2.9 million vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2019, 1.1% fewer than during 2018.

During 2019, 79,747 ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were registered for the first time in Great Britain, an increase of 26% on 2018. ULEVs made up 2.7% of all new registrations.

The number of diesel cars registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2019 declined by 18% compared to 2018, to the lowest annual number since 2001. There was a 26% increase in the number of alternative fuel cars over the same time period.

The most popular new car models in Great Britain in 2019 were Ford Fiesta (76 thousand), Volkswagen Golf (58 thousand) and Ford Focus (55 thousand).

At the end of 2019, there were 38.7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, an increase of 1.3% compared to the end of 2018.
This release includes a number of new and enhanced data tables relating to ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) and additional breakdowns by propulsion / fuel type for all main body types. This initiative has been put in place to meet the growing need from users for regularly updated datasets on the fast developing trends for vehicles using alternative fuels, particularly on a geographical basis.

**Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)**

- **VEH0132**: Licensed ULEVs by local authority, including a breakdown for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs), and a breakdown for private and company keepers for the latest quarter *(enhanced)*.

- **VEH0133**: Licensed ULEVs by body type and propulsion / fuel type, including top 20 licensed models at the end of the latest quarter *(new)*.

- **VEH0134**: Licensed ULEVs by postcode district (with BEV and PHEV breakdown) *(new)*.

- **VEH0171**: New ULEV registrations by body type and propulsion / fuel type, including top 20 models for the latest year *(new)*.

- **VEH0172**: New ULEV registrations by region *(new)*.

**Propulsion / fuel type**

A consistent propulsion / fuel type table has been introduced for all body types, with an enhanced layout for cars and vans. This has resulted in an *(enhanced)* version of VEH0203, VEH0253, VEH0403, and VEH0453, as well as *(new)* tables VEH0303, VEH0353, VEH0503, VEH0553, VEH0603, and VEH0653.

**Vehicles registered for the first time**

**During 2019, 2.9 million vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain.** *(VEH0150)*

New vehicle registrations have been declining for the past three years, mainly due to the fall in new car registrations (which typically represent around 80% of new registrations). In 2019, overall new registrations were 1.1% lower than during 2018, 6.5% lower than during 2017, and 12.0% lower than during 2016, which was the highest recorded level ever.

**Body Type**

Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), which includes vehicles such as motor homes, saw a large increase in new registrations during 2019 of 11.0% compared to 2018, as shown in Figure 1. This
was impacted by the introduction of mandatory smart tachographs during the year. Bus & coach registrations fell by 11.4% over the same period, largely due to a reduction in minibus registrations during early 2019.

**Europe**

According to figures produced by ACEA (see side bar): “Overall in 2019, new car registrations increased by 1.2% across the European Union, reaching more than 15.3 million units in total... Looking at the five major EU markets, Germany (+5.0%) recorded the largest increase last year, followed by France (+1.9%) and Italy (+0.3%). By contrast, both Spain (-4.8%) and the United Kingdom (-2.4%) saw demand fall in 2019.” [ACEA]

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

Although the number of new registrations in Great Britain can vary considerably each year, 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019 New registrations</th>
<th>2019 Proportion of all new registrations</th>
<th>2018 New registrations</th>
<th>2018 Proportion of all new registrations</th>
<th>Total stock at the end of 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cars</strong></td>
<td>2,295</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>2,342</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>31,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light goods vehicles (LGVs)</strong></td>
<td>369</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>4,123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motorcycles</strong></td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buses &amp; coaches</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>767</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSET: Vehicles registered for the first time by month, Great Britain, 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Thousands of vehicles registered for the first time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec-19</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov-19</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct-19</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep-19</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug-19</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul-19</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun-19</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May-19</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr-19</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar-19</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb-19</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan-19</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACEA**

The ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers’ Association) produce new registration figures collected from trade bodies across Europe. UK data is provided by The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), which represents new car sales rather than new registrations with DVLA, so the figures will be broadly comparable but will not match.

