

Statistical bulletin

UK trade in services by partner country: July to September 2019

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

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Next release:
To be announced

Notice

27 April 2020

The effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on our capacity means we have had to postpone publication of this bulletin.

We will continue to publish the data in the [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#) and [UK trade in services: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted](#) datasets.

This will protect the delivery and quality of our remaining outputs as well as ensuring we can respond to new demands as a direct result of COVID-19. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

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1 . Main points

- On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, the trade in services surplus widened £0.7 billion to £24.0 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019, compared with the same quarter a year ago, as exports grew faster than imports.
- Exports of services were £3.9 billion higher in Quarter 3 2019 compared with the same quarter last year, while imports of services grew by a lesser £3.2 billion.
- The rise in exports between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019 was mainly driven by other business services and intellectual property; increases in imports were mainly from other business services, financial services, and intellectual property.
- The UK imported £29.2 billion of services from non-EU countries in Quarter 3 2019, compared with £28.8 billion imported from the EU. The UK exported £49.1 billion of services to non-EU countries over the same period, compared with exports of £33.0 billion to the EU.
- The UK's largest trading partner for both exports and imports of services in Quarter 3 2019 was the United States.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

Data in this release will differ from the monthly [UK trade](#) release on a quarterly basis, as services data is on a non-seasonally adjusted basis while it is seasonally adjusted in UK trade.

Data are provided in as much detail as possible without disclosing the details of any individual companies, however, this means some figures have been suppressed to protect confidentiality.

You are advised to be cautious when interpreting changes between quarters because the series are not seasonally adjusted and few data points are presented, especially when looking at figures and tables in this release. It is therefore recommended that comparisons are made with the same quarter a year ago or between years. We plan to develop these statistics to be seasonally adjusted in the future.

The UK trade in services data have been produced as part of planned improvements to our trade statistics described in Section 3.3 of the [UK trade development plan: 2017](#).

This quarterly services release contains 32 service types by 67 countries. While service type by partner country data are published annually in [The Pink Book](#), this publication has an increased level of detail and is produced quarterly, covering periods from Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2016 to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019. This was made possible partly through fuller use of the improved quarterly country breakdown derived from the increased and optimised quarterly International Trade in Services (ITIS) Survey.

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

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

3 . UK imports and exports of services both increased in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019 compared with the same quarter a year ago

The UK trade in services surplus widened £0.7 billion to £24.0 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019, compared with Quarter 3 2018. This was mainly driven by a rise in exports, which increased £3.9 billion to £82.0 billion over the period, an increase of 5.0% (Table 1). UK imports of services increased 5.8% over the same period, from £54.8 billion in Quarter 3 2018 to £58.0 billion in Quarter 3 2019.

Table 1: UK exports and imports of services increased in Quarter 3 2019, compared with the same quarter a year ago

Total UK trade in services exports and imports, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2016 to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	Q1 2017	Q2 2017	Q3 2017	Q4 2017	Q1 2018	Q2 2018	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019
UK exports	60,438	67,098	68,525	73,516	67,203	73,900	75,335	75,181	70,133	76,421	78,150	82,166	74,768	78,058	82,039
UK imports	36,447	40,358	48,656	42,260	41,219	45,246	51,239	43,147	43,806	48,228	54,822	50,436	47,855	53,149	57,998
Balance	23,991	26,740	19,869	31,256	25,984	28,654	24,096	32,034	26,327	28,193	23,328	31,730	26,913	24,909	24,041

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

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

4 . Exports of services in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019 increased with both non-EU and EU countries

Services exports to non-EU countries increased £2.2 billion to £49.1 billion between Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, whereas exports to EU countries increased by a lesser £1.7 billion to £33.0 billion over the same period.

The largest country-level increase in exports to non-EU countries was to the United States, which rose by £0.8 billion to £19.5 billion. This was mainly driven by exports of other business services, which increased by £0.6 billion between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, partially offset by exports of intellectual property, which decreased £0.3 billion over the same period.

