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UK Trade in goods by Business Characteristics 2009 to 2012

(Experimental Statistics)

Summary

- In 2012, there were a total of 146,000 active exporting businesses in the UK, with a total employee count of 9.7 million. This is compared to over 200,000 importing businesses in the UK with a total employee count of 12.3 million.
- The majority of businesses (over 60 per cent) for both imports and exports have been trading for at least six years, suggesting that it is the longer established businesses that are responsible for the majority of UK trade.

Introduction

HMRC has linked the Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS) trade in goods data with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) business statistics sourced from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). This release gives some expanded analyses showing overseas trade by business characteristics. Whereas the OTS shows the values and volumes of goods being traded by product and country, this analysis provides information about the businesses that are trading those goods. This report focuses on trade by industry group, age of business and size of business (number of employees). In addition, you can download Excel spreadsheets with more detailed information.

If you have any views or comments on these statistics, please send them to:

uktradeinfo@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Key Points

Industry Group

Nine out of the 10 industry groups (excluding unknown) showed a growth in exports and imports by value from 2009 to 2012. Of these the largest growth was seen in imports of Mining and petroleum products (group 2) which more than doubled, increasing by 136 per cent, with exports increasing by 56 per cent from 2009 to 2012. Electronic and electrical equipment (group 5) saw an increase of 53 per cent for exports and 65 per cent for imports. Motor vehicles (group 7) saw an increase of 62 per cent for exports and 40 per cent for imports.

There were four industry groups that saw an average increase in the number of businesses from 2009 to 2012 when combining both exports and imports data. These were Mining and petroleum products (group 2) with 14 per cent more businesses, Pharmaceuticals (group 4) with a 4 per cent increase, Aerospace and related machinery (group 8) increased by 11 per cent and Services (group 10) increased by 3 per cent. All other groups decreased by a range from 3 per cent to 14 per cent.

Only two industry groups saw an increase in the number of employees for both imports and exports, which was Agriculture (group 1) and Mining and petroleum products (group 2). These both increased by about 2 per cent. Services¹ (group 10) saw an increase in exporting business employees balanced by a fall in employees in importing businesses, for a net increase of less than half a per cent. All other groups had fewer employees in 2012, ranging from 4 per cent to 13 per cent less.

Services (group 10) contributed the largest value of trade compared to the other groups. For 2012 the value of trade for Services (group 10) was £125 billion for exports which accounted for 42 per cent of total exports, and £248 billion for imports which accounted for 61 per cent of total imports. The reason

¹ These are businesses that are registered within the Service industry group. This is not data relating to trade in services.

is that the Services (group 10) includes businesses ranging from construction, wholesale and retail sales of motor vehicles to financial and insurance activities. All of these type of businesses within this group can import or export goods.

Age Group

From 2009 to 2012 businesses between 4 to 5 years old showed the largest increase in exports which was 54 per cent, from £14 billion in 2009 to £21 billion in 2012. For imports, businesses over 20 years old showed the largest increase which was 51 per cent from £127 billion in 2009 to £191 billion in 2012.

For employee count by age, only two categories (excluding unknown) saw an increase in both imports and exports. For exports, businesses over 20 years old saw the larger increase up 8 per cent from 5.1 million employees in 2009 up to 5.5 million in 2012. For imports, businesses between 4 to 5 years old saw the largest increase of 5 percent up 25,000 to 535,000 employees in 2012.

Employee Size

Businesses with zero employees had the largest increase in exports between 2009 and 2012, up 36 per cent to £27 billion. For imports, large businesses employing over 250 people imported 40 per cent more in 2012 of £216 billion compared to 2009 of £155 billion.

However, businesses that have zero employees were the only category to have less businesses import or exporting in 2012 compared to 2009. There were 16 per cent less exporting businesses, approximately 11,000 in 2012 and 8 per cent less importing businesses, approximately 15,500 in 2012.

Access to data

Tables 1 to 9 of this publication are [available](#) in excel format.

