

Runaway petrol prices finally plateau at 97 pence per litre

After two months of rapidly rising car fuel prices, the average cost of petrol and diesel for May finally settled at 96.8 and 99.0 pence per litre respectively, staying relatively static over the past week, says The AA Motoring Trust.

However, compared to last months average prices (94.6 and 97.8 p/ltr), this is still up more than two pence for petrol and just over a penny more for diesel. The monthly cost of refuelling for a family with both parents driving petrol cars has gone up 5 since mid April¹.

The price of crude oil continued to rise through the second half of April and reached a peak of over \$74 a barrel in the first week of May falling back to around \$70 by mid May. This increase drove prices at the pumps up sharply to record levels, with petrol reaching 96.81p a litre on 8 May and diesel 99.19p on 4 May.

East Anglia remains the most expensive region for petrol at 97.3 pence per litre, having shared the top spot with Wales at 95.1 pence per litre in April. As a whole, the UK retails the fifth most expensive petrol, behind Belgium, Denmark, Holland and Norway.

A more stable car fuel price is hardly a cause of celebration, particularly with petrol starting the year 8.5 pence lower. However, the relentless penny-a-week increase in April appears to have stalled, giving the beleaguered British motorist some hope for the summer, says Ruth Bridger, petrol analyst for The AA Motoring Trust.

The same cannot be said for drivers in rural communities, many of whom have been paying above a 1 a litre for weeks. With reports of local authorities switching financial resources from local bus subsidies to keep school buses on the road, a drop in the price of road fuels cant come soon enough.

NOTE TO EDITORS: ¹ A petrol car in the UK consumes on average 1363 litres of petrol per day. At 94.6 pence per litre, it costs 107.45 per month to run. At 96.8 pence per litre, it costs 109.95 per month.

With the price of petrol starting the year at 88.32 pence per litre, or 100.32 per month, the average UK car owner is now spending nearly 10 a month more on petrol.