

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 4 June 2020

Early experimental data on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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Next release:
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1 . Other pages in this release

More detailed commentary on the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the UK economy and society is available in the following pages:

- [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 4 June 2020](#)

2 . Main points

- 42% of businesses responding to the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) had less than six months of cash reserves, while 79% had applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).
- Of businesses that had temporarily paused trading between 4 and 17 May 2020, the manufacturing and construction industries had the highest proportion of businesses expecting to restart in the two weeks following responding to the survey, at 36% and 35% respectively.
- Of businesses that intend to start trading again in the next two weeks, 99% plan to put some safety measures in place, such as social distancing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- During the period 28 May to 31 May 2020, 13% of adults had isolated in the past seven days, the lowest figure since the survey began in late March.
- Online job adverts declined by more than 50% between 6 March and 29 May 2020 but appear to have levelled off in recent weeks.
- The overall price index for high-demand products (HDPs) has seen its fifth consecutive week of decline, bringing it to just 0.2% higher than its price level in week 1 (16 to 22 March 2020).
- There was an average of 341 daily ship visits during the period 25 May to 31 May 2020, the highest rolling average since 23 March.
- New declarations for Universal Credit and new claim advances have both gradually declined in the period to 26 May 2020, following peaks on 27 March and 6 April 2020, respectively.

Online price change analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics. The Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey (BICS) is voluntary and currently unweighted, so it may only reflect the characteristics of those who responded. Results presented are experimental.

3 . Indicators included in this release

This bulletin contains:

- final results from Wave 5 of the [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#) of UK businesses for the period 4 May to 17 May 2020
- final results from Wave 11 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), covering the period 28 May to 31 May 2020 exploring the [social impact of the coronavirus on individuals in Great Britain](#)
- [experimental online job advert indices](#) covering the UK job market for 1 January 2019 to 29 May 2020 using data from job advert aggregating website Adzuna
- [experimental online price indices](#) for high-demand products (HDPs) for 16 March to 31 May 2020
- [weekly shipping data](#) for the UK up to the week commencing 25 May 2020 and daily shipping data up to 31 May 2020
- weekly management information on [Universal Credit declarations \(claims\) and advances](#) for reference period 1 March to 26 May 2020 (see [Section 9 on Universal Credit](#)); this information is published every Tuesday by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and will continue to be updated until at least the end of June

We will add new [experimental](#) data and indices as and when new data become available and list them in this section.

This release does not contain data on the number of deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19). Our [weekly deaths bulletin](#) and [accompanying dataset](#) provides the most up-to-date figures on deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales.

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we're [working safely during the pandemic](#).

4 . Business impact of the coronavirus

This section presents final results from Wave 5 of the [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#) collected between 18 May and 31 May 2020 for reference period 4 May to 17 May 2020 (questions referring to future expectations are relative to the time each business completes their questionnaire). Out of 20,566 businesses in the UK sampled, 31% had responded as of 31 May 2020.

Figure 1: 79% of responding businesses¹ had applied for the CJRS and 28% of the workforce had been furloughed², while 42% of responding businesses had less than six months of cash reserves

Headline indicators from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey, UK, 4 May to 17 May 2020

Notes:

1. Of responding businesses not having permanently ceased trading.
2. Proportion of responding business not having permanently ceased trading, when apportioned by workforce size.
3. Final results, Wave 5 of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) (Response rate = 31%).
4. Businesses were asked for their experiences of furloughing staff for the reference period 4 May to 17 May 2020, but for questions regarding future expectations businesses may respond relative to the point of completing their questionnaire (responses collected 18 May to 31 May 2020).
5. All percentages are a proportion of the number of businesses that responded apart from the percentages on furlough leave, which are a proportion of the workforce apportioned by workforce size.

Download this chart

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Figure 1 shows that overall, 42% of responding businesses had less than six months of cash reserves, rising to 57% for businesses that had temporarily paused trading. This compared with 39% of businesses continuing to trade. Overall, 4% of responding businesses reported that they had no cash reserves; this rose to 8% for businesses that had paused trading.

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) was the most popular government support scheme, with 79% of all responding businesses applying. Of businesses who responded, 28% of the workforce had been furloughed. Of responding businesses that had not permanently ceased trading, 17% applied for business grants funded by the UK and devolved governments, while 16% applied for government-backed accredited loans or finance agreements.

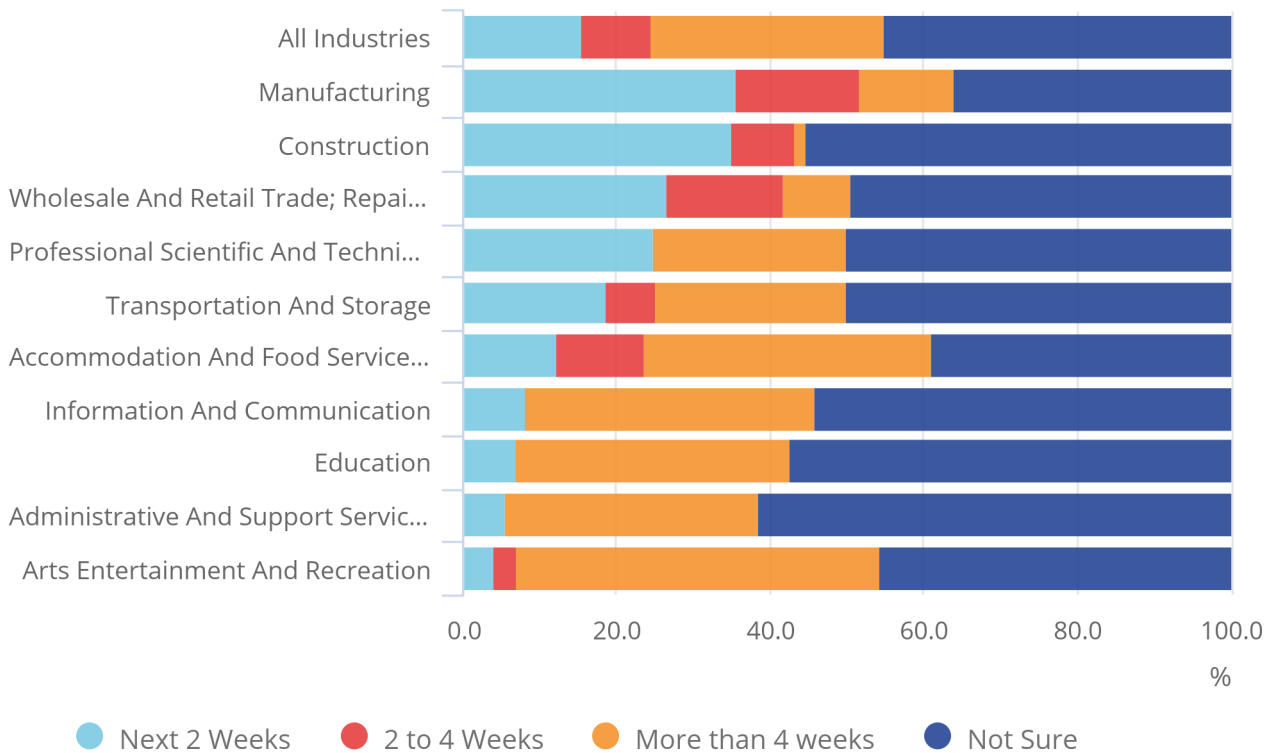
Some businesses that temporarily ceased trading are reopening. Of businesses that responded as trading between 4 and 17 May 2020, 8% said they had started trading again in the two weeks prior. Businesses that had temporarily closed or paused trading were also asked when they expect to restart trading.

Figure 2: Manufacturing and construction had the highest proportion of businesses expecting to restart trading in the two weeks following responding to the survey

Intentions to restart trading for businesses temporarily closed or paused trading, broken down by industry, UK, 4 May to 17 May 2020

Figure 2: Manufacturing and construction had the highest proportion of businesses expecting to restart trading in the two weeks following responding to the survey

Intentions to restart trading for businesses temporarily closed or paused trading, broken down by industry, UK, 4 May to 17 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Final results, Wave 5 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); the percentages in this chart relate to the businesses that had temporarily closed or paused trading during this period.
2. Estimates for five industries (Other Services; Mining and Quarrying; Real Estate Activities; Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities; and Human Health and Social Work Activities) are not shown either for disclosure purposes or because of small sample sizes, but their totals are included in "All industries".
3. Responses to the survey were collected up to 31 May 2020, of which 5% were received after the announcement by the UK government on 26 May that non-essential retailers in England could begin reopening from 15 June. For the 5% of businesses that replied to the survey between 27 May and 31 May 2020, the announcement may have impacted on their intentions to restart trading. Of the business responding from 27 May, 12% reported having temporarily paused trading and of those, 36% indicated they intend to restart trading in the next two to four weeks.

Of all businesses that had paused trading, 25% reported they expect to restart trading within the next four weeks, 30% intend to restart trading in more than four weeks, and 45% were not sure.

The manufacturing, construction and wholesale and retail trade sectors were the top three industries reporting the largest percentage of businesses that have currently paused trading indicating they expect to restart trading in the next two weeks, at 36%, 35% and 27% between 4 and 17 May 2020.

Of the temporarily closed businesses, 16% reported they are intending to restart trading in the next two weeks; 33% of the workforce in these businesses are expected to return from furlough while 12% are expected to return from remote working (note, businesses reporting they have paused trade may have had skeleton staff working during the temporary closure).

Of businesses that have temporarily closed more than two weeks ago and intend to start trading again, 99% reported intending to implement some safety measures, such as social distancing measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). More detailed information, including an industry breakdown of these data, can be found in the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 4 June 2020](#) release.

5 . Social impacts of the coronavirus on Great Britain

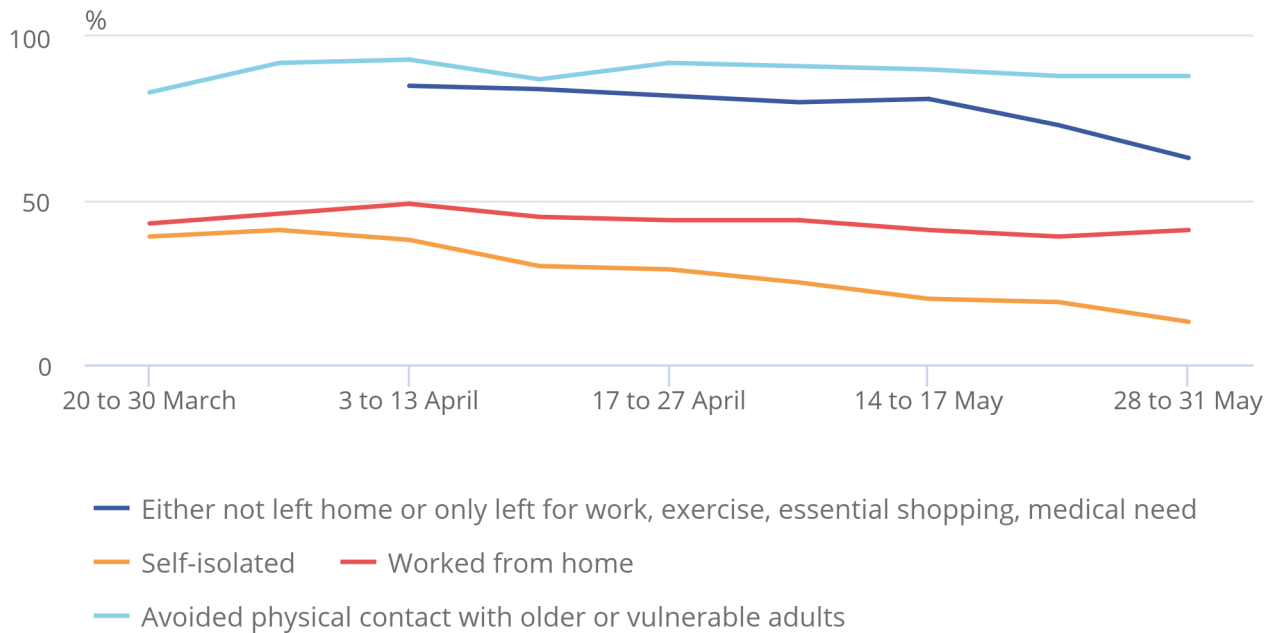
This section includes headline results from Wave 11 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 28 May to 31 May 2020. The full results will be published in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) on 5 June 2020.

Figure 3: 13% of adults had isolated in the past seven days, the lowest since data started being collected in March

Proportion of adults, Great Britain, 20 March to 31 May 2020

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Proportion of adults, Great Britain, 20 March to 31 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Questions: In the past seven days, have you avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?; In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?
2. Full response categories for reasons to leave home were: Travelling to and from work; For exercise, for example a run, walk or cycle; Shopping for basic necessities; and Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person. It does not include leaving for social reasons, which was permitted in England during the reference period.
3. Base population for Work from home series: adults who had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; or did any casual work for payment; or did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

6 . Online job adverts

These figures use job adverts provided by [Adzuna](https://www.adzuna.com), an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour.

These estimates are [experimental](#) and will be developed over the coming weeks. More details on the methodology can be found in [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies](#), and the full series are available in the [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

Figure 4: Total online job vacancies declined by more than 50% from 6 March to 29 May 2020

Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 29 May 2020: index 2019 average = 100

Notes:

1. The observations were collected on a roughly weekly basis; however, they were not all observed at the same point in each week, leading to slightly irregular gaps between each observation.
2. These series have a small number of missing weeks, mostly in late 2019, and the latest is in January 2020. These values have been imputed using linear interpolation. The data points that have been imputed are clearly marked in the [accompanying dataset](#).
3. The figure for total adverts in Education on 21 March 2019 was anomalous and has been replaced with an imputed value.

Download this chart

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The total number of online job adverts was relatively stable from the start of 2019 until the beginning of March 2020, after which it began to decline rapidly. This decline continued for two months, with total job adverts levelling off to 45.1% of its 2019 average on 29 May 2020.

The categories of catering and hospitality, and wholesale and retail, both saw very large declines in job adverts from the beginning of March 2020, which has stabilised to 21.0% and 24.2% of their 2019 averages on 29 May 2020, respectively. Education saw a smaller decline from the beginning of March, which has stabilised to 77% of its 2019 average on 29 May. In contrast, the volume of job adverts in health and social care saw little or no change from March to May, remaining at 99.6% of its 2019 average on 29 May 2020.

The "Education", "Healthcare / Social Care" (aggregated from Healthcare and Social Care), "Retail/Wholesale" and "Catering/Hospitality" categories were selected because they are likely to be of particular interest to users and more closely track trends in Office for National Statistics (ONS) vacancies data. Further category breakdowns not presented here are included in the [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

The Institute for Employment Studies are also using Adzuna data to produce weekly vacancy indicators, and [more granular breakdowns of these data can found in their release](#).

7 . Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

A timely indication of weekly price change for high-demand products (HDPs) has been developed, covering the period 16 March to 31 May 2020. This analysis is [experimental](#) and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics.

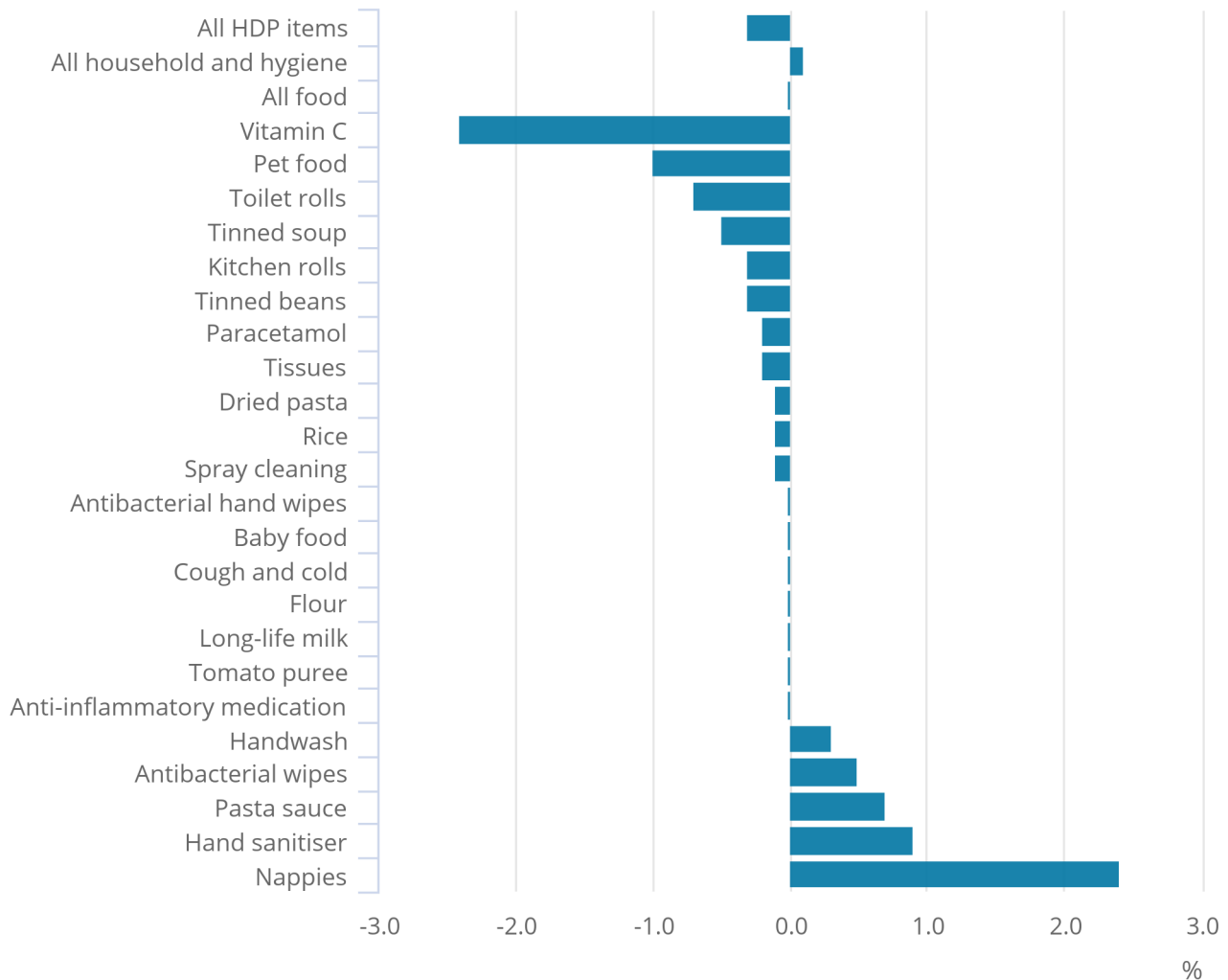
As experimental indices, these data are subject to revisions as we develop our methodology and systems. This week we have made some further refinements to the methodology, resulting in some revisions to the historical series.

Figure 5: Overall, the prices of items in the HDP basket have decreased by 0.3% between week 10 and week 11

Online price change of high-demand products, UK, percentage change between Week 10 (18 May to 24 May 2020) and Week 11 (25 May to 31 May 2020)

Figure 5: Overall, the prices of items in the HDP basket have decreased by 0.3% between week 10 and week 11

Online price change of high-demand products, UK, percentage change between Week 10 (18 May to 24 May 2020) and Week 11 (25 May to 31 May 2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics – Faster indicators

Notes:

1. 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 article](#).

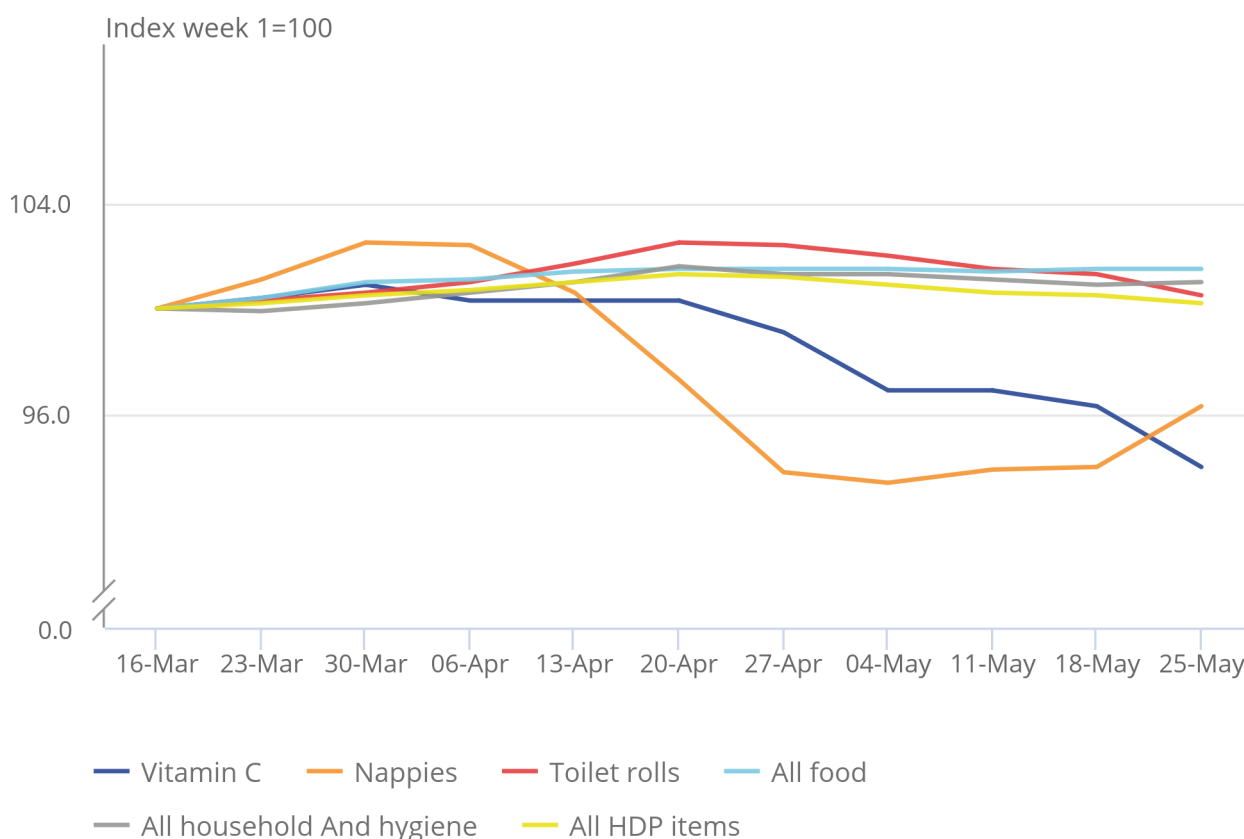
Figure 5 shows that overall, the online prices of items in the HDP basket have decreased by 0.3% between Week 10 (18 to 24 May 2020) and Week 11 (25 to 31 May 2020). The price changes of individual items were relatively large compared with recent weeks, with the price of nappies increasing by 2.4% and the price of vitamin C decreasing by 2.4%. Note that, relative to a number of items in the HDP basket, the vitamin C index has a small sample size, so this large price decrease may not be representative of all vitamin C products.

Figure 6: In week 11, the all HDP items index saw its fifth consecutive week of decline, bringing it to just 0.2% higher than its price level in week 1 (16 to 22 March 2020)

Online price change of selected high-demand products: index Week 1 (16 to 22 March 2020) = 100, UK

Figure 6: In week 11, the all HDP items index saw its fifth consecutive week of decline, bringing it to just 0.2% higher than its price level in week 1 (16 to 22 March 2020)

Online price change of selected high-demand products: index Week 1 (16 to 22 March 2020) = 100, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Faster indicators

Notes:

1. Index movements may not be exactly the same as percentage changes shown in Figure 5 as a result of rounding.
2. Dates on the x-axis refer to the start date of the week.

Figure 6 presents weekly price movements for aggregated indices and some selected items. The all HDP items index has seen its fifth consecutive week of decline, bringing it to just 0.2% higher than its week 1 level. In comparison, the all food and all household and hygiene goods indices have remained relatively stable over the last few weeks.

At the individual item level, nappies and vitamin C have seen the largest price falls since week 1. While vitamin C prices have seen a further decline in the latest week, prices of nappies have started to recover.

The price of toilet rolls has nearly returned to its week 1 level, after seeing five consecutive weeks of price increases at the beginning of the analysis, toilet rolls prices have now fallen for the fifth consecutive week.

The time series for all individual HDP items are published in a [dataset](#) alongside this release.

8 . Shipping

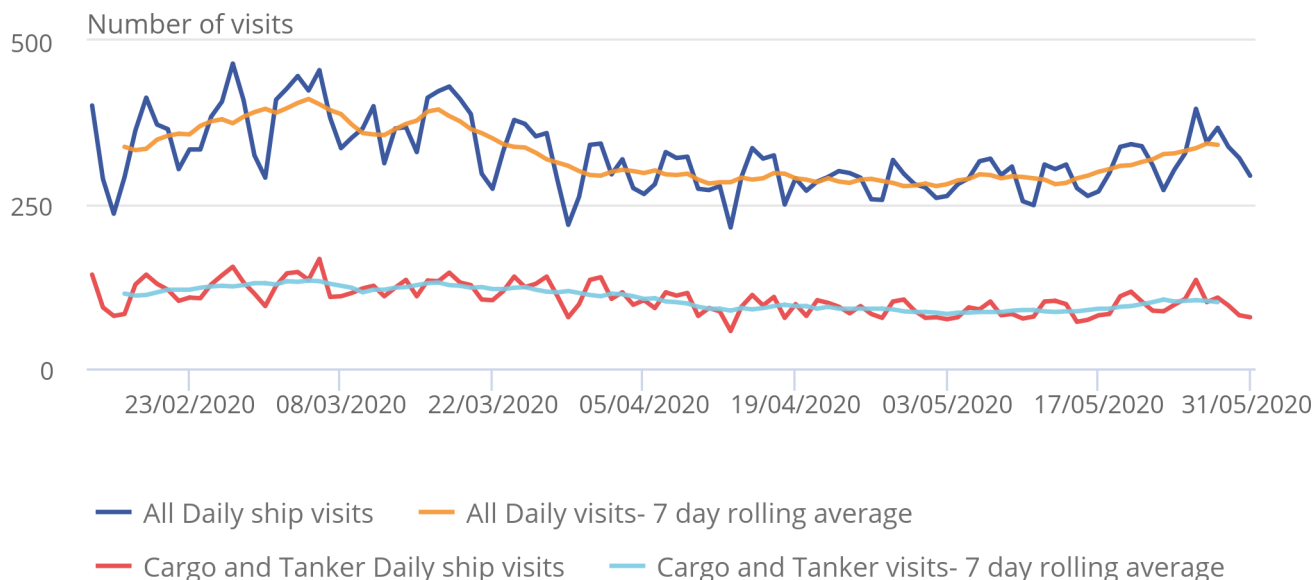
These shipping indicators are based on counts of all vessels and cargo and tanker vessels. As discussed in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](#), we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

Figure 7: There was an average of 341 daily ship visits during the period 25 May to 31 May 2020, the highest rolling average since 23 March

Daily movements in shipping visits, not seasonally adjusted, UK, 14 February to 31 May 2020

Figure 7: There was an average of 341 daily ship visits during the period 25 May to 31 May 2020, the highest rolling average since 23 March

Daily movements in shipping visits, not seasonally adjusted, UK, 14 February to 31 May 2020



Source: exactEarth

Notes:

1. The seven-day rolling average has been constructed using the three days before and after the reference point.
2. Daily and weekly shipping visits and unique visits are available by port in the [dataset](#).

9 . Universal Credit

Figure 8: New declarations for Universal Credit and new claim advances have both gradually declined following peaks on 27 March and 6 April 2020, respectively

Notes:

1. These declaration figures have not been derived using the same methodology as official statistics, and therefore the management information and official statistics will not be directly comparable. Figures relate to Great Britain only, and Northern Ireland is not included.

Download this chart

[.XLSX](#)

The first chart in Figure 8 shows the number of new declarations, which is when an individual or household provides information on their personal circumstances to begin a Universal Credit (UC) claim. Note that not all declarations will go on to receive a payment.

In the first half of March 2020, new declarations for individuals were steady between 11,000 and 16,000 each weekday (lower on weekends). This rose steeply following the advisory announcement on 16 March to avoid non-essential travel, bars, restaurants and other indoor leisure venues and to work from home if possible, to peak on 27 March with 146,290 declarations on the fifth day of lockdown, which was announced on 23 March. Measures to temporarily close entertainment, hospitality and indoor leisure premises took effect from 20 March. Numbers then declined gradually in the subsequent weeks to 19,390 new individual declarations on 26 May.

The second chart in Figure 8 shows the number of new claim advances, which provide support to new claimants in financial need until they receive their first regular payment of UC.

At the beginning of March 2020, advances for new claims were steady between 5,000 to 6,000 each weekday (lower on weekends). New claim advances peaked on 6 April at 35,280, which was 10 days after the peak of new declarations on 27 March. After the peak, new claim advances steadily fell to 7,670 on 26 May.

10 . Data

[Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 4 June 2020

The weekly and daily shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

[Online price changes for high-demand products](#)

Dataset | Released 4 June 2020

Weekly online price changes of selected high-demand products (HDPs).

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 4 June 2020

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

[Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#)

Dataset | Released 4 June 2020

Final results from the new BICS. This qualitative fortnightly survey covers business turnover, workforce, prices and trade. This dataset includes additional information collected as part of the survey including details on prices and imports and exports, which are not included within this bulletin or the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK bulletin](#).

11 . 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

The HDP basket contains everyday essential items that were identified at the beginning of the crisis to have 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.

12 . Measuring the data

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

The business indicators are based on responses from the voluntary, fortnightly [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#), which captures business' views on impact on turnover, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The data relate to final Wave 5 results, covering the survey period 4 May to 17 May 2020, and the survey questions for the period are available in [Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey questions: 4 May 2020 to 17 May 2020](#).

Estimates from the BICS are currently unweighted and should be treated with caution when used to evaluate the impact of the coronavirus pandemic across the UK economy. Each business was assigned the same weight regardless of turnover, size or industry.

More information on the quality and methodology, including response rates, sample size and weighting, is available in the "Measuring the data" section of the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK](#) bulletin.

Social impact of the coronavirus (OPN)

Data on the social impact of the coronavirus on Great Britain were collected from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). The data relate to the final results for Wave 11, covering the period 28 May to 31 May 2020. In this wave, 2,500 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 49% (or 1,224 individuals) for the survey.

More information on the quality and methodology of the OPN is available in the "Measuring the data" section of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) bulletin.

Online job advert estimates

These estimates are experimental and will be developed over the coming weeks. More information on the methodology used to compile these estimates is in the article, [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics](#).

Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

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 31 May 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 movement splice GEKS-Jevons index was calculated using a rolling window of five weeks. More information detailing [our plan](#) for data collection, compilation and publication of our various prices statistics following movement restrictions as a result of the coronavirus pandemic is available.

More information on the quality and methodology of the online price changes data is available in the [Online price changes of HDPs methodology](#).

Shipping

These weekly and daily 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](#).

13 . Strengths and limitations

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) 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.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the BICS data is available in the "Strengths and limitations" section of the [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK](#) bulletin.

Social impact of the coronavirus (OPN)

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

Online job advert estimates

These estimates are [experimental](#) and will be developed over the coming weeks. Information on the strengths and limitations of these estimates is in the article, [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics](#).

Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

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 it 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 \(HDPs\) methodology](#).

Shipping indicators

It should be noted that these indicators are not intended to be an early measure or predictor of gross domestic product (GDP), and their potential relationship with headline GDP should be interpreted with caution. Instead, they provide an early picture of a range of activities that are likely to have an impact on the economy, supplementing official economic statistics.

Publication of coronavirus-related data

We will publish this bulletin on a weekly basis during the coronavirus 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 regularly updated data from the new fortnightly survey, BICS, online prices for HDPs and weekly indicators from the OPN on the social impact of the coronavirus.

14 . Related links

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Webpage | 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: 4 May 2020 to 17 May 2020](#)

Article | Released on 18 May 2020

Questions from the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey for the period 4 May to 17 May 2020 relating to the Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society 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 Office for National Statistics's (ONS's) new experimental faster indicators.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 22 May 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 June 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.