Also available within the same excel file are 2 dimensional tables which show:

- Industry Group by Age
- Industry Group by Employee Size
- Employee Size by Age

A breakdown of Industry, Age or Employee Size by country for 2009 to 2012 is only available for a small number of countries. These countries are Germany, USA, France, China, Netherlands, Brazil, Italy, Russia, Spain, India, Portugal, South Africa, Irish Republic, Japan, Cyprus, Australia, Greece, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Hong Kong, EU (all EU countries combined), NEU (all Non EU countries combined).

This is [available](#) in Excel format.

Table 1: Total value of UK trade by Industry Group

£ millions

Industry Group	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
Group 1 Agriculture and Food	13,632	14,611	16,075	15,725	19,757	23,044	42,999	46,713
Group 2 Mining, Petroleum products and Waste	21,117	23,706	32,572	32,962	9,310	11,492	12,144	13,101
Group 3 Chemicals	12,962	15,544	15,109	15,143	4,565	4,851	6,030	5,984
Group 4 Pharmaceuticals	12,378	11,959	9,263	8,230	7,425	9,010	12,588	12,260
Group 5 Electronic and Electrical equipment	11,045	12,675	18,116	16,930	6,508	8,403	10,181	9,892
Group 6 Machinery and equipment n.e.s	12,249	14,450	16,834	17,071	15,149	19,736	21,646	21,275
Group 7 Motor vehicles, transport equipment (excluding aerospace)	13,131	17,758	21,371	21,287	8,594	9,989	7,446	7,735
Group 8 Aerospace and related machinery	14,851	16,937	15,441	16,623	10,684	12,280	13,878	13,637
Group 9 Other manufacturing	13,348	14,660	15,853	16,358	198,174	232,308	241,251	248,083
Group 10 Services	95,304	113,737	125,383	124,529	8,916	10,201	6,707	5,736
Unknown	5,522	6,669	9,064	11,471	19,757	23,044	42,999	46,713
Total	225,540	262,708	295,081	296,328	307,905	360,864	394,505	403,735

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 2: Business count by Industry Group

number

Industry Group	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
Group 1 Agriculture and Food	7,472	7,392	7,223	6,952	10,448	10,457	10,483	10,464
Group 2 Mining, Petroleum products and Waste	1,519	1,565	1,616	1,637	1,459	1,528	1,639	1,759
Group 3 Chemicals	1,541	1,506	1,452	1,438	1,430	1,426	1,374	1,386
Group 4 Pharmaceuticals	195	202	207	205	215	215	219	221
Group 5 Electronic and Electrical equipment	4,386	4,385	4,365	4,211	4,362	4,289	4,280	4,237
Group 6 Machinery and equipment n.e.s	3,838	3,778	3,660	3,533	3,593	3,548	3,401	3,327
Group 7 Motor vehicles, transport equipment (excluding aerospace)	1,545	1,471	1,404	1,342	1,516	1,437	1,387	1,321
Group 8 Aerospace and related machinery	156	163	161	171	155	170	155	175
Group 9 Other manufacturing	14,450	14,191	13,837	13,377	13,671	13,580	13,408	13,288
Group 10 Services	104,626	109,072	107,821	106,366	146,610	149,931	150,266	151,497
Unknown	3,338	4,331	5,449	6,476	9,878	11,451	11,332	12,510
Total	143,066	148,056	147,195	145,708	193,337	198,032	197,944	200,185

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 3: Employee count for Businesses by Industry Group

Number

Industry Group	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
Group 1 Agriculture and Food	454,679	458,830	456,420	461,709	517,253	523,819	521,204	528,737
Group 2 Mining, Petroleum products and Waste	300,900	296,921	287,448	307,486	340,091	344,909	344,826	349,627
Group 3 Chemicals	97,175	90,206	95,236	91,352	96,485	89,822	95,428	91,902
Group 4 Pharmaceuticals	50,272	46,428	50,524	48,212	50,559	46,519	50,795	48,283
Group 5 Electronic and Electrical equipment	197,035	186,878	185,936	183,610	197,100	186,332	186,660	184,818
Group 6 Machinery and equipment n.e.s	188,620	168,233	168,943	165,844	188,516	166,696	167,358	164,442
Group 7 Motor vehicles, transport equipment (excluding aerospace)	155,093	140,946	139,597	135,301	156,639	142,432	141,365	136,841
Group 8 Aerospace and related machinery	102,772	101,868	96,765	98,362	102,626	101,662	96,521	98,192
Group 9 Other manufacturing	518,540	485,976	486,014	483,095	523,739	490,509	490,881	491,844
Group 10 Services	7,551,432	7,736,422	7,692,548	7,738,187	10,417,122	10,240,899	9,926,290	10,208,315
Unknown	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Total	9,616,518	9,712,708	9,659,431	9,713,158	12,590,130	12,333,599	12,021,328	12,303,001

