

How retail closed '24 – To be poorly received when soon to be revealed

I covered in the first of this UK Screen Test series the intriguing most recent performance of the UK's food retailers. Intriguing in it revealed how the data pointed to marked volume weakness in grocery food sales, **FOR SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME**. That piece made the case that the data was misleading many into believing Britons were eating less because of "austerity", when we are in fact doing so very differently. The point of that piece was simply that the UK's supermarket groups had to quickly integrate by buying into the wholesale food businesses that are benefiting from selling into dark and light kitchens. Ever more such kitchens that are serving our ever-growing appetite for ready-made meals conveniently and competitively delivered into our hands at home and work.

This piece moves away from food to all other retail categories as designated by the ONS, doing so ahead of the updates from the UK's listed retailers.

Ahead of trading updates I am taking the liberty of presenting what the ONS data already available through to November tells us about performances across the UK's varied retail sectors. The data presented captures purchases done out of **traditional bricks and mortar stores**, as well as **retail sales made on-line**.

Since our consumer behaviour is highly seasonal, we must respect the data as being fit for its period. What I mean by this is that **DIY (52.46/1)** along with **Garden Centres (52.46/2)** will not be considered in any detail in what follows; because to repeat, these are very much "out of peak sales season" through Autumn and Winter.

This piece draws then on retail categories where Autumn and Autumn are crucial sales seasons. We run through sectors in no retail order. We begin, with an absence of prejudice with those retailers designated as selling a multitude of non-food things. This now strange retail "pick and match", captured once the high street giants of Debenhams and Woolworths who "in their day" were considered reflective of generic UK non-food retail.

The pattern we see in the **UK multiple retailer category (52.12, in-store and on-line)** is one very much followed so much more widely by UK retailers through the summer and into the Autumn/Winter of last year. Specifically, after a move-up into positive year-on-year growth, retail sales volumes for the UK's multiple retailers fell into negative territory for data into October and November (on-line sales holding steady). Alarming, the volume reversal coming from in-store sales came alongside no let-up in the deterioration being seen in retail pricing.

Shifting to **retailers of soft furnishings (52.41)** [Dunelm, DFS], we see that with this category too there was a volume reversal into Q4, but one not accompanied by price deflation. Indeed, because of falling costs for imports, the evidence was of margin robustness.

If we shift to **floor-coverings (52.48/1)**, [Headlam, dfs] the falling off in volumes of '23 was reversed in '24, with retail pricing holding stable.

Moving to retailers designed by the ONS as selling "household durables", we see extremely alarming signs coming from **furniture (52.44)**. In relation to those retailing **electrical goods (52.45)** the picture was nothing like as impressive as what was being seen for the retail of **phones and other electronics (52.48/2)**.

If household goods retailers were grouped together (52.44-46) we see that for both the traditional and on-line forms, recent performance that was alarming. This is where AO World is best associated.

Let me close with the retail of **clothing and footwear (52.42-43)**. Whether one considers this in its bricks and mortar (MKS, ABF - Primark) or ecommerce forms (Asos, Next), the picture was highly unflattering. All told then what with labour cost pressures the UK retail landscape ended 2024 generally poorly, albeit with certain pockets of resilience and indeed one or two of strength; see the retail of **phones and electronics (52.48/2)** and **Sports goods and toys (52.48/6)** [Frasers Group].

UK based Retailers non-food (52 less 52.11, 52.6 & 52.7)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

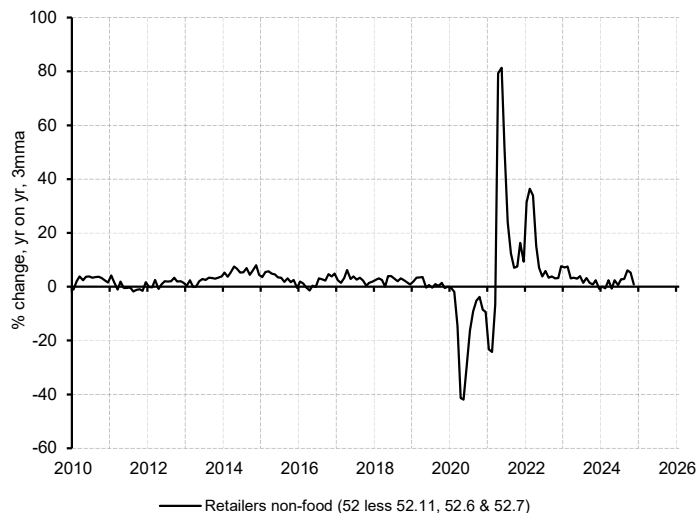
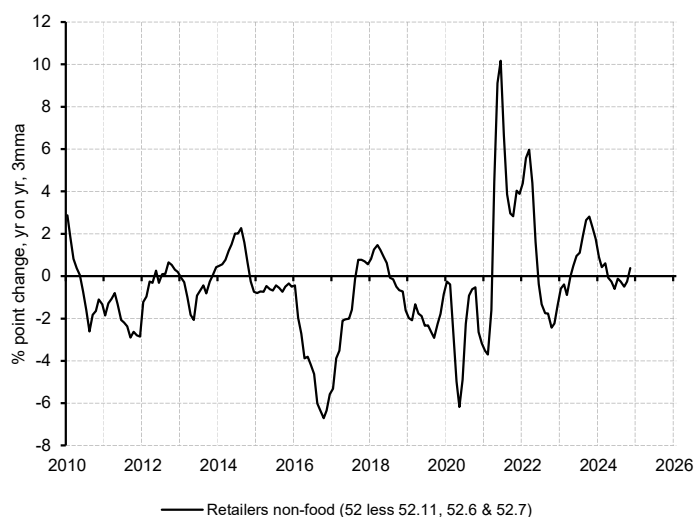


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Non-food Retailers 3.1 (0.3)

Non-food Retailers -0.5 (-0.2)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

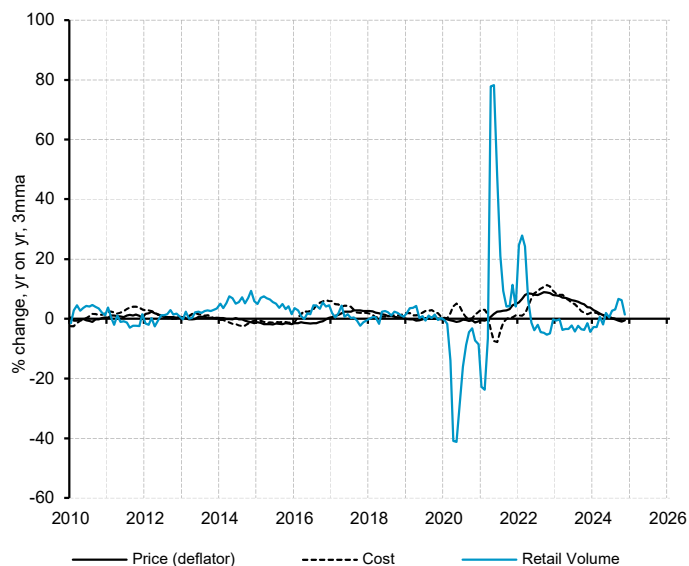
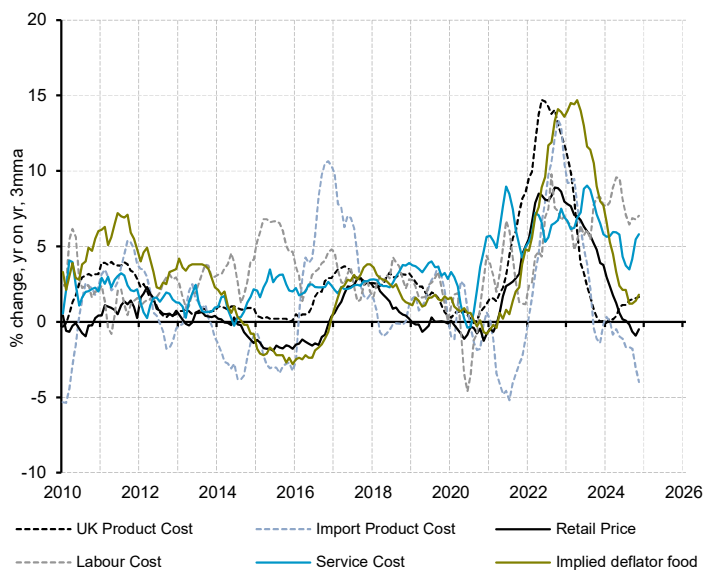


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Price 1.2 (0.5)
Cost 1.7 (0.6)
Volume 1.9 (0.2)

Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%,
Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 10.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Non-food stores On-Line (52 less 52.11, 52.6 & 52.7)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

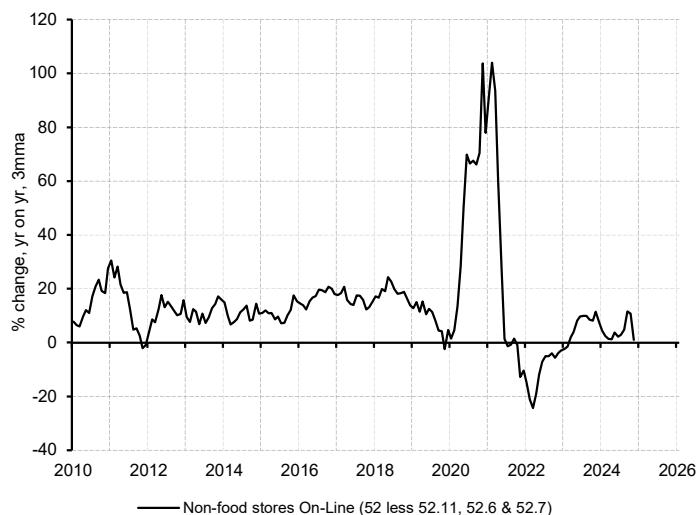
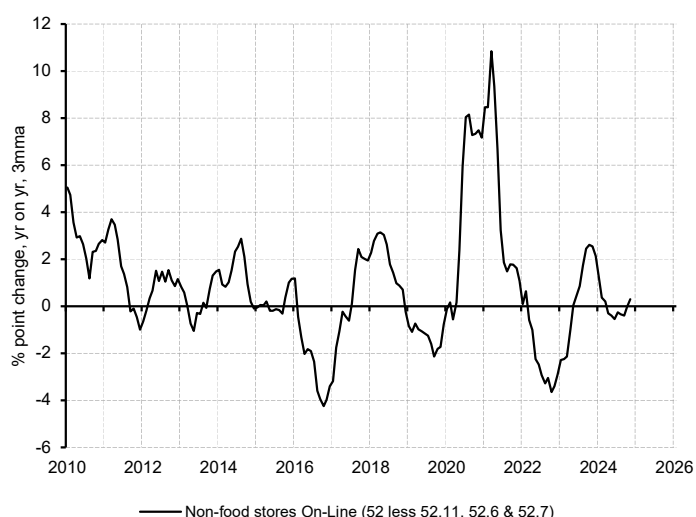


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Online Non-food stores 14.4 (0.7)

Online Non-food stores 0.9 (0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

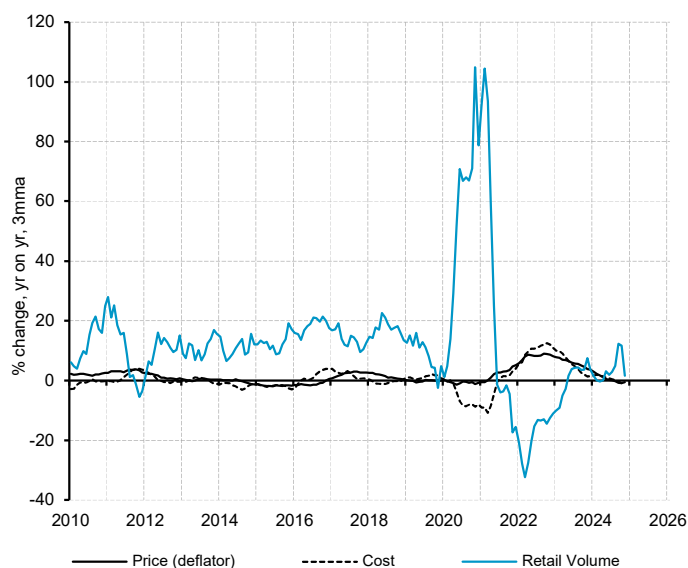
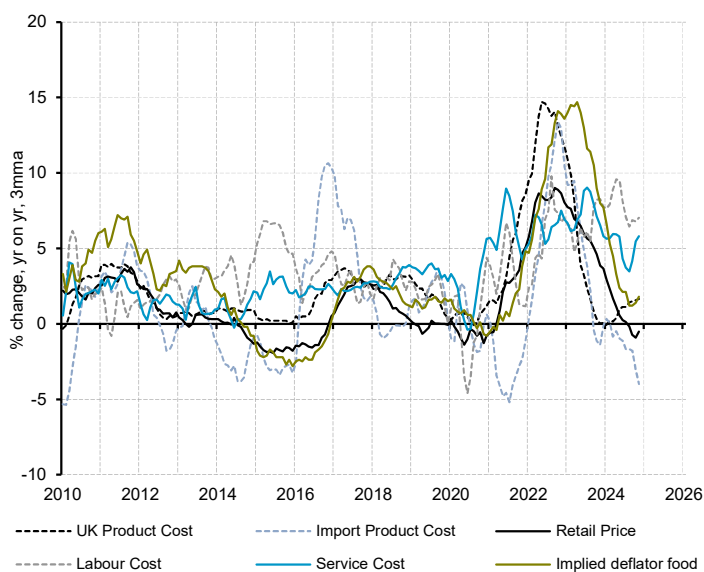


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Price 1.6 (0.6)
Cost 0.7 (0.2)
Volume 12.9 (0.6)

Weights: Home material cost 7.0%, Imported Material cost 45.0%,
Transport cost 14.0%, Labour cost 10.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Multiple retailers (Incl. Department Stores - 52.12) & incl on-line

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

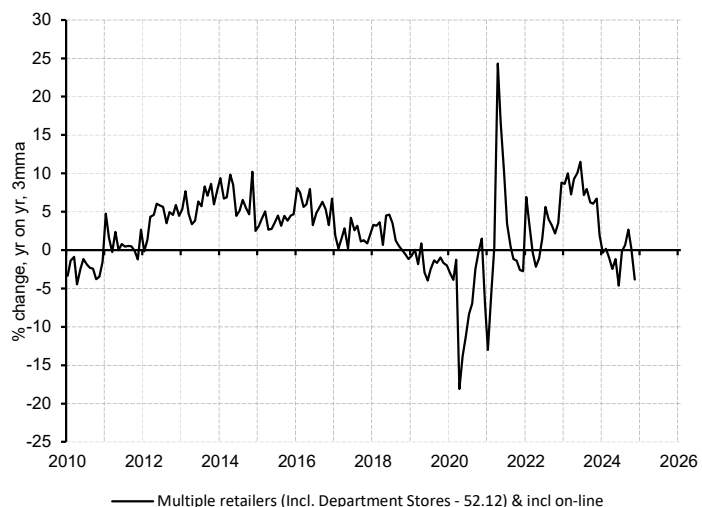
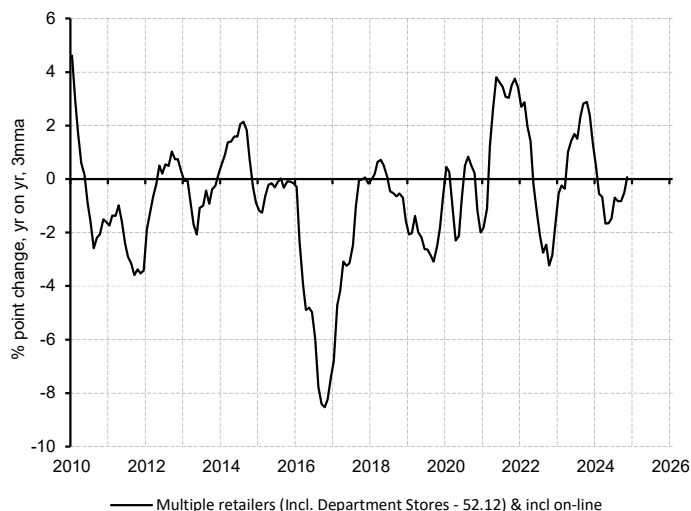


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Multiple retailers 2.3 (0.5)

Multiple retailers -0.7 (-0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

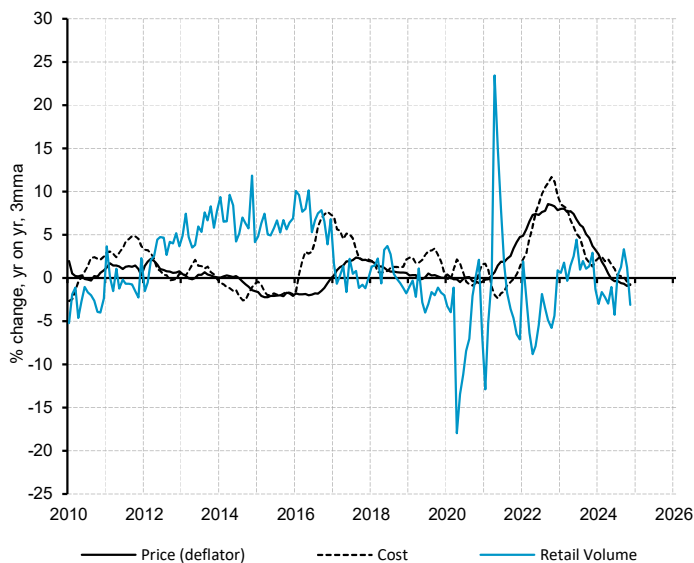
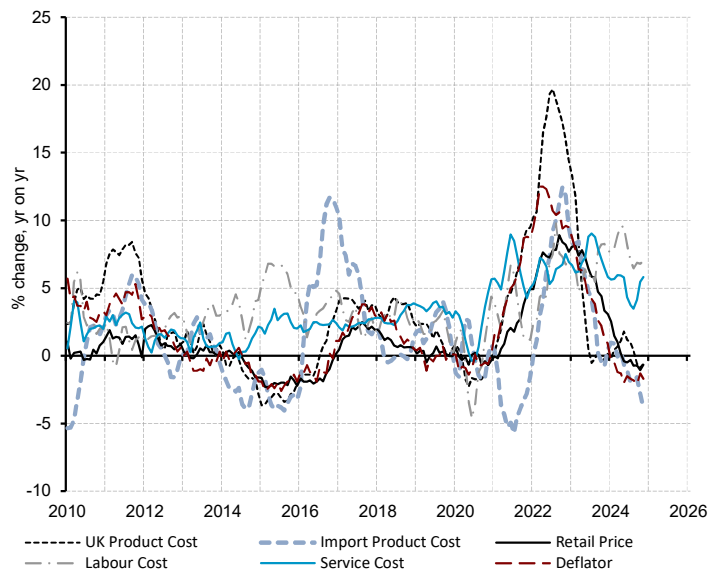


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 8.0%, Imported Material cost 60.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.2 (0.5)

Cost 1.9 (0.6)

Volume 1.1 (0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Multiple retailers On-Line element (Incl. Department Stores - 52.12)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

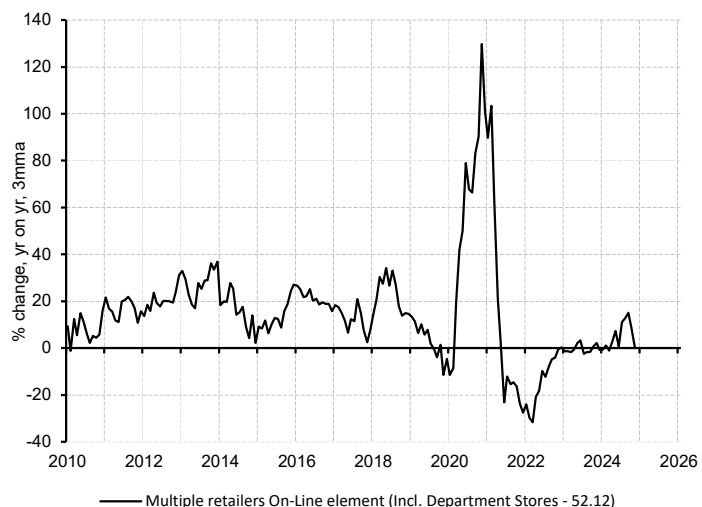
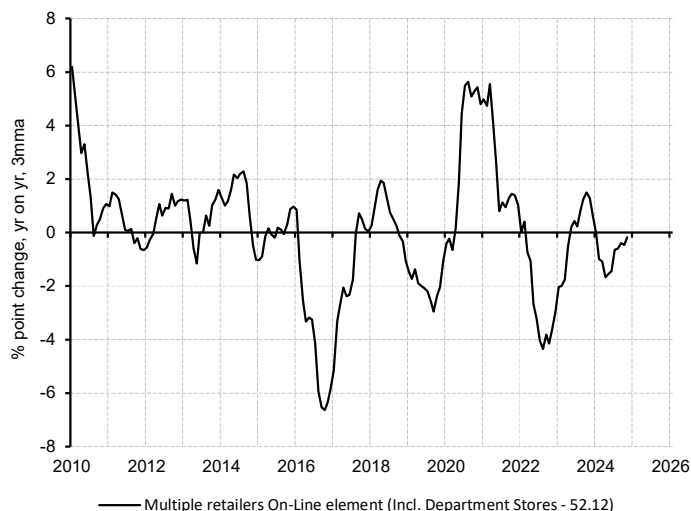


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Multiple retailers On-Line element 15.1 (0.7)

Multiple retailers On-Line element 0.0 (0.0)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

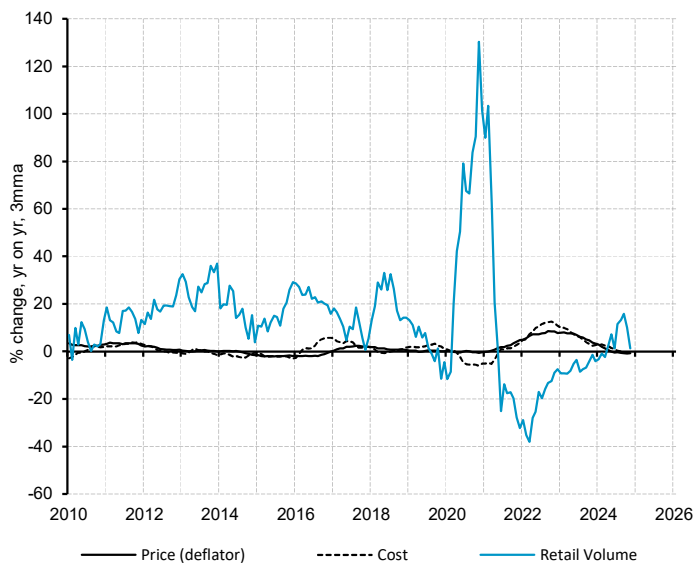
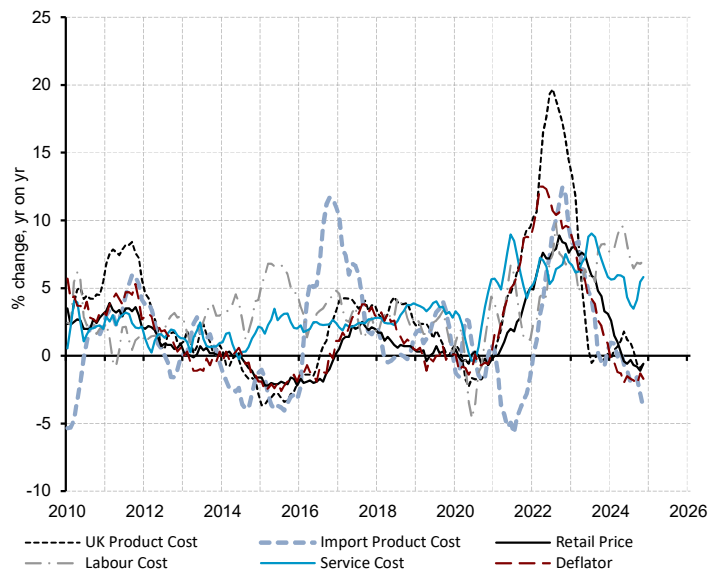


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 8.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%, Transport cost 16.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.5 (0.6)

Cost 1.4 (0.4)

Volume 13.6 (0.6)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of household textiles (52.41)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

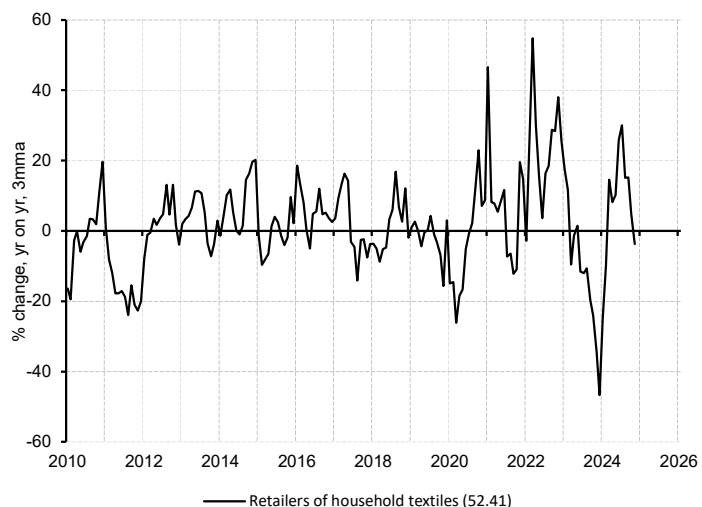
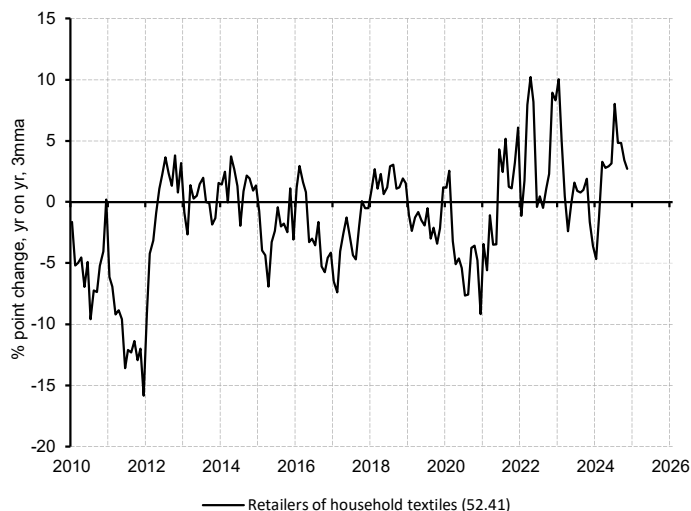


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
 Retailers of household textiles 1.8 (0.1)

Retailers of household textiles -1.2 (-0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

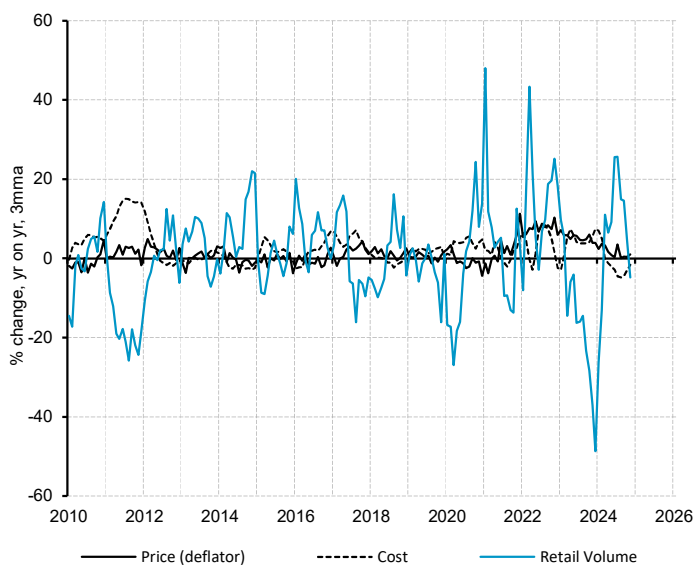
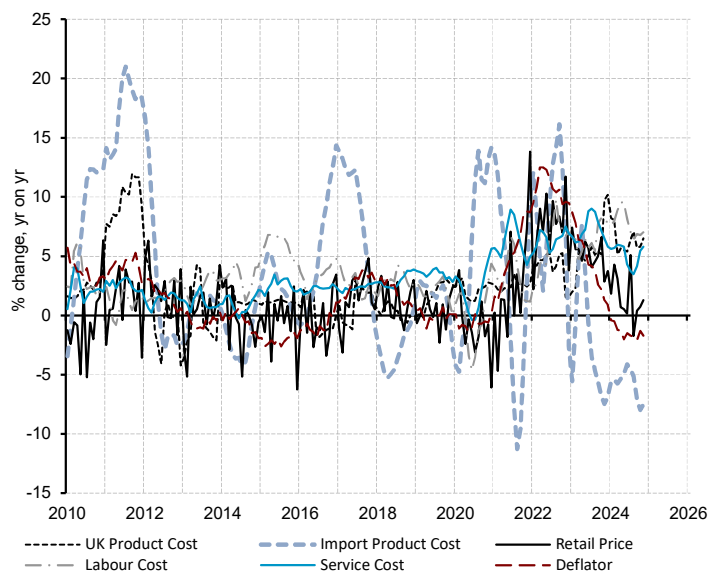


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 45.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.4 (0.5)

Cost 2.6 (0.6)

Volume 0.4 (0.0)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of home textiles & floor coverings (52.41+52.48/1)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

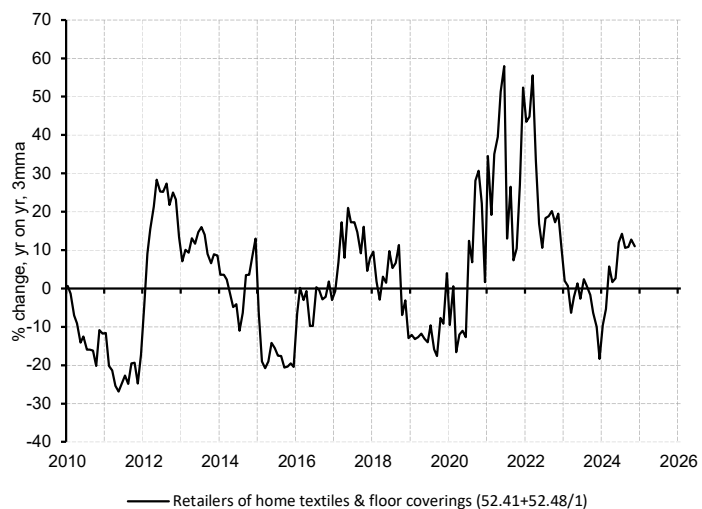
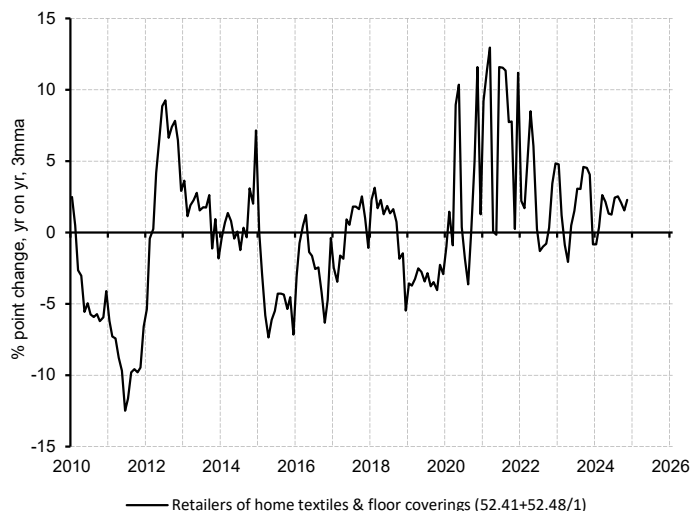


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of home textiles & floor coverings 2.9 (0.2)

Retailers of home textiles & floor coverings 0.1 (0.0)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

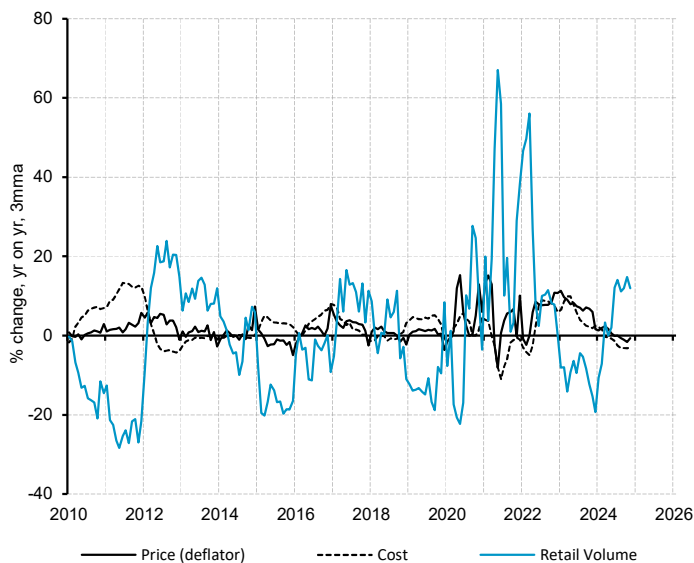
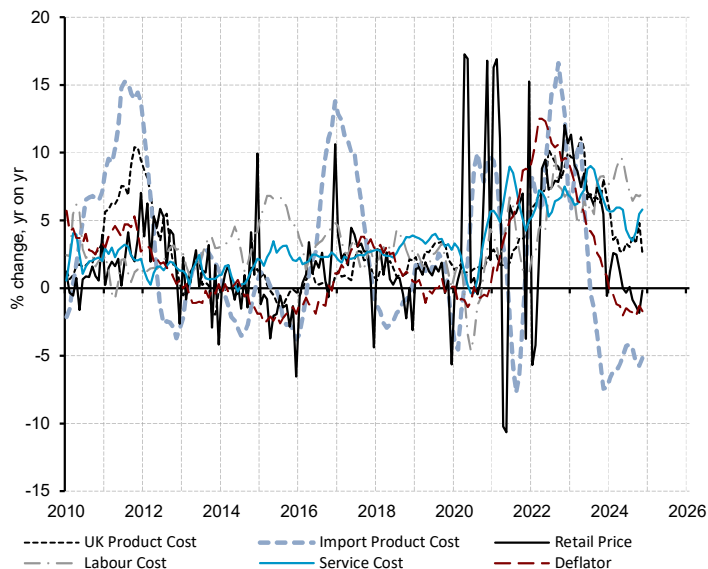


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 45.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 2.4 (0.6)

Cost 2.3 (0.5)

Volume 0.6 (0.0)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of textiles, clothing & footwear, incl. on-line (52.41-52.43)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

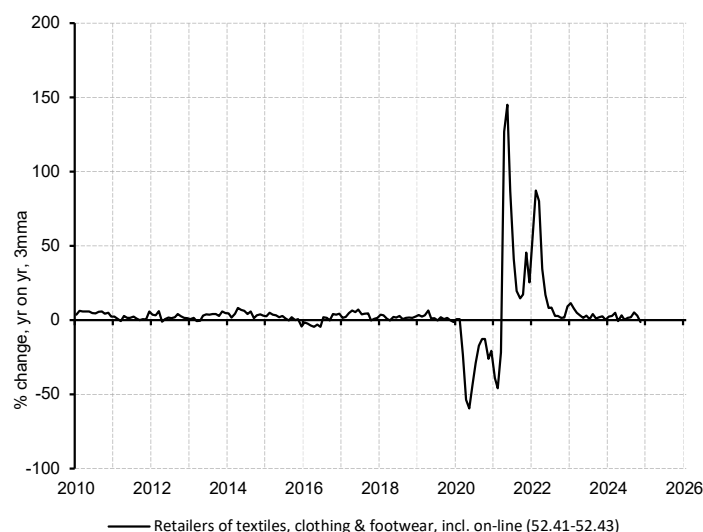
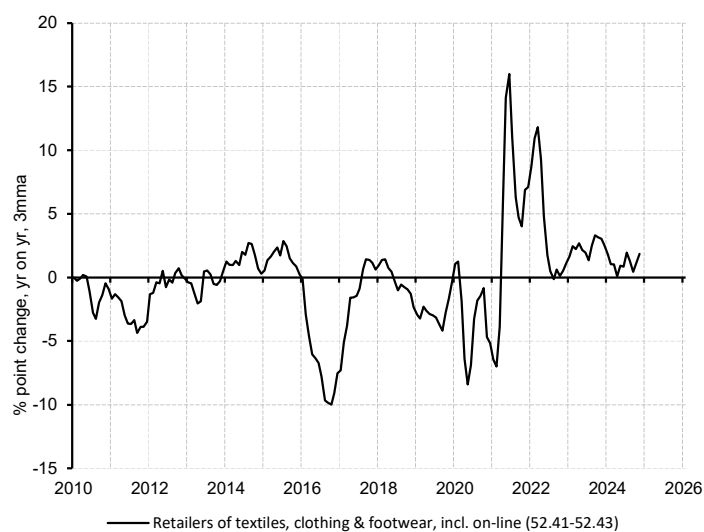


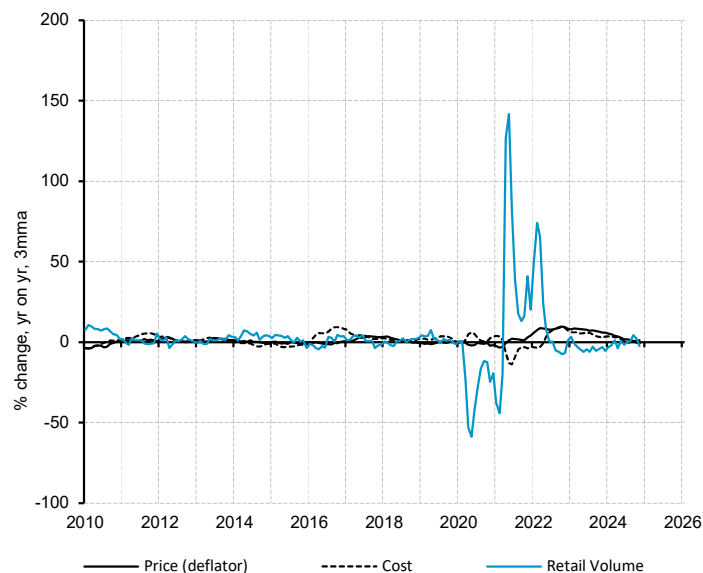
Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of textiles, clothing & footwear 4.3 (0.2)

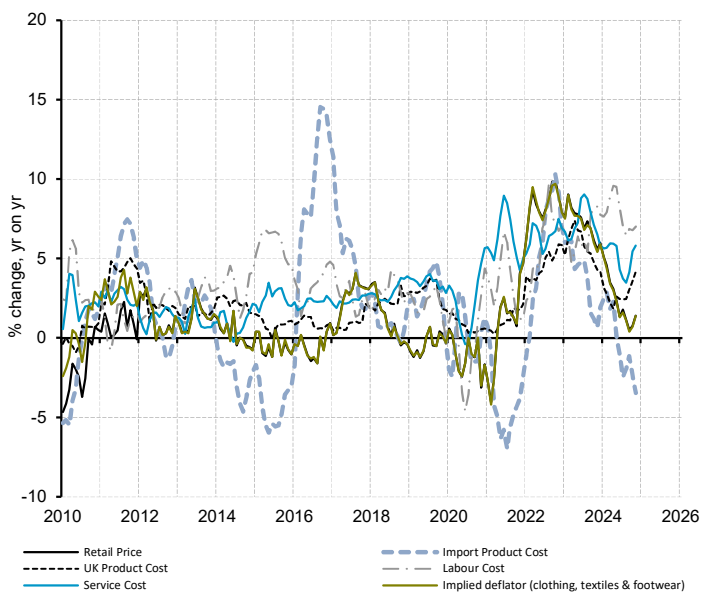
Retailers of textiles, clothing & footwear -0.2 (-0.1)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume



Price 1.4 (0.5)
Cost 1.7 (0.5)
Volume 2.8 (0.1)

Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 8.0%, Imported Material cost 62.0%,
Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 3.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Textile, clothing & footwear stores On-Line element (52.41-52.43)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

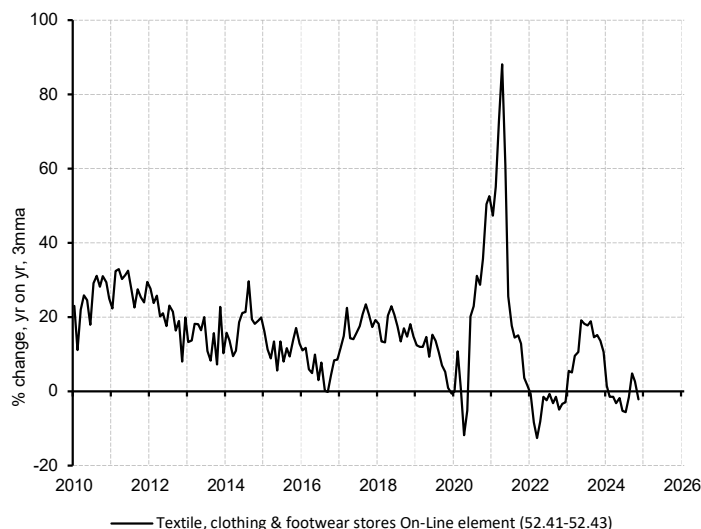
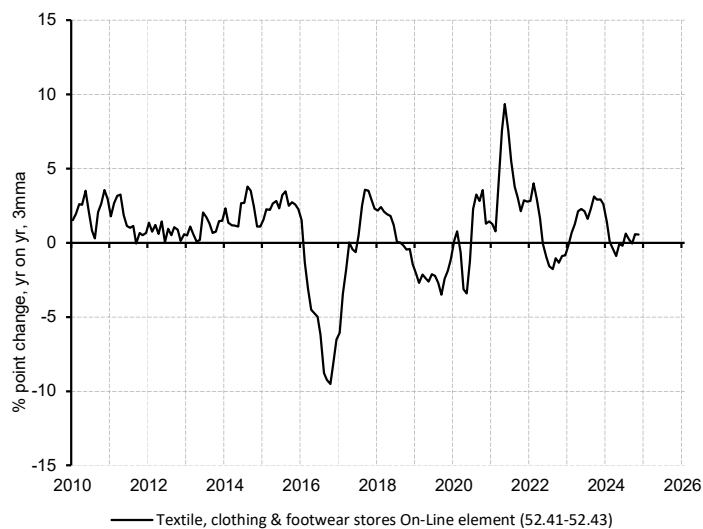


Chart 2. Operating margin

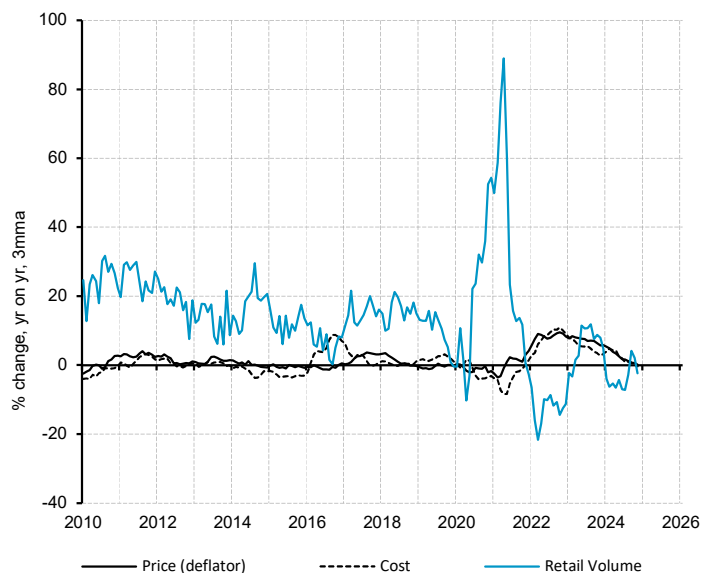


Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Textile, clothing & footwear stores Online 15.4 (1.1)

Textile, clothing & footwear stores Online 0.7 (0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

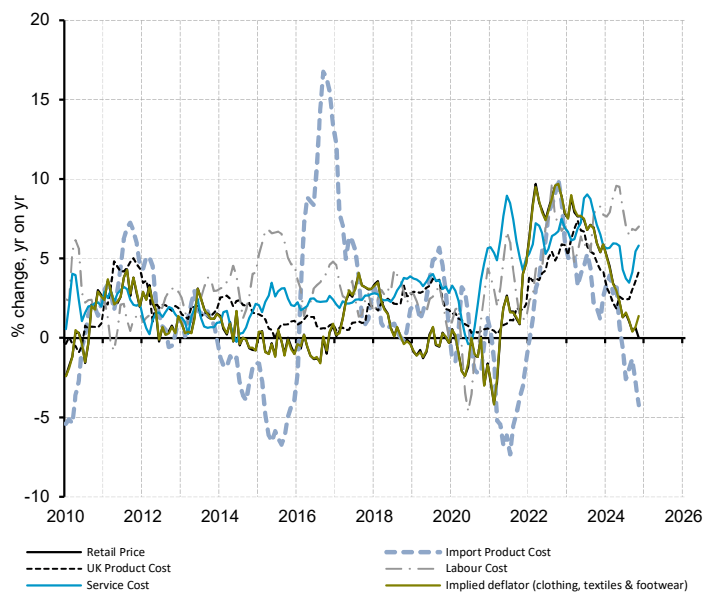


Price 1.7 (0.6)

Cost 1.0 (0.3)

Volume 13.7 (0.9)

Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 7.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%,
Transport cost 19.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 3.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Clothing retailers (52.42)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

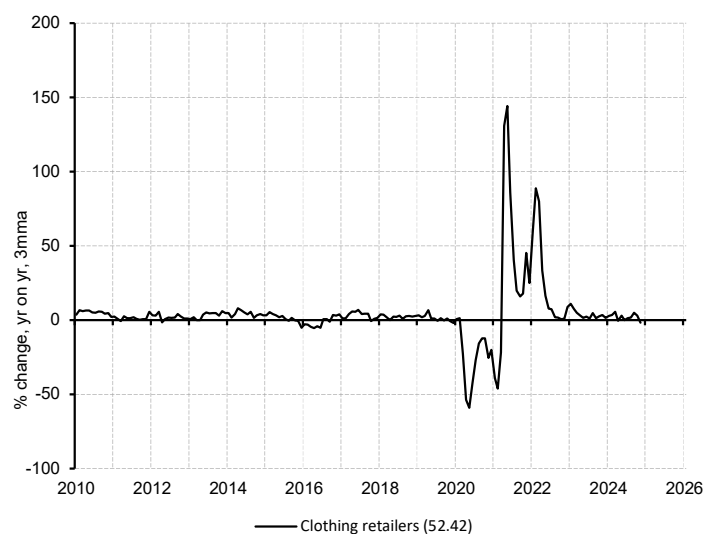
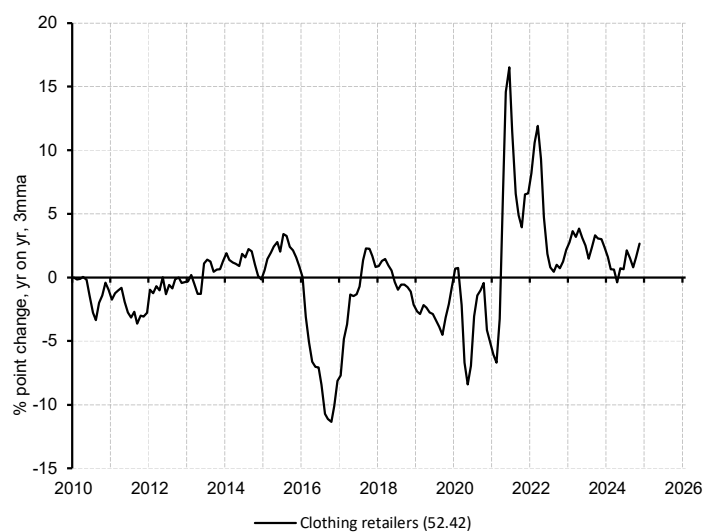


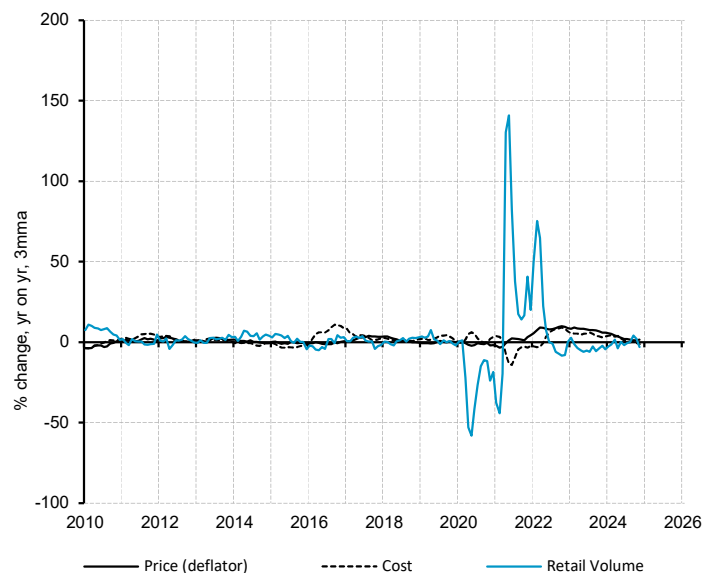
Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Clothing retailers 4.3 (0.2)

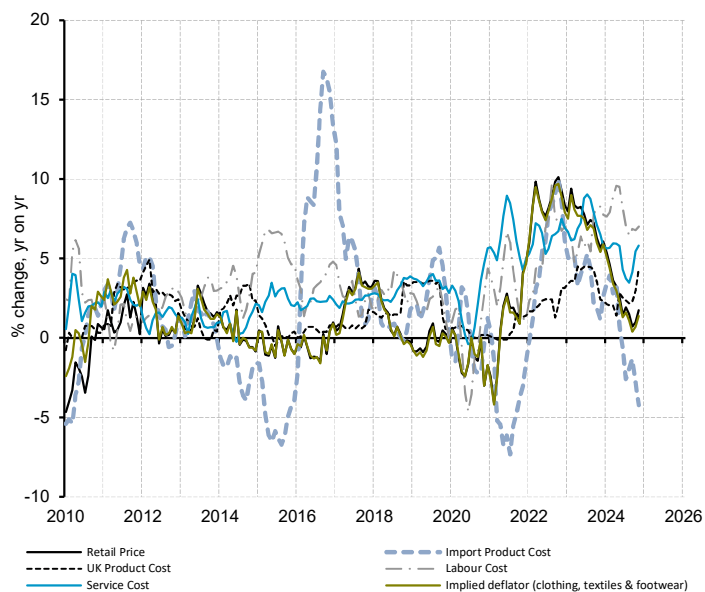
Clothing retailers -0.1 (0.0)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume



Price 1.6 (0.5)
Cost 1.7 (0.4)
Volume 2.6 (0.1)

Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 8.0%, Imported Material cost 62.0%,
Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 3.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Footwear retailers (52.43)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

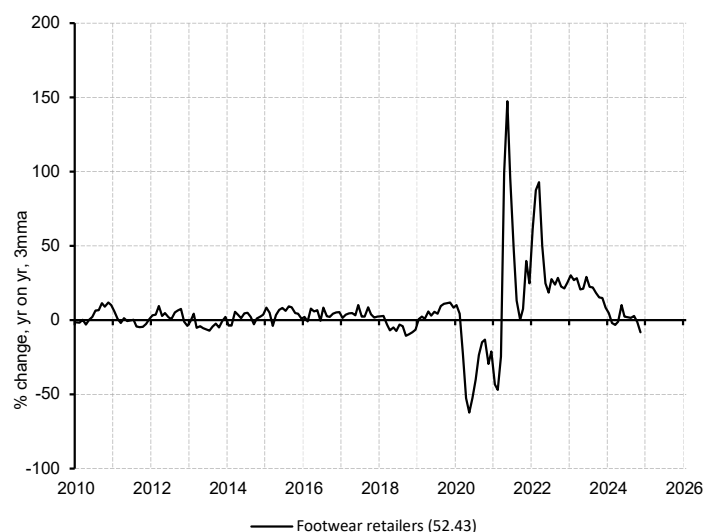
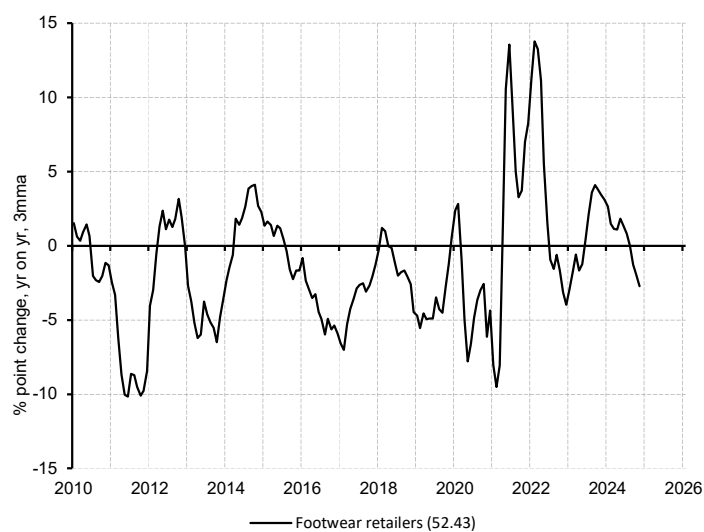


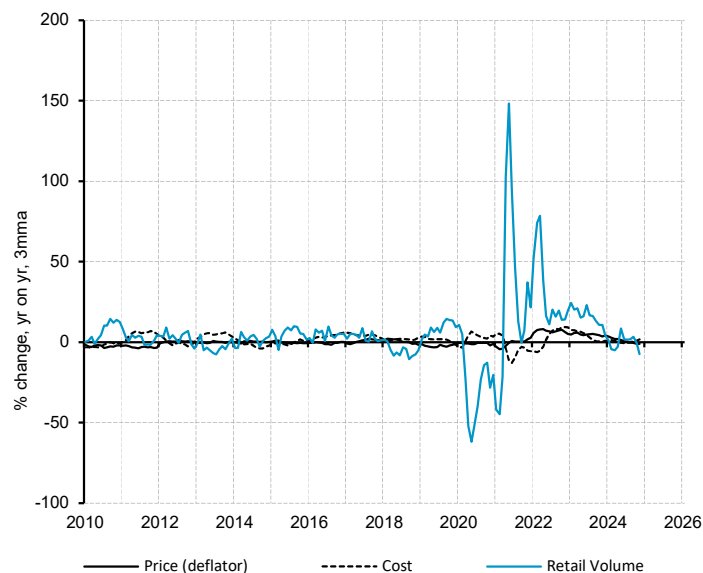
Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Footwear retailers 5.7 (0.2)

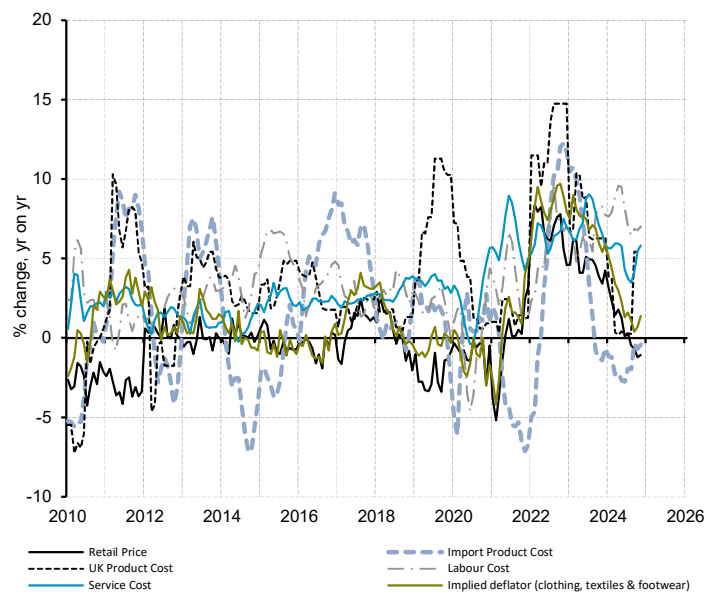
Footwear retailers -1.3 (-0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume



Price 0.3 (0.1)
Cost 1.5 (0.4)
Volume 5.3 (0.2)

Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 8.0%, Imported Material cost 62.0%,
Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 3.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of household durables goods, incl on-line (52.44-52.46)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

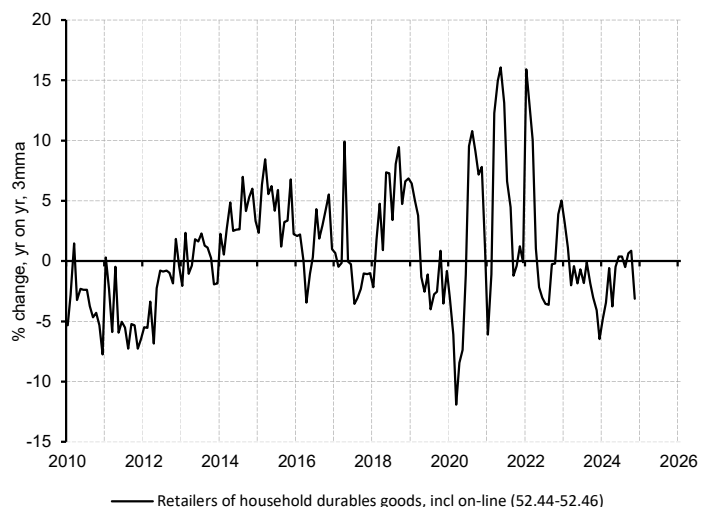
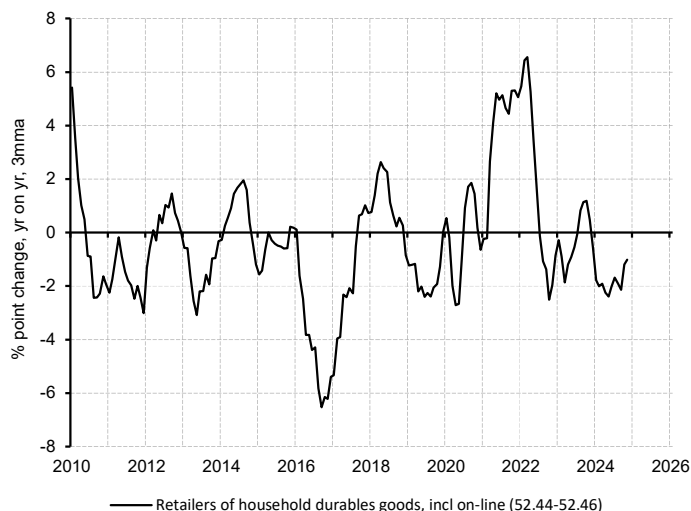


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of household durables goods, incl on-line 0.7 (0.1)

Retailers of household durables goods, incl on-line -0.4 (-0.2)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

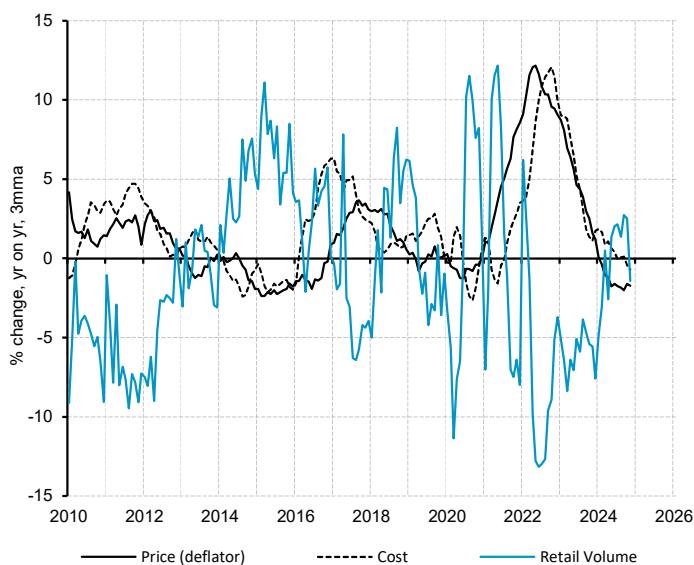
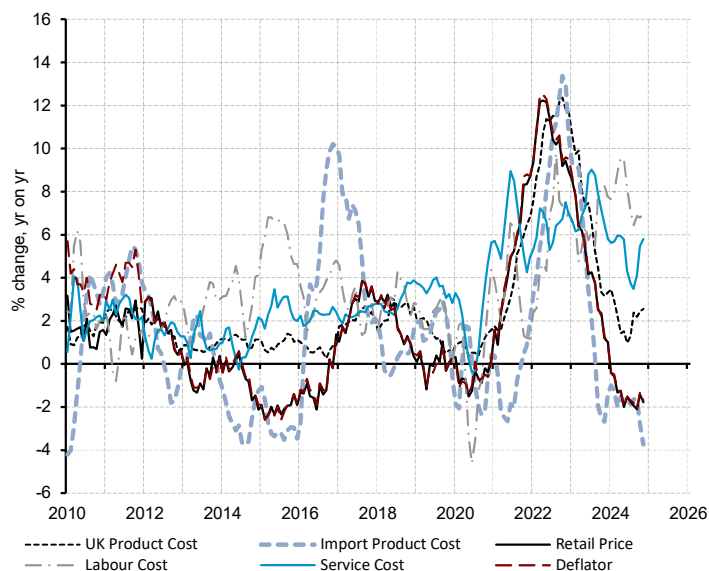


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 57.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 4.0%

Price 1.6 (0.5)
Cost 2.0 (0.7)
Volume -0.9 (-0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of household durables goods on-Line element (52.44-52.46o)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

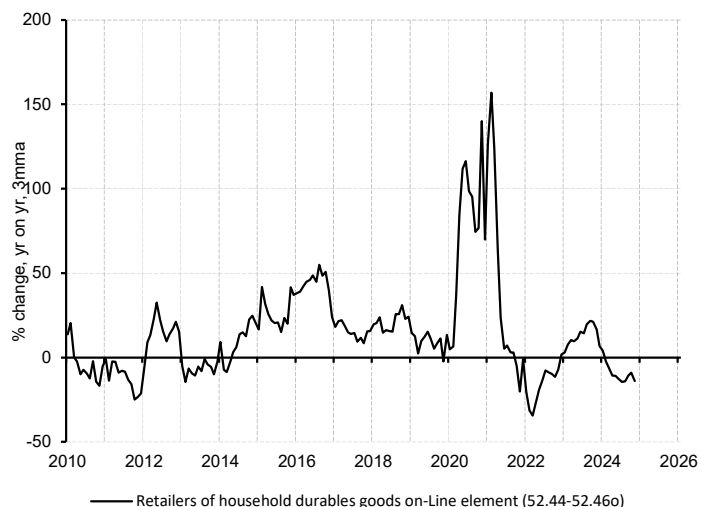
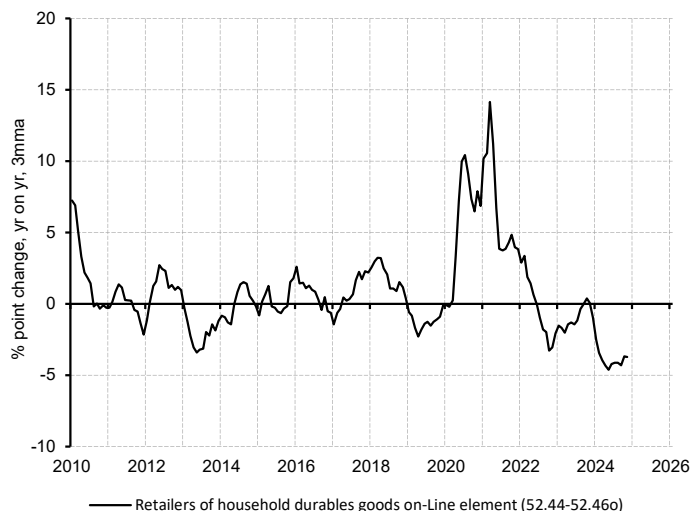


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Retailers of household durables goods on-Line element 15.0 (0.5)

Retailers of household durables goods on-Line element 0.8 (0.2)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

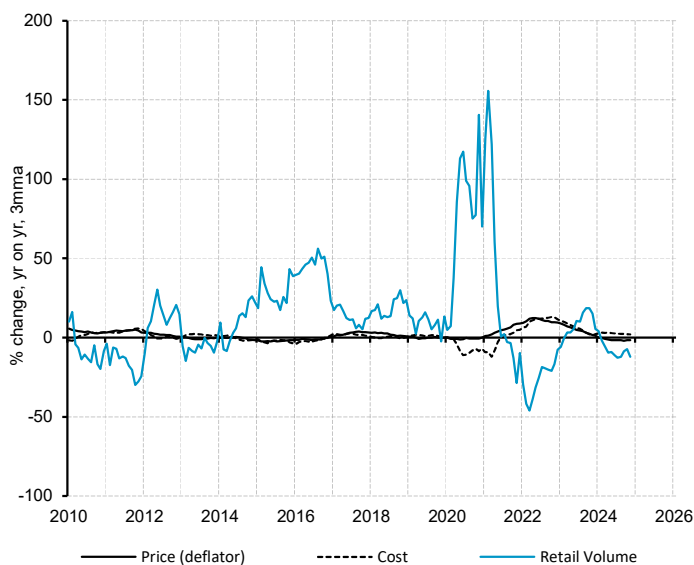
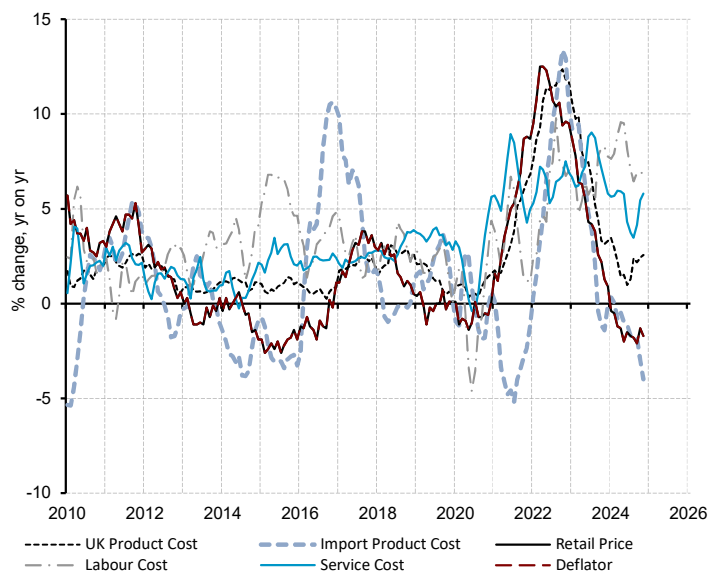


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 25.0%, Imported Material cost 30.0%, Transport cost 16.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 2.0 (0.6)
Cost 1.2 (0.3)
Volume 13.1 (0.4)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of general electrical & electronic goods, incl. on-line (52.45)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

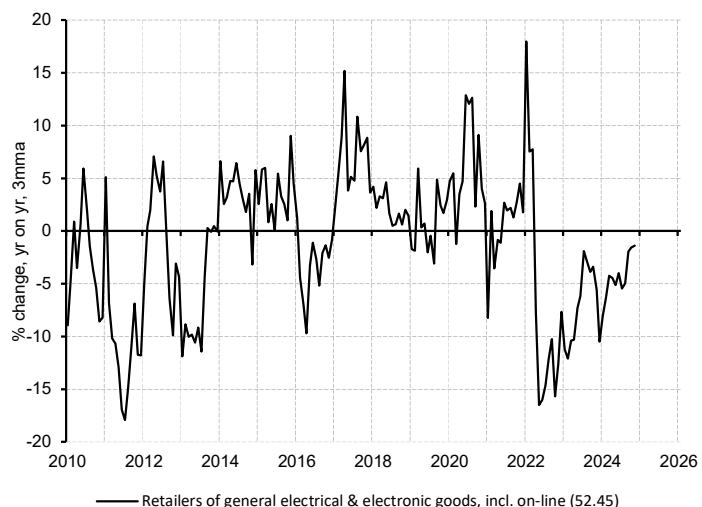
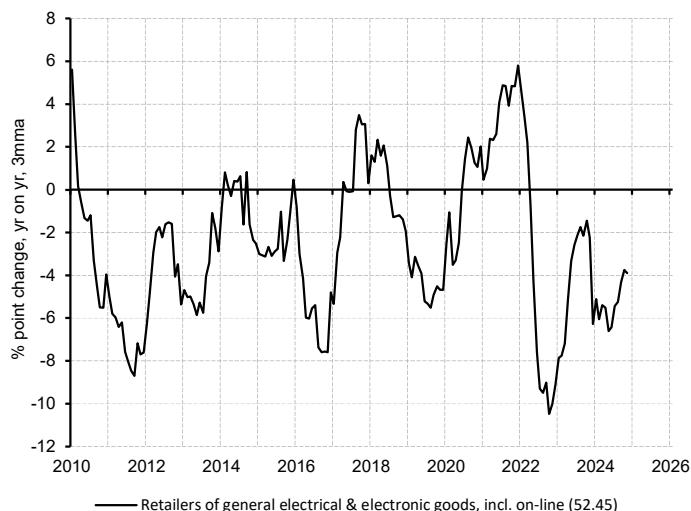


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Retailers of general electrical & electronic goods, incl. on-line -1.2 (-0.2) Retailers of general electrical & electronic goods, incl. on-line -2.6 (-0.7)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

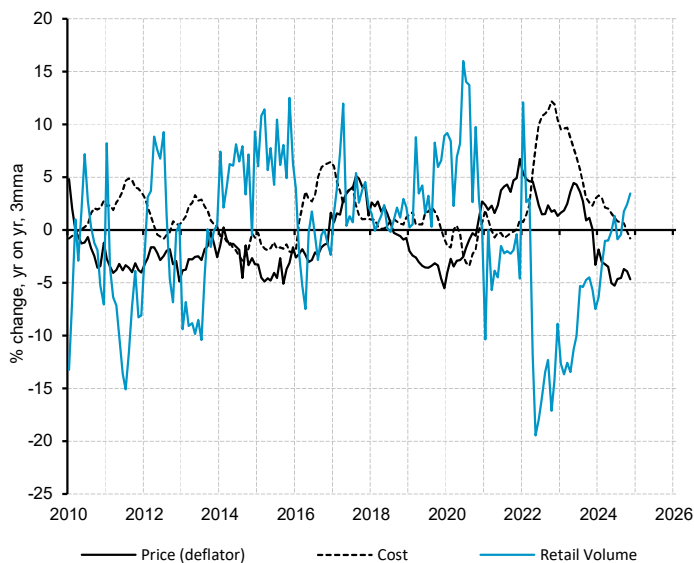
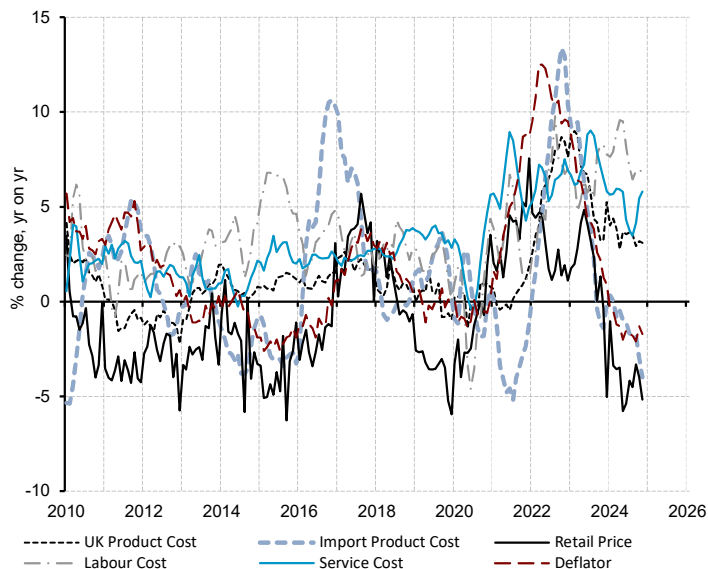


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 14.0%, Bought-in cost 4.0%

Price -0.9 (-0.3)

Cost 1.7 (0.6)

Volume -0.4 (-0.1)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of electrical & electronic goods (52.45+52.48/2)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

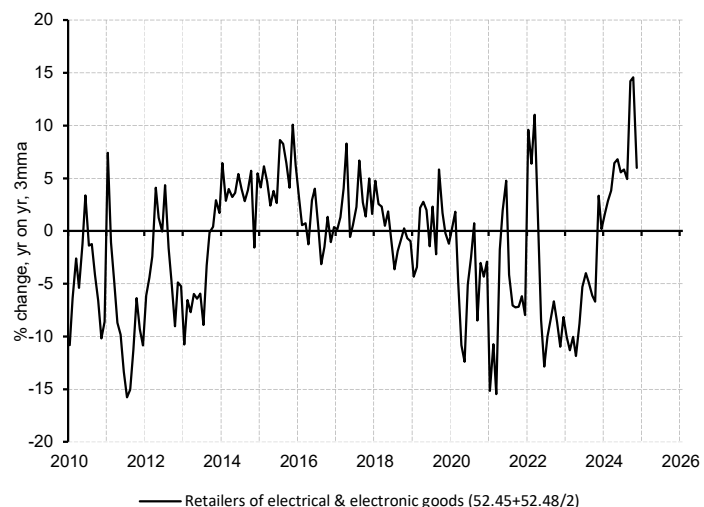
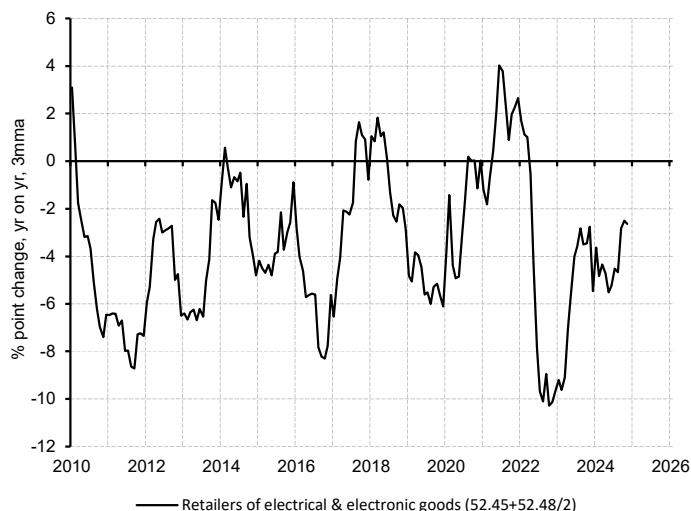


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Retailers of electrical & electronic goods -1.4 (-0.2)

Retailers of electrical & electronic goods -3.6 (-1.2)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

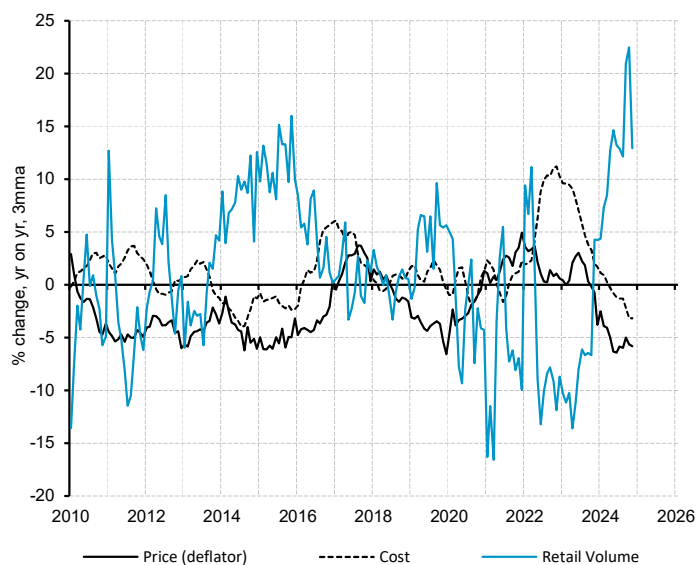
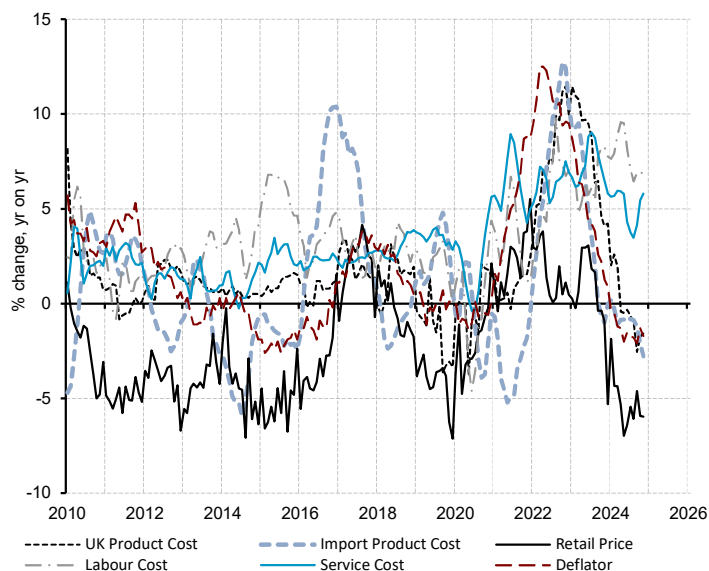


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 14.0%, Bought-in cost 4.0%

Price -2.1 (-0.7)

Cost 1.5 (0.5)

Volume 1.1 (0.1)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of DIY & building materials (52.46/1)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

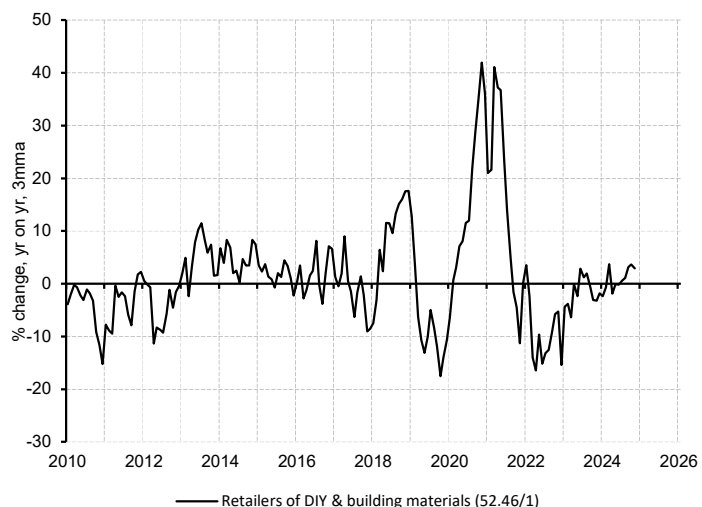
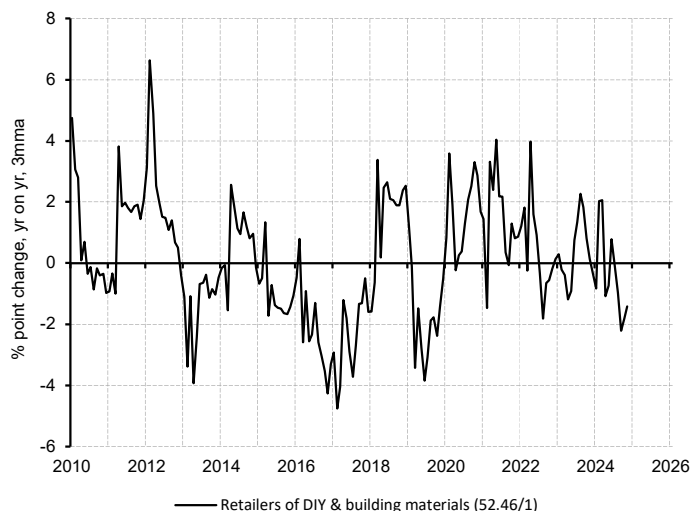


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of DIY & building materials 1.5 (0.1)

Retailers of DIY & building materials 0.1 (0.0)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

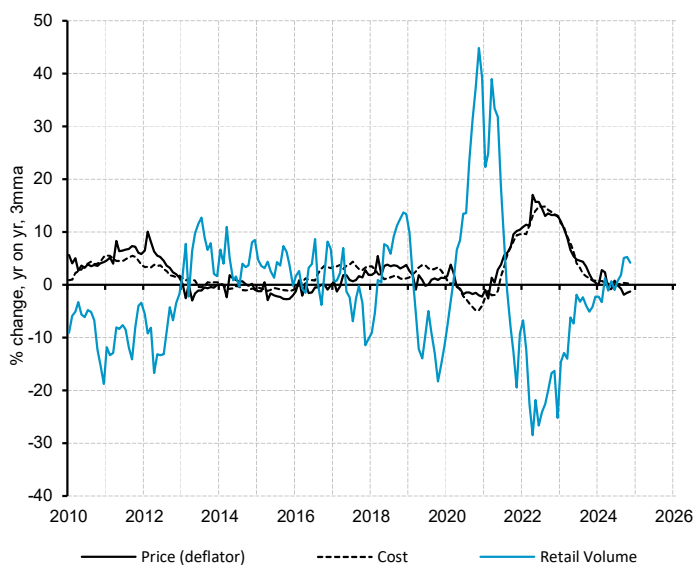
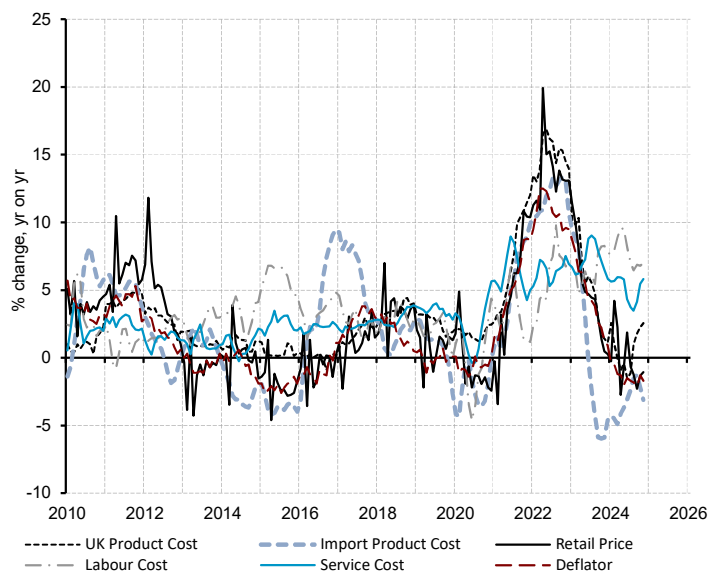


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 30.0%, Imported Material cost 35.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 4.0%

Price 2.7 (0.6)
Cost 2.6 (0.7)
Volume -0.8 (-0.1)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Garden centres & retailers of pet foods & products (52.46/2)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

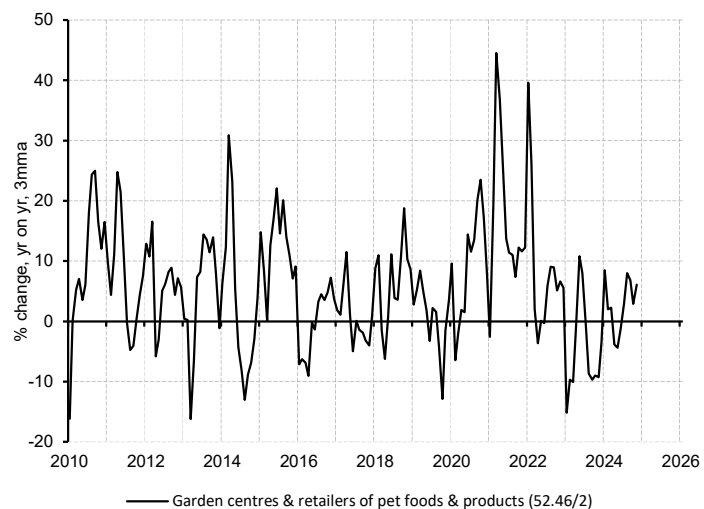
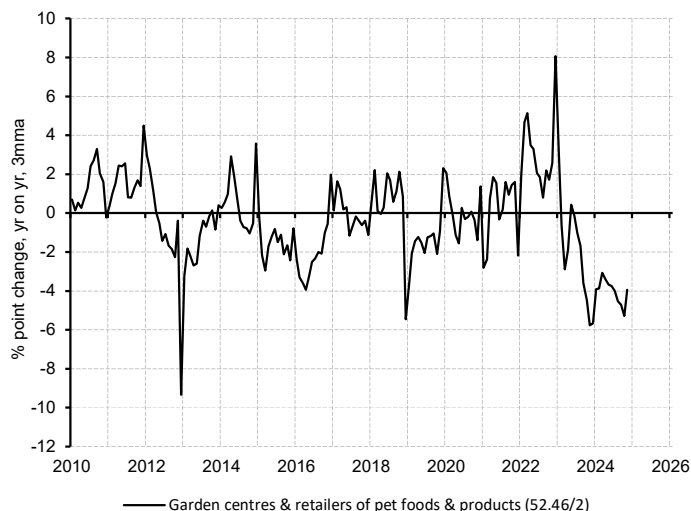


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
 Garden centres & retailers of pet foods & products 5.6 (0.6)

Garden centres & retailers of pet foods & products -0.4 (-0.2)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

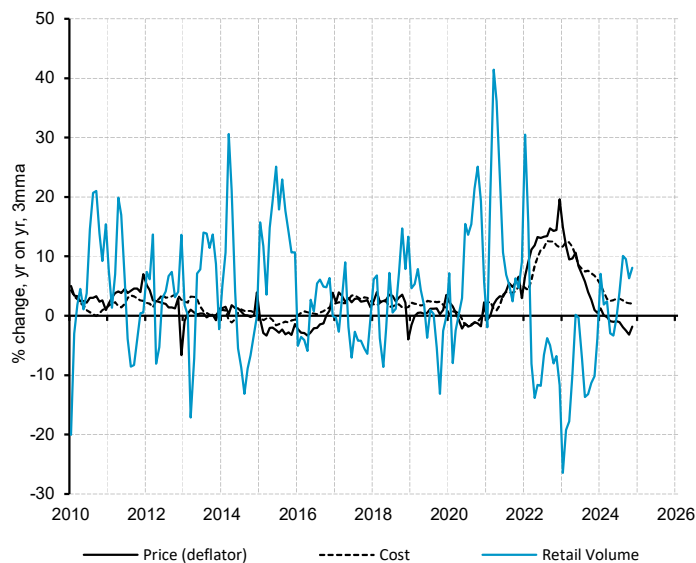
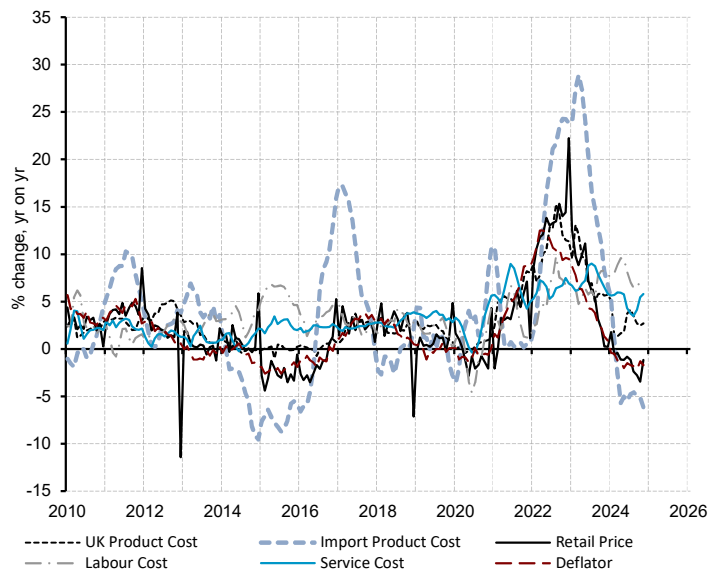


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 60.0%, Imported Material cost 5.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 2.3 (0.5)
 Cost 2.6 (0.8)
 Volume 3.5 (0.3)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of books, newspapers & periodicals (52.47)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

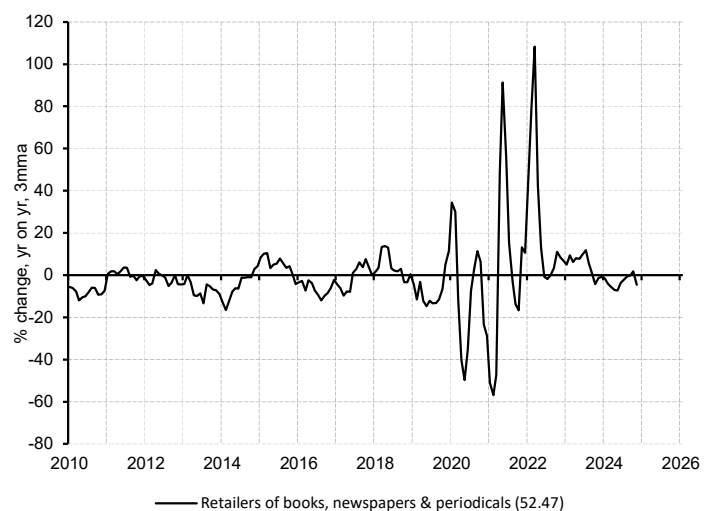
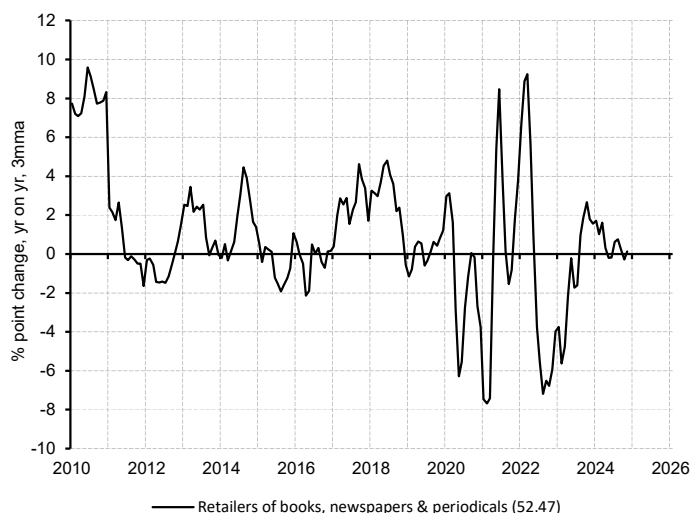


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of books, newspapers & periodicals -0.3 (0.0)

Retailers of books, newspapers & periodicals 0.9 (0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

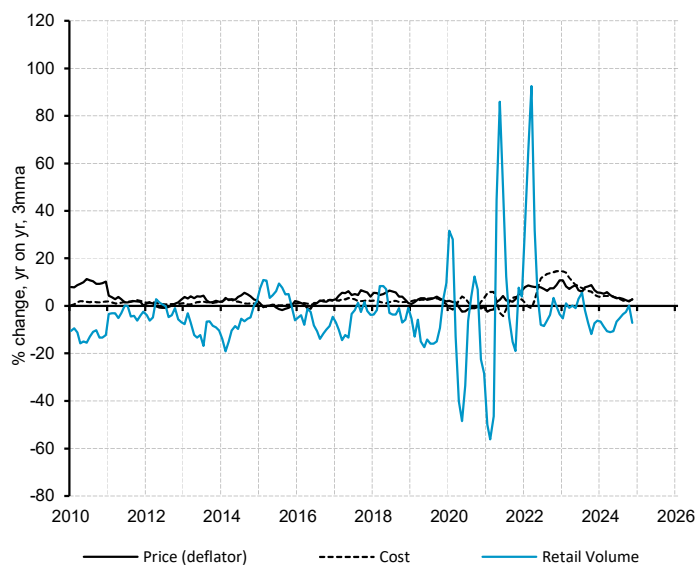
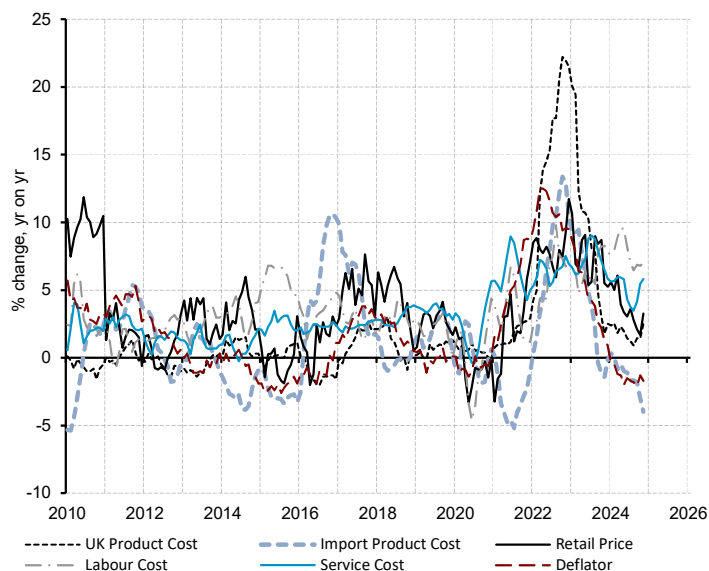


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 45.0%, Imported Material cost 11.0%, Transport cost 11.0%, Labour cost 16.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 3.5 (1.1)
Cost 2.6 (0.8)
Volume -3.6 (-0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of floor coverings (52.48/1)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

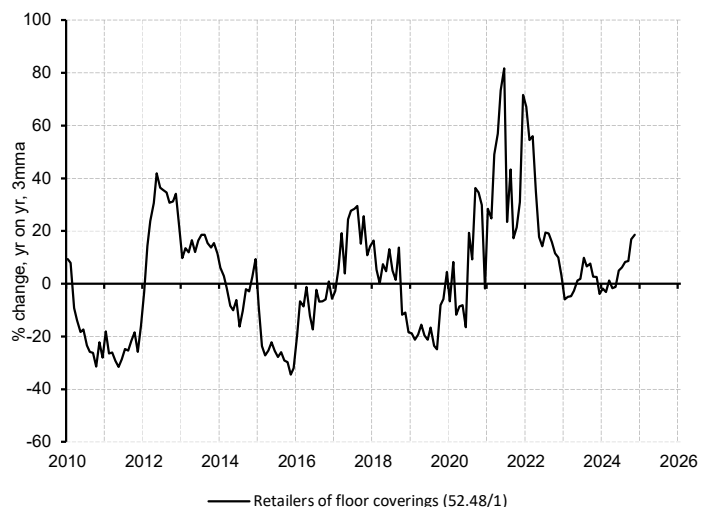
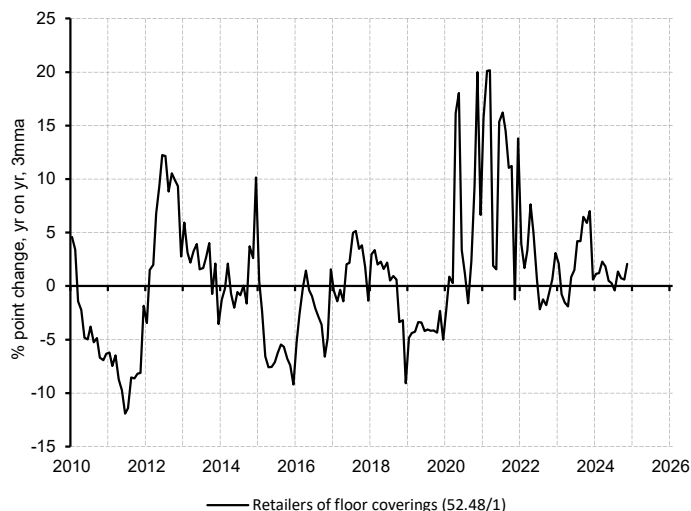


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of floor coverings 3.4 (0.1)

Retailers of floor coverings 0.7 (0.1)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

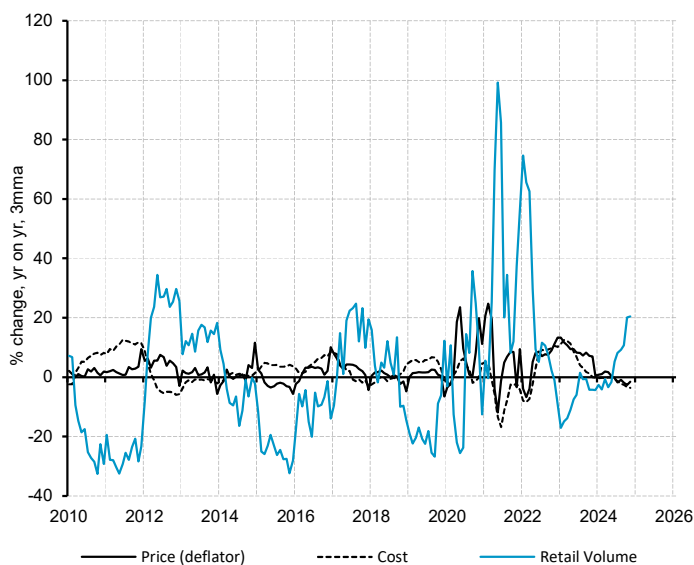
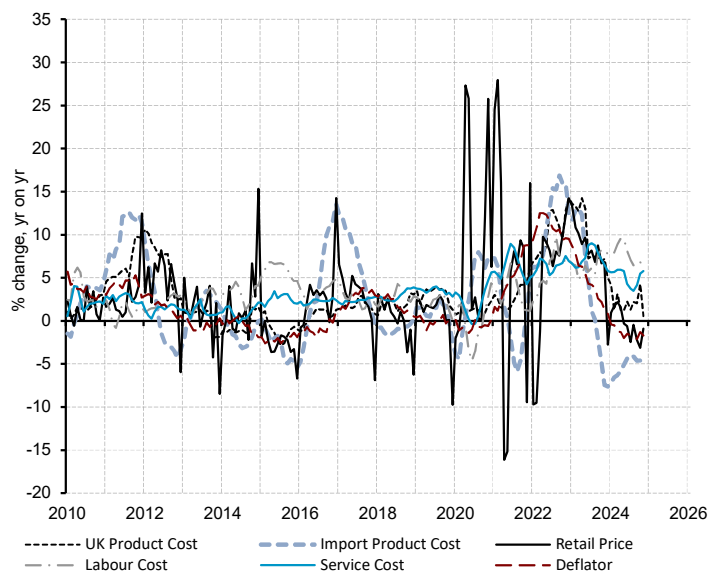


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 45.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 2.9 (0.5)

Cost 2.2 (0.4)

Volume 0.7 (0.0)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of phones & computers (52.48/2)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

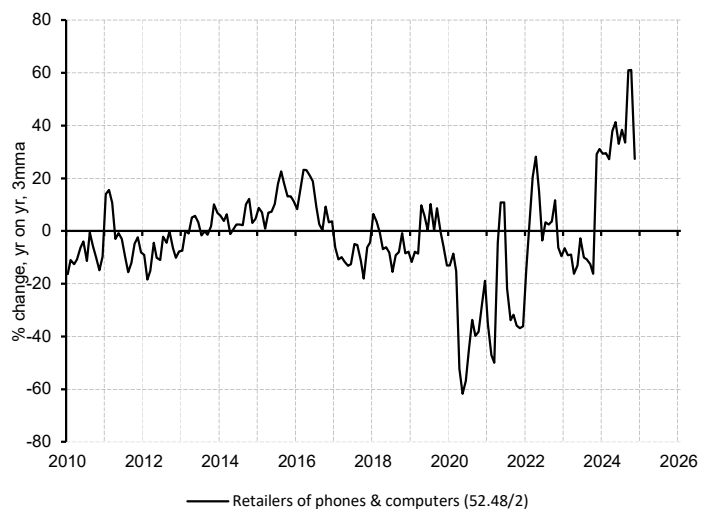
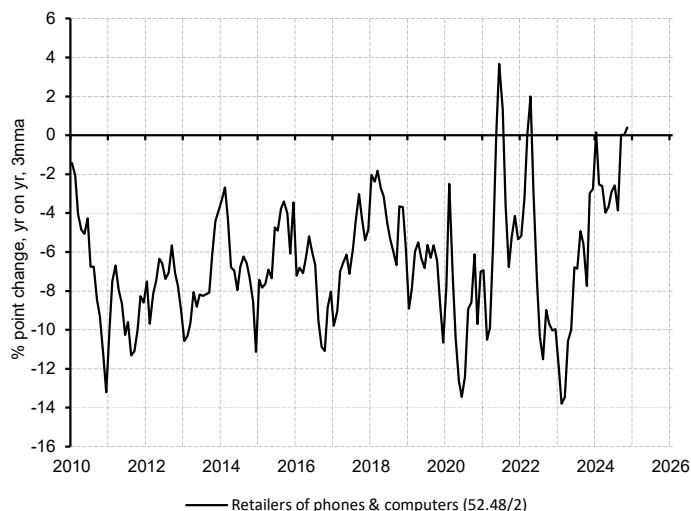


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
 Retailers of phones & computers -2.1 (-0.1)

Retailers of phones & computers -6.6 (-2.1)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

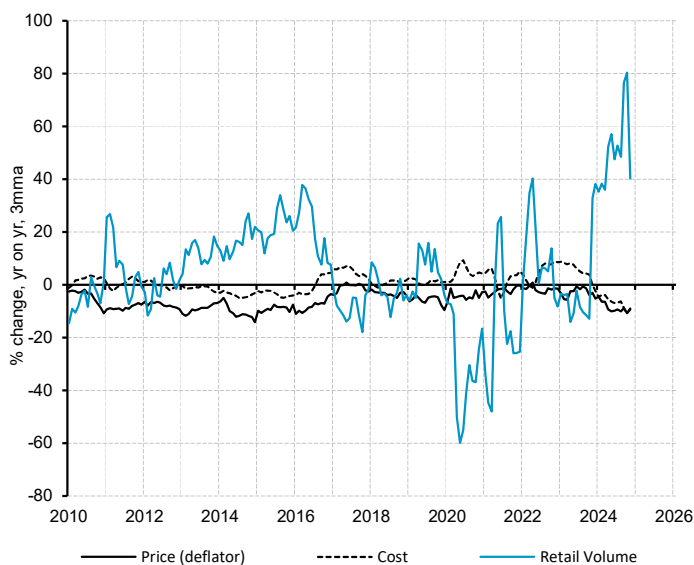
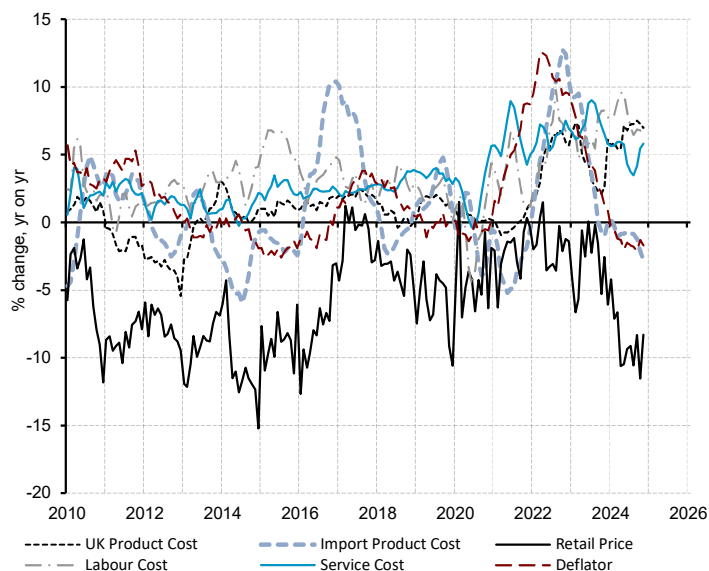


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 10.0%, Imported Material cost 50.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 14.0%, Bought-in cost 4.0%

Price -5.8 (-1.7)

Cost 0.8 (0.2)

Volume 5.2 (0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Other specialist retailers NES (52.48/3)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

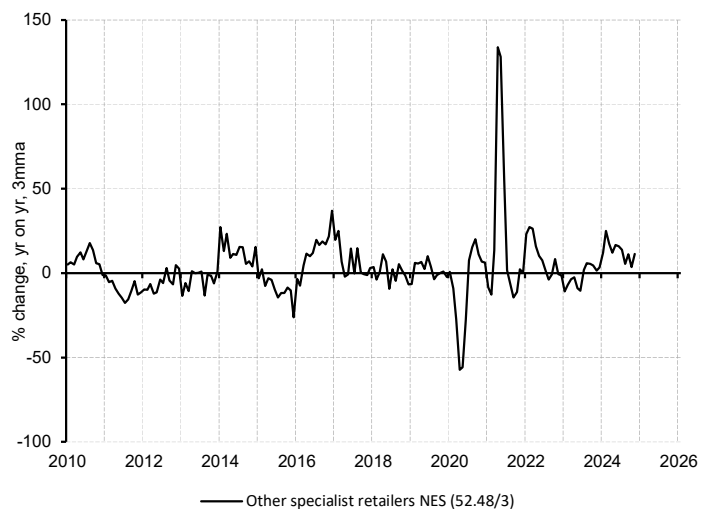
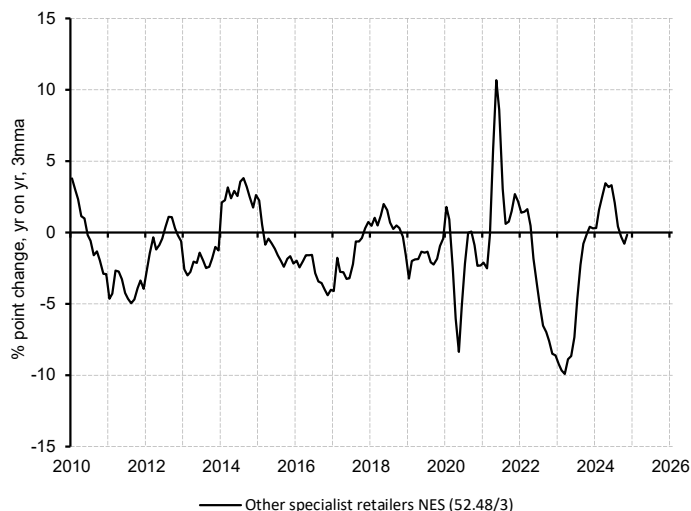


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Other specialist retailers NES 3.4 (0.2)

Other specialist retailers NES -1.2 (-0.4)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

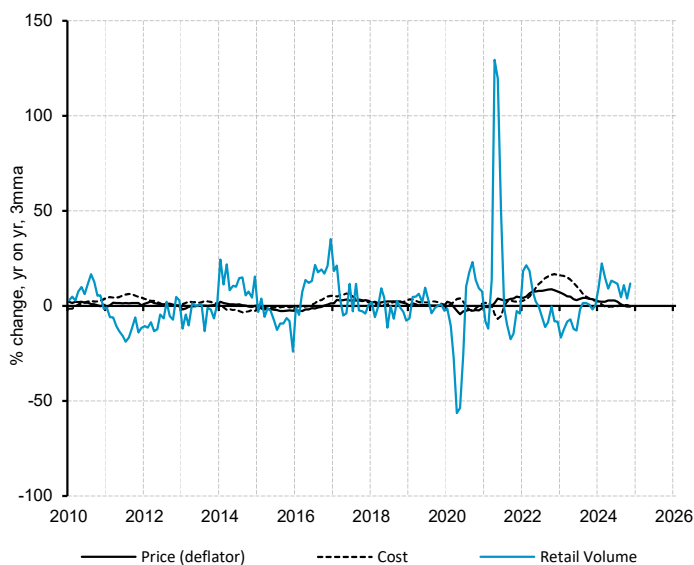
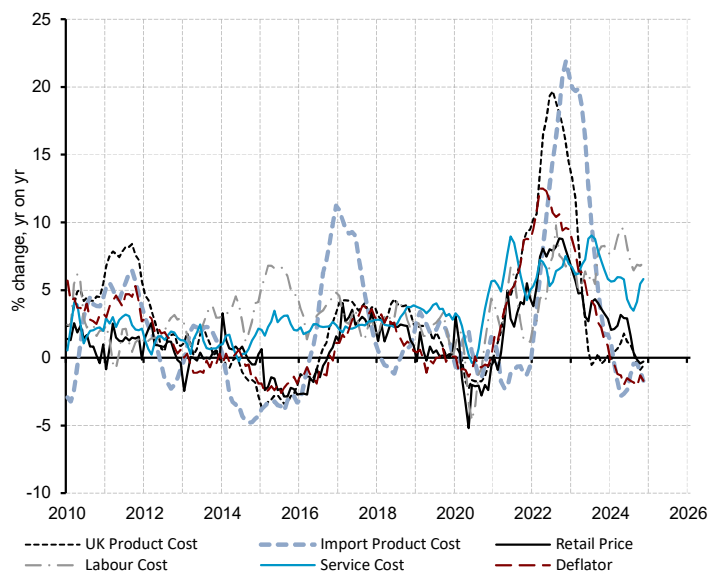


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 12.0%, Imported Material cost 53.0%, Transport cost 8.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.3 (0.5)

Cost 2.5 (0.6)

Volume 1.9 (0.1)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of music & video recordings & equipment (52.48/4)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

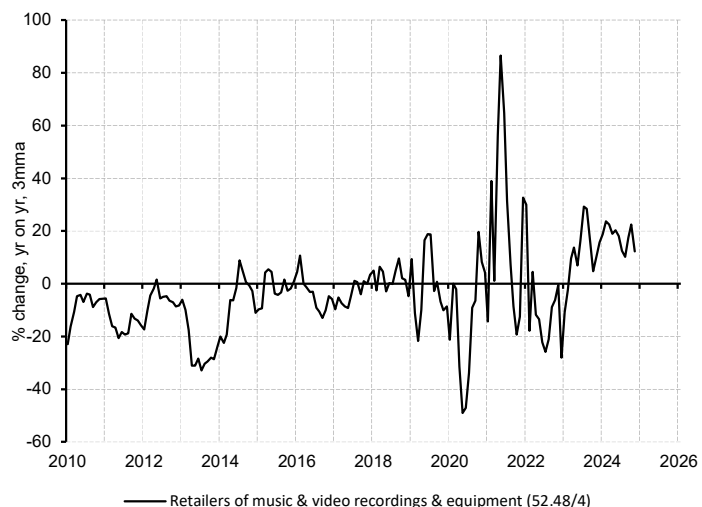
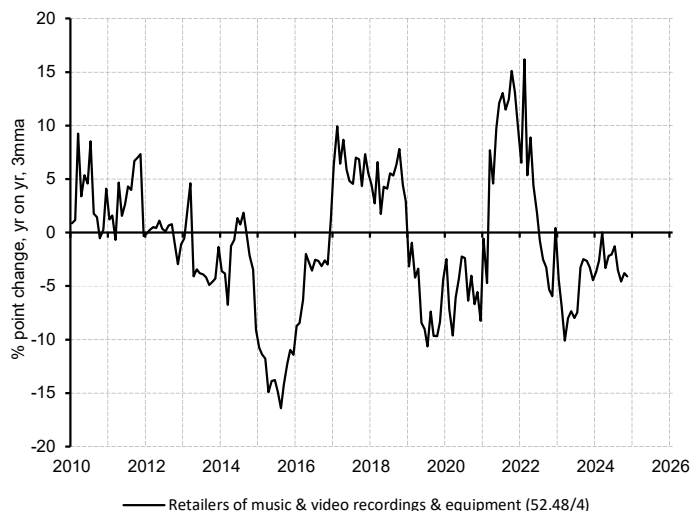


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets

Retailers of music & video recordings & equipment -2.9 (-0.2)

Retailers of music & video recordings & equipment -0.9 (-0.1)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

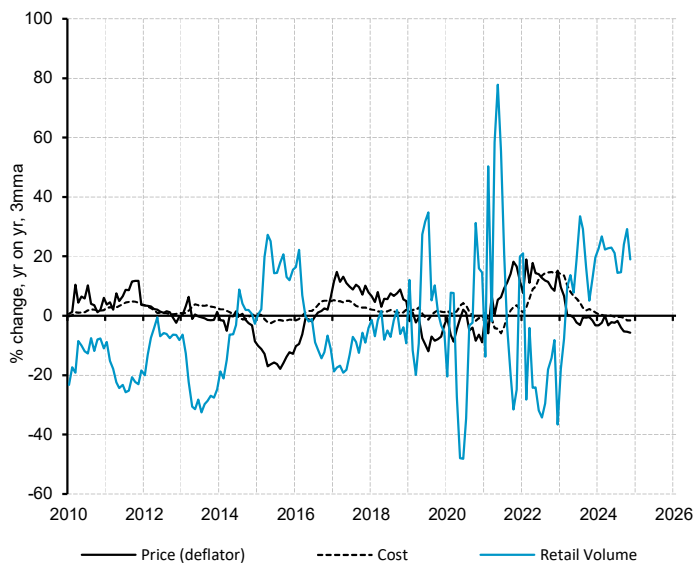
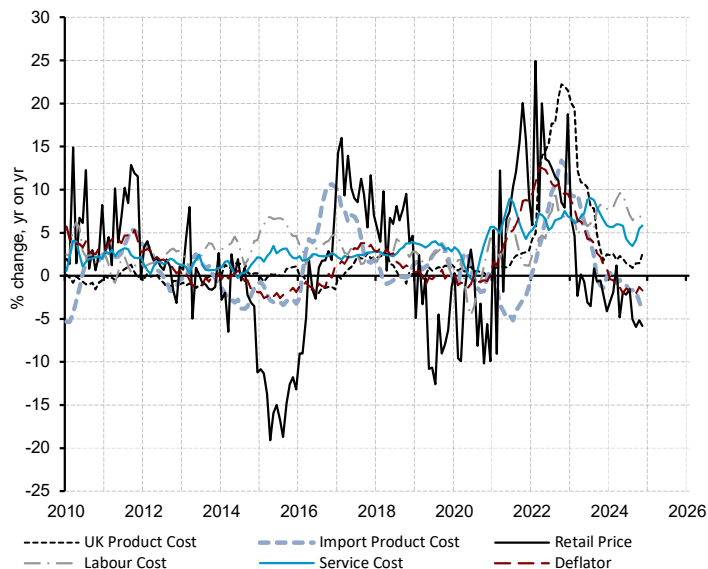


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 30.0%, Imported Material cost 35.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.4 (0.2)

Cost 2.3 (0.6)

Volume -3.3 (-0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of jewellery & watches (52.48/5)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

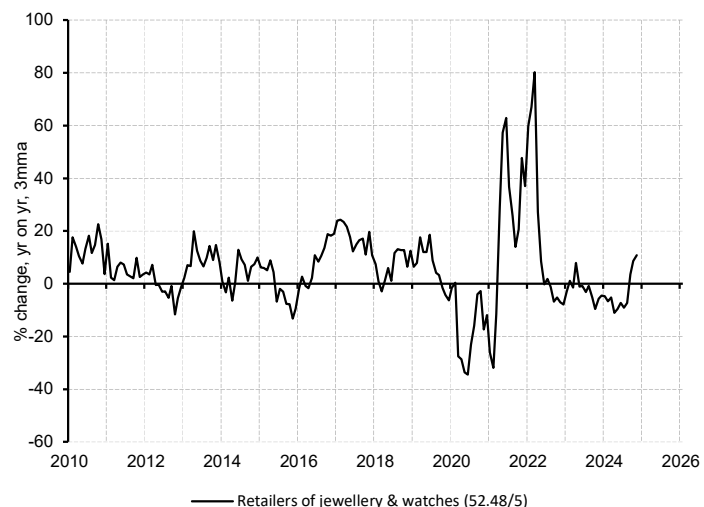
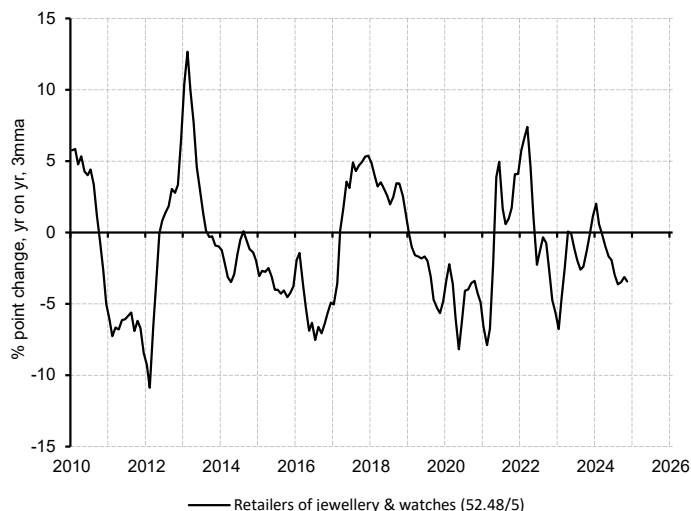


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of jewellery & watches 5.8 (0.4)

Retailers of jewellery & watches -1.1 (-0.3)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

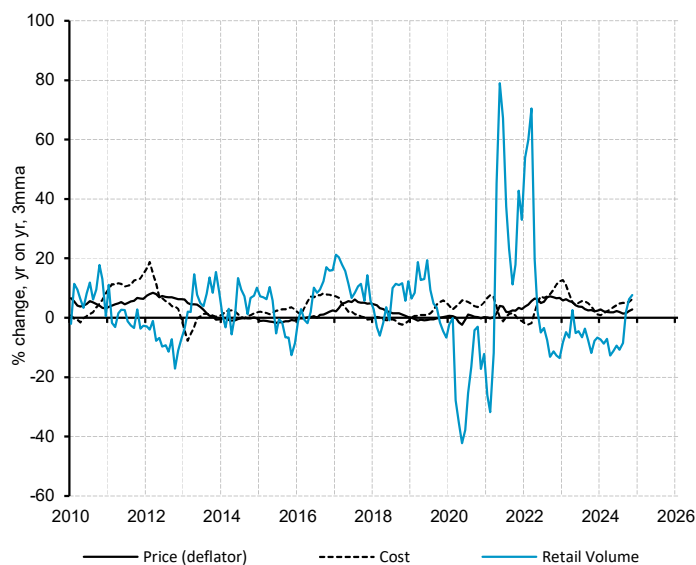
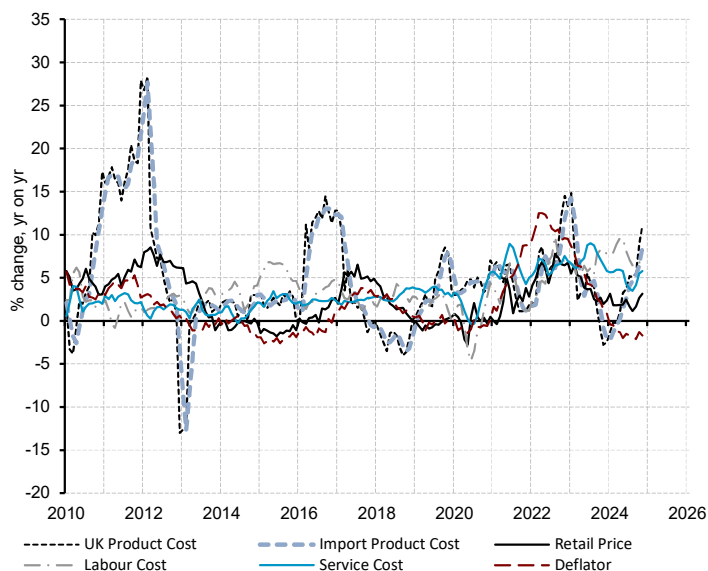


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 5.0%, Imported Material cost 60.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 2.6 (1.0)

Cost 3.7 (0.9)

Volume 3.3 (0.2)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers of sports goods, games & toys (52.48/6)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

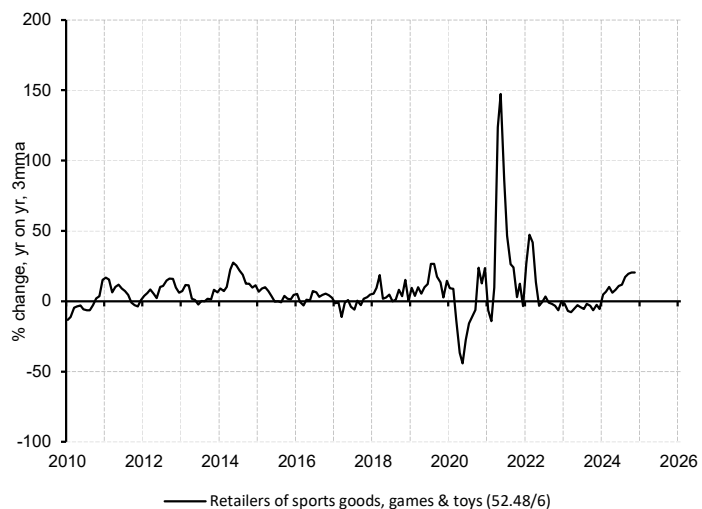
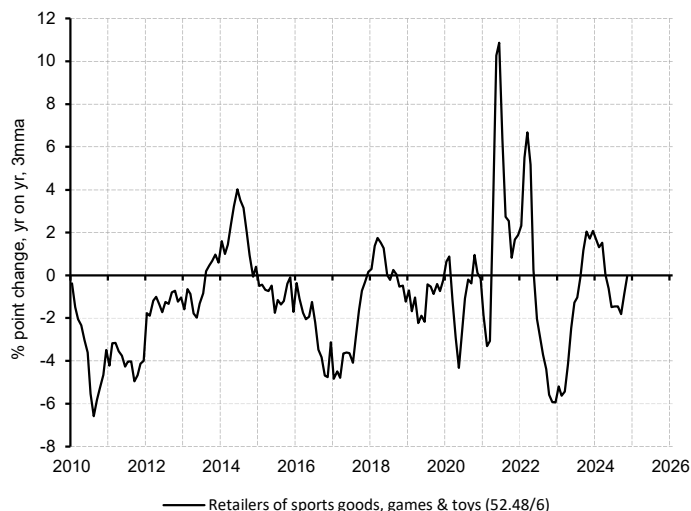


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers of sports goods, games & toys 7.0 (0.4)

Retailers of sports goods, games & toys -1.0 (-0.4)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

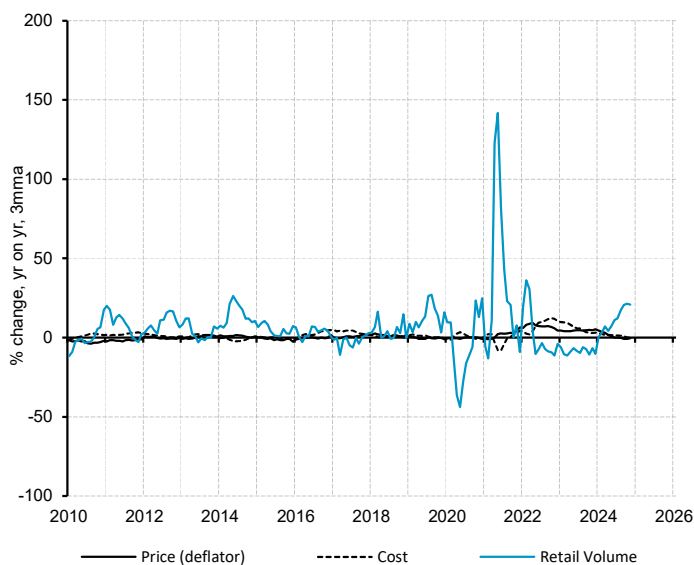
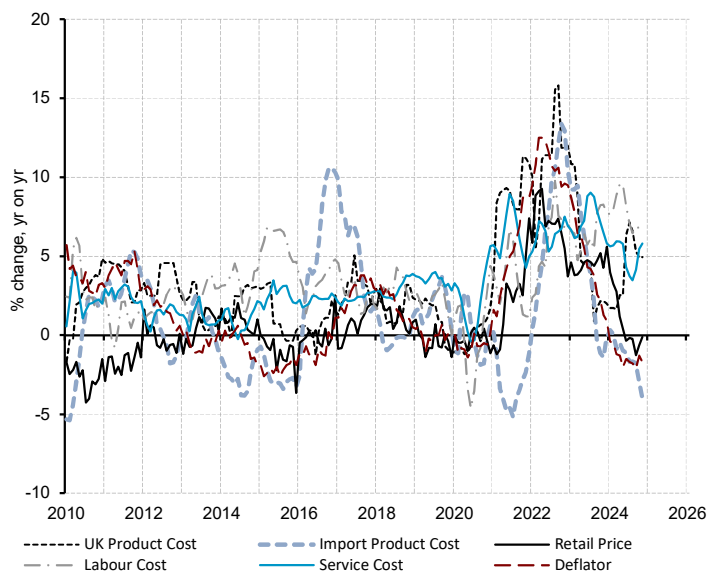


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 30.0%, Imported Material cost 35.0%, Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 0.8 (0.3)

Cost 1.8 (0.6)

Volume 6.2 (0.3)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers with ONLY Internet presense (52.61)

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

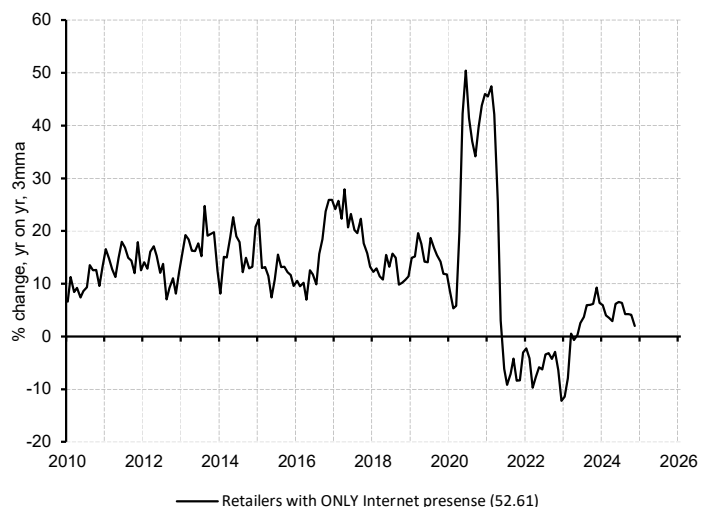
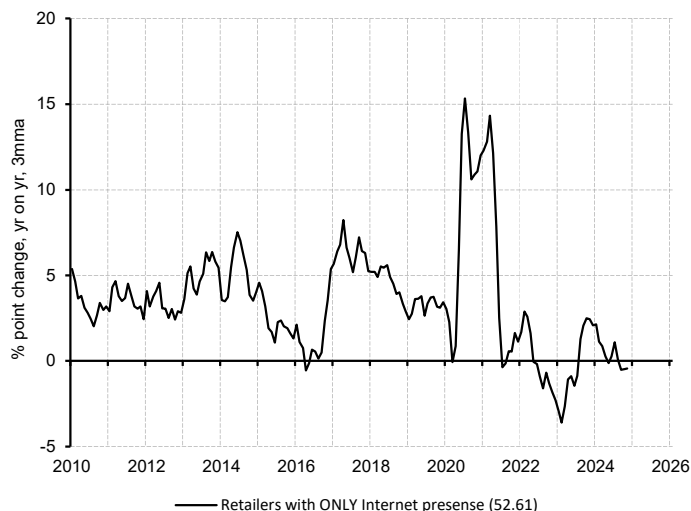


Chart 2. Operating margin



Annual Growth Averages (%) and Inverse Coefficient of variance* in brackets
Retailers with ONLY Internet presense 12.7 (1.1)

Retailers with ONLY Internet presense 3.5 (1.1)

Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

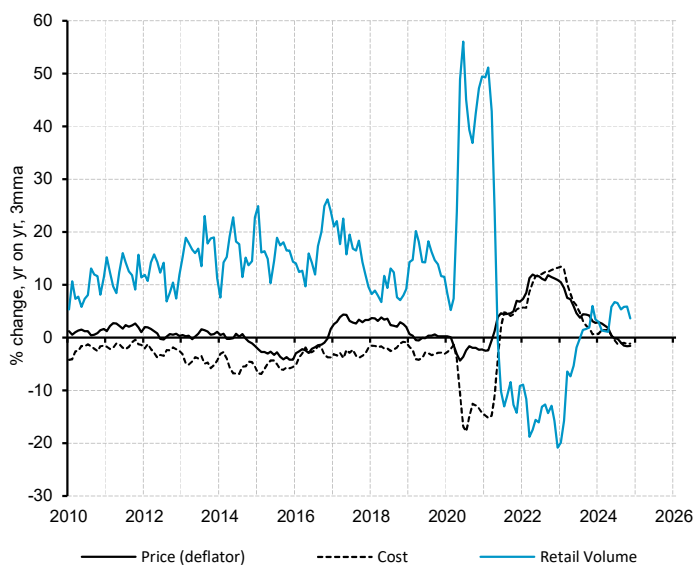
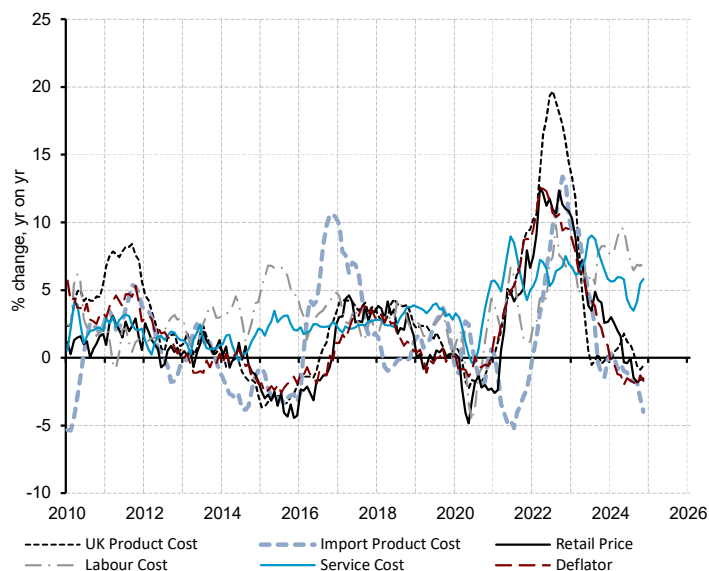


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Weights: Home material cost 5.0%, Imported Material cost 31.0%, Transport cost 12.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

Price 1.6 (0.4)
Cost -1.9 (-0.3)
Volume 11.3 (0.8)

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

UK based Retailers 52

Chart 1. Operating sales, £

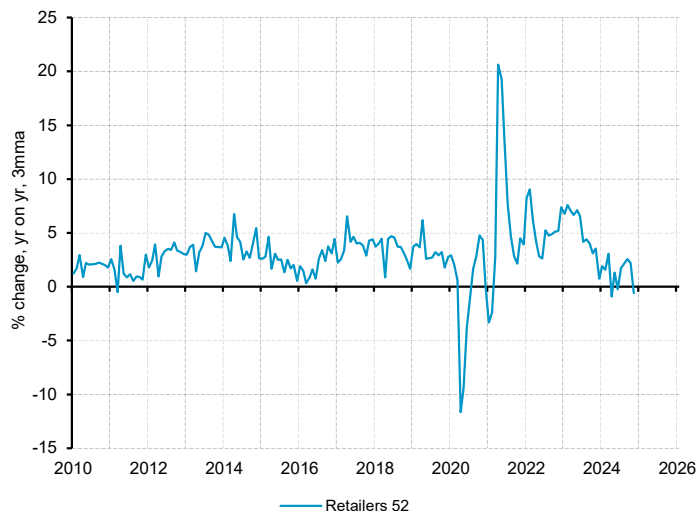


Chart 2. Operating margin

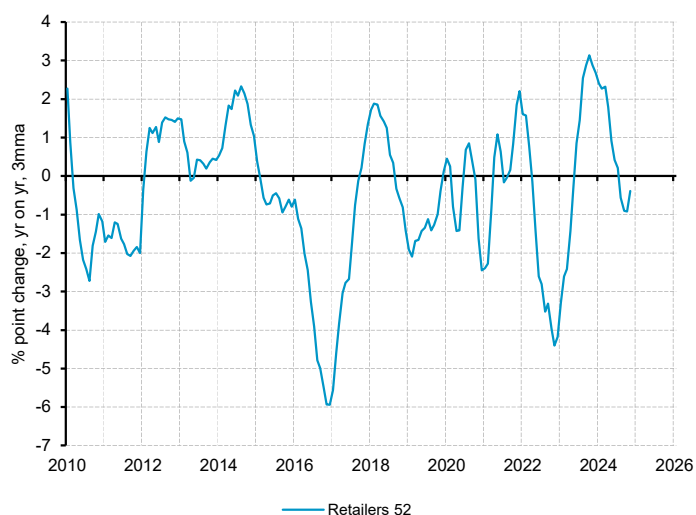


Chart 3. Price, cost & volume

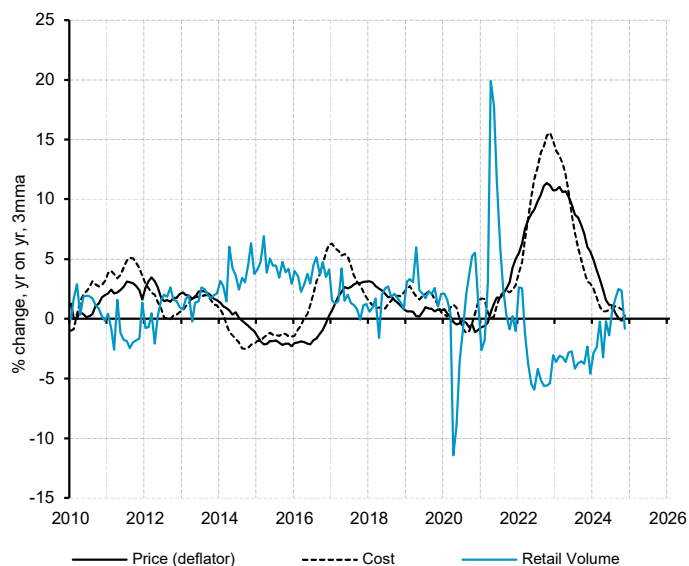
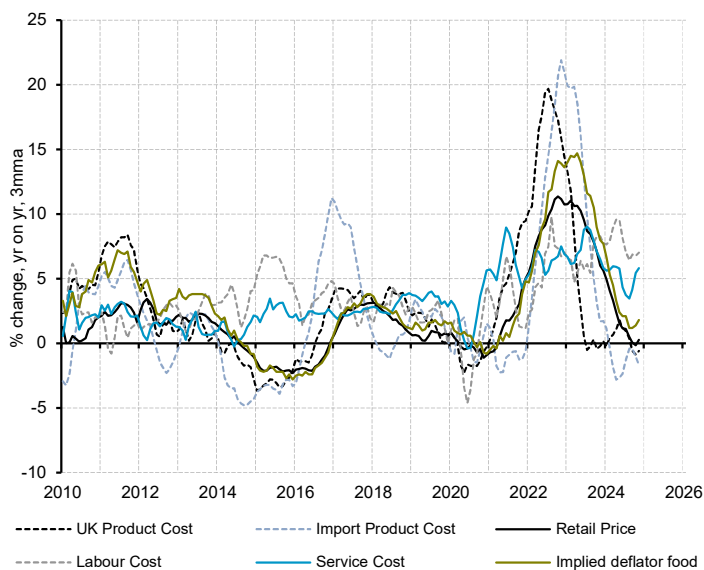


Chart 4. Detailed price & cost dynamics



Price	2.0 (0.6)
Cost	2.5 (0.7)
Volume	1.1 (0.3)

Weights: Home material cost 15.0%, Imported Material cost 45.0%,
Transport cost 6.0%, Labour cost 12.0%, Bought-in cost 8.0%

* Inverse Coefficient of Variance = Mean / Standard Deviation

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