



### 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 May 2020.

Supporting tables, visuals and data can be found at [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com)

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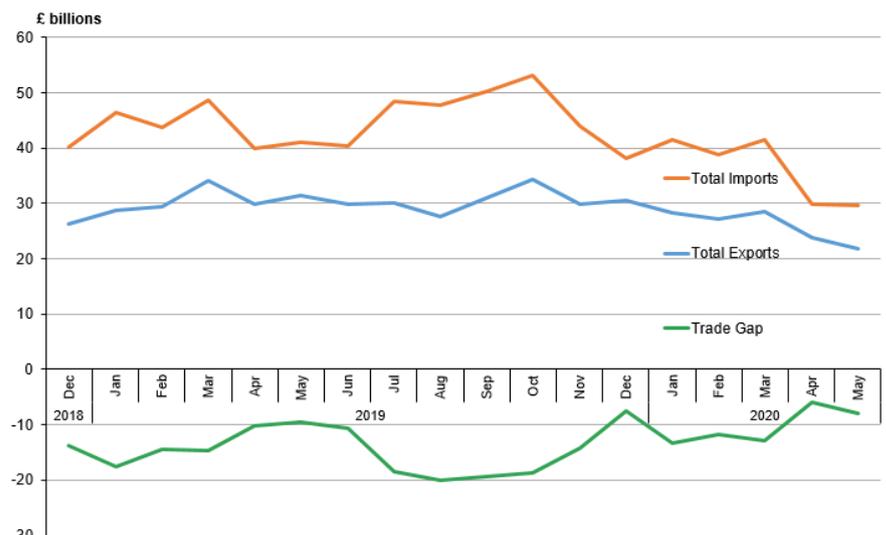
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### Trade in Goods, May 2020

- Total **exports** of goods for May 2020 were £21.9 billion. This was a decrease of £2.0 billion (8.2%) compared with last month, and a decrease of £9.5 billion (30%) compared with May 2019.
- Total **imports** of goods for May 2020 were £29.7 billion. This was a decrease of £0.1 billion (0.4%) compared with last month, and a decrease of £11.3 billion (28%) compared with May 2019.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £7.9 billion, widening by £1.8 billion on last month.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics  
Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional



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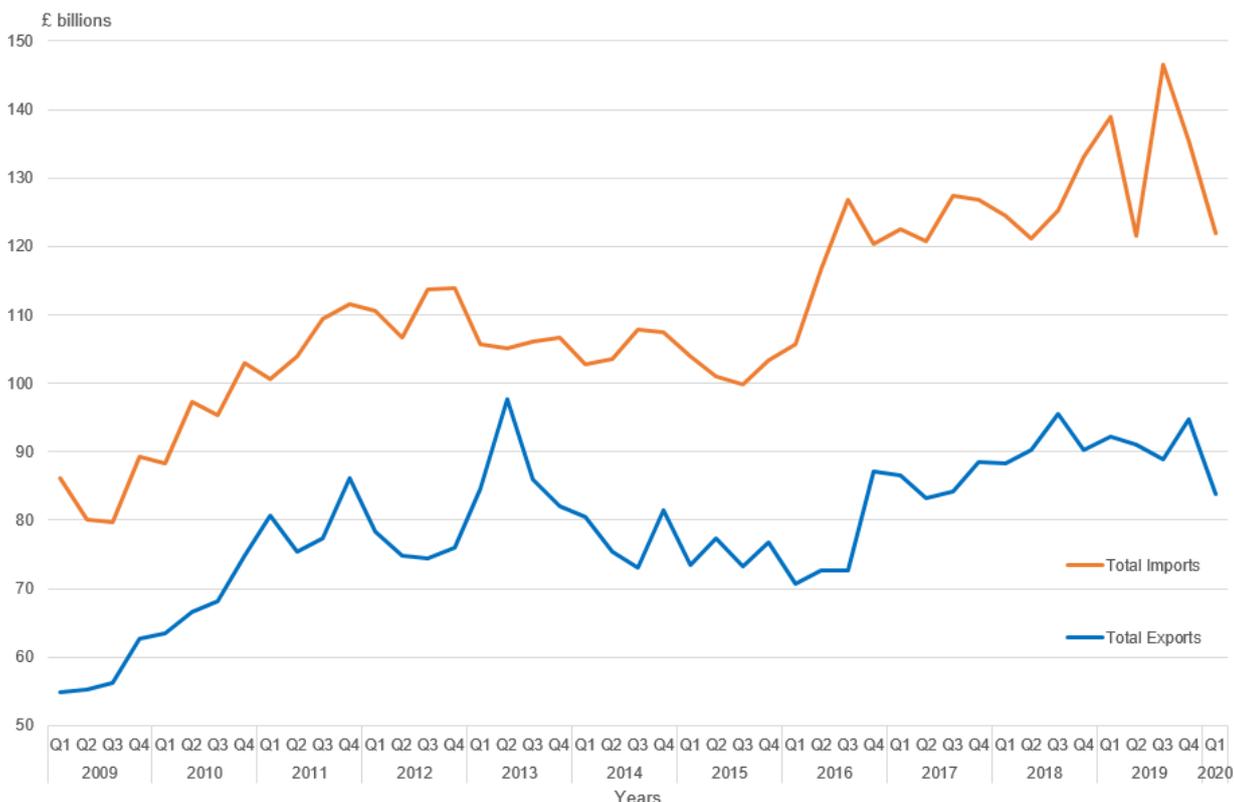
# Trade in Goods Trends

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 reached its highest point in Q3 of 2019. Exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a steady rise from Q2 of 2017 to Q3 of 2018. Q1 of 2020 saw the lowest quarterly exports value since Q2 of 2017.

