



About this release

This release includes the 1st provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and both countries of the EU and those outside the EU for August 2021.

Supporting tables, visuals and data can be found at www.uktradeinfo.com

In this publication

- Trade trends p.2
- Non-EU and EU trade p.3
- August 2021 Exports p.4

Country analysis

Country analysis – 3 months

Commodity analysis

Commodity analysis – 3 months

Combined analysis

- August 2021 Imports p.11

Country analysis

Country analysis – 3 months

Commodity analysis

Commodity analysis – 3 months

Combined analysis

- Methodology notes p.18

Trade in Goods, August 2021

- Total **exports** of goods for August 2021 were £24.0 billion. This was down £2.9 billion (11%) compared with last month, but up £1.1 billion (4.9%) compared with August 2020.
- Total **imports** of goods for August 2021 were £39.6 billion. This was down £2.6 billion (6.3%) compared with last month, and down £1.1 billion (2.6%) compared with August 2020.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £15.7 billion, widening by £0.2 billion on last month.

Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods and Statistics
Note: 2021 data is provisional



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Trade in Goods Trends

Following the global economic crisis, UK trade in goods dropped in 2009. Both imports and exports then steadily increased until 2012. From the start of 2013, imports remained relatively flat until a very sharp increase in Q3 of 2016. It has experienced large quarterly fluctuations since Q1 of 2019 and Q2 of 2020 saw the lowest quarterly imports value since Q3 of 2010. Exports peaked in Q2 of 2013, with a steady rise from Q2 of 2017 to Q3 of 2018. Q2 of 2020 also saw the lowest quarterly exports value since Q3 of 2010.

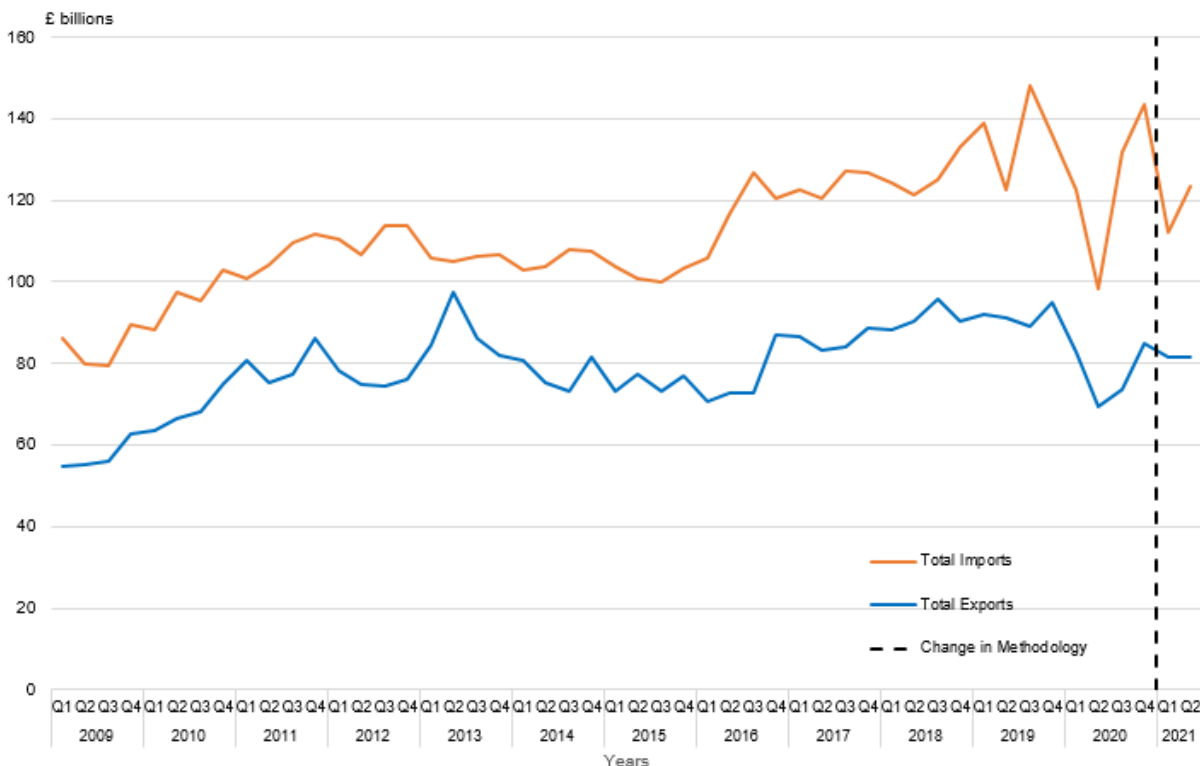
- The total **export** trade for Q2 of 2021 was £81.4 billion, which was an increase of 17% compared with £69.4 billion for Q2 of 2020.
- The total **import** trade for Q2 of 2021 was £123 billion, which was an increase of 26% compared with £98.1 billion for Q2 of 2020.
- There was a trade deficit of £42.1 billion for Q2 of 2021. This was a widening of 47% compared with £28.7 billion for Q2 of 2020.
- For many years Germany has been our largest trading import partner by value, recently surpassed by China, while the USA has been the dominant trading export partner, with occasional peaks for Switzerland.
- Mechanical appliances and Motor vehicles have generally been the largest **import** commodities by value. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has also predominantly been the largest valued commodity, with occasional peaks for Precious metals.

↑ Exports up 17% on Q2 2020

↑ Imports up 26% on Q2 2020

↑ Trade deficit widened by 47% on Q2 2020

Figure 2: Quarterly UK Trade in Goods, 2009 – 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Non-EU & EU Trade in Goods

Non-EU Trade in Goods:

- **Non-EU exports** for August 2021 were £12.4 billion. This was a decrease of £1.4 billion (9.9%) on last month, but an increase of £0.3 billion (2.3%) compared with August 2020.
- **Non-EU imports** for August 2021 were £22.6 billion. This was a decrease of £0.6 billion (2.6%) on last month, and a decrease of £1.2 billion (5.1%) compared with August 2020.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £10.2 billion.

↓ **Non-EU exports down 9.9% on last month**

EU Trade in Goods:

- **EU exports** for August 2021 were £11.6 billion. This was a decrease of £1.5 billion (11%) on last month, but an increase of £0.9 billion (7.9%) compared with August 2020.
- **EU imports** for August 2021 were £17.0 billion. This was a decrease of £2.0 billion (11%) on last month, but an increase of £0.1 billion (0.9%) compared with August 2020.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £5.4 billion.

↓ **EU Imports down 11% on last month**

Figure 3: Total UK Trade in Goods, with EU and Non-EU, August 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Country Analysis

- The USA remained the largest export partner country. It experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £547 million (14%).
- The Netherlands experienced the largest value increase on August 2020, up £665 million (49%).
- France experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £363 million (21%).
- The UAE experienced the largest value increase on last month and the 2nd largest value increase on August 2020, up £280 million (76%) and £349 million (more than doubling in value) respectively.
- Belgium experienced the 3rd largest value increase on August 2020, up £346 million (45%).
- Switzerland experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £268 million (36%).
- Germany experienced the largest value decrease on August 2020, down £252 million (10%).

↓ Exports to the USA down 14% on last month

↑ Exports to the Netherlands up 49% on August 2020

Table 1: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, August 2021

Partner Country	August 2021		July 2021		August 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on July 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
USA	3,242	3,789	-14.4	3,219	0.7	
Germany	2,213	2,417	-8.4	2,465	-10.2	
Netherlands	2,032	2,085	-2.6	1,366	48.7	
Ireland	1,583	1,705	-7.2	1,604	-1.3	
France	1,386	1,749	-20.8	1,332	4.0	
China	1,304	1,214	7.4	1,224	6.5	
Belgium	1,118	1,268	-11.8	772	44.8	
UAE	650	370	75.7	301	115.7	
Spain	609	752	-19.0	625	-2.5	
Hong Kong	582	614	-5.1	534	9.1	
Others	9,251	10,865	-14.9	9,397	-1.6	
Total EU	11,608	13,107	-11.4	10,754	7.9	
Total Non-EU	12,361	13,719	-9.9	12,086	2.3	
Total Exports	23,969	26,827	-10.7	22,840	4.9	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

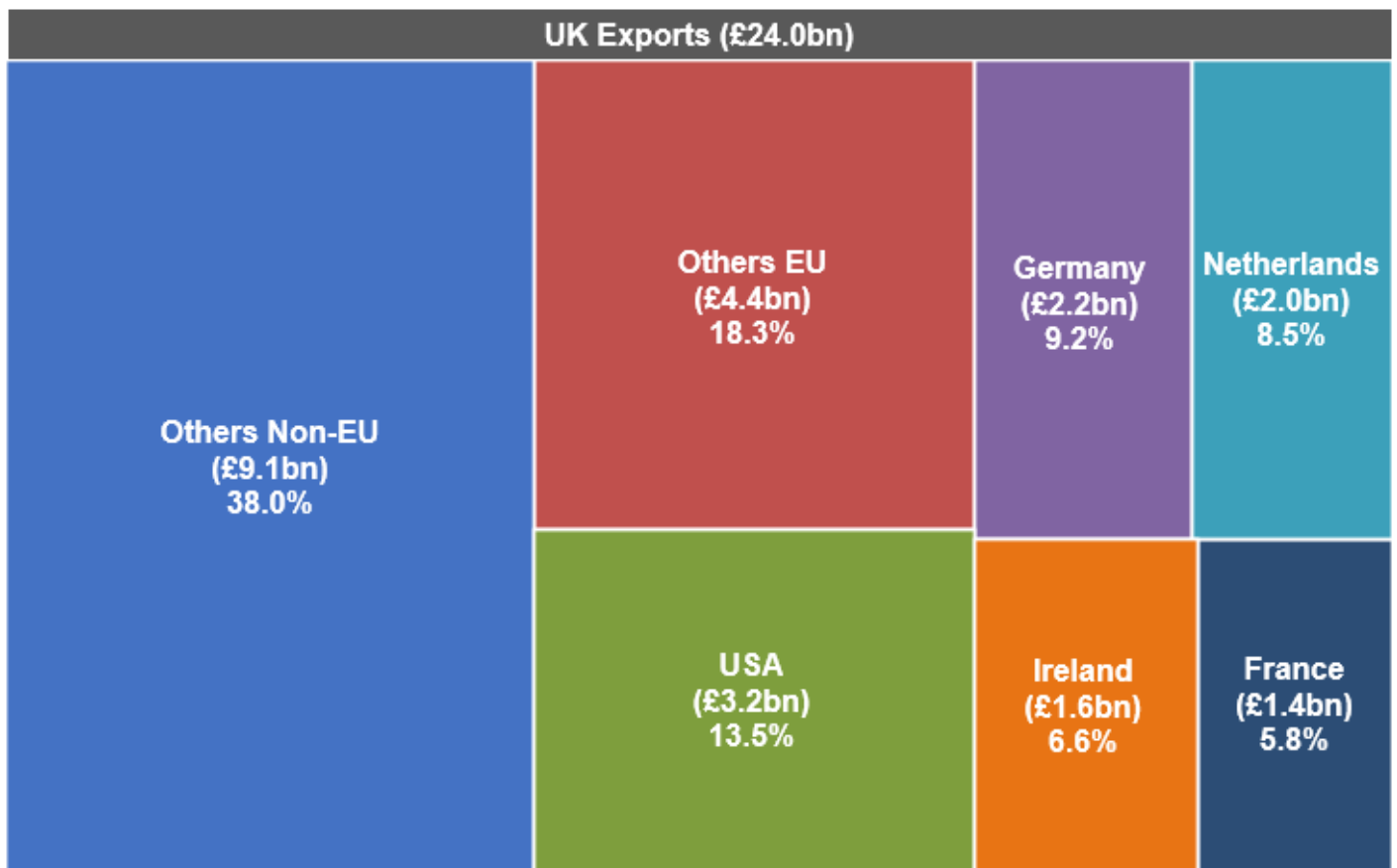
Exports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 44% of the total value of goods exported in August 2021. This was a decrease of less than 1 percentage point on August 2020.
- The USA accounted for 14% of the total value of goods exported from the UK. This was a decrease of less than 1 percentage point on August 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 9.2%. This was a decrease from an 11% share in August 2020.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, the UAE rose to 8th place from 15th, while Italy fell to 11th place from 8th.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with August 2020. Most notably, Switzerland fell to 12th place from 10th.

