



Department for Transport

Vehicle Licensing Statistics: 2019 Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun)

About this release

This release presents the latest statistics on licensed motor vehicles. It is part of the [Vehicle Statistics](#) series. Detailed [data tables](#) are available online and more detailed commentary can be found in the [annual release](#).

These statistics are based on administrative data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Except where otherwise stated, the statistics refer to Great Britain. UK data is available from July 2014.

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Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs):

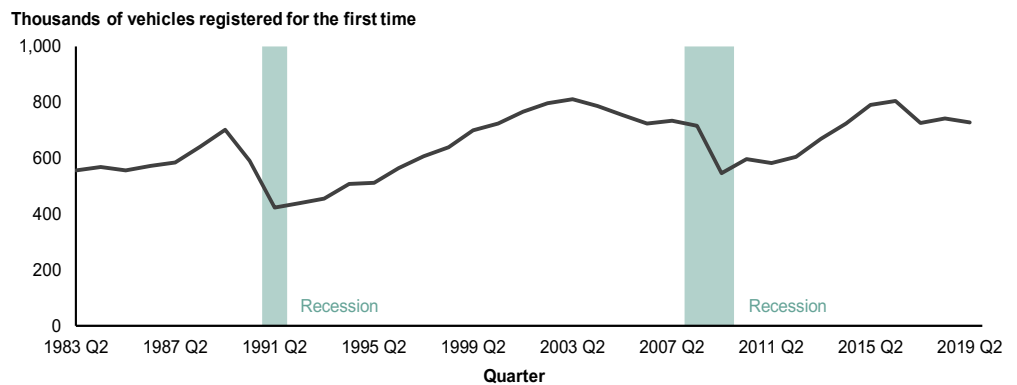
Vehicles that emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled.

Alternative fuel: Vehicles powered by something other than petrol or diesel.

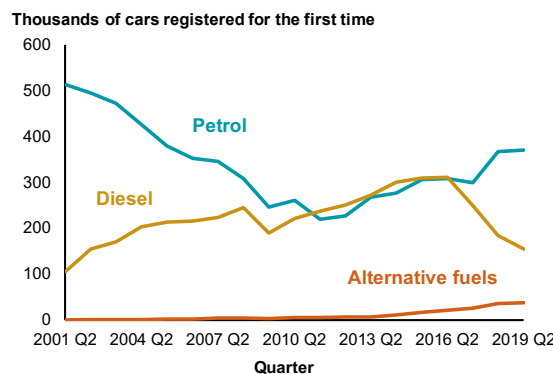
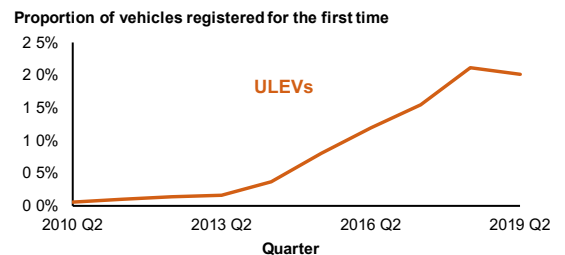
Next published:
December 2019



728 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2019 Q2, 2% fewer than during 2018 Q2.



During 2019 Q2, 14,649 ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were registered for the first time in Great Britain, a decrease of 6% on 2018 Q2. ULEVs made up 2.0% of all new registrations.



The number of **diesel** cars registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2019 Q2 declined by 16% compared to 2018 Q2, to the lowest number since 2002 Q2. There was a 5% increase in the number of **alternative fuel** cars over the same time period.



The most **popular** new car models in Great Britain in 2019 Q2 were the Ford Fiesta (19 thousand), the Ford Focus (15 thousand), and the Volkswagen Golf (14 thousand).



At the end of June 2019, there were 38.7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, an increase of 1.3% compared to the end of June 2018.

Vehicles registered for the first time

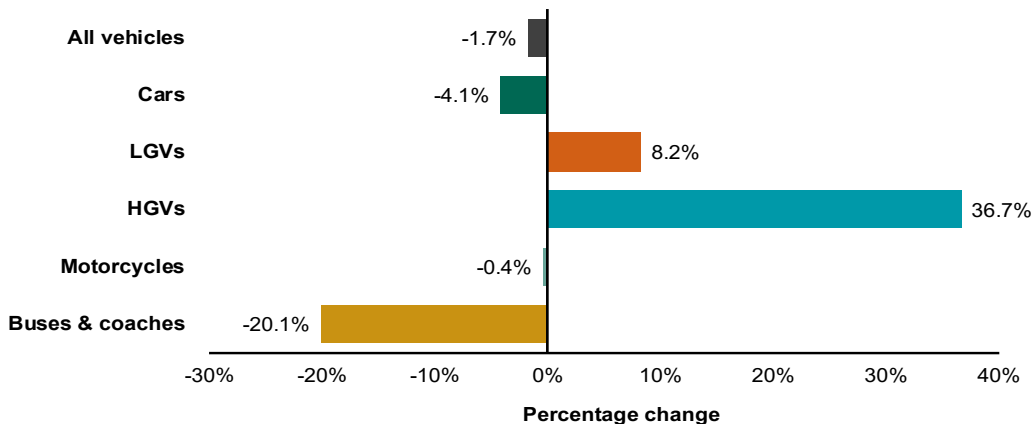
During 2019 Q2, 728 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain.

The number of new registrations was 1.7% lower than during 2018 Q2 but slightly (0.3%) higher than during 2017 Q2. Each month in quarter 2 had over 200 thousand new registrations with the most occurring in June, accounting for 39% of all new registrations in 2019 Q2.

Cars make up the majority of new registrations, accounting for 77.2% of all new registrations in 2019 Q2.

Cars registered for the first time declined by 4.1% in 2019 Q2 compared to 2018 Q2. Bus & coach registrations fell by 20.1% over the same period, continuing a long term trend following a reduction in minibus registrations. Both light and heavy goods vehicles saw a large increase of 8.2% and 36.7% respectively. The increase for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) was likely affected by the introduction of mandatory smart tachographs from 15 June onwards.

Figure 1: Percentage change in vehicles registered for the first time compared to 2018 Q2 by body type, Great Britain, 2019 Q2



Although the number of new registrations can vary considerably each quarter, the [total vehicle stock](#) varies much more slowly as there are many more vehicles that remain licensed over the year.

Table 1: Vehicles registered for the first time by body type, with previous year and total stock comparison, Great Britain, 2019 Q2

	2019 Q2		2018 Q2		Total stock at the end of June 2019
	New registrations	Percentage of all new registrations	New registrations	Percentage of all new registrations	
Cars	562	77.2	587	79.2	31,842
Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	95	13.0	88	11.9	4,103
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	17	2.4	13	1.7	505
Motorcycles	35	4.9	36	4.8	1,332
Buses & coaches	2	0.2	2	0.3	154
Other	16	2.3	16	2.2	764

During 2019 Q2 **728 thousand** vehicles registered for the first time in Great Britain



Updated tables

Detailed new registrations data tables updated this quarter:

All vehicles types: [VEH0150, 0160, 0161 & 0170](#)

Cars: [VEH0253 & 0256](#)

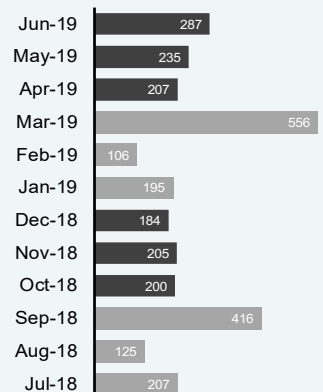
Monthly seasonality

Up to 1998, new registration plates were issued once a year in August, causing a peak in new registrations in the third quarter.

Since 1999, new plates were issued twice a year, in March and September. This changed the distribution of new registrations through the year, with peaks in the first and third quarters.

INSET: Vehicles registered for the first time by month of first registration, Great Britain, 12 months to June 2019

Thousands of vehicles registered for the first time



New car registrations by fuel type

New diesel and plug-in hybrid electric car registrations decline in Great Britain, with increases seen for petrol and battery electric cars.



There was a 16% decline in the number of diesel cars being registered for the first time in 2019 Q2 compared to 2018 Q2, to 154 thousand cars, which is below the 2008/09 recession dip and similar to 2002 Q2 registrations. New petrol car registrations increased by 1% over the same period.

There have now been three successive years of double digit percentage point declines for diesel cars, with a previous decrease of 26% to 2018 Q2 following a decrease of 20% to 2017 Q2. Since 2016 Q2, new registrations fell by 50% with 157 thousand fewer new diesel car registrations in the second quarter.

Diesel cars accounted for 49% of all new car registrations in 2016 Q2, which has dropped to 27% in 2019 Q2.

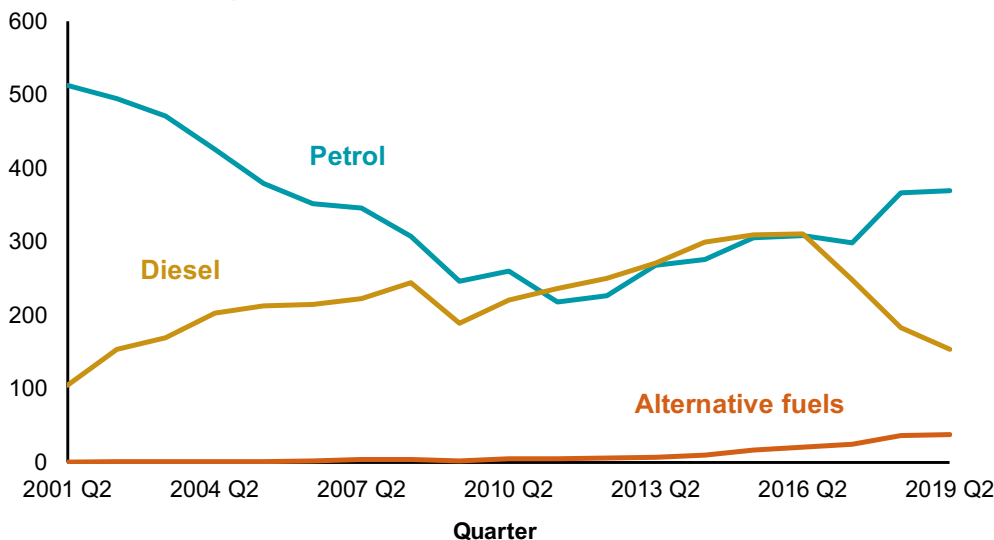
New car registrations

Annual change in 2019 Q2

Diesel **Petrol** **Alt. fuel**
-16% **+1%** **+5%**

Figure 2: Cars registered for the first time by fuel type, Great Britain, 2001 Q2 to 2019 Q2

Thousands of cars registered for the first time



Alternative fuel cars continued to see increases in 2019 Q2, a rise of 5% up to 38 thousand cars, but this increase was mixed between different fuel types. Compared to the previous year, the number of battery electric cars (+77%) and hybrid electric cars (+19%) both increased, whereas the number of plug-in hybrid electric cars (-41%) decreased.

Key events surrounding the decline in new diesel car registrations

April 2017: changes are introduced for newly registered car [tax bands and rates](#).

July 2017: [UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations](#) is announced, ending the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040.

November 2017: Transport for London announces the “world’s first [Ultra-Low Emission Zone](#)” - although new diesel cars would not be charged under the current plan.

Alternative fuel

Alternative fuel vehicles are those that can be powered by something other than petrol or diesel fuel, including hybrid electric, battery electric, gas, gas bi-fuel, and hydrogen / fuel cell electric.

Updated tables

Detailed fuel data tables updated this quarter:

Cars: [VEH0203 & 0253](#)

LGVs: [VEH0403 & 0453](#)

Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)

This section relates to the United Kingdom rather than Great Britain.

New battery electric ULEVs see large increase but overall new ULEV numbers decline in the UK.



In 2019 Q2, 14,811 ULEVs were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom, a decrease of 7% on 2018 Q2 but a 30% increase on 2017 Q2. ULEVs accounted for 2.0% of all new vehicle registrations, which was 2.1% in 2018 Q2.

For the year ending June 2019, the most common generic model of ULEV registered for the first time in the UK was the Mitsubishi Outlander with 8,712 vehicles, followed by the BMW 5 Series with 6,547 vehicles and the BMW I3 with 4,242 vehicles.

Figure 3: Top 20 generic models for ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, UK, year ending June 2019

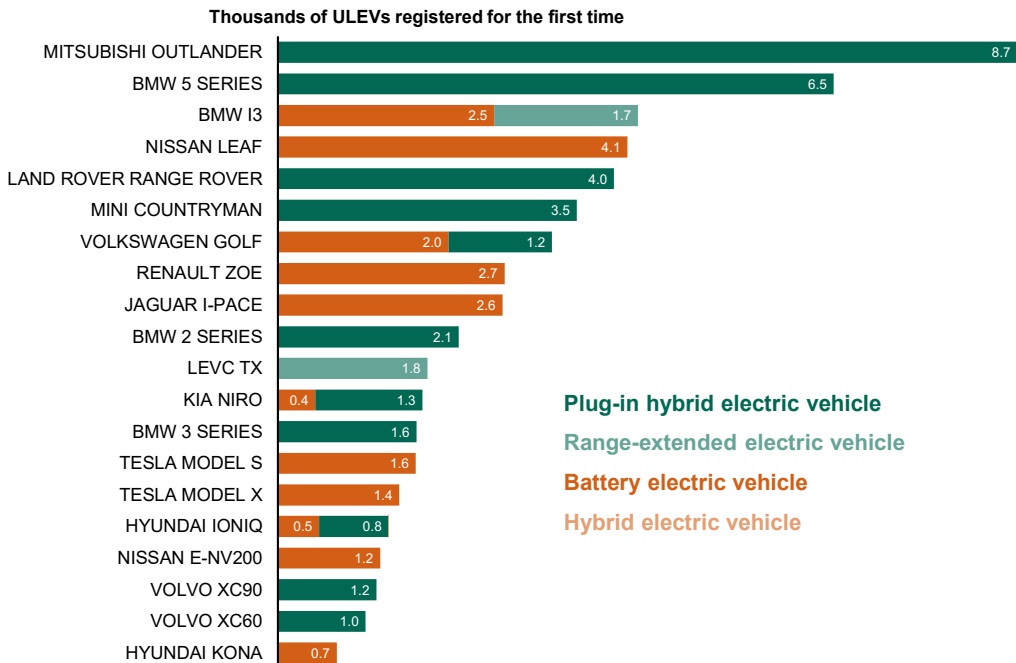
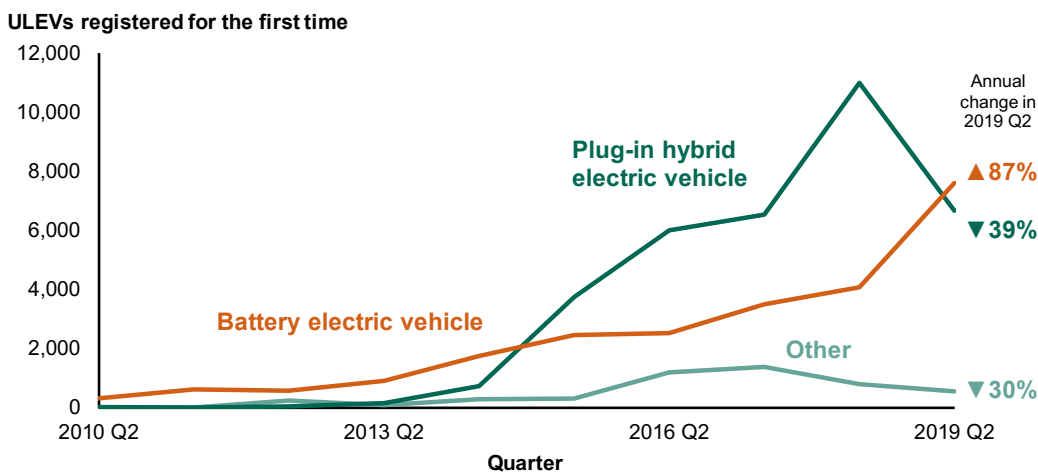


Figure 4: ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, UK, 2010 Q2 to 2019 Q2



Key events surrounding the uptake of new ULEV registrations

2011/2012: [plug-in car and van grants](#) are introduced, reducing the cost of new qualifying models. These were expanded to cover more body types in March 2016.

