

Article

# Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: February 2023

Experimental estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on trading status, financial performance, workforce and business resilience.

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# 1 . Main points

- In December 2022, there was an increase of 3 percentage points in the proportion of UK single-site businesses currently trading that reported a decrease in turnover compared with November 2022, up from 27% to 30%; Scotland reported the largest rise in the proportion of single-site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover during this period, up 4 percentage points from 21% to 25%.
- In December 2022, there was a fall in the proportion of UK single-site businesses that reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought compared with November 2022 from 43% to 40%; Wales was the only country to report a rise in the proportion between these periods (up 3 percentage points to 48%) with the figure for Northern Ireland remaining broadly stable (43%).
- The proportion of UK single-site businesses that reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold compared with the previous calendar month fell from 19% in November to 18% in December 2022; Wales was the only UK nation that reported a rise in the price of goods or service sold between November and December 2022, up from 19% to 22%.
- In early January 2023, 12% of UK single-site businesses reported experiencing worker shortages, 3 percentage points lower than in mid-July 2022 (15%); three of the four UK nations reported a fall in worker shortages since mid-July 2022, with only Scotland reporting an increase, up 3 percentage points to 12%.
- There are interactive maps in Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this article, which allow users to explore how business impacts differ by geography, based on Wave 61 to Wave 74 weighted single-site estimates.

## 2 . About this article

The data presented in this article are weighted single-site estimates, Wave 61 to Wave 74 of the Office for National Statistics' [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\)](#).

All current Business insights and conditions (BICS) subnational estimates should be treated as experimental estimates and caution is advised when interpreting the figures, as BICS results are weighted by industry and by size band but not by region. Multi-site regional results are produced by apportionment by region rather than weighting by region.

Our BICS subnational release focuses on a single-business-site approach to reflect sites spread across various geographies. Single-site businesses represent approximately 98% of all businesses and half of total UK turnover and employment. BICS does not cover all sectors of the economy and only includes private sector businesses.

The data reported are subject to [uncertainty](#), for example, sampling variability and [non-sampling error](#). Further information on quality is available in our [Business insights and conditions Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#) and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

Experimental single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 60 (27 June to 10 July 2022) are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: July 2022 article](#).

## 3 . Financial performance

**Figure 1: Interactive map showing single-site subnational estimates at ITL 2 using weighted single-site Wave 63 to Wave 74 Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) estimates.**

**Decrease in turnover compared with previous calendar month, single-site businesses currently trading, weighted by count, broken down by region, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022**

Notes:

1. Weighted single-site estimates, Wave 63 to Wave 74 of the Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions Survey.
2. Data have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages less than 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer (a micro business has fewer than 10 employees).

**Download the data**

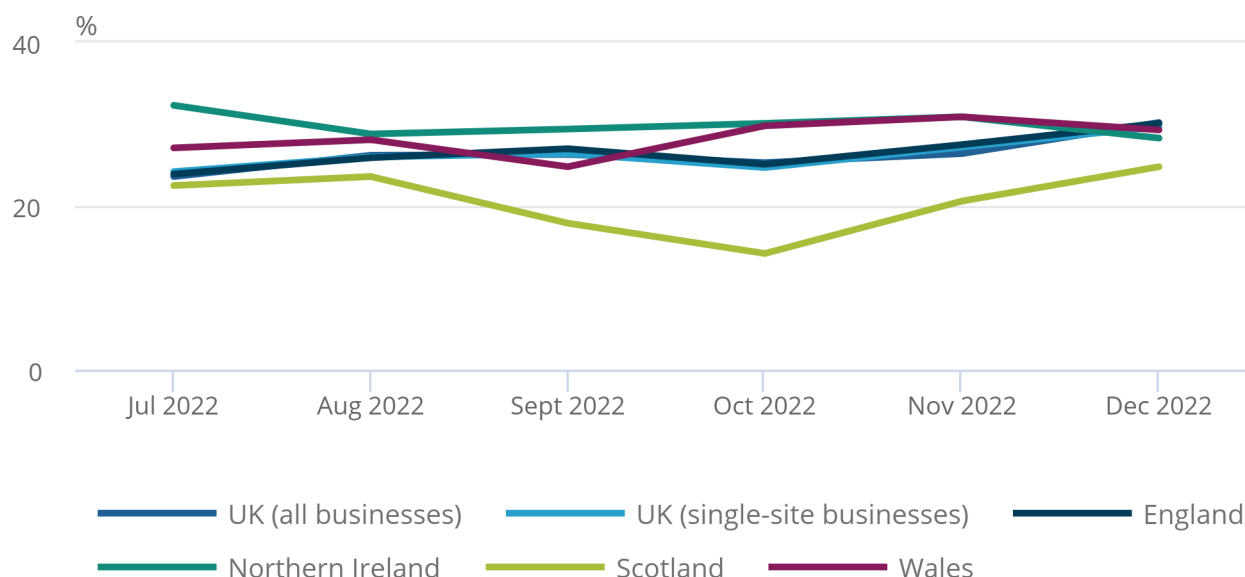
[.xlsx](#)

**Figure 2: England saw a 6-percentage point rise in single-site businesses reporting a decrease in turnover between July 2022 and December 2022**

Decrease in turnover compared to previous calendar month, single-site businesses currently trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

Figure 2: England saw a 6-percentage point rise in single-site businesses reporting a decrease in turnover between July 2022 and December 2022

Decrease in turnover compared to previous calendar month, single-site businesses currently trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022



**Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey**

**Notes:**

1. Final weighted all UK site results and weighted single-site estimates, Wave 63 to Wave 74 of the Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions Survey.
2. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.

Across UK trading single-site businesses, the following percentages were reported for turnover in December 2022, compared with data received in July 2022:

- 30% reported a decrease in turnover compared with the previous month, up from 24% in July 2022
- 47% reported turnover had stayed the same, down from 52% in July 2022
- 13% reported an increase in turnover, broadly stable with July 2022
- 11% were not sure, broadly stable with July 2022

In December 2022, England reported the highest percentage of single-site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover and saw the largest percentage point increase of all regions between July 2022 and December 2022, from 24% to 30%.

Northern Ireland experienced a 4-percentage point fall in the proportion of single-site businesses that reported a decrease in turnover between July 2022 and December 2022, from 32% to 28%. In each month from July 2022 to December 2022, Scotland was the UK nation with the lowest proportion of businesses that reported a decrease in turnover and dropped to 14% in October 2022. The figure was 25% in December 2022, 5 percentage points lower than the UK single-site total of 30%.

### **Figure 3: The West Midlands reported the highest percentage of single-site businesses that saw a decrease in turnover in December 2022**

**Decrease in turnover compared with previous calendar month, single-site businesses currently trading, broken down by country, region, and sector, weighted by count, UK, 1 December 2022 to 31 December 2022**

#### **Notes:**

1. For presentational purposes, response options have been combined.
2. For quality purposes, all industries have been collated to construction and production (production including: 2-digit SIC 5 to 29, inclusive), and services (including: 2-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
3. “\*\*” represents data that have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages less than 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer. (Micro business has fewer than 10 employees).

#### **Download the data**

[.xlsx](#)

Among the English regions, of businesses trading in December 2022, the West Midlands reported the highest percentage of businesses that saw a decrease in turnover, at 41%. This same region also reported the highest proportion of single-site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover for both the services (38%) and the joint construction and production sectors (55%).

In contrast, Yorkshire and the Humber had the lowest proportion of businesses reporting a decrease in turnover in the construction and production sector, at 23%, with the East Midlands reporting the lowest proportion in the services sector (23%).

## **4 . Prices**

### **Figure 4: Interactive map showing single-site subnational estimates at ITL 2 using weighted single-site Wave 63 to Wave 74 Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) estimates**

**Prices bought and sold increased, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by region, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022**

#### **Notes:**

1. Weighted single-site estimates, Wave 63 to Wave 74 of the Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions Survey.
2. Data have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages of less than 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer (a micro business has fewer than 10 employees).

**Download the data**

[.xlsx](#)

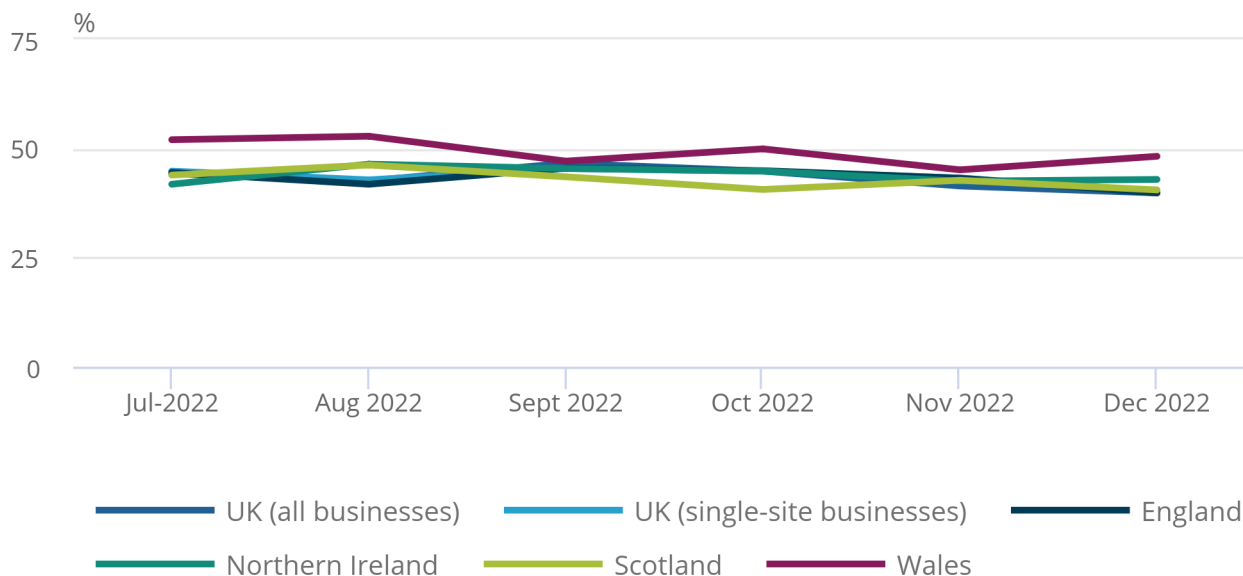
## Prices bought

**Figure 5: Nearly half (48%) of single-site businesses in Wales reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in December 2022 compared with November 2022**

Prices bought increased, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

Figure 5: Nearly half (48%) of single-site businesses in Wales reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in December 2022 compared with November 2022

Prices bought increased, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022



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

### Notes:

1. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

Between July and December 2022, there was a fall in the percentage of UK single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading that reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought, from 45% to 40%. However, the data suggest that some businesses continue to experience a continued increase in prices bought month on month.

Three of the four nations that make up the UK reported at least a 3-percentage point fall between July and December 2022 in the proportion of single-site businesses experiencing increases in prices bought compared with the previous calendar month. England reported the largest fall of 5 percentage points, from 45% to 40%. Only Northern Ireland reported a rise between these periods, up 1 percentage point from 42% in July 2022.

In December 2022, Wales reported the highest proportion of single-site businesses that experienced an increase in prices of goods or services bought, at 48%, 8 percentage points above the UK total. The nation with the lowest proportion reported in December 2022 was England, at 40%.

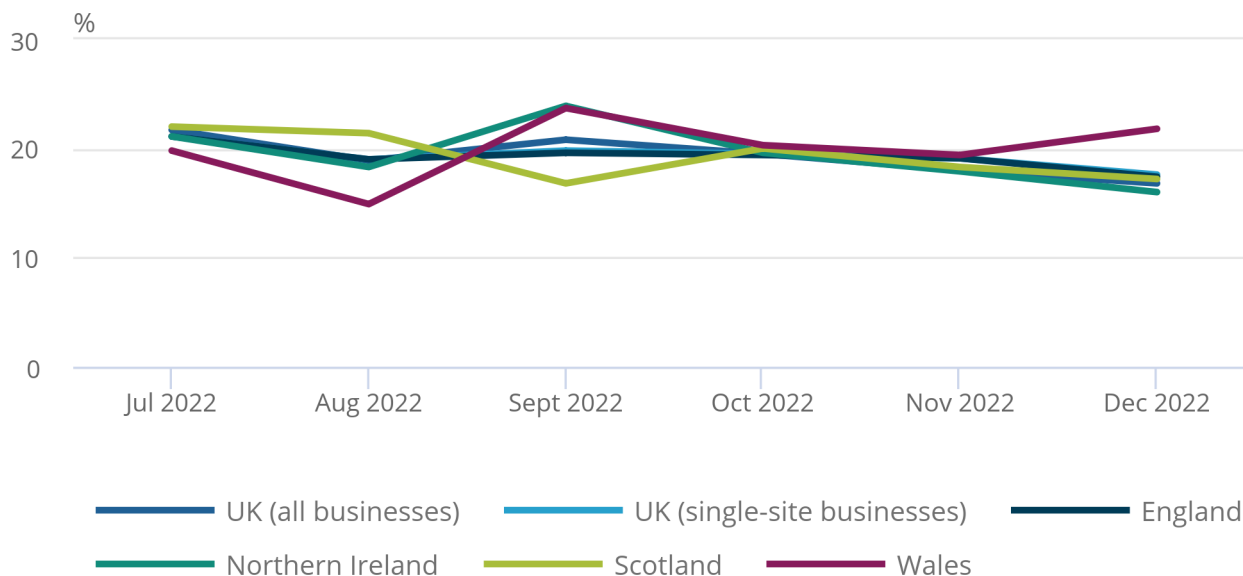
## Prices sold

**Figure 6: More than one in five (22%) single-site businesses in Wales reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold in December 2022 compared with November 2022**

Prices sold increased, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

### Figure 6: More than one in five (22%) single-site businesses in Wales reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold in December 2022 compared with November 2022

Prices sold increased, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022



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

#### Notes:

1. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

In December 2022, all UK countries except for Wales reported a fall in the proportion of single-site businesses that experienced an increase in the prices of goods or services sold, compared with July 2022. Wales reported the highest proportion of single-site businesses that experienced an increase in prices of goods or services sold in December 2022 compared with November 2022, at 22%, an increase of 2 percentage points from the proportion reported in July 2022. Conversely, Northern Ireland reported the lowest proportion of single-site businesses that experienced an increase in prices of goods or services sold in December 2022, at 16%, down from 21% in July 2022.

The UK overall saw a decrease in the proportion of single-site businesses that experienced an increase in prices of goods or services bought (40%) and sold (18%) in December 2022, down 5 and 4 percentage points, respectively from July 2022.

## 5 . Energy prices

## **Figure 7: Interactive map showing single-site subnational estimates at ITL 2 using weighted single-site Wave 63 to Wave 74 Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) estimates**

**Affected by energy price increases, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country and region, weighted by employment, UK, 8 August 2022 to 22 January 2023**

### **Notes:**

1. Weighted single-site estimates, Wave 63 to Wave 74 of the Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions Survey.
2. Data have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages of less than 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer (a micro business has fewer than 10 employees).



