



TYRECHECK 2025

A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF UK TYRE STANDARDS

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WELCOME

Tyre safety in the UK has improved over the last 25 years and we're proud of the role NTDA members have played in making that happen. Since the first TyreCheck in 2000 highlighted the risks posed by illegal and damaged tyres, much progress has been made. But this only tells half the story. In 2025, with new risks emerging and regional disparities widening, it is clear the work is far from over.

This latest report, TyreCheck 2025, is the most comprehensive tyre safety survey ever undertaken in the UK. Covering over 58,000 vehicles, it doesn't just revisit the ground broken in 2000 – it digs deeper, goes further and tells a far more detailed story.

This report was commissioned because tyre safety is not just a technical issue, it's a public safety obligation. It shows there are areas where tyre safety is strong but also highlights fresh challenges. It gives a voice to the data, uncovers the emerging "barely legal" tyre trend and shines a light on regional tyre safety crises that need immediate attention.

From Glasgow's high-performing results to the urgent situation in Halesowen, this is a report of lessons and opportunities. It proves that better outcomes are possible and it reminds us that legal doesn't always mean safe.

I hope this report gives you the insight you need to take action, whether that's within your own business or across the wider industry. Let's move beyond minimum standards and drive tyre safety forward, together.

Kindest regards,

Ian Andrew
NTDA Chief Executive
July 2025

*The TyreCheck 2025
campaign offers a
uniquely detailed picture
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over a quarter of a
century...*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The TyreCheck 2025 campaign marks a significant milestone in UK road safety, building directly on the groundwork laid 25 years ago by TyreCheck 2000. This latest study takes a major step forward, analysing tyre safety on 58,209 vehicles — a 55.2% increase in sample size compared to the 37,500 tyres examined at the turn of the millennium. The findings offer a uniquely detailed picture of how maintenance habits and safety standards have shifted over a quarter of a century.

At its core is a national survey of 54,704 vehicles checked across 141 locations spanning nine UK regions. This was supported by in-depth week-long studies in Glasgow (1,584 vehicles) and Surrey & Hampshire (1,546 vehicles), alongside a separate detailed report from Northern Ireland covering 375 vehicles. The focused studies went further than just checking tread depth. They examined wear patterns, repairability and structural issues reinforcing the point that while tread depth is what the law focuses on, it is only one part of overall tyre safety.

By combining wide national coverage with focused regional deep-dives, the campaign reveals both encouraging progress and persistent problems. Illegal tyres (defined as those worn below the 1.6mm legal minimum) are now less common than in 2000. But there has been a sharp rise in tyres that, while technically legal (1.6–2.0mm), offer far less grip and safety, especially in wet conditions. This shift suggests that while the most serious tyre failures may be on the decline, a new risk category is emerging that is putting drivers and road users at risk.

The picture also varies drastically from place to place. Glasgow and Surrey & Hampshire delivered stand-out results, showing that high safety standards are possible. In contrast, the Northern Ireland study uncovered a worrying proportion of vehicles still running on illegal tyres and there emerged some concerning safety critical hotspots elsewhere ■



INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND DATA ANALYSIS

Launched in May 2000 under the BIPAVER umbrella, TyreCheck 2000 was Europe's first coordinated tyre safety campaign, with the NTDA spearheading and managing the UK initiative. The campaign's primary objective was to provide a comprehensive snapshot of car tyre condition, including tread depth, pressure, wear patterns and damage assessment, as recorded by retailers during tyre replacements or general tyre safety checks.



The original campaign was sponsored by all major tyre manufacturers and formed part of a broader European effort to raise awareness about the critical importance of tyre maintenance and the inherent dangers associated with illegal and poorly maintained tyres. The data gathered supported the push for increasing the legal minimum tread depth, a debate that continues to influence policy discussions today.

In 2000, the campaign ran for one week and involved NTDA members checking over 37,500 tyres across the United Kingdom. The results were alarming: 10% of tyres were found to be below the 1.6mm legal minimum tread depth, while an additional 17% had tread depths under 2mm (which was being proposed at that time as the new legal minimum). Furthermore, 26% of tyres showed signs of damage and 46% were found to be incorrectly inflated.

The 2025 iteration of TyreCheck is a significant evolution compared to its predecessor. Running from 19 to 23 May 2025, the campaign was open to all NTDA tyre retailers, including the association's extensive network of mobile tyre fitting members. The submitted results have been compiled from four data collection streams:

National Survey: The primary dataset looked at 54,704 vehicles across 141 distinct locations spanning nine regions throughout the United Kingdom. This distribution closely mirrors the UK vehicle car parc.

Glasgow Focused Study: Two focused, week-long tyre inspections were conducted by NTDA member

technicians. The first was across five depots in the Glasgow area, recording very detailed data on tyre conditions for 1,584 vehicles (1,454 cars and 130 LCVs). This included assessments of tyre condition, wear levels, repairability and more.

