

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 18 March 2021

Early experimental data on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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## Correction

**19 March 2021 12:00**

A correction has been made to the title of figure 4, headline indicators from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), and the corresponding main point. The percentage of businesses currently trading was incorrectly said to be an increase from 72% in the previous wave (Wave 25). The percentage of businesses currently trading in both Wave 25 and Wave 26 was 74%. The title and main point have now been amended. No other estimates were impacted. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

# Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Online job adverts](#)
4. [UK spending on debit and credit cards](#)
5. [Business impacts and insights](#)
6. [Social impact of the coronavirus](#)
7. [Retail footfall](#)
8. [Shipping](#)
9. [Roads and traffic camera data](#)
10. [Company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications](#)
11. [Weekly online food and drink basket](#)
12. [Data](#)
13. [Glossary](#)
14. [Measuring the data](#)
15. [Strengths and limitations](#)
16. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Main points

- Total online job adverts on 12 March 2021 were at 93% of their average level in February 2020; this is the highest level observed since 12 March 2020, driven by rises across all UK countries and regions (Adzuna). [See Section 3.](#)
- The aggregated Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS)-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points from the previous week to 80% of its February 2020 average in the week to 11 March 2021 (Bank of England's CHAPS data). [See Section 4.](#)
- In initial results from Wave 26, 74% of UK businesses were currently trading, but still a much lower level than the 84% in mid-December 2020 (Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). [See Section 5.](#)
- The proportion of working adults in Great Britain who travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the last seven days has increased by 5 percentage points to 53% in the week ending 14 March 2021, when compared with the previous week (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)). [See Section 6.](#)
- UK retail footfall volumes in the week to 13 March 2021 increased to 47% of their level in the equivalent week of 2020, an increase of 5 percentage points from the previous week (Springboard). [See Section 7.](#)
- There was an average of 291 daily ship visits in the week ending 14 March 2021, a 17% decrease from the previous week; a similar fall of 15% was recorded between Week 10 and Week 11 of 2020, though this period last year coincides with the early impacts seen of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK (exactEarth). [See Section 8.](#)
- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 15 March 2021 saw a slight increase compared with the previous week but was still 22% below the level seen in the first week of February 2020 (Department for Transport (DfT)). [See Section 9.](#)
- Average counts of traffic camera activity for cars increased by 10% in London and 9% in the North East of England in the week ending 14 March 2021, when compared with the previous week (Transport for London, North East Traffic Cameras). [See Section 9.](#)
- There were 16,547 company incorporations in the UK in the week to 12 March 2021, a 13% decrease from the previous week; this is a fallback from a higher level in the previous week because of a backlog of applications (Companies House). [See Section 10.](#)

Results presented throughout this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision.

## 2 . Latest indicators at a glance

There have been some changes to indexing of the online job adverts data and seated diners data from this edition of the bulletin. For more details, see the [Measuring the data section](#).

## 3 . Online job adverts

The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. These figures use job adverts provided by [Adzuna](#), an online job search engine, and include [experimental estimates](#) of online job adverts by Adzuna category and by UK country and [NUTS1](#) region. 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.

## Methodological improvements

Users should note that, from the 18 March 2021 publication onwards, an improved process has been put in place to generate more accurate estimates of weekly job adverts by NUTS1 region. This change has been backdated so that it applies across the entirety of all indices, from 7 February 2018 onwards. More detail is provided on this in [Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies](#).

## Job adverts by category

**Figure 1: On 12 March 2021, the volume of online job adverts listed on Adzuna was at 93% of its average level in February 2020; the highest volume since 12 March 2020**

Index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, UK, 7 February 2020 to 12 March 2021

### Notes:

1. The observations were collected on a roughly weekly basis; however, before June 2020 they were not all observed at the same point in each week, leading to slightly irregular gaps between some observations.
2. Data have not been seasonally adjusted. Job adverts observed in February are generally representative of their level throughout the year.
3. These series have a small number of missing weeks in the data, the latest of which is in January 2020. Values for missing weeks have been imputed using linear interpolation. The data points that have been imputed are clearly marked in the accompanying dataset.
4. 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](#).
5. Job adverts data on 19 February 2021 were not used so have been imputed through linear interpolation.
6. February 2020 average job adverts were calculated using an arithmetic mean of the four recorded observations that month.

### [Data download](#)

According to Adzuna, on 12 March 2021, total online job adverts were at 93% of their average level in February 2020, an increase of 5 percentage points from 5 March 2021. This marks a continuation of the steady recovery in weekly job adverts observed since reaching their lowest point in May 2020 and is the highest volume of overall weekly job adverts observed on Adzuna since 12 March 2020.

Excluding the "unknown" category, compared with 5 March 2021 the volume of online job adverts increased in all Adzuna categories except "legal", which fell by 8 percentage points. On 12 March 2021 "legal" job adverts on Adzuna stood at 72% of their average level in February 2020.

The "transport, logistics and warehouse" category saw the largest week-on-week increase in weekly online job adverts of 23 percentage points to 159% of its average level in February 2020. This was followed by the "domestic help" and "energy, oil and gas" categories, which both saw week-on-week increases of 10 percentage points.

## Job adverts by country and region

### Figure 2: On 12 March 2021 the volume of online job adverts increased in all countries and regions of the UK compared with their level seven days prior

Index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, UK, 7 February 2020 to 12 March 2021

#### Notes:

1. There is a level shift in the Northern Ireland series from 17 October 2019 because of a large source of Northern Ireland job adverts being removed, and another level shift from 7 August 2020 because of a new source being included.
2. Data have not been seasonally adjusted. Job adverts observed in February are generally representative of their level throughout the year.
3. These series have a small number of missing weeks in the data, the latest of which is in January 2020. Values for missing weeks have been imputed using linear interpolation. The data points that have been imputed are clearly marked in the dataset.
4. Job adverts data on 19 February 2021 were not used so have been imputed through linear interpolation.
5. February 2020 average job adverts were calculated using an arithmetic mean of the four recorded observations that month.

#### [Data download](#)

According to Adzuna, on 12 March 2021, the volume of online job adverts increased in all UK regions and countries compared with 5 March 2021. Northern Ireland saw the largest week-on-week increase in online job adverts, by 15 percentage points. This was followed by the North East and West Midlands, which saw increases of 9 and 6 percentage points to 124% and 105% of their average level in February 2020, respectively. The smallest week-on-week changes were in Wales and Scotland, which both saw increases of 3 percentage points.

