

# Quarterly Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain Quarter 3 (July - September) 2014



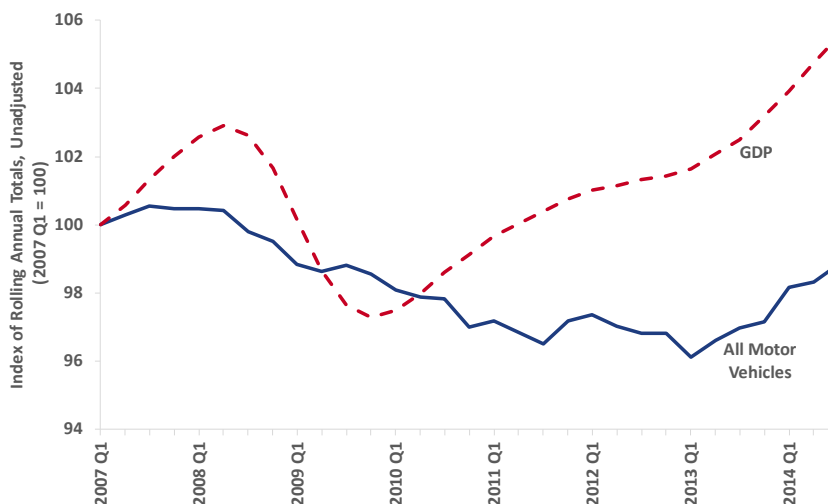
Department  
for Transport

**Main findings:** Traffic across all vehicle types and road classes has increased from Quarter 3 2013.

In Great Britain between July and September 2014 (Quarter 3), **all motor vehicle traffic increased by 2.2 per cent**, to 77.9 billion vehicle miles, when compared to the same quarter in 2013. This is the highest quarterly total recorded since 2008.

GDP increased over Quarter 3 2014 as the four key industrial groupings within the economy (services, production, construction and agriculture) indicated increases in output. It is likely that such economic growth is contributing to the continued upward trend in traffic volumes, as illustrated by the chart below.

**Index of Rolling Annual Totals, unadjusted - All Motor Vehicle Traffic and GDP: GB quarterly from 2007 [TRA2501e]**



## Compared to Quarter 3 2013:

- ▶ **Car traffic increased** by 1.4 per cent in Quarter 3 2014.
- ▶ **Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) traffic continues to rise** at a higher rate than any other vehicle type, increasing by 6.9 per cent.
- ▶ **All road classes experienced higher volumes of traffic**, with the largest increases being seen on urban minor roads (3.5 per cent).
- ▶ **Motorway traffic increased to a record high**, reaching 16.3 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 3 2014.

## Plans for next release

The February 2015 publication document will use rolling annual totals to present the road traffic statistics, as at end of December 2014. More detail is available on [page 4](#).

## About this release

This quarterly release presents estimates for road traffic in Great Britain from July to September 2014. The quarterly figures presented in this release for 2014 are provisional. Final annual estimates for 2014 are due to be published in May/June 2015.

Estimates are based on traffic data collected continuously from a national network of around 200 Automatic Traffic Counters.

The traffic estimates in this release are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise stated. Further charts and tables can be accessed online via our [road traffic statistical series](#).

## In this publication

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RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN: Bowie Penney

FURTHER INFORMATION: Media: 020 7944 3066 Public: 020 7944 3095 [roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

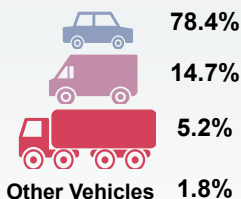
## Summary figures for Quarter 3 2014 (July - September)

The summary table below shows the patterns in vehicle traffic compared to the last quarter and previous Quarter 3 figures across a range of years. More information on our quarterly estimates, along with our [TRA25](#) quarterly tables, can be found online [here](#).

Vehicle Miles	This Quarter Q3 2014	Q3 percentage change over time				
		Last Quarter Q2 2014	Last Year Q3 2013	Five Years Ago Q3 2009	Ten Years Ago Q3 2004	Twenty Years Ago Q3 1994
<b>All Motor Vehicle Traffic</b>	<b>77.9 billion</b>	🟢 1.0%	🟢 2.2%	🟢 1.0%	🟢 1.5%	🟢 18.8%
<b>Cars and Taxis</b>	<b>61.1 billion</b>	🟢 0.6%	🟢 1.4%	🔴 0.6%	🔴 0.2%	🟢 13.8%
<b>LGVs</b>	<b>11.4 billion</b>	🟢 2.9%	🟢 6.9%	🟢 12.6%	🟢 21.5%	🟢 69.6%
<b>HGVs</b>	<b>4.0 billion</b>	🟢 1.1%	🟢 2.2%	🔴 0.2%	🔴 11.4%	🟢 4.5%
<b>Motorways</b>	<b>16.3 billion</b>	🟢 1.3%	🟢 2.3%	🟢 5.4%	🟢 8.1%	🟢 47.9%
<b>Rural 'A' Roads</b>	<b>22.4 billion</b>	🟢 0.4%	🟢 2.2%	🟢 1.1%	🟢 2.5%	🟢 23.7%
<b>Urban 'A' Roads</b>	<b>12.4 billion</b>	🟢 0.4%	🟢 1.9%	🔴 1.3%	🔴 3.9%	🟢 0.9%
<b>Rural Minor Roads</b>	<b>10.5 billion</b>	🟢 0.2%	🟢 0.6%	🔴 0.9%	🟢 4.0%	🟢 16.3%
<b>Urban Minor Roads</b>	<b>16.3 billion</b>	🟢 2.5%	🟢 3.5%	🔴 0.5%	🔴 2.9%	🟢 7.7%

## Proportion...

Car traffic continues to account for the highest proportion of vehicle miles travelled in Great Britain;

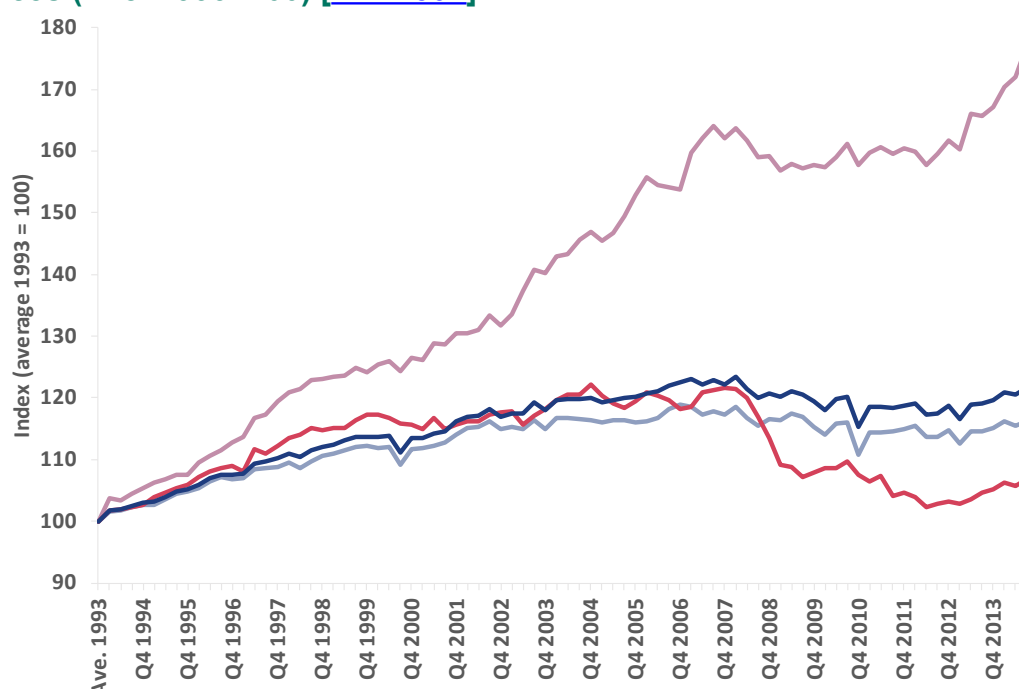


## Quarterly road traffic by vehicle type

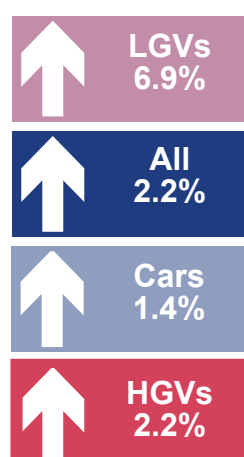
**Latest figures:** Traffic increases across car, LGV and HGV vehicle types.

