

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 8 April 2021

Early experimental data on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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Next release:
15 April 2021

Correction

14 April 2021 13:42

A correction has been made to the number of voluntary dissolution applications in this release. The number of voluntary dissolution applications for the week to Friday 2 April was incorrectly stated to be 4957, and an 18% decrease from the previous week. This has now been corrected to 5170, and a 14% decrease from the previous week. No other estimates were impacted. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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1 . Main points

This week's bulletin (8 April) is reduced because of the Easter bank holiday weekend. Datasets are still available, but our analysis is reduced. Content will be included as normal from next week's release (15 April).

This week, we are not able to publish the weekly online price change for a selection of food and drink products because of data processing challenges over the Easter bank holiday. We will resume publication of these data in next week's release, which will also include the missing data from this week.

UK spending on debit and credit cards

In the week to 1 April 2021, the aggregate Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS)-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases increased by 10 percentage points from the previous week to 88% of its February 2020 average. This increase was partly driven by the usual increase in "staples" (essential goods such as food and utilities) seen around the turn of the month, as well as a continued increase since early 2021 in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors (Bank of England's CHAPS data).

Business impacts and insights

The percentage of businesses currently trading has increased gradually from 71% in early January 2021 to 75% in late March 2021, according to the final results of Wave 27. This is a similar level to that seen in July 2020, but lower than the 84% seen in mid-December 2020 (Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)).

Social impact of the coronavirus

Out of the 94% of adults who reported that they had left their home in the last seven days, the proportion that did so to shop for things other than food or medicine remained low at 14% in the week ending 4 April (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)).

Retail footfall

In the week to 3 April 2021, UK retail footfall increased by 9% compared with the previous week to 51% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019. Footfall was strongest at retail parks, standing at 85% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019 (Springboard).

Online job adverts

Total UK online job adverts were at 97% of their February 2020 average level on Thursday 1 April 2021, only a slight increase from Friday 26 March 2021. Across all regions, job adverts either increased or remained broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week, apart from in Scotland, where they fell slightly by 1 percentage point (Adzuna).

Road traffic in Great Britain

On Monday 5 April 2021, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic decreased by 24 percentage points to 60% of the volume seen on the first Monday of February 2020. Note that Monday 5 April 2021 was a bank holiday (Easter Monday) and that a decrease in the volume of road traffic on this day is consistent with previous bank holidays (Department for Transport (DfT)).

Traffic camera activity

Average daily traffic camera activity in London for motorbikes, pedestrians and cyclists, and cars in the week ending 4 April 2021 increased to 123%, 109% and 103% respectively of their average levels seen in the two weeks immediately prior to the March 2020 lockdown. This rise in activity in the latest week coincides with the [easing of England restrictions](#) which came into effect on 29 March 2021 and the Easter weekend (Transport for London).

Vehicle flows around ports

In February 2021, the average sensor counts of vehicles over 11.66m in length (for example, larger lorries and coaches) on the Strategic Roads Network around English ports increased by 5 percentage points to 1% above their February 2020 level. This follows the recent dip seen in January 2021 (Highways England).

Shipping

In the week to 4 April 2021, the average number of daily ship visits remained unchanged from the previous week at 356, whereas the average number of daily cargo and tanker ship visits decreased by 6% over this period to 101 visits (exactEarth).

Company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications

There were 15,069 company incorporations in the UK in the week to 2 April 2021, an 11% decrease from the previous week and the lowest level recorded in 2021 to date. The main reason for this lower volume is the impact of the Easter bank holiday, as we are comparing a four-day working week with a five-day working week. Therefore, caution should be taken when interpreting this week's data (Companies House).

There were 5,170 voluntary dissolution applications in the UK in the week to 2 April, a 14% decrease from the previous week and the lowest level seen since the week ending 22 January 2021. As for incorporations, the same caution should be taken when interpreting this week's data for voluntary dissolutions (Companies House).

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

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Data for Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) lodgements for both existing and new dwellings are unavailable this week because of a delay with the data processing.

Notes:

1. Users should note that the latest CHAPS data estimates are provisional. This is to allow a three working day lag to capture any retailers that are no longer receiving daily payments from their merchant acquirer via CHAPS before removing the retailer from the sample, and these days have not elapsed yet because of the Easter bank holidays. Therefore, the provisional estimates for the latest week may be subject to revision in the publication next week. For more information see the [methodology article](#).

3 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

These data series are experimental faster indicators for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) data.

[Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

The weekly and daily shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

[Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

Experimental dataset for busyness indices covering the UK

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

[Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolutions](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

Weekly dataset showing the number of Companies House Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolution applications accepted.

[Vehicle flows around ports](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

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

[Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#)

Dataset | Released 8 April 2021

Responses from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which captures businesses responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected in the reference period.

4 . 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 chose 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.

5 . Measuring the data

End of EU Exit Transition period

As the UK enters into a new Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the UK statistical system will continue to produce and publish our wide range of economic and social statistics and analysis. We are committed to continued alignment with the highest international statistical standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally, and ensuring the general public, statistical users and decision makers have the data they need to be informed.

UK regional lockdown restrictions

The following is a summary of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in each of the four UK constituent countries between Monday 29 March 2021 and Monday 5 April 2021.

A full list of national restrictions is available for [England from gov.uk](#), for [Scotland from the Scottish Government](#), for [Wales the Welsh Government](#) and for [Northern Ireland from nidirect](#).

Restrictions as of Monday 29 March 2021

Scotland

- All of mainland Scotland is under Level 4 lockdown restrictions. Orkney, the Shetland Islands and the Western Isles (except Skye) are under Level 3 restrictions.
- However, in Level 4 areas since 12 March 2021 four people from two households have been allowed to meet outdoors.
- All arrivals from outside of the Common Travel Area (UK and Ireland) must self-isolate for 10 days at a managed quarantine hotel.
- Students returned to schools on a part-time basis on 15 March 2021.

Wales

- "Stay local" rules were lifted in Wales on 27 March 2021, removing internal travel restrictions and allowing up to six people from up to two households to meet outside.
- Travellers who have been in a [red-list country](#) in the last 10 days are not allowed into Wales and must self-isolate for 10 days in a managed quarantine hotel in either England or Scotland.
- Arrivals from other countries not on the red list must self-isolate for 10 days and undertake testing.

England

- England's restrictions were eased on 29 March 2021, allowing two households or six people to meet outside.
- Non-essential retail continues to be closed.
- UK and Irish nationals arriving from [red-list countries](#) must quarantine at hotels selected by the government; with some exceptions, non-UK and non-Irish nationals are not permitted to travel to the UK from red list countries.
- Arrivals from other countries must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland is under a full national lockdown.
- Arrivals from other countries outside of the Common Travel Area must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

2 April 2021

Scotland

- The "stay at home" order is replaced with a "stay local" one.

5 April 2021

Scotland

- Hairdressers, barbers, garden centres, click and collect and homeware stores are allowed to reopen.

6 . Strengths and limitations

Detailed information on the strengths and limitations of the different indicators included in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#). We will summarise any crucial updates or warnings in this section in the future.

7 . Related links

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

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

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

[Business insights and impacts on the UK economy: 8 April 2021](#)

Bulletin | 8 April 2021

Latest analysis on responses from the voluntary fortnightly Business insights and impacts on the UK economy survey, which captures businesses' responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 6 April 2021](#)

Bulletin | 6 April 2021

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

[Business insights and conditions Survey \(BICS\) questions](#)

Article | Last updated 6 April 2021

Latest questions from the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey relating to the Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society bulletin.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 26 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 8 April 2021

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

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, UK: 9 April 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 April 2021

Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with IQVIA, Oxford University and UK Biocentre.