

“building **excellence**
in materials supply”

Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



Quarter 4 2021

(Published 22 February 2022)

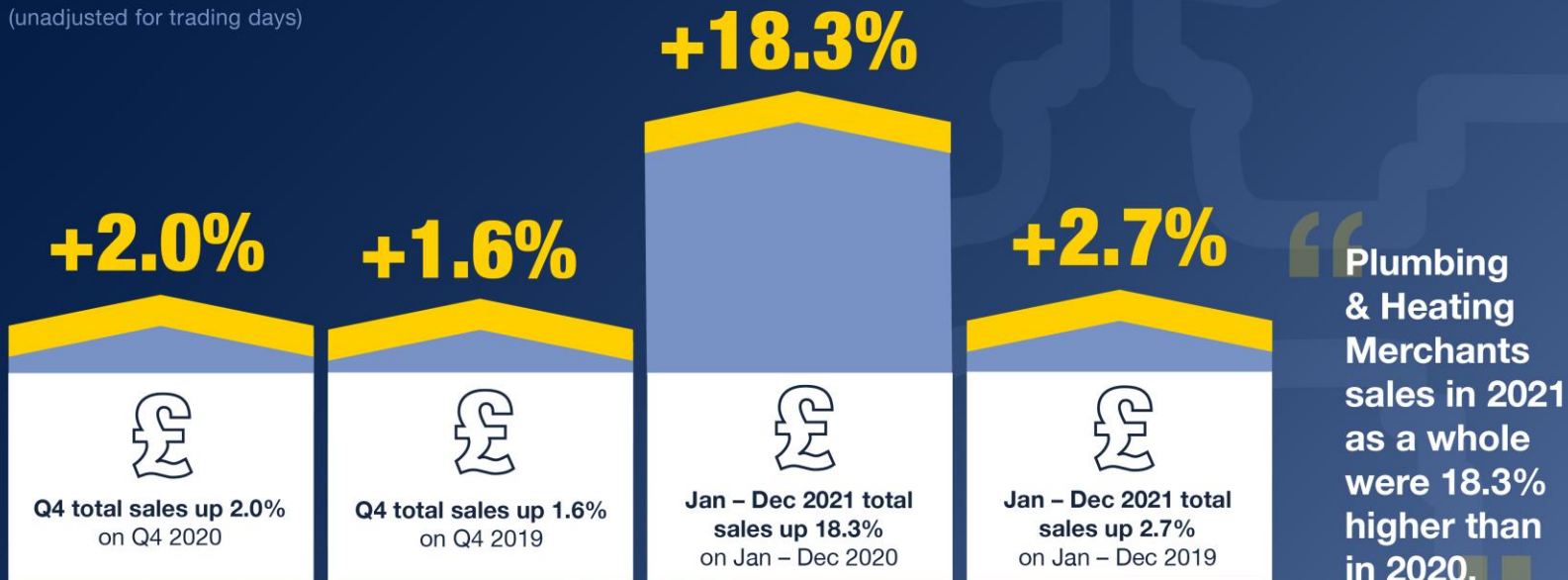
A Builders Merchant Building Index Publication

Highlights:

Plumbing & Heating Merchants sales in 2021 as a whole were 18.3% higher than in Covid-affected January to December 2020. Looking back two years, sales in January to December 2021 were 2.7% higher than 2019. Read the full Overview on page 5.

PHMI Report Q4 2021 Highlights

(unadjusted for trading days)



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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.

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. PHMI Index data is calculated against the base period January 2019 to December 2019. 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

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.

Overview and Insights

Plumbing & Heating Merchants 2021 sales up 18.3% on 2020 and up 2.7% on 2019

Total plumbing and heating value sales, from over 80% of specialist Plumbing & Heating merchants throughout Great Britain, were 0.3% higher in December 2021 compared with December 2020 (see [page 7](#)), with no difference in trading days this year.

Compared with two years ago, total value sales in December 2021 were 4.6% higher than in December 2019, helped by two more trading days ([page 8](#)). Like-for-like sales, which take trading day differences into account, were 7.7 lower.

Total value sales in December were 30.6% lower than in November, broadly in line with seasonal norms and not helped by five less trading days this month ([page 9](#)). Like-for-like sales were 10.2% lower.

December's PHMI Index was 84.1, not helped by four less trading days ([page 10](#)). The like-for-like index was 102.2.

Sales in Quarter 4 2021 were up 2.0% compared with Quarter 4 last year, with no difference in trading days ([page 13](#)).

Compared with Quarter 4 two years ago, total sales in October to December 2021 were up 1.6%, helped by one more trading day this year ([page 14](#)). Like-for-like sales were flat (-0.1%).

Sales in Quarter 4 were 6.4% higher than in Quarter 3, with four less trading day in the most recent period ([page 15](#)). Like-for-like sales were up 13.5%.

The fourth quarter PHMI Index was 105.5 ([page 16](#)) with two less trading days and the like-for-like index was 109.0.

Plumbing & Heating Merchants sales in 2021 as a whole were 18.3% higher than in Covid-affected 2020, with two less trading days this year ([page 17](#)). Like-for-like sales were 19.3% higher.

Looking back two years, sales in January to December 2021 were 2.7% higher than 2019, with no difference in trading days.

Sales in December were 0.3% higher than in December last year.

Compared with 2 years ago, sales were 4.6% higher than in December 2019.

Monthly and quarterly

Year-on-year: January 2021 to December 2021

Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



Jan 21	Feb 21	Mar 21	Three months
-5.0%	1.2%	26.0%	6.8%
Apr 21	May 21	Jun 21	Three months
192.4%	111.6%	35.2%	93.5%
Jul 21	Aug 21	Sep 21	Three months
12.8%	8.3%	1.7%	7.3%
Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Three months
-3.5%	9.0%	0.3%	2.0%

 Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Plumbing & Heating merchants sales finished 2021 up 0.3% in December compared with the same month last year.

Quarter 4 sales were 2.0% above October to December 2020.

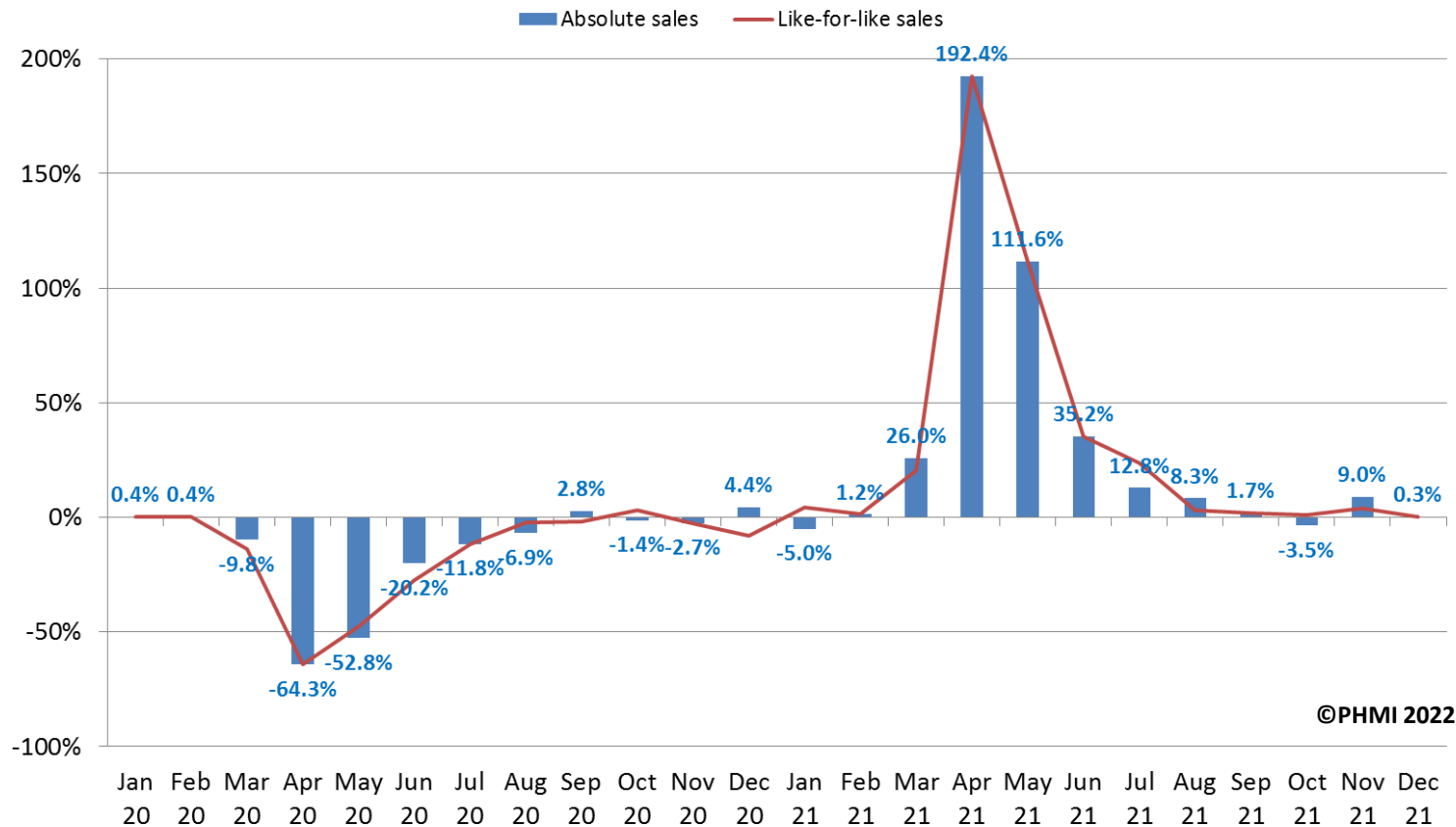
Monthly: This Year v Last Year

Absolute and like-for-like sales*



No difference in trading days in December 2021 compared with December 2020.
Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Month: year on year



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Growth slowed in
December to +0.3%.
Compared with
Covid-affected 2020,
sales in 2021 were
higher in all but two
months (January
and October).

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

Monthly: This Year v 2019

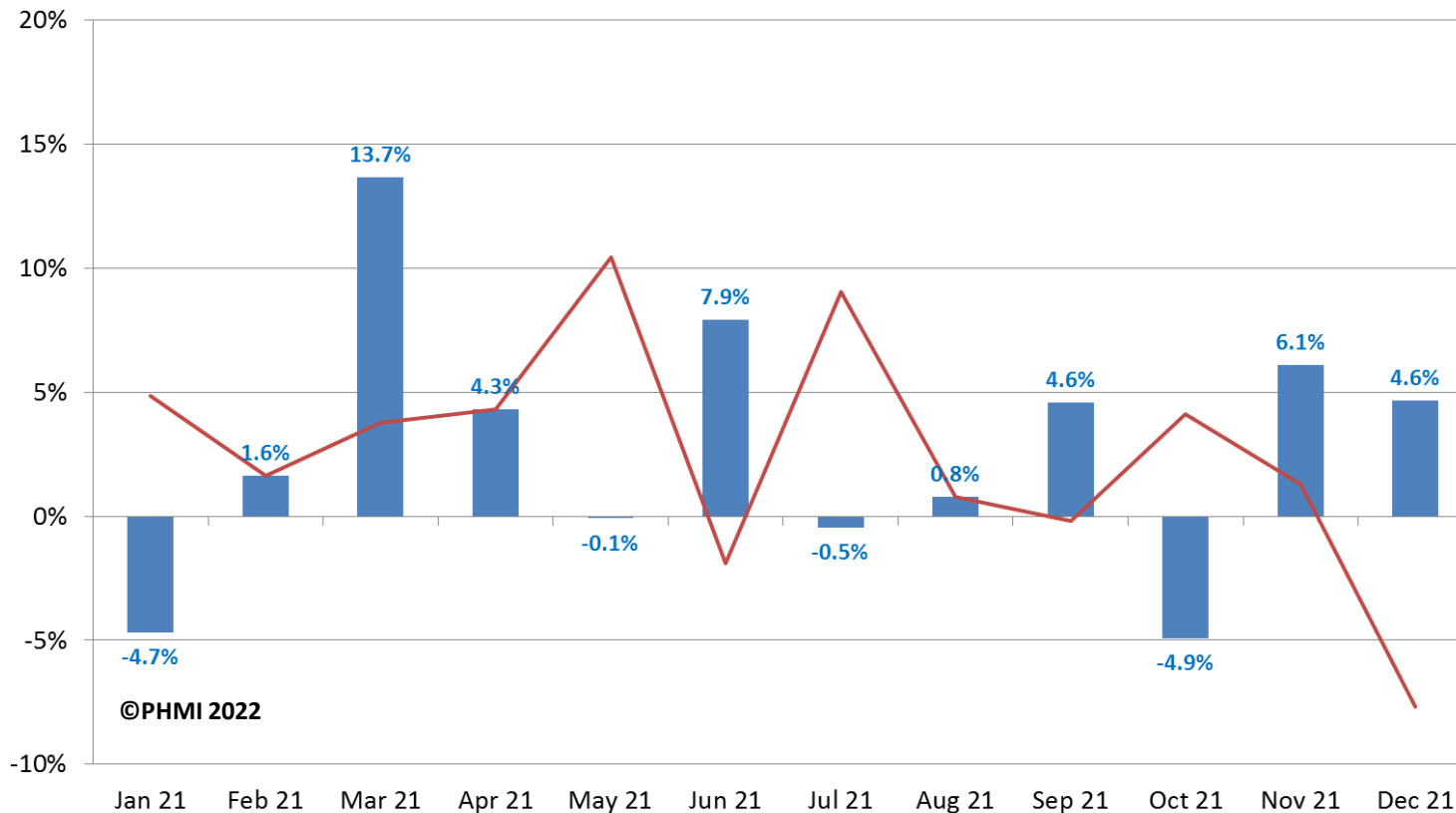
Absolute and like-for-like sales



Two more trading days in December 2021 compared with December 2019. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Month: compared with 2019

■ Absolute sales — Like-for-like sales



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Two extra trading days in December this year helped lift sales by 4.6% compared with December 2019. However like-for-like sales were 7.6% lower.

