



Independent Garage & Franchise Dealer Workshop Survey Report

2024 Review & 2025 Outlook

Published January 2025

Introduction

The Motor Ombudsman's survey of independent garages and franchise dealer workshops in the UK, looks at the principal challenges faced by businesses and positive developments during 2024, and gauges the views of respondents about their outlook for 2025.

The key findings of the research are presented in this report.

104

 survey respondents

(online study conducted between
04th November - 22nd November 2024)



Contents

2024 Review	3
- Main operational challenges	4
- Key staff challenges	5
- Main positives for garages and workshops	6
2025 Outlook	8
- Main business challenges	9
- Changes planned	10
- Key positives for garages and workshops	11



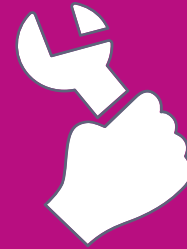
2024 Review

Q1. What have been your main operational challenges in 2024?



69%

1/ Having to raise prices to stay profitable



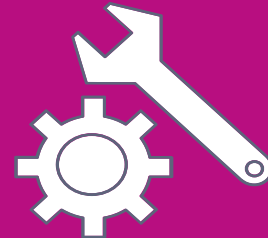
62%

2/ Recruiting qualified and experienced vehicle technicians



59%

3/ Higher energy bills and costs reducing business profitability



53%

4/ Customers not doing routine maintenance to save money



51%

5/ Parts shortages resulting in delays to customer vehicle repairs

6/ Diagnostic equipment becoming increasingly expensive (49%)

7/ Competing with parts for repairs being sold online at a lower cost (46%)

8/ Being able to source replacement parts for older vehicles (44%)

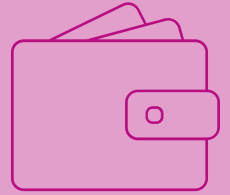
9/ Access to technical information becoming more difficult (41%)

10/ Being able to make a profit on labour rates (38%)

Q2. What have been the key staff challenges for your business in 2024?

55%

1/ Having to raise salaries to account for high inflation and the raised cost of living



49%

2/ Increasing pressures on the mental and physical health of staff due to rising bills and the cost of living



41%

3/ A lack of available apprentices to help fill technician vacancies



35%

4/ Having sufficient staff to accommodate periods of higher MOT demand



29%

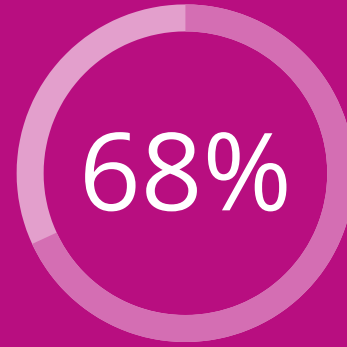
5/ Experienced technicians are choosing to freelance to take advantage of the increasing demand for skilled labour



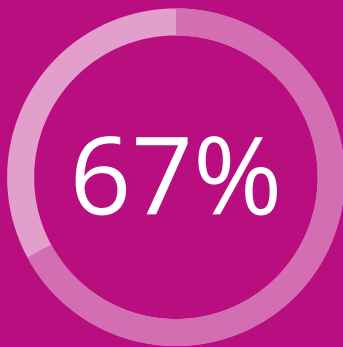
Q3. What have been the main positives for your business in 2024?



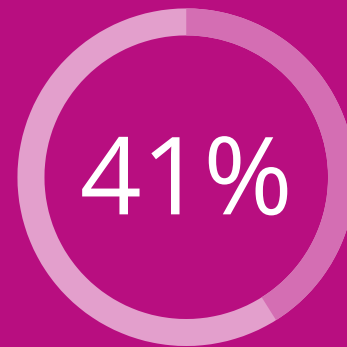
1/ We have seen a positive level of customer loyalty and retention



