Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators: 7 May 2020

New data and experimental indicators on the UK economy and society, including information related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Indicators are constructed from rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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Release date:
7 May 2020

Next release:
14 May 2020

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1 . Other pages in this release

More detailed commentary on the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the UK economy and society is available in the following pages:

- Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 7 May 2020
- Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 7 May 2020

2 . Main points

- Of businesses that responded to our fortnightly survey for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020, the main sectors reporting they had temporarily ceased trading were accommodation and food service activities (81%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (80%).
- 67% of responding businesses had applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), with 28% of the workforce in these businesses being furloughed.
- A month after lockdown measures were introduced, over 8 in 10 adults (82%) continued to say they had either not left their home or only left for the permitted reasons in the past seven days for the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) period 17 to 27 April 2020; this is a similar proportion to last week.
- Over one in five adults (21%) said their relationships were being affected, with partners or spouses causing the most concern.
- Overall, online prices of items in the high-demand products (HDPs) basket decreased by 0.1% over the period Week 6 (20 April to 26 April 2020) to Week 7 (27 April to 3 May 2020).
- After a slight upturn in late April, daily ship visits to major UK ports have continued to decline.

Online price change analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics. Both the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) and Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) are voluntary, so they may only reflect the characteristics of those who responded. The results presented are experimental.

3 . Indicators included in this release

This bulletin contains:

- final results from Wave 3 of the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) of UK businesses for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020
- final results for Wave 5 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), covering the period 17 April to 27 April 2020 and exploring the social impact of COVID -19 on individuals in Great Britain
- experimental online price indices for several high-demand products (HDPs), for 16 March to 3 May 2020
- weekly and daily shipping data for the UK, up to 27 April 2020 and 3 May 2020, respectively

We will add new experimental data and indices as and when new data become available, and we will list them in this section.

On 5 May 2020, the Department for Work and Pensions started publishing weekly management information on Universal Credit declarations (claims) and advances for reference period 1 March to 28 April 2020. This information will continue to be updated weekly on a Tuesday until at least the end of June.

This release does not contain data on the number of deaths involving COVID-19. Our weekly deaths bulletin and accompanying dataset provide the most up-to-date figures on deaths involving COVID-19 in England and Wales.

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK.
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our coronavirus roundup.
- View all coronavirus data.
- Find out out how our studies and surveys are serving public need.

4 . Business Impact of the coronavirus

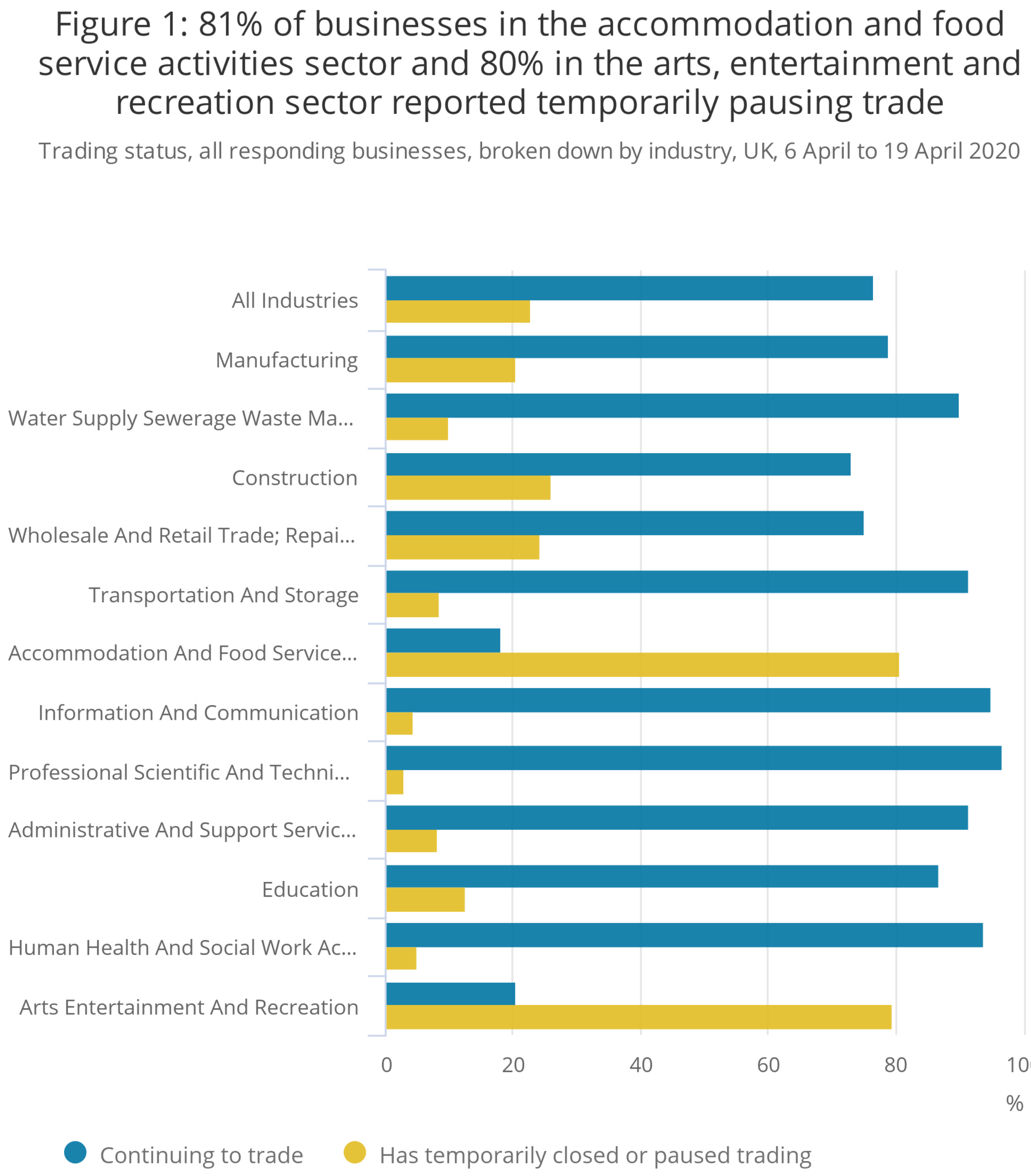
Of the 17,623 businesses surveyed, 6,114 (35%) responded for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020.

Trading

23% of responding businesses reported that they had temporarily closed or paused trading for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020, while 77% reported that they were continuing to trade (Figure 1).

Figure 1: 81% of businesses in the accommodation and food service activities sector and 80% in the arts, entertainment and recreation sector reported temporarily pausing trade

Trading status, all responding businesses, broken down by industry, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Bars will not sum to 100% as those businesses that have permanently ceased trading (less than 1%) are not included in the graph.

2. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; real estate services; financial and insurance activities; other services; and mining and quarrying have been removed because of their low response rate, but their totals are included in “All industries”.

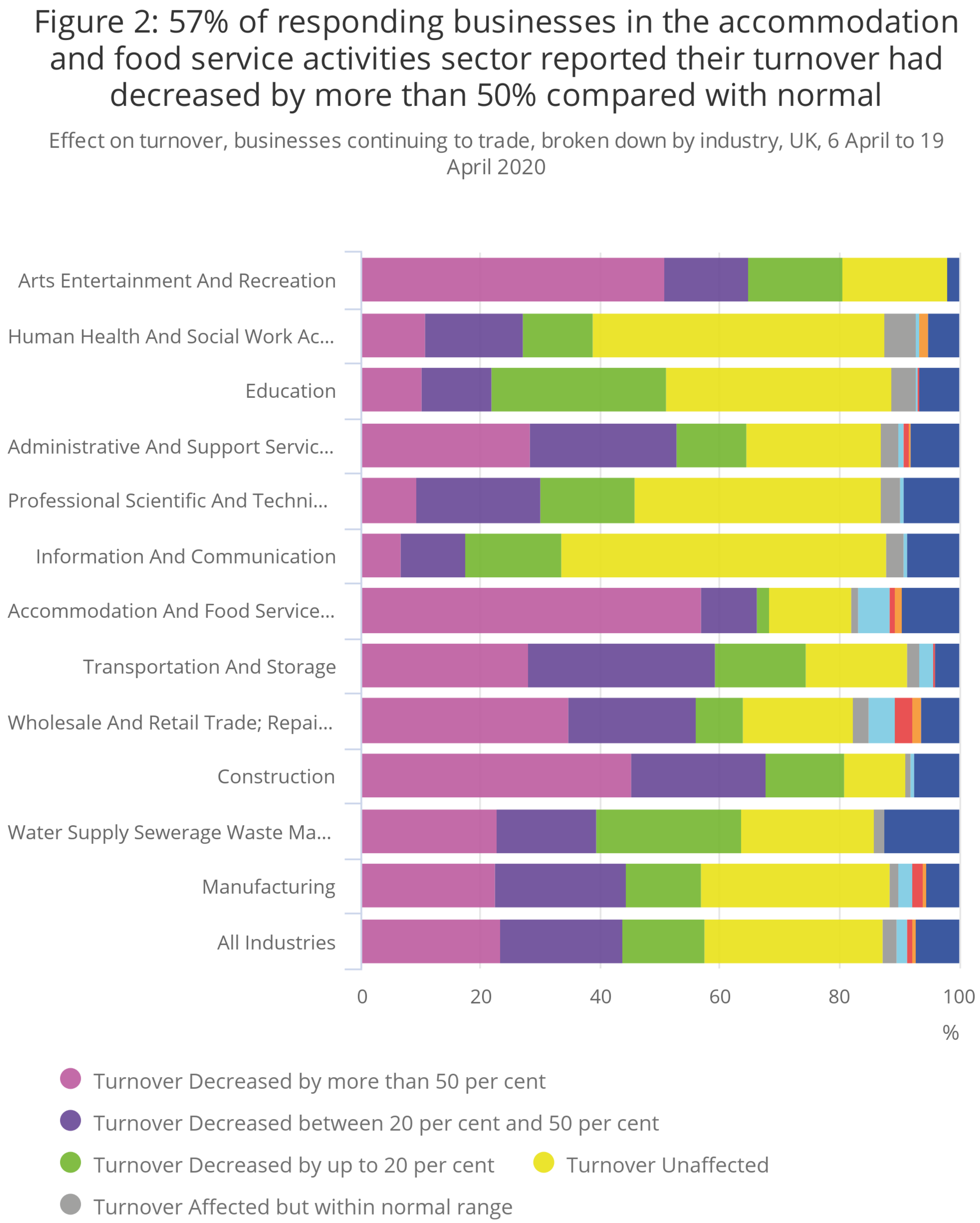
3. Final results, Wave 3 of the Office for National Statistics’ (ONS’) Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) (n = 6,114).

Financial performance

Of the 4,690 businesses that responded they were continuing to trade, 30% reported that their financial performance had not been affected in the period 6 April to 19 April 2020, whereas 58% reported that their turnover had decreased compared with normal (Figure 2).

Figure 2: 57% of responding businesses in the accommodation and food service activities sector reported their turnover had decreased by more than 50% compared with normal

Effect on turnover, businesses continuing to trade, broken down by industry, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes:

1. Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; real estate services; financial and insurance activities; other services; and mining and quarrying have been removed because of their low response rate, but their totals are included in "All industries".

2. Final results, Wave 3 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID19) Survey (BICS) (n = 4,690).

Government schemes

Of all the businesses that responded to the survey and have not permanently ceased trading, 67% had applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS), with 28% of the workforce in these businesses being furloughed.

The accommodation and food service activities sector had the largest proportion of businesses applying for the CJRS, with 87% of businesses in this sector applying and 73% of the workforce being furloughed; this is the highest proportion of any sector.

The construction sector had the second largest proportion of businesses applying for the CJRS, at 81%, but only 46% of the workforce had been furloughed.

Table 1: Proportion of businesses applying for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and proportion of workforce furloughed

Businesses that are temporarily closed, have paused trading or are continuing to trade, broken down by industry, UK, 6 April to 19 April 2020

Industry	**Proportion of businesses who have applied for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**	**Proportion of the workforce in these sectors who have been furloughed under terms of CJRS**
Manufacturing	64%	31%
Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	69%	14%
Construction	81%	46%
Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles And Motorcycles	73%	22%
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	87%	73%
Transportation and Storage	77%	32%
Information and Communication	40%	13%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	62%	13%
Administrative and Support Service Activities	76%	31%
Education	41%	7%
Human Health and Social Work Activities	35%	9%
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	76%	70%
All Industries	67%	28%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey

Notes

1. Electricity gas, steam and air conditioning supply; real estate services; financial and insurance activities; other services; and mining and quarrying have been removed because of their low response rate, but their totals are included in "All industries". Back to table

2. The furloughing proportions will not sum to 100% because these are apportioned by employment size. Back to table

3. Final Results, Wave 3 of ONS Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey who have temporarily closed or paused trading and continuing to trade (n = 6,114), apportioned by employment size. Back to table

4. The apportionment of workforce methodology used for these data does not involve grossing for UK-wide estimation. Back to table

5. These figures represent the proportion of responses to each question from businesses, apportioned using the employment recorded for each Reporting Unit on the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR). Back to table

Further information on the economic impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) is available in Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 7 May 2020, which includes further breakdowns of financial performance and government schemes by the four UK countries as well as workforce impacts and business confidence.

5 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain

This section discusses the final results from Wave 5 of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), covering the period 17 April to 27 April 2020; these results are being released to help understand the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Following government guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Official government advice is for everyone to stay in their homes apart from for a limited number of reasons such as essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work where it is not possible to work from home.

Staying at home

Over 8 in 10 adults (82%) said they had either not left their home or only left for one of the permitted reasons listed earlier in the past seven days, a small decrease from week (84%). This increased to 87% for those aged 70 years and over, and for those with an underlying health condition it was also 87%.

Of the 18% who said they had left their home for something else, the main reason was to run errands.

There continued to be a high level of support for the Stay at home measures, with 81% of adults saying they strongly supported the measures and a further 16% saying they “tend to support” the measures.

Self-isolation

Alongside the Stay at home guidance, official advice is that people should self-isolate if they or someone in their household experiences symptoms related to COVID-19. Some people may choose to self-isolate for other reasons, so these results should not be interpreted as an estimate of those with COVID-19 symptoms or those diagnosed with COVID-19.

Just under 3 in 10 adults (29%) said they had self-isolated in the past seven days, a similar level to last week (30%). For those aged 70 years and over, about half (45%) said they had self-isolated, while for those with an underlying health condition (all ages) it was 41%.

For those who said they had self-isolated over the past seven days, 24% said they had not left their home for the full seven days. Someone could have left their home at the start of the week and then started self-isolating or, conversely, completed their self-isolation at the start of the week and then left their home.

