

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 10 May 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 increased activity in the latest week, with aggregate UK spending on credit and debit cards increasing by 1% compared with the previous week, while overall retail footfall increased by 4% (Bank of England CHAPS, MRI OnLocation). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The total number of online job adverts on 3 May 2024 was 4% higher than the level in the previous week, but 17% lower than the equivalent week of 2023 (Adzuna). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- In the week to 5 May 2024, the System Price of electricity decreased by 4%, while the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 1%, when compared with the previous week; both remained lower than the levels seen in the equivalent week of 2023, by 20% and 14%, respectively (Elexon, National Gas Transmission). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- The daily average number of UK flights increased by 4% in the week to 5 May 2024, and increased by 4% when compared with the equivalent period of 2023. [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 10: 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

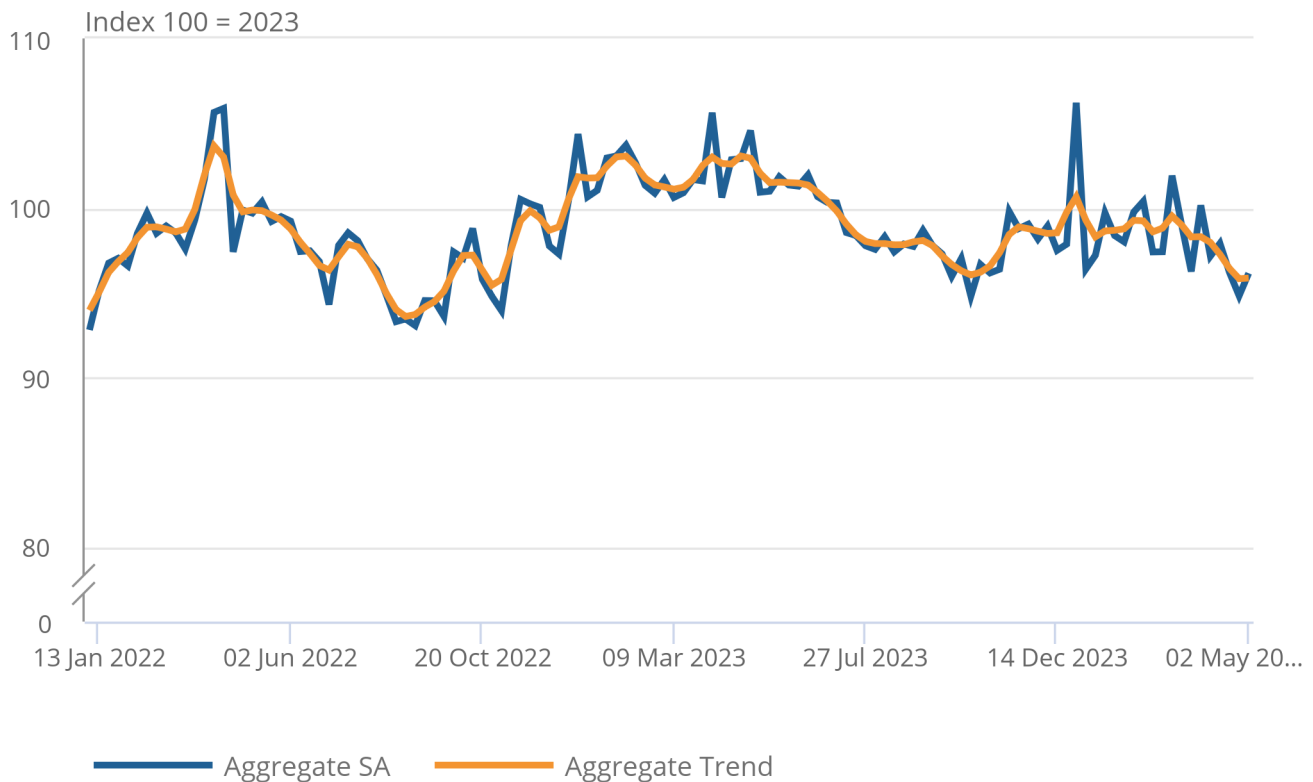
UK spending on debit and credit cards: weekly, seasonally adjusted CHAPS-based indicator

Figure 1: There was a 1% increase in "aggregate" seasonally adjusted credit and debit card spending in the latest week

Index of credit and debit card spending, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 2 May 2024

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Index of credit and debit card spending, seasonally adjusted, nominal prices, UK, week ending 6 January 2022 to week ending 2 May 2024



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

Notes:

1. 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. All series have been re-indexed, using their average value from 2023.
5. The "work-related" and "social" CHAPS series were withdrawn in 2024 because of sample population issues; these categories are still used as part of the calculations for the "aggregate" series.

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

- “aggregate” increased by 1%
- “delayable” increased by 1%
- “staple” increased by 1%

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

- “aggregate” decreased by 8%
- “delayable” decreased by 12%
- “staple” decreased by 13%

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](#).

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

In April 2024, the seasonally adjusted (SA) CHAPS-based aggregate indicator of credit and debit card spending decreased by 3% when compared with the previous month, and decreased by 5% when compared with April 2023.

After seasonal adjustment, both the “delayable” and “staple” categories also decreased when compared with the previous month at 4% and 1%, respectively. Both categories decreased further when compared with April 2023, with “delayable” decreasing by 4% and “staple” decreasing by 6%.

The monthly and weekly seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, and the monthly and daily non-seasonally adjusted CHAPS indices, are available in our accompanying [UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset](#). This dataset includes methodological notes that users should take into consideration. The monthly CHAPS index is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), and is not an additional series that is produced and validated by the Bank of England.

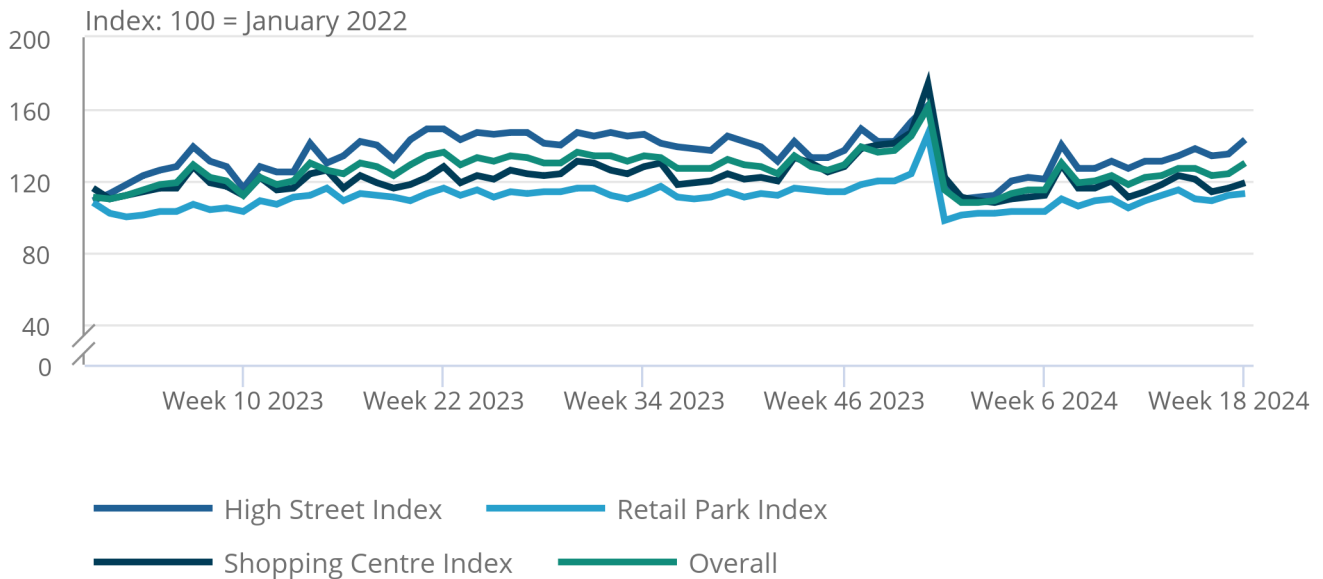
National retail footfall

Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 5 May 2024 increased by 4% when compared with the previous week

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 5 May 2024

Figure 2: Overall retail footfall in the week to 5 May 2024 increased by 4% when compared with the previous week

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 1 January 2023 to 5 May 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 5 May 2024 increased by 4% when compared with the level seen in the previous week, and 1% when compared with the equivalent week of 2023.

High street footfall increased by 6% when compared with the level seen in the previous week, showing the biggest change across the three location categories. Shopping centre footfall increased by 3%, while retail park footfall remained broadly unchanged. When compared with the equivalent week in 2023, high street and retail park footfall increased by 1%, while shopping centre footfall remained broadly unchanged.

Overall retail footfall increased across all of the 12 UK countries and regions when compared with the level seen in the previous week; the largest increases were seen in the East Midlands, the East and North East of England, increasing by 8%, 7% and 6%, respectively. When compared with the equivalent week of 2023, the largest decreases were observed in the North East and South West of England, both falling by 4%. The largest increase was seen in the West Midlands, at 4% for the same period.

Automotive fuel spending

The annual growth rate in estimated demand for fuel per transaction was at negative 3% in the week to 28 April 2024. This was a decrease of 1 percentage point from negative 2% the previous week, and a decrease of 8 percentage points from the equivalent period of last year.

In the same week, the annual growth rate in average fuel prices was 1%. This was an increase of 1 percentage point, up from 0% last week, and an increase of 10 percentage points from the equivalent period of last year.

Our accompanying [Automotive fuel spending dataset](#) is available.

4 . Business and workforce

Online job adverts

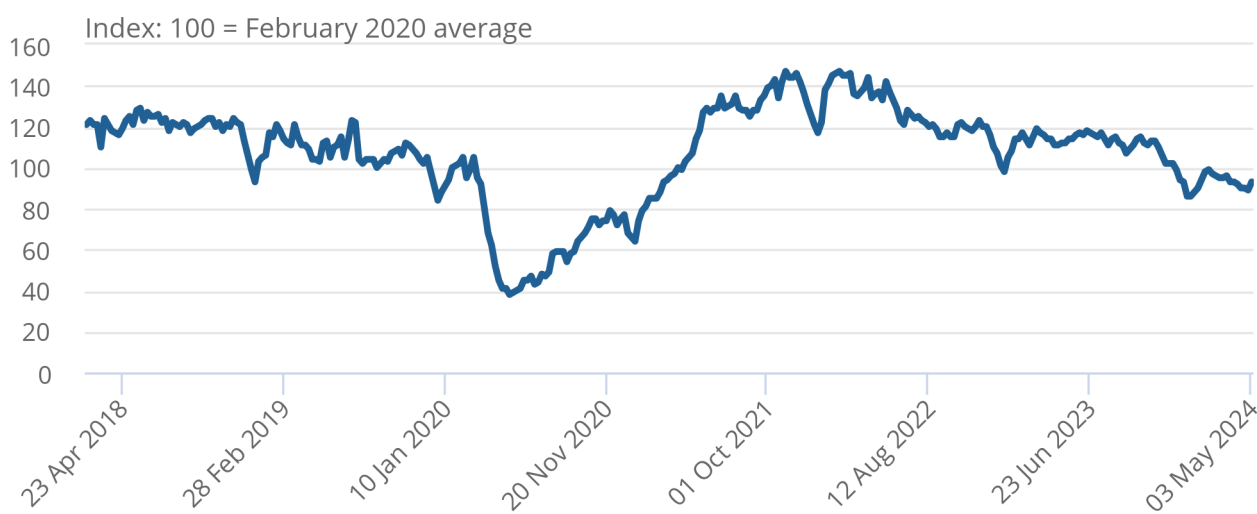
These figures are estimates of online job adverts by category, UK country, and English region, provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to Standard Industrial Classification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

Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 3 May 2024 was 4% higher than the level in the previous week, but this remains 17% lower than the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 3 May 2024

Figure 3: The total number of online job adverts on 3 May 2024 was 4% higher than the level in the previous week, but this remains 17% lower than the equivalent period of 2023

Volume of online job adverts, non-seasonally adjusted, UK, 7 February 2018 to 3 May 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. 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 3 May 2024 increased by 4% when compared with the previous week. There were increases in 11 of the 12 UK countries and English regions, with the North West and South East both seeing the largest rise of 6%, when compared with the previous week. Northern Ireland was the only country or region to see a decrease, falling by 1% when compared with the previous week.

The total number of online job adverts fell by 17% when compared with the equivalent period of 2023, with all regions seeing a decrease. The largest decreases occurred in Scotland and London, falling by 31% and 24%, respectively.

When compared with the equivalent period of 2023, the total number of online job adverts fell in 25 of the 28 job categories. The largest decreases were in the "Domestic help" and "Marketing, advertising and PR" categories, falling by 50% and 49%, respectively.

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

Advanced notification of potential redundancies

Calculated as a four-week rolling average, the number of potential redundancies in the week to 28 April was 15% below the level in the equivalent week of 2023; the number of employers proposing redundancies was 1% 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

In the week to 5 May 2024, the System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week, and was 14% lower than the equivalent week of 2023.

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

System Price of electricity

In the week to 5 May 2024, the System Price of electricity decreased by 4% when compared with the previous week, and was 20% lower than the equivalent week of 2023.

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

6 . Transport

Daily UK flights

In the week to 5 May 2024, the daily average number of UK flights increased by 4% when compared with the previous week. This number was also 4% higher than the number seen in the equivalent week of 2023.

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

7 . User engagement initial findings

Real Time Indicators ran an engagement survey between 25 January 2024 and 14 March 2024 to better understand the needs of our users. We are still in the process of analysing the responses, but high-level findings show that:

- approximately 75% of respondents visit the bulletin on a weekly basis and our datasets are the most useful part of our release
- the commentary in the weekly release is read by the majority of our users, with 61% of respondents reading the commentary “always” or “sometimes” (33% always, 28% sometimes, 19% rarely, 20% never)
- respondents want to see more granularity in our data, for example regional breakdowns and spending categories, along with a broader range of indicators

A formal response and an accompanying action plan will be published in due course.

8 . Data

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 10 May 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 10 May 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](#).

9 . 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.

10 . 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.

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 change to the intended release frequency because of a variety of reasons, such as data availability. If you would like further information about any of these datasets or previous release dates, please email: realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

Weekly data release

- The [UK spending on credit and debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Revolut spending on debit cards dataset](#) was last updated on 1 February 2024.
- The [Automotive Fuel spending dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024.
- The [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [System Average price of gas dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [System Price of electricity dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Traffic camera activity dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024. The [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#) was last updated on 5 April 2024.
- The [Daily UK flights dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.

Fortnightly data release

- The [Transactions at Pret A Manger dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024.

Monthly data release

- The [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) was last updated on 14 March 2024.
- The [Value Added Tax, flash estimates dataset](#) was last updated on 18 April 2024.
- The [Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset](#) was last updated on 10 May 2024.
- The [Sales and jobs in small businesses dataset](#) was last updated on 2 May 2024.

11 . 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.

12 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) relating to the biggest issues facing society today.

[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.

13 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 10 May 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 10 May 2024](#)