

Statistical Press Release – First Quarter 2016/2017 DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics Released

The DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics Quarter 1 2016-2017 is now available.

~Thursday, 13th October 2016

The publication is produced by the Analysis, Statistics & Research Branch (ASRB) of the Department for Infrastructure and contains summary statistical and trend information relating to the main functions of the DfI's Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) and other vehicle licensing activity. The publication is available on the ASRB website at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/driver-and-vehicle-agency-activity-statistics>

Key points

The key points for Quarter 1 2016/17 are:

Driver Testing

- 16,979 Driving Test Applications were submitted to the DVA. This marks an increase of over 11% in applications compared with the same quarter last year. While this is one fifth less than the first quarter series high of 21,170 applications received in 2008/09, it is still 28% higher than the figure recorded as recently as April to June 2013 and continues the increasing trend.
- Numerically the largest increase has been for Private Car L Tests, which have experienced a rise of almost 1,200 applications over the year. Again, it continues a generally increasing trend since the series low of 10,439 recorded during Quarter 3 2013/14 and is likely linked to continuing improvements in the economy. Notably, LGV applications have increased by nearly a half (48%) since last year to reach 951 in the most recent quarter. There is a recognised shortage of qualified LGV drivers in the industry which, along with improved economic conditions, may be encouraging an increase in applications.
- Almost 16,200 Driving Tests were conducted by the DVA, a rise of just over 13% on the same quarter last year. This is 18% less than the first quarter series high observed during 2008/09 but is, however, over 28% higher than the nearly 12,600 tests conducted as recently as April to June 2013.
- The pass rate for the Private Car L Test was down by just over 4 percentage points to 53% from the same period last year. This is the first notable decrease, in what has otherwise been a steadily increasing trend, since Quarter 1 2008 when the pass rate stood at a little over 44%.

Vehicle Testing

- The most popular booking method for vehicle test applications was the internet booking system which received 61% of all applications, up by 8 percentage points on the same period last year.
- Approximately 281,100 Vehicle Tests were carried out by the DVA. The vast majority of these (85%) were Full Tests with the remainder vehicle retests. Overall, Tests Conducted has increased by 1.6% compared with the same quarter in 2015 when the number was over 276,600.
- The overall pass rate for Full Tests was 81.6%, an increase of 0.7 percentage points compared with the same period last year. There has been a generally increasing pass rate for Full Tests, up by over 3 percentage points, since the first quarter in 2008/09.

Theory Testing

- A total of 21,642 applications for Theory Tests were received by DVA, an increase of just over 12% compared with the same period in 2015. The vast majority (71%) of the additional applications related to Private Cars. The increase in theory test applications will, in part, be due to the decreasing pass rate, resulting in more candidates booking to retake their test.
- Theory Test pass rates for Private Cars showed a 0.6 percentage point fall to just over 46% when compared with the same quarter in 2015. This contrasts with a pass rate of just below 17% for the taxi theory test which was introduced at the end of October 2014.

Vehicle Registration

- During January to March 2016, over 22,500 new vehicles were registered for the first time in the north of Ireland. This represents a small increase of just over 2% from the same period last year following a period of stagnation in the equivalent quarter between 2014 and 2015.
- The top make for private cars registered for the first time during January to March 2016 was Ford, accounting for 12.0% of all such registrations, followed by Volkswagen (9.9%) and Vauxhall (7.8%).

Driver Licence Stock

- Over three quarters (76%) of the north of Ireland's entitled population had a full and eligible licence for Private Cars / Light Vans as at the 30 June 2016. For the Male entitled population the proportion was 82% compared to 70% for females.

Road Transport Licensing

- At the 30 June 2016, there were 13,140 licensed Taxi Drivers in the north of Ireland, down by 9% from the same point in 2015. There were also 1,676 licensed Taxi Operators on this date, down by a similar proportion (10%) over the year. This fall was driven entirely by a reduction in Small Operators (who can have up to two taxis on their licence), and account for 87% of all operators, but whose numbers had fallen by almost 200 to 1,454 over the year.

Enforcement Activities

- DVA Enforcement teams carried out 14 joint operations with the PSNI predominately targeted on HGVs and Taxis. There were also a total of 13 spot checks on School Buses carried out by enforcement officers. Although this was down from the 34 checks carried out in the same quarter of 2015, only one vehicle was found to be committing an offence compared to 7 in the previous year.

Notes to Editors:

1. Background -

This is the latest quarterly edition of the Driver & vehicle Agency 'DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics' relating to April to June 2016. The report is written and issued by Analysis, Statistics & Research Branch in the Department for Infrastructure. This is the first edition of the quarterly publication under its new departmental title having previously been released by the former DoE.

2. Data sources -

The figures are derived mainly from administrative sources held within the DfI's Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) and its Transport Regulation Unit.

3. Vehicle Registration -

Although no longer the responsibility of DVA, for completeness and to provide continuity of reporting, detailed figures have been included in this publication relating to NI vehicle first registrations and vehicle licensing. DVA statisticians receive, on a quarterly basis, north of Ireland specific quality assured vehicle registration and licensing extracts from the DVLA/DfT for the purposes of producing Official Statistics. The DVLA/DfT are, and continue to be, responsible for all vehicle licensing and registration enquiries. Due to publication timing differences with the DfT, who release the headline UK figures (and now include NI), the latest available NI vehicle first registration figures are up to end-March 2016.

4. Future publication dates -

The Driver & Vehicle Agency 'DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics' is published every quarter at pre-announced release dates, which are available from the GOV.UK website at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements>

5. Publication copies -

Electronic copies of the 'DfI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics' Quarter 1, April to June 2016 is available at: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/driver-and-vehicle-agency-activity-statistics>

6. Infographic -

A companion Infographic is also available on our website at:

<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/dfi-driver-vehicle-operator-and-enforcement-statistics-quarter-one-1-april-2016-30-june-2016>

Should this format not be suitable for your needs, hard copies are available free of charge from:

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7. Media enquiries -

All media enquiries should be directed to the DfI Press Office on 028 9054 0372. For out of office hours, please contact the Duty Press Officer on pager 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.