

# DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics

## Quarter Four: January to March 2019

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## Key Findings

- The DVA conducted just over 1.09 million vehicle tests during 2018/19, an increase of 1.8% compared to last year, and the highest figure in our time series. The pass-rate for full tests was 81.8%, an increase on the 80.9% in each of the past two years, and the highest pass-rate on record.
- For the 2018 calendar year, there were approximately 51,500 new private-car registrations in Northern Ireland. This is 5% less than the figure recorded for 2017. The most popular make was Ford (13%), whilst white was the most popular colour (20%) and petrol was the most popular fuel-type (57%).
- There were just over 1,180,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, an increase of 1.9% on last year. The overwhelming majority (83%) were cars.
- Approximately 72,500 theory tests were conducted during 2018/19, an increase of 2.3% compared to last year, and the second-highest total in our time series. The pass-rate for private-car theory tests was 46%, a small decrease on last year, and the lowest annual figure recorded in our series.
- The DVA conducted just under 58,000 driving tests during 2018/19, broadly unchanged from the number conducted in the previous year. The pass-rate for these tests was 58.8%, the highest annual pass-rate in our time-series.
- Over a quarter of a million licensing transactions were carried out by DVA during 2018/19. This represents a decrease of approximately 18.6% in comparison with the volume carried out in 2017/18. As the period of validity of a driving licence changed from 3 years to 10 years in 1985, this has resulted in a significant cyclical pattern with a peak renewal period during the middle of each decade.
- At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, there were almost 1,107,000 full and eligible licence holders with private-cars / light vans entitlement. This was a rise of 1.4% compared with the total twelve months ago.
- At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, there were approximately 10,300 licensed taxi drivers, down by 9.4% when compared with the same point of 2018. Similarly, there were nearly 8,800 licensed taxi vehicles, down 1.7% on 2018. For both drivers and vehicles, these represent the lowest figures in our series.
- During 2018/19, DVA Enforcement staff checked just over 5,000 vehicles, 14% less than in 2017/18, and the lowest figure in our time-series. Of these, the largest volume was for HGVs, accounting for over two fifths of all the vehicles checked (43%).
- For the 2018/19 financial year, Agency performance against all three targets was below the target level. Vehicle testing dropped for the fifth quarter in a row, finishing the year on 82.2%. Driver testing ended the year on 85.0%, meaning this Agency target has been missed in four out of the last five years. The Driver licensing target finished on 93.5%.

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## **Introduction**

This is the eighteenth edition of the quarterly publication '*DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics*'. The statistics reported within this publication include summary key business volumes and transactions for drivers, vehicles, and operators and in the area of regulation and enforcement during quarter 4 of 2018/19. This covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. This publication also includes final, fully validated figures year-end statistics for the 2018/19 financial year. Due to the transfer of vehicle licensing functions to DVLA, the data in the corresponding section (page 8) is from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

This release presents statistical information for the volumes of activities under the following business areas:

- Vehicle testing;
- Vehicle licensing & registration;
- Driver theory testing;
- Driver practical testing;
- Driver licensing;
- Road transport licensing (i.e. buses, heavy goods vehicles and taxis);
- Enforcement & compliance;
- DVA target monitoring;
- Driver & rider instructor registration.

DVA systems provide the majority of data, although some is sourced from within the wider DfI. In addition, while the DVA is no longer responsible for vehicle registration and licensing with the transfer of those functions to DVLA in Swansea in July 2014, statistics relating to these areas are presented in section 2.

For further information and guidance on this publication, please see the User Guidance document, available on our website:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/driver-vehicle-agency-activity-statistics>

## **Background**

The *Driver and Vehicle Agency* (DVA) is an Executive Agency within the *Department for Infrastructure* (DfI) which was established following departmental restructuring in May 2016. The DVA was formed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 as part of the Review of Public Administration through a merger of two existing Agencies, namely the *Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency* (DVTA) and *Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland* (DVLNI).

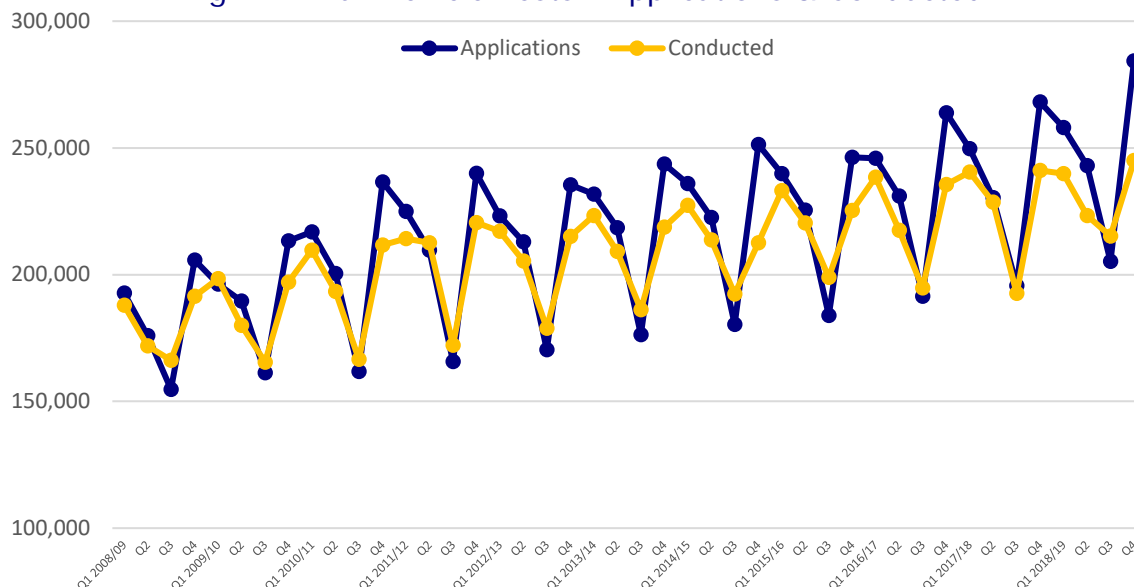
Vehicle testing forms the most significant aspect, in terms of volumes, of the work of the Operations Directorate in DVA, and by extension, the DVA as a whole.

## Vehicle Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From January to March 2019, the DVA received approximately 324,000 applications for vehicle tests, up by 4.8% compared to the same three-month period in 2018, and the highest volume recorded in our time series (table 1.1). The vast majority (88%) of these were for full tests rather than re-tests. This increase was primarily because of a rise of 11,400 (4.4%) in full private-car test applications. Note that the figures for vehicle test applications includes taximeter tests (circa 1,100 tests per quarter), in contrast to the figures for vehicle tests conducted, which do not.

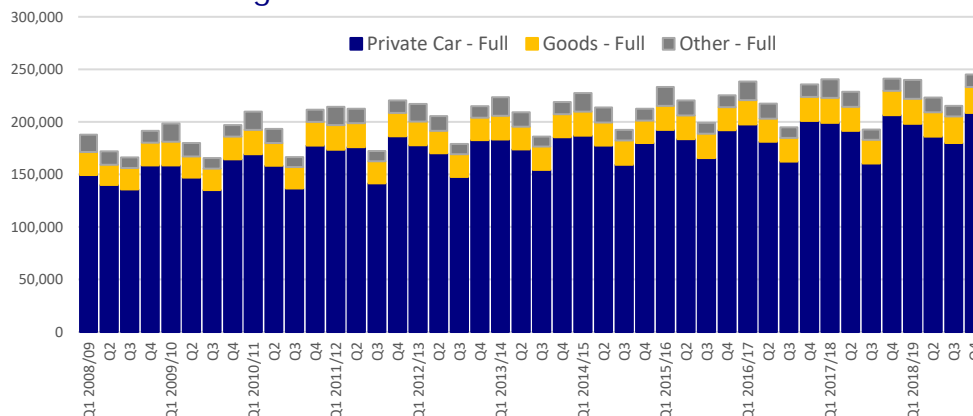
For the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA received just over 1.16 million applications for vehicle tests, an increase of 4.1% on last year, and the highest figure in our series. Similarly, nearly 1.09 million vehicle tests were conducted by the DVA during 2018/19, up 1.8% on last year, and again the highest figure seen in our time series. Compared with a decade ago, applications have risen by 31% whilst the number conducted has increased by 25%.

Fig. 1.1: Full Vehicle Tests - Applications & Conducted



During quarter 4, almost 284,000 vehicle tests were carried out by the DVA (full tests and re-tests), an increase of 1.1% compared to the equivalent quarter last year. The vast majority of these (73%) were full tests for private-cars (table 1.7).

