

# Ashdale Insights

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## First Come, First Served

*This month we ask do operators do enough to make sure their teams put the customer first?*

Just over a year ago I arranged to meet up with one of my previous clients. He now runs his own business but as a shareholder and former Director of that client he usually suggests meeting at one of their outlets.

Due to other commitments we couldn't meet until mid-afternoon but the pub in question was open all day so no worries there. We arrived and not surprisingly due to the time of day the place was virtually empty. Having found a suitable table my friend went to the bar to order drinks. And waited.

What seemed like an age there was still no sign of anyone coming to serve at the bar. In its self this would have been bad enough however the situation was compounded by the fact that with in view of the bar area there where three members of staff sitting down having a



meeting. Had these been just regular staff on their break then it may have been excusable, but on closer inspection it seemed at least two of them were part of the management team.

It would be fair to say that once he had got their attention, as well as ordering our drinks, my friend made it clear that as an ex-Director of what is quite a large Pub Chain their lack of customer service was more than disappointing.

Needless to say, we then spent the first twenty minutes of our catch-up discussing this and how it can have a major impact on whether customers

will return to an outlet when they have had this type of experience.

### **You had one job...**

Everyone who works in hospitality, be it in a small family café through to a big city pub or fine dining restaurant, knows there are 101 things which need to be done throughout the day.

**To read this in full and previous articles go to Ashdale Articles**

[www.ashdale-consulting.com](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)

**The largest upward contribution this month came from housing and household services, as the gas and electricity reductions of January 2019 unwound**

**Sainsbury's was the only one of the traditional large grocers to increase sales year-on-year, up +0.3%**

**We will have to wait and see what impact the coronavirus has on consumer confidence going forward and how long it goes on for**

## Economic Headlines

*These headlines are from our Economic Bulletin.*

CPI for January 2020 was +1.8% up on +1.3% in December, this represents a 6 month high driven in part by a rise in petrol and house prices.

Latest figures from the ONS shows that the unemployment rate remained at 3.8%, as total

wage growth slipped back slightly to +2.9%.

The latest estimate for GDP for the 3-months to December 2019 (Q4) was +0.0%, meaning headline GDP grew by +1.4% in 2019.

**CPI +1.8%**

**RPI +2.7%**

**CPIH +1.8%**

**UNEMPLOYMENT +3.8%**  
**PAY +2.9%**

**3-Mth to Dec-19 GDP +0.0%**  
**TRADE BALANCE +£5.89**  
**SERVICES +£29.96BN**

## Retail Headlines

*These headlines are from our Retail Bulletin.*

Retail sales rose +0.8% in January 2020 vs. January 2019, driven by moderate growth by both food and some non-food retailers, as the high streets continue to struggle.

Andrew Carlisle, managing director at Accenture, "While there

was modest sales growth in January, it is not enough for retailers to get excited about".

Latest 12 week figures saw the Grocery Market grow +0.7%, as retailers began to see an increase in the sale of sanitary products in response to concerns over the coronavirus.

**RETAIL VOLUMES +0.8%**  
**RETAIL VALUES +2.1%**  
**INTERNET SALES +7.4%**

**GROCERY MARKET (0.3%)**  
**GROCERY INFLATION +0.0%**  
**Lidl +11.4%**

## Consumer Spending Headlines

*These headlines are from our Consumer Spending Bulletin.*

Average family spending power was up £10 a week in December at £217, this was the slowest rise in the Income Tracker since November 2018.

The estimated average mortgage debt in December was £131,938,

meaning the average annual interest paid would be £3,127 per household (based on a rate of 2.37%).

GfK's UK Consumer Confidence Index was (7) in February, as wages and house prices rise and unemployment levels remain low and inflation rates remain stable.

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME £820**  
**TAXES & COST OF LIVING £603**  
**DISCRETIONARY £217**

**HOUSEHOLD DEBT £60,213**  
**EXC MORTGAGES £8,053**

**Overall Confidence (7)**  
**LY Personal Finances (1)**  
**NY Personal Finances +6**

## Cider Update

Latest data from HMRC shows that cider returns in Q4 2019 were down (4.8%) on the same quarter a year ago.

