

Article

UK trade with Russia: 2021

A closer look at the goods and services the UK trades with Russia.

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1 . Main points

- In 2021, the UK imported £10.3 billion of goods from Russia (2.2% of all goods imports) and exported £3.0 billion of goods (0.9% of all goods exports).
- The UK imported £5.2 billion of fuel from Russia in 2021 which accounted for 9.7% of all fuel imported.
- The highest value goods import from Russia in 2021 was refined oil (£3.0 billion); Russia is the UK's largest supplier of refined oil, accounting for 24.1% of all imports of this commodity.
- In the 12 months to September 2021, the UK exported £1.7 billion of services to Russia (0.6% of all services exports) and imported £0.8 billion of services (0.5% of all services imports).
- The main service exports to Russia were other business services (£0.5 billion), financial services (£0.3 billion) and telecommunications, computer and information services (£0.3 billion).

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the UK government imposed a range of [economic sanctions on Russia](#) from late February 2022, including sanctions on trade. While these sanctions came into force in late February 2022 and are therefore not yet reflected in [monthly UK trade data](#), there has been heightened interest in the UK's trade with Russia. This article includes trade in goods data for 2021 and trade in services data for the 12 months to September 2021 (the latest data available).

2 . UK trade in goods with Russia

In 2021, the UK imported £10.3 billion of goods from Russia, which accounted for 2.2% of all goods imports, making Russia our 12th biggest importing partner. There were £3.0 billion of goods exports to Russia (0.9% of all goods exports), making Russia our 24th biggest exporting partner.

The UK imported £5.2 billion of fuel from Russia in 2021 (Figure 1) which accounted for 9.7% of all fuel imported. The main imported fuel type was refined oil (£3.0 billion), which is oil that has been refined to be used as petrol or diesel for road vehicles, or lubricating oil. Russia was the UK's largest supplier of refined oil in 2021, accounting for 24.1% of all imports of this commodity (Table 1).

The UK also imported £1.0 billion of crude oil from Russia in 2021 (5.9% of all crude oil imports). This is unrefined petroleum which is then refined to produce useable products such as petrol or diesel. In addition, £1.0 billion of natural gas was imported (4.9% of all gas imports) which is used to generate electricity and for heating and cooking.

There were also large imports of unspecified goods (£2.6 billion) and material manufactures (£1.7 billion) from Russia in 2021. Unspecified goods cover a range of commodities including parcel post and coins, but more significantly precious metals and non-monetary gold (NMG) which is typically held as a store of wealth. We advise caution when interpreting [NMG trade](#) as movements can be large and highly volatile, distorting underlying trends in goods exports and imports.

Material manufactures includes goods that have been manufactured from raw materials such as wood, leather or metal products. Imports of non-ferrous metals make up a large proportion of the material manufactures imported from Russia. These include palladium, platinum and silver among others and are used for a wide range of purposes including in catalytic converters, solar panels and batteries.

The main exports from the UK to Russia in 2021 were machinery and transport equipment (£1.5 billion) and chemicals (£0.7 billion). Cars accounted for £0.4 billion of the machinery and transport equipment exports; 1.6% of the UK's total car exports 2021. The chemical exports to Russia were primarily medicinal and pharmaceutical products (£0.3 billion).

Figure 1: Imports of fuels made up over half of all goods imported from Russia in 2021

Trade in goods with Russia by commodity type, imports and exports

Download the data

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Table 1: Imports of refined oil from Russia in 2021 accounted for almost a quarter of all UK imports of this commodity

Trade in goods with Russia by detailed commodity type, top five imports and exports

Imports			Exports		
Commodity	Value (£bn)	Percentage	Commodity	Value (£bn)	Percentage
Refined oil	3.0	24.1%	Cars	0.4	1.6%
Unspecified goods	2.6	20.2%	Medicinal and pharmaceutical products	0.3	1.4%
Non-ferrous metals	1.5	8.0%	Specialised machinery (capital)	0.2	3.4%
Crude oil	1.0	5.9%	Mechanical power generators (intermediate)	0.2	1.0%
Gas	1.0	4.9%	General industrial machinery (capital)	0.1	1.7%

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

3 . UK trade in services with Russia

In the 12 months to September 2021, the latest period for which we have data, the UK exported £1.7 billion of services to Russia (0.6% of all services exports), making Russia our 32nd biggest exporting partner. Over the same period there were £0.8 billion of services imports from Russia (0.5% of all services imports), making Russia our 33rd biggest importing partner.

The main service type traded with Russia in 2021 was other business services (Figure 2), with exports of £0.5 billion and imports of £0.4 billion. This covers a wide range of services relating to business such as research and development, legal, accounting and public relations as well as advertising and market research.

Financial services accounted for £0.3 billion of exports and £0.1 billion of imports from Russia in 2021. More specifically, this was explicitly charged and other financial services (Table 2) which includes fund managers and monetary financial institutions and refers to explicit fees and commissions that do not require special calculation, for example early and late repayment fees and account charges.

Exports of telecommunications, computer and information services were £0.3 billion in 2021, while there were £0.1 billion imports of this service type. Telecommunications services includes the broadcast or transmission of sound, images and data and includes business network services, teleconferencing and support services.

Figure 2: Other business services were the primary services imports and exports between the UK and Russia in the 12 months to September 2021

Trade in goods with Russia by service type, imports and exports

Download the data

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Table 2: Explicitly charged financial services were the main service type the UK traded with Russia in the 12 months to September 2021

Trade in services with Russia by detailed service type, top five imports and exports

Imports			Exports		
Service type	Value (£bn)	Percentage	Service type	Value (£bn)	Percentage
Explicitly charged and other financial services	0.1	1.0%	Explicitly charged and other financial services	0.2	0.4%
Intragroup fees and cost recharge	0.1	0.9%	Telecommunications services	0.2	2.4%
Government	0.1	2.0%	Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations	0.2	0.3%
Work undertaken on a systematic basis to increase the stock of knowledge	0.1	0.9%	Intellectual property	0.1	0.8%
Legal, accounting, management consulting and public relations	0.1	0.4%	Personal travel	0.1	0.7%

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

4 . UK trade in goods with Russia interactive content

Use our interactive map to get a better understanding of what goods the UK traded with Russia in 2021. You can explore the full data, which break down UK trade in goods with 234 countries by 125 commodities, using our interactive tools. Select a country by hovering over it or using the drop-down menu.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

You can also explore the 2021 trade in goods data by commodity, such as refined oil imports from and car exports to Russia.

Select a commodity from the drop-down menu or click through the levels to explore the data.

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5 . UK trade data

[Trade in goods: country-by-commodity imports](#) Dataset | Released 11 March 2022 Monthly import country-by-commodity data on the UK's trade in goods, including trade by all countries and selected commodities, non-seasonally adjusted.

[Trade in goods: country-by-commodity exports](#) Dataset | Released 11 March 2022 Monthly export country-by-commodity data on the UK's trade in goods, including trade by all countries and selected commodities, non-seasonally adjusted.

[UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#) Dataset | Released 27 January 2022 Quarterly estimates of service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted.

6 . Glossary

Exports

Goods or services sold to other countries, the opposite of imports.

Imports

Purchases of foreign goods and services, the opposite of exports.

Total trade

The value of total trade between two trading partners (that is, exports plus imports).

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.

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.

7 . Data sources and quality

Unless otherwise specified, data within this bulletin are in current prices. This means they have not been adjusted to remove the effects of inflation.

Data sources

Trade is measured through both exports and imports of goods and services. Data are supplied by over 30 sources including several administrative sources.

Data from the quarterly International Trade in Services (ITIS) Survey make up over 50% of trade in services data and data from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) are the main source for travel services, making up around 8% of total trade.

Data from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) make up over 90% of trade in goods value and are the main source. View the [UK trade QMI](#) for more detail on data sources and methods.

Methods

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

For more information about our methods and how we compile these statistics, please see [Trade in goods, country-by-commodity experimental data: 2011 to 2016](#). Users should note that the data published alongside this release are no longer experimental. 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](#).

The interactive charts in [Section 4](#) 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.

8 . Future developments

This article is the first in a collection of [Focus on UK trade articles](#), with future articles planned on trade with Ukraine and imports of fuels.

9 . Related links

[UK trade: January 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 11 March 2022

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

[World trade explorer](#)

Interactive | Updated 27 April 2020

Use our interactive to understand how the UK trades with the rest of the world.

[Trade and investment factsheets](#)

Factsheet | Last updated 18 March 2022

A full set of country trade and investment factsheets covering UK trade in goods and services and foreign direct investments from the Department for International Trade (DIT). The timings of data included may be different across publications.