

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 8 October 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:
8 October 2026

Next release:
22 October 2026

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1 . Main points

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of businesses reported some degree of concern about energy prices in late September 2026, the highest proportion since the question was first asked in March 2026; the accommodation and food service activities industry had the highest proportion of businesses expressing concern (91%).
- In late September 2026, nearly three-quarters (73%) of businesses reported some degree of concern about increases in fuel prices, the highest proportion since the question was introduced in May 2026; the transportation and storage industry had the highest proportion that were “very concerned”, at 60%.
- In September 2026, 48% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported concern about at least one factor affecting supply chains over the next year, broadly stable with August, but up 17 percentage points from September 2025; the two most frequently reported concerns from businesses were the impact of international conflict (32%) and shipping disruption (21%).
- Around 3 in 10 (30%) of all businesses reported using at least one type of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in September 2026, with the proportion using AI steadily increasing since the question was introduced in September 2023 (9%); for businesses with 250 or more employees, the proportion was 51%, up 32 percentage points from September 2023 (19%).
- Of businesses with 10 or more employees that reported using AI technologies in September 2026, 38% reported that administrative and clerical roles were the most affected; this is an increase of 3 percentage points from June 2026 and 9 percentage points since this question was introduced in December 2025.
- Over 4 in 10 (41%) businesses reported some degree of concern about the impact climate change may have on their business; this is the highest recorded proportion since February 2023 (41%) and a 9-percentage point increase from June 2026.

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 165 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 21 September to 4 October 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

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

For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 21 September to 4 October 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 [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 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 September 2026 was 95%, with 86% fully trading, and 9% 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 . Artificial intelligence (AI)

AI adoption

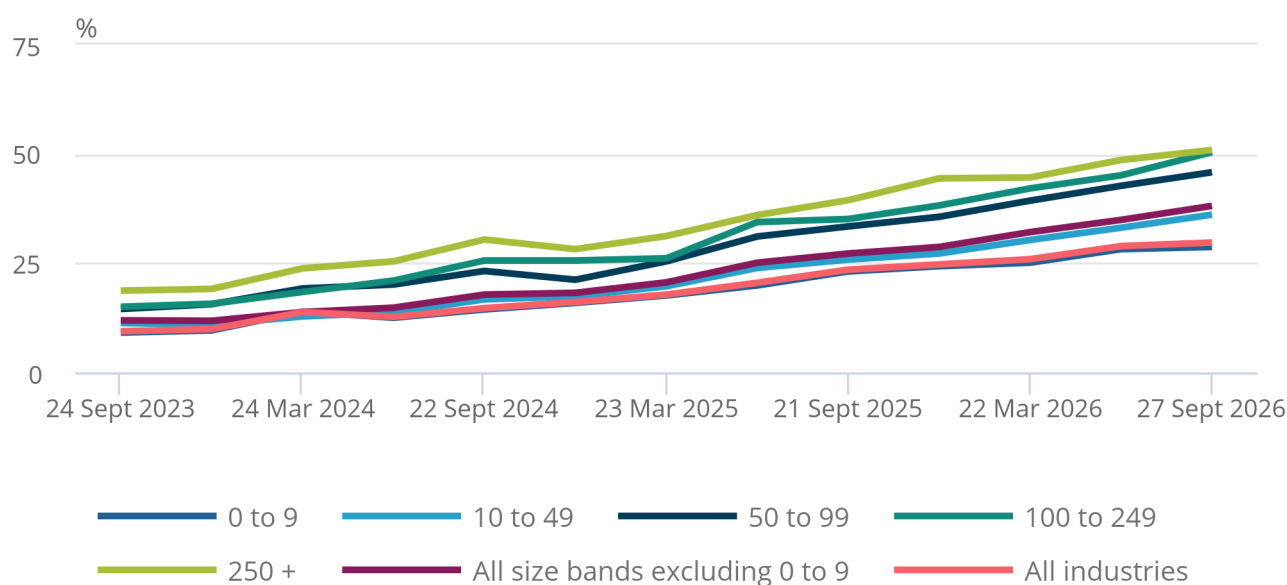
Businesses were asked which artificial intelligence (AI) technologies they currently use, if any, in September 2026.

Figure 1: 3 in 10 (30%) businesses reported using at least one type of AI technology in September 2026, rising to 51% for businesses with 250 or more employees

Current use of at least one AI technology, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 18 September 2023 to 4 October 2026

Figure 1: 3 in 10 (30%) businesses reported using at least one type of AI technology in September 2026, rising to 51% for businesses with 250 or more employees

Current use of at least one AI technology, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 18 September 2023 to 4 October 2026



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

Notes:

1. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

In September 2026, 3 in 10 (30%) businesses reported use of at least one type of AI technology. This proportion was broadly stable with June 2026, but has risen 20 percentage points since the question was introduced in September 2023 (9%). For businesses with 10 or more employees, 38% reported use of AI technologies, up 3 percentage points from June 2026 and 26 percentage points from September 2023.

Adoption of AI technologies has consistently been higher for larger businesses. In September 2026, around half (51%) of businesses with 100 or more employees reported adopting at least one AI technology. In comparison, only 29% of businesses with fewer than 10 employees reported using AI technologies.

The most frequently used AI technologies by businesses with 10 or more employees were text generation using large language models (21%) and visual content creation (19%). These proportions have risen 16 and 15 percentage points, respectively, since the question was introduced in September 2023.

Around 6 in 10 (60%) businesses in the information and communication industry reported currently using an AI technology. This is the highest proportion of any industry surveyed.

Impact of AI adoption on roles and headcount

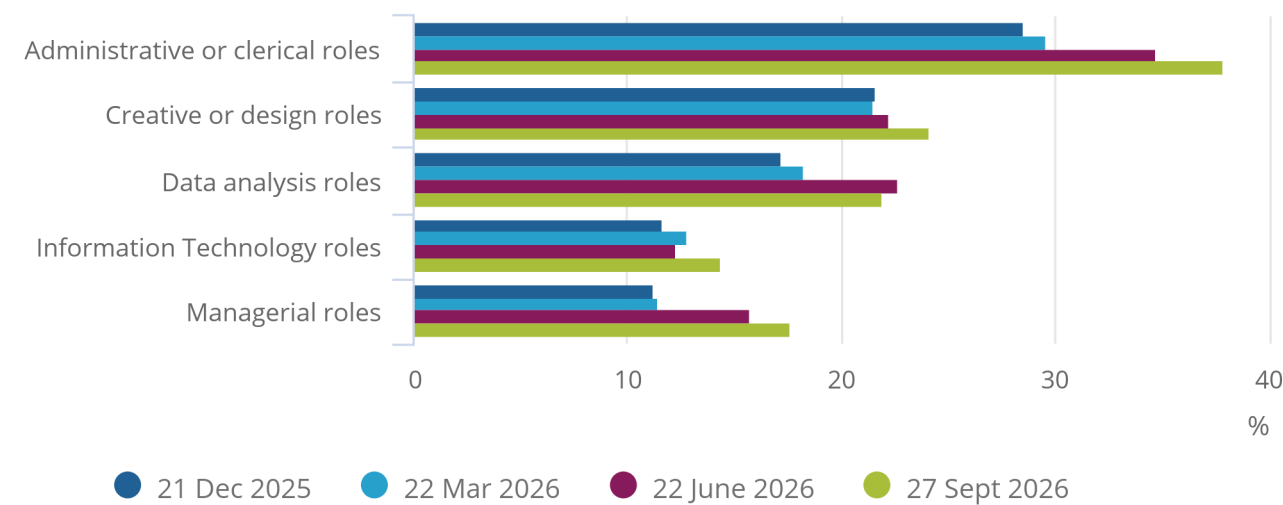
Businesses that reported using at least one AI technology were asked in September 2026 what roles, if any, have been most affected by AI technologies they have adopted. They were also asked what impact, if any, adopting AI technologies had on their overall workforce headcount.

Figure 2: Almost 4 in 10 (38%) of businesses with 10 or more employees adopting AI technologies reported administrative and clerical roles were most affected

Impact of AI adoption on roles, businesses with 10 or more employees that used some form of AI or were not sure if they are doing so, weighted by count, UK, 15 December 2025 to 4 October 2026

Figure 2: Almost 4 in 10 (38%) of businesses with 10 or more employees adopting AI technologies reported administrative and clerical roles were most affected

Impact of AI adoption on roles, businesses with 10 or more employees that used some form of AI or were not sure if they are doing so, weighted by count, UK, 15 December 2025 to 4 October 2026



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

Notes:

- 1. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.
- 2. For presentational purposes, some response options have been removed.

Of businesses with 10 or more employees that reported using AI technologies in September 2026, 38% reported administrative and clerical roles were the most affected. This is an increase of 3 percentage points since June 2026 and 9 percentage points since this question was first asked in December 2025. The next highest proportion was for creative or design roles, at 24%, broadly stable compared with December 2025.

In September 2026, of businesses with 10 or more employees that were currently using AI, 6% reported reduced headcount as a result. Fewer than 1% reported that their headcount had increased. These proportions have remained broadly stable over the last year.

4 . Data from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

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

Dataset | Released 8 October 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 8 October 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 164 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

5 . 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 specifically 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".

6 . Data sources and quality

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#), 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 163, 164 and 165 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	3 September 2026 Publication Wave 163	24 September 2026 Publication Wave 164	8 October 2026 Publication Wave 165
Sample	38,600	38,579	38,592
Response	9,899	10,256	9,933
Rate	25.6%	26.6%	25.7%

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 165 survey was live for the period 21 September to 4 October 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 21 September to 4 October 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 [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) quality and methodology information \(QMI\) report](#).

7 . 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 | 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 prices, financial performance, workforce and business resilience.

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 8 October 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 8 October 2026](#)