



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 April 2021.

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

In this publication

- Trade trends p.2
- Non-EU and EU trade p.3
- April 2021 Exports p.4

Country analysis

Country analysis – 3 months

Commodity analysis

Commodity analysis – 3 months

Combined analysis

- April 2021 Imports p.11

Country analysis

Country analysis – 3 months

Commodity analysis

Commodity analysis – 3 months

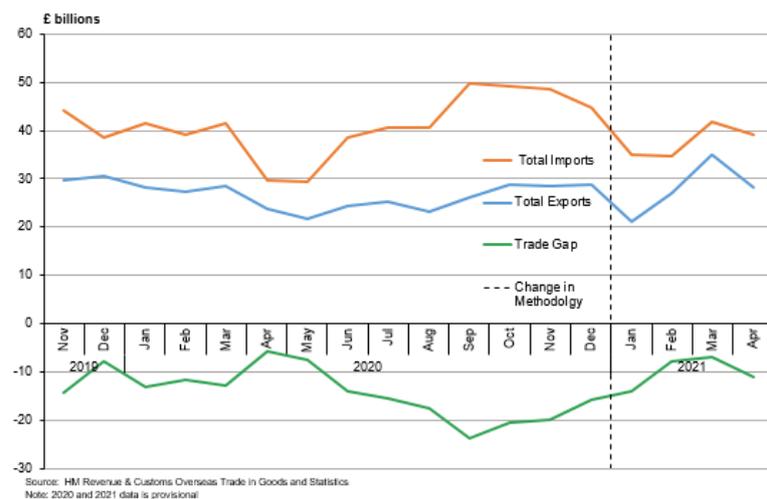
Combined analysis

- Methodology notes p.18

Trade in Goods, April 2021

- Total **exports** of goods for April 2021 were £28.1 billion. This was down £6.9 billion (20%) compared with last month, but up £4.3 billion (18%) compared with April 2020.
- Total **imports** of goods for April 2021 were £39.1 billion. This was down £2.8 billion (6.6%) compared with last month, but up £9.4 billion (32%) compared with April 2020.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £11.0 billion, widening by £4.1 billion on last month.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



From January 2021, the UK to EU export dataset incorporates both GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data. This creates a break in the timeseries, users should take care when making comparisons with months and years prior to 2021.



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Website: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com>
 Email: uktradeinfo@hmrc.gov.uk
 Statistical contact: H Mansfield
 Media contact: HMRC Press Office news.desk@hmrc.gov.uk

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.

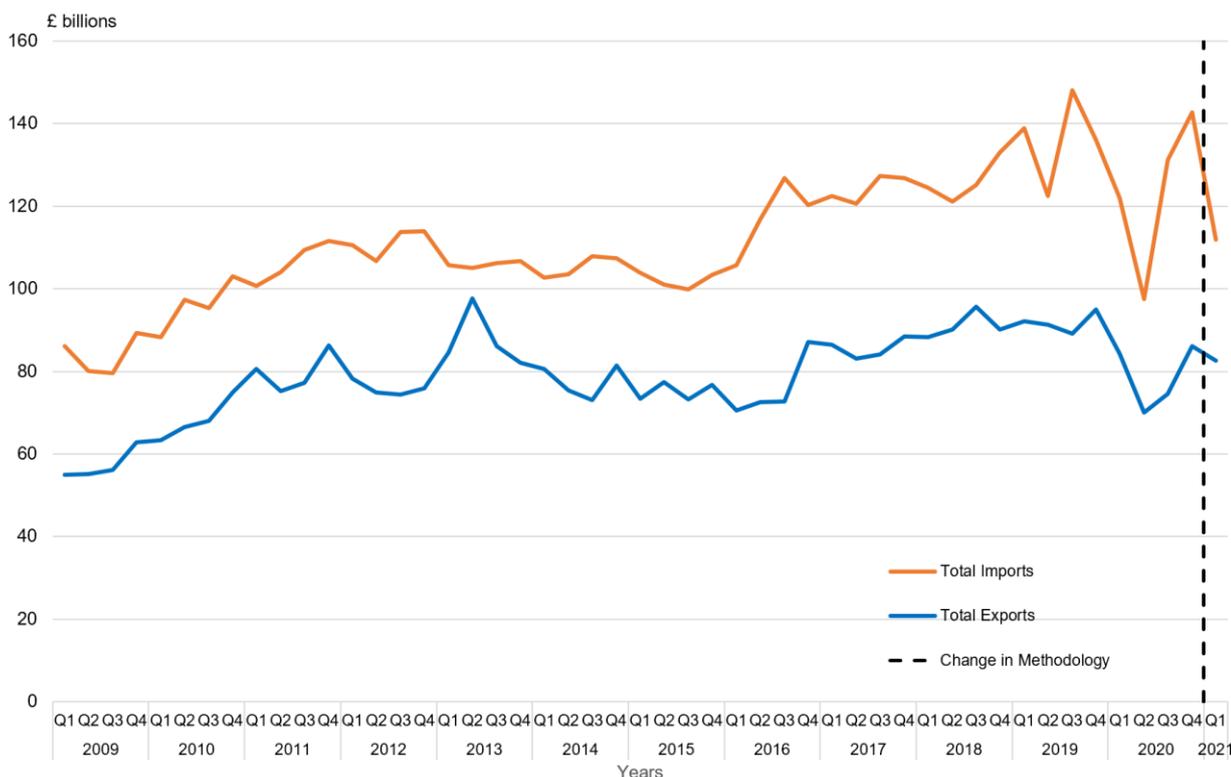
- The total **export** trade for Q1 of 2021 was £83.0 billion, which was a decrease of 1.4% compared with £84.2 billion for Q1 of 2020.
- The total **import** trade for Q1 of 2021 was £112 billion, which was a decrease of 8.4% compared with £122 billion for Q1 of 2020.
- There was a trade deficit of £28.7 billion for Q1 of 2021. This was a narrowing of 24% compared with £37.8 billion for Q1 of 2020.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading import partner by value, recently surpassed by China, while the USA has been the dominant trading export partner, with occasional peaks for Switzerland.
- Mechanical appliances and Motor vehicles have generally been the largest **import** commodities by value. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has also predominantly been the largest valued commodity, with occasional peaks for Precious metals.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, trade in goods in 2020 and 2021 experienced significant decreases, affecting our largest trade partners and commodity groups at differing magnitudes, although some months have shown some recovery.

