



About this release

This article breaks down the registered trader population for 2019, 2018 and 2017, explaining the numbers of businesses who have declared to HMRC trade in goods with EU and Non-EU countries, and the combination therein.

[Additional tables are available](#)

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**An Official
Statistics release**

Summary

In 2019, there was a total of 317,000 businesses who traded goods:

- 223,000 businesses traded with EU Member States and 168,000 businesses traded with Non-EU countries.
- 149,000 businesses traded only with EU Member States, whilst 93,000 traded only with Non-EU countries and 74,000 businesses traded with both.
- 257,000 businesses imported goods and 160,000 businesses exported goods.
- 157,000 businesses only imported, 60,000 only exported and 100,000 businesses both imported and exported.

Data sources

The unique business count for UK businesses trading goods with EU countries has been collected from VAT data and the Intrastat survey. All VAT registered businesses must submit VAT returns, which include values of EU trade. Businesses whose annual value of imports and exports of goods from/to EU countries exceed a given value threshold (EU imports: £1.5 million, EU exports: £250,000) are required to provide a more detailed Intrastat declaration each month. These counts therefore do not include businesses only trading with the EU below the VAT registration threshold.

The unique business count for UK businesses trading goods with Non-EU countries has been collected from customs declarations presented to HMRC using the Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) system.

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Trader Counts by Partner Country

Table 1: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2017, 2018 & 2019 by partner country

Partner Country	No. of Traders		
	2017	2018	2019
EU Member States Only	144,000	150,000	149,000
Both EU and Non-EU	72,000	73,000	74,000
Non-EU Countries Only	77,000	83,000	93,000
Total EU	217,000	223,000	223,000
Total Non-EU	150,000	156,000	168,000
Total	294,000	306,000	317,000

Source: HMRC Trade Statistics and Customs Analysis

Notes:

1. Due to values being rounded to nearest thousand, numbers presented may not sum to the totals provided
2. Intrastat and CHIEF data was compiled on a special trade basis, excluding trade that enters a customs warehouse but does not enter free circulation in the UK

223,000 businesses traded with EU Member States and 168,000 businesses traded with Non-EU countries in the calendar year of 2019.

- The number of businesses trading with EU Member States grew by 6,000 (3%) from 2017 to 2018, then remained constant from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of businesses trading with Non-EU countries grew also by 6,000 (4%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 12,000 (8%) from 2018 to 2019.

149,000 businesses traded only with EU Member States, whilst 93,000 traded only with Non-EU countries and 74,000 businesses traded with both in the calendar year of 2019.

- The number of businesses trading with only EU Member States grew by 6,000 (4%) from 2017 to 2018, then decreased by 1,000 (1%) from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of businesses trading with Both EU and Non-EU countries has steadily increased by 1,000 (1%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 1,000 (1%) again from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of businesses trading with only Non-EU countries grew by 6,000 (8%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 10,000 (12%) from 2018 to 2019.

