

# Van Activity Baseline Survey 2008: Provisional Results

## Introduction

1. This Statistical Release reports on a Department for Transport Baseline Survey of Van Activity for England. Undertaken during November and December 2008, the survey is preliminary research to further understand the composition of the national van fleet, and the factors affecting the growth in this sector. For the purposes of the survey, vans were considered to be those vehicles that can carry goods and have gross vehicle weights of 3.5 tonnes or less. Only those with contact addresses in England, as recorded by the DVLA, were approached to participate in the survey.
2. The Department recognises the substantial growth and diversity of the van sector and that there is a range of purposes which vans are used for. In 2007 there were 3.2 million licensed light goods vehicles (LGVs) registered in Great Britain, which is 9 per cent of total licensed vehicles and account for 13 per cent of total traffic in Great Britain. This traffic has increased by 40 per cent between 1997 and 2007 and has accounted for 31 per cent of all new traffic in that period. The information collected by this survey will increase our knowledge of van activities, vehicle specification and ownership type. It will also support two initiatives that the Department is currently developing, the Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED – [www.safed.org.uk](http://www.safed.org.uk)) and Van Best Practice programmes.
3. Provisional findings from the survey are presented here. A more in-depth final report will be produced later in 2009.
4. A sample of 17,380 licensed light goods vehicles registered at addresses in England was drawn from the DVLA database and the owners of these received a questionnaire in November and December 2008. 15,119 postal questionnaires were issued to owners of vehicles that had less than 10 sampled vehicles at the same address. The remaining 2,261 vehicles were mainly licensed to companies with large fleets registered in one office or hire/lease companies. These companies were contacted separately via telephone or email to try and increase the response rate, and reduce their response burden. The companies that could not be contacted had the questionnaires posted to the registered address of the vehicle.

## Provisional Results

5. The provisional results discussed here are based on a processed set of 6,565 responses, representing 38 per cent of all the questionnaires sent out and should therefore be treated with caution as the activity of non responders may be significantly different to that of those van users who have taken part in the survey.

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Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Note: Base of 6,565 vehicle returns from a survey conducted in November/December 2008

- The survey indicates that 59 per cent of light goods vehicles are owned by businesses, with 28 per cent owned by private individuals. The remaining 12 per cent are vehicles which had been leased or hired. Although 59 per cent of LGVs are owned by businesses, it is estimated that 66 per cent of the average weekly mileage by LGVs is by business-owned vehicles. Hire/lease vehicles account for 18 per cent of the mileage and privately owned LGVs account for 16 per cent (**Table 1**).

**Table 1: Percentage share of weekly mileage and LGV vehicle numbers by ownership status**

Ownership	Share of mileage	Share of LGV numbers
Private	16%	28%
Business	66%	59%
Hire/Lease	18%	12%
Not specified	0%	0%

- 53 per cent of the vehicles were purchased second hand with 46 per cent purchased new. There is a significant difference in the ownership of new and second hand vehicles. 86 per cent of private vehicles were purchased second hand whereas 94 per cent of hire/lease vehicles were purchased new. For business-owned vehicles, the split between new and second hand is fairly even. (**Table 2**).

**Table 2: Percentage of light goods vehicles in fleet by ownership status**

Ownership	New	Second hand	Not specified
Private	13%	86%	0%
Business	51%	48%	0%
Hire/Lease	94%	3%	3%
Not specified	35%	54%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>1%</b>

- In regards to the **primary use** of LGVs, **'the carriage of equipment, tools and/or materials to provide a service'** accounts for 51 per cent of the average weekly mileage and 50 per cent of the vehicles. The **'delivery/collection of goods'** accounts for a further 28 per cent of the mileage but only 21 per cent of the stock. **'Private and domestic non-business'** use is 9 per cent of the mileage but 18 per cent of the stock. **'Providing transport'** represents 3 per cent of both the mileage and the number of LGVs. The remainder did not have a primary use specified (**Table 3**).

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**Table 3: Percentage share of weekly mileage and LGV vehicle numbers by primary use**

Primary Use	Share of mileage	Share of LGV numbers
Delivery / collection of goods	28%	21%
Carriage of equipment	51%	50%
Providing transport	3%	3%
Private and domestic	9%	18%
Not specified	8%	9%

- The business activity that accounts for the most mileage is **'service provider'** which represents 40 per cent of business activity mileage. This activity also accounts for 40 per cent of the LGV stock. **'Goods collection and delivery'** represents 20 per cent of the mileage but only 13 per cent of the stock. **'Other'** business activities account for 17 per cent of the mileage and 18 per cent of the stock, and **'infrastructure maintenance'** for 10 per cent of the mileage and 7 per cent of the stock. The remaining 13 per cent of mileage are by vehicles where either a specified business activity is not given or is not applicable representing 23 per cent of the surveyed vehicles (**Table 4**).

**Table 4: Percentage share of weekly mileage and LGV vehicle numbers by business activity**

Business Activity	Share of mileage	Share of LGV numbers
Infrastructure maintenance	10%	7%
Goods collection and delivery	20%	13%
Service provider	40%	40%
Other	17%	18%
Not specified / Not applicable	13%	23%

- Table 5 provides a cross-tabulation of **primary use** against business activity of the user in terms of numbers of vehicles. One third of LGVs are used by owners whose business activity is **'service provider'** and for the primary use of **'carrying equipment, tools and/or materials'**. This is by far the biggest grouping. 12 per cent of vehicles are owned by people whose business is **'goods collection and delivery'** with the primary activity of **'the delivery and collection of goods'** (**Table 5**).
- **'Panel vans'**, **'car derived vans'** and **'flat bed / pick up / drop side'** vehicles are primarily used for **'the carriage of equipment, tools and/or materials'** (56, 49 and 44 per cent respectively). **'Box / Luton'** and **'insulated / refrigerated'** vans have the primary use of **'the delivery/collection of goods'** (47 and 92 per cent respectively) (**Figure 1**).

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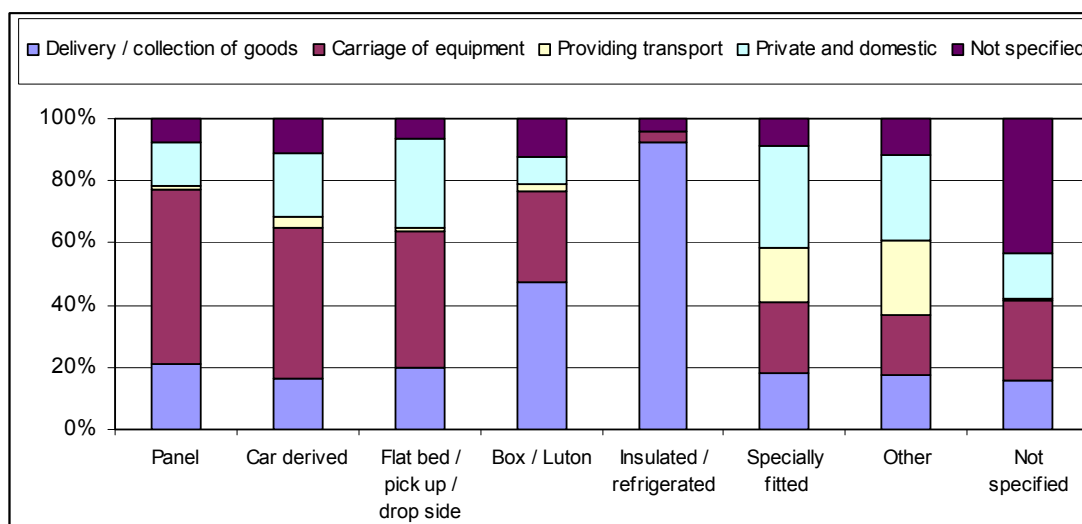
Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding

Note: Base of 6,565 vehicle returns from a survey conducted in November/December 2008

**Table 5: Percentage share of vehicles by primary use and business activity**

Business Activity	Primary use					Total
	Delivery / collection of goods	Carriage of equipment	Providing transport	Private and domestic	Not specified	
Infrastructure maintenance	0%	7%	0%	0%	0%	<b>7%</b>
Goods collection and delivery	12%	1%	0%	0%	0%	<b>13%</b>
Service provider	3%	33%	0%	2%	0%	<b>40%</b>
Other	5%	8%	1%	2%	1%	<b>18%</b>
Not specified / Not applicable	1%	1%	0%	13%	7%	<b>23%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 1: Percentage of light goods vehicles by body type and primary use**



- Owners of 44 per cent of the light goods vehicle fleet have **‘some’** or **‘extensive’** understanding and knowledge of the GB domestic rules on drivers’ hours relating to the operation of vans weighing 3.5 tonnes or below. 24 per cent said their level of knowledge was **‘none’**, and 9 per cent did not specify (**Table 6**).

**Table 6: Understanding and knowledge of drivers’ hours regulations**

None	24%
A little	22%
Some	31%
Extensive	13%
Not specified	9%

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### Further information:

- The results of the Department's previous van surveys can be found at the following links.
  - Survey of Company Owned Vans 2003-2005:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/surveyvan/>
  - Survey of Privately Owned Vans 2002-2003:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/privatevans/>
- Copies of the questionnaire and covering letter are located here:  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/freight/survey/formsnotes/vabs>
- For further information please email [roadfreight.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:roadfreight.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk) or telephone 020 7944 3180.