



## 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 December 2021.

Supporting tables, visuals and data can be found at [www.uktradeinfo.com](http://www.uktradeinfo.com)

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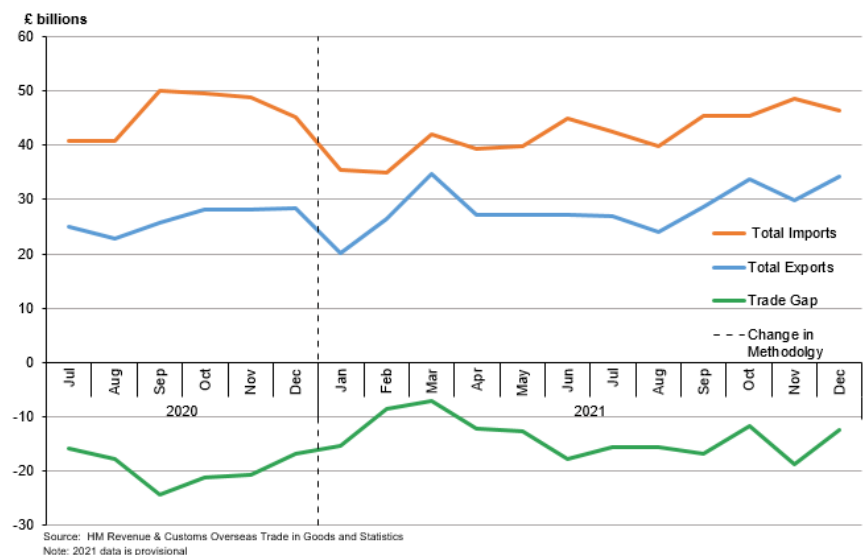
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## Trade in Goods, December 2021

- Total **exports** of goods for December 2021 were £34.2 billion. This was up £4.4 billion (15%) compared with last month and up £5.7 billion (20%) compared with December 2020.
- Total **imports** of goods for December 2021 were £46.5 billion. This was down £2.0 billion (4.1%) compared with last month, but up £1.3 billion (2.9%) compared with December 2020.
- The UK was a net importer this month, with **imports** exceeding **exports** by £12.3 billion, narrowing by £6.4 billion on last month.

### Figure 1: Total UK monthly Trade in Goods



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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, with Q2 of 2020 reporting 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.

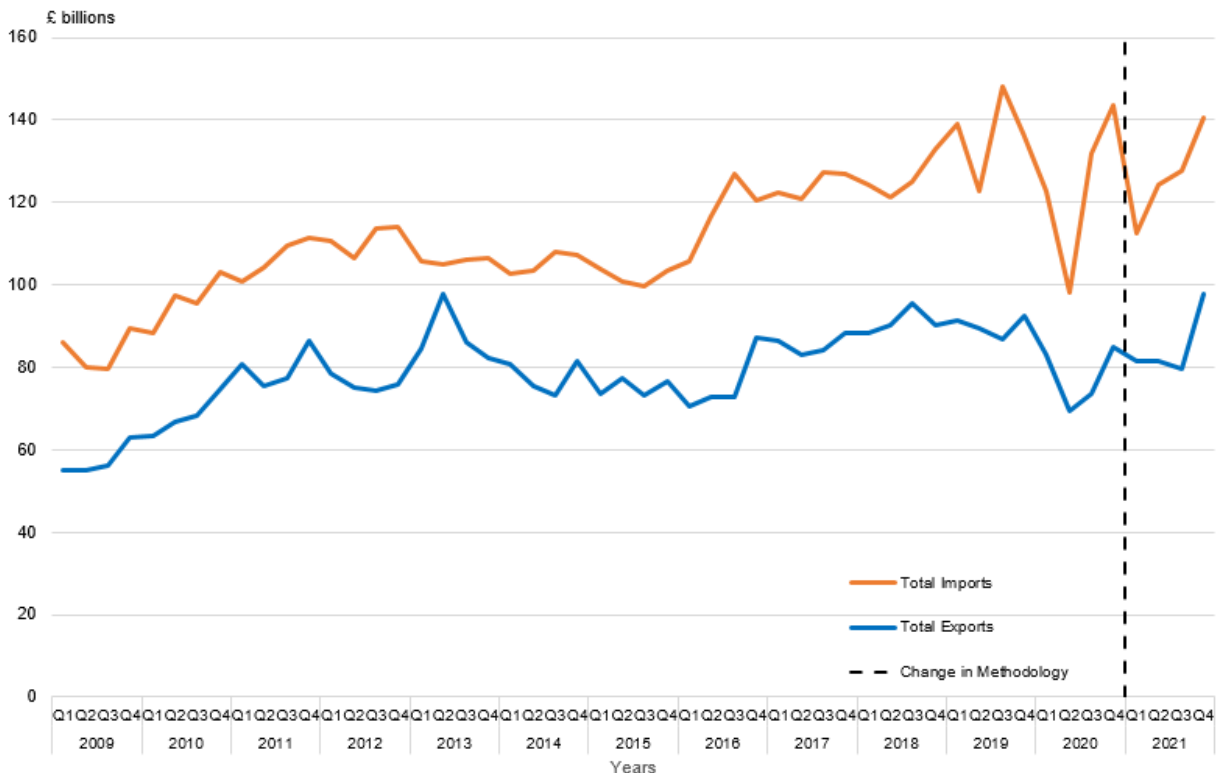
- The total **export** trade for Q4 of 2021 was £97.8 billion, which was an increase of 15% compared with £85.0 billion for Q4 of 2020.
- The total **import** trade for Q4 of 2021 was £140 billion, which was a decrease of 2.1% compared with £144 billion for Q4 of 2020.
- There was a trade deficit of £42.7 billion for Q4 of 2021. This was a narrowing of 27% compared with £58.5 billion for Q4 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, recently surpassed by Mineral fuels. For **exports**, Mechanical appliances has also predominantly been the largest valued commodity, with occasional peaks for Precious metals.

