



Issue 5 – October 2015

Contents

- [RAC Report on Motoring survey – Headline findings](#)
- [RAC response to findings – Calls to action](#)
- [Early Day Motion 390 – Potholes in the UK](#)
- [Legislation introduced in October – Smoking in cars and Consumer Rights Act](#)
- [RAC Fuel Watch](#)
- [What is the RAC doing in your constituency?](#)

RAC Report on Motoring 2015 – the most comprehensive survey of UK motorists

In September, the RAC launched its 2015 Report on Motoring. In its 27th year, the report is an extensive nationwide survey of a representative cross-section of UK motorists. It finds out what's on their minds, where their priorities on road policy lie and provides government and policy-makers with considerable insight into the attitudes of the UK motorist and what is high on their agenda.

RAC

RAC Report on
Motoring 2015
The speed of change

Below are key findings within the report:

- For 10% of drivers the state of local roads is now their number one concern, while a further 20% list it as a top four issue.
- Half of motorists (50%) say the condition of roads in their area has deteriorated over the course of the past year. In 99% of cases, potholes and other problems with road surfaces are to blame.
- Drivers' spending priorities reflect these concerns: 30% say local road maintenance is their top priority for government transport investment and a further 45% place it in their top 5 priorities. Indeed 45% of motorists say they would pay higher motoring taxes if the revenue raised was ring-fenced for road maintenance
- One in every 10 drivers (10%) say the price of fuel is their top concern, while a further 16% list the cost of petrol or diesel among their four main worries. This is down considerably from 2014 when the numbers were 21% and 26% respectively.
- Almost half of motorists (46%) support the ongoing fuel duty freeze with a further 32% favouring a cut in fuel duty and making good the shortfall with alternative types of motoring or non-motoring taxation.



- More than a third (34%) say the use of mobile phones (to talk, text or go online) is one of their top four areas of concern this year.
- Most motorists (74%) report that the cost of parking has increased in the past 12 months.
- Almost two-thirds (63%) say that there has been a drop in the availability of local town centre or high street parking spaces.
- Seven in 10 drivers (70%) say they regularly or occasionally break the 70mph motorway speed limit, and there is majority support (65%) for this to be raised to 80mph.
- Almost one in five (19%) say they will consider buying a hybrid or electric vehicle as their next car – but for half (47%) of this group this would be because of an expectation of lower running costs. Only 10% of the 19% would do so for environmental reasons.
- In December 2014, Scotland tightened up its drink-driving laws and reduced the blood alcohol limit to 50mg/100ml. 56% of motorists support a cut to 50mg/100ml or less across the rest of the UK.
- Young drivers are more likely to drink-drive: 26% of those aged 17-24 think they have done so in the past year.

For access to the full report and findings, please download a copy [here](#).

If you or your office wishes to discuss the findings of the report, please contact me directly on 07875 423 875 and email address is nlyes@rac.co.uk

RAC Response to Report Findings – Calls to Action

Based on the findings from the report, the RAC has made several calls to action. Our calls ask policy-makers, such as yourself, to consider changes to current motoring policy based upon motorist priorities.

RAC Calls to Action:

- 1 LOCAL ROAD MAINTENANCE:** With the condition of local roads motorists' top concern, the RAC believes the Government should provide leadership and ensure local authorities, and particularly revitalised city regions, have sufficient freedom to allocate expenditure in line with the priorities of council tax payers.. The RAC also believes there should be a 'more level playing field' so that expenditure by local authorities is not unfairly biased towards areas such as education and social services, rather than roads maintenance, simply because the legal obligations for the former are more prescriptive than for the latter.
- 2 FUEL PRICES:** Though not as high on motorists' priorities as last year, the price of fuel remains a key concern for many motorists. With overwhelming evidence of the link between fuel prices and economic growth, the RAC calls on the Chancellor to announce a freeze on fuel duty for the life of this Parliament. Pricing aberrations are still common and the RAC calls on the Competition and Markets Authority to re-examine the fuel retail market.
- 3 ROAD SAFETY ENFORCEMENT:** Concerns about the illegal behaviour of other drivers ranks highly as a concern for motorists in 2015. The RAC believes there are a number of steps the Government should consider to improve road safety. There is little expectation amongst the law-abiding majority of motorists that those who break the law will be caught by a police officer, no doubt due to the fact that roads policing officer numbers in England and Wales fell by 22.7% between 2010 and 2014. The RAC therefore calls on the Government, police authorities and chief constables to halt the decline in roads policing numbers.
- 4 REVIEW DRINK-DRIVE LIMIT:** There is strong support for a drink-drive blood-alcohol limit of 50mg/100ml or less. The RAC therefore calls on the Government to reduce the limit in England and Wales to 50mg/100ml to bring it in line with Scotland and most EU countries.
- 5 ROAD SAFETY TARGETS:** The RAC believes the Government should reintroduce national casualty reduction targets.

YOUNG DRIVERS REVIEW: Research from Consumer Intelligence published in June 2015 found that take-up of telematics insurance was highest among drivers aged between 18 and 24, with 22% of men in this group and 14% of women using such policies. Findings in the report suggests that 75% of motorists would find a telematics unit useful. The RAC believes that any future review into younger drivers should look closely at using such technology to improve driving standards amongst younger drivers as they are the most high-risk group when it comes to road traffic accidents. The RAC believes the Government should consider all available options in this review, including better education and training and possibly the introduction of graduated driver licences.

Early Day Motion 390 – Potholes in the UK

In September 2015, an Early Day Motion was tabled which highlighted the findings in the Report on Motoring on the state of Britain's local roads.

"That this House notes the RAC's 2015 Report on Motoring, which polled a sample of motorists in the UK who believe that the quality of roads has deteriorated in the last 12 months; applauds the Government's additional funding for repairing potholes, but believes that this is inadequate to address the growing problem of roads with potholes; further notes the cost to motorists of damaged roads and the danger to cyclists and motorcyclists; and calls on the Government to uplift the financial support it is giving to reduce the number of potholes in the UK."

The RAC would like your support in helping to achieve further signatures to this motion for the following reasons:

- According to Britain's motorists, the poor state of local roads is their top issue of concern and 30% believe it should be a priority for government and local authority spending.
- The estimated backlog according to the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) is more than £12bn simply to bring local roads up to an acceptable standard. The Government's own estimation is that there is a backlog of up to £8.6bn. This compares to an allocation of £6bn by the Government for local roads for the period up to 2020/21.
- Based on figures in the Asphalt Industry Alliance Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) report, the poor state of local roads cost £23m in claims in England and Wales.
- At the present rate, according to the AIA ALARM report, the estimated time to clear the backlog is 13 years.

Legislation introduced in October – Smoking in cars and Consumer Rights Act 2015

On 1st October 2015, legislation came into force on proposals to ban smoking in vehicles which have children under the age of 18. Our response to this was:

RAC spokesman Simon Williams said: "While the motoring public know this new law is coming, our data shows that a significant proportion are not aware just how soon it takes effect.

"It is worrying that nine in 10 motorists have concerns about the extent to which the new law is likely to be enforced. This is perhaps well-founded as traffic police officer numbers have fallen by nearly a quarter (23%) between 2010 and 2014 across forces in England and Wales, so it is hard to see how people flouting the law are going to be caught.

"The new ban joins a raft of other laws that have been introduced in recent years such as making it illegal to undertake or hog the middle lane of a motorway. But without sufficient enforcement there is a real danger that these laws will quickly be forgotten by a large proportion of the motoring population

Additionally on 1st October, the Consumer Rights Act 2015 came into force. The RAC's response to this was:

Despite the introduction of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, new data from the RAC shows just one in 20 (5%)* motorists are aware of the new law that gives anyone buying a vehicle significantly more protection if it turns out to be faulty.

The RAC believes the new law will strengthen the hand of buyers who think they have been mis-sold a used car or if a fault is revealed within the first 30 days. The new 'short-term right to reject' provision allows the buyer to demand a full refund –

previously the dealer could simply replace or repair a faulty item or part. For up to six months from the original date of sale, the dealer will be obliged to repair or replace the faulty part and will only have one opportunity to fix the problem. If a repair or replacement is not possible or is unsuccessful, the buyer will still be able to demand a reduced price or exercise their 'final right to reject', and demand full or partial repayment. RAC head of external affairs Pete Williams said: "Car buyers have long felt they are at the mercy of unscrupulous car traders, but the introduction of the Consumer Rights Act could finally turn the tables in their favour. Any licensed dealer must now refund the sale price in full if a buyer returns a faulty used car within the 30-day period.

"Over time, and subject to some successful test cases in the courts, the new law should begin to squeeze the most dishonest dealers content with selling sub-standard stock out of the market. There will be nowhere to hide for those actively selling vehicles to consumers that, frankly, are better off being sold for parts – if not sent to the scrapheap".

RAC Fuel Watch

World oil prices have declined since summer from just above \$62 a barrel to just under \$50. The Dollar has strengthened against Sterling during September, and the wholesale price of unleaded has dropped to below that of diesel. This has resulted in lower prices at the pumps, initially for diesel during August, and now for unleaded in September.



Year-on-year comparison 7th October 2014 to 7th October 2015

The average UK cost of unleaded on 7th October 2015 was 17.82ppl cheaper than it was on 7th October 2014. This represents a 14% price drop in one year. The average UK cost of diesel on 7th October 2015 was 21.21ppl cheaper than it was on the 7th October 2014. This represents a 16% price drop in a year.

	7 th October 2014	7 th October 2015
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	127.13	109.31
Diesel	131.56	110.35

Monthly price comparison 7th September 2015 to 7th October 2015

The average UK cost of unleaded on 7th October 2015 was 1.94ppl cheaper than it was on 7th September 2015. This represents a 1.7% price fall in a month. The average UK cost of diesel on 7th October 2015 was 0.59ppl more expensive than it was on 7th September 2015. This represents a 0.5% price rise in a month.

	7 th September 2015	7 th October 2015
Fuel Type	Average pump price ppl	Average pump price ppl
Unleaded	111.25	109.31
Diesel	109.76	110.35

The facts - the cost of filling a typical family car:

Fuel	Petrol	Diesel
Fuel tank in litres	55	55
Avg forecourt price in per litre	109.31	110.35

Total cost to motorist	£60.12	£60.69
Duty	£31.87	£31.87
VAT @ 20%	£10.02	£10.12
Cost of fuel	£18.23	£18.70
Exc VAT	£50.10	£50.58
VAT & duty	£41.89	£41.99
% tax of fuel cost	70%	69%

*Source: Experian Catalyst – UK prices as of 7th October 2015

- The RAC highlights that despite the recent welcome relief at the pumps since last year, UK motorists are still paying some of the highest fuel prices in Europe.
- The RAC welcomed confirmation in the Budget of a freeze on fuel duty for the remainder of this year. The RAC and its members believe strongly that a fall in oil prices should not be seen as an opportunity to raise additional tax revenues by increasing fuel duty. Independent modelling by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) and the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) demonstrated that there is a direct link between the price of fuel and economic growth and jobs. This conclusion has been accepted by the Treasury.
- The Government has recently confirmed that a trial of motorway signs warning of fuel prices ahead of services will begin shortly on sections of the M5. The RAC supports this initiative and believes the approach should be extended to all motorway services.



For further information, please visit our fuel pages: www.rac.co.uk/fuelwatch

What is the RAC doing in your constituency?

The RAC will announce this month that it has teamed up with The Scout Association to raise awareness on road safety. Our road safety mascot Horace, created with Aardman Animations, will be visiting many Scout and Cub pack across the UK during the course of the year and the RAC is sponsoring the Cub's road safety badge. Should you wish to register your interest in potentially joining us at a local road safety workshop with the Cubs or Scouts, please contact nlyes@rac.co.uk for further details.



The RAC and its road safety mascot Horace support the #SaveKidsLives campaign. This is a simple viral campaign supported by a compelling and shocking film by Luic Besson which highlights the heart breaking statistic that 500 children die around the world every day on the roads as they walk to school, play and go about their daily lives. The campaign was launched during the Third United Nations Global Road Safety Week and is now calling for Governments worldwide to commit to take action at the Global High Level Conference on Road Safety in Brasilia (17-19 November 2015). If you wish to register your support, please sign here: <http://www.savekidslives2015.org/>

#SaveKidsLives

As the Motorist's Champion, the RAC is expertly placed to advise and guide effective road and motoring policy. Should you wish to discuss anything within this newsletter or any wider policy issues, please contact:

Nicholas Lyes, public affairs manager on nlyes@rac.co.uk or 07875 423875.

rac.co.uk



@RAC_Press



RAC is a founding member of FairFuelUK

RAC