
LINK MONTHLY REPORT

August 2024





1. CONTENTS

2. Key Activities
3. LINK Volumes and Values
4. ATM Numbers
5. Maintaining Access to Cash
6. Footprint Report

2. KEY ACTIVITIES

LINK is the UK's Cash Access and ATM Network, connecting virtually all the UK's ATMs and providing communities with access to cash through ATMs and services such as cash at retailers' tills and recommending communities for banking hubs. LINK continues to operate to its usual high standard and remains well positioned to support consumers' access to cash needs through effective risk management and high levels of operational resilience. LINK works closely with its infrastructure provider and Network Members, all of whom continue to perform well.

The LINK Board met in London in early September with the Senior Management Team and Head of Financial Inclusion in attendance. John Howells (CEO) gave his usual update on a wide range of industry matters and developments. The Board carefully reviewed and discussed reports from various committees, business resilience and key operational areas. These included industry and stakeholder developments since the introduction of the new Government and the announcement of new FCA access to cash rules in July. Included for consideration, the latest report on the work of the Coordinating Body outlined key activity and ongoing developments to align with the FCA rules. The Board was able to agree a number of decisions and approvals, including changes to the Scheme's Rules and Cash Access Assessments required to ensure that LINK's alignment to the FCA's new rules, committee leadership and finances. Continued assessment and reporting for some of the areas discussed including industry engagement, cybersecurity and approaches to existing assessments was requested by the Board.

The Board was pleased to conclude an overall satisfactory status supported by positive regulatory engagement and continued good operational performance.

