



Department for
International Trade



Trade & Investment Factsheets

South Korea

This factsheet provides the latest statistics on trade and investment between the UK and South Korea.

Date of release: 1 August 2022; Date of next planned release: 19 August 2022

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and South Korea was **£16.2 billion** in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, an increase of 24.5% or £3.2 billion from the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021. Of this £16.2 billion:

- Total UK **exports** to South Korea amounted to £9.6 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 (an increase of 23.7% or £1.8 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021);
- Total UK **imports** from South Korea amounted to £6.6 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 (an increase of 25.6% or £1.4 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021).

South Korea was the UK's 21st largest trading partner in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 accounting for 1.2% of total UK trade.¹

In 2020, the **outward stock of foreign direct investment (FDI)** from the UK in South Korea was £4.6 billion accounting for 0.3% of the total UK outward FDI stock.

In 2020, the **inward stock of foreign direct investment (FDI)** in the UK from South Korea was £3.0 billion accounting for 0.2% of the total UK inward FDI stock.²

¹ Trade data sourced from the latest ONS publication of [UK total trade: all countries seasonally adjusted](#) data.

² Investment data sourced from ONS publication on [Foreign Direct Investment Involving UK Companies](#).

About these statistics

This factsheet presents the latest statistics on trade and investment between the UK and South Korea. It summarises a wide range of publicly available data, from data providers such as the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), as well as international data providers.

This factsheet is part of a wider range produced by the Department for International Trade which draws together many data sources into one single compendium document for each individual trade and investment partner. The full set of factsheets for different individual partners can be found on the [Trade and Investment Factsheets website](#) on GOV.UK.

Where data are available, these factsheets contain metrics on:

- [Headline trade statistics between the UK and each trading partner for the latest four quarters.](#)
- [Trade statistics by commodity and service type.](#)
- [Trade between the UK and each trading partner, broken down by UK country and English region.](#)
- [UK's market share as a total of all imports for each trading partner.](#)
- [Number of VAT-registered businesses trading goods.](#)
- [UK's Foreign Direct Investment \(FDI\) with each investment partner.](#)
- [Summary trade and investment data as reported by each trade and investment partner, as well as economic data and projections.](#)

All statistics are correct at the time of publication, with upcoming release dates available on the [Government update schedule for Official Statistics](#). The Department for International Trade strongly recommends users download the latest factsheet to ensure the most up-to-date statistics are used as some statistics are revised on a regular basis.

For the most up to date snapshot of the UK's trade and investment position with all partners, please see the [UK trade in numbers](#) publication or the [trade and investment core statistics book](#). These statistics are based on the same data sources as this factsheet and therefore are comparable. A list of all [Official Statistics](#) publications from the Department for International Trade can be found online.

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Summary trade and investment statistics for South Korea

UK trade with South Korea (based on the latest four quarters)³:

Trade	Value in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022	Change from the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021
Total trade	£16.2 billion	an increase of 24.5% or £3.2 billion
Ranking out of all the UK's trading partners	21st	
Total UK exports	£9.6 billion	an increase of 23.7% or £1.8 billion
Ranking out of all the UK's export partners	17th	
UK exports in goods (percentage of total UK exports that were goods)	£7.2 billion (75.0%)	an increase of 32.1% or £1.7 billion
UK exports in services (percentage of total UK exports that were services)	£2.4 billion (25.0%)	an increase of 3.8% or £88 million
Total UK imports	£6.6 billion	an increase of 25.6% or £1.4 billion
Ranking out of all the UK's import partners	21st	
UK imports in goods (percentage of total UK imports that were goods)	£5.5 billion (82.3%)	an increase of 31.2% or £1.3 billion
UK imports in services (percentage of total UK imports that were services)	£1.2 billion (17.7%)	an increase of 4.8% or £54 million

UK market share in South Korea⁴:

UK market share for total trade	Value in 2020	Change from 2019
Total UK market share	1.7%	an increase of 0.3 percentage points
UK market share for goods only	1.5%	an increase of 0.3 percentage points
UK market share for services only	2.8%	an increase of 0.5 percentage points

UK Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with South Korea⁵:

UK FDI	Value in 2020	Change from 2019
Total UK outward FDI	£4.6 billion	an increase of 5.6% or £245 million
Total UK inward FDI	£3.0 billion	an increase of 49.0% or £991 million

Economic statistics and projections using gross domestic product (GDP) for South Korea⁶:

Economic statistics	2019	2020	2021	2022
Economic growth, using GDP in real terms, compared to the previous year	2.2%	-0.7%	4.1%	2.3%
GDP per capita in \$USD (in thousands)	31.9	31.6	34.8	35.0

South Korea was the 10th largest economy in 2021, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).

³ Trade data sourced from Office for National Statistics data on [UK total trade \(seasonally adjusted data\)](#).

⁴ UK market share data calculated using the methodology outlined in the [market share section](#) in the factsheet, based on data from the Office for National Statistics and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

⁵ FDI data sourced from the Office for National Statistics publication [Foreign Direct Investment Involving UK Companies](#).

⁶ Economic data sourced from the International Monetary Fund [World Economic Outlook](#) databases; Estimates and projections are given in italics; GDP rankings where provided are based on values in current prices (nominal terms) in \$USD, where some partner values are based on estimates which may influence the rankings when revised.

Trade with South Korea (ONS)^{7 8 9}

Trade definitions

UK exports - Goods and services that were produced or sourced in the UK, which were sold to South Korea.

UK imports - Goods and services that were sold to the UK, which were produced or sourced by South Korea.

