

MRI Software April retail footfall demonstrate shoppers return to retail

1 year ago



The latest footfall data from retail experts [MRI Software](#) reveals a 4.3% year-on-year increase across all UK retail destinations in April 2025, driven largely by a 5.1% rise in retail park activity. This growth appears to be fuelled by the earlier timing of the Easter holidays and a stretch of warm spring weather

April delivered a welcome boost for UK retail destinations with footfall rising by 4.3% compared to last year – a much-needed lift as the sector deals with ongoing consumer caution. This boost was largely due to a 5.1% increase in activity at retail parks, bolstered by the shift in Easter holiday timings and a spell of warm weather. High streets and shopping centres also experienced gains in activity with footfall rising by 4.1% and 3.9%, respectively, indicating seasonal events and attractions are drawing visitors back to physical retail destinations. It's encouraging to see retail destinations across the UK maintain positive trends amidst several large retailers falling victim to a wave of cyber-attacks which may potentially impact the in-store experience.

The momentum continued month on month as April marked the third consecutive month of footfall growth; up 3.8% from March. This is great news for retail leaders, reflecting the positive impact of school holidays and the warmer weather. The first half of the month proved particularly strong, coinciding with the school Easter holidays. The second week, leading up to Easter weekend, saw the biggest jump in footfall in all UK retail destinations at 9.5%. This aligns with MRI Software's Insights from the Inside* with 73.6% of retailers stating they enjoyed a boost in sales leading up to Easter weekend rather than the weekend itself, suggesting that many shoppers used this to prepare for the celebrations and the weekend to enjoy spending time with family and loved ones. However, their optimism is tempered by economic reality; 68.1% of retailers have noticed a slowdown in spending on non-essential items recently, as many households adjust to rising monthly bills that came into effect at the beginning of the month.

Weekday footfall in April soared by 6.9% compared to last year, highlighting that more people are out and about during the school holidays and that the return to office is solidifying into a long-term trend. Interestingly, weekend footfall dipped by 2.9% compared to 2024, perhaps indicating that there is a shift in how people are spending their weekends differently. This is supported by MRI Software’s Central London Back to Office benchmark which revealed a 6% rise in footfall during April compared to last year, and a 5.1% increase from the previous month.

Despite a dip in activity after the Easter weekend, the combination of warmer weather, return to office, and schools reopening kept footfall high. The final week of April saw footfall rise by 10.6% compared to the previous week and by 4.4% compared to the same week last year. The 45th London Marathon also played a role, drawing large crowds and boosting Central London footfall by 8.6% compared to last year’s event. The evening of the marathon saw a significant 19.5% increase in footfall as runners and supporters celebrated, likely giving a much-needed boost to leisure and hospitality venues. As well as the Easter holidays, events including the FA Cup Semi Final and the opening of the IKEA store on Oxford Street may also have likely contributed to Central London footfall levels rising by 3.7% year on year and 6.8% month on month.

Looking ahead to May, these trends are promising but retail leaders should remain cautiously optimistic. While events such as the the upcoming bank holiday and school half-term break offer further opportunities to keep up the momentum, the cost-of-living squeeze continues to cast a long shadow. Retailers need to remain agile and focus on delivering value and experience which may help to convert footfall into spend as shoppers grow increasingly selective in how and where they part with their money.

** A weekly survey of over 700 store managers which provides insights from the shop floor around how external factors and consumer behaviour are impacting both footfall and spending*

April 2025 - UK				
% Change	OnLocation Footfall Index	High Street Index	Retail Park Index	Shopping Centre Index
Monthly	+3.8%	+4.5%	+3.4%	+2.8%
Annual	+4.3%	+4.1%	+5.1%	+3.9%