BDO HIGH STREET SALES TRACKER

APRIL MONTHLY REVIEW - the five weeks to 29 April 2018 04 May 2018

TOTAL (excl non-store)
-3.8%
April 2017: +1.9%

LIFESTYLE
-3.7%
April 2017: +5.3%

FASHION
-3.3%
April 2017: +1.2%

HOMEWARES
-8.8%
April 2017: -3.1%

NON-STORE
+16.4%
April 2017: +15.1%

April cracks under stronger Easter last year

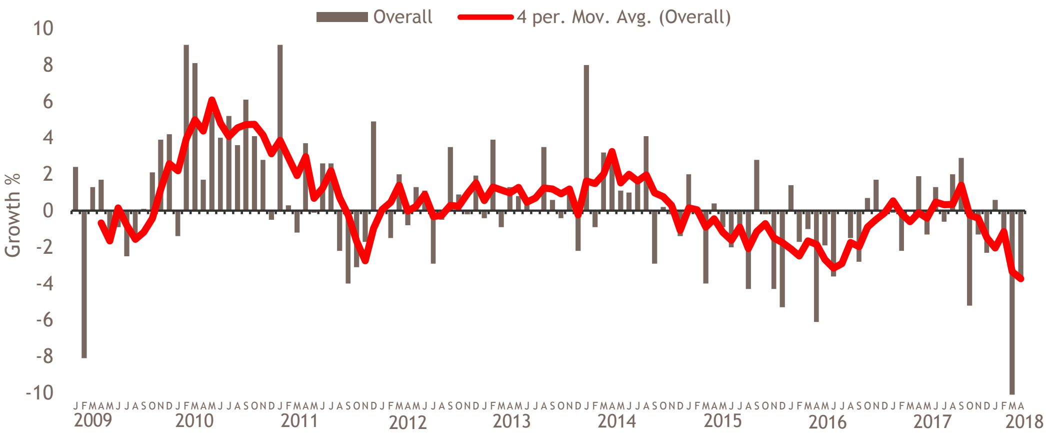
- Total like-for-like in-store sales were down by -3.8% in April from a base of +1.9% for the same month last year.
- The result marked the third negative month in succession for total in-store LFL sales. The high street has now not posted positive in-store growth since January, when sales eked up by a "glacial" +0.6%.
- April began with total like-for-like in-store sales marginally up by +0.53% for the week incorporating Easter Sunday, which kicked off the month. However, week two saw total sales plummet to -7.55% as wintery weather dragged on and the bank holiday Monday following Easter weekend did little to boost sales. After a bumpy start, the fate of April this year appeared sealed when week three was compared to an equivalent week last year that saw sunny weather and ended in Easter Sunday. The result was that LFL sales nosedived by -11.38%, but off of an impressive base of +9.44% generated from strong Easter trading in 2017. Glorious sunshine in week four was not enough to prevent total sales falling by -1.00%, despite going up against a negative week the year before that saw much cooler weather and included the bank holiday Monday that followed the Easter weekend. The month ended with sales marginally up by +0.50% despite the return of wet weather as the week progressed.
- All three sectors dropped into the negative in April, with homeware at the bottom of the pile. The main ray of light this month came from non-store fashion sales, which exhibited continued strong growth.
- Overall footfall was down in the first three weeks of April, as compared to the equivalent weeks in 2017. Week four saw overall footfall increase by +0.5%, going up against the week including the Easter Monday bank holiday the year before. The month ended with overall footfall down by -2.3% as wetter weather moved in.
- While economic indicators, the weather and some consumer sentiment gauges were all providing glimpses of improvements this month, the industry is still restructuring and bearing up under rising rates as the UK consumer continues to exercise caution. Retailers will be hoping that the prospect of summer weather will coincide with a continued fall in inflation and rising wages. Certainly these elements, combined with the prospect of a Royal wedding in May, will help provide more of a level playing field for growth.
- Lifestyle LFLs were down by -3.7% this month, but from a strong base of +5.3% seen for April last year. In-store lifestyle LFLs have now been negative for three successive months. April began positively with strong Easter trading boosting in-store sales by +6.06%. However, as the month continued post-Easter trading remained tough. Sales in weeks three and four were down by -8.19% and -10.01% respectively as they went up against two positive weeks straddling Easter weekend last year. The month ended with sales down by -1.49%.
- Fashion LFLs were down by -3.3% in April from a base of +1.2% for the same month last year. The result constituted the third negative in-store month in a row for fashion. After Easter trading provided little encouragement for in-store fashion sales, with the week ending down by -2.79%, the prospects for the month looked bleak. The week including the bank holiday Monday following Easter weekend saw in-store LFLs fall by -10.10% as footfall remained lacklustre. Week three saw LFLs down by -12.07%, but off of the +11.62% achieved in the equivalent week ending in Easter Sunday in 2017. The highlight of the month for in-store fashion sales came in week four when the mini-heatwave helped LFLs to rise by +6.11% as sales appeared to be boosted by an increased demand for summer clothing and shoes. The month ended with sales up by +1.96%.
- Homeware LFLs were down by a significant -8.8% this month, falling further from a negative base of -3.1% posted for April last year. This month's result marked the worst April for homeware on record. Homeware has now not seen positive in-store monthly sales growth since January (+0.8%). In-store LFLs were in positive territory for the first two weeks of April, up by +7.60% in the week including the bank holiday Monday as footfall at retail parks marginally increased. However, the weeks that went up against the two weeks straddling the Easter weekend last year saw in-store LFL sales plunge by -19.49% and -17.31% respectively. April ended with sales down by -1.92%.
- Non-store LFLs were up by +16.4% in April, outpacing a base of +15.1% for the same month last year. This month's result was the best seen this year since January. Non-store trading for the two weeks that straddled Easter this year improved on the two separate weeks that straddled Easter last year. Non-store trading in weeks three and four this year also outperformed the equivalent weeks last year that straddled Easter 2017. However, within the sample, fashion was well ahead, posting non-store LFLs north of +20% in every week of April, with the month high of +29.31% coming in the stellar week four when store sales also ticked north, thanks to the mini-heatwave.

The High Street Sales Tracker outlines weekly like-for-like sales changes of c85 mid-tier 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 floorcoverings, lighting, linen and textiles. **Non-store:** mail order, online and other non-store channels.

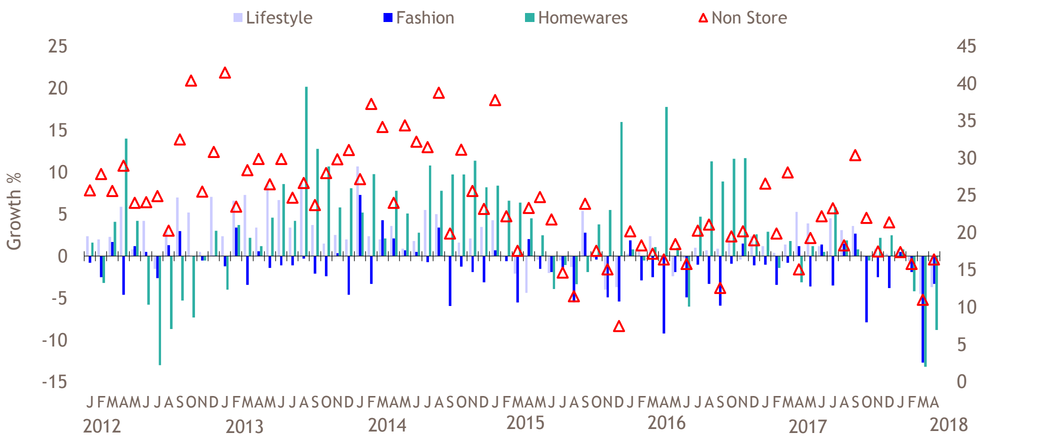
MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS 2018

LFL Growth %	Week 1 (we 01/04)	Week 2 (we 08/04)	Week 3 (we 15/04)	Week 4 (we 22/04)	Week 5 (29/04)	Total April
Lifestyle	6.06	-3.24	-8.19	-10.01	-1.49	-3.7
Fashion	-2.79	-10.10	-12.07	6.11	1.96	-3.3
Homewares	3.95	7.60	-19.49	-17.31	-1.92	-8.8
Non-store	12.46	16.73	17.15	15.90	18.90	16.4
Total (excl non-store)	**0.53**	**-7.55**	**-11.38**	**-1.00**	**0.50**	**-3.8**

MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS 2009-2018



MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS BY SECTOR 2012-2018



Further Information: HighStreetSalesTracker@bdo.co.uk