Fig. 1.2: Full Vehicle Tests Conducted



Increased levels of vehicle test applications and tests conducted seen in the trend series can, in part, be explained by the increased proportion of households in Northern Ireland with access to at least one car/van, which has risen from 77% in 2007/08 to 81% in 2017/18 (Continuous Household Survey 2017-18<sup>1</sup>), an increase of over 51,000 households.

The most popular booking method for vehicle test applications was the internet booking system which received 75% of all applications, up by over 3 percentage-points (equating to approximately 20,000 applications) on the equivalent period last year (table 1.4).

Fig. 1.3: Vehicle Test Applications by Booking Method

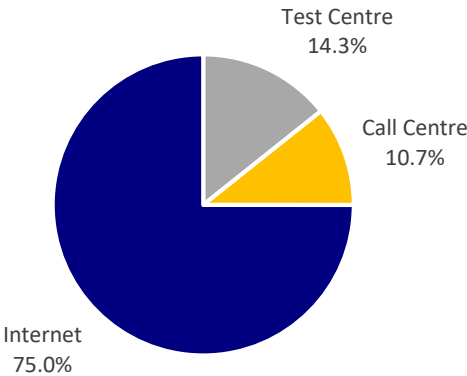
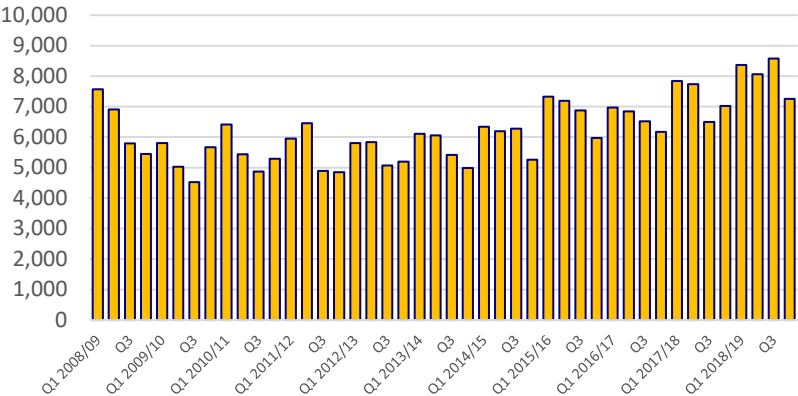


Fig. 1.4: Failed to Attends



Approximately 7,300 vehicles failed to attend for a booked test during the quarter, which is 3.4% higher than the equivalent period last year (table 1.10). This is approximately 2,400 working-hours of time lost.

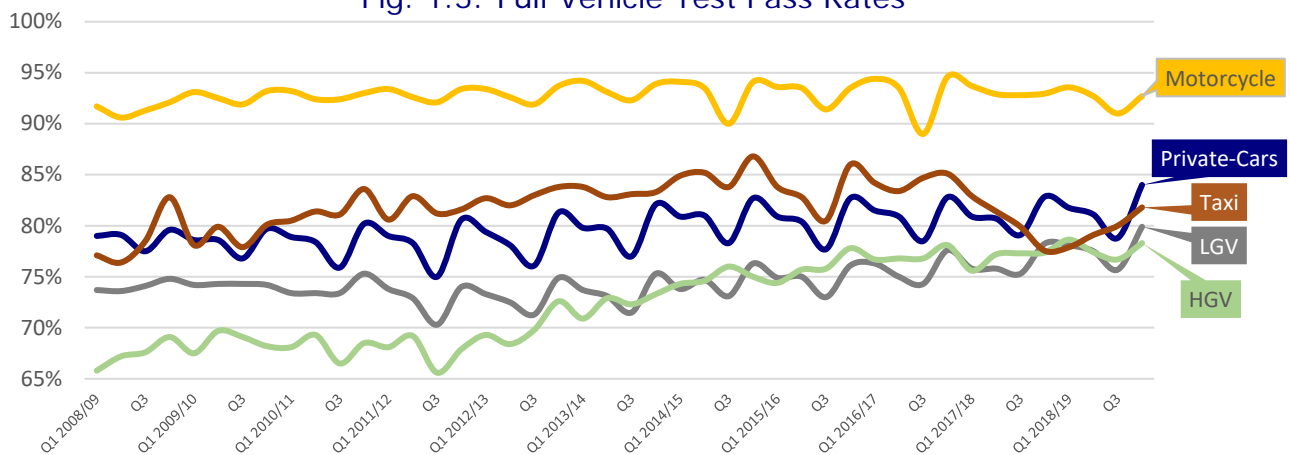
### Vehicle Test Pass-Rates

For 2018/19, the overall pass-rate for full tests was 81.8%, an increase on the pass-rate of 80.9% recorded in the same period last year, and the highest annual pass-rate since the time series began in 2008. The full test pass-rates varied by test category, from 77.6% for large passenger carrying vehicles to 93.0% for motorcycles (for those categories where there were greater than 1,000 full tests) (table 1.11).

The overall pass-rate for re-tests was 94.3%, also an increase when compared with last year. Similarly, the re-test pass-rates varied by category, from 91.5% for trailers to 94.6% for private-cars (for categories where there were greater than 1,000 re-tests) (table 1.12).

<sup>1</sup> Available from NISRA at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/chs-results>.

Fig. 1.5: Full Vehicle Test Pass Rates



### Vehicle Tests by Test Centre

The busiest test centre was again Newtownards, which conducted over 32,000 tests during the quarter, although this is partly due to the greater number of lanes at this centre. In comparison, the quietest centres were Downpatrick and Omagh, having conducted approximately 11,600 and 12,000 tests each during the January to March period (table 1.14).

Whilst the overall pass-rate for private-car full tests was 84.0%, by test centre this ranged from a high of 87.0% in Belfast (Balmoral) to a low of 80.0% in Larne (table 1.14). This was the twenty-sixth consecutive quarter that Belfast (Balmoral) had the highest pass-rate, and the tenth consecutive quarter that Larne had the lowest. However, this overall pass-rate takes no account of differences between the condition and age of cars presented for testing at each test centre and which will influence an individual centre's pass-rate.

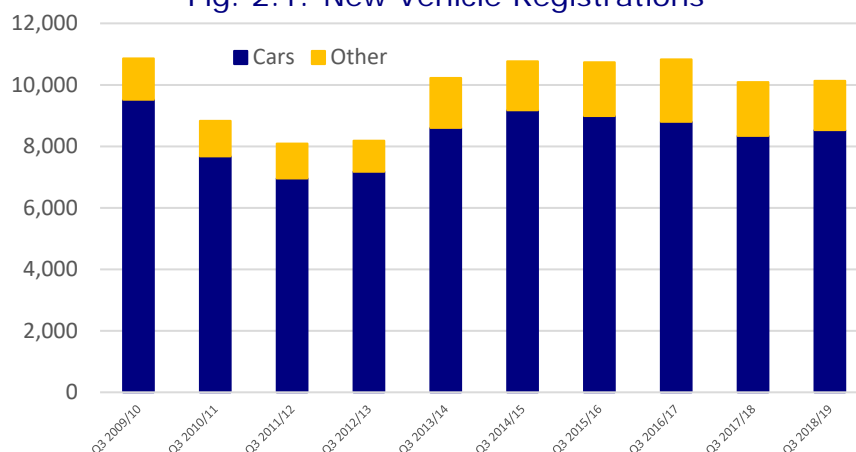
### Vehicle Registrations

During October to December 2018, approximately 10,500 vehicles were registered for the first time in Northern Ireland. The number of new vehicle first registrations showed a small increase of 0.4% from the same period in 2017. New car first registrations accounted for the majority of this increase, up by 2.2% when compared to 2017 (table 2.1).

For the 2018 calendar year, there were approximately 51,500 new private-car registrations in Northern

Ireland. This is 5% less than the figure registered during 2017.

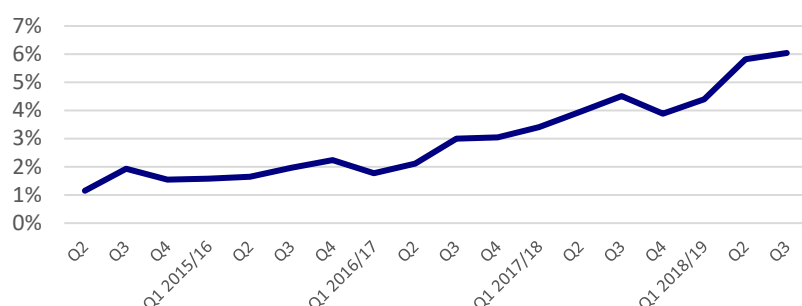
Fig. 2.1: New Vehicle Registrations



The top make for cars registered for the first time during October to December 2018 was Ford, accounting for 1,061 registrations. This marks the fifteenth quarter in a row that Ford has been at number one. The second largest make was Volkswagen accounting for 1,043 registrations (table 2.3). Of the makes in the top ten for car first registrations during the period, the largest increase when compared to the equivalent period in 2017 was for Volkswagen (+38%, from 756 to 1,043) and the largest decrease was for Hyundai (-16%, from 546 to 459). Ford was also the most popular make over the full 2018 calendar year, accounting for 13% of all new cars registered.

Continuing the change first seen last quarter, grey was the most popular colour for new cars, accounting for 20.6% of all new registrations. This is followed by white (19.4%), blue (18.7%), black (14.6%), and red (12.9%). Whilst grey is the most popular colour over the past two quarters, white remains the most popular colour over the full calendar year, accounting for 20% of all new cars registered.

Fig. 2.2: Proportion of New Car Registrations using Alternative-fuels



Over the past four years, there has been a decline in the proportion of newly registered cars fuelled by diesel, down from 54.6% of cars in 2014-15 Q3 to 37.4% this year (5,011 vehicles in 2014-15 Q3 down to 3,186 vehicles in 2018-19). Over the same period the number of

alternative-fuel<sup>2</sup> cars newly registered almost tripled, from 177 in 2014-15 Q3 to 515 this year.

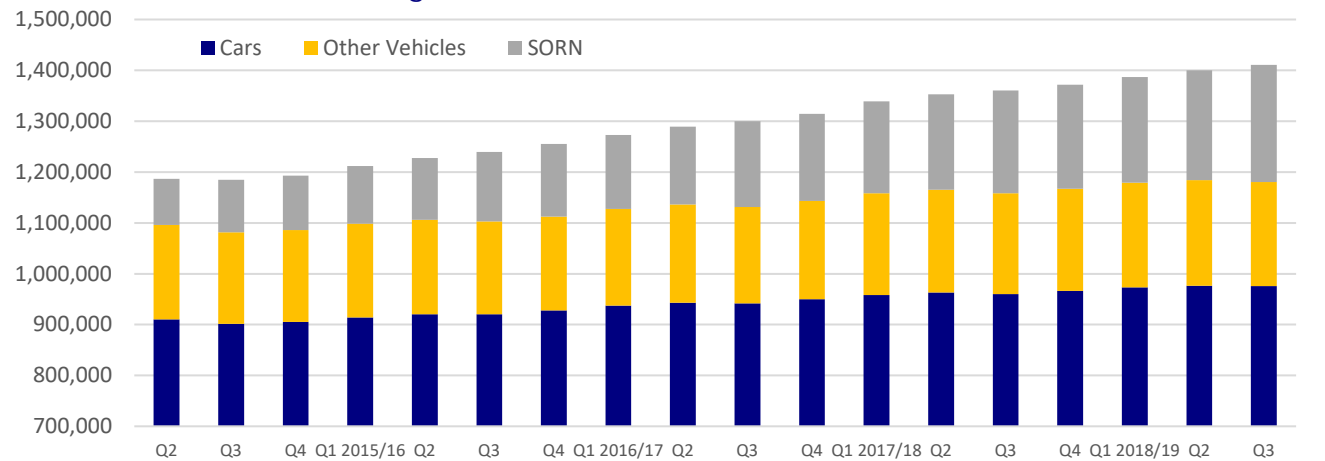
<sup>2</sup> Alternative-fuel vehicles are those able to use a range of alternatives to purely petrol or diesel fuel, including gas, electricity, or a combination such as gas bi-fuel and hybrid-electric.



There were 1,180,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, an increase of 1.9% compared with the previous year (table 2.13). Of these, 82.6% (975,661) were cars, and 12.0% (141,948) were goods vehicles (including both light and heavy). The most popular licensed vehicle was, again, the Volkswagen Golf, followed by the Ford Fiesta and the Ford Focus (table 2.15).

Over 230,000 vehicles had a *Statutory Off-Road Notification* (SORN) at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, representing 16.3% of the total vehicle stock (table 2.13). The number of SORN vehicles in Northern Ireland increased by almost a seventh (13.9%) from the same period in 2017; in comparison to an 7.8% increase in Great Britain. It should be noted that since December 2013, *continuous SORN* was introduced so a SORN declaration from then onwards lasts until the vehicle is re-taxed, sold, permanently exported or scrapped. This has resulted in significantly higher year-on-year increases from Q3 2013/14 onwards, both in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

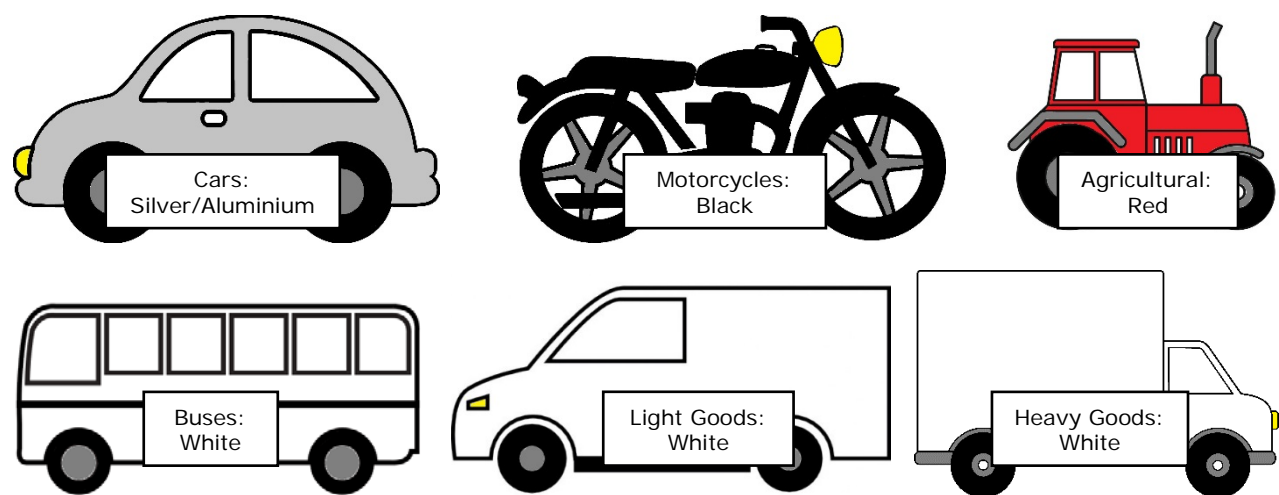
Fig. 2.3: Northern Ireland Vehicle Stock



As of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, the average age of a licensed vehicle in Northern Ireland was 8.5 years. However, there is some variance in average age for different body-types:

- Cars – 8.1 years;
  - Motorcycles – 13.0 years;
  - Light Goods – 8.2 years;
  - Heavy Goods – 9.8 years;
- Buses – 9.8 years;
  - Agricultural – 21.1 years;
  - Other – 9.7 years.

Similar to the new registrations above, in the Northern Irish stock of licensed vehicles the most popular colours for each body-type are notably monochrome, with only the stereo-typical ‘big red tractor’ bucking the trend:



The DVA has responsibility for the theory test element of the overall driving test process. Pearson VUE administers the test in Northern Ireland under contract with the DfI through DVA.

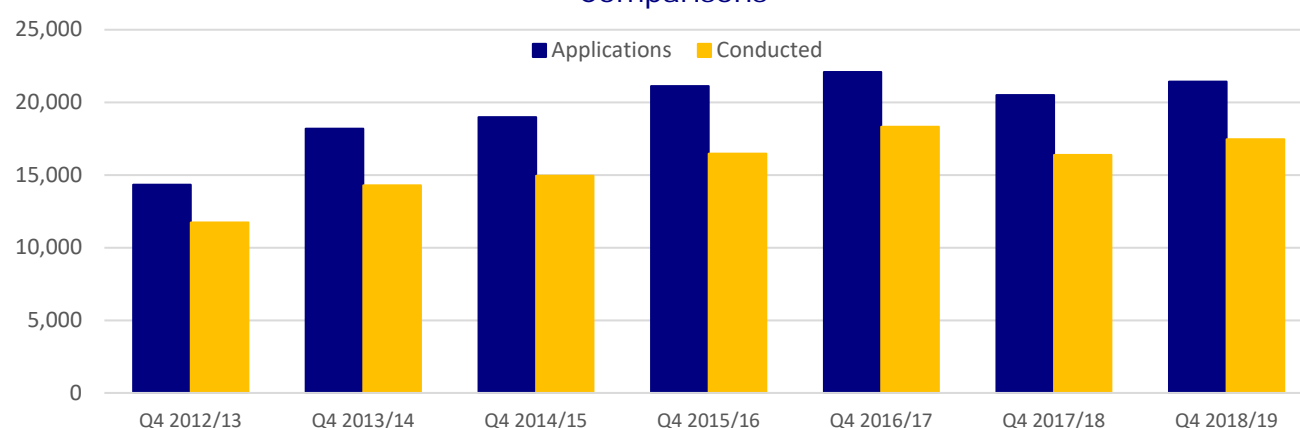
## Theory Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From January to March 2019, the DVA received approximately 21,500 theory test applications. This marks an increase of 4.4% from the 21,500 recorded in the same quarter last year (figure 3.1).

Similarly, during the same period the number of theory tests conducted increased from 16,400 in 2018 to 17,500 this year (table 3.2). This is the second quarter-on-quarter increase in the past two years, as the ongoing trend has been steady since the series-peak in late 2016.

For the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA conducted approximately 72,500 theory tests, an increase of 2.3% compared to last year, and the second-highest total in our time series.

Fig. 3.1: Theory Tests - Applications & Conducted - Quarterly Comparisons



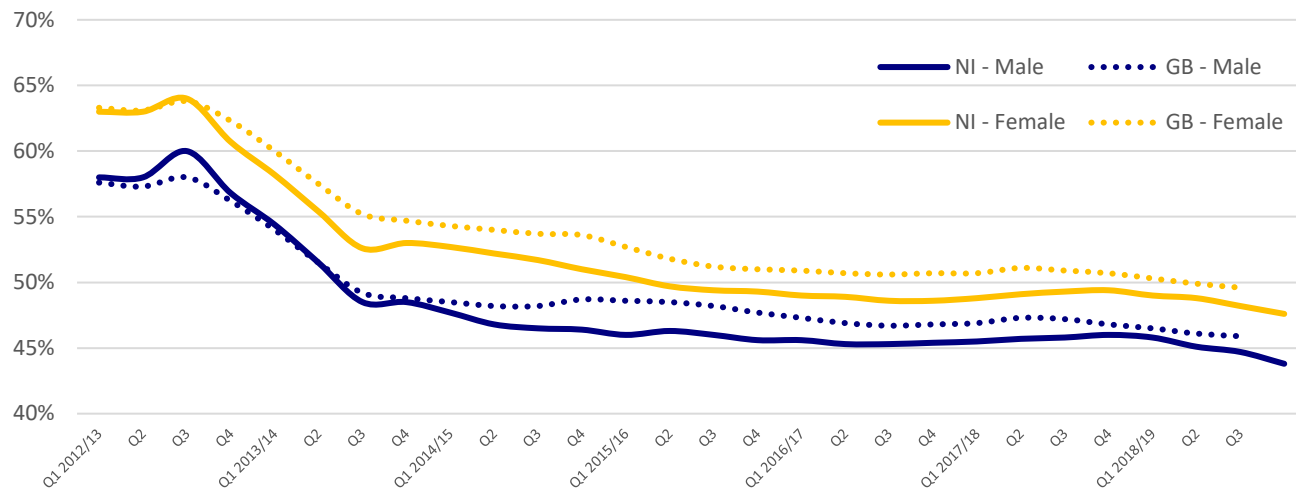
## Theory Test Pass-Rates

The theory test pass-rate for private-cars in quarter 4 showed a 0.5 percentage-point increase to 45.6% when compared with the previous quarter (table 3.4). Although this is an increase on the previous quarter, it is still the second-lowest pass-rate in our time-series, and is in-line with the declining trend seen over the past five years. The theory test pass-rate for motorcycles remains substantially higher, at 68.3%, reflecting the fact that those taking the motorcycle test will usually have already taken the private-car test. Whilst not directly comparable due to the nature and purpose of the tests, the pass-rate for the taxi theory test was 35.6%, an increase of 7.9 percentage-points over the preceding quarter. A reduction in the Hazard Perception pass-mark in September 2018 will have had some influence on this rise. Since 2015, when the taxi test was first introduced, this is the highest quarterly pass-rate seen so far.

## Theory Tests by Gender

Using a four-quarter rolling average, the theory test pass-rate by gender for private-car drivers showed that females consistently have a higher pass-rate than males (table 3.7). For the latest quarter, the pass-rates were 47.6% for females and 43.8% for males. The figures for both genders have been gradually decreasing at the same rate since 2012.

Fig. 3.2: Private Car Theory Test Pass-Rates - by Gender and Region



In general, from early in 2013, Northern Ireland theory test pass-rates for private-car drivers have been lower than the Great Britain pass-rates by approximately two percentage-points, although this gap has narrowed slightly during 2018/19. Also of note is that the declining trend in the pass-rate seen in Northern Ireland is nearly identical to the trend seen in Great Britain.

## **4** Driver Practical Testing

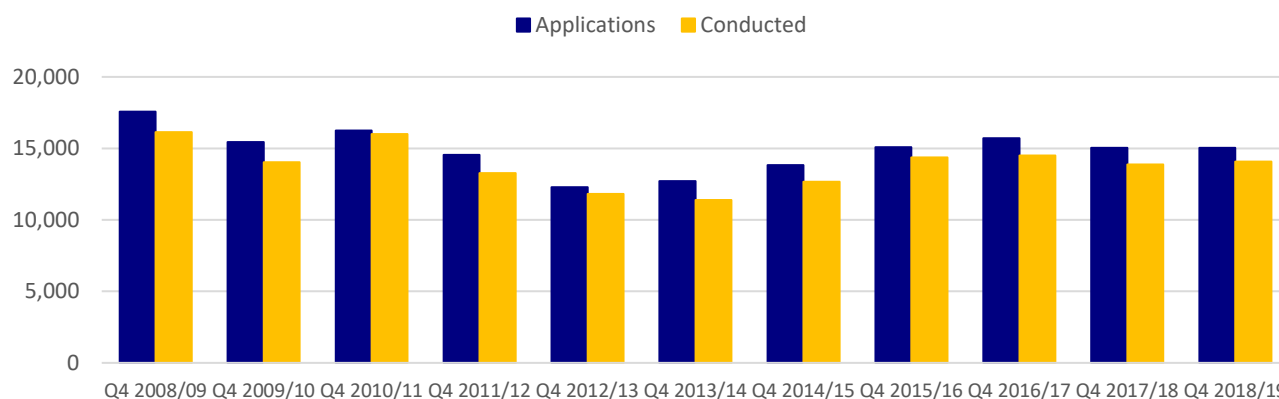
DVA provides a wide range of driving test categories for testing learner drivers and motorcyclists to ensure that they meet the required standard of competence necessary to drive safely on public roads.

### **Driving Test Applications and Tests Conducted**

From January to March 2019, over 15,000 driving test applications were submitted to the DVA, unchanged on the equivalent quarter in 2018 (table 4.1). However during the same three-month period, the number of driving tests conducted increased by 1.5% from approximately 13,200 in 2018 to almost 14,100 in January to March 2019 (table 4.3 & Figure 4.1). This is the second quarter-on-quarter increase in a row, reversing the downward trend seen over the previous eighteen months.

For the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA conducted just under 58,000 driving tests, broadly unchanged from the volume conducted in 2017/18.

**Fig. 4.1: Practical Tests - Applications & Conducted - Quarterly Comparisons**



For both driving test applications and driving tests conducted, tests for private-cars account for over four fifths of all applications or tests conducted.

During quarter 4, there were 282 appointments where the individual failed to attend (FTA), representing a 1.4% decrease on the same quarter last year (table 4.4).

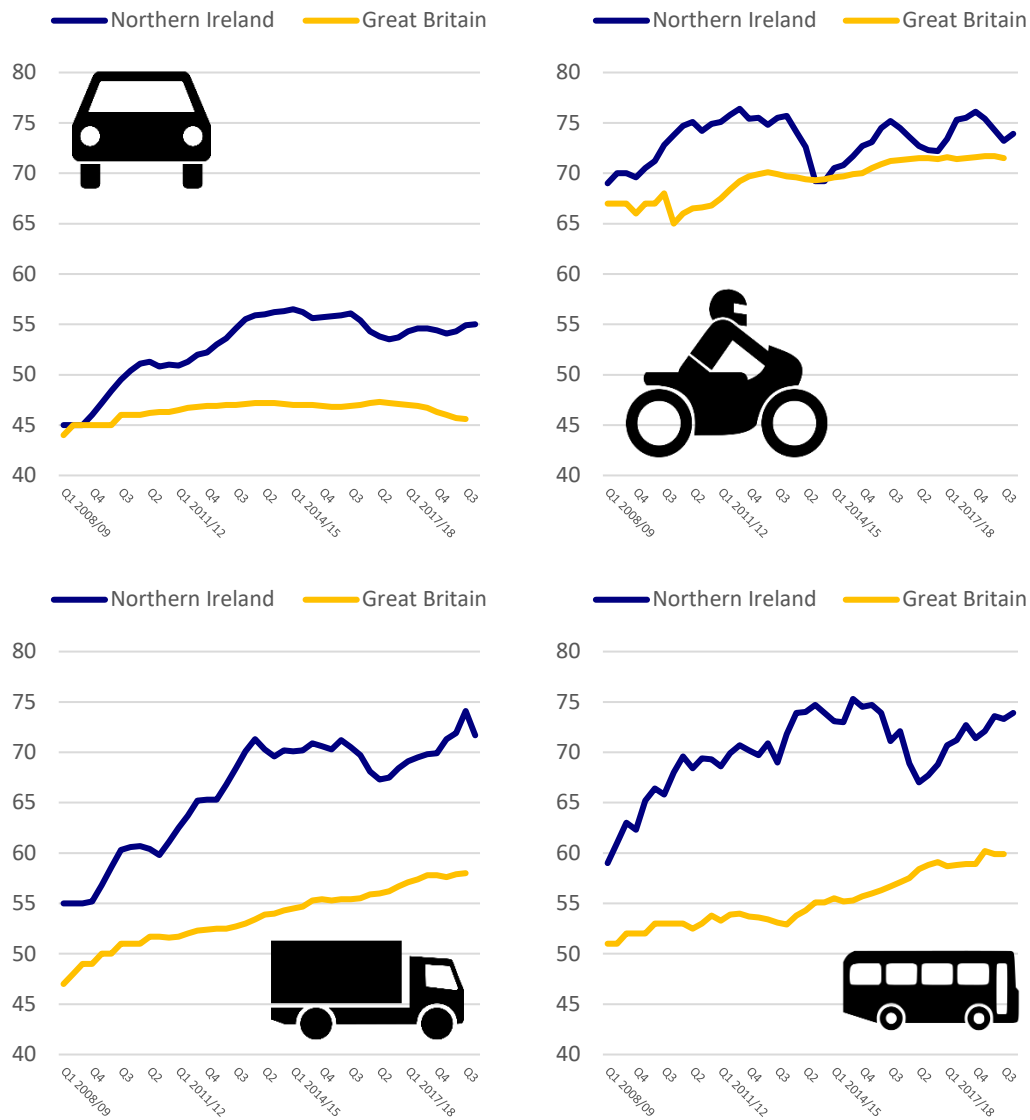
The most popular booking method for a driving test application was the internet booking system, which received 74.9% of all applications, up 3.0 percentage-points on the previous year (table 4.2).

### **Driving Test Pass-Rates**

For January to March 2019, the pass-rate for all categories of driving tests was 58.7%, up 1.8 percentage-points on the 56.9% recorded in the equivalent quarter last year (table 4.5). Pass-rates for all categories of vehicle remain broadly unchanged over the past five years.

In general, Northern Ireland pass-rates across all four main vehicle categories are higher than the pass-rates in Great Britain (table 4.10 & Figure 4.2). Part of the difference between NI and GB pass-rates may be attributable to regional driving conditions including the volumes of traffic and complexity of available road networks for testing.

Fig. 4.2: Driving Test Pass-Rates – Rolling 4-Quarter Average



### Driving Tests by Test Centre

The test centre that conducted the most private-car driving tests during the January to March 2019 period was, again, Belfast (Balmoral) (1,510 tests). The Armagh centre again conducted the fewest, with 367 tests during the quarter.

The overall pass-rate for private-car driving tests was 55.4%, ranging by test centre from 42.9% in Londonderry (Altnagelvin) to 73.8% in Downpatrick (table 4.6). This was the seventeenth consecutive quarter that Downpatrick had the highest pass-rate, and the fifth consecutive quarter that Londonderry (Altnagelvin) had the lowest. At least part of the difference recorded between test centres will reflect the differential driving ability and experience of candidates presenting for testing at each test centre while other relevant factors will be specific to the test centre such as local driving conditions.

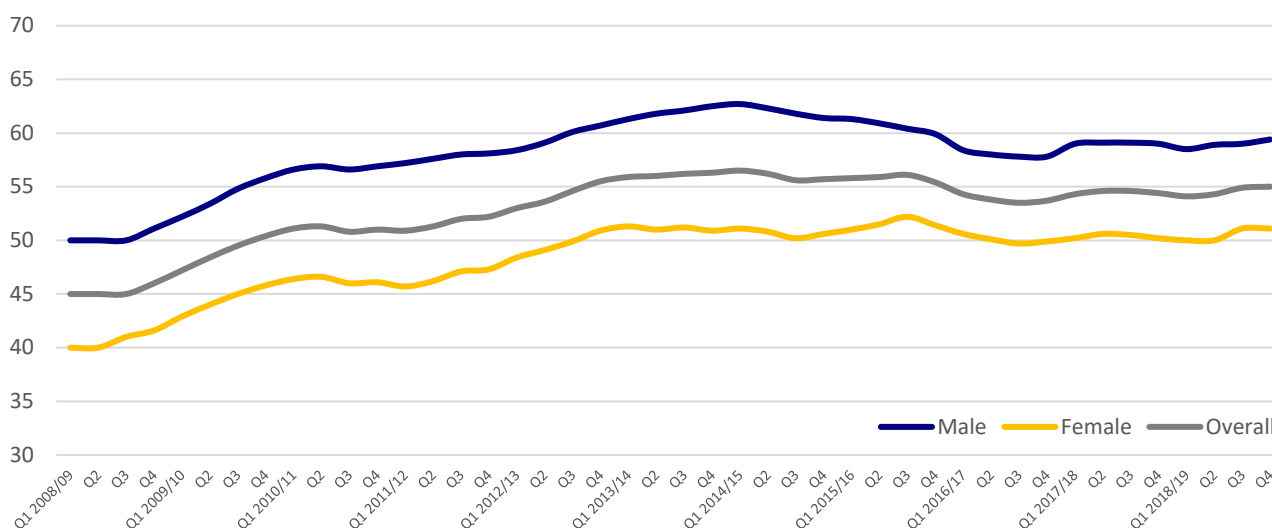
## Driving Test Pass-Rates by Gender

A clear gender gap is apparent in Northern Irish test pass-rates, using a four-quarter rolling average (table 4.10 & figure 4.3). In the latest quarter, males had an 8.3 percentage-point higher pass-rate compared to females for the private-car driving test. This gap has remained relatively consistent over the past decade.

Almost every test centre offering private-car driving tests also showed this same disparity, varying from 15.9 percentage-points at the Belfast (Dill Road) centre (55.5% v 39.6%) to 4.2 percentage-points in favour of females at the Newtownards centre (55.3% v 59.5%).

Whilst similar gender gaps in favour of males are also apparent in Great Britain for cars and motorcycles, interestingly, and in contrast to NI, the GB pass-rates for large goods vehicles are higher for females. Without a detailed understanding of the profile of candidates presenting for these categories of tests, it is difficult to contextualise why these differences by gender and UK location may occur. It should also be noted the small numbers of females presenting for testing on large goods vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles in Northern Ireland.

Fig. 4.3: Northern Ireland Private-Car Practical Test Pass-Rates – Rolling 4-Quarter Average



The DVA's Driver Licensing division is responsible for licensing drivers in Northern Ireland. The DVA issues and, where appropriate, withdraws licences in respect of drivers of cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, and other vehicles.

### Driver Licensing Transactions

The number of ordinary first licences ('provisional licences') issued in quarter 4 2018/19 (5,852) was 9.3% lower than the figure for those issued during the same period in the previous year (6,457 licences) (table 5.1). During 2018/19, the DVA issued 24,180 provisional licences, the lowest annual figure in our time series.

The DVA carried out approximately 61,700 ordinary licensing transactions during January to March 2019 (Figure 5.1). This represented a decrease of 1.2% in comparison with the volume carried out in the corresponding quarter of 2018. For the full financial year, the DVA carried out almost 247,000 transactions, a decrease of 15.7% on the peak figure recorded last year. As the period of validity of a driving licence changed from 3 years to 10 years in 1985, this has resulted in a significant cyclical pattern with a peak renewal period during the middle of each decade. Whilst this would usually have reduced by early 2017, the introduction of the new driver licensing IT system (*Driver Licensing System*) resulted in a backlog until late 2017.

