



Vehicle Licensing Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 3 2013 (Jul – Sep)

This publication presents information on motor vehicles in Great Britain that were licensed on 30 September 2013 (the end of quarter 3), or were registered for the first time during quarter 3 (July to September 2013).

The statistics are derived from data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), which administers vehicle registration and licensing records in Great Britain.



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Licensed vehicles:

- There were 35.2 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain on 30 September 2013, a 1.4 per cent increase on the same quarter of the previous year, the largest such increase since quarter 3 2007.
- Of these vehicles, 29.2 million were cars, also up 1.4 per cent on the same quarter last year.
- The total number of licensed vehicles has increased over the long term, but the rate of increase slowed down somewhat in the mid-2000s, and slowed further at the onset of the recession in 2008-09.

New registrations:

- A total of 751 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during quarter 3 2013, a 10.2 per cent increase compared with the same quarter of the previous year.
- There have now been nine consecutive quarters with year-on-year increases.
- The number of new registrations in 2013 is the largest third quarter figure since 2007, but it is still 10% less than the number in 2007.
- Average CO₂ emissions from new cars fell from 128.8 g/km in quarter 2 2013 to 127.6 g/km in quarter 3 2013.
- During quarter 3 2013, 1,210 new ultra-low emission vehicles were registered for the first time (in the UK), up from 987 in quarter 3 2012.

1. General context

The number of licensed vehicles and number of vehicles registered for the first time continue to be affected by the general economic climate in Britain and further afield. New registrations remain lower than they were before the recession of 2008-09 began, so the licensed vehicle stock, while continuing to grow, is growing more slowly.

However, while new car registrations across the European Union as a whole fell by 8 per cent in 2012 according to manufacturers' data, the UK was the only major EU market to show growth. This put the UK ahead of France in 2012 as the second largest new car market in Europe, after Germany.¹

The numbers of licensed goods vehicles and buses & coaches tend to be more affected by the fluctuations of the economy than other vehicle types.

