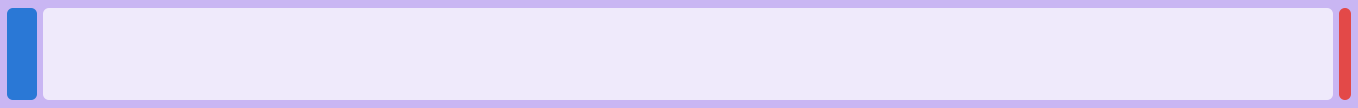
The real Black Friday 2026

We began recording prices on 9 October. Here's what moved before the sale at 70 shops selling online to the UK.



4,872 CUT

209,800 NO CHANGE OF 5% AND £1

1,883 UP



THE SHORT VERSION

The report on one page

A “was” price set us counting. Here’s what we found in the first fifteen days.

Why we count

A sale tag gives you a “was” price, but it can’t show you what the product cost before. So twice a day we read the product feeds of the shops we follow, recording every change. This run-up count uses prices shops actually charged, never their own “was” prices or RRPs.

Our test for a deal

That record gives us a simple test: a Black Friday deal is real when its sale price is the lowest we’ve recorded for that product since we started. We began on 9 October 2026. “Lowest we’ve recorded” means just that, not lowest ever.

The first price moves

Then the first changes came in. Between 9 and 24 October, 1,883 of the 216,555 products we compared rose by at least 5% and £1, then stayed higher for at least a day. 4,872 fell by the same margin. The other 209,800 didn’t move that much.

Shops in the count

Those figures come from 70 shops selling online to the UK. Beauty, books, clothing, toys and appliances lead. Most were added from 18 October, so their record is days old. This is our panel, not the whole market.

The next count

Next comes the sale window on 2 November. From then, our price check counts how many sale prices are the lowest we’ve recorded, and how many we had seen cheaper in the run-up. The final edition follows after Cyber Monday.

THE RUN-UP SO FAR

9 TO 24 OCTOBER 2026

216,555

products compared, at 70 shops selling online to the UK

0.9%

went up by at least 5% and £1 (1,883 products)

2.2%

were cut by at least 5% and £1 (4,872 products)

15

days of record since our first price, not a full 30; most shops joined later

WHY COUNT IT

Behind a “was” price

A crossed-out “was” price can make a saving feel settled at the basket. Whether it misleads is judged case by case, and the rules may change again.

The old price is crossed out and the new one sits beside it. The saving looks satisfyingly precise. But it all rests on that first number, supplied by the seller. You can’t easily tell whether people paid that “was” price last month, or whether the product wore it briefly, long ago. The doubt follows you to checkout.

That’s where we started: with a price you could check. We kept our own day-by-day record of what each product actually cost at the shops we follow, instead of leaning on the seller’s reference price.

The law as it stands

UK consumer law already bans misleading prices. Since April 2025, the Competition and Markets Authority can enforce that directly under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024. A “was/now” price is generally unlawful only when it’s shown to mislead the average shopper, decided case by case[1].

That question reached the High Court on 30 July 2026, when it gave judgment in the CMA’s case against Emma Sleep. The CMA had asked for a fixed 1:2 ratio: for every two products sold at the lower price, one sold at the higher “was” price. The court declined to impose it. It upheld breaches Emma had admitted, but declined to make wider findings[2,3,4]. Lawyers report that the CMA has since withdrawn the guidance built on the ratio[5].

What may change

That may not be the last word. In August the government said it would consult this autumn on adding fake “was” prices, invented discounts and misleading recommended retail prices to the Act’s list of practices banned in every case. That would remove the need to prove each one misleads[6,7]. As of 24 October 2026, we hadn’t seen the consultation open.

Where this report fits

For now, we stay with the prices. We count which ones moved before the sale, which way, and, once it opens, whether a sale price is the lowest we’ve recorded. Nothing here judges a shop’s compliance or says a seller broke the law.

METHOD

How we count

A price shifts in a shop's feed. Our live check on vouchernaut.com follows the same rules and recounts every few minutes.

Where prices come from	We start with shops' own product feeds, read twice a day through our affiliate networks. When a product's price changes, we note the new price and when we saw it.
A product's price	Between changes, the last price we saw stays in our record. It holds until the next change, or until the shop drops that option from its feed. Where a product has several options, we use the cheapest option's price.
What counts as a product	Before a product can join the count, it must be listed now, or waiting for our check before we list it, not marked out of stock, priced in pounds, and in our record before the day of the count. If its cheapest option is out of stock, we leave it out: a sold-out size never reads as a price change.
A rise or a fall	Our price-drop alert rule sets the bar: at least 5% and at least £1 of the earlier price. A product with several options is compared on the options listed at both moments we compare, so a shop adding a cheaper option or dropping its cheapest is never a fall or a rise. A product with no option listed at both isn't compared. A rise counts only after the new price holds for a whole day. We leave out rises of more than three times as likely feed errors.
The run-up	Normally, we look back up to 30 days before the sale. Here we can look only from our first price, on 9 October, to 24 October: 15 days. A shop that joins later counts from its first price with us. We compare where each product started and ended. If it came back to its starting price, we don't count a move.
The sale	When the Black Friday hub's sale window opens on 2 November, we start another check. A product counts as falling in the sale when its lowest sale price is at least 5% and £1 below its opening price. Then we ask whether that low beat every price in our record and whether the product had been cheaper in the run-up.
A real deal	A sale price that is the lowest we've recorded for that product since we started recording it.
Not counted	Outside the count sit out-of-stock products, removed products, prices in other currencies, delivery costs and discount codes. Shops' own "was" prices and RRPs never enter it.

WHAT OUR RECORD CAN'T TELL YOU

Our record begins with the first price we receive from a shop's feed. Anything before 9 October 2026, or before that shop joined, is beyond it. So "lowest we've recorded" does not mean "lowest it has ever been".

THE PANEL

What we track

We began in the gift aisle. By 24 October 2026, our count reached 217,525 products at 70 shops selling online to the UK, led by beauty, books, clothing and toys.

We started with the gift shops we list on Vouchernaut, reading the product feeds they publish through our affiliate networks. On 18 October, that meant 8,838 products at 30 shops. We've since added shops for this study, some before we list them, across beauty, fashion, books, toys, appliances and electricals. Amazon, Argos, Currys and John Lewis aren't in the panel.

Each shop's clock starts when its feed first reaches us. For most products here, that makes the run-up days long, not weeks. By 2 November, when the sale opens, every shop in the panel will have at least a week of record. The final edition lists the panel it covers.

The largest shops

Joybuy	24,618
Bookshop.org	22,674
Stylevana	19,250
LOOKFANTASTIC	16,308
The Range	13,385
Perfume Click	10,983
boohoo.com	9,346
MyBeauty.Boutique	8,893

The largest kinds of product

Beauty and pamper	67,737
Books	33,819
Clothing and shoes	30,157
Toys and games	16,823
Appliances	14,024
Hampers and food	5,609
Home and decor	5,544
Pets	5,296

WHY THE PANEL MATTERS

That uneven panel is why a percentage needs its setting. "0.9% went up" describes these shops and products, not UK retail as a whole. The eight largest shops hold 58% of the products compared, so we count by shop too.

FIGURE 3.1 Products compared on 24 October 2026 at 70 shops: the eight largest shops and kinds. We group kinds by each product's feed category and title.

FINDINGS · 9 TO 24 OCTOBER 2026

The run-up so far

Some hair masks and body oils at one beauty shop doubled in price or more. Almost everything else saw no change of 5% and £1 to 24 October. Rises gathered in a few shops; cuts spread more widely.



4,872 cut (2.2%) **209,800** no change of 5% and £1 (96.9%) **1,883** up (0.9%)

FIGURE 4.1 We compared 216,555 products from 9 October, or the day we first saw each one, to 24 October 2026.

Fifteen days is all we have, and for most shops only a few. Even so, the rises had a pattern. Of the 1,883 rises, 1,315 came from two shops. New Look had 519, about one in ten of the products we compared there. LOOKFANTASTIC had 796, including every rise in Figure 4.3: an Aromatherapy Associates bath and shower oil went from £32.50 to £65, and two Garnier hair mask duos from £7.99 to £17.98.

Those October rises leave the next question open. We don't know why any price moved, and a rise tells us nothing by itself about a later sale. Once the sale opens, we can check whether a Black Friday price sits below what the product cost in these weeks, or only below its higher price after a rise.

Cuts were spread more widely, with 1,353 at LOOKFANTASTIC, 1,094 at Stylevana, 767 at Joybuy and smaller numbers elsewhere. But don't put much weight on cuts outnumbering rises yet. We count a cut on the day we see it; a rise has to hold for a day, and most of the panel is only days old.

SHOP	COMPARED	UP	CUT
LOOKFANTASTIC	16,308	796	1,353
New Look	4,781	519	46
Boots Kitchen Appliances	4,860	149	258
Marks & Spencer	7,765	146	342
Not On The High Street	1,852	83	41

FIGURE 4.2 These five shops had the most rises among those with 20 or more products compared.

BIGGEST RISES	WAS	NOW	RISE
Garnier Ultimate Blends 3-in-1 Hair Mask Duo (two kinds) LOOKFANTASTIC	£7.99	£17.98	+125%
Garnier Hair Food Multi-Use Mask 400ml (two kinds) LOOKFANTASTIC	£4	£8.99	+125%
Aromatherapy Associates De-Stress Muscle Bath & Shower Oil (55ml) LOOKFANTASTIC	£32.50	£65	+100%
Aromatherapy Associates Relax Body and Massage Oil LOOKFANTASTIC	£31	£62	+100%
L'Oréal Paris Elvive Bond Repair Full Routine Bundle LOOKFANTASTIC	£29.98	£59.96	+100%

FIGURE 4.3 The largest rises to 24 October as a share of the earlier price, with prices as the shop listed them.

FOR SHOPPERS

How to check a deal yourself

Pause at the sale tag: five checks, with or without our record.

01 **Look the product up**

Find your product on vouchernaut.com/black-friday/price-check, under “Is this a real deal?”. If we track it, you’ll see every price we’ve recorded and a one-line verdict: the lowest we’ve recorded, close to it, or cheaper on a given day.

02 **Compare earlier dates**

Then look back three or four weeks, beyond the shop’s “was” price. A comparison site’s price history, or an earlier screenshot of your own, gives you more to go on than a reference price.

03 **Compare the same thing**

Make sure you’re looking at the same bundle, size or model number as before. Small differences can make prices look comparable when the products aren’t.

04 **Add delivery**

Now add delivery to the basket total. A lower item price can still cost more once a higher delivery charge appears.

05 **Don’t rush for a countdown**

The sale runs for weeks: our Black Friday hub counts it from 2 to 29 November. A clock on the page is a cue to check the price history before deciding.

2 NOVEMBER

The sale window opens. Our live price check starts counting sale prices against the record.

27 NOVEMBER

Black Friday. We recount every few minutes through the day.

EARLY DECEMBER

The final edition counts real sale prices by shop and kind of product.

SOURCES

Sources and data

Every price you've seen in these pages came from Vouchernaut's own record, shown in the live price check on 24 October 2026. For the legal background, we've linked our sources below, including the judgment itself.

1 Osborne Clarke, "Regulatory outlook: consumer law", September 2026 (the DMCC Act 2024 consumer enforcement regime, in force from 6 April 2025). https://www.osborneclarke.com/insights/regulatory-outlook-september-2026-consumer-law

2 Competition and Markets Authority v Emma Matratzen GmbH & Ors [2026] EWHC 1995 (Ch), judgment of Mr Justice Richards, 30 July 2026, paragraphs 4, 118 and 133. https://caselaw.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ewhc/ch/2026/1995

3 TLT, "CMA v Emma Sleep: High Court rejects the CMA's fixed volume requirement for reference pricing", August 2026. https://www.tlt.com/insights-and-events/insight/cma-v-emma-sleep-high-court-rejects-the-cmas-fixed-volume-requirement-for-reference-pricing

4 Lewis Silkin, "Reference prices: Emma Sleep case update: High Court puts CMA's 'blanket' 1:2 volume ratio to bed", 3 August 2026. https://www.lewissilkin.com/insights/2026/08/03/uk-consumer-law-revolution-reference-prices-emma-sleep-case-update-high-cour-102nfr0

5 Farrer & Co, "UK consumer law update: DMCCA, pricing and subscriptions", autumn 2026. https://www.farrer.co.uk/news-and-insights/uk-consumer-law-update-autumn-2026/

6 Lewis Silkin, "The UK Consumer Law Revolution continues: government to consult on banning misleading discount claims", 12 August 2026. https://www.lewissilkin.com/insights/2026/08/12/the-uk-consumer-law-revolution-continues-government-to-consult-on-banning-mislea-102nh3q

7 ISPreview, "New Rules to Tackle Fake Discounts Set to Benefit UK Consumers in 2027", August 2026. https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2026/08/new-rules-to-tackle-fake-discounts-set-to-benefit-uk-consumers-in-2027.html

USING THESE NUMBERS

If you quote or reuse these numbers, please link to vouchernaut.com/black-friday/price-check and include the date. Cite as: Vouchernaut Black Friday 2026 price check, 217,525 products at 70 UK shops, prices recorded from 9 October 2026, figures as of 24 October 2026. Vouchernaut earns commission on some links; that never changes what the price check counts.

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SEE IT LIVE

See the price history

vouchernaut.com/black-friday/price-check

Follow a product's price from this run-up through the sale. We show every price we've recorded and recount the numbers every few minutes.