**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 have been 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.
New diesel car registrations continue to decline sharply in Great Britain, with large increases seen for alternative fuel cars.

There was a 18% decline in the number of diesel cars being registered for the first time in 2019 compared to 2018, falling to 605 thousand cars, which is below the 2008/09 recession dip and similar to 2002 registrations.

Compared to 2018 new registrations, petrol cars increased by 3% and alternative fuel cars increased by 26% in 2019.

Battery electric new car registrations more than doubled in Great Britain, which contrasts with a sharp decline in plug-in hybrid electric cars.

In 2019, out of all new alternative fuel car registrations, there were 112 thousand hybrid electric (HEVs), 38 thousand battery electric (BEVs), 35 thousand plug-in hybrid electric (PHEVs), and less than one thousand using other fuel types.

The number of battery electric cars registered for the first time in 2019 more than doubled (+141%) compared to 2018, affected by the release of Tesla Model 3 and strong growth for other popular models.

Hybrid electric cars increased by 30% in 2019 compared to 2018, whereas the number of plug-in hybrid electric cars decreased by 17%.

Key events around the decline in new diesel cars

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.
Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)

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

Large increases in new battery electric ULEVs push total new ULEV numbers up in the UK. [VEH0171]

In 2019, 80,578 ULEVs were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom, an increase of 26% on 2018 and 52% on 2017. ULEVs accounted for 2.7% of all new vehicle registrations, up from 2.1% in 2018. [VEH0150]

In 2019, the most common generic model of ULEV registered for the first time in the UK was the Tesla Model 3 with 10,649 vehicles, followed by the Mitsubishi Outlander with 6,195 vehicles and the Nissan Leaf with 5,280 vehicles. [VEH0171]

Figure 3: ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, United Kingdom, 2010 to 2019 [VEH0171]

Figure 4: Top 20 generic models for ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, United Kingdom, 2019 [VEH0171]

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.
### Table 2: ULEVs registered for the first time by body type, with previous year and total new registrations comparison, United Kingdom, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cars</td>
<td>72,853</td>
<td>60,254</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light goods vehicles (LGVs)</td>
<td>3,625</td>
<td>1,606</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorcycles</td>
<td>1,706</td>
<td>668</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buses &amp; coaches</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,254</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the end of 2019, there were 269 thousand ultra low emission vehicles in the UK.

There were 36% more licensed ULEVs at the end of 2019 compared to the previous year, where there were 198 thousand.

The vast majority of ULEVs licensed at the end of 2019 were either PHEVs (53%) or BEVs (39%). A small proportion were range-extended electric vehicles (5%), which is currently only available in a small selection of models.

In the UK, at the end of 2019, ULEVs accounted for 0.7% of all licensed vehicles. Regionally, the highest rate was seen in London with 1.3% and the lowest was in the North East, Northern Ireland and Wales, each with 0.3%.

Average CO₂ emissions for cars

Average CO₂ emissions of cars registered for the first time have been affected by regulation and market changes over the past few years. Average CO₂ emissions of cars registered for the first time in Great Britain steadily fell between 2003 and 2016, but then began to increase, with a shift towards registering larger cars (which have higher reported emissions) and increases in reported emissions for popular petrol car models (Figure 6).

Changes to the official measurement procedure used, from NEDC to WLTP (see side bar), to determine car CO₂ emissions have caused a number of discontinuities to the time series from September 2018 onwards, which have complicated the interpretation of recent trends. These changes are summarised in Table 3 and the side bars.
Figure 6: Average CO\textsubscript{2} emissions for cars registered for the first time, monthly, Great Britain, Dec 2012 to Dec 2019 [VEH0150]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Grams per kilometre (g/km)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dec-12</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-13</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-14</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-15</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-16</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-17</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-18</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec-19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transition period causes break in time series

