Market Movers

August 2026

NHS Supply Chain

UK Key Market Movers (CPI)

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a key measure of inflation in the UK. Movements in CPI give a high-level overview of the key categories experiencing inflation. Below is a monthly snapshot of the top food commodity price inflation movements impacting the UK. The data is from Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Item	Percentage Change over 12 months
Milk, cheese and eggs	1.3%
Oil and fats	-1.0%
Breads and cereals	1.5%
Vegetables	2.3%
Meat	5.2%
Sugar, jam, syrups, chocolate and confectionary	10.4%
Fish	1.2%
Fruit	2.4%

Inflation Figures

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 2.8% in the 12 months to May 2026, unchanged from the 12 months to April. Food and non-alcoholic beverage prices rose by 2.2% in the 12 months to May 2026, down 3.0% in the 12 months to April. The rate in May was the lowest since December 2024, when it was 2.0%. The retail Index (RPI) is now 3.1% Vs 3.0% last month.

Latest Inflation Figures as of May 2026*	
Foodservice Price Index (FPI) in April	0.2%
Food Price Inflation (CPI)	2.2%
Retail Price Index (RPI)	3.1%
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	2.8%
Producer Price Index (PPI)	0.5%

*Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Trading Economics

Inflation Outlook

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Fruit and vegetables

UK-grown produce is coming into season, improving supply and quality across several lines.

Carrots are transitioning to new crop with better size and shelf life.

Herb supply is shifting to UK sources, with most varieties becoming fully available soon despite slight delays from the wet winter.

Berry supply is strengthening, with British strawberries and blackberries boosting quality and availability, and raspberries close behind. However, delayed British blueberry supply and lower Moroccan volumes may tighten availability later.

Bakery

Cocoa prices remain volatile but currently stable, with no new supplier-driven inflation, but ongoing weather and sustainability pressures keep volatility high.

Wheat supply in Europe is healthy, supporting short-term price stability.

Sugar remains stable, with strong global supply offsetting high energy costs, and are expected to remain broadly steady with only minor fluctuations in the coming years.

Fish and seafood

Fish and seafood prices have eased, supported by improved supply across key species including salmon, sea bass, cod and monkfish. Some volatility remains, with longer-term pressure, especially in whitefish, where reduced quotas and substitution demand are likely to drive price increases.

While current conditions are more stable, ongoing supply and cost pressures could drive prices higher later in the year.

Dairy

Dairy prices eased as milk supply outstripped demand from March to May, with Mozzarella and Cheddar most affected.

Egg markets remained volatile due to the ongoing impact of Avian Influenza, which continued to restrict availability. Looking ahead to June, egg markets are expected to stabilise as Avian Influenza pressures begin to ease.

Farmgate milk prices appear to be nearing the end of their decline. However, rising energy costs linked to the Middle East conflicts poses a potential upside risk to broader inflation.

Meat

UK meat prices are generally stabilising, but pressures remain.

Beef prices are still high due to limited supply and strong demand and are expected to stay tight.

Chicken and pork markets are more stable, with improving supply helping to support stability, although ongoing input costs are still limiting price reductions.

Lamb prices remain firm, reflecting seasonal demand and limited availability.

Overall, poultry offers the most pricing stability.

Recap on Last Quarter

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Meat

Beef: Beef remains the strongest inflationary pressure over the past quarter. Tight UK and Irish cattle supplies, robust consumer demand and competition from export markets have continued to support elevated pricing.

Chicken: Pricing has been relatively stable throughout the quarter. Improved production has helped offset ongoing labour, feed and energy cost pressures, providing greater pricing consistency than other protein categories such as beef and lamb.

Pork: Prices have remained broadly stable, supported by improved domestic supply and balanced demand.

Lamb: Lamb pricing has remained high throughout the quarter, driven by seasonal demand and short domestic supply.

Overall Summary: Over the past three months, meat inflation has become more concentrated in beef and lamb. Overall market conditions have improved. Limited livestock supply continues to restrict wider price reductions.

Fish & Seafood

Salmon: Pricing has remained volatile over the past three months, initially rising before easing as global supply improved. Despite recent softening, limited biomass growth means the market remains susceptible to future price increases.

Sea bass and bream: Pricing has largely stabilised following earlier volatility. Supply continues to be influenced by last year's poor growing conditions, although improved availability has helped ease prices in recent weeks.

Whitefish: Prices continue to be under pressure due to reduced supply, particularly for cod. This is also impacting other species such as haddock and hake. While there has been some short-term easing, longer-term inflation is still expected.

The seafood market has shown signs of stabilisation across several farmed species, but structural supply constraints in whitefish and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty continue to present potential inflationary risks.

Fruit & Vegetables

Sweet Potato: Very limited availability expected for the next month due to the end of European season, significant US crop losses, and vessel delays. Issues with availability seen since May.

Peppers: In the month of May, Spain and Morocco still had extremely limited supply. Sweet pointed peppers are also limited due to the lack of volume from Holland which is keeping prices elevated.

Lettuce & Leaves: Spinach has strong availability from Spain and Portugal however due to the high temperatures and tired fields there is more risk of insect pressure and yellowing. In April, there was a gap in planting due to weather which is impacting Cos lettuce availability.

Broccoli: Volumes from Spain remain significantly reduced due to earlier adverse weather, which created a planting gap that has not yet recovered, there have been shortages since May.

