

UK Port Freight Statistics: October to December 2014 (Quarter 4)

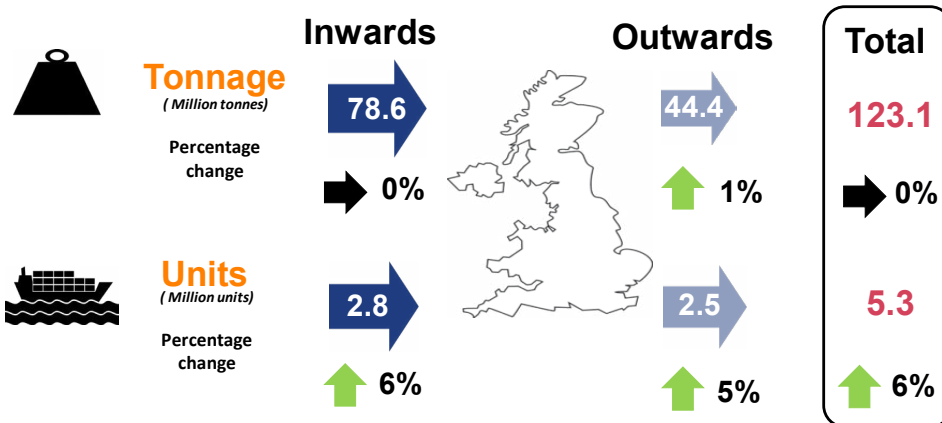


Department
for Transport

UK Major Ports: Quarter 4 2014 main findings

Quarterly Trend

Comparing quarter 4 2014 (October - December) with quarter 4 2013:

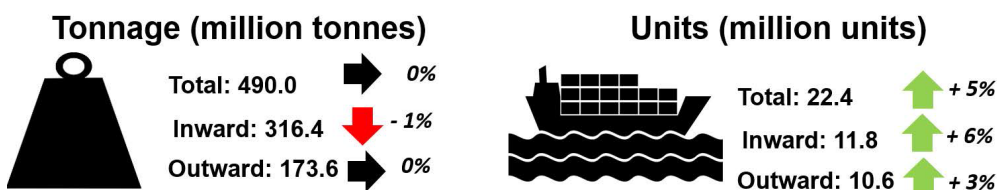


- Freight handled at UK major ports remained steady at **123.1 million tonnes** in quarter 4 2014. Traffic trends had been generally decreasing since the series began (in 2000), however total port freight levels have stabilised in recent years.

- Unitised traffic rose by **6 per cent** to **5.3 million units**. This was the seventh consecutive quarter on quarter increase.

Rolling Four Quarter Total

Comparing the 4 quarters ending December 2014 with the 4 quarters ending December 2013:



- Major port freight traffic remained stable at **490.0 million tonnes**, following the steady growth throughout 2014.

- UK major port unitised traffic **increased** for the sixth rolling 4 quarter period in a row, by **5 per cent** to **22.4 million units**.

About this release

This statistical release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by major UK sea ports.

Detailed final annual statistics will be published in August 2015, when the quarterly series will also be finalised. This statistical release compares results for the latest quarter to the same quarter a year earlier to avoid the misinterpretation of seasonal effects.

Definitions:

Major ports-

Ports handling over one million tonnes of freight per year and a small number of other key ports.

Together these ports accounted for 98% of total UK port traffic in 2013.

