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## **Cost-of-living pressures cause a quarter of young drivers to put off needed car repairs**

**Inflation and the cost-of-living crisis are worryingly causing young drivers not to maintain their cars properly, risking their safety and that of other road users, research from the RAC has found\*.**

A quarter of young drivers aged 17-24 (26%) say they have put off necessary repairs to their cars to save money while nearly three-in-10 (28%) are not servicing their vehicles as frequently as they should. Seventeen per cent also

admit to taking the dangerous decision to avoid replacing their tyres. The comparison to drivers of all ages is stark as only around one-in-10 (8%) say they have made these cutbacks.

Overall, 38% of drivers say they have reduced their spending on their cars, whether that's switching to a cheaper insurer (19%), servicing their vehicles less (12%) or putting off needed repairs (11%). However, in sharp contrast nearly two-thirds (64%) of young drivers aged 17-24 say they have made some form of motoring cutbacks. Most concerning of all from a road safety perspective is the fact that 6% of this age group admit to the illegal step of deliberately avoiding putting their cars through their annual MOT. Furthermore, 9% of young drivers admit to having stopped servicing their vehicles altogether.

The research also found that 69% of drivers surveyed found the cost of servicing and repairing their vehicles has risen in the past year (62% in 2022). This figure rises dramatically to more than three-quarters of those under 25 (77%), which shows just how much of an impact rising prices are having on young drivers in particular. The parts of the UK that have felt the effects of these increases the most are the South West (76%) and Wales (76%) and London (70%).

The RAC's study also found that nine-in-10 (87%) young drivers questioned had made changes to the way they use their vehicles to save money, compared to three-quarters (76%) of drivers of all ages. Nearly half (46%) said they were avoiding more expensive fuel stations while a similar proportion (48%) claimed to have been driving more efficiently to make their fuel last as long as possible. And, more than a third (35%) said they had cut down on the number of long-distance trips they make.

**RAC Breakdown spokesperson Rod Dennis said:**

“It's clear from the findings of our research that inflation and the cost-of-living crisis are causing drivers to cut back on car repairs, which will almost certainly lead to an overall reduction in the roadworthiness of vehicles using the roads. But the sheer extent to which younger drivers are being affected by rising prices is also a major cause for concern. Many will be in older, cheaper vehicles anyway meaning the risks of something going wrong if they don't look after them properly could be higher than for the general driving population.

“As a country we can ill afford to have more unroadworthy cars being driven. Last year, an average of five people were killed on our roads every day, a figure that hasn’t reduced significantly in years. It’s also the case that young drivers are much more likely to be involved in collisions – in fact, young men aged between 17 and 24 are four times more likely to be killed or seriously injured compared with all car drivers aged over 25.

“This is why the RAC continues to oppose government proposals to increase the gap between mandatory MOTs for older vehicles from 12 months to two years. This was being billed as a cost-saving to drivers, but we strongly believe it would likely lead to an increase in the number of unroadworthy vehicles in circulation and could very well prove to be a false economy as a result of problems going undetected for longer, and ultimately costing more to repair. Our own research\*\* also found a clear majority of drivers did not support this idea, viewing it as potentially dangerous, so we urge the Government to publish its response to the consultation earlier this year and finally put the matter to rest.

“Proper car maintenance is not only vital for road safety, it also helps keep costs down in the long run. This is why we’re working hard to make it easier and more cost-effective for drivers to look after their cars. We’ve launched a new specially designed MOT product that, at £44.99, bundles the annual test at one of our 600 approved garages with a 20-point vehicle health check worth £20, along with £20 that can be redeemed against items bought from the online RAC Shop – including everything from new car batteries, to oil, wiper blades and replacement lightbulbs. It’s available exclusively via the [free myRAC app](#).

“We also now have Mobile Mechanics who can service or repair vehicles at customers’ homes or workplaces in 20 of the biggest cities – removing the hassle often associated with taking a car to a garage. Increasingly, when our patrols can’t fix members at the roadside, they will tow them home and then arrange for a Mobile Mechanic to come and repair the car.

“What’s more, with prices that rival many garages it can be a really affordable route to keeping a car in good working order, too.”

More information on servicing and repairs that can be delivered by the RAC’s team of Mobile Mechanics can be found online at [www.rac.co.uk/car-care/mobile-mechanic](http://www.rac.co.uk/car-care/mobile-mechanic).

Cost-conscious drivers can also save up to 6p a litre on fuel by downloading the [myRAC app](#) from the App Store or Google Play.

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\* RAC Report on Motoring 2023 – a nationally representative sample of 2,583 drivers. 30-minute survey run for the RAC by Online95

\*\* <https://media.rac.co.uk/news/mot-rules-could-be-eased-to-cut-costs-rac-reaction-460474>

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## About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to more than 13 million 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. The RAC is also at the forefront in helping drivers make the switch to electric vehicles and leads in the development of new solutions for businesses and OEMs, partnering with the best in the motoring and mobility space.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

## Contacts



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