

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 28 April 2022

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and experimental methods.

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Release date:
28 April 2022

Next release:
5 May 2022

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1 . Main points

- Following the Easter holidays across the UK, most of the consumer behaviour measures we monitor were down in the latest week.
- Consumer behaviour indicators show falls in UK credit and debit card purchases (9 percentage points), OpenTable seated diners (5 percentage points) and the number of transactions in all Pret A Manger regional categories; Google Mobility data showed falls in all locations except for parks (Bank of England CHAPS data, OpenTable, Pret A Manger, Google Mobility). [Section 3](#).
- Transport indicators showed a mixed picture this week with total ship visits, and cargo and tanker ship visits decreasing by 3% and 2%, respectively; meanwhile road traffic increased by 4 percentage points compared with two weeks ago, to 99% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020 (exactEarth, Department for Transport). [Section 4](#).
- Almost one-fifth of the UK workforce (18%) was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working in March 2022, which is 3 percentage points higher than at the start of 2022 (initial results from Wave 55 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). [Section 5](#).
- Total online job advert volumes decreased by 7% in the latest week, with decreases in all 12 English regions and UK countries; the largest weekly category decrease was in "HR and recruitment" (20%) (Adzuna). [Section 5](#).
- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas decreased by 22% in the week to 24 April 2022, with the level now 32% of that on 10 March 2022, when prices peaked in the rolling seven-day series; the SAP is 164% higher compared with the same period last year (week ending 25 April 2021) (National Grid).

Results presented in this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision. Data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure representativity and relevance, which may mean indicators change at short notice.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. The break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.
2. Because of the bank holiday, Adzuna online job adverts previously ran only to Thursday 14 April 2022. Caution is advised when comparing these data as this is not the Friday-to-Friday comparison period historically used.
3. Data for the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases are provisional for the week to 21 April 2022.
4. For the road traffic indicator, week-on-two-week (11 April 2022) comparisons are made this week to avoid comparing against the lower level of motor vehicle traffic seen in the previous week because of the Easter Monday bank holiday.

3 . Consumer behaviour

Almost all of the consumer behaviour metrics were down in the latest week. None of these data are seasonally adjusted and the latest week's falls follow increases in the previous week, which coincided with the Easter holidays in parts of the UK.

There was a week-on-week fall of 9 percentage points for UK credit and debit card spending, and the number of transactions in all UK Pret A Manger regional categories fell.

Seated diner numbers in the UK decreased by 5 percentage points according to OpenTable, with a 15-percentage point weekly fall in Manchester. Google Mobility data showed falls in visits to all locations except for parks, which increased by 8% on the previous week. Meanwhile, visits to retail stores and recreation areas, as well as grocery and pharmacy sites, were both down 7%.

UK spending on debit and credit cards: daily CHAPS-based indicator

These data series are experimental faster indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily CHAPS payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card transactions made by customers at their stores, both via physical and via online platforms. More information on the indicator is provided in the accompanying [Bank of England CHAPS methodology article](#).

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business:

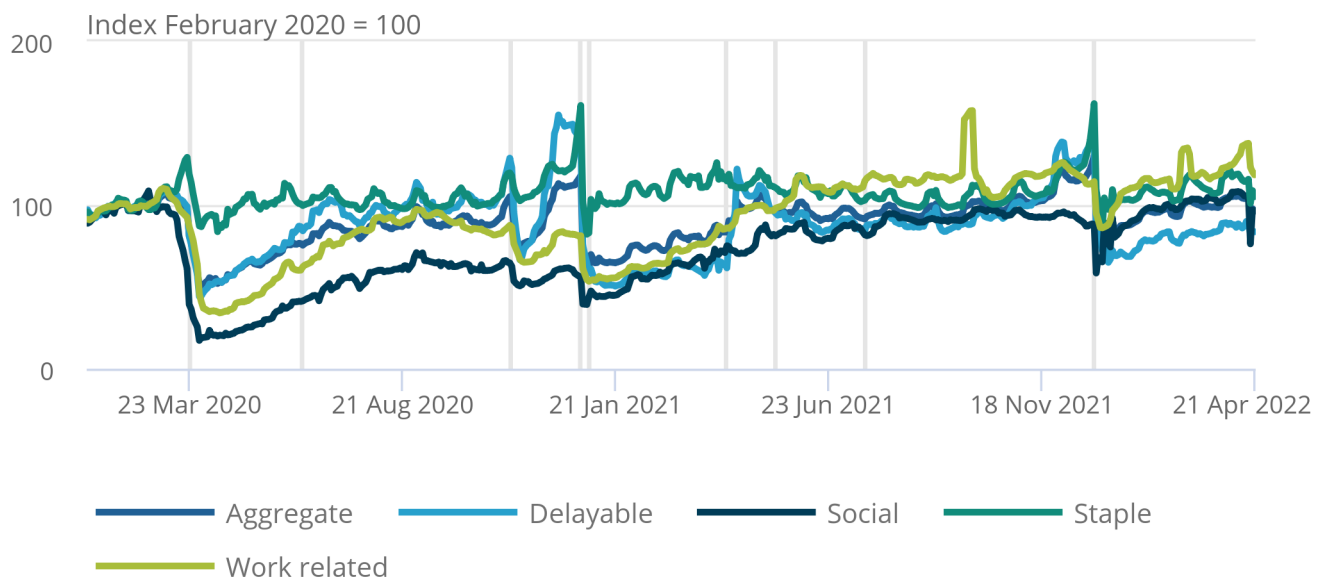
- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- "social" refers to spending on travel and eating out

Figure 1: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases decreased by 9 percentage points in the week to 21 April 2022 to 96% of its February 2020 average

Backward-looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 1: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases decreased by 9 percentage points in the week to 21 April 2022 to 96% of its February 2020 average

Backward-looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices



Source: ONS and Bank of England calculations

Notes:

1. Users should note the daily payment data is the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is a slight time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. The vertical lines indicate notable events and coronavirus (COVID-19) restriction changes.
3. Percentage point difference is derived from current week and previous week index before rounding.
4. Data are provisional for the week to 21 April 2022. Revisions are likely to be small but will be published in next week's bulletin.

Figure 1 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, "merchant acquirers".

The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases decreased in the week to 21 April 2022, by 9 percentage points from the previous week, to 96% of its February 2020 average level.

The spending categories recorded the following changes in the latest week:

- "work-related" decreased by 19 percentage points
- "staple" decreased by 11 percentage points
- "social" decreased by 9 percentage points
- "delayable" decreased by 6 percentage points

These weekly falls are most likely because of seasonal effects, following the Easter holidays in parts of the UK and coinciding with the end of the month.

"Work-related" and "staple" spending were above their February 2020 average levels at 118% and 105%, respectively. "Social" and "delayable" spending were below this level at 97% and 84%, respectively.

Transactions at Pret A Manger

Pret A Manger is a sandwich and coffee shop franchise chain, operating around 400 stores across the UK. Its transactional data are presented as an index and show total weekly till transactions at Pret A Manger shops as a proportion of the average weekly level in the first four weeks of 2020 (between Friday 3 January and Thursday 30 January 2020). Because of this comparison across the data time series, users should expect an element of seasonality in the data.

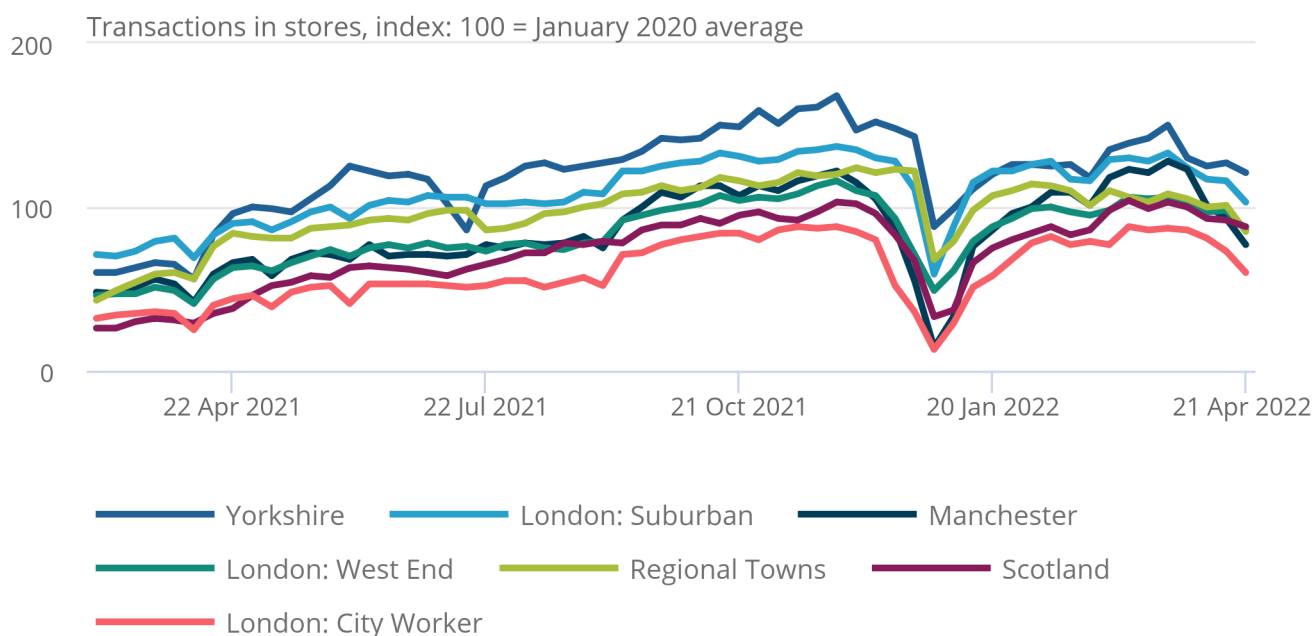
More information on the areas featured is available in [our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#). These data are also made available every Tuesday via the [Bloomberg](#) Pret Index.

Figure 2: Yorkshire had the highest number of transactions compared with their January 2020 average in the week to 21 April 2022, at 121%

Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

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Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Pret A Manger

Notes:

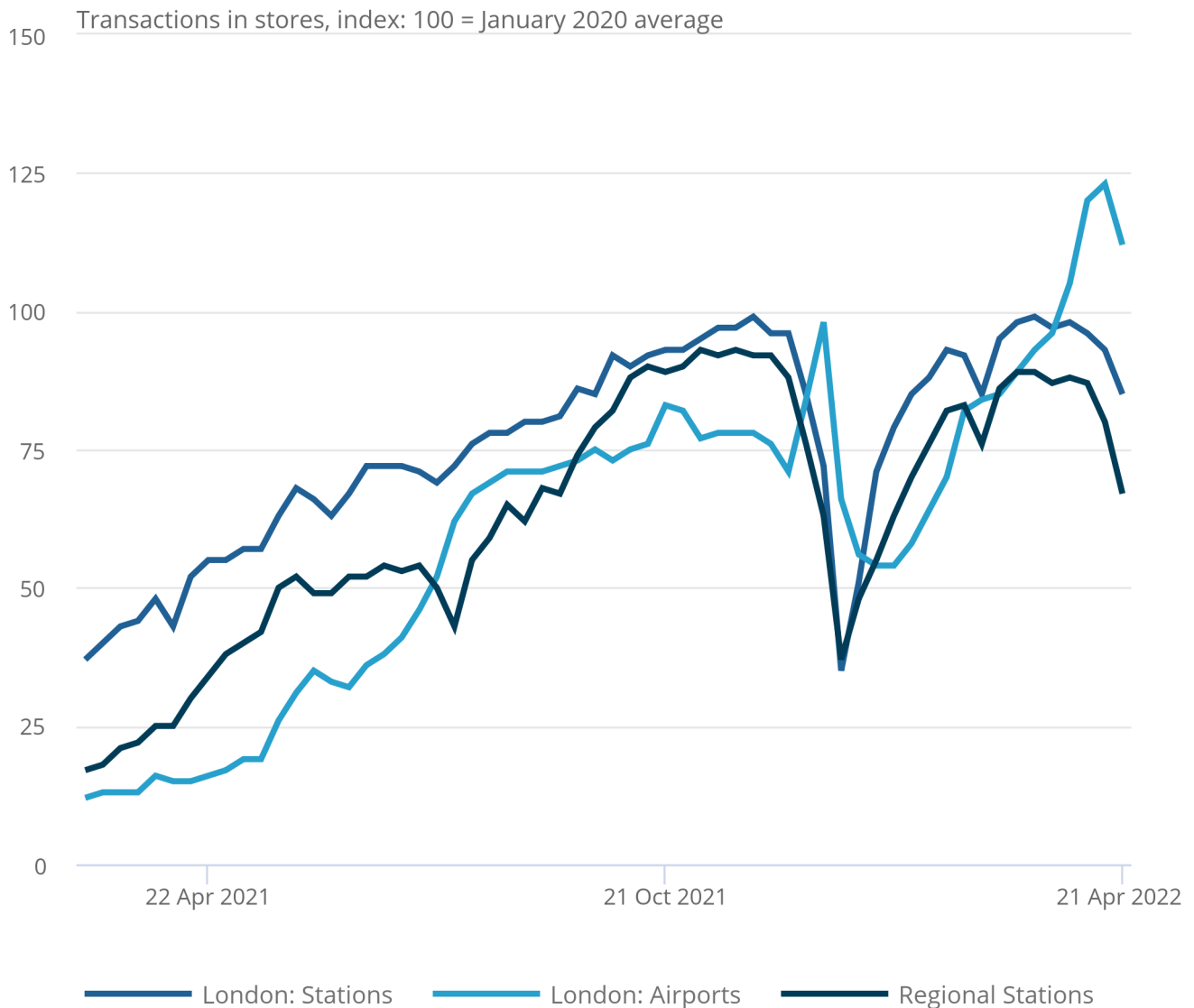
1. Dine-in services in England were suspended during the third national lockdown, which remained in place until Step 3 (17 May 2021) of England's roadmap out of lockdown.
2. Users should note not all store locations reopened as coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions were eased.
3. The index begins on 4 March 2021 as most stores were closed before this therefore the corresponding indices were mostly zero.

Figure 3: Transactions at stores in all transport locations decreased in the week to 21 April 2022 following the Easter Holidays

Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

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Transactions in Pret A Manger stores, UK, week ending 4 March 2021 to 21 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Pret A Manger

4 . Transport

Transport indicators showed a mixed picture this week. Total ship visits, and cargo and tanker ship visits decreased by 3% and 2%, respectively. Meanwhile, UK daily flights remained broadly similar to the previous week, at 82% of the equivalent week in 2019, despite reports of flight cancellations in recent weeks.

Road traffic volumes increased by 4 percentage points to 99% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020.

UK flight data

These data are daily flight figures from the [European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation \(EUROCONTROL\)](#). Daily flight numbers for the UK alongside other countries are available in [EUROCONTROL's dashboard](#). EUROCONTROL is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation. Its Aviation Intelligence and Performance Review Unit provides independent collection and validation of air navigation services performance-related data and intelligence gathering.

The flights data include international arrivals and departures to and from the UK (including Crown dependencies) and domestic UK flights but exclude overflights (flights that pass over UK territory). They capture all flight movements that operate under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), where the pilot uses instruments in the flight deck to control, guide and adjust the plane. This includes commercial flights carrying passengers and cargo as well as non-commercial flights such as private and military flights.