Total or 'bilateral' trade - The value of total trade between the UK and South Korea (exports plus imports).

Trade balance - The difference between exports and imports, calculated by UK exports minus UK imports.

Trade surplus - This occurs when the value of UK exports to South Korea is greater than the value of UK imports from South Korea.

Trade deficit - This occurs when the value of UK exports to South Korea is less than the value of UK imports from South Korea.

Headline trade statistics include trade in non-monetary gold (reported within the unspecified goods category), which can significantly affect trends for some partners. Please see the factsheet [quality and methodology report](#) for more information. These statistics are given on a balance of payments (change of ownership) basis.

Note: The latest data include trade between April 2021 and March 2022. Trade has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated lockdown measures globally. Consequently, data quality has been affected and may be subject to larger revisions than normal.

Total trade in goods and services (exports plus imports) between the UK and South Korea was £16.2 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, an increase of 24.5% or £3.2 billion from the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021.

In the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, **total UK exports** to South Korea amounted to £9.6 billion (an increase of 23.7% or £1.8 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021).

Of all UK exports to South Korea in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, £7.2 billion (75.0%) were **goods** and £2.4 billion (25.0%) were **services**. In the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, **UK exports of goods** to South Korea increased by 32.1% or £1.7 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021 while **UK exports of services** to South Korea increased by 3.8% or £88 million compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021.

In the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, **total UK imports** from South Korea were £6.6 billion (an increase of 25.6% or £1.4 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021).

Of all UK imports from South Korea in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, £5.5 billion (82.3%) were **goods** and £1.2 billion (17.7%) were **services**. In the same period, **UK imports of goods** from South Korea increased by 31.2% or £1.3 billion compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021 while **UK imports of services** from South Korea increased by 4.8% or £54 million compared to the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021.

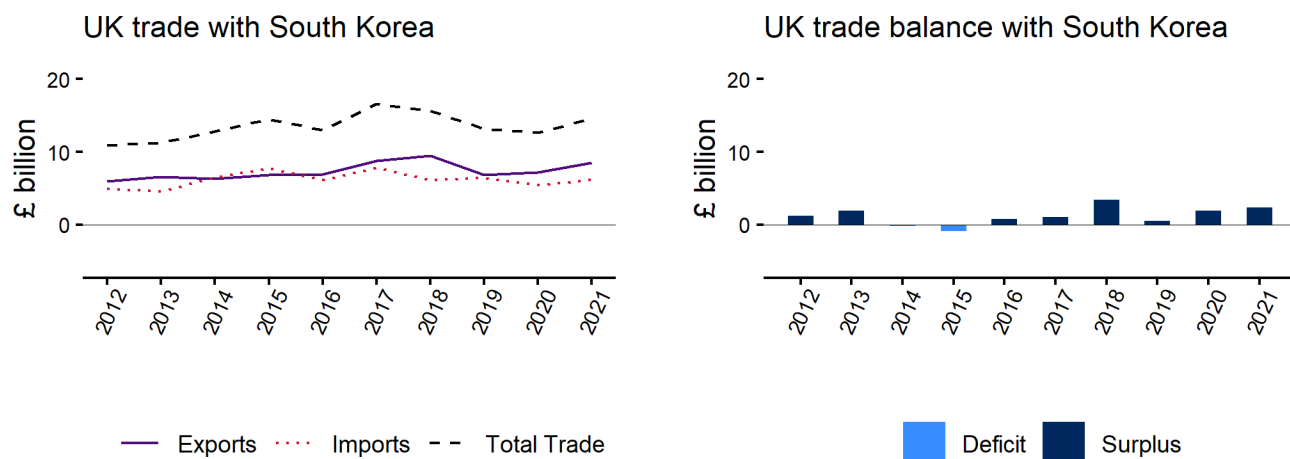
This means the UK reported a **total trade surplus** of £2.9 billion with South Korea, compared to a trade surplus of £2.5 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021. In the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, the UK had a **trade in goods surplus** of £1.7 billion with South Korea, compared to a trade in goods surplus of £1.3 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021. Meanwhile, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 the UK reported a **trade in services surplus** of £1.2 billion with South Korea, compared to a trade in services surplus of £1.2 billion in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2021.

⁷ Office of National Statistics (ONS) data source for total trade: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

⁸ This factsheet contains data as reported by the UK, users are advised to use UK-reported data where possible for consistency between partners. These data are subject to [asymmetries](#) e.g. the value of UK exports to South Korea (reported by the UK) may not match the value of South Korea imports from the UK (reported by South Korea).

⁹ Data are in nominal terms, meaning no adjustment has been made to account for changes in inflation or exchange rate. The totals may not exactly match the sum of their parts due to rounding.

The charts below present a time series for trade between the UK and South Korea for each year between 2012 and 2021:



Source: ONS, UK trade in goods and services, Q1 2022

The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ billion:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Value of total trade	10.9	11.2	12.8	14.5	13.0	16.6	15.6	13.2	12.6	14.6
Value of exports	6.0	6.6	6.3	6.8	6.9	8.8	9.5	6.8	7.2	8.5
Value of imports	4.9	4.6	6.5	7.7	6.1	7.8	6.1	6.4	5.4	6.1
Trade balance	+1.2	+1.9	-0.2	-0.9	+0.8	+1.0	+3.4	+0.5	+1.9	+2.4

In the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, South Korea was the UK's:¹⁰

- **21st largest trading partner** (accounting for 1.2% of total UK trade).
 - 19th largest **goods** trading partner (1.5% of UK goods trade).
 - Joint 27th largest **services** trading partner (0.7% of UK services trade).
- **17th largest export market** (accounting for 1.5% of total UK exports).
 - 11th largest **goods** export market (2.1% of UK goods exports).
 - 28th largest **services** export market (0.8% of UK services exports).
- **21st largest import market** (accounting for 0.9% of total UK imports).
 - 21st largest **goods** import market (1.0% of UK goods imports).
 - 28th largest **services** import market (0.6% of UK services imports).

