

DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics

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Key Findings

- The DVA received over 339,000 applications for vehicle tests during April to June 2019, up by 12.7% on last year. In addition, the DVA conducted almost 294,000 vehicle tests, an increase of 4.3% compared to the same period last year. The pass-rate for full tests was 83.2%, an increase on the 82.3% in the same period last year, and the second highest quarterly pass-rate on record.
- Approximately 20,600 new vehicles were registered in Northern Ireland during January to March 2019. This is 3.1% less than the figure recorded for the same period in 2018. The most popular make was Ford (11%), whilst white was the most popular colour (21%) and petrol was the most popular fuel-type (61%).
- There were just over 1,190,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 31st March 2019, an increase of 2.0% on last year. The overwhelming majority (83%) were cars.
- The number of theory tests conducted during the quarter was broadly unchanged from 2018, and remains approximately 18,500. The trend has remained steady over the past four years. The pass-rate for private-car theory tests was 43.7%, a small decrease on the previous quarter, and is the lowest quarterly pass-rate recorded in our series.
- The DVA conducted approximately 14,500 driving tests during April to June 2019, a decrease of 1.9% from the number conducted in the equivalent period last year. The pass-rate for these tests was 58.7%, broadly unchanged over the past five years.
- Nearly 58,500 licensing transactions were carried out by DVA during quarter one of 2019-20. This represents a decrease of approximately 9.1% in comparison with the volume carried out in the corresponding period in 2018. 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 30th June 2019, there were almost 1,109,000 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 30th June 2019, there were approximately 10,100 licensed taxi drivers, down by 9.5% when compared with the same point of 2018, and the lowest figure in our series. Similarly, there were nearly 8,800 licensed taxi vehicles, a small increase of 0.6% when compared to the record low in the preceding quarter.
- During quarter one of 2019-20, DVA Enforcement staff checked approximately 1,100 vehicles, of which 30% were HGVs. This is the lowest quarterly figure in our time series.
- For the 12-month period up to the end of June 2019, Agency performance against both the vehicle testing and driving testing performance measures was below the target level of 92%. Vehicle testing dropped for the sixth quarter in a row, from 82.2% to 74.1%. Driver testing also decreased for the sixth consecutive quarter, from 85.0% to 84.3%. For 2019-20, the DVA has split its driver licensing target into two categories: online applications and paper applications. For the April to June 2019 period, online performance was 97.3% processed within 5 days, whilst paper performance was 33.6% processed within 10 days, both against a target of 95%.

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Introduction

This is the nineteenth 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 1 of 2019-20. This covers the period from 1st April 2019 to 30th June 2019. Due to the transfer of vehicle licensing functions to DVLA, the data in the corresponding section (page 8) is from 1st January 2019 to 31st March 2019.

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.

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.

Final, fully validated financial-year statistics will be published in the '*DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics, 2019-20*' report, which is scheduled for public release in late May/early June 2020. The latest edition of the financial-year statistics for 2018-19 is available on our website, listed below.

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

Established following a departmental restructuring in May 2016, the *Driver & Vehicle Agency* (DVA) is an executive agency within the *Department for Infrastructure* (DfI). The DVA was formed on 1st 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).

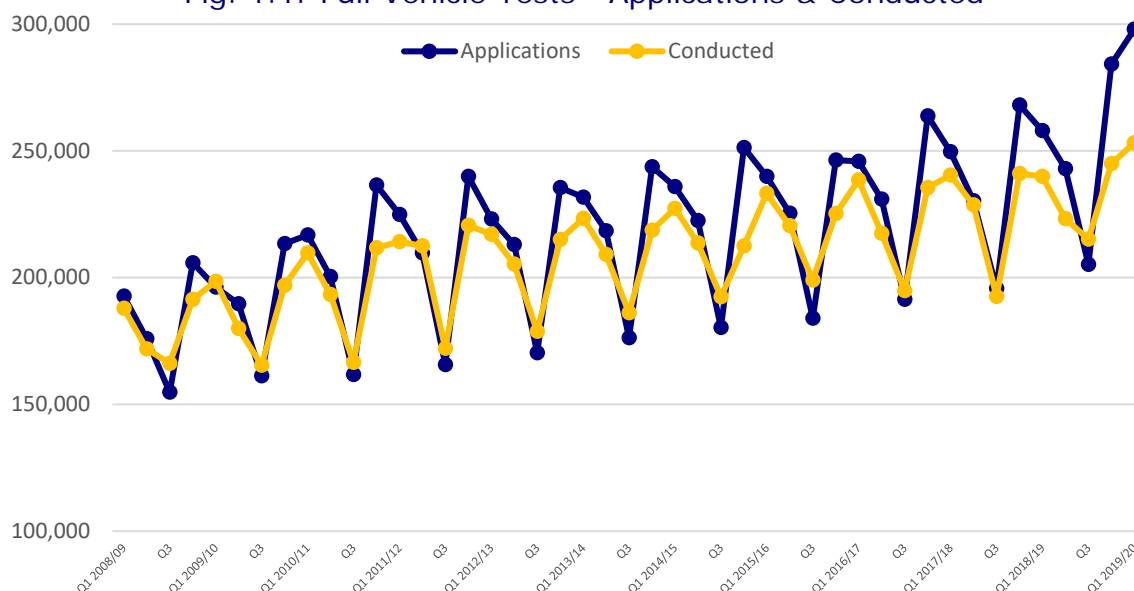
Vehicle testing forms the most significant aspect, in terms of volumes, of the work of the Operations Directorate in DVA, and by extension, the DVA as a whole.

Vehicle Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From April to June 2019, the DVA received just over 339,000 applications for vehicle tests, up by 12.7% 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 34,200 (16.1%) 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. The number of vehicle test applications has risen consistently over the past decade, with this quarter's total being 41% higher than the equivalent period in 2009.

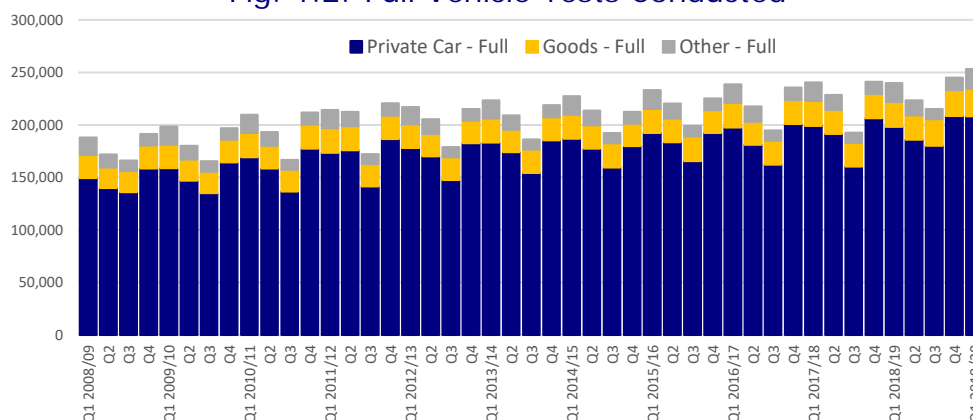
Note that additional Sunday opening at some test centres began during June 2019, which will account for some of the increases seen in quarter 1.

