

Health and beauty spending surges despite cost-of-living pressures



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Spending on health and beauty products is booming despite cost-of-living pressures as UK consumers increasingly consider make-up and perfume to be as essential as groceries, figures suggest.

While rising living costs have seen consumers cutting back and retail sales as a whole up 0.1% year-on-year in August, spending on health and beauty was up 7.3% – significantly higher than non-essential spending overall, which was up 0.7%, according to [Barclays](#).

A quarter of shoppers (23%) say they have been cutting back on buying clothing and accessories, with Barclays transaction data showing clothing was down 1.7% last month.

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of the retail sector, the UK's beauty spending highlights a growing emphasis on self-care

Karen Johnson, Barclays

But almost half of consumers (46%) say they consider health and beauty purchases as “essential” – a category which typically includes priority spending such as groceries and childcare.

The most resilient products over the past three years – those where consumers say they have either increased or not changed their spending – are pharmaceuticals (68%), hair care (66%), body care (62%) and fragrances (54%).

Those aged 18 to 27 have increased their spending on health and beauty by 17.5% over the past 12 months – more than double the rate of growth for those aged 44 to 59 at 6.5%, and triple the rate of 60 to 78-year-olds (4.7%).

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Karen Johnson, Barclays

But almost a third of consumers (32%) say they are turning to “dupes” – affordable copies of more expensive products.

[Fragrances](#) are the most sought-after health and beauty dupe, with 28% of those who buy cheaper copies admitting to spending on imitation scents.

Since January alone, the number of consumers watching “de-influencing” videos to find out which products are not worth buying has climbed from 11% to 17%.

Karen Johnson, head of retail at Barclays, said: “Despite rising living costs and subdued growth across the rest of the retail sector, the UK's beauty spending highlights a growing

emphasis on self-care.

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[Opinium](#) surveyed 2,000 UK adults between July 9-12 and again between August 6-9.