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The RAC's view on tackling the country's air quality problem

On the first ever National Clean Air Day, RAC public affairs manager Nick Lyes sets out how the country should tackle the problem of poor air quality in our towns and cities.

"While there is no single answer to solving the UK's air quality problem, there are at least now a range of measures that have been put forward that together can have a significant impact in improving the air we breathe in our towns and cities.

"The most urgent efforts must be focused, first and foremost, on the heaviest polluting vehicles that are doing the most mileage in areas with the worst air pollution. We need a programme of replacing or retrofitting ageing bus and taxi fleets, especially in towns and cities which are breaching air pollution limits.

"There are also other solutions that could have a very real positive benefit to improving air quality - councils for instance already have powers to introduce no idling zones. If every driver was first encouraged and then mandated to switch their engine off when in congestion, our urban areas could immediately benefit from cleaner air.

"In the longer term, there should be incentives to encourage motorists to switch to cleaner vehicles whether through reduced taxation for newer ultra-low emission vehicles, a targeted scrappage scheme or through extending the plug-in grant scheme.

"Efforts to improve traffic flow such as better sequencing of traffic lights can also help reduce congestion and therefore air pollution - when engines are

performing least well and are emitting more. Councils should also look at replacing speed humps with speed cushions where safe to do so. This would help reduce sharp braking and acceleration and encourage smoother driving which is better for the environment. Perhaps there is also a role for promoting the use of telematics which can also help promote smoother driving.

"Private motorists tell us that they have real concerns about air quality in our towns and cities and want to see something done about it. More than half surveyed for our latest Report on Motoring told us they were in favour of charges being levied on those vehicles that pollute the most - which indicates drivers are ready to be part of the solution. But given how much of a financial responsibility running a car is, drivers must be given sufficient time and encouragement to switch into cleaner vehicles."

The press office email address is press.office@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

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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