

Driver and Rider Test and Instructor Statistics, Great Britain: Quarter 2 2013/14 (July – September 2013)

This publication presents information on driving and riding theory and practical tests conducted in Great Britain to 30 September 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 353,420 **car practical tests** conducted between July and September 2013, 4 per cent fewer than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 48 per cent, equal to the same period in 2012.
- There were 411,473 **car theory tests** conducted between July and September 2013, 25 per cent more than in the same quarter of the previous year. The **pass rate** for these tests was 53 per cent, 9 percentage points lower than in the same period of 2012.
- The drop in the theory test pass rate continues to reflect the addition of new, previously unpublished, questions to the test from January 2013.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 July – September quarter as more candidates re-took the test.
- The number of **motorcycle tests**, both theory and practical, was around 25 per cent lower in July – September 2013 compared with the same period of the previous year. This reflects the continuing effects of the rush to pass the practical test before new restrictions 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 pass rate fall and the number of tests is up by over 20 per cent across both categories.
- At the end of September 2013, there were 43,704 **Approved Driving Instructors** on the Register, and 2,717 **motorcycle riding instructors** on the Statutory Register.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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1. General context

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA, now a part of the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) 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 per cent between 2007/08 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.
- the economic recession from 2008 may have discouraged some people from taking a test.

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

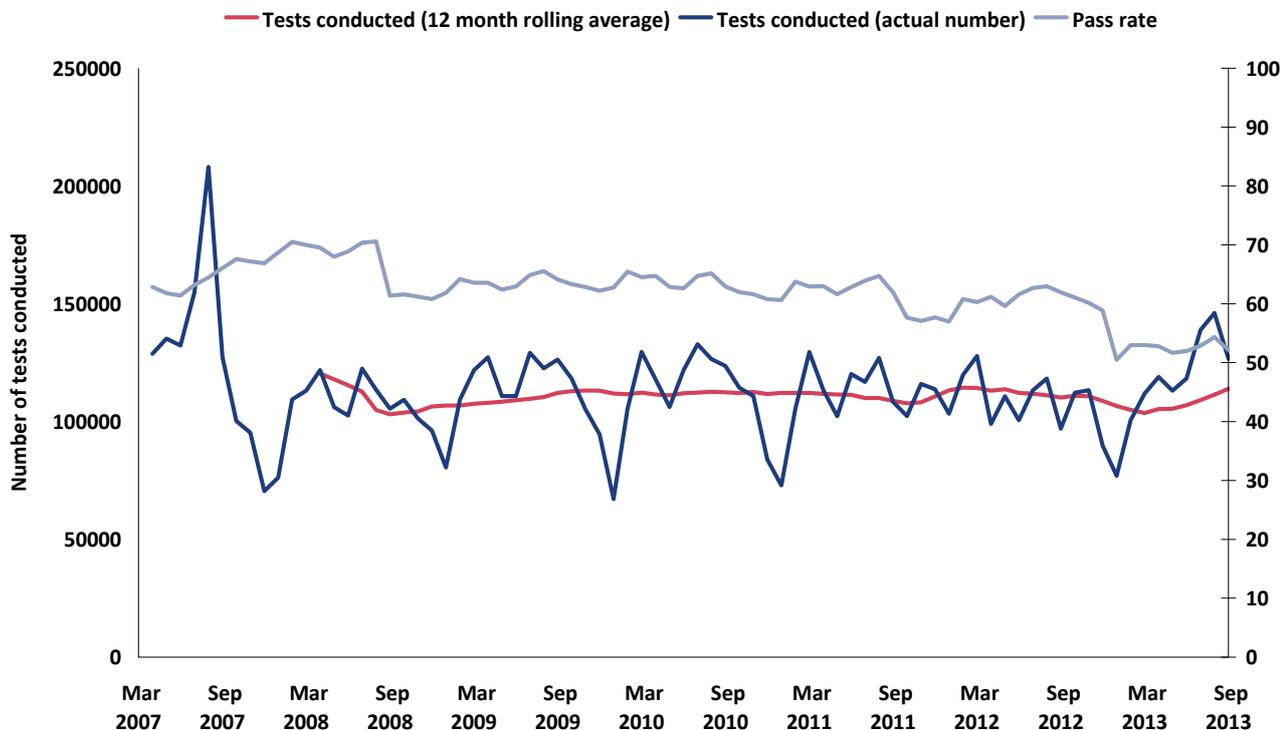
Test type	Latest Quarter (July – September 2013)			
	Number of tests taken (thousands)	Compared to same quarter previous year	Pass rate (percentage)	Compared to same qtr previous year (percentage points)
Car practical	353	↓ -4%	48	↔ 0
Car theory	411	↕ +25%	53	↓ -9
Motorcycle practical module 1	15.3	↓ -24%	69	↓ -2
Motorcycle practical module 2	14.4	↓ -24%	70	↕ +1
Motorcycle theory	17.4	↓ -28%	76	↕ +1
Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) practical	12.0	↕ +3%	55	↕ +2
LGV theory multiple choice	8.4	↕ +30%	65	↓ -12
LGV theory hazard perception	7.4	↕ +15%	81	↓ -1
LGV theory CPC *	4.3	↕ +9%	66	↕ +10
Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) practical	2.3	↓ -1%	56	↕ +2
PCV theory multiple choice	2.1	↕ +21%	69	↓ -7
PCV theory hazard perception	2.0	↕ +17%	79	↓ -3
PCV theory CPC *	2.2	↕ +29%	46	↕ +1