↑ **Exports up 15% on Q4 2020**

↓ **Imports down 2.1% on Q4 2020**

↓ **Trade deficit narrowed by 27% on Q4 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 December 2021 were £19.5 billion. This was an increase of £4.4 billion (29%) on last month and an increase of £5.0 billion (34%) compared with December 2020.
- **Non-EU imports** for December 2021 were £27.6 billion. This was a decrease of £0.1 billion (0.3%) on last month, but an increase of £5.3 billion (24%) compared with December 2020.
- For **non-EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £8.1 billion.

↑ **Non-EU exports up 29% on last month**

## EU Trade in Goods:

- **EU exports** for December 2021 were £14.6 billion. This was a decrease of less than £0.1 billion (0.1%) on last month, but an increase of £0.7 billion (5.4%) compared with December 2020.
- **EU imports** for December 2021 were £18.9 billion. This was a decrease of £1.9 billion (9.1%) on last month and a decrease of £4.0 billion (18%) compared with December 2020.
- For **EU trade** the UK was a net importer this month, with imports exceeding exports by £4.3 billion.

↓ **EU imports down 18% on December 2020**

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



Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

# Exports: Country Analysis

- Switzerland replaced the USA as the largest export partner country, experiencing the largest value increases on last month and on December 2020, up £3,057 million and £3,207 respectively (up to 3 times the value on both periods).
- Singapore experienced the 2nd largest value increase on December 2020, up £630 million (up to 3 times the value).
- Germany experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month and the largest value decrease on December 2020, down £250 million (9.4%) and £599 million (20%) respectively.
- Ireland experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month, up £597 million (30%).
- Hong Kong experienced the 3rd largest value increase on last month and the 4th largest value increase on December 2020, up £435 million (83%) and £373 million (63%) respectively.
- The Netherlands experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £306 million (12%). In contrast, it had the 3rd largest value increase on December 2020, up £379 million (21%).

↑ Exports to Switzerland up to 3 times the value on last month

↑ Exports to Singapore up to 3 times the value on December 2020

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

Partner Country	December 2021		November 2021		December 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on November 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
Switzerland	4,588	1,531	199.6	1,381	232.2	
USA	3,747	3,694	1.4	3,820	-1.9	
Ireland	2,606	2,008	29.7	2,511	3.8	
Germany	2,401	2,651	-9.4	3,000	-20.0	
Netherlands	2,228	2,534	-12.1	1,848	20.5	
France	1,756	1,802	-2.5	1,726	1.7	
China	1,403	1,164	20.5	1,307	7.3	
Belgium	1,282	1,404	-8.7	963	33.1	
Hong Kong	961	526	82.6	588	63.4	
Singapore	939	609	54.1	309	203.9	
Others	12,260	11,871	3.3	11,005	11.4	
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>14,643</b>	<b>14,657</b>	<b>-0.1</b>	<b>13,897</b>	<b>5.4</b>	
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>19,528</b>	<b>15,139</b>	<b>29.0</b>	<b>14,562</b>	<b>34.1</b>	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>34,171</b>	<b>29,796</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>28,459</b>	<b>20.1</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

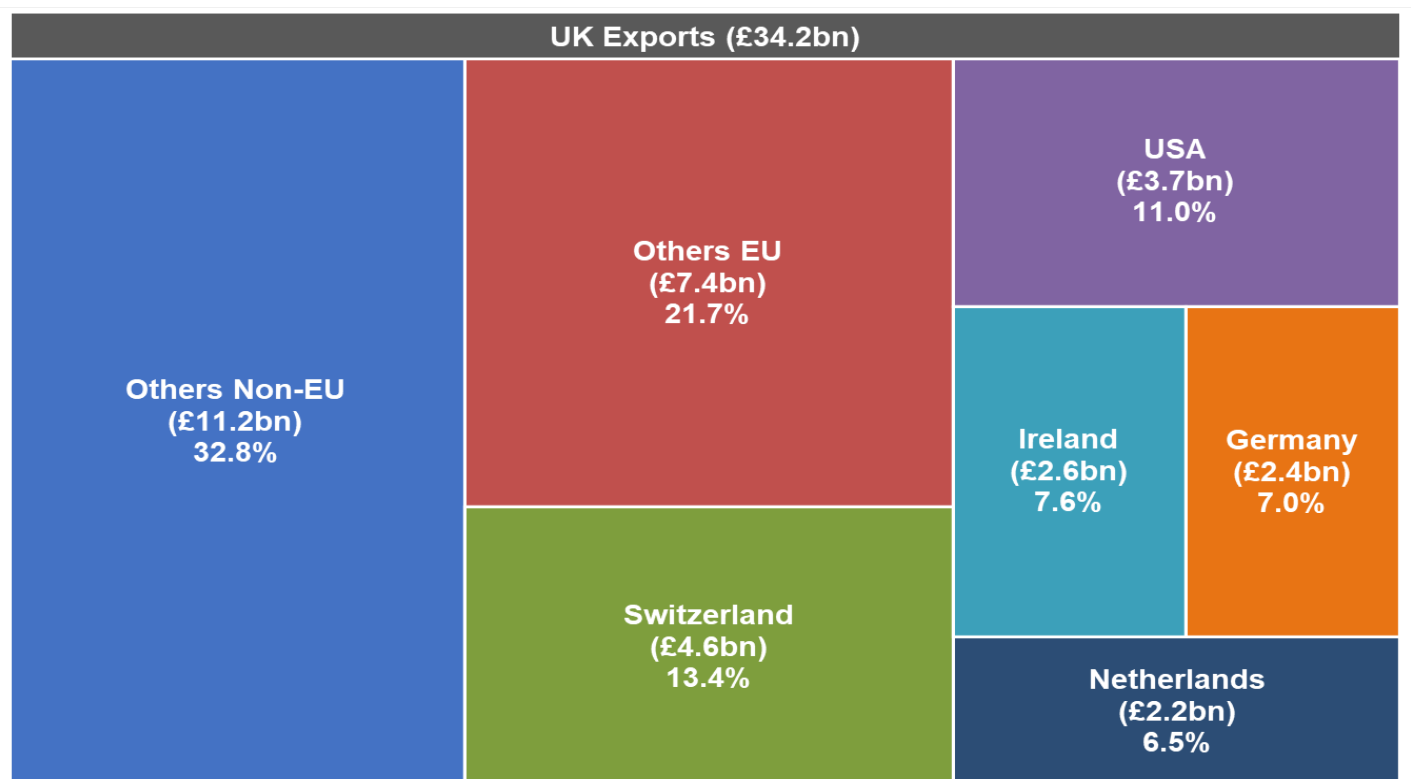
# Exports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 export partners accounted for 46% of the total value of goods exported in December 2021. This was an increase from a 45% share in December 2020.
- Switzerland accounted for 13% of the total value of goods exported from the UK. This was an increase from a 4.9% share in December 2020.
- The USA had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 11% of the total value of goods exported from the UK. This was a decrease from a 13% share in December 2020.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Switzerland rose to 1st place from 6th and Hong Kong rose to 9th place from 13th, while Germany fell to 4th place from 2nd.
- The top 10 export partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with December 2020. Most notably, Singapore rose to 10th place from 22nd, while Italy fell to 12th place from 9th.

