

Fuel Costs Climb Across UK Despite Drop in Global Oil Prices

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Fuel prices in the UK have continued to rise despite a recent decline in global oil prices, with the average cost of filling up a 55-litre family car now reaching £73.78 for petrol and £77.67 for diesel, according to figures from the RAC.

The latest data reveals that petrol prices have increased by £1.06, while diesel has surged by £1.55. Supermarket fuel outlets saw slightly smaller rises, with petrol averaging 130.26p per litre and diesel at 136.67p. Northern Ireland continues to offer the most affordable rates in the UK, with unleaded fuel priced at 128p per litre and diesel at 134p.

The rise in fuel costs follows recent volatility in global oil markets triggered by renewed tensions in the Middle East. Last month, crude oil prices climbed from \$64 to \$79 per barrel. Although prices have since dropped back to around \$67 per barrel, this relief has not yet been reflected at the pumps, leaving consumers to absorb the higher costs.

Simon Williams, a spokesperson for the RAC, criticised fuel retailers for failing to reduce prices in line with falling wholesale costs. He described the coming month as a critical period, stating that July will reveal whether retailers are prepared to lower prices or whether drivers will continue to face inflated costs. Williams pointed out that although fuel prices are still below the record highs of 2022, they remain a major expense for many households, especially amid ongoing cost-of-living pressures.

The Competition and Markets Authority has also raised concerns about the lack of competition in the fuel retail sector. It recently concluded that weak competition and high retailer margins were contributing to inflated prices, preventing savings from being passed on to motorists.

To address this issue, the government is expected to launch a Fuel Finder scheme later this year, backed by the RAC. The initiative aims to provide consumers with real-time access to the cheapest local fuel prices, promoting greater pricing transparency and encouraging competition among retailers.

As fuel remains an essential expense for millions of UK drivers, especially those in rural areas or reliant on personal vehicles for work, calls for fairer pricing and stronger oversight continue to grow. Whether retailers respond by adjusting their prices remains to be seen in the weeks ahead.