sales team behind this car have as much talent in depth as the car itself. ...[name of Dealership Principle]... presides over a team run by ...[name of Sales Manager]... including ...[names of Sales Executives]... Business and finance queries will be in the experienced hands of ...[name of Business & Finance Manager]...

...[background of individual sales team members qualifying them to sell this exciting new car]...

The Reaction Of Our Customers To The Car

'Already we've had a huge amount of positive reaction to this car,' says ...[name and position]... 'We found that owners of the old model were aware some time ago that this latest version was on its way and they've been regularly asking us questions about it for the last six months.'

'What's been most interesting however, is the number of enquiries we've had from owners of other marques. These are the kind of people we've never previously expected to see in our showrooms. Clearly, the way our franchise is developing appeals to them'

The Opportunities That This New Launch Has Created For Used Car Customers

'This model launch is not only about having a new car to sell - it's also about a great used car opportunity,' observes ...[name and position]... 'We still have a few unregistered examples of the old shape models left, all with high specifications and temptingly low prices. Plus we have our ex-demonstrator cars to sell, models which have been impeccably looked after.'

'On top of that, we always carried a lot of these models in our used stock - in fact, for some time, we've had the widest choice available in the whole area of this particular type of car. In addition of course, we're starting to get plenty of examples of this car in part exchange as existing owners trade up to the new model.'

'All this means that there really has never been a better time to trade up to one of these cars. So wide is our access to stock that we can match nearly every request for engine and specification that a used car customer is likely to make. When you add that to our long renowned standards of preparation, sales and service, the whole experience will be just like buying a new car - for of course a fraction of the overall price.'

Our Dealer History

'Our dealership is one of the best respected in the area,' observes '...[name & position]... 'and for good reason. We have outstanding facilities both in sales, service and all aspects of after sales. Over the years, we've also established an enviable reputation for looking after our customers and attention to detail. Perhaps, if you searched around long enough, you might be able to buy one of the cars we sell for just a few pounds cheaper - but that's not the point is it? A car is the second biggest purchase you make in your whole life as we all know. In buying one, you need to know that you're buying more than just a hunk of metal: you need to be buying a whole package of people and service. And that's just what we're set up to provide.'

Facts At A Glance

The Car: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, The Dealership: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, The Number to Call To Get Behind The Wheel: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, Where You Can Go For A Test Drive: xxxxxxxx, Who Are The Key People To Talk To: xxxxxxxx

New Car Road Test

CHILLI HOT STEPPER

In second generation form, the Dacia Sandero Stepway continues to offer a bit of fun for not a lot of money. Jonathan Crouch tries it.

Ten Second Review

The Dacia Sandero Stepway is inexpensive but doesn't look it. It's a supermini that's been jacked up a bit to give a crossover look and seems to press all the right buttons for buyers who don't want big outlay but require big value. Here's the latest version of the third generation version.



Background

You know when an idea is a good one when your opposition are looking at each other and wondering why they didn't think of it before. The Dacia formula is really rather simple. It takes tried and tested Renault engineering and recycles it into new cars hailing from Romania. Therefore there's very little research and development expense, low labour costs, minimal tooling outlay and hey presto, you have a line of cheap and reliable cars that are just about pitch perfect for these austere times. Hardly rocket science is it?

Renault acquired the company in 1999 and began importing into the UK thirteen years later. The core range is based around the Duster compact SUV and the Sandero supermini, the latter still the cheapest car on sale in the UK, and was rejuvenated back in 2020 in third generation re-designed form. The contender we look at here, the Sandero Stepway, is a spin-off of that model and it's one that has a lot to be said for it.

Driving Experience

In order to understand the appeal of the Sandero Stepway, know this. The basic Sandero supermini upon which it's based has been designed to sell into many third world markets and as such is billed as having excellent ground clearance and "robust underbody protection for impressive performance on unpaved tracks". If that's not a great basis for building a jacked-up version with even greater abilities, we don't know what is. Do remember though, that this isn't a four-wheel drive car, so there are limits as to what it can negotiate. For tougher stuff, you'll probably need to buy Dacia's Duster compact SUV. The extra wheel travel seems to give the Stepway a marginally better ride quality than the standard Sandero and the 41mm raise in height hasn't made body control noticeably worse.

This third generation model's stiffer, more sophisticated CMF-B platform means it can deliver some better engineering. Most Stepway folk will want the powerplant you have to have, one we'd recommend, the 89bhp three cylinder turbo petrol TCe 90 unit, which can be had with either 6-speed manual transmission or a CVT automatic gearbox. Dacia isn't bothering with a diesel this time round, but if you're looking for something super-frugal, you can have the TCe 100 petrol unit in LPG Bi-fuel form, with a dual fuel tank situated where the spare wheel would normally sit. With both the petrol and the LPG tanks filled, you'd have a range in this eco-variant of over 800 miles. Dacia promises that this car will be easy to use around town too, thanks to the fact that the steering is for this MK3 design electrically (rather than hydraulically) assisted and apparently needs up to 36% less effort to turn at low speeds.

The final engine choice is a perkier TCe 110 petrol turbo unit, which makes 62mph in 10 seconds and only comes with manual transmission.

Design and Build

As before, the Stepway is styled to look a bit more rugged without actually offering any four wheel-drive underpinnings. The extra 41mm of stepped up ground clearance gives it a nicely chunky look and might well prove useful when bumping up and down big kerbs in town. This third generation version has a redesigned front end and body features such as proper metal front and rear skid plates, fog lamps, pronounced flared wheel arches, larger 16-inch alloy wheels, longitudinal roof bars that can be turned into a functional roof rack and some smart paint colours.

Otherwise, it's exactly like a standard Sandero, which means that this 'DJF/BJ1 cross' generation version rides on the same CMF-B platform as a far pricier (and smaller) Renault Clio. That's allowed it to be a touch bigger than the pre-2020 MK2 model, noticeably wider (1,848mm without mirrors) and 19mm longer. The look's less anonymous too, thanks to a Y-shaped LED front lighting signature.

Inside, it's much nicer than you might expect, with a modern dashboard that's embellished on this Stepway variant with fabric finishes. Infotainment's taken step forward since 2020 too, most versions getting an 8-inch centre monitor featuring smartphone mirroring. Access to the rear is easy, with wide-opening doors and reasonable knee room; you could seat a couple of adults there more comfortably than in most other superminis. The boot's a decent size too, rated at 328-litres, extendable to 1,108-litres with the back seat folded.

Market and Model

There are three trim levels - 'Essential', 'Expression' and 'Extreme'. So how much are you going to end up paying? Think in terms of a Stepway starting price of just over £15,000 (about £1,500 more than a regular Sandero) and you won't be too far out. That makes this still the cheapest Crossover-styled car you can buy. It undercuts ruggedised versions of smaller city cars like the Fiat Panda Cross and the Kia Picanto X-line and offers lots more space inside than both. For some perspective, in size, this car is somewhere between a Fiesta Active-shaped supermini (models of which tend to be priced from around £22,500) and a Focus Active-sized family hatch (priced from around £28,000). So you get the idea. It really is hard to argue with this kind of value proposition.

Three interior media infotainment options are available, the most basic system - called 'Media Control' - includes Bluetooth and a DAB radio, but no screen. Instead, you get a dock for your smartphone which can run a purpose-designed app for in-car use. Further up the range, you get two options based around an 8-inch touchscreen; 'Media Display', which incorporates 'Android Auto' and 'Apple CarPlay' smartphone-mirroring. And (only for the top Stepway 'Extreme' variant) 'Media Nav', which has built-in sat nav with Wi-Fi-based smartphone access. Optional extras if you want to push up your Sandero include automatic air conditioning, heated front seats, a reversing camera, auto wipers and a power operated sunroof.

