



About this release

This release includes the 1st provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and both countries of the EU and those outside the EU for January 2021.

Supporting tables, visuals and data can be found at www.uktradeinfo.com

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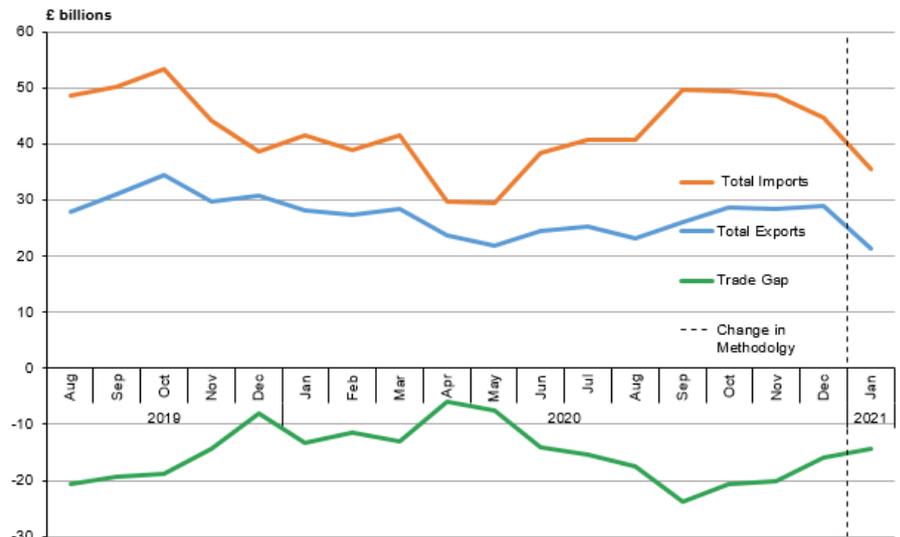
Trade in Goods, January 2021

From 31 December 2020, the free movement of people and goods and services between the UK and the EU ended. This has changed the way HMRC collects trade in goods statistics.

In summary, the overall UK to EU export dataset will incorporate both GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data. As a result, there will be a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. Users should take great care when comparing previous months and years.

- Total **exports** of goods for January 2021 were £21.2 billion. This was down £7.6 billion (26%) compared with last month, and down £7.1 billion (25%) compared with January 2020.
- Total **imports** of goods for January 2021 were £35.5 billion. This was down £9.2 billion (21%) compared with last month, and down £6.0 billion (14%) compared with January 2020.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £14.3 billion, narrowing by £1.6 billion on last month.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods and Statistics
Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional
Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

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Methodology changes

HMRC Trade in Goods Statistics (TIGS) are a detailed dataset covering the UK's trade in goods at a disaggregated country and product level. They are published monthly, quarterly and annually from trade declarations, providing access to both aggregated and detailed data for over 9,500 commodities and 250 partner countries.

From 31 December 2020, the free movement of people and goods and services between the UK and the EU ended. This means the way HMRC collects trade in goods statistics has changed, and statistics published from March 2021 onwards will reflect those changes.

UK to EU exports

Up to 31 December 2020, UK to EU export statistics were collected via the Intrastat statistical survey, which required traders to declare the value and volume of commodities exported to EU Member States within the relevant month of physical goods movement.

For goods moving from 1 January 2021, GB to EU export statistics will be compiled direct from customs export declarations made according to the requirements of the Taxation (Cross Border Trade) Act. The customs declaration requirements are more complex than the single monthly aggregated Intrastat return, and can result in differences between dates of declaration and actual movement of the goods out of the country.

The TIGS compilation methodology relies upon the acceptance date of the customs export declaration for its inclusion within the relevant month of account, rather than the declared physical movement date used from the Intrastat survey.

Intrastat survey returns will, however, continue to be collected for goods exported from Northern Ireland to the EU, under the terms of the [Northern Ireland Protocol](#).

Both the GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data will be incorporated into the overall UK to EU export dataset.

As a result of the changes and differences outlined above, there will be a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. These will not be directly comparable to UK to EU export statistics published for previous months and years.

UK imports from EU

UK imports from EU statistics will not be impacted by any change in 2021. The Intrastat survey continues to operate for all UK (GB and NI) imports (arrivals) from the EU, to mitigate the effects of staging customs controls, and to comply with the Northern Ireland Protocol.

