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BANK OF ENGLAND WATCHERS' CONFERENCE 2025

Bank of England

What if things are different?

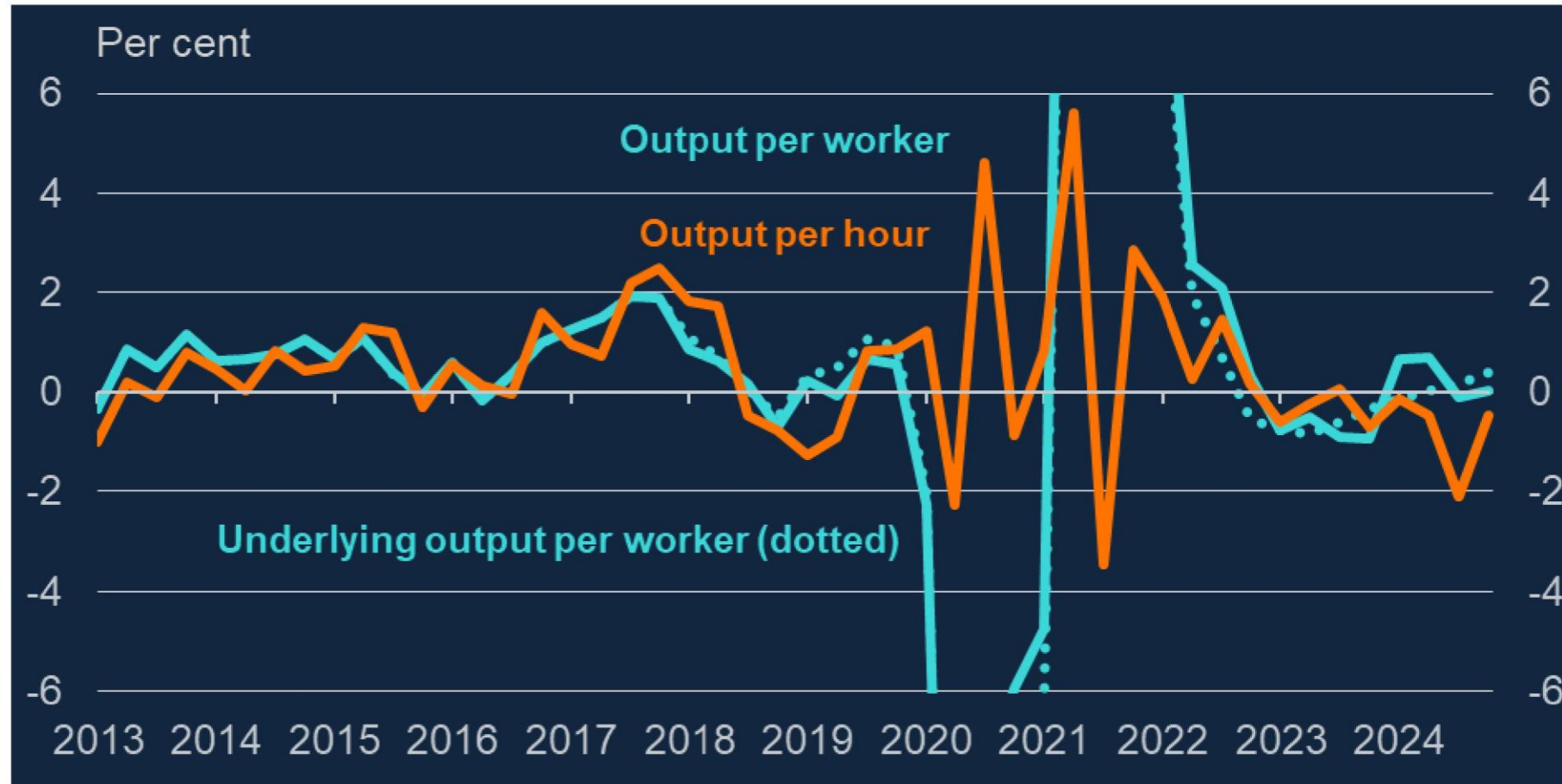
Speech by Clare Lombardelli

Deputy Governor for Monetary Policy

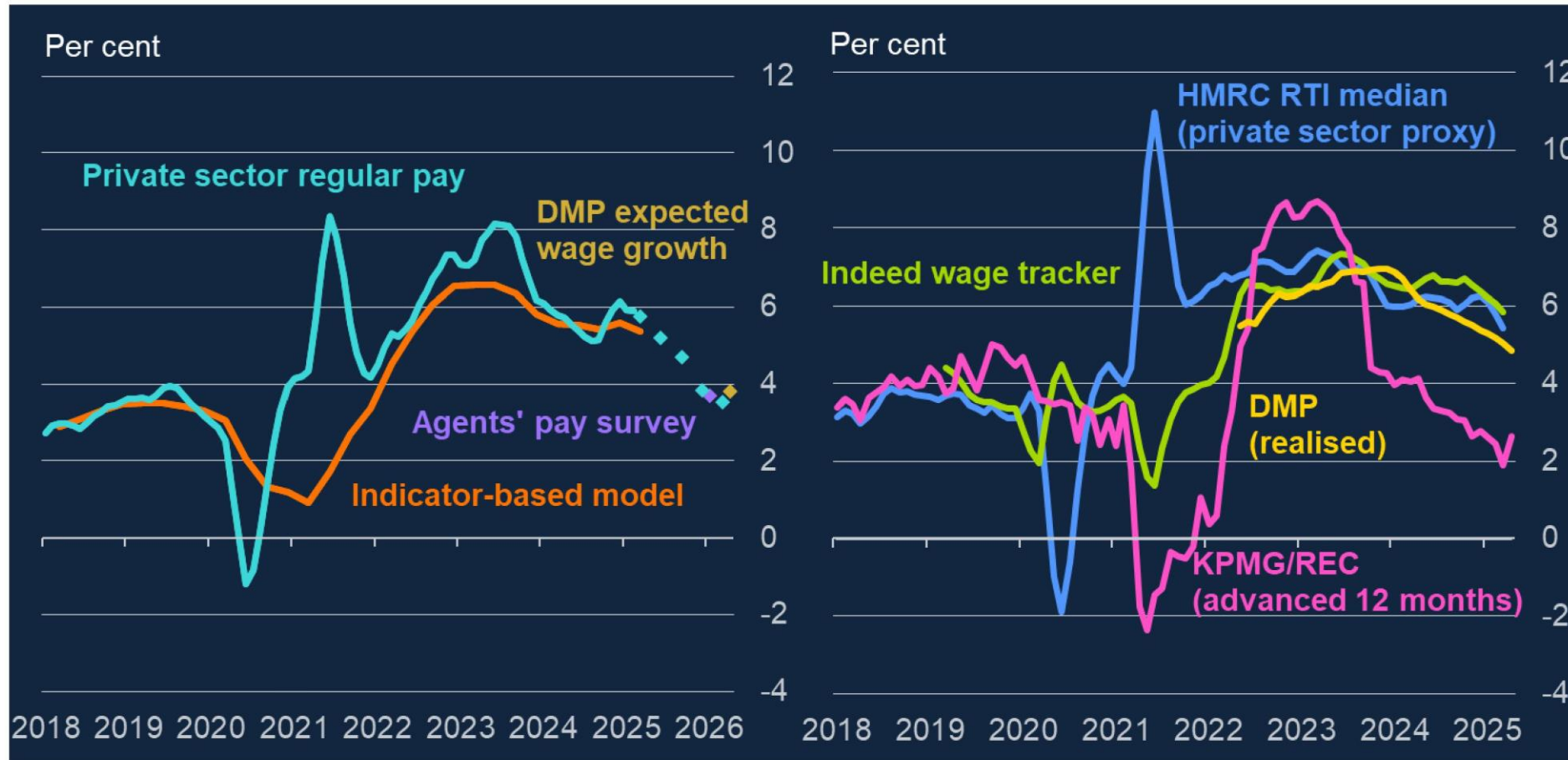
Bank of England Watchers Conference, London, 12 May 2025



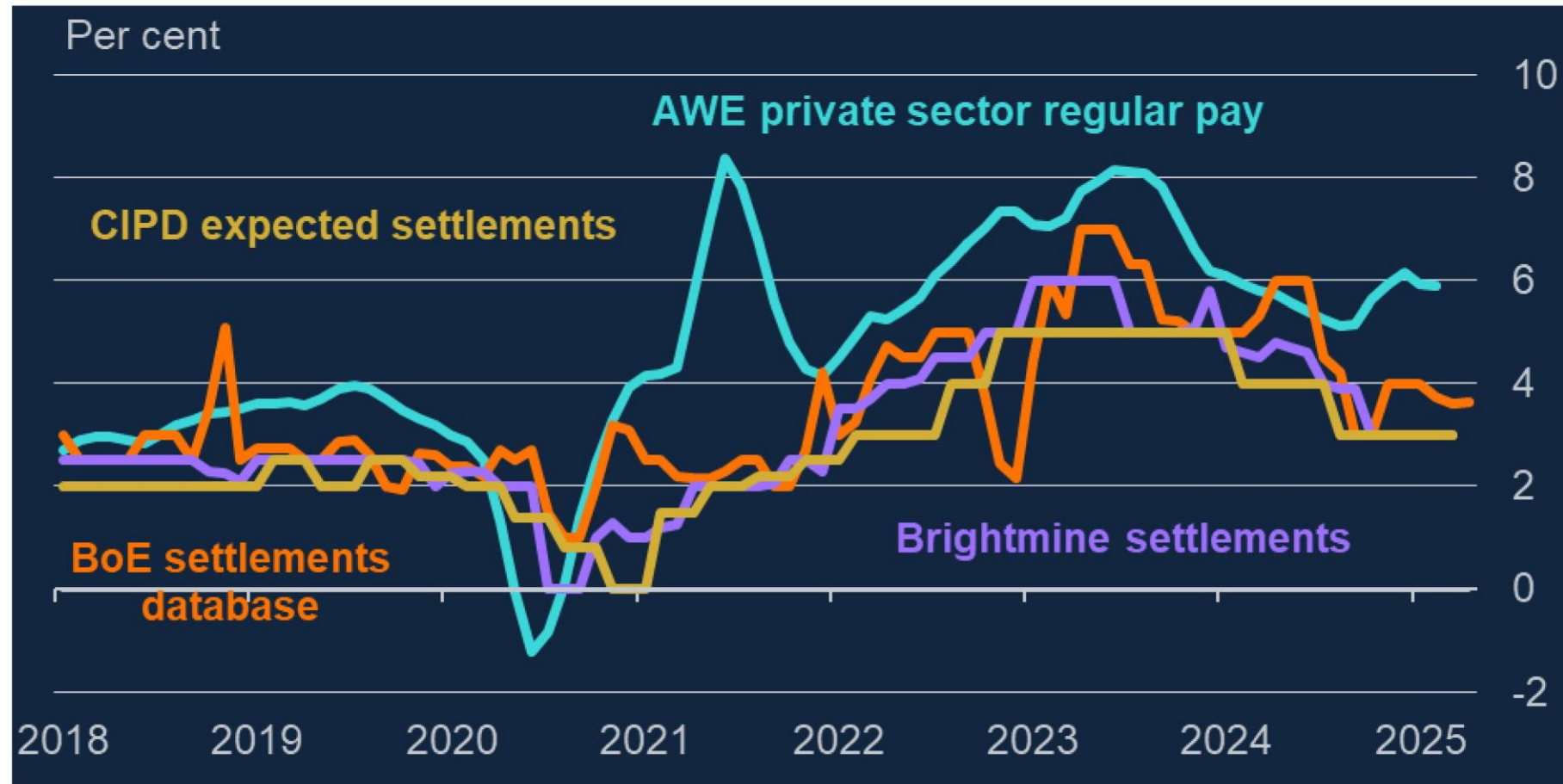
1. Labour productivity growth has been very weak



2. Wage growth higher than target-consistent but gradually easing

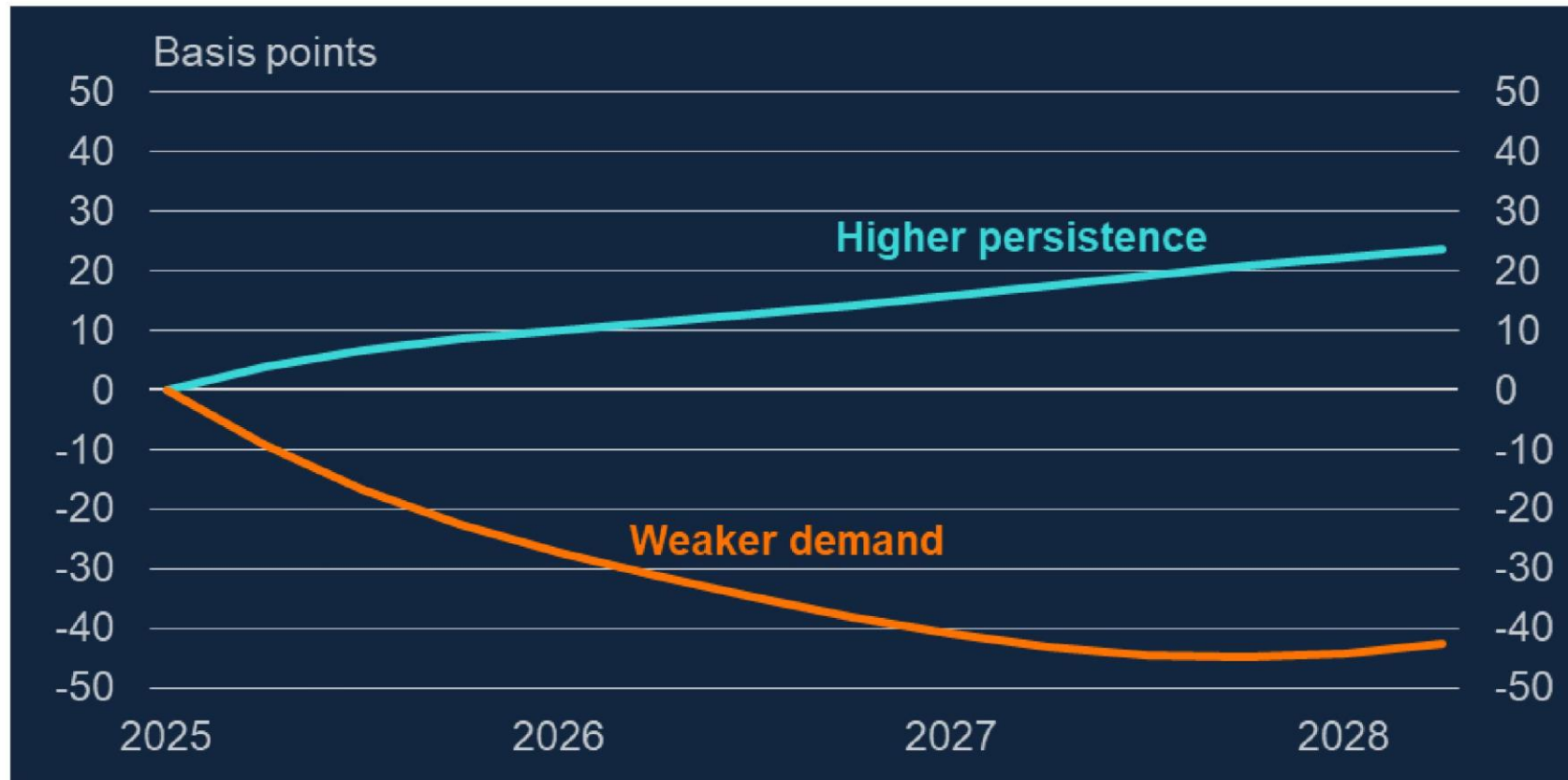


3. Latest pay settlements consistent with steer from Agents' survey



4. Policy tends to respond more strongly to a demand shock than in the presence of a trade-off

Model-based simulations of policy responses in May scenarios relative to baseline model-based path







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FISCAL POLICY, THE BOND MARKET, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR MONETARY POLICY

Fiscal Policy, the bond market, and implications for monetary policy

Sushil Wadhwani

Bank of England Watchers' conference

May 12, 2025

Reasons why the “term premium” might rise in the US

- Attacks on Fed independence
- Fear of sanctions
- The US is seen as a less reliable security partner
- Risks include forced debt swaps, taxes on inflows etc
- The rule of law is being undermined
- Japan has described their Treasury holdings as a “card” in trade negotiations
- Fiscal probity is being questioned

What the BOE might do to limit “contagion” from US Treasuries

- Lower short-term interest rates because of an “unwarranted” tightening in financial conditions
- The MPC already makes judgements about other unobservable variables (e.g. the neutral rate of interest, the equilibrium unemployment rate)
- If the QT programme is not on autopilot, it would give the MPC another instrument
- Amend communication-might imply one has to do less

Dealing with the high inflation risk premium embedded in UK gilts

- Long-term breakeven inflation embedded in the UK gilts market is well above the inflation target (by at least 100bp?)
- Long-term breakeven inflation that is embedded in the uS Treasury market is close to the Fed's inflation target
- Recall that the UK government sets the inflation target, while the Fed (and the ECB) set their own inflation target
- In August-September 2022, there were persistent rumours of an upward revision of the inflation target and twenty year breakeven inflation rose as high as 4.15%
- So perhaps we should allow the BOE to set its own target?

Other measures to reduce the IRP in the UK

- Increase the fraction of gilt issuance accounted for by index-linked gilts
- The BOE becomes more credible itself



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Fiscal policy, the bond market and implications for monetary policy

Andrew Benito

Eisler Capital

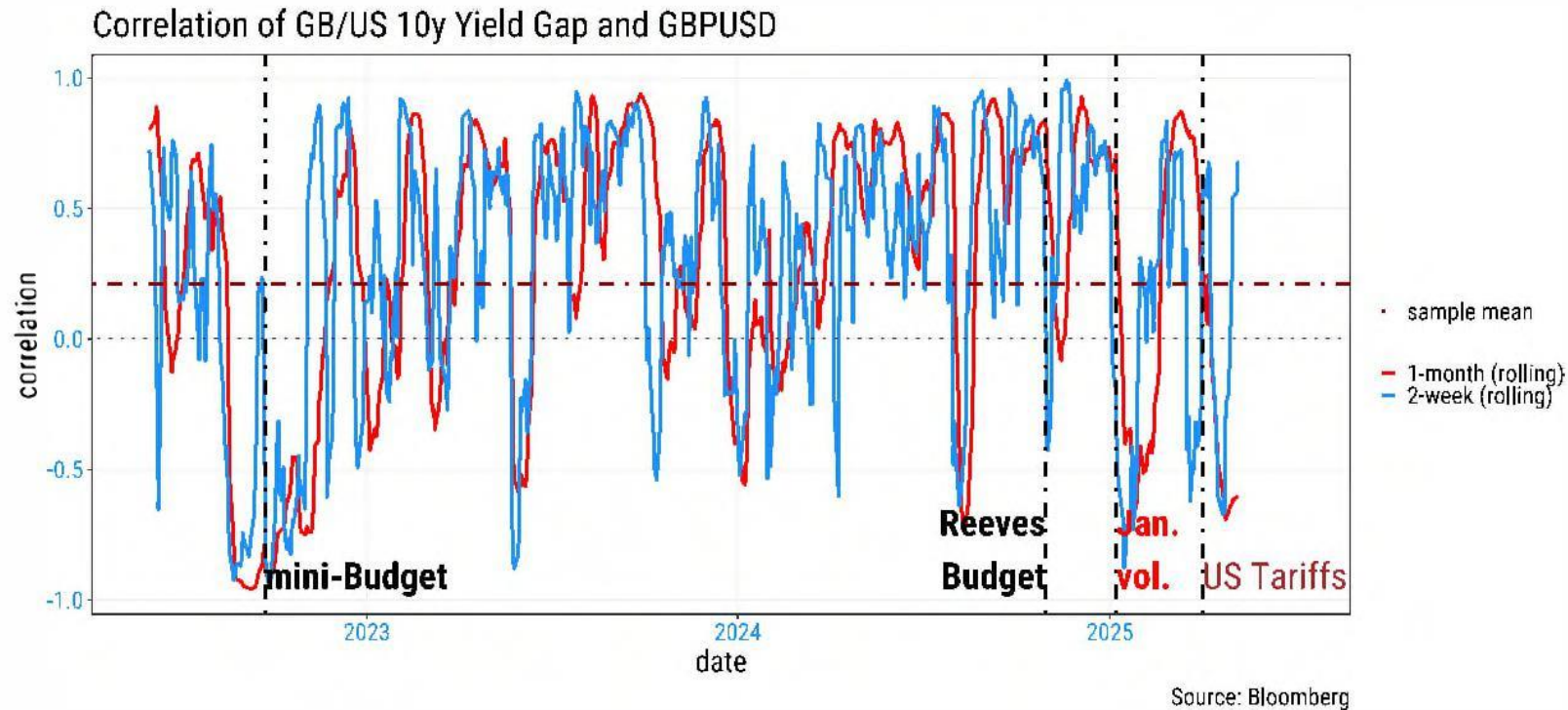
Remarks at BoE Watchers Conference

May 12, 2025

Main messages

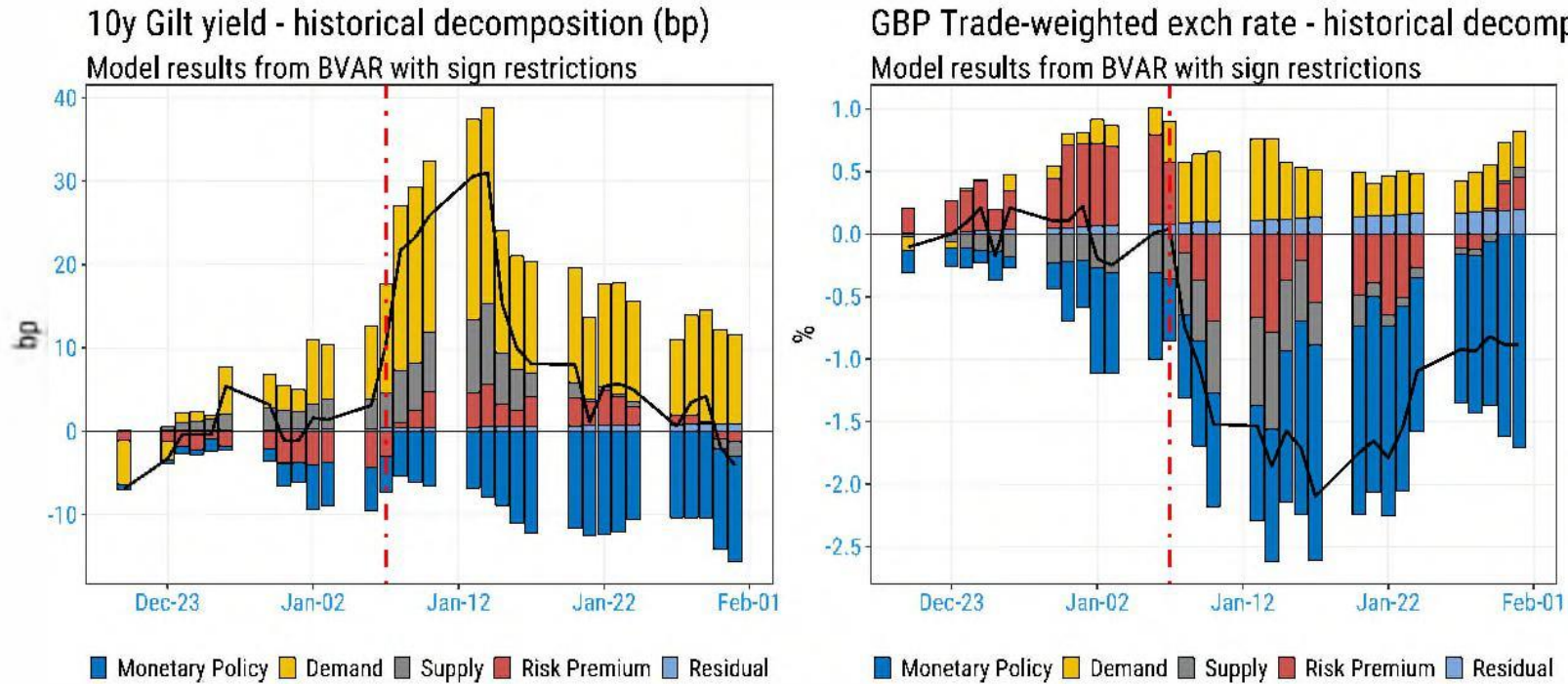
- ▶ **Markets** Risk of **fiscal fatigue**: more fiscal effort is needed but may lack political support, absent risk premium episodes.
- ▶ **BoE and Monetary policy**
 - **Risk premiums** complicate policy transmission and effectiveness.
 - Ease **monetary policy** as spare capacity opens-up (on fiscal consolidation or US Tariffs), not on fiscal risk premium.
 - Market liquidity: DMO changes preferred. QT changes and capacity to support **market functioning** facilitated by confidence in the fiscal path.
- ▶ Loosening the **fiscal rules** again would be a symptom of fiscal fatigue. More flexibility can come after more of a **track record**.

