

Article

Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2026

Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on financial performance, prices and workforce. These are official statistics in development.

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Next release:

To be announced

Notice

15 May 2026

This release has a headline only format and is accompanied by our full dataset.

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1 . Main points

- In March 2026, more than one in seven (15%) trading UK single-site businesses reported that their turnover was higher compared with the previous calendar month, down 3 percentage points from March 2025; the South East had the highest proportion of any nation or region (19%) while the West Midlands reported the lowest proportion (13%).
- Approximately a quarter (24%) of trading UK single-site businesses reported that their turnover had decreased in March 2026 compared with the previous calendar month, broadly stable with March 2025; the South West had the highest proportion of any nation or region (25%) while the East Midlands had the lowest (19%).
- The proportion of single-site businesses that reported that the prices of goods and services bought had increased, compared with the previous month, rose for all UK nations and regions between March 2025 and March 2026; the South West had the largest rise during this period (31% to 42%) and London had the smallest rise (27% to 32%).
- Between March 2025 and March 2026, all nations saw an increase in the proportion of single-site businesses that reported that the prices of goods and services sold had increased compared with the previous month; Northern Ireland had the largest rise during this period (12% to 18%) while Scotland had the smallest (12% to 13%).
- 9% of UK single-site businesses experienced worker shortages in early April 2026, broadly stable with both early March 2026 and early April 2025; the West Midlands had the highest proportion of any nation or region (10%) while the East Midlands had the lowest (6%).

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 . Overview

The data presented in this article are weighted single-site estimates from Wave 130 to Wave 154 of the Office for National Statistics' [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\)](#), which covers the periods March 2025 to March 2026. For some questions, businesses were asked for their experiences for the survey live period. However, other questions ask specifically about the most recent calendar month in relation to the time of completion.

This BICS subnational release focuses on the following topics:

- turnover
- prices of goods and services bought and sold
- worker shortages

The BICS subnational release focuses on a single-business-site approach to be reflective of sites spread across various geographies. Single-site businesses represent approximately 98% of all businesses and approximately half of total UK turnover and employment. BICS does not cover all sectors of the economy and only includes private sector businesses.

The data reported are subject to [uncertainty](#), for example, sampling variability and [non-sampling error](#). This means that the characteristics of single-site businesses that responded within a certain region and wave can have an impact on subnational BICS estimates. Further information on quality is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey quality and methodology information report](#) and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

3 . Data on business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy

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

Dataset | Released 15 May 2026

Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on topics such as trading status and workforce, by country and regional level. Official statistics in development.

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 our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey quality and methodology information report](#).

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”.

5 . Data sources and quality

This article uses microdata from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) to help understand business impacts on the subnational UK economy. It predominately focuses on Wave 130 to Wave 154 of the BICS (7 April 2025 to 19 April 2026) covering the period since the last edition of this article.

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) is voluntary, and the results are classed as [official statistics in development](#).

Table 1: Sample and response rates for all businesses, single-site businesses and multi-site businesses for Waves 150, 152 and 154 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	Wave 150	Wave 152	Wave 154
All businesses sample	38,953	38,801	38,750
All businesses rate	27.5%	27.2%	25.4%
Single-site businesses sample	28,288	28,179	28,134
Single-site businesses rate	24.2%	23.7%	22.0%
Multi-site businesses sample	10,665	10,622	10,616
Multi-site businesses rate	36.2%	36.5%	34.3%

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

Notes

1. Additional datasets including response rates proportional breakdowns of single-site businesses compared with multi-sites businesses and the distribution of single-site businesses across industries can be found in the accompanying datasets.

Table 2: Response rates for single-site businesses broken down by nation for Wave 154 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	Wave 154
Northern Ireland single-site businesses sample	1,198
Northern Ireland single-site businesses rate	18.4%
Scotland single-site businesses sample	4,296
Scotland single-site businesses rate	27.3%
England single-site businesses sample	34,171
England single-site businesses rate	25.9%
Wales single-site businesses sample	2,608
Wales single-site businesses rate	25.6%

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

Notes

1. Additional datasets including response rates proportional breakdowns of single-site businesses compared with multi-sites businesses, and the distribution of single-site businesses across industries can be found in the accompanying datasets.
2. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey samples a random sample of businesses across the UK, not by country.

Subnational BICS estimates

Subnational BICS estimates have been created by using the results collected in the fortnightly survey. Each survey return from each reporting unit is then applied to the reporting unit's one local site. We have removed businesses with multiple sites from the sample, and results in this analysis are based on single-site businesses only (as identified on the [Inter-Departmental Business Register \(IDBR\)](#)). Sections 2 and 3 of our [Business insights and impact on the UK and subnational economy: 9 December 2022 article](#) outline in detail the methodology behind our single-site subnational estimates, and its impact compared with previously published results encompassing all businesses.

Aggregates of [International Territorial Level \(ITL1\)](#) regions such as the UK or England may have higher or lower response proportions than any of their constituent regions because of differences in the sample composition in terms of company workforce.

Because the larger aggregate regions (such as the UK or England) generally have a larger proportion of smaller companies, if there is a substantial difference between the response proportions of larger and smaller companies, this will be reflected in the headline figures.

Weighting

Single-site estimates in this release are weighted, ensuring estimates are representative of all single-site businesses. The characteristics of single-site businesses that responded within a certain region and wave can have an impact on subnational BICS estimates. A detailed description of the weighting methodology and its differences to unweighted estimates is available in our [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\): preliminary weighted results](#).

The [weighted estimates for Scotland for businesses with 10 or more employees](#) are available from the Scottish Government website.

Single-site sample

While the single-site approach is not representative of all UK businesses (as it excludes businesses with multiple sites), weighted single-site estimates are representative of all UK single-site businesses and approximately 98% of all businesses (and half of total UK turnover and employment). The [accompanying datasets](#) show how the composition by region and industry (when using the single-sites approach) holds up, when compared with the all businesses sample.

Measuring the data

The BICS survey is voluntary and may only reflect the characteristics of those that responded. 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 quality and methodology information report](#).

6 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Updated frequently

This webpage provides the latest updates from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

[Business and innovation statistics](#)

Web page | Updated frequently

This webpage is a directory of statistical publications relating to business and innovation in Scotland, organised by subject.

7 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 15 May 2026, ONS website, article, [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2026](#)