Monthly: Month v previous month

Absolute and like-for-like sales*

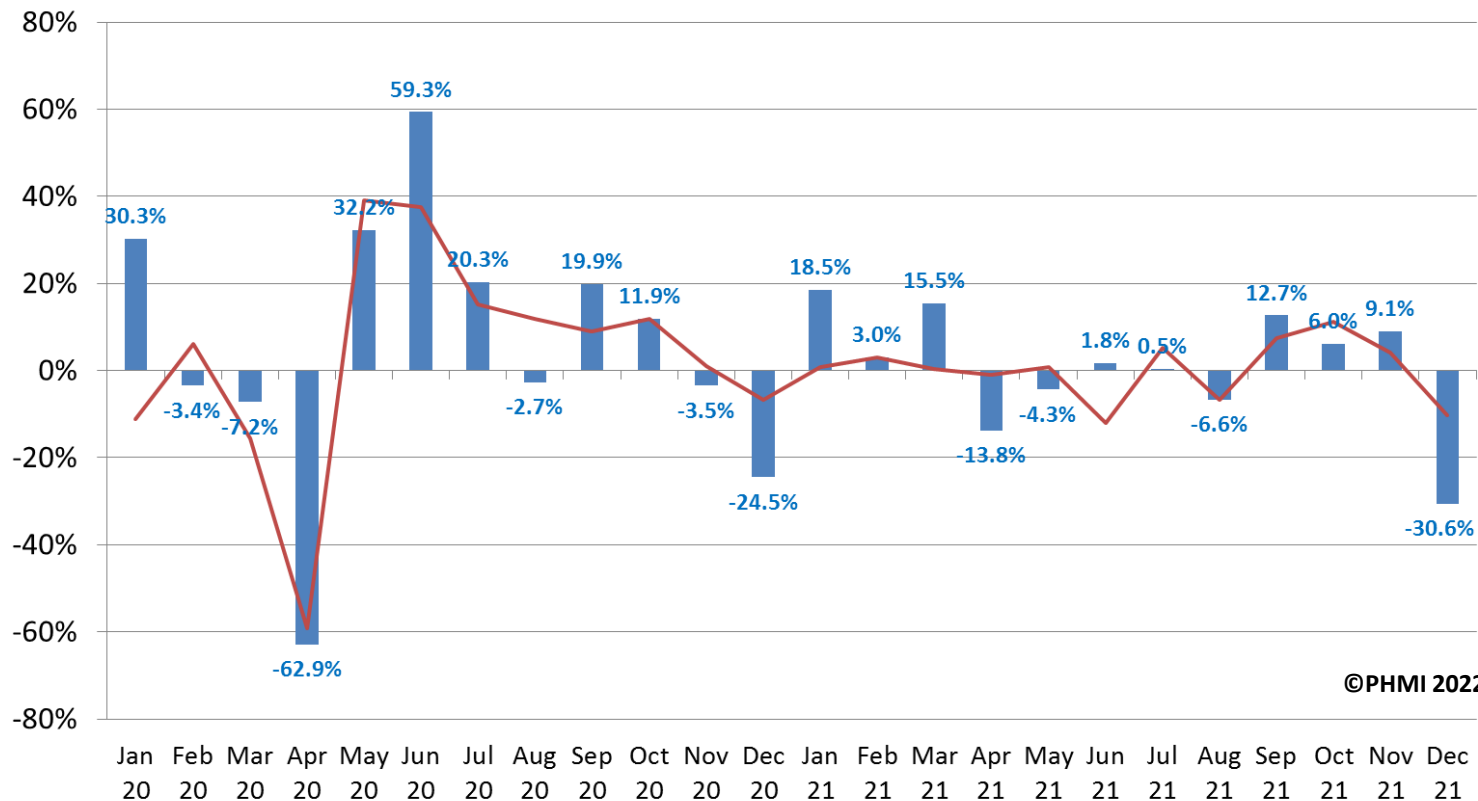
Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



Five less trading days in December 2021 compared with November 2021. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Month v previous month

■ Absolute sales — Like-for-like sales



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Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Five less trading days in December was the main cause of sales being 30.6% lower than in November. However like-for-like sales were also down (-10.2%).

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

Monthly: Index

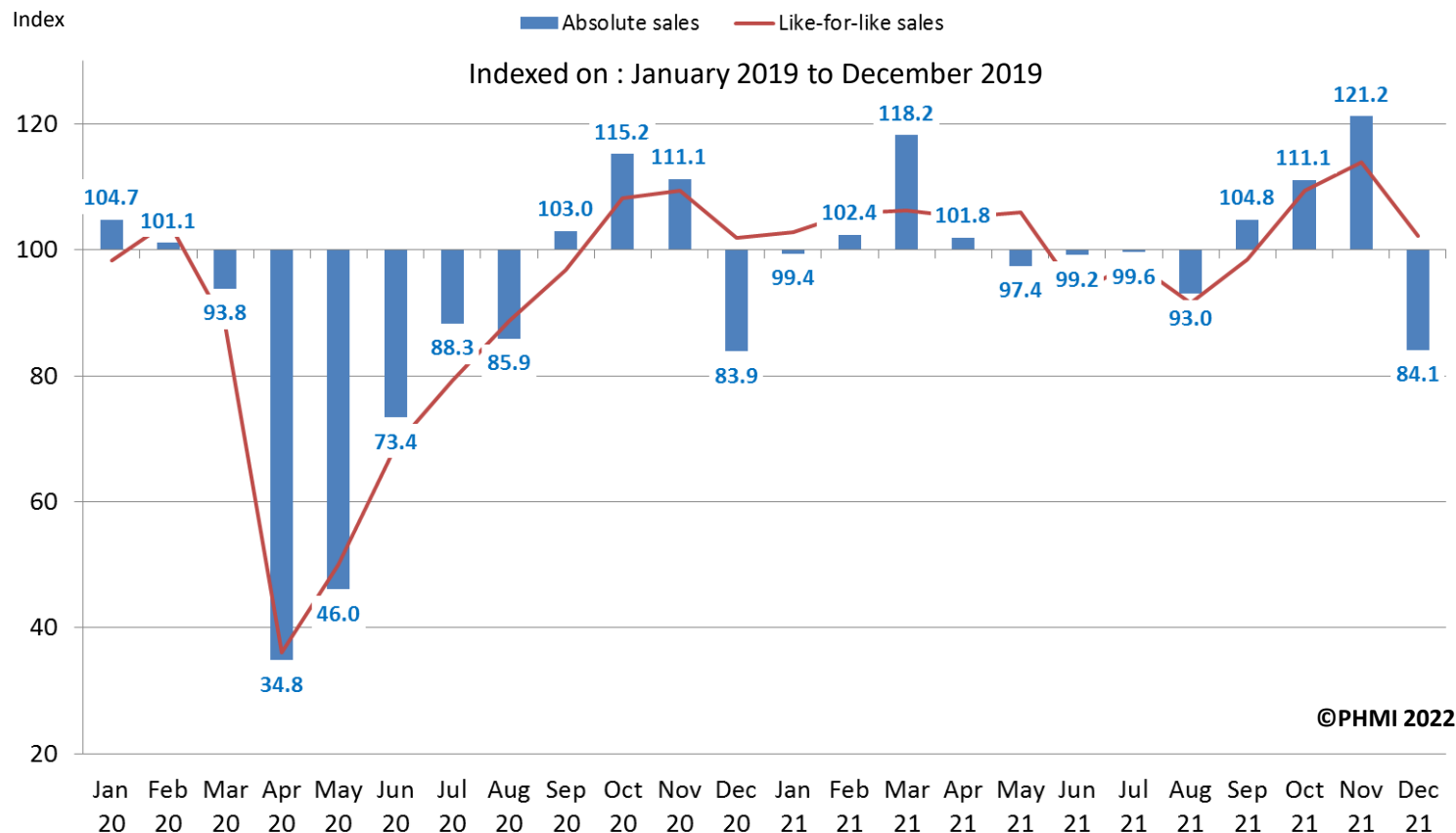
Absolute and like-for-like sales index*

Four less trading days in December 2021 than the Index base period. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



Indices: January 2020 to December 2021



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

December's PHMI Index was lower, due to four less trading days this month. Like-for-like sales exceeded the base period.

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

Rolling 3-months: This year v last year

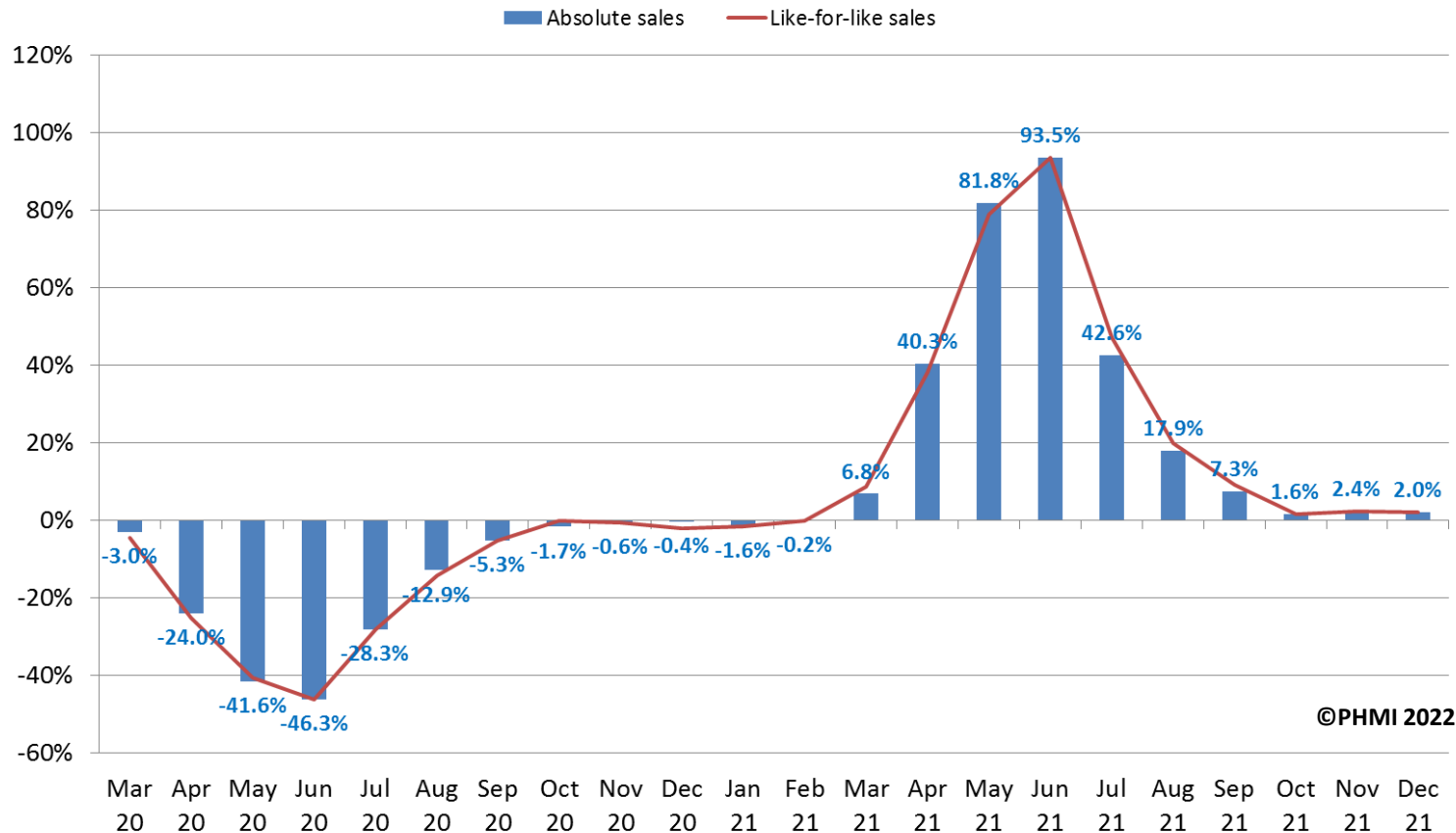
Absolute and like-for-like sales*



Plumbing & Heating
Merchant Index

No difference in trading days in October to December 2021 compared with October to December 2020. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Rolling 3 months: year on year



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Three-monthly growth has stabilised after peaking on the first anniversary of the Covid-19 lockdown. Sales in the three months to December 2021 were 2.0% higher than in 2020.