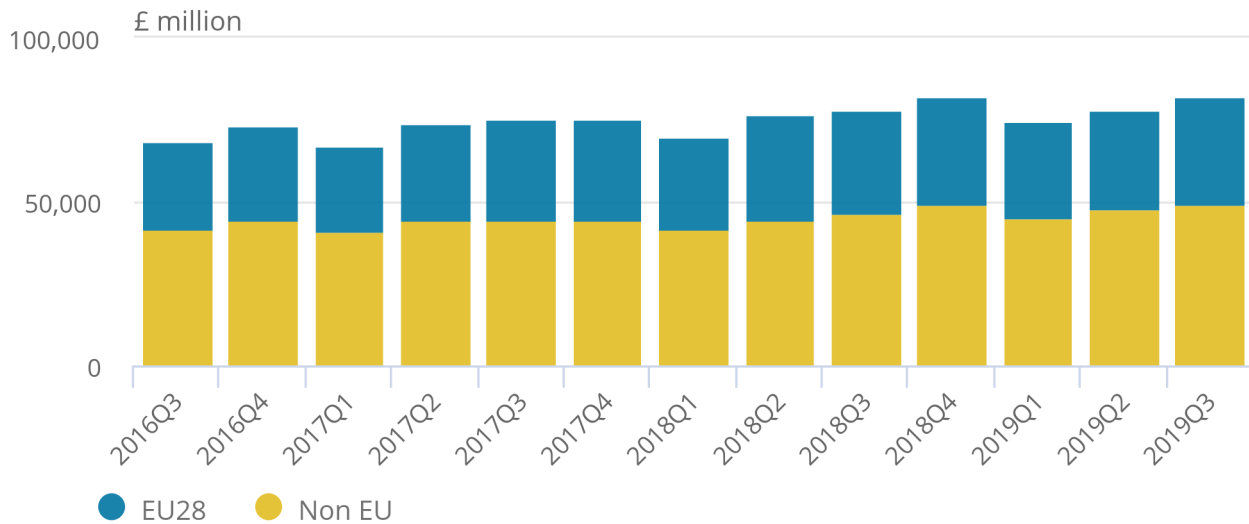
The largest country-level increase in exports to EU countries was to France, which increased by £0.3 billion to £4.7 billion between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019. This was mainly driven by intellectual property, which grew by £0.2 billion over the period.

Figure 1: Exports to both non-EU and EU countries rose compared with the same quarter a year ago

UK exports of services by EU and non-EU, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2016 to Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

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UK exports of services by EU and non-EU, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2016 to Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

5 . The United States remain the UK’s largest trading partner for services exports

The United States (US) remains the UK’s largest services export partner, accounting for £19.5 billion, or 23.7% of all UK exports of services in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019 (Table 2). This was followed by exports to Germany and France, which were £5.3 billion (6.4%) and £4.7 billion (5.7%), respectively.

The US had the largest increase in exports of all countries between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, of £0.8 billion. Exports increased for six of the top 10 exporting countries between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019. Switzerland had the largest decrease in exports of all countries between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, of £0.7 billion to £3.3 billion. This was mainly driven by falls in exports of other business services, and telecommunications, computer and information services, which fell by £0.4 billion and £0.3 billion, respectively.

Table 2: In Quarter 3 2019, the United States was the UK's largest services export partner
UK's largest export partner countries, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 to Quarter 3 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Country	£ million					Percentage of total services exports	
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q3 2018	Q3 2019
United States	18,672	19,583	18,274	18,963	19,456	23.9	23.7
Germany	5,162	5,601	5,230	5,231	5,261	6.6	6.4
France	4,420	4,733	4,309	4,476	4,687	5.7	5.7
Netherlands	4,306	4,555	4,421	4,352	4,481	5.5	5.5
Ireland	4,166	4,476	3,670	2,984	3,913	5.3	4.8
Switzerland	3,938	4,046	2,923	2,958	3,274	5.0	4.0
Italy	2,835	2,675	2,326	2,794	2,948	3.6	3.6
Spain	2,085	2,012	1,936	2,016	2,202	2.7	2.7
Japan	1,933	1,963	2,020	1,828	1,917	2.5	2.3
Australia	1,859	1,832	1,534	1,673	1,764	2.4	2.2
Rest of the world	28,774	30,690	28,125	30,783	32,136	36.8	39.2
World total	78,150	82,166	74,768	78,058	82,039	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

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

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

Most service types saw increases in exports for Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019 compared with Quarter 3 2018. Other business services saw the largest rise, increasing £1.7 billion (6.9%) over the period to £26.4 billion (Table 3). The increase in other business services exports was largely driven by a £1.3 billion increase to professional and management consulting services to £12.1 billion (Figure 2).