- All motor vehicle traffic increased by 2.2 per cent compared to Quarter 3 2013.

**Road traffic in Great Britain by vehicle type, seasonally adjusted indices (Ave. 1993=100) [TRA2501]**



**% Change from Q3 2013...**



- Car and taxi traffic increased by 1.4 per cent, to 61.1 billion vehicle miles, in Quarter 3 of 2014 from Quarter 3 2013.
- LGV traffic totalled 11.4 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 3 of 2014, 6.9 per cent higher than in the same quarter in the previous year. This contributes to a 21.5 per cent growth in LGV traffic over the past ten years, and an increase of 69.6 per cent since Quarter 3 1994.
- HGV traffic levels increased 2.2 per cent in Quarter 3 2014 from Quarter 3 2013, to 4.0 billion vehicle miles.

### Quarterly road traffic by road type

**Latest figures:** Traffic increases on motorways and all other road classes.

- Traffic on motorways in Great Britain increased from 15.9 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 3 2013 to 16.3 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 3 2014, representing growth of 2.3 per cent.
- Motorway traffic has increased by more than 47 per cent over a 20 year period since 1994.
- Estimates for 'A' road traffic in Quarter 3 also increased when compared to the same period in 2013. In Quarter 3 2014, traffic on rural 'A' roads was 22.4 billion vehicle miles, up 2.2 per cent. Traffic on urban 'A' roads has also increased, rising to 12.4 billion vehicle miles which is a 1.9 per cent increase on Quarter 3 2013 estimates.
- Traffic volumes rose by 0.6 per cent on minor rural roads, compared with Quarter 3 estimates for 2013, rising to 10.5 billion vehicle miles. Traffic on minor urban roads increased more sharply by 3.5 per cent, totalling 16.3 billion vehicle miles over the same period.

### Longer term...

Over the 20 year period since Quarter 3 1994, traffic volumes have increased across motorways and both 'A' roads and minor roads;