Surrey & Hampshire Focused Study: Intensive inspections across five depots in Aldershot, Alton, Farnham and Guildford examined 1,546 vehicles (1,337 cars and 209 LCVs) with detailed condition assessments.

Northern Ireland Focused Study: A comprehensive examination of 375 vehicles (330 cars and 45 LCVs) in the Limavady area provided detailed insights into pressure conditions, visual damage assessment and the severe tyre safety challenges facing this region. The expanded framework of the focused studies provided insights into tyre safety factors beyond the basic legal requirements, offering a more complete picture of vehicle safety standards.

DATA CLASSIFICATION

TyreCheck 2025's tyre condition classification system has three primary categories:

Illegal Tyres (1.6mm tread depth and below):

Tyres falling below the legal minimum tread depth as defined by UK road traffic legislation. These tyres represent an immediate safety hazard and legal liability for vehicle operators.

Barely Legal Tyres (1.6 to 2.0mm tread depth):

Tyres that meet the minimum legal requirement but fall



within a range where safety performance is significantly compromised, particularly in wet weather conditions. This category represents a critical safety margin that, while legally compliant, poses elevated risks.

Legal Tyres (above 2.0mm tread depth): Tyres exceeding the 2.0mm threshold, generally considered to provide adequate safety performance across a range of driving conditions.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

The regional analysis framework divides the United Kingdom into nine distinct regions:

- ▶ Central
- ▶ East
- ▶ North-East
- ▶ Northern Ireland
- ▶ North-West & North Wales
- ▶ Scotland
- ▶ South & West Wales
- ▶ South-East
- ▶ South-West

This classification allows for meaningful comparison of tyre safety standards across different geographic, economic and demographic contexts, while the focused studies provide detailed case studies of specific regional performance patterns ■

*The findings of
TyreCheck 2025 tell
a mixed story of
progress and persistent
problems...*



OVERALL NATIONAL STATISTICS

The TyreCheck 2025 campaign stands as the most in-depth inspection of tyre conditions ever carried out in the UK. Compared to the 37,500 vehicles checked back in 2000, the jump to 58,209 vehicles is not just a broader sweep of data, but shows a stronger, industry-wide push for safety oversight.

The findings tell a mixed story of progress and persistent problems. On the positive side, the number of vehicles with outright illegal tyres (those worn below the 1.6mm legal minimum) has dropped from 10.0% in 2000 to 7.69% in 2025. That's a 2.31 percentage point drop, showing that the worst offenders are becoming less common on UK roads.

But where one problem has eased, another has grown. Tyres sitting just above the legal threshold (1.6 to 2.0mm) now account for 31.79% of vehicles – up from 17.0% in 2000. That's a sharp 14.79 percentage point rise and it signals a shift toward last-minute tyre replacement where drivers are legally compliant but edging into dangerous territory.

VEHICLE ANALYSIS: PASSENGER VS LCV

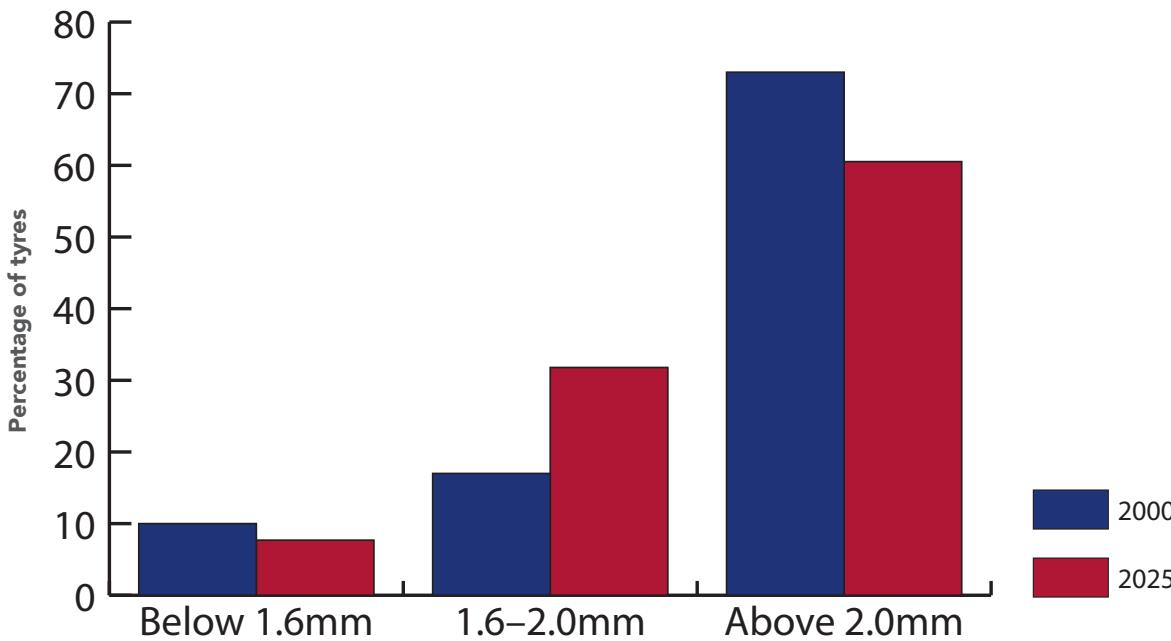
The national survey component examined 54,704 vehicles across 141 locations. It was made up of

52,339 passenger cars (95.7%) and 2,365 LCVs (4.3%). The analysis of passenger cars reveals 4,042 vehicles (7.72%) with illegal tyres and 17,505 vehicles (33.45%) with barely legal tyres, indicating that 41.17% of passenger cars examined presented some level of elevated safety risk. The remaining 30,792 passenger cars (58.83%) maintained safe tyre conditions. LCVs had slightly higher illegal tyre rates, with 205 vehicles (8.67%) falling below the legal minimum and 850 vehicles (35.93%) just above the threshold. This higher rate among commercial vehicles may reflect the increased operational demands and potentially different maintenance practices associated with commercial vehicle operations ■

Add it all up, and nearly two in every five vehicles on UK roads today (39.48%) are running on tyres that either break the law or barely meet it. While the remaining 60.52% are equipped with tyres above 2.0mm and considered safe across most conditions, the margin for error is narrowing fast.



TYRE ANALYSIS TREAD DEPTH COMPARISON: 2000 AND 2025



REGIONAL BREAKDOWN AND ANALYSIS

The national survey encompasses nine distinct regions, each presenting unique challenges and performance patterns. This regional analysis reveals substantial disparities in tyre safety standards, with illegal tyre rates ranging from exceptional performance in some areas to concerning levels requiring immediate intervention in others.

REGIONAL PERFORMANCE RANKINGS

The TyreCheck 2025 data reveals stark regional disparities in tyre safety standards across the United Kingdom.

Northern Ireland emerges as the region requiring most urgent attention. In the national survey, 558 vehicles were examined and results showed 114 vehicles with illegal tyres – that's 20.4% of vehicles, a rate that is more than double the national average. The focused Northern Ireland study provides additional context, examining 375 vehicles and finding an even more concerning 57.3% illegal tyre rate, suggesting that the challenges in this region may be more severe than initially indicated by the main survey data.

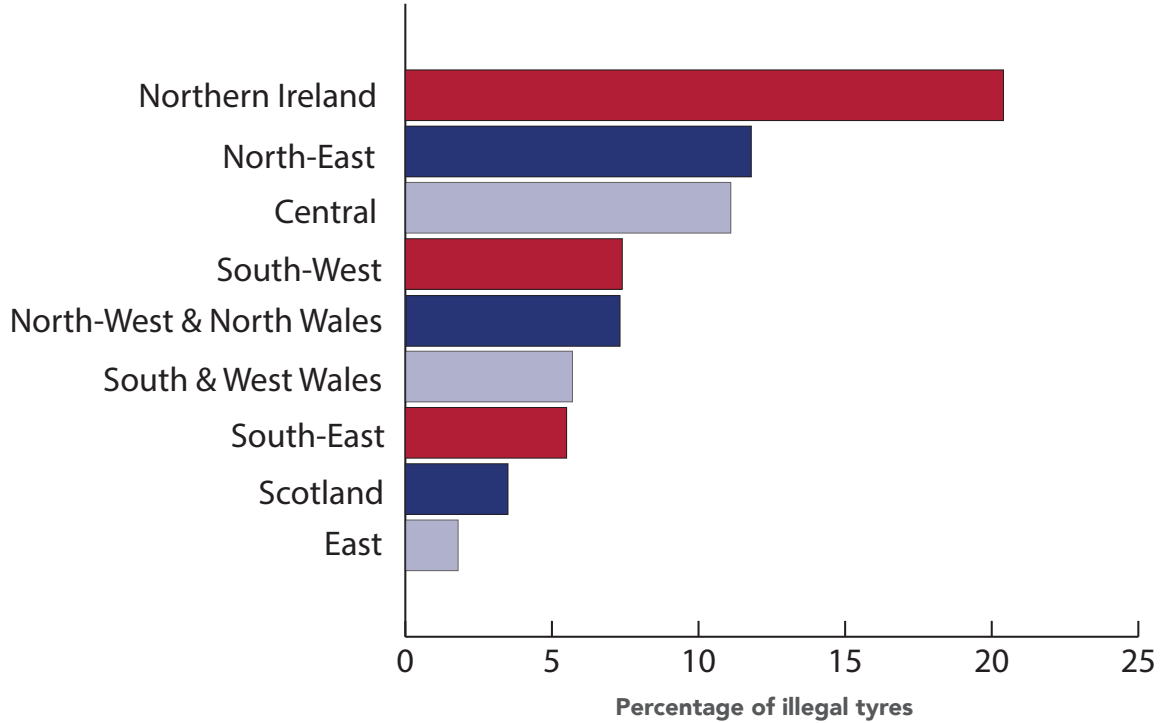
North-East England has the second-highest illegal

tyre rate at 11.8%, with 537 of 4,552 vehicles examined falling below the legal minimum. This region encompasses major urban centres including Sheffield, which recorded a 25.6% illegal tyre rate, and Bradford with 18.3% illegal tyres. The consistently elevated rates across multiple locations in this region suggest systemic challenges requiring coordinated intervention.

Central England ranks third with 11.1% illegal tyres, but this region contains the most extreme outlier in the entire dataset – Halesowen. Here, 70.9% of 461 vehicles examined had illegal tyres. This unprecedented rate is a genuine public safety emergency requiring immediate intervention. The Central region also includes Warwick with 30.3% illegal tyres. We can see from these results that there are multiple hotspots in the Central region that need urgent attention.

South-West England, despite having the largest sample size of 14,888 vehicles, has a more moderate 7.4% illegal tyre rate, though this still exceeds the national average. This region includes Gloucester with a concerning 30.4% illegal rate, demonstrating that even regions with generally better performance can contain significant problem areas.

REGIONAL COMPARISON





North-West & North Wales shows 7.3% illegal tyres across 6,831 vehicles examined, with notable variation between locations. Haverfordwest recorded 37.8% illegal tyres, while Carlisle demonstrated much better performance at 7.2% illegal rates, illustrating the importance of location-specific analysis within regional frameworks.

South & West Wales demonstrates relatively strong performance with 5.7% illegal tyres among 4,458 vehicles examined, suggesting that effective tyre safety practices are achievable across diverse geographic and economic contexts.

South-East England shows 5.5% illegal tyres across 12,283 vehicles. This sounds strong, but there are pressing concerns in this region as it also has the highest barely legal tyre rate at 42.3%. So, while fewer vehicles have completely illegal tyres, a substantial proportion are operating with minimal safety margins. The region includes Ashford with 11.8% illegal tyres and Maidstone with 26.1% illegal rates.

Scotland demonstrates strong performance with just 3.5% illegal tyres among 974 vehicles examined, though the focused Glasgow study provides additional insights with exceptional performance of just 0.63% illegal tyres among 1,584 vehicles examined in intensive inspections.

East England achieves the best regional performance with only 1.8% illegal tyres among 1,102 vehicles examined, demonstrating that excellent tyre safety standards are achievable. The focused Surrey & Hampshire study reinforces this pattern, with just 0.32% illegal tyres among 1,546 vehicles examined.

GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE PATTERNS

The data reveals significant differences between urban and rural tyre safety performance, with major urban centres consistently showing higher illegal tyre rates than their regional averages. Six key cities were specifically examined (Bradford, Halesowen, Sheffield, Ashford, Carlisle and Belfast) and have an average illegal tyre rate of 27.2%, substantially higher than the national average of 7.7%.

This urban issue appears to be influenced by multiple factors including:

- ▶ Vehicles being used more
- ▶ More challenging driving conditions
- ▶ Economic pressures
- ▶ Varying access to tyre services

The regional analysis suggests strong correlations between economic conditions and tyre safety standards. Regions with higher levels of economic deprivation tend to show elevated illegal tyre rates, while areas with stronger economic performance generally demonstrate better tyre maintenance practices. However, the presence of significant outliers within regions indicates that local factors can override broader regional trends.

Geographic factors also appear to influence tyre safety performance, with remote or rural areas sometimes showing different patterns than urban centres within the same region. The availability of tyre services, enforcement practices and local cultural attitudes toward vehicle maintenance all contribute to these geographic variations ■

FOCUSED STUDIES: GLASGOW AND SURREY & HAMPSHIRE

THE INTENSIVE INSPECTION

Over two focused, week-long tyre inspections conducted by NTDA member technicians across five depots in Glasgow and another five in Surrey & Hampshire, very detailed data on tyre conditions was recorded. This included assessments of tyre condition, wear levels, repairability and more, with several findings indicating that while these regions demonstrate superior performance compared to national averages, any unsafe tyre represents a significant public safety concern that demands serious attention.

These focused studies go well beyond standard tyre safety checks. Trained technicians used consistent, structured methods to assess each tyre in detail, not just for tread depth, but also for structural issues, wear patterns, visible damage, whether the tyre could be safely repaired and how all these factors link to overall vehicle safety.