On 12 March 2021, online job adverts on Adzuna exceeded their February 2020 average level in Northern Ireland, the North East, the East Midlands, the West Midlands, Yorkshire and The Humber, and the South West. As a proportion of their pre-pandemic levels, on 12 March 2021, online job adverts were lowest in London, the South East, and Scotland, standing at 80%, 84% and 87% of their February 2020 average levels, respectively.

## 4 . UK spending on debit and credit cards

These data series are experimental faster indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily Clearing House Automated Payment System (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 methodology article](#).

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

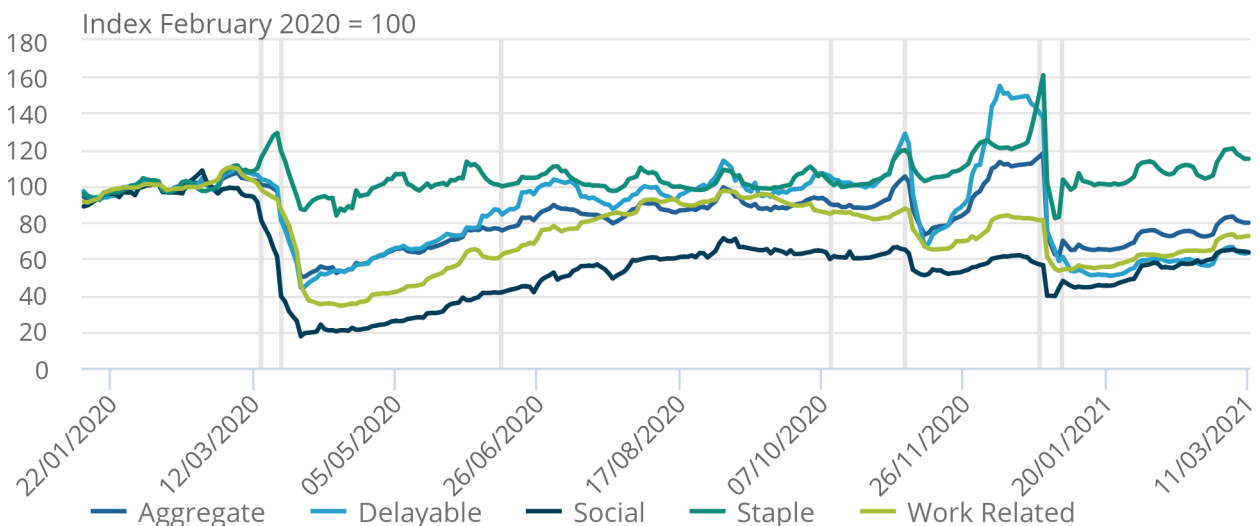
- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or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

**Figure 3: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points from the previous week to 80% of its February 2020 average in the week to 11 March 2021**

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 11 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 3: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points from the previous week to 80% of its February 2020 average in the week to 11 March 2021

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 11 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices



Source: Office for National Statistics 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 slight time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: PM COVID-19 announcement; Lockdown begins; Some non-essential shops allowed to reopen; Local COVID-19 alert levels; National restrictions begin in England; Christmas Eve; Lockdown begins in England and Scotland.
3. Percentage point difference is derived from current week and previous week index before rounding.

Figure 3 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, "merchant acquirers".

In the week to 11 March 2021, the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases in aggregate decreased 3 percentage points from the previous week to 80% of its February 2020 average, with a decline in all four individual consumption categories since the previous week. This follows last week's large increase that was primarily driven by an increase in "staples" coinciding with the turn of the month. Spending on "staples" normally reduces around this stage of the month after the earlier peak around the turn of the month. In the latest week, card spending on "staples" was at 115% of its February 2020 average. On the other hand, "delayable", "social" and "work-related" purchases were 63%, 63% and 72% of their levels in February 2020, respectively.

Since the substantial fall in spending at the beginning of 2021 that followed the Christmas period and introduction of national lockdowns across the UK, the CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases has gradually increased in all four consumption categories and remains above the troughs observed during the spring 2020 lockdown.

The full data time series available for data on UK spending on debit and credit cards can be found in the [accompanying dataset](#).

#### More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- [Explore the latest coronavirus data](#) from the ONS and other sources.
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

## 5 . Business impacts and insights

The initial results from Wave 26 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 22 February 2021 to 7 March 2021, with a response rate of 23.5% (9,170 responses). The survey was live for the period 8 to 16 March 2021.

These dates should be kept in mind in relation to local and national lockdown measures in place during the reference period and the date when the business responded. All four nations within the UK were subject to lockdowns during the reference and survey live periods.

For experimental single site weighted regional estimates that have been updated up to Wave 21 (29 December 2020 to 10 January 2021), please see [Understanding the business impacts of local and national restrictions: February 2021](#).

**Figure 4: 74% of businesses were currently trading in Wave 26, unchanged from the previous wave but still a much lower level than 84% in mid-December 2020**

Headline indicators from the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS), 22 February to 16 March 2021

**Notes:**

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 26 of Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period (22 February to 7 March 2021). However, for questions regarding the last two weeks (furlough estimates), businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (8 to 16 March 2021).
3. A detailed description of the weighting methodology and the weights used for each variable is available in [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\): preliminary weighted results](#).

#### [Data download](#)

The preliminary result of 19% of businesses' workforce on furlough leave in February 2021 equates to approximately 6 million people. These numbers are based on multiplying the BICS-weighted furlough proportions by the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) total annual employment. This will not be consistent with employment estimates from [Labour market statistics](#) as these are based on different sources over different time periods, but provides an indication of the use of furlough.

Additionally, the BICS proportion furloughed figure does not include the public sector, financial sector and parts of agriculture.

Across all UK industries in Wave 26:

- 72% of businesses had been trading for more than the last two weeks (unchanged from Wave 25)
- 2% of businesses had started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading (unchanged from Wave 25)
- 4% of businesses had paused trading but intend to restart in the next two weeks (broadly unchanged from Wave 25)
- 20% of businesses had paused trading and do not intend to restart in the next two weeks (broadly unchanged from Wave 25)
- 3% of businesses had permanently ceased trading (broadly unchanged from Wave 25)

Table 1 shows the financial performance of businesses currently trading.



Table 1: 42% of currently trading UK businesses reported a negative impact on their turnover compared with what is normally expected for this time of year

Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 22 February 2021 to 7 March 2021  
%

Turnover has increased by more than 50%	<1%
Turnover has increased between 20% and 50%	3%
Turnover has increased by up to 20%	6%
Turnover has not been affected	39%
Turnover has decreased by up to 20%	19%
Turnover has decreased between 20% and 50%	12%
Turnover has decreased by more than 50%	11%
Not sure	9%

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

#### Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 26 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS); businesses currently trading.
2. Table may not sum to 100% because of rounding and percentages less than 1% being removed for disclosure purposes.
3. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period 22 February to 7 March 2021. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (8 to 16 March 2021).

## 6 . Social impact of the coronavirus

This section includes some provisional results from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 10 to 14 March 2021. The survey went out to 6,025 adults in Great Britain and had a response rate of 75%.

Further information to help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain, will be available in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain published on 19 March 2021](#).

### Travelling to work

In the week ending 14 March 2021, the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who in the last seven days:

- travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) has increased by 5 percentage points from the previous week to 53%
- worked exclusively from home has decreased by 6 percentage points from the previous week to 30%
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home remains unchanged compared with last week at 16%

The increase in travel to work and decrease in work from home compared with the previous week coincides with schools re-opening in England from 8 March 2021.

## Shopping

Of the 94% of adults that reported they had left home in the last seven days, the proportion that did so to shop for food and medicine decreased slightly by 2 percentage points compared with last week to 74%.

The proportion of these adults who shopped for things other than food and medicine in the last seven days increased slightly compared with the previous week to 11%. This is a continuation of small, gradual increases observed since the week ending 24 January 2021 when the corresponding figure was 5%. The generally low level coincides with the ongoing lockdowns throughout England.

## 7 . Retail footfall

### National retail footfall

National footfall figures are supplied by [Springboard](#), a provider of data on customer activity. They measure the following for overall UK retail footfall, as well as by high street, retail park, and shopping centre categories:

- daily retail footfall as a percentage of its level on the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year; for example, Saturday 13 March 2021 is compared with Saturday 14 March 2020
- total weekly retail footfall as a percentage of its level in the equivalent week of the prior year; for example, footfall in Week 10 of 2021 is compared with its level in Week 10 of 2020
- the percentage change in weekly footfall compared with the previous week; for example, Week 10 of 2021 is compared with Week 9 of 2021
- Springboard's weekly data are defined over a seven-day period running from Sunday to Saturday; Week 10 of 2021 therefore refers to the period Sunday 7 March 2021 to Saturday 13 March 2021

**Figure 5: In the week to 13 March 2021, overall retail footfall in the UK was at 47% of its level in the equivalent week of 2020, an increase of 5 percentage points from last week**

Volume of retail footfall, percentage compared with the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, UK, 1 March 2020 to 13 March 2021



Source: Springboard and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

**Notes:**

1. The vertical lines indicate the following key events: first national lockdowns imposed; lockdown restrictions begin to ease across the UK; circuit-breaker lockdown in England; regional restrictions begin in England; national lockdown begins in England.
2. The spike on Monday 24 August 2020 was caused by the comparison with 26 August 2019, which was bank holiday Monday with good weather. The bank holiday this year was a week later, on 31 August 2020.
3. The spikes on 23 December and 30 December 2020 are because of the year-on-year comparison with 25 December 2019 and 1 January 2020 respectively, which were bank holidays.

According to Springboard, in the week to 13 March 2021, overall retail footfall in the UK was at 47% of its level in the equivalent week of 2020, an increase of 5 percentage points when compared with the value of the same index in the previous week.

Footfall at retail parks continues its relative strength compared with high streets and shopping centres. In the same seven-day period, footfall at retail parks was at 76% of its level in the equivalent week of 2020 whereas the corresponding figures for high streets and shopping centres were 40% and 36%, respectively. On Saturday 13 March 2021, footfall at retail parks reached 88% of its level in the equivalent day of 2020; this is the highest estimate since before Christmas, on 24 December 2020.

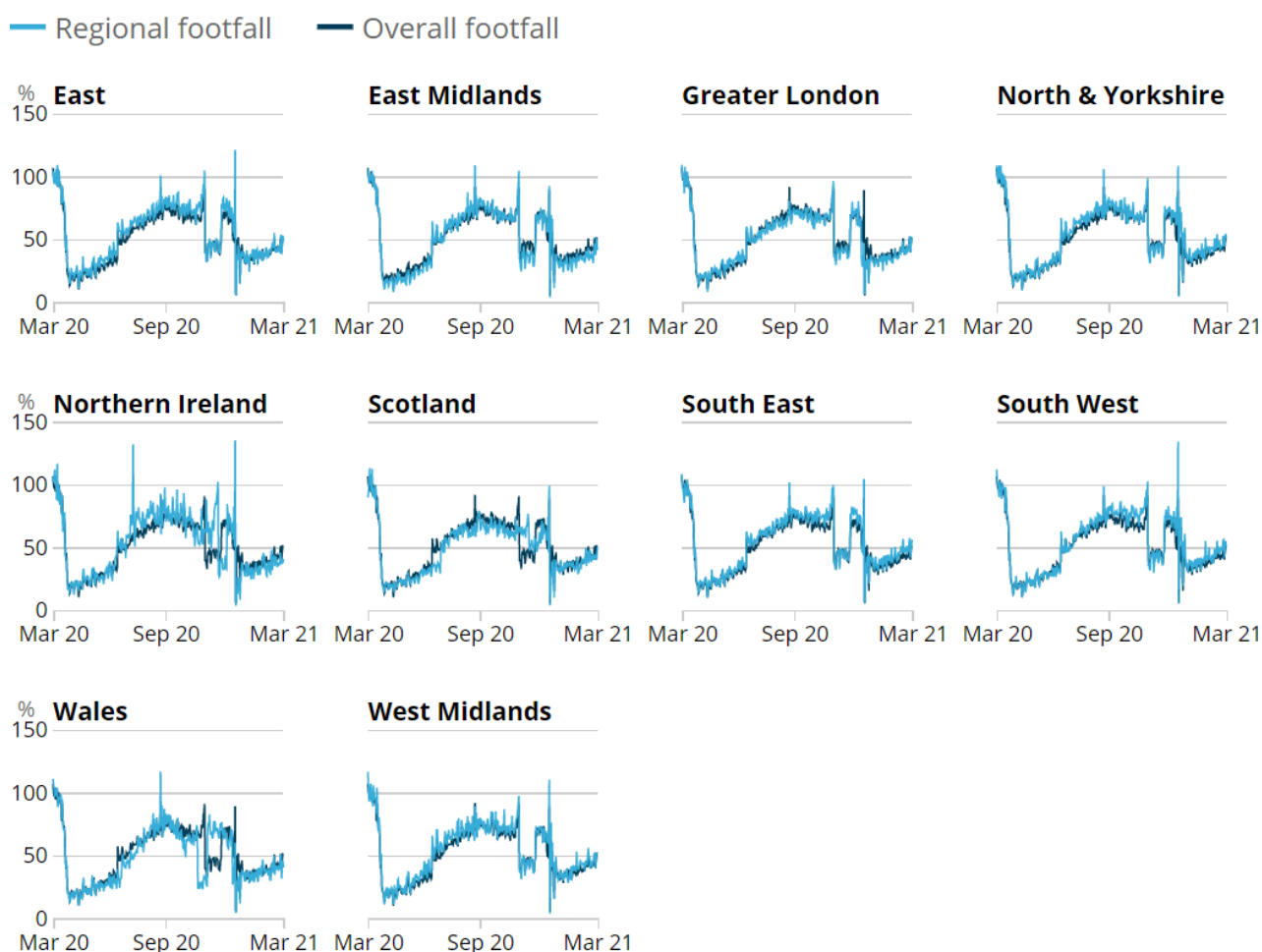
All retail locations saw a week-on-week increase in footfall, with shopping centres increasing by 10%, retail parks by 7% and high streets by 6% between the weeks ending 6 March and 13 March 2021.

## Regional retail footfall

Regional footfall figures are also supplied by Springboard and show the volume of overall retail footfall compared with the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, by UK region.

**Figure 6: In the week to 13 March 2021, daily retail footfall in all UK countries and regions continues to be substantially lower than its level in the equivalent period of 2020**

Volume of overall daily retail footfall, percentage of the level recorded on the same day of the equivalent week of the previous year, UK regions, 1 March 2020 to 13 March 2021



Source: Springboard and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

According to Springboard, daily retail footfall in all UK countries and regions continues to be substantially lower than its level in the equivalent period of 2020. However, there are large regional differences with some areas seeing stronger retail footfall than others.

Daily retail footfall was generally strongest in the South East, West Midlands, the North and Yorkshire, and Greater London. In contrast, it was generally weakest in the East Midlands, Northern Ireland and Wales.

For example, on Saturday 13 March 2021, retail footfall in the East Midlands was at 41% of its level recorded on the Saturday of the equivalent week of 2020, whereas the corresponding figure for Greater London was 51%. Users should note that this comparison has been made using figures for Saturday as this is typically the busiest day of the week for retail locations.

## 8 . Shipping

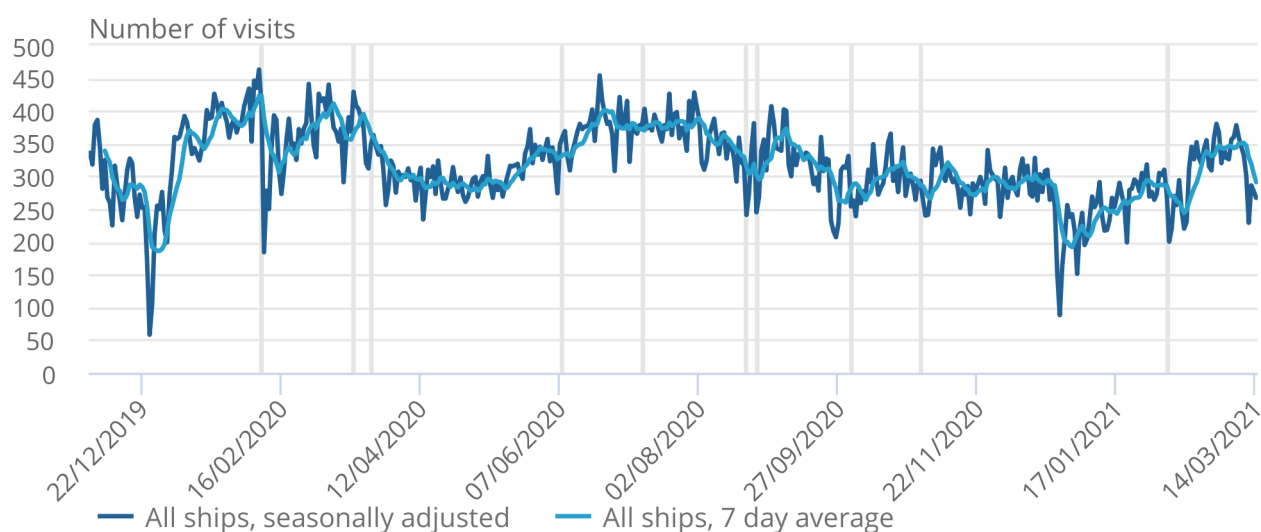
These shipping indicators are based on counts of all vessels, and cargo and tanker vessels. As discussed in [Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping](#), we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

**Figure 7: There was an average of 291 daily ship visits in the week ending 14 March 2021, a 17% decrease from the previous week and 18% lower than the same period a year ago**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 14 March 2021

Figure 7: There was an average of 291 daily ship visits in the week ending 14 March 2021, a 17% decrease from the previous week and 18% lower than the same period a year ago

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 14 March 2021



Source: exactEarth

In the week ending 14 March 2021, the seven-day average of all daily shipping visits was 291, a decrease of 17% from the previous week and 18% lower than the same period a year ago. This fall from the previous week can be attributed to reduced activity in numerous UK ports including Southampton, Portsmouth, and Grimsby and Immingham, and may have been affected by the strong winds on 11 March 2021.

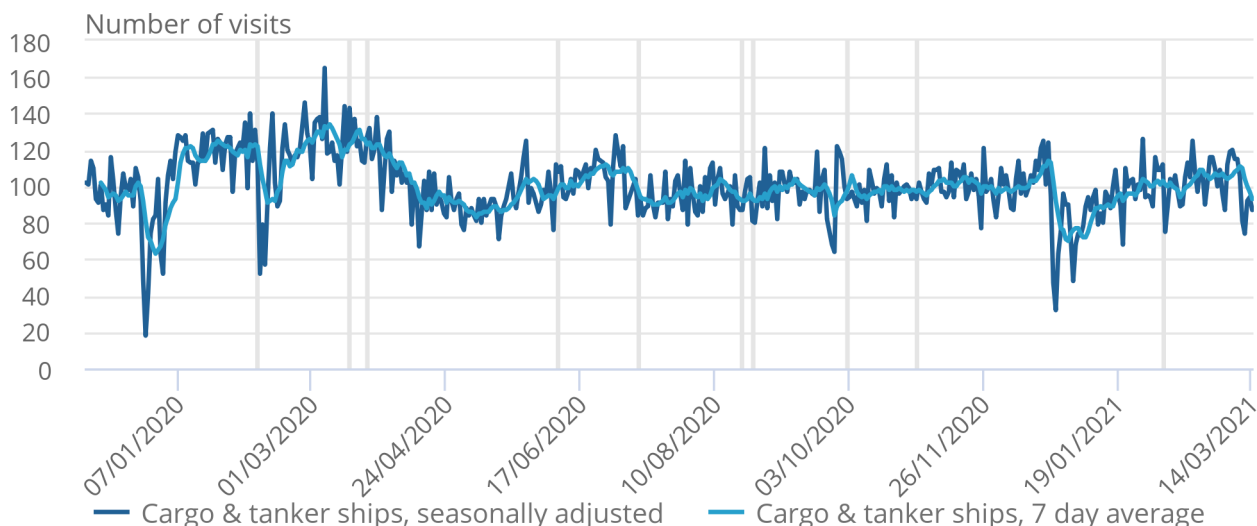
This large fall in the latest week follows the steady growth seen in recent weeks and more generally the strong upward trend seen since the beginning of the year. It should be noted that a comparable fall was recorded between Week 10 and Week 11 of 2020 when the seven-day average of all daily shipping visits decreased by 15% from 411 visits to 356 visits. However, the equivalent week last year coincides with the early impacts seen of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK.

**Figure 8: There was on average of 93 cargo and tanker ship visits in the week ending 14 March 2021, a 14% decrease from the previous week and 23% lower than the same period a year ago**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 14 March 2021

Figure 8: There was on average of 93 cargo and tanker ship visits in the week ending 14 March 2021, a 14% decrease from the previous week and 23% lower than the same period a year ago

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 14 March 2021



Source: exactEarth

#### Notes:

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: Storm Ciara; FCO advises against all non-essential international travel; Lockdown begins; UK international travel quarantine begins; travel corridors to 59 countries come into force; Storm Ellen; Storm Francis; Storm Alex; Storm Aiden; Storm Darcy.
2. The number of visits for Hull are included in these data from 1 June 2020 onwards.
3. The seasonally adjusted estimates are produced using a modified version of the seasonal adjustment method TRAMO-SEATS. More information is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society methodology](#).
4. The seasonal adjustment method may be limited as this is a short time series.
5. Daily and weekly shipping visits and unique visits are available by port in the [dataset](#), along with non-seasonally adjusted aggregate series.
6. The trend is now calculated as a rolling seven-day average of the number of daily ship and cargo and tanker ship visits. The presentation of the series has been shifted three days forward, this does not affect the calculation of the average.
7. Users should note that a reduction in shipping activity has been observed over the Christmas periods in 2019 and 2020.

In the week ending 12 March 2021, the seven-day average of all daily cargo and tanker ship visits was 93, a 14% decrease from the 108 visits recorded the previous week. It is also 23% lower than the level observed in the same period last year when 120 visits were recorded for the week ending 15 March 2020. As with total ship visits, this weekly fall follows a steady recovery since the beginning of the year. Again, it should be noted that a similar dip in the number of cargo and tanker visits was observed between Week 10 and Week 11 of 2020, though this period coincided with the early impacts seen of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK.

## **9 . Roads and traffic camera data**

### **Road traffic in Great Britain**

According to Department for Transport (DfT) non-seasonally adjusted road traffic data, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic as of Monday 15 March 2021 saw a slight weekly increase to 78% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020. This is a continuation of the recent upward trend but is still below pre-Christmas levels and 22% below the level seen in the first week of February 2020.

Car and light commercial vehicle traffic each showed slight increases on the previous week's figures. Cars saw an increase of 2 percentage points to 72% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020, whereas light commercial vehicles increased slightly by 1 percentage point to 94% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020. Heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) saw no change, remaining at 105% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020.

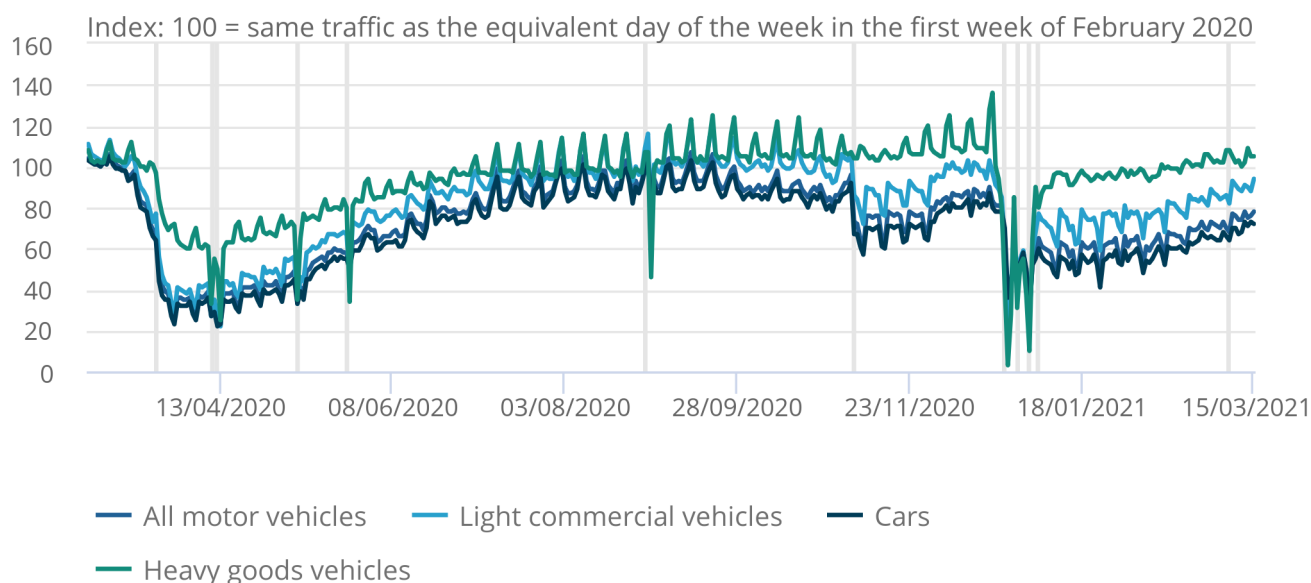


**Figure 9: The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 15 March 2021 saw a slight increase compared with the previous week, but was still 22% below its level in the first week of February 2020**

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 15 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 9: The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 15 March 2021 saw a slight increase compared with the previous week, but was still 22% below its level in the first week of 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 15 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted



Source: Department for Transport – road traffic statistics: management information

#### Notes:

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, these events are: First National lockdowns imposed; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Bank holiday; Bank holiday; National restrictions begin in England; Christmas Day; Boxing Day; New Year's Day; Lockdowns announced in England and Scotland; England re-opens schools.
2. For full details on the dates when countries/regions entered their respective tiers and restrictions refer to [section 14: UK regional lockdown restrictions](#).

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](#).

## Traffic camera activity

Traffic cameras are a valuable source for understanding the level of activity in towns and cities as well as changing patterns of mobility. The UK has thousands of publicly accessible traffic cameras with providers ranging from national agencies to local authorities. Further information on the methodology used to produce these data is available in our [methodology article](#) and [Data Science Campus blog](#).

In the [accompanying dataset](#), the following categories are available as non-seasonally adjusted, seasonally adjusted and trend data:

- cars
- motorbikes (only available for London and the North East)
- buses
- trucks
- vans
- pedestrians and cyclists

The categories are available for the following regions, which give a broad coverage across the UK and represent a range of different-sized settlements in urban and rural settings:

- [London](#)
- [Greater Manchester](#)
- [North East](#)
- [Northern Ireland](#)
- [Southend](#)
- [Reading](#)

**Figure 10: Average counts of traffic camera activity for cars increased by 10% in London and 9% in the North East of England in the week ending 14 March 2021, when compared with the previous week**

Traffic camera activity in selected areas, daily counts of cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists, UK, seasonally adjusted, March 2020 to March 2021

**Notes:**

1. The three regions shown here were selected to be representative of the 6 regions available.
2. Traffic camera images capture the appearance of buses, but they give no indication of the number of passengers using public transport.
3. Because of technical issues data for Northern Ireland on 6 March 2021 are mostly imputed.

[Data download](#)

In the week ending 14 March 2021, average counts of traffic activity for cars increased in London by 10% and the North East of England by 9%, whilst Northern Ireland remained broadly unchanged when compared with the previous week.

Average counts of traffic activity for buses also increased in both the North East and London by 4%, with Northern Ireland again remaining broadly unchanged when compared with last week. The increase in traffic camera activity for cars and buses compared with the previous week coincides with schools re-opening in England from 8 March 2021.

The level of pedestrians and cyclists remained similar in the latest week for both London and the North East, whilst that for Northern Ireland decreased by 22%. However, caution should be taken when interpreting this weekly change for Northern Ireland because of the relatively low numbers of counts.

Average counts of traffic activity for cars are now at 86% of the average level seen between 11 March and 22 March 2020 (before the first lockdown) for both London and the North East. In the North East, the equivalent figure for buses is now at 104%, whilst London is at 87% of its pre-lockdown average. An equivalent comparison cannot be made for Northern Ireland as data are only available from May 2020.

## **10 . Company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications**

### **Incorporations**

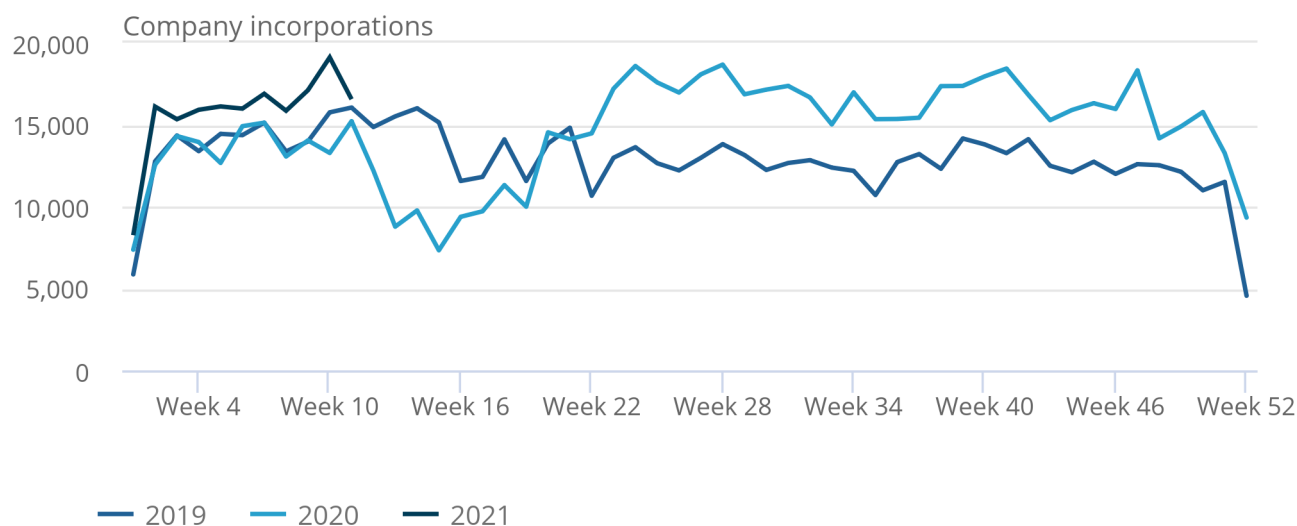
According to Companies House, in the week to Friday 12 March 2021, there were 16,547 company incorporations in the UK, a 13% decrease from the previous week but still higher than the equivalent weeks in 2019 and 2020 by 3% and 9%, respectively. This is a fallback from a higher level in the previous week because of a backlog of applications.

**Figure 11: There were 16,547 company incorporations in the UK in the week to 12 March 2021, a 13% decrease from the previous week**

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 12 March 2021

**Figure 11: There were 16,547 company incorporations in the UK in the week to 12 March 2021, a 13% decrease from the previous week**

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 12 March 2021



Source: Companies House and Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Week 1 refers to the period week ending 4 January 2019, 3 January 2020 and 1 January 2021. Week 11 refers to the period week ending 15 March 2019, 13 March 2020 and 12 March 2021.
2. The dips in December 2019 and December 2020 are explained by two bank holidays in the week ending 27 December 2019 and 25 December 2020.
3. Weekly data are for week commencing Saturday to Friday, as incorporation requests received on Saturdays and Sundays are typically processed on subsequent weekdays. For more information, see the accompanying [Companies House methodology page](#).

## Voluntary dissolution applications

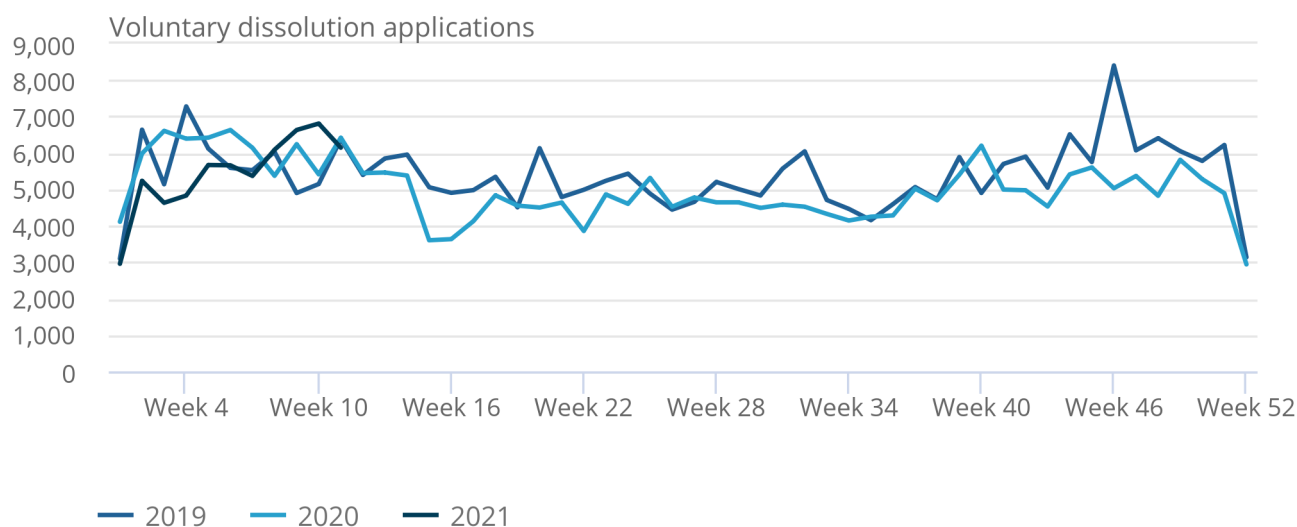
In the week to Friday 12 March 2021, there were 6,144 voluntary dissolution applications in the UK according to Companies House. This is a 10% decrease from the previous week and 4% lower than the number of voluntary dissolution applications observed in the equivalent weeks of 2019 and 2020. Despite this fall, as with last week, the continued high number of voluntary dissolutions can in part be attributed to a backlog of applications being processed.

**Figure 12: In the week to Friday 12 March 2021 there were 6,144 voluntary dissolution applications, a 10% decrease from the previous week**

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 12 March 2021

Figure 12: In the week to Friday 12 March 2021 there were 6,144 voluntary dissolution applications, a 10% decrease from the previous week

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 12 March 2021



Source: Companies House and Office for National Statistics

#### Notes:

1. Week 1 refers to the period week ending 4 January 2019, 3 January 2020 and 1 January 2021. Week 11 refers to the period week ending 15 March 2019, 13 March 2020 and 12 March 2021.
2. The dips in December 2019 and December 2020 are explained by two bank holidays in the week ending 27 December 2019 and 25 December 2020.
3. Weekly data are weeks from Saturday to Friday, as voluntary dissolution requests received on Saturdays and Sundays are typically processed on subsequent weekdays. For more information, see the accompanying [Companies House methodology page](#).
4. Increased Companies House operational activity during week ending 8 November 2019 caused a spike in total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications. This data point should be treated with caution.

## 11 . Weekly online food and drink basket

A timely indication of weekly online price change for a selection of food and drink products from several large UK retailers has been developed, covering the period 1 June 2020 to 14 March 2021. Details of the methodology used for these indicators can be found in [Online price changes methodology](#). This analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our [regular monthly consumer price statistics](#).

The data time series, weekly growth rates, and contributions to the weekly change for all individual food and drink items, along with sample sizes, are published in a [dataset](#) alongside this release.

The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket decreased by 0.1% between the week ending 14 March 2021 and the previous week, with six categories providing negative contributions to the overall price movement, three providing positive contributions and five making negligible contributions to the overall movement.

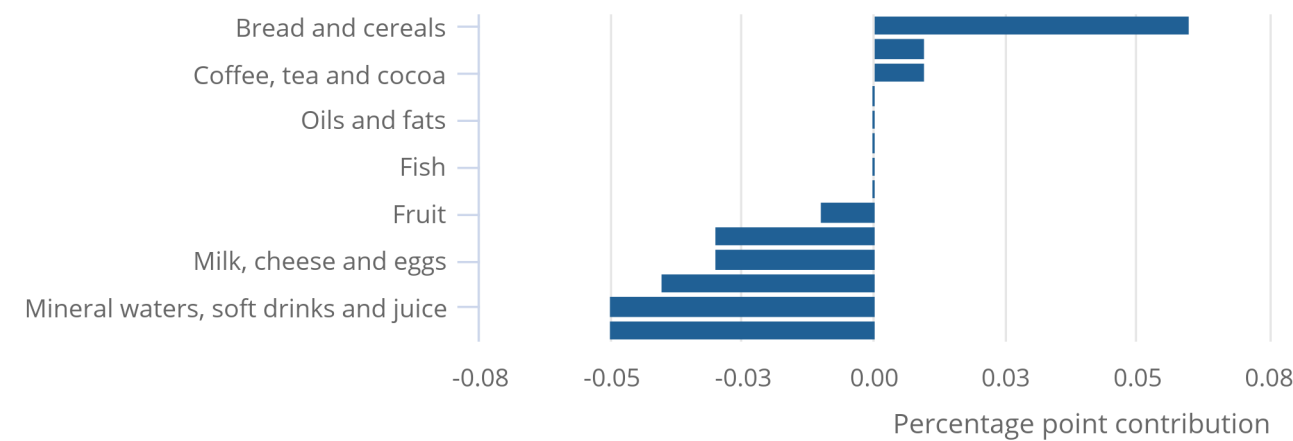
Users should note there is currently a data processing issue with the “Ready meal” index, which has resulted in missing data affecting the current week, plus the previous five weeks. This is expected to be corrected by next week, with no expected impact on the main drivers for price movements for this and previous publications.

**Figure 13: The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket decreased by 0.1% in the latest week**

Percentage point contributions to online price changes for food and drink, UK, between the week ending 7 March 2021 and the week ending 14 March 2021

Figure 13: The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket decreased by 0.1% in the latest week

Percentage point contributions to online price changes for food and drink, UK, between the week ending 7 March 2021 and the week ending 14 March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics - Online price collection

Notes:

- Contributions may not always sum to the weekly change, as a result of rounding.

The main downward contributors to the overall price movement in the latest week were “mineral waters, soft drinks and juices”, where prices fell by 0.7%, and “meat”, where prices fell by 0.4%. Both categories contributed negative 0.05 percentage points to the overall price movement. For “meat”, this price decrease was because of falling prices for over half of its sub-categories; particularly for bacon, lamb and ham portions, as well as meat snacks and pies. For “mineral waters, soft drinks and juices”, the fall was mainly driven by a decrease in the price of fruit juices and fruit squash.

The main offsetting category was “bread and cereals”, which experienced a 0.4% price increase and contributed positive 0.06 percentage points to the overall price movement. The main driver behind this was the rising price of breakfast cereal at three retailers.

## 12 . Data

### [UK spending on credit and debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

These data series are experimental faster indicators for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) data.

### [Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

The weekly and daily shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

### [Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

Experimental dataset for busyness indices covering the UK

### [Online weekly price changes](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

The online price changes for a selection of food and drink products from several large UK retailers. These data are experimental estimates developed to deliver timely indicators to shed light on changes in prices at online retailers faced by consumers.

### [Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

### [Company incorporations and voluntary dissolutions](#)

Dataset | Released 18 March 2021

Weekly dataset showing the number of Companies House Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolution applications accepted.

## 13 . Glossary

### Company incorporations

Incorporations are when a company is added to the Companies House register of limited companies. This can also include where an existing business applies to become a limited company, where it was not one before.

### 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.

## Voluntary dissolution applications

A voluntary dissolution application is when a company applies to begin dissolution proceedings. As such, they effectively chose to be removed from the Companies House register. For a company to be eligible to voluntarily dissolve, it should not have completed any trading activity for a period of three months.

## 14 . Measuring the data

### Indexing update

Users should note the following indexing changes that have been implemented in this week's bulletin:

### Online job adverts

From 18 March 2021 onwards, online job advert figures have been indexed to their average level in February 2020. This change applies to both job advert estimates by category and region. Previously online job advert estimates were indexed to their level recorded the year before. The re-indexing has been carried out to avoid comparing online job advert estimates against their level after the onset of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, when a substantial fall was observed across categories as well as countries and regions. However, we will continue to publish year-on-year indices for online job adverts by region and category [in the online job adverts dataset](#).

### Seated diners

OpenTable have revised the indices they publish so that seated diners are always compared with their level on the same day of the equivalent week of 2019. Previously their indices were year-on-year, meaning that seated diners in 2021 were compared against their level in 2020. This change was put in place to enable comparisons of the volume of seated diners against pre-pandemic levels, rather than after the onset of the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

### End of EU exit transition period

As the transition period ends and the UK enters into a new Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, the UK statistical system will continue to produce and publish our wide range of economic and social statistics and analysis. We are committed to continued alignment with the highest international statistical standards, enabling comparability both over time and internationally, and ensuring the general public, statistical users and decision makers have the data they need to be informed.

### UK regional lockdown restrictions

The following is a summary of coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions in each of the four UK constituent countries between Monday 1 March and Monday 8 March 2021.

A full list of national restrictions is available for [England from gov.uk](#), for [Scotland from the Scottish Government](#), for [Wales the Welsh Government](#) and for [Northern Ireland from nidirect](#).

### Restrictions as of Monday 1 March 2021



## Scotland

- All of mainland Scotland and the Western Isles are under full lockdown restrictions. Orkney and the Shetland Islands are under Level 3 restrictions.
- All arrivals from outside of the Common Travel Area (UK and Ireland) must self-isolate for 10 days at a managed quarantine hotel.

## Wales

- All of Wales is under Alert Level 4 restrictions, equivalent to a national lockdown.
- Travellers who have been in a [red list country](#) in the last 10 days are not allowed into Wales and must self-isolate for 10 days in a managed quarantine hotel in either England or Scotland.
- Arrivals from other countries not on the red list must self-isolate for 10 days and undertake testing.

## England

- England is under a full national lockdown.
- UK and Irish nationals arriving from [red list countries](#) must quarantine at hotels selected by the government. With some exceptions, non-UK and non-Irish nationals are not permitted to travel to the UK from red list countries.
- Arrivals from other countries must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

## Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland is under a full national lockdown.
- Arrivals from other countries outside of the Common Travel Area must self-isolate at home for 10 days and are required to present evidence of a negative COVID test before boarding planes.

## 8 March 2021

### England

- Schools and colleges reopen to all students.

## 13 March 2021

### Wales

- Alert Level 4 restrictions replaced with "stay local" rule.

Detailed information on the data sources, quality and methodology of the different indicators included in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#).

We will summarise any crucial updates to the quality or methodology in this section in the future.

## 15 . Strengths and limitations

Detailed information on the strengths and limitations of the different indicators included in this bulletin is available in the [Coronavirus and the latest indicators of the UK economy and society methodology](#).

We will summarise any crucial updates or warnings in this section in the future.

### Indexing update

As highlighted in [Section 14](#), we will be updating how we construct indices for some of the indicators in this bulletin in upcoming releases. At present some indicators are presented as year-on-year indices, allowing comparison of their observed level in a given day, week or year of 2021 against their recorded volume in the corresponding period of a "normal" year, before the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

However, from mid-to-late March, this year-on-year approach to indexing will result in comparing 2021 observations against their levels after the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, those indices would no longer be compared with a pre-pandemic baseline. To help with this issue, we will be making changes to the following indicators.

### Retail footfall

We will publish additional indices from Springboard comparing retail footfall against its level in the corresponding period of 2019, as well as 2020. This will allow us to analyse how retail footfall is faring compared with its level pre-pandemic in 2019, as well as against its level in 2020 when COVID restrictions were in place. We anticipate this change to be made sometime in April.

## 16 . Related links

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

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

### [Business insights and impacts on the UK economy: 11 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | 11 March 2021

Latest analysis on responses from the voluntary fortnightly Business insights and impacts on the UK economy survey, which captures businesses' responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 12 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | 12 March 2021

Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

### [Business insights and conditions Survey \(BICS\) questions](#)

Article | Last updated 8 March 2021

Latest questions from the Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey relating to the Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society bulletin.

### [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 5 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 March 2021

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

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey UK: 12 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 12 March 2021

Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with IQVIA, Oxford University and UK Biocentre.