

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 23 December 2020

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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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Latest indicators at a glance](#)
3. [Business impact of the coronavirus](#)
4. [Social Impacts of the coronavirus on Great Britain](#)
5. [Data](#)
6. [Glossary](#)
7. [Measuring the data](#)
8. [Strengths and limitations](#)
9. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

Shipping

According to exactEarth, in the week ending 20 December 2020, the seven-day average number of daily cargo ship visits in the UK increased to 111 visits from 99 in the previous week, the highest since June 2020. The increase in cargo ship visits has occurred at several major UK ports including: Grimsby and Immingham, Southampton, Felixstowe, Tees and Hartlepool, and Holyhead.

Roads and traffic camera data

According to the Department for Transport (DfT), on Monday 21 December 2020, the volume of all motor vehicle traffic decreased by 8 percentage points compared with Monday of the previous week.

According to traffic camera activity, in the week ending 20 December 2020, average counts of traffic camera activity for all vehicle types decreased in London. Counts of pedestrians decreased to 65% of the level seen pre-March lockdown. This decrease coincides with the [new four-tier system](#), which came into effect on Sunday 20 December 2020.

In Manchester, counts of all traffic except buses and pedestrians decreased compared with the previous week. In Northern Ireland, all counts of traffic activity except buses increased compared with the previous week, returning to its pre 27 November coronavirus rules levels.

Footfall

On Sunday 20 December 2020, overall UK footfall dropped to 53% of the level seen on the same day the previous year, a 14 percentage point decrease compared with the previous day. This large decrease coincides with the government introduction of a [new four-tier system](#). Footfall across all retail destinations saw a large drop compared with the previous day (a decrease of 17 percentage points in retail parks and 13 percentage points in both shopping centres and high streets).

On Sunday 20 December 2020, Wales saw a substantial drop to 27% of the level of footfall seen on the same day the previous year. Of the UK regions and countries, Wales had the largest drop of 44 percentage points compared with the previous day. This was followed by Greater London, which fell by 31 percentage points and the South East, which fell by 23 percentage points. Scotland saw a decrease of 6 percentage points. Northern Ireland was the only country to see an increase in footfall compared with the previous day.

Business impact of the coronavirus

According to initial results from Wave 20 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (30 November to 13 December 2020), 85% of UK businesses are currently trading, an increase from 80% in the previous wave.

Of all businesses, excluding those who have permanently ceased trading, 11% of their workforce are on furlough leave, down from 16% in the prior wave.

Social impacts of the coronavirus on Great Britain

According to the latest Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, in the week ending 20 December 2020, around 57% of adults travelled to work (both exclusively and in combination with working from home). This figure is broadly unchanged from the week ending 13 December 2020.

Company incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications

According to Companies House data in the week ending Friday 18 December 2020, there were 13,257 company incorporations, down from 15,766 in the previous week but higher than the corresponding figure for the same period of 2019 (11,503).

In the week ending 18 December 2020, there were 4,893 company voluntary dissolution applications, a decrease from 5,279 in the previous week and lower than the number seen in the corresponding period of 2019 (6,217).

OpenTable seated diner estimates

According to OpenTable on Saturday 19 December 2020, seated diners in the UK decreased to around 65% of their level on the same day of the equivalent week of 2019, from approximately 84% on Saturday 12 December 2020. The corresponding figure for restaurants in London was 6%, compared with 74% seven days prior.

Online price change in the food and drink basket

Overall prices of items in the food and drink basket remained unchanged for the fourth consecutive week at 99% of levels seen in the week ending 7 June 2020. Vegetables were the largest negative contributor as retailers offered discounts in time for Christmas. Meat; Milk, cheese and eggs; Oils and fats provided the largest upward contributions.

Online job adverts

According to Adzuna, in the latest week ending 18 December 2020, the volume of online job adverts increased by 9 percentage points from the previous week to 83% of levels compared with the same time last year. Job adverts increased across all categories and regions compared with the previous week.

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

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

3 . Business impact of the coronavirus

Initial results from Wave 20 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) are for the period 30 November to 13 December 2020, which closes on 27 December 2020. Out of approximately 39,000 UK businesses sampled, 11.7% had responded as of 16 December 2020. This is a lower response rate than usual for our initial results because of the earlier collation of data.

Please note that these data were collected over the period 14 December to 16 December 2020 and refer to the period 30 November to 13 December 2020. This should be kept in mind in relation to the timing of local and national lockdowns and dependent on the location and date when the business responded, as these could have an impact on the estimates.

Across all UK industries, in Wave 20:

- 78% of businesses had been trading for more than the last two weeks (an increase from 76% in Wave 19)
- 7% of businesses had started trading within the last two weeks after a pause in trading (an increase from 5% in Wave 19)
- 3% of businesses had paused trading but intend to restart in the next two weeks (a decrease from 7% in Wave 19)
- 10% of businesses had paused trading and do not intend to restart in the next two weeks
- 3% of businesses had permanently ceased trading

4 . Social Impacts of the coronavirus on Great Britain

This section includes some headline results from Wave 38 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 13 to 20 December 2020. The survey went out to 6,027 adults in Great Britain and had a response rate of 55%.

Travelling to work

In the week ending 20 December 2020, the proportion of working adults in Great Britain who:

- worked exclusively from home remained the same compared with the previous week at 28%
- travelled to work (both exclusively and in combination with working from home) remained broadly unchanged compared with the previous week at 57%
- neither travelled to work nor worked from home remained unchanged at 15%

Shopping

Of those adults that reported that they left home in the last seven days, the proportion that shopped for food and medicine remained unchanged at 77%. The corresponding figure for those who shopped for things other than food and medicine remained broadly unchanged at 23%.

There was no change compared with the previous week in the percentage of adults using a face covering at 97%.

5 . Data

[Weekly and daily shipping indicators](#)

Dataset | Released 23 December 2020

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

[Online job advert estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 23 December 2020

Experimental job advert indices covering the UK job market.

[Traffic camera activity](#)

Dataset | Released 23 December 2020

Experimental dataset for busyness indices covering the UK.

[Online weekly price changes](#)

Dataset | Released 23 December 2020

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 help understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

6 . 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.

7 . Measuring the data

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.

8 . 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.

9 . 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 impact on the UK economy: 17 December 2020](#)

Bulletin | 17 December 2020

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: 18 December 2020](#)

Bulletin | 18 December 2020

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 Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\) questions](#)

Article | Last updated 14 December 2020

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 11 December 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 22 December 2020

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: 18 December 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 December 2020

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