

Port Freight Statistics

Statistical Release

December 2012



Department
for Transport

UK Port Freight Statistics: Quarter 3 2012

This Statistical Release summarises the latest quarterly statistics on freight handled by major UK sea ports. More detailed provisional annual statistics are updated in a separate release in July and detailed final annual statistics are published in September (See separate Port Freight Statistics Annual series).



Key findings	1
Quarterly Port Statistics	2
Strengths & weaknesses of the data	4
Glossary	4
Background notes	4

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Key findings included:-

Rolling Annual total:-

- In the four quarters ending quarter 3 2012, total port traffic (tonnage) was 497 million tonnes. This is a 2 per cent decline compared to the four quarters ending quarter 3 2011 (509 million tonnes).
- The number of units of all types handled during the four quarters ending quarter 3 2012 was 20,797 thousand units, down 3 per cent compared with the year ending quarter 3 2011 (21,419).

Quarter 3 2012 :-

- During quarter 3 2012, total port traffic (tonnage) was 124 million tonnes, a decline of 3 per cent compared with quarter 3 2011 (127 million tonnes).
- The number of units of all types handling during quarter 3 2012 was 5,976 thousand units, down by 4 per cent compared with quarter 3 2011 (6,205 thousand units).

1. Quarterly Port Statistics

The provisional figures for freight traffic at each major UK port in quarter 3 2012 are based on 100 per cent of expected traffic as all ports had made complete returns for this quarter at the time of publication.

After the recession of 2008/2009 port freight traffic recovered through 2010 and 2011 but, in quarter 3 2012, the decline in both tonnage and unitised traffic that was seen in the first 2 quarters of the year has continued.

The provisional figures show that:

Rolling Annual total:-

- Total port traffic (tonnage) in the year ending quarter 3 2012 (497 million tonnes) was down 2 per cent on the year ending quarter 3 2011 (509 million tonnes).
- The number of units of all types handled in the year ending quarter 3 2012 (20,797 thousand units) was down 3 per cent compared with the year ending quarter 3 2011 (21,419 thousand units).

Quarter 3 2012:-

- Tonnage in quarter 3 of 2012 (124 million tonnes) was down 3 per cent compared with quarter 3 2011 (127 million tonnes).
- The number of units of all types handled in quarter 3 2012 (5,976 thousand units) was down 4 per cent compared with quarter 3 2011 (6,205 thousand units).

Note:

'Units' (also referred to as 'unitised traffic') includes all roll-on roll-off units whether carrying freight or not (road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, shipborne port-to-port trailers, passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other ro-ro units), and lift-on lift-off containers.

Detailed statistics (tables) on 'Quarterly Port Freight statistics' can be found in the web tables, [port0501-port0509](#).

Figure 1: Major Port traffic indices, tonnage - rolling four quarter totals to Q3 2012¹ (2000 = 100)

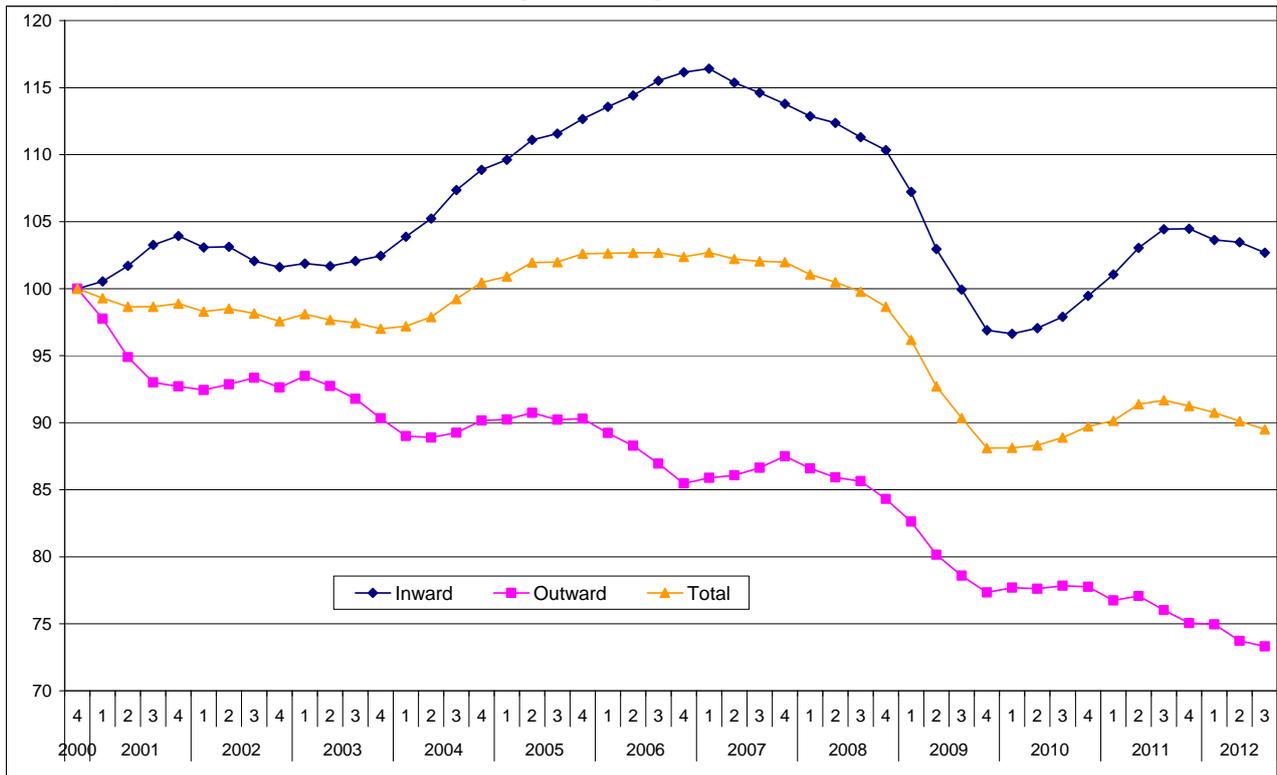
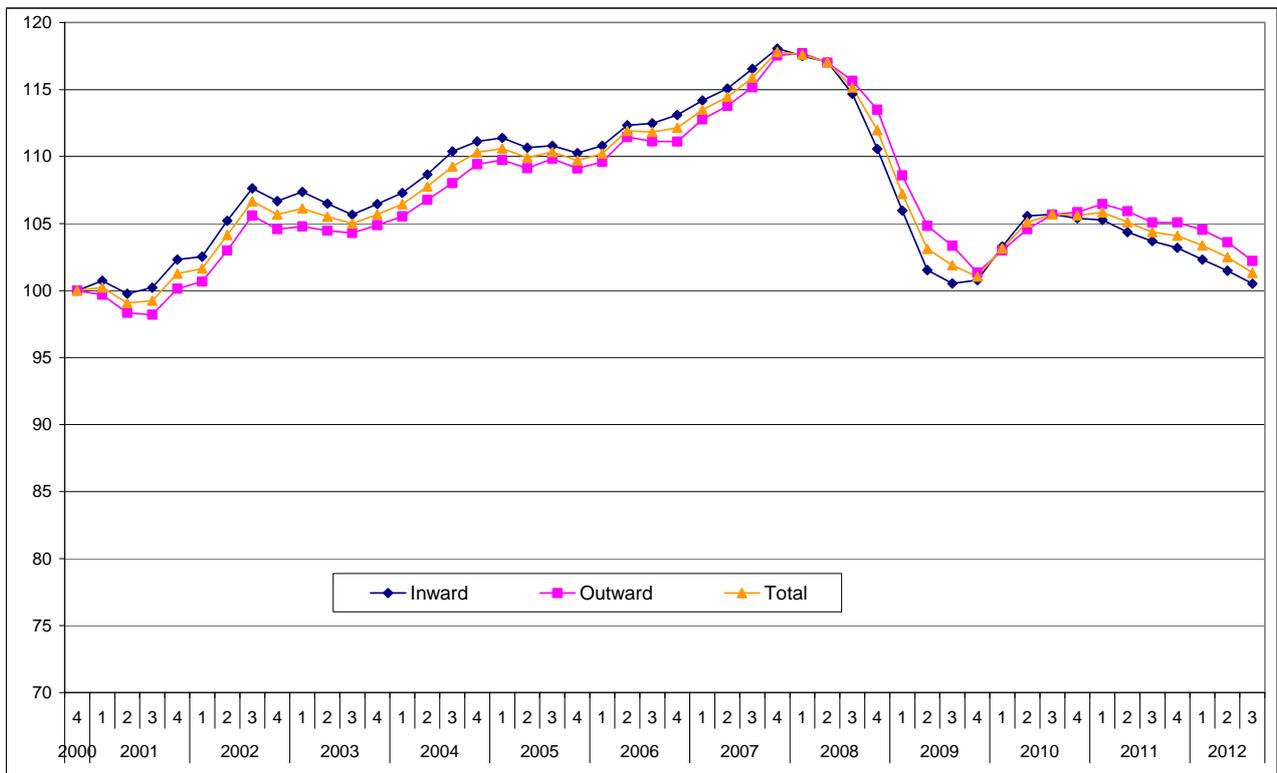


Figure 2: Major Port traffic indices, units² - rolling four quarter totals to Q3 2012¹ (2000 = 100)



1 Data for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2012 are provisional.

2 Includes non freight-carrying units such as passenger vehicles and trade motor vehicles.

2. Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- The port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in the United Kingdom, unless otherwise stated, and do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.
- The provisional quarterly port data relate to all cargoes loaded or unloaded by ship at major ports in the UK, including both international and domestic traffic.
- Provisional quarterly results are published approximately 10 weeks after the end of the quarter to which they relate. These statistics are based on the MSD2 forms provided by major ports. Data are available for total weight of goods and number of units inwards and outwards for each responding port. These figures may be subject to revision if subsequent checks against MSD1 data provided by agents or MSD2X data provided by ports at the year end, highlight anomalies. Typically a very small number of ports do not provide data in time for publication, in which case the national trend is estimated based on the trend for those ports which have provided data for the latest quarter.

3. Glossary

- Major ports: Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounting for over 97% of UK port traffic.
- Tonnage: The weight of goods transported, including crates and other packaging, but excluding the unloaded weight of shipping containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment where these are used.
- Units: Includes all roll-on/roll-off units whether carrying freight or not (road goods vehicles, unaccompanied trailers, shipborne port-to-port trailers, passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other ro-ro units), as well as lift-on lift-off containers. In most published port statistics freight carrying roll-on/roll-off units are reported separately, however, this detail is not available at the time of the quarterly statistics publication, in which combined totals are given.

4. Background notes

- The web tables and charts give further detail of the key results presented in this statistical release. They are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
- Full guidance on the methods used to compile these statistics can be found on the ports series page here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice ([Code of Practice](#)). They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure they meet customer needs. The latest review of port freight statistics can be found here: <http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/assessment-reports/assessment-report-221---maritime--road-traffic--bus--taxi--light-rail-and-disabled-parking-badge-statistics.pdf>

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- Details of Ministers and officials who receive pre-release access to these statistics up to 24 hours before release can be found on the ports series page here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-transport/series/ports-statistics>
 - The next update in this series will be published in March 2013. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for all quarters of 2012.
 - Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are updated twice a year; provisional in June and detailed final figures in September. The final 2011 figures can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-freight-statistics-2011-final-figures>