

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 4 March 2021

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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# 1 . Main points

- According to the indicator derived from the Bank of England's Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) data, in the week to 25 February 2021, aggregate debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points to 73% of their February 2020 average. See [Section 3](#).
- According to initial results from Wave 25 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), 44% of currently trading UK businesses reported a negative impact on their turnover compared with what is normally expected for this time of year. See [Section 4](#).
- According to the latest Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (week ending 28 February 2021), the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the last seven days has increased slightly by 3 percentage points when compared with the previous week to 49%. See [Section 5](#).
- According to exactEarth, there was an average of 344 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 February 2021, an increase of 4% from the previous week but 8% lower than the same period a year ago. See [Section 6](#).
- According to Springboard, in the week to 27 February 2021, daily retail footfall in all UK countries and regions continues to be substantially lower than its level in the equivalent period of 2020. See [Section 7](#).
- According to Adzuna, in the week ending 26 February 2021, total online job adverts were at 86% of their level in the same week last year, an increase of 5 percentage points from two weeks ago. See [Section 8](#).
- According to Companies House, in the week to 26 February 2021, there were 17,096 company incorporations in the UK, an 8% increase from 15,846 in the previous week and higher than the number of incorporations seen in the same week of 2019 and 2020. See [Section 9](#).
- According to the Department for Transport (DfT), on Monday 1 March 2021 the volume of all motor vehicle traffic increased by 3 percentage points when compared with Monday last week, to 73% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020. See [Section 10](#).

Results presented throughout this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision.

## 2 . Latest indicators at a glance

[Download the data](#)

## 3 . UK spending on debit and credit cards

These data series are experimental faster indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card transactions made by customers at their stores, both via physical and via online platforms.

More information on the indicator is provided in the accompanying [methodology article](#).

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business:

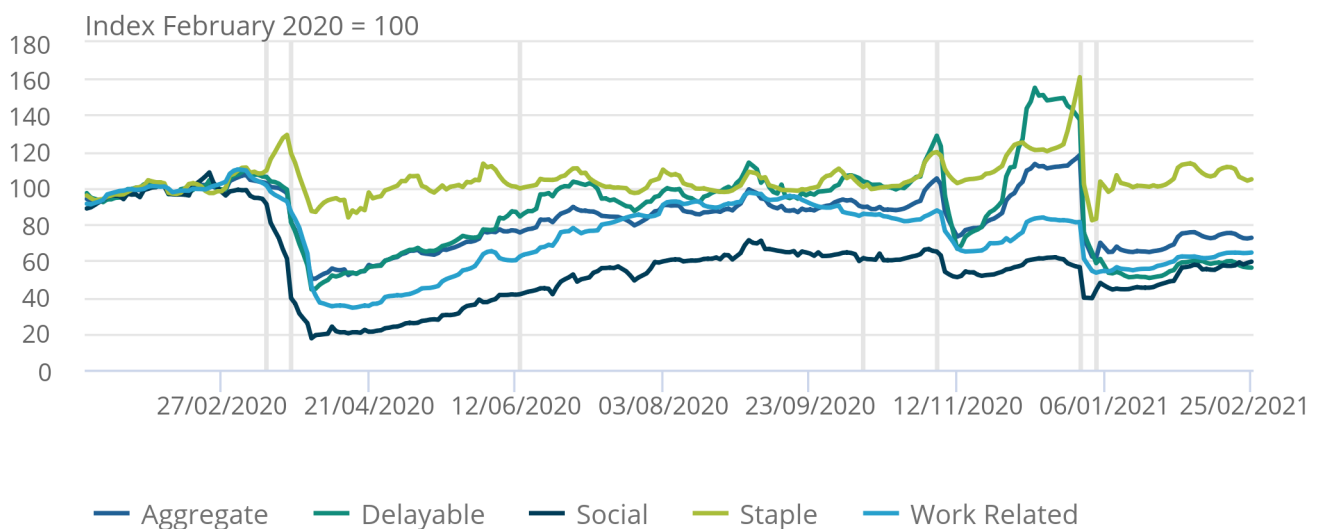
- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- "social" refers to spending on travel and eating out

**Figure 1: In the week to 25 February 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points from last week to 73% of its February 2020 average**

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 25 February 2021, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 1: In the week to 25 February 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points from last week to 73% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 25 February 2021, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices



**Source: ONS and Bank of England calculations**

**Notes:**

1. Users should note the daily payment data is the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is slight time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: PM COVID-19 announcement; Lockdown begins; Some non-essential shops allowed to reopen; Local COVID-19 alert levels; National restrictions begin in England; Christmas Eve; Lockdown begins in England and Scotland.
3. Percentage point difference is derived from current week and previous week index before rounding.

Figure 1 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, "merchant acquirers".

In the week to 25 February 2021, the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases in aggregate decreased 3 percentage points from the previous week to 73% of its February 2020 average.

This was primarily driven by a decrease in card spending on "staples", which fell by 7 percentage points from a small peak the previous week around Valentine's Day. "Delayable" spending also saw a decrease of 4 percentage points from the previous week. However, "social" spending increased slightly, and "work-related" spending was unchanged from the previous week.

In the latest week, card spending on "staples" was 105% of its February 2020 average. On the other hand, "delayable", "social" and "work-related" purchases were 56%, 59% and 64% of levels seen in February 2020, respectively. All three consumption categories remain above the lowest levels seen during the spring 2020 lockdown.

Since the substantial fall in spending at the beginning of the year, following the Christmas period and introduction of national lockdowns, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases has increased, broadly in line with the comparable period in 2020, albeit at a much lower level.

The full data time series available for data on UK spending on debit and credit cards can be found in the [accompanying dataset](#).

#### More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- [Explore the latest coronavirus data](#) from the ONS and other sources.
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

## 4 . Business impacts and insights

Initial results from Wave 25 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 8 to 21 February 2021, with a response rate of 21.7% (8,468 responses). The survey was live for the period 22 February to 2 March 2021.

These dates should be kept in mind in relation to local and national lockdown measures in place during the reference period and the date when the business responded. All four nations within the UK were subject to lockdowns for the duration of the reference and survey live periods.

For experimental single site weighted regional estimates that have been updated up to Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021), please see [Understanding the business impacts of local and national restrictions: February 2021](#).

