

Card Spending Update for August 2021



Release date : 16 November 2021

UK Finance: Card Spending Update for August 2021

Annual data comparisons are impacted by the reduction of spending due to lockdown restrictions and the economy re-opening from April 2021, resulting in large percentage variations when compared to 2020. Comparisons with August 2019 have therefore been included below to provide additional context.

Key data highlights:

Card transactions by UK cardholders both in the UK and overseas:

- There were 1.9 billion debit card transactions in August, 20.5 per cent more than in August 2020 and 24.7 per cent more than August 2019. The total spend of £61 billion was 1.8 per cent lower than August 2020 but 17.5 per cent higher than August 2019.
- There were 334 million credit card transactions in August, 21.8 per cent more than in August 2020 and 10 per cent more than August 2019. The total spend of £16.9 billion was 23.6 per cent higher than August 2020 and the same as it was in August 2019.
- Outstanding balances on credit card accounts have contracted by 7.1 per cent over the twelve months to August, as a result of repayments outstripping new borrowing in the year.

Card transactions made in the UK by cardholders from both the UK and from overseas countries:

- There were 1.9 billion debit and credit card transactions in the UK in August, 15.3 per cent more than in August 2020 and 16.5 per cent more than August 2019. The total spend of £68.9 billion was 3 per cent higher than August 2020 and 14.9 per cent higher than August 2019.
- Contactless payments accounted for 53 per cent of all credit card and 68 per cent of all debit card transactions.
- There were 1,262 million contactless card transactions in August, 29.6 per cent more than the 973 million in August 2020 and 73.9 per cent more than the 726 million in August 2019. The total value of contactless transactions was £15.4 billion in August, a 31.1 per cent increase on £11.8 billion in August 2020 and 123.1 per cent increase on £6.9 billion in August 2019.
- The number of contactless credit card transactions was 31.7 per cent higher than August 2020 and 44.7 per cent higher than August 2019. The number of contactless debit card transactions was 29.3 per cent higher than August 2020 and 79.2 per cent higher than August 2019.

UK Residents cards in issue - August 2021

98 million

DEBIT
CARDS

90 million of which are contactless

59 million

CREDIT
CARDS

52 million of which are contactless

53 million

CREDIT
CARD
ACCOUNTS

35 million of which are active

Notes to Editors

- For more information please call the [UK Finance Press Office on 020 7416 6750](tel:02074166750) or e-mail press@ukfinance.org.uk.
- UK Finance is the collective voice for the banking and finance industry. Representing more than 250 firms across the industry, we act to enhance competitiveness, support customers and facilitate innovation.
- Please note that data on UK cardholders is different to data on card activity in the UK. Data on UK cardholders refers to transactions made either inside the UK or overseas on cards issued to UK residents and reported by card issuers. Data on card activity in the UK refers to transactions made in the UK only, both on UK-issued cards and cards issued overseas, this data is provided by acquirers.
- A summary of our annual UK Payment Markets 2020 Report containing detailed analysis of the use of all types of payments in the UK, can be found here: <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/policy-and-guidance/reports-publications/uk-payment-markets-2021>
- The quarterly Household Finance Review containing analysis and economic commentary on household finance in the UK, can be found here: <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/data-and-research/data/household-finance/household-finance-review>.
- Please be aware when comparing 2021 data to 2020 that lockdown restrictions were different for some months with some restrictions removed in 2021 compared 2020.

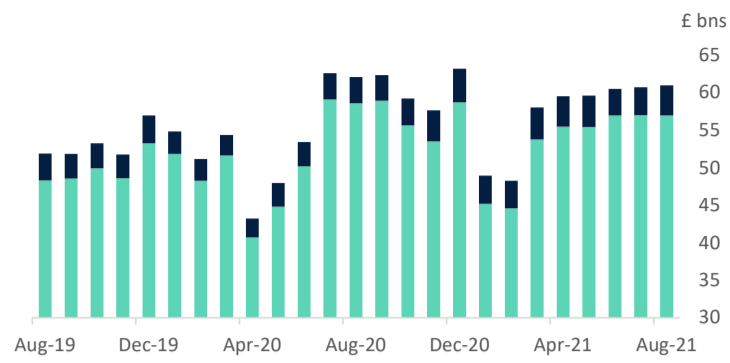
Next update:

16 December 2021

Debit cards (UK card holders)

Value of transactions

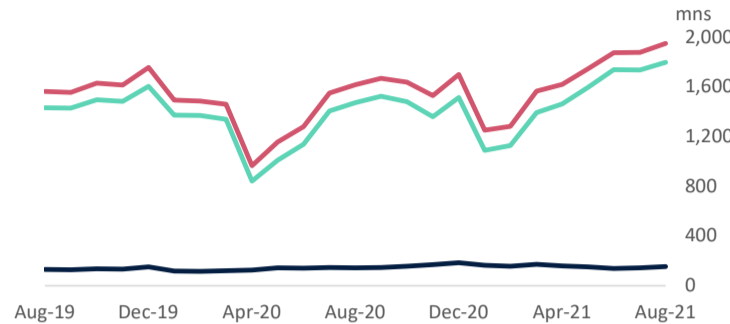
value of debit card purchases in the UK and overseas by UK cardholders



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y Comparison
outside the UK	£4.0 bn	15.2%
inside the UK	£57.0 bn	-2.8%

Number of transactions

volume of debit card purchases in the UK and overseas by UK cardholders

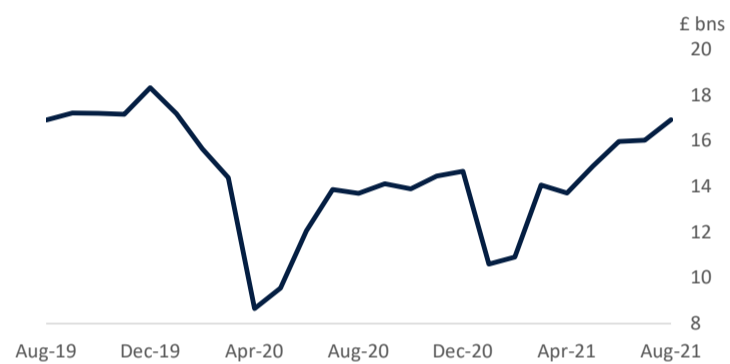


total transactions	1,947 mn	20.5%
inside the UK	1,794 mn	21.9%
outside the UK	153 mn	6.3%

Credit cards (UK card holders)

Value of transactions

value of transactions in the month including purchases, cash withdrawals and balance transfers by UK cardholders



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y Comparison
	£16.9 bn	23.6%

Number of transactions

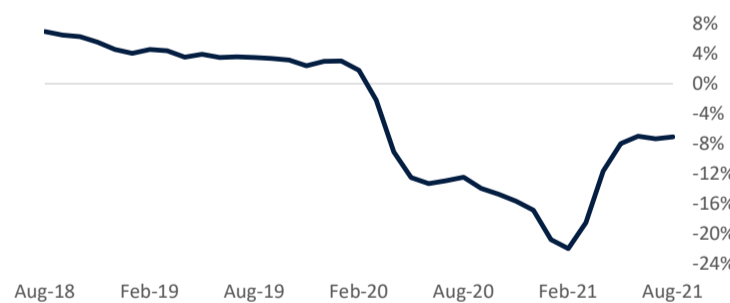
volume of transactions in the month including purchases, cash withdrawals and balance transfers by UK cardholders



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y Comparison
	334 mn	21.8%

Credit card growth rate

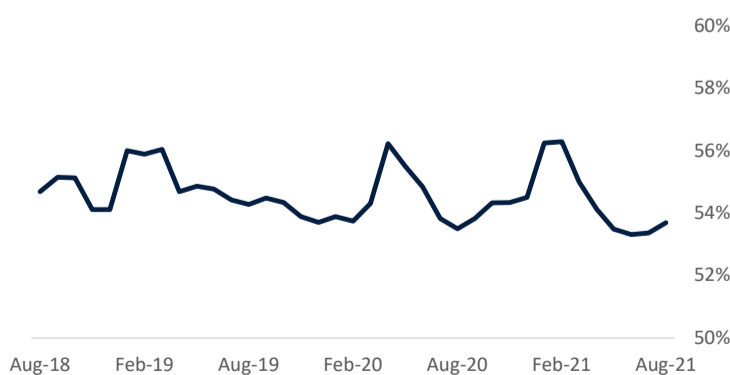
annual growth rate in credit card balances outstanding for UK cardholders



