

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 8 September 2022

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.

Contact:
Emily Hopson
bics@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455592

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1 . Main points

- In late August 2022, 21% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were on a variable rate for electricity, with 10% reporting that their fixed or hedged prices would expire by 31 December 2022; for gas these percentages were 16% and 6%, respectively.
- Input price inflation and energy prices remain the top two main concerns reported by businesses for October at 26% and 22%, respectively.
- In August 2022, 21% of businesses with 10 or more employees, reported experiencing global supply chain disruption; this has remained broadly stable since March 2022.
- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of trading businesses reported that they were able to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK in August 2022, however, this includes 14% of businesses that had to change suppliers or find alternative solutions to do so.
- The percentage of businesses with 10 or more employees who were experiencing worker shortages in late August, has remained broadly stable since early April 2022, at 36%.
- In August 2022, 51% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were improving their management practices in some way, with 37% consulting employees about potential improvements and 30% receiving formal training either online (16%) or in person (14%).

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 64 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 22 August to 4 September 2022.

Experimental single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 60 (27 June to 10 July 2022), are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: July 2022 article](#).

Please note that businesses were asked to exclude seasonal changes when answering questions contained within BICS.

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

Figure 1: Headline figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

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

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

In late August 2022, the percentage of businesses that reported they were trading was 94%, with 85% fully trading and 9% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 4% of businesses reported "temporarily paused trading" and 2% "permanently ceased trading" as their business's trading status.

3 . Business concerns

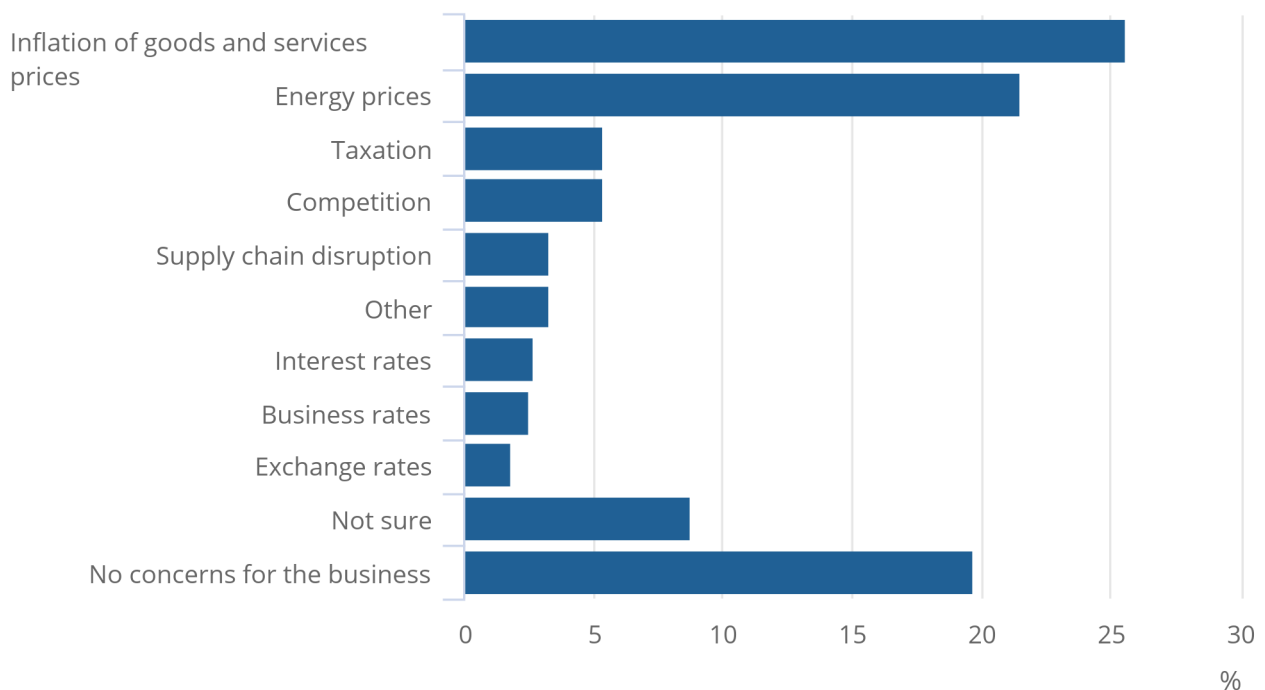
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked what the main concern for their business was looking ahead to October 2022.

Figure 2: Input price inflation and energy prices remain the top two concerns for businesses for October 2022

Business concerns, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 October 2022

Figure 2: Input price inflation and energy prices remain the top two concerns for businesses for October 2022

Business concerns, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 October 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. Response options may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

More than two-thirds (72%) of businesses reported they had some form of concern for their business for October 2022, this percentage was 83% for businesses with 10 or more employees.

The proportion that reported price inflation (26%) as their main concern has remained broadly stable since May 2022. In comparison, those that reported energy prices as their main concern (22%), has remained broadly stable since late March 2022.

Further details including the full list of concerns broken down by industry and size band are available in [our accompanying dataset](#).

4 . Energy prices

In late August 2022, businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked if their electricity and gas prices were fixed or hedged.

Table 1: Over a fifth (21%) of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were on a variable rate for electricity, while for gas this percentage was 16%

Fixed or hedged electricity and gas prices, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by business size, weighted by count, UK, 22 August to 4 September 2022

	Electricity		Gas	
	All business sizes excluding 0-9	All businesses	All business sizes excluding 0-9	All businesses
Yes, expiring by 31 December 2022	9.9%	6.4%	6.4%	2.9%
Yes, expiring by 31 March 2023	7.2%	3.5%	5.6%	1.9%
Yes, expiring after 31 March 2023	27.0%	8.7%	17.9%	5.3%
No, electricity/gas prices are variable	20.9%	23.6%	15.9%	15.6%
Not sure	23.9%	18.9%	20.8%	15.5%
Not applicable	11.1%	38.9%	33.4%	58.8%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes

1. Columns may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Further details on fixed or hedged energy prices broken down by industry and size band are available in [our accompanying dataset](#).

5 . Exporting and importing

Of currently trading businesses with 10 or more employees, 19% had exported and 25% had imported in the last 12 months.

Those businesses were asked how their exporting and importing in August 2022 compared with August 2021, and what challenges they had faced.

Figure 3: Exporting and importing figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

1. Exporting or importing compared with the same month last year: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees and had reported they had exported or imported in the last year. For presentational purposes, response options have been combined.
2. Exporting or importing challenges: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees, reported they had exported or imported in the last year, and reported how their exports or imports were affected. Businesses may report that exporting or importing has not been affected but are still able to report challenges.
3. Caution should be taken when interpreting these results based on the specific routing of this question meaning that only a small number of businesses responded.
4. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

Further industry and size band breakdowns for all exporting and importing questions are available in our [accompanying dataset](#).

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

6 . Supply chains

Global supply chain disruption

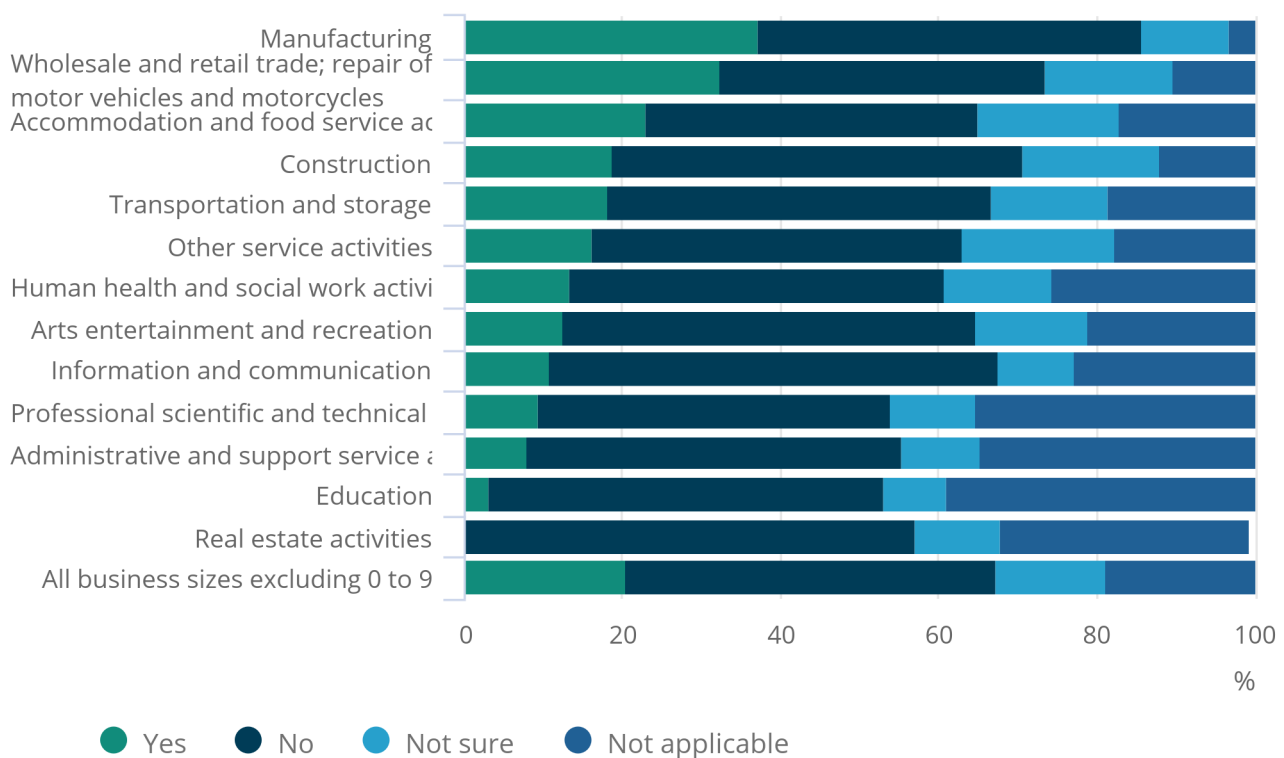
Businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked whether their business experienced any global supply chain disruption in August 2022.

Figure 4: Manufacturing businesses with 10 or more employees reported the highest percentage experiencing global supply chain disruption in August 2022, at 37%

Impact on global supply chains, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, weighted by count, UK, 1 August to 31 August 2022

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Impact on global supply chains, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, weighted by count, UK, 1 August to 31 August 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. "Mining and quarrying and "Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities" have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in "All business sizes excluding 0 to 9".
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

Of the top three industries that reported experiencing global supply chain issues, for businesses with 10 or more employees, the manufacturing industry has continued to report the largest proportion.

Further details of global supply chain issues broken down by industry and size band are available in [our accompanying dataset](#).

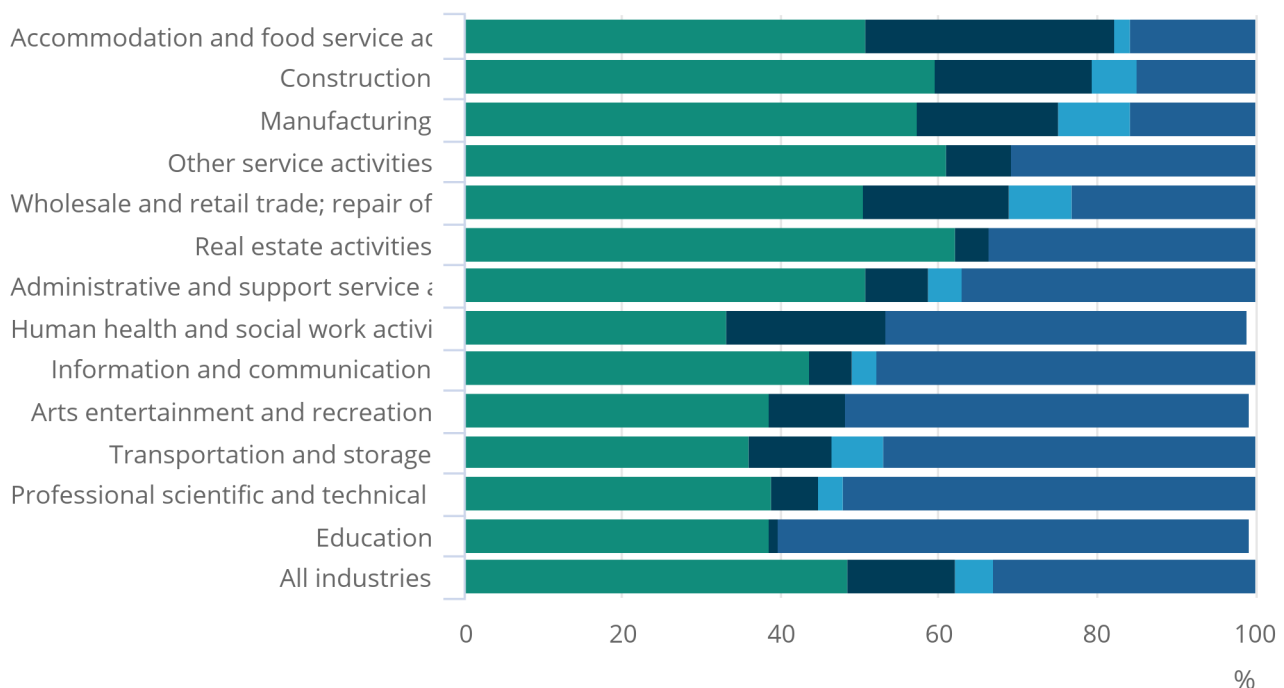
7 . Procurement within the UK

Figure 5: 62% of trading businesses were able to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK in August 2022

Intra-UK procurement, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 August to 31 August 2022

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Intra-UK procurement, businesses currently trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 1 August to 31 August 2022



- Yes, the business was able to get the materials, goods or services it needed
- Yes, but the business had to change suppliers or find alternative solutions
- No, the business was not able to get the materials, goods or services needed
- Not applicable

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
2. "Mining and quarrying" and "Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities" have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in "All industries".

Businesses within the accommodation and food service activities industry reported the largest increase in the proportion of businesses who were able to get their materials, goods or services. This was up 17 percentage points from 66% reported in July 2022 to 82% in August 2022. This industry also reported the largest proportion of businesses who were able to get the materials, goods or services they needed from within the UK in August 2022, either as expected, or through having to alter their supply chain.

8 . Worker shortages

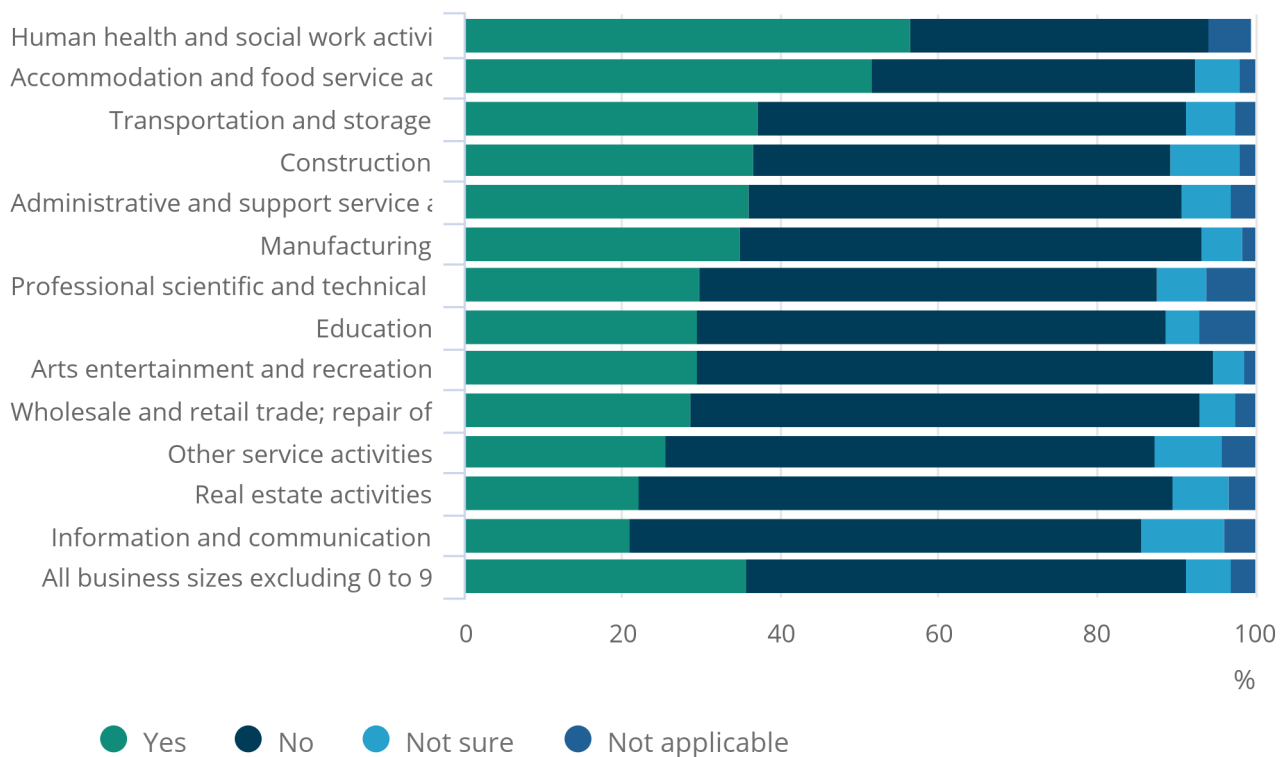
In late August 2022, the percentage of businesses with 10 or more employees that experienced a shortage of workers was 36%. This figure has remained broadly stable since early April 2022.

Figure 6: More than half (56%) of businesses with 10 or more employees in the human health and social work activities industry reported experiencing worker shortages

Worker shortages, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 22 August to 4 September 2022

Figure 6: More than half (56%) of businesses with 10 or more employees in the human health and social work activities industry reported experiencing worker shortages

Worker shortages, businesses not permanently stopped trading with 10 or more employees, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 22 August to 4 September 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
2. “Mining and quarrying” and “Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities” have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in “All business sizes excluding 0 to 9”.

For businesses with fewer than 10 employees, the percentage experiencing a shortage of workers (15%) has also remained broadly stable since early April 2022. The data suggest that a higher proportion of larger businesses are experiencing worker shortages than smaller businesses.

The two most commonly reported effects of these worker shortages for businesses with 10 or more employees, were employees working increased hours (54%), and unable to meet demands (38%). These percentages were 32% and 44% respectively for businesses of all sizes.

9 . Management practices

In late August 2022, businesses not permanently stopped trading were asked in which ways, if any, were they improving their management practices.

The responses that received the highest percentages were:

- consults employees about potential improvements, at 15%; the real estate activities industry reported the largest percentage, at 36%
- reads management literature, at 8%; the accommodation and food service activities industry reported that largest percentage, at 13%
- received formal training online, at 7%; the human health and social work activities industry reported the largest percentage, at 26%

For businesses with 10 or more employees, the percentages for these management practices improvements were 37%, 15% and 16%, respectively.

For all business sizes, the percentage of businesses that reported they were not improving management practices, was 36%. The education (private sector and higher education businesses only) industry reported the largest percentage, at 43%.

Those businesses who selected management practices were applicable to their business, were then asked the main challenge for improving the way their business is managed.

The responses that received the highest percentages were lack of time to find relevant information or plan changes, at 14%, and changes are too costly, at 12%.

More than half of all businesses reported they were not experiencing any challenges improving their management practices, at 53%.

10 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

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

Dataset | Released 8 September 2022

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.

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

Dataset | Released 22 August 2022

Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. These data are not official statistics but have been developed to deliver timely indicators to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other events.

Access to microdata

You can access the BICS microdata for Waves 1 to 63 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](#) are able to access data in the SRS. You can apply for accreditation through the [Research Accreditation Service \(RAS\)](#). You need to have relevant academic or work experience and must successfully attend and complete the assessed Safe Researcher Training.

To conduct analysis with microdata from the SRS, a project application must be submitted to the [Research Accreditation Panel \(RAP\)](#). To access the SRS, you must also work for an organisation with an Assured Organisational Connectivity agreement in place.

11 . Glossary

Reporting unit

The business unit to which questionnaires are sent is called the reporting unit. The response from the reporting unit can cover the enterprise as a whole or parts of the enterprise identified by lists of local units.

Net balance

Net balance is the difference between the percentage of businesses who reported a decrease, and the percentage of businesses who reported an increase.

12 . Measuring the data

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\) QMI](#), updated on 24 January 2022.

The BICS is voluntary, and the results are experimental. More information is available in our [Guide to experimental statistics](#).

Table 2: Sample and response rates for Waves 62, 63 and 64 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	11 August 2022 Publication Wave 62	25 August 2022 Publication Wave 63	8 September 2022 Publication Wave 64
Sample	38,064	38,009	37,955
Response	8,373	9,207	9,154
Rate	22.0%	24.2%	24.1%

Source: Office for National Statistics-Business Insights and Conditions Survey

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 64 survey was live for the period 22 August to 4 September 2022. The [BICS survey questions](#) are available.

Coverage

The Monthly Business Survey (MBS) covers the UK for production and Great Britain (GB) only for services. The Retail Sales Index (RSI) and construction are GB-focused. Therefore, the BICS will be UK-focused for production-based industries but GB-focused for the other elements of the economy covered. The industries covered are:

- non-financial services (includes professional, scientific, communication, administrative, transport, accommodation and food, private health and education, and entertainment services)
- distribution (includes retail, wholesale, and motor trades)
- production (includes manufacturing, oil and gas extraction, energy generation and supply, and water and waste management)
- construction (includes civil engineering, housebuilding, property development and specialised construction trades such as plumbers, electricians, and plasterers)

The following industries are excluded from the survey:

- agriculture
- public administration and defence
- public provision of education and health
- finance and insurance

For more information on the methodology of producing the BICS, such as [weighting](#), please see our [BICS quality and methodology information](#).

13 . Strengths and limitations

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

14 . Related links

[Comparison of furloughed jobs data, UK: March 2020 to June 2021](#)

Article | Released 2 September 2021

An overview of the similarities and differences between the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) furlough estimates and HMRC's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics, over the period 23 March 2020 to 30 June 2021.

[COVID-19 question bank](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This webpage provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data the ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

[Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: July 2022](#)

Article | Released 26 July 2022

Experimental estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on topics such as prices, worker shortages, and workforce status. Geographical breakdowns include country, regional and local authority levels.

[Business and individual attitudes towards the future of homeworking, UK: April to May 2021](#)

Article | Released 14 June 2021

Analysis of the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on office working and of business and individual attitudes to future working practices.

[Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey: preliminary weighted results](#)

Article | Released 14 September 2020

Early estimates of weighted responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey, focusing on businesses' responses on how turnover, workforce and trading status have been affected in two-week reference periods, from Wave 7 (1 to 14 June 2020) to Wave 12 (10 to 23 August 2020).

15 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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