GLASGOW FOCUSED STUDY

The Glasgow focused study examined 1,584 vehicles (1,454 cars and 130 LCVs) across five depots in the Glasgow and Rutherglen areas during the week of May 19-23, 2025. The study identified 10 vehicles (0.63%) with illegal tyres below the 1.6mm legal minimum and 19 vehicles (1.20%) with barely legal tyres between 1.6 to 2.0mm. While these percentages appear low compared to national averages, they represent real vehicles with compromised safety margins operating on Glasgow's roads daily. If this sample is representative of the Greater Glasgow area's approximately 360,000 registered vehicles, the extrapolated figures reveal there could be around 6,590 vehicles operating with compromised tyre safety on Glasgow's roads. Even at these relatively low percentages, the numbers of potentially unsafe vehicles present substantial risks to road users, pedestrians and the broader community. Glasgow's comprehensive condition assessment revealed other critical safety factors beyond tread depth affecting the area's vehicles:

Structural issues: Two tyres (0.1%) showed critical structural problems (out of shape and cord exposure). Extrapolated across the vehicle population, this could represent approximately 455 vehicles with severe structural tyre defects annually.

Wear patterns: 13 (0.8%) tyres showed excessive edge wear, suggesting that approximately 2,954 vehicles in the Glasgow area may have alignment

or suspension issues affecting tyre safety and performance.

Age-Related Deterioration: 95 tyres (6.0%) showed signs of perishing, indicating that approximately 21,600 vehicles in Glasgow may have age-related tyre deterioration that compromises safety even when tread depth appears adequate.

Puncture and Damage Issues: Combined damage categories affected 138 vehicles (8.7%), suggesting that approximately 31,320 vehicles in Glasgow may have puncture-related or structural damage requiring immediate attention.

General Wear: 203 tyres (12.8%) were classified as worn, indicating that approximately 46,080 vehicles in Glasgow may require tyre monitoring or replacement in the near term.

The study also documented significant professional intervention activities that highlight the scale of safety improvements possible:

Customer Advisories: 180 advisories were issued (11.4% of vehicles), suggesting that approximately 41,040 vehicles in Glasgow could benefit from professional tyre safety guidance annually.

Tyre Replacements: 284 tyres were replaced (17.9% of vehicles), indicating that approximately 64,440 vehicles in Glasgow may require immediate tyre replacement for safety reasons.

SURREY & HAMPSHIRE FOCUSED STUDY

The Surrey & Hampshire focused study examined 1,546 vehicles (1,337 cars and 209 LCVs) across

five depots in Aldershot, Alton, Farnham and Guildford during the same week-long period. While demonstrating superior performance even compared to Glasgow, the identification of 20 vehicles with unsafe tyres (1.29% of the sample) still represents a significant public safety concern requiring serious attention. The study identified five vehicles (0.32%) with illegal tyres and 15 vehicles (0.97%) with barely legal tyres, the lowest unsafe tyre rate recorded in any TyreCheck 2025 dataset.

However, despite the low percentages, if representative of Surrey & Hampshire's approximately 1.1 million registered vehicles, the extrapolated figures reveal substantial public safety implications:

- ▶ Total unsafe vehicles: Approximately 14,230 vehicles operating with compromised tyre safety
- ▶ Illegal vehicles: Approximately 3,557 vehicles operating below legal safety standards
- ▶ Barely legal vehicles: Approximately 10,672 vehicles operating with minimal safety margins

These figures demonstrate that even in regions with superior tyre safety performance, thousands of vehicles continue to operate with unsafe tyres, representing ongoing public safety risks that require continued vigilance and intervention.

Further safety concerns revealed in the assessment include:

Structural Issues: 38 tyres (2.5%) showed

structural problems (out of shape and cord exposure), suggesting that approximately 27,000 vehicles in Surrey & Hampshire may have structural tyre defects requiring immediate attention.

Wear Patterns: 46 tyres exhibited excessive edge wear (2.97% of vehicles), indicating that approximately 32,670 vehicles may have alignment or suspension issues affecting tyre safety.

Age-Related Deterioration: 97 tyres (6.27%) showed signs of perishing, suggesting that approximately 68,970 vehicles in Surrey & Hampshire may have age-related tyre deterioration compromising safety performance.

Puncture and Damage Issues: Combined damage categories affected 117 vehicles 7.57%, indicating that approximately 83,270 vehicles may have puncture-related or structural damage requiring professional assessment.

General Wear: 244 tyres (15.78%) were classified as worn, suggesting that approximately 173,580 vehicles in Surrey & Hampshire may require tyre monitoring or replacement in the near term.

