



Introduction

To all intents and purposes cars *are* public transport: they carry most members of the public, most of the time. 90% of all passenger miles travelled in Great Britain are on the roads. Just 9% are on the railways and around 1% in the air. The vast majority of road mileage is completed by car, van or taxi – 83% of the overall total.

That's why almost all of Britain's 35 million drivers are concerned about the cost of filling up. What follows is intended to help shine a light on both fuel prices and the nation's reliance on car travel.

Source: DfT Transport Statistics GB
[TSGB0101](#), [TSGB0915](#)

Breakdown of the pump price

As of 30 September 2013 the petrol price was 133.4p a litre (diesel was 140.2p).

Of this:

- 22.23p of the total price is VAT (16.7%)
- 57.95p of the total price is fuel duty (43.4%)
- 53.22p of the total price covers the costs of oil, fuel production and supply, and profit margin (39.9%)

Therefore, 60.1% of the pump price of petrol goes to the Chancellor.

The rate of duty was last changed in March 2011 when it was reduced by 1p to 57.95p. The duty rate is the same for both petrol and diesel.

The rate of duty last went up on 1 January 2011; from 58.19p to 58.95p.

Source: [DECC](#)





Fuel price highs

Petrol hit a record high of 142.17p a litre on 16 April 2012.

Diesel hit a record high of 148.04p a litre on the same day.

Source: [DECC](#)

UK vs EU fuel prices

As of 7 October 2013 the UK had the 11th highest petrol price in the 28-member EU. Italy, The Netherlands, Greece, Portugal, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Belgium, Ireland and Sweden all had higher pump prices.

As of the same date the UK had the second highest diesel price in Europe, after Italy.

Source: [Europe's Energy Portal](#)

Oil price

On 7 October 2013 a barrel of Brent crude oil cost \$108.26.

On 8 February 2013 a barrel of Brent crude oil hit a 12-month high of \$119.17.

On 11 July 2008 a barrel of Brent crude oil hit an all-time high of \$148.

Source: [Financial Times](#)

Number of drivers

There are 35.8 million licensed drivers in Great Britain (73% of all people aged 17 or over) up from 31.4 million in 2000.

There are 19.2 million male drivers and 16.7 million female drivers.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0201](#)

Number of registered vehicles

There are 34.6 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain including:

- 28.8 million cars (of which 5,648 are electric)
- 3.3 million vans
- 458,000 lorries

Source: DfT Statistics [VEH0101](#), [VEH0103](#), [VEH0130](#)

Vehicles per household

31% of households have two or more cars or vans.

44% of households have one car or van.

25% of households have no car or van.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0205](#)



Keeping the Nation Moving

Facts on fuels, cars and drivers



Low-income households

In those households in the lowest income quintile (fifth) 48% have no car.

Each person in households in the lowest income quintile makes an average of 402 trips per year by car as a driver or passenger compared with 15 trips by rail and Tube.

On average each person in these households travels 2,716 miles by car compared to 333 miles by rail and Tube.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0703](#), [NTS0705](#)

Number of journeys by car

Of all the trips made in Great Britain:

- 64% are as a car driver or passenger (main mode)
- 6% are by bus
- 22% are on foot
- 3% are by rail and Tube

78% of distance travelled by all modes, including walking, is as a car driver or passenger.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0301](#), [NTS0302](#)

Average vehicle mileage

The average petrol car travels 6,900 miles per year.

The average diesel car travels 11,200 miles per year.

On average, a car covers 2,600 miles a year on commuter journeys and 900 miles on business.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0901](#), [NTS0902](#)

Journey purpose

Of those journeys where a car or a van is the main mode of travel:

- 29% are for leisure
- 20% are for business or commuting
- 20% are for shopping
- 12% are driving someone else
- 10% are on personal business
- 9% are for taking children to school or accessing education

Note: Due to rounding the percentages above may not add up to 100%.

67% of commuting/business trips are by car (as main mode). By comparison 8% of journeys to work are by rail or Tube and 11% are on foot.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS0409](#)





Family Budget

UK households spent an average of £483.60 a week in 2011. This was up from £473.60 a week in 2010.

Household spending was highest in the transport category, at £65.70 a week. According to the Office for National Statistics, this includes £19.10 on the purchase of vehicles, £36.40 on the operation of personal transport (such as petrol, diesel, repairs and servicing) and £10.20 on transport services (such as rail, tube and bus fares).

Transport is 14% of the average weekly spend across all households (car owning or not, with vehicle insurance included, it is £75.10 or 15% of the total).

Source: [ONS Family Spending](#)

Rural vs urban car travel

87% of rural dwellers (aged 17 or over) are licence holders – compared to 61% for London, and 64% to Metropolitan built-up areas.

91% of rural households have at least one car – compared to 55% in London, 67% in other metropolitan areas and the GB average of 75%.

The average rural dweller (all ages, driver or not) does 8,499 miles per year as a car driver or passenger, compared to the GB average of 5,303 miles.

Source: DfT National Travel Survey [NTS9901](#), [NTS9902](#), [NTS9904](#)



The Royal Automobile Club Foundation for Motoring is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users. The Foundation publishes independent and authoritative research with which it promotes informed debate and advocates policy in the interest of the responsible motorist.

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