

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 3 March 2022

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

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Release date:
3 March 2022

Next release:
10 March 2022

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1 . Main points

- Users should be aware of the effects of extreme weather in parts of the UK between 16 and 21 February 2022 when making week-on-week comparisons for indicators in this release, particularly those related to transport and travel; see the [Met Office](#) for more details.
- In the period 16 to 27 February 2022, 81% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month; this was up 5 percentage points from 76% in the last period (3 to 13 February 2022) and 12 percentage points higher than the 69% in the period before that (19 to 30 January 2022) (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, 16 to 27 February 2022). [Section 3](#).
- Excluding businesses with fewer than ten employees, a third (33%) of UK businesses reported experiencing worker shortages in late February, however this is down from 37% reported in mid-October 2021 (initial results from Wave 51 of Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). [Section 4](#).
- In the week to 26 February 2022, overall retail footfall in the UK increased by 11% from the previous week, a period affected by adverse weather conditions throughout the UK, and was 83% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019; this is 7% higher than two weeks ago (Springboard).
- In the week to 24 February 2022, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases decreased by 5 percentage points from the previous week, to 93% of its February 2020 average; there were falls in all spending categories in the latest week, the largest of which was in the "delayable" spending category, falling by 7 percentage points (Bank of England CHAPS data). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas increased by 17% in the week to 27 February 2022, this was the largest weekly increase since 19 December 2021 when it rose by 25% (National Grid). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- UK small business sales were 15% higher in January 2022 compared with January 2019, but down 2 percentage points from December 2021; UK small business jobs meanwhile, were 2% lower than January 2019, but up 3 percentage points from December 2021 (Xero Small Business Insights). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- Transactions at Pret A Manger stores fell in most locations in the week to 24 February 2022 when compared with the previous week, coinciding with the half-term holiday for many schools and extreme weather in parts of the UK; meanwhile, transactions at London Airports increased by 2 percentage points whereas regional and London train station transactions both fell 7 percentage points (Pret A Manger).
- There was an average of 271 daily ship visits in the week to 27 February 2022, which was a 12% increase from the previous week; the average number of daily cargo and tanker ship visits increased by 11% over the same period, to 88 (exactEarth). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- In the week ending 27 February 2022, the seasonally adjusted average count of traffic camera activity in London for "cars" and "pedestrians and cyclists" increased by 10% and 23%, respectively, from the previous week; this follows notable drops coinciding with storms Eunice and Franklin (Transport for London). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The volume of motor traffic on Monday 28 February 2022 increased by 4 percentage points from the previous week; this was driven by increases in all types of motor vehicles following the adverse weather conditions the week before ([Department for Transport](#)).
- The seven-day average number of UK daily flights increased by 3% in the week to 27 February 2022, and was 65% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2020 (EUROCONTROL). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The seven-day average estimate of UK seated diners increased by 12 percentage points in the week to 28 February 2022, to 131% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019; this follows a 10-percentage point fall in the previous week (OpenTable).

- The total volume of online job adverts on 25 February 2022 fell slightly to 145% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level, the first fall in volume since the beginning of January 2022 (Adzuna). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- There were 16,253 company incorporations in the week to 25 February 2022, which was broadly unchanged from the previous week (16,163) but 5% lower than the equivalent week of 2021 (17,096) (Companies House). See the [accompanying dataset](#).
- The sectors with the highest percentage of the workforce in self-isolation on 19 February 2022 were "food production, agriculture and farming" and "social care", at 2.2% and 1.9%, respectively (Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey). [Section 5](#).

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.
2. *Comparisons in OpenTable data are made with the equivalent week in 2019 for all years in the series. Comparisons from 1 January 2022 were previously made with the equivalent week in 2020.
3. Users should note that, for the week ending 6 February 2022, there were a large number of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) lodgements for existing dwellings in Yorkshire and The Humber from a housing association contract. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data.

3 . Social impact of coronavirus

This section includes selected results from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 16 to 27 February 2022. The survey went out to 4,495 adults in Great Britain and had a response rate of 71% (3,170 responses). Further information to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain is available in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#).

Cost of living

In the period 16 to 27 February 2022, 81% of adults reported their cost of living had increased over the last month. This was up 5 percentage points from 76% in the last period (3 to 13 February 2022) and 12 percentage points higher than the 69% in the period before that (19 to 30 January 2022). The most frequently reported reasons continued to be:

- rising food shop prices (92%)
- rising energy bills (80%)
- increases to the price of fuel (76%)

Travelling to work

In the period 16 to 27 February 2022, the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who in the past seven days:

- travelled to work (both exclusively and in combination with working from home) was unchanged from the previous period (3 to 13 February 2022) at 68%
- worked exclusively from home remained broadly similar to the previous period at 15% (17% in the previous period)
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home remained broadly similar to the previous period at 17% (15% in the previous period)

Shopping

Of the 95% of adults in Great Britain who reported leaving home in the past seven days (broadly unchanged from 96% in the previous period), the proportion that did so to go shopping was 85%.

Face coverings

Of the 95% of adults in Great Britain who reported leaving home in the past seven days, the proportion that did so and reported wearing a face covering decreased by 5 percentage points from the previous period, to 83%. This followed a 7-percentage point decrease from 95% in the period before that.

Further breakdowns, such as the situation when a face covering was worn (for example, while shopping), and by country, is available in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#).

4 . Business impact and insights

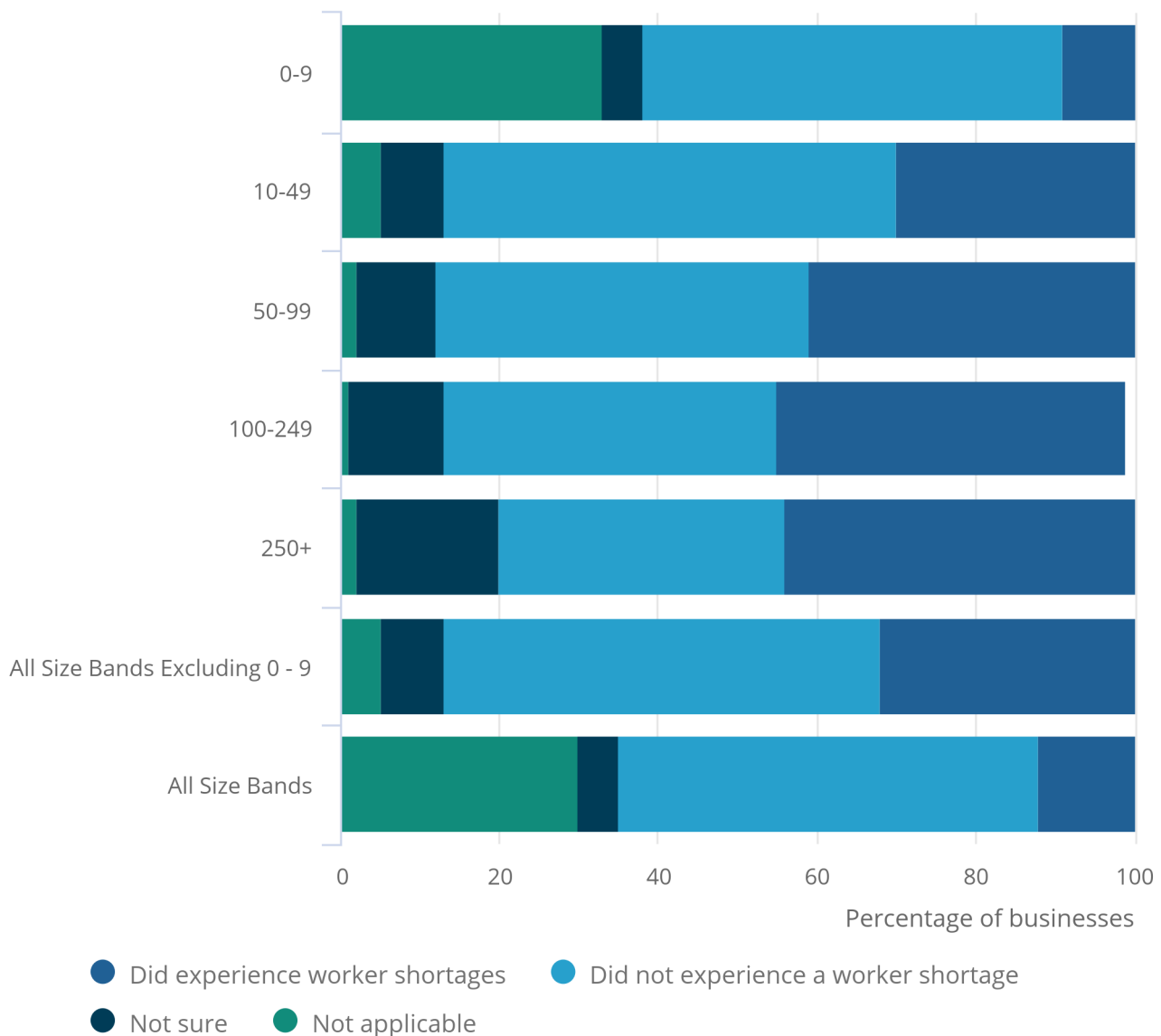
Initial results from Wave 51 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 7 February to 20 February 2022, with a response rate of 16.6% (6,335 responses). The survey was live for the period 21 February to 1 March 2022.