Bouts of (Sterling) risk premium



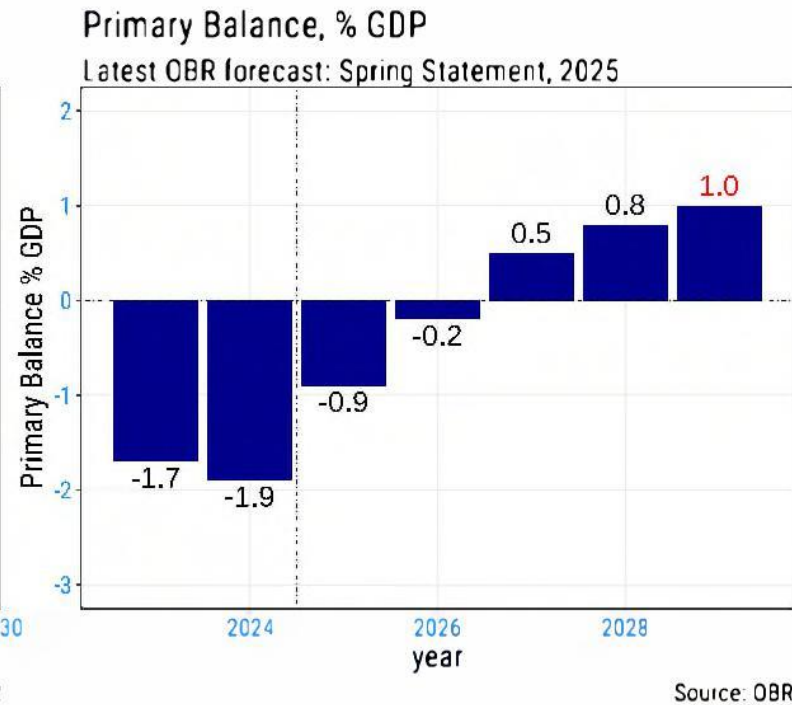
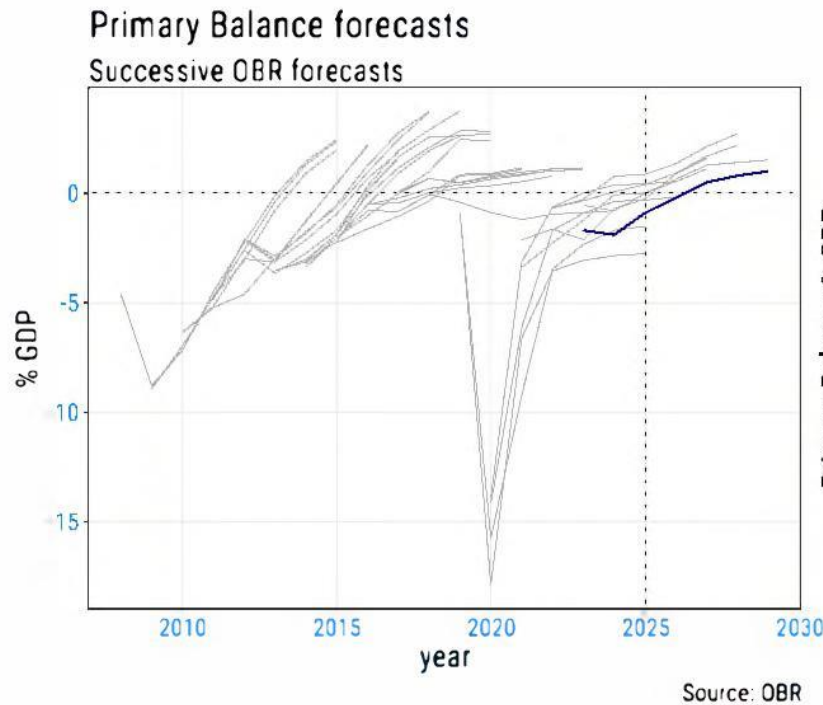
- ▶ Instability reflects changeable roles for different shocks.
- ▶ **Demand** news pushes Yields and Currency in the same direction ($\rho > 0$). **Risk premium** news pushes them in opposing directions ($\rho < 0$).
- ▶ 'Case studies': January episode and US tariffs.

Quantifying January's risk premium effect



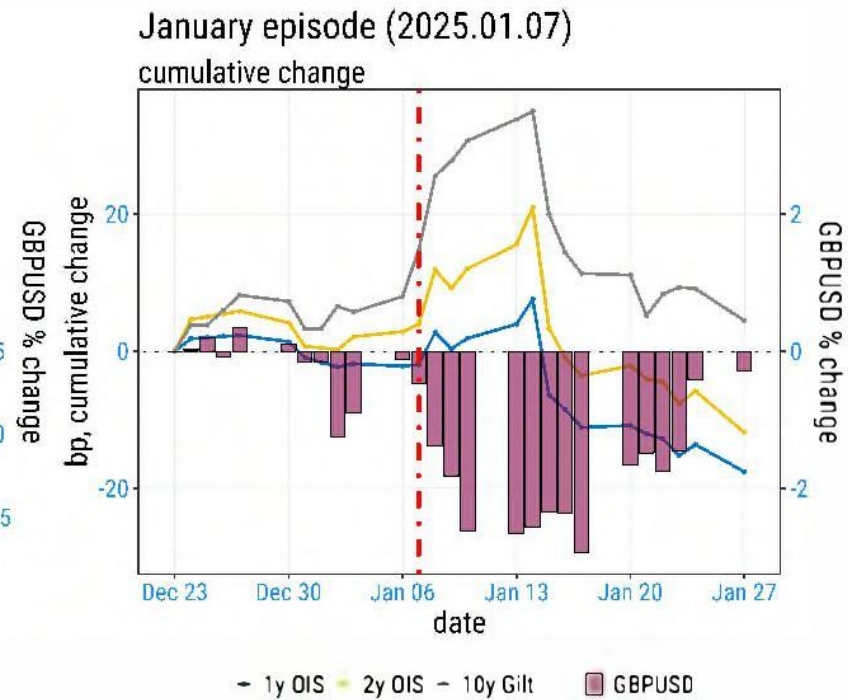
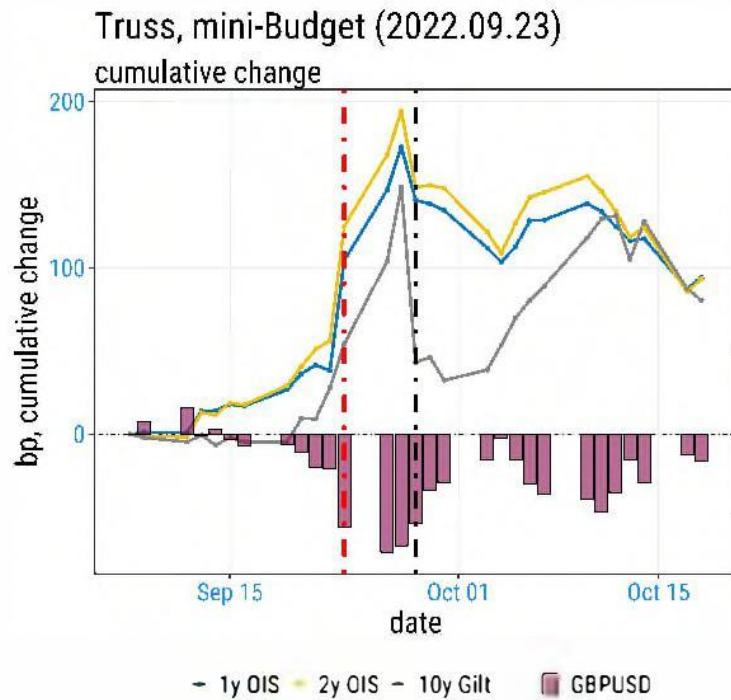
- Risk premium effect accounted for more of the move in foreign exchange than bond yields.

The fiscal effort: expect delays?

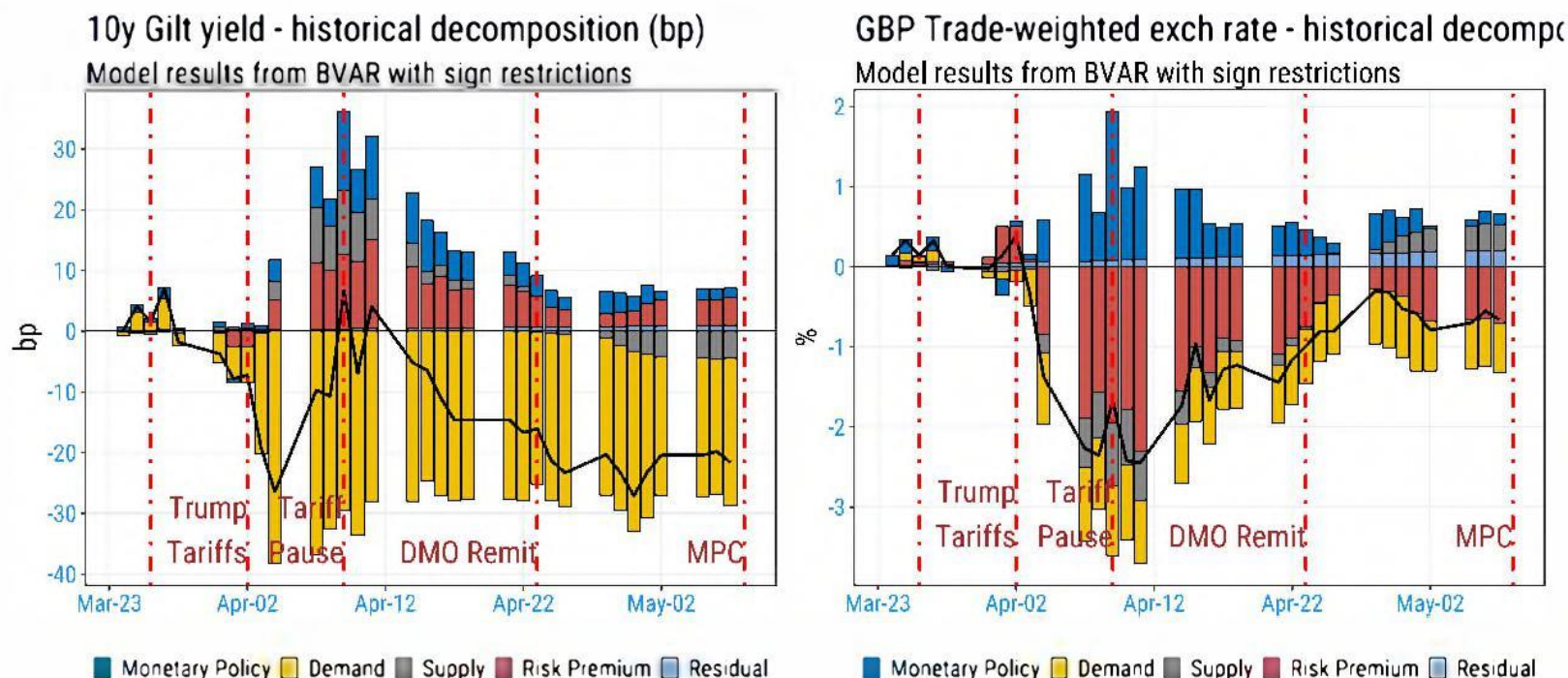


- ▶ Required, Debt-stabilising primary balance has increased from -2.0% of GDP to +1.0% (on $r\uparrow$, $g\downarrow$).
- ▶ Excl. 2020/21, 't+4' forecast error for the primary balance averages -2.4pp.

BoE: Risk premium episodes complicate policy effectiveness + predictable MPC Comms

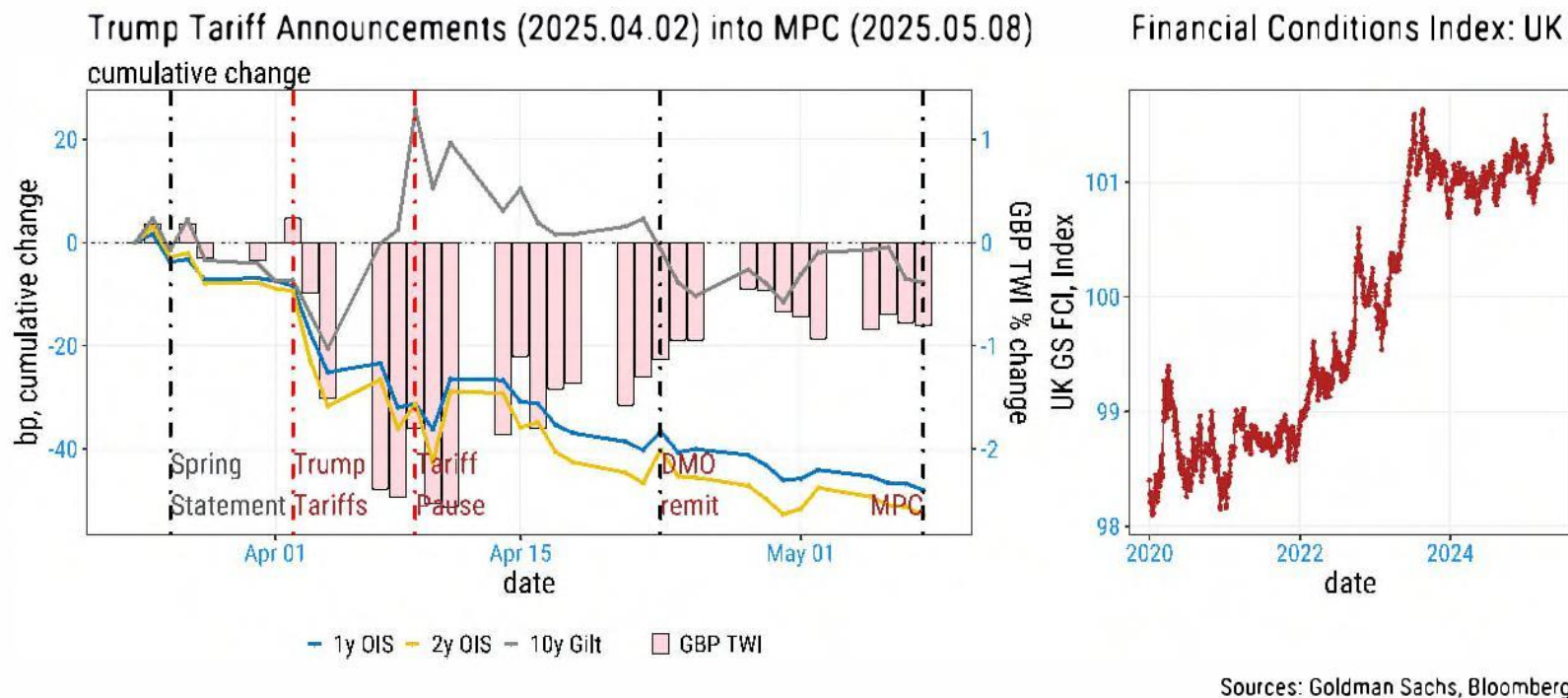


US Tariffs: Decomposing GBP market reactions



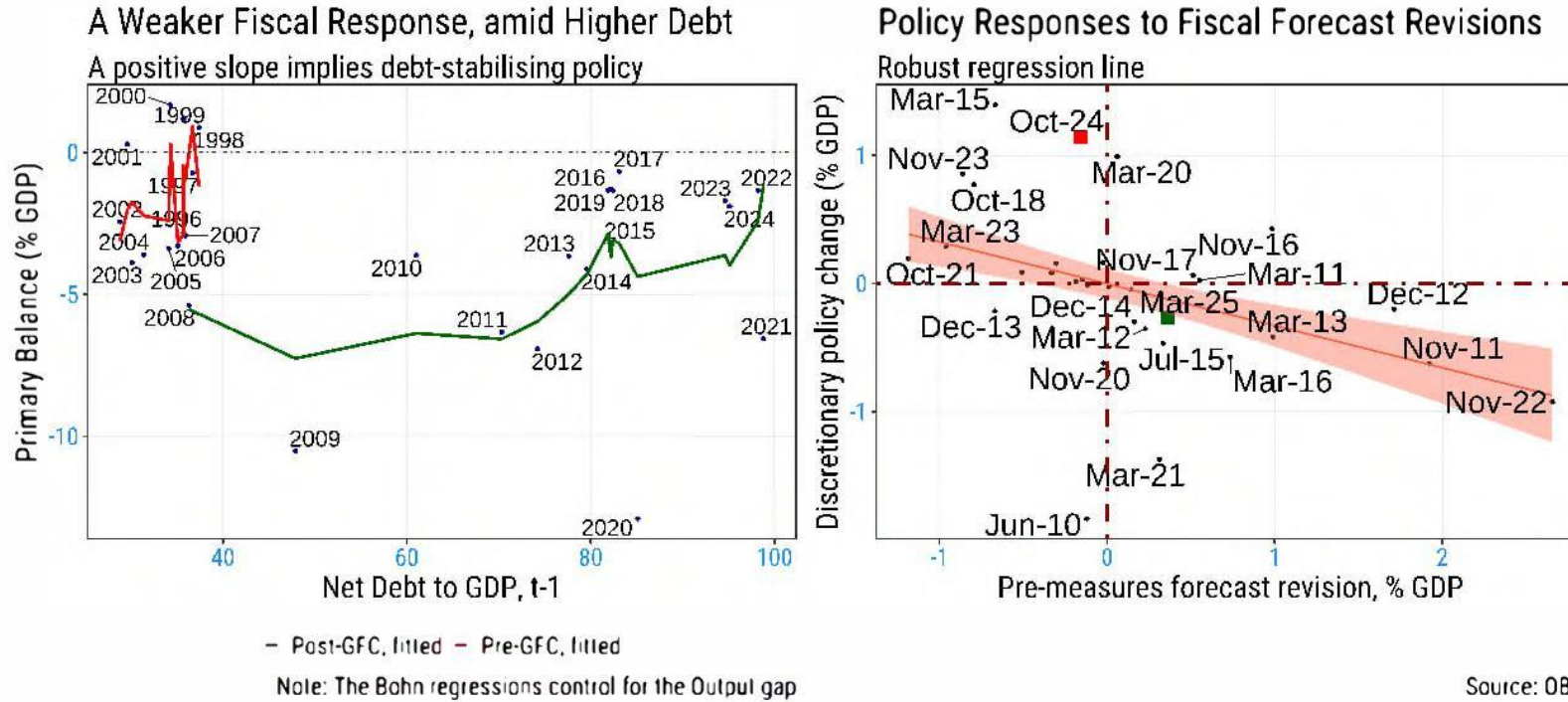
- ▶ **US Tariffs** as a negative Demand shock (for the UK), with a temporary Risk premium effect.
- ▶ Needed: allowance for a US risk premium and its spillovers.

BoE: weak Demand effects are Dovish. (Fiscal) Risk premium effects not so much



- ▶ Commitment to fiscal rules gives BoE greater flexibility to adjust **QT** (eg.10/04). A high bar on temporary and targeted interventions. **DMO** response (eg.23/04) preferred.

HMT: The fiscal reaction



- ▶ Suspending or revising fiscal rules would reinforce a sense of UK fiscal fatigue.



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BNP PARIBAS

The bank for a changing world

ECONOMIC RESEARCH

Bank of England Watchers Conference 2025

Fiscal policy, the bond market and implications for monetary policy

Isabelle Mateos y Lago
Group Chief Economist

May 12, 2025

6.956

25.001

22.608

35.891

23.795

19.307

4.852

1.803

Fiscal and Monetary Policy Relationship in the UK: It's (Uniquely) Complicated

Annual remit set by HMT but

- . Indemnification of QT losses
- . Fast normalization of QT

. Alignment of objectives via large share of inflation-indexed gilts

. Reflexivity / procyclicality from use of market interest rates

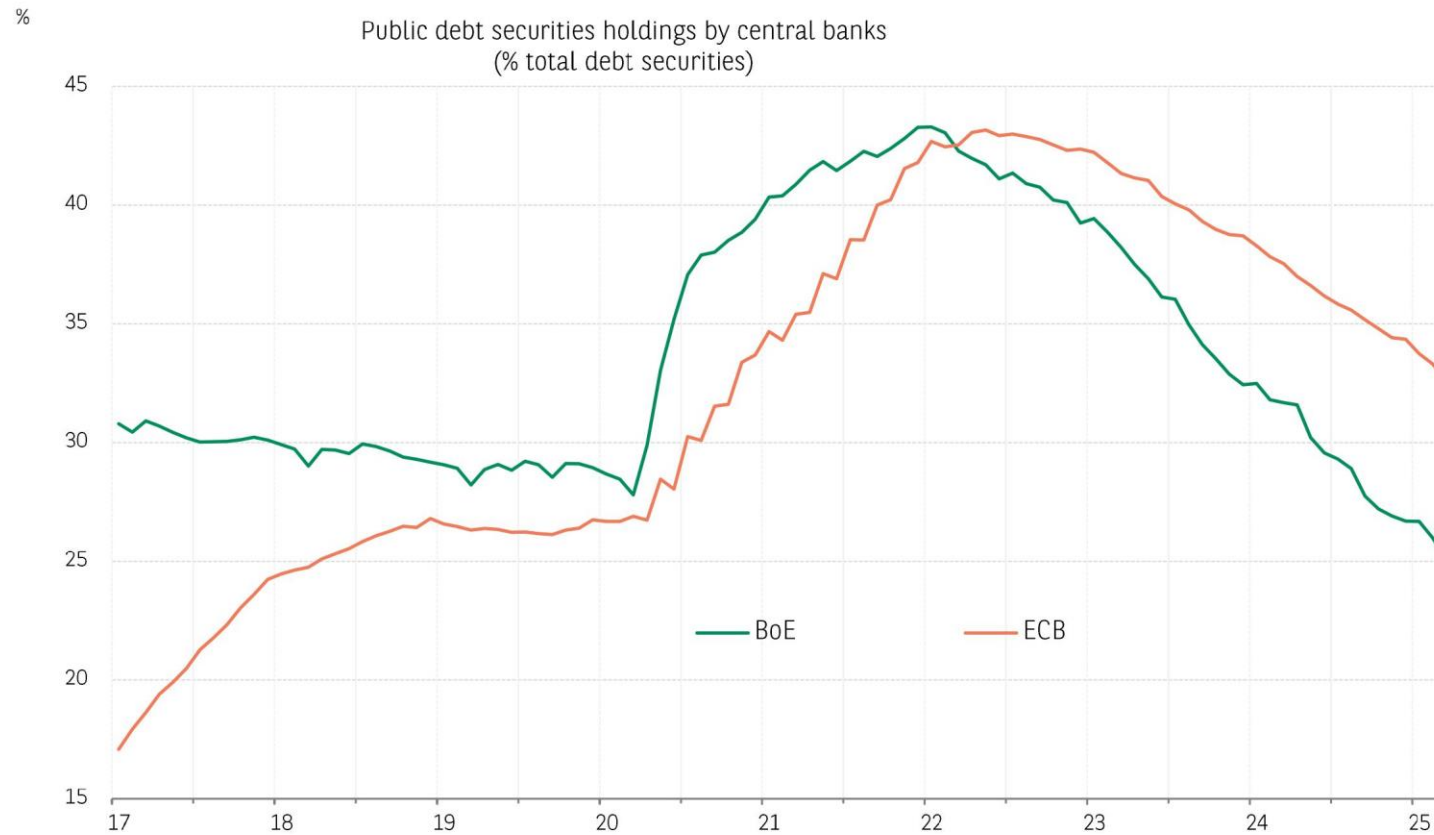
- in BOE forecasts
- in fiscal rules

. Heightened risk premia and vulnerability to UST moves

. Somewhat opaque framework complicates both monetary policy and financial stability missions



BoE chose a sharper path to balance sheet normalization

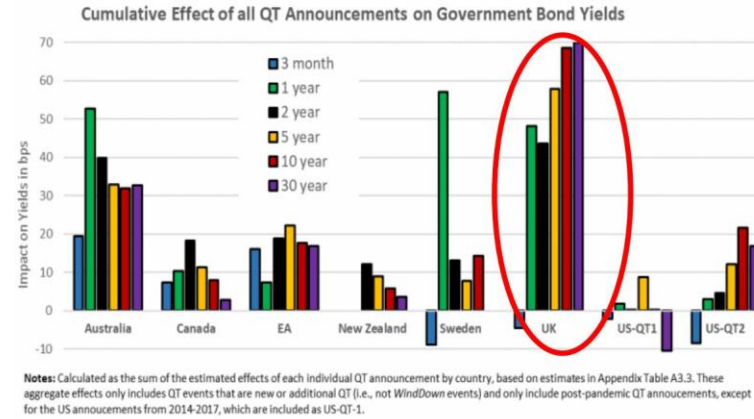


Source: BoE, ECB, BNP Paribas calculations

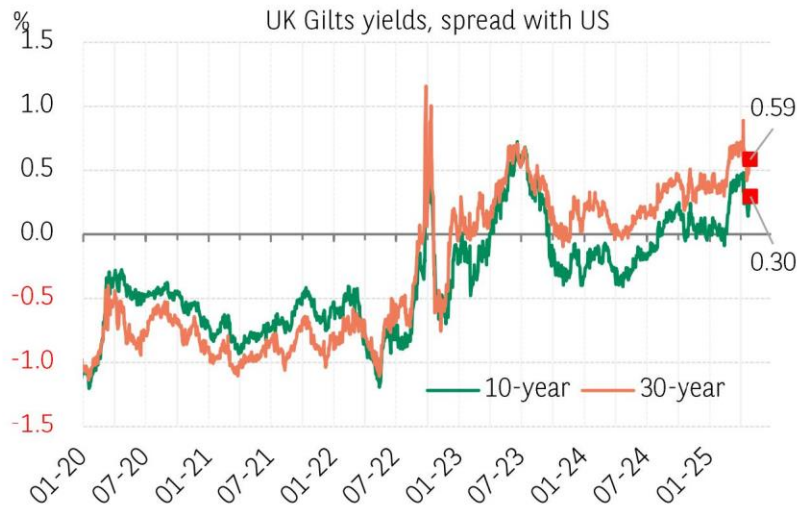




"Active" QT and economic uncertainty create upside risk to gilt yields



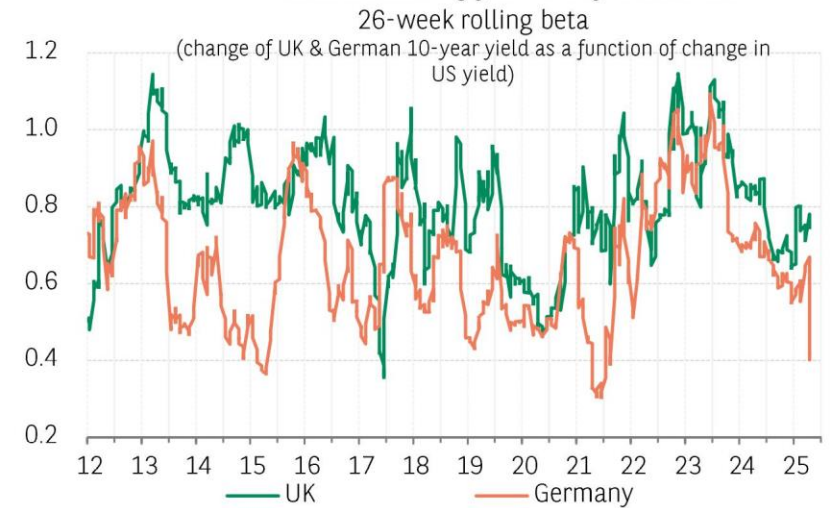
Repricing in Gilts in 2025 sharper than in the US



Source: Thomson Reuters

Source: W. Du et al. (2024), Quantitative tightening around the globe: what have we learned?, NBER working papers

Gilts Increasingly Driven by Treasuries



Source: Thomson Reuters, BNP Paribas calculations



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MONETARY POLICY OUTLOOK

Bank of England

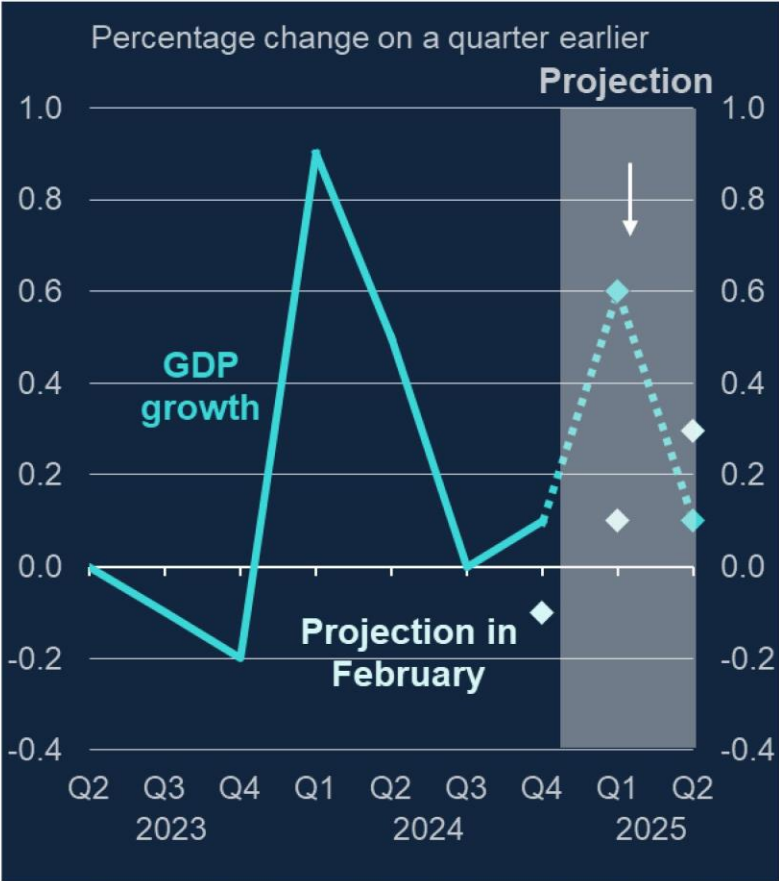
Monetary policy outlook

Megan Greene



Where are we now vs. the start of the year?

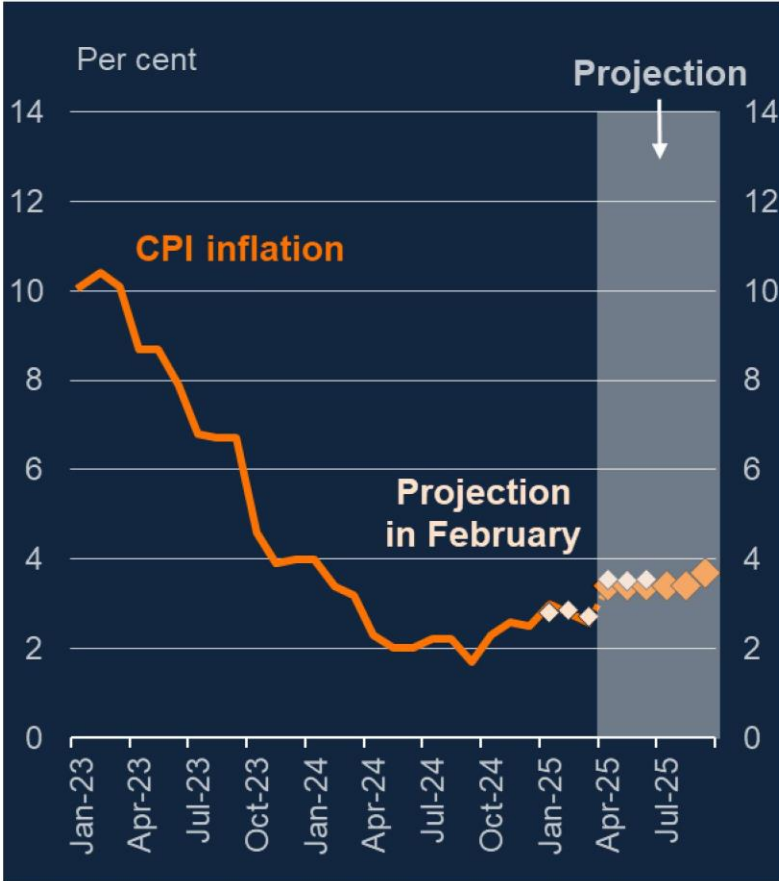
GDP growth



Unemployment rate



CPI inflation



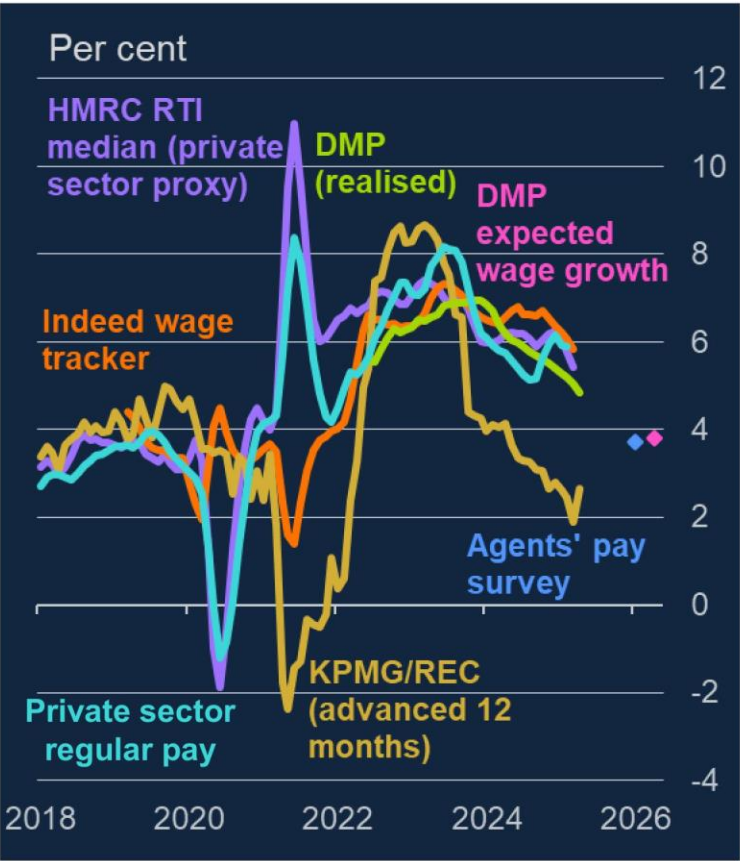
Sources: BCC, CBI, Lloyds Business Barometer, ONS, S&P Global and Bank calculations. The lighter diamonds show Bank staff's projections at the time of the February Report. The darker diamonds show Bank staff's current projections. The projections for headline GDP growth and the unemployment rate are quarterly and show 2025 Q1 and 2025 Q2 (February projections show 2024 Q4 to 2025 Q2). The projections for CPI inflation are monthly and show April to September 2025 (February projections show January 2025 to June 2025). The GDP growth and unemployment rate projections for 2025 Q1 are based on official data to February 2025, while the CPI inflation figures over the same quarter are outturns. Although LFS unemployment data have been reinstated by the ONS, they are badged as official statistics in development and the LFS continues to suffer from very low response rates, which can introduce volatility and potentially non-response bias (Box D of the [May 2024 Monetary Policy Report](#)).

Inflation persistence remains in focus

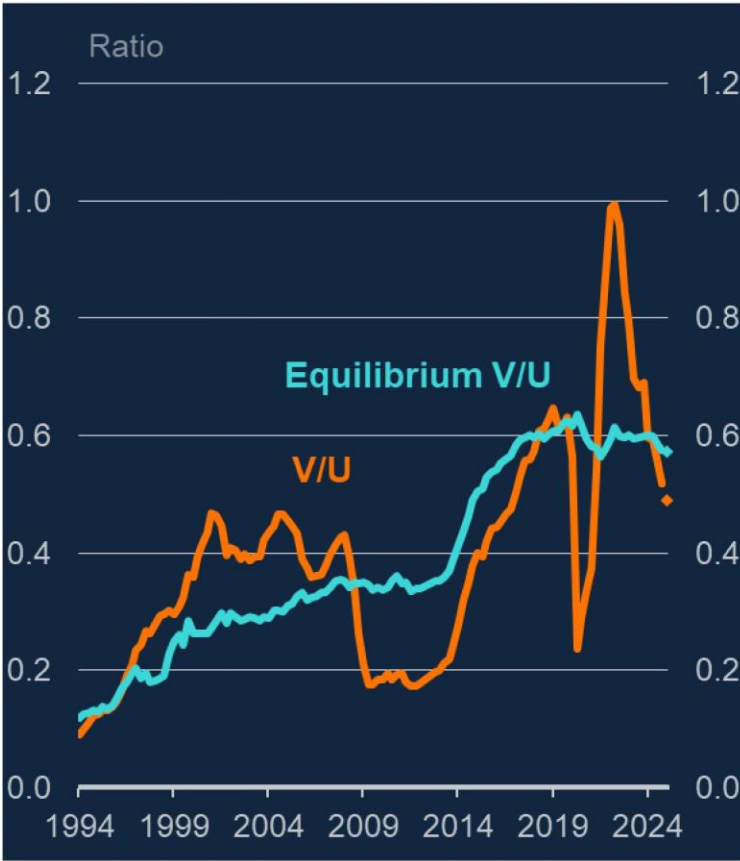
Services inflation



Pay growth



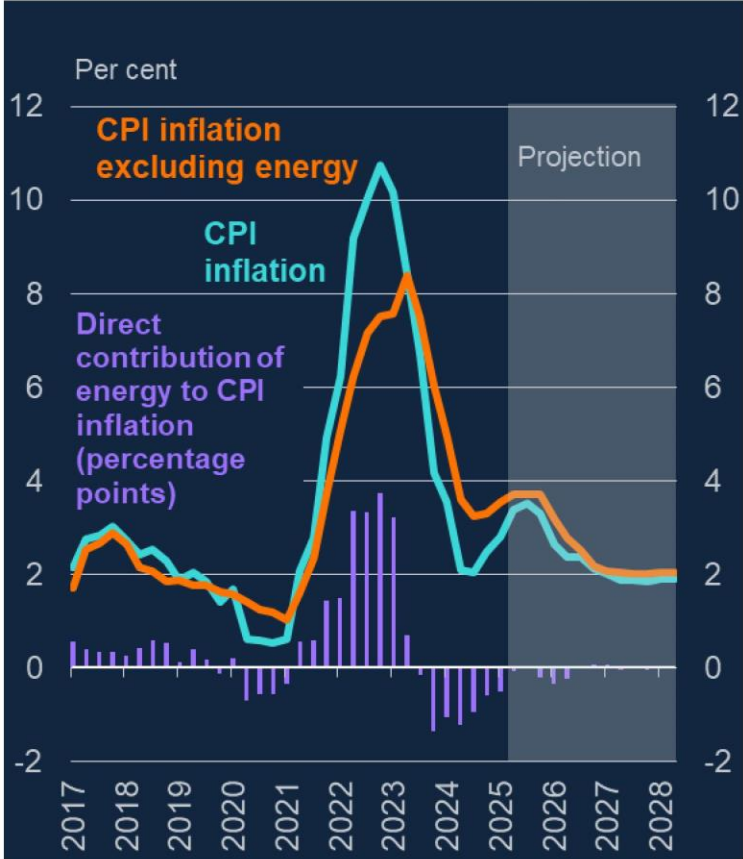
The observed V/U ratio and the estimated equilibrium level



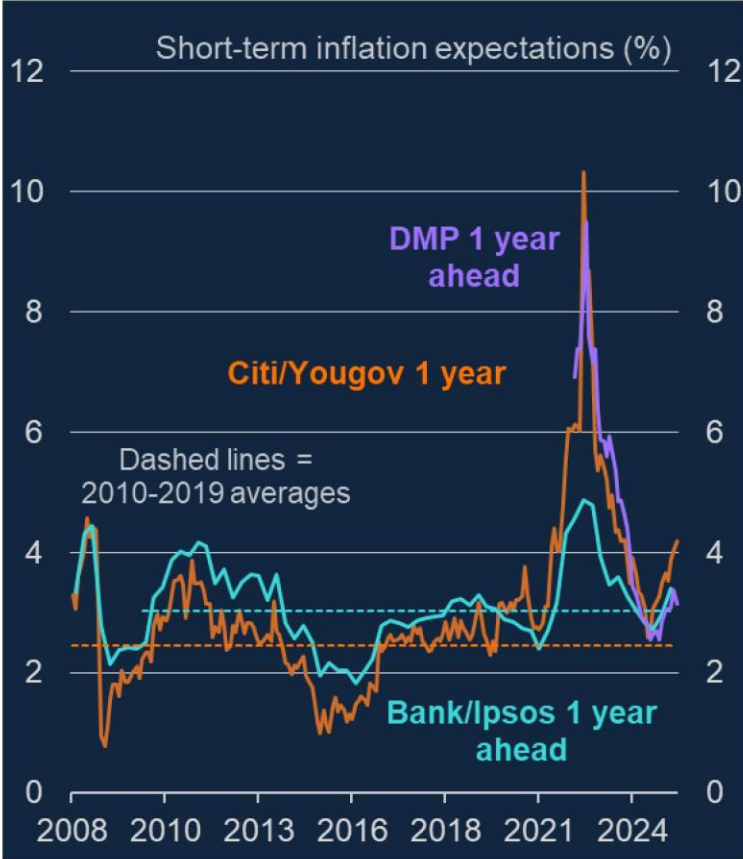
Sources: LHS chart: ONS and Bank calculations. The low variance measure is calculated by weighting each component of services inflation by the inverse variance of the change in 12-month inflation of that component from 12 months previously. The maximum adjusted weight is capped at twice its original value. Details on the components which have been included/excluded from the 'Services excluding indexed and volatile components, rents and foreign holidays' measure are included in the accompanying spreadsheet published online. All measures are seasonally adjusted. The trimmed mean measure excludes the 10% largest and 10% smallest price changes. The latest data points shown refer to March 2025. Centre chart: Bank of England Agents, DMP Survey, HMRC, Indeed, KPMG/REC UK Report on Jobs, Lloyds Business Barometer, ONS and Bank calculations. Private sector regular pay growth in the aqua line shows the ONS measure of private sector regular average weekly earnings growth (three-month average on same three-month average a year ago). Latest data points are for the three months to February 2025 for private sector regular pay. DMP shows three-month average realised pay growth from the DMP Survey. KPMG/REC shows average starting salaries for permanent staff compared to the previous month. The KPMG/REC index is mean-variance adjusted to ONS private sector regular pay growth over 2002–19 and is advanced by 12 months, which better reflects the leading relationship between the KPMG/REC index and the ONS measure of pay growth. HMRC Real-Time Information (RTI) shows median of private sector employee pay growth. Indeed shows annual average job title matched pay growth for UK job vacancies. Latest data points are March 2024 for Indeed, HMRC RTI and the KPMG/REC index, and April 2025 for the DMP Survey. The Agents' pay survey diamond shows respondents' expected average pay settlements in 2025, weighted by employment and sector. The DMP diamond shows average expected pay growth one year ahead for respondents to the April 2025 DMP Survey. RHS: AA/WARC Expenditure Report, ONS and Bank calculations. The equilibrium V/U ratio is estimated using an error-correction model over the period 1982–2023. The real cost of vacancy posting and hourly labour productivity are included as long-run determinants for the level of vacancies. The model also includes controls for short-term movements in these variables (Steinmach et al. 2025). The final data points for both series in the chart are 2024 Q4, while diamonds represent projections for 2025 Q1.

A near-term bump in inflation is expected to fall back though expectations remain elevated

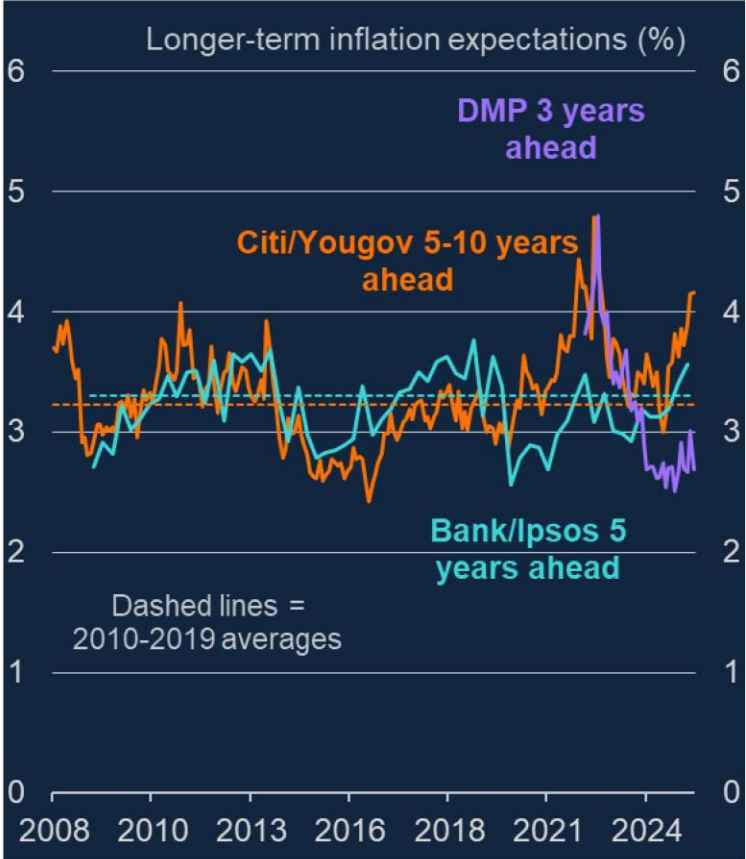
CPI inflation and CPI inflation excluding energy



Household and business short-term inflation expectations



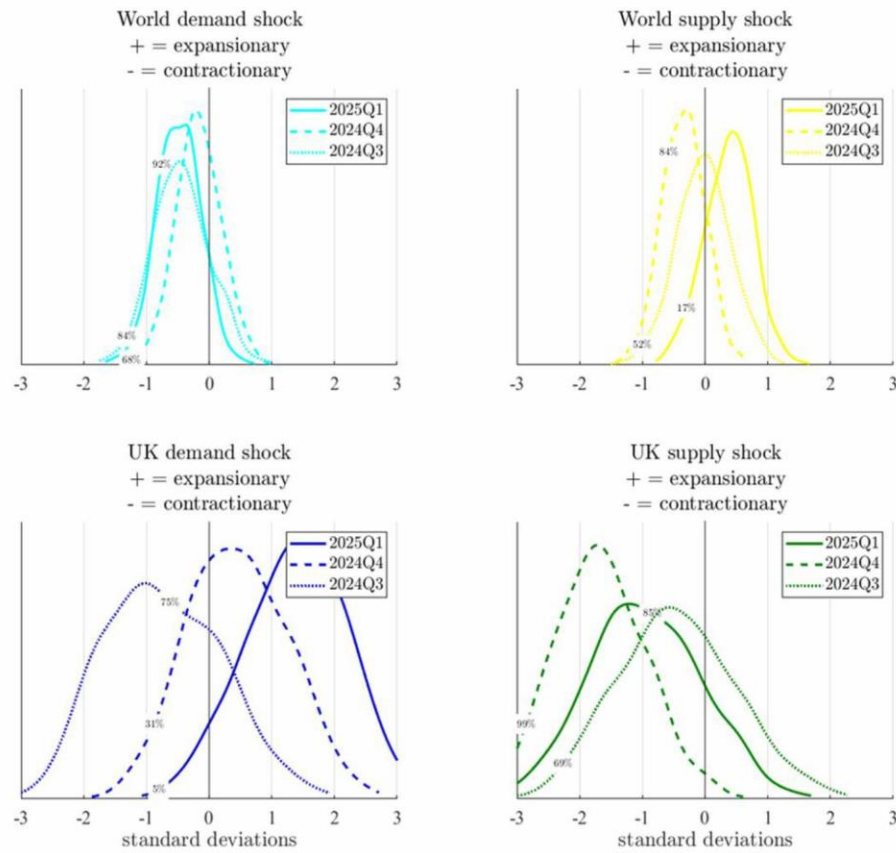
Household and business longer-term inflation expectations



Sources: LHS: Bloomberg Finance L.P., ONS and Bank calculations. Energy prices include fuels and lubricants, electricity, gas and other fuels. Centre and RHS: Bank/Ipsos Inflation Attitudes Survey (IAS), Citigroup, YouGov, DMP and Bank calculations. Bank/Ipsos IAS data shows median responses. Data shown are the one year and five year ahead inflation expectations measures. Dashed lines represent the series averages over 2010–19. A methodological break occurred during the Covid pandemic that means a degree of caution should be taken when making long-run comparisons with these data. The methodology notes linked in the latest [IAS release for February 2025](#) provide more information. Data are not seasonally adjusted and the latest data points are for 2025 Q1. Citi/YouGov survey data shown are the one year and five to ten year ahead inflation expectations measures. Dashed lines represent the series averages over 2010–19. Since August 2022, the YouGov/Citigroup survey has been based on updated response buckets. Data are not seasonally adjusted and the latest data points are for April 2025. DMP data is 1 year and 3 year ahead CPI expectations. Latest data points are for April 2025.

A key question remains whether weakness in activity is supply or demand driven – or both

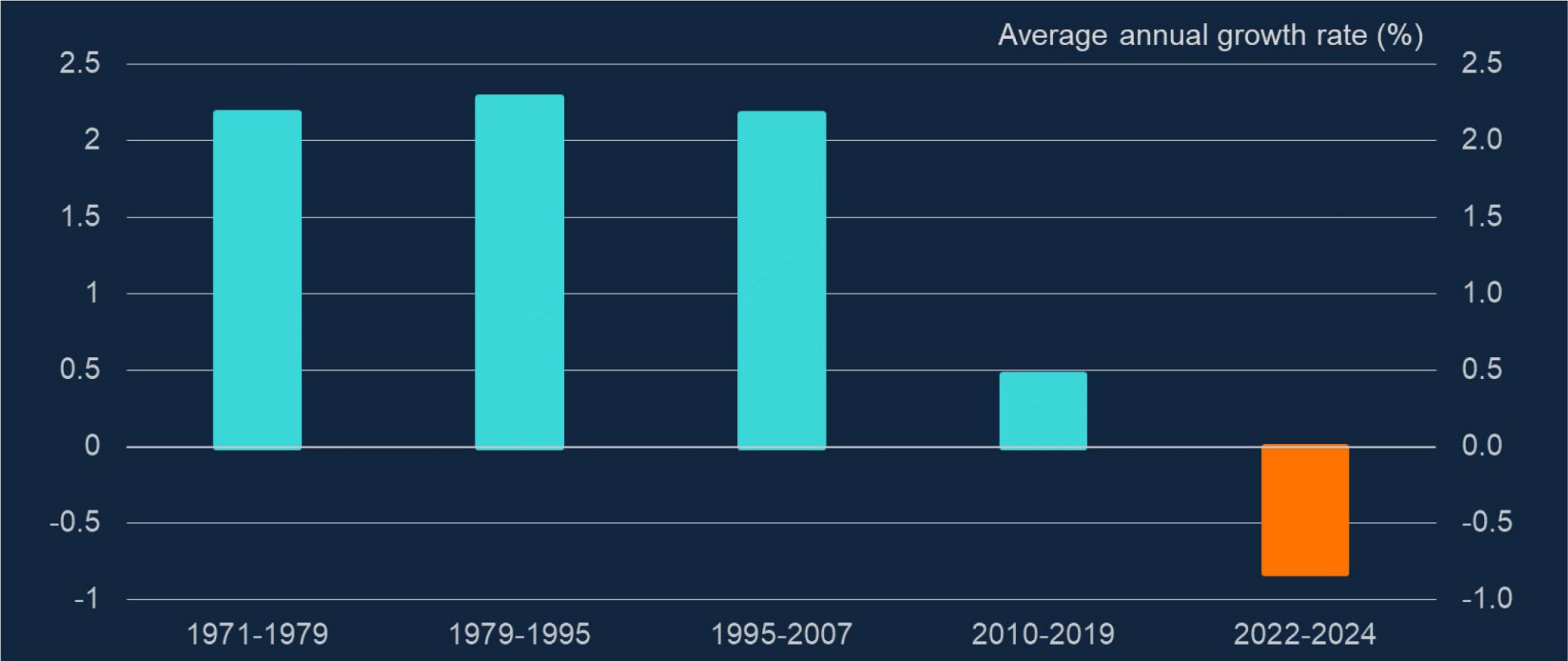
Results from Bank staff's SVAR



Sources: LHS: Chart shows the estimated distribution of domestic and global demand and supply shocks that have hit the UK economy in 2024 Q3, 2024 Q4 and 2025 Q1. These shocks are derived from a SVAR model for the UK economy, estimated using Bayesian techniques on data from 1992 Q1 to 2025 Q1. The shocks are identified through zero and sign restrictions. Moreover, the SVAR also estimates a global energy shock and a domestic monetary policy shock, not shown here. See [here](#) for further details on the model. RHS: Chart shows a decomposition of YoY headline GDP growth using results from the SVAR model. The chart is expressed in deviation from deterministic component (around 2%).

Productivity continues to be surprisingly weak

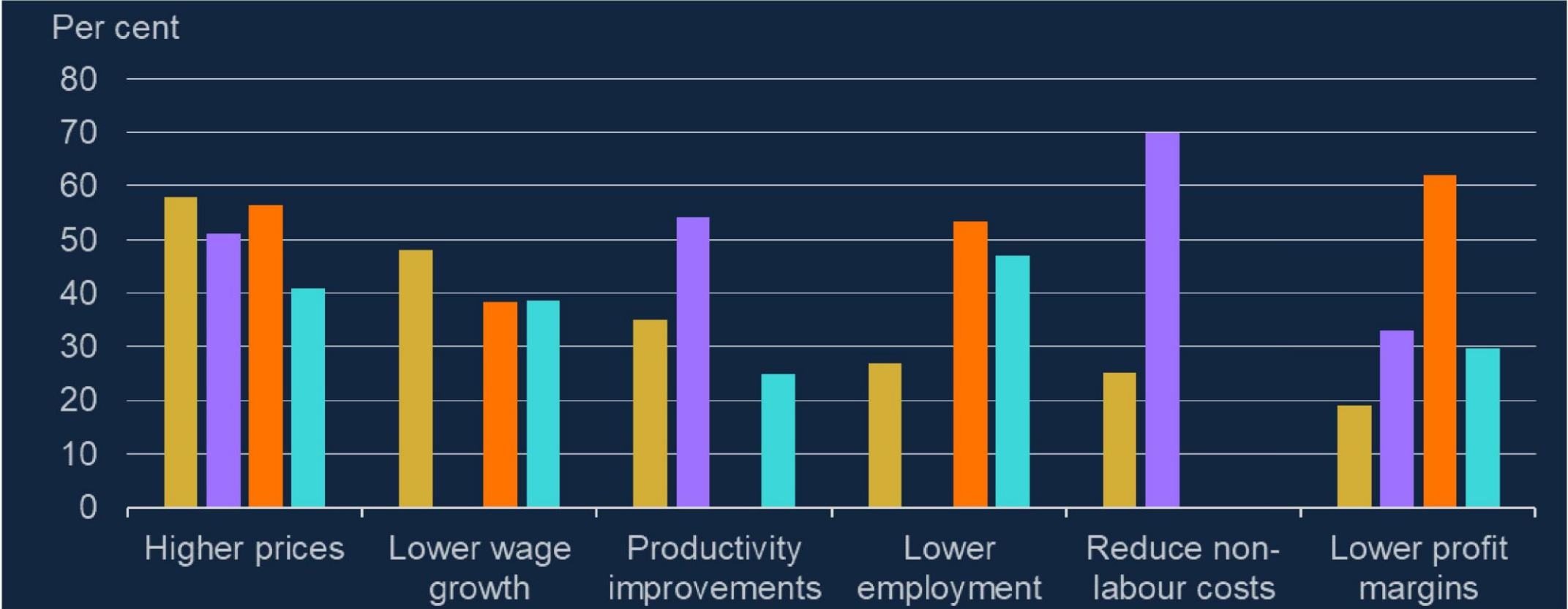
Average annual growth rate of whole economy labour productivity



Sources: ONS and Bank calculations.

Businesses' responses to the rise in the NICs is still unclear

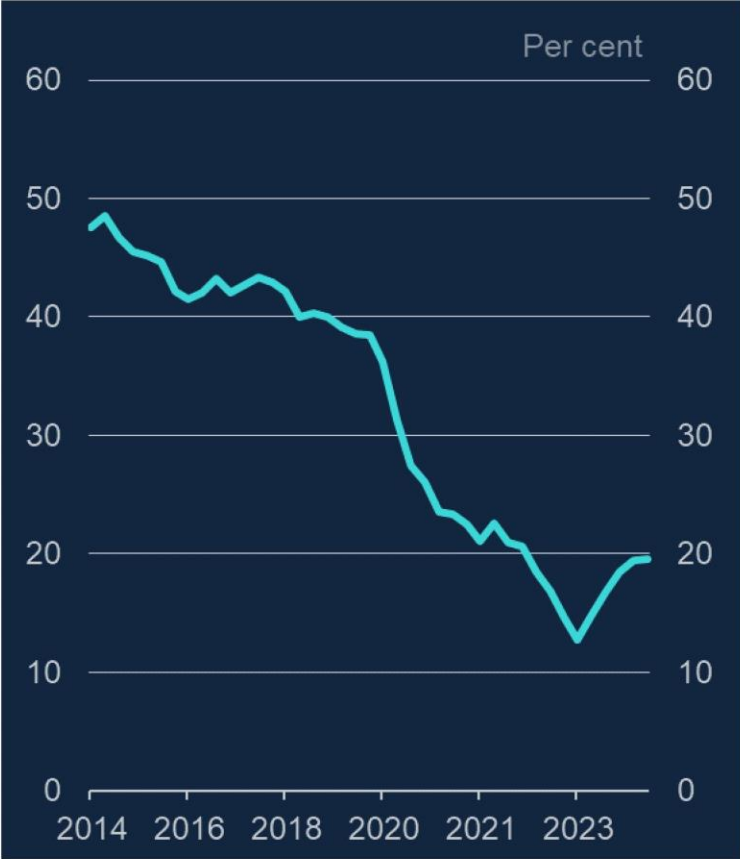
Proportion of firms reporting responses to Autumn Budget policy changes by margin of adjustment



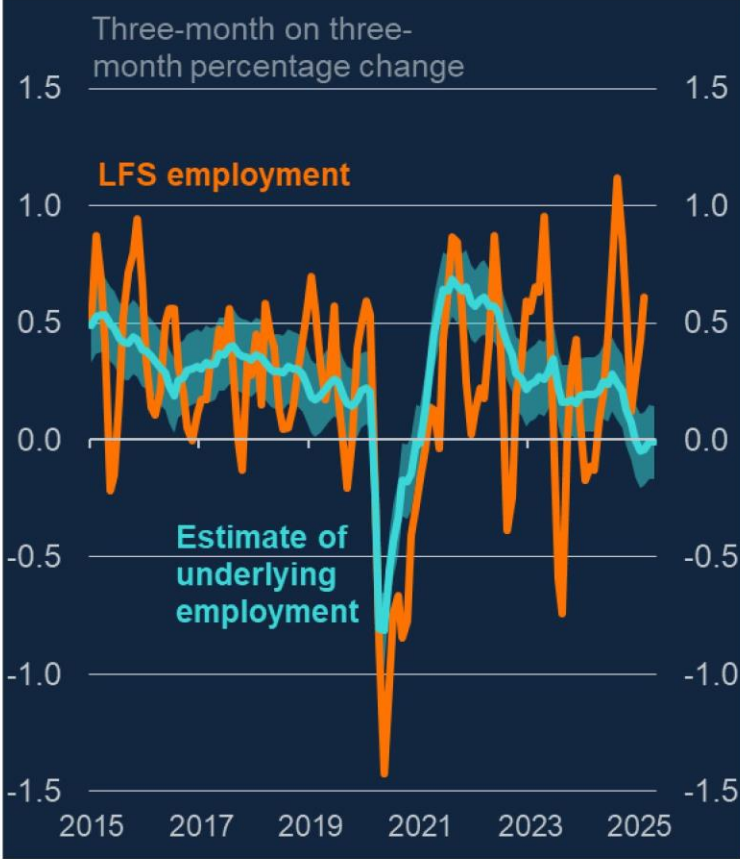
Sources: Agents' pay survey, Deloitte, DMP Survey, IoD and Bank calculations. Agents' pay survey results are based on the question: 'In response to the April 2025 increases in employers' National Insurance contributions (NICs) and National Living Wage/National Minimum Wage (NLW), and other changing labour market policies (including proposals in the Employment Rights Bill), what actions do you plan to take (select up to three that are most relevant/significant to you)?'. Firms are allowed to select multiple options, although limited to three options, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100. Responses are weighted by firm industry and size. Responses are for November and December 2024. Deloitte CFO survey results are based on weighted-average ratings on a scale of 0–100 for how likely chief financial officers are to pursue the following strategies in response to the forthcoming rise in employer National Insurance contributions. Zero stands for not pursuing at all and 100 stands for pursuing to the greatest extent. Latest data are for 2024 Q4. DMP results are based on the question: 'How do you expect your business to respond to the changes to employer National Insurance contributions announced in the November 2024 Budget?'. Firms are allowed to select multiple options, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100. Responses are weighted by firm industry and employment. Responses are for January 2025. IoD results are based on responses to the question: 'You said the changes will increase your employer National Insurance bill. How do you plan to respond to the resulting higher costs of employment?'. Latest data are for February 2025. Other option not shown in chart had response of 6.5%.

Official statistics still face some challenges

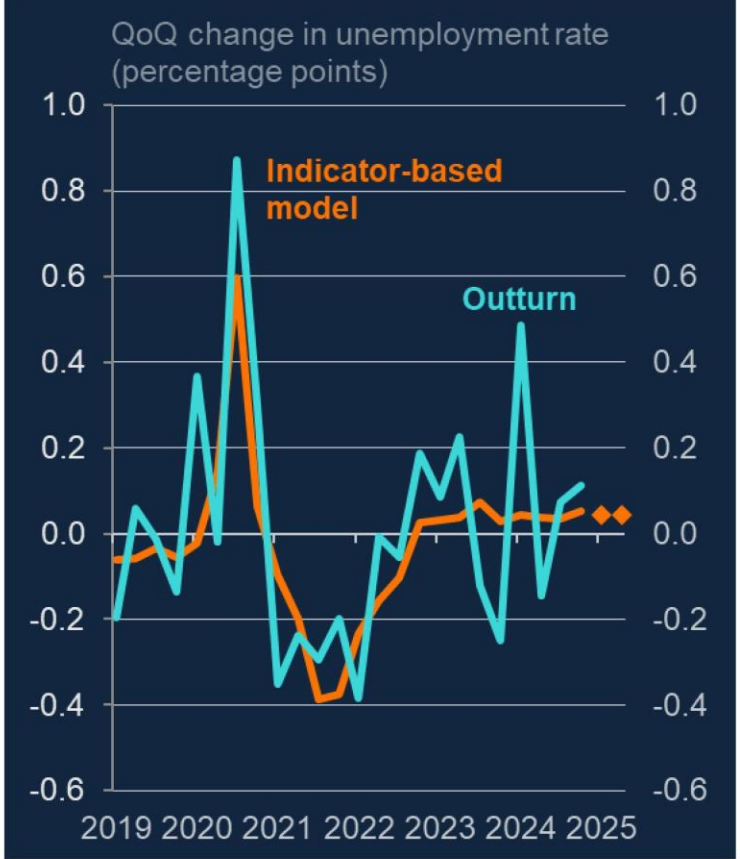
LFS response rates, excluding imputed households



Measures of employment growth










Quarterly change in the unemployment rate



Sources: LHS: ONS. Latest data is for 2024Q4. Response rate shown is total response rate. The total response rate is the cumulative response rate for the quarter across all waves, based on all eligible, in-scope households. Centre: Bank of England Agents, DMP survey, HM Revenue and Customs, KPMG/REC/S&P Global UK Report on Jobs, Lloyds Business Barometer, ONS, S&P Global and Bank calculations. (a) Bank staff's indicator-based measure of underlying employment growth is constructed using a dynamic factor model following the approach of [Doz et al \(2011\)](#). The model extracts a common component from monthly survey indicators, capturing co-movements across series. The common component is scaled to align with LFS employment growth between 2000–19. Shaded area represents 95% confidence intervals. Latest data are for the three months to February 2025 for the LFS and April 2025 for the survey data. RHS: Bank of England Agents, Google Trends, S&P Global, KPMG/REC UK Report on Jobs, ONS and Bank calculations. Bank staff's indicator-based models of near-term unemployment use mixed-data sampling (MIDAS) techniques ([Daniell and Moreira \(2023\)](#)). Latest data are to 2024 Q3 and the diamonds show the model implied values for 2024 Q4 and 2025 Q1.

Uncertainty persists surrounding the degree of restrictiveness in the economy

Potential drivers of the change in R^*

Potential driver	Likely directional impact on R^*
Demographic trends	
Global trade fragmentation	
Higher risk	
Global financial fragmentation	
Expansionary global fiscal policy	
Artificial intelligence (AI)	
Climate change	

Sources: LHS: Bank of England [February 2025 Monetary Policy Report](#).

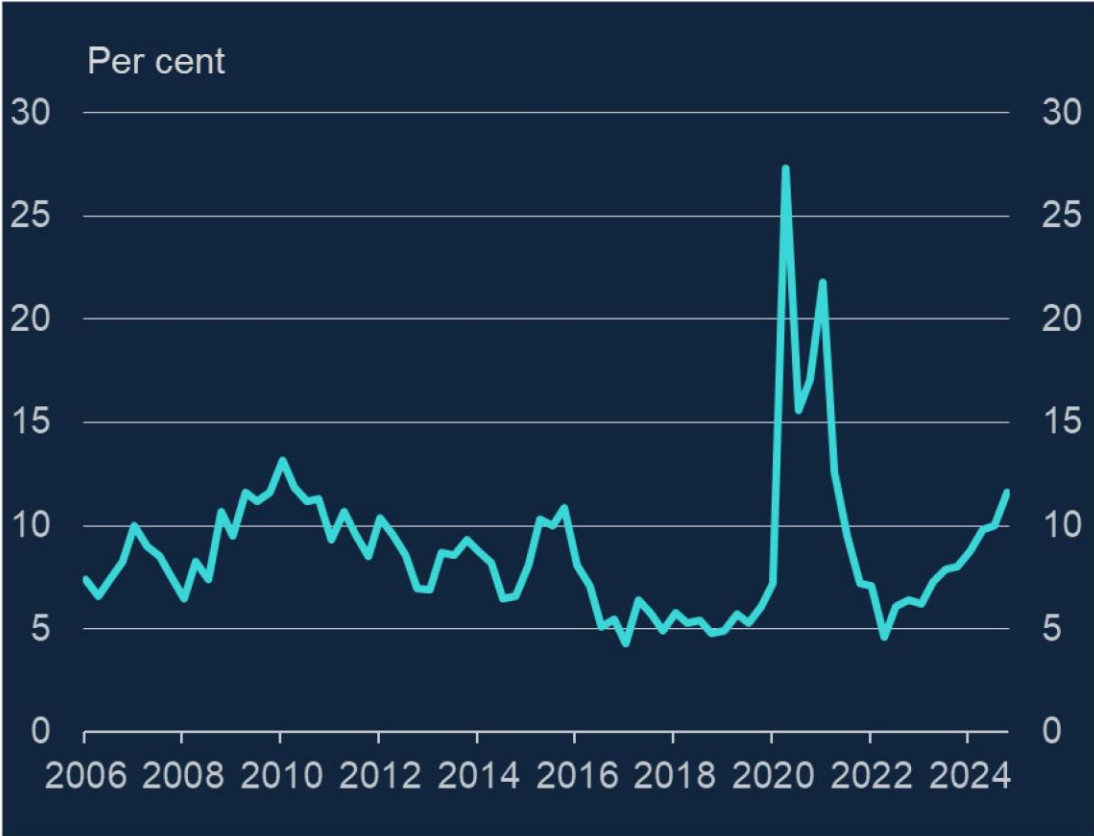
Estimates of change in R^* between 2018 and F25

Approach	Change from 2018 to F25 MPR
Financial market measures	>90bps
Survey measures	<25bps-150bps
Macroeconomic models	25bps-75bps

Sources: Financial market measures are based on dynamic term-structure models. 10-year forward expected rates are extracted from nominal bond yields before subtracting survey inflation expectations. The survey measures are based on responses to the Bank of England's MaPS survey and professional forecasts according to Consensus Economics. The macroeconomic models covered in the range are [Davis et al \(2024\)](#) and [Del Negro et al \(2019\)](#). Estimates shown are not exact. More detail can be found in the [February 2025 Monetary Policy Report](#).

Household saving ratio and consumption suggest monetary policy is still restrictive

Household saving ratio



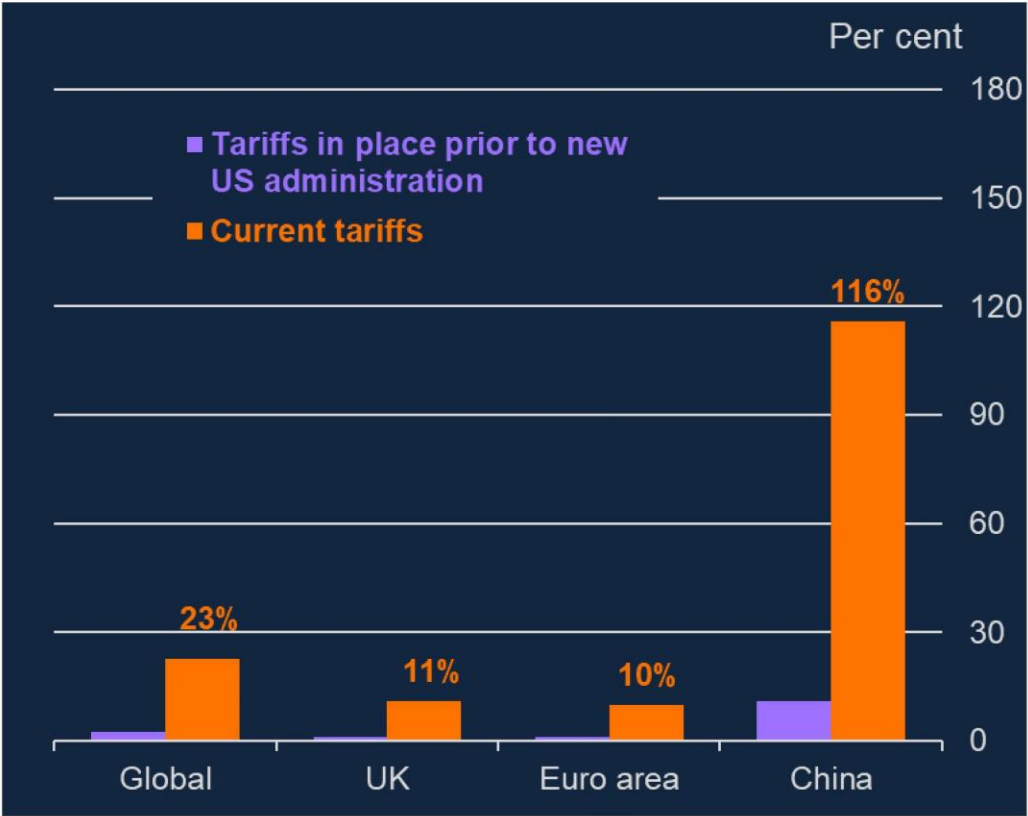
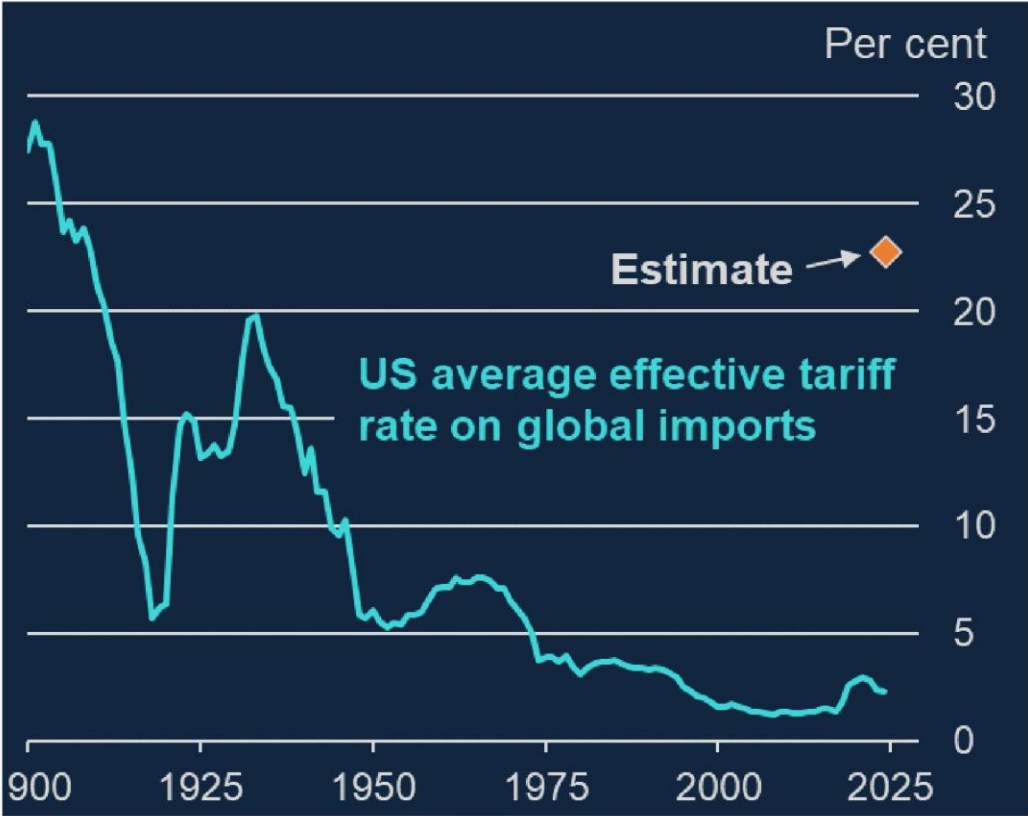
Household consumption



Source: ONS. LHS: Saving as a percentage of total available household resources. Based on NRJS. Final data points are 2024 Q4. RHS: Indexed 2019 Q4. Based on ABJR and HAYO. .

Global shocks have emerged

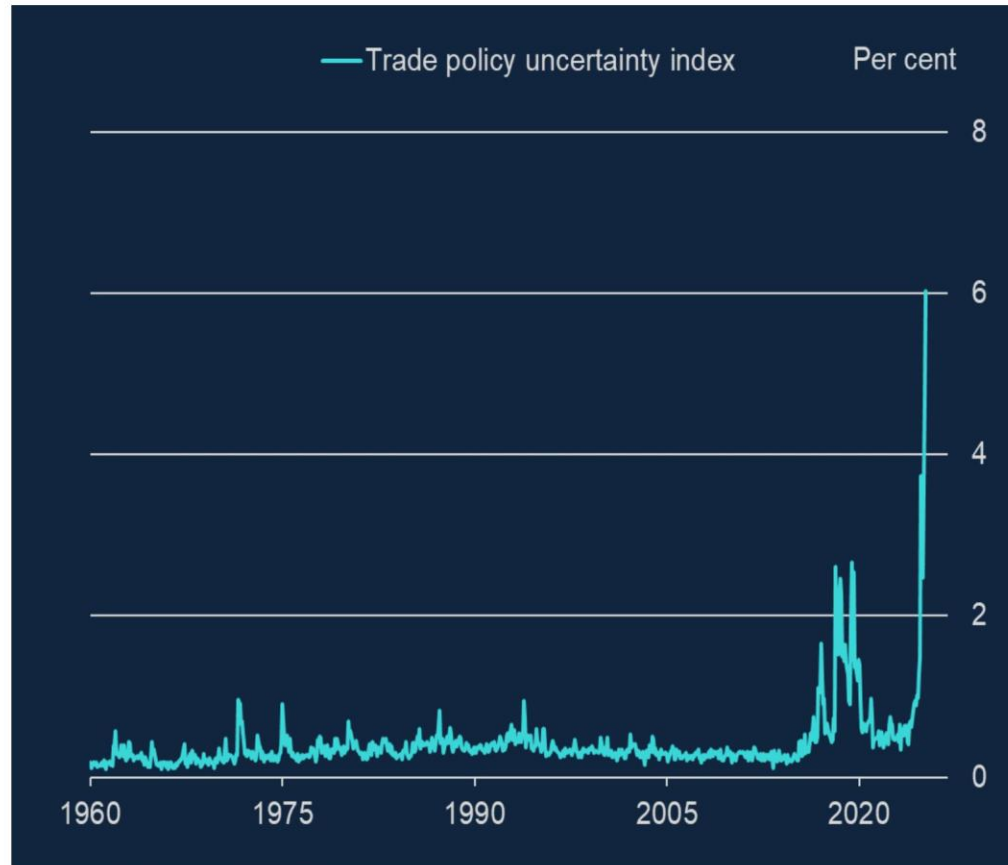
US effective tariffs



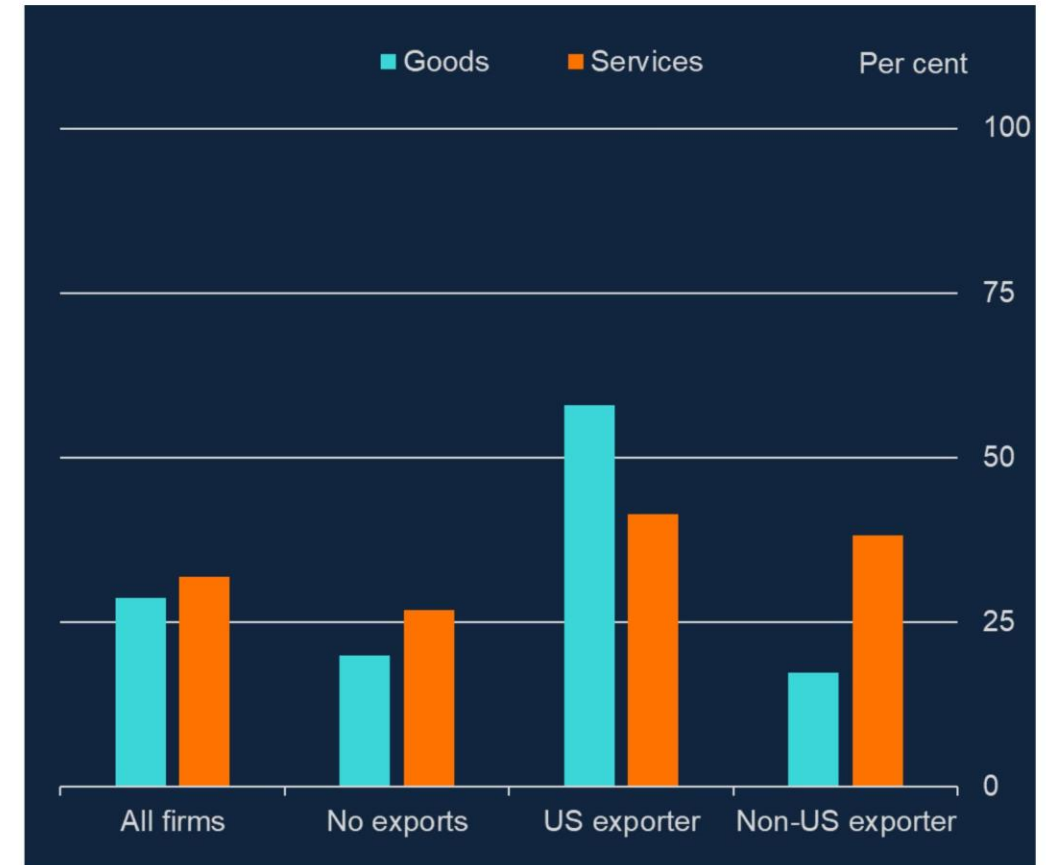
Sources: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, US International Trade Commission, White House and Bank calculations. The effective tariff rate is defined as implied customs duty revenue divided by total goods imports for consumption. Estimates for current effective US tariff rates reflect trade policies in place as of 15 April 2025 and assume that trade weights and flows remain fixed at 2024 levels. In the latest estimates, Bank staff also assume that the share of trade compliant with the free trade Agreement between the US, Mexico and Canada (USMCA) will rise from 2024 levels, with the vast majority of imports from Canada and Mexico adhering to USMCA standards as firms are motivated to demonstrate compliance in response to higher tariffs. A range of external estimates suggest that the US average effective tariff rate on global imports has increased to between 18% and 28% under the new US administration, depending on assumptions, particularly around changes in trade flows and substitution effects in response to tariffs, and the share of USMCA compliant trade.

Tariffs have led to heightened uncertainty

Trade policy uncertainty



Share of UK firms expecting a fall in sales next year because of US tariffs



Sources: [Caldara et al \(2019\)](#), DMP Survey and Bank calculations. LHS: The trade policy uncertainty index reflects automated text search results of the electronic archives of seven newspapers discussing trade policy uncertainty: Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, Guardian, Los Angeles Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Washington Post. Data are monthly. The final data point is for March 2024. RHS: The survey results are based on the question: 'How do you expect the implementation of new tariffs on goods entering the United States to affect the sales of your business over the next year?'. The survey took place between 4 and 18 April 2025.

Risks of trade policy to inflation are two-sided, but on balance likely to be disinflationary

Unilateral tariffs							Retaliation		
Impact on →	UK activity	UK inflation	Explanation	UK activity	UK inflation	Explanation			
Channel ↓									
Included in ECB-G									
Expenditure switching	↓	↓	US demand for UK exports weakens.	↓	↓	US demand for UK exports weakens			
Weaker global demand	↓	↓	Additional trade distortions weigh on global demand, weakening demand for UK exports.	↓	↓	Additional trade distortions weigh on global demand, weakening demand for UK exports.			
Trade diversion	↔	↓	Other countries lower prices of exports previously destined for US.	↔	↓	Other countries lower prices of exports previously destined for US.			
Exchange rate movement	↑	↑	Sterling depreciates against the dollar.	↓	↓	Sterling appreciates against the dollar.			
Not included in ECB-G									
Supply chains	↓	↑	Reorganisation temporarily reduces global supply capacity and increases price pressures.	↓	↑	Reorganisation temporarily reduces global supply capacity and increases price pressures.			
Lower competition/ knowledge transfer	↓	↔	Reduced trade openness weighs on global potential supply growth.	↓	↔	Reduced trade openness weighs on global potential supply growth.			

Source: For further details see [\(Greene, 2025\)](#)

Tariffs have also contributed to some sharp movements in financial markets

Equities



Foreign exchange



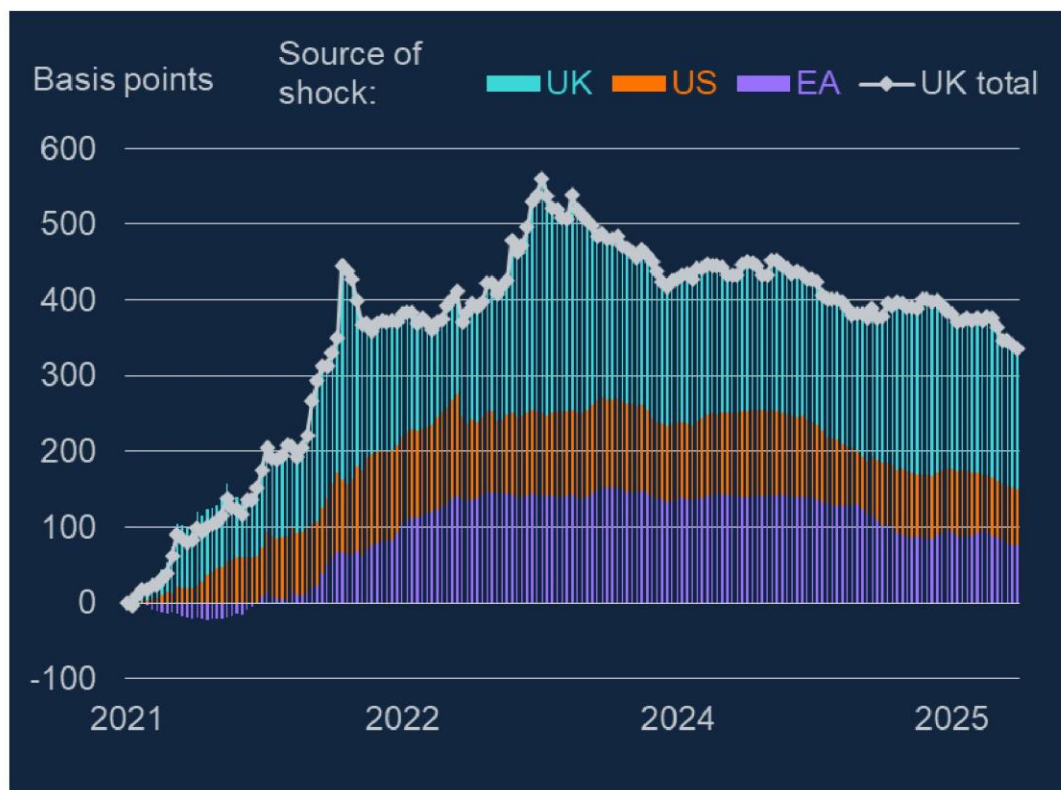
Ten-year government bond yields



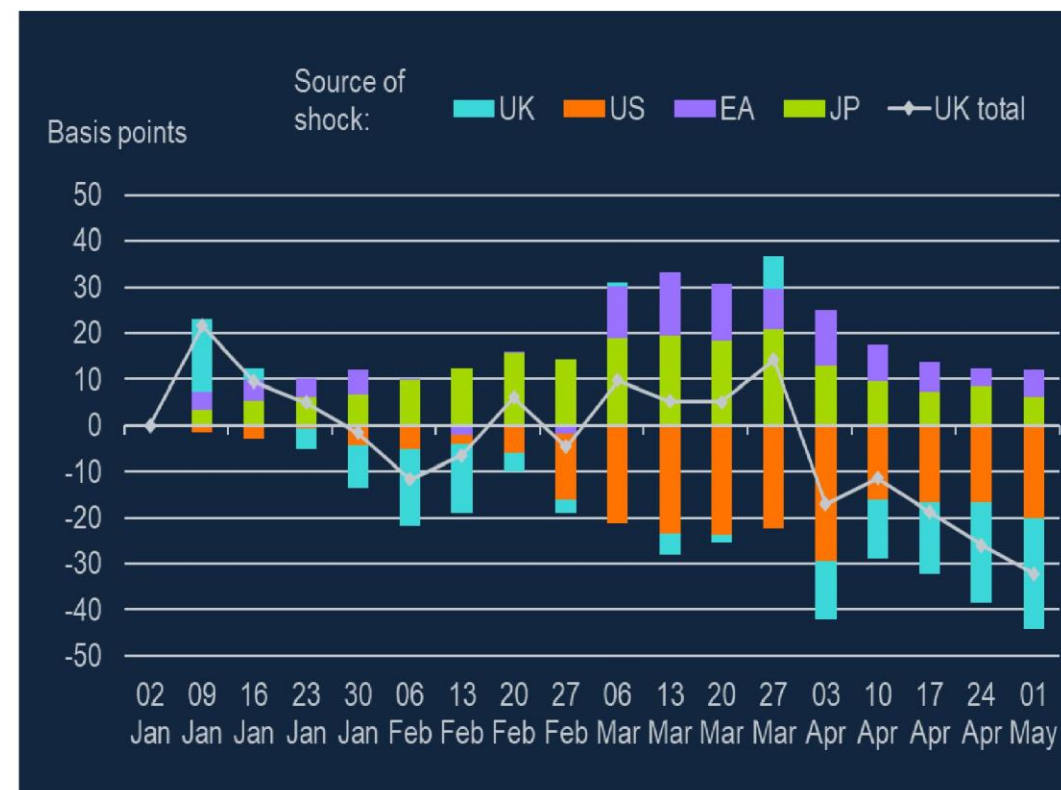
Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., Tradeweb FTSE Gilt Closing Data and Bank calculations. Equities and effective exchange rates are indexed to the date of the 2024 US presidential election, while 10-year yields show cumulative changes in yields over the same period. The final data points are for 29 April 2025.

Developments outside the UK significantly shift UK rates

Rigobon decomposition of UK 1y OIS



Rigobon decomposition of UK 3y Gilt Yield



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P. and Bank calculations. RHS: Decomposition of UK 1-year overnight index swap (OIS) rate cumulative change since December 2021. (LHS) and UK 3-year gilt cumulative change since 2 January 2025 (RHS) yield based on a model following [Rigobon \(2003\)](#). Latest data: 1ST May 2025.





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BANK OF ENGLAND WATCHERS' CONFERENCE 2025

MONETARY POLICY PANEL

Bank of England Watchers Conference

Katharine Neiss, PhD

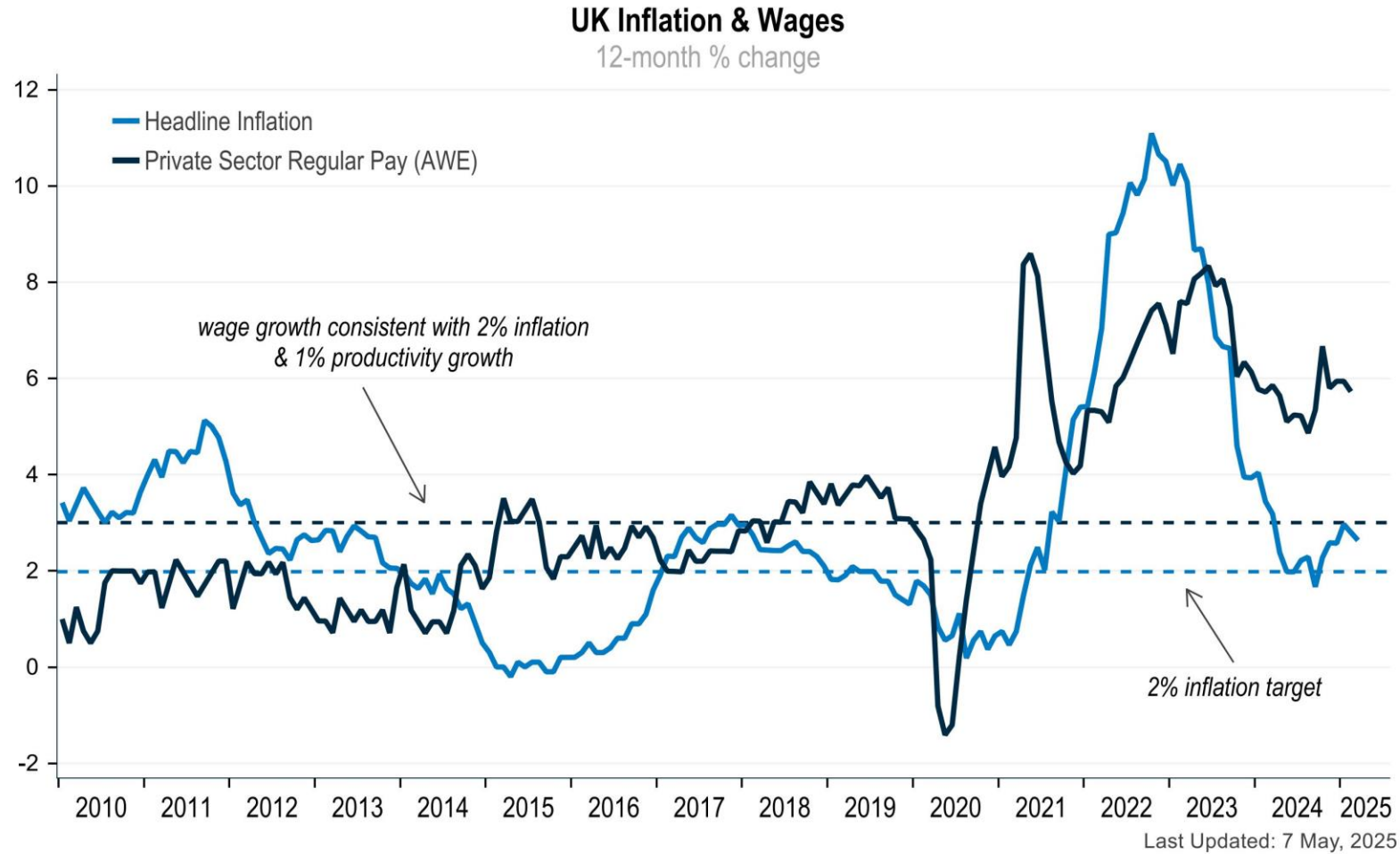
Deputy Head of Global Economics and Chief European Economist

May 13, 2025

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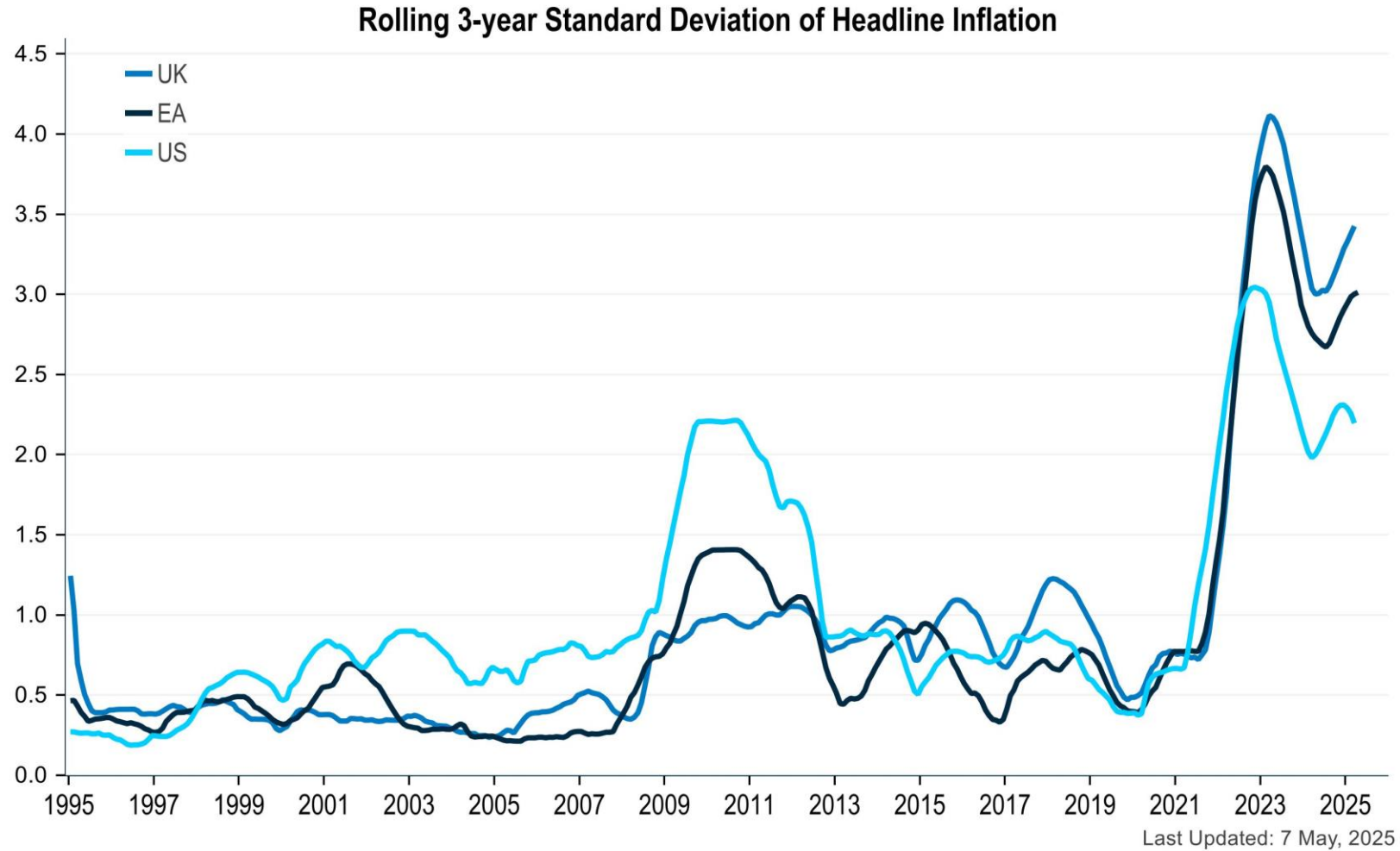
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Harder for the BOE to be Pre-emptive When Inflation and Wage Growth Still Too High



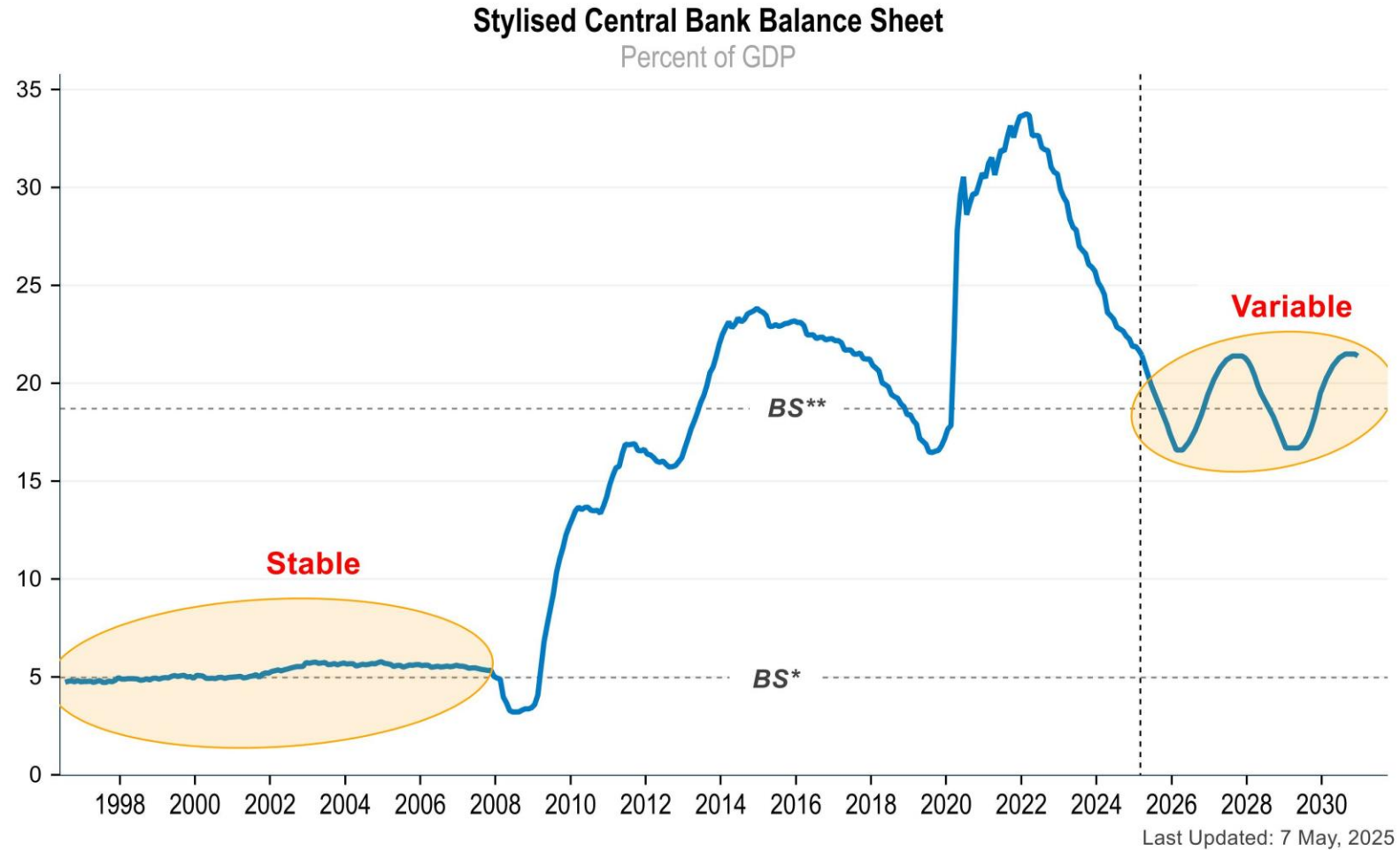
Source: Macrobond.

Job of Central Banks More Difficult in a World of Greater Inflation Variability



Source: Macrobond.

Policy May Need to Become More Reactive in the Case of Larger, More Frequent Shocks



Source: Macrobond.

REFERENCE

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The Flip Side of Monetary Policy

Gianluca Benigno, HEC-Lausanne

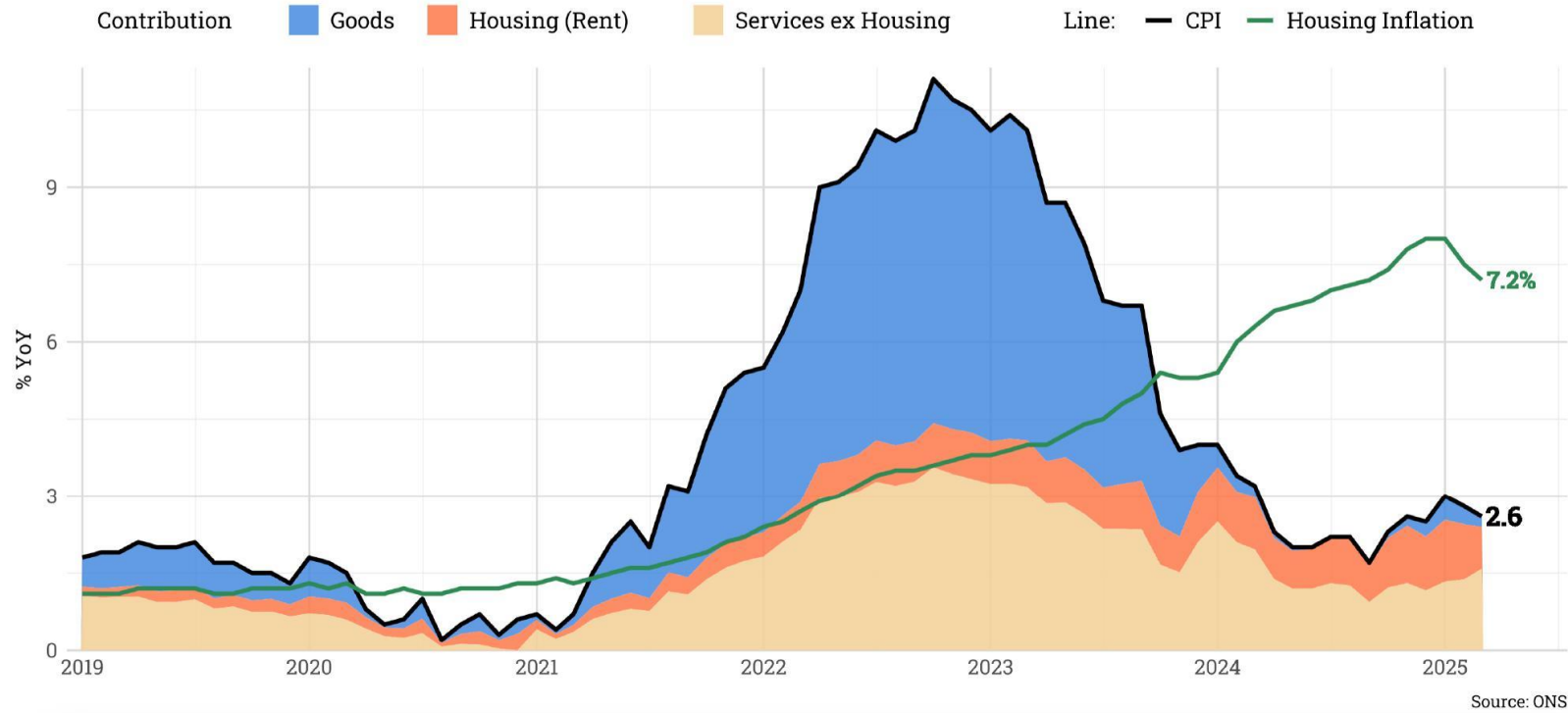


Bank of England Watcher Conference, 12th May 2025

UK inflation

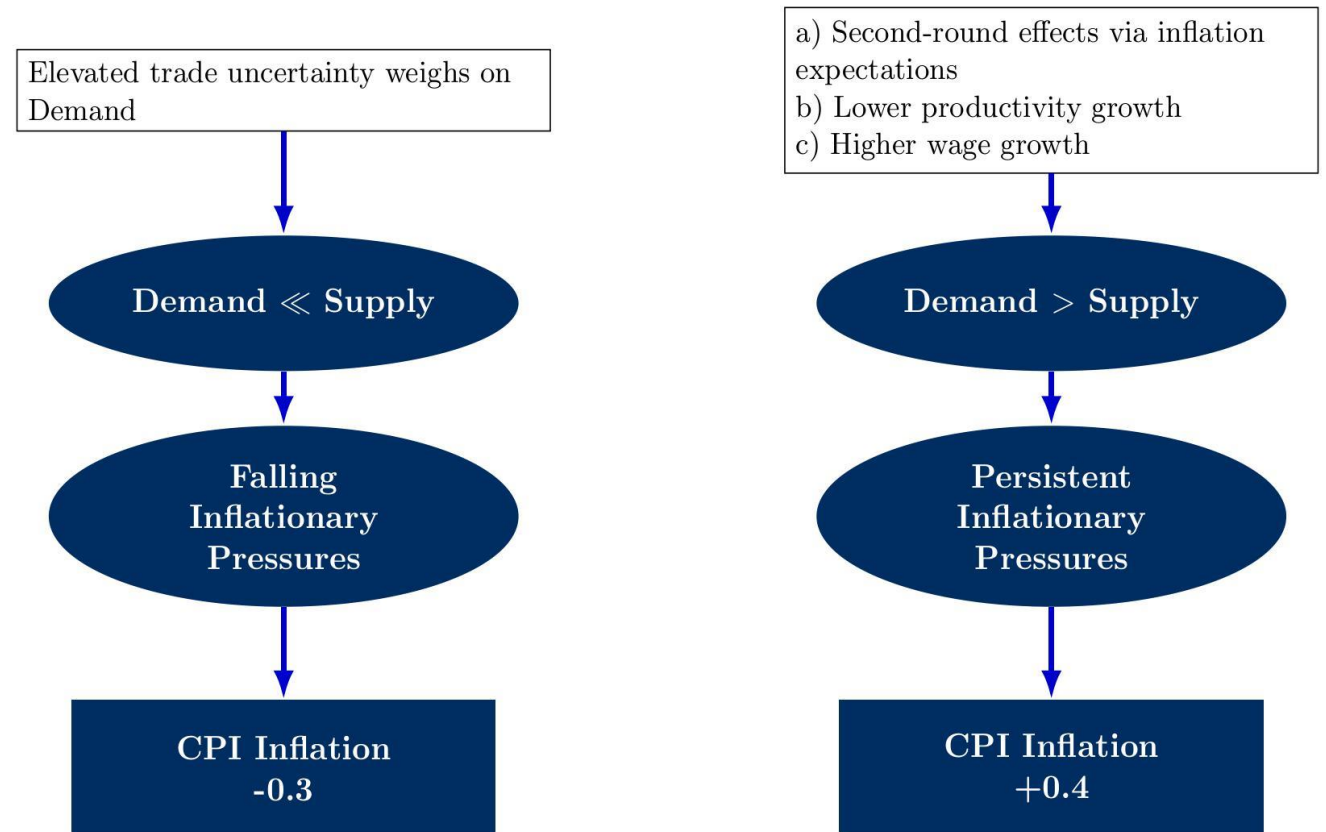
UK CPI Inflation Decomposition (%YoY)

Proportional contributions from Goods, Rent, and Services ex Rent with Housing Inflation and CPI lines



Bank of England's Scenario Analysis

Scenarios around Inflation Dynamics



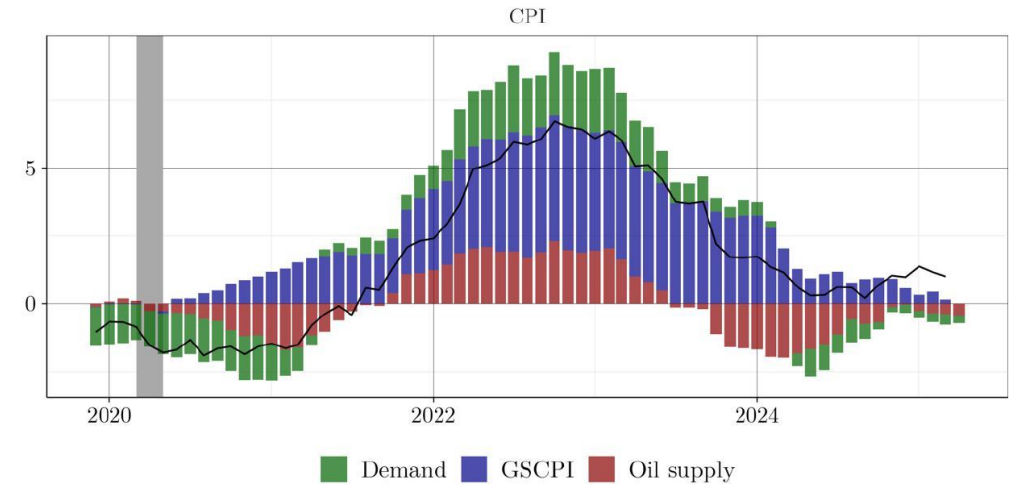
Background: Inflation Analysis

Two aspects:

- a) Global factors (supply chain disruption and natural gas)
- b) Cost-Channel: interest rates increase passed on tenants.

Note: relevance of regulated and indexed prices.

Historical decomposition - GBR



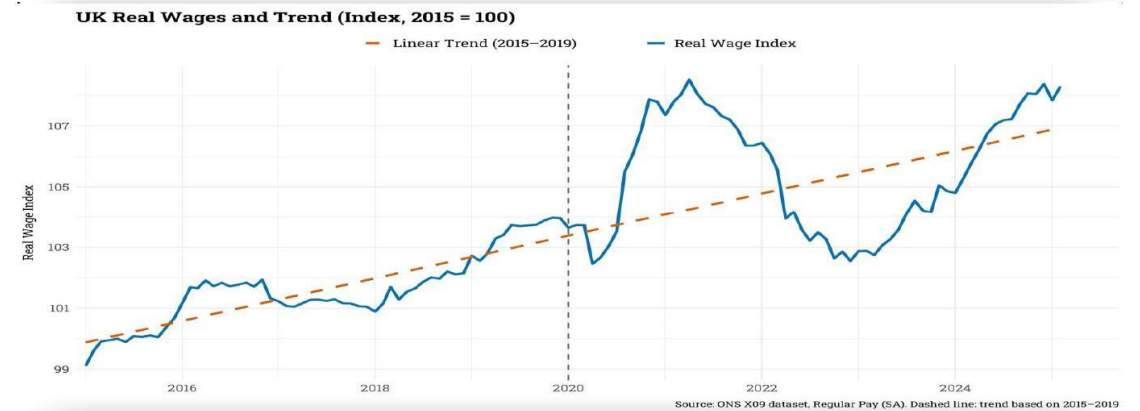
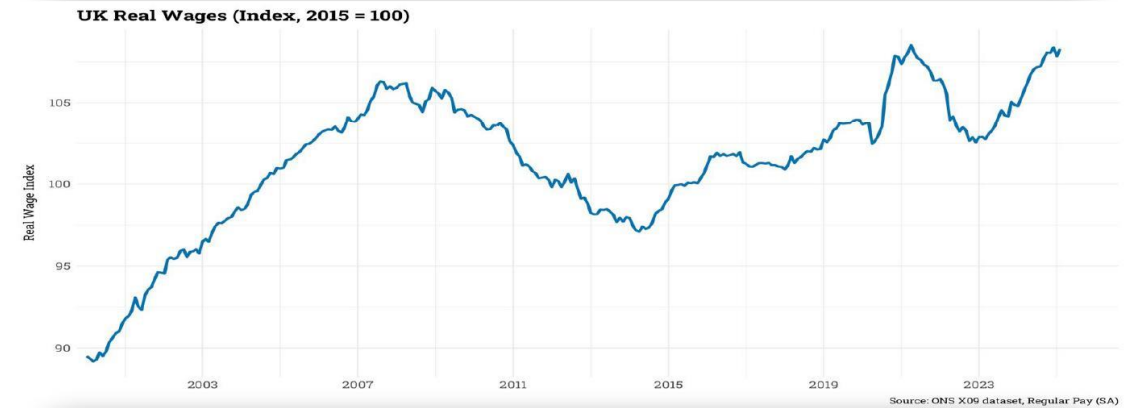
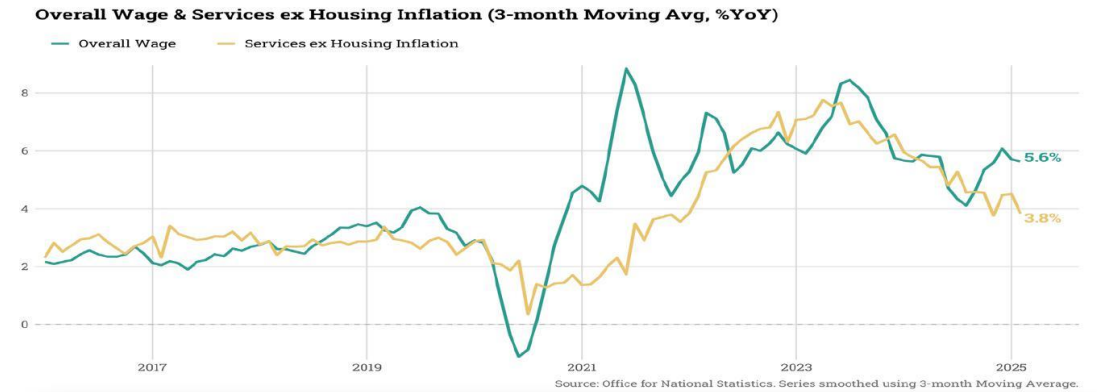
Actual rents for housing inflation and interest rate
(monthly annual rates, YoY%)



Wage and Demand

Nominal wage growth not just input costs.

Flip side: wage growth as income to support aggregate demand



Implications for Monetary Policy: the Flip Side

Less cautious and gradual cuts: more convinced and regular.

Interest rate cuts to support spending, limiting cash flow channel and reversing cost channel.

Other effects: fiscal policy (supportive) exchange rate (less so to the extent to which might amplify trade disruptions).



Conclusions

- Keeping rates high may contribute to inflation persistence.
- Nominal wage growth supports aggregate demand more than it acts as a cost driver.
- In a demand-deficient economy with structurally low productivity, the direct impact of tariffs on the UK economy is less relevant.

There are more certainties than uncertainties in the current policy landscape.





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THE NEUTRAL RATE OF INTEREST

Bank of England

The neutral rate of interest – and its relevance for monetary policy

Bank of England Watchers' Conference

12 May 2025

Dr. Catherine L. Mann

External member of the Monetary Policy Committee





What is the neutral rate of interest?

What is the neutral rate of interest?

- Definition: Varies across institutions, papers and studies
 - My preferred definition: the interest rate that neither stimulates nor depresses inflation
 - But, the time horizon of 'neither stimulate nor depress' is key, as time horizon incorporates the presence and dynamics of shocks, transmission, lags, and spillovers
- Synonyms? Neutral, natural, terminal, equilibrium rate... R-star, r-star...
 - In practice these are not all synonymous, they are different concepts, and differ by interlocutor
 - For my decision-making, the 'neutral rate' is the short-term rate at which the economy is neither stimulated nor contracted within the monetary policy horizon, and inflation is sustainably at target
- Measurement challenges:
 - Few of the elements underpinning the neutral rate are observable

Bringing the concepts together...

Illustrative example of the interaction between notions of nominal neutral and the nominal policy rate



Sources: Bank calculations.

Notes: Because the illustration asserts that $(\text{policy rate} - \text{short-term neutral}) = \text{degree of restrictiveness or accommodation}$, it follows that short-term and long-term neutral in this illustration is in nominal terms.

Restrictiveness at time t :

Determined by the term structure of expected interest rates, including the transmission through financial markets relative to the neutral rate, and the policy rate

Illustrative example of the term structure of neutral and the policy rate



Sources: Bank calculations.

Notes: Because the illustration asserts that $(\text{policy rate} - \text{short-term neutral}) = \text{degree of restrictiveness or accommodation}$, it follows that short-term and long-term neutral in this illustration is in nominal terms.

The term structure of the neutral rate: short-run versus long-run

- The distinction between short and long-run neutral rate has been previously made in the literature ([Platzer et al., 2022](#); [Obstfeld, 2023](#)) and in policy-making ([Seim, 2024](#); [Baker et al., 2023](#))
 - Short-run neutral can be moved around by economic shocks, changes in first stage financial market transmission, volatility, and spillovers of varying sources (e.g. risk, fiscal, demand shocks)
 - Long-run neutral is determined by the equilibrium level of savings and investment in the economy. It is the risk-less return that equates the demand and supply for savings. It is linked to slow-moving structural changes in the economy, such as demographics and productivity growth
 - For me, short-run neutral has greater monetary policy relevance. Long-run neutral is far off-stage, but it is helpful to the extent that this is the trend around which short-run fluctuates
-



Assessing the degree of restrictiveness

1) interest rate gaps

Monetary policy strategy: measuring restrictiveness

Let restrictiveness be defined as:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{real interest rate} - \text{neutral rate} \\ &= r - r^* \end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

Monetary policy strategy: measuring restrictiveness

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where

$$r = i - E(\pi) \tag{2}$$

and

$$r^* = i^* - E(\pi^*) \tag{3}$$

i = nominal interest rate set by the MPC (i.e. Bank Rate), $E(\pi)$ is expected inflation, i^* = nominal neutral interest rate and $E(\pi^*)$ is expected long-run inflation (2% is the BoE inflation target).

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Putting (2) and (3) into (1):

$$r - r^* = [i - E(\pi)] - [i^* - E(\pi^*)] \tag{4}$$

Monetary policy strategy: measuring restrictiveness

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Putting (2) and (3) into (1):

$$r - r^* = [i - E(\pi)] - [i^* - E(\pi^*)] \tag{4}$$

Rearranging (4):

$$r - r^* = [i - i^*] - [E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)] \tag{5}$$

Monetary policy and measuring restrictiveness: what do we know?

$$r - r^* = [i - i^*] - [E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)] \quad (5)$$

- The elements of the real rate gap $r - r^*$ are not observable
 - The policy rate i is known (it's my job), but i^* has to be measured
 - The inflation target $E(\pi^*)$ is pre-determined, but inflation expectations $E(\pi)$ need to be measured (and managed)
-

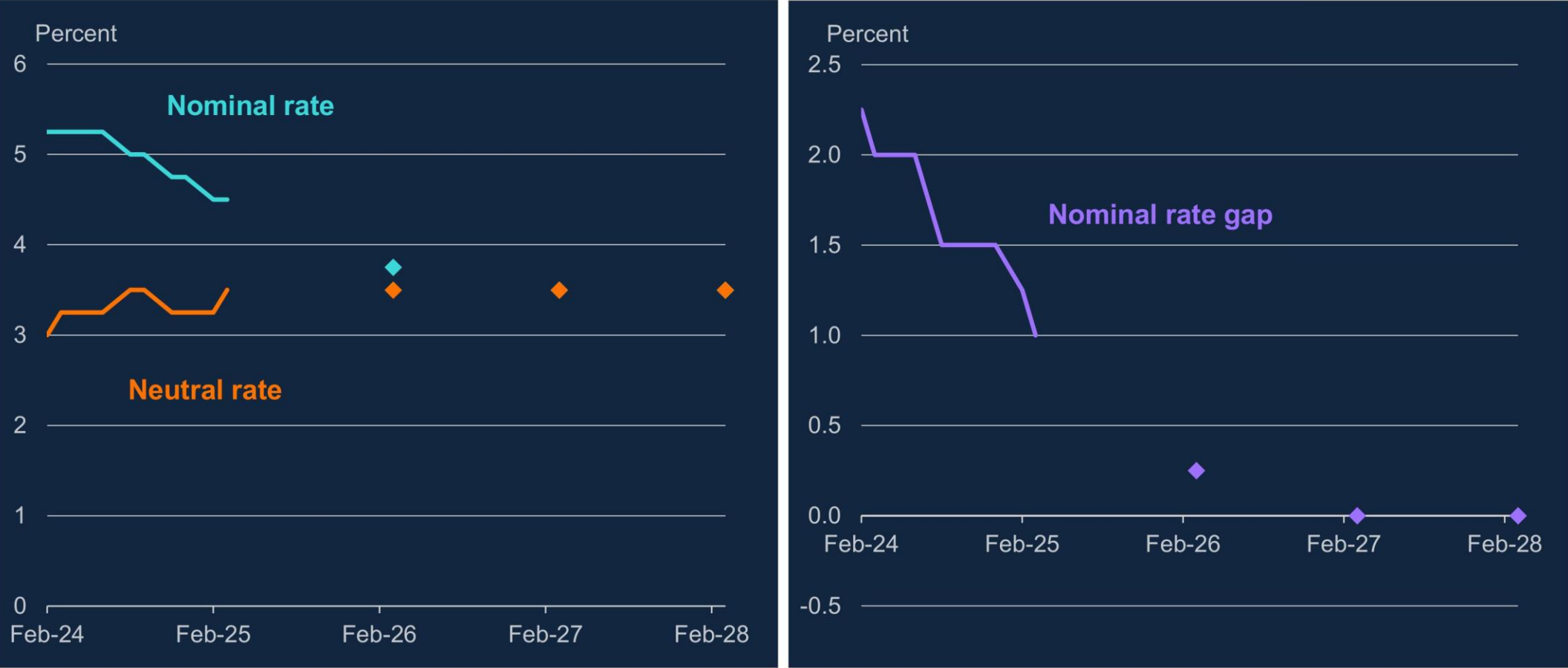
a) The nominal rate gap

$$r - r^* = \underbrace{[i - i^*]}_{\text{Nominal rate gap}} - [E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)] \quad (5)$$

- Some channels of the monetary transmission mechanism (mainly the cash flow channel, through mortgage rates for instance) are nominal in nature
- Monetary policymakers affect monetary conditions, and therefore financial conditions, by changing i and/or by affecting inflation expectations $E(\pi)$ while keeping long-term inflation expectations anchored at the inflation target $E(\pi^*) = 2\%$

Measuring $[i - i^*]$: A majority of MaPS respondents expect policy to turn neutral within 2 years

MaPS-implied nominal rate gap



Sources: Market Participant Survey and Bank calculations.
Notes: Diamonds show the MaPS median response of interest rate expectations 1-, 2- and 3-years ahead (aqua). The nominal rate gap (purple) is calculated at the nominal rate (aqua) minus the neutral rate (orange), in realised (solid lines) and expectations (diamonds) terms. Latest data: March 2025 survey.

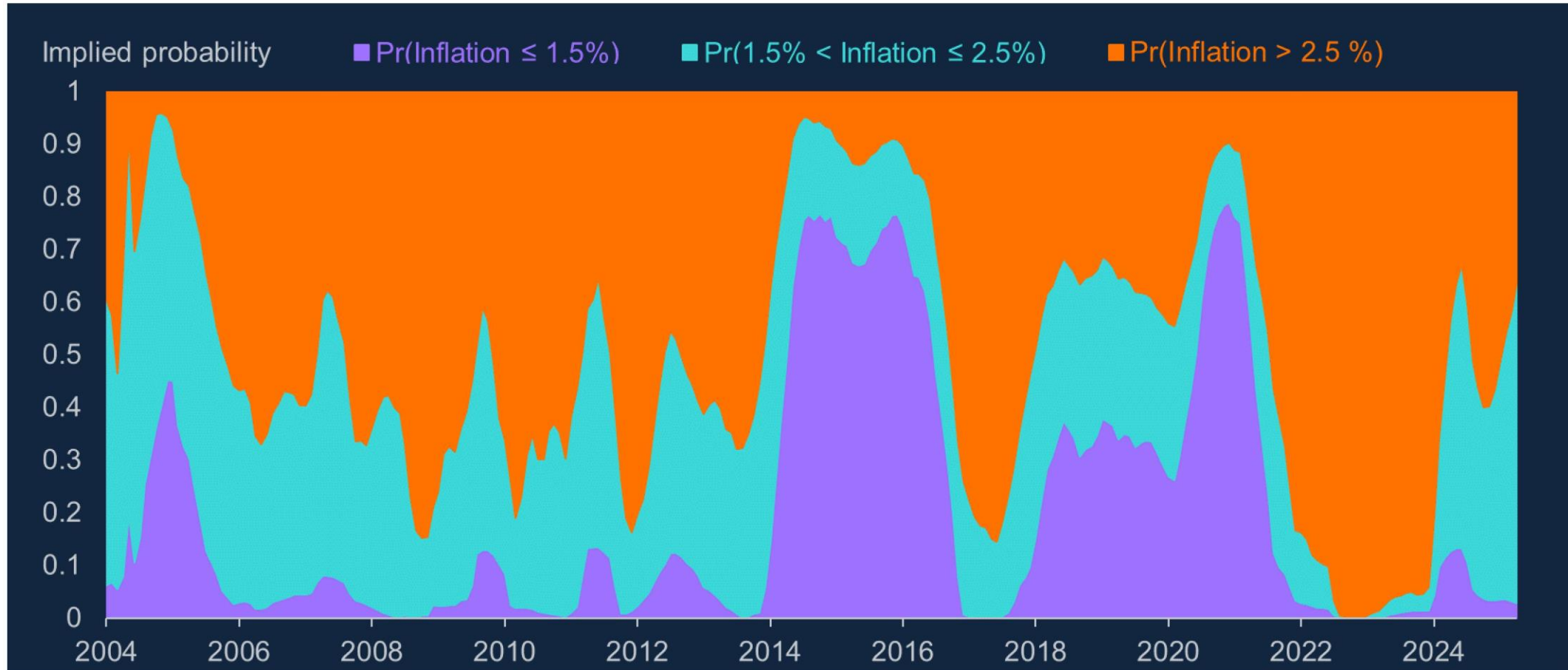
b) Inflation expectations 'drift'

$$r - r^* = [i - i^*] - \underbrace{[E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)]}_{\text{Inflation expectations drift}} \quad (5)$$

- Monetary policymakers affect monetary conditions, and therefore financial conditions, by changing i and/or by affecting inflation expectations $E(\pi)$ while keeping long-term inflation expectations anchored at the inflation target $E(\pi^*) = 2\%$
- Many factors that affect $E(\pi)$ are not directly under the control of the monetary policymaker, but to which it needs to respond (supply shocks, degree of forward-vs-backward-lookingness in expectation formation, frequency of price changes)

Measuring $E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)$: Implied probabilities of expected CPI inflation outcomes

Asset-price-implied probabilities of lower, around target and higher 12-months-ahead UK CPI outcomes



Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., Consensus Economics, LSEG Datastream, Office for National Statistics, Tradeweb, ICE BofAML and Bank calculations.

Notes: 6-month moving average of asset-price-implied probabilities of 12-months-ahead UK CPI inflation outcomes. Asset-price-implied probabilities are based on a monthly quantile regression of 12-months-ahead CPI inflation on asset prices from which probability density functions are obtained, adopting the methodology of [Adams et al. \(2021\)](#) and the [New York Fed](#). Asset prices include UK 3-year OIS rate, UK 10-year govt. bond yield, FTSE All-Share, UK IG corporate bond spread, sterling ERI.

c) The real rate gap

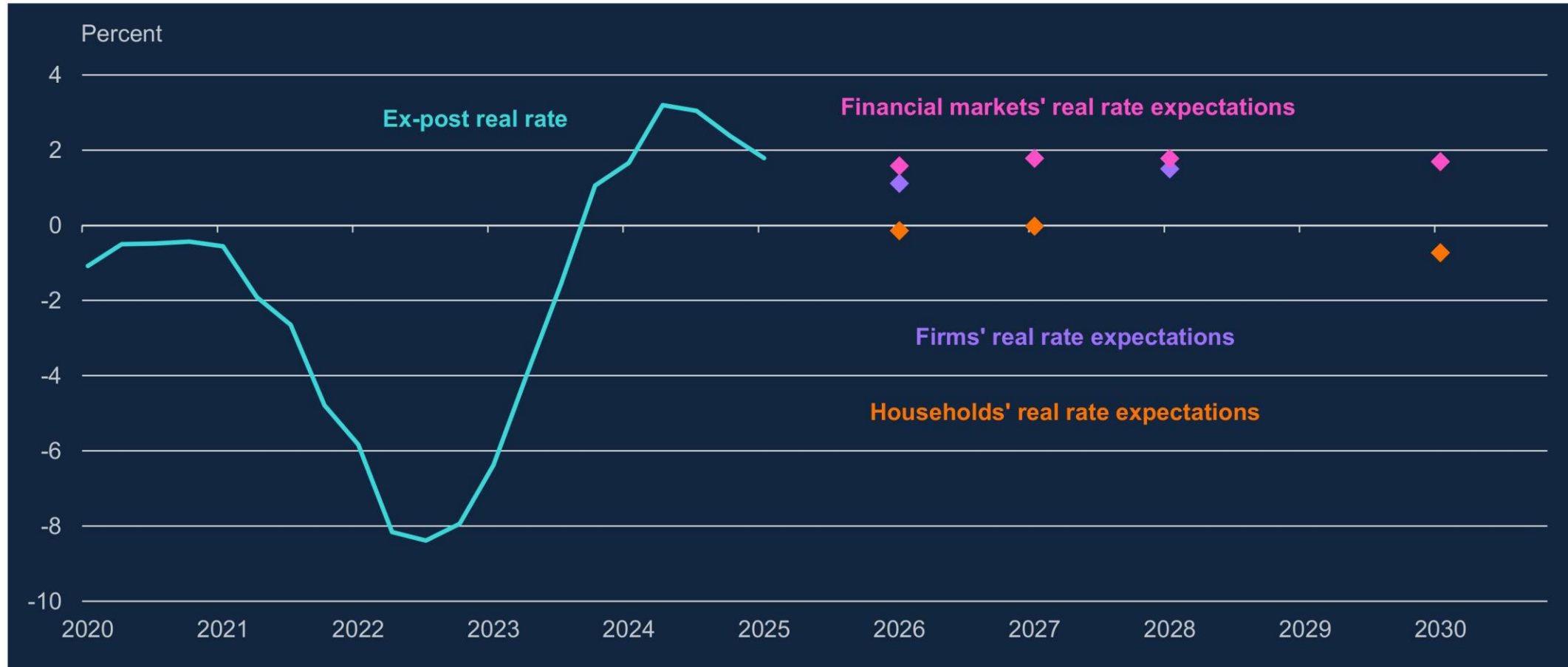
$$\underbrace{r - r^*}_{\text{Real rate gap}} = [i - i^*] - [E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)] \quad (5)$$

- Real rates are not directly observable
- Monetary policymakers affect real rates indirectly through their effect on i and $E(\pi)$
- So the real rate gap is endogenous to policy and shocks

Measuring r using survey-based $E(\pi)$:

Real interest rates differ across economic agents

Measures of ex-ante real interest rates by economic agent



Sources: Bank of England, Bank of England/Ipsos, Bloomberg Finance L.P., Decision Maker Panel, Market Participants Survey, ONS, Tradeweb and Bank calculations.

