Family spending in the UK: April 2017 to March 2018

Average weekly household expenditure on goods and services in the UK, by region, age, income, economic status, socio-economic class and household composition.

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Release date:
24 January 2019

Next release:
To be announced

Correction

24 January 2019 09:41

A correction has been made to the paragraph above Table 1 in Section 7. The figure published originally was £38.80 when it was in fact £18.60. This was due to a typing error. You can see the original content in the superseded version.

We apologise for any inconvenience.

Notice

9 August 2019

An error has been identified in the Living Cost and Food (LCF) Survey which has been found to impact the Family spending in the UK: April 2017 to March 2018 release. This affects, to a small degree, most estimates of average expenditure. The overall impact is that average weekly household expenditure in the UK is underestimated by around 0.5%, while the interpretation of the statistics remains the same.

The error was due to the imputation of data collected through a diary being incorrect for three quarters of the financial year in the LCF. Users should note this issue if using these data. We will correct this error when the next release covering April 2018 to March 2019 is published Early 2020. We apologise for any inconvenience. Please contact tracy.williams@ons.gov.uk for more information.

Table of contents

1 . Main points

- Average weekly household expenditure in the UK was £572.60 in the financial year ending 2018; the highest weekly spend since the financial year ending 2005, after adjusting for inflation.

- Transport was the category with the highest average weekly spend of £80.80, equivalent to 14% of households' average total weekly household expenditure.

- Households with heads aged 50 to 74 years spent almost a quarter of their housing expenditure costs on alterations and improvements.

- Average weekly household spending was the highest in London and the South East (over £650), whilst spending in the North East was the lowest, approximately £200 less.

- Households with heads aged under 30 years and those in Northern Ireland spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home, £7.80 and £8.60 respectively.

- Households' average weekly spend on alcoholic drinks away from the home was less in the financial year ending 2018 (£8.00) compared with 10 years ago (£10.90), after adjusting for inflation.

- Households in London spent the most on alcoholic drinks away from home, spending an average of £9.30 a week.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

Results presented in this bulletin cover the financial year ending (FYE) 2018; that is, April 2017 to March 2018.

Figures in this bulletin are averaged across all UK households, unless stated otherwise.

This bulletin uses the mean when referring to averages unless stated otherwise. Therefore, total average weekly household expenditure is equal to the total weekly expenditure of households divided by the number of households. All spending estimates are rounded to the nearest £0.10 therefore the sum of component items does not therefore necessarily add to the totals shown.

Spending is presented using Classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) categories, unless otherwise stated. COICOP is an internationally recognised classification system consistent with that used by UK National Accounts. It does not include all types of payments; for example, capital mortgage repayments are excluded. Section 5 of this bulletin references housing costs outside the COICOP classification system; this is to give a more complete view of this topic area.

This bulletin compares spending over time in two different ways, where figures either are or are not adjusted for inflation. Where figures are not adjusted for inflation, differences in spending could be because of differences in price level between the years. When comparing spending that has been adjusted for inflation, differences in price between years are not the cause for differences in spending, as this has already been considered. Where possible, we adjust for inflation when comparing levels of spending over time. We refer to these as deflated estimates. Please see the Quality and methodology section for more information on comparisons over time.

Statistical significance testing indicates the probability we are confident that the difference between the estimates we are comparing did not occur by chance. Any changes described as "significant" within this bulletin are either at the 95% or 90% level. This means that the probability that the difference occurred by chance is low (5 in 100 or lower and 10 in 100 or lower respectively).

This bulletin considers expenditure by UK constituent country and English region. We combine three years of data when presenting spending broken down by country and region to improve the robustness of results; these averages do not use deflated data.

This bulletin considers household expenditure by age group. The age of a household refers to the age of the person who is legally responsible for the household, known as the household reference person (HRP). Where there is more than one person who is legally responsible in the household, the HRP is the person with the highest income. If there is more than one person with the same income, the eldest member of the household becomes the HRP.

This article discusses income decile groups. Household incomes have been ranked in ascending order and divided into decile groups in order to examine expenditure patterns between different income groups. Income deciles divide the household income distribution into 10 equal parts. Households with the smallest income lie in the first decile and those with the largest income lie in the top decile.

We use equivalised disposable income decile when looking at expenditure and income together. Disposable income is defined as gross weekly cash income less the statutory deductions and payments of Income Tax and National Insurance contributions. It is used alongside expenditure as it is the amount households have available to spend or save. Equivalisation takes into account that households with many members are likely to need a higher income to achieve the same standard of living as households with fewer members. Please see the Quality and methodology section for more information on equivalisation.

Family spending has been designated by the UK Statistics Authority as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Statistics.

3 . Household spending in FYE 2018 was the highest since FYE 2005
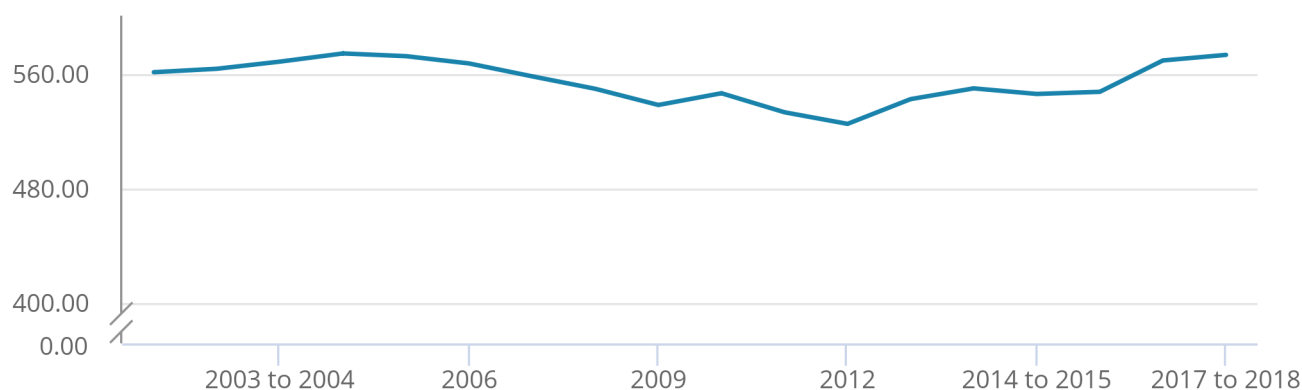
Average weekly household spending in the UK was £572.60 in the financial year ending (FYE) 2018. There has been an increasing trend in household spending in recent years following a low point in 2012. This is the highest level of household spending, after adjusting for inflation, since the previous peak in FYE 2005. Figure 1 shows average weekly household spending since FYE 2002.

Figure 1: There has been an increasing trend in household spending in recent years

Total household expenditure at financial year ending (FYE) 2018 prices, UK, FYE 2002 to FYE 2018

Figure 1: There has been an increasing trend in household spending in recent years

Total household expenditure at financial year ending (FYE) 2018 prices, UK, FYE 2002 to FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Notes:

1. Figures have been deflated to financial year ending 2018 prices using deflators specific to the classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) category.

It is useful to consider average spending alongside other economic indicators, to understand how it fits into the wider picture of the UK economy.

Gross domestic product (GDP), a headline measure of how well the economy is performing, grew steadily for all quarters in FYE 2018. Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2018 was the 21st consecutive quarter of growth, continuing the UK's period of growth since Quarter 1 2013.

Employment also continued to grow during this period. The employment rate reached 75.6% in Quarter 1 2018; at that time, the highest rate since records began in 1971. The proportion of workless households (households where no-one aged 16 years or over is in employment) fell to 14.3% in Quarter 1 2018, the lowest since records began in Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 1996. The increased proportion of people and households in work, may be one of the factors that contributed to higher levels of spending.

In 2017, the [households' saving ratio](#) (the level of gross disposable income plus adjustment to pension entitlements that is saved) fell to 3.9%, the lowest seen since records began in 1963. This could be attributed to the low base interest rate, which despite a small increase in November 2017 remained low at 0.5%. A low interest rate is a disincentive to save but it is an incentive to spend. It can encourage households to buy more goods and services on [credit](#), as well as taking out loans, which would influence higher levels of household spending. For all quarters in FYE 2018, households were net borrowers, meaning that they had to borrow (or draw on their reserves) to fund their spending and investment activities.

Household expenditure by category

In FYE 2018, transport, followed by housing, fuel and power (excluding mortgages), and recreation and culture were the expenditure categories with the highest average weekly expenditure in the UK. Households spent £80.80 a week on average on transport, £76.10 on housing, fuel and power and £74.60 on recreation and culture accounting for 40% of total average weekly household expenditure (14%, 13% and 13% respectively).

Figure 2 is an interactive tree map that enables you to explore average weekly household spending for FYE 2018 in more detail.

Figure 2: Households spent 40% of average weekly expenditure on transport, housing, fuel and power, and recreation and culture in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Household expenditure in the UK, FYE 2018

[Download the data](#)

Notes:

1. Mortgage interest payments, Council Tax and Northern Ireland rates are excluded from Housing(net) fuel and power.

2. Components of spending based on fewer than 10 recording households, or where the average rounds to 0, do not appear in the tree map.

Figure 3 shows the time series for each Classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) category since FYE 2002, adjusted for price changes. Looking at the trends in the high-spending categories, spending on transport remains the highest, over £10 a week higher in FYE 2018 than the lowest point in 2012. For housing, fuel and power, spending showed a general rise to a high in 2013, since then it has been fairly stable. Spending on recreation and culture has shown a general increase over time. For all three of these categories, the change since FYE 2017 has been relatively small (almost cancelling out any change for these three categories as a whole).

Considering the medium-sized spending categories, spending on food and non-alcoholic drinks has remained fairly constant across time, with the average spend in FYE 2018 (£60.60) being almost identical to the starting point of the series in FYE 2002 (£60.70).

Spending on restaurants and hotels showed a steady decrease until 2013 after which there were a few years of increase, but in the year FYE 2017 to FYE 2018 there has been a £2.00 decrease in average spend, with households spending an average of £49.60 a week on restaurants and hotels in FYE 2018.

Spending on household goods and services was at a low in 2011 at £29.40 a week followed by a general rise to a high of £40.70 a week in FYE 2018, though levels are broadly unchanged from the previous year.

For the lower-level spending categories, spending on clothing and footwear showed a general rise between FYE 2002 to 2010, since then it has remained fairly stable. However, in the period FYE 2017 to FYE 2018, spending in this category fell by £1.60 to £24.30 a week in FYE 2018.

Spending in the communication category has shown a general increase over time. In the year FYE 2017 to FYE 2018, there was an increase of £0.50.

Spending on alcoholic drinks and tobacco has shown a general downward trend over time, though remaining stable over the last three years.

Figure 3: Transport remained the highest spending category in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Household expenditure at FYE 2018 prices, by Classification of individual consumption by purpose category, UK, FYE 2002 to FYE 2018

Download the data

4 . Spending levels on transport in FYE 2018 remained similar to FYE 2017

Although transport was the category with the highest average weekly spend in the financial year ending (FYE) 2018, spending levels remained similar to FYE 2017, from £82.80 (in FYE 2017) to £80.80 (in FYE 2018) after adjusting to FYE 2018 prices.

The purchase of new and second-hand cars and vans, and petrol and diesel fuel accounted for nearly 60% of all spending on transport in FYE 2018, with the dominant expenditure, purchasing second-hand cars and vans, accounting for 21%. In comparison with the previous year, household spending on new cars decreased in FYE 2018 (prices adjusted by deflation) by 8% and household spending on second-hand cars decreased by 4%.

Data from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders support the observed decrease in households' spending on new and second-hand cars, reporting a 5.7% decrease in new car registrations between 2016 and 2017 and a 4.8% decrease in used car transactions between Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017 and Quarter 1 2018. They note that one reason for this is a decline in the demand for diesel vehicles, potentially associated with air quality concerns and changes to taxation.

Household spending in FYE 2018 compared with the previous year on all other categories within transport were largely unchanged.

5 . Households with a head aged 50 to 74 years spent almost a quarter of their housing expenditure costs on alterations and improvements in FYE 2018

The average weekly amount spent on the spending Classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) category of housing (net), fuel and power was £76.10. The proportions spent on the components of this category have largely remained unchanged over time with net rent (rent payments that the householders have to meet themselves, after housing benefits and any rebates received by the household to help pay for rent have been subtracted) accounting for nearly half of all expenditure in this category (47%).

For the rest of this section a more comprehensive definition of housing expenditure is used, which includes some significant housing-related costs (for example, mortgages including interest, protection and capital repayment) that are not included in the COICOP definition. Table 2.1 details all the items that are included in this comprehensive definition.

Figure 4 shows the components of the spending (COICOP) housing category and Figure 5 the components of the housing expenditure (comprehensive definition) category for the financial year ending (FYE) 2018. Households spent on average £185.70 a week on the housing expenditure category, nearly two and half times that spent on the COICOP housing category.
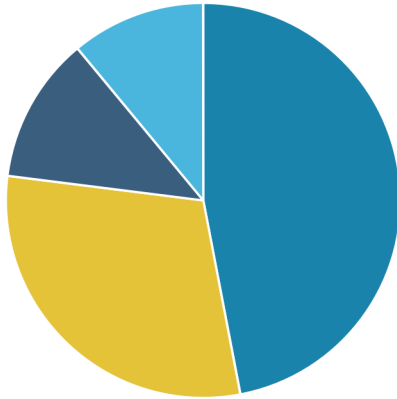
Households' highest four housing expenditure costs from highest to lowest were: mortgages, net rent, charges (including Council Tax or domestic rates, water charges, refuse collection), and alterations and improvements.

