



## Road lengths in Great Britain: 2012

This Statistical Release presents estimates for road lengths in Great Britain in 2012. Road lengths are presented for Great Britain as a whole, and are also available by region and by local authority in the accompanying tables.

These road length estimates are based on a range of sources including from Ordnance Survey and local authorities.

Motorways and 'A' roads are referred to as major roads. Major roads are also split into trunk roads which are centrally managed, and principal roads which are managed by local authorities (including Transport for London).

Other roads ('B', 'C' and 'U' roads) are referred to as minor roads.



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### Key results

- The total road length in Great Britain in 2012 was estimated to be **245.4 thousand miles**, an increase of 2.0 thousand miles (0.8 per cent) over 10 years.
- Minor roads made up 87 per cent of total road length, with motorways and 'A' roads accounting for one per cent and 12 per cent respectively.
- Despite accounting for only 13 per cent of road length in 2012, major roads (motorways and 'A' roads) accounted for 65 per cent of road traffic.
- The trunk road network (centrally managed motorways and 'A' roads) accounted for 7.5 thousand miles, a decrease of 1.3 thousand miles since 2002. This decrease reflects the government's de-trunking program (the transfer of centrally managed roads to local authorities). Most of these transfers were carried out between 2001 and 2003.

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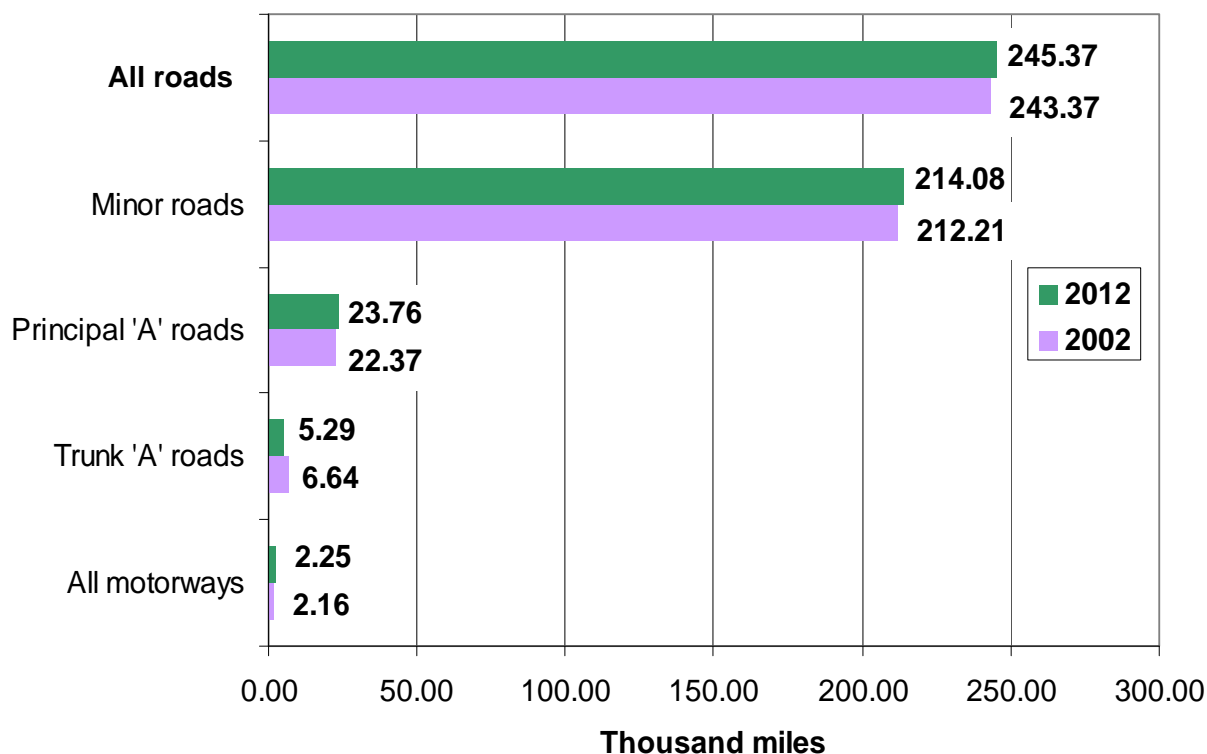
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# 1. Road lengths by road type

- The total road length in Great Britain in 2012 was estimated to be **245.4 thousand miles**, an increase of 2.0 thousand miles (0.8 per cent) over 10 years.

## Road length by road type in Great Britain, 2012 and 2002



## Major roads (motorways and 'A' roads)

- There were 31.3 thousand miles of major road in 2012 accounting for 13 per cent of total road length.
- There were 2.3 thousand miles of motorway in 2012, a 4.0 per cent increase since 2002. 'A' roads accounted for 29.0 thousand miles of road, a 0.1 per cent increase since 2002.
- Dual carriageways accounted for 17 per cent of the total length of 'A' road in 2012.
- The trunk road network (motorways and 'A' roads managed centrally) accounted for 7.5 thousand miles, a decrease of 1.3 thousand miles since 2002. This decrease reflects the government's de-trunking program (the transfer of centrally managed roads to local authorities). Most of these transfers were carried out between 2001 and 2003.
- In 2012, 18 per cent of 'A' road length was trunk 'A' road (managed centrally), down from 23 per cent in 2002.
- While the vast majority of motorway is trunk motorway, a small amount (one per cent) is managed by local authorities.

