



Local roads were said to be in a “parlous state”

ALAMY

## Vehicle pothole damage rises by 40% in a year

[Graeme Paton](#), Transport Correspondent

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The number of cars damaged by potholes has risen by more than a third in a year, prompting criticism that roads resemble the “surface of the moon”.

Research published today by the RAC found that 4,694 call-outs were made during the first three months of this year for damage traditionally caused by [holes in the road](#), including broken suspension springs, distorted wheels and damaged shock absorbers.

This was up 37 per cent since the same point in 2020 despite

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The number rose threefold from 1,461 in the final three months of 2020 before the worst of the winter weather. This was the largest quarterly rise in breakdowns related to potholes since 2006.

The RAC said local roads were already in a “parlous state” and the freezing conditions at the start of the year had led to large parts of the network crumbling away. Motorists were being left with with large bills for vehicle damage, it added.



Defective road surfaces were a contributory factor in 671 injuries and ten fatalities on UK roads in 2019 – often when cyclists were thrown from bikes after hitting a hole.

Much of the blame has been laid on historical underfunding of local roads.

The UK government is investing more than £1.1 billion in the local network in England in 2021-22, and funding has risen sharply in recent years.

However, research last month suggested that councils were facing a backlog of £10.2 billion to repair local roads. It means many authorities are resorting to a “patch and mend” approach to roads rather than prioritising more expensive long-term

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The study also found that local roads were being completely resurfaced only every 68 years on average.

Nicholas Lyes, head of roads policy at the RAC, said: “Many drivers are having to use roads that in places better resemble the surface of the moon and, as our figures show, thousands are suffering from unnecessary and costly breakdowns caused by potholes. The quieter roads brought about by national lockdowns could have been an ideal time for councils to start to fix problem road surfaces . . . Sadly, our data suggests this may not have been the case.”

Transport

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