



Department for Transport

Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain 2014 (R)

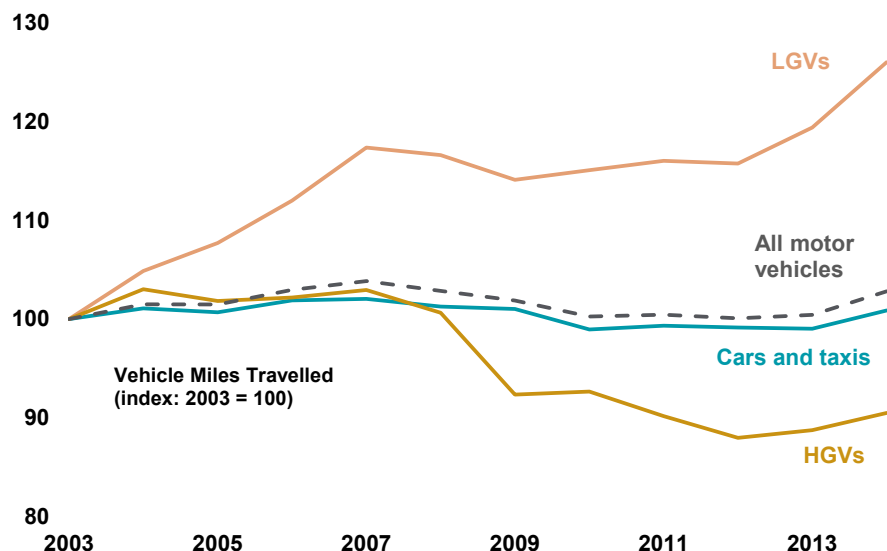
In 2014 all motor vehicle traffic in Great Britain was 311 billion vehicle miles, 2.4% higher than in 2013.

The 311 billion vehicle miles travelled by all motor vehicles in 2014 is the highest figure since 2008. This is 2.4% higher than 2013, and represents the fastest annual growth since 1996.

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Vehicle miles travelled by selected vehicle types in Great Britain, 2003-2014



By Vehicle Type

- ▶ Car traffic increased by 1.9%, to 244.4 billion vehicle miles. This is the largest annual increase since 2002.
- ▶ Van (LGV) traffic saw the largest percentage increase (5.5%), to attain the highest ever figure of 44.9 billion vehicle miles.

By Road Type

- ▶ Traffic on all types of road increased in 2014 compared to 2013.
- ▶ Rural minor roads experienced the largest increase (5.5%), and motorways the smallest increase (1.5%). Traffic on motorways in 2014 reached an all-time high of 64.3 billion vehicle miles.
- ▶ Traffic on the Strategic Road Network in 2014 was 86.9 billion vehicle miles; 32.7% of traffic in England.

(R): This release presents revised 2014 traffic estimates, incorporating very minor changes to the figures originally published in May 2015. See [p17](#) for further details.

Summary

The summary table below shows patterns in vehicle traffic across a range of years.

	Vehicle Miles 2014	Percentage change from:							
		Last Year		Five Years Ago		Ten Years Ago		Twenty Years Ago	
		2013	2009	2004	1994				
All Motor Vehicle Traffic	310.9 billion	↑ 2.4%	↑ 0.9%	↑ 1.3%	↑ 18.7%				
Cars and Taxis	244.4 billion	↑ 1.9%	↓ -0.1%	↓ -0.2%	↑ 14.0%				
Light Goods Vehicles (LGV)	44.9 billion	↑ 5.5%	↑ 10.4%	↑ 20.1%	↑ 66.9%				
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV)	16.0 billion	↑ 2.0%	↓ -2.0%	↓ -12.2%	↑ 3.8%				
Buses	2.8 billion	-- 0.0%	↓ -10.2%	↓ -12.5%	↓ -2.6%				
Motorcycles	2.8 billion	↑ 3.0%	↓ -12.8%	↓ -12.4%	↑ 18.1%				
Strategic Road Network (SRN)	86.9 billion	↑ 1.7%	↑ 3.0%	↑ 5.9%					
Motorways	64.3 billion	↑ 1.5%	↑ 4.1%	↑ 7.1%	↑ 46.3%				
Rural 'A' Roads	89.0 billion	↑ 2.0%	↑ 0.9%	↑ 1.4%	↑ 23.0%				
Urban 'A' Roads	49.3 billion	↑ 1.7%	↓ -1.3%	↓ -4.2%	↑ 1.1%				
Rural Minor Roads	43.5 billion	↑ 5.5%	↑ 2.5%	↑ 7.8%	↑ 21.5%				
Urban Minor Roads	64.8 billion	↑ 2.3%	↓ -1.4%	↓ -3.8%	↑ 6.2%				

Key definition: Traffic is the total distance driven by all vehicles in the vehicle class, area and time period in question. Traffic thus summarises both the number of vehicles travelling and the distance driven by each vehicle. Links to other definitions in the summary: [Minor roads, p9](#); [HGV, p7](#); [LGV, p7](#); [Strategic Road Network, p5](#); [Rural and Urban, p9](#).

Introduction

Traffic statistics from the Department for Transport

The Department for Transport (DfT) produces estimates of the vehicle miles travelled each year in Great Britain, broken down by vehicle type, road category and region. The department releases both quarterly and annual estimates, with the latter providing more detail and precision than the former.

Additionally, DfT provides a website allowing users to view and download estimated traffic flows on every link of the 'A' road and motorway network, and a means of downloading historic data from manual traffic counts: www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/

About this release

This Statistical Release presents revised annual road traffic estimates for Great Britain in 2014. Annual estimates are mainly based on around 8,000 manual counts where trained enumerators count traffic by vehicle type over a 12 hour period. Traffic data are also collected continuously from a national network of around 200 Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs).

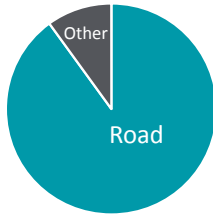
These two data sources are combined with road lengths statistics to produce the number of vehicle miles travelled each year by vehicle type, road category and region. ATC data is also used directly to produce estimates of how vehicle flows vary over time (p12), and to estimate time gaps between vehicles (p14).

For more detailed explanation of the methodology used, visit: www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance

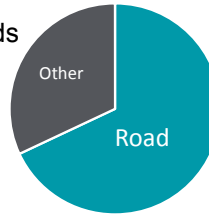
Trends in Road Transport

Road Transport continues to be the main transport mode for individuals and businesses.

90% of passenger kilometres are by road (2013)



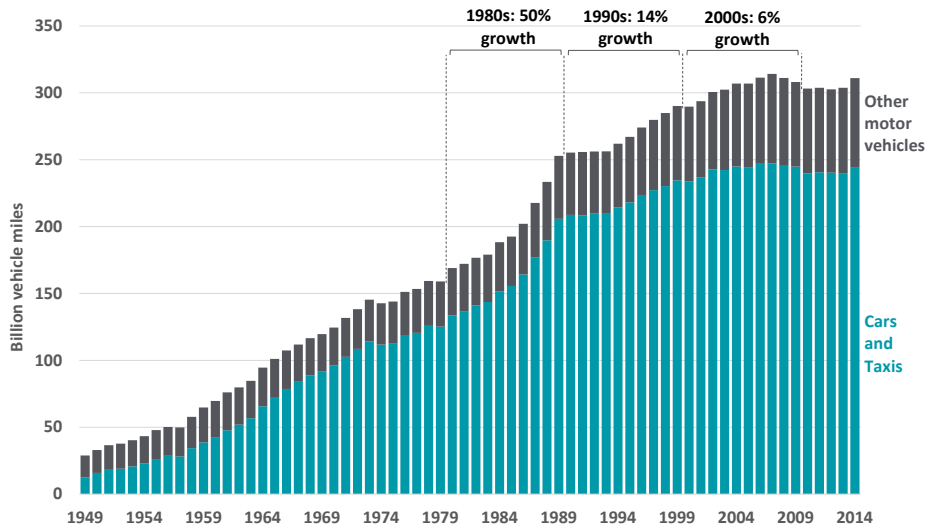
68% of freight goods moved by road (2010)



Since the 1950s the long term trend in traffic has been one of growth: vehicle miles travelled in 2014 are over ten times higher than in 1949.

