

Article

Understanding the business impacts of local and national restrictions: February 2021

Experimental estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS), for single site businesses only, on topics such as trading status, financial performance, workforce and business resilience. Geographical breakdowns include country, regional and local authority levels. This is an economic review article.

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1 . Main points

- Amidst new coronavirus restrictions in late December 2020, the share of single-site businesses currently trading fell across all four UK countries, as the proportion of the workforce on furlough rose again.
- Between 29 December 2020 and 10 January 2021, estimates show that Wales and Scotland had less than 2 in 3 single-site businesses currently trading.
- London had the lowest percentage of single-site businesses currently trading of the English regions, at 62%, and the highest proportion of the workforce on furlough, at 19%.
- The proportion of the UK workforce on furlough has been volatile across all four countries since November 2020 amidst changing restrictions, with Scotland having the largest proportion of the workforce on furlough, at 17%, between 14 and 27 December 2020.
- There are around twice as many businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in the hospitality sector than there are across all industries, according to net turnover balances.
- The results in this release are likely to reflect both structural differences between different countries and regions of the UK but also differences in the nature and timing of restrictions that have been put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.
- The interactive tool in Section 9 of this article allows users to explore how business insights and impacts differ by geography, based on single-site weighted Wave 21 Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey (BICS) results.

2 . Overview of the business impacts of local and national restrictions

This is our second look at business insights and impact on the sub-national UK economy. In early December 2020, we published our [first sub-national estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey](#) (BICS), on topics such as trading status, financial performance, furlough and cash reserves. This subsequent release extends this analysis to Wave 21, covering the reference period 7 September 2020 to 10 January 2021, and provides newly available sub-national and sector breakdowns.

To produce sub-national insights, we focus on those UK businesses which have a single business site only. Businesses can have just one site or many sites, and these sites can be in one country or region or have a presence across the UK and beyond. By using a single business site approach, we exclude businesses with multiple sites.

While apportionments can be applied to account for multiple sites, a multi-site business' response to a survey question may not necessarily be reflective of all its sites spread across various countries or regions. However, a response from a single-site business is representative of its one site.

Overall, single-site businesses represent 98% of all businesses, and approximately half of total UK turnover and employment. This analysis is based on a sample of approximately 27,000 single site businesses across the UK. From Wave 17, the sample size for BICS was nearly doubled to approximately 39,000 businesses, allowing for a more robust subnational analysis. More detail on the sample can be found in [Section 12](#).

In the following sections, caution should be taken when interpreting country by industry or region by sector results as response rates in some cases can be quite low and results can be volatile. Though, we have tried to avoid any loss of quality by compiling industries into sectors where appropriate.

Overall, while the single site approach is not representative of all UK businesses (as it excludes businesses with multiple sites), weighted single site estimates are representative of all UK single site businesses and therefore 98% of all businesses in the UK. The approach ultimately allows us to track business insights and impact in different regions over time to see how the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their business have evolved. In particular, with a focus on the business impacts of restrictions introduced in late December 2020.

3 . Business impacts by country

Figure 1 : Amidst new coronavirus restrictions in late December 2020, the percentage of single site businesses currently trading fell across all four UK countries, as the proportion of the workforce on furlough increased again

Percentages based on single site businesses, UK, 30 November 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Currently trading: businesses currently trading at time of response, as a percentage of all single site businesses. Results reflect collection period: Wave 20 (14 December to 23 December 2020) and Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021). Estimates are weighted by count.
2. Cash reserves: cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading. Results reflect collection period. Estimates weighted by turnover.
3. Workforce on furlough: proportion of the workforce furloughed, of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading. Results reflect reference period: Wave 20 (30 November to 13 December 2020) and Wave 21 (14 December to 27 December 2020). Estimates weighted by employment.
4. Net turnover balance: calculated by subtracting the businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by total businesses currently trading for that wave. Results reflect reference period. Estimates weighted by turnover.

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Amidst new coronavirus restrictions in late December 2020 across the UK, the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading fell across all four UK countries. In each case, estimates suggest that the latest restrictions have forced many more businesses to close in each country compared with the various coronavirus restrictions during autumn 2020.

As businesses temporarily closed or paused trading as a result of restrictions, the proportion of the workforce on furlough increased again. Wave-on-wave, Wales saw the highest increase, though, Scotland currently has the highest proportion of the workforce on furlough at 17%. Both Wales and Scotland have a higher proportion of their workforce on furlough than they did during the coronavirus restrictions in autumn 2020.

Net turnover balances are the percentage of businesses experiencing an increase in turnover minus the percentage experiencing a decrease. Throughout December 2020, across the four countries, fewer businesses were experiencing a decrease in turnover according to this measure, compared with the previous month. However, financial performances across the UK remain below what is expected for the time of year, with a net percentage of 35% of currently trading businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in Wave 21.

The impact of restrictions on businesses across the UK are likely to reflect structural differences between different countries and regions of the UK, the level of responses by industry per region, but also differences in the nature and timing of restrictions that have been put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus. For Wave 20 (14 to 23 December 2020), most businesses responded between 14 and 19 December 2020 (before new coronavirus restrictions were formally introduced). As a result, effects following restrictions are more evident in Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021), as shown in Figure 1.

Further geographic and industry breakdowns over time are also available in the [accompanying datasets](#).

