



Department  
for Transport

## UK Port Freight Statistics: April to June 2016 (Quarter 2)

### About this release

This statistical release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by **major** UK sea ports. Detailed final annual statistics for 2016 will be published in September 2017, when the quarterly series will also be finalised.

This statistical release compares results 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 2014.

#### Unitised traffic-

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

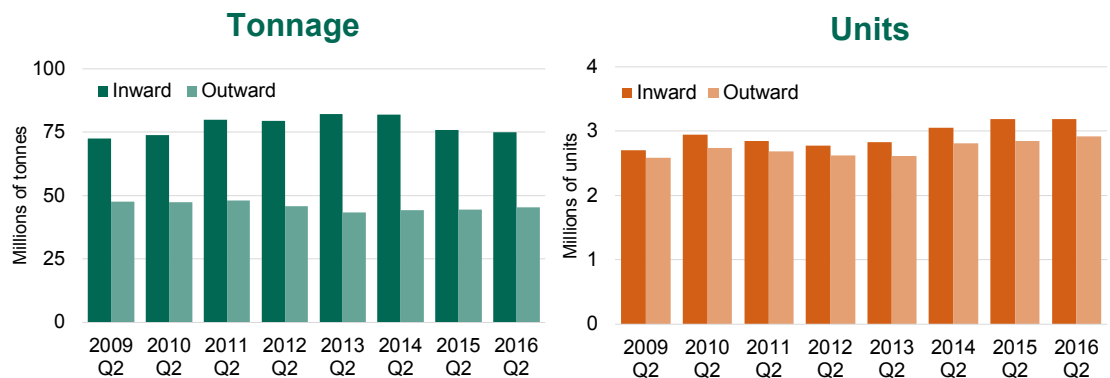
**UK major ports handled 120.3 million tonnes of freight in the second quarter of 2016, similar to the same quarter a year earlier. The total number of units through UK major ports increased by 1 per cent to 6.1 million units.**

Inward tonnage **decreased by 1 per cent to 75.0 million tonnes**, compared with the second quarter of 2015. This follows quarter on quarter decreases in recent quarters since the second quarter of 2015 and is the lowest second quarter inward tonnage since 2010.

Outward tonnage **increased by 2 per cent to 45.3 million tonnes**.

Outward tonnage comprised **38 per cent of total tonnage**, the largest proportion in the second quarter since 2011.

### Quarter 2 UK major port traffic, by direction: 2009 to 2016



Total unitised traffic has been increasing, compared to the same quarter a year earlier, since 2013. The number of units handled by UK major ports in the second quarter of 2016 is the highest second quarter volume since 2008.

In the second quarter of 2016 inward unitised traffic remained similar to the same quarter last year at **3.2 million units**.

Outward unitised traffic from UK major ports **increased by 2 per cent to 2.9 million units**.

