Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 11 April 2024

Early data on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

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1 . Main points

- In the latest week, aggregate UK spending on credit and debit cards decreased by 1%; this was 4% lower than the level in the equivalent week of 2023 (Bank of England CHAPS). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).

- The total number of online job adverts on 5 April 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week; this was 19% below the level seen for the equivalent period of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: B--usiness and workforce](#).

- Looking ahead to May 2024, 21% of businesses expect their turnover to increase, 56% to stay the same, 10% to decrease, and 13% were unsure; this is broadly unchanged from the previous month (initial results from wave 106 of the Business insights and conditions survey). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).

- In the week up to 7 April 2024, the System Price of electricity and the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 36% and 6%, respectively, when compared with the previous week; both also remained lower than the levels seen for the equivalent week of 2023, by 52% and 40%, respectively (Elexon, National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).

These are official statistics in development, and we advise caution when using the data. The data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure they are representative and relevant, which may mean indicators change at short notice. Read more in [Section 9: Measuring the data. section](#).

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.

2. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.

3. Indicators with SA in the title have been seasonally adjusted.

3 . Consumer behaviour

UK spending on debit and credit cards: weekly, seasonally adjusted CHAPS-based indicator

Figure 1: Seasonally adjusted "delayable" credit and debit card spending has trended upwards since February 2024, increasing 2% over the previous week

Index of credit and debit card spending, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, Week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 4 April 2024

Figure 1: Seasonally adjusted "delayable" credit and debit card spending has trended upwards since February 2024, increasing 2% over the previous week

Index of credit and debit card spending, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, Week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 4 April 2024
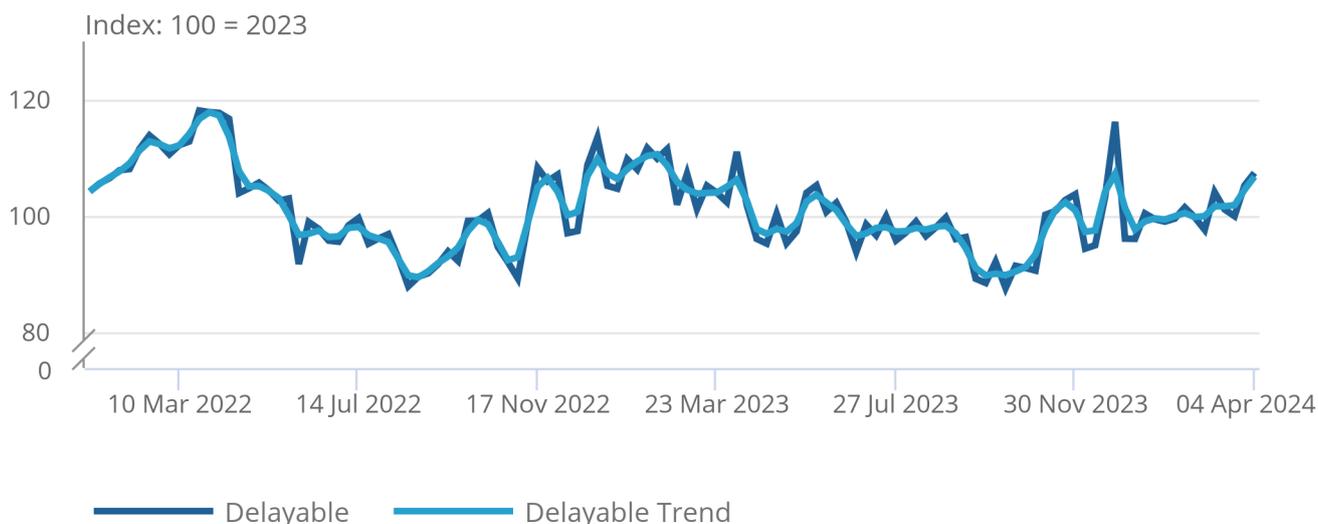
Source: Calculations from the Office for National Statistics and Bank of England

Notes:

1. Users should note that the weekly payment data show the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is a time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.

2. Percentage difference is derived from the current and previous index value before rounding.

3. Seasonal adjustment and trend estimates are calculated by the Office for National Statistics using data provided by the Bank of England.

4. Users should note that all series have been re-indexed, using their average value from 2023.

Users should note that the "work-related" and "social" CHAPS series have been withdrawn in 2024 because of sample population issues. We will continue publishing the aggregate, staple and delayable series while we are undertaking a review of the component series and will provide an update in due course. Please note that the "work-related" and "social" categories still contribute to the "aggregate" series.

In the latest week, spending categories, when seasonally adjusted, recorded the following changes:

- "aggregate" decreased by 1%

- "delayable" increased by 2%

- "staple" decreased by 1%

When compared with the same week in 2023, the spending categories, when seasonally adjusted, recorded the following changes:

- "aggregate" decreased by 4%

- "delayable" decreased by 3%

- "staple" decreased by 8%

The monthly and weekly seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, and the monthly and daily non-seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, are available in our accompanying UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset.

UK spending on debit and credit cards: monthly, seasonally adjusted (SA) CHAPS-based indicator

In March 2024, the SA CHAPS-based aggregate indicator of credit and debit card spending increased by 3% when compared with the previous month, and increased by 2% when compared with March 2023.

After seasonal adjustment, the "staple" category was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous month, while the "delayable" category increased by 2%. The "staple" category was also broadly unchanged when compared with March 2023, and the "delayable" category decreased by 2%.

The monthly and weekly seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, and the monthly and daily non-seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, are available in our accompanying UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset, which includes methodological notes that users should take into consideration. The monthly CHAPS index is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), rather than being an additional series that is produced and validated by the Bank of England.

National retail footfall

Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 7 April 2024 increased to 103% of the level in the previous week

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK 1 January 2023 to 7 April 2024

Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 7 April 2024 increased to 103% of the level in the previous week

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK 1 January 2023 to 7 April 2024

Index: 100 = January 2022

Source: MRI OnLocation (previously known as Springboard)

Notes:

1. The decrease in the final weeks of 2023 and early 2024 is in line with seasonal trends seen in previous years.

Overall retail footfall in the week to 7 April 2024 increased to 103% of the level seen in the previous week, and 98% of the level in the equivalent week of 2023.

Shopping centre footfall saw the largest week-on-week increase across the three location categories, rising to 105% of the level seen in the previous week. Retail park footfall increased to 104%, while high street footfall increased to 102%. When compared with the same period of 2023, retail park and shopping centre footfall increased to 104% and 101%, respectively, while high street footfall decreased, falling to 94% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

Overall retail footfall increased in 9 of the 12 UK countries and regions when compared against the previous week. The largest increases were seen in the South East and the East of England, rising to 107% and 106% of the level in the previous week, respectively. The largest week-on-week decrease was seen in Scotland, decreasing to 95%.

When compared against the equivalent week of the previous year, overall retail footfall decreased in 8 of the 12 UK countries and regions. The largest decreases were seen in Scotland and Wales, falling to 89% and 91% of the equivalent week in 2023, respectively.

4 . Business and workforce
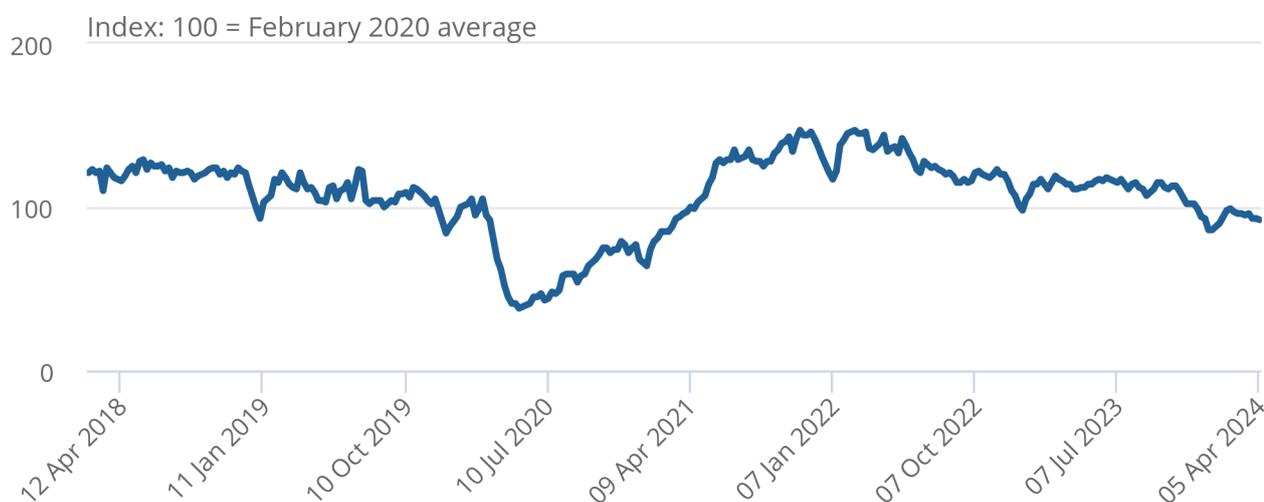
Online job adverts

These figures are innovative estimates of online job adverts by category, UK country, and English region, provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. 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 our Vacancy Survey.

Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 5 April 2024 was 19% below the level seen in the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 5 April 2024

Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 5 April 2024 was 19% below the level seen in the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 5 April 2024

Source: Adzuna

Notes:

1. Further category breakdowns are included in our Online job advert estimates dataset, and more details on the methodology can be found in our Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics methodology.

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 chart and our Online job advert estimates dataset.

The number of online job adverts on 5 April 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week. Of the 12 UK countries and English regions, 9 decreased, 1 increased and 2 remained broadly unchanged.

The total number of online job adverts fell by 19% when compared with the equivalent period of 2023, with all regions seeing a decrease when compared with the previous year. The largest decreases occurred in Scotland and London, decreasing by 28% and 25%, respectively.

When compared with the equivalent period of 2023, the total number of online job adverts fell in 25 of the 28 job categories. The largest decreases were seen in the "Construction and trades" and "Domestic Help" categories, falling by 49% and 48%, respectively. The remaining 3 of the 28 job categories increased when compared with the equivalent period of 2023, with the largest being seen in the "Part time and weekend" category, which increased by 118%.

Our accompanying Online job advert estimates dataset is available.

Business impact and insights

Table 1: Looking ahead to May 2024, business expectations for turnover were broadly unchanged from the previous month

Business turnover expectations, businesses currently trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 April 2023 to 31 May 2024

Dates	Expect turnover to increase	Expect turnover to stay the same	Expect turnover to decrease	Not sure
1 April 2023 to 30 April 2023	21.6%	52.6%	12.3%	13.5%
1 May 2023 to 31 May 2023	18.8%	53.4%	12.7%	15.1%
1 June 2023 to 30 June 2023	21.2%	53.6%	12.1%	13.2%
1 July 2023 to 31 July 2023	18.9%	53.4%	13.4%	14.3%
1 August 2023 to 31 August 2023	15.2%	54.1%	16.6%	14.2%
1 September 2023 to 30 September 2023	17.8%	55.0%	14.8%	12.4%
1 October 2023 to 31 October 2023	18.0%	54.3%	16.3%	11.5%
1 November 2023 to 30 November 2023	16.9%	55.5%	14.8%	12.8%
1 December 2023 to 31 December 2023	16.2%	48.8%	23.1%	11.9%
1 January 2024 to 31 January 2024	11.8%	50.1%	25.6%	12.6%
1 February 2024 to 29 February 2024	18.3%	52.8%	14.2%	14.8%
1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024	22.3%	54.1%	10.4%	13.1%
1 April 2024 to 30 April 2024	20.2%	56.0%	9.9%	14.0%
1 May 2024 to 31 May 2024	20.9%	55.9%	10.3%	13.0%