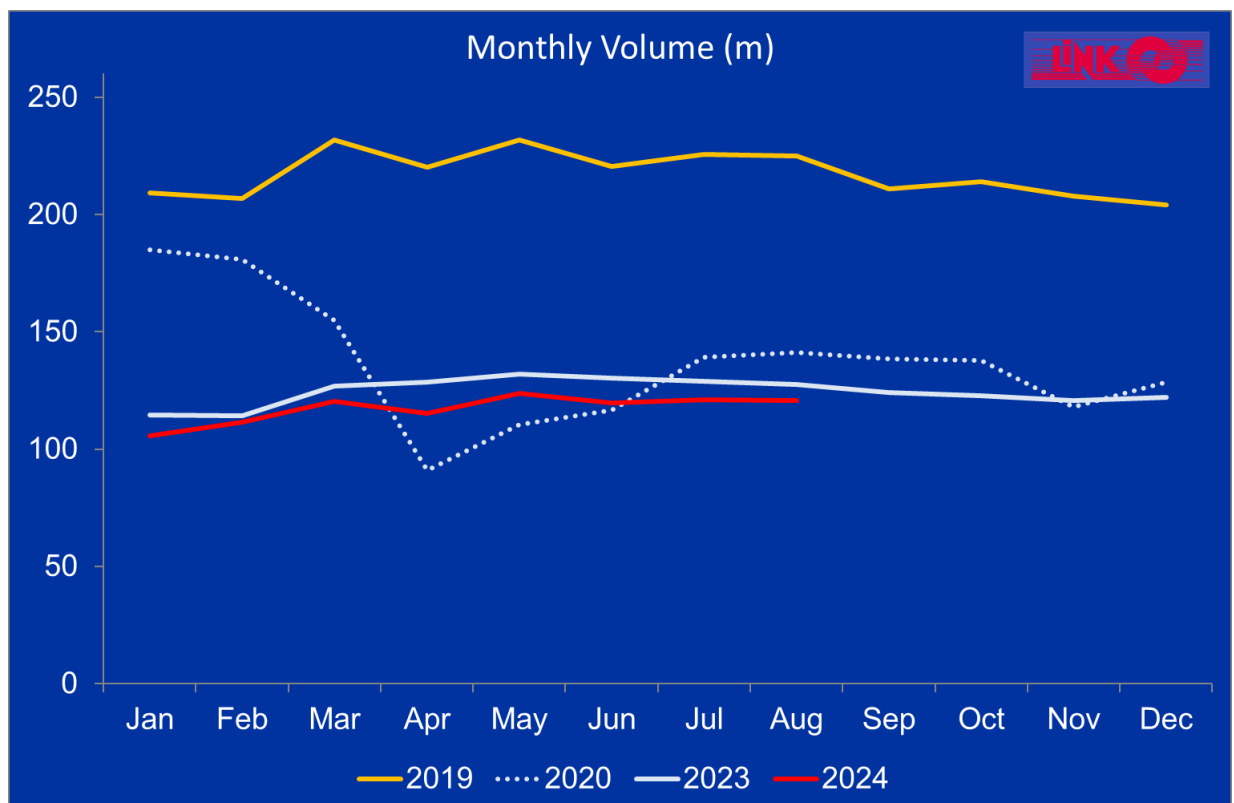
3. LINK VOLUMES AND VALUES

In August volumes fell 5.4% against August 2023, a broadly consistent fall with that seen year-on-year in July. Month-on-month, volumes were stable, a common pattern from July to August was experienced in each of the five previous years. The small uplift likely driven by summer activity. Year-to-date (YTD) volumes fell by 6.5%, a larger YTD fall than seen for the same period in 2023 compared to 2022 of 5.2% but little change compared to the YTD fall between July 2024 and July 2023.



The rate of decline of ATM withdrawal values continues to be slower than transaction volumes and indeed August saw a slight year-on-year increase of 1%, the first year-on-year increase for August since 2016, although negligible against the overall drop in cash withdrawn since pandemic. Year to date transaction values were 0.86% lower than the same period in 2023. A marginally smaller decline than the YTD decline in July YTD values due the small increase between July and August. Consumers turning towards cash for budgeting in the cost of living crisis may be contributing to the slowdown of the rate of decline of values.

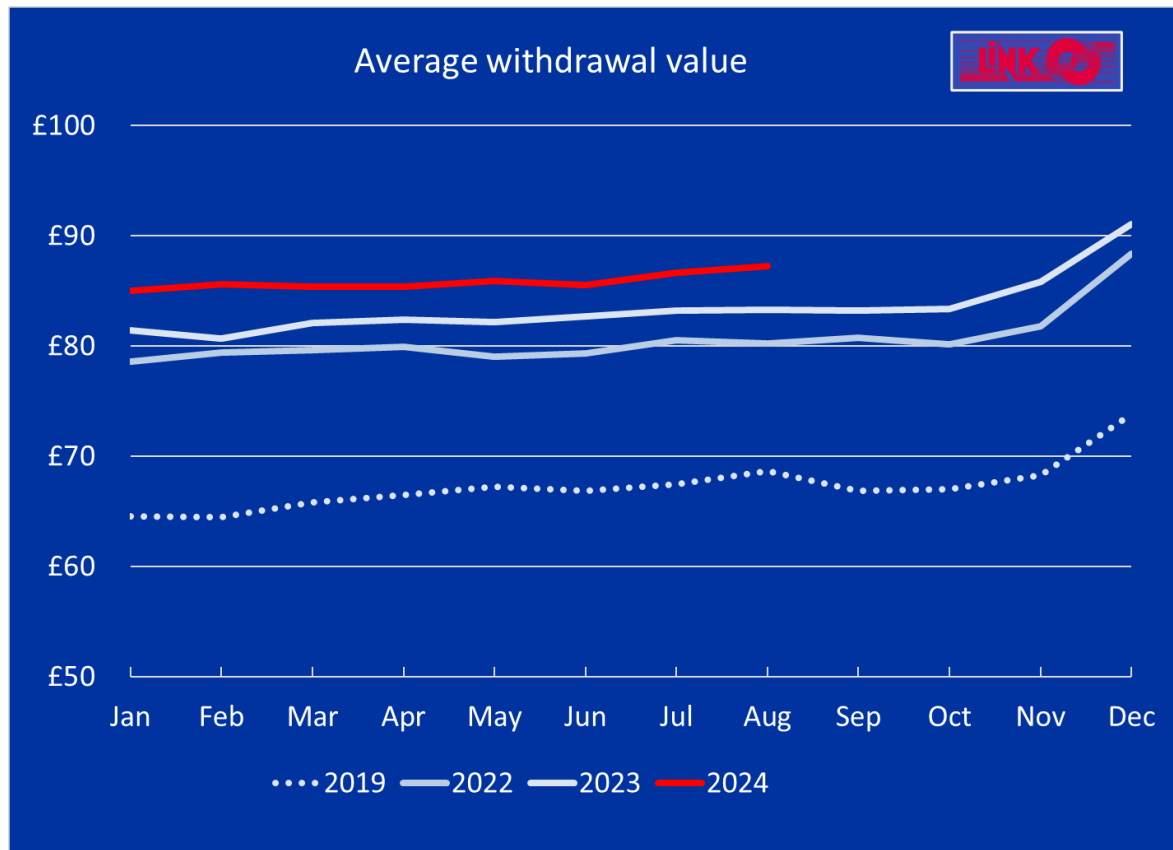
LINK Transaction Volumes (millions)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	209	207	232	220	232	221	226	225	211	214	208	204	2,608
2020	185	181	155	91	110	117	139	141	139	138	118	129	1,643
2021	99	97	114	123	131	133	140	140	137	141	133	135	1,522
2022	118	117	134	135	138	135	144	137	132	134	132	130	1,587
2023	115	114	127	128	132	130	129	128	124	123	121	122	1,492
2024	106	111	120	115	124	120	121	121					937