Cost of Ownership

There's a surprisingly high efficiency price to pay for this Stepway variant's 'SUV'-ness. In an ordinary Sandero, the three cylinder turbo 1.0-litre TCe 90 turbo unit almost all customers choose returns 53.3mpg on the combined cycle and 119g/km of CO₂. The same engine in a Sandero Stepway manages 50.4mpg and 127g/km. It's 45.6mpg and 140g/km for the automatic version. You would of course do much better with a pricier mainstream ruggedised supermini like a Ford Fiesta Active, but there's no doubt that Dacia has considerably closed the previous gap in efficiency that existed compared to the mainstream market. And it's useful to have the rare option of LPG power for the TCe engine (the TCe 100 Bi-fuel model), should you be prepared to consider it.

On to the warranty. Dacia offers its latest Zen warranty which can cover you for you to 7 years provided you get your car regularly serviced at a Dacia franchise. This is backed by three years or 60,000 miles of roadside assistance. Service intervals are every year or every 12,000 miles and since most Renault dealers look after Dacias too, you shouldn't be too far from a specialist workshop. It also helps that there's a timing chain that'll last as long as the engine. Dacia offers a choice of pre-paid servicing schemes covering you for either two years and 24,000 miles or three years and 36,000 miles.

Summary

This Dacia Sandero Stepway sells well for a reason. It's a much more interesting and, crucially, more expensive-looking car than the basic Sandero hatch and although the craze for these SUV-styled superminis might have been and gone, it's still a vehicle that will continue to find a ready market here in the UK. With its 41mm raised ride height, it will not only appeal to those looking for something a bit beefy-looking to drive in town, but older buyers might well appreciate not having to sit so far down into the vehicle.

The pricing, though nothing like as affordable as it used to be, still looks pretty good as well. For only a couple of hundred pounds more than the most depressingly basic citycar, you can buy a well-equipped Stepway with a modern petrol turbo engine and miles more equipment. Perhaps Skoda should have been Volkswagen's Dacia, but it hasn't really worked out that way. It's become a bit too gentrified. In contrast, the Stepway is a case study in how to do budget cars very well indeed.

Statistics

	Min		Max
Price		£15,295	
CO2 (g/km)	115 [???		120 [???
Max Speed (mph)		115	
Combined Mpg		50.4	
Length (mm)		4,088	
Width (mm)		1,848	
Boot capacity (l)		328	
Power (ps)	90 [???		110 [???
Insurance Group 1-50	4 [???		8 [???

Scoring

Superminis	
Performance	50%
Handling	50%
Comfort	60%
Space	70%
Styling	70%
Build	50%
Value	90%
Equipment	70%
Economy	80%
Depreciation	80%
Insurance	80%
Total	68%

A Woman's View

(Sample Content)

The New Dacia Sandero Stepway

FAMILY FAVOURITE

A Woman's View - Will It Suit Me?

The arrival of any new car is always an event in our household. The kids crawl all over the back seats looking for new gadgets. My husband pops the bonnet and scans the cam covers. And me? I just take a step back and take it all in.



With the new Dacia Sandero Stepway, doing just that was an enjoyable experience. And an enlightening one. I hadn't expected much interest from my neighbours in this model but I was wrong. Words were exchanged over the garden fence. Cups of sugar were borrowed. It created a stir.

Would it suit me? Well, if the family are happy, then so am I.

The Practicalities

First and foremost, I'd say that in my view after having completed a few hundred miles in this car, I think it would be an easy one to own. You slip in behind the wheel and everything feels just right, the major controls falling to hand easily. Too many of the cars I test require you to get out and study the handbook before you can explore all the functions available but with this one, I was up and running almost immediately. If you can operate a payphone, you shouldn't have much trouble with this car.

There were lots of little touches around the cabin which showed just how much care the designers had taken to get things just right. We lost count of what car marketers call surprise and delight features - basically, clever little additions you simply wouldn't expect on a car like this.

The Reaction Of Our Customers To The Car

'Already we've had a huge amount of positive reaction to this car,' says ...[name and position]... 'We found that owners of the old model were aware some time ago that this latest version was on its way and they've been regularly asking us questions about it for the last six months.'

'What's been most interesting however, is the number of enquiries we've had from owners of other marques. These are the kind of people we'd never previously have expected to see in our showrooms. Clearly, the way our franchise is developing appeals to them'

Behind the Wheel

It's great to drive - I'd certainly say that. In the time I had the car, I was forever looking round to find that my husband had snaffled the keys to roar off round to the pub and impress his friends. Men are so shallow...

