Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 24 September 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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Next release:
8 October 2026

Notice

24 September 2026

This release is published in a headline-only format and is accompanied by our full dataset

Table of contents

1 . Main points

- In August 2026, 28% of trading businesses reported that their turnover had decreased, up 6 percentage points from July 2026 and broadly stable with August 2025; 31% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their turnover had decreased, up 7 percentage points from July 2026, but also broadly stable with August 2025.

- Economic uncertainty (29%) remained the most reported challenge affecting turnover for trading businesses in September 2026, broadly stable with August 2026 and September 2025; cost of labour (37%) was the most reported challenge for businesses with 10 or more employees, broadly stable with August 2026 and September 2025.

- 17% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to decrease in October 2026 and 15% reported that they expect their turnover to increase; both figures are broadly stable with expectations for September 2026 and October 2025.

- 29% of trading businesses reported an increase in prices of goods and services bought in August 2026, broadly stable with July 2026, and up 6 percentage points from August 2025; 11% of trading businesses reported an increase in prices of goods and services sold, broadly stable with July 2026 and August 2025.

- 17% of trading businesses expect the prices of goods and services that they sell to increase in October 2026, up 3 percentage points from September 2026, and up 7 percentage points from October 2025; the construction industry had the highest proportion of businesses expecting to raise prices, at 32%, which is the highest proportion reported by this industry since February 2023 (35%).

- In early September 2026, 64% of businesses reported some degree of concern about energy prices, up 5 percentage points from late August 2026, with businesses citing the conflict in the Middle East as a reason; 9 in 10 (90%) businesses in the accommodation and food service activities industry expressed concern, the highest proportion since the question was introduced in March 2026.

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 164 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 7 to 20 September 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

- turnover, including expectations for next month and current challenges affecting turnover
- prices of goods and services bought and sold, including expectations for next month
- energy (gas and electricity), and fuel prices
- global supply chain disruption
- worker shortages and recruitment difficulties
- business concerns
- business performance, including expectations for next year

For full details of the survey questions used, see our BICS questions: 7 to 20 September article.

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 BICS Quality and Methodology Information (QMI), 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 early September 2026 was 95%, with 85% fully trading, and 10% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 4% of businesses reported "temporarily paused trading", and 2% reported "permanently ceased trading" as their business's trading status.

3 . Data on the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Business insights and impact on the UK economy
Dataset | Released 24 September 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 24 September 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 163 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 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 specifically stated, 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 162, 163 and 164 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	20 August 2026 Publication Wave 162	3 September 2026 Publication Wave 163	24 September 2026 Publication Wave 164
Sample	38,606	38,600	38,579
Response	9,826	9,899	10,256
Rate	25.5%	25.6%	26.6%

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 164 survey was live for the period 7 to 20 September 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our BICS questions: 7 to 20 September 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 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 BICS QMI.

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]
Bulletin | Released 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

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