Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 23 October 2025

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses, including financial performance, workforce, trade, and business resilience.

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Next release:
6 November 2025

Notice

23 October 2025

This release has a headline only format and is accompanied by our full dataset.

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1 . Main points

- Around 1 in 6 (17%) of trading businesses reported that their turnover had increased in September 2025 compared with the previous calendar month, up 6 percentage points from August 2025 but at a similar level to July 2025; 25% reported their turnover had decreased, down 4 percentage points from August but similar to the 4 months prior.

- 14% of trading businesses expected their turnover to increase in November 2025, down 2 points compared to expectations for October 2025 but broadly stable compared with November 2024; conversely, 20% of trading businesses reported that they expect their turnover to decrease in November 2025, up 4 percentage points compared to expectations for October 2025 and November 2024.

- Economic uncertainty remained the most reported challenge affecting turnover for trading businesses in early October 2025 at 28%, followed by competition (20%), which rose 4 percentage points from August 2025; for businesses with 10 or more employees, the most reported challenge was cost of labour (33%), although this has fallen 8 percentage points since peaking in early April.

- 22% of trading businesses reported an increase in the prices of goods or services bought in September 2025 when compared with the previous month, while 8% reported an increase in the prices of goods or services sold; although both are broadly stable with August, these proportions have fallen 10 and 5 percentage points, respectively, since April.

- In early October 2025, 18% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were experiencing worker shortages; this has been broadly stable since early September 2024.

- When asked in early October 2025, 20% of trading businesses expected their performance to increase over the next 12 months; while this percentage is 3 percentage points higher than September 2025, it has trended downwards since January 2024 (26%).

These are official statistics in development, and we advise caution when using the data. The BICS questions and topics are regularly reviewed, and questions are often added, removed, or amended to reflect changing circumstances and analytical priorities.

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the final results from Wave 142 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 6 to 19 October 2025.

Data reported within BICS bulletins and datasets are estimates that are subject to uncertainty, for example, sampling variability and non-sampling error. Further information on quality is available in our Business Insights and Conditions Survey Quality and Methodology Information (QMI), and we regularly update confidence intervals associated with the survey questions.

Single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 130 are available in our Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2025 article.

More about economy, business and jobs

- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our economic dashboard.
- View all economic data.

The percentage of businesses that reported they were trading in early October 2025 was 95%, with 86% fully trading, and 9% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 3% of businesses reported "temporarily paused trading", and 2% reported "permanently ceased trading" as their business's trading status.

3 . Data on the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Business insights and impact on the UK economy
Dataset | Released 23 October 2025
Weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade, and business resilience. This dataset includes additional information collected as part of the survey not presented in this publication. These are official statistics in development.

Business insights and impact on the UK economy confidence intervals
Dataset | Released 23 October 2025
Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade, and business resilience. These are official statistics in development.

Access to microdata

You can access the microdata for Waves 1 to 141 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) through the Secure Research Service (SRS). The BICS microdata for each wave are released on a rolling basis in the week following the publication of each wave. The microdata are made confidential and do not disclose information on any specific business.

Only researchers accredited under the Digital Economy Act, as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website are able to access data in the SRS. You can apply for researcher accreditation using the People and Projects Service (PPS).

To conduct analysis with microdata from the SRS, a project application must be submitted to the Research Accreditation Panel (RAP), as explained on the UK Statistics Authority website. Project accreditation applications should be submitted using the Project Accreditation Service for SRS (PASS). For more information, please see our guidance on applying for an accredited research project.

To use the SRS, you must access it through the appropriate safe setting. For more information on the full range of safe setting options, please see our guidance on accessing data securely.

Making our published spreadsheets accessible

Following the Government Statistical Service (GSS) guidance on releasing statistics in spreadsheets, we will be amending our published tables over the next couple of publications to improve the usability, accessibility and machine readability of our published statistics. If you have any questions or comments, please email us at bics@ons.gov.uk.

4 . Glossary

Private sector businesses

The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) is a survey of private sector businesses, meaning that the public sector is not sampled. Some businesses are also excluded; please see the Coverage section of this bulletin for more information.

Reporting unit

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

Trading businesses

Trading businesses refers to businesses that responded that their trading status was "currently fully trading" or "currently partially trading" only.

If trading businesses is not explicitly specified, the statistics presented refer to businesses that have "Not permanently stopped trading". This includes trading businesses and those that said their trading status was "paused trading and intends to restart in the next two weeks" or "paused trading and does not intend to restart within the next two weeks".

5 . Data sources and quality

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) QMI, which was updated on 10 October 2024.

The BICS is voluntary, and the results are official statistics in development. More information is available in our Guide to official statistics in development.

Table 1: Sample and response rates for Wave 140, 141 and 142 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	18 September 2025 Publication Wave 140	2 October 2025 Publication Wave 141	23 October 2025 Publication Wave 142
Sample	38,829	38,840	38,795
Response	10,348	10,672	10,415
Rate	26.7%	27.5%	26.8%

Source: Business Insights and Conditions Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes

1. Response rates for all waves can be found in the accompanying dataset.

The results are based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly BICS, which captures businesses' views on financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The Wave 142 survey was live for the period 6 to 19 October 2025. For full details of the survey questions used, see our Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 6 to 19 October 2025 article.

Coverage

The BICS sampling frame is based on the same industries as our Monthly Business Survey (MBS). The MBS covers the UK for production industries only, and Great Britain for construction, retail and services industries. The MBS is an important input to the output measure of gross domestic product (GDP), which includes monthly GDP.

For detailed information on the industries covered by the MBS and BICS, see our GDP(o) data sources catalogue. The following are some industries that are excluded from MBS and BICS:

- agriculture
- oil and gas extraction
- energy generation and supply
- public administration and defence
- public provision of education and health
- finance and insurance

For more information on the methodology of producing the BICS, such as weighting, please see our Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) QMI report.

Strengths and limitations

More quality and methodology information (QMI) on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in our Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) QMI.

6 . Related links

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 23 October 2025
Bulletin | Updated frequently
Early data on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: May 2025
Article | Released 30 May 2025
Estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on prices, financial performance, workforce and business resilience.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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