More timely data, for trade in goods only¹¹, show that UK exports of goods to South Korea increased by 51.6% in the 12 months to May 2022 compared to the same period the previous year. UK imports of goods from South Korea increased by 23.6% over the same period.

Note: As these data are presented for the 12 months ending May 2022, the UK and its trading partners have been affected by lockdown and other measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data quality has also been affected and may be subject to larger revisions than usual.

¹⁰ Rankings are based on the ONS dataset which contains data for all individual partners: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

¹¹ ONS data source for trade in the latest 12 months up to May 2022: [UK Trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

Trade in goods by commodity (ONS)^{12 13}

Please note, these data are presented on a non-seasonally adjusted basis and are not directly comparable to seasonally adjusted data, including the headline trade statistics presented before.

The **top 5 goods exported from the UK to South Korea** in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 were:

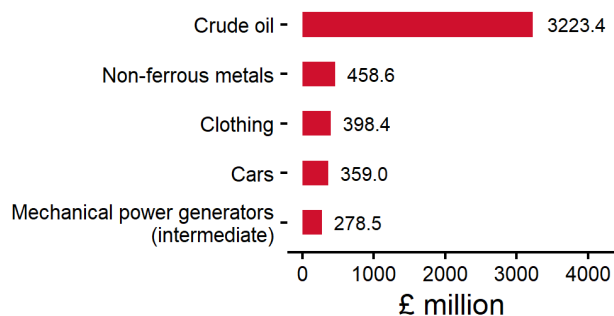
- 33O - Crude oil (£3.2 billion or 44.8% of all UK goods exported to South Korea)
- 68 - Non-ferrous metals (£458.6 million or 6.4%)
- 84 - Clothing (£398.4 million or 5.5%)
- 78M - Cars (£359.0 million or 5.0%)
- 71MI - Mechanical power generators (intermediate) (£278.5 million or 3.9%)

The **top 5 goods imported to the UK from South Korea** in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 were:

- 78M - Cars (£1.8 billion or 33.5% of all UK goods imported from South Korea)
- 76K - Telecoms & sound equipment (capital) (£440.0 million or 8.1%)
- 68 - Non-ferrous metals (£304.3 million or 5.6%)
- 67 - Iron & steel (£262.9 million or 4.8%)
- 77I - Miscellaneous electrical goods (intermediate) (£218.0 million or 4.0%)

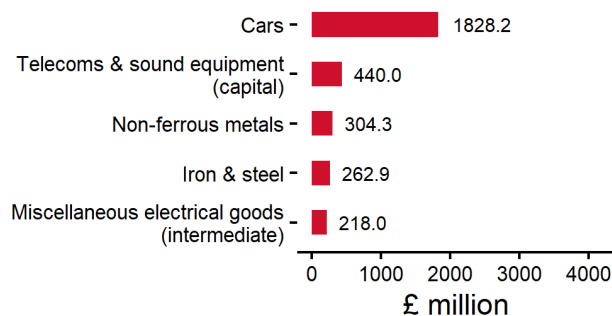
The chart below shows the top 5 products exported from the UK to South Korea and the top 5 products imported to the UK from South Korea, by value, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022. All data shown in the chart are provided in the text above.

The top 5 UK goods exports, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, to South Korea



Source: ONS, May 2022

The top 5 UK goods imports, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, from South Korea



Source: ONS, May 2022

¹² Data on trade in goods by commodity are sourced from data by the ONS: [UK trade release \(non-seasonally adjusted\)](#). These statistics for [exports](#) and [imports](#) present the latest data from the May 2022 ONS publication which are given on a monthly basis.

¹³ The commodities are categorised based on [SITC](#) codes using a mixture of level 2 and level 3 codes.

Trade in services by service type (ONS)^{14 15 16}

Please note, these data are presented on a non-seasonally adjusted basis and are not directly comparable to seasonally adjusted data, including the headline trade statistics presented before.

The **top 5 service types exported from the UK to South Korea** in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 were:

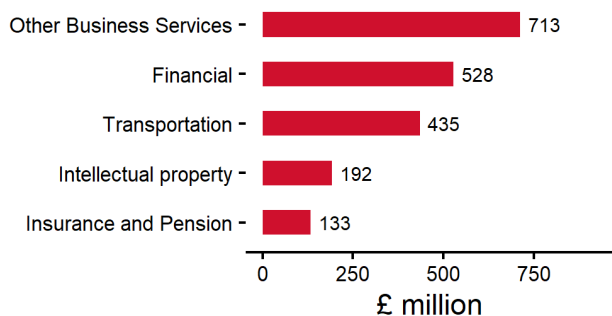
- Other Business Services (£713 million or 29.8% of all UK services exported to South Korea)
- Financial (£528 million or 22.0%)
- Transportation (£435 million or 18.2%)
- Intellectual property (£192 million or 8.0%)
- Insurance and Pension (£133 million or 5.6%)

The **top 5 service types imported to the UK from South Korea** in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022 were:

- Other Business Services (£462 million or 39.2% of all UK services imported from South Korea)
- Financial (£312 million or 26.4%)
- Transportation (£226 million or 19.2%)
- Telecommunications, computer and information services (£106 million or 9.0%)
- Insurance and Pension (£32 million or 2.7%)

