

# Transport Statistics Bulletin

Traffic in Great Britain:  
Q3 2002 Data

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**Symbols and conventions:** (i) **Unless otherwise stated, all tables refer to Great Britain.**  
(ii) **Metric units are generally used.**

**Units:** Figures are shown in italics when they represent percentages, indices or ratios.

**Rounding of figures:** In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent slight discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total as shown.

**Conversion factors:**

1 kilometre = 0.6214 mile	1 tonne = 0.9842 ton
1 tonne-km = 0.6116 ton-mile	1 gallon = 4.546 litres
1 billion = 1,000 million	1 litre = 0.220 gallons

**Symbols:** The following symbols have been used throughout.

..	= not available	.	= not applicable
-	= Negligible (less than half the final digit shown)	0	= Nil
*	= Sample size too small for reliable estimates.	ow	= of which
{	= subsequent data is disaggregated	}	= subsequent data is aggregated
	= break in the series	P	= provisional data
F	= forecast expenditure	e	= estimated outturn
n.e.s.	= not elsewhere specified	TSO	= The Stationary Office

# TRAFFIC IN GREAT BRITAIN

3rd Quarter 2002

Department for Transport

Statistics Bulletin (02)8

More detailed information on traffic flow data at selected points on the major road network and vehicle kilometre estimates by type of vehicle and class of road is available for purchase from the Department for Transport. Enquiries should be made to:

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Transport Statistics Roads 2 Division  
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76 Marsham Street  
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This bulletin was compiled by Kerrick Macafee. The latest quarterly bulletin can be found at the following website address: <http://www.transtat.dtlr.gov.uk/qbullets/qtraff.htm>. Enquiries about the contents should be made to the above address or ☎ 020 7944 6396

November 2002

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## Special Note

A Note on page 3 of the *Road Traffic Statistics: 2001* Bulletin, published on 29 August 2002, explained why the 1999 to 2001 values are on a different basis than those for earlier years. It concluded by commenting that a new series, with revisions to estimates for years prior to 1999, would be published as soon as possible.

It is now expected that the new series will be published in May 2003. Work is still continuing on developing the new estimates. The new series will incorporate:

- Separate estimates for traffic on roads in urban areas and rural areas (with the exact areas yet to be finalised), rather than for built-up and non built-up roads, which are related to the speed limits on roads;
- Better factors for converting our 12-hour manual counts to estimates of annual average daily flows and;
- Better estimates of minor road traffic, following a detailed examination of recent data.

A more technical note giving further details of the proposed methodological changes will be included in the next Bulletin, due for release on Thursday 6 February 2003.

## SYMBOLS

<b>P</b>	=	provisional figures
<b>..</b>	=	provisional figures not sufficiently accurate to be published

## DEFINITIONS

### Units

**Billion:** One thousand million.

### Roads

**Motorways:** Special roads reserved for certain classes of vehicle.

**Major roads:** 'A' roads.

**Minor roads:** 'B', 'C' and unclassified roads

**Non-Built-Up roads:** Roads with a speed limit of over 40mph.

**Built-Up roads:** Roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less.

### Vehicle types

**Cars:** Includes taxis, passenger vehicles with 15 or less seats and three-wheeled cars. Cars towing caravans or trailers are counted as one vehicle.

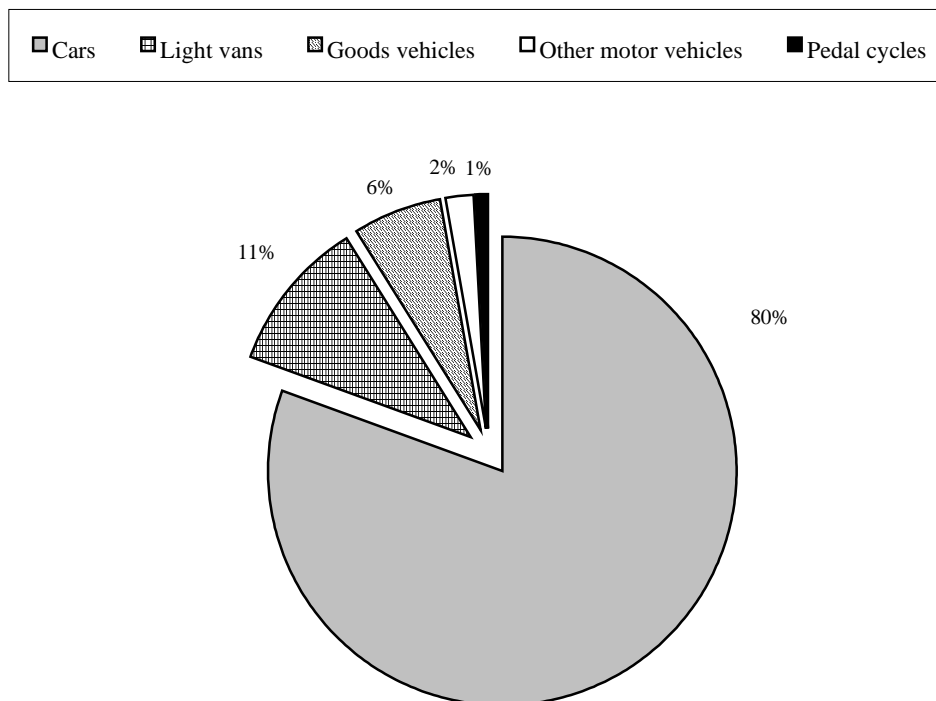
**Light vans:** Goods vehicles not exceeding 3,500kg gross vehicle weight.

**Goods vehicles:** Goods vehicles exceeding 3,500kg gross vehicle weight.

**Other vehicles:** Includes two wheel motor vehicles and large buses and coaches.

- Traffic levels were estimated to be three per cent higher in the third quarter of 2002 than in the same period of 2001. The rise partly reflects the impact of the foot and mouth disease on traffic in the third quarter of 2001.
- Car traffic levels rose by about three per cent from the third quarter of 2001 to the same period of 2002, whilst the level of goods vehicle traffic rose by two per cent over the same period.
- Our current estimate is that the underlying rate of traffic growth in the third quarter remains between 1 and 2 per cent per year.

**Chart 1: Road traffic in Great Britain by vehicle type in 2001**



**Table 1: Road traffic in Great Britain by vehicle type: Index numbers**

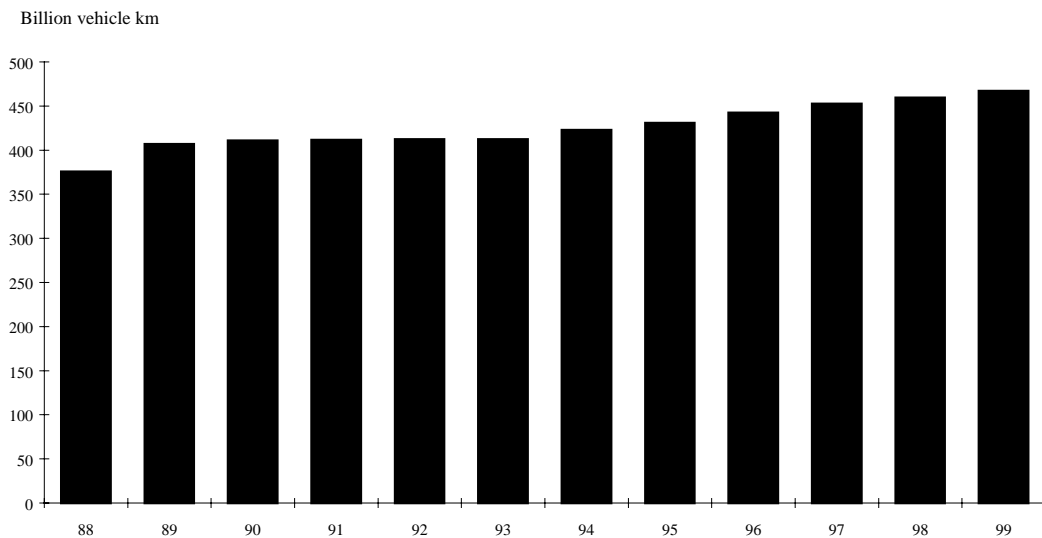
Seasonally adjusted index numbers (1993=100)

	Cars	Light vans	Goods vehicles	Other motor vehicles	All motor vehicles	Pedal cycles
<b>Weights (1993)</b> (billion vehicle kms)	<b>338.5</b>	<b>41.1</b>	<b>23.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>412.2</b>	<b>4.5</b>
1988	90.2	88.0	99.8	118.4	91.1	116.5
1996	107.0	109.6	109.1	103.1	107.3	94.6
1997	109.6	110.8	113.8	102.9	109.8	90.2
1998	111.0	116.8	112.2	101.3	111.4	88.3
1999	112.3	119.7	117.9	109.9	113.3	92.8
2000 *	112.4	122.3	119.9	106.7	113.7	91.3
2001	113.8	123.9	119.7	111.7	115.1	89.5
Seasonally adjusted index numbers (average quarter 1993=100)						
1998 Q1	111.1	115.0	112.8	96.6	111.3	88.1
Q2	110.6	115.4	110.8	103.0	110.9	89.0
Q3	110.1	117.0	111.3	102.5	110.7	88.1
Q4	112.0	119.8	114.0	103.4	112.7	88.1
1999 Q1	112.2	118.0	118.0	107.6	113.0	90.8
Q2	111.9	119.9	117.5	111.2	113.0	92.6
Q3	112.2	120.4	117.3	112.1	113.3	94.3
Q4	112.7	120.8	119.2	111.2	113.8	93.5
2000 Q1	113.1	120.9	120.4	113.5	114.3	92.6
Q2	112.7	120.9	119.8	111.2	113.9	92.6
Q3 *	110.8	123.8	118.9	107.3	112.4	89.9
Q4	112.6	120.7	119.9	103.3	113.6	90.8
2001 Q1	112.9	120.3	118.8	111.2	113.9	88.1
Q2	112.7	122.3	118.7	112.6	114.0	88.1
Q3	113.7	124.3	118.6	113.8	115.1	94.3
Q4	115.5	125.3	121.8	117.7	116.9	87.7
2002 Q1 P	116.1	123.6	121.5	120.2	117.3	..
Q2 P	114.9	126.2	120.8	119.9	116.5	..
Q3 P	116.9	129.0	121.2	118.0	118.4	..
Percentage change on previous year						
1997	2	1	4	0	2.3	-5
1998	1	5	-1	-2	1.5	-2
1999	1	2	5	9	1.7	5
2000 *	0	2	2	-3	0.3	-2
2001	1	1	0	5	1.3	-2
1999 Q1	1	3	5	11	2	3
Q2	1	4	6	8	2	4
Q3	2	3	5	9	2	7
Q4	1	1	5	8	1	6
2000 Q1	1	2	2	6	1	2
Q2	1	1	2	0	1	0
Q3 *	-1	3	1	-4	-1	-5
Q4	0	0	1	-7	0	-3
2001 Q1	0	0	-1	-2	0	-5
Q2	0	1	-1	1	0	-5
Q3 *	3	0	0	6	2	5
Q4	3	4	2	14	3	-3
2002 Q1 P	3	3	2	8	3	..
Q2 P	2	3	2	6	2	..
Q3 P	3	4	2	4	3	..

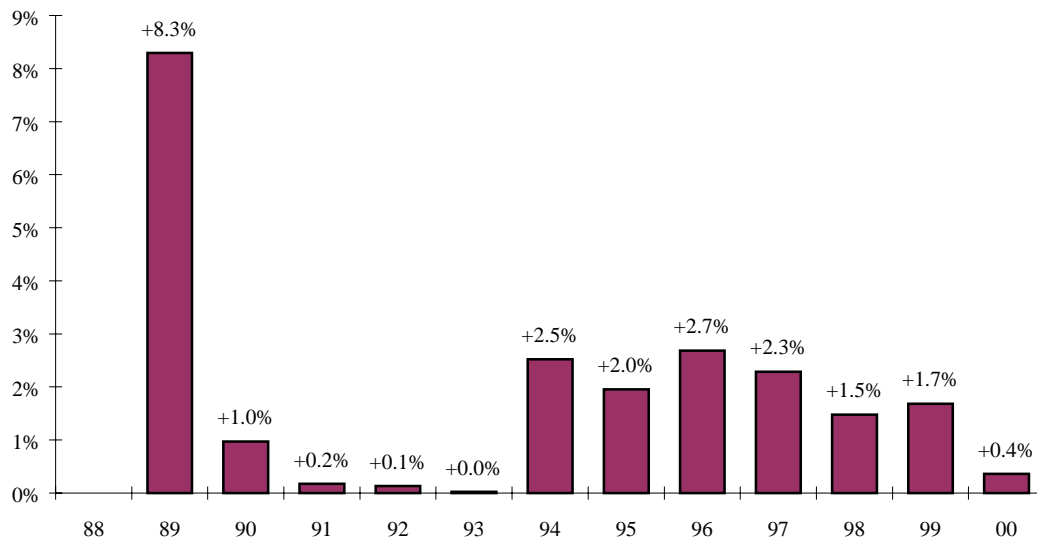
\* Figure affected by September 2000 fuel protest

- The revised estimate for all motor vehicle traffic in 2001 is 473.7 billion vehicle kilometres. This is little different from the provisional estimate.

**Chart 2a: Road traffic in Great Britain for all motor vehicles**



**Chart 2b: Percentage change in road traffic for all motor vehicles**



## Table 2: Road traffic in Great Britain by vehicle type

Billion vehicle kilometres

	Cars	Light vans	Goods vehicles	Other motor vehicles	All motor vehicles	Pedal cycles
1988	305.4	36.2	23.8	10.3	375.7	5.2
1996	362.4	45.1	26.0	9.0	442.4	4.3
1997	370.9	45.6	27.1	9.0	452.6	4.1
1998	375.6	48.1	26.7	8.9	459.2	4.0
1999	380.1	49.2	28.1	9.6	467.0	4.2
1999	378.4	49.4	28.8	9.5	466.0	4.1
2000 *	378.7	50.5	29.3	9.2	467.7	4.0
2001	383.7	51.1	29.2	9.6	473.7	4.0

### Seasonally adjusted figures

1999	Q1	94.6	12.2	7.2	2.3	116.2	1.0
	Q2	94.3	12.4	7.2	2.4	116.2	1.0
	Q3	94.6	12.4	7.2	2.4	116.5	1.0
	Q4	94.9	12.5	7.3	2.4	117.0	1.0
2000	Q1	95.4	12.6	7.4	2.4	117.7	1.0
	Q2	95.0	12.6	7.3	2.4	117.3	1.0
	Q3 *	93.4	12.8	7.3	2.3	115.8	1.0
	Q4	94.9	12.5	7.3	2.2	117.0	1.0
2001	Q1	94.0	12.3	7.3	2.2	115.9	1.0
	Q2	93.8	12.5	7.3	2.3	115.9	1.0
	Q3	94.7	12.7	7.3	2.3	117.0	1.1
	Q4	96.2	12.9	7.5	2.4	118.9	1.0
2002	Q1 P	96.7	12.7	7.4	2.4	119.2	..
	Q2 P	95.7	12.9	7.4	2.4	118.4	..
	Q3 P	97.4	13.2	7.4	2.4	120.4	..

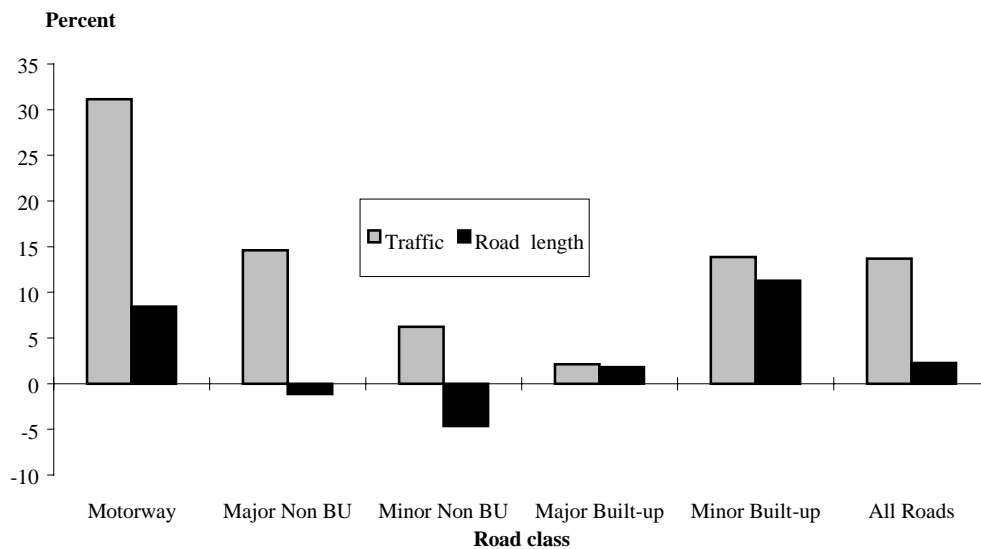
### Unadjusted figures

1999	Q1	90.7	11.5	7.3	2.0	111.6	0.7
	Q2	95.4	12.2	7.1	2.5	117.2	1.2
	Q3	98.3	12.9	7.2	2.8	121.2	1.4
	Q4	94.0	12.7	7.2	2.1	116.0	0.8
2000	Q1	91.8	12.0	7.5	2.1	113.4	0.7
	Q2	96.1	12.5	7.2	2.5	118.3	1.2
	Q3 *	97.0	13.3	7.3	2.7	120.2	1.3
	Q4	93.9	12.7	7.3	2.0	115.8	0.8
2001	Q1	91.7	11.9	7.4	2.0	113.0	0.7
	Q2	96.1	12.7	7.1	2.5	118.4	1.1
	Q3	99.6	13.4	7.3	2.8	123.1	1.4
	Q4	96.4	13.2	7.4	2.3	119.2	0.8
2002	Q1 P	94.3	12.2	7.6	2.2	116.3	..
	Q2 P	98.0	13.1	7.2	2.7	121.0	..
	Q3 P	102.4	13.9	7.4	2.9	126.6	..

\* Figure affected by September 2000 fuel protest

- Estimates of changes in traffic levels by road class are affected by long-term changes in road lengths. Over the last eight years, highway authorities have increasingly imposed 40 mph or lower speed limits on previously unlimited roads. This has resulted in a significant reclassification of roads from non built-up to built-up, particularly minor roads. The apparent rise in traffic on built-up roads shown in Table 3 is, therefore, largely the result of this reclassification. Chart 3 shows these trends in graphical terms.
- Traffic levels on motorways and major non built-up roads in the third quarter of 2002 were both about three per cent higher than the levels in the same quarter of 2001. Minor road traffic levels were four per cent higher than in the third quarter of 2001, mainly because traffic levels on these roads were particularly reduced by the impact of foot and mouth disease in this quarter of 2001.

**Chart 3: Percentage change in road traffic and road length for all motor vehicles: 1993 to 2001**



**Table 3: Road traffic in Great Britain by road class: Index numbers**

		Seasonally adjusted index numbers (1993=100)					
		Motorway	Major Non Built-up	Minor Non Built-up	Major Built-up	Minor Built-up	All roads
<b>Weights (1993)</b>		<b>63.9</b>	<b>118.1</b>	<b>45.5</b>	<b>78.0</b>	<b>106.8</b>	<b>412.2</b>
(billion vehicle kms)							
1988		85.3	87.4	106.3	95.7	89.0	91.1
1996		115.4	106.5	101.6	103.9	108.4	107.3
1997		122.0	109.1	106.3	102.2	110.3	109.8
1998		127.3	111.6	106.6	102.0	110.6	111.4
1999		130.9	114.2	106.4	102.3	112.8	113.3
2000	*	131.9	114.1	106.2	102.2	113.9	113.7
2001		133.6	115.3	106.4	104.1	115.8	115.1
Seasonally adjusted index numbers (average quarter 1993=100)							
1998	Q1	127.2	111.5	106.9	101.8	110.4	111.3
	Q2	126.2	109.8	107.5	101.5	111.2	110.9
	Q3	126.5	110.7	106.5	101.1	110.2	110.7
	Q4	129.2	114.3	105.6	103.8	110.7	112.7
1999	Q1	129.0	113.6	106.6	104.2	112.1	113.0
	Q2	130.3	114.4	106.3	102.3	111.8	113.0
	Q3	132.3	113.9	106.3	100.9	113.5	113.3
	Q4	132.0	114.8	106.8	101.8	113.7	113.8
2000	Q1	132.9	115.0	106.4	102.9	114.1	114.3
	Q2	132.0	114.6	106.5	102.2	113.9	113.9
	Q3 *	131.7	112.0	106.1	100.5	112.9	112.4
	Q4	132.4	114.9	104.0	101.9	113.6	113.6
2001	Q1	132.6	114.3	102.8	103.8	114.5	113.9
	Q2	131.9	114.0	104.3	103.7	115.0	114.0
	Q3	135.2	114.3	109.7	102.6	115.2	115.1
	Q4	135.9	118.4	106.8	104.6	117.3	116.9
2002	Q1 P	135.0	117.8	108.4	104.7	118.9	117.3
	Q2 P	133.8	116.4	108.0	104.6	118.5	116.5
	Q3 P	138.9	118.3	113.8	102.6	119.8	118.4
Percentage change on previous year							
1997		6	2	5	-2	2	2.3
1998		4	2	0	0	0	1.5
1999		3	2	0	0	2	1.7
2000	*	1	0	0	0	1	0.3
2001		1	1	0	2	2	1.3
1999	Q1	1	2	0	2	1	2
	Q2	3	4	-1	1	1	2
	Q3	5	3	0	0	3	2
	Q4	2	0	1	-2	3	1
2000	Q1	3	1	0	-1	2	1
	Q2	1	0	0	0	2	1
	Q3 *	0	-2	0	0	0	-1
	Q4	0	0	-3	0	0	0
2001	Q1	0	-1	-3	1	0	0
	Q2	0	-1	-2	2	1	0
	Q3 *	3	2	3	2	2	2
	Q4	3	3	3	3	3	3
2002	Q1 P	2	3	5	1	4	3
	Q2 P	1	2	4	1	3	2
	Q3 P	3	3	4	0	4	3
Memo item							
% rise in road length							
'93 to '01		7	0	-5	3	12	3

\* Figure affected by September 2000 fuel protest

- Car traffic on minor non built-up roads was four per cent higher in the third quarter of 2002, compared to the same quarter of 2001, reflecting the recovery from the effects of the foot and mouth disease outbreak on traffic in 2001. Goods vehicle traffic on the same roads were unchanged over the same period.

**Table 4: Car and goods vehicle traffic by road class: Index numbers**

		Seasonally adjusted index numbers (1993=100)											
		Cars					Goods vehicles <sup>1</sup>						
		Motor- way	Major Non Built- up	Minor Non Built- up	Major Built-up	Minor Built-up	All roads	Motor- way	Major Non Built- up	Minor Non Built- up	Major Built-up	Minor Built-up	All roads
<b>Weights (1993)</b>		<b>49.2</b>	<b>95.2</b>	<b>37.9</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>91.1</b>	<b>338.5</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>23.8</b>
(billion vehicle kms)													
	1988	83.5	87.0	103.8	94.1	88.7	90.2	97.1	93.5	131.0	111.2	96.1	99.8
	1996	114.7	106.1	101.1	103.9	108.6	107.0	119.2	106.5	88.0	105.2	106.2	109.1
	1997	121.3	108.9	106.1	102.3	110.5	109.6	126.2	107.5	99.0	102.2	122.0	113.8
	1998	127.1	111.3	106.0	102.0	110.4	111.0	127.4	108.8	96.9	98.1	104.4	112.2
	1999	128.7	113.0	106.2	102.0	112.5	112.3	140.5	114.6	91.9	96.5	103.5	117.9
	2000 *	128.8	112.7	105.6	101.9	113.5	112.4	144.5	116.9	93.8	95.2	102.1	119.9
	2001	130.7	113.8	106.0	103.8	115.2	113.8	144.3	117.3	90.1	95.0	101.8	119.7
Seasonally adjusted index numbers (average quarter 1993=100)													
	1998 Q1	127.3	111.4	106.4	101.9	110.6	111.1	126.1	110.4	101.2	100.0	103.5	112.8
	Q2	126.5	109.5	107.0	101.3	111.1	110.6	124.0	107.7	96.5	98.6	105.1	110.8
	Q3	126.3	110.3	105.8	100.8	109.7	110.1	127.1	106.8	96.5	97.3	105.1	111.3
	Q4	128.6	113.8	104.9	103.8	110.0	112.0	131.8	110.8	94.1	97.3	103.5	114.0
	1999 Q1	127.4	112.7	106.4	104.0	111.8	112.2	139.6	115.3	87.1	100.0	103.5	118.0
	Q2	128.2	113.2	105.8	102.0	111.4	111.9	138.0	115.3	94.1	97.3	101.8	117.5
	Q3	130.2	112.7	105.6	100.5	113.2	112.2	140.6	112.6	96.5	94.6	103.5	117.3
	Q4	129.1	113.3	107.1	101.4	113.5	112.7	143.8	116.2	91.8	94.6	101.8	119.2
	2000 Q1	130.0	113.4	106.7	102.5	113.9	113.1	144.3	117.5	89.4	98.6	103.5	120.4
	Q2	129.4	113.0	106.3	101.9	113.7	112.7	142.2	117.5	96.5	96.0	103.5	119.8
	Q3 *	127.6	110.7	104.6	99.8	112.2	110.8	145.1	113.8	98.2	92.7	101.4	118.9
	Q4	129.6	113.7	104.0	101.9	113.4	112.6	145.7	117.3	91.8	93.6	99.6	119.9
	2001 Q1	129.9	113.0	103.2	103.6	114.3	112.9	142.9	116.4	83.0	97.6	102.4	118.8
	Q2	129.0	111.8	104.2	103.5	114.9	112.7	141.7	116.3	91.1	96.0	102.4	118.7
	Q3	132.2	113.4	108.9	102.2	114.3	113.7	144.1	114.6	94.8	92.7	101.4	118.6
	Q4	132.7	116.8	106.5	104.4	116.7	115.5	147.6	120.5	91.8	93.6	100.7	121.8
	2002 Q1 P	131.5	116.7	108.8	104.4	118.7	116.1	147.1	118.2	87.3	98.6	104.6	121.5
	Q2 P	130.1	113.8	108.0	104.4	118.2	114.9	143.8	119.4	91.1	96.9	103.5	120.8
	Q3 P	135.3	117.3	113.3	101.9	118.9	116.9	148.5	117.0	94.8	92.7	103.5	121.2
Percentage change on previous year													
	1997	6	3	5	-2	2	2	6	1	13	-3	15	4
	1998	5	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	-2	-4	-14	-1
	1999	1	2	0	0	2	1	10	5	-5	-2	-1	5
	2000 *	0	0	-1	0	1	0	3	2	2	-1	-1	2
	2001	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	-4	0	0	0
	1999 Q1	0	1	0	2	1	1	11	4	-14	0	0	5
	Q2	1	3	-1	1	0	1	11	7	-2	-1	-3	6
	Q3	3	2	0	0	3	2	11	5	0	-3	-2	5
	Q4	0	0	2	-2	3	1	9	5	-3	-3	-2	5
	2000 Q1	2	1	0	-1	2	1	3	2	3	-1	0	2
	Q2	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	2	-1	2	2
	Q3 *	-2	-2	-1	-1	-1	-1	3	1	2	-2	-2	1
	Q4	0	0	-3	0	0	0	1	1	0	-1	-2	1
	2001 Q1	0	0	-3	1	0	0	-1	-1	-7	-1	-1	-1
	Q2	0	-1	-2	1	1	0	0	-1	-6	0	-1	-1
	Q3 *	4	2	4	2	2	3	-1	1	-3	0	0	0
	Q4	2	3	2	2	3	3	1	3	0	0	1	2
	2002 Q1 P	1	3	5	1	4	3	3	2	5	1	2	2
	Q2 P	1	2	4	1	3	2	1	3	0	1	1	2
	Q3 P	2	3	4	0	4	3	3	2	0	0	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Reliability of estimates of goods vehicles is ±4 for all roads and even larger for separate road classes

\* Figure affected by September 2000 fuel protest

## ANNEX

### Precision of estimates of percentage change

The numerical results in all the tables in this bulletin depend on data from the Core Census, a sample census of traffic counts at approximately 130 fixed sites randomly selected from the road network. All core sites are automatically operated, with counters providing classified traffic data on a continuous basis.

Traffic estimates published in this Bulletin, together with percentage changes, are therefore subject to a random sampling error. A measure of the precision of the estimates is given by the 95% confidence intervals attached to each estimate; approximate values applicable to percentage changes are shown in the table below. For example, an estimated change of 5% in all motor vehicle traffic on motorways between one quarter and the same quarter of the following year has a 95% confidence interval of  $\pm 2\%$ . This means that the actual change probably lies between 3% and 7%; there is only about a 1 in 20 chance that, due to random sampling error, the true value lies outside this range.

### Estimated 95% confidence intervals for percentage changes in road traffic compared with the same period of previous year

	Quarterly	Annual
All motor vehicles	$\pm 2\%$	$\pm 1.5\%$
Cars	$\pm 2\%$	$\pm 1.5\%$
Light vans	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 1.5\%$
Goods Vehicles	$\pm 4\%$	$\pm 2\%$
Motorways	$\pm 2\%$	$\pm 2\%$
Major roads	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 2.5\%$
Minor roads	$\pm 3\%$	$\pm 2\%$

These estimates are based on final traffic data for 1988 and 1989. They may be subject to slight variation from year to year.

Estimates of actual traffic levels are also subject to statistical error.

## Scottish Executive

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Transport Statistics Branch, Area 3-G13, Victoria  
Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

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### Northern Ireland Transport Statistics

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### Transport Statistics Users Group

The Transport Statistics Users Group (TSUG) was set up in 1985 as a result of an initiative by the Statistics Users Council and the Chartered Institute of Transport (now known as The Institute of Logistics and Transport). From its inception it has had strong links with the Department for Transport. The aims of the Group are:

- to identify problems in the collection, provision, use and understanding of transport statistics, and to discuss solutions with the responsible authorities;
- to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information between users and providers of transport statistics;
- to encourage the proper use of statistics through publicity and education.

The Group holds regular seminars on topical subjects connected with the provision and/or use of transport statistics. Recent seminars have included:

- Transport Statistics on the internet
- Aviation Statistics
- Parking Statistics
- Transport and social exclusion
- National Travel Survey User Consultation
- Transport Information Needs of the North of England
- How did you get to the Millennium Dome?

A newsletter is sent to all members about four times a year. Corporate membership of the Group is £50, personal membership £22.50, and student membership £10. For further details please contact:

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The TSUG has contributed to the production of the *Transport Year Book 2001*. This contains information on sources from Governmental and non-governmental organisations, including some European sources. One copy is supplied free to TSUG members. Non-members can purchase a copy from The Stationery Office (TSO) for £40.

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See also the Transport Statistics web site at: -

<http://www.transtat.dft.gov.uk/>

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**NOTE:** Prior to 1997, many of the Transport Statistic's Bulletins were published as HMSO publications. Enquiries about back issues, or transport publications in general, should be made to TSF5, Zone 17, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR. Great Britain. ☎ +44 (0)20 7944 3098.

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