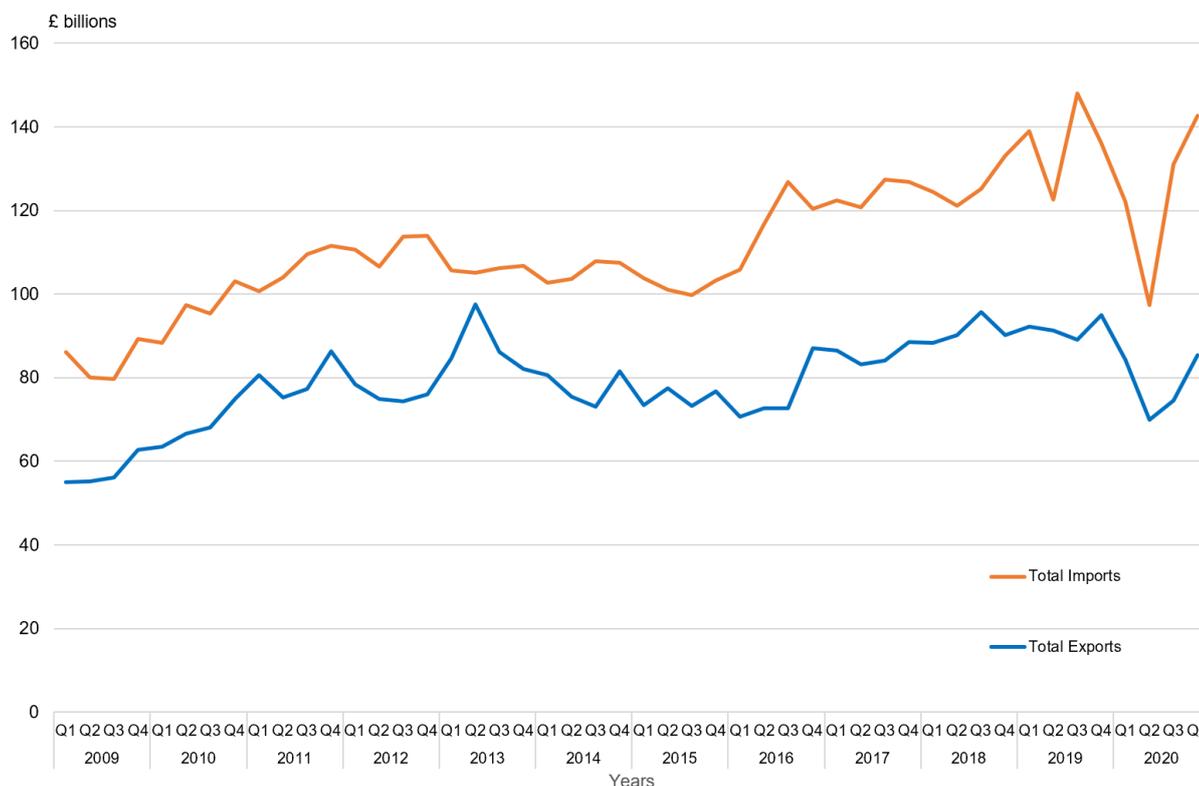
Trade in Goods Trends

Following the global economic crisis, UK trade in goods dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016. It has experienced large quarterly fluctuations since Q1 of 2019 and Q2 of 2020 saw the lowest quarterly imports value since Q3 of 2010. Exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a steady rise from Q2 of 2017 to Q3 of 2018. Q2 of 2020 also saw the lowest quarterly exports value since Q3 of 2010. Imports showed a recovery in Q3, while exports have remained low.

- The total **export** trade for Q4 of 2020 was £86.0 billion, which was a decrease of 9.4% compared with £95.0 billion for Q4 of 2019.
- The total **import** trade for Q4 of 2020 was £143 billion, which was an increase of 4.9% compared with £136 billion for Q4 of 2019.
- There was a trade deficit of £56.8 billion for Q4 of 2020. This was a widening of 38% compared with £41.1 billion for Q4 2019.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading **import** partner by value, although it is China this month, and the USA has been the dominant trading **export** partner.
- Mechanical appliances and Motor vehicles have generally been the largest **import** commodities by value. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has also predominantly been the largest valued commodity, with occasional peaks for Precious metals.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, trade in goods in 2020 experienced significant decreases, affecting our largest trade partners and commodity groups at differing magnitudes, although more recent months have shown some recovery.

- ↓ **Exports down 9.4% on Q4 2019**
- ↑ **Imports up 4.9% on Q4 2019**
- **Trade deficit widened by 38% on Q4 2019**

Figure 2: Quarterly UK Trade in Goods, 2009 – 2020



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2020 data is provisional

Non-EU & EU Trade in Goods

Non-EU Trade in Goods:

- **Non-EU exports** for January 2021 were £13.4 billion. This was a decrease of £1.8 billion (12%) on last month, and a decrease of £1.2 billion (8.1%) compared with January 2020.
- **Non-EU imports** for January 2021 were £20.4 billion. This was a decrease of £1.9 billion (8.3%) on last month, and a decrease of £1.8 billion (8.2%) compared with January 2020.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £7.0 billion.

↓ **Non-EU exports down 12% on last month**

EU Trade in Goods:

Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

- **EU exports** for January 2021 were £7.8 billion. This was a decrease of £5.8 billion (43%) on last month, and a decrease of £5.9 billion (43%) compared with January 2020.
- **EU imports** for January 2021 were £15.1 billion. This was a decrease of £7.4 billion (33%) on last month, and a decrease of £4.1 billion (21%) compared with January 2020.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £7.3 billion.

↓ **EU exports down 43% on last month**

Figure 3: Total UK Trade in Goods, with EU and Non-EU, January 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Country Analysis

Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

- The USA remained as the largest export partner country. This is despite experiencing the 2nd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,418 million (30%).
- The Republic of Ireland experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,522 million (62%).
- Germany experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, and the largest on January 2020, down £1,313 million (44%) and £1,427 million (46%) respectively.
- Switzerland experienced the largest value increase on January 2020, up £724 million (double the value).
- Saudi Arabia experienced the largest value increase on last month, and the 2nd largest on January 2020, up £516 million and £501 million respectively (3 times the value in both cases).

