5 April 2019

BDO HIGH STREET SALES TRACKER

March Fails to Offset Worst In-store Sales Month Since 2008

MARCH MONTHLY REVIEW
THE FIVE WEEKS TO 31 MARCH 2019

STORE	NON-STORE	TOTAL
+4.8%	**+18.7%**	**+6.5%**
MARCH 2018: -10.1%	MARCH 2018: +11.0%	MARCH 2018: -4.9%

- Total like-for-like (LFL) sales increased by +6.5% in March, but from a poor base of -4.9% for the equivalent month last year when the 'Beast from the East' brought lingering snow and cold to the UK. Total in-store LFLs increased by +4.8% this month, but were unable to get close to offsetting a dire base of -10.1% for March last year when the UK was hit by torrid weather conditions, which resulted in the worst month on record for total LFL sales and the worst in-store LFL sales going back to November 2008. The inability to offset last year's result despite significantly improved conditions will be concerning for retailers. Total non-store LFLs saw good growth of +18.7% in March from a middling base of +11.0% for the same month last year. Total non-store LFLs saw a substantial rise in the final week that concluded on Mother's Day.

- March began with total LFLs climbing by +26.22% against a dismal base of -20.43% for the same week last year when Britain was gripped by the 'Beast from the East'. Total LFLs dropped by -3.96% in the second week of the month from a base of +10.19% last year. The middle of the month brought mixed results as total LFLs saw a marginal increase of +0.24%, but from a low base of -2.63%, followed by a week in which total LFLs increased by +4.81%, but failed to offset a poor base of -9.32% for the same week last year. March concluded with total LFLs increasing by +8.43%, as non-store sales were boosted by Mother's Day and a warm start to the weekend, from a base of +3.86% last year, which included Good Friday.

- Overall footfall was mixed this month, but managed to bounce back in some weeks compared to last year when snow emptied the pavements. The highest result for the month was recorded for the high street in the first week (+21.5%), which was the week of blizzard-like conditions in 2018. Overall footfall saw increases in the middle (+0.8%) and end of the month (+4.7%) on the back of sunny and warmer conditions with only shopping centres declining in week three (-1.0%). Shopping centres recorded the lowest result of the month, declining by -7.7% in week two.

- For retailers at this time of year, anticipating the fate of seasonal lines is business as usual. However, the twisting Brexit saga, which has become more pressing and less certain, looks set to spring new anxieties. With spending on essential items remaining consistent and wages growing steadily consumer confidence has settled into a negative, though not deteriorating, posture over the past couple of months. But with all indicators pointing towards an extended period of uncertainty, discretionary spending could be further curtailed. Moreover, retailers will be desperate for clarity on future trading conditions.

LIFESTYLE
-0.5%
MARCH 2018: -1.4%

- Lifestyle total LFLs declined by –0.5% this month from a negative base of -1.4% for March last year. The result marks the second month of negative LFL sales for total lifestyle this year despite including St. Patrick's and Mother's Day. Total LFLs for lifestyle were positive for the majority of the month, rising off dismal results last year, however these improvements were unable to counter sharp declines in the middle of the month. In-store LFLs for lifestyle also had a poor month, decreasing by –2.7% in March from a poor base of -4.5% last year. The result means that in-store LFLs for lifestyle have been negative for fourteen consecutive months.

FASHION
+10.5%
MARCH 2018: -7.4%

- Fashion total LFLs increased by +10.5% in March, but from a dismal base of -7.4% for the same month last year. Total LFLs for fashion recorded positive results throughout the month, with the strongest result coming during a bounce-back week from snow last year in the first week (+33.33%). In-store LFLs for fashion increased by +8.2% this month, but from an abysmal base of -12.7% last year. In-store LFLs for fashion recorded three weeks of positive LFLs this month, but were only able to increase beyond last year's base in the first week.

HOMEWARES
+8.6%
MARCH 2018: -5.3%

- Homeware total LFLs increased by +8.6% this month, but from a negative base of -5.3% for March last year. Total LFLs for homeware recorded positive results in all weeks except for the final week of the month (-2.35%). In-store LFLs for homeware saw an increase of +9.0% in March, but were unable to offset a very low base of -13.2% last year. Despite in-store LFLs for homeware recording positive results in all but the final week of the month, the category only saw LFL sales offset last year's base in the first two weeks.

As of September 2018, lifestyle, fashion and homewares figures represent combined in-store and non-store totals for that category.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The High Street Sales Tracker outlines weekly like-for-like sales changes of some c85 retailers with c10,000 individual stores across **Fashion:** accessories, clothing, footwear. **Lifestyle:** general household goods, gifts, health and beauty, leisure goods. **Homewares:** cookware, furniture and floor coverings, lighting, linen and textiles. **Non-store:** mail order, online and other non-store channels. Total like-for-likes exclude non-store sales. Any footfall figures quoted are provided by Springboard who are a leading provider of automated visitor counting and retail sales analysis.

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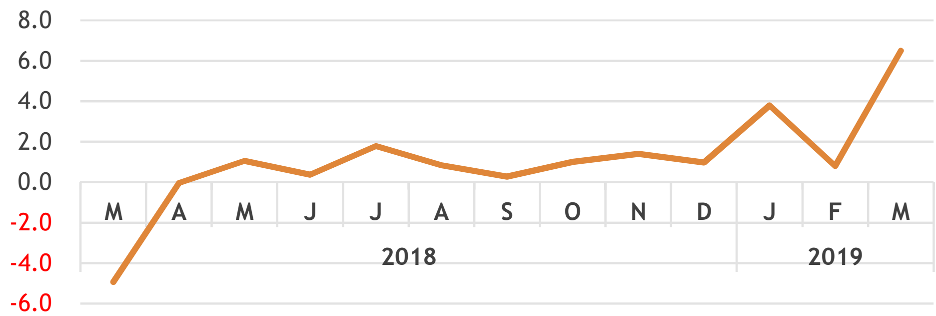
TOTAL LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS FROM 2018-2019

LFL Growth %	Week 1 (we 03/03)	Week 2 (we 10/03)	Week 3 (we 17/03)	Week 4 (we 24/03)	Week 5 (we 31/03)	Total March
Lifestyle	11.73	-22.58	-5.25	5.09	9.59	-0.5
Fashion	33.33	2.44	1.64	4.81	9.14	10.5
Homeware	18.62	11.91	7.76	3.65	-2.35	8.6
STORE	**36.58**	**-9.64**	**-3.97**	**0.71**	**-0.44**	**4.8**
NON-STORE	**8.46**	**8.29**	**8.92**	**20.86**	**48.78**	**18.7**
TOTAL	**26.22**	**-3.96**	**0.24**	**4.81**	**8.43**	**6.5**

MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS 2018-2019



MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS BY SECTOR 2018-2019