

Statistical bulletin

# Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 6 October 2022

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:  
6 October 2022

Next release:  
13 October 2022

## Table of contents

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

# 1 . Main points

- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas fell by 17% in the week to 2 October 2022; it was 22% higher than the same time the previous year, but 60% lower than its peak level recorded on 31 August 2022 (National Grid).
- Of businesses whose electricity or gas prices are fixed or hedged, in late September 2022 18% expected their electricity bills to increase by more than 300% at the end of their contract, and 17% expected the same for their gas bills (final results from Wave 66 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)).
- Business and workforce metrics were broadly down on the previous year; total online job adverts were unchanged in the latest week but 17% lower than the equivalent week of 2021, and for the fifth successive month jobs in small businesses have been down on the equivalent month of the previous year (Adzuna, Xero). [Section 3: Business and workforce](#).
- Consumer behaviour indicators showed broad increases this latest week, with growth in UK credit and debit card purchases consistent with previous end-of-month spending patterns, UK seated diners, and transactions in most Pret A Manger locations; meanwhile, overall retail footfall in the UK was 88% of the equivalent week of 2019 (Bank of England CHAPS data, OpenTable, Pret A Manger, Springboard). [Section 4: Consumer behaviour](#).
- Both UK road traffic and the average number of UK flights were broadly unchanged from the previous week, with the latter over 50% higher than the equivalent week of 2021 but 16% lower when compared with 2019 (Department for Transport, EUROCONTROL). [Section 5: Transport](#).

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 breaks in the shipping series are caused by technical issues.
2. Revolut adjustments to user count are at an aggregate level and as such age bands may not adjust evenly.
3. 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.
4. Users should note that week-on-week movements will be affected by changes in activity related to the September bank holiday for the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

### 3 . Business and workforce

Sales by small businesses recorded by Xero increased by 5% in August 2022 compared with July 2022 and were at 126% of the level seen in August 2019. Jobs in small businesses fell slightly (2%) in August 2022 when compared with the previous month and were 94% of the level seen in August 2019. Our [accompanying dataset: Sales and jobs in small businesses](#) is available.

The number of total UK online job adverts was broadly unchanged in the latest week, however, they are now 17% lower than the equivalent week of 2021 having shown a downward trend since the highest point this year in mid-February.

There were increased job adverts in 14 of the 28 online job advert categories. The largest of these was in the "graduate" category, which rose by 13% and is the same level as a year ago. Adverts in the "transport, logistics and warehouse", "management, executive and consulting" and "accounting and finance" categories saw the largest weekly falls, all decreasing by 4%. Adverts in "management, executive and consulting" have been trending downwards since mid-February 2022.

In the latest week, 5 of the 12 UK countries and English regions saw decreases in online job adverts. The largest week-on-week fall in regional online job adverts was in Northern Ireland, with a fall of 10%. The largest week-on-week increase was in the North East of England, which rose by 3%. However, after a steady recovery from a low in mid-May 2020, adverts in the North East have been steadily decreasing since mid-February 2022, moving more closely with the other English regions. Our [accompanying dataset: Online job advert estimates](#) is available.

Potential redundancies in the week to 25 September 2022 were 57% of their pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) level and 123% of the level in the equivalent week of 2021. The number of employers proposing redundancies is 72% of their pre-coronavirus levels and 127% of the level in the equivalent week of 2021. Our [accompanying dataset: Advanced notification of potential redundancies](#) is available.

Company incorporations in the week to 30 September 2022 were 13% above the level in the equivalent week of 2021 and 23% higher than 2019. In comparison, voluntary dissolution applications were 6% below the level in the equivalent week of 2021 but 20% higher than 2019. Our [accompanying dataset: Company incorporations, voluntary dissolutions and compulsory dissolutions](#) is available.

## 4 . Consumer behaviour

Users should note that week-on-week movements in this bulletin will be affected by changes in activity related to the September bank holiday for the State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Revolut debit card transaction data showed spending in all sectors rose in the week to 2 October 2022, apart from "pub, restaurant and fast food". This category's spending fell by 2 percentage points but was still 18 percentage points higher than at the same time last year. The largest weekly increase was in "retail" spending, which rose by 24 percentage points and was 25 percentage points above the level at the same time last year.

In the same period "entertainment" spending rose by 10 percentage points. Since falling in mid-March 2020 this category is yet to return to its pre-coronavirus levels, peaking on 5 June 2022 at 99% of its February 2020 average. Our [accompanying dataset: Revolut spending on debit cards](#) is available.

In the week to 29 September 2022, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases increased by 7 percentage points from the previous week to 101% of its February 2020 average. Our [accompanying dataset: UK spending on credit and debit cards](#) is available.

In the week to 2 October 2022, overall UK retail footfall was at 108% of the level of the previous week and was 88% of the equivalent week in 2019. Footfall in shopping centres and retail parks saw the largest increases, and are now at 115% and 113% of the level of the previous week, respectively. UK retail footfall in high streets rose slightly to 103% of the previous week. In the week to 2 October 2022, footfall in retail parks was closest to the level of the equivalent week in 2019, at 97%. The region with the highest week-on-week increase was the North East, at 116% of the level in the previous week.

Pret A Manger transactions increased at most locations in the week to 29 September 2022. All regional locations saw week-on-week increases, with the largest being a 23 percentage point increase in Manchester stores. This was followed by London city worker and Scotland stores, increasing by 14 and 13 percentage points, respectively.

The only location to see a decrease in transactions was London airport stores, with a fall of 5 percentage points. However, transactions at transport stores have generally trended upwards since early January 2022. Our [accompanying dataset: Transactions at Pret A Manger](#) is available.

UK seated diners rose by 5 percentage points in the week to 2 October 2022 and were 118% of the level in the equivalent week of 2019. Seated diner levels in London increased by 3 percentage points but were 13 percentage points down on the equivalent week of 2019.

## 5 . Transport

The average number of UK flights in the week to 2 October 2022 fell by 1% and was 84% of the level seen in 2019; this was broadly similar to the previous week (83%). Our [accompanying dataset: Daily UK flights](#) is available.

Road traffic levels were broadly unchanged in the week to 3 October 2022. Compared with last year, levels on Monday 3 October 2022 were 2 percentage points above the equivalent day (Monday 4 October 2021).

Data for the number of shipping visits for major ports in the UK in the latest week are available in our [accompanying dataset: Weekly shipping indicators](#).

Data for traffic camera activity in the latest week are available in our [accompanying dataset: Traffic camera activity](#)

## 6 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 6 October 2022

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

### [Revolut spending on debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 6 October 2022

Insight into the spending patterns of UK consumers from financial technology company Revolut.

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

Dataset | Released 6 October 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 6 October 2022

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

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

Dataset | Released 6 October 2022

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

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

### 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.

## 8 . Measuring the data

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

## 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

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.

## 10 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Released fortnightly

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, location of work, health and well-being 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 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.

## 11 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), published 6 October 2022, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 6 October 2022](#).