↓ **Exports to Republic of Ireland down 62% on last month**

↓ **Exports to Germany down 46% on January 2020**

Table 1: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, January 2021

Partner Country	January 2021	December 2020		January 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from December 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from January 2020 (%)
USA	3,285	3,987	-17.6	4,703	-30.2
Germany	1,649	2,962	-44.3	3,076	-46.4
Switzerland	1,371	1,591	-13.8	647	111.9
China	1,267	1,307	-3.0	1,531	-17.2
Netherlands	1,255	1,799	-30.2	1,961	-36.0
Republic of Ireland	926	2,448	-62.2	1,697	-45.4
France	918	1,696	-45.8	1,984	-53.7
Saudi Arabia	758	241	213.7	257	195.1
Belgium	648	952	-32.0	1,030	-37.1
Spain	637	730	-12.7	838	-24.0
Others	8,495	11,101	-23.5	10,542	-19.4
Total EU	7,811	13,609	-42.6	13,693	-43.0
Total Non-EU	13,397	15,204	-11.9	14,574	-8.1
Total Exports	21,208	28,814	-26.4	28,267	-25.0

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Exports: Country Analysis

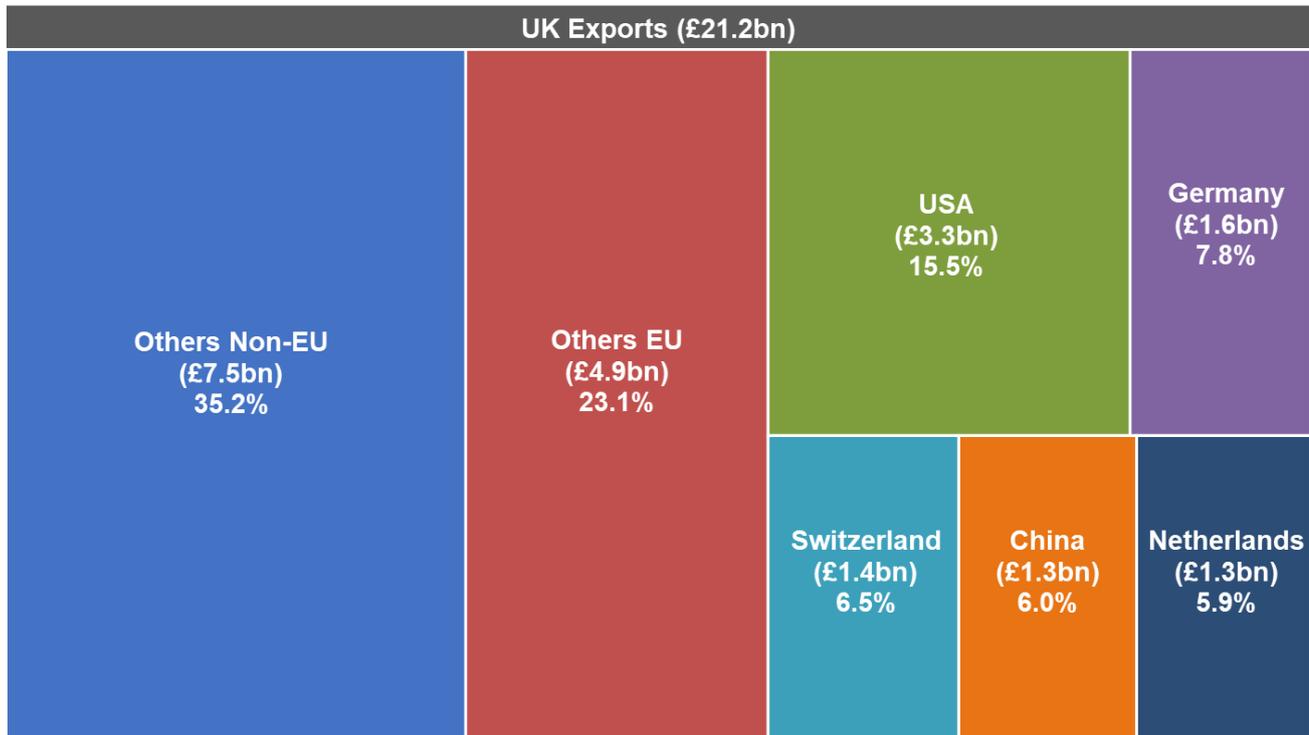
Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 42% of total exports in goods in January 2021. This was a decrease from a 47% share in January 2020.
- The USA accounted for 15% of the total value of exports from the UK. This was a decrease from a 17% share in January 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 7.8%. This was a decrease from an 11% share in January 2020.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, the Republic of Ireland fell to 6th place from 3rd, while Saudi Arabia rose to 8th place from 23rd.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with January 2020. Most notably, Switzerland rose to 3rd place from 10th, and Saudi Arabia rose to 8th place from 22nd, while France fell to 7th place from 3rd.

↓ **The USA had a 15% share of total exports in January 2021**

↓ **Germany had a 7.8% share of total exports in January 2021**

Figure 4: Share of UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, January 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional
 Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Exports: Commodity Analysis

Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

- Mechanical appliances remained as the largest export commodity despite experiencing the 2nd largest decrease on last month, and the largest decrease on January 2020, down £906 million (22%) and £1,390 million (30%) respectively.
- Mineral fuels experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,271 million (47%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease on last month, and the 3rd largest on January 2020, down £912 million (31%) and £852 million (29%) respectively.
- Other products experienced the largest value increase on last month and on January 2020, up £335 million (34%) and £587 million (80%) respectively.
- Precious metals experienced the 2nd largest value increase on January 2020, up £406 million (19%).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £666 million (39%).

↓ **Exports of Mechanical appliances down 30% on January 2020**

↓ **Exports of Motor vehicles down 31% on last month**

Table 2: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, January 2021

Commodity Description	January 2021	December 2020		January 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from December 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from January 2020 (%)
Mechanical appliances	3,176	4,083	-22.2	4,566	-30.4
Precious metals	2,587	2,629	-1.6	2,181	18.6
Motor vehicles	2,039	2,952	-30.9	2,891	-29.5
Mineral fuels	1,453	1,949	-25.4	2,725	-46.7
Other products	1,318	984	34.0	731	80.4
Electronic equipment	1,246	1,834	-32.1	1,607	-22.5
Pharmaceutical products	1,021	1,687	-39.5	1,313	-22.2
Measuring devices and gauges	926	1,274	-27.3	1,159	-20.1
Art and antiques	865	756	14.3	668	29.5
Aircraft	710	879	-19.2	1,291	-45.0
Others	5,866	9,786	-40.1	9,135	-35.8
Total Exports	21,208	28,814	-26.4	28,267	-25.0

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Exports: Commodity Analysis

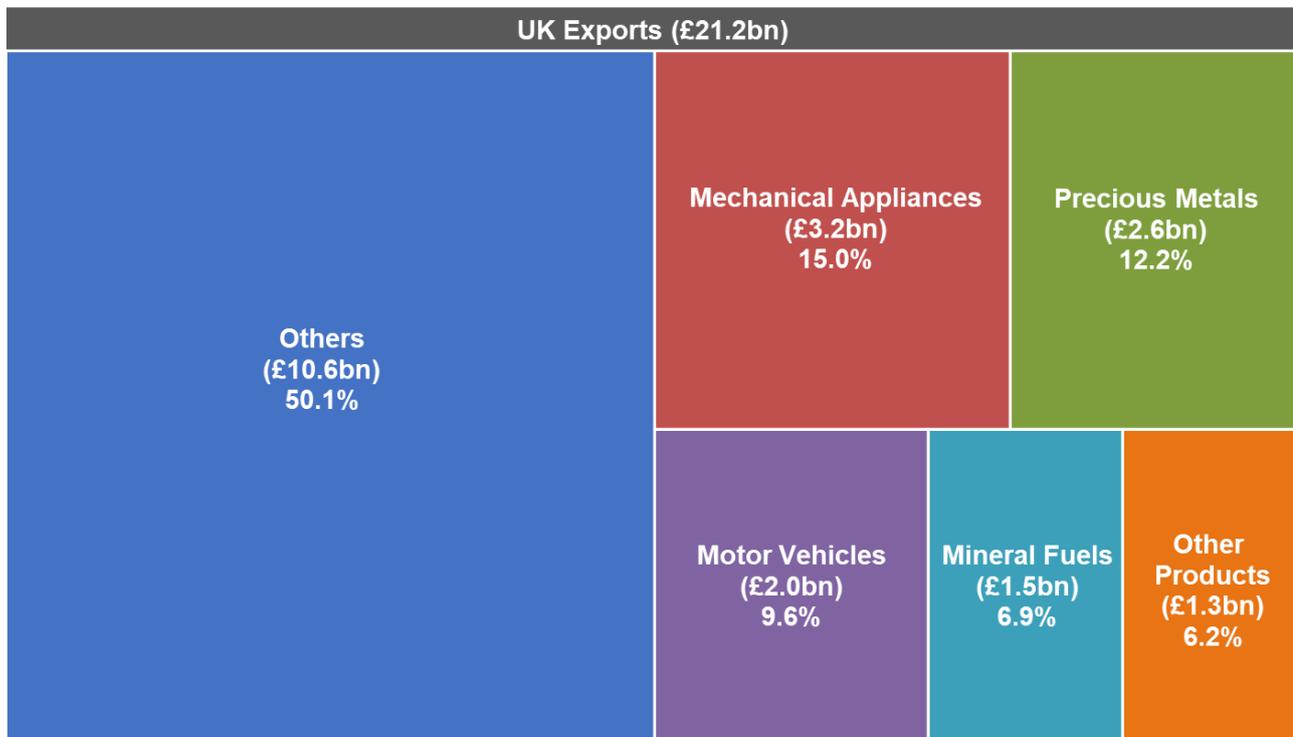
Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 50% of exports in January 2021, this was an increase from a 49% share in January 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the largest proportion, accounting for 15% of total exports. This was a decrease from a 16% share in January 2020.
- Precious metals had the 2nd largest proportion, up from 4th in January 2020. It accounted for 12% of total exports. This was an increase from a 7.7% share in January 2020.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Other products rose to 5th place from 9th, while Organic chemicals fell to 11th place from 8th.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with January 2020. Precious metals rose to 2nd place from 4th, Other products rose to 5th place from 11th, Art and antiques rose to 9th place from 12th, while Organic chemicals fell to 11th place from 6th.

↓ **Mechanical appliances accounted for 15% of total exports in January 2021**

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 12% of total exports in January 2021**

Figure 5: Share of UK exports by the top 5 commodities, January 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional
 Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Due to **methodology changes**, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Country to commodity:

- The decrease in exports to Germany compared with last month was led by Organic chemicals, down £282 million (92%). The decrease on January 2020 was led by Mineral fuels, down £257 million (89%).
- The decrease in exports to the Republic of Ireland on last month was led by Organic chemicals, down £240 million (99%).
- The increase in exports to Switzerland on January 2020 was dominated by Precious metals, up £731 million (nearly 3.5 times in value).
- The increase in exports to Saudi Arabia compared with last month was led by Art and antiques, up £417 million (from £0.1 million).

