



Traffic in Great Britain: Quarter 3 2007

This publication includes National Statistics on Traffic in Great Britain, including analyses by vehicle type and road class, for the third quarter of 2007.

These provisional figures indicate that estimated traffic levels rose by 1.1 per cent between Q3 2006 and Q3 2007. Other key results, comparing the provisional Q3 2007 estimates with the final estimates for the same quarter one year earlier (Q3 2006) include:

- Car traffic decreased by 1 per cent.
- Light van traffic increased by 12 per cent.
- Goods vehicle traffic increased by 3 per cent.
- Traffic on minor urban roads and rural A roads rose by 6 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.
- Traffic on minor rural roads was virtually unchanged.
- Traffic on motorways and urban A roads fell by 1 per cent and 3 per cent respectively.
- Based on the 2006 final annual estimates, cars account for 79 per cent of all motor vehicle traffic, light vans (13 per cent), goods vehicles (6 per cent), and other vehicles (2 per cent).

This quarterly bulletin also includes experimental statistics on the PSA target used to monitor congestion on motorways and trunk roads in England:

- Average vehicle delay on the slowest 10 per cent of journeys rose from 3.78 to 4.16 minutes per 10 miles between the baseline year (August 2004-July 2005) and the latest year (September 2006-August 2007). Over the same period, average journey time on these journeys rose from 13.4 to 13.8 minutes per 10 miles.

Notes

1. The next quarterly bulletin will be published on 7 February 2008
2. The figures on traffic levels are measured in terms of vehicle kilometres, and sometimes known as the volume of traffic. This is not the same as congestion. For example, traffic levels could increase without increasing congestion if traffic is more evenly spread during the day, with less during peak periods and more at other times. Congestion has a number of consequences, such as causing delays and making journey times unreliable.

3. The quarterly estimates are based mainly on data at 190 sites. Caution should be taken in drawing conclusions about longer term trends from a single quarter's or year's estimates.

4. The Department has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to make journeys more reliable on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) in England. This consists of all motorways and trunk roads managed by the Highways Agency, as well as the M6 Toll. The PSA target will be achieved if the average vehicle delay on the SRN's slowest 10 per cent of journeys is less in 2007-08 than in the baseline period. Congestion for these purposes is defined as delay in minutes per 10 miles, compared with the time taken to travel at a given 'reference speed'. Currently, because of data quality issues, 91 of 103 routes are used to monitor network performance. More information can be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/roadstrafficspeedscongestion/congestiononthestrategicroad5359>

5. These congestion data are 'experimental statistics' that are under development and we are currently testing their ability to meet customer needs. We believe they are robust enough to give a reasonable indication of overall trends, but while the series are experimental, their quality cannot be assured to the rigorous standards required by National Statistics.

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