

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 25 April 2024

Early 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.

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# 1 . Main points

- Consumer behaviour indicators showed decreased activity in the latest week, with aggregate UK spending on credit and debit cards decreasing by 2% compared with the previous week, while overall retail footfall decreased by 3% (Bank of England CHAPS, MRI OnLocation). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The total number of online job adverts on 19 April 2024 was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week, but 19% below the level seen for the equivalent period of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas increased by 14% in the week to 21 April 2024; this was 20% below the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023 (National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- Both the daily average number of UK flights and traffic camera activity for cars in London remained broadly unchanged in the week to 21 April 2024 when compared with the previous week (EUROCONTROL, Transport for London). [Section 6: Transport](#).

These are [official statistics in development](#), and we advise caution when using the data. The data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure they are representative and relevant, which may mean indicators change at short notice. Read more in [Section 9: Measuring the data](#).

## 2 . Latest indicators at a glance

### Notes:

1. Card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.
2. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
3. Indicators with SA in the title have been seasonally adjusted.

## 3 . Consumer behaviour

### UK spending on debit and credit cards: weekly, seasonally adjusted CHAPS-based indicator

These data series are real-time indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily CHAPS payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card transactions made by customers at their stores, both via physical and online platforms. More information on the indicator is provided in the accompanying [Guide to the Bank of England's UK spending on credit and debit cards experimental data series](#).

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business, we are currently publishing two of those categories:

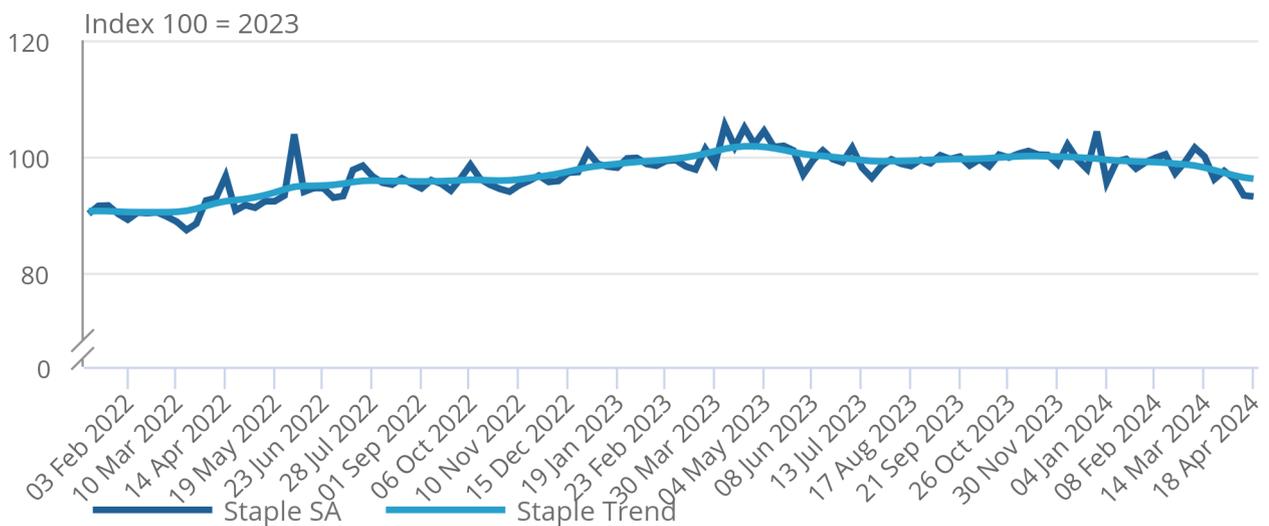
- “delayable” refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- “staple” refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities

**Figure 1: The “staple” category of CHAPS-based credit and debit card spending was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week, but continued the downward trend that started in December 2023**

Index of credit and debit card spending on staple goods, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 18 April 2024

Figure 1: The “staple” category of CHAPS-based credit and debit card spending was broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week, but continued the downward trend that started in December 2023

Index of credit and debit card spending on staple goods, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 18 April 2024



Source: Calculations from the Office for National Statistics and Bank of England

Notes:

1. Users should note that the weekly payment data show the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is a time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. Percentage difference is derived from the current and previous index value before rounding.
3. Seasonal adjustment and trend estimates are calculated by the Office for National Statistics using data provided by the Bank of England.
4. Users should note that all series have been re-indexed, using their average value from 2023.

The spending categories, when seasonally adjusted, recorded the following changes in the latest week:

- “aggregate” decreased by 2%
- “delayable” decreased by 5%
- “staple” was broadly unchanged

When compared with the same week in 2023, the spending categories, when seasonally adjusted, recorded the following changes:

- “aggregate” decreased by 6%
- “delayable” decreased by 5%
- “staple” decreased by 11%

The weekly and monthly seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, and the daily and monthly non-seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, are available in our accompanying [UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset](#).

## National retail footfall

**Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 21 April 2024 decreased by 3% when compared with the previous week**

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 21 April 2024

Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 21 April 2024 decreased by 3% when compared with the previous week

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 21 April 2024



Source: MRI OnLocation (previously known as Springboard)

### Notes:

1. The decrease in the final weeks of 2023 and early 2024 is in line with seasonal trends seen in previous years.

Overall retail footfall in the week to 21 April 2024 decreased by 3% when compared with the level seen in the previous week and decreased by 1% when compared with the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

All three location categories saw a decrease in footfall in the latest week. Shopping centre footfall had the largest decrease when compared with the level seen in the previous week, falling by 6%. Meanwhile, high street and retail park footfall also decreased, by 3% and 1%, respectively. When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, shopping centre and high street footfall again decreased, both falling by 2%, while retail park footfall remained broadly unchanged.

Overall retail footfall decreased in 9 of the 12 UK countries and regions when compared with the previous week. The largest decrease occurred in the East of England, falling by 8% of the level seen in the previous week. For the remaining 3 UK countries and regions, overall retail footfall increased in Northern Ireland by 4%, and remained broadly unchanged in Wales and the West Midlands.

When compared with the equivalent period of the previous year, overall retail footfall decreased in 8, increased in 2 and remained broadly unchanged in 2 of the 12 UK countries and regions. The largest decreases were seen in Northern Ireland and Scotland, with both decreasing by 6%.

# 4 . Business and workforce

## Online job adverts

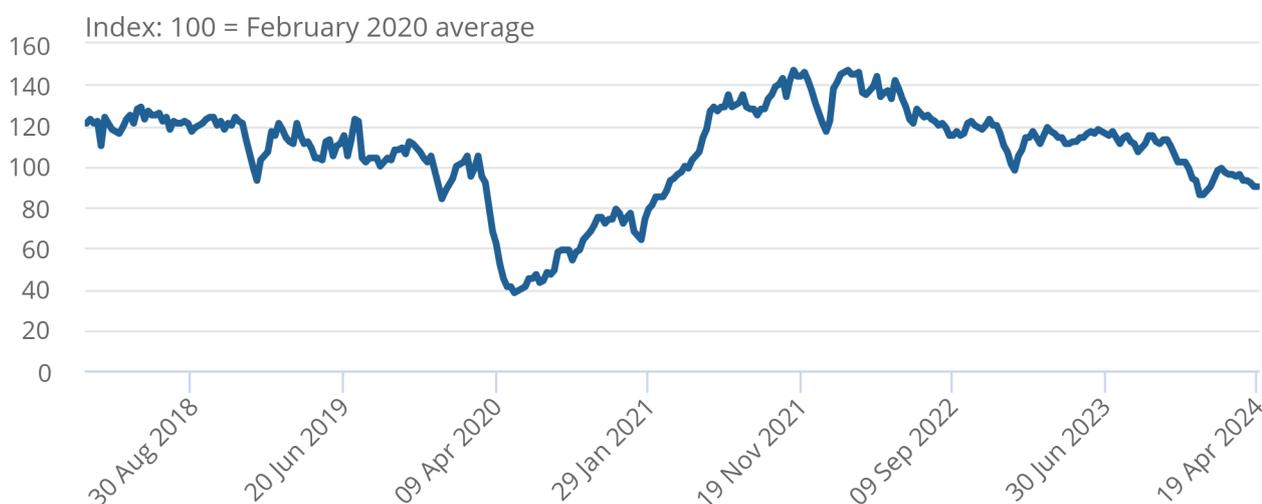
These figures are innovative estimates of online job adverts by category, UK country, and English region, provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories, so these values are not directly comparable with our Vacancy Survey.

**Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 19 April 2024 was 19% below the level seen in the equivalent period of 2023**

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 19 April 2024

Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 19 April 2024 was 19% below the level seen in the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 19 April 2024



Source: Adzuna

Notes:

1. Further category breakdowns are included in our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#), and more details on the methodology can be found in our [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies: Experimental Statistics methodology](#).
2. Users should note that week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage-point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage-point changes observed in the chart and our [Online job advert estimates dataset](#).

The number of online job adverts on 19 April 2024 remained broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week. Of the 12 UK countries and English regions, the number of online job adverts decreased in 6, increased in 2 and remained broadly unchanged in 4.

The total number of online job adverts fell by 19% when compared with the equivalent period of 2023, with all regions seeing a decrease when compared with the previous year. The largest decreases occurred in Scotland and London, falling by 33% and 25%, respectively.

When compared with the equivalent period of 2023, the total number of online job adverts fell in 25 of the 28 job categories, with the remaining 3 job categories all increasing. The largest decreases were seen in the “Domestic help” and “Construction and trades” categories, falling by 56% and 48%, respectively.

Our accompanying [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) is available.

## Business impact and insights

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) collects data from selected industries and does not have full coverage of the UK economy. For more information on the industries covered in the BICS sample, see our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#).

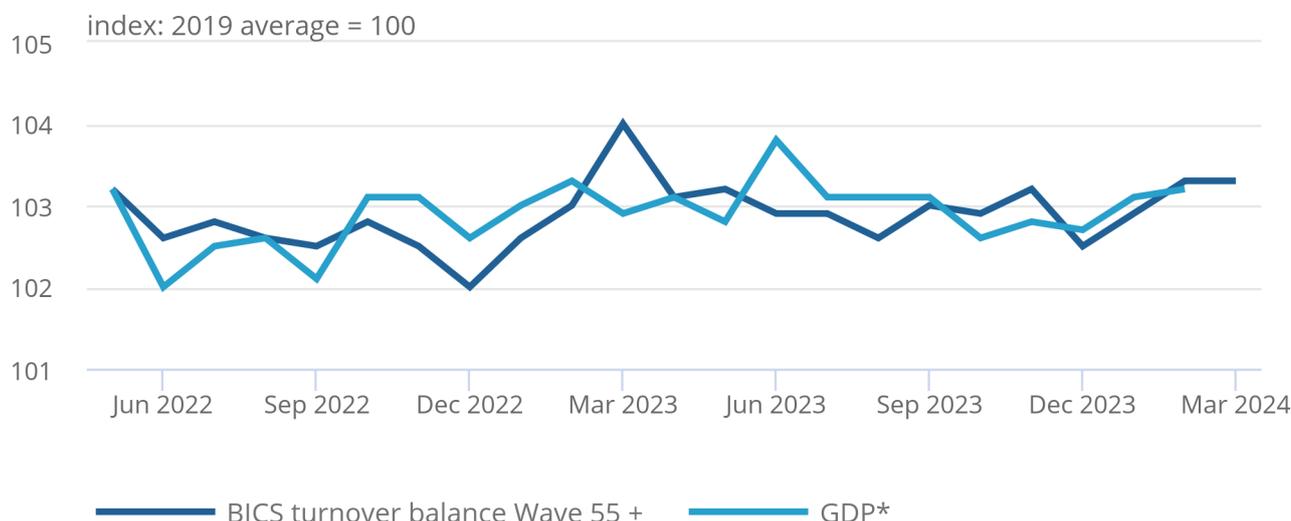
To enable comparisons, we have created a reweighted gross domestic product (GDP) estimate, termed as GDP\*. This only includes the industries covered within the BICS.

### Figure 4: The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) standardised turnover balance estimate remained broadly unchanged between February 2024 and March 2024

BICS turnover balance standardised and monthly GDP\* estimates, UK, 1 May 2022 to 31 March 2024

#### Figure 4: The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) standardised turnover balance estimate remained broadly unchanged between February 2024 and March 2024

BICS turnover balance standardised and monthly GDP\* estimates, UK, 1 May 2022 to 31 March 2024



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

#### Notes:

1. Final weighted results, Wave 55 to 106 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) and adjusted monthly gross domestic product (termed as GDP\*) estimates.
2. BICS turnover balances have been standardised and adjusted for magnitude and trading status.
3. GDP\* is a comparison measure derived to cover the same industries as those covered by BICS, which are then re-weighted. This differs from published monthly GDP.
4. The BICS asks businesses to report how their value of turnover compares with the previous month, excluding seasonal changes. GDP\* excludes any inflationary impact and reflects the changes in volume terms.
5. Data are plotted in the middle of the reference period.

## Advanced notification of potential redundancies

Calculated as a four-week rolling average, the number of potential redundancies in the week to 14 April 2024 was 18% below the level in the equivalent week of 2023. Further, the number of employers proposing redundancies was 16% below the level in the equivalent week of 2023.

Comparisons with the equivalent period a year ago help account for any seasonal impacts. For more information, our accompanying [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) is available.

## 5 . Energy

### System Average Price (SAP) of gas

The System Average Price (SAP) of gas increased by 14% in the week to 21 April 2024 when compared with the previous week. However, this was 20% below the level seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying [System Average Price of gas dataset](#) is available.

## 6 . Transport

### Traffic camera activity

The average traffic camera activity for cars in London was broadly unchanged in the week to 21 April 2024 when compared with the previous week. In the same period, average pedestrian and cyclist levels in London were also broadly unchanged.

Our accompanying [Traffic camera activity dataset](#) is available.

### Daily UK flights

The daily average number of UK flights remained broadly unchanged in the week to 21 April 2024, however, this was 4% higher than the equivalent week of 2023.

Our accompanying [Daily UK flights dataset](#) is available.

## 7 . Data

### [Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Weekly snapshot of online job advert indices covering the UK job market. These are official statistics in development. Source: Adzuna

### [UK spending on credit and debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 25 April 2024

Daily, weekly and monthly data showing seasonally adjusted and non-seasonally adjusted UK spending using debit and credit cards. These are official statistics in development. Source: CHAPS, Bank of England

This section lists a selection of the data available in this publication. For the full list of available datasets, please see our [accompanying dataset page](#).

## 8 . Glossary

### Real-time indicator

A real-time indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or experimental estimates, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

## 9 . Measuring the data

### Official statistics in development

These statistics are labelled as “official statistics in development”. Until September 2023, these were called “experimental statistics”. Read more about the change in our [Guide to official statistics in development](#).

We are developing how we collect and produce the data to improve the quality of these statistics. Read more in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article](#).

Once the developments are complete, we will review the statistics with the Statistics Head of Profession. We will decide whether the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or whether further development is needed. Production may be stopped if they are not of sufficient quality or value. Users will be informed of the outcome and any changes.

We value your feedback on these statistics. Contact us at [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

### Dataset release dates and intended release frequency

Latest release dates and intended release frequency of our associated datasets are available in the following list. Please note that there may be some changes to the intended release frequencies because of varying reasons. If you would like further information about any of these datasets, please contact us at [realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk](mailto:realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk).

### Weekly data release

[UK spending on credit and debit cards](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

[Revolut spending on debit cards](#) - latest release date is 1 February 2024

[Automotive fuel spending](#) - latest release date is 28 March 2024

[Online job advert estimates](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

[Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions](#) - latest release date is 7 March 2024

[Advanced notification of potential redundancies](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

[System Average Price of gas](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

[System Price of electricity](#) - latest release date is 18 April 2024

[Traffic camera activity](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

[Weekly shipping indicators](#) - latest release date is 5 April 2024

[Daily UK flights](#) - latest release date is 25 April 2024

### Fortnightly data release

[Transactions at Pret A Manger](#) – latest release date is 18 April 2024

## Monthly data release

[Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount](#) - latest release date is 14 March 2024

[Value Added Tax flash estimates](#) - latest release date is 18 April 2024

[Renter affordability for new tenancies](#) - latest release date is 11 April 2024

[Sales and jobs in small businesses](#) - latest release date is 14 March 2024

## 10 . Strengths and limitations

These statistics have been produced to provide timely indicators of the effect of developing world events on the UK economy and society, using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys, or official statistics in development.

The data presented in this bulletin are reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. Indicators are swapped in and out of the publication based on their suitability and availability.

### UK coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

Coronavirus restrictions should be considered when interpreting the data featured throughout this bulletin.

### Seasonality

Seasonal fluctuations are likely to be present in many of these indicators so caution must be applied when interpreting changes in series that are not seasonally adjusted.

## 11 . Related links

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#)

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, well-being and shortages of goods from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) to deliver real-time information to help assess issues affecting UK businesses and economy, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

## 12 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 25 April 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 25 April 2024](#)