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Motorists not put off diesel by VW emissions scandal

Emissions scandal has damaged trust in all motor manufacturers

Lack of understanding about effects of diesel emissions

Drivers unconcerned about re-sale values being adversely affected

The Volkswagen emissions scandal has damaged motorists' trust in all vehicle manufacturers' environmental claims with six in 10 drivers (57%) saying they have lost confidence since the news broke, according to new RAC research.

There is also widespread belief among 66% of those surveyed that the emissions testing process in Europe is not close enough to real-world driving conditions, but while concern about diesel emissions has clearly gone up among the 2,565 motorists surveyed by the RAC, nearly three-quarters of drivers (73%) say they are generally more worried about fuel consumption than they are about health-harming emissions.

Half (55%) claim to be concerned about the impact that emissions of pollutants from diesel cars have on air quality in their area, but around 15% admitted they don't understand the impact of oxides of nitrogen emissions.

And, even though concerns amongst those surveyed about harmful oxides of nitrogen emissions from diesel vehicles have almost doubled (24% to 43%) since the late September announcement that VW had used software to defeat emissions tests, 96% of diesel drivers said they had no plans to reduce how

much they drive their vehicles.

Diesel as a vehicle fuel does not appear to have been damaged by the story dominating the headlines as, despite all the negative attention about the harmful effects of diesel emissions, there is no appetite among motorists for increasing the level of taxation charged on diesel cars. Nearly half of the motorists questioned (47%) disagreed with the idea that diesel cars should be taxed more than petrol cars, with three in 10 (29%) not having a view either way and less than a quarter (24%) in favour of higher charges for diesels.

Surprisingly, only a small minority (22%) of diesel vehicle owners have concerns that their cars will be harder to sell second-hand; over half (51%) have no such fears with a further quarter (27%) uncertain whether it will or won't affect re-sale. And, only a third (34%) believe the second-hand value of their diesel vehicle will be lower than it was before the VW revelations, with the remaining 63% harbouring no such concerns.

RAC chief engineer David Bizley said: "It's clear from our research that despite all the talk about the real world emissions of pollutants from diesel cars and light commercial vehicles exceeding test values, motorists are generally far more concerned about their vehicles' fuel economy than they are about its emissions of pollutants.

"While motorists are not oblivious to the harmful effects of diesel emissions, they are – perhaps understandably – far more concerned about fuel economy because of the impact that this has on household finances. This is in contrast to the invisible effects of oxides of nitrogen which have no immediate impact on their pockets unless they happen to live in one of the few areas where diesel vehicle ownership is penalised in some way.

"It is important to recognise that cars are only responsible for around 35% of overall oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) emissions in our city centres where air quality is poorest. The bulk of the remainder is emitted by buses, taxis and commercial vehicles. The majority of those surveyed were, perhaps not surprisingly, unaware of this figure, but it emphasises that actions to improve air quality must be prioritised to target the biggest generators of pollution and not seen as just another opportunity to generate more revenues for local authorities from cash-strapped motorists.

"The RAC believes that plans to improve air quality should focus on local

solutions through a national framework. Defra's recent proposals on improving air quality strike a promising balance between action at local and national levels, however, Defra needs to be clear about their assumptions on real world emissions compared to test results that underpin their modelling studies and the Government needs to ensure that any actions taken by local authorities are compatible with the Defra clean air zone framework."

* Research carried out online with the RAC Opinion Panel 15-22 October 2015 with 2,565 respondents.

Notes to Editors

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.

The RAC supports and is a founding member of [FairFuelUK](#) which campaigns for fairer taxes on petrol and diesel.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 34 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 98% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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