## Minor roads ('B', 'C' and 'U' roads)

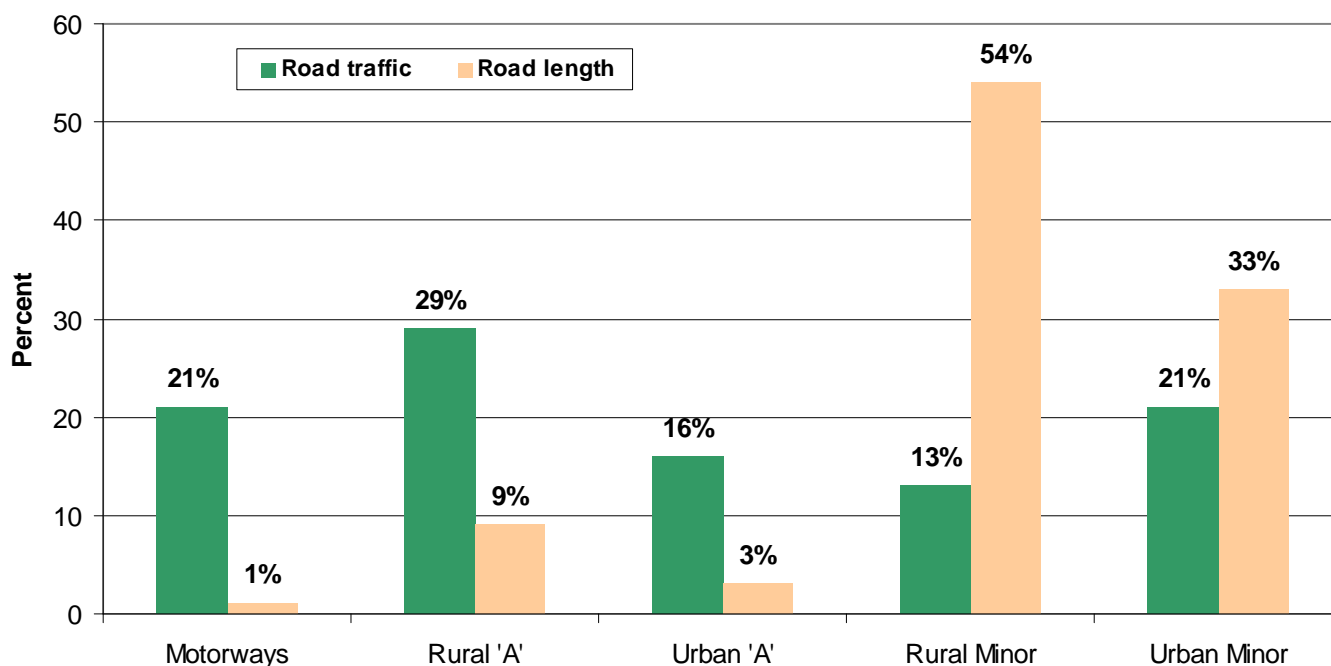
- Minor roads accounted for the majority (87 per cent) of road length in 2012. There were 214.1 thousand miles of minor road, a 0.9 per cent increase since 2002.
- Unclassified roads ('U' roads) accounted for 58 per cent of total road length (both major and minor roads) in 2012.

Data on "Road lengths by road type" can be found in [tables RDL0101 to RDL0103](#) (in miles) and [tables RDL0201 to RDL0203](#) (in kilometres).

## 2. Road lengths and road traffic

- Although major roads accounted for only 13 per cent of total road length, they carried 65 per cent of road traffic in 2012.
- Motorways made up only one per cent of total road length, but carried a fifth of all road traffic.
- Minor roads accounted for 87 per cent of total road length, but carried only 35 per cent of road traffic.
- Rural minor roads made up 54 per cent of total road length, but carried only 13 per cent of all road traffic.

### Road length and road traffic by road type in Great Britain, 2012



Data on "Road lengths and traffic" can be found in the road Lengths tables ([RDL0101](#) and [RDL0201](#)) and road traffic tables ([TRA0102](#) and [TRA0202](#)).

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### 3. Road lengths by region

- In 2012, 76 per cent of the 245.4 thousand miles of road in Great Britain was in England. 15 per cent was in Scotland and 9 per cent was in Wales.
- Within England, the regions with the largest amount of road length were South West, which had 31.1 thousand miles, and South East, with 29.6 thousand miles.

Data on “Road lengths by region” can be found in tables [RDL0101](#) and [RDL0201](#).

### 4. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- As road lengths estimates are based on information from a range of sources, the final estimates are reliant on all of these sources being accurate and up to date.
- Each year, the Department for Transport conducts a consultation exercise with local authorities to compare their records for the roads they manage with the records held by the Department. This is to ensure the accuracy of the road length data and to pick up any changes which have occurred to the road network.
- Small changes may occur between years which are not accounted for by changes to the physical road network but may have occurred due to improved measurement of road lengths and better accuracy of the data sources used.

### 5. Request for feedback

We are always keen to receive comments from users of transport statistics. If you have any comments about how the statistics in this release are presented or analysed, please contact us using the details listed on the first page of this release. It would be useful if you could specify which data in the release you are particularly interested in and if you use it for any specific purpose.

### 6. Background notes

1. Further information about road lengths data can be found in the [Notes and definitions](#) and the [Methodology note](#) which can all be found on the [Road length statistics webpage](#).
2. The road lengths statistics related to this statistical release can be found in [tables RDL0101 to RDL0103](#) (in miles) and [tables RDL0201 to RDL0203](#) (in kilometres).
3. Information on road traffic volumes can be found on the [Road traffic statistics webpage](#).
4. 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.
5. Details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found on the [Pre-release access list](#).