



# Provisional Van Statistics 2019-2020

## About this release

This Statistical Release presents provisional statistics of Van Activity in Great Britain. This is the first DfT statistical research into this sector since surveys in 2008 and 2009. It looks at van ownership, van mileage, where and when vans are traveling, and environmental factors.

These provisional statistics are compiled from responses to a detailed questionnaire, employing data on over 17,600 vans driven by private and business keepers.

Provisional findings from the survey are presented here. A final report will be produced later in 2020-21.

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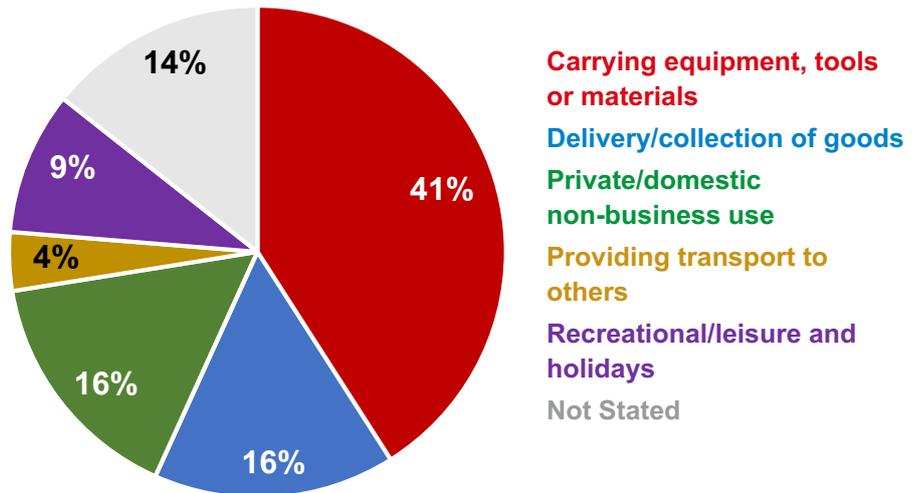
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## Key Findings

Van Usage in Great Britain, 2019-20



- Provisional findings for Great Britain’s van owners in 2019-20 indicate that the primary usage of licensed vans was for ‘carrying equipment, tools and materials’ (41%), followed by ‘delivery/ collection of goods’ (16%).
- Over half (55%) of business owned vans were new; 34% owned outright and 21% owned via a hire purchase agreement. Most privately owned vans were second-hand (81%).
- Over two thirds of vans (67%) travelled on local or rural roads regularly (4 or more days per week), with other main or ‘A’ roads also used regularly by 61% of vans. Fewer vans used dual carriageways and motorways regularly, with only 40% and 22% of vehicles using these roads 4 or more days per week, respectively.
- Half of all vans (50%) in Great Britain stayed local, within 15 miles of their base, on a typical day.
- The most common primary usage of ultra low emission vans was ‘carrying equipment, tools, materials’ (50%) followed by ‘delivery/ collection of goods to other businesses/individuals’ (26%).

# Introduction

This section provides an overview of the van sector.



**4.1 million**  
licensed vans in 2019



**55.5 billion vehicle miles**  
driven by vans in 2019

The Department for Transport's (DfT) road traffic estimates indicate that van travel has grown substantially over the last 25 years, increasing 106% to 55.5 billion vehicle miles in 2019. Van travel as a proportion of all motor vehicle miles has increased from 10% to 16% over the same period.

Vehicle stock statistics produced by DfT indicate that the number of vans in Great Britain has also increased substantially over the last 25 years (increasing 93% to 4.1 million licensed vans in 2019).

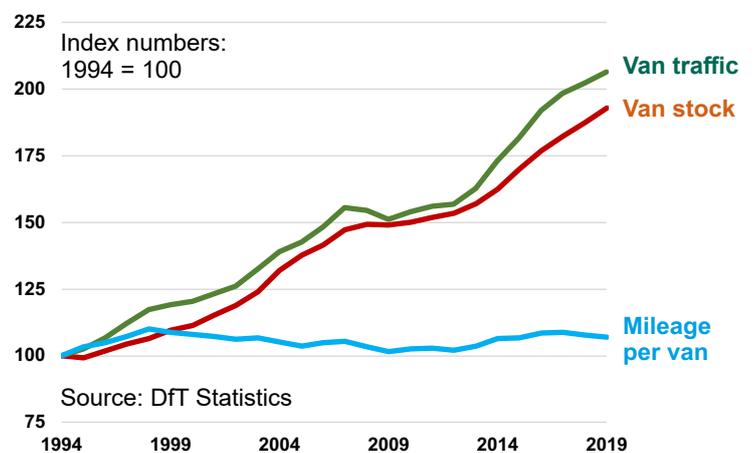
Average annual mileage per van in Great Britain (estimated from van vehicle miles divided by van stock) has remained broadly stable, at around 13,000 miles per year.

There has been major diversification in the types of vans on the market, including an expanse of car-derived vans, and diversity in propulsion type. However, the Ford Transit remains the most common make and model of van in Great Britain, with over 960,000 licenced as at end 2019.

