Important note on aggregation of data

UK trade information is compiled from trade declarations made at 8-digit Commodity Code from the UK Tariff (HS Nomenclature).

The nature of Supplementary Units can be different between 8-digit Commodity Codes (e.g. one could be square metres, another could be cubic metres).

Quantity should be consistent up to 2-digit level at which point there may also be differences (e.g. one Chapter may be litres, another may be kilograms).

Thus when aggregating above 8-digit level the figure created for Supplementary Units may be unreliable and the figure created for Quantity may be unreliable above 2-digit level. Value (£ Sterling) is consistent throughout and can be reliably aggregated.

In cases of doubt please refer to the UK Tariff for full definitions or feel free to e-mail us for further advice.

With effect from January 2006, Intrastat regulations only require the declaration of either a net mass or a supplementary unit value per line of trade. This was introduced into European legislation to reduce the administrative burden on the data provider. Therefore, for certain commodity codes of the Classification Nomenclature the submission of a net mass value is not required for Intrastat Declarations. Consequently, the net mass data published by HMRC within the Overseas Trade Statistics for those commodity codes may not reflect the actual net mass of traded goods.

It should be noted that HMRC does not currently estimate the net mass where this data element is omitted so HMRC does not recommend using the reported net mass totals for those commodity codes, and also for higher aggregates i.e. SITC totals. HMRC are working on a solution to estimate for the missing net mass data.

Please note: non-EU trade totals for net mass are unaffected so HMRC do not advise using aggregate quantity data for EU and non-EU trade.

Index of the Trade Data Dimensions with Basic Descriptions

The items listed below will help the user to better understand the data being viewed and provides useful background information to place it into context.

Units

For each comcode there is a quantity (usually weight but sometimes number for larger items) and statistical value in £ Sterling. Some, but not all, comcodes have a second quantity known as supplementary units which can be number of items if the first quantity is weight, or another weight if required for import duty calculations (full details are set out in the UK tariff which is available from The Stationery Office). Combinations of selections are possible if desired.

Country of Dispatch / Destination

UK imports and arrivals country data is published on the basis of the country of dispatch, i.e. the country from which the goods were originally dispatched to the UK. This is not necessarily the country of origin or manufacture, neither is it necessarily the last country from which the goods were shipped to the UK.

UK exports and dispatches country data is published on the basis of the country of destination, i.e. the country of ultimate
destination. This is the final country to which the goods are being exported from the UK.

**Comcode**

There are 4 levels of information on goods: total trade, Chapter (2-digit) level, 4-digit level, and 8-digit level (the lowest level of detail). It is possible to drill down to 8-digit comcode level for information at this level without reporting on higher level totals if this is what is required. Combinations of selections are possible if desired.

**Period.**

There are 3 levels of information: whole year, by first, second, third or fourth quarter and month (the lowest level). It is possible to drill down to month level for information at this level without reporting on higher level totals if this is what is required. Combinations of selections are possible if desired.

**Revisions**

The figures for EU and non-EU trade in goods are subject to revisions, not only because of late response but also because returns may require subsequent amendment. Revisions may also arise following detection of errors in original returns. For example, where there has been misclassification of goods, or the basis of valuation is incorrect.

**Suppressed Data (Summary).**

Some sensitive information is suppressed in all HM Revenue and Customs publications. Aggregated, and thus non-attributable, data is included at Chapter (2-digit) level. But the detail of this information will not appear at 4- or 8-digit level. You are advised to run a separate enquiry at 2-digit level, Suppressed Data, and world level in the Chapter(s) in which you are interested so that you can compare the results to establish whether there is any suppressed data at the lower levels. (If you select this enquiry alongside lower level information enquiries, the resulting tables can look very complicated so a separate enquiry is recommended.) Please see the [Trade Statistics: Policy onSuppressions](https://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=TradeDataNotes&hasFlashPlayer=true).