

Statistical bulletin

UK trade: September 2022

Total value of UK exports and imports of goods and services in current prices, chained volume measures and implied deflators.

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1 . Main points

- Total imports of goods, excluding precious metals, decreased by £2.8 billion (5.0%) in September 2022, with imports from EU countries decreasing by £1.9 billion (7.3%) and imports from non-EU countries falling by £0.9 billion (3.0%).
- The decrease in imports from non-EU countries was primarily driven by a £1.3 billion decrease in fuel imports, linked to falling gas imports from Norway and falling oil prices during September.
- Total exports of goods, excluding precious metals, decreased by £1.6 billion (4.7%) in September 2022, with exports to EU countries falling by £0.9 billion (5.1%) and exports to non-EU countries decreasing by £0.7 billion (4.2%).
- Removing the effect of inflation, total imports of goods, excluding precious metals, decreased by £2.6 billion (6.1%) and total exports of goods, excluding precious metals, decreased by £1.4 billion (4.8%) in September 2022.
- Early estimates suggest total imports of services remained at £19.1 billion in September 2022 and total exports of services also remained flat at £31.6 billion.
- Removing the effect of inflation, total imports and exports of services remained at similar levels to August 2022.
- The total trade in goods and services deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £1.3 billion to £23.7 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, but has remained relatively unchanged over the past three quarters.
- Removing the effect of inflation, the total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £8.1 billion to £8.7 billion in Quarter 3 2022.

Please note that all trade figures exclude non-monetary gold and other precious metals unless otherwise stated. This is because movements in non-monetary gold, an important component of precious metals, can be large and highly volatile, distorting underlying trends in goods exports and imports.

About this bulletin

Unless otherwise specified, data within this bulletin are in current prices and have not been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation. Official estimates of [price inflation](#) have risen strongly in recent months, and chained volume measures data, which we refer to as having the effect of inflation removed, can be found in our [UK trade publication tables](#) and [UK trade time series](#).

The UK leaving the EU and the subsequent transition period, along with the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, supply chain disruption and global recession, have caused higher levels of volatility in trade statistics in recent years. The monthly analysis shows short-term trade movements, but it is important to note that monthly data are erratic and therefore movements should be treated with caution.

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine beginning 24 February 2022, the UK government imposed a range of [economic sanctions on Russia](#), resulting in historic lows of trade with Russia. Our article, [The impact of sanctions on UK trade with Russia](#) discusses the effect of the sanctions applied on UK trade in goods.

2 . Changes affecting UK trade statistics

In January 2022, [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\) implemented a data collection change](#) affecting data on imports from the EU to Great Britain (GB). This followed a similar data collection change in January 2021 for data on exports of goods to the EU from GB.

Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail on the discontinuity found between the two compilation methods.

We are considering options to account for this discontinuity and plan to update users in December 2022. We advise caution when interpreting monthly trade statistics that span the periods when data collection changes were made.

In 2021, the use of Staged Customs Controls (SCC) allowed customs declarations to be reported up to 175 days after the date of import for imports of non-controlled goods from the EU to GB. [Full customs controls were introduced in January 2022](#), as such July 2022 marked the first full month of data where delayed customs declarations submitted under SCC could not be included. However, it is too early to determine the effect of SCC on import data in 2022.

We will keep users informed of any further changes in data collection.

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

3 . Monthly trade in goods

Total imports of goods decreased by £2.8 billion (5.0%) in September 2022, because of falling imports from both EU and non-EU countries. Total exports of goods decreased by £1.6 billion (4.7%) in September 2022, because of decreasing exports to both EU and non-EU countries (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Imports from non-EU countries were £5.3 billion higher than from EU countries in September 2022; this is linked to the large increases in the [value of fuel imports in the last months of 2021](#) and throughout 2022. Conversely, exports to EU countries were £0.7 billion higher than exports to non-EU countries in September 2022.

Table 1: Total imports and exports of goods both decreased in September 2022
Changes in the monthly UK trade in goods balances, excluding precious metals, imports and exports, EU and non-EU

		Exports	Imports	Balance
	Value (£bn)	32.8	53.2	-20.4
Total trade in goods: September 2022 vs August 2022	Change (£bn)	-1.6	-2.8	1.2
	% Change	-4.7	-5.0	
	Value (£bn)	16.8	23.9	-7.2
EU: September 2022 vs August 2022	Change (£bn)	-0.9	-1.9	1.0
	% Change	-5.1	-7.3	
	Value (£bn)	16.0	29.2	-13.2
Non-EU: September 2022 vs August 2022	Change (£bn)	-0.7	-0.9	0.2
	% Change	-4.2	-3.0	

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

Figure 1: Imports and exports of goods from both EU and non-EU countries have decreased in September 2022

EU and non-EU goods imports and exports, excluding precious metals, September 2019 to September 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as HM Revenue and Customs changed the collection methods for EU trade in January 2021 and January 2022. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

The value of goods imports from non-EU countries has been particularly affected by recent increases in [price inflation](#) (Figure 2). When removing the effect of inflation, total imports of goods decreased by £2.6 billion (6.1%). This decrease was driven by imports from EU countries, which decreased by £2.0 billion (8.8%), while imports from non-EU countries decreased by £0.6 billion (3.1%).

When removing the effect of inflation, total exports of goods decreased by £1.4 billion (4.8%) in September 2022. Exports to EU countries decreased by £0.9 billion (6.1%) and exports to non-EU countries decreased by £0.5 billion (3.5%).

Figure 2: Imports of goods from non-EU countries have been particularly affected by rising prices in recent months

Imports and exports of goods, excluding precious metals, current prices and chained volume measures, EU and non-EU, September 2019 to September 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as HM Revenue and Customs changed the collection methods for EU trade in January 2021 and January 2022. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail.

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4 . Monthly commodity analysis

Imports

Imports from the EU decreased in September 2022 across most commodities, with the largest decreases being a £0.7 billion fall in imports of chemicals and a £0.3 billion decrease in fuel imports (Figure 3). The decrease in chemical imports from the EU was because of reduced organic chemical imports from Ireland, as well as a fall in medicinal and pharmaceutical products from Germany and the Netherlands.

Imports of fuels from non-EU countries decreased by £1.3 billion, reducing in September 2022 after peaking in August. This decrease was partially offset by a £0.2 billion increase in imports of machinery and transport equipment from non-EU countries in September 2022, driven by ships and aircraft from China and South Korea.

Figure 3: Imports of goods from non-EU countries decreased in September 2022, with fuels falling after peaking in August

EU and non-EU goods imports by commodity, September 2020 to September 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as HM Revenue and Customs changed the collection methods for EU imports from January 2022. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail.

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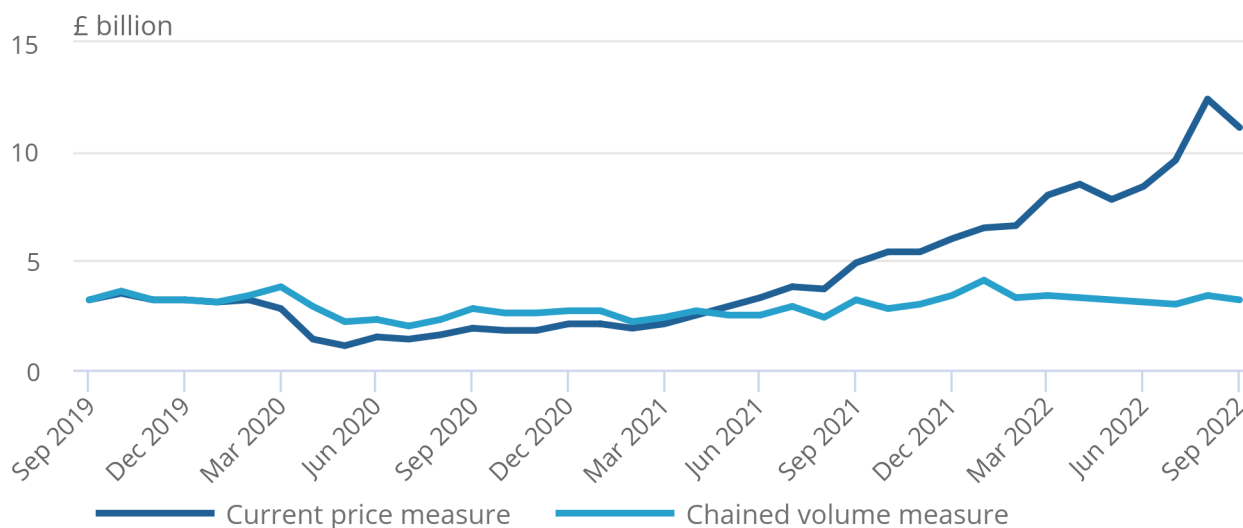
Although the total value of fuel imported from non-EU countries decreased substantially in September 2022, the value of imports decreased by only a relatively small amount after removing the effect of inflation (Figure 4). This fall in value has been driven by [falling oil prices](#) in the month of September, as well a reduction in the amount of gas imports from Norway.