↓ **Exports down 1.4% on Q1 2020**

↓ **Imports down 8.4% on Q1 2020**

↓ **Trade deficit narrowed by 24% on Q1 2020**

Figure 2: Quarterly UK Trade in Goods, 2009 – 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Non-EU & EU Trade in Goods

Non-EU Trade in Goods:

- **Non-EU exports** for April 2021 were £14.9 billion. This was a decrease of £5.4 billion (27%) on last month, but an increase of £0.7 billion (4.8%) compared with April 2020.
- **Non-EU imports** for April 2021 were £21.9 billion. This was an increase of £0.2 billion (1.0%) on last month, and an increase of £5.1 billion (31%) compared with April 2020.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £6.9 billion.

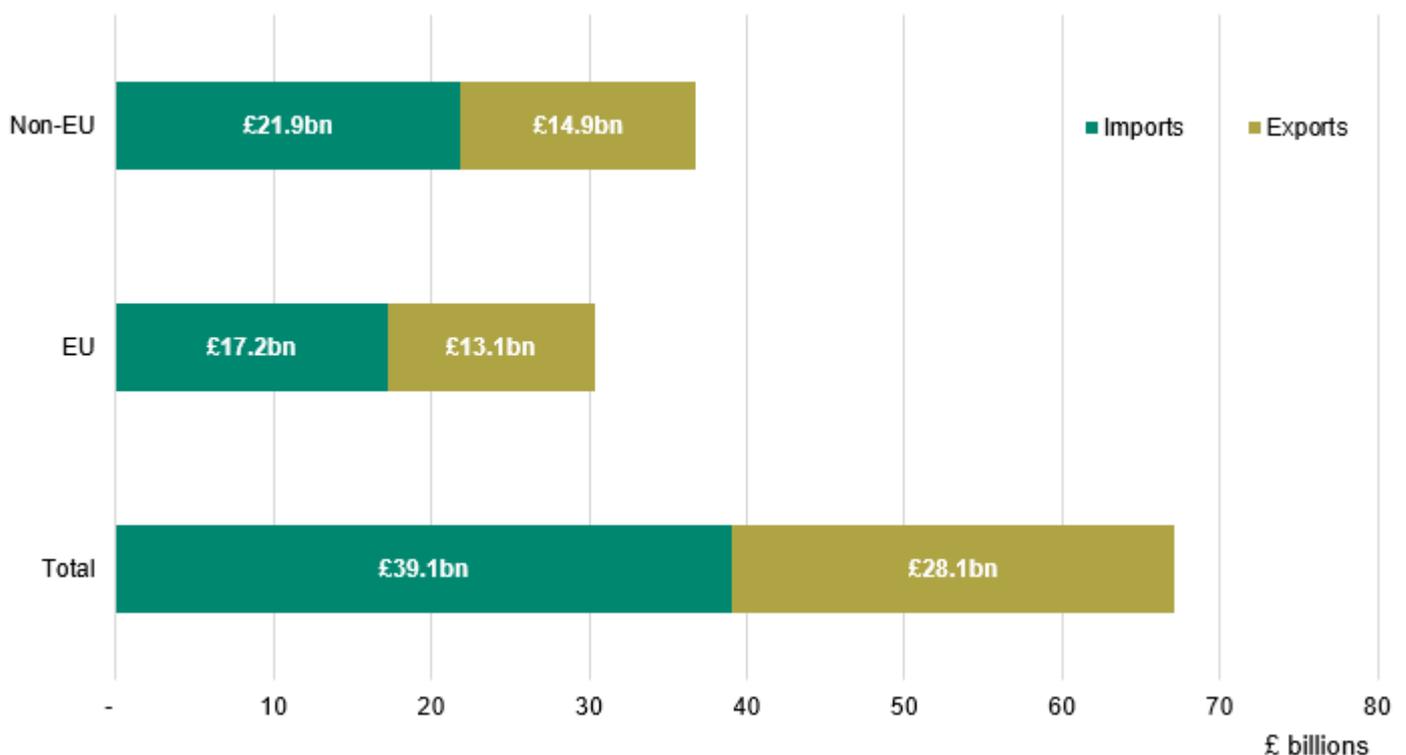
↑ **Non-EU imports up 31% on April 2020**

EU Trade in Goods:

- **EU exports** for April 2021 were £13.1 billion. This was a decrease of £1.5 billion (10%) on last month, but an increase of £3.6 billion (38%) compared with April 2020.
- **EU imports** for April 2021 were £17.2 billion. This was a decrease of £3.0 billion (15%) on last month, but an increase of £4.3 billion (33%) compared with April 2020.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £4.1 billion.

↓ **EU imports down 15% on last month**

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 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, down £490 million (11%). In contrast, it experienced the 2nd largest value increase on April 2020, up £593 million (19%).
- Switzerland experienced the largest value decreases on last month and on April 2020, down £4,030 million (71%) and £1,958 million (54%) respectively.
- Hungary experienced the largest value increases on last month and on April 2020, up £780 million (almost 7 times the value) and £836 million (from £78.2 million) respectively.
- France experienced the 3rd largest value increase on April 2020, up £511 million (51%).
- Belgium experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £403 million (27%). In contrast, it experienced the 4th largest value increase on April 2020, up £483 million (77%).
- Canada (15th place) experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on April 2020, down £335 million (45%).

↓ **Exports to Switzerland down 71% on last month**

↑ **Exports to Hungary up £836 million from £78 million**

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

Partner Country	April 2021	March 2021		April 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from April 2020 (%)
USA	3,786	4,276	-11.4	3,193	18.6
Germany	2,643	2,994	-11.7	2,387	10.7
Netherlands	1,790	2,023	-11.6	1,396	28.2
Republic of Ireland	1,668	1,863	-10.5	1,303	28.0
Switzerland	1,659	5,689	-70.8	3,617	-54.1
France	1,508	1,819	-17.1	997	51.2
China	1,322	1,624	-18.6	1,088	21.5
Belgium	1,111	1,514	-26.6	628	76.8
Hungary	914	134	581.5	78	1069.0
Italy	737	863	-14.7	493	49.3
Others	10,942	12,153	-10.0	8,619	27.0
Total EU	13,137	14,601	-10.0	9,542	37.7
Total Non-EU	14,942	20,351	-26.6	14,258	4.8
Total Exports	28,079	34,952	-19.7	23,800	18.0

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

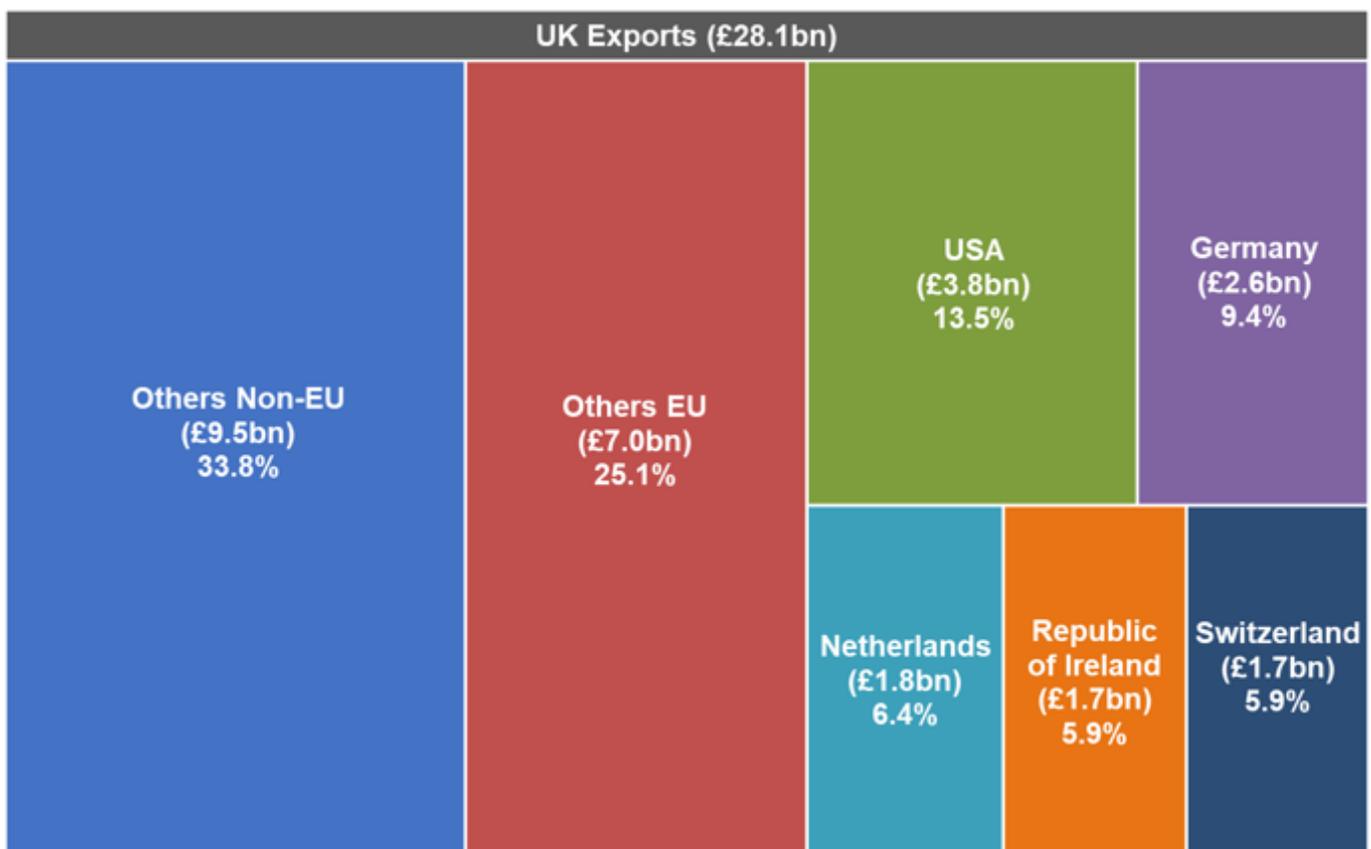
Exports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 41% of total exports in goods in April 2021. This was a decrease from 50% in April 2020.
- The USA accounted for 13% of the total value of exports from the UK. This was an increase of less than one percentage point on April 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 9.4%. This was a decrease from a 10% share in April 2020.
- 9 of the top 10 export partner countries decreased in value on last month, with Hungary as the exception. Only Switzerland decreased in value on April 2020.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Switzerland fell to 5th place from 1st, while Hungary rose to 9th place from 32nd.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with April 2020. Most notably, Hong Kong fell to 13th place from 8th and Canada fell to 15th place from 9th, while Hungary rose to 9th place from 38th.

↑ **The USA had a 13% share of total exports in April 2021**

↓ **Germany had a 9.4% share of total exports in April 2021**

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



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

Exports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to April 2021, the USA remained the largest export partner country.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to January 2021 and on the 3 months to April 2020, up 3 times the value and 76% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Belgium experienced the 2nd largest percentage increases on the 3 months to January 2021 and on the 3 months to April 2020, up 55% and 53% respectively.
- Among the top 10, the Republic of Ireland experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to January 2021, down 19%.
- Among the top 10, Germany experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to April 2020, down 5.1%.
- 7 of the top 10 export partners experienced an increase on the 3 months to January 2021. The exceptions were the Republic of Ireland, China, and Spain.
- 8 of the top 10 export partners experienced an increase on the 3 months to April 2020. The exceptions were Germany and Spain.