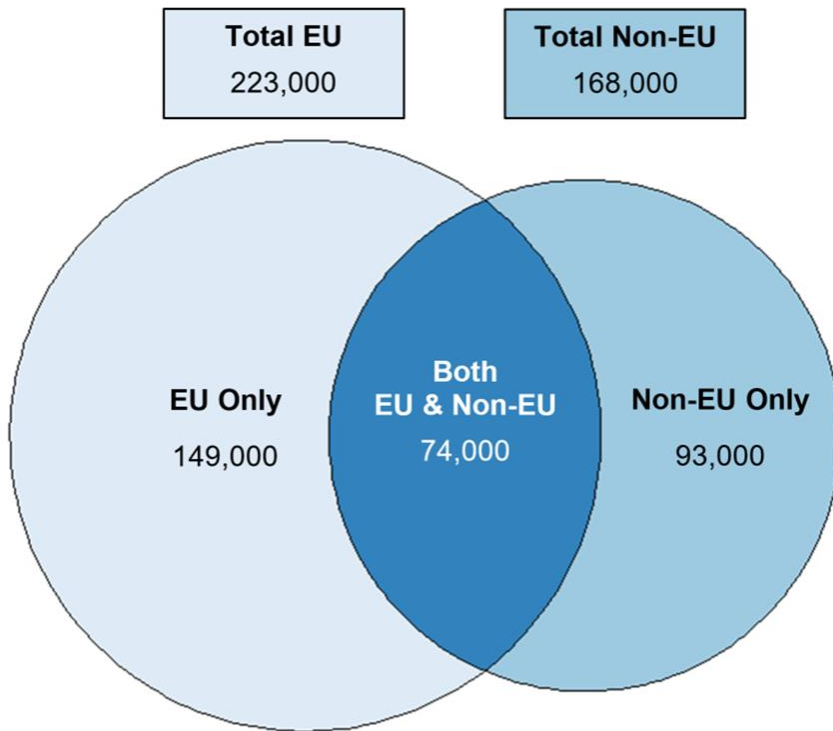
↓ **EU only trading population declined by 1% from 150k to 149k between 2018 and 2019, a change from its 4% growth between 2017 and 2018**

↑ **EU and Non-EU trading population grew by 1% from 73k to 74k between 2018 and 2019. This was consistent with 2017 to 2018 growth which also saw a 1% increase**

↑ **Non-EU only trading population grew by 12% from 83k to 93k between 2018 and 2019 compared to an 8% increase between 2017 and 2018**

