

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 25 November 2021

Early data and analysis for UK economy and society. Includes activity and change in business, spending, travel and jobs using rapid-response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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1 . Main points

- Shelf availability of items between 19 and 22 November 2021 was lowest for "crisps (multipack)", with 24% of this item's availability marked as "none" or "low"; shelf availability was highest for the "beer" category, as 74% of this item was recorded as having "high" availability (Kantar Public). [Section 3](#).
- Of businesses not permanently stopped trading, 14% reported a shortage of workers in late November 2021 compared with 64% reporting no shortage of workers; in the accommodation and food service activities industry over a third (38%) reported a shortage of workers (initial results from Wave 44 of Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). [Section 4](#).
- The total volume of online job adverts on 19 November 2021 was unchanged from the previous week at 144% of its February 2020 average level; the highest level of job adverts relative to its February 2020 level continues to be in "transport, logistics and warehouse" at 382%, while the largest weekly increase was in the "travel and tourism" category, rising by 11% (Adzuna). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The system average price (SAP) of gas increased by 17% in the week to 21 November 2021 and is almost four times higher than the start of the year; despite this, it is 10% lower than six weeks ago (week ending 10 October 2021) (National Grid). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- Not including transport-related stores, transactions at Pret A Manger stores in the week ending 18 November 2021 were at their highest level compared to January 2020 since the start of this series for five of seven regions (Pret A Manger).
- Overall retail footfall in the UK increased by 4% from the previous week and was 88% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; Scotland and the East Midlands had the lowest retail footfall relative to pre-coronavirus levels at 81% and 83% of the level in the same week of 2019, respectively (Springboard).
- The latest seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 3,268; this was 65% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019 and the highest relative to 2019 since the week ending 17 March 2020 (EUROCONTROL). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- In the week to 18 November 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases remained broadly unchanged from the previous week, at 103% of its February 2020 average; there was an increase in the "delayable" spending category by 5 percentage points, "social" and "work-related" spending categories remained broadly unchanged while the "staple" spending category remained unchanged (Bank of England CHAPS data). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- There was an average of 278 daily ship visits in the week to 21 November 2021 which was a 2% decrease from the previous week (285); the average number of daily cargo and tanker ship visits was 90, which was a 6% decrease from the previous week (96) (exactEarth). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- Average 15-minute counts of all vehicles on the strategic roads network around English ports remained broadly similar in September 2021 compared with the previous month, at 98% of its February 2020 level (Highways England). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- In the week ending 21 November 2021, the seasonally adjusted average count of traffic camera activity for pedestrians and cyclists in London increased by 5% from the previous week, to 129% of the average level seen in the week before the first UK-wide lockdown (week ending 22 March 2020) (Transport for London). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 22 November 2021 was at 97% of its level in the first week of February 2020, broadly unchanged for the fifth consecutive week ([Department for Transport](#)).
- The seven-day average estimate of UK seated diners in the week to 22 November 2021 was 117% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019, unchanged for the second successive week (OpenTable).
- In the week to 16 November 2021, the four-week rolling average of compulsory dissolution first gazettes (a notice issued by Companies House indicating their intention to remove a company from the register) was 11,592, a 2% increase from the previous week (11,343) (Companies House). For further breakdowns see the [accompanying dataset](#).

Results presented in this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Users should note that the break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.

3 . Shelf availability of items from UK shops

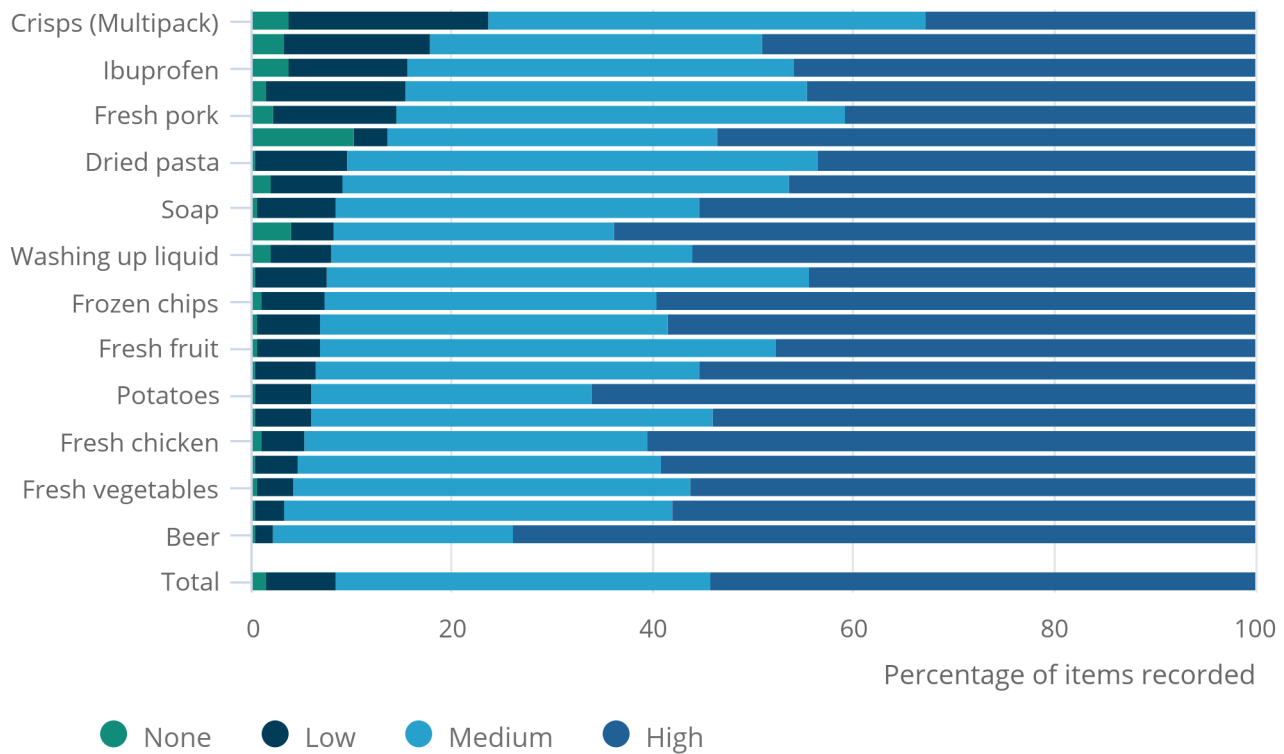
Shelf availability research for shops across the UK has been undertaken by Kantar Public. Collectors gathered information on a range of items from up to three different stores across multiple locations, recording availability across four categories: "none", "low", "medium", or "high". It is important to note these categories are subjective as they are recorded by individual collectors. The data were collected between 19 and 22 November 2021. This series will be updated weekly.

Figure 1: Shelf availability of items between 19 and 22 November 2021 was lowest for “crisps (multipack)”, with 24% of this item’s availability marked as “none” or “low”

Item availability in stores across 128 locations covering UK countries and English regions, between 19 and 22 November 2021

Figure 1: Shelf availability of items between 19 and 22 November 2021 was lowest for “crisps (multipack)”, with 24% of this item’s availability marked as “none” or “low”

Item availability in stores across 128 locations covering UK countries and English regions, between 19 and 22 November 2021



Source: Kantar Public

Notes:

1. Shelf availability does not imply stock availability in warehouses or storage units and is simply the level of available products in a selected sample of shops at the time of data collection.
2. In this period, 275 shops were visited and 5,932 observations were made.
3. Categories in this chart have been rounded for illustrative purposes and may not sum to category total or 100.

In the current period (19 to 22 November 2021), the overall proportion of observations for all items recorded as “high” was 54%; this was broadly similar to the previous four-day period (12 to 15 November 2021). Observations for all items recorded as “none” or “low” was 9%, also remaining broadly similar compared with the previous period.

Across the four availability categories, the largest proportion of observations recorded as “high” was “beer” at 74%, followed by “potatoes” at 66%. The highest proportion of items with availability recorded as either “none” or “low” was “crisps (multipack)” at 24%, followed by “paracetamol” at 18%.

Data for all categories are available in the [accompanying dataset](#).

4 . Business impacts and insights

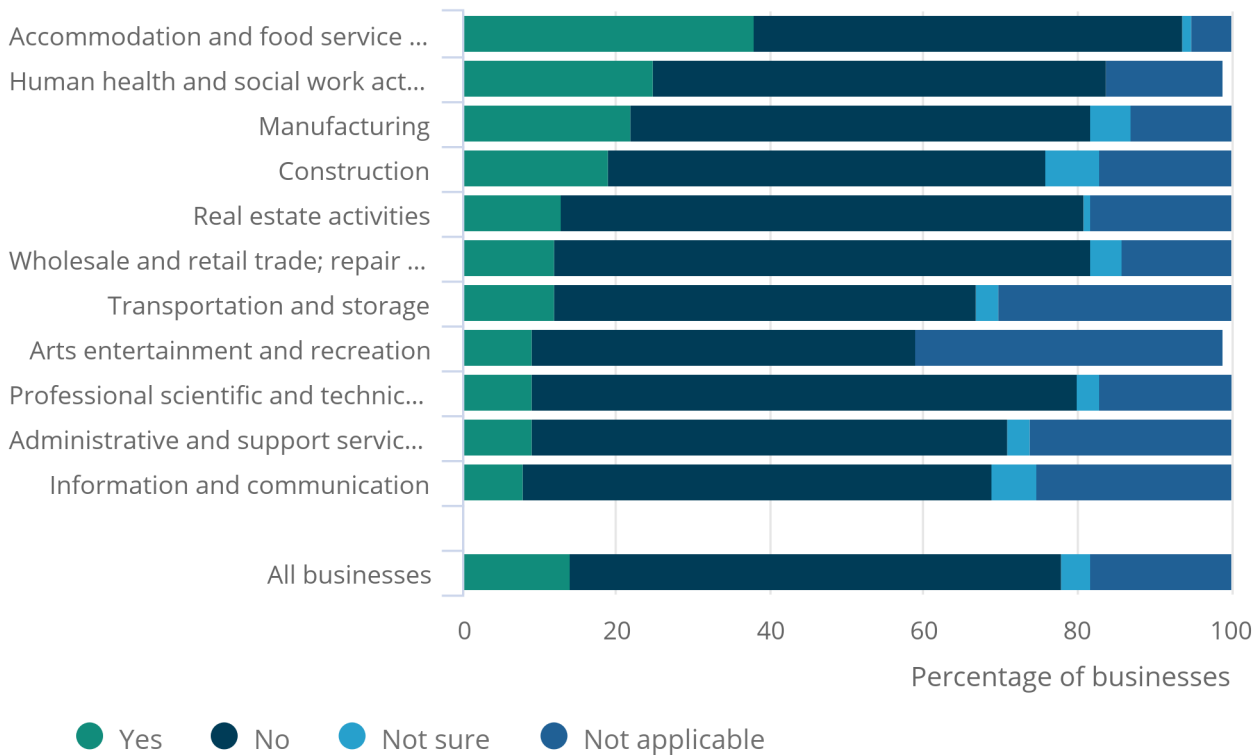
Initial results from Wave 44 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 1 to 23 November 2021, with a response rate of 20.5% (7,801 responses). The survey was live for the period 15 to 23 November 2021.

