



Department for Transport

Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 2 (Apr - Jun) 2018

About this release

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

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

For a more detailed commentary on vehicle registration statistics, see the annual release.

Except where otherwise stated, the statistics all refer to Great Britain. UK data is available from July 2014.

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

In this publication

- New registrations [2](#)
- New vehicles and the environment [3](#)
- Total licensed vehicles [6](#)
- Car makes and models [7](#)
- Background information [8](#)

ULEVs

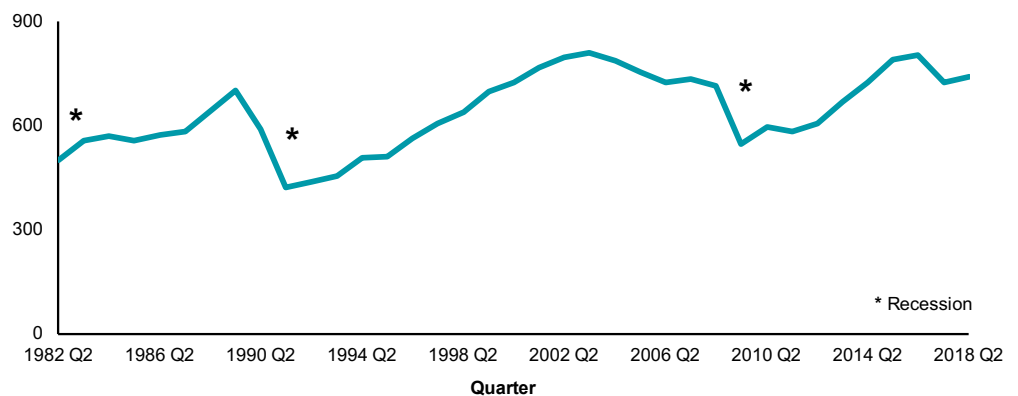
Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) are vehicles that emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled.

Next Published: December 2018

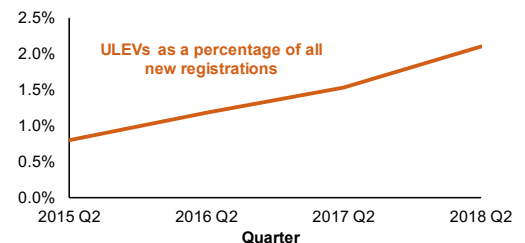


741,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during April to June 2018 (2018 Q2), 2% higher than during the same period in 2017.

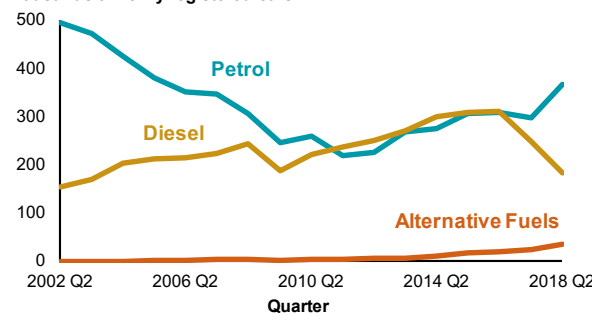
Thousands of newly registered vehicles



During 2018 Q2, 15,600 ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were newly registered in the United Kingdom, an increase of 37% on 2017 Q2. ULEVs made up 2.1% of all new registrations.



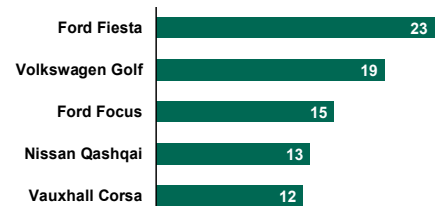
Thousands of newly registered cars



There was a sharp decline in the number of **diesel** cars being newly registered in 2018 Q2, down 26% compared to 2017 Q2. This was contrasted by a 23% increase for **petrol** cars over the same time period.



The most popular new car model in Great Britain in 2018 Q2 was the Ford Fiesta (23,000), followed by the Volkswagen Golf (19,000), and the Ford Focus (15,000).



New registrations during the quarter

During April to June 2018, 741,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain.

Whilst this was 2.0% higher than during 2017 Q2, it was still 8.0% lower than during 2016 Q2, indicating that the market has not recovered from the drop in vehicle registrations that started in April 2017.

This drop might have been due, in part, to the change in the amount of Vehicle Excise Duty due for newly registered cars, which came into force on 1st April 2017. This change generally made both the first year and subsequent years of tax more expensive for low emission, non-electric cars.

In Apr to Jun 2018



741,000 vehicles registered for the first time in Great Britain

Tables

Detailed new registrations data tables updated this quarter:

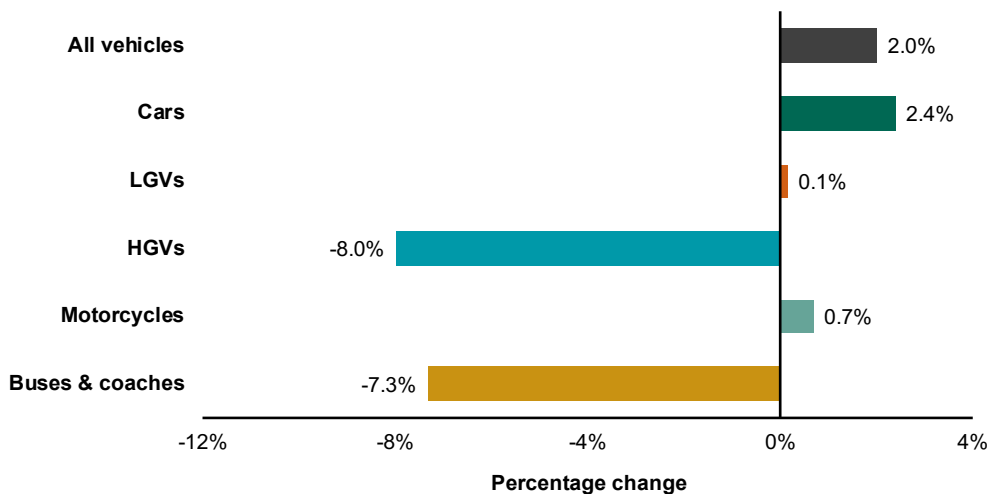
All vehicles types: [VEH0150, 0160 and 0170](#)

Cars: [VEH0253 and 0256](#)

Body type

The recent increase in vehicle registrations was mainly due to an increase in cars and a small increase in motorcycles, with other body types being fairly stable or declining.

Figure 1: Annual percentage change in vehicles registered for the first time by body type, Great Britain, 2018 Q2



Registration plates

Up to 1998, new registration plates were issued once a year in August, causing a peak in registrations in that month.

In 1999, this was changed to twice a year, in March and September. This changed the distribution of new registrations through the year, with more registrations in the first and third quarters compared to the second and fourth quarters.

Motorcycles

Motorcycle registrations are highly seasonal as they are much more likely to be driven in the second and third quarters of the year.

Cars typically make up the majority of new registrations. There were 587,000 cars (79.2%), 88,000 light goods vehicles (11.9%), 13,000 heavy goods vehicles (1.7%), 36,000 motorcycles (4.8%), and 18,000 other vehicles (2.5%) first registered in 2018 Q2.

In 2018 Q2, new registrations were 2.4% higher for cars, and 0.7% higher for motorcycles and broadly the same (0.1%) for light goods vehicles compared to 2017 Q2. In contrast, new registrations were 8.0% lower for heavy goods vehicles, and 7.3% lower for buses & coaches.

Northern Ireland

In 2018 Q2, there were 17,100 vehicles registered for the first time in Northern Ireland, which is 2.3% higher than in 2017 Q2. There were 13,800 cars (81.1%), 1,600 light goods vehicles (9.6%), 400 heavy goods vehicles (2.1%), 700 motorcycles (3.9%), and 600 other vehicles (3.3%) first registered in 2018 Q2.

New diesel car registrations continue to sharply fall, with petrol cars increasing instead.



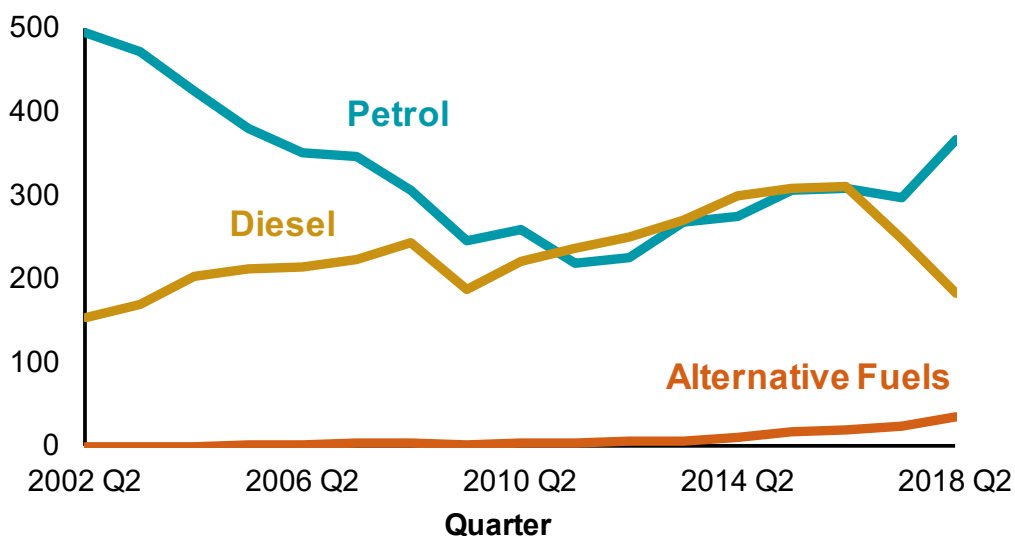
There was a sharp decline in the number of diesel cars being registered for the first time in 2018 Q2, down 26% compared to 2017 Q2, to just 184,000 cars, which is below the 2008/09 recession dip and similar to 2003/04 levels.

This was the second year of sharp decline in the second quarter, following the 20% decrease in new diesel car registrations in 2017 Q2. Over two years, registrations fell by 41% with 128,000 fewer diesels being registered.

This was the fifth quarter in a row where an annual decrease of over 20% has been observed. Diesel cars accounted for 49% of all new car registrations in 2016 Q2, which has dropped to just 31% in 2018 Q2.

Figure 2: Newly registered cars by fuel type, Great Britain, 2002 Q2 to 2018 Q2

Thousands of newly registered cars



In contrast, there was a sharp increase in the number of petrol cars being registered for the first time in 2018 Q2, a rise of 23% up to 367,000 cars compared to 2017 Q2. This is a return to levels not seen since before the 2008/09 recession.

Alternative fuel cars also saw a large increase in 2018 Q2, with 44% more cars registered for the first time, up to 36,000. This was largely driven by large increases in the number of both plug-in (64%) and non plug-in (43%) hybrid electric cars being registered for the first time.

Electric cars are still a small proportion of new alternative fuel registrations (10%), but the number registered for the first time increased by 14% in 2018 Q2.

Why have diesel registrations fallen so much?

The recent decline in diesel car registrations could be attributed, in part, to the changes in VED introduced in April 2017 as well as the announcement in July 2017 to end the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040.

End of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040

On 26th July 2017, the government confirmed that it will end the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040, as part of the UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations.

It is possible that this had an impact on the figures shown here.

For more information, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/plan-for-roadside-no2-concentrations-published>

Alternative fuel

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.

Tables

Detailed environment data tables updated this quarter:

ULEVs: [VEH0130](#), [0131](#), [0132](#) and [0170](#)

CO₂ cars: [VEH0256](#)

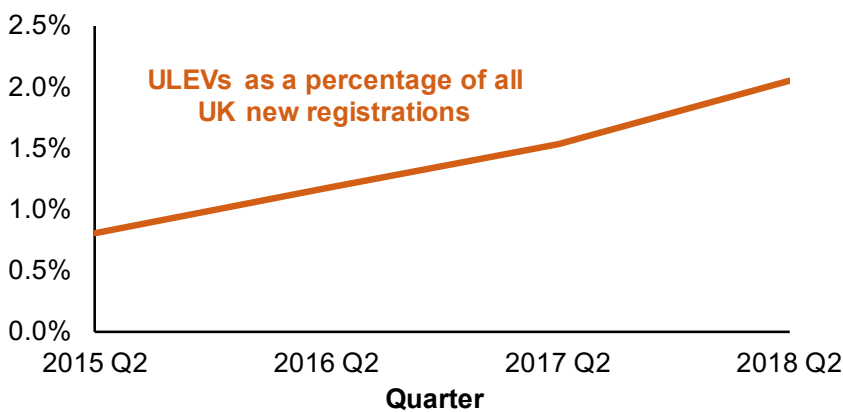
Ultra Low Emission Vehicles continue to increase their share of new registrations in the UK.



In 2018 Q2, 15,593 ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom, up 37% on 2017 Q2 and 61% on 2016 Q2. ULEVs accounted for 2.1% of all new vehicle registrations - up from 1.5% one year previously and 1.2% two years previously.

Most of this increase has been due to vehicles eligible for plug-in car and van grants. New registrations of ULEVs in 2018 Q2 included 13,807 cars and 218 light goods vehicles of models that were eligible for these grants, which was 90% of all ULEVs registered for the first time.

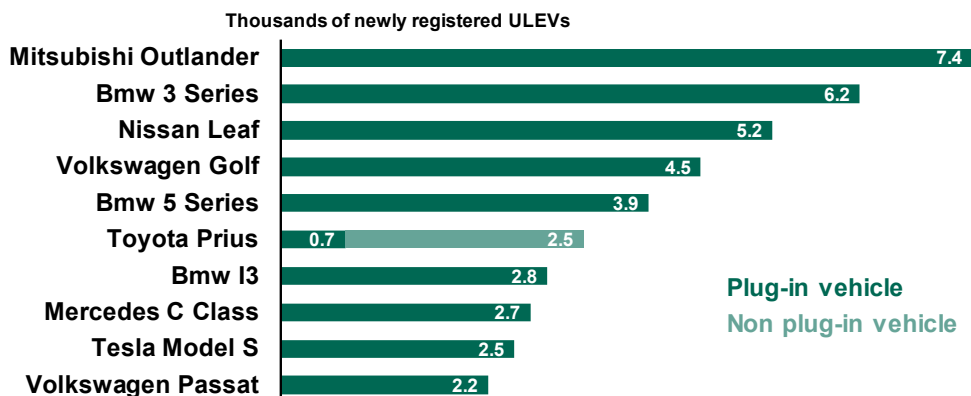
Figure 3: Percentage of newly registered vehicles that were Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, United Kingdom, 2015 Q2 to 2018 Q2



Looking over the last 12 months, during the year ending June 2018, the most common generic models of ULEV registered for the first time were the Mitsubishi Outlander with 7,381 vehicles, followed by the BMW 3 Series with 6,181 vehicles and the Nissan Leaf with 5,248 vehicles.

These were all plug-in hybrid vehicles; the most common generic model for non plug-in ULEVs was the Toyota Prius with 2,544 non plug-in cars.

Figure 4: Top 10 generic models of newly registered Ultra Low Emission Vehicles by plug-in status, United Kingdom, year ending June 2018



Road to Zero

On 9th July 2018, the government confirmed its ambition to see at least half of new cars to be ultra low emission by 2030.

This was released after the period these statistics cover, but subsequent figures may be affected.

For more information, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-road-to-zero-strategy-to-lead-the-world-in-zero-emission-vehicle-technology>

What are plug-in grants?

Plug-in car and van grants started in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively, with major changes in March 2016, seeing other vehicle types also being included in the grant.

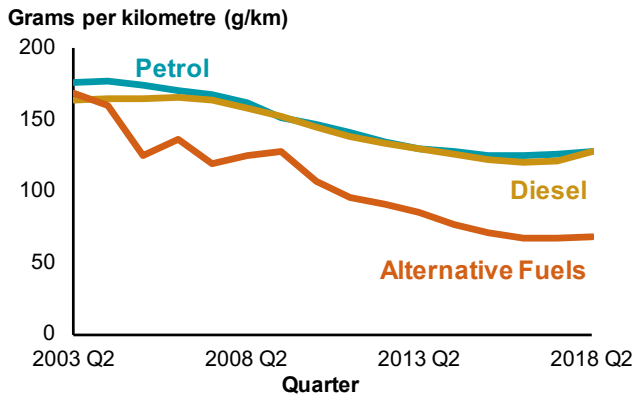
They provide a grant towards the cost of new qualifying models - see [Plug-in car and van grants](#) for further details.

Average CO₂ emissions of new cars continue to increase.



The average CO₂ emissions from cars registered for the first time in 2018 Q2 was 1.9% higher than in 2017 Q2, to an average figure of 124 g/km. Average CO₂ emissions from new cars have steadily fallen since records began in 2003, only starting to rise from mid-2016 onwards.

Figure 5: Average CO₂ emissions for newly registered cars by fuel type, Great Britain, 2003 Q2 to 2018 Q2



One of the many contributing factors to this is an increase in the proportion of larger cars being registered with higher emissions.

In 2018 Q2, the average CO₂ emissions increased for new petrol cars by 1.1% to 127 g/km and for new diesel cars by 4.8% to 127 g/km, compared to 2017 Q2.

Whilst there has been a marked increase in the popularity of alternative fuel cars, the average CO₂ emissions for these vehicles have been broadly stable, staying in the range of 67 to 68 g/km in the second quarter for the past 3 years.

VED bands / CO₂ emission bands

During 2018 Q2, 79% of cars registered for the first time were in one of the lowest five old Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) bands (A to E, up to 140 g/km), including 53% in Band C or lower (up to 120 g/km) and 13% in Band A (up to 100 g/km).

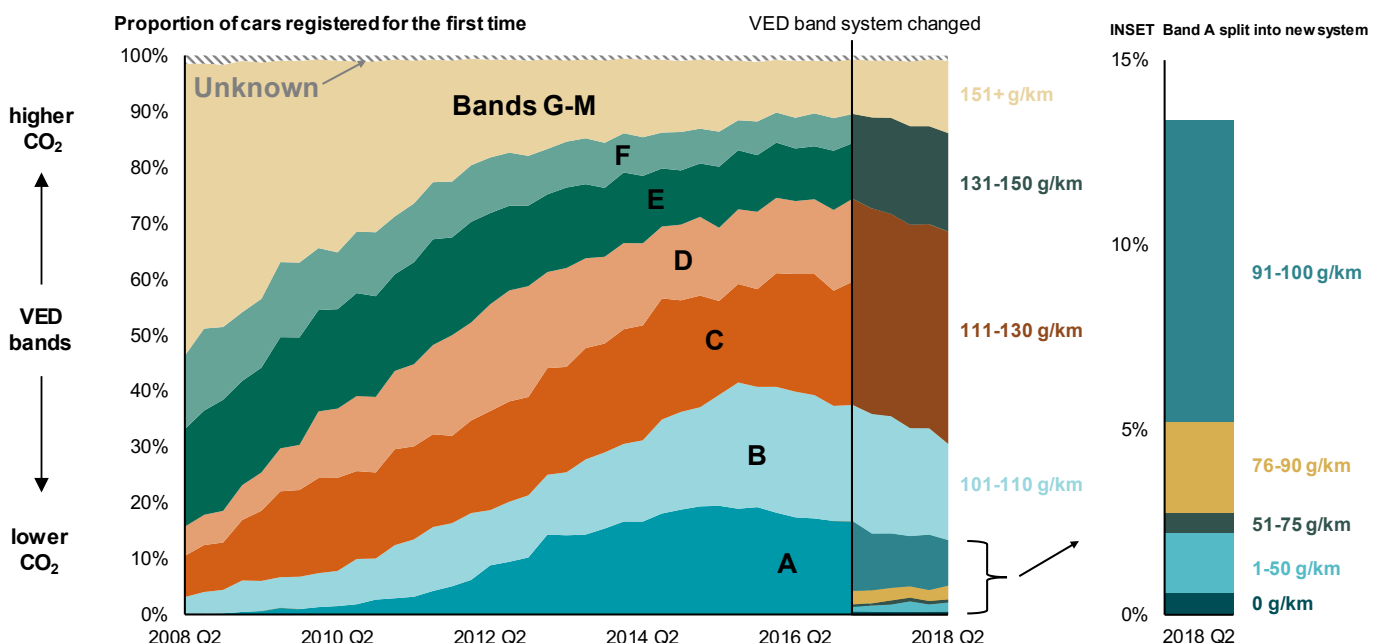
During 2018 Q2, 2.8% of cars registered for the first time were considered Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (up to 75 g/km), compared to 2.1% during 2017 Q2.

VED bands

Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) is charged on vehicles registered in the UK.

For cars licensed after March 2001, VED is charged in bands on the basis of their CO₂ emissions. From April 2017 new tax rates apply for cars newly registered after that date - see [Vehicle Tax Rate Tables](#) for further details.

Figure 6: New car registrations by VED band, quarterly, with inset for band A, Great Britain, 2008 Q2 to 2018 Q2



Total licensed vehicles

At the end of June 2018, there were 38.2 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, which is a 1.0% increase compared to the previous year.

At end of
June 2018



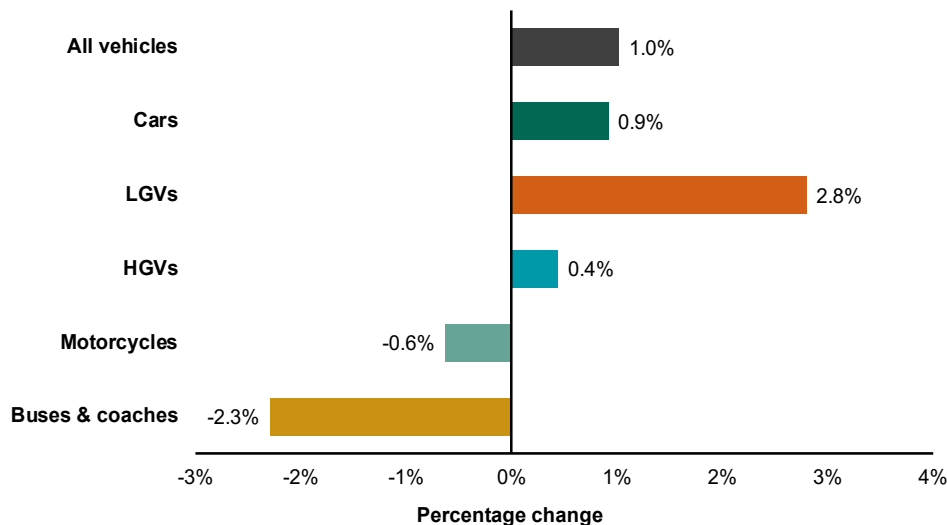
38.2 million
vehicles licensed
for use on roads
in Great Britain

However, not all vehicle types saw an increase. The largest percentage increase was for light goods vehicles at 2.8%, followed by cars at 0.9% and heavy goods vehicles at 0.4%. Buses & coaches fell by 2.2% and motorcycles fell by 0.6%.

How do these differ from new registrations?

The total number of licensed vehicles, and their characteristics, change much more slowly than the newly registered vehicles as there are many more vehicles that remain licensed.

Figure 7: Annual change in licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, 2018 Q2



Tables

Detailed licensed vehicle data tables:

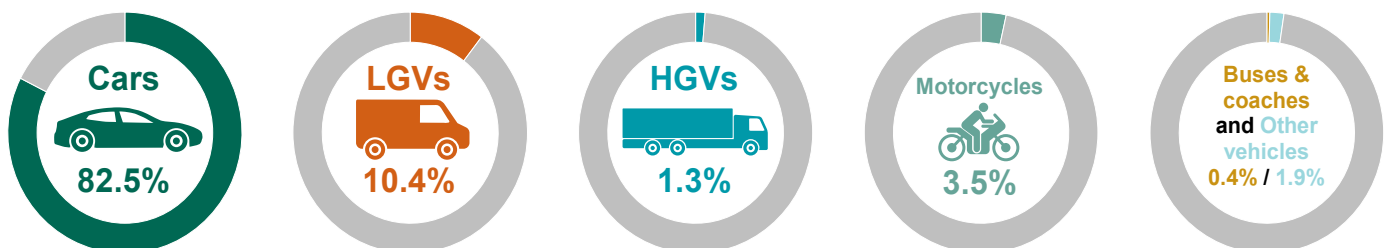
All vehicles types: [VEH0101_0104_0110_0120 to 0123_0128 to 0131 and 0132](#)

Motorcycles: [VEH0301](#)

Body type

Cars make up the majority of licensed vehicles. There were 31.5 million cars (82.5%), 4.0 million light goods vehicles (10.4%), 0.5 million heavy goods vehicles (1.3%), 1.3 million motorcycles (3.5%), and 0.9 million other vehicles (2.4%) licensed at the end of June 2018.

Figure 8: Licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, June 2018



Northern Ireland

At the end of June 2018, there were 1.2 million licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland, which is an increase of 1.8% compared to the previous year.

The distribution of vehicles by body type was broadly similar to Great Britain. There were 970,000 cars (82.5%), 120,000 light goods vehicles (9.9%), 24,000 heavy goods vehicles (2.1%), 25,000 motorcycles (2.2%), and 40,000 other vehicles (3.4%) licensed at the end of June 2018.

Car makes and models



The top five makes accounted for 42% of all cars registered for the first time during April to June 2018 in Great Britain.

These makes were Ford (11%), Volkswagen (9%), BMW (8%), Vauxhall (7%), and Audi (7%). This was the same top 5 as in 2017 Q2, in the same order despite a 16% increase in the number of newly registered Volkswagen cars.

There were nineteen makes with over 10 thousand newly registered cars each, accounting for 88% of all newly registered cars.

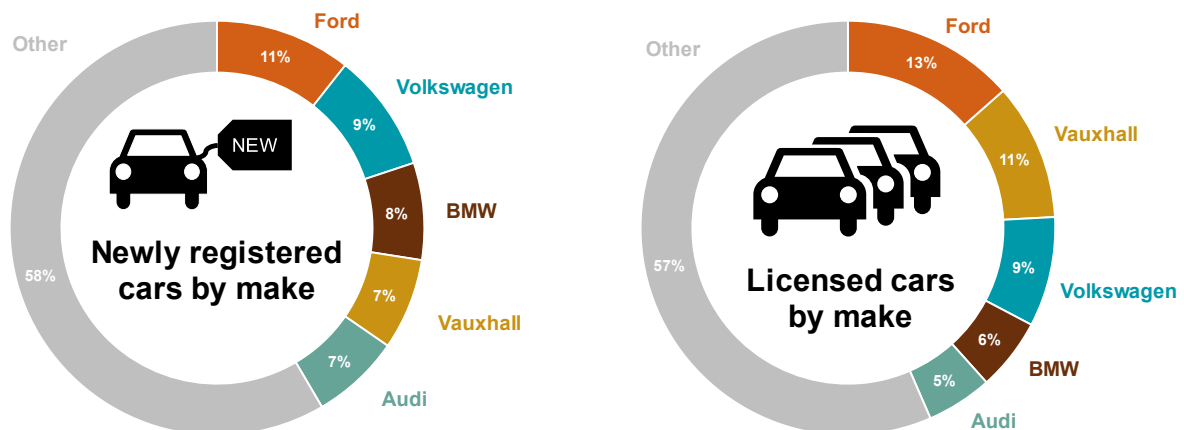
For total licensed stock at the end of June 2018, the top five makes were the same but in a different order, namely Ford (13%), Vauxhall (11%), Volkswagen (9%), BMW (6%), and Audi (5%), which accounted for 43% of all licensed cars.

Tables

Detailed make and model data tables

[VEH0120, 0121, 0124 to 0129, 0160, 0161](#)

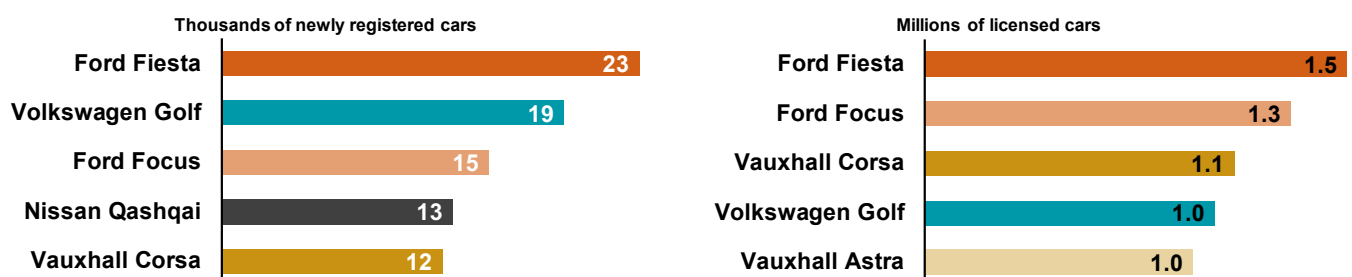
Figure 9: Top five makes out of newly registered cars during April to June 2018 and those licensed at the end of June 2018, Great Britain



The Ford Fiesta was the most common new registration in 2018 Q2, with 23,000 registered for the first time. This was followed by the Volkswagen Golf with 19,000, and the Ford Focus with 15,000. Despite producing the fourth most common newly registered car model (the Nissan Qashqai with 13,000), Nissan only accounted for 4% of all newly registered cars and saw a sharp 22% drop in new car registrations compared to 2017 Q2, driven by falls in Juke and X-Trail registrations.

At the end of June 2018, there were 1.5 million Ford Fiesta cars licenced, followed by the Ford Focus with 1.3 million, and the Vauxhall Corsa with 1.1 million.

Figure 10: Top five generic models out of newly registered cars during April to June 2018 and those licensed at the end of June 2018, Great Britain



Background information

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.

A separate note on users and uses of these statistics is available from the vehicles statistics information [web page](#).

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.gov.uk.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

The DVLA database can be regarded as being virtually complete in terms of the number of vehicles registered for the first time, 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;
- ▶ 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.

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

As a result of these changes, the coverage of the vehicle licensing statistics tables was expanded to cover UK as well as GB where practical. 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 now. For further information, please see the detailed [technical notes](#).

National Statistics

All of the statistics published in this series are National Statistics, apart from the exceptions listed on the [collection 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 next is due in December 2018. The Quarter 4 release for each calendar year is accompanied by a larger set of data tables and more detailed commentary.

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](#).

Release of DfT Statistics publications

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