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Majority of drivers left stumped by ‘garage speak’

More than half of drivers (56%) say they’ve been left struggling to understand the language used by garages when describing faults with cars and what needs to be done to fix them, new [RAC Breakdown](#) research shows.*

From odd terms like ‘big end’ (part of an engine) to acronyms such as AGM (a type of battery, not a meeting), DPF (a filter which helps clean up diesel exhausts) and TPMS (a system that monitors tyre pressure), the world of garage servicing and repairs has more than its fair share of words that have

the potential to baffle – which might explain why half of drivers surveyed (50%) feel they'd been overcharged or ripped off by a garage, with more than one-in-10 (15%) saying a garage carried out work they hadn't agreed to.

A quarter of drivers (26%) meanwhile felt the cost of repairs they ended up paying turned out to be far higher than they were quoted, while nearly a fifth (18%) said the garage could not repair their vehicle for them at all. Nearly half (46%) said they would be uneasy dealing with garages they didn't know.

To make things simpler for drivers who need to use a garage after their car breaks down, the RAC has introduced dedicated garage support across its range of [new breakdown assistance policies](#).** Drivers opting for the entry-level Standard package receive a fault report to help a garage understand what's wrong, while those opting for Advanced or Ultimate cover levels are given help finding and booking a garage, provided with repair estimates up-front, along with an explanation of the likely work needed, free of any 'garage lingo'.

The RAC has also developed a [guide to garage speak](#) that explains some often-used garage terms in simpler language.

RAC consumer roadside managing director Andy Baker said:

“These figures show there's a sizeable gulf between what garages say, and what the average driver actually understands. At best, this can be frustrating for drivers who need their vehicles repaired, but at worst it could mean they get a raw deal – with baffling language making it much more likely they approve any work, at any price they're quoted.

“And at the end of the day, getting the right repairs at a fair price shouldn't come down to how well drivers understand industry terms and acronyms. In a bid to overcome this language barrier we've included help in dealing with garages in all our new breakdown policies. This ranges from a patrol report that tells a garage what's likely to be wrong with a car, right up to our teams checking garage availability, getting a repair estimate and then talking through what needs to be done to get a car going again – minus the industry jargon – and even arranging priority access to an RAC Approved Garage.”

Support in dealing with garages is just one feature of the [new cover levels](#)

[from the RAC](#), all of which provide a 'complete breakdown service as standard' to customers for the first time, including 'rescue anywhere' and alternative transport provided as standard:

- With **Standard**, drivers get a 10-mile tow to the nearest garage if a vehicle can't be repaired at the roadside, plus a suspected fault diagnosis report to help the garage understand what's wrong. This is in addition to 'rescue anywhere' cover (at home or elsewhere in the UK), up to three call-outs a year and a 20-mile taxi ride for all passengers from the garage
- With **Advanced**, as well as a tow to anywhere in the UK if a vehicle can't be fixed at the roadside, drivers benefit from priority access to RAC Approved Garages – the patrol will contact up to three garages to see which can book the car in the soonest. The patrol will also get a repair estimate from the customer's chosen garage, and a full explanation of what's likely to be wrong in simple language will be given to the driver. Repairs will be covered by a 12-month warranty. This is on top of 'rescue anywhere' cover alongside unlimited call-outs, and customers will be kept mobile with taxis, hire car, hotel and/or public transport for up to two days to the value of £150
- With **Ultimate**, drivers enjoy all the benefits of Advanced plus a garage concierge service if the vehicle can't be fixed during the call-out, enabling customers to get a taxi from the scene while the vehicle is booked in and taken separately to the garage. They will also be kept moving with taxis, hire car, hotel and/or public transport for up to seven days to the value of £500.

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Notes to Editors

Every RAC Approved Garage works to both a COVID-19 code of conduct and customer charter approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

* 2,300 respondents who are members of the RAC Driver Opinion Panel were surveyed in August 2020

** For new UK breakdown cover only. Excludes Arrival, Business Breakdown, European Cover and RAC Essentials, and cover provided via corporate and insurance partners

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ISDN radio studio facilities are available for interviews Monday to Friday.

About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the UK, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers '[black box](#)' [telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **Other motoring services**. The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the RAC Opinion Panel. The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).