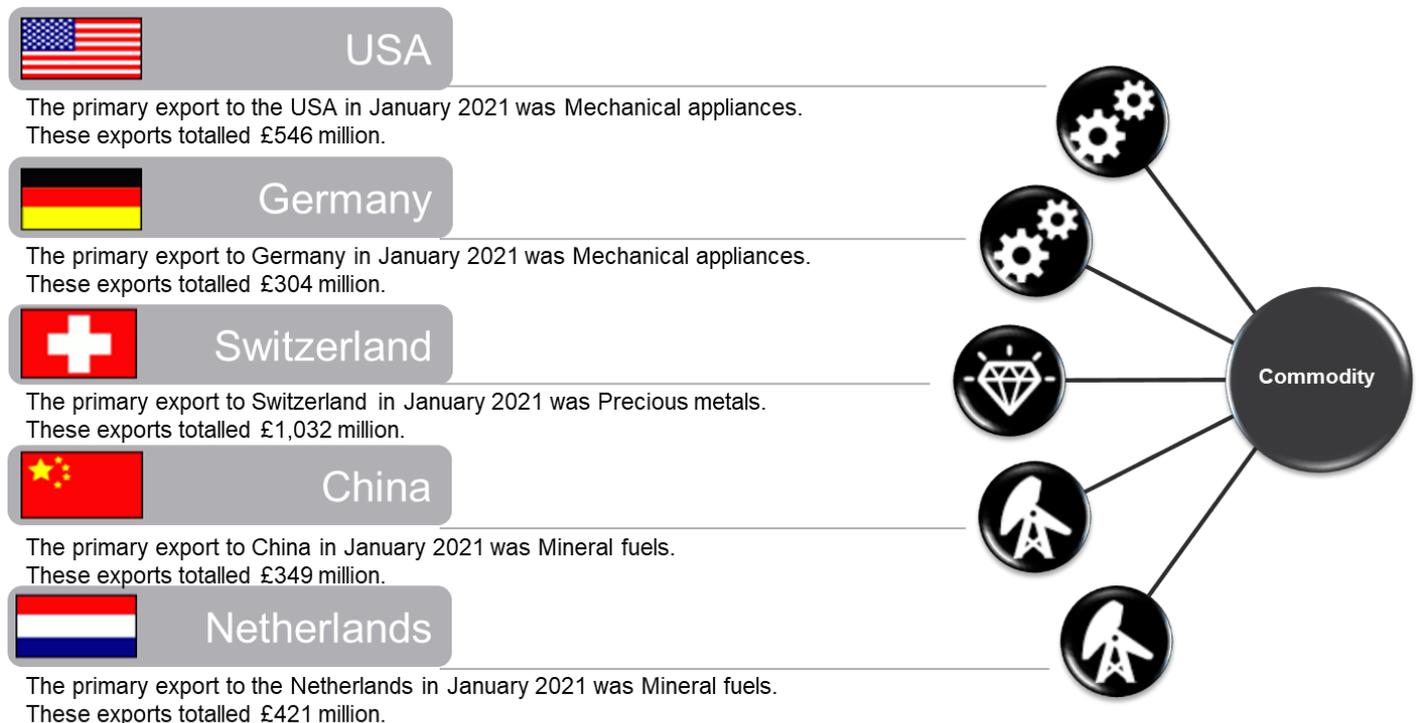
Commodity to country

- The decrease in exports of Mechanical appliances on last month was led by the Republic of Ireland, down £132 million (54%). The decrease on January 2020 was led by the USA and Singapore, down £213 million (28%) and £170 million (62%) respectively.
- The decrease in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by the Republic of Ireland, down £105 million (79%). The decrease on January 2020 was led by the USA, down £181 million (28%).
- The decrease in exports of Mineral fuels on January 2020 was led by the Netherlands and Germany, down £475 million (53%) and £257 million (89%) respectively.

↑ Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland up 3.5 times in value on last month

↓ Exports of Motor vehicles to the Republic of Ireland down 79% on last month

Figure 6: The UK's top commodity exports to the top 5 countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

Due to methodology changes, users should take great care when comparing UK to EU export statistics from January 2021 with previous months and years.

Imports: Country Analysis

- China replaced Germany as the largest import partner. It experienced the largest value increase on January 2020, up £633 million (15%).
- Germany experienced the largest value decreases on last month and on January 2020, down £1,869 million (34%) and £1,177 million (24%) respectively.
- The USA experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,170 million (27%).
- The Netherlands experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month and the 3rd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,107 million (32%) and £732 million (24%) respectively.
- Belgium experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £1,059 million (44%).
- France experienced the 4th largest value decrease on last month, down £818 million (37%).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £306 million (76%).