Recap on Last Quarter

Cabbage: Supply remains tight following an early end to the UK savoy season, with quality issues on imports; new season British sweetheart cabbage due shortly to ease pressure.

Lemons & Easy Peelers: Smaller sizes remain tight due to delayed South African crops impacted by severe weather, with supply constraints expected through July and August.

Melons: Tight supply due to region handover (Central America to Spain), Honeydew remains tight as we wait for Spanish season to get going.

Dairy

Dairy: Short-term uplift in March, followed by rising milk production and downward price pressure through April and May.

Cheddar: Prices softened due to increased availability and quieter demand.

Mozzarella: More stable, supported by consistent foodservice demand.

Eggs: Market remains impacted by Avian Influenza, with ongoing supply constraints and no near-term improvement expected.

Bakery

Cocoa: Prices have stabilised following recent volatility, with improved supply easing cost pressures, although some risk remains.

Wheat: Prices have eased following a short-term spike driven by market sentiment around global events, returning to a downward trend.

Sugar: Sugar prices remain relatively stable, despite ongoing sensitivity to global volatility. Following a brief reactive increase between March and early June, the market has resumed its downward trend.

Next Quarter Outlook

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Meat

Beef: Prices remain elevated, driven by constrained UK and Irish cattle supplies, strong consumer demand and continued competition from export markets. While the pace of inflation has moderated, availability is expected to remain tight through the summer.

Chicken: Prices have been broadly stable due to improved supply. However, rising costs and reduced EU supply, partly impacted by Avian Influenza, are expected to drive price increases next quarter.

Pork: Prices remain relatively stable, with improved domestic production helping to balance the market. Demand has softened slightly, easing inflationary pressure, although input costs continue to provide a floor to pricing.

Lamb: Prices remain firm, supported by seasonal demand and tighter domestic availability. Any uplift in export demand could place additional upward pressure on prices during the summer months.

Overall Outlook: The UK meat market remains relatively stable compared with earlier in the year, although structural supply constraints in beef and resilient demand across key proteins mean inflationary risks persist. Poultry pricing is expected to remain under pressure over the next quarter, while beef is expected to remain a key area of concern.

Fish and seafood

Salmon: Prices have softened following improved supply into European markets, although pricing remains volatile. Limited biomass growth means the market could tighten again if demand strengthens later in the year.

Sea Bass & Bream: Sea bass prices have eased, with bream remaining broadly stable. While current supply is supporting prices, longer-term availability continues to depend on stock recruitment following last year's challenging growing conditions.

Whitefish: Cod prices have eased in the short term, but the longer-term outlook remains inflationary due to reduced catch quotas. Haddock prices have also softened seasonally, while hake continues to see upward pressure as buyers substitute away from cod.

Other Species: Monkfish prices have fallen as seasonal landings increase, while halibut has also softened. Mackerel remains volatile, with sustainability considerations continuing to influence sourcing decisions.

Overall Outlook: While pricing has eased across several species this month, structural supply constraints in whitefish and ongoing geopolitical uncertainty around fuel and freight mean the market remains susceptible to renewed inflationary pressure in the second half of the year.

Fruit and vegetables

Carrots: Reached the seasonal crossover for carrots, new crop coming in the next two weeks. Leading to better size and shelf life.

Herbs: The supply is transitioning over to UK supply, coriander and parsley should be fully available in the next two weeks, slightly behind schedule to the wet winter, however

Next Quarter Outlook

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British Basil is back in season and supply is ready.

Berries: British strawberries and blackberries are now in season, improving availability and quality. Raspberries are expected to follow shortly, with UK blueberries due in July/August. Supply may remain tight in the short term due to reduced imports.

Grocery

Cooking Oils: The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has pushed crude oil prices higher, creating knock-on effects across related markets, including biodiesel. As biodiesel remains a more cost-effective alternative to conventional fuel, increased substitution demand has contributed to upward pressure on biodiesel prices.

Additional support for biodiesel demand is coming from Germany, where new regulations require oil companies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, further tightening the market.

Meanwhile, market sentiment remains cautious due to persistent dry weather conditions across parts of Europe and Australia. With crop yields still uncertain, concerns over supply availability continue to underpin price volatility.

Rice and Flour: Prices have remained relatively stable, supported by consistent harvests over the past year and adequate supply levels across key producing regions. This stability has helped minimise price volatility, allowing continuity in menu planning.

Dairy

The summer months are showing a decline in Avian Influenza, meaning that we should hopefully not see any more inflation across eggs as the market starts to stabilise. The farmgate price is showing signs of stabilising - which will mean that there will be no more impact on cheddar and mozzarella pricing. With the ongoing uncertainty in the Middle East, there is the risk of inflation across the board where energy costs continue to rise.

Bakery

Cocoa: Prices remain volatile, but no recent supplier increases have been reported. Improved supply and softer demand are supporting some stability, although risks remain and prices are expected to stay above historic levels.

Wheat: While geopolitical tensions continue to place pressure on fuel, fertiliser and logistics costs, European wheat supply remains relatively healthy, supporting a stable outlook in the near term.

Sugar: European beet sugar remains exposed to energy costs due to the energy-intensive nature of processing; however, strong global supply and healthy stock levels continue to support a favourable pricing outlook. Overall, the market is expected to remain broadly stable through 2027, with only minor fluctuations anticipated.