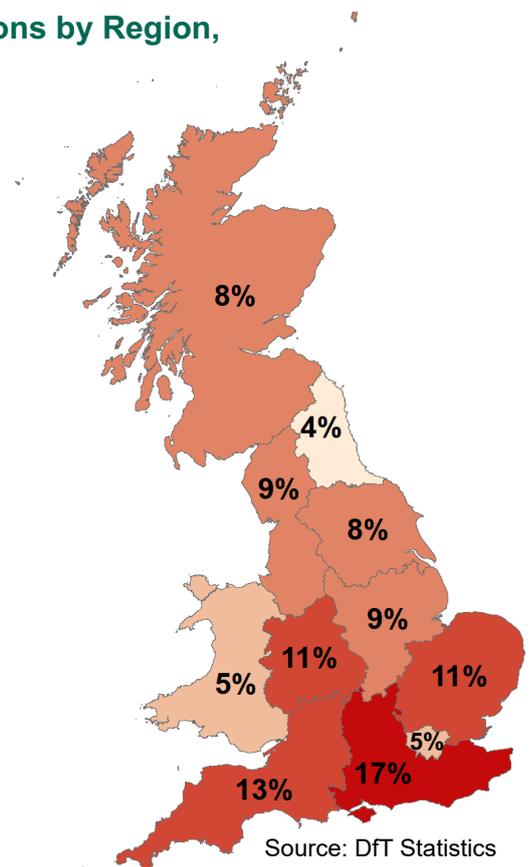
Vans are predominantly powered by diesel (96% at end 2019). The proportion of vans that were considered to be ultra-low emission in 2019 was 0.3%

In Great Britain in 2019, 87% of vans were registered in England compared to 8% in Scotland and 5% in Wales. The region with most van registrations was the South East (17%), followed by the South West (13%).

## Trend of Van Stock and Van Traffic, Great Britain 1994-2019



## Van Registrations by Region, 2019

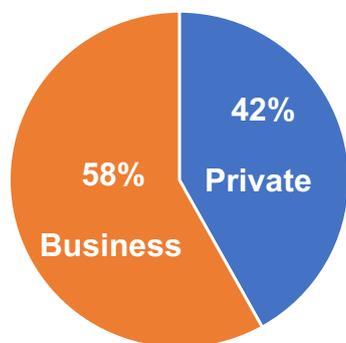




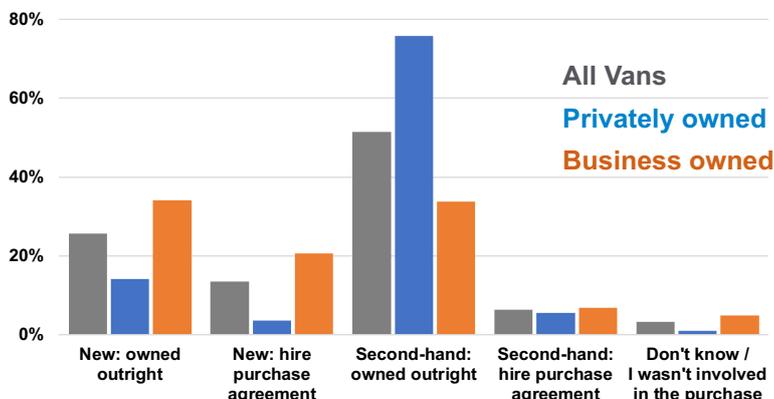
# Van Ownership

Provisional statistics on van ownership indicate that in 2019-20 there were slightly more business owned vans (58%) than those owned privately (42%). Business vans are those kept by a sole trader, partnership, or company.

## Van Ownership



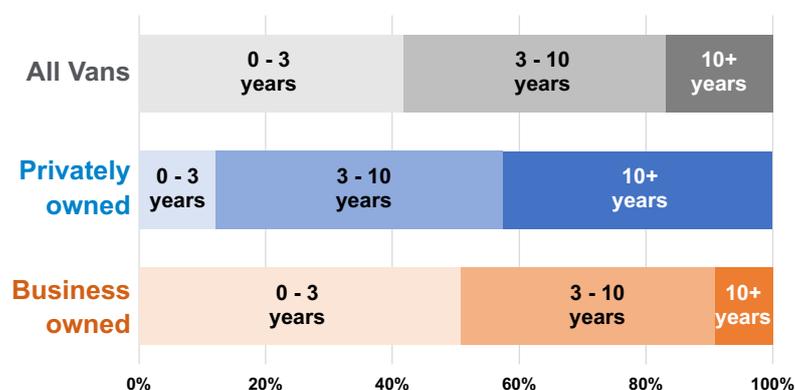
## New vs Second-hand Vans by Ownership



The likelihood of a van being second-hand was much greater if privately kept. Over half (55%) of business owned vans were new; 34% owned outright and 21% owned via a hire purchase agreement. Most privately owned vans were second-hand (81%). Of these second-hand vans, 93% were owned outright.

The majority of owners (60%) stated that their previous vehicle was a similar type of van. However, business vans were more likely to have used similar vans prior to their current vehicles, with 74% of businesses stating this option, compared to only 41% of private owners. Across all van owners, 17% had previously kept a smaller van or car; 9% had previously kept a larger van or lorry; and 10% of all responders didn't have a need before their current vehicle, meaning that this was their first van purchase. Private keepers, however, were more likely to not previously have had a need for a van in the past (16%), or had previously kept a car or smaller van (30%).

