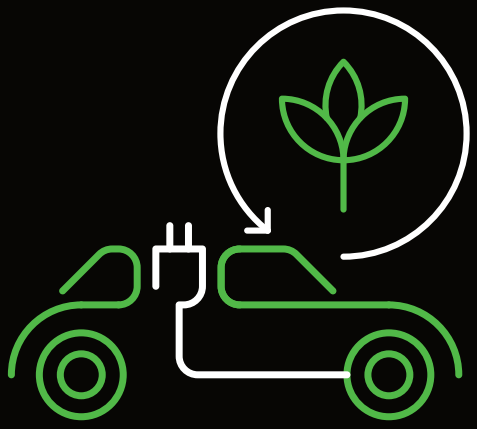
LEX AUTOLEASE

EVS, MYTHS AND THE MEDIA

Misinformation about EVs, and the truth behind the noise.



Cars bursting into flames, drivers stranded miles from home and eyewatering maintenance costs. Parts of the media paint a worrying picture of electric vehicles. Those outside the industry could be forgiven for thinking that there are serious problems with EVs. That drivers are headed back to ICE cars in their thousands. This is just not true, and it's often left to brokers and fleet managers to dispel those myths.

Chris Chandler is Principal Consultant at Lex Autolease and Subject Matter Expert for electrification and alternative fuels for Lloyds Transport. Here he explains why EVs have a bit of a Public Relations problem, and what we can do together to get the truth out there.

WHY DO WE READ SO MUCH ABOUT THE 'DOWNSIDES' OF EVS?

Controversy sells. Media outlets love attention-grabbing stories. Narratives pitting EVs against traditional vehicles get more clicks. This attention creates exaggeration and means more articles along the same lines are written and published, further fuelling the fire.

People naturally fear the unknown. And to many, EVs are just that. If they have doubts about EVs, they'll find negative stories to qualify how they feel. This is known as confirmation bias.

Snappy media soundbites often lack detail and context. For example, headlines about EV fires don't mention that while all vehicle fires are uncommon, the overall risk of an EV catching fire is lower than with ICE cars.

THE SIX MOST COMMON MYTHS ABOUT EVS

There are many myths circulating about electric vehicles, but these are the most persistent:

Electric vehicles are at higher risk of catching fire.

Truth: We funded 1 in 8 EVs in the UK last year and have no knowledge of one of our pure electric vehicles spontaneously combusting.

In America data from the National Transportation safety board reported that battery powered vehicles suffer 25 fires for every 100,000 sold compared to 1,530 fires for petrol vehicles.[1]

Data from other countries also shows that EV fires are generally rare. In Sweden in 2022, out of 611,000 electric vehicles, 23 fires were reported – that's 0.004%. From their 4.4 million petrol and diesel cars, 3,400 fires were reported.

Petrol and diesel vehicle fires are rare, but they're 20 times more likely than electric vehicle fires.

EV batteries won't last.

Truth: We're not seeing batteries degrade significantly.

Negative experiences with phone batteries, like sudden shutdown or rapid drain have shaped how some people feel about EVs. But most manufacturers now offer a battery warranty that's around 100,000 miles or 8 years for 75% retained capacity. This wouldn't happen if the manufacturers thought many batteries wouldn't last that long. Tesla's Impact Report showed that the battery degradation on their Model S and X was an average of only 12% degradation after 200,000 miles use.[2]

There aren't enough public chargers.

Truth: There are over 55,000 EV charging points in the UK. This has increased 46% since January 2023 and means that there are currently more electric public charging points than there are petrol pumps.

Charging at a point may take longer than refuelling at a pump, but as of March 2024, the UK has 11,609 rapid or ultra-rapid charging devices across 5,261 charging locations.[3]

The number of public charge points is growing all the time. In March 2024 alone, 2,300 net new EV public charging devices were added to the Zapmap database. It's forecast that the UK will have over 100,000 by August 2025.

EVs are more expensive to maintain.

Truth: There are usually around 20 moving parts in an EV drivetrain compared with approx. 2,000 in an ICE car. EVs have fewer components that can fail or need replacing – there's no spark plugs, oil or filters, clutch, etc. Lex Autolease data shows that servicing and maintaining an EV is 27 – 37% cheaper than an ICE car.

You're likely to run out of electricity in an EV.

Truth: Both Tusker and the AA have data that shows the percentage of petrol drivers that run out of fuel is almost the same as the percentage of EV drivers that have run out of electricity – 0.001%.

The National Grid won't cope if we all switch to EVs.

Truth: National Grid have confirmed that if we all switched our petrol and diesel cars to electric overnight tonight, the grid would only experience around a 10% increase in demand. In the UK we're using 16% less electricity than 20 years ago due to improved energy efficiency in everyday products and appliances. The electrification of UK vehicles is well within the National Grid's capacity.[4]

[1]Source: FairCharge Little Book of EV Myths. March 2024. - https://www.faircharge.co.uk/little-book-of-ev-myths [2]Source: Tesla Impact Report 2022 - https://www.tesla.com/impact
[3]Source: EV charging statistics 2024 - Zapmap (zap-map.com) https://www.zap-map.com/ev-stats/how-many-charging-points [4]Source: National Grid December 2023 - https://www.nationalgrid.com/stories/journey-to-net-zero-stories/can-grid-cope-extra-demand-electric-cars

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Educating the public will be a key part of dispelling myths about EVs, and Brokers and Fleet Managers have an important role to play. There are simple ways you can help:

- Provide training for your team, so they're ready to reassure customers with reliable information.
- Share real-world data on performance and the growing charging network with your team, customers and industry colleagues.
- Attend industry conferences and workshops so you're always up to date with EV advancements.

Together we can shape perceptions, push out misinformation and help drive the UK towards a more sustainable future.

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