



Department for Transport

Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 1 (Jan - Mar) 2015

About this release

This release presents the latest quarterly statistics on licensed motor vehicles. It is part of the [Vehicle Statistics](#) series. It is based on administrative data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Detailed [data tables](#) are available from the web site. Further tables are updated on an annual basis.

Please see page 2 for an important note about vehicle stock tables.

Except where otherwise stated, the statistics all refer to Great Britain.

For further details please refer to the Background Information section below and the separate [Technical Notes](#).

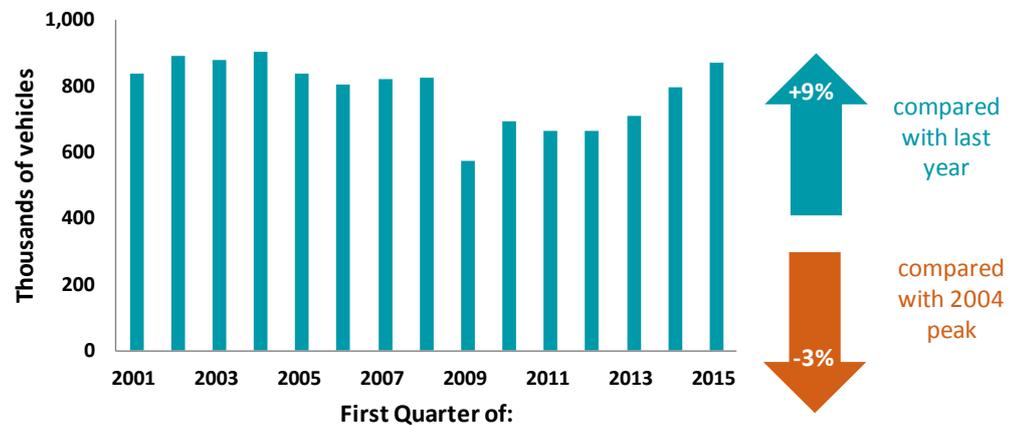
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During the first quarter of 2015 872 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain

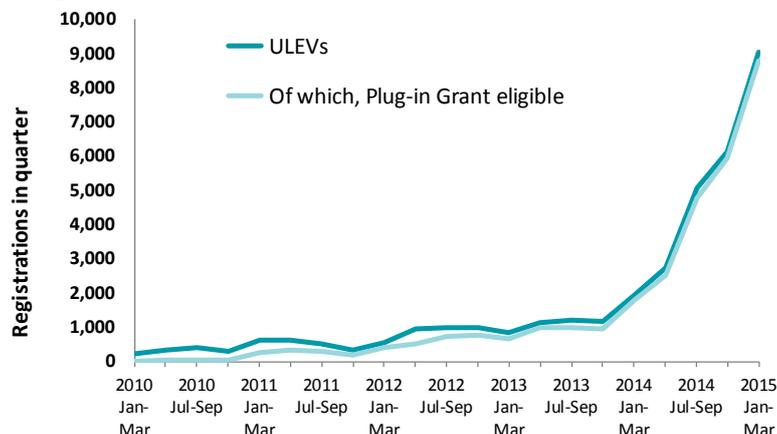
This was 9% up on the same quarter of 2014, and the highest first quarter since 2004. However, it was still 3% lower than the peak in quarter 1 of 2004.

Vehicles registered for the first time, GB: 2001-2015 [\[veh0150\]](#)



In total, 9,046 new **ultra low emission vehicles** were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom in quarter 1 2015

This was up 366% from 1,789 in the first quarter of 2014. Most of this increase has been due to vehicles eligible for plug-in car and van grants.



General Context

The number of licensed vehicles and number of vehicles registered for the first time are influenced by the general economic climate in Britain and further afield. New registrations have only recently returned to the level before the 2008-9 recession began, so the licensed vehicle stock, while continuing to grow, has been growing more slowly.

While new car registrations across the European Union as a whole rose by 6% in 2014 according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, the UK experienced the fastest rate of growth among the four countries with the most new registrations (9%). The UK was the second largest new car market in Europe in 2014, after Germany. The UK accounted for 20% of new cars registered in the EU in 2013, compared with 14% in 2009.

