

Statistical bulletin

UK trade: November 2022

Total value of UK exports and imports of goods and services in current prices, chained volume measures and implied deflators.

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1 . Main points

- The value of goods imports increased by £1.8 billion (3.5%) in November 2022; after removing the effect of inflation, imports of goods increased by £2.5 billion (6.1%).
- Goods imports from EU countries increased by £1.2 billion (4.7%) and imports from non-EU countries rose by £0.6 billion (2.2%), both driven by rising imports of machinery and transport equipment.
- Gas prices continued to decrease in November 2022, leading to the third consecutive month of decreases in the value of fuel imports from non-EU countries.
- The value of goods exports increased slightly by £0.2 billion (0.7%) in November 2022, rising by a smaller amount when compared with imports.
- The trade in goods and services deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £6.5 billion to £20.2 billion in the three months to November 2022, driven by a decrease in goods imports from non-EU countries which is linked to falling fuel prices.

Please note that all trade figures exclude non-monetary gold and other precious metals unless otherwise stated. This is because movements in non-monetary gold, an important component of precious metals, can be large and highly volatile, distorting underlying trends in goods exports and imports.

About this bulletin

Unless otherwise specified, data within this bulletin are in current prices and have not been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation. Official estimates of [price inflation](#) have risen strongly in recent months, and chained volume measures data, which we refer to as having the effect of inflation removed, can be found in our [UK trade publication tables](#) and [UK trade time series](#).

The UK leaving the EU and the subsequent transition period, along with the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, supply chain disruption and global recession, have caused higher levels of volatility in trade statistics in recent years. The monthly analysis shows short-term trade movements, but it is important to note that monthly data can be erratic, and therefore movements should be treated with caution.

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine beginning on 24 February 2022, the UK government imposed a range of [economic sanctions on Russia](#), resulting in historic lows of trade with Russia. Our article, [The impact of sanctions on UK trade with Russia](#) discusses the effect of the sanctions applied on UK trade in goods.

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- 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](#).

2 . Changes affecting UK trade statistics

EU imports

In January 2022, [HM Revenue and Customs \(HMRC\) implemented a data collection change](#) affecting data on imports from the EU to Great Britain (GB). This followed a similar data collection change in January 2021 for data on exports of goods to the EU from GB.

Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: 2020 to 2022](#) provides more detail on the discontinuity between the two compilation methods.

We have applied adjustments to our estimates of goods imports from the EU for the period January to December 2021 to reflect the data collection change. These revised estimates were included in our [GDP quarterly national accounts, UK: July to September 2022 bulletin](#) on 22 December 2022, and will now be published across all releases in the trade in goods series.

We have published an article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: adjustments to 2021 EU imports estimates](#) alongside this bulletin, summarising these adjustments to our estimates of goods imports from the EU in 2021.

Staged Customs Controls

In 2021, the use of Staged Customs Controls (SCC) allowed customs declarations to be reported up to 175 days after the date of import for imports of non-controlled goods from the EU to GB. [Full customs controls were introduced in January 2022](#) and, as such, July 2022 marked the first full month of data where delayed customs declarations submitted under SCC could not be included. Temporary arrangements still apply for imports of goods from Ireland to GB. We are reviewing the 2022 import data to determine any effect of SCC.

Future developments

The adjustments to our estimates of goods imports from the EU in 2021 are to account for discontinuities in 2021 EU import data resulting from data collection changes. Further work is ongoing to review the pre-2021 discontinuity in trade in goods with the EU, as well as the impact of SCC in 2022. We will keep users informed of any further changes while continuing to provide our best estimates of trade.

3 . Monthly trade in goods

Total imports of goods increased by £1.8 billion (3.5%) in November 2022, with rising imports from both EU and non-EU countries. Total exports of goods increased slightly by £0.2 billion (0.7%) in November 2022, with an increase in exports to non-EU countries partially offset by falling exports to the EU (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Imports from the EU were £0.7 billion higher than from non-EU countries, and exports to the EU were £0.6 billion lower than to non-EU countries in November 2022.