LINK Transaction Values (£millions)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2019	£8,788	£8,859	£10,211	£9,701	£10,354	£9,837	£10,070	£10,271	£9,336	£9,512	£9,494	£9,985	£116,417
2020	£8,182	£8,258	£7,450	£4,399	£5,664	£5,972	£7,076	£7,105	£6,903	£6,939	£6,016	£7,044	£81,010
2021	£5,062	£5,127	£5,995	£6,446	£6,809	£6,757	£7,242	£7,177	£6,928	£7,156	£6,785	£7,478	£78,960
2022	£5,946	£6,018	£6,952	£7,047	£7,065	£6,921	£7,481	£7,054	£6,848	£6,959	£6,932	£7,558	£82,781
2023	£5,979	£6,022	£6,837	£6,883	£7,063	£7,016	£7,025	£6,931	£6,743	£6,673	£6,780	£7,435	£81,389
2024	£5,864	£6,279	£6,882	£6,511	£7,032	£6,791	£6,937	£6,998	£	£	£	£	£53,295



The average withdrawal of £87.25 in August was again higher than compared to £83.33 for the corresponding month in 2023. Recently there has been a month to month there increase in the average value, after little change at the beginning of the year



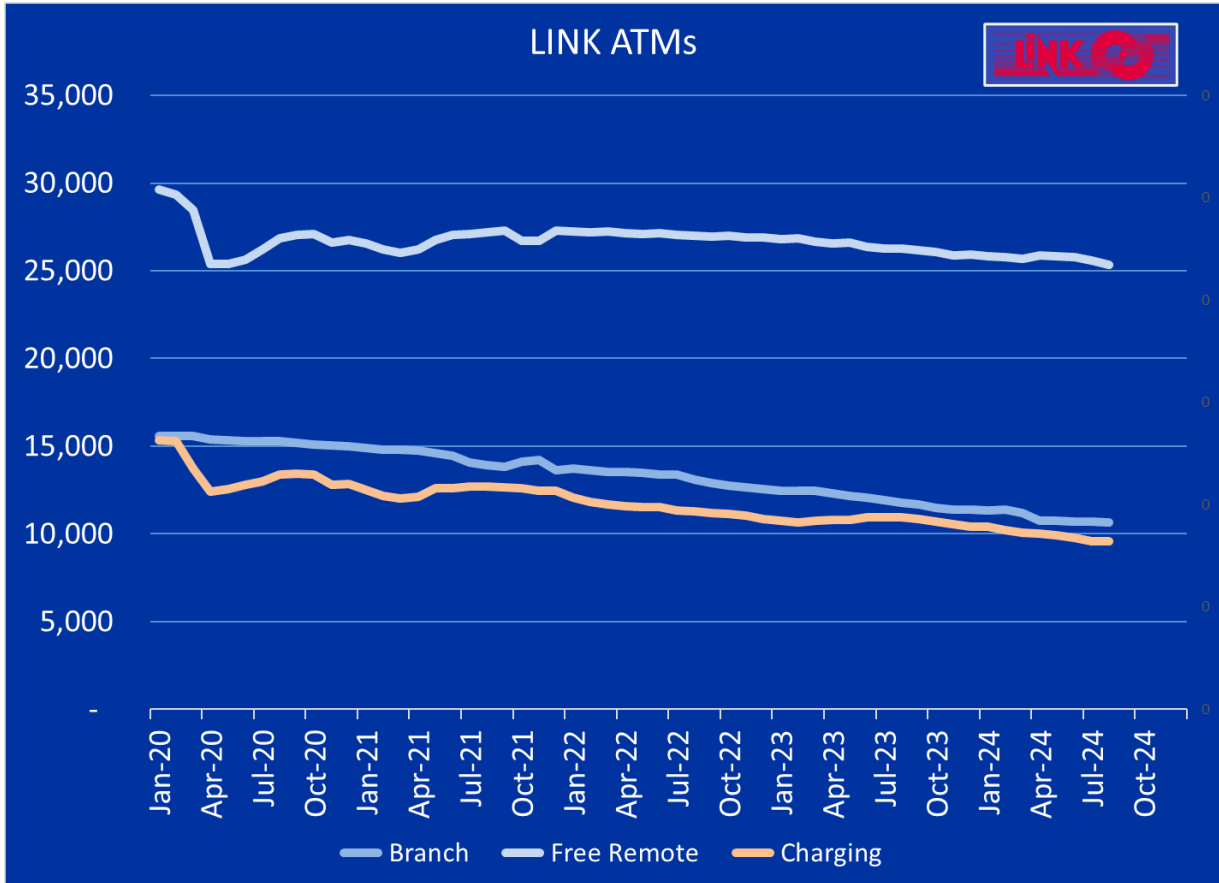
For more information and regular updates on cash and ATMs, see the LINK website www.link.co.uk or LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/2837871/> or Twitter/X [LINK Scheme@LINK_ATM_Scheme](https://twitter.com/LINK_ATM_Scheme).

4. ATM NUMBERS

ATM coverage across the UK continues to be broadly stable and consistent with the forecasts in LINK's strategy, with a very slow decline in non-branch free-to-use ATMs in the past year.

There are currently 36, 035 free ATMs across the UK, plus a further 9,598 pay-to-use machines.

Changes in branch ATM numbers continue to be reflective of the fall in bank branch numbers. Similarly the fall in Pay-to-use ATM numbers is consistent with declining use of cash reducing need and hence viability for ATMs in host locations.





5. MAINTAINING ACCESS TO CASH

LINK's Financial Inclusion Programme continues to be effective in maintaining free access to cash for consumers in rural, remote and deprived communities across the UK.

To-date, 136 lost free-to-use ATMs have been targeted for replacement and resolved, 66 through Direct Commissioning, 20 through Premiums and the remaining 50 by regular installation programmes.

Overall, over 3,500 ATMs get a subsidy as part of LINK's work on financial inclusion. LINK is now using social media to further raise awareness of the initiative and continues to welcome requests for ATMs.

See the LINK website for more details [LINK / Request Access to Cash](#)

On 29th July 2024 the PSR published its second Annual Review of [Specific Direction 12 \(SD12\)](#). The Direction was designed to make sure LINK continues to maintain a broad geographic spread of free-to-use (FTU) ATMs. SD12 was issued to LINK in March 2022. This review was conducted with consideration for how SD12 would work alongside cash access regulation introduced in the Financial Services and Markets Act (FSMA) 2023, and the Financial Conduct Authority's (FCA) [new cash access rules](#). The review found that SD12 was working well however in the context of the changes described the PSR concluded that the FCA's regulations are more comprehensive in protecting access to cash than the requirements of SD12 and therefore it should be retired when it expires in January 2025.

<https://www.psr.org.uk/publications/legal-directions-and-decisions/second-annual-review-of-specific-direction-12/>



6. LINK FOOTPRINT REPORT

LINK is committed to maintaining free access to cash for many years to come through an extensive network of ATMs, which covers the same area as it did on 1st February 2018. This includes Protected ATMs, which are machines 1km or more away from another free ATM and are therefore considered vital by LINK for their local community.

In the last 5 years, the total population living within 1km of free cash access has increased from 89.5% to 89.6%.

These Protected ATMs are analysed every month and the changes are summarised below.

May 2024		Change
Total Protected ATMs	3,540	12
Live ATMs	3,010	3
ATMs No Longer Transacting	530	9
Temporarily out of action	22	-3
Investigations with operator underway	21	9
ATMs Confirmed as Closed	487	3
ATMs not being replaced (a)	404	3
ATMs Targeted for Replacement	83	0
LINK directly commissioning a replacement	20	-2
Resolution not Possible (b)	63	2
ATMs previously targeted for replacement and now resolved (c)	135	1

The latest Footprint Report can always be found on the LINK website at: [LINK / Protecting the ATM network](#).

Notes - LINK Footprint Report

(a) ATMs are not replaced where consumers have free access to cash over the counter from a nearby post office, where the site was not accessible to the public, where there are security concerns, or where there is assessed to be no community detriment following a site visit by LINK.

(b) Where it is not currently possible to replace a Protected ATM for reasons such as no suitable premises within 1km, no willing site owners to host an ATM or no operator willing to deploy an ATM. LINK may still consider alternative actions and these sites remain on file.

(c) Sites which were targeted for replacement through the Programme and now have free access to cash via an ATM, whether through Premiums, Direct Commissioning or through the free competitive market.