



Independent Garage & Franchise Dealer Workshop Survey Report

2025 Review & 2026 Outlook

Published January 2026

Introduction

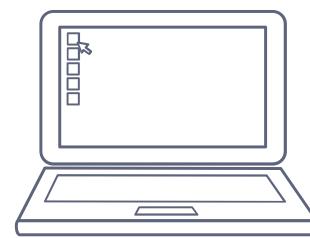


The Motor Ombudsman's survey of independent garages and franchise dealer workshops in the UK, looks at the principal challenges faced by businesses and positive developments during 2025, and gauges the views of respondents about their outlook for 2026.

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

85 survey respondents

(online study conducted between
03rd November - 21st November 2025)



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2025 Review

Q1. What have been your main operational challenges in 2025?



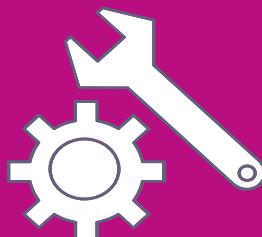
77%

1/ Rising energy bills and costs reducing business profitability



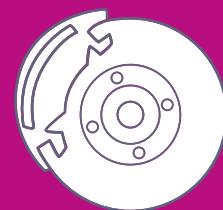
73%

2/ Having to raise prices to stay profitable when consumer finances are under pressure



61%

3/ Customers not doing routine maintenance to save money



54%

4/ Parts shortages resulting in delays to customer vehicle repairs



52%

5/ Recruiting qualified technicians to meet business demand

6/ Being able to make a profit on labour rates (48%)

7/ Access to technical information becoming more difficult (47%)

8/ Customers sourcing their own replacement parts to save money (46%)

9/ Having enough money to invest in the latest technology (45%)

10/ Competing with local businesses who are charging less to drive footfall (39%)

Q2. What have been the key staff challenges for your business in 2025?

68%

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



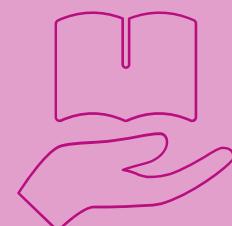
57%

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



34%

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



32%

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

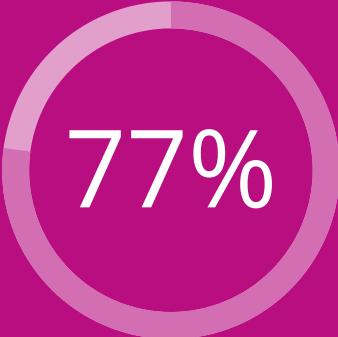


31%

5/ Having a skills shortage when it comes to working on Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)



Q3. What have been the main positives for your business in 2025?



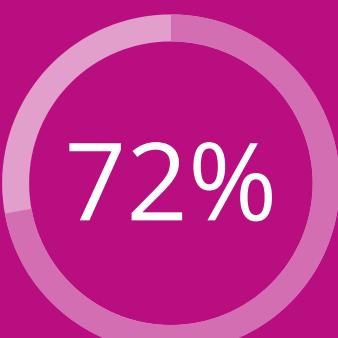
77%

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



74%

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



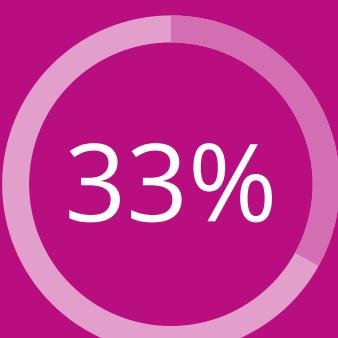
72%

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



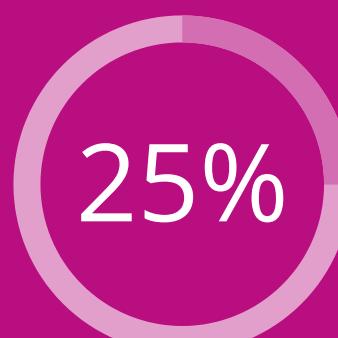
54%

4/ We have seen a positive level of staff loyalty



33%

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



25%

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

Q4. How would you sum up 2025 for your business in one word, and do you have any other insight to add?

manageable

retirement

better
expensive

disaster

grim



static
tricky

slow
stressful
average
good
tough
fantastic

busy
taxing

tiring

excellent
hard
steady

challenging

“



“Tough trading with lower revenue than last year”



“Customers are doing the bare minimum as they cannot afford rising costs”