Table 1: Overall, imports of goods increased by more than exports in November 2022
Monthly UK trade in goods balances, excluding precious metals, imports and exports, EU and non-EU

		Exports	Imports	Balance
	Value (£bn)	32.9	53.9	-21.0
Total trade in goods:	Change (£bn)	0.2	1.8	-1.6
November 2022 vs October 2022	% Change	0.7	3.5	
	Value (£bn)	16.1	27.3	-11.1
EU:	Change (£bn)	-0.4	1.2	-1.7
November 2022 vs October 2022	% Change	-2.7	4.7	
	Value (£bn)	16.7	26.6	-9.9
Non-EU:	Change (£bn)	0.7	0.6	0.1
November 2022 vs October 2022	% Change	4.2	2.2	

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

Figure 1: Imports of goods from both EU and non-EU countries increased in November 2022

EU and non-EU goods imports and exports, excluding precious metals, November 2019 to November 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there is a discontinuity from January 2021 in EU trade following an HM Revenue and Customs data collection change. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics](#), provides more detail.

Download the data

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When removing the effect of inflation, total imports of goods increased by £2.5 billion (6.1%) in November 2022, because of a £1.3 billion (7.0%) increase in imports from non-EU countries, and a £1.2 billion (5.3%) increase in imports from the EU (Figure 2). The value of imports from non-EU countries continues to be influenced by fuel prices which remain high, although [gas prices fell in November 2022](#).

Similarly, when removing the effect of inflation, total exports of goods increased by £0.5 billion (1.7%) in November 2022. During the same period, exports to non-EU countries increased by £0.6 billion (4.6%) while exports to the EU fell by £0.2 billion (1.2%).

Figure 2: After removing the effect of inflation, imports of goods from non-EU countries increased by a greater amount than in value terms in November 2022

Imports and exports of goods, excluding precious metals, current prices and chained volume measures, EU and non-EU, November 2019 to November 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there is a discontinuity from January 2021 in EU trade following an HM Revenue and Customs data collection change. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics](#), provides more detail.

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4 . Monthly commodity analysis

Imports

A major contributor to the increase in imports from the EU in November 2022 was a £1.5 billion increase in imports of machinery and transport equipment. This was alongside a smaller increase of £0.3 billion in chemical imports (Figure 3). The increase in machinery and transport equipment imports from the EU was because of higher ship imports from Finland.

Imports of machinery and transport equipment from non-EU countries increased by £1.3 billion in November 2022, because of higher imports of cars from China, and aircraft from the United States. Fuel imports from non-EU countries fell for the third consecutive month, with a decrease of £1.1 billion in November 2022. This decrease was driven by lower gas imports from Norway and Qatar.

Figure 3: Imports of goods from non-EU countries increased in November 2022, with increasing imports of machinery and transport equipment offsetting falling fuel imports

EU and non-EU goods imports by commodity, November 2020 to November 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there is a discontinuity from January 2021 in EU trade following an HM Revenue and Customs data collection change. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics](#), provides more detail.

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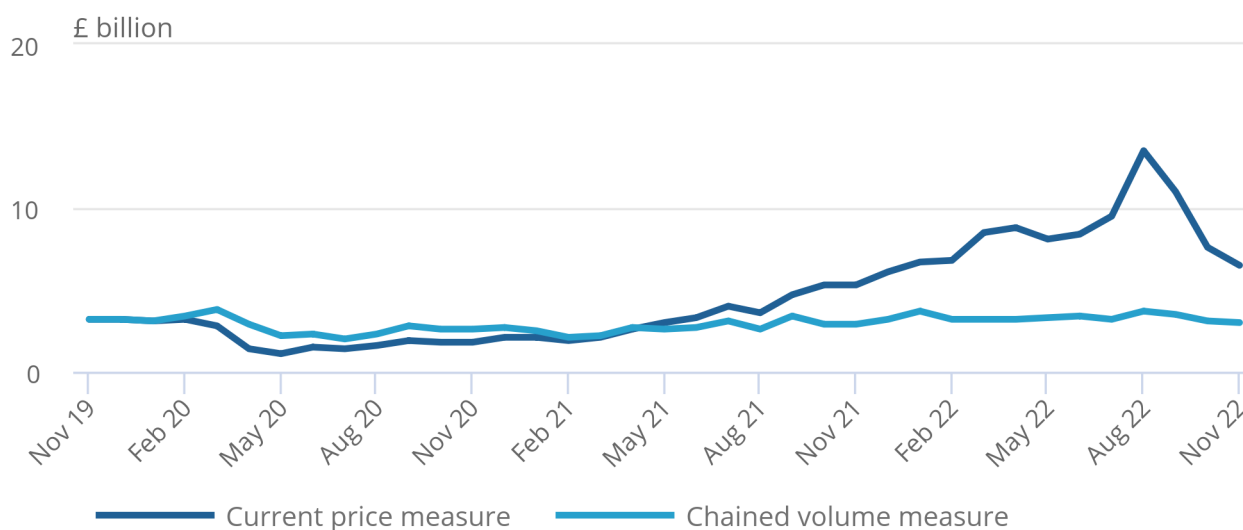
The total value of fuel imported from non-EU countries continued to decrease in November 2022, because of the [falling price of gas](#). When the effect of inflation is removed, fuel imports from non-EU countries decreased slightly in November (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The value of fuel imports continues to decrease in November 2022, driven by falling gas prices