Unitised traffic-

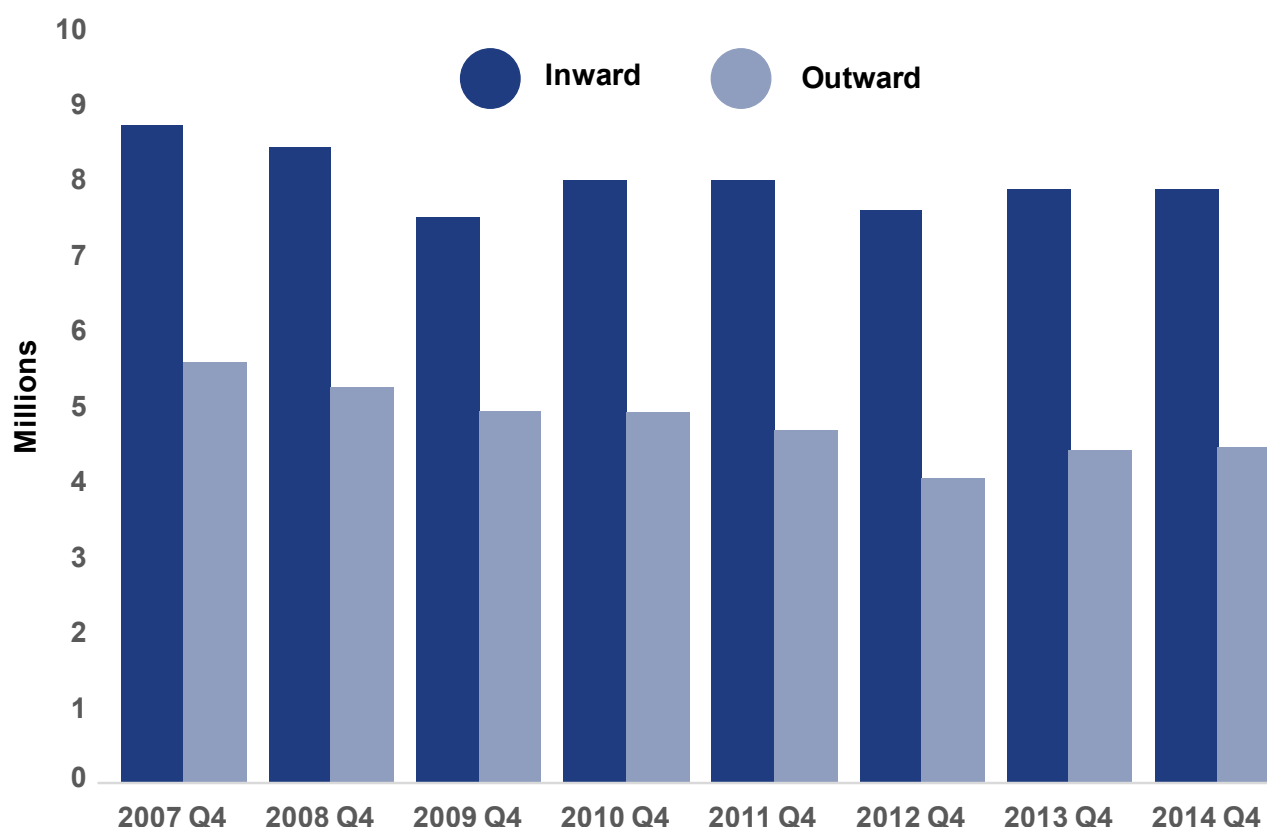
This includes containers and all Ro-Ro (trade, passenger, import/export motor vehicles). These figures include both loaded and empty units.

Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 4 2014 (October – December) to quarter 4 2013:

- **Freight** handled at UK major ports remained steady at **123.1 million tonnes** in quarter 4 2014. Traffic trends had been generally decreasing since the series began (in 2000), however total port freight levels have stabilised in recent years.
- Freight traffic **travelling in** to UK major ports **remained stable** at **78.6 million tonnes**, accounting for 64 per cent of all traffic. Since the delayed impact of the recession (2009) inward traffic has been generally increasing, with a slight dip in 2012. Levels for quarter 4 in 2014 are now just 7 per cent lower than the same quarter a decade earlier.
- Freight traffic **travelling out** of the UK major ports **increased by 1 per cent** to **44.4 million tonnes**. Outward traffic generally decreased prior to the recession. It continued to decline between 2009 and 2012, but appears to have stabilised in 2013 and 2014.

Chart 1: Major port traffic for quarter 4, 2007-2014

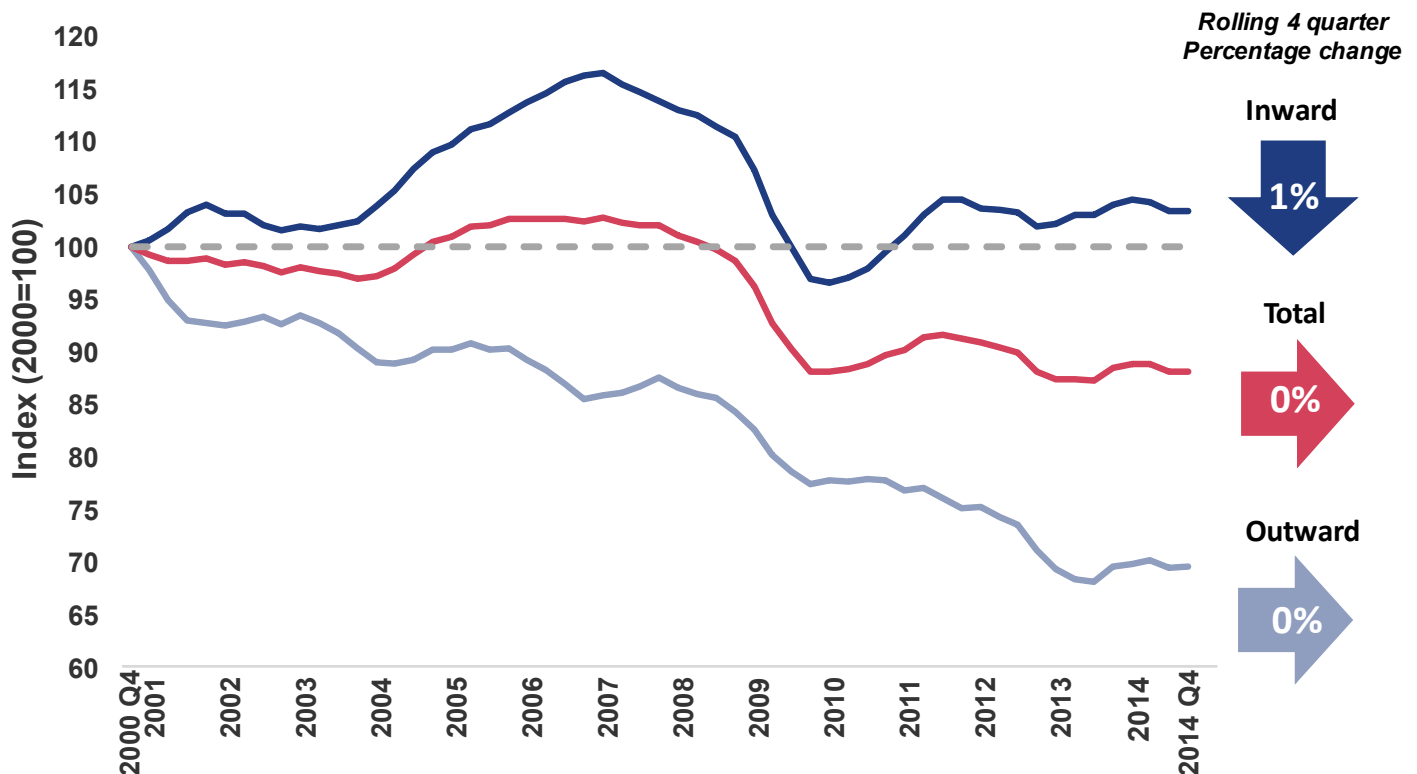


Detailed statistics (tables) on Quarterly Tonnage Port Freight Statistics can be found in the web tables [PORT0501 & PORT0504-PORT0506](#)

Rolling Four-Quarter Trend: Comparing the 4 quarters ending December 2014 with the 4 quarters ending December 2013:

- Major port **freight traffic remained stable at 490.0 million tonnes**, following steady growth throughout 2014. Prior to the recession, the rolling four quarter total had generally increased quarter on quarter. Since the start of 2008, totals have been decreasing with a year of brief growth in 2011.
- Freight **travelling in** to UK major ports decreased by 1 per cent when compared with the previous four quarters at **316.4 million tonnes**. Before the recession, the rolling four quarter total had been increasing consistently from quarter 4 2003. Since quarter 4 2010, this measure has been steadily increasing with a slight dip in 2012.
- Freight **travelling out** of UK major ports **remained stable at 173.6 million tonnes**, following three quarters of growth. The 4 quarter rolling outward total declined throughout 2011 to 2013.
- Major port traffic had a large drop in 2009 linked to the delayed impact of the recession. In recent years, port freight levels have stabilised.

Chart 2: Major port traffic indices, tonnage: rolling 4 quarter totals to December 2014 (2000=100)

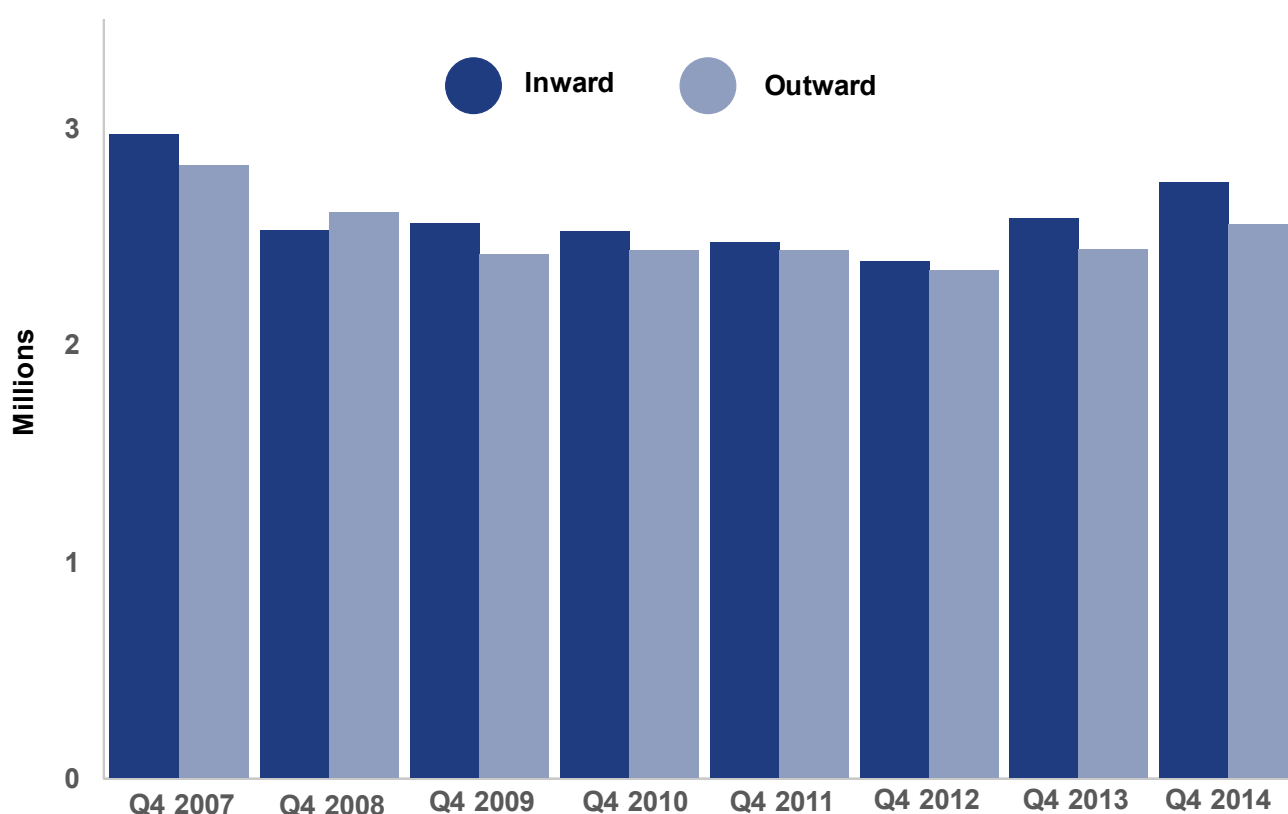


Major Port Freight Traffic (Units)

Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 4 2014 (October – December) to quarter 4 2013:

- Unitised traffic rose **by 6 per cent to 5.3 million units**, increasing for the seventh consecutive quarter. Since the series began in 2000, unitised traffic generally increased until the recession where it decreased rapidly. Growth in 2013 and 2014 suggest that the trend in unitised freight is returning to previous levels. Total figures are just 9 per cent lower than in the fourth quarter preceding the recession.
- Unitised traffic **travelling in** to UK major ports **rose by 6 per cent to 2.8 million units**. This continues on quarterly growth seen throughout 2013 and 2014, following a period of post-recession decline.
- Unitised traffic **travelling out** of UK major ports **increased by 5 per cent to 2.5 million units**. This was the sixth consecutive increase. The volume of units travelling out of the UK was 7 per cent higher than in quarter 4 2000 (start of series). Outward unitised traffic also declined in the period following the 2008 recession having generally increased 2000-2007.

