

21 February 2008

Coverage
Great Britain
Theme
The Economy

Steady underlying growth in retail sales

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that retail sales volume in the three months November to January rose by 0.6 per cent compared with the previous three months. This follows 0.5 per cent growth in the three months to December.

Three-monthly growth in sales volume was 0.1 per cent for predominantly food stores, while no growth was reported for predominantly non-food stores. Sales in non-store retailing and repair rose by 8.2 per cent, the strongest growth in the series. Sales in non-specialised stores (which includes department stores) fell by 3.9 per cent, the largest decrease in the series.

Total sales volume in the three months to January was 4.1 per cent higher than the same period a year ago. Sales for predominantly non-food stores rose by 5.1 per cent. Sales volume for household goods stores rose by 9.8 per cent, the largest growth for this sector since February 2002 (10.1 per cent). Sales volume for predominantly food stores rose by 0.9 per cent, while sales volume for non-store retailing and repair rose by 18.0 per cent, the largest growth in the series.

Total sales volume increased by 0.8 per cent between December and January. Sales volume for predominantly food stores increased by 0.7 per cent. Sales volume for predominantly non-food stores increased by 0.4 per cent. Sales volume for household goods stores increased by 4.3 per cent, the largest increase for this sector since August 2006 when it was 5.3 per cent.

The non-seasonally adjusted value of retail sales for the three months to January was 1.3 per cent higher than in the same period a year earlier. The average weekly value of sales in January was £4.6 billion, 4.8 per cent higher than in January 2007. Sales by predominantly food stores rose by 6.7 per cent over the year, the largest rise for this sector since January 2002 (7.8 per cent). This compares with 1.8 per cent growth for predominantly non-food stores and 18.0 per cent growth for non-store retailing and repair, the largest rise for this sector in the series. Sales by non-specialised stores (which includes department stores) fell by 2.2 per cent, the largest fall for this sector since September 2005 when it fell by 2.8 per cent.

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BACKGROUND NOTES

1. The latest Retail Sales Index First Release can be found at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/rs0208.pdf>
2. A briefing note is available at:
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=870>
3. The January period covered the five weeks from 30 December 2007 to 2 February 2008.
4. The volume of retail sales is the total takings adjusted for inflation and the value of retail sales is the total actual takings.
5. All volume statistics referred to above are seasonally adjusted.
6. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
7. Sales refer to average weekly sales.
8. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference.

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