However, over the last 20 years there has been a decline in the rate of traffic growth.

Motor vehicle traffic peaked at 314.1 billion vehicle miles in 2007 after which it fell for three consecutive years; the first consecutive annual falls since traffic records began.



Between 2010 and 2013 traffic was stable, but has shown strong growth again between 2013 and 2014. It is not yet clear if this growth is a fluctuation around a stable figure, or if it signals a return to sustained growth.

In addition, looking at change between 2000 and 2014, different trends have been observed:
...for different parts of the road network ...and for different vehicle types

Strategic Road Network traffic



In England since 2000

Local Road Network traffic



Car



Van



In Great Britain since 2000

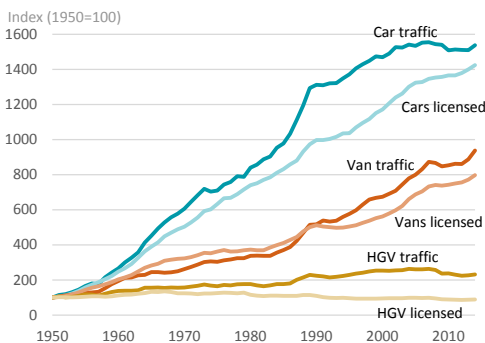
HGVs



The Department for Transport separately publishes information on:

Vehicles

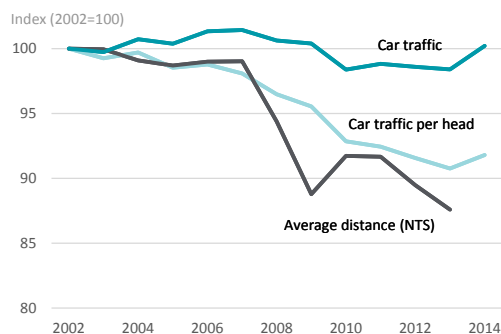
The number of vehicles licensed have shown broadly similar trends to road traffic since the 1950s.



Further vehicle stock information [here](#)

Personal travel

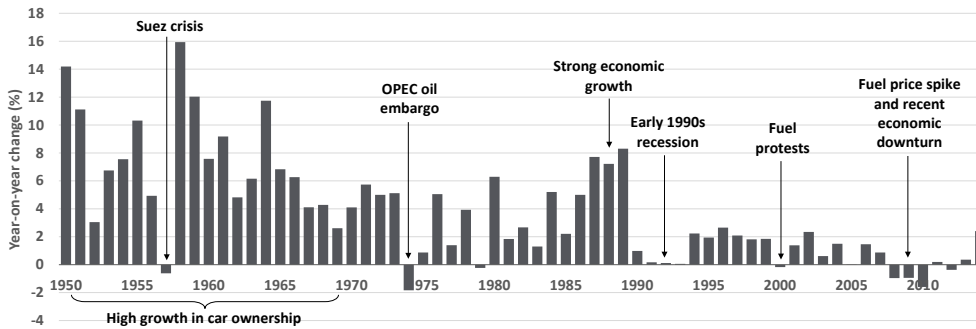
When compared for 2002 onwards, trends in the average distance travelled by car drivers per year are broadly similar to car traffic per head.



Further National Travel Survey data [here](#).

Factors Affecting Traffic Trends

Changes in the levels of road traffic can be related to a number of factors (see chart below), including population and where people live, their income, employment and car ownership, the cost of motoring, and the availability of other modes.



Links

Data sources used here are provided on [page 15](#).

Further information on factors affecting traffic can be found in the [Understanding the Drivers of Road Travel report](#), a review of the evidence on road demand.

Population growth and density

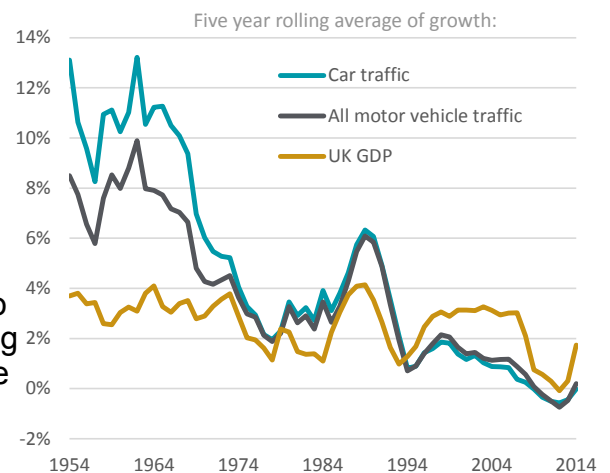
There has been a steady growth in population over the last 20 years resulting in more people travelling for economic and personal needs as well as a greater demand for goods which need to be transported.

The geographic pattern of population growth is also a key factor in how traffic is affected. In 2012/13, people living in rural hamlets and villages travelled on average 8,599 miles per year by car, compared to 3,533 miles per year in urban conurbations.

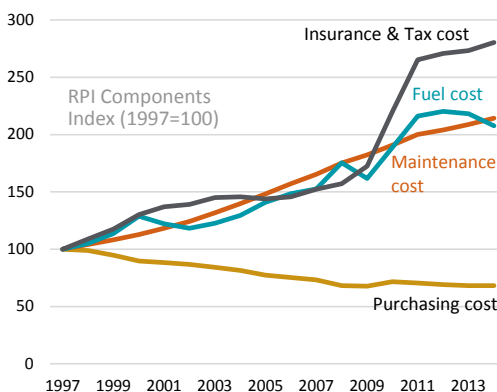
Incomes, the economy, and employment

Fluctuations in road traffic levels tend to coincide with events such as changes in the economy (including GDP, see the chart to the right) and peoples' disposable incomes, which influence car ownership and the trip behaviour of car owners.

The long term trend of growth in traffic has mainly been a result of growth in car ownership. There still appears to be some scope for further growth in ownership; according to the National Travel Survey 2013, 48% of lower income households are without access to a car.



Cost of motoring



Increases to the cost of motoring might be expected to have a negative effect on changes in the volume of car traffic. Based on the Retail Price Index (RPI), the total cost of motoring has risen around the same as the cost of living, and the chart on the left shows changes to the motoring components of the RPI. However, car use is also influenced by associated changes in the cost of alternative modes of transport (i.e. buses and trains).

Additionally, there is evidence that motorists are continuing to move towards cars with lower running costs and greater fuel efficiency. During 2014 the number of new ultra low emission vehicles registered for the first time increased 264%, from 2013, to over 15,800 vehicles (0.5% of new registrations).

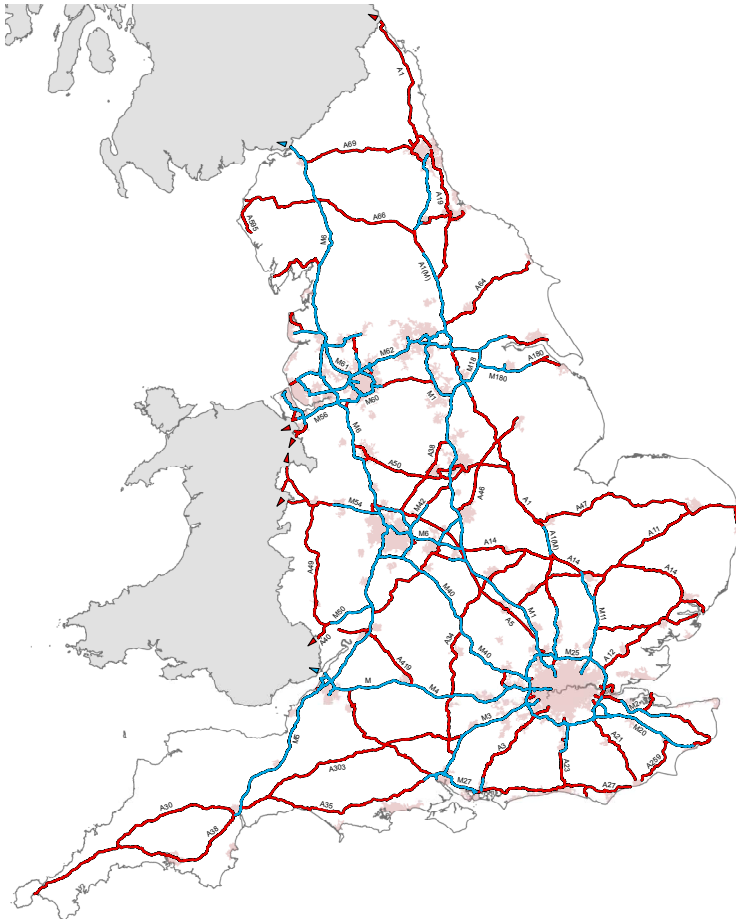
Demography

Over the long term there have been changes in the demographics of the driving population. In particular, there have been increases in licence holding for females and the older age groups. More recently, over the last 20 years, the proportion of young people with a full driving licence has decreased, from 44% of 17-20 year olds in 1995/97 to 31% in 2013.

Strategic Road Network (SRN)

The Strategic Road Network (SRN) is made up of the motorways and major trunk roads in England that are managed by [Highways England](#). In 2014 it comprised approximately 4,400 miles of road (2.4% of the English network).

Map 1: The Strategic Road Network in England

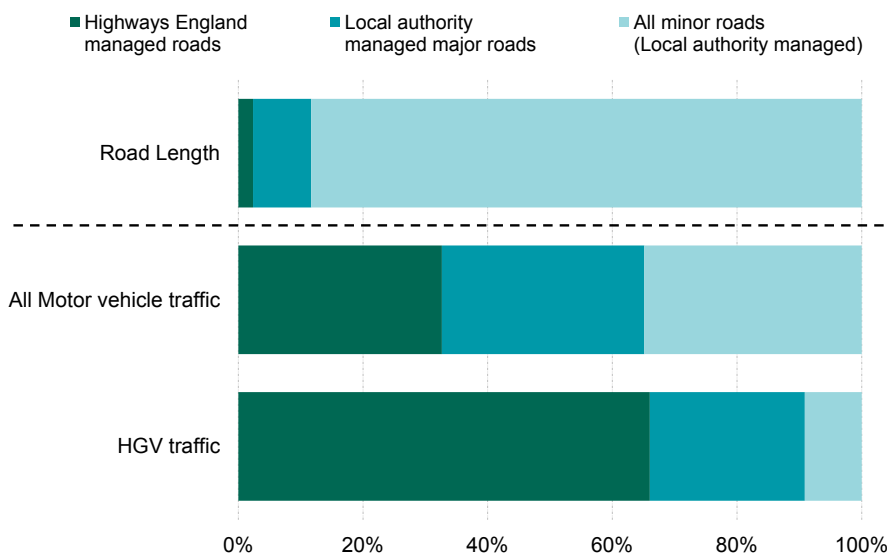


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Department for Transport gisu1112j178

Strategic Road Network Key Facts:

- ▶ Traffic on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) grew by 1.7% between 2013 and 2014, reaching 86.9 billion vehicle miles
- ▶ In 2014, the SRN made up only 2.4% of the English road network, but carried 32.7% of traffic in England.
- ▶ 66% of English HGV traffic was carried on the SRN in 2014.
- ▶ 8% of reported casualties in 2013 occurred on the SRN (see [here](#)).
- ▶ Traffic on the SRN is forecast to increase by between 29% and 60% from a 2010 baseline to 2040 (see [here](#)).

Road traffic and road length by road class in England, 2014



Useful Links

Strategic Road Network Statistics - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/strategic-road-network-statistics

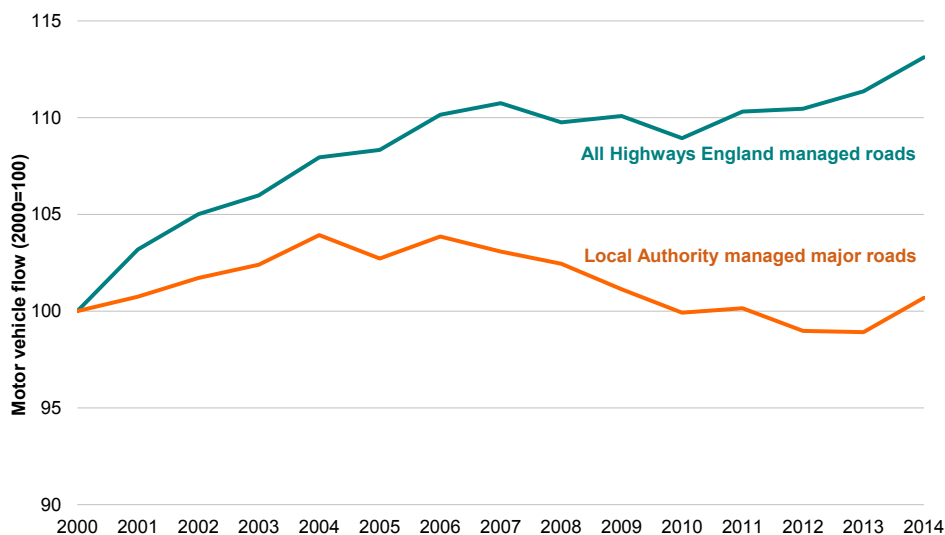
DfT report 'Use of the Strategic Road Network' - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/use-of-the-strategic-road-network

Highways England homepage - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england

Strategic Road Network (SRN)

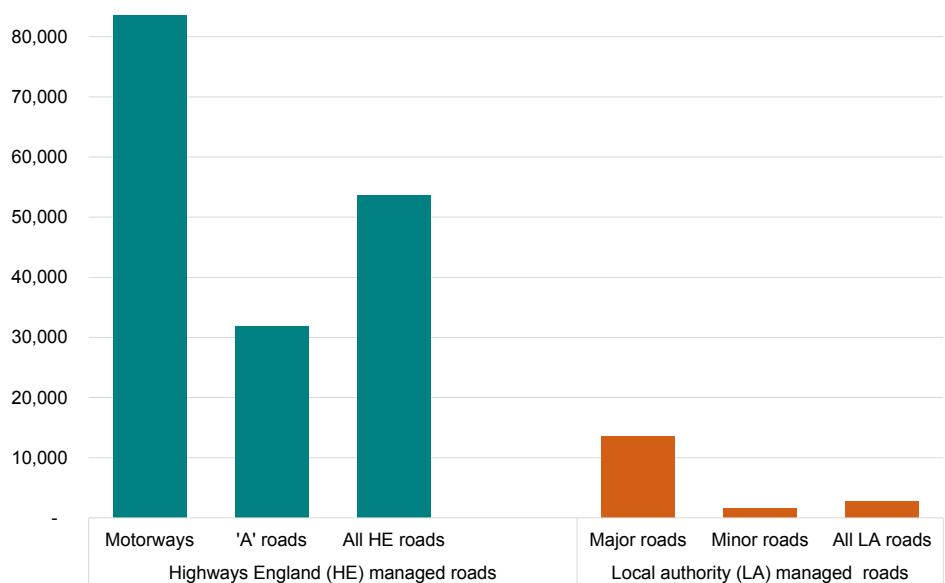
Between 2004 and 2014, traffic on the Strategic Road Network grew by 5.9% compared to a 2.8% fall experienced on major roads managed by local authorities over the same period.

Motor vehicle flow by road management in England: Index from 2000



The average daily flow for a road on the Strategic Road Network in 2014 was 53,600 vehicles per mile of road. This is around four times the flow on local authority managed major roads, at 13,500.

Motor vehicle flow on an average day by road management and road class in England, 2014



Detrunking

Between 1999 and 2012, the length of the SRN reduced by 12.6%, mostly as a result of a "detrunking" programme. The management of parts of the SRN was transferred from Highways England (the then Highways Agency) to the relevant local authorities.

Note on the data tables

The body responsible for managing major roads has been subject to change in the past (see "Detrunking", above).

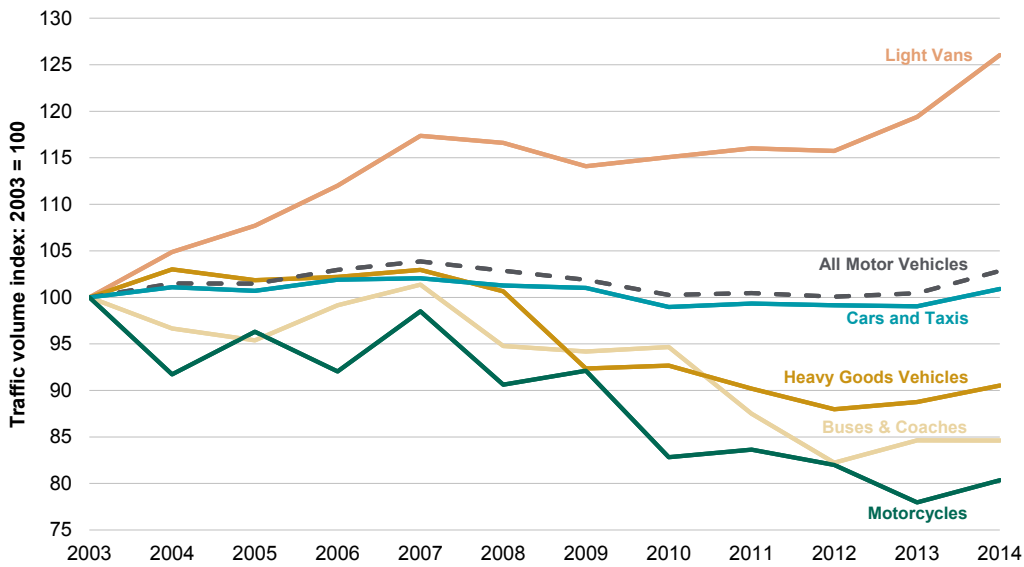
Therefore, DfT produces two sets of tables broken down by management to facilitate interpretation of trends over time:

- TRA41 figures refer to the management status of a road on 1st April in each of the historic years;
- TRA42 figures refer to the management status of a road as of 1st April 2014.

The TRA42 set of tables are experimental, and should therefore be treated with caution.

Road Traffic by Vehicle Type

Road traffic by vehicle type in Great Britain, index from 2003



Vehicle Definitions

Light Goods Vehicle

(LGV; a.k.a. van)
Goods vehicles not exceeding 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight



Heavy Goods Vehicle

(HGV; a.k.a. lorry)
Includes all goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes gross vehicle weight



Articulated HGVs

Rigid HGVs



Car traffic rose by 1.9% between 2013 and 2014, reaching 244.4 billion vehicle miles. This is the highest it has been since 2009, and is similar to car traffic in 2004. The highest ever level of car traffic occurred in 2007, before the recent recession, at 247.3 billion vehicle miles.



LGV traffic in 2014 was 44.9 billion vehicle miles, the highest level ever. This is 5.5% higher than in 2013, and 20.1% higher than 10 years ago. Minor rural roads saw the largest percentage increase in LGV traffic, rising by 7.5% from 2013 to 2014.



HGV traffic increased by 2% between 2013 and 2014 to 16 billion vehicle miles, which is the largest year-on-year increase since 2004. Over the medium term HGV traffic has fallen by 12.2% since its highest value ever in 2004, of 18.2 billion vehicle miles.



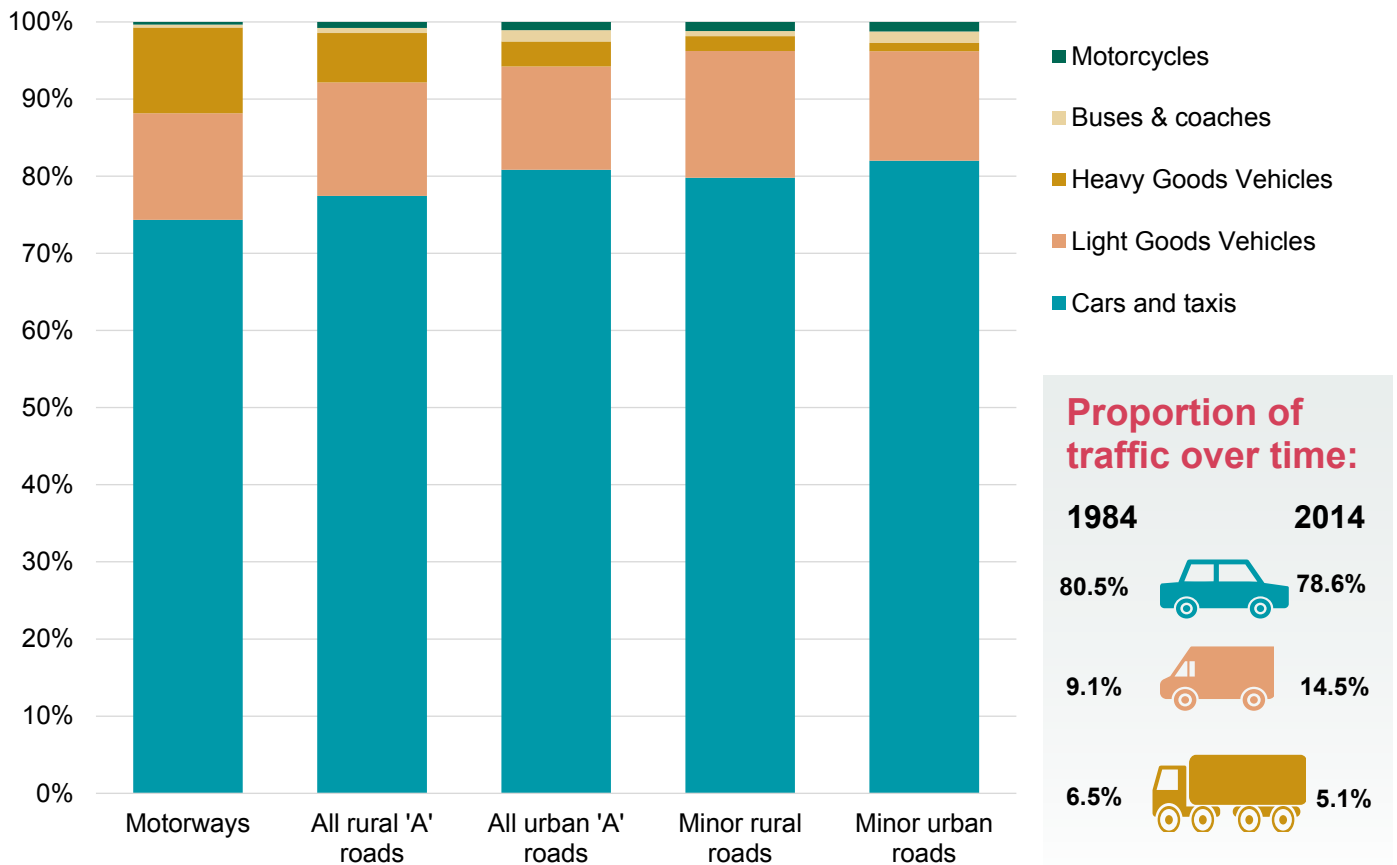
Bus and coach traffic remained static between 2013 and 2014, at 2.8 billion vehicle miles. However, underlying this is a 2.7% rise on rural 'A' roads, alongside a 1.7% fall on urban 'A' roads. Over the longer term, bus and coach traffic has decreased by 16.5% since its peak in 2007 (3.4 billion vehicle miles).



Motorcycle traffic increased by 3 percent from 2013 to 2014, to 2.8 billion vehicle miles. This comprises a 6.5% rise on rural 'A' roads, and a 2.1% fall on motorways. The 2014 figure is under half that of the highest motorcycle traffic ever, of 6.2 billion vehicle miles in 1960.

Road Traffic by Vehicle Type

Proportion of traffic by vehicle type, for different road types: Great Britain 2014



Proportion of traffic by vehicle type

Since the 1980s, cars have accounted for around four-fifths of all motor vehicle traffic and continue to be the main contributor to changes in the volume of overall motor vehicle traffic.

However, LGVs have become more important recently, accounting for 14.5% of all motor vehicle traffic in 2014 compared to 9% in 1984.

The contribution of different vehicles to total traffic varied with road type: in 2014, HGVs made up 11% of traffic on motorways, but only 1.4% on minor roads. This may reflect that HGV journeys tend to be longer than the average for other vehicle types; longer journeys tend to use motorways for a greater proportion of the distance.

Pedal Cycle Traffic



Pedal cycle traffic on roads or directly adjacent to them was 3.8% higher in 2014 than in 2013, at 3.25 billion vehicle miles. This traffic level is more than either motorcycles or buses.

Cycle traffic has risen every year since 2008, reflecting an overall increase in distance travelled by pedal cycle reported by the National Travel Survey. To put this in historical context, 2014 pedal cycle traffic remains less than one quarter of the figure in 1949, estimated at 14.7 billion vehicle miles.

Road Traffic by Road Class

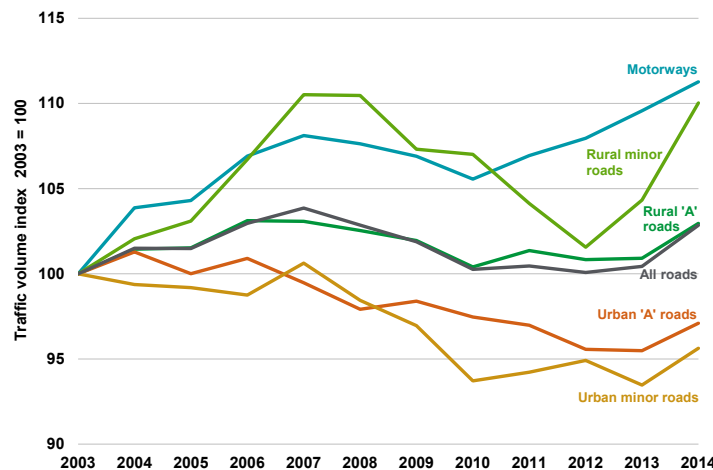
In 2014, major roads carried the majority of the traffic (65.2%), as has been the case over the past ten years.

Traffic on a given road type was not proportionate to the length of that road type: for example, motorways account for around 1% of the road network in length, but carried 20.7% of traffic in 2014.

Road traffic by road class in Great Britain, index from 2003

All road types saw traffic growth between 2013 and 2014:

Traffic on motorways increased by 1.5% between 2013 and 2014, to a new peak of 64.3 billion vehicle miles. Over the past 10 years, the volume of traffic on motorways has grown by 7.1%.



Traffic on rural minor roads grew by 5.5%, and rural A roads by 2.0%, resulting in the highest traffic on rural roads since 2007. On rural minor roads, cars and LGVs increased substantially, where other vehicles types showed little change (see table below).

Traffic on urban roads grew by 2% between 2013 and 2014 overall, after generally decreasing for the previous 6 years. Traffic on urban minor roads increased by 2.3%, and by 1.7% on urban 'A' roads.

Percent change in traffic by vehicle and road class: Great Britain 2013 to 2014

	Cars and taxis	LGVs	HGVs	Motor-cycles	Buses & coaches
Motorways	+0.9%	+4.3%	+2.8%	-2.1%	-4.6%
Rural 'A' roads	+1.4%	+5.2%	+1.0%	+6.5%	+2.7%
Urban 'A' roads	+0.9%	+6.8%	+2.1%	+2.2%	-1.7%
Minor rural roads	+5.3%	+7.5%	+0.3%	-0.2%	-0.2%
Minor urban roads	+1.8%	+5.0%	+3.6%	+4.3%	+0.9%

Definitions: Rural and Urban

DfT defines 'urban' roads to be those within a settlement of 10,000 people or more, following the 2001 Communities and Local Government definition of urban settlements. All other roads are defined as 'rural'.

Minor and Major

Major roads include motorways and 'A' roads. Minor roads comprise 'B', 'C' and unclassified roads.

Longer term trends

Change in traffic since 1994:

Motorways 46.3%



Rural 'A' 23.0%

Minor rural 21.5%



Urban 'A' 1.1%

Minor urban 6.2%

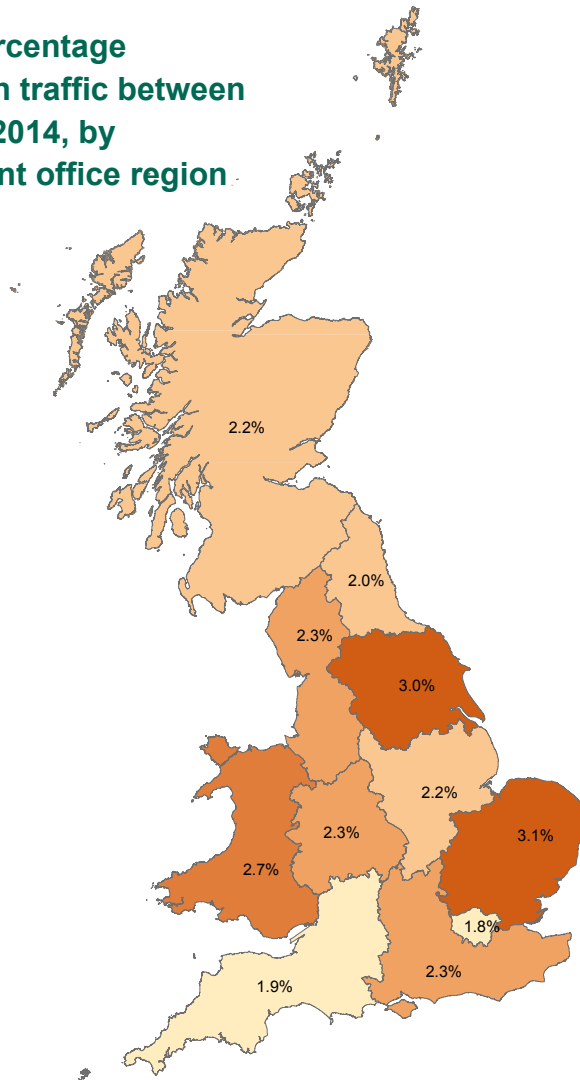


Geographical Variations in Traffic

The local authorities that contributed the most to overall traffic are concentrated in the Southeast of England, together making up 16.9% of traffic in Great Britain in 2014 (see right).

As traffic is defined as the distance driven by vehicles (see [p2](#)), an authority with a small network of very busy roads may have similar traffic to one with a large network of quiet roads.

Map 2: Percentage increase in traffic between 2013 and 2014, by government office region



Local authorities with the highest traffic levels (billion vehicle miles):

1.	Hampshire	9.3
2.	Kent	9.0
3.	Essex	8.9
4.	Surrey	8.6
5.	Hertfordshire	7.4

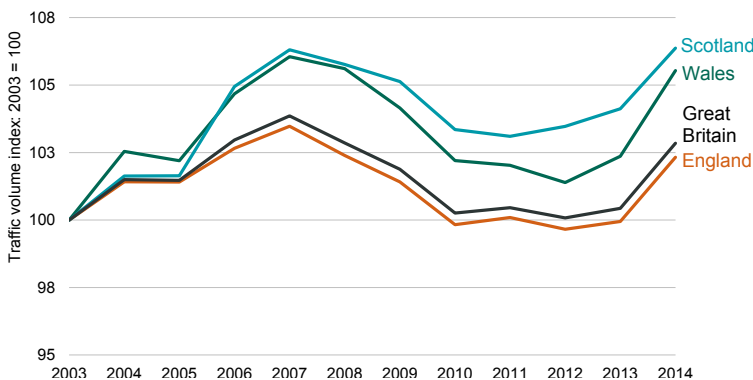
Note on local authority level figures:

Minor road figures are based on a sample, which is designed to be robust at the national level. Therefore, the uncertainty around local authority level figures is greater and they are not considered to be of National Statistics quality.

Compared to 2013, traffic has increased in all regions of Great Britain: Wales and the East of England have seen the largest percentage increases; London and the South West of England have seen the smallest increases (see Map 2, left).

Over the last ten years, on a national scale traffic growth has been fastest in Scotland and slowest in England, with 2014 figures 4.6% and 0.9% higher than in 2004 respectively.

Road traffic by the countries of Great Britain, from 2003



National traffic volumes in 2014 (billion vehicle miles)

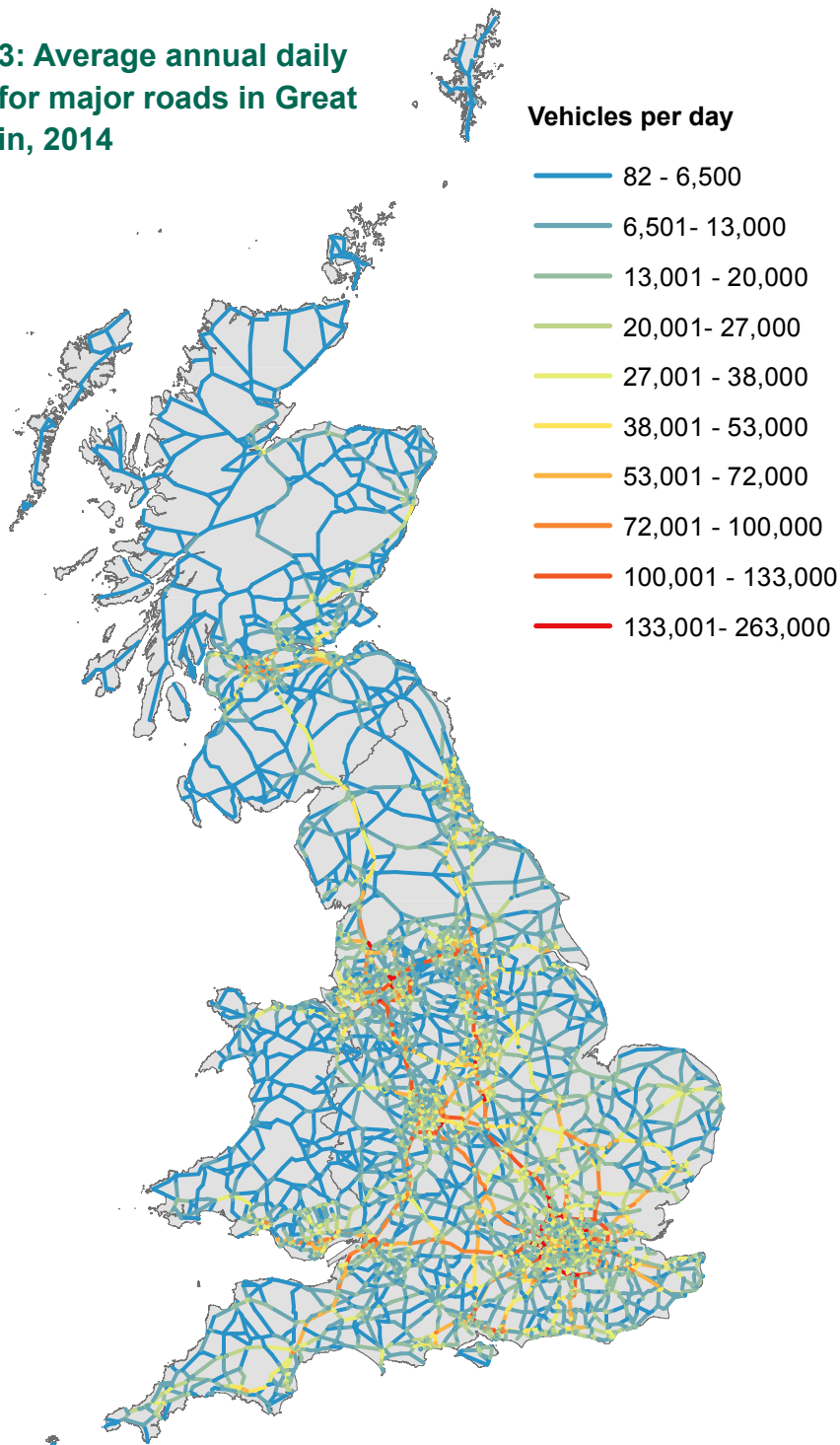
England	266.1
Wales	17.2
Scotland	27.6
Great Britain	310.9

Geographical Variation in Vehicle Flows

Motorways continued to have the highest average flow (see definitions), of 77,800 vehicles per day per mile of road, in 2014. This was 86 times more than the 900 vehicles per day per mile observed on minor rural roads.

In recent years, flows on the busiest junction-to-junction links have risen more quickly than the average for the road as a whole. For example, the average daily flow on the busiest link of the Western M25 was 263,000 vehicles in 2014, 57% higher than the busiest link in 2004. The daily flow averaged over the whole of the Western M25 has risen only 13% over the same period.

Map 3: Average annual daily flow for major roads in Great Britain, 2014



Definitions

Flow, and annual average daily flow (AADF)

Flow refers to the number of vehicles passing a given point on a road over a given time period.

DfT quantifies flow as the “Annual average daily flow” (AADF). This equals the number of vehicles passing a point on a road, in both directions, during an average 24 hour period in the year in question.

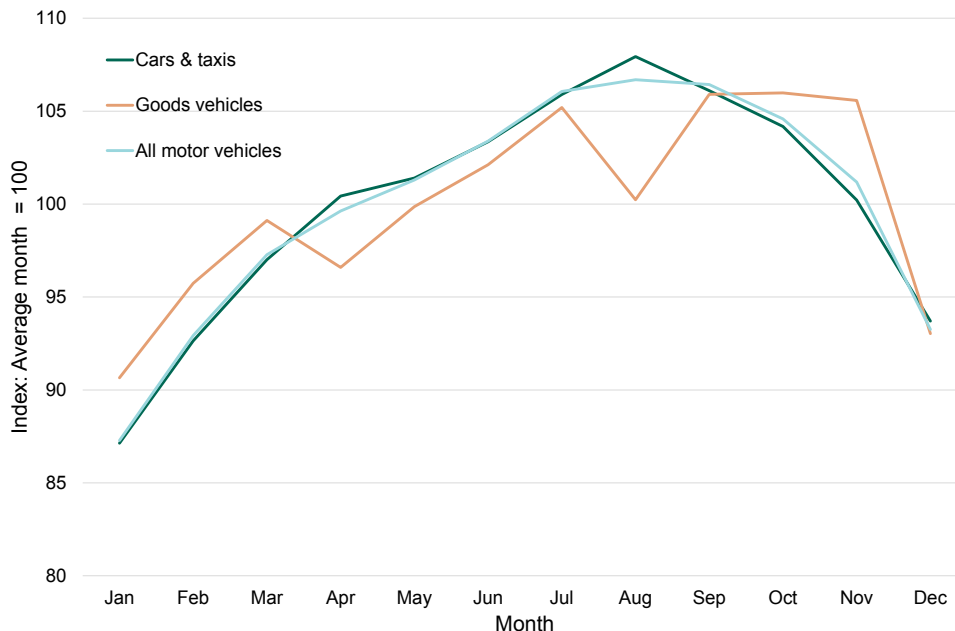
Highest Flow Links on the GB Major Road Network (AADF)

1.	M25	J14 - 15	262,800
2.	M1	J7- 8	197,200
3.	M60	J12 – 13	195,300
4.	M25	J13 – 14	186,900
5.	M25	J11 – 12	185,300

Temporal Vehicle Flows

Between 2010 and 2014, flow of all motor vehicles was highest in August, and lowest in January. In contrast to other vehicle types, HGV flows have shown a pronounced dip in August, with the highest flows occurring in Autumn.

Relative motor vehicle flow by month of the year and vehicle type; Great Britain 2010-2014



Data source

Statistics about temporal variation in traffic flow are compiled using data from DfT's network of automatic traffic counters (ATCs).

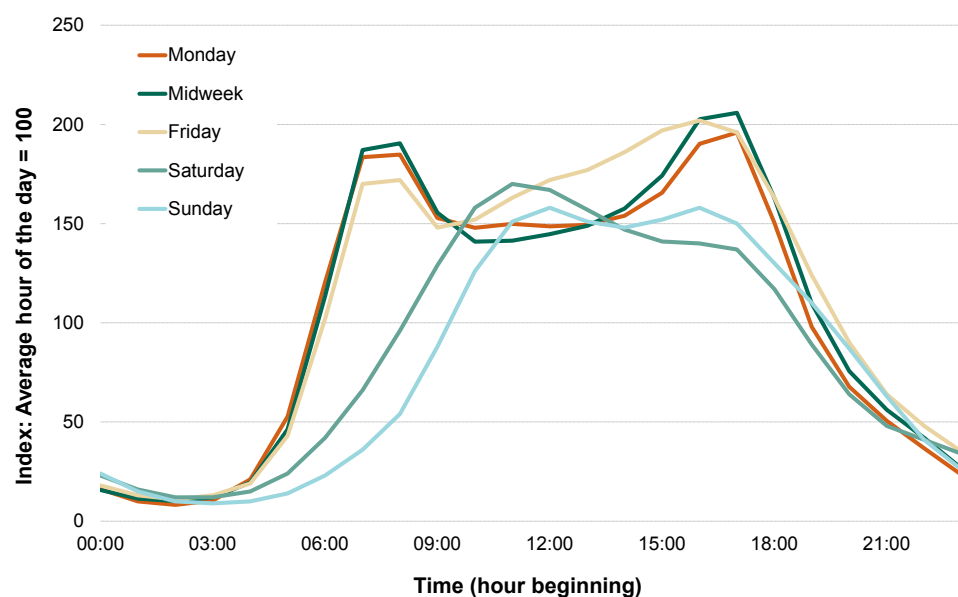
ATCs count and classify vehicles passing over them 24 hours a day, on every day of the year, so are well suited to provide data on flow variation across a range of timescales.

Distribution of traffic flows by time of day and day of the week in Great Britain, 2014

On weekdays in 2014, traffic peaked between 7 am and 9 am in the morning and between 4 pm and 6 pm in the afternoon.

At these times traffic was approximately double the average level.

Friday differed from the other weekdays, having a lower peak in the morning and the evening peak being more spread out.



Weekends were characterised by lower overall flows than weekdays, and by a single, midday peak rather than morning and evening ones.

For HGVs, weekend flows were particularly low relative to weekday flows, Sundays having on average only 26% of the flow on Thursdays.

Foreign Registered Vehicles

This section discusses the proportion of vehicles in traffic which are registered outside the UK; all other traffic estimates refer to all vehicles on the road, regardless of the national origin of the vehicle.

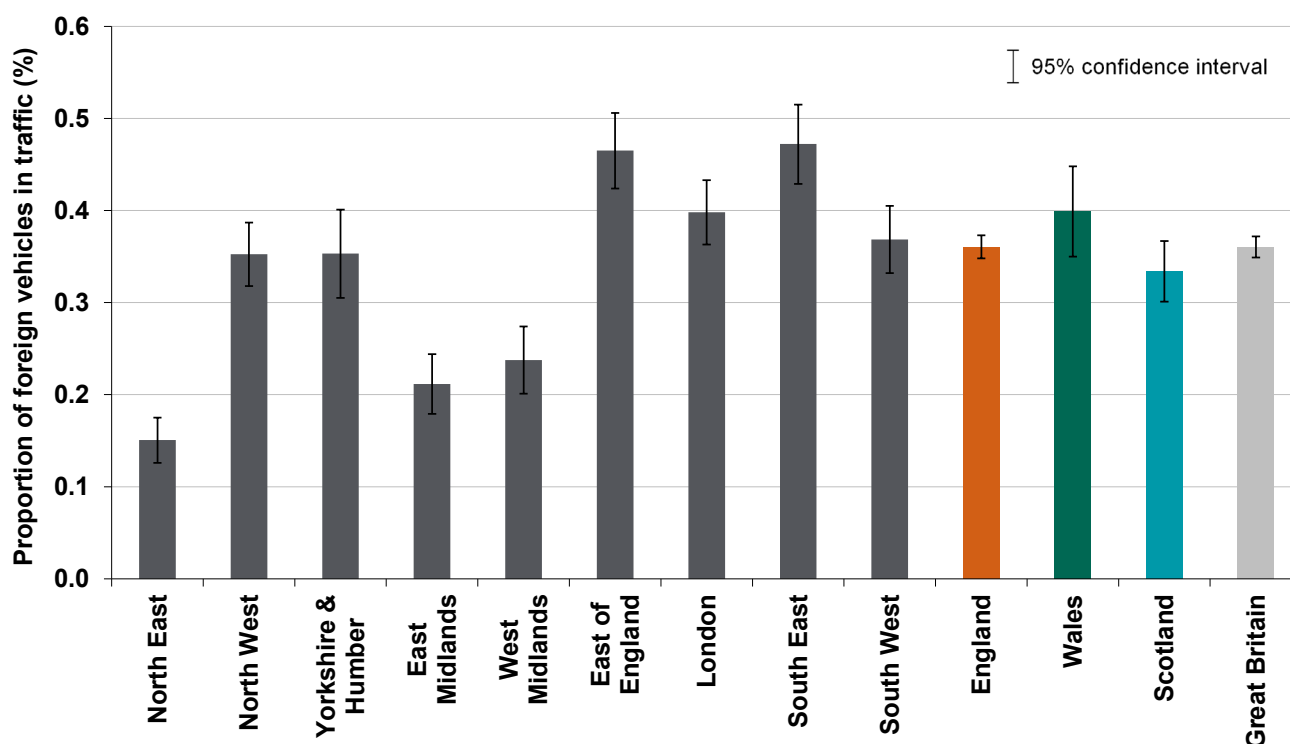
In 2013, 0.4% of traffic on British roads was estimated to be foreign registered. This is a small decrease from the rate in 2010, but is similar to the estimate in 2009.

The proportion of HGV traffic made up of foreign registered vehicles was higher than for other vehicle types. In 2013, 3.3% of HGV vehicle miles were driven by a foreign registered vehicle. This has decreased from 4% in 2009.

Why are these figures from 2013?

Surveys of foreign registered vehicle traffic take place on every other year. The latest data available is from 2013. An update is scheduled to be included in the 2015 Road Traffic Estimates in Summer 2016.

Proportion of foreign registered vehicles in traffic, by regions of England and country of Great Britain, 2013



The South East region had the highest proportion of foreign registered vehicles out of any region within Great Britain. This likely reflects that the South East is the region of arrival and departure for many motor vehicles coming from Europe through ports and the channel tunnel.

Heavy Goods Vehicle Headway

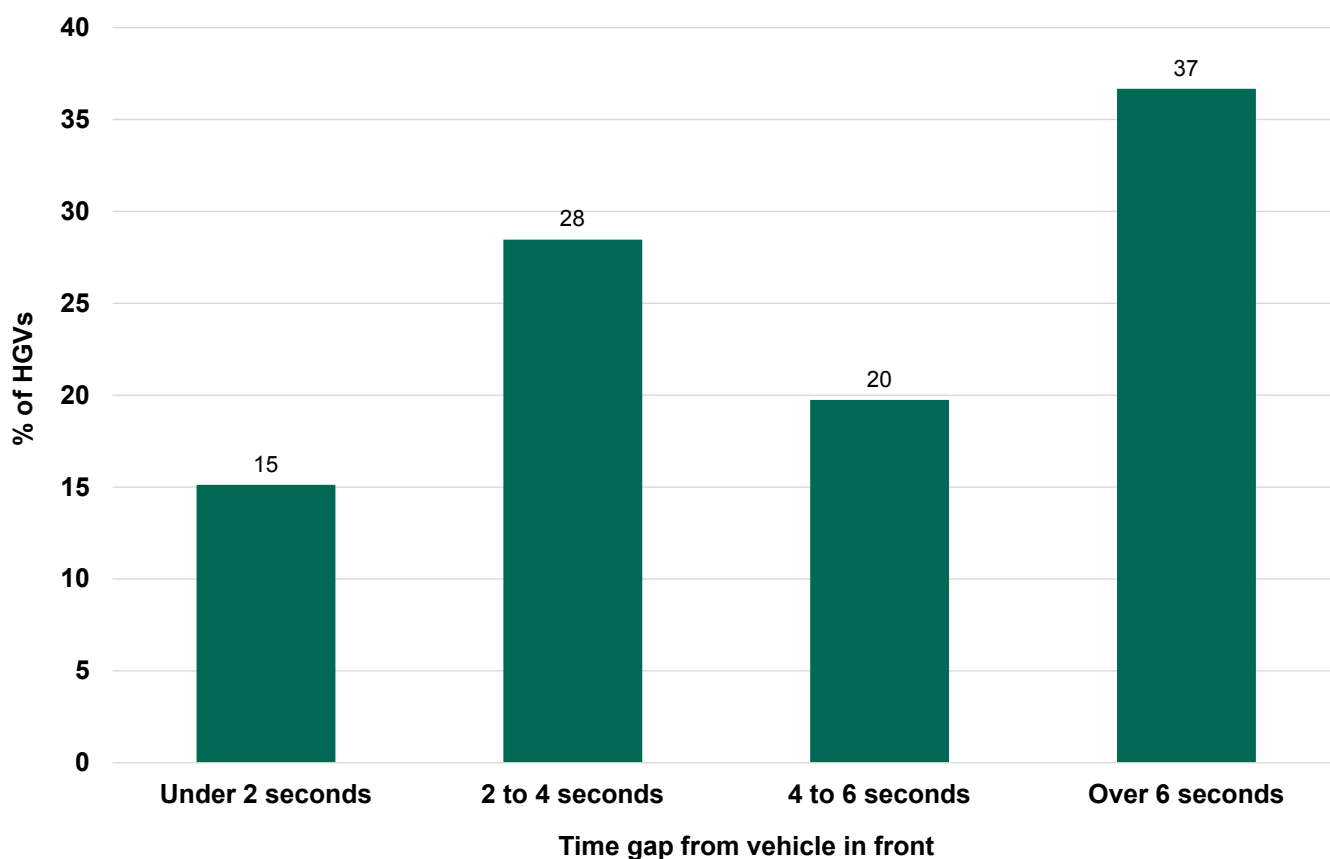
In 2014, 57% of HGVs left at least the recommended four second gap between themselves and the vehicle in front. This is the same proportion as in 2013, but slightly lower than 5 years ago (59%).

Fifteen percent of HGVs left less than a two second gap in 2014. This proportion has remained unchanged since 2010.

Headway

Headway is the measurement of time between two vehicles. The Highway Code (rule 126) recommends larger vehicles allow a four second gap in normal driving conditions.

Distribution of time gaps between HGVs and the vehicle in front, in 2014



Headway data: a note of caution

Headway data (in table [TRA3107](#)) is collected from a sample of automatic traffic counter (ATC) sites and are based on traffic in lane 1 only. These figures are classed as official statistics but not as National Statistics and should be treated with caution as the sample size is small.

Online traffic data

The complete series of data tables associated with this release, including tables mentioned in the text, can be found on the following pages:

- ▶ **TRA01:** Traffic volume (miles) - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra01-traffic-by-road-class-and-region-miles
- ▶ **TRA02:** Traffic volume (kilometres) - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra02-traffic-by-road-class-and-region-kms
- ▶ **TRA03:** Average annual daily flow and temporal traffic distributions - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra03-motor-vehicle-flow
- ▶ **TRA04:** Pedal cycle traffic - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra04-pedal-cycle-traffic
- ▶ **TRA31:** Heavy goods vehicle traffic - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra31-heavy-goods-vehicle-traffic
- ▶ **TRA32:** Foreign registered vehicles in GB traffic - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra32-foreign-registered-vehicles-in-traffic
- ▶ **TRA41:** Strategic Road Network traffic - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra41-strategic-road-network-traffic
- ▶ **TRA42:** Traffic based on a static road management status - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra42-traffic-based-on-a-static-road-management-status
- ▶ **TRA89:** Road traffic by region and local authority - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra89-traffic-by-local-authority

Quarterly traffic data

- ▶ **TRA25:** All quarterly traffic estimates - www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tra25-quarterly-estimates

Traffic counts website

- ▶ This website provides street-level traffic data for every junction-to-junction link on the 'A' road and motorway network in Great Britain, free for the general public - www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/

Related data

- ▶ **DfT Road traffic forecasts** - www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-forecasts-2015
- ▶ **DfT National Travel Survey Statistics** - www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics
- ▶ **DfT Road accidents and safety statistics** - www.gov.uk/government/collections/road-accidents-and-safety-statistics
- ▶ **DfT Vehicles statistics** - www.gov.uk/government/collections/vehicles-statistics
- ▶ **DfT report 'Use of the Strategic Road Network'** - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/use-of-the-strategic-road-network
- ▶ **DfT report 'Understanding the drivers of road travel'** - www.gov.uk/government/publications/understanding-the-drivers-of-road-travel-current-trends-in-and-factors-behind-roads-use
- ▶ **Transport Statistics Great Britain, 2014** - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-statistics-great-britain-2014

Background information

Users and uses of road traffic estimates

We continuously review the content of these statistics to ensure they are meeting users' needs. We welcome feedback via email and the team can be contacted at roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

A summary of the feedback we have received from users in a previous consultation can be found in '[Meeting customers' needs: Users and uses of road traffic statistics and data](#)'. We continue to welcome any feedback on these statistics.

Road traffic data are a key source of management information on the country's infrastructure. Main uses of road traffic statistics include:

► National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI)

Road traffic statistics are used to produce the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI), a legal requirement for EU Air Quality Directives, and for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

► Transport Modelling

The Department for Transport's National Traffic Model uses most traffic and speeds outputs to make forecasts and to inform policy decisions on a broad range of issues.

► Local transport planning

Local Authorities (including Transport for London) and devolved governments use the data for transport planning, road engineering and policy monitoring at a regional or local level.

► Road accident and safety statistics

Road accident and safety statistics use annual and quarterly traffic estimates to produce road safety and accident rates, as required for the Strategic Framework on Road Safety.

► The Department for Communities and Local Government

This department uses traffic data on major roads to contribute towards the funding settlement for local authorities.

► Public Users

The Department for Transport receives around 200,000 visits to the traffic counts website (www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/) and its underlying datasets, which provide street-level traffic data for every junction-to-junction link on the 'A' road and motorway network in Great Britain.

Next release

The next annual traffic statistics release will be in May 2016, reporting 2015 traffic figures.

The next quarterly release will be in February 2016, reporting Oct-Dec 2015 figures.

Feedback

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

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

Background information

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

Annual estimates make use of data from around 8,000 manual traffic counts in addition to continuous data from a national network of around 200 automatic traffic counters. These data sources produce accurate estimates of traffic in Great Britain by vehicle type and by road type. Whilst road traffic data is accurate at a high level of aggregation, it should be noted that:

- ▶ Although we produce traffic breakdowns by local authorities, traffic at this level is not robust, due to the sample size of the minor road data and must be treated with caution.
- ▶ During June, every second year, a roadside survey is carried out collecting information about vehicles travelling on the road which identifies vehicles with registration marks originating outside United Kingdom. This information has been used to produce estimates of the rate of foreign registered vehicles on Britain's roads, which are presented in tables [TRA32](#). These figures are designated as official statistics but not as National Statistics and should be treated with caution as the sample size is relatively small (3,969 observations of foreign registered vehicles out of 1,008,803 total observations). Particular attention should be paid to the confidence interval associated with each statistic and in some cases statistics have not been produced as the sample size is too small. This survey is next due to be carried out in 2015 and therefore the next estimates of foreign vehicle traffic will be published in 2016.
- ▶ Following user feedback over the last two years, we have not published table TRA3106 for the second year running. This table presented information on the percentage of HGVs weighing 10 percent over the legal maximum weight. Further information is available in our note of the user feedback [here](#) and any comments are welcomed via roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.
- ▶ Estimates for pedal cycle traffic only include cycling on roads, or paths directly adjacent to the road, and do not include estimates of cycling on other routes such as canal paths. Therefore, they may not give a complete representation of cycling.
- ▶ The Road Traffic statistics series consistently reports higher levels of vehicle kilometres for HGVs than the Road Freight statistics series. This can mainly be attributed to difference in data collection. A methodology note on this issue has been published and can be found in our statistical guidance notes online here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance

Revisions to 2014 traffic estimates

Since the original publication of 2014 road traffic estimates in May 2015, a minor processing error has been discovered. This has affected the traffic estimates for seven (out of over 18,000) junction-to-junction links of motorway and 'A' road. At the national level the impact of the revisions on road traffic estimates is negligible.

Traffic estimates for five local authorities have changed slightly as a result of correcting the processing error, and the relevant tables containing local information have been updated. The local authorities affected are Newport, Monmouthshire, Caerphilly, Warwickshire and Birmingham.

If you would like to know more about these revisions, please contact the road traffic statistics team by email: roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.