Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 20 August 2026

Faster indicators of trends in the UK economy and society, using innovative surveys, methods and data sources. These are official statistics in development.

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20 August 2026

Next release:
17 September 2026

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1 . Main points

In July 2026:

- Consumer activity was mixed; retail footfall increased, compared with June 2026, and the seasonally adjusted Direct Debit failure rate also increased when compared with July 2025 (BT Active Intelligence, Vocalink and Pay.UK).

- Labour market indicators showed some improvement from the previous month, with a decrease in potential redundancies and an increase in new online job adverts, compared with June 2026 (Insolvency Service HR1 forms, Textkernel).

- Wholesale energy prices increased, compared with June 2026, and remained notably higher than July 2025, as markets continued to respond to the conflict in the Middle East (National Gas Transmission, Elexon).

- Transport indicators were largely stable, compared with the previous month; ship visits to major UK ports remained broadly unchanged and UK flights saw a 1% increase (exactEarth, EUROCONTROL).

- New vehicle registrations remained broadly unchanged, compared with June 2026, and increased by 13%, compared with July 2025 (The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders).

- In the housing market, the number of new listings for property sales decreased while the average time on market remained broadly unchanged, compared with June 2026; the number of Energy Performance Building Certificates (EPCs) lodged in England and Wales for new dwellings increased by 2% across the same period (Rightmove, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government).

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: Quality, methods and data sources.

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.Indicators with "SA" in the title have been seasonally adjusted. Indicators with "NSA" in the title have not been seasonally adjusted but do present seasonality. All other indicators do not present seasonality. 3.Users should be cautious when interpreting month-on-month changes in non-seasonally adjusted data, as some indicators (e.g. retail footfall) are affected by calendar variation, including the number of days in a month. 4.Existing EPC data can show sudden spikes when housing associations lodge multiple expired EPCs at once.

3 . Consumer behaviour

Retail footfall was stronger in July 2026 than in June 2026, when an extended heatwave during the second half of the month coincided with the rare issuance of Red Warnings for Extreme Heat. Direct Debit average transaction amounts and failure rates continued to increase, compared with the same month a year earlier; this may partly reflect ongoing cost of living pressures on household finances.

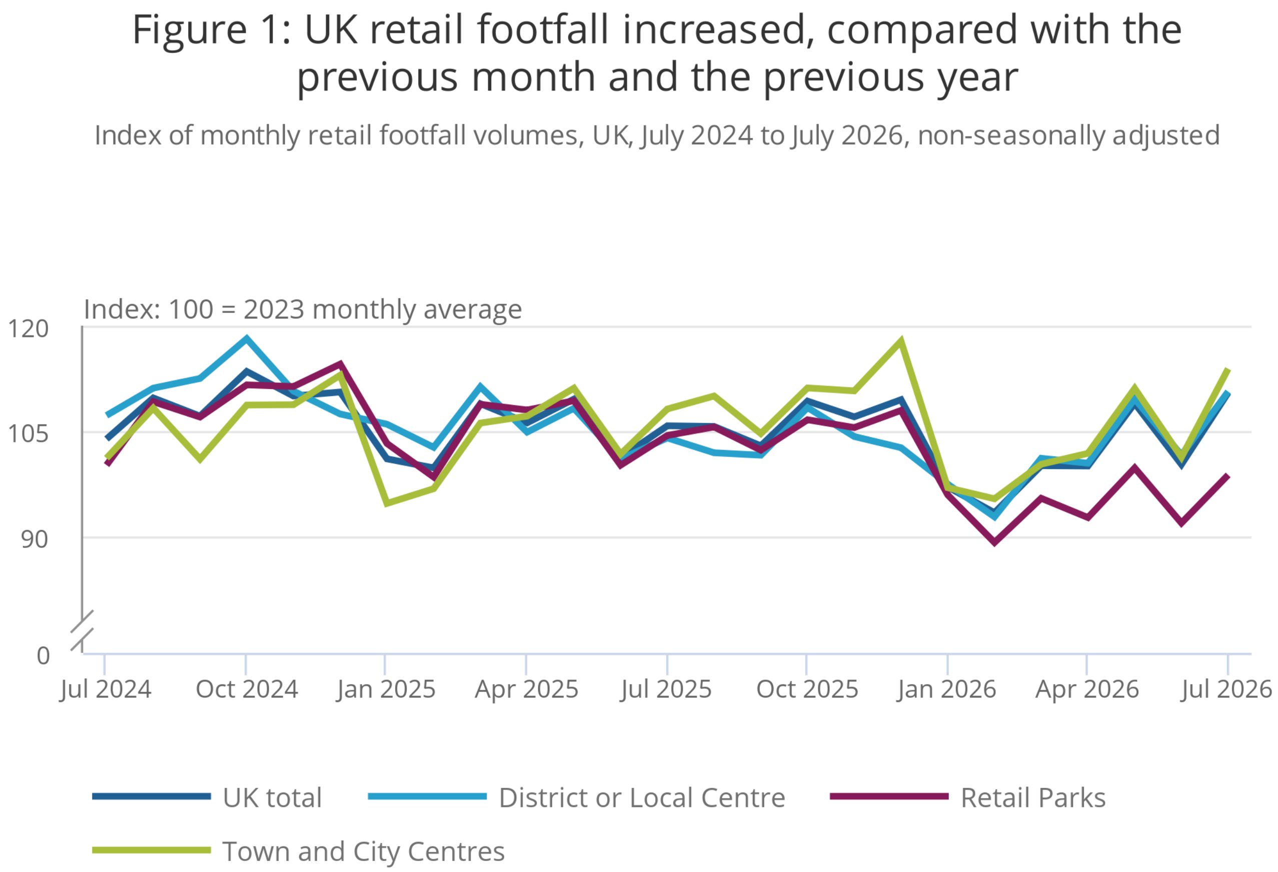
UK retail footfall

UK retail footfall increased by 10% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and increased by 4% when compared with July 2025.

Footfall in district or local centres increased by 9%, compared with the previous month, and by 6% when compared with July 2025. Footfall in town and city centres increased by 12% and 5%, respectively, over the same periods. Retail park footfall increased by 7%, compared with June 2026, but decreased by 5% when compared with the previous year.

Figure 1: UK retail footfall increased, compared with the previous month and the previous year

Index of monthly retail footfall volumes, UK, July 2024 to July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: BT Active Intelligence

Notes:

1. BT Active Intelligence retail footfall data are an estimate of UK retail footfall. The data exclude those who work and live in retail areas and only count visitors to these locations.

2. The data are available from July 2024 onwards. This back series is not long enough to perform seasonal adjustment of the data. Caution is advised when interpreting month-on-month changes, which are affected by calendar variation, including the number of days in a month.

Footfall increased in all 11 regions of Great Britain (including British countries and English regions), when compared with June 2026. The largest increases were seen in the South West (13%), the South East and Wales (both 12%). The smallest increases were seen in Scotland, the North East, East of England, and the East Midlands, which all increased by 9%.

Footfall increased in 4 regions and decreased in 4 regions when compared with July 2025, while 3 remained broadly unchanged. The largest increases were seen in London and Scotland (14% and 5%, respectively). The largest decreases were in the North East and Yorkshire and the Humber (both 3%). The East Midlands, South West and East of England all remained unchanged.

Data for Northern Ireland were unavailable.

Figure 2: Retail footfall increased in all regions when compared with June 2026

Change in retail footfall by region, UK, July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Details of the methods used to compile these data are available in theBT Active Intelligence methodology.
2. Caution is advised when interpreting month-on-month changes which are affected by calendar variation, including the number of days in a month.
3. Values for Northern Ireland have been suppressed, subject to further quality assurance processes.
4. Data are available in further detail, broken down by region and site type, in our accompanyingUK retail footfall dataset.

Revolut spending on debit cards

Seasonally adjusted Revolut debit card spending remained broadly stable in July 2026, compared with June 2026. Increases were seen in five of the nine spend categories; the biggest change was seen in "Entertainment", which rose by 5%.

Seasonally adjusted Revolut debit card spending increased by 6%, increasing in all nine spend categories, compared with June 2025. The largest increases were in "Entertainment" (17%) and "Transport" (9%).

Our accompanying Revolut spending on debit cards dataset is available.

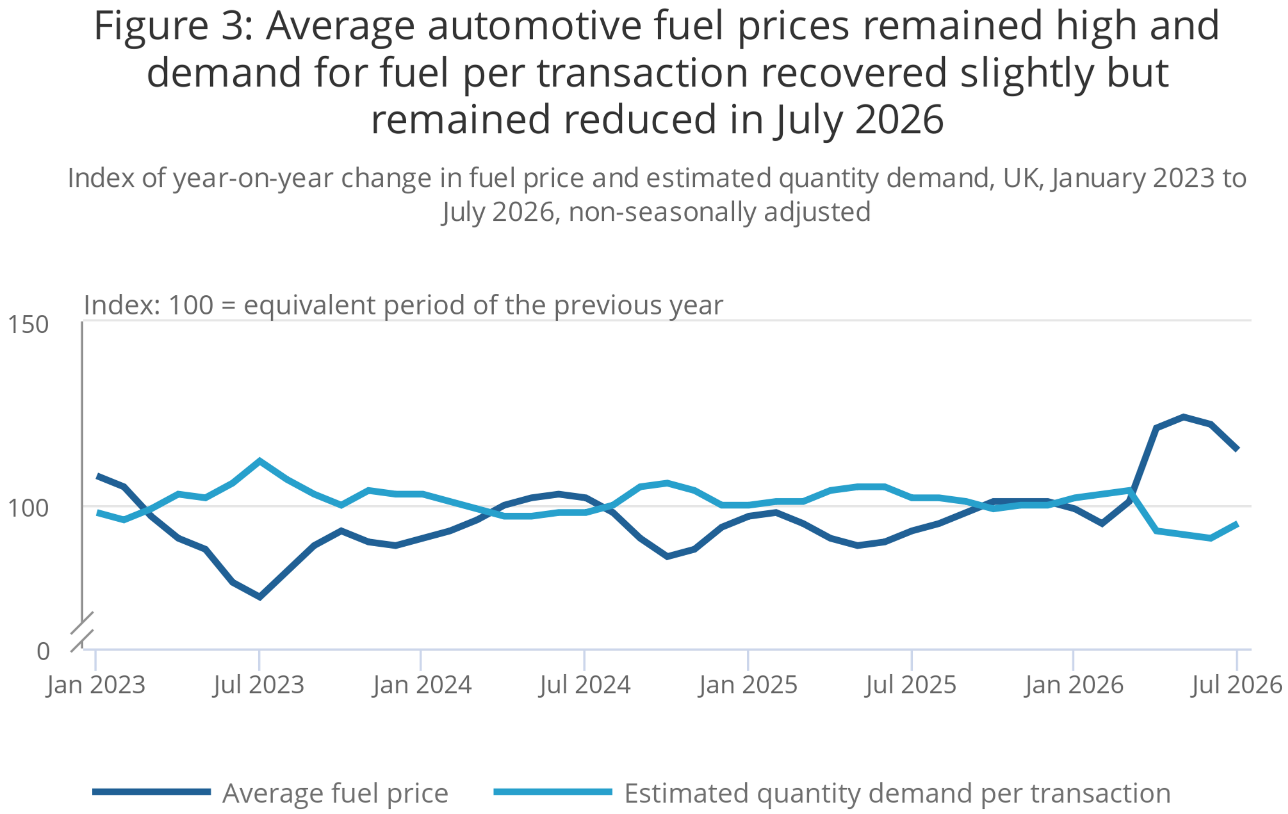
Automotive fuel spending

Demand for automotive fuel per transaction decreased by 5% in July 2026, compared with the previous year, while the average price of fuel increased by 15% over the same period.

This change in fuel price and demand reflects the effects of the conflict in the Middle East, which has affected supply chains and confidence, leading to higher global oil prices.

Figure 3: Average automotive fuel prices remained high and demand for fuel per transaction recovered slightly but remained reduced in July 2026

Index of year-on-year change in fuel price and estimated quantity demand, UK, January 2023 to July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Aggregated anonymised card-spending data from the Office for National Statistics, and road fuel price, road fuel sales and stock levels from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

Our accompanying [Automotive fuel spending dataset] is available.

Monthly Direct Debit average transaction amount and failure rate

The seasonally adjusted total Direct Debit average transaction amount was broadly unchanged in July 2026, compared with June 2026. "Loans" decreased by 4% over this period and "Electricity and gas" increased by 1%. All other categories were broadly unchanged.

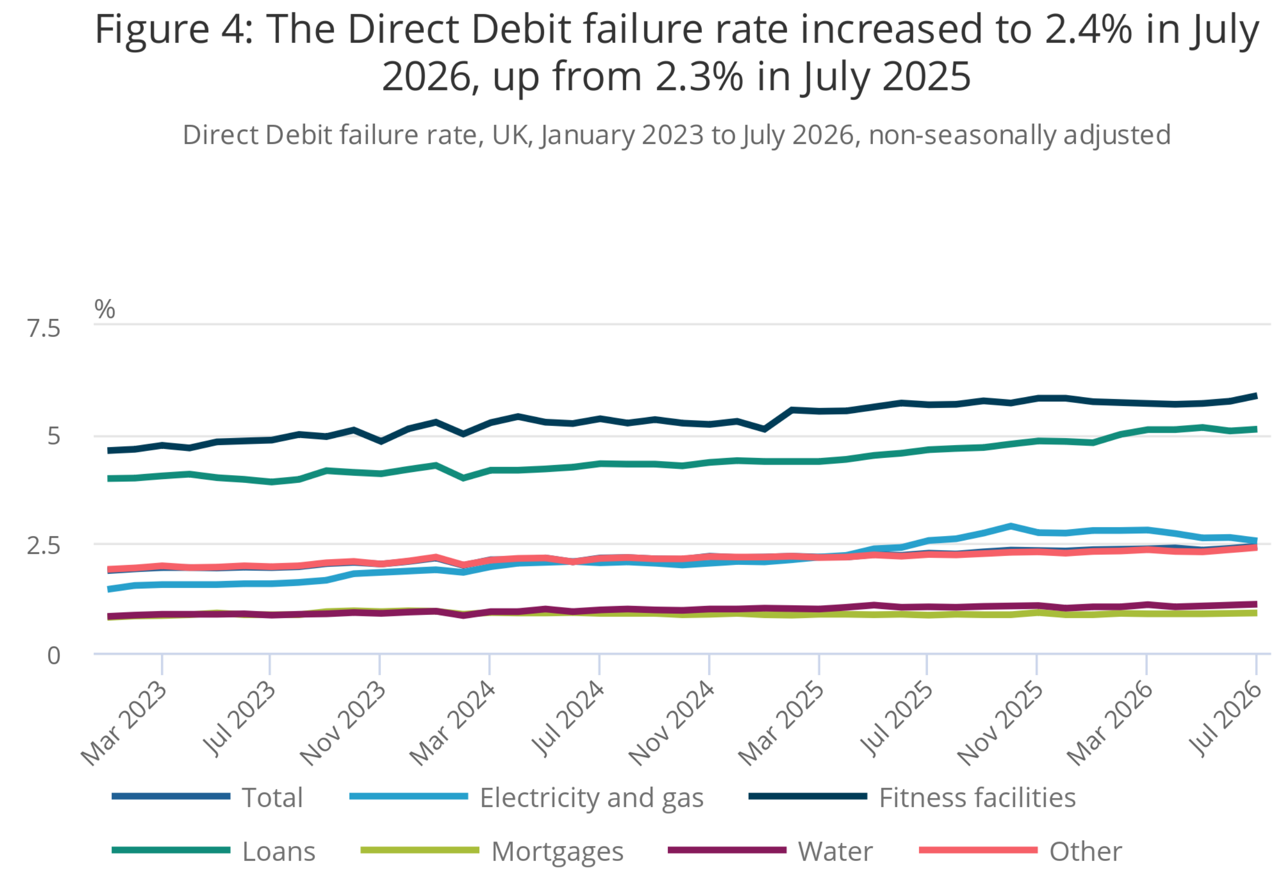
The seasonally adjusted total Direct Debit average transaction amount increased by 2% in July 2026, compared with July 2025. The "Water" category had the largest year-on-year increase, rising by 7%. This was followed by "Mortgages", which increased by 4%. The only decreases were in "Loans" and "Electricity and gas", which both fell by 3% over this period.

The seasonally adjusted Direct Debit failure rate increased from 2.3% in July 2025 to 2.4% in July 2026.

The largest increase over this period was for "Loans", which increased from 4.6% in July 2025 to 5.1% in July 2026. The only category that did not record an increase was "Electricity and gas", which was broadly unchanged over this period. This coincided with a fall in the Direct Debit average transaction amount, which was linked to lower household energy bills following falls in the Ofgem energy price cap during Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2026.

Figure 4: The Direct Debit failure rate increased to 2.4% in July 2026, up from 2.3% in July 2025

Direct Debit failure rate, UK, January 2023 to July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Pay.UK and Vocalink

Notes:

1. Data are based on a sample of anonymised and aggregated Bacs Direct Debit payments data.

2. The underlying failure rates are low, with month-to-month volatility expected.

3. "Other" includes payments such as credit card bills, rent, council tax and insurance.

For further details on what is covered within this indicator, see our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology.

Our accompanying Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset is available.

4 . Business and workforce

The number of new online job adverts increased and the number of potential redundancies decreased in July 2026, compared with the previous month.

New online job adverts

The total number of new online job adverts increased by 4% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, but decreased by 4% when compared with July 2025.

Job adverts increased in only 6 of the 26 occupational groups, compared with July 2025. This was led by Elementary trades and related occupations (21%) and Elementary administration and service occupations (12%). There were decreases in 19 occupational groups, with the largest declines in Health Professionals (28%) and Teaching and other education professionals (24%). One occupational group was broadly unchanged.

Figure 5: The number of online job adverts decreased by 4%, compared with July 2025

Volume of new job adverts, UK, January 2020 to July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted

Source: Textkernel

Notes:

1. New adverts represent the total number of job adverts that have gone online per month, calculated by counting the number of adverts that appear for the first time across the calendar month.
2. These data are not seasonally adjusted.
3. Data for October 2025 to February 2026 and June to July 2026 have been partially imputed. This is because we were unable to obtain accurate information from a major source for this period.
4. Data for March 2026 have been suppressed because of issues with obtaining job advert data from a major source.

Across the 12 UK regions (including the UK countries and English regions), only the South East (up 10%) and Northern Ireland (up 3%) recorded increases in job adverts, compared with July 2025. Job adverts fell in nine regions, with the largest percentage decreases seen in Yorkshire and The Humber (down 12%) and Scotland (down 10%). The East of England remained broadly unchanged.

The proportion of all new online job adverts for this month was largest in the South East (18%), followed by London (16%). The smallest proportions were in Northern Ireland (2%), and Wales and the North East (both 3%).

Details on the methods used to compile these estimates are available in our Measuring labour demand volumes across the UK using Textkernel data user guide.

Our accompanying Textkernel new online job adverts dataset is available. For further tables using similar methodology and sources by local authority and four-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC), see our Labour demand volumes by SOC datasets, which will be updated on 21 August 2026.

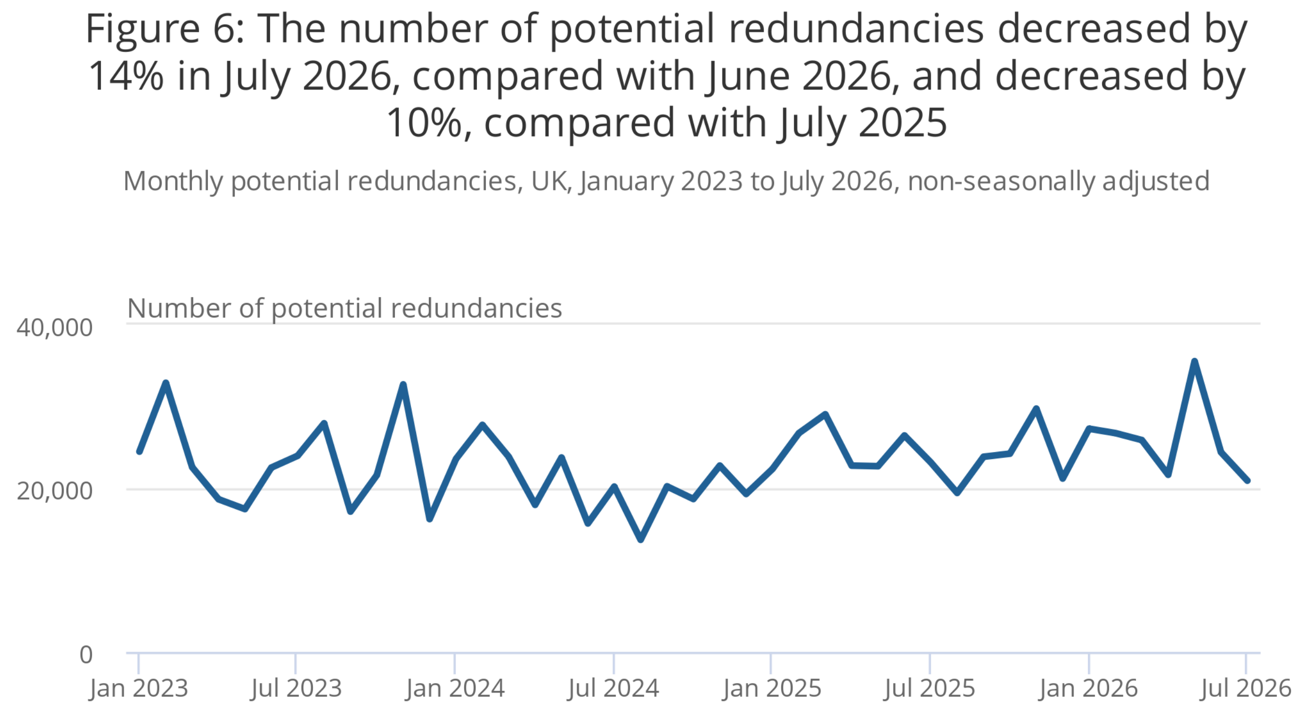
Advanced notification of potential redundancies

The number of potential redundancies and the number of employers proposing redundancies fell by 14% and 3%, respectively, compared with June 2026. Both measures also fell 10% and 6%, respectively, compared with July 2025.

Banking and finance accounted for the largest share of potential redundancies in July 2026, representing 26% of the total. This was followed by Transport and Communication (19%) and Manufacturing (18%).

Figure 6: The number of potential redundancies decreased by 14% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and decreased by 10%, compared with July 2025

Monthly potential redundancies, UK, January 2023 to July 2026, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Insolvency Service HR1 forms

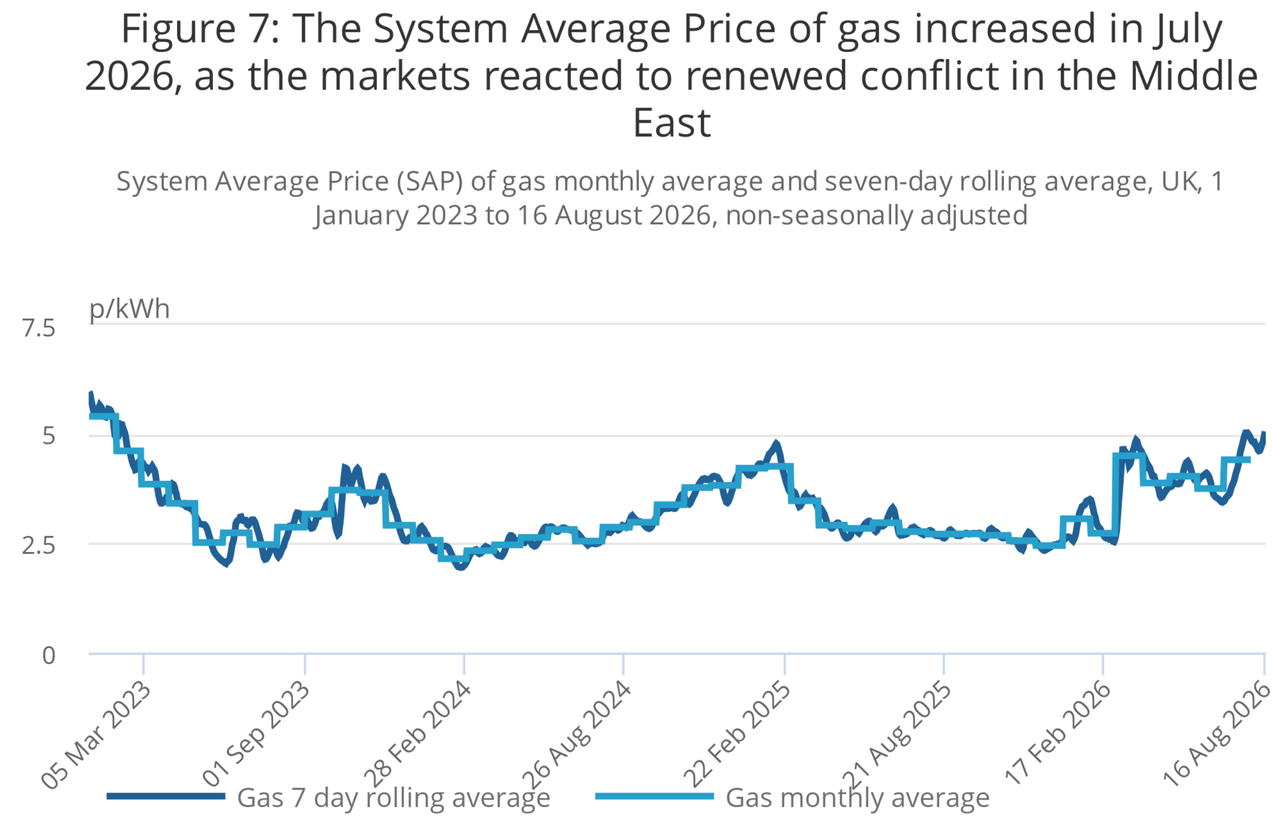
For more information, our accompanying Advanced notification of potential redundancies weekly dataset is available. Industry and regional breakdowns by month are available in our monthly potential redundancies dataset.

5 . Energy

Wholesale energy prices increased in July 2026, after a brief fall in June, as the markets reacted to the re-closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Figure 7: The System Average Price of gas increased in July 2026, as the markets reacted to renewed conflict in the Middle East

System Average Price (SAP) of gas monthly average and seven-day rolling average, UK, 1 January 2023 to 16 August 2026, non-seasonally adjusted

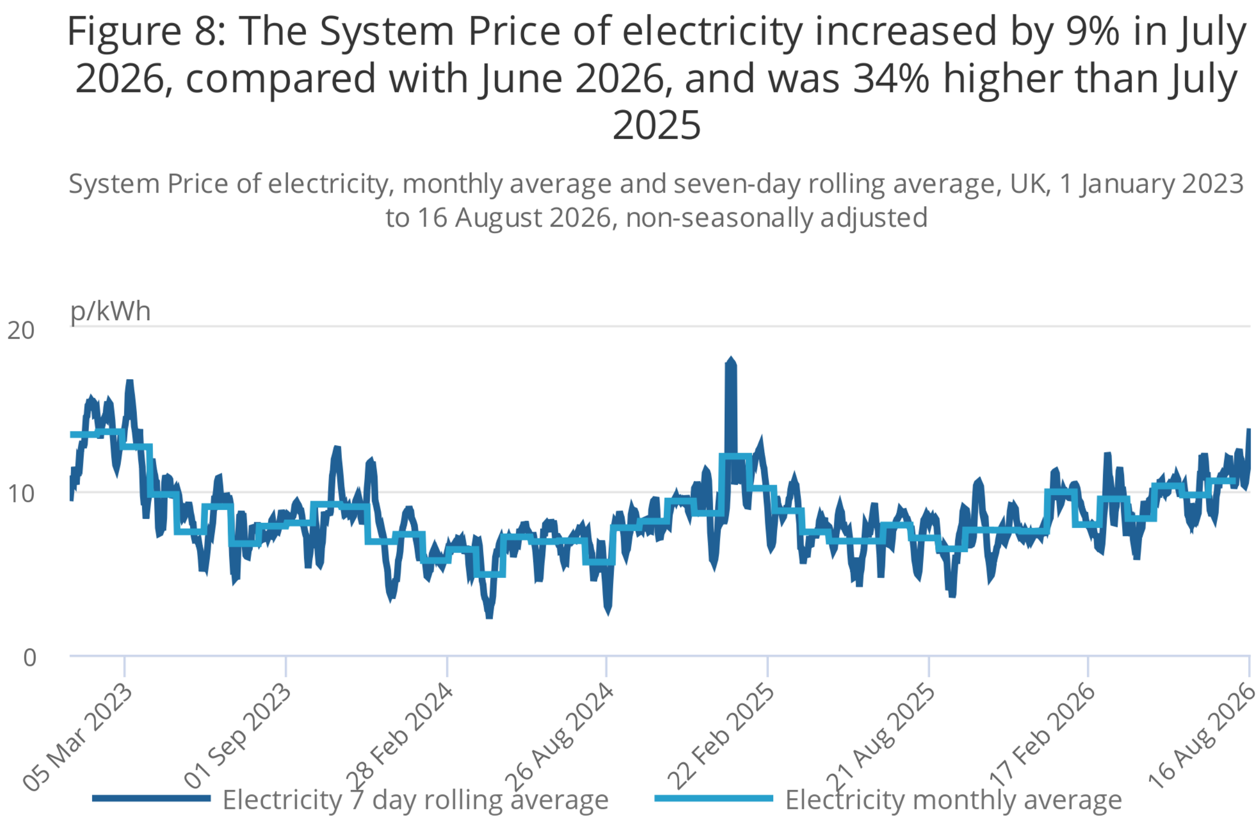


Source: National Gas Transmission

The System Average Price of gas increased by 18% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and increased by 59% when compared with July 2025. Gas prices initially declined in early August, reaching 4.507 pence per kWh on 5 August 2026, before rising consistently through the rest of the period. The latest available price was 5.316 pence per kWh on 16 August 2026, which is up 8.2% from 1 August 2026.

Figure 8: The System Price of electricity increased by 9% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and was 34% higher than July 2025

System Price of electricity, monthly average and seven-day rolling average, UK, 1 January 2023 to 16 August 2026, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Elexon

The System Price of electricity increased by 9% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and increased by 34% when compared with July 2025. Electricity prices initially declined in early August, reaching 8.238 pence per kWh on 8 August 2026, before increasing after this date. The latest available price was 15.634 pence per kWh on 16 August 2026, which is up 34.6% from 1 August 2026.

Changes in the System Average Price (SAP) of gas and the System Price of electricity are considered by the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) when setting the energy price caps for the next three months. Large changes in these prices can indicate that the future price cap set by Ofgem will change.

Our accompanying System Average Price of gas dataset and System Price of electricity dataset are available.

6 . Housing

Housing market: rentals

The seasonally adjusted number of new rental listings decreased by 2% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, but increased by 2%, compared with July 2025.

The largest month-on-month percentage decrease in new rental listings was in Yorkshire and The Humber, which fell by 6%. The number of new rental listings decreased in all regions (includes England, Scotland and Wales, and English regions) except Scotland, where it increased by 4%.

The largest year-on-year percentage change in new rental listings was in Wales, which was up 21% in July 2026, compared with July 2025. Four regions saw decreases over this period. The largest percentage decrease was in Yorkshire and The Humber, where the number of new rental listings fell by 4%.

Housing market: sales

The seasonally adjusted number of new listings for property sales decreased by 1% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and decreased by 6%, compared with July 2025.

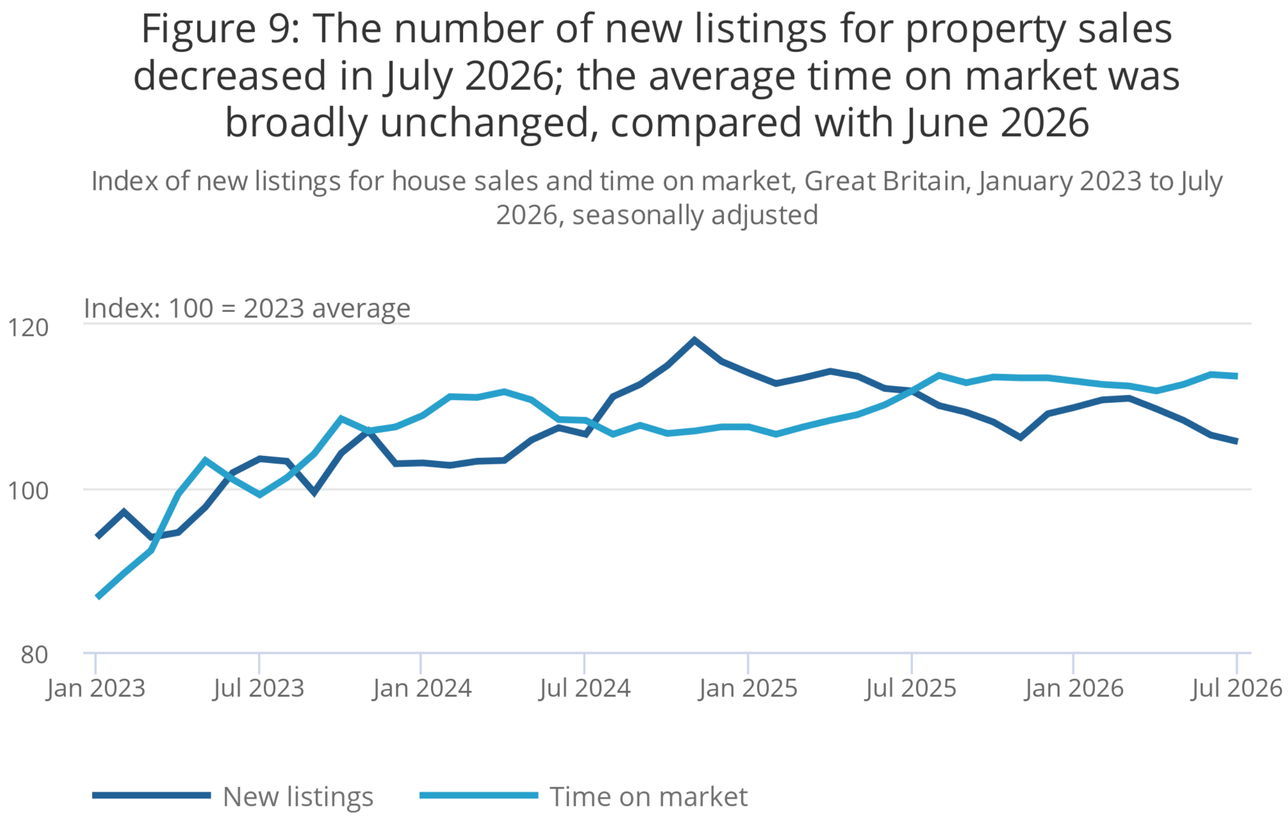
Month-on-month decreases were seen in 4 of the 11 regions. Yorkshire and the Humber and West Midlands both fell by 2%, and London and the South East both fell by 1%.

The number of new listings was broadly unchanged in 4 regions and increased in the remaining 3.

New sales listings decreased in all regions (includes England, Scotland and Wales, and English regions), compared with July 2025. The largest decrease was in West Midlands (down 10%), followed by London (down 9%).

Figure 9: The number of new listings for property sales decreased in July 2026; the average time on market was broadly unchanged, compared with June 2026

Index of new listings for house sales and time on market, Great Britain, January 2023 to July 2026, seasonally adjusted



Source: Rightmove

The seasonally adjusted average time on market for property sales remained at 68 days in July 2026, which is broadly unchanged from June 2026. The average time on market increased by 2%, compared with July 2025.

The longest average time on market for property sales was in London (79 days) and the shortest was in Scotland (37 days) in July 2026.

The largest month-on-month increases in the average time on the market in July 2026 were in the West Midlands and Wales, which were both up 3%, compared with June 2026.

The largest year-on-year increase was in London, where the average time on market for property sales increased by 10%, compared with July 2025. The largest decrease was in Scotland, which fell by 3%.

Our accompanying [housing market insights dataset] is available.

Energy Performance Building Certificates

The seasonally adjusted number of Energy Performance Building Certificates (EPCs) lodged in England and Wales for new dwellings increased by 2% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and by 1% when compared with June 2025.

The seasonally adjusted number of EPCs lodged in England and Wales for existing dwellings decreased by 3%, compared with the previous month, but increased by 8% when compared with the equivalent month of the previous year.

Our accompanying [Energy Performance Building Certificates (EPC) dataset] and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's [Weekly EPCs for domestic properties dataset] are available.

7 . Transport

New vehicle registrations

The seasonally adjusted number of new vehicle registrations (cars and light commercial vehicles) remained broadly unchanged in July 2026, compared with June 2026, but increased by 13% when compared with July 2025.

New registrations of Business cars, which account for a small share of the market, increased by 20%, which was the largest month-on-month percentage increase in new registrations. Private cars saw the largest decrease of 4%, and Fleet registrations, which account for a much larger share of the market, saw a decrease of 1%. Registrations of business cars increased by 48% and Fleet registrations increased by 10%, compared with July 2025.

Looking at seasonally adjusted new car registrations by fuel type, plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) were the only category to see growth, increasing by 4% in July 2026, compared with June 2026. Battery electric vehicle (BEV) registrations remained broadly unchanged over the period. Registrations of hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), petrol cars and diesel cars decreased by 5%, 4% and 2%, respectively.

Increases were observed across all categories of electric vehicles, compared with the previous year. The most notable growth occurred in registrations of BEVs and PHEVs, which increased by 42% and 32%, respectively, in July 2026, compared with July 2025. In contrast, registrations of diesel and petrol cars decreased by 17% and 5%, respectively, over the same period.

Our accompanying [UK new vehicle registrations and production dataset] is available.

UK flights

The seasonally adjusted number of UK flights increased by 1% in July 2026, compared with June 2026, and increased by 2%, compared with July 2025.

Our accompanying [Daily UK flights dataset] is available.

Shipping

The seasonally adjusted total number of ship visits to selected UK ports remained broadly unchanged in July 2026, compared with the previous month. The number of cargo and tanker visits decreased by 1%, while other ship visits increased by 1% over this period.

The seasonally adjusted total number of ship visits decreased by 1%. Cargo and tanker visits also decreased by 1%, and other ship visits decreased by 2%, compared with July 2025.

Our accompanying [Weekly shipping indicators dataset] is available.

8 . Data

System Average Price (SAP) of gas
Dataset | Released 20 August 2026
Daily data showing System Average Price (SAP) of gas, and rolling seven-day average, traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM). These are official statistics in development. Source: National Gas Transmission.

System Price of electricity
Dataset | Released 20 August 2026
Daily data showing the System Price of electricity, and rolling seven-day average, in Great Britain. These are official statistics in development. Source: Elexon.

Daily UK flights
Dataset | Released 20 August 2026
Daily data showing UK flight numbers and rolling seven-day average, including flights to, from, and within the UK. These are official statistics in development. Source: EUROCONTROL.

This section lists a selection of data available in this publication. For the full list of available datasets, please see our accompanying dataset page.

9 . Definitions

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.

Seasonal adjustment

Seasonal adjustment is the identification and removal of consistent and systematic variation in time series associated with the time of year. For more information on seasonal variation, and how we implement seasonal adjustment, see Section 2 of our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology.

10 . Quality, methods and data sources

About the statistics

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology
Methodology | Last revised 23 July 2026
Methodology for the data collection, aggregation, analysis, and presentation for the real-time indicators bulletin.

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: seasonal adjustment
Article | Released 25 June 2025
Methodology for the seasonal adjustment of real-time indicators.

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. We use 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.

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.

About the data sources

Dataset release dates and intended release frequency

Latest release dates and intended release frequency of our associated datasets are available in this section. Please note that there may be some change to the intended release frequency for 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

- Revolut spending on debit cards dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Automotive fuel spending dataset; updated 13 August 2026.
- UK retail footfall dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- System Average Price of gas dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- System Price of electricity dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Energy Performance Building Certificates (EPC) dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Weekly shipping indicators dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Daily UK flights dataset; updated 20 August 2026.

Monthly data release

- Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Textkernel new online job adverts dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Value Added Tax (VAT) flash estimates dataset; updated 20 August 2026.
- Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset; updated 13 August 2026.
- Rightmove Housing Market Insights; updated 20 August 2026.
- UK new vehicle registration and production dataset; updated 13 August 2026.
- Industry-to-industry payment flows, Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2, dataset; updated 16 July 2026.
- Industry-to-industry payment flows, SIC5, dataset; updated 16 July 2026.
- Region-to-region organisation payment flows dataset, updated 16 July 2026.
- Industry-to-industry payment flows by region dataset; updated 16 July 2026.

Statistical designation

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. Find out more in our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology.

Once the developments are complete, we will review the statistics with the Statistics Head of Profession. We will decide if the statistics are of sufficient quality and value to be published as official statistics, or if 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. If you would like to get in touch, please email realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

11 . Related links

Economic activity and social change real-time indicators, UK, dashboard
Dashboard | Released weekly
An overview of the UK economy and society, based on rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and innovative methods.

GDP monthly estimate, UK
Bulletin | Released monthly
Gross domestic product (GDP) measures the value of goods and services produced in the UK. It estimates the size of the economy and its growth.

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain
Bulletin | Released monthly
Social insights on daily life and events, including experiences of cost of living and attitudes to important issues, 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, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience.

12 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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