Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 18 August 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.

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25 August 2022

Notice

18 August 2022

Shipping data for the week to 14 August 2022 are unavailable this week because of technical issues. We apologise for the inconvenience and hope to reinstate these data in the next release.

Table of contents

1. Main points
2. Latest indicators at a glance
3. Business and workforce
4. Consumer behaviour
5. Transport
6. Data
7. Glossary
8. Measuring the data
9. Strengths and limitations
10. Related links

1 . Main points

- Business and workforce indicators showed a mixed picture in the latest period; online job adverts were broadly unchanged, company incorporations fell by 10%, and there was a net 3% of firms reporting increased turnover for July 2022 (Adzuna, Companies House, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)). Section 3.

- Consumer behaviour indicators showed mostly falling or stable activity in the latest week; transactions at Pret A Manger stores decreased in half of the 10 regions (Pret A Manger). Section 4.

- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas rose by 14% in the week to 7 August 2022, increasing to 69% of the peak level seen on 10 March 2022 (National Grid).

- In the latest week, daily UK flights and road traffic were broadly unchanged from the previous week (EUROCONTROL, Department for Transport). Section 5.

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 . Business and workforce

In the week to 12 August 2022, company incorporations decreased by 10% to 14,354 and voluntary dissolution applications (an application from a company to dissolve) decreased by 3% to 5,400 compared with the previous week. Compared with the equivalent week of 2021, company incorporations increased by 9%, while voluntary dissolutions decreased by 8%. In the week to 9 August 2022, there were 11,149 compulsory dissolution first gazettes (a notice issued by Companies House indicating their intention to remove a company from the register). Our accompanying dataset is available.

Potential redundancies in the week to 7 August 2022 were 69% of their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) level, while the number of employers proposing redundancies was 79% of their pre-coronavirus levels. Our accompanying dataset is available.

Value Added Tax flash estimates

Turnover diffusion indices are an aggregate measure used to track whether most firms are reporting an increase or decrease in turnover in their Value Added Tax (VAT) returns. They are calculated as the percentage of firms with increasing turnover minus the percentage with decreasing turnover.

The indices are constructed to lie between 1 and negative 1, so an index of 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported an increase in turnover compared with the previous month than those reporting a decrease in turnover. Conversely, an index of negative 0.05 means that 5% more firms reported a decrease in turnover compared with the previous month.

More information on the compilation and methodology of these estimates can be found in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology].

Table 1: A net 3% of firms reported increasing turnover in July 2022 when compared with the previous month
Value Added Tax turnover diffusion indices, day seven estimates, UK, February to July 2022, seasonally adjusted

	Total	**Agriculture, forestry and fishing**	**Production**	**Construction**	**Services**
Feb-22	0.05	0.04	0.07	0.00	0.09
Mar-22	0.03	0.03	-0.06	0.00	0.02
Apr-22	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.01	0.00
May-22	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.00	0.05
Jun-22	-0.02	0.04	-0.11	-0.07	-0.09
Jul-22	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.10	0.06

Source: HM Revenue and Customs – Value Added Tax (VAT) returns

Notes

1. The contributions of these industries to monthly gross domestic product (GDP) are: agriculture 0.7% production 13.7%, construction 6.4% and services 79.2%.

Data for all available industries, including seasonally adjusted month-on-month estimates and non-seasonally adjusted month-on-month and month-on-year estimates, for turnover and expenditure, are available in our accompanying dataset on VAT flash estimates.

Business impact and insights

Initial results from Wave 63 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 1 July to 31 July 2022, with a response rate of 21.8% (8,274 responses). The survey was live for the period 8 to 16 August 2022.

Table 2: A net 10% of businesses reported turnover was lower in July 2022 compared with June 2022, which is broadly similar to the 11% reported between May and June 2022
Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 to 31 July 2022

	All Industries
Turnover increased	13.5%
Turnover stayed the same	53.5%
Turnover decreased	23.3%
Not sure	9.8%

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

Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 63 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.

3. Net turnover balance is given by subtracting the percentage of businesses reporting a decrease in turnover, from the percentage of businesses who reported an increase in turnover.

Online job adverts

These figures are experimental estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine, by category and by UK country and English region. 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 the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Vacancy Survey.

Figure 1: The total number of online job adverts on 12 August 2022 was 6% lower than the equivalent week of 2021, and was 120% of its February 2020 average level

Volume of online job adverts by category, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 12 August 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Further category breakdowns are included in the 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. Users should note that 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 charts and accompanying dataset.

Download the data

.xlsx

Of the 28 job categories, 13 decreased in the latest week, with the greatest fall in "sales" (8%). The categories with the largest weekly increase were the "domestic help" and "property" categories, both of which rose by 5%.

The categories with the highest number of online job adverts relative to their February 2020 average continue to be "domestic help" and "transport, logistics and warehouse", at 240% and 233%, respectively.

In the latest week, total online job adverts were 6% lower than the level in the equivalent day of 2021. This is broadly unchanged from a month ago, when total online job adverts were 5% lower than the level seen in the equivalent day of 2021.

In the latest week, 14 of the 28 job categories recorded lower online job adverts than the equivalent day of 2021. The categories displaying the largest year-on-year reductions were "transport, logistics and warehousing" and "manufacturing", which were both down by 30%. The largest increase, meanwhile, was in "wholesale and retail", which was 30% higher than the equivalent day of 2021. "Wholesale and retail" online job adverts are now at 210% of their February 2020 average.

Figure 2: The largest decrease in online job adverts compared with the previous week occurred in London on 12 August 2022

Volume of online job adverts by UK countries and English regions, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 7 February 2020 to 12 August 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Download the data

.xlsx

While growth over the 12 UK countries and regions varied, the majority were down from last week with London displaying the largest fall at negative 2%. The regions with the highest number of online job adverts relative to their February 2020 average were Northern Ireland and the North East at 165% and 147%, respectively.

Scotland and Northern Ireland were the only locations that recorded a higher number of online job adverts compared with the equivalent day of 2021. In Scotland, this figure was 19% higher than one year ago, and in Northern Ireland it was up by 3%. Meanwhile, the largest fall in online job adverts when compared with the equivalent day of 2021 was in the East Midlands, which was down 22%. However, this region remains at 126% of its pre-coronavirus February 2020 level.

4 . Consumer behaviour

Revolut data showed mixed debit card spending across sectors in the week to 14 August 2022, with "entertainment" spending increasing by 2 percentage points from the previous week to 100% of the February 2020 average level. This is the highest this category has been post-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Elsewhere, spending on "automotive fuel" rose by 3 percentage points and was 49 percentage points above the same time last year. "Retail" spending, meanwhile, fell by 5 percentage points compared with the previous week. Our accompanying dataset is available.

Google Mobility data showed that, in the latest week, visits to "park" locations increased by 8% from the previous week, coinciding with warm weather throughout the UK during this period. Visits to "retail and recreation" locations fell by 2%, while "workplace", "transit station" and "grocery and pharmacy" visits were broadly unchanged. Our accompanying dataset is available.

UK seated diners were unchanged in the week to 14 August 2022 and were 127% of the level of the equivalent week of 2019. This is down 5 percentage points on the same time the previous year. London seated diners rose by 2 percentage points in the latest week and were 97% of the level of the equivalent week of 2019. This is 17 percentage points up on the same time the previous year.

