

Northern Ireland Economic Trade Statistics (NIETS)

Background context for 2020

Sales/Exports

- Totalled **£67.8 billion** (↓4.9%) – **66% goods (£45.1bn) and 34% services (£22.8bn)**.
- Sales to all reported regions, **except GB**, fell.
- Just over 2/3rds (67.9%) of total sales were within NI (£46.1bn).
- Sales within NI decreased during 2020 (↓£2.7bn or 5.5%) as did exports to Ireland, £4.2bn (↓£0.3bn or 7.3%); the Rest of the EU, £2.2bn (↓£0.2bn or 8.7%) and the Rest of the World, £4.1bn (↓£0.7bn or 14.9%).
- In contrast, sales to GB (£11.3bn) increased (↑£0.4bn or 4.0%), and were 2.7 times exports to Ireland (£4.2bn).
- Ireland is our single largest export market accounting for 6.2% of sales. Sales to Ireland were 1.9 times those to the REU (£2.2bn).
- Businesses had reported that the Covid-19 pandemic was the significant factor in these falling sales.

2020 Purchases/Imports

- Totalled **£44.1bn** (↓5.5%) – **77% goods (£34.1bn) and 23% services (£9.9bn)**.
- Purchases from all reported regions fell.
- 54% of purchases were from within NI (£23.8bn), 30% from GB and 16% via Imports (£6.8bn)
- Purchases from GB (£13.4bn) were 5.3 times those from Ireland (£2.5bn) – both down 0.3% and 10.4% respectively.
- Ireland is our single largest import market (£2.5bn), exceeding the REU (£2.1bn) and ROW (£2.2bn).
- Total purchases increased by 15.1% between 2018 and 2019, rising from £40.3 billion to £46.6 billion before falling to £44.1 billion in 2020.
- The decrease in 2020 is the largest in survey history, with the vast majority of businesses attributing the decline to the global pandemic.

2021

Sales/Exports

- Totalled **£77.1 billion** (↑13.6%) – **67% goods (£51.3bn) and 33% services (£25.8bn)**.
- Just over 2/3rds (67.6%) of total sales were within NI (£52.1bn).
- Remainder fairly evenly split between GB (16.6%) and exports outside the UK (15.8%), equating to £12.8bn and £12.2bn respectively.
- Sales to GB (£12.8bn) were almost 2.5 times sales to Ireland (£5.2bn). Sales to Ireland increased by 23.0%; Sales to GB increased by 13.1%.
- Ireland is our single largest export market accounting for 6.7% of sales. Sales to Ireland twice that to REU (£2.6bn).
- Sales to all destinations increased in 2021 – **post pandemic effect**. Total sales, sales within NI and sales to Ireland are at their highest levels on survey record.

2021 Purchases/Imports

- Totalled **£48.7bn** (↑10.5%) – **80% goods (£38.8bn) and 20% services (£9.9bn)**
- 54% of purchases were from within NI, 30% from GB and 16% via Imports (£7.7bn).
- Purchases from GB (£14.4bn) were 4.6 times those from Ireland (£3.1bn) – both up 7.6% and 22.5%.
- Ireland is our single largest import market (£3.1bn), exceeding the REU (£2.5bn) and ROW (£2.1bn).
- Purchases from within NI, GB and Ireland are at their highest levels on survey record.

Trade Balance

- NI businesses exported more (£12.2bn) than it imported (£7.7bn) – a trade surplus of £4.5 billion.
- The reverse was the case with our trade with GB. Purchases exceeded sales (£14.4bn v £12.8bn), resulting in a trade deficit of £1.7bn.

2019-2021 (Pre pandemic v post pandemic)

Effect of COVID-19 and EU Exit on trade

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the economy during 2020, due to (i) lockdown measures being introduced to mitigate its spread and (ii) prolonged periods of business closures. **This should be borne in mind when considering the change in trade estimates between 2020 and 2021.**

In addition the NI Protocol was implemented in January 2021. These are two major economic events and it is not possible to unpick the impact of either independently on these trade figures.

When the figures are viewed in the broader picture of trends observed over the past number of years, the 2021 figures broadly align with what might reasonably have been expected were it not for the impact of the pandemic in 2020.

Sales/exports 2019-2021

- Total sales increased by **£5.7bn** (↑8.0%) – **£3.0bn goods** (↑6.2%) & **£2.7bn services** (↑11.9%).
- Sales/exports increased for all regions, except the ROW (↓7.8%, £0.3bn).
- Sales of services increased for all reported regions.
- Exports of goods to ROW is the only area reporting a decrease (↓12.8%, £0.5bn).

Purchases/Imports 2019-2021

- Total purchases increased by **£2.1bn** (↑4.4%) – **£1.8bn goods** (↑4.9%) & **£0.2bn services** (↑2.4%).
- Purchases increased for all partners except from REU (↓1.3%, £32m) & ROW (↓5.0%, £110m).

