



UK economy grew faster than forecast at start of 2019 – 11 April 2019

The UK economy grew faster than expected during the three months to February, in spite of forecasts that Brexit uncertainty would dampen activity during the first quarter of 2019.

Britain's economy registered 0.3% growth in the three months to February, the Office for National Statistics said on Wednesday morning. Economists were expecting 0.2% growth. In fact, the economy grew by 0.2% in February alone, despite Brexit headwinds and expectations of stagnation.

These official figures contrast with private sector surveys, that suggested that the UK was heading for its worst performance since 2012, as Brexit uncertainty was leading companies and consumers to hold off spending.

The 0.3% growth is a reassuring sign that up to February at least the UK economy weathered the Brexit chaos and overseas slowdown well. Services again drove the economy, supported by consumer and government spending and a mini information technology boom.

Britain's service sector, which accounts for 80% of the economy, was responsible for the overwhelming majority of the growth during the three months to the end of February.

Computer programming and healthcare were two of the fastest growing parts of the services sector, while finance continued to contract. Manufacturing also continued to recover after weakness at the end of the last quarter.

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