Working from home

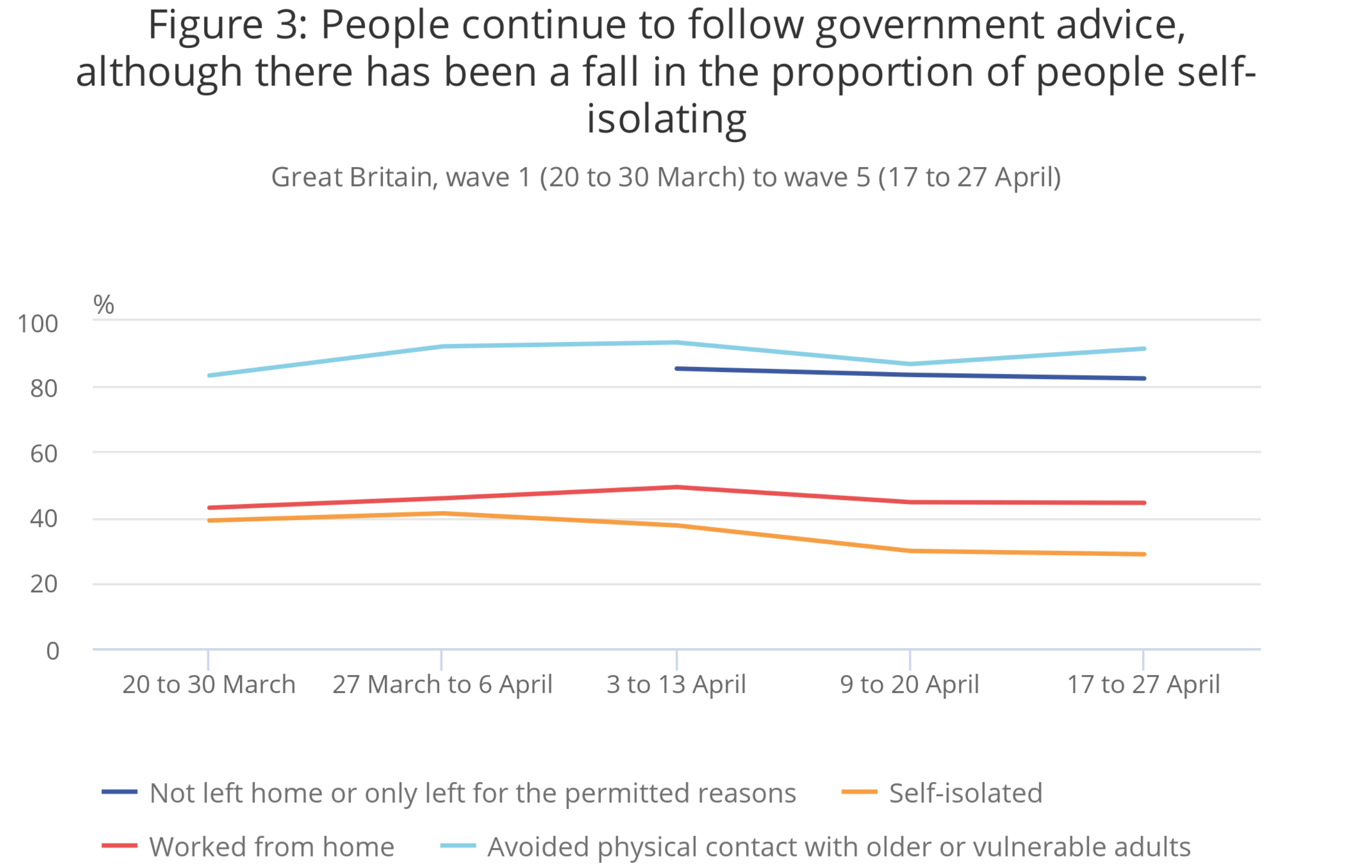
A similar proportion of adults in employment said they had worked from home at some point this week (44%) compared with last week (45%).

Social distancing

Social distancing guidance states that physical contact with others should be kept to a minimum. A large majority of adults continue to say that they are avoiding contact with other people when outside their homes. Over 90% of adults have maintained social distancing since Week 1 of the survey, and this week 94% of adults reported having done so. Shielding older or vulnerable people from the risk of infection is also important. Again, consistently high proportions of adults say they are avoiding contact with older or vulnerable adults; this week, 92% of adults reported doing this. Among these adults, 16% say the people they are avoiding are those to whom they provide care.

Figure 3: People continue to follow government advice, although there has been a fall in the proportion of people self-isolating

Great Britain, wave 1 (20 to 30 March) to wave 5 (17 to 27 April)



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Questions: In the past seven days, have you avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?; In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

Impact on well-being

The proportion of adults who said their well-being was affected increased this week (48%) compared with last week (46%). The proportion remained higher for those with an underlying health condition, at 51%, and lower for those aged 70 years and over, at 39%.

Table 2: Indicators of well-being

Indicator	Group	This week (%)	Last week (%)
Wellbeing is being affected	All adults	48	46
	70+	39	38
	Underlying health	51	58
Mean anxiety score[1]	All adults	4.2	4.2
	70+	4	4.2
	Underlying health	4.3	4.9
Percentage with high anxiety (score 6-10)*	All adults	37	36
	70+	33	35
	Underlying health	38	46
Feeling lonely often/always	All adults	6	4
	70+	2	4
	Underlying health	10	9
Feeling lonely some of the time	All adults	16	17
	70+	13	14
	Underlying health	18	22

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

1. Anxiety is measured on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”. Back to table

2. “This week” refers to the period 17 April to 27 April 2020, and “last week” refers to the period 9 April to 20 April 2020. Back to table

How relationships are changing

Responses to this survey were collected four weeks after the Stay at home measures were introduced. This has impacted both the relationships of those we live with and those we do not. However, through this month of lockdown, there is no distinct trend in our relationships worsening or improving.

This week, 21% of adults said their relationships were being affected. Over the last three weeks, this has ranged between 20% and 24%. Consistently throughout, the relationship that is causing most concern is with a partner or spouse, with around half of those with affected relationships being concerned about this. Around one-third were worried about their relationship with parents, and one-fifth were worried about relationships with dependent children.

Among those who say COVID-19 has affected their well-being this week, one in four (25%) said they were concerned about the strain on their relationships, just over one in five (22%) said they were spending too much time with others in their household, but just under one in three (30%) said they were spending too much time alone. These proportions have been very similar over the past four weeks.

As we continue to stay at home, staying in touch with friends and family remotely remained the most popular action helping people cope this week. Over half of adults (54%) also said spending time with people they live with was helping, again a similar proportion throughout the month of lockdown.

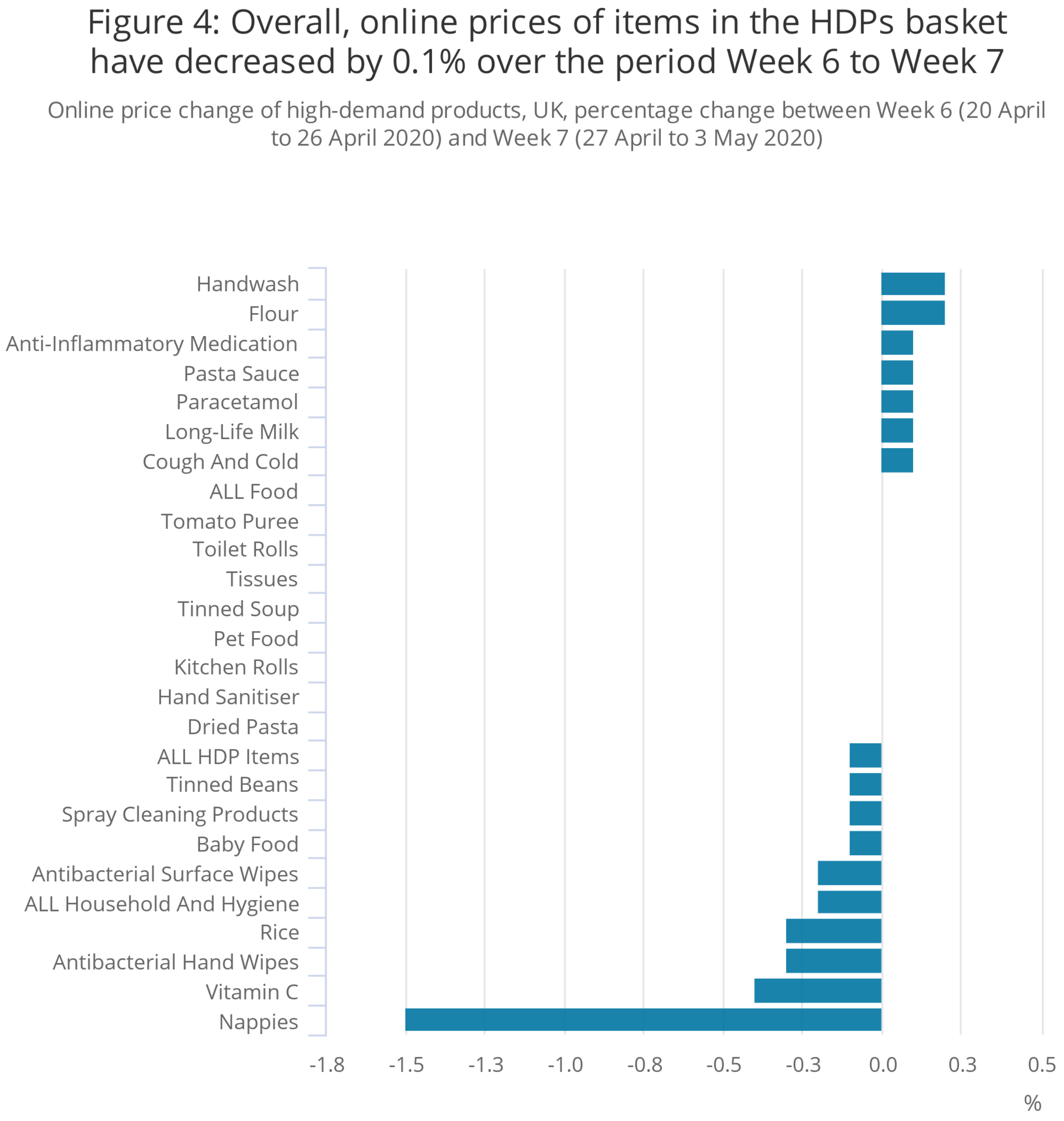
6 . Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

A timely indication of weekly price change for high-demand products (HDPs) has been developed, covering the period 16 March to 3 May 2020. This analysis is experimental and should not be compared with our regular consumer price statistics.

As experimental indices, these data are subject to revisions as we develop our methodology and systems. In this week's publication, we have made improvements to the way products are matched over time. We have revised the back series of these data to incorporate these methods improvements; a full time series is available in the dataset alongside this release.

Figure 4: Overall, online prices of items in the HDPs basket have decreased by 0.1% over the period Week 6 to Week 7

Online price change of high-demand products, UK, percentage change between Week 6 (20 April to 26 April 2020) and Week 7 (27 April to 3 May 2020)



Source: Office for National Statistics – Faster indicators

Notes:

1. These statistics are experimental and therefore subject to revision as methods are developed. They should not be used instead of official statistics.

2. Out-of-stock products have been removed where these are clearly labelled. However, there may be products out of stock that have still been included for some retailers. If the prices of these items do not change, this could cause the index to remain static.

3. Note that the size of the sample means that sometimes single retailers can contribute to substantial movements at the item level.

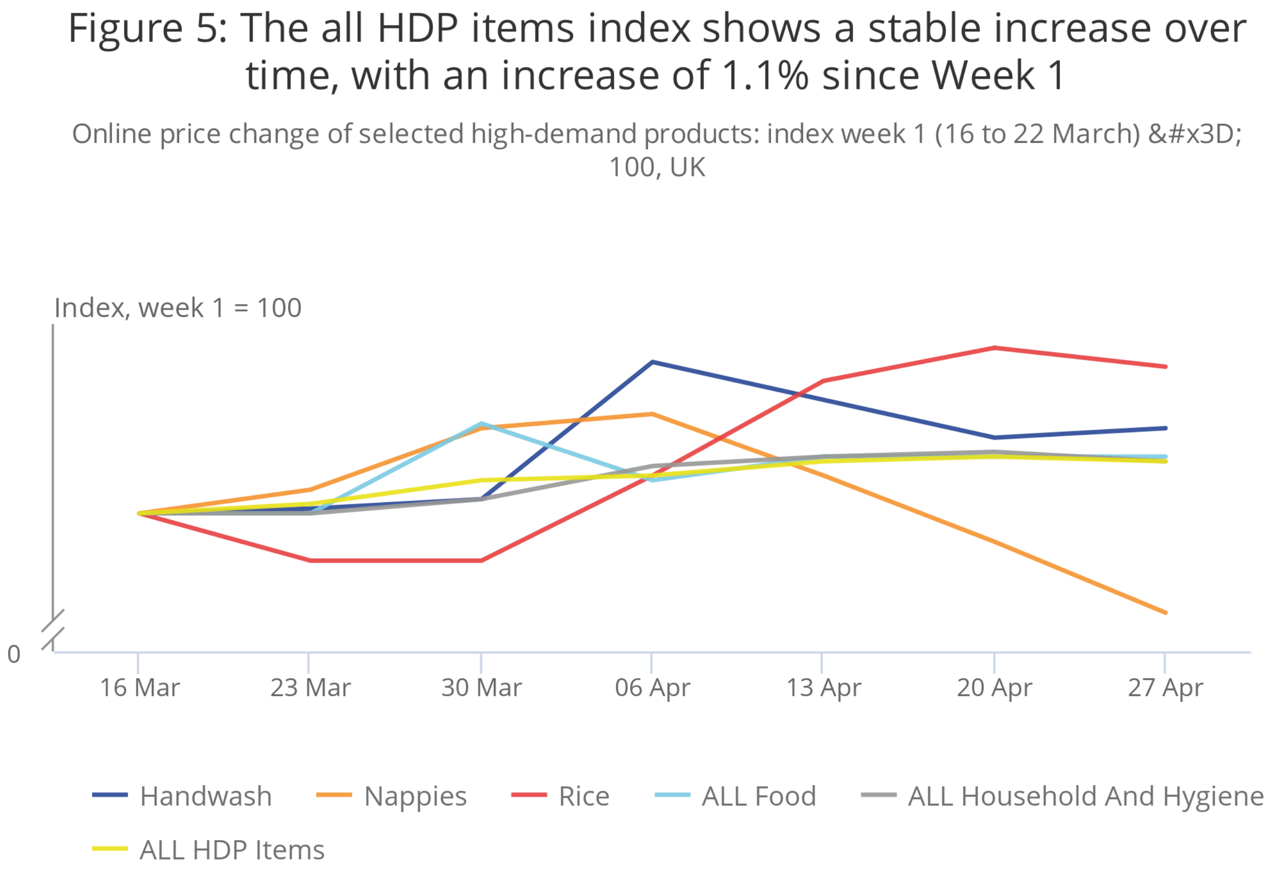
Overall, online prices of items in the HDPs basket have decreased by 0.1% from Week 6 to Week 7. Figure 4 shows the weekly change is typically stable, with eight HDP items showing an average 0% price change from Week 6 to Week 7, as well as the aggregate all food items index. Seven HDP items are showing positive price increases from Week 6 to Week 7, with the highest being flour and handwash both with an increase of 0.2%.

Figure 5 presents weekly price movements for aggregated indices and some selected items. The all HDP items index show a stable increase over time, with an increase of 1.1% between Week 1 and Week 7. The index of all food has seen no price change from Week 5 to Week 7, resulting in a 1.2% price increase since Week 1.