NEDC correlated

Introduction of WLTP

Table 3: The use of different testing systems for average reported CO\textsubscript{2} emissions of new cars, United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Testing system used</th>
<th>Figure used when registered</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NEDC / Pre-WLTP</td>
<td>Up to August 2018</td>
<td>NEDC</td>
<td>NEDC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition period</td>
<td>September 2018 to December 2018</td>
<td>WLTP</td>
<td>NEDC and NEDC correlated</td>
<td>Some NEDC tested vehicles allowed to be registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WLTP</td>
<td>January 2019 onwards</td>
<td>WLTP</td>
<td>NEDC correlated</td>
<td>WLTP figure will be used from April 2020 onwards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VED bands [VEH0256]

Prior to 2011, over 90% of cars registered for the first time each year had emissions above 110 g/km. This percentage had dropped to 59% by 2015, following increases in new ULEV and HEV registrations. However, a market shift to registering larger cars (e.g. SUVs) began to reverse this trend between 2015 and 2019, as illustrated in Figure 7. There was a marked shift back towards lower emission vehicles in the last two quarters of 2019. [VEH0256]

Figure 7: Cars registered for the first time by CO\textsubscript{2} emission / VED band, quarterly, with insert for lowest four bands, Great Britain, 2003 Q4 to 2019 Q4 [VEH0256]

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

Since March 2001, car VED has charged in bands on the basis of their CO\textsubscript{2} emissions (NEDC). From April 2017, the CO\textsubscript{2} emission bands for VED were revised.

From April 2020, whilst the VED bands did not change, the emissions used to allocate a band changed to use WLTP figures. This change will not be reflected in these statistics until 2020 Q2.

Break in series for average reported CO\textsubscript{2} emissions of cars

The “NEDC correlated” figure is not directly comparable with the NEDC figure as their underlying methodologies are different.

Table 3 illustrates which time periods are not directly comparable as a result:

- Up to August 2018
- September 2018 to December 2018
- January 2019 onwards
At the end of 2019, there were 38.7 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, a 1.3% increase compared to the end of 2018.

The number of licensed vehicles at the end of the year has increased in all but one year (1991) since the end of the Second World War.

Cars make up the majority of licensed vehicles. There were 31.9 million cars (82.4%), 4.1 million LGVs (10.7%), 0.50 million HGVs (1.3%), 1.3 million motorcycles (3.2%), 0.15 million buses & coaches (0.4%), and 0.77 million other vehicles (2.0%) licensed at the end of 2019.

All body types apart from buses & coaches saw an increase in overall licensed vehicles since the end of 2018. The largest percentage increase was for LGVs at 2.8%, which has been sustained for a number of years. There was a 1.9% fall in the buses & coaches fleet in 2019, which reflects the 11.4% decline in the number of new registrations during 2019.

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.
The average age of a licensed car in Great Britain was 8.3 years at the end of 2019. [VEH0211]

Petrol cars were older, with an average age of 9.1 years compared with 7.3 years for diesel cars. The average age of licensed LGVs was 8.3 years, HGVs was 7.4 years, buses & coaches was 10.9 years, and for motorcycles was 15.0 years. [VEH0211, VEH0311, VEH0411, VEH0511, VEH0611]

Figure 11: Licensed vehicles at the end of the year by body type and year of first registration (1995 onwards), Great Britain, 2019

Vehicles registered before 1995 have been omitted for simplicity. They account for a small proportion of all licensed vehicles.

Cars and their keepers

Company kept cars are a primary driver of new registrations for cars. [VEH0202, VEH0252]

During 2019, 59% of cars registered for the first time had a company keeper. However, the proportion of licensed cars at the end of 2019 kept by companies was much lower at only 9%.

This illustrates that company-kept cars registered for the first time become privately-kept within a few years. The proportion of company-kept cars in the fleet has remained relatively stable between 8-10% since 1994.

Over the last 10 years, the number of female registered keepers of licensed cars had increased by 17%, compared with an increase of only 9% in male keepers. Women now account for 35% of registered car keepers with men accounting for 50%.

