



UK Port Freight Statistics: April to June 2013 (Quarter 2)

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 in June and detailed final annual statistics are published in September. The quarterly series is finalised alongside the final annual statistics.



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Key findings from these provisional statistics included:-

Quarter 2 2013 :-

Comparing Quarter 2 2013 (April – June) with Quarter 2 2012:

- **Total major port freight** traffic (tonnage) **remained stable** at 125 million tonnes.
- **Inward freight traffic increased** for the second consecutive quarter to 82 million tonnes (a 3 per cent increase).
- **Unitised freight traffic increased** both in and out of UK major ports, with an overall increase of 1 per cent. This is first quarter on quarter increase in over two years.

Rolling Annual Total:-

Comparing the four quarters ending quarter 2 2013 (Q3 2012-Q2 2013) with the four quarters ending quarter 2 2012 (Q3 2011- Q2 2012):

- **The rolling annual total major port freight fell** by 3 per cent to 486 million tonnes. This continues the decline seen throughout 2012 and quarter 1 2013.
- **The rolling annual total of unitised freight traffic fell** by 1 per cent compared to the previous four quarters, with 20.8 million units moving through UK major ports.

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1. Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

1.1 Summary

- Total freight traffic declined throughout 2012 and in quarter 1 2013. However, **quarter 2 2013 saw levels remaining stable**, despite the **continued reduction in outwards traffic**.

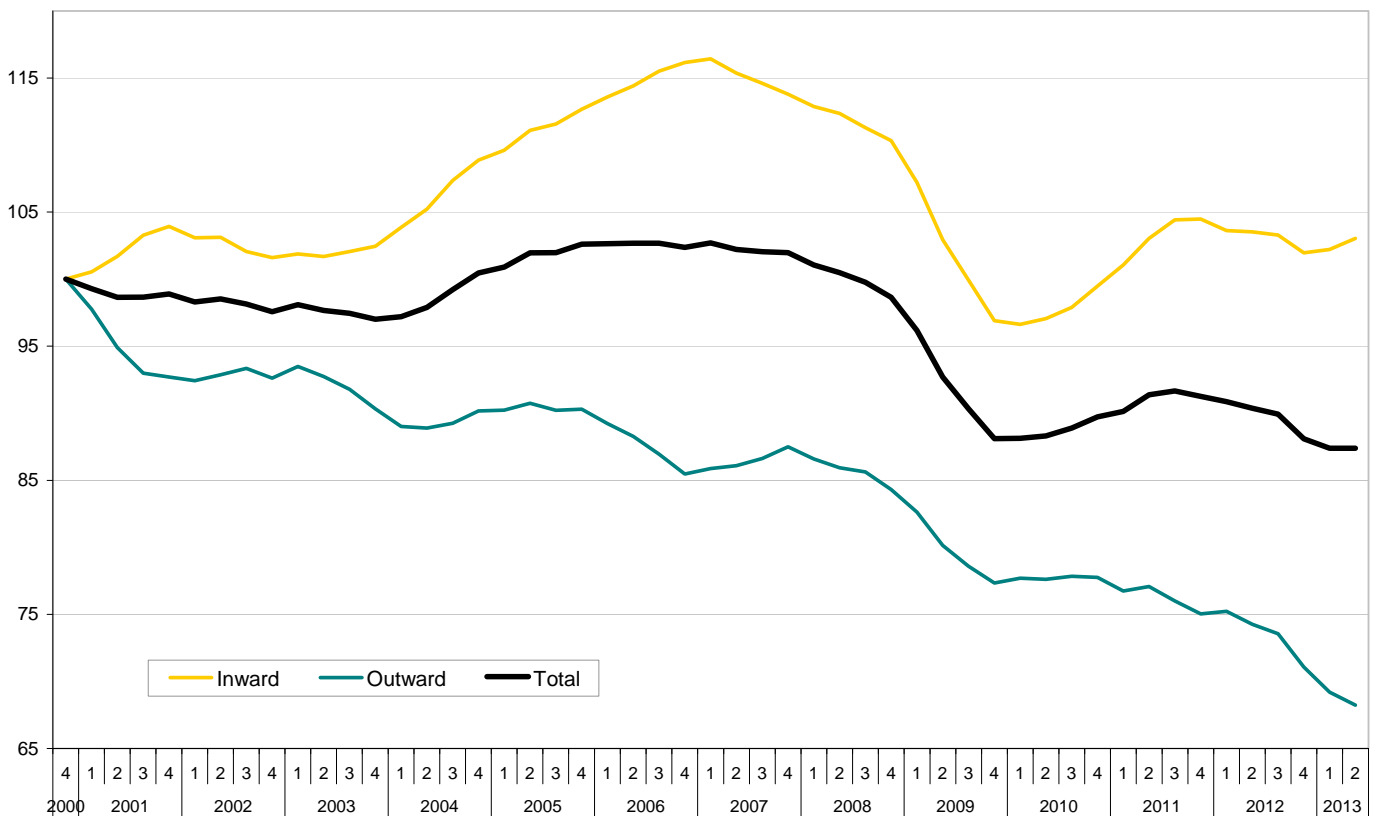
1.2 Quarterly Trend: April – June 2013 (Quarter 2 2013 compared to Quarter 2 2012)

- **Total freight traffic remained stable** at 125 million tonnes compared with the same quarter in 2012. This is the first quarter where freight traffic has not shown a decline since quarter 3 2011.
- In quarter 2 2013, **82 million tonnes** of freight travelled **in to UK major ports** (a 3 per cent rise compared with the same quarter last year), continuing the upwards trend seen in quarter 1 2013.
- **Outwards freight traffic fell by 5 per cent** to 43 million tonnes travelling out of UK major ports in quarter 2 2013 compared with 46 million tonnes in quarter 2 2012. This downward trend was seen throughout 2012 and in the first quarter of 2013.

1.3 Annual (Rolling) Trend: Four quarters ending quarter 3 2012

- **Total major port freight traffic was 3 per cent lower** than the previous four quarters at 486 million tonnes. This is the result of the decline seen in freight traffic in quarter 4 2011 and quarter 1 2013.
- **Inwards freight traffic to major ports remained stable** compared with the previous four quarters at 315 million tonnes. Freight traffic in to UK ports declined throughout 2012. However, in 2013, inwards tonnage has been rising.
- **Outwards freight traffic** has continued to decline. The rolling total in quarter 2 2013 was **8 per cent lower** than the four quarters ending quarter 1 2012 at 170 million tonnes.

Chart 1: Major Port traffic indices, tonnage - rolling four quarter totals to Q2 2013 (2000 = 100)



2. Major Port Freight Traffic (Unitised Traffic)

2.1 Summary

- The number of units moved through UK major ports fell throughout 2012 and this trend continued in quarter 1 2013. However, in quarter 2 2013, unitised traffic increased both in and out of UK major ports, resulting in the total number of units increasing by 1 per cent.

