

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 8 June 2023

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly 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.

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Next release:
15 June 2023

Notice

8 June 2023

This release has a headline only format and is [accompanied by our full dataset](#).

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1 . Main points

- Latest results suggest business conditions continue to remain challenging, but estimates show small signs of positive improvement for some measures; examples include a stable proportion of businesses reporting they were able to get materials, goods and services from within the UK, and a higher proportion of businesses reporting having fewer concerns for their business.
- Nearly two-thirds (65%) of trading businesses reported that they were able to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK in April 2023, unchanged from March 2023.
- When asked in May 2023, 68% of businesses reported they had some form of concern for June 2023, down from the 71% reporting concerns the previous month for May 2023, and the lowest percentage reported this year; those that reported energy prices as their main concern fell from 18% for May 2023 to 15% for June 2023, and concerns about inflation of goods and services prices fell from 16% to 15%.
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of businesses were not experiencing worker shortages in late May 2023; 13% reported they did have shortages and the remainder selected “not sure” or “not applicable”, stable with late April 2023.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) of businesses reported that their employees’ hourly wages had increased in April 2023 compared with March 2023 (14%); this was 48% in April 2023 for businesses with 10 or more employees compared with March 2023 (23%).
- In April 2023, fewer than 1 in 10 (9%) businesses were directly or indirectly affected by industrial action; of these, 24% reported they were unable to fully operate as a consequence and 32% selected “other” as a reason, for example, reduced demand for goods and/or services and a fall in the number of customers.

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 83 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 15 May to 28 May 2023.

The data reported within BICS bulletins and datasets are estimates that 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 74 are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: February 2023 article](#).

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

Figure 1: Headline figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. For presentational purposes, some response options have been excluded.
2. Data are plotted in the middle of each wave.

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The percentage of businesses that reported they were trading in late May 2023 was 95%, with 87% fully trading and 8% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 3% of businesses reported “temporarily paused trading” and 2% “permanently ceased trading” as their business’s trading status.

3 . Exporting and importing

Of currently trading businesses with 10 or more employees, 19% had exported and 23% imported in the last 12 months.

Those businesses that had exported and/or imported in the last year were asked how their exporting and importing in April 2023 compared with April 2022, and which challenges they had experienced an increase in compared with the previous calendar month.

Figure 2: Exporting and importing figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. Exporting or importing compared with the same month last year: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees and had reported they had exported or imported in the last year. For presentational purposes, response options have been combined.
2. Exporting or importing challenges: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees, reported they had exported or imported in the last year, and reported how their exports or imports were affected. Businesses may report that exporting or importing has not been affected but are still able to report challenges.
3. Caution should be taken when interpreting these results based on the specific routing of this question meaning that only a small number of businesses responded.
4. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

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Further industry and size band breakdowns for all exporting and importing questions are available in our [accompanying dataset](#).

4 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

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

Dataset | Released 8 June 2023

Weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. This dataset includes additional information collected as part of the survey not presented in this publication.

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

Dataset | Released 27 April 2023

Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. These data are not official statistics but have been developed to deliver timely indicators to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other events.

Access to microdata

You can access the microdata for Waves 1 to 82 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) through the Secure Research Service (SRS). The BICS microdata for each wave are released on a rolling basis in the week following the publication of each wave. The microdata are made confidential and do not disclose information on any specific business.

Only researchers accredited under the [Digital Economy Act, as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website](#) are able to access data in the SRS. You can apply for accreditation through the [Research Accreditation Service \(RAS\)](#). You need to have relevant academic or work experience and must successfully attend and complete the assessed Safe Researcher Training.

To conduct analysis with microdata from the SRS, a project application must be submitted to the [Research Accreditation Panel \(RAP\), as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website](#). To access the SRS, you must also work for an organisation with an Assured Organisational Connectivity agreement in place.

5 . 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.

6 . Measuring the data

More quality and methodology information (QMI) 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.

The BICS is voluntary, and the results are experimental. More information is available in our [Guide to experimental statistics](#).

Table 1: Sample and response rates for Wave 81, 82 and 83 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	4 May 2023 Publication Wave 81	18 May 2023 Publication Wave 82	8 June 2023 Publication Wave 83
Sample	39,118	38,950	38,939
Response	10,437	9,558	10,747
Rate	26.7%	24.5%	27.6%

Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Response rates for all waves can be found in the accompanying dataset.

The results are based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly BICS, which captures businesses' views on financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The Wave 83 survey was live for the period 15 May 2023 to 28 May 2023. The [BICS survey questions](#) are available.

Coverage

The Monthly Business Survey (MBS) covers the UK for production and Great Britain (GB) only for services. The Retail Sales Index (RSI) and construction are GB-focused. Therefore, the BICS will be UK-focused for production-based industries but GB-focused for the other elements of the economy covered. The industries covered are:

- non-financial services (includes professional, scientific, communication, administrative, transport, accommodation and food, private health and education, and entertainment services)
- distribution (includes retail, wholesale, and motor trades)
- production (includes manufacturing, oil and gas extraction, energy generation and supply, and water and waste management)
- construction (includes civil engineering, housebuilding, property development and specialised construction trades such as plumbers, electricians, and plasterers)

The following industries are excluded from the survey:

- agriculture
- public administration and defence
- public provision of education and health
- finance and insurance

For more information on the methodology of producing the BICS, such as [weighting](#), please see our [BICS QMI report](#).

7 . Strengths and limitations

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#).

8 . Related links

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators](#)

Bulletin | Updated frequently

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.

[Cost of living latest insights](#)

Web page | Updated frequently

The latest data and trends about the cost of living. Explore changes in the cost of everyday items and how this is affecting people.

[COVID-19 question bank](#)

Web page | Updated frequently

This web page 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 has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

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

Article | Released 16 February 2023

Experimental estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on topics such as prices, worker shortages and workforce status. Geographical breakdowns include country, regional and local authority levels.

[Characteristics of homeworkers, Great Britain: September 2022 to January 2023](#)

Article | Released 13 February 2023

Analysis of homeworkers, including prevalence of hybrid working, and breakdowns by personal characteristics. Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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