

Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 4 2011/12

This publication presents information on the number and pass rates of driving and riding tests conducted in Great Britain to 31st March 2012 (end of 2011/12 financial year).

The test and instructor statistics are derived from data held by the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), which administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain.

A supplementary bulletin will be released in July. This will contain more detailed tables providing breakdowns of test passes by age of candidate and number of test attempts.

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The key findings from Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics: Quarter 4 2011/12 include:

- A total of 427,491 tests were conducted across all test categories¹ between January and March 2012 (Q4 2011/12). This represents an overall decrease of 9.9 per cent in comparison with the same quarter in 2010/11.
- In total, around 1.74 million practical driving / riding tests were conducted during 2011/12, down by 1.3 per cent from the 1.77 million tests conducted during 2010/11. However, the 2011/12 total was higher than the 2009/10 total of 1.68 million.
- The practical car test pass rate has increased slightly from 44 per cent in 2007/08 to almost 47 per cent in 2011/12.
- It is likely that the prevailing economic situation has led fewer people undertaking commercial vehicle tests. The number of large goods vehicle tests fell from 70,766 in 2007/08 to 46,549 in 2011/12. The corresponding figures for passenger carrying vehicles were 10,331 in 2007/08 and 8,456 in 2011/12.
- At the end of 2011/12 there were 46,569 approved driving instructors on the Register. Of these, over 99 per cent scored a grade four or better at their last check test.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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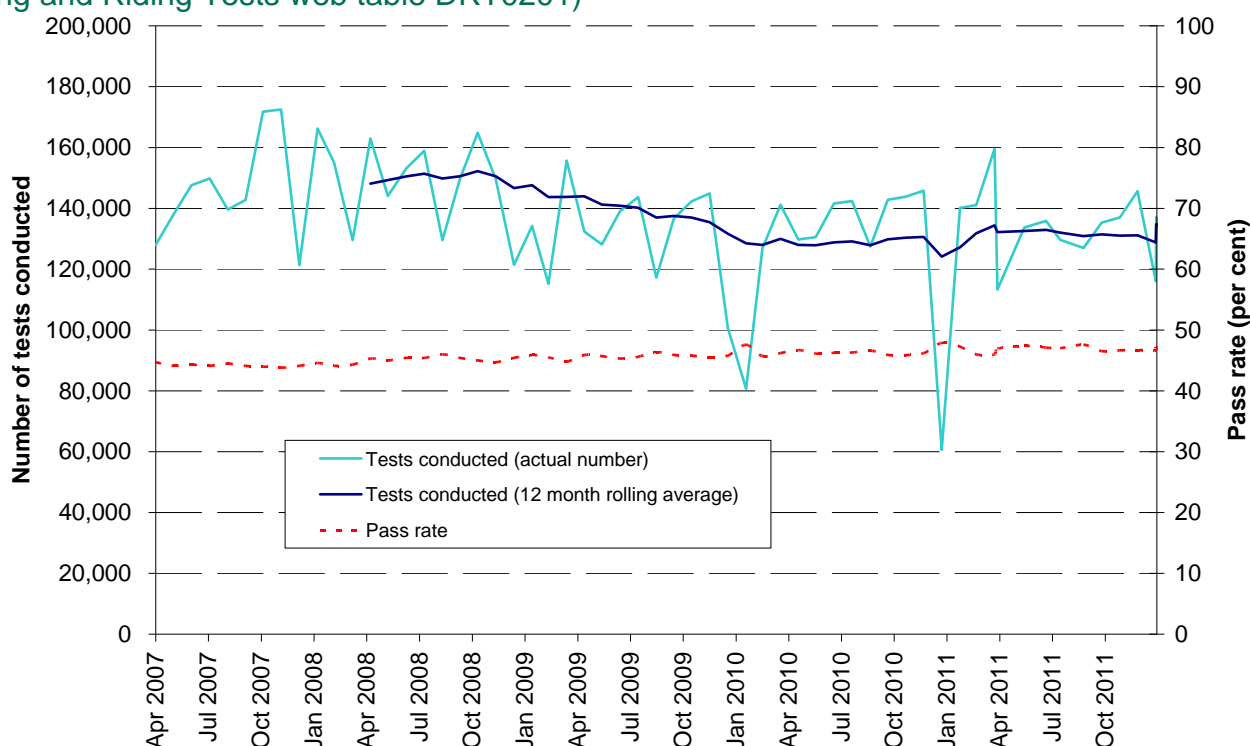
1. General trends