Similarly during quarter 4 2018/19, the DVA carried out 4,000 vocational licensing transactions, a decrease of 7.7% on the corresponding period in 2018 where the figure stood at just over 4,300 (table 5.2).

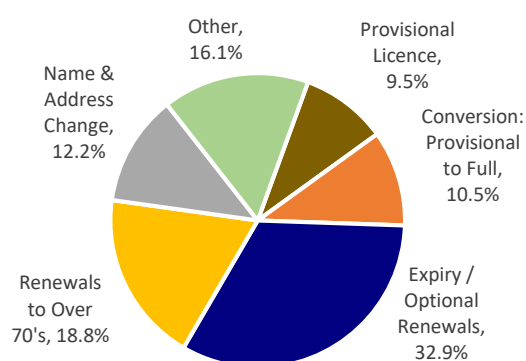
In other licensing activity, the number of letters of entitlement issued during the quarter remains high, from just over a thousand issued in the quarter ten years ago (2008/09 Q4: 1,018) to just over four thousand issued between January to March 2019 (table 5.3). However, the volume of identity checks has more than halved over the same ten-year period: reducing from approximately 16,600 in quarter 4 2008/09 to 7,100 in the same period in 2018/19.

Note that we have recently identified an issue with the reporting of volumes in this section. We have worked with our IT Supplier to amend the report, and as such, we have revised the figures in Tables 5.1 and 5.2 for 2018/19.

Fig. 5.1: Driver Licensing Transactions



Fig. 5.2: Driver Licence Transactions Q3 2018/19, by Type



## Driver Licence Stock

At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, there were over 1,107,000 full and eligible licence holders with private-cars / light vans entitlement, a rise of 1.5% compared with the total twelve months ago (table 5.9 & Figure 5.4). The number of people with this entitlement aged 65 and over has increased by over 6,500 in the past twelve months, with the total now approximately 210,000 individuals. In addition, those licence holders aged 65 and over now account for a larger proportion of the driver licence stock: as of June 2017, they made up 18.1% of the total, whereas by March 2019 they were 18.9%, reflecting the nature of Northern Ireland's aging population.

An estimated 75.9% of Northern Ireland's adult population (i.e. aged 17 or over) had a full and eligible licence for private cars / light vans, based on the 2017 Mid-Year Population Estimates<sup>3</sup> (table 5.8i). For males, the estimated figure was 79.5%, which is just over five percentage-points higher than the 72.5% seen for females.

Fig. 5.3: Proportion of Population with a Full & Eligible Private Car Licence - by Age

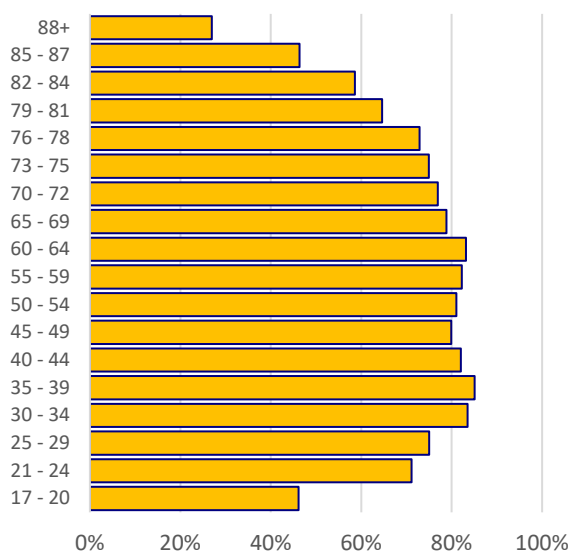


Fig. 5.4: Full & Eligible Private Car Licence Holders in Northern Ireland

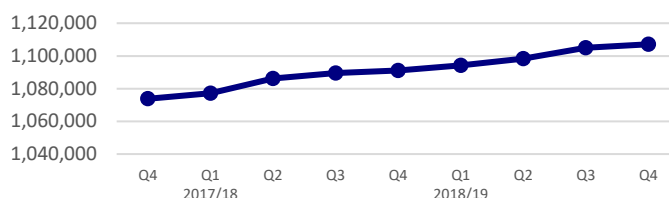
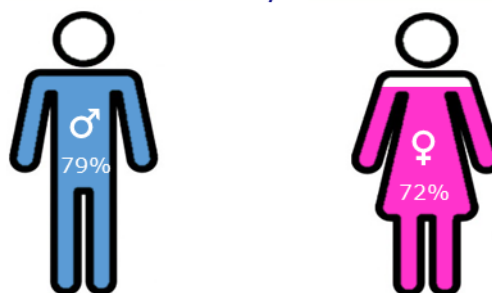


Fig. 5.5: Proportion of Population with a Full & Eligible Private Car Licence - by Gender



<sup>3</sup> Available from NISRA at <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates>.

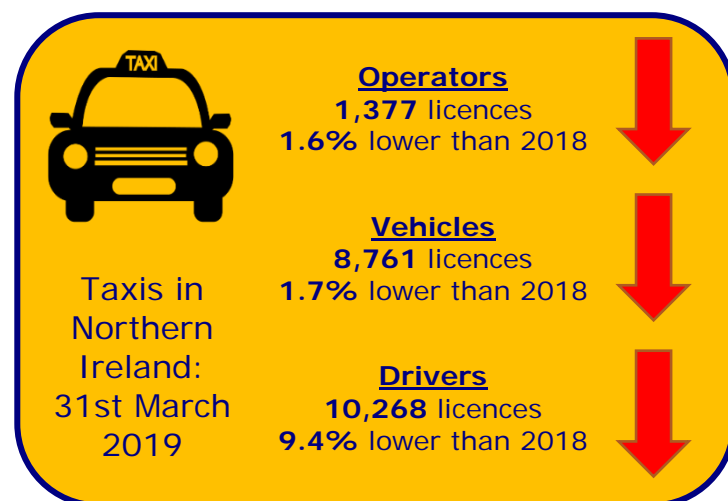


## **6** **Road Transport Licensing**

The Passenger Transport Licensing division in DVA is responsible for issuing (and where appropriate, withdrawing) licences in respect of taxi drivers and bus operators. Goods licensing is the responsibility of the Transport Regulation Unit in DfI.

### Taxi Licensing

The number of taxi driver licences in force at the end of March 2019 (10,268) was down by 9.4% on the previous year (table 6.2), and is the lowest recorded number in our time series. This is a continuation of the declining trend with numbers down by over a third on the series high recorded



five years ago. This reduction may have been exacerbated by the introduction of a new taxi driver theory and practical driving test, which was introduced on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2014. Of these taxi drivers, 96% were Male, whilst their average age was 51. Whilst the number of taxi driver licences has continued to fall, the number issued during 2018/19, actually increased by 7% compared to last year, rising from 2,073 to 2,220.

Approximately 2,100 vehicle licences for taxis were issued during January to March 2019, which is unchanged when compared with the corresponding quarter in 2018

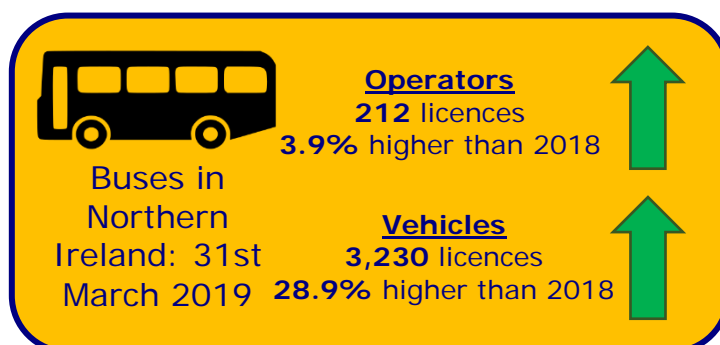
(table 6.1). However, for the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA issued only 8,487 taxi vehicle licences, the lowest annual figure since our time series began in 2009. At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, there were 8,761 licensed taxi vehicles in Northern Ireland, the lowest recorded number in our time series and a decrease of 1.7% on the previous year.

These taxi vehicles were affiliated to 1,377 licensed taxi operators, of which 83% were classified as small operators, i.e. can only list up to two taxis on the licence. Similar to the number of drivers and vehicles, the number of taxi operators is down almost a sixth when compared with the figure recorded two years ago and is the lowest figure recorded in our time series.