4 . Trading status

This section provides insights into the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading, by location and industry. Further geographic breakdowns can be found in our interactive map in [Section 9](#) and in our [accompanying datasets](#).

Figure 2: Wales and Scotland had less than 2 in 3 single-site businesses currently trading following new coronavirus restrictions in late December 2020

Currently trading, percentage of single site businesses, weighted by count, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 14 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. For presentational purposes "has been trading for more than the last two weeks" and "started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading" have been combined to "currently trading".
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.

[Data download](#)

In Wave 21, 70% of all UK single-site businesses were currently trading, down from 84% in Wave 20, as the share of businesses currently trading in the UK fell significantly across all four countries. These headline UK single-site estimates are similar to those published in our main BICS publication: [Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#).

Wales experienced the largest drop of all UK countries in their percentage of single-site businesses currently trading; falling 23 percentage points to 58% in Wave 21 as more stringent coronavirus restrictions were introduced in Wales on 20 December 2020. Wales has an above UK average proportion of businesses operating in accommodation and food service activities and wholesale and retail trade, partly explaining why it is the country with the lowest percentage of single-site businesses currently trading.

Scotland experienced an 18 percentage points drop in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading to 64% in Wave 21, as mainland Scotland was placed in the top tier of restrictions on 26 December 2020. Detailed estimates suggest the Highlands and Islands had the lowest percentage of single-site businesses currently trading in Scotland in Wave 21, at 54%.

England experienced a 13 percentage points decrease in the percentage of single site businesses currently trading to 71% in Wave 21 amidst additional areas being moved into Tier 4 across England.

Northern Ireland saw an 11 percentage points fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading to 75% in Wave 21, amidst tighter restrictions and curfews coming into effect on 26 December 2020.

Note that some businesses may shut over the Christmas period with or without new coronavirus restrictions. Estimates in this release are not adjusted for seasonal or calendar effects.

Figure 3: Other service activities industry (which includes hairdressing and other beauty treatment activities) saw the largest wave on wave fall in the share of single site businesses currently trading in late December 2020, to 43%

Change in single site businesses currently trading, by country and industry, between Wave 20 and 21, percentage points, weighted by count, UK, 14 December 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results using Wave 20 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. For presentational purposes "has been trading for more than the last two weeks" and "started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading" have been combined to "currently trading".
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Mining and quarrying has been removed for disclosure purposes, but its total is included in "All industries".
5. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
6. Industry descriptions and country names have been shortened and simplified for presentational purposes.
7. The dark vertical lines represent a value of zero.

[Data download](#)

At a UK level, the other service activities industry (which includes hairdressing and other beauty treatment activities) saw the largest wave on wave fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading to 43% in Wave 21, compared with 89% in Wave 20.

In England, the other service activities industry experienced the largest wave on wave fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading; falling by 44 percentage points to 48% in Wave 21. While some industries saw little or no change, such as the water supply, sewerage and waste management industry.

In Northern Ireland, the accommodation and food service activities industry experienced the largest wave-on-wave fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading; falling by 52 percentage points to 48%. This was the only industry with less than half of its businesses currently trading in Wave 21 in Northern Ireland. Note that some results for Northern Ireland have been suppressed because of low response.

In Scotland, the administrative and support service activities industry experienced the largest wave-on-wave fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading; falling by 51 percentage points to 37% in Wave 21. Accommodation and food service activities (34%), administrative and support service activities (37%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (42%) were the industries with less than half of its businesses currently trading in Wave 21 in Scotland. Note that some results for Scotland have been suppressed because of low response.

In Wales, the manufacturing industry experienced the largest wave-on-wave fall in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading; falling by 46 percentage points to 51%. Arts, entertainment and recreation (6%) and accommodation and food service activities (41%) were the industries with less than half of its businesses currently trading in Wave 21 in Wales. Note that some results for Wales have also been suppressed because of low response.

Figure 4: Following tougher restrictions in England in late December 2020, London and the West Midlands experienced the largest falls in single site businesses currently trading, among the English regions

Change in single site businesses currently trading, by English region and sector, between Wave 20 and 21, percentage points, weighted by count, UK, 14 December 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results using Wave 20 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. For presentational purposes "has been trading for more than the last two weeks" and "started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading" have been combined to "currently trading".
3. For quality purposes industries have been collated to construction, production (including: two-digit SIC 5 to 39, inclusive), and services (including: two-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
4. Response rates vary across regions and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
5. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
6. The dark vertical lines represent a value of zero.

[Data download](#)

Since tougher restrictions were introduced in late December 2020, of the English regions, the West Midlands, London and the North East saw the largest falls in the percentage of single-site businesses currently trading in Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021). In contrast, Yorkshire and The Humber saw the lowest fall in the percentage of businesses currently trading.

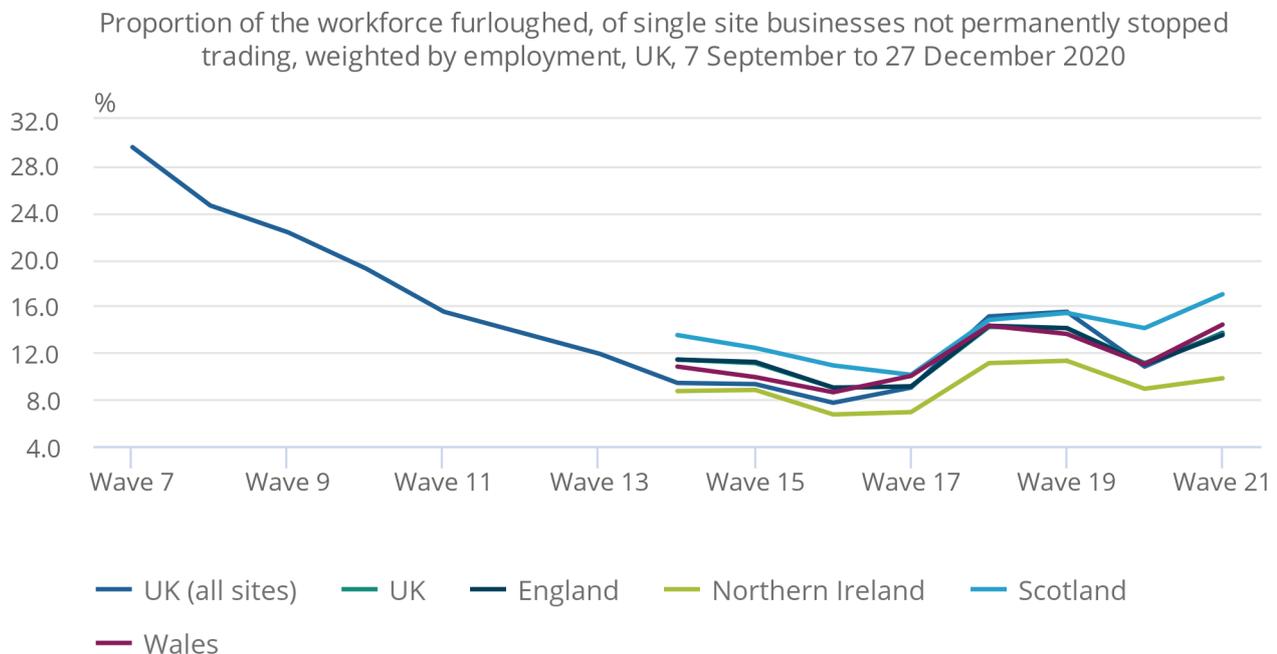
5 . Workforce

This section provides insights into the proportion of the workforce in single-site businesses that are on full or partial furlough leave, by location and industry.

Figure 5: The proportion of the UK workforce on furlough has been volatile across all four countries since November 2020, with Scotland currently having the largest proportion of the workforce on furlough

Proportion of the workforce furloughed, of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 7 September to 27 December 2020

Figure 5: The proportion of the UK workforce on furlough has been volatile across all four countries since November 2020, with Scotland currently having the largest proportion of the workforce on furlough



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results Wave 14 to 21 and weighted all sites results Wave 7 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Response rates vary across country and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
3. 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.

In Wave 21 (14 to 27 December 2020), there was an increase across all UK countries in the proportion of the workforce in single-site businesses on furlough, at 14%. Scotland had the highest proportion on furlough, at 17%, while Northern Ireland had the lowest, at 10%.

This follows a brief two-week period in Wave 20 (30 November to 13 December 2020) where some workers had returned from furlough, with the largest percentage returning in the arts, entertainment and recreation industry, and the accommodation and food services industry.

Overall, there has been great volatility in the proportion of the workforce on furlough since the furlough scheme was extended at the end of October 2020 (impacts of which are captured in Wave 18 when uptake on the furlough scheme increased sharply).

Figure 6: The proportion of the workforce on furlough in the accommodation and food service activities industry was 73% across the UK in Wave 21, rising to above 80% in Wales and Northern Ireland

Proportion of the workforce furloughed, of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Response rates vary across country and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
3. 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.
4. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
5. Industry descriptions and country names have been shortened and simplified for presentational purposes.

[Data download](#)

Figure 7: The services sector had the highest proportion of the workforce on furlough leave at 16% across England, rising to 19% in London and the North East

Proportion of the workforce furloughed, of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, England, 14 to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. For quality purposes industries have been collated to construction, production (including: two-digit SIC 5 to 39, inclusive), and services (including: two-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
5. 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.

Of the English regions, London had the highest proportion of its workforce in single-site businesses on furlough leave in Wave 21, at 19%, compared with 14% across England. Detailed estimates show that the West and North West of outer London (which include Brent and Harrow and Hillingdon) had the highest proportions of workforce on furlough, at 27%. Figure 7 shows that much of workforce on furlough in London is driven by the services sector.

In contrast, the South West had the lowest proportion of its workforce in single-site businesses on furlough leave at 10% in Wave 21.

6 . Financial performance

This section provides insights into financial performance by location and industry, using net turnover balances. These balances are calculated as the percentage of businesses experiencing an increase in turnover minus the percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease.

In Wave 21 (14 to 27 December 2020), across all UK single-site businesses currently trading:

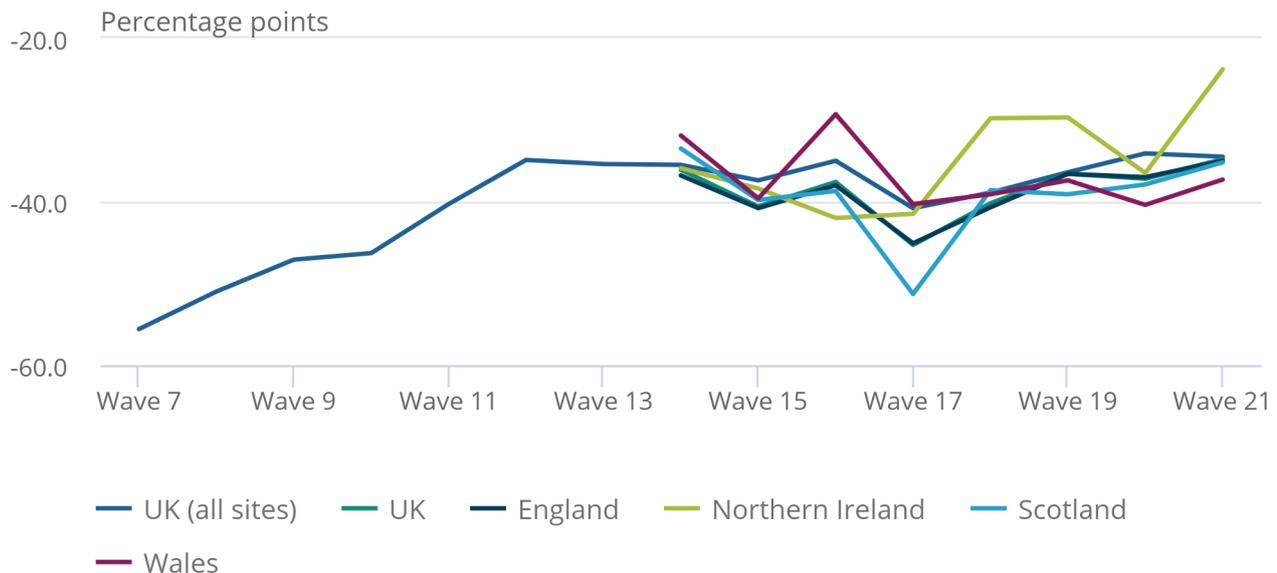
- 40% experienced a decrease in turnover compared with normal expectations for this time of year, down from 44% in Wave 20
- 44% experienced no impact on turnover, up from 41% in Wave 20
- 6% experienced an increase in turnover compared with normal expectations for this time of year, up from 7% in Wave 20
- 10% were not sure, up from 9% in Wave 20

Figure 8: Between late October (Wave 17) and late December 2020 (Wave 21), single site businesses have experienced a gradual fall in the net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 7 September to 27 December 2020

Figure 8: Between late October (Wave 17) and late December 2020 (Wave 21), single site businesses have experienced a gradual fall in the net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 7 September to 27 December 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Weighted single sites results (Wave 14 to 21) and UK all sites weighted results (Waves 7 to 21) of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Net turnover balances have been calculated by subtracting the weighted by turnover number of businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from the weighted by turnover number of businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by the total weighted number of businesses currently trading for that wave.
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Results for this particular question, wave and geographical breakdown should be treated with caution due to lower than usual responses, where a small number of businesses were affected.
5. Estimates below zero mean that there are more businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover than are experiencing an increase, and above zero means the reverse is true.

Figure 8 shows that Wales have had the highest net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover over the course of December 2020 (Wave 20 and 21) when compared with UK-wide estimates. This could be partly down to Wales having an above UK average proportion of businesses operating in the accommodation and food service activities industry, which has been one of the most affected industries throughout the pandemic. However, Figure 9 shows that Wales had a higher net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover across all sectors, compared with UK-wide estimates, in Wave 21.

In contrast, Northern Ireland have had a lower net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover since early November 2020, when compared with the other UK countries. Figure 9 shows that these net percentages were lower across all sectors when compared with UK-wide estimates, and most significantly in production.

Figure 9: Wales had the highest net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover over the course of December 2020, when compared with UK-wide estimates

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Net turnover balances have been calculated by subtracting the weighted by turnover number of businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from the weighted by turnover number of businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by the total weighted number of businesses currently trading for that wave.
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Estimates below zero mean that there are more businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover than are experiencing an increase, and above zero means the reverse is true.

[Data download](#)

In England, Northern Ireland and Wales, the services sector was the sector with the highest net percentage of single-site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in Wave 21.

While, in Scotland, the production sector was the sector with the highest net percentage of single-site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in Wave 21, at 43%, with Eastern Scotland being the main driver at 62%.

Figure 10: The East Midlands had the highest net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in mid-December 2020, among the English regions

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 19 October to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 17 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Net balances have been calculated by subtracting the weighted by turnover number of businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from the weighted by turnover number of businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by the total weighted number of businesses currently trading for that wave.
3. Response rates vary across regions and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Estimates below zero mean that there are more businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover than are experiencing an increase, and above zero means the reverse is true.

[Data download](#)

Figure 11: In the East Midlands, the sector with the highest net percentage of single site businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in mid-December 2020 was the production sector

Net turnover balances of businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Net balances have been calculated by subtracting the weighted by turnover number of businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from the weighted by turnover number of businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by the total weighted number of businesses currently trading for that wave.
3. For quality purposes industries have been collated to construction, production (including: two-digit SIC 5 to 39, inclusive), and services (including: two-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
4. Response rates vary across regions and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
5. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
6. Estimates below zero mean that there are more businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover than are experiencing an increase, and above zero means the reverse is true.