Figure 4: Fuel imports decreased in September 2022 but continue to reflect high and volatile fuel prices

Non-EU fuel imports, current prices and chained volume measures, September 2019 to September 2022

Figure 4: Fuel imports decreased in September 2022 but continue to reflect high and volatile fuel prices

Non-EU fuel imports, current prices and chained volume measures, September 2019 to September 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, seasonally adjusted

Exports

The decrease in exports to the EU was driven by a £0.4 billion decrease in exports of machinery and transport equipment and a £0.3 billion fall in fuel exports (Figure 5). Decreased exports of mechanical machinery to Germany was the main contributor to reduced machinery and transport equipment exports.

The fall in exports to non-EU countries was driven by a £0.7 billion decrease in exports of machinery and transport equipment and a £0.6 billion fall in fuel exports. The fall in machinery and transport equipment was driven by reduced ship and aircraft exports to Qatar and Switzerland and mechanical machinery to the US. These decreases were partially offset by a £0.5 billion increase in exports of material manufactures, led by increased exports of non-ferrous metals to the US, India and Hong Kong.

Figure 5: Exports of goods decreased in September 2022, driven by decreasing exports of machinery and transport equipment and fuels

EU and non-EU goods exports by commodity, September 2020 to September 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as HM Revenue and Customs changed the collection methods for EU exports from January 2021. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail.

Download the data

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5 . Monthly trade in services

Early estimates suggest total imports of services remained at £19.1 billion in September 2022 and total exports of services also remained flat at £31.6 billion (Figure 6). This release includes data for Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 for the first time, which is used to estimate monthly trade values for July, August and September, replacing our previous estimates for those months.

As is the case with trade in goods, imports and exports of services have been affected by rising prices in recent months. When removing the effect of inflation, total imports and exports of services remained at a similar level to August 2022.

Figure 6: Both imports and exports of services remained flat in September 2022

Imports and exports of services, current prices and chained volume measures, September 2019 to September 2022

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

[The Bank of England agents' summary of business conditions for Quarter 3 \(July to Sept\) 2022](#) reported a modest slowdown in business activity, with squeezed household incomes weighing on demand for consumer services, but demand for business services and financial services remained strong. Similarly, [IHS Markit's purchasing manager's index for September](#) reported that service sector activity declined, with hospitality focused service providers being the hardest hit.

6 . Quarterly trade in goods and services

Total imports of goods increased by £3.3 billion (2.0%) in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022 (Table 2). Imports from non-EU countries increased during this time, while imports from EU countries decreased. Exports of goods over the same period increased by £3.3 billion (3.4%) because of increasing exports to both EU and non-EU countries.

Total imports of services increased by £1.8 billion (3.3%) in Quarter 3 2022 compared with Quarter 2 2022, and exports of services over the same period increased by £3.0 billion (3.3%).