Non-EU fuel imports, current prices and chained volume measures, November 2019 to November 2022

Figure 4: The value of fuel imports continues to decrease in November 2022, driven by falling gas prices

Non-EU fuel imports, current prices and chained volume measures, November 2019 to November 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, seasonally adjusted

Exports

The decrease in exports to the EU was driven by a £0.4 billion fall in fuel exports (Figure 5), led by decreased exports of crude oil to Poland and Sweden. November 2022 was the fourth month in a row where exports of fuels to EU countries fell.

The rise in exports to non-EU countries was driven by a £0.7 billion increase in exports of machinery and transport equipment, along with an increase of £0.4 billion in exports of chemicals. The increase in exports of machinery and transport equipment was because of increased exports of aircraft to Qatar, and road vehicles to the United States and China. This was partially offset by a £0.3 billion decrease in material manufactures exports, primarily non-ferrous metals to India.

Figure 5: Exports of goods to non-EU countries increased in November 2022, driven by increasing exports of machinery and transport equipment, and chemicals

EU and non-EU goods exports by commodity, November 2020 to November 2022

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there is a discontinuity from January 2021 in EU trade following an HM Revenue and Customs data collection change. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics](#), provides more detail.

Download the data

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5 . Monthly trade in services

Early estimates suggest both imports and exports of services decreased by £0.1 billion in November 2022. Imports fell to £20.8 billion (0.6%) while exports decreased to £34.6 billion (0.2%) (Figure 6). Monthly figures for trade in services for October and November 2022 have been forecast from Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2022 data, while using additional data sources. View our [UK trade QMI](#) for more detail on how our trade in services statistics are compiled.

As is the case with trade in goods, imports and exports of services have been affected by rising prices in recent months. When removing the effect of inflation, imports of services decreased to £17.8 billion (0.6%) and exports of services decreased to £29.5 billion (0.2%) in November 2022.

Figure 6: Both imports and exports of services decreased in November 2022

Imports and exports of services, current prices and chained volume measures, November 2019 to November 2022

Download the data

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[The Bank of England agents' summary of business conditions for Quarter 4 2022](#) reported a continued modest decrease in business activity. They stated that reduced household incomes continued to weigh on demand for consumer services, despite some boost from bookings over the Christmas period. In contrast, business services contacts reported growth, though the weakness in consumer demand was increasingly affecting business services contacts that supply consumer-facing firms.

6 . Three-monthly trade in goods and services

Total imports of goods decreased by £5.3 billion (3.2%) in the three months to November 2022, compared with the three months to August 2022 (Table 2). Imports from both EU and non-EU countries decreased during this time. Exports of goods over the same period decreased by £1.5 billion (1.5%), with exports decreasing to the EU and exports to non-EU countries increasing.

Imports of services decreased by £0.7 billion (1.2%) in the three months to November 2022 compared with the three months to August 2022, and exports of services over the same period increased by £2.0 billion (2.0%).