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

Notes

1. Final weighted results from Wave 104 and initial weighted results from Wave 106 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

2. Initial results from Wave 106 of our Business insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) were collected from 2 April to 9 April 2024, with a response rate of 20.7% (9,636 responses).

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

4. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) collects data from selected industries and does not have full coverage of the UK economy. For more information on the industries covered in the BICS sample, see ourBusiness Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) QMI.

Advanced notification of potential redundancies

Calculated as a four-week rolling average, the number of potential redundancies in the week to 31 March 2024 was 15% above the level in the equivalent week of 2023, while the number of employers proposing redundancies was 3% above the level in the equivalent week of 2023.

Comparisons with the equivalent period a year ago help account for any seasonal impacts. For more information, our accompanying Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset is available.

5 . Energy

System Average Price (SAP) of gas

The System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 6% in the week to 7 April 2024, when compared with the previous week. This was 40% lower than the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying System Average Price of gas dataset is available.

System Price of electricity

The System Price of electricity decreased by 36% in the week to 7 April 2024 when compared with the previous week. This price was 52% lower than the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying System Price of electricity dataset is available.

6 . Transport

Traffic camera activity

The average traffic camera activity for cars in London decreased by 1% in the week to 7 April 2024 when compared with the previous week. In the same period, average pedestrian and cyclist levels in London increased by 6%.

Our accompanying Traffic camera activity dataset is available.

Daily UK flights

In the week to 7 April 2024, the daily average number of UK flights increased by 7% when compared with the previous week and was 4% higher than during the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying Daily UK flights dataset is available.

7 . Data

[Online job advert estimates](#)
Dataset | Released 11 April 2024
Weekly snapshot of online job advert indices covering the UK job market. These are official statistics in development. Source: Adzuna

[UK spending on credit and debit cards](#)
Dataset | Released 11 April 2024
Daily, weekly and monthly data showing seasonally adjusted and non-seasonally adjusted UK spending using debit and credit cards. These are official statistics in development. Source: CHAPS, Bank of England

[System Average Price (SAP) of gas](#)
Dataset | Released 11 April 2024
Daily data showing System Average Price (SAP) of gas, and rolling seven-day average, traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM). These are official statistics in development. Source: National Gas Transmission

[System Price of electricity](#)
Dataset | Released 11 April 2024
Daily data showing the System Price of electricity, and rolling seven-day average, in Great Britain. These are official statistics in development. Source: Elexon

[Daily UK flights](#)
Dataset | Released 11 April 2024
Daily data showing UK flight numbers and rolling seven-day average, including flights to, from, and within the UK. These are official statistics in development. Source: EUROCONTROL

This section lists a selection of the data available in this publication. For the full list of available datasets, please see our [accompanying dataset page](#).

8 . 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 estimates, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

9 . Measuring the data

Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as "official statistics in development". Until September 2023, these were called "experimental statistics". Read more about the change in our Guide to official statistics in development.

We are developing how we collect and produce the data to improve the quality of these statistics. Read more in our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article.

Once the developments are complete, we will review the statistics with the Statistics Head of Profession. We will decide whether the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or whether further development is needed. Production may be stopped if they are not of sufficient quality or value. Users will be informed of the outcome and any changes.

We value your feedback on these statistics. Contact us at realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

10 . 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 Official Statistics in development.

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.

11 . Related links

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain
Bulletin | Released fortnightly
Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, well-being and shortages of goods 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 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. These are official statistics in development

12 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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