

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 4 June 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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Release date:
4 June 2026

Next release:
18 June 2026

Notice

4 June 2026

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

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Headline figures](#)
3. [Business Insights and Conditions Survey data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Data sources and quality](#)
6. [Related links](#)
7. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- In May 2026, 66% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their staffing costs (including wages, bonuses, national insurance (NI), and pension contributions) had increased over the last three months, which is up 25 percentage points compared with February 2026, but down 11 percentage points compared with May 2025; large quarterly movements are typically seen at this time because of the change in the financial year.
- In May 2026, 44% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they would adapt to future rises in employment costs by increasing prices, which is down 3 percentage points compared with May 2025; 38% reported they would absorb the costs within profit margins, while 23% reported they would reduce the number of employees.
- More than half (54%) of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their employees' hourly wages increased in April 2026 compared with March 2026, which is broadly stable from April 2025, but up 36 percentage points from January 2026; the change compared with January 2026 is likely because of the April 2026 minimum wage rise.
- 62% of businesses reported at least some level of concern about energy prices in late May 2026, rising to 73% for businesses with 10 or more employees, which are both broadly stable compared with early May; please be aware that the majority of responses to the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) were received before the July 2026 energy price cap announcement on 27 May.
- Over two-thirds (68%) of businesses reported at least some level of concern about fuel costs in late May 2026, rising to 74% for businesses with 10 or more employees; the transportation and storage industry reported the highest proportion of concern (84%), followed by the accommodation and food service activities industry (82%).
- In May 2026, 34% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were concerned about international conflict impacting supply chains over the next year, which is down 4 percentage points from April 2026 but up 25 percentage points from December 2025; 25% were concerned about the impact of shipping disruption, which was broadly stable from April but up 18 percentage points from December 2025.

These are [official statistics in development](#), and we advise caution when using the data. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (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 157 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 18 to 31 May 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

- homeworking
- hourly wages and staffing costs
- worker shortages and recruitment
- skills demand
- use of cloud computing software, including modes of payment
- impact of US tariffs

For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 18 May to 31 May 2026 article](#).

Data reported within the 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 \(QMI\) report](#), and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

Single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 154 are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2026 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 April 2026 was 95%, with 83% fully trading, and 11% 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 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

[Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 4 June 2026](#)

Dataset | Released 4 June 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 4 June 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 156 of the 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 [Information on the Integrated Data Service \(IDS\) website](#).

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. Please email bics@ons.gov.uk if you have any questions or comments.

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 subsection, in [Section 5: Data sources and quality](#) 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 specified, the statistics presented refer to businesses that have "not permanently stopped trading". This includes trading businesses and those that reported their status as "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 report](#), 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 155, 156 and 157 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	7 May 2026 Publication Wave 155	21 May 2026 Publication Wave 156	4 June 2026 Publication Wave 157
Sample	38,715	38,686	38,672
Response	10,466	9,899	9,777
Rate	27.0%	25.6%	25.3%

Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) 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 157 survey was live for the period 18 to 31 May 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 18 May 2026 to 31 May 2026 article](#).

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 the MBS and the 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 frequently

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: 21 May 2026](#)

Bulletin | Updated monthly

Faster indicators of trends in the UK economy and society, using innovative surveys, methods and data sources. These are official statistics in development.

[Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2026](#)

Article | Released 15 May 2026

Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on financial performance, prices and workforce. These are official statistics in development.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 4 June 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 4 June 2026](#)