

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 10 November 2022

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These real-time indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

Contact:
Katie Cunliffe
realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 560344

Release date:
10 November 2022

Next release:
17 November 2022

Notice

10 November 2022

This week the bulletin contains a reduced suite of indicators as we assess our future publication schedule. This will continue to be a weekly release, but the frequency of some indicators may change. If you have any questions or comments regarding this, please contact realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Energy and housing](#)
4. [Consumer behaviour](#)
5. [Business and workforce](#)
6. [Data](#)
7. [Glossary](#)
8. [Measuring the data](#)
9. [Strengths and limitations](#)
10. [Related links](#)
11. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 110% in the week to 6 November 2022, which was the largest week-on-week increase observed to date in 2022; this value was also 322% above the February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline level but was still 79% below the peak seen in August 2022 (National Grid). [Section 3: Energy and housing](#).
- Consumer behaviour indicators showed mixed activity in the latest week with UK credit and debit card purchases increasing by 6 percentage points in line with previous end-of-month seasonal spending patterns (Bank of England CHAPS data), but the number of UK seated diners falling by 12 percentage points and retail footfall falling to 88% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019 (OpenTable, Springboard). [Section 4: Consumer Behaviour](#).
- Of businesses that had not permanently stopped trading, 44% reported that prices of goods or services bought in October 2022 had increased when compared with the previous month (initial results from Wave 69 of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#) (BICS)). [Section 5: Business and workforce](#).
- The number of UK online job adverts fell in 16 of the 28 online job advert categories and 9 of the 12 UK countries and English regions (Adzuna). [Section 5: Business and workforce](#).
- Road traffic levels were broadly stable in the week to 7 November 2022 and up 2 percentage points on the equivalent day last year, Monday 8 November 2021; these statistics are published by the [Department for Transport](#).

Results presented in this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision. Data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure representativity and relevance, which may mean indicators change at short notice.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
2. Users should note that card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.
3. The latest week-on-week changes in consumer behaviour activity are likely to have been affected by school holidays in parts of the UK.

3 . Energy and housing

System Average Price (SAP) of gas

This is the average price of all gas traded through the balancing market. Market participants post bids or offers for volumes of gas a day-ahead and within-day trades. The SAP aggregates the trades conducted on the on-the-day commodity market (OCM). This is the market that the National Grid use in their role as residual balancer. Other markets exist for wholesale gas trading in Great Britain.

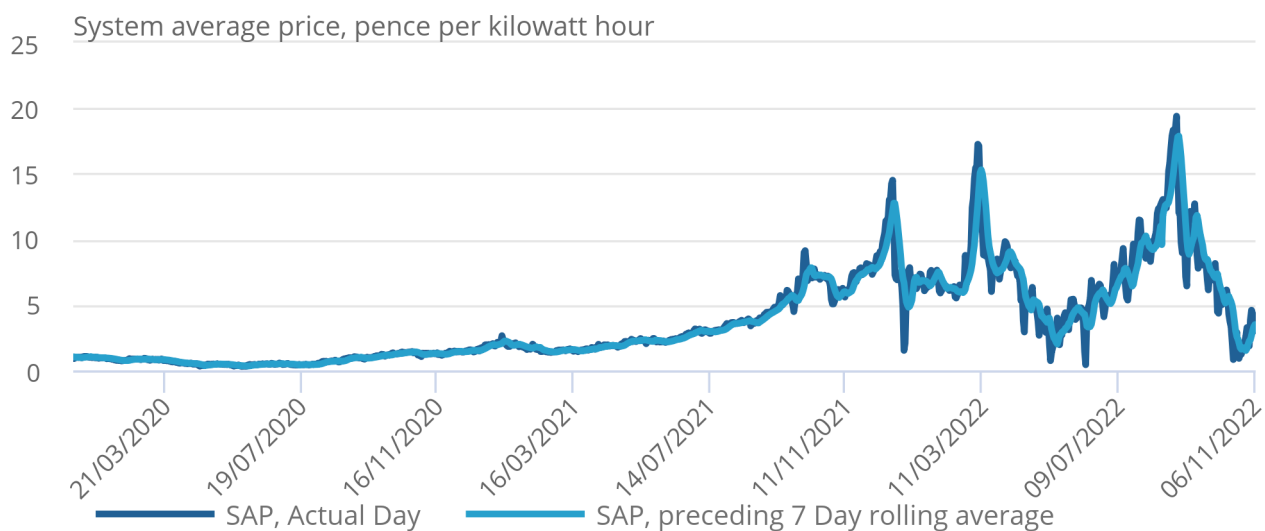
These data can be used to understand the general trend of gas prices within the UK. However, the data should be treated with caution, as these can be subject to extreme within-day trading prices and may skew actual traded prices. Additionally, while these prices reflect spot prices on the day, traders can opt for future contracts where the buyer and the seller agree the market-determined price for gas for a future date. The daily SAP is used to determine the futures price and is therefore a useful indicator of supply constraints and demand pressures.

