

North South divide as garage charges top £183 an hour

With garages charging up to £183.30 an hour for a mechanic, it's no surprise to hear that British motorists forked out more than £3.7bn on labour to fix their cars last year.

The unique Warranty Direct Labour Rates Survey 2007, which compares franchised and independent garages, also highlighted the massive North South divide when it comes to the cost of motoring. Visitors to www.labourrates.co.uk can now check regional differences for mechanic labour charges.

For every £100 spent at a garage, £63 is spent on materials and £37 on labour according to analysis of Warranty Direct data*. In total, motorists spent nearly £10bn** last year servicing and repairing their vehicles, and paid for more than 504,000 mechanic hours.

Unsurprisingly, Greater London is the most expensive region in the country with an average labour rate of £89.78 per hour when combining both franchised and independent garages.

The Capital was also home to the most expensive dealer in the country charging an incredible £183.30 an hour – the equivalent of 41 gallons of fuel or 1,500 miles***.

The ten highest counties were all from the South of England, including Hertfordshire (£86.68), Essex (£80.20) and Berkshire (£78.76).

	Ten Most Expensive Regions	Average Cost of Mechanic per hour		Top Least Expensive Regions	Average Cost of Mechanic per hour
1	Greater London	£89.78	1	Fife	£55.40
2	Hertfordshire	£86.68	2	Pembrokeshire	£56.83
3	Surrey	£84.91	3	Angus	£57.98
4	Buckinghamshire	£81.65	4	Aberdeenshire	£58.94
5	Dorset	£80.45	5	Highland	£60.01
6	Essex	£80.20	6	Lancashire	£61.67
7	Wiltshire	£79.44	7	Cumbria	£62.44
8	Oxfordshire	£79.14	8	Northumberland	£62.49
9	Berkshire	£78.76	9	Cornwall	£62.68
10	Bedfordshire	£78.52	10	Perth & Kinross	£62.88

Conversely, the cheapest part of the country found by Warranty Direct was Fife with garages charging £55.40 on average. Besides Cornwall (£62.68), Lancashire at £61.67 an hour was the most southerly region in the ten least expensive areas.

There remains a significant difference between choosing a franchised dealership over an independent garage at £89.31 and £49.92 an hour nationwide, respectively.

The data is based on labour rates from more than 3,856 franchised and independent garages across the UK.

For further information visit www.warrantydirect.co.uk or www.labourrates.co.uk.

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* Based on analysis of more than 60,000 Warranty Direct policies

** http://www.of.gov.uk/shared_of/reports/consumer_protection/of683.pdf

*** Based on petrolprices.com average of 96.8p litre of unleaded petrol and a car returning 36mpg on the combined cycle.