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Motor Ombudsman study reveals majority of car owners have used six-month extension to delay MOT

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MOT delay used by the majority of motorists...

More than half of car owners (56%), who had an MOT due between 30th March and 31st July 2020, chose to use the six-month extension to delay their car's test beyond the expiry date on their existing certificate, according to a YouGov poll commissioned by The Motor Ombudsman

Nearly three-quarters of motorists (72%) who had opted to prolong the annual safety assessment, have followed government advice and carried out regular maintenance checks on their vehicle prior to taking it to the garage for an MOT

- The study also found that making tests mandatory from 1st August has done little to create a renewed sense of urgency to book a test, with only 29% of people that had passed the original expiry date, stating they had done so



A YouGov poll commissioned by The Motor Ombudsman has found that the majority of car owners have taken advantage of the six-month extension announced by the government in March to delay getting an MOT. The study of 765 individuals in Great Britain, who have a car of three or more years of age, and that had an existing MOT certificate expiring between 30th March and 31st July 2020, revealed that 56% had exercised their right to prolong taking their vehicle to a garage for the compulsory annual test. The research conducted by the fully impartial Ombudsman dedicated solely to the automotive sector, that has thousands of UK businesses accredited to its Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI)-approved Motor Industry Code of Practice for Service and Repair, showed that of these individuals who chose to leave their MOT until a different time, just over a third (36%) stated that they would be organising for the safety assessment to be carried out either before or on the newly-extended due date. A further one in five (20%) said that they had let the original deadline given to them in 2019 pass, but had used the additional window to get their car's MOT completed ahead of schedule, rather than waiting until the last possible day. The findings of the research echoed data provided by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), showing that nearly 4.9 million Class 4 MOTs, which includes passenger cars, were conducted between 1st April and 30th June 2020. This represents a decline of more than 50% when compared to the 10.3 million Class 4 tests undertaken in the very same period a year earlier.

For owners who had opted to benefit from the MOT extension, nearly three quarters (72%) had taken heed of government advice, and had (30%) or were continuing (42%) to perform regular safety checks to ensure that the oil level and tyre pressures met vehicle manufacturer-recommended levels before taking their car in for its delayed MOT. Those living in Scotland, and vehicle owners aged over 55 years were the most conscientious when it came to routine maintenance, with 91% and 76% of people in these respective groups stating that they had kept or are keeping a regular eye on their car. Conversely, 22% had not paid any attention to their vehicle or could not recall doing so (6%), with 25 to 34-year-olds and individuals residing in the South being the least likely people to look under the bonnet to see if anything had to be topped up (27%).

Following the recent announcement by government that MOTs would once again become mandatory for cars that needed to be tested from 01st August onwards, the poll showed that this had not driven any sense of urgency amongst consumers to get their MOTs booked if their original certificate had expired. In fact, only 29% of respondents stated that they had organised the annual test for their vehicle.

Commenting on the research, Bill Fennell, Chief Ombudsman and Managing Director of The Motor Ombudsman, said: "The results of our study and wider industry data clearly shows that there is cause for worry, due to the number of potentially unsafe cars on the road that have not had their MOT. This is compounded by the concern that the recent government announcement has created very little impetus to buck this trend. If their personal situation allows, and with many garages and repairers once again opening their doors following the lifting of recent lockdown restrictions, we are urging consumers to take their cars for the annual assessment as soon as possible. This means that they will have a better chance of securing a booking, and will also help to alleviate a large build-up of outstanding tests that could leave MOT stations unable to cope at a later date."

Bill added: "Since the start of the Coronavirus lockdown period, we have regularly updated our online Knowledge Base to help address some of the most common consumer questions around the guidance issued by government on MOTs and other pertinent subjects, and to reinforce the importance of maintaining and keeping a car in a roadworthy condition at all times."



About The Motor Ombudsman

The Motor Ombudsman is the automotive dispute resolution body. Fully impartial, it is the first ombudsman to be focused solely on 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 The Motor Ombudsman media contact:

About the YouGov survey data:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,330 GB adults, of which 765 had a car that was three or more years of age, and that had an MOT due between 30th March and 31st July 2020. Fieldwork was undertaken between 3rd - 5th August 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Highlights of research results:

1. On 25th March 2020, in response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown, the UK Government extended the expiry date for a car's MOT certificate by six months if it was due between 30th March 2020 and 31st July 2020...Which ONE, if any, of the following BEST describes your situation in relation to the MOT for your car?

1. a) I took my car for its MOT before or on the expiry date of the original certificate issued to



me following last year's test (i.e. in 2019) 44%

2. b) The original expiry date marked on my current certificate has passed, but I am planning to take my car for its MOT before or on the actual expiry date of the extended certificate 36%

3. c) The original expiry date marked on my current certificate has passed, but I have now taken my car for its MOT by using the extension (e.g. the MOT was due on the 5th April 2020, but you took the car for its MOT on 1st August 2020) 20%

2. For this question, by "recommended vehicle safety checks", we mean checking the level of engine oil, windscreen washer fluid and tyre pressure as examples of checks. You previously said that you delayed your MOT in line with the six-month extension...Which ONE of the following statements BEST applies to you?

1. a) I have carried out the recommended vehicle safety checks despite having had my MOT carried out beyond the expiry date of the original certificate issued in 2019 30%

2. b) I have delayed carrying out my MOT in line with the six-month extension, but I haven't done any checks and have no plans to carry out any recommended vehicle safety checks before taking my car for its MOT 22%

3. c) I have delayed carrying out my MOT in line with the six-month extension, but have and will continue to carry out the recommended vehicle safety checks until I take my car for its MOT 42%

4. d) Can't recall 6%

3. On 29th June 2020, the UK Government announced that mandatory MOT testing was to be reintroduced for cars due for their MOT test on 1st August 2020 or later... Which ONE, if any, of the following statements best applies to you?

1. a) This announcement encouraged me to book my MOT earlier than needed 9%

2. b) This announcement did not encourage me to book my MOT, and I have not done this yet 50%

c) This announcement had no impact at all, as I had already booked my MOT 29%

d) Other 12%



Class 4 MOTs carried out in April to June 2020 versus April to June 2019:

Data provided by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) shows that nearly 4.9 million Class 4 MOTs, which includes passenger cars, were conducted between 1st April and 30th June 2020. This represents a decline of more than 50% when compared to the 10.3 million Class 4 tests conducted in the very same period a year earlier (see the table below).

2019

April 3,328,057

May 3,619,924

June 3,310,413

TOTAL 10,258,394

2020

April 832,867

May 1,407,611

June 2,622,920

TOTAL 4,863,398



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