

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 14 April 2022

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

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Release date:  
14 April 2022

Next release:  
21 April 2022

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# 1 . Main points

- Most of the consumer behaviour measures we monitor were down in the latest week, with falls in visits to "grocery and pharmacy" (2%), "retail stores and recreation areas" (1%), and "workplaces" (4%), according to Google Mobility data. [Section 3](#).
- Transactions at UK Pret A Manger locations mostly decreased in the latest week, while UK seated diner numbers fell by 2 percentage points; in Manchester in the same period, Pret A Manger transactions and seated diner numbers fell by 22 and 13 percentage points, respectively (Pret A Manger, OpenTable).
- UK credit and debit card spending showed a slight week-on-week increase of 2 percentage points; "work-related" spending, which includes the purchasing of road fuel, increased by 6 percentage points (Bank of England CHAPS data).
- Total online job advert volumes increased by 2% in the latest week, with increases in 10 of the 12 English regions and UK countries; the largest weekly category increase was in "energy, oil and gas" (9%) (Adzuna).
- Between early February and March 2022, the standardised Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) turnover balance estimate increased by 0.6% (final results from Wave 53 of BICS). [Section 4](#).
- Transport indicators displayed week-on-week growth coinciding with the Easter holidays in parts of the UK; this included a 2% increase in ship visits and a 2 percentage point increase in road traffic, while daily UK flights rose by 3% and are now 81% of the pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) equivalent week (exactEarth, Department for Transport, EUROCONTROL).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 10% in the week to 10 April 2022, with the level now 53% of that on 10 March 2022, when prices peaked in the rolling seven-day series; the SAP is 356% higher compared with the same period last year (week ending 11 April 2021) (National Grid).

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. The break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.

## 3 . Consumer behaviour

Most of the measures of consumer behaviour were down in the latest week. Transactions at Pret A Manger were mostly down, as were UK seated diner numbers. Visits to all location categories were also down. Meanwhile, UK spending on credit and debit cards increased slightly, in part driven by a 6 percentage point increase in "work-related" spending which includes road fuel.

## Mobility

[Google Mobility](#) data provide an indicator of changes in the volume of visits to different location types compared with a pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline.

Visits are calculated based on publicly available anonymised data from Google users in the UK who have opted into Location History for their Google account, so are based on a subset of users. Full details of [Google's methods used to compile the data](#) are available.

We have transformed the publicly available anonymised data into an indexed seven-day moving average to smooth the weekday and weekend.

We have used data for the following location types:

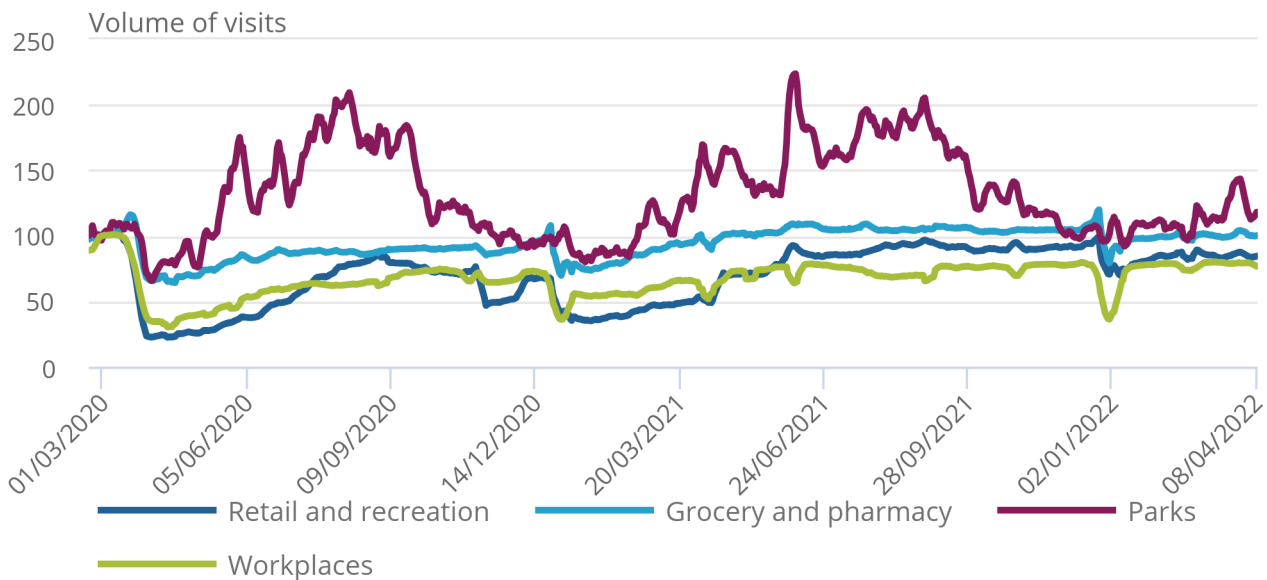
- grocery and pharmacy: grocery stores, supermarkets, farmers' markets, specialty food shops and pharmacies
- parks: parks, public beaches, marinas, public gardens and other public open spaces
- retail and recreation: restaurants, cafes, shopping centres, theme parks, museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas
- workplaces: places of work

**Figure 1: Visits to retail and recreation locations were 16% below pre-coronavirus levels in the week to 8 April 2022 and 1% lower than the previous week**

Volume of visits, seven-day rolling average, index: 100 = the median value for the corresponding day of the week between 3 January and 6 February 2020, 21 February 2020 to 8 April 2022, UK

Figure 1: Visits to retail and recreation locations were 16% below pre-coronavirus levels in the week to 8 April 2022 and 1% lower than the previous week

Volume of visits, seven-day rolling average, index: 100 = the median value for the corresponding day of the week between 3 January and 6 February 2020, 21 February 2020 to 8 April 2022, UK



Source: Google LLC "Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Reports" <https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/> Accessed: 11 April 2022

**Notes:**

1. These data have not been seasonally adjusted. Users should consider seasonal events, such as the weather and holiday periods, that may impact movements in the data.

Visits to each location type in the UK in the week to 8 April 2022:

- in parks decreased by 5% from the previous week and were 18% above pre-coronavirus levels
- in grocery and pharmacy decreased by 2% and were unchanged compared with pre-coronavirus levels
- in retail and recreation decreased by 1% and were 16% below pre-coronavirus levels
- in workplaces decreased by 4% and were 23% below pre-coronavirus levels

The full data time series can be found in [our accompanying Visits to location types using Google Mobility dataset](#).

These are experimental indicators, which we are working to develop further. However, [further geographical breakdowns of the Google Mobility data](#) are available.

## 4 . Business and workforce

Total online job advert volumes increased by 2% in the latest week, with increases in 18 of the 28 online job advert categories. The largest weekly increase was in "energy, oil and gas" (9%). Potential redundancies and the numbers of employers proposing redundancies increased by 17 and 5 percentage points, respectively, in the week to 3 April 2022.

We will shortly introduce a new indicator showing monthly counts of Large Goods Vehicle vocational testing in Great Britain, as a measure of potential new drivers starting the process to join the Large Goods Vehicle driving workforce. These data are published by the Department for Transport (DfT) and are available in [Developing faster indicators of transport activity](#).

## Business impact and insights

[Final results from Wave 53](#) of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 7 to 20 March 2022.

BICS collects data from selected industries and does not have full coverage of the UK economy, see the [BICS Quality and Methodology Information](#) for more information on the industries covered in the BICS sample. To enable comparisons, we have created a reweighted gross domestic product (GDP) estimate, termed as GDP\*, which only includes the same industries as those covered within BICS.

### **Figure 2: Between early February and March 2022 the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) standardised turnover balance estimate has risen by 0.6%**

BICS turnover balance standardised and monthly GDP\* estimates , index: 100 = 2019 average levels, UK, 1 June 2020 to 3 April 2022

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

#### Notes:

1. Final weighted results, Wave 7 to 53 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) and adjusted monthly gross domestic product (termed as GDP\*) estimates.
2. BICS turnover balances have been standardised and adjusted for magnitude and trading status.
3. GDP\* is a comparison measure derived to cover the same industries as those covered by BICS, which are then re-weighted. This differs from published monthly GDP.
4. BICS data are plotted in the middle of the reference period of each wave and GDP\* are plotted in the middle of the reference month. For example, 20 March 2022 is the mid-point of Wave 53 (7 March to 3 April 2022).
5. From Wave 53, the question was changed from “the last two weeks” to “the last month”. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period; however, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire.

From April 2022, BICS and the Opinion and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) have introduced planned changes to ensure the surveys remain relevant to the changing socio-economic landscape. Please find further details of the [changes to the BICS and OPN surveys in this National Statistical blog](#).

## 5 . Data

### [Advanced notification of potential redundancies](#)

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

Weekly dataset showing the number of potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, submitted to Insolvency Service via HR1 forms.

### [Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

Experimental daily traffic camera counts data for busyness indices covering the UK.

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

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in the UK.

### [Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

### [Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 14 April 2022

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

Users should note that 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](#).

## 6 . Glossary

### Faster indicator

A faster 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.

## 7 . 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](#).

## 8 . 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

A full overview of coronavirus restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries can be found:

- [coronavirus in England](#)
- [coronavirus in Scotland](#)
- [coronavirus in Wales](#)
- [coronavirus in Northern Ireland](#)

These 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.

## 9 . Related links

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

Latest data on coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 April 2022

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

### [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional](#)

Bulletin | Released 12 April 2022

Provisional counts of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released 8 April 2022

Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey (delivered in partnership with IQVIA, the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratories).