

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 5 May 2023

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

Contact:
Tom Williams
realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 455932

Release date:
5 May 2023

Next release:
11 May 2023

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Data](#)
4. [Glossary](#)
5. [Measuring the data](#)
6. [Strengths and limitations](#)
7. [Related links](#)
8. [Cite this statistical bulletin](#)

1 . Main points

- Almost a third (31%) of businesses with 10 or more employees were experiencing worker shortages in April 2023, up two percentage points from late March 2023; more than half (53%) of those affected indicated that their employees were working increased hours as a consequence (final results from Wave 81 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey).
- The total number of online job adverts grew by 1% on 28 April 2023 compared with the previous week, though it has broadly trended downwards over the last 12 months and is now 17% lower than the equivalent period of 2022 (Adzuna).
- Both the System Average Price (SAP) of gas and System Price of electricity fell in the week to 30 April 2023 compared with the previous week, decreasing by 4% and 9%, respectively; the latest SAP of gas is now 80% below the peak observed in late August 2022, while the System Price of electricity is 79% lower (National Gas Transmission, Elexon).
- In the latest week, Revolut debit card spending increased by 16 percentage points with increases in every sector, the largest of which was retail, which increased by 26 percentage points; elsewhere, overall retail footfall increased to 105% of the level of the previous week, while the number of transactions increased at all 10 Pret A Manger location types in the same week for the first time since 15 September 2022 (Revolut, Springboard, Pret A Manger).
- In the week to 30 April 2023, the number of UK flights was unchanged from the previous week, but 8% higher than this time last year; meanwhile, both the average number of daily UK ship visits and the average cargo and tanker ship visits were lower than the equivalent week of last year (EUROCONTROL, exactEarth).

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 they are representative and relevant, which may mean indicators change at short notice.

Next week's release (11 May) will feature a reduced suite of indicators because of limited processing times following the 9 May Bank Holiday. If you wish to discuss next week's indicator release schedule in more detail, please contact us at Realtime.indicators@ons.gov.uk.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level, and as such, age bands may not adjust evenly.
2. Users should note that card spending over time is pushed upwards by the impacts of both inflation on value of transactions and cash-to-card conversion.
3. The gaps in the shipping timeline data are caused by technical issues.

3 . Data

[Advanced notification of potential redundancies](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

Number of potential redundancies from Insolvency Service HR1 forms and number of employers proposing redundancies, Great Britain.

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

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

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in Great Britain over the On-the-Day Commodity Market (OCM).

[Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

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

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

These data series are experimental real-time indicators for monitoring UK spending using debit and credit cards. They track the daily CHAPS payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates, based on data supplied by the Bank of England.

[Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 5 May 2023

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

4 . 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 Statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

5 . 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](#).

6 . 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

Coronavirus 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.

7 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, industrial action, and energy savings in the home 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. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) to deliver real-time information to help assess issues affecting UK businesses and economy, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience.

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 5 May 2023, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 5 May 2023](#)