

21 January 2005

BRC RESPONSE TO ONS SALES FIGURES OUT TODAY:

BRC Director General, Kevin Hawkins, said:

"The ONS sales figures out today come as no surprise and on the whole mirror the BRC's own sales figures released last week. The trading environment this Christmas was tough and left most retailers disappointed and nervous about the challenging times ahead.

"There is no doubt, that consumer confidence is fragile and evidently people are cautious about spending. Uncertainty over the economy, the housing market and interest rates continues to take its toll. With these figures and with retail price inflation at such a low level, dodging the issue of cutting interest rates to help ease consumer blues is no longer viable."