Licensed vehicle numbers

At the end of quarter 4 2014 there were 35.6 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain, of which 29.6 million were cars.

We have not updated vehicle stock data tables relating to quarter 1 2015, as some records were missing in the raw data. These tables will be updated as soon as possible. The tables affected are:

All vehicle types: [VEH0101, 104,110, 120 to 123, 128 to 131](#)

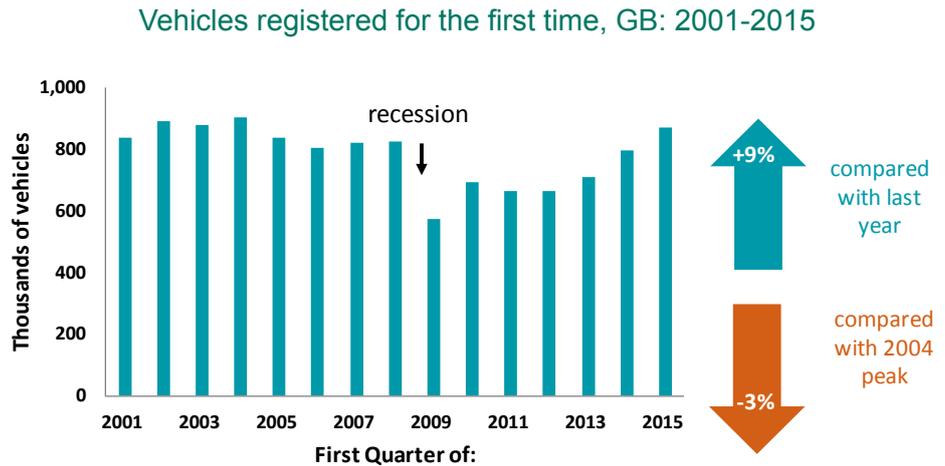
Motorcycles: [VEH0301](#)

The release of quarter 2 data in September 2015 will not be affected.

New Registrations this quarter

872 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain in quarter 1 2015 (January to March).

This represents an increase of 73 thousand vehicles, or 9%, from the same quarter of the previous year.

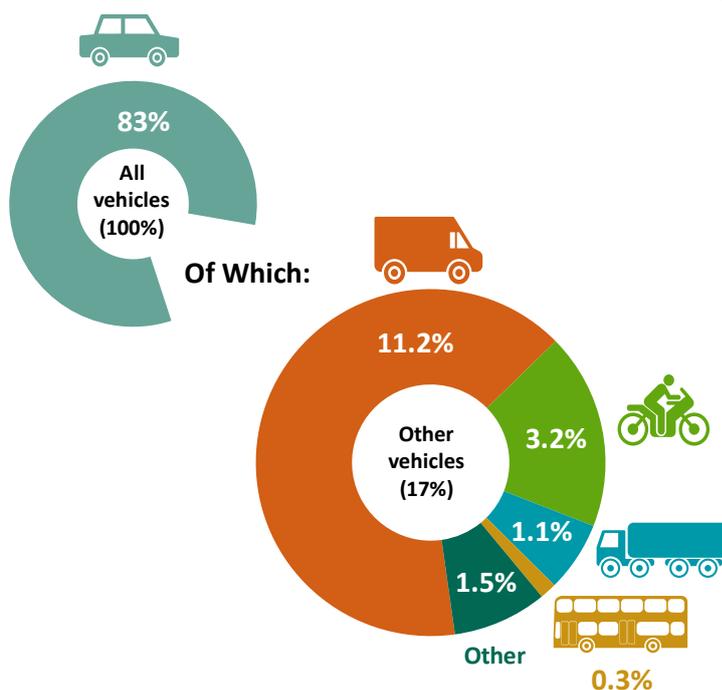


The economic downturn from late 2008 affected the new registration figures from then onwards, but a downward trend was already apparent before that.

The new registration figure for January to March 2015 was the highest quarter 1 figure since 2004, and the first to exceed the pre-recession 2008 level. However, it is still 3% below the highest quarter 1 total in 2004.

A 'Vehicle Scrappage Scheme' for cars and vans helped to boost first registrations between May 2009 and April 2010, and may also have had the side effect of slightly depressing registrations briefly either side of this period if prospective buyers changed their plans to take advantage of the scheme.

New registrations in Great Britain in Q1 2015, by vehicle type



Tables

Detailed new registrations statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

All vehicles types: [VEH0150_160 to 170](#)

Cars: [VEH0256](#)

The charts to the right show indexed trends in new registrations for each major vehicle type, on the same scale. The impact of the recession in late 2008 and 2009 can be seen.

The number of **cars** registered for the first time in quarter 1 2015 was up 7.0% on quarter 1 2014, at 722 thousand. The last three years have seen a sustained period of growth. The shorter surge in car registrations during 2010 reflects the effect of the vehicle scrappage scheme mentioned above.

The number of **vans** registered for the first time in quarter 1 2015 was up 23% on quarter 1 2014, at 98 thousand. The last twenty seven months have seen sustained year-on-year growth exceeding that of cars. The recession had a relatively bigger impact on both van and HGV registrations than those of other vehicles.

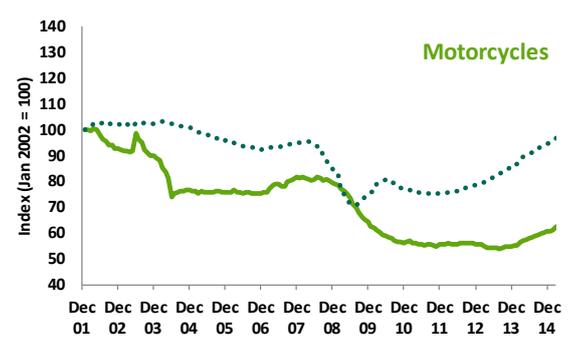
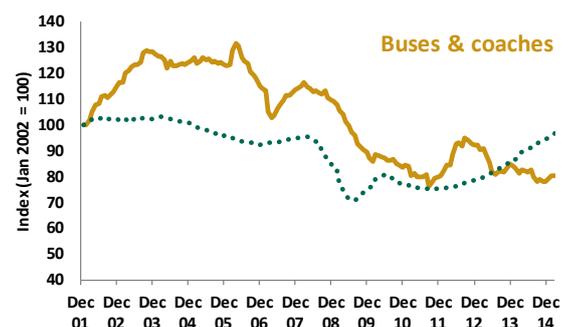
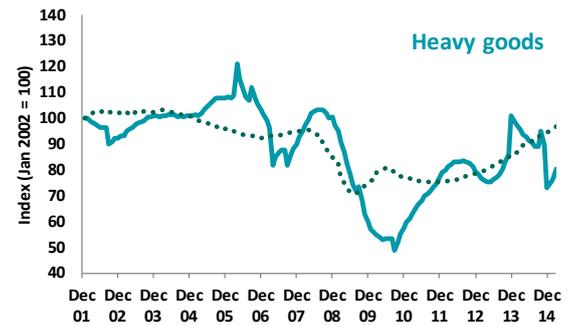
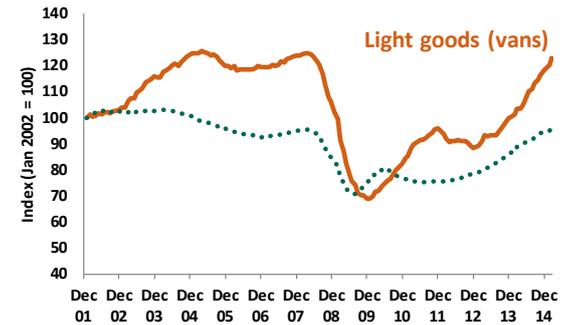
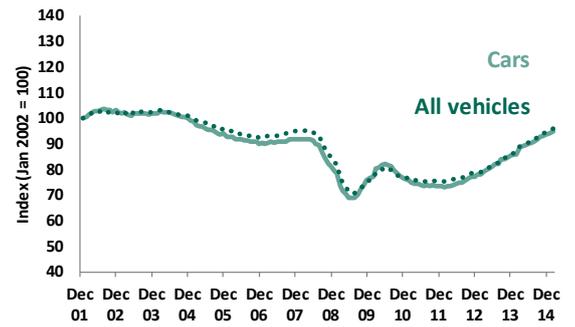
The number of **HGVs** registered for the first time in quarter 1 2015 was up 59% on quarter 1 2014, at 10 thousand. This reflects a lull in registrations in quarter 1 2014 following an earlier rush to register new vehicles before new environmental standards (Euro 6) came in in January 2014. However, registrations remain below pre-recession levels.