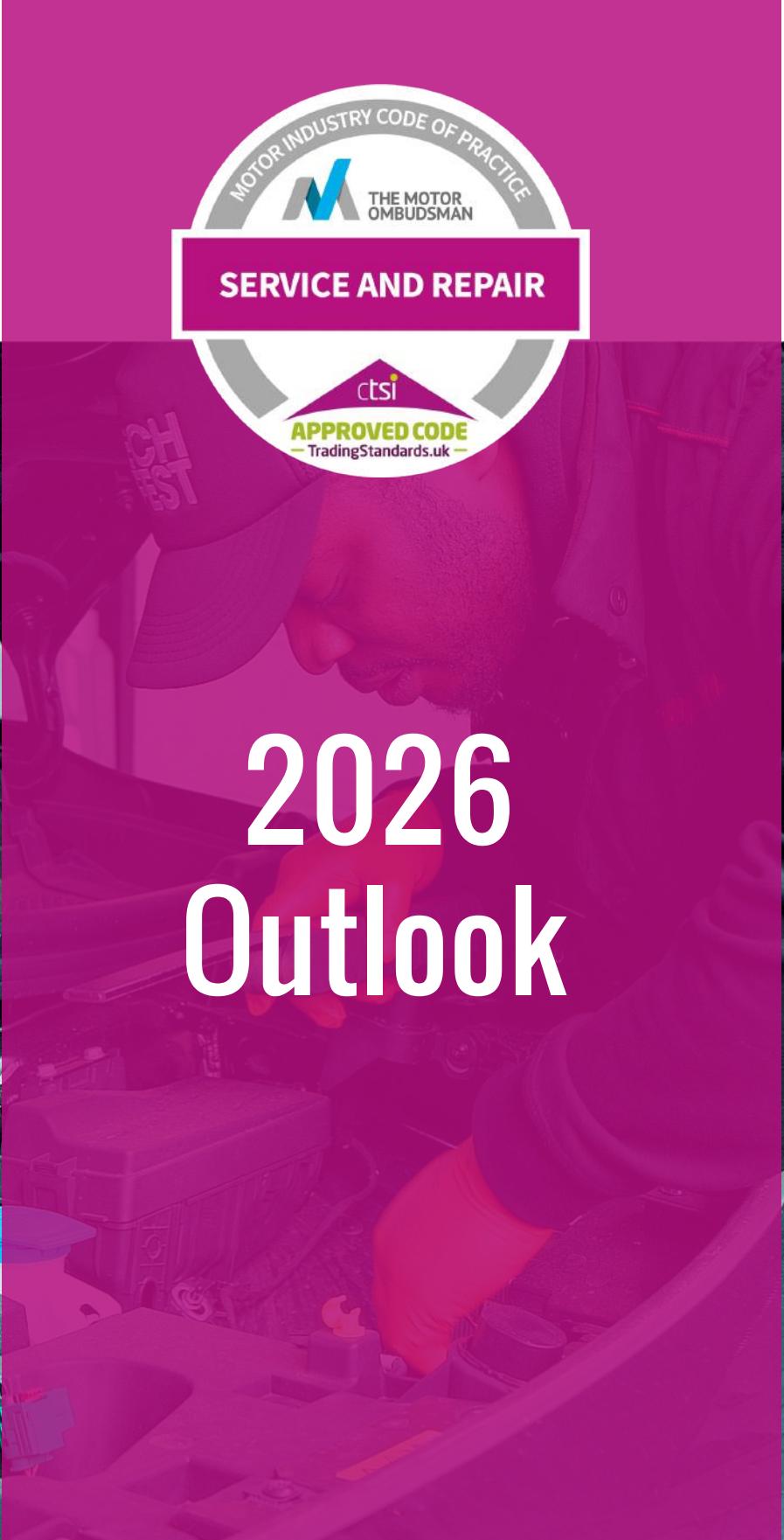
“Meeting customer expectations is becoming harder”



“We are having to work new problems out as they come along”



2026 Outlook

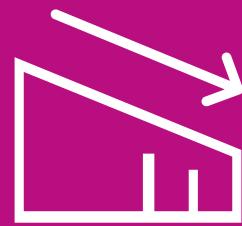


Q5. What do you see as the main challenges for your business in 2026?



92%

1/ Rising operational costs, taxes and energy bills



69%

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



68%

3/ Paying more for parts to repair customer vehicles



68%

4/ Customers putting off essential repairs



55%

5/ Trying to avoid passing on higher costs in the prices charged to customers

6/ Recruitment of qualified staff (45%)

7/ Generating new business in a challenging climate (38%)

8/ Customers abandoning their cars on site if repairs are too costly (38%)

9/ Customer retention being harder due to the financial pressure on households (37%)

10/ Electric vehicles providing less scope for additional revenue opportunities and replacement parts (34%)

Q6. What changes are you looking to introduce in 2026?



38%

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



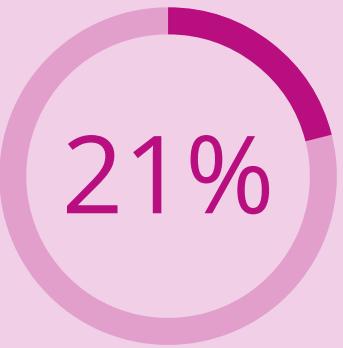
34%

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



29%

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



21%

4/ Investing in EV training for staff and / or equipment



21%

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



20%

6/ Attending webinars and training courses to learn about improving operations

Q7. What do you see as some of the positives for your business in 2026?



"We are looking to diversify our services"



"We are opening a new training academy"



"We will be learning more about marketing effectively"



"Continuing to provide great customer service"





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