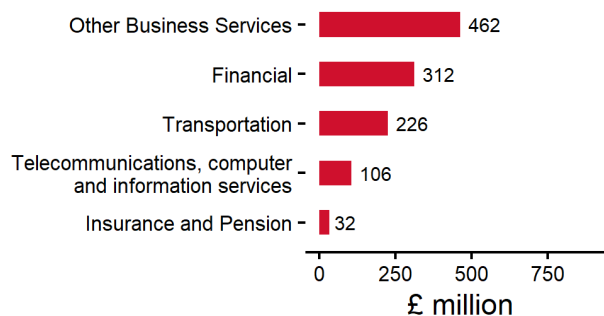
The chart below shows the top 5 service types exported from the UK to South Korea and the top 5 service types imported to the UK from South Korea, by value, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022. All data shown in the chart are provided in the text above.

The top 5 UK services exports, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, to South Korea



Source: ONS, Q1 2022

The top 5 UK services imports, in the four quarters to the end of Q1 2022, from South Korea



Source: ONS, Q1 2022

¹⁴ Trade in services by service type is sourced from data by the ONS: [UK trade in services by partner country \(non-seasonally adjusted\)](#).

¹⁵ Data are classified on the [EBOPS 2010](#) basis. 'Other business services' include: Research and development, professional and management consulting services, technical services and trade related services. A full description of all service types can be found on the [UN Statistics Division website](#).

¹⁶ Service type data may be unavailable for some quarters, due to the suppression of figures for the confidentiality of individual traders. Data currently displayed here refers to the annual data for 2021 rather than the sum of the latest four quarters.

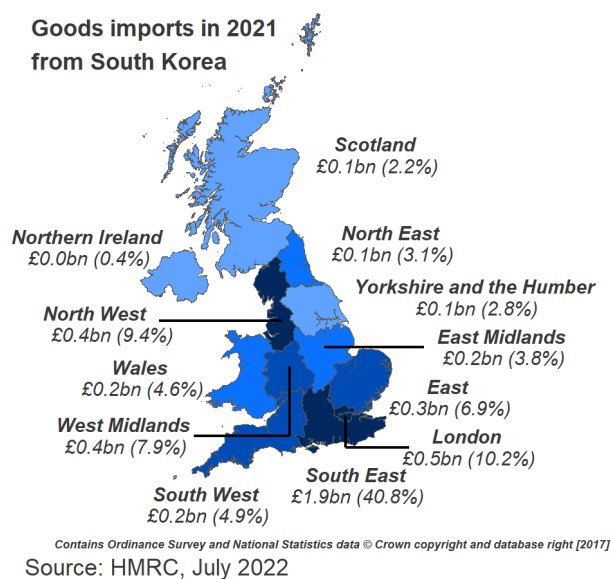
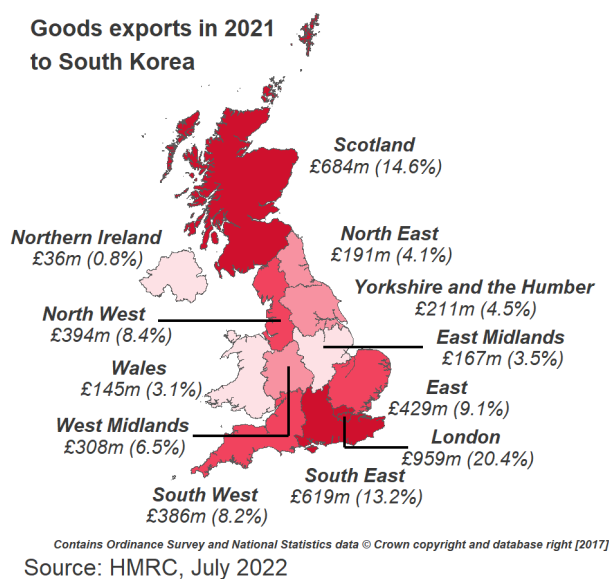
Trade in goods by UK countries and English regions (HMRC)^{17 18}

Regional trade definitions

UK regions - The UK is categorised into 12 regions based on the International Territorial level 1 (ITL1). This level includes 9 regions in England, as well as Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Regional trade data - The data are compiled by merging HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC) trade data with employment data from the Interdepartmental Business Register (IDBR) so a business' trade can be allocated to a UK region based on the proportion of its employees employed in that region. Where a trader is not matched with the IDBR, its trade is matched with ONS postcode data to obtain the UK region in which the Head Office of the VAT-registered business is based.

The maps below show the value of UK goods exports and imports between each UK region and South Korea in 2021. The maps are shaded with the 3 UK regions with the highest amount of trade as the darkest colour, and the 3 UK regions with the lowest amount of trade as the lightest colour.



The data that are presented in the maps above for 2021 in £ million for exports and £ billion for imports are also given in the table below:

UK country or English region	North East	North West	Yorkshire and the Humber	East Midlands	West Midlands	East	London	South East	South West	Wales	Scotland	Northern Ireland
Value of goods exports to South Korea	191	394	211	167	308	429	959	619	386	145	684	36
Percentage of total goods exports to South Korea	4.1%	8.4%	4.5%	3.5%	6.5%	9.1%	20.4%	13.2%	8.2%	3.1%	14.6%	0.8%
Value of goods imports from South Korea	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.5	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.0
Percentage of total goods imports from South Korea	3.1%	9.4%	2.8%	3.8%	7.9%	6.9%	10.2%	40.8%	4.9%	4.6%	2.2%	0.4%

Note that these figures from HMRC are reported on a physical movement basis and are **not directly comparable** to trade data from ONS which are reported on a change of ownership basis. **Percentages will not total 100%** as data not allocated to a single UK country or English region are not presented.