Table 2: Total imports and exports of both goods and services increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022
Changes in quarterly UK trade balances, excluding precious metals, imports and exports, EU and non-EU

		Exports	Imports	Balance
	Value (£bn)	101.3	162.3	-61.0
Total trade in goods:				
Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022	Change (£bn)	3.3	3.3	0.1
vs Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022	% Change	3.4	2.0	
	Value (£bn)	52.4	76.2	-23.8
Trade in goods, EU:				
Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022	Change (£bn)	2.8	-4.2	7.0
vs Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022	% Change	5.7	-5.2	
	Value (£bn)	48.8	86.0	-37.2
Trade in goods, non-EU:				
Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022	Change (£bn)	0.5	7.4	-6.9
vs Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022	% Change	1.0	9.4	
	Value (£bn)	94.7	57.4	37.3
Total trade in services:				
Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022	Change (£bn)	3.0	1.8	1.2
vs Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022	% Change	3.3	3.3	

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

7 . Quarterly trade in goods commodity analysis

Decreases in imports of several commodities from the EU occurred in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, with imports of machinery and transport equipment decreasing by £1.7 billion and chemical imports falling by £1.4 billion (Figure 7).

Increasing imports from non-EU countries in Quarter 3 2022 were driven by a £8.3 billion increase in fuel imports, [which is linked to the increasing price of oil during this period](#). Imports of machinery and transport equipment also increased by £1.6 billion in Quarter 3 2022.

Exports to EU countries increased, driven by a £2.0 billion rise in exports of fuels and a £0.6 billion increase in machinery and transport equipment.

The increase in exports to non-EU countries in Quarter 3 2022 was driven by a £2.0 billion increase in machinery and transport equipment. This was partially offset by a £0.9 billion decrease in fuel exports and £0.4 billion decreases in exports of miscellaneous manufactures and chemicals.

Figure 7: Imports of fuels from non-EU countries increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022

Changes in imports and exports by goods commodity group, excluding unspecified goods, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022

8 . Quarterly trade in services account type analysis

The largest increase in service imports in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022 was a £0.6 billion increase in insurance and pension services. Other large increases were seen in travel services and other business services, which increased by £0.4 billion and £0.3 billion respectively (Figure 8).

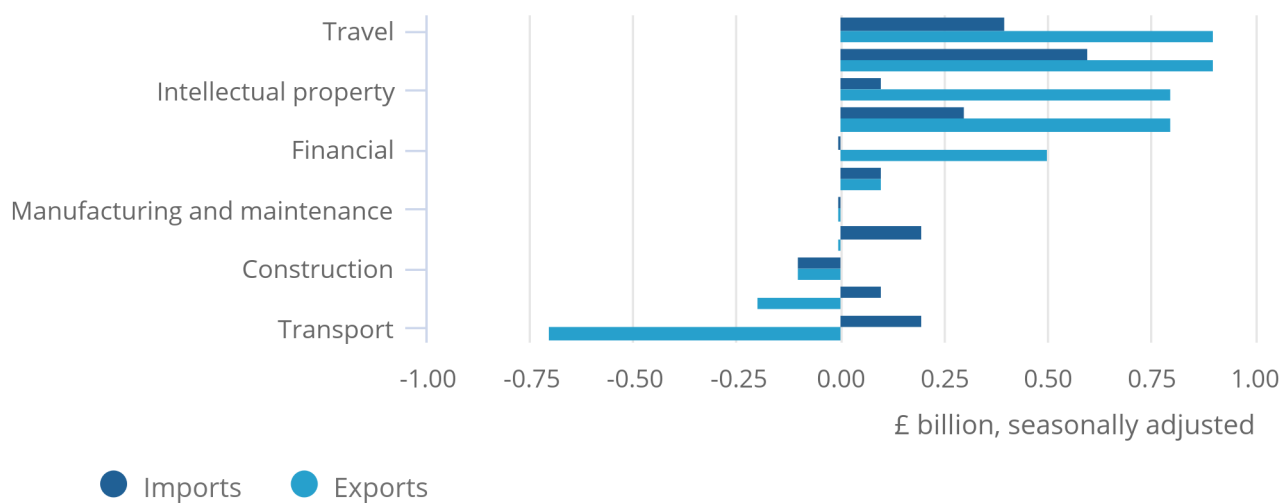
Exports of travel services and insurance and pension services both increased by £0.9 billion in Quarter 3 2022, while intellectual property services and other business services both increased by £0.8 billion. Conversely, exports of transport services decreased by £0.7 billion over the same period.