The engine responsiveness is more direct than I had expected from this class of car - a boon when overtaking slow moving traffic. Its a very torquey powerplant too - in other words, theres plenty of pulling power. And thats a help not only when overtaking but in urban traffic as well. Unlike other cars in this class, I didnt find myself constantly having to change gear to keep the engine on song. No matter how characterful an engine is, if youre constantly having to row it along with the gearlever, it quickly becomes an irritation.

All-round visibility is great, again, a boon when youre manoeuvring around crowded city streets. You also feel very safe behind the wheel: its one of those cars you could trust to your eighteen year old daughter (if you absolutely had to), knowing that she would be as safe as it was possible to be. Finally, its secure. Tests have shown that its one of those cars that crooks just walk away from.

Value for Money

No, this car isnt cheap - but then you wouldnt expect quality to come without a price. When you sit down and compare it to other cars in the sector, it actually stacks up extremely well. Especially when you take account of the high level of specification included. Another factor to consider within the value equation is the long warranty on offer and the useful amount of breakdown cover included in the deal. I also took the time to research the insurance side and found that the grouping attached to this car is much lower than I had expected. Apparently, thats to do with the trouble the designers have taken to achieve a high level of vehicle security.

Finally, the research Ive done on dealer networks suggests that dealers from this franchise are amongst the friendliest and most helpful in the industry. They also, Id add, offer the widest range of finance deals. My local showroom is always keen to invite me in for a coffee and shoot the breeze - and they dont even know Im a motoring journalist! Its all part of a more relaxed attitude to selling that really appeals to me.

Could I Live With One?

Id say so, yes. This car looks good, the family like it and, when you add everything up, its also very good value for money. Thats a pretty difficult combination to beat.

Auto Response

(Sample Content)

Comments from Motorists

Natalie Lewis purchased a new Dacia Sandero Stepway

What made me buy the car?

I bought it a couple of weeks ago after seeing it on the dealerships showroom. I liked the car but I wasn't sure if I wanted to splash out on one. The salesman threw in a nice stereo and some alloy wheels though, and the car was sold.



My husband takes our other car to work and I needed something to get around in during the day. I think that this is an extremely stylish looking car. I like the exterior design details and the interior is nice and lively. It looks like nothing else on the road and when I came to get a new car I didn't really consider anything else, it was this one all the way.

What do I think of it now?

It's a reliable, stylish car. The model I've got has electric windows and a sunroof which is good. It's a brilliantly fun, enjoyable, lively, exactly what I was looking for. I bought it on HP and sometimes the payments can be a bit of a problem but the car is worth the aggro.

The advertising on the TV is trying to give the car a sportier image, and even though I haven't got a top of the range engine in mine, I think the marketing strategy could get the image to stick because the car handles really well. The car is very comfortable to drive, the seats are good and there is a nice sized boot. Lack of space in the back can be a bit of a problem but I don't normally have more than two people in the car, or if I do it's not for long distances.

The Reaction Of Our Customers To The Car

'Already we've had a huge amount of positive reaction to this car,' says ...[name and position]... 'We found that owners of the old model were aware some time ago that this latest version was on its way and they've been regularly asking us questions about it for the last six months.'

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What's gone wrong with it?

There were a few little minor niggles at first but I was impressed by how rapidly and effectively the friendly dealer staff sorted them out. Since then, it's been fine.

What's it like to drive?

It serves its purpose well. I only use it for short journeys and would use my husbands car, which is larger and even more comfortable, if were going further afield. I love the fact that I got loads of extras with the car. Theres air-conditioning, electric sunroof, alloy wheels and it was still quite well priced.

The car has been good mechanically so I havent had much contact with the dealers except for one service, and my MOTs, they seem to be generally good. Most of my driving is done around town so the good economy of the car is also a bonus.

Would I buy another?

Without doubt. This car gives me a good feeling every time I open the bedroom curtains and look down on it sitting in the drive.

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