**Figure 2: 19% of the workforce of all UK businesses (excluding those permanently ceased trading) were furloughed, broadly unchanged from 20% in the previous wave**

Headline indicators from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), 8 February to 2 March 2021

## Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 25 of Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period (8 to 21 February 2021). However, for questions regarding the last two weeks (furlough estimates), businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (22 February to 2 March 2021).
3. A detailed description of the weighting methodology and the weights used for each variable is available in [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\): preliminary weighted results](#).

## [Download the data](#)

The preliminary result of 19% of businesses' workforce on furlough leave in mid February 2021 equates to approximately 6 million people. This number is based on multiplying the BICS-weighted furlough proportions by the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) total annual employment. This will not be consistent with employment estimates from [Labour market statistics](#) as these are based on different sources over different time periods but provides an indication. Additionally, the BICS proportion furloughed does not include the public sector, financial sector and parts of agriculture.

Across all UK industries in Wave 25:

- 72% of businesses had been trading for more than the last two weeks (an increase of 2 percentage points from Wave 24)
- 1% of businesses had started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading (broadly unchanged from 2% in Wave 24)
- 3% of businesses had paused trading but intend to restart in the next two weeks (unchanged from Wave 24)
- 21% of businesses had paused trading and do not intend to restart in the next two weeks (broadly unchanged from 22% in Wave 24)
- 3% of businesses had permanently ceased trading (unchanged from Wave 24)

Table 1 shows the financial performance of businesses currently trading.

Table 1: 44% of currently trading UK businesses reported a negative impact on their turnover compared with what is normally expected for this time of year

Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 8 to 21 February 2021

%	
Turnover has increased by more than 50%	<1%
Turnover has increased between 20% and 50%	2%
Turnover has increased by up to 20%	6%
Turnover has not been affected	39%
Turnover has decreased by up to 20%	20%
Turnover has decreased between 20% and 50%	13%
Turnover has decreased by more than 50%	12%
Not sure	9%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)

#### Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 25 of Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period (8 to 21 February 2021). However, for questions regarding the last two weeks (furlough estimates), businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (22 February to 2 March 2021).
3. Values may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

## 5 . Social impact of the coronavirus

This section includes some provisional results from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 24 February to 28 February 2021. The survey went out to 6,028 adults in Great Britain and had a response rate of 70%. Further information to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain, will be available in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain published on 5 March 2021](#).

### Travelling to work

In the week ending 28 February 2021, the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who in the last seven days:

- travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) has increased slightly by 3 percentage points when compared with the previous week to 49%
- worked exclusively from home has decreased slightly by 3 percentage points from the previous week to 32%
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home remains unchanged from the previous week at 19%

## Shopping

Of the 93% of adults that reported they had left home in the last seven days, the proportion that did so to shop for food and medicine remained similar to the previous week at 77%.

The proportion of these adults who shopped for things other than food and medicine in the last seven days remained unchanged compared with the previous week at 9%. Although there has been no change this week, there has been a small, gradual increase over the previous four weeks from 5% in the week ending 24 January 2021. The generally low level coincides with the ongoing lockdowns throughout the UK.

## 6 . Shipping

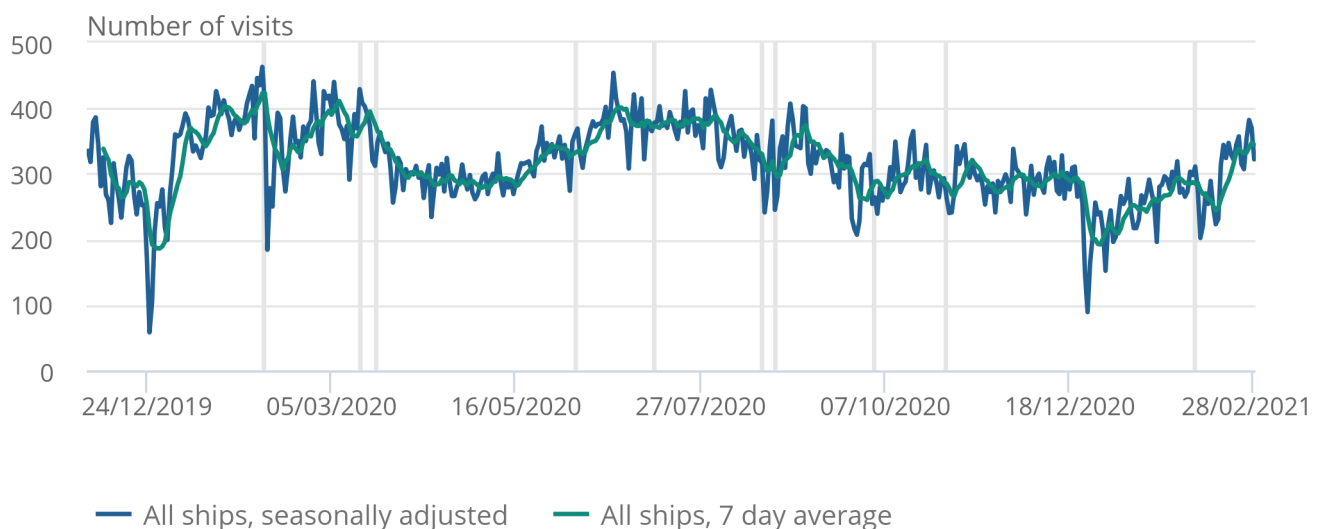
These shipping indicators are based on counts of all vessels, and cargo and tanker vessels. As discussed in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](#), we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

**Figure 3: There was an average of 344 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 February 2021, an increase of 4% from the previous week but 8% lower than the same period a year ago**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 February 2021

Figure 3: There was an average of 344 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 February 2021, an increase of 4% from the previous week but 8% lower than the same period a year ago

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 February 2021



Source: exactEarth

In the week ending 28 February 2021, the seven-day average of all daily shipping visits was 344, an increase of 4% from the previous week. The rise on the previous week can be attributed to activity in three major UK ports: Grimsby and Immingham, Holyhead, and Tees and Hartlepool. This marks the continuation of an upward trend since the beginning of the year and is the highest number of visits seen since September 2020. However, total ship visits remain at a lower level than the same period last year by 8%.

