Jan 20, 2017 00:01 GMT

Cost and availability of parking is a growing concern for motorists

There is growing concern among motorists about both the cost and availability of parking in the UK, according to the latest RAC Report on Motoring.

Almost a fifth (18%) of the 1,714 motorists surveyed for the report said the cost of parking is one of their top-four concerns, a 50% increase compared with one in eight (12%) who said this in 2015. And, fears about the availability of parking have also increased, and by an even greater proportion, with one in seven (14%) – a 75% increase on the 8% on 2015 – now saying this is a top-four motoring concern.

Concern about the availability of parking is unsurprisingly biggest in London where 20% say it is a significant issue. Similarly, the cost of parking is also the greatest concern for London's motorists with 25% listing it as such, but outside the capital it is a significant cause of worry for drivers in the East Midlands (21%) closely followed by the West Midlands, the East of England and Yorkshire where it was named as a concern by 20% of motorists surveyed.

Of those who leave their cars at home for short journeys and use public transport instead, nearly a quarter (23%) said they have done so because they can't find affordable parking when they get to their destination. This problem appears to be worst in the North of England where nearly four in 10 (39%) cited it. Other areas where motorists believe this to be the case include the East of England (31%), Yorkshire (29%) and the South West (26%).

And, with cost being such a great concern it is perhaps no wonder that a whopping 84% of motorists think they are an easy target for local authorities

to raise revenue through parking fines.

Interestingly, while the average annual mileage driven by motorists in the RAC Report on Motoring 2016 has changed relatively little in the last 12 months, the difficulty in finding parking was cited as the most common reason for motorists using their vehicles less. In fact a quarter (24%) of those who use their cars less said this was a factor compared to only 14% who gave the same reason 12 months ago.

RAC chief engineer David Bizley said: “Motorists are very clearly more concerned about the availability and cost of parking than they were 12 months ago. This is a worrying finding as struggling to find somewhere to park and then having to pay through the nose to do so could have a very negative effect both on individuals who rely on their cars to go about their daily lives and on businesses in our town and city centres whose viability affects the prosperity of our high streets.

“We hope that the growing concern about the cost of parking is not symptomatic of a blatant attempt by operators to generate increased profits or by policymakers to force more people out of their cars and onto expensive or inadequate public transport instead – a case of using too much ‘stick’ and not enough ‘carrot’ when it comes to making motorists change behaviour.

“In fact, our research tells us that more than half of drivers (54%) would drive less if public transport was better and 44% of this group would use it more if the fares were not so high.

“Looking at a national level the Government has been slow to respond to the Department for Communities and Local Government discussion paper on tackling unfair parking practices. When they do publish their views we will study them very closely to understand the implications for motorists, but given that our findings show that cost and availability of parking is an increasing concern for motorists, the Government should make its views known sooner rather than later.

“In the meantime we urge the Government and local authorities to recognise the important role that parking fulfils in the health of local high streets, on employment and on local communities and to reflect this in both parking provision and the associated legislative framework.”

Notes to Editors

* The RAC Report on Motoring 2016 is based on a large-scale internet survey carried out by Quadrangle on behalf of the RAC. In total, Quadrangle interviewed 1,714 British motorists (i.e. those who hold a current driving licence and drive at least once a month). The survey was conducted in May 2016, with the questionnaire taking around 25 minutes to complete.

** www.confused.com/car-insurance/price-index/overall

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual Report on Motoring – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check RAC Fuel Watch or follow #racfuelwatch on Twitter. This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members'

vehicles going again

- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts

Press office team
Press Contact
For journalist enquiries only
Emails monitored during normal office hours
press.office@rac.co.uk
ISDN number on request