

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 8 August 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.

Contact:  
Real Time Indicators team  
realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk

Release date:  
8 August 2024

Next release:  
15 August 2024

## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Consumer behaviour](#)
4. [Business and workforce](#)
5. [Energy](#)
6. [Transport](#)
7. [Data](#)
8. [Glossary](#)
9. [Data sources and quality](#)
10. [Related links](#)
11. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

# 1 . Main points

- In July 2024, 45% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month; this is the lowest value since the start of the series in November 2021 (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, Office for National Statistics). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- Overall retail footfall decreased by 2% in the week to 4 August 2024 when compared with the previous week; this was 1% above the level in the equivalent week of 2023 (MRI OnLocation). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The total number of online job adverts on 2 August 2024 was 18% lower than the equivalent week of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- The System Price of electricity decreased by 10% in the week to 4 August 2024 compared with the previous week, to 7.055 pence per kilowatt hour; meanwhile, the System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 10% compared with the previous week, to 2.762 pence per kilowatt hour (Elexon, National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- The daily average number of UK flights decreased by 2% in the week to 4 August 2024 when compared with the previous week but was 3% higher than 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

## Public opinions and social trends relating to economic activity

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covers topics relating to people's experiences of daily life and events. It currently includes questions about what people feel are important issues, their health, well-being, and their experiences of increases in the cost of living. It regularly includes questions on a range of other topics such as attitudes towards climate change, experiences of industrial action, or attitudes towards artificial intelligence. If you would like to know more about the OPN then please read our [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain monthly bulletin](#).

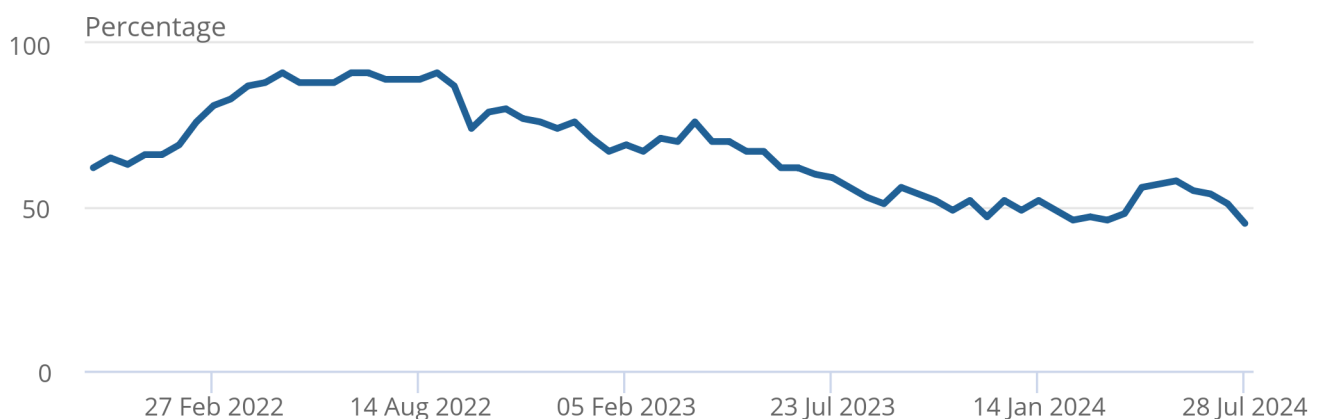
We will be reporting on the OPN survey questions that best link to other economic indicators in our real-time indicators release.

### Figure 1: In July 2024, 45% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month, the lowest value since the start of the question series

Proportion of adults who reported their cost of living has increased over the last month, Great Britain, November 2021 to July 2024

Figure 1: In July 2024, 45% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month, the lowest value since the start of the question series

Proportion of adults who reported their cost of living has increased over the last month, Great Britain, November 2021 to July 2024



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) from the Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Question: "Has your cost of living changed compared to one month ago?"
2. The base: all adults.
3. In the periods 14 to 25 September 2022 and 27 March to 7 April 2024, changes were made to the survey design to allow us to measure the short- and long-term impacts of the cost of living. These may have impacted responses to this question.

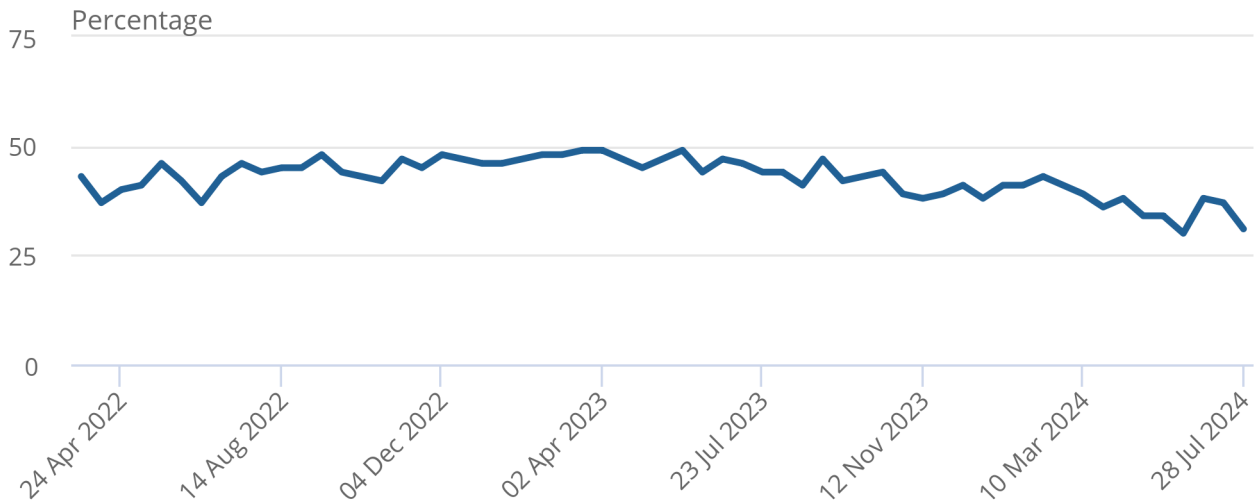
In July 2024, the proportion of adults reporting that their cost of living has increased in the last month was 45%. This is the lowest proportion since the start of the series in November 2021 and continues the general decline in this series since mid-2022.

**Figure 2: In July 2024, 31% of adults who pay energy bills reported finding it difficult to afford, continuing the general downward trend since mid-2023**

Proportion of adults who find it difficult to pay energy bills, Great Britain, March 2022 to July 2024

Figure 2: In July 2024, 31% of adults who pay energy bills reported finding it difficult to afford, continuing the general downward trend since mid-2023

Proportion of adults who find it difficult to pay energy bills, Great Britain, March 2022 to July 2024



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "How easy or difficult is it to afford your energy bills?"
2. The base: all adults who pay energy bills.

The proportion of adults who reported paying energy bills as somewhat or very difficult to afford has been generally decreasing over the last 18 months. In July 2024 the proportion of adults finding it difficult to afford energy bills was 31%, which is the second lowest value since the start of this series.

**Figure 3: Overall retail footfall in the week to 4 August 2024 decreased by 2% when compared with the previous week but was 1% above the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023**

Index of daily retail volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 4 August 2024

Figure 3: Overall retail footfall in the week to 4 August 2024 decreased by 2% when compared with the previous week but was 1% above the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023

Index of daily retail volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 4 August 2024



Source: MRI OnLocation

Notes:

1. Peaks in footfall correspond to bank holidays and school holidays and for the previous 12 months are as follows: Week 51, 2023 Christmas bank holidays and school holidays; Week 7, 2024 February school half term; Week 15, 2024 Easter bank holidays and school holidays; Week 21, 2024 late May bank holiday and school half term.

Overall retail footfall decreased by 2% in the week to 4 August 2024 when compared with the previous week but was 1% above the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

High street footfall and shopping centre footfall both decreased compared with the previous week, by 3% and 2%, respectively, while retail park footfall increased by 1% when compared with the previous week. When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, high street footfall and retail park footfall increased by 2% and 1%, respectively, while shopping centre footfall decreased by 3%.

Overall retail footfall decreased in 7, increased in 3, and remained broadly unchanged in 2 of the 12 UK countries and English regions when compared with the previous week. The largest decreases were seen in the North West, London and South East, with all three regions decreasing by 3%.

When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, overall retail footfall increased in 6, decreased in 5, and remained broadly unchanged in 1 of the 12 UK countries and English regions. The largest year-on-year increase was seen in the East Midlands, rising by 5%, while the largest year-on-year decrease was seen in Wales, where overall retail footfall fell by 5%.

## Automotive fuel spending

The annual growth rate in the estimated demand for fuel per transaction was negative 3% in the week to 28 July 2024. When compared with the previous week, this was broadly unchanged, but was 12 percentage points lower than in the equivalent week of 2023.

The annual growth rate in average fuel prices was 2% in the week to 28 July 2024. This was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week but 26 percentage points higher than in the equivalent week of 2023.

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

## 4 . Business and workforce

### Online job adverts

**Figure 4: The total number of online job adverts on 2 August 2024 was 18% lower than the equivalent week of 2023**

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 2 August 2024

#### Notes

1. These estimates of online job adverts are provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine, and are an indicator for the demand of labour.
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](#).
3. Further category breakdowns are available in our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#), and more details on the methodology are in our [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics methodology](#).

The total number of online job adverts in the latest week was 18% lower than the equivalent period of 2023. Adverts in all UK countries and English regions were lower than the equivalent period of 2023, with the largest year-on-year decline of 31% in Scotland.

The total number of online job adverts was lower in 26 of the 28 job categories when compared with the equivalent week of 2023. The adverts with the largest year-on-year decreases were in "Construction and trades" and "Admin, clerical and secretarial", which were 52% and 47% lower, respectively.

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

## 5 . Energy

### System Average Price of gas

The System Average Price (SAP) of gas increased by 10% in the week to 4 August 2024 compared with the previous week, from a seven-day average price of 2.514 pence per kilowatt hour to 2.762 pence per kilowatt hour. This was 17% higher than the equivalent week of 2023, which had a seven-day average price of 2.366 pence per kilowatt hour.

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

## System Price of electricity

The System Price of electricity decreased by 10% in the week to 4 August 2024 compared with the previous week, from a seven-day average price of 7.825 pence per kilowatt hour to 7.055 pence per kilowatt hour. This was 4% lower than the equivalent week of 2023, which had a seven-day average price of 7.372 pence per kilowatt hour.

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

## 6 . Transport

### Daily UK flights

In the week to 4 August 2024, the daily average number of UK flights decreased by 2% when compared with the previous week. This was 3% higher than the equivalent week of 2023.

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

## 7 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 8 August 2024

Weekly snapshot of online job advert indices covering the UK job market. These are official statistics in development. Source: Adzuna

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

Dataset | Released 8 August 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 8 August 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

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.

## Seasonal Adjustment

Seasonal adjustment is the identification and removal of consistent and systematic variation in time series that is associated with the time of year. For more information on seasonal variation, and how we implement seasonal adjustment, see Section 2: How we measure real-time indicators of our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article](#).

## 9 . Data sources and quality

### Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as [official statistics in development](#). Until September 2023, they 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. Find out 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 if the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or if 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. If you would like to get in touch, please email [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

### Dataset release dates and intended release frequency

Latest release dates and intended release frequency of our associated datasets are available in this section. Please note that there may be some change to the intended release frequency for 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 8 August 2024.
- The [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 8 August 2024.
- The [Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions dataset](#) was last updated on 8 August 2024.
- The [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) was last updated on 1 August 2024.
- The [System Average price of gas dataset](#) was last updated on 8 August 2024.
- The [System Price of electricity dataset](#) was last updated on 8 August 2024.
- The [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#) was last updated on 5 April 2024.
- The [Daily UK flights dataset](#) was last updated on 8 August 2024.

### Fortnightly data release



- The [Transactions at Pret A Manger dataset](#) was last updated on 1 August 2024.

## Monthly data release

- The [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) was last updated on 25 July 2024.
- The [Value Added Tax, flash estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 25 July 2024.
- The [Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset](#) was last updated on 11 July 2024.
- The [Sales and jobs in small businesses dataset](#) was last updated on 1 August 2024.

## 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.

## 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

### [GDP monthly estimate, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released monthly

Gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of goods and services produced in the UK. It estimates the size of and growth in the economy.

### [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

## 11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 8 August 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 8 August 2024](#)