↑ **Exports to Switzerland up 3 times the value on the 3 months to January 2021**

↓ **Exports to the Republic of Ireland down 19% on the 3 months to January 2021**

Table 2: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, 3 months to April 2021

Partner Country	3 months to Apr 2021		3 months to Jan 2021		3 months to Apr 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	
USA	11,474	11,447	0.2	11,308	1.5	
Switzerland	10,449	3,468	201.3	5,925	76.3	
Germany	7,993	7,703	3.8	8,423	-5.1	
Netherlands	5,879	5,143	14.3	5,228	12.5	
Irish Republic	4,817	5,968	-19.3	4,544	6.0	
France	4,795	4,125	16.3	4,480	7.1	
Belgium	4,002	2,588	54.6	2,620	52.7	
China	3,963	4,037	-1.8	3,238	22.4	
Italy	2,367	1,949	21.5	2,071	14.3	
Spain	1,926	2,038	-5.5	2,026	-4.9	
Others	32,402	30,086	7.7	29,906	8.3	
Total Exports	90,068	78,552	14.7	79,768	12.9	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest export commodity despite experiencing the largest value decreases on last month and on April 2020, down £2,983 million (39%) and £1,190 million (20%) respectively.
- Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £953 million (27%). In contrast, it experienced the largest value increase on April 2020, up £1,996 million (4 times the value).
- Mechanical appliances experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £712 million (16%).
- Aircraft experienced the 3rd largest value increase on April 2020, up £549 million (double the value).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on April 2020, down £332 million (19%).
- Mineral fuels experienced the 4th largest value decrease on last month, down £350 million (20%).

↓ Exports of Precious metals down 39% on last month

↑ Exports of Motor vehicles up 4 times the value on April 2020

Table 3: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, April 2021

Commodity Description	April 2021	March 2021		April 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change from March 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change from April 2020 (%)
Precious metals	4,642	7,625	-39.1	5,832	-20.4
Mechanical appliances	3,830	4,542	-15.7	3,325	15.2
Motor vehicles	2,638	3,591	-26.5	642	311.1
Electronic equipment	1,551	1,782	-13.0	1,315	18.0
Pharmaceutical products	1,447	1,751	-17.3	1,779	-18.6
Mineral fuels	1,437	1,787	-19.6	1,309	9.8
Other products	1,380	1,467	-6.0	550	150.9
Measuring devices and gauges	1,231	1,460	-15.7	961	28.1
Aircraft	1,096	1,052	4.2	547	100.4
Organic chemicals	959	1,026	-6.5	996	-3.7
Others	7,868	8,868	-11.3	6,545	20.2
Total Exports	28,079	34,952	-19.7	23,800	18.0

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

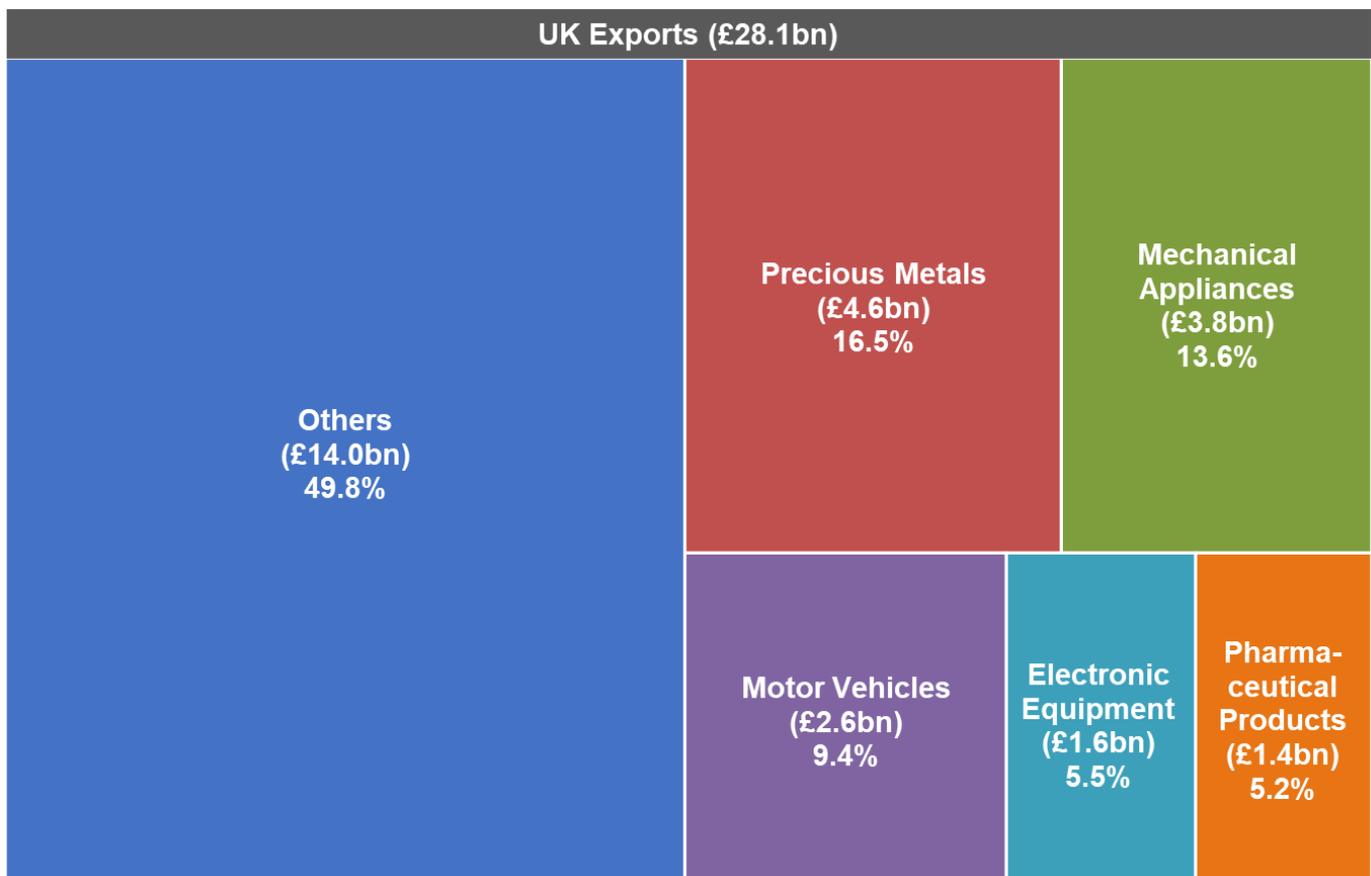
Exports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 50% of exports in April 2021, this was a decrease from a 57% share in April 2020.
- Precious metals accounted for 17% of total exports. This was a decrease from a 25% share in April 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 14% of total exports. This was a decrease of less than one percentage point on April 2020.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed order when compared with last month. Most notably, Mineral fuels fell to 6th place from 4th.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with April 2020. Most notably, Motor vehicles rose to 3rd place from 9th, while Pharmaceutical products fell to 5th place from 3rd and Organic chemicals fell to 10th place from 6th.

↓ **Precious metals accounted for 17% of total exports in April 2021**

↓ **Mechanical appliances accounted for 14% of total exports in April 2021**

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



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

Exports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to April 2021, Precious metals replaced Mechanical appliances as the largest export commodity. It experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to January 2021 and the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to April 2020, up more than double the value and 41% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Aircraft experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to January 2021, up 31%.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the 3rd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to April 2020, up 39%.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to January 2021, down 12%.
- Among the top 10, Organic chemicals experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to April 2020, down 7.9%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to January 2021. The exceptions were Mineral fuels, Electronic equipment and Organic chemicals.
- 6 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to April 2020. The exceptions were Mechanical appliances, Mineral fuels, Pharmaceutical products and Organic chemicals.

↑ **Precious metals exports up more than double the value on the 3 months to January 2021**

↑ **Motor vehicles exports up 39% on the 3 months to April 2020**

Table 4: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to April 2021

Commodity Description	3 months to Apr 2021		3 months to Jan 2021		3 months to Apr 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	
Precious metals	16,828	7,520	123.8	11,897	41.5	
Mechanical appliances	11,931	11,157	6.9	12,334	-3.3	
Motor vehicles	9,175	8,255	11.1	6,618	38.6	
Mineral fuels	4,909	5,568	-11.8	5,228	-6.1	
Electronic equipment	4,791	4,915	-2.5	4,698	2.0	
Pharmaceutical products	4,703	4,431	6.1	5,094	-7.7	
Other products	4,153	3,176	30.8	1,953	112.6	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,805	3,449	10.3	3,409	11.6	
Aircraft	3,130	2,389	31.0	2,662	17.6	
Organic chemicals	2,385	2,408	-1.0	2,589	-7.9	
Others	24,258	25,284	-4.1	23,285	4.2	
Total Exports	90,068	78,552	14.7	79,768	12.9	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Country to commodity:

- The decreases in exports to Switzerland on last month and on April 2020 were dominated by Precious metals, down £3,938 million (74%) and £1,977 million (59%) respectively.
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was driven by Motor vehicles, down £279 million (38%). The increase on April 2020 was also led by Motor vehicles, up £370 million (5 times the value).
- The increases in exports to Hungary on last month and on April 2020 were led by Precious metals, up £829 million (from less than £1.0 million) on both periods.
- The decrease in exports to Belgium on last month was led by Pharmaceutical products, down £131 million (43%). The increase on April 2020 was led by Motor vehicles, up £133 million (from £11.7 million).

↓ Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland down 74% on last month

↑ Exports of Motor vehicles to the USA up 5 times the value on April 2020

Commodity to country

- The decrease in exports of Mechanical appliances on last month was led by the USA, down £130 million (18%).
- The increase in exports of Aircraft on April 2020 was led by France, up £119 million (almost 3 times the value).
- The decrease in exports of Pharmaceutical products on April 2020 was led by China, down £139 million (67%).
- The decrease in exports of Mineral fuels on last month was led by the Netherlands, down £116 million (25%).

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



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

Imports: Country Analysis

- China remained the largest import partner country despite experiencing the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £701 million (13%). In contrast, it experienced the 2nd largest value increase on April 2020, up £1,559 million (49%).
- Germany experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £994 million (18%). Conversely, it experienced the largest value increase on April 2020, up £1,579 million (55%).
- Norway experienced the 3rd largest value increase on April 2020, up £858 million (2.5 times the value).
- South Africa (in 12th place) experienced the largest value increase on last month and the 4th largest value increase on April 2020, up £468 million (91%) and £781 million (almost 5 times the value) respectively.
- The Netherlands experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month and the largest value decrease on April 2020, down £527 million (20%) and £322 million (13%) respectively.

↓ Imports from Germany down 18% on last month

↑ Imports from South Africa up almost 5 times the value on April 2020

Table 5: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, April 2021

Partner Country	April 2021	March 2021		April 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on March 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)
China	4,741	5,442	-12.9	3,181	49.0
Germany	4,447	5,441	-18.3	2,868	55.1
USA	3,576	3,580	-0.1	3,779	-5.4
Netherlands	2,128	2,655	-19.8	2,450	-13.2
Belgium	1,755	1,879	-6.6	1,245	40.9
France	1,649	1,902	-13.3	1,156	42.7
Russia	1,594	1,283	24.3	1,781	-10.5
Italy	1,500	1,653	-9.3	935	60.4
Norway	1,448	1,334	8.6	591	145.1
Spain	1,082	1,370	-21.0	766	41.2
Others	15,141	15,300	-1.0	10,900	40.4
Total EU	17,194	20,198	-14.9	12,925	33.0
Total Non-EU	21,866	21,642	1.0	16,728	30.7
Total Imports	39,060	41,840	-6.6	29,653	31.7