## Proportion of Van Mileage by Vehicle age and Ownership



The 2019-20 van survey found that just over a quarter (27%) of vans were 3 years old or less, 4 out of 10 (40%) were between 3 years and 10 years old, and a third were over 10 years old (33%).

Provisional findings indicate that the age of vans kept varies greatly between the private and business sector. Over half of vans (54%) driven by private owners were more than 10 years old, compared to 17% by business owners.

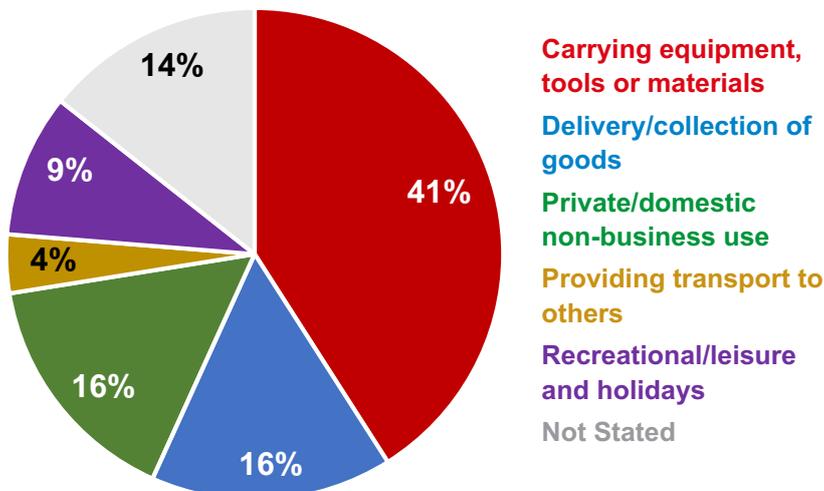
The composition of mileage by van age is reflected in this. Over half of van mileage by business owners (51%) was by vans that were 3 years old or less compared to 12% by private vans.



# Van Usage and Mileage

This section provides provisional estimates of the primary usage and mileage of vans.

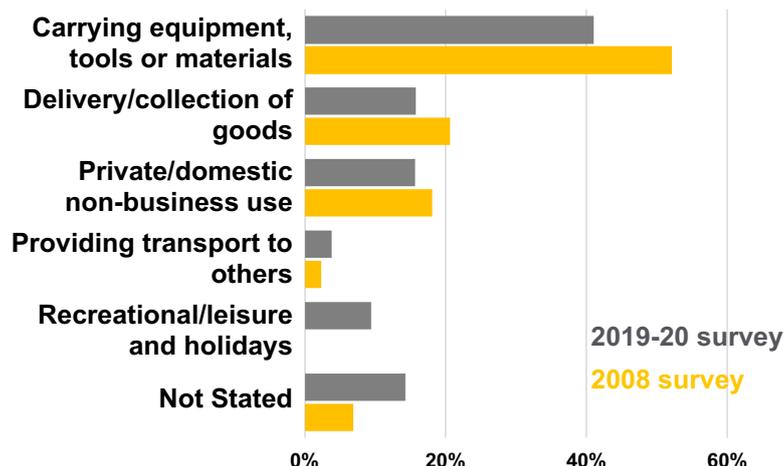
## Primary Usage, 2019-20



Vans are used for a range of activities. Provisional findings for Great Britain's van owners in 2019-20 indicate that the primary useage of licensed vans was for 'carrying equipment, tools and materials' (41%), followed by 'delivery/collection of goods' (16%).

These usages have been compared to a similar England study in 2008. When comparing as a share of all usages, 'carrying equipment, tools and materials' (41%) in 2019-20 was slightly lower than the 2008 figures for England (52%). This was similar for 'delivery or collection of goods' (16% in 2019-20 and 21% in 2008). As there has been an increase in van stock, in volume terms all usages have increased since the 2008 study.

## Primary Usage, 2008 and 2019-20 (2008 figures cover England only)

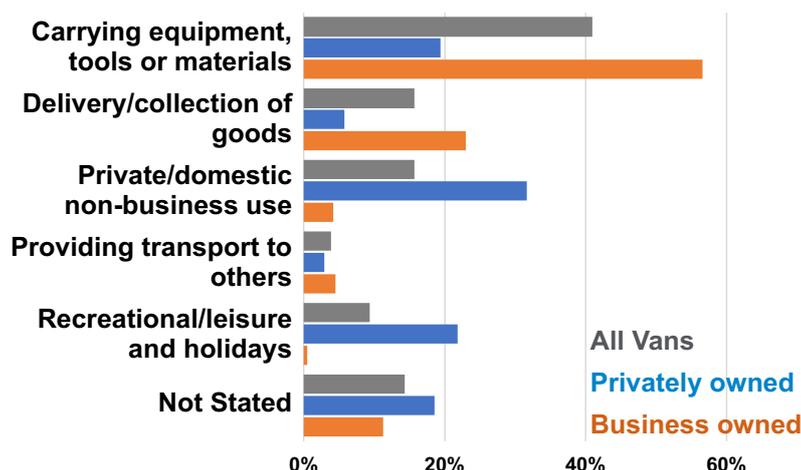


The 2019-20 study included 'Recreation/leisure and holidays' as a new primary usage category. As illustrated in the chart below, this is driven by privately owned vans.

Privately owned vans primary usages were 'private/domestic non-business' use (32%), followed by 'recreational/leisure/holiday' use (22%).

