



## Sea Transport in Wales during 2015

17 May 2017  
SB 27/2017

### Key points

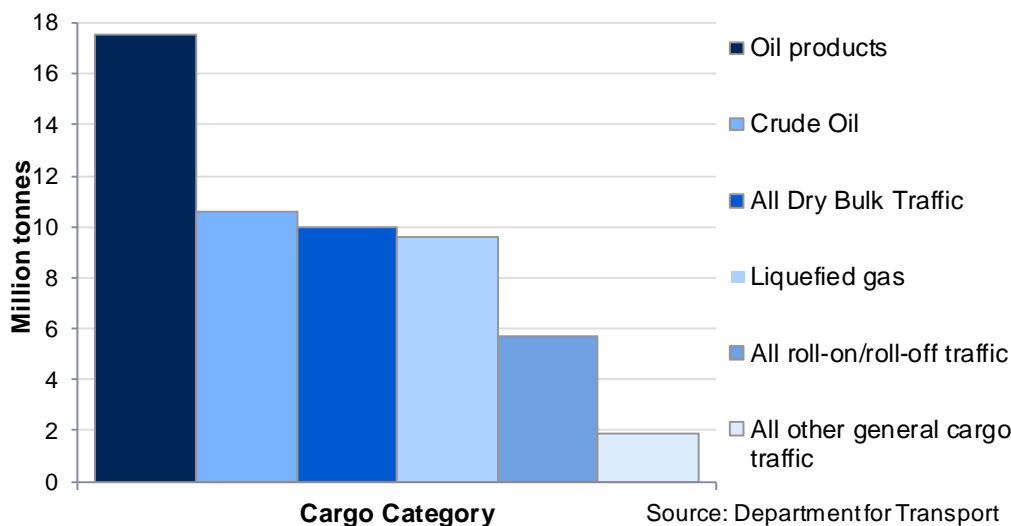
In Wales during 2015 total freight traffic through Welsh ports was 56.4 million tonnes (Mt). Of this, 40.4 Mt were goods inwards and 15.9 Mt were goods outwards. Welsh ports accounted for 11 per cent of the total United Kingdom (UK) port traffic of 496.7 Mt.



The traffic of liquefied bulk accounted for 68 per cent of traffic in major Welsh ports. The largest components of these flows were:

- Oil products, with total traffic of 17.6 Mt; of which nearly 10.7 Mt was goods outwards, with 7.1 Mt exported to the rest of the world and 3.6 Mt sent to destinations elsewhere in the UK. The remaining 6.9 Mt were goods inwards from both UK and foreign sources.
- Crude oil, with total traffic of 10.6 Mt; most of which was inwards, with 2.2 Mt from the rest of the UK and 8.3 Mt imported from elsewhere in the world.
- Liquefied gas, with total traffic of 9.6 Mt.
- Passenger movements between Ireland and Welsh ferry ports have declined by 60 per cent at Fishguard, 35 per cent at Milford Haven and 29 per cent at Holyhead (from 1998 to 2015, [table 1](#)).

**Chart 1: Foreign and domestic traffic at major Welsh ports by cargo category, 2015**



### About this bulletin

This Statistical Bulletin sets out information about ports in Wales for 2015. It covers the freight traffic through these ports; passengers and freight traffic between Wales and the Republic of Ireland; and ship arrivals at Welsh ports. This bulletin provides key analysis, with [tables of underlying data](#) found on the webpage.

### In this bulletin

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Other large bulk cargo categories include the 5.7 Mt traffic of ores (mainly importing iron ore) and 2.5 Mt of Coal traffic. In addition, sea transport involved over 10 thousand ship arrivals in Wales during the year.

One of the most important roles for Welsh ports is as the principal route for lorry traffic between Ireland and Great Britain (and the rest of Europe). Over three quarters of goods taken by Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) to GB and the rest of the EU goes through Wales, the majority of which is through Holyhead.

## **International transport of freight**

### **The main ports in Wales**

The three most important ports in Wales meet specialised shipping needs:

- Milford Haven handles mainly crude oil, petroleum products and liquefied natural gas.
- Port Talbot imports iron ore and coal mostly for the adjacent steelworks.
- Holyhead is the main port for freight and sea passenger transport with the Irish Republic.