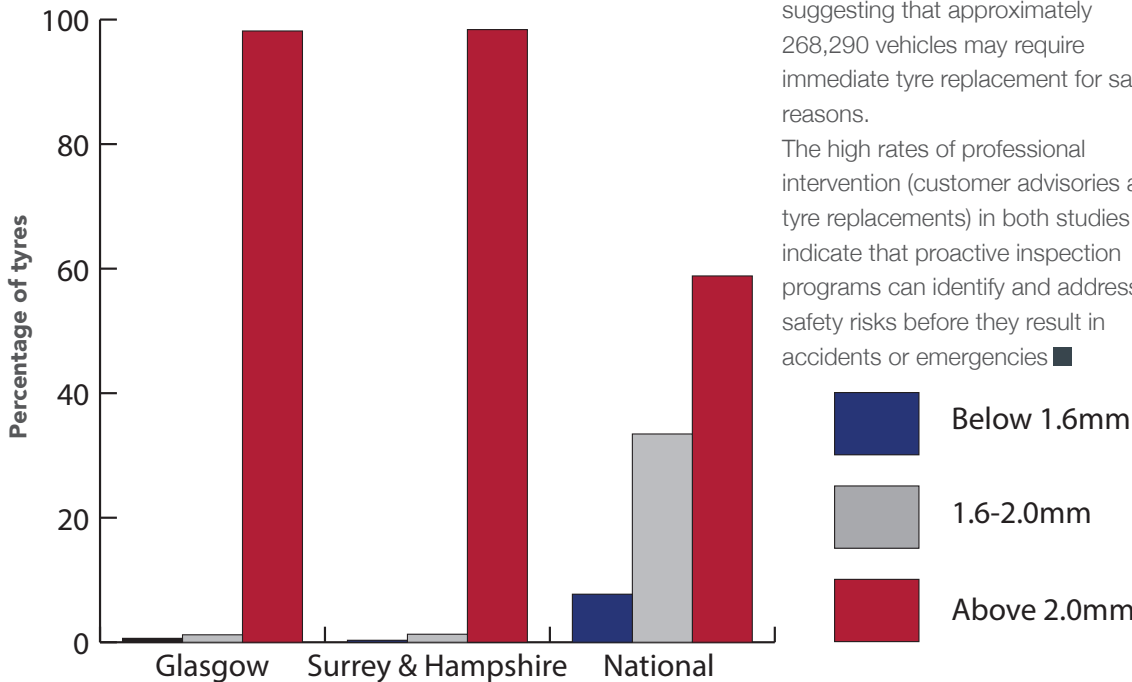
The study documented extensive professional intervention activities highlighting the scale of safety improvements achievable:

Customer Advisories: 179 advisories were issued (11.58% of vehicles), indicating that approximately 127,380 vehicles in Surrey & Hampshire could benefit from professional tyre safety guidance annually.

Tyre Replacements: 377 tyres were replaced (24.39% of vehicles), suggesting that approximately 268,290 vehicles may require immediate tyre replacement for safety reasons.

The high rates of professional intervention (customer advisories and tyre replacements) in both studies indicate that proactive inspection programs can identify and address safety risks before they result in accidents or emergencies ■

FOCUSED STUDY: RESULTS AND COMPARISON



CRITICAL SAFETY HOTSPOTS AND URBAN ANALYSIS

The TyreCheck 2025 data reveals several locations with illegal tyre rates exceeding 25%, representing critical safety hotspots requiring immediate intervention. These areas present genuine public safety emergencies where the concentration of unsafe vehicles poses significant risks to both individual motorists and the broader community.

HALESOWEN: UNPRECEDENTED SAFETY EMERGENCY

Halesowen emerges as the most critical safety hotspot in the entire dataset, with 327 of 461 vehicles examined (70.9%) found to have illegal tyres. This unprecedented rate represents a genuine public safety crisis requiring immediate emergency intervention. The scale of non-compliance in Halesowen exceeds anything previously recorded in UK tyre safety monitoring and suggests systemic factors that require comprehensive investigation and response.

The Halesowen situation is particularly concerning because it affects a substantial number of vehicles (461 examined) in a concentrated geographic area, meaning that hundreds of unsafe vehicles are operating on local roads daily.

This concentration of risk poses dangers not only to the drivers of these vehicles but to all road users in the area, including pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists.

ADDITIONAL CRITICAL HOTSPOTS

Beyond Halesowen, several other locations require urgent attention:

Haverfordwest (North-West & North Wales): 37.8% illegal tyres among 249 vehicles examined, representing 94 unsafe vehicles in a concentrated area.
Gloucester (South-West): 30.4% illegal tyres among



963 vehicles examined, affecting 293 vehicles and representing the largest absolute number of illegal tyres in any single location after Halesowen.

Warwick (Central): 30.3% illegal tyres among 670 vehicles examined, with 203 vehicles presenting immediate safety risks.

Belfast (Northern Ireland): 29.5% illegal tyres among 234 vehicles examined, confirming the severe challenges facing Northern Ireland identified in the regional analysis.

URBAN SAFETY CHALLENGES

The analysis of six key cities specifically identified for examination reveals concerning patterns of elevated illegal tyre rates in major urban centres. These cities represent significant population centres where poor tyre safety standards affect large numbers of road users and pose substantial public safety risks.

Halesowen (Central Region): As discussed above, Halesowen presents the most severe safety emergency with 70.9% illegal tyres. The combined

illegal and barely legal rate reaches 94.1%, meaning that virtually all vehicles examined present some level of elevated safety risk.

Belfast (Northern Ireland): With 29.5% illegal tyres and 10.7% barely legal, Belfast demonstrates a 40.2% combined risk rate. This performance confirms the broader challenges facing Northern Ireland and highlights the need for targeted urban intervention programs.

Sheffield (North-East): Recording 25.6% illegal tyres and 36.9% just over the legal threshold among 1,389 vehicles examined, Sheffield shows a 62.4% combined risk rate. This represents one of the largest absolute numbers of at-risk vehicles in any single urban centre.

Bradford (North-East): With 18.3% illegal tyres and 17.7% barely legal among 628 vehicles, Bradford shows a 36.0% combined risk rate. While lower than other cities examined, this still represents a substantial safety concern.

Ashford (South-East): Recording 11.8% illegal tyres and 36.9% barely legal among 1,170 vehicles, Ashford demonstrates a 48.7% combined risk rate, indicating that nearly half of vehicles examined present elevated safety risks.

Carlisle (North-West & North Wales): Showing the best performance among the key cities with 7.2% illegal tyres, Carlisle still demonstrates concerning patterns with 60.2% barely legal tyres, resulting in a 67.4% combined risk rate. This pattern suggests reactive maintenance practices where tyres are used until nearly worn out.

URBAN FACTORS

With the six key cities examined showing an average illegal tyre rate of 27.2%, compared to the national average of 7.7%, it's clear there is a consistent pattern of elevated illegal tyre rates in urban centres compared to their surrounding regions. This urban penalty appears to be influenced by multiple factors:

- **Economic Pressures:** Urban areas often have higher living costs and economic pressures that may lead to deferred vehicle maintenance, including tyre replacement.
- **Vehicle Use:** Urban vehicles typically experience higher annual mileage and more challenging driving conditions, including frequent stop-start traffic, parking challenges and road surface variations.
- **Access to Services:** While urban areas typically have more tyre service providers, they may

also have higher service costs and greater time pressures that discourage proactive maintenance.

- **Enforcement Variations:** Different enforcement practices and priorities across urban areas may influence compliance rates with tyre safety regulations.

PUBLIC SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

The critical safety hotspots identified in TyreCheck 2025 represent immediate public safety risks requiring urgent intervention. The concentration of unsafe vehicles in specific geographic areas creates elevated risks for all road users. There is an increased accident risk as vehicles with illegal tyres have significantly reduced braking performance, particularly in wet conditions. Poor tyre safety standards end up costing individuals and communities too, not only through increased accident rates, but also through insurance claims (so raising premiums) and through greater demands on the emergency services ■

25-YEAR COMPARISON: PROGRESS AND PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

ILLEGAL TYRE RATE IMPROVEMENTS

The most significant positive development since TyreCheck 2000 is the reduction in illegal tyre rates from 10.0% in 2000 to 7.7% in 2025. This improvement suggests that awareness campaigns, enforcement activities and industry initiatives have had measurable positive impacts on the most critical safety violations. It translates to tangible safety benefits for UK road users and demonstrates the value of sustained industry and policy attention to tyre safety issues. It mustn't be forgotten however, that the persistence of 7.7% illegal tyre rates in 2025 shows major challenges remain.

THE BARELY LEGAL TYRE CHALLENGE

While illegal tyre rates have improved, the most striking trend over the 25-year period is the dramatic increase in barely legal tyres from 17.0% in 2000 to 31.8% in 2025. While fewer motorists are driving on completely illegal tyres, a much larger proportion are operating dangerously close to the legal threshold. This pattern suggests reactive rather than proactive maintenance practices, with tyre replacement delayed until absolutely necessary rather than when optimal safety margins are maintained.

The combined illegal and barely legal rate has increased from 27.0% in 2000 to 39.5% in 2025, meaning that nearly two in five vehicles now present some level of elevated safety risk compared to approximately one in four vehicles 25 years ago. This trend represents a concerning deterioration in overall tyre safety margins despite improvements in the most extreme violations.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

The 25-year period has witnessed significant technological and regulatory developments that provide important context for interpreting the tyre safety trends:

TYRE TREAD DEPTH COMPLIANCE: 2000 AND 2025

Year	Illegal (below 1.6mm)	Barely legal (1.6-2.0mm)	Legal (above 2.0mm)
2000	10.0%	17.0%	73.0%
2025	7.7%	31.8%	60.5%

Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS):

Mandatory TPMS installation in new vehicles since 2014 has improved pressure monitoring capabilities.

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS):

The widespread adoption of electronic stability control, anti-lock braking systems and other safety technologies may have reduced the immediate consequences of poor tyre conditions, potentially creating a false sense of security among motorists.

MOT Testing Enhancements:

Improvements in MOT testing procedures and tread depth measurement accuracy have improved the detection of illegal tyres, though the annual testing cycle does not prevent deterioration between inspections.

Spare Tyre Elimination:

The trend toward eliminating spare tyres in favour of run-flat tyres or repair kits may have influenced maintenance practices and emergency response capabilities.



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

The 25-year period encompasses significant economic and social changes that influence tyre maintenance practices:

Economic Pressures: Periods of economic uncertainty and rising living costs may encourage deferred maintenance practices, contributing to the increase in barely legal tyres as motorists delay replacement until absolutely necessary.

Vehicle Usage Patterns: Changes in commuting patterns, urbanisation trends and vehicle usage may affect tyre wear rates and maintenance priorities.

Service Industry Evolution: The growth of online purchasing and budget tyre options has changed the tyre replacement landscape, potentially affecting both access and quality considerations.

Awareness vs. Action Gap: While awareness of tyre safety importance has likely increased over 25 years, the data suggests that this awareness has not translated into proactive maintenance practices for a substantial proportion of motorists.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE POLICY AND PRACTICE

The 25-year comparison has important implications for future policy and practice. The reduction in illegal tyre rates demonstrates that focused attention and intervention can achieve measurable improvements in the most critical safety violations. However, the increase in barely legal tyres represents a new category of risk that requires different intervention approaches focused on promoting proactive rather than reactive maintenance practices.

There is also clearly a need for targeted interventions. The persistence of regional and local variations suggests that uniform national approaches may be insufficient and that targeted interventions addressing specific local challenges may be more effective ■

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIREMENTS



Emergency Intervention in Halesowen:

The 70.9% illegal tyre rate in Halesowen represents an unprecedented public safety emergency requiring immediate comprehensive

intervention. Emergency measures should include:

- ▶ Immediate roadside enforcement operations targeting the Halesowen area
- ▶ Investigation of systemic factors contributing to the extreme non-compliance rates
- ▶ Emergency support programs for motorists unable to afford tyre replacement
- ▶ Coordination with local authorities to address underlying economic and social factors

Critical Hotspot Interventions: The locations with illegal tyre rates exceeding 25% require urgent attention. These hotspots demand coordinated intervention programs including enhanced enforcement, targeted education campaigns and economic support initiatives.

Northern Ireland Comprehensive Support: The severe challenges facing Northern Ireland require comprehensive regional intervention including enhanced enforcement, expanded service provision and economic support programs.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The increase in tyres between 1.6 and 2.0mm indicates a shift toward reactive maintenance practices that compromise safety margins. Developing a proactive maintenance culture requires:

- ▶ Education campaigns emphasising optimal tread depth (over 2.0mm) rather than minimum legal requirements.
- ▶ Technology integration. While Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems (TPMS) is mandatory on all new cars sold since 2014, many older vehicles remain without it, and even where fitted, the systems can be underused or poorly maintained. The industry can play a stronger role in promoting TPMS servicing and encouraging drivers to

respond to early warnings, turning pressure alerts into proactive safety action.

- ▶ Economic incentives for proactive replacement rather than reactive maintenance.
- ▶ Professional advisory services to guide optimal replacement timing.

POLICY FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS



Legal Minimum Tread Depth

Review: The substantial increase in barely legal tyres and the safety implications of operating near the 1.6mm threshold suggest consideration of raising the legal minimum

to 2.0mm, aligning with optimal safety performance standards demonstrated in the focused studies.

Graduated Enforcement Approach: Implementing graduated penalties based on tread depth levels could encourage proactive maintenance while addressing the spectrum of risk from barely legal to severely illegal tyres.

Enhanced MOT Testing: More frequent inspections or mandatory follow-ups within three months of a tyre advisory so defects are not simply forgotten until the next MOT.

Economic Support Programs: Targeted financial assistance for low-income motorists could address the economic barriers to tyre replacement that contribute to high illegal tyre rates in specific areas.

SUCCESS METRICS AND TARGETS



Success by 2030 should be defined by clear tyre safety targets across the UK. These include reducing the national rate of illegal tyres to 5% or lower, cutting the number of tyres between 1.6 and

2.0mm to no more than 25% and ensuring no specific location reports illegal tyre rates above 25%. Regional variation should also be reduced to a maximum 10 percentage point difference between the best and worst-performing areas. The effectiveness of any interventions could be measured through a range of indicators including the number of vehicles receiving

professional inspection and advisory services, tyre replacement rates following professional input and customer satisfaction with tyre safety services.

FINAL THOUGHTS



The TyreCheck 2025 campaign demonstrates both the progress achieved over 25 years of tyre safety initiatives and the significant challenges that remain. While the reduction in illegal tyre rates represents

genuine progress, the increase in barely legal tyres and the extreme regional disparities indicate that current approaches are still not achieving optimal safety standards across the United Kingdom. The exceptional performance demonstrated in the East region and the focused studies in Glasgow and Surrey & Hampshire provide valuable models for best practices that could be replicated in under performing regions. Understanding the factors that contribute to these success stories is crucial for developing effective intervention strategies for regions facing greater challenges.

Addressing the tyre safety challenges identified in TyreCheck 2025 requires coordinated action across industry, government and community stakeholders. The road ahead needs collective commitment to moving beyond minimum compliance toward optimal safety standards, ensuring that all UK motorists have access to safe, well-maintained tyres regardless of their geographic location or economic circumstances ■

TYRECHECK 2025 SPONSORS

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