Business vans top primary usages were 'carrying equipment, tools and materials to enable service provision' (57%), followed by 'delivery or collection of goods to other businesses or individuals' (23%).

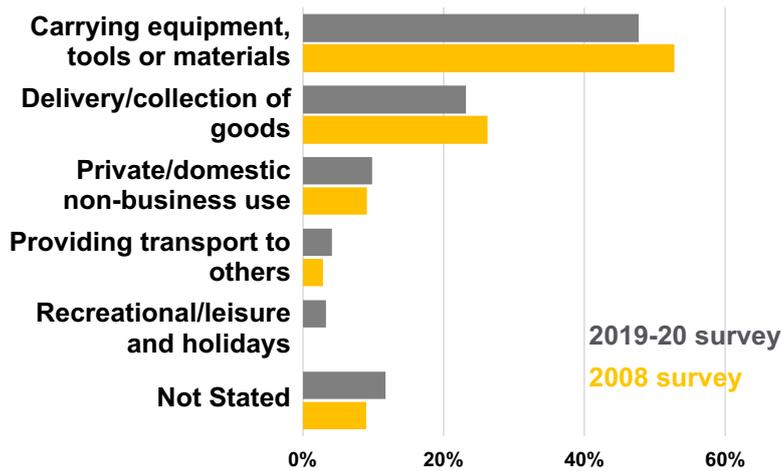
## Primary Usage by Van Ownership (proportion of vans)



Primary usages by van mileage showed a similar distribution to the primary usage by numbers of licensed vans.

Across all van owners, the primary activity of the majority of Great Britain’s annual van mileage (48%) was for ‘carrying equipment, tools or materials’. ‘Delivery/collection of goods’ made up the next most mileage at 23%, followed by ‘private/domestic non-business’ use at 10%.

### Van Mileage by Primary Usage, 2008 and 2019-20 (2008 figures cover England only)



These 2019-20 figures are broadly similar to the previous study of van ownership in England in 2008. In the 2008 study, 53% of mileage was attributed to ‘carrying equipment’, 26% to ‘delivery/collection’ and 9% to ‘private/domestic’ use.

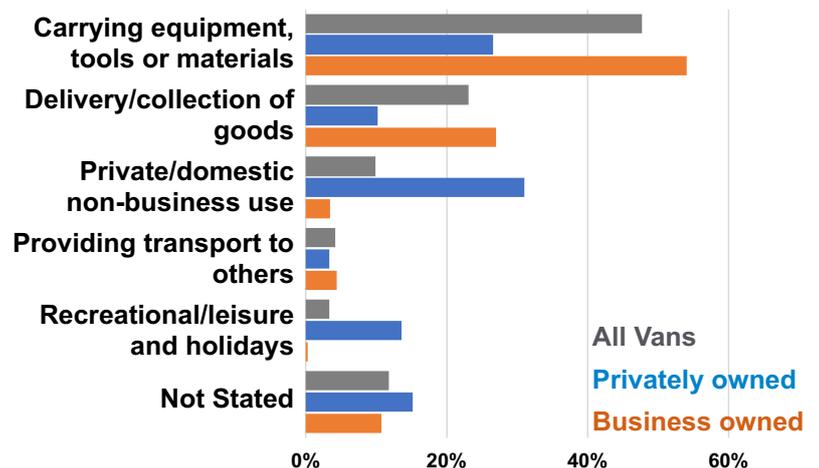
The 2019-20 study saw the introduction of a new category – ‘recreational/ leisure and holidays’, which made up 3% of all van mileage in 2019-20.

Van mileage differs between private and by business owners.

For private owners, ‘private/ domestic non-business use, including travel to work’ was the primary usage mileage (31%), followed by ‘carrying equipment, tools, materials’ (27%).

For business owners most mileage was done ‘carrying equipment, tools, materials’ (54%) followed by ‘delivery/collection of goods services’ (27%)

### Van Mileage by Primary Usage and Ownership



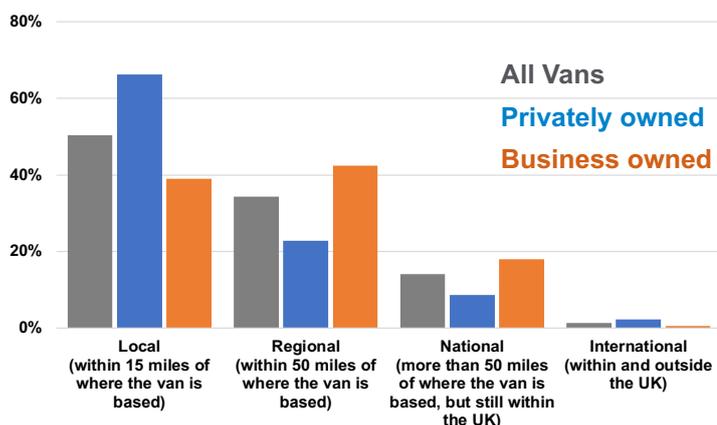


## Where and When of Van Travel

This section discusses where and when van journeys take place.

The provisional findings of the 2019-20 survey showed that half of all vans (50%) in Great Britain stayed local, within 15 miles of their base, on a typical day. Just over a third of vans travelled regionally (34%), 14% travelled nationally and 1% internationally on a typical day.

### Van Journeys by Ownership

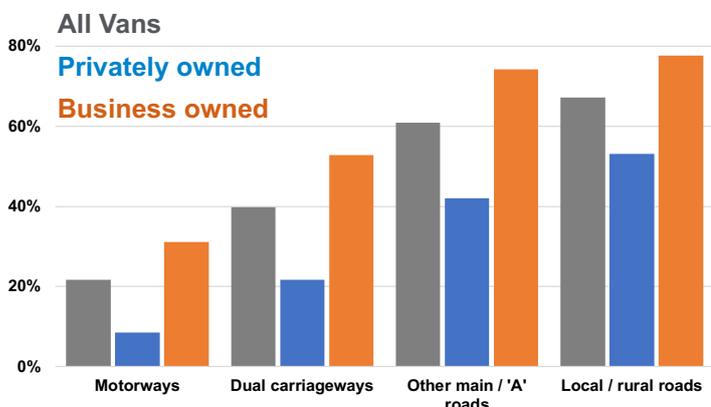


Private vans were more likely to stay local, with only 34% travelling further than 15 miles from their base on a typical day.

Business vans showed similar likelihoods of travelling either locally or regionally (39% and 42% respectively), but were twice as likely to travel nationally than private owners, with 18% of business vans travelling nationally on a typical day, compared to only 9% of private vans.

The likelihood of a van travelling further than 15 miles from base on a typical day was also shown to be dependent upon the primary usage of the vehicle. Vans used primarily for 'private or domestic non-business' use and 'recreational' use were more likely to stay local (72% and 51% respectively). Vans used primarily for 'transport', 'carrying equipment, tools or materials' or the 'delivery/collection of goods' tended to be used for travel further than 15 miles from base. The group most likely to go further were vans used for 'delivery or collection of goods', with 61% of these travelling regionally or further on a typical day.

### Van Usage (at least 4 days per week) by Road Type and Ownership



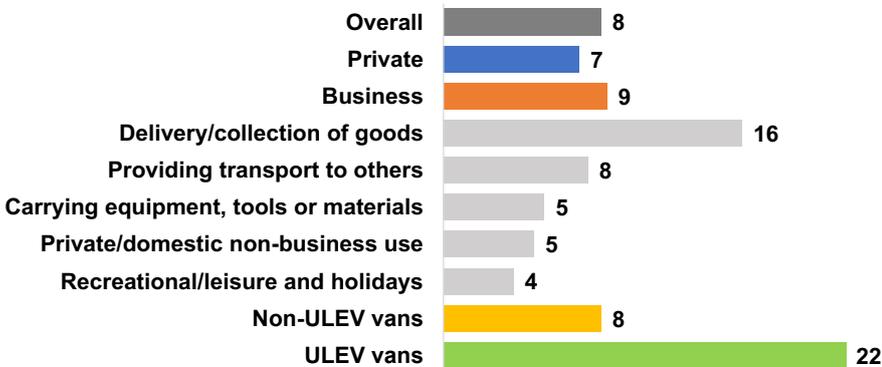
Provisional findings indicate that over two thirds of vans (67%) travelled on local or rural roads regularly (4 or more days per week), with other main or 'A' roads also used regularly by 61% of vans. Fewer vans use dual carriageways and motorways regularly, with only 40% and 22% of vehicles using these roads 4 or more days per week, respectively.

Business vans were more likely to be used regularly on all types of roads when compared to privately owned vans. Only 8%

of private vans were used regularly on motorways, with just over half (53%) used 4 or more days per week on local or rural roads.

Business vans made 9 stops a day on average, compared to 7 for private vans. Primary usage of the vehicle was a key determining factor in the average number of stops, with vans used for 'delivery/collection' averaging 16 stops per day, double that of any other type of usage.