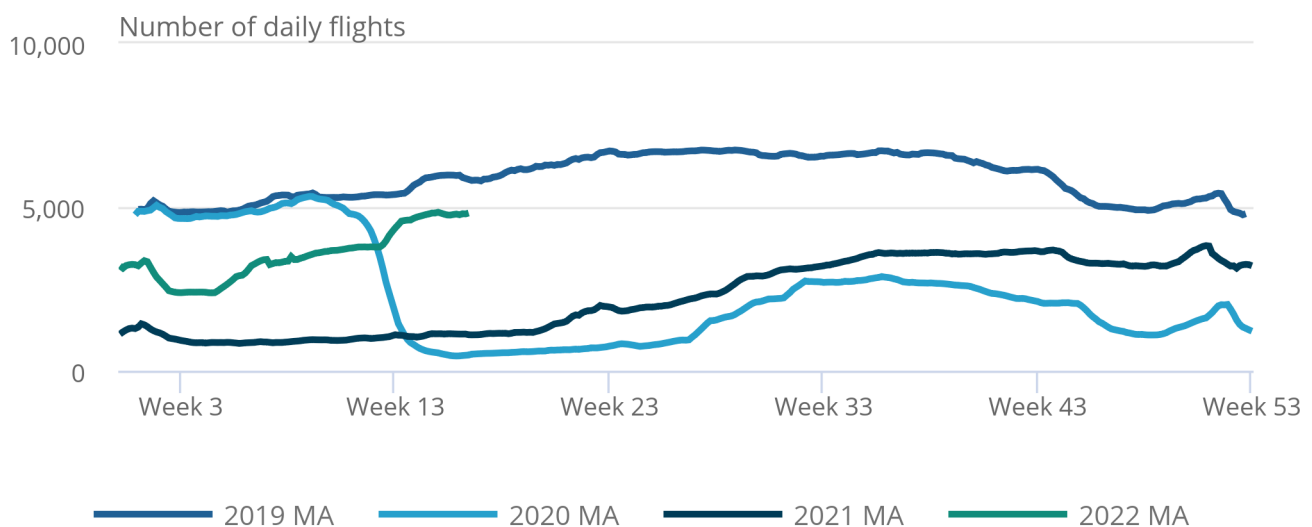
Data from EUROCONTROL do not include information on the volume of passengers or cargo carried on UK flights. Especially in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, flights might not be operating at full capacity and therefore trends in passengers and cargo will differ from trends in flights presented here.

Figure 4: The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 4,816 in the week to 24 April 2022; nine times higher than the equivalent week of 2020

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, seven-day moving average, 2 January 2019 to 24 April 2022, UK

Figure 4: The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 4,816 in the week to 24 April 2022; nine times higher than the equivalent week of 2020

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, seven-day moving average, 2 January 2019 to 24 April 2022, UK



Source: European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL)

Despite flight cancellations in recent weeks, the seven-day average number of UK daily flights remained broadly similar to the previous week (4,756) and was at 82% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019. Caution should be used when interpreting this figure as the latest period only includes Easter Monday, while the 2019 comparison includes the whole Easter holiday.

The full data time series available for UK flights can be found in [our accompanying UK daily flights dataset](#), which contains daily flight numbers and the rolling seven-day averages.

Road traffic in Great Britain

Week-on-two-week (11 April 2022) comparisons are made this week to avoid comparing against the lower level of motor vehicle traffic seen in the previous week because of the Easter Monday bank holiday.

The volume of all motor vehicle traffic on Monday 25 April 2022 increased by 4 percentage points, from two weeks ago on Monday 11 April 2022, to 99% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020, according to the Department for Transport (DfT) non-seasonally adjusted road traffic data.

Compared with 11 April 2022, traffic volumes for light commercial vehicles increased by 5 percentage points to 114% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020. Similarly, car traffic volume increased by 3 percentage points to 94% of the level on the same date, while heavy goods vehicle traffic was broadly unchanged at 108% of the level in the first week in February 2020.

Figure 5: The volume of all motor vehicle traffic on Monday 25 April 2022 was 99% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020

Daily road traffic index: 100 = same traffic as the equivalent day of the week in the first week of February 2020, 1 March 2020 to 25 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, Great Britain

Notes:

1. The blue shaded areas refer to periods when restrictions across the UK were in effect.

[Download the data](#)

The daily DfT estimates are indexed to the first week of February 2020 and the comparison is with the same day of the week. The data provided are useful as an indication of traffic change rather than actual traffic volumes. More information on the methods, quality and economic analysis for these indicators can be found in the [DfT methodology article](#).

5 . Business and workforce

Total online job advert volumes decreased by 7% in the latest week and were 134% of their February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level, likely resulting from the Easter break as well as wider inflation concerns and seasonality.

All 28 categories saw a decrease in the number of online job adverts on Friday 22 April 2022, the largest of which was in "HR and recruitment" (20%). There were also decreases in all 12 English regions and UK countries.

Almost one-fifth of the UK workforce (18%) was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working in March 2022, which is 3 percentage points higher than at the start of 2022.

Online job adverts

Job adverts by category

These figures are experimental estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine, by category and by UK country and English region. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to [Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\)](#) categories, so these values are not directly comparable with [the Office for National Statistics' \(ONS\) Vacancy Survey](#).

Figure 6: The total volume of online job adverts on 22 April 2022 decreased by 7% from the previous week, and was 134% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus average level

Volume of online job adverts by category, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 22 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Further category breakdowns are included in the [Online job advert estimates dataset](#) and more details on the methodology can be found in [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies](#).
2. Users should note that week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage point changes observed in the charts and [accompanying dataset](#).
3. Because of data collection issues, recent comparisons have alternated between Friday-to-Friday and Monday-to-Monday comparisons. Caution is advised when comparing data from 4 to 25 March and 8 to 14 April 2022. We have now reverted back to the usual Friday comparisons.

[Download the data](#)

All 28 categories saw a decrease in the number of online job adverts on Friday 22 April 2022. The largest decrease was in "HR and recruitment" (20%), followed by "accounting and finance" and "legal", which both decreased by 10%.

The categories with the highest level of online job adverts when compared with their February 2020 pre-coronavirus average levels were "transport, logistics and warehouse" at 243%, followed by "domestic help" at 214%.

Job adverts by region

Figure 7: Online job adverts decreased in all regions on 22 April 2022 from the previous week; the largest decrease was in Northern Ireland (9%)

Volume of online job adverts by UK countries and English regions index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 22 April 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

[Download the data](#)

The volume of online job adverts decreased in all 12 English regions and UK countries on 22 April 2022 when compared with the previous week. The largest decrease was in Northern Ireland (9%), followed by the South East, Wales and the West Midlands, which all decreased by 8%. Note that the Northern Ireland data display higher volatility than other English regions and UK countries.