## Download the data

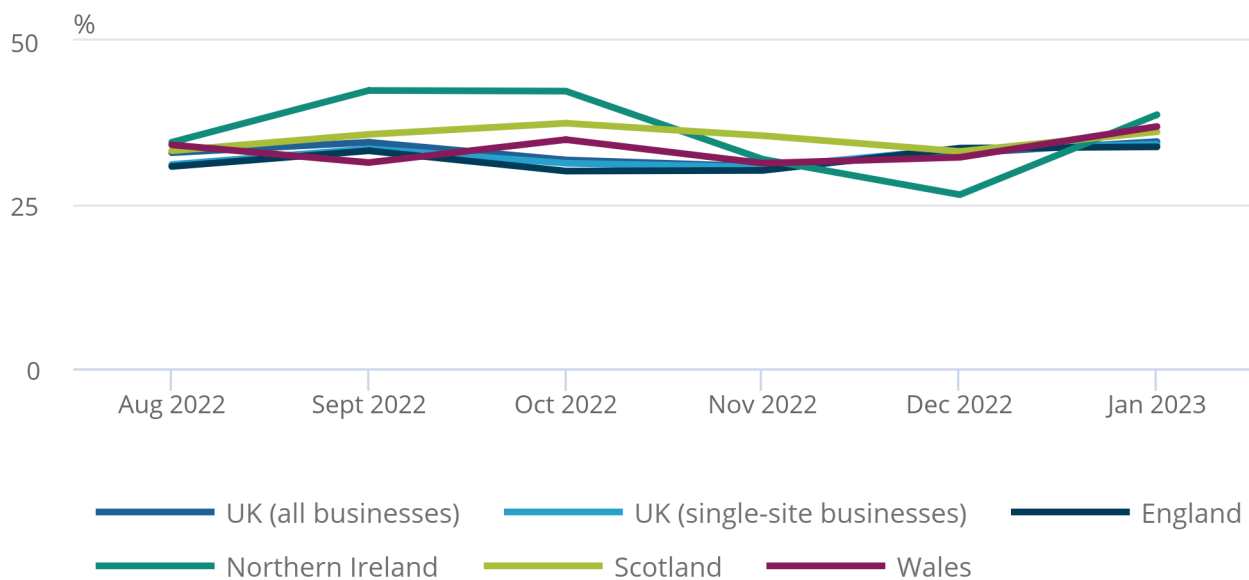
[.xlsx](#)

### Figure 8: Recent increases in energy prices have affected production and/or suppliers for 39% of single-site businesses in Northern Ireland

Energy prices, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading where production and or suppliers have been affected, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 8 August 2022 to 22 January 2023

### Figure 8: Recent increases in energy prices have affected production and/or suppliers for 39% of single-site businesses in Northern Ireland

Energy prices, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading where production and or suppliers have been affected, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 8 August 2022 to 22 January 2023



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

#### Notes:

1. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.
3. For presentation purposes some response options have been combined.

In early January 2023, 34% of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading reported that their production and/or suppliers had been affected by the recent increases in energy prices, an increase of 3 percentage points from 31% in early August 2022.

In early January 2023, Northern Ireland reported the largest proportion of single-site businesses affected by the recent increases in energy prices, at 39%. This was an increase of 4 percentage points from August 2022, the largest percentage point increase of any of the UK's four nations between these periods. However, because of the different structure of the Northern Ireland energy market, and that it is regulated by a different regulator compared with the rest of the UK, direct comparisons can be difficult.

England reported the smallest percentage of single-site businesses affected by recent increases in energy prices in both early August 2022 (31%) and early January 2023 (34%).

## 6 . Worker shortages

**Figure 9: Interactive map showing single-site subnational estimates at International Territorial level (ITL) 2 using weighted single-site Wave 61 to Wave 73 Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) estimates**

**Worker shortages, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by region, UK, 11 July 2022 to 8 January 2023**

### Notes:

1. Weighted single-site estimates, Wave 61 to Wave 73 of the Office for National Statistics' Business Insights and Conditions Survey.
2. Data have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages of less than 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer (a micro business has fewer than 10 employees).

### Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

In early January 2023, single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading in the UK were asked if they were experiencing a shortage of workers:

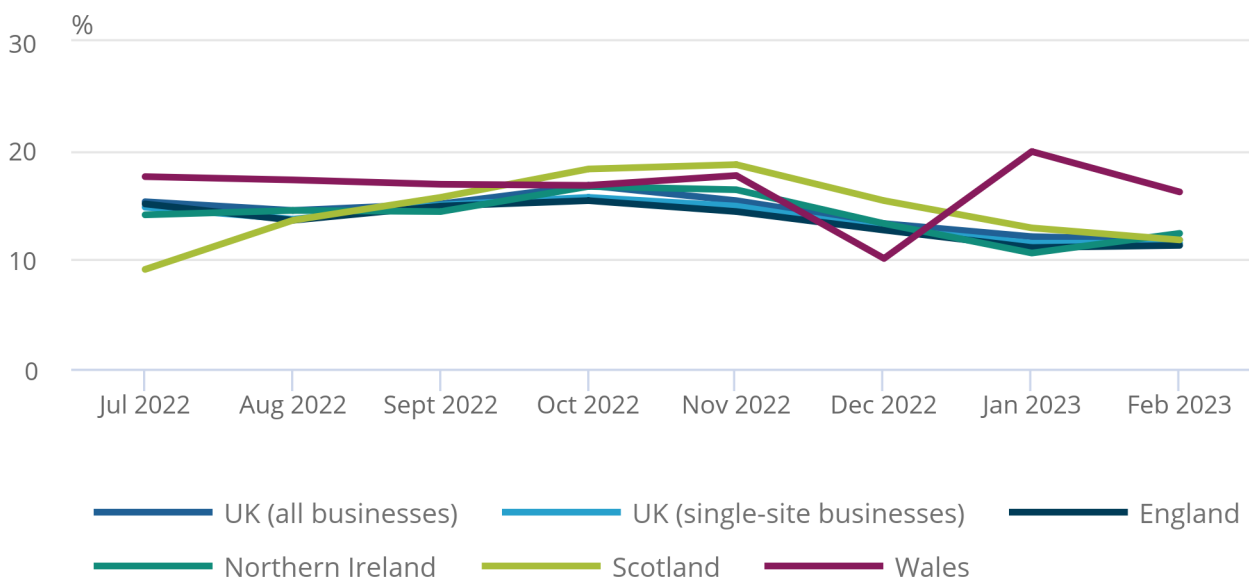
- 12% reported they were experiencing worker shortages
- 63% reported they were not experiencing worker shortages
- 5% reported they were not sure
- 21% reported the question was not applicable to them

**Figure 10: In early January 2023, one in six (16%) single-site businesses in Wales reported experiencing worker shortages**

Worker shortages, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 11 July 2022 to 8 January 2023

### Figure 10: In early January 2023, one in six (16%) single-site businesses in Wales reported experiencing worker shortages

Worker shortages, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 11 July 2022 to 8 January 2023



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

**Notes:**

1. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

In early January 2023, Wales, at 16%, reported the largest proportion of single-site businesses experiencing worker shortages, with the UK total at 12%. Scotland consistently reported the largest proportion of single-site businesses reporting a shortage of workers between late August 2022 and late November 2022, however between late August 2022 and early January 2023, the region saw a decrease from 18% to 12% in the proportion of businesses reporting worker shortages.

In early January 2023, the UK single-site overall percentage was at the lowest level reported (12%) since mid-July, having fallen from the highest level reported in late August 2022 (16%). Of all four UK nations, single-site businesses in England reported the lowest percentage of businesses experiencing worker shortages in early January 2023, at 11%.

## 7 . Industrial action

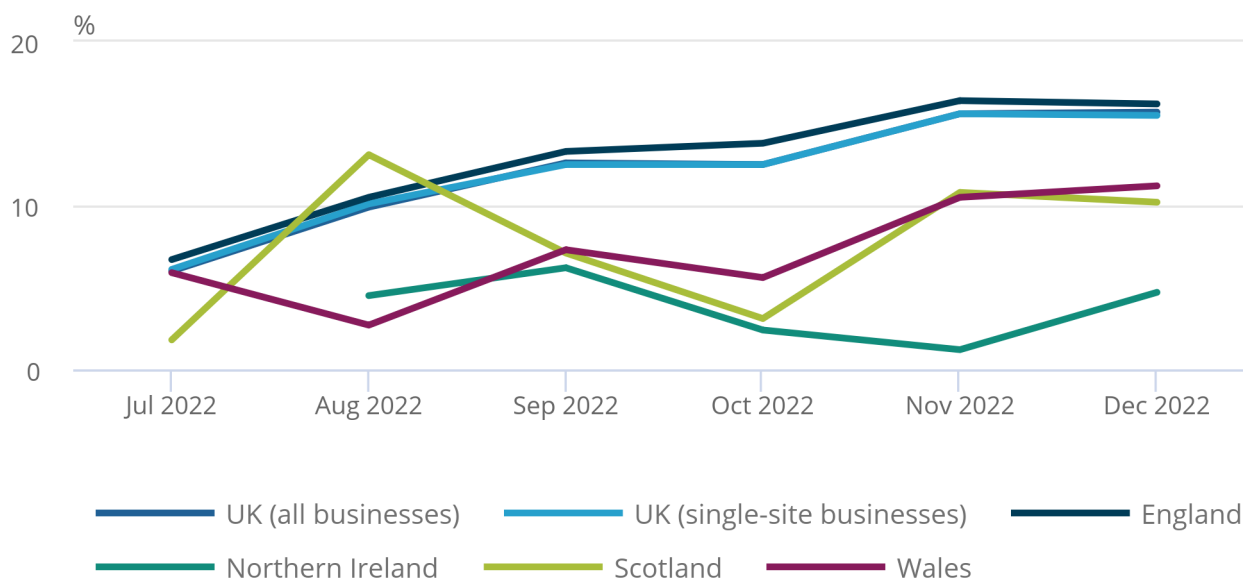
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked how they had been affected by industrial action (the Business Insights and Conditions Survey does not cover all sectors of the economy and only includes private businesses).

**Figure 11: In December 2022, approximately one in six (16%) private sector single-site businesses in England had been affected as a result of industrial action**

Single-site private sector businesses affected by industrial action, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022

Figure 11: In December 2022, approximately one in six (16%) private sector single-site businesses in England had been affected as a result of industrial action

Single-site private sector businesses affected by industrial action, percentage of single-site businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by country, weighted by count, UK, 1 July 2022 to 31 December 2022



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

### Notes:

1. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can affect the interpretation of these estimates.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.
3. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey does not cover all sectors of the economy and only includes private businesses.

In December 2022, across UK private sector single-site businesses:

- 16% reported their business was affected by industrial action
- 47% reported their businesses was not affected by industrial action
- 10% reported they were not sure
- 26% reported not applicable
- 1% preferred not to say

Of single-site businesses within the UK, England reported the largest proportion of businesses affected by industrial action every month since July 2022 (with the exception of August 2022). The region saw a rise between July and December 2022, from 7% to 16%.

Northern Ireland reported the lowest proportion of single-site businesses affected between September and December 2022, with only Wales reporting a lower percentage for August 2022. In December 2022, 5% of single-site businesses in Northern Ireland reported being affected by industrial action, 11 percentage points below the UK single-site total (16%).

### **Figure 12: Nearly a third of single-site construction and production businesses in London were affected by industrial action in December 2022**

**Affected by industrial action, private sector single-site businesses currently trading, broken down by country, region, and sector, weighted by count, UK, 1 December to 31 December 2022**

#### **Notes:**

1. For presentational purposes, response options have been combined.
2. For quality purposes, all industries have been collated to construction and production (production including: 2-digit SIC 5 to 29, inclusive), and services (including: 2-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
3. “\*” represents data that have been removed for confidentiality reasons. This includes percentages under 1%, breakdowns with a count of 10 or fewer, and breakdowns with a micro business count of 10 or fewer. (Micro business has fewer than 10 employees).
4. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey does not cover all sectors of the economy and only includes private businesses.

#### **Download the data**

[.xlsx](#)

In December 2022, among English regions, the East of England (21%) and the South West (21%) reported the highest proportion of single-site businesses affected by industrial action. These same regions also reported the largest percentage of single-site businesses affected within the services sector, at 21% and 22%, respectively.

In the joint construction and production sector, London reported the largest percentage of single-site businesses affected by industrial action, at 33%, 17 percentage points higher than the next highest region, the South West, at 16%.

Northern Ireland reported the lowest proportion of single-site businesses affected by industrial action in December 2022, at 5%, with the services sector in Northern Ireland (6%) also the least affected of any nation or region within the UK. In the latest Business Register and Employment Survey, employees in the UK, provisional results 2021, Northern Ireland has the largest share of public sector workers at 25% in 2021, compared with the UK (18%), followed by Wales (23%) and Scotland (23%), which may contribute to the lower proportion of businesses reporting they were affected by strike action.

## 8 . Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy data

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

Dataset | Released 16 February 2023

Experimental subnational estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) on topics such as trading status, financial performance, workforce and business resilience.

Geographical breakdowns include country and regional levels.

## 9 . Glossary

### Reporting unit

The business unit to which questionnaires are sent is called the reporting unit. The response from the reporting unit can cover the enterprise as a whole or parts of the enterprise identified by lists of local units.

## 10 . Data sources and quality

This article uses microdata from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) to help understand business impacts on the subnational UK economy. It predominately focuses on Wave 63 to 74 of BICS (8 August 2022 to 22 January 2023), covering the period since the last edition of this article.

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) is voluntary, and the results are [experimental](#).

Table 1: Sample and response rates for all businesses, single-site businesses and multi-site businesses for Waves 72, 73 and 74 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

<b>Wave</b>	<b>Wave 72</b>	<b>Wave 73</b>	<b>Wave 74</b>
<b>All businesses sample</b>	40,576	39,308	39,303
<b>All businesses rate</b>	24.5%	19.9%	26.2%
<b>Single-site businesses sample</b>	29,158	28,145	28,133
<b>Single-site businesses rate</b>	21.0%	17.4%	22.9%
<b>Multi-site businesses sample</b>	11,418	11,163	11,170
<b>Multi-site businesses rate</b>	33.4%	26.0%	34.5%

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

### Notes

1. Additional datasets including response rates, proportional breakdowns of single-site businesses compared with multi-site businesses, and the distribution of single-site businesses across industries can be found in our accompanying datasets.

In addition to single-site subnational estimates, we also provide multi-site subnational estimates. The multi-site methodology can be found in our [Understanding the business impacts of local and national restrictions, UK: July 2021 article](#) and further detail behind these estimates is presented in our [accompanying dataset](#).

All current BICS subnational estimates should be treated as experimental estimates and caution is advised when interpreting the figures, as BICS results are weighted by industry and by size band but not by region. Multi-site regional results are produced by apportionment by region rather than weighting by region.

The make-up of single-site businesses that responded within a certain region and wave can have an impact on subnational BICS estimates. This should be considered when interpreting results. Details of the make-up of single-site businesses can be found in our [accompanying dataset](#).

## Subnational BICS estimates

Subnational BICS estimates have been created by using the results collected in the fortnightly BICS survey. Each survey return from each reporting unit is then applied to the reporting unit's one local site. We have removed businesses with multiple sites from the sample and results in this analysis are based on single-site businesses only (as identified on the [Inter-Departmental Business Register \(IDBR\)](#)). Sections 2 and 3 of our [Business insights and impact on the UK and sub-national economy: 9 December 2022 article](#) outline in detail the methodology behind our single-site subnational estimates, and its impact compared with previously published results encompassing all businesses.

Aggregates of [International Territorial Level \(ITL 1\)](#) regions such as the UK or England may have higher or lower response proportions than any of their constituent regions because of differences in the sample composition in terms of company workforce.

Because the larger aggregate regions (such as the UK or England) generally have a larger proportion of smaller companies, if there is a substantial difference between the response proportions of larger and smaller companies, this will be reflected in the headline figures.

## Weighting

Single-site estimates in this release are weighted, ensuring estimates are representative of all single-site businesses. A detailed description of the weighting methodology and its differences to unweighted estimates is available in [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\): preliminary weighted results](#).

The [Scottish Government's Weighted estimates for Scotland for businesses with greater than ten or more than nine employees are available](#) on their website.

## Single-site sample

While the single-site approach is not representative of all UK businesses (as it excludes businesses with multiple sites), weighted single-site estimates are representative of all UK single-site businesses and approximately 98% of all businesses (and half of total UK turnover and employment). The [accompanying datasets](#) show how the composition by region and industry when using the single-sites approach holds up, when compared with the all-businesses sample.

## Measuring the data

The BICS survey is voluntary and may only reflect the characteristics of those that responded. More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#), updated on 24 January 2022.

## 11 . Related links

### [COVID-19 question bank](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This webpage provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data the ONS have in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.



## 12 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 16 February 2023, ONS website, article, [Business Insights and Impact on the UK Subnational Single-Site Economy: February 2023](#)