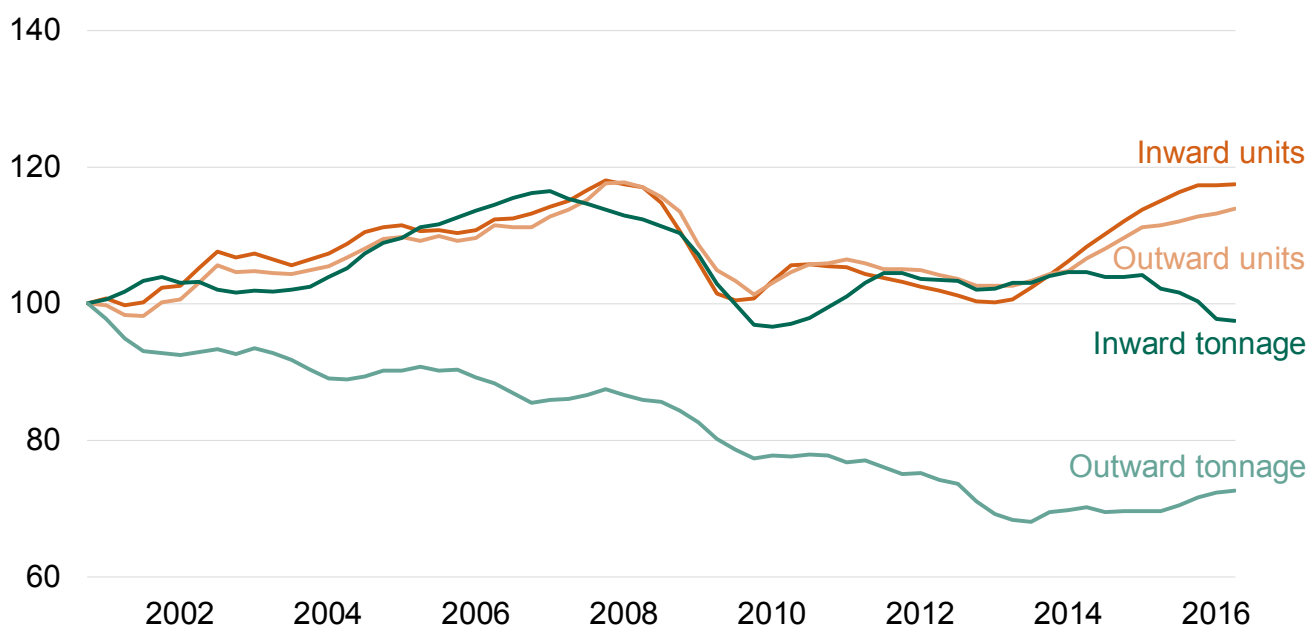
## Major Port Freight Traffic (Rolling 4 quarter trend)

The rolling four quarter total of UK major port tonnage **decreased 1 per cent to 479.6 million tonnes**, compared with same quarter in the previous year.

Inward tonnage **decreased by 5 per cent to 298.3 million tonnes**, the lowest level since the post recession low in 2010.

Outward tonnage **increased by 4 per cent to 181.3 million tonnes**. From 2011 to 2013 outward tonnage declined before stabilising in 2014 and then increasing through from the third quarter of 2015 to present. The rolling four quarter total inward tonnage was 117.0 million tonnes more than outward, the smallest difference between the four quarter rolling totals since 2010.

### Major port traffic indices, tonnage and units: rolling 4 quarter totals to April 2016 (4 quarters to Q4 2000 = 100)



The rolling four quarter total unitised traffic **increased by 2 per cent to 23.7 million units**, compared with the four quarter total to the second quarter of 2015. Inward unitised traffic **increased by 2 per cent to 12.5 million units** after increasing 6 per cent to the second quarter of 2015. Outward unitised traffic **increased by 2 per cent to 11.2 million units**.

The rolling four quarter totals of units in and out of UK major ports have had similar trends over time. Since the fourth quarter of 2000, inward traffic has been between 51 and 53 per cent of total units. However, annual data for 2014 shows that only 3 per cent of inward units were empty freight carrying units while 22 per cent of outward units were empty. Return trips by passenger vehicles may also contribute to the similarity between outward and inward units. In 2014, passenger vehicles accounted for 25 per cent of total unitised traffic with 12 per cent inward and 13 per cent outward.

## Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- ▶ These port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from major ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.
- ▶ These statistics are based on data provided by major ports. Data is available for total weight of goods and number of units inwards and outwards for each port. More in depth commentary will be provided with the release of the final port statistics which will include details on cargo categories.
- ▶ The data provided for 2015 and 2016 is provisional and may be subject to revision if subsequent checks against data provided by agents, or data provided by ports at the year end, highlight anomalies.
- ▶ A small amount data for the second quarter of 2016 was unavailable at the time of publication and so an estimate was included. Once this data is received the tables will be revised in the next publication.

## 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 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 December 2016. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the third quarter of 2016.
- ▶ Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are released in September. The final 2014 figures can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/port-freight-statistics-2014-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. For further information and data tables see link below: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/transport/data/database>