



Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Quarter 1 2014 (Jan – Mar)

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:

Jeremy Grove 020 7944 6142

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Media: 020 7944 3066

Public: 020 7944 3077

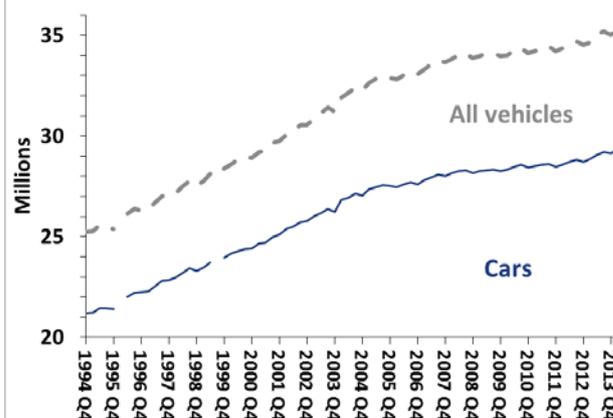
vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Main findings

At the end of March 2014 there were 35.3 million vehicles licensed for use on the road in Great Britain.

- This is a 1.9% increase on quarter 1 2013, the biggest year-on-year increase since quarter 4 2005.
- The total number of licensed vehicles has increased over the long term, but the rate of increase slowed down after about 2005, and slowed further at the onset of the recession in 2008-09.

Licensed vehicles GB: Q2 1994 Q1 2014 [Table veh0101]



The number of licensed vehicles in Great Britain has increased every year since the end of the Second World War, except 1991.

799 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain in quarter 1 2014, 12% up on the same quarter of 2013, but still 12% lower than in the peak quarter 1 of 2004.

- During quarter 1 2014, 1,929 new ultra-low emission vehicles were registered for the first time, up 130% on the same quarter of 2013. These included 1,777 cars and vans eligible for Government Plug-in Grants, 162% more than in quarter 1 2013.
- The average carbon dioxide emissions of newly registered cars fell by 2.8% in quarter 1 2014 compared the same quarter in 2013, to 126 grams per kilometre.

At the end of March 2014, the most common car in Great Britain was the Ford Focus (1.5 million), followed by the Ford Fiesta (1.4 million).

About this release

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A report on motor vehicles in Great Britain based on administrative data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). See [Technical Notes](#) for further details.

This report is part of the [Vehicle Statistics](#) series. Detailed data tables are available from the web site. Further tables are updated on an annual basis in addition to those updated quarterly which are listed below.

General context

The number of licensed vehicles and number of vehicles registered for the first time continue to be affected by the general economic climate in Britain and further afield. New registrations remain lower than they were before the recession began, so the licensed vehicle stock, while continuing to grow, is growing more slowly.

While new car registrations across the European Union as a whole fell by 1.7% in 2013 according to the [European Automobile Manufacturers' Association](#), the UK was the only major EU market to show double digit growth. The UK was the second largest new car market in Europe in 2013, after Germany. The UK accounted for 19% of new cars registered in the EU in 2013, compared with 17% in 2012.

Licensed vehicle numbers

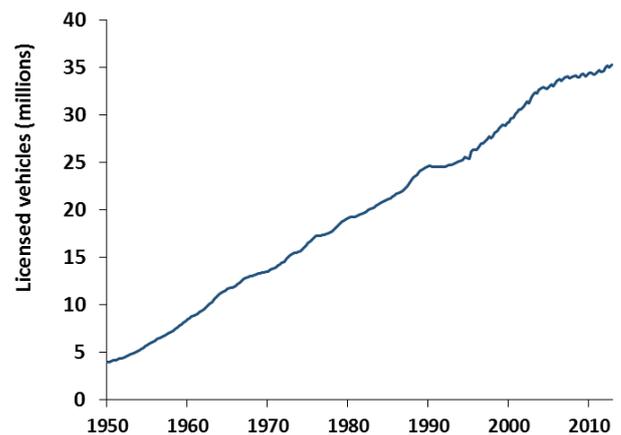
At the end of quarter 1 2014 there were 35.3 million vehicles licensed for use on the roads in Great Britain, of which 29.4 million were cars.

The total number of licensed vehicles has increased in every year since the end of the Second World War except 1991.