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

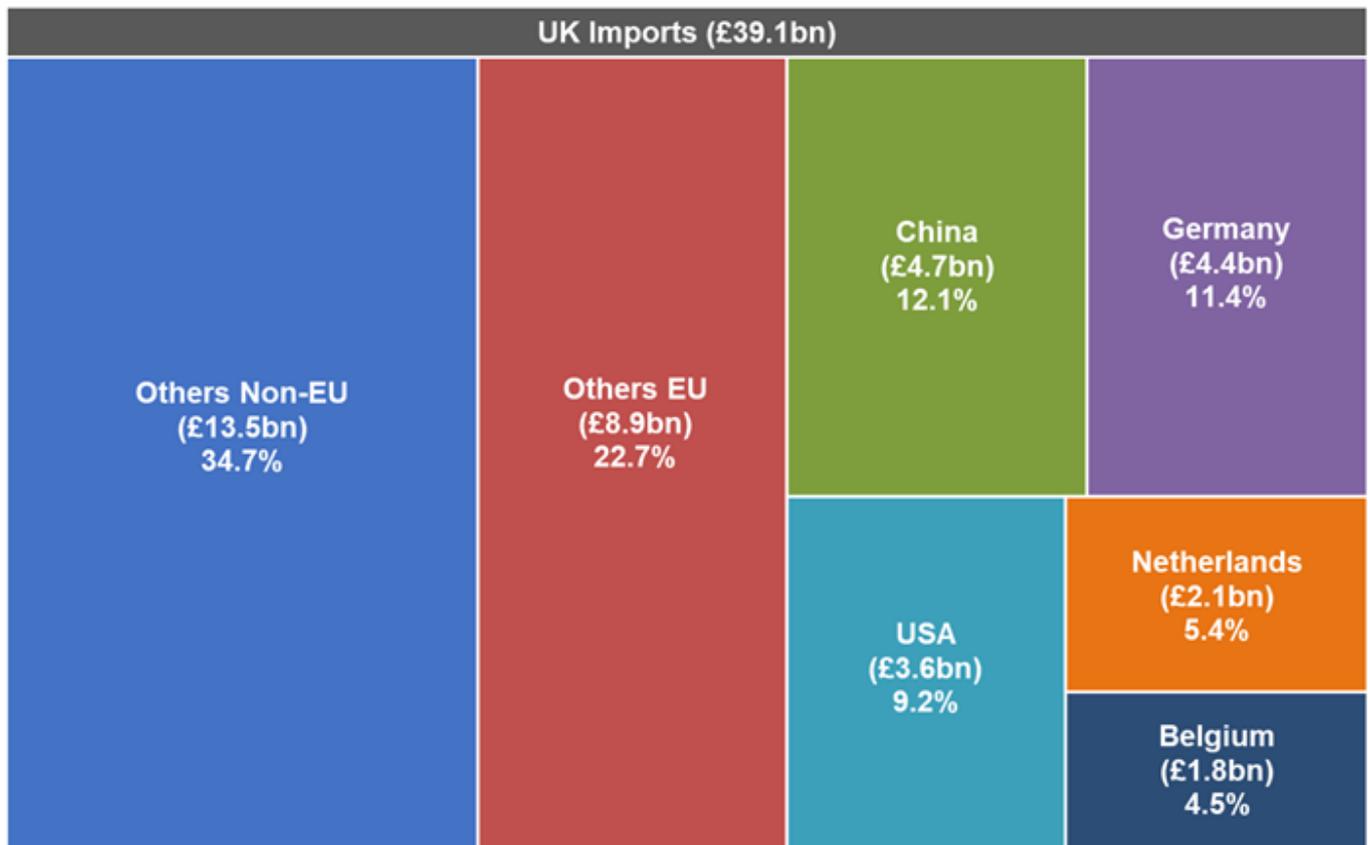
Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 43% of the total value of goods imported in April 2021. This was a decrease from 47% in April 2020.
- China accounted for 12% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from 11% in April 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 11%. This was an increase from 9.7% in April 2020.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Russia rose to 7th place from 10th.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with April 2020. Most notably, the USA fell to 3rd place from 1st, while Norway rose to 9th place from 13th.

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

↑ **China accounted for 12% of total imports in April 2021**

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



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

Imports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to April 2021, China remained the largest import partner country. Among the top 10, it experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to April 2020, up 81%.
- Among the top 10, the Netherlands experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to January 2021 and the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to April 2020, down 24% and 19% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Norway experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on April 2020, up 48%.
- Among the top 10, the USA experienced the largest percentage decrease on April 2020, down 19%.
- All of the top 10 countries experienced a decrease on the 3 months to January 2021.
- 6 of the top 10 countries experienced an increase on the 3 months to April 2020. The exceptions were the USA, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France.

↑ **Imports from China up 81% on the 3 months to April 2020**

↓ **Imports from the Netherlands down 24% on the 3 months to January 2021**

Table 6: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, 3 months to April 2021

Partner Country	3 months to Apr 2021		3 months to Jan 2021		3 months to Apr 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	
China	15,170	16,282	-6.8	8,398	80.6	
Germany	14,126	14,790	-4.5	13,281	6.4	
USA	10,315	10,697	-3.6	12,781	-19.3	
Netherlands	7,065	9,251	-23.6	8,732	-19.1	
Belgium	5,188	6,091	-14.8	5,335	-2.7	
France	5,103	5,866	-13.0	5,415	-5.8	
Italy	4,459	4,599	-3.0	3,882	14.9	
Norway	4,035	4,089	-1.3	2,734	47.6	
Russia	3,802	4,615	-17.6	3,699	2.8	
Spain	3,588	3,961	-9.4	3,480	3.1	
Others	42,902	48,216	-11.0	42,448	1.1	
Total Imports	115,754	128,458	-9.9	110,185	5.1	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 and 2020 data is provisional

Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Mechanical appliances remained the largest import commodity despite experiencing the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £589 million (11%). In contrast, it experienced the 3rd largest value increase on April 2020, up £984 million (25%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,104 million (24%). Conversely, it experienced the largest value increase on April 2020, up £2,754 million (more than 4 times the value).
- Mineral fuels experienced the 2nd largest value increases on last month and on April 2020, up £301 million (12%) and £1,425 million (96%) respectively.
- Electronic equipment experienced the 4th largest value increase on April 2020, up £824 million (29%).
- Precious metals experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £379 million (8.7%).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the largest value decrease on April 2020, down £317 million (19%).

↓ Imports of Mechanical appliances down 11% on last month

↑ Imports of Motor vehicles up more than 4 times the value on April 2020

Table 7: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, April 2021

Commodity Description	April 2021		March 2021		April 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on March 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	
Mechanical appliances	4,920	5,508	-10.7	3,935	25.0	
Precious metals	4,741	4,362	8.7	4,399	7.8	
Electronic equipment	3,643	3,740	-2.6	2,819	29.2	
Motor vehicles	3,589	4,693	-23.5	835	329.8	
Mineral fuels	2,912	2,612	11.5	1,487	95.9	
Pharmaceutical products	1,375	1,627	-15.5	1,691	-18.7	
Plastics and plastic products	1,203	1,300	-7.4	1,008	19.3	
Measuring devices and gauges	1,058	1,344	-21.3	973	8.8	
Miscellaneous chemical products	887	939	-5.5	436	103.5	
Furniture and light fittings	827	875	-5.5	479	72.7	
Others	13,904	14,840	-6.3	11,590	20.0	
Total Imports	39,060	41,840	-6.6	29,653	31.7	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

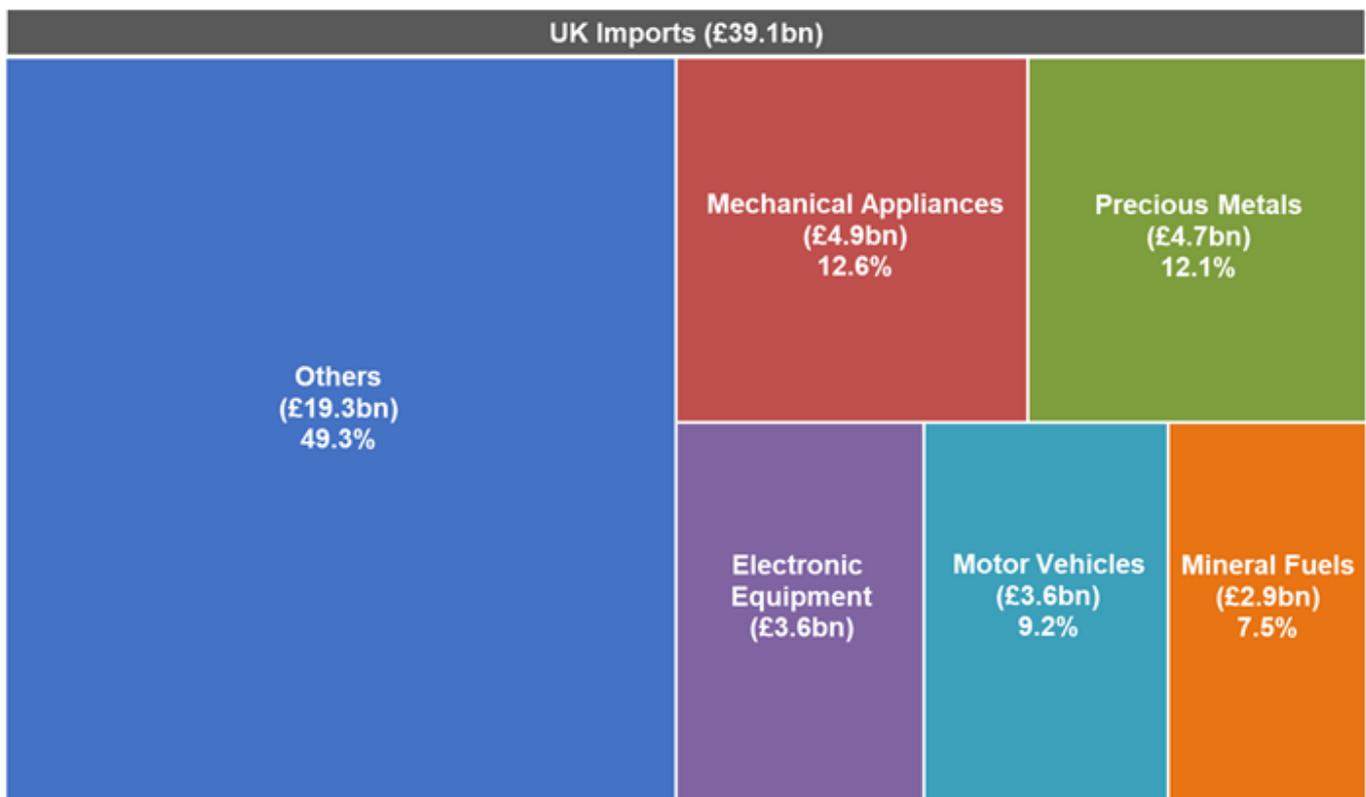
Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 51% of the total value of goods imported in April 2021. This was an increase from a 48% share in April 2020.
- Mechanical appliances accounted for 13% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was a decrease of less than a percentage point on April 2020.
- Precious metals had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for a 12% share. This was a decrease from a 15% share in April 2020.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed order compared with last month. Most notably, Motor vehicles fell to 4th place from 2nd.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with April 2020. Most notably, Motor vehicles rose to 4th place from 8th and Miscellaneous chemical products rose to 9th place from 13th.

↑ **The top 5 import commodities accounted for 51% of total imports in April 2021**

↓ **Mechanical appliances accounted for 13% of total imports in April 2021**

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



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

Imports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to April 2021, Mechanical appliances replaced Precious metals as the largest import commodity.
- Among the top 10, Precious metals experienced the largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to January 2021 and on the 3 months to April 2020, down 31% and 16% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Miscellaneous chemical products experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to January 2021 and on the 3 months to April 2020, up 24% and more than double respectively.
- Among the top 10, Electronic equipment experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to January 2021, down 19%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to January 2021. The exceptions were Mechanical appliances, Miscellaneous chemical products, and Furniture and light fittings.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to April 2020. The exceptions were Precious metals and Pharmaceutical products.

↓ Imports of Precious metals down 31% on the 3 months to January 2021

↑ Imports of Miscellaneous chemical products up more than double on the 3 months to April 2020

Table 8: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to April 2021

Commodity Description	3 months to Apr 2021		3 months to Jan 2021		3 months to Apr 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on January 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on April 2020 (%)	
Mechanical appliances	14,965	14,498	3.2	14,025	6.7	
Precious metals	12,705	18,444	-31.1	15,117	-16.0	
Motor vehicles	11,707	12,472	-6.1	10,430	12.2	
Electronic equipment	10,680	13,226	-19.2	9,360	14.1	
Mineral fuels	7,867	8,017	-1.9	7,589	3.7	
Pharmaceutical products	4,518	5,049	-10.5	4,831	-6.5	
Plastics and plastic products	3,629	3,734	-2.8	3,171	14.4	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,406	3,834	-11.2	3,342	1.9	
Miscellaneous chemical products	2,823	2,285	23.5	1,248	126.1	
Furniture and light fittings	2,454	2,280	7.6	1,775	38.3	
Others	41,001	44,618	-8.1	39,296	4.3	
Total Imports	115,754	128,458	-9.9	110,185	5.1	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Country to commodity:

- The decrease in imports from China on last month was driven by Mechanical appliances and Motor vehicles, down £216 million (17%) and £172 million (61%) respectively. The increase on April 2020 was led by Miscellaneous chemical products, up £406 million (from £26.0 million).
- The increases in imports from South Africa on last month and on April 2020 were dominated by Precious metals, up £307 million (87%) and £594 million (10 times the value) respectively.
- The decrease in imports from the Netherlands on last month was driven by Motor vehicles, down £214 million (62%). The decrease on April 2020 was driven by Mechanical appliances and Pharmaceutical products, down £217 million (46%) and £212 million (67%) respectively.

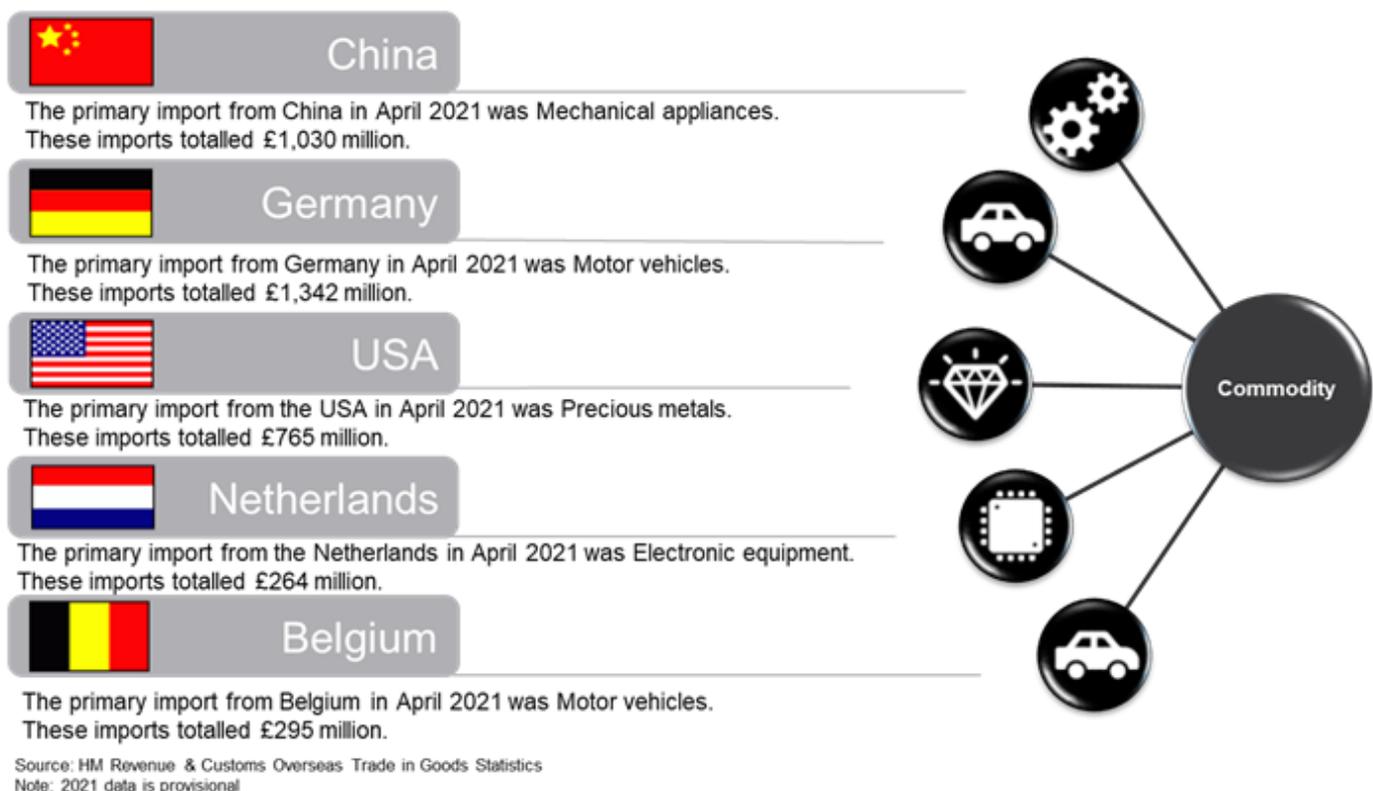
↑ Imports of Precious metals from South Africa up 87% on last month

Commodity to country:

- The decrease in imports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by Germany, down £358 million (21%). In contrast, the increase on April 2020 was dominated by Germany, up £1,147 million (almost 7 times the value).
- The increases in imports of Mineral fuels on last month and on April 2020 were dominated by Norway, up £168 million (16%) and £828 million (more than 3 times the value) respectively.
- The increase in Electronic equipment on April 2020 was driven by China, up £340 million (55%).

↑ Imports of Motor vehicles from Germany up 7 times the value on April 2020

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



Methodology Notes

Metadata

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

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

Data sources

UK to EU exports

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

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

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

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

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

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

UK imports from EU

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

Figures derived from Intrastat include:

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

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

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

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

Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

Relationship with other statistical publications

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

National Statistics Publication

HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries on 11 June 2021 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). The 1st release is published on HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com.

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

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

Month of account	First release date
May 2021	9 July 2021
June 2021	12 August 2021
July 2021	10 September 2021

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

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

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

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

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