- ↓ Exports down 9% on Q1 2019
- ↓ Imports down 12% on Q1 2019
- Trade deficit narrowed by 19% on Q1 2019

- The total **export** trade for Q1 of 2020 was £83.8 billion, which was a decrease of 9.1% compared with £92.2 billion for Q1 of 2019.
- The total **import** trade for Q1 of 2020 was £122 billion, which was a decrease of 12% compared with £139 billion for Q1 of 2019.
- There was a trade deficit of £38.0 billion for Q1 of 2020. This was a narrowing of 19% compared with £46.7 billion for Q1 2019.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading **import** partner by value. The USA has been the dominant trading partner for **exports** for many years.
- 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 recent months has seen abnormally low values, affecting our largest trade partners and commodity groups at differing magnitudes.

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics  
 Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

# Non-EU & EU Trade in Goods

## Non-EU Trade in Goods:

- **Non-EU exports** for May 2020 were £12.3 billion. This was a decrease of £2.0 billion (14%) on last month, and a decrease of £4.7 billion (28%) compared with May 2019. This is the lowest monthly total since August 2016.
- **Non-EU imports** for May 2020 were £16.1 billion. This was a decrease of £0.6 billion (3.7%) on last month, and a decrease of £3.8 billion (19%) compared with May 2019. This is the lowest monthly total since February 2016.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £3.9 billion.

↓ **Non-EU exports down 14% on last month**

## EU Trade in Goods:

- **EU exports** for May 2020 were £9.6 billion. This was an increase of less than £0.1 billion (0.2%) on last month, and a decrease of £4.8 billion (33%) compared with May 2019.
- **EU imports** for May 2020 were £13.6 billion. This was an increase of £0.5 billion (3.8%) on last month, and a decrease of £7.5 billion (35%) compared with May 2019.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £4.0 billion.

↓ **EU imports down 35% on May 2019**

**Figure 3: Total UK Trade in Goods, with EU and Non-EU, May 2020**



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

# Exports: Country Analysis

- The USA replaced Switzerland as the largest export partner country, despite experiencing the 2nd largest value decrease on last month and the largest value decrease on May 2019, down £351 million (11%) and £1,667 million (37%) respectively.
- Switzerland experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,859 million (51%). In contrast it showed the 3rd largest value increase on May 2019, up £148 million (9.2%).
- Germany saw the 4th largest value decrease on last month and 3rd largest on May 2019, down £278 million (12%) and £935 million (31%) respectively.
- China experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on May 2019, down £957 million (54%).
- Belarus (in 13th place) experienced the largest value increase on last month and on May 2019, up £464 million (from £3.4 million), and £456 million (from £11.0 million) respectively.
- France experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £193 million (19%).

↓ Exports to the USA down 37% on May 2019

↓ Exports to Switzerland down 51% on last month

**Table 1: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, May 2020**

Partner Country	May 2020		April 2020		May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)	
USA	2,841	3,191	-11.0	4,507	-37.0	
Germany	2,124	2,402	-11.6	3,059	-30.6	
Switzerland	1,758	3,617	-51.4	1,610	9.2	
Irish Republic	1,502	1,318	14.0	1,725	-12.9	
Netherlands	1,336	1,403	-4.7	2,160	-38.1	
France	1,202	1,009	19.1	1,882	-36.2	
China	822	1,067	-22.9	1,779	-53.8	
Belgium	706	636	11.0	1,240	-43.1	
Hong Kong	696	865	-19.6	924	-24.7	
Canada	625	741	-15.6	441	41.6	
Others	8,258	7,579	8.9	12,074	-31.6	
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>9,618</b>	<b>9,594</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>-33.4</b>	
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>12,252</b>	<b>14,234</b>	<b>-13.9</b>	<b>16,967</b>	<b>-27.8</b>	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>21,870</b>	<b>23,828</b>	<b>-8.2</b>	<b>31,402</b>	<b>-30.4</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics  
Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

