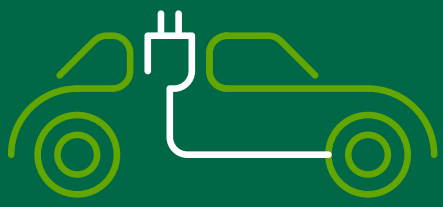
LEX AUTOLEASE

EV reliability and maintenance

Separating fact from fiction with real-world data



Stranded drivers. Tyres wearing out in months. Batteries failing after a few years. Sky-high servicing costs. Some media reports paint a bleak picture of electric vehicles, making them seem unreliable, expensive, and a fad that's quickly fading.

But that's simply not true. And more often than not, it's brokers, fleet managers, and leasing companies like us who are left to tell the truth.

Chris Chandler, Principal Consultant at Lex Autolease and Subject Matter Expert for electrification and alternative fuels for Lloyds Transport, explains why EVs have a Public Relations problem – and what we can do to set the record straight.

Why do we read so much about the 'downsides' of EVs?

Controversy sells

Some information about EVs can be sensationalised. Information that creates tension between EVs and traditional vehicles often attract more attention. This can lead to exaggerated claims spreading quickly.

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 soundbites often lack detail and context

Online snippets can lead to misunderstandings, making it harder to distinguish between reality and exaggeration.

The five most common myths about EVs

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

EVs wear through tyres at an alarming rate

Truth: While EVs do experience slightly higher tyre wear than petrol or diesel cars, the difference is a lot smaller than some online claims suggest. Our tyre partner, Kwik Fit, analysed over 5 million tyres and found that EVs wear tyres just 11% faster on average, or around 2,700 miles sooner, than their petrol or diesel equivalents. For SUVs, the difference is even smaller at 7%. Why? EVs are heavier, their tyres are larger, and they deliver more instant torque. But this is far from the wallet-busting crisis some suggest. As tyre technology improves, wear rates will continue to level out. And the biggest factor? Driving style. Hard acceleration, braking, and sharp cornering will wear out any tyres faster, EV or not. Drive smoothly, and your tyres last longer.

EV drivers are being left stranded in laybys

Truth: The average new BEV now delivers 275 miles on a single charge, with some exceeding 400 miles. For Lex Autolease's EV fleet, the figure is just under 300 miles — more than enough for most drivers, as 99% of UK journeys are under 100 miles. And despite common fears, running out of charge is rare. In 2024, just 1.85% of EV breakdowns were due to an empty battery, a figure expected to fall to 1%, the same as petrol and diesel cars running out of fuel. Many of these callouts are due to range anxiety, with drivers safely escorted to the nearest charger. So no, EV drivers aren't being left stranded on laybys and hard shoulders across the UK.

EV batteries need replacing after 3-4 years

Truth: Today's EV batteries are built to last the life of the vehicle. A Tesla study found that after 200,000 miles, their batteries lose just 12% capacity on average. In the UK, all new EVs come with a minimum 8-year, 100,000 mile battery warranty, ensuring the battery retains 70% of its original capacity by the time the warranty ends. Need proof? We put it to the test. In the 2024 GreenFleet EV Rally, we tested a 9-year-old Tesla Model S with over 250,000 miles on its original battery, motors, and drivetrain. After covering 1,500 miles, the results proved the durability and reliability of EV technology.

EVs are expensive to maintain

Truth: At Lex Autolease, we base our maintenance budgets on manufacturer parts, labour, servicing, and tyre replacement, along with lease duration and annual mileage. On 3 and 4-year leases (10,000 to 20,000 miles per year), the maintenance budgets for pure electric vehicles are 27% to 37% lower compared to petrol or diesel cars. That's a saving of up to £1,400 over four years. One manufacturer reported a 45% saving on EVs versus petrol and diesel.

Our analysis of Lex Autolease EVs, with leases ending in 2024, shows actual savings of 19% to 49% on maintenance costs over their lease life, with a greater range of ages and mileages but reflecting similar savings. Tusker's data supports this, showing that EVs are 14% to 32% cheaper for servicing and maintenance than petrol and diesel cars.

EV drivers are unhappy and complaining

Truth: At Lex Autolease, we track customer satisfaction closely. Our data shows that EVs generate 1% fewer complaints than petrol or diesel vehicles. In fact, in a six-month sample, the complaint rate for EVs was just 1.5 per 10,000 vehicles, reflecting a positive experience for most customers. The Tusker Driver Report (Summer 2024) found that 90% of drivers were satisfied or very satisfied with their EVs. An independent ZapMap survey of over 3,700 EV drivers gave an average satisfaction score of 87/100 – proof that EV drivers are happy with them.

Sources: AA, Autotrader, FairCharge, Kwik Fit, SMMT, Tesla, Tusker, Zap Map

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.