



Department for Transport

# Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 3 (Jul - Sep) 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 online.

These statistics are based on administrative data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

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

More detailed commentary can be found in the [annual release](#).

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## ULEVs

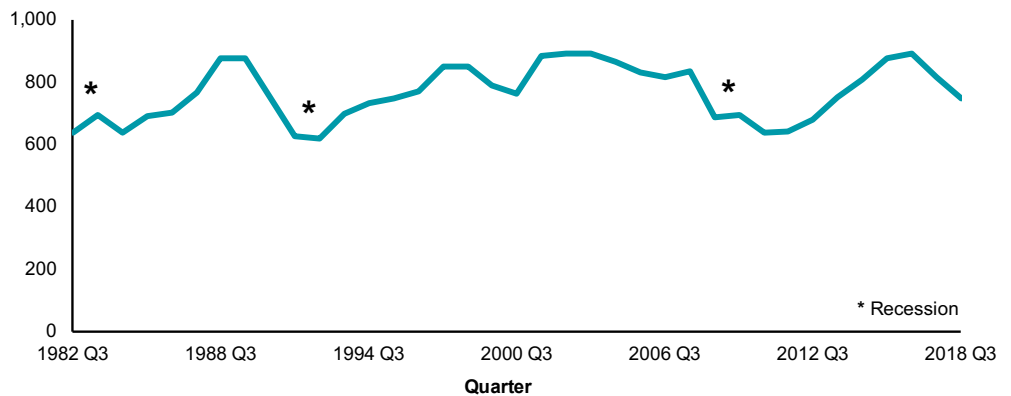
Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) are vehicles that emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled.

**Next published: April 2019**



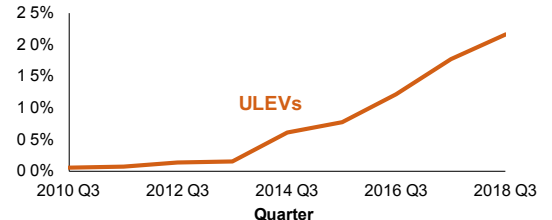
**747,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during July to September 2018 (2018 Q3), 8% fewer than during the same period in 2017.**

Thousands of vehicles registered for the first time

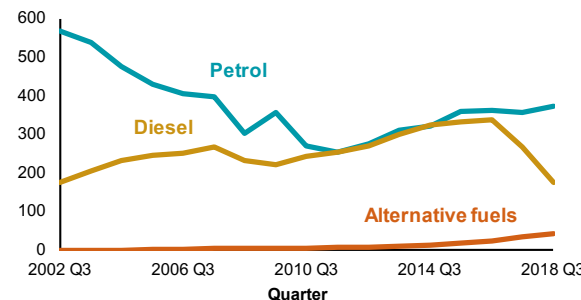


**During 2018 Q3, 16,200 ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were registered for the first time, an increase of 12% on 2017 Q3. ULEVs made up 2.2% of all new registrations.**

Proportion of vehicles registered for the first time



Thousands of cars registered for the first time

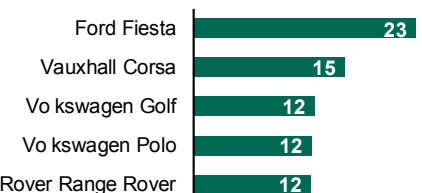


**There was a sharp decline in the number of diesel cars registered for the first time in 2018 Q3, down 34% compared to 2017 Q3. This was contrasted by a 5% increase for petrol cars over the same time period.**



**The most popular new car model in Great Britain in 2018 Q3 was the Ford Fiesta (23,000), followed by the Vauxhall Corsa (15,000), and the Volkswagen Golf (12,000).**

Thousands of cars registered for the first time



## New registrations during the quarter

**During July to September 2018, 747,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain.**

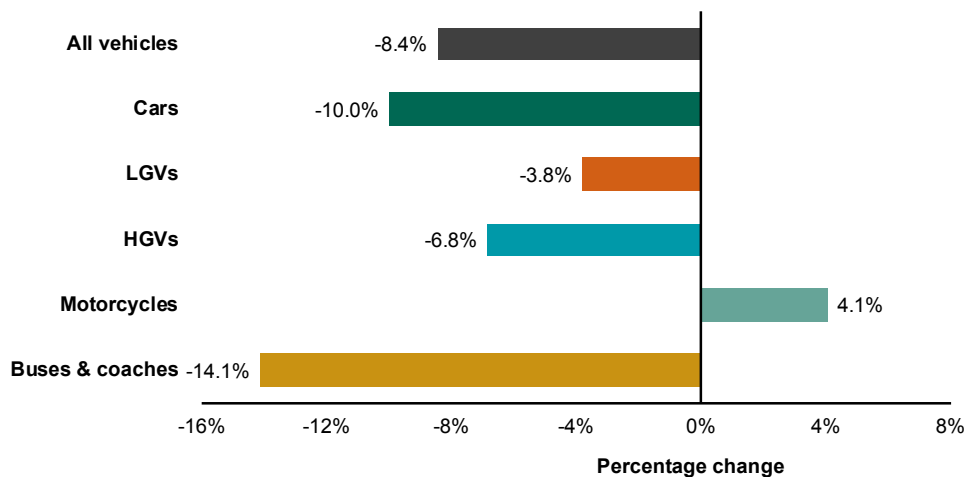
This was 8.4% lower than during 2017 Q3 and 16.3% lower than during 2016 Q3. However, it was similar to 2013 new registrations and still 8% higher than during the 2008/09 recession.

The Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP) became mandatory for cars registered for the first time from 1 September 2018 in the EU. The introduction of WLTP was a contributory factor to the decline this quarter due to additional testing prior to new registrations causing restrictions of available models. For more information, please see: [wltpfacts.eu/](http://wltpfacts.eu/)

### Body type

All body types, apart from motorcycles, saw a sharp decline in 2018 Q3. Buses & coaches had the largest decline with 14.1% fewer registered for the first time. There has been a gradual decline since the beginning of 2017. In contrast, there was a 4.1% increase in the number of motorcycles registered for the first time.

**Figure 1: Annual percentage change in vehicles registered for the first time by body type, Great Britain, 2018 Q3**



Cars typically make up the majority of new registrations. There were 592,000 cars (79.2%), 95,000 light goods vehicles (LGVs) (12.7%), 11,000 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) (1.5%), 32,000 motorcycles (4.3%), and 17,000 other vehicles (2.2%) registered for the first time in 2018 Q3.

### Northern Ireland

In 2018 Q3, there were 15,700 vehicles registered for the first time in Northern Ireland, which was 4.4% lower than in 2017 Q3. There were 12,700 cars (80.6%), 1,700 LGVs (10.8%), 300 HGVs (2.2%), 500 motorcycles (3.3%), and 500 other vehicles (3.0%) registered for the first time in Northern Ireland in 2018 Q3.

**In Jul to Sep 2018**



**747,000** vehicles registered for the first time in Great Britain

### Updated tables

Detailed new registrations data tables updated this quarter:

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

Cars: [VEH0253 & 0256](#)

### Registration plates

Up to 1998, new registration plates were issued once a year in August, causing a peak in new registrations in the third quarter.

Since 1999, new plates were issued twice a year, in March and September. This changed the distribution of new registrations through the year, with peaks in the first and third 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.

The National Travel Survey provides more information on [motorcycle use](#).

## New vehicles and the environment

### New diesel car registrations continue to sharply fall, contrasted by increases for petrol and alternative fuel cars.



There was a sharp decline in the number of diesel cars being registered for the first time in 2018 Q3. There was a 34% drop compared to 2017 Q3, to just 176,000 cars, which is below the 2008/09 recession dip and similar to 2002 registrations.

This was the second year of sharp decline in the third quarter, following the 21% decrease in new diesel car registrations in 2017 Q3. Over two years, registrations fell by 48% with 161,000 fewer diesels being registered for the first time.

Diesel cars accounted for 47% of all new car registrations in 2016 Q3, which has dropped to just 30% in 2018 Q3.

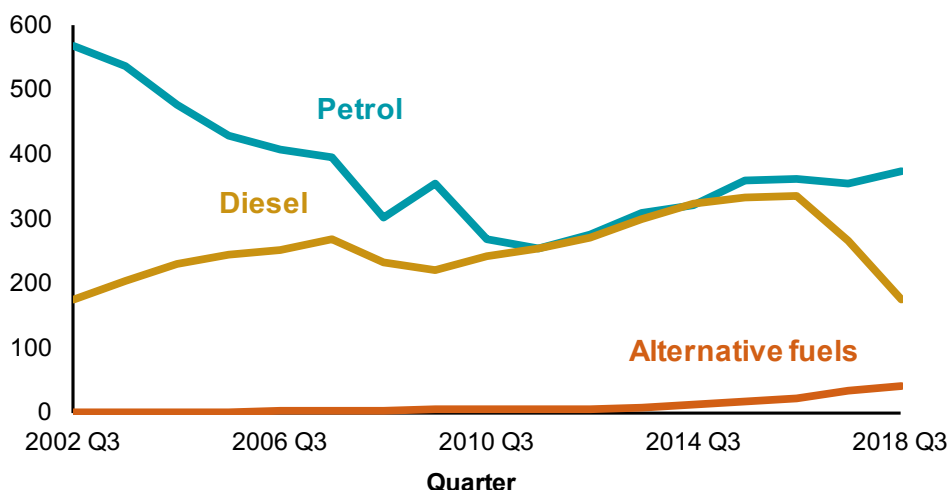
#### New car registrations

Annual change in 2018 Q3

Diesel	Petrol	Alt. fuel
-34%	+5%	+12%

**Figure 2: Cars registered for the first time by fuel type, Great Britain, 2002 Q3 to 2018 Q3**

Thousands of cars registered for the first time



In contrast, there was a small increase in the number of petrol cars being registered for the first time in 2018 Q3, a rise of 5% up to 374,000 cars compared to 2017 Q3.

Alternative fuel cars also saw a large increase in 2018 Q3, with 19% more cars registered for the first time, up to 42,000.

#### Northern Ireland

A similar picture occurred in Northern Ireland, with annual percentage changes of -22% for diesel, +2% for petrol, and +36% for alternative fuel cars registered for the first time in 2018 Q3.

In Northern Ireland, diesel cars accounted for 53% of all new car registrations in 2016 Q3, which dropped to 37% in 2018 Q3.

#### Key events surrounding the decline in new diesel car registrations

April 2017: changes are introduced for newly registered car [tax bands and rates](#).

July 2017: [UK Plan for Tackling Roadside Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations](#) is announced, ending the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040.

November 2017: Transport for London announces the “world’s first [Ultra-Low Emission Zone](#)” - although new diesel cars would not be charged under the current plan.

#### 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.

#### Updated tables

Detailed fuel and environment data tables updated this quarter:

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

CO<sub>2</sub> cars: [VEH0253 & VEH0256](#)

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

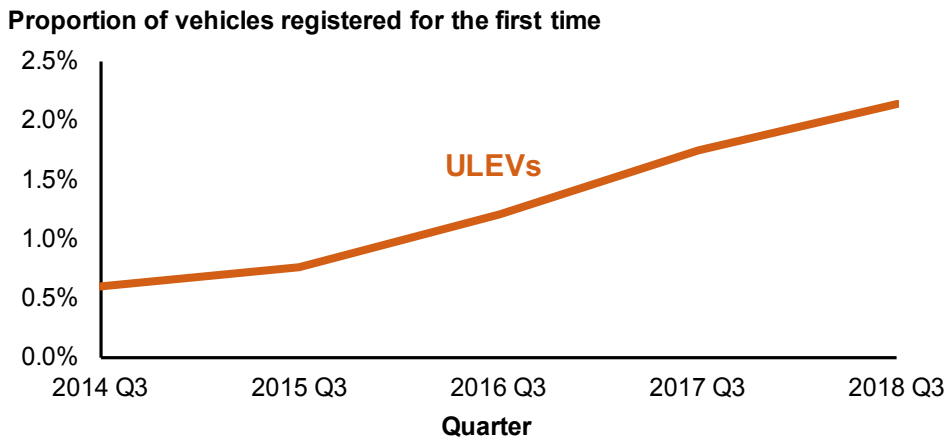


In 2018 Q3, 16,387 ULEVs were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom, up 12% on 2017 Q3 and 49% on 2016 Q3. ULEVs accounted for 2.1% of all new vehicle registrations - up from 1.8% one year previously and 1.2% two years previously.



The vast majority (89%) of these ULEVs were eligible for plug-in grants. New registrations of ULEVs in 2018 Q3 included 14,125 cars and 325 light goods vehicles of models that were eligible for these grants.

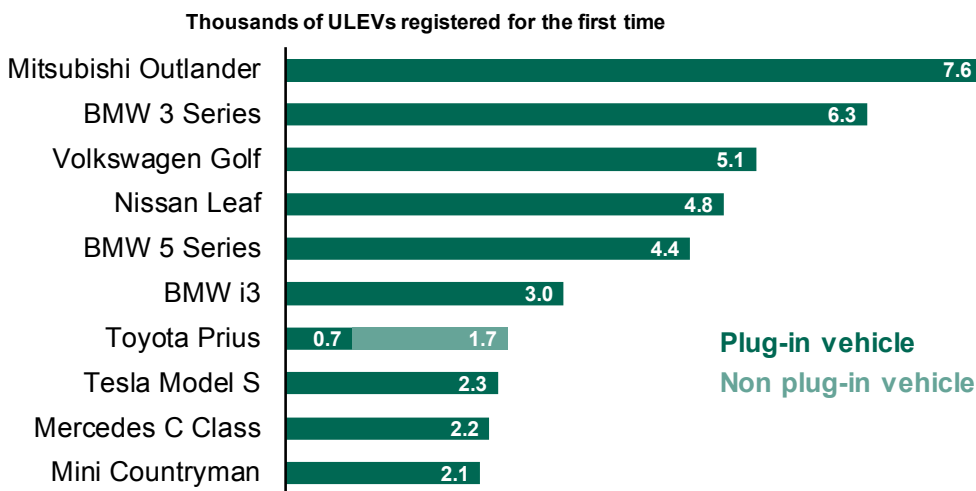
**Figure 3: Proportion of vehicles registered for the first time that were ULEVs, UK, 2014 Q3 to 2018 Q3**



During the year ending September 2018, the most common generic model of ULEV registered for the first time in the UK was the Mitsubishi Outlander with 7,593 vehicles, followed by the BMW 3 Series with 6,338 vehicles and the Volkswagen Golf with 5,126 vehicles.

These were all plug-in vehicles; the most common generic model for non plug-in ULEVs was the Toyota Prius with 1,693 non plug-in cars.

**Figure 4: Top 10 generic models for ULEVs registered for the first time by plug-in status, UK, year ending September 2018**



## CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

Since the introduction of WLTP, there are now two different official CO<sub>2</sub> emission figures for some vehicles.

For this period, only the original CO<sub>2</sub> figure (NEDC) for each vehicle is reported in these statistics.

## What are plug-in grants?

[Plug-in car and van grants](#) started in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively, reducing the cost of new qualifying models.

Major changes were implemented in March 2016, including other vehicle types being included in the grant.

## Road to Zero

On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018, the government announced the [Road to Zero Strategy](#), confirming its ambition to see at least half of new cars to be ultra low emission by 2030.

This strategy is likely to have a long term impact on these figures.

## Reformed Plug-In Car Grant

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2018, the government announced that [changes would be made to the plug-in car grant](#), effective 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

This announcement was released after the period these statistics cover. Subsequent figures are likely to be affected.

# Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of new cars continue to increase.

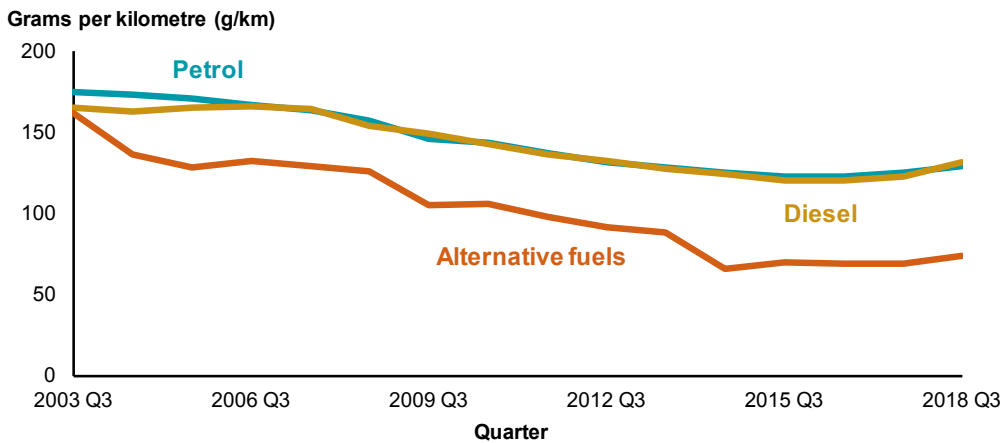


The average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars registered for the first time in 2018 Q3 was 4.3% higher than in 2017 Q3, to an average figure of 127 g/km. Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from newly registered cars were steadily falling since 2003, only starting to rise from mid-2016 onwards.

The two main contributing factors for this were an increase in the proportion of larger cars being registered with higher emissions and an increase in emissions for popular petrol car models.

In 2018 Q3, the average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions increased for new petrol cars by 3.6% to 130 g/km and for new diesel cars by 7.5% to 132 g/km, compared to 2017 Q3. However, the overall increase was mostly due to petrol cars as they accounted for 63% of all cars registered for the first time.

**Figure 5: Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for cars registered for the first time by fuel type, Great Britain, 2003 Q3 to 2018 Q3**



## VED bands

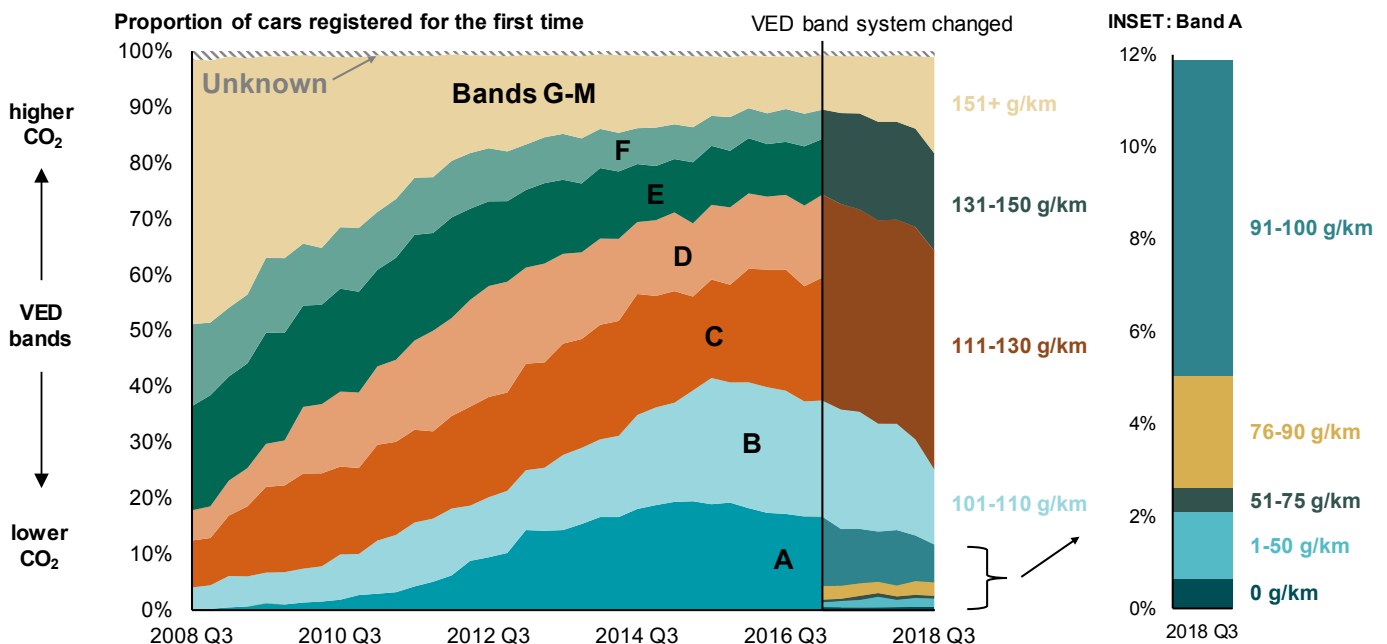
Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) (VED) is charged on vehicles registered in the UK.

From March 2001, car VED is charged in bands on the basis of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The bands were then revised for cars registered from April 2017 onwards.

## Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) bands / CO<sub>2</sub> emission bands

During 2018 Q3, 25% of cars registered for the first time had emissions up to 110 g/km, whereas the share of those with emissions of 151+ g/km was 17%, up from 10% in 2017 Q3.

**Figure 6: Cars registered for the first time by VED band, quarterly, with inset for band A, Great Britain, 2008 Q3 to 2018 Q3**





## Total licensed vehicles

At the end of September 2018, there were 38.4 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, which is a 1.0% increase compared to the previous year.

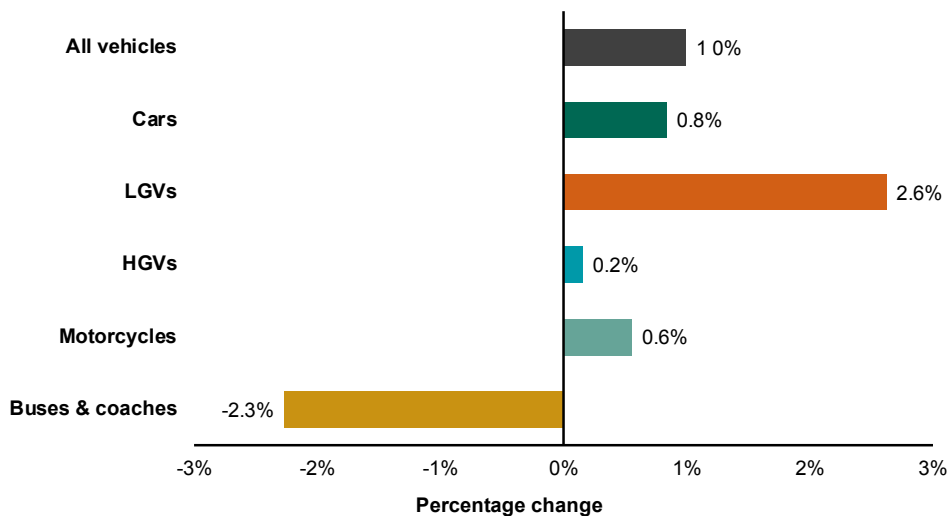
At end of Sep 2018



**38.4 million** vehicles licensed for use on roads in Great Britain

All body types apart from buses & coaches saw an increase. The largest percentage increase was for LGVs at 2.6%, followed by cars at 0.8%, motorcycles at 0.6%, and HGVs at 0.2%. Buses & coaches fell by 2.3%, which is in line with the sharp decline in new registrations.

**Figure 7: Annual change in licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, end of September 2018**



### 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.

### Updated tables

Detailed licensed vehicle data tables updated this quarter:

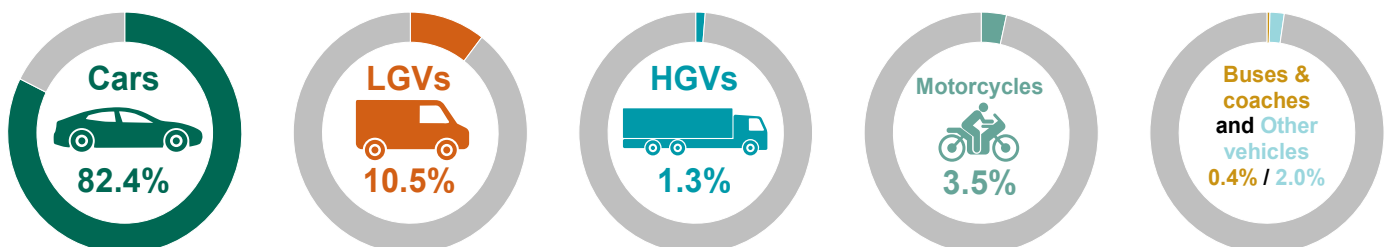
All vehicles types: [VEH0101, 0104, 0110, 0120 to 0123, 0128 to 0131 & 0132](#)

Motorcycles: [VEH0301](#)

### Body type

Cars make up the majority of licensed vehicles. There were 31.6 million cars (82.4%), 4.0 million LGVs (10.5%), 0.5 million HGVs (1.3%), 1.3 million motorcycles (3.5%), and 0.9 million other vehicles (2.4%) licensed at the end of September 2018.

**Figure 8: Licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, end of September 2018**



### Northern Ireland

At the end of September 2018, there were 1.2 million licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland, which is an increase of 1.6% compared to the previous year.

The distribution of vehicles by body type was broadly similar to Great Britain. There were 980,000 cars (82.4%), 120,000 LGVs (9.9%), 24,000 HGVs (2.1%), 26,000 motorcycles (2.2%), and 40,000 other vehicles (3.4%) licensed at the end of September 2018.

## Car makes and models



The most common make for cars registered for the first time during July to September 2018 was Ford, followed by Mercedes-Benz and Vauxhall.

In 2018 Q3, the top five makes were Ford (10%), Mercedes-Benz (8%), Vauxhall (8%), BMW (7%), and Volkswagen (7%), accounting for 40% of all new car registrations. This is quite different compared to 2017 Q3, which is to be expected given that car makes have had varying impacts from the introduction of mandatory WLTP tests on new models.

There were 22 makes with over 10 thousand newly registered cars each, accounting for 93% of all newly registered cars.

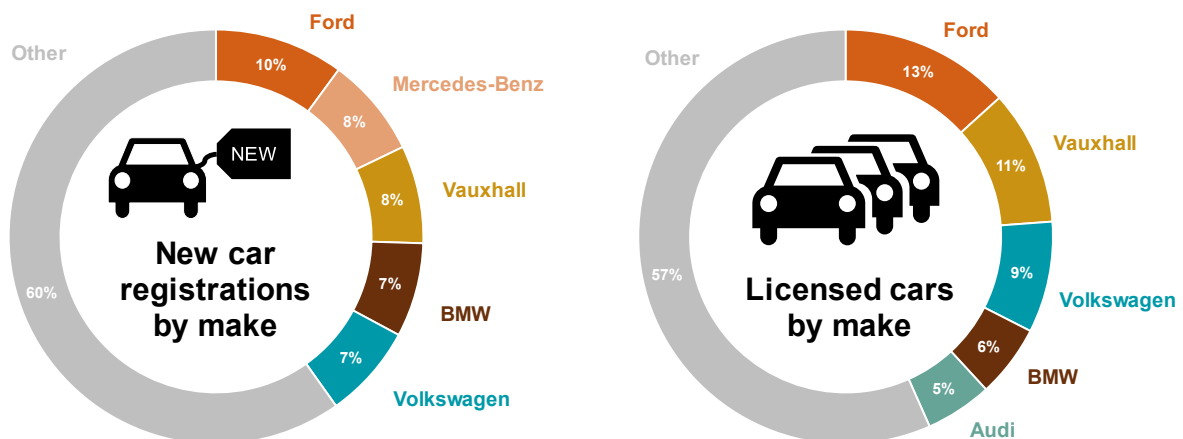
For total licensed stock at the end of September 2018, the top five makes were different to new registrations, namely Ford (13%), Vauxhall (11%), Volkswagen (9%), BMW (6%), and Audi (5%), which accounted for 43% of all licensed cars.

### Updated tables

Detailed make and model data tables updated this quarter:

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

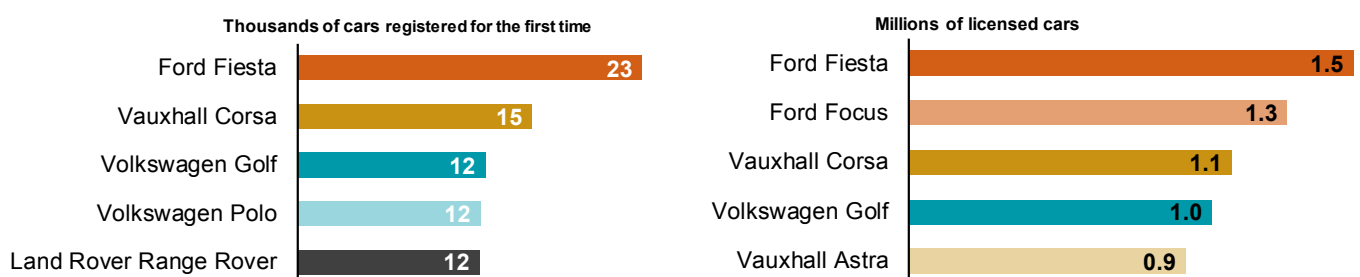
**Figure 9: Top five makes for cars registered for the first time during July to September 2018 and for those licensed at the end of September 2018, Great Britain**



The Ford Fiesta was the most common new registration in 2018 Q3, with 23,000 registered for the first time. This was followed by the Vauxhall Corsa with 15,000 and Volkswagen Golf with 12,000.

At the end of September 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 for cars registered for the first time during July to September 2018 and for those licensed at the end of September 2018, Great Britain**



## Background notes

### 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

The Department for Transport are running a short survey on the use of table VEH0150 to understand our user needs and requirements. If you wish to comment on this table, please complete the [short survey](#).

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](mailto: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 release is due in April 2019. 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 (VEH0150).

Any updates to these plans will be advertised via the [DfT statistical publications schedule](#).

## Release of DfT Statistics publications

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