- There are a number of factors that affect how many tests are conducted: common ones are the economic climate influencing candidate behaviour; changes in the testing regime generating surges in tests; and weather conditions at each test centre. In general, the number of tests conducted in December through to February each year is lower than the other months. This is because the weather is often worse during these months, lowering the demand for tests, and reducing the number of tests that are conducted. This leads to a redistribution of tests in the following months. Unlike previous years, though, almost exactly 25 per cent of all car driving tests took place in each quarter of 2011/12 as the weather has been less influential in 2011/12 than in earlier years.
- At total of 427,491 tests were conducted across all test categories¹ (excluding ADI tests) between January and March 2012 (Q4 2011/12). This represents an overall decrease of 9.9 per cent in comparison with the same quarter in 2010/11. An explanation for this is that quarter 4 2010/11 included tests that were delayed from the previous quarter as a result of the heavy snowfall experienced in many parts of the country.
- In total, around 1.74 million practical driving / riding tests¹ were conducted during 2011/12, down by 1.3 per cent from the 1.77 million tests conducted during 2010/11. This was largely due to the introduction of independent driving in October 2010 which generated a surge in tests conducted prior to this date. However, the 2011/12 total was higher than the 2009/10 total of 1.68 million, though comparisons cannot be made with earlier years than this as Module 1 and 2 motorcycle tests were not introduced until April 2009.

2. Practical car tests

Practical car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to March 2012

(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



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- Around 395,500 practical car driving tests were conducted in quarter 4 2011/12. This was 10.3 per cent lower than that same period in the previous year. As discussed above, this fall probably partially relates to the bad weather in December 2010 which would have led to a 'boost' in the number of tests conducted during quarter 4 2010/11.
 - Since 2007/08 there has been a general downward trend in the number of tests conducted. About 1.57 million car test were conducted in 2011/12, down from 1.61 million in 2010/11. This represents a 2.3 per cent fall. Two of the most significant causes of this are the prevailing economic conditions experienced since 2008 and changes to the driving / riding test during 2010 (independent driving).
 - Overall, the pass rate has increased slightly from 44 per cent in 2007/08 to almost 47 per cent in 2011/12. This will have led to a reduction in the need for repeat testing and therefore dampened the number of tests conducted.
 - The number of tests taken by females is higher than for males largely due to females having a lower pass rate than males. In most years the male pass rate is about 6 to 6.5 percentage points higher than the female pass rate.

3. Practical motorcycle tests (Module 1 and 2)

- There were 9,671 Module 1 motorcycle tests in quarter 4 2011/12. Aside from quarter 4 2009/10, this is the lowest number of Module 1 tests conducted during any single quarter since the modular system was introduced. However, as already discussed, the quarter 4 2010/11 figures are likely to have been boosted by delayed tests from December 2010.
- Despite the quarter 4 year-on-year fall in Module 1 tests, the 59,954 tests conducted during 2011/12 is highest yearly total since the test was introduced in April 2009 even though there was an almost 10 percentage point rise in the pass rate over the same period. The number of tests conducted during 2011/12 is 3.3 per cent higher than the 57,711 tests conducted during 2010/11.
- The number Module 2 tests conducted during 2011/12 was 57,911, up by almost 17 per cent from 2010/11.
- Over 87 per cent of all Module 1 motorcycle tests since April 2009 have been undertaken by men. This rises to 91 per cent of all Module 2 tests.
- The pass rate for Module 1 has gradually increased from around 60 per cent in early 2009/10 to around 70.5 per cent in 2011/12. The most recent quarter has seen the highest quarterly pass rate on record at 72.8 per cent.
- The pass rate for Module 2 has remained fairly constant, though the rate has marginally decreased from 2009/10 by around 1 percentage point to 68.9 per cent in 2011/12. There is no difference in pass rates between males and females.

4. Practical large goods vehicle (LGV) tests

- There were 11,576 LGV tests in quarter 4 2011/12, a 4.3 per cent decrease from 12,096 in quarter 4 2010/11.
- Although the number of tests conducted during the whole of 2011/12 was 6 per cent higher than the previous year (46,549 in comparison with 43,894), this was the first annual rise in the series. A total of 70,766 LGV tests were conducted in 2007/08, over 50 per cent more than in the most recent year. It is likely that the prevailing economic situation has led to fewer people undertaking commercial vehicle tests. Although the decreases are not as marked, this pattern reflects the trends in both heavy goods vehicle traffic^{*} and vehicle licensing statistics[†], and as the number of vehicles and distance driven have fallen there will have been a corresponding fall in the need for newly-qualified drivers.
- As with motorcycles, the vast majority of LGV tests are taken by men. Since the start of the series in April 2007, 93 per cent of all tests have been undertaken by men. This number has only varied by around +/- 2 percentage points throughout the whole period.
- The pass rate for the whole of 2011/12 was 52.4 per cent, though it was slightly higher, at 52.9 per cent, in the final two quarters of the year. Over a longer series of time, the pass rate has risen from around 46 per cent in 2007/08 to 49 per cent in 2008/09 before stabilising at around 51.5 per cent during 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- In every year the female pass rate has been higher than the male pass rate. During the most recent year, 54.2 per cent of tests taken by women result in a pass in comparison with 52.3 per cent of men. However, females only account for one in every 13 test passes.

5. Practical passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) tests

- In total, 8,456 PCV tests were conducted in 2011/12, 1.1 per cent lower than in 2010/11 and 18 per cent lower than the 10,331 tests conducted in 2007/08. As with the LGV tests, it is likely that the pattern has been partially influenced by the wider economic situation and, similarly, it reflects the decrease in the number of licensed buses and coaches that has been seen since the peak in 2005.
- The overall pass rate in 2011/12 was 53.7 per cent, which is almost exactly the same as for 2010/11. Similarly to LGV tests, the pass rate for females taking the test is slightly higher than the males at 58.6 per cent in comparison with 52.8.
- Since April 2009, about 83 per cent of all PCV tests have been undertaken by men.
- Since April 2009, about 60 per cent of PCV tests taken by females resulted in a pass whereas

^{*} www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/road-traffic-estimates-2011/

[†] www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/vehicle-licensing-statistics-q1-2012/

roughly 52 per cent of tests taken by males resulted in a pass. During 2011/12, two females passed their PCV test for every 13 males that passed it.

6. Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) tests

- The number of Potential Driving Instructors (PDIs) who take their ADI qualifying tests has decreased since 2007/08, especially over the last two years. From 2010/11 to 2011/12 the number of Part 2 and Part 3 tests conducted have fallen by 33 per cent and 26 per cent respectively and the number of Part 2 tests also decreased by 27 per cent in the previous year.
- In total, 7,336 Part 2 tests and 8,972 Part 3 tests were conducted in 2011/12.
- The Part 2 pass rate has varied each year since 2007/08, with the lowest rate at 47.8 per cent in the first year of the published series and the highest rate of 52.8 per cent in 2011/12. The most recent year's figure is up from the 2010/11 pass rate of 50.7 per cent.
- The Part 3 pass rate is considerably lower than Part 2 and, other than 2007/08 when it stood at 27.1 per cent, it has remained between 29.6 per cent and 30.7 per cent every other year.
- As with the vocational driving tests, ADI tests are dominated by male candidates. Around 72 per cent of all Part 2 tests and 75 per cent of all Part 3 tests conducted during 2011/12 were undertaken by men.
- Female candidates have higher Part 3 pass rate than males. In 2011/12, females had a 30.4 per cent pass rate compared with 29.8 per cent for males. Although this pattern holds true for the other years as well the differences in pass rates between the two genders is very small. Part 2 pass rates, however, show the opposite pattern with 54.5 per cent of tests undertaken by men resulting in a pass in 2011/12 in comparison with 48.3 per cent of tests undertaken by women.

7. Driving and riding instructors

- At the end of 2011/12 there were 46,569 approved driving instructors on the Register. During the year, 3,339 new ADIs joined the register and 3,214 new trainee licences were issued (trainee licences are issued following a successful application by a potential driving instructor after they passed their Part 2 test).
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,497 riding instructors on the Statutory Register at end of the year.
- During 2011/12, 15,765 check tests were conducted on ADIs. At the point of their last check test, 56 per cent of all ADIs scored a grade four, 37 per cent a grade five and 6 per cent a grade

six[‡]. No ADI scored a grade one and just under 1 per cent scored a grade two or three.

- Compulsory basic test (CBT) instructors also undergo check tests. Of the 748 tests undertaken during 2011/2, 623 (83%) resulted in a satisfactory result.
- At the end of 2011/12 there were 1,498 approved off-road CBT sites in Great Britain. Of these, 92 were new sites approved and introduced during the year.
- In the final quarter of 2011/12, 44,400 candidates passed their CBT course and were issued with a DL196 certificate. This took the total for the whole year to 196,450.

8. Background notes

1. Test categories included are B (car), B1 (tricycles and quadricycles), A, A1 and A2 (motorcycles), C, C1 (medium and large goods vehicles), C+E, C1+E (medium/large goods vehicles with trailers), D, D1 (minibuses and buses), D+E and D1+E (minibuses / buses with trailers). It does not include ADI Part 2 and Part 3.
2. The [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?orderby=title&post_type=table&series=driving-tests-and-instructors) web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release. The tables are available at http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics?orderby=title&post_type=table&series=driving-tests-and-instructors
3. These official statistics are not designated National Statistics. They 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 found in the [Pre-release access list](#).
5. All of the DRT tables are provisional until the end of the current financial year. Figures for every month in the current financial year are subject to minor revision until they are made final in the June publication. Some of the figures presented in this publication for 2011/12 have been revised slightly since first publication in February and are now final.
6. The Driving Standards Agency also publishes data by test centre. These datasets can be accessed through the [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](#) web page.
7. A supplementary release will be published in July according to the timetable at www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/forthcoming-ts-publications/. The July release will include new tables giving statistics on the number of tests conducted and passed by gender and age of candidate, along with information on pass rates by the test attempt number.
8. Additional data on ethnicity of candidates will be released via www.data.gov.uk. This information is not being published as part of the statistical release as only circa 30 per cent of candidates declare their ethnicity. It is, therefore, highly likely that the information is subject to self-selection and –reporting biases and neither the DSA nor DfT would recommend that users rely on these data being a true reflection of the ethnicity of all candidates. The data are being provided simply for information and as they are frequently request under the Freedom of Information Act. A full link to these data will be provided in the July supplementary release.

[‡] Grades run from 1 – extremely poor overall performance, to 6 – very high overall performance