

Card Expenditure Statistics [CES] – September 2009

Seasonally-adjusted

At a glance key figures for September

	Total spending £ billions		Annual growth rates for spending		Number of purchases millions	
	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008
All plastic cards	34.3	32.5	3.7%	8.7%	706	652
Debit cards	23.3	21.5	6.6%	11.3%	530	483
Credit cards	11.0	10.9	-1.9%	4.1%	176	169

Plastic card spending in September was the highest so far recorded, reaching £34.3 billion. With underlying economic activity remaining muted it seems that the increases recorded in the CES for September are due to the calendar effects of the last day of August (a bank holiday) falling on a Monday. Consequently, up to three days' trading activity (29-31 August) may be inflating the September figures. It is likely that the credit spending figure is inflated by about £0.4 billion and the debit figure by about £0.7 billion; these amounts would need to be added back to the August figures. A clearer picture of spending patterns emerges from the annual growth rates that are continuing to fall (see Chart 1). The current rates are the lowest recorded.

The **plastic card share of total retail sales**¹ in September was 65.7%, although this figure will also be inflated due to the CES not being prior-adjusted for trading days whereas the ONS Retail Sales data are.

Average transaction values have been falling gradually since November 2008 and the year-on-year comparison is showing a fall of 2.4%. **Average monthly expenditure** is unaffected by the lack of a trading day adjustment for August/September; debit card spending is currently averaging £21.4 billion per month, and credit card spending £10.4 billion.

¹CES 3-month moving average spending for September of £15.4 billion expressed as a percentage of a similar 3-month moving average for National Statistics 'All retailing' (EAQV) based on the value of Retail Sales at current prices (SA) that gives a figure of £24.0 billion.

Chart 1

Spending on plastic cards
Annual growth rates

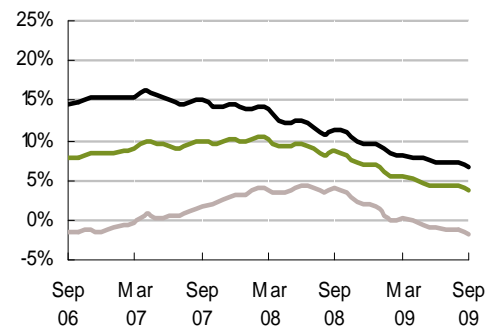


Chart 2

Percent of retail sales made on plastic cards
Three-month moving average

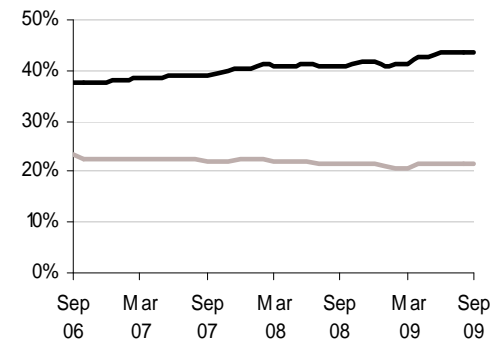


Chart 3

Average transaction values
Three-month moving average

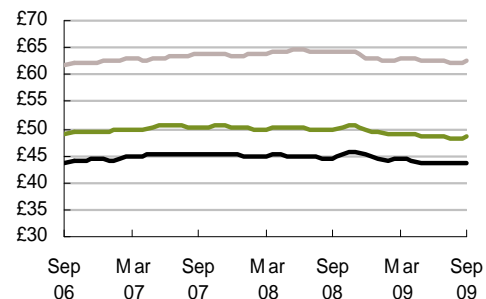
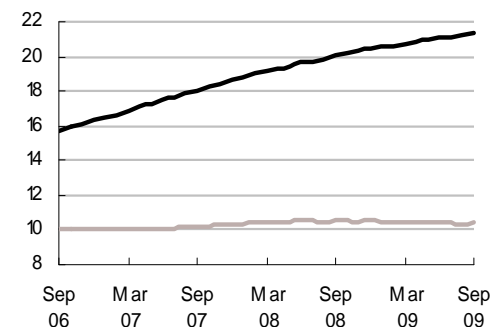


Chart 4

Average monthly expenditure
£ billions



— Debit cards
— Credit cards
— All plastic cards