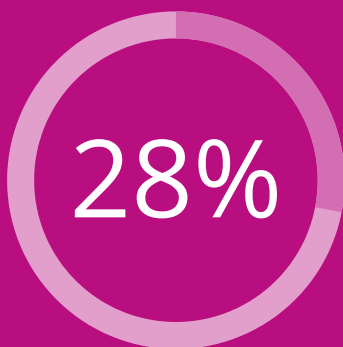
2/ Customers keeping their existing cars for longer, giving more opportunities to secure additional work



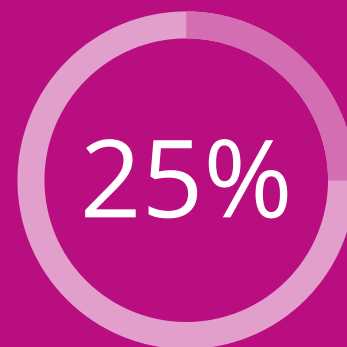
3/ Our feedback from customers has been very positive throughout the year



4/ We have seen a positive level of staff loyalty

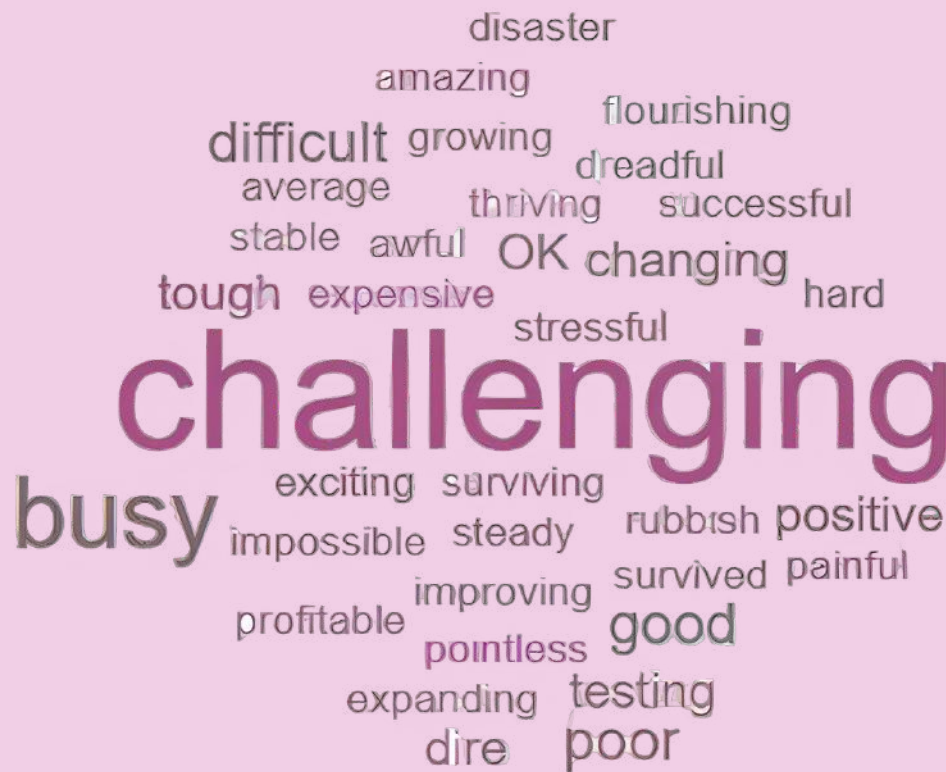


5/ We have been more proactive to send reminders and make bookings with customers when their service or MOT is due



6/ We have introduced new processes and technology to increase the overall customer experience

Q4. How would you sum up 2024 for your business in one word, and do you have any other insight to add?



"Waiting times for parts are a major issue especially when a vehicle is stripped on a lift"



"We have not experienced such a serious shortage of trained mechanics and MOT testers"



"Long hours and very hard work for very little reward"



"MOTs need to change to a fixed minimum price"



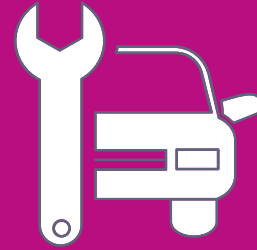
2025 Outlook

Q5. What do you see as the main challenges for your business in 2025?



89%

1/ Rising operational costs, taxes and energy bills



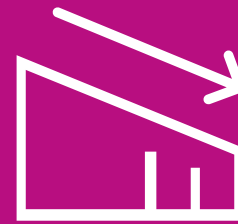
56%

2/ Customers putting off essential repairs



52%

3/ Paying more for parts to repair customer vehicles



48%

4/ A reduction in customers being able to afford ad hoc and routine maintenance



48%

5/ Recruitment of qualified staff

6/ Trying to avoid passing on higher costs in the prices charged to customers (42%)

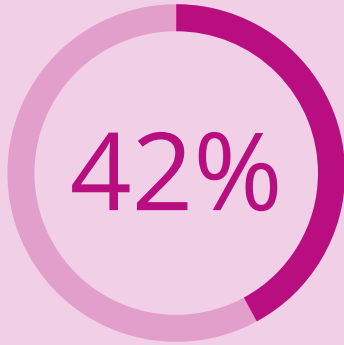
7/ Customers abandoning their cars on site if repairs are too costly or prove uneconomical to repair (28%)

8/ Customer retention being harder due to the financial pressure on households (27%)

9/ Generating new business in a challenging climate (26%)

10/ Electric vehicles providing less scope for additional revenue opportunities and replacement parts (21%)

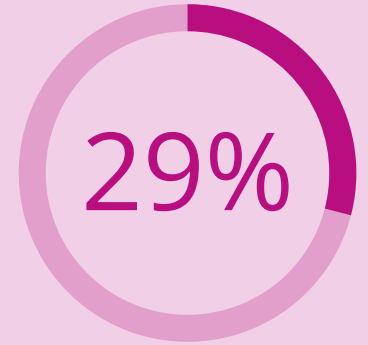
Q6. What changes are you looking to introduce in 2025?



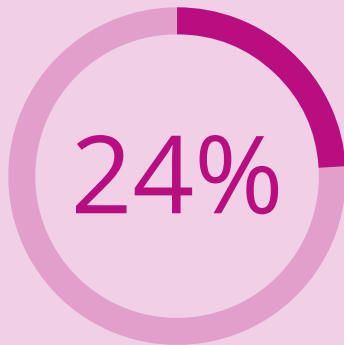
1/ Refurbishment of existing premises to improve look and feel of service and repair experience



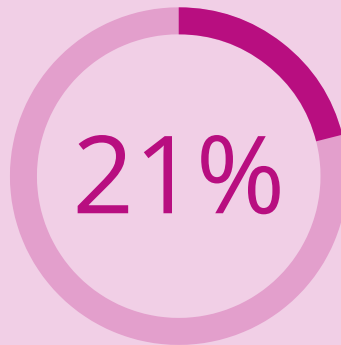
2/ Investment in the recruitment of additional qualified and experienced technicians



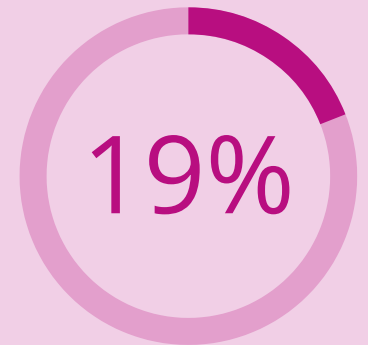
3/ Review of opening hours and days to improve the work-life balance of staff



4/ Expansion of key suppliers to help reduce any delays to the repair of customer vehicles



5/ Participation in webinars and training courses to learn about improving operations



6/ Expansion of number of workshop and MOT bays to meet increased customer demand

Q7. What do you see as some of the positives for your business in 2025?



"Customer retention. We are very lucky that to we have a large amount of customers that have been coming to us for almost 20 years"



"We will looking to introduce a new concept to help customers understand about the importance of investing in car maintenance "



"More people will be moving into our area"



"Continued year-on-year growth and great demand for our services"



"Our new MOT station will be in place"



Visit our Knowledge Base for answers to frequently-asked service and repair questions:

www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/kb-cats/service-and-repair