	Latest (August 2021)
	-7.1%

Credit card balances bearing interest ^(b)

percentage of total balances outstanding that incur interest

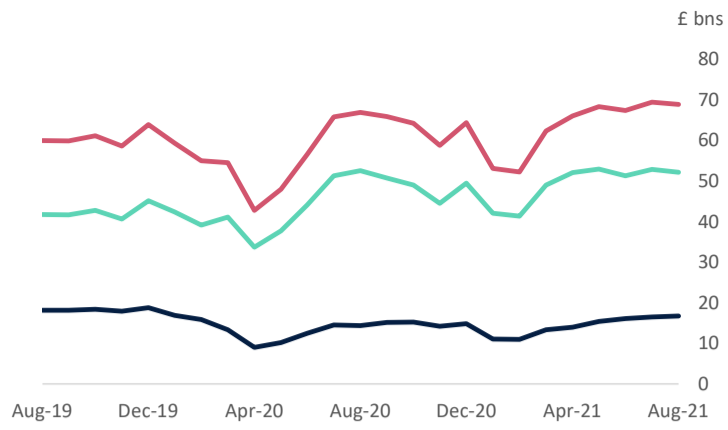


	Latest (August 2021)
	53.7%

Card activity in the UK

Value of transactions in the UK

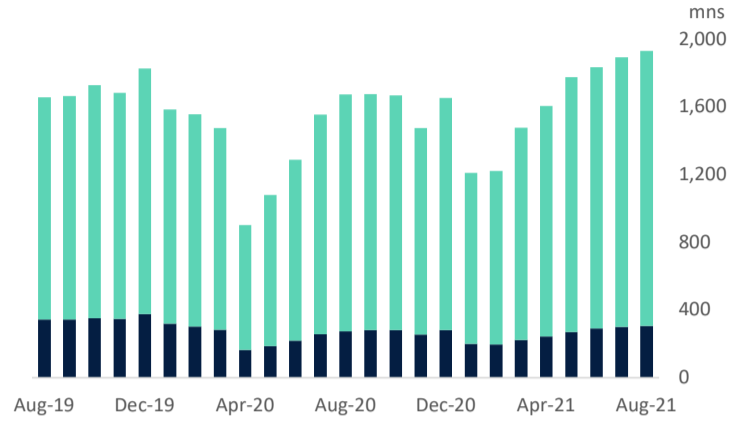
value of all debit and credit card transactions in the UK including overseas-issued cards



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y comparison
total cards	£68.9 bn	3.0%
debit cards	£52.1 bn	-0.7%
credit cards	£16.8 bn	16.6%

Number of transactions in the UK

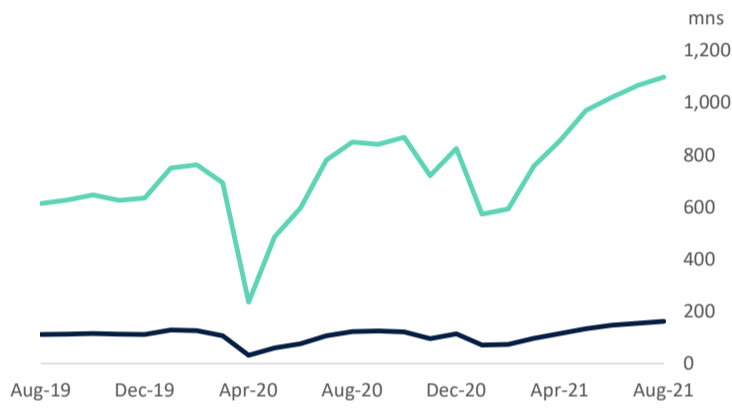
volume of all debit and credit card transactions in the UK including overseas-issued cards



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y comparison
debit cards	1,621 mn	15.9%
credit cards	307 mn	12.1%

Contactless card transactions

volume of all contactless debit and credit card transactions in the UK including overseas-issued cards



	Latest (August 2021)	Y-o-Y comparison
debit cards	1,100 mn	29.3%
credit cards	162 mn	31.7%

UK card holders

		Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21
Cards in issue with UK residents (000's)	debit cards	96,518	96,649	96,224	95,375	95,035	97,334	98,577	99,100	98,859	99,288	98,471	98,097	98,180
	credit cards	62,031	61,977	61,710	61,699	60,607	60,404	60,305	60,314	60,187	59,415	59,405	59,280	59,404
	total	158,549	158,626	157,935	157,074	155,642	157,739	158,882	159,414	159,046	158,702	157,877	157,377	157,584
of which have contactless functionality (000's)	debit cards	84,831	84,706	84,572	83,806	83,370	88,374	87,215	87,234	89,980	90,271	89,849	89,497	89,695
	credit cards	52,049	51,918	51,749	51,960	52,103	52,071	52,141	52,215	52,494	51,905	52,009	52,058	52,291
	total	136,880	136,623	136,321	135,766	135,473	140,445	139,357	139,449	142,474	142,176	141,858	141,555	141,986

UK Debit card holders

		Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21
value of purchases	£ mns	62,099	62,344	59,241	57,648	63,220	48,974	48,301	58,028	59,557	59,604	60,531	60,715	61,007
of which inside the UK	£ mns	58,617	58,936	55,654	53,513	58,737	45,187	44,572	53,796	55,463	55,442	56,975	57,010	56,994
of which outside the UK	£ mns	3,482	3,408	3,587	4,135	4,483	3,787	3,729	4,232	4,095	4,162	3,556	3,705	4,013
volume of purchases	mns	1,616	1,667	1,635	1,528	1,697	1,251	1,282	1,563	1,619	1,746	1,873	1,875	1,947
of which inside the UK	mns	1,472	1,522	1,479	1,359	1,512	1,088	1,127	1,392	1,460	1,595	1,736	1,732	1,794
of which outside the UK	mns	144	146	156	169	185	163	155	172	159	151	137	143	153

UK Credit card holders

		Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21
of which active accounts (those with balances outstanding at the end of the calendar month)	000's	36,100	35,993	35,694	35,617	34,902	34,042	33,796	33,979	33,926	34,064	34,222	34,278	34,501
value of transactions	£ mns	13,697	14,130	13,900	14,454	14,673	10,606	10,916	14,072	13,716	14,897	15,973	16,029	16,924
of which purchases	£ mns	12,795	13,102	12,925	13,483	13,760	9,542	9,901	12,987	12,703	13,836	14,847	14,846	15,635
of which cash advances	£ mns	172	179	156	136	155	114	123	140	149	169	174	175	196
of which balance transfers	£ mns	730	850	819	835	759	951	892	945	863	892	953	1,008	1,094
volume of transactions	000's	273,815	281,547	273,769	273,396	292,157	196,422	201,438	255,720	257,914	280,471	308,620	311,741	333,572
of which purchases	000's	272,065	279,667	272,073	271,873	290,561	195,106	200,102	254,190	256,308	278,705	306,672	309,772	331,421
of which cash advances	000's	1,390	1,463	1,288	1,109	1,214	872	914	1,077	1,184	1,328	1,456	1,449	1,597
of which balance transfers	000's	360	417	409	414	382	443	422	453	422	438	492	519	554
credit card balances outstanding	£ mns	60,119	59,166	58,195	57,913	57,387	54,200	53,099	52,929	53,288	53,779	54,131	54,140	54,586
percentage bearing interest ^(b)		53.5%	53.8%	54.3%	54.3%	54.5%	56.2%	56.3%	55.0%	54.1%	53.5%	53.3%	53.4%	53.7%
net change on month	£ mns	368	-953	-971	-282	-526	-3,187	-1,101	-170	359	491	352	9	446
annual growth rate		-12.5%	-14.0%	-14.7%	-15.7%	-16.8%	-20.7%	-22.0%	-18.5%	-11.6%	-7.9%	-7.0%	-7.3%	-7.1%

Card activity in the UK

on both UK and overseas issued cards

		Aug-20	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21
	total	66,915	65,900	64,233	58,825	64,406	53,153	52,293	62,400	66,062	68,352	67,408	69,449	68,915
Debit & credit card value of transactions (£ mns)	of which online £ mns	23,894	22,709	21,158	22,392	21,741	25,283	24,009	27,168	26,262	23,617	22,577	23,290	22,734
	of which contactless £ mns	11,764	11,488	12,006	9,939	12,179	8,038	8,271	10,361	11,982	13,652	14,191	14,935	15,426
	total	52,532	50,718	48,993	44,555	49,487	42,049	41,355	49,052	52,111	52,958	51,271	52,939	52,144
Debit cards	of which online £ mns	19,122	17,662	15,987	16,408	16,427	19,992	19,047	21,553	21,115	18,278	17,239	17,918	17,235
	of which contactless £ mns	10,000	9,701	10,237	8,570	10,421	7,019	7,194	8,968	10,266	11,657	12,005	12,625	13,016
	total	14,384	15,181	15,240	14,270	14,919	11,104	10,938	13,348	13,951	15,394	16,137	16,510	16,771
Credit cards	of which online £ mns	4,772	5,048	5,171	5,984	5,314	5,291	4,961	5,614	5,147	5,339	5,338	5,372	5,498
	of which contactless £ mns	1,764	1,787	1,769	1,370	1,757	1,019	1,077	1,393	1,716	1,995	2,186	2,310	2,409
	total	1,672	1,673	1,666	1,474	1,651	1,210	1,221	1,475	1,604	1,774	1,833	1,892	1,928
Debit & credit card volume of transactions (mns)	of which online mns	218	232	237	271	270	296	288	311	295	301	287	287	288
	of which contactless mns	973	966	992	817	939	645	668	855	972	1,105	1,169	1,222	1,262
	total	1,399	1,391	1,385	1,219	1,370	1,009	1,025	1,253	1,361	1,503	1,542	1,592	1,621
Debit cards	of which online mns	151	161	163	184	188	213	212	241	231	235	222	221	223
	of which contactless mns	850	841	869	721	825	574	593	759	857	972	1,022	1,068	1,100
	total	274	281	281	254	281	201	196	223	244	271	291	300	307
Credit cards	of which online mns	67	72	75	87	82	83	75	69	64	65	65	65	65
	of which contactless mns	123	125	122	95	114	71	74	97	116	133	147	155	162

Annual growth rates are adjusted to exclude the effects of population changes, data revisions, write-offs and sales/purchases of loan books, to reflect underlying business trends where appropriate and are based on non-seasonally adjusted.

Year-on-year percentage changes compare the latest month's figure with the same month's figure in the previous year.

Please note data on UK cardholders is separate to data on card activity in the UK. Data on UK cardholders refers to transactions on cards issued to UK residents, both overseas and inside the UK. Data on card activity in the UK refers to transactions in the UK only, but on both UK-issued cards and cards issued overseas this data is provided by acquirers.

We estimate data covers over 97 per cent of the total credit card market.

Active accounts are defined as those with balances outstanding at the end of the calendar month.

(b) Please note this figure refers to the percentage of total credit card balances outstanding that incurred interest at the end of the month i.e. excluding spending in the interest-free period or with balances on a zero per cent rate.

The monthly credit card data has been re-stated back to January 2019 to increase our market coverage to 97 per cent providing a more representative picture of the credit card market.

Debit card transactions outside the UK include foreign POS transactions as well as online purchases and subscriptions acquired outside the UK. No further breakdown of this data is available to identify the split between foreign transactions and UK transactions acquired outside the UK.

Data series are subject to restatement, based on corrections or the receipt of additional information.

For more information please call the [UK Finance Press Office on 020 7416 6750](tel:02074166750) or e-mail press@ukfinance.org.uk