



# UK Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics September 2020

## 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 September 2020.

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

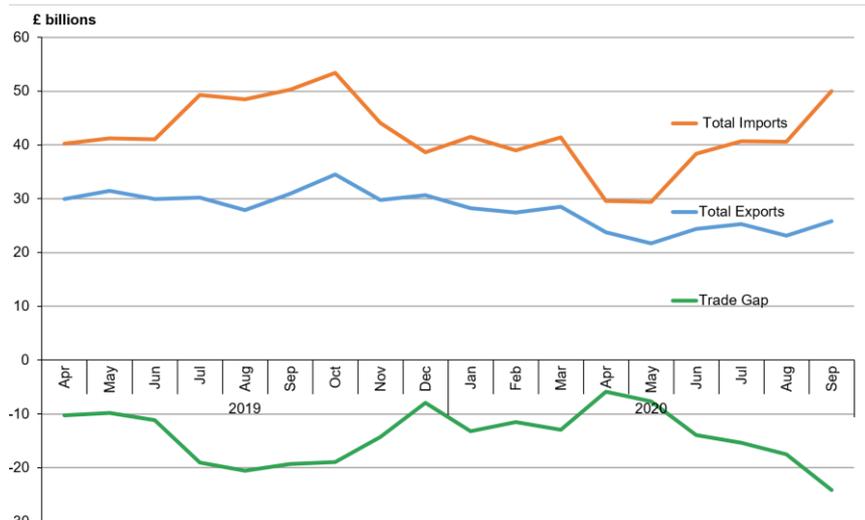
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## Trade in Goods, September 2020

- Total **exports** of goods for September 2020 were £25.9 billion. This was an increase of £2.8 billion (12%) compared with last month, but a decrease of £5.1 billion (16%) compared with September 2019.
- Total **imports** of goods for September 2020 were £50.0 billion. This was an increase of £9.4 billion (23%) compared with last month, but a decrease of £0.3 billion (0.6%) compared with September 2019.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £24.1 billion, widening by £6.6 billion on last month.

### Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods and Statistics  
Note: 2020 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 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 have shown a recovery in Q3, while exports have remained low.

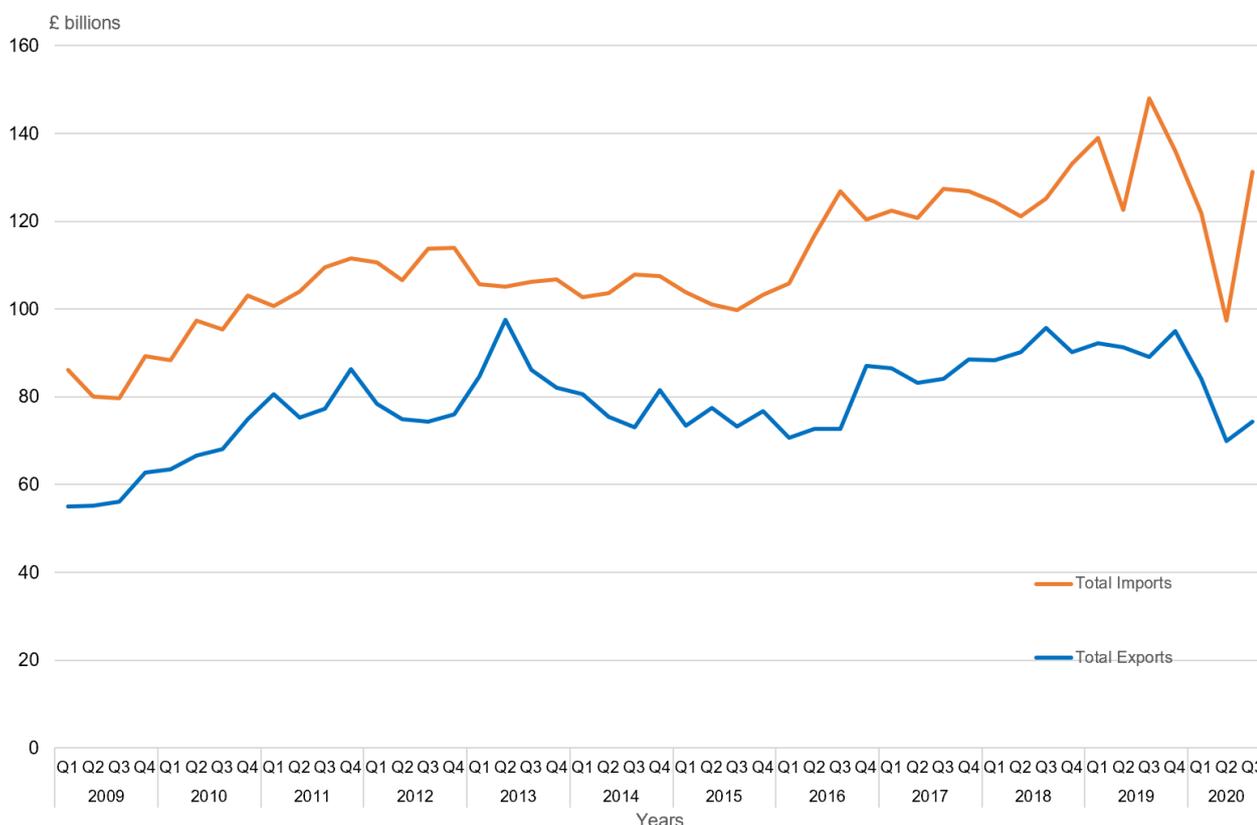
- The total **export** trade for Q3 of 2020 was £74.3 billion, which was a decrease of 17% compared with £89.1 billion for Q3 of 2019.
- The total **import** trade for Q3 of 2020 was £131 billion, which was a decrease of 11% compared with £148 billion for Q3 of 2019.
- There was a trade deficit of £57.0 billion for Q3 of 2020. This was a narrowing of 3.2% compared with £58.9 billion for Q3 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 Q2 2020 saw abnormally low values, affecting our largest trade partners and commodity groups at differing magnitudes.