Figure 1: The System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 110% in the week to 6 November 2022, which was the largest week-on-week increase observed to date in 2022

System average price, pence per kilowatt hour, 1 January 2020 to 6 November 2022, GB, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 1: The System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 110% in the week to 6 November 2022, which was the largest week-on-week increase observed to date in 2022

System average price, pence per kilowatt hour, 1 January 2020 to 6 November 2022, GB, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: National Grid

Notes:

1. The price trends observed will differ from that of the monthly Producer Price Inflation (PPI) series published by the ONS because of the differences in data sources and methods.

The System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 110% in the week to 6 November 2022, which was the largest week-on-week increase observed to date in 2022. This figure was also 322% above the February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline but 39% below the level of the equivalent week of 2021.

4 . Consumer behaviour

The latest week-on-week changes in consumer behaviour activity are likely to have been affected by school holidays in parts of the UK.

In the latest week, Revolut debit card transaction data showed generally decreased activity; spending fell in all but one of the reported sectors, as "food and drink" remained unchanged. However, all categories except "travel and accommodation" were up on the equivalent period of last year and most categories were also up on their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic level. "Retail" spending was 65 percentage points higher than its pre-pandemic level. Debit card spending decreased in two of the three age categories compared to the previous week. Spending among those aged 35 to 54 years saw the largest decrease of 10 percentage points, while spending among those aged 18 to 34 years remained unchanged. Our [accompanying dataset: Revolut spending on debit cards](#) is available.

The number of in-store transactions at Pret A Manger showed a mixed picture in the week to 3 November 2022, increasing at 5 locations and decreasing at 5 locations. The largest increase was at London city worker locations where transactions increased by 5 percentage points. The biggest fall was at London airports where transactions fell by 12 percentage points. Our [accompanying dataset: Transactions at Pret A Manger](#) is available.

In the week leading up to 30 October 2022, the estimated demand for fuel per transaction was broadly unchanged from the previous week, and at 88% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2021. Average fuel prices were 124% of the level in the equivalent week of 2021, broadly unchanged from the previous two weeks. Total fuel sales were at 98% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2021. Our [accompanying dataset: Automotive fuel spending](#) is available.

According to [data from OpenTable](#), the number of UK seated diners fell by 12 percentage points in the week to 6 November 2022, but was 118% of the level in the equivalent pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) week of 2019. In London, however, the number fell by 4 percentage points, and was 11 percentage points lower than the equivalent week of 2019.

National retail footfall

National retail footfall figures are supplied by Springboard, a provider of data on customer activity. The breakdowns in this indicator are as follows:

- overall footfall, which is the sum of the average footfall in each destination type weighted by their respective footfall volumes
- shopping centre, which is a space that does not form part of the public highway, and is owned and managed by a single landlord
- high street, which is the central part of the main business and commercial area of a town
- retail parks and shopping parks, which comprise of retail warehouse units, wholly owned and managed by a single landlord

Springboard's weekly data are defined over a seven-day period running from Monday to Sunday. Week 44 of 2022 refers to the period Monday 31 October to Sunday 6 November 2022. All quoted figures have been rounded to the nearest integer.

Figure 2: In the week to 6 November 2022, overall weekly retail footfall was 88% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019

Volume of daily retail footfall, percentage compared with the equivalent week of 2019, 1 January 2020 to 6 November 2022, UK

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

According to Springboard, in the week to 6 November 2022, the volume of overall weekly retail footfall for:

- the overall springboard index was 91% of the previous week and 88% of the equivalent week of 2019
- retail parks were 97% of both the previous week and of the level in the equivalent week of 2019
- high streets were 87% of both the previous week and of the level in the equivalent week of 2019
- shopping centres were 91% of the previous week and 82% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019

In the week to 6 November 2022, all 12 UK countries and English regions saw decreases in week-on-week retail footfall, except for Northern Ireland, which was 108% of the level in the previous week.

UK Spending on debit and credit cards

Daily CHAPS-based indicator

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

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business:

- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- "social" refers to spending on travel and eating out

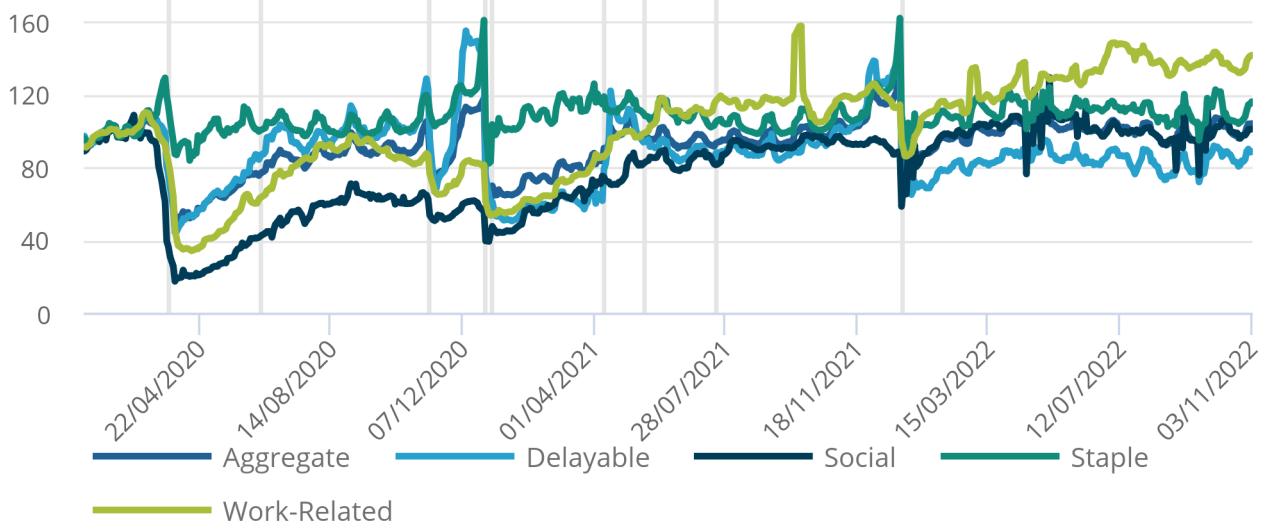
Figure 3: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 6 percentage points in the week to 3 November 2022, to 104% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 3 November 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 3: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 6 percentage points in the week to 3 November 2022, to 104% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 3 November 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Index February 2020 = 100



Source: ONS and Bank of England calculations

Notes:

1. Users should note the daily payment data is the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is a slight time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. The vertical lines indicate notable events and coronavirus (COVID-19) restriction changes.
3. Percentage point difference is derived from current week and previous week index before rounding.

Figure 3 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, "merchant acquirers". The spending categories recorded the following changes in the latest week:

- "staple" increased by 10 percentage points
- "work-related" increased by 8 percentage points
- "delayable" increased by 5 percentage points
- "social" increased by 3 percentage points

"Work-related", "staple" and "social" spending were above their February 2020 average levels at 142%, 116% and 101%, respectively. "Delayable" spending remained below its February 2020 average level at 88%.

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

The monthly data time series is available in the [accompanying dataset: UK spending on credit and debit cards](#) and includes methodological notes that users should bear in mind. The monthly CHAPS index is calculated by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), rather than being an additional series that is produced and validated by the Bank of England.

The monthly CHAPS-based indicator of aggregate credit and debit card spending in October 2022 was at 101% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level. This was 3 percentage points higher than September 2022 and 2 percentage points higher than October 2021.

Most of the spending categories in the monthly CHAPS-based indicator also increased from September to October 2022. All categories except "delayable" were above their February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average levels and had increased when compared with the equivalent period last year. "Work-related" spending saw the largest year-on-year increase of 24 percentage points.

5 . Business and workforce

During the latest week, the total number of online job adverts remained unchanged from the previous week, despite numbers in 16 of the 28 categories decreasing, and was 20% below the number of the equivalent week of 2021. The largest week-on-week decrease was in the "HR and recruitment" category, which fell by 21%, and the "charity and voluntary" category fell by 16%. The category recording the largest weekly increase was "transport, logistics and warehouse", which increased by 11% and also recorded the largest increase compared to its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline (168%).

In the latest week, 9 of the 12 UK countries and English regions saw decreases in the number of online job adverts. Only the North West saw an increase this week (1%), while the number of job adverts in Wales and London remained unchanged.

Note: data collection issues mean that recent comparisons have alternated between Friday-to-Friday and Monday-to-Monday. For this reason, caution is advised when comparing data between 28 October and 7 November 2022. Our [accompanying dataset: Online job advert estimates](#) is available.

Business impact and insights

Initial results from Wave 69 of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#) (BICS) were collected from 31 October to 8 November 2022, with a response rate of 20.9% (8,166 responses).

Table 1: 44% of UK businesses that had not permanently stopped trading reported that prices of goods or services bought had increased in October 2022
Prices of goods or services bought/sold, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 October to 31 October 2022

	Prices increased	Prices stayed the same	Prices decreased	Not sure	Not applicable
All industries - prices bought	44.3%	33.6%	Less than 1%	7.1%	14.6%
All industries - prices sold	19.6%	58.4%	1.6%	5.1%	15.4%

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

Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 69 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Table may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

In October 2022, 44% of businesses reported that the prices of goods or services bought had increased compared with the previous month, compared with 47% in September 2022, and 43% in August 2022. Additionally, 20% of businesses reported that the prices of goods or services sold had also increased compared with the previous month, compared with 21% in September 2022 and 19% in August 2022.

Table 2: 22% of UK businesses that had not permanently stopped trading expected prices of goods or services sold to increase in December 2022, compared with 28% last month
Expectations of price rises from businesses, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, September 2022 to December 2022

	Prices will increase	Prices will stay the same	Prices will decrease	Not sure	Not applicable
September 2022	27.9%	44.3%	1.3%	12.7%	13.9%
October 2022	28.1%	45.8%	1.1%	11.2%	13.9%
November 2022	27.7%	46.2%	1.4%	10.7%	14.0%
December 2022	21.7%	52.6%	1.9%	10.9%	12.9%

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

Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 69 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Table may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.

6 . Data

[Automotive fuel spending](#)

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Estimated quantity of automotive fuel demand per average transaction is an experimental indicator used to isolate real demand after adjusting for growth in fuel prices.

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

[Revolut spending on debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Insight into the spending patterns of UK consumers from financial technology company Revolut.

[System Average Price \(SAP\) of gas](#)

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM).

[Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

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

Dataset | Released 10 November 2022

Experimental indicator for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's CHAPS data.

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

7 . 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 Statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

8 . Measuring the data

Information on the methodology used to produce the indicators in this bulletin is available in the [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

9 . 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 Experimental Statistics.

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.

10 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

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

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary 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.

11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 10 November 2022, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 10 November 2022](#)