

“building **excellence**  
in materials supply”

# Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



**November 2021**

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**A Builders Merchant Building Index Publication**

# Building the Industry & Building Brands from Knowledge

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



# Contents:

Click links below to visit pages

<b>Plumbing &amp; Heating Merchant Index:</b>	
<a href="#">Introduction</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Overview</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Month and 3-month index table</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Monthly index</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Month, year-on-year</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Month v 2019</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Month on month</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Rolling 3 months, year-on-year</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Rolling 3 months v previous 3 months</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Quarterly index</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Quarter, year-on-year</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Quarter on quarter</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Year to date, year-on-year</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Year to date v 2019</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Last 12 months</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Trading days</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Plumbing &amp; Heating channel definition and merchants</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Contacting PHMI</a>	<a href="#">21-22</a>

The 'Contents' link below brings you back to this page.

# Introduction:

## Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



This Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index (PHMI) report contains data from GfK's ground-breaking Plumbing & Heating Merchants Panel, which analyses data from over 80% of Plumbing & Heating merchants' sales throughout Great Britain, accounting for about £3bn. There is no overlap or double counting between PHMI and Builders Merchant Building Index (BMBI).

GfK's Plumbing & Heating Point of Sale Tracking Data is a gold standard in reliable market trends. Unlike data from sources based on relatively small samples or estimates, or sales from suppliers to the supply chain, this up-to-date data is based on actual sales from specialist plumbing & heating merchants. It is, in effect, the market.

PHMI trend data is indexed on the 12 months of 2019. Currently, data is available by total monthly value sales and the series tracks what is happening in the plumbing and heating market month by month. This trend series gives the industry access to far more accurate insights than has been available. MRA Research produces the Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index, a brand of the BMF (Builders Merchants Federation), to provide reliable data, and a platform and voice for this important industry and for leading plumbing and heating brands to communicate to the wider market.

### **PHMI Experts**

Plumbing & Heating brands who are interested in becoming PHMI Experts, speaking for their markets and building their brands, should contact Ralph Sutcliffe: [ralph@mra-research.co.uk](mailto:ralph@mra-research.co.uk)

### **More data available**

This PHMI report provides valuable top-level indices but there's considerably more data available. GfK insights go much deeper and can quantify market values and drill down into contributing categories, tracing product group performance, to focus on aspects that are critical to you.

GfK can produce like-for-like market comparability tailored to the requirements of an individual business. Merchants or suppliers who are interested in acquiring data or getting involved should contact Emile van der Ryst at [emile.van-der-ryst@gfk.com](mailto:emile.van-der-ryst@gfk.com).

# Overview and Insights

## Record PHMI month for plumbing and heating merchants

Total plumbing and heating value sales, from over 80% of specialist Plumbing & Heating merchants throughout Great Britain, were 9.0% higher in November 2021 compared to November 2020 (see [page 8](#)), with one more trading day this year. November's sales were the highest month since PHMI started in January 2019. Like-for-like sales, which take trading day differences into account, were 4.1% higher. Compared with two years ago, total value in November 2021 was 6.1% higher than in November 2019, with one more trading day ([page 9](#)). Like-for-like sales were 1.3% higher.

Total value sales in November were 9.1% higher than in October, with one more trading day this month ([page 10](#)). Like-for-like sales were 4.1% higher.

November's PHMI Index, which contrasts sales with the base period of January to December 2019, was 121.2, with one more trading day – see the table on [page 6](#) and the chart on [page 7](#).

Sales in the three months September to November 2021 were up 2.4% compared with the same three months last year, with no difference in trading days ([page 11](#)).

Compared with the same three months two years ago, total sales in September to November 2021 were up 1.7%, with no difference in trading days.

Sales in the three months September to November were 15.5% higher than in the preceding three months, June to August, with one more trading day in the most recent period ([page 12](#)). Like-for-like sales were up 13.7%.

Sales in the first eleven months of 2021 were 19.9% higher than in Covid-affected January to November 2020, with two less trading days this year ([page 16](#)). Like-for-like sales were 21.0% higher.

Looking back two years, sales in January to November 2021 were 2.5% higher than the same eleven months in 2019, with two less trading days this year ([page 17](#)). Like-for-like sales were 3.4% higher.

Plumbing & Heating Merchants' sales in the 12 months December 2020 to November 2021 were 18.7% ahead of December 2019 to November 2020, with no difference in trading days ([page 18](#)).

Sales in November were 9.0% higher than last year, with the highest monthly revenue since PHMI started in January 2019.

Compared with 2 years ago, sales were 6.1% higher than in November 2019.

# Indices: Monthly and quarterly

December 2020 to November 2021

(Indexed on January to December 2019)

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



Dec 20	Jan 21	Feb 21	Three months
83.9	99.4	102.4	95.2
Mar 21	Apr 21	May 21	Three months
118.2	101.8	97.4	105.8
Jun 21	Jul 21	Aug 21	Three months
99.2	99.6	93.0	97.3
Sep 21	Oct 21	Nov 21	Three months
104.8	111.1	121.2	112.3

Indices are a measure that express sales values relative to a fixed base, enabling rapid performance comparisons to be made. The Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index uses total sales in 2019 to create monthly and quarterly base periods. These represent average performance.

The figures above express how the periods compare with the 2019 base:

- If turnover was exactly the same, the Index would be 100.
- Values over 100 indicate higher turnover in that period. For example, November's index of 121.1 means turnover was 21.2% above the base period.
- Values below 100 indicate lower turnover in that period. August's Index of 93.0 means turnover was 7.0% lower than the base period.



Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# Monthly: Index

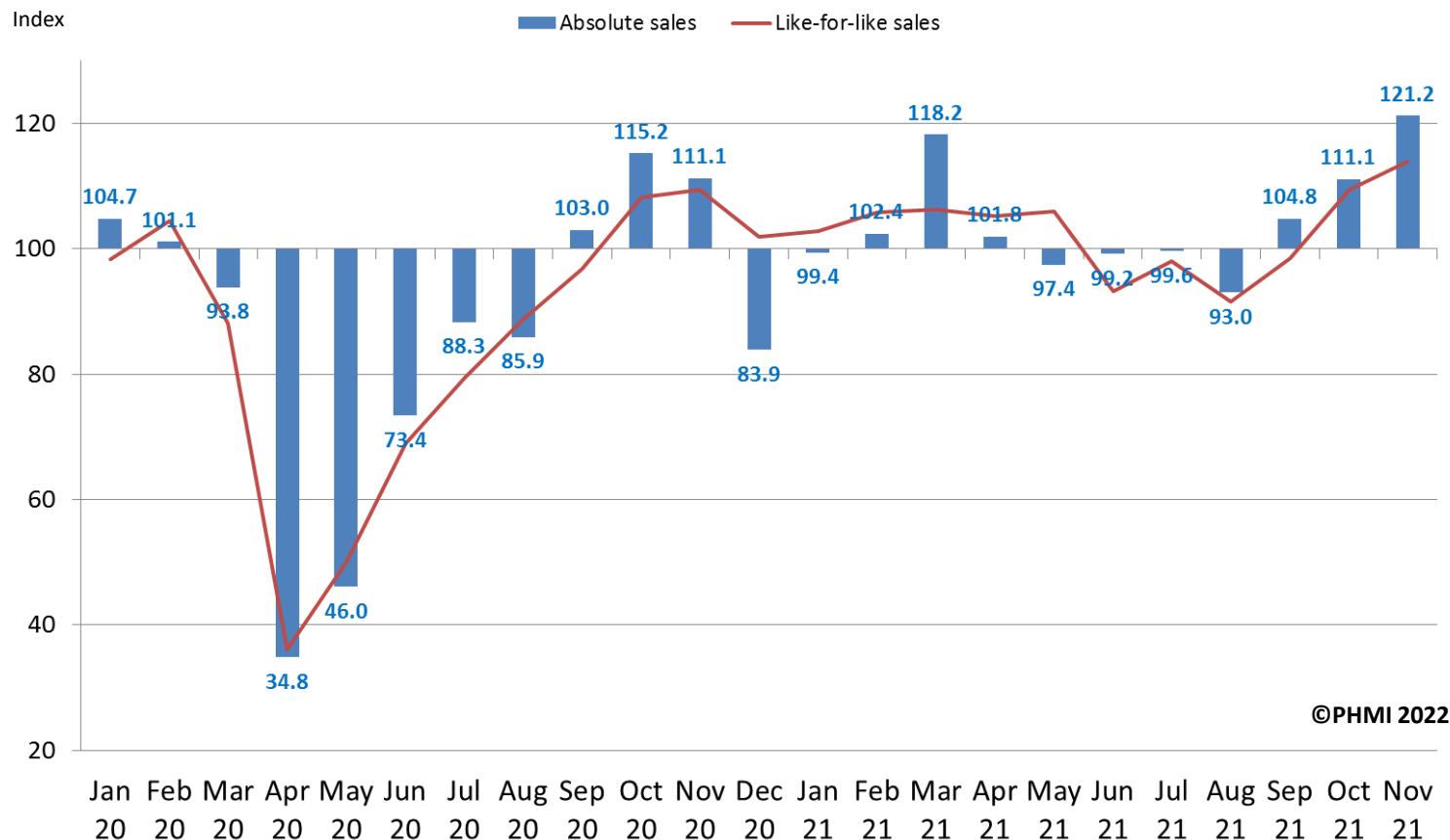
Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Indices: January 2020 to November 2021



\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

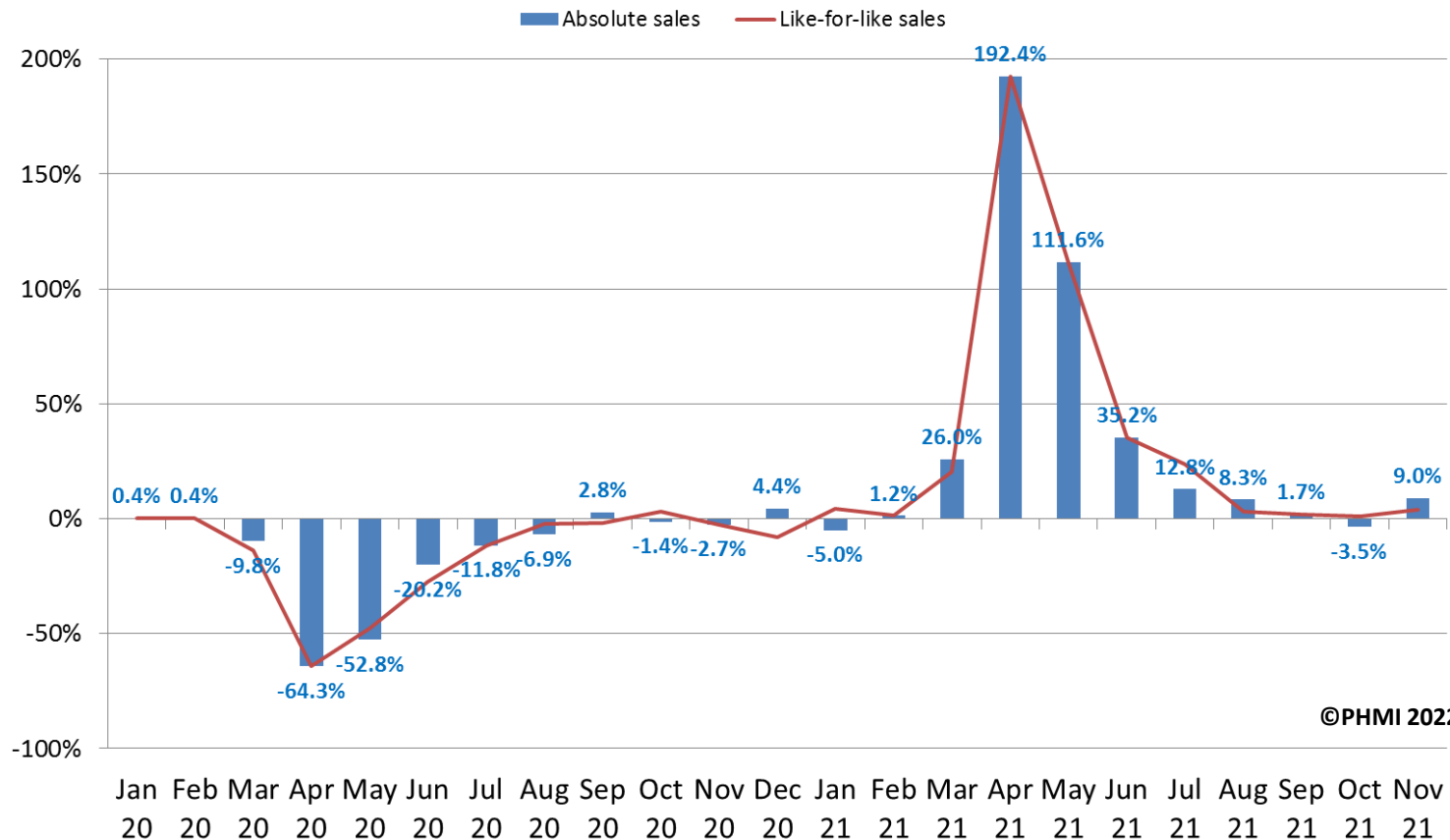
**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# Monthly: This Year v Last Year

## Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

### Month: year on year



Values shown for  
absolute sales

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.



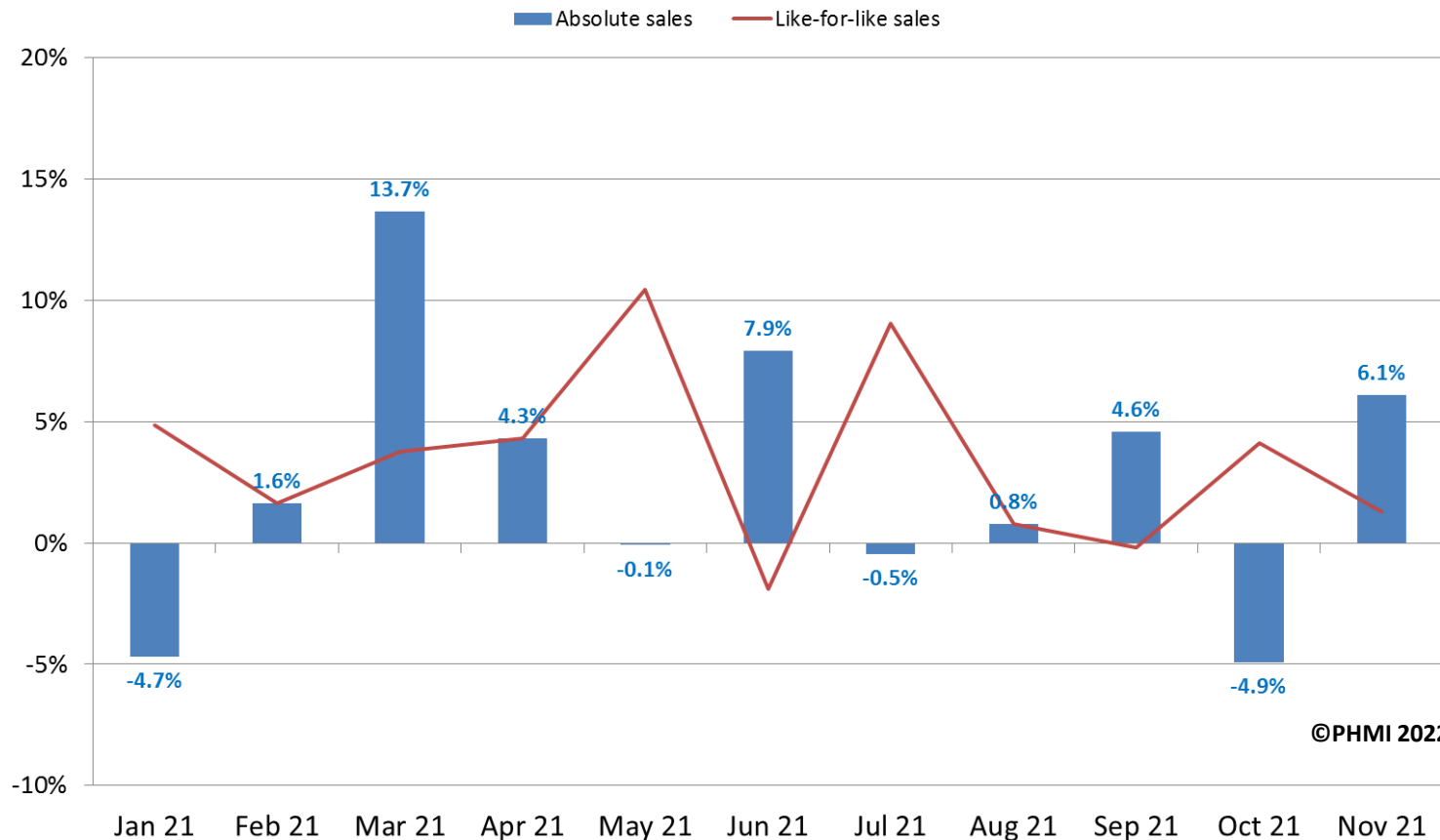
# Monthly: This Year v 2019

## Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

### Month: compared with 2019



**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# Monthly: Month v previous month

Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

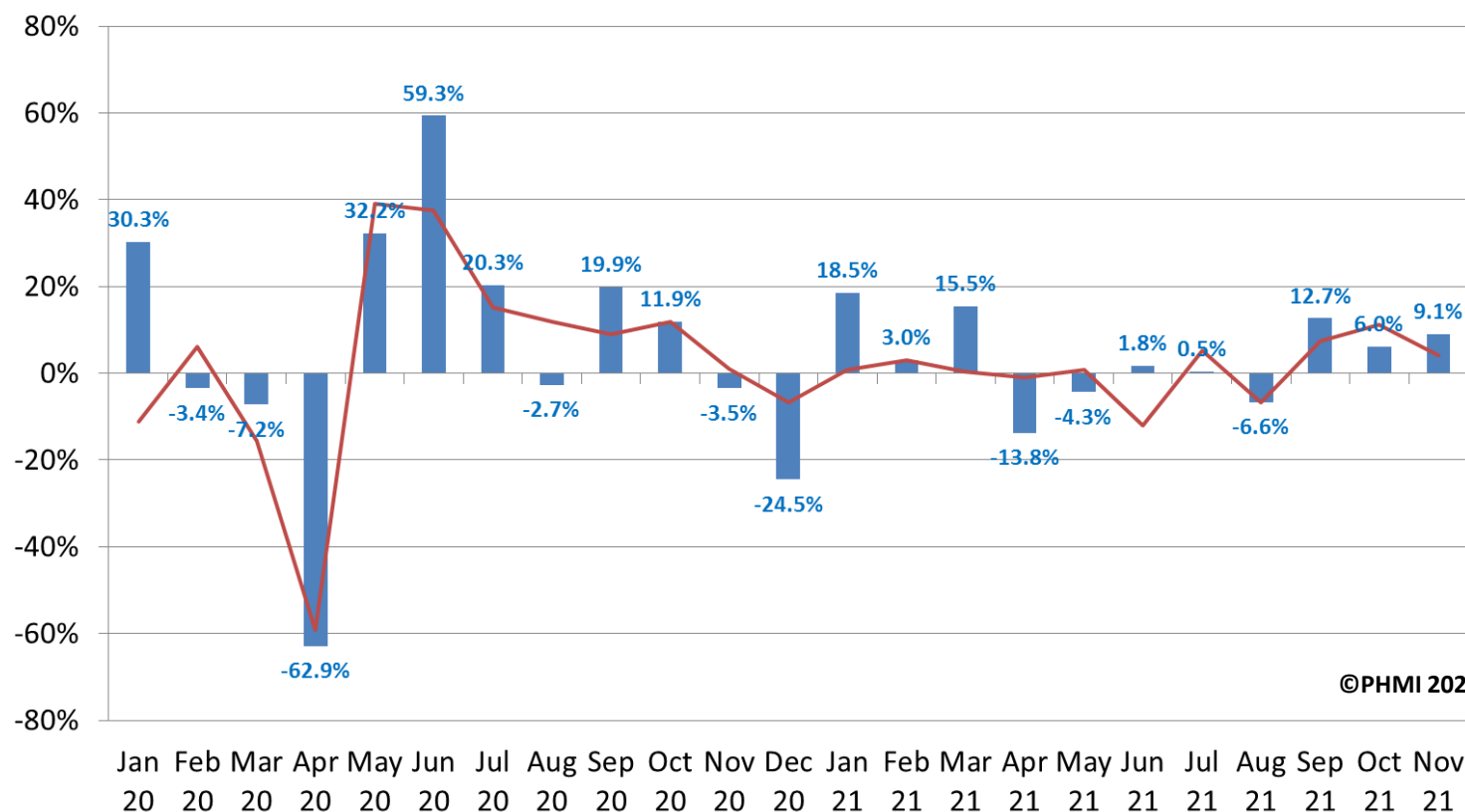
Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Month v previous month

Absolute sales Like-for-like sales



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Jan 20 Feb 20 Mar 20 Apr 20 May 20 Jun 20 Jul 20 Aug 20 Sep 20 Oct 20 Nov 20 Dec 20 Jan 21 Feb 21 Mar 21 Apr 21 May 21 Jun 21 Jul 21 Aug 21 Sep 21 Oct 21 Nov 21

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.



Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# Rolling 3-months: This year v last year

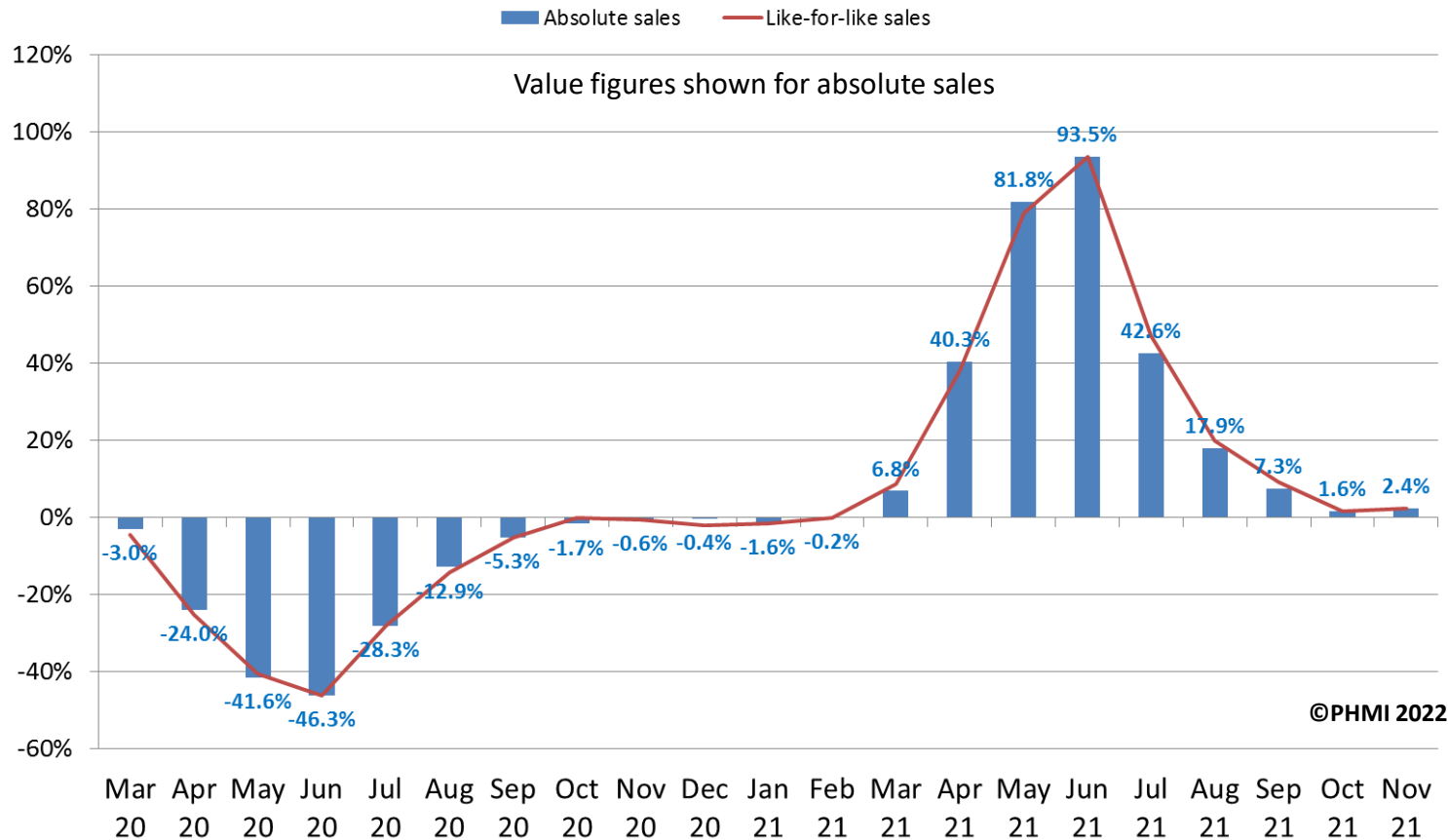
Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Rolling 3 months: year on year



Eg. Nov21 shows sales in the three months September to November were 2.4% higher than the same three months last year.

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# Rolling 3-months: v previous 3 months

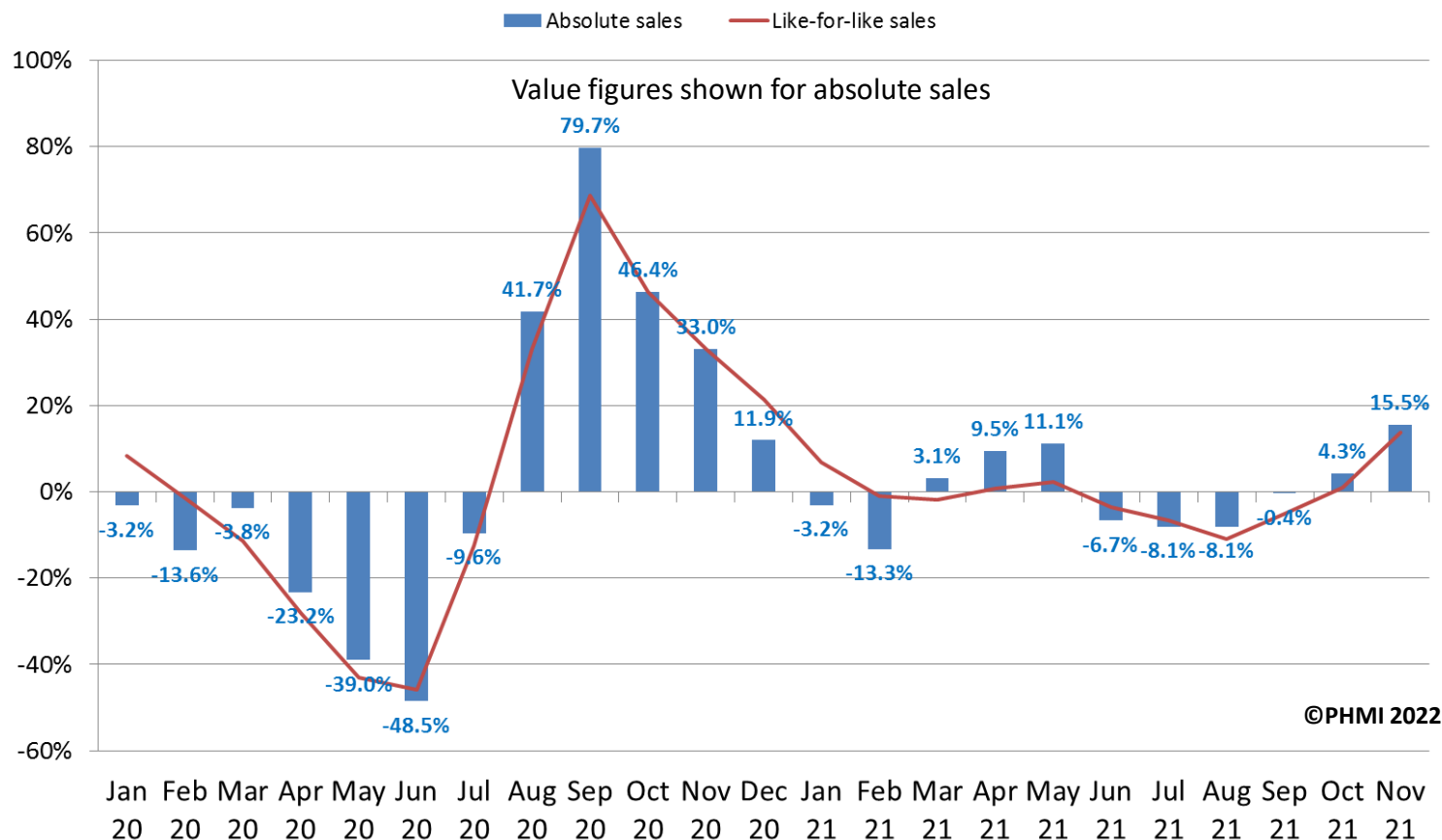
Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Rolling 3 months v previous 3 months



Eg. Nov 21 shows the three months September to November were 15.5% higher than the three months June to August.

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Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

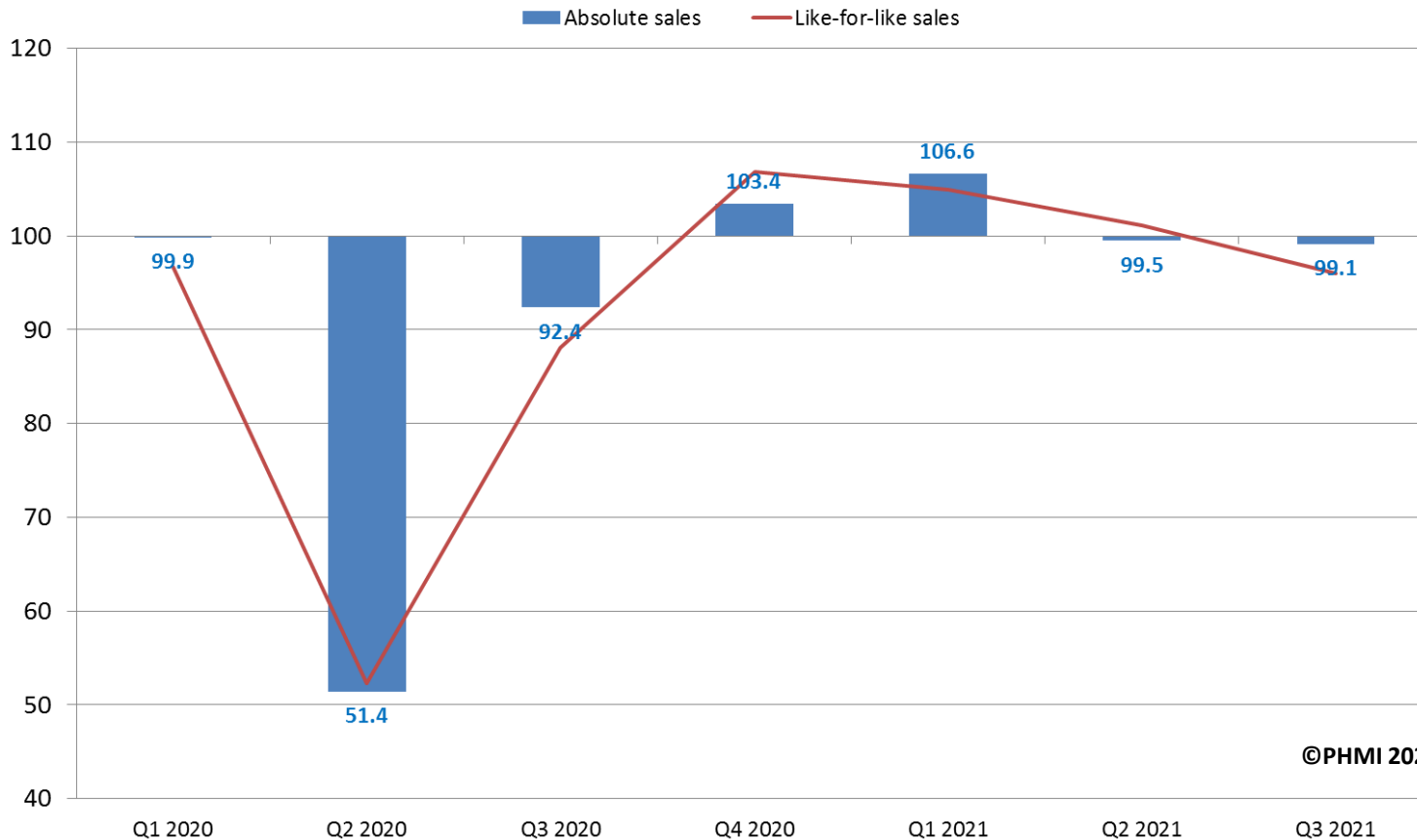
# Quarterly: Index

Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Indices: Q1 2020 to Q3 2021



Values shown for  
absolute sales

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\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Sep 2021

# Quarterly: Year on Year

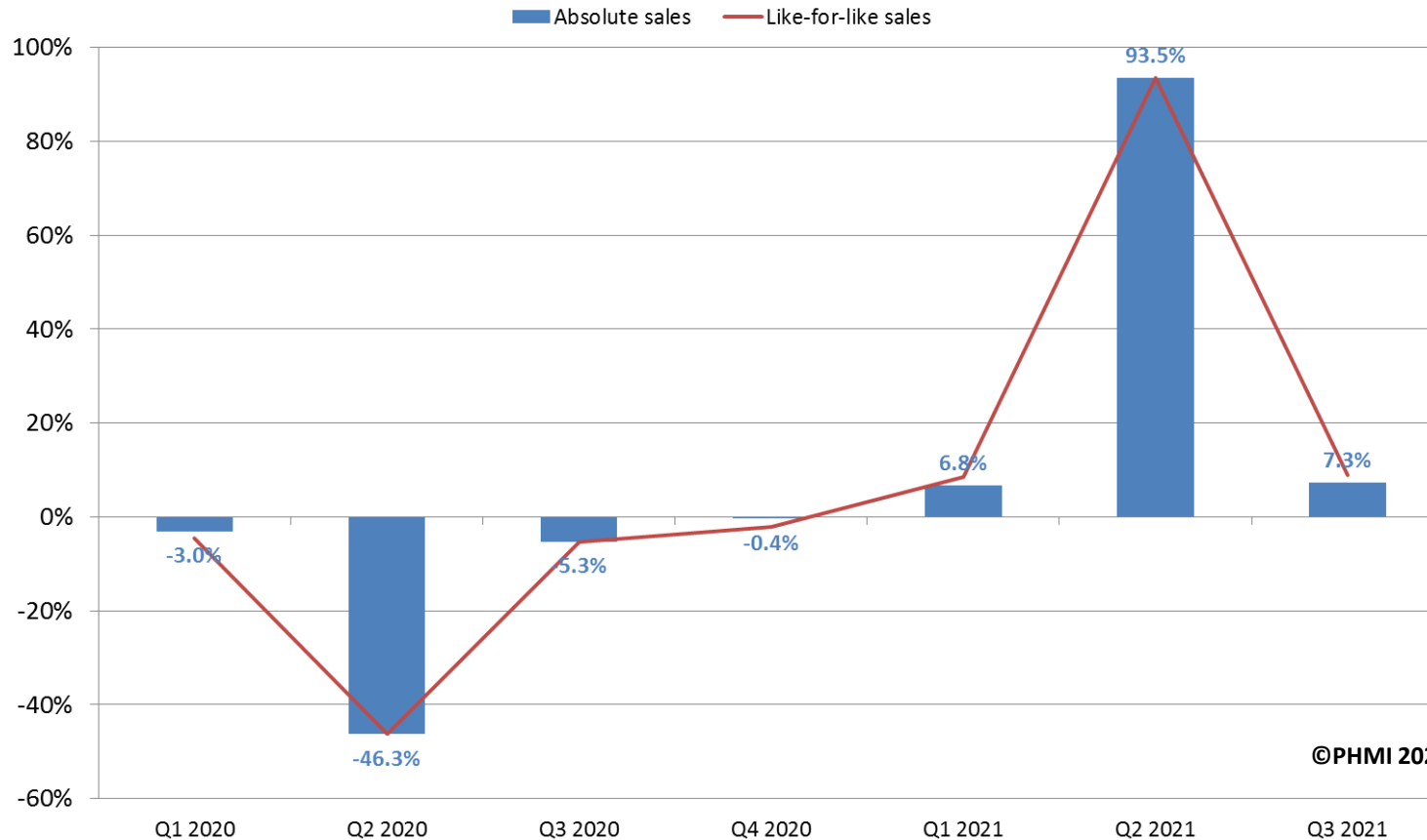
Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Quarter: year on year



Values shown for  
absolute sales

©PHMI 2022

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Sep 2021

# Quarterly: Quarter v previous quarter

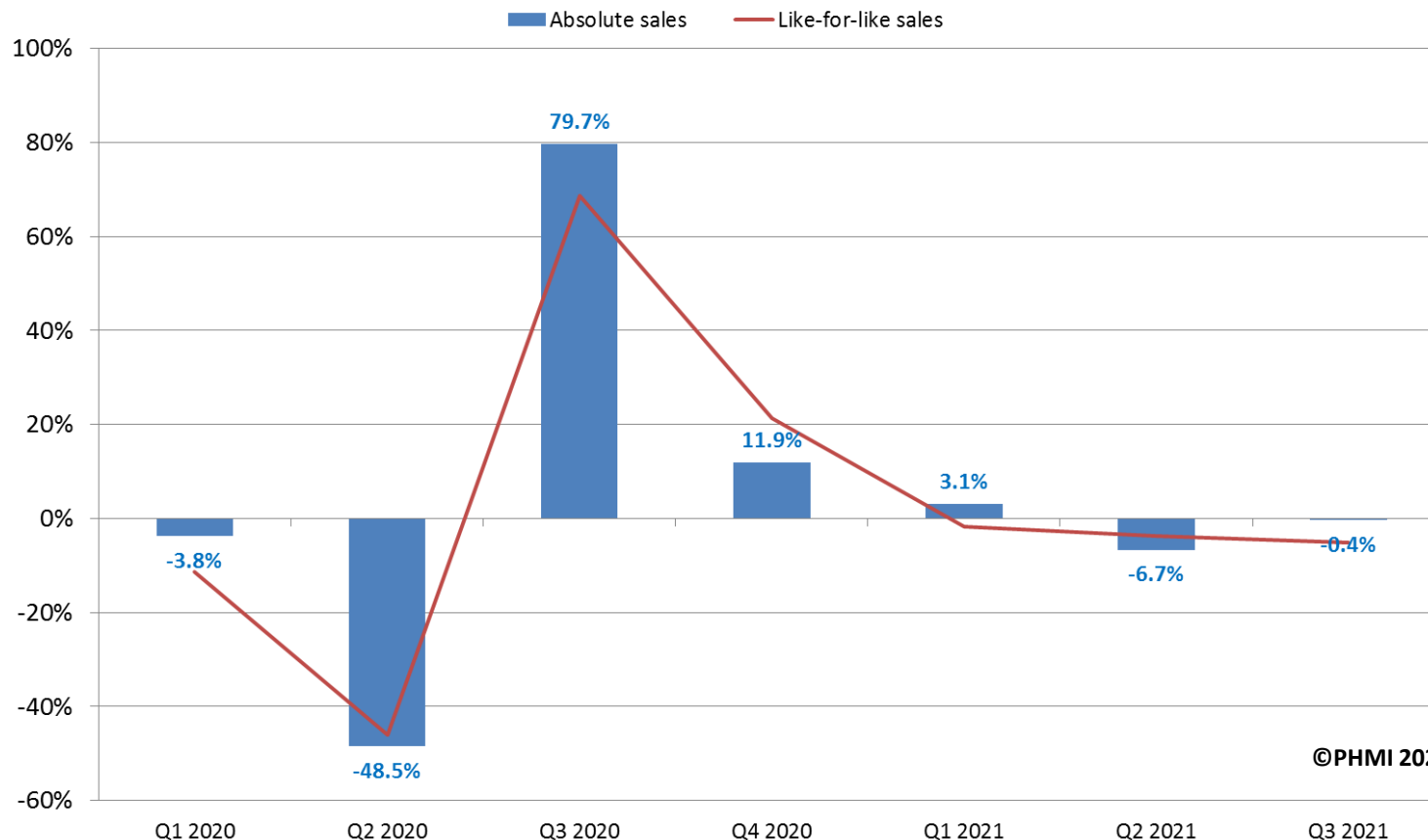
Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*

Plumbing & Heating  
Merchant Index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Quarter v previous quarter



