



Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 1 2013/14 (April – June 2013)

This publication presents information on driving and riding theory and practical tests conducted in Great Britain to 30 June 2013, and also statistics from the Advanced Driving Instructor register and the Integrated Register of Driver Trainers.

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.

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The key findings include:

- There were 355,255 **car practical tests** conducted between April and June 2013, 1.8 per cent fewer than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 47.4 per cent, differing only marginally (up 0.2 percentage points) from the same period in 2012.
- There were 350,380 **car theory tests** conducted between April and June 2013, 12.9 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 52.2 per cent, 8.6 percentage points lower than in the same period of 2012.
- The drop in the theory test pass rate reflects the addition of new, previously unpublished, questions to the test from January 2013. The reduced pass rates since January will have contributed to the increase in the number of theory tests in the April – June quarter as more candidates re-took the test.
- The number of **motorcycle tests**, both theory and practical, were about 30 per cent lower in April – June 2013 compared with the same period of the previous year. This reflects the after-effects of a rush to pass the practical tests before new limits on young motorcyclists were introduced in January 2013.
- The introduction of new questions in the **large goods vehicle (LGV)** and **passenger carrying vehicle (PCV)** multiple choice theory tests in May 2013 also caused a surge in these tests ahead of the changes, and a drop in the pass rates afterwards.
- At the end of quarter 3, there were 45,387 **Approved Driving Instructors** on the Register, and 2,497 motorcycle **riding instructors** on the Statutory Register.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. General context

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) administers the driving test and training schemes in Great Britain. A driver or rider must pass both theory and practical tests in order to obtain full entitlement to drive a particular vehicle type on the road.

The total number of practical tests (which is dominated by car driving tests) has been on a downward medium-term trend, decreasing by 12% between 2007/8 and 2012/13. There are a number of factors potentially influencing this, including:

- generally increasing practical **test pass rates**, meaning fewer candidates are taking retests.
- a **demographic trend** of declining birth rates during the 1990s, meaning that there are now fewer young people in the peak age-group for driving tests (17-20). Population data suggests that this trend is likely to continue until late in the current decade, before reversing.

Short-term variation in test numbers can be driven by seasonal and weather factors (there are generally fewer practical tests in the winter, and particularly in months with severe weather). Regulatory and administrative changes can also have an effect, such as the recent changes involving theory test questions and the EU Directive changes affecting motorcycles, which are discussed in this release.