↓ Imports from Germany down 34% on last month

↓ Imports from the USA down 27% on January 2020

Table 3: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, January 2021

Partner Country	January 2021	December 2020		January 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2020 (%)
China	4,781	5,266	-9.2	4,148	15.3
Germany	3,640	5,509	-33.9	4,817	-24.4
USA	3,093	3,502	-11.7	4,263	-27.4
Netherlands	2,335	3,442	-32.2	3,068	-23.9
Norway	1,550	1,415	9.5	1,180	31.3
France	1,397	2,215	-36.9	1,822	-23.3
Belgium	1,371	2,429	-43.6	1,817	-24.6
Canada	1,285	1,396	-8.0	1,196	7.4
Spain	1,096	1,360	-19.4	1,196	-8.4
Republic of Ireland	1,078	1,255	-14.1	1,075	0.2
Others	13,898	16,971	-18.1	16,902	0.4
Total EU	15,135	22,514	-32.8	19,269	-21.5
Total Non-EU	20,388	22,244	-8.3	22,214	-8.2
Total Imports	35,523	44,758	-20.6	41,483	-14.4

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

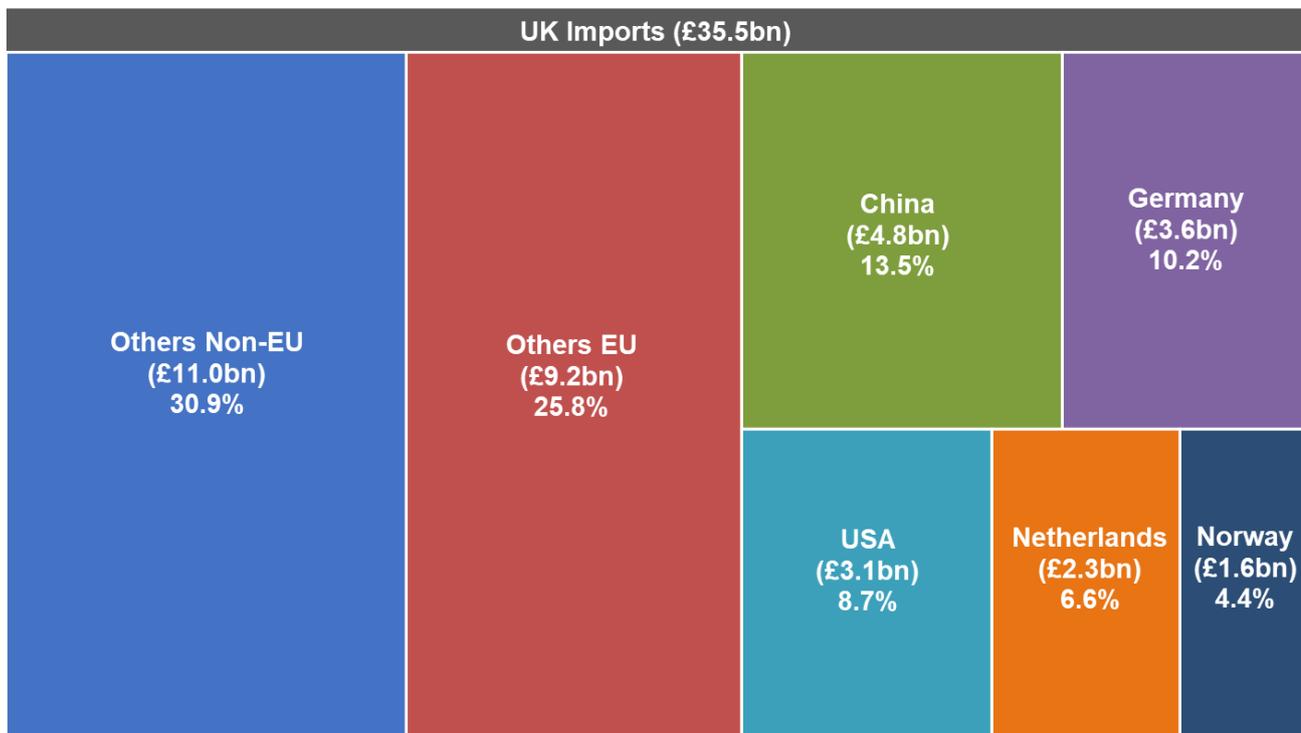
Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 43% of the total value of goods imported in January 2021. This was a decrease from 44% in January 2020.
- China accounted for 13% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from 10% in January 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 10%. This was a decrease from 12% in January 2020.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Norway rose to 5th from 9th and Belgium fell to 7th from 5th.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with January 2020. Most notably, China rose to 1st place from 3rd and Norway rose to 5th place from 10th.

↓ **The top 5 partners accounted for 43% of total imports in January 2021**

↑ **China accounted for 13% of total imports in January 2021**

Figure 7: Share of UK imports of goods from the top 5 countries, January 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest import commodity despite experiencing the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £1,073 million (18%). In contrast, it experienced the largest value increase on January 2020, up £400 million (8.6%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease on last month and the 2nd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,543 million (33%) and £1,040 million (25%) respectively.
- Mechanical appliances experienced the largest value decrease on January 2020, down £1,105 million (21%).
- Electronic equipment experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £991 million (22%).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the 4th largest value decrease on last month and the 3rd largest value decrease on January 2020, down £850 million (45%) and £714 million (40%) respectively.
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £328 million (12%). Contrastingly, it experienced the 4th largest value decrease on January 2020, down £531 million (14%).

↓ Imports of Motor vehicles down 33% on last month

↓ Imports of Pharmaceutical products down 40% on January 2020.

Table 4: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, January 2021

Commodity Description	January 2021	December 2020		January 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2020 (%)
Precious metals	5,044	6,117	-17.5	4,643	8.6
Mechanical appliances	4,162	4,884	-14.8	5,267	-21.0
Electronic equipment	3,511	4,502	-22.0	3,696	-5.0
Mineral fuels	3,167	2,839	11.6	3,698	-14.4
Motor vehicles	3,115	4,657	-33.1	4,155	-25.0
Plastics and plastic products	1,121	1,238	-9.4	1,139	-1.5
Pharmaceutical products	1,052	1,902	-44.7	1,765	-40.4
Measuring devices and gauges	972	1,405	-30.9	1,193	-18.5
Miscellaneous chemical products	791	913	-13.4	434	82.1
Furniture and light fittings	730	743	-1.7	813	-10.2
Others	11,859	15,559	-23.8	14,680	-19.2
Total Imports	35,523	44,758	-20.6	41,483	-14.4

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

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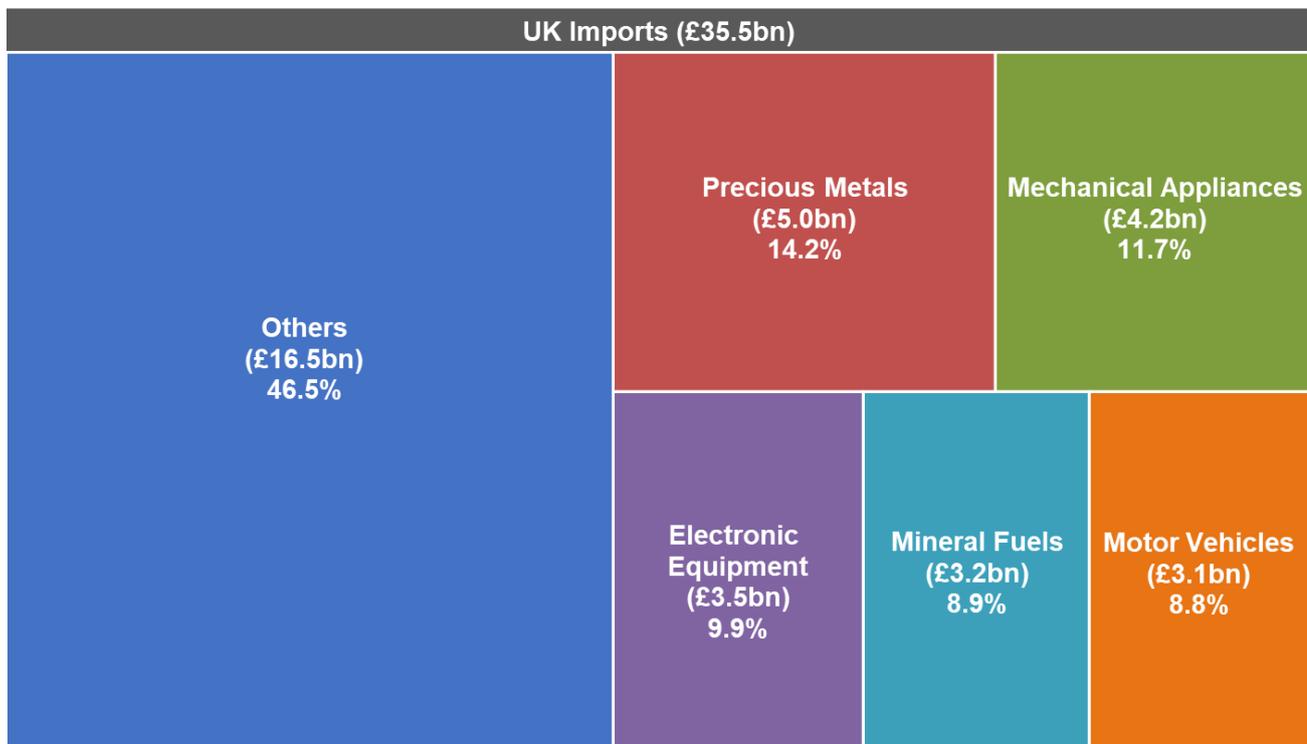
Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 53% of the total value of goods imported in January 2021. This was an increase from a 52% share in January 2020.
- Precious metals accounted for 14% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from an 11% share in January 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for a 12% share. This was a decrease from a 13% share in January 2020.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Motor vehicles fell to 5th place from 3rd, Plastics and plastic products rose to 6th place from 8th, and Furniture and light fittings rose to 10th place from 12th.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with January 2020. Most notably, Electronic equipment rose to 3rd place from 5th, Motor vehicles fell to 5th place from 3rd, and Miscellaneous chemical products rose to 9th place from 19th.

↑ **The top 5 import commodities accounted for 53% of total imports in January 2021**

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 14% of total imports in January 2021**

Figure 8: Share of UK imports for the top 5 commodities, January 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Country to commodity:

- The increase in imports from China on January 2020 was driven by Miscellaneous chemical products, up £331 million (from £13 million).
- The decreases in imports from the Netherlands on last month and January 2020 were driven by Pharmaceutical products, down £297 million (71%) and £221 million (64%) respectively.
- The decrease in imports from France on last month was driven by Aircraft, down £197 million (90%).
- The increase in imports from Switzerland on last month was dominated by Precious metals, up £245 million (almost 5 times the value).

