

# UK Port Freight Statistics: October – December (Quarter 4)



Department  
for Transport



**RESPONSIBLE STATISTICIAN:** Behnom Havaei-Ahary: 020 7944 2168  
**FURTHER INFORMATION:** Media: 020 7944 3066  
 Public: [maritime.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:maritime.stats@dft.gsi.gov.uk)

## UK Major Ports Quarter 4 2013 Main Findings

### Quarterly Trend

Comparing quarter 4 2013 (October - December) with quarter 4 2012:

| Quarterly Totals: Q4 2013       |       |                    |         |          |
|---------------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------|----------|
|                                 | Total | Q4 2012 Comparison | Inwards | Outwards |
| <b>Tonnage (Million tonnes)</b> | 122   | +5%                | 78      | 44       |
| <b>Units (Million units)</b>    | 5.0   | +6%                | 2.6     | 2.4      |

- **Total major port freight traffic (tonnage) increased to 122 million tonnes.**
- **Outward freight traffic rose** by 9 per cent to **44 million tonnes**, the first quarter on quarter increase seen in outward traffic since quarter 2 2012.
- **Unitised traffic** at UK major ports **increased by 6 per cent** totalling **5.0 million units**,

### Rolling Annual Total

Comparing the four quarters ending quarter 4 2013 (Q1 2013 – Q4 2013) with the four quarters ending quarter 4 2012 (Q1 2012 – Q4 2012):

| Rolling Annual Totals: 2013     |       |                 |         |          |
|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------|---------|----------|
|                                 | Total | 2012 Comparison | Inwards | Outwards |
| <b>Tonnage (Million tonnes)</b> | 491   | 0%              | 318     | 173      |
| <b>Units (Million units)</b>    | 21.2  | +2%             | 11.0    | 10.2     |

- **The rolling annual total major port tonnage increased by less than 1 per cent to 491 million tonnes**, the highest total since the period ending quarter 3 2012.
- **The rolling annual total of unitised traffic increased to 21.2 million units** during 2013, a 2 per cent increase compared with the previous four quarters.

### About this release

This Statistical Release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by **major** UK sea ports. Provisional annual statistics for all ports are published June and detailed final annual statistics are published in September. The quarterly series is finalised alongside the final annual statistics for 2013.

This statistical release uses quarter on quarter comparisons to eliminate seasonal impact.

## Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

### Summary

The rolling annual total for the period ending quarter 4 2013 saw **UK major ports** handle **491 million tonnes** of freight traffic, this was the highest total seen throughout 2013.

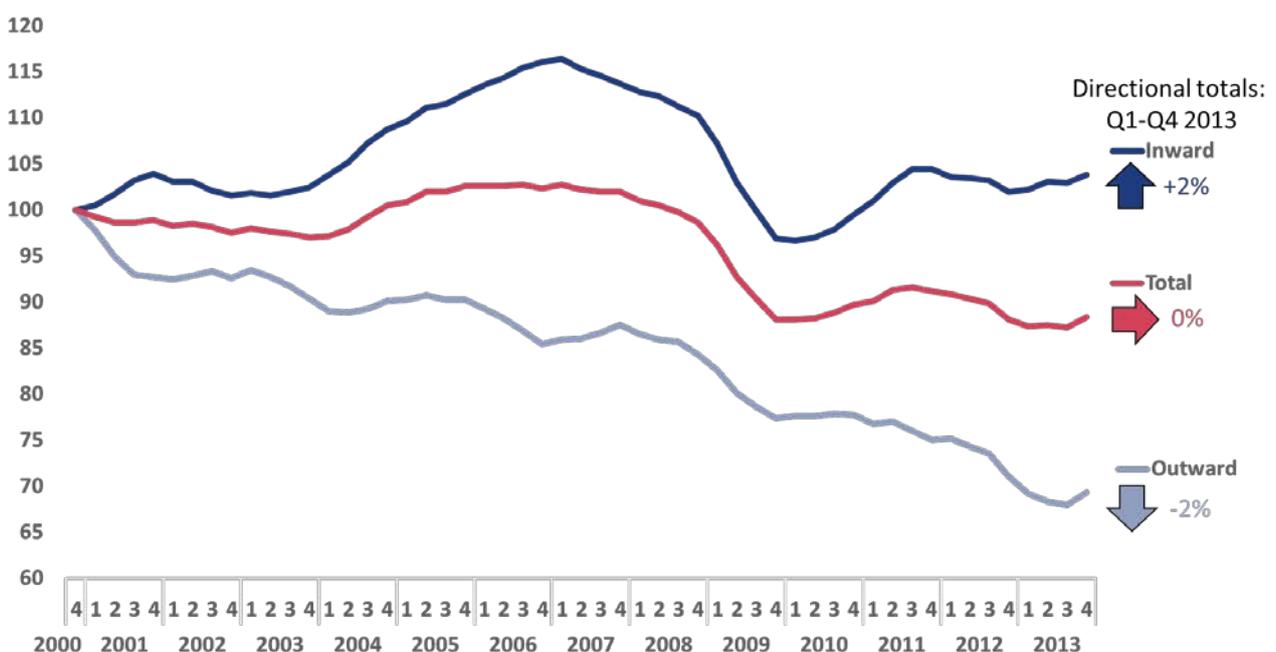
### Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 4 2013 (October – December) to quarter 4 2012:

- **Total freight traffic increased** by 5 per cent to **122 million tonnes**. Despite this increase, this was still the second lowest amount of freight handled during the fourth quarter in the past decade.
- Freight traffic travelling **in to UK major ports** was **78 million tonnes**; a 4 per cent increase. This was the biggest quarter on quarter increase since quarter 3 2011.
- Freight traffic travelling **out of UK major ports**, rose by 9 per cent, totalling **44 million tonnes**. This ended a period of continuous decline in the fourth quarter, seen since the start of the 2007 recession, but was still lower than the 2011 total of 47 million tonnes.

### Annual (Rolling) Trend: quarter 4 2012 through to quarter 4 2013

- **Total major port freight traffic** increased by less than 1 percent to **491 million tonnes** compared with the period ending quarter 4 2012. More long term this figure is virtually unchanged from the 2009 rolling annual total but still 14 per cent lower than the 2007 pre-recession peak.
- The annual rolling total for this period saw an increase in the amount of traffic coming **in to UK major ports**, rising by 2 per cent to **318 million tonnes** compared to the previous four quarters.
- Traffic travelling outwards from **UK major ports continued to decline**. The latest figure of **173 million tonnes** was 2 per cent lower than the previous four quarters.

**Chart 1: Major port traffic indices, tonnage: rolling four quarter totals to quarter 4 2013 (2000=100)**



Detailed statistics (tables) on “Quarterly Tonnage Port Freight Statistics’ can be found in the web tables [PORT0501 & PORT0504-PORT0506](#)

## Major Port Freight Traffic (Units)

### Summary

The **annual total number of units** handled at UK major ports for the period ending quarter 4 2013 was **21.2 million**. There were marginal increases in both inwards and outwards traffic over this period.

