

UK retail footfall holds steady in August as high streets lead growth

5 months ago



UK retail footfall saw continued growth in August, rising +0.3% year-on-year, driven by visits to high streets which recorded a +0.8% uplift compared to last year. Shopping centres witnessed marginal growth by +0.1%, while retail parks declined by -0.9%, according to the latest data from retail tech experts [MRI Software](#).

Month-on-month, overall footfall dipped slightly by -0.6% compared to July, led by a -1.6% drop in high street visits. However, shopping centres (+0.8%) and retail parks (+0.1%) saw modest gains bolstered by the final week of the month coinciding with shopping for back-to-school essentials and payday weekend.

August's results reinforce the notion of resilience within retail stores and destinations across the UK. Despite the economic backdrop, footfall continues to stabilise, with high streets proving their strength as destinations for leisure and social activity during the summer holidays. The school break remains a key driver for footfall, but the challenge lies in converting seasonal traffic into sustained momentum as we head into Autumn.

The extended holiday period also blurred weekday and weekend behaviours, with footfall rising +0.3% and +0.5% respectively compared to last year. Major summer events boosted visits to regional cities outside of London (+6.4% YoY), while Central London saw footfall increase by +1.6%. Coastal towns enjoyed a +9.5% uplift month-on-month, though they remain -1.2% below last year's levels which could reflect an increase in holidays abroad in August.

Overall, retail sentiment remains cautious. According to MRI Software's Insights from the Inside*, 70% of store managers surveyed say school holidays drove in-store activity this summer, but 55% expect

September sales to remain lower than last year, signalling potential consumer tightening ahead of the Golden Quarter. As the retail sector moves into autumn trading, preparation is key. Retail leaders prioritising the experiential factor, leveraging local events, and have the ability to adapt quickly and benefit from data-driven insights will be primed to capture footfall and spend during the Golden Quarter.

*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.

Aug-25	High Street	Retail Park	Shopping Centre	OnLocation Footfall Index
YoY	0.8%	-0.9%	0.1%	0.3%
MoM	-1.6%	0.1%	0.8%	-0.6%