

Quarterly Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain Quarter 2 (April - June) 2014



Department
for Transport

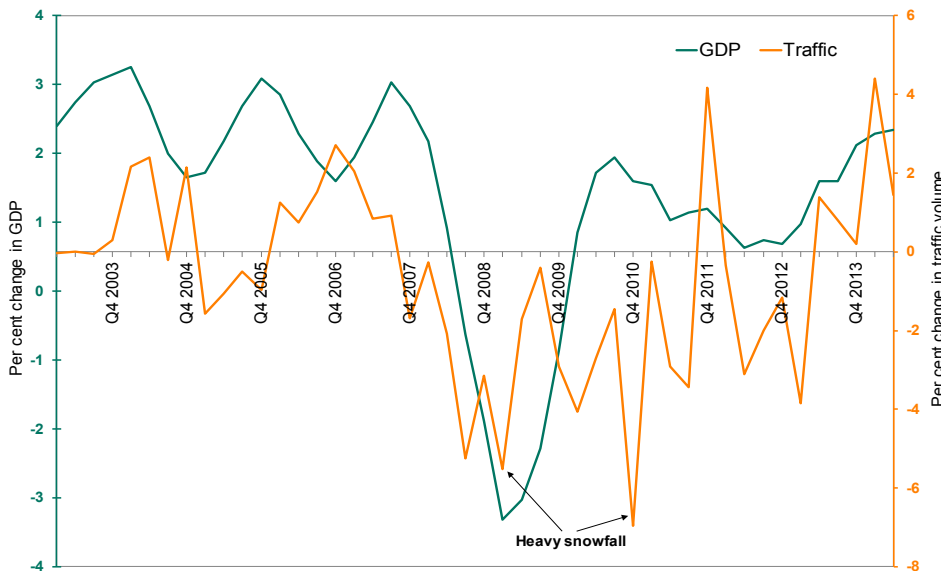
Main findings: Traffic across all vehicle types and road classes has increased from Quarter 2 2013.

In Great Britain between April and June 2014 (Quarter 2), **all motor vehicle traffic increased by 1.4 per cent**, to 77.1 billion vehicle miles, when compared to the same quarter in 2013.

GDP increased over Quarter 2 2014 returning to pre-recession levels. It is likely that economic growth is contributing to the continued upward trend in traffic volumes, as illustrated by the chart below. In particular, Light Goods Vehicle (LGV) traffic continues to increase more than other vehicle types, increasing 3.5 per cent from Quarter 2 2013.

However, the total for all motor vehicle traffic is still 2.5 per cent lower than the peak of 79.0 billion vehicle miles reached in Quarter 1 2008.

Motor vehicle traffic and GDP: GB quarterly from 2003 [TRA2501]



Compared to Quarter 2 2013:

- ▶ **Car traffic also increased** by 1.0 per cent in Quarter 2 2014.
- ▶ **All road classes experienced higher volumes of traffic**, with the largest increases being seen on both urban (1.9 per cent) and rural (1.8 per cent) 'A' roads.

About this release

This quarterly release presents estimates for road traffic in Great Britain from April to June 2014. Quarterly estimates are provisional until they have been constrained by the final annual estimates each year. The quarterly figures presented in this release for 2014 are provisional. Final annual estimates for 2014 are due to be published in summer 2015.

Estimates are based on traffic data collected continuously from a national network of around 200 Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs). ATCs also record some physical properties of passing vehicles which are used to classify traffic by vehicle type.

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

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Summary figures for Quarter 2 2014 (April - June)