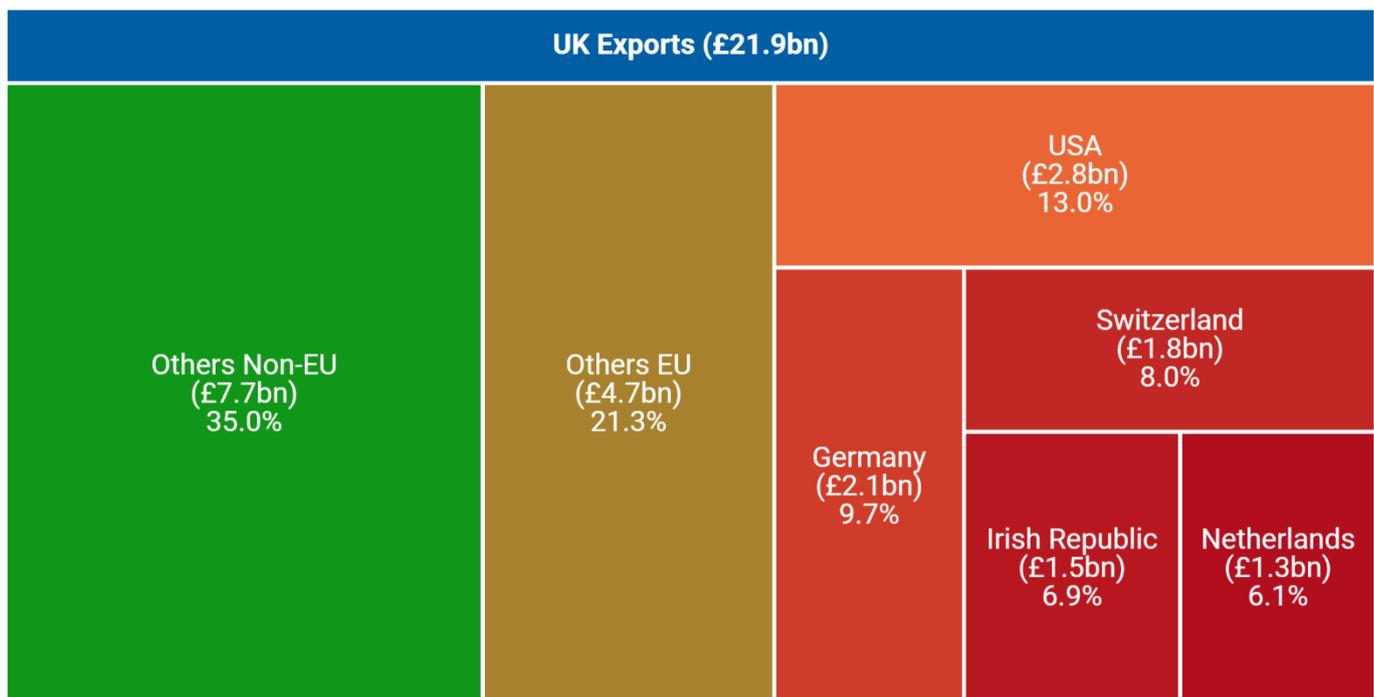
# Exports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 44% of total exports in goods in May 2020. This was an increase from a 43% share in May 2019.
- The USA accounted for 13% of the total value of exports from the UK, this was a decrease from a 14% share in May 2019.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 9.7%. This was a decrease of less than 1 percentage point on May 2019.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Switzerland dropped to 3rd place from 1st and Belgium rose to 8th place from 10th.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with May 2019. Most notably, Switzerland rose to 3rd place from 7th, and Canada rose to 10th place from 16th.

↓ **The USA had a 13% share of total exports in May 2020**

↓ **Germany had a 10% share of total exports in May 2020**

**Figure 4: Share of UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, May 2020**



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

## Exports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to May 2020, the USA remained the largest export partner country. Among the top 10, it experienced the 3rd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to February 2020, down 28%, and decreased on the 3 months to May 2019, down 27%.
- Among the top 10, China experienced the largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to February 2020, and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 34% and 49% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to February 2020, and on the 3 months to May 2019, up more than 2.5 times the value and 80% respectively.
- Among the top 10, France experienced the 2nd largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to February 2020, and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 32% and 41% respectively.
- 7 of the top 10 partner countries experienced a decrease on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019. Switzerland, Hong Kong and Canada were the exceptions in each case.

↓ **Exports to China down 49% on the 3 months to May 2019**

↑ **Exports to Switzerland more than 2.5 times the value of the 3 months to February 2020**

**Table 2: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, 3 months to May 2020**

Partner Country	3 months to May 2020		3 months to Feb 2020		3 months to May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on February 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)	
USA	10,149	14,027	-27.6	13,918	-27.1	
Germany	7,351	9,036	-18.6	9,043	-18.7	
Switzerland	7,035	2,574	173.3	3,911	79.9	
Irish Republic	4,501	5,092	-11.6	5,745	-21.7	
Netherlands	4,495	5,973	-24.7	6,090	-26.2	
France	3,835	5,672	-32.4	6,491	-40.9	
China	3,053	4,595	-33.6	5,958	-48.8	
Hong Kong	2,724	1,867	45.9	2,500	8.9	
Belgium	2,308	2,911	-20.7	3,614	-36.1	
Canada	1,792	1,143	56.8	1,361	31.7	
Others	26,886	33,094	-18.8	36,743	-26.8	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>74,130</b>	<b>85,983</b>	<b>-13.8</b>	<b>95,375</b>	<b>-22.3</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

## Exports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest export commodity, despite showing the largest value decrease on last month, down £2,212 million (38%). In contrast, it saw the 3rd largest increase on May 2019, up £202 million (5.9%).
- Organic chemicals experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £192 million (19%). In contrast, it saw the largest increase on May 2019, up £232 million (40%).
- Mineral fuels experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, and the 2nd largest on May 2019, down £156 million (12%) and £2,334 million (68%) respectively.
- Motor vehicles (in 11th place) experienced the largest value decrease on May 2019, down £2,417 million (79%).
- Art and antiques (17th place) experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £196 million (over 4 times in value).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the 2nd largest value increase on May 2019, up £214 million (15%).

↓ Exports of Precious metals down 38% on last month

↓ Exports of Motor vehicles down 79% on May 2019

**Table 3: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, May 2020**

Commodity Description	May 2020	April 2020		May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)
Precious metals	3,628	5,839	-37.9	3,425	5.9
Mechanical appliances	3,305	3,330	-0.7	4,935	-33.0
Pharmaceutical products	1,687	1,778	-5.1	1,473	14.5
Electronic equipment	1,411	1,321	6.8	1,769	-20.2
Mineral fuels	1,105	1,260	-12.4	3,439	-67.9
Measuring devices and gauges	1,024	966	6.1	1,290	-20.6
Organic chemicals	810	1,002	-19.2	578	40.1
Other products	708	551	28.5	747	-5.1
Plastics and plastic products	677	700	-3.3	798	-15.1
Aircraft	663	549	20.7	1,234	-46.3
Others	6,852	6,532	4.9	11,714	-41.5
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>21,870</b>	<b>23,828</b>	<b>-8.2</b>	<b>31,402</b>	<b>-30.4</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

