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Weathering the storm at home: AIB Spend Trend reveals 18% increase in spending on homewares in August

- **Mixed picture for hospitality sector: spend up slightly in hotels and restaurants but down slightly in pubs**
 - **People from Westmeath buck the trend, with pub spend up 17%**
 - **Spending decreased most in the airline travel sector (-5%)**
- **Online spending increased 15% year on year; charity spending increased 14% year on year**

Summer spending recovered slightly last month despite the continued bad weather, according to the AIB August Spend Trend. Overall spending rose by 1%, and in a month that saw Storms Antoni and Betty, flash floods and fallen trees, many people chose to stay home and avoid the inclement weather, with spending on homewares up 18%, the biggest increase across all sectors analysed.

There was mixed fortune in spending across the hospitality sector, following a decline in July. Spend in hotels and restaurants was up 2% and 1% respectively in August, however, it fell slightly in pubs (-1%), during what would traditionally be a busy month.

Spending in pubs by people from Monaghan fell most (-7%) but Westmeath bucked the trend, with pub spending by people from the county up 17%. People from Mayo had the biggest increase in spend in hotels (+13%), while people from Louth had the biggest decrease (-8%). Spending in restaurants increased most among people from Roscommon (+4%) and decreased most among people from Limerick (-2%). Year on year spend in restaurants is up 10%.

Spend on groceries is unchanged in the month, however it is up 5% year on year, in line with inflation. Charity spend increased 14% year on year, spend in department stores increased 26% in the year while spend on utilities only rose 2% in the year, despite rising energy costs. Online spending increased 15% year on year.

The monthly data was compiled from 70 million debit and credit card transactions in store and online during August 2023 and has been anonymised and aggregated. Data provided by AIB features one of the most comprehensive and accurate data sets on consumer spending in Ireland.

Spend Trend August 2023 (all data points compared to the previous month, unless otherwise stated).

- Overall average daily spending increased 1%.
- Spending increased most among people from Clare (+3%).
- The biggest decrease in spending was among 25 to 34-year-olds (-2%).

- Online spending decreased slightly (-1%), while there were increases for spend via digital wallet (+3%), chip and pin (+2%) and contactless (+1%). Despite the slight decrease in August, online spending increased 15% year on year.
- Spending across all sectors analysed: homeware (+18%), health and beauty (+4%), hotels (+2%), clothing, restaurants, electronics (+1%), groceries and hardware (unchanged), pubs (-1%) airline travel (-5%).
- Sligo saw the biggest decrease in spending on airline travel (-14%) followed by neighbouring counties Leitrim (-12%) and Mayo (-11%).

Speaking about the data, John Brennan, Head of SME Banking at AIB said “August was another wet month so it’s no surprise that people were choosing to stay indoors and spend on their homes. While spending increased slightly for hotels and restaurants in the month, it was down slightly for pubs, which is disappointing as summer is traditionally a busy time for the sector. Spending in restaurants rose 15% in the year which is a good indicator and demonstrates an upward trend for the sector. It’s also interesting to note the differences in spend across different parts of the country, for example people from Westmeath had an increase in pub spending of 17%, despite the sector being down overall. These insights are vital for businesses, to help them plan accordingly and grow their business.”

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