

Northern Ireland Ports Traffic 2015



Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Business
Frequency: Annual

Key points

- The total tonnage through Northern Ireland (NI) ports in 2015 was 25.3 million tonnes, compared to 25.1 million tonnes the previous year. Total freight traffic through United Kingdom (UK) ports in 2015 was 496.7 million tonnes, compared to 503.2 million tonnes the previous year.
- Over the year, the total tonnage decreased to 15.6 million tonnes of inward traffic and increased to 9.7 million tonnes of outward traffic in Northern Ireland. For the UK as a whole, the inward traffic figure for 2015 decreased to 314.1 million tonnes and outward traffic increased to 182.5 million tonnes.
- The majority of total NI traffic came through the Belfast Port (66.0%), while Warrenpoint accounts for the second highest level of total traffic (11.5%), followed by 10.1% coming through the Port of Larne. The most popular UK port was Grimsby & Immingham, which handled 11.9% of total UK port traffic in 2015.
- A total of 459,601 non-freight vehicles passed through Northern Ireland ports in 2015. This compared with a figure of 474,508 in 2014 – a decrease of 3.1%. In total 5,764,045 non-freight vehicles passed through the UK in 2015 – an increase of 0.5% on 2014.

Context

The Department for Transport (DfT) collects and publishes statistics about passenger and freight traffic through the ports of the UK. The statistics in these releases are collected to provide information on trends and patterns in the handling of freight traffic at UK sea ports.

The importance of shipping and trade to the economy of the UK, an island nation, has resulted in the establishment of a large number of ports around the coast, which are very diverse in terms of size and type of cargo handled. Around 95 per cent by volume of the UK's international trade is transported by sea, and at least until recently, the UK port sector handled a greater weight of goods than any other in Europe.

Statistics on UK port traffic (2015) are available on the DfT Statistics website:

[UK Port Freight Statistics 2015](#)

Following publication of the detailed final annual release by DfT, statisticians within the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency analyse the data which relate to Northern Ireland ports and release this information as the 'Northern Ireland Ports Traffic' publication in November each year.

The Northern Ireland Ports Traffic publication provides statistics on passenger and freight traffic through Northern Ireland ports. Full details including information on quality and methodology can be found in the Ports Traffic section of the NISRA-ELMS website:

[NI Ports Traffic - further information](#)

This Ports Traffic report contains the following chapters:

- 1. Goods through principal ports**
- 2. Non-freight vehicles**
- 3. Further information**
- 4. Index of tables**

National Statistics

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is a producer's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

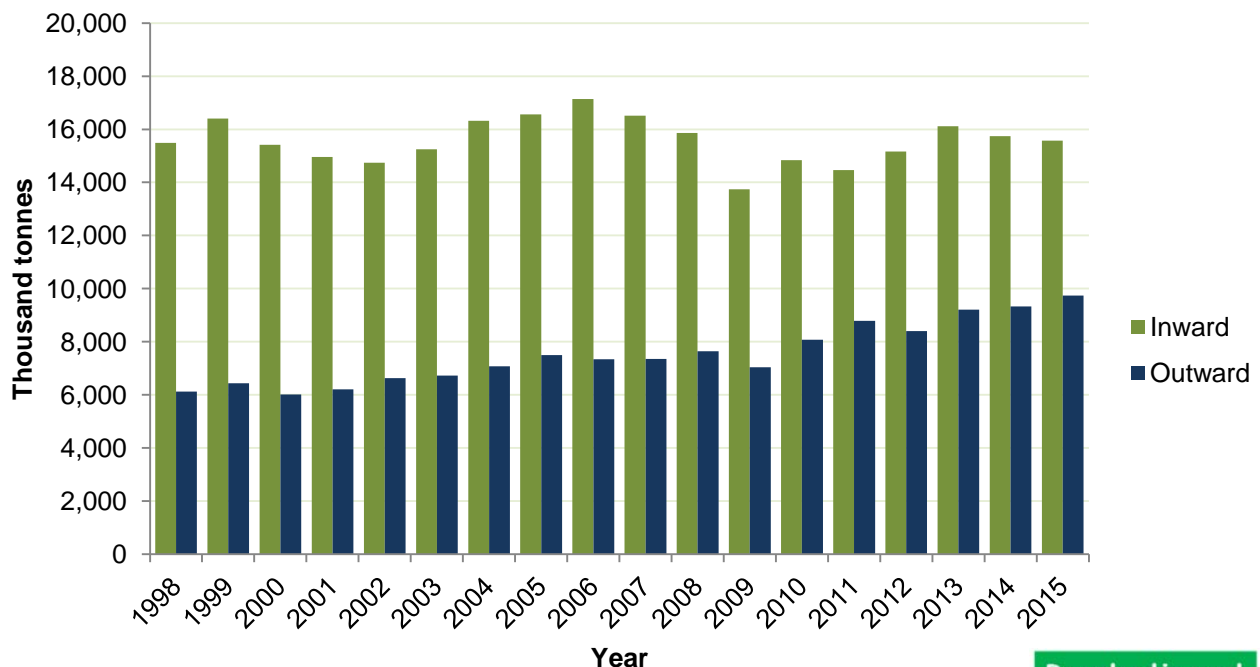
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Goods through principal ports

Key points

- The total tonnage through Northern Ireland ports in 2015 was 25.3 million tonnes
- This represented an increase of 0.9% on the figure of 25.1 million tonnes for 2014
- In 2015, the majority of total NI traffic came through the Belfast Port (66.0%)

Figure 1: Total inward and outward traffic for Northern Ireland, 1998-2015



[Download in excel](#)

The total tonnage through Northern Ireland ports in 2015 was 25.3 million tonnes, which:

- comprised 15.6 million tonnes of inward traffic and 9.7 million tonnes of outward traffic.
- represented an increase of 0.9% on the figure of 25.1 million tonnes in 2014, which comprised 15.7 million tonnes of inward traffic and 9.3 million tonnes of outward traffic.
- has exceeded 25 million tonnes of total traffic in each of the last three years.

Of all NI ports in 2015:

- the majority of total traffic came through the Belfast Port (66.0%), with the remainder coming through Warrenpoint (11.5%), Larne (10.1%), Londonderry (6.9%) and other minor ports (5.4%).
- the majority of inward traffic came through the Belfast Port (65.0%), with 10.8% through Londonderry, 9.6% through Warrenpoint, 8.8% through Larne and the remainder through other minor ports (5.7%).

- 67.6% of outward traffic came through the Belfast Port, with 14.6% through Warrenpoint, 12.1% through Larne and the remainder through Londonderry (0.7%) and other minor ports (5.0%).

In 2015, total freight traffic through UK ports was 496.7 million tonnes, which:

- was lower than the figure in 2014 (503.2 million tonnes).
- was some 15.0% below the peak in the series in 2005 (584.5 million tonnes).
- comprised 314.2 million tonnes of inward traffic, a decrease of 3.5% since 2014.
- comprised 182.5 million tonnes of outward traffic, an increase of 2.7% since 2014.

Of all UK ports in 2015:

- Grimsby and Immingham was the UK's leading port, handling 59.1 million tonnes (11.9% of UK traffic), followed by London with 45.4 million tonnes (9.1%), Milford Haven with 37.7 million tonnes (7.6%) and Southampton with 37.7 million tonnes (7.6%).
- Orkney (242.8%) experienced the largest percentage increase in total traffic of all major UK ports, although the total tonnage for 2015 (3.9 million tonnes) was relatively small (0.8% of UK traffic) compared to the leading ports.

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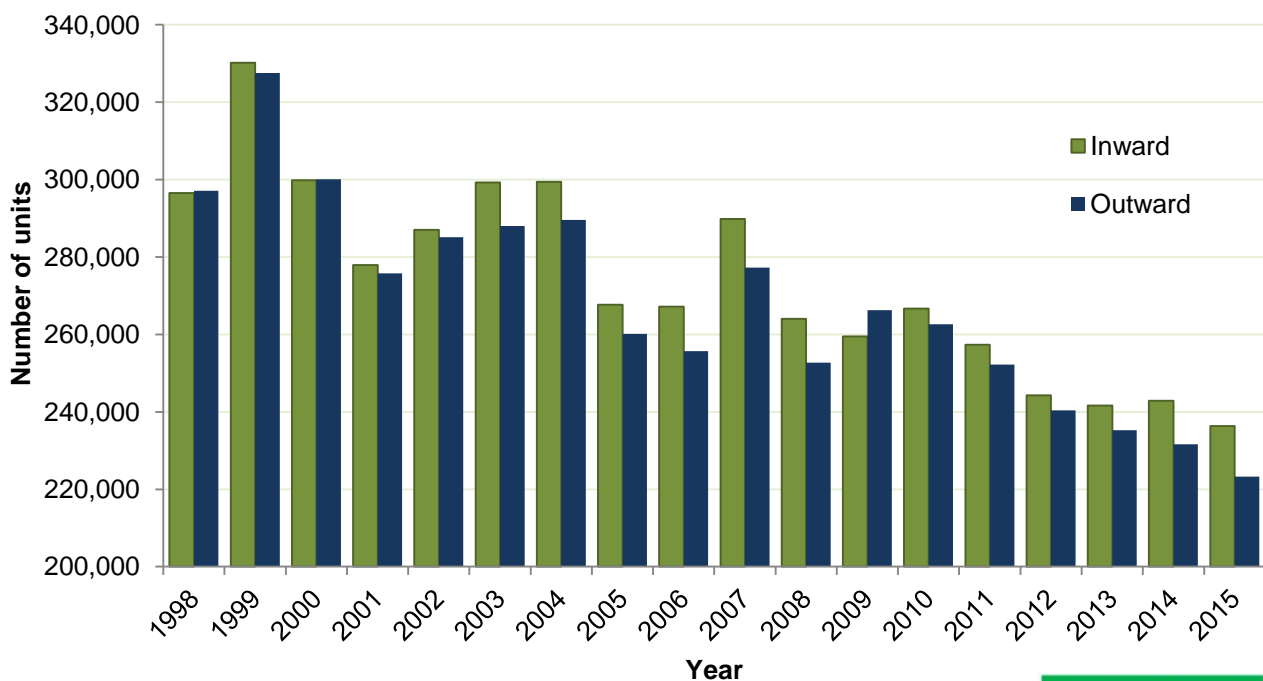
Non-freight vehicles

Non-freight vehicles include passenger cars, motorcycles and accompanying trailers / caravans and passenger buses.

Key points

- Over 450 thousand non-freight vehicles passed through NI ports
- Belfast accounted for nearly two thirds of the traffic
- Dover still the most popular UK port

Figure 2: Unit load carrier non-freight vehicles - Northern Ireland, 1998-2015



[Download in excel](#)

A total of 459,601 non-freight vehicles passed through Northern Ireland ports in 2015, which:

- represented a decrease of 3.1% on 2014 figures.
- comprised 236,341 vehicles arriving in NI and 223,260 leaving.
- mostly passed through the Belfast Port (65.6%), with the remainder passing through the Port of Larne (34.4%).

A total of 5,764,045 non-freight vehicles passed through UK ports in 2015, which:

- represented an increase of 0.5% on 2014 figures.
- comprised 2,891,627 inward traffic and 2,872,418 outward traffic.
- passed in largest numbers through the Port of Dover, which accounted for 2,353,452 vehicles or 40.8% of the total UK non-freight vehicle traffic.

Port freight traffic statistics are based on a combination of data reported to the DfT by port authorities and shipping lines or their agents. Prior to 2000, reporting was by port authorities only.

In January 2000, an EC Maritime Statistics Directive (Council Directive 95/64/EC on statistical returns in respect of the carriage of goods and passengers by sea, recast as Directive 2009/42/EC) was implemented in the UK. This required a complete overhaul of data collection methods. The information in this report has been shown as far as possible on the same or similar basis as previously published, but it should be noted that the different collection system for freight traffic has resulted in some discontinuities in the data series between 2000-2014 and previous years.

Under the Directive, information is required quarterly on foreign and domestic tonnages and freight units, for major ports (i.e. those that have over one million tonnes of freight per annum), by route, flag and cargo type. Much less information is required for smaller ports. Most of the detailed freight information is collected from shipping lines, operators and shipping agents, because the detailed route and ship flag information required by the Directive is only generally available from them. The ports supply more limited information quarterly and annually, which is used to provide control totals and also to publish more timely provisional results.

A technical note, published by the Department for Transport, provides further information on the current and previous data collection systems, and explains the methods and quality standards implemented in the DfT Port Freight Statistics publication, and the Northern Ireland Ports Traffic publication. It is available at:

[A guide to DfT maritime statistics](#)

Contact information

If you require further information about the figures contained in this publication or the accompanying tables, please contact:

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The next Northern Ireland Ports Traffic bulletin, including estimates for 2016, will be published in November 2017.

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Index of tables

The following tables containing Northern Ireland Ports Traffic data for 1998-2015 can be found on the website:

[Table 1 - Tonnage of goods through the principal ports in Northern Ireland](#)

[Table 2 - Unit load carrier cross channel traffic](#)

[Table 3 - Unit load carrier foreign traffic](#)

[Table 4 - Unit load carrier total traffic](#)

[Table 5 - Other traffic \(cross channel, foreign and total\)](#)

[Table 6 - Unit load carrier traffic non-freight vehicles](#)

Notes and definitions:

Tables 1-5 give tonnage of goods through the ports and exclude weights of containers and weights of materials shipped for dumping at sea.

Inward traffic

Inward traffic refers to all goods taken into Northern Ireland from Great Britain and elsewhere through the Northern Ireland ports. Northern Ireland is not necessarily the ultimate destination for these goods.

Outward traffic

Outward traffic covers all goods taken out through Northern Ireland ports, destined for Great Britain or for foreign countries. The origin of the goods is not necessarily in Northern Ireland.