

Statistical bulletin

Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies: October to December 2020

Transactions that result in a change of ultimate control of the target company and have a value of £1 million or more.

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1 . Main points

- In Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&A) involving a change in majority share ownership all saw notable increases in both value and number, while domestic M&A recorded sizeable decreases.
- In Quarter 4 2020 estimates for the total value of inward M&A (foreign companies abroad acquiring UK companies) were £4.3 billion, which was higher than Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020 (£3.2 billion).
- The value of outward M&A (UK companies acquiring foreign companies abroad) was £4.5 billion in Quarter 4 2020, an increase of £3.1 billion on the value recorded in the previous quarter (£1.4 billion).
- Domestic M&A (UK companies acquiring other UK companies) was valued at £2.2 billion in Quarter 4 2020, which was lower than the previous quarter (£4.4 billion).
- The amount of M&A activity has been affected by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, where the number of completed deals were much lower in April and May 2020; monthly deals have followed a broadly flat trend since June 2020, though these were lower than the numbers completed per month over 2019.

2 . Monthly mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

The amount of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) activity has been affected by the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, where the number of completed deals were much lower in April and May 2020. Since the fall in the monthly total of domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&A) from 183 in March 2020 down to a low of 42 in May 2020, there was an upward trend in the number of deals to 116 in October 2020.

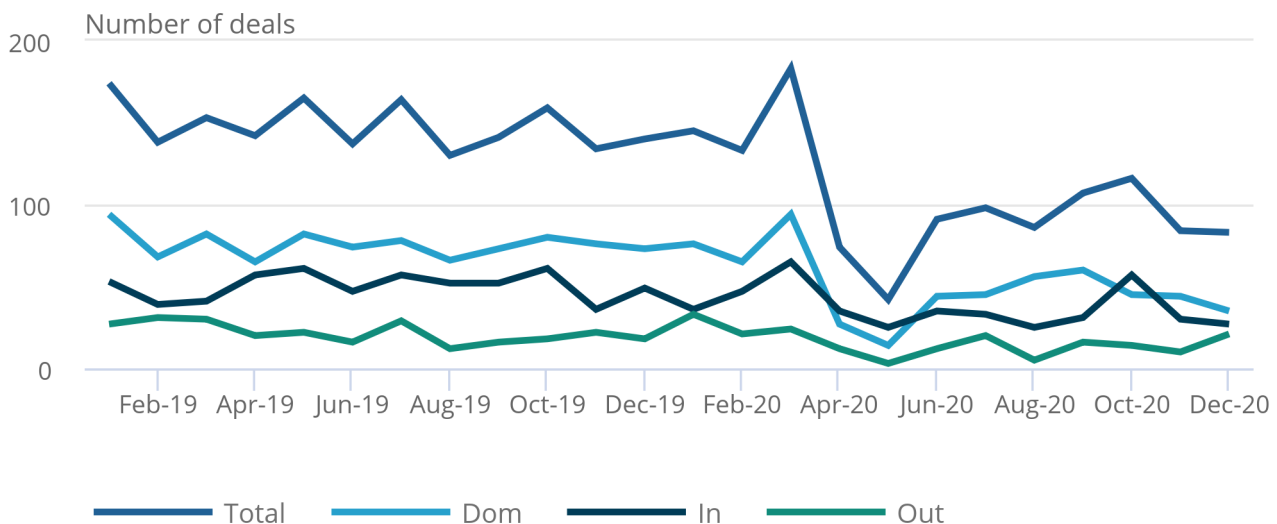
The total number of M&A deals then fell by 32 between October and November, mainly due to fewer inward M&A deals between the two months, with domestic and outward M&A deals only seeing a slight decrease. The month of December saw a similar number of M&A deals to November.

Figure 1: The number of monthly domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies from January 2019 to December 2020 ranged from 42 to 183

Monthly mergers and acquisitions, Jan 2019 to Dec 2020

Figure 1: The number of monthly domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies from January 2019 to December 2020 ranged from 42 to 183

Monthly mergers and acquisitions, Jan 2019 to Dec 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Quarter 4 2020 saw 283 completed transactions, a slight decrease of eight when compared with the previous quarter (291), but a sizeable decrease of 150 when compared with Quarter 4 2019 (433).

The total number of monthly M&A deals has followed a broadly flat trend since June 2020, yet these were lower than the numbers completed per month over 2019. For outward M&A, the number of deals did fall between March 2020 and May 2020, yet the number of deals completed in December 2020 (21) was very similar to that in March 2020 (24). The monthly number of domestic and inward M&A deals remained below the numbers in March 2020. There was a relatively large increase in domestic M&A deals between May 2020 (14) and June 2020 (44); likewise for inward from September (31) to October (57).

[The Bank of England Agents' Summary of Business Conditions report for Quarter 4 2020](#) states that "Activity has recovered relative to troughs earlier in 2020", and reports "Investment intentions remained subdued overall, though some contacts are beginning to reinstate projects".

3 . Inward mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

The estimates for the total value of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) of UK companies made by foreign companies increased by £1.1 billion to £4.3 billion in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 when compared with Quarter 3 (July to September) 2020 (£3.2 billion). This was £11.4 billion lower than the value of £15.7 billion recorded in Quarter 4 2019.

A few high value inward acquisitions which completed in Quarter 4 2020 were:

- [Sampo Plc](#) of Finland, which acquired Hastings Group Holdings Plc of the UK
- [PerkinelmerInc](#) of the USA, which acquired Horizon Discovery Group Plc of the UK

Lists of notable completed inward mergers and acquisitions valued in excess of £100 million and which took place in 2020, can be found in previously published [mergers and acquisitions quarterly releases](#).

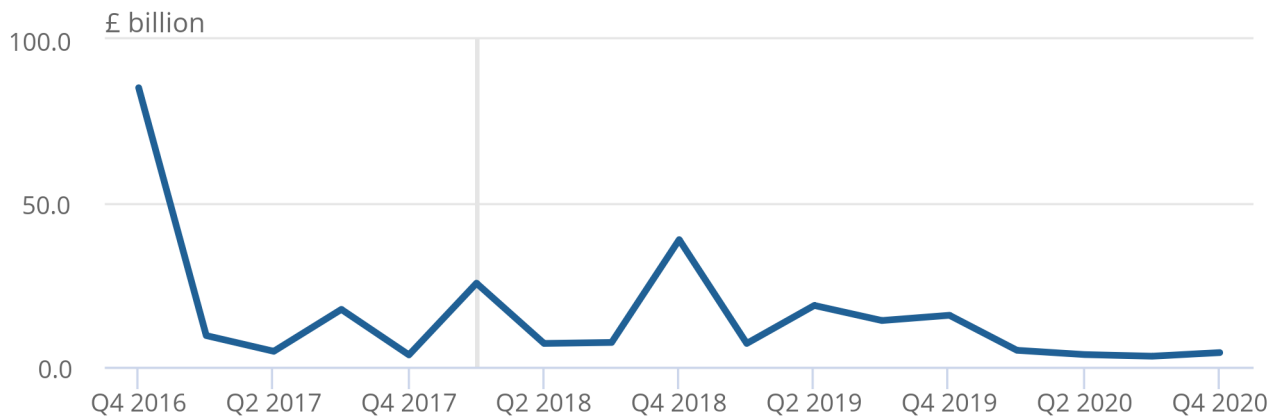
Value of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies

Figure 2: Estimates for the value of inward mergers and acquisitions between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £3.2 billion to £85.2 billion

Value of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 2: Estimates for the value of inward mergers and acquisitions between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £3.2 billion to £85.2 billion

Value of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).
3. Value of deals are in current prices and consequently do not account for the effects of inflation over time.

Number of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies

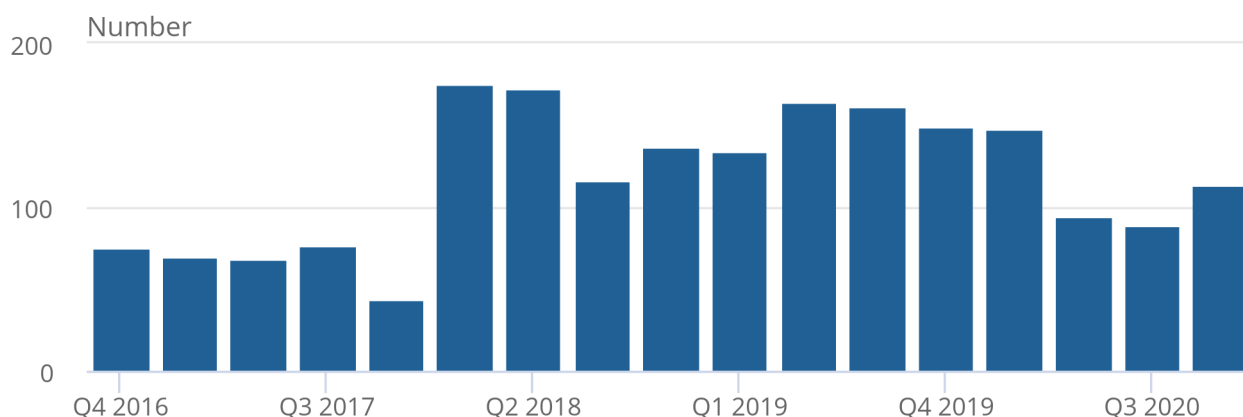
There were 114 successful inward acquisitions by foreign companies in Quarter 4 2020, an increase of 25 transactions on the number reported in the previous quarter (89) and 35 fewer than Quarter 4 2019 (149).

Figure 3: The estimates for the number of inward M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 44 to 176 transactions

Number of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 3: The estimates for the number of inward M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 44 to 176 transactions

Number of quarterly inward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. Consequently, the estimates from 2018 onwards are not directly comparable with those for previous years. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

There were 23 inward disposals of UK companies involving a change of majority share ownership during Quarter 4 2020. These were worth £0.4 billion, a decrease of £0.3 billion on the value reported in Quarter 3 2020 (£0.7 billion) when 29 disposals were recorded.

In 2020 there were 446 completed inward mergers and acquisitions (M&A) worth a total of £16.3 billion compared with 609 inward M&A with a value of £55.5 billion recorded in 2019.

Our [Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies, annual overview: 2020](#) provides further information on how M&A activity in 2020 compares with previous years.

4 . Outward mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

The value of outward mergers and acquisitions (M&A) UK companies acquiring foreign companies involving a change in majority share ownership in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 was £4.5 billion, a £3.1 billion increase compared with Quarter 3 (Jul to Sep) 2020 (£1.4 billion) and £1.5 billion increase on Quarter 4 2019 (£3.0 billion).

Notable high value outward acquisitions in excess of £100 million and which completed in Quarter 4 2020 were:

- [Ocado Group Plc](#) of the UK, which acquired Kindred Systems Inc of the USA
- [HH Global Enterprise Network Ltd](#) of the UK, which acquired Innerworkings Inc of the USA.

Lists of notable completed outward mergers and acquisitions valued in excess of £100 million and which took place in 2020, can be found in previously published [mergers and acquisitions quarterly releases](#).

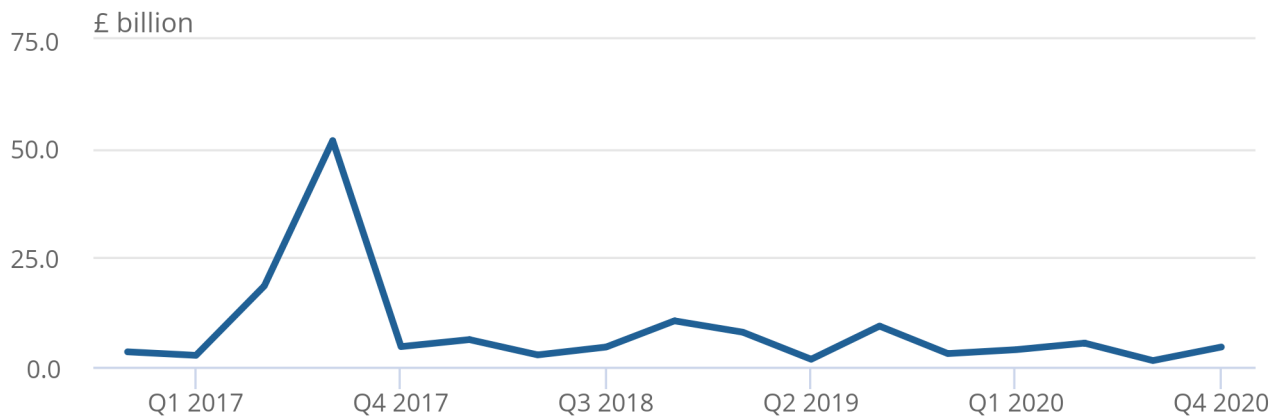
Value of quarterly outward M&A transactions involving UK companies

Figure 4: The estimates for the value of outward M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £1.4 billion to £51.8 billion

Value of outward quarterly M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 4: The estimates for the value of outward M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £1.4 billion to £51.8 billion

Value of outward quarterly M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; and Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).
3. Value of deals are in current prices and consequently do not account for the effects of inflation over time.

There were 45 completed outward M&A deals during Quarter 4 2020, slightly more than the previous quarter (Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020) when 41 acquisitions were recorded, but 13 fewer than Quarter 4 2019 (58).

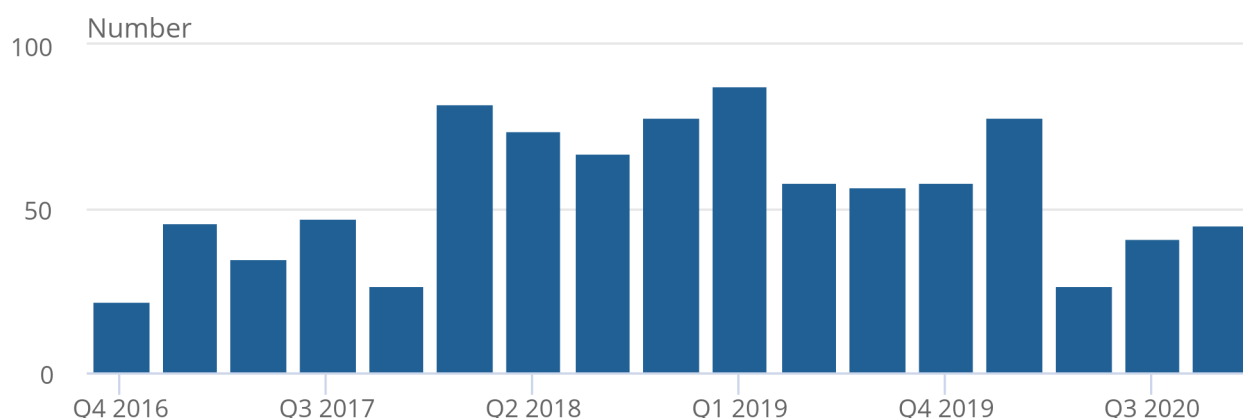
Number of quarterly outward M&A transactions involving UK companies

Figure 5: The estimates for the number of outward M&A transactions between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 22 to 88 transactions

Number of quarterly outward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 5: The estimates for the number of outward M&A transactions between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 22 to 88 transactions

Number of quarterly outward M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; and Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. Consequently, the estimates from 2018 onwards are not directly comparable with those for previous years. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

During Quarter 4 2020 there were 10 outward disposals involving a change of majority share ownership. These transactions were valued at £11.1 billion, £10.9 billion higher than Quarter 3 2020 (£0.2 billion when seven disposals were reported). The increase in both the number and value of outward disposals seen in Quarter 4 2020 can largely be explained by additional large value deals completing.

One notable large outward disposal which completed in Quarter 4 2020, was [Aviva Plc](#) of the UK which disposed of Aviva Limited Aviva Asia Pte Limited of Singapore.

In 2020 the total value of completed outward mergers and acquisitions was £15.2 billion, £6.7 billion lower than the value in 2019 (£21.9 billion) and the lowest recorded since 2010 (£12.4 billion). There were 191 successful outward mergers and acquisitions during 2020, 70 fewer deals than in the previous year (261).

Our [Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies, annual overview: 2020](#) provides further information on how M&A activity in 2020 compares with previous years, including on outward M&A disposals.

5 . Domestic mergers and acquisitions (M&A)

In Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 the estimates for the value and number of domestic mergers and acquisitions (M&A) (UK companies acquiring other UK companies) was £2.2 billion, half the value previously recorded in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020 (£4.4 billion) and explained by the completion of a lower number of higher valued acquisitions.

A few notable large valued domestic acquisitions that completed in Quarter 4 2020 were:

- [RWS Holdings Plc](#) of the UK, which acquired SDL Plc of the UK
- [Mitie Group Plc](#) of the UK, which acquired Interserve (Facilities Management) Ltd of the UK

Lists of notable completed domestic mergers and acquisitions valued in excess of £100 million and which took place in 2020, can be found in previously published [mergers and acquisitions quarterly releases](#).

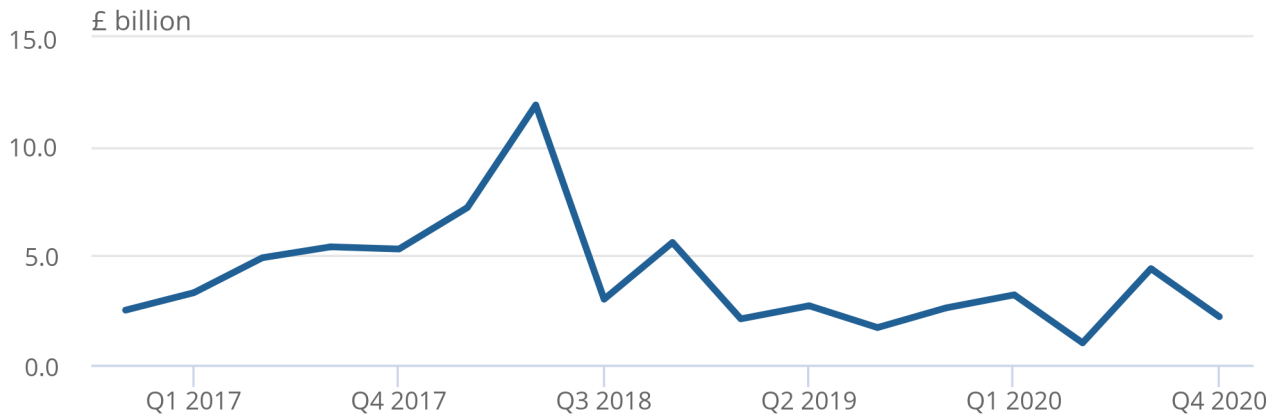
Value of domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies by quarter

Figure 6: The estimates for the value of domestic M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £1.0 billion to £11.9 billion

Value of quarterly domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 6: The estimates for the value of domestic M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from £1.0 billion to £11.9 billion

Value of quarterly domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; and Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).
3. Value of deals are in current prices and consequently do not account for the effects of inflation over time.

There were 124 completed domestic acquisitions involving a change in majority share ownership in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020, 37 deals fewer than Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020 (161) and 105 fewer than Quarter 4 2019 (229).

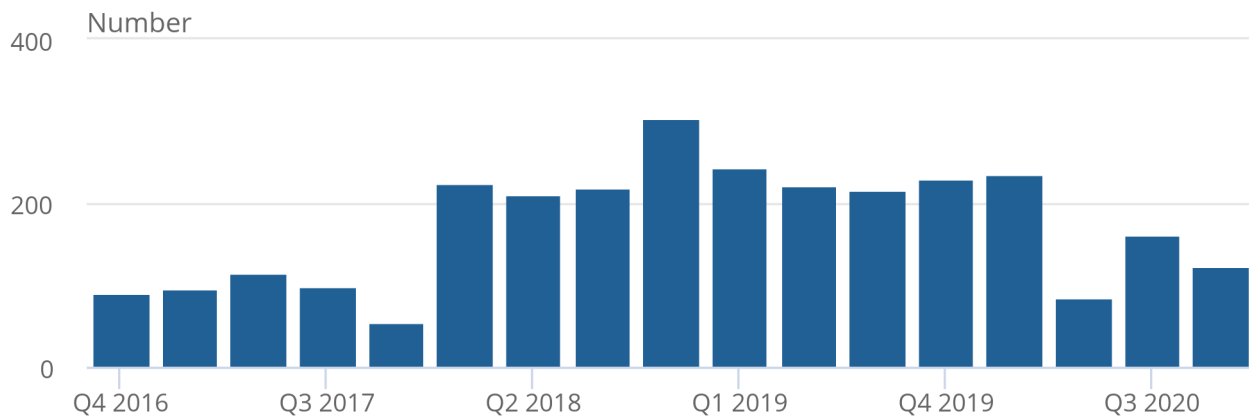
Number of quarterly domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies

Figure 7: The estimates for the number of domestic M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 54 to 303 transactions

Number of quarterly domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020

Figure 7: The estimates for the number of domestic M&A between Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2016 and Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 ranged from 54 to 303 transactions

Number of quarterly domestic M&A transactions involving UK companies, 2016 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes:

1. Quarter 1 covers January to March; Quarter 2 covers April to June; Quarter 3 covers July to September; and Quarter 4 covers October to December.
2. A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Quarter 1 2018 (shown as a solid line), which may lead to a structural break in the M&A statistical time series. Consequently, the estimates from 2018 onwards are not directly comparable with those for previous years. More information regarding these changes can be found in the [Mergers and Acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

In 2020 the value of completed domestic M&A was £10.8 billion, an increase of £1.8 billion when compared with £9.0 billion recorded in 2019. This increase can be explained by the completion of more larger value domestic M&A transactions.

There were 605 completed domestic M&A involving a change in majority share ownership, in 2020, a sizeable decrease of 306 transactions on the number recorded in 2019 (911).

Our [Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies, annual overview: 2020](#) provides further information on how M&A activity in 2020 compares with previous years.

6 . Data for mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies

[Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies](#)

Dataset | Released 9 March 2021

Quarterly estimates of the value and number of mergers and acquisitions and disposals involving UK companies worth £1 million or more.

[Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies – time-series](#)

Dataset | Released 9 March 2021

Quarterly data on the value and number of mergers, acquisitions and disposals involving UK companies worth £1 million or more.

7 . Glossary

Domestic M&A

Mergers and acquisitions of UK companies acquiring other UK companies.

Inward M&A

Mergers, acquisitions and disposals of UK companies by foreign companies.

Outward M&A

Mergers, acquisitions and disposals of foreign companies abroad by UK companies.

Mergers and acquisitions transactions

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) occur when one company takes control of another company. The internationally agreed definition of a M&A deal is when one company gains more than 50% of the ordinary shares (or voting rights) of the acquired company.

Disinvestments (Disposal transactions)

Disinvestment or disposal transactions refers to a decrease in the ordinary share ownership of a subsidiary company.

Transaction aggregates

The following are definitions of reasons why revisions to the aggregates for M&A transactions valued at £100 million and greater principally occur.

Completion of transactions

On announcement of a proposed transaction, an expected completion date is usually given. The publicly-reported values will be allocated to the quarter of expected completion. If the transaction is ultimately completed in an earlier or later quarter, the recorded values will be reallocated to the new quarter.

Publicly-reported values

Publicly-reported values are initially used to compile the aggregates. These can vary considerably from the values ultimately supplied by the respondents, frequently because the assumption of debt has been included in the publicly-reported value. A nominal value is applied if no publicly-reported value is available. The final values used to create the aggregates are those supplied by the respondent.

Non-completion of transactions

On announcement of a proposed transaction, the publicly-reported value of the transaction is recorded. If the transaction does not subsequently take place the recorded value will be deleted.

Non-share transactions

On announcement of a proposed transaction, it may appear that there will be transactions in the share capital of the companies involved and the publicly-reported values will be recorded. If subsequent information contradicts this, the recorded values will be amended or deleted.

Control

On announcement of a proposed transaction, it may appear that the transaction will give the purchasing company control of the purchased company, that is, a share ownership of greater than 50%. If subsequent information contradicts this, the recorded values will be amended or deleted.

Revisions from M&A data source

The current source provider of M&A deal information continually updates its database. Therefore, any new and additional reported transactions which completed in previous quarterly periods will be included as revisions.

Revisions from respondents

Very occasionally companies will restate the values that they have previously supplied to us.

8 . Measuring the data

Mergers and acquisitions (M&A) statistics from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 fully incorporate the Bureau van Dijk (BVD) Zephyr data source and methods. This new data source has increased the coverage of smaller M&A transactions and therefore results in a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported; users are therefore advised to take care when comparing the latest estimates with the number of transactions reported for quarters prior to Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018. See [Mergers and acquisitions Quality and Methodology Information](#) for more details.

The previous M&A estimates for Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2020, Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2020 and Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020 have been revised to reflect new information received after our last publication in [December 2020](#). The detailed revisions analysis is given in Table R1 which is attached to this publication.

No further revisions to estimates prior to Quarter 1 2020 have been made. Therefore, time series statistics for all quarters of 2019 and any previous historic quarterly and annual periods remain unchanged.

Table 1: Survey response rates for Mergers and Acquisitions Survey
Quarter 3 2020 and Quarter 4 2020

Cross-Border Mergers and Acquisitions (CBAM) Outwards

Reference Period	Quarter 3 2020	Quarter 4 2020
Response Rate (%)	100%	89%

Cross-Border Mergers and Acquisitions (CBAM) Inwards

Reference Period	Quarter 3 2020	Quarter 4 2020
Response Rate (%)	77%	81%

Domestic Mergers and Acquisitions (DAM)

Reference Period	Quarter 3 2020	Quarter 4 2020
Response Rate (%)	100%	100%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Mergers and Acquisitions Survey

Notes

1. These response rates apply to the return of mergers and acquisitions statutory survey questionnaires for deals valued in excess of £100 million.
2. Previous quarter responses have been revised, latest responses are provisional.
3. Quarter 3 is July to September 2020; Quarter 4 is October to December 2020.

After EU withdrawal

Now that the UK has left 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 1 January 2020. We will continue to produce statistics broken down to EU and non-EU aggregates.

After the transition period, we continue to produce our mergers and acquisitions statistics in line with the UK Statistics Authority'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 Mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies 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.

9 . Strengths and limitations

We produce statistics on the number and value of mergers and acquisitions (M&A) transactions. This information is presented in the following way:

- transactions are only recorded in Office for National Statistics (ONS) statistics once the deal has been legally completed
- each transaction has a value of at least £1 million
- the transactions results in a change of ultimate control of the target company
- all values are in current prices, and therefore have not been adjusted for the effects of inflation

These are among the main reasons our M&A statistics can differ from those reported in other sources. There can be a substantial time gap between the point at which a deal is announced and when it is legally completed. In addition, in some cases, announced M&A deals do not take place. ONS statistics on disposals (or de-mergers) are also included in tables alongside this bulletin. These are typically fewer in number per quarter, which can lead to greater suppression of statistics to mitigate disclosure. The focus of this bulletin is on acquisitions, although some of the more complex deals can include the disposal of some part of the newly-created corporate structure.

It is sometimes necessary to suppress figures for certain items in order to avoid disclosing information about an individual business. Further information on why statistics are suppressed is available in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) [Disclosure Control Policy](#).

