Statistical bulletin

Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 7 May 2026

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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Release date:
7 May 2026

Next release:
21 May 2026

Notice

7 May 2026

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

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1 . Main points

- In late April 2026, 38% of businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they were concerned about international conflict impacting supply chains over the next year, broadly stable from March, but a 28 percentage point rise from December 2025; 25% were concerned about the impact of shipping disruption, a rise of 4 percentage points from March, and 18 percentage points from December 2025.

- In late April 2026, 22% of trading businesses with 10 or more employees reported that they had exported goods, services, or both in the last 12 months; 28% reported that they had imported goods, services, or both in the last 12 months.

- Around two in five (39%) trading businesses with 10 or more employees that had exported reported that their exporting costs had increased in March 2026 compared with March 2025; this was an increase of 9 percentage points from December 2025, and the highest proportion since September 2023.

- More than two in five (44%) trading businesses with 10 or more employees that had imported reported that their importing costs had increased in March 2026 compared with March 2025; this was an increase of 14 percentage points since December 2025, and the highest proportion since June 2023.

- In late April 2026, of the 17% of trading businesses that reported that they had sold goods or services to customers in other UK nations in the last 12 months, 19% cited transport costs as a challenge experienced while doing so, a rise of 7 percentage points from January 2026 and the highest proportion since January 2023; a number of businesses cited increased fuel costs as a reason for this when invited to comment.

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 155 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), which was live from 20 April to 3 May 2026.

This wave of the survey asked businesses questions about:

- exporting and importing including rules of origin
- UKCA markings
- supply chains
- domestic trade
- international trade, including EU trade, US trade and US tariffs.

For full details of the survey questions used, see our Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 20 April to 3 May article.

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 April 2026 was 93%, with 84% fully trading, and 10% partially trading (for example, trading with reduced hours or staff numbers). Meanwhile, 4% 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: 7 May 2026
Dataset | Released 7 May 2026
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 7 May 2026
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 154 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 exactly 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 . 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, 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 Waves 153, 154 and 155 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Wave	2 April 2026 Publication Wave 153	23 April 2026 Publication Wave 154	7 May 2026 Publication Wave 155
Sample	38,759	38,750	38,715
Response	10,756	9,833	10,466
Rate	27.8%	25.4%	27.0%

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 155 survey was live for the period 20 April to 3 May 2026. For full details of the survey questions used, see our Business Insights and Conditions Survey questions: 20 April to 3 May 2026 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.

6 . Related links

Economic activity and social change real-time indicators, UK, dashboard
Dashboard | Updated frequently
An overview of the UK economy and society, based on rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and innovative methods.

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 23 April 2026
Bulletin | Updated frequently
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 financial performance, prices and workforce. These are official statistics in development.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 7 May 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Business insights and impact on the UK economy: 7 May 2026