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## **RAC patrols attend 1,714 pothole-related breakdowns in Q4 2018**

**Despite the generally mild start to winter RAC patrols still dealt with 1,714 breakdowns in the last three months of 2018 that were more than likely caused by potholes or poor road surfaces.**

This number of call-outs for damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension springs and distorted wheels represented 0.8% of all the breakdowns the RAC attended on behalf of its individual members in the final three months of the year.

And, this in turn was the joint lowest percentage share of pothole-related faults seen by the roadside rescue organisation in the fourth quarter of any year since 2013, to the relief of UK drivers.

When looking at 2018 as a whole, RAC patrols attended 13,093 breakdowns related to poor road surface conditions which equated to 1.4% of all RAC call-outs – the lowest percentage recorded for any 12-month period since October 2017 (Q3 2017 – also 1.4%) but unfortunately still very close to the all-time high of 1.6% seen in Q3 and Q4 2017 and Q3 and Q4 2015.

However, in contrast to this improving picture, the Pothole Index\*, which is the RAC's most accurate long-term indicator of the health of the UK's roads, remains stubbornly high at 2.5. This means drivers are still two and a half times more likely to suffer a pothole-related breakdown than they were when the RAC first started analysing its data in this way 13 years ago in 2006.

In the third quarter of 2018 the index was at 2.63, so the latest figure is also an improvement on that as well as representing a third successive quarterly fall. The record high for the RAC Pothole Index figure was 3.5 in Q1 2010 when motorists were 3.5 times more likely to breakdown due hitting a pothole as they were in 2006.

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The poor state of local roads was identified to be the issue of greatest concern in the RAC's 2018 [Report on Motoring](#)\*\* with 42% of 1,808 drivers surveyed citing this as one of their top four concerns compared to 10% in

2017. Two-thirds (66%) also said the condition of local roads had deteriorated in the last 12 months which represents a worrying increase on 2017 when the percentage was 51%.

In addition, an RAC Freedom of Information request to the 212 councils in England, Scotland and Wales responsible for roads found 512,270 potholes were reported for repair in 2017 to 161 authorities – an increase of 44% on two years earlier.

RAC Breakdown spokesperson Simon Williams said: “Data gathered from the breakdowns RAC patrols attended in the final three months of 2018 shows a slightly more encouraging picture in relation to the quality of UK road surfaces. Unfortunately, while this is better news we are far from having the beautifully smooth roads that motorists would like.

“Those responsible for our roads have much to do to restore drivers’ faith as too many suffer the consequences of potholes on a daily basis. The next two quarters will be particularly telling if temperatures plummet and water gets into road defects and freezes and expands causing further deterioration in surfaces.

“We know local authorities are fighting an uphill road maintenance battle due to the difficult choices they have had to make in terms of where they spend their money. This is why we believe central government needs to give councils increased money for roads by ring-fencing a proportion of the existing £28bn they receive in fuel duty every year. This would help councils plan ahead more effectively, shifting focus away from just reactive maintenance to preventative action which would help stop potholes occurring in the first place.

“We feel it would be far fairer to road users if more of the tax generated by drivers was put towards the repair and maintenance of local roads. From April 2020 the National Roads Fund will come into action with the £6bn brought in from vehicle excise duty each year being ring-fenced for road maintenance and improvement as part of the Road Investment Strategy. We believe there is a need for a similar fund for local roads that can tackle the backlog of maintenance over a period of 10 years. The one-off cost of bring roads in England and Wales back to a fit-for-purpose state is estimated by the [Asphalt Industry Alliance](#) to be £9.3bn.”

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## **Notes to Editors**

\* The RAC Pothole Index is a 12-month rolling measure of the share of pothole fault breakdowns compared to 2006, corrected for seasonal weather effects and improving longer term vehicle reliability Data has been collected by the RAC since 2006. Data excludes punctures.

\*\* Research for the [RAC Report on Motoring](#) was conducted by Quadrangle using an online survey of 1,808 motorists who hold a full, current driving licence, drive at least once a month and who have a motor vehicle in their household. The research was carried out from 2-18 May 2018.

## **About the RAC**

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of drivers for more than 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and 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 drivers at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and 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](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

## Contacts



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