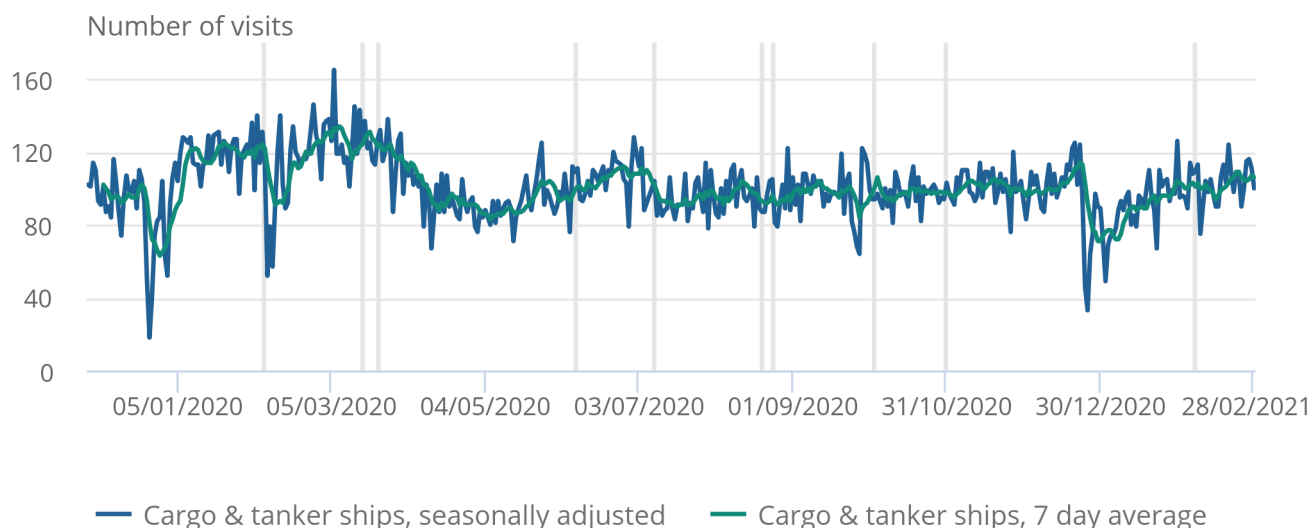


**Figure 4: There was an average of 106 cargo ship visits in the week ending 28 February 2021, a slight decrease of 3% from the previous week and 15% lower than the same period a year ago**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 February 2021

Figure 4: There was an average of 106 cargo ship visits in the week ending 28 February 2021, a slight decrease of 3% from the previous week and 15% lower than the same period a year ago

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 February 2021



Source: exactEarth

#### Notes:

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: Storm Ciara; FCO advises against all non-essential international travel; Lockdown begins; UK international travel quarantine begins; travel corridors to 59 countries come into force; Storm Ellen; Storm Francis; Storm Alex; Storm Aiden; Storm Darcy.
2. The number of visits for Hull are included in these data from 1 June 2020 onwards.
3. The seasonally adjusted estimates are produced using a modified version of the seasonal adjustment method TRAMO-SEATS. More information is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society methodology](#).
4. The seasonal adjustment method may be limited as this is a short time series.
5. Daily and weekly shipping visits and unique visits are available by port in the [dataset](#), along with non-seasonally adjusted aggregate series.
6. The trend is now calculated as a rolling seven-day average of the number of daily ship and cargo ship visits. The presentation of the series has been shifted three days forward, this does not affect the calculation of the average.
7. Users should note that a reduction in shipping activity has been observed over the Christmas periods in 2019 and 2020.

In the week ending 28 February 2021, the seven-day average of all daily cargo ship visits was 106; a slight decrease of 3% from the previous week. Despite this, the average number of daily cargo ship visits continues to stay at pre-Christmas levels, while still 15% lower than the level observed in the same period last year.

## 7 . Footfall

### National retail footfall

National footfall figures are supplied by [Springboard](#), a provider of data on customer activity. They measure the following for overall UK retail footfall, as well as by high street, retail park, and shopping centre categories:

- daily retail footfall as a percentage of its level on the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year; for example, Saturday 27 February 2021 is compared with Saturday 22 February 2020
- total weekly retail footfall as a percentage of its level in the equivalent week of the prior year; for example, footfall in Week 8 of 2021 is compared with its level in Week 8 of 2020
- the percentage change in weekly footfall compared with the previous week; for example, Week 8 of 2021 is compared with Week 7 of 2021
- Springboard's weekly data are defined over a seven-day period running from Sunday to Saturday; Week 8 of 2021 therefore refers to the period Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 February 2021

**Figure 5: In the week to 27 February 2021, overall retail footfall in the UK was at 43% of its level in the equivalent week of 2020, an increase of 5 percentage points from last week**

Volume of retail footfall, percentage compared with the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, UK, 1 March 2020 to 27 February 2021



Source: Springboard and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

**Notes:**

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: first National lockdowns imposed; lockdown restrictions begin to ease across the UK; circuit-breaker lockdown in England; regional restrictions begin in England; national lockdown begins in England.
2. The spike on Monday 24 August 2020 was caused by the comparison with 26 August 2019, which was bank holiday Monday with good weather. The bank holiday this year was a week later, on 31 August 2020.
3. The spikes on 23 December and 30 December 2020 are because of the year-on-year comparison with 25 December 2019 and 1 January 2020 respectively, which were bank holidays.

According to Springboard, in the week ending Saturday 27 February 2021, overall UK retail footfall was at 43% of its level compared with the equivalent week of 2020. This is an increase of 5 percentage points compared with the value of the same index in the previous week.

In the same seven-day period footfall at retail parks was at 69% of its level compared with the equivalent week of 2020. This remains substantially higher than that for shopping centres and high streets, which were at 31% and 37% of the levels seen in the equivalent week of 2020, respectively.

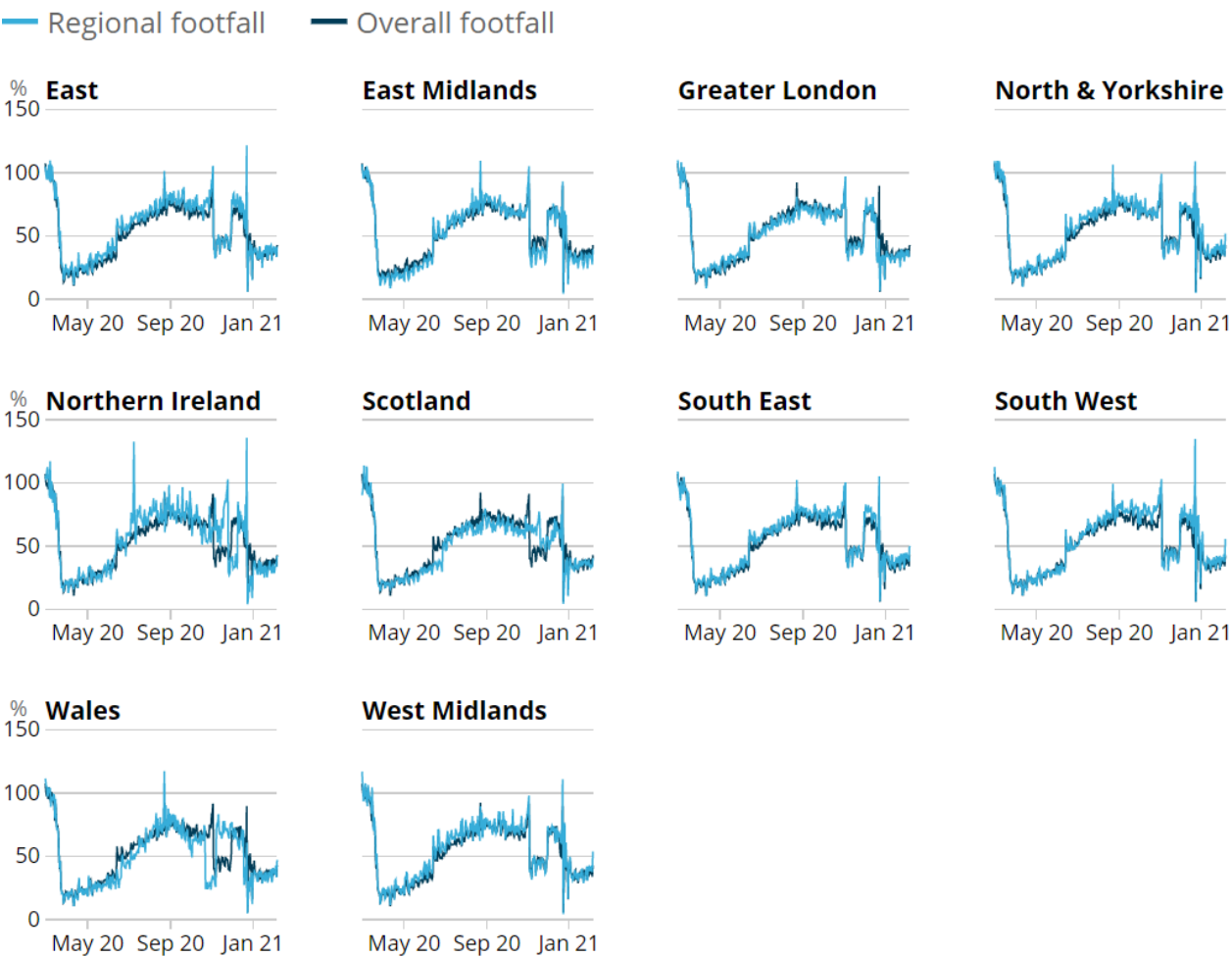
Week-on-week changes in retail footfall between the weeks ending 20 and 27 February 2021 showed a continued increase from the previous week across all three types of retail locations. Overall footfall rose by 11% between these periods whilst footfall at UK high streets saw the largest weekly increase of 16%. Footfall increased by 6% at both retail parks and shopping centres.

## Regional retail footfall

Regional footfall figures are also supplied by [Springboard](#) and show the volume of overall retail footfall compared with the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, by UK region.

**Figure 6: In the week to 27 February 2021, daily retail footfall in all UK countries and regions continues to be substantially lower than its level in the equivalent period of 2020**

Volume of overall daily retail footfall, percentage of the level recorded on the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, UK regions, 1 March 2020 to 27 February 2021



Source: Springboard and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

Continuing the trend observed since the beginning of 2021, in the week to 27 February 2021, daily retail footfall continues to be substantially lower than its level in the equivalent period of 2020. In particular, daily retail footfall was weakest in the East Midlands, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland when compared with the same week of 2020. In contrast, retail footfall was stronger in the West Midlands, the South East and the South West.

For example, on Saturday 27 February 2021, retail footfall in the East Midlands was at 33% of its level recorded on the Saturday of the equivalent week of 2020, whereas the corresponding figure for the West Midlands was 48%. Users should note that this comparison has been made using figures for Saturday as this is typically the busiest day of the week for retail locations.

## 8 . Online job adverts

These figures use job adverts provided by [Adzuna](#), an online job search engine, and include [experimental estimates](#) of online job adverts by Adzuna category and by UK country and [NUTS1](#) region. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to [Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\)](#) categories, so these values are not directly comparable with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Vacancy Survey.

Data for the week ending 19 February 2021 were unavailable so have been imputed through linear interpolation. Data for the week ending 26 February 2021 are unaffected by this. Given the imputation in last week's data, fortnightly comparisons are made in this week's bulletin rather than weekly to ensure meaningful comparisons.

**Figure 7: In the week ending 26 February 2021, the proportion of UK online job adverts was 86% of the level seen in the same week last year, an increase of 5 percentage points compared with two weeks ago**

Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 26 February 2021, percentage compared with the same week in the previous year

### Notes:

1. The observations were collected on a roughly weekly basis; however, before June 2020 they were not all observed at the same point in each week, leading to slightly irregular gaps between some observations.
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 dataset.
3. Further category breakdowns are included in the [Online job advert estimates dataset](#), and more details on the methodology can be found in [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies](#).
4. Job adverts data for the week ending 19 February 2021 were unavailable so have been imputed through linear interpolation. Data for the week ending 26 February 2021 are unaffected by this.

### [Data download](#)

According to Adzuna, in the last two weeks, the proportion of total UK online job adverts compared with the same week last year increased by 5 percentage points to 86%. This represents the broad continuation of a trend of increasing weekly online job adverts, when compared with their level last year, since reaching a low of 34% in May 2020.