Figure 1: Excluding businesses with fewer than 10 employees, a third (33%) of UK businesses not permanently stopped trading reported worker shortages in late February 2022, down from 37% in mid-October 2021

Worker shortage, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 21 February to 1 March 2022

Figure 1: Excluding businesses with fewer than 10 employees, a third (33%) of UK businesses not permanently stopped trading reported worker shortages in late February 2022, down from 37% in mid-October 2021

Worker shortage, businesses not permanently stopped trading, broken down by size band, weighted by count, UK, 21 February to 1 March 2022



Notes:

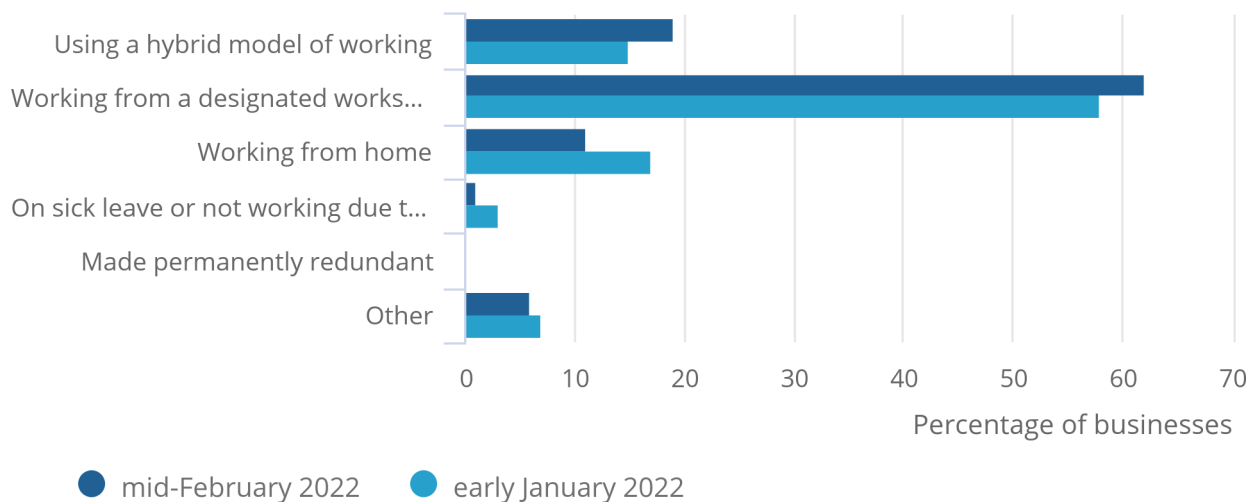
1. Initial weighted results, Wave 51 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
3. Size bands refer to the number of employees in a business.

Figure 2: In mid-February 2022, 19% of the workforce was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working, this is 4 percentage points higher than at the end of 2021

Working arrangements, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 27 December 2021 to 20 February 2022

Figure 2: In mid-February 2022, 19% of the workforce was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working, this is 4 percentage points higher than at the end of 2021

Working arrangements, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 27 December 2021 to 20 February 2022



Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 48 and Wave 51 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. "Other" includes all other arrangements not defined in the question.
4. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period, however, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire.

Table 1: In mid-February 2022, 27% of UK businesses currently trading reported that turnover was lower than its “normal range” for the time of year, a slight improvement from late January
Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by count, UK, 7 to 20 February 2022

All Industries	
Turnover has increased by more than 50%	Less than 1%
Turnover has increased between 20% and 50%	1
Turnover has increased by up to 20%	4
Turnover has not been affected	57
Turnover has decreased by up to 20%	12
Turnover has decreased between 20% and 50%	7
Turnover has decreased by more than 50%	8
Not sure	11

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

Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 51 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. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 7 to 20 February 2022. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (21 to 1 March 2022).

5 . Self-isolation rates in the workforce by sector and for working age population by country

Data from the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey \(CIS\)](#) were used to provide modelled estimates of the proportion of the workforce self-isolating because of coronavirus by work sector and the proportion of the working age population self-isolating because of coronavirus by country.

In the two weeks ending 19 February 2022, the percentage of people self-isolating because of coronavirus in "health-care" and "teaching and education" work sectors has decreased. This follows an increase in self-isolation in "teaching and education", "social care" and "health-care" in the two weeks ending 29 January 2022.

Figure 3: The percentage of the working-age population self-isolating because of coronavirus decreased in England in the two weeks ending 19 February 2022

Estimated percentage of the working-age population (aged 17 to 69 years) self-isolating because of coronavirus from 2 January to 19 February 2022, UK countries

Notes:

1. All results are provisional and subject to revision.
2. These statistics refer to self-reported self-isolation occurring in working-age adults (aged 17 to 69 years), regardless of employment status, living in private households.
3. During the period shown, self-isolation requirements were frequently updated with different changes taking place at different times across the UK countries.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Figure 4: The sectors with the highest percentages of the workforce in self-isolation on 19 February 2022 were “food production, agriculture and farming” and “social care”, at 2.2% and 1.9%, respectively

Estimated percentage of the workforce self-isolating because of coronavirus, by work sector, 26 December 2021 to 19 February 2022, UK

Notes:

1. All results are provisional and subject to revision.
2. These statistics refer to self-reported self-isolation in working adults (aged 16 years and over) living in private households.
3. In the “food production, agriculture and farming” work sector, there is a 95% confidence interval from 1.5% to 3.2%.
4. In the “social care” work sector, there is a 95% confidence interval from 1.3% to 2.7%.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

More information on how these estimates were calculated is available in [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey estimates of the UK workforce in self-isolation by sector](#), published on 14 February 2022.

A breakdown of the CIS data is available in the [accompanying dataset](#).

6 . Data

[Advance potential redundancies](#)

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

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

[Daily UK flights](#)

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

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

[Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

[Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 3 March 2022

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

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

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.

8 . Measuring the data

UK coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

A full overview of coronavirus 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.

9 . Strengths and limitations

Information on the strengths and limitations of the indicators in this bulletin is available in [the Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

The methodology for the advanced notifications of potential redundancies dataset can be found in the in the [3 February 2022 Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators publication](#). In the coming weeks there will be a full methodology paper published, which will be linked in this bulletin.

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.

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

Bulletin | Released 18 February 2022

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

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

Bulletin | Released 1 March 2022

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

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

Bulletin | Released 25 February 2022

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