

31 May 2018

Northern Ireland Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics: Purchases and Imports Results 2016

Geographical Area: Northern Ireland

Theme: Economy

Frequency: Annual

NISRA published its Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics (BESES) results relating to local businesses' sales in 2016 to markets outside Northern Ireland in December 2017. This release provides information on the value of goods and services purchased by NI businesses in 2016. These releases remain designated as 'experimental' to reflect the fact that they are under development.

Key points

- Total purchases by companies in Northern Ireland (NI) were estimated to be worth £44.3 billion in 2016, an increase of 1.9% (£0.8 billion) over the year.
- Total purchases of goods were estimated to be worth £35.2 billion in 2016, an increase of 3.3% (£1.1 billion) over the year
- Total purchases of services represented 20.5% of total purchases in 2016 and were estimated to be worth £9.1 billion. Purchases of services decreased by 3.0% over the year (£0.3 billion).
- Imports were estimated to be worth £6.8 billion in 2016, an increase of 11.2% (£0.7 billion) over the year.
- Imports of goods were estimated to be worth £6.1 billion in 2016, an increase of 11.0% (£0.6 billion). Imports of goods represented 89.7% of all imports.
- Imports of services represented 10.3% of total imports in 2016 and were estimated to be worth £0.7 billion. Imports of services increased by 13.2% (£0.1 billion) over the year.
- Imports from ROI were estimated to be worth £2.3 billion in 2016, an increase of 16.7% (£0.3 billion) over the year.
- Imports from REU were estimated to be worth £2.1 billion in 2016, an increase of 4.2% (£0.1 billion) over the year.
- Imports from ROW were estimated to be worth £2.4 billion in 2016, an increase of 12.9% (£0.3 billion) over the year.

2 Results Tables: 2016

Table 1: Purchases and Imports from Trade Partners Split by Goods and Services: 2016 (£ millions)

Trade Partner	Total Purchases	Total Purchases of Goods	Total Purchases of Services
Total Purchases	£44,280	£35,186	£9,094
NI Purchases	£24,050	£18,088	£5,962
GB Purchases	£13,421	£10,989	£2,432
ROI Imports	£2,288	£1,995	£293
REU Imports	£2,124	£1,964	£160
ROW Imports	£2,398	£2,150	£248
Total Imports	£6,810	£6,109	£701

Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Reference Tables

To support this release a set of reference tables with further sectoral breakdowns are available on the [NISRA website](#).

3 Further Information

Experimental Status

The Broad Economy Sales and Exports Statistics (BESES) is an experimental annual measure of local businesses' sales to markets outside Northern Ireland (NI). The BESES was first published in 2015 (referring to survey years 2011 and 2012) to provide a more comprehensive measure of such sales than had previously been available. This release provides information on the value of goods and services purchased by NI businesses in 2016.

Background Notes

Coverage: Following a decision in 2013 by the Office for National Statistics to discontinue the publication of figures covering Insurance & Re-insurance industries (within Sector K) due to ongoing volatility of the estimates, the NIABI and BESES publications also exclude estimates for this sector.

The other main areas that are excluded are: Public Administration and Defence (section O) while Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (section A) excludes farming (groups 01.1, 01.2, 01.3, 01.4 and 01.5). Local authority and central Government bodies in Education (section P) and Human Health and Social Work Activities (section Q) have also been excluded from this publication, as has 86.2 (Medical and Dental Practice Activities) within section Q.

Further information regarding survey methodology, coverage and definitions can be found on the [NISRA website](#).

Given the limitations in coverage, the BESES does not provide a complete picture of trade. However a more complete description of the sales and purchases of goods and services can be found in the [Supply and Use Tables \(SUTs\) for NI](#) for 2015.

Other Sources: While directly comparable UK data for the BESES do not exist (the BESES covers goods and services produced in Northern Ireland), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) are responsible for collecting the UK's international trade in goods data, which are published as two National Statistics series - the 'Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS) of the UK' and the 'UK Regional Trade Statistics (RTS)'. These UK regional statistics can be accessed at: <https://www.uktradeinfo.com/Statistics/RTS/Pages/default.aspx>.

HMRC's primary source data is collected from the EU-wide Intrastat survey and from Customs import and export entries, both administered by HMRC. The BESES is an experimental measure, based on an annual survey of local businesses' trade with markets outside Northern Ireland (NI). BESES data is gathered through the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry and has been running since 2011.

A joint NISRA/HMRC statement referencing the differences between the methodologies and ongoing collaborative working is available on the [NISRA website](#).

Further Information

Further information on the BESES can be accessed on the [NISRA website](#).