

Statistical bulletin

UK trade in services by partner country experimental data: January to March 2019

Trade in services data, including breakdown of exports and imports by country and geographical region, EU and non-EU.

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1 . Main points

- This release covers all the UK economy's trade in services, presenting UK trade in services by 67 countries and 31 service types, on a non-seasonally adjusted basis.
- Exports and imports of services were higher in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 compared with Quarter 1 2018, by £3.7 billion and £3.9 billion respectively.
- The top five service types for exports increased, except financial services, in Quarter 1 2019 compared with the same quarter a year ago.
- Other business services was the largest service type import accounting for 27.7% of total imports in Quarter 1 2019.
- The European Union (EU) remained the UK's largest trading partner for both exports and imports of services in Quarter 1 2019, while the US was the largest trading partner when considering individual countries.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

The UK trade in services data have been produced as part of planned improvements to our trade statistics described in Section 3.3 of the [trade development plan](#). In response to user needs, one of our main priorities is to publish detailed trade figures across more dimensions; for example, across industries, geographic trade partners and service types. A large focus for the trade development plan is also making improvements to the quality of the trade figures.

This is the fourth of our more detailed quarterly services releases containing 31 service types by 67 countries. While we currently publish service type by partner country annually in [Pink Book](#), we have increased the level of detail available and produced quarterly data for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2016 to Quarter 1 2019.

We have made significant quality improvements to the UK trade in services by partner country experimental dataset. This is partly through fuller use of the improved quarterly country breakdown derived from the increased and optimised quarterly International Trade in Services (ITIS) survey. To deliver at the pace required, the data are closely aligned to the balance of payments but are not fully consistent for 2016. The improvements in the 2016 data will be incorporated into Pink Book 2019, the first opportunity to revise this time period within the wider accounts.

When we publish the BB19 consistent [UK trade in services by partner country: April to June 2019 on 23 October 2019](#) we are planning to remove the following country aggregates:

- Total EFTA (R2)
- Total Europe (E1)
- Total Americas (A1)
- Total Asia (S1)
- Total Australasia & Oceania (O1)
- Total Africa (F1)

Instead we will include a Rest of the World (D5) series alongside Total EU28 (B5) and World total (W1). Removing these additional country aggregates will allow us to reduce the number of cells that need to be suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Data in this release includes Quarter 1 2019, with previous figures in line with the [Trade in services by partner country bulletin](#) on 24 April 2019.

Data are provided in as much detail as possible without disclosing the details of any individual companies, however, this means some figures have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. You are advised to be cautious when interpreting changes between quarters given that the series are not seasonally adjusted and few data points are presented. It is therefore recommended that comparisons are made with the same quarter a year ago or between years. We plan to develop these statistics to be seasonally adjusted in the future.

These data are our best estimates of bilateral UK trade flows, compiled following internationally agreed standards and using a wide range of robust data sources. However, in some cases alternative estimates of bilateral trade flows are available from the statistical agencies for those countries or through central databases such as [UN Comtrade](#). Differences between estimates are known as trade asymmetries and are a known aspect of international trade statistics, affecting bilateral estimates across the globe, not just the UK.

We are heavily engaged in analysis of these asymmetries, developing strong bilateral relationships with other countries to understand, explain and potentially reduce them. We have published a [series of analyses](#) showing comparisons and the relative strengths of different estimates, which users may wish to reference to help them better understand the quality of our bilateral trade estimates.

3 . The value of UK exports and imports of services increased in Quarter 1 2019 compared with Quarter 1 2018

The value of UK exports of services increased from £64.9 billion in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018, to £68.7 billion in Quarter 1 2019, an increase of 5.8%, as shown in Table 1.

The value of UK imports of services increased by 9.9% over the same period, from £39.1 billion in Quarter 1 2018 to £43.0 billion in Quarter 1 2019.

Table 1: Exports and imports in Quarter 1 (Jan to March) 2019 have increased compared to the same quarter a year ago

Total UK trade in services exports and imports, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2016 to Quarter 1 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019
UK exports	57,710	64,135	66,455	69,588	64,217	70,185	71,996	72,402	64,918	71,586	71,952	74,955	68,664
UK imports	33,576	38,164	46,017	38,366	37,715	41,584	47,589	38,810	39,091	43,614	50,344	43,238	42,958

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December. [Back to table](#)

4 . Exports of services in Quarter 1 2019 increased to all geographic regions except non-EU Europe when compared with Quarter 1 2018

The value of services exports for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 increased to all geographical regions, except non-EU Europe, when compared with Quarter 1 2018. The largest increase was to the Americas, rising £2.1 billion from £16.8 billion to £18.9 billion. The service type primarily driving this was other business services, which increased by £1.2 billion between Quarter 1 2018 and Quarter 1 2019.

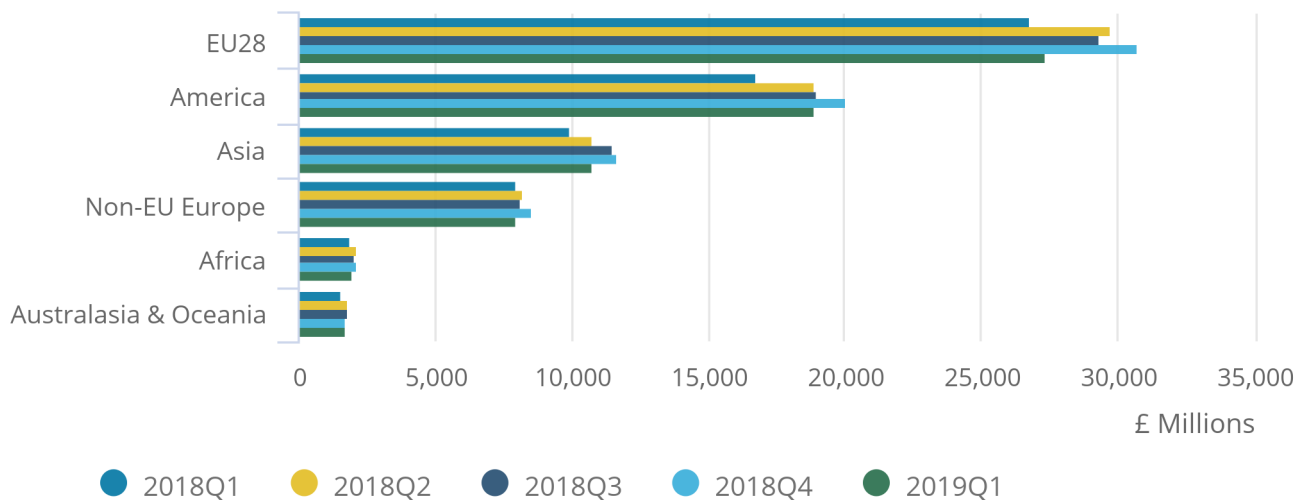
Asia and the EU saw an increase of £0.8 billion and £0.6 billion respectively, followed by Australasia and Africa both increasing by £0.1 billion.

Figure 1: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, exports to the Americas saw the largest increase of the geographical regions

UK exports of services by geographical region, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 1: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, exports to the Americas saw the largest increase of the geographical regions

UK exports of services by geographical region, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade in services

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December.

It is important to note that these estimates for UK services exports are not seasonally adjusted. Therefore, some variation from quarter to quarter will be explained by the time of the year, where trade in some services could be more common than at other times of the year.

5 . The US remains the UK's largest trading partner for services exports

The US remains the UK's largest services export partner, accounting for £16.0 billion, or 23.3% of all UK exports of services in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 (Table 2). The value of exports to Germany was the second-highest at £4.7 billion, with exports to France the third-highest at £4.3 billion.

Of the top 10 countries, the US had the largest increase of exports between Quarter 1 2018 and Quarter 1 2019 of £1.8 billion, followed by Germany and France which increased by £0.3 billion and £0.2 billion respectively. Switzerland and Ireland were the only countries whose exports decreased between Quarter 1 2018 and Quarter 1 2019, by £0.3 billion and £0.1 billion respectively.

Exports to Germany and France were equivalent to 6.8% and 6.3% of total UK services exports, respectively. Taken together, UK exports to the top three countries accounted for 36.4% of all UK services exports in Quarter 1 2019.

Table 2: In Quarter 1 2019 the US was the largest services export partner at £16.0 billion UK's largest export partner countries, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Country	£ million				Cumulative percentages of total services exports		
	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q1 2018	Q1 2019
United States	14,184	15,772	16,292	16,996	16,003	21.8	23.3
Germany	4,414	4,743	4,717	5,010	4,667	28.6	30.1
France	4,110	4,476	4,383	4,627	4,316	35.0	36.4
Netherlands	4,102	4,459	4,294	4,650	4,104	41.3	42.4
Ireland	3,625	4,151	3,851	4,466	3,529	46.9	47.5
Switzerland	3,088	2,841	3,071	3,270	2,812	51.6	51.6
Italy	1,937	2,352	2,456	2,272	2,006	54.6	54.5
Japan	1,765	1,821	1,836	1,860	1,852	57.3	57.2
Spain	1,653	1,828	1,925	1,844	1,713	59.9	59.7
Australia	1,231	1,428	1,448	1,384	1,353	61.8	61.7
Rest of the World	24,809	27,715	27,679	28,576	26,309	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December. [Back to table](#)
2. United States including Puerto Rico. [Back to table](#)

6 . Exports of other business services remains the UK's largest export service type

Comparing Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 with the same quarter a year ago for the top five export service types, other business services and intellectual property had the largest value increase in exports, £1.6 billion and £1.5 billion respectively. Of the top five export service types, the largest percentage rise of exports when comparing Quarter 1 2019 with Quarter 1 2018 was intellectual property, which increased by 36.6%, followed by an 8.5% rise of exports of other business services. Financial services had the largest decrease of £0.2 billion between Quarter 1 2018 and Quarter 1 2019.

Other business services, which includes research and development, professional and management consulting services, and technical, trade-related and other business services not included elsewhere, continues to be the largest export service type, accounting for 29.4% of total services exports in Quarter 1 2019.

Table 3: Other business services accounted for 29.4% of total service exports in Quarter 1 2019
UK's largest service type exports, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Service type	£ million				Cumulative percentages of total services exports		
	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q1 2018	Q1 2019
Other business services	18,579	20,074	19,648	23,015	20,155	28.6	29.4
Financial	15,302	15,935	14,782	15,392	15,122	52.2	51.4
Travel	6,972	10,547	11,606	9,765	7,216	62.9	61.9
Transportation	6,956	7,495	8,190	7,578	7,138	73.6	72.3
Intellectual property	3,987	4,074	4,217	4,796	5,448	79.8	80.2
Other service types	13,122	13,461	13,509	14,409	13,585	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December. [Back to table](#)

Figure 2 shows the value for each component of other business services in Quarter 1 2019. Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations made up the largest share of other business services, accounting for 32.4%.

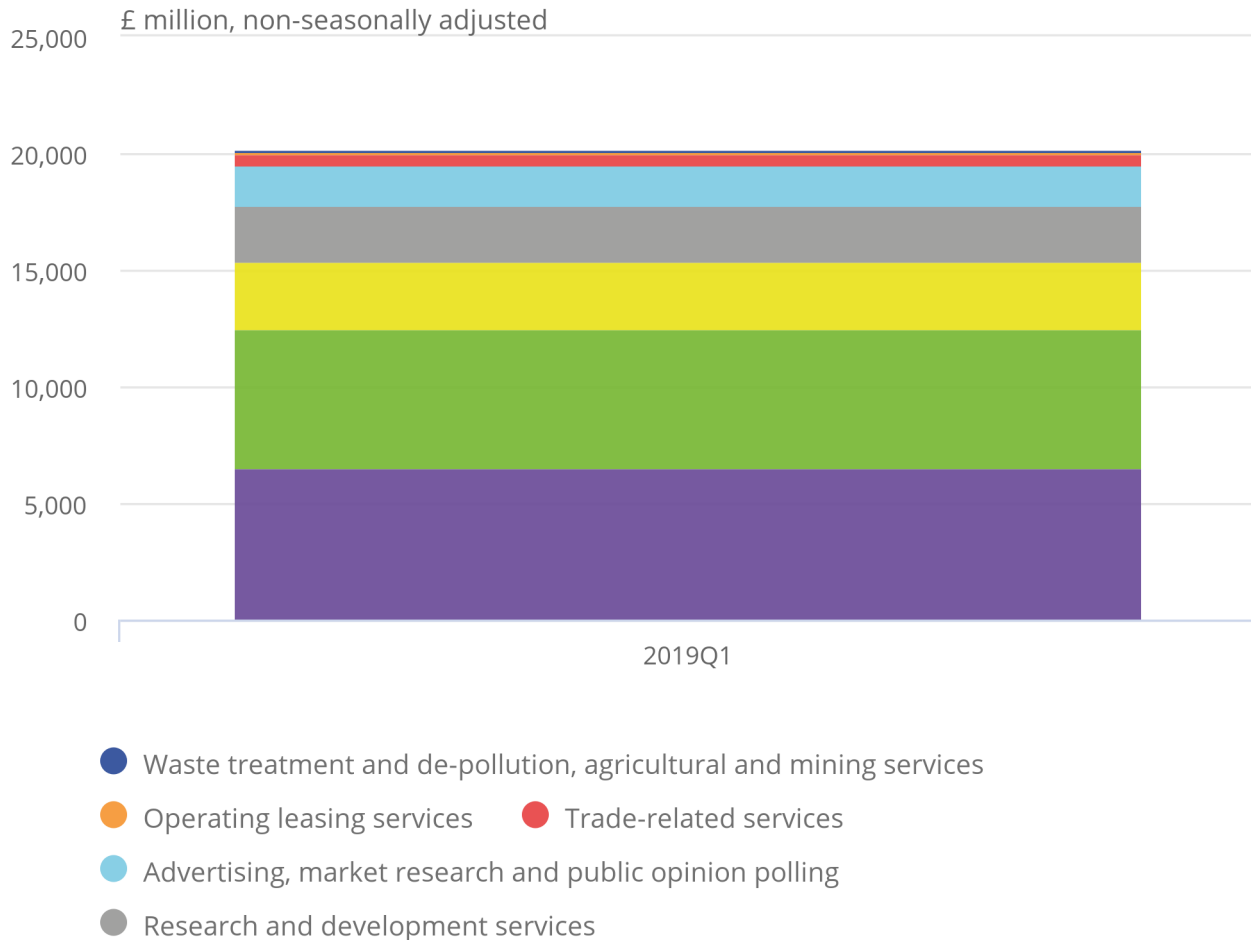
Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations is a subcomponent of professional and management consulting services.

Figure 2: Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations accounted for 32.4% of total exports of other business services

Total UK exports of other business services, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019

Figure 2: Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations accounted for 32.4% of total exports of other business services

Total UK exports of other business services, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade in services

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December.

In Quarter 1 2019, the US was the largest export partner for other business services, accounting for 30.4%. The £6.1 billion export of other business services to the US was driven primarily by £2.6 billion exports of legal, accounting, management consultation and public relations.

Ireland was the second-largest export partner for other business services, followed by Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany, as shown in Figure 3. The top five export partners accounted for 57.9% of total exports of other business services.

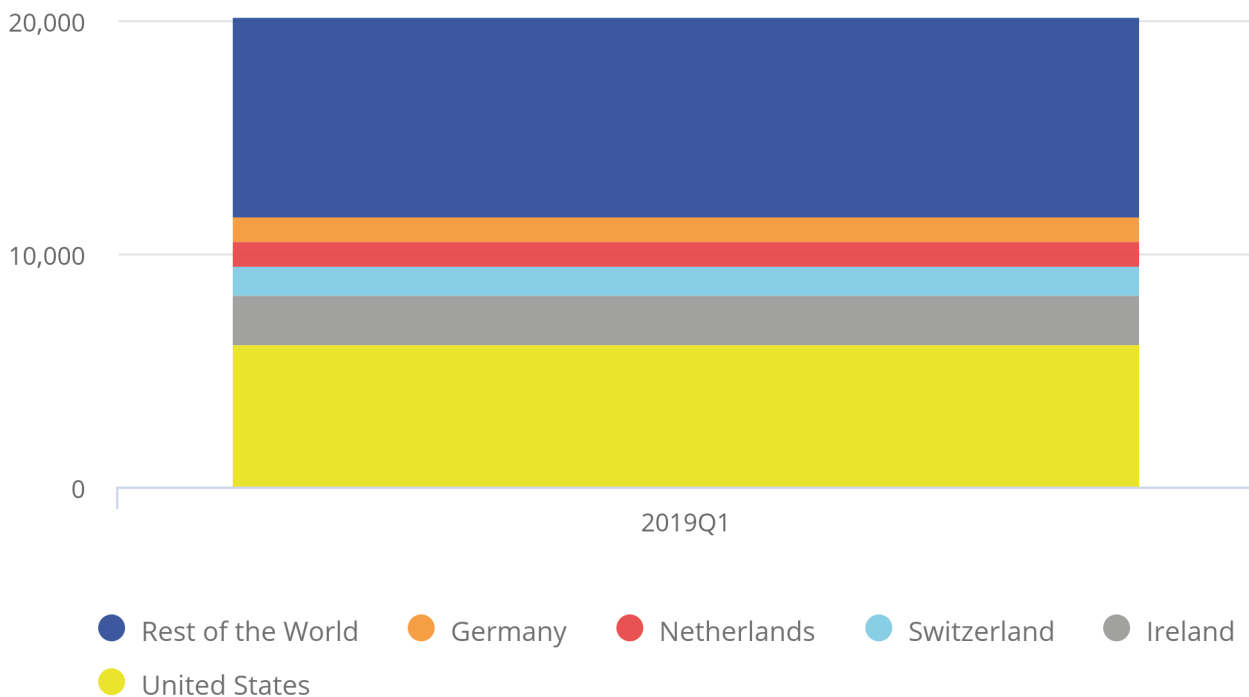
Figure 3: The US was the largest export partner for other business services, accounting for 30.4%

UK exports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019

Figure 3: The US was the largest export partner for other business services, accounting for 30.4%

UK exports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019

£ million, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade in services

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December.

7 . Imports of services in Quarter 1 2019 were higher than those reported in Quarter 1 2018 for most geographical regions

Imports of services increased in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 compared with Quarter 1 2018 for most geographical regions, with the exception of Africa which decreased by £0.1 billion. The largest increase of imports was from the EU, which rose by £1.8 billion followed by America which increased by £1.3 billion.

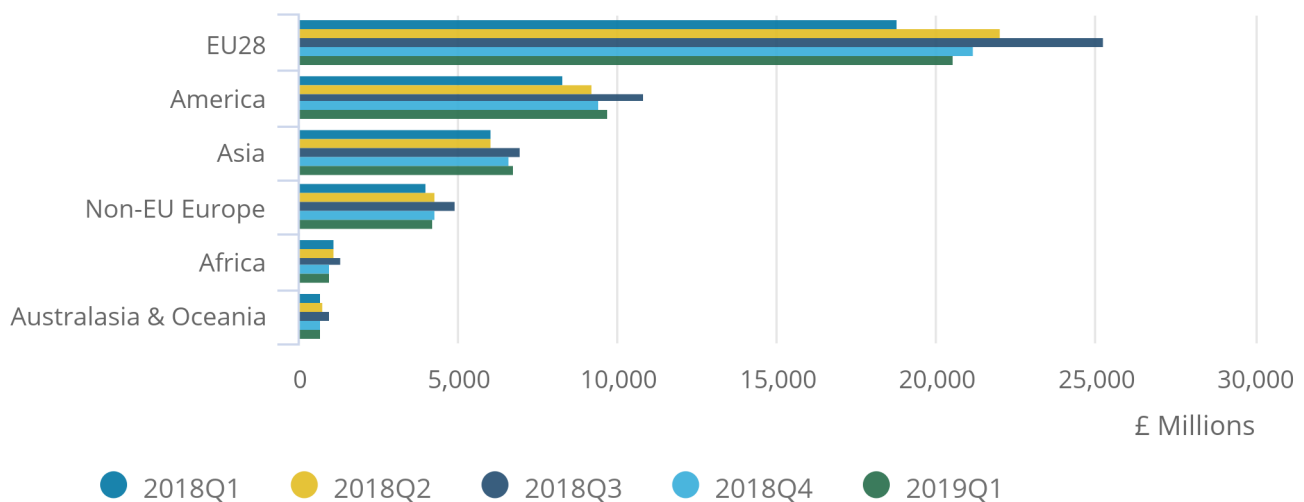
Other business services drove the rise in imports from the EU and America, which increased by £1.4 billion and £1.0 billion respectively.

Figure 4: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, imports from the EU saw the largest increase of £1.8 billion

UK imports of services by geographical region, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 4: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, imports from the EU saw the largest increase of £1.8 billion

UK imports of services by geographical region, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade in services

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December.

8 . The three highest-value trading partners for services imports accounted for over one-third of total services imports in Quarter 1 2019

The value of imports from the UK's top 10 import destinations increased in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 compared with Quarter 1 2018. The largest rise in imports was from the US which increased by £1.4 billion, followed by France which increased by £0.6 billion.

The US remains the UK's largest import partner in Quarter 1 2019, accounting for £8.1 billion, or 18.9% of total imports of services. The value of imports from France was the second-highest, with imports from Spain the third-highest. Imports from France and Spain were equivalent to 8.3% and 7.7% of total UK services imports respectively, as shown in Table 4. The top three countries accounted for 34.8% of all UK services imports.

Table 4: United States remained the largest import partner country in Quarter 1 2019, making up 18.9% of total imports

UK's largest import partner countries, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Country	£ million				Cumulative percentages of total services imports		
	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q1 2018	Q1 2019
United States	6,738	7,383	8,587	7,718	8,101	17.2	18.9
France	3,003	3,569	4,211	3,839	3,569	24.9	27.2
Spain	3,206	3,877	5,168	3,426	3,295	33.1	34.8
Germany	2,143	2,386	2,350	2,471	2,167	38.6	39.9
Netherlands	1,504	1,771	1,865	1,768	1,906	42.4	44.3
Ireland	1,630	2,399	1,810	1,925	1,778	46.6	48.5
Japan	1,180	1,149	1,343	1,662	1,555	49.6	52.1
India	1,163	1,189	1,157	1,260	1,434	52.6	55.4
Italy	1,226	1,354	1,760	1,300	1,359	55.7	58.6
Switzerland	966	1,016	1,258	1,168	1,245	58.2	61.5
Rest of the World	16,332	17,521	20,835	16,701	16,549	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December. [Back to table](#)
2. United States including Puerto Rico [Back to table](#)

9 . Imports of other business services in Quarter 1 2019 accounted for 27.7% of total UK imports

Other business services was the largest service type import accounting for 27.7% of total imports in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019 (Table 5). Imports of other business services saw a 28.6% increase in Quarter 1 2019 compared with Quarter 1 2018.

Travel was the second largest import, contributing 26.3% of total services imports in Quarter 1 2019. Users should note that these data show the seasonal trends throughout the year, with the majority of imports of travel seen in Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. Travel covers goods and services provided to UK residents during visits abroad of less than one year, excluding students and medical patients who remain residents of their country of origin, even if the length of stay in another economy is more than a year. Transport to and from the UK is excluded from travel and shown as passenger services under transportation.

Table 5: Other business services accounted for 27.7% of total services imports in Quarter 1 2019
UK's largest service type imports, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 to Quarter 1 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Service type	£ million				Cumulative percentages of total services imports		
	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q1 2018	Q1 2019
Other business services	9,252	10,322	10,150	11,081	11,894	23.7	27.7
Travel	10,908	14,369	19,805	11,750	11,287	51.6	54.0
Transportation	5,659	5,676	6,861	5,713	5,521	66.0	66.8
Financial	4,199	4,353	4,579	5,311	4,826	76.8	78.0
Telecommunications, computer and information services	3,405	3,172	3,120	3,168	3,068	85.5	85.2
Other service types	5,668	5,722	5,829	6,215	6,362	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Quarter 1 is January to March, Quarter 2 is April to June, Quarter 3 is July to September and Quarter 4 is October to December. [Back to table](#)

In Quarter 1 2019, the US was the largest import partner for other business services, accounting for 28.2% of total imports of other business services. Of the £3.4 billion imports of other business services from the US, £2.5 billion was from technical, trade-related and other business services.

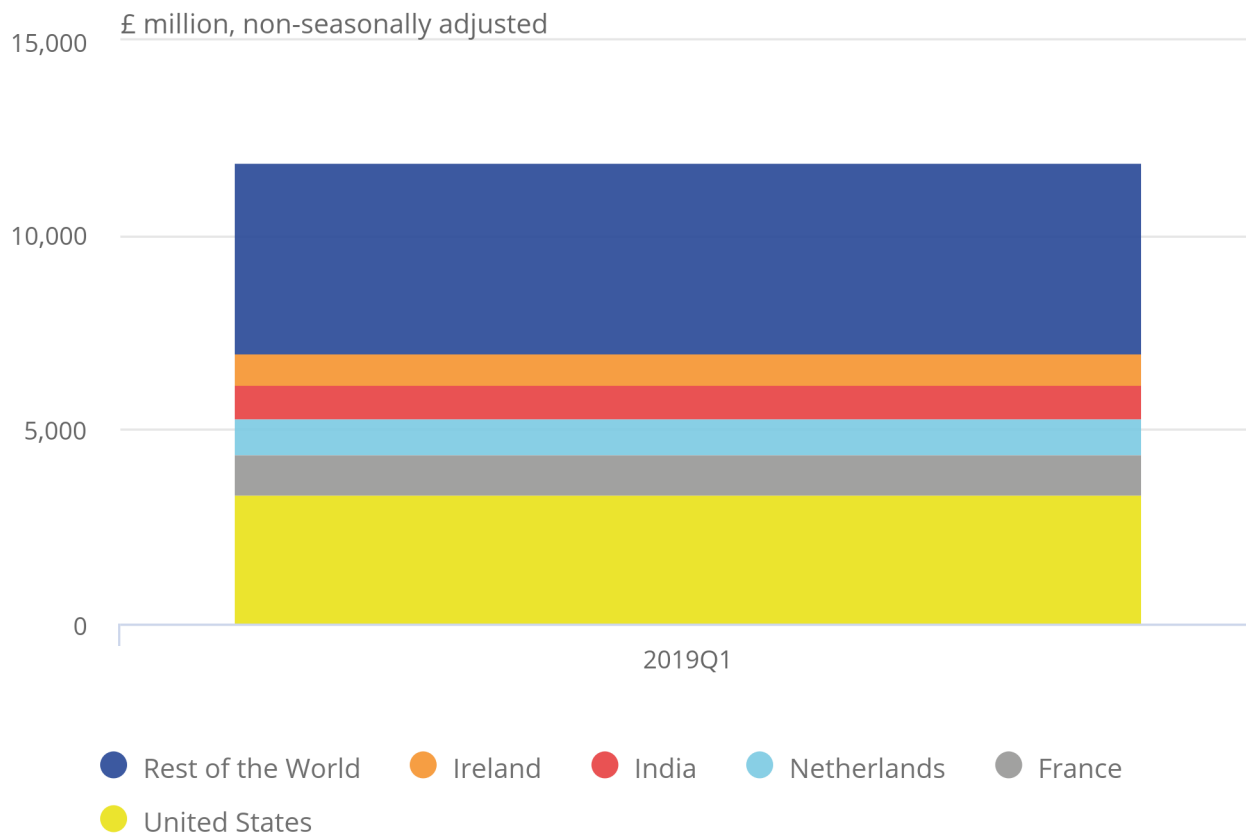
France was the second-largest import partner for imports of other business services, followed by the Netherlands, India and Ireland. The top five import partners accounted for 58.5% of total imports of other business services (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The US was the largest import partner for other business services, accounting for 28.2% of total other business services imports

UK imports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019

Figure 5: The US was the largest import partner for other business services, accounting for 28.2% of total other business services imports

UK imports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2019



Source: Office for National Statistics - UK trade in services

10 . Explore the new trade in services data with our interactive tools

We have produced some interactive tools to help explore the data.

Data are provided in as much detail as possible without disclosing the details of any individual companies, but this means some figures have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. The interactive tool will show no data available if the data are zero, suppressed or unavailable at this level of detail.

Select a country by hovering over it or using the drop-down menu.

Figure 8: UK trade in services with the rest of the world, exports and imports, 2018

What about trade in a particular service type?

Use our interactive tools to understand UK trade of a particular service type.

Select a service type from the drop-down menu, or click through the levels to explore the data.

Figure 9: UK exports, 2018

Figure 10: UK imports, 2018

What questions do you have about the new data? Do you find these tools helpful? Please email trade@ons.gov.uk with your comments.

11 . Quality and methodology

Trade in services covers export and import activity across 12 categories:

- manufacturing
- maintenance and repair services
- transportation
- travel
- construction
- insurance and pension
- financial
- intellectual property
- telecommunications services
- other business services
- personal, cultural and recreational
- government

Trade in services statistics are derived from a variety of sources, though the International Trade in Services (ITIS) Survey and the International Passenger Survey (IPS) form the bulk of these data. Most of our data sources are supplied with geographical breakdowns to enable the production of trade in services statistics by country and service type. If the data source does not include geographical breakdowns, the data are estimated using a closely aligned source.

Detailed methodological notes are published in the [UK Balance of Payments, The Pink Book 2018](#).

The [UK trade methodology webpages](#) have been developed to provide detailed information about the methods used to produce UK trade statistics.

The [UK trade Quality and Methodology Information report](#) contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data
- uses and users of the data
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data