

DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator, and Enforcement Statistics

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Key Findings

Please note that DVA services were impacted by industrial strike action on 22 September 2023, so statistics for quarter two are lower than would have been the case had this been a routine working day.

- During quarter two of 2023/24, DVA delivered 274,143 vehicle tests (full and retest), the second highest quarter two volume on record.
- From April to September, DVA delivered 562,242 vehicle tests relative to 555,680 for the same period in 2022/23, 1.2% (6,562) more tests so far this year.
- Over 11,800 vehicles failed to attend a booked vehicle test in quarter two. This equates to 4.3% of all conducted tests during this period.
- Over 22,800 theory tests were conducted in quarter two of 2023/24, over 46,180 tests this financial year to date which is 2.1% (961) higher than for the same period in 2022/23 (45,228).
- During this quarter, 3,038 customers failed to attend (FTA) a booked theory test, which equates to 13.3% of all theory tests conducted during this period.
- The DVA conducted 15,371 driving tests this quarter, and 31,718 tests year to date 2023/24, relative to over 35,000 for the same period in 2022/23.
- There were 552 candidates that failed to attend a booked driving tests this quarter, equivalent to 3.6% of all driving tests conducted in this period.
- At the end of June 2023, there were 1.27 million licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland, the highest on record.
- Performance for driver licensing paper applications in quarter two was 5.4 percentage points above the 90% target level, at 95.4%.
- Driver licensing online applications performance was also above the target level this quarter, at 97.7% against a target of 95%.
- At the end of September 2023, there were 1,159,493 full and eligible driver licence holders (excluding provisional licence holders) with private car/light van entitlement in Northern Ireland, the highest on record.
- In quarter two of 2023/24, the DVA issued 2,445 transport licences related to taxi vehicles (1,888), taxi drivers (456) and taxi operators (101).
- DVA were active across the full range of enforcement activities, having checked 721 vehicles and issued 159 penalty notices totalling £22,090 in fines. DVA undertook 12 joint operations with PSNI, 5 cross-border operations with An Garda Síochána, and 9 spot checks on school buses.
- During 2022/23 DVA carried out a Random Heavy Goods Vehicle Compliance Survey. This survey included 700 vehicles and 51 road-side operations covering the period from June 2022 to February 2023.
- Of the 700 vehicles inspected, 177 (25.3%) were deemed to be non-compliant, with 1 in every 4 having a vehicle defect or committing a road traffic offence, worthy of prosecution,

prohibition, or a fixed penalty notice. This increases to 27.6% when verbal warnings issued are included.

- The overall non-compliance rate of 25.3% was found to be higher than the 21.7% in 2016/17 the last time this survey was conducted, though this comparison is not on a like-for-like basis due to changes in compliance testing and better technology now to detect non-compliance than was available for previous surveys.
- The 2022/23 survey found that 6.1% of vehicles and 5.4% of trailers had at least one roadworthiness defect resulting in a prohibition, prosecution or fixed penalty notice relative to 11.4% and 7.2% respectively in 2016/17.
- Non-compliance due to traffic related offences increased from 11.9% to 22.3% between surveys. On an actual count of individual recorded road traffic offences, Drivers Hours & Recording equipment accounted for most recorded road traffic offences which affirms the view that digital/smart tachographs and the use of modern technology at the roadside is responsible for detecting more drivers' hours offences than during previous surveys and why non-compliance of 22.3% is much higher relative to previous surveys.

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Introduction

This is the thirty-sixth 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, operators in the area of regulation and enforcement during quarter two of 2023/24. This covers the period from 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2023.

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

- Vehicle testing;
- Vehicle licensing and registration;
- Driver theory testing;
- Driver practical testing;
- Driver licensing;
- Road transport licensing (i.e. buses, heavy goods vehicles and taxis);
- Enforcement and compliance; and
- DVA target monitoring;
- HGV Random Survey 2023/24

DVA systems provide the majority of data, although we also source some from within the wider Department for Infrastructure and from DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency). 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 this area are presented in section two.

For further information and guidance on this publication, please see the User Guidance document, available on our website¹.

Background

The *Driver and Vehicle Agency* (DVA) is an executive agency within the *Department for Infrastructure* (DfI). The DVA was formed on 1 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).

Please note that the HGV Random Survey 2022/23 results included in the quarter two report are not designated National Statistics, but Official Statistics and are published with this report for convenience. DVA are not planning to conduct these types of survey on a quarterly basis going forward.

¹ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/driver-vehicle-agency-activity-statistics>

Vehicle Testing

Vehicle testing forms the most significant aspect, in terms of volumes, of the work of the Operations Directorate in DVA.

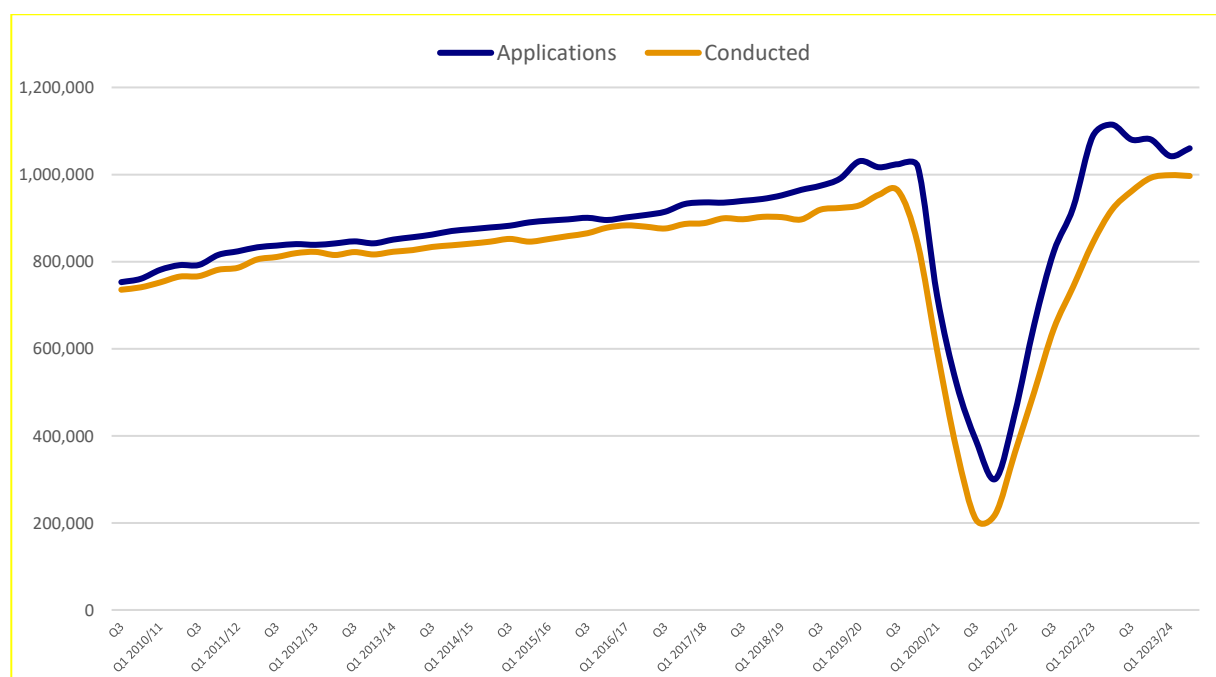
Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the DVA suspended all vehicle testing from 24 March 2020, and began issuing temporary exemption certificates (TECs) to all customers. The DVA resumed IVA testing on 1 June 2020, whilst the testing of priority vehicle groups commenced on 20 July 2020. Priority vehicle groups include taxis and buses due a first-time test, vehicles not previously registered in Northern Ireland, vehicles with an MOT expired by more than 12 months (that includes vehicles previously declared SORN), and those sold by car dealerships. Testing of further vehicle categories began on 1 September 2020, including four-year-old private cars and motorcycles, three-year-old light goods vehicles, all heavy goods vehicles, and trailers. The restrictions during that winter did not directly curtail vehicle testing, although additional deep-cleaning and social distancing have reduced capacity across the test centres. Further vehicle categories returned to the testing regime in March 2021, along with changes to the length of TECs being issued. There are currently no restrictions on vehicle testing related to the pandemic. For the latest news and updates, please visit the Motoring page on the NIDirect website².

Vehicle Test Applications

From July to September 2023, DVA received 317,360 applications for a vehicle test, just under 0.4% (1,172) lower than the previous quarter (318,532) (Table 1.3).

The majority (87.5%; 277,538) of vehicle test applications were full tests. The most common vehicle test category was private cars, accounting for 81.9% (227,307) of all full test applications. Figure 1.1 details the rolling four quarterly count for full vehicle test applications and full vehicle tests conducted.

Figure 1.1: Full Vehicle Tests – Applications and Conducted (Rolling 4-Quarter Total)



Please note that figures for vehicle test applications include taximeter tests but those for vehicle tests conducted do not.

² <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-and-motoring>

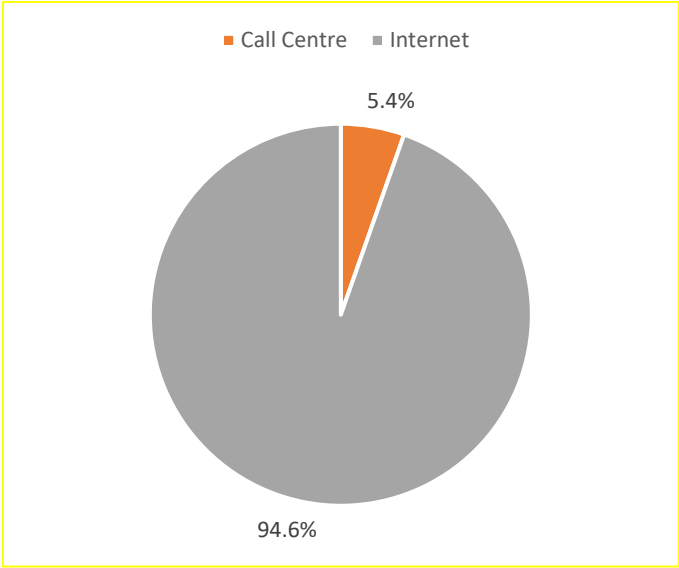
Booking Method

During quarter two of 2023/24, all vehicle test applications were made via the DVA online booking facility or using DVA call centres.

The most popular method used was online booking, which received 94.6% (300,297) of all vehicle test applications (Figure 1.2 and Table 1.4). The remaining 5.4% (17,063) of vehicle test applications were made via DVA call centres.

This is the eight consecutive quarter in which online bookings have exceeded 90% of all vehicle test applications bookings (Table 1.4).

Figure 1.2: Vehicle Test Applications by Booking Method.



Vehicle Tests Conducted

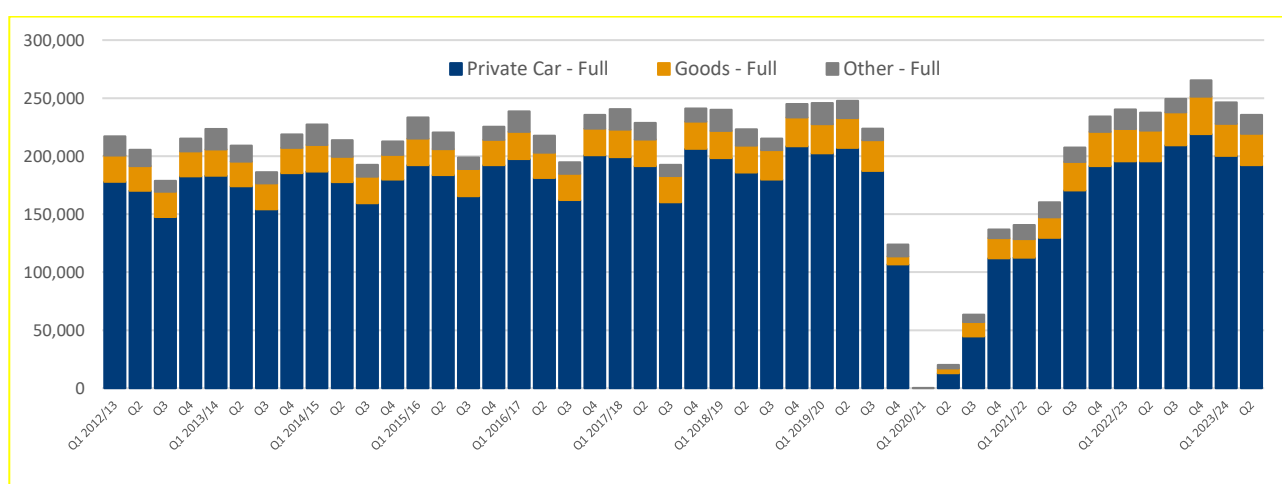
During quarter two, DVA delivered 274,143 vehicle tests (full and retest) (Table 1.7). This is 4.8% lower than the previous quarter (288,099) but higher than the number of tests conducted in the same quarter of 2022/23 (273,480) and the second highest quarter two volume on record.

In the year to date, from April to September, DVA delivered 562,242 vehicle tests relative to 555,680 for the same period in 2022/23, 1.2% (6,562) more tests so far this year.

Most vehicle tests conducted were full tests, accounting for 86% (235,647) of all vehicle tests carried out (274,143) this quarter (Table 1.5); of the 235,647 full tests conducted, 81.6% (192,287) were for private cars.

For the year to date, DVA has delivered 392,415 private car full tests, 0.3% (1,317) higher relative to the same period in 2022/23 (Table 1.5 and Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3: Full Vehicle Tests Conducted



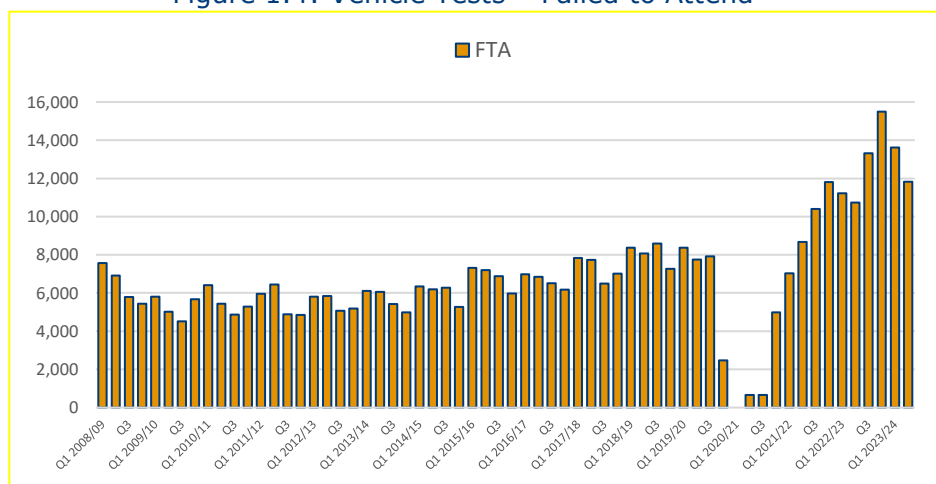
The steady increase in vehicle test applications seen in the trend series prior to the COVID-19 pandemic can, in the main, be explained by the increasing number of licensed cars in Northern Ireland, which has risen by 8.7% over the five years to 2020-21 (see Table 2.13). In addition, owners seem to be keeping their vehicles for longer, as the proportion of cars of MOT-age has risen by nearly 6 percentage-points over the same five years, whilst the average age of a licensed car has risen from 7.7 to 8.4 years over the same period. Together, this resulted in approximately 99,000 (14%) additional private cars requiring a test in 2020 compared to 2015. It is too early to say what impact the pandemic and other relevant changes will have on these trends long term, as people's lifestyles, work pattern and car-usage will inevitably change.

Failed to Attend

This quarter, 11,820 customers failed to attend a booked vehicle test (Table 1.10 and Figure 1.4). This equates to 4.3% of all conducted tests during this period (274,143).

For the full financial year 2022-23, over 50,700 vehicles failed to attend for testing, the highest in our series and 34.0% (12,887) higher than 2021-22.

Figure 1.4: Vehicle Tests – Failed to Attend



Vehicle Test Pass-Rates

For the second quarter of 2023/24 the overall pass-rate for full vehicle tests was 82.8% which is slightly higher than the 82.4% in the previous quarter (Table 1.11). This pass-rate is on a par with quarterly pass-rates in 2019-20 (Table 1.11 and Figure 1.5).

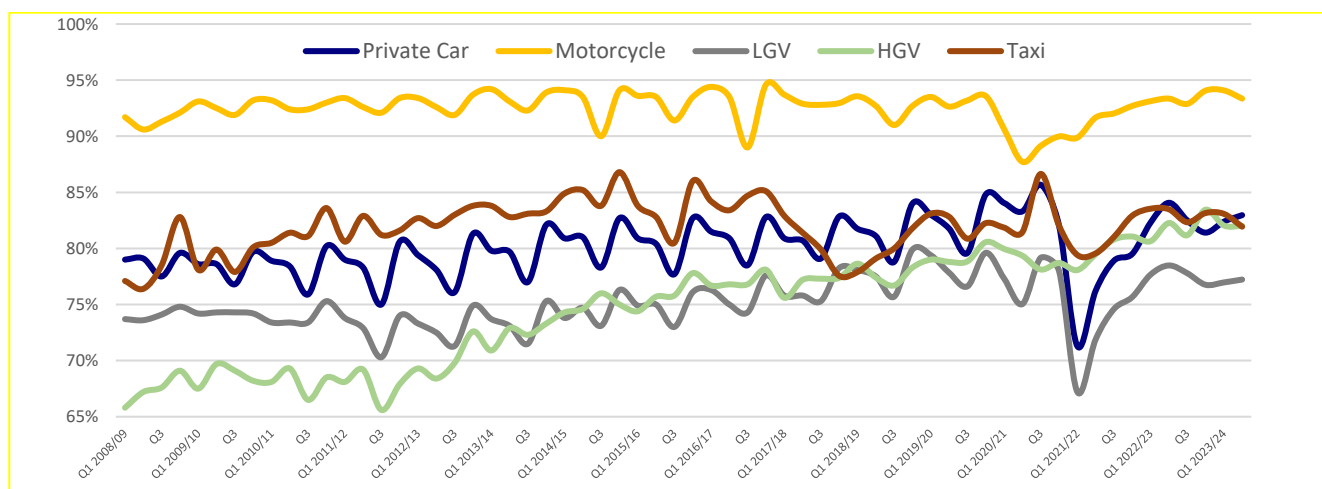
The pandemic era drop in pass-rates would suggest that vehicle owners did not maintain their vehicles during periods of test exemption, though vehicle test pass rates since 2022/23 seem to have trended slightly above pre-pandemic levels. This is also the case for private car full tests, with the current quarter two pass rate of 83.0% above the 81.8% for the same quarter in 2019/20.

For the financial year 2022/23, the overall pass-rate for full tests was 82.4%, almost five percentage points higher than in 2021/22 (77.6%) (Table 1.11). The 2022-23 rate is close to the 82.1% achieved in 2019/20. Pass rates for full tests in 2022/23 varied by category, from 77.6% for light goods to 93.3% for motorcycles (for categories where there were at least 2,000 tests) (Table 1.11).

The overall pass-rate for vehicle re-tests this quarter was 94.2%, almost the same as the 94.4%, quarter one pass-rate (Table 1.12). This is also on a par with historical quarterly re-test pass rates which maintained very stable levels of circa 93%-94% over a long period of time prior to the pandemic (Table 1.12).

For the 2022/23 financial year, the overall re-test pass-rate of 94.4% is the highest annual pass rate recorded (Table 1.12). The 2022-23 figure is one percentage point higher than the 2021/22 overall re-test pass-rate (93.4%). As with full tests, the annual re-test pass-rate varied by category, from 89.8% for LPCV to 94.7% for private cars and motorcycles, for vehicle test categories where there were at least 1,000 tests (Table 1.12).

Figure 1.5: Full Vehicle Test Pass-Rates



Vehicle Tests by Test Centre

The busiest test centre for vehicle testing during quarter two was Newtownards having conducted 35,317 full tests (Table 1.14); of these, 31,432 were private cars tests, an increase of 10.9% (3,085) relative to the 28,347 private car tests conducted in quarter one. Omagh, conducted fewest private car full tests this quarter, 5,908 compared with 7,549 in the previous quarter (Table 1.14).

The overall full test pass rate for private cars rose slightly between quarters, from 82.4% in quarter one to 83.0% this quarter; pass rates by test centre within this category ranged from a low of 79.4% in Cookstown to a high of 87.0% in Belfast (Balmoral) (Table 1.14). This is the thirteenth consecutive quarter that Belfast (Balmoral) has had the highest full test private car pass-rate. Differences in pass rates like this may arise due to several interacting factors including, for example, the mix of vehicles tested within and between test centres.

Vehicle Licensing and Registration

Since July 2014, Vehicle Licensing for Northern Ireland has been administered by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea.

Vehicle Registrations

This section includes the latest available vehicle licensing data for Northern Ireland covering the period from April to June 2023. Vehicle licensing data for July to September 2023 will be published in our quarter three report scheduled for release in March 2024.

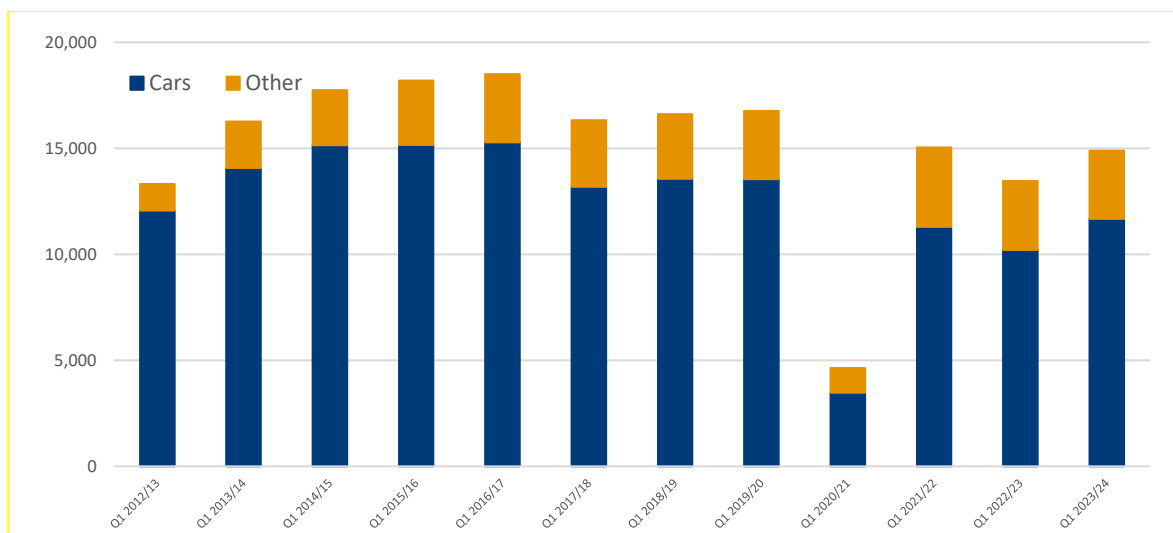
During April to June 2023 the DVLA registered 14,885 new vehicles to Northern Ireland, 13.4% lower than the previous quarter (17,198), but higher than the 13,451 registered in the same quarter for 2022/23 (Table 2.1) (Figure 2.1). Please note that new vehicle registrations excludes vehicles previously registered with the DVLA but whose ownership transferred to Northern Ireland during the latest quarter. Taking new and used vehicles into account, the total number of first-time registrations to Northern Ireland this quarter was 14,975 compared with 17,334 for the last quarter of 2022/23.

Private cars accounted for 11,672 (78.4%) of all new vehicle registrations, which is almost the same in percentage terms relative to the previous quarter (78.6%) (Table 2.1).

The noticeable drop in new vehicle registrations in quarter one of 2020/21 (Figure 2.1) is directly related to the pandemic and is not reflective of changes in customer buying behaviour prior to or post the pandemic when many vehicle dealerships were either closed or operating at reduced capacity to ensure social distancing.

For financial year 2021/22, there were 38,464 new private car registrations in Northern Ireland, 24.2% lower than 2018/19 (50,799) and the lowest financial year total in our series, excluding the pandemic dominated year 2020/21 (Table 2.1). There was a total of 41,189 new private car registrations in the financial year 2022/23, an increase of 7.1% (2725) from 2021/22 (Table 2.1)

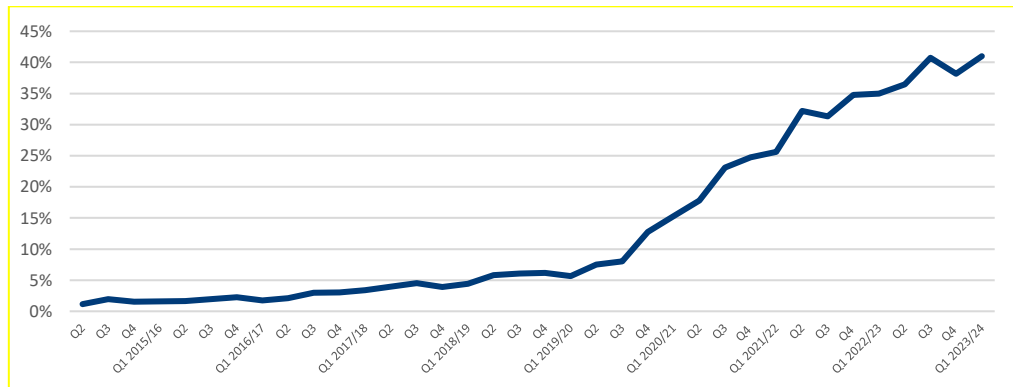
Figure 2.1: New Vehicle Registrations



Top makes for private car first time registrations in quarter one 2023/24 were Volkswagen at 10.7%, Fiat at 9.0%, followed by Honda and Toyota at 7.8% and 7.4% respectively (Table 2.3).

Grey was again the most popular choice of colour for new private cars this quarter, accounting for 25.6% (2,988) of all new car registrations (11,672); White (17.9%) and Black (17.1%) were the next most popular colours.

Figure 2.2: Proportion of New Car Registrations using Alternative Fuels



The proportion of new cars registered in Northern Ireland using alternative fuel³ has increased substantially over the last number of years, rising from 5.8% in quarter two of 2018/19 to a high of 41.0% in quarter one of 2023/24. Over the same period, the proportion of new diesel cars has declined from 36.5% to 8.5%. This is the eleventh quarter in a row that alternative-fuel cars have out-sold diesel cars, in this quarter 990 compared with 4,785 respectively.

Licensed Vehicles

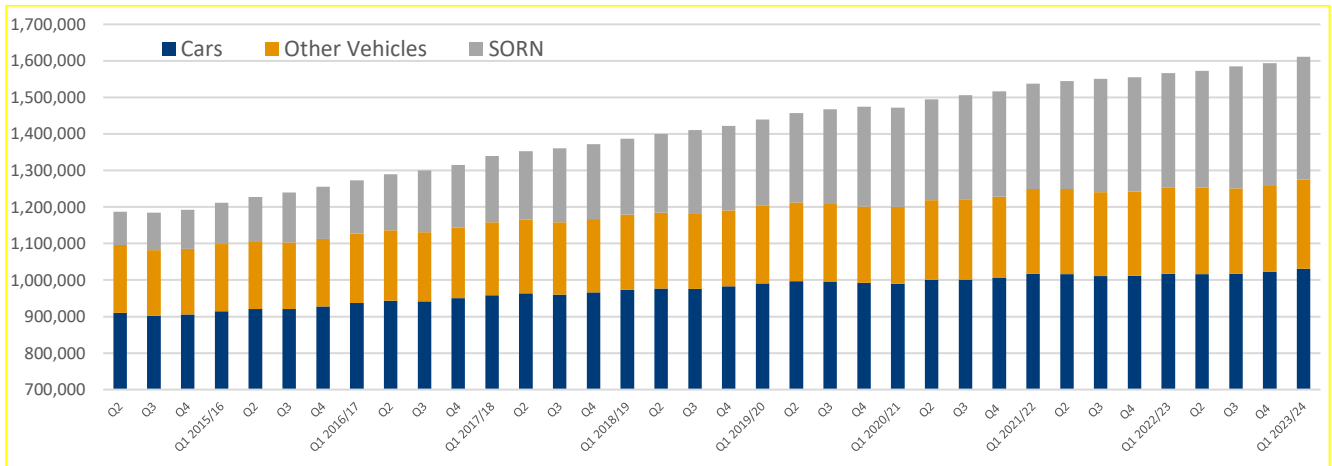
At the end of June 2023 there were 1,274,391 licensed vehicles in Northern Ireland, an increase of 1.2% (14,826) relative to the previous quarter (1,259,565), and the highest licensed stock volume on record. Since the same quarter in 2018/19 licensed vehicle stock has increased from 1,178,859 to its current high of 1,274,391, an increase of 8.1% (95,532) in five years (Table 2.13).

At the end of this quarter, just over 8 in every 10 (80.9%) licensed vehicles was a private car (1,031,415). Private car stock is the highest on record and has increased by 13.3% (121,145) since quarter two of 2014/15 (910,270) (Table 2.13).

Just over 336,570 vehicles had a SORN at the end of June 2023, a small 0.8% (2,702) increase from the previous quarter (333,875). Sorned vehicles represent 20.8% of all vehicle stock in Northern Ireland (1,610,986) (Table 2.13). 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 year-on-year increases in SORN from quarter four of 2013/14 onwards, both in Northern Ireland and Great Britain.

³ Alternative-fuel vehicles are 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.

Figure 2.3: Northern Ireland Vehicle Stock

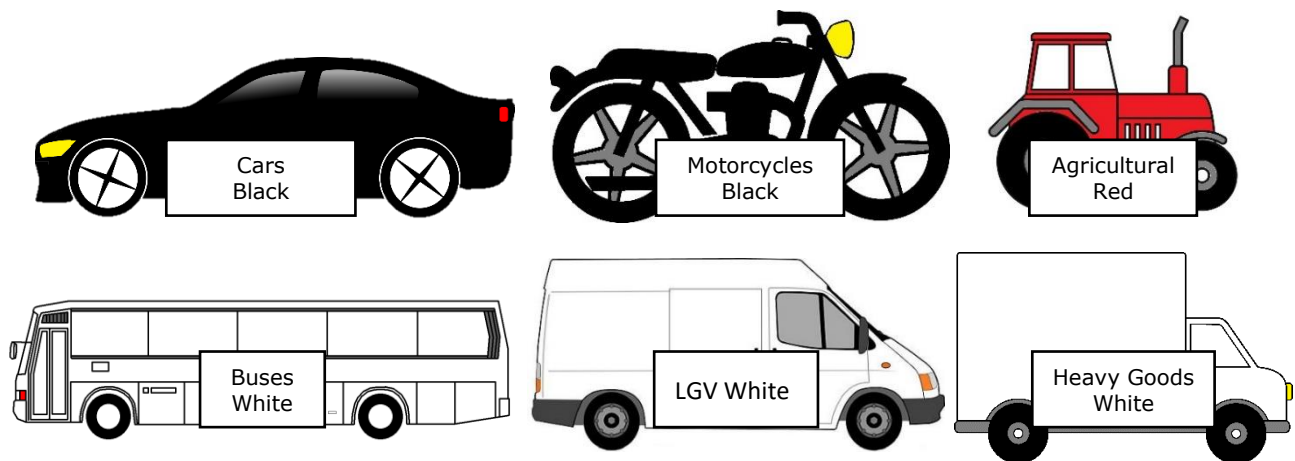


As of 31 June 2023, the average age of a licensed vehicle in Northern Ireland was 9.74 years, a small increase on the 9.60 years at the end of the previous quarter.

However, there is some variance in average age for different vehicle body-types:

- Cars – 9.3 years
- Motorcycles – 14.6 years
- Light Goods – 9.0 years
- Heavy Goods – 10.3 years
- Buses – 10.1 years
- Agricultural – 21.6 years
- Other – 11.0 years

As with new registrations for licensed vehicles the most popular colours for each body-type are notably monochrome, with as always only the stereo-typical 'big red tractor' bucking this trend.



Driver Theory Testing

Please note that some theory-testing data from 2021-22 onwards is provisional and pass rates are only partially complete for this period.

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

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the DVA suspended all driver theory testing between 20 March 2020 and 6 July, and again from 26 December until 22 April 2021.

For the latest news and updates, please visit the Driver Theory Testing page on the NIDirect website⁴.

Theory Test Applications and Tests Conducted

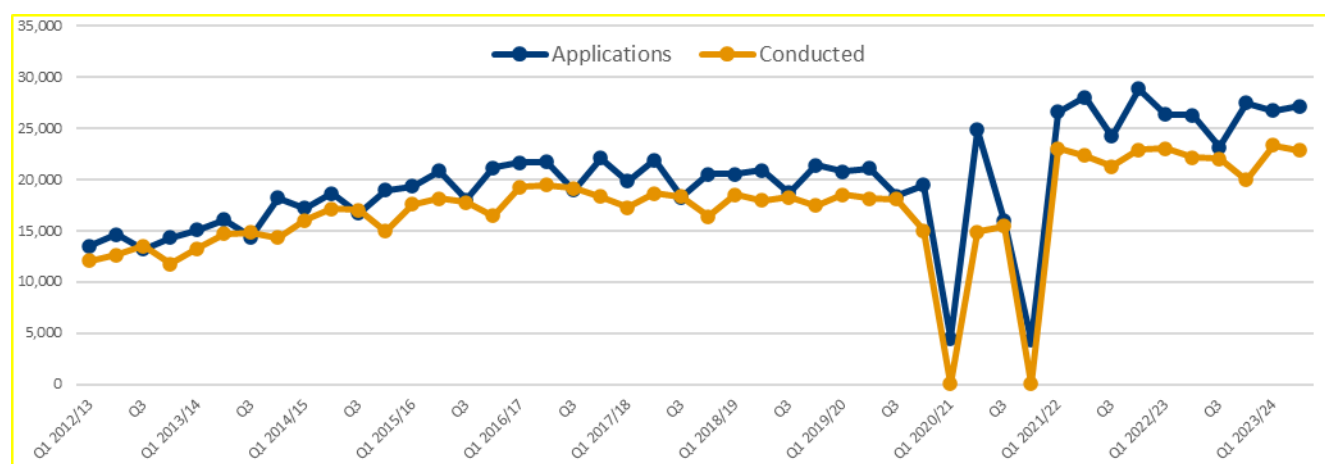
From July to September 2023, the DVA delivered 22,863 theory tests (Table 3.2; Figure 3.1). This figure is 2.0% (463) lower than the number of theory tests delivered in the first quarter of 2023/24 (23,326; Table 3.2)

For the 2022-23 financial year, the DVA conducted over 87,200 theory tests, the second highest on record for a single year. Pre-pandemic, test volumes ranged from 69,950 in 2015-16 to 76,200 in 2016-17.

The DVA received 27,186 theory test applications in quarter two, 1.8% (473) higher than the previous quarter (26,713) (Table 3.1).

Private cars accounted for over eight in every ten theory test applications (86.9%, 23,624) and theory tests conducted (87.6%, 20,023) in quarter two (Tables 3.1 and 3.2).

Figure 3.1: Theory Test Applications and Conducted

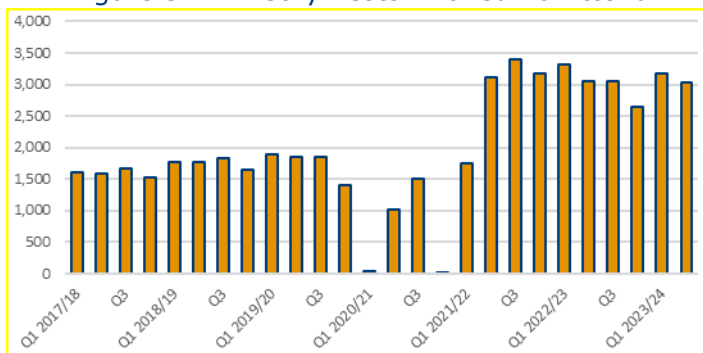


⁴ <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/driving-theory-test>

Failed To Attend

During this quarter, 3,038 customers failed to attend (FTA) a booked theory test (Table 3.3 and Figure 3.2). This represents 13.3% of all theory tests conducted during this quarter (22,863).

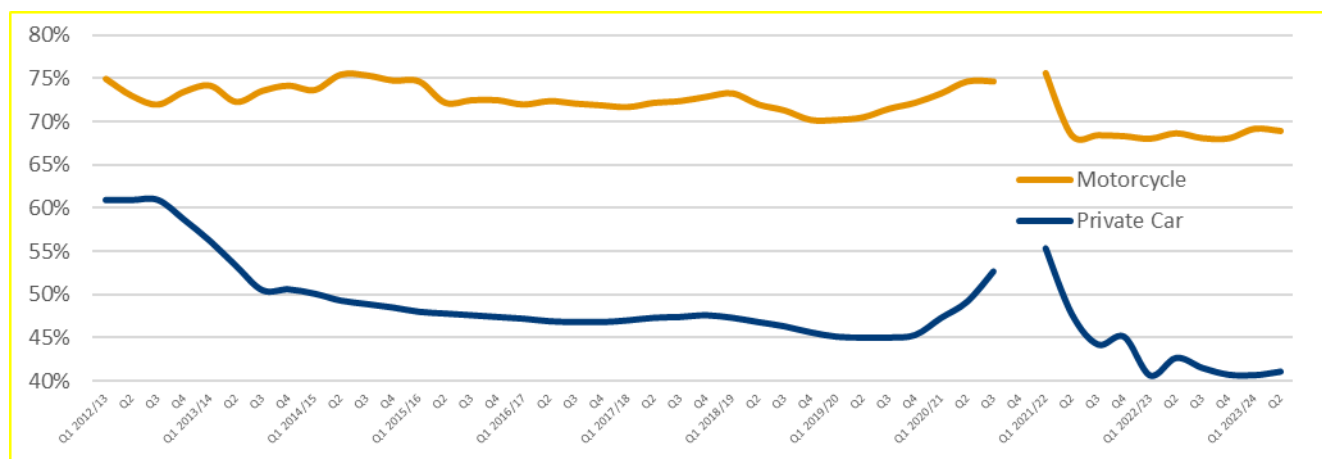
Figure 3.2: Theory Tests - Failed To Attend



Theory Test Pass-Rates

For the full 2022/23 financial year, the theory test pass-rate for private cars was 40.7%, a decrease of 14.5 percentage points from the 2020/21 pass rate (55.2%) (Table 3.4). For the motorcycle test, the pass-rate was 68.0%, reflecting the fact that those taking the motorcycle test will usually have already taken the private-car test. The 2022/23 motorcycle theory test pass-rate represents a decrease of over seven percentage points from the 2020/21 annual figure (75.3%). Whilst not directly comparable due to the nature and purpose of the tests, the pass-rate for the taxi theory test was 25.9%, an increase of over six percentage points compared to 2020/21.

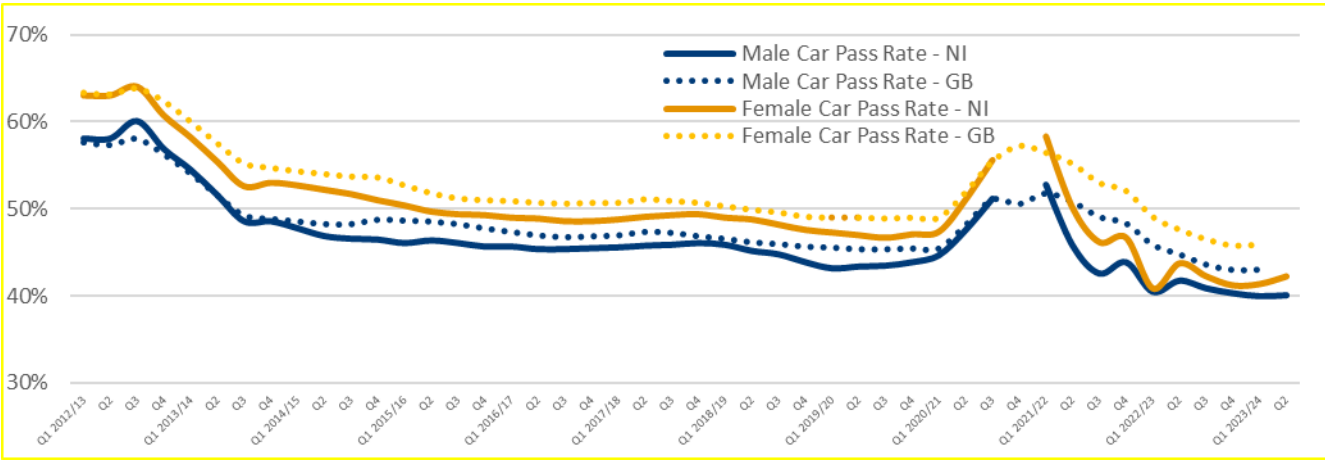
Figure 3.3: Theory Test Pass-Rates (Rolling 4-quarter Averages)



Continuing the trend over the past decade, the NI 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 2022-23 financial year, the pass-rates were 41.2% for females and 40.2% for males, a difference of one percentage point (Table 3.7). Although the pass-rates had been gradually decreasing from 2012 to 2020, since the resumption of testing in summer 2020, partial and provisional data suggests that pass-rates for both genders have decreased coming out of the pandemic period.

Provisional quarter two rolling four-quarter average figures suggest that the pass-rate trend for males and females is similar to the previous quarter, with figures of 40.0% and 42.3% for quarter two compared to 39.9% and 41.4% respectively in the previous quarter (Table 3.7). There is insufficient data to conclude there is a permanent change to the gender gap in theory pass rates by gender. Both 'gender-gap' and post-pandemic pass-rate trends are similar to those in Great Britain for the period for which we have comparable data (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4: Private Car Theory Test Pass-Rates by Gender (rolling 4-quarter averages)



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.

Following the outbreak of COVID-19, the DVA suspended all driver testing from 20 March 2020 until 5 October, again from 17 October until 20 November, again for a third time between 27 November and 10 December. The most recent suspension began on 23 December 2020, reopening on 23 April 2021. During quarter four, only off-road motorcycle and certain LGV tests were able to continue. DVA are currently testing across all driver test categories.

For the latest news and updates, please visit the Practical Driving Test page on the NIDirect website⁵.

Driving Test Applications and Tests Conducted

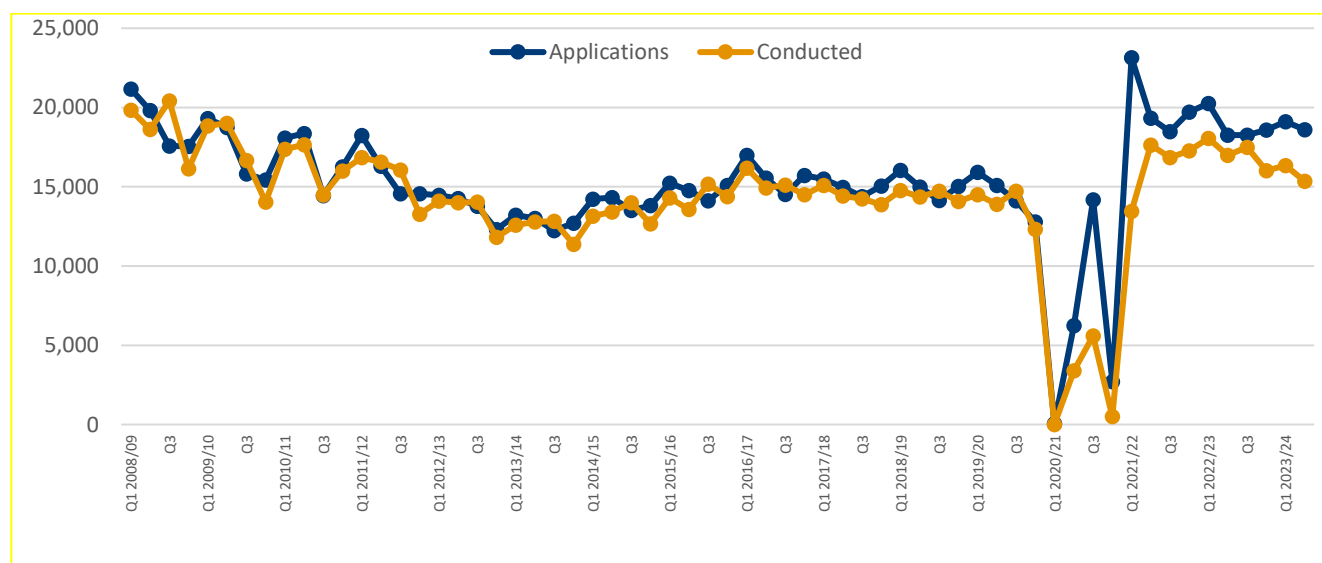
Please note that DVA services were impacted by industrial strike action on 22 September 2023, so testing volumes for September are lower than would have been the case had this been a routine working day.

The DVA conducted 15,371 driving tests this quarter and 31,718 tests this financial year to date. (Table 4.3 and Figure 4.1). Just over 8 in every 10 driving tests conducted this quarter were private cars (80.6%; 12,387) (Table 4.3).

From July to September 2023, the DVA received 18,600 applications for a driving test, 2.6% (500) lower than for quarter one (19,100), but 1.9% (350) higher than the same quarter of 2023/23 (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1).

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, trends for both test applications and tests conducted over the past five years had remained relatively steady, but post pandemic increased applications reflect higher numbers of young people presenting for a driving test, though recent trend suggests that driver tests conducted may be returning to pre-pandemic levels of testing.

Figure 4.1: Driving Test Applications and Conducted



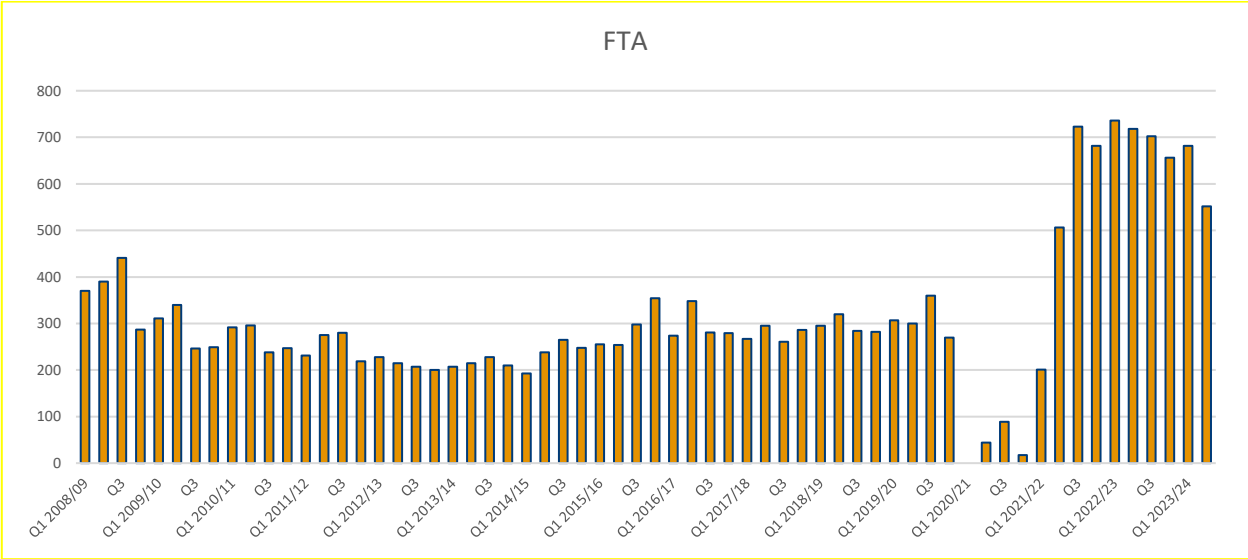
⁵ <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/book-your-practical-driving-test-online>

Failed to Attend

In quarter two there were 552 driving test appointments for which customers failed to attend (FTA) a paid for practical driving test, and over 1,230 FTA tests this financial year to date, equating to just under 4% of all driving tests conducted from April to September 2023 (Table 4.4).

In 2022-23, there were 2,812 FTA practical driving test appointments, the highest on record back to 2008-09.

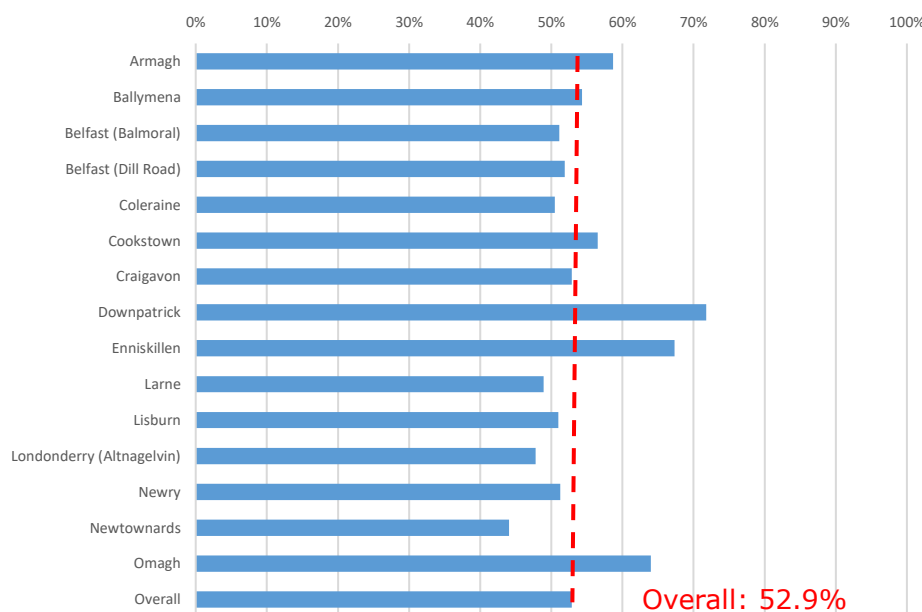
Figure 4.2: Driving Tests – Failed to Attend



Driving Tests by Test Centre

The number of private car driving tests delivered in quarter two ranged from a high of 1,516 at Newtownards to 396 at Armagh (Table 4.6). Across all driving test centres and using a rolling four-quarter average, the pass-rates for private car driving tests ranged from 44.1% in Newtownards to 71.8% in Downpatrick (Table 4.7b). At least part of the difference in driving test outcomes between test centres will be due to differential driving ability and the learning experience of candidates presenting for testing, while other relevant factors will be specific to each test centre such as local driving conditions.

Figure 4.3: Private Car Driving Test Pass-Rates by Test Centre, Q2 (Rolling 4-quarter Averages)



Driving Test Pass-Rates

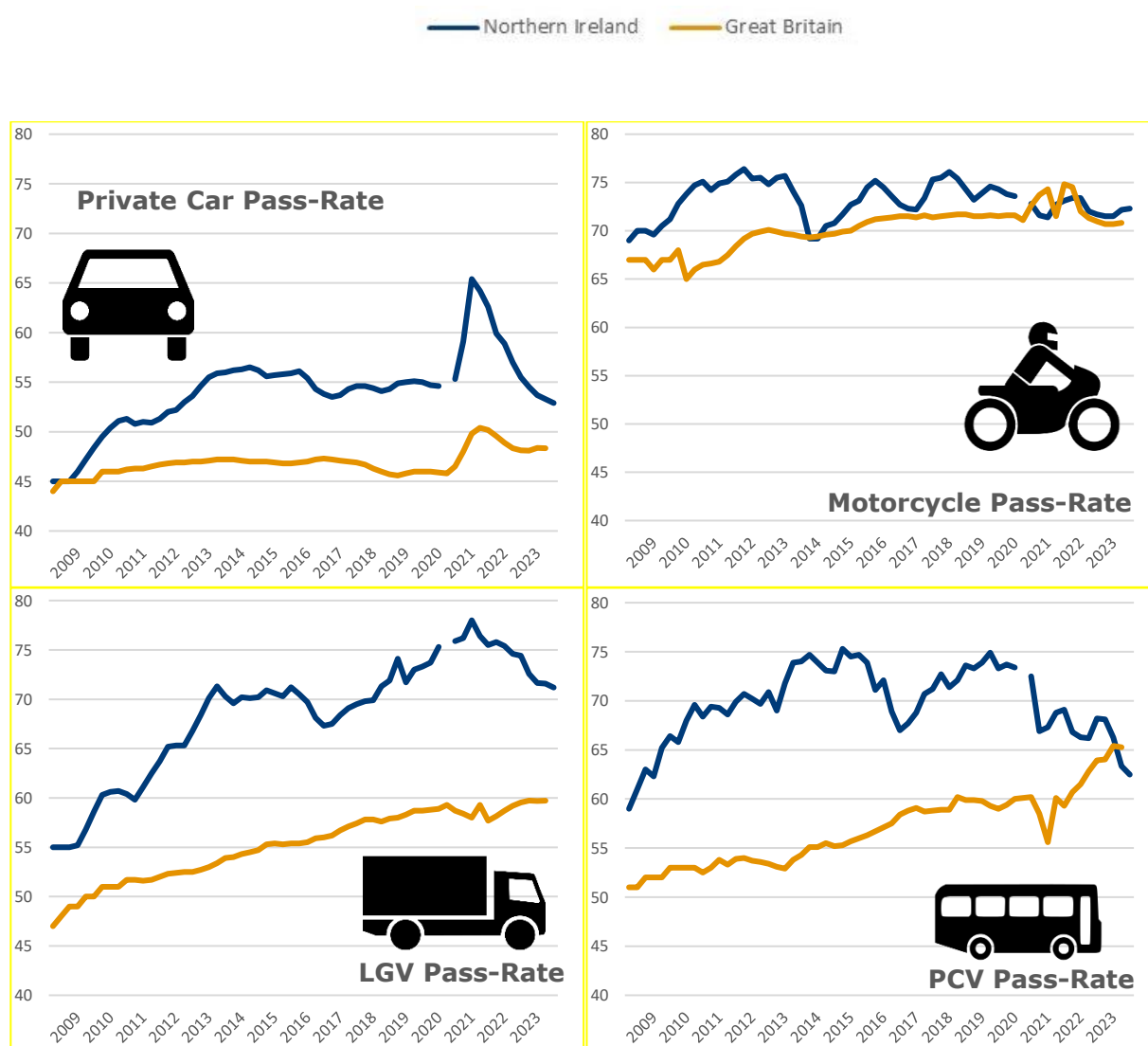
For July to September 2023, the private car driving test pass-rate was 53.0%, slightly below that for the previous quarter at 53.4% (Table 4.5).

Prior to the pandemic, pass-rates for all categories of vehicle remained broadly unchanged over the five years up to the onset of Covid restrictions in 2020. Although pass-rates for private cars reached a high of 66% in quarter three of 2020-21, pass rates for this category have been trending downwards and seem to have returned to pre-Covid levels (Table 4.5).

Using a rolling 4-quarter average, pass-rates for private car driver testing dropped from 65.4% in quarter four of 2020/21 to 52.9% for quarter two of 2023/24, slightly lower than the 53.3% of the previous quarter (Table 4.10). The pass rate is now comparable to pre-pandemic rolling 4 quarter pass-rates of typically 54%-55% (Table 4.10 and Figure 4.4).

Using the same rolling 4-quarter average, pass-rates for private cars and LGV are generally higher in Northern Ireland compared with the equivalent rates in Great Britain where we have comparable data, and overall rates are broadly similar for motorcycle tests (Table 4.10 & Figure 4.4). Pass rates for PCV are slightly lower for NI than GB for Q1, reflecting the downward trend in PCV pass rates seen in NI in recent years. Part of the difference between NI and GB pass-rates may be attributable to regional driving conditions including volumes of traffic and the complexity of road networks for driver testing.

Figure 4.4: Driving Test Pass-Rates (Rolling 4-Quarter Average)



Driving Test Pass-Rates by Gender

Historically up to pre-pandemic years, a clear 'gender-gap' was apparent in private car driver testing pass-rates, based on a four-quarter rolling average. Since driving testing resumed in the summer of 2020, this gap has narrowed considerably and remained much lower throughout 2022/23 and into the first two quarters of 2023/24. During quarter two of 2023/24, the rolling four-quarter average private car test pass-rate for males was just 1.3 percentage points higher than that for females, at 53.5% and 52.2% respectively (Table 4.10 and Figure 4.5).

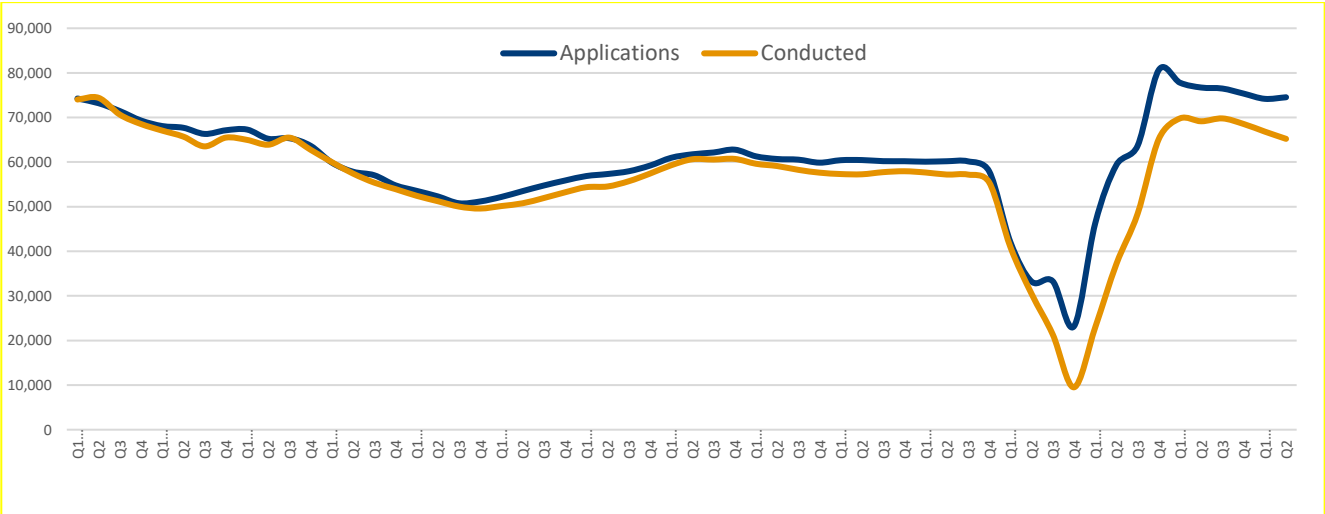
This gender gap is also now substantially narrower than the 6.2 percentage-point gap present in the Great Britain (GB) statistics pre-pandemic. The gap in GB between males and females has also reduced from over 5 percentage points in quarter one of 2021/22 to 3.5 percentage points in quarter one of 2023/24 (Table 4.10). GB data is not available to allow comparison over four quarters to the end of quarter two 2023/24 (Table 4.10).

It remains too soon to conclude if this narrowing of the gender gap is indicative of a permanent reduction or if this gap will revert to pre-pandemic levels. Without a detailed understanding of the profile of candidates presenting for testing, it is difficult to contextualise why differences in pass rates by gender and location persist in the way that they do.

Most test centres offering private car driving tests show this gender gap disparity, to varying degrees. However, some six test centres now show a gender gap in favour of females; for example, based on the same four-quarter rolling average, pass-rates for private car testing for females were higher than those for males in Newtownards (44.8% against 43.5%), Cookstown

(57.2% against 55.9%), and in Newry (53.2% against 49.6%) where the gap was largest in favour of females. (Table 4.7b).

Figure 4.5: Private Car Driving Test Pass-Rate by Gender (Rolling 4-Quarter Averages)



Whilst similar gender gaps in favour of males are also apparent in Great Britain for private cars, motorcycle pass rates are similar, with rolling four-quarter average pass rates for females and males both 70.8% for GB quarter one 2023/24 (Table 4.10). However, in contrast to Northern Ireland, GB pass-rates for large goods vehicles are consistently higher for females relative to males, typically showing a 4-5 percentage point difference; the latest Figures for GB for quarter one 2023/24 report the rolling four-quarter average pass rates for females at 65.4% compared with 59.1% for males (Table 4.10).

5 Driver Licensing

The DVA is responsible for driver licensing in Northern Ireland. DVA issues and, where appropriate, withdraws driver licences in respect of drivers of private cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, and other vehicle types.

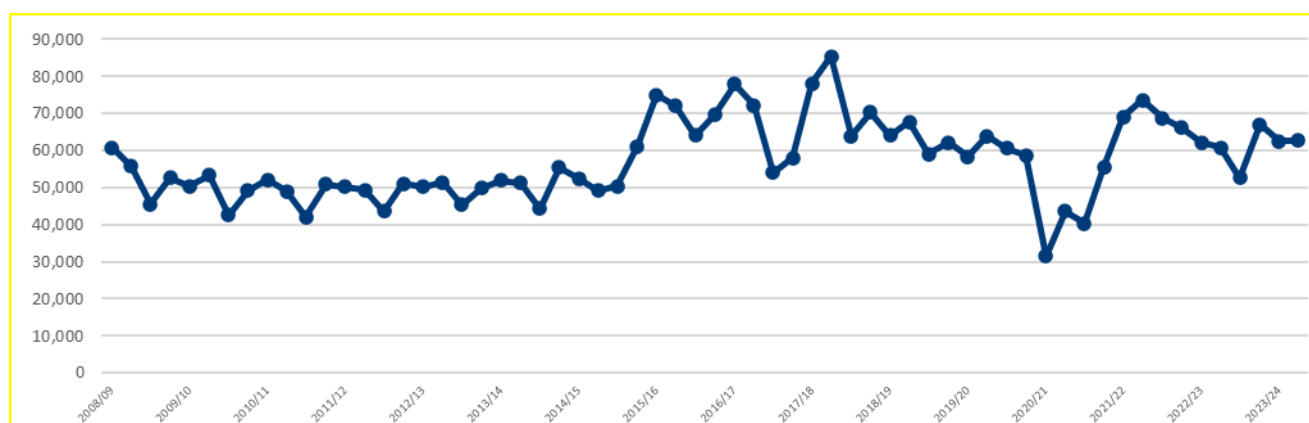
On 27 March 2020, the DVA suspended the processing of all paper renewal applications and temporarily closed the driver licensing office. From the end of April that year they began processing applications from Group 2 (lorry/bus) applicants and those from front line workers. Only applications received online were processed during this period. From June 2020, the DVA began resuming all driver licensing bar counter service at that time and now processes all driver licensing applications it receives.

Driver Licensing Transactions

Ordinary licensing transactions during 2022/23 totalled 242,642 which is slightly above (1,327, 0.5%) that in 2019/20 (241,315), but lower than the 277,510 for 2021/22 (Figure 5.1).

In the second quarter of 2023/24 DVA completed 62,730 ordinary driver licensing transactions, which is slightly higher than the previous quarter (62,540) and 1,982 (3.3%) higher than the same quarter in 2022/23 (60,748) (Table 5.1).

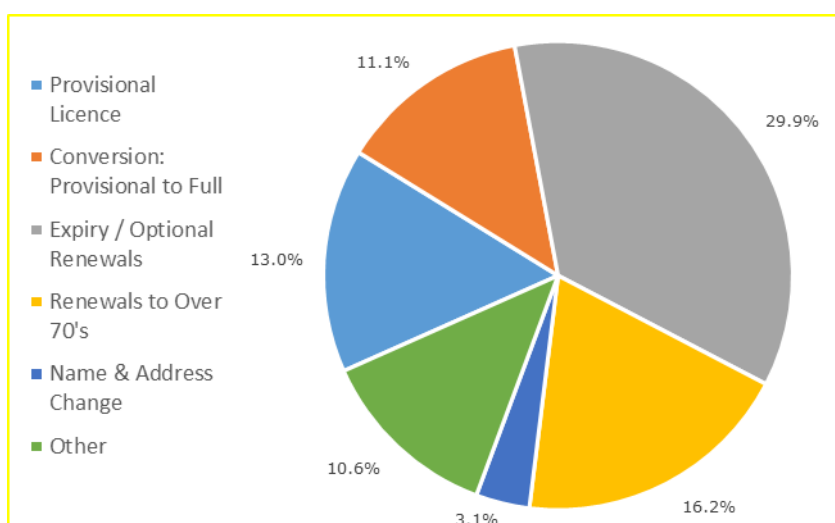
Figure 5.1: Driver Licensing Transactions



The number of Ordinary first licences ('provisional licences') issued in quarter two was 8,146, 779 (10.6%) higher than that for the same quarter the previous year (7,367) (Table 5.1).

This quarter, Expiry/Optional Renewals accounted for 29.9% (18,749) of all ordinary licensing transactions followed by Renewals to over 70's at 16.2% (10,150) of all Ordinary Licences transactions (Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Ordinary Driver License Transactions by Type, Quarter One 2023/24



In 2022/23 DVA completed just over 19,050 vocational driver licensing transactions, the second highest on record since 2008/09. In the second quarter of 2023/24, 4,622 vocational driver licensing transactions were completed, which is 2.3% (107) fewer relative to the same quarter in 2022/23 (4,729) (Table 5.2).

Driver Licence Stock

At the end of September 2023 there were 1,159,493 full and eligible driver licence holders (excluding provisional licence holders) with private car/light van entitlement in Northern Ireland, 0.5% (5,926) higher than the previous quarter (1,153,567) and the highest on record since quarter two of 2012/13 (1,046,811) (Table 5.4).

The number of provisional licence holders with private car/light van entitlement increased relative to the previous quarter from 109,037 to 110,358 at the end of September 2023, a rise of 1.2% (1321) between quarters. This is the third quarterly increase in provisional licence volumes in 2023 (Table 5.4).

Driver licence holders aged 65 years and above with full private car/light van entitlement accounted for 21.1% (241,478) of all licence holders with this entitlement (1,145,312) (Table 5.4).

Figure 5.3: Proportion of Population with a Full Car Licence – by Age

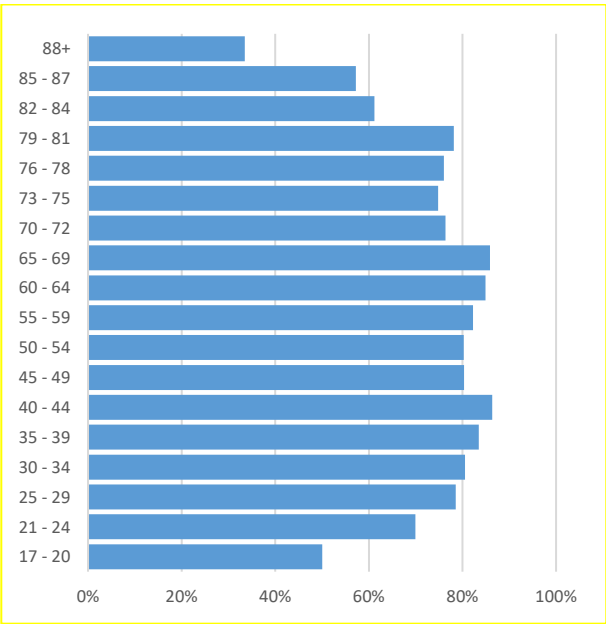


Figure 5.4: Full Car Licence Holders in Northern Ireland

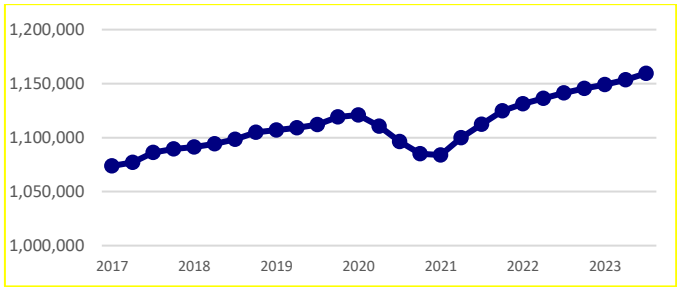
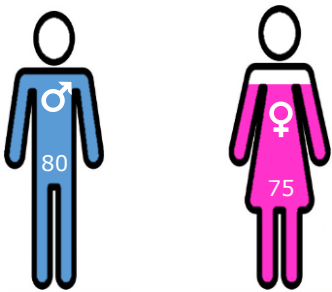


Figure 5.5: Proportion of Population with a Full Car Licence – by Gender



At the end of September 2023, an estimated 75.3% of Northern Ireland’s population aged 17 or over, had full and eligible private car/light van drivers licence entitlement. This is based on the latest published NISRA 2022 mid-year population estimates⁶ (Table 5.8). For males and females, the equivalent percentages were 80% and 75% respectively (Figure 5.5).

⁶ Available from the NISRA website 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 withdrawing licences in respect of taxi drivers and bus operators. The Transport Regulation Unit within DfI is responsible for goods vehicle licensing in Northern Ireland, and not the DVA.

Whilst most of the division continued to operate during COVID-19 restrictions, the DVA suspended for a limited period the division's reception and counter services on 27 March 2020.

The NI Assembly designated taxi drivers as key workers, and so taxi driver licensing continued to operate throughout the pandemic. Similarly, the DVA maintained bus and taxi operator licensing services throughout. All bus and taxi vehicle licences expiring between 10 March 2020 and 31 May 2021 were renewed automatically for an additional twelve months, at no cost to the owner.

For the latest news and updates, please visit the Motoring page on the NIDirect website⁷.

Taxi Licensing

Taxi Vehicles

During financial year 2022/23 DVA issued 7,281 taxi vehicle licences, the lowest on record and just under 2% (128) fewer than the equivalent figure for 2021/22 (7,409). This compares with 8,625 in 2019/20, the last 'normal' year of operation prior to the pandemic (Table 6.1). At the end of September 2023, licensed taxi vehicle stock stood at 7,011, 30 more than the at the end of June 2023 (6,981), and 1.7% (116) higher relative to the same period in 2022 (6,895) (Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1).

Taxi Drivers

During 2022/23 DVA issued 1,535 taxi driver licences, compared with 1,679 in 2021/22, a fall of 8.6% (144) annually and the lowest on record since 2009/10.

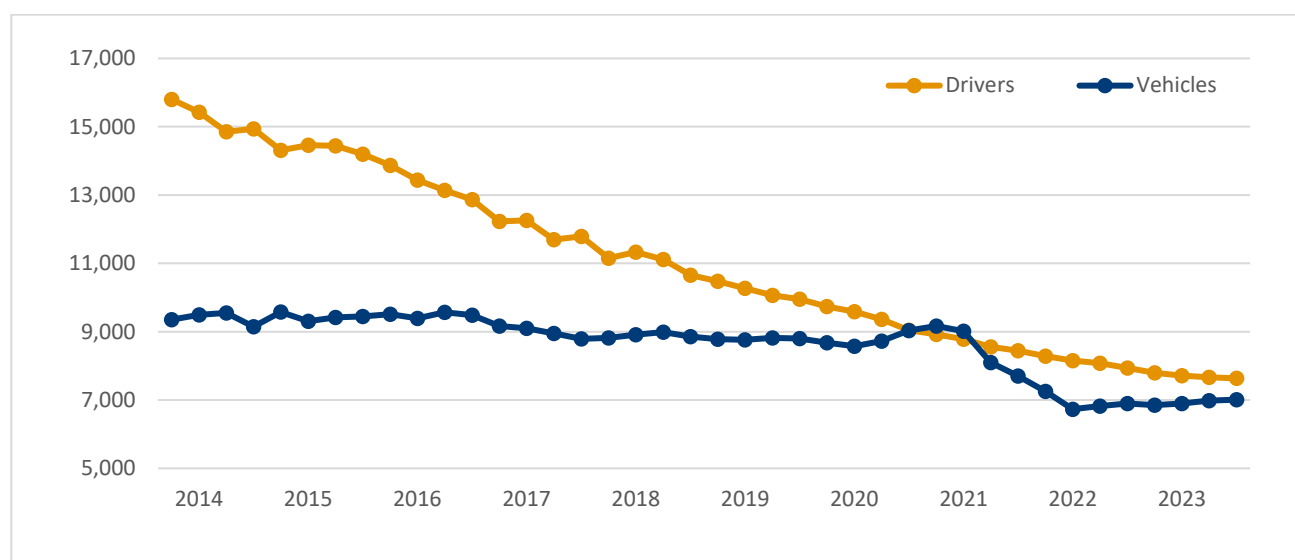
In the second quarter of 2023/24 DVA issued 456 taxi driver licences compared with 590 in quarter one and 369 in the same quarter of 2022/23 (Table 6.1). At the end of September 2023 there were 7,679 licensed taxi drivers, slightly higher (14) than last quarter at 7,665 (Table 6.2 and Figure 6.1).

Taxi Operators

As with taxi drivers, the number of taxi operators has been trending downwards in recent years, falling by 11% (140), from 1,267 at the end of 2021/22 to 1,127 in 2022/23. At the end of September 2023 there were 1,137 licensed taxi operators, a small increase from the 1,135 in quarter one, and 10.3% (130) lower than the same quarter in 2022/23 (1,267) (Table 6.2).

⁷ <https://www.nidirect.v.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-and-motoring>

Figure 6.1: Licensed Taxi Driver and Taxi Vehicle Volumes



Bus Licensing

Bus Vehicles

During 2022/23 DVA issued 3,472 Public Service Vehicle licences a small increase of 2.4% (81) relative to 2021/22 (3,391) (Table 6.1).

In the second quarter of 2023/24 DVA issued 754 bus licences, compared with 1,050 in quarter one, but 3.0% (22) higher than the second quarter of 2022/23 (732) (Table 6.1). The number of licensed bus vehicles at the end of September 2023 was 3,365, 33 higher than at the end of June 2023 (3,332) and 1.6% (53) lower relative to quarter two in 2022/23 (3,418) (Table 6.3).

Bus Operators

In 2022/23 the DVA issued 3,134 and 154 bus vehicle licences and bus operator licences respectively. Relative to 2021/22, bus vehicle licences and operator licences issued fell by just over 18% (705) and 11% (19) respectively (Table 6.1).

At the end of September 2023 there were 191 licensed bus operators, almost the same as at the end of June 2023 (192), and one higher than the equivalent quarter of 2022/23 (Table 6.3).

Goods Licensing

The number of licensed goods vehicles operators at the end of September 2023 was 5,389, 0.8% (44) fewer than the previous quarter (5,433), and 3.9% (219) lower than the same quarter in 2022/23. Associated with these 5,389 operators were 22,133 goods vehicles, the same figure as in quarter one, but representing a fall of 1.5% (343) vehicles relative to quarter two the previous year (Table 6.4).

The number of standard international operator licences in place fell for the sixth consecutive quarter from 1,953 to 1,861 at the end of September 2023, a drop of 4.7% (92) since quarter four of 2021/22.

There were 3,204 operators working under restricted licenses at the end of this quarter, 35 less than at the end of June 2023 (3,239) (Table 6.4).

7 Enforcement & Compliance

Enforcement falls within the Compliance and Enforcement directorate, which is responsible for the enforcement of legislation pertaining to roadworthiness standards and licensing requirements at the roadside.

COVID-19 presented several challenges for enforcement activity. The directorate successfully applied a range of solutions, including the creation of a segregated sterile interview facility within a liveried van to enable staff to conduct enforcement services, whilst protecting officers, drivers, and operators from risks of infection.

In the second quarter of 2023/24, DVA were active across the full range of enforcement activities having checked 721 vehicles, issued 159 fixed penalty notices in the amount of £22,090 in fines, with 12 joint operations with PSNI, 5 cross border operations with An Garda Síochána, and 9 spot checks on school buses (Table 7.1 to Table 7.4).

Enforcement Activities

Enforcement checks during 2022/23 (2,894) were just over 6% above those in 2021/22 (2,714) but remained well below levels achieved prior to the pandemic at circa 5,000 checks per annum. There were 721 checks in this quarter, almost 100 more than in quarter one (622) (Figure 7.1 and Table 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Vehicle Checks

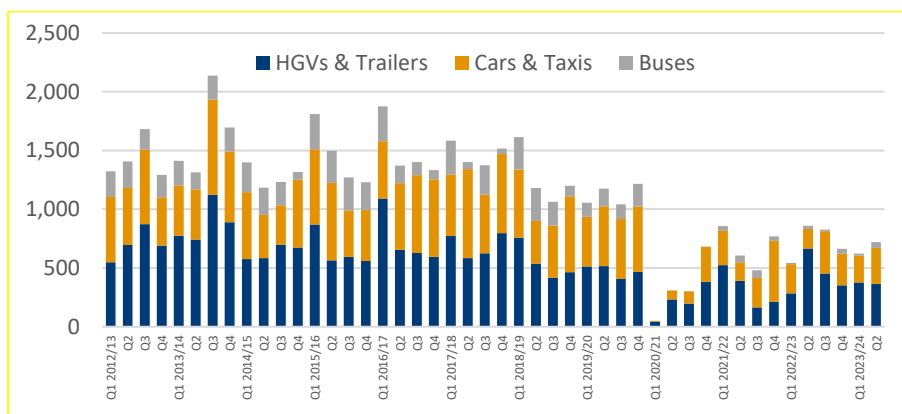
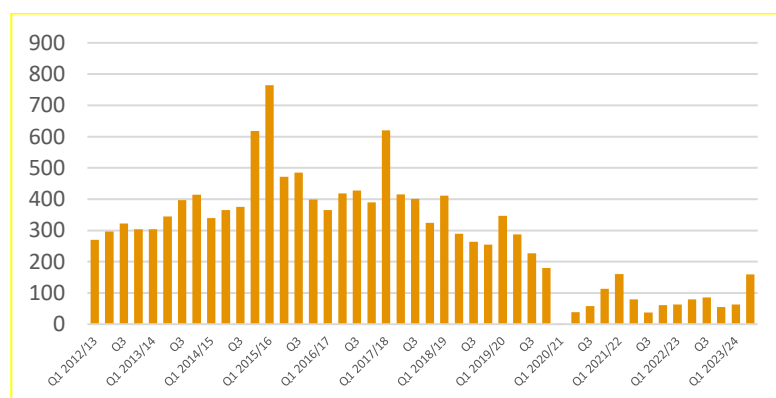


Figure 7.2: Fixed Penalties Issued



Enforcement officers in 2022/23 issued 283 fixed penalty notices compared with 337 in 2021/22, and 1,041 in 2019/20. The total value of fixed penalties issued in 2022/23 amounted to just over £29,000, £5,120 of this in the last quarter of 2022/23. In this, the second quarter of 2023/24, DVA issued 159 fixed penalties, amounting to £22,090 in fines (Figure 7.2 and Table 7.2).

Figure 7.3: Convictions

There were 73 successful convictions in 2022/23, compared with 429 in the previous year, 2021/22. This second quarter of 2023/24 saw 16 convictions relating to 78 offences (Table 7.2 and Figure 7.3).

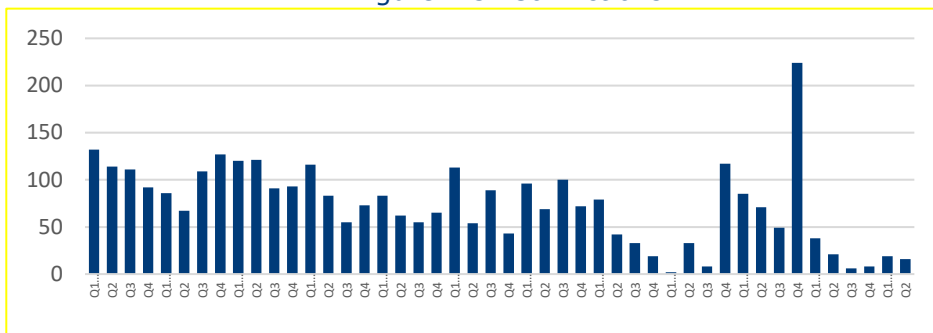
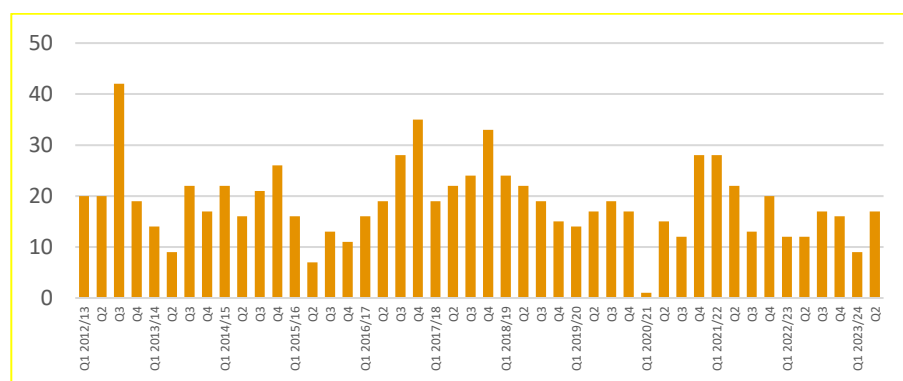


Figure 7.4: Joint and Cross-Border Operations

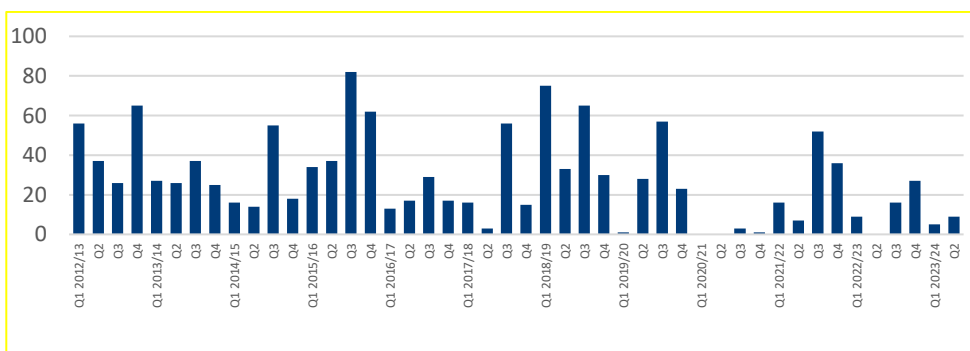


During 2022/23 there were 36 joint operations with PSNI compared with 62 in 2021/22. There were 12 joint operations with PSNI in the second quarter of 2023/24, and 5 cross border operations with the Road Safety Authority in Ireland, the PSNI and An Garda Síochána (Table 7.3 and Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.5: School Bus Checks

In 2022/23 there were 52, School Bus Checks, below half that in 2021/22 (111).

There were 9 spot checks on School Buses in the second quarter of 2023/24, 14 year to date so far in this financial year (Table 7.4 and Figure 7.5).



DVA Target Monitoring

For 2020/21, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DVA developed new targets through which it monitors driver licensing processing times and performance. The previous reported targets for Driver and Vehicle Testing are no longer applicable or reported, and there has been an adjustment to the target for Paper Driver Licensing. For information, the previously reported statistics for the old targets are included in Table 8.1. The revised targets are as follows:

1. *Online Driver Licensing* - Process 95% of complete online driver licensing applications within 5 working days.
2. *Paper Driver Licensing* - Process 90% of complete paper driver licensing applications within 10 working days.

Driver Licensing

Online application performance in 2022/23 at 98.6% was above the 95% target level for the year. Performance was above 98% for every quarter in 2022/23 and stood at 98.3% for the last quarter of 2022/23 (Figure 8.2) (Table 8.1). Online applications performance for financial year 2021/22, was 98.1%.

Paper applications performance at 92.6% was above the 90% target level for the last financial year 2022/23, and significantly better than the 78.3% achieved for paper applications in 2021/22. Quarterly performance was above target for each quarter of 2022/23, ending the year at 90.6% for quarter four of 2022/23.

Performance for driver licensing paper applications for the second quarter of 2023/24, at 95.4% was 5.4 percentage points above the 90% target level, which is the seventh consecutive quarter that paper applications processing has been above target.

At the end of this quarter, driver licensing online applications processing performance at 97.7% was 2.7 percentage points above the 95% target level.

Please note that reported performance levels include a small number of records potentially outside the scope of the target, meaning that actual performance against target is being slightly under-reported. Work remains ongoing to identify and account for these records in future reporting.

Figure 8.1: Online Driver Licence Application Waiting Time Performance

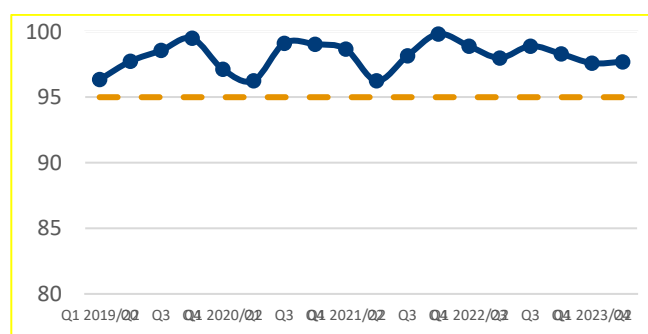
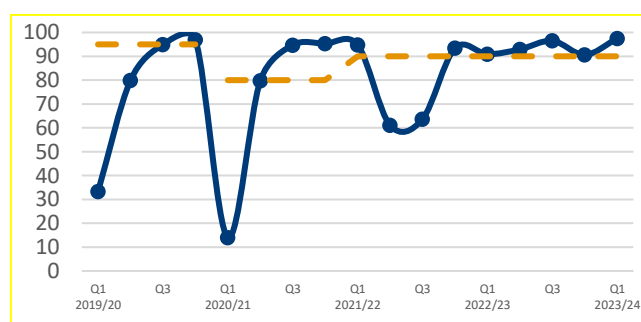


Figure 8.2: Paper Driver Licence Application Waiting Time Performance



(Note the indicators in this section do not have National Statistics accreditation but continues to have Official Statistics status).

Section 9: Heavy Goods Vehicle Compliance Survey 2022/23

Please note that HGV Random Survey 2023/24 results are not designated National Statistics, but Official Statistics and are reported within this issue of the quarterly report for convenience. DVA are not planning to conduct these types of survey on a quarterly basis going forward.

Background

The Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) is responsible for the regulation of the Heavy Goods, Taxi and Bus industries in Northern Ireland (NI). In this role the DVA is tasked with ensuring that all vehicles are compliant with current industry regulations. To do this DVA Enforcement Officers regularly carry out intelligence led operations, inspecting vehicles they suspect are not compliant with current industry regulations. Any such vehicles identified are served with a prohibition notice until such times that the vehicle was brought up to standard and subsequently re-checked by DVA. In some cases, depending on the nature or severity of the non-compliance, the driver and/or operator may be fined or prosecuted.

As well as these targeted operations, DVA in the past undertook large scale random biennial compliance surveys, the last of which was in respect of HGV in 2016/17. The aim of these surveys was to establish a baseline of non-compliance within each industry and provide evidence for specific types of enforcement activity in the future. For these early surveys, the roadside vehicle inspections were carried out by DVA Enforcement Officers, and the methodology and subsequent analysis of the data gathered, was completed by the Department for Transport's (DfT) In House Analytical Consultancy (IHAC) unit. This was the approach for the 2007, 2009 and 2011 Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) compliance surveys and the 2007 and 2009 Taxi Compliance surveys.

The role of IHAC in these surveys was transferred to NISRA statisticians who helped to carry out the 2011 Taxi Compliance Survey, the 2012 Bus Compliance Survey and the 2012/13 and 2013/14 Random Compliance Surveys of HGVs, Buses and Taxis. The DVA did not conduct any random compliance surveys in 2014/15, taking this time to focus on intelligence led inspections and operator premises visits.

The last random survey report relating to HGV on road compliance was carried out in 2016/17 and published in May 2017. This report is available from the Departmental website via the link below.

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/dfi-driver-vehicle-operator-and-enforcement-statistics-2016-17>

The data presented in this section is from a random sample of HGVs on NI roads consisting of 700 vehicles, 410 of these with trailers, with 51 road-side operations carried out during the period from June 2022 to February 2023.

Methodology

The format of this survey followed the approach used in previous random HGV compliance surveys. This consisted of a series of random roadside inspections on HGVs across a range of locations. DVA administrative staff, in conjunction with Enforcement Officers, composed an exhaustive list of viable locations for conducting roadside inspections on HGV's. A suitable location is one where Enforcement Officers have sufficient space to carry out the vehicle inspection without blocking the road and comply with Health and Safety constraints. Consideration must also be given to the flow of HGVs expected in the surrounding area to ensure that an adequate sample can be drawn from that location.

This list was then randomly ordered by DVA Statisticians. The HGV Enforcement Team worked their way from the top of the list, continuing down until the sample quota for the survey had been achieved.

Sampling Requirements

The sample size for this survey depends on the resource available and the level of confidence the DVA requires from the results. Standard statistical convention for this type of sample survey would require the results to be produced with a 5% confidence Interval at the 95% confidence level. This means that if this sample survey was conducted 100 times, with 100 different samples of the same population, we would expect a result within 5% of the observed sample result 95 times. The sample size required to achieve this level of accuracy, using a Simple Random Sampling methodology, is **244**, assuming a similar level of non-compliance as the most recent HGV Survey (20.0%).

However, it is not feasible to conduct this survey using Simple Random Sampling as this would require 244 single vehicle operations. This is simply not practical given the resources available. Instead, the 2016/17 Random Compliance Survey employed a cluster sampling methodology as in previous years. Each randomly selected location will be defined as a cluster. It is important that these locations were chosen randomly and that the vehicles inspected at each location were not selected based on reputation or prior knowledge.

Cluster Sampling methodology requires a larger sample than would be required using Simple Random Sampling, to achieve the same level of accuracy. The reason for this is the survey Design Effect (DE). The DE arises as this survey method is not totally random. The DE reduces the actual sample size which increases the uncertainty around the survey results. To reduce the impact of this, the actual sample size needs to be increased so that, once the DE has been taken into account, the effective sample size is equal to the required **244**. Assuming a similar DE to the most recent HGV survey (1.283), the required sample size is **313**. However, it would be prudent to sample more than the minimum **313** identified. This protects against a higher DE or non-compliance level than that observed in previous surveys. A larger sample size would also reduce the Confidence Interval meaning that any change in the observed compliance rate would have a greater chance of being statistically significant when compared to previous results. DVA statisticians recommended a sample size of **700** consisting of **35** operations with **20** HGV inspections per operation.

It should be noted that inspecting the first 20 HGVs that the enforcement officers encounter at each location, is a perfectly acceptable sampling method, provided this has been decided prior to their arrival at each location, and before they have seen any HGV vehicles. This approach would be ideal for locations where it can sometimes prove difficult to get the required number of vehicles due to low traffic volumes.

Data Quality Assessment

Very Good – The data reported for this survey were collected through a sample survey in line with best practice survey methodology. For each heavy goods vehicle stopped at the roadside, the Enforcement Team completed a comprehensive inspection. This included descriptive information about the inspection such as date, time, and location; personal, licence and insurance data on the driver and operator. Information was also collected on vehicle defects or offences committed by the driver, and details of actions taken by Enforcement Officers.

Inspections were also carried out by traffic examiners and technical officer teams to ensure that all roadworthiness and licensing criteria were covered. Completed data relating to these inspections and checks were collated by DVA and input into the enforcement database, Enforcement Live. Data were extracted and collated from the database and sent to DVA statistics for analysis.

To comply with legislative changes, data collected for this most recent survey is not on a like-for-like basis with previous surveys, so comparisons with results from previous surveys and changes in compliance metrics are within the context of new and additional checks relative to surveys from previous years.

HGV Compliance Survey Headline Results

Of the 700 HGV inspections conducted, 177 (25.3%) were deemed to be non-compliant; that is to say, just over 1 in every 4 vehicles checked had at least one vehicle defect or were committing at least one traffic offence worthy of prosecution, prohibition, or a fixed penalty notice. This increases to 27.6% when verbal warnings issued are included (table 9.1).

The overall non-compliance rate of 25.3% was higher than the rate recorded when the HGV survey was last undertaken in 2016/17, at which time the level of non-compliance was 21.7%. Taking account of sampling errors there is a 95% chance that the actual level of non-compliance within the general population of HGVs currently using NI roads ranges from 21.9% to 28.7%. The range was previous survey in 2016/17 was from 18.4% to 25.1%. There is some overlap between these two ranges so it's not possible to be definitive about the actual trend in overall non-compliance from 2016/17 to 2022/23. For longer historical context the published non-compliance rate for HGV in 2012/13 was 22.7% and 31.2% in 2011/12.

As the regulatory regime for HGVs was not the same for both surveys this change in non-compliance rates is not on a like-for-like basis and is indicative only. DVA vehicle testing data indicates that the MOT quarter one 2023/24 pass rate for HGV was 80.0% relative to 76.7% for the same quarter of 2016/17. Vehicle licensing data for Northern Ireland shows that the average age of HGV stock at the end of June 2023 was 10.2 years compared with 9.7 years for the same period in 2017, suggesting that at least some of the potential increase in non-compliance between the two surveys may be partly explained by the longer life span of HGVs using NI roads. The number of HGVs licensed for the road with DVLA in Swansea at the end of June 2023 was 25,187 compared with 23,515 for the same quarter in 2016/17, an increase of 1,672 (7.1%) registered HGV stock, suggesting an older profile of HGV now relative to 2016/17.

The current survey found that 6.1% of vehicles and 5.4% of trailers had at least one roadworthiness defect resulting in a prohibition, prosecution of fixed penalty notice being issued relative to 11.4% and 7.2% respectively for the survey conducted in 2016/17 (table 9.2). In contrast, non-compliance due to traffic related offences increased from 11.9% to 22.3% between surveys. However, on an actual count of individual recorded road traffic offences, Drivers Hours & Recording equipment accounted for most recorded road traffic offences which affirms the view that digital/smart tachographs and the use of modern technology at the roadside is responsible for detecting more drivers' hours offences than during previous surveys and why non-compliance of 22.3% is much higher relative to previous surveys.

Accuracy of Results

The results presented in this report are derived from a random sample HGVs on NI roads at the times they were stopped and inspected and will therefore be subject to sampling errors. The error range, or confidence interval, associated with the headline results is presented in Tables 9.1 to 9.3. These are reported at the 95% confidence level meaning that if we carried out the same survey 100 times, in 95 of these surveys we would expect to obtain values within these ranges. As a cluster sampling technique was employed rather than simple random sampling, which would not have been feasible, this further reduces the accuracy of the survey estimates and leads to a wider error range than would otherwise have been the case. This is known as the survey design effect and a value of 1 indicates that the error associated with each estimate is the same as would be found with a simple random sample of equivalent size. The higher that the design effect is above 1, the greater the additional error will be. The design effects associated with each of the non-compliance measures from the 2022/23 HGV survey are available alongside the confidence intervals in Table 9.3. The design effects have been fully taken account of in the calculation of confidence intervals.

Notes

National Statistics

On the 24 March 2015, the UK Statistics Authority accredited this series as National Statistics. National Statistics are accredited official statistics. These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in March 2015. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled 'accredited official statistics'. The OSR website contains further details at: [Accredited official statistics – Office for Statistics Regulation \(statisticsauthority.gov.uk\)](https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/driver-and-vehicle-statistics-in-northern-ireland). This means the 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>. DVA statisticians produce them free from any political interference and undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs.

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards, at: DVA.Statistics@nisra.gov.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the OSR website.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They were 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 since the report achieved National Statistics accreditation, we have added the section on target monitoring. We discussed these with the Office for Statistical Regulation (OSR), and it was agreed that both the old Vehicle Testing and Driver Testing Waiting Time targets fully complied with the National Statistics standard. However, whilst the two Driver Licensing processing time targets meet 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 the OSR could deem them fully compliant. In the interim, these indicators will continue to have the status of Official Statistics and we have highlighted this in the relevant section of the report.

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