The other major ports include Fishguard, Swansea, Cardiff, and Newport and there are also a number of minor ports (i.e. handling less than 0.8 Mt a year) in Wales: Barry, Mostyn, Neath, Llanddulas, Llanelli, Port Penrhyn and Burry Port.

Milford Haven is the largest port in Wales and, in 2015, the third largest port in the UK, predominantly through the oil and gas traffic. It handled 37.7 Mt of traffic in 2015, which was 7.6 per cent of the UK total. This shows an increase of 9.8 per cent or 3.4 Mt from 2014 ([table 1](#)).

Comparing Welsh ports with those across the rest of the UK shows that Grimsby and Immingham remained the UK's leading port in 2015, handling 59.1 Mt (12 per cent of UK traffic). It was followed by London (2nd) with 45.4 Mt (9 per cent of UK traffic), Southampton (4th) with 37.6 Mt (8 per cent of UK Traffic) and Tees and Hartlepool (5th) with 35.8 Mt (7 per cent of UK traffic).

Total freight traffic through UK ports in 2015 was 496.7 million tonnes (Mt), a 1.3 per cent decrease on 2014, and 15.3 per cent below the 2004 level. Compared with 2014, inwards traffic decreased slightly to 314.2 Mt, whilst outwards traffic increased by 4.8 MT by to 182.5 Mt.

### **Quarterly imports and exports**

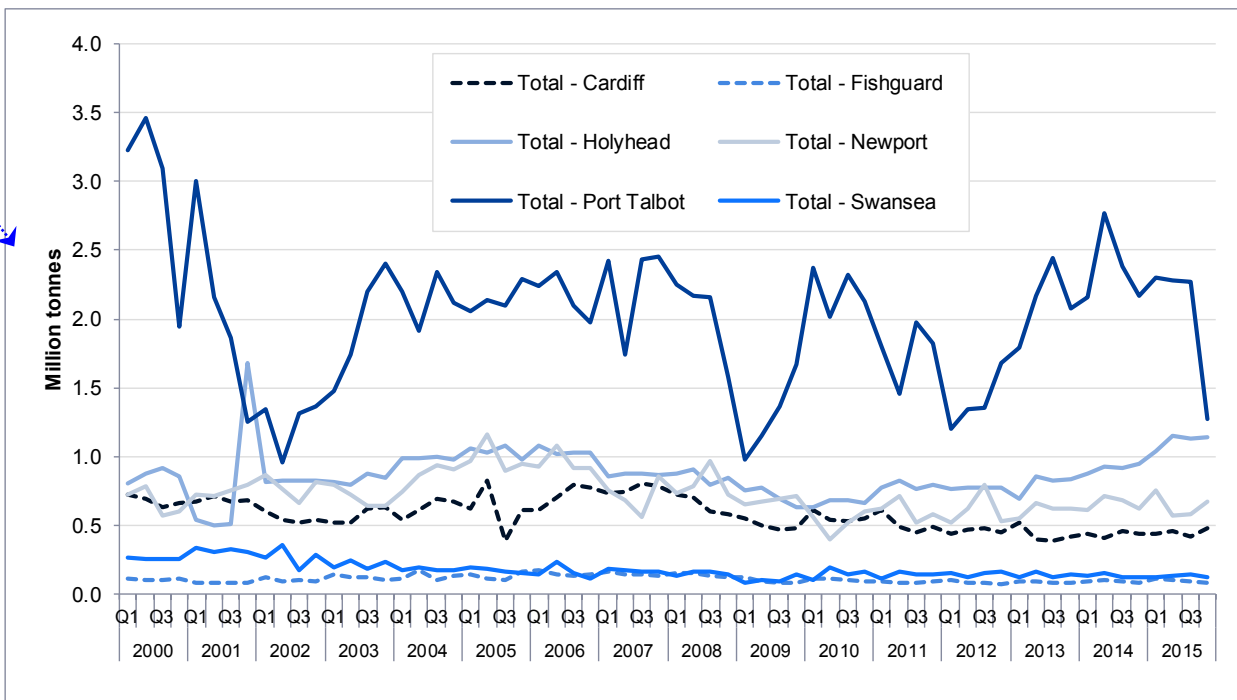
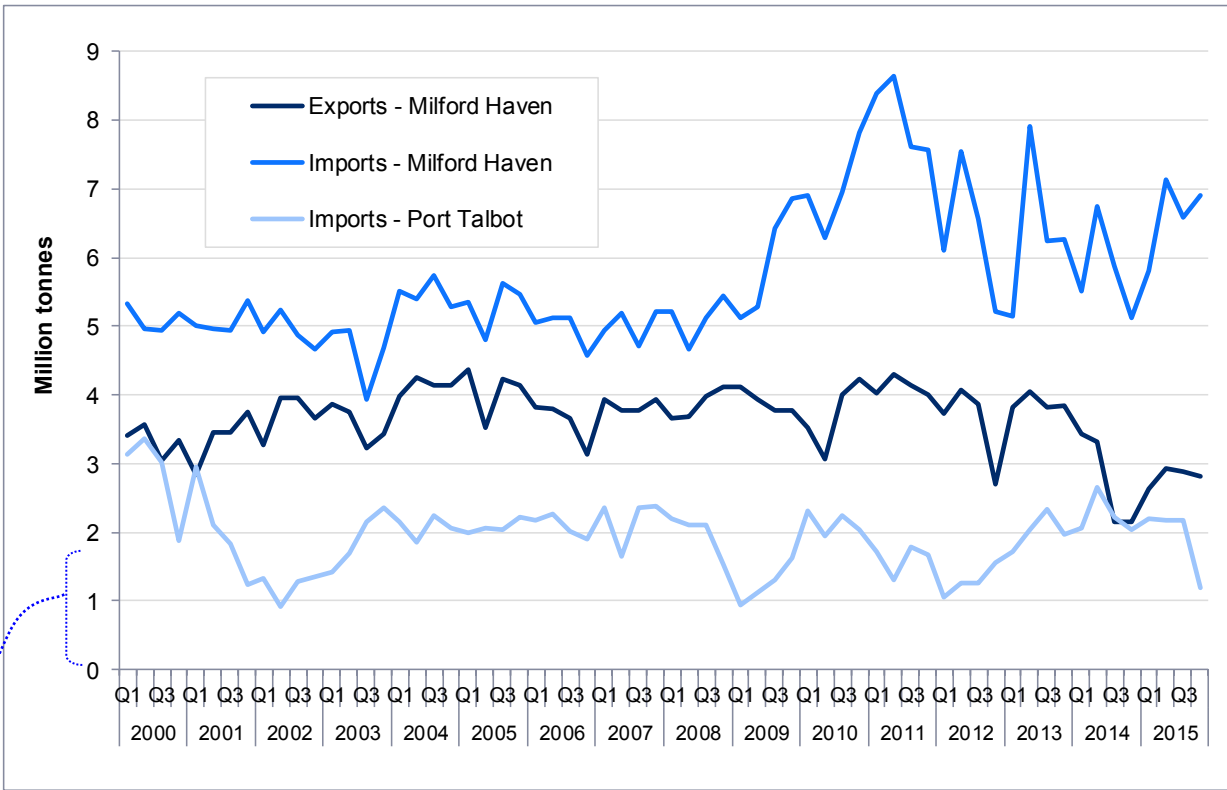
Imports to Milford Haven have been higher though more volatile in recent years. Exports from Milford Haven have fluctuated in recent years with the 2104 and 2015 figures being lower than the 2000 figures. The provisional 2015 figures are higher than the 2014 figures, but still remain lower than the 2000 figures.

Whilst there has been a slight downward trend for total imports and exports through Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, that trend has reversed for Holyhead since 2010.

Imports through Port Talbot depend on the production levels in the adjoining steel plant. For the UK as a whole, steel production increased to 12.0 million in 2014 but declined again to 10.9 (provisional data) in 2015. Part of this decrease in production came from Port Talbot, which

accounts for over a third of the UK's output of steel and the import figures for the port similarly show a reflective decrease over that time.

