

St Helena in Figures

Prepared by the Statistics Office of the St Helena
Government on November 04, 2022

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Comments and questions are very welcome:
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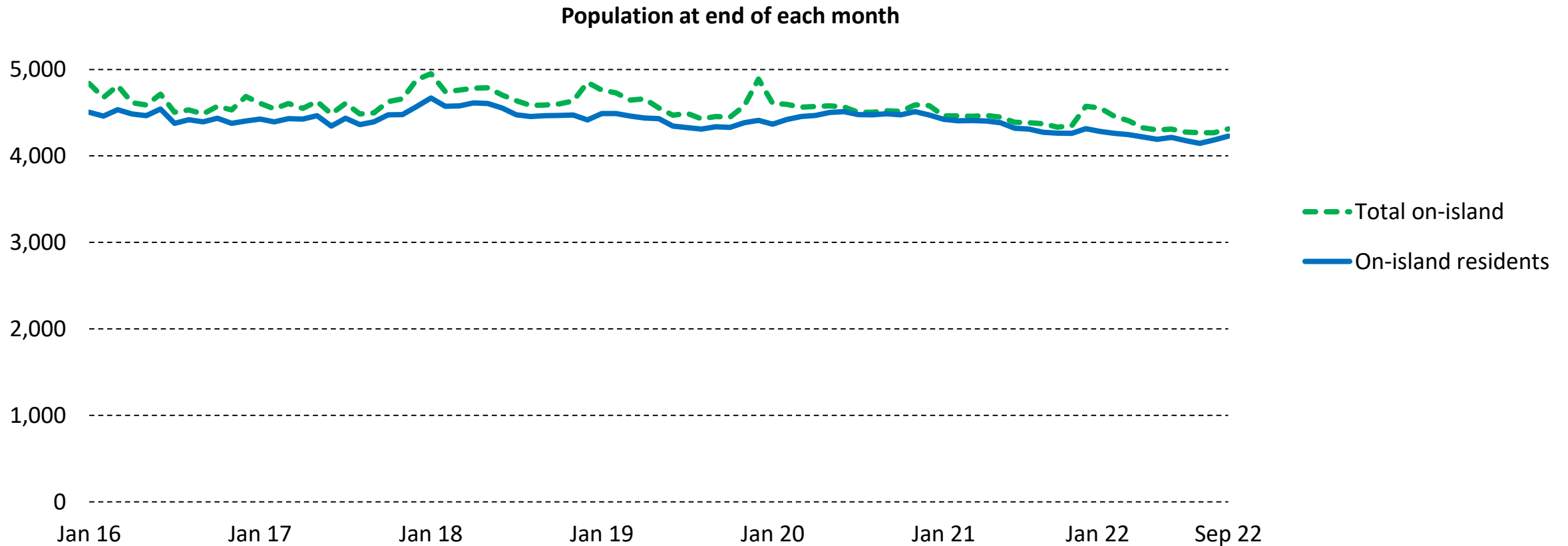
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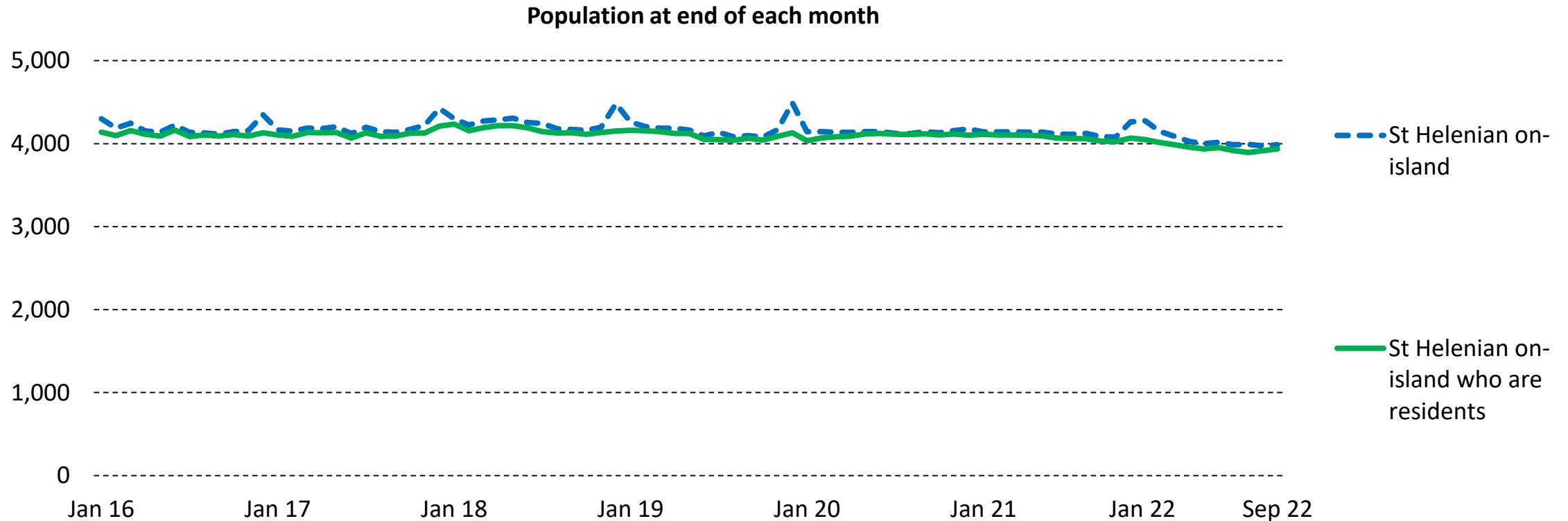
Total population

The total on-Island population (both residents and visitors) has fluctuated between 4,500 and 5,000 from 2015 to 2020, but fell below 4,500 during 2021. The number of people on St Helena who are residents has been around 4,500 in recent years, but there was a decline below 4,500 during 2021. This declining trend has continued into early and mid 2022 but appears to have stalled in September.



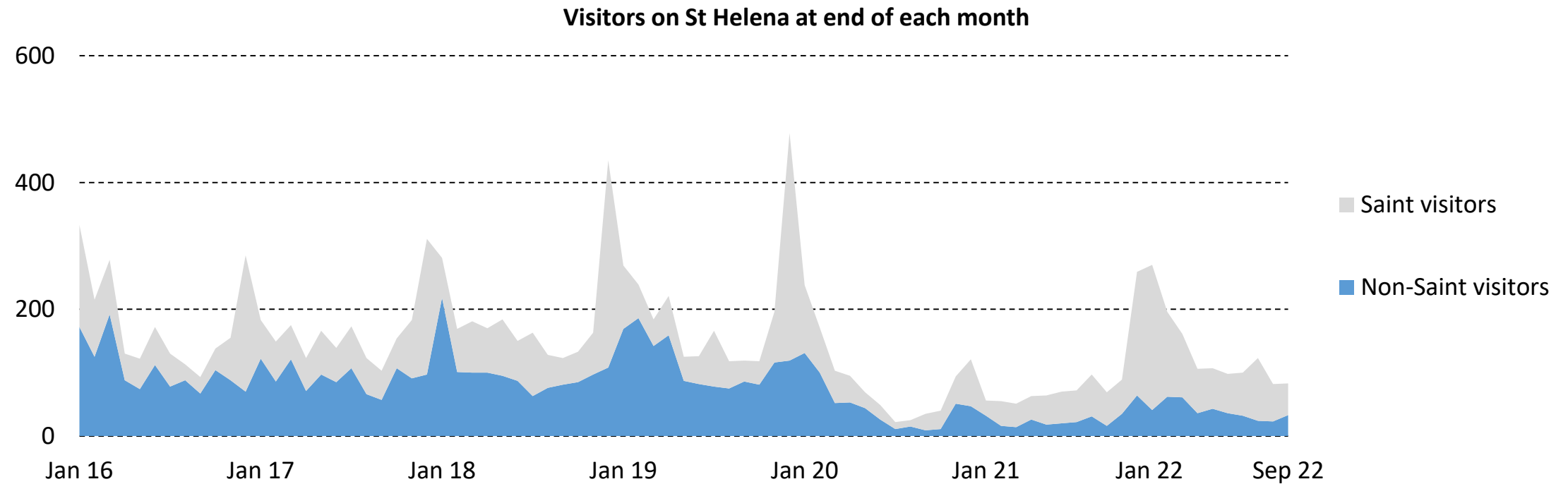
St Helenians

The number of St Helenians on St Helena who live on the island is just under 4,000 in September 2022, and it has been relatively stable – even through the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions, the 2020/21 Christmas season was the first for many years that the number of St Helenians on St Helena did not increase significantly for the holiday season, but the 2021/22 season returned to a more typical pattern.



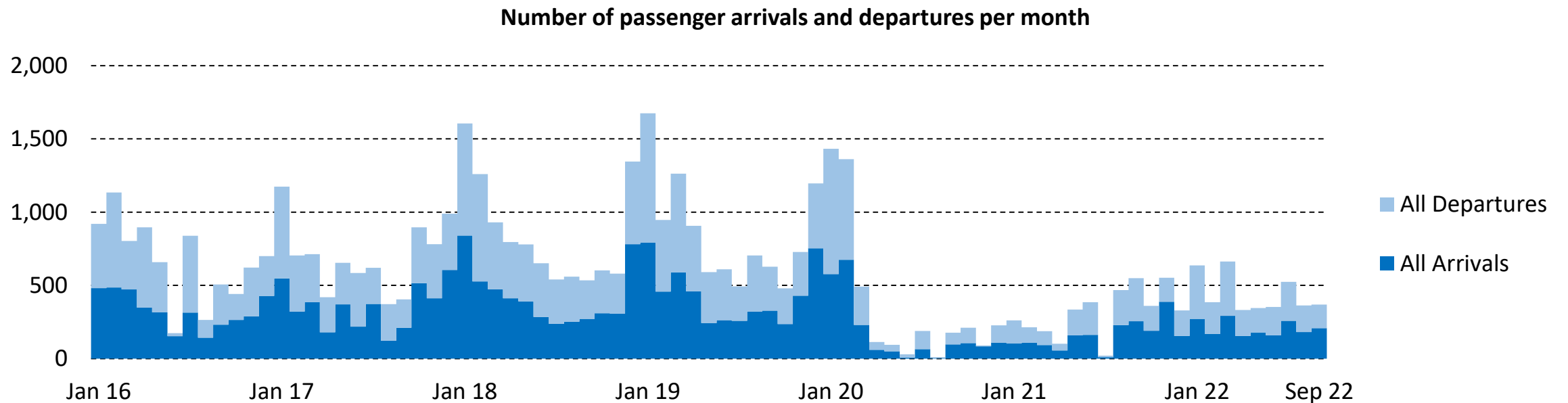
Visitors

Travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in lower numbers of visitors on St Helena - especially tourists. But, from the 2020/21 Christmas holiday season into 2021 and 2022, there was a higher number of visitors arriving. The 2021/22 holiday season shows a more typical pattern, although still not at levels seen in 2018 to 2020.



International travel

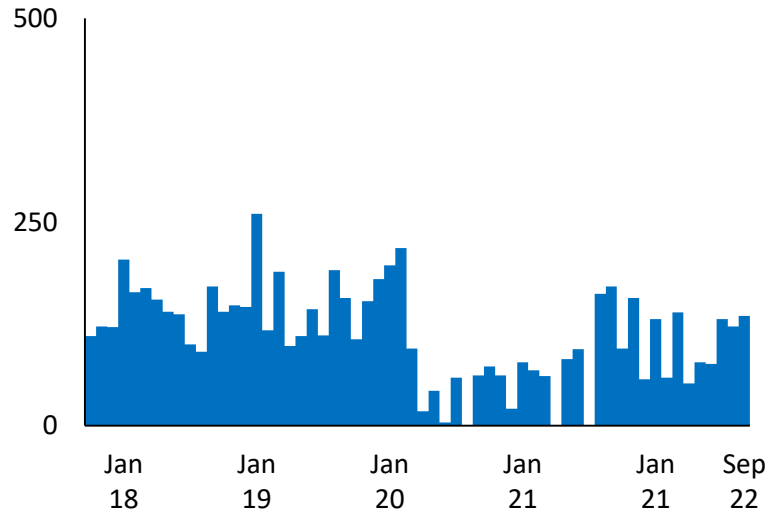
After the start of scheduled international air services to St Helena in October 2017 there was an increase in the number of arrivals and departures each month, with peak travel occurring between December and April each year. But from March 2020, travel disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a major drop in international passenger travel. However arrivals and departures in the 2021/22 holiday season were considerably higher than the same period in 2020/21, and this trend has continued into 2022.



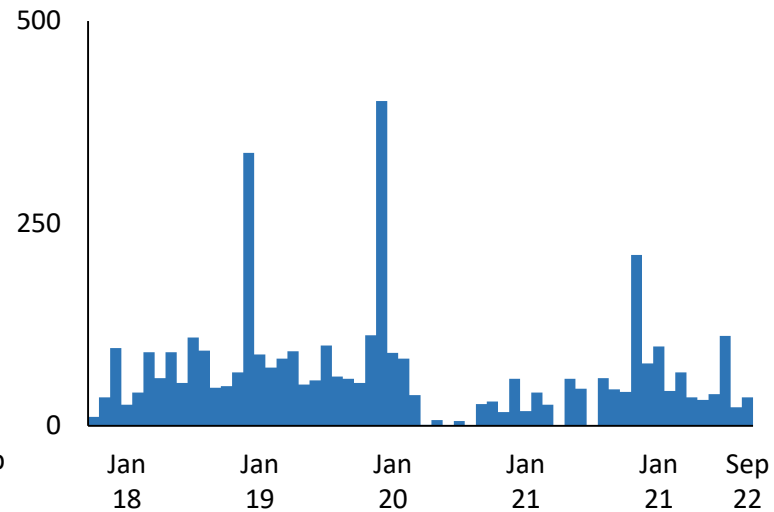
Air arrivals

Flights have been much less frequent during the COVID-19 pandemic, and various travel restrictions have been in place, and so arrivals by air for all reasons have been lower. The number of arrivals increased slightly in August and September 2021 when transit passengers were boarding and departing a Royal Navy ship, and again in November for the 20/21 holiday season. Prior to the pandemic tourist arrivals were increasing, but there have been very few tourists since.

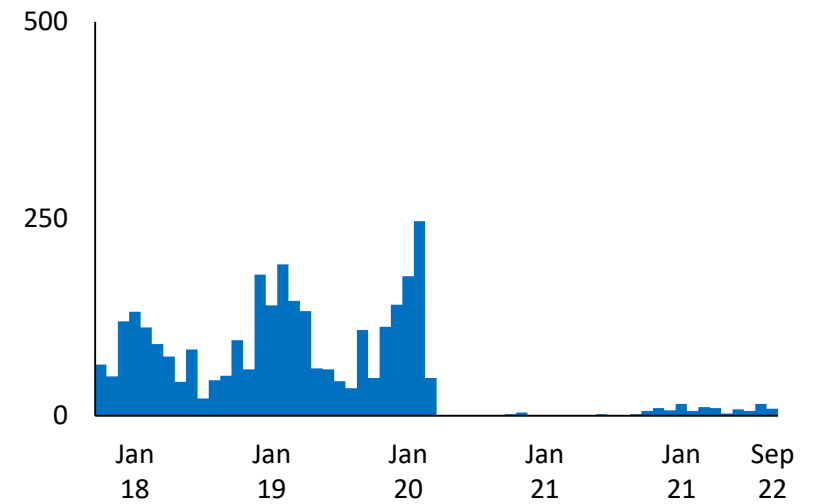
Returning residents, business, and transit



St Helenian holiday visits

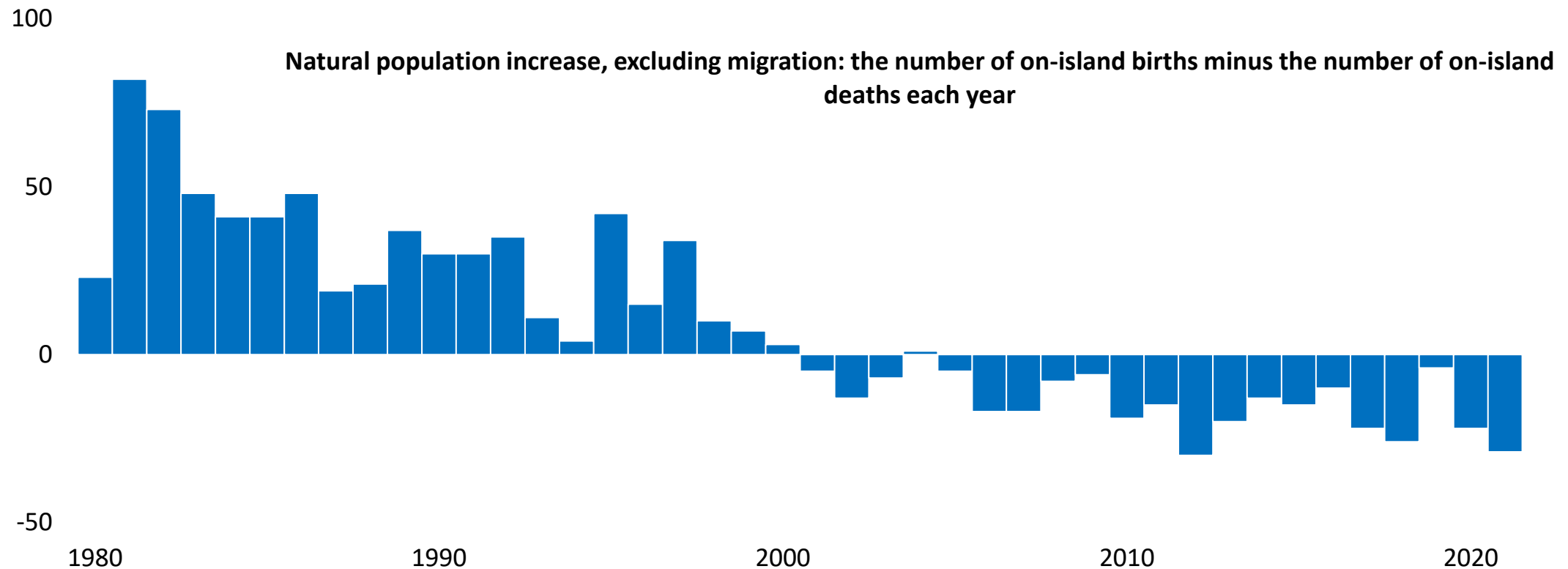


Tourism (non-St Helenian)



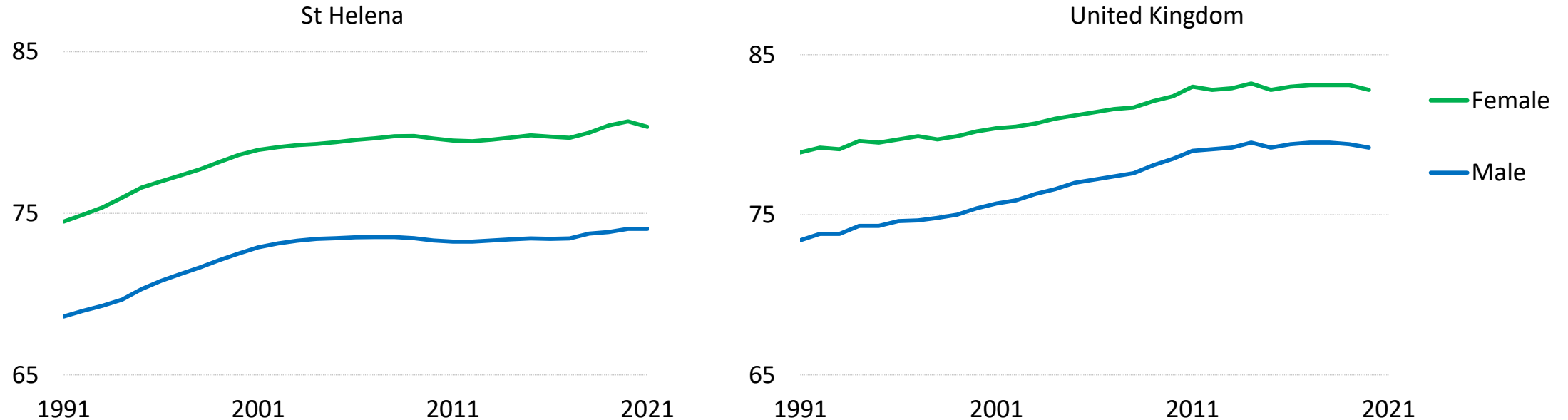
Births and deaths

In the twenty years before 2000, the number of births exceeded the number of deaths in every year; in 1981 there were 82 more births than deaths. But after 2000 the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births in every year, apart from 2004 when there was 34 registered births and 33 registered deaths. In 2021 there were 24 more deaths than births.



Life expectancy at birth

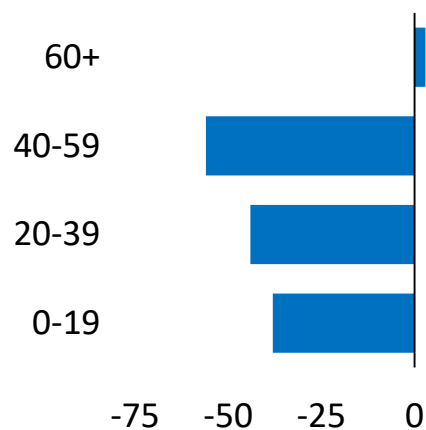
Life expectancy at birth (sometimes thought of as average age at death) on St Helena is estimated to be around 81 for females and around 74 for males. Since 1991, life expectancy has increased around five to seven years on average, a similar improvement to that seen in the UK. Note that the estimates for St Helena should be used with some care: given the small size of the population, the estimate for each year is based on the age of people dying over the previous ten years, and so there is likely to be a 'lag'. So although St Helena's life expectancy is estimated to be around five to six years lower than the UK, some of this might be due to the effect of this lag.



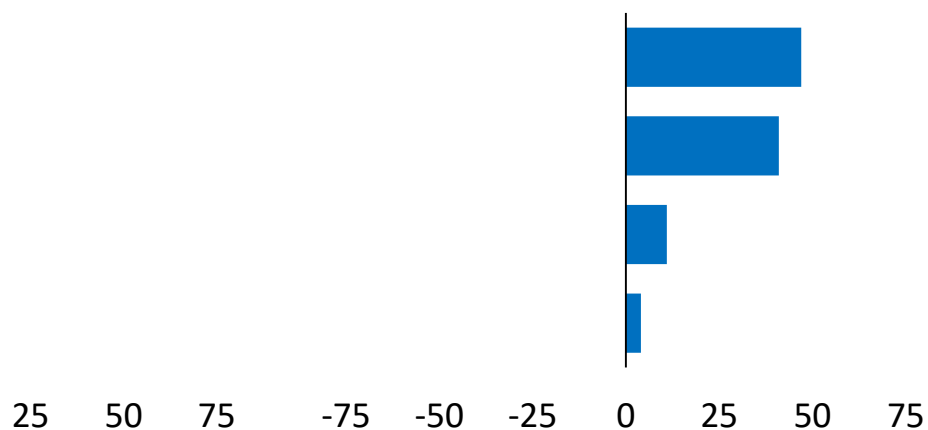
Migration of residents

St Helena is affected by both emigration, when residents leave the island, and immigration, when people come to the island to live, either returning St Helenians or new long-term residents. These charts show the net arrivals of residents during an illustrative twelve month period (February to January) recorded in immigration records, in three consecutive years. They show, in each age group, the number of arrivals minus the number of departures – so a negative number illustrates net departures. Note that it is hard to identify a ‘typical’ period and migration pattern, since events like large construction projects or the COVID-19 pandemic will have a major impact. But it is clear that younger St Helenians tend to leave the island to work abroad, with some (but not all) returning later in life.

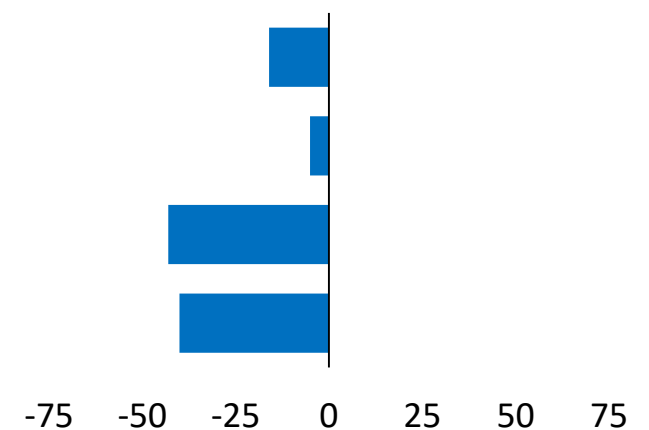
Feb 19 to Jan 20



Feb 20 to Jan 21



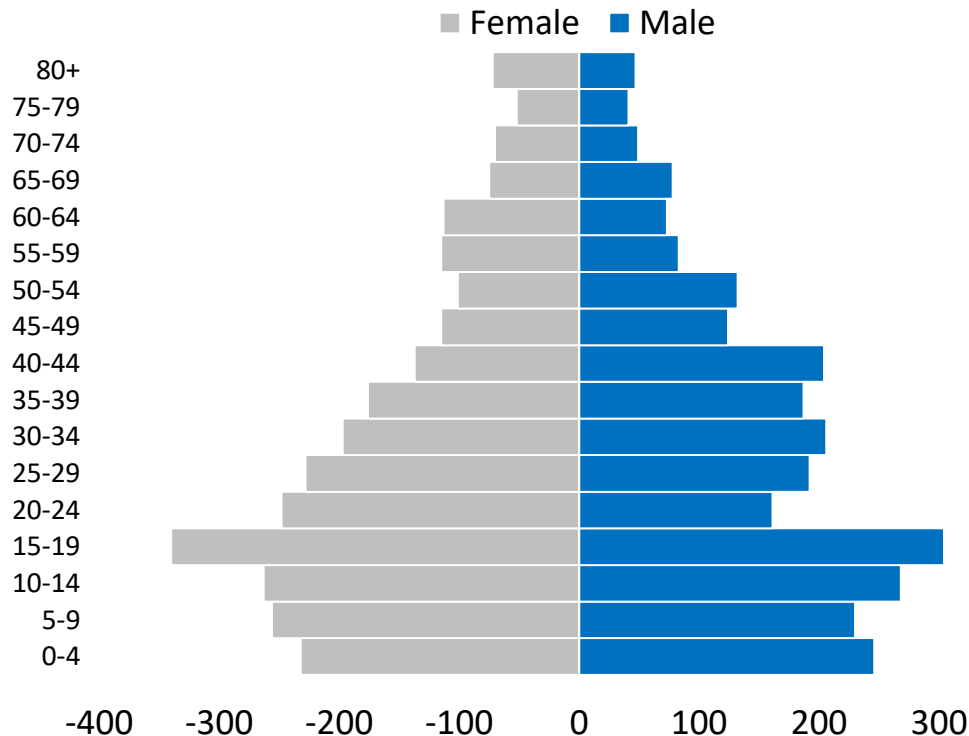
Feb 21 to Jan 22



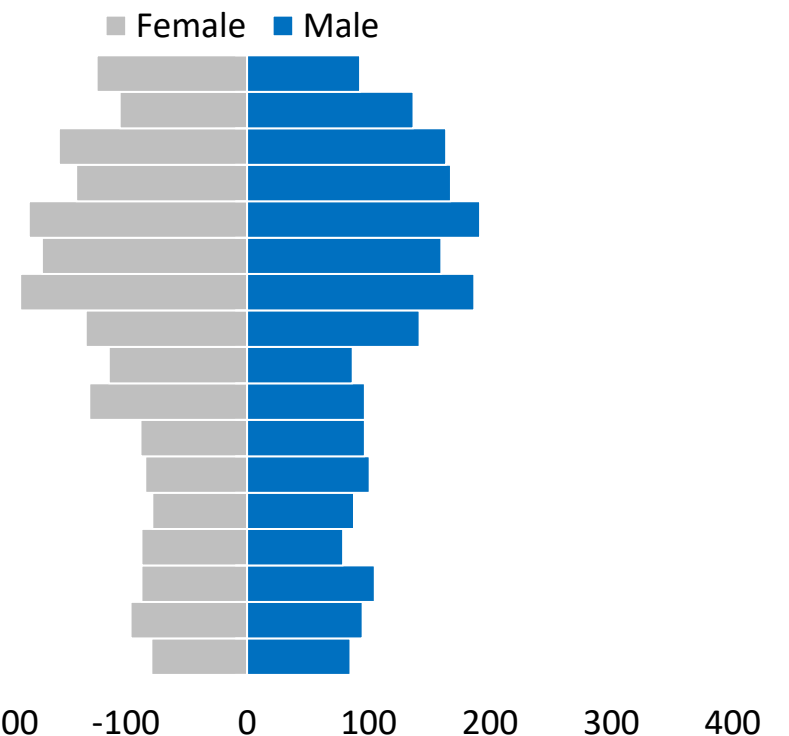
Long-term change in population structure

The fall in the number of births, the increase in life expectancy, and the tendency for St Helenians to seek work opportunities abroad has led to a dramatic change in the demographic structure of the St Helenian population in the last 30 to 40 years. The number of children under 15 has dropped from around 1,500 in 1987 to around 550 in 2021. The number of people 65 and older was around 500 in 1987, but is just under 1,100 in 2021. And the number of people of roughly working age (15-64) was just under 3,500 in 1987, but is just below 2,500 in 2021.

St Helenian resident population: 1987



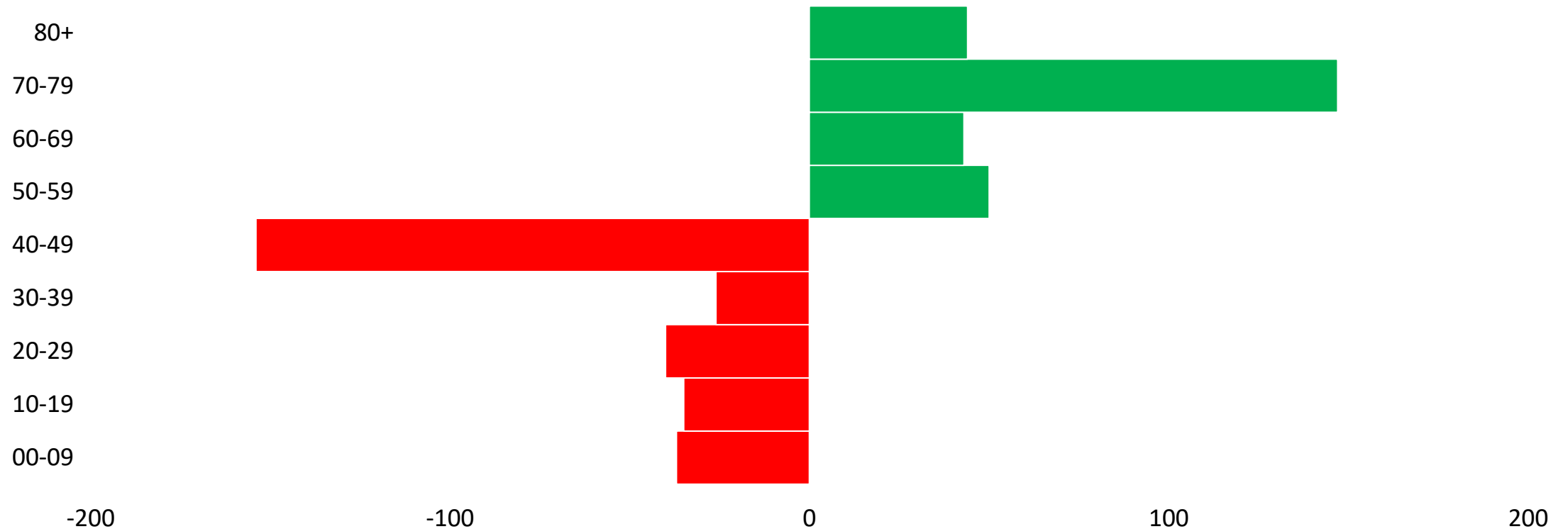
2021



Short-term change in population structure

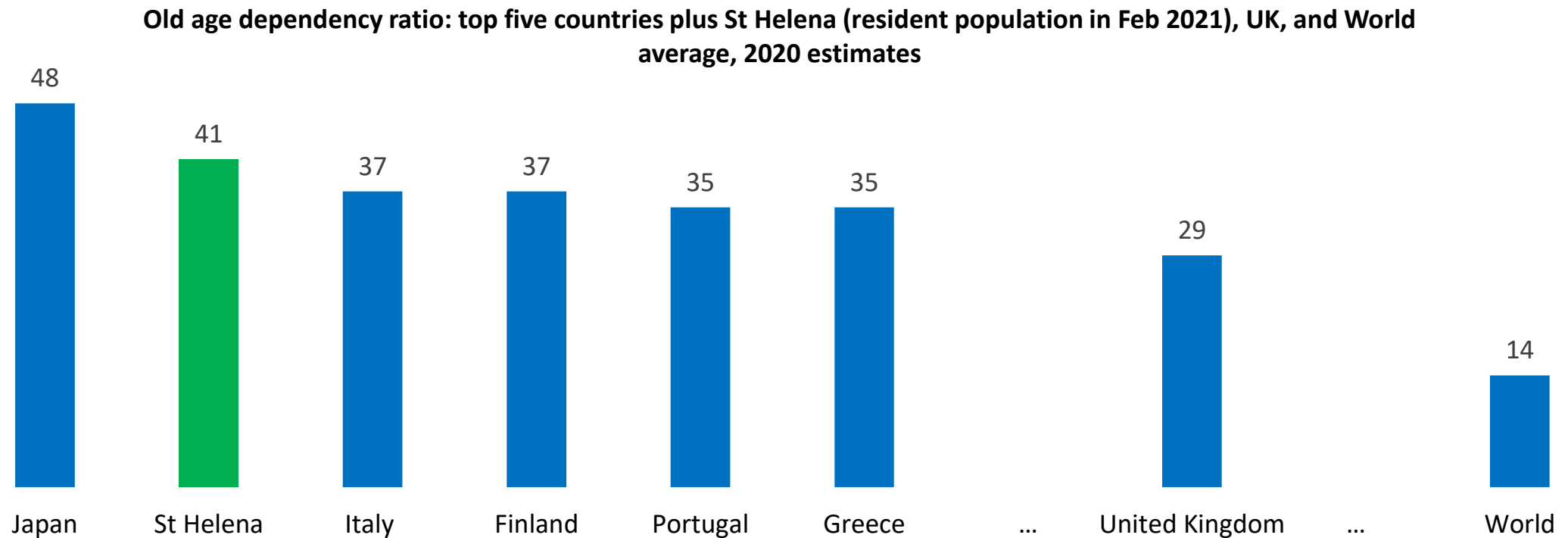
Between 2016 and 2021 the population continued to 'age', and there was also likely an affect from younger people departing to work overseas and for St Helenians of working age to return overseas after working on the construction of the airport or related activities. The median age of St Helenians living on St Helena is now over 50.

Change in age structure of St Helenian resident population: 2016 to 2021



Old age dependency ratios

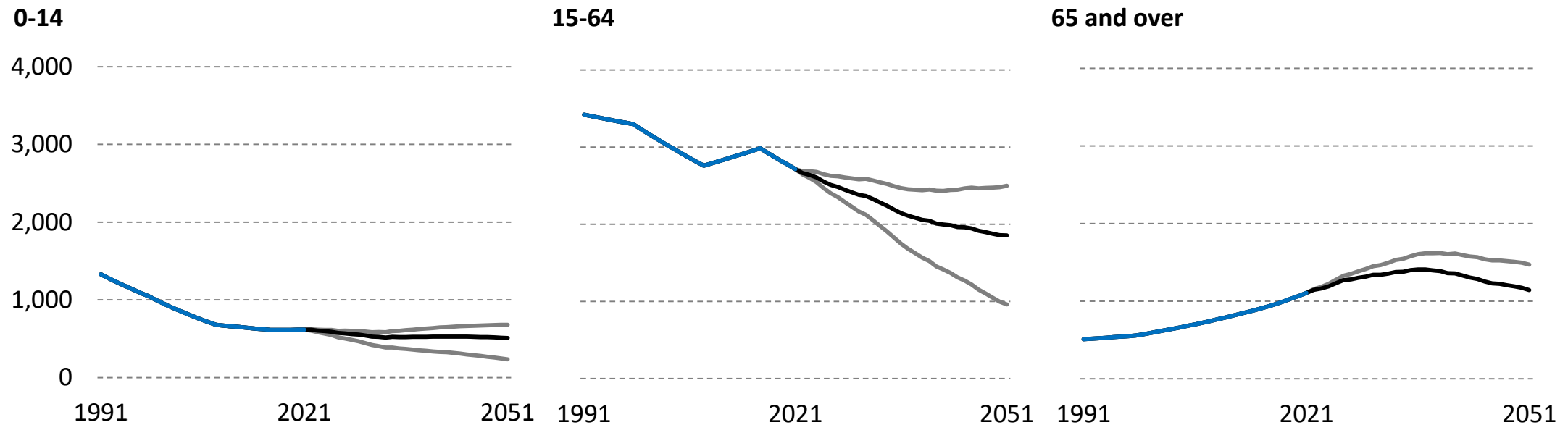
The old age dependency ratio is the number of people who are 65 and over compared to the number of people aged 15 to 64. Delivering public services in countries with high old age dependency ratios presents significant challenges. St Helena has a very high age dependency ratio - around 41 residents 65 and over for every 100 residents aged 15 to 64, higher than every country in the world apart from Japan (the ratio of St Helenians only is even higher, at 44). St Helena data are February 2021 (Census); data for other countries are from the World Bank.



Population projections

Different migration scenarios have been used to forecast St Helena's population: no net migration, an annual net outward migration of 20 residents, an annual net inward migration of 20 residents, and an annual net inward migration of 40 residents. In all scenarios used, the population aged 15-64 falls by 2051, and the population aged 65 and over increases, but then falls.

Charts show the resident population from 1976 to 2021, and the range of projected population estimates from 2022 to 2051 (i.e. the scenarios that result in the lowest and highest populations in each group).



Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

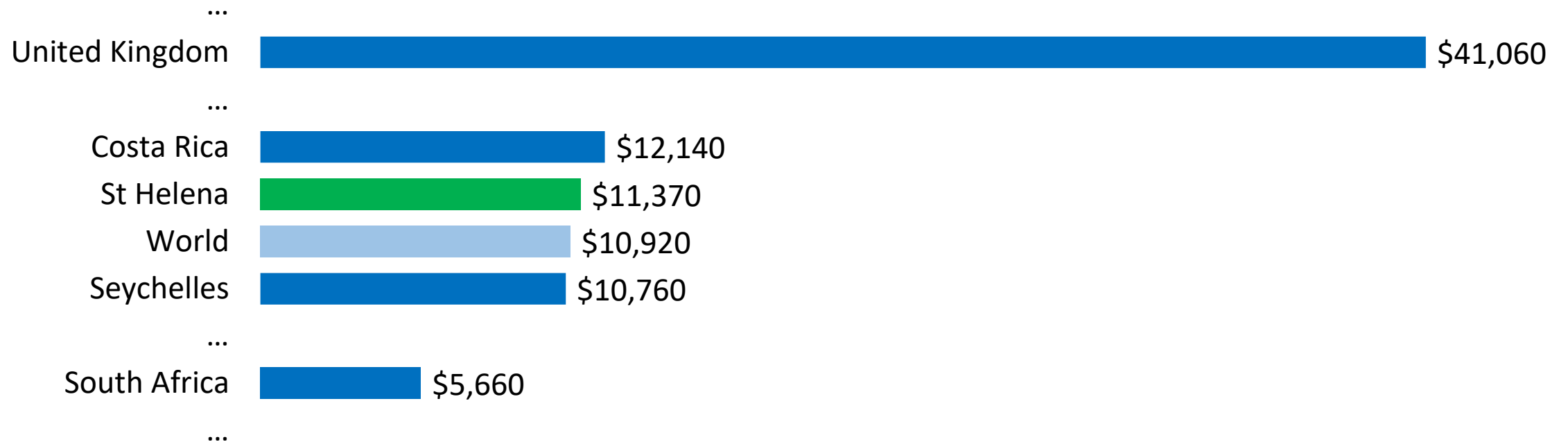
GDP is a measure of the economic output that takes place on St Helena. The economy shrank slightly in 2019/20 but it has grown slightly in 2020/21, because of the extra resources provided by the United Kingdom to managed the threat from the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2017/18, GDP has been calculated using the 'production' (or 'output') method. Note that the St Helena economy is small, and timing and other classification issues can affect year-to-year comparisons.

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21
GDP Market prices (£ million, current)	39.0	41.6	38.8	36.3	38.2	37.8	39.2
Market prices (£ million, constant 18/19)	..	..	..	38.2	39.3	38.2	39.2
Annual GDP growth rate	..	..	..	..	2.9%	-2.6%	2.4%
GDP per capita (£, current)	8,530	8,960	8,570	7,930	8,190	8,330	8,690
GDP per capita (\$, current)	13,760	13,510	11,200	10,530	11,760	10,620	11,370

GDP per capita

The Gross Domestic Product per capita of St Helena in 2020/21 was around 70% lower than the UK, but close to the world average and around twice as high as South Africa. The two countries closest to St Helena in terms of GDP per capita are the Seychelles and Costa Rica.

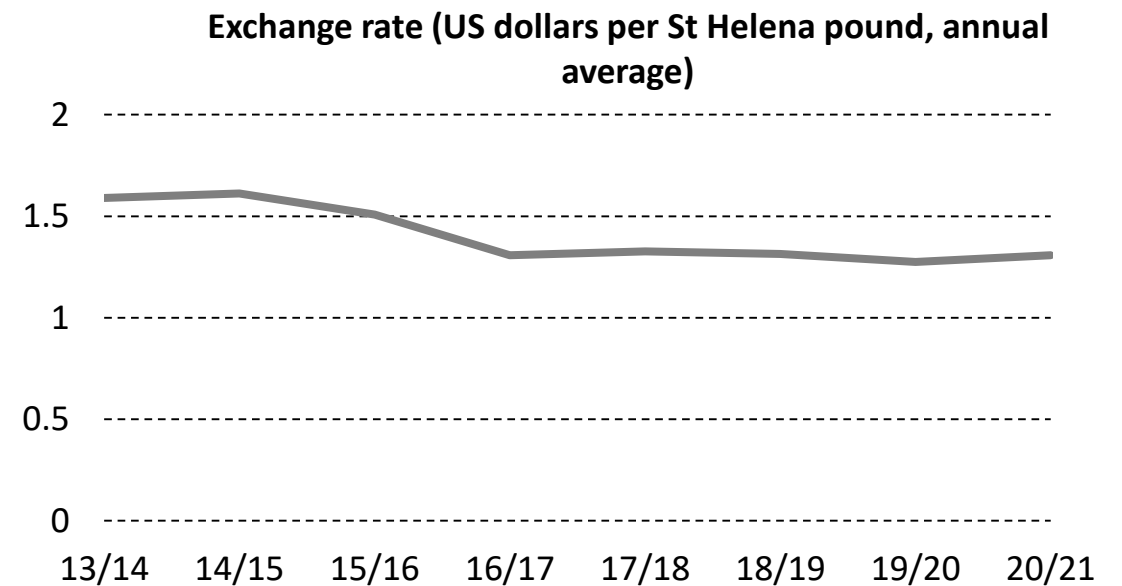
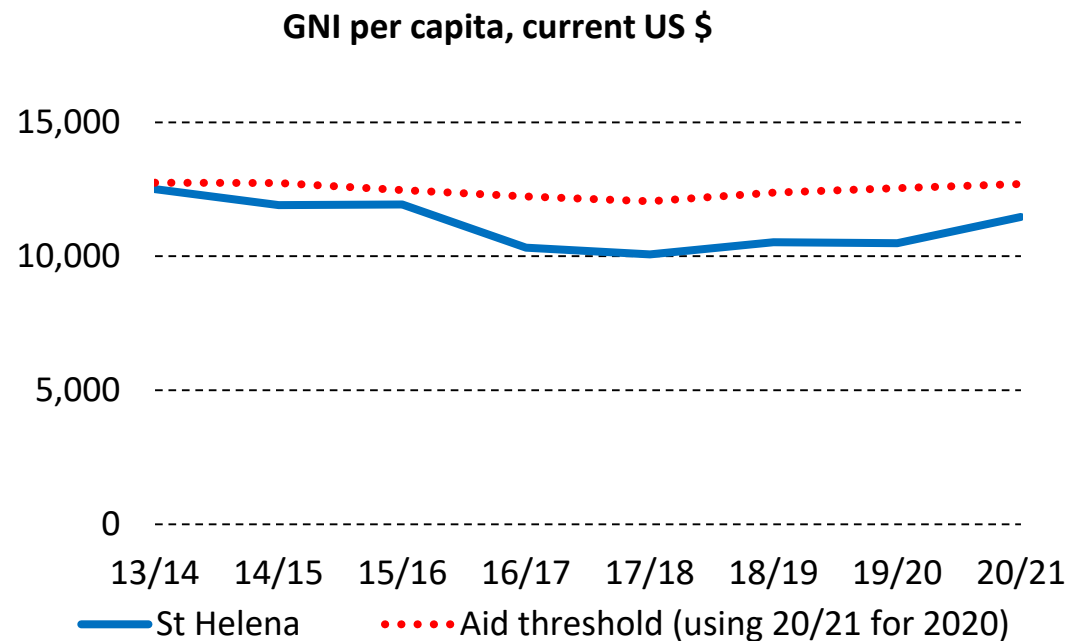
Note that the values in the chart are expressed in US dollars, and GDP for other countries relates to the 2020 calendar year.



Eligibility for aid

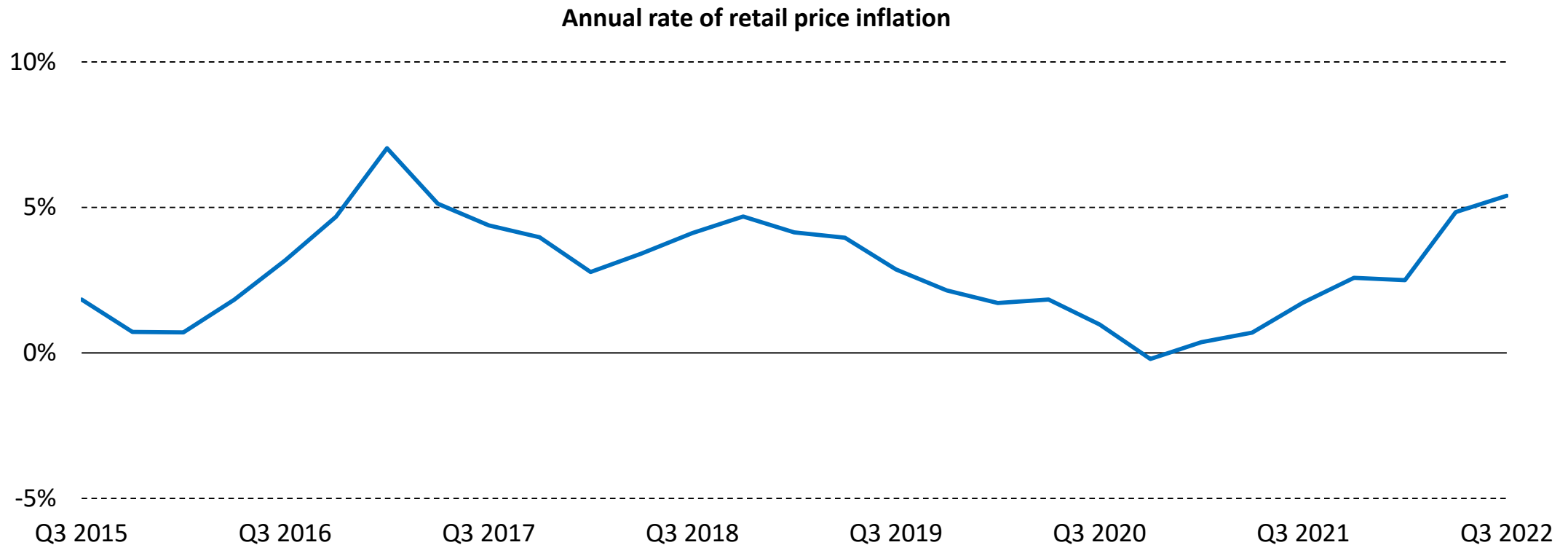
Gross National Income (GNI) is a measure of the economic output of St Helena's residents. One important use of this indicator is to determine whether a country or territory is eligible to call grants received from other countries "aid", using a GNI per capita threshold set by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development.

In 2020/21, St Helena was below the threshold of \$12,695, although it was closer than in 2019/20. It was quite close in 2013/14, but it moved further away due to the weak economic growth in St Helena, and the drop in the value of the Pound compared to the dollar caused by Brexit.



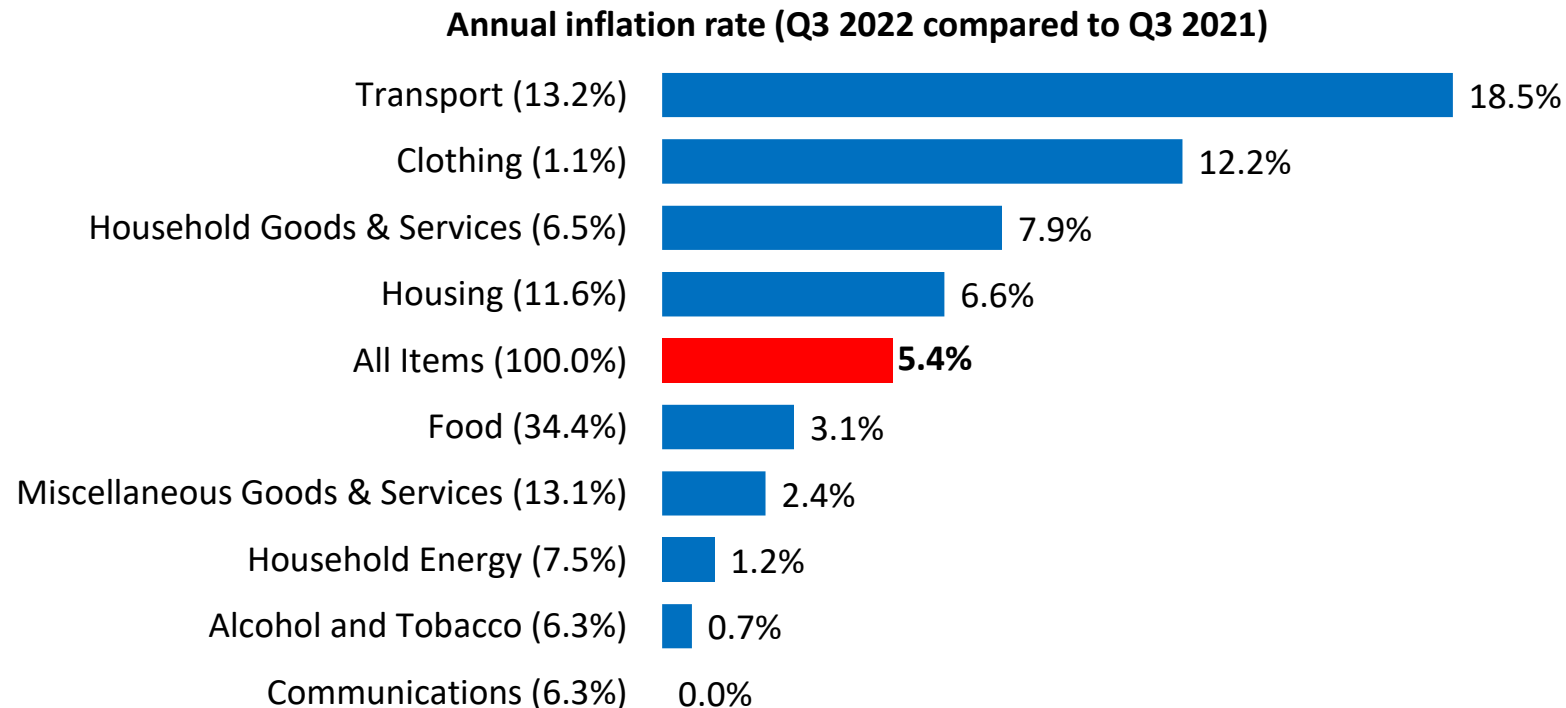
Latest inflation rate

St Helena measures price inflation by collecting the prices of a fixed basket of goods and services each quarter. The latest annual price inflation rate in Q3 2022 is 5.4%, which means that, on average, retail prices went up by 5.4% between Q3 2021 and Q3 2022. This is an increase compared to inflation in late 2020 and early 2021, and is the highest rate since the first quarter of 2017 (7.0%). Inflation is above 7% in both South Africa and the UK, which is likely to have an impact on St Helena's inflation rate in 2022.



Inflation by category

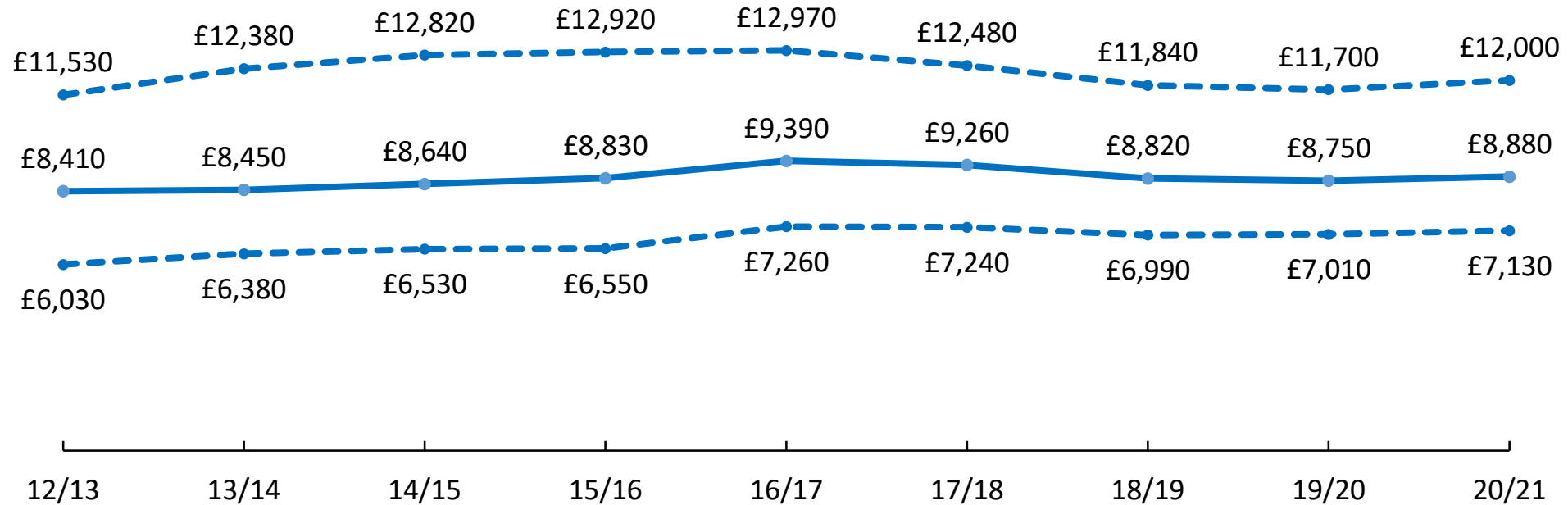
The annual inflation rate in Q3 2022 was 5.4%, but there are variations in the rate for different categories of good and services. For instance, the annual price change of Transport was higher at 18.5%, due largely to the effect of increases in petrol and diesel fuel. Please note that the share of average household expenditure spent on each category of goods and services in 2017 (the base year for the index weighting pattern) is given in brackets.



Wage levels

Adjusted for inflation, median wage levels on St Helena rose substantially during construction of the new Airport in 2016/17, but they have fallen back since. In 2020/21, half of all full-time employees earned less than £8,880 a year, or £170 a week – and a half earned more. A quarter earned less than £7,130 a year, or £137 a week, and a quarter earned more than £12,000 a year, or £230 a week.

Inflation-adjusted median annual wage from full-time employment (2020/21 prices), and upper and lower quartiles

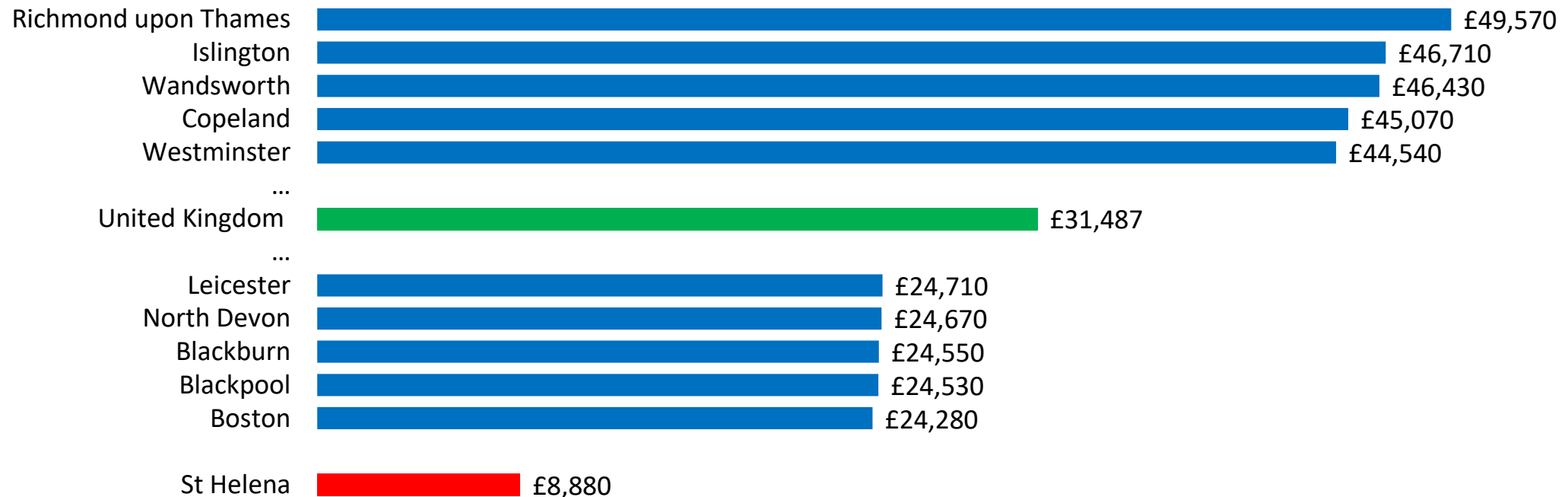


Wage levels compared to UK areas

The median UK wage earner receives more than 3.5 times their counterpart on St Helena. The median wage earner in the area with the lowest UK wage (Boston) level earns 2.7 times more than their St Helenian counterpart.

St Helena data are from PAYE income tax records; UK data are from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE).

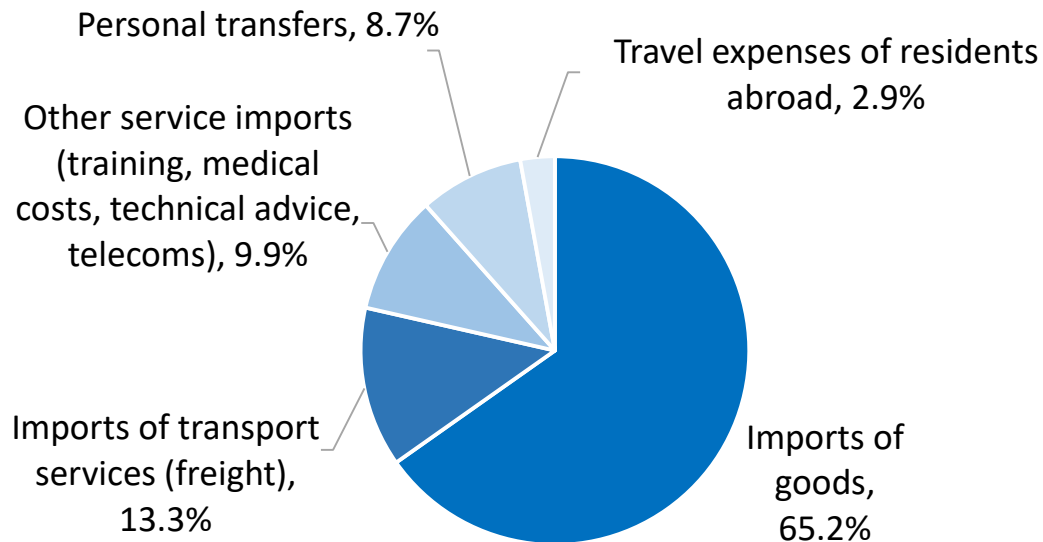
Median gross wage from full-time employment, highest and lowest five of the published UK areas (smallest geography) in 2020, plus St Helena 2020/21



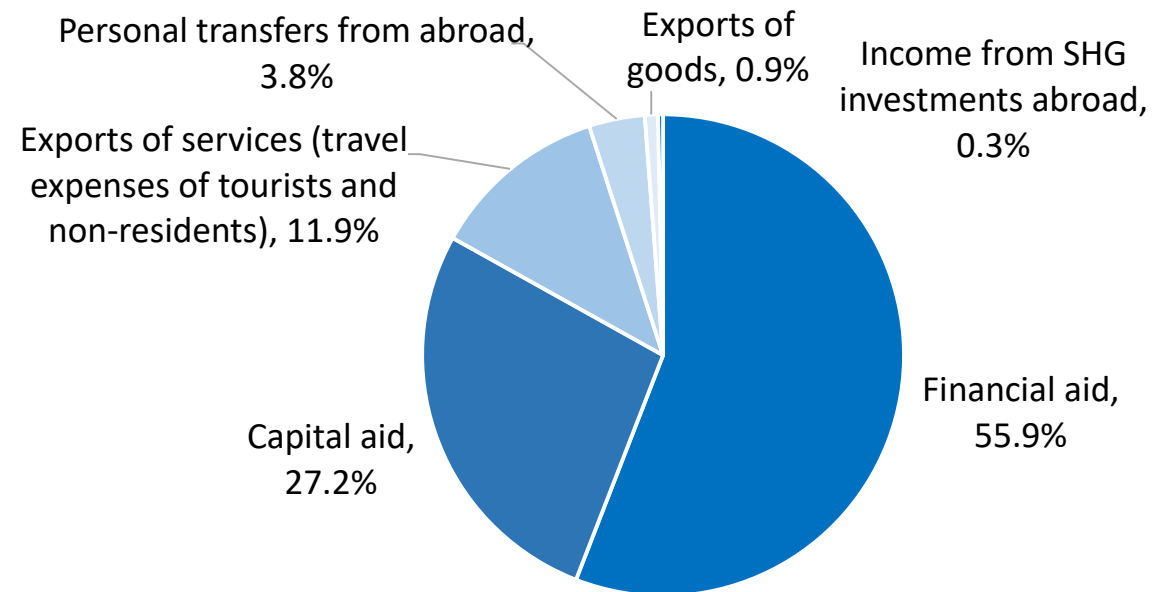
The Balance of Payments

Statistics on the Balance of Payments (BoP) measure financial transactions between businesses, organisations and people resident on St Helena and those resident in the rest of the world. The BoP has three accounts, which together must balance – the current, capital and financial accounts. For St Helena, provisional estimates of the current and capital account only have been made for 2018/19, and they indicate that over 80% of money coming in from abroad was aid, and around 12% was from visitors to St Helena. Almost 80% of the money going out to residents in the rest of the world is used to pay for imports and associated transport services.

"Money out": per cent of total payments (£29.6m), 18/19



"Money in": per cent of total receipts (£47.7m), 18/19

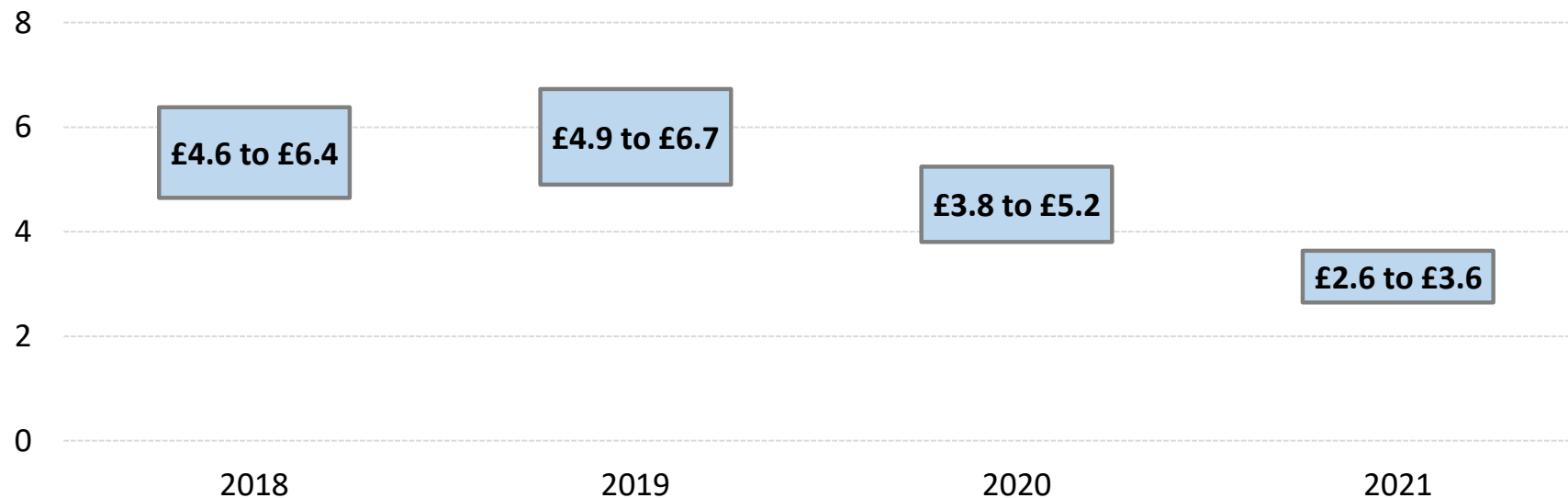


Exports of services to visitors

St Helena's biggest export is the provision of services to visitors, who typically spend money on accommodation, food, hospitality, and transport (visitors include both tourists and St Helenians visiting friends and relatives). The expenditure of these visitors in 2018 and 2019 was estimated to be between £4.6m and £6.7m per year, but 2020 and 2021 has been much lower due to the international travel disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

These provisional figures are derived using estimates of visitor spending (based on an airport departure survey), and an analysis of immigration records.

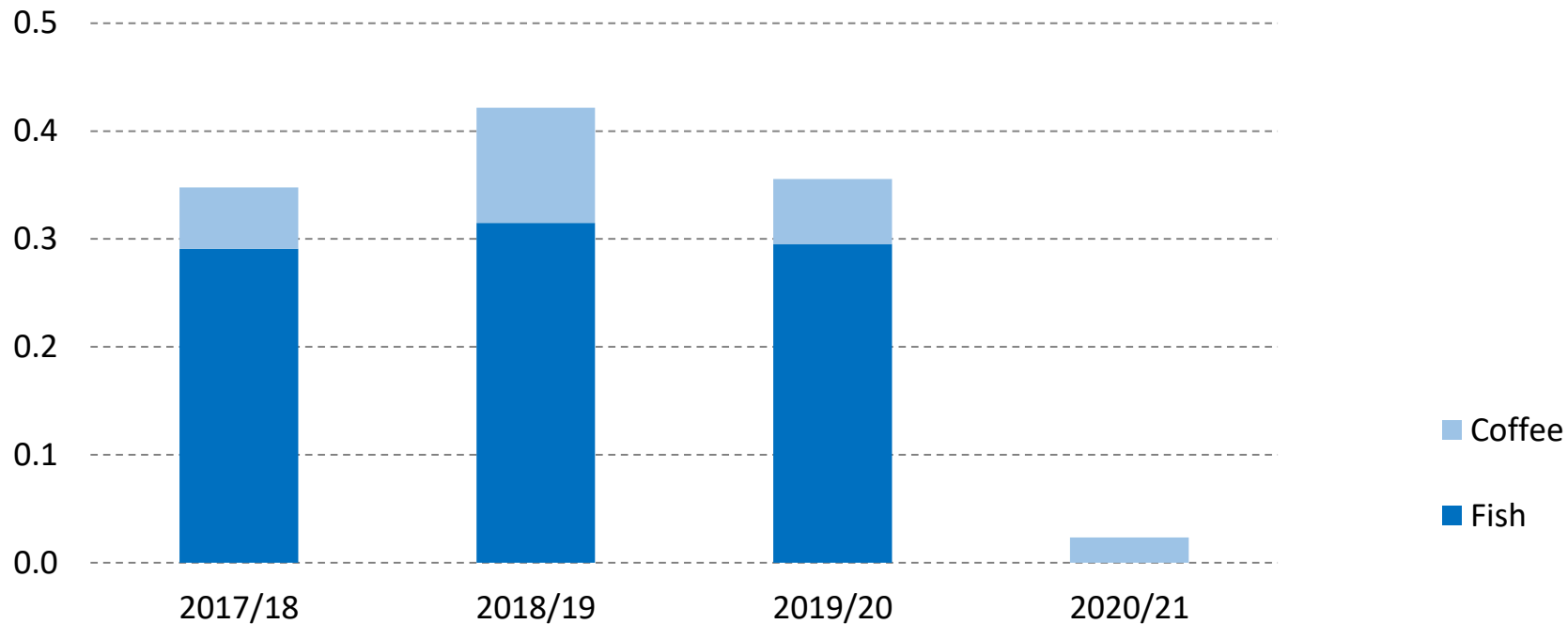
Range estimate of the expenditure of non-residents on St Helena, £ millions, current prices (i.e. not adjusted for inflation)



Exports of fish and coffee

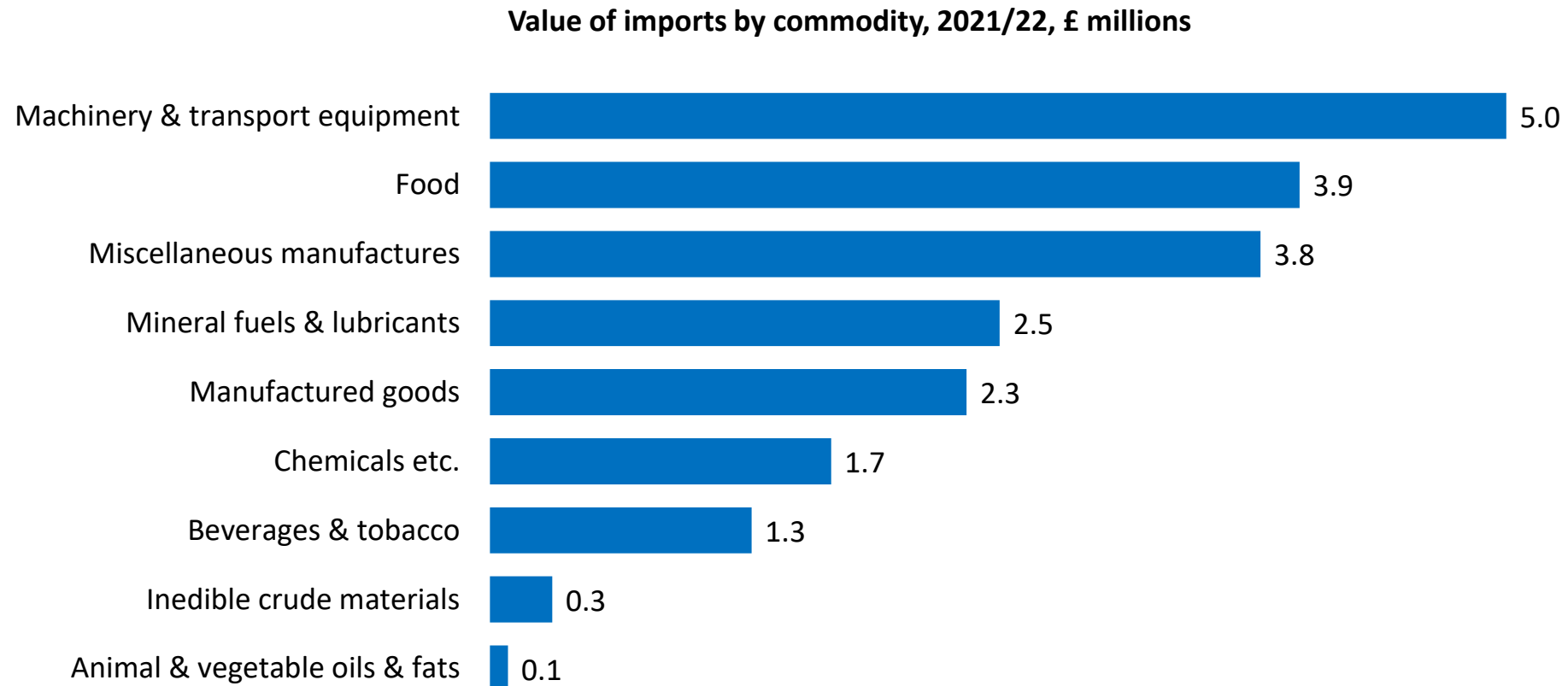
Fish and coffee are St Helena's two main commodity exports, with a total value of around £0.35m to £0.4m in each of the years 2017/18 to 2019/20 (roughly 1% of GDP). In 2020/21, there were no exports of fish due to the closure of the St Helena Fisheries Corporation. It should be noted that the value of the export of goods commodities is normally much smaller than the export of services to visitors (i.e. "tourism").

Exports of major goods commodities, current prices (i.e. not adjusted for inflation), £ millions



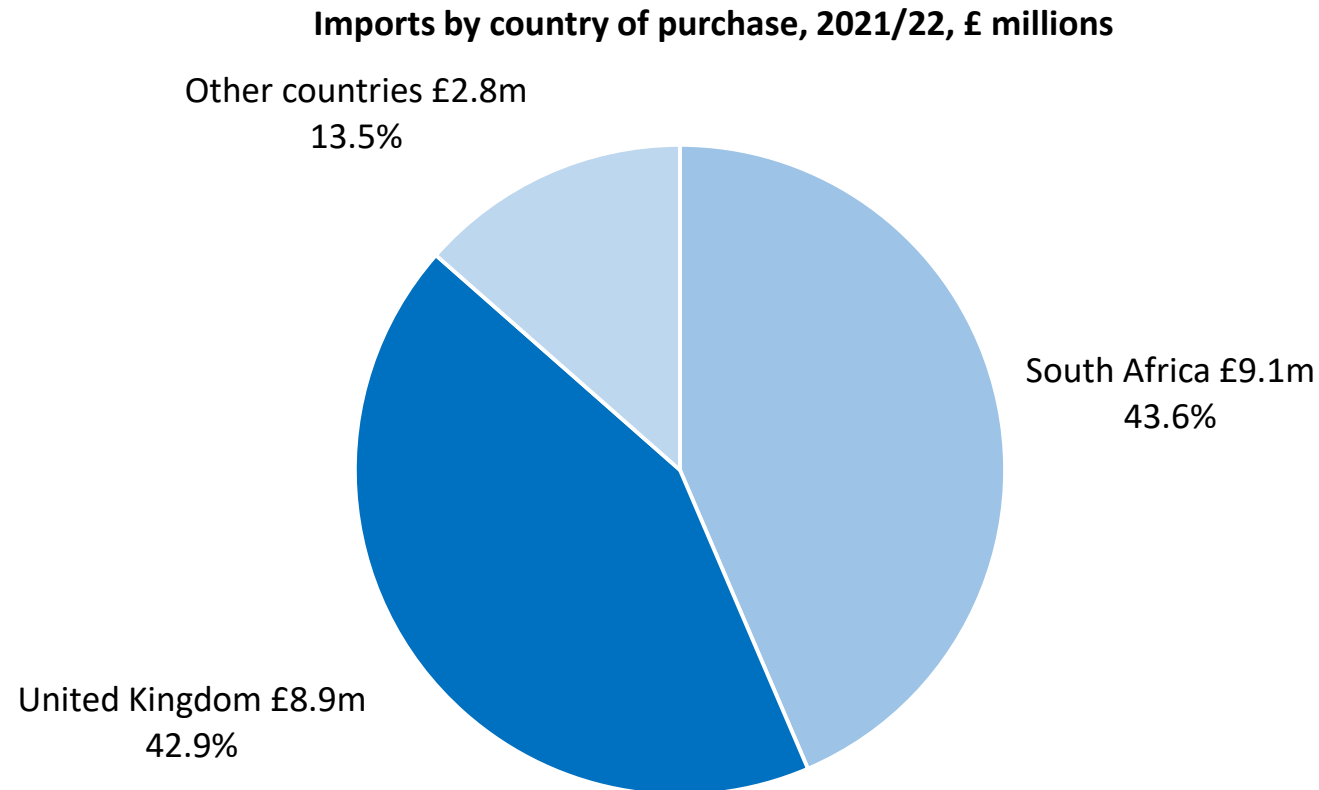
Imports by commodity

In 2021/22, the total value of imported goods was £20.8 million, similar to the previous four years. Imports consist mainly of machinery and vehicles, food, various manufactured goods, fuel, chemicals, and beverages and tobacco.



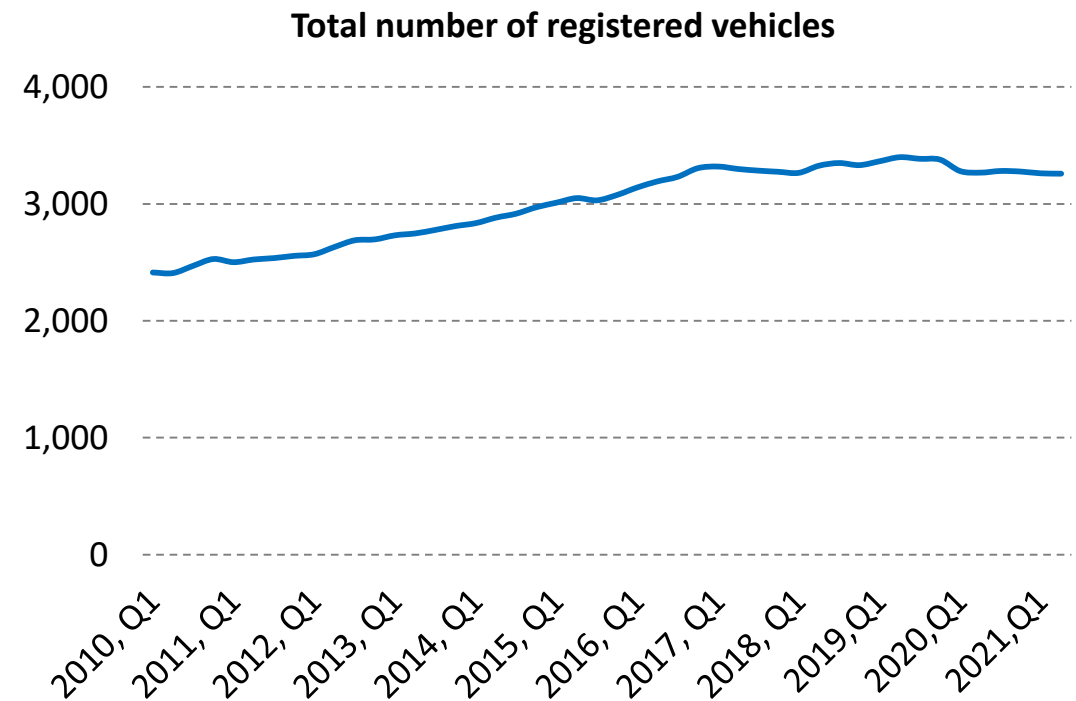
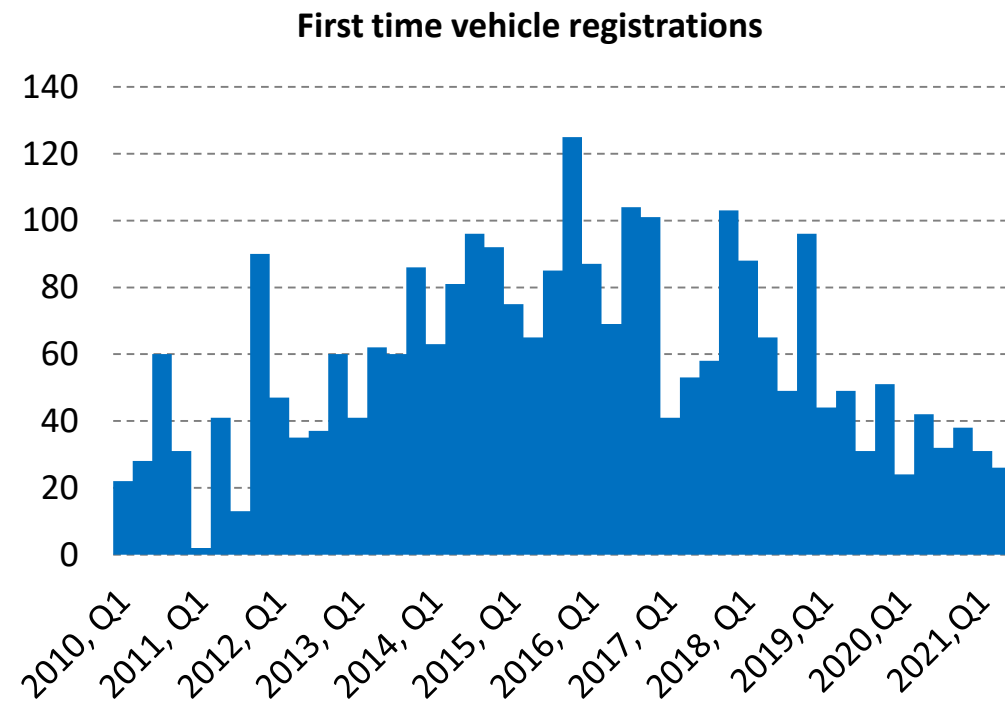
Imports by country of purchase

In 2021/22, around 44% of all goods imported were purchased in South Africa, 43% in the UK, and 13.5% from elsewhere (mostly petrol and diesel fuel). The prices of imported goods are affected by the cost of transport from those countries to St Helena, the price inflation rates in South Africa and the UK, and the Pound/Rand exchange rate, since commodities in South Africa are sold in Rand.



Vehicle registrations

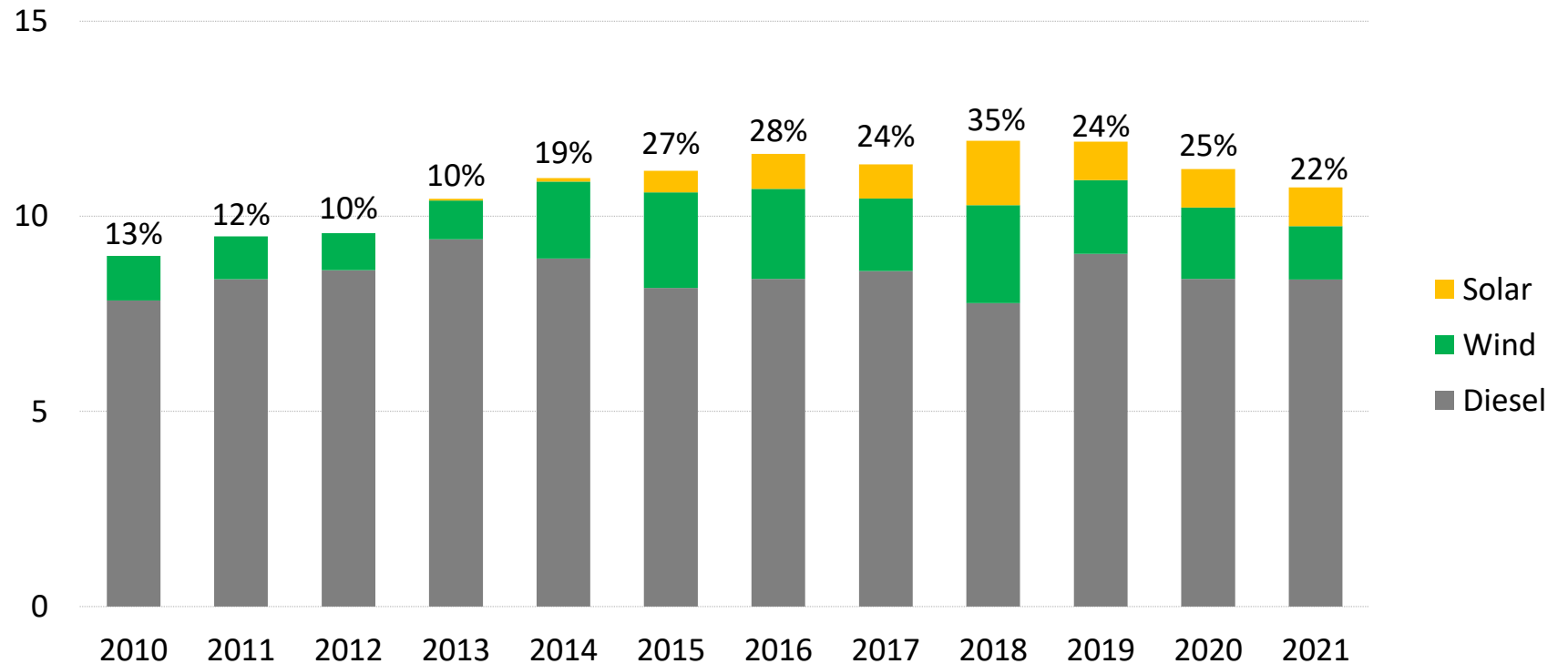
New vehicle registrations can be a useful indicator of the level of activity in the economy. The number of first-time vehicle registrations (usually imported vehicles) each quarter accelerated during the airport construction period, but slowed in 2019, 2020 and 2021 to pre-airport levels. The number of licensed vehicles (i.e. those 'on the road') increased rapidly during airport construction, by about a third compared to 2010. But since 2017 the number has stabilized at around 3,300.



Electricity generation

St Helena generates around 11-12 gigawatt-hours of electricity a year through its public utility company (Connect Saint Helena Ltd). Around a quarter of this is generated using renewable sources (wind and solar), with around three-quarters still reliant on the diesel-powered power station situated in Rupert's Valley. Note that some businesses and households have installed private solar 'off-grid' generation capacity; this is not included in these figures.

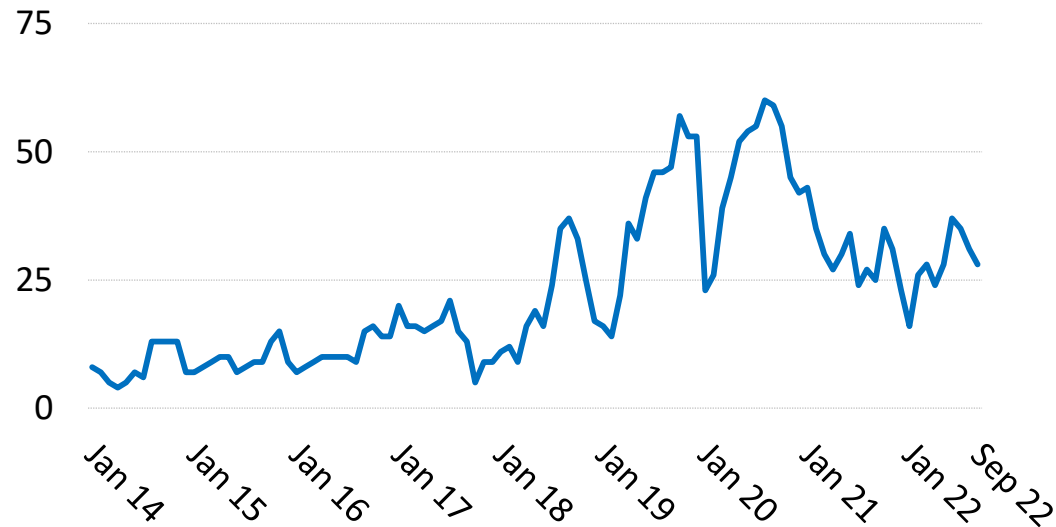
Electricity generation, GWh (percentages show renewable energy as % of total)



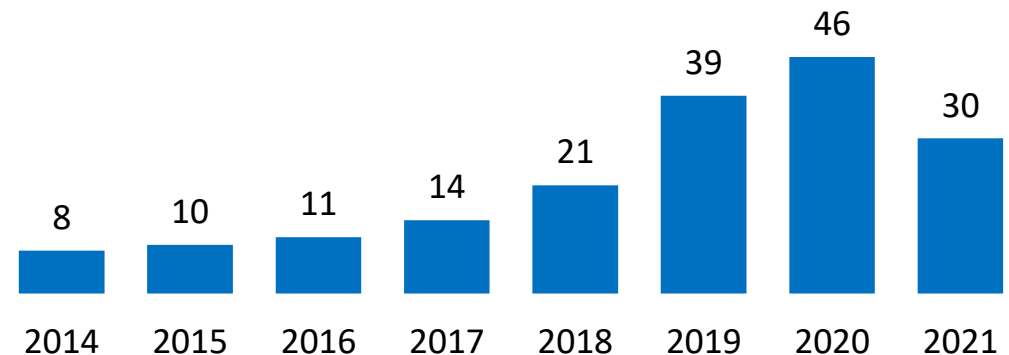
Unemployment

The number of people claiming Unemployment Allowance (UA) rose in 2019 and 2020, although the number fell in 2021. UA was discontinued in September 2021, although the Benefits Office now maintains a count of the number of registered unemployed persons who are 'job ready'. Note that the number of UA claimants or the number of registered unemployed can significantly underestimate unemployment, which is usually defined as the number of people without a job but actively seeking work.

Persons receiving Unemployment Allowance (to Sept 2021) or registered as unemployed and 'job ready' (from Oct 2021)



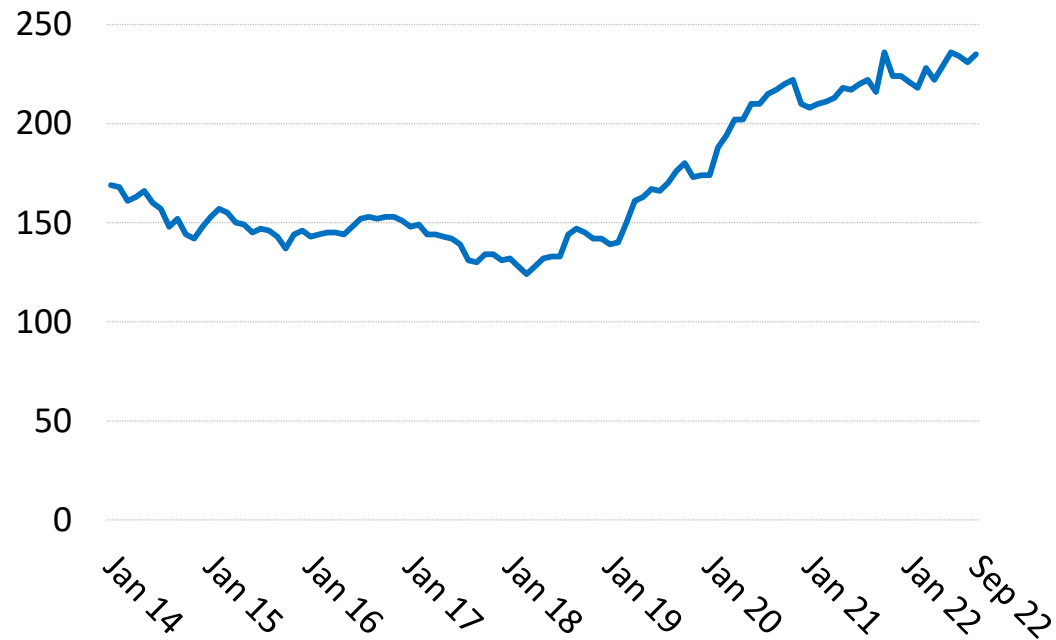
Average number of persons receiving Unemployment Allowance (to Sept 2021) or registered as unemployed and 'job ready' (from Oct 2021), per month



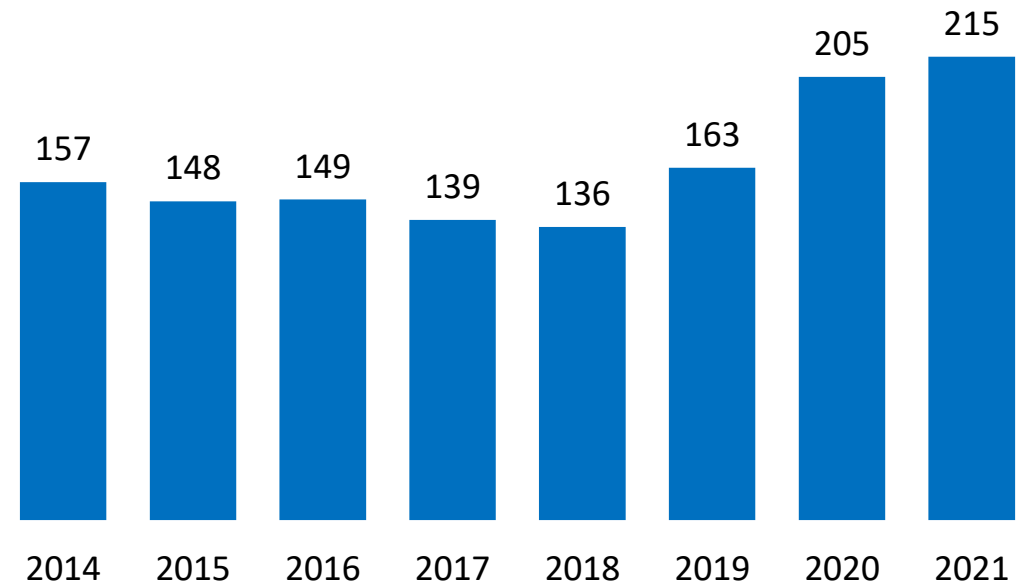
Social benefits

The number of families claiming Income Related Benefits at the end of September 2022 was just over 230. Up until October 1 2021, Income Related Benefits were paid to households whose income falls below an agreed minimum level, but from October 1 2021 they are paid to families; at the same time, eligibility rules were also changed.

Households (to Sept 21) or families (Oct 21 onwards) receiving Income Related Benefits



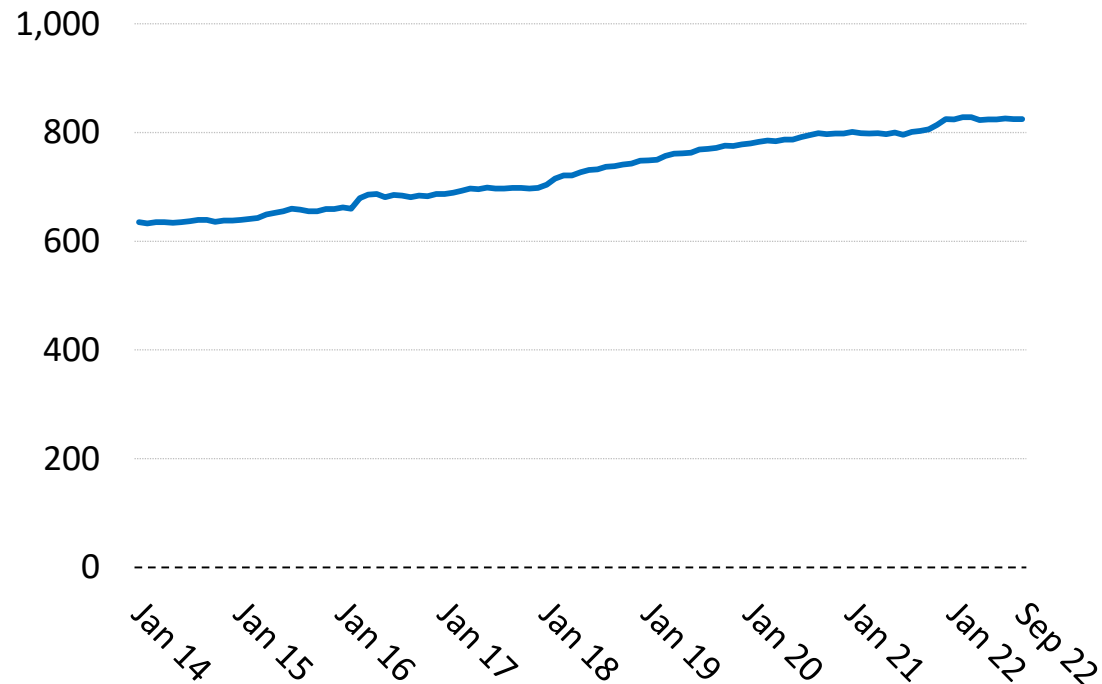
Average number of households (to Sept 21) or families (Oct 21 onwards) receiving Income Related Benefits per month



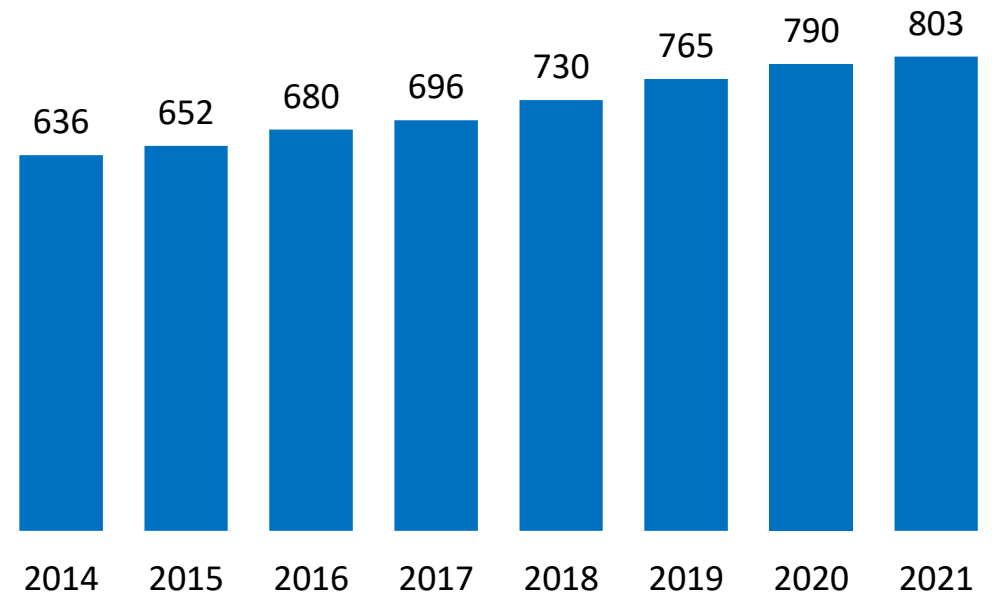
Basic Island Pension

The number of claimants of Basic Island Pension (BIP) is just over 800 in September 2022, or just under 20% of the total population. The Basic Island Pension is paid to residents who are 65 and over, have worked for at least 20 years on St Helena, and have only small alternative pensions in place. The number of BIP recipients has risen steadily in recent years, consistent with demographic projections and St Helena's 'ageing' population.

Persons receiving Basic Island Pension



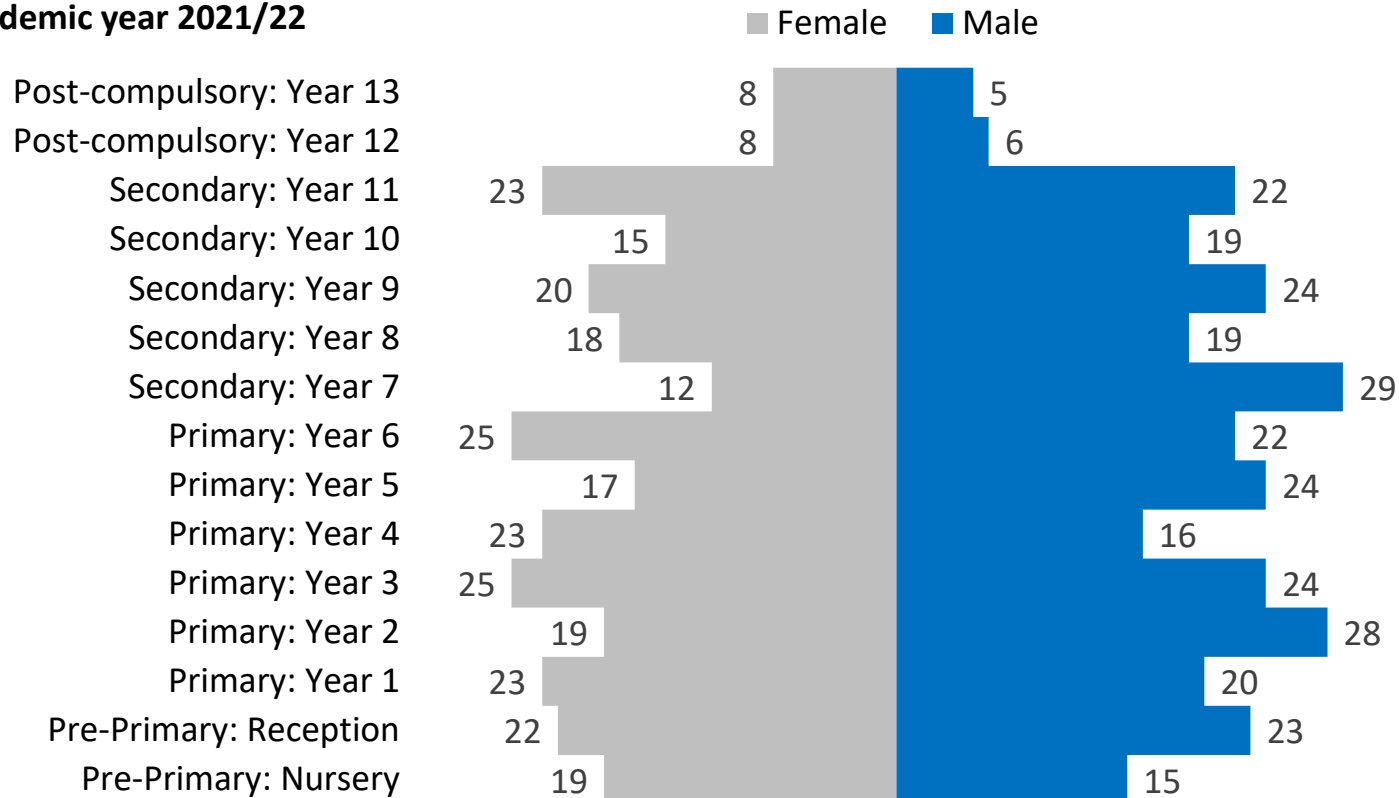
Average number of persons receiving Basic Island Pension per month



School enrolment

Up to year 11, each school year group has around 30 to 50 pupils enrolled, with some variations between the groups. Enrolment in post-compulsory education is much lower, with 27 pupils enrolled in the 21/22 academic year across the two year groups 12 and 13 (i.e. children aged 17 and 18). However, it should be noted that some children also enrol in an apprenticeship scheme during these years.

Academic year 2021/22



For more government statistics, please visit
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Comments and questions are very welcome:
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