

Statistical bulletin

GDP, UK regions and countries: October to December 2020

Quarterly economic activity within the countries of the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) and the nine English regions (North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East, and South West).

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Release date:
3 August 2021

Next release:
November 2021

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1 . Other pages in this release

- [Methodology](#) used to produce these estimates
- Link to [GDP in Scotland](#), published by the Scottish Government
- Link to [GDP in Northern Ireland](#), published by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

2 . Main points

- In Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020, all four countries in the UK showed positive quarter-on-quarter growth; England increased by 1.2%, Scotland grew by 2.3%, Northern Ireland increased by 0.7% and Wales grew by 0.9%, following record growth in Quarter 3 (July to Sep) 2020 as the economy saw some recovery from the large falls in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) at the start of the pandemic.
- Of the nine English regions, London saw the largest growth in Quarter 4 2020, with an increase of 3.1%, while the only two regions estimated to have contracted were the East Midlands and West Midlands, which fell by 0.8% and 0.3% respectively.
- Data within this release have been updated to include Quarter 4 2020 but do not include any revisions to earlier data periods, including alignment to recently published Annual Regional Accounts or Quarterly National Accounts; the majority of this release presents only quarter on quarter changes from Quarter 1 2020 to Quarter 4 2020.
- As part of ongoing development of these experimental statistics we are undertaking a project to refine methods to improve data quality; we will incorporate revisions to the historic data at the same time as introducing any improvements to methods to minimise the frequency of revisions for our users (see Background and development in [Section 4](#)).

These estimates are designated as [experimental statistics](#) while they are still in development, and should be interpreted with some caution.

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

3 . GDP, UK regions and countries data

[Quarterly country and regional GDP](#)

Dataset | Released 3 August 2021

Quarterly economic activity within Wales and the nine English regions (North East, North West, Yorkshire and The Humber, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East, and South West).

[Quarterly country and regional GDP – data source catalogue](#)

Dataset | Released 3 August 2021

A breakdown of all the data sources that feed into the measure of Quarterly country and regional GDP.

4 . Measuring the data

These data are designated as [experimental statistics](#). These are statistics that are in the testing phase. We will continue to develop these statistics and seek users' views on their uses and needs for these data. We welcome feedback to help inform our development work at regionalgdp@ons.gov.uk.

Estimates are calculated based on site-level (local unit) activity. Industry movements may differ to those at the national level, which are based on overall (reporting unit) business activity.

The main data source for these estimates is turnover data from approximately 1.9 million VAT returns. Information from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) on workplace employment allows us to apportion the VAT turnover for each business based on their employment share within a region. The [quality assurance of administrative data \(QAAD\) report for VAT data](#) is available.

Other volume measure data are used where appropriate, or where VAT data has insufficient coverage. A full list of other data sources is included in the [data sources catalogue](#).

While the data sources and methods used in both our regional and national estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) are broadly similar, there are some clear differences. For example, in the extent to which VAT data is used in the compilation of these estimates. These estimates aim to produce the best estimates at a sub-national level.

Background and development

In this release, we have paused updating the time series between Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2012 and Quarter 3 (July to Sep) 2020 to focus on developing methods to improve data quality, and minimise the frequency of revisions for our users. The development of these statistics is part of our ongoing work programme on experimental statistics.

The majority of the data in this release focuses on the periods Quarter 1 2020 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020, and the industry breakdown within the nine English regions and Wales is presented as quarter-on-previous quarter changes, from Quarter 1 2020 to Quarter 4 2020.

The data for earlier periods are not balanced to the most recently published annual Regional Accounts (the preferred source for annual gross domestic product (GDP) changes). Data for the regions from Quarter 1 2012 to Quarter 4 2020, provided in the key figures tables published alongside this release, are presented only at total industry level. This is done because at that level they will be subject to less revision on future alignment. Users who require quarterly region by industry data over a longer time period than presented in this release could take historic data from our previous release and add on the latest data period. However, be aware that the time series is subject to future revision.

Our work package for improvement will include a review of consistency between UK GDP and quarterly regional GDP, the processing systems and the constraints imposed as the datasets are compiled.

To minimise the frequency of revisions to our users, we plan to implement the improvements at the same time as incorporating the latest estimates of annual [Balanced Regional Accounts](#) and the improved [sub-national estimates of the construction industry](#) in our next release. We also plan to address some inconsistencies with the latest output measure of GDP output as published in [GDP monthly estimate, UK: May 2021](#). We welcome feedback and comments on this publication at regionalgdp@ons.gov.uk.

5 . Related links

[GDP monthly estimate, UK: May 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 July 2021

Gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of goods and services produced in the UK.

[Regional economic activity by gross domestic product, UK: 1998 to 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 May 2020

Annual estimates of economic activity by UK country, region and local area using gross domestic product (GDP). Estimates are available in current market prices and in chained volume measures and include a full industry breakdown of balanced regional gross value added.

[GDP in Scotland](#)

Statistical publication | Released 5 May 2021

This publication includes Gross domestic product (GDP) for Scotland (updated second estimate) for 2020 first quarter, produced by the Scottish Government.

[NI Composite Economic Index](#)

Release | Released 8 July 2021

An experimental quarterly measure of the performance of the Northern Ireland economy based on available official statistics.

[Welsh short-term output indicators](#)

Report | Released 29 July 2021

Data showing the short-term movements in the output of industries in the production, construction, and market services sectors.