↓ **Exports down 17% on Q3 2019**

↓ **Imports down 11% on Q3 2019**

• **Trade deficit narrowed by 3.2% on Q3 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 September 2020 were £13.3 billion. This was an increase of £0.9 billion (7.2%) on last month, but a decrease of £3.2 billion (20%) compared with September 2019.
- **Non-EU imports** for September 2020 were £28.5 billion. This was an increase of £4.7 billion (20%) on last month, and an increase of £1.8 billion (6.7%) compared with September 2019.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £15.2 billion.

↓ **Non-EU exports down 20% on September 2019**

## EU Trade in Goods:

- **EU exports** for September 2020 were £12.6 billion. This was an increase of £1.9 billion (18%) on last month, but a decrease of £1.9 billion (13%) compared with September 2019.
- **EU imports** for September 2020 were £21.5 billion. This was an increase of £4.7 billion (28%) on last month, but a decrease of £2.1 billion (8.9%) compared with September 2019.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £8.9 billion.

↑ **EU imports up 28% on last month**

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

# Exports: Country Analysis

- The USA remained as the largest export partner country despite experiencing the largest value decreases on last month and September 2019, down £88.7 million (2.6%) and £1,616 million (33%) respectively.
- Norway experienced the largest value increases on last month and September 2019, up £584 million (more than 3 times the value) and £558 million (almost 3 times the value) respectively.
- France experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £408 million (31%).
- The Republic of Ireland experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month, up £311 million (19%).
- China showed the 2nd largest value decrease September 2019, down £1,047 million (46%).
- Germany experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on September 2019, down £528 million (17%).

↓ **Exports to the USA down 33% on September 2019**

↑ **Exports to Norway up more than 3 times the value on last month**

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

Partner Country	September 2020		August 2020		September 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from September 2019 (%)	
USA	3,271	3,360	-2.6	4,887	-33.1	
Germany	2,564	2,434	5.3	3,092	-17.1	
Republic of Ireland	1,907	1,597	19.5	1,849	3.2	
France	1,745	1,337	30.5	2,075	-15.9	
Netherlands	1,494	1,341	11.4	1,912	-21.9	
China	1,249	1,241	0.6	2,296	-45.6	
Belgium	959	768	25.0	1,128	-15.0	
Norway	845	262	223.2	287	194.1	
Italy	818	593	38.1	879	-6.8	
Spain	734	626	17.2	1,015	-27.7	
Others	10,279	9,542	7.7	11,546	-11.0	
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>12,571</b>	<b>10,696</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>14,438</b>	<b>-12.9</b>	
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>13,296</b>	<b>12,404</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>16,528</b>	<b>-19.6</b>	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>25,866</b>	<b>23,100</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>30,966</b>	<b>-16.5</b>	

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

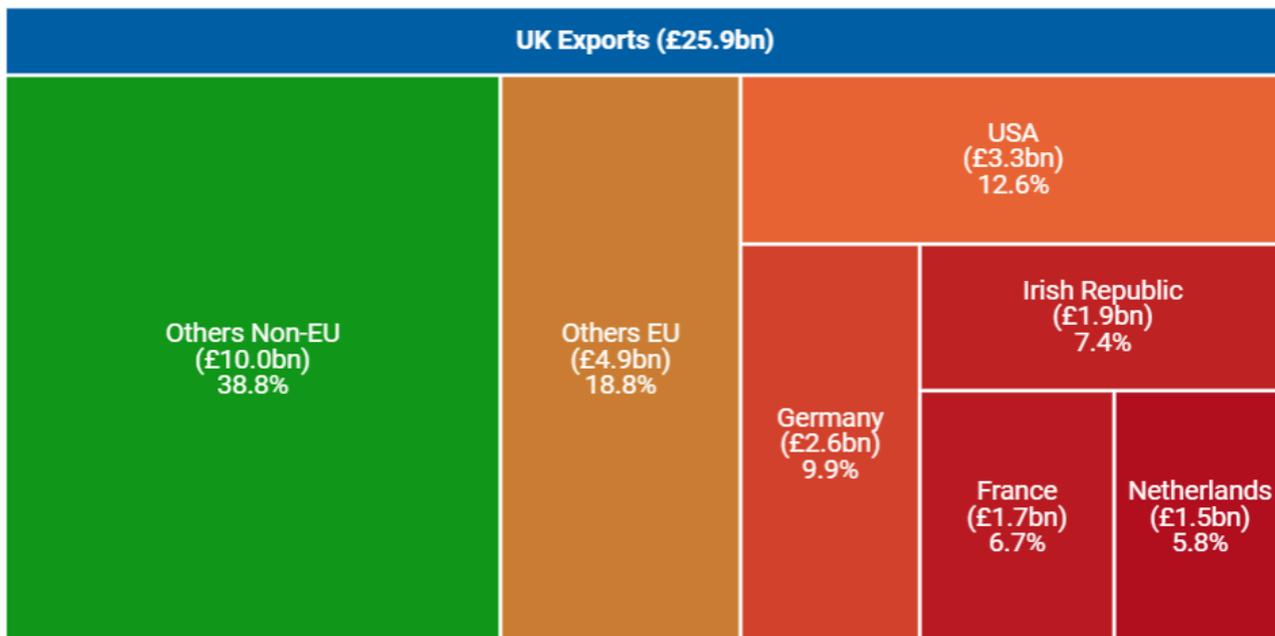
# Exports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 42% of total exports in goods in September 2020. This was a decrease from a 46% share in September 2019.
- The USA accounted for 13% of the total value of exports from the UK. This was a decrease from a 16% share in September 2019.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 9.9%. This was a slight decrease from a 10% share in September 2019.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Norway rose to 8th place from 22nd while Spain fell to 10th place from 8th.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with September 2019. Most notably, the Republic of Ireland rose to 3rd place from 6th, and China fell to 6th place from 3rd.

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

↓ **Germany had an 9.9% share of total exports in September 2020**

**Figure 4: Share of UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, September 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 September 2020, the USA remained the largest export partner country. However, among the top 10 it experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 28%.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to June 2020, down 67%. Conversely, it experienced the only increase on the 3 months to September 2019, up 12%.
- Among the top 10, Italy experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up 27%.
- Among the top 10, France experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up 24%.
- Among the top 10, China experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 38%.
- 8 of the top 10 export partners experienced increases on the 3 months to June 2020. Switzerland and Spain were the exceptions.

↑ **Exports to Italy up 27% on the 3 months to June 2020**

↓ **Exports to China down 38% on the 3 months to September 2019**

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

Partner Country	3 months to Sep 2020		3 months to Jun 2020		3 months to Sep 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on June 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
USA	10,303	9,386	9.8	14,402	-28.5	
Germany	7,513	7,081	6.1	8,967	-16.2	
Republic of Ireland	5,182	4,367	18.7	5,392	-3.9	
France	4,702	3,794	23.9	5,972	-21.3	
Netherlands	4,409	4,102	7.5	5,695	-22.6	
China	3,667	3,019	21.5	5,886	-37.7	
Belgium	2,638	2,153	22.6	3,077	-14.2	
Italy	2,222	1,750	27.0	2,387	-7.0	
Switzerland	2,213	6,677	-66.9	1,982	11.6	
Spain	2,023	2,112	-4.2	2,733	-26.0	
Others	29,406	25,489	15.4	32,654	-9.9	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>74,277</b>	<b>69,929</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>89,147</b>	<b>-16.7</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

## Exports: Commodity Analysis

- Mechanical appliances remained as the largest export commodity. It experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month, up £457 million (14%). In contrast, it showed the 2nd largest decrease on September 2019, down £1,140 million (23%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £1,069 million (60%). In contrast, it showed the 3rd largest value decrease on September 2019, down £713 million (20%).
- Ships, boats and floating structures (13th place) experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, and the largest on September 2019, up £552 million (from £65.0 million) and £561 million (from £56.4 million) respectively.
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest value decrease on last month, and on September 2019, down £472 million (27%), and £1,421 million (53%) respectively.
- Knitwear (19th place) experienced the 2nd largest value increase on September 2019, up £51 million (18%).

↑ **Exports of Motor vehicles up 60% on last month**

↓ **Exports of Mineral fuels down 53% on September 2019**

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

Commodity Description	September 2020		August 2020		September 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from August 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from September 2019 (%)	
Mechanical appliances	3,822	3,365	13.6	4,962	-23.0	
Motor vehicles	2,844	1,775	60.2	3,557	-20.1	
Precious metals	1,946	2,068	-5.9	2,187	-11.0	
Electronic equipment	1,720	1,534	12.1	1,919	-10.3	
Pharmaceutical products	1,437	1,489	-3.5	1,775	-19.0	
Mineral fuels	1,274	1,745	-27.0	2,695	-52.7	
Measuring devices and gauges	1,178	1,077	9.3	1,336	-11.8	
Aircraft	923	684	35.0	1,276	-27.6	
Plastics and plastic products	726	624	16.2	777	-6.6	
Other products	704	874	-19.4	733	-4.0	
Others	9,292	7,864	18.2	9,750	-4.7	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>25,866</b>	<b>23,100</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>30,966</b>	<b>-16.5</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

