Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 3 February 2022

Early data and analysis for UK economy and society. Includes activity and change in business, spending, travel and jobs using rapid-response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

Contact:
Emelia D’Silva-Parker
faster.indicators@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455120

Release date:
3 February 2022

Next release:
10 February 2022

Table of contents

1 . Main points

- Following the lifting of Plan B restrictions in England on 27 January 2022, the seven-day average estimate of UK seated diners increased by 9 percentage points in the week to 31 January 2022 to 106% of the level in the equivalent week of 2020; in London and Manchester seated diners increased by 8 and 11 percentage points over the same period, respectively (OpenTable).

- In the week to 29 January 2022, overall retail footfall in the UK increased by 2% from last week and was 82% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; this is the third consecutive week of increasing retail footfall and was again driven in part by weekly rises in high street footfall (Springboard).

- In the week to 27 January 2022, transactions at Pret A Manger increased in all store locations apart from in suburban London stores, where they remained unchanged (Pret A Manger).

- In the week to 27 January 2022, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 3 percentage points from the previous week, to 90% of its February 2020 average; there were increases in all spending categories in the latest week, the largest of which were in "delayable" and "social" spending, both of which increased by 4 percentage points (Bank of England CHAPS data). See the accompanying dataset.

- Advanced notification of potential redundancies has fallen to below the level seen before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (Insolvency Service). Section 3.

- In the last month, 15% of UK businesses reported that they had experienced global supply chain disruption (initial results from Wave 49 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). Section 4.

- The total volume of online job adverts on 28 January 2022 was at 141% of its February 2020 average level; this is the third consecutive week-on-week increase, following a dip in the volume of online job adverts over Christmas and New Year (Adzuna). Section 5.

- Over two thirds of adults (69%) reported their cost of living had increased over the last month; this was up slightly from the last period (66%) (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, 19 to 30 January 2022). Section 6.

- The system average price (SAP) of gas increased by 12% in the week to 30 January 2022 (National Grid). See the accompanying dataset.

- In the week ending 30 January 2022, the seasonally adjusted average counts of traffic camera activity for "pedestrians and cyclists" increased by 6% from the previous week in both London and North East England (Transport for London, North East traffic cameras). See the accompanying dataset.

- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 31 January 2022 was at 91% of its level in the first week of February 2020, broadly unchanged from the previous week (Department for Transport).

- In the week ending 30 January 2022, the seven-day average number of UK daily flights was half (50%) of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2020, and 276% of the level in the equivalent week of 2021 (EUROCONTROL). See the accompanying dataset.

- There was an average of 279 daily ship visits in the week to 30 January 2022, a 5% decrease from the previous week, while the average number of daily cargo and tanker ship visits decreased by 6% over the same period (exactEarth). See the accompanying dataset.

- There were 15,579 company incorporations in the week to 28 January 2022, broadly similar to the previous week (15,468) and 3% lower than the equivalent week of 2021 (16,108) (Companies House). See the accompanying dataset.

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

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Users should note that the break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.

2. *Comparisons in OpenTable data are made with the equivalent week in 2019 until December 2021. From 1 January 2022, comparisons are made with the equivalent week in 2020. This is likely to change in the coming weeks and revert back to 2019 comparisons across the series.

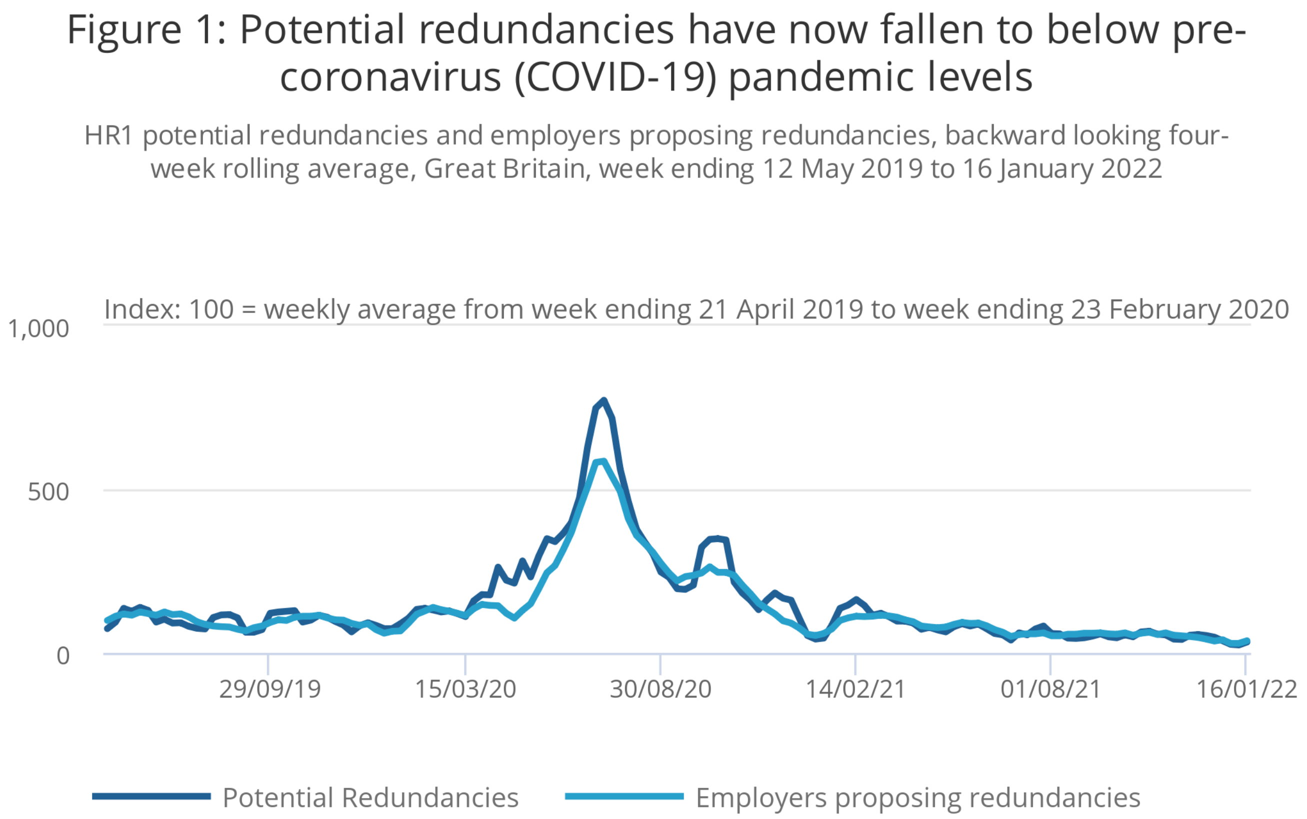
3 . Advanced notification of potential redundancies

Advanced notification of potential redundancies is provided to the Insolvency Service's Redundancy Payments Service by employers. Employers provide this information using a HR1 form when they are proposing to dismiss 20 or more employees at a single establishment within a period of 90 days. A separate form is required for each establishment where it is proposed that 20 or more employees will be dismissed, meaning that an employer may be required to file multiple HR1 forms where redundancies are proposed at multiple establishments. More information on HR1 forms can be found on the government website.

This new series will be updated weekly and further breakdowns will be available in the coming months in the monthly Labour Market release.

Figure 1: Potential redundancies have now fallen to below pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic levels

HR1 potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, backward looking four-week rolling average, Great Britain, week ending 12 May 2019 to 16 January 2022



Source: Insolvency Service

Notes:

1. These data do not record the total number of redundancies; they record the number of potential redundancies filed on HR1 forms.

2. The four-week rolling average is presented to smooth the series and this is indexed (100 = weekly average from week ending 21 April 2019 to week ending 23 February 2020) to compare the latest data to a pre-coronavirus average. Industry level data prior to 21 April 2019 is not comparable because of recording differences, hence the index baseline starting at this point.

3. Dates relate to the date of receipt of the HR1 form.

4. For further methodology details see Strengths and Limitations.

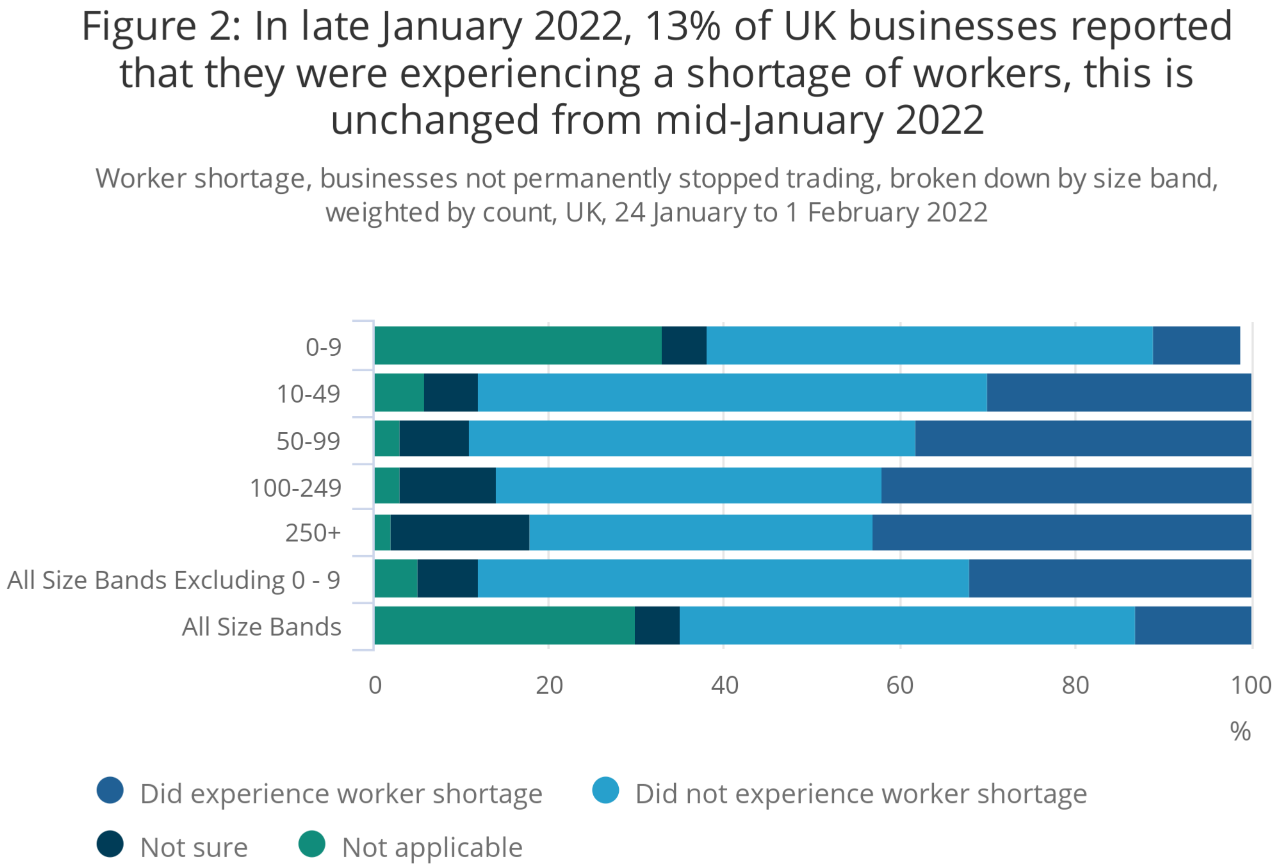
These data are available in the accompanying dataset.

4 . Business impact and insights

Initial results from Wave 49 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 10 January to 1 February 2022, with a response rate of 14.5% (5,551 responses). The survey was live for the period 24 January to 1 February 2022.

Figure 2: In late January 2022, 13% of UK businesses reported that they were experiencing a shortage of workers, this is unchanged from mid-January 2022

Worker shortage, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 24 January to 1 February 2022



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

Notes:

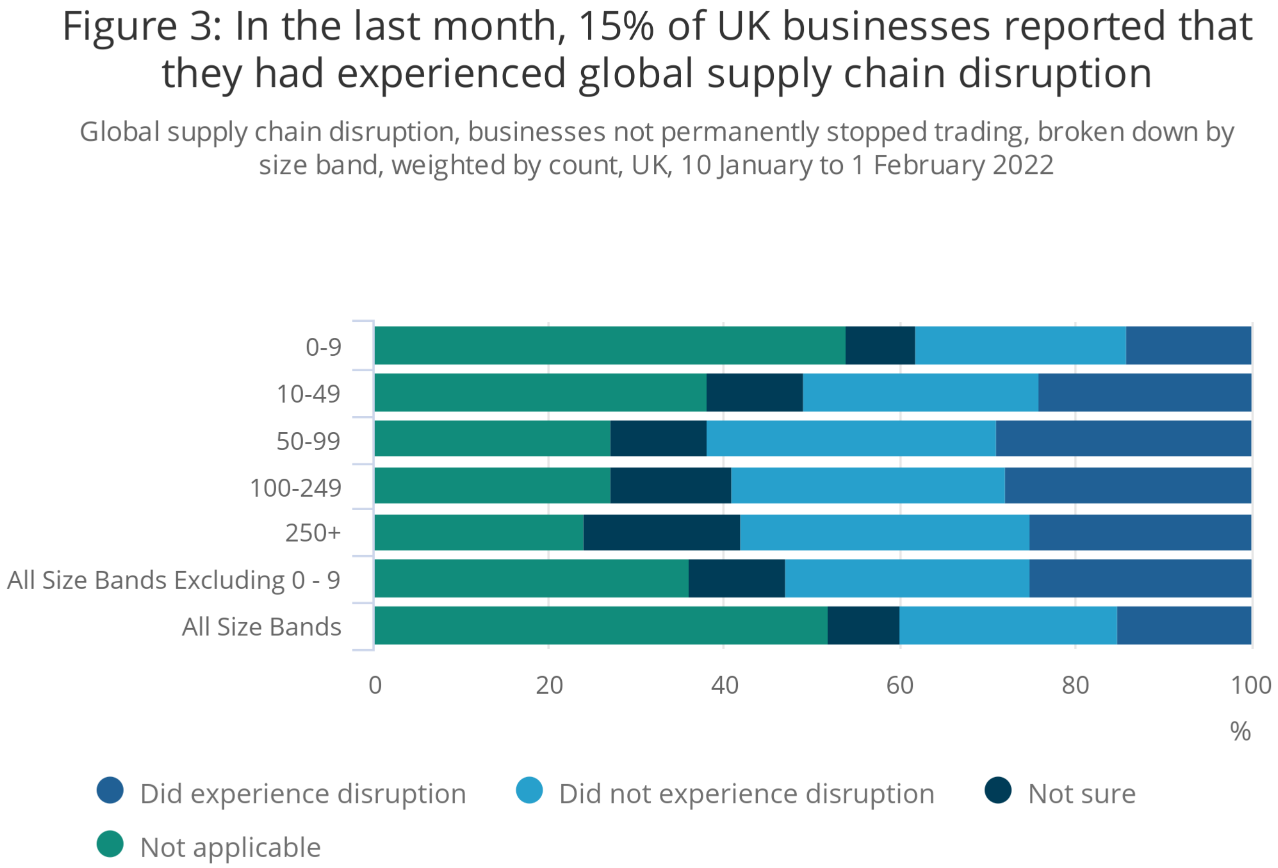
1. Initial weighted results, Wave 49 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

3. Size bands refer to the number of employees in a business.

Figure 3: In the last month, 15% of UK businesses reported that they had experienced global supply chain disruption

Global supply chain disruption, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 10 January to 1 February 2022



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

Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 49 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

3. Size bands refer to the number of employees in a business.

4. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 10 January to 1 February 2022. However, for questions regarding the last month, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (24 January to 1 February 2022).

5 . Online job adverts

Job adverts by category

These figures are experimental estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine, by category and by UK country and English 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.

Figure 4: The total volume of online job adverts on 28 January 2022 has increased 20% since 7 January 2022 to 141% of its pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) February 2020 average level

Volume of online job adverts by category, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 28 January 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. 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.

2. Users should note that week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage point changes observed in the charts and accompanying dataset.

Download this chart

.XLSX

The total volume of online job adverts on 28 January 2022 was at 141% of its February 2020 average level; this is the third consecutive week-on-week increase, following a dip in the volume of online job adverts over Christmas and New Year.

Of the 28 categories, 17 recorded a week-on-week increase in the volume of online job adverts, while 11 decreased compared with the previous week. The largest weekly increases were in "HR and recruitment" and "energy, oil and gas", which rose by 20% and 14%, respectively. Meanwhile, the largest weekly decreases were in "domestic help" and "travel and tourism", which fell by 16% and 10%, respectively.

Despite seeing a 4% fall from the previous week, "transport, logistics and warehouse" continues to be the category with the highest level of online job adverts when compared with its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level at 258%.

Job adverts by region

Figure 5: North East England is the region with the highest volume of job adverts at 166% of its pre-coronavirus, February 2020 average level

Volume of online job adverts by UK countries and English regions index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 28 January 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Download this chart

.XLSX

On 28 January 2022, of the 12 English regions and UK countries, 6 recorded increases in the number of online job adverts, 5 recorded decreases and 1 remained unchanged from the previous week. The largest weekly increase was in Northern Ireland, which rose by 12%. Meanwhile, the largest week-on-week decrease was in Wales, which fell by 7%. All UK countries and English regions remain above their February 2020 pre-coronavirus average level.

6 . Social impact of coronavirus

This section includes some results from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 19 to 30 January 2022. The survey went out to 4,496 adults in Great Britain and had a response rate of 77% (3,441 responses). Further information to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain is available in Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain.

Cost of living

In the period 19 to 30 January 2022, 69% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month; this was up slightly from 66% in the last period (6 to 16 January 2022). The most frequently reported reasons were:

- rising food shop prices (89%), a slight increase of 2 percentage points from the last period
- rising energy bills (80%), broadly unchanged from the last period
- increases to the price of fuel (68%), a slight decrease of 3 percentage points from the last period

Travelling to work

In the period 19 to 30 January 2022, the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who in the past seven days:

- travelled to work (both exclusively and in combination with working from home) increased slightly by 3 percentage points from the last period (6 to 16 January 2022) to 62%
- worked exclusively from home decreased slightly by 4 percentage points from the last period to 22%
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home was broadly unchanged from the last period at 16%

Shopping

Of the 96% of adults in Great Britain who reported leaving home in the past seven days (93% in the last period), the proportion that did so to shop for food and medicine increased slightly by 2 percentage points from the last period to 83%.

The proportion of these adults who shopped for things other than food and medicine in the past seven days increased slightly by 2 percentage points from the last period to 40%.

Face coverings

Of the 96% of adults in Great Britain who reported leaving home in the past seven days, the proportion that did so and reported wearing a face covering was unchanged from the last period at 95%.

Further breakdowns, such as the situation when a face covering was worn (for example, while shopping), and by country, is available in Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain.

7 . Data

System Average Price (SAP) of gas
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in the UK.

UK spending on credit and debit cards
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Experimental indicator for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's CHAPS data.

Advanced notification of potential redundancies
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Weekly dataset showing the number of potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, submitted to Insolvency Service via HR1 forms.

Daily UK flights
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Experimental daily UK flight numbers and rolling seven-day average, including flights to, from, and within the UK.

Weekly shipping indicators
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

Traffic camera activity
Dataset | Released 3 February 2022
Experimental daily traffic camera counts data for busyness indices covering the UK.

Users should note that this section lists a selection of the data available with this publication. For the full list of available datasets please see the accompanying dataset page.

8 . 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.

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.

Voluntary dissolution applications

A voluntary dissolution application is when a company applies to begin dissolution proceedings. As such, they effectively choose 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.

Compulsory dissolutions

When a company fails to file the required financial accounts and/or confirmation statements, if no contact is received by Companies House following a series of letters to the company and its officers, a first gazette notice is published in the Gazette, a notice of the Registrar's intention to dissolve the company.

9 . Measuring the data

UK coronavirus restrictions

A full overview of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries can be found here:

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland

These restrictions should be considered when interpreting the data featured throughout this bulletin.

10 . Strengths and limitations

Information on the strengths and limitations of the indicators in this bulletin is available in the Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology.

Potential redundancy data: methods for cleaning and comparison with other data sources

Advanced notifications of potential redundancies are submitted to the Insolvency Service (IS) via a HR1 form. The HR1 form submissions can also include contractual changes, changes to pensions, or employees being transferred to new sites. As we are only concerned with permanent dismissals, an automated cleaning process has been applied to remove cases that are not planned dismissals. Firstly, all cases with less than 20 proposed dismissals are removed as HR1 forms should only be submitted if the employer intends to make 20 or more dismissals. Secondly, we remove any observations containing any of the following words:

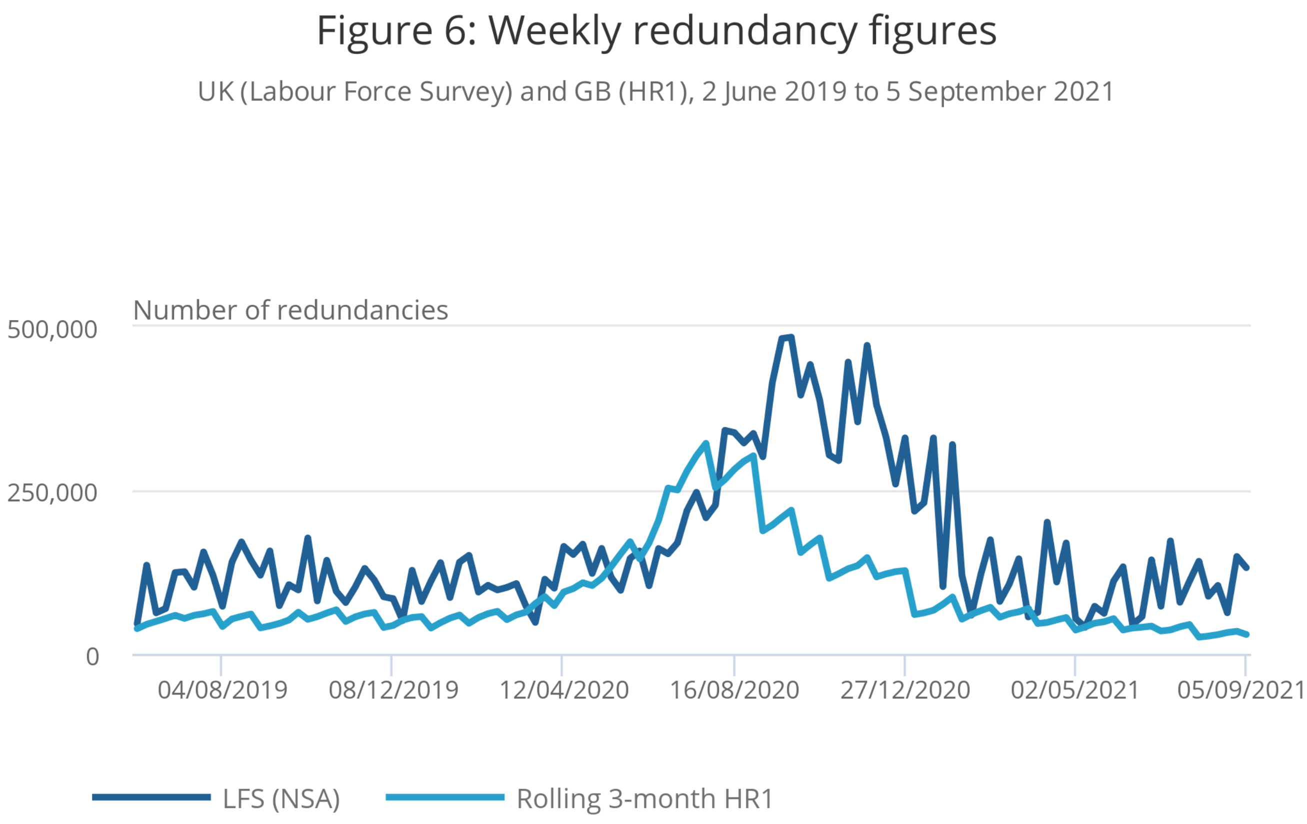
- "pension"
- "contractual"
- "terms" and "conditions"
- "transfer"
- "move"
- "TUPE" (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment))

IS publish monthly data on the total number of potential redundancies submitted in HR1 forms. IS data has had limited treatment to remove dismissals and reengagement in comparison with the data published here. We therefore expect our data to be consistently below IS published data but still follow a similar trend.

Comparing HR1 potential redundancy data with Labour Force Survey (LFS) redundancy data finds that HR1 data peaks earlier than LFS data. This is to be expected as HR1 is a notification of intention to dismiss whereas the LFS picks up redundancies that have occurred. The HR1 data are consistently lower than the LFS redundancy data, but this is also expected as the LFS picks up redundancies from smaller businesses and includes Northern Ireland data.

Figure 6: Weekly redundancy figures

UK (Labour Force Survey) and GB (HR1), 2 June 2019 to 5 September 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force Survey, Insolvency Service

Notes:

1. Not seasonally adjusted.

2. HR1 with cleaning applied.

11 . Related links

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

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain]
Bulletin | Released 21 January 2022
Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional]
Bulletin | Released 1 February 2022
Provisional counts of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

[Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK]
Bulletin | Released 2 February 2022
Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey (delivered in partnership with IQVIA, the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratories).