

# Men 'pay 25% more to insure cars'

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Men are paying about £170 more for car insurance than women despite the introduction of European Union rules that ban imposing prices on premiums according to gender.

A study found that the gap between men and women had grown significantly over the past four years. Researchers said that many insurers relied on statistics that showed that men had a higher likelihood of being involved in an accident, even if the motorist concerned was a safe driver.

These were not affected by the EU directive in 2012, which banned insur-

ers from using gender as a factor when pricing policies.

The disclosure adds to the strain on motorists. Average premiums have increased by 38 per cent over the past three years, according to some measures, dramatically outstripping the rate of inflation. Recent rises have coincided with a change in the government formula used to calculate personal injury compensation, more than doubling payouts for life-changing injuries.

Bill increases are also likely to have been driven by a jump in insurance premium tax, which is levied on all policies by the government. The tax rate has doubled in 18 months from 6 per

cent in autumn 2015 to 12 per cent earlier this year.

The study was published today by the price comparison website Comparethemarket.com.

John Miles, head of motor insurance, said: "This data shows how little difference the EU gender directive has had on insurance premiums, with providers still giving big discounts to women.

"This is likely [to be] due to a number of factors, such as statistically higher accident rates for men and more men than woman driving business and commercial vehicles, which are higher risk. The directive removed the ability of providers to give default discounts to

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## despite EU rules

women. However, the statistics and risk models used by insurers mean that the result is largely the same."

The research compared prices for fully comprehensive cover from thousands of quotes sourced through the website.

It found that between June and August this year men were quoted £821 on average compared with £649 for women, 26.5 per cent more. This was up from a gap of 19 per cent when the study was carried out in January 2013, just after the implementation of the EU directive.

Over the past year alone prices for men have risen faster than those for

women. Men's bills rose by £46 while prices for women increased by £41.

A study two years ago suggested that women were in fact better drivers than men. Researchers found that women outperformed men in almost every area on the road, including keeping to speed limits, stopping at lights and using indicators. Women were also less likely to tailgate, cut into traffic, use a mobile behind the wheel or cause an obstruction.

The study for Privilege Insurance tracked 50 drivers as well as observations of 200 motorists making their way around Hyde Park Corner in central London.