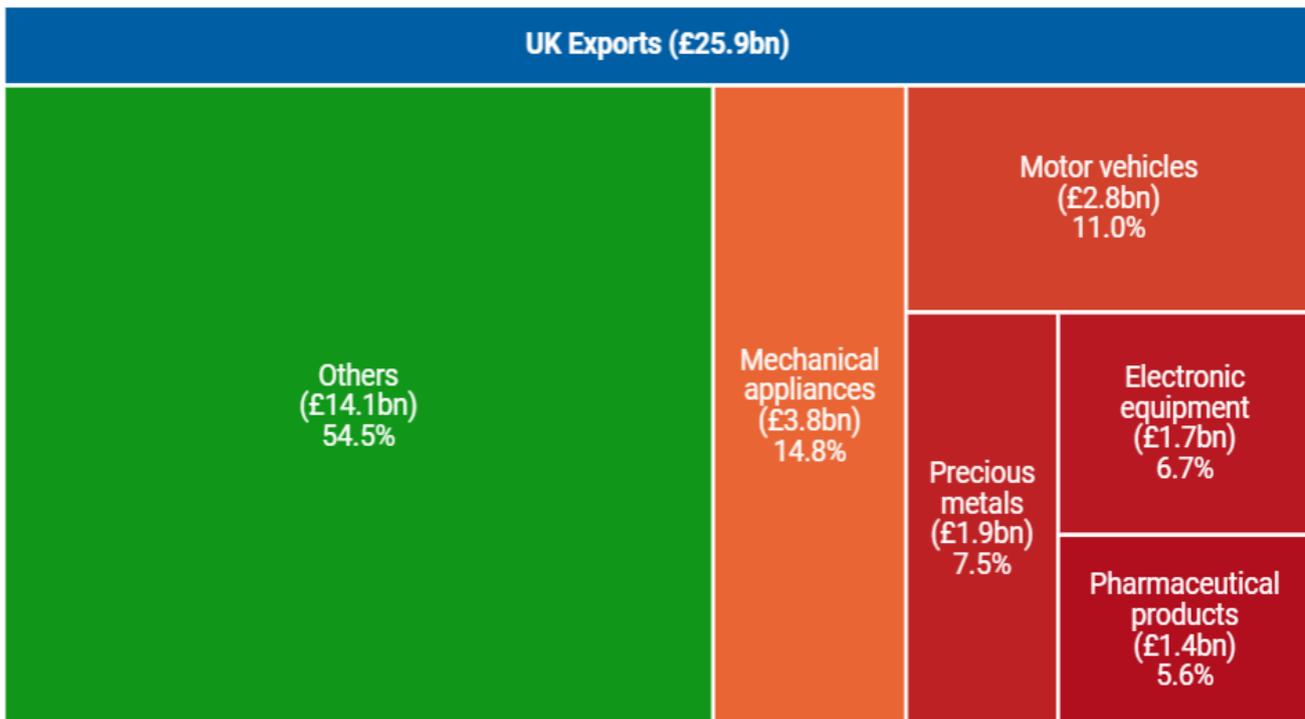
# Exports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 46% of exports in September 2020, this was a decrease from a 49% share in September 2019.
- Mechanical appliances had the largest proportion, accounting for 15% of total exports. This was a decrease from a 16% share in September 2019.
- Motor vehicles had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 11% of total exports. This was a decrease of less than 1 percentage point on September 2019.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Mineral fuels fell to 6th place from 4th, and Aircraft rose to 8th place from 10th.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with September 2019. Most notably, Mineral fuels fell to 6th place from 3rd, while Beverages fell to 12th place from 9th.

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

↓ **Motor vehicles accounted for 11% of total exports in September 2020**

**Figure 5: Share of UK exports by the top 5 commodities, September 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 September 2020, Mechanical appliances replaced Precious metals as the largest export commodity, experiencing an increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up 8.1%.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, more than doubling in value. In contrast, it experienced the 3rd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 28%.
- Among the top 10, Precious metals experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to June 2020, down 47%. In contrast, it experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2019, up 9.1%.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 44%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced increases on the 3 months to June 2020. Precious metals, Pharmaceutical products, and Organic chemicals were the exceptions.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced decreases on the 3 months to September 2019. Precious metals and Other products were the exceptions.

↑ **Motor vehicles exports more than double the value on the 3 months to June 2020**

↓ **Precious metals exports down 47% on the 3 months to June 2020**

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

Commodity Description	3 months to Sep 2020		3 months to Jun 2020		3 months to Sep 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on June 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
Mechanical appliances	11,225	10,382	8.1	14,463	-22.4	
Motor vehicles	7,071	2,986	136.8	9,831	-28.1	
Precious metals	6,414	12,032	-46.7	5,877	9.1	
Electronic equipment	4,935	4,301	14.7	5,521	-10.6	
Pharmaceutical products	4,478	5,163	-13.3	5,208	-14.0	
Mineral fuels	4,466	4,064	9.9	7,930	-43.7	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,420	3,073	11.3	3,890	-12.1	
Other products	2,395	2,025	18.2	2,177	10.0	
Aircraft	2,259	2,075	8.8	3,436	-34.3	
Organic chemicals	2,175	2,571	-15.4	2,353	-7.6	
Others	25,440	21,257	19.7	28,461	-10.6	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>74,277</b>	<b>69,929</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>89,147</b>	<b>-16.7</b>	

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

# Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The increases in exports to Norway on last month and on September 2019 were dominated by Ships, boats and floating structures, up £557 million (from £11.1 million) and £565 million (from £3.5 million) respectively.
- The increase in exports to France on last month was led by Motor vehicles, up £85.7 million (doubling in value) and Aircraft, up £71.2 million (46%).
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was led by Precious metals, down £172 million (53%).