[Data download](#)

7 . Cash reserves

This section provides insights into business' cash reserves by location and industry.

In Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021), across all UK single-site businesses:

- 6% had no cash reserves
- 4% had less than one month of cash reserves
- 26% had between one and three months of cash reserves
- 47% had four or more months of cash reserves
- 17% were not sure

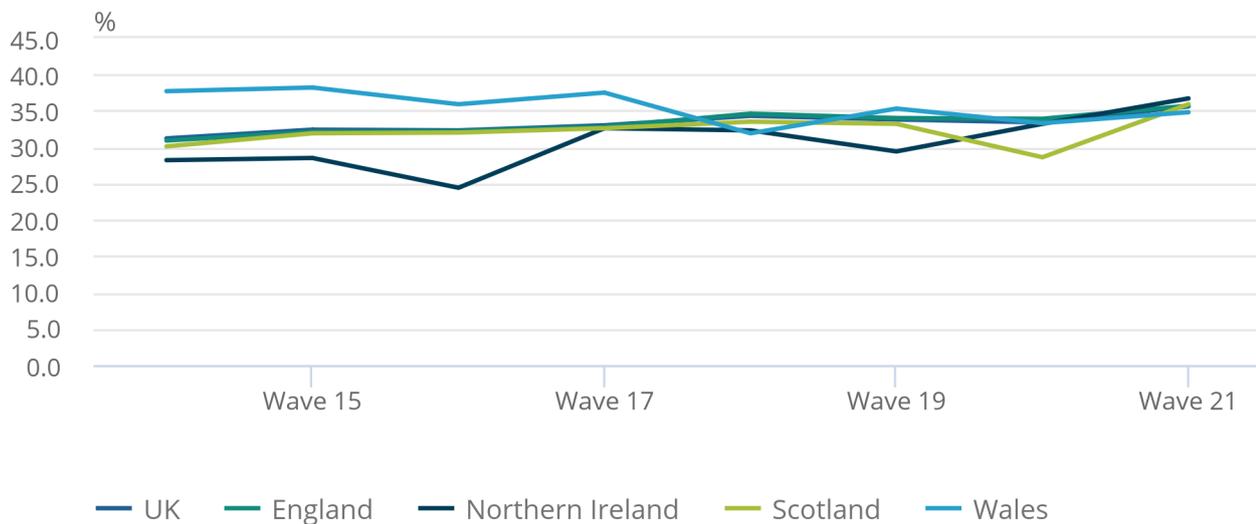
Hereafter, cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined for geographic breakdowns for quality purposes (that is, to avoid results being based on a low number of responses).

Figure 12: The percentage of single site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves has generally been rising slightly across most UK countries, except for Wales

Cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021

Figure 12: The percentage of single site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves has generally been rising slightly across most UK countries, except for Wales

Cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 14 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined for quality purposes.
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.

Across most of the UK, the share of single-site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves has generally been rising, from 31% in late September 2020 to 36% in late December 2020, except in Wales where it has fallen from 38% to 35% over that same period.

Figure 13: In Wave 21, 75% single site businesses in the accommodation and food service activities industry in Northern Ireland had no or less than three months of cash reserves, compared with 57% across the UK

Cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined for quality purposes.
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Mining and quarrying has been removed for disclosure purposes, but its total is included in "All industries".
5. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
6. Industry descriptions and country names have been shortened and simplified for presentational purposes.

[Data download](#)

In England, the two industries with the highest share of single-site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves in Wave 21 were other service activities (63%) and accommodation and food service activities (57%).

In all other countries, the accommodation and food service activities industry had the highest share of businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves in Wave 21; rising to 75% in Northern Ireland.

Figure 14: Of the English regions, the North East had the highest share of single site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves at 42%, compared with 35% across England in Wave 21

Cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 14 to 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined for quality purposes.
3. Response rates vary across regions and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.

[Data download](#)

Of the English regions, the North East had the highest share of single-site businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves at 42%, compared with 36% across England in Wave 21. In the North East, the production sector had the highest share of businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves at 49% (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: In the North East, the production sector had the highest share of businesses with no or less than three months of cash reserves at 49%

Cash reserves of between zero and three months, percentage of single site businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses not permanently stopped trading.
2. Cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined for quality purposes.
3. For quality purposes industries have been collated to construction, production (including: two-digit SIC 5 to 39, inclusive), and services (including: two-digit SIC 45 to 98, inclusive).
4. Response rates vary across regions and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.

[Data download](#)

8 . Hospitality sector

This section focuses on data from the hospitality sector, and how it has been impacted from late September 2020 to late December 2020. The hospitality sector includes the following industries:

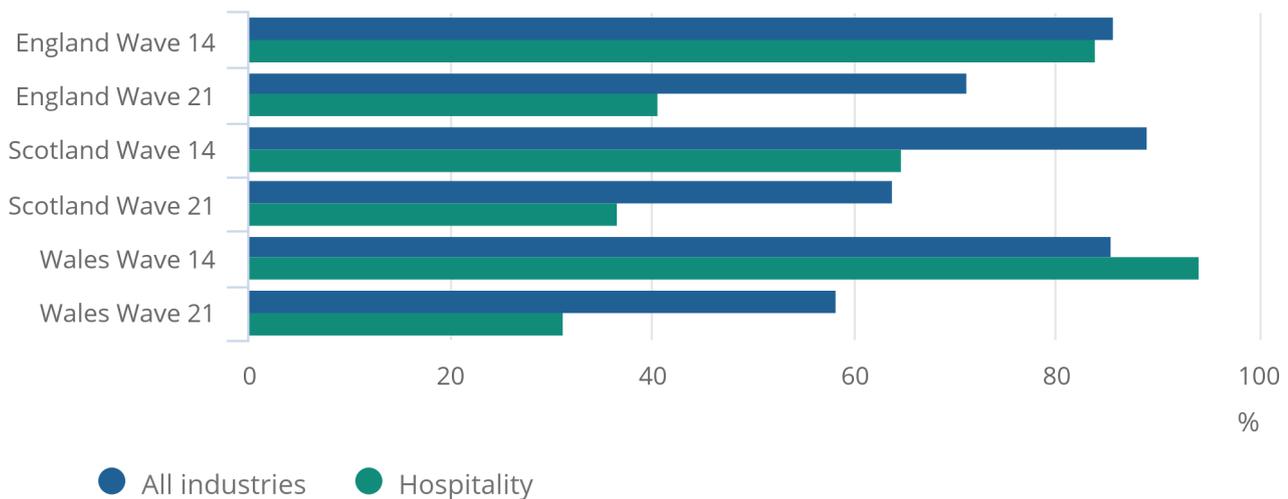
- accommodation
- food and beverage service activities
- travel agency, tour operator and other reservation service and related activities
- creative, arts and entertainment activities
- libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities
- sports activities and amusement and recreation activities

Figure 16: The percentage of businesses currently trading in the hospitality sector generally decreased throughout December 2020, with less than 1 in 3 currently trading in Wales in Wave 21

Currently trading, percentage of single site businesses in the hospitality sector, weighted by count, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021

Figure 16: The percentage of businesses currently trading in the hospitality sector generally decreased throughout December 2020, with less than 1 in 3 currently trading in Wales in Wave 21

Currently trading, percentage of single site businesses in the hospitality sector, weighted by count, UK, 21 September 2020 to 10 January 2021



Source: Office for national Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 14 (21 September to 4 October 2020) and Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021) of the Office for National Statistics’ (ONS’) Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. For presentational purposes “has been trading for more than the last two weeks” and “started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading” have been combined to “currently trading”.
3. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
4. Northern Ireland has been excluded for presentational purposes due to suppressions in Wave 14.
5. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.

The share of single-site businesses currently trading in the hospitality sector across the UK has fallen from four in five in late September 2020 to two in five in late December 2020.

The patterns in percentage trading across the countries differ because of the timing of new restrictions to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Wales, the country with the lowest percentage trading in the hospitality sector in late December 2020, had seen a gradual fall since early December 2020.

Scotland had been experiencing a fall in the percentage trading in its hospitality sector from 93% in early November 2020 to 37% by late December 2020.

In contrast, the percentage trading in England's hospitality sector had seen a gradual pick up from 47% in mid-November 2020 to 64% by mid-December 2020, before falling in late December 2020 as restrictions returned.

The movement of data in specific countries will vary depending on what coronavirus restrictions were in place at specific times and depending on how many businesses responded to the survey from the hospitality sector in that specific country.

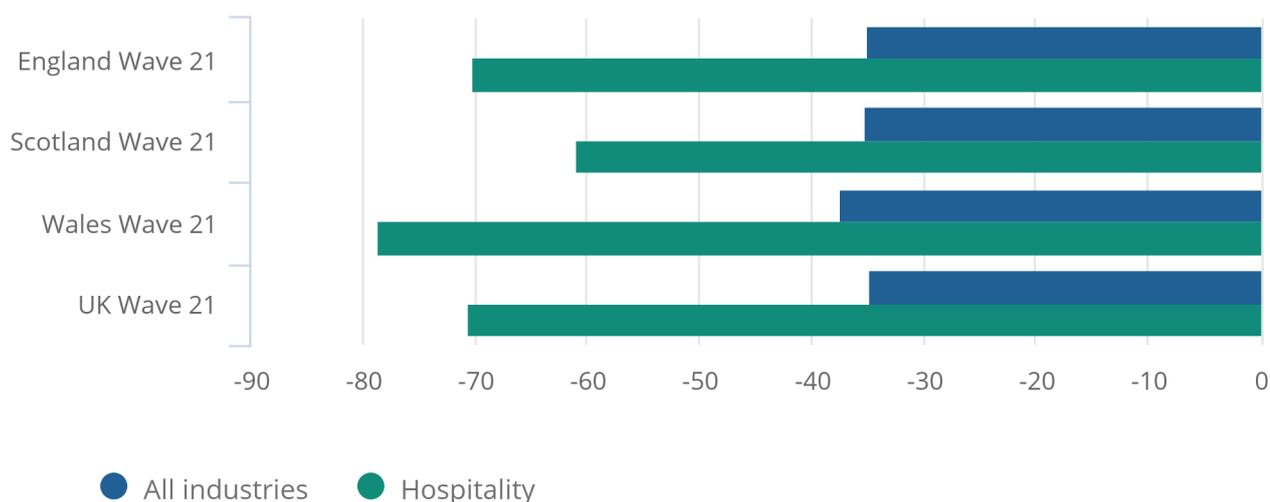
Note that some businesses may shut over the Christmas period with or without new coronavirus restrictions. Estimates in this release are not adjusted for seasonal or calendar effects.

Figure 17: There are around twice as many businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in the hospitality sector than there are across all industries, according to net turnover balances

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020

Figure 17: There are around twice as many businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in the hospitality sector than there are across all industries, according to net turnover balances

Net turnover balances of single site businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 14 to 27 December 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Net turnover balances have been calculated by subtracting the weighted by turnover number of businesses who have reported a decrease in turnover from the weighted by turnover number of businesses with an increase in turnover, all divided by the total weighted number of businesses currently trading for that wave.
3. "*" = percentages less than 1% or industry and country count is 10 or less.
4. Response rates vary across countries and between waves. Low response can impact the interpretation of these estimates.
5. Northern Ireland is excluded from this figure due to suppression.

Though the share of businesses currently trading in the hospitality sector in late September 2020 was on par with other industries, at four in five, the net percentage of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover has remained consistently high throughout this time period. Figure 17 shows that there were twice as many businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in the hospitality sector in Wave 21 than there were across all industries, according to net turnover balances. This is also the case going back to September when comparable single-site estimates began.

This suggests that even when businesses were open, most were still not generating the same levels of turnover as compared with normal expectations for this time of year. This is likely because of coronavirus restrictions affecting movement and travel within the UK, therefore affecting demand for accommodation, restaurants, bars and other hospitality businesses as the public may be reluctant to take risks even if restrictions allowed them to visit such places.

Wales saw the most volatile net turnover balances in the hospitality sector, with a net percentage of 50% of businesses experiencing a decrease in turnover in early September 2020 to 79% in late December 2020. There was much volatility in the financial performance of Wales' hospitality sector, especially around November 2020 when a firebreak lockdown was introduced in the country.

9 . Further geographic analysis

The interactive map shows experimental sub-national results using weighted Wave 21 single-site data; with insights into businesses currently trading, proportion of the workforce furloughed, businesses reporting a decrease in turnover, and businesses reporting no or less than three months cash reserves.

In some cases, responses are low and so should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Areas with 10 or less responses have been suppressed for disclosure purposes. Number of responses per geographic area across all variables can be found in the [accompanying datasets](#).

Figure 18: Interactive map highlighting the business impact of the coronavirus pandemic in Wave 21

Percentage of single site businesses, weighted, UK, 14 December 2020 to 10 January 2021

Notes:

1. Weighted single site results, Wave 21 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. For presentational purposes: a. "has been trading for more than the last two weeks" and "started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading" have been combined to "currently trading". b. decreased turnover categories and increased turnover categories have been combined. c. cash reserve categories between zero and three months have been combined.
3. Business that have not permanently stopped trading responded to the cash reserves and proportion furloughed questions, however, only businesses currently trading responded to the decrease in turnover questions.
4. For the proportion furloughed and turnover estimates, businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 14 to 27 December 2020. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021).
5. Areas with 10 or less responses have been suppressed for disclosure purposes.

Data download [enter link description here](#)

10 . Business impacts of national and local restrictions data

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

Dataset | Released 1 February 2021

Experimental subnational estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS), for single site businesses only, on topics such as trading status, financial performance, workforce and business resilience. Geographical breakdowns include country, regional and local authority levels.

11 . Glossary

Coronavirus

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that cause disease in people and animals. They can cause the common cold or more severe diseases, such as COVID-19.

COVID-19

COVID-19 is the name used to refer to the disease caused by the SARS CoV-2 virus, which is a type of coronavirus. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) takes COVID-19 to mean presence of SARS-CoV-2 with or without symptoms.

Furlough

Furlough is a temporary absence from work allowing workers to keep their job while the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues.

Reporting unit

The business unit to which questionnaires are sent is called the reporting unit. The response from the reporting unit can cover the enterprise as a whole or parts of the enterprise identified by lists of local units.

12 . Data sources and quality

The Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey is voluntary and may only reflect the characteristics of those that responded; the results are [experimental](#).

The BICS survey provides timely insights into the impact on businesses' financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience over a fortnightly period and the [survey questions](#) are available.

Table 1: Dates of the reference and collection period of each wave of the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Wave	Reference period	Survey period
Wave 14	7 to 20 September	21 September to 4 October
Wave 15	21 September to 4 October	5 to 18 October
Wave 16	5 to 18 October	19 October to 1 November
Wave 17	19 October to 1 November	2 to 15 November
Wave 18	2 to 15 November	16 to 29 November
Wave 19	16 to 29 November	30 November to 13 December
Wave 20	30 November to 13 December	14 to 23 December
Wave 21	14 to 27 December	29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Subnational BICS estimates

Subnational BICS estimates have been created by using the results collected in the fortnightly business survey (BICS). Each survey return from each reporting unit is then applied to the reporting unit's one local site. We have removed businesses with multiple sites from the sample and results in this analysis are based on single site businesses only (as identified on the [IDBR](#)). Sections 2 and 3 of our [first sub-national BICS article](#) outlines in detail the methodology behind our single site subnational estimates and its impact compared with previously published results encompassing all businesses.

Aggregates of [Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics \(NUTS1\)](#) regions such as the UK or England may have higher or lower response proportions than any of their constituent regions because of differences in the sample composition in terms of company workforce.

Because the larger aggregate regions, such as the UK or England, generally have a larger proportion of smaller companies, if there is a substantial difference between the response proportions of larger and smaller companies, this will be reflected in the top-line figures.

Weighting

Single site estimates in this release are weighted, ensuring estimates are representative of all single site businesses. A detailed description of the weighting methodology and its differences to unweighted estimates is available in [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\): preliminary weighted results](#).

[Weighted estimates for Scotland for businesses with greater than nine employees](#) are available from the Scottish Government.

Single-site sample

While the single-site approach is not representative of all UK businesses (as it excludes businesses with multiple sites), weighted single-site estimates are representative of all UK single-site businesses and approximately 98% of all businesses (and half of total UK turnover and employment). Tables 2 and 3 show how the composition by region and industry when using the single-sites approach holds up, when compared with the all businesses sample.

Table 2: Wave 21 all businesses and single site sample size and response rate, broken down by region, UK

Region	Wave 21 sample	Wave 21 response rate	Wave 21 single sites sample size	Wave 21 single sites response rate
Northern Ireland	1,758	16.1%	1,178	15.1%
Scotland	5,264	21.8%	2,328	20.4%
Wales	3,221	23.1%	1,362	22.3%
England	32,777	22.8%	22,271	20.8%
South West	5,099	26.0%	2,019	26.1%
South East	7,760	24.5%	3,625	22.6%
London	8,988	19.8%	5,020	17.0%
East of England	5,612	23.8%	2,460	22.6%
West Midlands	5,141	22.2%	2,030	19.4%
East Midlands	4,419	22.9%	1,777	21.3%
Yorkshire and The Humber	4,988	22.7%	1,955	21.8%
North West	6,371	22.1%	2,653	20.0%
North East	2,513	20.9%	732	19.0%
UK	38,967	22.5%	27,139	20.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes

1. Wave 21 sample and response rates for all businesses and single site businesses of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).

Table 3: Wave 21 all businesses and single site sample size, broken down by industry, UK

Industry	Wave 21 sample	Wave 21 response rate	Single site Wave 21 sample	Single site Wave 21 response rate
Manufacturing	5,425	24.4%	3,554	24.0%
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	307	27.7%	160	27.5%
Construction	3,583	20.1%	2,895	18.5%
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	6,787	23.5%	4,074	20.7%
Transportation and storage	1,811	21.3%	1,202	18.6%
Accommodation and food service activities	3,950	20.7%	2,843	18.9%
Information and communication	2,706	21.0%	2,076	19.4%
Real estate activities	522	23.8%	331	19.0%
Professional, scientific and technical activities	5,138	22.8%	3,811	20.3%
Administrative and support service activities	4,457	22.1%	3,401	21.0%
Education	1,008	28.5%	527	27.3%
Human health and social work activities	1,333	21.2%	843	18.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,340	24.0%	968	23.5%
All industries	38,967	22.5%	27,139	20.6%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes

1. Wave 21 sample and response rates for all businesses and single site businesses of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS).
2. Other service activities and Mining and quarrying have been removed for disclosure purposes, but their totals are included in "All industries".

13 . Future developments

Results presented in this article cover Waves 14 to 21 only. In the future, we hope to develop weighted regional estimates to cover Wave 7 onwards, to enable analysis into how the pandemic has affected different regions from June 2020 to date.

With the sample redesign from Wave 17 onwards, estimates for more questions should be possible, allowing for insights at both a regional and local authority level.

14 . Related links

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

Web page | 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.

[Insights of the Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey: 23 March to 5 April \(Wave 2\) to 1 to 14 June \(Wave 7\) 2020](#)

Article | Released 8 July 2020

Impact of the coronavirus pandemic on businesses' turnover, cash flow and workforce: analysis on responses to our new voluntary fortnightly business survey and how these have been affected in each two-week reference period. Covers the period 23 March to 14 June 2020.

[Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey: preliminary weighted results](#)

Article | Released 14 September 2020

Early estimates of weighted responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey, focusing on business' responses on how turnover, workforce and trading status have been affected in two-week reference periods, from Wave 7 (1 to 14 June 2020) to Wave 12 (10 to 23 August 2020).

[Coronavirus and the experiences of UK businesses, textual analysis: March 2020 to July 2020](#)

Article | Released 6 August 2020

Analysis of qualitative responses from selected questions from the fortnightly Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS), which provides further insights on individual business experiences over the course of the pandemic so far.

[Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey, expectation responses over time, UK: 1 June to 23 August 2020 \(Waves 6 to 11\)](#)

Article | Released 8 September 2020

Turnover expectations of the same businesses over time, using the final results of Waves 6 to 11 of the voluntary fortnightly BICS, covering the period 1 June to 23 August 2020.

[Comparison of furloughed jobs data: May to July 2020](#)

Article | Released 25 September 2020

An overview of the similarities and differences between the fortnightly BICS furlough estimates and HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC's) Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) data, over the period 1 May to 31 July 2020.