

Black Friday boost expected as anxious shoppers stock up early for Christmas

Black Friday shopping visits are expected to receive a boost this year as consumers worried about supply chain issues bring forward Christmas purchases, according to a forecast.

Data company Springboard predicts that the week beginning 21 November will see the biggest bump in footfall, of 7.9% compared with the previous week, of the seasonal shopping period.

That compares with a 6.5% uplift predicted for the last week before Christmas Day.

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Will Christmas be cancelled?

It would also represent a resurgence for Black Friday, which has dwindled in importance over the last couple of pre-pandemic years – delivering footfall boosts of just 1.7% in each of 2018 and 2019.

“The widespread awareness amongst consumers of potential [supply](#) issues this Christmas is likely to lead to consumers bringing their Christmas purchasing forward to November in order guarantee the availability of their desired gifts,” the report said.

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Some stores, including toy retailer The Entertainer, have already urged shoppers to buy gifts early given the possibility of shortages closer to Christmas Day.

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Across the six-week festive shopping period – from 21 November to 4 January – footfall is expected to be 17.4% lower than in 2019, according to Springboard.

However, that would still see footfall – a measure of visits to shopping destinations – 80.9% above where it was in 2020 when pandemic restrictions were in place.

Diane Wehrle, insights director at Springboard, said: “This year, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the supply issue associated with the shortage of HGV drivers... will unfortunately cause further issues for bricks and mortar retailers over the Christmas trading period.

“In addition, the end of the furlough scheme, coinciding with recent increases in energy prices are likely to dampen footfall as household spend on Christmas gifts is constrained and family experiences are favoured.”