

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 23 May 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, overall retail footfall fell by 1% while the annual growth rate in average fuel prices rose by 1 percentage point, when compared with the previous week (MRI OnLocation, Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The total number of online job adverts on 17 May 2024 decreased by 1% from the level in the previous week and was 19% lower than the equivalent week of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- Approximately one in eight (13%) trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold in April 2024 when compared with March 2024, up 4 percentage points from last month; this was the largest proportion reported since June 2023, with many businesses commenting that they have been unable to absorb the cost of the National Living Wage increase (final results from [wave 108 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#)).
- In the week to 19 May 2024, the System Price of electricity increased by 29%, while the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 4% when compared with the previous week; however, both were higher than the equivalent week of 2023, by 10% and 2%, respectively (Elexon, National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- The daily average number of UK flights increased by 1% in the week to 19 May 2024 and was up 5% on the equivalent week of 2023 (EUROCONTROL). [Section 6: Transport](#).

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](#).

## 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

### Automotive fuel spending

The annual growth rate in the estimated demand for fuel per transaction was negative 4% in the week to 12 May 2024. This was a decrease of 1 percentage point when compared with the previous week and was 7 percentage points lower than in the equivalent period of last year.

In the same week, the annual growth rate in average fuel prices was 2%. This was an increase of 1 percentage point from a 1% growth rate in the previous week, and was 13 percentage points higher than in the equivalent period of last year.

Our accompanying [Automotive fuel spending dataset](#) is available.

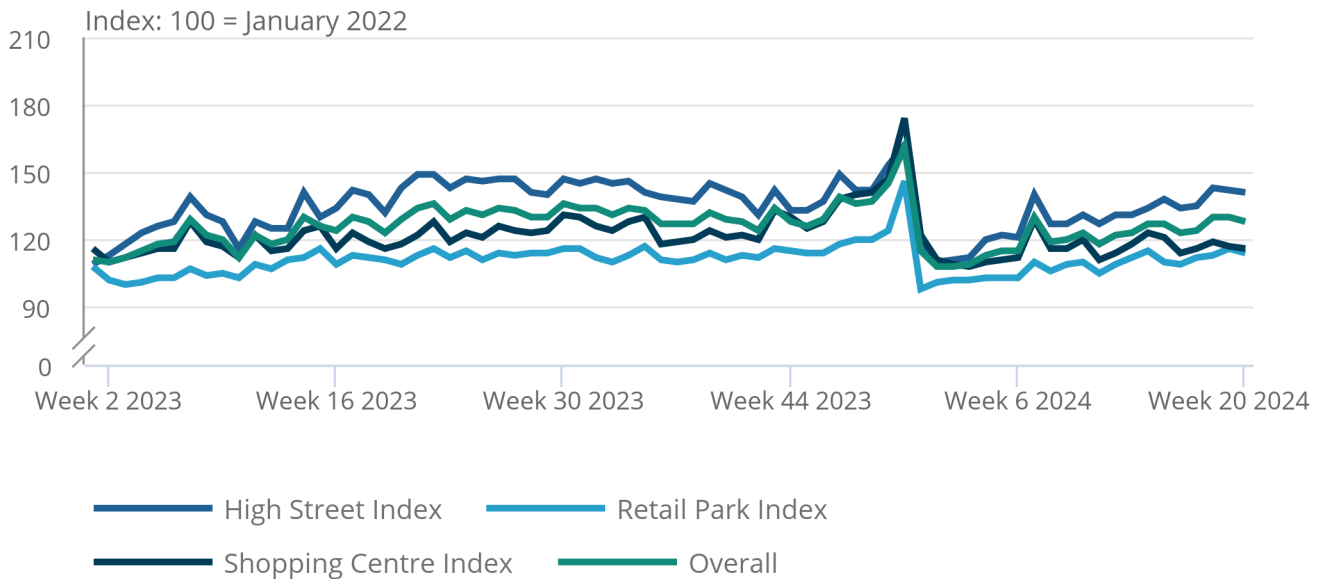
## National retail footfall

**Figure 1: In the week to 19 May 2024, overall retail footfall decreased by 1% when compared with both the previous week and the equivalent week of 2023**

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 19 May 2024

Figure 1: In the week to 19 May 2024, overall retail footfall decreased by 1% when compared with both the previous week and the equivalent week of 2023

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 19 May 2024



**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 19 May 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week and was also 1% below the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

All three location categories decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week. When compared with the equivalent week in 2023, two of the three location categories saw a decrease, with high street footfall falling by 3% and shopping centre footfall falling by 1%. The remaining category, retail park footfall, saw an increase of 4%.

Overall retail footfall decreased in 10 of the 12 UK countries and English regions when compared with the previous week and remained broadly unchanged in the remaining 2. The largest decreases were seen in Northern Ireland, which fell by 8%, followed by the East of England and Wales, which both fell by 4%.

When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, 7 of the 12 UK countries and regions saw a decrease, with the largest decrease seen in Wales, falling to 6% below the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

## 4 . Business and workforce



## Online job adverts

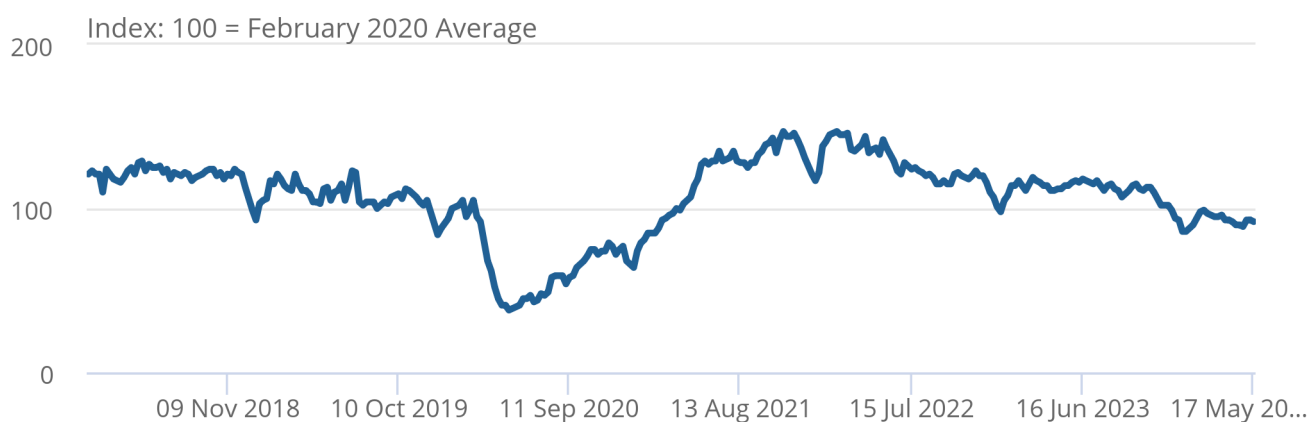
These figures are estimates of online job adverts by category, UK country, and English region, provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories, so these values are not directly comparable with our Vacancy Survey.

**Figure 2: In the latest week, the total number of online job adverts decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week, and were 19% lower than in the equivalent period of 2023**

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 17 May 2024

Figure 2: In the latest week, the total number of online job adverts decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week, and were 19% lower than in the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 17 May 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. 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 in our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

The number of online job adverts on 17 May 2024 decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week. Of the 12 UK countries and English regions, 6 decreased, 1 increased, and 5 remained broadly unchanged. London decreased the most, falling by 3%, while the South West was the only country or region to increase, rising by 1% when compared with the previous week.

The total number of online job adverts fell by 19% when compared with the equivalent period of 2023, with all regions decreasing. The largest decrease occurred in Scotland, falling by 31%.

When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, the total number of online job adverts fell in 24 of the 28 job categories. The categories with the largest decrease were "Marketing, advertising and PR" and "Construction and trades" with both falling by 51%.

Our accompanying [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) is available.

## 5 . Energy

### System Average Price (SAP) of gas

In the week to 19 May 2024, the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 4% when compared with the previous week. However, this was 2% higher than the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying [System Average Price \(SAP\) of gas dataset](#) is available.

### System Price of electricity

In the week to 19 May 2024, the System Price of electricity increased by 29% when compared with the previous week, from a seven-day average price of 5.97 pence per kilowatt hour to 7.68 pence per kilowatt hour. This is now 10% above the equivalent week for 2023.

Our accompanying [System Price of electricity dataset](#) is available.

## 6 . Transport

The daily average number of UK flights increased by 1% in the week to 19 May 2024. This number was 5% higher than the number seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying [Daily UK flights dataset](#) is available.

## 7 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 23 May 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 16 May 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

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

## Data release dates and intended release frequency

Latest release dates and intended release frequency of our associated datasets are available in the following list. Please note that there may be some change to the intended release frequency because of a variety of reasons, such as data availability. If you would like further information about any of these datasets or previous release dates, please email: [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

## Weekly data release

- The [UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 16 May 2024.
- The [Revolut spending on debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 1 February 2024.
- The [Automotive Fuel spending dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.
- The [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.
- The [Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.
- The [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) was last updated on 16 May 2024.
- The [System Average price \(SAP\) of gas dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.
- The [System Price of electricity dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.
- The [Traffic camera activity dataset](#) was last updated on 16 May 2024.
- The [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#) was last updated on 5 April 2024.
- The [Daily UK flights dataset](#) was last updated on 23 May 2024.

## Fortnightly data release

- The [Transactions at Pret A Manger dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024.

## Monthly data release

- The [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) was last updated on 14 March 2024.
- The [Value Added Tax \(VAT\), flash estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 18 April 2024.
- The [Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Sales and jobs in small businesses dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024.

## 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 from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) relating to the biggest issues facing society today.

### [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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