

UK Port Freight Statistics:

January – March (Quarter 1)



Department
for Transport



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UK Major Ports

Quarter 1 2014 Main Findings

Quarterly Trend

Comparing quarter 1 2014 (January - March) with quarter 1 2013:



- Total major port freight traffic was **121 million tonnes**, an **increase of 1 per cent**.
- Outward freight traffic **rose** by 1 per cent compared to quarter 1 2013 to **43 million tonnes**, this was the second increase following 6 quarters of decline.
- Unitised traffic at UK major ports **increased by 4 per cent** to **4.8 million units**.

Rolling Annual Total

Comparing the 12 months ending March 2014 with the 12 months ending March 2013:



- Total major port freight traffic **increased by 1 per cent** to **492 million tonnes**, continuing the increase seen in quarter 4 2013.
- Total major port unitised traffic **increased by 3 per cent** to **21.4 million units**. Previously the rolling annual total steadily declined from quarter 3 2011.

About this release

This Statistical Release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by **major** UK sea ports. Detailed final annual statistics are published in August. The quarterly series is finalised alongside the final annual statistics for 2013 in September.

This statistical release uses quarter on quarter comparisons to avoid seasonal impact.

Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

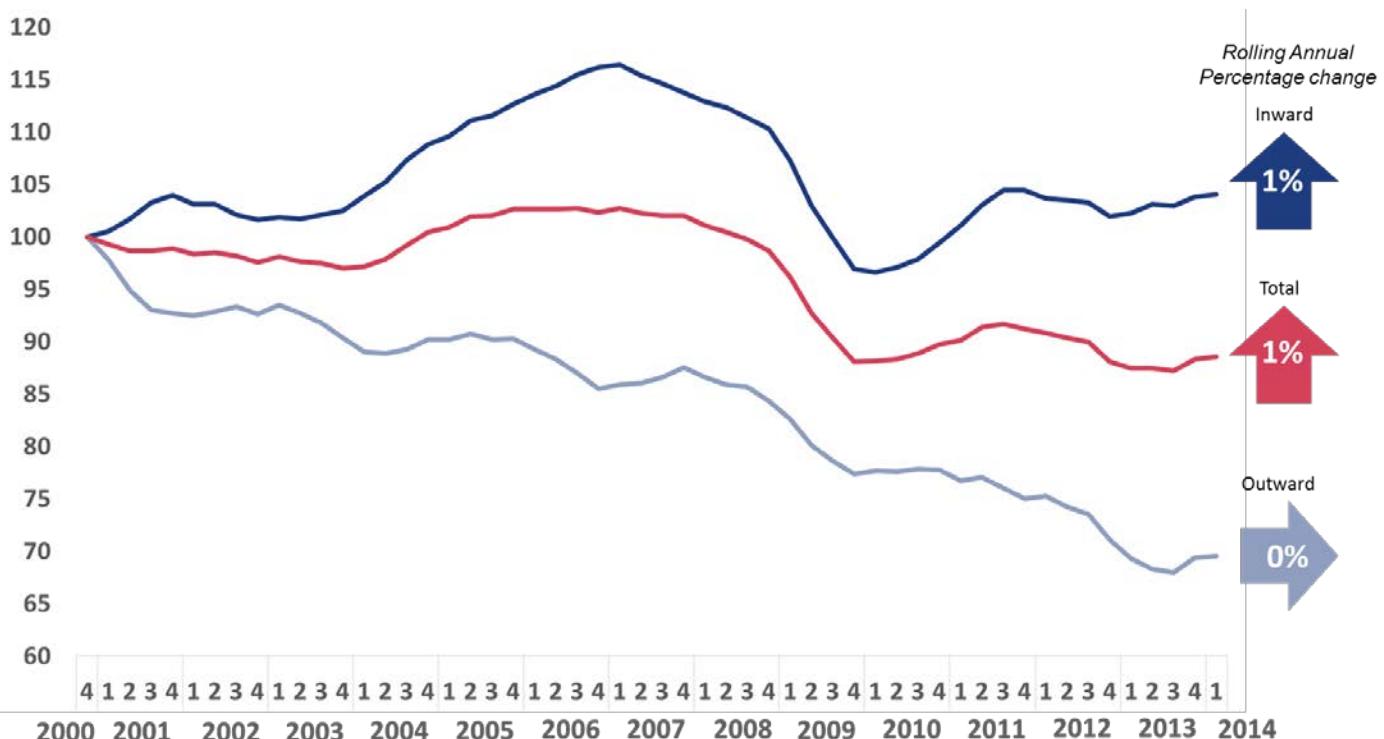
Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 1 2014 (January – March) to quarter 1 2013:

- Total freight handled at UK major ports rose for the second quarter by 1 per cent to 121 million tonnes. Previously traffic steadily declined from quarter 4 2011, as such the total tonnage in quarter 1 2014 was still 4 per cent lower than the same quarter in 2011.
- Freight traffic travelling in to UK major ports increased by 1 per cent to 78 million tonnes, accounting for 64 per cent of all traffic. This was the second consecutive quarterly increase but quarter 1 2014 remained 1 per cent lower than the previous quarter 1 peak in 2011.
- Freight traffic travelling out of the UK major ports increased by 1 per cent to 43 million tonnes. This was the second quarterly increase following 6 quarters of decline. Quarter 1 2014 was 8 per cent lower than the same quarter in 2012, the start of the decline.

Annual (Rolling) Trend: comparing the 12 months ending March 2014 with the 12 months ending March 2013

- Total major port freight traffic increased by 1 per cent to 492 million tonnes, continuing the increase seen in quarter 4 2013.
- Freight travelling in to UK major ports rose by 2 per cent to 318 million tonnes, for the second consecutive increase.
- Freight travelling out of UK major ports remained stable at 174 million tonnes, following three years of decline which began in Q1 2011.

Chart 1: Major port traffic indices, tonnage: rolling 12 month totals to March 2014 (2000=100)



Detailed statistics (tables) on “Quarterly Tonnage Port Freight Statistics” can be found in the web tables [PORT0501 & PORT0504-P0RT0506](#)

Major Port Freight Traffic (Units)

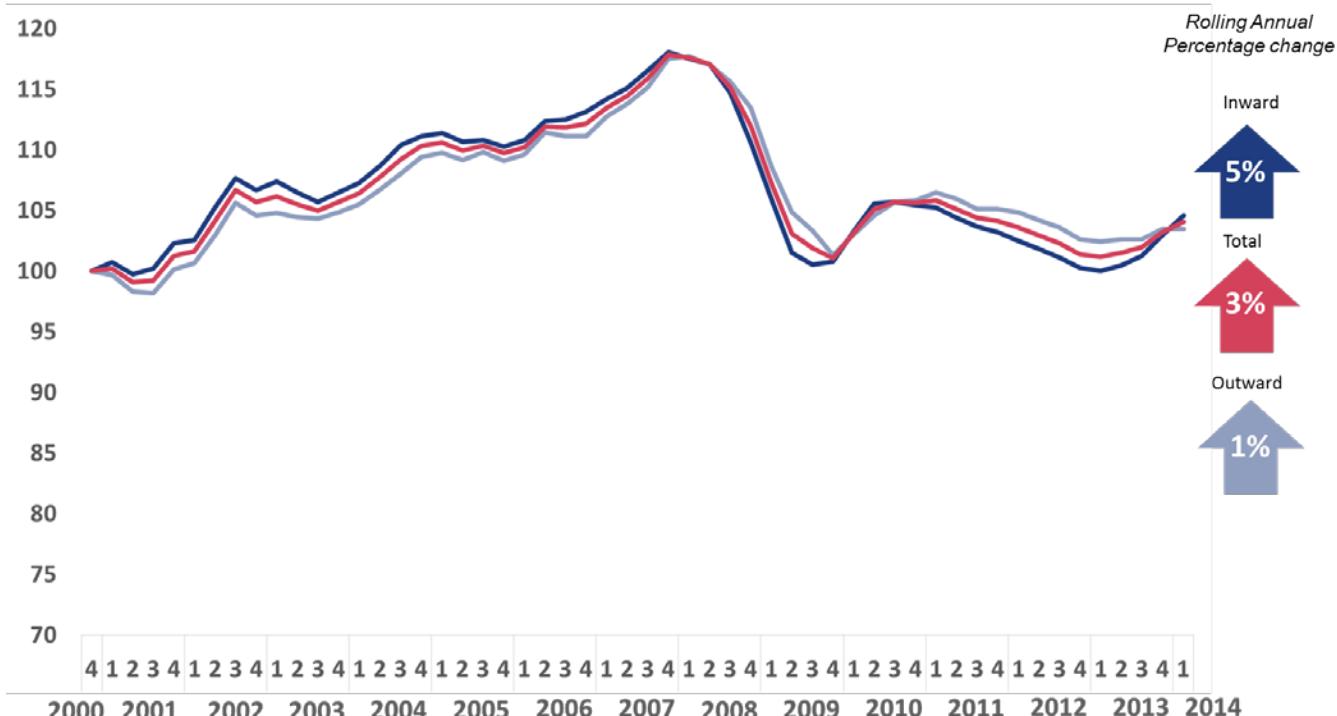
Quarterly Trend: Comparing quarter 1 2014 (January – March) to quarter 1 2013:

- Total unitised traffic **rose** for the fourth consecutive quarter by **4 per cent** to **4.8 million units**. This was the highest quarter 1 total since 2008.
- Unitised traffic **travelling in** to UK major ports **rose by 7 per cent** to **2.6 million units**. This was the fourth consecutive quarterly increase. The quarter 1 2014 total was 2 per cent higher than the previous peak in quarter 1 2010.
- Unitised traffic **travelling out** of UK major ports **remained stable** at **2.2 million units** following 3 quarters of growth. Outward unitised traffic increased throughout 2013 following a year of decline in 2012. The quarter 1 2014 total was 1 per cent lower than the same quarter at the start of 2012.

Annual (Rolling) Trend: Comparing 12 months ending March 2014 with the 12 months ending March 2013

- Total UK major port unitised traffic **increased** for the second 12 month period in a row by **3 per cent** to **21.4 million units**. Previously the rolling annual total steadily declined from quarter 3 2011.
- Unitised traffic **travelling in** to UK major ports **increased by 5 per cent** to **11.2 million units**. This was the second increase following a steady decline seen since quarter 2 2011.
- Freight **travelling out** of UK major ports **rose by 1 per cent** compared with the previous four quarters to **10.2 million units**. This continued the increase seen in the last quarter of 2013.

Chart 2: Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling 12 month totals to March 2014 (2000=100)



Detailed statistics (tables) on ‘Quarterly Unitised Port Freight Statistics’ can be found in the web tables [PORT0502 & PORT0507-PORT0509](#)

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.
- These statistics are based on data 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 data provided by agents, or data provided by ports at the year end, highlight anomalies. More in depth commentary will be provided with the release of the final port statistics.
- 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. **The provisional figures for freight traffic at each major UK port in quarter 1 2014 are based on 100 per cent of expected traffic as all ports had made complete returns for this quarter at the time of publication.**

Glossary

- **Major ports:** Ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounted for 98% of UK port traffic in 2012.
- **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 (ro-ro) 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 (lo-lo) 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.

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/collections/maritime-and-shipping-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/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>

- National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Port Freight Statistics were assessed by the UK Statistics Authority against the Code of Practice and were confirmed as National Statistics in February 2013.
- 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/publications/maritime-and-shipping-statistics-guidance>
- The next update in this series will be published in September 2014. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the second quarter of 2014.
- 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 2012 figures can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/port-freight-statistics-2012-final-figures>