

20 March 2008

**Coverage**  
Great Britain  
**Theme**  
The Economy

## Retail sales in food stores drive growth

Retail sales volume in the three months December to February rose by 1.0 per cent compared with the previous three months. This follows 0.7 per cent growth in the three months to January.

Three-monthly growth in sales volume was 1.0 per cent for predominantly food stores, while sales in predominantly non-food stores rose by 0.2 per cent. Sales in the non-store retailing and repair sector rose by 7.3 per cent. Sales in non-specialised stores (which includes department stores) fell by 3.6 per cent, the largest decrease since the series began in 1986.

Total sales volume in the three months to February was 4.7 per cent higher than the same period a year ago. Sales for predominantly non-food stores rose by 5.3 per cent, while sales volume for predominantly food stores rose by 2.0 per cent, the largest growth for this sector since May 2007 (2.0 per cent). Sales volume for the non-store retailing and repair sector rose by 18.6 per cent, the largest growth since the series began in 1986.

On a monthly basis, total sales volume increased by 1.0 per cent between January and February. Sales volume for predominantly food stores increased by 1.6 per cent, the largest increase for this sector since June 2006 (1.9 per cent). Sales volume for predominantly non-food stores increased by 0.5 per cent, with sales for household goods stores decreasing by 4.2 per cent, the largest decrease for this sector since February 2000 (-4.5 per cent).

The non-seasonally adjusted value of retail sales for the three months to February was 2.6 per cent higher than in the same period a year earlier. The average weekly value of sales in February was £4.9 billion, 6.6 per cent higher than in February 2007. Sales by predominantly food stores rose by 7.6 per cent over the year, the largest rise for this sector since January 2002 (7.8 per cent). This compares with 4.8 per cent growth for predominantly non-food stores and 13.4 per cent growth for the non-store retailing and repair sector. Sales by other non-food stores rose by 11.6 per cent, the largest rise for this sector since April 2002 (11.6 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/rs0308.pdf>
2. A briefing note is available at:  
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=870>
3. The February period covered the four weeks from to 3 February 2008 to 1 March 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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