Chart 3: Major port unitised traffic for quarter 4, 2007-2014

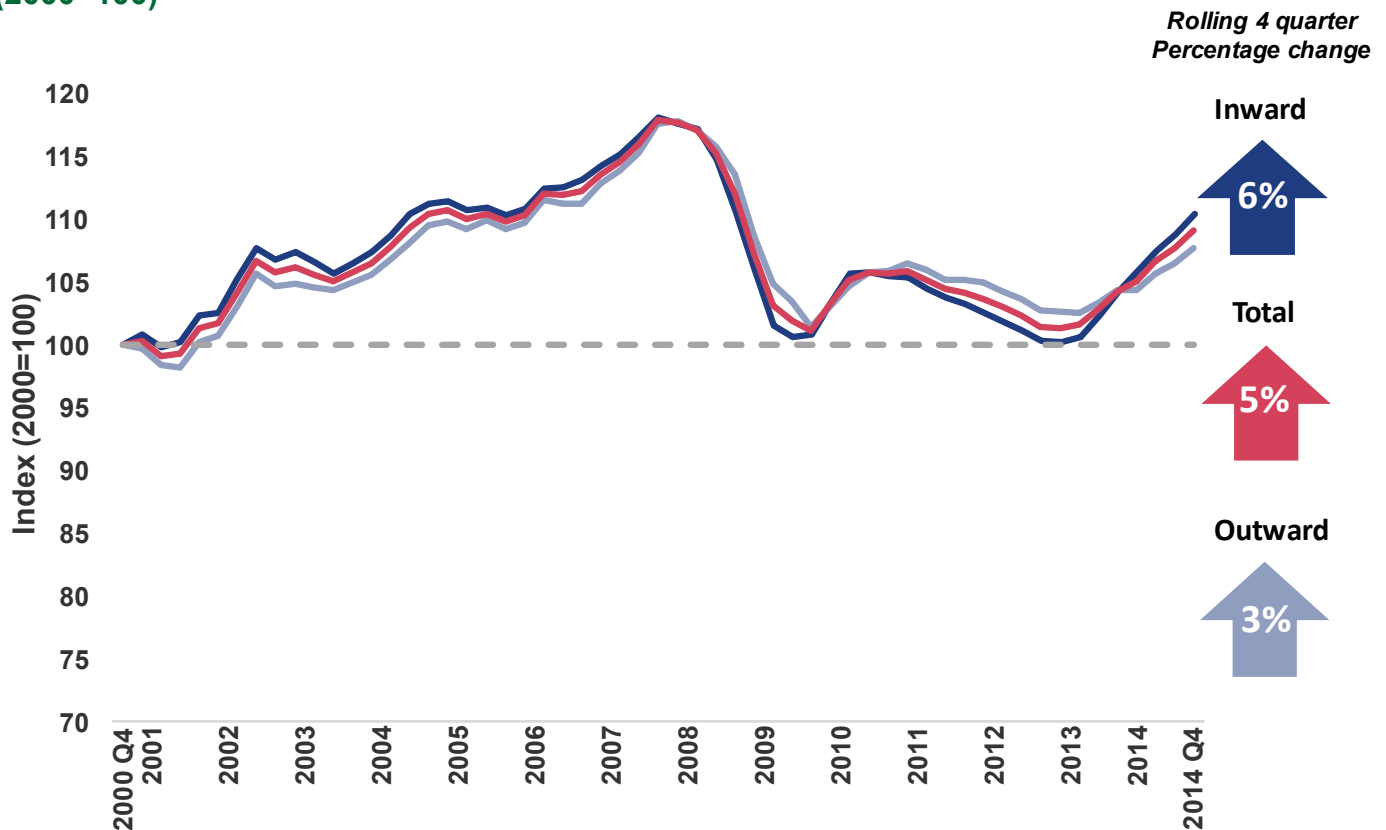


Detailed statistics (tables) on Quarterly Unitised Port Freight Statistics can be found in the web tables [PORT0502 & PORT0507-PORT0509](#)

Rolling Four-Quarter Trend: Comparing the 4 quarters ending December 2014 with the 4 quarters ending December 2013

- UK major port unitised traffic **increased** for the sixth rolling 4 quarter period in a row, **by 5 per cent to 22.4 million units**. Previously, the rolling 4 quarter total steadily declined from quarter 3 2011 to quarter 3 2013.
- Unitised traffic **travelling in** to UK major ports **increased by 6 per cent to 11.8 million units**.
- Unitised traffic **travelling out** of UK major ports **increased by 3 per cent** compared with the previous 4 quarter period to **10.6 million units**.
- Although unitised freight traffic has fluctuated since the recent post-recession low in 2009, unitised freight appears to be growing again.

Chart 4: Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling 4 quarter totals to December 2014 (2000=100)



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 cargos 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 2014 are based on 100 per cent of expected returns.
- ▶ Following an earlier processing error, Stranraer resubmitted their 2013 data, therefore figures have been revised in all of the PORT05 tables. It is a minor change with an addition of 0.4 million tonnes of freight and 37 thousand units. We are currently working on carrying out amendments on the annual port freight tables.

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 2013.
- ▶ **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/statistical-data-sets/port05-traffic-indices-and-quarterly-breakdowns>
- ▶ 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/pre-release-access-lists-for-maritime-and-shipping-series>
- ▶ The next update in this series will be published in June 2015. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the first quarter of 2015.
- ▶ Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are released in August 2015. The final 2013 figures can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/port-freight-statistics-2013-final-figures>
- ▶ These statistics are also sent to EuroStat on a quarterly basis and used in a table alongside data from other EU member countries. In quarter 4 2013 the UK handled 15 per cent of all traffic in the EU. For further information and data tables see link below: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/transport/data/database>