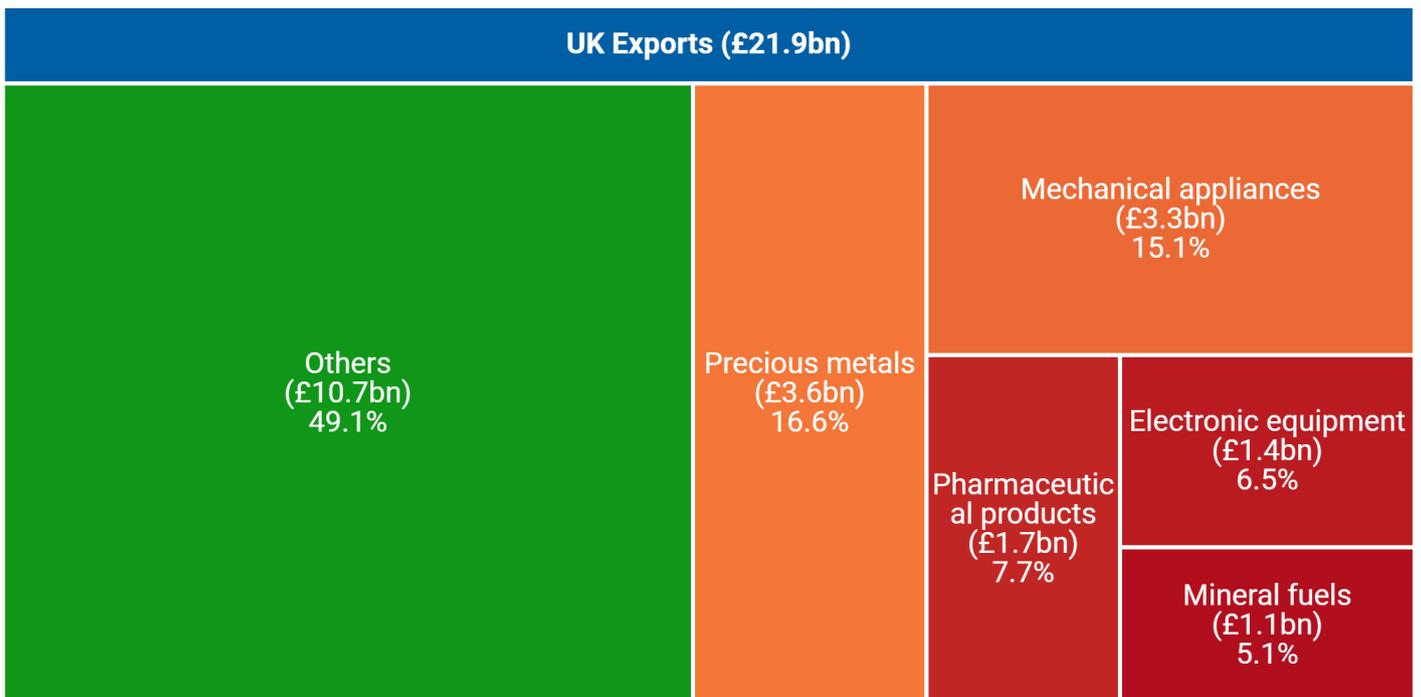
# Exports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 51% of exports in May 2020, this was a decrease from a 53% share in May 2019.
- Precious metals had the largest proportion, accounting for 17% of total exports. This was an increase from an 11% share in May 2019.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 15% of total exports. This was a decrease from a 16% share in May 2019.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month, although the top 5 were unchanged.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with May 2019. Most notably, Precious metals rose to 1st place from 3rd, Pharmaceutical products rose to 3rd place from 6th, and Organic chemicals rose to 7th place from 13th. Motor vehicles dropped out of the top 10, down to 11th place from 4th.

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 17% of total exports in May 2020**

↓ **Mechanical appliances accounted for 15% of total exports in May 2020**

**Figure 5: Share of UK exports by the top 5 commodities, May 2020**



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

## Exports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to May 2020, Precious metals replaced Mechanical appliances as the largest export commodity. It experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to February 2020, and on the 3 months to May 2019, up 49% and 24% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 52% and 54% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 47% and 52% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Pharmaceutical products experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to February 2020, up 22%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced decreases on the 3 months to February 2020. Precious metals, Pharmaceutical products, and Plastics and plastic products were the exceptions.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced decreases on the 3 months to May 2019. Precious metals, and Organic chemicals were the exceptions.

↑ **Precious metals exports up 49% on the 3 months to February 2020**

↓ **Motor vehicles exports down 54% on the 3 months to May 2019**

**Table 4: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to May 2020**

Commodity Description	3 months to May 2020		3 months to Feb 2020		3 months to May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on February 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)	
Precious metals	13,065	8,784	48.7	10,515	24.2	
Mechanical appliances	10,959	13,518	-18.9	14,463	-24.2	
Pharmaceutical products	5,243	4,315	21.5	5,413	-3.1	
Electronic equipment	4,452	5,059	-12.0	5,601	-20.5	
Motor vehicles	4,327	9,091	-52.4	9,367	-53.8	
Mineral fuels	4,022	7,617	-47.2	8,464	-52.5	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,233	3,642	-11.2	3,985	-18.9	
Organic chemicals	2,700	3,151	-14.3	2,397	12.7	
Plastics and plastic products	2,165	2,040	6.1	2,479	-12.6	
Aircraft	2,082	3,612	-42.4	3,770	-44.8	
Others	21,881	25,152	-13.0	28,920	-24.3	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>74,130</b>	<b>85,983</b>	<b>-13.8</b>	<b>95,375</b>	<b>-22.3</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics  
Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

# Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The decrease in exports to Switzerland compared with last month was led by Precious metals, down £1,830 million (54%). The increase on May 2019 was also led by Precious metals, up £346 million (29%).
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was led by Organic chemicals, down £192 million (50%). The decrease on May 2019 was led by Art and antiques, and Motor vehicles, down £546 million (93%) and £470 million (88%) respectively.
- The decrease in exports to Germany on last month was led by Precious metals, down £319 million (71%). The decrease on May 2019 was led by Mineral fuels, Motor vehicles, and Aircraft, down £361 million (75%), £230 million (71%), and £221 million (63%) respectively.
- The increase in exports to Belarus compared with both periods was dominated by Precious metals, up £463 million from nil trade.

↓ Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland down 54% on last month

## Commodity to country

- The decrease in exports of Mineral fuels compared with last month was led by China and the Netherlands, down £77.1 million (63%) and £66.6 million (11%) respectively. The decrease on May 2019 was led by the Netherlands and the USA, down £450 million (45%) and £396 million (86%) respectively.
- The increase in exports of Art and antiques on last month was led by Bermuda, up £115 million (from nil trade).
- The increase in exports of Organic chemicals on May 2019 was led by the Irish Republic, up £189 million (from £8.6 million).
- The increase in exports of Pharmaceutical products on May 2019 was led by Germany and Canada, up £106 million (doubling in value) and £77.8 million (over 3 times in value) respectively.

↓ Exports of Mineral fuels to China down 63% 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: 2020 data is provisional

## Imports: Country Analysis

- China replaced the USA as the largest import partner country, experiencing the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £535 million (17%).
- Hong Kong experienced the largest value increase on last month and the 2nd largest value increase on May 2019, up £695 million (2.5 times the value) and £661 million (more than double the value) respectively.
- Russia experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £861 million (48%). Conversely, it experienced the 3rd largest value increase on May 2019, up £320 million (53%).
- Uzbekistan (ranked 11th) experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month and the largest value increase on May 2019, up £432 million (95%) and £888 million (from £0.1 million) respectively.
- Germany experienced the largest value decrease on May 2019, down £2,427 million (45%).

↑ Imports from Hong Kong up 2.5 times the value on last month

↓ Imports from Germany down 45% on May 2019

**Table 5: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, May 2020**

Partner Country	May 2020	April 2020		May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)
China	3,717	3,181	16.8	3,683	0.9
USA	3,219	3,779	-14.8	3,929	-18.1
Germany	2,907	2,885	0.8	5,334	-45.5
Netherlands	2,525	2,477	2.0	2,971	-15.0
France	1,357	1,175	15.5	2,235	-39.3
Italy	1,196	951	25.7	1,686	-29.1
Belgium	1,174	1,261	-6.9	1,799	-34.8
Hong Kong	1,158	463	150.0	498	132.6
Russia	921	1,781	-48.3	600	53.4
Irish Republic	920	918	0.2	1,189	-22.7
Others	10,634	10,973	-3.1	17,100	-37.8
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>13,611</b>	<b>13,117</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>21,064</b>	<b>-35.4</b>
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>16,117</b>	<b>16,728</b>	<b>-3.7</b>	<b>19,961</b>	<b>-19.3</b>
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>29,728</b>	<b>29,844</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>41,025</b>	<b>-27.5</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

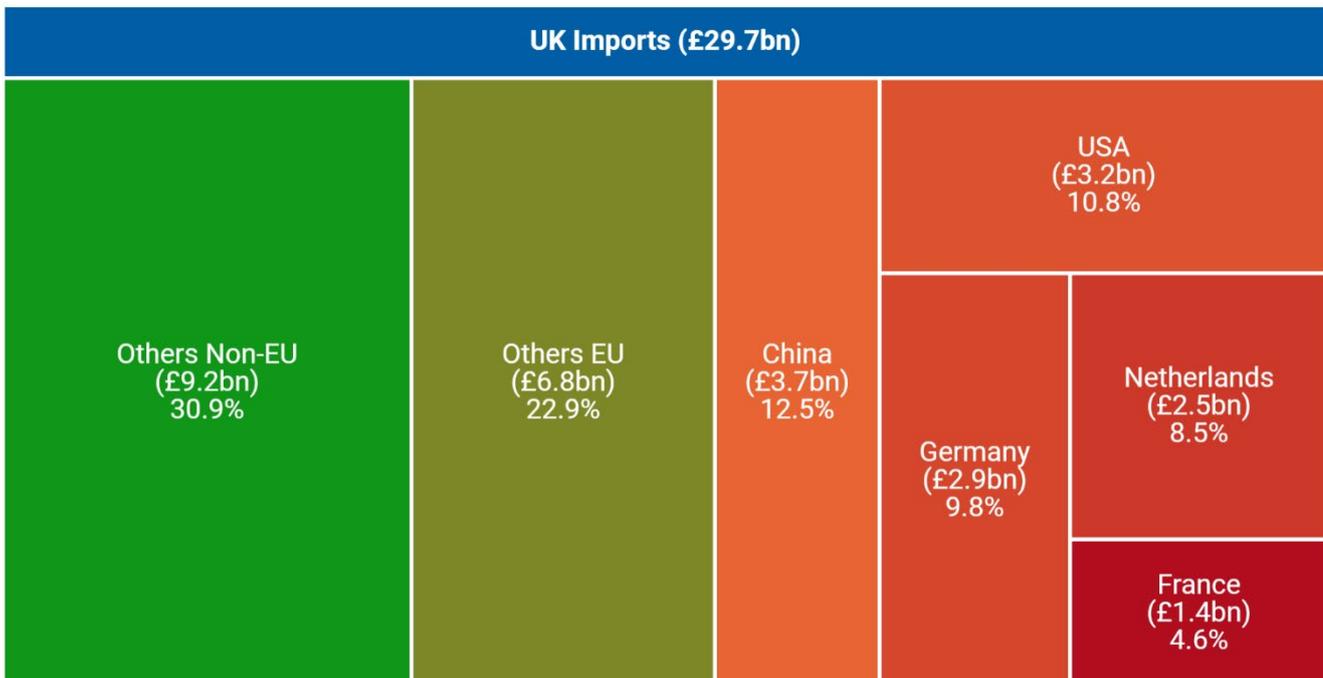
# Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 46% of the total value of goods imported in May 2020. This was an increase from a 44% share in May 2019.
- China accounted for 13% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from a 9.0% share in May 2019.
- The USA had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 11%. This was an increase from a 9.6% share in May 2019.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) have changed compared with last month. Most notably, Hong Kong rose to 8th place from 14th and Russia fell to 9th place from 5th.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) have changed compared with May 2019. Most notably, Germany fell to 3rd place from 1st, Hong Kong rose to 8th place from 20th, and Russia rose to 9th place from 17th.

↑ **The top 5 partners accounted for 46% of total imports in May 2020**

↑ **China accounted for 13% of total imports in May 2020**

**Figure 7: Share of UK imports of goods from the top 5 countries, May 2020**



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

## Imports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to May 2020, the USA replaced Germany as the largest import partner country. This is despite experiencing decreases on the 3 months to February 2020 and the 3 months to May 2019, down 6.0% and 3.6% respectively.
- Among the top 10, France experienced the largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 24% and 41% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Russia experienced the only percentage increases on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, up 0.9% and 64% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Germany experienced the 2nd largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 22% and 36% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Italy experienced the 3rd largest decreases on the 3 months to February 2020 and on the 3 months to May 2019, down 21% and 30% respectively.

↓ Imports from France down 41% on the 3 months to May 2019

↑ Imports from Russia up 64% on the 3 months to May 2019

**Table 6: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, 3 months to May 2020**

Partner Country	3 months to May 2020		3 months to Feb 2020		3 months to May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on February 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)	
USA	11,652	12,399	-6.0	12,090	-3.6	
Germany	11,196	14,376	-22.1	17,572	-36.3	
China	9,198	10,224	-10.0	10,443	-11.9	
Netherlands	8,440	8,689	-2.9	10,604	-20.4	
Belgium	4,690	5,316	-11.8	6,268	-25.2	
France	4,608	6,027	-23.5	7,797	-40.9	
Russia	3,624	3,591	0.9	2,205	64.3	
Italy	3,568	4,497	-20.7	5,122	-30.4	
Spain	3,023	3,675	-17.7	4,316	-30.0	
Irish Republic	2,921	3,140	-7.0	3,543	-17.6	
Others	38,066	46,660	-18.4	49,776	-23.5	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>100,985</b>	<b>118,593</b>	<b>-14.8</b>	<b>129,738</b>	<b>-22.2</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

## Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest import commodity, experiencing the largest value increases on last month and May 2019, up £459 million (10%) and £2,555 million (more than double the value) respectively.
- Mechanical appliances experienced the largest value decrease on last month and the 3rd largest value decrease on May 2019, down £532 million (13%) and £2,016 million (37%) respectively.
- Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £402 million (46%). Conversely, it experienced the largest value decrease on May 2019, down £3,530 million (74%).
- Other textile goods experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month and the 2nd largest on May 2019, up £379 million (more than 2.5 times the value) and £440 million (more than 3 times the value) respectively.
- Mineral fuels experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month and on May 2019, down £361 million (24%) and £2,984 million (73%) respectively.

↑ Imports of Precious metals up more than double on May 2019

↓ Imports of Motor vehicles down 74% on May 2019

**Table 7: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, May 2020**

Commodity Description	May 2020	April 2020		May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)
Precious metals	4,864	4,405	10.4	2,309	110.7
Mechanical appliances	3,439	3,971	-13.4	5,456	-37.0
Electronic equipment	2,794	2,805	-0.4	3,620	-22.8
Pharmaceutical products	1,564	1,692	-7.5	1,428	9.5
Motor vehicles	1,271	868	46.4	4,801	-73.5
Mineral fuels	1,128	1,489	-24.3	4,112	-72.6
Measuring devices and gauges	1,004	981	2.3	1,209	-17.0
Plastics and plastic products	981	1,019	-3.8	1,205	-18.6
Other textile goods	623	244	155.0	184	239.5
Organic chemicals	616	650	-5.3	588	4.8
Others	11,445	11,720	-2.3	16,114	-29.0
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>29,728</b>	<b>29,844</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>41,025</b>	<b>-27.5</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

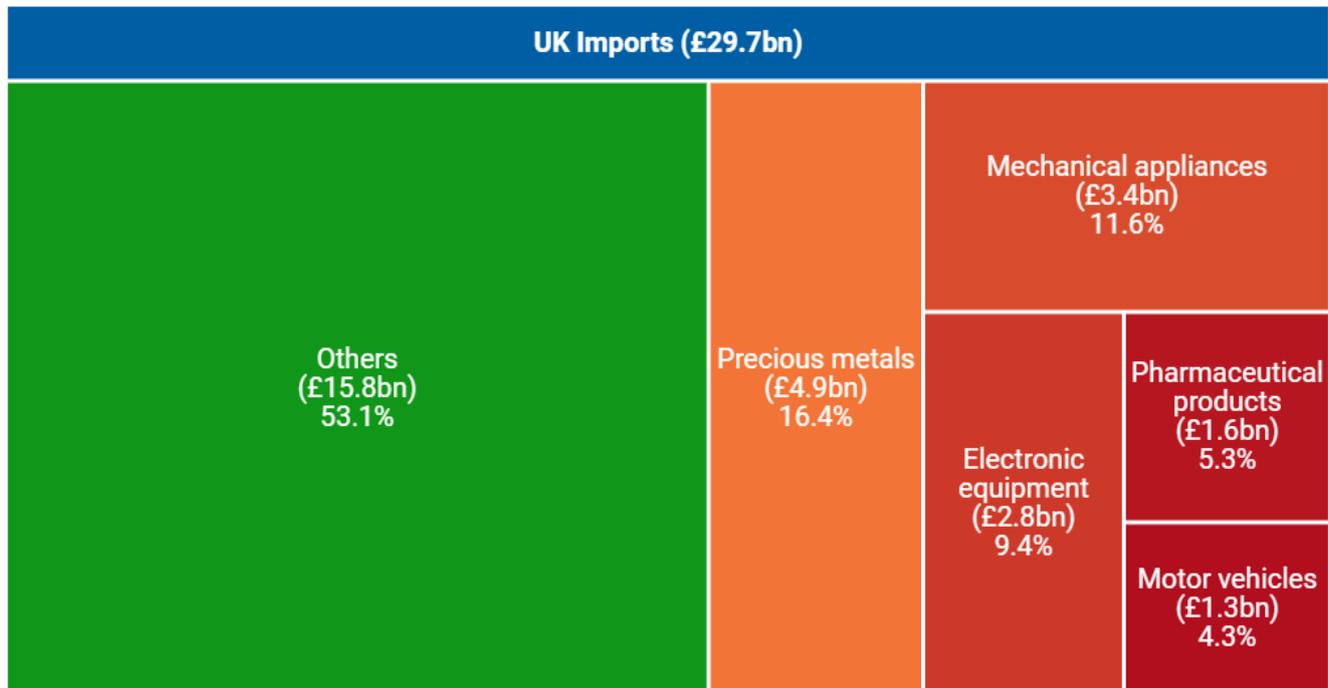
# Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 47% of the total value of goods imported in May 2020. This was a decrease from a 49% share in May 2019.
- Precious metals accounted for 16% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from a 5.6% share in May 2019.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 12%. This was a decrease from a 13% share in May 2019.
- The top 10 import commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Other textile goods rose to 9th place from 29th.
- The top 10 import commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with May 2019. Most notably, Precious metals rose to 1st place from 5th and Motor vehicles fell to 5th place from 2nd.

↓ The top 5 import commodities accounted for 47% of total imports in May 2020

↑ Precious metals accounted for 16% of total imports in May 2020

Figure 8: Share of UK imports for the top 5 commodities, May 2020



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

## Imports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to May 2020, Precious metals replaced Mechanical appliances as the largest import commodity. It experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2019, up 50%.
- Among the top 10, Pharmaceutical products experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to February 2020, up 16%.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to February 2020 and the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2019, down 47% and 51% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to February 2020 and the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2019, down 44% and 55% respectively.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to February 2020. Precious metals, Pharmaceutical products, and Organic chemicals were the exceptions.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to May 2019. Precious metals and Organic chemicals were the exceptions.

↑ **Precious metals up 50% on the 3 months to May 2019**

↓ **Mineral fuels down 47% on the 3 months to February 2020**

**Table 8: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to May 2020**

Commodity Description	3 months to May 2020		3 months to Feb 2020		3 months to May 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on February 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2019 (%)	
Precious metals	14,996	14,432	3.9	10,027	49.6	
Mechanical appliances	12,650	14,946	-15.4	16,821	-24.8	
Electronic equipment	8,923	10,481	-14.9	11,575	-22.9	
Motor vehicles	6,965	12,469	-44.1	15,641	-55.5	
Mineral fuels	5,552	10,416	-46.7	11,230	-50.6	
Pharmaceutical products	5,007	4,300	16.4	5,957	-15.9	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,263	3,413	-4.4	3,896	-16.2	
Plastics and plastic products	3,094	3,106	-0.4	3,932	-21.3	
Organic chemicals	1,937	1,748	10.8	1,812	6.9	
Furniture and light fittings	1,539	2,145	-28.3	2,323	-33.8	
Others	37,060	41,136	-9.9	46,525	-20.3	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>100,985</b>	<b>118,593</b>	<b>-14.8</b>	<b>129,738</b>	<b>-22.2</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2019 and 2020 data is provisional

# Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The decrease in imports from Germany on May 2019 was dominated by Motor vehicles, down £1,521 million (86%).
- The increase in imports from China on last month was driven by Other textile goods, up £362 million (more than 3 times the value).
- The decrease in imports from Russia on last month and the increase on May 2019 were both dominated by Precious metals, down £731 million (50%) and up £596 million (more than 5 times the value) respectively.

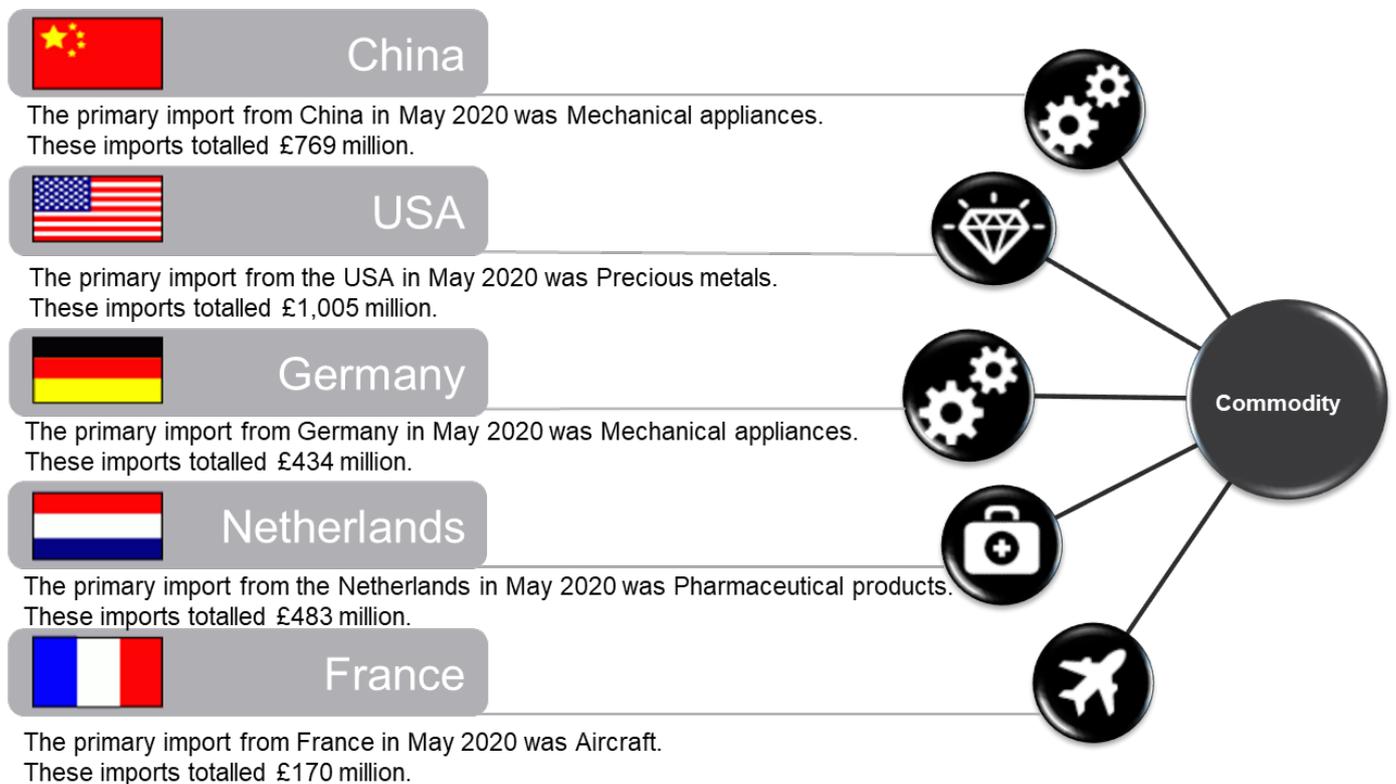
↓ Imports of Motor vehicles from Germany down 86% on May 2019

## Commodity to country:

- The increase in imports of Precious metals on last month was driven by Hong Kong and Uzbekistan, up £712 million (from £5.1 million) and £432 million (95%) respectively. The same countries led the increase on May 2019, up £697 million (from £20 million) and £888 million (from nil trade) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Motor cars on last month was led by Spain and Italy, up £86.9 million (almost 2.5 times the value) and £63.6 million (more than 3.5 times the value) respectively.
- The decrease in imports of Mechanical appliances on last month was driven by the Netherlands, down £201 million (42%). The decrease on May 2019 was driven by the USA, down £493 million (47%).
- The decrease in imports of Mineral fuels on last month was led by Russia, down £115 million (52%). The decrease on May 2019 was driven by Norway, down £817 million (73%).

↑ Imports of Precious metals from Uzbekistan up 95% on last month

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics  
 Note: 2020 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](#).

Find details of how users interested in import and export markets for specific goods make use of the detailed OTS data in '[The User Story](#)'.

## Data sources

The **EU figures** provided in this publication of the May 2020 Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics are collected from the Intrastat survey. They 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 [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 May 2020 Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics are presented by customs declarations and collected by the CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight) system.

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

## Methodology

This methodology paper 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. The Overseas Trade Statistics Methodology paper (October 2019) is available [here](#).

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. More information can be found [here](#).

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 web site provides an overview of BoP at the [Guide to UK Trade](#) as well as the 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. [uktradeinfo.com](#) provides more detail about the [differences between BoP and OTS publications](#).

The aggregate estimates here will differ from the Eurostat publication [Euro area external trade](#). The OTS was published up until the May 2016 month of account as 'general trade' based upon goods recorded as they enter or leave the UK. This will include goods imported into and exported from a freezone or customs warehouse, regardless of their future use. The Eurostat EU external trade data are published as 'special trade' where goods are recorded as trade only when they enter free circulation or are declared to specific Customs regimes such as Inward Processing (IP) or Processing under Customs Control (PCC). Imports from a free zone or customs warehouse are similarly recorded in 'special trade'.

### National Statistics Publication

HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries on 14 July 2020 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](http://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 May 2020. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2019 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
June 2020	12 August 2020
July 2020	11 September 2020
August 2020	09 October 2020

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 at <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-93---uk-trade-in-goods.pdf>.

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.

As the UK leaves the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. During the transition period, those UK statistics that align with EU practice and rules will continue to do so in the same way as before 31 January 2020. After the transition period, we will continue to produce statistics in line with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics and in accordance with internationally agreed statistical guidance and standards.