**Motorways** ↑ 47.9%



**Rural 'A'** ↑ 23.7%

**Minor rural** ↑ 16.3%

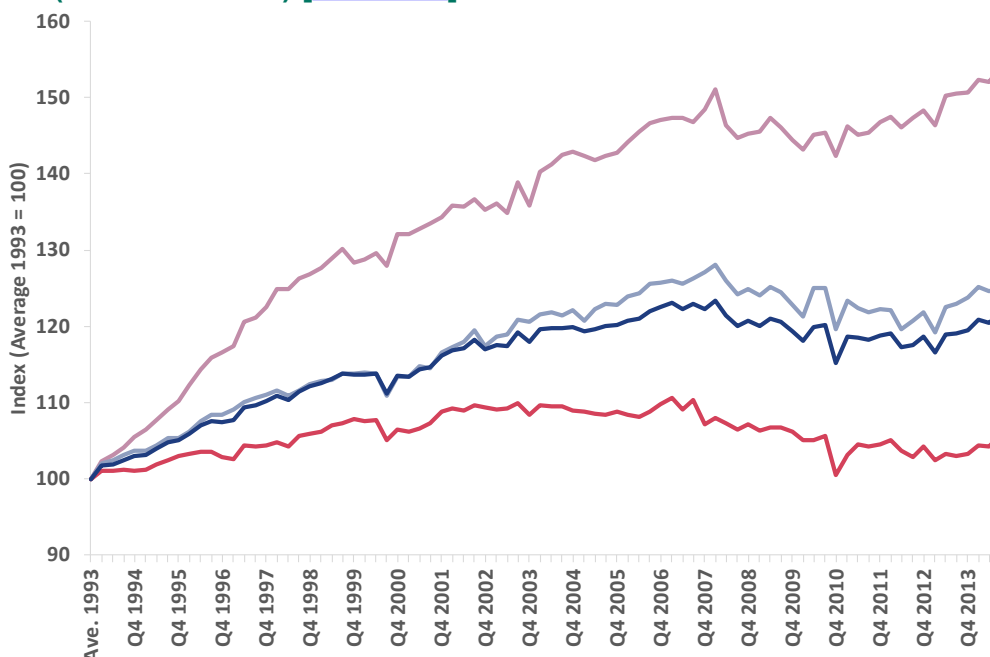


**Urban 'A'** ↑ 0.9%

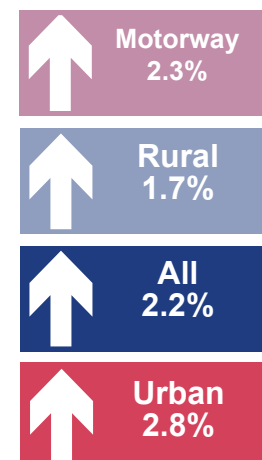
**Minor urban** ↑ 7.7%



### Road traffic in Great Britain by road type, seasonally adjusted indices (Ave. 1993=100) [\[TRA2502\]](#)



### % Change from Q3 2013...



## Background information

### Changes to the next quarterly traffic publication

In the February 2015 publication document the intention is to use rolling annual totals to present the road traffic statistics, as at end of December 2014. The chart on the front page of this release uses this presentation of traffic data, and tables with the rolling total data have been added to the existing published data. Initial feedback has indicated that users find this information easier to use and understand. All existing tables will also continue to be published.

If you have any comments on this planned change to future publications, or feedback on any aspects of the Department's road traffic statistics, please contact the team via email: [roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

### Users and uses of these statistics

Road traffic data are a key source of management information on the country's infrastructure. Main uses of road traffic statistics are summarised online in our report [Meeting customers' needs: Users and uses of road traffic statistics and data](#)

### HGV and bus vehicle classification

In January 2014, a correction was applied which changed the way that buses are classified on motorways and some 'A' roads. Because of this correction, traffic has shifted slightly from buses to HGVs. An investigation into the impact of this change on the current quarterly national traffic estimates has found the effect to be relatively small, and so the change is no longer highlighted in our tables.

## Next release

The next Quarterly Road Traffic estimates, for Quarter 4 (October to December) 2014, are due to be published in February 2015. This will include provisional annual estimates for 2014. The final Annual Road Traffic estimates for 2014 are scheduled to be published in May/June 2015.

## Feedback

We welcome further feedback on any aspects of the Department's road traffic statistics including content, timing, and format via email to [roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

## Sources, strengths and weaknesses of the data

**Quarterly estimates** are based on data from automatic traffic counters and give an indication of changes in traffic levels for different types of vehicle and on different types of road in Great Britain as a whole. **Annual estimates** make use of data from around eight thousand manual traffic counts in addition to the data from the automatic traffic counters and can estimate traffic levels in local areas and on specific road links which cannot be produced from the quarterly data.

Automatic traffic counters classify vehicle types based on characteristics such as axle-spacing and vehicle length. This creates the possibility for misclassification of vehicles with atypical characteristics, meaning that provisional estimates for different vehicle types are less robust than the final estimates which also utilise the more accurate manual counts data. The classification algorithms are continually developed to ensure that vehicle classification is as accurate as possible.

As part of the quarterly methodology, historic figures are subject to revision. However, these revisions will typically be minor and will not affect the overall patterns shown in the data.

Provisional quarterly traffic estimates for all motor vehicles have historically been accurate (typically within 1.5 per cent) when compared with the final quarterly estimates.

## National Statistics

National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs.

Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-release-access-lists-for-road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-series](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-release-access-lists-for-road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-series)

All motor vehicle traffic	Billion vehicle miles/percentage														
	2011					2012					2013				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.
Provisional estimates at time of publication	76.7	75.8	76.2	77.3	305.8	76.5	74.6	75.0	76.7	302.6	75.4	76.9	77.1	77.6	306.4
Final estimates	76.3	75.4	75.7	76.4	303.8	76.5	74.6	75.3	76.2	302.6	75.0	76.0	76.2	76.5	303.7
Difference (%)	0.6	0.4	0.6	1.2	0.7	0.0	-0.1	-0.4	0.6	0.0	0.5	1.1	1.1	1.4	0.9

Further statistical guidance can be found online here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance)