

Reopening of indoor hospitality fails to boost footfall

The reopening of indoor hospitality last month failed to boost footfall in town centres, according to the latest figures.

Footfall strengthened after non-essential retail opened in April but the numbers were disappointing after restaurants, pubs and cafes were allowed to open indoors in England from 17 May.

The gap between footfall in May 2021 and the same time in 2019 – the year being used to allow comparison with pre-pandemic times – widened as the month went on.

It was 25.3% down in the first week of May and 26.8% down by the last week.

But there was a slight improvement when the month was looked at as a whole – footfall was 27.5% lower than 2019 pre-pandemic level, compared to April being down 32.7% from 2019 levels.

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High streets were worst-hit – down 36.3%, while shopping centres were down 30.3% and retail parks were down 5.7%.

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Explaining the reason for the figures, Springboard, which compiles the data, said: "May was the wettest on record which inevitably lowered the initial exhilaration of consumers in being able to eat out as even visiting indoor environments necessitated braving the weather.

"Secondly, the limitations on dining capacity in indoor venues inevitably means that the uplift in footfall generated has been limited; and thirdly most of the increase in footfall has

occurred post 5pm when volumes of activity are far lower those than during retail trading hours."