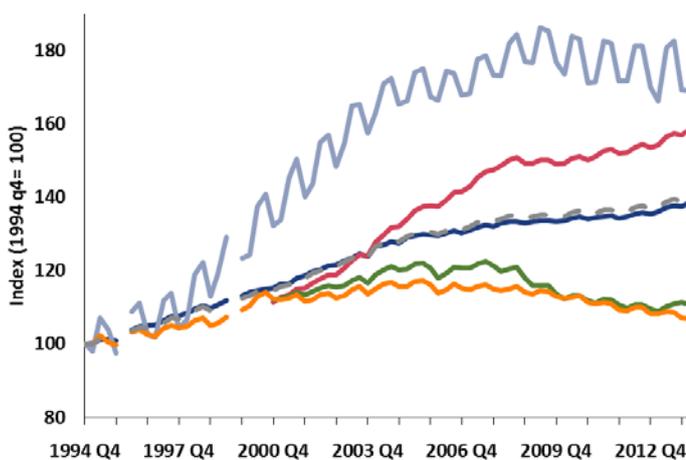
Between 1996 and 2007, the annual growth in licensed vehicles averaged 2.5% a year, although from the mid-2000s it had already begun to slow somewhat. Following the recession of 2008-9 it slowed further, but did not stop, averaging 0.3% a year between 2008 and 2011.

Between quarter 1 2013 and quarter 1 2014 the total vehicle stock increased by 1.9%, the highest year-on-year increase since quarter 4 2005.

Licensed vehicles GB: 1950 - Q1 2014 [Table veh0101]



Licensed vehicles by type GB: Q4 1994 TO Q1 2014 [Table veh0101]



Share in Q1 2014:

3.5% Motorcycles

9.6% Vans

All vehicles (=100%)

83.2% Cars

1.3% HGV

0.5% Bus & coach

The numbers of **licensed cars** increased by 1.8% between quarter 1 2014 and quarter 1 2013, the fastest rate of growth since 2005.

Van numbers were up 2.7% over the same period, the fastest growth rate since 2008.

Motorcycle numbers increased by 1.6% over the last year, but had previously been declining slightly since a peak in 2008/9.

Since the end of 1994, the number of licensed cars in Great Britain has increased by 39%, while the number of vans has increased by 58% and the number of motorcycles by 69%

The numbers of heavy goods vehicles (HGV) and buses and coaches have both fallen since 2007. The number of **HGVs** in quarter 1 2014 was 1.7% up on the same quarter of the previous year, but remains 8% below the peak in 2007. However, there is some evidence of hauliers using fewer, larger HGVs (and more large vans), so this reduction in numbers does not necessarily indicate a fall in road freight carrying capacity.

The number of **buses and coaches** fell by 1.2% compared with quarter 1 2013, continuing an eight year decline. There are now 8% fewer buses than in 2005, when the number peaked.

Detailed vehicle stock statistical tables updated this quarter

- [VEH0101, 110, 120 to 123, 128 to 130](#) – All vehicle types
- [VEH0301](#)– Motorcycles

New registrations this quarter

799 thousand vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain in 2014 quarter 1.

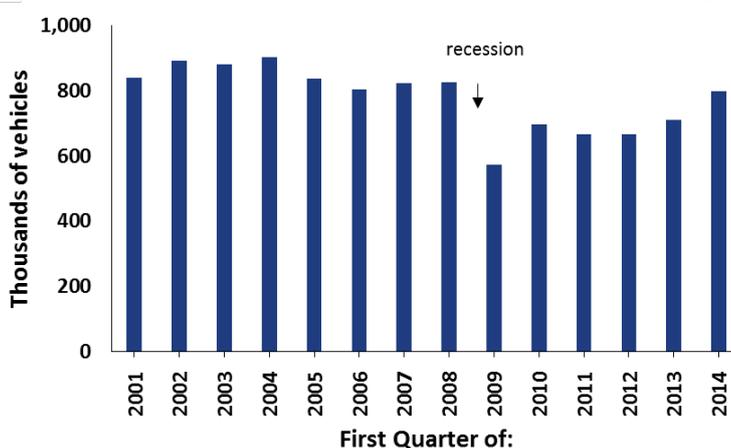
This represents an increase of 89 thousand vehicles, or 12.5%, from the same quarter of the previous year.

It is the highest quarter 1 total since 2008, but still 12% below the highest quarter 1 total in 2004

The economic downturn is likely to have affected the figures from 2008 onwards, but a downward trend was already apparent before this.