Other business services continues to be the largest export service type accounting for 32.1% of total services exports in Quarter 3 2019.

Table 3: In Quarter 3 2019, other business services accounted for 32.1% of total service exports
UK's largest service type exports, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 to Quarter 3 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Service type	£ million					Percentage of total services exports	
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q3 2018	Q3 2019
Other business services	24,661	28,247	25,460	25,520	26,356	31.6	32.1
Financial	15,154	16,007	16,035	14,852	15,628	19.4	19.0
Travel	10,868	8,867	6,625	9,248	11,364	13.9	13.9
Transportation	8,006	7,367	6,827	7,585	7,863	10.2	9.6
Telecommunications, computer and information services	5,889	6,512	5,928	5,991	6,046	7.5	7.4
Other service types	13,572	15,166	13,893	14,862	14,782	17.4	18.0
Total services	78,150	82,166	74,768	78,058	82,039	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

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

Figure 2 shows the value for each component of other business services in Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019. Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations made up the largest share of other business services, accounting for 36.4% in Quarter 3 2019.

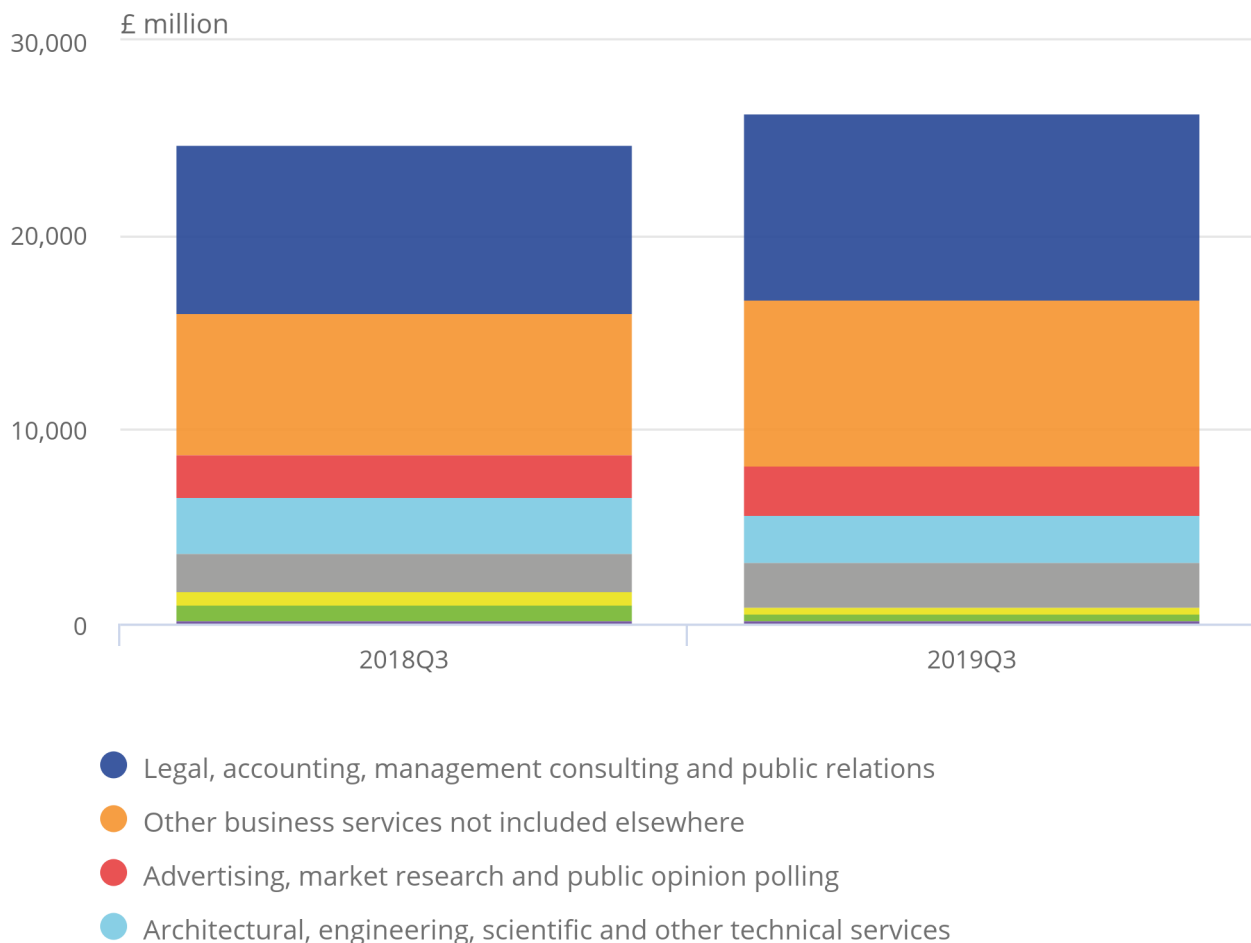
Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations is a subcomponent of professional and management consulting services.