For privately-kept vehicles where the keeper’s gender is recorded, 59% are male and 41% are female at the end of 2019. Overall, privately-kept cars, including those where the gender is unknown, accounted for 89% of all cars at the end of 2019, with those between keepers accounting for 2%.

Who is a registered keeper?

Every registered vehicle, unless it is in the process of changing hands, has a registered keeper, whose details are held by DVLA. Note that the registered keeper of a vehicle is not necessarily the person who uses it, and the vehicle is not always based at the keeper’s contact address. This is particularly true for company or fleet vehicles.
Ford remained the most common make for new car registrations in Great Britain during 2019. [VEH0260]

During 2019, the top five makes were Ford (10%), Volkswagen (9%), Mercedes-Benz (7%), BMW (7%), and Vauxhall (7%). The equivalent top five for 2018 were Ford (11%), Volkswagen (8%), Vauxhall (7%), Mercedes-Benz (7%) and BMW (7%).

There were 17 makes with over 50 thousand cars registered for the first time each in 2019, accounting for 84% of all new car registrations. [VEH0260]

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

There were 21 makes with over 500 thousand licensed cars each, accounting for 92% of all licensed cars. [VEH0210]

Figure 12: Top five makes for cars registered for the first time during 2019 and for those licensed at the end of 2019, Great Britain [VEH0210, VEH0260]

Ford Fiesta was the most common new car registration in 2019, with 76 thousand registered for the first time. This was followed by Volkswagen Golf with 58 thousand and Ford Focus with 55 thousand. [VEH0161]

Land Rover Range Rover and Nissan Qashqai were fifth and sixth respectively (52 and 51 thousand) despite their makes only accounting for 3% and 4% of all new car registrations. [VEH0161]

At the end of 2019, the most common licensed car was Ford Fiesta, with 1.5 million cars licenced, followed by Ford Focus with 1.2 million, and Vauxhall Corsa with 1.1 million. [VEH0128]

Figure 13: Top five generic models for cars registered for the first time during 2019 and for those licensed at the end of 2019, Great Britain [VEH0128, VEH0161]
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 about the data used in this release, please see the detailed notes and definitions. 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.

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 (VED) 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 notes and definitions.

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.

Measuring CO₂ emissions in new vehicles since 2018

Cars registered for the first time from September 2018 onwards were mandated to be tested under WLTP, resulting in a WLTP-CO₂ emissions figure. In 2019, this additional figure was collected (for the vast majority of cars) at point of first registration using DVLA’s new Register a Vehicle (RaV) service.

Using this 2019 RaV data, the average WLTP-CO₂ emissions for cars registered for the first time in the UK was provisionally around 153 g/km, which is around 20% higher than the “NEDC correlated”-CO₂ figure of 128 g/km.

From April 2020 onwards, the WLTP-CO₂ figure will be used to determine the VED band for a car, so it is expected that a noticeable change in these figures from 2020 Q2 onwards will be observed due to the new methodology alone.

In addition, the majority of light goods vehicles registered for the first time from September 2019 onwards are also mandated to be tested under WLTP rather than NEDC.

Recent trends

There are more recent data than published here available from SMMT on the majority of vehicle sales.

SMMT data are published monthly for cars and vans shortly after the month-end, in advance of the publication of DfT’s detailed official statistics. This can be useful to look at the most recent trends in vehicle registrations.

Although there are slight differences in coverage of the SMMT data, the volumes and trends published by SMMT are generally consistent with DfT published data.

More information about the data published by SMMT can be found on their website.

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.gov.uk.

Next release

Vehicle Licensing Statistics are published quarterly. The next release is due in June 2020, which will cover the period up to the end of March 2020. The quarterly releases (published June, September, December) have a reduced number of tables and commentary compared to the annual publication (April).

Any updates to these plans, including the exact publication date when known, will be advertised via the DfT statistical publications schedule.

Release of DfT Statistics publications

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