UK spending on debit and credit cards

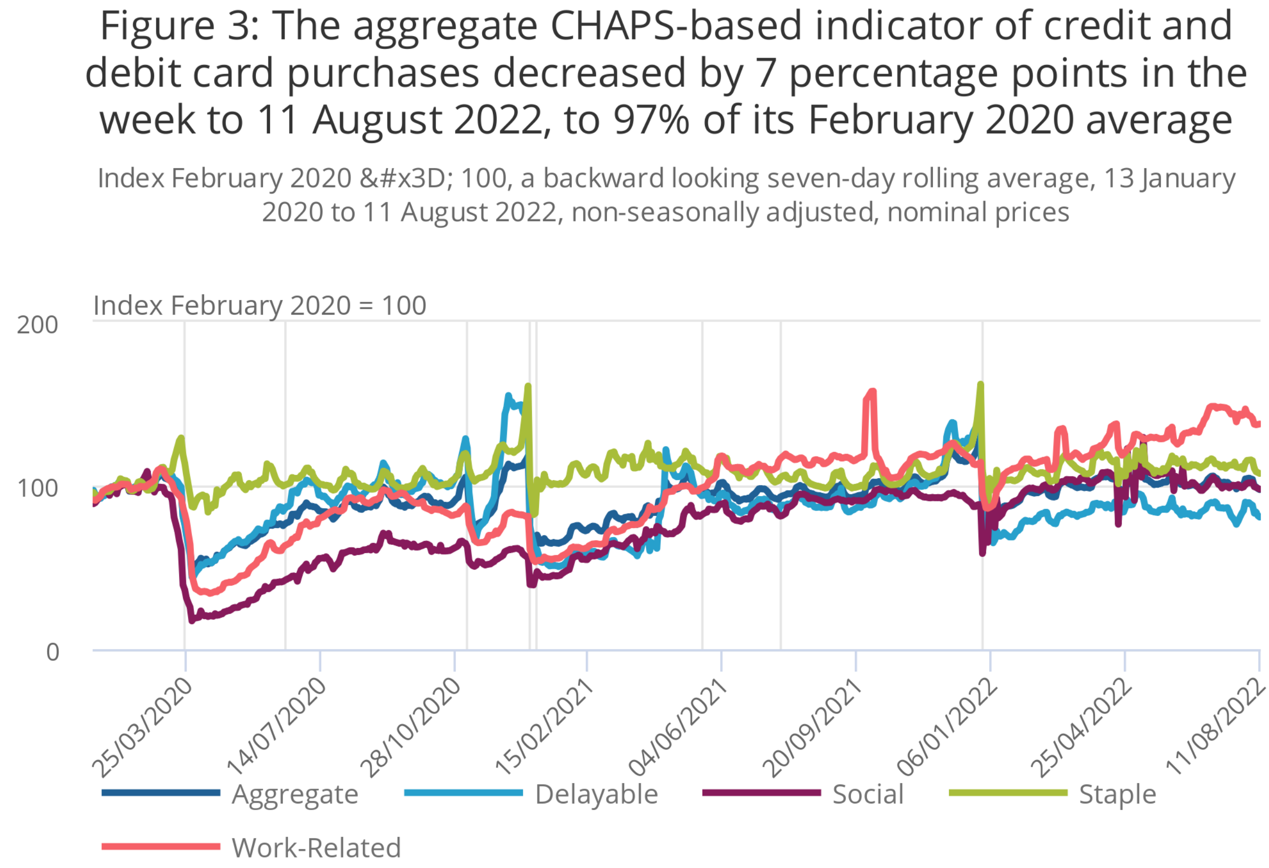
These data series are experimental real-time indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily CHAPS payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card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

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 decreased by 7 percentage points in the week to 11 August 2022, to 97% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 11 August 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices



Source: Office for National Statistics and Bank of England calculations

Notes:

1. Users should note the daily payment data are 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 the 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" and "delayable" both decreased by 8 percentage points

- "work-related" (which includes spending on road fuel) decreased by 5 percentage points

- "social" decreased by 4 percentage points

"Work-related" and "staple" spending were above their February 2020 average levels at 138% and 107%, respectively. "Social" and "delayable" spending remained below their February 2020 average level at 98% and 81%, respectively.

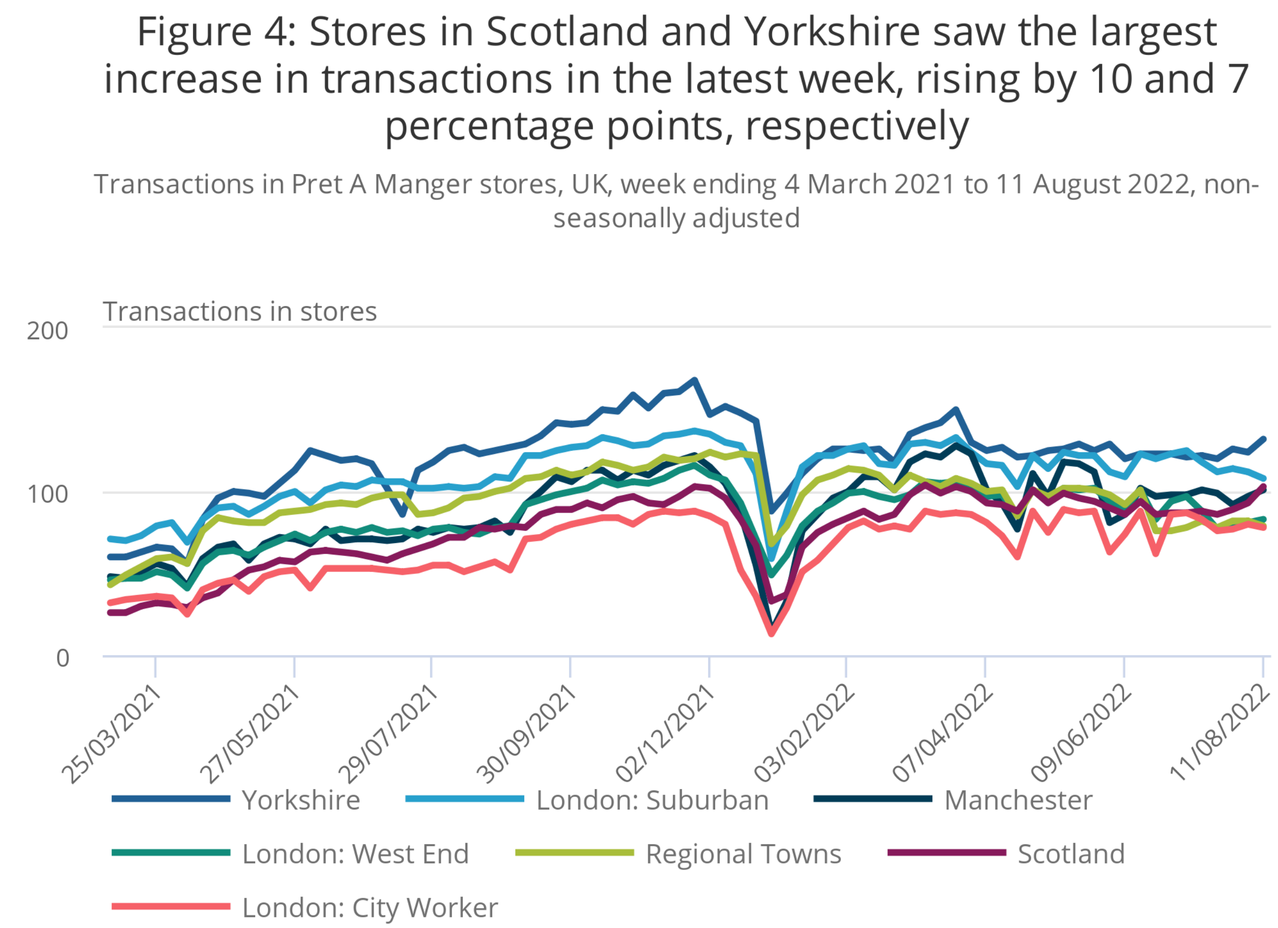
Transactions at Pret A Manger

Pret A Manger is a sandwich and coffee shop franchise chain, operating around 400 stores across the UK. Its transactional data are presented as an index and show total weekly till transactions at Pret A Manger shops as a proportion of the average weekly level in the first four weeks of 2020 (between Friday 3 January and Thursday 30 January 2020). Because of this comparison across the data time series, users should expect an element of seasonality in the data.

More information on the areas featured is available in our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology. These data are also made available every Tuesday through the Bloomberg Pret Index.

Figure 4: Stores in Scotland and Yorkshire saw the largest increase in transactions in the latest week, rising by 10 and 7 percentage points, respectively

Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 11 August 2022, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Pret A Manger – Store transactions

Notes:

1. Dine-in services in England were suspended during the third national coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic lockdown, which remained in place until step three (17 May 2021) of England's roadmap out of lockdown.

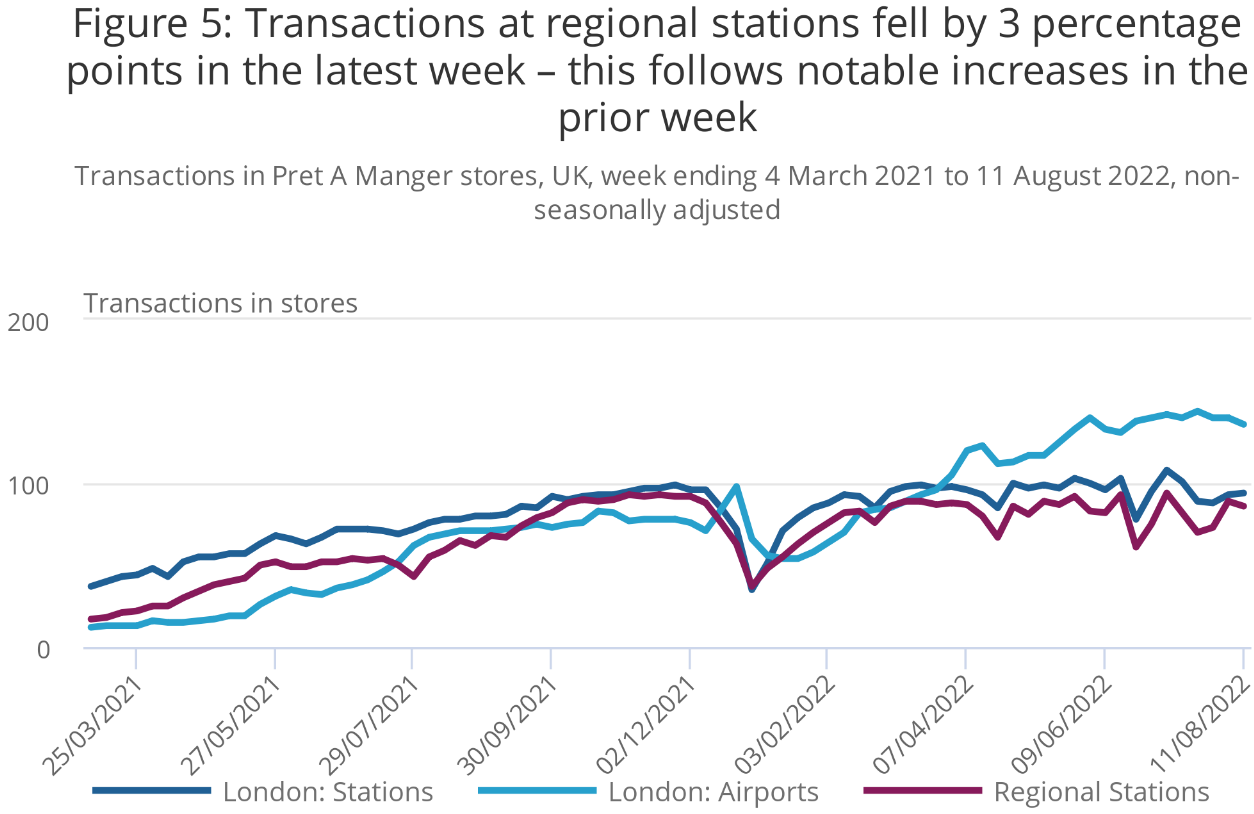
2. Users should note not all store locations reopened as coronavirus pandemic restrictions were eased.

3. The index begins on 4 March 2021 because most stores were closed before this; therefore, the corresponding indices were mostly zero.

For the fifth consecutive week, Yorkshire stores had the highest number of transactions compared with January 2020 averages, at 132%. This follows a period of falling transactions at London suburban stores, which previously had the highest levels relative to January 2020. London suburban store transactions are now 108% of their January 2020 average, having peaked this year on 24 March 2022, at 133%.

Figure 5: Transactions at regional stations fell by 3 percentage points in the latest week – this follows notable increases in the prior week

Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 11 August 2022, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Pret A Manger – Store transactions

Transactions at Pret A Manger regional station stores have been fairly volatile over the summer period. Notable week-on-week changes since the beginning of June may have been affected by rail strikes and the periods of hot weather where non-essential travel was discouraged.

5 . Transport

Road traffic on Monday 15 August 2022 was broadly unchanged from the previous week at 98% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020. All types of vehicle traffic were broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week.

UK flight data

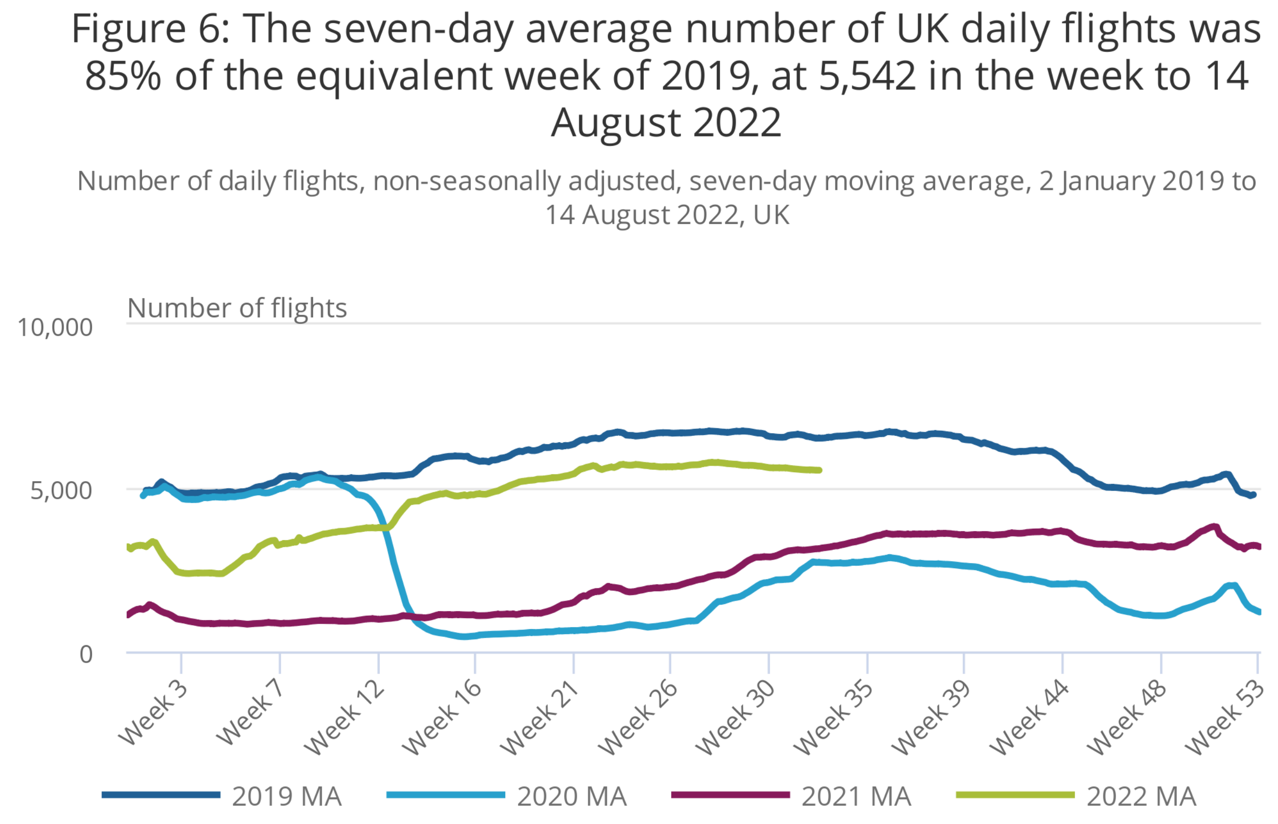
These data are daily flight figures from the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL). Daily flight numbers for the UK alongside other countries are available in EUROCONTROL's dashboard. EUROCONTROL is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation. Its Aviation Intelligence and Performance Review Unit provides independent collection and validation of air navigation services' performance-related data and intelligence gathering.

The flights data include international arrivals and departures to and from the UK (including Crown dependencies) and domestic UK flights but exclude overflights (flights that pass over UK territory). They capture all flight movements that operate under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), where the pilot uses instruments in the flight deck to control, guide and adjust the plane. This includes commercial flights carrying passengers and cargo as well as non-commercial flights such as private and military flights.

Data from EUROCONTROL do not include information on the volume of passengers or cargo carried on UK flights. Especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, flights might not be operating at full capacity and therefore trends in passengers and cargo will differ from trends in flights presented here.

Figure 6: The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 85% of the equivalent week of 2019, at 5,542 in the week to 14 August 2022

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, seven-day moving average, 2 January 2019 to 14 August 2022, UK



Source: European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL)

The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was broadly unchanged from the previous week (5,574) and was at 85% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019. This has been broadly stable at around 85% of its equivalent week in 2019 since the week ending 24 April 2022.

The full data time series available for UK flights can be found in the accompanying daily UK flights dataset, which contains daily flight numbers and the rolling seven-day averages.

6 . Data

Advanced notification of potential redundancies
Dataset | Released 18 August 2022
Weekly dataset showing the number of potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, submitted to Insolvency Service via HR1 forms .

Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions
Dataset | Released 18 August 2022
Weekly dataset showing the number of Companies House incorporations and voluntary dissolutions accepted, and companies placed into compulsory dissolution.

Revolut spending on debit cards
Dataset | Released 18 August 2022
Insight into the spending patterns of UK consumers from financial technology company Revolut.

System Average Price (SAP) of gas
Dataset | Released 18 August 2022
Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in the UK.

Transactions at Pret A Manger
Dataset | Released 18 August 2022
Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

UK spending on credit and debit cards
Dataset | Released 18 August 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.

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.

Diffusion index

The diffusion index tracks the growth in turnover and expenditure of firms. It is constructed to lie between negative 1 and 1. For example, if 65% of firms have increasing turnover, 30% have decreasing turnover and 5% turnover remains unchanged, then the diffusion index is 0.35.

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

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.

10 . Related links

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest data and analysis
Webpage | Updated as and when data become available
Latest data on the coronavirus in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

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).

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional
Bulletin | Released weekly
Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving coronavirus, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK
Bulletin | Released 5 August 2022
Percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) in private residential households in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, including regional and age breakdowns.