

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 5 May 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.

Contact:  
Emelia D'Silva-Parker  
faster.indicators@ons.gov.uk  
+44 1633 455120

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# 1 . Main points

- Consumer behaviour indicators show growth in UK credit and debit card purchases (by 6 percentage points), with growth in all spending categories, while Google Mobility data shows growth in all categories except park visits, which fell by 19%; in comparison, UK seated diners fell by 8 percentage points in the most recent week (Bank of England CHAPS data, Google Mobility, OpenTable). [Section 3](#).
- Transport indicators largely showed an increase this week, with daily UK flights, total ship visits, and cargo and tanker visits increasing by 2%, 7%, and 10%, respectively; meanwhile, road traffic decreased by 19 percentage points, which is consistent with the fall in traffic volume of previous bank holidays (EUROCONTROL, exactEarth, Department for Transport). [Section 4](#).
- Total online job advert volumes increased by 2% in the latest week; the largest weekly category increase was in "HR and recruitment" (14%), while "travel and tourism" online job adverts showed the largest decrease (4%) (Adzuna). [Section 5](#).
- In late April 2022, 31% of businesses reported their production and/or suppliers had been affected by recent increases in energy prices; the accommodation and food service activities industry reported the highest percentage at 64% (final results from Wave 55 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 7% in the week to 1 May 2022, with the level now 30% of that on 10 March 2022, when prices peaked in the rolling seven-day series; the SAP is now 125% higher compared with the same period last year (week ending 2 May 2021) (National Grid).

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. The break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.
2. Data for the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases are provisional for the week to 28 April 2022.

## 3 . Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour indicators show growth in UK credit and debit card purchases (by 6 percentage points), with growth in all spending categories. However, please note that the data are provisional this week. The largest growth was in "staple" and "social" categories, both of which increased by 7 percentage points in the week to 28 April 2022. Google Mobility data showed an increase in all categories except "park visits", which fell 19% in the week to 29 April 2022. This follows the end of the Easter break and school holidays across the country.

UK seated diners fell by 8 percentage points in the week to 1 May 2022, with seated diners in London also falling by 2 percentage points. Seated diners in Manchester increased by 14 percentage points over the same period.

## Daily CHAPS-based indicator

These data series are experimental faster 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 via online platforms. More information on the indicator is provided in the [Bank of England CHAPS methodology article](#).

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business. These are:

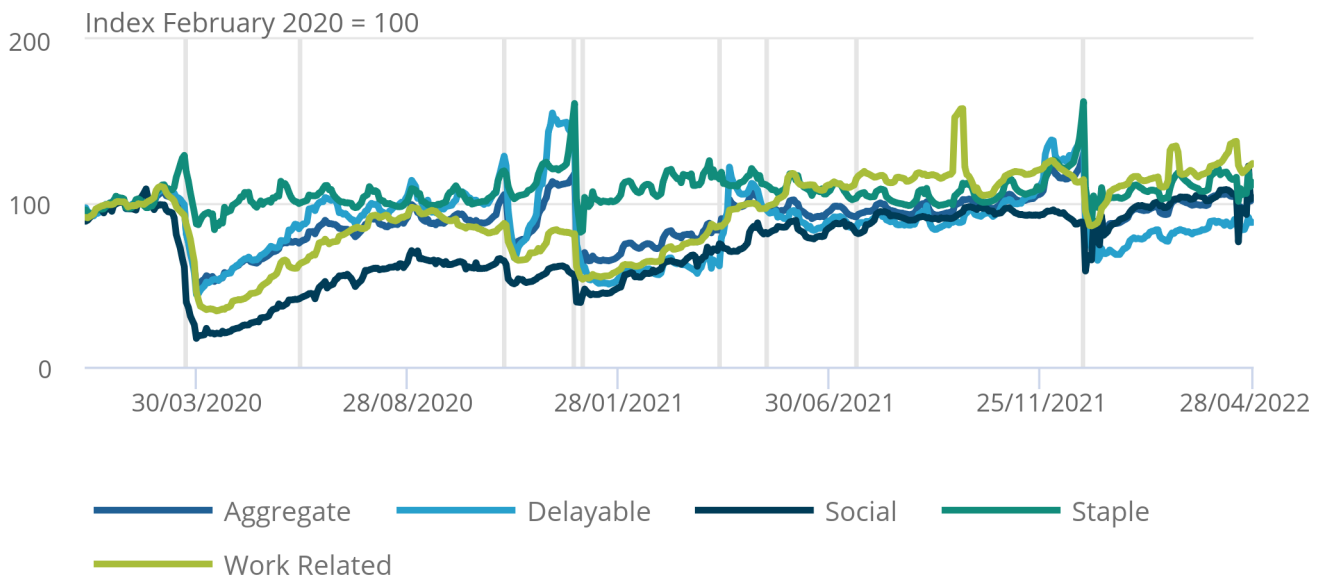
- "staples", which refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related", which refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable", which refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- "social", which refers to spending on travel and eating out

**Figure 1: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 6 percentage points in the week to 28 April 2022, to 102% of its February 2020 average**

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 28 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 1: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 6 percentage points in the week to 28 April 2022, to 102% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 28 April 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 is 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 current week and previous week index before rounding.
4. Data are provisional for the week to 28 April 2022.

Figure 1 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, "merchant acquirers".

This week, the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 6 percentage points from the previous week to 102% of its February 2020 average level. These and the following statistics are provisional for the week to 28 April 2022.

All spending categories recorded changes in the latest week. For example:

- "work-related" increased by 6 percentage points (this sector includes road fuel spending)
- "staple" increased by 7 percentage points
- "delayable" increased by 5 percentage points
- "social" increased by 7 percentage points

"Work-related", "staple", and "social" spending were all above their February 2020 average levels at 124%, 113%, and 103%, respectively. "Delayable" spending remained below its February 2020 average levels at 88%.

## 4 . Transport

Transport indicators largely showed an increase this week. Total ship visits increased by 7%, and cargo and tanker ship visits increased by 10%. UK daily flights increased by 2% to 84% of the equivalent week in 2019.

Meanwhile, road traffic volumes decreased by 19 percentage points on 2 May 2022. This was 80% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020. Users should note that 2 May 2022 was a national bank holiday.

### Road traffic in Great Britain

The volume of all motor vehicle traffic on 2 May 2022 (Bank Holiday Monday) decreased by 19 percentage points from the previous week (25 April 2022). It was 80% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020; this is according to the Department for Transport (DfT) non-seasonally adjusted road traffic data. This decrease in the volume of road traffic is consistent with previous bank holidays.

On Bank Holiday Monday, traffic volumes for heavy goods vehicles decreased by 65 percentage points in the latest week. They were 43% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020. Light commercial vehicle traffic volumes decreased by 38 percentage points in the latest week and were 76% of the level seen in the first week of February 2020. Meanwhile, car traffic volumes fell by 11 percentage points, and were 83% of the level seen in the first week in February 2020.

**Figure 2: The volume of all motor vehicle traffic on bank holiday Monday, 2 May 2022, decreased by 19 percentage points from the previous week and was 80% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020**

**Daily road traffic index: 100 = same traffic as the equivalent day of the week in the first week of February 2020, 1 March 2020 to 2 May 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, Great Britain**

#### Notes:

1. The blue shaded areas refer to periods when restrictions across the UK were in effect.

## Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

The daily DfT estimates are indexed to the first week of February 2020 and the comparison is with the same day of the week. The data provided are useful as an indication of traffic change rather than actual traffic volumes. More information on the methods, quality, and economic analysis for these indicators can be found in the [DfT methodology article](#).

## 5 . Business and workforce

Total online job advert volumes increased by 2% in the latest week; the largest weekly category increase was in "HR and recruitment" (14%), while "travel and tourism" online job adverts showed the largest decrease (4%).

Small business sales continued to rise in March 2022, up 5 percentage points compared with February 2022. Sales increased or remained stable in all industries except "Accommodation and Food Services", which fell by 11 percentage points to 109% of the equivalent month of 2019. Small business jobs, meanwhile, fell 3 percentage points.

Potential redundancies and the number of employers proposing redundancies fell by 3 and 2 percentage points, respectively, in the week to 17 April 2022.

### 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. These are provided by work sector. The proportion of the working-age population self-isolating because of coronavirus is provided by country.

For the two-week period ending 23 April 2022, the percentage of people self-isolating decreased in all work sectors. This follows on from the previous trend, where self-isolation decreased in all sectors except "manufacturing or construction".

### Figure 3: The percentage of the working-age population self-isolating because of coronavirus decreased in England in the week ending 23 April 2022

**Estimated percentage of the working-age population (aged 17 to 69 years) self-isolating because of coronavirus (COVID-19) from 06 March to 23 April 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 sector with the highest percentage of the workforce in self-isolation on 23 April 2022 was “arts, entertainment or recreation” at 1.8% followed by “food production, agriculture, farming” at 1.6%**

Estimated percentage of the workforce self-isolating because of coronavirus (COVID-19), by work sector, 27 February 2022 to 23 April 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 “arts, entertainment or recreation” work sector, there is a 95% confidence interval from 1.0% to 3.0%.
4. In the “food production, agriculture, farming” work sector, there is a 95% confidence interval from 0.9% to 2.7%.

**Download the data**

[.xlsx](#)

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

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

**Online job adverts by category**

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 5: The total volume of online job adverts on 29 April 2022 increased by 2% from the previous week, and was 136% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus average level**

Volume of online job adverts by category, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 29 April 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 [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies](#).
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](#).
3. Because of data collection issues, recent comparisons have alternated between Friday-to-Friday and Monday-to-Monday comparisons. Caution is advised when comparing data between 4 and 25 March 2022 and 8 to 14 April 2022. We have now reverted back to the usual Friday comparisons.

## Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Of the 28 categories, 18 saw an increase in the number of online job adverts on Friday 29 April 2022. The largest increase was in "HR and recruitment" (14%), followed by "wholesale and retail" (6%), and "part-time/weekend" (4%). The number of online job adverts remained unchanged in four categories, and decreased in six categories; the largest decrease was in the "travel and tourism" category, which fell by 4%.

The category with the highest level of online job adverts when compared with its February 2020 pre-coronavirus pandemic average levels was "transport, logistics and warehouse" at 240%, followed by "HR and recruitment" at 222%.

## Job adverts by region

### Figure 6: The only decrease in the volume of online job adverts was in Scotland, which decreased by 1% when compared with the previous week

Volume of online job adverts by UK countries and English regions index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 29 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

## Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

The volume of online job adverts increased in 11 of 12 English regions and UK countries on 29 April 2022 when compared with the previous week. The only decrease in the volume of online job adverts was in Scotland, which decreased by 1% compared with the previous week and was at 142% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus pandemic average level.

## 6 . Data

### [Advance notification of potential redundancies](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2022

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

### [Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 5 May 2022

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

### [Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2022

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

### [Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2022

Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around 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 our [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.

## 8 . Measuring the data

Information on the methodology used to produce the indicators in this bulletin is available in our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology article](#).

## 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

For a full overview of coronavirus restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries, see:

- [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 coronavirus in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

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

Bulletin | Released 1 April 2022

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

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

Bulletin | Released 4 May 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 6 May 2022

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