

S&P Global UK Manufacturing PMI[®]

UK Manufacturing PMI at near four-year high in April

April 2026

Manufacturing PMI at 53.7 in April

Output, new orders and employment all increase

Input price inflation at near four-year high as supply chain pressures build

The UK manufacturing sector made a positive start to the second quarter of the year, with the trends in output, new orders and employment all showing signs of improvement. Supply chain and price pressures continued to grow, however, as disruptions, delays and the war in the Middle East were felt across the sector.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index™ (PMI[®]) rose to a 47-month high of 53.7 in April, its best level since May 2022 and little-changed from the earlier flash estimate of 53.6. The headline PMI has posted above its neutral 50.0 mark – signalling expansion – for six successive months.

Four of the five PMI sub-components (output, new orders, employment and suppliers' delivery times) were all at levels usually consistent with improved operating conditions. Stocks of purchases also declined to one of the weakest extents during its current 43-month sequence of contraction.

Manufacturing production rose for the sixth time in the past seven months. The scaling up of output volumes reflected improved new order intakes, efforts to clear backlogs of work and a minor build up of finished goods stocks. Output growth was broad-based by sector, with increases seen across the consumer, intermediate and investment goods categories.

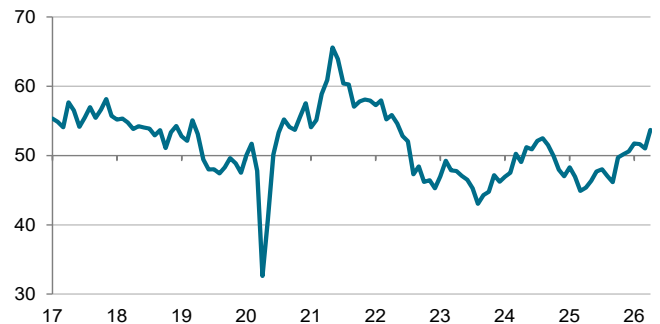
Improved intakes of new work from domestic and overseas clients contributed to a fifth successive increase in total new orders in April, with the rate of expansion accelerating to one of its highest during the past four years. Part of the increase reflected clients bringing forward purchases to mitigate expected supply chain delays and price increases.

New export business rose for the fourth consecutive month, albeit to a slightly weaker extent than in March. Intakes of new work improved from clients in the USA, China, Japan, and India. There were, however, reports of new export order growth being stymied by the effects of Middle East conflict and restricted passage through the Strait of Hormuz on global economic expansion and client confidence.

Business optimism fell to its lowest level in a year during April, as manufacturers remained concerned about the impact of the war in the Middle East on global economic

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Index, sa, >50 = improvement m/m



Data were collected 9-27 April 2026.

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Comment

Rob Dobson, Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence

“April saw the growth rate of the UK manufacturing sector recover after being hit by the impacts of the war in the Middle East during March. The headline PMI rose to a near four-year high, as the trends in output and new orders strengthened. Staffing levels were also increased for the first time in 18 months.”

“The upturn comes with several of catches, however. Restrictions on transit through the Strait of Hormuz are causing substantial disruptions to input deliveries, with supplier lead times lengthening to the greatest extent in almost four years. The resulting material shortages are exerting steep pressure on purchasing costs. Input prices rose at one of the fastest rates in the 34-year survey history, and at a pace rarely exceeded outside of the pandemic-related inflationary surge of 2021-22.”

“It should also be noted that the gain in production is partly the result of clients bringing forward purchases to mitigate expected price uplifts and supply disruptions. As this process unwinds later in the year, alongside declining business optimism, growth in the sector could cool while inflationary pressures remain on high heat.”

growth, geopolitical instability and the consequences of government policy. That said, companies still expect new product launches, planned marketing activity, improved client confidence and hopes for a more stable geopolitical backdrop to support output growth over the coming year.

Supply chain pressures continued to build in April. Average vendor performance deteriorated to the greatest extent in almost four years, linked to ongoing complications caused by the Middle East war and restrictions on transit through the Strait of Hormuz. Shortages of freight capacity, port disruptions and customs delays were also mentioned by manufacturers.

Supplier delays and the resulting shortages of inputs led to a further steep acceleration in purchase price inflation during April. Input costs increased at the quickest pace since June 2022 and to one of the greatest extents registered by the survey (which began in January 1992) outside of the post-pandemic inflationary surge.

Manufacturers reported a wide range of inputs as up in price, including chemicals, electronics, energy, food stuffs, metals, plastics, pulp and timber. The feed-through of higher taxes and staff costs (employer NI and minimum wages) also contributed to higher purchasing costs. Subsequently, manufacturers raised their average selling prices for the fifth successive month and at the fastest rate since November 2022.

Purchasing activity rose for the first time in three months in April, as some firms stepped up input buying to mitigate expected price increases and supply disruption. Stocks of purchases fell only marginally, while there was a mild build-up of finished goods inventory.

Methodology

The S&P Global UK Manufacturing PMI® is compiled by S&P Global from responses to questionnaires sent to purchasing managers in a panel of around 650 manufacturers. The panel is stratified by detailed sector and company workforce size, based on contributions to GDP. Data collection began in January 1992.

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 Purchasing Managers' Index™ (PMI). The PMI is a weighted average of the following five indices: New Orders (30%), Output (25%), Employment (20%), Suppliers' Delivery Times (15%) and Stocks of Purchases (10%). For the PMI calculation the Suppliers' Delivery Times Index is inverted so that it moves in a comparable direction to the other indices. Since January 2006 the average difference between final and flash Manufacturing PMI values is 0.1 (0.4 in absolute terms).

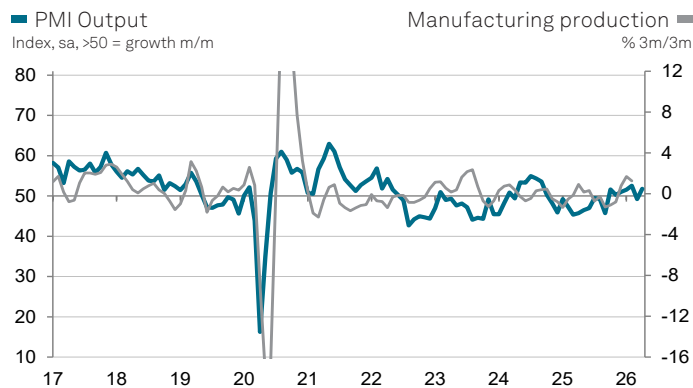
Underlying survey data are not revised after publication, but seasonal adjustment factors may be revised from time to time as appropriate which will affect the seasonally adjusted data series.

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

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PMI by S&P Global

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