The quarter started off ok as returns in October were up +0.2% vs. October the previous year.

This performance soon faded as returns in

November were down (12.1%) vs. November 2018.

The quarter came to an end with returns for December flat at +0.0% compared to December 2018.

A result of this has been that Cider returns on a MAT are back in slight decline at (0.1%).

These numbers are for traditional apple Ciders only. Fruit based Cider volumes are categorized as Made-Wine for duty by HMRC.

Source: HMRC February 2020



**Despite some volatility across the year 2019 saw traditional cider returns broadly flat vs. 2018**

## Casual Dining Update

The Casual Dining Show, which was due to take place on 25-26 March, has been postponed due to the unfolding coronavirus outbreak until the 14-15 July at London ExCel.

Discounts off food are the number one incentive for customers, according to a survey by HGEM, with 88% stating they'd be willing to part with their

personal data to receive them and 65% of respondents confirming a free drink would suffice. It also revealed that only 41% of diners would share personal data in exchange for free Wi-Fi.

New figures from the Barclaycard Spend Index reveal that consumer spend grew +2.2% year-

on-year last month thanks to takeaways and digital subscriptions, as people stayed at home to shield from the stormy weather and limit the risk of contracting Coronavirus.



**More than one in four (28%) of Brits steered clear of the high street and other busy places amid fears of catching COVID-19**

## Weather Summaries

For more months and years then simply go to:

[www.ashdale-consulting.com](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)

JANUARY	
MILD	Temp = +2.0 Rain = 100 Sun = 94
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The middle of the month was unsettled, quite windy but mild</li> <li>The month ended quite wet with some snow on higher ground</li> </ul>	

FEBRUARY	
STORMS	Temp = +1.4 Rain = 237 Sun = 104
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very windy and wet with storms Ciara (9<sup>th</sup>) and Dennis (15<sup>th</sup>)</li> <li>The wettest February since 1862, although some sunshine</li> </ul>	

**Storm Ciara on the 9<sup>th</sup> and Storm Dennis on the 15<sup>th</sup> brought exceptional rainfall to most of the country**

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## Helping clients...

**Sell More**  
**Charge More**  
**Lower Costs**

## About Ashdale Business Consulting

I help my clients *sell more, charge more* and *lower costs*.

Having been a client myself I understand you always have *more things which need doing* than you ever have time for. Sometimes you also need *additional skills* or *experience* to complement those already in your organisation.

### Sound familiar?

That's where help. I provide an independent flexible resource to draw from on just those occasions. I work across a range of different industry sectors providing *analysis, insight* and *strategic thinking*, however I specialise in helping the UK alcohol and hospitality sector.

Clients range from *individual outlets* and *microbrewers* through to *regional/national brewers*, as well as *global drinks companies* and *trade organisations*.

For more information go to my website:

[www.ashdale-consulting.com](http://www.ashdale-consulting.com)

## Dates and Events for Your Diary\*

### General

#### March

1<sup>st</sup> St David's Day  
11<sup>th</sup> Budget  
17<sup>th</sup> St Patrick's Day  
22<sup>nd</sup> Mother's Day  
29<sup>th</sup> Clocks Go Back

#### April

10<sup>th</sup> Good Friday  
12<sup>th</sup> Easter Sunday (BH)  
13<sup>th</sup> Easter Monday (BH)

### Licensed Trade

#### March

11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Beer X (SIBA)  
**The Following event have been postponed**  
25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> Casual Dining Show

#### April

1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Wetherspoons Real Ale Festival  
17<sup>th</sup> Vintage (Wine) Festival (Lnd)

### Sports

#### March

1<sup>st</sup> League Cup Final (Lnd)  
**The Following events have been postponed**  
15<sup>th</sup> Grand Prix (Aus)  
22<sup>nd</sup> Grand Prix (Bahrain)

#### April

**The Following events have been postponed**  
4<sup>th</sup> Grand National (TBC)  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Masters – Augusta  
26<sup>th</sup> London Marathon

## Ashdale Training Dates

### Helping Pubs & Bars Make More Money

No current Open Workshops in 2020

For more information [click here](#).



\*Events and Sports are being postponed/cancelled due to the Coronavirus