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

Rolling 3-months: v previous 3 months

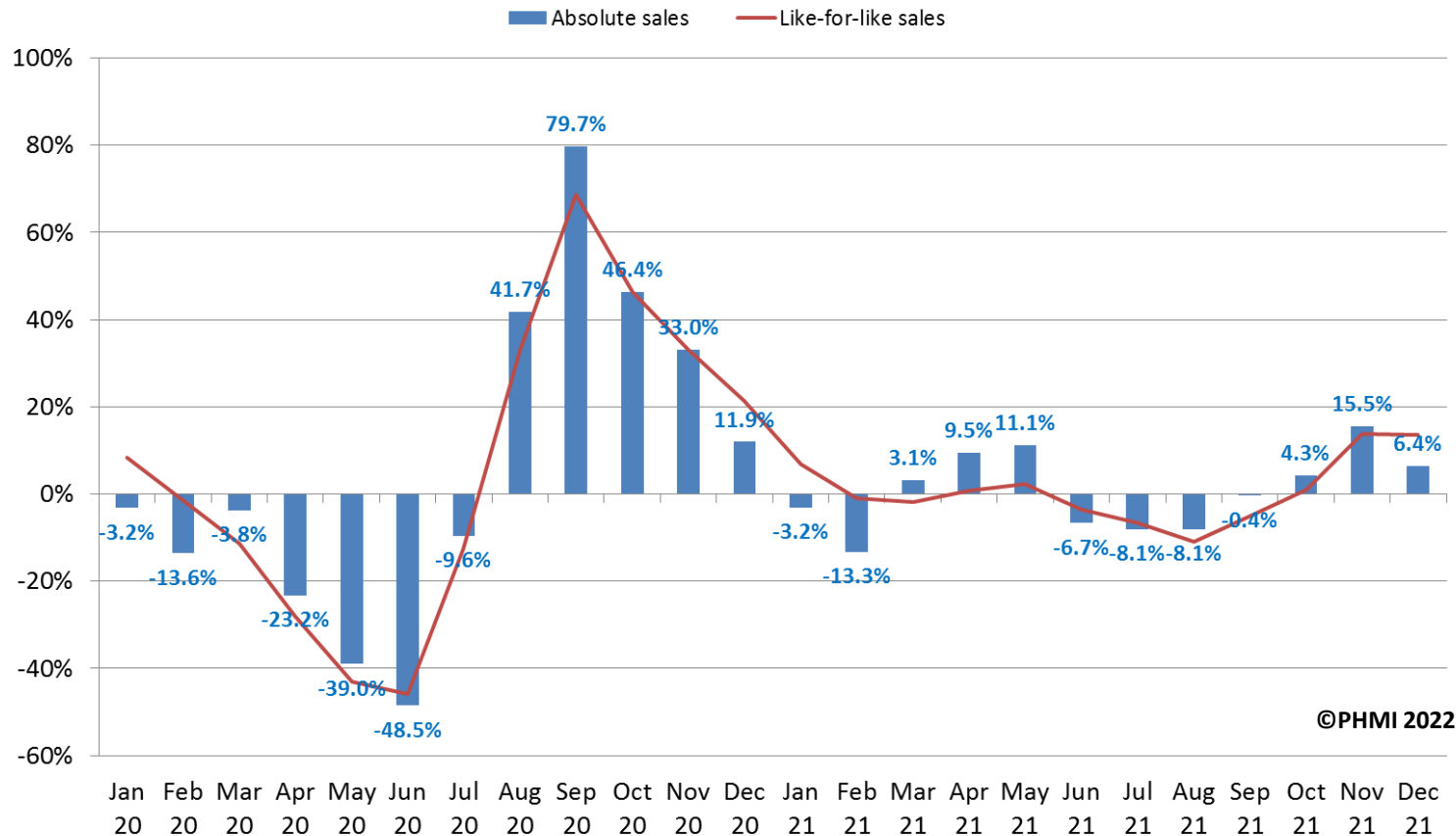
Absolute and like-for-like sales*

Plumbing & Heating
Merchant Index



Four less trading days in October to December 2021 compared with July to September 2021. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Rolling 3 months v previous 3 months



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Sales in the three months October to December 2021 were 6.4% higher than in July to September 2021. The lower growth compared with the three months to November (+15.5%) was down to a difference in trading days.

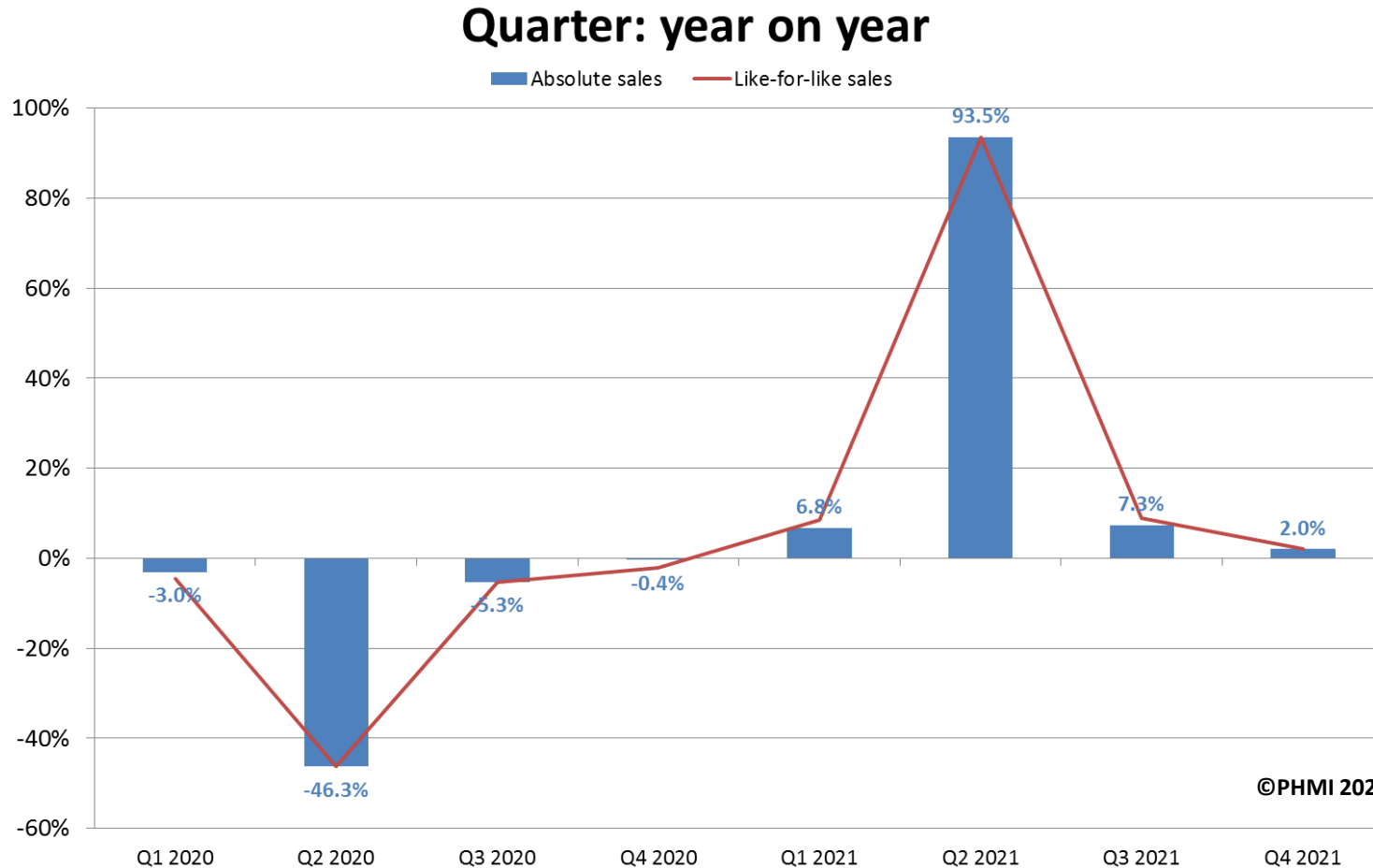
*Some merchants temporarily closed branches between March and May 2020 and this will have affected trading day comparisons.

Quarterly: Year on Year

Absolute and like-for-like sales*



No difference in trading days in Quarter 4 2021 compared with Quarter 4 2020. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Growth in quarter 4 has stabilised after the significant increase in Q2 caused by the first anniversary of the Covid-19 lockdown.

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

Quarterly: Year v 2019

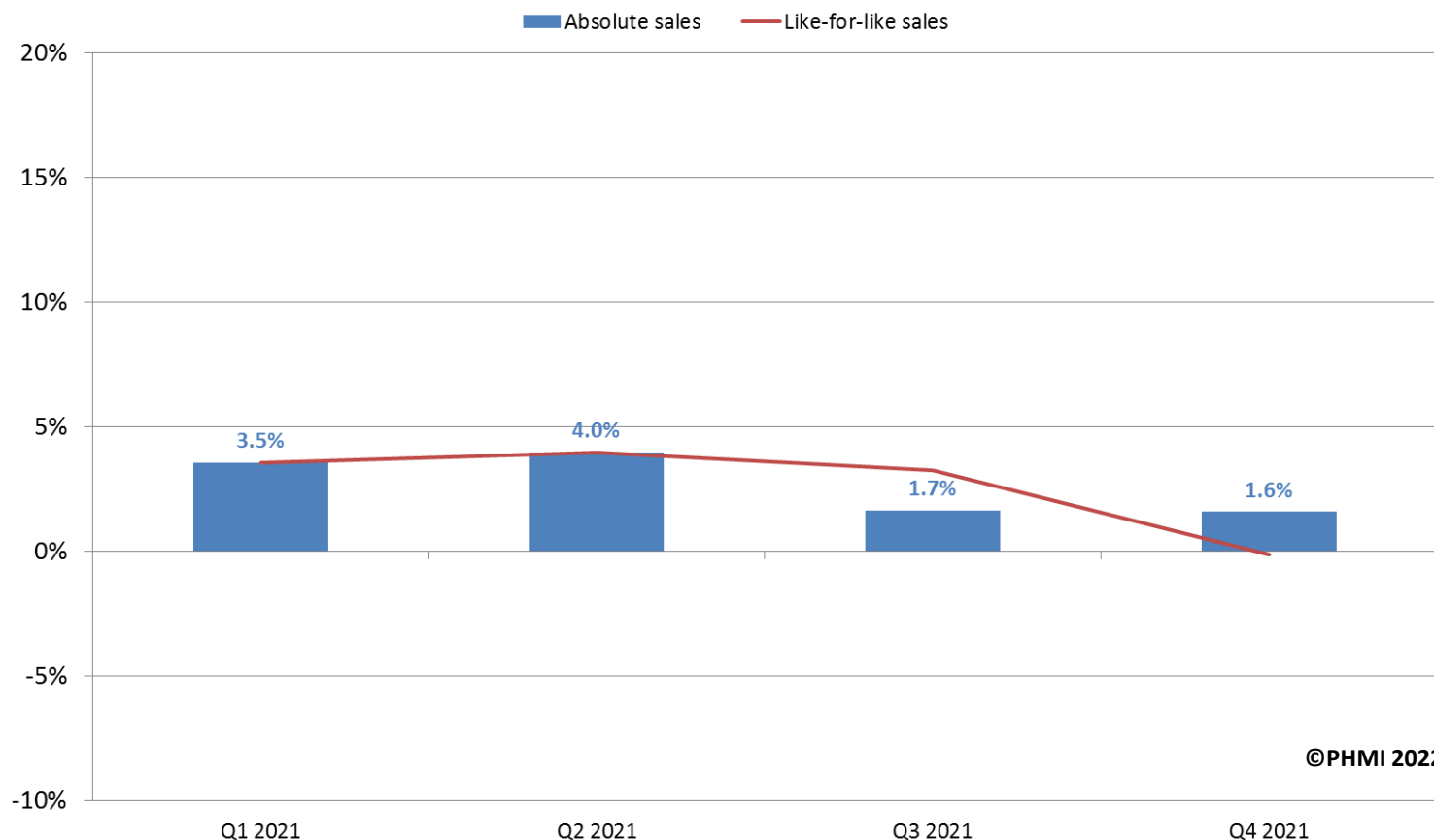
Absolute and like-for-like sales

Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



One more trading day in Quarter 4 2021 compared with Quarter 4 2019. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Quarter: this year v 2 years ago



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Compared with two years ago, sales in Quarter 4 2021 were 1.6% higher than in Quarter 4 2019. However one extra trading day this year meant like-for-like sales were flat (-0.1%).

Quarterly: Quarter v previous quarter

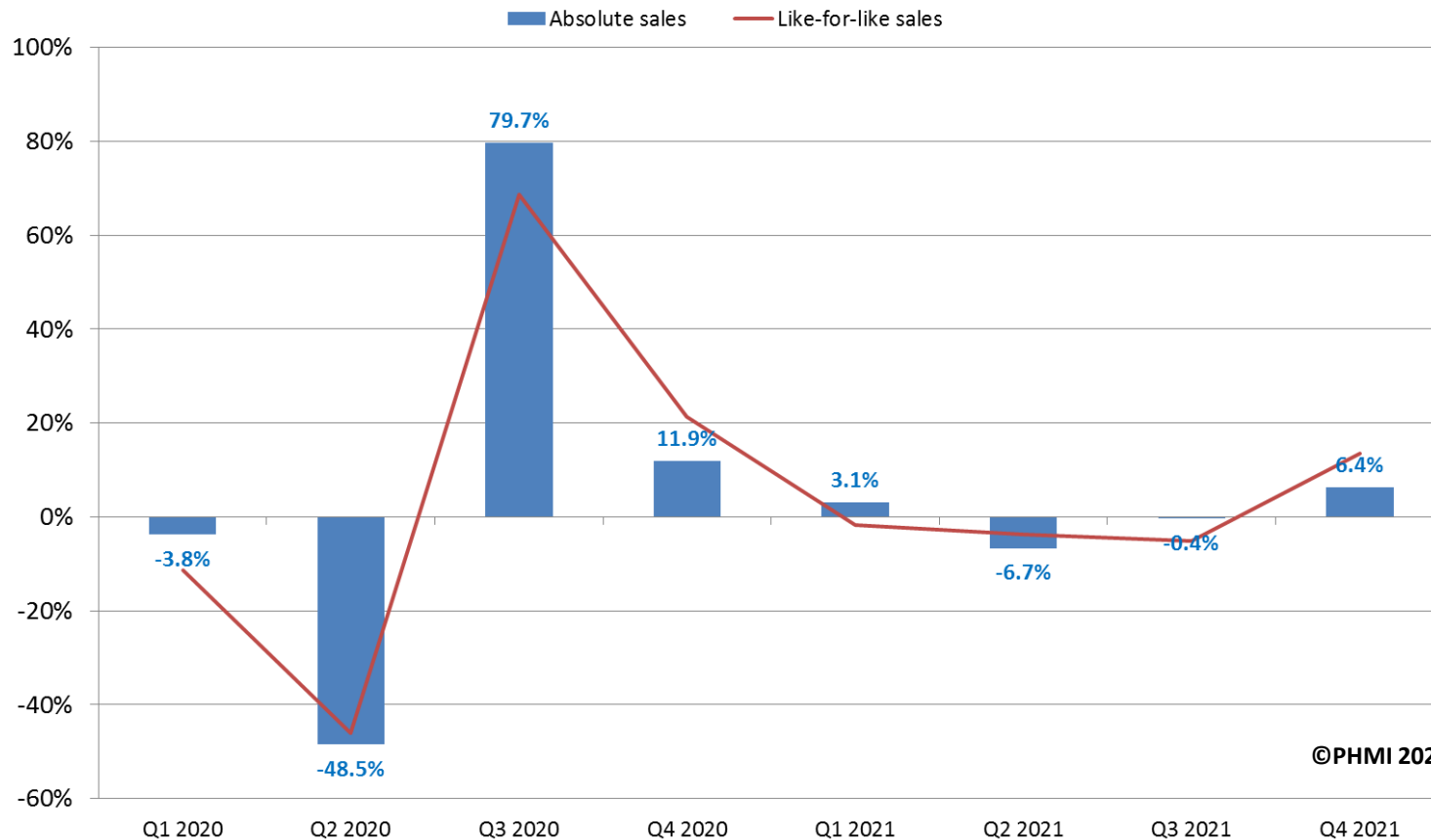
Absolute and like-for-like sales*

Plumbing & Heating Merchant Index



Four less trading days in Quarter 4 2021 compared with Quarter 3 2021. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Quarter v previous quarter



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Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Sales in Quarter 4 were 6.4% higher than in Quarter 3, despite four less trading days in Q4. Like-for-like sales were 13.5% higher.

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

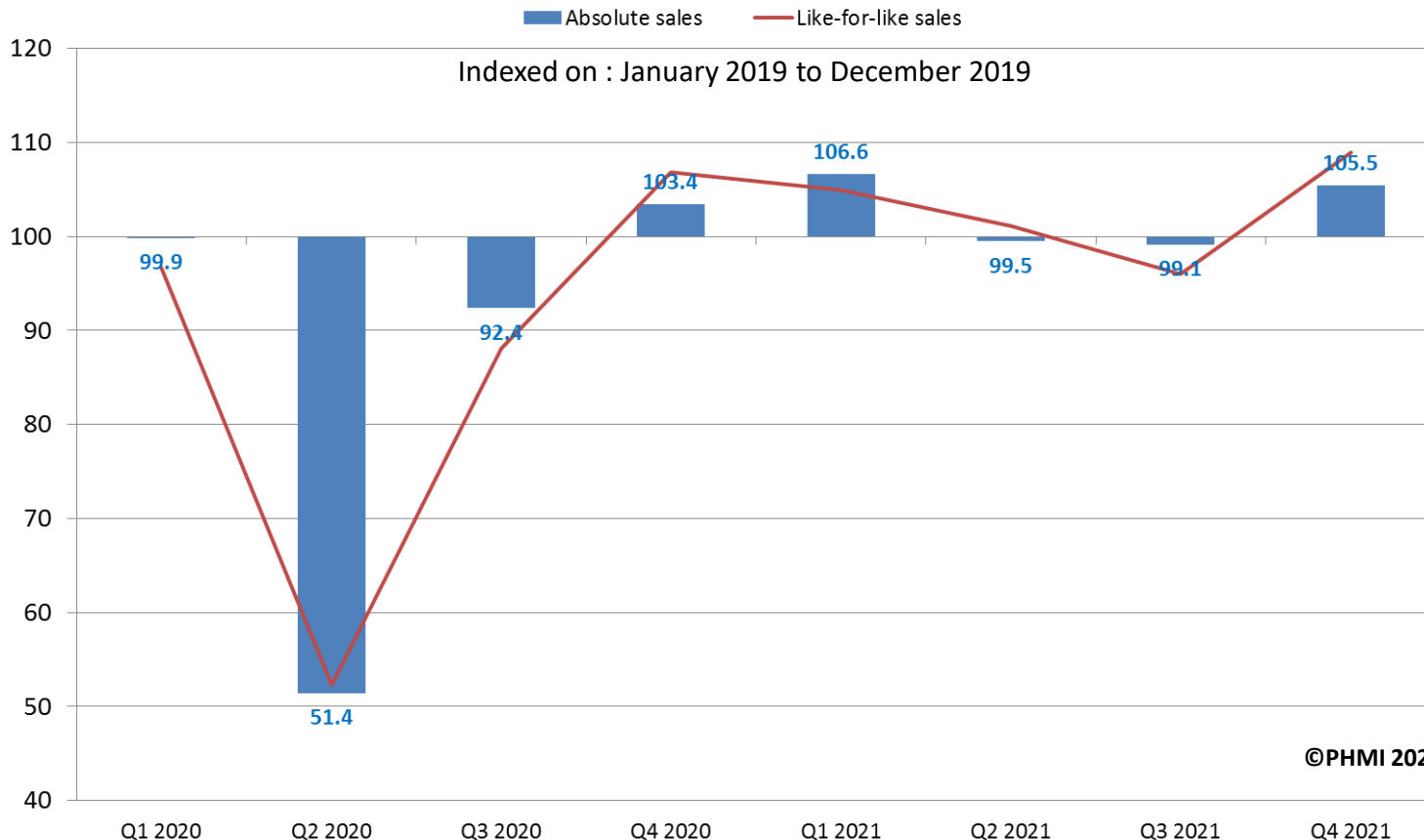
Quarterly: Index

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



Two less trading days in Quarter 4 2021 than the Index base period. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Indices: Q1 2020 to Q4 2021



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

Quarter 4's index
was the second-
highest, only
exceeded by the first
quarter of 2021.

The like-for-like
sales index was the
highest since PHMI
started.

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

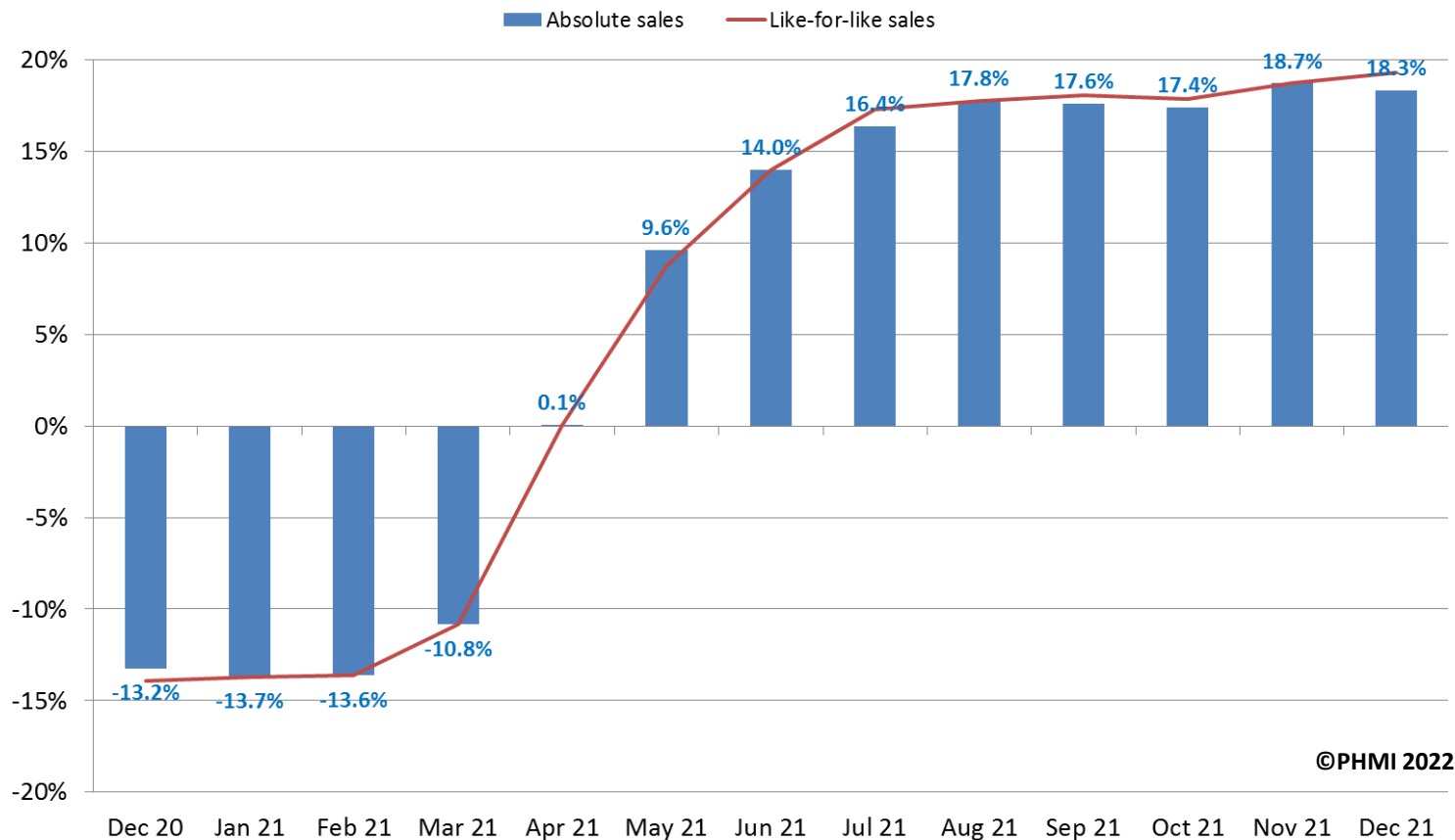
Last 12 months: Year on year

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



Two less trading days in January to December 2021 compared with January to December 2020. Like-for-like sales take trading day differences into account.

Rolling 12 months v previous 12 months



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Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Values shown for
absolute sales

As a whole, 2021 ended 18.3% ahead of Covid-19 affected 2020. With four less trading days this year, like-for-like sales were up 19.3%.

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

PHMI Trading Days



Source: GfK's
Builders Merchants
Total Category Report
January 2019 to December 2021

Monthly Index: 20.7

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 17

Quarterly Index: 62

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

Half Year

2020	
H1 125	H2 125
2021	
H1 124	H2 124

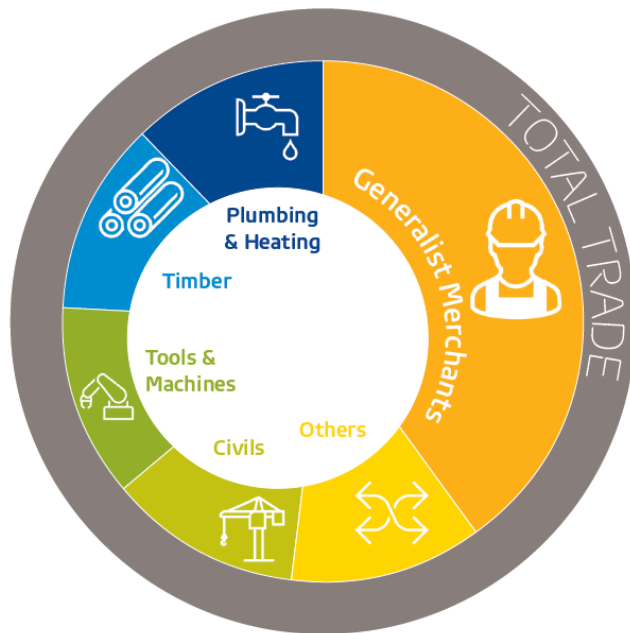
Full Year

2020
250
2021
248

*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



Building the Industry & Building Brands from Knowledge

Plumbing & Heating
Merchant Index



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:



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More data available

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