



Department
for Transport

Quarterly Road Traffic Estimates, Great Britain April - June 2015

Traffic across all vehicle types and road classes has increased, for the ninth quarter in succession.

Motor vehicle traffic in Great Britain **increased by 2.3%** in the year ending June 2015 from the previous year. The **provisional figure** of 314.6 billion¹ vehicle miles is the highest rolling annual total ever, around 0.1% more than the pre-recession peak for the year ending September 2007.

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About this release

This quarterly release presents estimates for road traffic in Great Britain from April to June 2015. Quarterly estimates remain provisional until they have been constrained by the final annual estimates each year. Final annual estimates for 2015 are due to be published in summer 2016.

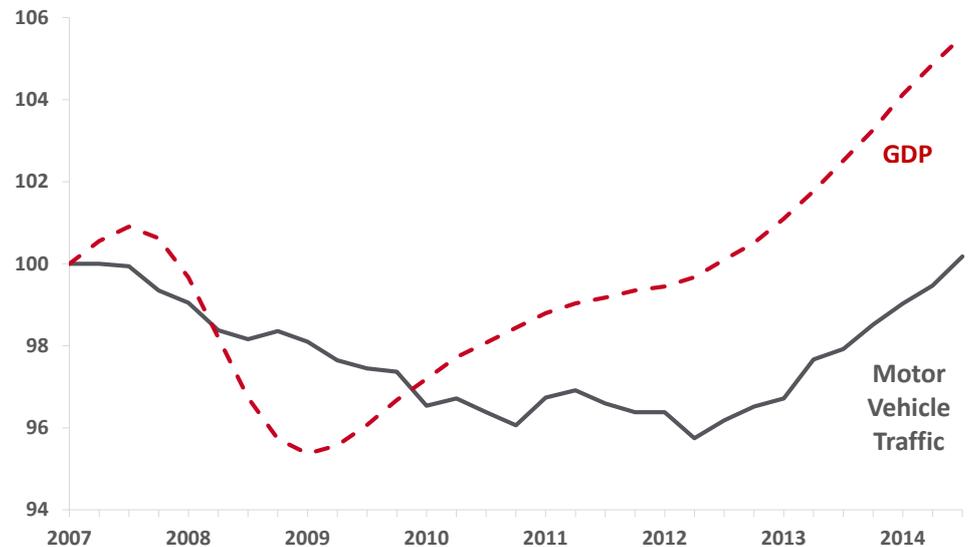
Quarterly estimates are based on traffic data collected continuously from a national network of around 200 Automatic Traffic Counters. Final annual figures also incorporate manual traffic count data.

Information

Further charts and tables can be accessed online via our [road traffic statistical series](#).

The upward trend in traffic volumes is likely to reflect growth in the UK economy. GDP rose by 2.6%² in the year ending June 2015. Lower fuel prices may also have contributed to increased traffic. The retail price of premium unleaded in the year ending June 2015 was on average 12.6 pence per litre cheaper than in the previous year³.

Chart 1: Index of rolling annual motor vehicle traffic in Great Britain, and UK GDP [TRA2501e]



Compared to the previous year, in the year ending June 2015:

- ▶ **Car traffic increased by 1.7%**
- ▶ **Van traffic continued to rise faster than any other vehicle type, increasing by 6.3% to a new peak of 46.3 billion vehicle miles**
- ▶ **All road classes experienced higher volumes of traffic, with traffic on rural minor roads increasing the fastest, at 5.5%**
- ▶ **Motorway traffic increased by 1.8%, reaching 65 billion vehicle miles**

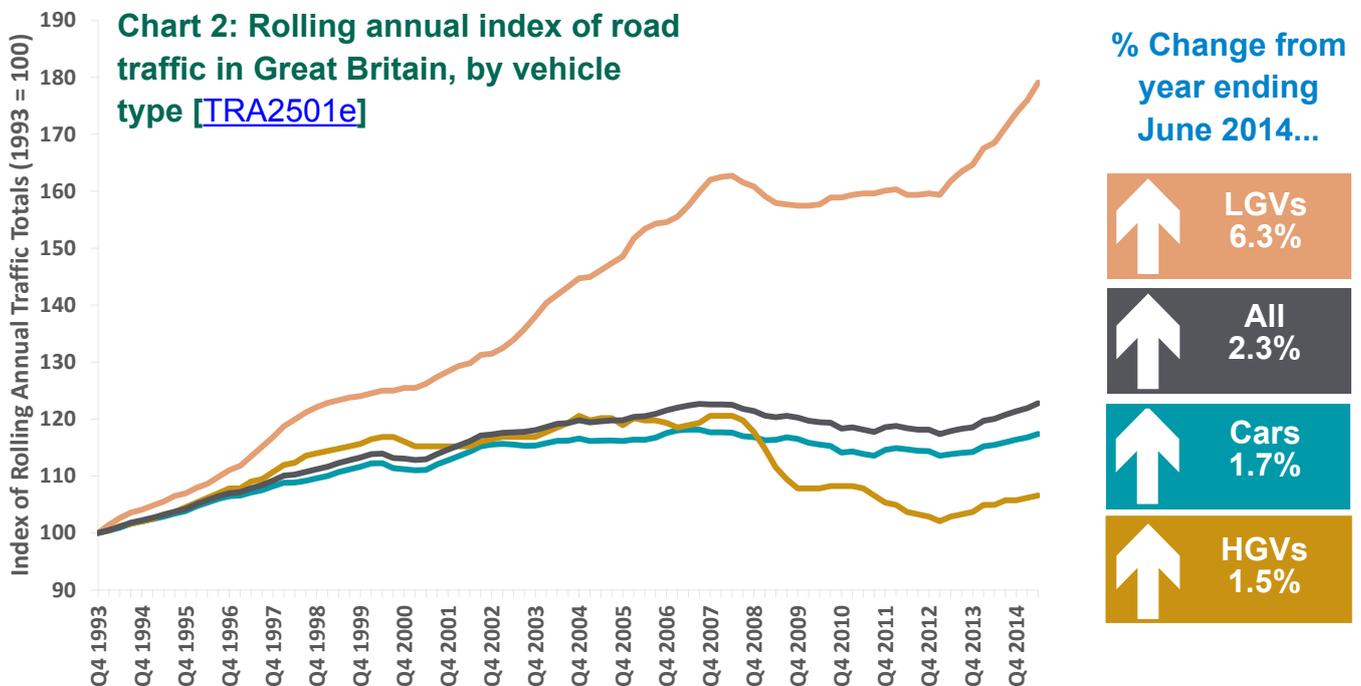
Summary Figures

The summary table below shows how vehicle traffic in the year ending June 2015 compares to that in the year ending March 2015, and to figures across a range of earlier years. More information on our quarterly estimates, along with our [TRA25](#) series of quarterly tables, can be found online [here](#).

	Vehicle Miles (Provisional)	Percentage change from...				
		Last Quarter	Last Year	Five Years Ago	Ten Years Ago	Twenty Years Ago
		Year ending Mar 2015	Year ending June 2014	Year ending June 2010	Year ending June 2005	Year ending June 1995
All Motor Vehicle Traffic	314.6 billion	↑ 0.7%	↑ 2.3%	↑ 2.8%	↑ 2.6%	↑ 19.0%
Cars and Taxis	246.6 billion	↑ 0.5%	↑ 1.7%	↑ 1.6%	↑ 1.0%	↑ 14.1%
Light Goods Vehicles (LGV)	46.3 billion	↑ 1.8%	↑ 6.3%	↑ 13.5%	↑ 22.5%	↑ 69.6%
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV)	16.1 billion	↑ 0.6%	↑ 1.5%	↓ -1.1%	↓ -11.3%	↑ 3.3%
Motorways	65.0 billion	↑ 0.7%	↑ 1.8%	↑ 6.1%	↑ 7.8%	↑ 44.6%
Rural 'A' Roads	90.0 billion	↑ 0.8%	↑ 1.6%	↑ 2.8%	↑ 2.8%	↑ 22.5%
Urban 'A' Roads	49.6 billion	↑ 0.3%	↑ 1.1%	↓ -0.5%	↓ -3.1%	↑ 0.7%
Rural Minor Roads	44.8 billion	↑ 1.6%	↑ 5.5%	↑ 5.7%	↑ 10.6%	↑ 25.2%
Urban Minor Roads	65.2 billion	↑ 0.3%	↑ 2.5%	↑ 0.3%	↓ -2.6%	↑ 7.1%

Vehicle Type

Traffic across all vehicle types has increased over the last year



Share of traffic by vehicle type, in the year ending June 2015



78.4%



14.7%



5.1%

In the year ending June 2015:

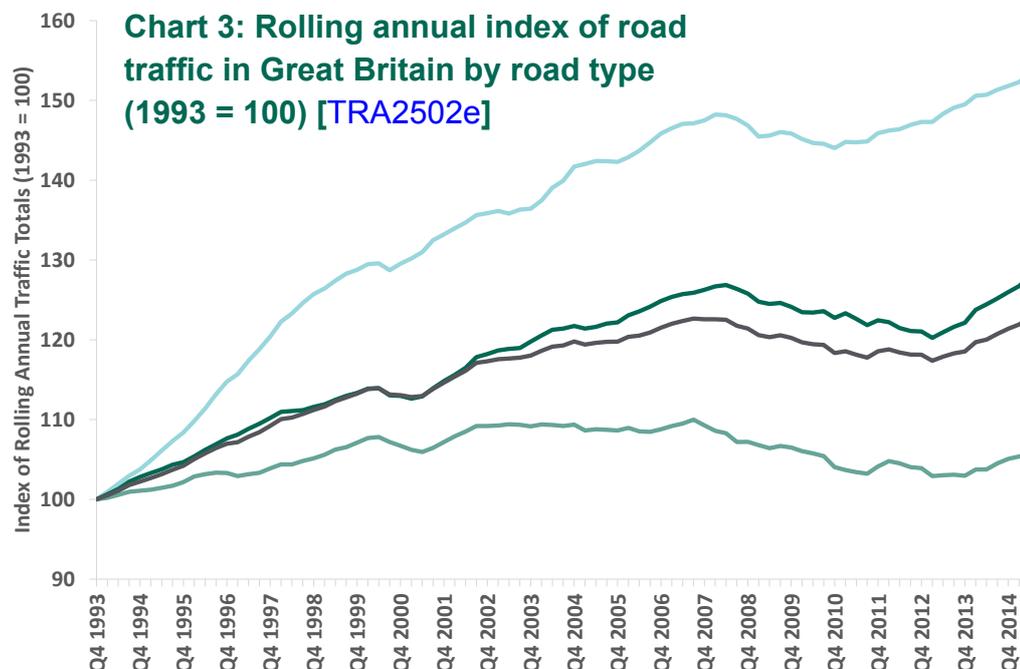
- Car and taxi traffic increased by 1.7% from the previous year, to 246.6 billion vehicle miles. This is 0.7% below the record level in the year ending June 2007, of 248.3 billion vehicle miles.
- LGV traffic totalled 46.3 billion vehicle miles, 6.3% more than the previous year. Since 1995, LGV traffic has risen by 69.6%.
- HGV traffic increased 1.5%, totalling 16.1 billion vehicle miles.

Road Type

Traffic continues to increase across all road classes

In the year ending June 2015:

- Provisionally, traffic on motorways and rural roads was higher than ever before, whereas despite growing 1.9%, traffic on urban roads remains 3.9% below the pre-recession peak in 2007.
- Traffic on motorways grew by 1.8% from the previous year, from 63.9 billion to 65 billion vehicle miles.
- 'A' road traffic showed an increase of 1.5% overall. On rural 'A' roads it rose 1.6% to 90 billion vehicle miles, while on urban 'A' roads it rose 1.1% to 49.6 billion vehicle miles.
- Traffic volumes also grew on minor roads. Traffic increased by 5.5% on minor rural roads to 44.8 billion vehicle miles, and by 2.5% on minor urban roads to 65.2 billion vehicle miles.



Long term trends

Over the last 20 years, traffic has increased at varying rates across vehicle and road types.

Total traffic ↑ 19.0%

Car and taxi ↑ 14.1%

LGV ↑ 69.6%

HGV ↑ 3.3%

Motorways ↑ 44.6%

Rural 'A' ↑ 22.5%
Minor rural ↑ 25.2%

Urban 'A' ↑ 0.7%
Minor urban ↑ 7.1%

% Change from year ending June 2014...

↑ Motorway 1.8%

↑ Rural 2.9%

↑ All 2.3%

↑ Urban 1.9%

Footnotes

1. One billion = 1,000 million
2. Economic data is sourced from the Office for National Statistics, available [here](#).
3. Fuel price data is sourced from the Department for Energy and Climate Change, available [here](#).

Background Information

Users and uses of these statistics

Road traffic data are a key source of management information on the country's infrastructure. Main uses of road traffic statistics are summarised online in our report "[Meeting customers' needs: Users and uses of road traffic statistics and data](#)". These include:

- Highways England, Local Authorities (including Transport for London) and devolved governments, who use the data for transport planning, road engineering and policy monitoring at a regional or local level.
- Road accident and safety statistics, who use our annual and quarterly traffic estimates to produce road safety and accident rates, as required for the Strategic Framework for Road Safety.

We welcome **feedback** on any aspects of the Department's road traffic statistics including content, timing, and format. Please send any queries you have by email, to roadtraff.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

Sources, strengths and weaknesses of the data

Quarterly estimates are based on data from automatic traffic counters and give an indication of changes in traffic levels for different types of vehicle and on different types of road in Great Britain as a whole. **Annual estimates** make use of data from around eight thousand manual traffic counts in addition to the data from the automatic traffic counters and can estimate traffic levels in local areas and on specific road links which cannot be produced from the quarterly data.

Automatic traffic counters classify vehicle types based on characteristics such as axle-spacing and vehicle length. This creates the possibility for misclassification of vehicles with atypical characteristics, meaning that **provisional estimates** for different vehicle types are less robust than the final estimates which also utilise the more accurate manual count data. The classification algorithms are continually developed to ensure that vehicle classification is as accurate as possible.

Further statistical guidance can be found online here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-statistics-guidance

As part of the quarterly methodology, historic figures are subject to revision. However, these revisions are typically minor and will not affect qualitative patterns in the data.

Provisional quarterly and annual traffic estimates for all motor vehicles have historically been accurate (typically within 1.5% when compared with the final estimates, as illustrated in the table below.

Billion vehicle miles/percentage

All motor vehicle traffic	2012					2013					2014				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Ann.
Provisional estimates at time of publication	76.5	74.6	75.0	76.7	302.6	75.4	76.9	77.1	77.6	306.4	77.4	77.2	77.9	77.8	310.2
Final estimates	76.5	74.6	75.3	76.2	302.6	75.0	76.0	76.2	76.5	303.7	77.3	77.3	78.1	78.2	311.0
<i>Difference (%)</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>-0.1</i>	<i>-0.4</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>0.9</i>	<i>0.1</i>	<i>-0.2</i>	<i>-0.3</i>	<i>-0.6</i>	<i>-0.3</i>

Next release

The next Quarterly Road Traffic estimates, for year ending September 2015, are due to be published in November 2015. Final annual traffic estimates for 2015 are due to be published in summer 2016.

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.

Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/pre-release-access-lists-for-road-traffic-speeds-and-congestion-series