

Card Expenditure Statistics [CES] – January 2010

Seasonally-adjusted

At a glance key figures for January

	Total spending £ billions		Annual growth rates for spending		Number of purchases millions	
	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009
All plastic cards	31.1	31.1	4.4%	6.6%	652	630
Debit cards	21.1	20.9	7.0%	9.4%	491	468
Credit cards	9.9	10.2	-0.5%	1.4%	161	162

Spending on plastic cards weakened in January amounting to £31.1 billion, £3.1 billion lower than in December. Consumer activity was subdued as evidenced by 30 million fewer purchases, attributed to the impact of the weather and some anticipation of purchases into December to avoid the January VAT rise. Annual growth rates fell back slightly (see Chart 1) to continue the persistent downward path that was briefly interrupted by the extraordinary spending seen in November. Spending on credit cards fell below £10 billion for the first time since November 2008.

Changes in the classification of retail sales have been introduced with effect from January 2010 of which the most significant is the reclassification of sale of automotive fuels as a retail activity. This change has been incorporated in the CES with the introduction of automotive fuels as a sub-sector within retail sales (see Table 2). Whereas total retail sales includes automotive fuels from January 2010 (and total services excludes them) Table 2 shows data for automotive fuels for earlier months. The 12 month growth rates also include automotive fuels from January 2010

Average transaction values [ATV] fell strongly in January bringing the three-month average (see Chart 3) down by £0.57 to £49.31. The ATV in Supermarkets fell from £34.39 to £30.15, but Railways saw a strong rise from £26.04 to £30.66.

The **plastic card share of total retail sales** (including automotive fuels)¹ in January was 66.6% (see Chart 2); in the food & drink sector the share was 59.0%.

¹CES 3-month moving average spending for January of £17.4 billion expressed as a percentage of a similar 3-month moving average for National Statistics 'All retailing including automotive fuel' (AGG 21) based on the value of Retail Sales at current prices (SA) that gives a figure of £26.1 billion.

Chart 1

Spending on plastic cards
Annual growth rates

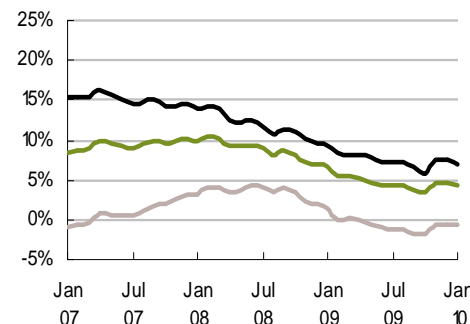


Chart 2

Percent of retail sales made on plastic cards
(including automotive fuel)
Three-month moving average

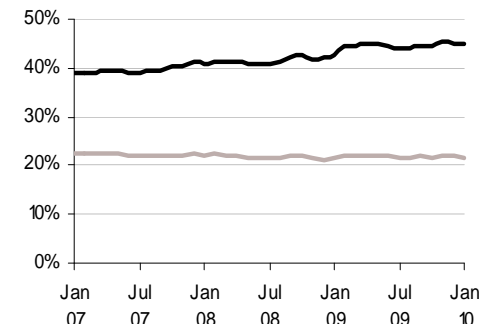


Chart 3

Average transaction values
Three-month moving average

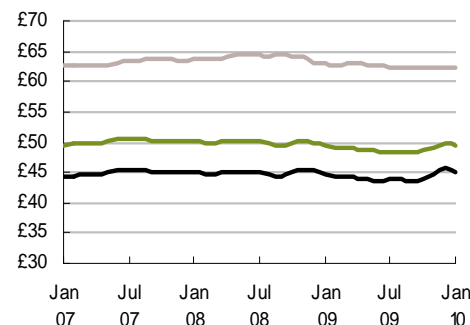
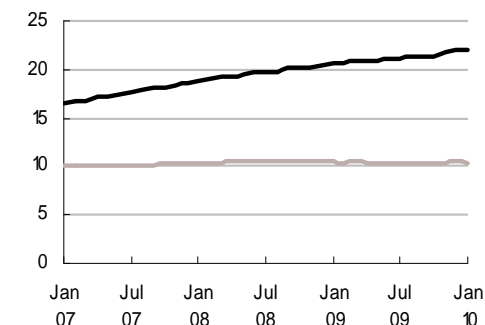


Chart 4

Average monthly expenditure
£ billions



— Debit cards
— Credit cards
— All plastic cards