↓ **The USA had a 14% share of total exports in August 2021**

↓ **Germany had a 9.2% share of total exports in August 2021**

Figure 4: Share of UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, August 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to August 2021, the USA remained the largest export partner country.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2021 and the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to August 2020, down 71% and 14% respectively.
- Among the top 10, the Netherlands experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 41%.
- Among the top 10, Belgium experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 39%.
- Among the top 10, Spain experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to August 2020, down 14%.
- 7 of the top 10 export partners experienced a decrease on the 3 months to May 2021. The exceptions were the Netherlands, Ireland, and Spain.
- 7 of the top 10 export partners experienced an increase on the 3 months to August 2020. The exceptions were Germany, Switzerland, and Spain.

↓ Exports to Switzerland down 71% on the 3 months to May 2021

↑ Exports to the Netherlands up 41% on the 3 months to August 2020

Table 2: UK exports of goods to the top 10 countries, 3 months to August 2021

Partner Country	3 months to Aug 2021		3 months to May 2021		3 months to Aug 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
USA	10,501	11,821	-11.2	10,093	4.0	
Germany	7,299	8,502	-14.1	7,582	-3.7	
Netherlands	6,164	5,852	5.3	4,368	41.1	
Ireland	5,307	5,151	3.0	4,918	7.9	
France	4,910	5,034	-2.5	4,606	6.6	
China	3,573	4,343	-17.7	3,506	1.9	
Belgium	3,541	3,833	-7.6	2,551	38.8	
Switzerland	2,423	8,320	-70.9	2,814	-13.9	
Italy	2,230	2,421	-7.9	2,128	4.8	
Spain	2,038	2,016	1.1	2,372	-14.1	
Others	29,960	31,839	-5.9	27,211	10.1	
Total Exports	77,946	89,132	-12.6	72,151	8.0	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Commodity Analysis

- Mechanical appliances remained the largest export commodity. It experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,167 million (25%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, and the largest value decrease on August 2020, down £761 million (33%) and £208 million (12%) respectively.
- Precious metals experienced the largest value increase on last month, and the 2nd largest value increase on August 2020, up £382 million (20%) and £190 million (9.2%) respectively.
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest value increase on August 2020, up £284 million (16%).
- Aircraft (ranked 11th) experienced the 3rd largest value decreases on last month, and on August 2020, down £282 million (33%) and £124 million (18%) respectively.
- Organic chemicals (ranked 12th) experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on August 2020, down £132 million (19%).

↓ Exports of Mechanical appliances down 25% on last month

↑ Exports of Mineral fuels up 16% on August 2020

Table 3: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, August 2021

Commodity Description	August 2021	July 2021		August 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on July 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)
Mechanical appliances	3,441	4,608	-25.3	3,347	2.8
Precious metals	2,245	1,863	20.5	2,055	9.2
Mineral fuels	2,029	2,162	-6.1	1,745	16.3
Pharmaceutical products	1,642	1,620	1.3	1,491	10.1
Motor vehicles	1,563	2,324	-32.8	1,771	-11.8
Electronic equipment	1,544	1,639	-5.8	1,526	1.1
Other products	1,209	1,429	-15.4	874	38.3
Measuring devices and gauges	1,188	1,267	-6.2	1,073	10.8
Plastics and plastic products	748	832	-10.2	623	20.0
Beverages	652	617	5.7	617	5.7
Others	7,710	8,466	-8.9	7,719	-0.1
Total Exports	23,969	26,827	-10.7	22,840	4.9

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

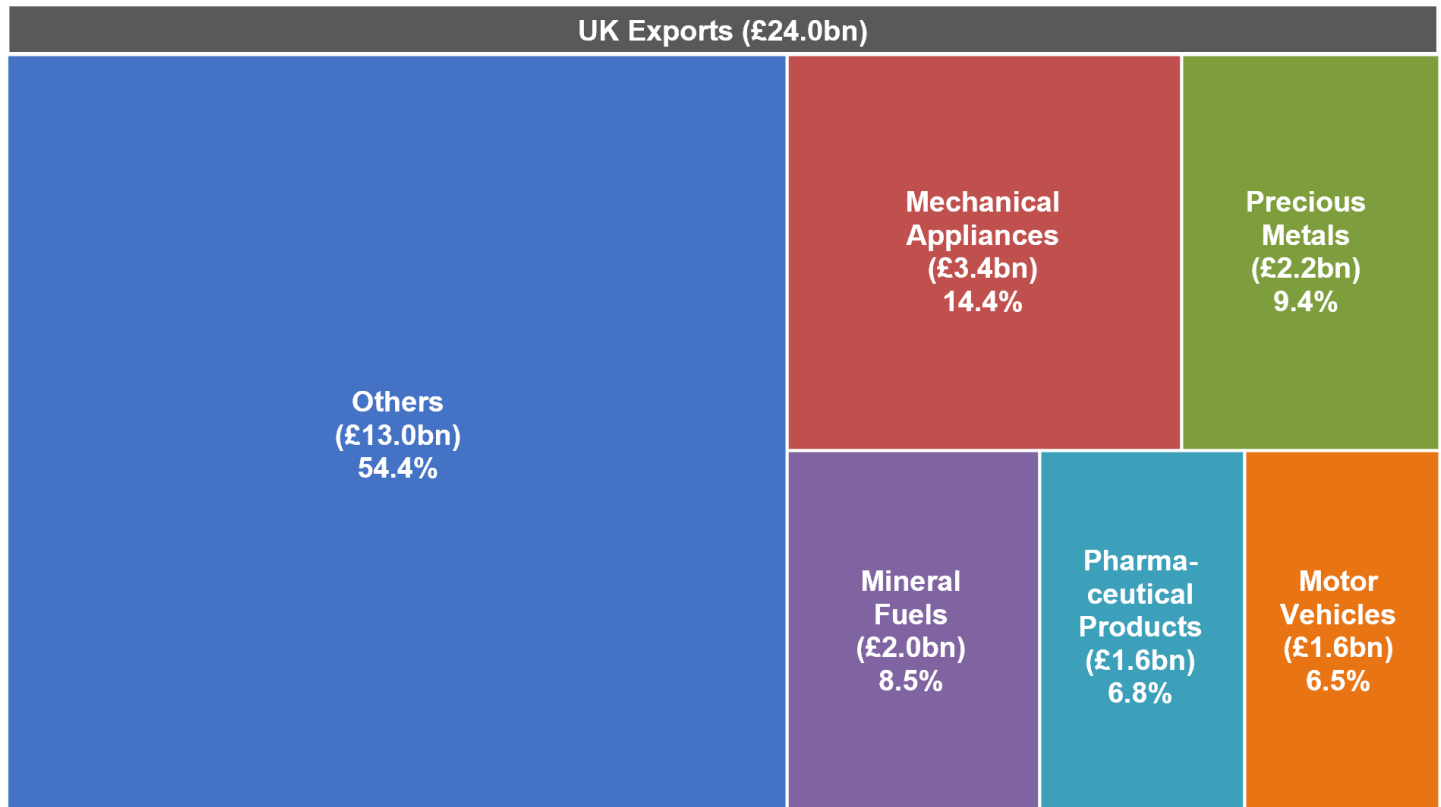
Exports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 46% of the total value of goods exported in August 2021. This was a decrease of less than 1 percentage point on August 2020.
- Mechanical appliances accounted for 14% of the total value of goods exported from the UK. This was a decrease from a 15% share in August 2020.
- Precious metals had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 9.4% of total exports. This was an increase from a 9.0% share in August 2020.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed when compared with last month. Most notably, Precious metals rose to 2nd place from 4th, and Pharmaceutical products rose to 4th place from 6th, while Motor vehicles fell to 5th place from 2nd.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with August 2020. Most notably, Plastics and plastic products rose to 9th place from 11th, while Organic chemicals fell to 12th place from 9th.

↓ **Mechanical appliances accounted for 14% of total exports in August 2021**

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 9.4% of total exports in August 2021**

Figure 5: Share of UK exports by the top 5 commodities, August 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to August 2021, Mechanical appliances replaced Precious metals as the largest export commodity.
- Among the top 10, Precious metals experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2021, down 50%.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2021, down 27%.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to May 2021 and on the 3 months to August 2020, up 12% and 24% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Plastics and plastic products experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 23%.
- 8 of the top 10 export commodities experienced a decrease on the 3 months to May 2021. The exceptions were Mineral fuels and Plastics and plastic products.
- All of the top 10 export commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to August 2020.

↓ **Precious metals exports down 50% on the 3 months to May 2021**

↑ **Mineral fuels exports up 24% on the 3 months to August 2020**

Table 4: UK exports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to August 2021

Commodity Description	3 months to Aug 2021		3 months to May 2021		3 months to Aug 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
Mechanical appliances	12,279	12,601	-2.6	11,133	10.3	
Precious metals	7,032	14,008	-49.8	7,003	0.4	
Motor vehicles	6,162	8,497	-27.5	5,938	3.8	
Mineral fuels	5,724	5,128	11.6	4,631	23.6	
Electronic equipment	4,831	4,985	-3.1	4,801	0.6	
Pharmaceutical products	4,772	4,872	-2.1	4,749	0.5	
Other products	4,087	4,359	-6.2	2,461	66.1	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,755	3,968	-5.4	3,347	12.2	
Plastics and plastic products	2,488	2,485	0.1	2,019	23.2	
Aircraft	2,276	2,822	-19.3	2,216	2.7	
Others	24,540	25,408	-3.4	23,854	2.9	
Total Exports	77,946	89,132	-12.6	72,151	8.0	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
Note: 2021 data is provisional

Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Country to commodity:

- The increases in exports to the UAE on last month and on August 2020 was dominated by Precious metals, up £304 million (to 5 times the value) and £372 million (from £7.3 million) respectively.
- The decrease in exports to the USA on last month was led by Mineral fuels and Mechanical appliances, down £170 million (55%) and £139 million (20%) respectively.
- The decrease in exports to Switzerland on last month was led by Precious metals, down £143 million (36%).
- The decrease in exports to Germany on August 2020 was led by Organic chemicals and Mineral fuels, down £110 million (74%) and £108 million (62%) respectively.

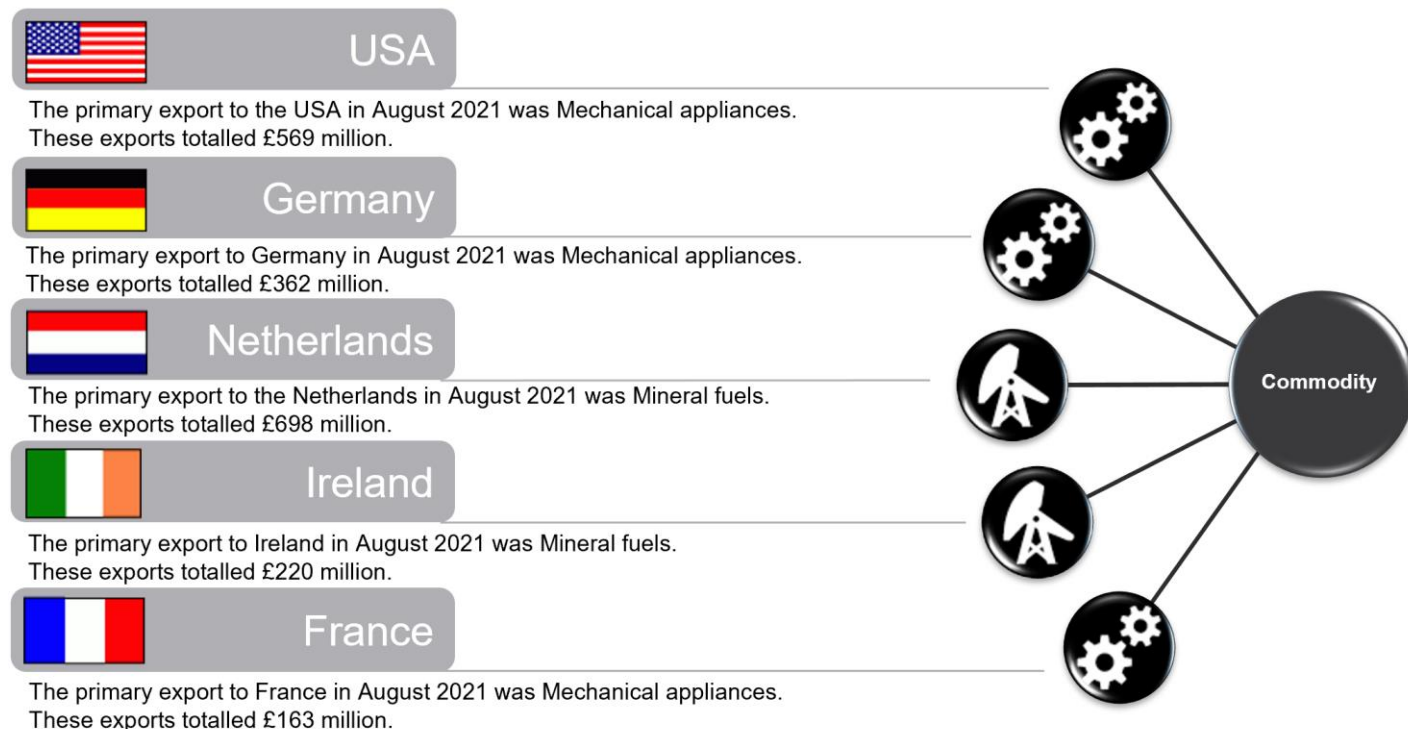
Commodity to country

- The decrease in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by France and China, down £114 million (60%) and £103 million (45%) respectively. The decrease on August 2020 was also led by China, down £79 million (38%).
- The increase in exports of Mineral fuels on August 2020 was led by the Netherlands and Ireland, up £220 million (46%) and £120 million (to more than double the value) respectively.
- The decreases in exports of Aircraft on last month and on August 2020 were led by France, down £73 million (46%) and £71 million (45%) respectively.

↓ Exports of Mineral fuels to the USA down 55% on last month

↑ Exports of Mineral fuels to the Netherlands up 46% on August 2020

Figure 6: The UK's top commodity exports to the top 5 countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Country Analysis

- China remained the largest import partner country, experiencing the 2nd largest value increases on last month and on August 2020, up £314 million (6.5%) and £676 million (15%) respectively.
- Uzbekistan (ranked 120th) experienced the largest value decrease on August 2020, down £2,078 million (to less than £1.0 million).
- Hong Kong (ranked 18th) experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on August 2020, down £1,842 million (75%).
- Norway experienced the largest value increase on August 2020, up £1,037 million (to almost 2.5 times the value).
- Kazakhstan (ranked 17th) experienced the largest value increase on last month and the 3rd largest value increase on August 2020, up £417 million (to almost 3 times the value) and £603 million (from £49.2 million) respectively.
- Germany experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £557 million (12%).

↓ Imports from Hong Kong down 75% on August 2020

↓ Imports from Germany down 12% on last month

Table 5: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, August 2021

Partner Country	August 2021		July 2021		August 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on July 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
China	5,111	4,797	6.5	4,435	15.2	
Germany	4,113	4,670	-11.9	4,407	-6.7	
USA	3,549	3,506	1.2	3,156	12.4	
Netherlands	2,401	2,580	-6.9	2,576	-6.8	
Belgium	1,867	1,952	-4.4	1,757	6.3	
France	1,828	1,792	2.0	1,537	18.9	
Norway	1,815	2,042	-11.1	778	133.2	
Russia	1,561	1,648	-5.3	1,583	-1.4	
Italy	1,343	1,566	-14.2	1,301	3.3	
Spain	1,045	1,247	-16.2	852	22.7	
Others	15,012	16,488	-9.0	18,338	-18.1	
Total EU	17,040	19,077	-10.7	16,896	0.9	
Total Non-EU	22,605	23,211	-2.6	23,825	-5.1	
Total Imports	39,645	42,288	-6.3	40,720	-2.6	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

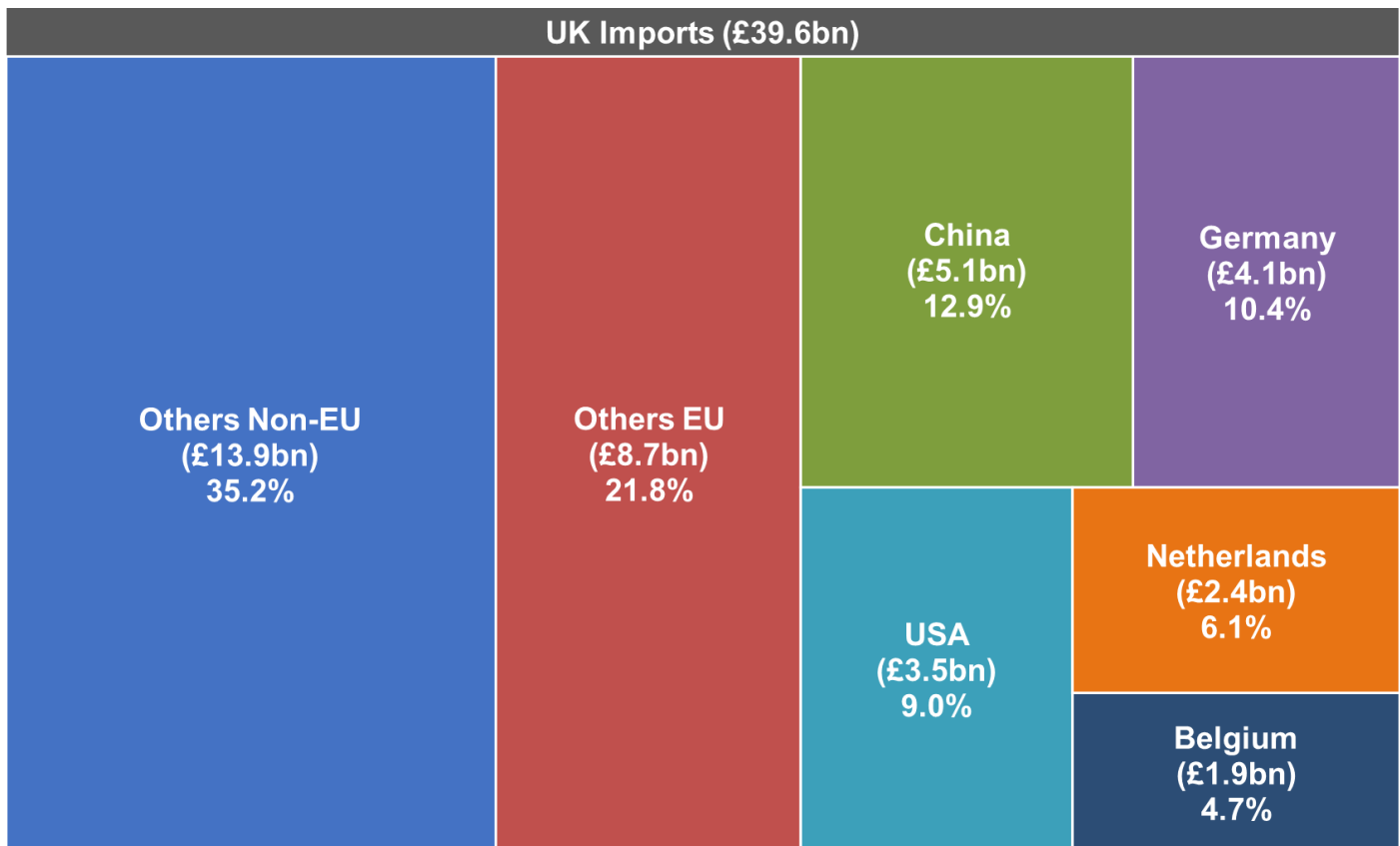
Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 43% of the total value of goods imported in August 2021. This was an increase from a 42% share in August 2020.
- China accounted for 13% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from an 11% share in August 2020.
- Germany had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 10%. This was a decrease from an 11% share in August 2020.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Norway fell to 7th place from 5th and Ireland fell to 12th place from 10th.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with August 2020. Most notably, France rose to 6th place from 9th and Norway rose to 7th place from 16th, while Hong Kong fell to 18th place from 5th.

↑ **The top 5 partners accounted for 43% of total imports in July 2021**

↑ **China accounted for 13% of total imports in August 2021**

Figure 7: Share of UK imports of goods from the top 5 countries, August 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Country Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to August 2021, China remained the largest import partner country.
- Among the top 10, Norway experienced the 3rd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2021 and the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 24% and up to almost 2.5 times the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2021 and the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 29% and 44% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Russia experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2021, up 27%.
- Among the top 10, the Netherlands experienced the only percentage decrease on the 3 months to August 2020, down 8.4%.
- 8 of the top 10 countries experienced an increase on the 3 months to May 2021. The exceptions were Germany and Italy.

↑ Imports from Switzerland up 29% on the 3 months to May 2021

↑ Imports from Norway up to almost 2.5 times the value on the 3 months to August 2020.

Table 6: UK imports of goods from the top 10 countries, 3 months to August 2021

Partner Country	3 months to Aug 2021		3 months to May 2021		3 months to Aug 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
China	14,907	14,715	1.3	13,200	12.9	
Germany	13,651	14,255	-4.2	13,651	0.0	
USA	11,182	10,828	3.3	9,530	17.3	
Netherlands	7,711	7,122	8.3	8,418	-8.4	
Belgium	5,817	5,260	10.6	4,940	17.8	
France	5,557	5,286	5.1	5,139	8.1	
Norway	5,164	4,160	24.1	2,108	144.9	
Russia	4,984	3,932	26.7	4,599	8.4	
Italy	4,483	4,663	-3.9	4,329	3.5	
Switzerland	4,179	3,239	29.0	2,907	43.8	
Others	48,969	47,230	3.7	51,561	-5.0	
Total Imports	126,605	120,689	4.9	120,383	5.2	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals remained the largest import commodity. It experienced the largest value increase on last month, up £453 million (8.9%). Conversely, it experienced the largest value decrease on August 2020, down £4,523 million (45%).
- Mineral fuels experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £610 million (15%). In contrast, it experienced the largest value increase on August 2020, up £1,731 million (doubling in value).
- Mechanical appliances experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, down £473 million (9.9%). Conversely, it experienced the 2nd largest value increase on August 2020, up £463 million (12%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £456 million (13%).
- Miscellaneous chemical products (ranked 11th) experienced the 3rd largest value increase on August 2020, up £357 million (94%).
- Electronic equipment experienced the 4th largest value decrease on last month, down £357 million (9.9%).

↓ Imports of Precious metals down 45% on August 2020

↓ Imports of Mineral fuels down 15% on last month

Table 7: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, August 2021

Commodity Description	August 2021	July 2021		August 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on July 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)
Precious metals	5,530	5,077	8.9	10,053	-45.0
Mechanical appliances	4,318	4,791	-9.9	3,855	12.0
Mineral fuels	3,459	4,069	-15.0	1,728	100.2
Electronic equipment	3,250	3,607	-9.9	3,249	0.0
Motor vehicles	3,181	3,637	-12.5	3,098	2.7
Pharmaceutical products	1,664	1,679	-0.9	1,319	26.2
Plastics and plastic products	1,318	1,385	-4.8	1,187	11.0
Measuring devices and gauges	1,108	1,120	-1.1	1,063	4.2
Furniture and light fittings	877	926	-5.3	672	30.5
Knitwear	742	715	3.8	847	-12.4
Others	14,198	15,281	-7.1	13,649	4.0
Total Imports	39,645	42,288	-6.3	40,720	-2.6

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

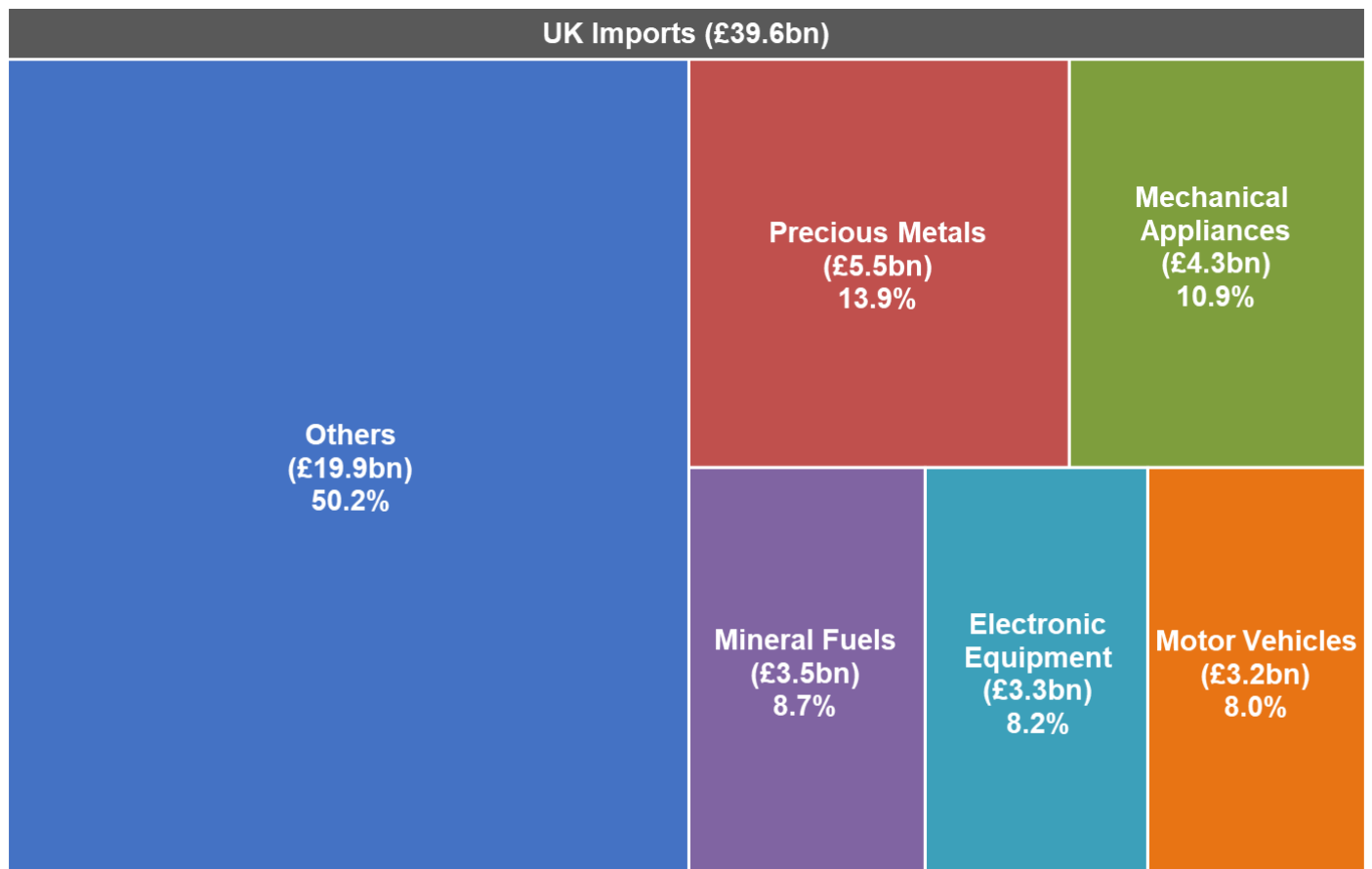
Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 50% of the total value of goods imported in August 2021. This was a decrease from a 54% share in August 2020.
- Precious metals accounted for 14% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was a decrease from a 25% share in August 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for an 11% share. This was an increase from a 9.5% share in August 2020.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed order compared with last month. Most notably, Organic chemicals fell to 14th place from 10th.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with August 2020. Most notably, Mineral fuels rose to 3rd place from 5th and Furniture and light fittings rose to 9th place from 12th, while Clothes (not knitted) fell to 16th place from 10th.

↓ **The top 5 import commodities accounted for 50% of total imports in August 2021**

↓ **Precious metals accounted for 14% of total imports in July 2021**

Figure 8: Share of UK imports for the top 5 commodities, August 2021



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
 Note: 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Commodity Analysis – 3 Months

- In the 3 months to August 2021, Precious metals remained the largest import commodity. Among the top 10, it experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2021, up 24%. Conversely, it experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to August 2020, down 25%.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the largest percentage increase on the 3 months to May 2021 and on the 3 months to August 2020, up 28% and up to more than double the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, Miscellaneous chemical products experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to May 2021, down 18%. In contrast, it experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to August 2020, up 93%.
- 5 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to May 2021 and 5 experienced a decrease.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to August 2020. The exceptions were Precious metals and Measuring devices and gauges.

↑ Imports of Precious metals up 24% on the 3 months to May 2021

↑ Imports of Mineral fuels up to more than double the value compared with the 3 months to August 2020

Table 8: UK imports of goods for the top 10 commodities, 3 months to August 2021

Commodity Description	3 months to Aug 2021		3 months to May 2021		3 months to Aug 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on May 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on August 2020 (%)	
Precious metals	18,819	15,191	23.9	25,148	-25.2	
Mechanical appliances	14,321	14,970	-4.3	12,726	12.5	
Motor vehicles	10,847	12,154	-10.7	10,065	7.8	
Mineral fuels	10,721	8,379	27.9	4,801	123.3	
Electronic equipment	10,482	10,602	-1.1	10,230	2.5	
Pharmaceutical products	4,869	4,534	7.4	4,629	5.2	
Plastics and plastic products	4,109	3,723	10.4	3,556	15.5	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,472	3,490	-0.5	3,502	-0.9	
Furniture and light fittings	2,707	2,545	6.4	1,976	37.0	
Miscellaneous chemical products	2,326	2,853	-18.5	1,207	92.6	
Others	43,933	42,247	4.0	42,542	3.3	
Total Imports	126,605	120,689	4.9	120,383	5.2	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2020 and 2021 data is provisional

Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

Country to commodity:

- The increase in imports from China on last month was driven by Motor vehicles, up £150 million (more than doubling in value). The increase on August 2020 was driven by Miscellaneous chemical products, Motor vehicles, and Mechanical appliances, up £278 million (from £20.9 million), £179 million (to more than 3 times the value), and £179 million (24%) respectively.
- The decrease in imports from Germany on last month was driven by Motor vehicles and Mechanical appliances, down £314 million (25%) and £116 million (16%) respectively.

