



Department for Transport

Vehicle Licensing Statistics: Annual 2020

About this release

This release presents the latest [statistics on licensed motor vehicles](#). 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 refer to Great Britain. UK data is available from July 2014.

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ULEVs: Vehicles that are reported to emit less than 75g of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the tailpipe for every kilometre travelled.

Alternative fuel: Vehicles that can be propelled by something other than just petrol or diesel.

Next published: July 2021

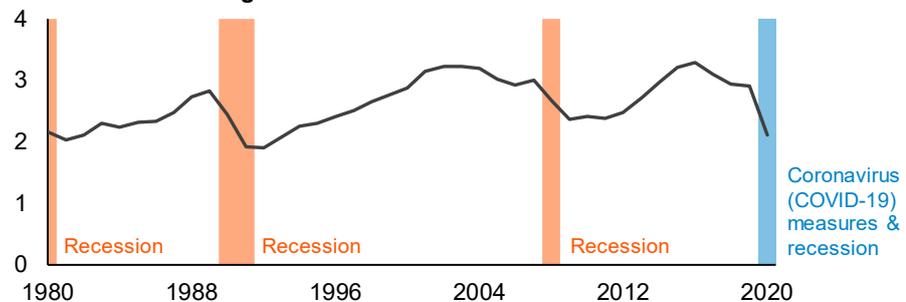


The recent trends in this statistical series have been heavily affected by the measures implemented from March 2020 onwards to limit the impact of the **coronavirus (COVID-19)** pandemic. Additional information is provided on [page 3](#).



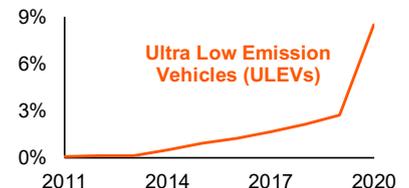
2.1 million vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2020, 27% lower than during 2019. [\[VEH0150\]](#)

Millions of vehicles registered for the first time - GB

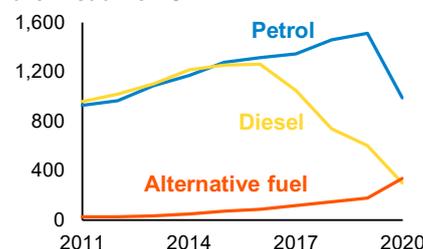


During 2020, 179 thousand **ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)** were registered for the first time in Great Britain, an increase of 125% on 2019. ULEVs made up 8.5% of all new registrations in 2020. [\[VEH0150\]](#)

Proportion of vehicles registered for the first time - GB



Thousands of cars registered for the first time - GB



More **alternative fuel cars** (338 thousand) were registered for the first time in Great Britain during 2020 than **diesel cars** (295 thousand), following a 87% annual increase in alternative fuel cars year on year, amidst a sharp decline for both petrol and diesel cars. [\[VEH0253\]](#)



The most **popular** new car models registered in Great Britain in 2020 were Ford Fiesta (48 thousand), Vauxhall Corsa (46 thousand) and Volkswagen Golf (44 thousand). [\[VEH0161\]](#)



At the end of 2020, there were 38.6 million **licensed vehicles** in Great Britain, a decrease of 0.3% compared to the end of 2019. [\[VEH0101\]](#)



Published table improvements

This release includes a number of enhanced data tables relating to alternative fuels and emissions. In addition, we have improved the metadata surrounding our geographic breakdowns.

This initiative has been put in place to meet the growing need from users for regularly updated datasets on the fast developing trends for vehicles using alternative fuels, particularly on a geographical basis.

Alternative fuels / Emission datasets

- ▶ [VEH0132](#): Licensed ULEVs by local authority, including a breakdown for Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs), now including a further breakdown by private and company keepers (**enhanced**).
- ▶ [VEH0156](#): Provisional average reported CO₂ emissions figure of cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) registered for the first time, by data source, now including a further propulsion / fuel type breakdown for cars (**enhanced**).
- ▶ [VEH0203/VEH0253](#): Cars registered for the first time by propulsion / fuel type, now including figures on Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) (**enhanced**).

Proposed future changes

We are always interested in receiving user feedback about the regular data we publish. Our future plans are discussed in [the background note](#).

Keepership

Every registered vehicle, unless it is in the process of changing hands, has a registered keeper, whose details are held by DVLA.

Note that the registered keeper of a vehicle is not necessarily the person who uses it, and the vehicle is not always based at the keeper's contact address. This is particularly true for company or fleet vehicles.

Impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19)



The government's measures to limit the impact and transmission of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have affected the trends in these figures since March 2020.

Timeline of events impacting new registrations up to end 2020

During the UK lockdown (applied from 23 March 2020), vehicle dealerships and showrooms were required to close, removing the main method by which new vehicles are sold in the UK, which had a heavy impact on new registrations during 2020 Q2. These restrictions were subsequently lifted at various times for the devolved countries of the UK - England (1 June), Northern Ireland (8 June), Wales (22 June), and Scotland (29 June).

In response to the first national lockdown, several manufacturers implemented new methods for purchasing vehicles (e.g. "click and collect").

During July to September 2020, there were no national restrictions affecting vehicle registrations themselves, although locally applied measures might have led to reduced access to dealerships.

During October to December 2020, national and local measures were implemented in each devolved country at different times.

Impact on new UK registrations



Monthly new registrations in the UK were considerably lower in 2020 (compared with the same months in 2019) during periods of national lockdowns and restrictions affecting dealerships and showrooms (see **Table 1**). The most affected periods for new registrations were during March to June and in November. July was the only month to show a year on year increase during 2020, increasing by 12%. Overall, there were just over 800 thousand fewer vehicles registered in the UK.

UK economy

New vehicle registrations are heavily affected by the economy.

The UK economy was in recession following two successive declines in GDP during 2020 Q1 and Q2, but subsequently rebounded in 2020 Q3 and Q4. However, the economy did not recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Table 1: New vehicle registrations, United Kingdom, January to December, 2018 to 2020 ^[VEH0150]

Date	2018	2019	2020	Annual percentage change: 2020 (%)
January	199,813	202,012	190,887	-6
February	108,493	111,025	108,310	-2
March	567,462	564,203	314,523	-44
1st to 21st*	280,714	282,763	262,739	-7
22nd to 31st	286,748	281,440	51,784	-82
April	213,277	211,560	12,342	-94
May	245,922	240,046	37,079	-85
June	298,793	293,837	197,146	-33
July	211,685	206,371	230,235	+12
August	129,384	134,489	128,671	-4
September	421,954	414,027	412,742	0
October	204,597	191,443	190,360	-1
November	209,329	203,713	160,982	-21
December	186,230	191,311	178,063	-7
Whole year	2,996,939	2,964,037	2,161,340	-27

* Whilst the first full UK lockdown started on 23 March 2020, this table compares the first 3 complete weeks of March to avoid the strong effect of the day of the week on new registrations.

Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)

Despite the fall in new registrations, ULEVs saw large year on year UK increases in 2020 from June onwards (see **Table 2**), ranging from +89% to +250% each month.

Consequently, the overall proportion of new vehicle registrations that were ULEVs in the UK also increased significantly during the course of 2020. The proportion grew from 5.1% in January 2020, up to 17.8% in December 2020. The overall proportion for 2020 was 8.4%, compared to 2.7% in 2019.

Table 2: New vehicle registrations by body type, including ultra low emission vehicles, United Kingdom, January to December, 2019 and 2020 ^[VEH0150]

									Thousand / Percentage			
Month	Cars	Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	Motorcycles	Buses & coaches	Other vehicles	Total: All	Car ULEVs	Other body type ULEVs	Total: ULEVs	Proportion of all new vehicles that were ULEVs	
		New registrations										
Jan-19	163.7	23.0	4.2	7.0	0.4	3.6	202.0	3.6	0.3	4.0	2.0	
Feb-19	84.5	14.8	2.7	5.5	0.4	3.1	111.0	2.1	0.2	2.3	2.1	
Mar-19	462.4	68.8	6.9	17.9	0.8	7.5	564.2	8.9	0.9	9.8	1.7	
Apr-19	163.8	25.7	5.0	11.0	0.5	5.5	211.6	3.5	0.6	4.1	1.9	
May-19	185.9	30.8	5.0	12.1	0.6	5.7	240.0	4.4	0.6	5.0	2.1	
Jun-19	226.4	40.4	7.7	13.0	0.6	5.8	293.8	5.1	0.7	5.7	2.0	
Jul-19	159.5	26.7	3.1	11.2	0.4	5.6	206.4	3.8	0.8	4.5	2.2	
Aug-19	95.4	23.9	2.7	8.0	0.3	4.2	134.5	4.1	0.5	4.6	3.4	
Sep-19	346.6	42.4	4.6	13.9	1.0	5.5	414.0	13.0	0.7	13.7	3.3	
Oct-19	146.6	26.3	5.1	8.1	0.7	4.6	191.4	6.2	0.8	7.0	3.7	
Nov-19	160.5	26.7	4.8	7.1	0.7	4.0	203.7	8.9	0.9	9.8		
Dec-19	151.3	26.5	3.7	5.8	0.7	3.3	191.3	9.3	0.8	10.1	5.3	
2019	2,346.6	375.9	55.4	120.6	7.2	58.3	2,964.0	72.9	7.7	80.6	2.7	
New registrations												
Jan-20	152.1	24.2	3.4	7.1	0.4	3.6	190.9	8.8	0.8	9.7	5.1	
Feb-20	82.1	14.6	2.3	5.7	0.4	3.2	108.3	4.5	0.7	5.2	4.8	
Mar-20	257.4	31.8	4.8	13.8	1.0	5.9	314.5	18.4	0.9	19.3	6.1	
Apr-20	4.2	3.1	1.0	1.7	0.1	2.2	12.3	1.4	0.2	1.7	13.5	
May-20	20.6	7.6	1.2	5.5	0.1	2.0	37.1	3.2	0.3	3.4	9.3	
Jun-20	146.7	31.0	2.3	13.7	0.2	3.3	197.1	13.3	0.7	14.0	7.1	
Jul-20	177.3	29.6	3.3	15.1	0.3	4.6	230.2	15.0	0.9	15.9	6.9	
Aug-20	90.3	20.8	2.5	10.6	0.4	4.0	128.7	8.2	0.5	8.7	6.8	
Sep-20	331.8	54.2	4.6	15.8	0.9	5.5	412.7	33.7	1.5	35.2	8.5	
Oct-20	142.6	28.6	4.3	9.9	0.6	4.4	190.4	16.7	1.2	17.9	9.4	
Nov-20	116.5	28.7	4.2	7.2	0.5	3.9	161.0	17.5	1.0	18.5	11.5	
Dec-20	134.8	27.3	3.6	9.1	0.3	2.9	178.1	30.4	1.2	31.6	17.8	
2020	1,656.4	301.5	37.6	115.0	5.2	45.5	2,161.3	171.1	10.0	181.1	8.4	
Annual percentage change: 2019 to 2020 (%)												
Jan-20	-7	5	-20	1	8	-1	-6	142	163	144		
Feb-20	-3	-2	-14	4	0	5	-2	112	231	122		
Mar-20	-44	-54	-31	-23	28	-21	-44	106	11	98		
Apr-20	-97	-88	-80	-84	-87	-59	-94	-59	-61	-59		
May-20	-89	-75	-75	-55	-90	-64	-85	-28	-53	-31		
Jun-20	-35	-23	-70	5	-65	-42	-33	163	5	145		
Jul-20	11	11	6	35	-8	-17	12	296	18	250		
Aug-20	-5	-13	-5	32	20	-5	-4	101	-1	90		
Sep-20	-4	28	0	14	-16	-1	0	160	101	157		
Oct-20	-3	9	-15	22	-20	-5	-1	168	62	156		
Nov-20	-27	7	-11	1	-24	-2	-21	97	11	89		
Dec-20	-11	3	0	56	-55	-13	-7	226	49	212		
2020	-29	-20	-32	-5	-28	-22	-27	135	30	125		

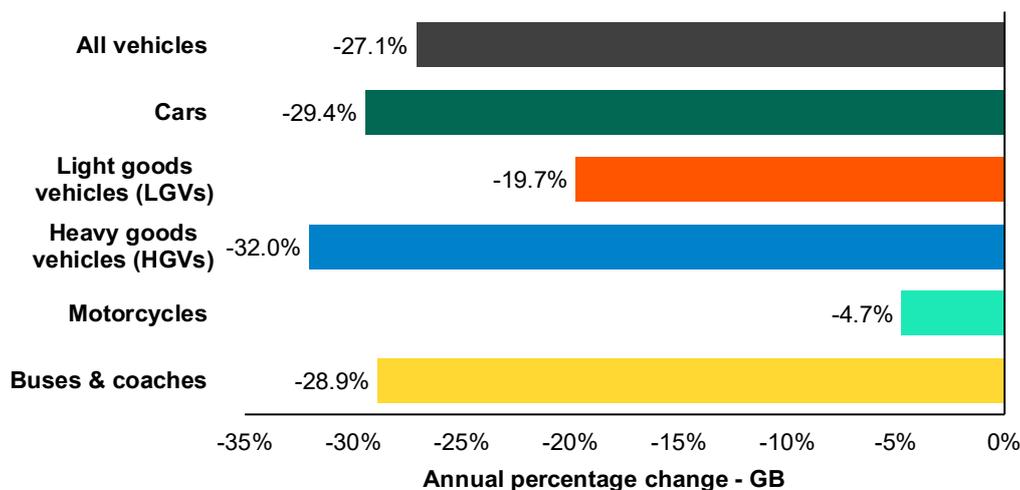
Vehicles registered for the first time

During 2020, 2.1 million vehicles were registered for the first time in Great Britain. [\[VEH0150\]](#)

New vehicle registrations in Great Britain in 2020 decreased by 27.1% compared to 2019, the fourth consecutive year of decline following the highest recorded level ever in 2016, falling to levels not seen since 1993.

There were decreases in the number of new registrations across all body types. The least affected body type was motorcycles, which decreased by only 4.7%.

Figure 1: Annual percentage change in vehicles registered for the first time compared to 2019 by body type, Great Britain, 2020 [\[VEH0150\]](#)



Europe

The ACEA (European Automobile Manufacturers' Association) produce new registration figures collected from trade bodies across Europe. UK data is provided by The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), which represents new car sales rather than new registrations with DVLA, so the figures will be broadly comparable but will not match.

According to figures produced by ACEA:

“2020 saw the biggest yearly drop in car demand since records began, with new-car registrations falling by 3 million units compared to 2019.

All 27 EU markets recorded double-digit declines throughout 2020. Among the region's biggest car markets, Spain posted the sharpest drop (-32.3%), followed closely by Italy (-27.9%) and France (-25.5%), while full-year losses were significant but less pronounced in Germany (-19.1%).”

Data covering the EU, the UK, and the EFTA (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland) can be found here: <https://www.acea.be/press-releases/article/passenger-car-registrations-23.7-in-2020-3.3-in-december>

Monthly seasonality

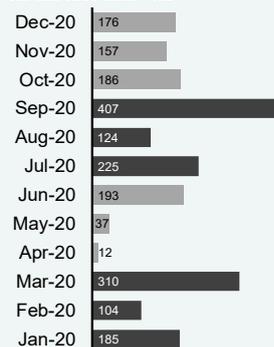
Up to 1998, new registration plates were issued once a year in August, causing a peak in new registrations in the third quarter.

Since 1999, new plates have been 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.

INSET: Vehicles registered for the first time by month, Great Britain, year ending December 2020

[\[VEH0150\]](#)

Thousands of vehicles registered for the first time - GB



Updated tables

Detailed new registrations data tables updated this quarter:

All vehicle types: [VEH0150, 0160, 0161 & 0170 to 0172](#)

Cars: [VEH0253 & 0256](#)

Although the number of new registrations in Great Britain can vary considerably each year, the [total vehicle stock](#) varies much more slowly as there are many more vehicles that remain licensed over the year.

Table 3: Vehicles registered for the first time by body type, with previous year and total stock comparison, Great Britain, 2020 [VEH0101_VEH0150]

	2019		2020		Total stock at the end of December 2020
	New registrations	Proportion of all new registrations	New registrations	Proportion of all new registrations	
Cars	2,295	79.1	1,620	76.6	31,696
Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	369	12.7	296	14.0	4,220
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	54	1.9	37	1.7	486
Motorcycles	119	4.1	113	5.3	1,274
Buses & coaches	7	0.2	5	0.2	137
Other vehicles	57	2.0	44	2.1	769
Total	2,901	100.0	2,116	100.0	38,582

New car registrations by fuel type

More alternative fuel cars were registered for the first time than diesel cars in 2020. [VEH0253]



In 2020, there was continued decline in new diesel car registrations in Great Britain, falling by 51% compared to 2019. Over the same period, new petrol car registrations fell 35%.

Diesel car registrations have been falling in recent years since peaking in 2016. Over the four year period from 2016 to 2020, new diesel car registrations fell 77%.