**Chart 2: Trends in the quarterly imports and exports from 2000 to 2015 (2015 figures are still provisional)**

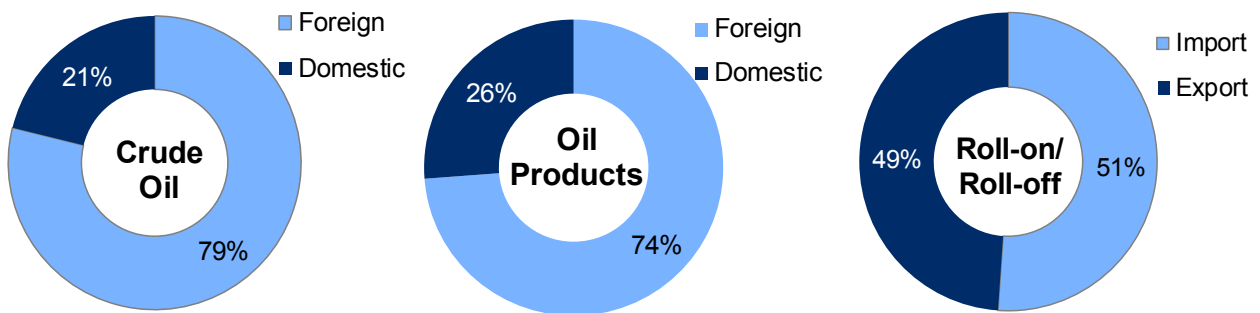


## Foreign and domestic cargo and traffic

When comparing domestic and foreign traffic the data, in Chart 3, shows that:

- almost 80 per cent of crude oil traffic through the ports of Wales was for foreign imports, the rest coming from domestic sources with no foreign exports
- around three quarters (74 per cent) of the traffic of oil products was foreign traffic, of which 55 per cent was foreign exports, the rest was traffic to and from other UK ports
- the volume of roll-on/roll-off traffic that was imported was broadly similar to the volume exported

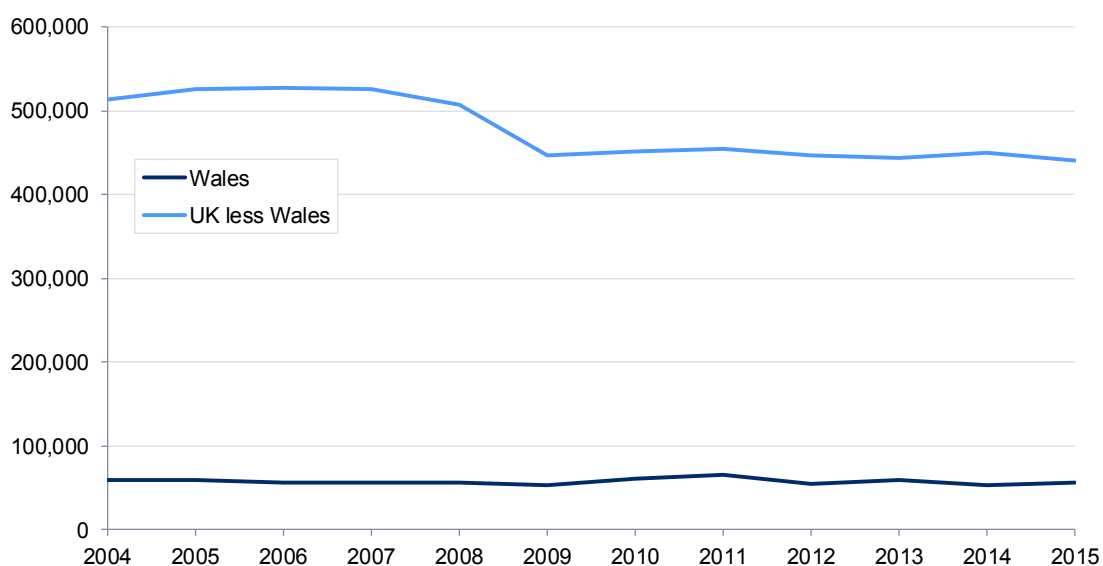
**Chart 3: Domestic and Foreign Traffic at major Welsh ports, 2015**



## Ports in Wales compared with the rest of the United Kingdom

There was a slight downward trend between 2005 and 2009 in the volume of total sea traffic in Wales. Since 2010 the amount of traffic has fluctuated annually with traffic peak in 2011.

**Chart 4: All port traffic through Wales and rest of UK, 2004 to 2015**



Source: Department for Transport

## Freight movements to and from the Republic of Ireland through Welsh ports

Welsh ports also act as the gateway between the Republic of Ireland and the rest of Europe with, for example, 72 per cent of goods carried on HGVs between the Republic of Ireland and Europe passing through Wales.

An important influence on the level of freight traffic through Welsh ports will be the level of economic activity in the Republic of Ireland. Since 2011 Irish GNP<sup>1</sup> has been increasing, growing by 18.7% in 2015<sup>2</sup> and figures for traffic of goods between Ireland and Europe through Wales show a similar pattern in recent years.

- In 2015, 492 thousand lorries and unaccompanied trailers passed through Welsh ports to and from Ireland. Within this total, around half were from, and half to, Ireland. 80 per cent of this traffic went through Holyhead.
- In addition, in 2015 there were just under 2.6 million sea passengers travelling between Wales and Ireland; 2.0 million of these passed through Holyhead with the remainder using the ports of Fishguard and Milford Haven. There were also 653 thousand accompanied passenger vehicles, made up of 642 thousand cars and 11 thousand coaches.

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<sup>1</sup> The GNP figures have been used here in preference to GDP because the former takes account of the large flows of profits and interest out of the Irish economy as a consequence of its role as the European base for many multinational companies and the role of Irish-based companies in the aircraft leasing business.

<sup>2</sup> [National income and expenditure annual results, Central Statistics Office](#)

## Passenger movements through Welsh ports

### Ferry passengers

The numbers of ferry passengers using Welsh ports peaked in 1998 and since then there has been a general decline. The decline included the removal of the Swansea – Cork service, which restarted in 2010. Passenger movements between Ireland and Welsh ferry ports have declined by 60 per cent at Fishguard, 35 per cent at Milford Haven and 29 per cent at Holyhead (from 1998 to 2015).

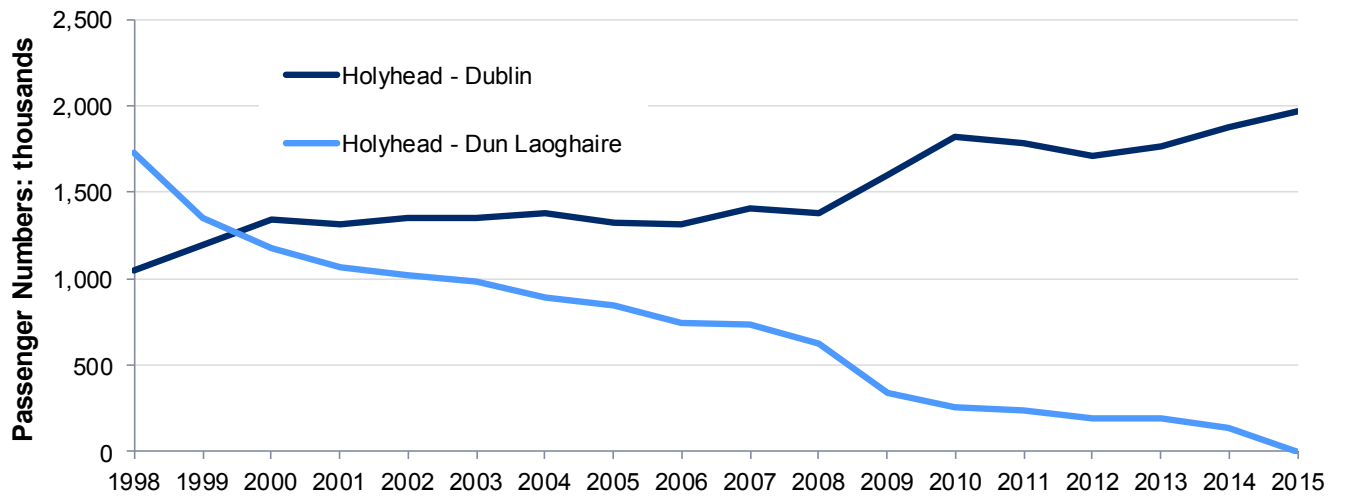
**Table 1: Sea passenger traffic between (both to and from) Wales and the Irish Republic by port, 1998 to 2015**

