

London's high streets

Key information

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Overview

On 10 March 2026, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released [data on high streets and retail areas in Great Britain](#). In this post, the Research Unit's Becca Storer explores the latest data with respect to London's high streets, including land use, high street populations, and employment activity.

Land use

Addresses on London's high streets are classified into three main categories: retail, residential and offices.

In June 2025, the majority of addresses on high streets in London were residential (66.8 per cent). London's high streets were notably more residential than the rest of England, and also had the highest proportion of office addresses compared to all other regions.

Retail addresses made up a significantly smaller proportion (17.7 per cent) of London's high streets than in England overall (28.7 per cent).

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Figure -

Source: [Land use on the high street in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

Access to high streets

Residents of London are much more likely to live near a high street than residents of other areas of England. As of the 2021 Census, 45.4 per cent of Londoners lived on or around a high street, compared to 21.5 per cent of the national population.

There is significant variation in the percentage of residents in different London boroughs who live near a high street; residents of central London are more likely to live near a high street than those in outer London. In 2021, boroughs with the highest proportion of residents living near to a high street were the City of London (95.2 per cent), Kensington and Chelsea (82.7 per cent) and Westminster (82.5 per cent). In comparison, only 24.8 per cent of residents in Bromley and 25 per cent of residents in Bexley lived close to a high street.

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Source: [Population living on or around high streets in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

Employment on the high street

The ONS publishes statistics on relative employment on high streets, using Business Register and Employment Survey data. It uses an employment index to show how employment has changed over time in relation to employment in 2015. Index values above 100 indicate an increase relative to 2015, while values below 100 indicate a decrease relative to 2015. A value of 100 indicates no change from the 2015 level.

Retail employment

Between 2015 and 2024, retail employment has decreased in both central and non-central retail settings in London. This trend is particularly pronounced for retail employment in central shopping centre settings, which decreased by 24 per cent between 2015 and 2024.

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[Employment on the high street in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

Employment on central high streets

Between 2015 and 2024, employment in central high streets in London shifted away from retail and into other sectors. Employment in central high streets in London increased by 35 per cent in health, education and public administration; 26 per cent in accommodation and food services; and 38 per cent in other service industry

sectors. Retail is the only industry where employment in central high streets decreased over this period (by 6 per cent).

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[Employment on the high street in Great Britain - Office for National Statistics](#)

Mayoral activity and London Assembly scrutiny

In February 2025, the Mayor of London and London Councils launched [London's Growth Plan](#), which described itself as “a blueprint for turbocharging productivity in the capital.”

The Plan aims to restore productivity growth to an average of two per cent a year over the next decade, grow London's economy by £107 billion by 2035, and help create over 150,000 "good" jobs by 2028. Alongside the Plan, the GLA set out an ambition to “Help local high streets thrive” with a £20 million High Streets Fund to "boost" local high streets, tackle empty properties and ensure all London boroughs benefit from economic growth.

On 24 April 2025, the London Assembly Economy, Culture and Skills Committee published its report [At a crossroads: London's high streets](#) – which highlighted the challenges facing London's high streets and identified opportunities for them to flourish. The report included a number of recommendations related to the Mayor's 2025-26 High Streets Fund.

In the most recent Growth Plan update, published December 2025, London and Partners confirmed that the £20 million High Streets Fund capital had been allocated to boroughs, alongside an additional £600k revenue funding confirmed for 12 high streets through its High Street Place Labs programme.^[1]

References

^[1] [Progress updates - London Growth Plan](#)

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