

Report on Motoring 2025



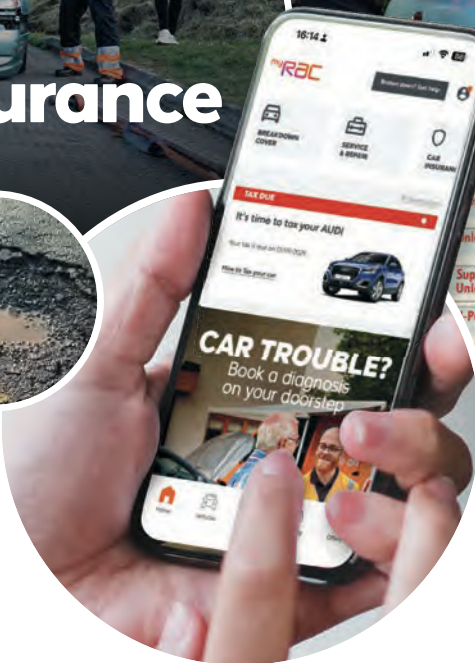
**Servicing
and repairs**



Breakdown



Insurance



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RAC



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RAC Report on Motoring 2025

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Foreword

Dave Hobday, RAC Chief Executive

The essential nature of the car to people's lives once again stands out in the findings of this year's RAC Report on Motoring.

Despite the efforts of government to improve the appeal of public transport, eight-in-10 drivers still say they would struggle to get by without a vehicle, and this figure gets even higher for those living in rural areas. It's therefore particularly concerning that the biggest concern for drivers this year is the cost of keeping their vehicle on the road.

Almost a third of drivers state the sheer expense of motoring – such as car maintenance, fuel prices, motor insurance premiums, vehicle tax and parking charges – is their top concern.

Worryingly, the increased expense of servicing and repairing vehicles has become the single biggest cost concern for drivers this year. Choosing to skip maintenance to save money can prove to be an expensive mistake, often resulting in a bigger bill further down the line. This year's report shows two-thirds of drivers have had to pay for unexpected repair costs. Keeping on top of routine maintenance and fixing issues as they appear is critical.

The price of fuel remains a constant thorn in drivers' sides. While pump prices are largely driven by the global price of oil, retailer margins also play a part. The RAC has long campaigned

for greater competition among retailers, so we're hopeful the Government's 'Fuel Finder' scheme, which demands forecourts report daily prices, will make a difference when it comes into force at the end of the year. In the meantime, we urge drivers to use fuel price comparison tools, like the myRAC app, to find the cheapest local fuel.

We continue to be there for the nation's drivers, whether that's our patrols rescuing members when they break down, or our mobile mechanics servicing and repairing customers' vehicles on their driveways or at work – a convenient and cost-effective alternative to using a garage. In fact, RAC Mobile Mechanics are increasingly being used by members to replace suspension springs that have broken due to being driven on the nation's pothole-ridden roads.

It's little wonder then that concern about the poor condition of roads remains high. But the proportion of drivers who cited this as their top bugbear has fallen and been replaced by concerns around motoring costs. We're hopeful there'll be an even greater drop next year given the Government's record £1.6bn funding settlement for local councils in England and

the requirement for the money to be well spent. I'm pleased to say the RAC's call for more authorities to use preventative maintenance treatments that stop potholes forming in the first place has been well and truly heard by the Government as this should both extend the lives of our roads and give drivers a better experience at the wheel.

For the first time this year we've made a clear link between the quality of road surfaces and safety, with more than half of drivers citing potholes as their main safety concern with the roads themselves. But the state of the roads is just one aspect when it comes to road safety, and this year's report explores more aspects of this topic than ever before.

More motorists have admitted to driving under the influence of drink or drugs, either illegal or prescription. The drug-driving issue has also been highlighted by the Government, with the proportion of collisions where drugs are a factor rising towards the level of drink-related ones.

Aware that drink-driving is one of the 'fatal four' causes of road traffic collisions, we are calling on the Government to give courts the power to order repeat offenders to use 'alcolocks' that

prevent vehicles from being driven by someone who is intoxicated. Doing so would prevent them from reoffending, as many do even when banned. We know drivers are supportive of such a measure and hope the Government will include this in its forthcoming Road Safety Strategy.

As the car is such an integral part of our daily lives in the UK, it's vital our roads are safe – whether that's free from dangerous potholes, free from dangerous drivers, or free from unroadworthy vehicles putting other road users at risk.

Ultimately, safety is at the core of everything we do at the RAC, whether that's going to the aid of broken-down members or giving customers peace of mind through our nationwide Mobile Mechanics service. I'm very proud to say the latter is rapidly transforming the service, maintenance and repair market as more and more drivers and fleet managers take advantage of having garage-quality work conveniently carried out at homes and workplaces.

I hope you find this year's RAC Report on Motoring an interesting and insightful read.





Please note that data presented in this report is rounded to zero decimal places.
For this reason, some figures when added may sum to more than 100%.



1

Drivers, vehicles and dependency

Drivers' dependency on their vehicles in 2025 remains as high as ever while our data again confirms that the older drivers are and the more rural their location, the more reliant they are on their cars. Petrol engines are still the most widespread choice of powertrain and the long-term decline in diesel's popularity shows no sign of slowing.

There are indications that UK drivers are returning to the new-car market as the age of the average vehicle has dropped, and lower fuel prices have prompted an increase in typical mileage.

Britain's drivers remain hugely reliant on their cars to meet their mobility needs. The 2025 RAC Report on Motoring shows that 80% of drivers say they would find it very difficult to adjust their lifestyle to being without a vehicle, a percentage that has remained at a consistently high level since 2020.

Meanwhile, 60% of drivers say they 'strongly agree' they would find life without a car difficult – the same percentage as in 2023 and 2024. Car dependency increases with age, this year's report has found: 86% of drivers aged 65 or older say they would struggle to adjust to life without a car compared to 66% of under 25s. Among those aged between 45 and 64, the rate is 83%, and it is 76% among drivers in the 25-44 age group.

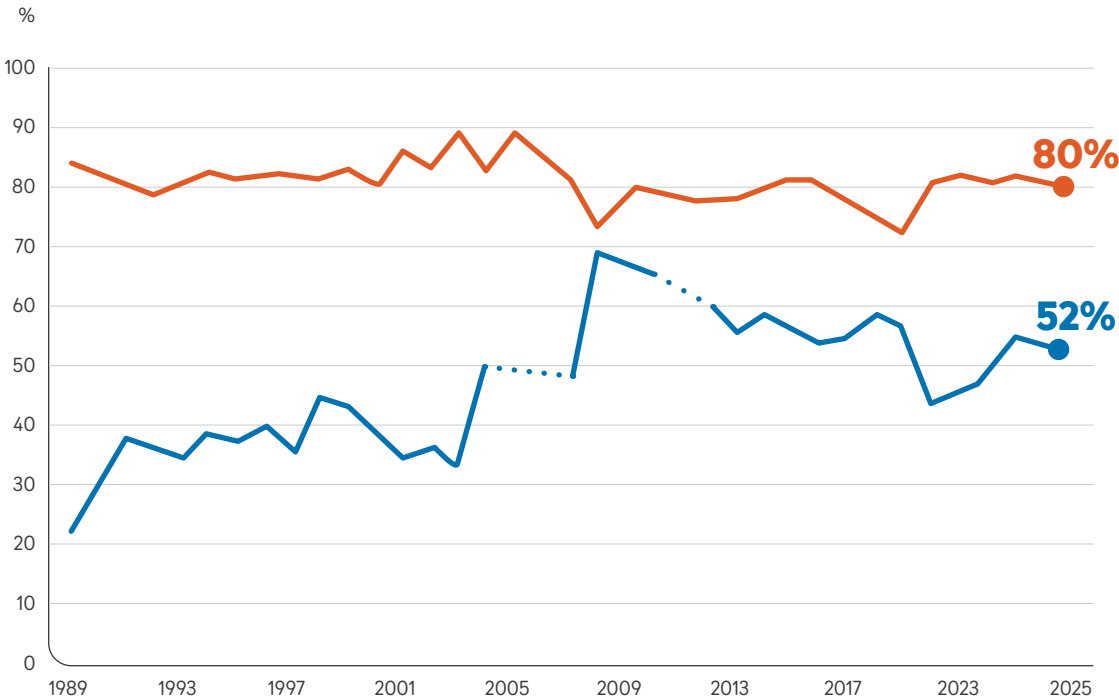
71%

of urban drivers say they'd find it difficult to adjust to being without a vehicle

Drivers who live in urban areas with better public transport options are understandably less dependent than average on their cars – although, even among the UK's city and town dwellers, a clear majority (71%) say they would find it hard to live without their vehicles. In rural areas, the percentage rises to 88%, reflecting the relative lack of availability of public transport, while among drivers who live in the suburbs or on the edges of towns, the rate is 82%.

Drivers' views on car dependency

- Would find it very difficult to adjust lifestyle to being without a car
- Would drive less if public transport was better



Dotted lines indicate interpolated data – question not asked in these years.

1.1 Drivers' main vehicles: powertrain, type and age

In 2025, the majority of UK drivers surveyed for the Report on Motoring say their main vehicles are petrol-powered (59%), a slight fall on the 61% recorded in 2024 and below the peak of 63% recorded in both 2020 and 2021. The percentage of drivers who state their main vehicle has a diesel engine has fallen to 24% this year from 27% in 2024, continuing diesel's long-term decline in popularity. In 2017, 35% of main vehicles ran on diesel.

Conventional hybrids comprise 8% of drivers' main vehicles, up from 7% in 2024, while the percentage of those whose main car is a plug-in hybrid is 4% (3% in 2024). After declining in 2024, there has been a rebound in the percentage of drivers who say their main car is a pure battery-electric vehicle: after falling from 4% in 2023 to 2% in 2024, this year's figure has returned to 4%.

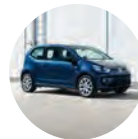


26% SUVs

(13% smaller SUVs, 13% larger SUVs)



22% Mid-size hatchbacks



21% Small hatchbacks

In terms of body type, mid-size hatchbacks are the most common choice for main vehicles (22%), followed closely by small hatchbacks (21%). This year has seen an increase in the popularity of larger sports utility vehicles (SUVs), from 10% in 2024 to 13% now. This figure rises to 16% among drivers aged between 25 and 44. With 13% of all drivers using a smaller SUV as their main vehicle, SUVs currently represent 26% of main cars in the UK.





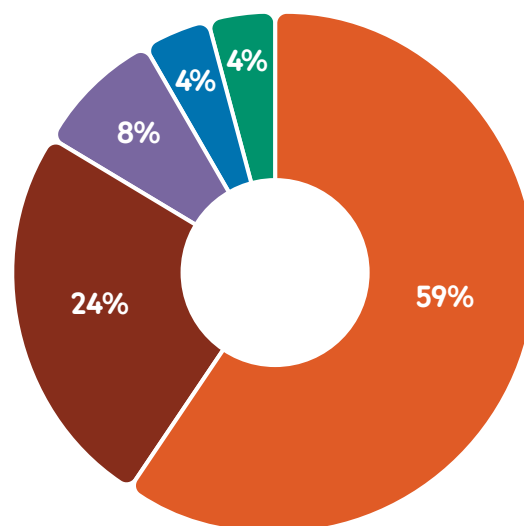
While the age of vehicles of those surveyed by the RAC increased in the period immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic, the trend appears to have reversed in 2025. This year, 57% of main cars are at least five years old, down from 63% in 2024 and 65% in both 2022 and 2023. In 2025, the Report on Motoring research shows a quarter (25%) of main vehicles are more than 10 years old compared with 27% in 2024 and 30% in 2023.

At the same time, 31% of main cars in 2025 are less than three years old, up from 24% in 2024, 23% in 2023 and 21% in 2022. Older motorists are more likely to drive older cars: among those aged 65 or older, 73% have a main vehicle that is at least five years old while the percentage among those aged between 45 and 64 is 68%. This figure falls to 29% among the under 25s.

Drivers who use their main car for business purposes are far more likely to have newer vehicles: among this group, half (50%) say their main vehicle is less than three years old compared to 20% of non-business drivers.

How UK drivers' current vehicles are powered

- Petrol
- Diesel
- Conventional hybrid
- Plug-in hybrid
- Battery-electric



1.2 Car usage and commuting

As fuel prices have continued to decline from their mid-2022 peak, drivers' average annual mileage has increased in 2025 to just over 11,000 compared to 9,622 in 2024 and 9,114 in 2023. Meanwhile, 29% of drivers say they have covered less than 5,000 miles over the past 12 months, down from 30% in 2024 and 32% in 2023.

The length of typical weekday trips has increased this year, with a fall in the percentage of those who say they usually drive up to 30 miles on an average weekday, from 68% in 2024 to 56%. Meanwhile, the percentage of motorists who drive between 30 and 100 miles on average on any given weekday has risen from 21% in 2024 to 31% in 2025.

Among drivers who commute by car, 43% do so five days a week. This is the highest level since Covid-19, but below the 49% recorded prior to the pandemic. There has been a decline in the percentage of drivers who commute on just one or two days each week, from 20% in 2024 to 14% this year.

The importance of the car is also highlighted by a third of commuters (33%) saying it's their only feasible way of getting to and from work. This figure rises to 61% for drivers who live in rural areas. Across all drivers, 35% say buses

and 23% say trains are a possible alternative way of commuting. Among urban dwellers the respective percentages are 52% and 37%, but just 11% and 9% among rural residents.

Finally, 83% of drivers say they usually rely on their cars when shopping for groceries, while 82% use their vehicles for most visits to family and friends. Among drivers who work, 76% usually commute by car – and only 7% say they never use their vehicle to travel between home and work.

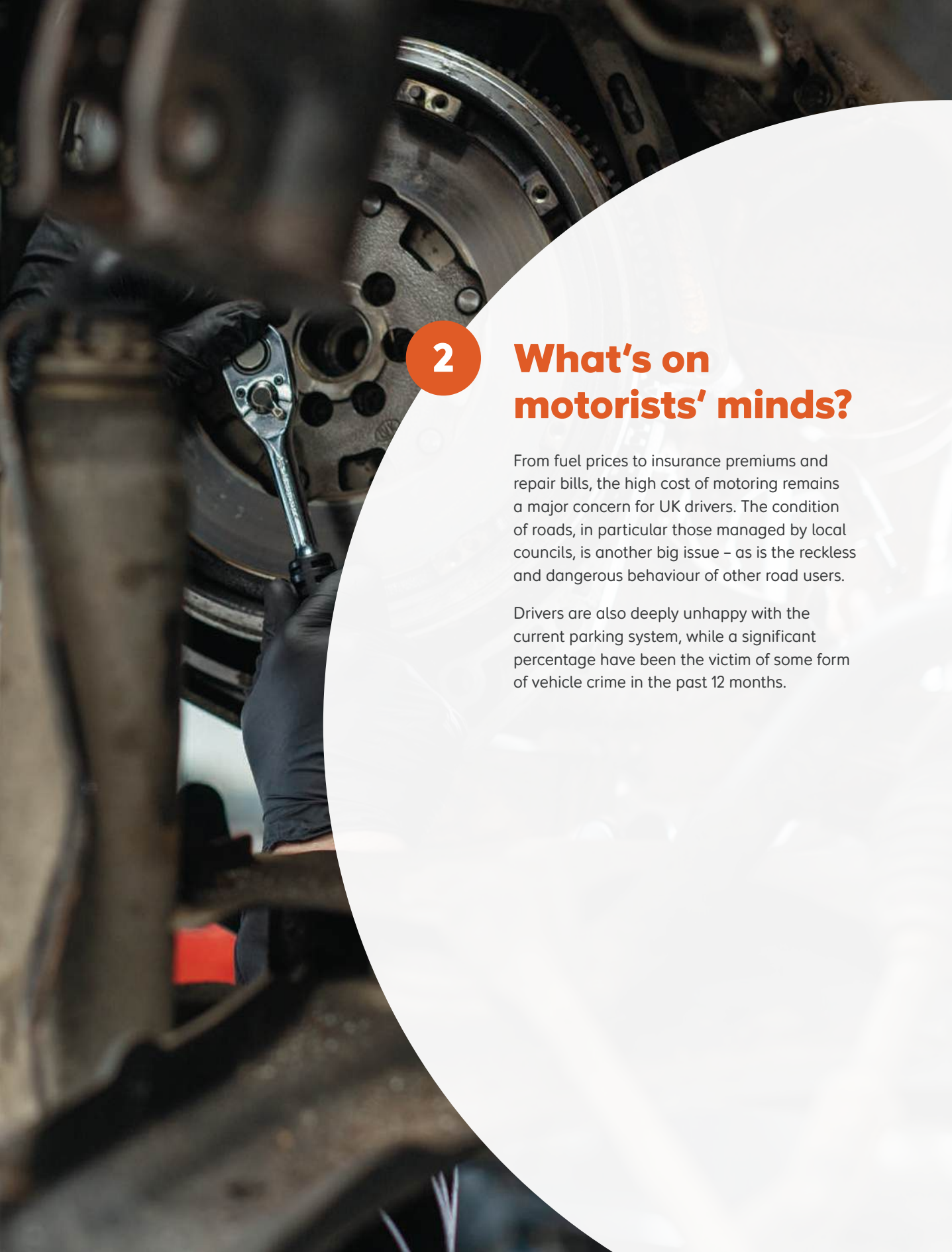


EXPERT VIEW

Claire Evans, consumer editor at What Car?

"It's hugely worrying that a third of commuters have no other feasible way of getting to work other than driving. The Government needs to work far harder to improve our public transport network, especially outside of the biggest cities, where bus and train transport are patchy and expensive."





2

What's on motorists' minds?

From fuel prices to insurance premiums and repair bills, the high cost of motoring remains a major concern for UK drivers. The condition of roads, in particular those managed by local councils, is another big issue – as is the reckless and dangerous behaviour of other road users.

Drivers are also deeply unhappy with the current parking system, while a significant percentage have been the victim of some form of vehicle crime in the past 12 months.

UK drivers' top overall motoring concerns

1. The cost of motoring

30%

2. The condition and maintenance of roads

27%

3. The behaviour and law-breaking of drivers

27%

The impact of the elevated inflation experienced between 2022 and 2024 continues to be felt by the motoring public, and the high cost of motoring is UK drivers' top general concern in 2025. Three-in-10 drivers (30%) say they are most worried about issues such as fuel prices, motor insurance premiums, vehicle tax and parking charges – not to mention the expense associated with servicing and maintenance work. The numerous financial challenges facing drivers are examined in greater detail in Chapter 3, *The cost of driving*.

The 2025 RAC Report on Motoring has also found that 27% of drivers say the poor condition and lack of maintenance of Britain's roads is their main concern; and the same percentage (27%) cite the careless, reckless and dangerous behaviour of other drivers as their most significant worry this year.

In Chapter 4, *The state of our roads*, we look at drivers' specific concerns relating to both local and high-speed roads. These range from potholes and damaged road surfaces to litter and poor signage visibility. We also highlight the risks that substandard road conditions pose to driver and vehicle safety. Meanwhile, Chapter 5, *The dangers on our roads*, covers attitudes to speeding, mobile phone use among motorists, drink-driving and road safety in general.

Collectively, these three issues – the cost of motoring, the state of UK roads and other motorists' behaviour – dwarf drivers' other concerns by a considerable margin. The fourth most widespread overall complaint – traffic congestion and slower journey times – is cited by just one-in-20 drivers (5%). Meanwhile, only 3% say that pollution and air quality is their main worry in 2025.

30%

of drivers say the cost of motoring is their top overall concern



2.1 Drivers' concerns in detail

Looking at the specific issues of greatest concern to drivers, the condition and maintenance of local roads leads the way for the third consecutive year. In 2025, 47% of drivers say the poor state of local roads is one of their top four concerns. Although this represents a relatively steep fall on the 56% figure recorded in 2024, the lack of adequate investment in local roads – those that councils are responsible for – is a long-term problem and has been the top worry in five of the last six editions of the report. Concern about the state of motorways and high-speed dual carriageways, meanwhile, is unchanged at 16% this year.

The poor standard of other motorists' driving is a leading concern for 29% of drivers this year, while a number of further issues related to the behaviour of other road users also rank highly. For example, 26% say the aggressive behaviour of other drivers is a major problem (up sharply from 20% in 2024), and 21% worry about motorists who break traffic laws, for example by running red lights or speeding. A similar percentage (20%) are concerned about other drivers' use of handheld mobile phones, although this issue has steadily diminished in importance over the past decade, having peaked at 41% in 2016 when it was drivers' leading concern. The percentage of drivers who complain about the behaviour of cyclists has fallen to a 10-year low of 16%, while 13% see

25%

of drivers say the cost of maintaining and repairing their vehicle is a top concern, up from 23% in 2024

the use of e-scooters on the road as a problem. Untaxed and uninsured drivers are a concern for 14% of drivers – this is also the lowest level in the past 10 years – while other people's drug and drink-driving are a top worry for 13% and 12% respectively. Only 8% of drivers include car theft and/or criminal damage to vehicles among their four biggest concerns.

In terms of financial challenges, concern about the cost of vehicle insurance remains high: 29% of drivers say this is a main worry in 2025, making it the joint-second most widespread issue. However, concern is down significantly on the 35% figure recorded in 2024 in the wake of widespread rises in premiums driven by soaring repair costs. The cost of fuel is also an issue for 29% of drivers: this figure has declined steadily in line with falling petrol and diesel prices since peaking at 55% in 2022. Meanwhile, a quarter of drivers (25%) say the cost of maintaining and repairing their vehicle is a top concern, up from 23% in 2024. This year, a further 15% say the cost and availability of parking is a major worry compared to 12% in 2024.

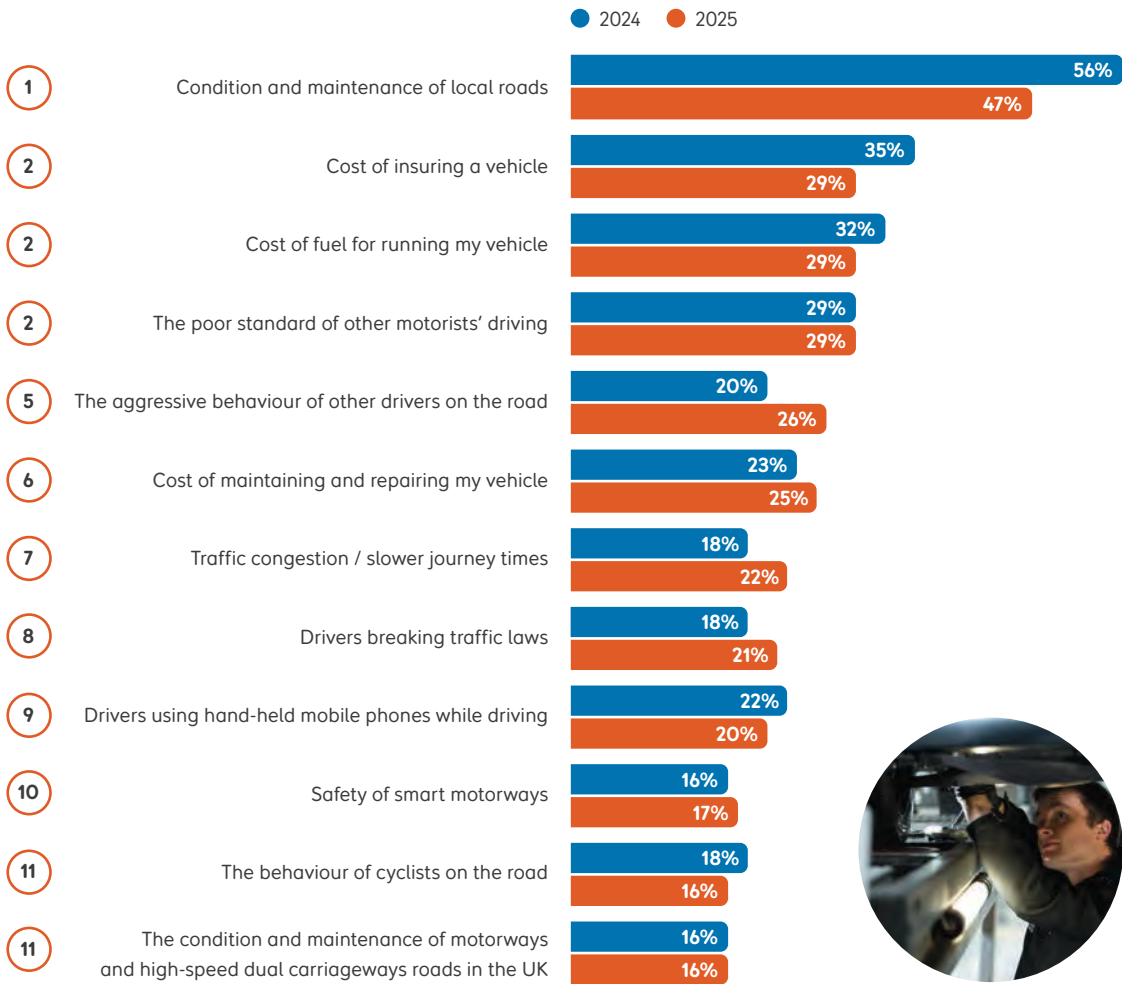
'26% say the
aggressive behaviour
of other drivers is **a major problem'**

Among other notable problems, there has been a rise in concern about traffic congestion and slower journey times. This issue is cited by 22% of drivers in 2025, up from 18% in 2024 and closer to the figures recorded in the years leading up to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. There has been a marginal increase in the percentage of drivers who say the safety of smart motorways – in particular, where the hard shoulder is used as a running lane – is

a top-four concern. The figure has risen very slightly from 16% in 2024 to 17% this year, but remains below its 2021 peak of 24%. This overall decline reflects the Government’s decision in 2023 to cancel plans for future smart motorway projects on the grounds of both cost and lack of public confidence in them. Finally, 9% of drivers say the impact of vehicles on health and the environment is a main worry, compared to 8% in 2024.

Drivers’ top concerns for 2025 and how they’ve changed

Figures represent the proportion of all drivers that said the issue was a top concern





EXPERT VIEW

Antony Kildare, chief executive, IAM RoadSmart

"The rise in the numbers concerned with aggressive driving is noteworthy but not especially surprising. There has been a general perception in recent years that driving standards are deteriorating and people are becoming far more impatient on the road."

2.2 Concerns by age, location and vehicle type

The condition of local roads is the top issue for all drivers over the age of 24, but is felt especially keenly by those aged 65 and over: among this group, 63% say local roads are a top concern compared to 47% of all drivers. In the 45-64 age group, 53% say local roads are a worry, but the figure falls to just 20% among the under 25s.

Older drivers are more likely to complain about the standard of other people's driving (35% versus 29% among all age groups). However, drivers aged 65 and above are considerably more relaxed about fuel costs (19% versus 29% among all ages), no doubt reflecting the fact they typically have lower annual mileages than other age groups.

60%

say local roads in rural areas are an issue, compared to just 26% in urban areas

Financial issues dominate concerns among the under-25s: 36% of this age group say insurance premiums are a top issue (29% among all ages) and 31% cite fuel costs (also 29% among all ages). However, as petrol and diesel prices have declined, young drivers' concern about fuel costs has halved since peaking at 62% in 2022. The impact of repair and maintenance costs is significantly higher among the under-25s, with 30% saying this is a top worry compared to 25% of the driving population as a whole.



EXPERT VIEW

Steve Gooding, director, RAC Foundation

"The jump in concern about congestion due to roadworks suggests the need to improve how schemes are planned and managed as the volume of work – both for utilities and for highway maintenance – is, if anything, set to increase due to the age of our networks, just as traffic levels are also continuing their post-Covid bounceback."

Local road conditions are a far greater concern for drivers based outside of towns and cities: in rural areas, 60% say local roads are an issue and in suburbs the rate is 55%. In Britain's urban areas, just 26% complain about the state of local roads.

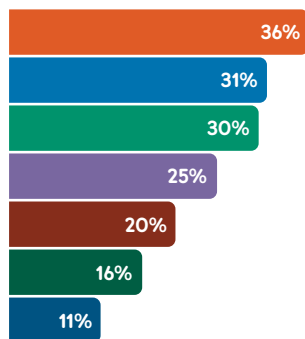
Unsurprisingly, petrol and diesel drivers are more concerned than average about fuel costs (31% and 32% respectively say the cost of filling up is a top concern). The same proportion of drivers of battery-electric vehicles (31%) say the expense associated with public chargers is a leading worry in 2025.

UK drivers' top motoring concerns in 2025 by age group

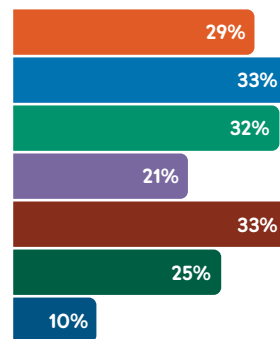
- Cost of insuring a vehicle
- Cost of fuel
- Cost of maintaining and repairing a vehicle
- Aggressive behaviour of other drivers

- Condition and maintenance of local roads
- Poor standard of other motorists' driving
- Safety of smart motorways

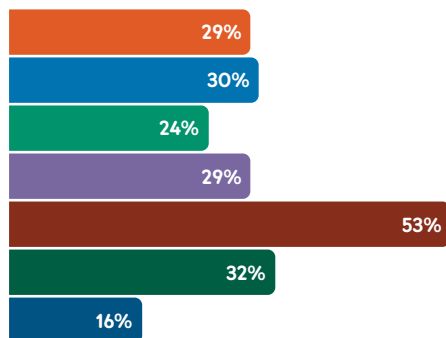
17 to 24-year-olds



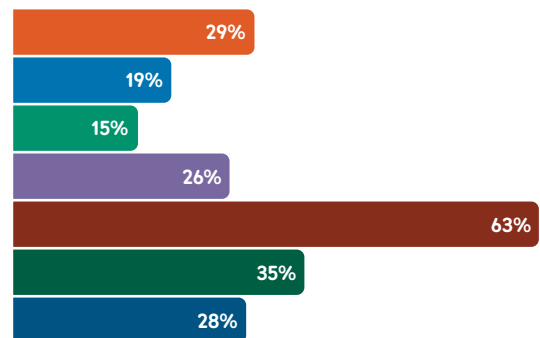
25 to 44-year-olds



45 to 64-year-olds



65-plus



2.3 Parking problems

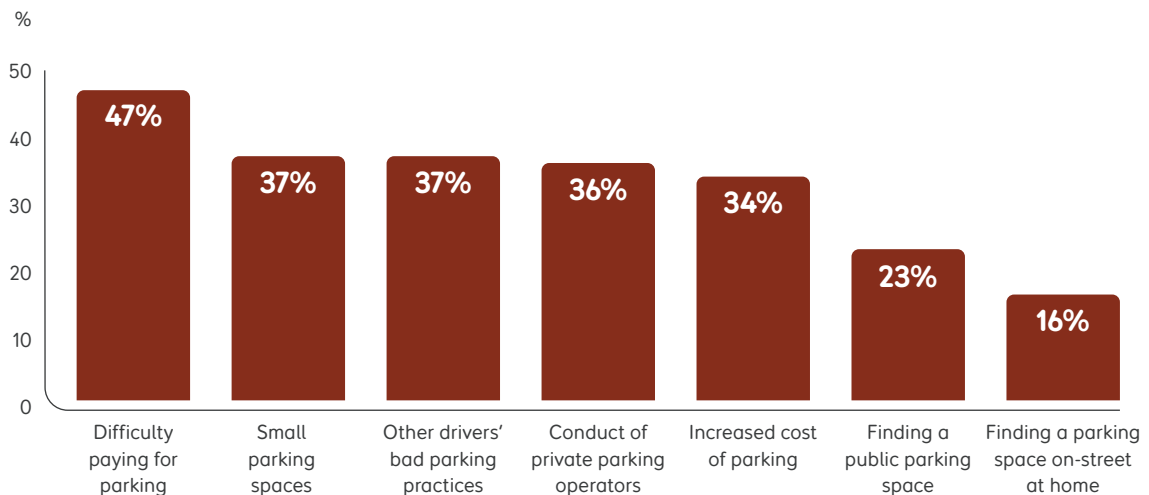
There is widespread dissatisfaction with the UK's current parking system. Almost half of drivers (47%) say that challenges in simply paying for public parking spaces is a problem – making this their biggest parking gripe – a percentage that rises sharply to 72% among those aged 65 and over, and to 59% among drivers based in rural areas. These difficulties include a lack of physical payment machines and the increasingly common requirement to pay via a smartphone app – a process that can be hampered by a lack of mobile phone signal.

The news that the Government is aiming to simplify the parking system by launching the National Parking Platform¹ – which will enable drivers to use a single parking app of their choice to pay for parking at any location, rather than having to download numerous apps – is welcome. However, the RAC believes it is important that drivers also have the option to pay by alternative means, for example with a contactless bank card, if they are unwilling or unable to use a smartphone app.

Meanwhile, more than a third of all drivers (37%) find parking spaces are too small for modern vehicles, a figure that rises to 51% of those aged 65 and above. Other motorists' poor parking etiquette, such as blocking pavements or parking outside of marked bays, is an issue for 37% of drivers. Further concerns include the conduct of private parking operators when pursuing payment for alleged (36%), the rising cost of parking (34%) and general difficulties in finding parking spaces in public car parks (23%) or on the street at home (16%).



UK drivers' biggest parking-related concerns



¹ <https://media.rac.co.uk/national-parking-platform-to-launch-rac-reaction>



EXPERT VIEW

**David Leibling, transport and motoring consultant,
and founder of the Report on Motoring**

"Car park operators must make more provision for older drivers who are concerned about paying for parking and the difficulty of manoeuvring into parking spaces which are too small."



2.4 Vehicle crime

A significant percentage of drivers have recent experience of vehicle crime: 26% say they have fallen victim to issues such as theft or vandalism in the past 12 months. Those who live in town and city centres are more likely to have been targeted, with 45% of this group experiencing vehicle crime compared to just 15% of those who live in rural areas and 20% of drivers based in the suburbs or on the outskirts of towns.

Almost a fifth (19%) of urban drivers say their car has been vandalised in some way over the past year, while 13% say they have had possessions stolen from their vehicle. In rural areas, the corresponding rates are 7% and 2% respectively. Other issues include vehicle theft (11% in urban areas and 6% overall), theft of vehicle parts or number plates (11% in urban areas versus 5% overall) and other motorists failing to leave a note after causing minor damage (9% in urban areas and 8% overall).

45%

of drivers in towns and cities say they have experienced vehicle crime over a 12-month period

Despite the lower incidence of vehicle crime in rural areas, drivers outside of Britain's towns and cities are equally, if not more, worried about being targeted by thieves and vandals. Among drivers based in rural areas, 38% say they are concerned about their car being stolen, the same figure as urban drivers. Meanwhile, 39% of rural drivers are worried about vandalism compared to 34% of those in town or city centres. Finally, drivers in rural locations are considerably more concerned about other motorists failing to leave a note in the event that they cause damage to a parked car: this is a concern for 34% of rural drivers but just 18% of those based in urban areas.

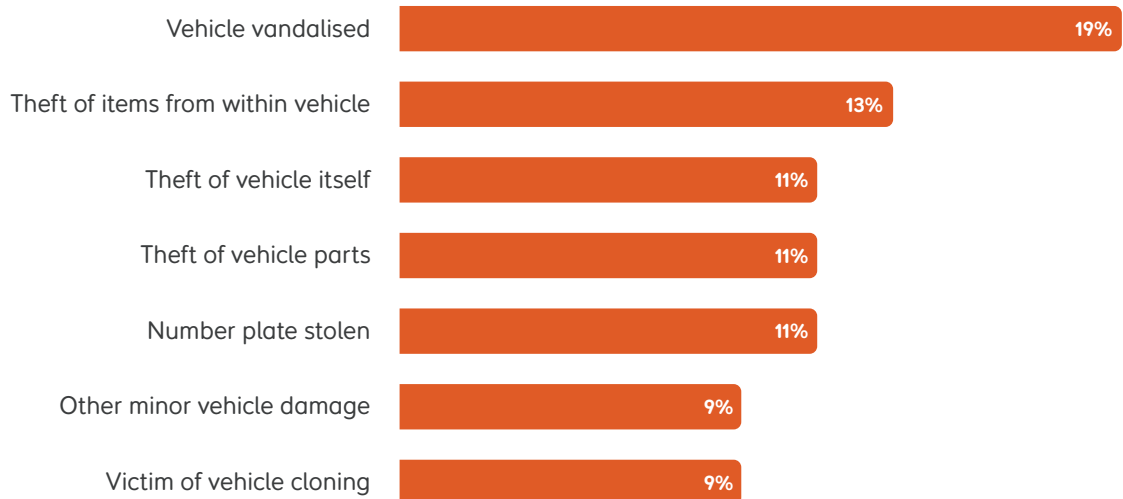


EXPERT VIEW

Jonathan Hewett, chief executive, Thatcham Research

"Vehicle theft is no longer just opportunistic – it's increasingly driven by organised criminal gangs using sophisticated methods. Tackling the threat means not only making cars harder to steal, but also disrupting the networks behind high-volume, tech-enabled theft."

Top vehicle crimes experienced by urban drivers



EXPERT VIEW

Claire Evans, consumer editor at What Car?

"One vehicle is stolen every five minutes in England and Wales, so it's no wonder vehicle crime is a big concern for motorists. Investing in simple deterrents, such as a Faraday pouch for keys, or a steering wheel lock, are affordable ways to counter theft."



38%

of drivers in rural areas say they are concerned about their car being stolen, the same figure as urban drivers



A close-up photograph of a car engine. A white oil can with a black handle is positioned on the left, with a blue cloth draped over it. The engine components are visible in the background, including a yellow dipstick and various metal parts.

3

The cost of driving

Rising car maintenance and repair costs are placing a significant burden on UK motorists – a worrying percentage of drivers are taking drastic and potentially dangerous steps to save money, including postponing vital repairs and neglecting to have their vehicles serviced. Insurance premiums and fuel prices continue to impact drivers, but the cost of both has eased over the last 12 months. Electric vehicle drivers, however, have faced a rise in public charging costs.

Although the rate of inflation in the UK has fallen back from the highs recorded in 2022 and 2023, households in Britain remain under considerable financial pressure. The 2025 RAC Report on Motoring makes it clear that drivers continue to struggle to meet the expenses associated with owning and running a vehicle.

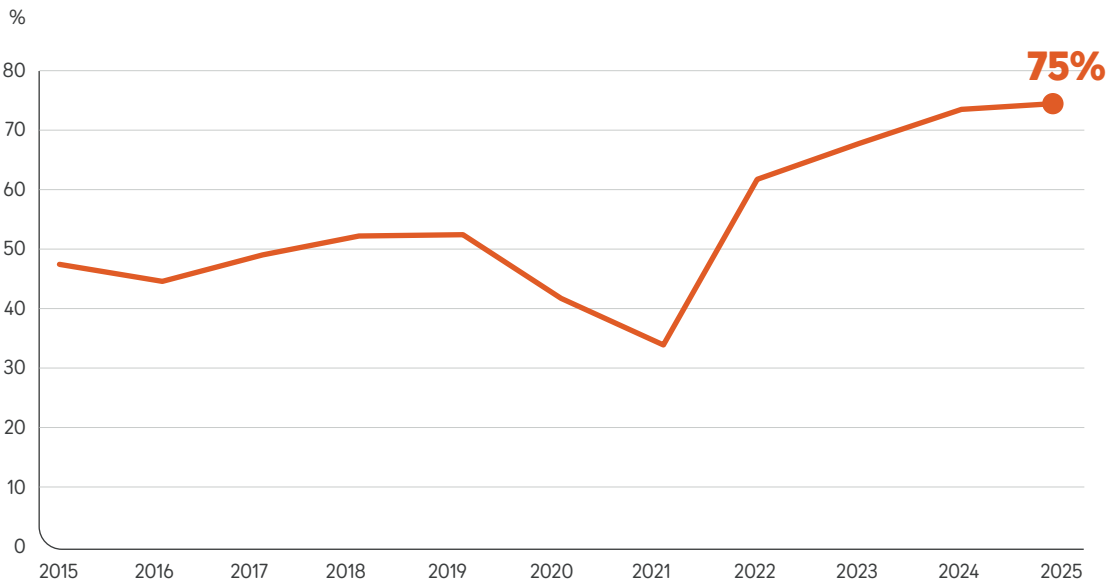
However, while fuel prices and insurance premiums have in the past represented the main monetary burdens for motorists, our research has found that the cost of simply keeping their vehicle on the road is now the most significant financial challenge for UK drivers. In 2025, 25% of drivers say the cost of servicing, maintenance and repairs – including replacing tyres – is their biggest concern related to running a vehicle. This is ahead of the price of motor insurance (24%) and the cost of fuelling or charging a car (23%).

25%

of drivers in 2025 say the cost of servicing, maintenance and repairs – including replacing tyres – is their biggest concern related to running a vehicle

The rising prices of recent years have sent the cost of replacement car parts and mechanics' labour soaring. Figures published earlier this year by the Motor Ombudsman¹ show that the average cost of repairing the most popular used cars in Britain had risen by 20% in 12 months. Worryingly, a separate survey of vehicle repair companies² from the organisation suggests that these price rises are set to continue over the months ahead.

Proportion of UK drivers who report the cost of maintaining and repairing their vehicle has increased over 12 months





EXPERT VIEW

Jonathan Hewett, chief executive, Thatcham Research

"Repair is now the biggest factor in insurance premium cost. As vehicles become more complex, improving repairability is essential – not just to control costs, but to get drivers back on the road quickly and safely. Smarter vehicle design and better access to repair data can ease the burden on motorists and support a more efficient repair network."

"Unexpected repair bills are a growing, yet often avoidable, frustration. As cars become more advanced, we must prioritise repair-friendly design. Making components like lights, sensors and body panels easier to repair can reduce downtime, lower costs, and support a more sustainable repair ecosystem."

The 2025 report indicates that three-quarters of drivers (75%) say their maintenance and repair costs have increased over the past year. This figure has increased consistently since 2021 – when only 35% of drivers reported a rise in maintenance and repair costs – and remains considerably higher than the pre-Covid-19 pandemic trend. Only 2% say maintenance and repair costs have fallen since 2024.

Meanwhile, 72% say their insurance premiums have increased this year, although this is down

substantially from 87% in 2024, and one-in-10 drivers (10%) report a fall in premiums. Just over two-thirds of drivers (69%) say their fuel expenditure has risen: this is down from 73% in 2024 and well below the 93% figure recorded in 2022 when pump prices reached record highs. A further 55% report higher electric vehicle charging costs, compared to 51% a year ago. Among other vehicle-related expenses, 78% say general parking charges have risen (76% in 2024) and 58% say the cost of residents' parking permits is up (64% in 2024).

1. thisismoney.co.uk/money/cars/article-14621257/Repair-costs-popular-cars-Britain-increased.html

2. thisismoney.co.uk/money/cars/article-14267809/car-repair-costs-set-soar-HIGHER-2025-motoring-experts-warn.html

3.1 Soaring maintenance and repair costs: how drivers are coping

The impact of higher maintenance and repair expenses has been felt widely: over the past 12 months, two-thirds of drivers (65%) say they have had to pay for unexpected repair costs for the vehicle they use most. Among this group, almost four-in-10 (39%) say they have struggled to meet these costs, up from 37% in 2024.

Replacing or repairing tyres is the most common source of unexpected costs (54%), followed by brake repair or replacement (26%), suspension repairs (18%), issues with 12-volt batteries (17%) and exterior light problems (16%). Drivers with older vehicles are more likely to face unexpected repair bills: the rate among those with cars more than 10 years old is 74% compared to 65% overall. Suspension problems are considerably more common among older vehicles, relating to 24% of unexpected repairs. This is likely to be the result of the ongoing wear and tear experienced by older cars as they navigate the UK's pothole-ridden roads.

2025

the average bill was £650, up by 5% from 2024's £617

54%
of drivers

faced with unexpected costs had to get one or more tyres repaired or replaced

Have drivers had to pay out for unexpected repair costs in the last 12 months?

- Yes, and I've been fine covering the costs
- Yes, but meeting the costs has been difficult
- No
- I'm not responsible for the costs



Vehicles off the road due to breakdowns and/or repairs

● Up to 1 day
 ● 2 days
 ● 3 days
 ● 4 to 7 days
 ● 1 week or more
 ● Not been off the road



Interestingly, however, relatively new vehicles are far from immune from mechanical issues: 68% of cars between one and two years old have unexpectedly required some form of maintenance or repair work in the past year. Tyres have been the main source of problems (45%), followed by brakes (31%), exterior lights (21%) and heating/cooling systems (17%).

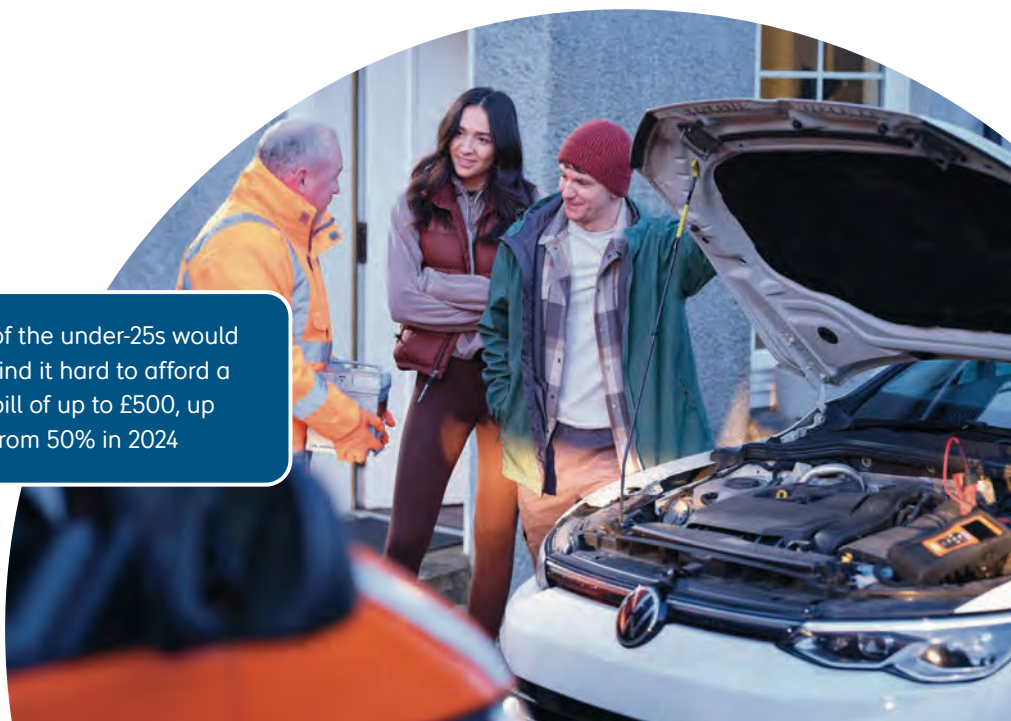
The cost of unexpected repair bills can put drivers' finances under considerable strain. In 2025, the average bill was £650, up by more than 5% from 2024's £617. Meanwhile, three-quarters of drivers (76%) say they would struggle to meet an unexpected car repair bill – although this represents a slight fall on 79% in 2024. Four-in-10 drivers (39%) say they would find it difficult to meet a repair bill of £500 or less compared to 35% in 2024. More than half (54%) would struggle to pay a surprise bill of up to £1,000, the same percentage as last year.

The challenge of meeting unexpected repair bills is greatest among young drivers: 57% of the under-25s would find it hard to afford a bill of up to £500, up from 50% in 2024. But a rising percentage of older drivers say they would also struggle to pay for unexpected repairs costing £500 or less: this applies to 40% of those aged between 45 and 64 (up from 35% in 2024) and 30% of those aged 65 or over (25% in 2024).

A significant minority of drivers (39%) say their main vehicle has been off the road at some point in the last 12 months due to it needing repairs. A quarter of all drivers (26%) say they have had to go without their vehicle for two days or more as a result. This has the potential to create considerable problems for drivers: 86% say having their car off the road for any amount of time was inconvenient, with 45% describing this as very inconvenient.

57%

of the under-25s would find it hard to afford a bill of up to £500, up from 50% in 2024



Having to temporarily go without their main vehicle was more of an issue for drivers between the ages of 25 and 44: half (50%) said this was very inconvenient compared to 37% of those aged 65 or older. Among drivers based in rural areas, 51% say their main car being unavailable due to repair work was very inconvenient compared to 39% of those who live in the suburbs or on the edges of towns. Separate RAC research³ has found that drivers are increasingly frustrated by the time they are required to spend getting to and from garages, while other bugbears include not knowing how long repairs will take, and having to wait days or even weeks for garage slots to become available.

Faced with rising repair costs and worried about unexpectedly high maintenance bills, a minority of drivers admit to taking drastic measures that, while intended to save money, could put themselves, their vehicles, and other road users at serious risk. For example, 12% say they are having their car serviced less frequently than in the past while 5% say they have given up on services altogether, relying solely on the annual MOT to identify problems.

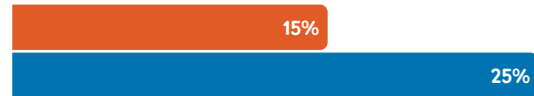
15%

of drivers say they are both avoiding repairs and neglecting to replace worn tyres, a figure that rises to 25% among the under-25s

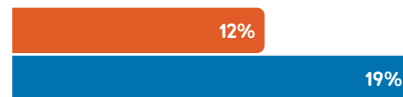
What have drivers done to save money in last 12 months?

● All drivers ● Drivers aged 17-24

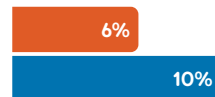
Put off repairs and/or replacing tyres



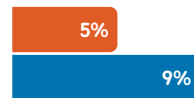
Servicing vehicle less frequently than in the past



Ignored MOT advisory notices



Stopped vehicle servicing and just MOT it



Avoided having MOT done when it was due



Meanwhile, 11% admit to having put off making necessary repairs on the grounds of cost. More worryingly, 8% say they have delayed replacing their tyres in order to save cash. In aggregate, 15% of drivers say they are both avoiding repairs and neglecting to replace worn tyres, a figure that rises to a shocking 25% among the under-25s. Finally, 6% of all drivers – and 10% of the under-25s – say they have ignored advisory notices on their most recent MOT certificate. While doing so is not illegal, failure to rectify such issues in a timely manner can lead to much more serious – and expensive – problems further down the line. Indeed, recent RAC findings⁴ indicate that 17% of drivers who ignored MOT advisory notices in the previous 12 months went on to experience a breakdown or were involved in a collision as a result.



EXPERT VIEW

Claire Evans, consumer editor at What Car?

"Drivers who are concerned about the cost of maintaining their car may find it beneficial to shop around for MOT and servicing deals, and to look at ways of minimising one-off costs by taking out a monthly payable servicing plan.

"It's also worth bearing in mind that rectifying a fault while it remains a minor niggle is likely to cost far less than it might if it's ignored until it gets worse.

"Certain brands will provide a year's warranty cover for free if a car up to a certain age is serviced by them, and that could mean subsequent faults are fixed for free, potentially saving car owners from big bills."

3. <https://media.rac.co.uk/maddened-by-maintenance-quarter-of-drivers-see-car-servicing-and-repairs-as-a-hassle>
4. <https://media.rac.co.uk/one-in-six-drivers-who-ignore-mot-advisories-suffer-a-breakdown-or-worse>





Mobile Mechanics

Car maintenance made easy

Time spent getting to and from the garage can be a frustrating experience for drivers.

The RAC's network of mobile mechanics can service and repair vehicles at a driver's home or workplace car park. That means drivers can get on with their day without having to take time away from work to get to a garage.

For full and interim services, diagnostic checks, and repairs like springs, brake pad and disc replacements, RAC Mobile Mechanics come to you.

Find out more at:

rac.co.uk/mobile



3.2 Insurance prices ease

The decline in average motor insurance premiums over the past year has been reflected in a fall in concern about the cost of cover in the 2025 report. Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI)⁵ show that the cost of the average annual car insurance policy fell 7% between the first three months of 2024 and the same period this year, to £535. While 29% of drivers currently say insurance prices are a top concern, this is substantially down on 2024's 35% figure.

However, the ABI has warned that insurers' costs in settling claims have risen to the highest level since records began in 2013 – a consequence of the increasing price of replacement parts and garage labour. This has the potential to feed through into further rises in premiums in the months ahead.

24%

of drivers have switched insurance providers to save money in 2025, up from 19% in 2023 and 22% in 2024

There has been a rise in the proportion of drivers who have switched insurance providers to save money, from 19% in 2023 and 22% in 2024 to 24% this year. One-in-10 drivers (10%) say they have amended their policy to make it cheaper, for example by reducing the extent of cover.

5. www.abi.org.uk/news/news-articles/2025/5/quarterly-motor-claims-hit-record-high/



EXPERT VIEW

Jonathan Hewett, chief executive, Thatcham Research

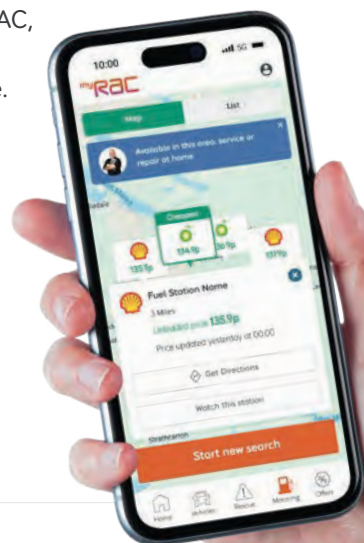
"Insurance costs remain a key concern for many drivers, especially younger motorists. As vehicles become more complex, insurers need deeper insight into how design, technology and repairability affect risk. A more transparent understanding of vehicle performance in the real world can help ensure premiums better reflect actual risk – supporting fairer outcomes for drivers and a more resilient insurance market."



3.3 Refuelling and recharging: a mixed picture

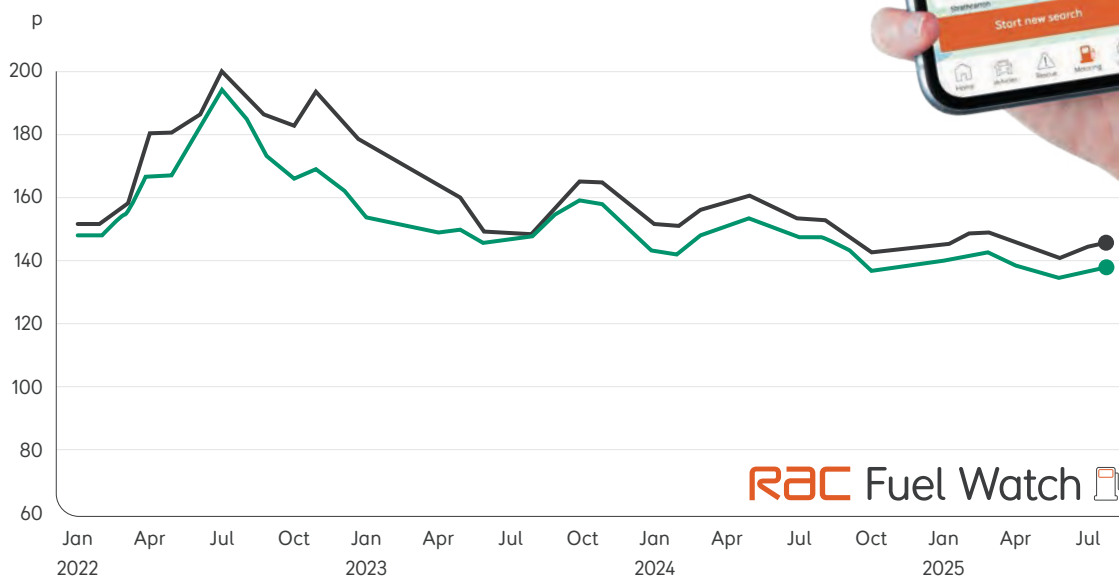
Given the fact that the prices of petrol and diesel were lower in the first half of 2025 than in 2024, it is unsurprising that fewer drivers report an increase in fuel expenditure over the past year. Data from RAC Fuel Watch⁶ showed that, in May 2025, average forecourt prices across the UK had fallen to their lowest levels since 2021, reflecting a sustained downward trend in the price of oil, but within weeks pump prices had once again started ticking upwards. Financial pressures continue to be felt and more than a fifth (22%) of drivers say they have deliberately driven less over the past year in order to save money.

The RAC welcomed the Government's decision in its autumn 2024 Budget to maintain the freeze on fuel duty as well as the current 5p duty cut from spring 2025, while the RAC also supports the introduction of the Fuel Finder scheme by the end of 2025. This will legally require all UK fuel stations to share real-time price information, giving drivers a better chance to get the best deals on petrol and diesel. These can be found through apps such as myRAC, which is free to download and use.



UK pump and wholesale prices since 2022

● Diesel pump (inc VAT) ● Unleaded pump (inc VAT)



RAC Fuel Watch

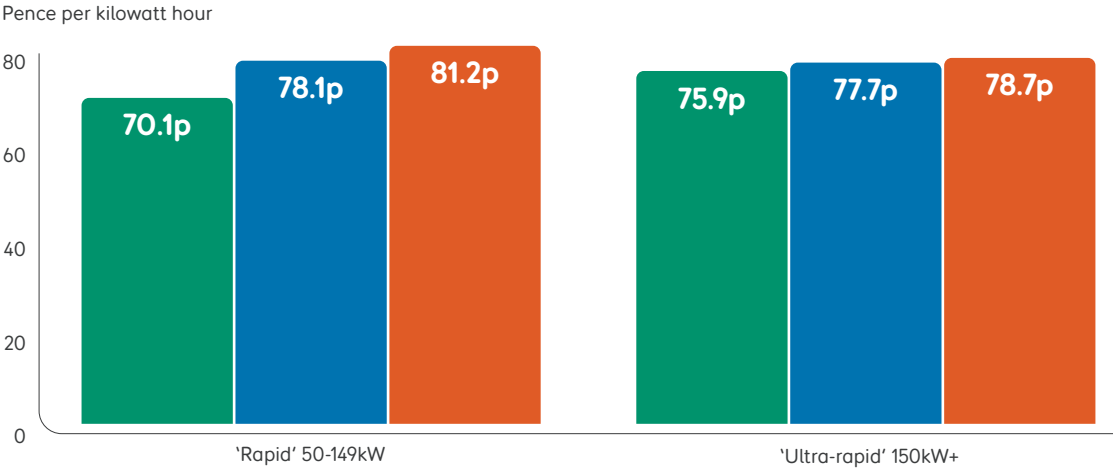
⁶ www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/fuel-watch/

Conversely, the cost of charging an electric vehicle at the fastest public charge points has increased over the last 12 months⁷. Figures from RAC Charge Watch show that the cost of charging via public rapid and ultra-rapid chargers had risen to all-time highs as of May 2025, despite the fact that wholesale electricity prices in the UK have been well below their 2022 peaks. The growing gap between the cost of charging at home and in public is

partly due to the substantial infrastructure investments being made by providers of public charge points. Public charging networks have also seen significant increases in supply costs, while electricity provided through public charge points is not subject to Ofgem’s domestic price cap – nor does it benefit from the lower 5% VAT rate that applies to domestic energy consumption.

Cost to charge an electric car at rapid and ultra-rapid public chargers

● May 2023 ● May 2024 ● May 2025



7. www.rac.co.uk/drive/electric-cars/charging/electric-car-public-charging-costs-rac-charge-watch/





WORKS
ACCESS



The background image shows a multi-lane highway during the day. In the foreground, a series of red and white traffic cones are lined up on the left side of the road, partially blocking a lane. Several cars are visible in the distance, including a blue car and a red car. In the background, a bridge spans the highway, and there are trees and some industrial structures on the horizon. The sky is clear and blue.

4

The state of our roads

The state of local roads remains drivers' top individual concern in 2025 – although there are indications that conditions may not be deteriorating as rapidly as in recent years.

A significant percentage of drivers report vehicle damage caused by poor road surfaces, and many say they have had to swerve to avoid potholes. However, news of increased government funding to support councils' road maintenance programmes is encouraging.

Meanwhile, there are signs that the rate of decline in the condition of motorways and high-speed roads is slowing, while drivers say that congestion levels are on the rise.

While the past 12 months have seen an increase in satisfaction about the state of the UK's local roads, this issue remains by some distance the most pressing singular concern among drivers for the third consecutive year. Once again, this reflects the chronic, long-term lack of adequate investment in road maintenance and repair by successive governments. The 2025 RAC Report on Motoring shows that the conditions of local roads – those that councils are responsible for – is a top motoring-related worry for 47% of drivers. However, this is down substantially on the record level of 56% in 2024.

With regard to the state of Britain's motorways and high-speed dual carriageways, there has been no change in overall concern this year in comparison with 2024. However, at 16%, the percentage is currently considerably higher than the average between 2016 and 2023 (11%).



4.1 Local roads: disrepair and danger

After five consecutive annual increases, there has been a fall in the proportion of drivers who say the state of the local roads they regularly use has deteriorated. In 2025, 59% say local road conditions have worsened compared to 73% in 2024. Meanwhile, 12% of drivers report an improvement in local roads, twice as many as in 2024 (6%) and the highest rate in eight years.

Behind these figures, however, are considerable geographical variations. Among drivers who live in UK cities and town centres, 29% report an improvement in local road conditions in the past 12 months – by some distance the highest figure in the past eight years – while 37% say conditions have worsened. Among drivers based in villages and rural areas, only 3% say the state of local roads has improved while 71% say they

3%

of drivers in rural areas say the state of local roads has improved over a 12-month period

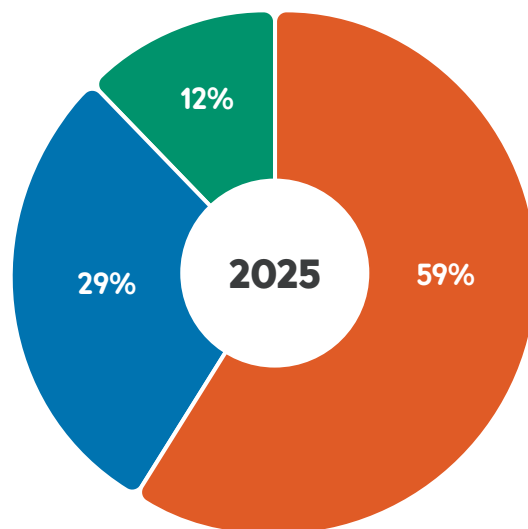
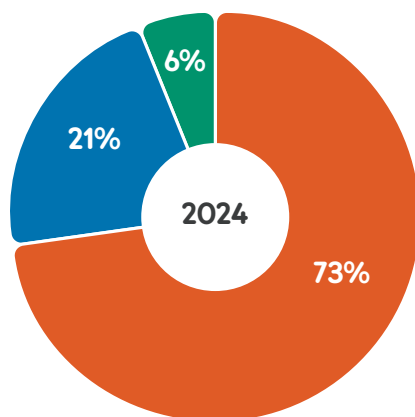
have got worse – although this figure was 81% in 2024. For drivers in suburban areas or the edges of towns, 5% report an improvement and 67% a deterioration (78% in 2024).

Problems with road surfaces are the most common cause for complaint: 95% of drivers who said local conditions had deteriorated cited this factor (down from 98% in 2024).

Condition of local roads – the start of an improvement?

A larger proportion of drivers this year said local roads they regularly drive on are in a better condition than a year ago.

- Worse than a year ago
- The same as a year ago
- Better than a year ago



However, the likes of potholes and crumbling asphalt are not the only issues. Six-in-10 drivers (60%) complain of faded road markings and 48% of poor drainage, compared to 58% and 61% respectively in 2024.

Meanwhile, there has been a rise in the percentage of drivers who have noted a lack of signage visibility (40% in 2025 compared to 34% last year), greater quantities of litter (35% versus 31%), a lack of foliage or grass maintenance (28% versus 22%) and missing cats' eyes (18% versus 14%). Additional issues include a lack of street lighting (17%), a lack of or inaccurate signage (14%) and damaged or dilapidated safety barriers (9%).

Driving on substandard roads presents a significant challenge to motorists and road safety: 73% of drivers say they need to concentrate more to avoid hitting potholes. Meanwhile, 68% say driving on potholed roads is dangerous and 61% find doing so uncomfortable.

Almost three-quarters of drivers (72%) say they have had to steer carefully into another lane or onto the other side of the road to avoid a pothole, while the same percentage have slowed appreciably to drive over a pothole.

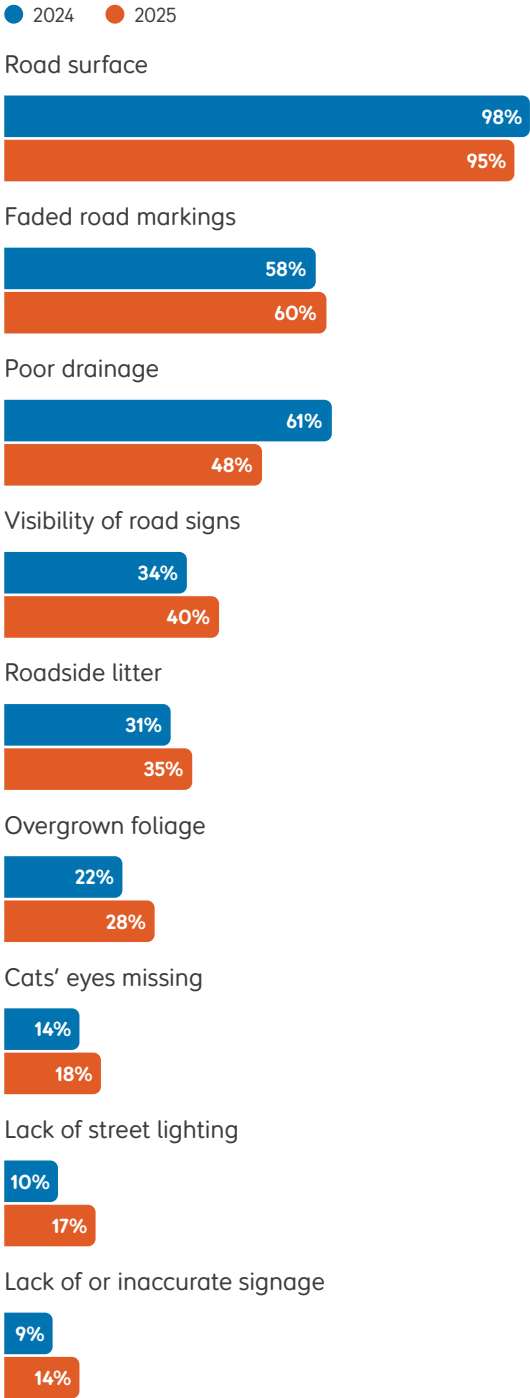
Just under half (44%) have maintained a greater distance from the vehicle ahead to give themselves more time to react to potholes, and 35% say they have swerved quickly to avoid a pothole, ending up at least partly in another lane or on the other side of the road as a result.

29%

of drivers say their vehicle has been damaged by a pothole or poor road surface in the past 12 months, up from 27% in 2024

Local roads – problems beyond potholes

In 2025, a higher proportion of drivers report a plethora of different problems with local roads.



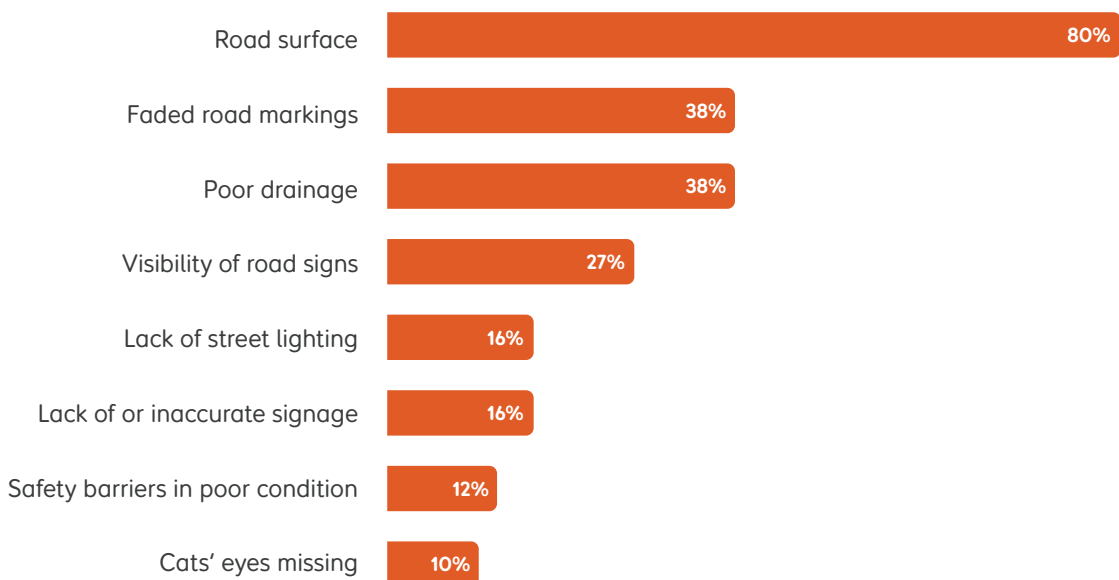
Almost three-in-10 drivers (29%) say their vehicle has been damaged by a pothole or poor road surface in the past 12 months, up from 27% in 2024. The most common type of damage is a punctured tyre (47%), followed by a damaged wheel (34%), broken suspension spring (24%) and broken shock absorber (21%).

In terms of the biggest threats to safety from the roads, 80% of drivers highlight poor road surfaces (86% in 2024) followed by faded road markings (38% – no change on 2024) and poor drainage (38% compared to 50% in 2024).

There has been a rise in the proportion of drivers who say a lack of signage visibility is a hazard, from 22% last year to 27%. Problems with road surfaces are seen as a bigger danger by rural drivers (90% compared to 64% among urban drivers), while drivers in cities and town centres are more likely than others to cite a lack of or inaccurate signage (24% versus 16% overall and just 8% of rural drivers).



What problems with the roads represent the biggest road safety hazards for drivers?



4.2 Seeking a better approach to local road maintenance

While the findings related to local roads in this year's report make slightly less gloomy reading than in 2023 and 2024, they can hardly be described as encouraging; Britain's local roads remain in a shocking state of repair. Figures published by the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) in early 2025¹ show that the amount of investment required to clear the backlog of road repair and maintenance work in England and Wales has risen to £17bn, the highest figure recorded in the 30 years the AIA has been publishing its Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) report.

Meanwhile, the latest data from the RAC's Pothole Index² shows that the number of pothole-related breakdowns attended by RAC patrols in the second quarter of 2025 was 9% higher than in the same period in 2024. Between April and June 2025, 1.2% of all breakdowns were linked to pothole damage, up from 1.0% a year earlier. In addition, RAC analysis of government data found that, in one-in-five (19%) council areas, 10% of roads are in a 'red' or 'poor' condition – requiring further investigation to ascertain whether immediate work is needed³.

'The RAC has long held the view that the **collective failure** to invest in UK roads is a false economy'

The RAC has long held the view that the collective failure to invest in UK roads is a false economy, given that a lack of effective road maintenance ultimately leads to higher repair costs for local authorities, as well as damage to vehicles and a greater risk to road safety. The RAC believes councils need to take a more proactive approach to road repairs, carrying out the right type of maintenance at the right time and not just filling potholes as they appear. For example, councils should use techniques such as surface dressing to preserve roads that are in a reasonable condition and resurface those that are beyond repair.

In this regard, there are some reasons for optimism. In December 2024, the Government announced⁴ a record £1.6bn local roads package. Importantly, the funding came with the requirement that councils use the money to carry out preventative maintenance and to demonstrate how effectively they were using the money. In addition, local authorities are also being required to improve their data collection and reporting relating to road conditions⁵.



The RAC in Parliament



This year, the RAC joined forces with the UK's leading road maintenance trade bodies to take the message of how best to improve the long-term quality of our local roads to Parliament.

In April 2025, around 80 MPs and peers attended an RAC-hosted event at Westminster, along with the roads minister. There, they gained insights from industry experts to inform conversations with local authorities about increasing the effectiveness of their maintenance work. Senior representatives came from the Road Surface Treatments Association, the Institute of Highway Engineers, the Asphalt Industry Alliance and the Road Emulsion Association.

76%

of drivers do not think the motoring taxes they pay are sufficiently reinvested into local roads

Finally, the 2025 report shows continued support for a greater proportion of revenues from motoring taxation being diverted to fund the maintenance of local roads: 85% of drivers favour such a move (86% in 2024). Three-quarters of drivers (76%) do not think the motoring taxes they pay are sufficiently reinvested into local roads (77% in 2024), and 89% believe the standard of roads should be better given the amount of taxes they pay (88% in 2024).



EXPERT VIEW

Antony Kildare, chief executive, IAM RoadSmart

"Poorly maintained roads are not only a financial risk, they are also a real hazard particularly for those on pedal bikes and motorcyclists. Investing in high quality infrastructure will not only improve journey reliability and reduce costs, but it will also save lives."

1. www.asphaltuk.org/alarm-survey-page/

2. www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/driving-advice/rac-pothole-index-statistics-data-and-projections/

3. www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/road-condition-statistics-data-tables-rdc

4. www.gov.uk/government/news/seven-million-more-potholes-to-be-filled-next-year-as-public-urged-to-report-roads-in-need-of-repair

5. www.gov.uk/government/publications/highway-maintenance-funding-guidance-for-local-authorities/letter-to-local-authorities-about-local-highway-maintenance-funding-in-2025-to-2026

4.3 The state of motorways and major A-roads

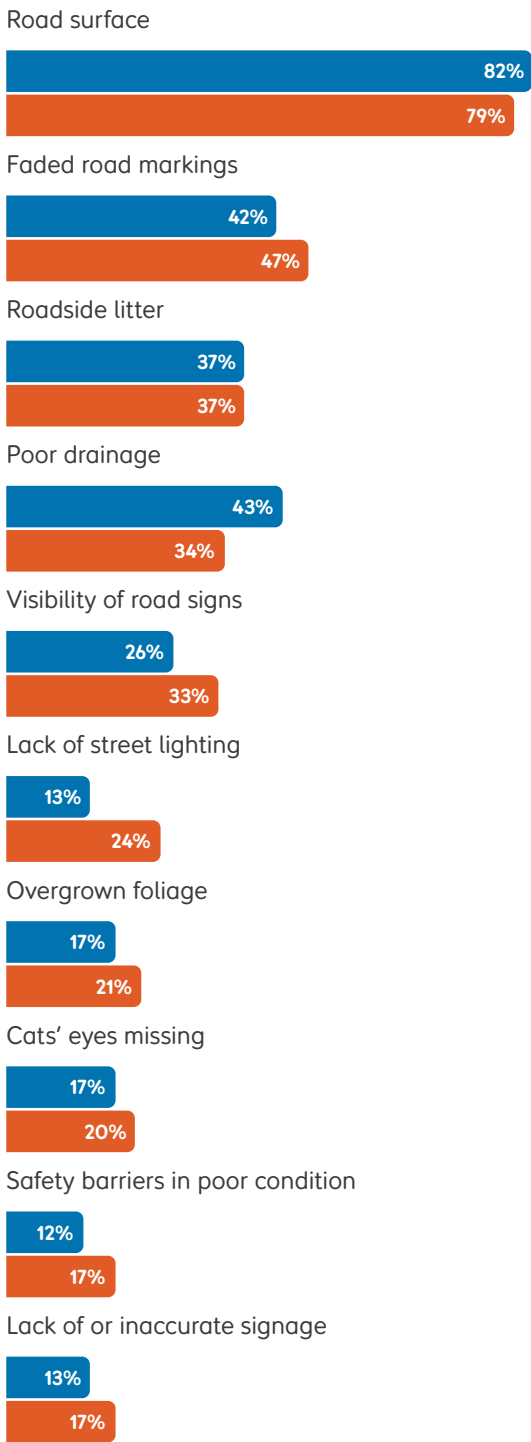
There has been a fall in the percentage of drivers who say the state of motorways and high-speed dual carriageways has deteriorated in the past 12 months, from 50% in 2024 to 42% this year. The percentage of drivers that say conditions have improved has doubled from 6% to 12%. Drivers based in UK towns and cities are more likely to report an improvement (30% compared with just 3% in rural areas), and much less likely to report a deterioration of conditions (26% versus 54% in rural areas).

While problems with road surfaces are the main reason for saying conditions have worsened (79%; 82% in 2024), there has been a rise in complaints about faded lane markings (from 42% last year to 47%). Litter is an issue for 37% of drivers (no change), while poor drainage on motorways and dual carriageways is a problem for 34% – down sharply from 43% in 2024. Meanwhile, there has been a rise in concern about signage visibility (from 26% to 33%), lack of lighting (from 13% to 24%) and lack of grass or foliage maintenance (from 17% to 21%).



Problems with motorways and major A-roads

● 2024 ● 2025



4.4 Traffic congestion

The 2025 report also sought drivers' views on congestion. A majority of drivers (55%) feel that rush-hour congestion has worsened in the past year, up from 48% in 2024, while half (50%) think urban traffic has worsened in the last 12 months (51% in 2024). Slightly more drivers (47%) think roads have got busier at the weekend (42% in 2024), while 36% say weekday congestion outside of peak hours has got worse (34% in 2024).

The main reasons given for the rise in congestion are a rise in vehicle numbers (77% versus 75% in 2024) and an increase in roadworks (69% from 60% in 2024). Drivers also cite poor parking (46%), blockages caused by delivery drivers (40%) and increasing numbers of cycle lanes (39%).

55%

of drivers feel that
rush-hour congestion
has worsened in the
past year







5

The dangers on our roads

Of all the possible dangers encountered behind the wheel, potholes and other issues with road surfaces have been identified by drivers as the biggest threat to safety. There is also widespread concern about the poor standard of other motorists' driving, excessively bright headlights and aggressive behaviour such as tailgating or road rage.

Fewer drivers admit to speeding in 2025 – although there are signs of a rise in drink-driving. Drivers generally support tougher measures to tackle the latter, however. Meanwhile, the proportion of drivers who admit to using a handheld phone while driving – for example, to make calls, send or receive messages or even take photos – has risen to its highest level since the pandemic.

The risks to road safety posed by other motorists remain a significant concern for Britain's drivers. The 2025 RAC Report on Motoring has found that issues relating to the reckless or dangerous behaviour of other motorists is the top concern for 27% of drivers – behind only the cost of motoring (30%) and equal to the poor condition and maintenance of roads.

5.1 Safety concerns around drivers, roads and vehicles

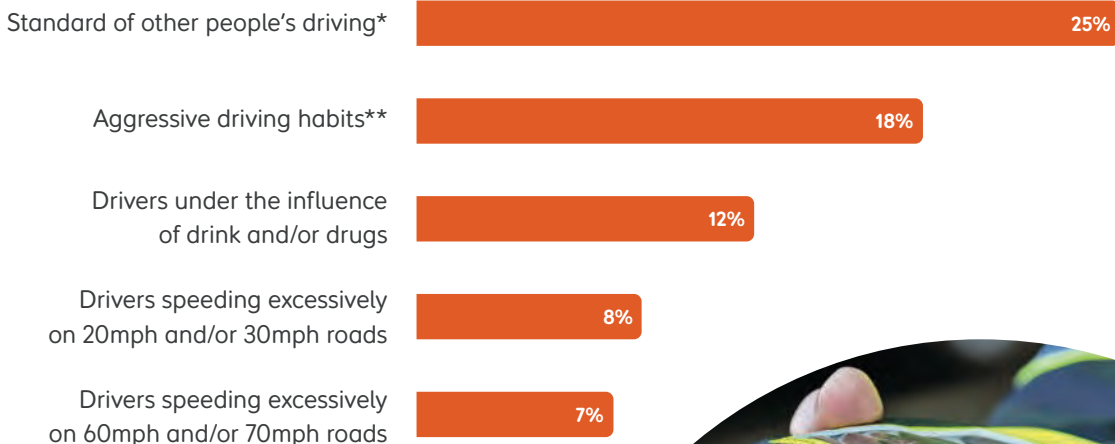
This year's report asked drivers to identify their biggest road safety worry in terms of the **behaviour of other road users**. The most widespread issue, cited by 25%, is the general standard of driving: this includes failure to indicate correctly, poor lane discipline and appearing distracted while at the wheel. Aggressive behaviour such as tailgating, overtaking dangerously and road rage is the top concern for just under a fifth of drivers (18%).

Other major concerns include drivers under the influence of drink and/or drugs (12%), excessive speeding on 20mph or 30mph roads (8%), motorists using handheld mobile phones, distracted pedestrians and excessive

speeding on high-speed roads (all 7%). Just 6% of drivers say they are not concerned about the substandard behaviour of other road users.

Drivers were also asked to identify their **main safety concern related to the roads** they most often use. The poor quality of road surfaces was by far the most widespread issue, cited by more than half (52%). One-in-10 drivers (10%) say their top roads worry is their safety driving on smart motorways where the hard shoulder has been converted to a running lane, while both faded road markings and urban speed limits that are deemed too high are the top roads issues for 7%.

Drivers' top safety concerns about other road users



*e.g. failing to indicate, being distracted

**e.g. tailgating, road rage, dangerous overtakes

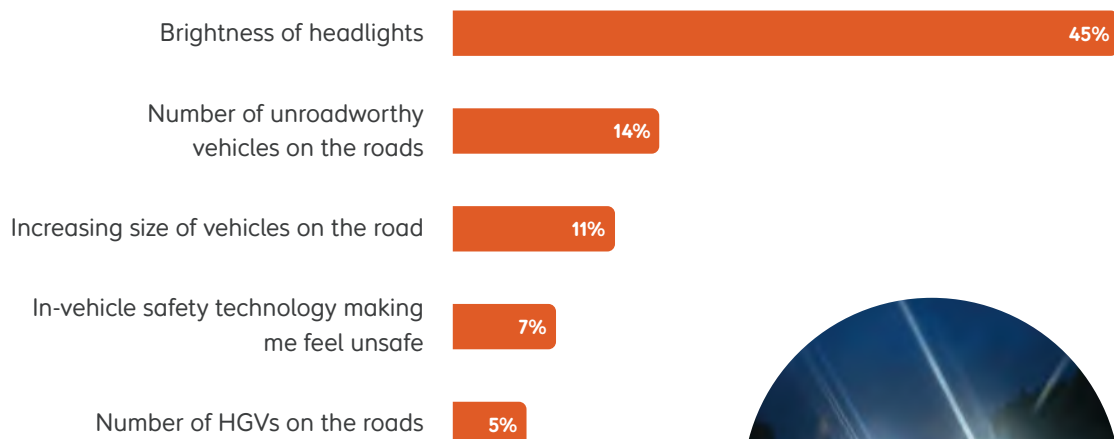


Looking at the **risks posed by other vehicles**, 45% of drivers say the excessive brightness of headlights is their biggest vehicle-related safety concern, followed by the number of unroadworthy vehicles in circulation (14%) and increasing vehicle size, such as larger SUVs (11%). Meanwhile, the danger posed by safety technology, for example phantom braking where a vehicle brakes unexpectedly, is the main vehicle-related safety issue for 7% of drivers.

Considering drivers' views on all the safety risks above, drivers feel the poor quality of road surfaces poses the greatest threat: 26% say this is their major concern overall. We look at this issue in much greater detail in Chapter 4, *The state of our roads*. The standard of other people's driving (11%), the brightness of headlights and aggressive driving habits (both 10%) are also significant issues overall.



Drivers' top safety concerns about vehicles



5.2 Attitudes to speeding

There has been a decline in the percentage of drivers who say they frequently or occasionally exceed the speed limit on all types of roads in 2025. On the UK's motorways, the figure has fallen from 58% in 2024 to 54% – the lowest level recorded in the past 11 years. On 60mph roads, 44% of drivers admit to frequently or occasionally breaking the limit (47% in 2024), while on 30mph roads the figure is 40% (42% last year). On roads with a 20mph limit, admitted speeding stands at 49%. While this is lower than the 50% recorded in 2024, it is above the long-term average recorded since 2015.

Half of drivers (50%) this year believe there is a culture in the UK that says it is acceptable to break the speed limit, although this figure is down slightly on 54% in 2024, while almost three-quarters of drivers (73%) say they try to stick as closely as possible to the speed limit (71% in 2024). Worryingly, driving well above the speed limit appears to be very common: eight-in-10 drivers (79%) say they regularly see people excessively speeding on 20mph and 30mph roads (80% in 2024), while on roads where the limit is 60mph or 70mph, the figure rises to 83% (82% in 2024).

50%

of drivers believe there is a culture of speeding in the UK

Recent RAC research has found that almost half of UK police forces (48%) had caught drivers driving at more than 90mph on 30mph roads between January 2023 and August 2024, while 90% of forces had caught drivers travelling at over 60mph on 30mph roads during the same period!

Meanwhile, more than half of police forces (58%) have recorded drivers travelling in excess of 140mph: Leicestershire police recorded a speed of 167mph on a stretch of the M1, while another motorist was clocked at 161mph on a 50mph stretch of the A303 in Somerset. These shocking findings highlight the incredible dangers posed by a minority of lawbreaking motorists to other drivers – especially on urban 30mph roads, where there are more likely to be high numbers of pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

1. <https://media.rac.co.uk/nearly-half-of-police-forces-record-speeds-of-over-90mph-on-30mph-roads-3369306>



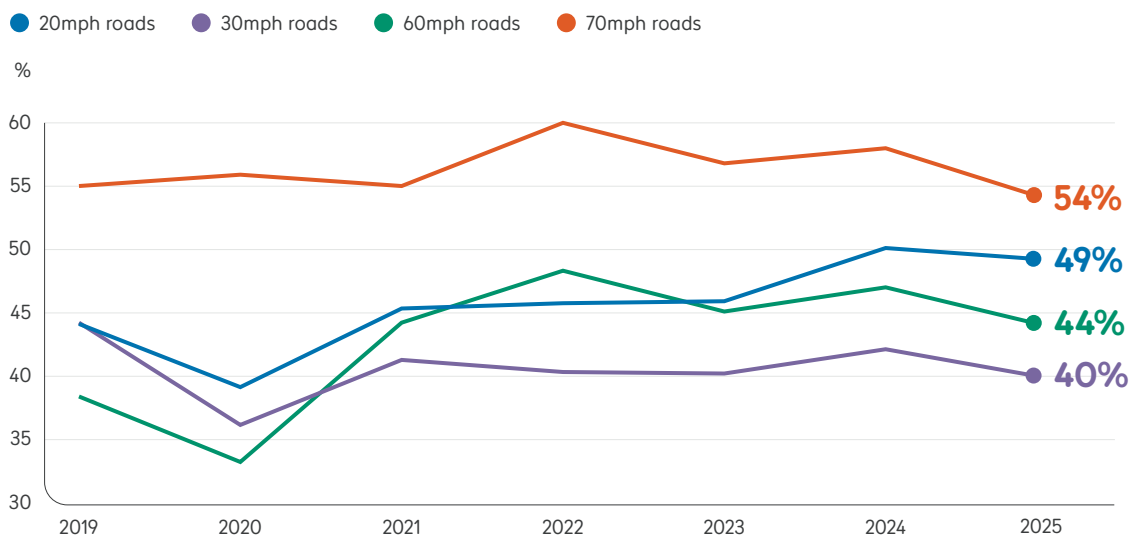


EXPERT VIEW

Jo Shiner, chief constable, Sussex Police, and Roads Policing Portfolio lead, National Police Chiefs' Council

"It's encouraging to see fewer drivers admitting to speeding, but the reality is that far too many still treat speed limits as flexible – especially in 20mph and 30mph zones where lives are most at risk. Nearly half of drivers say they regularly see others speeding in these areas. That needs to change. We must challenge the mindset that speeding is socially acceptable and reinforce that limits are there to protect us all. Speed kills – it is that stark."

Proportion of drivers who admit to frequently or occasionally speeding



5.3 Hope of progress on road safety

The road safety concerns and attitudes to speeding described above are particularly pertinent in the light of recent official data that shows a disturbing increase in the number of road fatalities in 2024². Government figures indicate that, while overall road casualty numbers may have declined slightly in comparison with 2023, deaths have risen, partly as a result of a higher level of fatal collisions involving motorcycles. Meanwhile, pedestrian fatalities appear to have risen to their highest level since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is welcome, therefore, that the current government has committed to publishing a national road safety strategy in 2025³ – the first in more than 10 years. The RAC has long called for the reintroduction of casualty reduction targets as far too many lives are still being lost on the UK's roads every year.

Spotlight on glare

Having campaigned for several years about the glare caused by the brightness of modern headlights, the RAC is pleased that the UK Government have commissioned a study into the problem, with results due this year⁴. RAC research found that a quarter of drivers (25%) who find vehicle headlights too bright are driving less at night as a result⁵, while 95% of all drivers think that vehicle headlights can be too bright at times. Most drivers who are affected by headlight glare (61%) believe the problem has got worse over the past 12 months⁶.

The RAC is working collaboratively with Baroness Hayter, the College of Optometrists, IAM RoadSmart and others on this initiative.

2. <https://media.rac.co.uk/latest-provisional-data-shows-road-fatalities-rose-in-2024>

3. <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-02-13/debates/72EFD423-9792-4E41-8374-3AAF2CE453A3/details>

4. <https://media.rac.co.uk/headlight-glare-new-government-confirms-it-will-go-ahead-with-research-487750>

5. <https://media.rac.co.uk/quarter-of-drivers-affected-by-bright-headlights-drive-less-at-night-as-a-result-3370051>

6. www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/road-safety/headlight-glare/



5.4 Drink-driving

The proportion of drivers who admit to having driven a car while over the drink-drive limit in the past 12 months shows signs of returning to pre-pandemic levels, according to the 2025 report. This year, 7% of drivers think they have driven while over the limit on the same night as they consumed alcohol, while 5% believe they have done so the morning after. Both figures are the highest since 2019. In 2025, 89% of drivers say they do not believe they have driven while over the limit – this is the lowest level since 2019.

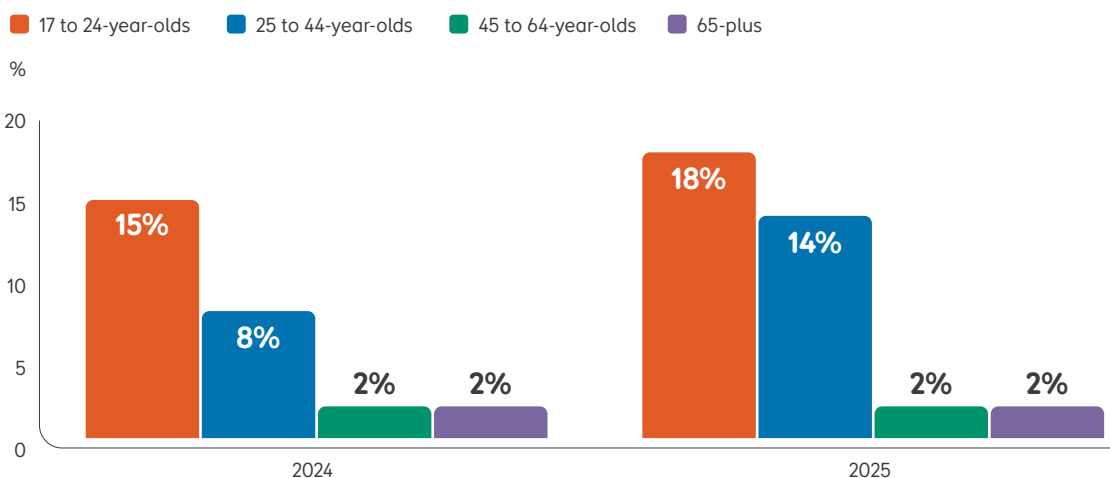
The rate of self-confessed drink-driving is highest among the under-25s: in this age group, 30% say they have driven while over the limit compared to 19% of drivers aged 25 to 44, 5% of those aged 45 to 64 and just 2% of those aged 65 or older. Worryingly, drink-driving among the under-45s appears to be rising sharply. This year, almost a fifth of under 25s (18%) say they have driven over-the-limit shortly after consuming alcohol, up from 15% in 2024, while the rate in those aged 25 to 44 has increased from 8% to 14%.

40%

of drivers under 25 say they've been a passenger in a car they've suspected is driven by someone over the limit

Data from vehicle passengers confirms this trend. In 2025, 16% say they have been in a car where they suspect the driver was over the limit, double the 8% recorded last year. Among the under-25s, the rate has risen from 28% to 40%; and in the 25-to-44 age group the percentage is 31% compared to just 14% in 2024.

Drivers who know or think they've driven while over the drink-drive limit – on the night





EXPERT VIEW

Antony Kildare, chief executive, IAM RoadSmart

"The findings show a worrying trend of passengers, particularly younger passengers, getting into vehicles with drivers they suspect are under the influence. The power of peer pressure in these situations cannot be underestimated in achieving cultural change against drink and drug-driving."

There is widespread support for the introduction of tougher measures to tackle drink-driving. More than two-thirds (68%) of drivers think more should be done to address the problem, rising to 77% among the under-25s and 75% among those aged 25 to 44 – interestingly, the two age groups with the greatest propensity to break drink-driving laws, according to the RAC's figures.

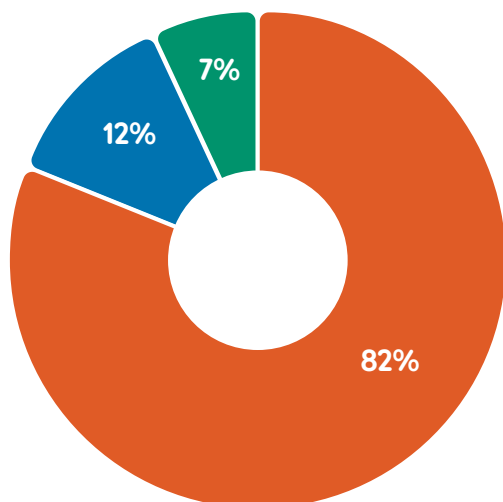
As part of the 2025 report, the RAC asked the 32% of drivers who do not support additional action to tackle drink-driving to reassess their views in light of the latest figures that

show the number of fatalities related to drink-driving had risen to its highest level since 2009, accounting for around a fifth of all road deaths⁷. This evidence persuaded just under half of drivers (43%) to change their minds and express support for extra enforcement and/or stricter legislation.

Drivers' views were sought on one potential intervention that could reduce instances of drink-driving – alcohol interlocks, which are devices used in a number of other countries that only allow vehicles to be driven after the driver provides a negative alcohol breath test.

Do drivers support the use of alcohol interlocks to reduce drink-driving?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



*Of those drivers that support the use of alcohol interlocks.

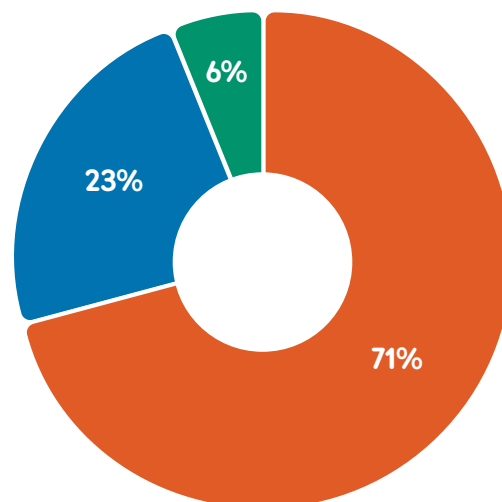
More than eight-in-10 drivers (82%) support the introduction of alcohol interlocks in the UK. Of this group, the majority (71%) believe that every driver caught over the legal drink-drive limit should be forced to have an interlock fitted, while 23% believe the policy should only target repeat offenders.

Support for interlocks is highest among younger drivers, rising to 87% of the under-25s and 86% of those aged 25 to 44, while it is 73% among those aged 65 and older.

'In 2023, there were
an estimated **260**
drink-driving **fatalities**'

Which drivers caught should have an alcohol interlock fitted?*

- Every driver caught over the legal limit
- Only drivers who have been caught on at least one occasion previously
- Don't know



68%

of drivers think more should be done to address the drink-driving problem, rising to 77% among the under-25s

Government data released in July confirmed that an estimated 260 people lose their lives on the UK's roads each year as a result of drink-drivers, while the proportion of deaths where alcohol was a cause is at a similar level now to the late 1980s.⁸

7. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-involving-illegal-alcohol-levels-2022/reported-road-casualties-in-great-britain-involving-illegal-alcohol-levels-2022

8. <https://media.rac.co.uk/drink-drive-deaths-up-7-in-a-decade-rac-comment>

5.5 Drug-driving

The percentage of the under-25s who admit to driving after taking illegal drugs, while small, has risen from 2% in 2024 to 6% this year, while the proportion who have driven under the influence of prescribed medication that impairs driving is up from 6% to 10%. Among those aged 25 to 44, admitted drug-driving after consuming illegal substances has risen very slightly from 1% to 2% in the past 12 months, while driving after taking prescription drugs that impair performance at the wheel is up to 5% from 2%.

'Under-25s who admit to driving after **taking illegal drugs** has risen to 6% this year'

28%

of the under-25s think they have been in a car with a driver who has taken illegal or potentially dangerous prescription drugs, up from just 13% in 2024

Looking at passengers' views, 28% of the under-25s think they have been in a car with a driver who has taken illegal or potentially dangerous prescription drugs, up from just 13% in 2024. Among those aged 25 to 44, the rate has risen from 6% to 16%.

The report's findings correlate with government data which points to the prevalence of drug-driving increasing. Department for Transport data⁹ shows that while alcohol impairment remains the leading cause of collisions, the gap between alcohol and drug-impaired crashes has narrowed. What's more, drugs are behind a growing number of fatal road collisions.

9. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/developing-drug-driving-statistics





EXPERT VIEW

Jo Shiner, chief constable, Sussex Police, and Roads Policing Portfolio lead, National Police Chiefs' Council

"We're seeing a worrying rise in drink and drug-driving among younger motorists, and the public are noticing it too. These behaviours destroy lives and have no place on our roads. I note the strong public support for alcohol interlocks which can offer a practical way to prevent repeat offences and protect lives before it's too late."

5.6 Handheld mobile phone use

The proportion of drivers who admit to illegally making or receiving a phone call without a hands-free kit has risen to 30%, the highest level in almost a decade. Meanwhile, the percentage who admit to texting, emailing, accessing the internet or posting on social media has reached a post-pandemic high of 12%. One-in-five drivers (19%) admit to checking messages or notifications, the highest level since 2016, and 11% say they have taken a photo or recorded a video with their phone while driving, up from 8% in 2024 and the highest rate since 2019. Separate recent research¹⁰ suggests that the majority of drivers are unable to complete a car journey without being distracted by their mobile phone.

Younger drivers are by far the most likely age group to engage in illegal mobile phone use. Well over half (58% compared to 30% overall) say they have made or received a call without a hands-free kit, and 27% have composed a message or social media post while behind the wheel. Almost four-in-10 (37%) have made or received a video call while driving and 29% have taken a photo or filmed a video. Around one in-seven (14%) say they have played a game on their phone while driving.

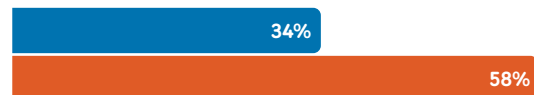


Young drivers' mobile phone use while behind the wheel

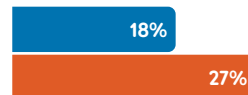
Proportion of drivers aged 17 to 24 who admit to illegally using a handheld phone has increased dramatically since 2022.

● 2022 ● 2025

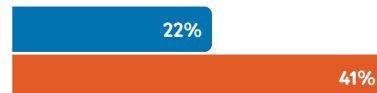
Make or receive a voice call



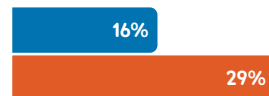
Text, email, post on social media, use internet



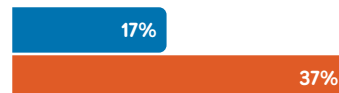
Check texts, emails or social media posts



Take a photo or record a video



Make or receive a video call



10. www.rac.co.uk/drive/news/motoring-news/drivers-are-unable-to-complete-a-car-journey-without-using-mobile-phone/

Finally, there has been an increase in the percentage of drivers who say they have watched or recorded a livestream while at the wheel in the past 12 months, from 5% in 2024 to 9% this year. Again, the rate is highest among the under-25s; here it has risen slightly to 24% from 23% last year. Among those aged between 25 and 44, there has also been a sharp increase in admitted livestreaming, from 10% to 20%.

24%

of under-25s admit to watching or recording a livestream while driving



EXPERT VIEW

Jo Shiner, chief constable, Sussex Police, and Roads Policing Portfolio lead, National Police Chiefs' Council

"The scale of illegal mobile phone use by young drivers is deeply concerning. From making calls to checking messages and even gaming while driving, this behaviour is reckless and utterly unacceptable. No notification is worth risking a life. We need to see stronger education, visible, and automated enforcement, and a cultural shift so that using a phone at the wheel becomes socially unacceptable."



A close-up photograph of a car's rear light assembly, showing the red and white lenses and the surrounding bodywork. The image is partially obscured by a large white circular graphic element on the right side.

6

Choice of next vehicle

More drivers plan to change their current vehicle in 2025 than compared to 2024, and their next car is less likely than in previous years to be petrol-driven and more likely to be a pure electric model.

Drivers who intend to buy an EV next are attracted by the ability to charge at home as well as environmental considerations. But a number of obstacles to the wider take-up of EVs remain, from range anxiety to concerns about upfront costs as well as the extent and reliability of the public charging network.

6.1 Drivers' plans to replace their current vehicles

There is greater certainty among drivers when it comes to plans to change their current car, the 2025 Report on Motoring has found. This year, the percentage of drivers who are not planning on changing their vehicle or who do not know when they will do so has fallen from 37% in 2024 to 33%. At the same time, the percentage of drivers who plan to change vehicle within the next three years has risen to 49% – the highest level since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and an increase on 45% in 2024.

The drivers of newer cars are more likely to replace them in the short to medium term. For example, among those who own vehicles that are currently between six months and a year old, 73% intend to replace them within three years. The corresponding figure for drivers of cars between one and two years old is 74%, while for those with cars between five and 10 years old, the rate is just 39%, and 34% for those with vehicles more than 10 years old. These figures reflect the fact that a significant number of drivers acquire their cars through lease or personal contract purchase deals that typically run for three years, after which the vehicle tends to be replaced with a newer model.

33%

of drivers say rising day-to-day costs have stopped them changing their car sooner than they might have otherwise done

The high cost of living in the UK remains the chief obstacle to replacing a vehicle: in 2025, 33% of drivers say rising day-to-day costs have stopped them changing their car sooner than they might have otherwise done, up from 31% in 2024. Other impediments include high second-hand vehicle prices (18%, down from 20% in 2024), wider economic uncertainty and concerns about job security (17% compared to 15% in 2024), difficulty in finding the right vehicle (12% versus 11% in 2024) and the impact of higher interest rates on car finance costs (11% – no change). Meanwhile, half (51%) of drivers say they are happy with their current vehicle, although this is down on the 54% recorded last year.

Drivers aged under 25 are more likely than other age groups to say the rising cost of living has put them off changing their vehicle, but this percentage has declined significantly in recent years – from 62% in 2023 and 56% in 2024, to 47% this year. However, there has been a rise in the proportion of under-25s who say economic uncertainty and worries about job security have stopped them changing their car, from 21% in 2024 to 25% this year.



6.2 Electric vehicles: popularity rebounds, but challenges remain

Data published by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) in July 2025 showed that the share of the new car market accounted for by sales of pure electric vehicles (EVs) had risen to 21.6% so far this year compared to 19.6% in 2024¹. Meanwhile, the choice of EVs has expanded dramatically, with four in every five models currently available as a battery-electric, plug-in hybrid or conventional hybrid version².

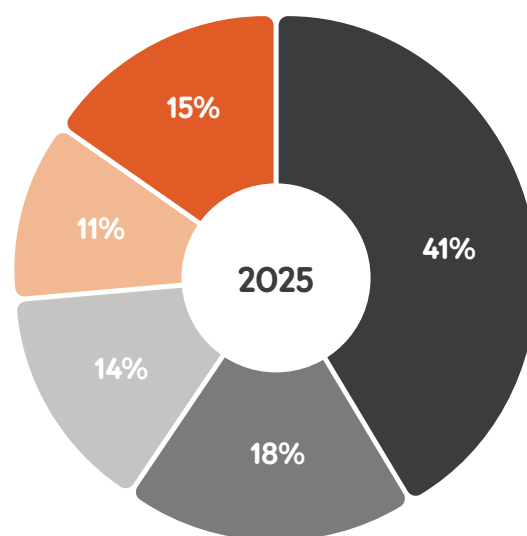
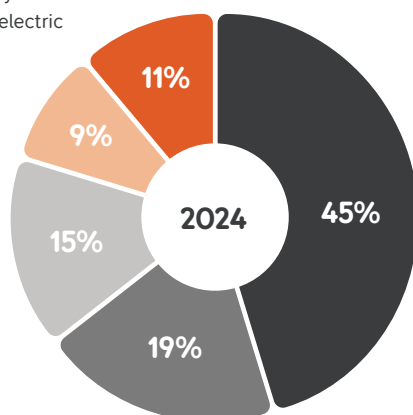
However, the SMMT notes that new EV sales continue to be supported to a significant degree by fleet purchases and acquisitions through workplace salary-sacrifice schemes. Both have been underpinned in recent years by the lower rate of benefit-in-kind tax. The organisation also points out that the market share of new pure EVs coming onto the roads remains below the

28% target set by the Government for 2025 as a whole³. Nonetheless, there are welcome signs of growth in the market for used EVs: while the UK's second-hand car market grew by 5.5% in 2024, the number of used EV sales increased by 57.4% – although EVs represented just 2.5% of total used car sales⁴.

This year's report shows that there has been a welcome rebound in the percentage of drivers who say their next vehicle is likely to be a pure EV, from 11% in 2024 to 15% this year – the highest level on record. Among those who do not currently drive a pure EV, 12% say they plan to switch to one next. Interest in plug-in hybrids has also risen, from 9% in 2024 to 11%, while 18% of drivers say they expect their next car to be a conventional hybrid, the same percentage as in 2024.

Drivers' choice of next vehicle

- Petrol
- Conventional hybrid
- Diesel
- Plug-in hybrid
- Battery-electric



1. www.smmt.co.uk/bumper-june-for-uk-new-car-market-as-one-in-four-buyers-goes-electric/ and www.smmt.co.uk/record-ev-market-share-but-weak-private-demand-frustrates-ambition/

2. www.smmt.co.uk/brits-enjoy-greenest-ever-car-choice-with-record-two-in-five-models-available-as-battery-electric/

3. www.smmt.co.uk/new-car-registrations-stall-in-july-but-recovery-expected/

4. www.smmt.co.uk/demand-for-used-evs-rises-to-record-levels-as-second-hand-car-market-grows-in-2024/

Fewer drivers than ever before intend to buy a petrol vehicle next: the percentage has fallen to 40% from 44% in 2024, while only 14% of drivers say their next car will run on diesel – although this is virtually unchanged from the 15% in 2024. Current diesel drivers are the least likely to plan to switch to a pure EV – only 8% intend to do so compared with 15% of all drivers. And among current drivers of petrol cars, 11% say their next vehicle will be a pure EV.

Existing pure EV drivers are the most satisfied when it comes to their choice of vehicle, as they are least likely to opt for a different powertrain when they next change their vehicle: 77% plan to choose another pure EV. This compares to 64% of current conventional hybrid drivers who plan to stick with a conventional hybrid and 60% of petrol drivers who say their next car will also be entirely petrol-fuelled. Conversely, over half of diesel drivers (52%) say they will choose an alternative, non-diesel powertrain when they next change their vehicle.

Drivers aged 65 or older are the least likely to opt for a pure EV next: the rate among this age group is just 7%, while it is 10% among those aged between 45 and 64. Almost one-in-five of the under-25s (18%) plan to choose a pure EV next, but the rate is highest among drivers aged between 25 and 44 (24%). Drivers who use their cars for business purposes are more likely to choose a pure EV as their next vehicle – the rate among this group is 21% compared to just 10% of those who do not use their vehicles for work. This may reflect the favourable tax treatment afforded to pure EVs when acquired as company cars or through salary-sacrifice schemes.

24%

of 25 to 44-year-old drivers expect to get a battery-electric vehicle next



EXPERT VIEW

Steve Gooding, director, RAC Foundation

"Drivers' plans to move away from traditional petrol and diesel cars continue to edge cautiously upward, but there's some way to go to achieve the step change in battery-electric take-up that will meet our carbon-cutting ambitions. That could be about the cost of cars – linked to wider concern about the cost of motoring – but also their convenience particularly the challenge of recharging away from home."





EXPERT VIEW

**Quentin Willson, motoring journalist
and founder of FairCharge**

"Despite government doing little to educate drivers on the benefits of EVs, this year sees some of the highest scores for those planning to buy a pure electric car and the lowest for petrol with new battery technology appealing greatest to a younger 25 to 44-year-old demographic."



6.3 Reasons drivers want to go electric

The most common reason given by drivers who say they intend to choose a pure EV as their next vehicle is the fact they can charge it at home (58% this year compared to 52% in 2024). The second most widespread reason relates to concern about the environmental impact of conventionally fuelled vehicles – this is cited by 43% of drivers, although this percentage has declined steadily since 2021, when the rate was 66%. Equally, fewer drivers in 2025 say that lower running costs – chiefly fuel and vehicle tax – are a reason for going electric. The percentage has declined from 64% in 2022 to 40% this year.

Concern about the health impacts of emissions from petrol and diesel cars is another factor (40%), while 26% say they typically only drive short distances so would be ideally suited to a pure EV. A quarter of drivers (24%) believe pure EVs have fewer mechanical parts that can go wrong, and 20% like the fact that they would face lower or zero clean air zone and/or congestion charges. One-in-six drivers (17%) would choose a pure EV on the basis that the upfront cost of such vehicles is reasonable.

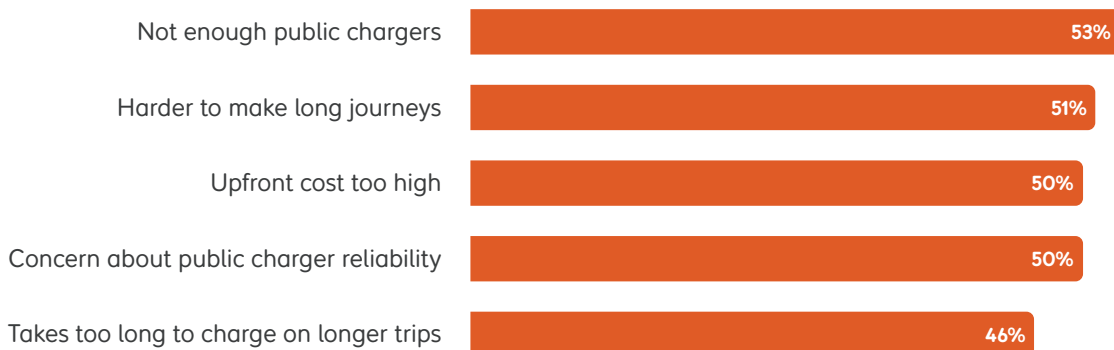


6.4 Reasons for not going electric

A lack of public charging points is the most common reason given by drivers who do not plan to switch to a pure EV next. The rate is 53% in 2025, but this has fallen from 63% in 2021. Figures published by Zapmap⁴ show that the public charging network had grown by 25% between August 2024 and August 2025, with more than 11,000 new charge points added since the start of this year. As of the end of July, there were 656 rapid charging hubs installed - locations with at least six rapid or ultra-rapid charging devices - a 22% increase since the end of 2024.

An inability to easily make long journeys is another major stumbling block (51%), while half of drivers who do not plan to switch to an EV are concerned about the reliability of the public charging network as well as upfront costs when compared to petrol and diesel cars (both 50%). In July 2025, the Government announced plans to address the cost of EVs: Electric Car Grants⁵ of up to £3,750 will be available to subsidise purchases of new EVs priced up to £37,000.

Drivers' top reasons for not getting an EV next



EXPERT VIEW

Jonathan Hewett, chief executive, Thatcham Research

"Once drivers experience EV ownership, their perception shifts — but making that shift stick means ensuring long-term affordability and sustainability remain part of the deal."

4. www.zap-map.com/ev-stats/how-many-charging-points

5. www.gov.uk/government/speeches/electric-car-grant-launched





EXPERT VIEW

Claire Evans, consumer editor at What Car?

"It's great to see that car buyers are less concerned about range anxiety than before, but the more widespread concerns about public charging infrastructure mirror worries voiced by What Car? readers, who told us the main reason they're not keen on switching to an EV is the limitation of the public charging network."

Other concerns include mid-journey charging times (46% compared to 50% in 2024), the distance that can be driven on a single charge (42% compared to 43% last year) and the cost of charging (30%). Meanwhile, 23% say they do not have off-street parking so would find charging at home a challenge. However, the Government is attempting to address this issue through a £25m scheme that will help drivers without off-street parking to run cables across pavements so they can charge EVs while they are parked on the street outside their homes.⁶ Meanwhile, there has been a decline in the percentage of drivers who say a lack of pure EV choice is a reason they will not choose such a vehicle next: this has fallen steadily from 25% in 2021 to 13% this year.

Looking at more general attitudes towards pure EVs, a quarter of drivers who do not plan to switch to an EV next (26%) say nothing could convince them to switch to such a vehicle, while 43% of this group say they still have considerable doubts about EVs in general. Almost a quarter (23%) say they are keen on getting an EV but still have some doubts.

6. www.gov.uk/government/news/new-63-million-boost-for-britains-electric-vehicle-revolution

Opposition to EVs is highest among drivers aged 65 or older: 35% say they do not currently want a pure EV and nothing could convince them to change this view. The corresponding rate among drivers aged 45 to 64 is 28%, while it is 19% among those aged 25 to 44 and 13% among the under-25s. Meanwhile, 17% of drivers aged between 25 and 44 say they would like a pure EV and are convinced they are a good thing. Just 1% of those aged 65 and older share this view.



EXPERT VIEW

Mike Hawes, chief executive, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders

"There is still much for the industry, government and other stakeholders to do to get drivers to consider going electric with nearly 70% of respondents saying they either don't want one or that they still have doubts about them."

Non-EV drivers' attitudes to getting an EV in the future

- Want one; convinced they're a good thing
- Quite keen to get one; have a few doubts
- Not that keen to get one; still have a lot of doubts
- Don't want one and don't believe anything could convince me

17 to 24-year-olds



25 to 44-year-olds



45 to 64-year-olds



65-plus



1%

6.5 When do drivers plan to move to an EV?

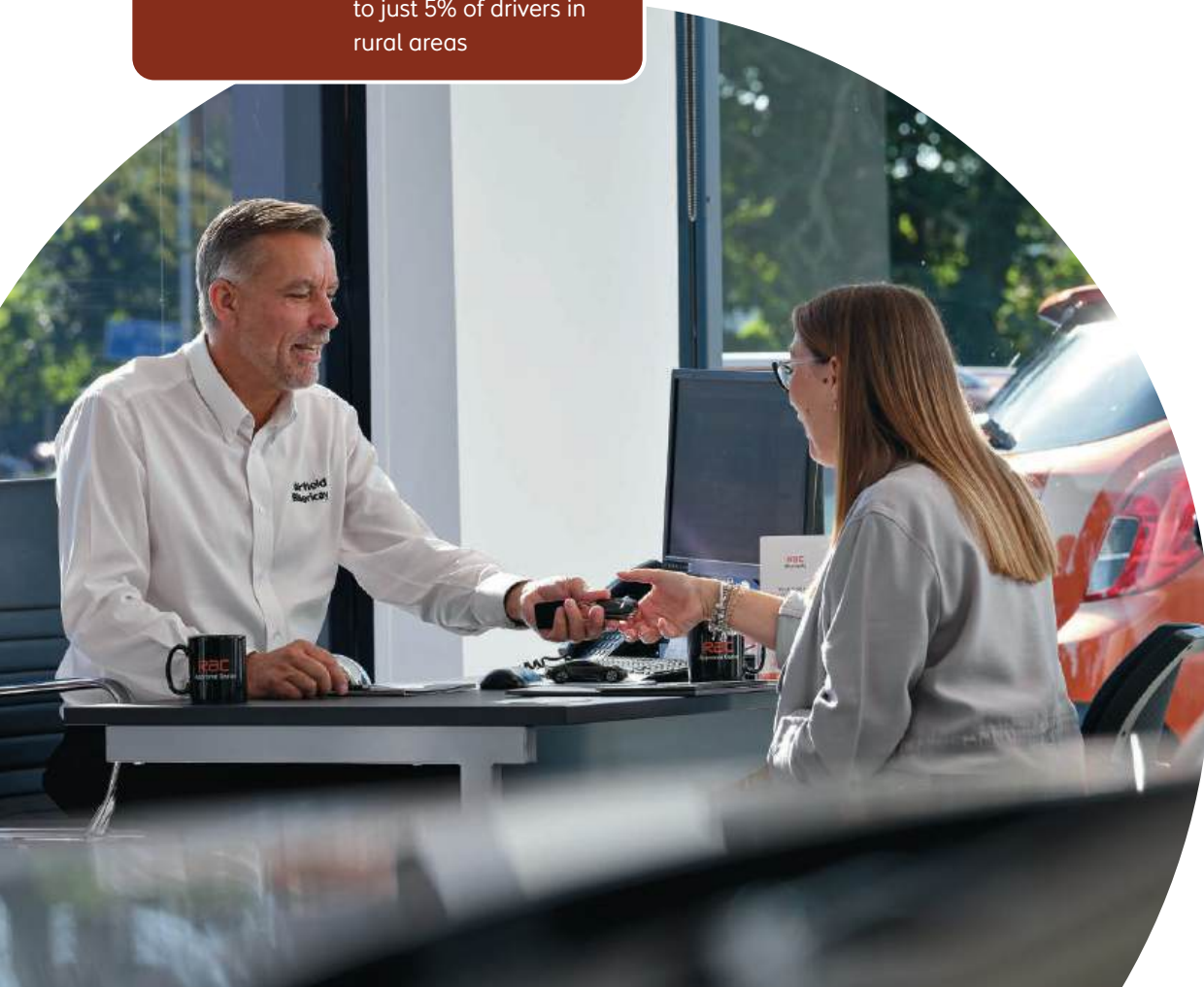
There has been a notable increase in the proportion of drivers who expect to move to a pure EV within the next five years, from 15% in 2024 to 23% this year. This percentage is considerably higher among drivers who are based in cities and town centres (49% – a sharp rise on 2024's 29%), but remains tiny among rural drivers (5%).

Among those who do not currently own a pure EV, there has been a further increase in the distance an electric car would need to be able to cover on a single charge before drivers would consider getting one. The average distance required has risen to 422 miles from 398 in 2024 and 360 in 2021. While such range is beyond the majority of EVs currently on the market, it should be noted that the average car journey distance in the UK stood at less than 10 miles in 2023⁷.

49%

of drivers in towns and cities expect to get an EV within the next five years, compared to just 5% of drivers in rural areas

7. www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2023/nts-2023-car-availability-and-trends-in-car-trips



6.6 Views on charging EVs

The report also asked drivers for their views on EV charging. Among current owners of EVs, 66% believe the UK's public charging network needs more genuinely fast charge points (i.e. those that provide at least 100kW of power), while 46% feel there are too many smartphone apps or websites for using public charge points. A third (34%) complain that public charge points are sometimes not working, while 40% say they prefer to use their EV for shorter rather than longer journeys.

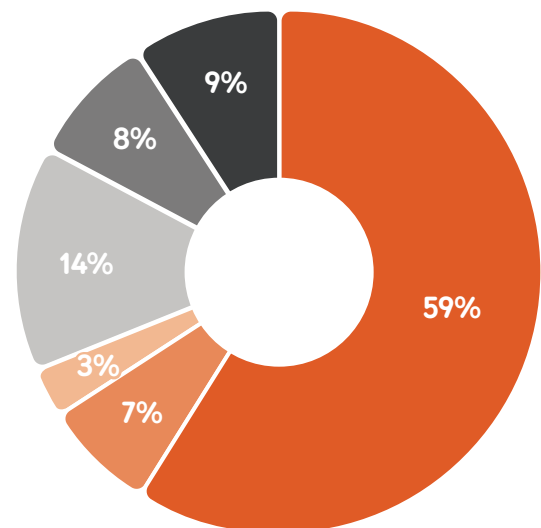
More than half (53%) think it is unfair that the rate of VAT imposed on the electricity provided by public charge points is higher than the rate on domestic energy (20% compared to 5%). Meanwhile, a third (33%) say they regularly see non-electric cars parked in EV charging bays, while a similar percentage (31%) say it has

become harder to find a public charger that is not in use – a rate that has climbed sharply on the 20% recorded in 2024.

For drivers who do not currently have a pure EV, a clear majority (69%) say they would be able to charge such a car at home (59%), in a designated off-street parking space (7%) or through an on-street charging point outside their home (3%). Just under a third (31%) say they would be unable to charge at home: 14% say they can only park on the street and there are no available charge points, while 9% have a designated parking space but would not be able to have a charger installed. The remaining 8% say they would be unable to install a domestic charge point because they rent their home.

If drivers acquired an EV, would they be able to charge at home, or have a charger installed?

- Have driveway and/or garage
- Have designated off-street space
- Have on-street charging
- Can only park on-road, no chargers
- Rent home, can't install a charger
- Have designated off-street space, can't install a charger



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The background image shows the interior of a public transport vehicle, likely a bus or train. It features rows of green seats with a red and white pattern. Overhead, there are long, cylindrical light fixtures. The perspective is from the back of the vehicle looking forward. A large white circular graphic is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the section header and text.

7

Alternative transport modes

Drivers' attitudes towards public transport are becoming more positive: a small but growing proportion see public transport as an attractive alternative to making journeys by car. At the same time, however, there has been a slight fall in the percentage of drivers who would be willing to use public transport more if services were more reliable, convenient and affordable.

Reported usage of buses and trains has increased, with more drivers – especially those in younger age groups – saying they take the bus or train at least once a month. However, public transport usage among drivers in rural areas remains low.

7.1 Drivers' views on public transport

A growing minority of drivers agree that public transport in the UK is an attractive alternative to making journeys by car, the 2025 Report on Motoring has found. The percentage has risen steadily since the pandemic, from 22% in 2021 to 33% this year. Notably, the number of drivers who strongly agree with this statement has risen from 7% in 2021 to 13% in 2024. Meanwhile, there has been a slight decline in the number of drivers who say they would use their vehicle less if public transport were more convenient, reliable and/or affordable: in 2025, the figure is 52%, down slightly from 55% in 2023 and 53% in 2024.

53%

of drivers under 25 see public transport as a feasible alternative to driving

There is a clear negative correlation between the appeal of public transport and driver age. The under-25s are most likely to see public transport as a feasible alternative to driving – the rate among this group is 53% (by far the highest level since the pandemic) compared to just 24% of those aged 65 or older. Similarly, 63% of the under-25s say they would use their cars less if public transport services were better compared to just 40% of drivers aged 65 and above.

Drivers' attitudes to public transport

Agreement with the statement 'I would use my vehicle less if public transport was better'

- Strongly agree
- Slightly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Slightly disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Drivers living in urban areas



Drivers living in rural areas



1. www.gov.uk/government/publications/spending-review-2025-document/spending-review-2025-html
2. www.gov.uk/government/speeches/national-bus-fare-cap
3. www.gov.uk/government/news/1-billion-government-funding-boost-for-bus-services-across-england-to-help-end-postcode-lottery

Half of urban drivers (50%) think public transport is an attractive alternative to taking the car compared to 23% of drivers based in rural areas – no doubt a reflection of the greater availability of public transport options in the UK's cities and town centres. However, a significant number of drivers in rural locations (46%) would be willing to use public transport more if services were better; the rate in cities and town centres is 58%, and 50% in suburbs and the edges of towns. As we noted in Chapter 1, *Drivers, vehicles and dependency*, 61% of drivers in rural locations say they have no feasible alternative to the car when it comes to travelling to and from work.

Given this context, it is notable that the Government has committed to increasing funding for public transport investment in England. In the June 2025 Spending Review¹, it was announced that more than £15bn would be provided by 2032 for mayors in England's largest city regions to invest in the likes of buses, trams and local rail. Further spending has been earmarked to upgrade regional rail routes. Meanwhile, in autumn 2024, the Government announced that the national bus fare cap, which limits single fares at £3, would be extended until the end of 2025², while an additional £1bn in funding was provided to support local bus services in 2025 and 2026³.

'61% of drivers in rural locations
say they **have no feasible alternative**
to the car when it comes to travelling to and from work'



EXPERT VIEW

David Leibling, transport and motoring consultant, and founder of the Report on Motoring

"Younger people are less likely to say they would find it very difficult to adjust their lifestyle without their car and tend to use public transport more, but they are still very likely to be inconvenienced when their car is being repaired."



7.2 Drivers' use of buses and trains

There has been an increase in the proportion of drivers who regularly take the bus, with 30% saying they make a journey by bus at least once a month. This is the highest level since before the pandemic and is a sharp rise on the 24% recorded in 2024. Some 14% of drivers use the bus at least weekly, up from 11% last year and just 8% in 2022.

Among the under-25s, 57% take the bus at least once a month compared to 44% of those aged between 25 and 44 – a steep increase on last year's 27%. Monthly bus use stands at just 18% of those in the 45-64 age group, while the rate among drivers aged 65 or older is slightly higher, at 24% – no doubt due to the availability of free bus travel for older people around the UK. The lack of provision of bus services in rural locations is reflected in the fact that just 11% of drivers in these areas take a bus at least once a month compared to 56% of drivers in cities and town centres.

30%

of drivers make a journey by bus at least once a month

There has also been an increase in the number of drivers who journey by train at least once a month, from 19% in 2024 to 23% this year. The equivalent figure for business drivers stands at 37%. The rate among the under-25s is 43% while it is 38% among drivers aged between 25 and 44 – up sharply from 24% in 2024. Among those aged between 45 and 64, it falls to 15% and it is just 7% among drivers aged 65 or older. Train use is considerably higher among drivers who live in the UK's towns and cities: 44% take the train on at least a monthly basis compared to just 8% of drivers based in villages and other rural areas.



EXPERT VIEW

Quentin Willson, motoring journalist and founder of FairCharge

"Despite years of promises, the 'modal shift' to public transport hasn't happened. Sixty per cent of drivers say life without a car would be very difficult with over 80% of car use mostly for shopping and commuting. Walking, cycling or other forms of transport are still in single-figure percentages and show that government must try harder to make bus and train travel easier and more affordable. The passenger car is still Britain's preferred mode of transport."

7.3 Drivers and cycling

Half of drivers (50%) say they generally walk or cycle on short journeys rather than take the car, a slight drop on 2024's 52%. Some 13% of drivers say they make a journey by bicycle at least once a month, up from 10% in 2024. Younger drivers travel most often by bike. Among the under-25s, 29% make a cycle journey at least once a month, while the rate is 20% among those aged between 25 and 44. These figures demonstrate that there is a significant degree of overlap between the UK's driving and cycling populations, especially in younger age groups.

In addition, 25% of all drivers say they use a bicycle for non-leisure purposes, such as commuting, at least occasionally.

50%

of drivers say they generally walk or cycle on short journeys rather than take the car



The RAC's work for drivers

✓ Record funding to fix local roads

In December 2024, the new Government announced the biggest ever one-off road maintenance funding settlement for councils in England. With the poor state of local roads consistently a top priority for drivers, this should mark the start of a gradual improvement – something that is in all road users' interests.

✓ Longer-term roads funding settlements for councils

The news of record local roads funding came with a requirement on councils to report the maintenance they have carried out. We are also pleased to see our call for more preventative works, such as surface dressing which stops potholes from appearing in the first place, has been heeded by government. This is more cost-effective for local authorities and is something the RAC has long campaigned for.

✓ Fuel duty rate kept down

In the last Budget, the new Government announced that fuel duty would be kept at the lower rate of 52.95p per litre. With taxation representing the majority of the pump price, this was a welcome decision.

✓ Fuel Finder by the end of 2025

The RAC has done more to campaign for fairer prices at the pumps than any other motoring organisation. It's therefore positive the present Government picked up where the previous one left off and is requiring all forecourts to publish their prices from the end of this year. Drivers will be able to use apps, such as myRAC, to check the current price wherever they are in the country.

✓ New Electric Car Grant aimed at more affordable vehicles

The RAC has long stressed the need for a targeted grant aimed at stimulating the more affordable end of the market. Three years after the country's first plug-in car grant was axed, in July the Government announced a new grant aimed at driving up new EV registrations. Drivers can save up to £3,750 off vehicles that meet certain sustainability standards and have a list price of under £37,000.



✓ Official private parking code of practice closer to launch

In July, the Government announced a fresh consultation on measures to be included in the long-awaited official Private Parking Code of Practice, that received royal assent six years ago. The RAC has been in full support of the need for the code since 2017 and continues to campaign for its introduction.

✓ National Parking Platform launches

The RAC is well aware of drivers' frustration at needing to download multiple mobile apps to park their vehicles, depending on which council area they are in. May's announcement of the roll-out of the National Parking Platform means drivers should, in time, be able to use the app of their choice wherever they park.



✓ Study into dazzling headlights confirmed

The RAC was the first motoring organisation to highlight and campaign on the issue of headlight glare in the UK, raising the matter with the Government as early as 2018. The current government heeded the RAC's calls to better understand the problem, with an initial report due out in 2025.

RAC

Our calls on government

The cost of driving

Ensure fairer fuel prices for all

The forthcoming launch of the Government's Fuel Finder scheme – due in early 2026 – will bring welcome transparency to the fuel market for drivers. We hope this will – as intended – spark greater competition between forecourts and lead to lower prices. The Competition and Markets Authority's role as the official price monitoring body should, in time, reveal whether or not the scheme has made a difference. RAC Fuel Watch will continue to monitor fuel price fluctuation to highlight if retailers reliably pass on wholesale price savings to drivers at the pumps.

Keep fuel duty down

Alongside its existing efforts to introduce more competition into the fuel market, we'd like to see a commitment from the Government that it won't increase fuel duty. Even at today's lower rate, tax – both fuel duty and VAT – still represents more than half of the cost of a litre of petrol and diesel.

Reduce the motor insurance tax burden

We continue to call on the Government to reduce Insurance Premium Tax from its current 12% rate. Such a high rate not only increases the risk of people driving uninsured, it also unfairly places an even greater burden on younger and more inexperienced drivers who already pay the highest premiums.

Road safety

Take a data and evidence-led approach to reducing road casualties

The Government's much-promised road safety strategy represents an enormous opportunity that could ultimately reduce casualties and keep all road users safe. Taking an evidence-led approach to future interventions can help ensure efforts are focused in the right places.

Reintroduce road safety casualty reduction targets

We urge the Government to reintroduce formal road casualty reduction targets, which were scrapped in 2010, giving the issue of road safety the national focus it deserves.

Clamp down on excessive speeding

Speed is the leading cause of fatal road collisions in the UK. We encourage the Government to work with police forces and road safety organisations to introduce a crackdown on drivers who speed excessively as they present a disproportionate risk to the safety of all road users.





Our calls on government (cont'd)

Road safety (cont'd)

Map out a path to tackling headlight glare

With the imminent publication of the Government's report into this issue, it's important drivers' concerns are heard – and that clear actions are agreed that address glare from both new and existing vehicles on the roads.

Consider an alcohol interlocks trial to cut drink-drive deaths

A majority of UK drivers want to see more being done to reduce the number of people that drive while over the legal alcohol limit. Data shows around 260 lives are lost every year in drink-driving collisions and that a significant number of drink-drive offences are committed by reoffenders. Alcohol interlocks, which prevent an intoxicated motorist from driving in the first place, are already used in a number of other countries. We urge the Government to consider a trial of alcolocks with a view to giving courts the power to order convicted drink-drivers to have to use them.



Commit to General Safety Regulation 2 on vehicle safety standards

We continue to call on the Government to mandate all new vehicles to be fitted with advanced safety systems, including autonomous emergency braking. Such technologies can improve road safety.

Civil enforcement

Protect drivers by finally getting the official Private Parking Code of Practice over the line

The RAC calls on the Government to finally publish the revised Parking Code of Practice to prevent drivers being unfairly treated by private parking operators. Despite the code becoming law in 2019, it has been delayed by legal challenges from private parking operators and debt recovery companies. Meanwhile, drivers continue to be issued record numbers of parking charge notices, with many simply paying up rather than contesting them even if they are in the right. We want the code to include a cap on parking charge notices, a ban on debt recovery fees, strict rules on operator conduct and a single independent appeals system.

Ensure councils enforce yellow box junctions fairly

A study commissioned by the RAC showed many yellow box junctions are too large which leads to drivers being fined unnecessarily. What's more, drivers were fined nearly £1m from just 36 yellow boxes outside London and Cardiff in 2024. The new Government should lay down new regulations to ensure boxes are set up fairly and that councils always use their moving traffic offence powers fairly.

Mandate councils to permit a minimum of two parking payment methods

We continue to urge the Government to ensure drivers can always pay for council parking by at least two different means, including contactless bank cards/via mobile phone.

Vehicle crime

Tackle the scourge of vehicle cloning

An increasing number of drivers are victims of vehicle cloning – where the identity of one vehicle is applied to another, in an attempt to avoid being caught committing traffic or motoring offences. This leads to innocent people being fined for offences, such as speeding, they didn't commit. More data is needed on the scale of the problem, along with a plan from government to tackle it.

Crack down on 'ghost' number plates

Alongside cloned vehicles, so-called 'ghost' number plates that cannot be read by automatic number plate recognition cameras are becoming more common as a means of drivers evading the law. All police forces need to be equipped with cameras that can detect these illegal plates, which often featured raised 3D lettering and numerals. The Government should also consider mandating flat (2D) number plates, tightening the rules for number plate suppliers and toughening the penalties for those caught driving with illegal plates.



Electric vehicles

Reduce VAT on public chargers

Three-in-10 would-be EV drivers who were surveyed for this year's Report on Motoring said they would not be able to charge an electric vehicle where they live. For this reason, it is vital the Government reduces the VAT rate at public chargers from 20% to match the 5% levied on domestic electricity as it will ensure those who can't charge at home are able to run a zero-emission vehicle cost effectively. This would significantly speed up adoption of EVs by making public charging more affordable.

Adopt the UK's first public charging charter

We call on the Government and charge point operators to adopt the RAC and FairCharge Public Charging Charter. This would ensure chargers are accessible and safe for all, charger locations are clearly signposted, kWh prices are displayed prominently for drivers to see and all chargers work at least 99% of the time. The charter, the first of its kind in the UK, has previously been recommended to the Government by a House of Lords committee inquiry into the EV transition.

Drivers and their vehicles at a glance

Below is a summary of survey respondents' vehicles and usage against figures for the 2025 Report on Motoring (2024 data in brackets):



Approximate number of miles driven over 12 months¹

Miles driven	%
5,000 miles or fewer	29% (29%)
5,001 – 10,000 miles	49% (50%)
10,001 miles or more	21% (19%)



Number of cars per household

Households with	%
One car	48% (50%)
Two cars	36% (34%)
Three cars	11% (11%)
Four cars	3% (3%)
Five or more cars	2% (2%)



Age of vehicles²

Motorists who own a car	%
Less than a year old	7% (7%)
1 to 2 years old	12% (8%)
2 to 3 years old	12% (9%)
3 to 4 years old	11% (13%)
Between 5 and 10 years old	32% (36%)
More than 10 years old	25% (27%)

Average number of cars	
In household	1.8 (1.7)



1. All who personally drive a vehicle at least once a month.
2. Age of vehicle driven most often.



Research methodology

The RAC Report on Motoring 2025 is based on a large-scale online survey carried out by Online95 on behalf of the RAC. In total, Online95 interviewed 2,395 UK motorists (i.e. those who hold a full, current UK driving licence, drive at least once a month and have a motor vehicle in their household).

The survey was conducted from 4 April to 21 April 2025, with the questionnaire taking around 30 minutes to complete. Responses were rim weighted to be nationally representative of UK motorists in age, gender, socio-economic groups and all UK regions. The data in the report was analysed and reported by Ragdoll Research and Planning.

Statistical reliability

Any figures taken from a sample of a population should not be taken as a precise indication of the actual figures for that population. The reported figures are estimates, within a small margin of error, of the actual figures. The margin of error varies with sample size – the larger the sample is, the lower the error will be. It also varies with the proportions answering: the margin of error is smaller for a 90% or 10% result than for a 50% result.

In order to illustrate the use of varying sample sizes and their effect on the statistical significance of results, the table opposite outlines the degree of statistical error broadly associated with an example sample size of 1,000, and the effective sample size of the weighted survey data, 2,002.

Please note that data presented in this report is rounded to zero decimal places. For this reason, some figures when added may sum to more than 100%.



Sample size	Reported percentage at 95% level of confidence				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
1,000	±1.86%	±2.48%	±2.84%	±3.04%	±3.10%
2,002	±1.31%	±1.75%	±2.01%	±2.15%	±2.19%

How to read the above table: Assume the reported percentage, with an effective sample base of 2,002, is 23%. The closest column to this reported percentage is the '20% or 80%' column. The significant difference on the table shows $\pm 1.75\%$. This means that 95 out of 100 surveys (reflecting the 95% level of confidence) with an effective sample size of 2,002 will produce a percentage of 23%, plus or minus 1.75%, or within the range of 21.25% and 24.75%.

Please note that the margin of error will be marginally different for each reported percentage, however, the above table can serve to find the closest estimate.



Company overview

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 15m UK personal and business members. Whatever the need, we have a growing range of driving and mobility-related services and solutions covering everything from breakdown assistance to vehicle insurance, and from car maintenance to servicing and repairs – all increasingly enabled by digital platforms, data and our colleagues.

Headquartered in the West Midlands with more than 4,500 staff, the RAC operates from three bases – Walsall, Bristol and Salford – with its vehicle and breakdown services underpinned by its nationwide, branded patrol force. Last year, the RAC attended 2.4m breakdowns.

We provide individual members and small business owners with breakdown cover and a broad range of exclusive optional extras on either an annual or flexible monthly subscription basis. Through our partnerships with leading motor manufacturers, banks, insurance companies and fleets, we also provide breakdown and accident assistance to individuals and technical and customer support services. In insurance, we primarily offer motor insurance policies, many of which are available through price comparison websites.

For the one-in-five vehicles our patrols are not able to fix, the RAC has a nationwide network of RAC Mobile Mechanics capable of repairing vehicles at customers' homes or workplaces, as well as carrying out routine servicing and diagnostic checks.

Appointments can be booked on rac.co.uk or via the myRAC mobile app, available for Apple and Android devices. The myRAC app brings everything a driver needs together in one place to make running a car cheaper and easier. Drivers can log a breakdown, book a service or MOT, see the MOT history of all their vehicles, set maintenance reminders and find the cheapest fuel at any location.

Our fleet of breakdown vans is already well-equipped to cater for the needs of EVs. We can give emergency charges to depleted EVs and, if needs be, tow them with all four wheels off the road without the need for a separate flatbed recovery vehicle. In addition, the RAC was the first national roadside assistance company to put zero-emission electric patrol vans into service.

The RAC also offers drivers an online shop, legal services, vehicle history checks and inspections, a new and used car buying website, a nationwide network of used car dealerships and circa 1,000 approved garages providing the highest standards of service under the trusted RAC name.

Using our research with drivers, the RAC campaigns at a national level on the biggest motoring issues, including the condition and maintenance of the country's roads, the cost of filling and charging up, and road safety.





Advisory panel

This report was guided by the expert contributions of the following members of the RAC's Report on Motoring advisory panel:



Claire Evans
Consumer editor, What Car?



David Leibling
Transport and motoring consultant, and founder of the Report on Motoring



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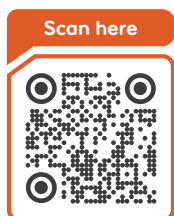
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