

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 17 November 2022

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These real-time indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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Notice

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This week the bulletin contains a reduced suite of indicators as we assess our future publication schedule. This will continue to be a weekly release, but the frequency of some indicators may change. If you have any questions or comments regarding this, please contact realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

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1 . Main points

- Consumer behaviour indicators showed mixed activity in the latest week with Revolut debit card transaction spending data falling in all but one of the reported sectors, while retail footfall increased to 104% of the level of the previous week; elsewhere the change in the number of in-store transactions at Pret A Manger varied between locations (Revolut, Springboard, Pret A Manger). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- Nearly half (46%) of trading businesses reported an increase in the price of goods or services bought in October 2022 compared with September 2022 (final results from Wave 69 of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#) (BICS)).
- The number of UK online job adverts increased in 18 of the 28 online job advert categories and 11 of the 12 UK countries and English regions on 11 November 2022 when compared to the previous week (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas fell by 9% in the week to 13 November 2022; this was 47% below the level of the equivalent week of 2021 and was 81% below the weekly peak level recorded on 28 August 2022 (National Grid).
- Road traffic levels were broadly stable in the week to 14 November 2022, as well as in comparison with the equivalent day of last year (Monday 15 November 2021); levels for cars and light goods vehicles remained broadly unchanged on the previous week, while heavy goods vehicles traffic levels increased by 2 percentage points ([Department for Transport](#)).

Results presented in this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision. Data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure representativity and relevance, which may mean indicators change at short notice.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
2. Users should note that card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.

3 . Consumer behaviour

In the week to 10 November 2022, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases was broadly unchanged from the previous week at 103% of its February 2020 average. Our [accompanying dataset: UK spending on credit and debit cards](#) is available.

Revolut debit card transaction data showed decreased spending in all but one of the reported sectors in the week to 13 November 2022, with "retail" having the largest decrease of 7 percentage points. "Travel and accommodation" was the only sector to see an increase in spending, of 9 percentage points from the previous week.

All categories except "travel and accommodation" were up on the equivalent period of last year, with "automotive fuel" having the largest increase of 30 percentage points, followed by "food and drink" and "retail", increasing by 18 and 17 percentage points respectively. Despite increased activity compared with last year, "entertainment" spending is the only category that is still yet to return to pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels. After peaking on 5 June 2022 at 99% of its February 2020 average, it is now at 78%. Our [accompanying dataset: Revolut spending on debit cards](#) is available.

Overall retail footfall increased in the week to 13 November 2022, to 104% of the level of the previous week. Footfall in high streets was largely responsible for this increase, at 107% of the level in the previous week, as footfall in shopping centres and retail parks were 102% and 100% of the level of the previous week, respectively.

Retail footfall in Wales and Northern Ireland decreased in the latest week but increased in the remaining 10 UK countries and English regions. The largest of these increases was in the North West, at 107% of the level in the previous week. Footfall in retail parks was closest to 2019 levels in the week to 13 November 2022, at 97%, while footfall in shopping centres was lowest at 82% of the 2019 level.

The number of in-store transactions at Pret A Manger showed a mixed picture in the week to 10 November 2022. It increased at five locations and decreased at four locations, while Yorkshire was broadly unchanged. The largest increase was at Manchester stores, where transactions increased by 5 percentage points. The biggest falls were seen at regional and London stations, where transactions fell by 18 and 16 percentage points respectively. These falls coincided with widespread rail disruption caused by the Tube strike on Thursday 10 November 2022 and disruption following the late cancellation of rail strikes on Saturday 5, Monday 7 and Wednesday 9 November 2022. Our [accompanying dataset: Transactions at Pret A Manger](#) is available.

In the week to 6 November 2022, the estimated demand for fuel per transaction increased by 2 percentage points from the previous week, to 90% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2021. Average fuel prices were 123% of the level in the equivalent week of 2021, broadly unchanged from the previous three weeks. Our [accompanying dataset: Automotive fuel spending](#) is available.

4 . Business and workforce

The number of UK online job adverts increased by 2% on 11 November 2022 compared with the previous week, with increases in 18 of the 28 online job advert categories. The largest increase was in the "HR and recruitment" category, which went up by 25%. However, this only returned it to a similar level seen a fortnight ago.

Compared with the equivalent day in 2021, total online job adverts fell by 17%. The largest falls were seen in the "manufacturing", "property", and "marketing, advertising and PR" categories, which were all 38% below this level. Only three of the online job advert categories were above the level seen on the equivalent day of 2021; the largest increase was in the "wholesale and retail" category, which was up 31%.

In the latest week, 11 of the 12 UK countries and English regions saw increases in online job adverts, with Wales remaining broadly unchanged. However, only the levels in Scotland increased from the equivalent week in 2021. Our [accompanying dataset: Online job advert estimates](#) is available.

Value Added Tax flash estimates

Turnover diffusion indices are an aggregate measure used to track whether most firms are reporting an increase or decrease in turnover in their Value Added Tax (VAT) returns. They are calculated as the percentage of firms with increasing turnover minus the percentage with decreasing turnover.

The indices are constructed to lie between 1 and negative 1, so an index of 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported an increase in turnover compared with the previous month than those reporting a decrease in turnover. Conversely, an index of negative 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported a decrease in turnover compared with the previous month.

More information on the compilation and methodology of these estimates can be found in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

Table 1: A net 4% of firms in the production industry reported increasing turnover in October 2022 when compared with the previous month

Value Added Tax turnover diffusion indices, day seven estimates, UK, May to October 2022, seasonally adjusted

	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Production	Construction	Services
May 2022	0.03	0.04	-0.02	0.04
Jun 2022	0.03	-0.09	-0.05	-0.09
Jul 2022	0.04	0.11	0.09	0.08
Aug 2022	0.05	0.07	0.01	0.00
Sep 2022	-0.11	-0.10	-0.05	-0.01
Oct 2022	-0.01	0.04	0.01	0.00

Source: HM Revenue and Customs – Value Added Tax (VAT) returns

Notes

1. These data are unweighted.
2. The industry contributions to gross domestic product (GDP) are; agriculture at 0.7%, production at 13.7%, construction at 6.4% and services at 79.2%.

The number of firms in the services industry reporting an increase in turnover in October 2022 was equal to the number of firms reporting a decrease. This compares with a net 3% reporting an increase in October 2021. In the production industries, 4% reported an increase in October 2022 compared with 8% in October 2021, and in the construction industry 1% reported an increase in October 2022 compared with 3% reporting a decrease in October 2021. A net 1% of firms in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industry reported decreased turnover in October 2022, which was the same as in October 2021.

Data for all available industries, including seasonally adjusted month-on-month estimates and non-seasonally adjusted month-on-month and month-on-year estimates, for turnover and expenditure, are available in our [accompanying dataset: VAT flash estimates](#).

5 . Data

[Automotive fuel spending](#)

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Estimated quantity of automotive fuel demand per average transaction is an experimental indicator used to isolate real demand after adjusting for growth in fuel prices.

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

[Revolut spending on debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Insight into the spending patterns of UK consumers from financial technology company Revolut.

[System Average Price \(SAP\) of gas](#)

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM).

[Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

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

Dataset | Released 17 November 2022

Experimental indicator for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's CHAPS data.

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](#).

6 . Glossary

Real-time indicator

A real-time 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.

7 . Measuring the data

Information on the methodology used to produce the indicators in this bulletin is available in the [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

8 . Strengths and limitations

These statistics have been produced to provide timely indicators of the effect of developing world events on the UK economy and society, using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or Experimental Statistics.

The data presented in this bulletin are reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. Indicators are swapped in and out of the publication based on their suitability and availability.

UK coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

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

Seasonality

Seasonal fluctuations are likely to be present in many of these indicators so caution must be applied when interpreting changes in series that are not seasonally adjusted.

9 . Related links

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#)

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, location of work, health and well-being from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#)

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary business survey (BICS) to deliver real-time information to help assess issues affecting UK businesses and economy, including financial performance, workforce, trade and business resilience.

10 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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