Table 2: Total imports of both goods and services decreased in the three months to November 2022
Three-monthly UK trade balances, excluding precious metals, imports and exports, EU and non-EU

		Exports	Imports	Balance
	Value (£bn)	203.0	223.2	-20.2
Total trade:				
three months to November 2022	Change (£bn)	0.5	-6.0	6.5
vs three months to August 2022	% Change	0.3	-2.6	
	Value (£bn)	99.2	160.5	-61.4
Total trade in goods:				
three months to November 2022	Change (£bn)	-1.5	-5.3	3.8
vs three months to August 2022	% Change	-1.5	-3.2	
	Value (£bn)	49.6	77.3	-27.7
Trade in goods, EU:				
three months to November 2022	Change (£bn)	-2.5	-1.3	-1.3
vs three months to August 2022	% Change	-4.9	-1.6	
	Value (£bn)	49.5	83.2	-33.7
Trade in goods, non-EU:				
three months to November 2022	Change (£bn)	1.1	-4.0	5.0
vs three months to August 2022	% Change	2.2	-4.6	
	Value (£bn)	103.9	62.7	41.2
Total trade in services:				
three months to November 2022	Change (£bn)	2.0	-0.7	2.7
vs three months to August 2022	% Change	2.0	-1.2	

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

7 . Three-monthly total trade balances

The total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £6.5 billion to £20.2 billion in the three months to November 2022 (Figure 7), driven by a decrease in goods imports from non-EU countries, which is linked to falling fuel prices over the period. When removing the effect of inflation, the total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £3.8 billion to £9.3 billion in the three months to November 2022. This narrowing is because of weaker imports of goods across several commodities in the three months to November 2022, [with rising prices possibly reducing consumer demand](#).

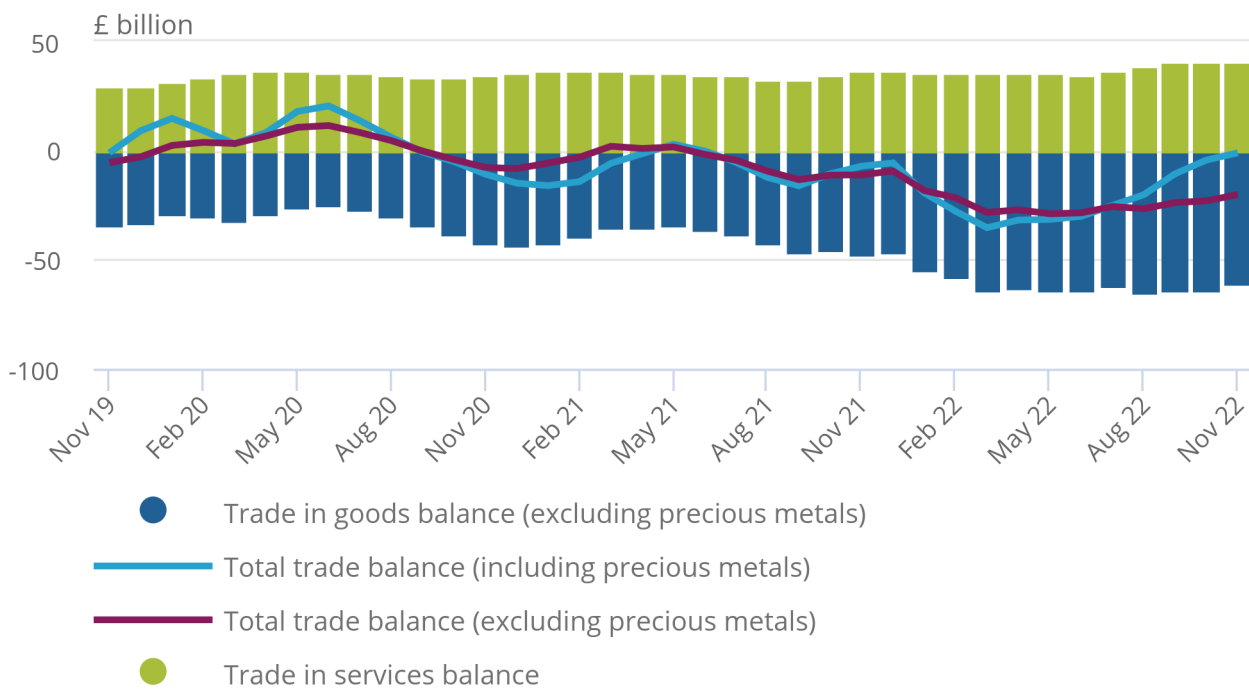
The trade in goods deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed by £3.8 billion to £61.4 billion in the three months to November 2022. Early estimates suggest the trade in services surplus widened by £2.7 billion to £41.2 billion.

