

The use made of vehicle statistics and data

This document gives some examples of the types of ways users make use of the vehicles data. It also provides a summary of a user feedback survey which was carried out between December 2011 and January 2012. The survey has helped the Department for Transport understand how the statistics meet or fail to meet users' needs and plan how the outputs can be improved.

1. Ongoing engagement with users

The Department for Transport has a number of ways of engaging with users. We receive roughly ten to twenty public enquiries a week either by telephone or email. We also respond to up to ten Freedom of Information requests a week on behalf of the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency. These requests, especially those for which our prepared tables do not answer, help direct us to what additional tables are needed or how existing tables can be modified to best address user needs.

Aside from formal user feedback surveys, we engage with users in a number of ways:

- Undertaking detailed discussions with users when they request data about how they intend to use data so we can identify the most appropriate set of statistics to supply
- Have regular discussions with DVLA about the types of requests they receive and the information they need to give full responses
- Maintain close links to industry bodies such as the *Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders* to understand how their customers benefit from our data
- Attend conferences and seminars with user groups such as the *Transport Statistics User Group*, including giving presentations on the range of data we can supply
- Develop outputs and tables specifically required by various policy teams within the Department for Transport and its agencies, especially in the areas of low emissions and MOT tests

FURTHER INFORMATION

Public Enquiries:

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2. Use of vehicle statistics

Members of the public and the media make use of the data to inform understanding of how the numbers and types of vehicles in Britain are changing and what impact the changes are likely to have.

Industry bodies, especially insurers, manufacturers and other motoring industry organisations use the data to inform business decisions.

Academics and consultants are some of the more significant users of detailed vehicles data. They use the data to carry out research into a wide range of vehicle related topics, including estimating emissions, relative mileage between different fuel types and affect of emissions regulations on the types of vehicles in fleet.

Local authorities have interest in the types of vehicles in their local areas, especially used in relation to road safety campaigns and work.

The European Commission makes use of the data to monitor the performance of car and van manufacturers against regulations designed to improve the CO2 emissions from new vehicles.

Officials in the Department for Transport and other government departments use the data for a number of subjects, including:

- to inform policies on low emissions vehicles;
- to monitor performance of existing policies, such as the Plugged in Car Grant and Plugged in Places;
- to estimate and forecast income from vehicle excise duty (VED);
- to assess the impact of VED evasion;
- to assess the impact of MOT non-compliance;
- to provide base data for modelling, for instance as part of the National Transport Model;
- to respond to Parliamentary Questions and inform parliamentary business;
- to populate tables in compendia publications.

3. Responding to users' needs

A number of new tables have been added to the Vehicle Licensing Statistics series over the past few years. These contain data that have been most regularly requested by users. The most common request has been for tables giving detailed information by make and model. A set of five new tables containing make / model data were released to address these requests. These tables have also been used by third parties to provide websites and apps that summarise the detailed information in a visual and easy-to-use way. We have worked with these developers to ensure that they understood the data and provided guidance on

the sources of data to their users. This has also led to the production and publication of additional guidance specifically on the make / model tables.

Over the last two years roughly 20 tables have been added, modified or improved as a direct result of user comments and feedback. This has included creating a new quarterly bulletin and publishing more tables on a quarterly rather than annual basis.

We ran a user feedback questionnaire in December 2010 and January 2011. A total of 20 users filled out the survey, 15 of whom felt that the statistics provided met most if not all of their needs. Most users who feel the outputs do not fully meet their needs are most interested in getting data at a finer geographical scale. We have tried to address this issue with the production of statistics by postcode district (e.g. "N1" rather than "N1 1AA"), but we need to balance the production of detailed geographies with the risk of making individual vehicles identifiable.

A number of new requests have come out of the survey and we will consider which can be included in Vehicle Licensing Statistics 2011. Possible changes will include the addition of further historic data (back to 1994 for licensed vehicles and 2001 for new registrations, the earliest dates for which we hold the underlying data), the addition of statistics for Northern Ireland, clarification of vehicle definitions and data guidance, and the reproduction of some of the more detailed car tables for other vehicle types.

The latest Vehicle Licensing Statistics can always be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/statistics/series/vehicle-licensing/>.

4. Contacting us

We are always interested in getting further feedback and comments from users. If you have any specific requests, suggestions or ideas please email vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk or call 020 7944 3077.