* - CPC = Certificate of Professional Competence

2. Car tests

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

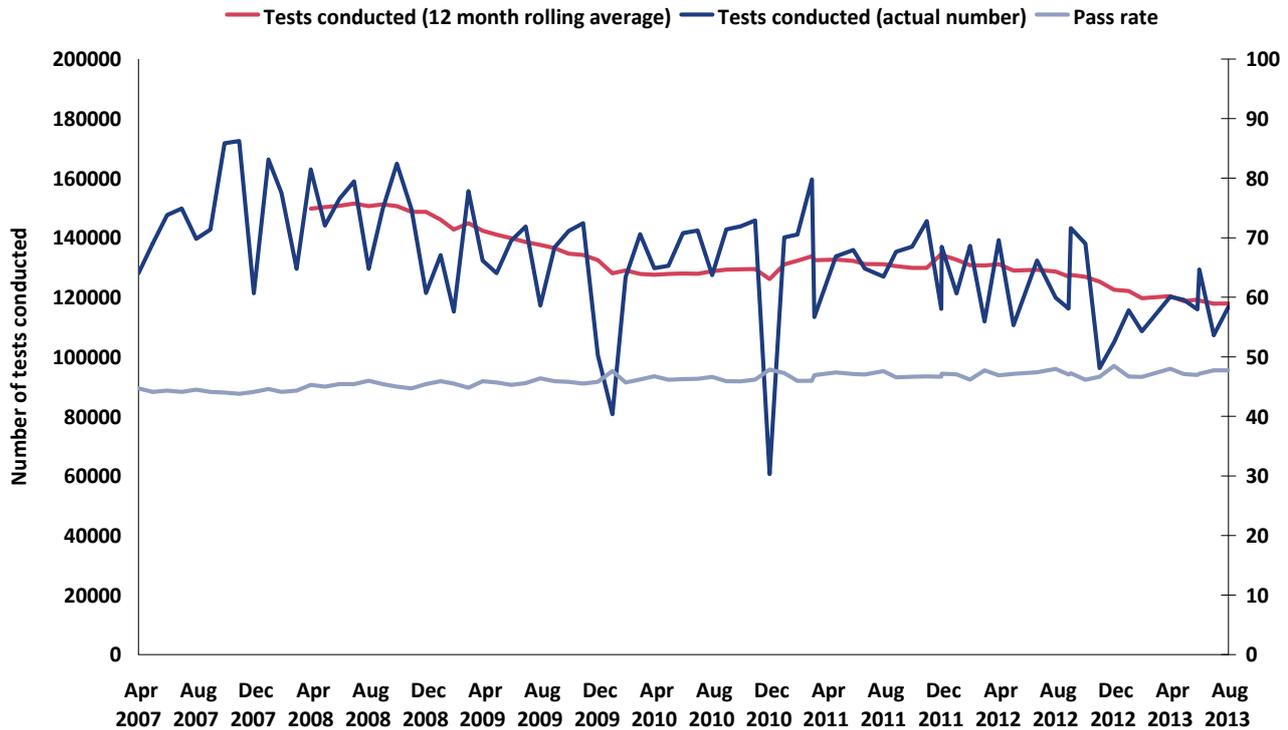
(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT5201)