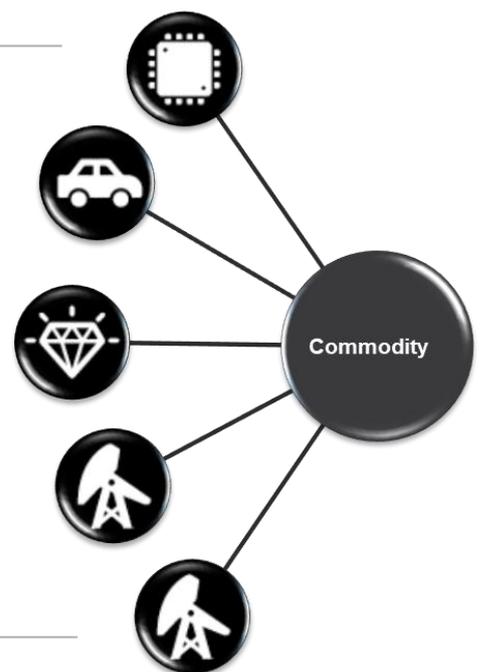
Commodity to country:

- The decrease in Precious metals on last month was driven by Russia, down £601 million (50%). The increase on January 2020 was driven by Australia and Russia, up £403 million (from £32 million) and £357 million (2.5 times the value) respectively.
- The decrease in Motor vehicles on last month was dominated by Germany and Belgium, down £567 million (37%) and £508 million (65%) respectively. The same countries dominated the decrease on January 2020, down £412 million (30%) and £181 million (40%) respectively.
- The decrease in Electronic equipment on last month was led by Denmark and the Netherlands, down £211 million (93%) and £198 million (40%) respectively.
- The increase in Mineral fuels on last month was driven by Netherlands, up £217 million (99%). The decrease on January 2020 was driven by the USA and Russia, down £263 million (45%) and £237 million (40%) respectively.

↓ Imports of Pharmaceutical products from the Netherlands down 71% on last month

↑ Imports of Precious metals from Russia up 2.5 times the value on January 2020

Figure 9: The UK's top commodity imports from the top 5 countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Methodology Notes

Metadata

Data behind this bulletin is available through our [uktradeinfo](#) web site:

- Detailed Trade Statistics data at 8-digit commodity code level is available in our [interactive database](#).
- Aggregate OTS data is available in [pre-prepared Excel tables](#).

Data sources

UK to EU exports

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For goods moving from 1 January 2021, GB to EU export statistics will be compiled direct from customs export declarations made according to the requirements of the Taxation (Cross Border Trade) Act. The customs declaration requirements are more complex than the single monthly aggregated Intrastat return, and can result in differences between dates of declaration and actual movement of the goods out of the country.

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As a result of the changes and differences outlined above, there will be a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. These will not be directly comparable to UK to EU export statistics published for previous months and years.

UK imports from EU

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Figures derived from Intrastat include:

- Estimates for businesses who have yet to submit detailed data on the trade they had with other EU Member States this month.
- Estimates for businesses who do not have to submit detailed data on the trade they have with other EU Member States.
- An adjustment for trade associated with Missing Trader Intra Community fraud. More details of this can be found in the OTS methodology paper [here](#).

Estimates are included in all high-level totals including commodity (HS2) and country totals.

The **Non-EU figures** provided in this publication of the January 2021 Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics are presented by customs declarations and collected by the CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight) system. Declarations collected via the Customs Declarations Service (CDS) are included: for imports from August 2020 month of account; and for exports from December 2020 month of account onwards.

Detailed trade information is presented according to the [Harmonised System \(HS\)](#) nomenclature.

Methodology

The Overseas Trade Statistics Methodology paper (March 2021) is available [here](#). It covers all aspects of the Overseas Trade Statistics methodology – data sources, classifications and definitions, quality assurance,

publications and governance. It is a useful companion to the trade data, providing the definitions and methodologies on which the data are based.

From 31 December 2020, the free movement of people and goods and services between the UK and the EU ended. This has changed the way HMRC collects trade in goods statistics. The overall UK to EU export dataset will incorporate both GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data. As a result, there will be a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. Users should take great care when comparing previous months and years.

From the May 2016 month of account, there was a methodological change to the way our trade-in-goods statistics are compiled. Following a change in legislation, trade-in-goods statistics switched from the 'general trade' system of compilation to the 'special trade' system.

Non-Monetary Gold (NMG) can form a substantial part of the non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS). For further information, see [Inclusion of Non-Monetary Gold in OTS](#). Data relating to monthly non-EU and EU import and export totals for January 2008 onwards with a breakdown of non-monetary gold and other trade is available in an [OTS time series spreadsheet](#).

Relationship with other statistical publications

The aggregate estimates here will differ slightly from those that are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of the Balance of Payments (BoP), as the 2 sets of data are compiled to different sets of rules. The ONS website provides an overview of [BoP](#), where you can find their detailed monthly [UK Trade Releases](#). The BoP publication shows a high-level picture of UK trade-in-goods, whereas the OTS publication shows a detailed picture of the UK's trade-in-goods by commodity and partner country.

National Statistics Publication

HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries on 12 March 2021 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). The 1st release is published on HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com.

This release includes the 1st provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and both countries of the EU and those outside the EU for January 2021. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2020 are also being released in line with the [HM Revenue & Customs Policy on Revisions](#).

The next three publications are due for release on the following days:

Month of account	First release date
February 2021	13 April 2021
March 2021	12 May 2021
April 2021	11 Jun 2021

The OTS has been reviewed as part of an assessment made of Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics by the [UK Statistics Authority](#). The report of that assessment can be found [here](#).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Now that the UK has left the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. All releases continue to be produced in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics as well as internationally agreed statistical guidance and standards.