July 2018: [Road to Zero Strategy](#) is announced, confirming the government's ambition to see at least half of new cars to be ultra low emission by 2030.

October 2018: The government announced that [changes would be made to the plug-in car grant](#), focusing on battery electric vehicles.

Reported CO₂ emissions of new cars

Cars registered for the first time have a reported CO₂ emission rating. This is used for tax and emissions purposes.

The introduction of the Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) has led to changes from September 2018 being not directly comparable with previous periods.

Updated tables

Detailed environment data tables updated this quarter:

ULEVs: [VEH0130](#), [0131](#), [0132](#) & [0170](#)

Cars: [VEH0206](#) & [0256](#)

Total licensed vehicles

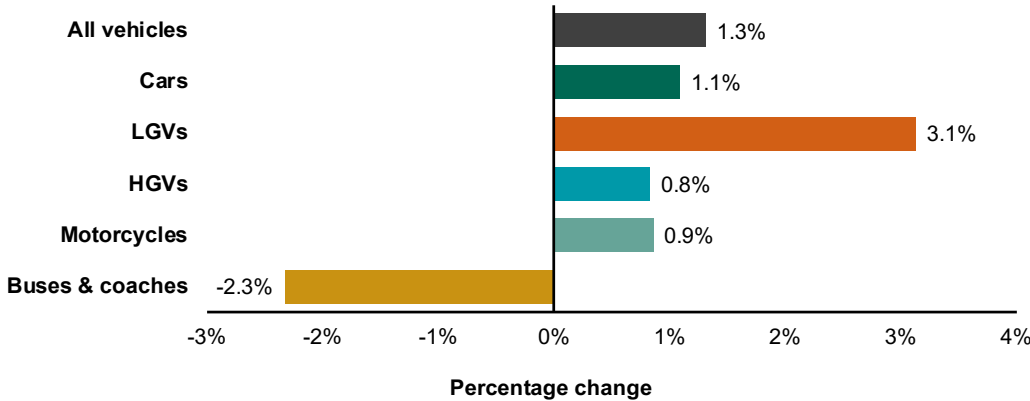
At the end of June 2019, there were 38.7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, a 1.3% increase compared to June 2018.

The total number of licensed vehicles has increased in all but one year (1992) since the end of the Second World War.

At end of June 2019 **38.7 million** vehicles licensed for use on roads in Great Britain



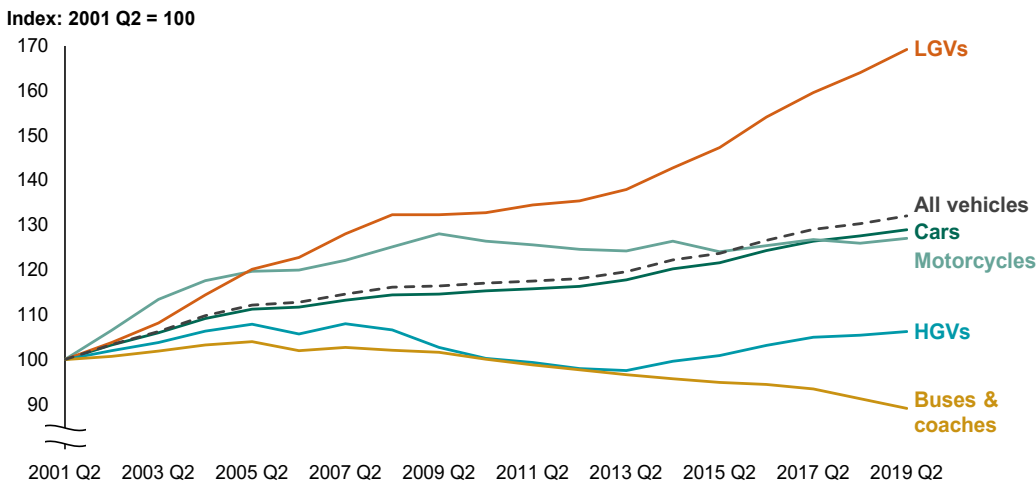
Figure 5: Annual change in licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, end of June 2019



Cars make up the majority of licensed vehicles. There were 31.8 million cars (82.3%), 4.1 million LGVs (10.6%), 0.51 million HGVs (1.3%), 1.3 million motorcycles (3.4%), 0.15 million buses & coaches (0.4%), and 0.76 million other vehicles (2.0%) licensed at the end of June 2019.

All body types apart from buses & coaches saw an increase in overall registered vehicles since the end of June 2018. The largest percentage increase was for LGVs at 3.1%, followed by cars at 1.1%, and motorcycles at 0.9% and HGVs at 0.8%. Buses & coaches fell by 2.3%, which reflects the decline in new registrations.

Figure 6: Index of licensed vehicles at the end of the quarter by body type, Great Britain, 2001 Q2 to 2019 Q2



How are these different from new registrations?

Figures on licensed vehicles have slower variations compared to vehicles registered for the first time as there are many more vehicles that remain licensed over the year.

Updated tables

Detailed licensed vehicle data tables updated this quarter:

All vehicles types: [VEH0101, 0104, 0110, 0120 to 0123, 0128 to 0131 & 0132](#)

Motorcycles: [VEH0301](#)

Motorcycles

The number of licensed motorcycles fluctuates considerably by quarter, with higher numbers licensed at the end of June and September compared to the end of March and December.

This is consistent with riders typically licensing their motorcycle for 6 months during the summer months but not during winter.

The National Travel Survey provides more information on [motorcycle use](#).

Car makes and models

Ford was the most common make for new car registrations in Great Britain during 2019 Q2, followed by Volkswagen and BMW.



During 2019 Q2, the top five makes were Ford (10%), Volkswagen (9%), BMW (8%), Mercedes-Benz (7%), and Vauxhall (7%), accounting for 41% of all new car registrations. This is similar to the distribution during 2018 Q2, except that Mercedes-Benz was in sixth place, with Audi in the top five.

There were 18 makes with over 10 thousand cars registered for the first time each in 2019 Q2, accounting for 87% of all new car registrations.

For total licensed stock at the end of June 2019, the top five makes were different to new registrations, namely Ford (13%), Vauxhall (10%), Volkswagen (9%), BMW (6%), and Audi (5%), which accounted for 43% of all licensed cars.

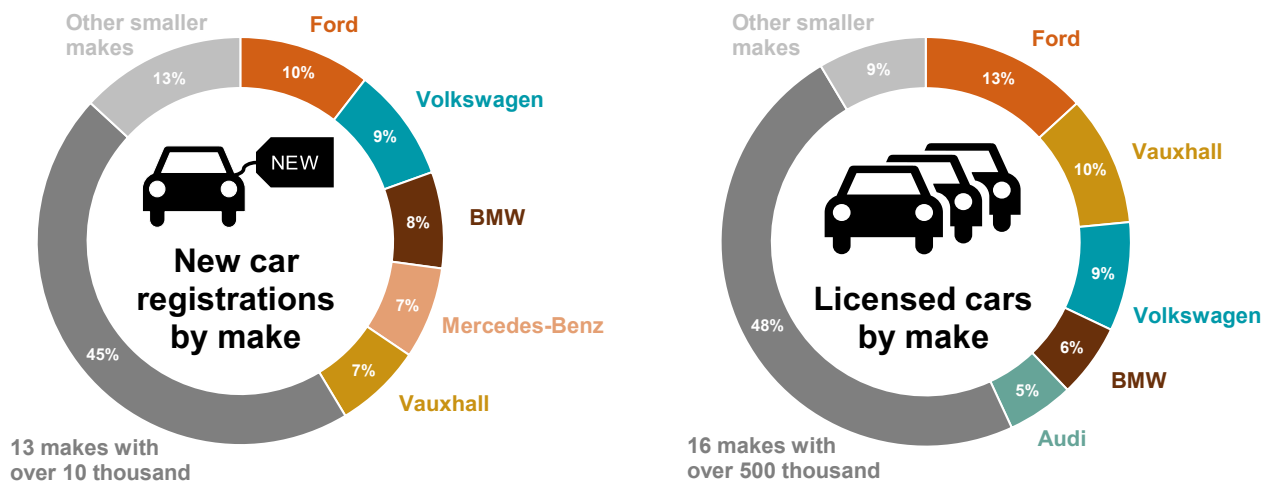
There were 21 makes with over 500 thousand licensed cars each, accounting for 91% of all licensed cars.

