



Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics: England and Wales 2013

RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:

Matthew Tranter 020 7944 3076

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Media: 020 7944 3066

Public: 020 7944 3094 bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Key findings: Licensed vehicle numbers fall slightly compared to 2011

The number of licensed taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) in England and Wales fell slightly between 2011 and 2013, according to Department for Transport statistics

There were an estimated 78 thousand taxis and 153 thousand licensed PHVs in England and Wales at end March 2013, a total of 231 thousand vehicles – around one thousand fewer than as the same point in 2011 when the figures were last collected, representing a fall of 0.7%.

This is the first reduction in overall licensed vehicle numbers since comparable statistics were first collected in 2005 and growth in vehicles has slowed considerably since the start of the economic downturn; the total number of taxis and PHVs increased 18% between 2005 and 2009 but by only 2% between 2009 and 2013.

Taxi numbers have been recorded since the 1970s, and grew rapidly following the 1985 Transport Act which amended the circumstances in which a local authority could control taxi licences (as shown in the chart). The recent levelling off is similar to that seen in the early 1990s, another period of economic downturn.

Changes in vehicle numbers are likely to reflect both economic conditions and local licensing policies, with considerable variation between areas – between 2011 and 2013 nearly half of licensing authorities recorded an increase in numbers.

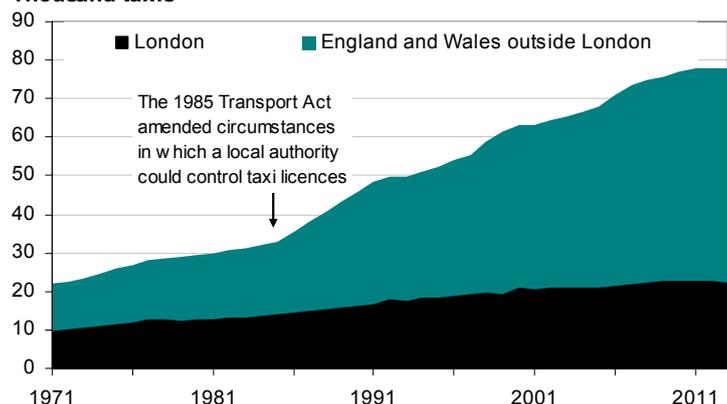
England and Wales, end March 2013:

231,000 licensed vehicles in total
 - 78,000 taxis, 58% wheelchair accessible
 - 153,000 Private Hire Vehicles
 - 31% of all licensed vehicles in London

297,000 total licensed drivers

- 63,000 taxi-only licences
 - 155,000 PHV-only licences
 - 78,000 dual licences

Thousand taxis



About this release

This statistical release presents information on taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) in England and Wales as at 31 March 2013 and includes information relating to the number of licensed vehicles, drivers and (for PHVs only) operators. Figures are updated every two years. They are collected through a survey of licensing officers for each unitary or lower tier local authority in England and Wales.

CONTENTS • Key figures p2 • Commentary p2 • Background information p4

Key figures

The table summarises the latest figures, and shows the change since the previous survey in 2011.

	England	Wales	England and Wales
<i>March 2013 figure in thousands and change compared to March 2011</i>			
Total licensed vehicles	221.6 📉 0.6%	9.0 📉 1.7%	230.5 📉 0.7%
Taxis	73.0 ➡ 0.0%	4.9 📉 0.6%	78.0 📉 0.1%
wheelchair accessible taxis	43.9 📉 0.7%	1.4 📈 10.2%	45.3 📉 0.4%
Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs)	148.6 📉 0.9%	4.0 📉 2.9%	152.6 📉 1.0%
wheelchair accessible PHVs	4.3	0.4	4.7
Licensed PHV operators	15.4 📉 3.3%	0.7 📉 3.9%	16.1 📉 3.3%
Total licensed drivers	285.2 📉 0.5%	11.7 📉 4.9%	296.9 📉 0.7%
Taxi-only licences	62.2 📉 5.1%	0.9 📉 54.4%	63.2 📉 6.5%
PHV-only licences	154.1 ➡ 0.0%	1.3 📉 28.0%	155.4 📉 0.3%
Dual licences	68.8 📈 2.8%	9.5 📈 11.9%	78.3 📈 3.8%

Detailed statistical tables are available online via the [taxi statistical series](#) and the statistical dataset [taxi01](#)

- Trend in taxi numbers from 1965 (taxi0101) and taxi, PHV and driver numbers from 2005 (taxi0102)
- Taxi, PHV and driver statistics by region (taxi0103) and licensing authority area (taxi0104)
- Taxi and PHV numbers per thousand population and rural-urban classification (taxi0105)

Commentary

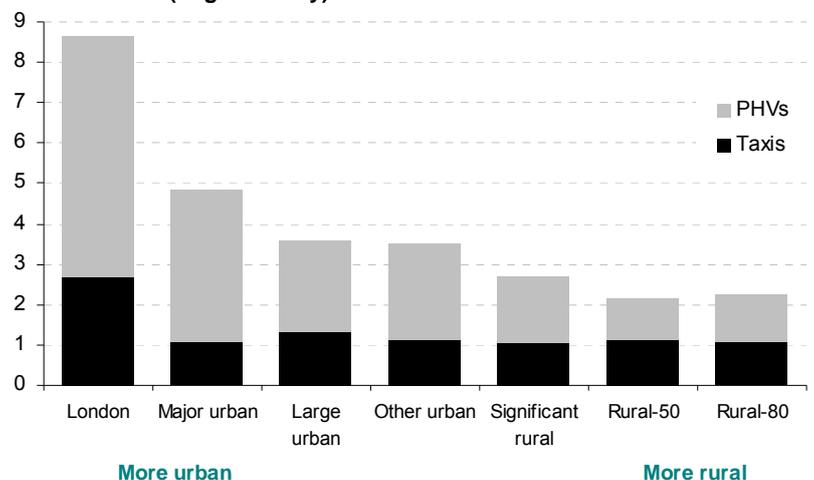
These statistics provide information on the number of licensed taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs), drivers and operators in England and Wales. Both taxis and PHVs must be licensed. **Taxis** (or ‘hackney carriages’) are available for immediate hire and can be hailed in the street (known as ‘plying for hire’), but can also accept pre-bookings. **PHVs** (sometimes known as ‘minicabs’) must be pre-booked and cannot use taxi ranks or ply for hire. The taxi and private hire trades are highly regulated. Taxis cannot operate without both the vehicle and the driver being licensed. Private hire vehicles require the same, plus an operator licence.

Licensed vehicles

Overall there were an estimated 231 thousand taxis and PHVs in England and Wales in 2013, just over a third of which (78 thousand) were taxis. This is equivalent to 4.1 licensed vehicles per thousand people. Overall this rate is higher in London and more urban areas, though outside London the number of taxis per thousand is broadly constant with the difference due to PHVs (see chart).

Licensing authorities outside London can choose to impose limits on taxi numbers. In 2013, 88 authorities (29% of those responding) chose to do so – though these authorities include some of the larger ones and account for nearly 40% of total taxis in England

Licensed taxis and PHVs per thousand people by rural-urban classification (England only)

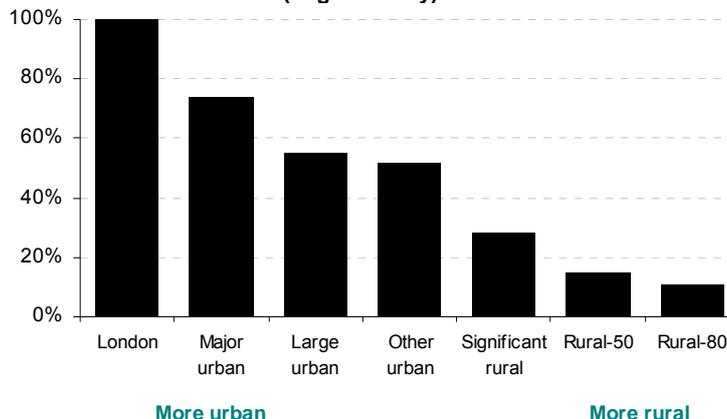


and Wales outside London. Since 2011, 7 areas have removed restrictions and 7 areas have introduced them. PHV numbers are not restricted.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles

An estimated 58% of all taxis in England and Wales were wheelchair accessible (either purpose built or converted) at March 2013 – around 45 thousand vehicles in total. This proportion has been broadly unchanged since 2009. All 22 thousand London taxis are accessible, and outside London the more urban areas have a higher proportion of accessible taxis (see chart). In total 176 authorities (58% of those responding) had a requirement for accessible vehicles in all or part of their taxi fleet.

Estimated proportion of taxis that are wheelchair accessible by rural-urban classification (England only)



A much smaller proportion of PHVs – which are often saloon cars – are wheelchair accessible. We estimated this proportion to be around 3% in 2013.

Licensed drivers

Overall, there were an estimated 297 thousand licensed taxi or PHV drivers in England and Wales, around 2 thousand fewer than in 2011.

Of the total 52% had PHV-only licences, 21% taxi-only licences with 26% having dual taxi/PHV licences – the proportion of licences which are dual, which has risen from 23% in 2005, continued to increase in 2013.

These figures essentially count licences, rather than drivers – the actual number of licensed drivers is likely to be slightly lower as in areas where dual licences are not issued some drivers will hold both taxi and PHV licences. An increasing move to dual licences could therefore mean that the number of driver licences reduces more than the number of licensed drivers.

Driver licensing policies

- **159** of 305 authorities providing information (51%) require taxi drivers to be licensed every year, with the remainder less often or offering a choice. This proportion is similar for PHV drivers.
- **93** authorities (30%) have a requirement for disability awareness training for taxi drivers, compared to **75** having a requirement for PHV drivers.

Related information

These statistics provide information on licensed vehicle and driver numbers, a measure of supply of taxis and PHVs, and details of licensing policies adopted.

- Information on **taxi use** in Great Britain (a measure of demand) is collected through the National Travel Survey, which shows that young adults and those without access to a household car make relatively more trips by taxis. Figures are available in table [nts0601](#) (trips by age and sex), [nts0703](#) (trips by car availability) and [nts0303](#) (trend over time) and further figures may be available on request from the NTS team (national.travelsurvey@dft.gsi.gov.uk)
- The number of people **employed as taxi and PHV drivers** is also collected in the Labour Force Survey, and published in table [tsgb0116](#) of Transport Statistics Great Britain. Other statistics which provide information on the contribution of taxis and PHVs to the economy are collected by the [Office for National Statistics](#).
- Numbers of licensed taxis and PHVs in **Scotland** (which operators under a different licensing regime) are collected by the Scottish Government and published in [Scottish Transport Statistics](#).

Background information

Users and uses of these statistics

These statistics are used within DfT to inform the development and monitoring of policy relating to taxis (for example regarding wheelchair accessible vehicles and quantity controls on taxis), and for occasional ministerial briefing or to answer public enquiries. Outside DfT the statistics are perceived to be of interest to various industry bodies and provide information for licensing authorities to compare themselves to other areas. Figures were also used by the Law Commission as background to their recent review of taxi licensing policy¹.

Strengths and weaknesses of the data

These statistics are collected through a survey of the 316 licensing authorities in England and Wales (lower tier local authorities, and TfL for London). A copy of the survey questionnaire can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-taxis>

In 2013, full or partial responses were received from 97 per cent of areas, covering nearly 99 per cent of licensed vehicles. Where a figure was not provided, this was imputed by carrying forward a figure from the authority's latest response to previous surveys. This means that the national estimates involve very little imputation. Data returns are validated by comparing to previous figures and querying cases where there has been a particularly big change. This can result in revisions to previous years figures, though these are typically minor.

In a few cases, authorities report that figures are estimated, or relate to time points other than 31 March. Although these factors are unlikely to impact on the national and regional level figures to any great degree, changes in the data systems used by licensing authorities to store and extract the information can result in fluctuations in the quality of data over time. This is unlikely to be systematic and it is difficult to assess the impact with any precision, however sensitivity analysis suggests changes of +/- 1% in the national figures should be interpreted with caution.

Among individual data items the number of wheelchair accessible taxis and particularly PHVs are most affected by unavailability of information. National figures for wheelchair accessible PHVs are estimated from the information available and considerably less robust than the other statistics presented in this release.

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:

www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/index.html

For details of ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release: <https://www.gov.uk/transport-statistics-notes-and-guidance-taxis>

Next Release

Following feedback from local authority representatives, we intend to collect and publish Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle statistics on an ad-hoc basis in future. The date of the next release will be announced through the DfT publications schedule at least one month before publication, but is unlikely to be before summer 2015.

We welcome user feedback on the frequency of future publications or any other aspect of these statistics. This can be provided by email to bus.statistics@dft.gsi.gov.uk

¹ For further details see: <http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/areas/taxi-and-private-hire-services.htm>