Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators: 16 April 2020

New data and experimental indicators on the UK economy and society, including information related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Indicators are constructed from rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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16 April 2020

Next release:
23 April 2020

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1 . Other pages in this release

More detailed commentary on the social impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is available on the following page:

- [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 16 April 2020]

2 . Weekly indicators in response to coronavirus

This bulletin contains:

- initial results from wave 2 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020
- results from the new Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey covering the period 27 March to 6 April 2020; these are to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain
- experimental online price indices for several high-demand products (HDPs) for 16 March to 12 April 2020, covering items such as long-life food, health, and household and hygiene products
- weekly and daily shipping data for the UK

3 . Main points

- Of the 5,316 businesses responding to the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS), 25% reported they had temporarily closed or paused trading for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020, while 75% were continuing trading.
- For responding businesses who were still trading, an average of 21% of the workforce had been furloughed (under the terms of the UK government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme) in the period 23 March to 5 April 2020.
- The Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey results show just over half of adults (53.1%) said the coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting their well-being.
- Staying in touch with friends and family remotely is the most common action that is helping people cope with staying at home (76.9%).
- Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket have increased by 1.8% over the period week 3 (30 March to 5 April) to week 4 (6 April to 12 April).
- Daily shipping data shows, up to 11 April 2020 there has been a gradual decrease in daily ship visits to the UK during the past few weeks.

Online price change analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics. The Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey is voluntary and may only reflect the characteristics of those who responded; results are experimental.

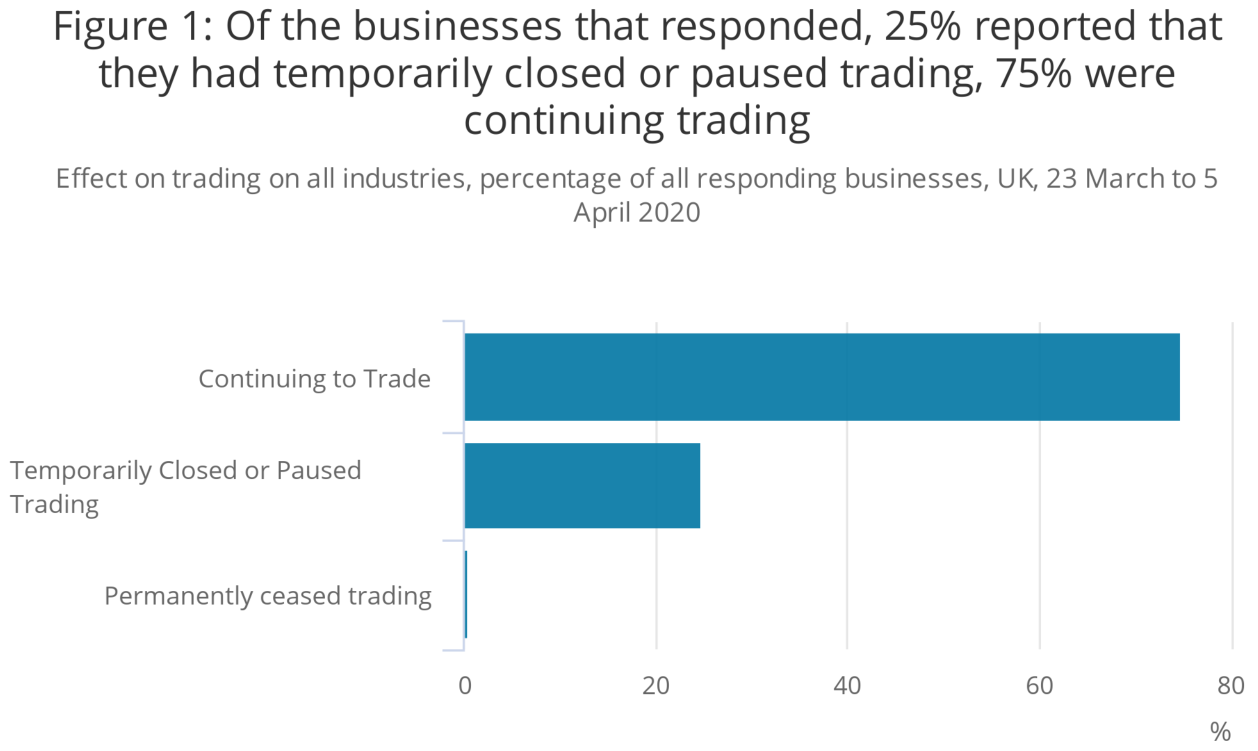
4 . Business impact of the coronavirus

Of 17,786 businesses surveyed by the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) in wave 2, 5,316 (30%) have responded so far for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020.

Financial performance

Figure 1: Of the businesses that responded, 25% reported that they had temporarily closed or paused trading, 75% were continuing trading

Effect on trading on all industries, percentage of all responding businesses, UK, 23 March to 5 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics

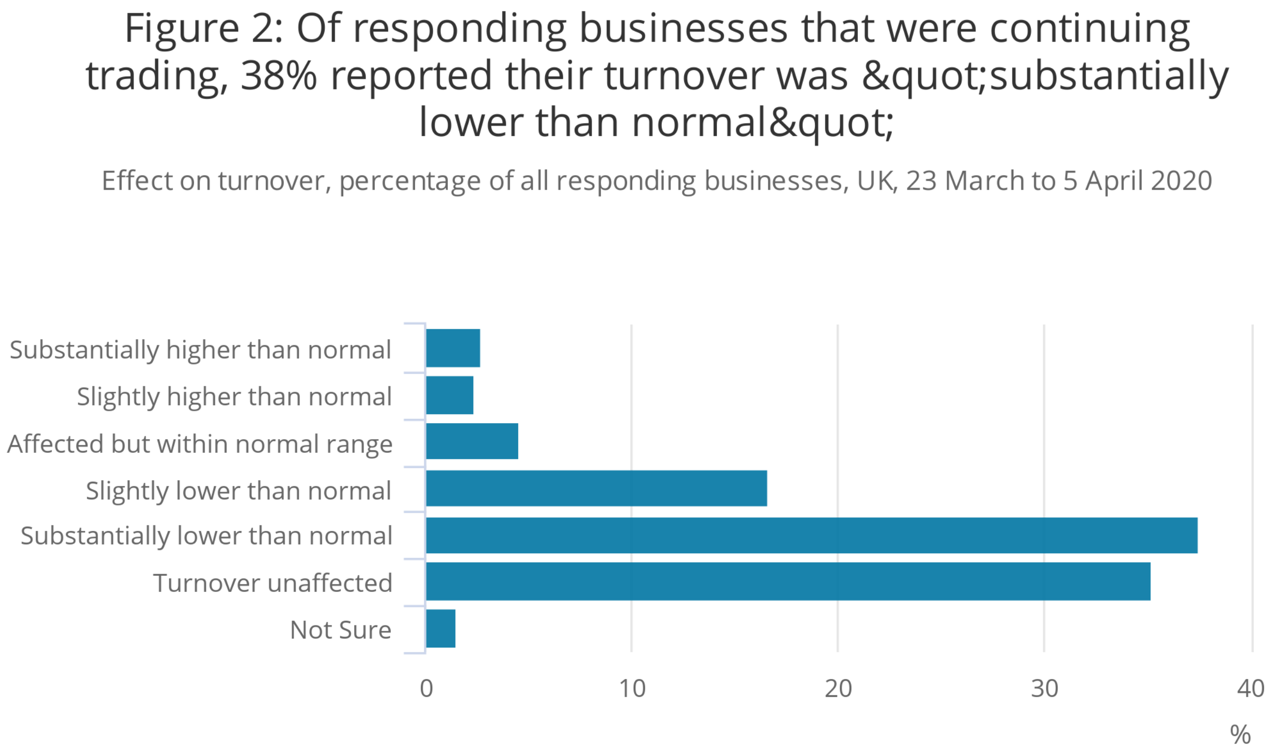
Notes:

1. Of those businesses that responded, 0.4% permanently ceased trading
2. Initial results, wave 2 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (n = 5,316)

Initial results from wave 2 of the BICS show that around a quarter of businesses that responded had temporarily closed or paused trading, while 0.4% permanently ceased trading, for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020. Around 75% reported continuing trading during this period.

Figure 2: Of responding businesses that were continuing trading, 38% reported their turnover was "substantially lower than normal"

Effect on turnover, percentage of all responding businesses, UK, 23 March to 5 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Initial results, wave 2 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (n = 3,977)

2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Initial survey results from wave 2 of the BICS show, of the businesses who had responded and were continuing trading, approximately:

- 38% reported that their turnover was substantially lower than their normal range

- 3% reported their turnover was substantially higher than their normal range

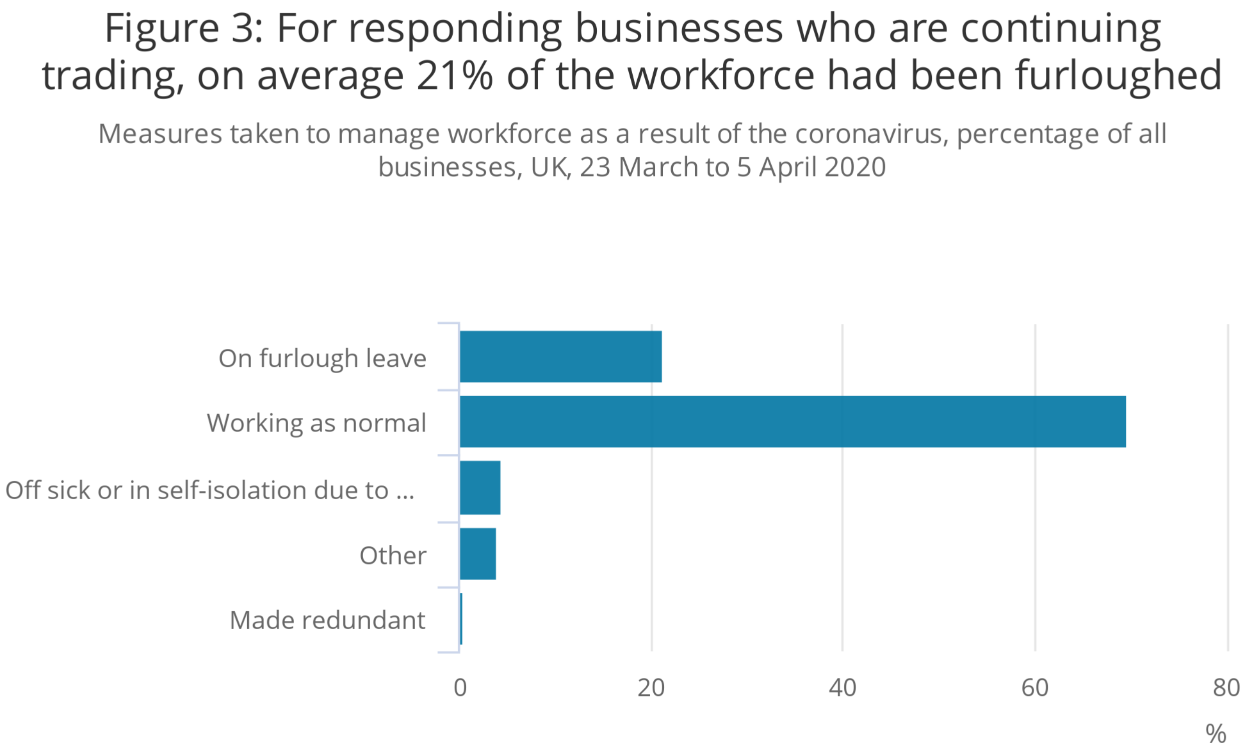
- 5% reported that while their turnover had been affected between the period 23 March to 5 April, it was still within their normal range

Of the affected businesses, 99% of those who reported that their turnover was abnormally affected between this period attributed this to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Workforce

Figure 3: For responding businesses who are continuing trading, on average 21% of the workforce had been furloughed

Measures taken to manage workforce as a result of the coronavirus, percentage of all businesses, UK, 23 March to 5 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- "Other" includes all other effects not defined in the question.
- Initial results, wave 2 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (n = 3,977)

On average, for those businesses who have responded to wave 2 of the BICS and are continuing to trade:

- 21% of the workforce had been furloughed under the terms of the UK government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
- 70% of the workforce were still working as normal for the period between 23 March and 5 April 2020
- 5% of the workforce were off sick or in self-isolation because of the coronavirus

Of those businesses continuing to trade, the survey also asked what measures were being taken to manage their current workforce.

Figure 4: Of businesses who were continuing trading, 41% of businesses who responded said they were reducing staff levels in the short-term

Measures taken to manage workforce as a result of the coronavirus, percentage of all businesses, UK, 23 March to 5 April 2020

Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

- The percentages in this chart will not sum to 100% as businesses were able to select multiple options
- Initial results, wave 2 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey. (n = 3,977)

In terms of the measures taken to manage the workforce as a result of the coronavirus, of businesses continuing to trade who have responded to the BICS so far:

- 41% said they were reducing staff levels in the short-term in the period 23 March to 5 April 2020
- 29% reported having to decrease working hours
- 7% reported that they were recruiting staff in the short-term

Businesses were also asked what arrangements were in place in terms of staff working patterns in the period 23 March to 5 April 2020. Of those businesses continuing to trade, on average:

- 47% of staff were working remotely
- 37% of staff were still working at their normal place of work
- 16% of staff had other arrangements in place between 23 March to 5 April 2020

It should be noted that there is likely overlap in these figures.

5 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

Initial results from the new Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey covering the period 27 March to 6 April 2020; these are to help understand the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Following government guidance to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

Alongside the Stay At Home guidance, official advice is that people should self-isolate if they or someone in their household experiences symptoms related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). These results should not be interpreted as an estimate of those with COVID-19 symptoms or those diagnosed with COVID-19.

Just over 2 in 5 adults (41.2%) said they had self-isolated (stayed at home) in the past seven days. For those aged 70 years and over, this rose to 62.3%, while for those with an underlying health condition (of all ages) it was 57.5%.

Figure 5: Over 70s are most likely to have self-isolated in the past seven days, though there has been a small increase in those aged 16 to 69 years who are self-isolating

Great Britain, 20 March to 30 March 2020 and 27 March 2020 to 6 April 2020

Nearly all adults (96.8%) said they had avoided physical contact (such as shaking hands) with other people, a similar level to last week (94.3%).

An increased proportion of adults in employment said they were working from home this week (45.8%) compared with last week (42.9%). It is not known whether those who said they were not working from home were still working in their usual place of work or if they had stopped working.

This wave of the survey is the first to be wholly collected after the government's [Stay At Home](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others) measures were introduced. This advises everyone to stay in their homes apart from a limited number of reasons such as essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work. The first estimate of the proportion of people following this guidance will be published next week.

Impact on well-being

Just over half of adults (53.1%) said the coronavirus was affecting their well-being, with the most common issue being feeling worried about the future.

Table 1: Indicators of well-being

Indicator	Group	This week (%)	Last week (%)
	All adults	53.1	n/a
Wellbeing is being affected[1]	70+	45.8	n/a
	Underlying health	54.7	n/a
	All adults	5	5.2
Mean anxiety score[2]	70+	4.7	4.8
	Underlying health	4.9	5.4
	All adults	46.9	49.6
Percentage with high anxiety (score 6-10)[2]	70+	42.2	42.8
	Underlying health	45.4	52
	All adults	5.4	6.3
Feeling lonely often/always	70+	1.1	1.9
	Underlying health	11.2	8.4
	All adults	14.7	17.5
Feeling lonely some of the time	70+	10.5	10.8
	Underlying health	14.4	14.8

Source: Office for National Statistics - Opinions and lifestyle survey

Notes

1. Question only asked to respondents that said they were very worried or somewhat worried about the affect Covid-19 is having on their life right now. Back to table

2. On a scale of 0 to 10 how anxious did you feel yesterday? Back to table

Coping whilst staying at home and community support networks

Despite restrictions on physical contact with others, finding a way to stay in touch with friends and family remotely is the most popular action that is helping people cope whilst staying at home. Spending time with members of their household was also an important part of coping during this lockdown period. Leisure activities such as watching films (55.5%), reading (39.2%), gardening (37.6%) and cooking (34.2%) were also popular.

Figure 6: The majority of adults said staying in touch with friends and family is helping them cope

Great Britain, 27 March 2020 to 6 April 2020

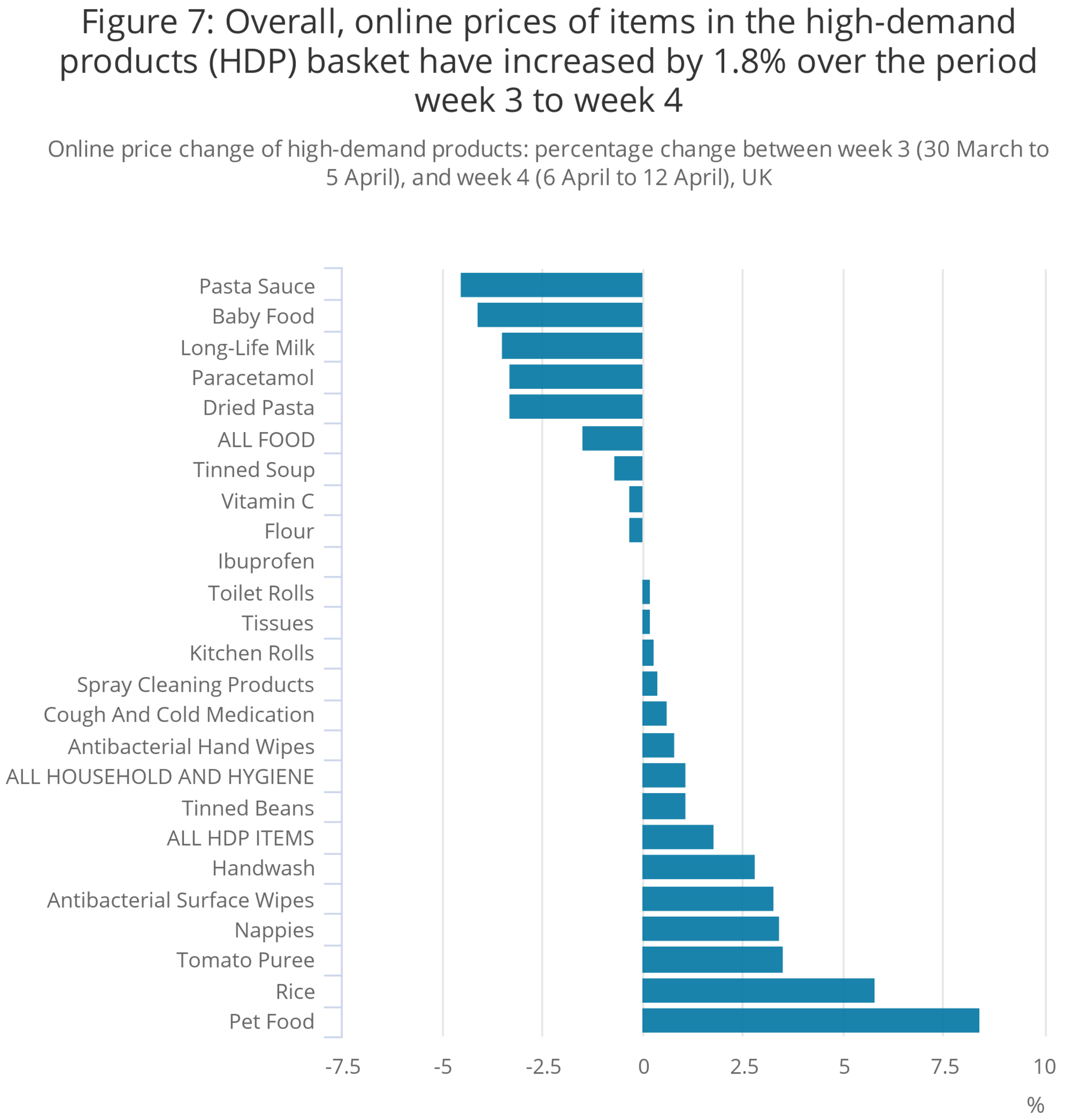
6 . Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

A timely indication of weekly price change for high-demand products (HDP) has been developed, covering the period 16 March to 12 April 2020.

It is not appropriate to compare the experimental online price movements detailed in this release with the headline Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) as CPIH includes a wider range of items and is produced using different methods, data sources and quality thresholds. They should also not be used to pre-empt any future publication of consumer price statistics because of these differences. More information on retailers and items included within the HDP basket is available in the Online price changes for HDPs methodology. This article also includes details on the methods and data sources used for these price indices.

Figure 7: Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDP) basket have increased by 1.8% over the period week 3 to week 4

Online price change of high-demand products: percentage change between week 3 (30 March to 5 April), and week 4 (6 April to 12 April), UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

These statistics are experimental, and should not be used instead of official statistics.

Prices for the HDP basket increased by 1.8% from 30 March to 5 April (week 3) to 6 April to 12 April (week 4) with prices for all long-life food items decreasing by 1.5% and all household and hygiene items increasing by 1.1%. At a more detailed level, prices for pet food and rice rose by 8.4% and 5.8% respectively, while prices of pasta sauce fell by 4.5% (note that the size of the sample means that sometimes single retailers can contribute to substantial movements at the item level).

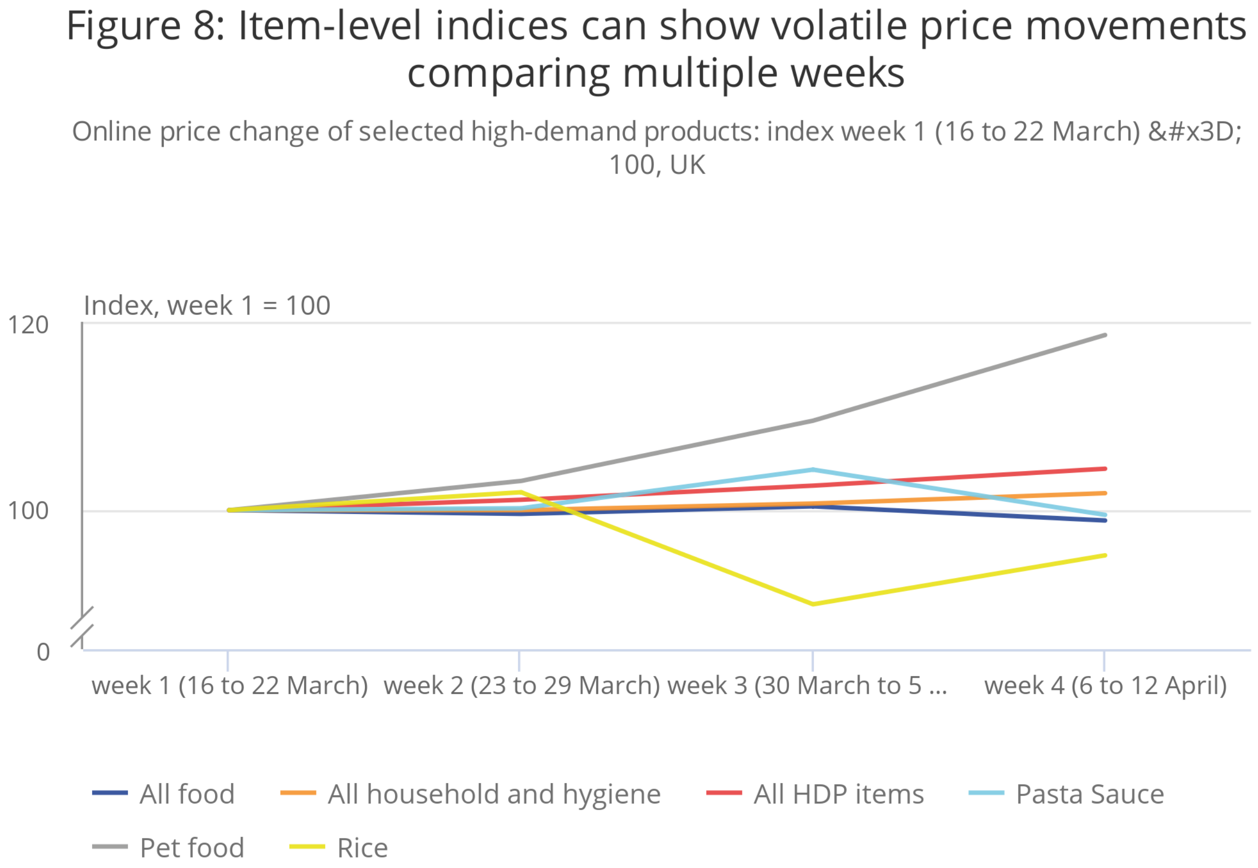
Figure 8 presents price movements for these aggregate indices and selected items. Movements in the all HDP items index show a stable increase over time, with an increase of 4.4% since week 1. Pet food has a high weight in the all HDP items basket and is one of the main drivers of this change.

In contrast, the movement for food items included in the HDP basket fluctuates around the “no change” mark over the period. Prices have fallen by 1.1% for week 4 (compared with week 1), compared with an increase of 0.4% for week 3 (compared with week 1).

Some item movements can be more volatile. For example, prices for rice fell by 11.7% from week 2 to week 3 but rose by 5.8% from week 3 to week 4 (Figure 8), resulting in an overall price fall from week 1 to week 4 of 4.8%.

Figure 8: Item-level indices can show volatile price movements comparing multiple weeks

Online price change of selected high-demand products: index week 1 (16 to 22 March) = 100, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

These statistics are experimental, and should not be used instead of official statistics.

7 . Shipping indicators

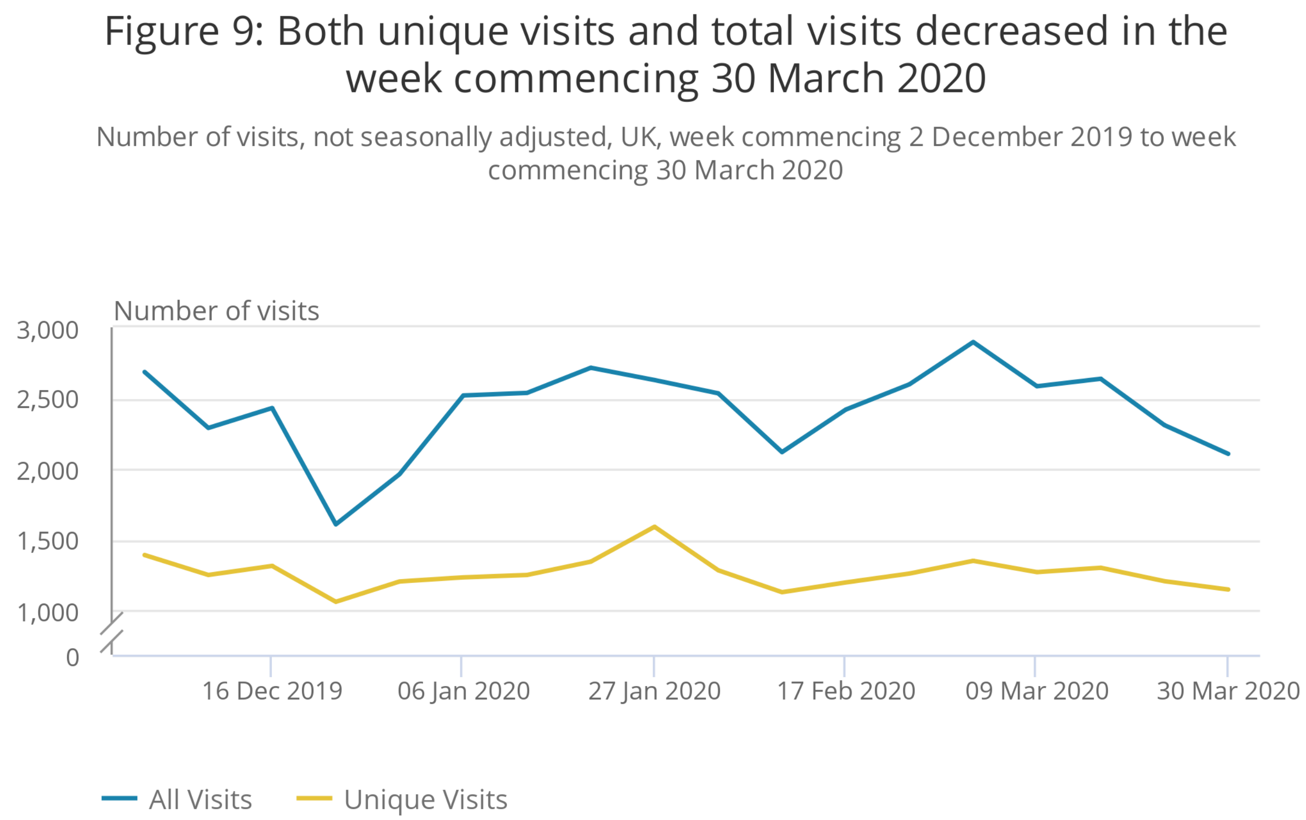
This section discusses the shipping indicators based on counts of all vessels, cargos and tankers up to the week commencing 30 March 2020 for weekly data, and up to 11 April 2020 for daily data.

Following a review, we have changed the source of these data and improved the methodology used to produce them. We aim to increase the length of all time series in future releases.

As discussed in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](), we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

Figure 9: Both unique visits and total visits decreased in the week commencing 30 March 2020

Number of visits, not seasonally adjusted, UK, week commencing 2 December 2019 to week commencing 30 March 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics

In the week commencing 30 March 2020, the number of unique visits to UK ports fell by 4.9%. Total visits to UK ports decreased by 8.8% in the same period.

We have now started to include daily shipping indicators for the ship visits. We will look to include more daily data in future releases.

Figure 10: There has been a gradual decrease in daily ship visits to major ports in the UK during the past few weeks

Daily movements in shipping visits, not seasonally adjusted, UK, 14 February 2020 to 11 April 2020

Source: Office for National Statistics

These data are available up to 11 April 2020, showing UK total visits for all ships.

8 . Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators data

[Weekly shipping indicators](#)
Dataset | Released 16 April 2020
The weekly shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

9 . Glossary

Faster indicator

A faster indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or experimental statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

High-demand product (HDP) basket

A HDP basket means everyday essential items that currently have a high consumer demand, including items from food, health and hygiene categories. The selection of these items was based on anecdotal evidence on patterns of consumer spend. The basket does not cover all items within these categories.

Underlying health condition

This refers to any medical condition a person suffers with on a daily basis that, when faced with another medical condition (such as coronavirus (COVID-19), could cause their symptoms to worsen. Specific conditions include alzheimer's disease or dementia, angina or long-term heart problem, asthma, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or asperger's (Asperger syndrome), cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or long-term lung problem, diabetes, epilepsy or other conditions that affect the brain, high blood pressure, kidney or liver disease, stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis and rheumatoid arthritis.

10 . Measuring the data

Shipping

These weekly faster shipping indicators data are created through new experimental methods and are not official statistics. More quality and methodology information is available in Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping.

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Table 2: Business impacts of coronavirus survey sample, returns and response rates for each release

	2 April 2020 Publication	**9 April 2020 Publication**	**16 April 2020 Publication**
Wave	**Wave 1**	**Wave 1**	**Wave 2**
Sample	17786	17786	17786
Return	3642	4598	5316
Rate	20.5%	25.9%	29.9%

Source: Office for National Statistics

The business indicators are based on responses from the voluntary, fortnightly Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey, which captures business' views on impact on turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience. These data relate to the period 23 March 2020 to 5 April 2020. The survey questions are available in Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey questions: 23 March 2020 to 5 April 2020 .

Sample size and weighting

Estimates from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) are currently unweighted and should be treated with caution when used to evaluate the impact of the coronavirus across the UK economy. Each business was assigned the same weight regardless of turnover, size or industry, and the data in the latest period are preliminary.

Caution should be taken when evaluating the impact of measures introduced on 20 March 2020 as the current survey asks businesses for responses for the entire two-week time period.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

Prices were scraped daily from several large online UK retailers (typically supermarkets and other prominent high-street chains with an online presence) from 16 March to 12 April 2020 for selected items chosen to form the HDP basket (see Table 1 in the online price changes for HDPs methodology). An average weekly price was then calculated for each unique product and a GEKS-Jevons index was calculated.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the Online price changes of high-demand products methodology.

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) (OPN)

Data on the social impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on Great Britain were collected from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) and the Labour Market Survey (LMS). The data related to the period 27 March to 6 April 2020. In this first wave, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 78.7% (or 1,581 individuals) for the survey.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the OPN Survey is available in the “Strengths and limitations” section of the Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain bulletin.

11 . Strengths and limitations

Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey

The Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) is voluntary and responses are qualitative, which should be treated with caution as results reflect the characteristics of those who responded and not necessarily the wider business population.

These data should not be used in place of official statistics. The survey was designed to give an indication of the impact of the coronavirus on businesses and a timelier estimate than other surveys.

The data from wave 2 of the new fortnightly BICS covers the period 23 March to 5 April 2020, across all business sectors covered by the Monthly Business Survey (including Retail Sales Index and construction).

We do not recommend comparison between the latest data from BICS and the last period (9 March to 22 March 2020) because of changes in the questionnaire and additional questions. Further analysis is currently being undertaken to allow this for future publications.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDP)

These experimental online price changes data should not be compared with the headline Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers’ housing costs (CPIH). The CPIH is produced using different methods, data and quality thresholds, and incorporates a broader range of goods and services, such as housing.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the [Online price changes of high-demand products methodology].

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) (OPN)

More information on the strengths and limitations of the Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey is available in the “Strengths and limitations” section of the Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain bulletin.

Publication of coronavirus (COVID-19) related data

We will be publishing this faster indicator bulletin on a weekly basis during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is to ensure we are meeting user needs for more timely data. We will be adding new data and experimental indicators as and when data become available each week.

This publication will include regular updated data from the new fortnightly survey, BICS, online prices for HDPs, and weekly indicators from the OPN survey on social impact of COVID-19.

12 . Related links

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest data and analysis
Web page | Updated as and when data become available
Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) questions: 23 March 2020 to 5 April 2020
Article | Released on 16 April 2020
Questions from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey for the period 23 March to 5 April 2020 relating to the Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators weekly bulletin.

Rapid review of coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators
Webpage | Released on 9 April 2020
Letter from Ed Humpherson, the Director General for Regulation at the UK Statistics Authority, endorsing the ONS’s new experimental faster indicators.

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 3 April 2020
Bulletin | Released 14 April 2020
Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.