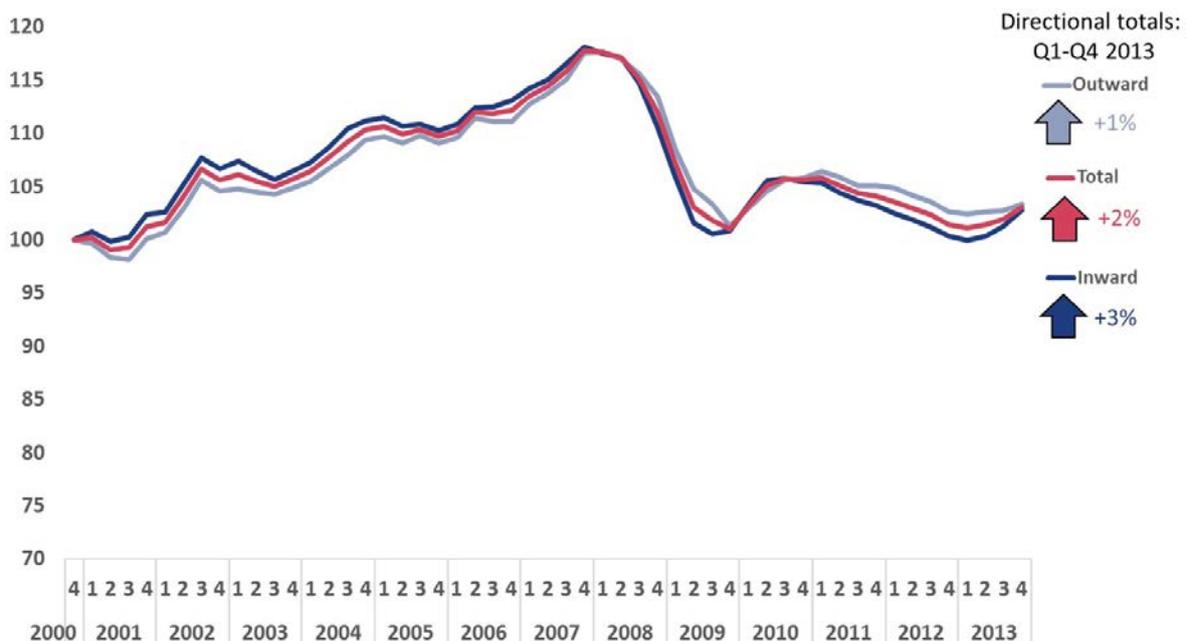
### Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 4 2013 (October – December) to quarter 4 2012:

- **Total unitised traffic increased** by 6 per cent to **5.0 million**. More long term, this was the first time since 2007 that the amount of units handled in the fourth quarter has increased.
- **Unitised traffic travelling into UK major ports** rose by 8 per cent to **2.6 million units**. This was the largest amount seen during the October-December period since 2007.
- The amount of **unitised traffic travelling out of UK major ports** totalled **2.4 million units**, an increase of 4 per cent over the 2012 total.

### Annual (Rolling) Trend: quarter 4 2013 through to quarter 4 2012

- **Total unitised traffic rose** 2 per cent to **21.2 million units** in comparison to the previous four quarters. This was the first substantial increase since the 12 month period ending March 2011.
- Compared with the previous four quarters, **unitised traffic** travelling into UK major ports increased by 3 per cent to **11.0 million**.
- **Outward unitised traffic** totalled **10.2 million units**, a 1 per cent increase compared to the previous four quarters.

**Chart 2: Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling four quarters totals to quarter 4 2013 (2000=100)**



Detailed statistics (tables) on “Quarterly Unitised Port Freight Statistics’ can be found in the web tables [PORT0502 & PORT0507-PORT0509](#)

## Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- The port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.
- The provisional quarterly port data relate to all cargoes loaded or unloaded by ship at major ports in the UK, including both international and domestic traffic.
- These statistics are based on data provided by major ports. Data are available for total weight of goods and number of units inwards and outwards for each responding port. These figures may be subject to revision if subsequent checks against data provided by agents, or data provided by ports at the year end, highlight anomalies. More in depth commentary will be provided with the release of the final port statistics.
- Typically a very small number of ports do not provide data in time for publication, in which case the national trend is estimated based on the trend for those ports which have provided data for the latest quarter. **The provisional figures for freight traffic at each major UK port in quarter 4 2013 are based on 100 per cent of expected traffic as all ports had made complete returns for this quarter at the time of publication.**

## Glossary

- **Major ports:** Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounted for 98% of UK port traffic in 2012.
- **Tonnage:** The weight of goods transported, including crates and other packaging, but excluding the unloaded weight of shipping containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment where these are used.
- **Units:** Includes all roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) units whether carrying freight or not (road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, shipborne port-to-port trailers, passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other ro-ro units), as well as lift-on lift-off (lo-lo) containers. In most published port statistics, freight carrying roll-on/roll-off units are reported separately, however, this detail is not available at the time of the quarterly statistics publication, in which combined totals are given.

## Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/maritime-and-shipping-statistics>
- Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found on the ports series page here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>

- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Port Freight Statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and were confirmed as National Statistics in February 2013.
- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found on the ports series page here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>
- The next update in this series will be published in June 2014. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the first quarter of 2014.
- Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are updated twice a year; provisional in June and detailed final figures in September. The final 2012 figures can be found here:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-freight-statistics-2012-final-figures>