

Press release: Dr Fox on latest trade figures

According to the latest independent statistics, released by the ONS on Monday, 11 June, UK exports rose 7.4% (£43.3 billion) to £625.4 billion to the end of April 2018 compared to the same time last year.

Exports continue to grow faster than imports for the tenth month continuously with the overall trade deficit narrowing by £6.7 billion from £37.5 billion to £30.8 billion.

The country's renowned service sector continues to thrive with exports up 7.5% to £282.6 billion, increasing the service surplus to £108.7 billion.

Goods exports also rose strongly by 7.4% to £342.8 billion.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

Far from the gloom some people report, today's trade figures show in the year to April 2018 the trade deficit narrowed by £6.7 billion as overall exports rose by 7%.

If we look on a stable longer term basis, the growth was driven by both the UK's renowned service sector which saw exports rising by 7.5% to £283 billion and UK goods exports which grew by 7.4%.

For the first time as a dedicated trade department, we're able to provide comprehensive support to British exporters – helping make sure they meet the global demand for our top-of-the-range high quality goods and services.

The figures follow separate analysis released by HMRC (7 June) which found the number of VAT-registered businesses exporting goods in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is at 109,000 – a rise of 4.1% from the previous year.

The figures also reveal:

- exports of goods from England increased by 6.5% to £244.6 billion
- in Scotland, goods exports increased by 12.1% to £28.8 billion
- in Wales, goods exports increased by 7.1% to £16.4 billion
- in Northern Ireland, goods exports increased by 4.9% to £8.5 billion

In the first months of 2018, the average value of goods exported per exporter was £750,000.

Businesses were also taking advantage of global interest as the number exporting to non-EU countries rose to over 47,000. The most popular non-EU destinations include the USA, that 19.2% of exporters sold goods to, Australia (7.3%) and Switzerland (7.2%).

Further information:

- [View the latest ONS statistics](#)
- [View HMRC trade in goods data](#)

[News story: Government funding boost for Cycle Ambition Cities](#)

Cycle Ambition Cities are on track to make cycling the natural choice of transport after successfully bidding for a share of £6.5 million government funding that will get more people cycling safely.

In February, the Department for Transport gave Cycle Ambition Cities the [chance to bid for a share of £6.5 million of government funding](#) to trial new schemes aimed at improving road safety and creating more bike-friendly areas.

Since February's announcement the government has identified 7 winning Cycle Ambition City bids and is contributing over £7 million to these cities this year as part of the Department for Transport's [Cycle safety review](#).

Successful bids will be spent on a range of improvements to encourage more people to cycle as part of their everyday journeys – from a new 6km cycle route in West Yorkshire to improving crossings for cyclists and pedestrians in Bristol and Cambridge.

[Cycle Ambition Cities](#)

Cycling Minister Jesse Norman said:

I want us to become a nation of cyclists, and to make cycling a natural choice for people of all ages and backgrounds.

While Britain has some of the safest roads in the world, we want to encourage still more people to take up cycling.

We are determined to make cycling safer and easier across the country. This funding, as part of our overall cycling and walking strategy, will help local councils to make their roads safer for everyone.

The Department for Transport launched the first ever statutory [Cycling and walking investment strategy](#) in April 2017, to encourage more people to cycle and walk. This sets out how the government will deliver its ambition for cycling, and outlines how the £1.2 billion of funding available over the period to 2021 will be spent.

On 1 June 2018, the department's [call for evidence on cycling and walking in this country](#) closed, providing an opportunity for people to share their views and opinions on everything from improved infrastructure to education for all road users.

The 6 Cycle Ambition Cities with successful bids are:

- Birmingham
- Bristol
- Cambridge
- Leeds
- Manchester
- Norwich

Details of the successful bids

Cycle City/authority	Scheme name	DfT contribution	Proposed benefits
Bristol	Old Market Roundabout	£479,495	Significant improvements to crossings for cyclists and pedestrians
Cambridge	Fendon Road Roundabout	£550,000	Significant improvements to access for cyclists and crossings for pedestrians
Manchester	Ashton New Road/Alan Turing Way Junction	£1,542,000	Major junction upgrade and segregation for cyclists
West Yorks Combined Authority	Calder Valley Corridor Cycle Route	£1,470,000	New 6km cycle route along canal towpath between Hebden Bridge and Todmorden
Norwich	Earlham Fiveways Roundabout	£685,000	Significant improvements to crossings and access for cyclists
Norwich	Green Pedalway	£1,040,000	Significant improvements to crossings and access/environment for cyclists and pedestrians
Birmingham	Pershore Road/Priory Road junction, Edgbaston	£1,300,000	New cycleway and improved pedestrian crossings; improved road markings
DfT Total contribution		£7,066,495	

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[News story: Foreign Secretary call with Aung San Suu Kyi](#)

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

I reiterated my deep and continuing concern about the situation facing Burma's Rohingya people to State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, and encouraged her to show the leadership needed to bring together the communities of Rakhine State.

I welcomed Burma's agreement of a Memorandum of Understanding allowing UN oversight of the refugee returns process in Rakhine, and her Government's announcement of the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations in Rakhine. I underlined the need for swift implementation of both, to support the creation of conditions to allow the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees and ensure those responsible for human rights violations in Rakhine are held to account.

Recent fighting in Kachin and Shan States is also deeply troubling and I stressed the need for the Burmese military to exercise restraint and ensure humanitarian access to those people forced to flee from their homes by the violence.

We also discussed the passing of Burma's Wildlife Act, which is welcome and lays down some of the toughest punishments in South East Asia for illegal wildlife trade crimes.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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[News story: David Mundell visits Arbroath and Dundee](#)

On his visit to the region on Friday [8 June] Mr Mundell:

- Visited Arbroath smokehouse RR Spink & Sons to discuss the opportunities for the sector brought by Brexit.
- Met representatives of the University of Dundee and Abertay University to hear details of bids being made as part of the Tay Cities Deal. These projects would boost Dundee's strengths in biomedical sciences, forensic science and cybersecurity.
- Visited Tayside Aviation, a potential partner in the Tay Cities Deal.

Mundell said:

I took the opportunity of visiting RR Spink to discuss the

challenges and opportunities of EU exit for their business – as well as sampling their delicious hot and cold smoked trout and salmon.

We are making good progress on the Tay Cities City Region Deal, which has the potential to transform the region's economy, boosting growth, creating jobs and increasing prosperity. I was pleased to have the opportunity of discussing the details further with partners.

Mr Mundell met a number City Deal partners, including representatives of Dundee and Abertay Universities and NHS Tayside. He also visited Tayside Aviation, another potential partner in the City Deal.

UK City Region Deals are a UK Government initiative, delivered in partnership with the Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners. The Tay Cities Deal was given the green light in the 2016 Autumn Statement, and reaffirmed in the 2017 March Budget. The UK Government and Scottish Government are currently discussing the detailed proposals from the Tay Cities

[News story: Minister for Defence Procurement visits JFC](#)

This was the minister's first visit to JFC since starting in his role 5 months ago. During his visit, the minister heard about the important contribution that JFC makes towards defence and how it works with the single services.

The minister was briefed on the role that JFC plays in driving defence innovation, especially through work being carried out by the jHub. He recognised the enabling capability that JFC provides and highlighted the criticality of innovation to defence

During his visit, the minister held a meeting with military and civilian staff based at the Northwood site. He took the opportunity to praise the work undertaken across JFC, especially around integration and commented that JFC is the glue that brings the whole of defence together.

Referencing recent humanitarian efforts undertaken by the UK armed forces, such as after Hurricane Irma, the minister congratulated JFC on helping coordinate the UK response. He expanded further, confirming one of JFC's key roles is to ensure strong integration and co-ordination. He also shared that JFC is an important enabler within defence when it comes to working with our international partners.

Finally, he opened a discussion with members of the audience, covering subjects including the growing importance of space to UK defence and the need through Modernising Defence Programme for defence to deliver in an increasingly agile manner.