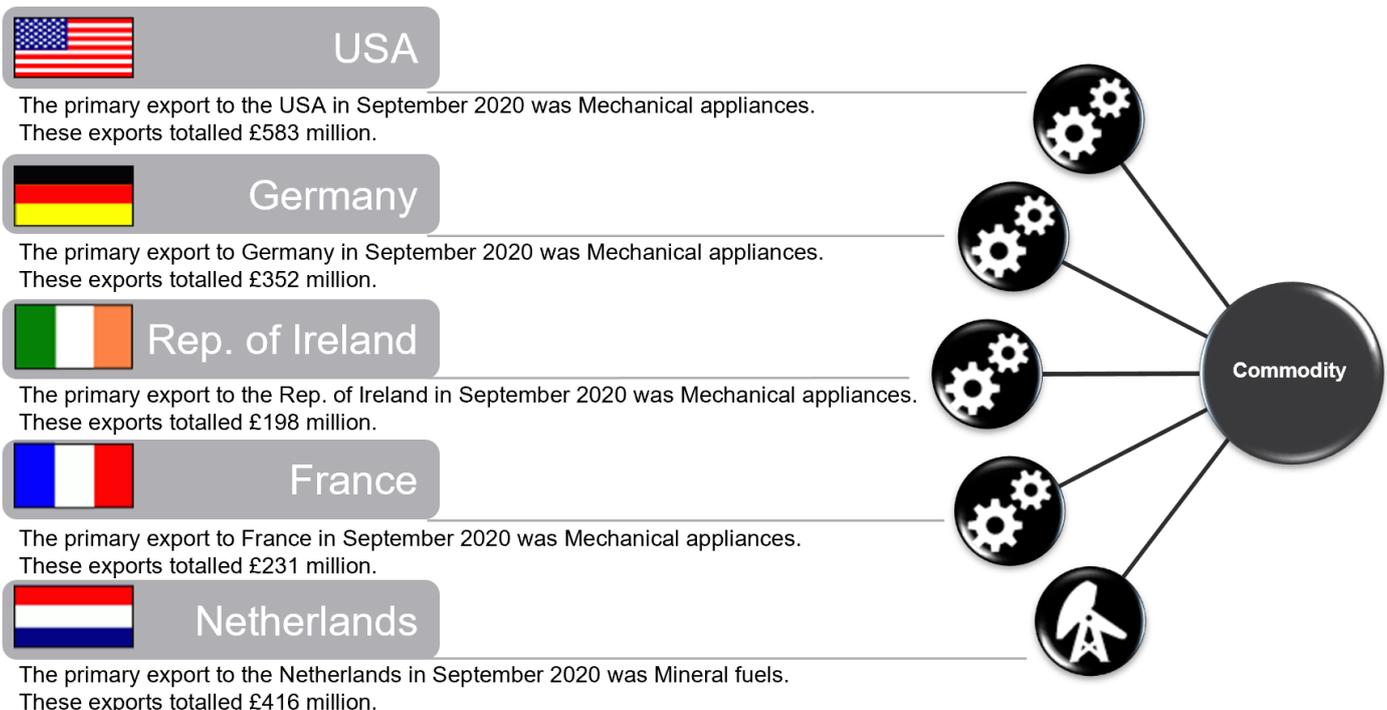
↑ Exports of Motor vehicles to France doubled in value on last month

## Commodity to country

- The increase in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by Germany and China, up £158 million (more than doubling in value) and £135 million (65%) respectively. The decrease on September 2019 was led by the USA, down £298 million (37%).
- The increase in exports of Mechanical appliances compared with last month was led by Germany, up £101 million (40%). The decrease on September 2019 was driven by the USA, down £256 million (31%).
- The decrease in exports of Mineral fuels on last month was led by China, down £108 million (47%). The decrease on September 2019 was led by China, the Netherlands, and Germany, down £394 million (76%), £316 million (43%) and £222 million (70%) respectively.

↑ Exports of Motor vehicles to Germany more than doubled in value 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 remained the largest import partner country, experiencing an increase on last month and the 3rd largest increase on September 2019, up £1,446 million (33%) and £1,758 million (43%) respectively.
- Switzerland experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £1,621 million (more than double the value).
- Uzbekistan (ranked 77th) experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £2,065 million (99%).
- Russia experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month and the largest value increase on September 2019, up £1,495 million (94%) and £2,049 million (3 times the value) respectively.
- Australia (ranked 19th) experienced the largest value decrease on September 2019, down £835 million (58%).
- Germany experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month, up £1,446 million (34%).

↑ Imports from Switzerland up more than double on last month

↑ Imports from Russia up 3 times the value on September 2019

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

Partner Country	September 2020		August 2020		September 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
China	5,881	4,435	32.6	4,123	42.6	
Germany	5,754	4,308	33.6	6,026	-4.5	
USA	3,875	3,156	22.8	4,370	-11.3	
Russia	3,079	1,583	94.4	1,029	199.1	
Netherlands	2,969	2,568	15.6	3,501	-15.2	
Hong Kong	2,874	2,464	16.6	865	232.2	
Switzerland	2,871	1,250	129.7	3,351	-14.3	
Belgium	2,231	1,750	27.5	2,379	-6.2	
France	2,191	1,536	42.7	2,543	-13.8	
Italy	1,574	1,281	22.9	1,737	-9.4	
Others	16,667	16,257	2.5	20,345	-18.1	
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>21,492</b>	<b>16,763</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>23,581</b>	<b>-8.9</b>	
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>28,476</b>	<b>23,825</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>26,689</b>	<b>6.7</b>	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>49,967</b>	<b>40,588</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>50,270</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