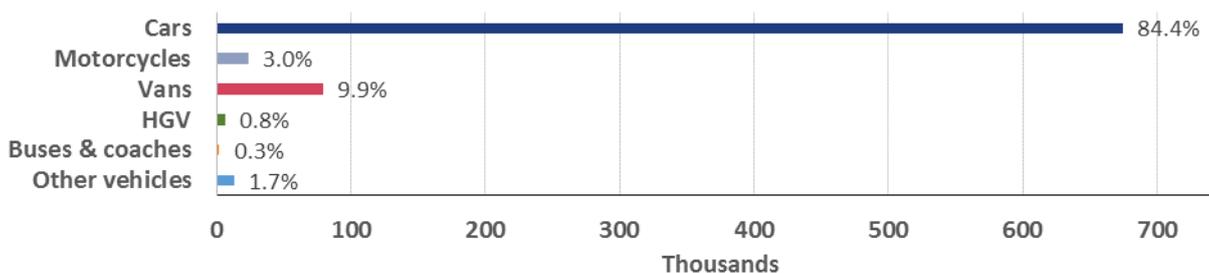
Vehicles registered for the first time, GB: 2001-2014

[web table veh0150]



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 Q1 2014, by vehicle type [Table veh0150]



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 quarter 1 2014 was up 13.5% on quarter 1 2013, at 674 thousand. The last eighteen months 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 1 2014 was up 14.3% on quarter 1 2013, at 79 thousand. The charts show that the recession had a relatively bigger impact on both van and HGV registrations than those of other vehicles.

The number of **HGVs** registered for the first time in quarter 1 2014 was down 31.8% on quarter 1 2013, at 6 thousand. This reflects a lull in registrations following an earlier rush to register new vehicles before new environmental standards (Euro 6) came in in January 2014. The broader picture is one of increasing HGV registrations from a low point following the recession.

New **bus and coach** registrations increased relatively rapidly early in the last decade. While they dropped off less sharply than those of vans or HGVs at the the onset of the recession, they have also recovered less since, and at just over 2 thousand in quarter 1 2014 were 15.6% down on quarter 1 2013.

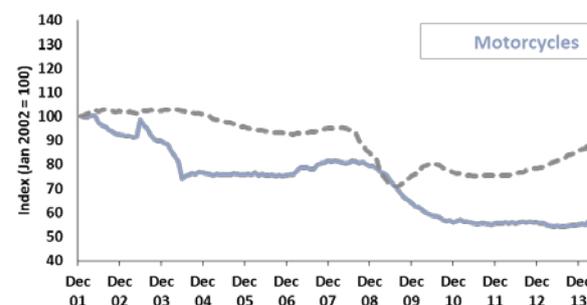
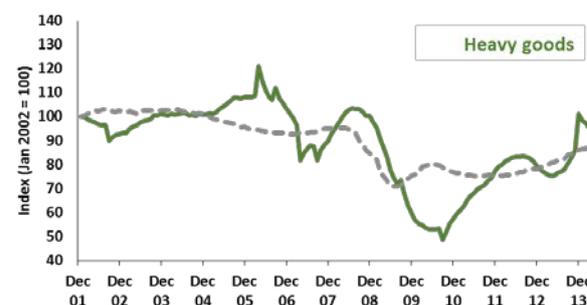
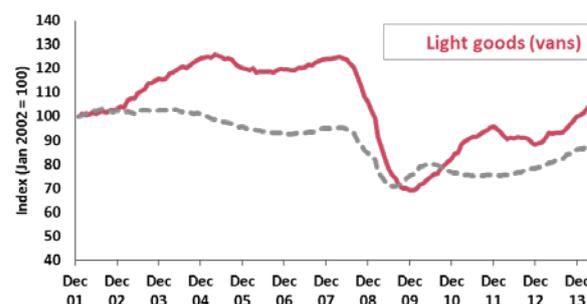
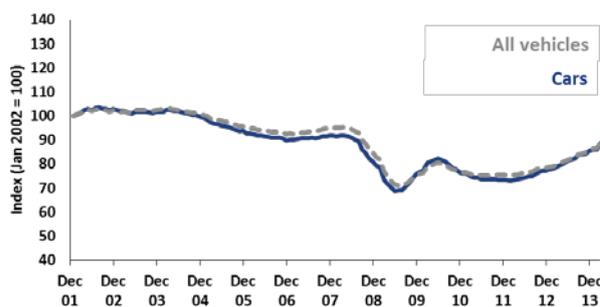
New registrations of **motorcycles** fell relatively rapidly in the first few years of the last decade, before levelling off. The onset of the recession saw a further decrease, followed by another period of relative stability. The 11 thousand new registrations in quarter 1 2014 was up 11.5% on quarter 1 2013.

Vehicles registered for the first time: GB, 2001- Mar 14

12-month rolling averages, indexed to Jan 2002=100:

By vehicle type

[Table veh0150]



Detailed new registrations statistical tables updated this quarter

- [VEH0150, 160 to 170](#) – All vehicle types
- [VEH0256](#) – Cars

Cars and the environment

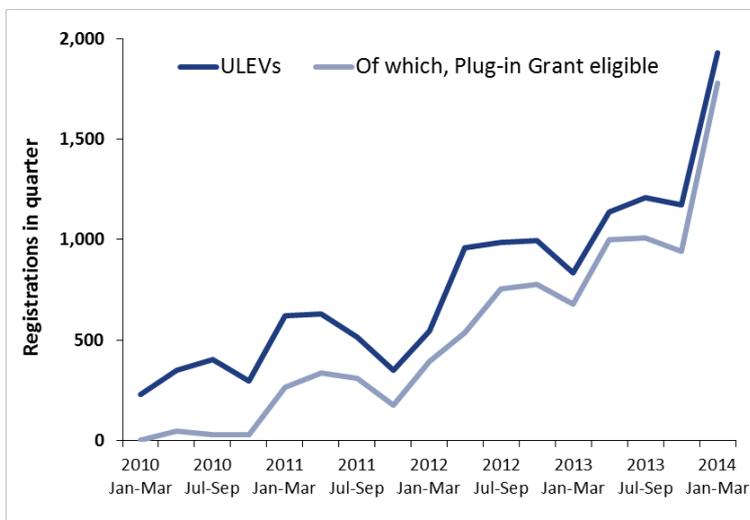
A range of factors have been driving changes in the fuel type, efficiency and emissions of the vehicle fleet. There are financial benefits to motorists who switch to cars with smaller engine sizes or lower emissions. Cars with lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions fall in cheaper Vehicle Excise Duty (car 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.

For more detail of propulsion types for cars see 2013 annual statistics release (Tables veh0203 & veh0253).

The proportion of the licensed car fleet that is made up of diesel and alternative fuel vehicles has continued to grow. By quarter 4 2013 there were 10.1 million **diesel** cars, accounting for 34.5% of the total, up from only 7.4% in 1994. **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 207 thousand alternative fuel cars licensed by December 2013, but this was up 16% over the year.

In total, 1,929 new **ultra low emission vehicles** (ULEV - vehicles with emissions of CO₂ below 75 g/km, or fully electrically powered) were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom in quarter 1 2014, up 130% from 837 in the first quarter of 2013.

New Ultra Low Emission & electric vehicles, UK: 2010-Q1 2014 [Table veh0170]



Most of this increase has been due to vehicles eligible for the **plug-in car and van grants** introduced in January 2011 and February 2012 respectively.¹ The 2014 quarter 1 registrations included 1,727 cars and 50 vans of models that were eligible for these grants, 162% up on the same quarter of 2013. The models accounting for the most registrations in the latest quarter were the Nissan Leaf with 886 and the BMW i3 with 339.

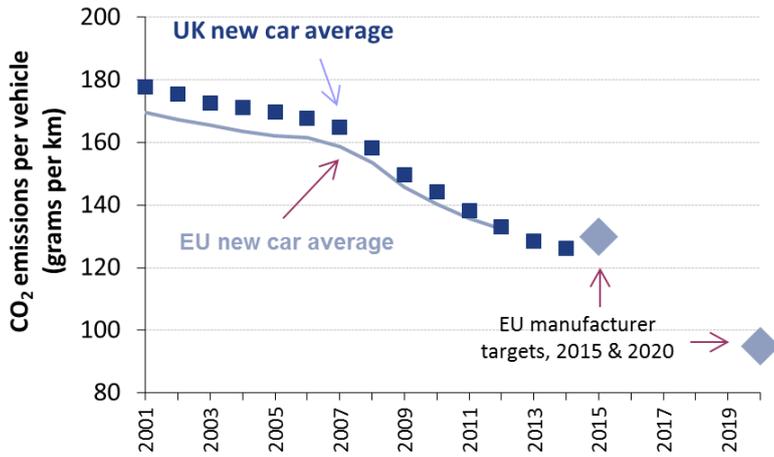
The number of newly registered ultra low emissions vehicles is one of the Department for Transport's [input and impact indicators](#).

¹ These grants are designed to 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 <https://www.gov.uk/plug-in-car-van-grants/overview> for further details.

For more detail of VED bands and CO₂ emissions for all licensed cars see 2013 annual statistics release (Table veh0206).

Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) for cars licensed after 2001 is charged on the basis of their **CO₂ emissions**. In quarter 4 2013, 32% of all licensed cars fell into one of the lowest five VED bands (A to E, up to 140 g/km), compared with under 1% in 2001.

New car CO₂ emissions, UK: 2001 - Q1 2014 [Table veh0256]



The average CO₂ emissions from cars newly registered in 2014 quarter 1 fell by 2.8% from 2013 quarter 1 to an average figure of 126 g/km. Since 2001 the average emissions of new cars has fallen by 29%.

Average new car CO₂ emissions is one of the Department for Transport's [input and impact indicators](#).

Note to chart: 2014 based on Q1 only

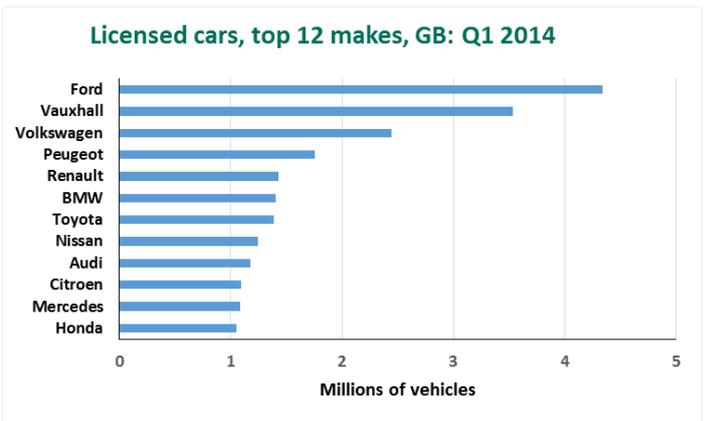
Detailed statistical table updated this quarter

- [VEH0256](#)

Makes and models of cars

At the end of quarter 1 2014, the **most common car model** in Great Britain was the Ford Focus (1.5 million) followed by the Ford Fiesta (1.4 million), a situation unchanged from the year before. In total, Ford accounted for 15% of all cars and Vauxhall for 12%.

The top five makes (Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Peugeot and Renault) accounted for 46% of all licensed cars in Great Britain. There were twelve **makes** with over 1 million cars each on the road at the end of March 2014 and together these accounted for 75% of all licensed cars.



The Ford Fiesta was the most common new registration in 2014 quarter 1 with 39 thousand cars registered for the first time. This was followed by the Ford Focus and Vauxhall Corsa with 24 thousand each and the Volkswagen Golf with 18 thousand.

The top five car makes in terms of **new registrations** (Ford, Vauxhall, Volkswagen, Audi and BMW) accounted for 45% of the new car registrations in quarter 1 2014.

Detailed statistical tables updated this quarter

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

Background information

Important changes to these statistics from July 2014

Some changes are expected in the vehicle licensing statistics as a result of plans announced in March 2014 to centralise the delivery of vehicle and registration services for Northern Ireland at DVLA in Swansea, where these services for Great Britain are already administered, from July 2014.

This will result in a single vehicle register for the United Kingdom, in place of separate registers for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. As a result of this change, it is proposed that the coverage of the VEH series of vehicle licensing statistics tables be expanded to cover UK rather than GB. Where practical, the key time series tables currently published for GB will be expanded to give time series for both UK and GB, at least for a transitional period. Tables currently showing a breakdown of GB statistics into the constituent countries of GB will continue to do so, with an additional split for Northern Ireland being added.

These changes would begin to come into effect for statistical releases produced after July 2014, primarily with the Quarter 3 2014 release. These plans are currently provisional, and subject to change as the details are finalised. If you have any comments on these plans, please send them to vehicles.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Separately from this GB/UK statistical series, the Driver and Vehicle Agency Northern Ireland will continue to publish [statistics for vehicles registered in Northern Ireland](#).

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 Great Britain.

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 Northern Ireland and foreign registered vehicles may also use British 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](#).

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 next is due on 11 September 2014. The Quarter 4 release for each calendar year is accompanied by a larger set of data tables. 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.