Values shown for  
absolute sales

©PHMI 2022

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Sep 2021

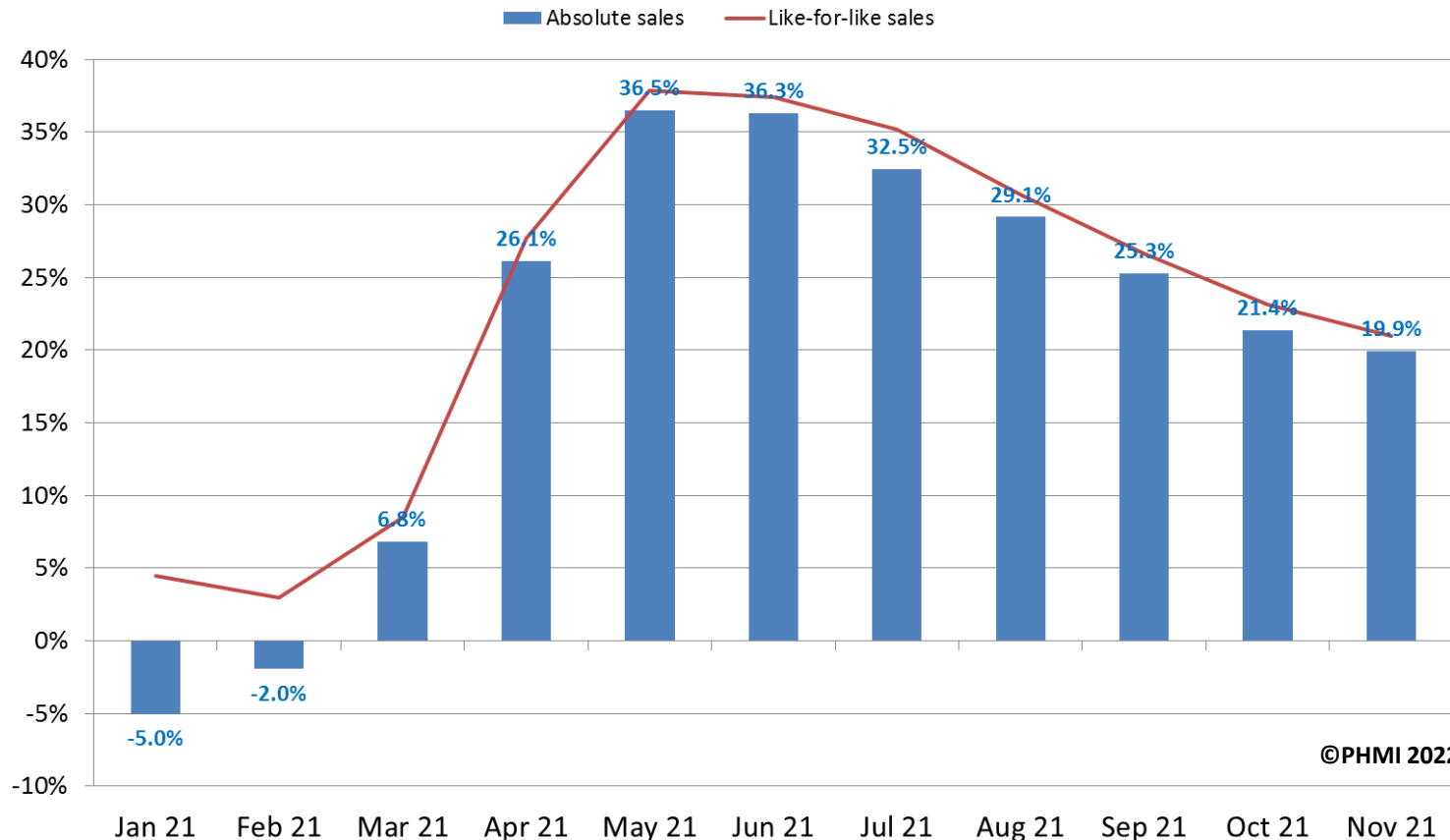
# Year To Date: Year on year

Last 11 months absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*




(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Cumulative year to date: Jan 21 to Nov 21 v last year



Values shown for  
absolute sales

\*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

 Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021



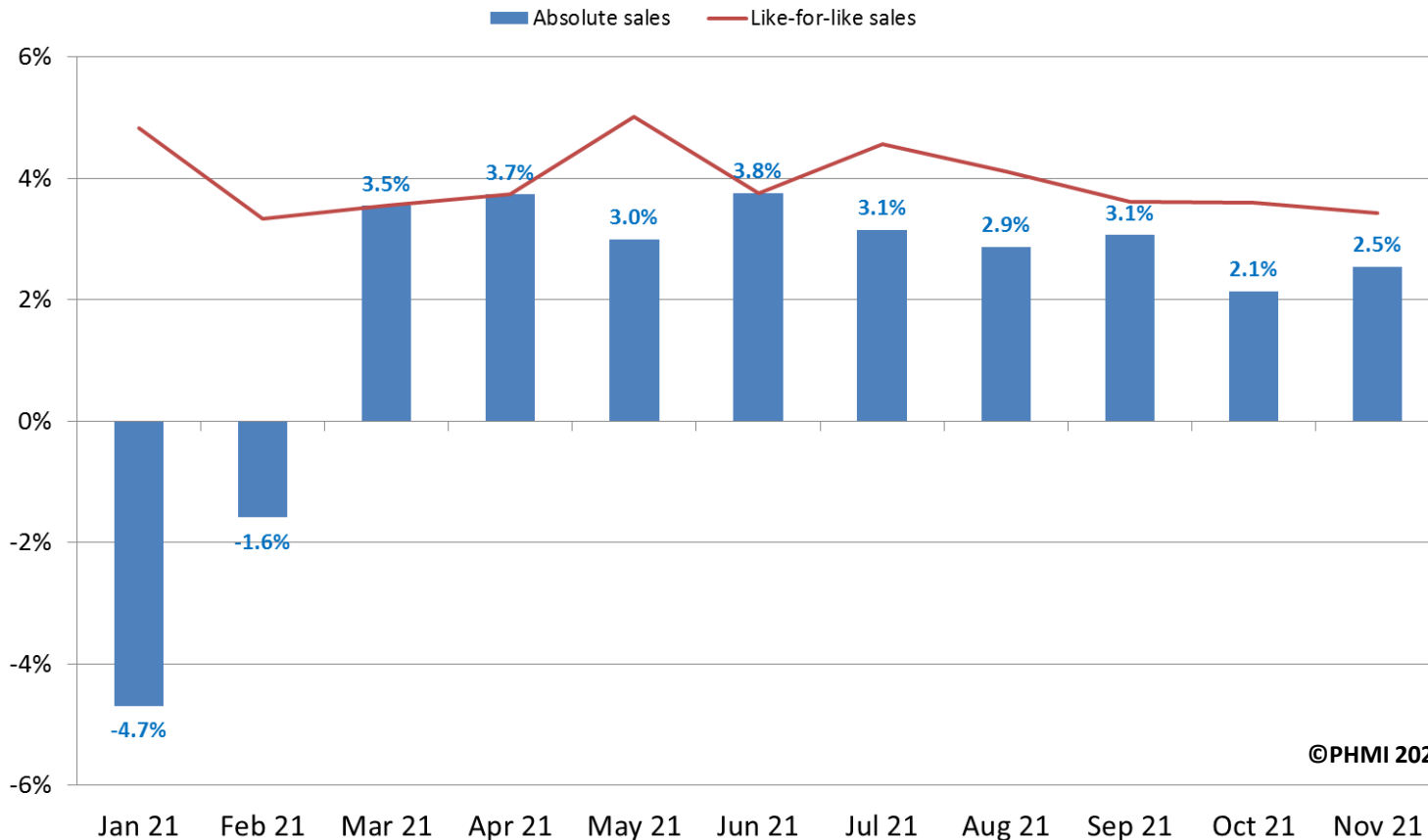
# Year To Date: 2021 v 2019

Last 11 months absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

## Cumulative year to date: 2-year comparison



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**GfK** Source: GfK's  
Plumbing & Heating  
Point of Sale Tracking  
Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

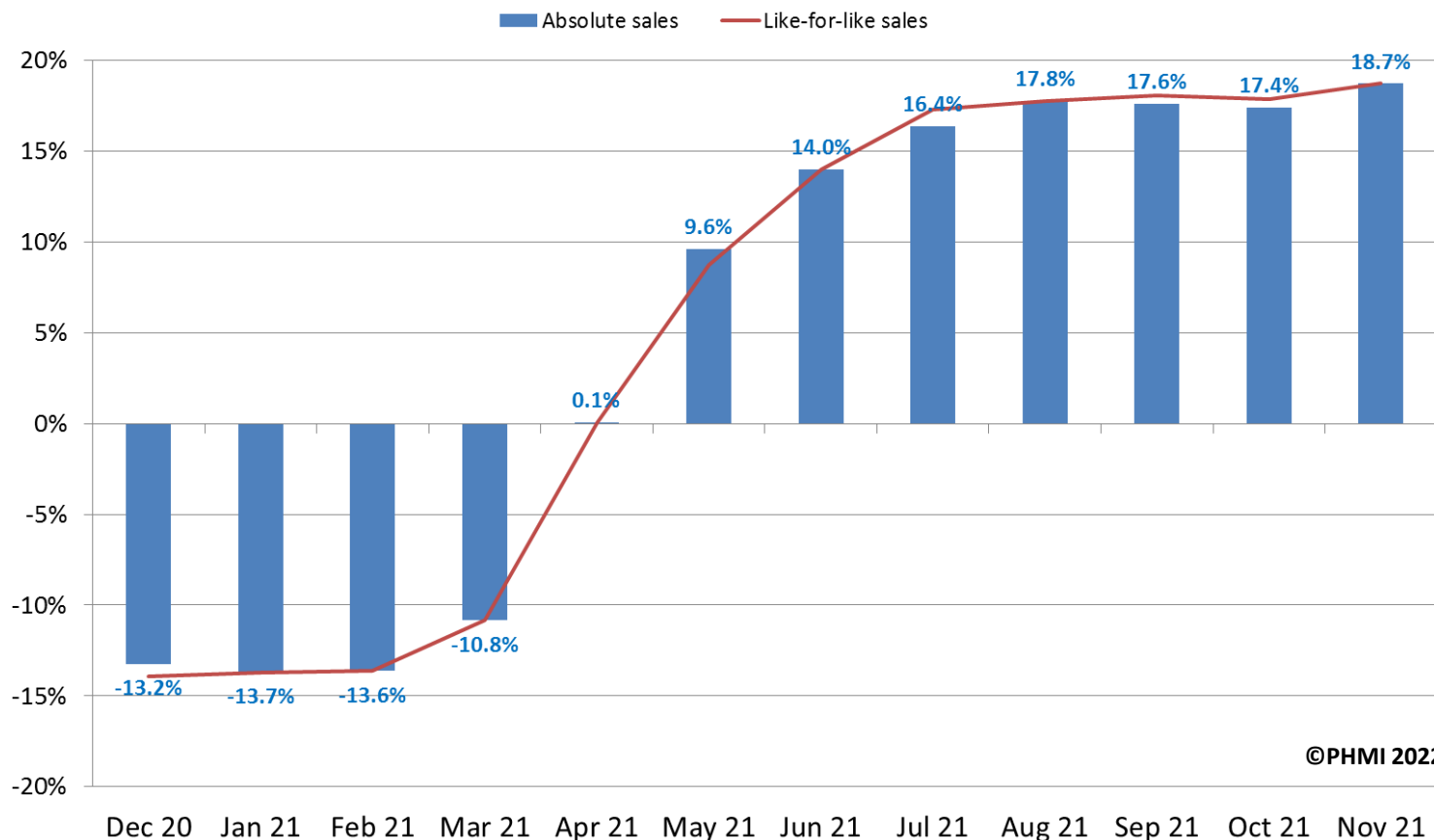
# Last 12 months: Year on year

## Absolute sales index and like-for-like sales index\*



(Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account)

### Rolling 12 months v previous 12 months



Values shown for  
absolute sales

©PHMI 2022

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**GfK** Source: GfK's  
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Data, Jan 2019 to Nov 2021

# PHMI Trading Days

## Monthly

Index: 20.8

2020											
Jan 22	Feb 20	Mar* 22	Apr* 20	May* 19	Jun 22	Jul 23	Aug 20	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 21	Dec 17
2021											
Jan 20	Feb 20	Mar 23	Apr 20	May 19	Jun 22	Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 22	Oct 21	Nov 22	Dec

## Quarterly

Index: 62.3

2020			
Q1 64	Q2 61	Q3 65	Q4 60
2021			
Q1 63	Q2 61	Q3 64	Q4

## Half Year

2020	
H1 125	H2 125
2021	
H1 124	H2

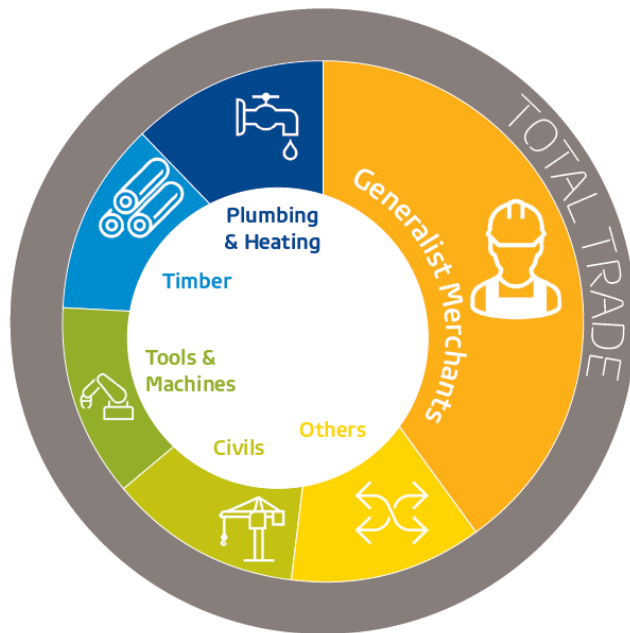
## Full Year

2020
250
2021

\*Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, some merchants temporarily closed branches in the period March to May 2020, hence their trading days may have differed from the standard numbers shown above.

# Plumbing & Heating channel definition and merchants

## Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



### Plumbing Specialists

Plumbing & Hardware Specialists are small outlets handling nails, hardware products, pipes, ironware, paint, faucets, sanitary products, bathroom accessories, ceramic tiles and heating equipment such as boilers, radiators & heating controls.

Their main turnover is generated with product groups such as installation, paint & plumbing/hardware product groups (e.g. nails, saws, scissors, keys).

### Plumbing Merchants

Large outlets handling nails, hardware products, pipes, ironware, paint, faucets, sanitary products, bathroom accessories & kitchen, bathroom furniture, bath tubs and heating equipment such as boilers, radiators & heating controls. Compared with Plumbing Specialists they are bigger & generate a higher turnover.

Their main turnover is generated with bath/kitchen faucets, sanitary & complementary products, bathroom accessories, tiles and bath tubs and bathroom furniture.

Turnover is generated with professional end users (B2B) as well as private end users (B2C).

Merchant partners include:



Plumbing Trade Supplies



# Contacting PHMI

## PHMI Experts

Plumbing & Heating brands who are interested in becoming PHMI Experts and speaking for their markets and building their brands should contact Ralph Sutcliffe:



**Ralph Sutcliffe**

Business Development  
Director

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# Contact us

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