|             |               |                      |                   |               |                   |                   |                   | <i>Thousands</i> |
|-------------|---------------|----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|             | Holyhead -    | Holyhead -           | Holyhead -        | Mostyn -      | Fishguard -       | Milford Haven -   | Swansea -         | Total            |
| <b>Year</b> | <b>Dublin</b> | <b>Dun Laoghaire</b> | <b>all routes</b> | <b>Dublin</b> | <b>all routes</b> | <b>all routes</b> | <b>all routes</b> | <b>All ports</b> |
| 1998        | 1,051         | 1,724                | 2,775             | -             | 810               | 512               | 158               | 4,255            |
| 1999        | 1,193         | 1,348                | 2,541             | -             | 830               | 495               | 133               | 3,999            |
| 2000        | 1,342         | 1,176                | 2,518             | -             | 832               | 463               | 124               | 3,937            |
| 2001        | 1,316         | 1,064                | 2,380             | 5             | 687               | 388               | 122               | 3,582            |
| 2002        | 1,354         | 1,017                | 2,371             | 44            | 662               | 387               | 121               | 3,585            |
| 2003        | 1,350         | 984                  | 2,333             | 48            | 645               | 384               | 118               | 3,528            |
| 2004        | 1,376         | 887                  | 2,262             | 10            | 614               | 378               | 116               | 3,380            |
| 2005        | 1,327         | 847                  | 2,173             | -             | 590               | 321               | 100               | 3,184            |
| 2006        | 1,311         | 745                  | 2,057             | -             | 584               | 333               | 81                | 3,055            |
| 2007        | 1,404         | 734                  | 2,138             | -             | 597               | 379               | -                 | 3,114            |
| 2008        | 1,374         | 622                  | 1,996             | -             | 554               | 345               | -                 | 2,895            |
| 2009        | 1,598         | 343                  | 1,942             | -             | 501               | 315               | -                 | 2,757            |
| 2010        | 1,821         | 252                  | 2,073             | -             | 419               | 325               | 94                | 2,910            |
| 2011        | 1,781         | 238                  | 2,020             | -             | 410               | 313               | 59                | 2,802            |
| 2012        | 1,709         | 189                  | 1,898             | -             | 364               | 329               | -                 | 2,591            |
| 2013        | 1,766         | 188                  | 1,954             | -             | 333               | 328               | -                 | 2,615            |
| 2014        | 1,875         | 139                  | 2,013             | -             | 351               | 322               | -                 | 2,686            |
| 2015        | 1,970         | -                    | 1,970             | -             | 327               | 335               | -                 | 2,632            |

Source: Department for Transport

Holyhead has seen a change in route usage from Dun Laoghaire to Dublin over the period from 1998 to 2014; however in 2015 the Dun Laoghaire route ceased its service. In 1998 the busiest route through Holyhead (and Wales) was the Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire service with over 1.7 million passenger movements, however the last recorded figures for 2014 recorded only 0.14 million passengers. Alongside this, the Holyhead to Dublin route has continued to see an increase in passenger numbers from just over 1 million in 1998 to nearly 2 million in 2015, an increase of 87 per cent. Chart 5 illustrates these changes.

**Chart 5: Passenger numbers on both routes from Holyhead to Dublin and Dun Laoghaire.**



## Key quality information

### 1 Context

#### 1.1 Related publications

The Department for Transport produces a range of [statistics relating to the maritime sector](#) presenting information on domestic waterborne freight, ports, sea passengers, shipping fleets and sea farers.

Transport Scotland produce a compendium publication titled '[Scottish Transport Statistics](#)' which includes a chapter on Water Transport.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency publish an annual statistics bulletin titled '[Northern Ireland Ports Traffic](#)' providing statistics on passenger and freight traffic through Northern Ireland ports.

#### 1.2 Symbols

In tables where figures have been rounded to the nearest final digit, there may be an apparent discrepancy between the sum of the constituent items and the total shown.

The following symbols have been used throughout the bulletin:

- nil or less than half the final digit shown
- . not applicable
- .. not available

### 2. Relevance

These figures are compiled by the Department for Transport (DfT). The UK-level data, together with a full description of the sources and methods used to compile these data can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

### 3. Accuracy

#### Freight data

**Source of data:** 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. The current collection arrangements for port freight traffic statistics were introduced in 1 January 2000 to meet the requirements of the 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).

**Coverage:** The statistics relate to traffic to and from ports in Wales. UK-level figures do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

**Major and minor ports:** Major ports are those with cargo volumes of at least 1 million tonnes annually (plus a small number of ports with less tonnage). More detailed data are collected for



major ports than for the remaining 'minor' ports, and this is reflected in the statistics which can be produced.

**Weights:** All weights are tonnes gross, including crates and other packaging. The tare weights of containers, road goods vehicles, trailers and other items of transport equipment (i.e. the unloaded weight of the vehicle or equipment itself) are excluded.

**Cargo types:** Major port traffic is classified by cargo type. Cargo type is defined primarily in terms of the means by which the goods are loaded onto or off the vessel - although for some cargo types there is some further subdivision into broad commodities, the method of loading takes priority. A table of cargo types is shown below.

| Category                              | Description   | Code |
|---------------------------------------|---|------|
| <b>Unitised traffic</b>               |   |      |
| Containers                            | 20 ft freight units   | 31   |
|                                       | 40 ft freight units   | 32   |
|                                       | Freight units > 20 ft & < 40 ft   | 33   |
|                                       | Freight units > 40 ft   | 34   |
| Roll-on/Roll-off (self-propelled)     | Road goods vehicles with or without accompanying trailers                                     | 51   |
|                                       | Passenger cars, motorcycles and accompanying trailers/caravans                                | 52   |
|                                       | Passenger buses   | 53   |
|                                       | Import/Export motor vehicles  | 54   |
|                                       | Live animals on the hoof  | 56   |
|                                       | Other mobile self-propelled units   | 59   |
| Roll-on/Roll-off (non self-propelled) | Unaccompanied road goods trailers & semi-trailers   | 61   |
|                                       | Unaccompanied caravans and other road, agricultural and industrial vehicles                   | 62   |
|                                       | Rail wagons, shipborne port to port trailers, and shipborne barges engaged in goods transport | 63   |
|                                       | Other mobile non self-propelled units   | 69   |
| <b>Non-unitised traffic</b>           |   |      |
| Liquid Bulk                           | Liquefied gas   | 11   |
|                                       | Crude oil   | 12   |
|                                       | Oil products  | 13   |
|                                       | Other liquid bulk products  | 19   |
| Dry Bulk                              | Ores  | 21   |
|                                       | Coal  | 22   |
|                                       | Agricultural products   | 23   |
|                                       | Other dry bulk  | 29   |
| Other general cargo                   | Forestry products   | 91   |
|                                       | Iron and steel products   | 92   |
|                                       | Other general cargo & containers < 20 ft  | 99   |

**Unitised goods:** Goods which are lifted on or off the vessel in large (20 foot or longer) shipping containers, or rolled on or off in one of a variety of self propelled or towed units are said to be unitised cargoes. For these cargo types, the number of units as well as the weight of goods is recorded. Subsets of unitised goods are main freight units consisting of all containers and those ro-ro units which are designed to carry freight (categories 51, 61 and 63 above). The purpose of the main freight unit classification is that it excludes those ro-ro units which are not freight carrying – i.e. passenger vehicles, trade vehicles, and other specialised vehicles and trailers.

**Geographical classification of traffic:** UK port traffic is classified geographically according to where the goods were last loaded or next unloaded at the other end of the sea journey. All traffic is either domestic or foreign.

### **Sea passenger data**

These figures are compiled by the Department for Transport (DfT). UK-level data, together with a full description of the sources and methods used to compile these data can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

**Source of data:** International ferry passenger statistics are collected monthly from ferry operators by DfT. They include drivers of lorries, coaches and other vehicles but exclude passengers on purely domestic routes.

### **Ship arrival statistics**

They are compiled by the Department for Transport (DfT) and a link to the UK-level data, together with a full description of the sources and methods used to compile these data can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).