New **bus and coach** registrations increased relatively rapidly up to 2003. While they dropped off less sharply than those of vans or HGVs at the onset of the recession, they have not shown a sustained recovery since. The number in quarter 1 2015 were 11.7% up on quarter 1 2014 at 2 thousand.

New registrations of **motorcycles** fell relatively rapidly in the first few years of the last decade, before levelling off. The onset of the recession saw a further decrease, followed by another period of relative stability. The total of 28 thousand new registrations in quarter 1 2015 was up 14.4% on quarter 1 2014.

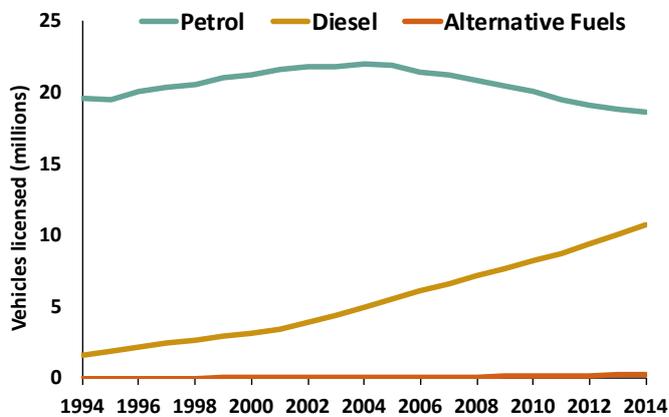
**Vehicles registered for first time, by vehicle type:
GB, 2001- Mar 2015.**

12-month rolling averages (index Jan 2002=100)



A range of factors have been driving changes in the fuel type, efficiency and emissions of the vehicle fleet. There are financial benefits to motorists who switch to cars with smaller engine sizes or lower emissions. Cars with lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions fall in cheaper Vehicle Excise Duty (car tax) bands. Cars with smaller engines and / or cars which use diesel rather than petrol tend to have better fuel efficiency, and are therefore cheaper to run. In addition, legally binding EU-wide CO₂ emission targets for manufacturers give them added incentives to bring lower emission vehicles to the market.

Licensed cars by propulsion type, GB 1994 - 2014



The proportion of the licensed car fleet that is made up of diesel and alternative fuel vehicles has continued to grow. By quarter 4 2014 there were 10.7 million **diesel** cars, accounting for 36.2% of the total, up from only 7.4% in 1994. There were only 248 thousand **alternative fuel** cars licensed by December 2014, but this was up 20% over the year¹.

In total, 9,046 new **ultra low emission vehicles** (ULEVs) were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom in quarter 1 2015, up 366% from 1,789 in the first quarter of 2014. Most of this increase has been due to vehicles eligible for plug-in car and van grants.

What are alternative fuel vehicles?

Alternative fuel vehicles are those able to use a range of alternatives to purely petrol or diesel fuel, including gas, electricity, or a combination such as gas bi-fuel and hybrid electric.

More detail

For more detail of propulsion types for cars see 2013 annual statistics release (tables [veh0203](#) & [veh0253](#)).

What are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles?

Ultra low emission vehicles are those with emissions of CO₂ below 75 g/km, or fully electrically powered.

1. Based on annually updated data.

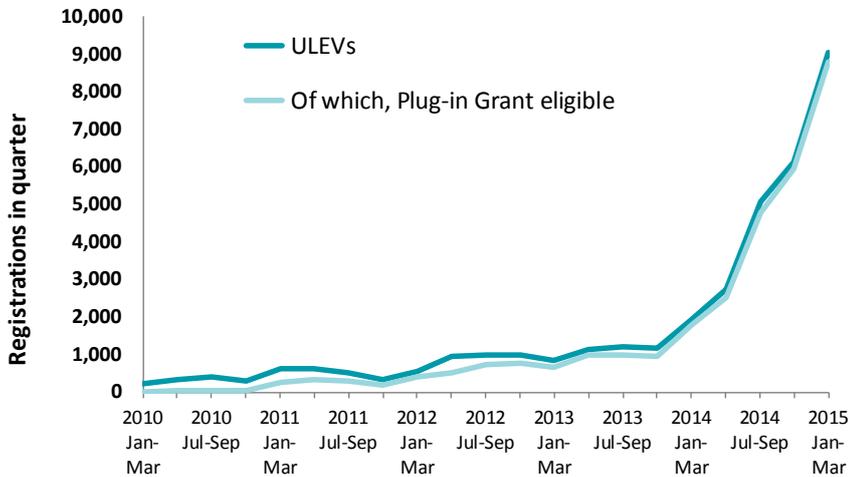
What are plug-in grants?

Plug-in car and van grants were introduced in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively.

These grants are designed to provide 25% of the cost of a car (up to £5,000) or 20% of the cost of a van (up to £8,000) for qualifying models - see [Plug-in car and van grants](#) for further details.

The 2015 quarter 1 registrations included 8,561 cars and 247 vans of models that were eligible for these grants, 392% up on the same quarter of 2014. This growth is being influenced by new models coming into the market, and increasingly, competitive pricing. The models accounting for the most registrations in the latest quarter were the Mitsubishi Outlander with 4,596 and the Nissan Leaf with 1,705. The number of privately owned ULEVs newly registered in quarter 1 2015 was 2,807, up from 674 in the same quarter of 2014.

New Ultra Low Emission & electric vehicles, UK 2010 - Q1 2015

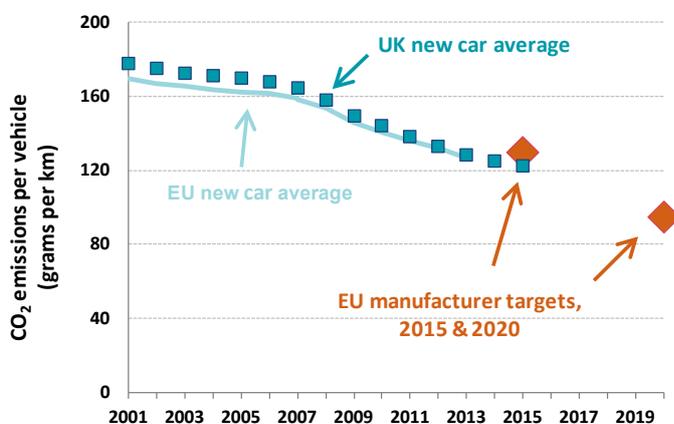


The number of newly registered ultra low emissions vehicles is one of the Department for Transport's [input and impact indicators](#).

In quarter 4 2014, 37% of all licensed cars fell into one of the lowest five **Vehicle Excise Duty** bands (A to E, up to 140 g/km), compared with under 1% in 2001¹.

The average CO₂ emissions from cars newly registered in 2015 quarter 1 fell by 3.0% from 2014 quarter 1 to an average figure of 122 g/km. Since 2001 the average emissions of new cars has fallen by 31%.

New car CO₂ emissions, UK 2001 - Q3 2014



Note: 2015 average based on Q1 only

Average new CO₂ emissions is one of the Department for Transport's [input and impact indicators](#).

Tables

Detailed environment statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

ULEV: [VEH0170](#)

CO₂ cars: [VEH0256](#)

What are VED bands?

Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) is charged on vehicles registered in the UK.

For cars licensed after March 2001, VED is charged in bands on the basis of their CO₂ emissions - see [Vehicle Tax Rate Tables](#) for further details.

1. Based on annually updated data.

How do the EU Emissions targets work?