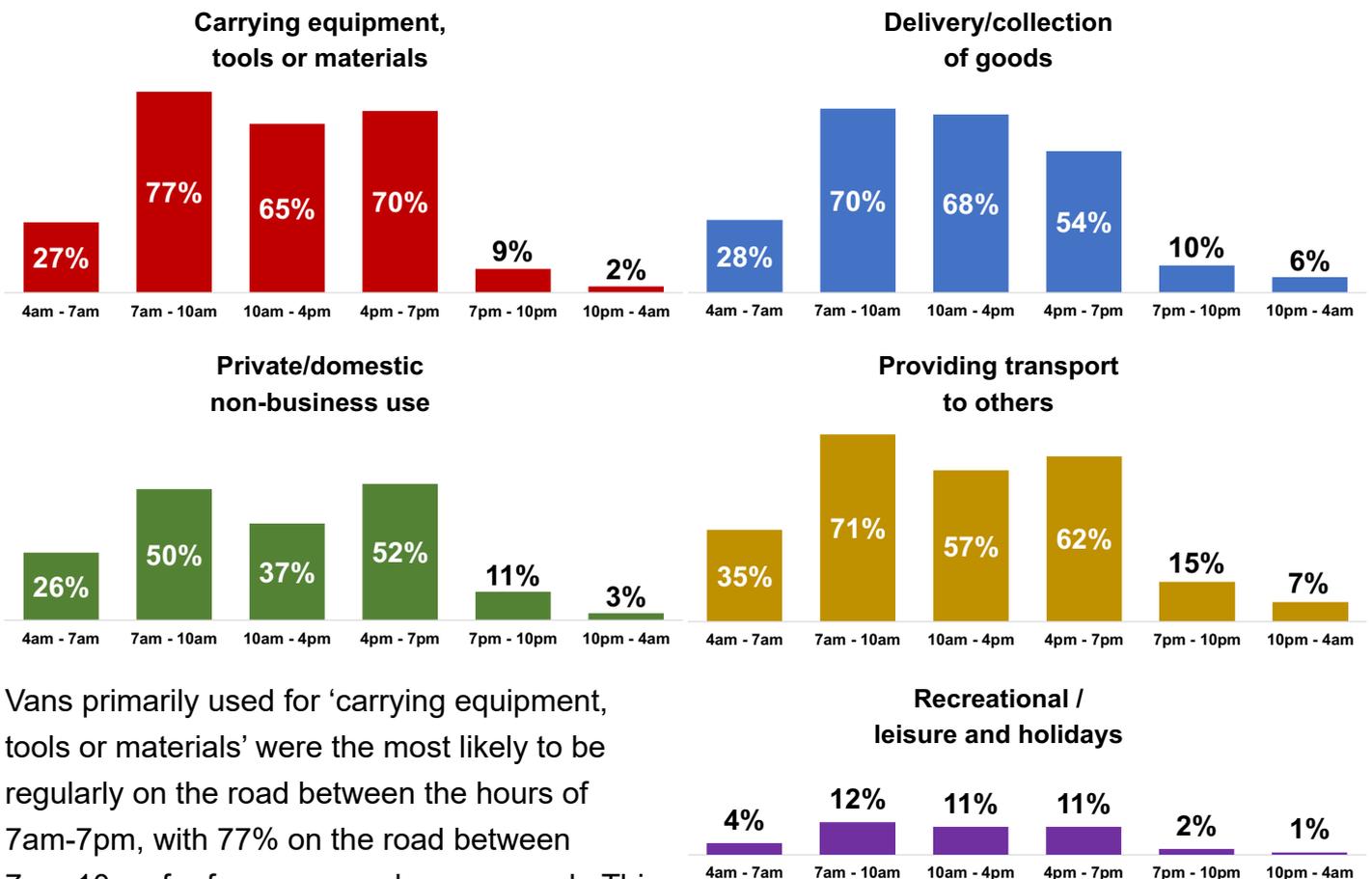
### Typical Number of Stops for Vans



Vans with ultra low emissions (ULEVs) made more than twice the number of stops per day on average when compared to non-ULEV vans (22 and 8 stops on average per day respectively). This may be because 26% of ULEVs' primary use was for 'delivery/collection of goods to other businesses/individuals' compared to 16% of non-ULEV vans.

Over half of all vans were on the road for 4 or more days per week between the hours of 7am and 7pm. The most popular time to be regularly on the road was 7am-10am, with 64% of all vans on the road at this time for 4 or more days per week.

### Regular (at least 4 times a week) travel proportion by Time of Day and Primary Usage



Vans primarily used for 'carrying equipment, tools or materials' were the most likely to be regularly on the road between the hours of 7am-7pm, with 77% on the road between 7am-10am for four or more days per week. This was more than any other usage across all time bands.



# ULEVs and Environmental Considerations

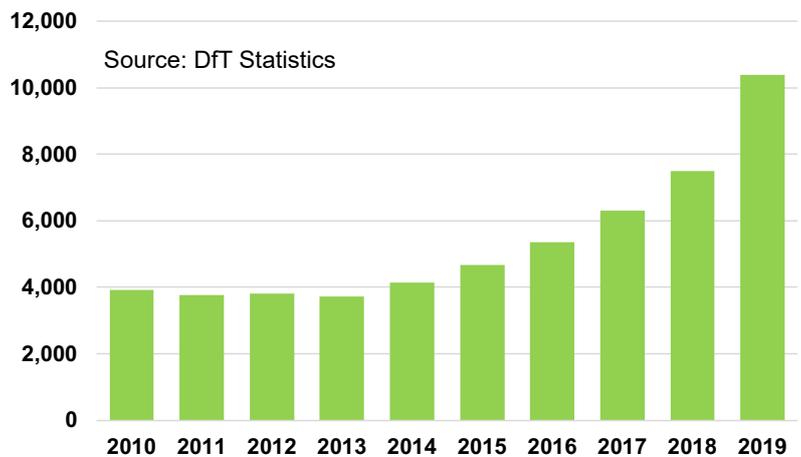
## Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)

Vehicles that emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled. In practice, the term typically refers to battery electric, plug-in hybrid electric and fuel cell electric vehicles.

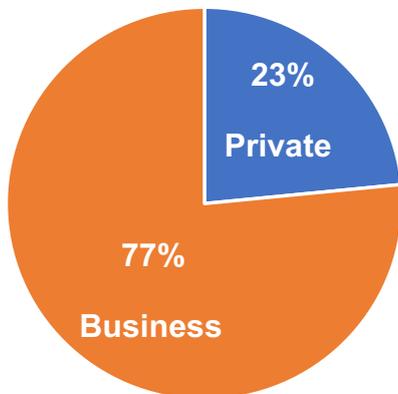
Road transport in Great Britain is a contributor to carbon dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions. This section discusses the small proportion of vans that are ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs).

Nearly all vans are powered by diesel (96%). This means that the proportion of the country's van stock that is ultra low carbon emitting is small (0.3%). However, the number of licensed ULEV vans is increasing. At the end of 2019 there were 10.4 thousand ULEV vans, compared to 4.2 thousand in 2008.

### Number of ULEV licensed vans



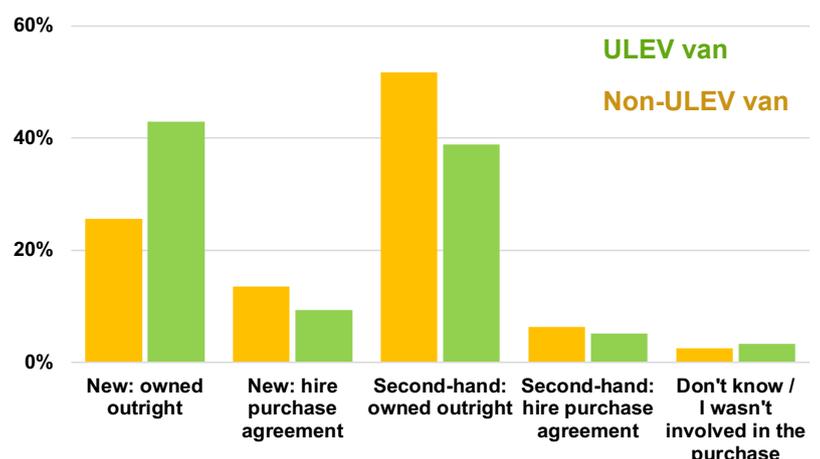
### ULEV van Ownership



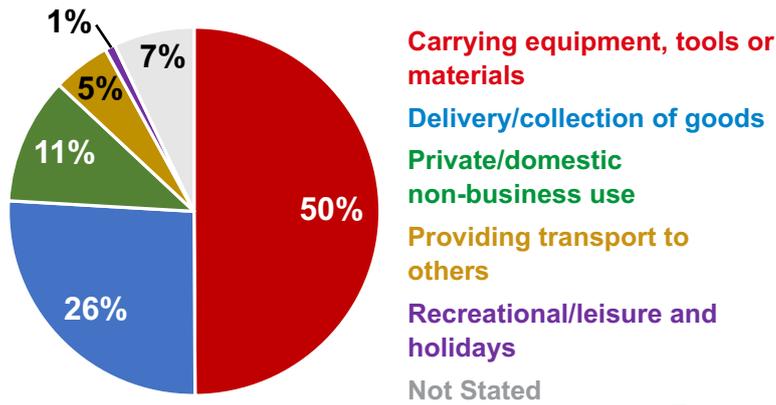
According to the provisional 2019-20 study, ultra low emission vans were predominantly business owned. Whilst 58% of all vans were business owned, more than three quarters (77%) of ULEV vans were reported to be owned by a business.

Carbon-emitting (petrol and diesel) vans were more likely than their ultra low emission counterparts to be second-hand. Of vans powered by diesel or petrol, 52% were owned and purchased second-hand and 6% were second-hand hired. In comparison, 52% of ULEV vans were new (43% owned outright and 9% hired).

### Van Ownership by Fuel Type



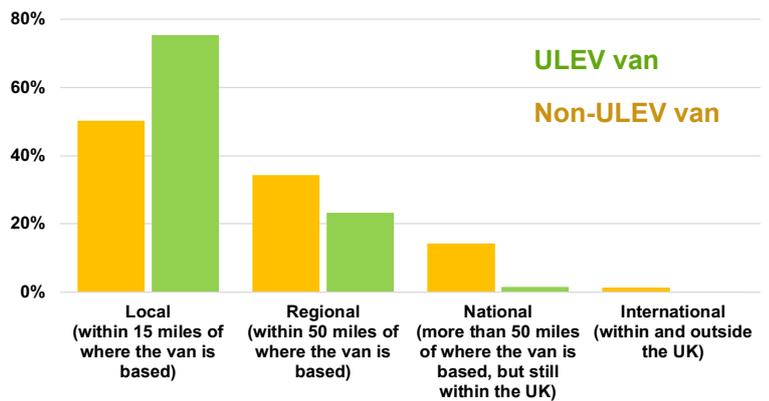
## ULEV vans by Primary Usage



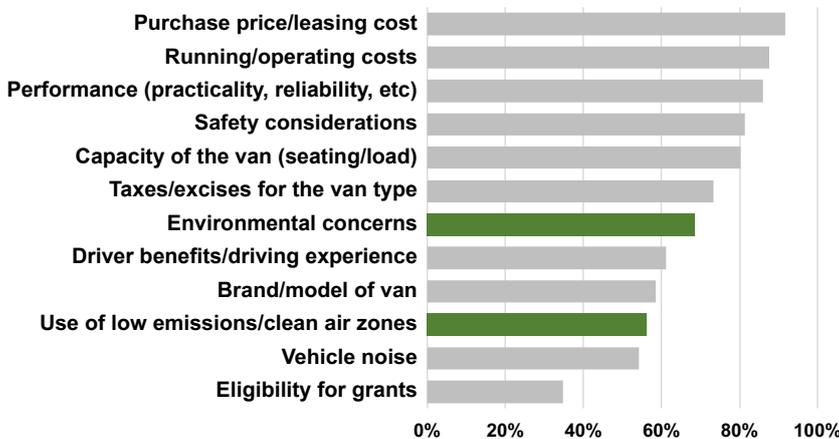
The most common primary usage of ULEV vans is 'carrying equipment, tools, materials' (50%) followed by 'delivery/collection of goods to other businesses/individuals' (26%) and then 'private/domestic' use (11%).

ULEV vans were more likely to be used locally compared to carbon-emission vans. On a typical day, 75% of ULEV vans stayed within 15 miles of their base, compared to 50% carbon emission vehicles. Only 1% of ULEV vans travelled more than 50 miles away from their base on a typical day.

## Range of Van Journeys by Fuel Type



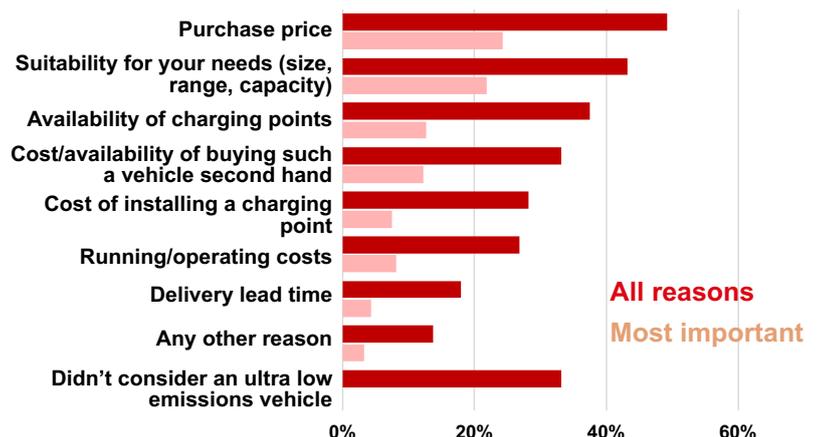
## Importance of factors influencing the next purchasing decision



In considering factors that would influence the next van purchase, two environmental factors were listed as very or quite important by a majority of respondents. However, in the overall order they were rated 7th and 10th most important, with 69% citing environmental concerns and 56% citing use of low emissions/clean air zones.

Reasons for not purchasing Ultra Low Emission Vans (ULEV) were varied. A third of van owners (33%) did not consider the purchase of a ULEV, nearly half (49%) claim purchase price, with the other most common reasons being vehicle suitability (43%), availability of charging points (38%) and the cost/availability of purchasing one second-hand (33%).

## Perceived Barriers to Buying a ULEV



## Background Information

The Department for Transport commissioned statistical research into the van sector in 2019. This publication provides provisional findings based on interim data from this new survey.

Accompanying tables are available: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/van-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/van-statistics)

### Factors affecting fieldwork

The effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic means that the final stages of fieldwork were postponed until Autumn 2020.

Provisional figures have been produced using the returns completed by mid March 2020. All remaining returns will be processed in Autumn 2020 to produce a final report later in 2020-21.

The provisional statistics are compiled from responses to a detailed questionnaire, employing data on over 17,600 vans driven by private and business keepers. The vehicles covered by the survey are vehicles registered in Great Britain as privately or company owned, capable of carrying goods, not exceeding 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight in the light goods taxation class, and with van body types according to DVLA records.

Further guidance on the methodology, sample sizes, weighting, and strengths and limitations can be found in the Technical Report: [www.gov.uk/guidance/van-statistics-information](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/van-statistics-information)

### Strengths and Limitations

These provisional estimates have some limitations resulting from the postponement of the final stages of fieldwork, which will be addressed in the final report due later in 2020-21:

- Shortening the fieldwork of the company questionnaire. The final reminder for completion of the questionnaire was not sent to company keepers.
- The processing of questionnaires received after mid March 2020 has been delayed until Autumn 2020. The provisional statistics are based on around 80% of all questionnaires completed.
- Larger fleet companies are under-represented owing to the foreshortening of the fieldwork and sufficient time to mitigate low response.

### Other data sources

The publication also includes National Statistics from other DfT statistics to provide context, including:

- Road Traffic Estimates 2019: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-traffic-statistics)
- Vehicle Licensing Statistics 2019: [www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-2019](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/vehicle-licensing-statistics-2019)
- Van Activity in England 2008: [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110203090410/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2008](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110203090410/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/goodsbyroad/roadfreightstatistics2008)

The comparisons of the provisional van statistics with these sources should be treated with some caution due to differing survey methodologies, collection methods, and geographic coverage.

## Thank you

DfT is grateful for the input and helpful advice from Highways England and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

The survey fieldwork, data input, coding and some analysis were carried out by Watermelon Research Limited. Special thanks are due to the project team, the coders and to all the interviewers.

The help of the members of the public and businesses who gave their time to respond is gratefully acknowledged.

## Official Statistics

Official Statistics are produced to high professional standards as per the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They undergo quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Details of ministers and officials who received pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found in the pre-release access list:

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/van-statistics](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/van-statistics)

## Feedback

We welcome feedback on any aspects of the Department's van statistics including content, timing, and format. We welcome feedback via email and the team can be contacted at [roadtraff.stats@dft.gov.uk](mailto:roadtraff.stats@dft.gov.uk)



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