Figure 7: The total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed in the three months to November 2022

UK trade balances, three-month periods, November 2019 to November 2022

Figure 7: The total trade deficit, excluding precious metals, narrowed in the three months to November 2022

UK trade balances, three-month periods, November 2019 to November 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade statistics, current prices, seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data as there is a discontinuity from January 2021 in EU trade following an HM Revenue and Customs data collection change. Our article, [Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics](#) provides more detail.

8 . Explore UK trade in goods country-by-commodity data for 2021

Explore the 2021 trade in goods data using our interactive tools. Our data break down UK trade in goods with 234 countries by 125 commodities.

Use our map to get a better understanding of what goods the UK traded with a country. Select a country by hovering over it (desktop only) or use the drop-down menu.

Download the data

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Notes:

1. For more information about our methods and how we compile these statistics, please see our [Trade in goods, country-by-commodity experimental data: 2011 to 2016](#) article. Users should note that the data published alongside this release are official statistics and no longer experimental.
2. 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](#).
3. This interactive map denotes country boundaries in accordance with statistical classifications set out within Appendix 4 of the [Balance of Payments \(BoP\) Vademecum \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#) and do not represent the UK policy on disputed territories.

You can also explore the 2021 trade in goods data by commodity, such as car exports to the EU, and UK tea or coffee imports.

Select a commodity from the drop-down menu or select the levels with your digit or cursor to explore the data.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

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Notes:

1. For more information about our methods and how we compile these statistics, please see our [Trade in goods, country-by-commodity experimental data: 2011 to 2016](#) article. Users should note that the data published alongside this release are no longer experimental.
2. These data are our best estimate of these bilateral UK trade flows. Users should note that alternative estimates are available, in some cases, via the statistical agencies for bilateral countries or through central databases such as [UN Comtrade](#).
3. These interactive charts denote country boundaries in accordance with statistical classifications set out within Appendix 4 of the [Balance of Payments \(BoP\) Vademecum \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#) and does not represent the UK policy on disputed territories.

9 . Revisions

In accordance with the [National Accounts Revisions Policy](#), the data in this release have been revised from January 2021 to October 2022 for both goods and services.

10 . UK trade data

[UK trade: goods and services publication tables](#) Dataset | Released 13 January 2023 Monthly data on the UK's trade in goods and services, including trade inside and outside the EU.

[UK trade time series](#) Dataset MRET | Released 13 January 2023 Monthly value of UK exports and imports of goods and services by current price, chained volume measures (CVMs) and implied deflators (IDEFs).

[UK trade in goods by classification of product by activity time series](#) Dataset MQ10 | Released 13 January 2023 Quarterly and annual time series of the value of UK imports and exports of goods grouped by product. Goods are attributed to the activity of which they are the principal products.

[Customise my dataset: country by commodity](#) Dataset | Released 13 January 2023 Customisable version of country by commodity data on the UK's trade in goods, including trade by all countries and selected commodities, exports and imports, non-seasonally adjusted.

[Other related trade data](#) Dataset web page | Released 13 January 2023 Other UK trade data related to this publication. These include trade in goods for all countries with the UK, monthly export and import country-by-commodity trade in goods data, and revisions triangles for monthly trade data.

11 . Glossary

Chained volume measures (CVMs)

CVM estimates are a “real” measure in that they have had the effect of inflation removed to measure the change in volume between consecutive periods, fixing the prices of goods and services in one period (the base year).

Current price measures (CPs)

These estimates measure the actual price paid for goods or services and are not adjusted for inflation. Unless otherwise stated, all current price data are provided in £ million and are seasonally adjusted.

Inflation

Inflation is the change in the average price level of goods and services over a period of time.

Implied deflators (IDEFs)

An IDEF shows the implied change in average prices for the respective components of the trade balance, for example, the IDEF for imports will show the average price movement for imports.

Precious metals and non-monetary gold

Precious metals include precious metals, silver, platinum and palladium, and it forms part of the commodity group “unspecified goods”. Non-monetary gold comprises the majority of this group and is the technical term for gold bullion not owned by central banks.

Trade balance

The trade balance is the difference between exports and imports or exports minus imports. When the value of exports is greater than the value of imports, the trade balance is in surplus. When the value of imports is greater than the value of exports, the trade balance is in deficit. The balance is sometimes referred to as “net exports”.

A full [Glossary of economic terms](#) is available.

12 . Measuring the data

Coronavirus (COVID-19) data impact

Because of the challenges of data collection during the coronavirus pandemic, we have experienced challenges around the level of survey and data returns for this trade release.

Data sources

Data from the quarterly International Trade in Services (ITIS) Survey make up over 50% of trade in services data. View [our UK trade QMI](#) for more detail.

Data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) are the main source for travel services, historically making up around 8% of total imports. Following suspension of the survey in 2020 the survey has now largely resumed, with a very small number of ports yet to have resumed interviewing. IPS data are being used with a small adjustment to account for the reduction in sample size, and we continue to quality assure our estimates using complimentary data sources. However, we advise continued caution when using these data until the IPS is fully operational. View [our UK trade QMI](#) for more detail.

Data from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) make up over 90% of trade in goods value and are the main source. We have worked closely with HMRC to prepare for the change in collection of customs data, which occurred at the end of the EU exit transition period. View further information in [our Impact of EU exit on the collection and compilation of UK trade statistics](#) article.

In line with international standards, our headline trade statistics contain the UK's exports and imports of non-monetary gold. View more information about [our recording of non-monetary gold](#). Unless otherwise specified, data within this bulletin are in current prices. This means they have not been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation.

Method

Trade is measured through both exports and imports of goods and services. Data are supplied by over 30 sources including several administrative sources, with HMRC being the largest for trade in goods.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK trade figures are produced on a country of dispatch basis, which records imports as coming from the country dispatching the shipments. However, trade figures can also be produced on a country of origin basis as is used by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Users should be aware of the different accounting methods used, and the resulting differences across trade figures.

Monthly trade in services data are taken from quarterly trade in services data and split across the months within that quarter through estimation. In months where we have a full quarter's data, we revise previous estimates of monthly values within that quarter.

View more detailed information about the methods used to produce UK trade statistics in [our UK trade methodology](#).

13 . Strengths and limitations

National Statistics designation status

The [UK Statistics Authority suspended the National Statistics designation of UK trade \(PDF, 72.9KB\)](#) on 14 November 2014. We have now responded to all of the specific requirements of the [reassessment of UK trade](#) and, as part of our engagement with the Office for Statistics Regulation team, we are sharing our continuous improvement and development plans to support UK trade statistics regaining [National Statistics status](#). We welcome feedback on our new trade statistics, developments and future plans by email to trade@ons.gov.uk.

Trade asymmetries

Asymmetries can be caused by a range of conceptual and measurement variations between the estimation practices of different countries. Statistical agencies are likely to have different source data, estimation methods, and methodological, geographical and definitional differences. More [information on trade in goods asymmetries](#) is published by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), while [analysis on trade in services asymmetries](#) is published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

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

14 . Related links

[Impact of trade in goods data collection changes on UK trade statistics: adjustments to 2021 EU imports estimates](#) Article | Released 13 January 2023 Summary of adjustments to account for HM Revenue and Customs data collection changes resulting from EU exit and the impact on Office for National Statistics (ONS) UK trade statistics.

[Focus on UK trade](#) Article series | Latest release 24 August 2022 A series of articles taking a closer look at emerging themes in UK trade statistics.

[The impact of sanctions on UK trade with Russia: June 2022](#) Article | Released 24 August 2022 An analysis of the impact of economic sanctions of UK trade in goods with Russia.

[Trends in UK imports and exports of fuels](#) Article | Released 29 June 2022 An article examining recent trends in UK imports and exports of fuels.

[The impacts of EU exit and coronavirus \(COVID-19\) on UK trade in services: November 2021](#) Article | Released 22 November 2021 An analysis of UK trade in services in the context of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the end of the EU transition period on 31 December 2020.

[Understanding the latest changes to UK trade figures with the EU](#) Blog | Released 11 March 2022 A blog explaining the changes to the way trade in goods data are collected by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

[In the balance: identifying differences between UK and EU trade figures](#) Blog | Released 8 July 2021 A blog examining the disparities between UK official statistics on trade and those produced by the EU, which have increased since the end of the Brexit transition period.

[Trade off: different ways of measuring imports and exports](#) Blog | Released 14 May 2021 A blog examining the discrepancies between the Office for National Statistics and Eurostat trade figures.

15 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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