¹⁷ HMRC data source for regional UK trade data: [HMRC Regional Trade Statistics](#) (data extracted from the spreadsheet download using the HMRC [interactive tables](#)).

¹⁸ Totals presented here will differ from overall HMRC trade figures due to the exclusion of trade in non-monetary gold and non-response estimates and the exclusion of data not allocated to a UK country or region. Figures for 2021 are provisional and subject to change.

UK Market Share (ONS and UNCTAD)^{19 20}

Market Share definitions

UK market share – Imports from the UK as a percentage of all the goods and services imported by South Korea. Market share is provided for total imports from the UK, as well as for goods and services separately.

Market share methodology – These UK market share statistics are derived by the Department for International Trade, using publicly available data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). These new statistics allows users to estimate the importance of UK trade on imports to each trading partner. Market share is calculated as the value of imports from the UK using data from [ONS](#), divided by the value of total imports using data from [UNCTAD](#). Data from UNCTAD are converted from US dollars into pounds sterling by using the annual average spot exchange rate²¹.

The UK's market share for South Korea in 2020 was as follows:

- **The total UK market share in South Korea was 1.7% in 2020 for goods and services.** This is an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2019.
- The UK market share in South Korea was 1.5% in 2020 for **goods only**. This is an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2019.
- The UK market share in South Korea was 2.8% in 2020 for **services only**. This is an increase of 0.5 percentage points from 2019.

Number of VAT-registered businesses trading goods (HMRC)^{22 23 24}

VAT-registered businesses definition

VAT-registered businesses - Any company with a VAT taxable turnover of more than £85,000 must be registered for VAT with HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC). These estimates do not cover unregistered businesses (those businesses who are not registered for VAT and do not have an Economic Operator Registration and Identification (EORI) number), or those businesses that trade in services.

Businesses trading with South Korea in 2020:

- In 2020, around 6,800 UK VAT-registered businesses exported goods to South Korea.
- In 2020, around 6,600 UK VAT-registered businesses imported goods from South Korea.

Businesses trading with the world in 2020:

- In 2020, around 148,700 UK VAT-registered businesses exported goods to the world.
- In 2020, around 252,900 UK VAT-registered businesses imported goods from the world.

¹⁹ ONS data source for market share: [UK total trade data \(seasonally adjusted\)](#).

²⁰ UNCTAD data source for market share: [Goods and Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual](#). Some UNCTAD data may be based on estimates.

²¹ Annual average spot exchange rates for \$USD to £GBP are sourced from the [Bank of England](#).

²² HMRC data source for VAT-registered businesses trading goods: [HMRC Trade in Goods by Business Characteristics](#). These are experimental statistics and results should be treated with caution.

²³ Estimates only cover VAT-registered businesses exporting or importing goods. Data for UK businesses engaged in trade of services with South Korea are not available. VAT-registered business may trade with multiple trading partners abroad so care should be taken when adding figures for multiple trading partners.

²⁴ Counts of businesses trading with individual EU partners exclude businesses trading below [Intrastat](#) thresholds, which for 2018 was £1.5million for EU imports and £250,000 for EU exports. The number of VAT-registered businesses has been rounded to the nearest 100 here.

Trade in Value Added (OECD)²⁵ ²⁶

Trade in Value Added definitions

Trade in Value Added (TiVA) - TiVA is a statistical approach to examine supply chains, which is not possible with conventional ('gross') trade statistics. This is because TiVA treats international trade flows as flows of value added rather than gross flows of final goods and services.

Domestic and foreign value added - In TiVA, gross exports are decomposed into domestic and foreign value added. Domestic value added measures the value added generated by the domestic economy in the production of its exports (e.g. the value added by UK car manufacturers and their UK supply chains in car exports). Foreign value added measures the value added contribution that foreign suppliers make to these exports (e.g. the import of foreign car parts).

TiVA statistics - Although TiVA offers advantages over traditional ways of measuring trade, these statistics are not fully developed. These results are estimates which should be considered complementary to conventional trade statistics and not be over-interpreted. In addition, the geographical detail is limited for developing countries. More information on TiVA can be found in a recent [research report](#) by the Department for International Trade and Cambridge Econometrics.

UK forward linkages for exports - Measures the reliance of foreign exporters on UK value added (inputs).

UK backward linkages for exports - Measures the reliance of UK exporters on foreign value added (inputs).

Employment supported by exports - This provides an estimate of the number of employees in exporting industries, and their domestic supply chains that are supported by exporting activity.

UK forward linkages for exports:

- **In 2018, 0.6% of the total value added in gross exports from South Korea originated in the UK.**
- In 2018, 32.0% of the value added content in gross exports from South Korea reflected foreign imports from abroad. The largest sources of foreign value added for gross exports from South Korea were China (5.2%), United States (3.6%), and Japan (2.7%).

UK backward linkages for exports:

- **In 2018, 0.2% of the total value added in gross exports from the UK originated in South Korea.**
- In 2018, 17.8% of the value added content in gross exports from the UK reflected foreign imports from abroad. The largest sources of foreign value added for gross exports from the UK were United States (2.7%), Germany (1.8%), and Norway (1.5%).

Employment supported by exports:²⁷

- Exporting activity in South Korea supported 6.2 million persons in 2018 (23.3% of total South Korea employment). Exports to the UK supported around 86,600 jobs in South Korea in 2018.
- Exporting activity in the UK supported 6.8 million persons in 2018 (20.9% of total UK employment). Exports to South Korea supported around 111,300 jobs in the UK in 2018.

²⁵ The estimates in this factsheet are based on Trade in Value Added statistics published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD): a) [Trade in Value Added database \(origin of value added in gross exports\), November 2021](#); and b) [Trade in Employment \(TiM\) database: Principal indicators, February 2022](#), indicators EXGR_DEM and EMPN_EXGRDEM.

²⁶ The latest data available from OECD are for 2018. Trade in Value Added data are currently awaiting revisions and are correct as of 18 February 2022.

²⁷ These estimates measure employees directly and indirectly supported by exports i.e. workers employed in exporting businesses and in other domestic businesses supplying inputs to the exporting businesses. The estimates should be interpreted as employment *supported* by exports, rather than employment *created* by exports, as the jobs may have previously existed to serve the domestic market. Employees may also be supported by exports from a multiple number of trading partners. As with the core TiVA data, these estimates are based on a number of assumptions and modelling, so should be interpreted with caution.

Foreign Direct Investment with South Korea (ONS)^{28 29 30}

Foreign direct investment definitions

Foreign direct investment (FDI) - Investment made by a firm or individual in one economy ('direct investor') to acquire a 'lasting interest' in an enterprise operating in another economy. The lasting interest is deemed to exist if the direct investor acquires at least 10% of equity, or equivalently 10% of the voting rights, of the company.

FDI stock - The accumulated value of all previous investments at the end of a reference period. Figures are net, that is the value of investment minus disinvestment. **UK outward FDI stock** provides the total value of FDI by UK investors in economies abroad (investment of a UK parent company in South Korea), while **UK inward FDI stock** provides the total value of FDI by non-UK investors in the UK (investment of a South Korea parent company in the UK).

Data disclosure - It can happen that FDI is coming from only a few investors. In that case, figures are suppressed by the ONS to avoid disclosure of information relating to individual enterprises.

Note: *The FDI data for 2020 have been affected by changes in sampling methodology. Improvements have been made to the population which has been sampled and the way that businesses are sampled from the population, capturing a wider range of businesses. This will mean 2020 data are more representative of UK FDI with overseas partners.*

However, some caution should be taken when comparing 2020 data to previous years. The methodology change has led to an increase in reported FDI, particularly inward FDI, in 2020. The effect of this methodology change will vary between partners, although it is not possible to quantify this specific impact for individual partners.

More information about the methodology changes can be found on the [ONS website](#).

UK outward FDI stock:

- In 2020, the **stock of FDI from the UK in South Korea** was £4.6 billion, 5.6% or £245 million higher than in 2019. In 2020, South Korea accounted for 0.3% of the total UK outward FDI stock.
- In 2020, the total UK FDI abroad was £1.7 trillion. In 2020, the **top destination for UK FDI** was United States, accounting for 24.1% of the total UK outward FDI stock, followed by Netherlands (11.2%) and Luxembourg (6.0%).

UK inward FDI stock:

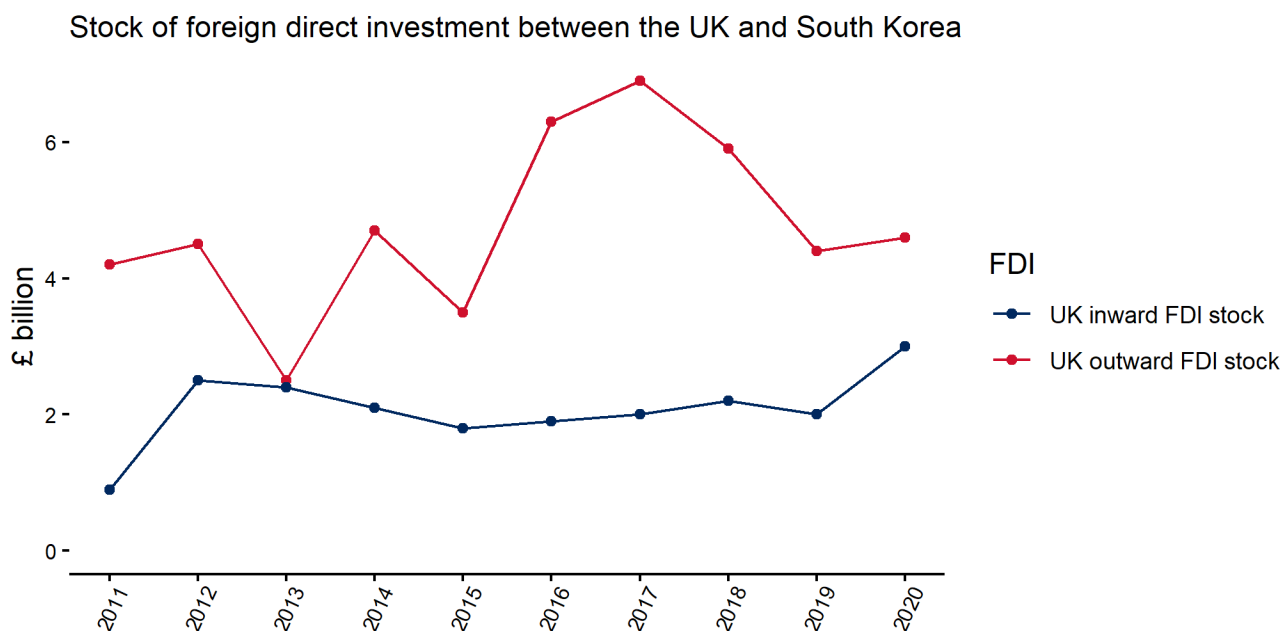
- In 2020, the **stock of FDI from South Korea in the UK** was £3.0 billion, 49.0% or £991 million higher than in 2019. In 2020, South Korea accounted for 0.2% of the total UK inward FDI stock.
- In 2020, the total FDI in the UK was £1.9 trillion. In 2020, the **top investor in the UK** was United States, accounting for 24.8% of the total UK inward FDI stock, followed by Netherlands (10.4%) and Jersey (7.0%).

²⁸ ONS data source for FDI statistics: [Foreign Direct Investment involving UK companies](#).

²⁹ Data are presented on a directional basis which means they are not directly comparable to the asset/liability report prepared by ONS as part of the Balance of Payments statistical release. Figures are on net basis (investments minus disinvestments) and are given in nominal terms. Negative FDI values occur when disinvestments are greater than investments. Data are on an immediate destination/source basis and not an ultimate destination/source, which is likely to overstate financial centres such as the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

³⁰ This factsheet contains data as reported by the UK and are subject to asymmetries e.g. UK outward FDI to South Korea (reported by the UK) may not match South Korea inward FDI from the UK (reported by South Korea). For consistency when comparing between partners, users are advised to use UK-reported data as far as possible.

The chart below shows FDI between the UK and South Korea between 2011 and 2020:



Source: ONS, 2020 FDI main release. Data are on a directional basis, data suppression can cause breaks in the trends.

The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ billion:

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
UK outward FDI stock	4.2	4.5	2.5	4.7	3.5	6.3	6.9	5.9	4.4	4.6
UK inward FDI stock	0.9	2.5	2.4	2.1	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.0	3.0

Economic statistics (as reported by South Korea)

Trade and investment data for South Korea (UNCTAD)^{31 32 33}

The following data are reported by South Korea and are for reference only. Whenever possible use data from UK sources for trade and investment. All data below are presented in \$USD in billions.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
TRADE								
Nominal exports	721.7	725.3	640.6	606.7	670.0	725.3	655.9	603.9
Nominal imports	647.8	642.4	534.9	507.6	593.2	645.0	603.6	537.6
Nominal trade balance	73.9	82.9	105.6	99.1	76.9	80.3	52.3	66.3
INVESTMENT								
Inward FDI stock	180.9	179.4	179.5	188.9	229.4	237.2	241.7	264.9
Outward FDI stock	238.8	260.5	285.9	310.2	360.6	405.2	456.0	500.9

³¹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) data sources for trade: [Goods and Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual](#); and for investment: [Foreign direct investment: Inward and outward flows and stock, annual](#).

³² Estimates are given in italics. Historic data pre-2013 can be found on the [UNCTAD website](#).

³³ All trade data are on a Balance of Payments basis. The FDI data are on a directional and net (investment minus disinvestment) basis. These figures are given in current prices and are rounded to the nearest \$0.1 billion, with missing data represented by dashes.

Economic data and projections for South Korea (IMF)^{34 35}

The following table presents economic statistics for South Korea. Projections include assumptions of the effects of COVID-19 and may be subject to change in the future. Estimated data, as well as projections up to 2027, are presented in italics and are subject to revision.

Year	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
TRADE GROWTH									
Change in exports (%)	0.2	-1.8	9.9	6.6	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5
Change in imports (%)	-1.9	-3.3	8.6	8.1	4.2	3.8	3.4	3.3	3.3
CURRENT ACCOUNT									
Current account balance (% of GDP)	3.6	4.6	4.9	2.2	3.2	3.8	4.2	4.2	4.1
GDP									
Change in real GDP (%)	2.2	-0.7	4.1	2.3	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.3
GDP per capita (1,000 \$USD)	31.9	31.6	34.8	35.0	37.3	39.2	41.1	43.0	44.8
GDP PPP (Int'l \$billion)	2,309.3	2,317.2	2,510.5	2,735.9	2,900.9	3,049.0	3,188.0	3,327.6	3,471.2
INFLATION									
Inflation, year average (CPI %)	0.4	0.5	2.5	4.0	2.4	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
UNEMPLOYMENT									
Unemployment rate (% of total labour force)	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6
POPULATION									
Population (million)	51.7	51.8	51.7	51.6	51.5	51.4	51.4	51.3	51.3
INVESTMENT-SAVINGS									
Total investment (% of GDP)	31.5	31.9	31.8	33.5	32.9	32.5	32.3	31.9	31.7
Gross national savings (% of GDP)	34.8	36.2	36.7	35.7	36.1	36.3	36.5	36.1	35.7
BUDGET DEFICIT-DEBT									
General government net lending/borrowing (% of GDP)	0.4	-2.2	-0.6	-1.6	-1.1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.1	-1.2
General government gross debt (% of GDP)	42.1	48.9	49.8	52.0	53.3	55.1	56.8	58.3	59.8

South Korea was the 10th largest economy in 2021, in terms of gross domestic product (GDP). The UK was the 5th largest economy in 2021.³⁶

³⁴ International Monetary Fund (IMF) provide economic commentary in their [World Economic Outlook reports](#). The latest data presented here can be found in the [World Economic Database, April 2022](#). Changes in real GDP (%) includes latest estimates from the [July 2022](#) World Economic Outlook report for those economies where [data](#) were provided.

³⁵ Projections and estimates are given in italics. More information for each metric and each partner, as well as historic data pre-2019, can be found on the [IMF website](#).

³⁶ GDP ranking based on values in current prices (nominal terms) in \$USD. Some GDP values for partners are based on estimates which may influence the rankings when revised.

Top goods traded with the world by South Korea (UN Comtrade)^{37 38}

Data presented here shows the top commodities traded to the world, not solely the UK, by South Korea. These commodities are presented on a different classification from the earlier data by commodity from the ONS and should not be directly compared.

You access more statistics about individual export and import **markets** for South Korea by using the online [UN Comtrade tool](#) developed by the Department for International Trade and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Top goods exported to the world by South Korea in 2020:

Rank	HS Commodity	\$USD billion	% of total goods exported
1	85 - Electrical machinery and equipment	159.7	31.1%
2	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	67.9	13.2%
3	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	54.2	10.6%
4	39 - Plastics and articles thereof	31.6	6.2%
5	27 - Mineral fuels or oils, products of their distillation	25.4	5.0%
6	90 - Optical, photographic, cinematographic and medical equipment	20.1	3.9%
7	72 - Iron and steel	19.7	3.9%
8	89 - Ships, boats and floating structures	18.7	3.7%
9	29 - Organic chemicals	15.4	3.0%
10	73 - Articles of iron or steel	7.9	1.5%
	All goods exported	512.7	100.0%

Top goods imported from the world by South Korea in 2020:

Rank	HS Commodity	\$USD billion	% of total goods imported
1	85 - Electrical machinery and equipment	94.1	20.1%
2	27 - Mineral fuels or oils, products of their distillation	86.6	18.5%
3	84 - Machinery and mechanical appliances	57.4	12.3%
4	90 - Optical, photographic, cinematographic and medical equipment	19.4	4.1%
5	87 - Vehicles other than railway or tramway stock	18.2	3.9%
6	26 - Ores, slag and ash	15.9	3.4%
7	29 - Organic chemicals	12.1	2.6%
8	39 - Plastics and articles thereof	11.5	2.5%
9	72 - Iron and steel	11.1	2.4%
10	30 - Pharmaceutical products	8.0	1.7%
	All goods imported	467.5	100.0%

³⁷ United Nations (UN) Comtrade data are sourced from the online [UN Comtrade tool](#). The data reported above are for 2020, but as the data upload to UN Comtrade is continuous, more timely data may be available from the source.

³⁸ Data are classified using the [Harmonized System](#) and are given on a physical movement basis, with UK data comparable to HMRC data sources rather than the headline trade figures presented here from ONS.

Top services traded with the world by South Korea (ITC Trade Map)^{39 40 41}

Data presented here shows the top service types traded to the world, not solely the UK, by South Korea.

Top services exported to the world by South Korea in 2020:

Rank	EBOPS Service Type	\$USD billion	% of total services exported
1	Transport	24.9	28.5%
2	Other business services	24.5	28.1%
3	Travel	8.7	10.0%
4	Charges for the use of intellectual property n.i.e.	6.9	7.9%
5	Telecommunications, computer, and information services	6.6	7.6%
	All services exported	87.3	100.0%

Top services imported from the world by South Korea in 2020:

Rank	EBOPS Service Type	\$USD billion	% of total services imported
1	Other business services	33.8	32.8%
2	Transport	24.2	23.5%
3	Travel	14.7	14.3%
4	Charges for the use of intellectual property n.i.e.	10.0	9.7%
5	Manufacturing services on physical inputs owned by others	7.8	7.6%
	All services imported	102.9	100.0%

³⁹ International Trade Centre (ITC) Trade Map data are sourced from the online [ITC Trade Map tool](#). The data above are for 2020, but as the data upload to ITC is continuous, more timely data may be available from the source.

⁴⁰ Data are classified on the [EBOPS 2010](#) basis. 'Other business services' include: Research and development, professional and management consulting services, technical services and trade related services. A full description of all service types can be found on the [UN Statistics Division website](#).

⁴¹ Estimates are shown in italics, where for some partners only estimates are available - These data have been included for information and should be treated with caution.

Background Notes

This document is one of a wider set of factsheets between the UK and its individual trade and investment partners which can be found on the [Trade and Investment Factsheets website](#). All of these factsheets are published as [Official Statistics](#) as defined by the [UK Statistics Authority](#), and are compliant with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) where they meet user needs as well as promoting trustworthiness, quality and public value in Government statistics. The publication of these factsheets as Official Statistics was agreed by the Chief Statistician at the Department for International Trade, who monitors these factsheets to ensure they continue to adhere to the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). These factsheets have not been formally assessed by the [Office of Statistics Regulation](#) and are therefore not designated as [National Statistics](#).

As a requisite of publishing as Official Statistics, a [quality and methodology report](#) has been produced which outlines the quality of these factsheets, as well as providing more information on the methodology of the data sources presented here. This report contains hyperlinks to information on the strengths and weaknesses for each data source. Statistics contained in the factsheets from UK data providers all come from Official Statistics publications, with some sources also being from National Statistics publications.

Future updates of these factsheets can be found on the [Government update schedule for Official Statistics](#). These scheduled updates are in line with significant updates from UK data providers when they release new data. Unscheduled releases of the factsheets may also be necessary to accommodate data updates where little or no advanced notice are given, such as in the case of international data updates. Please see the data update schedule and revisions policy in the [quality and methodology report](#) for more information. Please note that there may be occasions where more recent data than is provided here can be found directly from the data providers.

The Department for International Trade welcome any feedback or comments on these factsheets, please send these to statistics@trade.gov.uk.



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