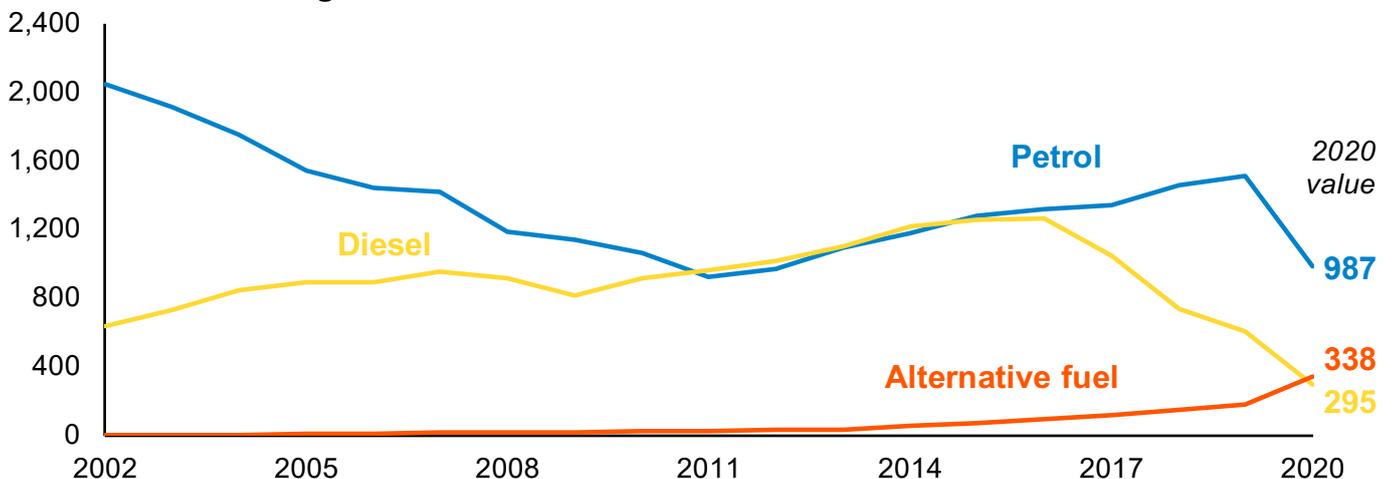
By contrast, new registrations of alternative fuel cars increased sharply by 87% in 2020 compared to 2019. More new alternative fuel cars (338 thousand) were registered this year than new diesel cars (295 thousand).

New car registrations Annual change in 2020 - GB

Diesel	Petrol	Alt. fuel
-51%	-35%	+87%

Figure 2: Cars registered for the first time by fuel type, Great Britain, 2002 to 2020 [VEH0253]

Thousands of cars registered for the first time - GB



There were more new Battery Electric cars registered for the first time in 2020 than in all previous years combined. [\[VEH0253\]](#)

In 2020, across all new alternative fuel car registrations in Great Britain, there were 164 thousand Hybrid Electric (HEVs), 107 thousand Battery Electric (BEVs), 67 thousand Plug-in Hybrid Electric (PHEVs), and fewer than 1 thousand using other alternative fuel types.

New registrations of BEV cars nearly tripled in 2020 (+184%) compared to 2019, with more registered than in all previous years combined (2001 to 2019 new registrations: 101 thousand), which equates to 51% of all new BEV car registrations since 2001 occurring in 2020.

Furthermore, 23% of all new HEV car registrations since 2001 occurred in 2020, and 29% of all new PHEV car registrations since 2001 occurred in 2020.

New HEV car registrations increased by 51% in 2020 compared with 2019 and new PHEV car registrations increased by 92% over the same period.

		Does the vehicle use petrol or diesel?	
		Yes	No
Does the vehicle use electric power? 	Yes, and is a plug-in	Plug-in Hybrid Electric (PHEV) ¹	Battery Electric (BEV)
	Yes, but is not a plug-in	Hybrid Electric (HEV)	Fuel Cell Electric (FCEV)
	No	Petrol / Diesel	Other*

1. A Range-Extended Electric Vehicle (R-EEV) is a special case of PHEV, where the conventional fuel does not power the wheels directly, usually only charging the battery for additional range.

* This table excludes rare combinations based on biofuels and other emerging technologies.

Explaining fuel type technologies

Due to the introduction of new technologies, there are many terms used now to describe how a vehicle is propelled, which are not always straightforward to compare. **Figure 3** shows the overlap between common terms used in this release to describe alternative fuel vehicles, along with some common models found in those areas. Note that the size of the area does not accurately reflect how many vehicles lie in that region.

Figure 3: Venn diagram to show the overlap of the terms plug-in, Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV), and Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) in the wider context of alternative fuel types in these statistics

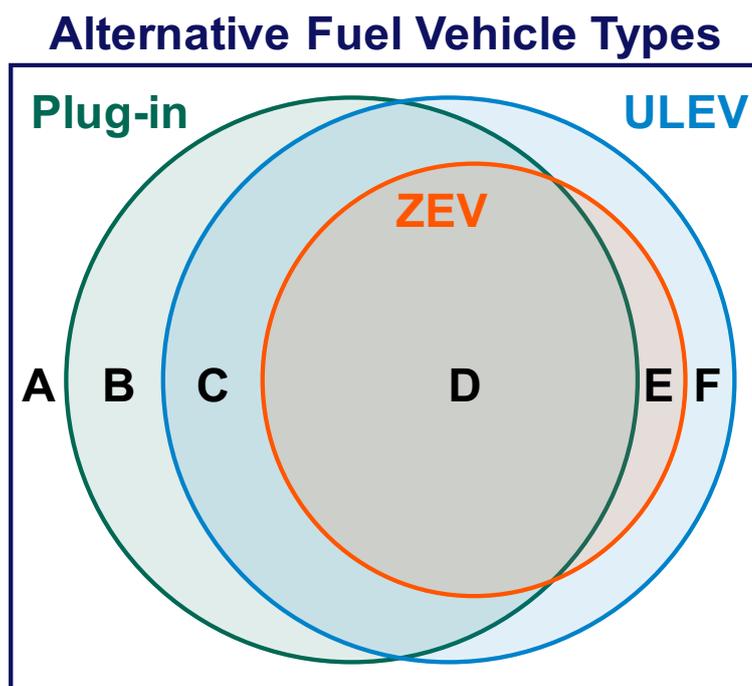


Figure 3 labels

- A:** Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) that are too high-emitting to count as ULEVs, e.g. Toyota Yaris HEV.
- B:** Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) that are too high-emitting to count as ULEVs, e.g. BMW X5 PHEV.
- C:** Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) and Range-Extended Electric Vehicles (R-EEVs), e.g. Mitsubishi Outlander PHEV and BMW i3s REX respectively.
- D:** Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), e.g. Tesla Model 3, Nissan Leaf, and Nissan e-NV200 (van).
- E:** Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEVs) that use hydrogen, e.g. Toyota Mirai or Hyundai IX35.
- F:** Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) that are low-emitting, e.g. a series of Toyota Prius HEV in 2016/17.

Ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs)

This section relates to the United Kingdom rather than Great Britain.

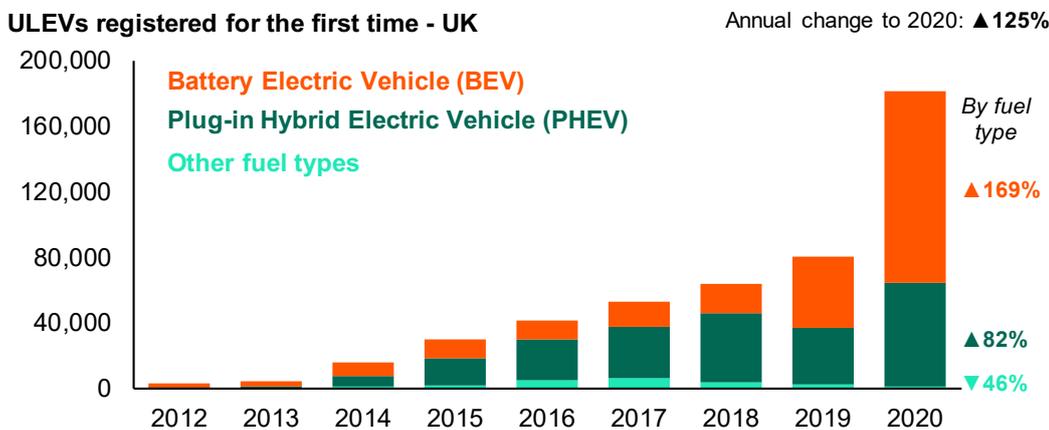
New ULEVs in the UK continue to increase in 2020, with battery electric vehicles up 169%. [\[VEH0171\]](#)



In 2020, 181,090 ULEVs were registered for the first time in the United Kingdom, an increase of 125% on 2019 and 183% on 2018. ULEVs accounted for 8.4% of all UK new vehicle registrations in 2020, up from 2.7% in 2019. [\[VEH0150\]](#)

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) accounted for 64% of new ULEV registrations in 2020, which has increased from 54% in 2019 and 28% in 2018. Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs) accounted for 35% of new ULEV registrations in 2020, which has decreased from 43% in 2019 and 65% in 2018.

Figure 4: ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, United Kingdom, 2012 to 2020 [\[VEH0171\]](#)



ULEV definition

In these statistics, a ULEV is defined as a vehicle with **reported** tailpipe CO₂ emissions of less than 75 g/km.

From April 2020, the CO₂ emission figures for cars registered for the first time exclusively use WLTP, which generally (but not always) reports higher emission levels than e-NEDC for the same car. Consequently, a small number of model variants are now above the 75 g/km threshold and are no longer recorded as ULEVs in these statistics, whilst a smaller number are now under the threshold so are now considered to be ULEVs.

More information about CO₂ emission figures can be found [on page 10](#).

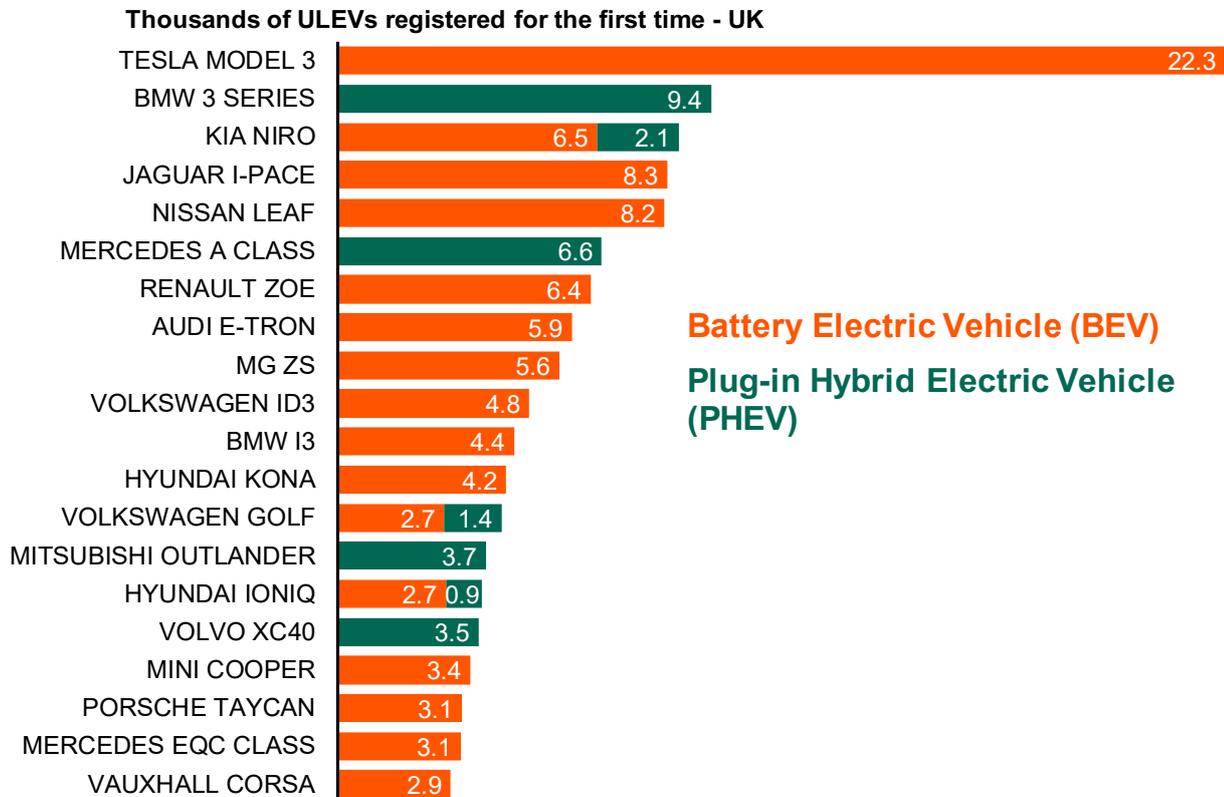
Table 4: Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) registered for the first time by body type, with previous year and total new registrations comparison, United Kingdom, 2020 [\[VEH0171\]](#)

New ULEV registrations	Number / Percentage			
	2020	2019	Annual percentage increase: 2019 to 2020 (%)	Proportion of all new registrations (2020) (%)
Cars	171,068	72,853	135	10.3
Battery Electric Cars	107,878	37,932	184	6.5
Plug-in Hybrid Electric Cars	63,048	34,591	82	3.8
Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	6,208	3,625	71	2.1
Battery Electric LGVs	5,650	3,419	65	1.9
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	16	19	-16	-
Motorcycles	2,358	1,706	38	2.0
Buses & coaches	317	121	162	6.1
Other	1,123	2,254	-50	2.5
Total	181,090	80,578	125	8.4

Generic model

For the year ending December 2020, the most common generic model of ULEV registered for the first time in the UK was the Tesla Model 3 with 22,349 vehicles, followed by the BMW 3 Series with 9,408 vehicles and the Kia Niro with 8,594 vehicles. [\[VEH0171\]](#)

Figure 5: Top 20 generic models for ULEVs registered for the first time by fuel type, United Kingdom, January 2020 to December 2020 [\[VEH0171\]](#)

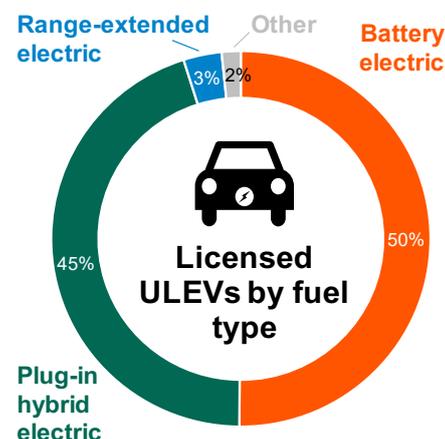


At the end of 2020, there were 432 thousand ultra low emission vehicles in the UK. [\[VEH0130\]](#)



There were 60% more licensed Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) at the end of 2020 compared to the previous year, where there were 269 thousand.

Figure 6: Licensed ULEVs by fuel type, UK, 2020 [\[VEH0133\]](#)



The majority of ULEVs licensed at the end of 2020 were either BEVs (50%) or PHEVs (45%), as shown in **Figure 6**. A small proportion were range-extended electric vehicles (3%), currently only available in a small selection of models. [\[VEH0133\]](#)

In the UK, at the end of 2020, ULEVs accounted for 1.1% of all licensed vehicles. Regionally, the highest rate was seen in London with 1.8% and the lowest was in the North East, Northern Ireland and Wales, each with 0.4%. [\[VEH0104, VEH0130\]](#)

Electric Vehicle Charging Device Statistics

The Department for Transport publishes [statistics](#) on the number of publicly available electric vehicle charging devices in the UK.

Average CO₂ emissions for cars

Average CO₂ emissions for cars registered for the first time have been decreasing year on year every month since September 2019, prior to which was a complex period of regulation and market changes. [\[VEH0156\]](#)



In the UK, the average CO₂ emissions for cars registered for the first time in 2020 was 112.0 g/km under e-NEDC, down 12.3% compared with 2019, and an average of 135.1 g/km under WLTP, down 11.4% compared with 2019. The notable shift towards registering new Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) in late 2020 contributed to these declines.

Reported CO₂ emissions

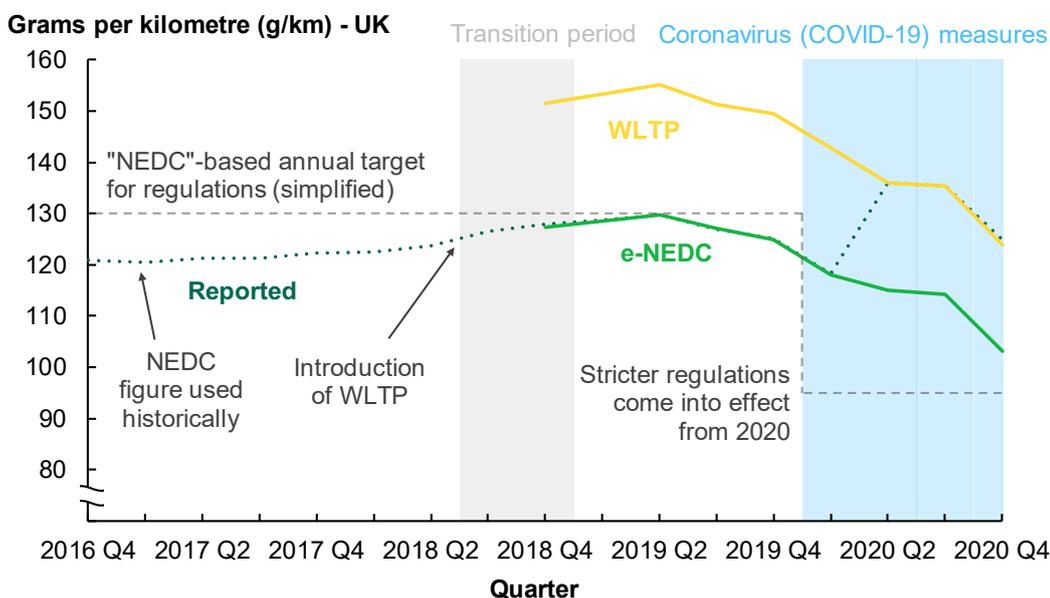
The transition from using NEDC to WLTP as the official measurement procedure used to determine car CO₂ emissions has complicated the interpretation of recent trends.

This has caused a number of discontinuities to the time series for **reported** emissions from September 2018 onwards. **Table 5** summarises these changes.

Table 5: The use of different testing systems for average reported CO₂ emissions of new cars, United Kingdom

Time Period	Testing system used	Reported figure at point of first registration
Up to August 2018	NEDC	NEDC
September 2018 to December 2018	NEDC and WLTP	NEDC and e-NEDC
January 2019 to March 2020	WLTP	e-NEDC
April 2020 onwards	WLTP	WLTP

Figure 7: Average CO₂ emissions for cars registered for the first time by emissions data source, quarterly, United Kingdom, 2016 Q4 to 2020 Q4 [\[VEH0156\]](#)



Methods used to measure CO₂ emissions

New European Driving Cycle (NEDC): Original laboratory test based on theoretical behaviour.

Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicle Test Procedure (WLTP): More advanced lab test to replace NEDC, based on real driving data.

e-NEDC figure: Calculated using a WLTP test via the [COM₂PAS tool](#) developed by the European Commission, for tax and emissions monitoring purposes (can be referred to as NEDC correlated). This is not directly comparable with an NEDC figure as their underlying methodologies are different.

Interpretation of Figure 7

Reported figure: Average CO₂ emissions were increasing steadily from mid-2016 up to the transition period and were only measured using a NEDC figure. From September 2018 onwards, cars tested under NEDC could only be registered with agreement from the European Commission - to avoid manufacturers being left with new cars that were illegal to sell. The reported figure became the WLTP figure for cars registered from April 2020.

e-NEDC figure: Once WLTP testing was introduced, cars registered for the first time quickly transitioned to being registered with an e-NEDC figure. Whilst initially higher than the NEDC trend would suggest, the e-NEDC figure started to decline from September 2019 onwards. This figure was used to [assess manufacturers against emissions regulations](#) until the end of 2020.

WLTP figure: The WLTP figure trend mirrors that of the e-NEDC figure, although it is approximately 20% higher. From 2021, this will be the only measure for new cars.

Average emissions by fuel type

New data included in this release shows the average CO₂ emissions of new cars by fuel type. **Figure 8** shows this new data on a quarterly basis from 2018 Q4 onwards.

Overall for 2020, new petrol cars had emissions of 149.0 g/km under WLTP, a decrease of 4.1% compared to 2019, whereas new diesel cars had emissions of 165.5 g/km under WLTP, a decrease of 0.4%. [\[VEH0156\]](#)

New petrol HEV cars had emissions of 125.6 g/km under WLTP in 2020, an increase of 2.7% compared to 2019, whereas new petrol PHEV cars had emissions of 43.4 g/km under WLTP, a decrease of 22.1%.

Emissions monitoring across Europe

The reported emissions of new vehicles were regulated in the UK under EU law until the end of 2020. These regulations were copied into UK law for new registrations from 2021 onwards.

Monitoring datasets for the EU regulations are published by the European Environment Agency (EEA).

- ▶ [Regulation \(EU\) 2019/638](#)
- ▶ [New passenger car data from EEA](#)
- ▶ [New light commercial vehicle data from EEA](#)

Updated tables

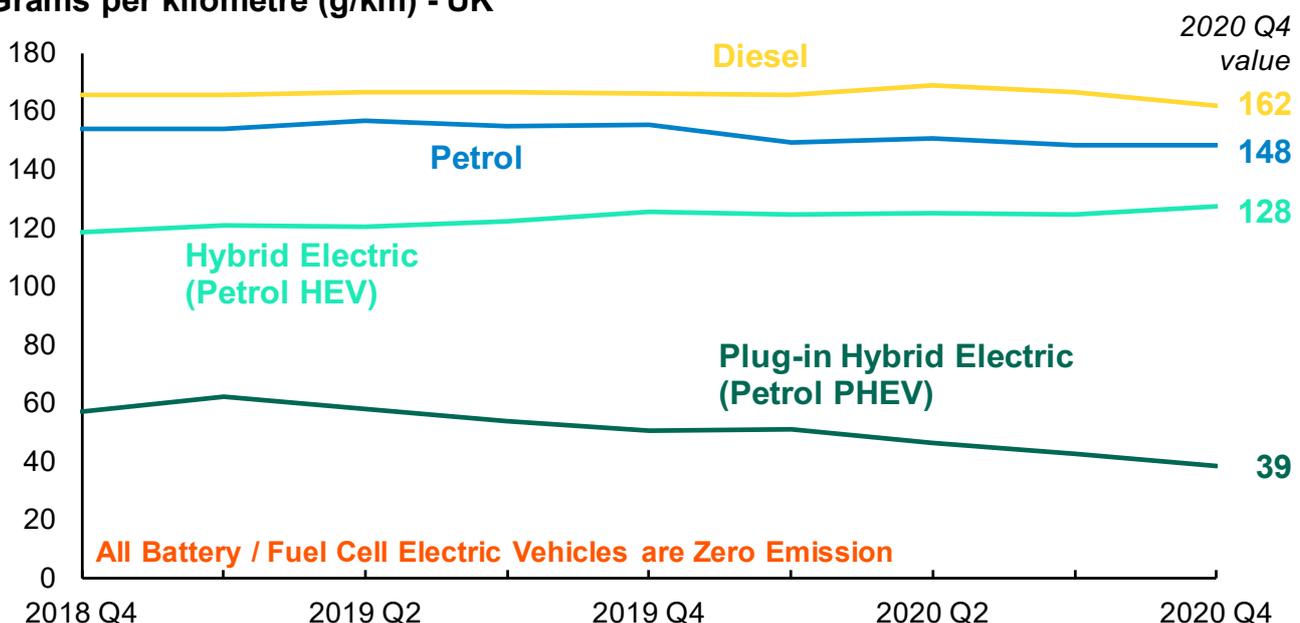
Detailed CO₂ emissions data tables updated this quarter:

All figures: [VEH0156](#)

Reported figures for cars by VED band: [VEH0256](#)

Figure 8: Average CO₂ emissions (WLTP) for cars registered for the first time by selected fuel type, quarterly, United Kingdom, 2018 Q4 to 2020 Q4 [\[VEH0156\]](#)

Grams per kilometre (g/km) - UK



There now exists a discontinuity in the Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) band distribution from 2020 Q2 onwards for a number of reasons. [\[VEH0256\]](#)

The distribution has been partially impacted by changes in registration patterns during the coronavirus pandemic, in addition to the adoption of WLTP as the reported CO₂ figure for cars from April 2020 onwards. The most recent quarters have also seen strong growth in the registration of new Zero Emission Vehicles.

The adoption of WLTP contributed to declines in new cars with reported emissions between 76-130 g/km, with corresponding increases for those reported with 131+ g/km, as shown in **Figure 9**. This is partially due to the WLTP figure being ~20% higher on average than the previously used e-NEDC figure for these cars.

VED bands

[Vehicle Excise Duty](#)

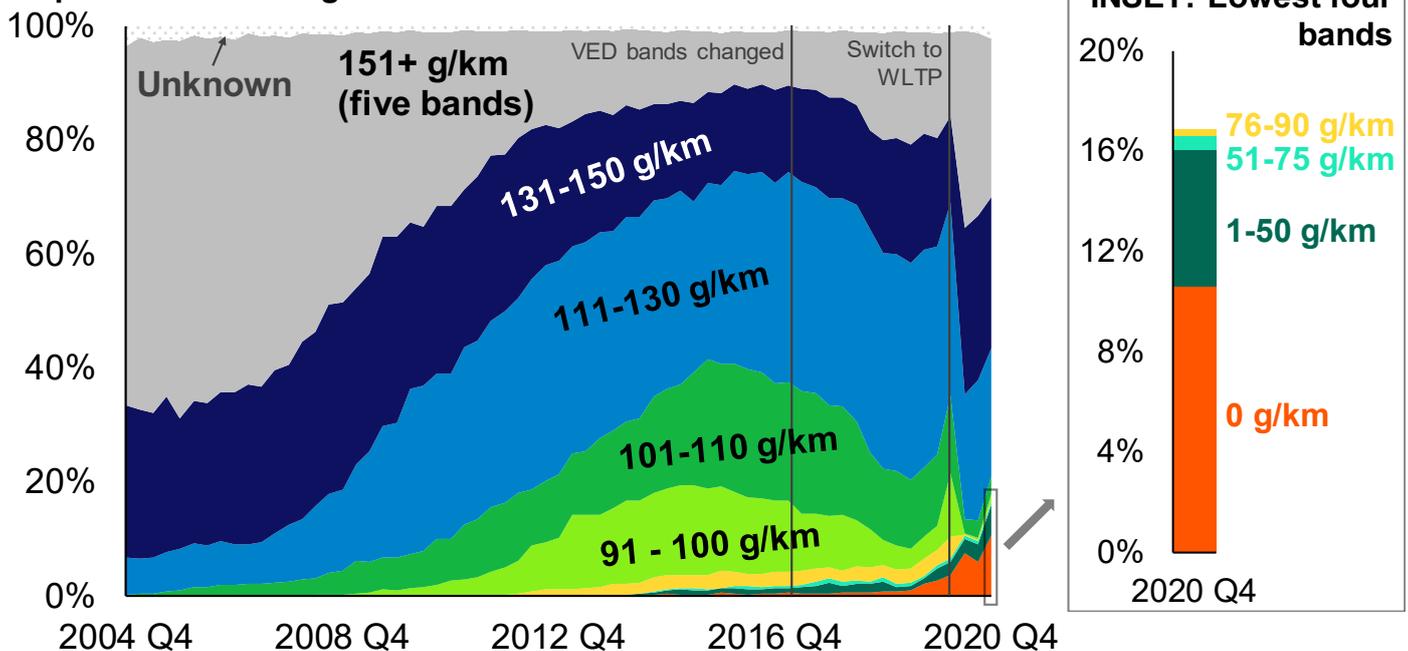
(VED) is charged on vehicles registered in the UK.

Since March 2001, car VED has charged in bands on the basis of their CO₂ emissions (NEDC). These bands were revised from April 2017.

From April 2020, the emissions measure used to allocate a VED band was changed to use WLTP figures. The bands themselves were not altered.

Figure 9: Cars registered for the first time by current VED band (based on reported CO₂ emissions), quarterly, with inset for lowest four bands in the latest quarter, Great Britain, 2004 Q4 to 2020 Q4 [\[VEH0256\]](#)

Proportion of cars registered for the first time - GB



Total licensed vehicles

The decline in licensed vehicles at the end of 2020 was affected by increased levels of SORNs issued. [\[VEH0101\]](#)

At the end of December 2020, there were 38.6 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, a 0.3% decrease compared to the end of December 2019. This is the fourth consecutive quarter where there was a year on year decline of licensed vehicles. Prior to 2020, this had only occurred once (in 1991) since the end of the Second World War, as shown in **Figure 10**.

Body type

Cars make up the majority of licensed vehicles. The number of licensed vehicles by body type in Great Britain at the end of December 2020 are presented in **Table 6**.

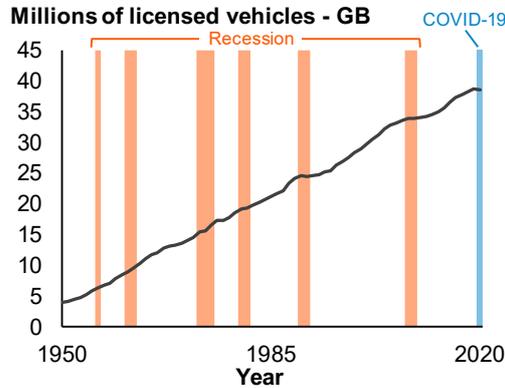
At the end of 2020, there were year on year increases in the number of licensed light goods vehicles (LGVs) (+2.4%) and motorcycles (+1.9%). Declines in the number of licensed cars (-0.6%), heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) (-3.1%), and buses & coaches (-10.0%) all coincided with higher-than-usual increases in SORN stock (as shown in **Table 6**), possibly due to keepers choosing to SORN their vehicle to save on VED as they may not be using their vehicles during the coronavirus restrictions. [\[VEH0101 VEH0110\]](#)

Figure 12 provides the long-term time series to provide some context to these latest trends.

Table 6: Annual difference in licensed vehicles and vehicles with a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) by body type, including total stock for reference, Great Britain, end of 2020 [\[VEH0101 VEH0110\]](#)

	Difference between end of Dec-20 compared to end of Dec-19		Thousand
	Licensed vehicles	Vehicles with a SORN	Total licensed stock at the end of Dec-20
Cars	-192	+259	31,696
Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	+97	+51	4,220
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	-16	+27	486
Motorcycles	+24	+53	1,274
Buses & coaches	-15	+13	137
Other	+2	+17	769
All vehicles	-101	+421	38,582

Figure 10: Licensed vehicles at the end of the year, Great Britain, 1950 to 2020 [\[VEH0103\]](#)



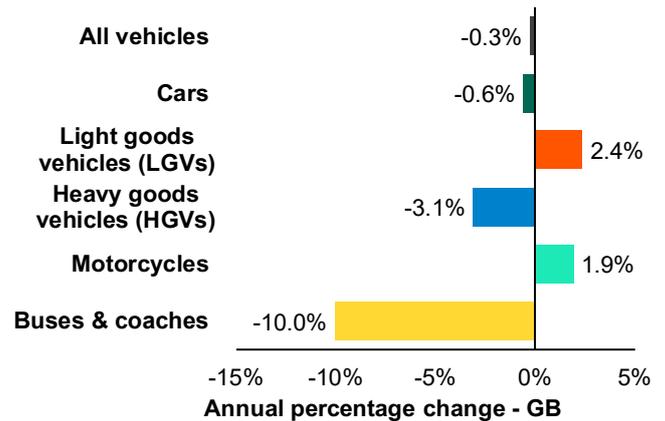
What vehicles are included?

These figures only include vehicles that are licensed for use on UK roads, which typically requires [paying Vehicle Excise Duty \(VED\)](#).

Vehicles that are not licensed should typically be given a **Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN)**. The keeper can then re-license their vehicle at any time.

[Detailed tables relating to vehicles with a SORN are available.](#)

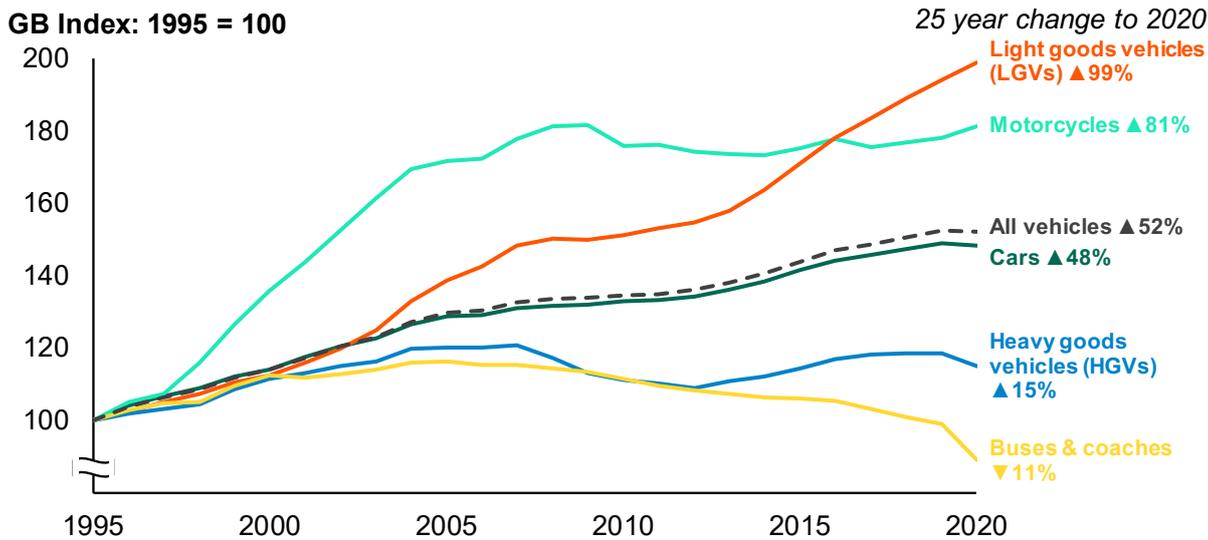
Figure 11: Annual percentage change in licensed vehicles by body type, Great Britain, end of 2020 [\[VEH0101\]](#)



How are these different from new registrations?

