UK retail enjoys strong bank holiday weekend

By Nigel Taylor - May 4, 2022

Retail destinations “fared well” over the early May bank holiday with a strong uplift in footfall from the week before, according to footfall expert Springboard. The rise averaged 8% over the three days from Saturday to Monday.

This strong footfall performance also narrowed the gap from 2019 considerably, to an average of just -8.3% between Saturday and Monday across all retail destinations, it noted.

Footfall last week (24-30 Sunday) rose 3.1% across UK retail destinations although this was heavily influenced by a significant uplift of 77.9% on Sunday, due to the low comparable of Easter Sunday in the week before.

On Monday (26 April), footfall declined by just 0.4% driven by a drop of 11.9% in retail parks. This was due to a strong comparable in this destination type on Easter Monday in the week before, said Springboard.

Saturday and Sunday were the strongest trading days, with rises in footfall of 9.5% and 11.3% respectively. There was less of an uplift in consumer activity overall on Monday (+3.3% from the week before), but retail parks performed strongly with a rise in footfall of 12%. 

Image: Nigel Taylor
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High streets and retail parks recorded particularly strong improvements versus 2019, to -8.5% below 2019 in high streets over the three days and -5% from 2019 on Monday, and -2.6% below 2019 in retail parks over the three days with footfall 1.2% higher than 2019 on Sunday.

Footfall was 22.5% higher than last year in all UK retail destinations over the three days, and 36.8% higher in high streets rising to 52.1% higher than 2021 on Monday.

The lead-up to the bank holiday weekend saw noticeably lower footfall than the week before across all three destination types. Over the three days between Tuesday and Thursday, footfall declined from the week before by an average of 7.3%.

In city centres around the UK, activity also increased over the three days by an average of 8% in Central London and by 15.9% in regional cities outside of the capital.

It also appears that Easter trips had ended last week, with declines in footfall in coastal and historic towns over the seven days up to Saturday (-8.8% in coastal towns, -1.8% in historic towns). However, footfall in both of these town types bounced by over the bank holiday weekend, with rises that averaged +8% and +14.7% over the three days from Saturday to Monday.

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