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Motor Ombudsman Garage Finder searches increasingly popular

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MOT demand helps drive 82% increase in Motor Ombudsman Garage
finder searches during third quarter of 2020.



- The Motor Ombudsman's Garage Finder recorded an 82% rise in searches in the third quarter of 2020 when compared to the preceding three-month period
- The notable upsurge in search volume mirrors the heightened demand during recent weeks for MOTs, as consumers were urged to take their car in for the annual assessment to help reduce the burden on garages later in the year
- The re-opening of car showrooms may have equally contributed to the number of people using the Garage Finder when looking for a Motor Ombudsman-accredited business to buy a new or used car



The Motor Ombudsman, the fully impartial Ombudsman for the automotive sector, has recorded its highest number of searches on its online Garage Finder (TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder) for a single quarter during 2020. Between 1st July and 30th September, the tool was called on by users to locate a UK-based car retailer or repairer that is accredited to the Ombudsman's Service and Repair and Vehicle Sales Codes of Practice a combined total of 66,187 times. This represents a significant 82% rise in demand versus the previous three-month period (36,290 searches), and a slight increase on the figure seen between January and March (65,198). The near doubling of user searches during the last three months when compared to the previous quarter, mirrors the heightened consumer demand for MOTs following the lockdown period where many garages temporarily closed their doors, and 56% of motorists postponed the annual test using the government's six-month extension, according to a recent Motor Ombudsman poll. Owners have also been urged to get their vehicles tested prior to the expiry of the exemption in order to help alleviate the burden on MOT stations in the closing months of 2020, which resulted in a significant rise in throughput compared to what is ordinarily seen in a typical year. According to the latest figures from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), 310,000 more MOTs and retests were carried out in August this year compared to the same period in 2019, whilst a total of 3.7 million MOTs took place this September, which is around half a million higher than the monthly average seen during the 2019 to 2020 financial year (3.25 million)¹.

Furthermore, the re-opening of car showrooms for sales following the lifting of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in June, and people being encouraged to avoid public transport, may have equally contributed to the higher volume of searches in the third quarter, as individuals sought a local Motor Ombudsman-accredited retailer to buy a new or used car.



On average, 621 searches have taken place on The Motor Ombudsman's Garage Finder each day since the start of the decade, meaning that 25 have been recorded every hour or around one every two minutes. Highlighting its popularity, the online Garage Finder has consistently been one of the most visited pages on TheMotorOmbudsman.org this year, and gives consumers the ability to quickly view the profile of thousands of businesses located across the country and read the latest reviews and ratings posted by other motorists. In addition, car owners can also find out the services that a car dealership or independent garage offers, and click through to their website to make an enquiry or to book in work on their vehicle, thereby providing an important source of potential customer leads and revenue for businesses.

Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: "It is very encouraging to see that our online Garage Finder tool continues to be an important point of reference for consumers when looking to either buy a car or have one repaired, and that so many motorists recognise the benefits of using a business that has committed to the high standards required by our Motor Industry Codes of Practice."

Bill added: "With many MOTs still outstanding across the country, combined with the demand for regular routine maintenance, our Garage Finder will also continue to prove particularly beneficial to help find an alternative Motor Ombudsman-accredited business in their local area, should the consumer's regular garage be fully booked. With daily searches already averaging in excess of 700 in October, user traffic is showing no signs of slowing as we enter the last quarter of 2020."

To view the service and repair and vehicle sales businesses that are accredited to The Motor Ombudsman, visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/garage-finder.



About The Motor Ombudsman

The Motor Ombudsman is the fully impartial Ombudsman dedicated solely to the automotive sector, and self-regulates the UK's motor industry through its comprehensive Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Codes of Practice. Thousands of businesses, including vehicle manufacturers, warranty product providers, franchised dealers and independent garages, are accredited to one or more of the Codes, which drive even higher standards of work and service, and give consumers added protection, peace of mind and trust during the vehicle purchase and ownership experience.

For more information on The Motor Ombudsman, visit www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org.

