Article

UK trade in services by industry, country and service type: 2016 to 2018

Breakdown of UK trade in services by industry, country and service type on a balance of payments basis using a new experimental dataset.

Contact:
Abi Casey
trade@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)1633 455121

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Next release:
To be announced

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1 . Main points

- The UK trade in services surplus narrowed by £1.2 billion in 2018 to £109.6 billion.

- Imports increased by more than exports; UK services imports increased by £16.4 billion to £197.3 billion, while exports increased by a lesser £15.3 billion to £306.9 billion.

- The financial services activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, was the largest exporter and importer of services; this industry's exports increased by £3.4 billion to £55.8 billion, while imports increased by £3.2 billion to £27.1 billion in 2018.

- UK services exports to the United States saw the largest increase of any country in 2018, increasing £3.9 billion to £71.8 billion; this was largely caused by a £1.3 billion (20.6%) increase in exports from the computer programming, consultancy and related activities industry.

- Ireland saw the largest country-level increase in imports to the UK, increasing £3.4 billion to £11.3 billion in 2018; imports from the wholesale trade, except for the motor vehicles and motorcycles industry, caused this change, increasing £0.8 billion to £1.3 billion.

2 . Introduction

This release looks at trade in services by country, service type and industry on a balance of payments (BoP) basis. This release is accompanied by a rich dataset to help users explore which industries contribute most to the trade in services aggregates, which countries they trade with and which service types they trade.

3 . Things you need to know about this release

Experimental Statistics

It is important to emphasise that the statistics included within this release are experimental. The methodology used to compile the data are subject to future improvements. Further detail regarding the methodology used to compile the statistics can be found in Section 8.

After EU withdrawal

As the UK leaves the EU, it is important that our statistics continue to be of high quality and are internationally comparable. During the transition period, those UK statistics that align with EU practice and rules will continue to do so in the same way as before 31 January 2020. We will continue to produce statistics broken down to EU and non-EU aggregates.

After the transition period, we will continue to produce our international trade statistics in line with the UK Statistics Authority's (UKSA's) Code of Practice for Statistics and in accordance with internationally agreed statistical guidance and standards. This is based on the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual sixth edition (BPM6), until those standards are updated.

Data published in UK trade statistical releases also form part of the broader system of UK National Accounts, which will be produced in line with international standards as laid down in the European System of Accounts (ESA) 2010 until the EU budgets are finalised for the years in which we were a member, as specified in the Withdrawal Agreement.

Abbreviations

In this release, the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry will be abbreviated to "financial service activities", while the computer programming, consultancy and related activities industry will be abbreviated to "computer programming and consultancy". This is for ease of reading.

Disclosure control

Data are subject to [disclosure control](#) meaning some data have been suppressed to protect confidentiality such that individual traders cannot be identified. For this reason, when we refer to rankings or contributions of exports or imports for a given year, this only considers data that have not been suppressed.

Data

Data within this release provide estimates of trade in services only; [UK trade in goods by industry, country and commodity](#) was published on 24 April 2019 and the latest figures will be published on 27 March 2020.

Data in this release are in current prices and are subject to rounding. Small rounding discrepancies may therefore exist.

It is important to note that analyses presented in this article do not include data that have been suppressed to protect individual trader confidentiality. This means contributions to services by industry do not include any data that have been suppressed.

The data are available to users via two datasets to minimise the amount of data we need to suppress. Publishing the data in this way reduces the number of dimensions in the data, meaning we can reduce the amount of data that are suppressed.

The datasets contain country by industry ([Standard Industrial Classification (SIC](#)), two-digit) data by total service types for 67 countries and country regional groupings (including EU, non-EU and whole world) and country region by service type ([Extended Balance of Payments (EBoPs)](#), one-digit), by industry (SIC, two-digit).

Estimates derived from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) are used to help measure exports and imports of travel services. It is not possible to allocate individuals undertaking personal travel to an industry. Therefore, estimates of trade in personal travel services are reported under "no industry". It is possible to allocate business travel to an industry based on the industry the business travellers are employed within. However, it has not yet been possible to undertake this mapping. Therefore, estimates of trade in business travel services are currently reported under "unknown industry". There are other specific cases where our source data does not contain industry information for some products; in these cases, this has been mapped to "unknown industry". We will look to improve this in the next release. As such, please note that estimates categorised as either "no industry" or "unknown industry" are not included in our top 10 industries calculations and have been excluded from total trade in services for the purpose of percentage of total calculations.

There are two files accompanying this release, one for exports and one for imports, and each file contains both datasets. To view the dataset for country by industry, filter the dataset to service type "0 Total Services". This will provide estimates by country for each industry across all products. To view the dataset for region by industry and service type, filter the data to include all service types other than "0 Total Services".

Revisions

Data in this release have been revised back to 2016 and are consistent with UK trade in services by partner country, published on 22 January 2020. For Blue Book and Pink Book 2019, there were a range of trade-specific methodological improvements outlined in Impact of Blue Book 2019 developments on UK trade data, 1997 to 2016.

Trade asymmetries

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 in 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 produced 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.

4 . The top 10 exporting industries exported more to non-EU than EU countries in 2018

Note that exports undertaken by an unknown industry are not included within this analysis and have been excluded from total trade in services for the purpose of percentage of total calculations (see Section 3). These data are available in the accompanying datasets.

Excluding unknown industries, the top 10 industries contributed 61.7% of total UK services exports in 2018, of which 61.8% were to non-EU countries. The wholesale trade, except for the motor vehicles and motorcycles industry, was the only top 10 industry that exported more to EU countries than non-EU countries in 2018 (Figure 1).
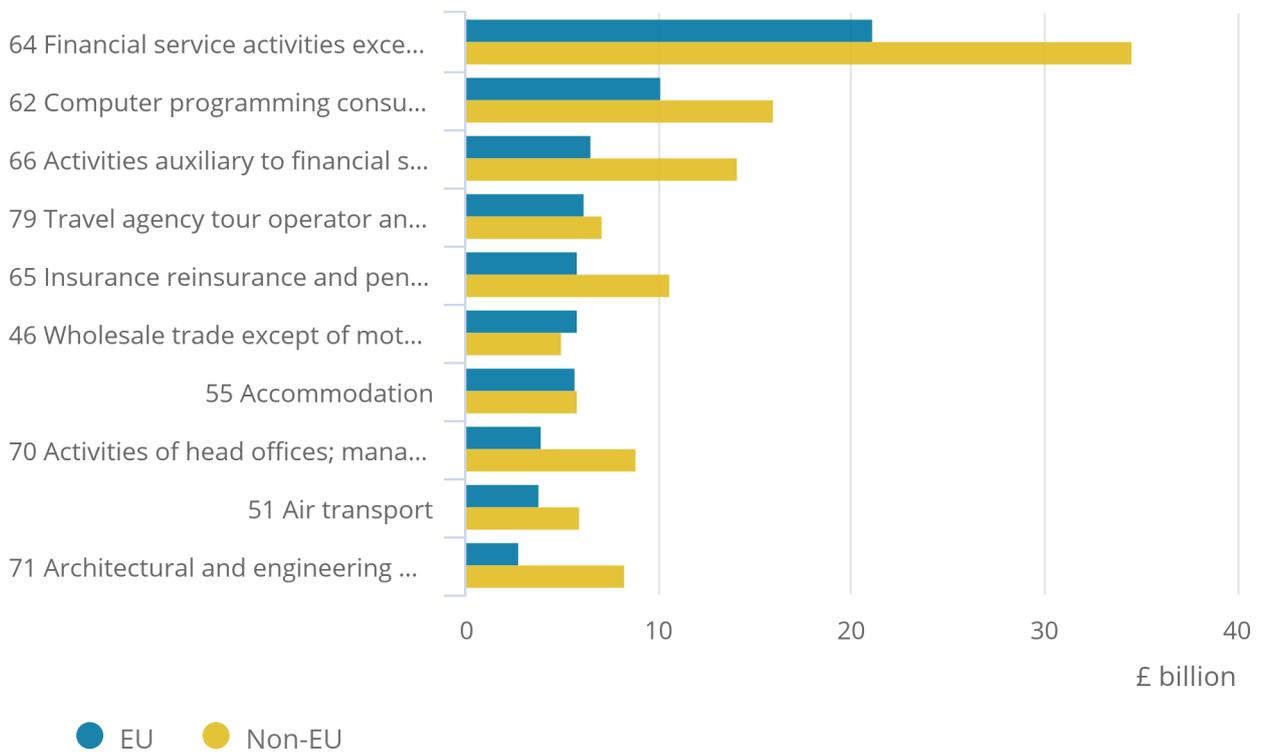
The largest services-exporting industry in 2018 was the financial service activities industry (industry 64), which exported £55.8 billion of services; this was 18.2% of total services exports. Of the £55.8 billion of services exported from the financial service activities industry, 62.0% went to non-EU countries. The second-largest industry was computer programming and consultancy (industry 62), which exported £26.2 billion; this was 8.6% of total services exports in 2018.