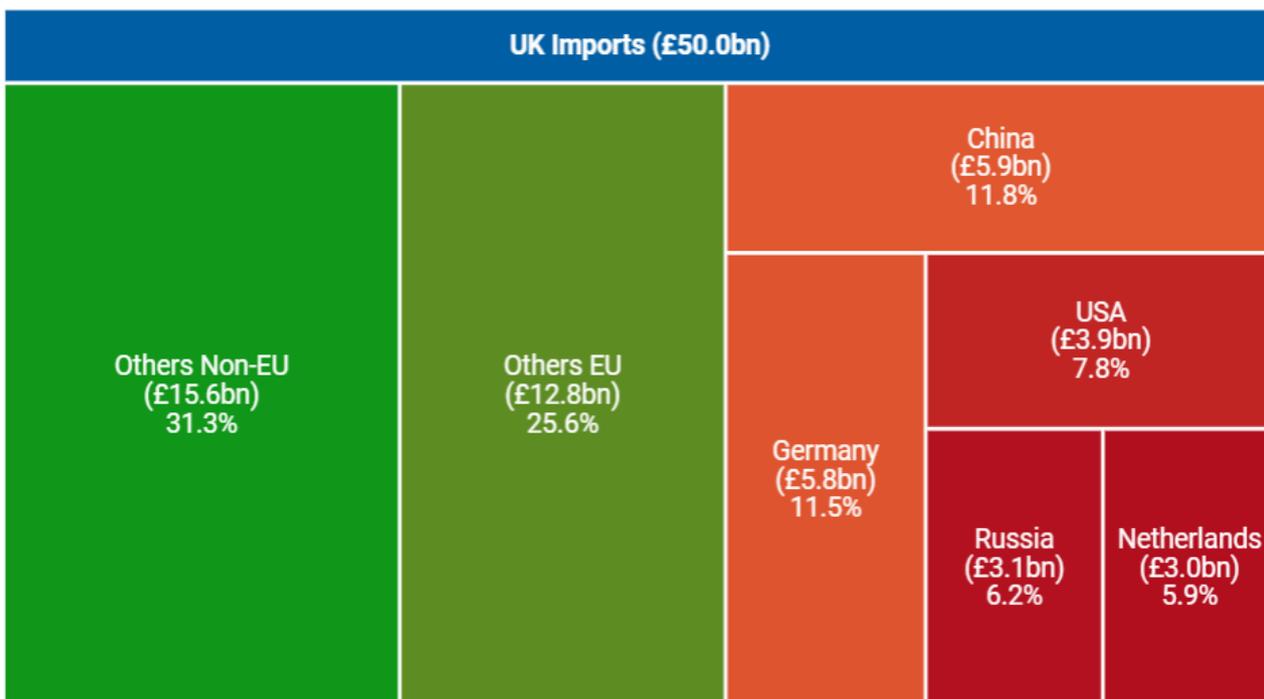
# Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 43% of the total value of goods imported in September 2020. This was an increase of less than one percentage point on September 2019.
- China accounted for 12% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from an 8.2% share in September 2019.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for a 12% share. This was a decrease of less than one percentage point on September 2019.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) have changed compared with last month. Most notably, Russia rose to 4th place from 8th and Switzerland rose to 7th place from 11th.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) have changed compared with September 2019. Most notably, China rose to 1st place from 3rd, Russia rose to 4th place from 13th, and Hong Kong rose to 6th place from 17th.

↑ **The top 5 partners accounted for 43% of total imports in September 2020**

↑ **China accounted for 12% of total imports in September 2020**

**Figure 7: Share of UK imports of goods from the top 5 countries, September 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 September 2020, China remained the largest import partner country, experiencing a percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up 37%.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up more than 4 times the value. Conversely, it experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 56%.
- Among the top 10, Hong Kong experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020 and the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2019, up more than 2 times the value and more than 2.5 times the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, the USA experienced the only percentage decrease on the 3 months to June 2020 and the 2nd largest decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 3.2% and 26% respectively.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to September 2019. The exceptions were China, Hong Kong, and Russia.

↑ Imports from Switzerland up more than 4 times the value on the 3 months to June 2020

↑ Imports from Hong Kong up more than 2.5 times the value on the 3 months to September 2019

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

Partner Country	3 months to Sep 2020		3 months to Jun 2020		3 months to Sep 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on June 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
China	15,022	10,958	37.1	12,089	24.3	
Germany	15,014	9,848	52.5	16,814	-10.7	
USA	10,038	10,365	-3.2	13,624	-26.3	
Netherlands	8,444	7,803	8.2	10,367	-18.5	
Hong Kong	7,153	3,185	124.6	2,638	171.2	
Russia	6,053	4,327	39.9	2,684	125.5	
Belgium	5,571	3,935	41.6	6,698	-16.8	
France	5,559	4,182	32.9	7,226	-23.1	
Switzerland	5,195	1,229	322.8	11,930	-56.5	
Italy	4,416	3,483	26.8	4,984	-11.4	
Others	48,800	38,069	28.2	58,966	-17.2	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>131,264</b>	<b>97,383</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>148,020</b>	<b>-11.3</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

## Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest import commodity, experiencing the largest value increases on last month and September 2019, up £1,965 million (20%) and £2,490 million (26%) respectively.
- Organic chemicals (ranked 18th) experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £171 million (24%).
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest value decrease on September 2019, down £1,214 million (36%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £1,596 million (52%). Conversely, it experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on September 2019, down £833 million (15%).
- Mechanical appliances experienced the 3rd largest increase on last month, up £688 million (18%). Conversely, it experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on September 2019, down £919 million (17%).
- Other textile goods (ranked 11th) experienced the 2nd largest value increase on September 2019, up £742 million (more than 5 times the value).

↓ Imports of Mineral fuels down 36% on September 2019

↑ Imports of Motor vehicles up 52% on last month

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

Commodity Description	September 2020		August 2020		September 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
Precious metals	12,021	10,056	19.5	9,531	26.1	
Motor vehicles	4,676	3,081	51.8	5,510	-15.1	
Mechanical appliances	4,530	3,842	17.9	5,449	-16.9	
Electronic equipment	3,902	3,245	20.2	4,167	-6.4	
Mineral fuels	2,142	1,725	24.2	3,355	-36.2	
Pharmaceutical products	1,624	1,315	23.4	1,711	-5.1	
Plastics and plastic products	1,476	1,185	24.6	1,256	17.6	
Measuring devices and gauges	1,379	1,059	30.1	1,307	5.5	
Clothes, not knitted	1,176	820	43.5	862	36.4	
Knitwear	971	842	15.3	1,036	-6.3	
Others	16,071	13,418	19.8	16,087	-0.1	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>49,967</b>	<b>40,588</b>	<b>23.1</b>	<b>50,270</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

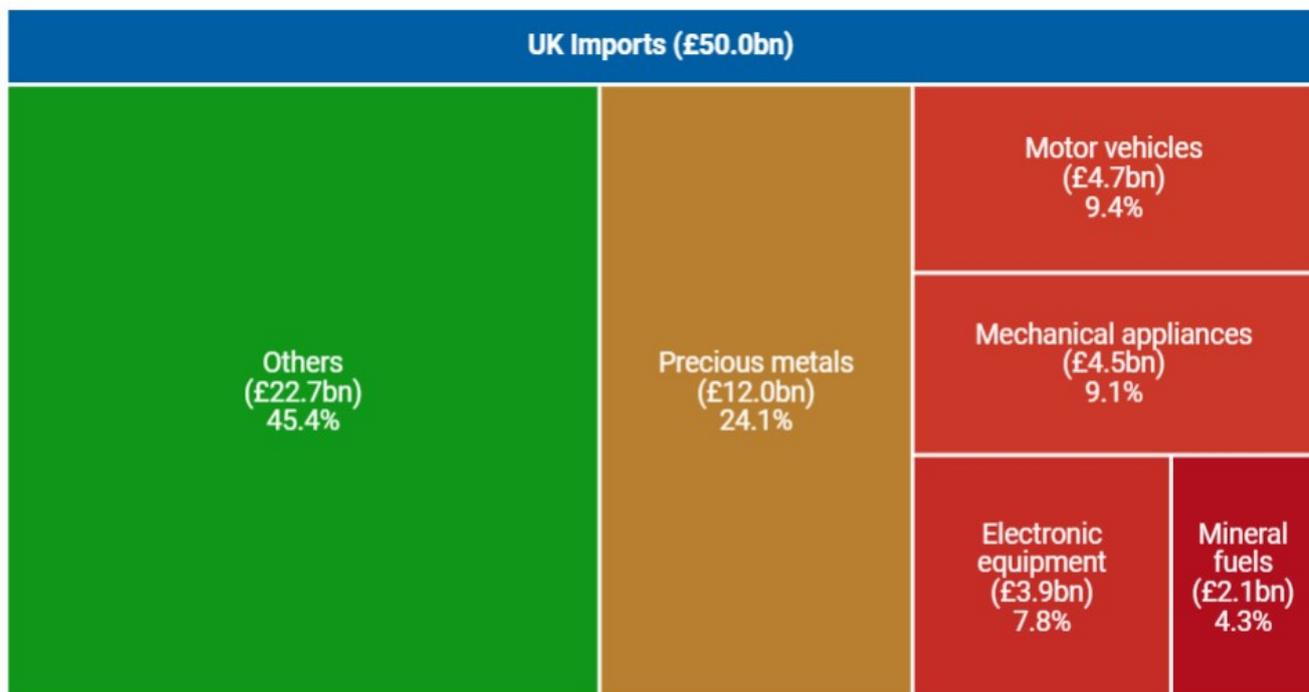
# Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 55% of the total value of goods imported in September 2020. This was a decrease from a 56% share in September 2019.
- Precious metals accounted for 24% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from a 19% share in September 2019.
- Motor vehicles had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for a 9.4% share. This was a decrease from an 11% share in September 2019.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) remained the same but changed order compared with last month. Most notably, Motor vehicles rose to 2nd place from 4th.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) remained the same but changed order compared with September 2019. The top 6 were unchanged, but Plastics and plastic products rose to 7th place from 8th.

↓ **The top 5 import commodities accounted for 55% of total imports in September 2020**

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 24% of total imports in September 2020**

**Figure 8: Share of UK imports for the top 5 commodities, September 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 September 2020, Precious metals remained the largest import commodity, experiencing a 72% increase on the 3 months to June 2020.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020, up more than 2 times the value. Conversely, it experienced the 3rd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 20%.
- Among the top 10, Pharmaceutical products experienced the only decrease on the 3 months to June 2020, down 9.5%.
- Among the top 10, Clothes, not knitted experienced the 3rd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to June 2020 and the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2019, up more than 2 times the value and 9.4% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to September 2019, down 47%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to September 2019. The exceptions were Precious metals, Plastics and plastic products, and Clothes, not knitted.