Updated tables

Detailed make and model data tables updated this quarter:

[VEH0120 to 0129, 0160 & 0161](#)

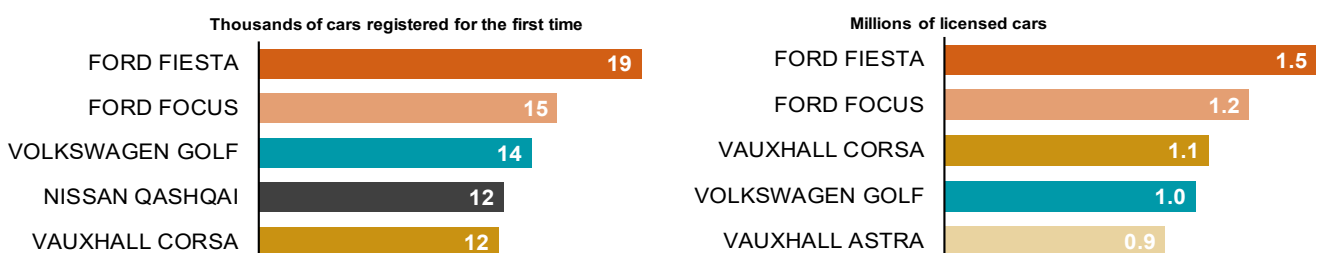
Figure 7: Top five makes for cars registered for the first time during 2019 Q2 and for those licensed at the end of June 2019, Great Britain



The Ford Fiesta was the most common new car registration in 2019 Q2, with 19 thousand registered for the first time. This was followed by the Ford Focus with 15 thousand and the Volkswagen Golf with 14 thousand. The Nissan Qashqai was the fourth most registered generic model, despite Nissan only accounting for 4% of new car registrations.

At the end of June 2019, the most common licensed car was the Ford Fiesta, with 1.5 million cars licenced, followed by the Ford Focus with 1.2 million, and the Vauxhall Corsa with 1.1 million.

Figure 8: Top five generic models for cars registered for the first time during 2019 Q2 and for those licensed at the end of June 2019, Great Britain



Background notes

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.

A separate note on users and uses of these statistics is available from the vehicles statistics information [web page](#).

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@df.gov.uk.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The DVLA database can be regarded as being virtually complete in terms of the number of vehicles registered for the first time, licensed vehicles and vehicles with a SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notification). However, there may be some errors in some of the specific details of individual vehicles.

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;
- ▶ Foreign registered vehicles may also use UK roads without being registered with DVLA;
- ▶ Vehicle excise duty evasion.

Most of these factors will only have a marginal effect for most uses of the data.

Geography

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 of these changes, the coverage of the vehicle licensing statistics tables was expanded to cover UK as well as GB where practical. 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 now. For further information, please see the detailed [technical notes](#).

National Statistics

These statistics were designated as National Statistics in April 2012. There are a few exceptions listed on the [collection page](#).

National Statistics are produced to the high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for 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 release is due in December 2019. The Quarter 4 release for each calendar year is accompanied by a larger set of data tables and more detailed commentary.

Any updates to these plans will be advertised via the [DfT statistical publications schedule](#).

Release of DfT Statistics publications

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