Excluding the "unknown" category, in the last two weeks, online job adverts increased in 25 of the 28 Adzuna categories when compared with their level in the same week last year. Online job adverts in the "catering and hospitality" and "education" categories saw an increase of 5 and 7 percentage points compared with two weeks ago to 28% and 75% of the level seen in the same week last year, respectively. The "wholesale and retail" and "healthcare and social care" categories remained broadly unchanged from two weeks ago.

The most notable rise was for "transport, logistics and warehouse" and "manufacturing" categories, which increased by 36 and 21 percentage points to 151% and 149% of their level seen in the same week of last year, respectively. The year-on-year increase for manufacturing reflects, in part, a subdued level of online job adverts at the start of 2020. The largest fall in the last two weeks came from "legal", which decreased by 18 percentage points to 63% of the level seen in the same week last year.

## **Figure 8: In the last two weeks, the volume of online job adverts as a proportion of its level in the same week of last year increased across all UK regions and countries**

Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 26 February 2021, percentage compared with the same week in the previous year

### **Notes:**

1. There is a level shift in the Northern Ireland series from 17 October 2019 because of a large source of Northern Ireland job adverts being removed, and another level shift from 7 August 2020 because of a new source being included.
2. Job adverts data for the week ending 19 February 2021 were unavailable so have been imputed through linear interpolation. Data for the week ending 26 February 2021 are unaffected by this.

### [Data download](#)

According to Adzuna, in the last two weeks, the volume of online job adverts as a proportion of its level in the same week of last year increased across all UK countries and regions. The volume of online job adverts increased the most in Northern Ireland, followed by the North East and Wales, with increases of 16, 13 and 12 percentage points, respectively. Despite this, only three regions (Northern Ireland, the North East and East Midlands) have a higher proportion of online job adverts than that seen in the same week last year. Online job adverts in London remain the lowest, at 73% of the level seen in the same week last year.

## **9 . Company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications**

### **Incorporations**

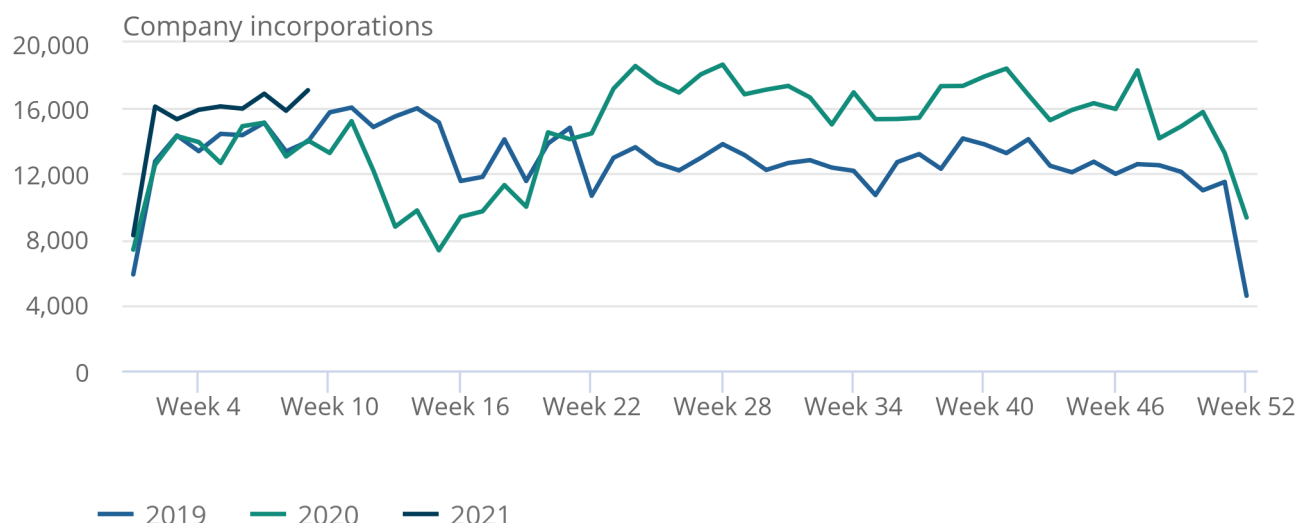
According to Companies House data, in the week to Friday 26 February 2021, there were 17,096 company incorporations in the UK, an 8% increase from the 15,846 seen in the previous week. This is higher than the number of incorporations seen in the ninth week of both 2019 and 2020, when 13,965 and 14,034 companies were registered, respectively. It is also the highest number of company incorporations seen so far this year and continues the trend of higher incorporations since the second half of last year.

**Figure 9: In the week to 26 February 2021, there were 17,096 company incorporations in the UK, an 8% increase from 15,846 in the previous week**

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 February 2021

Figure 9: In the week to 26 February 2021, there were 17,096 company incorporations in the UK, an 8% increase from 15,846 in the previous week

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 February 2021



Source: Companies House and Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Week 1 refers to the period week ending 4 January 2019, 3 January 2020 and 1 January 2021. Week 9 refers to the period week ending 1 March 2019, 28 February 2020 and 26 February 2021.
2. The dips in December 2019 and December 2020 are explained by two bank holidays in the week ending 27 December 2019 and 25 December 2020.
3. Weekly data are for week commencing Saturday to Friday, as incorporation requests received on Saturdays and Sundays are typically processed on subsequent weekdays. For more information, see the accompanying [Companies House methodology page](#).