Figure 4: Households spent nearly half of their expenditure within the housing, fuel and power category on net rent in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Housing (net), fuel and power COICOP components, UK, FYE 2018

Figure 4: Households spent nearly half of their expenditure within the housing, fuel and power category on net rent in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

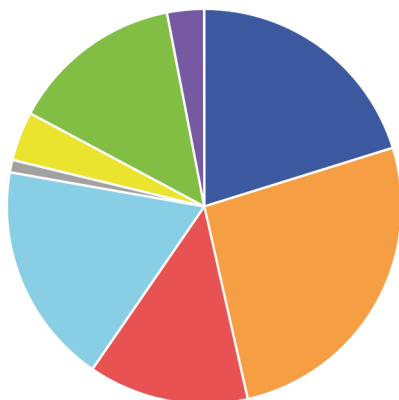Housing (net), fuel and power COICOP components, UK, FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Figure 5: Households spent a fifth of their expenditure within the comprehensive housing expenditure category on net rent and a quarter on mortgages in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Comprehensive definition of housing expenditure components, UK, FYE 2018

Figure 5: Households spent a fifth of their expenditure within the comprehensive housing expenditure category on net rent and a quarter on mortgages in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Comprehensive definition of housing expenditure components, UK, FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Figure 6 shows average weekly spending on housing expenditure costs (excluding secondary dwelling and outright purchase of main dwelling) by the age of the person legally responsible for the household, the household reference person (HRP), in FYE 2018.

Households containing a HRP aged under 30 years spent most of their housing expenditure costs on net rent (59%), with spending on net rent declining with age. This largely reflects the higher proportion of younger households who are renting. For example, the English Housing Survey (XLS, 417KB) showed that 91% of households with a HRP aged 16 to 24 years and 63% of households with a HRP aged 25 to 34 years were privately or socially renting in 2016 to 2017, compared with 22% households with a HRP aged 65 years or over.

Alternatively, the largest housing expenditure cost for households with a head aged 30 to 49 years was mortgage costs, accounting for 36% of all housing expenditure costs for this age group. This age group spent the most on mortgage costs and as age increased from this point mortgage costs declined, with households with a HRP aged 75 years and over spending the least (1% of their housing expenditure costs). This largely reflects the higher proportion of middle-aged households buying with a mortgage. For example, the English Housing Survey showed that households with an HRP aged 35 to 44 years and 45 to 54 years had the highest proportion of households buying with a mortgage (46% and 47% respectively) in 2016 to 2017. Households aged 65 years and over had the lowest proportion buying with a mortgage, at 5%.

Expenditure is averaged across all households including those reporting nil expenditure on a specific item so that all households are included when calculating both rent and mortgage expenditure. It is useful to consider average weekly expenditure on net rent by renters and on mortgages by mortgage holders. This is the only occasion where expenditure has been averaged over only households that have expenditure on specific items. The average weekly mortgage payment by mortgage holders was £156.50 in FYE 2018, accounting for almost an eighth (13%) of all mortgage holders' expenditure, as shown in Table 2.9. Although average spending on net rent by renters was approximately a third less, at £107.80 per week, rent costs account for a larger proportion of total expenditure for renters (18%), as shown in Table 2.8.
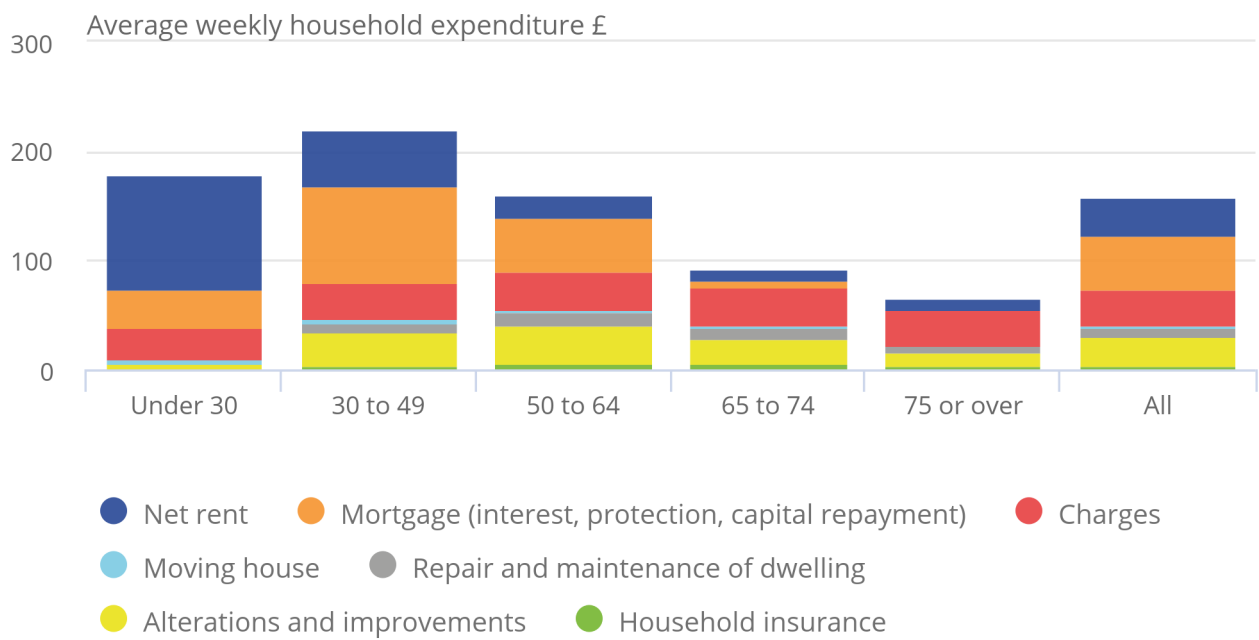
Expenditure on alterations and improvements (including central heating installation, double-glazing, kitchen units and so on) is highest for households where the HRP is in the middle age groups. Almost a quarter of all housing expenditure costs is spent on alterations and improvements in households where the HRP is aged 50 to 64 years (21%) or 65 to 74 years (24%), higher than the average for all households (14%).

Figure 6: Spending on net rent declined as the age of the household head increased

Household expenditure on components of housing expenditure by age of household reference person (HRP), UK, financial year ending 2018

Figure 6: Spending on net rent declined as the age of the household head increased

Household expenditure on components of housing expenditure by age of household reference person (HRP), UK, financial year ending 2018

Source: Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Notes:

1. Excludes spending on secondary dwelling and outright purchase of main dwelling due to small sample sizes.

6 . Which country within the UK was the highest spender?

This section will consider how household spending varies between the UK constituent countries, that is, England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. When looking at spending by country, we combine three years of financial year data to make the analysis more robust; these averages do not use deflated data.

The different countries of the UK have different spending patterns when compared with one another. This is likely to be the result of a range of factors, including differences in income, differences in lifestyle, and regional price differences.

England

Table A33 shows that England had the highest level of household spending for the financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2018. Average weekly household spending for England was £565.10 a week, compared with the UK average of £551.90 for the same time period. England was the only UK constituent country whose average weekly household spending was more than the UK average, where four out of the nine English regions spent more than the UK average a week.

However, spending within England varied greatly. Average weekly household spending in London and the South East was over £650 whilst average weekly household spending in the North East was approximately £200 less at £457.50.
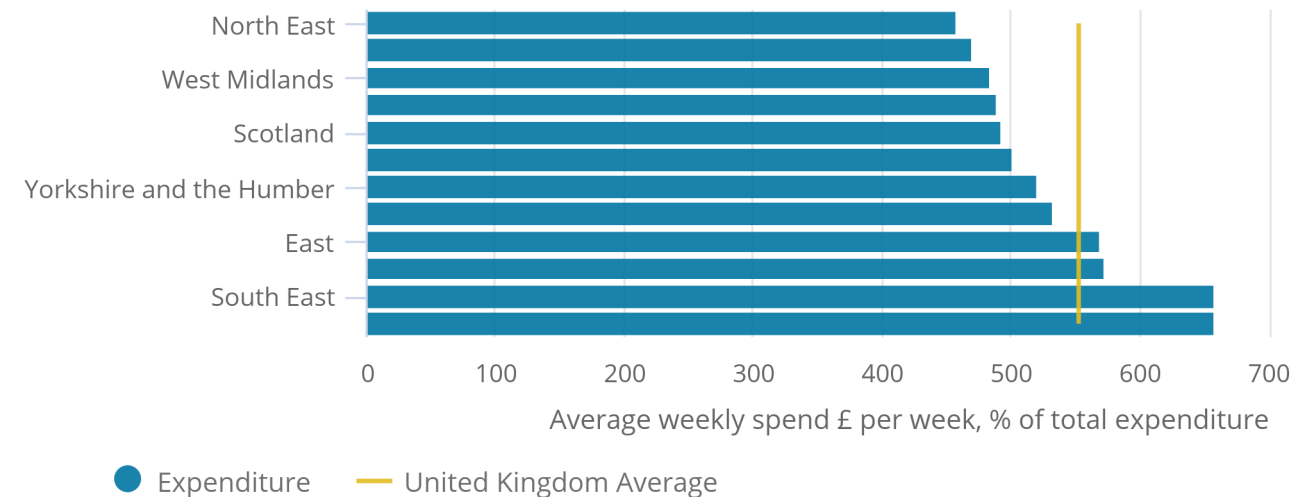
Figure 7 demonstrates the differences in overall spending for the different English regions and compares them with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This shows that when we consider the UK as a whole, England had both the lowest- and highest-spending regions.

Figure 7: Average weekly household spending was the highest in London and the South East, whilst spending in the North East was the lowest

Household expenditure by country and region, UK, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2018

Figure 7: Average weekly household spending was the highest in London and the South East, whilst spending in the North East was the lowest

Household expenditure by country and region, UK, financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics - Living Costs and Food Survey

As for the UK as a whole, the top three spending categories for England were transport, followed by housing, fuel and power, and recreation and culture. However, spending patterns vary across the English regions.

The highest spending regions of England are London, where households spent an average of £658.30 a week, and the South East, where households spent an average of £657.50 a week; over £85 a week more than those in the next highest spending region, the South West.

Whilst total spending in the top two regions is almost identical, the spending pattern differs considerably. Households in London spent 19% of their total expenditure on housing, fuel and power (£124.20 a week) whilst households in the South East spent only 12% of their total expenditure on this category (£77.40 a week). This was driven by higher spending on net rent in London. Focusing only on those who are renting, Table 2.11 shows households in London spent an average weekly amount of £179.60 on net rent, compared with £131.70 in the South East. This was more than two and a half times the average amount spent by renters in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Households in London spent only 11% of their total expenditure on transport (£75.10 a week), compared with households in the South East who spent 15% (£99.10 a week). This was driven by higher expenditure on the purchase of vehicles in the South East, where households spent more than any other region of the UK (£34.30 a week); a third or more higher than the average amount spent by households on the purchase of vehicles in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Households in London spent only 10% of their total expenditure (£64.40 a week) on recreation and culture compared with households in the South East who spent 14% (£93.50 a week) – the highest-spending region of the UK on this category. However, recreation and culture was the highest spending category for households in the North East and Scotland. Households in the North East spent 16% (£72.80 a week) of their total expenditure on recreation and culture whilst households in Scotland spent 14% (£69.40 a week). This was driven by a few different factors, such as lower spending on transport and housing.

Scotland

Following on from England, the second-highest spending UK constituent country was Scotland. Scottish households spent an average of £492.20 a week in FYE 2016 to FYE 2018. Whilst the top spending category for households in Scotland was recreation and culture, they spent a similar amount (£68.20 a week, 14% of total expenditure) on transport.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland spent an average of £488.50 a week in FYE 2016 to FYE 2018. Northern Ireland was the only country of the UK that had food and non-alcoholic drinks in its top three spending categories.

Households in Northern Ireland spent 13% of their total expenditure on food and non-alcoholic drinks, compared with the UK average of 11%. One reason for this is that the average Northern Ireland household size is larger than the UK average. There is also some evidence to suggest that cultural differences (PDF, 136KB) may also be a factor, with slightly higher importance placed on quality local produce by households in Northern Ireland than those in England.

Wales

Households in Wales had the lowest average weekly spending out of the four UK constituent countries for FYE 2016 to FYE 2018. Here, average weekly household spending was £470.40; this was £81.50 less than the UK average for this three-year time period. When we compare Wales' average weekly household spending with the separate regions of England in addition to Scotland and Northern Ireland, the North East was the only region that spent less than households in Wales, at £457.50 a week.

The top spending category for Wales was transport, with households in Wales spending 15% of their total expenditure in this category. This mirrors the high car ownership we see in Wales; Table A48 shows that 85% of households in Wales owned a car or van in this three-year period. This was higher than England (78%), Scotland (72%) and Northern Ireland (80%). Households in Wales spent an average of £25.80 a week on the purchase of vehicles, which was 5% of total expenditure.

7 . Which households spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home?

In the financial year ending (FYE) 2018, average weekly household expenditure on restaurants and hotels was £49.60, representing 9% of total expenditure. Spending on restaurants and hotels showed a steady decrease until 2013 after which there were a few years of increase. In the year FYE 2017 to FYE 2018 there was a £2.00 decrease in average spend, after figures have been adjusted for inflation.

Restaurants and hotels can be split into catering services and accommodation services, with both experiencing a decrease in spending in FYE 2018, after adjusting for inflation, with a larger decrease for catering services.
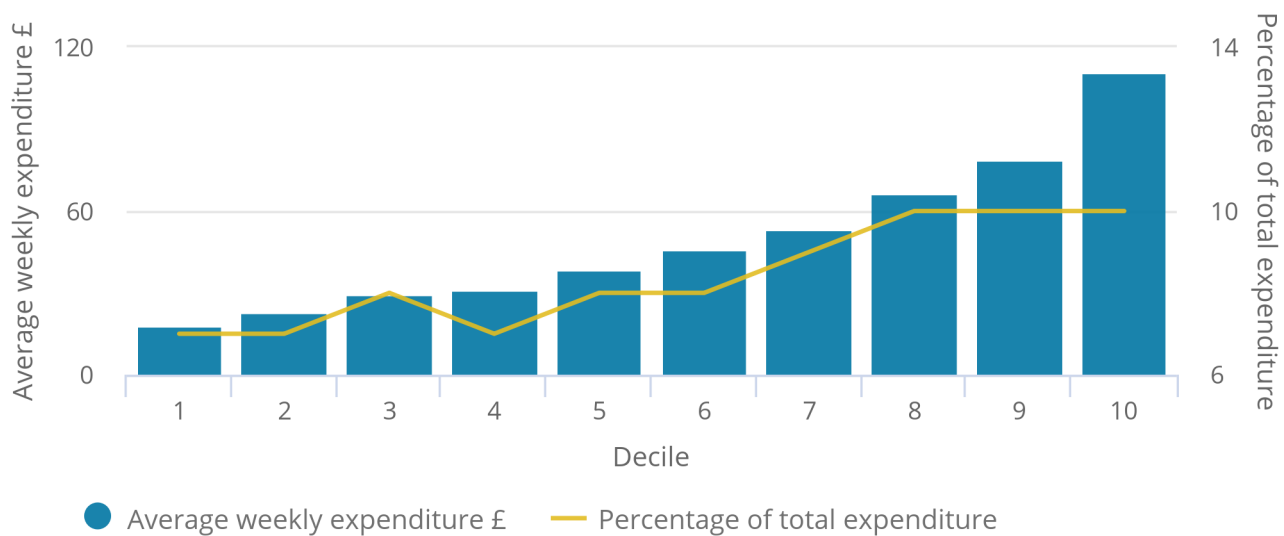
Spending on restaurants and hotels varies greatly across the income distribution as shown in Table 3.1E. The poorest 10% of households spent an average of £18.20 a week on restaurants and hotels (7% of total expenditure), compared with £110.60 a week for those in the highest income decile (10% of total expenditure), just over six times as much, as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Spending on restaurants and hotels varied greatly across the different income groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on restaurants and hotels (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of total expenditure) by equivalised disposable income decile group, UK, FYE 2018

Figure 8: Spending on restaurants and hotels varied greatly across the different income groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on restaurants and hotels (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of total expenditure) by equivalised disposable income decile group, UK, FYE 2018

Legend: ● Average weekly expenditure £   — Percentage of total expenditure

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Catering services accounted for 78% of spending on restaurants and hotels in FYE 2018. Within catering services, spending on restaurant and café meals is the highest-spending category, with an average weekly spend of £18.60 accounting for 48% of expenditure on catering services as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Restaurant and café meals was the highest spending category within catering services in FYE 2018

	Average weekly expenditure £ per week	Percentage of catering services expenditure
Catering services	38.80	100%
Restaurant and café meals	18.60	48%
Alcoholic drinks (away from home)	8.00	21%
Takeaway meals eaten at home	5.10	13%
Other takeaway and snack food	5.10	13%
Contract catering (food) and canteens	2.00	5%

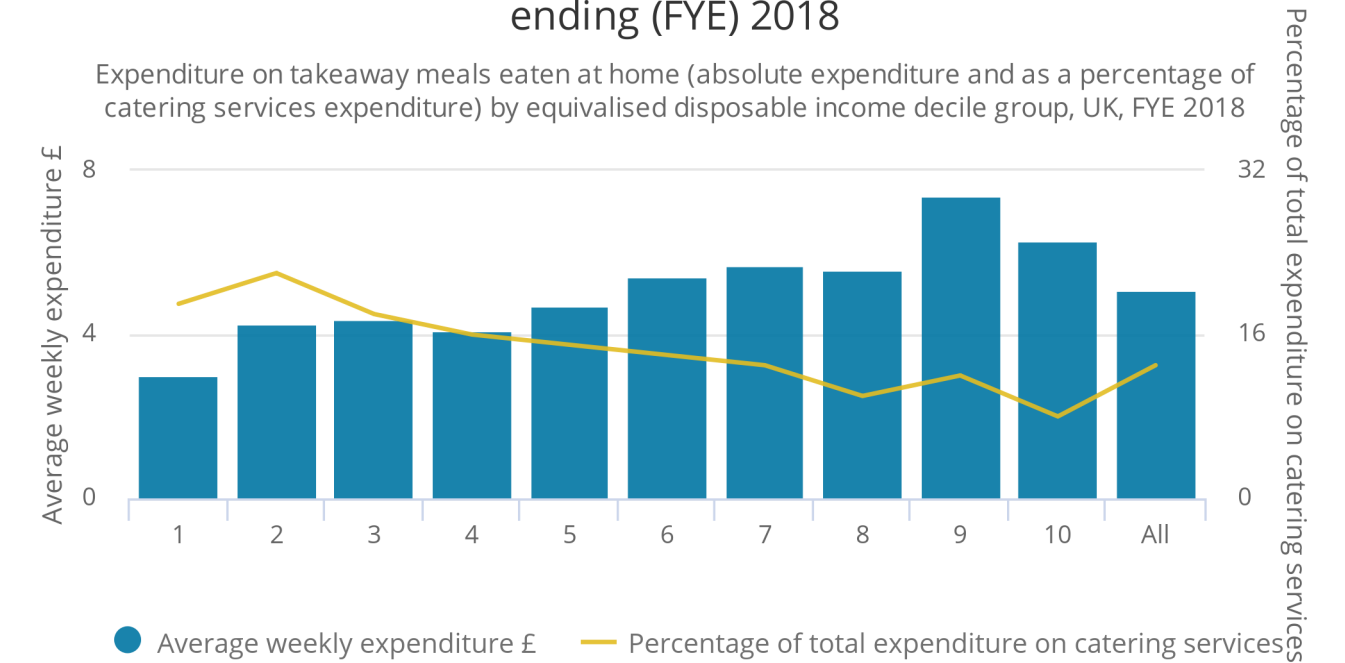Source: Office for National Statistics

Spending within catering services varies between different groups, in particular, there are differences in the percentage of catering services expenditure on restaurants and café meals, and takeaway meals eaten at home.

Comparing spending across the different income groups, households in the two lowest equivalised disposable income deciles spent proportionally more on takeaway meals eaten at home, with the poorest 10% of households spending 19% and the second-poorest spending 22% of their overall catering services expenditure on takeaways. The richest income decile spent 8% of their catering services expenditure on this, the lowest proportion across all income groups as demonstrated by Figure 9. By contrast, this group spent the highest proportion of their catering services expenditure (52%) on restaurant and café meals.

Figure 9: Households in the two lowest equivalised disposable income groups spent proportionally more on takeaway meals eaten at home than other income groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by equivalised disposable income decile group, UK, FYE 2018

Figure 9: Households in the two lowest equivalised disposable income groups spent proportionally more on takeaway meals eaten at home than other income groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018
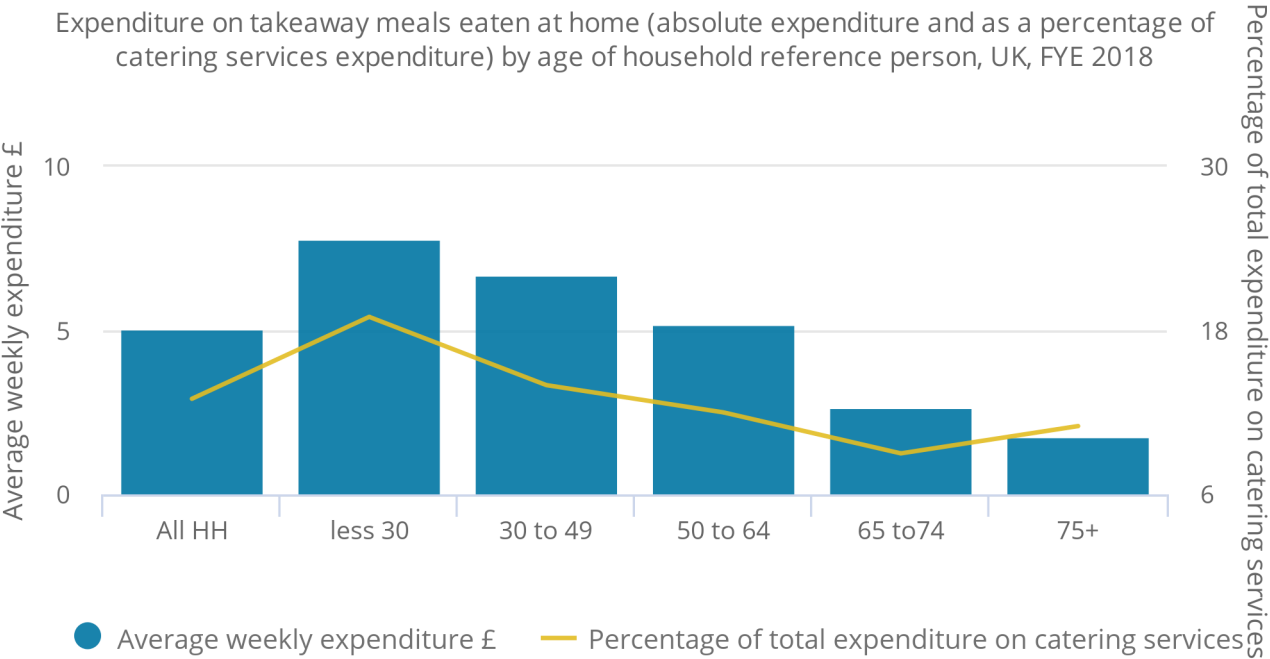
Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by equivalised disposable income decile group, UK, FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Comparing the spending of households by the age of the person legally responsible for the household, the household reference person (HRP), shows there are also differences in how different age groups spend their money within catering services. Households in the under 30 years age group spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home, spending on average £7.80 a week, as shown in Table A11. This accounted for 19% of their spending on catering services, the highest percentage spend on this compared with other age groups as demonstrated by Figure 10. Subsequently they had the lowest percentage spend on restaurants and café meals, with 39% of their spending on catering services attributed to this (£16.20 on average per week). Households where the HRP is 75 years and over had the highest percentage spend on this at 68% (£11.40 on average per week).

Figure 10: Households with heads aged under 30 years spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home compared with other age groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by age of household reference person, UK, FYE 2018

Figure 10: Households with heads aged under 30 years spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home compared with other age groups in financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by age of household reference person, UK, FYE 2018

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

We also see that different countries and regions in the UK have different spending habits for catering services. In order to look at spending by country and region, three years of data are averaged to make the analysis more robust. The average spending on restaurants and hotels combined over FYEs 2016, 2017 and 2018 was £48.30 [1].

Table A35 shows households in Northern Ireland spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home, spending an average of £8.60 a week on this (20% of their expenditure on catering services) in FYE 2016 to FYE 2018. This is a high proportion compared with other UK countries and regions, with the next highest being the North East, with 15% of catering services expenditure spent on takeaway meals eaten at home (£5.10 per week on average). The higher spending on this may be linked to the average Northern Ireland household size being larger than the UK average. The South West spent the least, £3.90 on average per week on takeaway meals eaten at home (11% of catering services expenditure) as demonstrated by Figure 11.
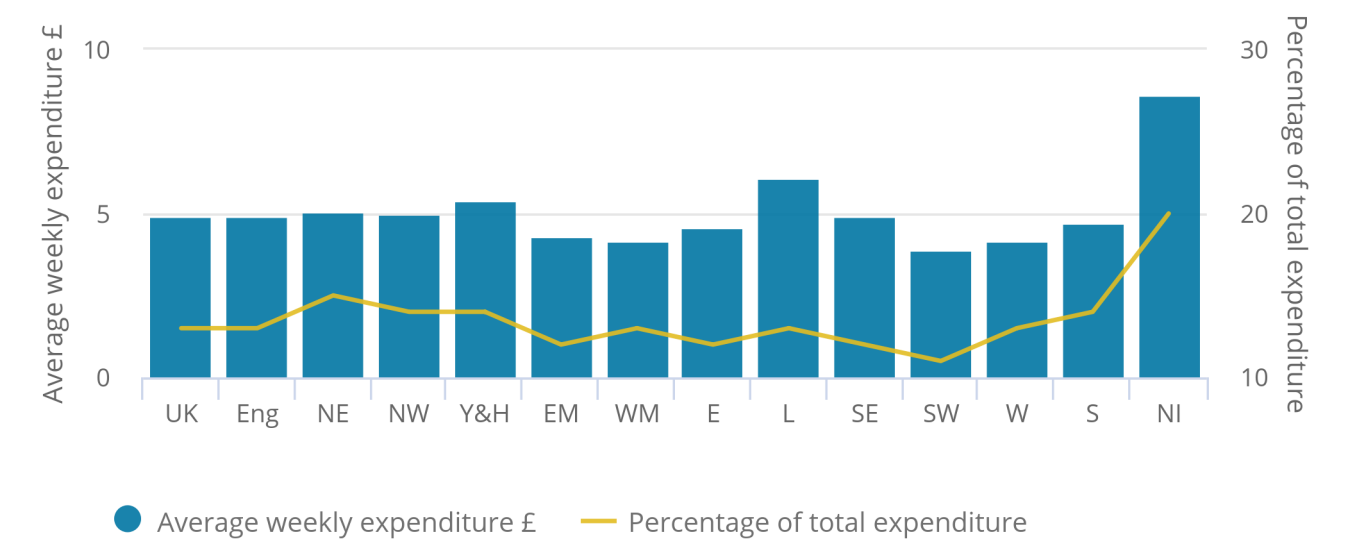
As well as spending a greater proportion of catering expenditure on takeaway meals, Northern Ireland households also spent a higher proportion of total expenditure on restaurant and café meals and takeaway meals when compared with England, Wales and Scotland.

Figure 11: Households in Northern Ireland spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home in financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by English regions and UK constituent countries, FYE 2016 to FYE 2018

Figure 11: Households in Northern Ireland spent the most on takeaway meals eaten at home in financial year ending (FYE) 2016 to financial year ending (FYE) 2018

Expenditure on takeaway meals eaten at home (absolute expenditure and as a percentage of catering services expenditure) by English regions and UK constituent countries, FYE 2016 to FYE 2018

Average weekly expenditure £   Percentage of total expenditure

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

Notes:

1. UK: United Kingdom, Eng: England, NE: North East, NW: North West, Y&H: Yorkshire and the Humber, EM: East Midlands, WM: West Midlands, E: East, L: London, SE: South East, SW: South West, W: Wales, S: Scotland, NI: Northern Ireland

8 . Households' alcohol drinking habits have changed over the last 10 years

Within catering services, the second-highest spend in the financial year ending (FYE) 2018 was on alcoholic drinks away from the home. On average, £8.00 per week was spent on this, accounting for 21% of household spending on catering services. This compares with an average household spend of £8.70 on alcoholic drinks brought home, giving a total average weekly expenditure of £16.70 spent on alcoholic drinks for all households.

Combining three years of data in order to look at differences between UK countries and regions of England, the average spending on alcoholic drinks combined over FYEs 2016, 2017 and 2018 was £16.00, with an average of £8.20 spent on alcoholic drinks brought home (51% of spending on alcoholic drinks) and £7.80 spent on alcoholic drinks away from home (49% of spending on alcoholic drinks) as shown in Figure 13. The North West had the highest average weekly spend on all alcoholic drinks, at £17.00 per week. Wales had the lowest, at £13.40 per week.

London had the highest spend on alcoholic drinks away from home, spending an average of £9.30 a week, 56% of spending on all alcoholic drinks. This was the largest percentage spend on alcoholic drinks away from home. Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and the South West had the lowest percentage spend on alcoholic drinks away from home, with 44% of the expenditure on alcoholic drinks attributed to this. This may reflect a number of factors including regional differences in prices, and socio-demographic characteristics.

Table 2: Households in London spent the most on alcoholic drinks away from home in FYE 2018

	Average weekly expenditure £ per week			As percentage of expenditure on all alcoholic drinks		
	Alcoholic drinks brought home	Alcoholic drinks away from home	All alcoholic drinks	Alcoholic drinks brought home	Alcoholic drinks away from home	Total
UK	8.20	7.80	16.00	51%	49%	100%
England	8.20	8.10	16.30	50%	50%	100%
North East	7.50	8.70	16.20	46%	54%	100%
North West	8.70	8.30	17.00	51%	49%	100%
Yorkshire and the Humber	7.90	8.90	16.80	47%	53%	100%
East Midlands	8.90	7.50	16.40	54%	46%	100%
West Midlands	7.60	6.70	14.30	53%	47%	100%
East	8.60	7.80	16.40	52%	48%	100%
London	7.40	9.30	16.70	44%	56%	100%
South East	8.60	8.30	16.90	51%	49%	100%
South West	8.60	6.80	15.40	56%	44%	100%
Wales	7.50	5.90	13.40	56%	44%	100%
Scotland	8.30	6.50	14.80	56%	44%	100%
Northern Ireland	8.30	6.40	14.70	56%	44%	100%

Source: Office for National Statistics

Overall average household expenditure on alcoholic drinks (including those brought home and those drunk away from the home) has decreased over the last 10 years. In 2007, households spent on average £18.90 on alcoholic drinks, compared with £16.70 in FYE 2018 (figures in this section have been adjusted for inflation). This is in line with a fall in the percentage of adults drinking alcohol since 2005, as reported by the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).
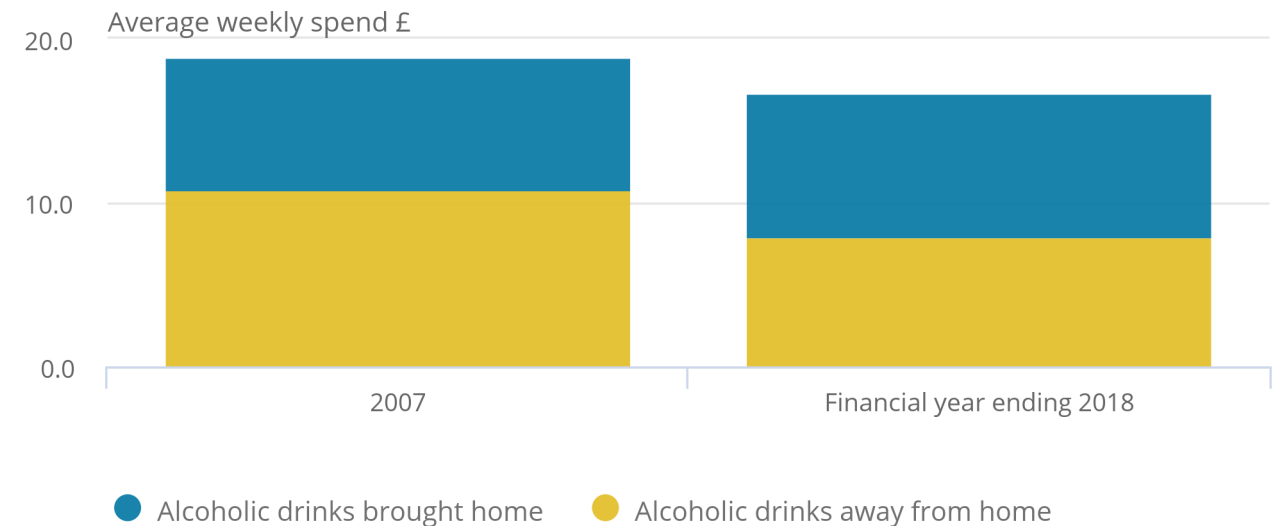
Overall, the proportion of the total spend on alcoholic drinks that is attributed to drinks away from the home has been decreasing over the last 10 years. In 2007, households spent an average of £10.90 a week on alcoholic drinks away from the home, which accounted for 57% of their spending on alcoholic drinks. This decreased to £8.00 in FYE 2018, accounting for 48% of spending on alcoholic drinks as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12: Households spent less on alcoholic drinks away from the home in financial year ending (FYE) 2018 compared to 10 years ago

Expenditure on alcoholic drinks, UK, 2007 and FYE 2018

Figure 12: Households spent less on alcoholic drinks away from the home in financial year ending (FYE) 2018 compared to 10 years ago

Expenditure on alcoholic drinks, UK, 2007 and FYE 2018

Average weekly spend £

Alcoholic drinks brought home   Alcoholic drinks away from home

Source: Office for National Statistics – Living Costs and Food Survey

This decline in spending on alcoholic drinks away from the home could be associated with the decline in the number of pubs in recent years, particularly smaller pubs, which tend to be more focused on the sale of drinks.

9 . Links to related statistics

Details of household consumption expenditure within the context of the UK National Accounts are produced as part of Consumer trends. This publication includes all expenditure by members of UK- resident households. National accounts figures draw on a number of sources including the Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF): figures shown in this report are therefore not directly comparable with national accounts data. National accounts data may be more appropriate for deriving long-term trends on expenditure.

Further information about food consumption and in particular details of food quantities, is available from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who produce their own report of the survey.

The [Household income and inequality](#) and [Effects of taxes and benefits on household income](#) bulletins provide a more detailed analysis of disposable income and inequality in the UK. Our preferred measures of household income are published in these releases. Both these releases use data provided by the LCF, the same data source used in Family spending. The income measures follow the definitions and concepts set out in the [Canberra Handbook](#) (published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)), which is the basis of internationally agreed standards in this area. This defines income as receipts (either monetary or in kind) that are received on a regular basis and are available for current consumption.

10 . What's changed in this release?

The financial year ending March 2018 edition of Family spending includes deflated data for some of the lower classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) categories. Previously only the main categories of the COICOP were deflated. Please see the [Quality and methodology section](#) for more information.

The financial year ending March 2017 edition of Family Spending included some changes to the range and content of available tables; this is to ensure robust estimates. [An index of tables](#) gives more information.

11 . Quality and methodology

The [Living Costs and Food Survey Technical Report](#) and corresponding [Quality and Methodology Information report](#), contains important information on:

- the strengths and limitations of the data and how it compares with related data

- uses and users of the data

- how the output was created

- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

Description of the survey

All the findings in this bulletin are taken from data collected on the [Living Costs and Food Survey](#) (LCF). The LCF is a UK household survey, designed to provide information on household expenditure patterns and food consumption.

The LCF is a voluntary sample survey of private households. Each individual in a selected household is asked to complete a household interview and then an expenditure diary for two weeks. The survey is continuous, interviews being spread evenly over the year to ensure that seasonal effects are covered.

Great care is taken to ensure complete confidentiality of information and to protect the identity of LCF households. Only anonymised data are supplied to users.

Sampling

The LCF sample for Great Britain is a multi-stage stratified random sample with clustering. It is drawn from the small users file of the postcode address file (PAF) – the Post Office's list of addresses. After stratification by two census variables, 697 postal sectors are randomly selected and, from within these, households are sampled.

A total of 11,689 households were selected in financial year ending (FYE) 2018 for the LCF in Great Britain.

The Northern Ireland sample is drawn as a random sample of addresses from the Land and Property Services Agency list.

Response: Great Britain

The overall response rate for the LCF in FYE 2018 was 43% in Great Britain.

Because of the practicalities of running a voluntary survey, it is not possible to get full response from every selected household. Of the total 11,689 households in Great Britain selected for the LCF in FYE 2018, there were 5,013 households that co-operated fully in the survey, including 164 households that provided sufficient information to be included as valid responses.

Response: Northern Ireland

The overall response rate for the LCF in FYE 2018 was 47% in Northern Ireland.

In FYE 2018, there were 1,000 sampled households, 841 of which were eligible, where 392 households gave full interviews.

Estimation

The LCF employs weighting to reduce the effect of non-response bias and produce estimates of population totals and means. The weighting procedure is designed to compensate for non-response (sample-based weighting) and to adjust the sample to reflect known population totals (population-based weighting).

The technical report goes into further detail showing the effects of the weighting by comparing unweighted and weighted data.

Standard errors and estimates of precision

The LCF is a sample of households and not a census of the whole population. Therefore, the estimates presented in this report will differ, to some degree, from the true population values. For more information on all estimates of precision, please see the technical report.

Standard errors provide a numerical measure of the likely difference that will arise, solely due to random chance. Standard errors for detailed expenditure items are presented in relative terms in Table A1 (standard error as a percentage of the average to which it refers). Please note that when broken down further by sub-category, for example, household composition, the standard errors will increase; therefore, extra care should be taken when interpreting and comparing figures.

Confidence intervals can be used to estimate a range within which the true population value should lie. This report presents confidence intervals at the 95% level. This means that if we used the same sampling method to select different samples and computed an interval estimate for each sample, we would expect the true population parameter to fall within the interval estimates 95% of the time.

Statistical significance testing indicates the probability with which we are confident that the difference between the estimates under examination did not occur by chance. Significant testing is carried out at the 95% and 90% levels. Please see the Things you need to know about this release section for definitions of highly significant and significant results.

Equivalisation methodology

Income quintile and decile groups are based on a ranking of households by equivalised disposable income. Equivalisation is the process of accounting for the fact that households with many members are likely to need a higher income to achieve the same standard of living as households with fewer members. Equivalisation takes into account the number of people living in the household and their ages, acknowledging that while a household with two people in it will need more money to sustain the same living standards as one with a single person, the two-person household is unlikely to need double the income.

The Family spending technical report provides further detail.

Spending by UK constituent country and English region

This bulletin considers expenditure by UK constituent country and English region. We combine three years of data when presenting spending broken down by country and region. This is done to increase the sample size and therefore improve the robustness of results. The average for each year is summed and then the total is divided by three. The averages do not use deflated data.

Comparisons over time

Throughout this bulletin, figures are compared over time. Where possible, expenditure figures have been deflated, that is, adjusted for inflation, to allow comparison of expenditure in real terms across survey years. In this bulletin, all figures have been deflated when comparing the main categories of the Classification of individual consumption by purpose (COICOP) over time. Figures not adjusted for inflation are also available for the main COICOP categories in Table 4.3. Figures are deflated using the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and the indices are specific to each major COICOP category.

For housing goods and services items that are not covered by the CPI, the owner occupier housing costs (payments method) indices are used. More detailed categories have been deflated using the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) and the specific indices that best matches the detailed COICOP category. The LCF technical report contains greater detail on how our figures are deflated.

Please note that other ONS statistics referenced in the commentary may use a different method for deflating time series figures, according to the concept being measured.

The LCF is reviewed every year and changes are made to keep it up-to-date. Therefore, year-on-year changes should be interpreted with caution.

Standard errors for categories with lower levels of spending tend to be higher, so trends for these categories need to be treated with a degree of caution.