Figure 2: In the accommodation and food service activities industry, more than a third (38%) of businesses not permanently stopped trading reported a shortage of workers in late November 2021

Worker shortage, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 15 November to 23 November 2021

Figure 2: In the accommodation and food service activities industry, more than a third (38%) of businesses not permanently stopped trading reported a shortage of workers in late November 2021

Worker shortage, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by industry, weighted by count, UK, 15 November to 23 November 2021



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

Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 44 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
3. "Mining and quarrying", "water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities", "education" and "other service activities" have been removed for disclosure purposes, but are included in "All businesses".

5 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

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

[Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

[Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

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

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK online job market.

[Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Weekly dataset showing the number of Companies House incorporations and voluntary dissolutions accepted, and companies placed into compulsory dissolution.

[Daily UK flights](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Experimental daily UK flight numbers and rolling seven-day average, including flights to, from, and within the UK.

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

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

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

[Shelf availability of items from UK shops](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Data provided by Kantar Public, recording item availability of 23 popular products across the UK and English regions.

[Daily vehicle flows around ports](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Daily data showing vehicle flows around major ports in England. Contains average 15- minute sensor counts by size of vehicle, and average speeds.

[Vehicle flows around ports](#)

Dataset | Released 25 November 2021

Monthly data showing vehicle flows around major ports in England. Contains average 15-minute sensor counts by size of vehicle, and average speeds.

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.

Company incorporations

Incorporations are when a company is added to the Companies House register of limited companies. This can also include where an existing business applies to become a limited company, where it was not one before.

Voluntary dissolution applications

A voluntary dissolution application is when a company applies to begin dissolution proceedings. As such, they effectively choose to be removed from the Companies House register. For a company to be eligible to voluntarily dissolve, it should not have completed any trading activity for a period of three months.

Compulsory dissolutions

When a company fails to file the required financial accounts and/or confirmation statements, if no contact is received by Companies House following a series of letters to the company and its officers, a first gazette notice is published in the Gazette, a notice of the Registrar's intention to dissolve the company.

7 . Measuring the data

UK coronavirus restrictions

A full overview of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries can be found here:

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

These restrictions should be considered when interpreting the data featured throughout this bulletin.

Pret A Manger index

The index shows total weekly till transactions at Pret A Manger stores as a proportion of the companies' average weekly level in the first four weeks of 2020 (between 3 January 2020 and 30 January 2020).

These data are delivered weekly from Friday to Thursday in a week-ending format.

The index is broken down by region:

- Yorkshire
- London: suburban (stores within Greater London but outside zones 1 and 2)
- London: City (key office areas)
- London: West End (key retail areas)
- London: airports (four major airports in London)
- London: stations (three large train stations in London)
- Manchester
- Scotland
- Regional towns (stores in towns not included in this index)
- Regional stations (stores in stations in towns not included in this index)

These regions have been selected as in some areas of the UK, there are limited numbers of Pret A Manger stores. For example, at the time of index creation, there were two stores open in Leeds and two in York, leading to these being grouped together as “Yorkshire”.

Wales is omitted from the index as it has a low number of stores. Regional towns includes shops in towns other than those listed.

8 . Strengths and limitations

Information on the strengths and limitations of the indicators in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#).

9 . Related links

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

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

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

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

Bulletin | Released 19 November 2021

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

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

Bulletin | Released 23 November 2021

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 19 November 2021

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