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Retailers take drivers for a ride by hiking petrol prices another 3p in November while wholesale prices fall

Drivers endured yet more pump price rises last month with retailers adding on average another 3.1p to a litre of unleaded and 2.7p to diesel, even though wholesale costs of both fuels were already lower and suddenly dropped even further, according to new analysis by [RAC Fuel Watch](#).*

Despite wholesale petrol prices tumbling 10p in November to their lowest levels since September, retailers actually continued to put prices up with the

average cost of a litre of unleaded ending the month at 147.28p. It was a similar picture for diesel, with prices up to 150.64p by 30 November in spite of wholesale costs having fallen by 7p from the middle of the month. Prices for both fuels peaked at record highs on 21 and 20 November respectively – petrol 147.72p per litre and diesel 151.1p.

The RAC believes there is absolutely no justification for the high prices being charged on forecourts and is pleading with retailers to cut pump prices immediately to fairer levels – by around 12p a litre for petrol and 7p for diesel – or clearly explain the reasons for charging the prices they are. This would reduce the average price of unleaded to 135p and diesel to 144p. At the moment, drivers of petrol cars are losing out to the tune of an incredible £5.5m a day based on current prices.**

The discovery of the Omnicron Covid variant is the reason for the sudden drop in wholesale prices towards the end of the month, with a barrel of oil falling to \$70.90 at the end of November, down from \$84.74 at the start.

The RAC believes the unjustified high cost of fuel is hurting drivers at the worst possible time with Christmas just around the corner and is adding to the unprecedented pressure on household incomes, especially among the less well-off.

RAC fuel spokesman Simon Williams said:

“Sadly, our data shows all too clearly that drivers are being taken for a ride by retailers at the moment. We can’t see any justification for the prices that are being charged at the pumps and are concerned that drivers on lower incomes who depend on their vehicles are being priced off the road altogether. The wholesale petrol price, which is what retailers pay to buy new supply, dropped by 10p from mid-November, so we can’t see how any increase – let alone a 3p one – was warranted.

“Much earlier in the pandemic we saw retailers’ margin on fuel understandably increase as the oil price plummeted on the back of people being told to stay at home. Despite the news of a new Covid variant, we are in a completely different world now with car use near to pre-pandemic levels so retailers shouldn’t be taking huge profits on every litre of fuel they sell. We therefore urge them to do the right thing and cut their prices to much fairer levels as matter of urgency.

“There’s also a clear argument that competition in fuel retailing isn’t working, a fact demonstrated by no one publicly defending their refusal to lower pump prices. There appears to be no desire among the big four retailers, which dominate fuel sales, to lower their prices to entice customers to store. If a major brand were to cut its prices tomorrow, you can guarantee that within hours the others would do the same. It would be much fairer if retailers mirrored wholesale prices more closely on a daily or weekly basis.

“We urge the Government to intervene now. It’s a sad fact that the Chancellor’s fuel duty freeze last month, while welcome, simply wasn’t anywhere near enough to ease the burden now being placed on millions of households who have no choice but to use their vehicles. While the Chancellor could introduce a temporary cut in VAT on motor fuel it might be better for the Government to ask the biggest retailers to explain why they’re charging such high prices for fuel when wholesale prices have dropped.

“Once again, the financial benefits of running an electric car for those drivers who can afford to make the switch are clear. Despite some public charging networks having increased their prices in recent weeks as a result of rising wholesale energy costs, drivers lucky enough to be able to charge at home can benefit from some excellent electricity deals, including [our own tariff](#) which can be fixed until June 2023 and currently costs just 6p per kilowatt hour overnight.”

RAC Fuel Watch data shows that the cheapest petrol currently on sale is from Asda supermarkets where a litre costs on average 144.47p, with Morrisons not far behind at 145.52p. It’s the same for diesel, with Asda charging 147.47p a litre and Morrisons 148.69p.

Regional pump prices compared

Unleaded	01/11/2021	30/11/2021	Change
UK average	144.17	147.28	3.11
East	144.75	147.99	3.24
East Midlands	144.23	147.35	3.12
London	144.43	147.39	2.96

North East	143.11	146.35	3.24
North West	143.94	147.08	3.14
Northern Ireland	142.13	144.65	2.52
Scotland	143.78	147.04	3.26
South East	144.93	148.11	3.18
South West	144.39	147.57	3.18
Wales	144.02	146.83	2.81
West Midlands	144.09	147.02	2.93
Yorkshire and The Humber	143.52	146.52	3.00

Diesel	01/11/2021	30/11/2021	Change
UK average	147.90	150.64	2.74
East	148.23	151.14	2.91
East Midlands	147.81	150.79	2.98
London	148.02	150.91	2.89
North East	147.49	149.97	2.48
North West	147.56	150.33	2.77
Northern Ireland	144.66	146.64	1.98
Scotland	148.11	150.71	2.60
South East	148.55	151.74	3.19
South West	148.41	151.18	2.77
Wales	147.96	150.42	2.46
West Midlands	147.90	150.67	2.77
Yorkshire and The Humber	147.85	150.32	2.47

[Find out more about UK petrol and diesel prices](#) on the RAC website.

* UK national average pump prices quoted are based on Experian Catalist data from 1-30 November 2021. Wholesale prices, oil price and the value of sterling are based on data from 1-30 November 2021.

** Based on UKPIA stating that around 46m litres of petrol are sold per day. Retail cost of this fuel based on 147p pump price is £67.6m; cost based on 135p pump price is £62.1m. Difference is £5.5m.

The press office email address is press.enquiries@rac.co.uk and media centre is at media.rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

About the RAC

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to 13 million UK 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](#).

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