The summary table below shows the patterns in vehicle traffic compared to the last quarter and previous Quarter 2 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 Q2 2014 | Q2 percentage change over time | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Last Quarter Q1 2014 | Last Year Q2 2013 | Five Years Ago Q2 2009 | Ten Years Ago Q2 2004 | Twenty Years Ago Q2 1994 |
| All Motor Vehicle Traffic | 77.1 billion | ↓ 0.3% | ↑ 1.4% | ↓ 0.6% | ↑ 0.4% | ↑ 18.0% |
| Cars and Taxis | 60.7 billion | ↓ 0.5% | ↑ 1.0% | ↓ 1.6% | ↓ 1.1% | ↑ 13.4% |
| LGVs | 11.0 billion | ↑ 0.5% | ↑ 3.5% | ↑ 8.3% | ↑ 19.3% | ↑ 65.5% |
| HGVs¹ | 4.0 billion ¹ | ↓ 0.2% ¹ | ↑ 2.3% ¹ | ↓ 2.8% ¹ | ↓ 12.3% ¹ | ↑ 3.7% ¹ |
| Motorways | 16.1 billion | - 0.0% | ↑ 1.4% | ↑ 3.0% | ↑ 7.5% | ↑ 47.2% |
| Rural 'A' Roads | 22.3 billion | ↓ 0.4% | ↑ 1.8% | ↑ 0.6% | ↑ 1.4% | ↑ 24.2% |
| Urban 'A' Roads | 12.3 billion | ↓ 1.0% | ↑ 1.9% | ↓ 1.7% | ↓ 3.4% | ↑ 1.1% |
| Rural Minor Roads | 10.4 billion | ↓ 1.4% | ↑ 1.5% | ↓ 2.8% | ↑ 3.5% | ↑ 16.1% |
| Urban Minor Roads | 15.9 billion | ↑ 0.7% | ↑ 0.4% | ↓ 3.1% | ↓ 6.1% | ↑ 4.5% |

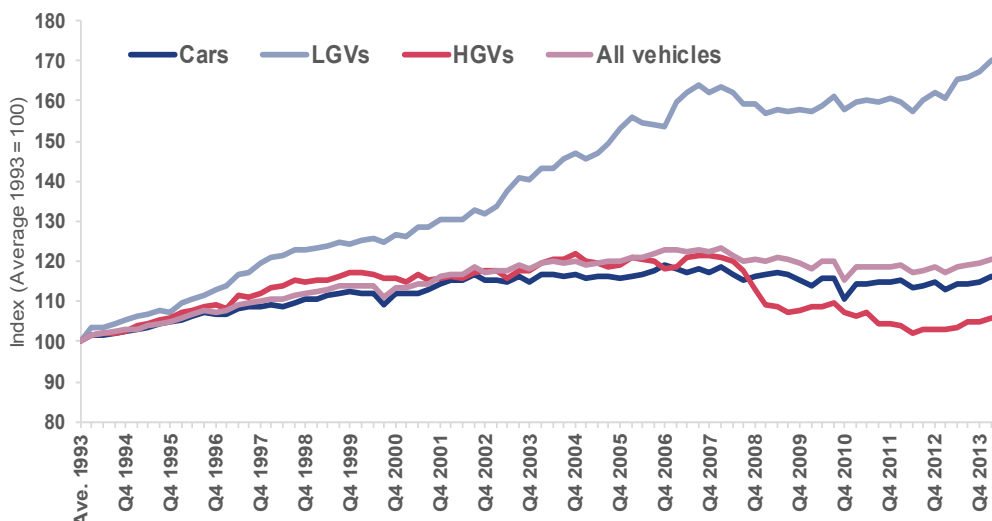
Further information...

¹ A correction to the way buses are classified on motorways and some 'A' roads was introduced in Quarter 1 2014. This reclassification led to a shift in traffic from buses to HGVs. As a result, it is advised that users take caution when comparing statistics for bus and HGV traffic from Quarter 1 2014 onwards with historic traffic statistics. See background information on [page 5](#) for further details.

Quarterly road traffic by vehicle type

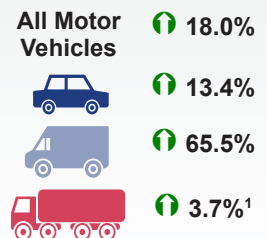
- **Latest figures:** Traffic increases across car, LGV and HGV vehicle types.
- All motor vehicle traffic increased by 1.4 per cent compared to Quarter 2 2013.

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

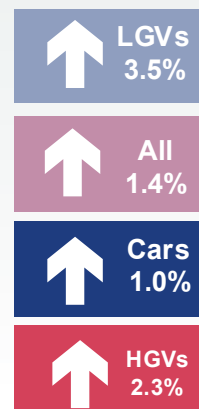


Longer term...

Traffic volumes have increased at varying rates since 1994:



% Change from Q2 2013...

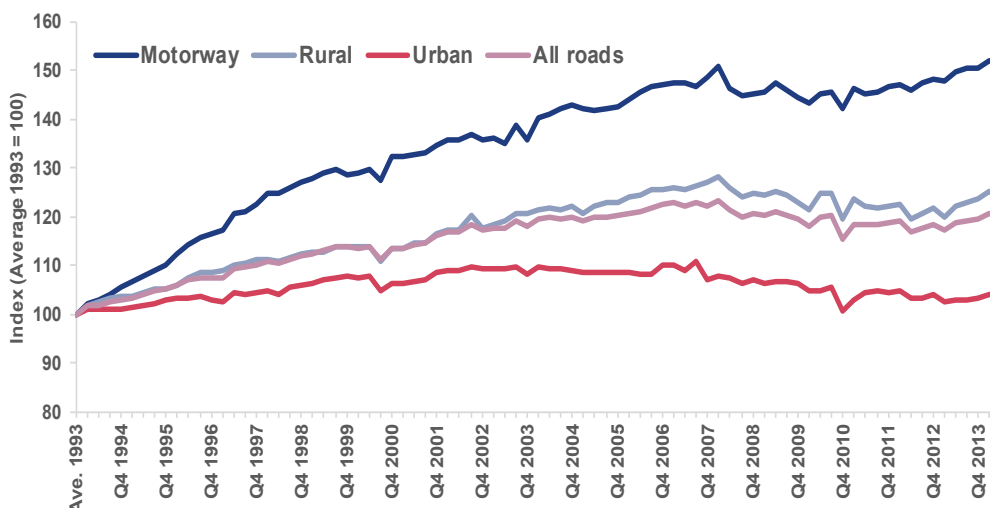


- Car and taxi traffic increased by 1.0 per cent, to 60.7 billion vehicle miles, in Quarter 2 of 2014 from Quarter 2 2013.
- LGV traffic totalled 11.0 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 2 of 2014, 3.5 per cent higher than in the same quarter in the previous year. This contributes to a 19.3 per cent growth in LGV traffic over the past ten years, and an increase of over 65.5 per cent since 1994.
- HGV traffic levels increased from Quarter 1 2014, growing 2.3 per cent to 4.0 billion vehicle miles¹.

Quarterly road traffic by road type

- **Latest figures:** Increase in traffic on motorways and all other road classes.
- Traffic on motorways in Great Britain increased from 15.9 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 2 2013 to 16.1 billion vehicle miles in Quarter 2 2014, representing growth of 1.4 per cent.
- Motorway traffic has increased by around 47 per cent over a 20 year period since 1994.
- Estimates for 'A' road traffic in Quarter 2 also increased when compared to the same period in 2013. In Quarter 2 2014, traffic on rural 'A' roads was 22.3 billion vehicle miles, up 1.8 per cent. Traffic on urban 'A' roads has also increased, rising to 12.3 billion vehicle miles which is a 1.9 per cent increase on Quarter 2 2013 estimates.
- Traffic volumes rose by 1.5 per cent on minor rural roads, compared with Quarter 2 estimates for 2013, rising to 10.4 billion vehicle miles. Traffic on minor urban roads increased 0.4 per cent to 15.9 billion vehicle miles over the same period.

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



Longer term...

Over a 20 year period since 1994, traffic volumes have increased across motorways, all 'A' road and minor roads types;

Motorways 47.2%



Rural 'A' 24.2%

Minor rural 16.1%



Urban 'A' 1.1%

Minor urban 4.5%



% Change from Q2 2013...

Motorway 1.4%

Rural 1.7%

All 1.4%

Urban 1.0%

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.

Further information...

Further statistical guidance and methodological notes can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance>.

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](#).

| 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 |
| <i>Difference (%)</i> | <i>0.6</i> | <i>0.4</i> | <i>0.6</i> | <i>1.2</i> | <i>0.7</i> | <i>0.0</i> | <i>-0.1</i> | <i>-0.4</i> | <i>0.6</i> | <i>0.0</i> | <i>0.5</i> | <i>1.1</i> | <i>1.1</i> | <i>1.4</i> | <i>0.9</i> |

Background information

HGV and bus vehicle classification

A correction was applied to Quarter 1 2014 figures for HGV and Other motor vehicles. This shifted traffic from buses to HGVs on motorways and some 'A' roads. As a result, figures published after Quarter 1 2014 are not directly comparable with earlier years and this is highlighted in the tables by a break line and a footnote.

Initial estimates suggest that this change may have increased HGV estimates by around 2 per cent and decreased bus traffic estimates by around 7 per cent when compared to previous years. We are continuing to investigate the impact of this change, and whether it is possible to apply the same change to historic data. Further information will be provided alongside our next quarterly publication.

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: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-release-access-lists-for-road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-series>.

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.

Next release

The next Quarterly Road Traffic estimates, for Q3 (July to August) 2014, are due to be published in November 2014. Annual Road Traffic estimates for 2014 are currently scheduled to be published in summer 2015.