

Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 3 (Jul - Sep) 2015



Department
for Transport

About this release

This release presents the latest quarterly statistics on licensed motor vehicles. It is part of the [Vehicle Statistics](#) series. Detailed [data tables](#) are available from the web site. Further tables are updated on an annual basis.

It is based on administrative data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

Except where otherwise stated, the statistics all refer to Great Britain. However, the series is being expanded to cover UK data.

For further details please refer to the Background Information section below and the separate [Technical Notes](#).

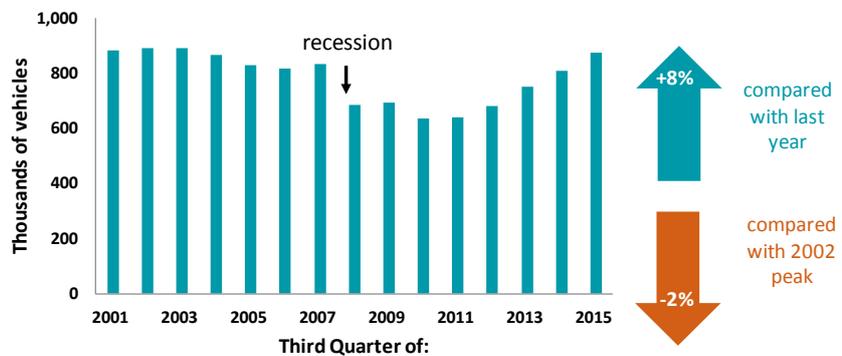
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New registrations in Great Britain are increasing and have returned to pre-recession levels.

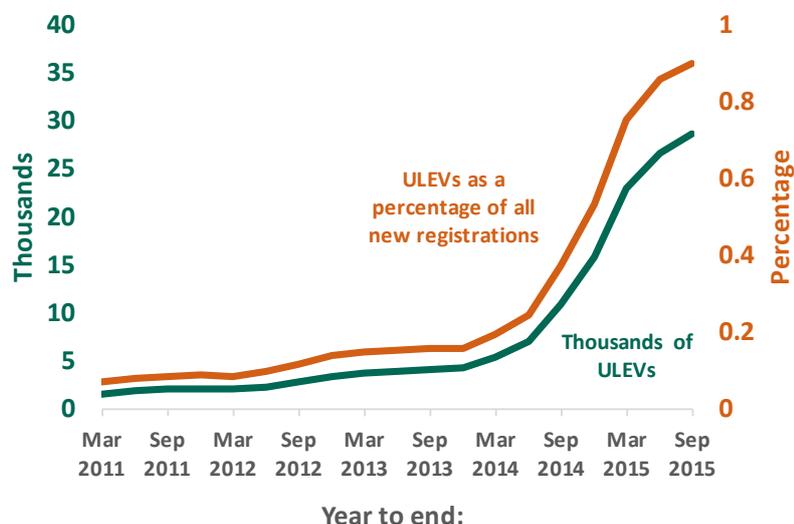
From July to September 2015, just over 876,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain. This was 8% up on the same quarter of 2014, and just 2% lower than the peak quarter 3 figure in 2002.

Vehicles registered for the first time, GB: 2001-2015 [\[veh0150\]](#)



In the year to the end of September 2015, 28,600 new **ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)** were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom. This represented 0.9% of all new registrations, compared with less than 0.4% one year previously.

New Ultra Low Emission Vehicle registrations, UK 2010 - Q3 2015



General Context

The number of licensed vehicles and number of vehicles registered for the first time are influenced by the general economic climate in Britain and further afield. New registrations have returned to the level before the 2008-9 recession began.

While new car registrations across the European Union as a whole rose in 2014 by 6% according to the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association, the UK experienced the fastest rate of growth among the four countries with the most new registrations (9%). The UK was the second largest new car market in Europe in 2014, after Germany. The UK accounted for 20% of new cars registered in the EU in 2014, compared with 14% in 2009.

Licensed vehicle numbers

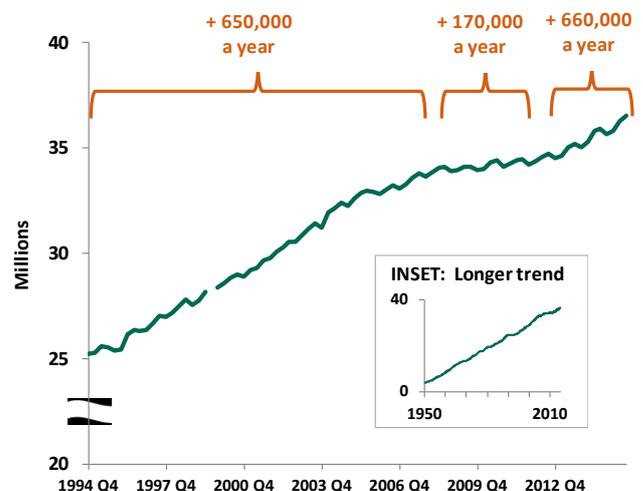
At the end of September 2015 there were 36.5 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain, of which 30.2 million were cars. This was up 1.8% on the same time in 2014.