Figure 2: Legal, accounting, management consulting, and public relations accounted for 36.4% of total exports of other business services in Quarter 3 2019

Total UK exports of other business services, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 2: Legal, accounting, management consulting, and public relations accounted for 36.4% of total exports of other business services in Quarter 3 2019

Total UK exports of other business services, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

In Quarter 3 2019, the United States (US) was the largest export partner for other business services, accounting for 30.3%, or £8.0 billion (Figure 3) of all UK other business services exports. Within other business services, the US exported £4.0 billion of professional and management consulting services.

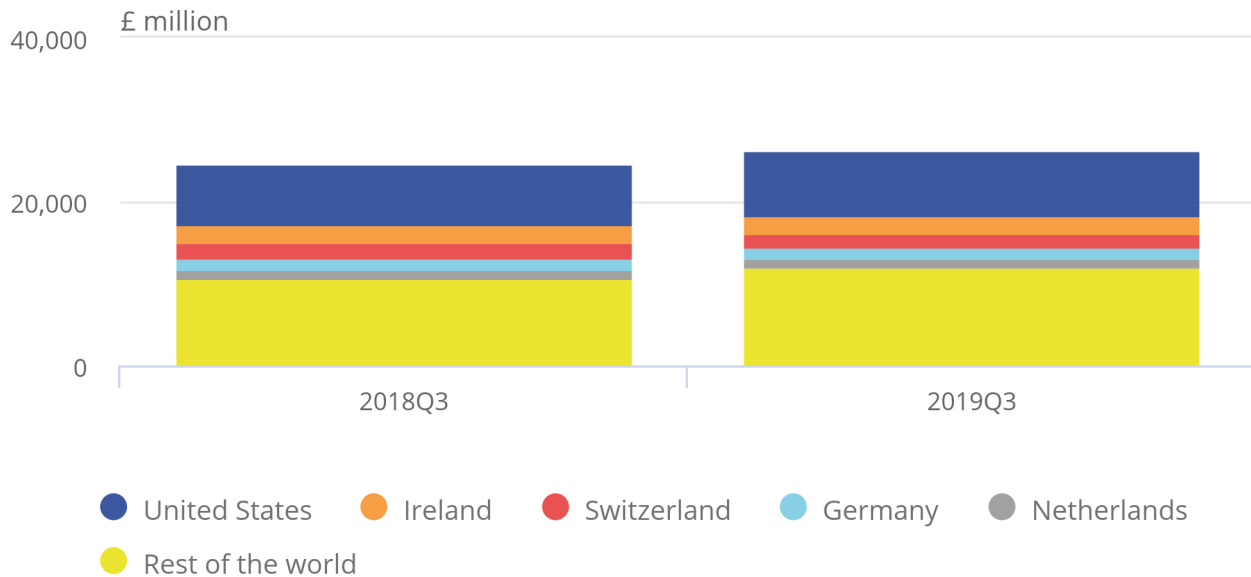
Ireland was the second-largest export partner for other business services, followed by Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The United States was the largest export partner for other business services, in Quarter 3 2019