Summary table: Driver and rider tests taken, and pass rates: Great Britain

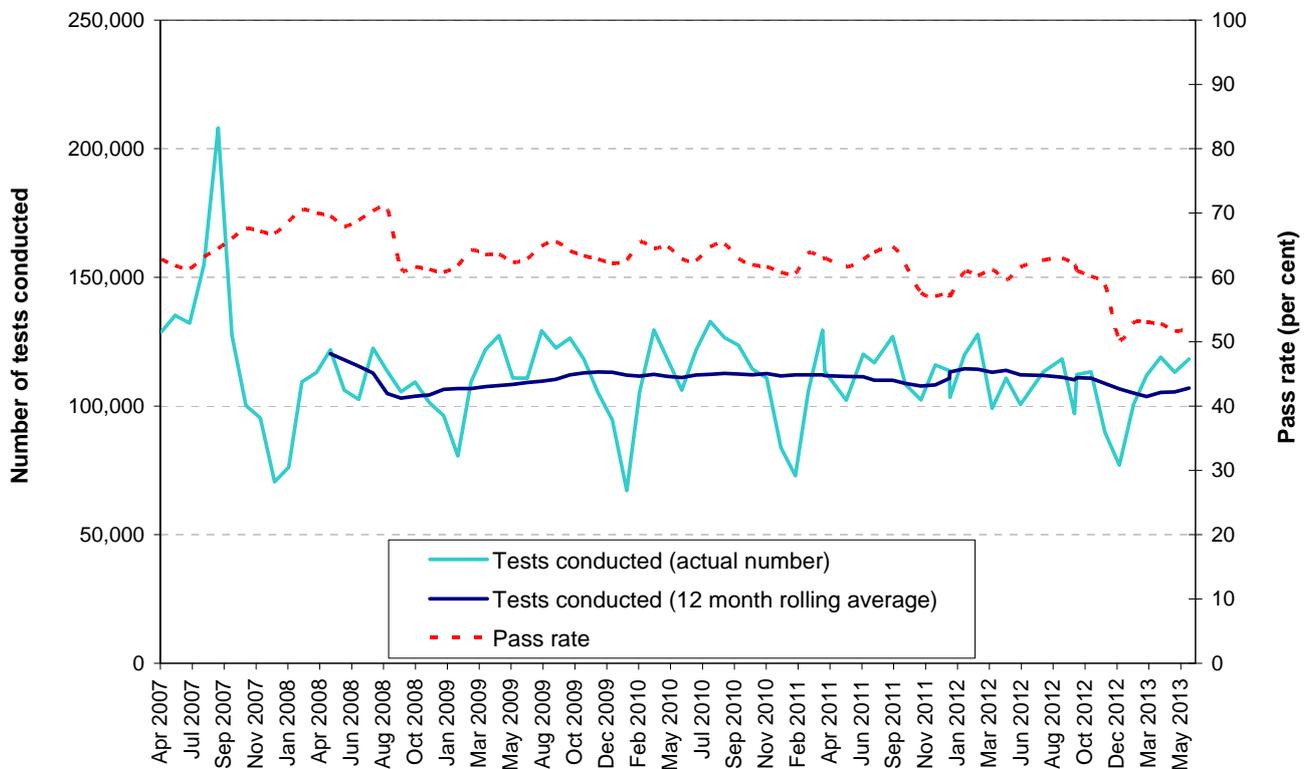
Test type	Latest Quarter (April – June 2013)	
	Number of tests taken	Pass rate
	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to same qtr previous year
Car practical	355 thousand; 📉 -1.8%	47.4%; 📈 +0.2
Car theory	350 thousand; 📈 +12.9%	52.2%; 📉 -8.6
Motorcycle practical module 1	12.9 thousand; 📉 -28.4%	69.1%; 📉 -2.9
Motorcycle practical module 2	11.5 thousand; 📉 -31.4%	69.8%; 📈 +1.7
Motorcycle theory	14.4 thousand; 📉 -32.9%	76.5%; 📈 +0.6
Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) practical	12.2 thousand; 📈 +3.6%	53.6%; 📈 +1.6
LGV theory multiple choice	7.5 thousand; 📈 +9.9%	70.4%; 📉 -6.7
LGV theory hazard perception	7.3 thousand; 📈 +11.3%	79.3%; 📉 -2.1
LGV theory CPC *	4.2 thousand; 📈 +2.1%	63.0%; 📈 +2.9
Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) practical	2.4 thousand; 📉 -3.6%	54.1%; 📈 +3.3
PCV theory multiple choice	2.0 thousand; 📈 +6.1%	71.4%; 📉 -6.7
PCV theory hazard perception	2.0 thousand; 📈 +5.4%	79.3%; 📉 -0.9
PCV theory CPC *	1.8 thousand; 📈 +4.4%	46.6%; 📉 -1.7

* - CPC = Certificate of Professional Competence

2. Car tests

Theory car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to June 2013

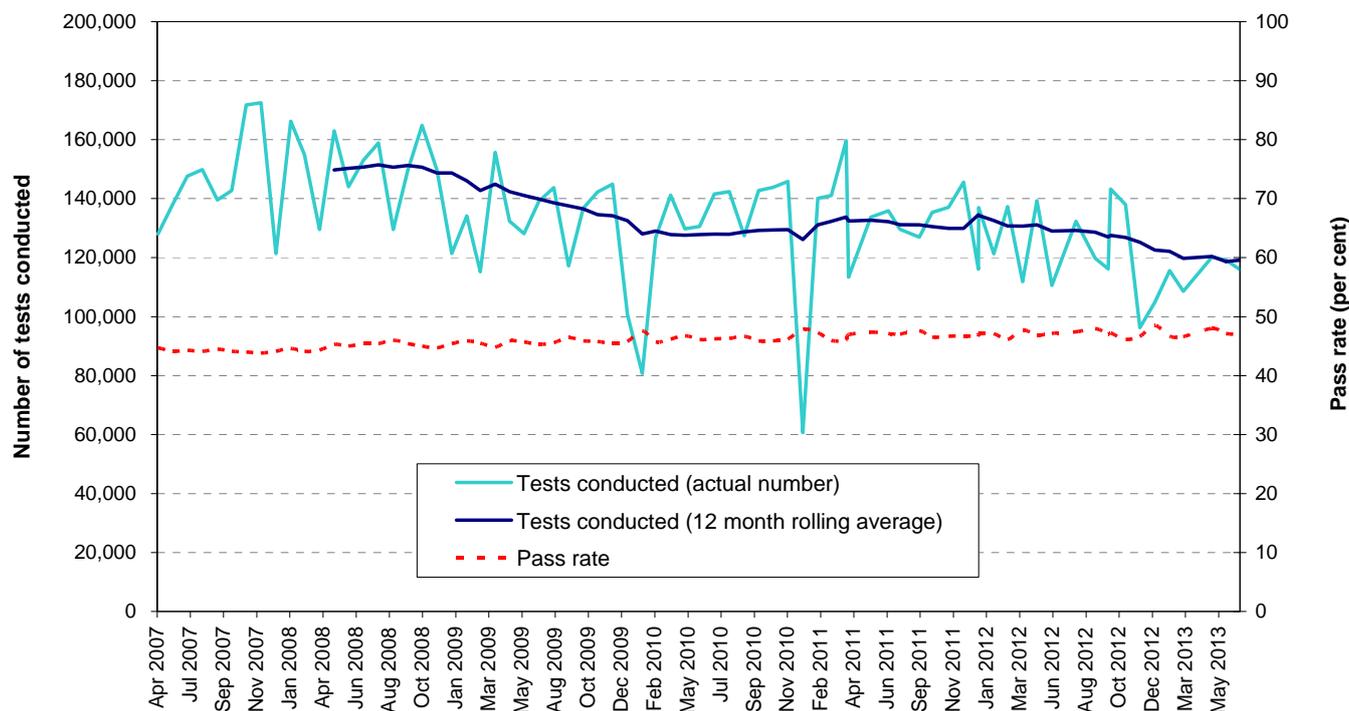
(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT5201)



- From April to June 2013 there were 350,380 car theory tests conducted. This is 12.9 per cent more than in the same quarter a year earlier. In January 2012 the theory test question bank was withdrawn from publication, leading to a small surge in conducted tests in the run up to the change (as the graph above shows, the usual mid-winter 'dip' in test numbers was much less pronounced than in other years).
- The pass rate for April to June 2013 was 52.2 per cent, almost identical to the 52.3 per cent of the preceding quarter, but 8.6 percentage points lower than in the April to June quarter the previous year. This drop was due to the introduction of the first new, previously unpublished, questions into the theory test papers in January 2013. This reduction in the pass rate will be contributing to the increase in theory tests conducted, as more candidates re-take the test.

Practical car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to June 2013

(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



- There were 355,255 car practical tests conducted from April to June 2013. When compared to the same quarter in the previous year this is 1.8 per cent down. This is a fairly modest reduction in comparison with the longer term downward trend in recent years, especially taking into account the recent dip in the number of theory test passes, which might be expected to reduce the number of candidates applying for the practical test. A factor tending to increase test numbers compared with the previous year is that there were two more Bank Holidays within the quarter in 2012 (Good Friday falling in early April and the extra Jubilee Bank Holiday in June) than in 2013.
- The pass rate for April to June 2013 was 47.4 per cent. This is marginally higher (by 0.2 percentage points) than the same quarter a year ago.

3. Motorcycle tests

On 19 January 2013, the EU 3rd Directive came into force in the UK. This directive limits the engine size available to riders under the age of 24⁸ at the date of attempting the practical test. This led to a surge in tests for this age group for both theory and practical tests prior to this date, followed by a corresponding drop below the numbers typical for the time of year after it – a situation which has continued through April – June 2013.

Theory Test

- There were 14,420 motorcycle theory tests conducted from April to June 2013, 32.9 per cent fewer than in the same quarter a year.

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- Pass rate has increased by 0.6 percentage points in this quarter, compared to the same quarter last year, to 76.5 per cent.

Practical (module 1 and 2) Tests

- There were 12,933 module 1 and 11,526 module 2 tests carried out during April to June 2013. These figures represent reductions of 28.4 per cent and 31.4 per cent respectively on the previous year.
- The pass rates fell by 2.9 percentage points for module 1 tests to 69.1 per cent, and rose by 1.7 percentage points for module 2 tests, to 69.8 per cent.
- The longer term trend for practical motorcycle tests shows a steady increase in the number of tests conducted, particularly for module 2, since 2009/10.

4. Large goods vehicle (LGV) and passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) tests

For both LGVs and PCVs, separate multiple choice and hazard perception tests must be passed before candidates can take the practical tests. In May 2013 there was a question refresh for both these multiple choice tests. Much as for the similar change to the car theory test in January, this led to an increase in the number of LGV and PCV theory tests before the change, and a reduction in the pass rate for both multiple choice tests after the change.

Theory Tests

- The number of multiple choice theory tests increased by 9.9 per cent in April to June 2013 compared with the same period in the previous year for LGVs, and by 6.1 per cent for PCVs. The quarterly pass rates for both tests dropped by 6.7 percentage points compared with the same quarter of the previous year, to 70.4 per cent for LGV tests and 71.4 per cent for PCV tests. Between April and May 2013 the pass rates dropped by 12 percentage points for LGV tests and 10 percentage points for PCV tests, with the pass rates holding steady at the lower rates through June.
- The number of hazard perception tests was also up in the April to June quarter, by 11.3 per cent for LGV tests and 5.4 per cent for PCV tests. The pass rates were down 2.1 per cent and 0.9 per cent respectively on the same quarter of the previous year.

Practical Tests

- There were 12,236 LGV practical tests during April to June 2013, 3.6 per cent more than during the same quarter of the previous year. The pass rate increased by 1.6 percentage points to 53.6 per cent.
- The longer term trend for practical LGV tests shows a sharp drop between 2007/8 and 2009/10 with the onset of the economic downturn, with relatively little change in the numbers since.
- There were 2,355 PCV tests during April-June 2013, 3.6 per cent fewer than in the same quarter the year before. The pass rate increased by 3.3 percentage points to 54.1 per cent.

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- The longer term trend for practical PCV tests shows a drop after 2009/10, but much less marked than that for LGVs, and a slight increase during 2012/13.

6. Driving and riding instructors

Numbers of instructors currently registered

- At the end of June 2013/4, there were 44,089 Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) on the ADI Register, 5 per cent down on one year previously.
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,659 motorcycle riding instructors on the Statutory Register at end of June, 7 per cent fewer than one year earlier.

Checks on existing instructors

- From April to June 2013, 4,800 check tests were conducted on ADIs. This was an increase of 35 per cent compared with the same quarter in the previous year. At the end of June, 54 per cent of all currently graded ADIs scored a grade four, 38 per cent a grade five and 7 per cent a grade six⁹. No ADI scored a grade one and 1 per cent scored a grade two or three.
- Compulsory basic test (CBT) instructors also undergo check tests. Of the 166 tests undertaken during quarter 3, 149 (90 per cent) had a 'Satisfactory' result.

New applicants, and theory and practical ADI tests

- The number of first applications during April to June 2013 to become a driving instructor increased by 1.9 per cent when compared to the same period last year, to 1,909.
- There were 1,500 ADI theory tests conducted during April to June 2013, 11 per cent fewer than in the same quarter a year ago. The pass rate fell by 0.9 percentage points, to 48.8 per cent.
- During April to June 2013, 1,184 Part 2 and 1,388 Part 3 practical ADI tests were conducted. This represents falls of 17 per cent and 22 per cent respectively compared to the same period a year ago. Pass rates for both parts of the ADI practical test remained fairly static in comparison to same quarter of the previous year.
- The numbers of theory and practical ADI tests conducted have been on a downward trend for several years.

7. Background notes

1. Practical 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).
2. The [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](#) web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release, including detailed data tables.
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. The next release of statistics will be published on 12 December 2013 and will provide information for the second quarter of the 2013 financial year (July to September 2013).
5. 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](#).
6. The Driving Standards Agency also publishes [operational data](#) by test centre.
7. Additional data on ethnicity of candidates are released via www.data.gov.uk. This information is not 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.
8. For further information on the impact of the EU 3rd Directive to rider licensing please visit - <https://www.gov.uk/ride-motorcycle-moped/bike-categories-ages-and-licence-requirements>.
9. Grades run from 1 – extremely poor overall performance, to 6 – very high overall performance