

UK retail footfall rebounds with high streets leading the way

1 year ago



[MRI Software](#)'s latest footfall data reveals a rebound last week, driven by high streets, while shopping centres and retail parks lagged. Warmer weather, schools reopening post-half-term, and a return to the office helped push high street activity up by +4.2%, with coastal towns (+11%) and Greater London (+10.6%) seeing double-digit growth.

Week 10 - SUN-SAT

The first week of March saw retail footfall rebound last week from the week before in high streets and retail parks whereas shopping centres continued to see a decline. The rise in high street activity is encouraging as it may well align with factors such as warmer weather, and schools reopening following the half term break across the UK which will also signal a return to the office.

Footfall rose on four out of seven days last week peaking on Sunday and Wednesday in all UK retail destinations, however the drop in activity came on Friday which was far more significant in shopping centres. High streets benefitted from the warmer weather on Saturday with a rise in footfall recorded however retail parks and shopping centres saw a drop in activity on this day compared to the week before.

All town types seemingly benefitted from the milder weather conditions with footfall rising from the week before, especially in coastal towns and Greater London where double digit rises were recorded from the week before. Market and historic towns also witnessed strong activity, alongside MRI Software's Central London Back to Office benchmark. Apart from the West Midlands, regional footfall in all UK retail destinations remained strong particularly in the East of England and the South West.

Retail footfall rose by +1.8% overall last week from the week before driven by a +4.2% rebound in high

street activity and by +0.1% in retail parks. Shopping centres, however, saw a -1.6% decline in footfall, reflecting cautious consumer behaviour ahead of Mother's Day and Easter, which fall two weeks later this year than in 2024. This suggests shoppers may be planning purchases more intentionally.

Week on week, Sunday and Wednesday were the strongest days with footfall rising by +18% and +8.3%, respectively, in all UK retail destinations but driven predominantly by high streets experiencing strong rises of +23.3% (Sunday) and +11.5% (Wednesday). This upward trend continued into the weekend with activity rising by +4% on Saturday whereas retail parks and shopping centres saw a much quieter day with footfall declining by -4.4% and -2.5%, respectively; a sign of milder weather conditions encouraging people to outdoor retail destinations.

Coastal towns also benefitted from the improved weather conditions as footfall rose by +11% week on week, a double digit trend which was also echoed in Greater London (+10.6%). The return to office was evident in Central London as activity levels rose by +4.8% however did remain -1.9% lower than last year. Market and historic towns also saw similar week on week trends with footfall rising by +6.8% and +8.3%, respectively.

Compared to 2024 levels, high street footfall remained flat whereas shopping centres and retail parks saw footfall decline by -0.9% and -4.3%, respectively. With seasonal shifts in major events that typically drive retail footfall, including Mother's Day and Easter moving to later in March and into April, these annual fluctuations are expected to level out over time.

Week 10 - MON-SUN

The first week of March saw retail footfall rebound last week from the week before in high streets only whereas retail parks and shopping centres continued to see a decline. The rise in high street activity is encouraging as it may well align with factors such as warmer weather, and schools reopening following the half term break across the UK which will also signal a return to the office.

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Compared to 2024 levels, high streets and retail parks saw an uplift in footfall remained flat whereas shopping centres saw activity decline. With seasonal shifts in major events that typically drive retail footfall, including Mother's Day and Easter moving to later in March and into April, these annual fluctuations are expected to level out over time.