

# DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics

## Quarter Three: October to December 2018

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**Produced by:**

DVA Statistics Branch,  
Driver and Vehicle Agency,  
Annex 4, Belfast Test Centre,  
66 Balmoral Road,  
Belfast,  
BT12 6QL

**Contact:** Richard Ramsden

**Telephone:** 02890 547911

**Email:** [DVA.Statistics@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:DVA.Statistics@nisra.gov.uk)

**Website:**

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

## Key Findings

- Just over 260,000 vehicle tests were carried out by the DVA during quarter 3 of 2018/19, an increase of 11.5% compared to the equivalent quarter last year. The vast majority of these (83%) were full tests, whilst the overall pass rate for these was 79%.
- At over 16,000, the number of new vehicle first registrations in the period July to September 2018 showed a decrease of 4.5% from the equivalent period in 2017. New car first registrations accounted for the majority of this decrease, down by a greater 7.8%.
- There were just over 1,184,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, an increase of 1.6% on last year. The overwhelming majority (83%) were cars.
- The number of theory tests conducted during the quarter was broadly unchanged from 2017, and remains approximately 18,300. Six out of the last seven quarter-on-quarter comparisons have now shown decreases. The pass rate for private car theory tests was 45%, a small decrease on last quarter, and the lowest figure recorded in our series.
- Over 14,100 driving test applications were submitted during October to December 2018, a decrease of 1.7% on the equivalent quarter in 2017. However during the same three-month period, the number of driving tests conducted increased by 3.4% to over 14,700. The pass rate for these tests was 58.7%, down slightly on the 59.4% last quarter although this is broadly unchanged over the past five years.
- Almost 60,500 licensing transactions were carried out by DVA during quarter 3 of 2018/19. This represents a decrease of approximately 11% in comparison with the volume carried out in the corresponding quarter of 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> December 2018, there were almost 1,105,000 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> December 2018, there were approximately 10,500 licensed taxi drivers, down by 6% when compared with the same point of 2017. Similarly, there were nearly 8,800 licensed taxi vehicles, down 0.4% on 2017. For both drivers and vehicles, these represent the lowest figures in our series.
- During October to December 2018, DVA Enforcement staff checked nearly 1,100 vehicles; of these, the largest volume was for HGVs, accounting for nearly two fifths of all the vehicles checked (39%).
- For the 12 month period up to the end of December 2018, Agency performance against two of the three targets was below the target level. Vehicle testing dropped for the fourth quarter in a row, from 86.9% to 85.2%. Driver testing also decreased for the fourth consecutive quarter, from 87.3% to 85.2%. The Driver Licensing target methodology is currently under review and we are aiming for revised figures to be included in the Quarter 4 publication.

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## **Introduction**

This is the seventeenth 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 3 of 2018/19. This covers the period from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. Due to the transfer of vehicle licensing functions to DVLA, the data in the corresponding section (page 8) is from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 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.

Whilst the majority of data is taken from DVA systems, 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 continue to be presented in section 2.

Final, fully validated year end statistics will be published in the '*DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics, 2018/19*' report, which is scheduled for public release in late May/early June 2019. The latest edition of the year end annual statistics for 2017/18 can be found 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**

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 October to December 2018, almost 251,000 applications for vehicle tests were received by the DVA, up by 6.1% compared to the same three month period in 2017 (table 1.1). The vast majority (82%) of these were for full tests rather than re-tests. This increase was primarily as a result of a rise of 8,600 (5.3%) in full private car test applications. It should be noted 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.

Fig. 1.1: Full Vehicle Tests - Applications & Conducted

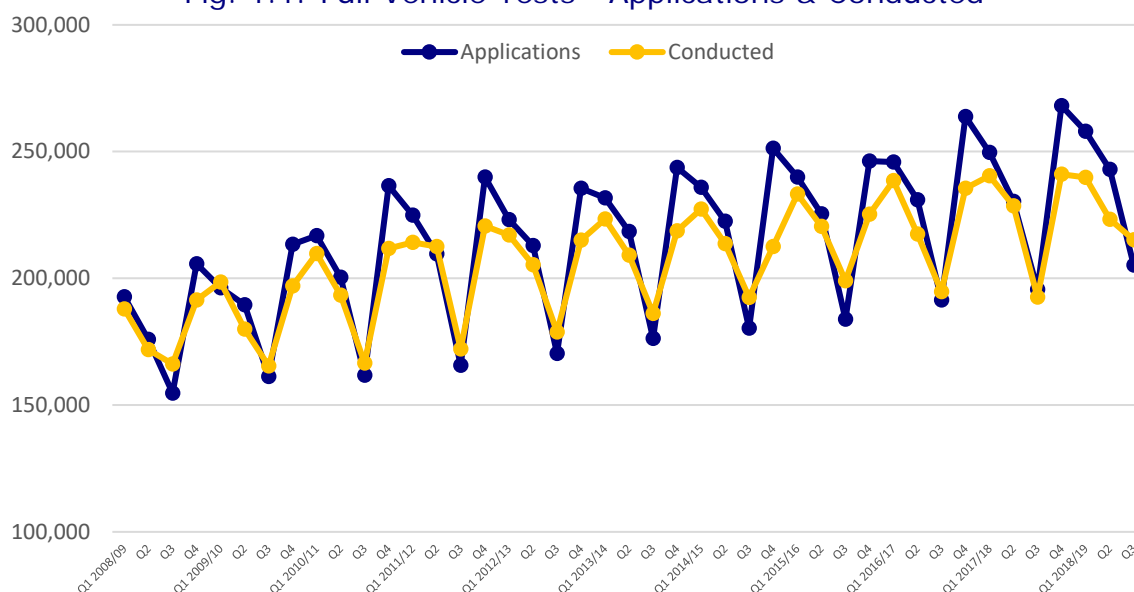
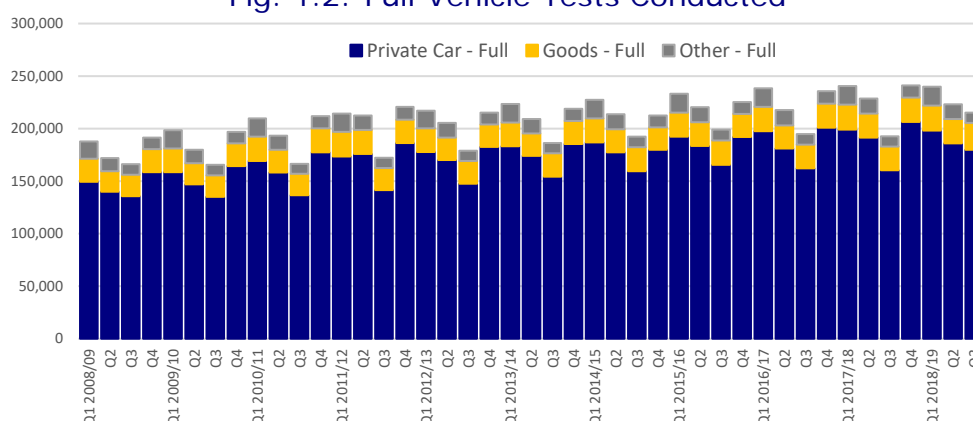


Fig. 1.2: Full Vehicle Tests Conducted

During quarter 3 just over 260,000 vehicle tests were carried out by the DVA (full tests and re-tests), an increase of 11.5% compared to the equivalent quarter last year. The vast majority of these (69%) were full tests for private cars (table 1.7).



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 72% of all applications, up by almost 4 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

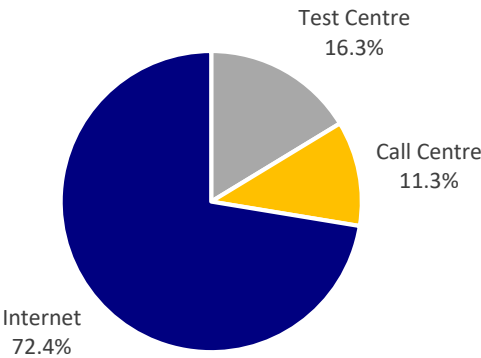
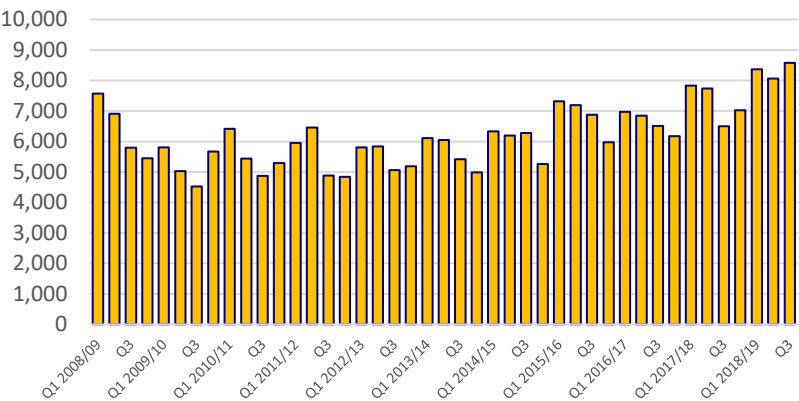


Fig. 1.4: Failed to Attends



Nearly 8,600 vehicles failed to attend for a booked test during the quarter, which is 32.3% higher than the equivalent period last year (table 1.10), and the highest figure in our time series. This is approximately 2,900 working-hours of time lost.

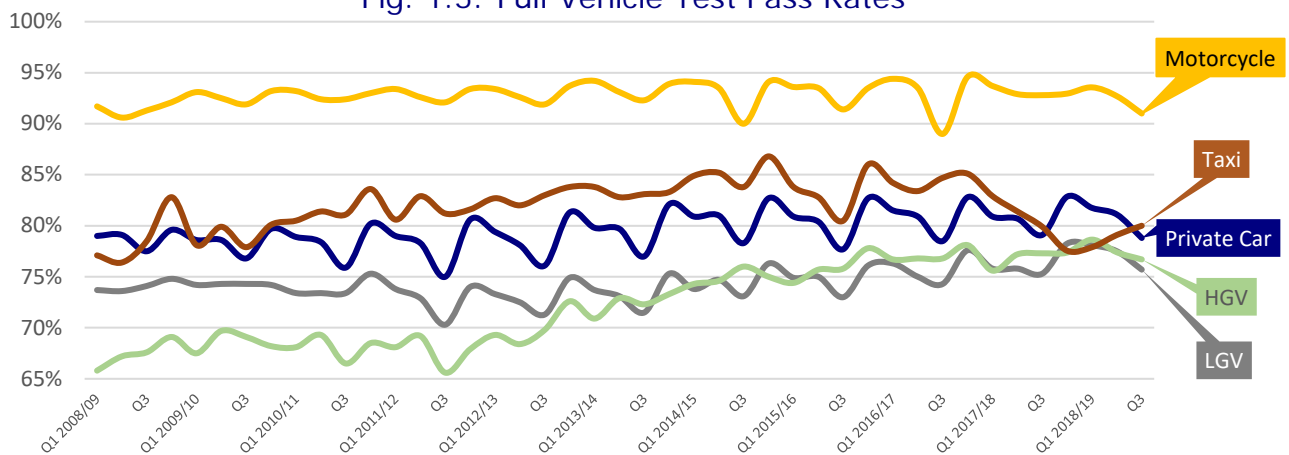
Vehicle Test Pass Rates

In quarter 3, the overall pass rate for full tests was 79.3%, a small increase on the pass rate recorded in the same period last year. The full test pass rates varied by test category, from 75.7% for light goods vehicles to 91.0% 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 93.9%, also an increase when compared with the equivalent period in 2017. The re-test pass rates varied by category, from 91.6% for heavy goods vehicles to 94.2% for private cars (for categories where there were greater than 200 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

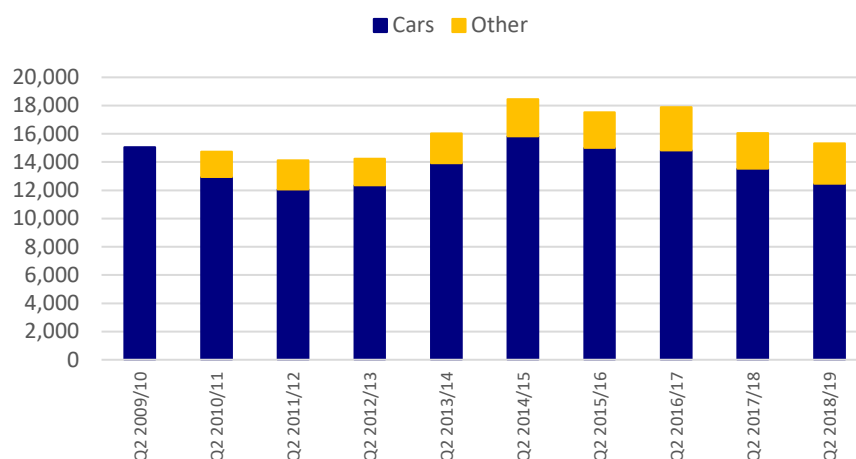
The busiest test centre was again Newtownards, which conducted just over 29,000 tests during the quarter, although this is partly due to the greater number of lanes at this centre. In comparison, the quietest centres were Downpatrick and Omagh, having conducted approximately 10,000 and 11,000 tests each during the October to December period (table 1.14).

Whilst the overall pass rate for private car full tests was 78.8%, by test centre this ranged from a high of 82.8% in Belfast (Balmoral) to a low of 73.8% in Larne (table 1.14). This was the twenty-fifth consecutive quarter that Belfast (Balmoral) had the highest pass rate, and the ninth consecutive quarter that Larne had the lowest. However, this overall pass rate takes no account of differences between the conditions or age of cars presenting for testing at each test centre and which will impact on an individual centre's pass rate.

### Vehicle Registrations

During July to September 2018, approximately 16,000 vehicles were registered for the first time in Northern Ireland. The number of new vehicle first registrations showed a decrease of 4.5% from the same period in 2017. New car first registrations accounted for the majority of this decrease, down by 7.8% when compared to 2017. The 15,336 new vehicle registrations is the lowest figure recorded for quarter 2 in six years (table 2.1).

Fig. 2.1: New Vehicle Registrations\*

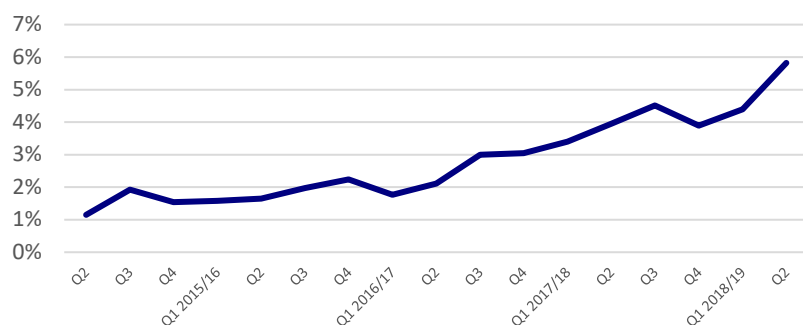


\* Other Registrations split into new & used for Q2 2009/10 are unavailable.

The top make for cars registered for the first time during July to September 2018 was Ford, accounting for 1,652 registrations. This marks the fourteenth quarter in a row that Ford has been at number one. The second largest make was Volkswagen accounting for 1,131 registrations (table 2.3). Of the makes in the top ten for car first registrations during the period, the largest increase was for Toyota (+29%, from 570 to 736) and the largest decrease was for Hyundai (-33%, from 898 to 602).

In a rare change to the usual ranking over the past four years, grey was the most popular colour for new cars, accounting for 19.6% of all new registrations. This is followed by white (19.4%), blue (17.7%), black (15.5%) and red (13.7%).

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



Over the past three years, there has been a decline in the proportion of diesel cars being newly registered, down from 50.9% of cars in 2015-16 Q2 to 36.9% this year (7,644 vehicles in 2015-16 Q2 down to 4,554 vehicles in 2018-19). Over the same period the number of

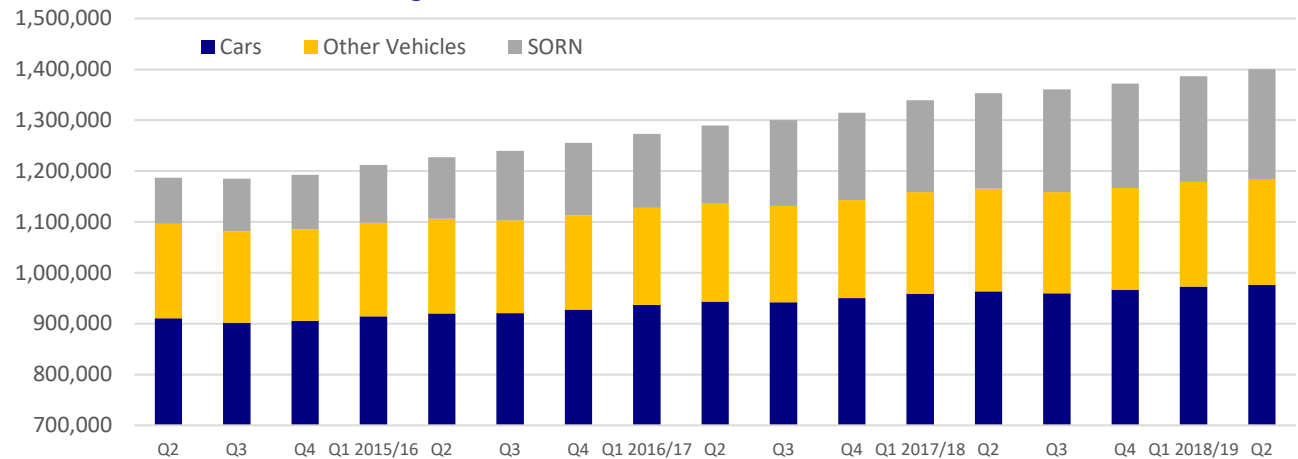
alternative-fuel<sup>2</sup> cars newly registered almost tripled, from 248 in 2015-16 Q2 to 726 this year.

<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 1,184,000 vehicles licensed in Northern Ireland at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, an increase of 1.6% compared with the previous year (table 2.13). Of these, 82.4% (976,290) were cars, and 12.0% (142,001) were goods vehicles (including both light and heavy).

Over 216,000 vehicles had a *Statutory Off-Road Notification* (SORN) at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018, representing 15.4% of the total vehicle stock (table 2.13). The number of SORN vehicles in Northern Ireland increased by over a sixth (15.1%) from the same period in 2017; in comparison to an 7.6% 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.

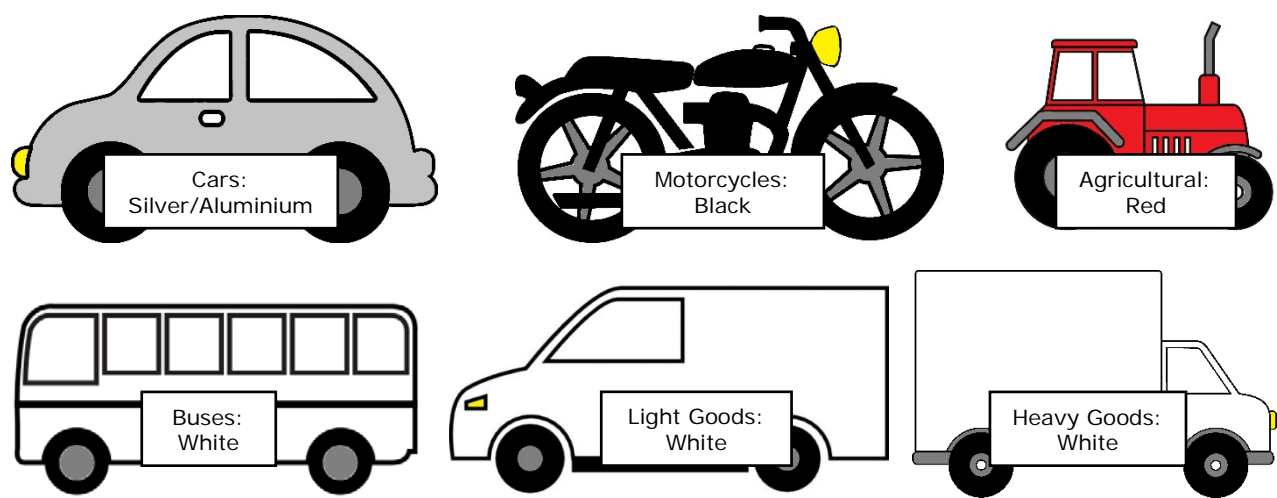
Fig. 2.3: Northern Ireland Vehicle Stock



As of 30<sup>th</sup> September 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 – 8.0 years;
  - Motorcycles – 12.9 years;
  - Light Goods – 8.1 years;
  - Heavy Goods – 9.8 years;
- Buses – 9.6 years;
  - Agricultural – 21.0 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:



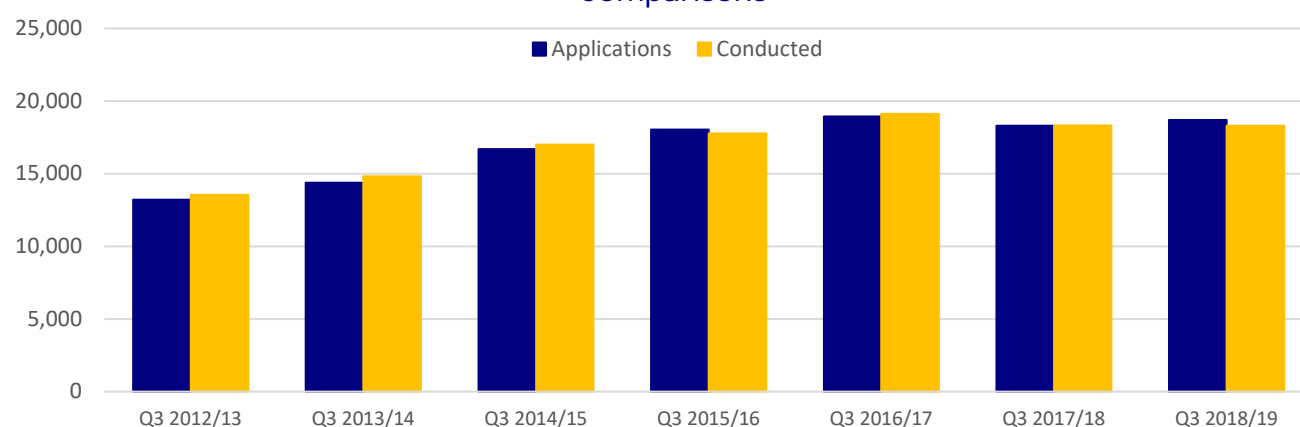
The DVA has responsibility for the theory test element of the overall driving test process. The test is administered in Northern Ireland by Pearson VUE under contract with the DfI through DVA.

### Theory Test Applications and Tests Conducted

From October to December 2018, just over 18,700 theory test applications were received. This marks an increase of 2.2% from the just under 18,300 recorded in the same quarter last year (figure 3.1).

In contrast, during the same period the number of theory tests conducted decreased slightly from 18,329 in 2017 to 18,290 this year (table 3.2). Six out of the last seven quarter-on-quarter comparisons have now shown decreases, since the series-peak in late-2016.

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



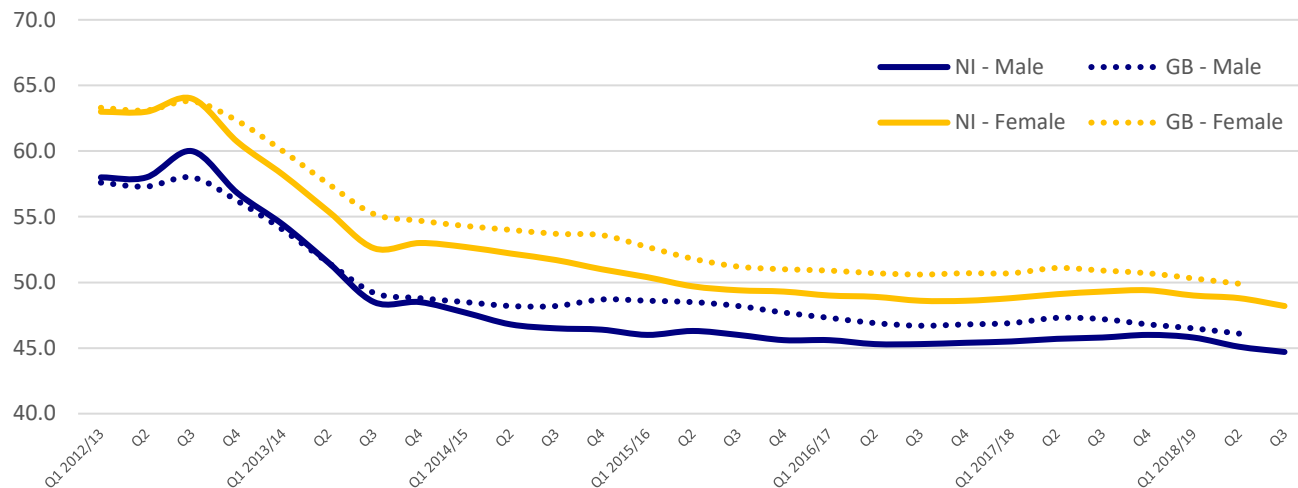
### Theory Test Pass Rates

The theory test pass rate for private cars in quarter 3 showed a 0.9 percentage point decrease to 45.1% when compared with the previous quarter (table 3.4). This decrease is a continuation of the declining trend seen over the past five years, and marks the lowest pass rate recorded in our series. The theory test pass rate for motorcycles remains substantially higher, at 68.1%, 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 pass rate was 27.7%, an increase of 2.4 percentage points over the preceding quarter.

## 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 period the pass rates were 48.2% for females and 44.7% 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.

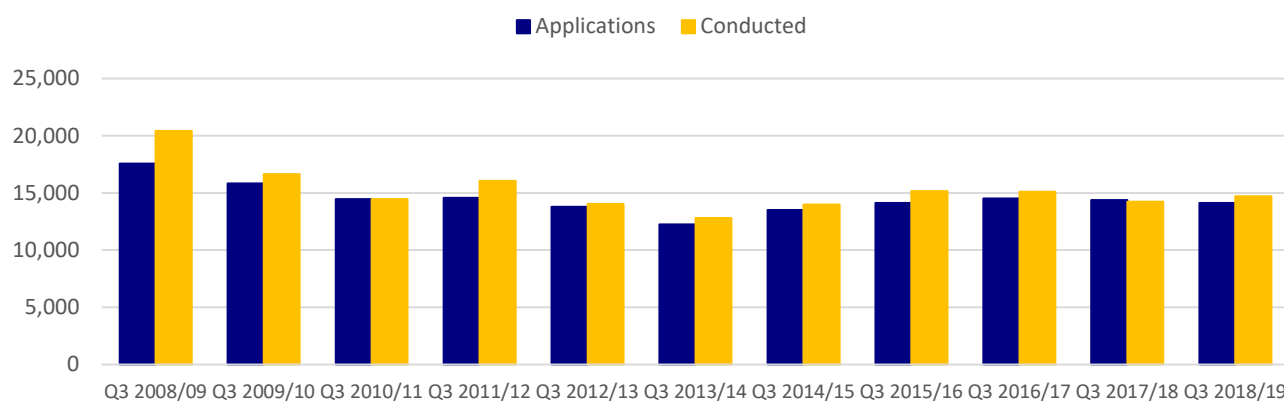
## Driver Practical Testing

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 October to December 2018, over 14,100 driving test applications were submitted to the DVA, a decrease of 1.7% on the equivalent quarter in 2017 (table 4.1). This reverses the increases of the previous two quarters, and is a return to the downward trend seen in 2017/18. However during the same three-month period, the number of driving tests conducted increased by 3.4% from approximately 14,200 in 2017 to over 14,700 in July to September 2018 (table 4.3 & Figure 4.1). The increase in the number of tests conducted reverses the downward trend seen over the previous eighteen months.

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 3, there were 284 appointments where the individual failed to attend (FTA), representing an 8.8% increase on the same quarter last year (table 4.4).

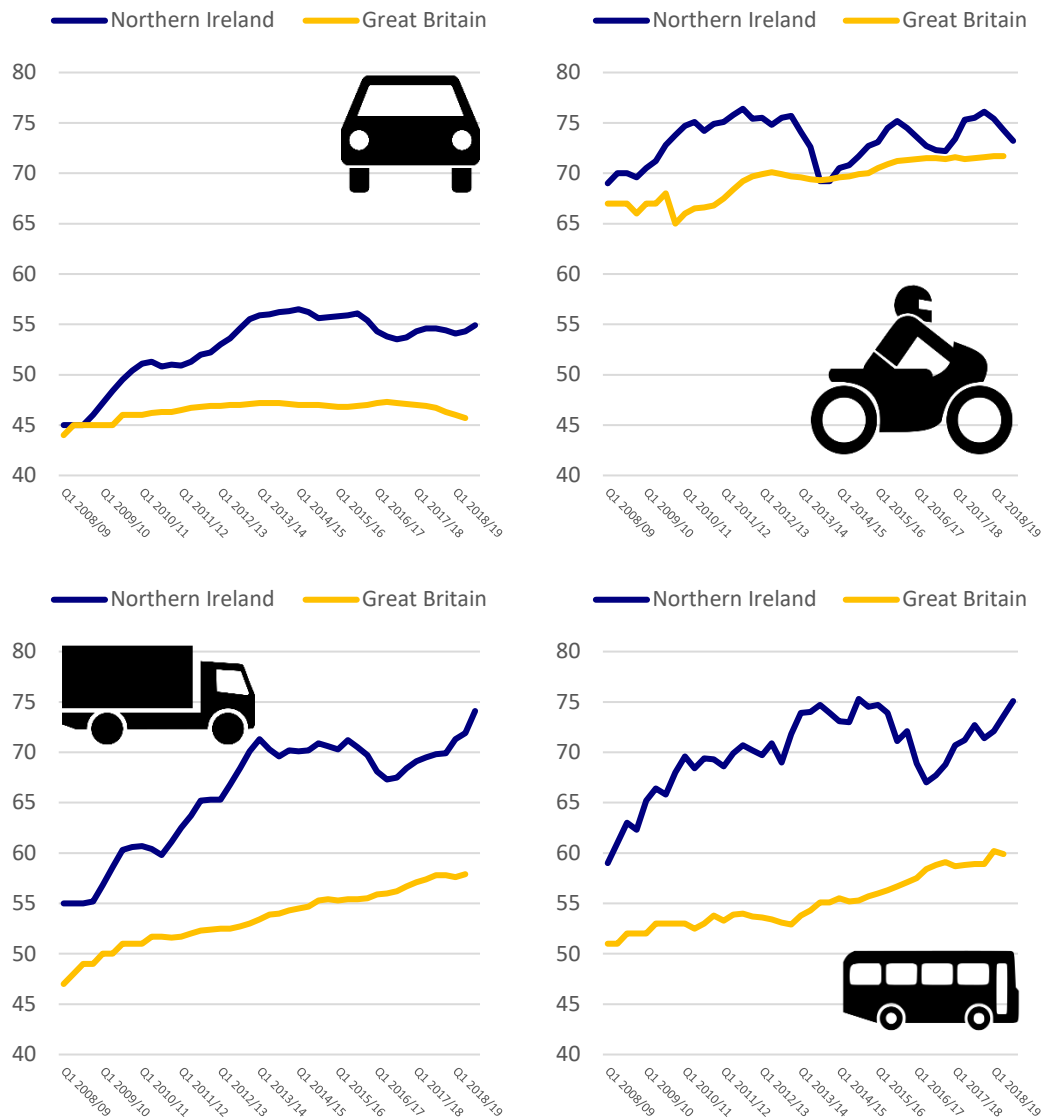
The most popular booking method for a driving test application was the internet booking system which received 74.1% of all applications, up 0.2 percentage points on the previous year (table 4.2).

### Driving Test Pass Rates

For October to December 2018, the pass rate for all categories of driving tests was 58.7%, up 1.7 percentage points on the 57.0% 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 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 October to December 2018 period was, again, Belfast (Balmoral) (1,407 tests). The Armagh centre again conducted the fewest, with a total of 348 tests during the quarter.

The overall pass rate for private car driving tests was 54.9%, ranging by test centre from 44.1% in Londonderry (Altnagelvin) to 70.2% in Downpatrick (table 4.6). This was the sixteenth consecutive quarter that Downpatrick had the highest pass rate, and the fourth 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.

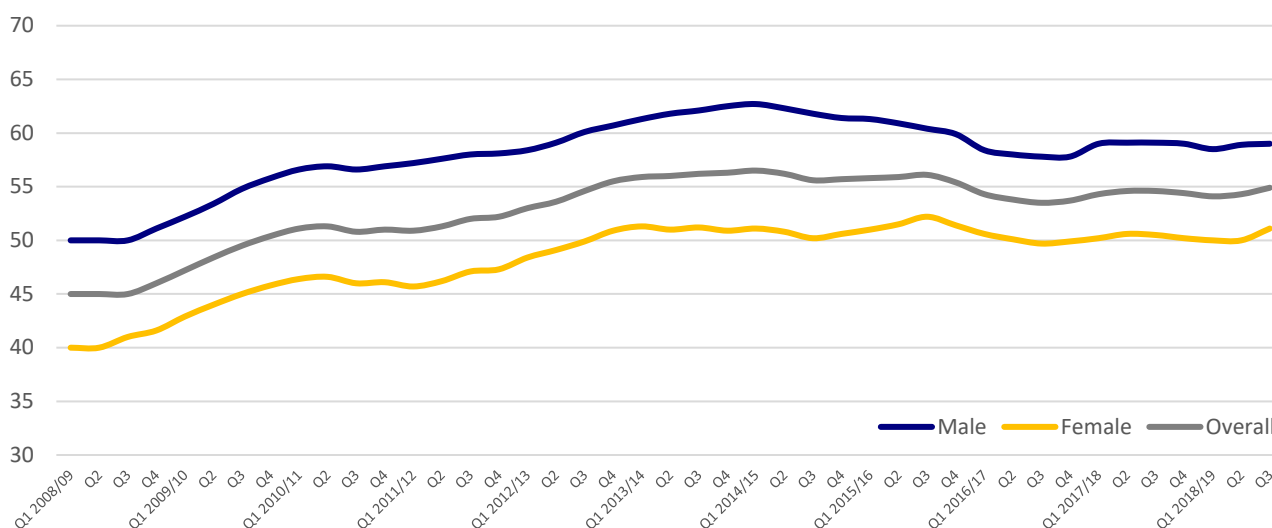
## Driving Test Pass Rates by Gender

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 period males had an 8 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 17.2 percentage points at the Omagh centre (71.4% v 54.2%) to 4.1 percentage points in favour of females at the Craigavon centre (58.6% v 62.7%).

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 3 2018/19 (5,761) was 5.8% lower than the figure for those issued during the same period in the previous year (6,117 licences) (table 5.1).

A total of 56,832 ordinary licensing transactions were carried out by DVA during October to December 2018 (Figure 5.1). This represented a decrease of 10.9% in comparison with the volume carried out in the corresponding quarter of 2017. 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 3 2018/19, a total of 3,638 vocational licensing transactions were carried out by DVA, a decrease of 9.9% on the corresponding period in 2017 where the figure stood at 4,039 (table 5.2).

In other licensing activity, the number of letters of entitlement issued during the quarter remains high, from under seven hundred issued in the quarter ten years ago (2008/09 Q3: 694) to 5,260 issued between October and December 2018 (table 5.3). However, the volume of identity checks has more than halved over the same ten-year period: reducing from 14,215 in quarter 3 2008/09 to 6,707 in the same period in 2018/19.

Fig. 5.1: Driver Licensing Transactions

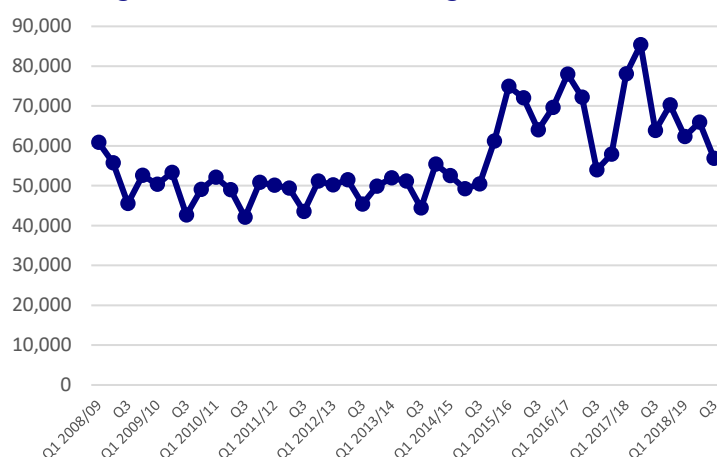
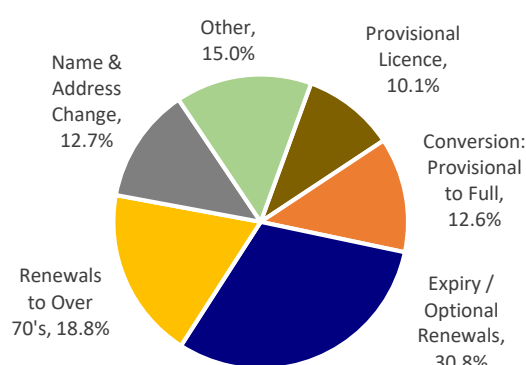


Fig. 5.2: Driver Licence Transactions Q3 2018/19, by Type



## Driver Licence Stock

At the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, there were almost 1,105,000 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 over 6,500 in the past twelve months, to now stand at over 208,000 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 December 2018 they were 18.8%, reflecting the nature of Northern Ireland's aging population.

Based on Mid-Year Population Estimates<sup>3</sup> for Northern Ireland in 2017, it is estimated that 75.8% of Northern Irelands population aged 17+ had a full and eligible licence with entitlement for private cars / light vans (table 5.8i). For males the estimated figure was 79.4% which is just over five 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

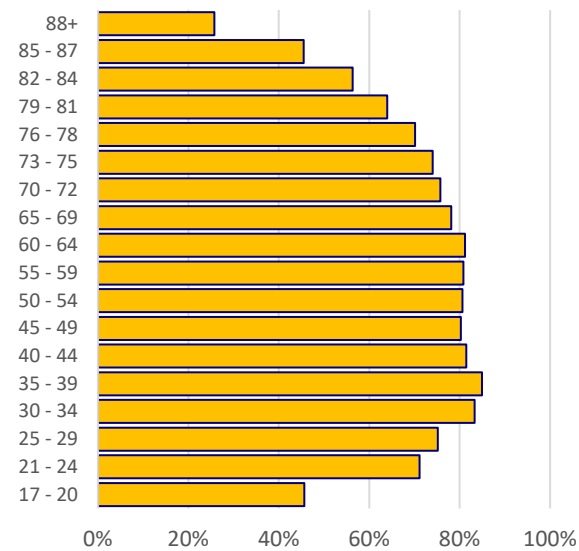


Fig. 5.4: Full & Eligible Private Car Licence Holders in Northern Ireland

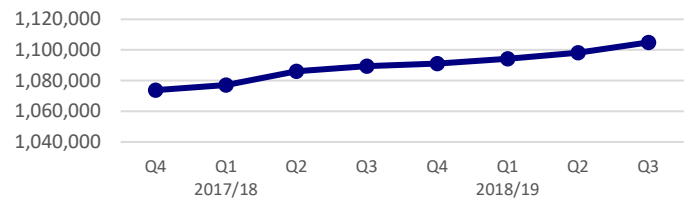
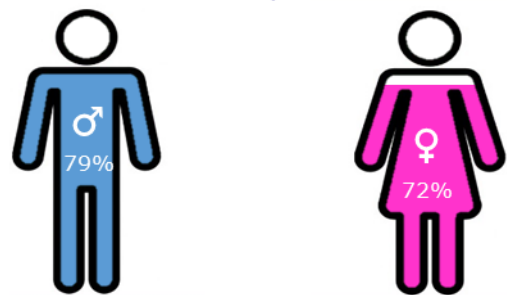


Fig. 5.5: Proportion of Population with a Full & Eligible Private Car Licence - by Gender



<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 December 2018 (10,480) was down by 6.1% 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 of

15,802 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.

Over 2,000 vehicle licences for taxis were issued during October to December 2018, which is down by a sixth when compared with the corresponding quarter in 2017 (table 6.1). At the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 there were 8,785 licensed taxi vehicles in Northern Ireland, the lowest recorded

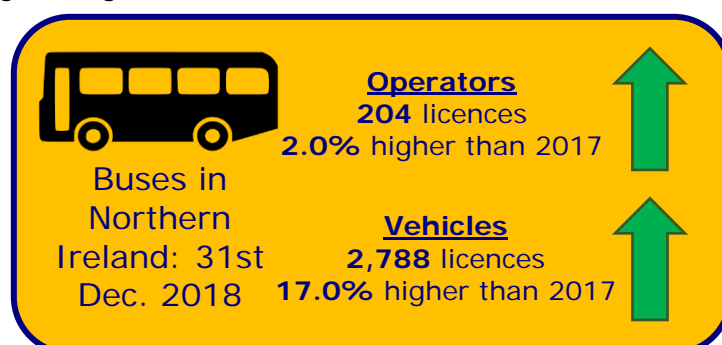
number in our time series and a decrease of 0.4% on the previous year.

These taxi vehicles were affiliated to 1,413 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 almost a sixth when compared with the figure recorded last year.

### Bus Licensing

The number of licensed buses at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 was 2,976, up 25% on the figure at the end of December 2017 (table 6.3) and the highest figure recorded in our time series. 786 PSV omnibus licences were issued during the quarter, up 40% on the equivalent quarter in 2017 (table 6.1).

At the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018, there were 208 bus operator licences in force, up slightly from the amount as recorded one year ago (204). During October to December 2018, a total of 54 bus operator licences were processed, up 14.9% on the 47 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> December 2018 was 1,796, an increase of 1.9% 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.



## **Enforcement & Compliance**

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 October to December 2018, DVA enforcement staff checked 1,065 vehicles; of these, the largest volume was for HGVs, accounting for almost two fifths of all vehicles checked (39%) (table 7.1 & figure 7.1).

Fig 7.1: Enforcement Spot-Checks, by Quarter

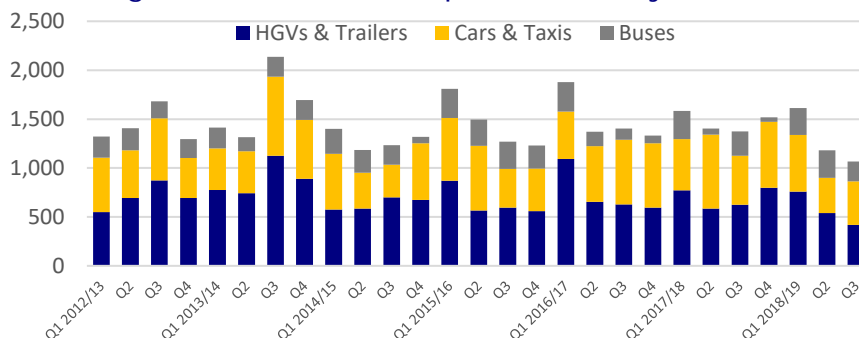
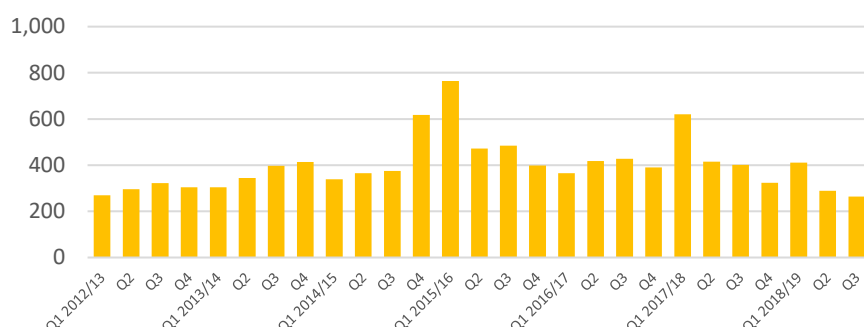
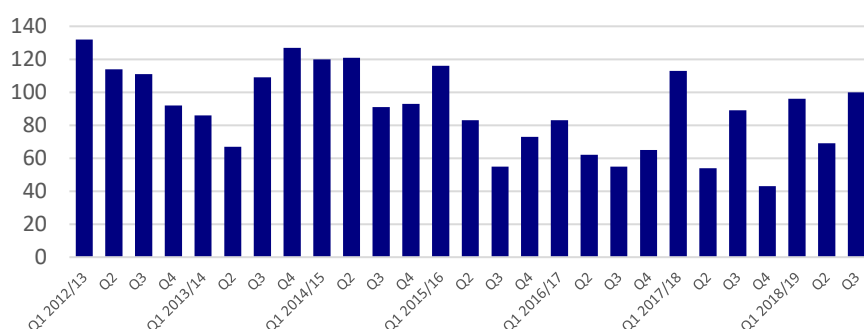


Fig 7.2: Fixed Penalties Issued, by Quarter



In quarter 3, there were a total of 264 fixed penalty notices issued by DVA enforcement officers (table 7.2 & figure 7.2). The total value of these fixed penalties issued was £39,730. This is the lowest number of fixed penalty notices in our time series.

Fig 7.3: Convictions, by Quarter



There were 100 successful convictions during the quarter, accounting for 250 offences. From these cases, the DVA received £37,870 of Court fines & costs, the largest figure since 2015/16 quarter 1.

During October to December 2018, enforcement teams carried out 11 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.

In addition, there were 65 spot-checks on school buses carried out by enforcement officers (table 7.4 & figure 7.5). These spot-checks discovered a total of 36 offences, the highest number in our time series.

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

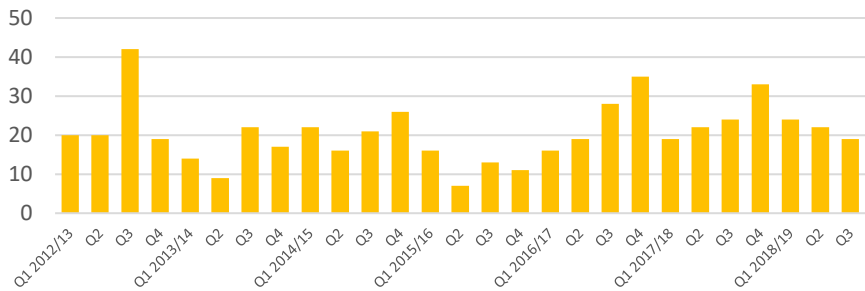
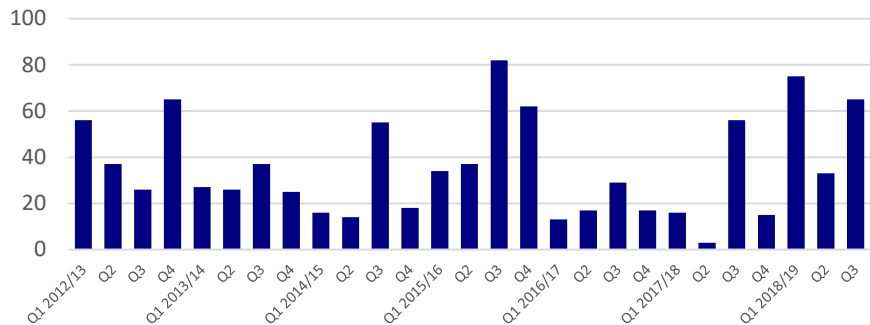


Fig 7.5: School Bus Checks, by Quarter



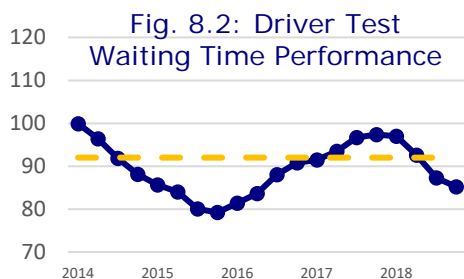
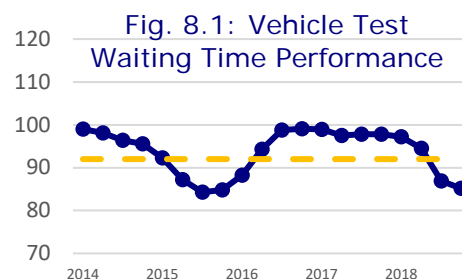


## DVA Target Monitoring

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 12 months up to end-December 2018 was 85.2%. This represents a decrease of 1.8 percentage points on the position last quarter, and 6.9 percentage points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1).



Driver testing waiting time performance for the 12 months up to end-December 2018 was 85.2%. This is a 2.1 percentage point decrease on the position in the previous quarter, and 6.8 percentage points below the current Agency target of 92% (table 8.1).

The methodology behind the figures for 2018/19 for the Driver Licensing target are currently under review. We are aiming for revised figures to be included in the Quarter 4 report.

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

## **Notes**

### **National Statistics**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2015 this series of statistics were designated as National Statistics. This means they have been certified by the UK Statistics Authority as compliant with its Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

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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