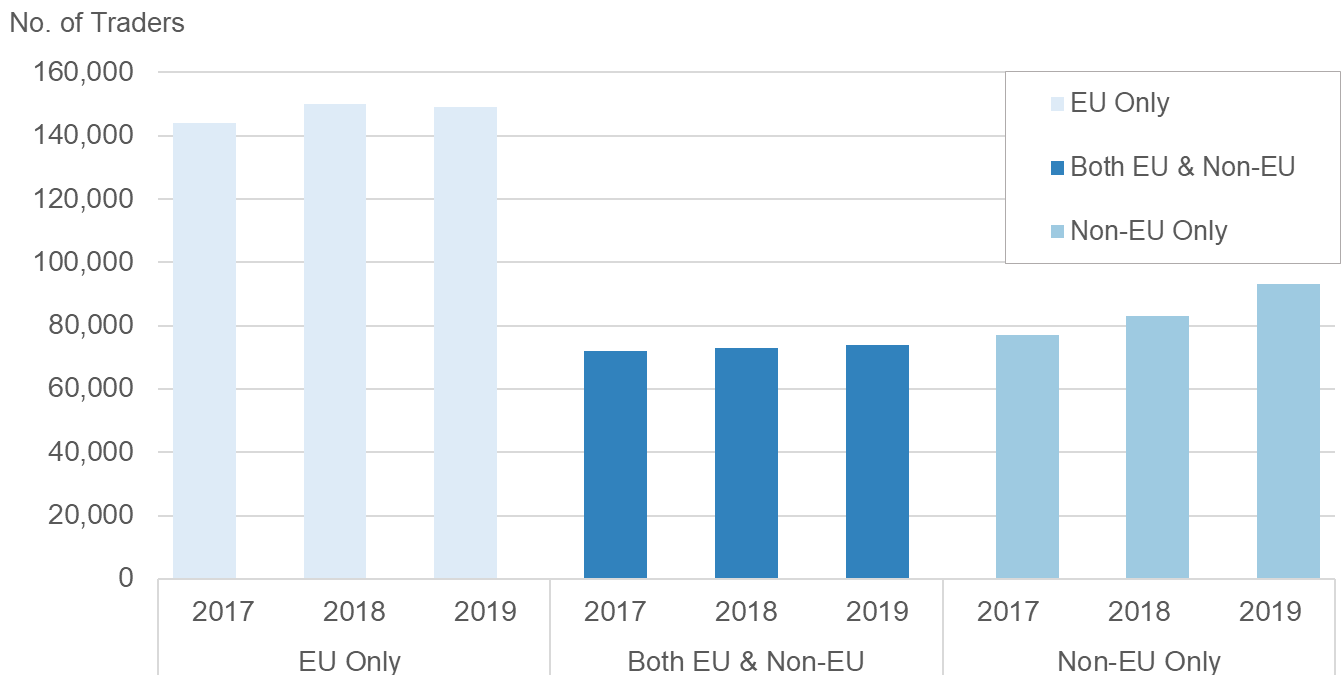
Trader Counts by Partner Country

Figure 1: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2019 by trade partner



- Of the 223,000 businesses who traded with EU Member States, 149,000 traded only with the EU.
- Of the 168,000 businesses who traded with Non-EU countries, 93,000 traded only with Non-EU countries.
- There were 74,000 businesses who traded with both EU Member States and Non-EU countries and were therefore counted within both the total EU and the total Non-EU populations.

Figure 2: Time series of the UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods from 2017 to 2019 by trade partner



Trader Counts by Trade Flow

Table 2: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2017, 2018 and 2019 by trade flow

Trade Flow	Number of Traders		
	2017	2018	2019
Importing Only	139,000	148,000	157,000
Both Importing and Exporting	96,000	99,000	100,000
Exporting Only	58,000	60,000	60,000
Total Importers	236,000	247,000	257,000
Total Exporters	155,000	158,000	160,000
Total	294,000	306,000	317,000

Source: HMRC Trade Statistics and Customs Analysis

Notes:

1. Due to values being rounded to nearest thousand, numbers presented may not sum to the totals provided
2. Importing refers to both EU and Non-EU imports and Exporting refers to both EU and Non-EU exports
3. Intrastat and CHIEF data was compiled on a special trade basis, excluding trade that enters a customs warehouse but does not enter free circulation in the UK

257,000 businesses imported goods and 160,000 businesses exported goods in the calendar year of 2019.

- The number of importing businesses grew by 11,000 (5%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 10,000 (4%) from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of exporting businesses grew by 3,000 (2%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 2,000 (1%) from 2018 to 2019.

157,000 businesses only imported, 60,000 only exported and 100,000 businesses both imported and exported in the calendar year of 2019.

- The number of importing only businesses grew by 9,000 (6%) from 2017 to 2018, then by another 9,000 (6%) from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of both importing and exporting businesses grew by 3,000 (3%) from 2017 to 2018, then by 1,000 (1%) from 2018 to 2019.
- The number of exporting only businesses grew by 2,000 (3%) from 2017 to 2018, then remained constant from 2018 to 2019.

↑ **Importing only trading population grew by 6% from 148k to 157k between 2018 and 2019. This was consistent with 2017 to 2018 which also saw a 6% increase.**

↑ **Importing and exporting trading population grew by 1% from 99k to 100k between 2018 and 2019, which was smaller than the 3% increase seen between 2017 and 2018**

↔ **Exporting only trading population remained constant between 2018 and 2019, a change in trend from its 3% growth between 2017 and 2018**

Trader Counts by Trade Flow

Figure 3: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2019 by trade flow

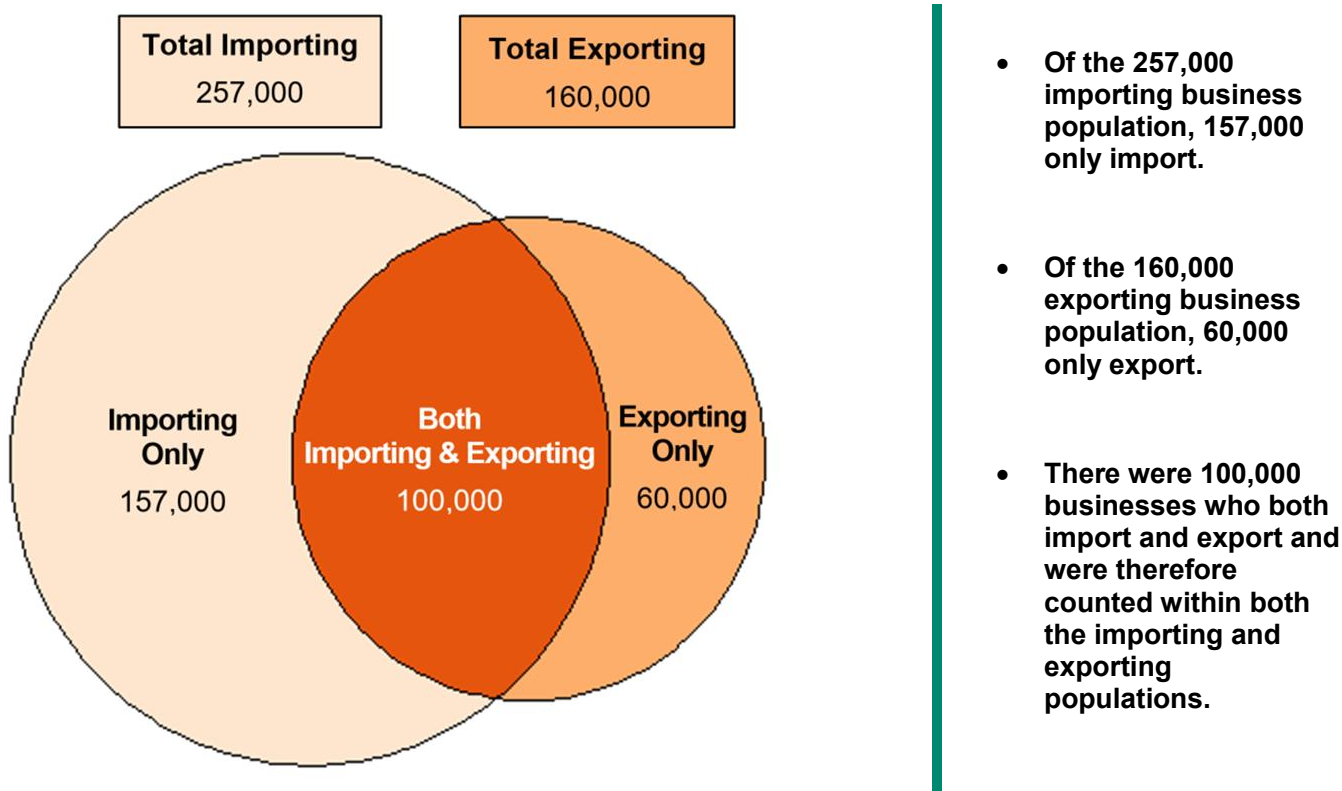
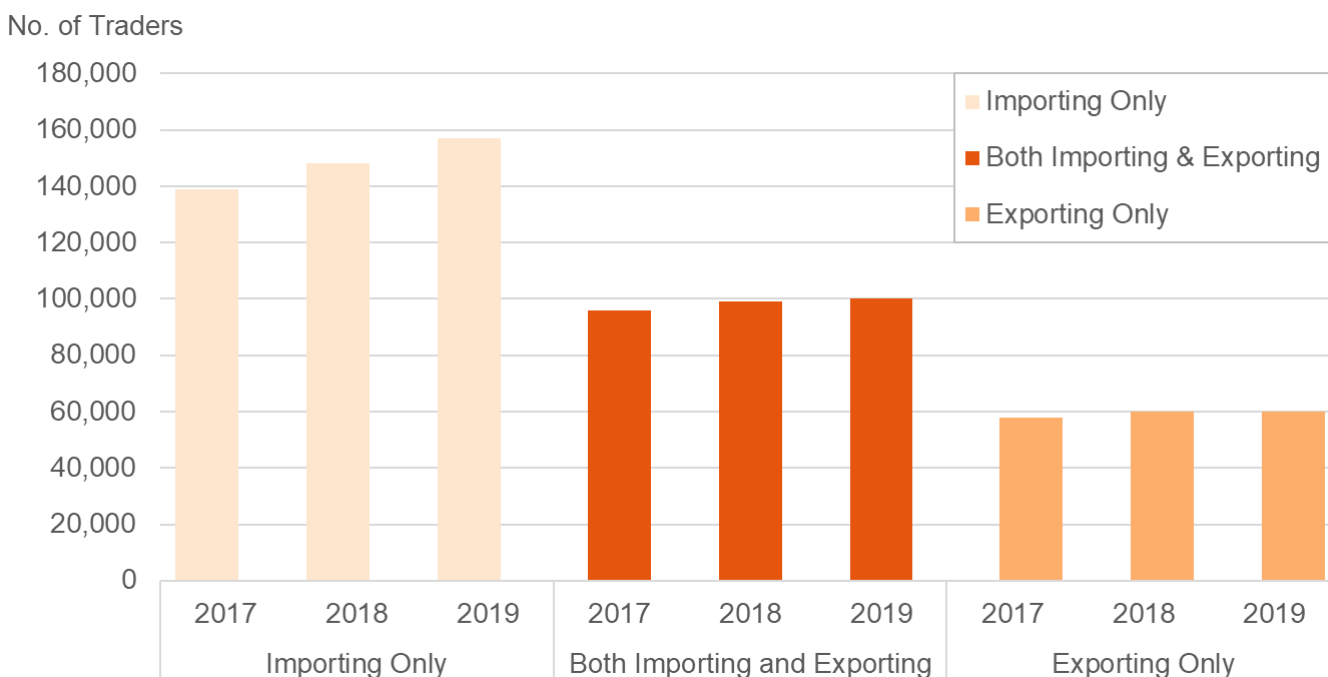


Figure 4: Time series of the UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods from 2017 to 2019 by trade flow



Trader Counts by Partner Country and Trade Flow

Table 3: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2019 by partner country and flow of trade

Trade Partner	Trade Flow	No. of Traders
EU Countries Only	Imports Only	86,000
	Both Imports & Exports	28,000
	Exports Only	34,000
With Both EU & Non-EU	Imports Only	9,000
	Both Imports & Exports	61,000
	Exports Only	5,000
Non-EU Countries Only	Imports Only	62,000
	Both Imports & Exports	11,000
	Exports Only	21,000
Total		317,000

Source: HMRC Trade Statistics and Customs Analysis

Notes:

1. Due to values being rounded to nearest thousand, numbers presented may not sum to the totals provided
2. Importing refers to both EU and Non-EU imports and Exporting refers to both EU and Non-EU exports
3. Intrastat and CHIEF data was compiled on a special trade basis, excluding trade that enters a customs warehouse but does not enter free circulation in the UK

Figure 5: UK's importer and exporter population for trade in goods in 2019 by partner country and flow of trade



Explanatory notes

1. The trader count is derived from trade declarations and is a count of businesses importing and exporting trade in goods. The Non-EU and total figures will not include businesses whose Non-EU trade is made up entirely of consignments below the statistical threshold (£873 and 1000kg for 2019).
2. EU trade data is only collected from VAT registered businesses. In contrast, Non-EU trade data is collected from both VAT and Non-VAT registered businesses.
3. Intrastat and CHIEF data was compiled on a special trade basis, excluding trade that enters a customs warehouse but does not enter free circulation in the UK.
4. The data presented will differ to that in HMRC's Regional Trade Statistics (RTS) which presents business counts compiled on a quarterly basis and uses different methodology.
5. The population of businesses that trade with both EU & Non-EU countries, and undertake both imports and exports in Table 3, is formed from seven bespoke groups that have been summed for this commentary. These bespoke populations are presented separately in the additional tables published with this release.
6. This data is provisional and may be subject to change.

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