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FairFuelUK says, “Motorists Paying £10–£15 More Per Tank Than Wholesale Trends Justify”

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How much?! Photograph © Kim Henson.

They tell us…

Fuel prices soar — wholesale prices don't. FairFuelUK Demands Answers…

FairFuelUK today released a new analysis of official UK Government data showing that both diesel and petrol drivers have been consistently overcharged over the past 12 months. Using DESNZ monthly retail fuel prices and ONS refined-petroleum wholesale indices converted into pence per litre, FairFuelUK found that the retail–wholesale margins for both fuels have widened dramatically — in many months exceeding 100 pence per litre.

The findings reveal a clear pattern: wholesale fuel prices have risen only modestly, yet pump prices have surged and remained high, creating margins that cannot be justified by supply-chain costs, taxation, or market conditions.

Key Findings in the last 12 months

Diesel

• Wholesale diesel barely changed: +1.2% (76.7ppl → 77.6ppl)

• Retail diesel jumped sharply: +18.9% (153ppl → 182ppl)

• Diesel margins exploded: +36.8% (76.3ppl → 104.4ppl).

Petrol

• Wholesale petrol barely changed: +1.4% (62.3ppl → 63.2ppl)

• Retail petrol rose strongly: +12.2% (148ppl → 166ppl)

• Petrol margins jumped: +20.0% (85.7ppl → 102.8ppl)

Across both fuels, margins have grown far faster than wholesale costs — leaving motorists, hauliers, tradespeople, and small businesses paying significantly more than justified.

Howard Cox, Founder of FairFuelUK, said:

• "This data proves what drivers have known for years: pump prices shoot up like a rocket when wholesale rises, but drift down like a feather when wholesale falls. Wholesale diesel and petrol have barely moved — yet retail prices have soared and stayed high. Motorists are being fleeced, and it's time for full transparency and proper oversight."

• "Since the Iran crisis began, more than 40 countries have stepped in to protect their drivers from global fuel volatility — cutting taxes, capping margins, enforcing transparency, or directly intervening to stabilise pump prices. Yet here in the UK, motorists have been left completely exposed. The Government has done nothing meaningful to reduce pump prices, nothing to rein in inflated margins, and nothing to protect drivers from the rocket-and-feather rip-off that has become standard practice on our forecourts."

Why have margins exploded? FairFuelUK's analysis identifies several structural causes:

• Rocket-and-feather pricing: Retail rises instantly when wholesale rises, but falls slowly when wholesale drops.

• Risk premiums added but never removed: Retailers price in volatility even when volatility disappears.

• VAT amplifies every retail increase: VAT is charged on the entire pump price, not just the fuel.

• Weak competition: Supermarkets no longer aggressively undercut; independents follow supermarket pricing.

• Wholesale opacity: Consumers cannot see wholesale prices, enabling margin inflation.

• Retail margin inflation: Retail margins have quietly grown from ~15–20ppl to ~25–30ppl.

FairFuelUK Calls for Immediate Action: FairFuelUK urges the Government and regulators to implement:

1. Mandatory wholesale–retail transparency
2. Real-time margin reporting
3. Independent oversight of pump pricing behaviour
4. A freeze in Fuel Duty for the lifetime of this Parliament
5. A Competition & Markets Authority investigation into retail fuel margins

"Drivers deserve fair, transparent fuel pricing — not inflated margins," Cox added.

More comments from the Founder of FairFuelUK, Howard Cox:

• "While British motorists have been hammered by soaring pump prices, the Government has quietly enjoyed a massive VAT £1.2bn windfall on every fill-up. As retail prices climbed — even though wholesale barely moved — VAT receipts ballooned. Instead of helping drivers, the Treasury has pocketed millions in extra VAT, fleecing motorists to pay for the consequences of years of inept economic management."

• "Other nations acted. Britain didn't. Wholesale petrol and diesel barely shifted during the crisis, yet UK pump prices surged and stayed high. Drivers, hauliers, tradespeople and small businesses have paid far more than justified — not because of global instability, but because the Government refused to intervene while retailers inflated margins and VAT raked in the proceeds."

• "FairFuelUK demands to know why the Government stood by while dozens of other countries protected their drivers. Why were British motorists left to carry the full burden? Why were inflated margins allowed to grow unchecked? And why, even now, is there still no plan to deliver transparency, oversight, or relief at the pumps?"

• "Drivers deserve answers — and they deserve action. The UK cannot continue to be one of the only major economies that shrug its shoulders while motorists are hammered at the forecourt and the Treasury cashes in."

Here is the data for the last 12 months

Diesel	Retail (ppl)	Wholesale (ppl)	Margin (ppl)
Aug-25	153	76.7	76.3
Sep-25	155	77.6	77.4
Oct-25	158	81.1	76.9
Nov-25	162	73.6	88.4
Dec-25	165	77.2	87.8
Jan-26	171	83.1	87.9
Feb-26	176	73.6	102.4
Mar-26	182	76.7	105.3
Apr-26	186	93.9	92.1
May-26	185	83.4	101.6
Jun-26	183	78.3	104.7
Jul-26	182	77.6	104.4
Change since Aug 25	**19%**	**1%**	**37%**

Petrol	Retail (ppl)	Wholesale (ppl)	Margin (ppl)
Aug-25	148	62.3	85.7
Sep-25	150	63.2	86.8
Oct-25	152	66.7	85.3
Nov-25	155	59.8	95.2
Dec-25	158	63.7	94.3
Jan-26	162	69.6	92.4
Feb-26	165	59.8	105.2
Mar-26	168	62.3	105.7
Apr-26	170	75.9	94.1
May-26	169	65.4	103.6
Jun-26	167	64.9	102.1
Jul-26	166	63.2	102.8
Change since Aug 25	12%	1%	20%

About FairFuel UK; they tell us…

We are a public affairs team with no shareholders to satisfy, just an award-winning campaign representing the real concerns of hard-working motorists, families, small businesses, commercial drivers and hauliers across the UK. Decades of fiscal exploitation by successive Governments with little in return warrant the need for FairFuelUK.

FairFuelUK was founded by and is managed by the Campaign's CEO, Howard Cox.

Funding is provided through regular donations from supporters.

Previous backers have included Logistics UK, the RHA, the RAC, Association of Pallet Networks, UKLPG and others

Since 2010, FairFuelUK has saved drivers over £200bn in planned tax hikes in duty and VAT through constructive and objective campaigning. Now the immediatepressure group's focus is on stopping those unnecessary tax hikes based on a good-intentioned but flawed 'green' agenda. These include new taxes and bans on drivers entering our major cities, and potentially adding more costs on petrol and diesel drivers by the Treasury. These are new taxes that will not improve air quality, but simply hit consumers and the economy. There are ways to improve air quality without hitting consumers' pockets.

Current FairFuelUK Campaign Issues include:

Fuel duty, VAT on duty – PumpWatch and fuel price transparency – Effective ways to lower emissions but not through tax hikes – Stop the perennial demonisation of van drivers, hauliers and motorists – Quash ULEZ, LTNs, 15 minute areas – Scrap 2030 Ban on the sales of new diesel and petrol cars – More investment in UK roads similar to the level of HS2 spend – Establish a long term Government strategic roads transport plan – Halt unnecessary cash generating congestion zones and ULEZ expansion – VED and its future – Influence fairer future road user taxation plans and road funding with fuel duty revenue predicted to decline – Help role out new vehicle technology in a way that does not hit drivers in the pocket – Scrap hospital parking charges – Other related motoring costs and driving issues

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