UK exports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 3: The United States was the largest export partner for other business services, in Quarter 3 2019

UK exports of other business services by partner country, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics

7 . Imports of services from both EU and non-EU countries, were higher in Quarter 3 2019 than Quarter 3 2018

Imports of services from non-EU countries increased by £1.8 billion to £29.2 billion in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019 compared with Quarter 3 2018. The largest increase of imports from non-EU countries was from the United States, which increased by £0.7 billion to £10.5 billion. This was mainly driven by other business services, which increased by £0.5 billion between Quarter 3 2018 and Quarter 3 2019.

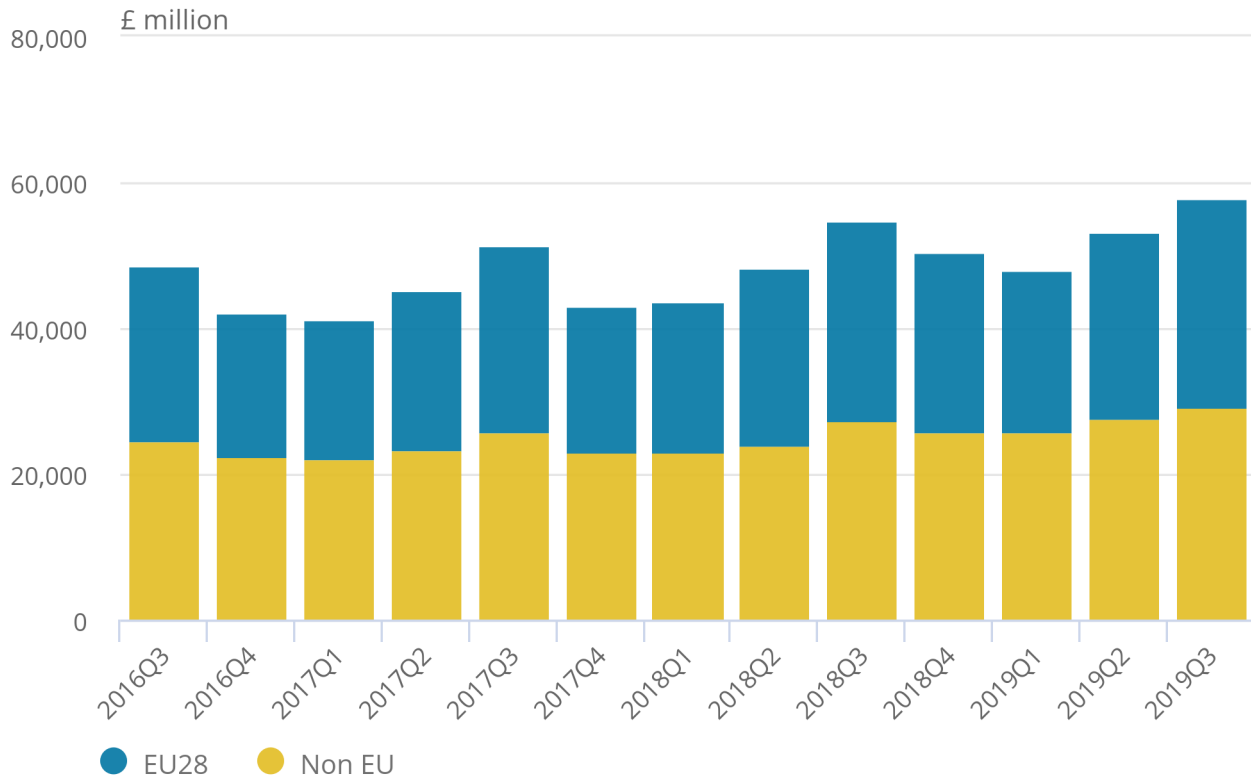
Imports of services from the EU increased £1.4 billion to £28.8 billion in Quarter 3 2019 compared with Quarter 3 2018. The largest increase of imports from the EU was from Sweden, which grew by £0.6 billion to £1.6 billion.

Figure 4: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, imports from the EU and non-EU countries both increased

UK imports of services by EU and non-EU, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2016 to Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 4: Compared with the same quarter a year ago, imports from the EU and non-EU countries both increased

UK imports of services by EU and non-EU, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2016 to Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

8 . The three highest-value trading partners for imports of services accounted for over one-third of total services imports in Quarter 3 2019

The United States remains the UK’s largest import partner, accounting for £10.5 billion, or 18.1% of services imports in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019, followed by Spain and France. Imports from Spain and France accounted for £5.1 billion (8.7%) and £4.8 billion (8.3%) of total UK services imports, respectively (Table 4).

Table 4: The United States remained the largest import partner country in Quarter 3 2019
UK's largest import partner countries, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Country	£ million					Percentage of total services imports	
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q3 2018	Q3 2019
United States	9,821	9,651	9,701	10,224	10,525	17.9	18.1
Spain	5,145	3,415	3,245	4,002	5,055	9.4	8.7
France	4,337	4,063	3,709	4,084	4,825	7.9	8.3
Germany	2,962	3,242	2,587	3,206	2,842	5.4	4.9
Ireland	2,590	2,947	1,891	2,193	2,741	4.7	4.7
Netherlands	2,020	2,165	2,017	2,271	2,064	3.7	3.6
Italy	2,057	1,695	1,573	1,693	2,028	3.8	3.5
India	1,234	1,307	1,555	1,621	1,670	2.3	2.9
Japan	1,296	1,549	1,634	1,767	1,617	2.4	2.8
Sweden	953	1,003	1,306	1,365	1,577	1.7	2.7
Rest of the world	22,407	19,399	18,637	20,723	23,054	40.9	39.7
World total	54,822	50,436	47,855	53,149	57,998	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

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

9 . Imports of travel in Quarter 3 2019 accounted for 31.2% of total UK imports

Though travel was the largest service type for imports in Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2019, accounting for £18.1 billion (31.2%) of total imports, imports of travel saw a 0.8% decrease compared with the same quarter a year ago (Table 5). Other business services was the second largest services import, contributing £17.5 billion (30.2%) of total services imports in Quarter 3 2019, an increase of 7.8%.

Users should note that these data are non-seasonally adjusted and show the seasonal trends throughout the year, with the majority of imports of travel seen in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) and Quarter 3. Travel imports cover goods and services provided to UK residents during visits abroad of less than one year. This excludes students and medical patients who remain residents of their country of origin, even if the length of stay in another economy is more than a year. Transport to and from the UK is excluded from travel, and shown as passenger services under transportation.

Table 5: Travel accounted for 31.2% of total services imports in Quarter 3 2019
 UK's largest service type imports, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 to Quarter 3 2019, non-seasonally adjusted

Service type	£ million					Percentage of total services imports	
	Q3 2018	Q4 2018	Q1 2019	Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q3 2018	Q3 2019
Travel	18,222	10,517	9,984	13,752	18,068	33.2	31.2
Other business services	16,240	18,954	17,144	18,175	17,507	29.6	30.2
Transportation	7,244	5,937	6,091	6,185	7,102	13.2	12.2
Financial	4,206	4,949	4,737	4,932	5,012	7.7	8.6
Intellectual property	2,670	3,017	3,161	3,266	3,297	4.9	5.7
Other service types	6,240	7,062	6,738	6,839	7,012	11.4	12.1
Total services	54,822	50,436	47,855	53,149	57,998	100.0	100.0

Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

Notes

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

In Quarter 3 2019, Spain was the largest import partner of travel services, accounting for £3.6 billion (19.9%), of which £3.3 billion was from personal travel.

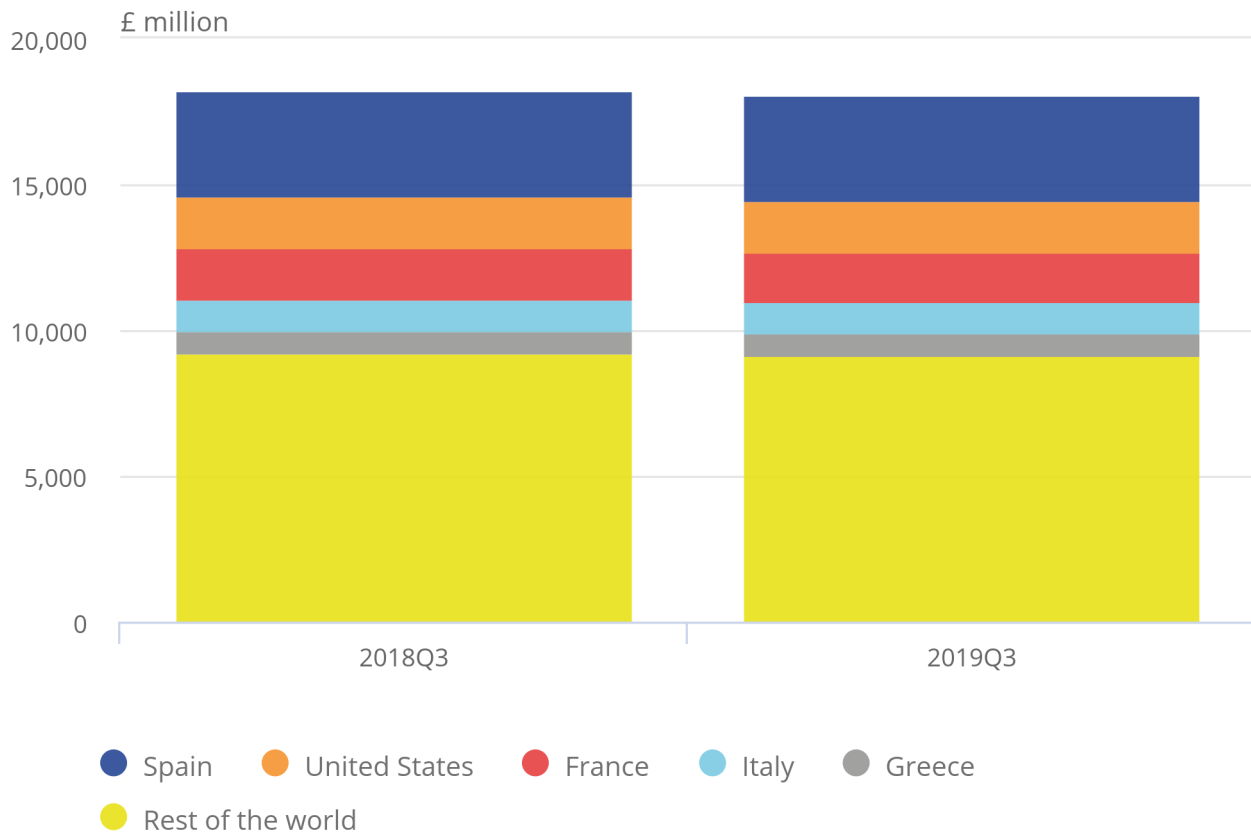
The United States was the second-largest import partner for imports of travel, followed by France, Italy and Greece (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Spain was the largest import partner for travel services, accounting for 19.9% of total UK services imports

UK imports of travel services by partner country, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 5: Spain was the largest import partner for travel services, accounting for 19.9% of total UK services imports

UK imports of travel services by partner country, Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2018 and Quarter 3 2019, £ million non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Office for National Statistics – UK trade in services

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

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

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

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

Figure 6: UK trade in services with the rest of the world, exports and imports, 2018

What about trade in a particular service type?

Use our interactive tools to understand UK trade of a particular service type. Select a service type from the drop-down menu, or click through the levels to explore the data.

Figure 7: UK exports, 2018

Figure 8: UK imports, 2018

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

11 . Trade in services data

[UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Dataset | Released 22 January 2020

Quarterly estimates of service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted.

[UK trade in services: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted](#)

Dataset | Released 22 January 2020

Quarterly estimates of total trade in services by country, non-seasonally adjusted.

[UK trade, quarterly trade in goods and services tables](#)

Dataset | Released 22 January 2020

Quarterly estimates of total trade, trade in goods and trade in services by country, non-seasonally adjusted.

12 . Quality and methodology

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

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

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

Detailed methodological notes are published in the [UK Balance of Payments, The Pink Book 2019](#).

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

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