Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 3 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:
24 September 2026

Notice

3 September 2026

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

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1 . Main points

- In August 2026, 28% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were concerned about international conflict impacting supply chains over the next year, while 21% were concerned about the impact of shipping disruption; these proportions were broadly stable compared with July 2026, but up 17 and 12 percentage points, respectively, from September 2025.

- In August 2026, 13% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were concerned about climate change impacting supply chains over the next year, rising 4 percentage points compared with July (9%) and 9 percentage points from September 2025 (4%).

- Of businesses with 10 or more employees that were concerned about supply chain factors in August 2026, 53% expected the cost of sourcing materials to increase, and 46% expected transportation costs to increase; these are both broadly stable compared with July 2026, but 5 and 12 percentage point rises, respectively, from September 2025.

- Approximately three in five (59%) businesses expressed some degree of concern regarding energy prices in late August, broadly stable compared with early August; 63% of businesses reported some level of concern about increases in fuel prices, also broadly stable compared with early August.

- In August 2026, 38% 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; this proportion is down 11 percentage points compared with a year ago.

- Around one in six (16%) businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their employees' hourly wages increased in July 2026, down 38 percentage points from April 2026, though broadly stable compared with a year ago; this large fall is likely because of the previous data being collected shortly after the rise in the minimum wage in the new financial year.

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 163 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 17 to 30 August 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

- homeworking
- hourly wages and staffing costs
- worker shortages and recruitment
- energy and fuel prices
- supply chain risk including factors and resilience
- US tariffs

For full details of the survey questions used, see our BICS questions Wave 163 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 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 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 August 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 on the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Business insights and impact on the UK economy
Dataset | Released 3 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 3 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 162 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 our 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. 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.

Sample and response rates for Wave 161, 162 and 163 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	6 August 2026 Publication Wave 161	20 August 2026 Publication Wave 162	3 September 2026 Publication Wave 163
Sample	38,618	38,606	38,600
Response	10,034	9,826	9,899
Rate	26.0%	25.5%	25.6%

Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Response rates for all waves can be found in our 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 163 survey was live for the period 17 to 30 August 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our BICS Survey questions: 17 to 30 August 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 prices, financial performance, prices and workforce. These are official statistics in development.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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