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 4: Total value of UK trade by Age of Business

£ million

Age (years)	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0 to 1	8,626	4,907	7,969	9,505	9,972	10,778	10,455	13,977
2 to 3	17,061	18,906	14,828	9,790	21,310	20,775	17,321	15,652
4 to 5	13,605	16,818	17,399	21,006	15,193	21,356	24,291	22,221
6 to 9	27,960	25,656	27,953	28,758	38,968	39,673	39,803	42,684
10 to 20	56,956	68,797	80,312	80,076	82,652	98,466	112,306	105,705
20 +	93,268	116,078	131,162	130,821	126,616	153,489	176,609	190,791
Unknown	8,064	11,547	15,459	16,372	13,194	16,327	13,720	12,706
Total	225,540	262,708	295,081	296,328	307,905	360,864	394,505	403,735

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 5: Business count by Age of Business

number

Age (years)	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0 to 1	12,442	12,808	12,251	11,661	19,574	19,705	19,766	20,093
2 to 3	15,379	15,006	14,650	14,656	21,809	20,614	19,926	20,540
4 to 5	13,574	13,694	13,325	12,480	18,441	18,357	17,817	16,914
6 to 9	22,553	23,236	22,736	22,106	28,833	29,397	29,484	29,441
10 to 20	33,983	35,338	34,888	35,189	41,280	42,587	42,649	43,641
20 +	35,833	37,289	37,800	38,404	44,028	45,707	46,619	48,444
Unknown	9,302	10,685	11,545	11,212	19,372	21,665	21,683	21,112
Total	143,066	148,056	147,195	145,708	193,337	198,032	197,944	200,185

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 6: Employee count for Businesses by Age of Business

number

Age (years)	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0 to 1	298,359	210,725	182,281	245,207	504,856	373,044	244,384	328,754
2 to 3	542,150	474,625	336,274	415,590	663,584	533,322	531,878	552,872
4 to 5	377,796	494,440	555,785	399,499	510,487	590,516	650,461	535,404
6 to 9	988,546	899,295	794,391	850,377	1,153,894	1,076,438	983,058	1,061,810
10 to 20	2,294,482	2,158,639	2,162,995	2,237,916	2,939,724	2,841,861	2,852,824	2,885,853
20 +	5,098,452	5,452,711	5,564,646	5,507,166	6,718,446	6,816,943	6,649,334	6,844,431
Unknown	16,733	22,273	63,059	57,403	99,139	101,475	109,389	93,877
Total	9,616,518	9,712,708	9,659,431	9,713,158	12,590,130	12,333,599	12,021,328	12,303,001

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 7: Total value of UK trade by Employee Size

£ million

Employee Size	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0	20,002	24,117	27,626	27,252	31,465	36,559	39,958	42,086
1 to 9	13,262	15,961	15,981	15,244	21,310	24,050	23,437	22,571
10 to 49	19,443	22,391	25,252	25,329	39,056	42,551	48,368	46,870
50 to 249	32,196	36,131	39,819	41,031	48,020	59,408	57,999	63,651
250 +	132,640	153,245	171,494	171,376	154,953	182,747	211,490	216,255
Unknown	7,997	10,862	14,910	16,096	13,101	15,550	13,254	12,302
Total	225,540	262,708	295,081	296,328	307,905	360,864	394,505	403,735

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 8: Business count by Employee Size

number

Employee Size	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0	12,966	12,837	11,761	10,837	16,752	16,412	15,705	15,467
1 to 9	77,089	80,565	79,235	77,491	104,105	107,190	106,632	106,888
10 to 49	30,847	31,116	31,865	32,988	38,327	38,140	39,591	41,652
50 to 249	9,835	9,878	9,973	10,195	11,846	11,889	12,003	12,476
250 +	3,355	3,339	3,375	3,413	4,187	4,133	4,133	4,209
Unknown	8,974	10,321	10,986	10,784	18,120	20,268	19,880	19,493
Total	143,066	148,056	147,195	145,708	193,337	198,032	197,944	200,185

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Table 9: Employee count for Businesses by Employee Size

number

Employee Size	Exports				Imports			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1 to 9	260,273	266,945	267,251	258,220	350,427	354,323	360,270	356,689
10 to 49	666,792	668,383	676,937	706,825	820,966	813,249	832,352	885,372
50 to 249	1,010,310	1,013,823	1,023,064	1,048,584	1,218,654	1,212,344	1,232,380	1,280,805
250 +	7,679,143	7,763,557	7,692,179	7,699,529	10,200,083	9,953,683	9,596,326	9,780,135
Unknown	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Total	9,616,518	9,712,708	9,659,431	9,713,158	12,590,130	12,333,599	12,021,328	12,303,001

Source: HMRC OTS and ONS IDBR data

Annex: Metadata FAQ

What is the purpose of these experimental statistics?

To produce trade statistics based on 10 predefined industry groups to show the total value of UK trade imported and exported, broken down by age and employee size of UK businesses.

How has the data matching been done?

By matching the businesses reference on the IDBR data with its corresponding VAT number on the trade statistics data. If a match was not found, then a fuzzy matching on the name was attempted. Any remaining unmatched VAT numbers were treated as businesses, with industry group obtained from departmental VAT records where possible.

Which variables are being published?

Age (0-1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-9, 10-20, 20+, unknown)
Employee size (0, 1-9, 10-49, 50-249, 250+, unknown)
Industry group (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, unknown)
Statistical Value of trade in goods
Employee count
Business count

What are the industry groupings?

The SIC 2007 groupings within each Industry group are:

Group	Description	SIC 2007
Group 1	Agriculture and Food	A, 10 – 17
Group 2	Mining, Petroleum products and Waste	B, 19, 24, D, E
Group 3	Chemicals	20
Group 4	Pharmaceuticals	21
Group 5	Electronic and Electrical equipment	26, 27
Group 6	Machinery and equipment n.e.s	28
Group 7	Motor vehicles, transport equipment (excluding aerospace)	29, 30 (excluding 30.3)
Group 8	Aerospace and related machinery	30.3
Group 9	Other manufacturing	18, 22, 23, 25, 31, 32
Group 10	Services	33, F – U

For further details on SIC 2007 visit the ONS website

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/classifications/current-standard-classifications/standard-industrial-classification/sic-2007-summary-of-structure.xls>

What partner countries or geographical areas are available?

Only a selection of partner countries are available, which are Germany, USA, France, China, Netherlands, Brazil, Italy, Russia, Spain, India, Portugal, South Africa, Irish Republic, Japan, Cyprus, Australia, Greece, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, Hong Kong, EU (all EU countries combined), NEU (all Non EU countries combined).

This is [available](#) in excel format for expert users.

How were the employee count and business count fields calculated?

The business count is the total number of businesses who imported or exported, with the specified characteristics. The employee count is the total number of employees for those businesses. It does *not* mean that all these employees are directly involved in the activity of international trade.

How have suppressions been applied to these experimental statistics?

While the OTS is subject to passive disclosure control, due to linking with the IDBR these experimental statistics are subject to active disclosure control. Disclosure control procedures applied are in line with those recommended by GSS guidance on disclosure control.

Where the data has been suppressed additional suppressions, called masks, have been used making it impossible to calculate the suppressed cells.

- Suppressed cells will show an “S”

A 3-way cross tabulation between Age, Employee size and Industry group was not possible due to the number of suppressions and masks needed to the data.