**Source of data:** The primary source used was commercially obtained vessel movement data from Lloyds List Intelligence (LLI) which is now merged with other information on ship movements obtained by DfT through the system described above for all cargo or passenger carrying movements at major ports and the sea passenger survey. The three data sources are merged at the level of individual vessels calling at each port. The maximum number of calls from any of the three sources is taken as the final estimate.

**Coverage and quality:** The data are considered a reasonably accurate estimate of the number of commercial shipping movements at UK ports, but are not necessarily exact, and the coverage of certain vessel or traffic types may be variable at the margins. The data are not classified as National Statistics. The table below shows the classification of ships types and the ships arrival that are not covered.

| Ship type  | Trading status | Vessel types included   |
|--|----------------|---|
| Tankers  | Trading        | Oil tanker, oil-chemical tanker, chemical tanker, liquid gas tanker, other tanker   |
| Ro-ro vessels  | Trading        | Ro-ro passenger, ro-ro containers, ro-ro other cargo  |
| Fully cellular container vessels   | Trading        | Container (fully cellular)  |
| Other dry cargo vessels  | Trading        | Bulk carrier, bulk-oil carrier, refrigerated cargo, specialised carrier, general cargo, general cargo-passenger   |
| Passenger*   | Trading        | Passenger, cruise   |
| Other vessels*   | Non-trading    | Offshore supply, dredging, bunkering tanker   |
| <b>Not included:</b><br>Work boats which are unlikely to be carrying cargoes | Non-trading    | Fish catching, other fishing, offshore (except supply), tugs or towing/pushing craft, offshore vessels other than supply ships, such as drilling vessels, pilot vessels, research ships, fishing boats, military vessels, research, other work vessels, non-seagoing ships, non-merchant ships, non-propelled vessels, non-ship structures, vessels of unknown or unrecorded type |

#### 4. Timeliness and punctuality

This bulletin reports on Sea Transport in Wales during 2015. Information covers traffic to and from ports in Wales. UK-level figures do not cover ports in the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. This bulletin is based on annual data which is published by the Department for Transport.

Related publications are available from the [Statistics and Research website](#).

Sea Transport statistics for Wales will be added to the [StatsWales website](#) in due course.

## 5. Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical Bulletin is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics & Research website and [additional data tables](#) are available online:

Table 1: Foreign and domestic traffic, by port and type of commodity, Wales, 1991 to 2015

Table 2: Foreign and domestic traffic, by port, Wales, 1965 to 2015

Table 3: Traffic at major ports of Wales, by cargo category, 2005 to 2015 (a)

Table 4: Foreign and domestic traffic at major ports of Wales, by cargo category, 2015

Table 5: All port traffic, inwards and outwards, by UK country, 2004 to 2015

Table 6: Ship arrivals by port, Wales, 2002 to 2015

Table 7: Goods carried on HGVs between GB and Eire, 2015

Table 8: Number of lorries and unaccompanied trailers passing through Welsh ports to the Irish Republic, by port, 2005 to 2015

Table 9: All port traffic, freight units by type, Wales, 2003 to 2015

Table 10: Foreign and coastwise traffic at major ports of Wales by type of unitised traffic

Table 11: Accompanied passenger vehicles to and from the Irish Republic, 1981 and 2015

Table 12: Sea passenger traffic between (both to and from) Wales and Irish Republic, by port, 1998 to 2015

## 6. Comparability and coherence

The Department for Transport produces a range of [statistics relating to the maritime sector](#) presenting information on domestic waterborne freight, ports, sea passengers, shipping fleets and sea farers.

## **National Statistics status**

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 UK Statistics 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 Welsh Government'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.

## **Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)**

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators ("national indicators") that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before the National Assembly. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016 and this release does not include any of the national indicators.

Information on indicators and associated technical information - [How do you measure a nation's progress? - National Indicators](#)

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

## **Further details**

This document is available at:

<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/sea-transport/?lang=en>

## **Next update**

September 2017

## **We want your feedback**

We welcome any feedback on any aspect of these statistics which can be provided to:

[stats.transport@wales.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:stats.transport@wales.gsi.gov.uk)

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