

Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 4 2012/13

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This publication presents information on the number and pass rates of driving and riding tests (theory and practical) conducted in Great Britain to 31 March 2013. It also includes statistics from the Approved 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.

Statistics for theory tests are being included in this publication for the first time. Theory test data is taken from monthly summaries supplied to the DSA by the theory test provider.

The key findings include:

- There were 329,055 **car practical tests** conducted between January and March 2013, 16.8 per cent fewer than in the same period of 2012. The **pass rate** for these tests was 47.2 per cent, differing only slightly (up 0.4 per cent) from the same period of 2012. Prolonged winter weather during early 2013 is likely to have reduced the number of tests carried out.
- There were 289,556 **car theory tests** conducted between January and March 2013, 17.5 per cent fewer than in the same period of 2012. The **pass rate** for these tests was 52.3 per cent, 7.2 percentage points lower than in the same period of 2012.
- In January 2012 the car theory test question bank was withdrawn from publication, and new, previously-unpublished questions were added to the test in January 2013. These **changes affecting the car theory test** appear to have reduced both candidate numbers and pass rates.
- On 19 January 2013, the EU 3rd Driving Licence Directive came into force in the UK. This limits the engine size of motorcycles available for use on UK roads by riders under the age of 24 at the date of attempting the practical test. There was an increase in the number of theory and practical **motorcycle tests** for riders in this age group in the lead-up to the implementation date, with a sharp fall afterwards.

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 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:

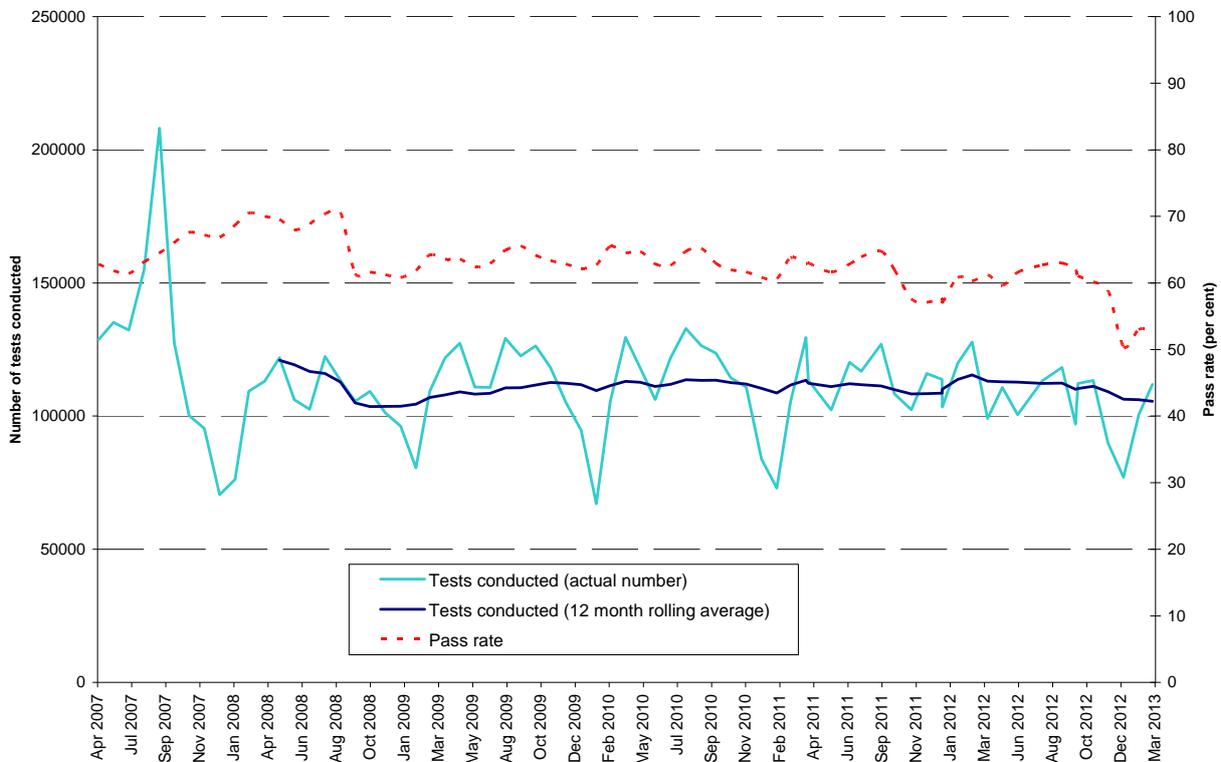
- generally increasing practical **test pass rates**, meaning fewer candidates are taking retests.
- a **demographic trend** of declining birth rates during the 1990s, meaning that there are now fewer young people in the peak age-group for driving tests (17-20). Population data suggests that this trend is likely to continue until the late in the current decade, before reversing.
- data from the National Travel Survey show a clear downward trend in the *proportion* of young adults (aged 17-20) holding full licences since around 2007, suggesting that the **economic** situation or possibly other **social** trends are also having an effect.

The weather can have an important effect on short term variation (there are generally fewer tests in the winter, and particularly in months with severe weather). Changes in the way tests are administered can also have an effect, such as the changes involving car theory test questions, and those involving motorcycle rules, highlighted in the key points on page 1.

	Financial Year 2012-13		Latest Quarter (January – March 2013)	
	Tests taken	Pass rate	Tests taken	Pass rate
	Compared to previous year	Compared to previous year	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to same qtr previous year
Car practical	1.43 million; 📉 -8.5%	47.1%; 📈 0.2	330 thousand; 📉 -16.8%	47.2%; 📈 0.4
Car theory	1.24 million; 📉 -9.3%	59.1%; 📉 -1.7	290 thousand; 📉 -17.5%	52.3%; 📉 -7.2
Motorcycle practical module 1	66.1 thousand; 📈 10.6%	70.5%; ➡ 0%	8.2 thousand; 📉 -15.7%	69.9; 📉 -2.9%
Motorcycle practical module 2	65.1 thousand; 📈 12.5%	68.9%; ➡ 0%	9.7 thousand; 📈 11.1%	70.3; 📈 0.8%
Motorcycle theory	73.6 thousand; 📈 11%	74.5%; 📉 -5%	8.2 thousand; 📉 -45.5%	76.2; 📈 0.5%
Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) practical	46.2 thousand; 📉 -0.7%	53%; 📈 0.6%	11.1 thousand; 📉 -4.6%	54%; 📈 1.1%
LGV theory multiple choice	27.2 thousand; 📉 -0.1%	77.4%; 📉 -1.5%	6.6 thousand; 📉 -12.6%	78.6%; 📈 0.2%
LGV theory hazard perception	26.7 thousand; 📉 -1.6%	81.1%; 📉 -0.3%	6.6 thousand; 📉 -10.1%	80.8%; 📉 -0.4%
LGV theory CPC	16.3 thousand; 📈 8.7%	57.8%; 📈 6.3%	3.8 thousand; 📉 -15.4%	60.1%; 📈 9.3%
Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) practical	9.2 thousand; 📈 8.4%	52.9%; 📉 -0.2	2.2 thousand; 📈 7.8%	54%; 📉 -1.1%
PCV theory multiple choice	7.2 thousand; 📉 -1.1%	76.5%; 📉 -1.2%	1.6 thousand; 📉 -16.8%	77%; 📉 -1.6%
PCV theory hazard perception	7 thousand; 📉 -3.2%	80.5%; 📈 0.8%	1.6 thousand; 📉 -16.9%	71.3%; 📈 2.4%
PCV theory CPC	6.8 thousand; 📈 6.1%	43.8%; 📈 2.5%	1.5 thousand; 📉 -20.8%	48.3%; 📈 7.5%

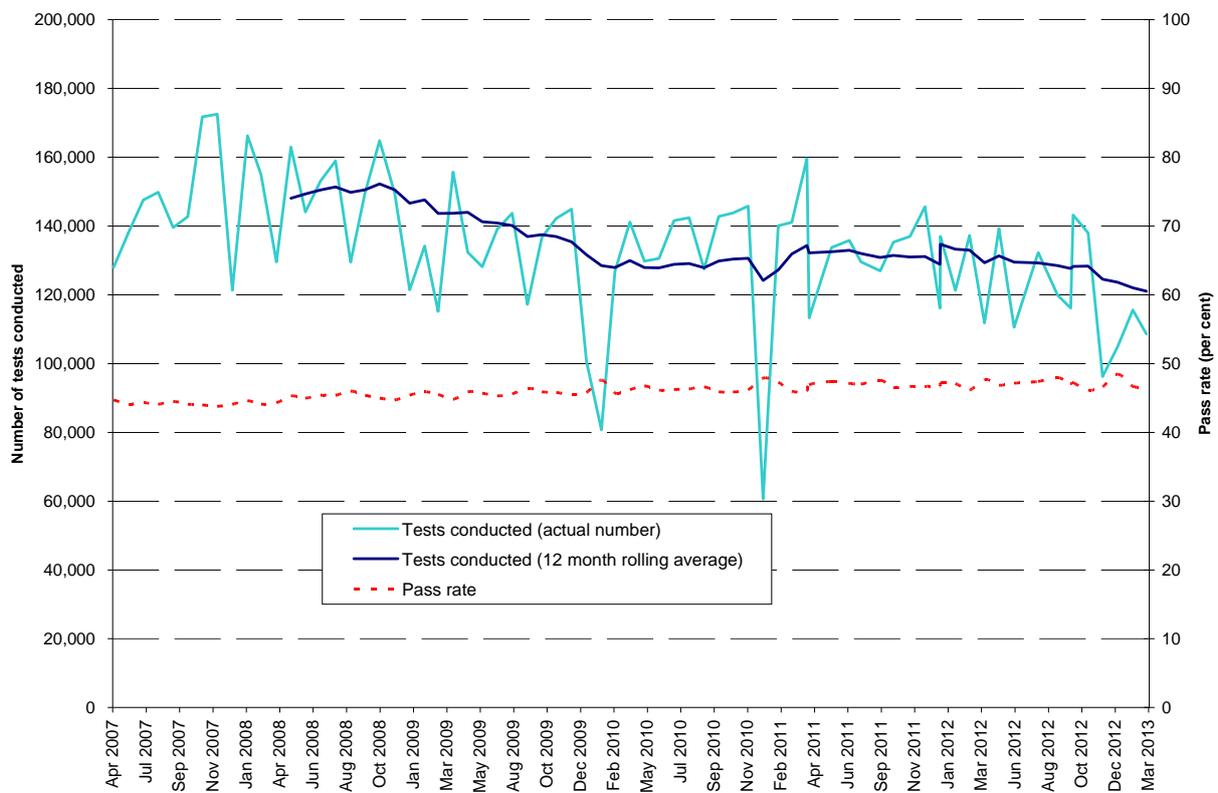
2. Theory and practical car tests

Theory car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to March 2013 (Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT5201)



- From January to March 2012/13, there were 289,556 car theory tests. This is a decrease of 17.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2011/12. In January 2012 the theory test question bank was withdrawn from publication, leading to a small surge in conducted tests.
- The pass rate for January to March 2013 was 52.3 per cent. This is 7.2 percentage points lower than the same period last year. This fall in pass rate occurred at the same time that the first new, previously unpublished test questions were added to the question papers in January 2013.
- Over the 2012/13 financial year as a whole, 127,453 fewer theory tests were conducted than during the previous financial year, and the pass rate fell by 1.7 percentage points to 59.1 per cent. This was largely due to the decline in the pass rate in the period from January to March.

Practical car tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to March 2013 (Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



- There were 329,055 car practical tests conducted from January to March 2012/13. When compared to the same period in the previous year this is a fall of 16.8 per cent.
- Over the course of the 2012/13 financial year 1,436,481 car practical tests were conducted. This is 8.5 per cent lower than the previous financial year.
- The pass rate for quarter 4 2012/13 was 47.2 per cent. This is 0.4 percentage points higher than the same quarter a year ago.
- For the financial year 2012/13 the pass rate was 47.1 per cent. This is 0.2 percentage points higher than the previous financial year.

3. Theory and practical motorcycle tests (Module 1 and 2)

On 19th January 2013, the EU 3rd Directive⁹ⁱ came into force in the UK. This directive limits the engine size available to riders under the age of 24 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 trough.

Theory Test

- There were 8,160 motorcycle theory tests conducted from January to March 2013. This represents a 45.5 per cent fall from the same period in 2012, during which 14,973 tests were conducted.
- During the financial year 2012/13 73,604 theory tests were conducted. This represents an increase of 11 per cent when compared to the previous financial year.
- There was a negligible change in the pass rate of 0.5 percentage points to 76.2 per cent for the period January to March 2013 compared to the same quarter a year ago.
- For the financial year, the pass rate dropped 5 percentage points to 74.5 per cent.

Practical (module 1 and 2) Tests

- During the period January to March 2013 there were 8,157 module 1 tests conducted. This is 15.7 per cent fewer than the same quarter in the previous year.
- The module 1 pass rate for the three month period was 69.9 per cent, 2.9 percentage points lower than the same quarter last year.
- Over the financial year 2012/13, the number of module 1 tests taken was 66,050. This is 10.6 per cent higher than the previous financial year.
- The number of module 2 tests conducted from January to March 2013 was 9,703, an 11.1 per cent increase on the same period in the previous year.
- The pass rate for the period January to March 2013 was 70.3 per cent on the module 2 test. This is 0.8 percentage points higher than during this period in 2012.

4. Theory and practical large goods vehicle (LGV) tests

Theory Test

- There was a total of 6,587 multiple choice LGV theory tests conducted from January to March 2013. This is a fall of 12.6 per cent when compared to the same period a year earlier.
- The number of LGV theory tests conducted between April 2012 and March 2013 was broadly similar to the previous year, falling by 0.7 per cent to 27,249.
- from January to March 2013, total of 6,581 hazard perception tests were conducted. This is 10.1 per cent below the same period a year before.
- Over the financial year 2012/13, the number of hazard perception tests conducted was 1.6 per cent (427 tests) lower than during the previous financial year. The overall pass rate fell slightly by 0.3 percentage points, to 81.1 per cent.

Practical Test

- There were 11,078 LGV practical tests conducted over the period January to March 2013. This is 4.3 per cent fewer than the same quarter a year earlier.
- Over the course of the financial year 2012/13, 46,246 LGV tests were conducted. This is a marginal decline (0.7 per cent) when compared to the previous financial year.
- The pass rate for LGV testing from January to March 2013 was 54 per cent which is 1.1 percentage points higher than the same period a year ago. This has helped increase the LGV pass rate for the financial year to 53 per cent; an increase of 0.6 percentage points compared to the previous financial year.
- 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 little change in the annual numbers since.

5. Theory and practical passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) tests

Theory Test

- There were 1,633 multiple choice PCV theory tests conducted from January to March 2013. This represents a 16.8 per cent reduction compared to the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the financial year 2012/13, 7,196 multiple choice tests were conducted. This is only 80 tests fewer than the previous financial year.
- During the period January to March 2013, there were 1,606 hazard perception tests conducted. This is a 16.9 per cent reduction on the previous financial year.
- During the financial year 2012/13, 7,040 hazard perception tests were conducted. This is 3.2 per cent lower than the previous financial year.

Practical Test

- The number of PCV practical tests conducted from January to March 2013 was 2,153, 7.8 per cent more than the same quarter a year ago.
- Over the financial year 2012/13 the number of tests conducted increased by 8.3 per cent to 9,162 compared to the previous financial year.

6. Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) theory and practical tests

Theory Test

- There were 1,325 theory tests conducted from January to March of 2013. This represents a fall of 32.5 per cent in comparison to the same period in 2012.
- For the financial year 2012/13 6,048 tests were conducted, 30.8 per cent fewer than in 2011/12.
- The pass rate for the period January to March and the financial year remained broadly flat and in line with the same time periods a year ago.

Practical Test

- During the period January to March 2013 there were 1,008 ADI part 2 tests conducted. This is a 28.2 per cent fall from the same quarter last year.
- Over the financial year the number of ADI part 2 tests conducted has fallen 34.1 per cent to 4,834 when compared to the previous financial year.
- From January to March 2013 there were 1,223 ADI part 3 tests conducted. This represents a fall of 35.8 per cent compared to the same period a year ago.
- For the financial year 2012/13 5,882 ADI part 3 tests were conducted, a fall of 34.4 per cent when compared to the last financial year.

We have seen continued year on year falls in the number of ADI theory, part 2 and part 3 practical tests being conducted. This may be linked to the falls in the number of car practical tests being conducted as well as the still relatively high numbers on the ADI register.

7. Driving and riding instructors

- At the end of March 2013, there were 45,387 approved driving instructors on the register. This is 2.6% fewer than were registered at the end of March 2011. In contrast to this trend, the number of first applications to become a potential driving instructor has increased by 1.9% when compared to the same period last year; this will be offset in the annual figures as there was a fall of 14.8% in quarter 2 2012.
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,497 riding instructors on the statutory register at end of the year.
- During this quarter, 4,664 check tests were conducted on ADIs. This is an increase of 20.9% when compared with the same quarter in the previous year. At the end of March 2013, 55 per cent of all ADIs scored a grade four, 37 per cent a grade five and 6.5 per cent a grade six¹⁰. No ADI scored a grade one and just over 1 per cent scored a grade two or three.
- Compulsory basic test (CBT) instructors also undergo check tests. Of the 161 tests undertaken from January to March 2013, 143 (88%) resulted in a satisfactory result.

8. Background notes

1. [Theory test statistics are included in this release for the first time as official statistics.](#)
 2. 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).
 3. The [Driver and Rider Tests and Instructors](#) web page provides further detail of the key findings presented in this statistical release, including the data tables.
 4. 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.
 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 data by test centre. These datasets can be accessed [here](#).
 7. The next release of these statistics will be on 29 August 2013 and will provide April-June 2013 information.
 8. 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 provided simply for information and as they are frequently request under the Freedom of Information Act.
 9. 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>
 10. Grades run from 1 – extremely poor overall performance, to 6 – very high overall performance
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