↑ **Imports of Motor vehicles up more than 2 times the value on the 3 months to June 2020**

↓ **Imports of Mineral fuels down 47% on the 3 months to September 2019**

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

Commodity Description	3 months to Sep 2020		3 months to Jun 2020		3 months to Sep 2019	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on June 2020 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2019 (%)	
Precious metals	29,366	17,052	72.2	28,483	3.1	
Mechanical appliances	12,875	11,700	10.0	16,707	-22.9	
Motor vehicles	11,574	5,152	124.6	14,388	-19.6	
Electronic equipment	10,772	8,881	21.3	11,896	-9.4	
Mineral fuels	5,387	4,192	28.5	10,240	-47.4	
Pharmaceutical products	4,504	4,978	-9.5	5,197	-13.3	
Plastics and plastic products	3,919	3,047	28.6	3,748	4.6	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,626	3,184	13.9	3,763	-3.6	
Clothes, not knitted	2,780	1,319	110.7	2,540	9.4	
Knitwear	2,515	1,177	113.6	2,891	-13.0	
Others	43,946	36,700	19.7	48,167	-8.8	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>131,264</b>	<b>97,383</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>148,020</b>	<b>-11.3</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 data is provisional

# Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The increase in imports from China on September 2019 was driven by Other textile goods, up £698 million (from £64 million).
- The decrease in imports from Uzbekistan on last month was dominated by Precious metals, down £2,065 million (99%).
- The decrease in imports from Australia on September 2019 was dominated by Precious metals, down £837 million (67%).

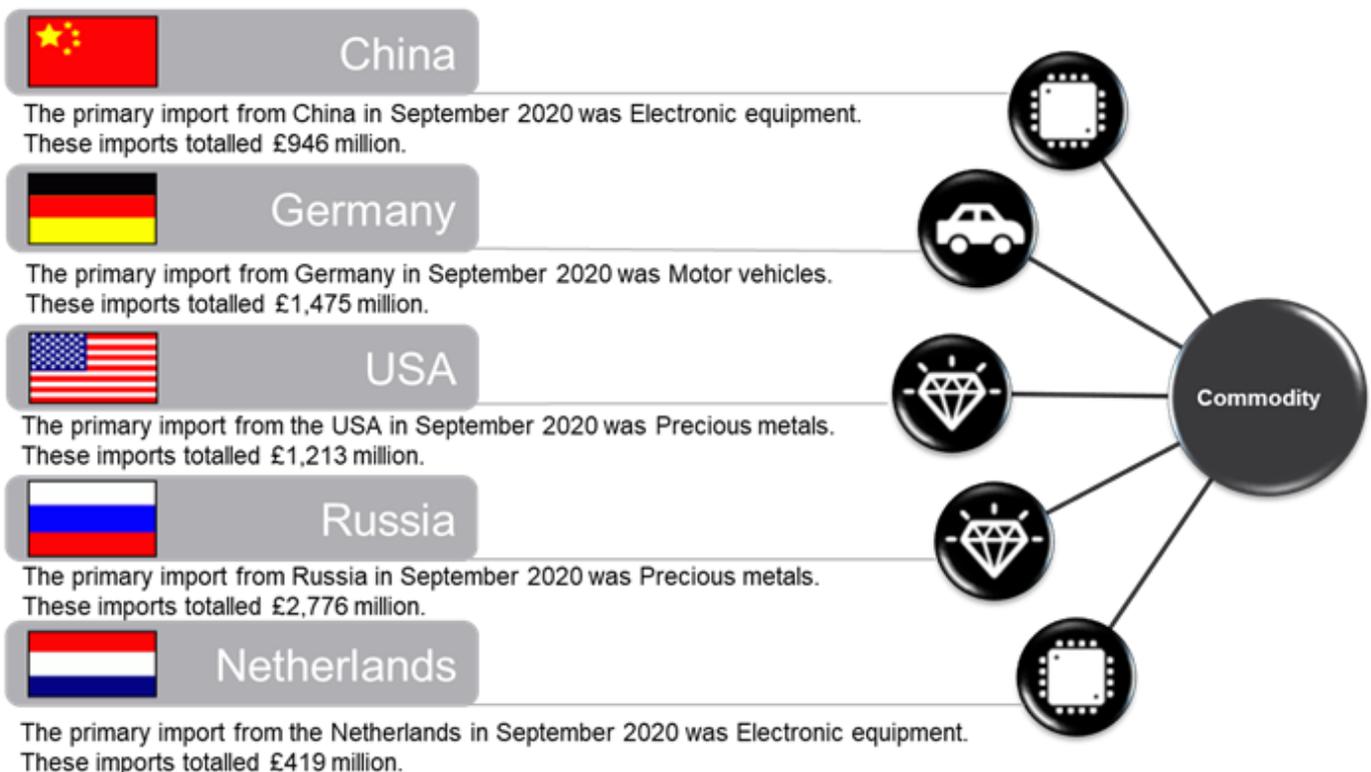
↓ Imports of Precious metals from Uzbekistan down 99% on last month

## Commodity to country:

- The increase in imports of Precious metals on last month was driven by Switzerland and Russia, up £1,578 million (more than 2.5 times the value) and £1,487 million (more than 2 times the value) respectively. The increase on September 2019 was driven by Russia and Hong Kong, up £2,265 million (more than 5 times the value) and £1,821 million (more than 7 times the value) respectively.
- The decrease in imports of Organic chemicals on last month was driven by the Republic of Ireland, down £187 million (78%).
- The decrease in imports of Mineral fuels on September 2019 was driven by Saudi Arabia and Russia, down £234 million (93%) and £232 million (53%) respectively.
- The increase in imports of Motor vehicles on last month was driven by Germany and Belgium, up £318 million (27%) and £308 million (66%) respectively. The decrease on September 2019 was also driven by Germany, down £327 million (18%).

↑ Imports of Precious metals from Russia up more than 5 times the value on September 2019

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](#).

## Data sources

The **EU figures** provided in this publication of the September 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 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 September 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 in the OTS methodology paper [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](#), 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.

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 12 November 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 August 2020. 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
October 2020	10 December 2020
November 2020	15 January 2021
December 2020	10 February 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.

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.