

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 2 April 2026

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience.

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Notice

2 April 2026

This release has a headline only format and is accompanied by our full dataset.

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1 . Main points

- In March 2026, 37% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were concerned about international conflict impacting supply chains over the next year, while 21% were concerned about the impact of shipping disruption; these are up 27 and 14 percentage points, respectively, from December 2025 and the largest proportions reported since the question was introduced in September 2024.
- More than half (56%) of businesses with 10 or more employees that were concerned about impacts on supply chains over the next year are expecting the costs of sourcing materials to increase, up 10 percentage points from late December 2025; additionally, 50% expect transportation costs to increase, up 17 percentage points from late December 2025.
- When asked in March 2026, over half (55%) of businesses expressed some level of concern about energy prices; this proportion rose to 74% for businesses with 10 or more employees.
- More than a quarter (26%) of businesses reported using at least one type of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, up 8 percentage points from late March 2025; for businesses with 250 or more employees, the proportion was higher, at 45%, up 13 percentage points over the same period.
- Nearly 1 in 5 (18%) businesses reported that they are planning to adopt at least one type of AI technology in the next 3 months, up 6 percentage points from late March 2025; this is the highest proportion reported since the question was introduced in late September 2023.
- In late March 2026, 5% of businesses that are using some form of AI technology reported that there had been a reduction in their workforce headcount because of AI technologies, broadly stable with late December 2025; this proportion rose to 7% for businesses with 10 or more employees, also broadly stable over the same period.

These are [official statistics in development](#), and we advise caution when using the data. The BICS questions and topics are regularly reviewed, and questions are often added, removed, or amended to reflect changing circumstances and analytical priorities.

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 153 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 16 to 29 March 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

- supply chain resilience
- energy (gas and electricity) prices
- environmental issues, including concern about climate change
- artificial intelligence (AI) technologies
- the impact of United States tariffs

For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 16 to 29 March web page](#).

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 Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#), and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

Single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 142 are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: November 2025 article](#).

More about economy, business and jobs

- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

The percentage of businesses that reported they were trading in late March 2026 was 95%, with 85% fully trading, and 10% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 3% of businesses reported "temporarily paused trading", and 2% reported "permanently ceased trading" as their business's trading status.

3 . Data from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

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

Dataset | Released 2 April 2026

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. These are official statistics in development.

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

Dataset | Released 2 April 2026

Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade, and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

Access to microdata

You can access the microdata for Waves 1 to 152 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 researcher accreditation using the People and Projects Service (PPS). For more information, please see our [guidance on how to become an accredited researcher](#).

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](#). Project accreditation applications should be submitted using the Project Accreditation Service for SRS (PASS). For more information, please see our [guidance on applying for an accredited research project](#).

To use the SRS, you must access it through the appropriate safe setting. For more information on the full range of safe setting options, please see our [guidance on accessing data securely](#).

Making our published spreadsheets accessible

Following the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) guidance on releasing statistics in spreadsheets](#), we will be amending our published tables over the next couple of publications to improve the usability, accessibility and machine readability of our published statistics. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at bics@ons.gov.uk.

4 . Glossary

Private sector businesses

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) is a survey of private sector businesses, meaning that the public sector is not sampled. Some businesses are also excluded; please see the Coverage section of this bulletin for more information.

Reporting unit

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

Trading businesses

Trading businesses refers to businesses that responded that their trading status was "currently fully trading" or "currently partially trading" only.

If trading businesses is not exactly specified, the statistics presented refer to businesses that have "Not permanently stopped trading". This includes trading businesses and those that said their trading status was "paused trading and intends to restart in the next two weeks" or "paused trading and does not intend to restart within the next two weeks".

5 . Data sources and quality

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](#), which was updated on 10 October 2024.

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

Table 1: Sample and response rates for Wave 151, 152 and 153 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	5 March 2026 Publication Wave 151	19 March 2026 Publication Wave 152	2 April 2026 Publication Wave 153
Sample	38,864	38,801	38,759
Response	10,952	10,563	10,756
Rate	28.2%	27.2%	27.8%

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 153 survey was live for the period 16 March to 29 March 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 16 March 2026 to 29 March 2026 web page](#).

Coverage

The BICS sampling frame is based on the same industries as our Monthly Business Survey (MBS). The MBS covers the UK for production industries only, and Great Britain for construction, retail and services industries. The MBS is an important input to the output measure of gross domestic product (GDP), which includes monthly GDP.

For detailed information on the industries covered by the MBS and BICS, see our [GDP\(o\) data sources catalogue](#). The following are some industries that are excluded from MBS and BICS:

- agriculture
- oil and gas extraction
- energy generation and supply
- 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 [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI report](#).

6 . Related links

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

Dashboard | Updated weekly

An overview of the UK economy and society, based on rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and innovative methods.

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 19 March 2026](#)

Bulletin | Updated monthly

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.

[Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: November 2025](#)

Article | Released 3 November 2025

Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on prices, financial performance, workforce, and business resilience.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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