2. Licensed vehicle stock

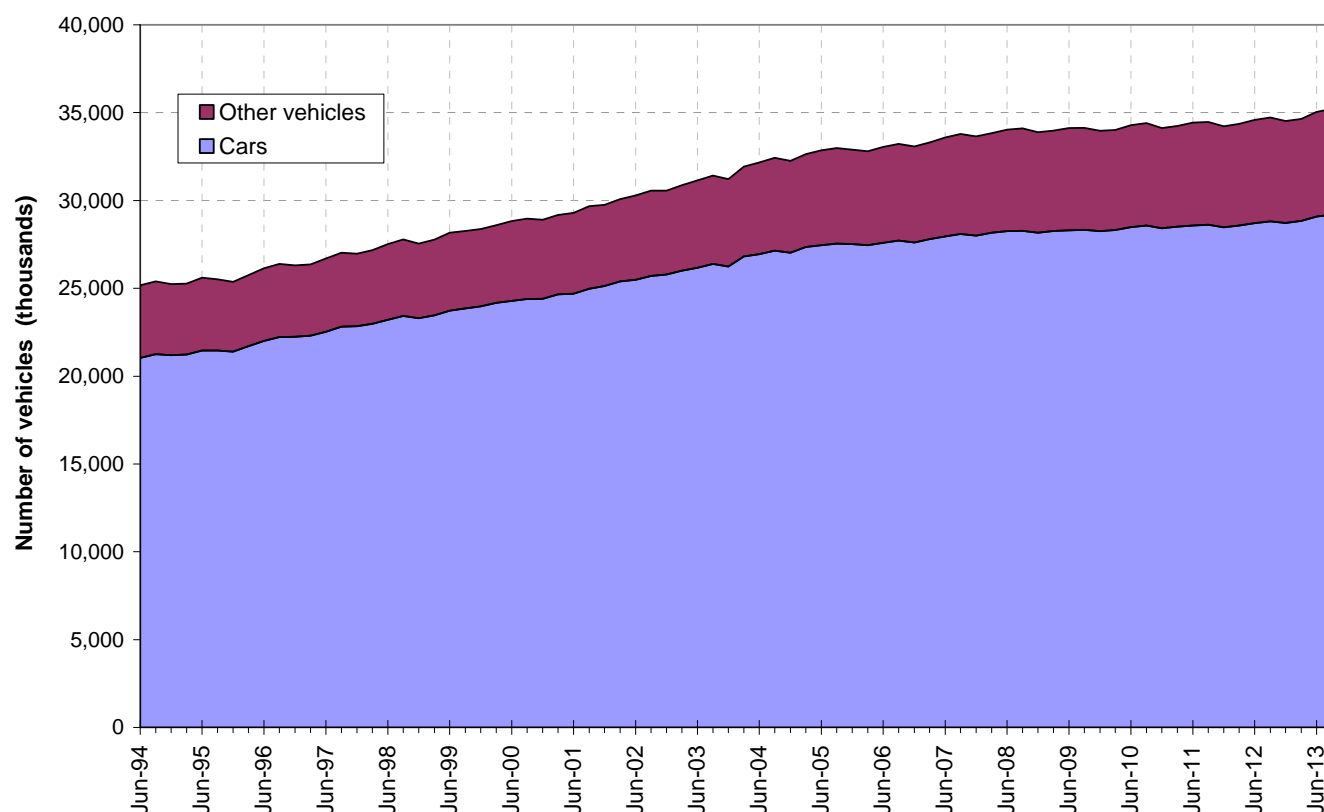
General

- There were 35.2 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain on 30 September 2013. Of these vehicles, 29.2 million were cars.
- There is seasonality in quarterly licensed vehicle figures, with more vehicles being licensed and used during the summer months than in the winter months. Therefore it is generally most meaningful to compare similar periods in each year – especially for motorcycles.
- The prevailing economic situation has a noticeable influence on trends in the number of licensed vehicles, especially commercial vehicles. The numbers of licensed HGVs, buses & coaches and motorcycles have been on a generally downward trend since the recession of 2008-09, and the rate of increase in other types of vehicles has slowed. However, it should be noted that the previously increasing trends had already slowed to some extent for all vehicle types several years earlier, around the mid-2000s.
- The total number of vehicles in quarter 3 2013 was 1.0 per cent higher than at the end of quarter 2 2013 and 1.4 per cent higher than at the end of quarter 3 2012. This quarter continues the year-on-year increases that have happened every quarter since quarterly data were introduced in 1994.

¹ European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) data <http://www.acea.be/collection/statistics>

Licensed vehicles: Great Britain, 1994 to 2013 Q3

(Vehicles web table veh0101)



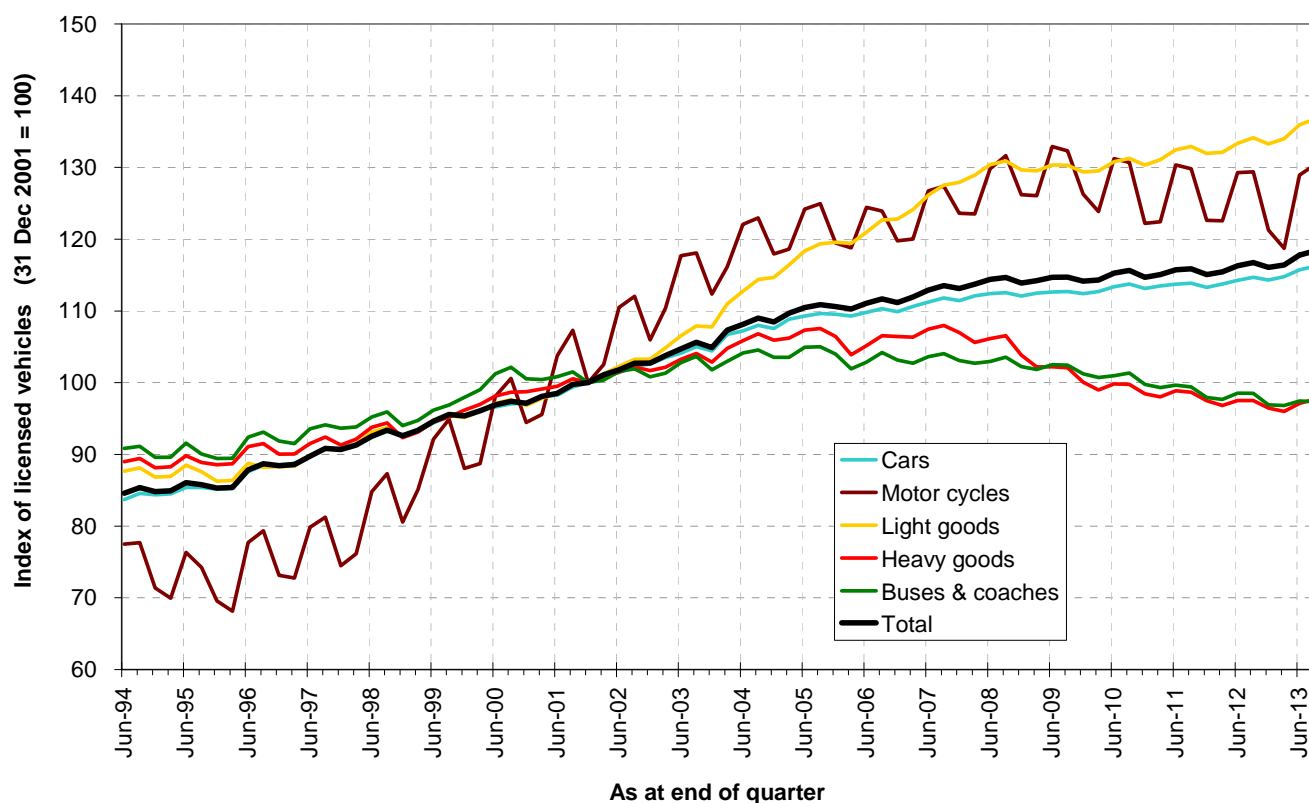
Licensed stock by vehicle type

- The number of licensed cars was 1.4 per cent higher at the end of quarter 3 2013 than it was at the end of the same quarter in 2012. As with total vehicles, the number of licensed cars has risen year-on-year since the start of the series in 1994.
- The number of licensed light vans has increased every year since 1995, except for during 2009. From around 2002 until the onset of the recession during 2008, their numbers increased much more rapidly than those of cars. The number at the end of quarter 3 2013 was up 2.0 per cent on one year previously.
- Although the numbers of cars and light vans continue to increase, the current growth rates are historically quite low. These vehicle types account for nearly 93 per cent of all licensed vehicles, therefore the trend in the total number of licensed vehicles is similar. Between 1994 and mid-2008 the number of licensed cars increased by an average of 2.2 per cent per year. From 2008 mid-2008 to mid-2012, the annual increase averaged 0.4 per cent. Since mid-2012 the average increase has been 1.0 per cent.
- The numbers of buses & coaches decreased by 1.2 per cent over the year to end quarter 3 2013. Buses & coaches have registered a year to date fall for every quarter since quarter 2 2007.

- Over the year to the end of quarter 3, the numbers of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and motorcycles increased by 0.2%, the first such increase since quarter 4 2007.
- The number of motorcycles increased by 0.8% compared with the same quarter of the previous year. This is the largest such increase since quarter 2 2009.

Licensed vehicles by body type (indexed): Great Britain, 1994 to 2013 Q3

(Vehicles web table veh0101)



3. Vehicles registered for the first time

General

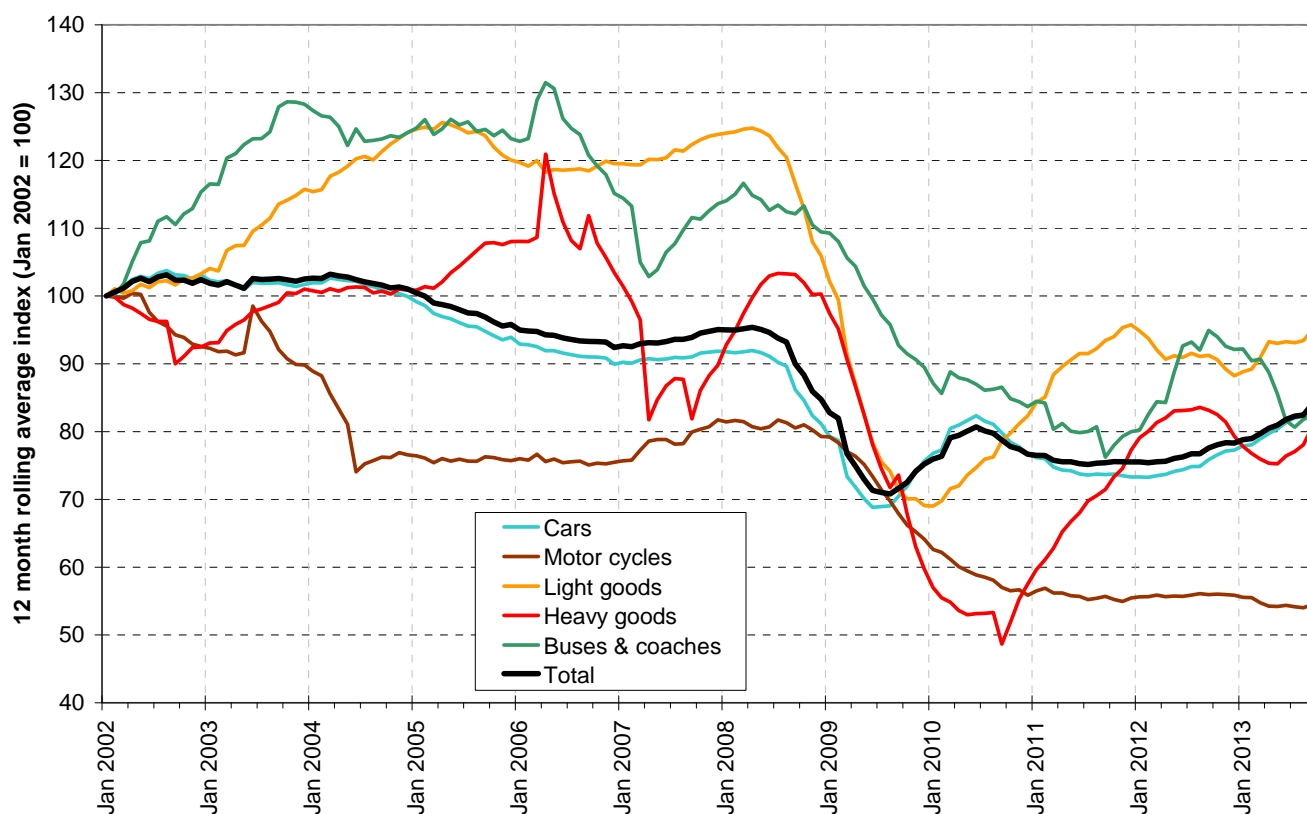
- A total of 751 thousand vehicles was registered for the first time in Great Britain during quarter 3 2013. This represents a 10.2 per cent increase in the number of first registrations from quarter 3 2012. The last nine quarters have now shown year-on-year increases in the number of first registrations. Before this, apart from the period from mid 2009 to mid 2010, which was affected by the Vehicle Scrappage Scheme⁵, the last quarter showing year-on-year growth was quarter 1 2008.
- During quarter 3 2013, 620 thousand cars were registered for the first time. This was a 11.8 per cent increase on the same period in 2012. The last six quarters have all seen year-on-year growth of over five per cent. Aside from the mid 2009 to mid 2010 period affected by the Vehicle Scrappage Scheme, the last two quarters are the only ones to produce growth of over ten per

cent since the series started in 2002.

- The number of vehicles registered for the first time is usually higher in quarters 1 and 3 than it is in quarters 2 and 4. This is influenced by the release of new number plates in March and September.

Vehicles registered for the first time in Great Britain: Jan 2002 to Sep 2013 (12 month rolling average, indexed to January 2002)

(Vehicles web table veh0150)

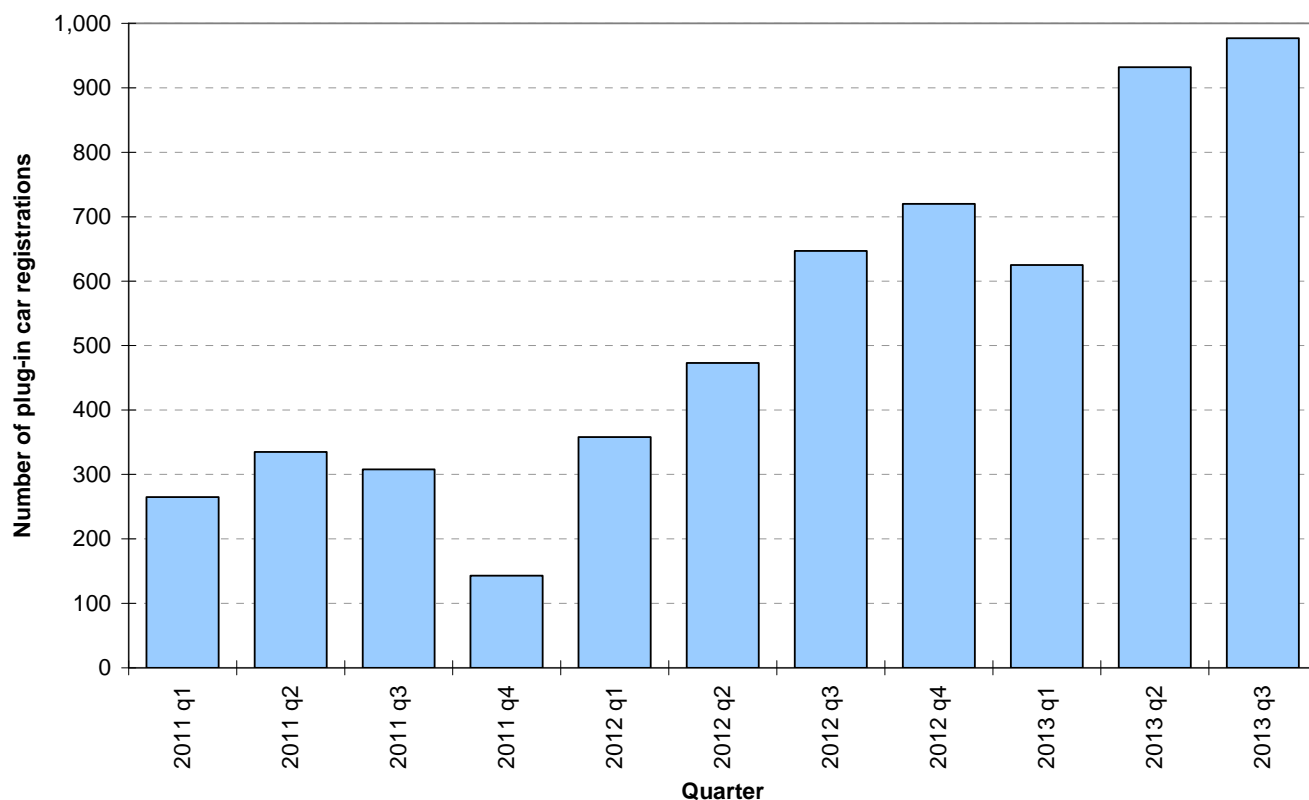


- Aside from the effects of the 2008-09 recession, first registrations of cars generally declined between 2004 and the beginning of 2012. Since then an increasing upward trend has emerged, which may in part reflect a reversion to more typical economic conditions following the recession. However, the first registration figures for cars and for total vehicles in quarter 3 2013 were both 15 per cent lower than they were in quarter 3 2001.
- The decrease in numbers of motorcycles being registered for the first time is more marked. 53 thousand motorcycles were registered for the first time in quarter 3 2001. By quarter 3 2013, this had fallen by 46 per cent to 29 thousand.

Carbon dioxide emissions and low emission vehicles

- The average carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of new cars continues to fall. The average emissions of cars registered in quarter 3 2013 was 127.6 g/km, down from 128.8 g/km for quarter 2 2013 and 131.9 g/km for quarter 3 2012. Since the first quarter of 2003, the average emissions from new cars have fallen by 45 g/km, a decrease of around 26 per cent. Much of this fall has been driven by tighter environmental regulations, emissions targets imposed on manufacturers, and demand among consumers for cars with higher fuel efficiencies / lower vehicle excise duty rates.
- During quarter 3 2013, a total of 1,210 new ultra-low emission vehicles⁶ was registered for the first time. These figures are for the UK as a whole. This is the highest number recorded in any quarter and represents an increase of 23 per cent from 987 in the same quarter of the previous year. The number of cars and quadricycles among these increased from 736 to 1,066 over the same period, exceeding one thousand vehicles for the first time
- Plug-in car and van grants, which started in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively, are likely to have made a major contribution to this increase⁷. The first registrations in quarter 3 2013 included 977 cars and 30 vans which were eligible for the grants. An increase in supply of electric cars to the UK market will have also played a part.

Plug in Grant Eligible cars registered for the first time in the UK: Jan 2011 to Sep 2013 (Vehicles web table veh0170)



Popular car models

- The most popular model among cars registered for the first time during the year to quarter 3 2013 was the Ford Fiesta, with 114 thousand new registrations. The Ford Focus and Vauxhall Corsa came next with 88 thousand and 84 thousand respectively, followed by the Vauxhall Astra (68 thousand) and Volkswagen Golf (64 thousand).
- The Vauxhall Mokka, Vauxhall Adam and Dacia Duster have been the most popular new car models that have appeared on the market since October 2012, with 11.1 thousand new registrations of the Mokka, 6.4 thousand of the Adam and 5.8 thousand of the Duster over the last twelve months.

4. 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. DfT estimates that under 2 per cent 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 Northern Ireland and foreign registered vehicles may also use British 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 see the Notes and Definitions available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/vehicles-statistics-guidance>.

5. Background notes

1. The Vehicle Licensing Statistics web page at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vehicles-statistics> provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release and statistics on other vehicle topics.
2. The following tables have been updated as part of this release:

veh0101	number of licensed vehicles by body type
veh0110	number of SORN vehicles by body type
veh0120	number of licensed vehicles by make and model
veh0121	number of SORN vehicles by make and model
veh0122	number of licensed vehicles by postcode district
veh0123	number of SORN vehicles by postcode district
veh0128	number of licensed vehicles by generic model name
veh0129	number of SORN vehicles by generic model name
veh0130	number of licensed ultra-low emissions vehicles (UK data)
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 CO ₂ emission band
veh0301	number of licensed motor cycles
3. 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.
4. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be accessed from the [Vehicle Licensing Statistics web page](#).
5. Further information about what the Vehicle Scrappage Scheme was is available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/www.direct.gov.uk/en/motoring/buyingandsellingavehicle/adviceonbuyingandsellingavehicle/dg_177693. The scheme ran between May 2009 and April 2010.
6. The Department for Transport uses the term 'ultra-low emission vehicles' to refer to vehicles with significantly lower levels of tailpipe emissions than conventional vehicles. All vehicles with fully electric powertrains and cars with tailpipe emissions below 75 g/km of CO₂ are included.
7. Further information on the Plug-In Car Grant is available at <https://www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants>.