- From July to September 2013 there were 411,473 car theory tests conducted. This is 25 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 in 2011/12 than in other years).
- The pass rate for July to September 2013 was 53 per cent, this is 1 percentage point higher than the preceding quarter (a usual seasonal pattern), but 9 percentage points lower than July to September in 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.
- Historic data suggests that at times when questions have been refreshed it takes approximately 6 months for pass rates to rebound. It appears that the **pass rate** has not fully recovered this quickly this time. There has however been a 6 per cent increase in the **number** of passes during the quarter ending September 2013 compared with the same quarter of the previous year, to 218,700, thanks to an increase in tests conducted.

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

(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0201)



- There were 353,420 car practical tests conducted from July to September 2013. When compared to the same quarter in the previous year this is 4 per cent down. This is likely to reflect the influence of the changes made to the theory test questions in January 2013.
- The pass rate for July to September 2013 was 48 per cent. This is unchanged from the same period a year ago.

Related information includes:

Car theory tests in table DRT5201

Car practical tests in table DRT0201

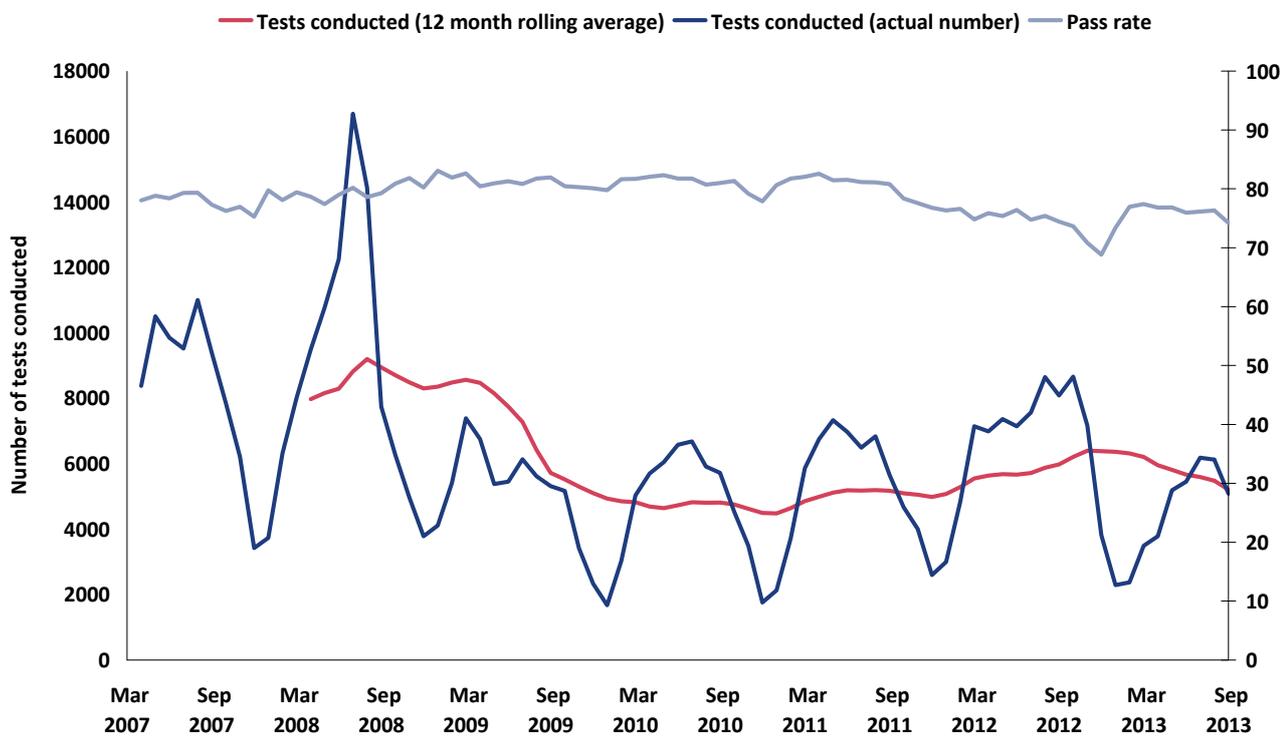
3. Motorcycle tests

On 19 January 2013, the EU 3rd Directive came into force in the UK. This directive limits the engine size that can be ridden by riders under the age of 24⁸. This led to a surge in tests for this age group for both theory and practical tests prior to this date, followed by a drop resulting in a lower than normal number of tests. This situation has continued through July – September 2013.

Theory Test

Theory motorcycle tests: Great Britain, April 2007 to September 2013

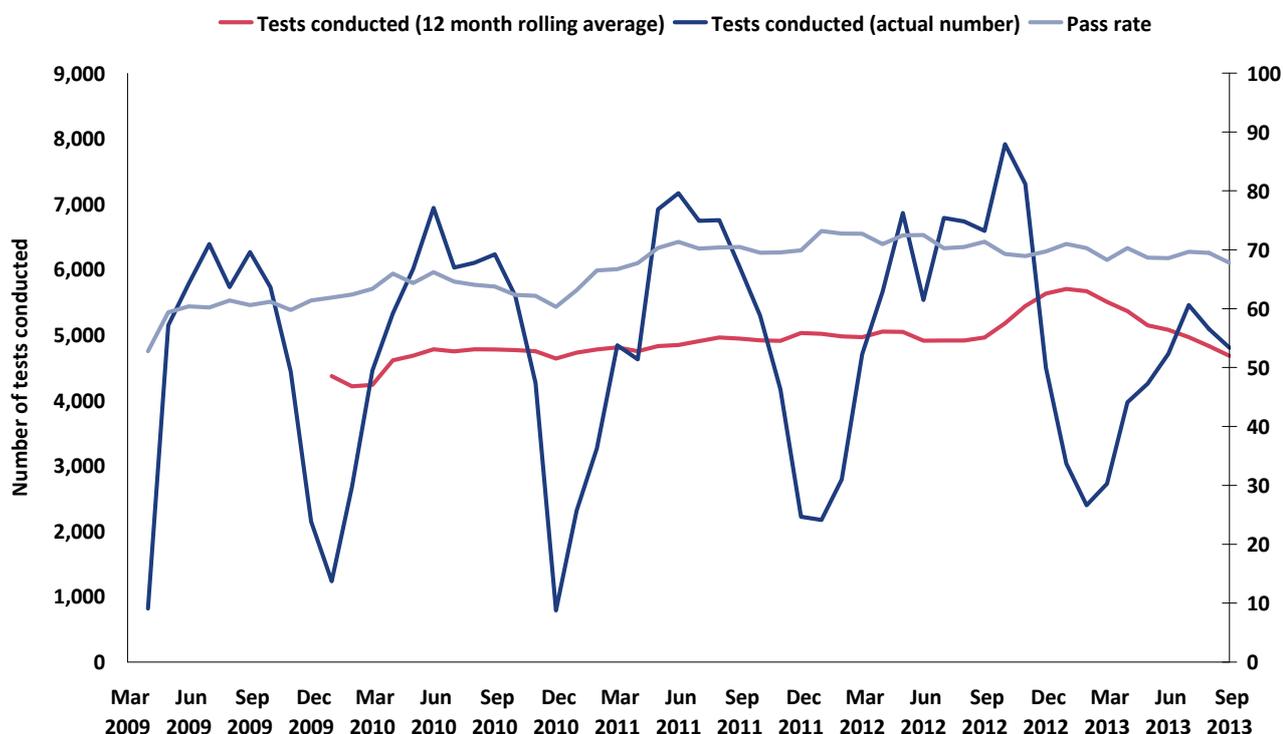
(Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0401)



- There were 17,400 motorcycle theory tests conducted from July to September, 28 per cent fewer than in the same quarter a year earlier.
- The pass rate has increased by 1 percentage points in this quarter, compared to the same quarter last year, to 76 per cent.

Practical (module 1 and 2) Tests

Practical motorcycle tests module 1: Great Britain, April 2009 to September 2013 (Driving and Riding Tests web table DRT0401)



- There were 15,349 module 1 and 14,406 module 2 tests conducted during July to September 2013. These figures represent a 24 per cent and a 24 per cent reduction in testing respectively compared to the previous year.
- The module 1 pass rate fell by 2 percentage points to 69 per cent this quarter compared to the same period a year ago and rose by 1 per cent on module 2 to 70 per cent.

Related information includes:

Motorcycle theory tests in table DRT5401

Motorcycle practical tests in tables DRT0401 and DRT0421

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. As with the 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 LGV multiple choice theory tests increased by 29 per cent to 8,444 during July to September 2013 compared to the same quarter a year earlier, and there were 13 per cent more PCV tests (2,144).
- The pass rates for the multiple choice theory tests during July to September fell by 12 percentage points to 65 per cent for LGVs and 7 percentage points to 68.5 per cent PCVs when compared to the same period a year before.
- The number of hazard perception theory tests was also higher during this quarter compared to a year ago. LGV tests were up by 15 per cent to 7,426 and PCV tests by 17 per cent to 1,993.

Practical Tests

- There were 12,014 LGV practical tests during July to September 2013, 3 per cent more than during the same quarter of the previous year. The pass rate increased by 2 percentage points to 55 per cent.
- After the sharp drop in LGV testing coinciding with the onset of the economic downturn in 2008, we are beginning to see early signs of growth. This coincides with improvements to the economy.
- There were 2,317 PCV tests during July to September 2013, 1 per cent fewer (17 tests) than in the same quarter the year before. The pass rate increased by 2 percentage points to 56 per cent.

Related information includes:

LGV theory tests in table DRT5501

LGV practical tests in table DRT0501

PCV theory tests in table DRT5601

PCV practical tests in table DRT0601

5. Driving and riding instructors

Numbers of instructors currently registered

- At the end of September 2013, there were 43,704 Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) on the ADI Register, 5 per cent fewer than September 2012.
- Alongside the ADIs, there were 2,717 motorcycle riding instructors on the Statutory Register at end of June, a reduction of 9 per cent over the year.

Checks on existing instructors

- From July to September 2013, 4,095 check tests were conducted on ADIs. This was an increase of 7 per cent compared with the same quarter in the previous year. At the end of September, 47 per cent of all currently graded ADIs scored a grade four, 35 per cent a grade five and 6 per cent a grade six⁹. Two ADIs 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 from July to September 2013, 149 (90 per cent) had a 'Satisfactory' result.

New applicants, and theory and practical ADI tests

- The number of first applications during July to September 2013 to become a driving instructor increased by 20 per cent when compared to the same period last year, to 1,815.
- There were 1,427 ADI theory tests conducted during July to September 2013, compared to 1,456 in the same quarter a year ago. The pass rate fell by 5 percentage points to 47 per cent.
- During July to September 2013, 991 Part 2 and 1,151 Part 3 practical ADI tests were conducted. This represents falls of 21 per cent and 26 per cent respectively compared to the same period a year ago. Pass rates were a little higher for Part 2 of the ADI practical test, remaining fairly static for Part 3 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.

Related information includes:

ADI statistics in tables INS0101, INS0102, INS0103 and DRT5701

Compulsory basic training instructor statistics in tables INS0501 and INS0502

Compulsory basic training statistics in tables INS0503 and INS0504

6. 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 data on the topics 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 13 March 2014 and will provide information for the third quarter of the 2013 financial year (October to December 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 around 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 requested 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