The total number of licensed vehicles has increased in every year since the end of the Second World War except 1991. For much of this period this growth has been remarkably constant.

Between 1996 and 2007, the annual growth in licensed vehicles averaged 650,000 per year, although from the mid-2000s it slowed somewhat.

Following the recession of 2008-9 it slowed further, but did not stop, averaging 170,000 a year between 2008 and 2012. Since 2013 the annual growth in licensed vehicles has averaged 660,000 per year.

Licensed vehicles in GB: Q4 1994 - Q3 2015



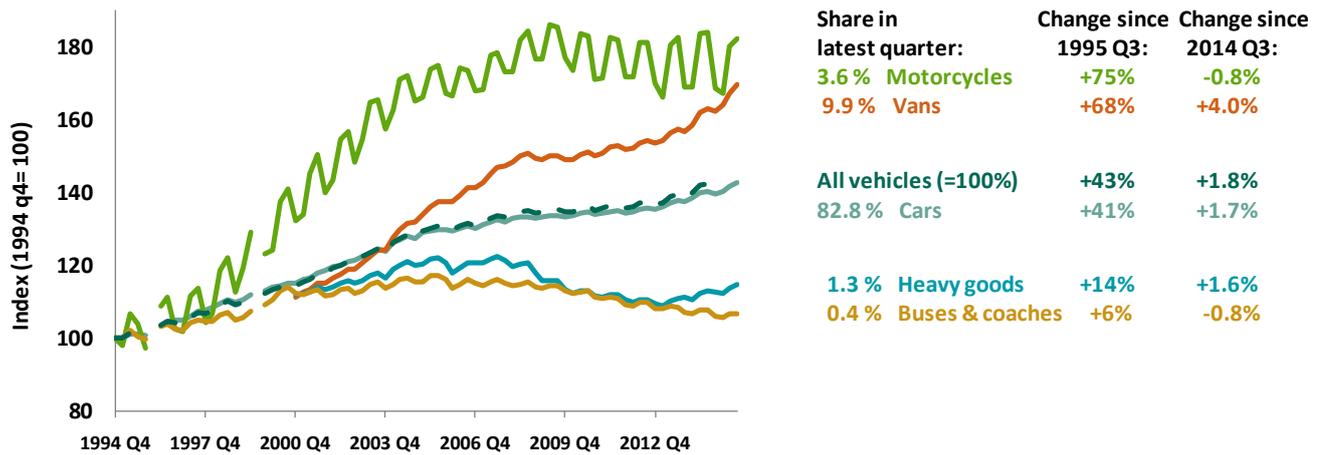
Tables

Detailed vehicle stock statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

All vehicles types: [VEH0101, 104, 110, 120 to 123, 128 to 131](#)

Motorcycles: [VEH0301](#)

Licensed vehicles by type, GB: Q4 1994 - Q3 2015



The recent increases in vehicle numbers have been driven largely by cars and vans, the two most common vehicle types.

Vans were the fastest growing vehicle type over the last year, up 4.0% between September 2014 and September 2015. This year-on-year increase is the highest since December 2007.

The numbers of **licensed cars** increased by 1.7% in the same period. This is similar to the year-on-year increase of September 2014 which was 1.8%.

Motorcycle numbers fell by 0.8% over the last year, and are now 2% lower than in September 2009.

Since September 1995, the number of licensed cars in Great Britain has increased by 41%, while the number of vans has increased by 68% and the number of motorcycles by 75%.

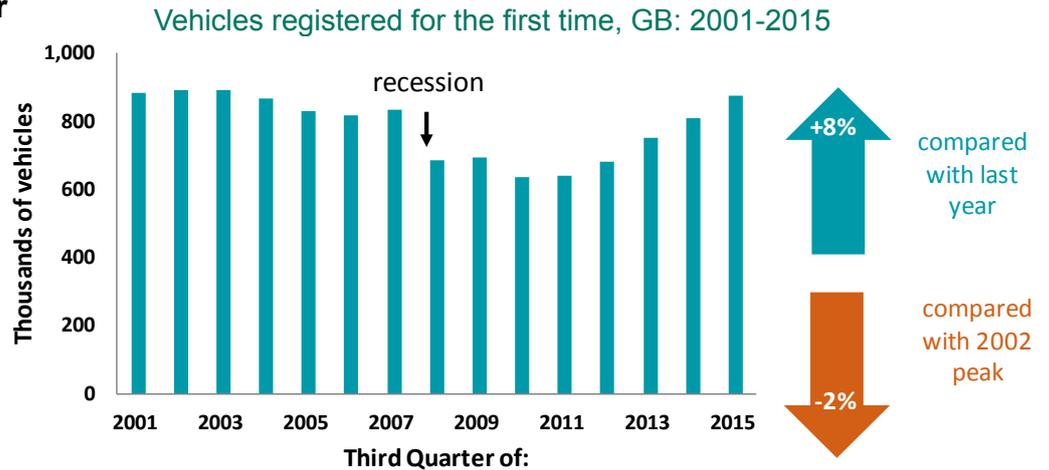
The number of **HGVs** in September 2015 was 1.6% up on the same time of the previous year, but remains 6% below the peak in 2007.

The number of **buses and coaches** fell by 0.8% compared with September 2014, continuing an eight year decline. There are now 9% fewer buses than in 2005, when the number peaked.

New Registrations this quarter

From July to September 2015, just over 876,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain.

This represents an increase of 67,000 vehicles, or 8%, from the same quarter of the previous year.

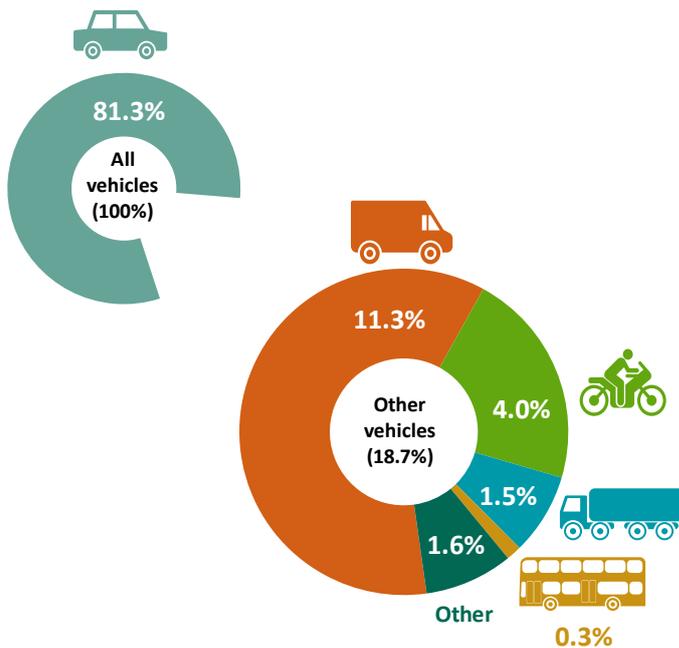


The economic downturn from late 2008 affected the new registration figures from then onwards, but a downward trend was already apparent before that.

The new registration figure for July to September 2015 was the highest quarter 3 figure since 2002, although 2% below the 2002 figure, and the first to exceed the pre-recession level.

A 'Vehicle Scrappage Scheme' for cars and vans helped to boost first registrations between May 2009 and April 2010, and may also have had the side effect of slightly depressing registrations briefly either side of this period if prospective buyers changed their plans to take advantage of the scheme.

New registrations in Great Britain in Q3 2015, by vehicle type



Tables

Detailed new registrations statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

All vehicles types: [VEH0150_160 to 170](#)

Cars: [VEH0256](#)

The charts to the right show indexed trends in new registrations for each major vehicle type, on the same scale. The impact of the recession in late 2008 and 2009 can be seen.

The number of **cars** registered for the first time in July to September 2015 was up 7.6% on the same quarter of 2014, at 712,500. The last three years have seen a sustained period of growth. The shorter surge in car registrations during 2010 reflects the effect of the vehicle scrappage scheme mentioned above.

The number of **vans** registered for the first time in quarter 3 2015 was up 12% on quarter 3 2014, at 98,600. The recession had a bigger impact on van registrations than those of other vehicles (except HGVs), but the last three years have seen relatively rapid growth.

