

# WEEKLY REPORT



**MMGY**  
**Weekly Report for UK & Ireland**  
24 October 2025

# ECONOMIC, POLITICAL & SOCIAL UPDATE

## **UK Inflation Holds Steady at 3.8% Despite Slower Food Price Rises**

The UK's annual inflation rate stayed at 3.8% in September, unchanged for the third consecutive month, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Food and drink prices dropped by 0.2% month-on-month — the first decline in 16 months — mainly due to lower prices for vegetables, dairy products, and cereals. However, items such as coffee, chocolate, and red meat continue to see notable price increases. While the slowdown in food inflation offers some relief for households, overall inflation remains well above the Bank of England's 2% target, meaning the cost-of-living pressures and business expenses are likely to persist for now.

Source: [BBC](#)

## **Retail Sales Reach Highest Level in Over Three Years, Surprising Economists**

UK retail sales rose by 0.5% in September, surpassing economists' expectations of a 0.2% decline. This marks the fourth consecutive monthly increase, reaching the highest sales volume since July 2022. Strong performances were noted in computer and telecommunications sectors, bolstered by the iPhone 17 launch, and in online jewellery sales driven by high gold demand. Despite adverse weather and a five-day London tube strike, online spending surged to levels not seen since the pandemic's end. However, food sales declined, reflecting ongoing high food price inflation.

Source: [Sky News](#)

## **Real Living Wage to Rise by Nearly 7%, Benefiting Low-Paid UK Workers**

The UK's Real Living Wage is set to increase by 6.7% to £13.45 per hour nationwide and by 6.9% to £14.80 in London, effective from April 2026. This voluntary wage, distinct from the statutory National Living Wage, is calculated annually based on the actual cost of living and is paid by over 16,000 employers, including Uniqlo, the University of Salford, and Truro City Council. The increase aims to support financial stability among low-paid workers, with employers encouraged to implement the new rates by 1 May 2026.

Source: [The Guardian](#)

## **Trump Ends All Trade Talks with Canada Over 'Fake' TV Advert**

President Donald Trump announced the termination of all trade negotiations with Canada following the airing of a controversial TV advert in Ontario. The advert featured a manipulated clip of former President Ronald Reagan criticizing tariffs, suggesting they lead to job losses and trade wars. The Reagan Foundation condemned the use of Reagan's likeness without permission, labeling the ad as "fake" and considering legal action. Trump responded by accusing the Canadian government of interference in U.S. judicial matters and reaffirmed the importance of tariffs to U.S. national security and economy. This decision exacerbates existing trade tensions between the two nations.

Source: [Sky News](#)

# TRADE UPDATE

## **UK-US market predicted to grow in 2025 and 2026**

The UK market to the US is projected to continue to grow next year despite concerns around affordability and the perception of the country as a welcoming destination. Analyst Oxford Economics said the UK was among the European markets currently bucking an overall downturn in outbound travel to the US and predicted ongoing growth in 2026. Data presented by Oxford Economics subsidiary Tourism Economics at Brand USA's Travel Week event in London suggested the overall inbound market to the US would be 6.3% down in 2025, compared to 2024. This is a 2.4% improvement on an earlier projection of an 8.7% downturn this year. A bounce back of 3.7% is predicted for 2026, with overall numbers expected to return to 2024 levels in 2027.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

## **Eurostar to run double-decker trains from 2031**

Eurostar plans to run double-decker trains through the Channel Tunnel from 2031. The rail operator has signed a €2 billion (£1.7bn) deal for 30 Celestia trains from the manufacturer Alstom, with an option to buy 20 more. Each of the new trains will carry up to 540 passengers, 20% more than Eurostar's existing trains. By running two trains together – as the operator does currently on cross-Channel services – each departure would offer up to 1,080 seats.

Source: [Travel Gossip](#)

## **UK school half term departures up 2% YOY**

Some 27,751 flights are scheduled to depart from UK airports over the October half-term, 2% more than last year, according to aviation analysts Cirium. Friday 24 October will be the busiest day, with 3,098 departures. The number of seats available during half-term is up 9% compared to 2019, before the pandemic. However, the number of flights is down 2% compared to 2019, when there were 28,351. The most popular international destinations are Dublin, Amsterdam, Alicante, Malaga and Paris CDG.

Source: [Travel Gossip](#)

## **Byway Data Shows Off-Peak Travel Boom Shrinking Shoulder Season**

The traditional shoulder travel season is shrinking as more people opt to travel outside of peak summer, suggests flight-free firm Byway. This shift is driven by a desire for fewer crowds and more comfortable temperatures. New data reveals off-season departures are up 50% year-on-year, with September proving most popular (up 60% vs 2024). In contrast, summer departures grew slower. April-May and September-October are now described as the new “sweet spots.” Byway notes this trend eases pressure on local infrastructure and supports businesses year-round. Founder Cat Jones said demand for overland, off-season holidays is rising, with new sleeper routes and technology helping travelers move towards more “meaningful, sustainable and considered” holidays.

Source: [Travel Weekly](#)

# MEDIA & SOCIAL UPDATE

## New social media platform safer for young people

Tribela, a new social media platform designed for under-18s, is claimed to provide a “safer place for younger users” according to its founder, Natalie Boll. In a bid to tackle young people being exposed to harmful content online, the new social platform, due to release in 2026, will see all content moderated before making it on to the platform, with violence, sexual content, and explicit language banned. Tribela will also come with a recommendation system, which will allow users to customise what they see on their feed based on topics.

Source: [BBC News](#)

## Key Media Movers and Shakers:

- **Genie Harrison promoted to Executive Travel Editor:** Previously the Assistant Travel Editor for print at The Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday, Genie is now the Executive Travel Editor at The Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday and Mail Online.
- **Alison Graves leaves Reach PLC:** Formerly the Lifestyle and Features Editor, Alison will leave the role to work as a freelancer.
- **Jessica Carpani promoted to Head of Lifestyle:** Formerly Executive Lifestyle Editor, Jessica has been promoted to Head of Lifestyle at The Daily Telegraph.
- **Gemma Bowes promoted to Assistant Travel Editor:** Formerly Acting Associate Editor, Gemma has been promoted to Assistant Travel Editor at The Times and The Sunday Times.

# MICE UPDATE

## New AI system aims to solve live event accessibility for deaf attendees

Developed by Speaksee, Soundshape is designed to make accessibility the standard for any venue or event hosting large groups. The AI-powered system seamlessly integrates with existing AV setups to provide live subtitles with over 95 per cent accuracy and a latency of less than one second. The system is engineered for rapid deployment, connecting to any existing AV system with just three cables (audio, power, and internet), eliminating the need for specialist IT support during setup. The system can translate speech into over 100 languages, allowing attendees to select their preferred language on their device. This makes it an essential tool for international conferences and diverse audiences.

Source: [M&IT \(Meetings & Incentive Travel\)](#)

# LIGHTER NOTE

## New App Helps People Discover Nature

A new mobile app called Wildling aims to reconnect people with nature by mapping the UK's wild spaces. The app features a built-in content hub offering practical advice and inspiration, such as tips for getting children outdoors and guides like 'how to build a den' or 'how to go rock pooling'. See more [here](#)