London footfall suffers in sweltering heat - Springboard UK data

By Nigel Taylor - July 19, 2022

With UK temperatures rising to record levels, Springboard has braved the elements to update us on the impact the weather had on retail footfall on Monday.

It’s no shock to find it caused a “significant” drop in London footfall, down 18.1% week-on-week, recorded on Springboard’s ‘Back to the Office’ benchmark. And that was up to 11am, so it doesn’t account for what happened when temperatures rose a further few degrees in the afternoon.

Across all UK high streets footfall was down 7.3%. while in both shopping centres and retail parks - both of which offer air conditioned environments - footfall rose by 1.6% and 1.3% respectively.

And at least high streets in coastal towns saw a week-on-week surge in footfall, by 9%, unsurprising given their locations.

Diane Wehrle, Insights Director at Springboard: “Typically when the weather is hot and sunny, shoppers gravitate to outdoor locations, and so footfall in high streets tends to increase while decreasing in shopping centres. However, with the extreme heat… the reverse has occurred.”
She said the impact on high streets is demonstrated even more clearly by looking at footfall in different types of town across the UK. In city centres across the UK footfall was 11.5% lower than last week and 16.1% lower in Central London.

The only parts of the UK where high street footfall rose from last Monday were Scotland (+0.6%), Northern Ireland (+0.6%) and Wales (+3.2%) where temperatures, while still hot, have been lower than in England.

She added: “People are clearly working at home today as advised, as Springboard's Central London 'Back to the Office' benchmark which tracks footfall in areas of Central London that are in close proximity to offices.”

“As the day progresses and the heat increases, we are anticipating that the gap between footfall in high streets and shopping centres will widen further,” Wehrle added.

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