

Statistical bulletin

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

### 3 November 2022

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](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

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# 1 . Main points

- Many of the consumer behaviour indicators showed increased activity this week, with retail footfall in the week to 30 October 2022 increasing to 110% of the level of the previous week, coinciding with half-term school holidays in some parts of the UK (Springboard). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The number of UK online job adverts on 28 October 2022 was 16% lower than the equivalent day of 2021, but 19% above the February 2020 average; elsewhere, sales by small businesses were 4% higher than in September 2021 (not adjusted for inflation), while jobs in small businesses were 4% lower (Adzuna, Xero). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- Two in five (40%) businesses in late October 2022 had taken some form of action to reduce their energy costs over the last three months, while 39% of businesses plan to act in November 2022 to reduce their energy costs (final results from Wave 68 of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#) (BICS)).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas fell by 20% in the week to 30 October 2022 and was 74% below the level of the equivalent week of 2021; however, it was 102% above the February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline level (National Grid).
- The average number of daily ship visits decreased in the week to 30 October 2022, although the average number of cargo and tanker ship visits remained relatively stable; meanwhile, the number of UK flights in the week to 30 October 2022 was 87% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019 (exactEarth, EUROCONTROL). [Section 5: 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. The breaks in the shipping series are caused by technical issues.
2. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
3. 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.
4. Latest week-on-week movements in consumer behaviour indicators are impacted by changes in activity relating to the half-term school holidays in parts of the UK.

## 3 . Consumer behaviour

Users should note that the latest week-on-week movements in consumer behaviour indicators are impacted by changes in activity relating to the half-term school holidays in parts of the UK. Some areas, such as retail footfall, will see increased activity, while others will see reduced activity.

Overall retail footfall increased in the week to 30 October 2022, to 110% of the level of the previous week. Retail footfall in all 12 UK countries and English regions increased, with the largest increase seen in Northern Ireland, at 115% of the level in the previous week. In the week to 30 October 2022, overall UK retail footfall was at 92% of the level of the equivalent week of 2019; this is the highest level relative to 2019 recorded since the week ending 5 June 2022 (93%). Footfall in retail parks was the closest to 2019 levels, at 96%, while footfall in shopping centres was lowest at 85% of the 2019 level.

The number of in-store transactions at Pret A Manger in the week to 27 October 2022 increased in Scotland and Yorkshire by 9 and 8 percentage points, respectively. All other regions saw decreases or were broadly unchanged. The biggest decreases were seen in London city worker and London suburban stores, which both saw decreases of 5 percentage points. All transport location stores saw decreases this week, the largest being an 8 percentage point decrease in regional stations. Our [accompanying dataset: Transactions at Pret A Manger](#) is available.

The number of UK seated diners rose by 11 percentage points in the week to 30 October 2022, and was 130% of the level in the equivalent pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) week of 2019. In London, the number increased by 2 percentage points but was 7 percentage points lower than the equivalent week of 2019.

In the week to 27 October 2022, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases was unchanged from the previous week at 98% of its February 2020 average. Our [accompanying dataset: UK spending on credit and debit cards](#) is available.

Revolut debit card transaction data showed increased spending in all reported categories in the week to 30 October 2022, with "retail" having the largest increase of 18 percentage points. All categories except "travel and accommodation" were up on the equivalent period of last year, with "automotive fuel" having the largest increase of 27 percentage points, followed by "entertainment" and "retail" both increasing by 17 percentage points. Despite increased activity compared with last year, "entertainment" spending is the only category that is still yet to return to pre-coronavirus levels; after peaking on 5 June 2022 at 99% of its February 2020 average, it is now at 88%. Our [accompanying dataset: Revolut spending on debit cards](#) is available.

## 4 . Business and workforce

The number of UK online job adverts was broadly unchanged on 28 October 2022 compared with the same day the previous week. It was, however, 16% lower than the equivalent day of 2021 and 19% above the February 2020 average. Of the 28 job advert categories, 24 were below the level seen on the equivalent day of 2021, but only eight were below the February 2020 average. Of the 12 UK countries and English regions, 11 were below the levels seen in the equivalent day of 2021; however, all regions remained above the February 2020 average. Our [accompanying dataset: Online job advert estimates](#) is available.

Sales by small businesses recorded by Xero decreased by 6% in September 2022 compared with August 2022, but were 4% higher than September 2021. These figures are not adjusted for inflation. Jobs in small businesses were unchanged compared with the previous month and were 4% lower than September 2021. Our [accompanying dataset: Sales and jobs in small businesses](#) is available.

## 5 . Transport

In the week to 30 October 2022, the average number of daily ship visits decreased by 9% compared with the week ending 16 October 2022, from 270 visits to 245. The average number of cargo and tanker ship visits remained relatively stable at 86 visits. [Our accompanying dataset: Weekly shipping indicators](#) is available.

The number of UK flights in the week to 30 October 2022 increased to 87% of the level recorded in the equivalent week of 2019, but remained broadly unchanged compared with the previous week. [Our accompanying dataset: Daily UK flights](#) is available.

## 6 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 3 November 2022

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

### [Revolut spending on debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 3 November 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 3 November 2022

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

### [Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 3 November 2022

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

### [Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 3 November 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 3 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](#).

## 7 . 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.

## 8 . 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](#).

## 9 . 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.

## 10 . 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.

## 11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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