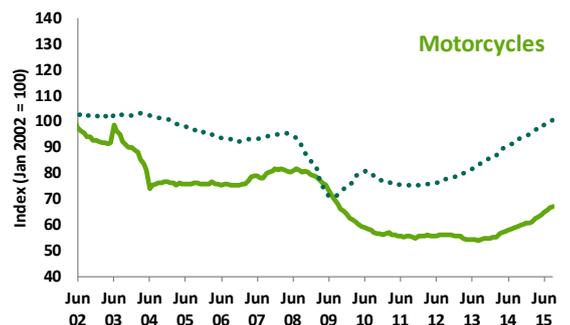
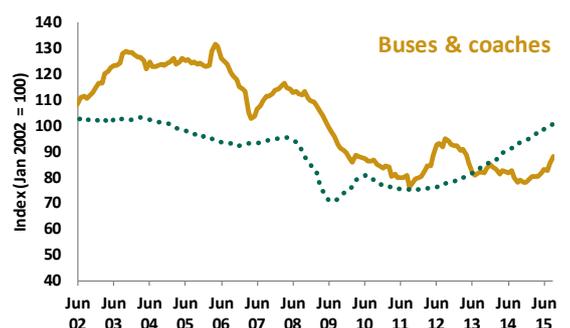
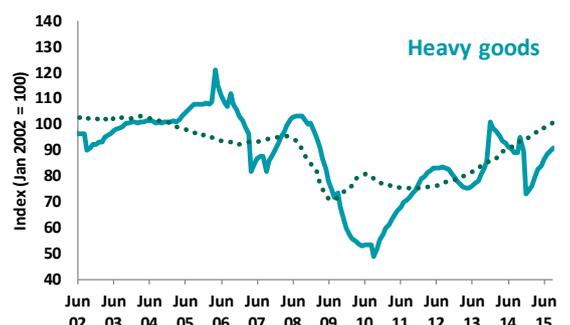
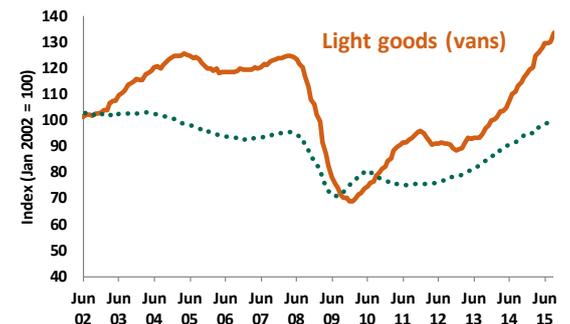
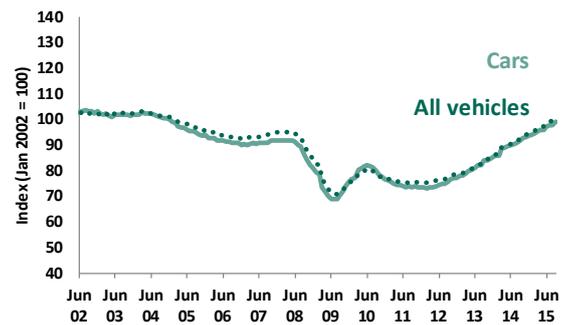
The number of **HGVs** registered for the first time in quarter 3 2015 was up 23% on the same quarter the year before at 13,200. This is the highest quarter 3 total since 2006 but still 17% lower than the number first registered in quarter 3, 2001.

New **bus and coach** registrations increased relatively rapidly up to 2003. While they reduced less sharply than those of vans or HGVs at the onset of the recession, they have not shown a sustained recovery since. The number in quarter 3 2015 was 28% up on the previous year at 2,400. This is the highest number newly registered in quarter 3 since 2008.

New registrations of **motorcycles** fell relatively rapidly in the first few years of the last decade, before levelling off. The onset of the recession saw a further decrease, followed by another period of relative stability. Over the last two years, new registrations have been rising again, and the total of 35,200 thousand new registrations in quarter 3 2015 was up 12% on the previous year.

Vehicles registered for first time, by vehicle type: GB, 2001- Sep 2015.

12-month rolling averages (index Jan 2002=100)



A range of factors have been driving changes in the fuel type, efficiency and emissions of the vehicle fleet. There are financial benefits to motorists who switch to cars with smaller engine sizes or lower emissions. Cars with lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions fall into cheaper Vehicle Excise Duty (car tax) bands. Cars with smaller engines and / or cars which use diesel rather than petrol tend to have better fuel efficiency, and are therefore cheaper to run. In addition, legally binding EU-wide CO₂ emission targets for manufacturers give them added incentives to bring lower emission vehicles to the market.

In total, 6,906 new **ultra low emission vehicles** (ULEVs) were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom during July to September 2015, up 36% from 5,061 in the same quarter of 2014.

Over the year to the end of September 2015, 28,600 new ULEVs were registered, amounting to 0.9% of all new vehicle registrations - up from less than 0.4% one year previously, and 0.2% two years before.

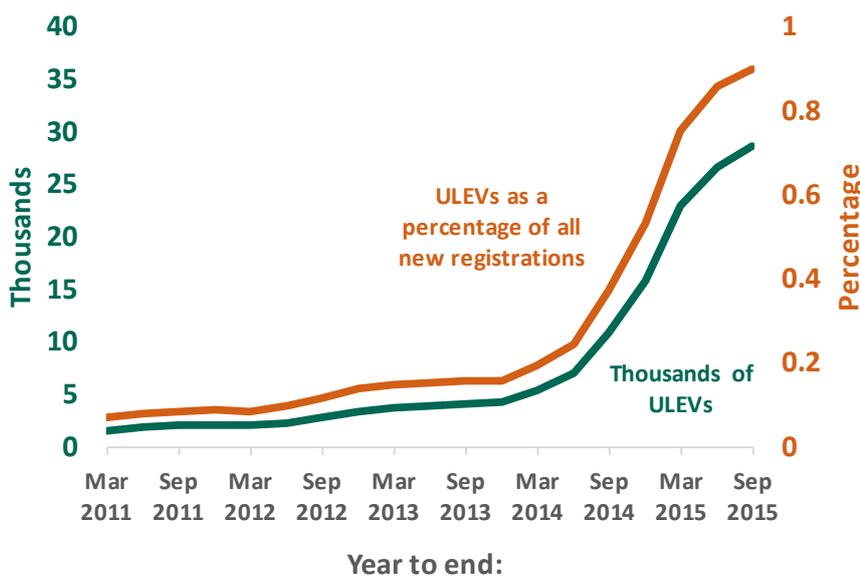
What are alternative fuel vehicles?

Alternative fuel vehicles are those able to use a range of alternatives to purely petrol or diesel fuel, including gas, electricity, or a combination such as gas bi-fuel and hybrid electric. There were only 248,000 alternative fuel vehicles licensed in Great Britain at end of 2014, but this was up 20% over the year.

What are Ultra Low Emission Vehicles?

Ultra low emission vehicles are those with emissions of CO₂ below 75 g/km, or fully electrically powered.

New Ultra Low Emission Vehicle registrations, UK 2010 - Q3 2015



Tables

Detailed environment statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

ULEV: [VEH0130, 0131 and 0170](#)

CO₂ cars: [VEH0256](#)

More detail

For more detail of propulsion types for cars see 2014 annual statistics release (tables [veh0203](#) & [veh0253](#)).

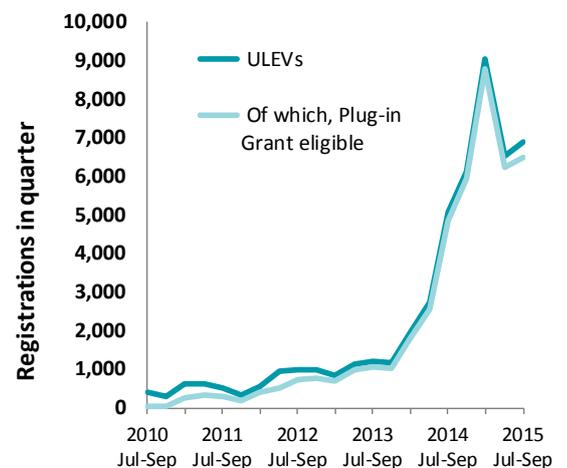
Most of this increase has been due to vehicles eligible for plug-in car and van grants. New registrations in the last quarter included 6,259 cars and 227 vans of models that were eligible for these grants, 33% up on the same period in 2014. The growth in ULEVs is being influenced by new models coming into the market, and increasingly, competitive pricing. The models with the most registrations in the latest quarter were the Mitsubishi Outlander with 2,140 and the Nissan Leaf with 1,321. The number of privately owned ULEVs newly registered, during July to September 2015, was 2,322, up from 1,986 in the same quarter of 2014.

What are plug-in grants?

Plug-in car and van grants were introduced in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively. They provide 25% of the cost of a car (up to £5,000) or 20% of the cost of a van (up to £8,000) for qualifying models - see [Plug-in car and van grants](#) for further details.

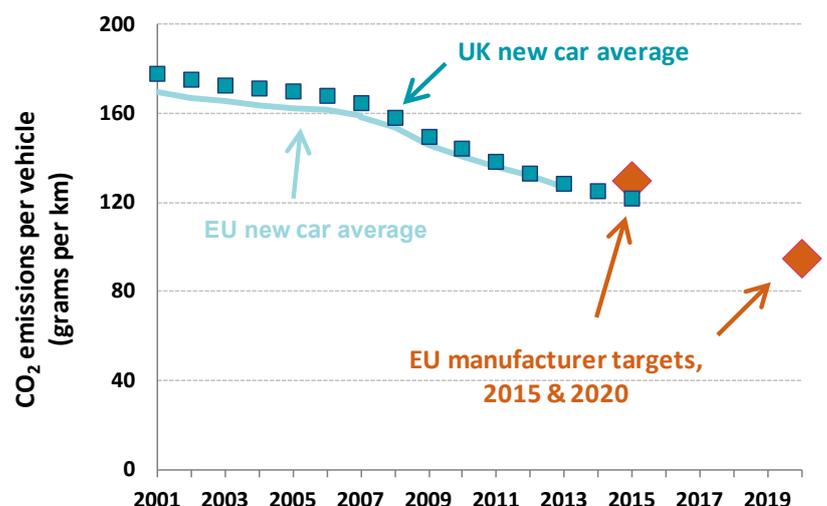
New car registrations in Great Britain are very seasonal, with large peaks in March and September each year, when DVLA issues new number plate series. The motor trade often gears its marketing to this cycle. The higher number of new ULEV registrations in the first quarter of 2015 was mainly due to a particularly large number in March 2015, when the number plates changed, and probably also reflected renewed competition in the market following the introduction of new models, including the Mitsubishi Outlander. This effect was less marked in September 2015.

New Ultra Low Emission & electric vehicles, UK 2010 - Q3 2015



New cars registered during July to September 2015 had average CO₂ emissions of 121 g/km. This was 3.0% lower than the same period in 2014. Since 2001 the average emissions of new cars has fallen by 32%.

New car CO₂ emissions, UK 2001 - Q3 2015



Note: 2015 average based on Q1, Q2 and Q3 only

How do the EU Emissions targets work?

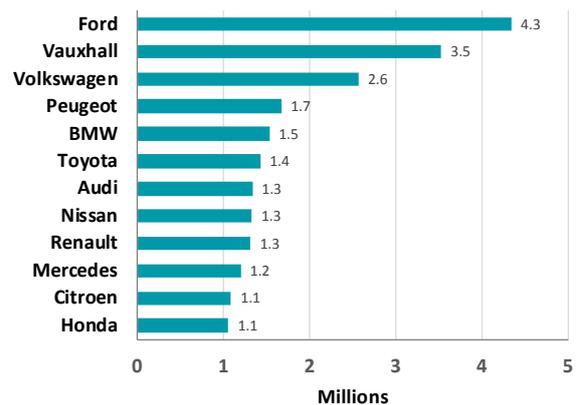
The targets are for manufacturers selling cars in the EU, rather than applying directly at the member state level.

Makes and models of cars

At the end of September 2015, the top five makes (Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Peugeot and BMW) accounted for 45% of all licensed cars in Great Britain. There were twelve **makes** with over 1 million cars each on the road at the end of September 2015 and together these accounted for 74% of all licensed cars.

The **most common car model** in Great Britain was the Ford Focus (1.4 million), closely followed by the Ford Fiesta (1.4 million), a situation unchanged since 2008. In total, Ford accounted for 14% of all cars and Vauxhall for 12%.

Licensed cars, top 12 makes, GB: End Sep 2015

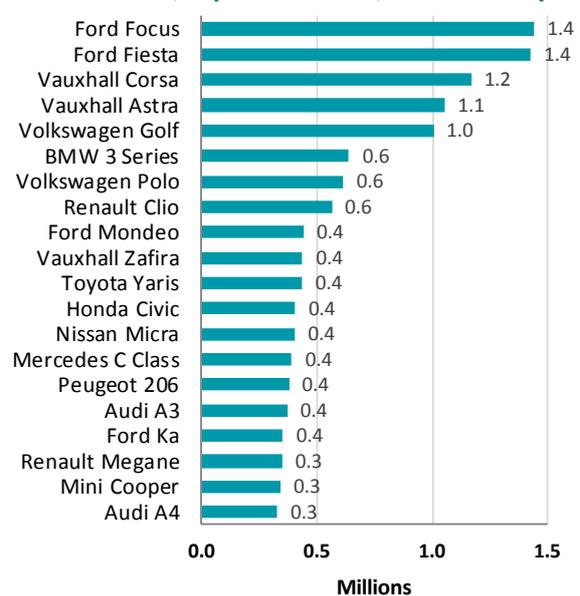


Tables

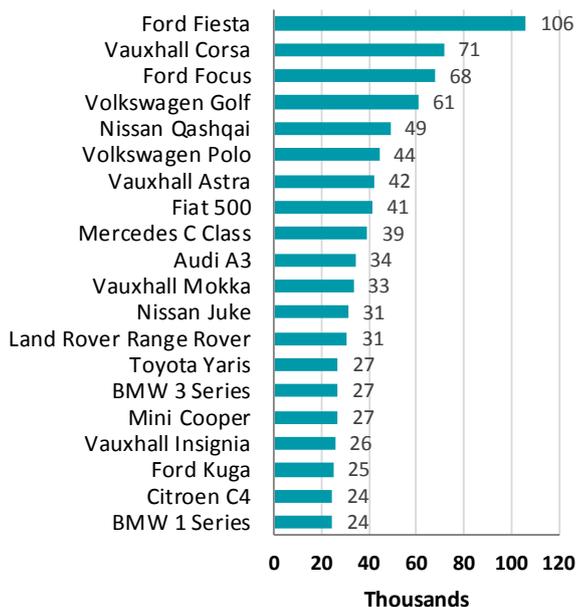
Detailed make and model statistical tables updated this quarter are:-

[VEH0120](#), [121](#), [128](#), [129](#), [160](#), [161](#)

Licensed cars, top 20 models, GB: End Sep 2015



New car registrations, top 20 models, GB: January to Sep 2015



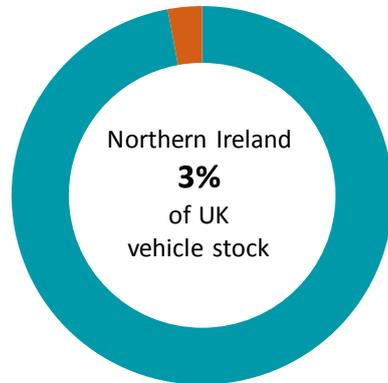
The Ford Fiesta was the most common new registration from January to September 2015 with 106,000 cars registered for the first time. This was followed by the Vauxhall Corsa with 71,000, the Ford Focus with 68,000 and the Volkswagen Golf with 61,000.

The top five car makes in terms of **new registrations** (Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Audi and Nissan) accounted for 44% of the new car registrations from January to September 2015.

United Kingdom data

As a result of the changes described to the right, data for the United Kingdom (Great Britain + Northern Ireland) are now included in the data tables for this series.

The total number of vehicles licensed in the UK at the end of September 2015 in the UK was 37.6 million, of which 1.1 million (3 per cent) were registered to an address in Northern Ireland.



Within Great Britain, 31.1 million vehicles were registered in England, 2.9 million in Scotland and 1.8 million in Wales.

The number of registered vehicles per 1,000 residents was markedly lower in London (358 vehicles per 1,000 people) than in any other English region or country, reflecting its highly urbanised nature. There was less variation between the other regions, with the rate being highest in the southern English regions (of which the South West was highest at 698) and lowest among the northern English regions (of which the North East was lowest at 508).

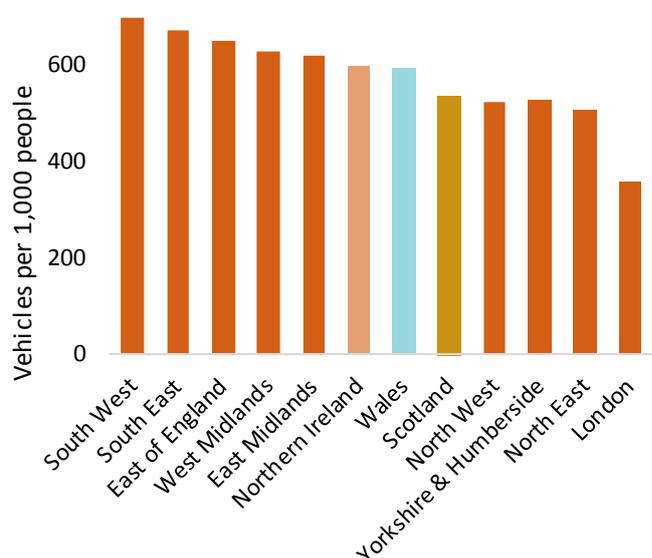
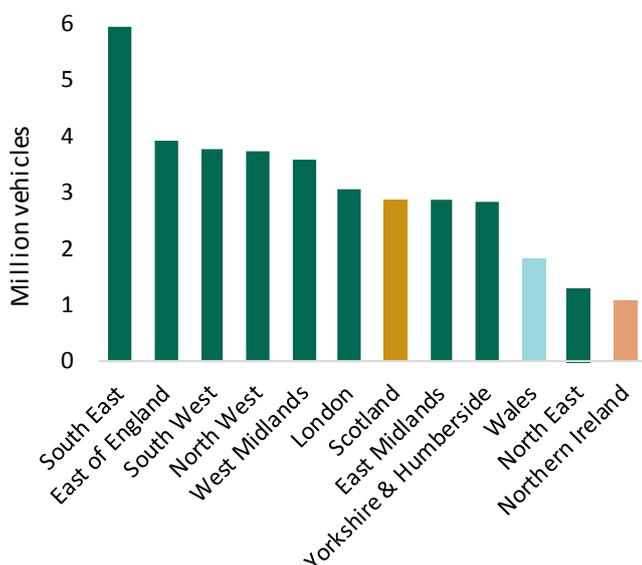
Addition of Northern Ireland data to this series

In July 2014 vehicle and registration services for Northern Ireland were centralised at DVLA, creating a single vehicle register for the United Kingdom, in place of separate registers for Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

As a result, the coverage of the vehicle licensing statistics tables was expanded to cover UK rather than GB. Where practical, the published tables now give figures for both UK and GB. Because of the greater availability of GB time series data, this statistical release will continue to focus mainly on GB rather than UK results for the time being.

Separately from this GB/UK statistical series, [DOE Northern Ireland](#) continue to publish statistics for vehicles registered in Northern Ireland.

Licensed vehicles by country or English region, UK: Q3 2015



About these statistics

Almost all the statistics in the vehicle licensing statistics series are derived by Department for Transport statisticians from extracts of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) vehicle database. The main purpose of the database is to administer vehicle registration and licensing records in the United Kingdom.

For further information, please see the detailed [Technical Notes](#). There is also a [Statement of Administrative Sources](#) for the DVLA vehicles database.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The DVLA database can be regarded as being virtually complete in terms of the number of licensed vehicles and vehicles with a SORN (Statutory Off-Road Notification). However, there will be some errors in some of the specific details of individual vehicles, mostly less important details. The Department for Transport estimates that under 2% of the vehicles records have an inaccuracy in one of the variables used for the statistics published. Other factors to consider in interpreting these statistics include: changes in legislation, revisions to the series, seasonal variation which affects some vehicle types, vehicle excise duty evasion and other types of failure to inform DVLA of relevant facts about the status of a vehicle, and the fact that foreign registered vehicles may also use UK roads without being registered with DVLA. Most of these factors will only have a marginal effect for most uses of the data. For further information, please see the detailed [Technical Notes](#).

What is the full list of tables updated as part of this release?

veh0101:	number of licensed vehicles by body type
veh0104:	number of licensed vehicles by region
veh0110:	number of SORN vehicles by body type
veh0120:	number of licensed vehicles by make and model
veh0121:	number of SORN vehicles by make and model
veh0122:	number of licensed vehicles by postcode district
veh0123:	number of SORN vehicles by postcode district
veh0128:	number of licensed vehicles by generic model name
veh0129:	number of SORN vehicles by generic model name
veh0130:	number of licensed ultra-low emissions vehicles (UK data)
veh0131:	number of plug in cars and vans by local authority.
veh0150:	first registrations by body type
veh0160:	first registrations by make and model
veh0161:	first registrations by generic model name
veh0170:	first registrations of ultra-low emission vehicle registrations (UK data)
veh0256:	first registrations of cars by CO2 emission band
veh0301:	number of licensed motor cycles

Users and uses of these statistics

A separate note on this is available from the vehicles statistics guidance [web page](#).

National Statistics

All of the statistics published in this series are National Statistics, apart from the exceptions listed on the [series page](#). Vehicles statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority and confirmed as National Statistics in April 2012. National Statistics 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.

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](#).

Next Release

Vehicle Licensing statistical releases are published quarterly. The Quarter 4 release for each calendar year is accompanied by a larger set of data tables, and the next of these is due on 14 April 2016. In addition a single table of monthly new vehicle registrations is released on the series page on the second Thursday of each month. Any updates to these plans will be advertised via the [DfT statistical publications schedule](#).

Request for Feedback

We welcome any feedback on these statistics, to ensure future releases best meet user needs. Feedback can be provided by email to vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.