Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 4 December 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:
18 December 2025

Notice

4 December 2025

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

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1 . Main points

- In late November 2025, 35% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their staffing costs (including wages, bonuses, national insurance (NI), and pension contributions) had increased over the last three months; this is down 13 percentage points compared with late August, but a 3 percentage point rise compared with late November 2024.
- Around one in eight (12%) businesses with 10 or more employees reported that their employees' hourly wages increased in October 2025 compared with September; this is a 5 percentage point fall compared with July, and a 2 percentage point fall compared with October 2024.
- In late November 2025, 61% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they had not been affected by worker shortages, broadly stable with late August 2025; this proportion has ranged between 59% and 62% since the question was introduced in late February 2024.
- Around 3 in 10 (29%) businesses with 10 or more employees reported experiencing recruitment difficulties in October 2025, down 3 percentage points from July; of these businesses, 50% cited a lack of qualified applicants for the roles on offer, while 33% cited a low number of applications.
- In late November 2025, 19% of private sector businesses reported that they are using or planning to use increased homeworking as a permanent business model going forward; this proportion has ranged between 18% and 22% since late February 2023.
- In late November 2025, 37% of businesses with 10 or more employees that had exported goods in the last 12 months reported they were impacted by US tariffs in the last month; 34% expect an impact in the next month, with 46% of these reporting they would have to pass on additional costs to customers as a result.

These are official statistics in development, and we advise caution when using the data. The Business Insights and Conditions Survey (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 145 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 17 to 30 November 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 142 are available in our Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: November 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 late November 2025 was 96%, with 84% fully trading, and 12% 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 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

Business insights and impact on the UK economy Dataset | Released 4 December 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 4 December 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 144 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

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.

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.

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 specifically 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 143, 144, and 145 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	6 November 2025 Publication Wave 143	20 November 2025 Publication Wave 144	4 December 2025 Publication Wave 145
Sample	38,780	38,758	38,738
Response	10,418	10,457	10,492
Rate	26.9%	27.0%	27.1%

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 145 survey was live for the period 17 to 30 November 2025. For full details of the survey questions used, see our Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 17 to 30 November 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: 4 December 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: November 2025 Article | Released 3 November 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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