↑ **Switzerland had a 13% share of total exports in December 2021**

↓ **The USA had an 11% share of total exports in December 2021**

**Figure 4: Share of UK exports of goods to the top 5 countries, December 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 December 2021, the USA remained the largest export partner country.
- Among the top 10, Switzerland experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up to 2.5 times the value and up to 3.5 times the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, Singapore experienced the 2nd largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up to almost 2.5 times the value on both periods.
- Among the top 10, Ireland experienced the 3rd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2021, up 31%.
- Among the top 10, Germany experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to December 2020, down 18%.
- All of the top 10 export partners experienced an increase on the 3 months to September 2021.
- 5 of the top 10 export partners experienced a decrease on the 3 months to December 2020 and 5 experienced and increase.

↑ Exports to Switzerland up to 3.5 times the value on the 3 months to December 2020

↑ Exports to Singapore up to almost 2.5 times the value on the 3 months to September 2021

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

Partner Country	3 months to Dec 2021		3 months to Sep 2021		3 months to Dec 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
USA	11,394	10,335	10.2	11,627	-2.0	
Switzerland	10,802	4,171	159.0	2,987	261.6	
Germany	7,564	6,952	8.8	9,210	-17.9	
Netherlands	7,533	6,597	14.2	5,488	37.3	
Ireland	6,705	5,134	30.6	7,519	-10.8	
France	5,212	4,689	11.2	5,094	2.3	
Belgium	4,028	3,633	10.9	3,052	32.0	
China	3,817	3,698	3.2	4,058	-5.9	
Singapore	2,284	977	133.8	952	140.0	
Italy	2,229	2,221	0.4	2,503	-11.0	
Others	36,240	31,208	16.1	32,474	11.6	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>97,807</b>	<b>79,614</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>84,964</b>	<b>15.1</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

# Exports: Commodity Analysis

- Precious metals replaced Mechanical appliances as the largest export commodity, experiencing the largest value increases on last month and on December 2020, up £3,897 million and £4,099 million respectively (up to 2.5 times the value on both periods).
- Organic chemicals experienced the 2nd largest value increase on last month up £838 million (to 3 times the value).
- Pharmaceutical products experienced the largest value decrease on last month, down £336 million (17%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month, and the largest value decrease on December 2020, down £133 million (4.9%) and £387 million (13%) respectively.
- Mechanical appliances experienced the 2nd largest value increase on December 2020, up £646 million (16%).
- Mineral fuels experienced the 3rd largest value increase on December 2020, up £646 million (33%).
- Iron and Steel (ranked 13th) experienced the 4th largest value increase on December 2020, up £215 million (55%).

↑ Exports of Precious metals up to 2.5 times the value on December 2020

↑ Exports of Organic chemicals up to 3 times the value on last month

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

Commodity Description	December 2021	November 2021		December 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on November 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)
Precious metals	6,654	2,757	141.4	2,555	160.4
Mechanical appliances	4,797	4,673	2.7	4,151	15.6
Mineral fuels	2,612	2,713	-3.7	1,966	32.9
Motor vehicles	2,573	2,707	-4.9	2,961	-13.1
Electronic equipment	1,815	1,789	1.5	1,841	-1.4
Other products	1,744	1,564	11.5	989	76.3
Pharmaceutical products	1,624	1,960	-17.2	1,698	-4.4
Measuring devices and gauges	1,335	1,311	1.8	1,281	4.2
Organic chemicals	1,226	387	216.6	1,094	12.0
Aircraft	918	861	6.6	880	4.4
Others	8,873	9,073	-2.2	9,044	-1.9
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>34,171</b>	<b>29,796</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>28,459</b>	<b>20.1</b>

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

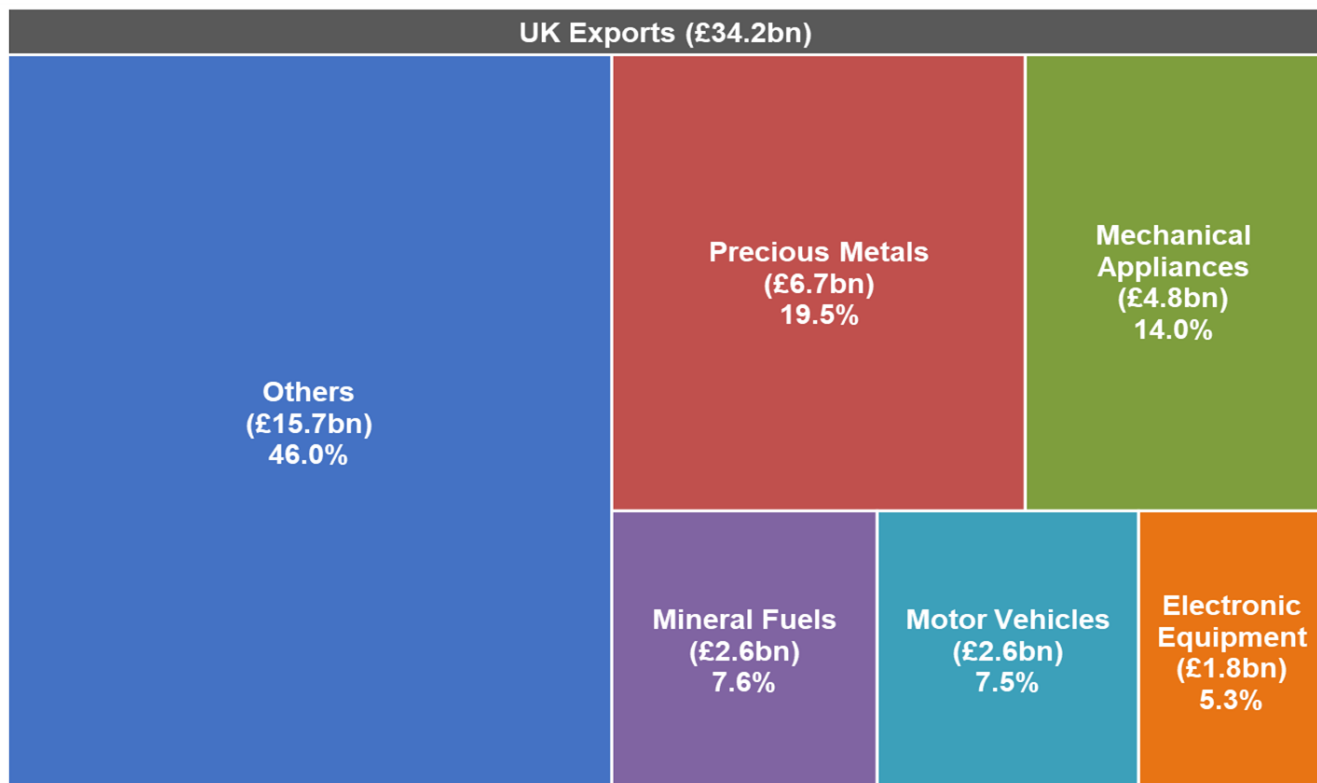
# Exports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 export commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 54% of the total value of goods exported in December 2021. This was an increase from a 47% share in December 2020.
- Precious metals accounted for 19% of the total value of goods exported from the UK. This was an increase from a 9.0% share in December 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 14% of total exports. This was a decrease from a 15% share in December 2020.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Pharmaceutical products fell to 7th place from 5th, while Organic chemicals rose to 9th place from 16th.
- The top 10 export commodities (ranked by value) changed order compared with December 2020. Most notably, Precious metals rose to 1st place from 3rd, while Motor vehicles fell to 4th place from 2nd.

↑ **Precious metals accounted for 19% of total exports in December 2021**

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

**Figure 5: Share of UK exports by the top 5 commodities, December 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 December 2021, Precious metals replaced Mechanical appliances as the largest export commodity. Among the top 10, it experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up to double the value on both periods.
- Among the top 10, Mineral fuels experienced the 2nd largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up 24% and 54% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Motor vehicles experienced the 3rd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2021, up 22%. In contrast, it experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to December 2020, down 21%.
- Among the top 10, Aircraft experienced the 4th largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2021, up 18%.
- All of the top 10 export commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to September 2021.
- 8 of the top 10 export commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to December 2020. The exceptions were Motor vehicles and Electronic equipment.

↑ **Precious metals exports up to double the value on last month**

↑ **Mineral fuels exports up 54% on the 3 months to December 2020**

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

Commodity Description	3 months to Dec 2021		3 months to Sep 2021		3 months to Dec 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
Precious metals	15,844	8,061	96.5	7,265	118.1	
Mechanical appliances	14,223	12,539	13.4	12,466	14.1	
Mineral fuels	8,322	6,719	23.8	5,416	53.7	
Motor vehicles	7,594	6,214	22.2	9,609	-21.0	
Electronic equipment	5,397	4,883	10.5	5,514	-2.1	
Pharmaceutical products	5,306	4,749	11.7	5,209	1.9	
Other products	5,166	4,037	28.0	2,683	92.5	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,975	3,723	6.8	3,778	5.2	
Aircraft	2,611	2,217	17.8	2,508	4.1	
Plastics and plastic products	2,440	2,344	4.1	2,209	10.5	
Others	26,930	24,129	11.6	28,307	-4.9	
<b>Total Exports</b>	<b>97,807</b>	<b>79,614</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>84,964</b>	<b>15.1</b>	

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

# Exports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The decrease in exports to Germany on last month was driven by Mechanical appliances, down £92.5 million (17%). The decrease on December 2020 was led by Organic chemicals, down £273 million (89%).
- The increase in exports to Ireland on last month was dominated by Organic chemicals, up £591 million (from £7.0 million).
- The decrease in exports to the Netherlands on last month was driven by Pharmaceutical products and Mineral fuels, down £181 million (56%) and £106 million (14%) respectively. The increase on December 2020 was led by Mechanical appliances, up £83 million (50%).

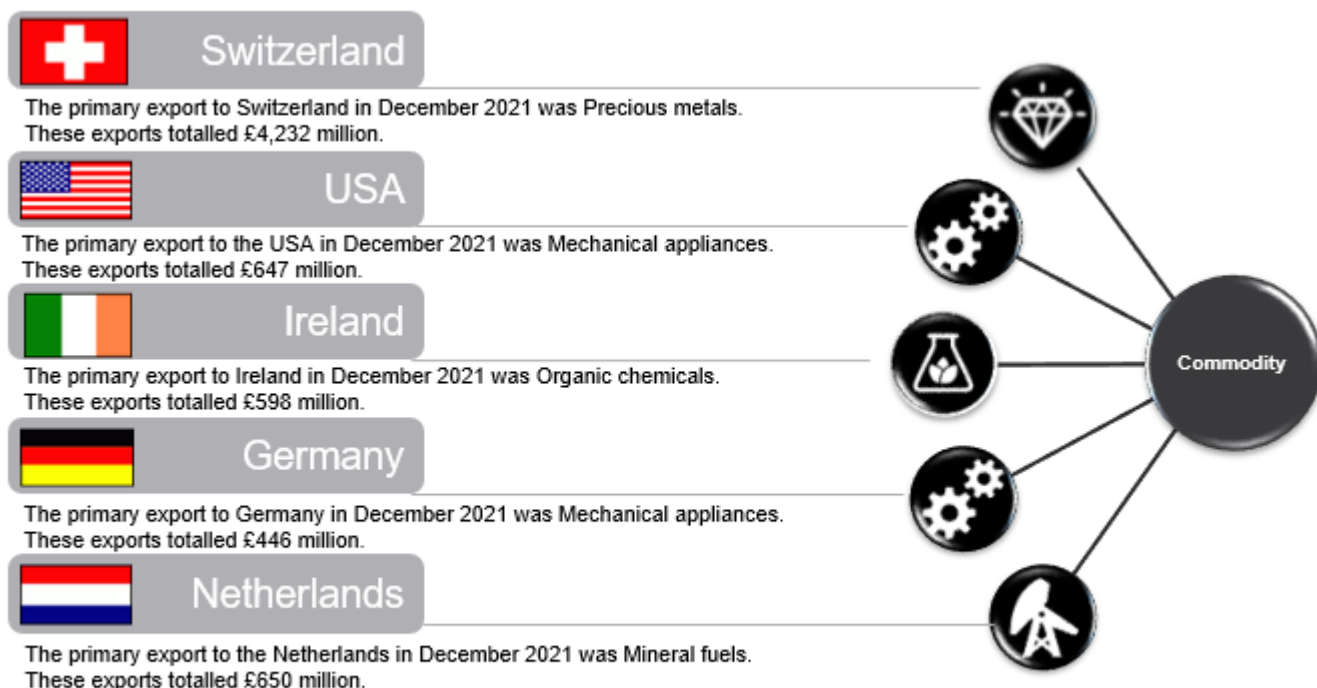
↓ Exports of Mechanical appliances to Germany down 17% on last month

## Commodity to country

- The increase in exports of Precious metals on last month was dominated by Switzerland, Singapore, and Hong Kong, up £3,062 million (to 3.5 times the value), £424 million (to 3 times the value), and £335 million (to more than 3.5 times the value) respectively. The increase on December 2020 was led by the same countries, up £3,214 million (to more than 4 times the value), £641 million (from £0.5 million) and £329 million (to more than 3.5 times the value) respectively.
- The decrease in exports of Motor vehicles on last month was led by Germany down £60.4 million (22%). The decrease on December 2020 was led by Ireland and Turkey, down £70.4 million (51%) and £61.2 million (69%) respectively.
- The increase in exports of Mechanical appliances on December 2020 was led by China, up £114 million (81%).
- The increase in exports of Mineral fuels on December 2020 was led by Ireland, up £266 million (to more than double the value).

↑ Exports of Precious metals to Switzerland up to more than 4 times the value on December 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, despite experiencing the largest value decrease on last month, down £1,372 million (21%).
- Norway had the 2nd largest value increase on last month and the largest value increase on December 2020, up £998 million (27%) and £3,314 million (to more than 3 times the value) respectively.
- Germany had the largest value decrease on December 2020, down £1,332 million (24%).
- The USA had the largest value increase on last month and the 2nd largest value increase on December 2020, up £1,077 million (31%) and £1,048 million (30%) respectively.
- Russia had the 3rd largest value increase on both periods, up £291 million (16%) and £645 million (42%) respectively.
- Australia (ranked 39th) had the 2nd largest value decrease on December 2020, down £539 million (76%).

↓ Imports from China down 21% on last month

↑ Imports from Norway up to more than 3 times the value on December 2020

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

Partner Country	December 2021		November 2021		December 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on November 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
China	5,226	6,599	-20.8	5,266	-0.7	
Norway	4,729	3,730	26.8	1,415	234.1	
USA	4,549	3,472	31.0	3,502	29.9	
Germany	4,295	4,817	-10.8	5,627	-23.7	
Netherlands	3,106	3,264	-4.9	3,423	-9.3	
Russia	2,164	1,873	15.6	1,519	42.4	
Belgium	2,066	2,140	-3.4	2,472	-16.4	
France	1,756	1,926	-8.8	2,264	-22.4	
Italy	1,534	1,602	-4.3	1,876	-18.2	
Ireland	1,278	1,594	-19.8	1,287	-0.7	
Others	15,802	17,468	-9.5	16,541	-4.5	
<b>Total EU</b>	<b>18,920</b>	<b>20,805</b>	<b>-9.1</b>	<b>22,947</b>	<b>-17.6</b>	
<b>Total Non-EU</b>	<b>27,586</b>	<b>27,680</b>	<b>-0.3</b>	<b>22,244</b>	<b>24.0</b>	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,506</b>	<b>48,485</b>	<b>-4.1</b>	<b>45,192</b>	<b>2.9</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

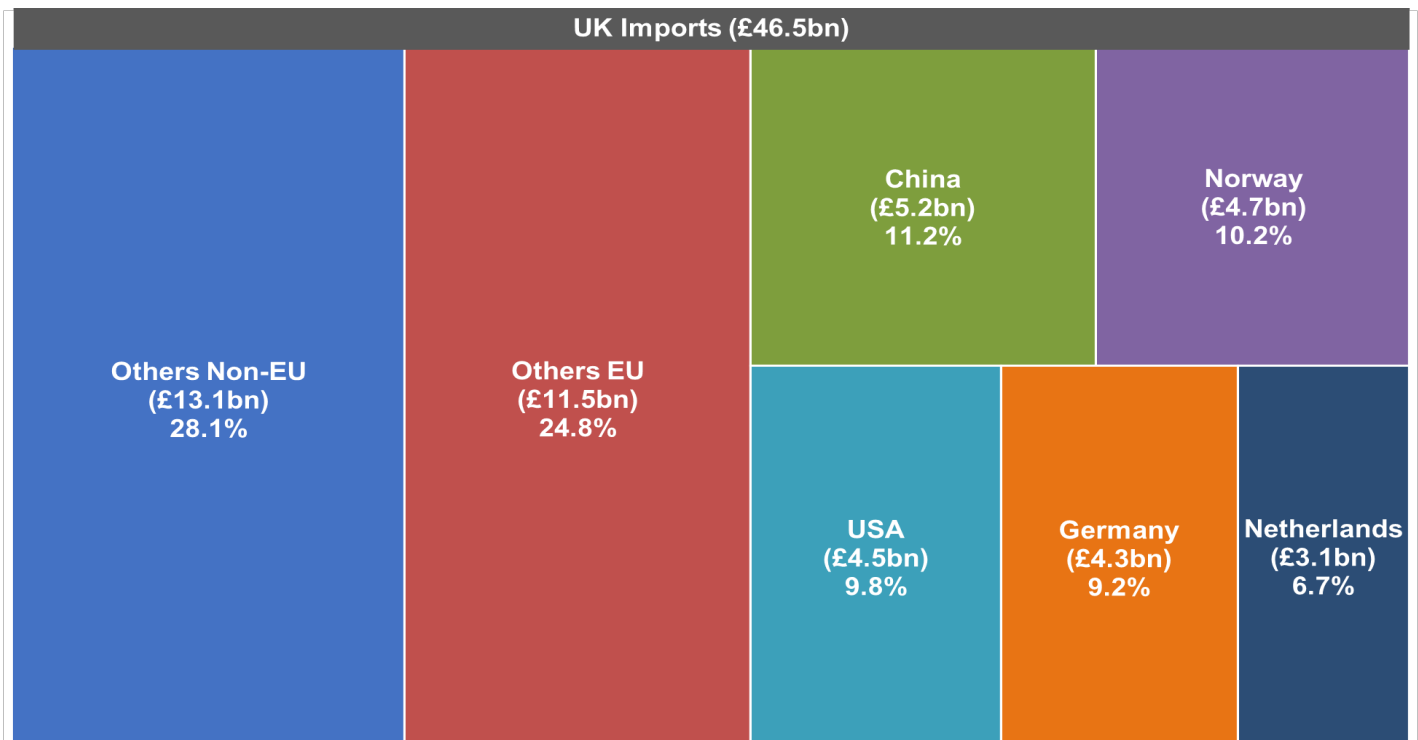
# Imports: Country Analysis

- The top 5 import partners accounted for 47% of the total value of goods imported in December 2021. This was an increase from 45% in December 2020.
- China accounted for 11% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was a decrease from a 12% share in December 2020.
- Norway had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for 10%. This was an increase from a 3.1% share in December 2020.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed order compared with last month. Most notably, Russia rose to 6th place from 8th, while Germany fell to 4th place from 2nd.
- The top 10 import partner countries (ranked by value) changed compared with December 2020. Most notably, Norway rose to 2nd place from 9th, while Germany fell to 4th place from 1st and Ireland rose to 10th place from 12th.

↑ **The top 5 partners accounted for 47% of total imports in December 2021**

↓ **China accounted for 11% of total imports in December 2021**

**Figure 7: Share of UK imports of goods from the top 5 countries, December 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 December 2021, China remained the largest import partner country.
- Among the top 10, Norway experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up 86% and up to more than 3 times the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, Russia experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2021, up 28%.
- Among the top 10, Germany experienced the largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to December 2020, down 19%.
- All of the top 10 countries experienced an increase on the 3 months to September 2021.
- 7 of the top 10 countries experienced a decrease on the 3 months to December 2020. The exceptions were Norway, the USA, and Russia.

↓ Imports from Germany down 19% on the 3 months to December 2020

↑ Imports from Norway up 86% on the 3 months to September 2021

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

Partner Country	3 months to Dec 2021		3 months to Sep 2021		3 months to Dec 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
China	17,193	16,085	6.9	18,086	-4.9	
Germany	13,867	13,503	2.7	17,135	-19.1	
Norway	12,056	6,483	86.0	3,632	232.0	
USA	11,814	10,793	9.5	11,535	2.4	
Netherlands	9,243	8,073	14.5	10,353	-10.7	
Belgium	6,332	5,983	5.8	6,984	-9.3	
Russia	5,856	4,559	28.5	5,814	0.7	
France	5,727	5,714	0.2	6,873	-16.7	
Italy	4,733	4,467	6.0	5,419	-12.7	
Ireland	3,946	3,614	9.2	4,126	-4.4	
Others	49,692	48,424	2.6	53,555	-7.2	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>140,460</b>	<b>127,698</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>143,512</b>	<b>-2.1</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

## Imports: Commodity Analysis

- Mineral fuels remained the largest import commodity. It experienced the largest value increases on last month and on December 2020, up £2,411 million (37%) and £6,153 (to more than 3 times the value) respectively.
- Precious metals experienced the largest value decrease on December 2020, down £1,853 million (30%).
- Motor vehicles experienced the largest value decrease on last month and the 2nd largest value decrease on December 2020, down £592 million (13%) and £808 million (17%) respectively.
- Electronic equipment experienced the 2nd largest value decrease on last month and the 3rd largest value decrease on December 2020, down £531 million (12%) and £592 million (13%) respectively.
- Mechanical appliances experienced the 3rd largest value decrease on last month, down £273 million (5.5%).
- Organic chemicals experienced the 2nd largest value increase on December 2020, up £227 million (40%).

↑ Imports of Mineral fuels up to more than 3 times the value on December 2020

↓ Imports of Motor vehicles down 13% on last month

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

Commodity Description	December 2021		November 2021		December 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on November 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
Mineral fuels	8,903	6,492	37.1	2,749	223.8	
Mechanical appliances	4,704	4,977	-5.5	4,940	-4.8	
Precious metals	4,267	4,292	-0.6	6,120	-30.3	
Electronic equipment	3,948	4,479	-11.9	4,539	-13.0	
Motor vehicles	3,877	4,469	-13.2	4,685	-17.2	
Pharmaceutical products	1,997	1,894	5.4	1,909	4.6	
Measuring devices and gauges	1,191	1,198	-0.6	1,425	-16.4	
Plastics and plastic products	1,159	1,426	-18.7	1,286	-9.9	
Furniture and light fittings	824	940	-12.3	759	8.5	
Organic chemicals	802	1,013	-20.9	575	39.5	
Others	14,835	17,306	-14.3	16,204	-8.5	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>46,506</b>	<b>48,485</b>	<b>-4.1</b>	<b>45,192</b>	<b>2.9</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional

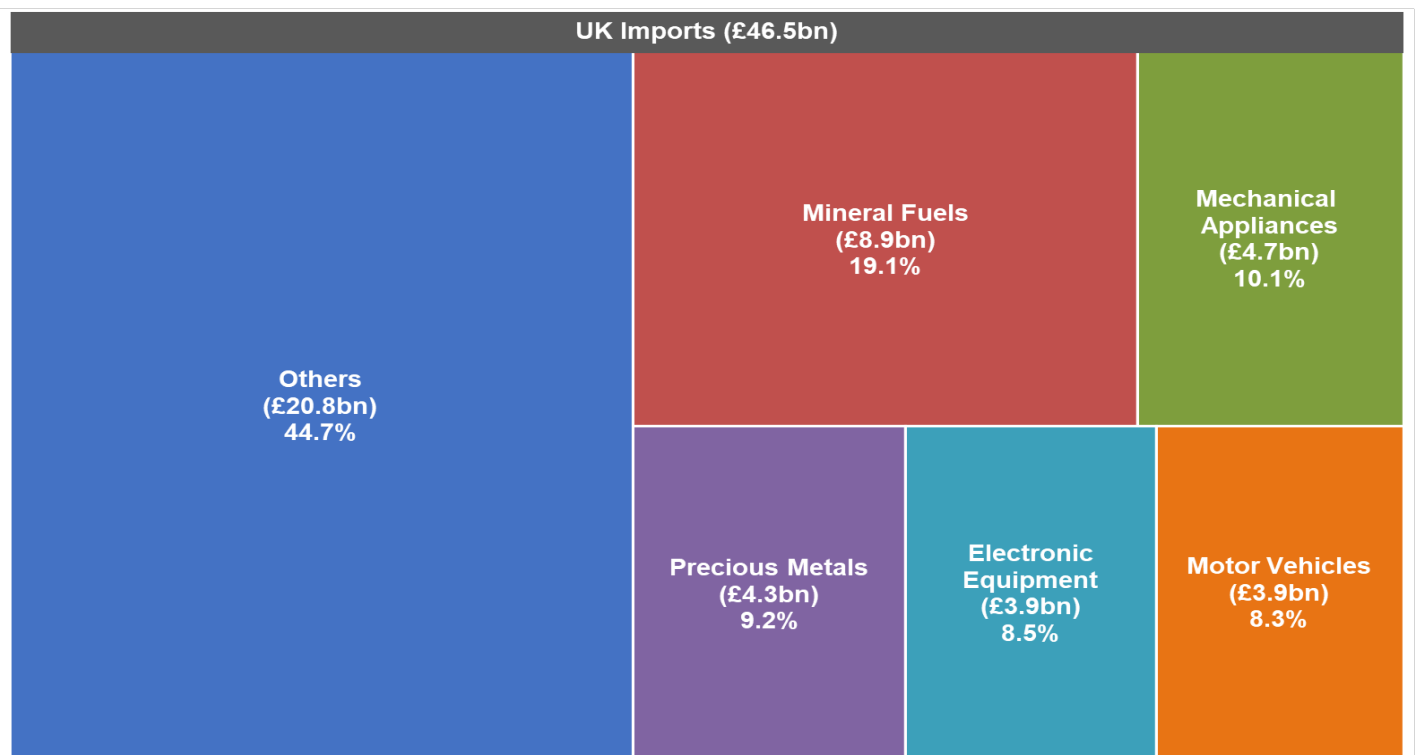
# Imports: Commodity Analysis

- The top 5 import commodities (ranked by value) accounted for 55% of the total value of goods imported in December 2021. This was an increase from 51% in December 2020.
- Mineral fuels accounted for 19% of the total value of goods imported to the UK. This was an increase from a 6.1% share in December 2020.
- Mechanical appliances had the 2nd largest proportion, accounting for a 10% share. This was a decrease from an 11% share in December 2020.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with last month. Most notably, Precious metals rose to 3rd place from 5th and Furniture & light fittings rose to 9th place from 11th.
- The top 10 commodities (ranked by value) changed compared with December 2020. Most notably, Mineral fuels rose to 1st place from 5th and Organic chemicals rose to 10th place from 16th, while Precious metals fell to 3rd place from 1st, and Miscellaneous chemical products fell to 14th place from 9th.

↑ **The top 5 import commodities accounted for 55% of total imports in December 2021**

↑ **Mineral fuels accounted for 19% of total imports in December 2021**

**Figure 8: Share of UK imports for the top 5 commodities, December 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 December 2021, Mineral fuels replaced Precious metals as the largest import commodity. Among the top 10, it experienced the largest percentage increases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, up 72% and up to more than 3 times the value respectively.
- Among the top 10, Precious metals experienced the largest percentage decreases on the 3 months to September 2021 and on the 3 months to December 2020, down 15% and 43% respectively.
- Among the top 10, Measuring devices and gauges experienced the 2nd largest percentage decrease on the 3 months to December 2020, down 21%.
- Among the top 10, Knitwear experienced the 2nd largest percentage increase on the 3 months to September 2021, up 14%.
- 7 of the top 10 commodities experienced an increase on the 3 months to September 2021. The exceptions were Precious metals, Plastics & plastic products, and Furniture & light fittings.
- 8 of the top 10 commodities experienced decreases on the 3 months to December 2020. The exceptions were Mineral fuels, and Furniture & light fittings.

↑ Imports of Mineral fuels up 72% on the 3 months to September 2021

↓ Imports of Precious metals down 43% on the 3 months to December 2020

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

Commodity Description	3 months to Dec 2021		3 months to Sep 2021		3 months to Dec 2020	
	Total (£ millions)	Total (£ millions)	Change on September 2021 (%)	Total (£ millions)	Change on December 2020 (%)	
Mineral fuels	21,574	12,529	72.2	6,942	210.8	
Mechanical appliances	14,763	14,341	2.9	15,180	-2.7	
Precious metals	12,783	15,100	-15.3	22,557	-43.3	
Motor vehicles	12,517	11,218	11.6	14,730	-15.0	
Electronic equipment	12,502	11,215	11.5	13,855	-9.8	
Pharmaceutical products	5,719	5,294	8.0	5,953	-3.9	
Plastics and plastic products	3,926	4,128	-4.9	4,094	-4.1	
Measuring devices and gauges	3,484	3,406	2.3	4,433	-21.4	
Knitwear	2,685	2,346	14.4	2,757	-2.6	
Furniture and light fittings	2,618	2,778	-5.8	2,401	9.1	
Others	47,888	45,343	5.6	50,612	-5.4	
<b>Total Imports</b>	<b>140,460</b>	<b>127,698</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>143,512</b>	<b>-2.1</b>	

Source: HM Revenue & Customs Overseas Trade in Goods Statistics

Note: 2021 data is provisional



# Imports: Combined Commodity & Country Analysis

## Country to commodity:

- The decrease in imports from China on last month was driven by Mechanical appliances, Electronic equipment, and Precious metals, down £304 million (27%), £247 million (17%), and £238 million (96%) respectively.
- The increase in imports from Norway on last month and on December 2020 was dominated by Mineral fuels, up £1,165 million (35%) and £3,249 million (up to more than 3.5 times the value).
- The decrease in imports from Germany on December 2020 was driven by Motor vehicles and Precious metals, down £295 million (19%) and £275 million (73%) respectively.

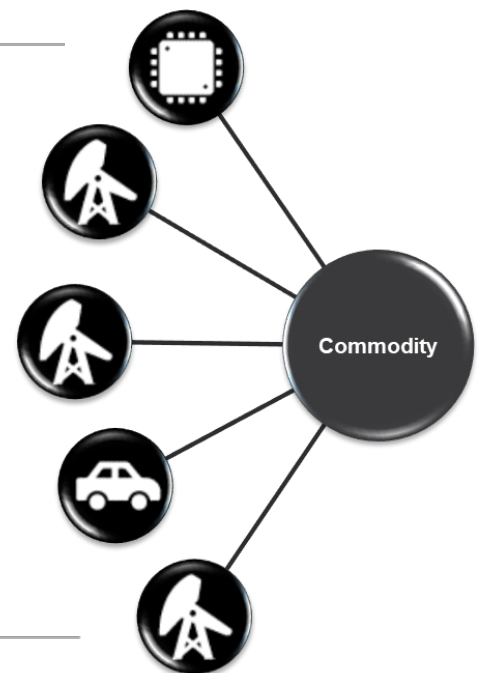
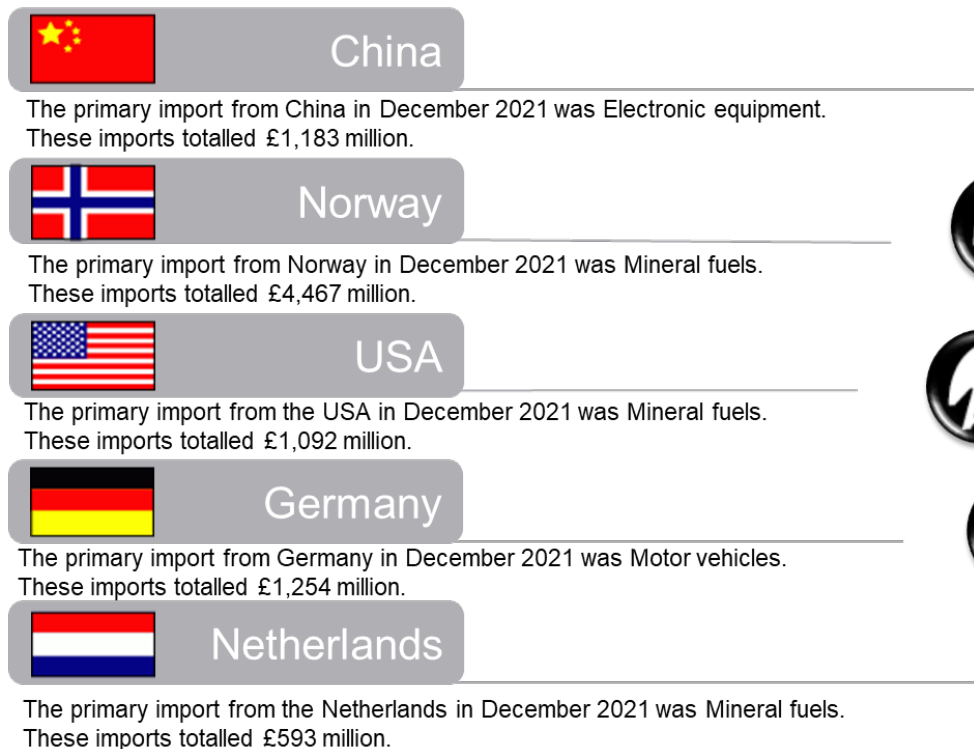
↓ Imports of Mechanical appliances from China down 27% on last month

↑ Imports of Mineral fuels from Norway up to more than 3.5 times the value on December 2020

## Commodity to country:

- The decrease in imports of Precious metals on December 2020 was driven by Australia, Hong Kong, and Canada, down £517 million (96%), £481 million (88%), and £430 million (40%) respectively.
- The decrease in Motor vehicles on last month was driven by the Netherlands, down £123 million (26%), and its decrease on December 2020 was driven by Belgium, down £502 million (64%).
- The increase in imports of Organic chemicals on December 2020 was dominated by Ireland, up £155 million (to almost 3.5 times the value)

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 Trade in Goods Statistics (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 December 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 11 February 2022 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](http://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 December 2021. At the same time revisions for all previously published non-EU and EU data for 2021 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
January 2022	11 March 2022
February 2022	11 April 2022
March 2022	12 May 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.