

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 22 May 2025

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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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Consumer behaviour](#)
4. [Business and workforce](#)
5. [Energy](#)
6. [Transport](#)
7. [Housing](#)
8. [Data](#)
9. [Glossary](#)
10. [Data sources and quality](#)
11. [Related links](#)
12. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- Overall retail footfall remained broadly unchanged in the week to 18 May 2025 compared with the previous week, and was also broadly unchanged when compared with the equivalent week of 2024 (MRI OnLocation). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit average transaction amount was broadly unchanged in April 2025 compared with the previous month; "Water" and "Loans" increased by 4% and 2%, respectively, but "Electricity and Gas" decreased by 2% compared with March 2025 (Pay.UK and Vocalink). [Section 3: Consumer behaviour](#).
- The number of new online job adverts decreased by 12% to approximately 656,000 new adverts in April 2025 compared with the previous month; this was the lowest number of new adverts in 2025, potentially affected by April bank holidays (Textkernel). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- In April 2025, 1% more firms reported a decrease in turnover, rather than an increase, when compared with the previous month; this is 4 percentage points lower than March 2025, and the change is within normal month-on-month variation (HM Revenue and Customs Value Added Tax returns). [Section 4: Business and workforce](#).
- Economic uncertainty was the most reported challenge affecting turnover for trading businesses in early May 2025 at 30%, down 3 percentage points from early April 2025; for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most commonly reported challenge was cost of labour at 39%, down 2 percentage points over the same period (final results from Wave 132 of the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey](#)).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 16% to 2.917 pence per kilowatt hour (p/kWh) in April 2025 compared with the previous month, while the System price of electricity decreased by 15% to 7.509p/kWh over the same period (National Gas Transmission, Elexon). [Section 5: Energy](#).
- The total number of ship visits to major UK ports increased by 1% in April 2025 compared with the previous month, but decreased by 5% when compared with the equivalent month of 2024 (exactEarth). [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: Data sources and quality](#).

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

Monthly Direct Debit average transaction amount and failure rate

The monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount are anonymised and aggregated datasets made available to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) by Pay.UK and Vocalink. The data are unadjusted for inflation and reflect economic activity in nominal terms.

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

In April 2025, the seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit failure rate decreased by 1% compared with the previous month. Failure rates decreased for "Fitness Facilities" and "Mortgages" by 15% and 3%, respectively, but increased for "Electricity and Gas" and "Water", by 5% and 2%, respectively. The failure rate of "Loans" remained broadly unchanged.

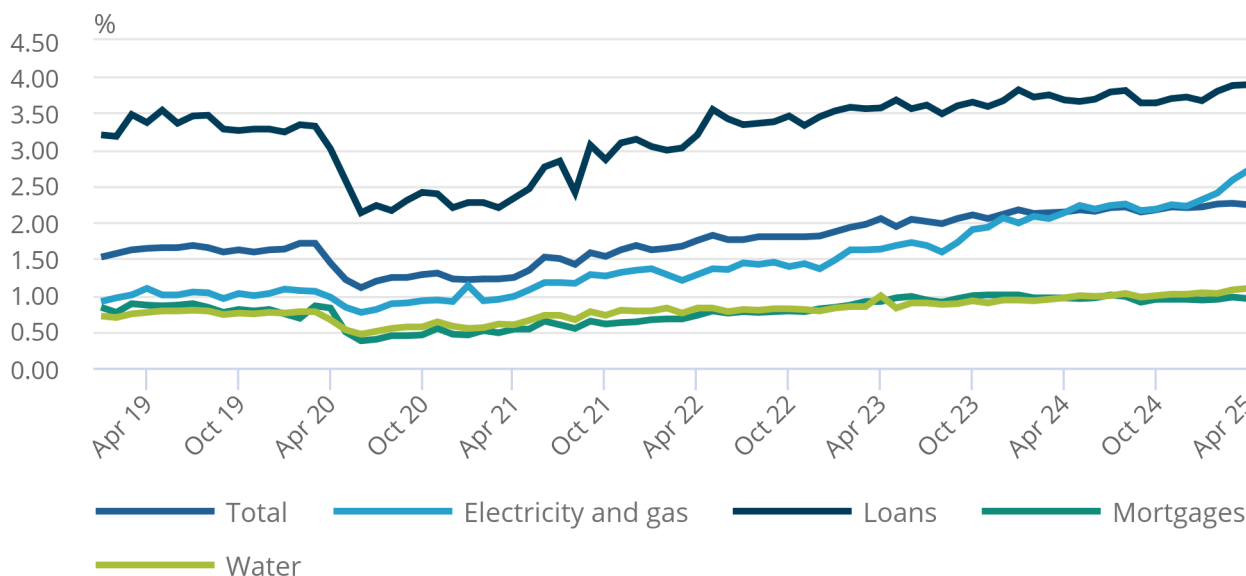
When compared with April 2024, the seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit failure rate increased by 5% in April 2025. Failure rates for "Electricity and Gas" saw the largest increase over this period, at 27%, while "Water" and "Loans" saw increases of 14% and 6%, respectively.

Figure 1: The "total" Direct Debit failure rate for April 2025 was 2.24%, compared with 2.26% in March 2025

Direct Debit failure rate, UK, January 2019 to April 2025, seasonally adjusted

Figure 1: The "total" Direct Debit failure rate for April 2025 was 2.24%, compared with 2.26% in March 2025

Direct Debit failure rate, UK, January 2019 to April 2025, seasonally adjusted



Source: Pay.UK and Vocalink

Notes:

1. Data include both individual and business Direct Debit transactions.
2. The total series covers all Direct Debit failure, including data beyond the five categories published in our [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#).
3. The underlying failure rates are low, so month-to-month volatility is expected within this series.

The seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit average transaction amount remained broadly unchanged in April 2025 when compared with the previous month. "Electricity and Gas" decreased by 2% and "Water", "Loans", and "Mortgages" increased by 4%, 2%, and 1%, respectively.

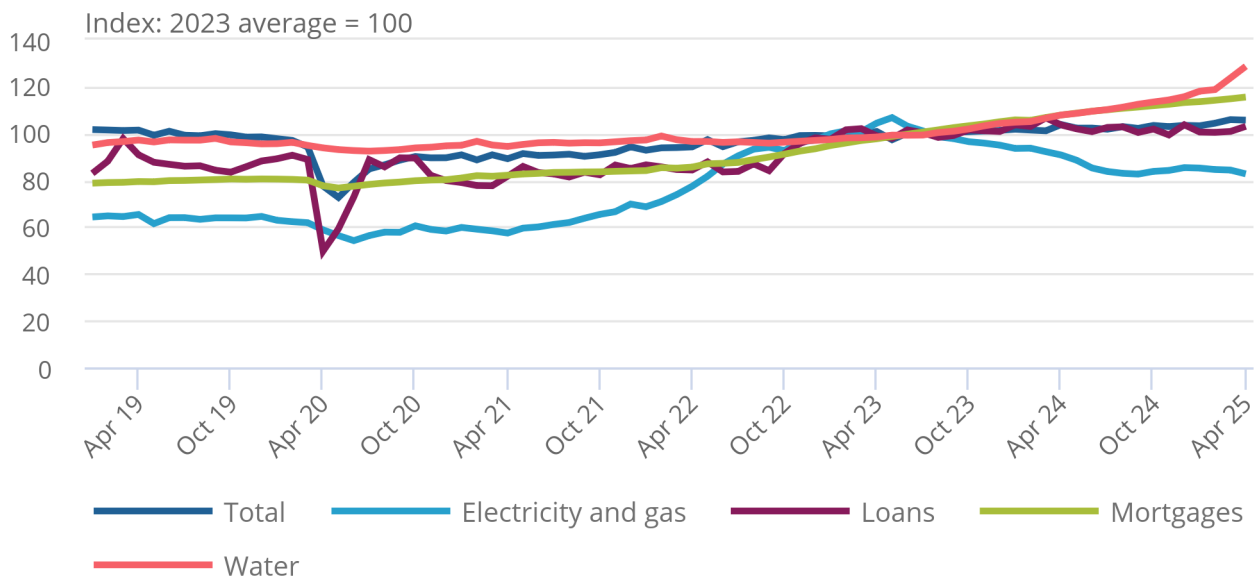
When compared with April 2024, the seasonally adjusted "Total" Direct Debit average transaction amount increased by 2%. This was because of increases in average transaction amounts for "Water" and "Mortgages" of 19% and 7%, respectively, but counteracted by decreases in "Electricity and Gas" and "Loans" of 9% and 1%, respectively.

Figure 2: The Direct Debit average transaction amount for "Water" increased by 4% in April 2025, compared with March 2025

Average transaction amount, UK, January 2019 to April 2025, seasonally adjusted

Figure 2: The Direct Debit average transaction amount for "Water" increased by 4% in April 2025, compared with March 2025

Average transaction amount, UK, January 2019 to April 2025, seasonally adjusted



Source: Pay.UK and Vocalink

Notes:

1. Data include both individual and business Direct Debit transactions.
2. The total series covers all Direct Debit transactions, including data beyond the five categories published in our [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#).
3. Data are not adjusted for inflation.

Our accompanying [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#) is available.

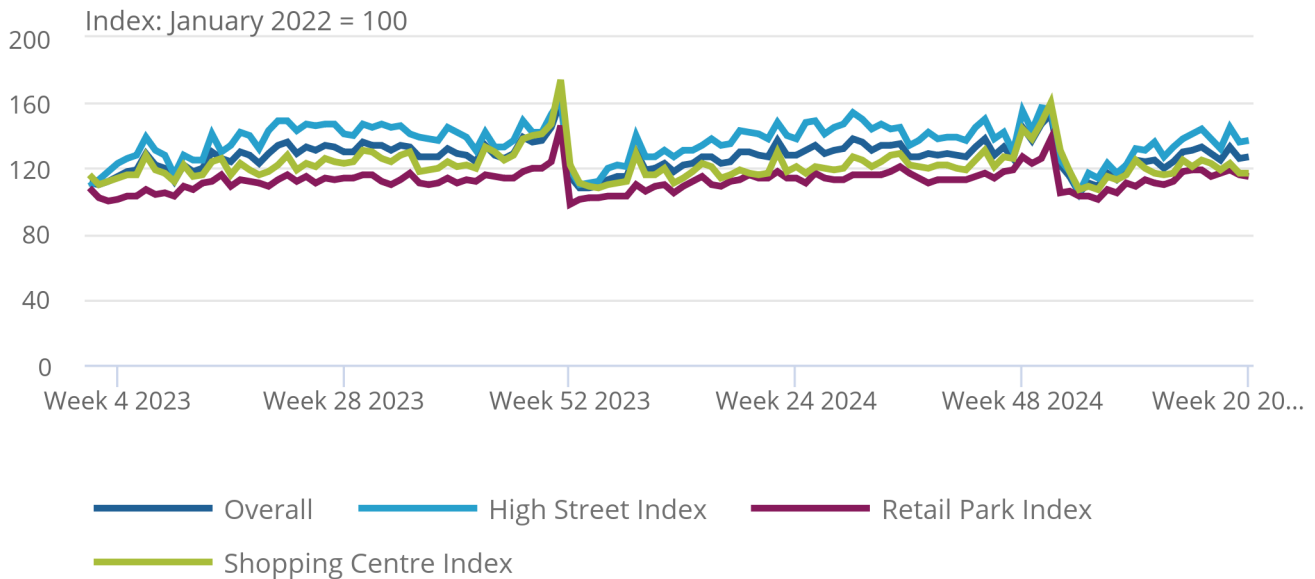
National retail footfall

Figure 3: Overall retail footfall remained broadly unchanged in the week to 18 May 2025, compared with the previous week and the same week in 2024

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, UK, 1 January 2023 to 18 May 2025, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 3: Overall retail footfall remained broadly unchanged in the week to 18 May 2025, compared with the previous week and the same week in 2024

Index of daily retail footfall volumes, UK, 1 January 2023 to 18 May 2025, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: MRI OnLocation

Notes:

1. Peaks in footfall correspond to bank holidays and school holidays and for the previous 12 months are as follows: Week 7, 2024 February school half term; Week 15, 2024 Easter bank holidays and school holidays; Week 21, 2024 late May bank holiday and school half term; Weeks 30 to 35, 2024 school holidays; Week 43, 2024 October half-term; Week 51, 2024 Christmas bank holidays and school holidays.

In the week to 18 May 2025, retail footfall remained unchanged in retail parks and shopping centres compared with the previous week, while high streets saw an increase of 1%. When compared with the equivalent week of 2024, overall retail footfall remained also broadly unchanged; retail parks saw a 1% increase, high streets saw a 1% decrease and shopping centres remained broadly unchanged.

Overall retail footfall decreased in 4 of the 12 UK countries and regions compared with the previous week. The largest decreases were in the North East and Northern Ireland, which both decreased by 6%. There were increases in 4 of the 12 regions, with the largest in the East Midlands and West Midlands, which both increased by 2%.

Automotive fuel spending

In the month of April 2025, the annual growth rate for the average price of automotive fuel decreased by 4 percentage points compared with the previous month, and decreased by 9 percentage points when compared with April 2024.

The annual growth rate for average automotive fuel demand per transaction increased by 3 percentage points compared with the previous month, and by 7 percentage points when compared with April 2024.

4 . Business and workforce

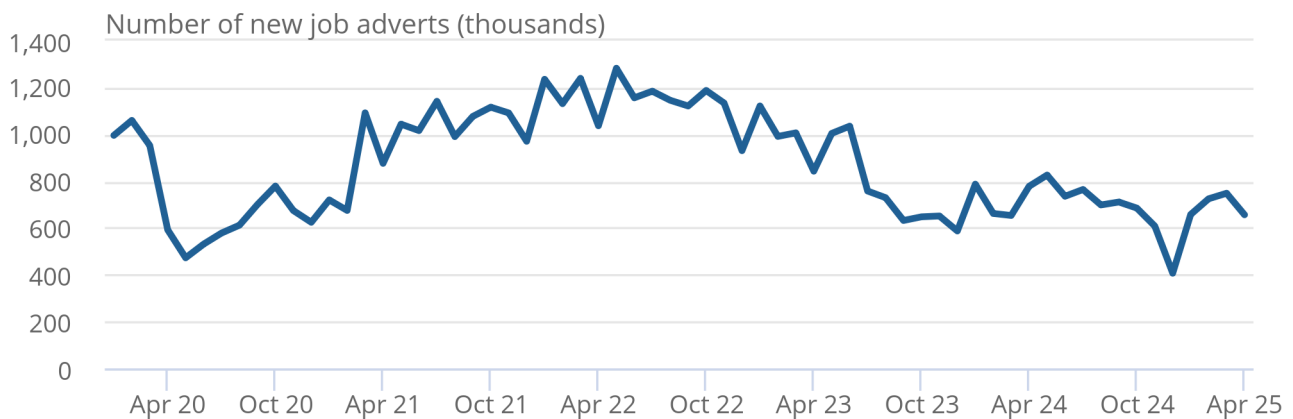
Textkernel new online job adverts

Figure 4: The number of new online job adverts decreased by 12% to approximately 656,000 new adverts in April 2025 compared with March 2025

Volume of new job adverts, UK, January 2020 to April 2025, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 4: The number of new online job adverts decreased by 12% to approximately 656,000 new adverts in April 2025 compared with March 2025

Volume of new job adverts, UK, January 2020 to April 2025, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Textkernel

Notes:

1. New adverts represent the total number of adverts that have gone online in the month, calculated by counting the number of adverts that appear for the first time across the calendar month.
2. Counts are rounded to the nearest five.

The number of new adverts decreased by 16% from approximately 778,000 adverts in April 2024 to just over 656,000 adverts in April 2025. The number of new online job adverts decreased by 12% compared with March 2025. This was the lowest number of new adverts in 2025, potentially impacted by April bank holidays.

Figure 5: The number of new job adverts decreased in all UK countries and English regions in April 2025, compared with April 2024

Volume of new adverts, UK countries and English regions, January 2020 to April 2025, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. New adverts represent the total number of adverts that have gone online in the month, calculated by counting the number of adverts that appear for the first time across the calendar month.
2. Counts are rounded to the nearest five.
3. For information on how adverts were assigned to geographical locations, see our [Measuring labour demand volumes across the UK using Textkernel data user guide](#).

All UK countries and English regions had a decrease in the number of new adverts in April 2025 when compared with the previous year. The largest percentage decrease was in the East of England at 20%, while the smallest decrease was in Northern Ireland at 3%.

The number of new adverts decreased in 24 of the 26 occupation groups in April 2025 when compared with April 2024. The occupation group that saw the largest percentage decrease in the volume of new adverts over this period was "Health professionals" which decreased by 30%. This is the second month in a row that job adverts for "Health professionals" have had the largest decrease when compared with the previous year.

The only two occupational groups that saw an increase were "Community and civil enforcement occupations" by 15% and "Transport and mobile machine drivers and operatives" by 8%.

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](#). For further tables using similar methodology and sources by local authority and 4-digit SOC, see our [Labour demand by Standard Occupation Classification datasets](#).

Our accompanying [Textkernel new online job adverts 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 of firms with decreasing turnover.

These estimates have been weighted according to each industry's contribution to the economy. As services have the greatest contribution, they have a greater contribution to the total index.

The indices are constructed to lie between 1 and negative 1. 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.

Figure 6: In April 2025, 1% more firms reported a decrease in turnover, rather than an increase, when compared with the previous month; this is 4 percentage points lower than March 2025

Weighted Value Added Tax (VAT) turnover diffusion indices, seasonally adjusted, UK, January 2020 to April 2025

Notes:

1. These data are current price, so they may reflect elements of inflation.
2. The shaded areas represent the 95% confidence limits.
3. The confidence limits are 1.96 standard deviations of the seasonally adjusted series, centred around zero. If a data point is outside of these limits, it is a statistically significant difference.

In April 2025, 1% more firms reported a decrease in turnover, rather than an increase, decreasing by 4 percentage points from March 2025. This is after seasonal adjustment and is within normal month-on-month variation.

A net 4% of firms within the construction sector reported decreased turnover on the previous month, decreasing 3 percentage points from March 2025; this latest figure falls outside of normal month-on-month variation.

The services sector, the largest contributing sector to total gross domestic product (GDP), saw a net 1% of firms reporting decreased turnover in April 2025 compared with the previous month. This has decreased by 5 percentage points from March 2025 and is within normal month-on-month variation.

The production sector saw a net 3% of firms reporting increased turnover in April 2025 compared with the previous month, and this remains broadly unchanged when compared with March 2025. A net 1% of firms in the agriculture sector reported increased turnover on the previous month, increasing 3 percentage points from March 2025.

The data are seasonally adjusted. 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](#).

Business impact and insights

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) collects data from selected industries and does not have full coverage of the UK economy. For more information on the industries covered in the BICS sample, see our [BICS quality and methodology information \(QMI\)](#).

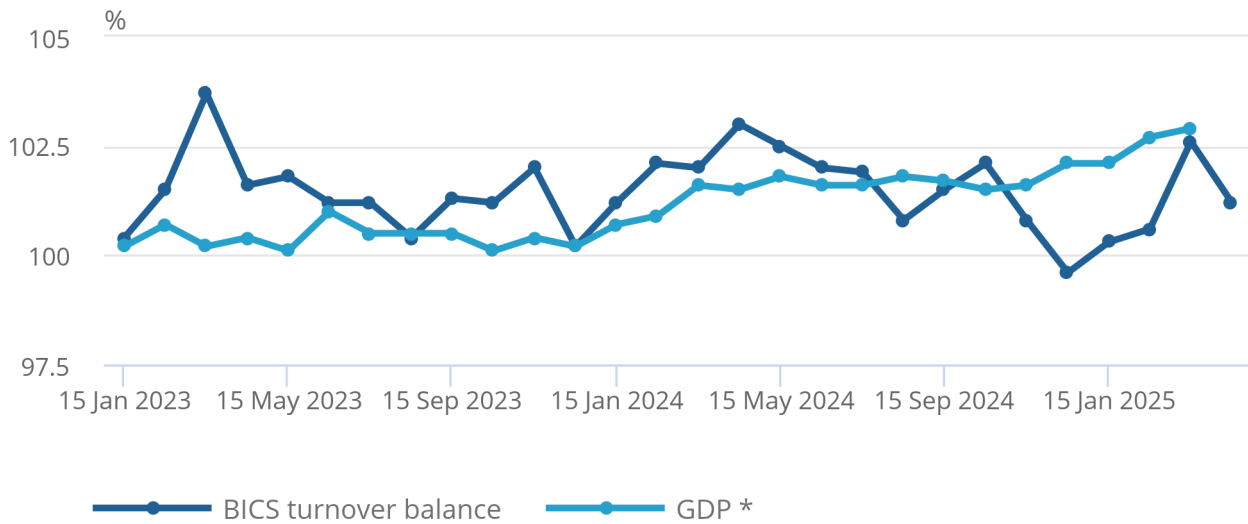
We have created a reweighted gross domestic product (GDP) estimate, termed as GDP*, to enable comparisons, which only includes the same industries as those covered within the BICS.

Figure 7: The Business Insights and Conditions Survey standardised turnover balance fell by 1.4 percentage points between March and April 2025

Business Insights and Conditions Survey standardised turnover balance and monthly gross domestic product* (GDP*) estimates, UK, 15 January 2023 to 15 April 2025

Figure 7: The Business Insights and Conditions Survey standardised turnover balance fell by 1.4 percentage points between March and April 2025

Business Insights and Conditions Survey standardised turnover balance and monthly gross domestic product* (GDP*) estimates, UK, 15 January 2023 to 15 April 2025



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

Notes:

1. Final weighted results are from Waves 76 to 132 of our BICS and adjusted monthly GDP (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 our published monthly GDP.
4. The BICS asks businesses to report how their value of turnover compares with the previous month, excluding seasonal changes. GDP* excludes any inflationary impact and reflects the changes in volume terms.
5. Data are plotted in the middle of the reference period.
6. BICS turnover balances are subject to revision due to being calculated using a rolling average of monthly GDP estimates.

Advanced notification of potential redundancies

The number of potential redundancies was 32% higher in the four weeks to 27 April 2025 than the equivalent four weeks of 2024. The number of employers proposing redundancies was 15% higher when compared over the same period.

Comparisons with the equivalent period a year ago help to account for any seasonal effects. For more information, our accompanying [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#) is available.

5 . Energy

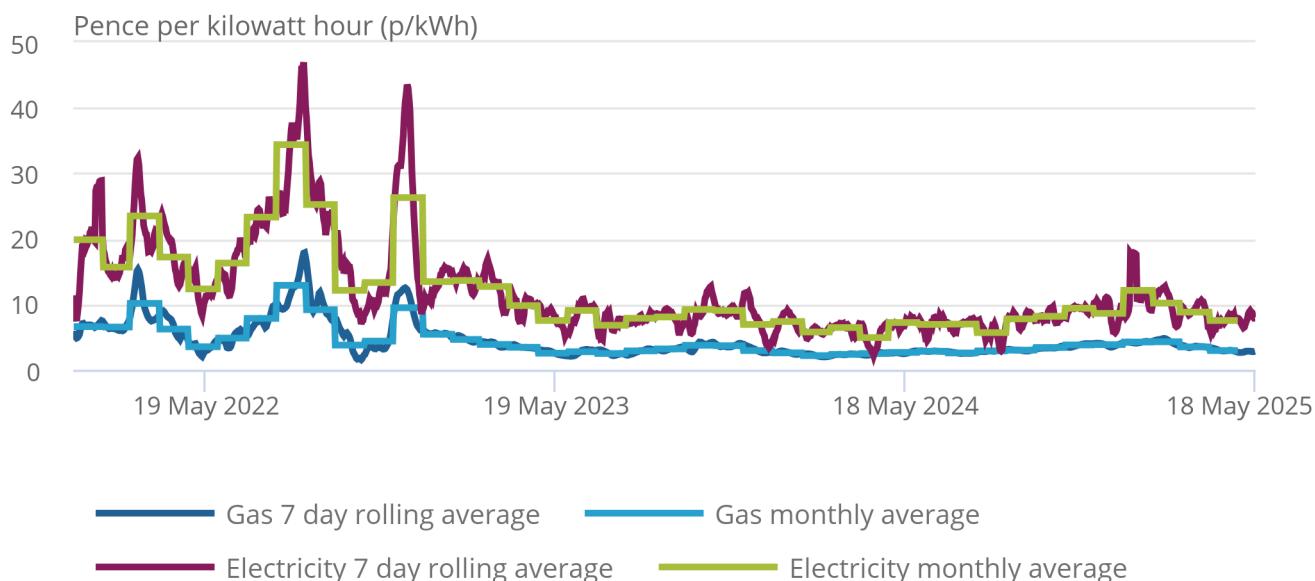
System Average Price of gas and System Price of electricity

Figure 8: The System Average Price of gas decreased by 16% in April 2025 and the System Price of electricity decreased by 15%, compared with the previous month

System Average Price (SAP) of gas and System Price of electricity, monthly average and seven-day rolling average, UK, 1 January 2022 to 18 May 2025, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 8: The System Average Price of gas decreased by 16% in April 2025 and the System Price of electricity decreased by 15%, compared with the previous month

System Average Price (SAP) of gas and System Price of electricity, monthly average and seven-day rolling average, UK, 1 January 2022 to 18 May 2025, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Elexon, National Gas Transmission

The System Average Price of gas decreased by 16% in April 2025, compared with the previous month. It decreased from a monthly average price of 3.476 pence per kilowatt hour (p/kWh) to 2.917p/kWh. This was 18% higher than April 2024, which had a monthly average price of 2.466p/kWh.

The System price of electricity decreased by 15% in April 2025, compared with the previous month. It decreased from a monthly average price of 8.795p/kWh to 7.509p/kWh. This was 53% higher than in April 2024, which had a monthly average price of 4.904p/kWh.

Our accompanying [System Average Price of gas dataset](#) and [System Price of electricity dataset](#) are available.

6 . Transport

Daily UK flights

The seasonally adjusted total number of flights increased by 1% in April 2025, compared with the previous month. They increased by 3%, compared with the equivalent month of 2024.

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

Weekly shipping indicators

In the month of April 2025, the total monthly count of ships visiting selected UK ports increased by 1% compared with the previous month. Over the same period, the monthly count of cargo ship and tanker visits decreased by 4%.

When compared with the equivalent month of 2024, the total number of ship visits and the monthly count of cargo ship and tanker visits both decreased by 5%.

Our accompanying [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#) is available.

7 . Housing

Energy Performance Building Certificates

The total number of Energy Performance Building Certificates (EPCs) for new dwellings across England and Wales decreased by 27% in the month of April 2025, compared with the previous month. It decreased for existing dwellings by 14% over the same period.

The total number of EPCs for new dwellings decreased by 8%, compared with the equivalent month of 2024. However, the number of EPCs for existing dwellings increased by 2%.

Our accompanying [Energy Performance Building Certificates \(EPC\) dataset](#) is available. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's weekly [EPCs for domestic properties dataset](#) is available.

8 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 22 May 2025

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 22 May 2025

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 22 May 2025

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. Please note that because of our data sharing agreement with MRI onLocation, we are unable to provide a dataset for our footfall metric. 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.

Seasonal adjustment

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 article](#).

10 . Data sources and quality

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. Find out 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 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.

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.

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 article](#).

Weekly data release

- [Revolut spending on debit cards dataset](#); updated 15 May 2025.
- [Automotive fuel spending dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions dataset](#); updated 30 January 2025.
- [Advanced notification of potential redundancies dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [System Average price of gas dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [System Price of electricity dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Energy Performance Building Certificates \(EPC\) dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Weekly shipping indicators dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Daily UK flights dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.

Monthly data release

- [Monthly Direct Debit failure rate and average transaction amount dataset](#); updated 15 May 2025.
- [Textkernel new online job adverts dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Value Added Tax \(VAT\) flash estimates dataset](#); updated 22 May 2025.
- [Renter affordability for new tenancies dataset](#); updated 9 May 2025.

Quarterly data release

- [Sales and jobs in small businesses dataset](#); updated 7 November 2024.

Discontinued data series

- [UK credit and debit card payments](#); updated 5 December 2024.

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.

11 . Related links

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#)

Methodology | Last revised 2 April 2024

Methodology for the data collection, aggregation, analysis and presentation for the real-time indicators bulletin.

[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 and growth in the economy.

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

Bulletin | Released monthly

Social insights on daily life and events, including important issues, cost of living, and artificial intelligence 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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