

Provisional statistics of retail sales for June 2021

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (August 2).

The value of total retail sales in June 2021, provisionally estimated at \$28.1 billion, increased by 5.8% compared with the same month in 2020. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in May 2021 increased by 10.4% compared with a year earlier. For the first half of 2021, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales increased by 8.4% compared with the same period in 2020.

Of the total retail sales value in June 2021, online sales accounted for 8.1%. The value of online retail sales in that month, provisionally estimated at \$2.3 billion, increased by 63.8% compared with the same month in 2020. The revised estimate of online retail sales in May 2021 increased by 52.9% compared with a year earlier. For the first half of 2021, it was provisionally estimated that the value of online retail sales increased by 54.9% compared with the same period in 2020.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in June 2021 increased by 2.8% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in May 2021 increased by 7.7% compared with a year earlier. For the first half of 2021, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales increased by 7.1% in volume compared with the same period in 2020.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing June 2021 with June 2020, the value of sales of other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified increased by 16.0%. This was followed by sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts (+31.8% in value); wearing apparel (+18.8%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (+10.6%); medicines and cosmetics (+8.9%); motor vehicles and parts (+36.0%); fuels (+5.1%); Chinese drugs and herbs (+10.8%); and books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+6.8%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of commodities in supermarkets decreased by 7.0% in June 2021 over a year earlier. This was followed by sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (-1.6% in value); commodities in department stores (-20.3%); furniture and fixtures (-3.6%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (-1.8%); and optical shops (-2.7%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales increased by 3.3% in the second quarter of 2021 compared with the preceding quarter, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales increased by 3.6%.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics. Starting from January 2020, data on online retail sales have been collected in MRS. The relevant results were first published in the January 2021 issue of the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales".

The retail sales statistics cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that retail sales continued to increase in June over a year earlier as consumption demand revived further alongside the stable local epidemic and improved labour market situations. For the second quarter as a whole, retail sales volume grew by 3.6% over the preceding quarter after seasonal adjustment. Yet with incoming visitors remaining scant, retail sales stayed far below the pre-recession level.

Looking ahead, the spokesman pointed out that the Consumption Voucher Scheme will help stimulate local consumer sentiment and provide support to the retail sector. To create conditions for further improvement in retail business and a broader based economic recovery, it is essential for the community to keep the epidemic under control and strive towards more widespread vaccination.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for May 2021 as well as the provisional figures for June 2021. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first half of 2021 are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on value of online retail sales for May 2021 as well as the provisional figures for June 2021. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first half of 2021 are also shown.

Table 3 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for May 2021 as well as the provisional figures for June 2021. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first half of 2021 are also shown.

Table 4 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080003&scode=530). Alternatively, the historical series of retail sales statistics can be downloaded in the form of a statistical table at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=D5600089&scode=530).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; email: mrs@censtatd.gov.hk).