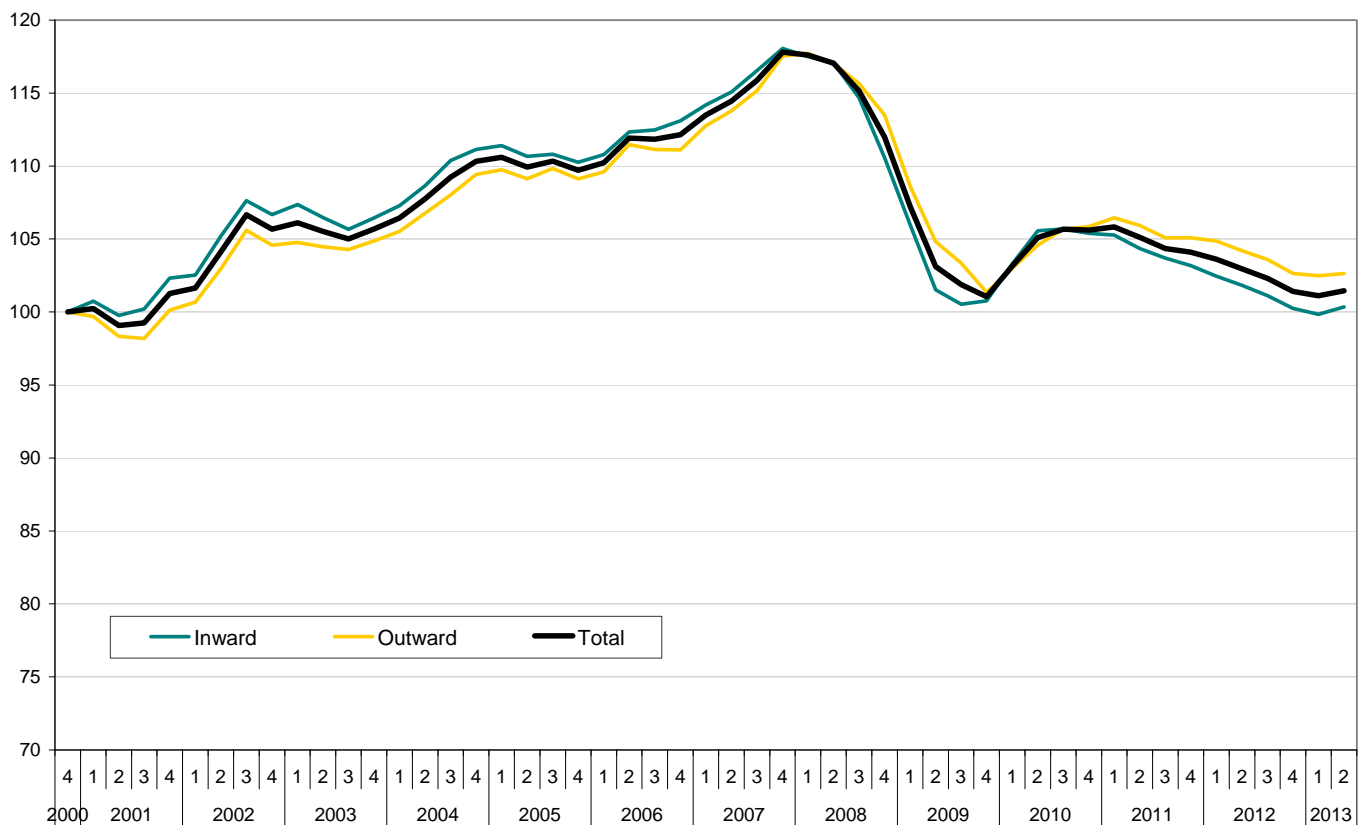
2.2 Quarterly Trend: April – June 2013

- **Unitised freight traffic increased** by 1 per cent to 5.5 million units in quarter 2 2013, the first year on year increase since quarter 1 2011.
- **Inwards traffic** accounted for 52 per cent of unitised freight traffic, with 2.8 million units travelling in to UK major ports in quarter 2 2013. Traffic **rose by 2 per cent** compared with the same quarter last year, the first year on year increase since quarter 3 2010.
- **Outwards unitised freight** traffic has steadily declined year on year since quarter 1 2011. However, the number of units **increased by 1 per cent** in quarter 2 2013 compared to quarter 2 2012, to 2.6 million units.

2.3 Annual (Rolling) Trend: Q2 2013 through to Q3 2012

- The decline in unitised freight through major UK ports has continued with **the rolling total falling to 20.8 million units** compared to 21.1 million units in the previous four quarters.
- Both **inwards and outwards unitised traffic has decreased in** quarter 2 2013 compared with the four quarters ending quarter 1 2012. Inwards traffic decreased to a rolling total of 10.7 million units travelling in to UK major ports, a 1 per cent decline.
- A rolling total of **10.1 million units travelled out of UK major ports** in quarter 2 2013, a 1 per cent decline compared with the previous four quarters.

Chart 2: Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling four quarter totals to Q2 2013 (2000 = 100)



Detailed statistics (tables) on 'Quarterly Port Freight statistics' can be found in the web tables, [port0501-port0509](#).

3. 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 2 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.**

4. Glossary

- **Major ports:** Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounting 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.

5. 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/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-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/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>

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- 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/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
 - The next update in this series will be published in December 2013. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the third quarter of 2013.
 - 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>