Fig. 1.1: Full Vehicle Tests - Applications & Conducted



During quarter 1, the DVA conducted almost 294,000 vehicle tests (full tests and re-tests), an increase of 4.3% compared to the equivalent quarter last year, and the highest number on record. The vast majority of these (71%) were full tests for private-cars (table 1.7).

Fig. 1.2: Full Vehicle Tests Conducted



The increased level of vehicle test applications seen in the trend series can, in the main, be explained by the increasing number of licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland, which has risen by 9.7% over the past four years (see table 2.13). In addition, owners seem to be keeping their vehicles for longer, as the proportion of vehicles of MOT-age has risen by nearly 2% over the past two years, whilst the average age of a licensed vehicle has risen from 8.2 to 8.5 years over the past four years. Together, this has resulted in approximately 66,000 (6%) additional vehicles requiring a test in 2019 compared to 2015. In recent months, we have also seen a change in customer booking habits along with a move from seven-week reminder letters to nine-weeks, resulting in customers booking their tests earlier than in previous years. Recent press articles may have exacerbated this shift in demand.

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 39,000 applications) on the equivalent period last year (table 1.4).

Fig. 1.3: Vehicle Test Applications by Booking Method

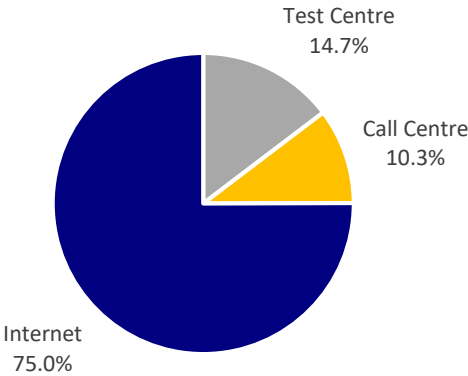
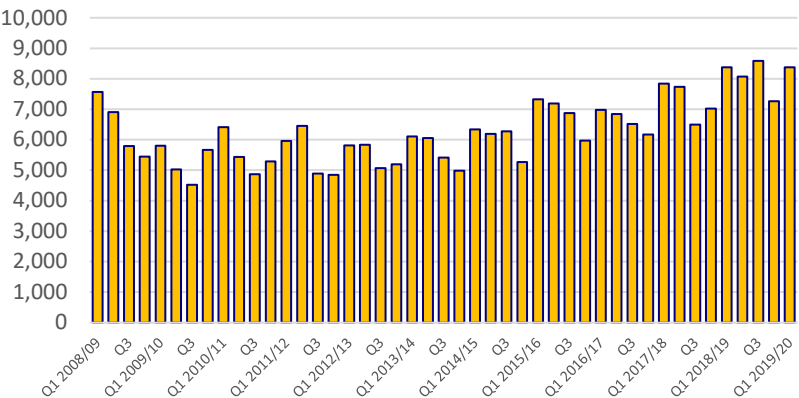


Fig. 1.4: Failed to Attends



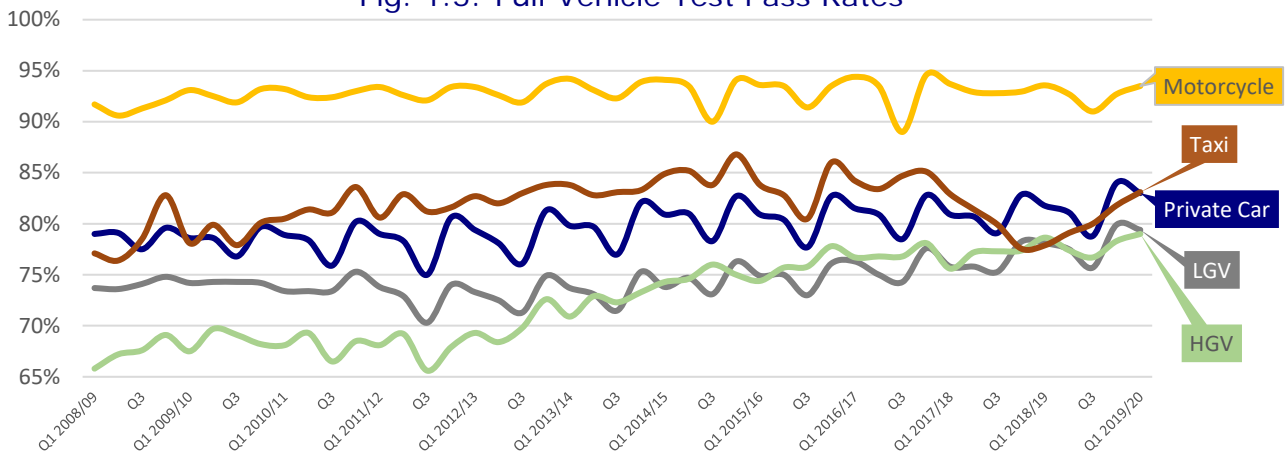
Approximately 8,400 vehicles failed to attend for a booked test during the quarter, which is unchanged compared to the equivalent period last year (table 1.10). These account for over 2.8% of the conducted tests during the quarter, a proportion that is broadly unchanged over the past decade. These tests equate to approximately 2,400 working-hours of time lost.

Vehicle Test Pass-Rates

In quarter 1, the overall pass-rate for full tests was 83.2%, an increase on the pass-rate of 82.3% recorded in the same period last year, and the second highest quarterly pass-rate since the time series began in 2008. The full test pass-rates varied by test category, from 78.0% for large passenger carrying vehicles to 93.5% 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 94.0%, a decrease when compared with last year. Similarly, the re-test pass-rates varied by category, from 88.5% for trailers to 95.5% for motorcycles (for categories where there were greater than 200 re-tests) (table 1.12).

Fig. 1.5: Full Vehicle Test Pass Rates



Vehicle Tests by Test Centre

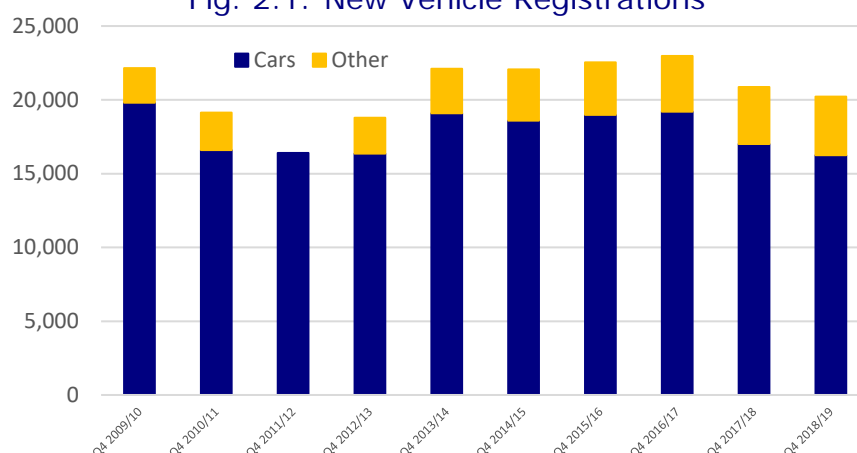
The busiest test centre was again Newtownards, which conducted nearly 33,500 tests during the quarter, although this is partly due to the greater number of lanes at this centre. In comparison, the quietest centres were Enniskillen and Omagh, having conducted approximately 12,300 and 12,600 tests each during the April to June period (table 1.14).

Whilst the overall pass-rate for private-car full tests was 83.0%, by test centre this ranged from a high of 86.8% in Belfast (Balmoral) to a low of 79.3% in Larne (table 1.14). This was the twenty-seventh consecutive quarter that Belfast (Balmoral) had the highest pass-rate, and the eleventh 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 January to March 2019, approximately 20,600 vehicles were registered for the first time in Northern Ireland. The number of new vehicle first registrations showed a decrease of 3.1% from the same period in 2018. New car first registrations accounted for the majority of this decrease, down by 4.5% when compared to 2018 (table 2.1). The 20,225 new vehicle registration is the lowest figure recorded for quarter 4 in six years (table 2.1).

Fig. 2.1: New Vehicle Registrations

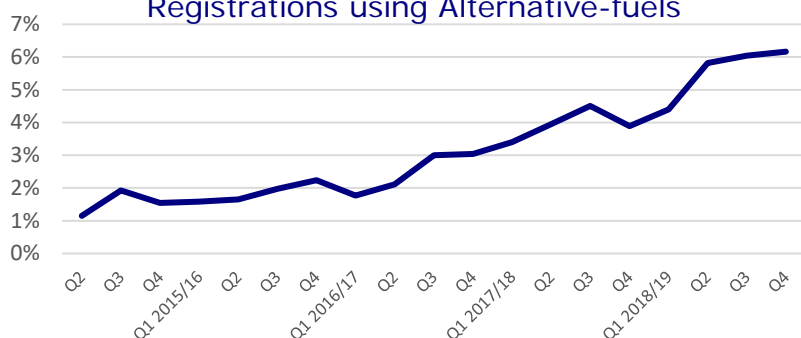


* Other Registrations split into new & used for Q4 2011/12 are unavailable.

The top make for cars registered for the first time during January to March 2019 was Ford, accounting for 1,867 registrations. This marks the sixteenth quarter in a row that Ford has been at number one. The second largest make was Volkswagen accounting for 1,813 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 2018 was for Renault (+12%, from 684 to 765) and the largest decrease was for Hyundai (-17%, from 1,122 to 928).

White was the most popular colour for new cars, accounting for 20.5% of all new registrations. This is followed by grey (20.3%), blue (17.8%), black (14.7%), and red (13.7%).

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 52.0% of cars in 2014-15 Q4 to 33.3% this year (9,662 vehicles in 2014-15 Q4 down to 5,414 vehicles in 2018-19). Over the same period the number of

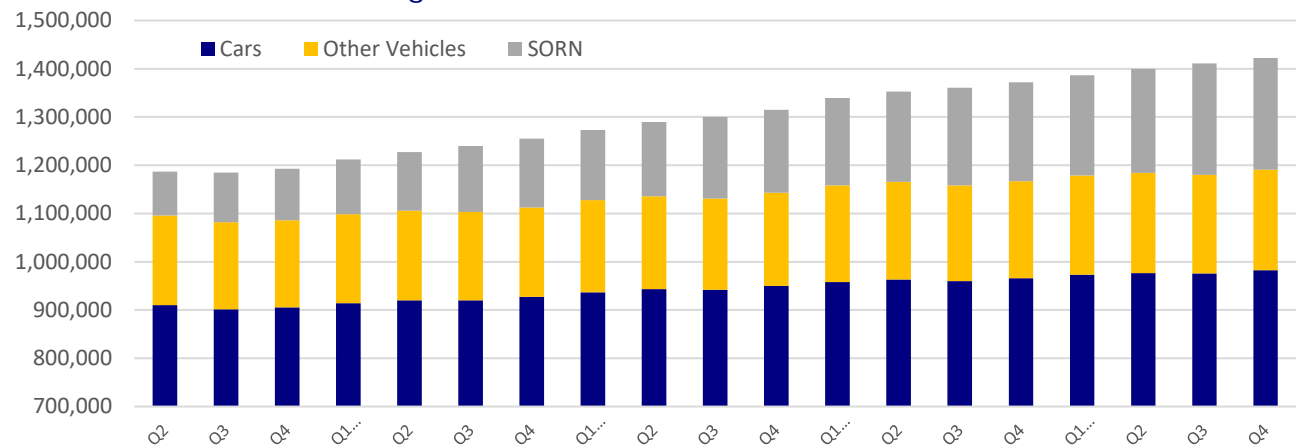
alternative-fuel¹ cars newly registered almost quadrupled, from 287 in 2014-15 Q4 to 1,002 this year.

¹ 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 1,190,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 31st March 2019, an increase of 2.0% compared with the previous year, and 9.7% compared with four years ago (table 2.13). Of these, 82.5% (982,692) were cars, and 12.1% (144,248) were goods vehicles (including both light and heavy).

Over 231,000 vehicles had a *Statutory Off-Road Notification* (SORN) at the 31st March 2019, representing 16.3% of the total vehicle stock (table 2.13). The number of SORN vehicles in Northern Ireland increased by almost a seventh (12.9%) from the same date in 2018; 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.

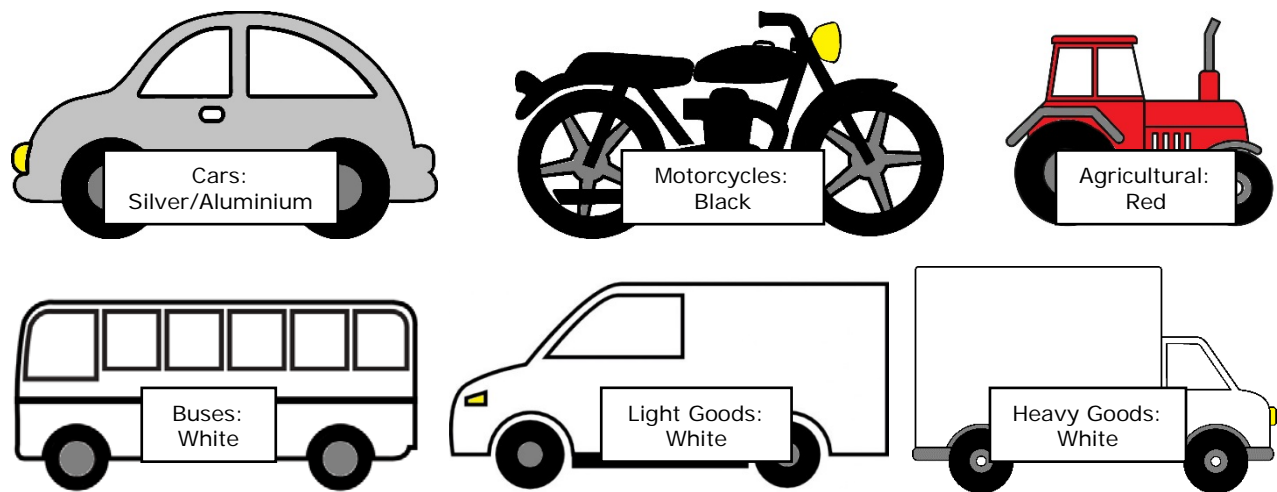
Fig. 2.3: Northern Ireland Vehicle Stock



As of 31st March 2019, 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 – 13.1 years;
 - Light Goods – 8.1 years;
 - Heavy Goods – 9.7 years;
- Buses – 9.9 years;
 - Agricultural – 21.1 years;
 - Other – 10.0 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:



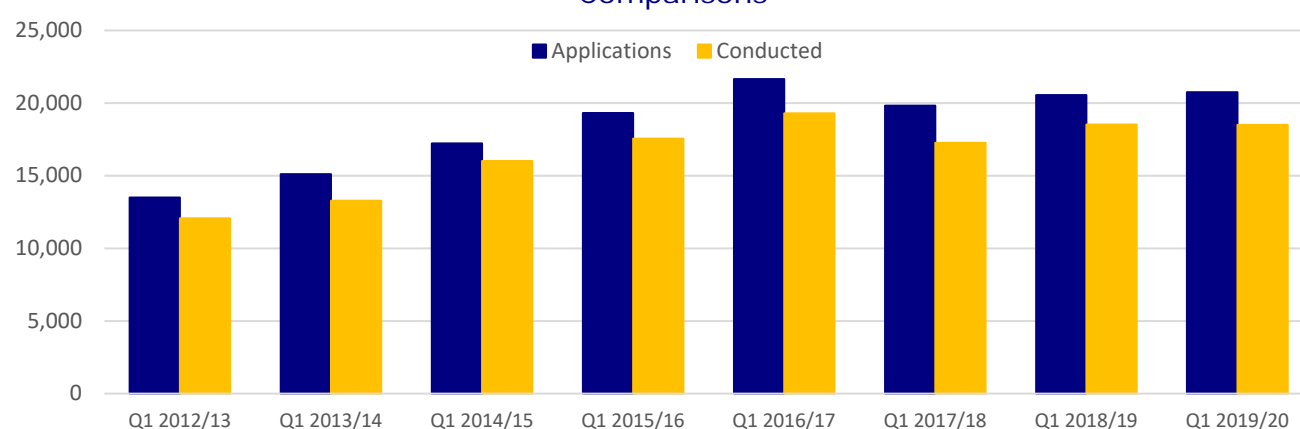
The DVA has responsibility for the theory test element of the overall driving test process. Pearson VUE administers the test in Northern Ireland under contract with the DfI through DVA.

Theory Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From April to June 2019, the DVA received approximately 20,700 theory test applications. This marks a small increase of 1.0% from the 20,500 recorded in the same quarter last year (figure 3.1).

Conversely, during the same period the number of theory tests conducted decreased slightly from 18,529 to 18,496 this year (table 3.2). Seven out of the last nine quarter-on-quarter comparisons have now shown decreases, although the trend is broadly steady since the series-peak in late 2016.

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



During quarter 1, there were 1,900 tests where the individual failed to attend, an increase of 7.5% on the equivalent period in 2018, and the second highest number in our series (table 3.3). These account for over 9.3% of the conducted tests during the quarter, the highest proportion in our series, and in keeping with the rising trend seen since 2015.

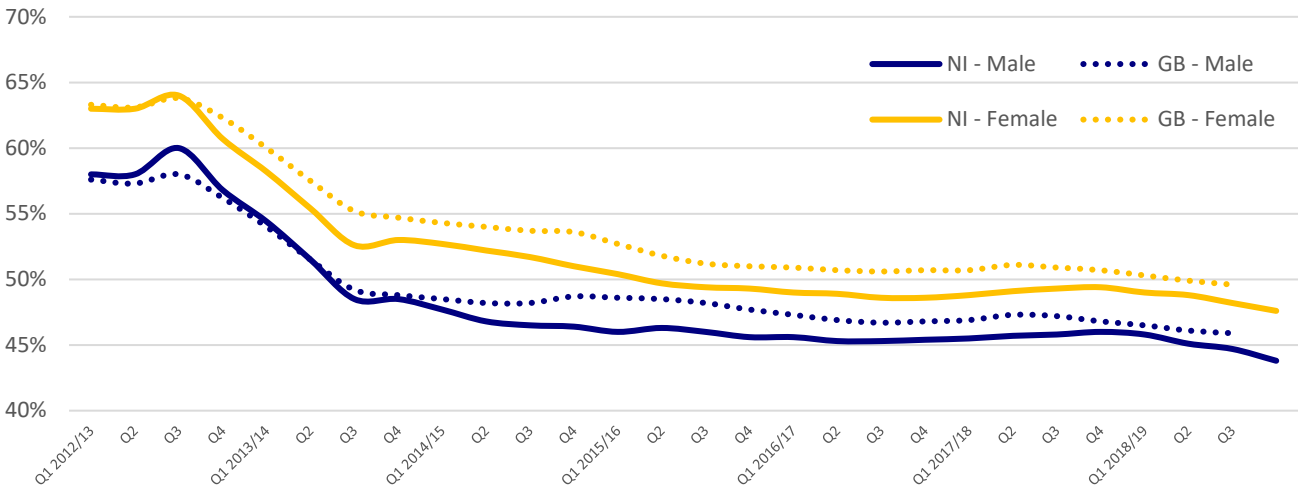
Theory Test Pass-Rates

The theory test pass-rate for private-cars in quarter 1 showed a 1.9 percentage-point decrease to 43.7% when compared with the previous quarter (table 3.4). This decrease is a continuation of the declining trend seen over the past six years, and marks the lowest pass-rate recorded in our series. The theory test pass-rate for motorcycles remains substantially higher, at 73.0%, 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 33.1%, a decrease of 2.5 percentage-points over the preceding quarter, although still 8.4 percentage-points higher than the 24.7% recorded a year ago. A reduction in the Hazard Perception pass-mark in September 2018 will have had some influence on this rise.

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 47.3% for females and 43.1% for males. The figures for both genders have been gradually decreasing at the same rate since 2012. This 'gender-gap' in pass-rates is nearly identical to that seen in Great Britain (figure 3.2).

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

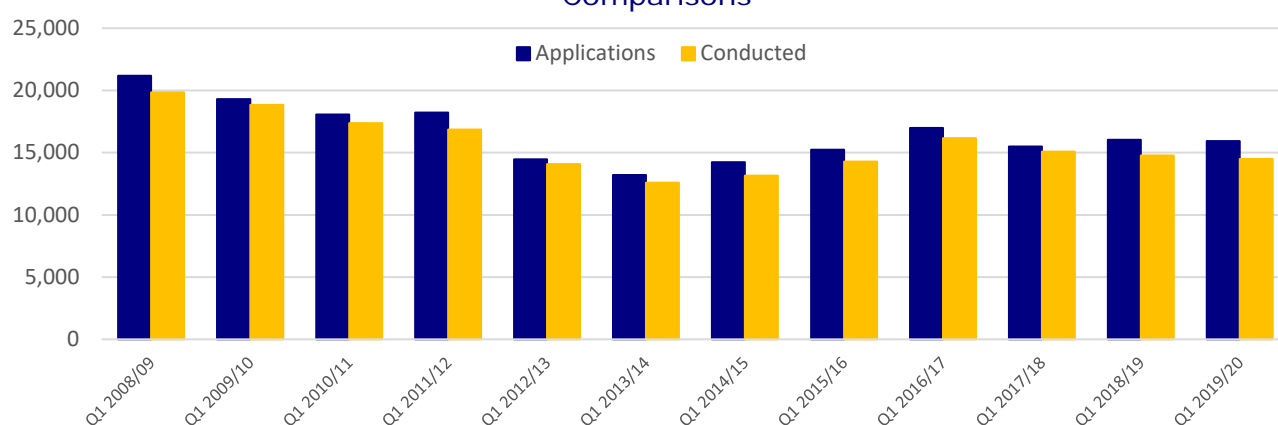


DVA provides a wide range of driving test categories for testing learner drivers and motorcyclists to ensure that they meet the required standard of competence necessary to drive safely on public roads.

Driving Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From April to June 2019, nearly 15,900 driving test applications were submitted to the DVA, a small decrease of 0.7% on the equivalent quarter in 2018 (table 4.1). Similarly, during the same three-month period, the number of driving tests conducted decreased by 1.9% from approximately 14,800 in 2018 to almost 14,500 in April to June 2019 (table 4.3 & figure 4.1). Whilst this quarter has seen decreases in both applications and tests conducted, the trends for both over the past five are relatively steady.

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 1, there were 307 appointments where the individual failed to attend (FTA), representing a 4.1% decrease on the same quarter last year (table 4.4). These account for almost 2.1% of the conducted tests during the quarter, a proportion in-line with the trend seen since 2016.

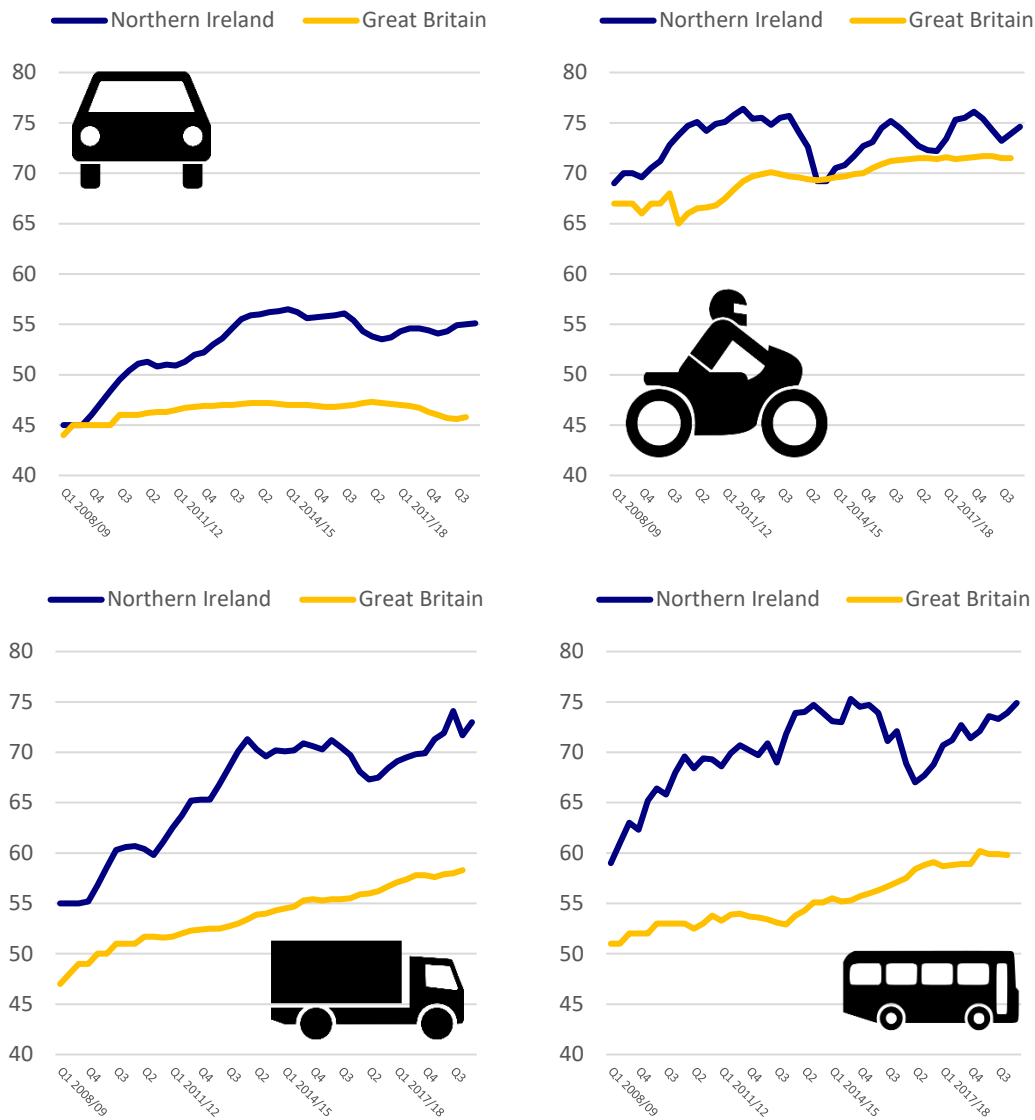
The most popular booking method for a driving test application was the internet booking system, which received 75.0% of all applications, up 2.3 percentage-points on the previous year (table 4.2).

Driving Test Pass-Rates

For April to June 2019, the pass-rate for all categories of driving tests remained 58.7% for the third consecutive quarter, up 0.3 percentage-points on the 58.4% 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 April to June 2019 period was, again, Belfast (Balmoral) (1,349 tests). The Armagh centre again conducted the fewest, with 393 tests during the quarter.

The overall pass-rate for private-car driving tests was 54.4%, ranging by test centre from 41.0% in Londonderry (Altnagelvin) to 71.8% in Downpatrick (table 4.6). This was the eighteenth consecutive quarter that Downpatrick had the highest pass-rate, and the sixth 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.

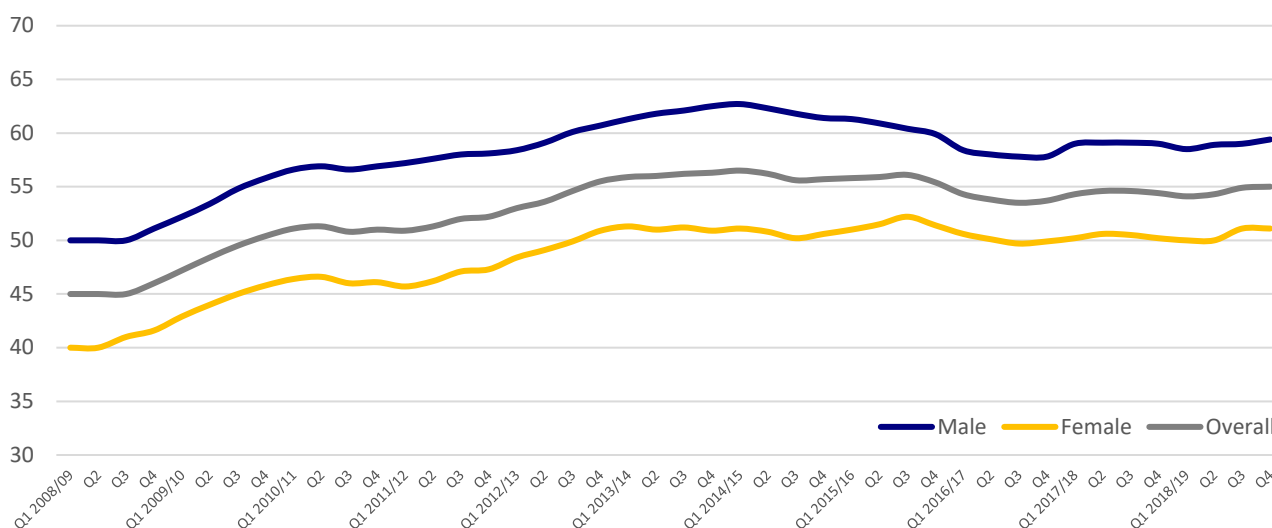
Driving Test Pass-Rates by Gender

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 8.0 percentage-point higher pass-rate compared to females for the private-car driving test. This gap has remained relatively consistent over the past decade.

Every test centre offering private-car driving tests also showed this same disparity, to varying degrees, from 11.4 percentage-points at the Lisburn centre (71.3% v 59.9%) to 1.7 percentage-points at the Craigavon centre (61.5% v 59.7%).

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 1 2019-20 (6,220) was 5.3% lower than the figure for those issued during the same period in the previous year (6,568 licences) (table 5.1).

The DVA carried out approximately 58,300 ordinary licensing transactions during April to June 2019 (Figure 5.1). This represented a decrease of 9.1% in comparison with the volume carried out in the corresponding quarter of 2018. 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 1 2019-20, the DVA carried out 4,233 vocational licensing transactions, a decrease of 8.4% on the corresponding period in 2018 where the figure stood at just over 4,473 (table 5.2).

In other licensing activity, the number of letters of entitlement issued during the quarter remains high, from just under 1,500 issued in the quarter ten years ago to approximately 5,300 issued between April to June 2019 (table 5.3). However, the volume of identity checks has nearly halved over the same ten-year period: reducing from approximately 12,400 in quarter 1 2009-10 to approximately 7,500 in the same period in 2019-10.

Fig. 5.1: Driver Licensing Transactions

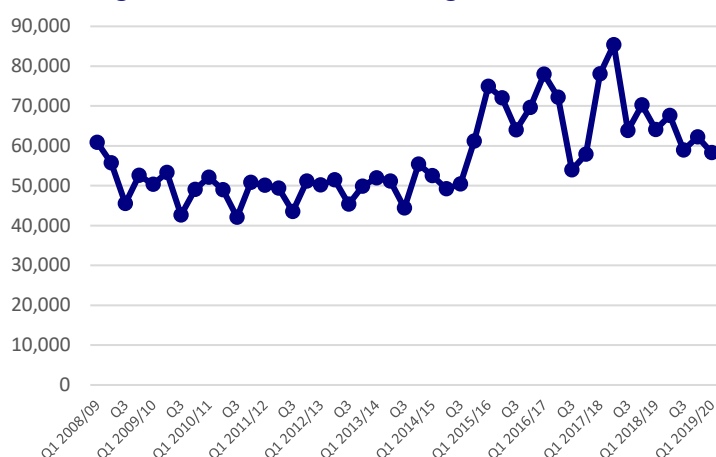
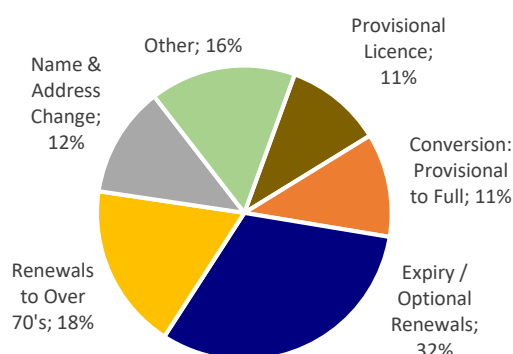


Fig. 5.2: Driver Licence Transactions Q1 2019-20, by Type



Driver Licence Stock

At the 30th June 2019, there were over 1,109,000 full and eligible licence holders with private-cars / light vans entitlement, a rise of 1.4% 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 almost 6,000 in the past twelve months, with the total now approximately 210,500 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 June 2019 they were 19.0%, reflecting the nature of Northern Ireland's aging population.

An estimated 75.7% 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 2018 Mid-Year Population Estimates² (table 5.8i). For males, the estimated figure was 79.1%, which is approximately seven percentage-points higher than the 72.4% seen for females.

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

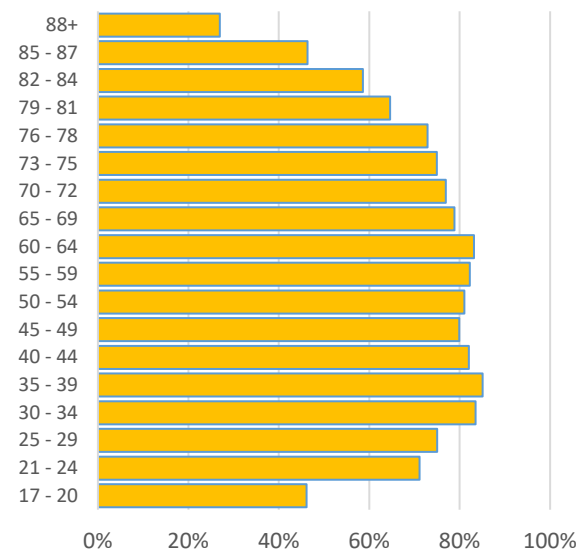


Fig. 5.4: Full & Eligible Private Car Licence Holders in Northern Ireland

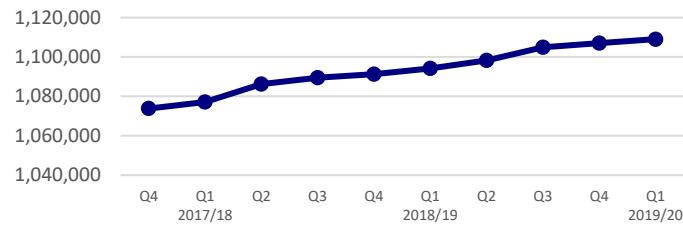
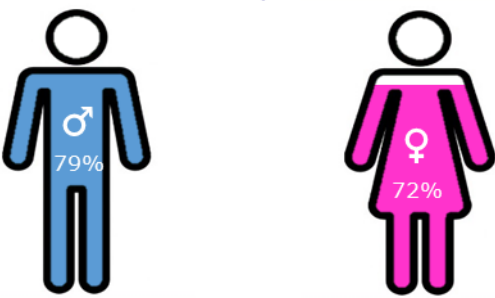


Fig. 5.5: Proportion of Population with a Full & Eligible Private Car Licence - by Gender



² 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 June 2019 (10,066) was down by 9.5% 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 a third on the series high recorded five

years ago. This reduction may have been caused, in part, by the introduction of a new taxi driver theory and practical driving, introduced on 31st Oct 2014. Of these taxi drivers, 96% were Male, whilst their average age was 50.

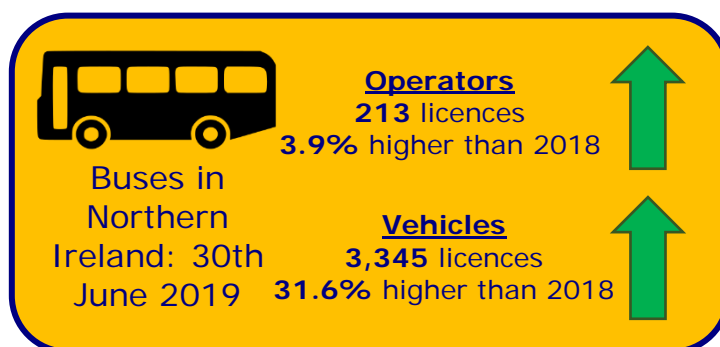
Approximately 2,200 vehicle licences for taxis were issued during April to June 2019, which is 2.6% lower than the number issued in the corresponding quarter in 2018 (table 6.1). At the 30th June 2019, there were 8,817 licensed taxi vehicles in Northern Ireland, a small increase of 0.6% when compared to the record low in the preceding quarter.

These taxi vehicles were affiliated to 1,390 licensed taxi operators, of which 86% 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 over a sixth when compared with the figure recorded two years ago and is the second-lowest figure recorded in our time series.

Bus Licensing

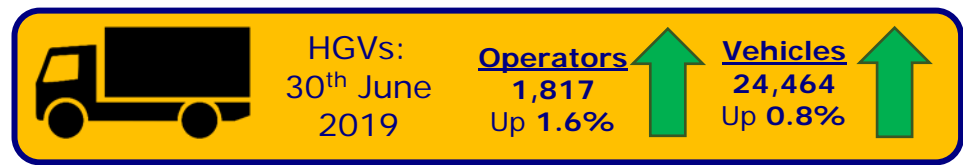
The number of licensed buses at the 30th June 2019 was 3,345, up 32% on the figure at the end of March 2019 (table 6.3) and the highest figure recorded in our time series. The DVA issued 949 bus vehicle licences during the quarter, up 13% on the equivalent quarter in 2018, and again the highest figure in our time series (table 6.1).

At the 30th June 2019, there were 213 bus operator licences in force, up from the amount as recorded one year ago (205). During April to June 2019, 62 bus operator licences were processed, up 13% on the 55 recorded in the same period last year.



Goods Licensing

The total current standard international goods vehicle operator licences in force as at the 30th June 2019 was 1,817, an increase of 1.6% on last year, and an increase of 23% on six 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 April to June 2019, DVA enforcement staff checked 1,056 vehicles; of these, the largest volume was for HGVs, accounting for almost a third of all vehicles checked (table 7.1 & figure 7.1). This is the lowest quarterly figure in our time series.

Fig 7.1: Enforcement Spot-Checks, by Quarter

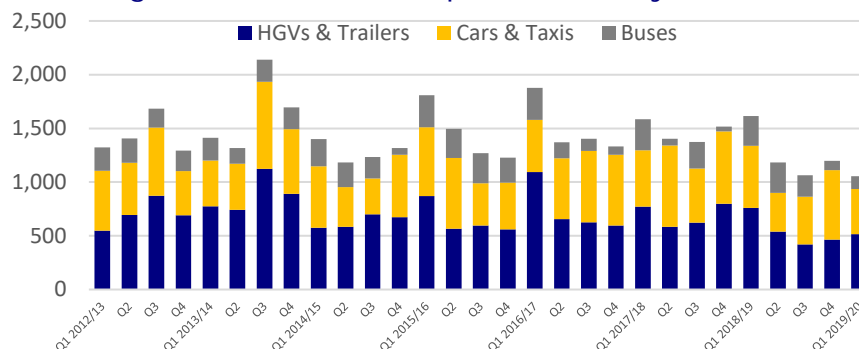
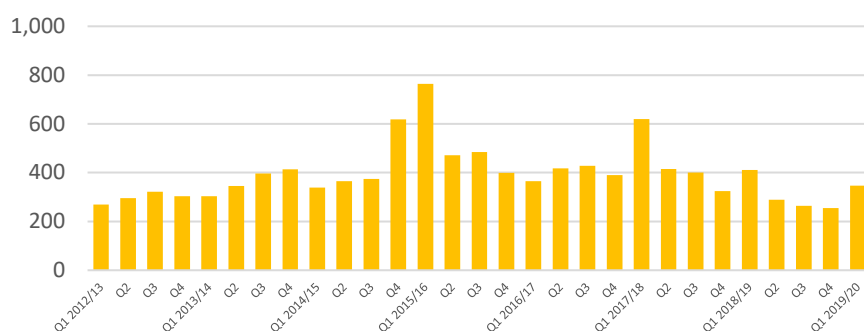
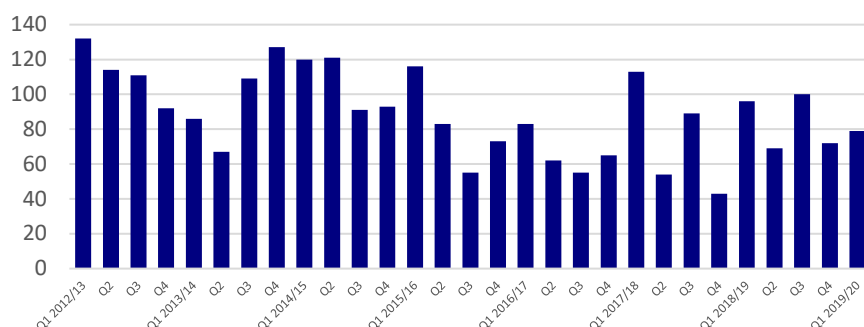


Fig 7.2: Fixed Penalties Issued, by Quarter



DVA enforcement officers issued 347 fixed penalty notices during quarter 1 (table 7.2 & figure 7.2). The total value of these fixed penalties issued was £51,230.

Fig 7.3: Convictions, by Quarter



There were 79 successful convictions during the quarter, accounting for 225 offences. From these cases, the DVA received £41,780 of Court fines & costs, the largest figure for seven years.

During April to June 2019, enforcement teams carried out six joint operations with the PSNI (table 7.3 & figure 7.4). They also carried out eight cross border operations in conjunction with the Road Safety Authority in Ireland, along with PSNI and An Garda Síochána.

The DVA conducted only one school bus check during the quarter, the lowest quarterly total in our time series (table 7.4 & figure 7.5).

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

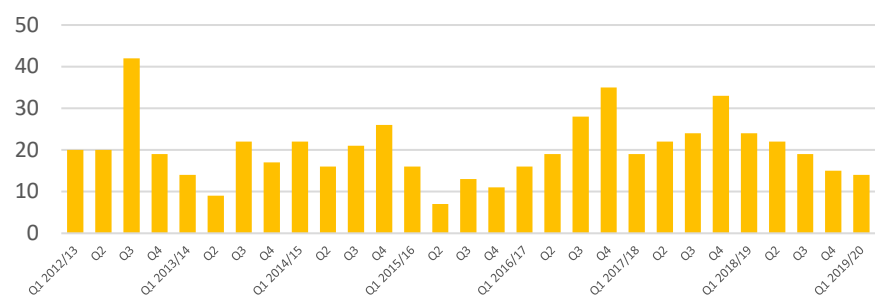
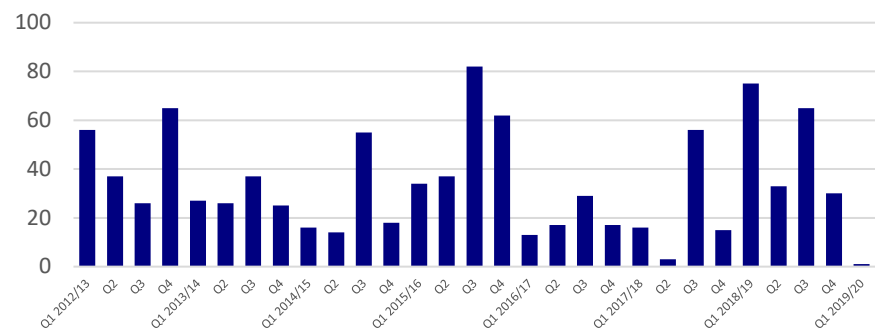


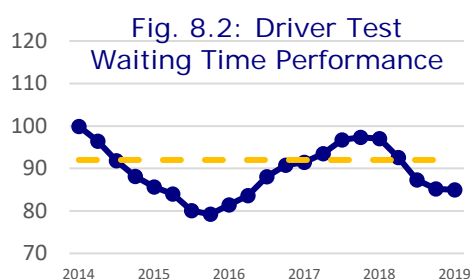
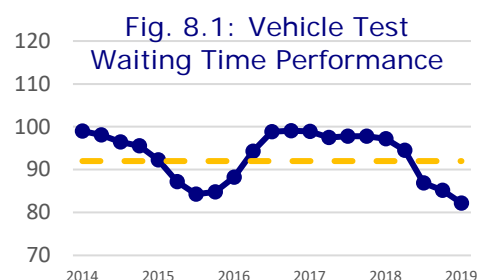
Fig 7.5: School Bus Checks, by Quarter



The DVA monitors performance through four 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. *Online Driver Licensing* - Process 95% of complete online driver licensing applications within 5 working days;
4. *Paper Driver Licensing* - Process 95% of complete paper driver licensing applications within 10 working days.

Vehicle testing waiting time performance for 12 months up to end-June 2019 was 74.1%. This represents a decrease of 8.1 percentage-points on the position last quarter, and 17.9 percentage-points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1). This is the lowest reported figure since our time series began in 2014.



Driver testing waiting time performance for 12 months up to end-June 2019 was 84.3%. This is a 0.7 percentage-point decrease on the position in the previous quarter, and 7.7 percentage-points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1).

For 2019-20, the DVA has split the reporting for driver licensing into two: one target for online applications (5 days) and another for paper applications (10 days). Neither of these is directly comparable to the previous *all-in-one* target. The figures reported are therefore for 2019-20 quarter 1 only, and not a 12-month performance like the other targets.

For 2019-20 quarter 1, online driver licensing performance was 97.3%, 2.3 percentage-points above the Agency target of 95%. For paper driver licensing, the performance was 33.6%, substantially below the Agency target of 95%. However, it should be noted that the average waiting time for paper applications was 11.7 days, and 90% of applications were processed within 16 days or less.

(Note that the third and fourth indicators in this section do not yet have National Statistics accreditation, although continue to have Official Statistics status).

Notes

National Statistics

On the 24th 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 further 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. We have discussed these with the Office for Statistical Regulation (OSR), and 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 targets 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, these indicators 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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