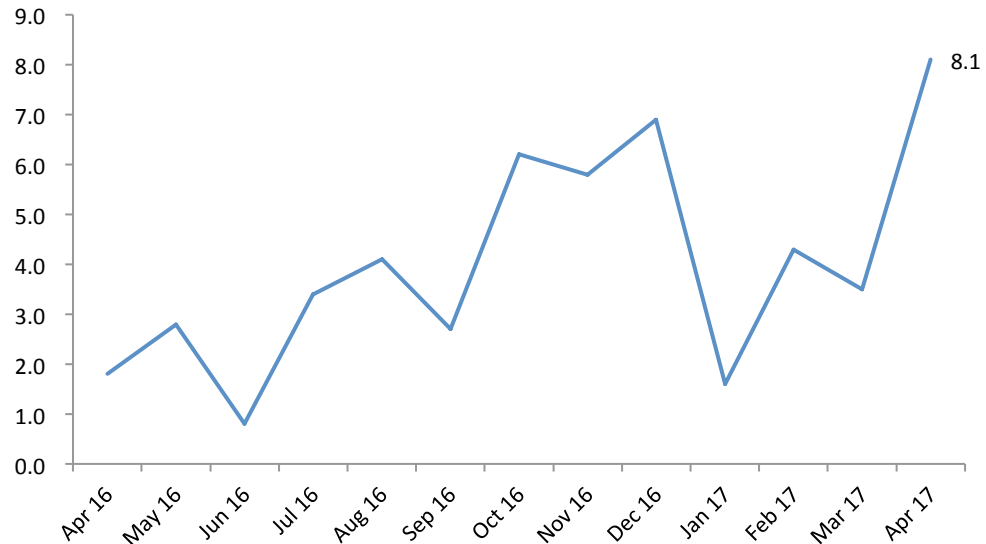


UK Monthly Retail Sales: A Bumper April, Helped by a Late Easter

- Helped by a later Easter than last year, total retail sales jumped by 8.1% year over year in April, accelerating from already solid growth of 3.3% in March.
- Unweighted average growth across March and April was a very strong 5.8%.

Figure 1. UK Total Retail Sales (ex Automotive Fuel): YoY % Change



All data in this report are nonseasonally adjusted.

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)/Fung Global Retail & Technology

Figure 2. UK Retail Sales: Notable Rising and Falling Sectors in April



Grocery retailers' sales growth was strong, at 7.1% year over year, versus 1.5% in March.

Clothing specialists enjoyed 10.1% growth, versus an already strong 8.7% in March.

Online-only retailers again drove growth, with sales up by 23.8%.

After a run of weak or negative growth, **DIY and hardware stores** saw a bumper 22.6% uplift.



Structural declines continued for **books and news stores**, whose sales were down 8.5%, and **music and video stores**, whose sales were down 8.1%.

Sales at **floorcoverings specialists** fell 4.3% and at **computer and telecoms stores** fell 10.4%, but these are typically highly volatile sectors in the ONS index.

Source: ONS/Fung Global Retail & Technology

Retail in Detail

Retail growth in March and April was distorted by the timing of Easter: it fell in March last year, but was in April this year. Despite this, growth in March 2017 was solid, and this accelerated to very strong growth in April.

The ONS says that sales adjusted for seasonal factors such as Easter were up 4.9% in March and 6.5% in April.

The **grocery retail** sector grew sales by 7.1% in April, and across March and April, the unweighted average was a solid 4.3%—well ahead of April food-price inflation of 1.5%.

Clothing specialists' growth was driven by a reported surge in sales by small retailers. Across March and April, the total clothing specialists sector grew sales by an average 9.4%, according to the ONS.

The **floorcoverings** and **computers and telecoms** sectors are typically highly volatile in the ONS index, and this volatility continued in April.

Automotive fuel retailers' sales increased by 8.7%, with inflation running at 11.1% in March.

Figure 3. UK Retail Sales, by Sector: YoY % Change

	February	March	April
Total (ex Automotive Fuel)	4.3	3.5	8.1
Grocery Retailers	2.5	1.5	7.1
Specialist Food Stores	(6.2)	(7.5)	3.8
Beverage and Tobacco Specialists*	(10.0)	(8.3)	(10.4)
Department Stores/Mixed-Goods Retailers	(0.1)	2.1	4.0
Clothing Specialists	5.6	8.7	10.1
<i>Large Clothing Specialists**</i>	2.8	6.1	5.9
<i>Small Clothing Specialists**</i>	33.6	34.0	58.2
Footwear Specialists	7.0	(0.1)	11.3
Furniture and Lighting Stores	(4.3)	(2.3)	0.3
Electrical Goods Specialists	6.7	6.1	24.9
DIY and Hardware Stores	(1.1)	(0.3)	22.6
Music and Video Specialists	(3.4)	(9.3)	(8.1)
Health and Beauty Specialists	10.9	16.9	9.1
Books and News Stores	(11.3)	(9.8)	(8.5)
Floor Coverings Specialists*	12.5	25.7	(4.3)
Computers and Telecoms Equipment*	(14.1)	(9.1)	(10.4)
Other Specialized Stores	13.2	(1.2)	7.2
Mail Order and Internet Pure Plays	26.2	25.1	23.8
Other Nonstore Retail*	(20.4)	2.5	(14.8)
<i>Automotive Fuel Retailers</i>	<i>17.8</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>8.7</i>

* *Relatively small or fragmented sector, where figures may be distorted by methodological issues such as changes in the survey sample.*

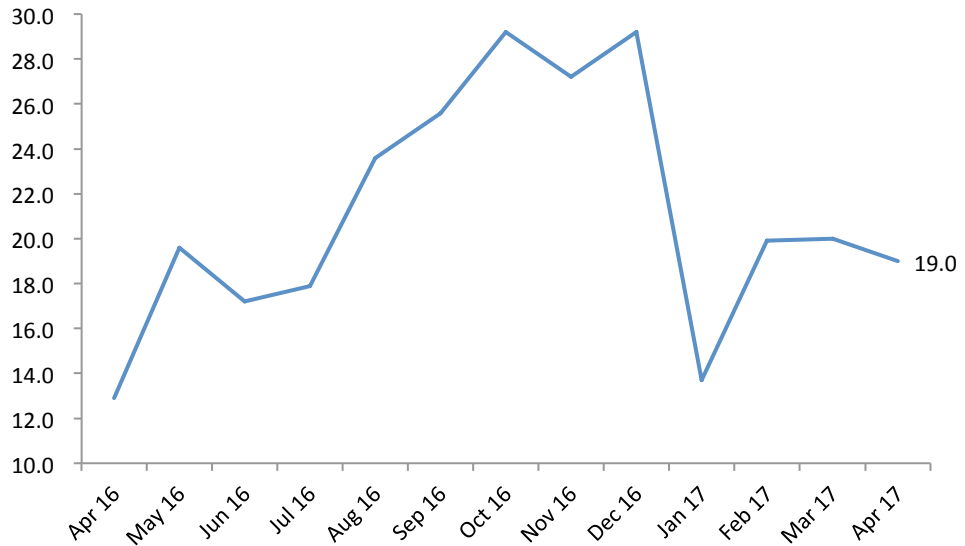
** *A small retailer is defined as one with fewer than 100 employees or with revenues of £60 million or less per year; all others are large retailers.*

Source: ONS

Online Retail Sales

Total Internet sales growth slowed from 20% in March to 19% in April, reflecting, in part, the tendency for consumers to return to brick-and-mortar stores over the four-day Easter holiday period.

Figure 4. UK Internet Retail Sales: YoY % Change



Source: ONS

In April, online growth rates softened sequentially across all sectors except food retailers.

E-commerce accounted for 14.8% of all retail sales in April.

Figure 5. UK Internet Retail Sales, by Sector: YoY % Change

	February	March	April
All Internet Retail Sales	19.9	20.0	19.0
Food Stores	12.7	16.7	17.5
Department Stores/Mixed-Goods Retailers	18.4	22.0	10.1
Clothing and Footwear Specialists	17.4	16.2	8.2
Household Goods Stores*	16.5	25.8	11.3
All Other Stores	22.4	17.4	9.6
Nonstore Retailers	18.9	25.8	10.6

* Includes furniture and lighting specialists, electrical goods retailers, DIY and hardware stores, and music and video retailers.

Source: ONS



MONTHLY BRIEFING

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