Figures on total licensed vehicles have slower variations compared to vehicles registered for the first time as there are many more vehicles that remain licensed over the year.

Figure 12: Index of licensed vehicles at the end of the year by body type, Great Britain, 1995 to 2020 [VEH0101]



Vehicle age and keepers

The average age of a licensed car in Great Britain was 8.6 years at the end of 2020.

[VEH0211]

The average age of licensed vehicles by body type at the end of 2020 is shown in **Table 7**.

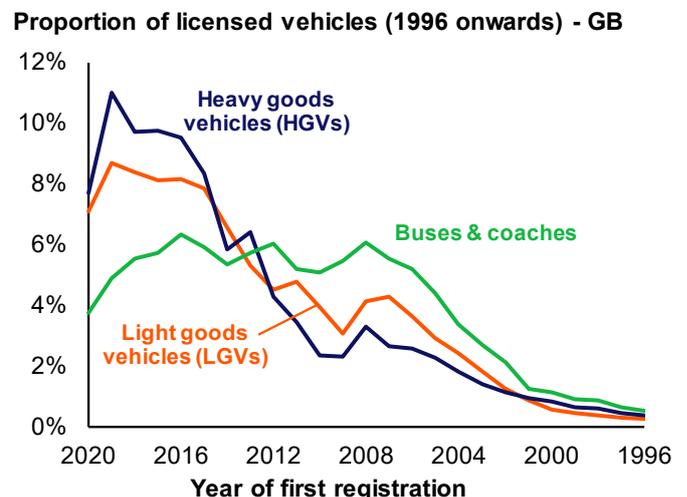
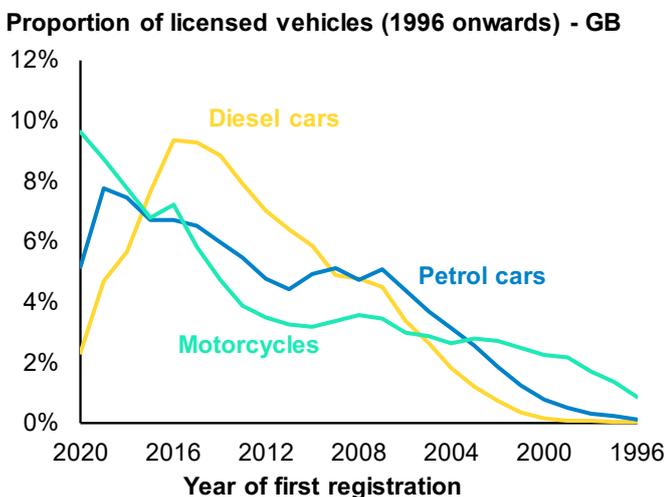
At the end of 2020, licensed petrol cars were, on average, older than diesel cars, with average ages of 9.3 years and 8.0 years respectively.

Table 7: Average age, in years, of licensed vehicles by selected body type, Great Britain, end of 2020 [VEH0211 VEH0311 VEH0411 VEH0511 VEH0611]

Body type	Average age (years)
Cars	8.6
Petrol Cars	9.3
Diesel Cars	8.0
Light goods vehicles (LGVs)	8.5
Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs)	7.5
Motorcycles	15.4
Buses & coaches	11.2

Figure 13: Proportion of licensed vehicles at the end of the year by year of first registration (1996 onwards) for each body type, Great Britain, 2020 [VEH0211 VEH0311 VEH0411 VEH0511 VEH0611]

Vehicles registered before 1996 have been omitted for simplicity. They account for a small proportion of all licensed vehicles.



Company-kept cars accounted for 57% of new car registrations in Great Britain in 2020. [\[VEH0202, VEH0252\]](#)



During 2020, 57.3% of cars registered for the first time had a company keeper. However, the proportion of licensed cars at the end of 2020 kept by companies was much lower at only 8.2%.

This is due to company-kept cars typically moving to become privately-kept after the car is around three years old.

Although the proportion of cars with company keepers has remained within the range 8-10% since 1994, the proportion in 2020 was the lowest since 2011.



At the end of 2020, for all privately-kept vehicles where the keeper's gender is recorded, 59% were registered to male keepers and 41% to female keepers.

Over the last 10 years, the number of licensed cars registered to female keepers increased by 17%, compared with an increase of 9% for those registered to male keepers. Women now account for 35% of registered car keepers with men accounting for 50%, as shown in **Figure 14**.

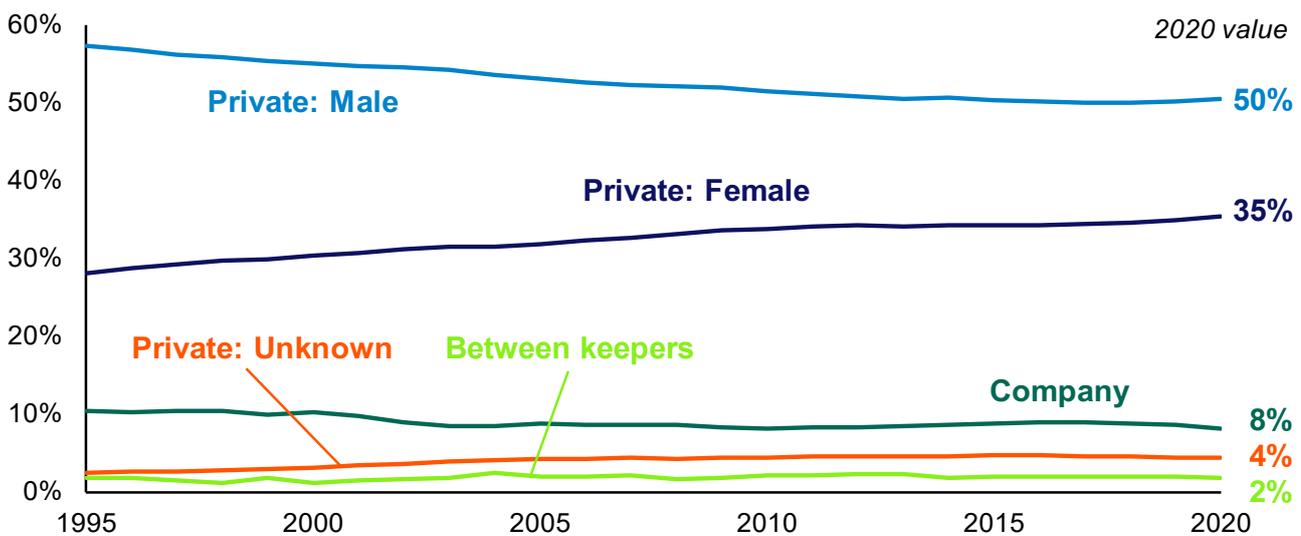
Who is a registered keeper?

Every registered vehicle, unless it is in the process of changing hands, has a registered keeper, whose details are held by DVLA.

Note that the registered keeper of a vehicle is not necessarily the person who uses it, and the vehicle is not always based at the keeper's contact address. This is particularly true for company or fleet vehicles.

Figure 14: Proportion of licensed cars at the end of the year by keepership, Great Britain, 1995 to 2020 [\[VEH0202\]](#)

Proportion of licensed cars - GB



The majority of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles are company-kept in the UK. [\[VEH0132\]](#)



New data included in this release show the breakdown of licensed Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) by keepership.

At the end of 2020, there were 431,639 licensed ULEVs in the UK, of which 192,530 were privately-kept (45%), 232,645 were company-kept (54%), and 6,464 were between keepers (1%). For BEVs alone, 54% are company-kept, although for PHEVs the proportion is slightly higher at 56%.

Car makes and models

Ford Fiesta continues to be the most common generic model for new car registrations in 2020. [\[VEH0160\]](#)



During 2020, the top five makes were Ford (9.3%), Volkswagen (9.0%), BMW (7.1%), Mercedes-Benz (6.8%), and Audi (6.6%). The equivalent top five for 2019 were Ford (10.1%), Volkswagen (8.7%), Mercedes-Benz (7.4%), BMW (7.3%), and Vauxhall (6.9%).

There were 17 makes each with over 40 thousand cars registered for the first time in 2020, accounting for 83.6% of all new car registrations.

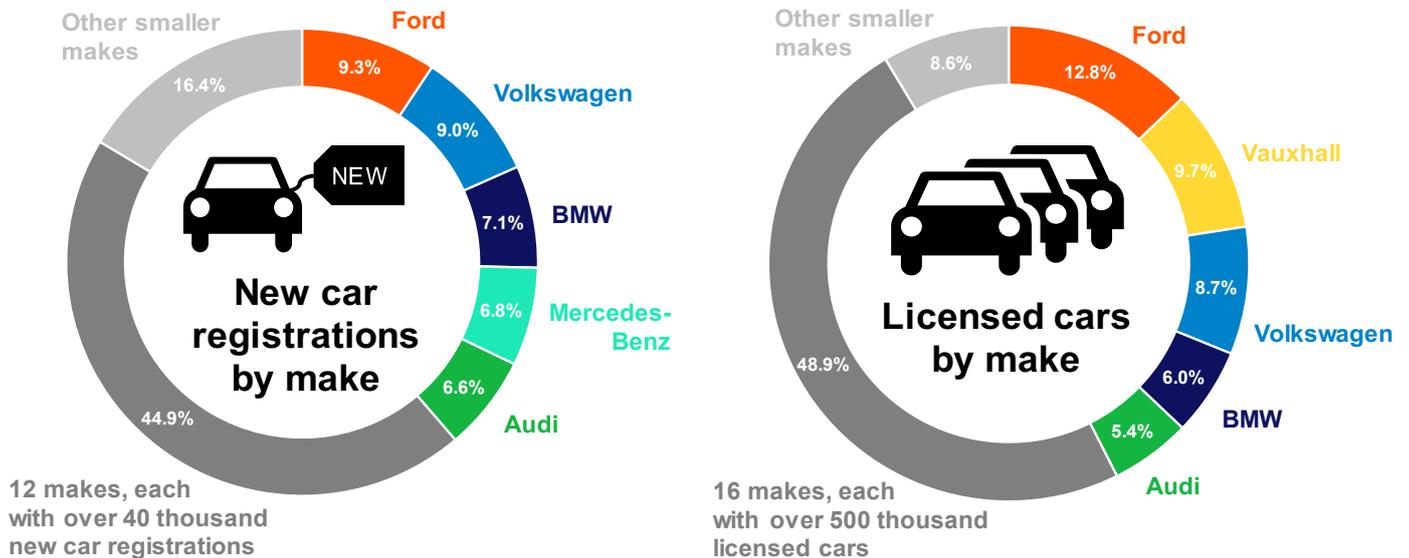
For total licensed stock at the end of 2020, the top five makes were different to new registrations, namely Ford (12.8%), Vauxhall (9.7%), Volkswagen (8.7%), BMW (6.0%), and Audi (5.4%). There were 21 makes each with over 500 thousand licensed cars, accounting for 91.4% of all licensed cars. [\[VEH0120\]](#)

Updated tables

Detailed make and model data tables updated this quarter:

[VEH0120 to 0123, 0128, 0129, 0160 & 0161](#)

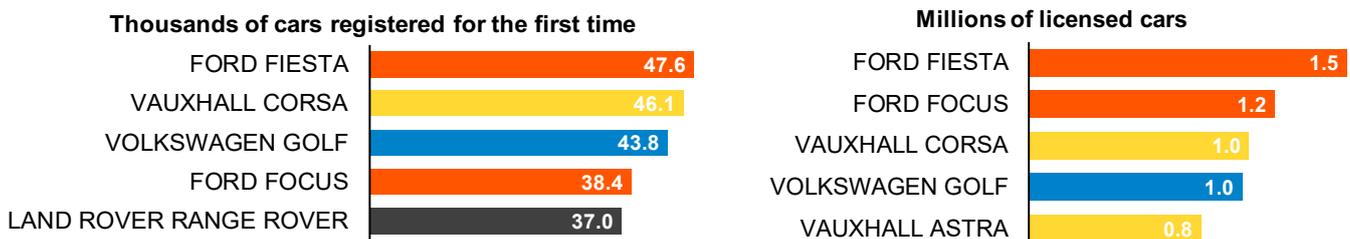
Figure 15: Top five makes for cars registered for the first time during 2020 and for those licensed at the end of 2020, Great Britain [\[VEH0120_VEH0160\]](#)



Ford Fiesta was the most common new car registration in 2020, with 47,617 registered for the first time, followed by Vauxhall Corsa, with 46,093 registrations and Volkswagen Golf with 43,754 registrations. [\[VEH0161\]](#)

At the end of 2020, the most common licensed car was Ford Fiesta, with 1.5 million licensed, followed by Ford Focus with 1.2 million, and Vauxhall Corsa with 1.0 million. [\[VEH0128\]](#)

Figure 16: Top five generic models for cars registered for the first time during 2020 and for those licensed at the end of 2020, Great Britain [\[VEH0128_VEH0161\]](#)



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 about the data used in this release, please see the detailed [notes and definitions](#). 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](#).

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 may be some errors in some of the specific details of individual vehicles.

The Department for Transport has previously estimated that under 2% of the vehicle 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;
- ▶ Seasonal variation which affects some vehicle types;
- ▶ Foreign registered vehicles may also use UK roads without being registered with DVLA;
- ▶ Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) evasion.

Most of these factors will only have a marginal effect for most uses of the data.

Geography

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 [notes and definitions](#).

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.gov.uk.

Proposals to change our table outputs and definitions

We constantly review the content of our published tables and are considering the following changes.

(a) Table changes

- ▶ Cease production of [VEH0131](#). This table is not in keeping with our other outputs, which leads to user confusion. [VEH0132](#) contains details that should satisfy most user needs.
- ▶ Upgrade the geography used in tables [VEH0122](#), [VEH0123](#), [VEH0134](#) from postcode districts to smaller MSOAs (Middle Layer Super Output Areas) and national equivalents. The use of postcode districts can make it difficult for our users to perform further analyses.

We're also considering providing the following tables as a flat file dataset (i.e. CSV) rather than a published table (subject to meeting accessibility guidelines) due to their size and current difficulty of use: [VEH0122](#), [VEH0123](#), [VEH0134](#) (once upgraded to MSOA); [VEH0220](#); and [VEH0221](#).

(b) Updated and new metrics

Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV): Recognising advances in technology from 2021, the UK Government expects to define an ULEV as a car or van that emit less than 50 g/km CO₂, rather than the current 75 g/km.

We intend to reproduce the ULEV figures here under this new definition, although this cannot be reliably extended before January 2019 due to the lack of WLTP data available. This new definition will likely exclude a number of plug-in hybrid electric models that do not have a large zero-emission range, such as the Land Rover Range Rover P400E.

Plug-in Vehicle (PiV): In order to support the uptake of vehicles that can be powered by electric chargepoints, we intend to provide a parallel series of figures relating to Plug-in Vehicles (PiVs), which will look very similar to our current ULEV figures, and relate to the fuel source (i.e. electricity) rather than the emissions of the vehicle.

(c) ULEV/PiV vehicle type scope

In addition, vehicles would only be considered ULEVs/PiVs in these statistics if they could reasonably be expected to make significant use of the public highway as a mode of transport. This would result in the removal of mobility scooters (class 3 invalid carriages), forklifts, agricultural vehicles, road maintenance vehicles, construction vehicles, and vehicles of an unknown structure.

Please contact us at vehicles.stats@dft.gov.uk if any of these changes would heavily impact your use of our statistics.

National Statistics

These statistics were [designated as National Statistics in April 2012](#). There are a few exceptions listed on the [collection page](#).

National Statistics are produced to the high professional standards set out in the [Code of Practice for 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](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on every aspect of life in the United Kingdom, which has affected almost all statistical trends across the transport sector. New vehicle registration and licensed vehicle statistics are likely to be affected in future months and quarters by the economic and social impacts of the coronavirus.

Recent trends

There are more recent data than published here available from SMMT on the majority of vehicle sales. SMMT data are published monthly for cars and vans shortly after the month-end, in advance of the publication of DfT's detailed official statistics. This can be useful to look at the most recent trends in vehicle registrations.

Although there are slight differences in coverage of the SMMT data, the volumes and trends published by SMMT are generally consistent with DfT published data. More information about the data published by SMMT can be found on [their website](#).

Next release

Vehicle Licensing Statistics are published quarterly. The next release is due in July 2021, which will cover the period up to the end of March 2021. The quarterly releases (typically published in June, September, and December) have a reduced number of tables and commentary compared to the annual publication (typically published in April).

Any updates to these plans, including the exact publication date when known, will be advertised via the [DfT statistical publications schedule](#).

To hear more about DfT statistics publications as they are released, please follow us on Twitter via our [@DfTstats](https://www.twitter.com/DfTstats) account: <https://www.twitter.com/DfTstats>. TWITTER, TWEET, RETWEET and the Twitter logo are trademarks of Twitter, Inc. or its affiliates.