Figure 8: Imports and exports of travel services and insurance and pension services increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022

Changes in imports and exports by services account type, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022

Figure 8: Imports and exports of travel services and insurance and pension services increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022

Changes in imports and exports by services account type, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 compared with Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

9 . Quarterly total trade balances

The total trade in goods and services deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £1.3 billion to £23.7 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022, but has remained relatively unchanged over the past three quarters (Figure 9). This narrowing has been driven by increasing exports of goods, with imports of goods increasing by a lesser amount.

The trade in goods deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £0.1 billion to £61.0 billion in Quarter 3 2022, while early estimates suggest the trade in services surplus widened by £1.2 billion to £37.3 billion.

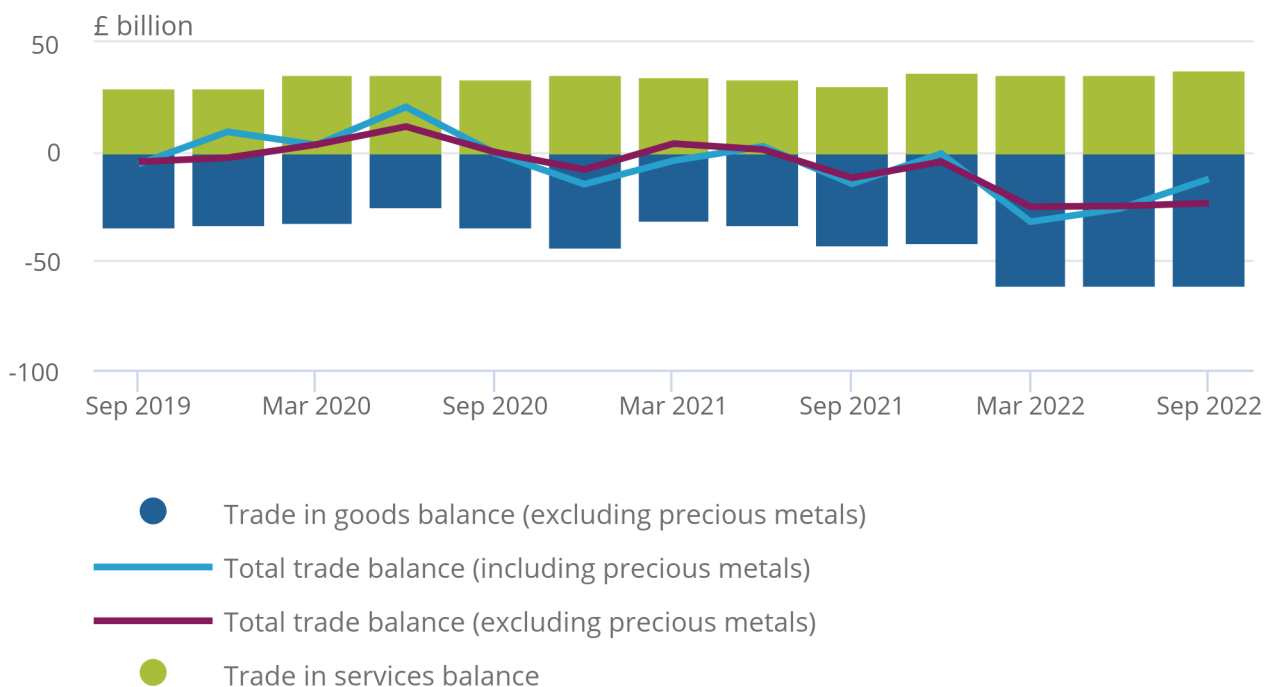
Removing the effect of inflation, the total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £8.1 billion to £8.7 billion in Quarter 3 2022.

Figure 9: The total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, has remained relatively unchanged over the past three quarters

UK trade balances, three-month periods, September 2019 to September 2022

Figure 9: The total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, has remained relatively unchanged over the past three quarters

UK trade balances, three-month periods, September 2019 to September 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as HM Revenue and Customs changed the collection methods for EU trade in January 2021 and January 2022. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail.

10 . Explore UK trade in goods country-by-commodity data for 2021

Explore the 2021 trade in goods data using our interactive tools. Our data break down UK trade in goods with 234 countries by 125 commodities.

Use our map to get a better understanding of what goods the UK traded with a country. Select a country by hovering over it or using the drop-down menu.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Notes:

1. For more information about our methods and how we compile these statistics, please see [Trade in goods, country-by-commodity experimental data: 2011 to 2016](#). Users should note that the data published alongside this release are official statistics and no longer experimental.
2. These data are our best estimate of these bilateral UK trade flows. Users should note that alternative estimates are available, in some cases, through the statistical agencies for bilateral countries or through central databases such as [UN Comtrade](#).
3. This interactive map denotes country boundaries in accordance with statistical classifications set out within Appendix 4 of the [Balance of Payments \(BoP\) Vademecum \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#) and do not represent the UK policy on disputed territories.

You can also explore the 2021 trade in goods data by commodity, such as car exports to the EU and UK tea or coffee imports.

Select a commodity from the drop-down menu or click through the levels to explore the data.

Download the data

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11 . Revisions

In accordance with the [National Accounts Revisions Policy](#), the data in this release have been revised from July 2022 to August 2022 for both goods and services.

12 . UK trade data

[UK trade: goods and services publication tables](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Monthly data on the UK's trade in goods and services, including trade inside and outside the EU.

[UK trade time series](#)

Dataset MRET | Released 11 November 2022

Monthly value of UK exports and imports of goods and services by current price, chained volume measures (CVMs) and implied deflators (IDEFs).

[UK trade in goods by classification of product by activity time series](#)

Dataset | Released 15 September 2022

Quarterly and annual time series of the value of UK imports and exports of goods grouped by product. Goods are attributed to the activity of which they are the principal products.

[Customise my dataset: country by commodity](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Customisable version of country by commodity data on the UK's trade in goods, including trade by all countries and selected commodities, exports and imports, non-seasonally adjusted.

[Other related trade data](#)

Dataset web page | Released 11 November 2022

Other UK trade data related to this publication. These include trade in goods for all countries with the UK, monthly export and import country-by-commodity trade in goods data, and revisions triangles for monthly trade data.

13 . Glossary

Chained volume measures (CVMs)

CVM estimates are a "real" measure in that they have had the effect of inflation removed to measure the change in volume between consecutive periods, fixing the prices of goods and services in one period (the base year).

Current price measures (CPs)

These estimates measure the actual price paid for goods or services and are not adjusted for inflation. Unless otherwise stated, all current price data are provided in £ million and are seasonally adjusted.

Inflation

Inflation is the change in the average price level of goods and services over a period of time.

Implied deflators (IDEFs)

An IDEF shows the implied change in average prices for the respective components of the trade balance, for example, the IDEF for imports will show the average price movement for imports.

Precious metals and non-monetary gold

Precious metals include precious metals, silver, platinum and palladium, and it forms part of the commodity group “unspecified goods”. Non-monetary gold comprises the majority of this group and is the technical term for gold bullion not owned by central banks.

Trade balance

The trade balance is the difference between exports and imports or exports minus imports. When the value of exports is greater than the value of imports, the trade balance is in surplus. When the value of imports is greater than the value of exports, the trade balance is in deficit. The balance is sometimes referred to as “net exports”.

A full [Glossary of economic terms](#) is available.

14 . Measuring the data

Coronavirus (COVID-19) data impact

Because of the challenges of data collection during the coronavirus pandemic, we have experienced challenges around the level of survey and data returns for this trade release.

Data sources

Data from the quarterly International Trade in Services (ITIS) Survey make up over 50% of trade in services data. View our [UK trade QMI](#) for more detail.

Data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) are the main source for travel services, historically making up around 8% of total imports. Following suspension of the survey in 2020 the survey has now largely resumed, with a very small number of ports yet to have resumed interviewing. IPS data are being used with a small adjustment to account for the reduction in sample size, and we continue to quality assure our estimates using complimentary data sources. However, we advise continued caution when using these data until the IPS is fully operational. View our [UK trade QMI](#) for more detail.

Data from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) make up over 90% of trade in goods value and are the main source. We worked closely with HMRC to prepare for the change in collection of customs data, which occurred at the end of the EU exit transition period. View further information in our article [Impact of EU exit on the collection and compilation of UK trade statistics](#).

In line with international standards, our headline trade statistics contain the UK's exports and imports of non-monetary gold. View more information about [the ONS's recording of non-monetary gold](#). Unless otherwise specified, data within this bulletin are in current prices. This means they have not been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation.

Method

Trade is measured through both exports and imports of goods and services. Data are supplied by over 30 sources including several administrative sources, with HMRC being the largest for trade in goods.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK trade figures are produced on a country of dispatch basis, which records imports as coming from the country dispatching the shipments. However, trade figures can also be produced on a country of origin basis as is used by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Users should be aware of the different accounting methods used, and the resulting differences across trade figures.

Monthly trade in services data are taken from quarterly trade in services data and split across the months within that quarter through estimation. In months where we have a full quarter's data, we revise previous estimates of monthly values within that quarter.

View more detailed information about the methods used to produce UK trade statistics in our [UK trade methodology](#).

15 . Strengths and limitations

National Statistics designation status

The [UK Statistics Authority suspended the National Statistics designation of UK trade \(PDF, 72.9KB\)](#) on 14 November 2014. We have now responded to all of the specific requirements of the [reassessment of UK trade](#) and, as part of our engagement with the Office for Statistics Regulation team, we are sharing our continuous improvement and development plans to support UK trade statistics regaining [National Statistics status](#). We welcome feedback on our new trade statistics, developments and future plans by email to trade@ons.gov.uk.

Trade asymmetries

Asymmetries can be caused by a range of conceptual and measurement variations between the estimation practices of different countries. Statistical agencies are likely to have different source data, estimation methods, and methodological, geographical and definitional differences. More [information on trade in goods asymmetries](#) is published by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), while [analysis on trade in services asymmetries](#) is published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [UK trade QMI](#).

16 . Related links

[Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#)

Article | Released 3 October 2022

Interpretation of the latest HM Revenue and Customs data collection changes resulting from EU exit and the impact on UK trade statistics.

[Focus on UK trade](#)

Article series | Latest release 24 August 2022

A series of articles taking a closer look at emerging themes in UK trade statistics.

[The impact of sanctions on UK trade with Russia: June 2022](#)

Article | Released 24 August 2022

An analysis of the impact of economic sanctions of UK trade in goods with Russia.

[Trends in UK imports and exports of fuels](#)

Article | Released 29 June 2022

An article examining recent trends in UK imports and exports of fuels.

[The impacts of EU exit and coronavirus \(COVID-19\) on UK trade in services: November 2021](#)

Article | Released 22 November 2021

An analysis of UK trade in services in the context of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the end of the EU transition period on 31 December 2020.

[Understanding the latest changes to UK trade figures with the EU](#)

Blog | Released 11 March 2022

A blog explaining the changes to the way trade in goods data are collected by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

[In the balance: identifying differences between UK and EU trade figures](#)

Blog | Released 8 July 2021

A blog examining the disparities between UK official statistics on trade and those produced by the EU, which have increased since the end of the Brexit transition period.

[Trade off: different ways of measuring imports and exports](#)

Blog | Released 14 May 2021

A blog examining the discrepancies between the Office for National Statistics and Eurostat trade figures.

17 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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