At the individual item level, the price of handwash has increased across the six-week period, while rice saw strong growth from Week 3 to Week 6 followed by a price change of negative 0.3% from Week 6 to Week 7. Nappies saw the biggest price fall of all HDPs: their price rose from Week 1 to Week 4 but has since fallen to negative 2.1% compared with Week 1, a trend separately shown by a number of retailers. The time series for all individual HDP items are published in a dataset alongside this release.

Figure 5: The all HDP items index shows a stable increase over time, with an increase of 1.1% since Week 1

Online price change of selected high-demand products: index week 1 (16 to 22 March) = 100, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Faster indicators

Notes:

1. These statistics are experimental and therefore subject to revision as methods are developed. They should not be used instead of official statistics.

More information detailing our plan for data collection, compilation and publication of our various prices statistics following movement restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is available.

7 . Shipping

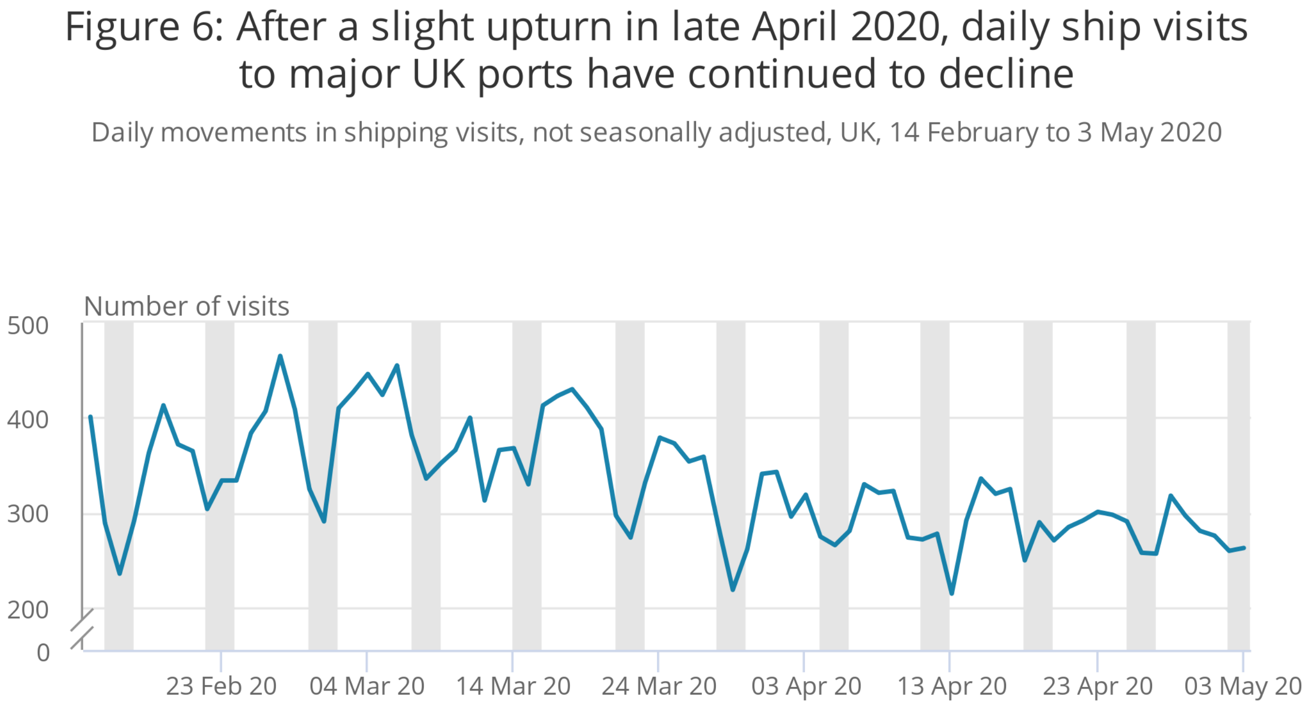
This section discusses the shipping indicators based on counts of all vessels. We have advanced the timeliness of these indicators to include up to 3 May 2020 for daily data and up to the week commencing 27 April 2020 for weekly data. As discussed in Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping, we expect the shipping indicators to be related to the import and export of goods.

In the week commencing 27 April 2020, the number of unique visits to UK ports decreased by 4.1%. After last week's small upturn in unique visits, this continued the trend of ongoing decline. In the same week, total visits to UK ports decreased by 2.3%, marking the sixth consecutive week of declining total visits.

Figure 6 shows the movements in total daily ship visits. After a period of daily fluctuations that together showed a marked downward trend from mid-March to mid-April 2020, the last few weeks have seen a relatively constant level of daily visits within the usual slight daily fluctuations.

Figure 6: After a slight upturn in late April 2020, daily ship visits to major UK ports have continued to decline

Daily movements in shipping visits, not seasonally adjusted, UK, 14 February to 3 May 2020



Source: exactEarth

8 . Data

Weekly and daily shipping indicators
Dataset | Released 7 May 2020
The weekly and daily shipping indicators dataset associated with the faster indicators of UK economic activity.

Online price changes for high-demand products
Dataset | Released 7 May 2020
Weekly online price changes of selected high-demand products (HDPs).

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS)
Dataset | Released 7 May 2020
Final results from the new BICS. This qualitative fortnightly survey covers business turnover, workforce, prices and trade.

This dataset includes additional information collected as part of the survey including details on prices and imports and exports, which are not included within this bulletin or the Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK bulletin.

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data
Dataset | Released 7 May 2020
New indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Includes breakdowns by at-risk age, sex and underlying health condition.

9 . Glossary

Faster indicator

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

High-demand product (HDP) basket

The HDP basket contains everyday essential items that were identified at the beginning of the crisis to have high consumer demand, including items from food, health and hygiene categories. The selection of these items was based on anecdotal evidence on patterns of consumer spend. The basket does not cover all items within these categories.

Underlying health condition

In this bulletin, adults with an underlying health condition include those with: Alzheimer’s disease or dementia; angina or a long-term heart problem; asthma; autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or Asperger’s (Asperger syndrome); cancer; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or a long-term lung problem; diabetes; epilepsy or other conditions that affect the brain; high blood pressure; kidney or liver disease; stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis; or rheumatoid arthritis. This also includes pregnant women.

Dependent children

Questions about homeschooling in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) are asked when the responding individual has a dependent child in their household. A dependent child is defined as someone who is under the age of 16 years or someone who is aged 16 to 18 years old, has never been married and is in full-time education.

In employment

For the OPN, a person is said to be “ in employment” if they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

Key workers

Key workers have been identified in the OPN if a respondent has self-reported they have been given “key worker status” only. It has not been defined by an official list of occupations or industries in which people work.

10 . Measuring the data

Shipping

These weekly and daily faster shipping indicators data are created through new experimental methods and are not official statistics. More quality and methodology information is available in Faster indicators of UK economic activity: shipping.

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS)

The business indicators are based on responses from the voluntary, fortnightly BICS, which captures business' views on impact on turnover, workforce, prices, trade and business resilience. The data relate to final Wave 3 results, covering the survey period 6 April to 19 April 2020, and the survey questions for the period are available in BICS questions: 6 April 2020 to 19 April 2020.

Estimates from the BICS are currently unweighted and should be treated with caution when used to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 across the UK economy. Each business was assigned the same weight regardless of turnover, size or industry.

More information on the quality and methodology, including response rates, sample size and weighting, is available in the “Measuring the data” section of the Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK bulletin.

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) (OPN)

Data on the social impact of COVID-19 on Great Britain were collected from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) and the Labour Market Survey (LMS). The data related to final Wave 5 results, for the period 17 April to 27 April 2020. In this fifth wave, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 66% (or 1,327 individuals) for the survey.

More information on the quality and methodology of the OPN is available in the “Measuring the data” section of the Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain bulletin.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

Prices were scraped daily from several large online UK retailers (typically supermarkets and other prominent high-street chains with an online presence) from 16 March to 3 May 2020 for selected items that were chosen to form the HDP basket (see Table 1 in the Online price changes for HDPs methodology). An average weekly price was then calculated for each unique product and a movement splice GEKS-Jevons index was calculated using a rolling window of five weeks.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the Online price changes of HDPs methodology.

11 . Strengths and limitations

Shipping indicators

It should be noted that these indicators are not intended to be an early measure or predictor of gross domestic product (GDP), and their potential relationship with headline GDP should be interpreted with caution. Instead, they provide an early picture of a range of activities that are likely to have an impact on the economy, supplementing official economic statistics.

Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS)

The BICS is voluntary and responses are qualitative, which should be treated with caution as results reflect the characteristics of those who responded and not necessarily the wider business population.

These data should not be used in place of official statistics. The survey was designed to give an indication of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and a timelier estimate than other surveys.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the BICS data is available in the "Strengths and limitations" section of the Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK bulletin.

Social impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) (OPN)

More information on the strengths and limitations of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is available in the "Strengths and limitations" section of the Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain bulletin.

Online price change for high-demand products (HDPs)

These experimental online price changes data should not be compared with the headline Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH). The CPIH is produced using different methods, data and quality thresholds, and it incorporates a broader range of goods and services, such as housing.

More information on the strengths and limitations of the online price changes data is available in the Online price changes of HDPs methodology.

Publication of COVID-19-related data

We will be publishing this faster indicator bulletin on a weekly basis during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to ensure we are meeting user needs for more timely data. We will be adding new data and experimental indicators as and when data become available each week.

This publication will include regular updated data from the new fortnightly survey, BICS, online prices for HDPs and weekly indicators from the OPN on the social impact of COVID-19.

12 . Related links

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest data and analysis
Web page | 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 Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) questions: 6 April 2020 to 19 April 2020
Article | Released 30 April 2020 Questions from the Business Impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Survey (BICS) for the period 6 April to 19 April 2020 relating to the Coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators weekly bulletin.

Rapid review of coronavirus, the UK economy and society, faster indicators
Webpage | Released 9 April 2020
Letter from Ed Humpherson, the Director General for Regulation at the UK Statistics Authority, endorsing the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') new experimental faster indicators.

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 24 April 2020
Bulletin | Released 5 May 2020
Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19), by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.