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2020

2021

SALES

PURCHASES

SALES

PURCHASES

Percentage values in bold show the share of total sales/purchases

Percentage values in blue font show the goods-services split

Value of sales and annual % change

Value of purchases and annual % change

Value of sales and annual % change

Value of purchases and annual % change

TOTAL SALES

Total: £67.8bn (↓ 4.9%) – **100%**
Goods: £45.1bn (↓ 6.6%) – **66%**
Services: £22.8bn (↓ 1.3%) – **34%**

NI

Total: £46.1bn (↓ 5.5%) – **68%**
Goods: £30.0bn (↓ 6.7%) – **65%**
Services: £16.0bn (↓ 3.2%) – **35%**

GB

Total: £11.3bn (↑ 4.0%) – **17%**
Goods: £6.9bn (↑ 1.0%) – **61%**
Services: £4.4bn (↑ 9.2%) – **39%**

IE

Total: £4.2bn (↓ 7.3%) – **6%**
Goods: £3.2bn (↓ 7.3%) – **75%**
Services: £1.1bn (↓ 7.4%) – **25%**

REU

Total: £2.2bn (↓ 8.7%) – **3%**
Goods: £1.9bn (↓ 9.7%) – **83%**
Services: £0.4bn (↓ 3.8%) – **17%**

ROW

Total: £4.1bn (↓ 14.9%) – **6%**
Goods: £3.1bn (↓ 17.9%) – **76%**
Services: £1.0bn (↓ 3.4%) – **24%**

EXTERNAL SALES

Total: £21.8bn (↓ 3.6%) – **32%**
Goods: £15.0bn (↓ 6.6%) – **69%**
Services: £6.7bn (↑ 3.6%) – **31%**

EXPORTS

Total: £10.5bn (↓ 10.7%) – **15%**
Goods: £8.1bn (↓ 12.1%) – **77%**
Services: £2.4bn (↓ 5.3%) – **23%**

TOTAL PURCHASES

Total: £44.1bn (↓ 5.5%) – **100%**
Goods: £34.1bn (↓ 7.6%) – **77%**
Services: £9.9bn (↑ 2.4%) – **23%**

NI

Total: £23.8bn (↓ 7.0%) – **54%**
Goods: £17.3bn (↓ 8.9%) – **73%**
Services: £6.5bn (↓ 1.3%) – **27%**

GB

Total: £13.4bn (↓ 0.3%) – **30%**
Goods: £10.8bn (↓ 2.8%) – **81%**
Services: £2.6bn (↑ 11.4%) – **19%**

IE

Total: £2.5bn (↓ 10.4%) – **6%**
Goods: £2.2bn (↓ 11.8%) – **87%**
Services: £0.3bn (↑ 0.9%) – **13%**

REU

Total: £2.1bn (↓ 16.5%) – **5%**
Goods: £1.9bn (↓ 20.2%) – **89%**
Services: £0.2bn (↑ 30.3%) – **11%**

ROW

Total: £2.2bn (↓ 1.7%) – **5%**
Goods: £1.9bn (↓ 1.9%) – **87%**
Services: £0.3bn (↓ 0.4%) – **13%**

IMPORTS

Total: £6.8bn (↓ 9.9%) – **16%**
Goods: £6.0bn (↓ 11.9%) – **88%**
Services: £0.8bn (↑ 7.5%) – **12%**

TOTAL SALES

Total: £77.1bn (↑ 13.6%) – **100%**
Goods: £51.3bn (↑ 13.8%) – **67%**
Services: £25.8bn (↑ 13.3%) – **33%**

NI

Total: £52.1bn (↑ 13.2%) – **68%**
Goods: £34.3bn (↑ 14.0%) – **66%**
Services: £17.9bn (↑ 11.6%) – **34%**

GB

Total: £12.8bn (↑ 13.1%) – **17%**
Goods: £7.8bn (↑ 12.7%) – **61%**
Services: £5.0bn (↑ 13.9%) – **39%**

IE

Total: £5.2bn (↑ 23.0%) – **7%**
Goods: £3.9bn (↑ 22.6%) – **75%**
Services: £1.3bn (↑ 24.4%) – **25%**

REU

Total: £2.6bn (↑ 16.8%) – **3%**
Goods: £2.1bn (↑ 11.4%) – **79%**
Services: £0.5bn (↑ 42.8%) – **21%**

ROW

Total: £4.4bn (↑ 8.3%) – **6%**
Goods: £3.3bn (↑ 6.1%) – **75%**
Services: £1.1bn (↑ 15.2%) – **25%**

EXTERNAL SALES

Total: £24.9bn (↑ 14.5%) – **32%**
Goods: £17.0bn (↑ 13.2%) – **68%**
Services: £7.9bn (↑ 17.4%) – **32%**

EXPORTS

Total: £12.2bn (↑ 16.0%) – **16%**
Goods: £9.2bn (↑ 13.7%) – **76%**
Services: £3.0bn (↑ 23.6%) – **24%**

TOTAL PURCHASES

Total: £48.7bn (↑ 10.5%) – **100%**
Goods: £38.8bn (↑ 13.6%) – **80%**
Services: £9.9bn (↓ 0.0%) – **20%**

NI

Total: £26.5bn (↑ 11.4%) – **54%**
Goods: £19.6bn (↑ 13.5%) – **74%**
Services: £6.9bn (↑ 6.0%) – **26%**

GB

Total: £14.4bn (↑ 7.6%) – **30%**
Goods: £12.3bn (↑ 13.9%) – **85%**
Services: £2.1bn (↓ 18.7%) – **15%**

IE

Total: £3.1bn (↑ 22.5%) – **6%**
Goods: £2.8bn (↑ 26.3%) – **90%**
Services: £0.3bn (↓ 3.3%) – **10%**

REU

Total: £2.5bn (↑ 18.2%) – **5%**
Goods: £2.2bn (↑ 16.0%) – **87%**
Services: £0.3bn (↑ 35.8%) – **13%**

ROW

Total: £2.1bn (↓ 3.3%) – **4%**
Goods: £1.8bn (↓ 4.6%) – **86%**
Services: £0.3bn (↑ 5.4%) – **14%**

IMPORTS

Total: £7.7bn (↑ 12.9%) – **16%**
Goods: £6.8bn (↑ 13.2%) – **88%**
Services: £0.9bn (↑ 10.9%) – **12%**

More detailed information on the above can be found via the [NISRA website](#)