

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 1 April 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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## Notice

### 31 March 2021

Users should note that next week's bulletin (8 April) will be reduced because of the upcoming Easter bank holiday weekend. Datasets will still be available, but analysis within the bulletin will be reduced to main points (Section 1) and the data dashboard (Section 2) only. Content will be included as normal in the following week's release (15 April).

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# 1 . Main points

- Initial results from Wave 27 show that 40% of currently trading UK businesses reported a negative impact on their turnover compared with what is normally expected for this time of year; this is a slight decrease from 42% in the previous wave (Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)). [See Section 3.](#)
- 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 slightly to 53% in the week ending 28 March 2021, when compared with the previous week (Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)). [See Section 4.](#)
- In the week to 25 March 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases stood at 78% of its February 2020 average (Bank of England's CHAPS data). [See Section 5.](#)
- Retail footfall was strongest in the East of England compared with other UK regions and countries in the week to 27 March 2021, standing at 47% of its level in the equivalent period of 2019; it was relatively weakest in Northern Ireland, with a corresponding figure of 36% (Springboard). [See Section 6.](#)
- Total UK online job adverts stood at 96% of their February 2020 average level, an increase of 2 percentage points; this was driven by increases on the week across all UK NUTS1 regions except London (Adzuna). [See Section 7.](#)
- The volume of motor vehicle traffic on Monday 29 March 2021 was 4 percentage points higher than the previous week, standing at 84% of the level seen in the first week of February 2020; this is the highest level seen since December 2020 (Department for Transport (DfT)). [See Section 8.](#)
- Average daily traffic camera activity in London in the week ending 28 March 2021 increased to similar levels seen before the first lockdown (Transport for London). [See Section 8.](#)
- There was an average of 356 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 March 2021, broadly unchanged from the previous week; this follows the gradual upward trend seen since the low shipping activity at the beginning of the year (exactEarth). [See Section 9.](#)
- In the week to 26 March 2021, there were 16,944 company incorporations and 6,043 voluntary dissolutions, a 7% and 15% increase from the previous week, respectively (Companies House). [See Section 10.](#)

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

## 2 . Latest indicators at a glance

From the week to 21 March 2021, there has been a change to the data processing method for Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) lodgements for both existing and new dwellings. Please see our [methodology page](#) for more details.

## 3 . Business impacts and insights

Initial results from Wave 27 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 8 to 21 March 2021, with a response rate of 23.8% (9,282 responses). The survey was live for the period 22 to 30 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.

For experimental single site weighted regional estimates that have been updated up to Wave 26 (22 February to 21 March 2021), please see [Understanding the business impacts of local and national restrictions: March 2021](#).

## **Figure 1: 75% of businesses were currently trading in Wave 27, broadly 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), 8 to 30 March 2021

### **Notes:**

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 27 of Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).
2. Businesses were asked for their experiences for the reference period (8 to 21 March 2021). However, for questions regarding the last two weeks (furlough estimates), businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (22 to 30 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.](#)

### [Download the data](#)

The preliminary result of 19% of businesses' workforce on furlough leave in March 2021 equates to approximately 6.2 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.

Across all UK industries in Wave 27:

- 73% of businesses had been trading for more than the last two weeks (broadly unchanged from Wave 26)
- 2% of businesses had started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading (unchanged from Wave 26)
- 4% of businesses had paused trading but intend to restart in the next two weeks (unchanged from Wave 26)
- 18% of businesses had paused trading and do not intend to restart in the next two weeks (broadly unchanged from Wave 26)
- 3% of businesses had permanently ceased trading (unchanged from Wave 26)

Table 1: 40% of currently trading UK businesses reported a negative impact on their turnover compared with what is normally expected for this time of year, a slight decrease from 42% in Wave 26  
Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by turnover, UK, 8 to 21 March 2021

	%
<b>Turnover has increased by more than 50%</b>	<1%
<b>Turnover has increased between 20% and 50%</b>	2%
<b>Turnover has increased by up to 20%</b>	7%
<b>Turnover has not been affected</b>	41%
<b>Turnover has decreased by up to 20%</b>	17%
<b>Turnover has decreased between 20% and 50%</b>	12%
<b>Turnover has decreased by more than 50%</b>	10%
<b>Not sure</b>	9%

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

## Notes:

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 27 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 8 to 21 March 2021. However, for questions regarding the last two weeks, businesses may respond from the point of completion of the questionnaire (22 to 30 March 2021).

## 4 . Social impact of the coronavirus

This section includes some provisional results from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 24 to 28 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](#) due to be published 6 April 2021.

### Travelling to work

In the week ending 28 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) increased slightly by 2 percentage points from the previous week to 53%
- worked exclusively from home remained broadly unchanged from the previous week at 31%
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home remained unchanged from the previous week at 17%

This week saw minimal changes in those measures compared with the previous week, but still a gradual continuation in the trend away from working from home towards travelling to work.

## Shopping

Of the 93% of adults that reported they had left home in the last seven days, the proportion that did so to shop for food and medicine remained broadly unchanged compared with the previous week at 75%.

The proportion of these adults who shopped for things other than food and medicine in the last seven days saw a slight increase of 2 percentage points compared with the previous week at 13%.

## 5 . 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 [methodology article](#).

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

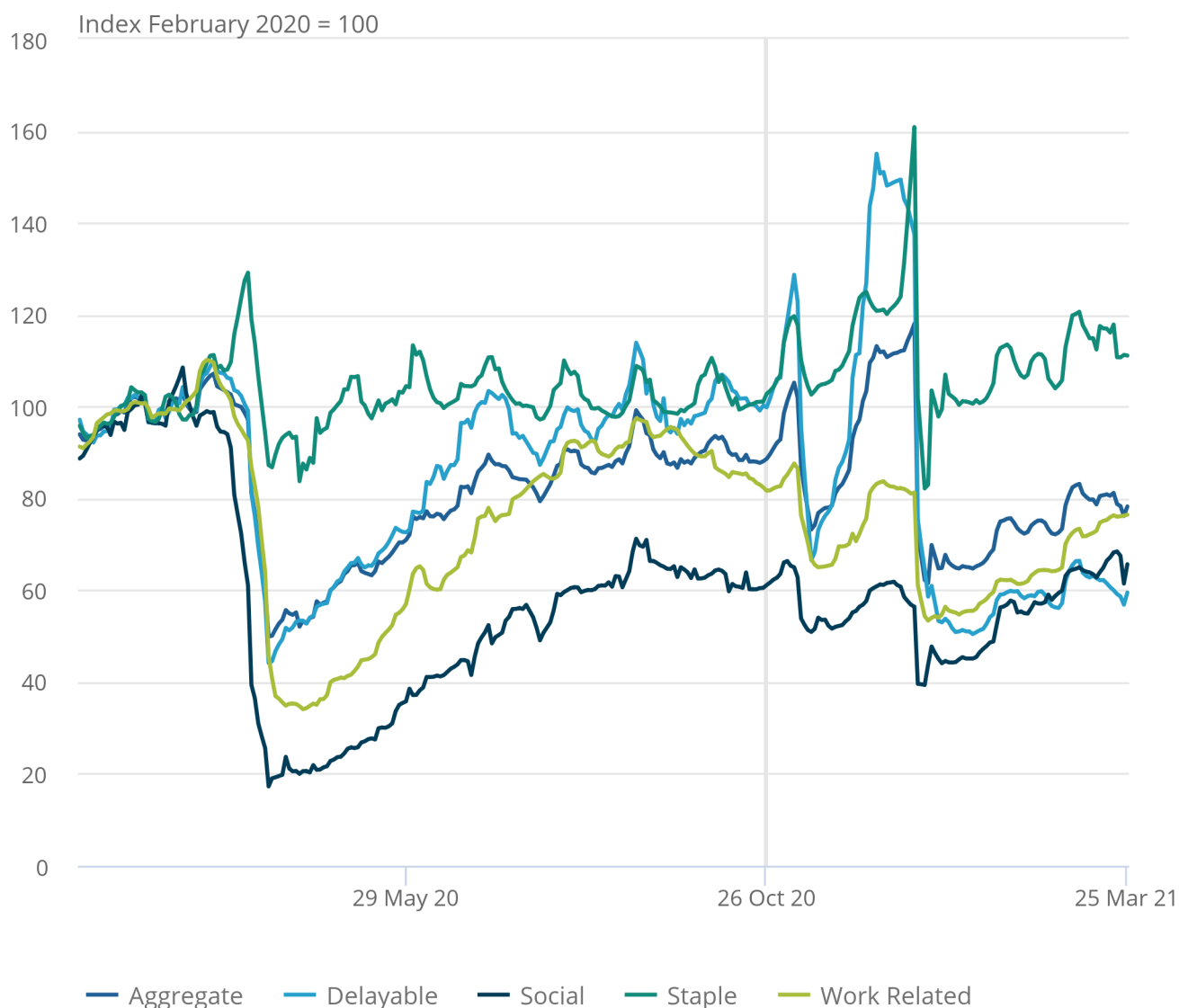
- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or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

**Figure2: In the week to 25 March 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 2 percentage points from the previous week to 78% of its February 2020 average**

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 25 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices

Figure 2: In the week to 25 March 2021, the aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases decreased by 2 percentage points from the previous week to 78% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 25 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 2 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 25 March 2021, the CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases in aggregate decreased by 2 percentage points from the previous week to 78% of its February 2020 average. This was driven by a decrease across all individual consumption categories, except "work related" which rose slightly by 1 percentage point from the previous week. Staples spend saw the largest weekly decrease of 5 percentage points from the previous week. In the latest week, card spending on "staples" was at 111% of its February 2020 average. On the other hand, "delayable", "social" and "work-related" purchases were 59%, 66% and 76% of their average levels in February 2020, respectively.

Despite this week's slight fall, all four categories of the CHAPS-based indicator of debit and credit card purchases have gradually increased since the substantial fall in spending at the beginning of 2021 that followed the Christmas period and introduction of national lockdowns across the UK, and remain above the lowest levels 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](#).

## 6 . Retail footfall

### Indexing update

Users should note that retail footfall indices have been updated in this bulletin to avoid year-on-year comparisons against atypical periods when the coronavirus (COVID-19) had begun to have an effect.

As a result, from Week 1 of 2021 (week commencing 3 January 2021) both daily and weekly indices have now been generated by comparing retail footfall against its level in the equivalent period of 2019. Prior to this change, indices were generated on a year-on-year basis so, from January 2021 onwards, were comparing retail footfall against its level in the equivalent period of 2020.

### 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 2019; for example, Saturday 27 March 2021 is compared with Saturday 23 March 2019
- total weekly retail footfall as a percentage of its level in the equivalent week of 2019; for example, footfall in Week 12 of 2021 is compared with its level in Week 12 of 2019
- the percentage change in weekly footfall compared with the previous week; for example, Week 12 of 2021 is compared with Week 11 of 2021
- Springboard's weekly data are defined over a seven-day period running from Sunday to Saturday; Week 12 of 2021 therefore refers to the period Sunday 21 March 2021 to Saturday 27 March 2021

**Figure 3: In the week to 27 March 2021, overall retail footfall in the UK was at 43% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019, broadly unchanged from the previous week**

Volume of retail footfall, percentage compared with the equivalent day of the equivalent week of 2019, 1 March 2020 to 27 March 2021



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

**Notes:**

1. The vertical lines indicate key events. In order, the events are: 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.
4. Prior to 3 January 2021 daily indices were generated by comparing footfall against its level on the same day of the equivalent week the year before. From this date onwards they were generated by comparing footfall against its level on the same day of the equivalent week in 2019. For a two-day period, from 1 January 2021 to 2 January 2021 daily indices were therefore generated using a 2021 vs. 2020 comparison.

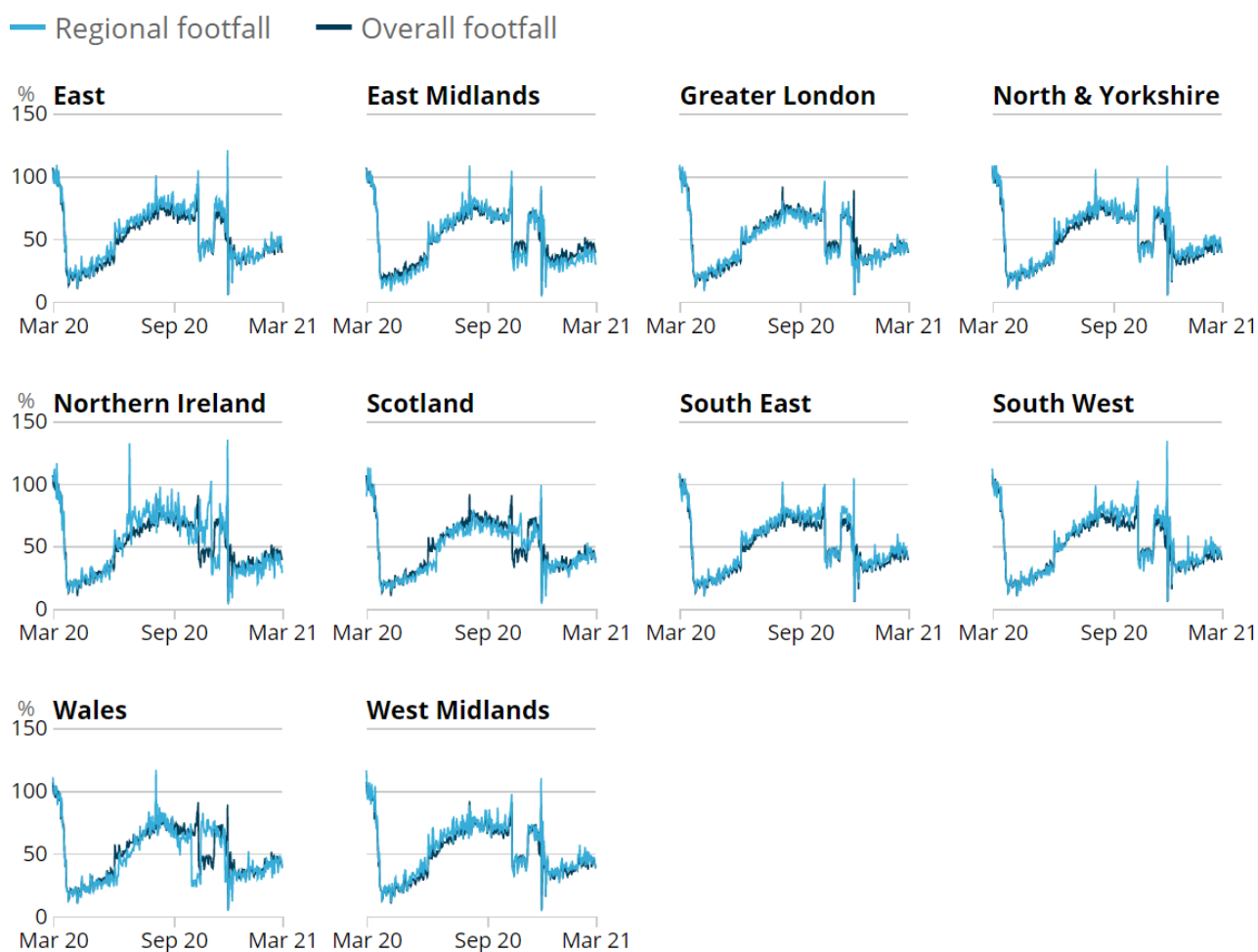
According to Springboard, in the week to 27 March 2021, overall retail footfall in the UK was at 43% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019, broadly unchanged from the value of the same index in the previous week. This follows the gradual uptick seen in the retail footfall index since the start of the year, after the new year dip.

Continuing the trend observed since the beginning of the year, in the week to 27 March 2021, footfall at retail parks was substantially stronger than that at high streets and shopping centres, standing at 73% of its volume in the equivalent week of 2019. The corresponding figures for high streets and shopping centres were 34% and 32%, respectively.

All retail locations saw week-on-week increases in footfall, with shopping centres increasing by 4%, retail parks by 9% and high streets by 7% between the weeks ending 20 March and 27 March 2021. Users should note that week-on-week changes in footfall are presented as percentages rather than percentage points because the figures represent differences in the level of footfall between periods, rather than movements in an index.

**Figure 4: In the week to 27 March 2021, retail footfall was strongest in the East of England, standing at 47% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019**

Volume of overall daily retail footfall, percentage of the level recorded on the same day of the equivalent week of 2019, UK regions, 1 March 2020 to 27 March 2021



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

#### Notes:

1. Prior to 3 January 2021 daily indices were generated by comparing footfall against its level on the same day of the equivalent week the year before. From this date onwards they were generated by comparing footfall against its level on the same day of the equivalent week in 2019. For a two-day period, from 1 January 2021 to 2 January 2021 daily indices were therefore generated using a 2021 vs. 2020 comparison.

According to Springboard, in the week to 27 March 2021, retail footfall was strongest in the East of England, standing at 47% of its level in the equivalent week of 2019. This was followed by the North and Yorkshire, the South West and the South East of England whose corresponding figures all stood at 45% of their average February 2020 level.

In the same period retail footfall was relatively weakest in Northern Ireland, with a corresponding figure of 36%. However, in all regions retail footfall is still substantially below its level in the equivalent week of 2019.

All countries and regions of the UK saw increases in retail footfall between the weeks ending 20 March and 27 March 2021 except Scotland, where it fell by 2%. The largest week-on-week increase was in the East of England, where it increased by 12%.

## 7 . Online job adverts

### Job adverts by category

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 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 5: On 26 March 2021, total UK online job adverts stood at 96% of their February 2020 average level, an increase of 2 percentage points from a week ago**

Index of job adverts on Adzuna by category, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, 4 January 2019 to 26 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted

#### 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 February 2021. 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. February 2020 average job adverts were calculated using an arithmetic mean of the four recorded observations that month.
5. 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](#).

[Download the data](#)

In the week following the announcement of the first UK lockdown on 23 March 2020, the volume of online job adverts fell in all 28 job categories. Since then there has been a bounce back across numerous categories, with some seeing stronger recovery than others.

According to Adzuna, on 26 March 2021, total online job adverts stood at 96% of their average level in February 2020, an increase of 2 percentage points from the week before. This is the highest volume of online job adverts observed since 6 March 2020, before the first national lockdowns were introduced in the UK.

In the latest week, on 26 March 2021, excluding "unknown", total online job adverts were around or exceeded their average February 2020 level in 12 of the 28 Adzuna categories. Online job adverts were highest in "transport and logistics" at 181% of its average level in February 2020. The six other categories in which online job adverts exceeded their February 2020 average level were "manufacturing" (167%), "construction and trades" (161%), "domestic help" (140%), "facilities and maintenance" (121%), "scientific and QA" (110%), "part-time and weekend" (104%) and "property" (101%).

Conversely, "catering and hospitality" was the category with by far the lowest volume of job adverts, at 43% of its average level in February 2020. This coincides with the ongoing closure of bars and restaurants across the UK. The differing performance of job categories suggests that, although overall labour demand is recovering to its pre-pandemic level, its composition by industry appears to be substantially different to what it was in February 2020.

Excluding the "unknown" category, compared with 19 March 2021, the volume of online job adverts increased in 19 out of 28 categories, fell in eight, and was unchanged in one other. The largest increases from last week in online job adverts were in the "part-time and weekend" category, rising by 31 percentage points compared with their average level in February 2020; this increase is partially driven by a high volume of adverts from a single company. The largest weekly decrease was in "scientific and QA", which fell by 9 percentage points over the same period.

## Job adverts by region

### Figure 6: On 26 March 2021 the volume of UK online job adverts was higher than its average February 2020 level in eight UK NUTS1 countries and regions

Index of job adverts on Adzuna by region, 100 = average job adverts in February 2020, UK, 7 February 2020 to 26 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 February 2021. Values for missing weeks have been imputed using linear interpolation. The data points that have been imputed are clearly marked in the dataset.
4. February 2020 average job adverts were calculated using an arithmetic mean of the four recorded observations that month.

[Download the data](#)

On 26 March 2021, the volume of online job adverts was higher than its February 2020 average level in eight out of the 12 UK NUTS1 countries and regions. As a proportion of their average February 2020 level, online job adverts were highest in the North East of England, standing at 129% of their average February 2020 level. This was followed by Northern Ireland (126%) and the East Midlands (120%).

Online job adverts for London remain weakest compared with their February 2020 levels, on 26 March 2021, standing at 78% of their average volume that month. The region with the second weakest volume of job adverts was the South East, whose corresponding figure was 87%.

In the latest week, 11 of the 12 UK NUTS1 regions and countries saw increases in the volume of job adverts from the same time in the previous week. The largest increases took place in Northern Ireland, the West Midlands and East Midlands, increasing by 9, 5 and 5 percentage points, respectively. The only region to see a decrease in job advert numbers since the previous week was London, where they fell by 3 percentage points between 19 and 26 March 2021.

## 8 . Roads and traffic camera data

According to Department for Transport (DfT) non-seasonally adjusted road traffic data, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic on Monday 29 March 2021 saw a weekly increase of 4 percentage points to 84% of the level seen on the first week in February 2020. This is a continuation of the recent upward trend and coincides with the [easing of England restrictions](#) which came into effect on 29 March 2021.

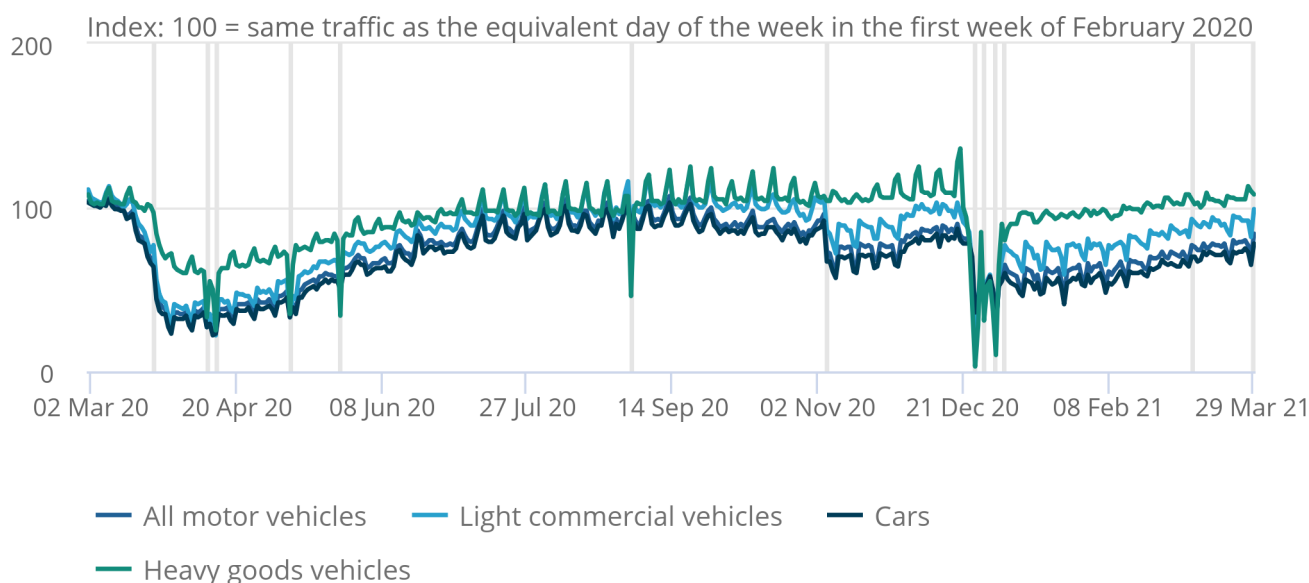
All categories of road traffic showed increases on the previous week's figures. Car traffic increased by 5 percentage points to 78% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020, followed by light commercial vehicle traffic which increased by 4 percentage points to 99%. Heavy good vehicles (HGVs) saw a slight increase of 2 percentage points to 108% of the level seen on the same day of the first week in February 2020.

**Figure 7: Motor vehicle traffic volumes on Monday 29 March 2021 were 4 percentage points higher than last week at 84% of their level in the first week of February 2020, the highest since December 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 29 March 2021, non-seasonally adjusted

Figure 7: Motor vehicle traffic volumes on Monday 29 March 2021 were 4 percentage points higher than last week at 84% of their level in the first week of February 2020, the highest since December 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 29 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 and the easing of the lockdown restrictions in England.
2. From Monday 29 March 2021, the government has announced an easing [of restrictions in England](#) which, amongst other measures, allows outdoor meetups and outdoor sports to resume.
3. 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 8: Traffic camera activity in London in the week ending 28 March 2021 increased to similar levels seen before the first lockdown**

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 six regions available.
2. Traffic camera images capture the appearance of buses, but they give no indication of the number of passengers using public transport.

[Download the data](#)



Levels of activity before the first lockdown are calculated as an average of the traffic camera counts from 11 March 2020, when the London series begins, to 22 March 2020.

In the week ending 28 March 2021, levels of traffic camera activity increased in all categories in London to be around or above the levels seen before the first lockdown:

- cars increased by 6% to 97% of the levels before the first lockdown
- buses increased by 4% to 99%
- trucks increased by 5% to 100%
- vans increased by 5% to 103%
- pedestrians and cyclists increased by 6% to 104%

Traffic camera activity in the North East also increased in the week ending 28 March 2021, although the levels seen for most categories were still below those before the first lockdown:

- cars increased by 6% to 90% of the levels before the first lockdown
- buses increased by 4% to 106%
- trucks increased by 2% to 96%
- vans increased by 4% to 91%
- pedestrians and cyclists increased by 2% to 80%

The same comparisons cannot be made for Northern Ireland as data are not available for the period before the first lockdown. Northern Ireland saw weekly increases in most categories, although caution should be taken when interpreting weekly changes for Northern Ireland because of the relatively low numbers of counts across all categories. In the week ending 28 March 2021, when compared with the previous week in Northern Ireland:

- cars increased by 1%
- buses increased by 16%
- trucks increased by 11%
- vans increased by 6%
- pedestrians and cyclists decreased by 1%

## 9 . 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.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic first began to affect the level of shipping visits from in the week ending 29 March 2020. For this reason, users should interpret comparisons of total and cargo and tanker ship visits in the week ending 29 March 2021 to the same period last year with caution. From early April 2021 onwards, we will be able to make year-on-two-year comparisons as we have data back to 1 April 2019; this will enable us to compare the number of weekly ship visits against their level in a corresponding "normal" period.

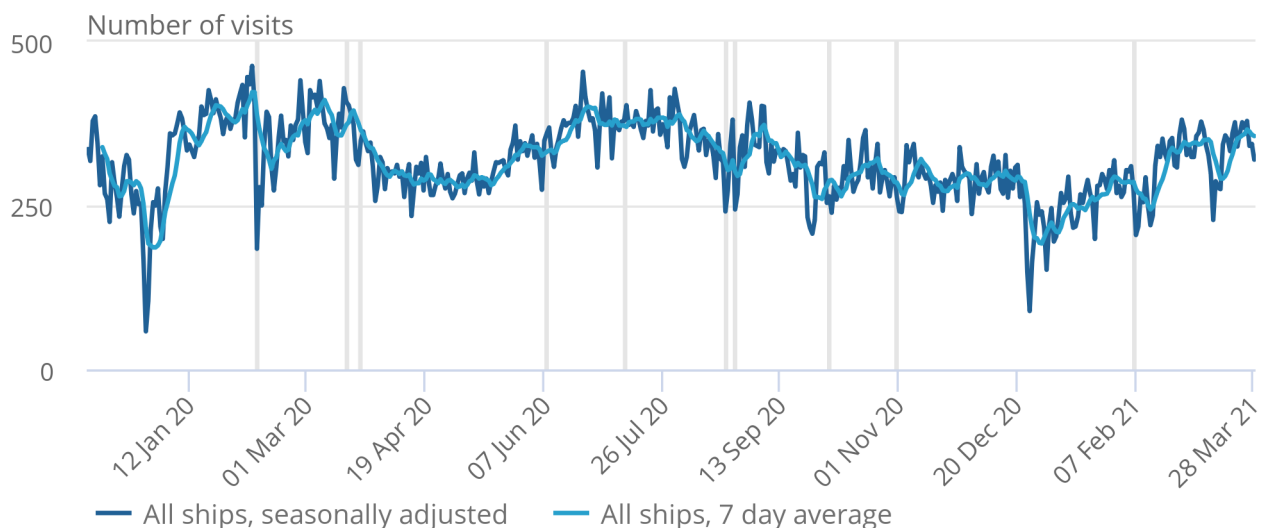
Users should note that we will be closely monitoring exactEarth data for any effects on UK shipping activity as a result of the Suez canal blockage, which took place between 23 and 29 March 2021.

**Figure 9: There was an average of 356 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 March 2021, which has remained broadly unchanged from the previous week**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 March 2021

Figure 9: There was an average of 356 daily ship visits in the week ending 28 March 2021, which has remained broadly unchanged from the previous week

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 March 2021



Source: exactEarth

In the week ending 28 March 2021, the seven-day average of all daily shipping visits was 356, which is broadly unchanged from the 352 visits recorded in the previous week. Total daily ship visits were 8% higher than the same period a year ago, when 329 visits were recorded in the week ending 29 March 2020.

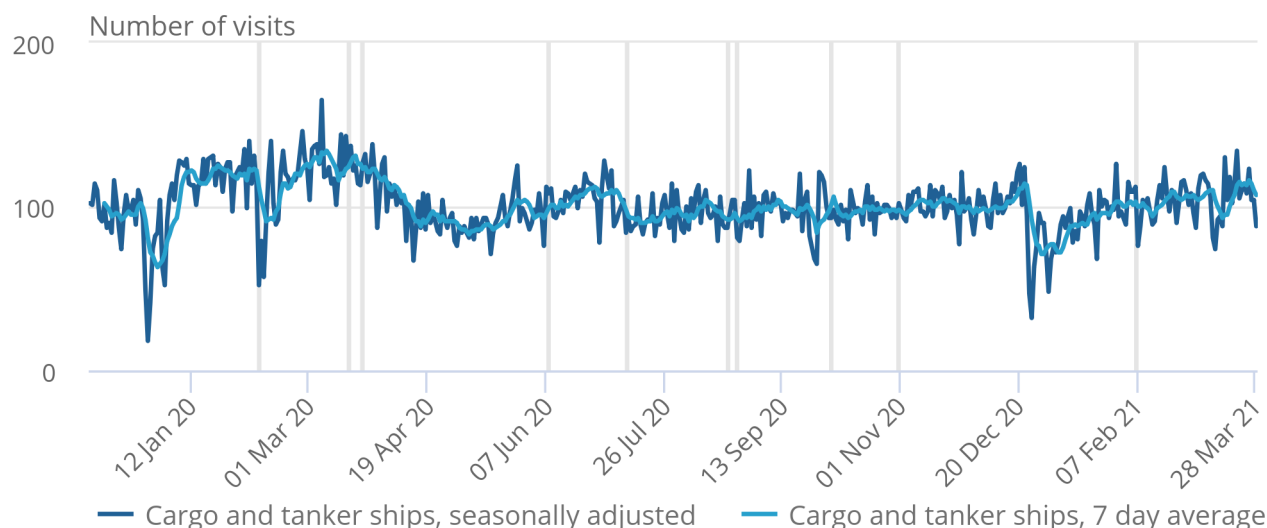
This broadly flat trend seen in the latest week follows the gradual upward trend seen since the beginning of the year.

**Figure 10: There was an average of 107 cargo and tanker ship visits in the week ending 28 March 2021, a 7% decrease from the previous week**

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 March 2021

Figure 10: There was an average of 107 cargo and tanker ship visits in the week ending 28 March 2021, a 7% decrease from the previous week

Daily movements in shipping visits, UK, seasonally adjusted, 1 December 2019 to 28 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 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.
8. The reduced number of daily visits across UK ports may have been affected by the strong winds on 11 March 2021.

In the week ending 28 March 2021, the seven-day average of all daily cargo and tanker ship visits was 107, a 7% decrease from the 115 visits recorded the previous week. Cargo and tanker visits were 11% lower than the level observed in the same period last year when 120 visits were recorded for the week ending 29 March 2020. This weekly decrease follows the gradual recovery seen since the beginning of the year.

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

### **Incorporations**

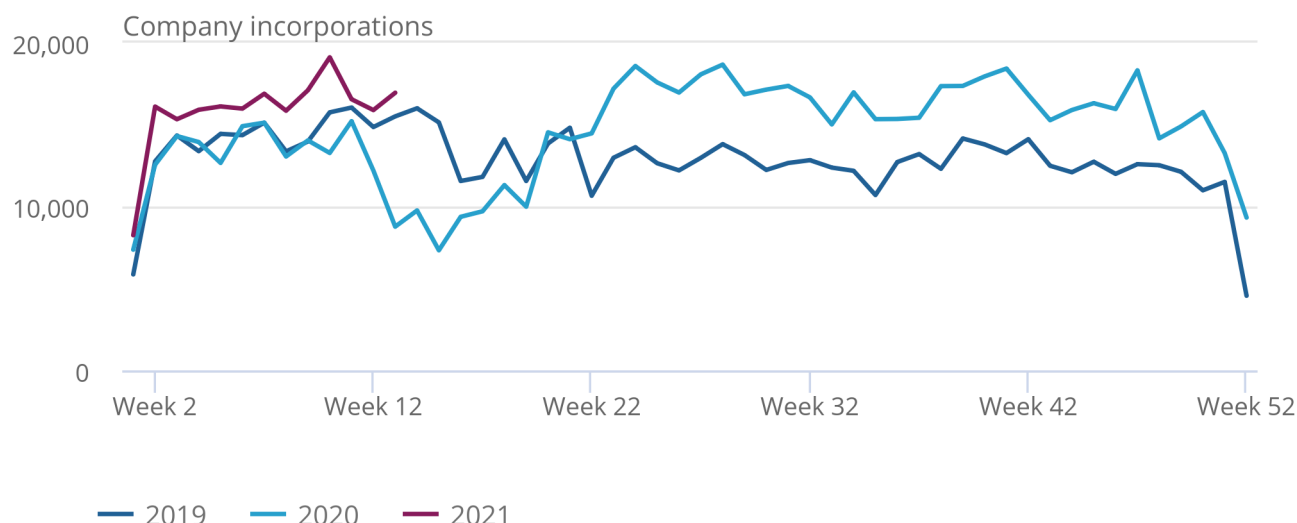
According to Companies House, in the week to Friday 26 March 2021, there were 16,944 company incorporations in the UK, a 7% increase from the previous week. This continues to remain above the number of incorporations seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and 2020, where 15,501 and 8,770 company incorporations were recorded, respectively. However, caution should be taken when interpreting differences between Week 13 of 2020 and 2021, as this period last year coincides with the early impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the UK.

**Figure 11: In the week to 26 March 2021, there were 16,944 company incorporations, a 7% increase from the previous week**

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 March 2021

Figure 11: In the week to 26 March 2021, there were 16,944 company incorporations, a 7% increase from the previous week

Total weekly company incorporations, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 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 13 refers to the period week ending 29 March 2019, 27 March 2020 and 26 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](#).
4. The higher levels of company incorporations recorded in the week ending 5 March 2021 (Week 10) were because of a backlog of applications being processed following an administrative delay in previous weeks.

## Voluntary dissolution applications

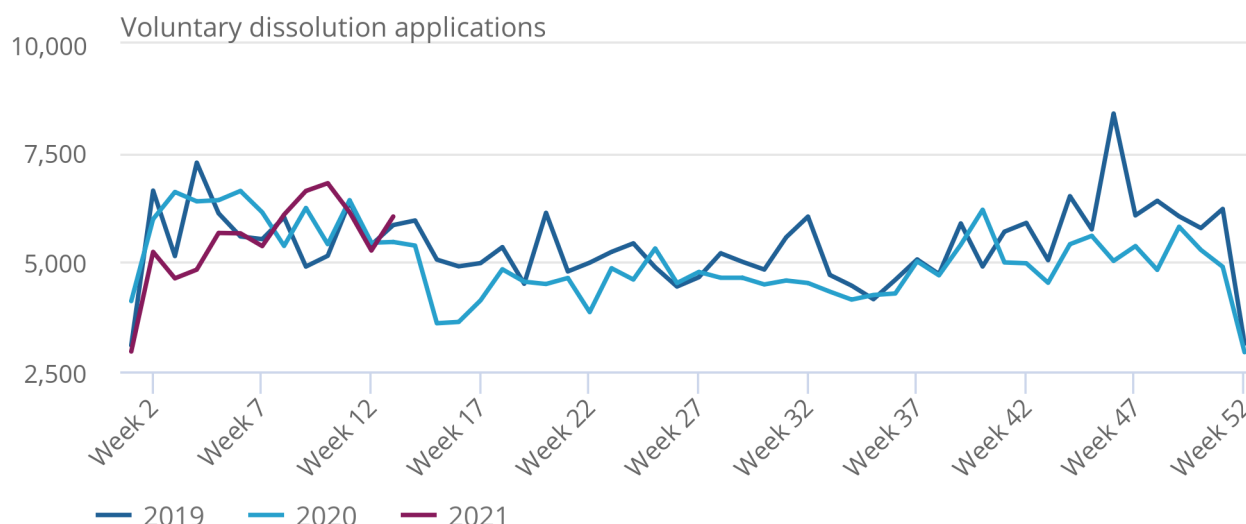
In the week to Friday 26 March 2021, there were 6,043 voluntary dissolution applications in the UK. This is a 15% increase from the previous week and higher than the levels seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and 2020, where 5,848 and 5,461 voluntary dissolution applications were recorded, respectively.

**Figure 12: In the week to 26 March 2021, there were 6,043 voluntary dissolution applications, which is above the number estimated in the same equivalent week in 2019 (5,848) and 2020 (5,461)**

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 March 2021

Figure 12: In the week to 26 March 2021, there were 6,043 voluntary dissolution applications, which is above the number estimated in the same equivalent week in 2019 (5,848) and 2020 (5,461)

Total weekly company voluntary dissolution applications, UK, from week ending Friday 4 January 2019 to week ending Friday 26 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 13 refers to the period week ending 29 March 2019, 27 March 2020 and 26 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 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.
5. The higher levels of voluntary dissolution applications recorded in the recent weeks up to week ending 5 March 2021 (Week 10) were because of a backlog of applications being processed following an administrative delay in previous weeks.

The full data time series available for weekly company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications can be found in the [accompanying dataset](#).

# 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 28 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.

A data processing error for the Ready meal index series has been present in the dataset since the week ending 7 February 2021; this has now been rectified. This series and its "food products (not elsewhere covered)" aggregate have been revised back to week ending 7 February 2021 to correct for this error. Ready meals make up a small proportion of the basket by weight (0.7%) and the category to which it belongs, "food products, not elsewhere covered" consistently provides one of the smaller contributions to the overall weekly change, so the impact of this error on the headline series was minimal.

A larger methodological update to [introduce new items for the 2021 basket](#) in line with the headline CPIH is planned in the coming weeks.

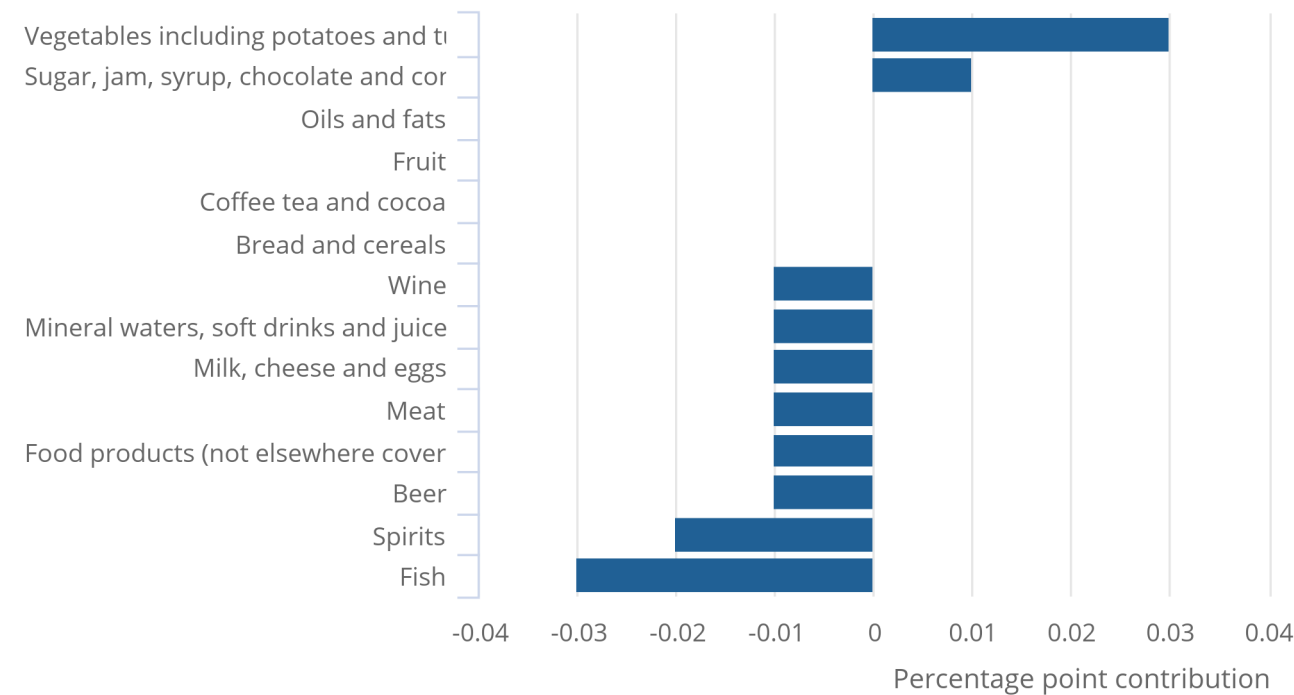
The overall price of items in the online food and drink basket decreased by 0.1% between the week ending 28 March 2021 and the previous week, with eight categories providing negative contributions to the overall price movement, two providing positive contributions and four making negligible contributions to the overall movement.

**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 21 March 2021 and the week ending 28 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 21 March 2021 and the week ending 28 March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Online price collection

Notes:

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

The main downward contributor to the overall price movement in the latest week was “fish”, where prices fell by 1.0%, which contributed negative 0.03 percentage points to the overall price movement. This price decrease was because of falling prices across most of its sub-categories, particularly for fish fingers and canned tuna at multiple retailers.

The main offsetting category was "vegetables including potatoes and tubers", which experienced a 0.3% price increase and contributed positive 0.03 percentage points to the overall price movement. The main driver behind this was the rising price of crisps at two retailers.



## 12 . Data

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

Dataset | Released 1 April 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 1 April 2021

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

### [Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 1 April 2021

Experimental dataset for busyness indices covering the UK

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

Dataset | Released 1 April 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 1 April 2021

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

### [Company Incorporations and Voluntary Dissolutions](#)

Dataset | Released 1 April 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

## End of EU exit transition period

As the UK enters into a new Trade and Co-operation 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 22 March and Monday 29 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 22 March 2021

### Scotland

- All of mainland Scotland is under Level 4 lockdown restrictions. Orkney, the Shetland Islands and the Western Isles are under Level 3 restrictions.
- However, in Level 4 areas since 12 March 2021 four people from two households have been allowed to meet outdoors.
- All arrivals from outside of the Common Travel Area (UK and Ireland) must self-isolate for 10 days at a managed quarantine hotel.
- Students returned to schools on a part-time basis on 15 March 2021.

### Wales

- All of Wales is under "stay local" rules after national lockdown restrictions were eased on 13 March 2021.
- 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.

## 27 March 2021

### Wales

- Wales lifts all internal travel restrictions as the "stay local" rule is ended.
- Self-contained tourist sites are allowed to reopen.

## 29 March 2021

### England

- Lockdown restrictions are eased in England, allowing two households or six people to meet outside.
- "Stay at home" messaging is dropped.

## 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.

## 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:25 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | 25 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: 26 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | 26 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 22 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 19 March 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 30 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: 1 April 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 April 2021

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