## Voluntary dissolution applications

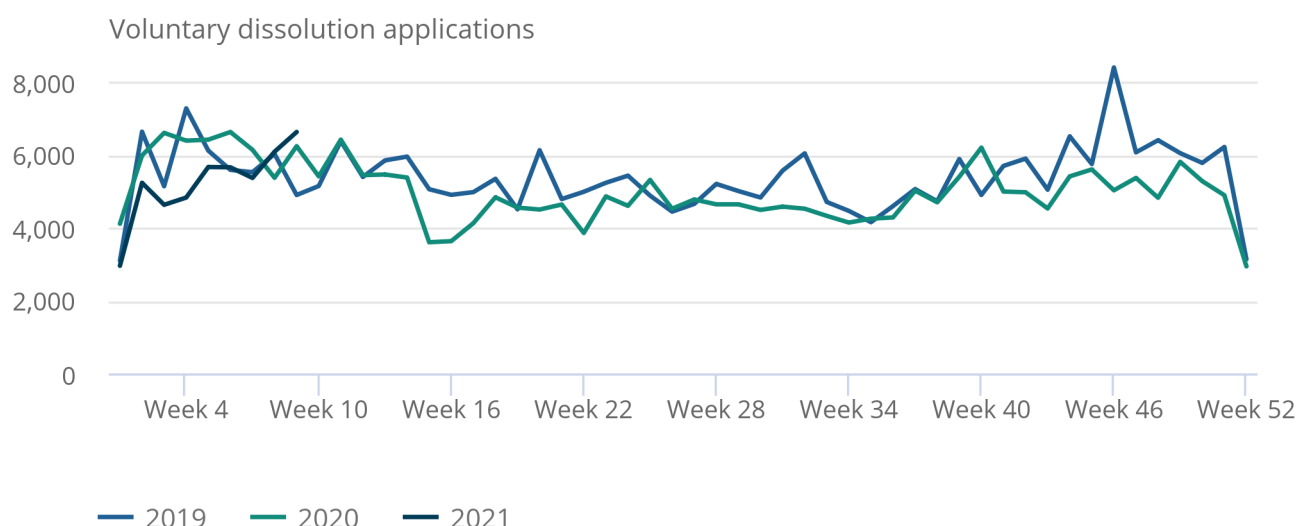
In the week to Friday 26 February 2021, there were 6,629 voluntary dissolution applications, a 9% increase from 6,087 recorded in the previous week and the highest level seen since the week ending Friday 7 February 2020 when there were also 6,629 recorded. This is also higher than the number of voluntary dissolution applications seen in the ninth weeks of 2019 and 2020, when there were 4,898 and 6,239, respectively. However, the large weekly increases in the last two weeks can be in-part attributed to a backlog of paper applications that were processed.

**Figure 10: In the week to Friday 26 February 2021 there were 6,629 voluntary dissolution applications, a 9% increase from 6,087 in the previous week**

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 February 2021

Figure 10: In the week to Friday 26 February 2021 there were 6,629 voluntary dissolution applications, a 9% increase from 6,087 in the previous week

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 February 2021



Source: Companies House and Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Week 1 refers to the period week ending 4 January 2019, 3 January 2020 and 1 January 2021. Week 9 refers to the period week ending 1 March 2019, 28 February 2020 and 26 February 2021.
2. The dips in December 2019 and December 2020 are explained by two bank holidays in the week ending 27 December 2019 and 25 December 2020.
3. Weekly data are weeks from Saturday to Friday, as voluntary dissolution requests received on Saturdays and Sundays are typically processed on subsequent weekdays. For more information, see the accompanying [Companies House methodology page](#).
4. Increased Companies House operational activity during week ending 8 November 2019 caused a spike in total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications. This data point should be treated with caution.

The full data time series available for weekly company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications can be found in the [accompanying dataset](#).

## 10 . Roads and traffic camera data



## Road traffic in Great Britain

According to Department for Transport (DfT) non-seasonally adjusted road traffic data, on Monday 1 March 2021, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic saw a weekly increase of 3 percentage points to 73% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020. Overall, since the start of the latest lockdown in January 2021, motor vehicle volumes on Monday were the highest so far in 2021, even though they are still below the pre-Christmas levels.

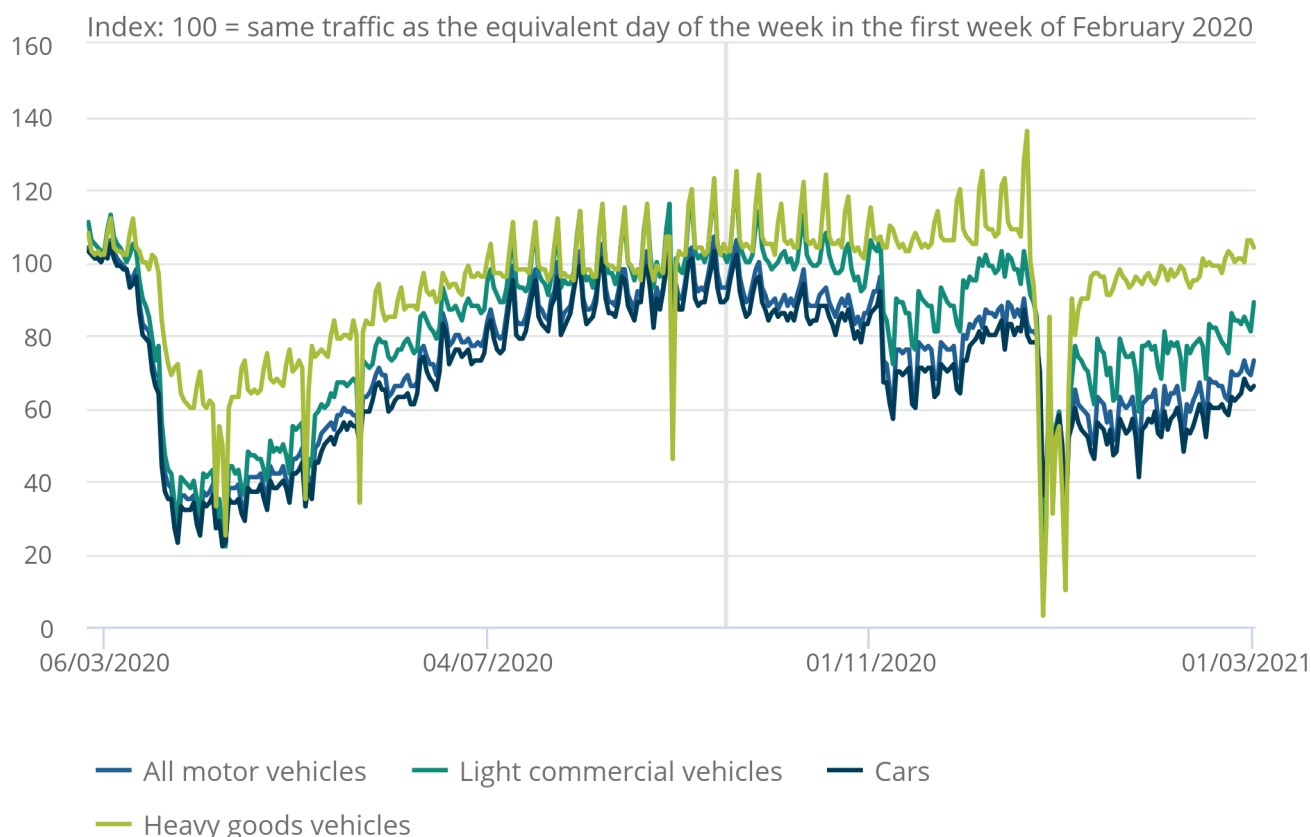
All categories of road traffic showed increases on the previous week's figures. Light commercial vehicles and cars both increased by 3 percentage points to 89% and 66% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020, respectively. Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) increased by 2 percentage points to 104%.

**Figure 11: On Monday 1 March 2021, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic increased by 3 percentage points, compared with Monday last week, to 73% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020**

Daily road traffic index: 100 = same traffic as the equivalent day of the week in the first week of February 2020, 1 March 2020 to 1 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 11: On Monday 1 March 2021, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic increased by 3 percentage points, compared with Monday last week, to 73% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020

Daily road traffic index: 100 = same traffic as the equivalent day of the week in the first week of February 2020, 1 March 2020 to 1 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Department for Transport – road traffic statistics: management information

#### Notes:

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, these events are: First National lockdown imposed; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Bank holiday; Bank holiday; Bank holiday; National restrictions begin in England; Christmas Day; Boxing Day; New Year's Day; Lockdowns announced in England and mainland Scotland.
2. For full details on the dates on when countries or regions entered their respective tiers and restrictions refer to [Section 14: UK regional lockdown restrictions](#)

The daily DfT estimates are indexed to the first week of February 2020 and the comparison is with the same day of the week. The data provided are useful as an indication of traffic change rather than actual traffic volumes. More information on the methods, quality and economic analysis for these indicators can be found in the [methodology article](#).

## Traffic camera activity

Traffic cameras are a valuable source for understanding the level of activity in towns and cities as well as changing patterns of mobility. The UK has thousands of publicly accessible traffic cameras with providers ranging from national agencies to local authorities. Further information on the methodology used to produce these data is available in our [methodology article](#) and [Data Science Campus blog](#).

In the [accompanying dataset](#), the following categories are available as non-seasonally adjusted, seasonally adjusted and trend data:

- cars
- motorbikes (only available for London and the North East)
- buses
- trucks
- vans
- pedestrians and cyclists

The categories are available for the following regions, which give a broad coverage across the UK and represent a range of different-sized settlements in urban and rural settings:

- [London](#)
- [Greater Manchester](#)
- [North East](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Southend](#)
- [Reading](#)

**Figure 12: In the week ending 28 February 2021, average counts of traffic camera activity for cars increased in all regions compared with the previous week.**

Traffic camera activity in selected areas, daily counts of cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists, UK, seasonally adjusted, March 2020 to February 2021

**Notes:**

1. The regions shown here were selected to be representative of the regions available.
2. Traffic camera images capture the appearance of buses, but they give no indication of the number of passengers using public transport.
3. Note that data for Durham have been excluded because of quality concerns.
4. Note that because of technical issues between 17 to 22 and 25 to 26 February 2021, the traffic camera values for Greater Manchester have been imputed.
5. Please also note that Reading had a larger than normal amount of imputation in the latest week (around 60% of the data was imputed from 15 February onwards).

### [Data download](#)

In London in the week ending 28 February 2021, average counts of traffic activity for cars increased by 6%. Motorbikes saw the largest weekly increase by 13%, while pedestrians and cyclists increased by 12% and vans by 5%. Buses and trucks remained broadly unchanged compared with the previous week.

However, counts of all vehicle types in London continue to be below the levels seen before the first lockdown in March 2020. The vehicle type with the highest proportion of traffic activity when compared with the average level between 11 and 22 March 2020 (pre-lockdown) is motorbikes, at 96%. Cars, and pedestrians and cyclists are now both recorded at 75% of the average pre-lockdown level.

In Northern Ireland, average counts of all traffic camera activity except for trucks increased when compared with the previous week. Pedestrians and cyclists saw the largest weekly increase of 24%, reversing the decrease seen last week. Buses and cars increased by 7% and 5%, respectively, whereas, trucks saw a slight decrease of 2% when compared with last week. Because of the relatively low numbers in Northern Ireland, caution should be taken when interpreting this weekly percentage change.

In the North East, cars, trucks and vans all recorded a 1% increase from the previous week. After the substantial increase last week, pedestrians and cyclists saw a slight decrease of 1%.

As with London, counts for all vehicle types in the North East and Northern Ireland remain below the levels seen before the first lockdown in March 2020.

## 11 . Weekly online food and drink basket

A timely indication of weekly online price change for a selection of food and drink products from several large UK retailers has been developed, covering the period 1 June 2020 to 28 February 2021. Details of the methodology used for these indicators can be found in [Online price changes methodology](#). This analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our [regular monthly consumer price statistics](#).

The data time series, weekly growth rates, and contributions to the weekly change for all individual food and drink items, along with sample sizes, are published in a [dataset](#) alongside this release.

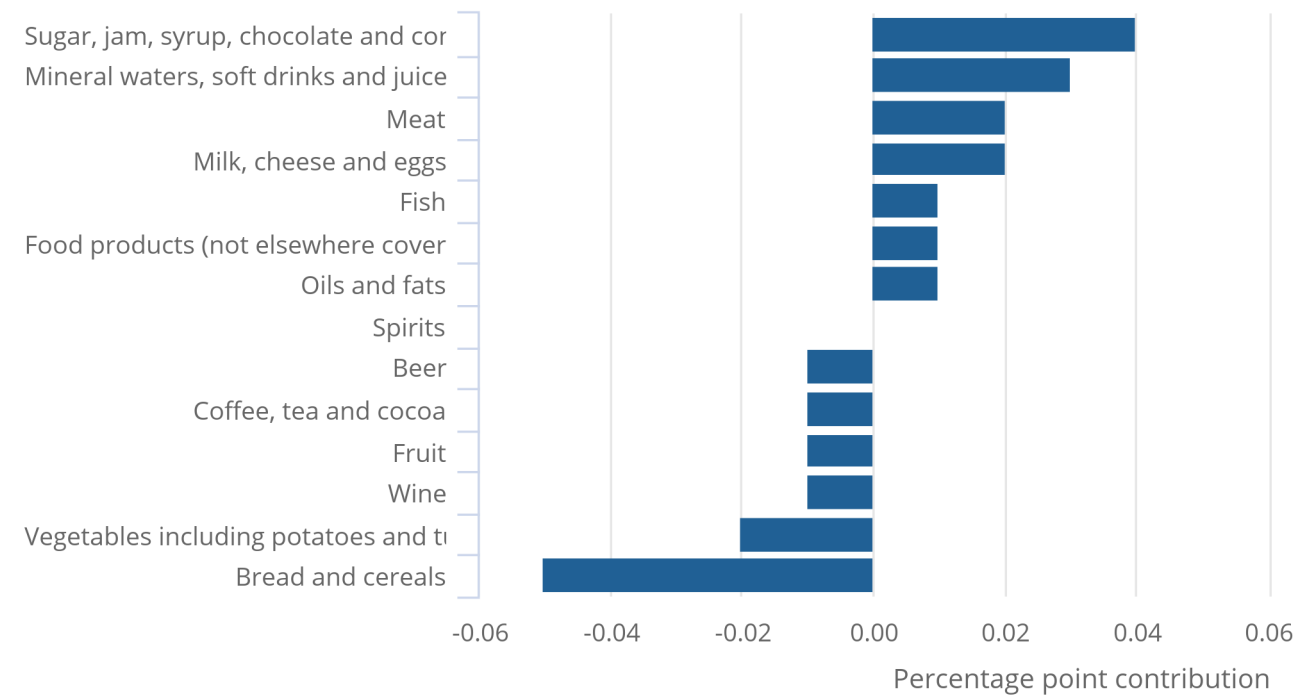
The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket was unchanged between the week ending 28 February 2021 and the previous week, with seven categories providing positive contributions to the overall price movement, six providing negative contributions and one making a negligible contribution to the overall movement.

**Figure 13: The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket was unchanged from the previous week**

Percentage point contributions to online price changes for food and drink, UK, between the week ending 21 February 2021 and the week ending 28 February 2021

**Figure 13: The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket was unchanged from the previous week**

Percentage point contributions to online price changes for food and drink, UK, between the week ending 21 February 2021 and the week ending 28 February 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Online price collection

Notes:

- 1. Contributions may not always sum to the weekly change, as a result of rounding.

The main downward contributor to the overall price movement in the latest week was “bread and cereals”, which saw its price fall by 0.3% and contributed negative 0.05 percentage points to the overall price movement. This price fall was mostly because of the falling price of breakfast cereal.

The main offsetting category was “sugar, jam, syrup, chocolate and confectionery”, which experienced a 0.4% price increase and contributed positive 0.04 percentage points to the overall price movement. The main driver behind this was the rising price of chocolate at two retailers.

## 12 . Data

### [UK spending on credit and debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

These data series are experimental faster indicators for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) data.

### [Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

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

### [Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

Experimental dataset for busyness indices covering the UK

### [Online weekly price changes](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

The online price changes for a selection of food and drink products from several large UK retailers. These data are experimental estimates developed to deliver timely indicators to shed light on changes in prices at online retailers faced by consumers.

### [Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

### [Company incorporations and voluntary dissolutions](#)

Dataset | Released 4 March 2021

Weekly dataset showing the number of Companies House incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications accepted.

## 13 . Glossary

### Company incorporations

Incorporations are when a company is added to the Companies House register of limited companies. This can also include where an existing business applies to become a limited company, where it was not one before.

### 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.

### Voluntary dissolution applications

A voluntary dissolution application is when a company applies to begin dissolution proceedings. As such, they effectively chose to be removed from the Companies House register. For a company to be eligible to voluntarily dissolve, it should not have completed any trading activity for a period of three months.

# 14 . Measuring the data

## End of EU exit transition period

As the transition period ends and the UK enters into a new Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the UK statistical system will continue to produce and publish our wide range of economic and social statistics and analysis. We are committed to continued alignment with the highest international statistical standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally, and ensuring the general public, statistical users and decision makers have the data they need to be informed.

## UK regional lockdown restrictions

The following is a summary of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in each of the four UK constituent countries between Monday 22 February 2021 and Monday 1 March 2021.

A full list of national restrictions is available for [England from gov.uk](#), for [Scotland from the Scottish Government](#), for [Wales the Welsh Government](#) and for [Northern Ireland from nidirect](#).

### Scotland

- All of mainland Scotland and the Western Isles were under full lockdown restrictions. Orkney and the Shetland Islands were under Level 3 restrictions.
- All arrivals from outside of the Common Travel Area (UK and Ireland) must self-isolate for 10 days at a managed quarantine hotel.

### Wales

- All of Wales was in Tier 4 lockdown restrictions.
- Travellers who have been in a red-list country in the last 10 days are not allowed into Wales and must self-isolate for 10 days in a managed quarantine hotel in either England or Scotland.
- Arrivals from other countries not on the red list must self-isolate for 10 days and undertake testing.

### England

- England was under a full national lockdown.
- UK and Irish nationals arriving from red-list countries must quarantine at hotels selected by the government; with some exceptions, non-UK and non-Irish nationals are not permitted to travel to the UK from red-list countries.
- Arrivals from other countries must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

### Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland was under a full national lockdown.
- Arrivals from other countries outside of the Common Travel Area must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

Detailed information on the data sources, quality and methodology of the different indicators included in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#).

We will summarise any crucial updates to the quality or methodology in this section in the future.

## 15 . Strengths and limitations

Detailed information on the strengths and limitations of the different indicators included in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#).

We will summarise any crucial updates or warnings in this section in the future.

## 16 . 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 insights and impacts on the UK economy:25 February 2021](#)

Bulletin | 25 February 2021

Latest analysis on responses from the voluntary fortnightly Business insights and impacts on the UK economy survey, which captures businesses' responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 26 February 2021](#)

Bulletin | 26 February 2021

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

### [Business insights and conditions Survey \(BICS\) questions](#)

Article | Last updated 22 February 2021

Latest questions from the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey relating to the Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society bulletin.

### [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 19 February 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 March 2021

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.

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey UK: 26 February 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 February 2021

Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with IQVIA, Oxford University and UK Biocentre.