

For immediate release
19 May 2016

Contact
020 3217 8436
Press@ukcards.org.uk

THE
UKCARDS
ASSOCIATION

MEDIA ALERT

Monthly contactless spend passes £1.5 billion

UK Card Expenditure Statistics: March 2016

Spending on contactless cards has reached a record £1.5 billion in a month for the first time.

Contactless payments totalled £1.508 billion in March, the latest data from The UK Cards Association shows. The milestone comes just four months after contactless spending hit £1 billion, in November 2015. The £0.5 billion mark came in May last year.

One in seven of all card transactions are now contactless, compared to one in 16 a year ago. There were a total of 179.6 million contactless purchases in March, with 67 made every second. On the high street, one in six card purchases are now contactless.

Monthly contactless spending has more than trebled in the past year, up from £431.1 million in March 2015. There are a total of 86.5 million contactless cards in circulation in the UK.

Overall, total payment card spending was £51.9 billion in March, with 1.18 billion transactions in the month.

Richard Koch, Head of Policy at The UK Cards Association, said:

“It took almost eight years for monthly contactless spending to reach half a billion pounds - now it’s grown by the same amount in just four months. This dramatic rise shows that paying with contactless is now second nature for millions of consumers who see it as an alternative to cash.

“Contactless cards are already being used to pay for travel and to donate to charity and as the technology evolves, we will see even more environments where contactless will enable fast, easy and secure payments.”

	Total Spending <i>£ billions</i>		Annual growth rates for spending		Number of purchases <i>Millions</i>	
	Mar 2016	Mar 2015	Mar 2016	Mar 2015	Mar 2016	Mar 2015
All payment cards	51.9	51.3	6.7%	7.7%	1,181	1,082
<i>Of which online</i>	<i>12.4</i>	<i>11.1</i>	<i>13.0%</i>	-	<i>152</i>	<i>126</i>
Debit cards	37.1	36.3	7.4%	8.2%	912	827
Credit cards	14.9	15.0	4.9%	6.3%	269	255

Spending by sector

- Retail sector spending decreased by £19 million to £24 billion in March, while service sector spending rose by £8.9 million to £28 billion.
- Garden centres, gardening services and bakers and dairies saw the largest increases in spending, reflecting the arrival of spring and Easter.



- The debit and credit card share of total retail sales was a 77.4 per cent in March.

ENDS

For further information, please contact The UK Cards Association Press Office on 020 3217 8436 or email press@ukcards.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

1. The full March 2016 Card Expenditure Statistics, include detailed retail and service sector data, are available at: <http://www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk/2016-facts-figures/index.asp>. Total spending figures are seasonally adjusted. Sub-sector level spending figures have not been seasonally adjusted.

2. Further details of the March contactless statistics are available at: http://www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk/contactless_contactless_statistics/index.asp

About the *Card Expenditure Statistics* figures:

Card Expenditure Statistics reveal where credit, debit and charge cards are used in the UK. They are reported to The UK Cards Association by banks and other financial institutions, known as merchant acquirers, that process plastic card transactions on behalf of businesses and enterprises.

Spending is shown separately for debit and credit cards, by volume and by value, and the location is broken down into the principle UK retail and services sectors with a detailed analysis covering over 100 merchant categories across the full range of industries in the UK.

About The UK Cards Association:

The UK Cards Association is the trade body for the card payments industry in the UK, representing financial institutions which act as card issuers and acquirers. Members of the Association account for the vast majority of debit and credit cards issued in the UK - issuing in excess of 55 million credit cards and 95 million debit cards - and cover the whole of the payment card acquiring market.

The Association promotes co-operation between industry participants in order to progress non-competitive matters of mutual interest; informs and engages with stakeholders to shape legal and regulatory developments; develops industry best practice; safeguards the integrity of the card payments industry by tackling card fraud; develops industry standards; and co-ordinates other industry-wide initiatives such as those aiming to deliver innovation. As an Association we are committed to delivering a card payments industry that is constantly focused on improved outcomes for the customer. More information about The UK Cards Association is available at www.theukcardsassociation.org.uk