

S&P Global UK Construction PMI[®]

Steepest decline in construction output since November 2025

April 2026

New business falls markedly in April

Input cost inflation strongest since June 2022

Suppliers' delivery times lengthen to greatest extent for just over three years

April data highlighted another challenging month for the UK construction sector as business activity decreased and cost inflation intensified.

The headline seasonally adjusted S&P Global UK Construction Purchasing Managers' Index™ (PMI[®]) – an index tracking changes in total industry activity – registered 39.7 in April, down from 45.6 in March and indicative of a sharp fall in overall business activity. Reduced output has been seen in each month since January 2025 and the latest reading was the weakest for five months.

Civil engineering activity (index at 35.3) registered the steepest decline, followed by house building (38.2). Commercial work (42.7) showed some resilience in comparison to elsewhere in the construction sector, although the latest reduction was the fastest recorded so far in 2026.

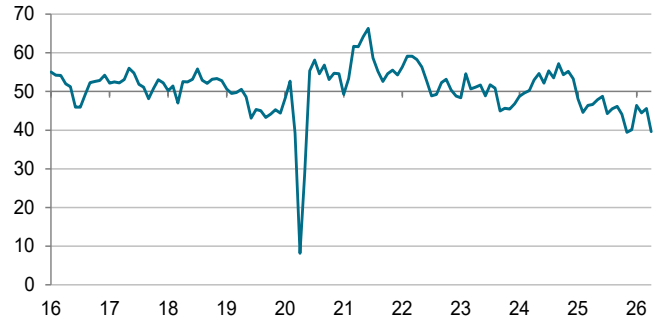
Survey respondents widely reported subdued demand conditions and a subsequent lack of new work to replace completed projects in April. This was signalled by the sharpest decline in total new business since November 2025. Construction companies often noted that elevated business uncertainty due to the Middle East conflict had led to longer sales conversion times and fewer tender opportunities.

Softer order books contributed to a sustained downturn in staffing levels during April. Moreover, the pace of job shedding was the steepest for four months. A number of firms noted that fewer project starts and strong wage pressures had led to the non-replacement of voluntary leavers.

The latest survey pointed to a sharp and accelerated decline in overall purchasing activity across the construction sector, largely reflecting reduced workloads. However, some firms commented on advanced purchasing of raw materials due to concerns about escalating costs and potential supply disruptions.

Vendor performance deteriorated for the second month running in April. The lengthening of average lead times was the sharpest since December 2022. This was mainly attributed to international shipping delays, alongside difficulties importing materials from the GCC region.

S&P Global UK Construction PMI Total Activity
Index, sa, >50 = growth m/m



Data were collected 9-29 April 2026.

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Comment

Tim Moore, Economics Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said:

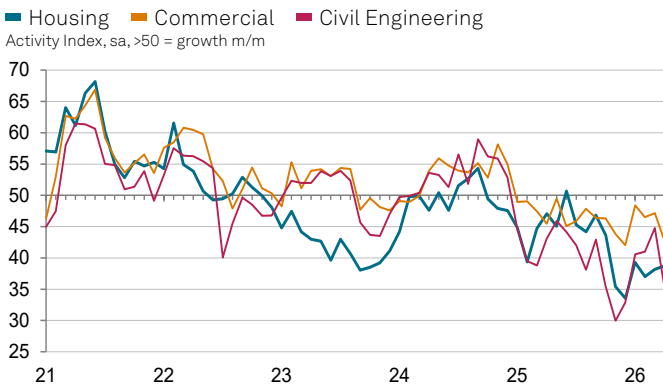
"A rapid acceleration of input cost inflation was seen across the UK construction sector in April. Aside from the post-pandemic surge in input prices from early-2021 to mid-2022, the latest rise in purchasing costs was the steepest in three decades of data collection.

"Around two-thirds of the survey panel reported higher cost burdens in April, which was overwhelmingly linked to fuel surcharges and subsequent rises in raw material prices. Adding to supply chain challenges, the latest data also indicated longer wait times for the delivery of construction items due to international shipping delays.

"April data again signalled subdued underlying demand conditions, despite construction companies reporting pockets of growth in areas such as energy infrastructure work. A lack of new orders to replace completed projects contributed to the sharpest decline in business activity for five months.

"Expectations for construction activity over the next 12 months remained positive overall during April, but confidence levels were the lowest since last November. Survey respondents cited a growing list of factors weighing on construction sector optimism, including fragile investment sentiment and elevated borrowing costs, alongside continued uncertainty about the impact of the Middle East conflict on prices, supply chains and broader economic prospects."

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Fuel surcharges meanwhile contributed to a rapid increase in purchasing prices across the construction sector. Around 69% of the survey panel reported a rise in their input costs in April (up from 48% in March), while only 2% signalled a decline. This pointed to the fastest overall rate of cost inflation since June 2022. Many firms noted the pass-through of higher transportation costs by suppliers. Meanwhile, subcontractors increased their average prices charged to the greatest extent for three years.

Finally, business activity expectations softened in April and were the least optimistic since November 2025. Some firms noted confidence linked to long-term infrastructure projects and hopes of a rebound in demand if the Middle East conflict subsides. However, construction companies also widely commented on expected growth headwinds during the year ahead from rising inflation and elevated borrowing costs, as well as fragile investment sentiment.

Methodology

The S&P Global UK Construction PMI® is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 150 construction companies. The panel is stratified by company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Survey data were first collected April 1997.

Survey responses are collected in the second half of each month and indicate the direction of change compared to the previous month. A diffusion index is calculated for each survey variable. The index is the sum of the percentage of 'higher' responses and half the percentage of 'unchanged' responses. The indices vary between 0 and 100, with a reading above 50 indicating an overall increase compared to the previous month, and below 50 an overall decrease. The indices are then seasonally adjusted.

The headline figure is the Total Activity Index. This is a diffusion index that tracks changes in the total volume of construction activity compared with one month previously. The Total Activity Index is comparable to the Manufacturing Output Index and Services Business Activity Index. It may be referred to as the 'Construction PMI' but is not comparable with the headline manufacturing PMI figure.

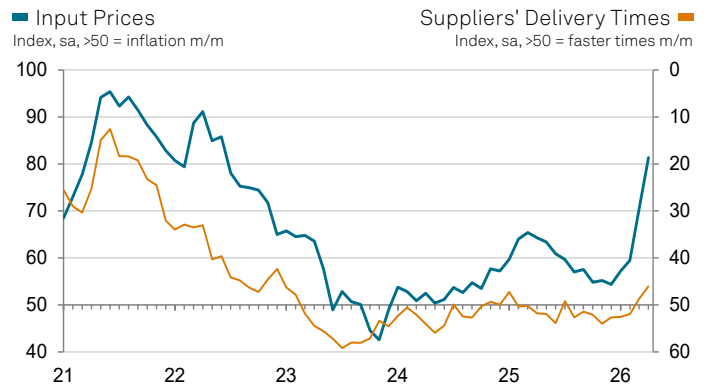
Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

For further information on the PMI survey methodology, please contact economics@spglobal.com.

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