

Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 5 January 2023

The impact of challenges facing the economy and other events on UK businesses. Based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly 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.

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Next release:
12 January 2023

Notice

5 January 2023

From 15 December 2022, this release will have a headline only format. It will be accompanied by our full stand-alone dataset. We will return to a full release on 26 January 2023.

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1 . Main points

- In November 2022, approximately one in six (16%) businesses had been affected as a result of industrial action; more than a quarter (28%) of those businesses reported they were unable to obtain necessary goods for their business.
- In late December 2022, 5% of businesses with 10 or more employees expected to make redundancies over the next three months; the largest reported reasons for doing so were to reduce staff costs (69%) and certain job roles no longer being required (29%).
- Almost a third (32%) of businesses with 10 or more employees reported they were experiencing a shortage of workers, with the human health and social work activities industry (private sector businesses only) reporting the highest proportion of businesses affected, at 51%.
- When looking ahead to January 2023, more than one in five (22%) businesses reported energy prices were their main concern, followed by input price inflation (15%) and falling demand of goods and services (14%).
- More than a third (35%) of trading businesses with 10 or more employees that had imported in November 2022 reported they had experienced an increase in transportation cost changes compared with October 2022; this was 29% for exporting businesses.

2 . Headline figures

The data presented in this bulletin are the results from Wave 72 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 12 December to 27 December 2022.

The 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 Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#) and we regularly update [confidence intervals](#) associated with the survey questions.

Experimental single-site weighted regional estimates up to Wave 60 (27 June to 10 July 2022) are available in our [Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: July 2022 article](#).

Please note that businesses were asked to exclude seasonal changes when answering questions contained within BICS.

More about economy, business and jobs

- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [economy, business and jobs roundup](#).
- Explore the latest trends in employment, prices and trade in our [economic dashboard](#).
- View [all economic data](#).

Figure 1: Headline figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. For presentational purposes, some response options have been combined and/or excluded.
2. Business concerns: the data for the start of 2022 and the equivalent period last year are not available as the question was not asked for this time period.
3. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Of currently trading businesses with 10 or more employees, 19% had exported and 25% had imported in the last 12 months. Those businesses that had exported and/or imported were asked how their exporting and importing in November 2022 compared with November 2021, and which challenges they had experienced an increase in compared with the previous calendar month.

Figure 2: Exporting and importing figures from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes:

1. Exporting or importing compared with the same month last year: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees and had reported they had exported or imported in the last year. For presentational purposes, response options have been combined.
2. Exporting or importing challenges: percentage of businesses currently trading with 10 or more employees, reported they had exported or imported in the last year, and reported how their exports or imports were affected. Businesses may report that exporting or importing has not been affected but are still able to report challenges.
3. Caution should be taken when interpreting these results based on the specific routing of this question, meaning that only a small number of businesses responded.
4. Data are plotted in the middle of the period of each wave.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

3 . Business Insights and Conditions Survey data

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

Dataset | Released 5 January 2023

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.

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

Dataset | Released 8 December 2022

Confidence intervals for weighted estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) about financial performance, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. These data are not official statistics but have been developed to deliver timely indicators to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other events.

Access to microdata

You can access the microdata for Waves 1 to 71 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 accreditation through the [Research Accreditation Service \(RAS\)](#). You need to have relevant academic or work experience and must successfully attend and complete the assessed Safe Researcher Training.

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](#). To access the SRS, you must also work for an organisation with an Assured Organisational Connectivity agreement in place

4 . Glossary

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.

Net balance

Net balance is the difference between the percentage of businesses that reported a decrease, and the percentage of businesses that reported an increase.

5 . Measuring the data

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](#), updated on 24 January 2022.

The BICS is voluntary, and the results are experimental. More information is available in our [Guide to experimental statistics](#).

Table 1: Sample and response rates for Wave 70, 71 and 72 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	1 December 2022 Publication Wave 70	15 December 2022 Publication Wave 71	5 January 2023 Publication Wave 72
Sample	39,041	39,015	40,576
Response	10,406	9,225	9,950
Rate	26.7%	23.6%	24.5%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

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 72 survey was live for the period 12 December to 27 December 2022. The [BICS survey questions](#) are available.

Coverage

The Monthly Business Survey (MBS) covers the UK for production and Great Britain (GB) only for services. The Retail Sales Index (RSI) and construction are GB-focused. Therefore, the BICS will be UK-focused for production-based industries but GB-focused for the other elements of the economy covered. The sectors covered are:

- non-financial services (includes professional, scientific, communication, administrative, transport, accommodation and food, private health and education, and entertainment services)
- distribution (includes retail, wholesale, and motor trades)
- production (includes manufacturing, oil and gas extraction, energy generation and supply, and water and waste management)
- construction (includes civil engineering, housebuilding, property development and specialised construction trades such as plumbers, electricians, and plasterers)

The following industries are excluded from the survey:

- 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 [BICS quality and methodology information](#).

6 . 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](#).

7 . Related links

[Comparison of furloughed jobs data, UK: March 2020 to June 2021](#)

Article | Released 2 September 2021

An overview of the similarities and differences between the fortnightly Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) furlough estimates and HM Revenue and Customs' Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics, over the period 23 March 2020 to 30 June 2021.

[COVID-19 question bank](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This webpage provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data the ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

[Business insights and impact on the UK subnational single-site economy: July 2022](#)

Article | Released 26 July 2022

Experimental estimates from the voluntary fortnightly business survey (BICS) on topics such as prices, worker shortages, and workforce status. Geographical breakdowns include country, regional and local authority levels.

[Business and individual attitudes towards the future of homeworking, UK: April to May 2021](#)

Article | Released 14 June 2021

Analysis of the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on office working and of business and individual attitudes to future working practices.

[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 businesses' 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).

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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