Business impact and insights

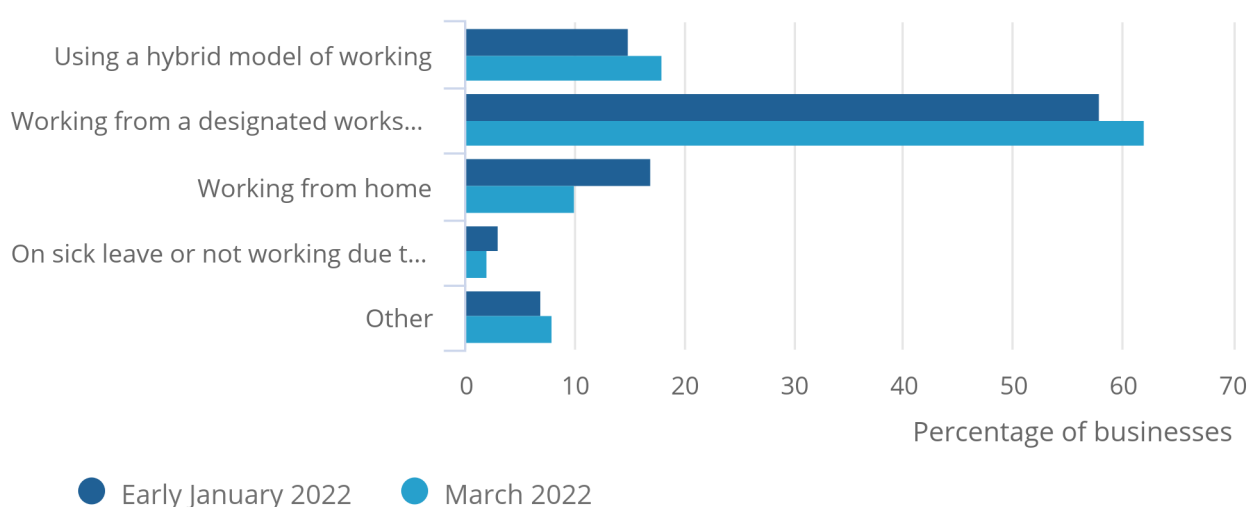
Initial results from Wave 55 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 1 to 31 March 2022, with a response rate of 20.2% (7,707 responses). The survey was live for the period 19 to 26 April 2022.

Figure 8: Almost one-fifth of the UK workforce (18%) was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working in March 2022, this is 3 percentage points higher than at the start of 2022

Working arrangements, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 1 March to 31 March 2022

Figure 8: Almost one-fifth of the UK workforce (18%) was estimated to be using a hybrid model of working in March 2022, this is 3 percentage points higher than at the start of 2022

Working arrangements, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by employment, UK, 1 March to 31 March 2022



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

Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 55 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding, percentages less than 1% being removed and some response options being removed for disclosure purposes.
3. "Other" includes all other arrangements not defined in the question.

Table 1: In March 2022, 21% of UK businesses currently trading reported that turnover was lower than its “normal range” for the time of year, with 13% reporting it was higher

Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 March to 31 March 2022

All Industries

Turnover increased	13%
Turnover stayed the same	55%
Turnover decreased	21%
Not sure	12%

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

Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 55 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Bars may not sum to 100% because of rounding.
3. From Wave 55, the question changed to ask about a specific calendar month rather than “over the last month, compared to normal expectations for this time of year” therefore data is not comparable to previous waves.

6 . Data

[Advance potential redundancies](#)

Dataset | Released 28 April 2022

Weekly dataset showing the number of potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, submitted to Insolvency Service via HR1 forms.

[Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 28 April 2022

Experimental daily traffic camera counts data for busyness indices covering the UK.

[System Average Price \(SAP\) of gas](#)

Dataset | Released 28 April 2022

Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in the UK.

[Weekly shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 28 April 2022

Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

[Transactions at Pret A Manger](#)

Dataset | Released 28 April 2022

Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

Users should note that this section lists a selection of the data available with this publication. For the full list of available datasets please see the [accompanying dataset page](#).

7 . Glossary

Faster indicator

A faster indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or Experimental Statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

8 . Measuring the data

Information on the methodology used to produce the indicators in this bulletin is available in [our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology](#).

9 . Strengths and limitations

These statistics have been produced to provide timely indicators of the effect of developing world events on the UK economy and society, using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or Experimental Statistics.

The data presented in this bulletin are reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. Indicators are swapped in and out of the publication based on their suitability and availability.

UK coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

A full overview of coronavirus restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries can be found:

- [coronavirus in England](#)
- [coronavirus in Scotland](#)
- [coronavirus in Wales](#)
- [coronavirus in Northern Ireland](#)

These restrictions should be considered when interpreting the data featured throughout this bulletin.

Seasonality

Seasonal fluctuations are likely to be present in many of these indicators so caution must be applied when interpreting changes in series that are not seasonally adjusted.

10 . Related links

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

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

Latest data on the coronavirus in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 April 2022

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 April 2022

Provisional counts of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released 22 April 2022

Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey (delivered in partnership with IQVIA, the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratories).