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RAC statement on 'The Unintended Consequences of Freezing Fuel Duty' report

Commenting on a report from Professor David Begg and released by [Greener Journeys](#), RAC roads policy spokesman Nicholas Lyes said:

“Millions of motorists and businesses are going to balk at the idea of fuel duty rising in the autumn. Petrol and diesel prices are currently at a three-and-a-half year high, and there is the prospect of them reaching record levels if the oil price continues to climb. In this scenario, we should be talking about the Government acting to help bring prices back into check by lowering fuel duty to protect the economy – not putting up tax on fuel.

“The ultimate question is whether deliberately raising prices still further, by ending the fuel duty freeze, would actually stop people driving – or simply make everyone who has no realistic alternative to driving significantly poorer, while at the same time contributing towards a higher rate of inflation. [RAC data suggests](#) a huge majority would find it difficult to adjust their lives without access to a vehicle.

“In terms of public transport, the simple fact of the matter is that outside the capital and other major UK cities, provision continues to be exceptionally patchy. This means many people have no realistic alternative to using a car for getting to their places of work, to the shops or elsewhere. A lack of reliable, affordable alternatives has to be one of the major reasons why public transport patronage in many areas is regrettably falling.

“It’s likely that many motorists would welcome improved, more affordable public transport, especially if it meant they didn’t need to use their cars for

shorter journeys – the fact that [23% of car trips are for journeys of two miles or less](#) shows that just how significant this opportunity is. This could be a ‘win-win’ in terms of reducing congestion and improving air quality in our towns and cities, but it will not happen without much more investment in public transport.

“As a country, we need to begin a debate about how we all pay for the use of our roads into the future. The current approach to taxing drivers via fuel duty is not sustainable in the longer term given the shift to cleaner vehicles and a set date for ending the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles. This makes an alternative inevitable, although finding a suitable replacement is likely to be controversial and potentially a political time bomb.”

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About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to nearly 14 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC’s breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



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