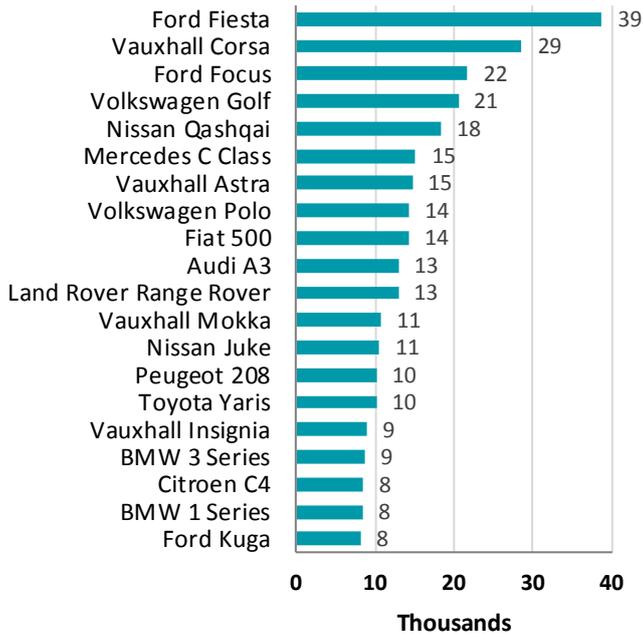
The targets are for manufacturers selling cars in the EU, rather than applying directly at the member state level.

Makes and models of cars

The Ford Fiesta was the most common new registration in 2015 quarter 1 with 39 thousand cars registered for the first time. This was followed by the Vauxhall Corsa with 29 thousand, the Ford Focus with 22 thousand and Volkswagen Golf with 21 thousand.

The top five car makes in terms of **new registrations** (Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Nissan and Audi) accounted for 44% of the new car registrations in 2015 quarter 1.

New registrations cars, top 20 models, GB: first quarter 2015



Tables

Detailed make and model statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

[VEH0160, 161](#)

About these statistics

Almost all the statistics in the vehicle licensing statistics series are derived by Department for Transport statisticians from extracts of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) vehicle database. The main purpose of the database is to administer vehicle registration and licensing records in the United Kingdom.

For further information, please see the detailed [Technical Notes](#). There is also a [Statement of Administrative Sources](#) for the DVLA vehicles database.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The DVLA database can be regarded as being virtually complete in terms of the number of licensed vehicles and vehicles with a SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notification). However, there will be some errors in some of the specific details of individual vehicles, mostly less important details. The Department for Transport estimates that under 2% of the vehicles records have an inaccuracy in one of the variables used for the statistics published. Other factors to consider in interpreting these statistics include: changes in legislation, revisions to the series, seasonal variation which affects some vehicle types, vehicle excise duty evasion and other types of failure to inform DVLA of relevant facts about the status of a vehicle, and the fact that foreign registered vehicles may also use UK roads without being registered with DVLA. Most of these factors will only have a marginal effect for most uses of the data. For further information, please see the detailed [Technical Notes](#).

What are the full list of tables updated as part of this release?

- veh0131: number of plug in grant eligible cars and vans by local authority.
- veh0150: first registrations by body type
- veh0160: first registrations by make and model
- veh0161: first registrations by generic model name
- veh0170: first registrations of ultra-low emission vehicle registrations (UK data)
- veh0256: first registrations of cars by CO2 emission band

- veh0301: number of licensed motor cycles

Addition of Northern Ireland data to this series

In July 2014 vehicle and registration services for Northern Ireland were centralised at DVLA, where these services for Great Britain were already administered. This created a single vehicle register for the United Kingdom, in place of separate registers for Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

As a result, the coverage of the vehicle licensing statistics tables is being expanded to cover UK rather than GB. Where practical, the published tables are being expanded to give figures for both UK and GB, at least for a transitional period. Because of the greater availability of GB time series data, this statistical release will continue to focus mainly on GB rather than UK results for the time being.

If you have any comments on these changes, please send them to vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Separately from this GB/UK statistical series, [DOE Northern Ireland](#) will continue to publish statistics for vehicles registered in Northern Ireland.

Users and uses of these statistics

A separate note on this is available from the vehicles statistics guidance [web page](#).

National Statistics

All of the statistics published in this series are National Statistics, apart from the exceptions listed on the [series page](#). Vehicles statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority and confirmed as National Statistics in April 2012. National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the [Pre-release access list](#).

Next Release

Vehicle Licensing statistical releases are published quarterly. The next update, relating to quarter 2, is due on 10 September 2015. The Quarter 4 release for each calendar year is accompanied by a larger set of data tables. In addition a single table of monthly new vehicle registrations is released on the series page on the second Thursday of each month. Any updates to these plans will be advertised via the [DfT statistical publications schedule](#).

Request for Feedback

We welcome any feedback on these statistics, to ensure future releases best meet user needs. Feedback can be provided by email to vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.