



Department for Transport

UK Port Freight Statistics: October to December 2015 (Quarter 4)

About this release

This statistical release summarises the latest provisional quarterly statistics on freight handled by major UK sea ports.

Detailed final annual statistics for 2015 will be published in August 2016, when the quarterly series will also be finalised.

This statistical release compares results for the latest quarter to the same quarter a year earlier to avoid the misinterpretation of seasonal effects.

Definitions:

Major ports-

Ports handling over one million tonnes of freight per year and a small number of other key ports.

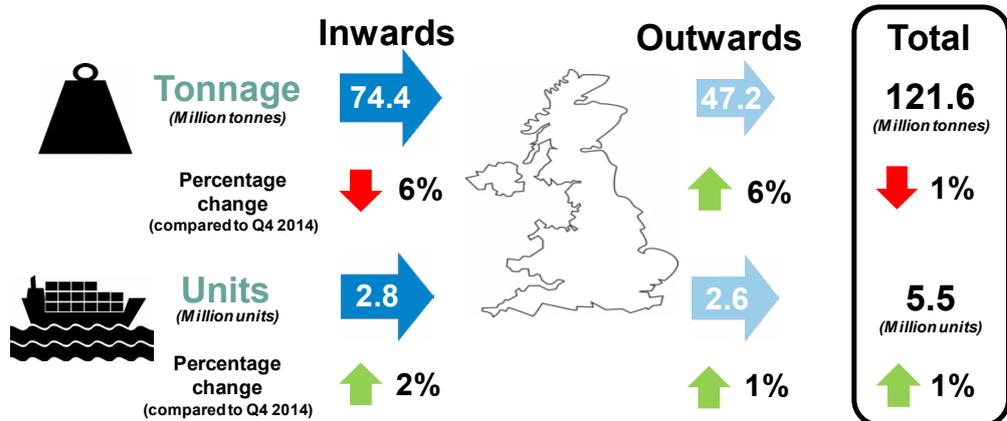
Together these ports accounted for 98% of total UK port traffic in 2014.

Unitised traffic-

This includes containers and all Ro-Ro (trade, passenger, import/export motor vehicles). These figures include both loaded and empty units.

UK Major Ports: Quarter 4 2015 main findings

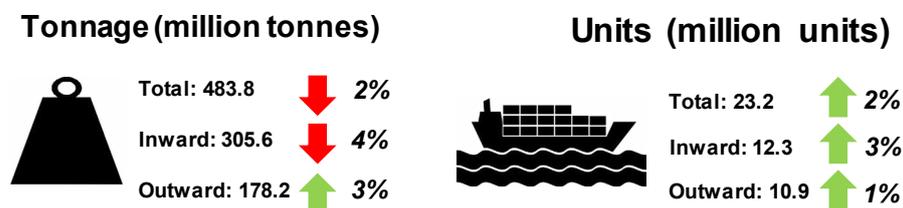
Fourth Quarter Total (latest quarter compared to same quarter a year earlier)



Total freight tonnage through UK major ports in the fourth quarter 2015 **decreased by 1 per cent to 121.6 million tonnes** compared with the same quarter in 2014.

Unitised traffic through UK major ports **increased by 1 per cent to 5.5 million units**. This continues the upward trend in unitised freight observed since 2013.

Provisional total for 2015 (compared to 2014)



Total tonnage of freight traffic through UK major ports in 2015 **decreased by 2 per cent to 483.8 million tonnes** compared with the previous year.

Total unitised traffic in 2015 **increased by 2 per cent to 23.2 million**, from 22.8 million units in 2014.

Major Port Freight Traffic (Tonnage)

Quarterly Trend (Latest quarter compared to same quarter a year earlier)

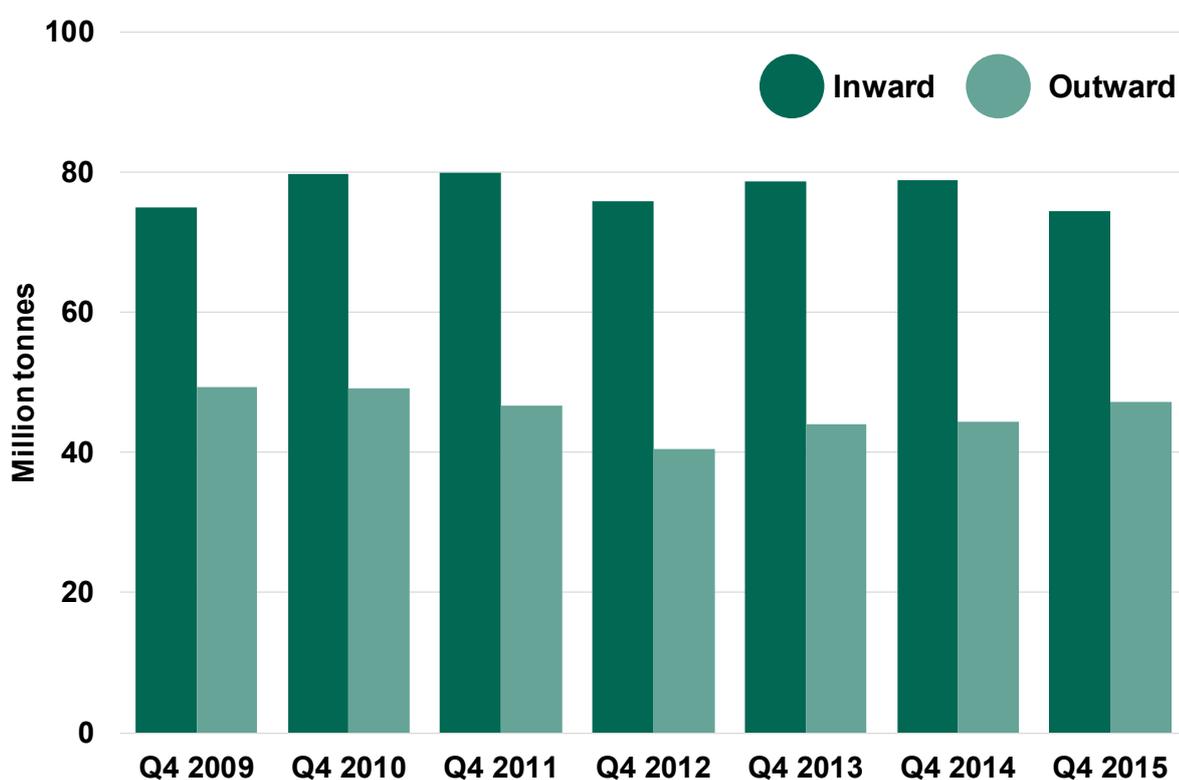
Compared with the same quarter in 2014, total freight tonnage through UK major ports in the fourth quarter of 2015 **decreased by 1 per cent to 121.6 million tonnes**. This is the lowest fourth quarter tonnage since 2012.

The tonnage of inward freight **decreased by 6 per cent to 74.4 million tonnes**. This is the third consecutive quarter on quarter decrease in 2015.

The tonnage of outward freight **increased by 6 per cent to 47.2 million tonnes**, the highest fourth quarter outward tonnage since 2010 following increases in each fourth quarter since 2013.

The divergence of inward and outward tonnage trends has reduced the inward proportion to 61 per cent of total tonnage from 64 per cent in quarter 4 2014.

Major port traffic for quarter 4, 2009-2015



Detailed statistics on freight traffic (tonnage) can be found in the statistical data sets: [PORT0501 & PORT0504-PORT0506](#)

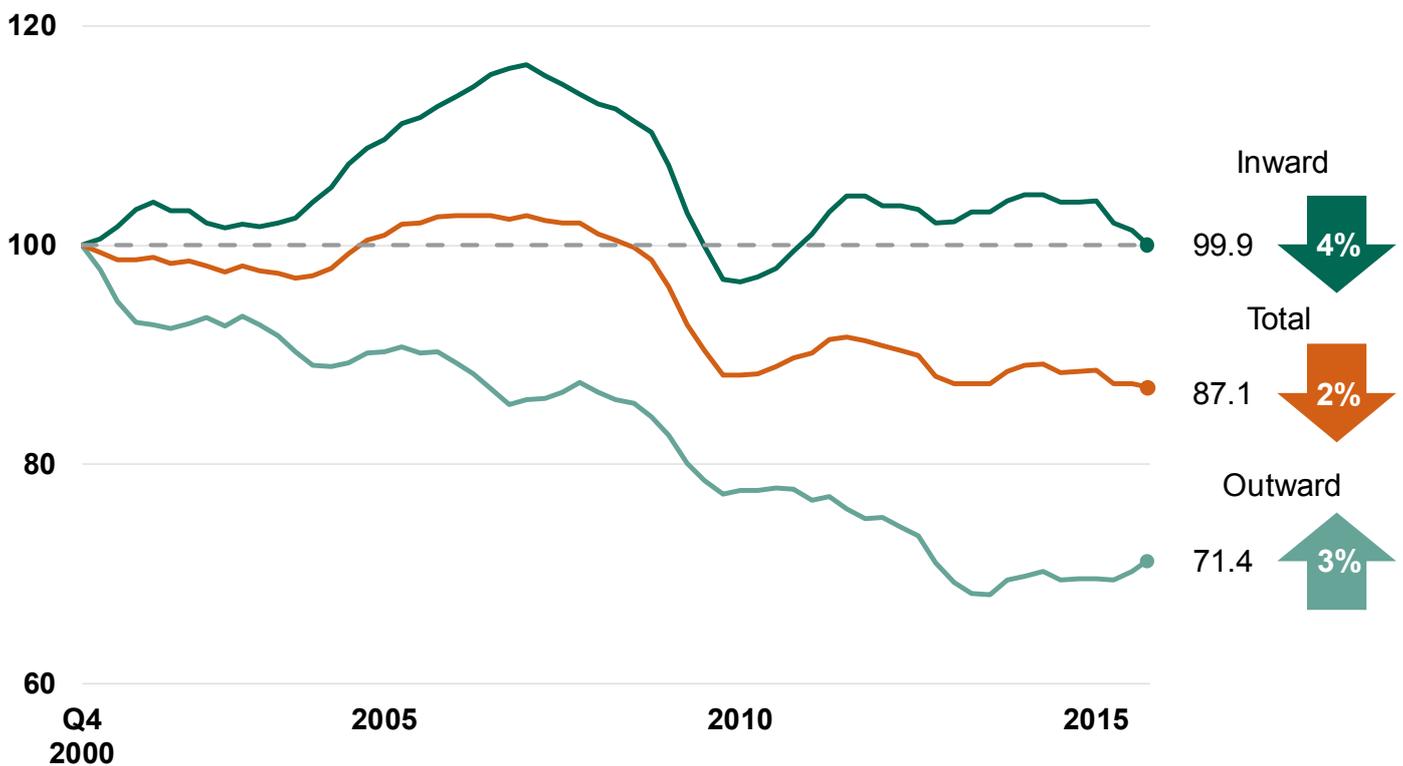
Provisional total for 2015 (compared to 2014)

The total tonnage of freight traffic through UK major ports in 2015 **decreased by 2 per cent to 483.8 million tonnes** compared with the previous year.

The tonnage of inward freight in 2015 **decreased by 4 per cent to 305.6 million tonnes**, compared with 2014.

The tonnage of outward freight **increased by 3 per cent to 178.2 million tonnes**.

Major port traffic indices, tonnage: rolling 4 quarter totals to December 2015 (4 quarters to Q4 2000 = 100)



Major Port Freight Traffic (Units)

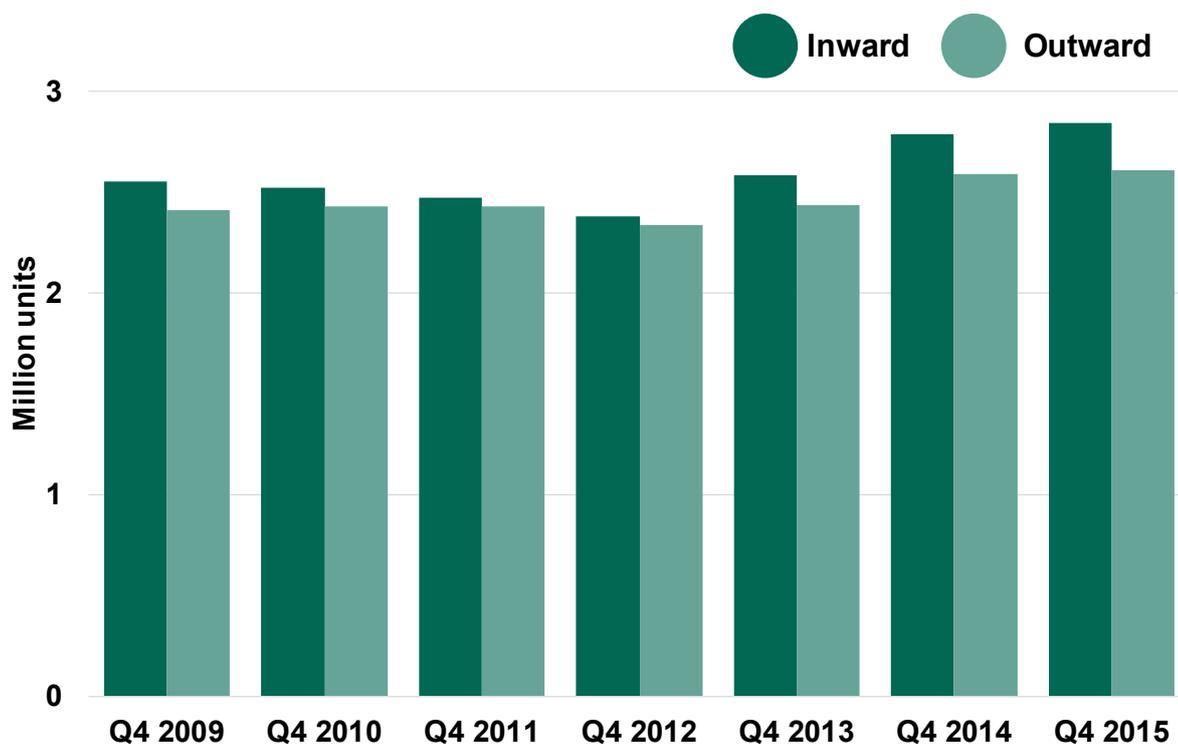
Quarterly Trend (latest quarter to the same quarter a year earlier)

Total unitised traffic through UK major ports in the fourth quarter of 2015 **increased by 1 per cent to 5.5 million units** compared with the same quarter in the previous year. This continued the trend of increases seen since 2013, although the quarter on quarter increases in 2014 were higher than in 2015.

Inward traffic **increased by 2 per cent to 2.8 million units** compared with the fourth quarter of 2014. Inward traffic has grown quarter on quarter since 2013, although at higher rates during 2013 and 2014 than in 2015.

Outward traffic **increased by 1 per cent to 2.6 million units**. This followed increases of 6 and 4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2014 and 2013.

Major port unitised traffic for quarter 4, 2009-2015



Detailed statistics on unitised traffic can be found in the statistical data sets: [PORT0502 & PORT0507-PORT0509](#)

Provisional total for 2015 (compared to 2014)

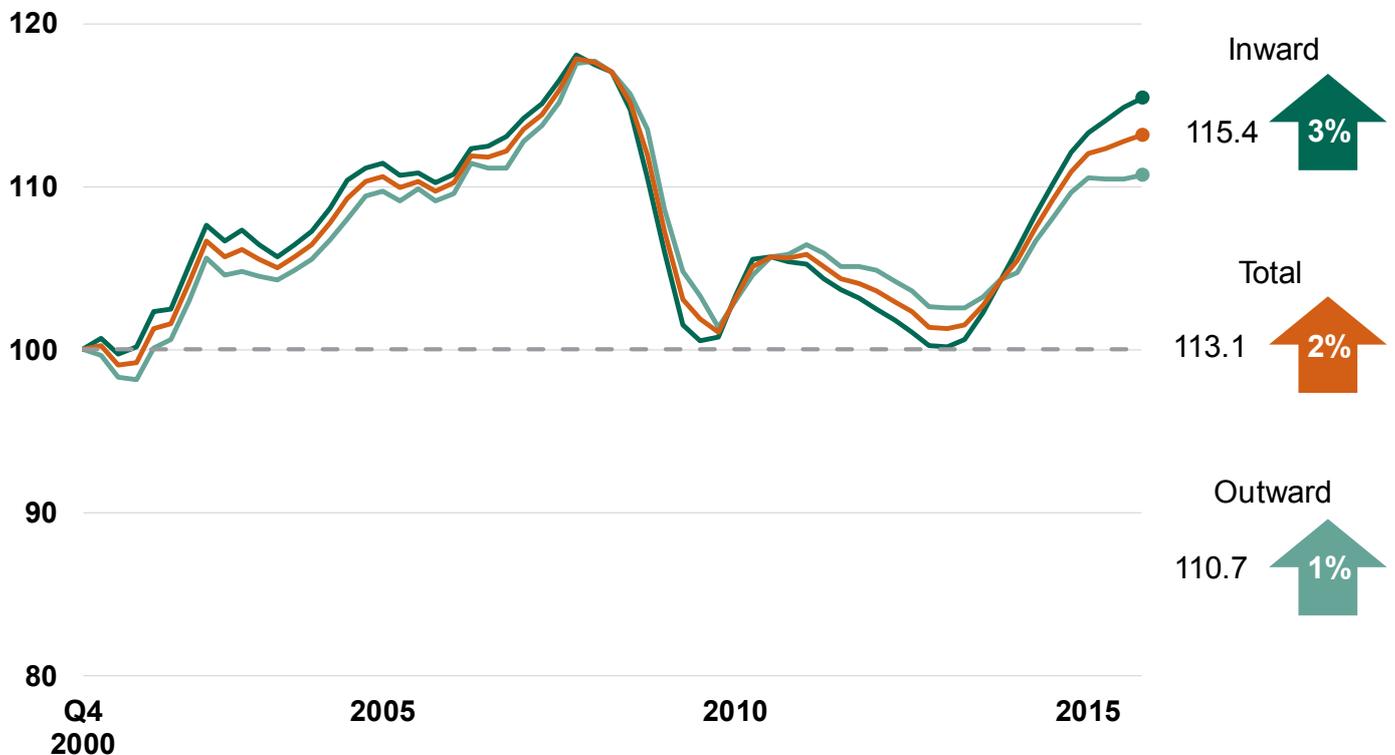
Total unitised traffic in 2015 **increased by 2 per cent to 23.2 million units**, compared to the previous year. The rolling 4 quarter total of unitised traffic has increased every quarter since the start of 2013, although the rate of growth has slowed since the final quarter of 2014.

In the 4 quarters to December 2015, unitised traffic inward **increased by 3 per cent to 12.3 million units**.

Outward traffic **increased by 1 per cent to 10.9 million units**.

Both inward and outward traffic has increased quarter on quarter since 2013, with increases in inward traffic consistently greater than outward.

Major Port traffic indices, units - rolling 4 quarter totals to December 2015 (4 quarters to Q4 2000 = 100)



Strengths and weaknesses of the data

- ▶ The port freight statistics relate to traffic to and from major 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 cargos 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 4 2015 are based on 100 per cent of expected returns.

Glossary

- ▶ **Major ports:** Those ports handling over one million tonnes per year, and a small number of other key ports, together accounted for 98 per cent of UK port traffic in 2014.
- ▶ **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/statistical-data-sets/port05-traffic-indices-and-quarterly-breakdowns>
- ▶ 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/pre-release-access-lists-for-maritime-and-shipping-series>
- ▶ The next update in this series will be published on 15 June 2016. It will contain provisional quarterly figures for the first quarter of 2016.
- ▶ Annual statistics on freight handled by UK sea ports are released in August. The final 2014 figures can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/port-freight-statistics-2014-final-figures>
- ▶ These statistics are also sent to EuroStat on a quarterly basis and used in a table alongside data from other EU member countries. For further information and data tables see link below: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/transport/data/database>