### Bus Licensing

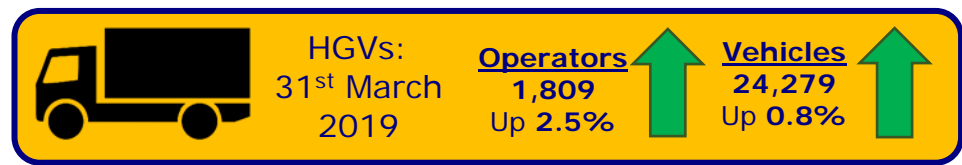
The number of licensed buses at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 was 3,230, up 29% on the figure at the end of March 2019 (table 6.3) and the highest figure recorded in our time series. The DVA issued 3,347 bus vehicle licences during the financial year, up 40% on the previous year, and again the highest figure in our time series (table 6.1).

At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, there were 212 bus operator licences in force, up from the amount as recorded one year ago (204), and the highest figure in our time series. During January to March 2019, 51 bus operator licences were processed, up 10.9% on the 46 recorded in the same period last year.



**Goods Licensing**

The total current standard international goods vehicle operator licences in force as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 was 1,809, an increase of 2.5% on last year, and an increase of 20% on five years ago (table 6.4). This figure marks the high point of our series since it began in 2012/13.

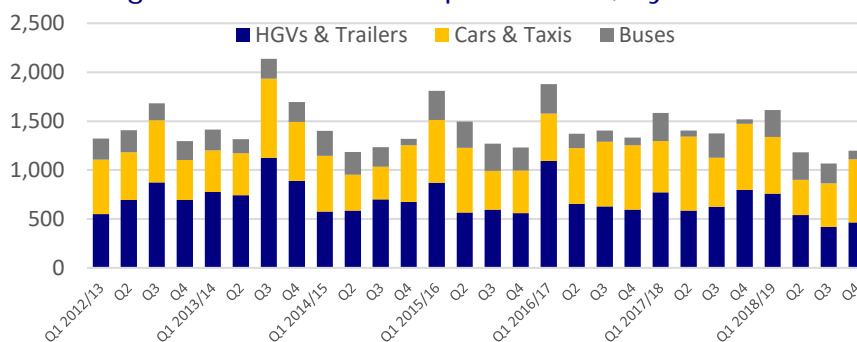


DVA Enforcement falls within the Agency's Compliance & Enforcement directorate. Roadside Enforcement is responsible for the enforcement of legislation pertaining to roadworthiness standards and licensing requirements at the roadside.

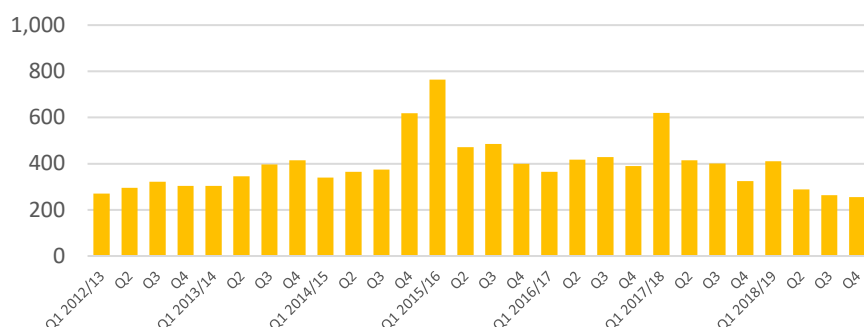
### Enforcement Activities

During January to March 2019, DVA enforcement staff checked 1,199 vehicles; of these, the largest volume was for HGVs, accounting for almost two fifths of all vehicles checked (table 7.1 & figure 7.1). For the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA inspected just over 5,000 vehicles, 14% less than in 2017/18, and the lowest figure in our time series.

**Fig 7.1: Enforcement Spot-Checks, by Quarter**

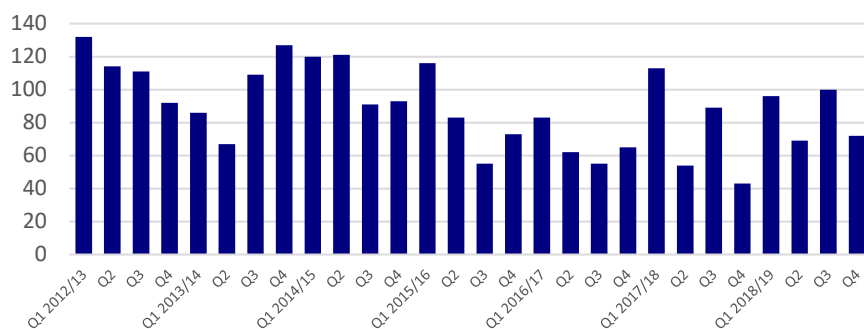


**Fig 7.2: Fixed Penalties Issued, by Quarter**



In quarter 4, there were 255 fixed penalty notices issued by DVA enforcement officers (table 7.2 & figure 7.2). The total value of these fixed penalties issued was £37,930. This is the lowest quarterly number of fixed penalty notices in our time series. DVA staff issued 1,219 fixed penalty notices during 2018/19, which was the lowest figure for six years.

**Fig 7.3: Convictions, by Quarter**



There were 72 successful convictions during the quarter, accounting for 183 offences. From these cases, the DVA received £26,547 of Court fines & costs.

For the full financial year, there were 337 successful prosecutions, the highest total since 2014/15.

During January to March 2019, enforcement teams carried out 7 joint operations with the PSNI (table 7.3 & figure 7.4). They also carried out 8 cross border operations in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority in Ireland, along with PSNI and An Garda Síochána. For the 2018/19 financial year, the DVA conducted 48 joint operations and 32 cross border operations.

In addition, there were 30 spot-checks on school buses carried out by enforcement officers (table 7.4 & figure 7.5). These spot-checks discovered 13 offences. 203 buses were inspected during the 2018/19 financial year, the second highest total on record, and found 87 offences, a record high.

Fig 7.4: Joint or Cross-Border Operations, by Quarter

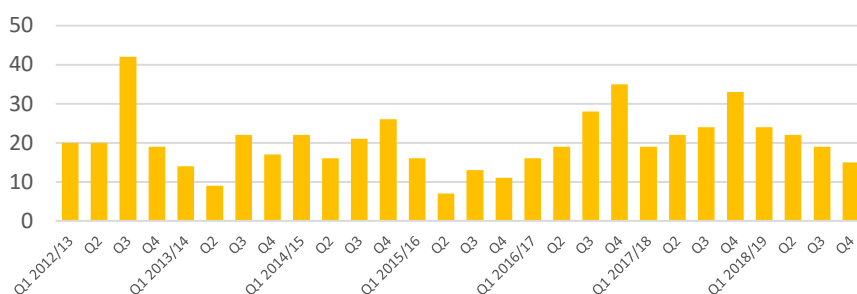
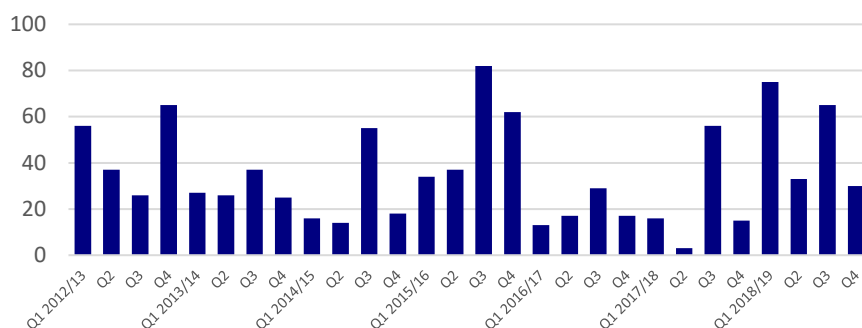


Fig 7.5: School Bus Checks, by Quarter



## Compliance Survey

During 2018/19, the DVA conducted a Bus Compliance survey. This entailed over 98 operations throughout the year, resulting in 483 vehicle inspections.

Of these inspections, 20.2% were deemed non-compliant. That is to say, just over one-in-five had a mechanical defect, or were committing a traffic offence worthy of a prosecution, prohibition or fixed penalty notice. This non-compliance rate is broadly unchanged when compared to the rate reported three years ago.

The survey found that 12.2% of buses had a roadworthiness defect (one or more), and that 13.2% of drivers/operators had committed at least one traffic offence.

It is important to note that we use a sample survey to calculate these estimates, and so these figures should be considered along with their confidence limits when using them to draw comparisons with the bus population. Table 7.7 contains the details of these confidence limits.

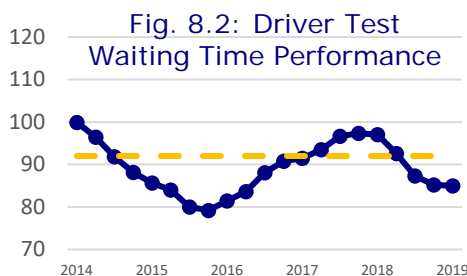
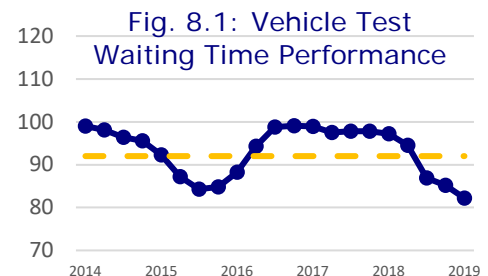


## DVA Target Monitoring

The DVA monitors performance through three targets:

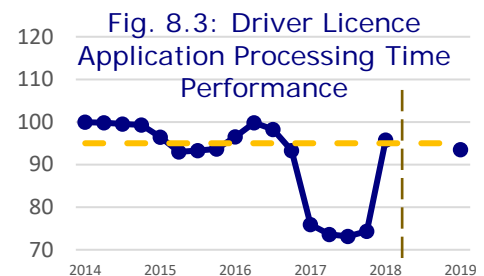
1. *Vehicle Testing* - Appoint 92% of vehicle test applications within 21 days or later on request;
2. *Driver Testing* - Appoint 92% of practical driving test applications within 28 days or, on request, at a later date;
3. *Driver Licensing* - Process 95% of complete driver licensing applications within 10 working days.

Vehicle testing waiting time performance for the 2018/19 financial year was 82.2%. This represents a decrease of 3.0 percentage-points on the position last quarter, and 9.8 percentage-points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1).



Driver testing waiting time performance for the 2018/19 financial year was 85.0%. This is a 0.2 percentage-point decrease on the position in the previous quarter, and 7.0 percentage-points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1).

During 2018/19, the DVA processed 93.5% of completed driver licence applications within 10 working days. This is 1.5 percentage-points below the Agency target of 95%. Note that in previous years, performance against this target has been estimated using a sample survey. However, for 2018/19, the methodology has been improved and expanded to a full census (i.e. all relevant records rather than just a limited-sample). DVA Statistics Branch is confident that this new approach is robust, and accurately reflects the Agency's performance over the period.



(Note that the third indicator in this section does not yet have National Statistics accreditation, although continues to have Official Statistics status).

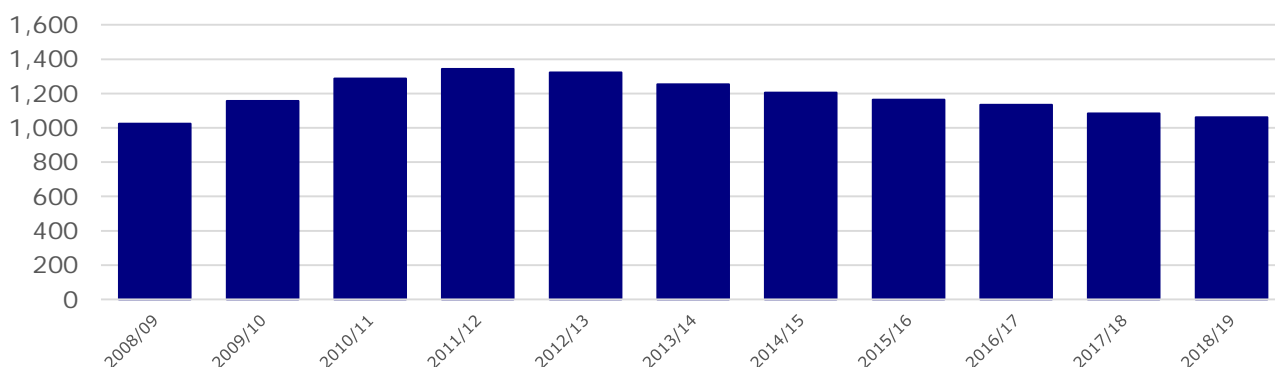


The DVA carries responsibility for the maintenance of the Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) register and the Approved Motorcycle Instructor (AMI) register.

### Volumes

As of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, 1,062 Approved Driving Instructors were registered in Northern Ireland; a 2.8% reduction on the number registered a year ago (figure 9.1) (table 9.1). This is the seventh successive fall in numbers, from the peak of 1,344 in 2011/12. Of these Driving Instructors, 86% were male: a proportion that is broadly unchanged over the past ten years. There were 25 new registrants this year, a fall of 14% on last year, and the second-smallest number recorded in our time series. Falling numbers taking the driving test (table 4.3) from 2008/09 to 2011/12, combined with the economic climate, increasing motoring costs, and demographic changes may all have contributed to a lower demand for instructors.

Fig 9.1: Approved Driving Instructors in Northern Ireland

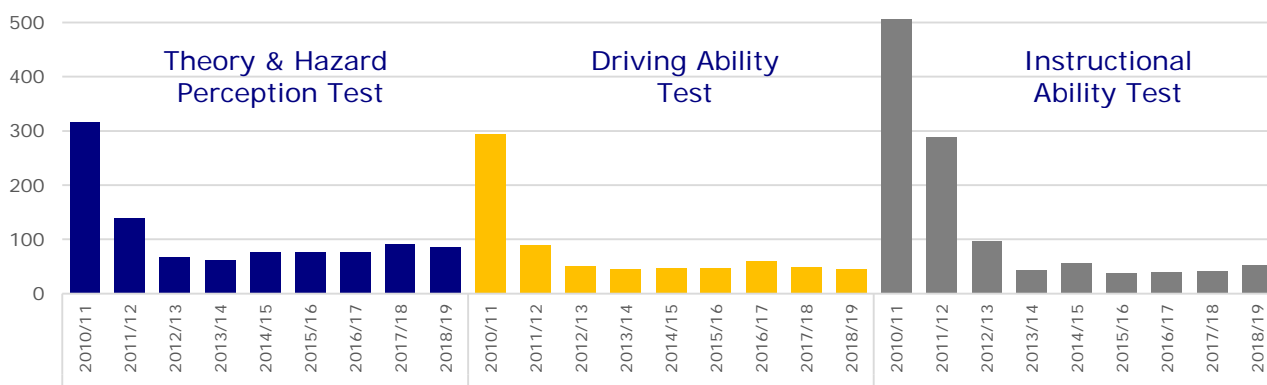


The number of Approved Motorcycle Instructors remains substantially lower, with 55 registered as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, broadly unchanged on the 57 registered seven years ago (table 9.2).

### Test Volumes & Pass-Rates

The numbers undertaking each exam-element, remain low compared to the peaks seen in 2010/11 (figure 9.2) (table 9.3). In 2018/19, 86 candidates attempted the Theory & Hazard Perception test (down 5% on 2017/18), 46 attempted the Driving Ability test (down 6%), and 53 attempted the Instructional Ability test (up 29% on last year).

Fig. 9.2: ADI Test Volumes in Northern Ireland



The pass-rate for the Theory & Hazard Perception test in 2018/19 was 29%, which is the lowest pass-rate recorded in our series (table 9.4). In 2018/19, the pass-rate for the Driving Ability test was 74%, an increase on the 55% last year, and the highest figure in our series. Finally, the pass-rate for the Instructional Ability test was 32%, broadly unchanged on eight years ago (33% in 2011/12), although lower than the peak figure of 44% in 2016/17.

Note that large movements in pass-rates from year to year may be due to the small numbers sitting each test.

## **Notes**

### **National Statistics**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015 this series of statistics were designated as National Statistics. This means the UK Statistics Authority has certified them as compliant with its Code of Practice for Official Statistics. You can find both the assessment report and letter of confirmation on the UK Statistics Authority website at: <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/driver-and-vehicle-statistics-in-northern-ireland>.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality, and public value. They are produced free from any political interference and undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The Department further demonstrates its commitment to the Code of Practice by publishing a series of supporting statements related to its use of administrative data, publication strategy, confidentiality arrangements, revisions policy, customer service and complaints procedure. For details see: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/statistics-and-research/code-practice-statistics>.

Note that three new target-monitoring indicators have been added to the report since National Statistics accreditation was achieved. Having discussed these with the Office for Statistical Regulation (OSR), it has been agreed that both the Vehicle Testing and Driver Testing Waiting Time targets fully comply with the National Statistics standard. However, whilst the Driver Licensing processing time target met many aspects of the Code of Practice, more investigation of the processes and quality checks associated with the new *Driver Licensing System* would be required before it could be similarly deemed fully compliant. In the interim, this indicator will continue to have the status of Official Statistics and this has been highlighted in the relevant section of the report.

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