It is not uncommon for the value of M&A transactions to vary considerably from one quarter to the next. This mainly reflects the nature of M&A activity in that these capture one-off deals. Therefore, if a particularly high-value M&A deal completes in a given quarter, it can make that quarter seem out of line with those that precede and follow it.

The volatility of M&A transactions also makes it difficult to link M&A statistics with other economic indicators – such as gross domestic product – or global events because of the time it can take between announcing and completing a M&A deal. It can therefore be more informative to look at longer-term trends within M&A statistics rather than focusing on quarterly movements. Details of any notable M&A deals that completed in Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2020 can be found in the respective sections of this bulletin.

Our data supplier, Bureau Van Dijk, have confirmed that there has been minimal impact on their activity from the economic restrictions introduced with the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. They report uninterrupted service from their operations. However, there could be an impact if companies' reporting processes take longer, although there is no conclusive evidence of this from transactions covered in this release.

Contextual external evidence

Global merger, acquisitions and disposals activity can be driven by the availability of credit. Therefore, when credit conditions deteriorate, as happened in the 2008 to 2009 economic downturn, M&A activity may decline. M&A activity can also be affected by the economic outlook and company profits, in addition to a range of other economic factors. The process of completing a M&A transaction takes time and sometimes there may be a lag between improving economic conditions and any change in M&A activity. Therefore, it is important to consider the M&A data within the wider economic context.

The following commentary summarises some external evidence from the Bank of England's (BOE) Credit Conditions Survey, Agents Summary of Business Conditions Report and the Monetary Policy Report.

[The Credit Conditions Survey for Quarter 4 2020](#) reported that "Lenders reported that the overall availability of credit to the corporate sector was unchanged in Q4 2020, decreasing for small businesses and remaining unchanged for medium and large firms. Overall availability was not expected to change in Q1 2021". The same report also stated that "Lenders reported that demand for corporate lending from small businesses decreased slightly in Q4 2020, and demand from medium sized businesses decreased whereas demand from large private non-financial corporations (PNFCs) increased over the same period. Demand for corporate lending was expected to decrease for small businesses in Q1 2021 but increase for medium and large businesses over the next quarter".

[The Agents Summary of Business Conditions report for Quarter 4 2020](#) stated that "Credit demand among small and medium-sized companies was reported to have increased in some cases as Covid-related restrictions came into effect. Contacts thought credit demand could rise further in the coming quarters as deferred payments, such as rent and tax, fall due in the first six months of 2021. Medium-sized companies reported an increase in merger and acquisition activity and banks were reported to have been willing to underwrite and provide credit for deals in certain sectors. Demand for bank credit from large corporates remained subdued, as many companies were able to raise finance elsewhere, for example in debt and equity markets. Although the government-backed loan schemes are supporting credit availability, especially for the smallest companies, there have been some reports of bank credit conditions tightening, particularly in sectors that had been most affected by the pandemic, and where insolvencies were expected to rise. There were also reports of trade credit insurance being reduced for companies in those sectors".

[The Monetary Policy Report for November 2020](#) stated that "Many contacts have cancelled or postponed investment, citing concerns about the strength of the recovery, their cash positions and uncertainty about the outlook. Investment intentions were particularly weak in the automotive, aviation and oil and gas sectors. Contacts also reported postponing projects such as office moves, workplace expansion and replacement of machinery in order to preserve cash. However, contacts in sectors experiencing strong growth, such as food production, renewable energy, warehousing and distribution, reported investing to increase capacity. Investment in IT and digital services remained strong as companies invested in remote working and online services. And there were a few reports of paused investment projects being reinstated. Credit demand among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was reported to have increased a little in recent weeks, in part due to renewed social distancing restrictions in some areas, and ahead of the closure of the Government lending schemes which had previously been due to finish at the end of November. Contacts thought credit demand could rise further in the coming quarters as deferred payments, such as rent and tax, come due. However, high levels of debt among SMEs could constrain the appetite of many to take on new debt. Demand for bank credit from large corporates remained subdued, as companies were able to raise credit in capital markets or elsewhere. Although the Government schemes are supporting credit availability, especially for the smallest companies, there have been some reports of bank credit conditions tightening, particularly in sectors that had been most affected by the pandemic, and where insolvencies were expected to rise".

10 . Related links

Supplementary information about mergers and acquisitions involving UK companies was published in:

[Foreign direct investment involving UK companies: 2019](#)

Bulletin | Released 21 December 2020

Direct investment of UK companies abroad (outward) and foreign companies into the UK (inward), including investment flows, positions and earnings, by country, component and industry.

[Mergers and acquisitions activity annual overview: 2020](#)

Article | Released 9 March 2021

Commentary outlining provisional statistics on mergers and acquisitions (M&A) involving UK companies for 2020.

[Mergers and acquisitions activity annual overview: 2019](#)

Article | Released 3 March 2020

Commentary outlining provisional statistics on mergers and acquisitions (M&A) involving UK companies for 2019.

1 Summary of cross-border mergers, acquisitions and disposals

£million

	Transactions abroad by UK companies ⁵				Transactions in the UK by foreign companies ⁵			
	Acquisitions		Disposals		Acquisitions		Disposals	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAQ	CBBI	CBAS	CBBT	CBAU	CBCQ	CBAW	CBDB
2011	286	50 234	80	14 111	237	32 967	69	11 748
2012	122	17 933	40	..	161	17 414	27	..
2013	58	..	..	..	141	31 839	26	1 913
2014	113	20 647	36	5 288	110	15 041	23	..
2015	170	25 561	42	16 852	145	33 335	35	7 451
2016	141	17 292	42	15 420	262	189 968	35	..
2017	155	77 525	56	10 480	259	35 227	55	13 216
2018	301	23 808	48	12 101	603	78 787	71	16 932
2019	261	21 888	68	12 631	609	55 556	146	12 542
2020	191	15 191	37	21 665	446	16 286	102	3 547
2017 Q1	46	2 587	15	1 412	70	9 461	11	1 878
Q2	35	18 548	16	2 050	68	4 727	20	3 809
Q3	47	51 773	17	6 507	77	17 480	17	6 463
Q4	27	4 617	8	511	44	3 559	7	1 066
2018 Q1	82	6 159	17	2 573	176	25 502	16	7 340
Q2	74	2 710	14	2 907	173	7 067	23	3 078
Q3	67	4 457	12	5 032	117	7 374	18	4 650
Q4	78	10 482	5	1 589	137	38 844	14	1 864
2019 Q1	88	7 927	14	1 238	134	7 103	36	1 894
Q2	58	1 658	14	700	165	18 683	37	886
Q3	57	9 270	27	10 088	161	14 065	38	5 781
Q4	58	3 033	13	605	149	15 705	35	3 981
2020 Q1	78 [†]	3 929 [†]	17 [†]	6 068 [†]	148 [†]	5 047 [†]	31 [†]	1 197 [†]
Q2	27	5 415	3	4 361	95	3 716	19	1 257
Q3	41	1 374	7	179	89	3 246	29	683
Q4	45	4 473	10	11 057	114	4 277	23	410