Figure 1: The largest services-exporting industry in 2018 was financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, which exported £55.8 billion

Top 10 services-exporting industries split by EU and non-EU countries, 2018

Figure 1: The largest services-exporting industry in 2018 was financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, which exported £55.8 billion

Top 10 services-exporting industries split by EU and non-EU countries, 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

In 2018, the largest service type by industry export was financial services exported by the financial service activities industry (industry 64), at £45.5 billion; this represented 14.8% of total UK exports. This was followed by exports of insurance and pension services by the insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security industry (industry 65), at £16.5 billion (Table 1). This is the only service type this industry exported to in 2018.

Table 1: In 2018, the largest service type by industry export was financial services by the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, at £45.5 billion

Largest service type by industry exports, 2018

Rank	Service type	Industry	2018 £ billion	% of total UK exports
1	Financial	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	45.5	14.8
2	Insurance and pension	65 Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security	16.5	5.4
3	Financial	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	13.8	4.5
4	Travel	79 Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities	13.2	4.3
5	Other business services	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	11.7	3.8
6	Other business services	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	10.3	3.4
7	Telecommunication services	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	10.1	3.3
8	Transportation	51 Air transport	9.9	3.2
9	Travel	55 Accommodation	9.8	3.2
10	Other business services	70 Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	9.1	3.0

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

In 2018, the largest country by industry export was from the financial service activities industry (industry 64) to the United States, exporting £15.4 billion; this was an increase of £0.4 billion from 2017. This represented 5.0% of total UK exports and was the largest country by industry export for 2017 and 2018. The largest increase was in the computer programming and consultancy industry (industry 62), increasing £1.3 billion to £7.7 billion in 2018, the second-largest country by industry export (Table 2). While exports from activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities industry (industry 66) to the United States was the second-largest country by industry export in 2017, it was only the third largest in 2018, growing by a lesser £0.3 billion to £6.8 billion.

The United States accounts for 74.3% of the top 10 country by industry exports. The financial service activities industry (industry 64) appears the most frequently in the top 10 country by industry exports, accounting for 53.1%.

Table 2: In 2018, the largest country by industry export was to the United States by the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, at £15.4 billion

Largest country by industry exports, 2018

Rank	Country	Industry	2018 £ billion	% of total UK exports
1	United States[1]	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	15.4	5.0
2	United States[1]	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	7.7	2.5
3	United States[1]	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	6.8	2.2
4	United States[1]	65 Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding, except compulsory social security	5.2	1.7
5	France	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	4.1	1.3
6	Netherlands	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	4.0	1.3
7	Germany	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	3.8	1.2
8	United States[1]	70 Activities of head offices; management consultancy activities	3.4	1.1
9	United States[1]	72 Scientific research and development	3.1	1.0
10	Switzerland	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	2.5	0.8

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

1. United States including Puerto Rico. Back to table

Exporting industries, 2017 to 2018

The largest increase in total services exports between 2017 and 2018 was within the computer programming and consultancy industry (industry 62), which increased by £3.8 billion to £26.2 billion; £3.3 billion of this growth came from increased exports to non-EU countries. The United States contributed £1.3 billion to the increase in this industry's services exports (Figure 2).

The industry with the largest decrease in services exports between 2017 and 2018 was the manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi-trailer industry (industry 29); exports fell by £1.1 billion to £1.1 billion largely because of a £0.9 billion fall in exports to EU countries. Exports to Germany fell £0.5 billion to £0.2 billion in 2018.

Hover over the data points in Figure 2 to see how the change in total industry services exports between 2017 and 2018 was split between EU and non-EU countries. Data points in the top-right quadrant show industries that experienced an increase in services exports with both EU and non-EU regions between 2017 and 2018, while those in the bottom left show industries that decreased services exports with EU and non-EU countries. The top-left quadrant includes industries that experienced an increase in services exports to EU countries but a decrease in services exports to non-EU countries. The bottom-right quadrant shows industries that increased services exports to non-EU countries while services exports to EU countries fell.

Figure 2: More UK industries increased their exports to EU countries in 2018

Change in exports by industry, EU compared with non-EU between 2017 and 2018

5 . The top 10 importing industries imported more from non-EU than EU countries in 2018

Figure 3 shows the top 10 UK services-importing industries in 2018 disaggregated by EU and non-EU regions. Note that imports of travel services have not been allocated to an industry so are not included within this analysis and have been excluded from total trade in services for the purpose of percentage of total calculations (see Section 3). These data are available in the accompanying datasets.

The top 10 industries contributed 62.7% of total UK services imports in 2018. The largest services-importing industries imported more from non-EU countries than EU countries in 2018, with 57.8% of the top 10 importing industries' imports coming from non-EU countries.

The largest services-importing industry in 2018 was the financial service activities industry (industry 64), which imported £27.1 billion of services making up 18.6% of total imports of services in 2018. Of the £27.1 billion imported, 69.9% came from non-EU countries.

The second-largest industry was the computer programming and consultancy industry (industry 62), which imported £13.1 billion of services, accounting for 9.0% of total imports of services in 2018.

Figure 3: The largest services-importing industry in 2018 was the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, which imported £27.1 billion

Top 10 services-importing industries split by EU and non-EU countries, 2018
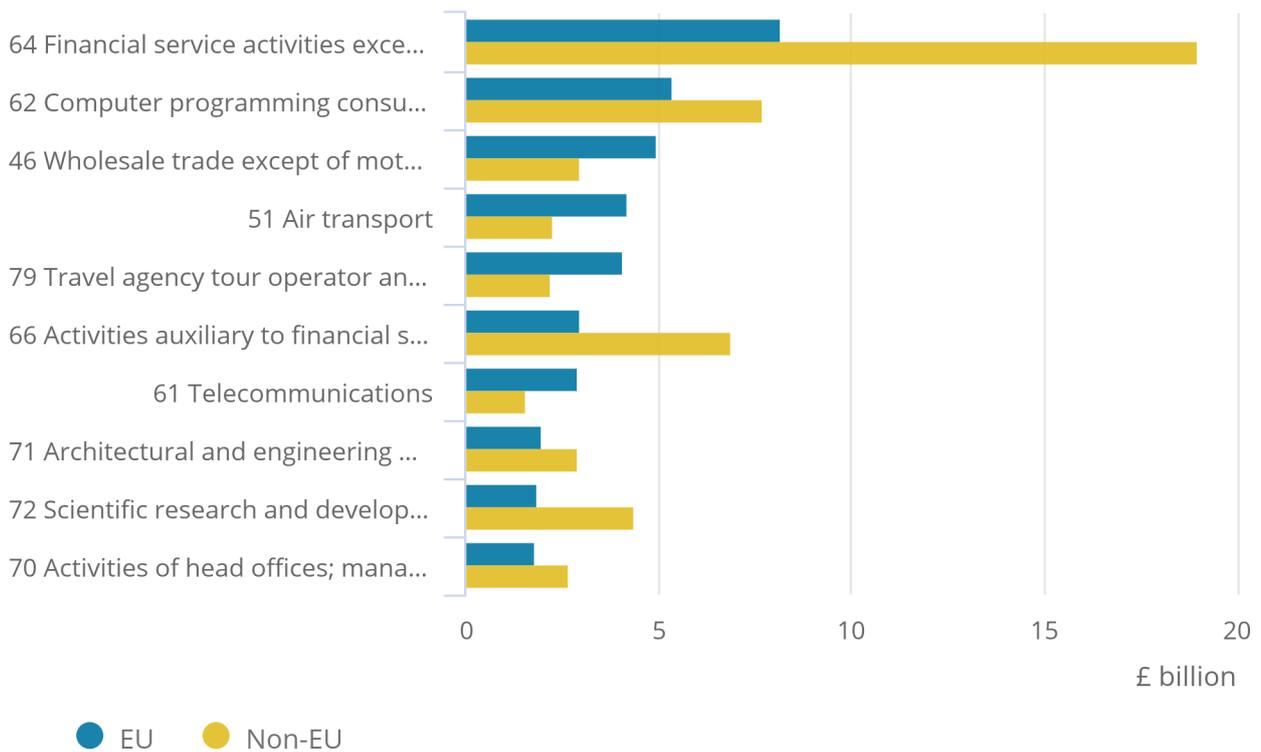
Legend: ● EU   ● Non-EU

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

In 2018, the largest service type by industry import was other business services by the financial service activities industry (industry 64), at £19.5 billion. This represented 13.4% of total UK imports (Table 3). While this was also the largest service type by industry import in 2017, imports grew £1.3 billion in 2018. This was caused by a £1.6 billion increase in services imports from non-EU countries and offset by a £0.2 billion decrease in services imports to EU countries.

Table 3: In 2018, the largest service type by industry import was other business services by the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, at £19.5 billion

Largest service type by industry imports, 2018

Rank	Service type	Industry	2018 £ billion	% of total UK imports
1	Other business services	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	19.5	13.4
2	Financial	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	7.5	5.2
3	Other business services	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	6.9	4.8
4	Transportation	51 Air transport	6.5	4.5
5	Transportation	79 Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities	6.3	4.3
6	Financial	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	6.1	4.2
7	Other business services	46 Wholesale trade, except of motor vehicles and motorcycles	4.7	3.2
8	Transportation	52 Warehousing and support activities for transportation	4.3	2.9
9	Other business services	71 Architectural and engineering activities; technical testing and analysis	3.9	2.7
10	Telecommunication services	61 Telecommunications	3.9	2.7

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

In 2018, the largest country by industry import was from the United States by the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding (industry 64), at £8.3 billion' this was 5.7% of total UK imports. This was followed by imports from the United States by the computer programming and consultancy industry (industry 62), at £3.3 billion (Table 4).

Table 4: In 2018, the largest country by industry import was from the United States by the financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding industry, at £8.3 billion
Largest country by industry imports, 2018

Rank	Country	Industry	2018 £ billion	% of total UK imports
1	United States[1]	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	8.3	5.7
2	United States[1]	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	3.3	2.3
3	United States[1]	72 Scientific research and development	2.9	2.0
4	United States[1]	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	2.7	1.9
5	Germany	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	2.2	1.5
6	Ireland	62 Computer programming, consultancy and related activities	1.9	1.3
7	Hong Kong	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	1.6	1.1
8	France	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	1.4	1.0
9	Singapore	64 Financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding	1.3	0.9
10	Japan	66 Activities auxiliary to financial services and insurance activities	1.3	0.9

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

1. United States including Puerto Rico. Back to table

Importing industries, 2017 to 2018

The largest increase in services imports between 2017 and 2018 was within the financial service activities industry (industry 64), which increased by £3.2 billion to £27.1 billion; £2.7 billion of this growth came from increased imports from non-EU countries (Figure 4).

The industry that experienced the largest decrease in imports between 2017 and 2018 was the warehousing and support activities for transportation industry (industry 52), which decreased by £0.9 billion to £4.4 billion. The negative growth was driven by imports to EU countries, which decreased by £0.7 billion. At the country level, France saw the largest decrease of £0.1 billion to £0.4 billion.

Hover over the data points in Figure 4 to see how the change in total industry imports between 2017 and 2018 was split between EU and non-EU countries. Data points in the top-right quadrant show industries that experienced an increase in services imports with both EU and non-EU countries between 2017 and 2018, while those in the bottom left show industries that decreased with EU and non-EU countries. The top-left quadrant includes industries that experienced an increase in imports from EU countries but a decrease in imports from non-EU countries. The bottom-right quadrant shows industries that increased imports from non-EU countries while imports from EU countries fell.

Figure 4: More UK industries increased their imports from non-EU countries in 2018

Change in imports by industry, EU compared with non-EU between 2017 and 2018

6 . Explore the new trade in services data with our interactive tool

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. However, this means some figures have been suppressed to protect confidentiality. The interactive 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 5: UK trade in services with the rest of the world, exports and imports, 2018

Notes:

1. These data are our best estimate of these bilateral UK trade flows. Users should note that alternative estimates are available, in some cases, through the statistical agencies for bilateral countries or through central databases such as UN Comtrade.

2. Interactive maps denote country boundaries in accordance with statistical classifications set out within Appendix 4 of the Balance of Payments (BoP) Vademecum (PDF, 1.1MB).

Download this chart

.xlsx

7 . UK trade data

UK trade in services by industry, country and service type, exports
Dataset | Released 28 February 2020
Experimental dataset providing an annual breakdown of UK trade in services exports by industry, country and service type on a balance of payments (BoP) basis.

UK trade in services by industry, country and service type, imports
Dataset | Released 28 February 2020
Experimental dataset providing an annual breakdown of UK trade in services imports by industry, country and service type on a BoP basis.

8 . Measuring the data

The dataset for the trade in services analysis released alongside this article was compiled by combining data from the International Trade in Services (ITIS) survey, the International Passenger Survey (IPS) and other non-survey services sources, with information from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), the Annual Survey of Goods and Services (ASGS) and the Annual Purchases Survey (APS).

International Trade in Services (ITIS)

The ITIS surveys collect company-level microdata on exports and imports of services products. Office for National Statistics (ONS) ITIS data are compliant with the latest international standards, as outlined in the Manual on Statistics of International Trade in Services 2010 (MSITS 2010).

Breakdowns are available by product, industry and geographical region, and products are classified using the Extended Balance of Payments Services classification (EBoPS 2010). The ITIS survey consists of 52 products and 17 product groups, and it is the main source of UK trade in services data, covering most industries. However, it has several exceptions such as:

- travel

- transport

- banking and other financial institutions

- higher education

- charities

- most activities within the legal profession

The quarterly sample is made up of approximately 2,200 businesses and the annual sample is made up of approximately 15,500 businesses. The survey data from both the quarterly and annual results are combined to produce the annual ITIS estimates and are used as a main data source to compile total trade in services estimates.

The majority of the data come from the ITIS survey, the largest source of UK trade in services data. The ITIS survey covers approximately 58% of services exports and 45% of services imports, and it excludes industries in travel, transport, banking and other financial institutions, higher education, charities, and most activities within the legal profession.

For industries that the ITIS survey measures, a direct industry breakdown can be found using the industrial classifications of responding businesses. All businesses sampled to complete the ITIS survey are sampled from the IDBR, which contains records of the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of each business. ITIS service type by country data are then broken down into industries using this business-level SIC information and are therefore considered robust.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the ITIS QMI.

International Passenger Survey (IPS)

The IPS is a continuous survey (conducted 362 days a year) at major ports of entry to, or exit from, the UK. The collected data are weighted, and the results feed into the Travel Account of UK Trade in Services.

Published estimates are based on face-to-face interviews with a random sample of passengers as they enter or leave the UK by the principal air, sea and tunnel routes. All interviews are conducted on a voluntary basis. The target number of interviews is 260,000 per year, although over 300,000 interviews (representing about 0.2% of travellers) have been conducted annually since 2009 owing to a change in design. Actions have been taken to come down to pre-2009 levels.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the IPS QMI and on the IPS methodology page.

Non-ITIS services sources

The Chamber of Shipping (CoS) conducts surveys into its members' participation in foreign trade, and data from the CoS are uplifted to account for UK sea transport companies that are not members using estimates for the gross tonnage of the UK fleet for different types of ship. Information on the financial services industries is supplied by the Bank of England, the Baltic Exchange, ITIS and other UK National Statistics surveys. Financial Services Authority, Lloyd's of London and National Statistics surveys supply insurance data.

Estimates of exports and imports of services are based on a large number of administrative sources including the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Ministry of Defence, Commercial Bar Association, Baltic Exchange, Heathrow Airport Holdings, NATS Holdings, Gatwick Airport, Manchester Airport, Texaco, BP, ExxonMobil, Trinity House, HM Immigration, Gambling Commission, Financial Services Authority and Royal Mail. These are annual and quarterly and accessed on a regular basis.

For the remaining non-ITIS data sources, an industry breakdown is not available and is therefore estimated based on assumptions made using two alternative data sources: the ASGS and the APS.

The ASGS was launched in 2017 and measures service industry turnover broken down by the individual services provided to customers both inside and outside the UK. Data are collected on a Statistical Classification of Products (goods and services) by Activity in the EU version 2.1 (CPA) basis, which have been converted to their equivalent Extended Balance of Payments (EBoP) classification, using the Eurostat correspondence tables EBoPs 2010 – CPA 2008 (ZIP, 335KB).

An industry by service type mapper is created by using the SIC information for the businesses sampled to complete the ASGS, with the industry by service type data for customers outside the UK assumed to represent exports. This mapper is then applied to existing EBoPs, where ITIS data are not available, to split it down into industries.

The APS was launched in 2016 and measures each industry's intermediate consumption (that is, goods or services used up in the production process). No breakdown is available between products purchased either abroad or domestically; therefore, total purchases are assumed to represent imports. Similar to the ASGS, data are also collected on a CPA basis, which have been converted to their equivalent EBoP classification, using the Eurostat correspondence tables EBoPs 2010 – CPA 2008 (ZIP, 335KB). An industry by service type mapper is created by using the SIC information for the businesses sampled to complete the APS.

Please note that no country breakdowns are available from the ASGS and APS; therefore, the breakdown of countries within each industry is assumed to be the same. Caution must therefore be taken when interpreting lower-level country by industry by service type detail where the non-ITIS data sources are used.

Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)

The IDBR is a comprehensive record of UK businesses compiled and used by the government for statistical purposes. The IDBR provides the main sampling frame for ONS business surveys and other government departments, covering over 2.6 million businesses in all sectors of the UK economy.

The primary data used to maintain the IDBR are provided by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC). All firms registered with HMRC for either Value Added Tax (VAT) or Pay As You Earn (PAYE) purposes are listed, excluding those without employees and with turnover below the VAT threshold.

The IDBR includes data on the structure of businesses, classifying "VAT units" and "PAYE units" from the HMRC registrations. "Local units" represent the individual sites on which the business operates, while "reporting units" are usually made up of local units that undertake similar activities. The "VAT unit" contains all units within an enterprise group. Businesses are sampled for the ITIS, ASGS and APS at the "reporting unit" level.

Annual Survey of Goods and Services (ASGS)

The ASGS was launched by the ONS in summer 2017 in response to one of the main recommendations from Professor Sir Charles Bean's independent review of economic statistics . The recommendation was to provide more comprehensive and detailed statistics on the services industries for the UK, which were not captured by existing surveys.

The ASGS collects information on the turnover of a business, broken down into the individual services and goods provided, as well as whether the turnover was generated from customers based inside the UK or customers based outside the UK.

Turnover consists of sales to any individual, business entity or other parts of an organisation. The ASGS has a sample size of approximately 40,000 and measures service products using the CPA.

Product classifications in the CPA are designed to categorise products that have common characteristics. They provide the basis for collecting and calculating statistics on the production, distributive trade, consumption, international trade and transport of such products.

The ASGS measures UK services industries only and therefore does not collect data from the production and construction industries (sections A, B, C and F of the SIC). It covers a large element of the service economy, excluding notable industries such as public administration.

More information on the ASGS is available within the [Development of the ASGS](#) article.

Annual Purchases Survey (APS)

The APS provides detail on the energy, services, goods and materials used up or transformed in the production process for and running of UK businesses, otherwise referred to as intermediate consumption. The APS specifically excludes capital investment (including fixed assets), staff costs, and goods and services bought for resale without further processing.

The original Purchases Survey ran from the 1950s to 2006 (with the final reference period being 2004); it was reintroduced from the 2015 reference period. The APS has a sample size of approximately 31,000, which is taken from the IDBR, and measures service products using the [CPA](#). The APS covers a large element of the economy, with some notable exceptions such as public administration.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [APS QMI](#).