3 May 2019

BDO HIGH STREET SALES TRACKER

Bricks-and-Mortar Retail Falls Again Despite Easter Boost

APRIL MONTHLY REVIEW
THE FOUR WEEKS TO 28 APRIL 2019

STORE
-0.4%
APRIL 2018: -3.8%

NON-STORE
+18.3%
APRIL 2018: +16.4%

TOTAL
+1.8%
APRIL 2018: -0.0%

- Total like-for-like (LFL) sales increased by +1.8% in April from a flat base of -0.0% for the equivalent month last year. Total in-store LFLs saw a further decline of -0.4% this month from an already poor base of -3.8% for April last year. The result marked the third month of negative in-store LFL sales this year after recording an increase in March, though one that was unable to offset a brutal base from last year. The last fifteen months have been difficult for in-store LFL sales and April 2018 recorded the second worst result over this period. As a consequence, the inability to offset last year's base will likely feel like another missed opportunity for bricks-and-mortar retail with growth coming from steady LFLs for non-store sales. Total non-store LFLs increased by +18.3% in April from an unexceptional base of +16.4% last year.

- April began with total LFLs increasing by +1.30%, but from a very poor base of -4.44% for the same week last year that included Easter bank holiday Monday. As some schools began Spring holidays, total LFLs increased by +2.62% in the second week of the month, but from another negative base of -5.47% last year. The third week of the month, which began the Easter bank holiday weekend, saw total LFLs increase by +3.95% from an already positive base of +3.00% for the same week last year. April concluded with a week that began with Easter bank holiday Monday and saw Storm Hannah sweep across parts of the country over the weekend as total LFLs reported a slight increase of +0.58% from a base of +2.74% last year.

- Overall footfall was down for three out of four weeks in April as compared to the equivalent weeks in 2018. The month began and concluded with overall footfall declining, by -5.2% and -1.3% respectively. Week two saw the only increase of the month as overall footfall saw an uptick of +1.4%. Shopping centres saw negative footfall in every week this month and also saw the largest decline of the month for all categories with a drop of -7.3% in week one.

- With Easter coming slightly later this year and coinciding with record temperatures there was good reason to expect a boost for in-store sales at a critical time. However this proved to be limited in another month of fluctuating weather and political conditions. Consumer purchasing power has seen gradual improvement as inflation remains low and nominal wages continue to creep upwards; and with news that the UK's Q1 growth was slightly better than anticipated there are reasons for optimism. But reports are also indicating that personal finances continue to be a concern for consumers and, for businesses, the prolongation of Brexit is a challenge to long-term planning. Both will need assurances sooner rather than later.

LIFESTYLE
+2.4%
APRIL 2018: -2.7%

- Lifestyle total LFLs saw an uptick of +2.4% this month, but fell slightly short of offsetting last year's base of -2.7%. With Easter falling back in April this year, total lifestyle LFLs recorded a positive result for the second time in 2019. Total LFLs for lifestyle were positive in all but the final week of the month as Storm Hannah swept away footfall on the high street. In-store LFLs for lifestyle fell by -0.4% in April from a diminished base of -3.7% last year. The result marks the fifteenth consecutive month of negative LFL sales for in-store lifestyle despite seeing a bump in week three with a record-setting warm Easter weekend.

FASHION
+1.5%
APRIL 2018: +2.3%

- Fashion total LFLs increased by +1.5% in April from a positive base of +2.3% for the same month last year. Total LFLs for fashion recorded positive results in each week of April, but from very poor bases in the first two weeks (-5.59% and -4.46%, respectively). In-store LFLs for fashion declined by -0.8% this month from an already poor base of -3.3% last year. The category recorded an increase for LFL sales in the middle two weeks of the month, but still recorded the second monthly decline for in-store fashion LFLs this year.

HOMEWARES
+5.7%
APRIL 2018: -8.8%

- Homeware total LFLs increased by +5.7% this month, but from a dreadful base of -8.8% for April 2018. Total LFLs for homeware recorded two weeks of positive results (+6.27%, +17.03%) in the middle of April, but neither offset negative bases for the equivalent weeks last year (-9.63%, -17.90%). In-store LFL sales for homeware saw a marginal increase of +0.6% this month, but from a dreadful base of -8.8% last year. In-store LFLs for homeware recorded two weeks of positive results bookended by negative LFL sales in the first and last weeks of the month.

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

FOR MORE INFORMATION

e: HighStreetSalesTracker@bdo.co.uk

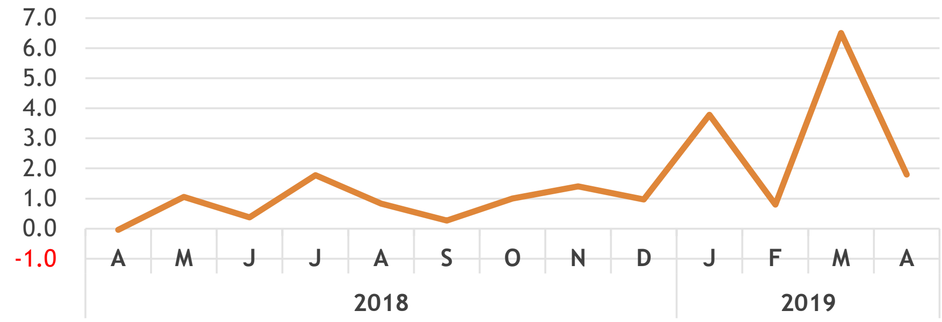
The High Street Sales Tracker outlines weekly like-for-like sales changes of some c85 retailers with c10,000 individual stores across **Fashion:** accessories, clothing, footwear. **Lifestyle:** general household goods, gifts, health and beauty, leisure goods. **Homewares:** cookware, furniture and floor 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.

www.bdo.co.uk

TOTAL LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS FROM 2018-2019

LFL Growth %	Week 1 (we 07/04)	Week 2 (we 14/04)	Week 3 (we 21/04)	Week 4 (we 28/04)	Total April
Lifestyle	1.16	3.33	7.75	-1.68	2.4
Fashion	2.14	2.04	1.12	0.76	1.5
Homeware	-5.85	6.27	17.03	8.48	5.7
STORE	**-3.46**	**0.76**	**6.02**	**-4.17**	**-0.4**
NON-STORE	**23.30**	**18.75**	**9.68**	**20.57**	**18.3**
TOTAL	**1.30**	**2.62**	**3.95**	**0.58**	**1.8**

MONTHLY LIKE-FOR-LIKE RESULTS 2018-2019



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