2 Mergers and acquisitions abroad by UK companies: source of funding

£million

	Total ³		Direct transactions ⁴		Indirect transactions of which:			
	Number	Value	Funds paid directly by UK parent		Funded by loan from UK parent		Funds raised locally abroad	
			Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAQ	CBBI	CBBU	CBBV	CBBW	CBBX	CBBY	CBBZ
2011	286	50 234	223	36 912	47	4 999	35	8 323
2012	122	17 933	83	9 523	29	8 094	19	316
2013	58	..	44	2 935	11	..	4	..
2014	113	20 647	79	6 888	35	7 641	77	6 118
2015	170	25 561	155	21 604	30	1 323	83	2 641
2016	141	17 292	142	9 838	23	3 978	58	3 859
2017	155	77 525	148	74 230	37	2 191	74	1 104
2018	301	23 808	244	18 553	..	..	..	..
2019	261	21 888	68	21 440	..	..	..	..
2020	191	15 191	66	14 927	..	..	..	..

[†] Indicates earliest revision, if any.

Disclosive data indicated by ..

1 Includes acquisitions by foreign companies routed through their UK subsidiary companies

2 The deal identification threshold has been increased at Q1 2010 from £0.1m to £1.0m and as a consequence there is a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported.

3 Where a transaction is funded in more than one way, it is included in 'Number' in each method but only once in 'Total'. Therefore numbers may not sum exactly across the columns.

4 Transactions for which details about financing have not been confirmed are included amongst direct transactions. The figures are subsequently revised when details become available.

5 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018, consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

6 Improved methodology to identify the number and value of disposal transactions was introduced from Q1 2019.

3 Disposals abroad by UK companies: funds realised

£million

	Total ¹		Direct transactions ²		Indirect transactions of which:			
	Number	Value	Funds paid directly to UK parent		Repayment of loan made by UK parent		Funds retained abroad	
			Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAS	CBBT	CBCA	CBCB	CBCC	CBGD	CBCE	CBCF
2011	80	14 111	66	12 533	6	598	13	980
2012	40	..	30	5 817	3	..	11	..
2013	..	..	28	5 682	2	..	..	..
2014	36	5 288	28	4 610	7	323	11	355
2015	42	16 852	44	16 617	–	–	8	1 222
2016	42	15 420	43	15 297	..	..	..	..
2017	56	10 480	60	10 078	4	85	11	315
2018	48	12 101	40	11 829	..	..	..	..
2019	68	12 631	35	12 481	..	..	..	..
2020	37	21 665	22	21 619	..	..	..	..

4 Mergers and acquisitions in the UK by foreign companies: source of funding

£million

	Total ¹		Direct transactions ²		Indirect transactions of which:			
	Number	Value	Funds paid directly to UK by foreign company		Funded by loan from foreign company		Funds raised in the UK	
			Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAU	CBCQ	CBDC	CBDD	CBHZ	CBIA	CBIB	CBIC
2011	237	32 967	158	17 112	50	12 598	49	3 257
2012	161	17 414	103	11 659	48	4 217	35	1 538
2013	141	31 839	94	8 391	39	..	25	..
2014	110	15 041	78	10 404	27	2 702	61	1 934
2015	145	33 335	150	29 009	14	707	39	3 620
2016	262	189 968	274	184 656	29	2 495	97	2 817
2017	259	35 227	257	31 567	26	1 582	94	2 078
2018	603	78 787	123	71 323	5	111	17	7 354
2019	609	55 556	100	48 475	..	..	..	..
2020	446	16 286	76	15 660	..	..	..	..

5 Disposals in the UK by foreign companies: funds realised

£million

	Total ¹		Direct transactions ²		Indirect transactions of which:			
	Number	Value	Funds paid directly to foreign parent		Repayment of loan to foreign parent		Funds retained in the UK	
			Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAW	CBDB	CBID	CBIE	CBIF	CBIG	CBIH	CBII
2011	69	11 748	49	8 589	9	1 190	22	1 969
2012	27	..	23	5 821	..	..	6	96
2013	26	1 913	19	1 541	3	..	9	..
2014	23	..	17	2 415	..	..	..	..
2015	35	7 451	38	7 006	..	..	..	..
2016	35	..	40	6 095	..	..	..	..
2017	55	13 216	58	13 015	..	..	..	..
2018	71	16 932	56	10 542	..	..	..	..
2019	146	12 542	51	10 648	..	..	..	..
2020	102	3 547	37	3 492	..	..	..	..

[†] Indicates earliest revision, if any.

Disclosive data indicated by ..

1 Where a transaction is funded in more than one way, it is included in 'Number' in each method but only once in 'Total'. Therefore numbers may not sum exactly across the columns.

2 Transactions for which details about financing have not been confirmed are included amongst direct transactions. The figures are subsequently revised when details become available.

-indicates data is zero or less than £0.5m

3 The deal identification threshold has been increased at Q1 2010 from £0.1m to £1.0m and as a consequence there is a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported.

4 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018, consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

5 Improved methodology to identify the number and value of disposal transactions was introduced from Q1 2019.

6A Area analysis of acquisitions abroad by UK companies

£million

	World Total		EU		Other Europe		Europe Total		USA	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAQ	CBBI	CBAY	CBAZ	HCK3	HCK4	HCJ3	HCJ4	CBBA	CBBB
2011	286	50 234	75	20 666	29	2 760	104	23 426	83	9 342
2012	122	17 933	34	7 932	12	842	46	8 774	41	5 384
2013	58	..	16	6 216	7	376	23	6 592	8	600
2014	113	20 647	33	11 404	15	2 279	48	13 683	27	4 987
2015	170	25 561	55	7 712	16	7 715	71	15 427	61	6 136
2016	141	17 292	49	2 112	13	1 494	62	3 606	36	12 542
2017	155	77 525	62	2 394	10	484	72	2 878	55	71 678
2018	301	23 808	149	4 348	14	2 036	163	6 385	73	15 663
2019	261	21 888	99	9 412	13	1 724	112	11 136	86	8 902
2020	191	15 191	84	3 835	8	1 379	92	5 214	63	5 208

	Other Americas		Americas Total		Asia		Australasia & Oceania		Africa	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	HCL3	HCL4	HCM3	HCM4	HCN3	HCN4	HCO3	HCO4	HCP3	HCP4
2011	30	2 410	113	11 752	33	6 807	16	7 666	19	583
2012	18	2 640	59	8 024	7	458	5	..	5	..
2013	13	323	21	923	..	..	..	..	..	..
2014	17	1 135	44	6 122	12	637	..	..	..	..
2015	18	2 381	79	8 517	..	..	9	859	..	..
2016	18	745	54	13 287	10	293	..	..	..	..
2017	10	392	65	72 068	..	..	..	..	..	..
2018	25	812	98	16 476	19	636	18	234	3	77
2019	20	775	106	9 677	14	390	23	599	6	86
2020	8	84	71	5 292	..	..	15	181	..	..

6D Area analysis of disposals abroad by UK companies

£million

	World Total		EU		Other Europe		Europe Total		USA	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAS	CBBT	CBBJ	CBBK	HCK5	HCK6	HCJ5	HCJ6	CBBL	CBBM
2011	80	14 111	32	4 857	4	57	36	4 914	18	4 715
2012	40	..	..	..	..	..	17	2 764	7	1 038
2013	..	..	12	1 589	3	128	15	1 717	9	3 691
2014	36	5 288	..	..	..	..	18	2 887	..	..
2015	42	16 852	18	6 270	4	541	22	6 811	..	..
2016	42	15 420	..	..	..	..	19	916	10	8 859
2017	56	10 480	..	..	..	..	23	2 486	..	..
2018	48	12 101	..	..	..	..	24	6 254	..	..
2019	68	12 631	..	..	..	..	32	9 708	..	..
2020	37	21 665	..	..	..	..	18	6 589	..	..

	Other Americas		Americas Total		Asia		Australasia & Oceania		Africa	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	HCL5	HCL6	HCM5	HCM6	HCN5	HCN6	HCO5	HCO6	HCP5	HCP6
2011	9	1 559	27	6 274	10	..	5	..	2	..
2012	6	2 189	13	3 227	2	1 220	3	..	6	46
2013	..	..	9	3 691	..	..	4	..	..	..
2014	..	..	14	2 228	..	..	..	..	..	..
2015	..	..	10	2 828	..	..	..	..	4	73
2016	11	5 621	21	14 478	..	..	..	..	..	..
2017	..	..	21	5 170	8	295	..	..	..	..
2018	..	..	9	2 043	..	..	5	400	..	..
2019	..	..	11	407	19	510	..	..	..	..
2020	..	..	8	803	5	14 174	..	..	..	..

† Indicates earliest revision, if any.

Disclosive data indicated by ..

-indicates data is zero or less than £0.5m

1 The deal identification threshold has been increased at Q1 2010 from £0.1m to £1.0m and as a consequence there is a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported.

2 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018, consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

3 Improved methodology to identify the number and value of disposal transactions was introduced from Q1 2019.

7A Area analysis of acquisitions in the UK by foreign companies

£million

	World Total		EU		Other Europe		Europe Total		USA	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAU	CBCQ	CBCG	CBCH	HCJ7	HCJ8	HCI7	HCI8	CBCI	CBCJ
2011	237	32 967	69	6 238	23	1 395	92	7 633	87	21 489
2012	161	17 414	53	3 533	21	1 094	74	4 627	50	6 217
2013	141	31 839	35	..	18	..	53	24 172	54	3 408
2014	110	15 041	31	4 681	14	700	45	5 381	42	6 318
2015	145	33 335	34	5 816	14	2 004	48	7 820	48	11 083
2016	262	189 968	84	125 172	23	1 370	107	126 541	89	30 313
2017	259	35 227	80	9 224	21	5 894	101	15 120	84	8 232
2018	603	78 787	190	5 649	64	12 168	254	17 817	231	52 678
2019	609	55 556	172	11 320	81	1 773	253	13 092	222	30 223
2020	446	16 286	120	5 704	63	1 340	183	7 043	165	4 514

	Other Americas		Americas Total		Asia		Australasia & Oceania		Africa	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	HCK7	HCK8	HCL7	HCL8	HCM7	HCM8	HCN7	HCN8	HCO7	HCO8
2011	22	1 690	109	23 179	18	1 367	14	762	4	26
2012	21	4 256	71	10 473	12	2 277	1	..	3	..
2013	16	1 529	70	4 937	13	..	2	..	3	..
2014	8	1 317	50	7 635	12	1 932	..	..	..	..
2015	25	9 052	73	20 137	17	4 680	..	..	..	..
2016	21	2 471	110	32 784	35	29 946	..	..	..	..
2017	34	6 653	118	14 885	26	2 856	9	2 260	5	105
2018	36	4 351	267	57 028	55	1 698	17	925	10	1 319
2019	61	4 716	283	34 938	46	6 139	15	664	12	722
2020	44	3 134	209	7 648	33	712	..	..	..	..

7D Area analysis of disposals in the UK by foreign companies

£million

	World Total		EU		Other Europe		Europe Total		USA	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	CBAW	CBDB	CBCR	CBCS	HCJ9	HCK2	HCI9	HCI2	CBCT	CBCU
2011	69	11 748	26	6 539	9	394	35	6 933	18	2 993
2012	27	..	11	1 054	7	..	18	..	4	..
2013	26	1 913	9	862	3	36	12	898	8	..
2014	23	..	..	..	..	..	13	1 949	..	..
2015	35	7 451	10	1 117	10	3 399	20	4 516	..	..
2016	35	..	13	3 322	8	1 336	21	4 658	..	..
2017	55	13 216	18	3 698	11	1 151	29	4 846	10	5 123
2018	71	16 932	20	3 195	8	3 464	28	6 659	20	1 766
2019	146	12 542	50	1 178	22	487	72	1 664	42	7 635
2020	102	3 547	35	1 687	20	171	55	1 858	21	887

	Other Americas		Americas Total		Asia		Australasia & Oceania		Africa	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	HCK9	HCL2	HCL9	HCM2	HCM9	HCN2	HCN9	HCO2	HCO9	HCP2
2011	6	687	24	3 680	8	..	2	..	..	..
2012	3	..	7	3 601	..	..	..	..	..	..
2013	2	..	10	611	3	328	1	..	..	..
2014	..	..	8	809	..	..	..	..	..	..
2015	..	..	13	2 911	..	..	..	..	..	..
2016	..	..	12	1 245	..	..	..	..	..	..
2017	7	1 108	17	6 230	6	1 562	..	..	..	..
2018	10	1 748	30	3 514	..	..	..	..	..	..
2019	20	1 256	62	8 890	..	..	..	..	..	..
2020	15	155	36	1 042	10	621	..	..	..	..

† Indicates earliest revision, if any

Disclosive data indicated by ..

-indicates data is zero or less than £0.5m

1 The deal identification threshold has been increased at Q1 2010 from £0.1m to £1.0m and as a consequence there is a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported.

2 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018, consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

3 Improved methodology to identify the number and value of disposal transactions was introduced from Q1 2019.

8 Summary of mergers and acquisitions in the UK by UK companies

£million

	Total all mergers and acquisitions ²		Mergers and acquisitions of independent companies ²		Sales of subsidiaries between company groups ²	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
	AIHA	DUCM	DWVH	HIKB	DWVL	HIKC
2011	373	8 089	276	5 265	97	2 824
2012	266	3 413	216	2 536	50	877
2013	238	7 665	175	4 135	63	3 530
2014	189	8 032	150	5 968	39	2 063
2015	245	6 920	194	4 640	51	2 280
2016	428	24 688	383	11 038	45	13 650
2017	364	18 783	323	15 451	41	3 332
2018	960	27 732	541	19 046	419	8 685
2019	911	9 040	480	5 705	431	3 336
2020	605	10 813	311	3 418	294	7 395
2017 Q1	97	3 295	83	2 658	14	636
Q2	114	4 855	..	..	..	..
Q3	99	5 379	92	5 308	7	70
Q4	54	5 254	..	..	..	..
2018 Q1	225	7 176	111	5 119	114	2 057
Q2	212	11 941	126	9 436	86	2 505
Q3	220	2 991	136	1 720	84	1 271
Q4	303	5 624	168	2 771	135	2 852
2019 Q1	244	2 054	134	1 013	110	1 041
Q2	221	2 689	115	2 130	106	559
Q3	217	1 701	105	813	112	888
Q4	229	2 596	126	1 749	103	848
2020 Q1	235 [†]	3 200 [†]	120 [†]	963 [†]	115 [†]	2 237 [†]
Q2	85	1 043	37	371	48	672
Q3	161	4 384	89	800	72	3 584
Q4	124	2 186	65	1 284	59	902

9 Mergers and acquisitions in the UK by UK companies: category of expenditure

£million

	Expenditure ²					Percentage of expenditure ²		
	Cash			Issues of ordinary shares	Issues of fixed interest securities	Cash	Issues of ordinary shares	Issues of fixed interest securities
	Total	Independent companies	Subsidiaries					
	DUCM	DWVW	DWVX	AIHD	AIHE	DWVY	DWVZ	DWVA
2011	8 089	4 432	2 667	719	271	87	10	4
2012	3 413	1 937	789	419	268	82	10	8
2013	7 665	3 690	3 475	353	147	92	6	2
2014	8 032	3 249	1 947	2 782	51	65	35	–
2015	6 920	3 365	1 871	1 418	265	74	22	4
2016	24 688	5 493	5 308	13 471	418	43	55	2
2017	18 783	8 036	3 097	7 286	364	59	39	2
2018	27 732	7 633	8 487	11 551	63	58	42	–
2019	9 040	3 605	3 104	2 331	–	74	26	–
2020	10 813	3 007	5 197	..	..	77	..	..
2017 Q1	3 295	2 615	419	138	122	92	4	4
Q2	4 855	..	..	136	92	..	3	2
Q3	5 379	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Q4	5 254	1 922	390	..	..	44	..	..
2018 Q1	7 176	1 936	1 957	..	..	54	..	..
Q2	11 941	2 809	2 424	..	..	44	..	..
Q3	2 991	1 687	1 259	45	–	98	2	–
Q4	5 624	1 201	2 847	..	–	72	..	–
2019 Q1	2 054	1 009	991	54	–	97	3	–
Q2	2 689	772	543	..	–	49	..	..
Q3	1 701	812	808	81	–	95	5	–
Q4	2 596	1 012	762	..	–	68	..	..
2020 Q1	3 200 [†]	631 [†]	2 075 [†]	84 [†]
Q2	1 043	354	661	..	..	97	..	..
Q3	4 384	795	1 662	..	..	56	..	..
Q4	2 186	1 227	799	..	..	93	..	..

[†] Indicates earliest revision, if any
Disclosive data are indicated with ..

1 The deal identification threshold has been increased from Q1 2010 from £0.1 to £1.0m and as a consequence there may be a discontinuity in the number and value of transactions reported.

2 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018,

consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

10 Summary of net cross-border acquisitions and disposals

£million

	Net transactions abroad by UK companies ³		Net transactions in the UK by foreign companies ³		Net cross-border transactions involving UK companies ³	
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value
2011	206	36 123	168	21 219	38	14 904
2012	82	..	134	..	-52	..
2013	..	..	115	29 926	..	..
2014	77	15 359	87	..	-10	..
2015	128	8 709	110	25 884	18	-17 175
2016	99	1 872	227	..	-128	..
2017	99	67 045	204	22 011	-105	45 034
2018	253	11 707	532	61 855	-279	-50 148
2019	193	9 257	463	43 014	-270	-33 757
2020	154	-6 474	344	12 739	-190	-19 213
2017 Q1	31	1 175	59	7 583	-28	-6 408
Q2	19	16 498	48	918	-29	15 580
Q3	30	45 266	60	11 017	-30	34 249
Q4	19	4 106	37	2 493	-18	1 613
2018 Q1	65	3 586	160	18 162	-95	-14 576
Q2	60	-197	150	3 989	-90	-4 186
Q3	55	-575	99	2 724	-44	-3 299
Q4	73	8 893	123	36 980	-50	-28 087
2019 Q1	74	6 689	98	5 209	-24	1 480
Q2	44	958	128	17 797	-84	-16 839
Q3	30	-818	123	8 284	-93	-9 102
Q4	45	2 428	114	11 724	-69	-9 296
2020 Q1	61 [†]	-2 139 [†]	117 [†]	3 850 [†]	-56 [†]	-5 989 [†]
Q2	24	1 054	76	2 459	-52	-1 405
Q3	34	1 195	60	2 563	-26	-1 368
Q4	35	-6 584	91	3 867	-56	-10 451

[†] Indicates earliest revision, if any.

Disclosive data indicated by ..

1 Includes acquisitions by foreign companies routed through their UK subsidiary companies.

2 The deal identification threshold has been increased at Q1 2010 from £0.1m to £1.0m and as a consequence there is a discontinuity in the number of transactions reported.

3 A new method for compiling M&A statistics was introduced from Q1 2018, consequently the estimates for 2018 onward are not directly comparable with those for previous years.

4 Improved methodology to identify the number and value of disposal transactions was introduced from Q1 2019.

R1 REVISIONS ANALYSIS

Revisions since last mergers and acquisitions publication

£ million

		2019	2020 Q1	2020 Q2	2020 Q3
Cross-border mergers, acquisitions and disposals					
Transactions abroad by UK companies					
Value of acquisitions	CBBI	–	–305	–130	–192
Value of disposals	CBBT	–	–202	–173	–30
Transactions in the UK by foreign companies					
Value of acquisitions	CBCQ	–	–165	–316	–178
Value of disposals	CBDB	–	–55	–92	–3
Mergers and acquisitions in the UK by UK companies					
Summary of transactions					
Value of all acquisitions and mergers	DUCM	–	–40	–338	–78
Value of acquisitions of independent companies	HIKB	–	–10	–159	–34
Value of sales of subsidiary companies	HIKC	–	–30	–179	–44
Category of expenditure					
Cash paid for independent companies	DWVW	–	–10	–159	–34
Cash paid for subsidiary companies	DWVX	–	–26	–176	–37
Issue of ordinary shares	AIHD	–	..	..	..
Issue of fixed interest securities	AIHE	–	..	..	..