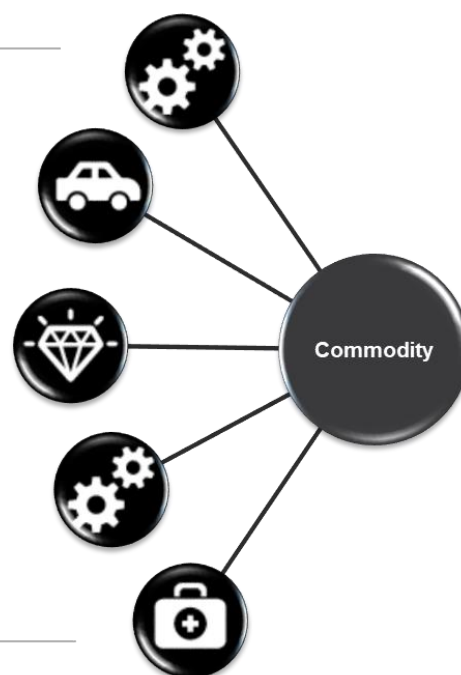
↓ Imports of Motor vehicles from Germany down 25% on last month

Commodity to country:

- The increase in imports of Precious metals on last month was driven by Kazakhstan, the USA, and Switzerland, up £420 million (to almost 3 times the value), £294 million (47%), and £205 million (98%) respectively. The decrease on August 2020 was driven by Uzbekistan and Hong Kong, down £2,079 million (to nil trade) and £1,807 million (92%) respectively.
- The decrease in imports of Mineral fuels on last month was driven by the USA and Norway, down £165 million (35%) and £152 million (8.7%) respectively. The increase on August 2020 was driven by Norway, up £976 million (to more than 2.5 times the value).
- The decrease in imports of Electronic equipment on last month was dominated by Denmark, down £202 million (93%).

↑ Imports of Mineral fuels from Norway up to more than 2.5 times the value on August 2020

Figure 9: The UK's top commodity imports from the top 5 countries



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics
Note: 2021 data is provisional

Methodology Notes

Metadata

Data behind this bulletin is available through our [uktradeinfo](#) web site:

- Detailed Trade Statistics data at 8-digit commodity code level is available in our [interactive database](#).
- Aggregate OTS data is available in [pre-prepared Excel tables](#).

Data sources

UK to EU exports

Up to 31 December 2020, UK to EU export statistics were collected via the Intrastat statistical survey, which required traders to declare the value and volume of commodities exported to EU Member States within the relevant month of physical goods movement.

For goods moving from 1 January 2021, GB to EU export statistics are compiled direct from customs export declarations made according to the requirements of the Taxation (Cross Border Trade) Act. The customs declaration requirements are more complex than the single monthly aggregated Intrastat return, and can result in differences between dates of declaration and actual movement of the goods out of the country.

The TIGS compilation methodology relies upon the acceptance date of the customs export declaration for its inclusion within the relevant month of account, rather than the declared physical movement date used from the Intrastat survey.

Intrastat survey returns continue to be collected for goods exported from Northern Ireland to the EU, under the terms of the [Northern Ireland Protocol](#).

Both the GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data are incorporated into the overall UK to EU export dataset.

As a result of the changes and differences outlined above, there is a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. These will not be directly comparable to UK to EU export statistics published for previous months and years.

UK imports from EU

UK imports from EU statistics is not impacted by any change in 2021. The Intrastat survey continues to operate for all UK (GB and NI) imports (arrivals) from the EU, to mitigate the effects of staging customs controls, and to comply with the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Figures derived from Intrastat include:

- Estimates for businesses who have yet to submit detailed data on the trade they had with other EU Member States this month.
- Estimates for businesses who do not have to submit detailed data on the trade they have with other EU Member States.
- An adjustment for trade associated with Missing Trader Intra Community fraud. More details of this can be found in the OTS methodology paper [here](#).

Estimates are included in all high-level totals including commodity (HS2) and country totals.

The **Non-EU figures** provided in this publication of the August 2021 Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics are presented by customs declarations and collected by the CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight) system. Declarations collected via the Customs Declarations Service (CDS) are included: for imports from August 2020 month of account; and for exports from December 2020 month of account onwards.

Detailed trade information is presented according to the [Harmonised System \(HS\)](#) nomenclature.

Methodology

The Overseas Trade Statistics Methodology paper (March 2021) is available [here](#). It covers all aspects of the Overseas Trade Statistics methodology – data sources, classifications and definitions, quality assurance,

publications and governance. It is a useful companion to the trade data, providing the definitions and methodologies on which the data are based.

From 31 December 2020, the free movement of people and goods and services between the UK and the EU ended. This changed the way HMRC collects trade in goods statistics. The overall UK to EU export dataset will incorporate both GB to EU customs export declaration data and NI Intrastat export (dispatch) data. As a result, there will be a break in the timeseries for published UK to EU export statistics from January 2021. Users should take care when comparing previous months and years.

From the May 2016 month of account, there was a methodological change to the way our trade-in-goods statistics are compiled. Following a change in legislation, trade-in-goods statistics switched from the 'general trade' system of compilation to the 'special trade' system.

Non-Monetary Gold (NMG) can form a substantial part of the non-EU Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS). For further information, see [Inclusion of Non-Monetary Gold in OTS](#). Data relating to monthly non-EU and EU import and export totals for January 2008 onwards with a breakdown of non-monetary gold and other trade is available in an [OTS time series spreadsheet](#).

Relationship with other statistical publications

The aggregate estimates here will differ slightly from those that are published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) as part of the Balance of Payments (BoP), as the 2 sets of data are compiled to different sets of rules. The ONS website provides an overview of [BoP](#), where you can find their detailed monthly [UK Trade Releases](#). The BoP publication shows a high-level picture of UK trade-in-goods, whereas the OTS publication shows a detailed picture of the UK's trade-in-goods by commodity and partner country.

National Statistics Publication

HM Revenue & Customs released these latest statistics on Overseas Trade with countries on 13 October 2021 under arrangements set out in the [Code of Practice for Official Statistics](#). The 1st release is published on HMRC's trade data website www.uktradeinfo.com.

This release includes the 1st provisional estimates of trade-in-goods between the UK and both countries of the EU and those outside the EU for August 2021. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2020 are also being released in line with the [HM Revenue & Customs Policy on Revisions](#).

The next three publications are due for release on the following days:

Month of account	First release date
September 2021	11 November 2021
October 2021	10 December 2021
November 2021	14 January 2022

The OTS has been reviewed as part of an assessment made of Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics by the [UK Statistics Authority](#). The report of that assessment can be found [here](#).

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

Now that the UK has left the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. All releases continue to be produced in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Statistics as well as internationally agreed statistical guidance and standards.