Notes: Ex-ante real interest rates are calculated as the 1, 2, 3 and 5-year ahead OIS rate respectively, minus the (maturity-matched) survey-implied inflation expectation. Quarterly data. For households, the Bank of England/Ipsos Inflation Attitudes Survey is used, the Decision Maker Panel for firms' and the Market Participants survey for financial markets. The ex-post real interest rate is calculated as Bank Rate minus realised headline CPI inflation.



Assessing the degree of restrictiveness

2) the role of volatility, uncertainty, risk premia

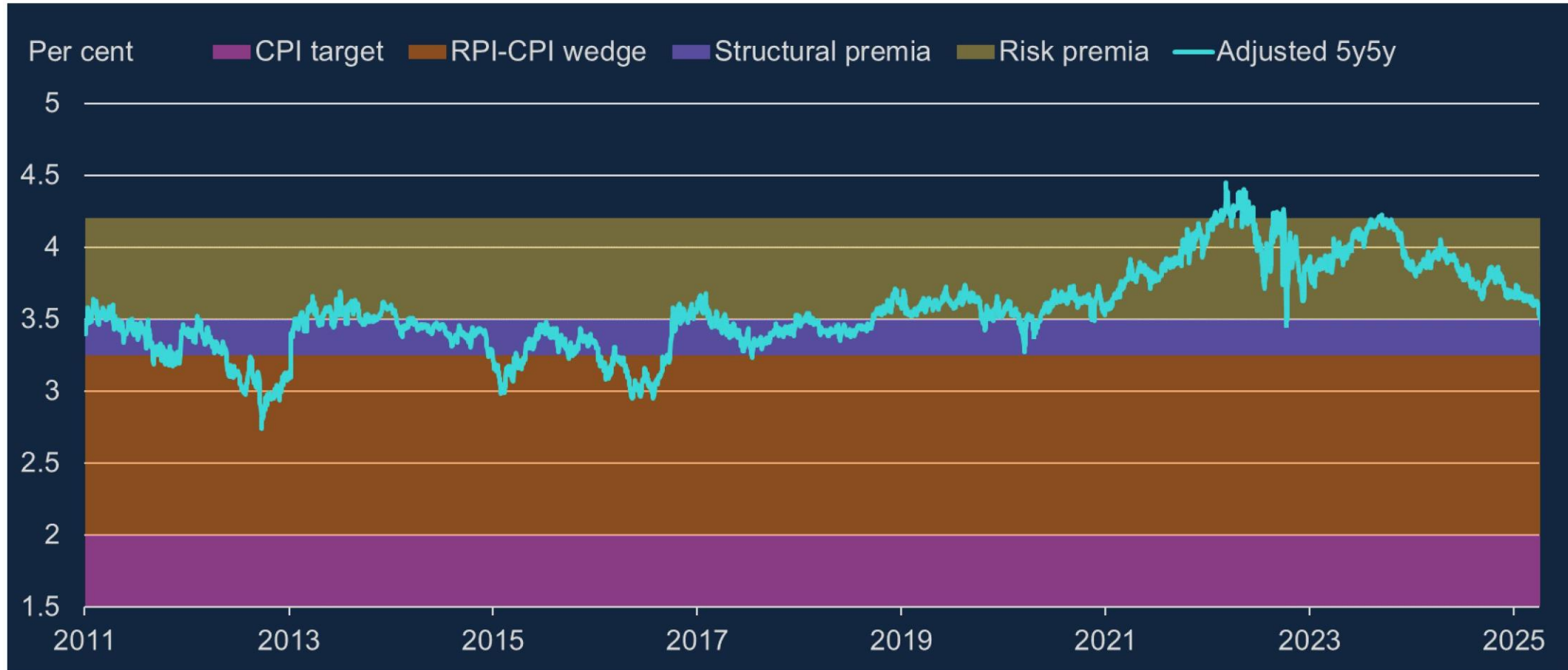
The role of uncertainty, volatility, and risk premia

$$\underbrace{r - r^*}_{\text{Uncertainty affects the real rate gap}} = \underbrace{[i - i^*]}_{\text{Volatility affects the nominal rate gap}} - \underbrace{[E(\pi) - E(\pi^*)]}_{\text{Volatility affects the inflation expectations drift}} \quad (5)$$

- Uncertainty reduces consumption and investment, lowering r^*
- Volatility in (π) is positive and asymmetrically related to (π) , raising i^*
- Higher risk premia in financial markets yield higher r^* and i^*

Risk premia are significant, but often assumed away when looking at inflation expectations

RPI-reform adjusted UK 5-year, 5-years ahead measure of inflation compensation

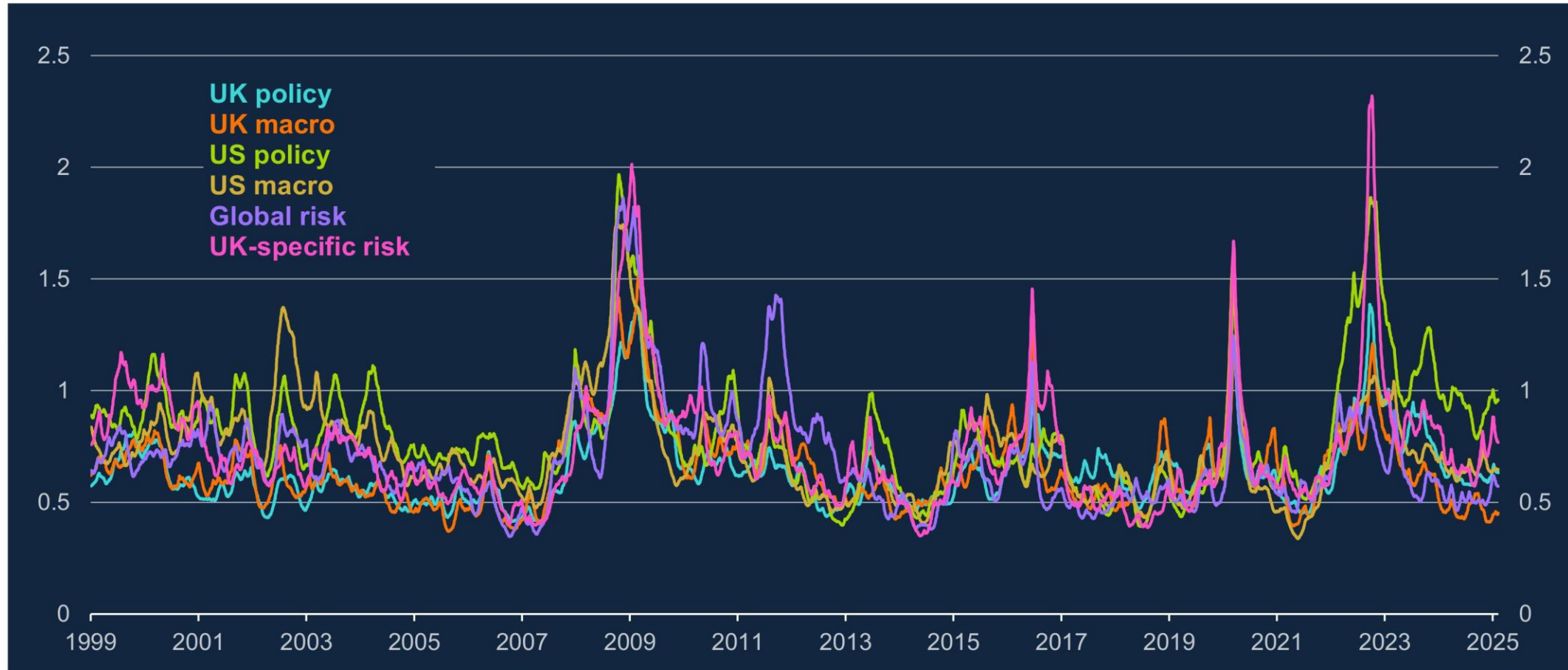


Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P. and Bank calculations.

Notes: Latest data: 1st April 2025. UK RPI adjusted 5y5y is derived by adjusting the five-year, five-year rate to account for UK RPI reform. From 2030, UK RPI will be aligned with the CPIH measure of consumer prices.

Volatility and spillovers affect UK financial conditions: US monetary policy factor remains elevated, but UK specific risk is present too.

Stochastic volatility of asset price factors



Source: Bloomberg Finance L.P. and Bank calculations

Notes: See [Mann \(2025\)](#) for more detail. The calculations are based on a structural VAR identified using sign and magnitude restrictions following [Brandt et al. \(2021\)](#). The model is extended to analyze monetary policy spillovers between the UK and its two most important trading partners and dominant currency blocks, the US and EA.



Assessing the degree of restrictiveness

3) the effect of monetary policy on financial conditions and the economy

Financial market transmission matters: It's not just the short-term interest rate that affects restrictiveness

UK financial conditions index



Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., Moneyfacts, LSEG, Tradeweb and Bank calculations.

Notes: The pink line is an adaptation of [Burr \(2023\)](#), where interest rates are detrended using the MaPS median estimate of the neutral rate.

The choice of r^* matters: Underestimating r^* implies overestimating restrictiveness

UK financial conditions index



Sources: Bloomberg Finance L.P., Moneyfacts, LSEG, Tradeweb and Bank calculations.

Notes: The pink line is an adaptation of [Burr \(2023\)](#), where interest rates are detrended using the MaPS median estimate of the neutral rate.

Conclusions for monetary policy and research

- Evaluating restrictiveness of policy in real-time is challenging, with various methodologies which have strengths and weaknesses
 - Real rate gap:
 - Allows monitoring in real-time, but subject to strong assumptions
 - Nominal rate gap:
 - Allows monitoring of policy transmission to financial conditions, and is an early-indicator, but involves uncertainty about second-stage monetary policy transmission to output and inflation
 - Inflation expectations gap:
 - Allows a direct assessment of the effectiveness of policy, but is subject to measurement challenges and the channels of monetary policy transmission
 - Biggest research gaps? Treatment of uncertainty, volatility, and risk
-





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International aspects of natural and neutral real interest rates

Maurice Obstfeld

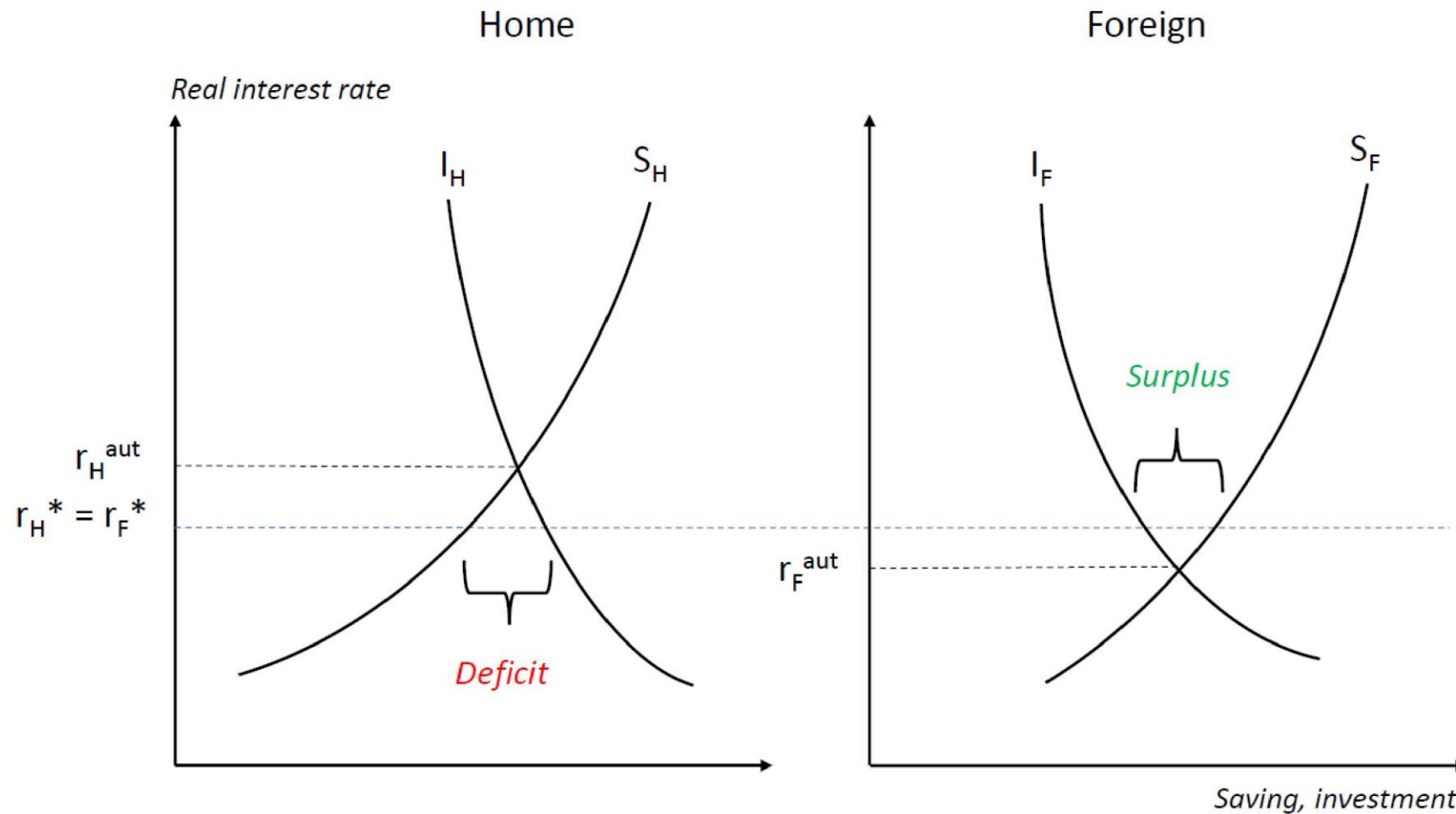
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In an integrated capital market, r is global

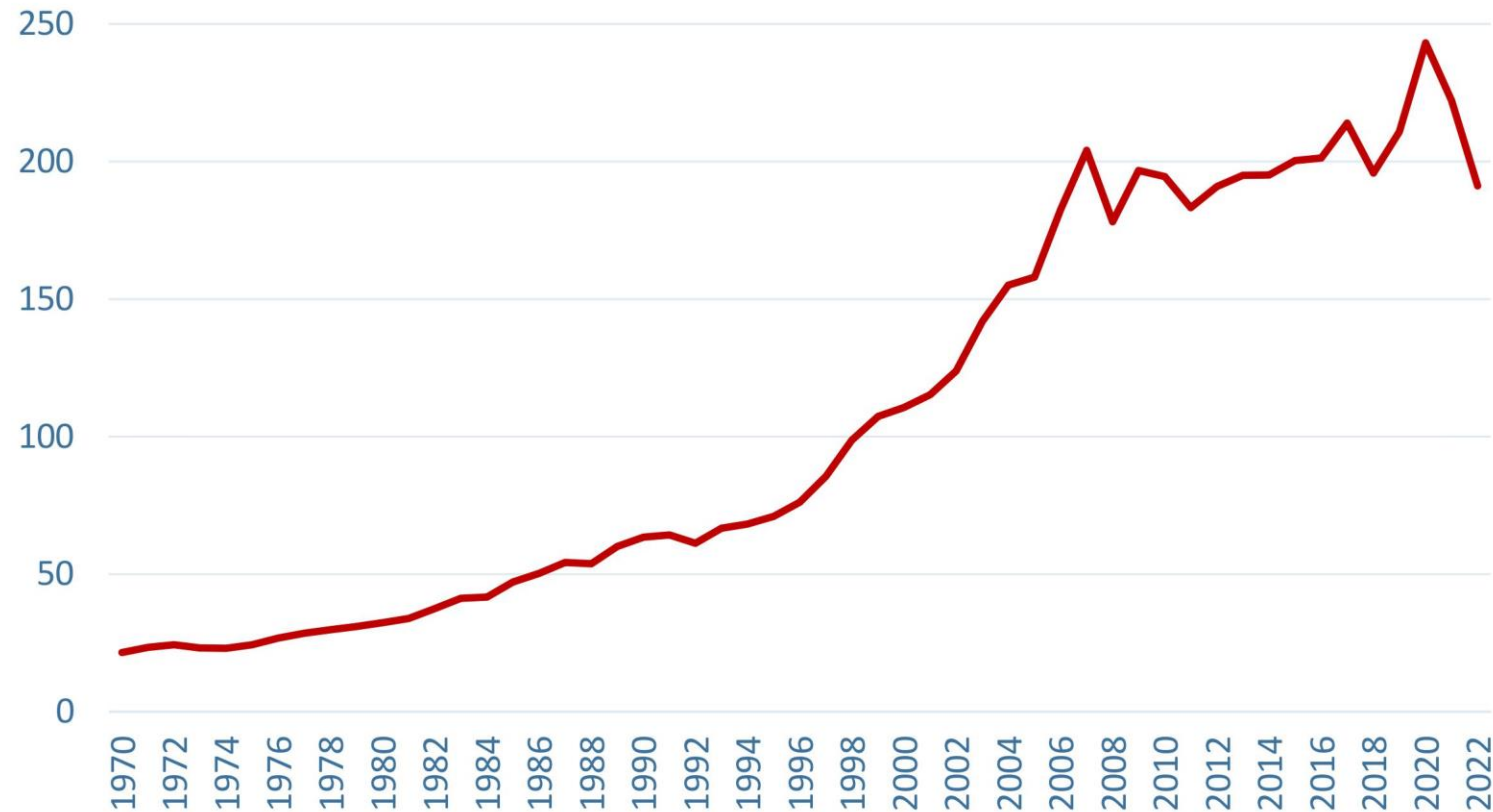
One-good model of Metzler (1968)



International financial integration is high

Average of external assets and liabilities, from
G. M. Milesi-Ferretti,
Brookings EWN database

Percent of world GDP



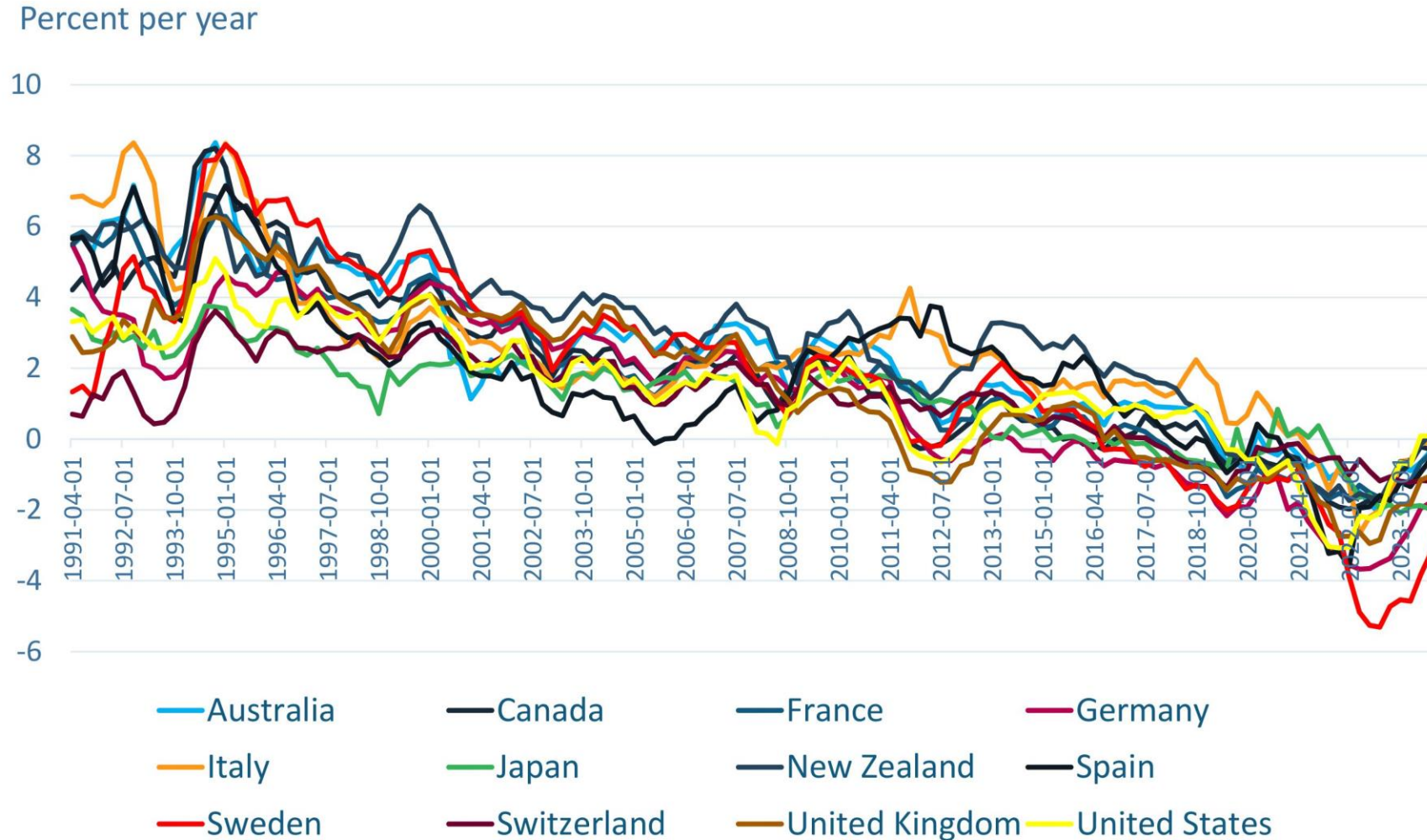
Real-world complications

$$r_H = r_F + E\Delta q + ?$$

- Interest parity: expected change in real exchange rate
 - Mean-reverting?
 - In part a reflection of *merchandise trade* costs
- Currency risk premium
- Term premium
- Liquidity premium
- Default risk in sovereign yields
- Tax treatment
- Barriers to cross-border capital movement

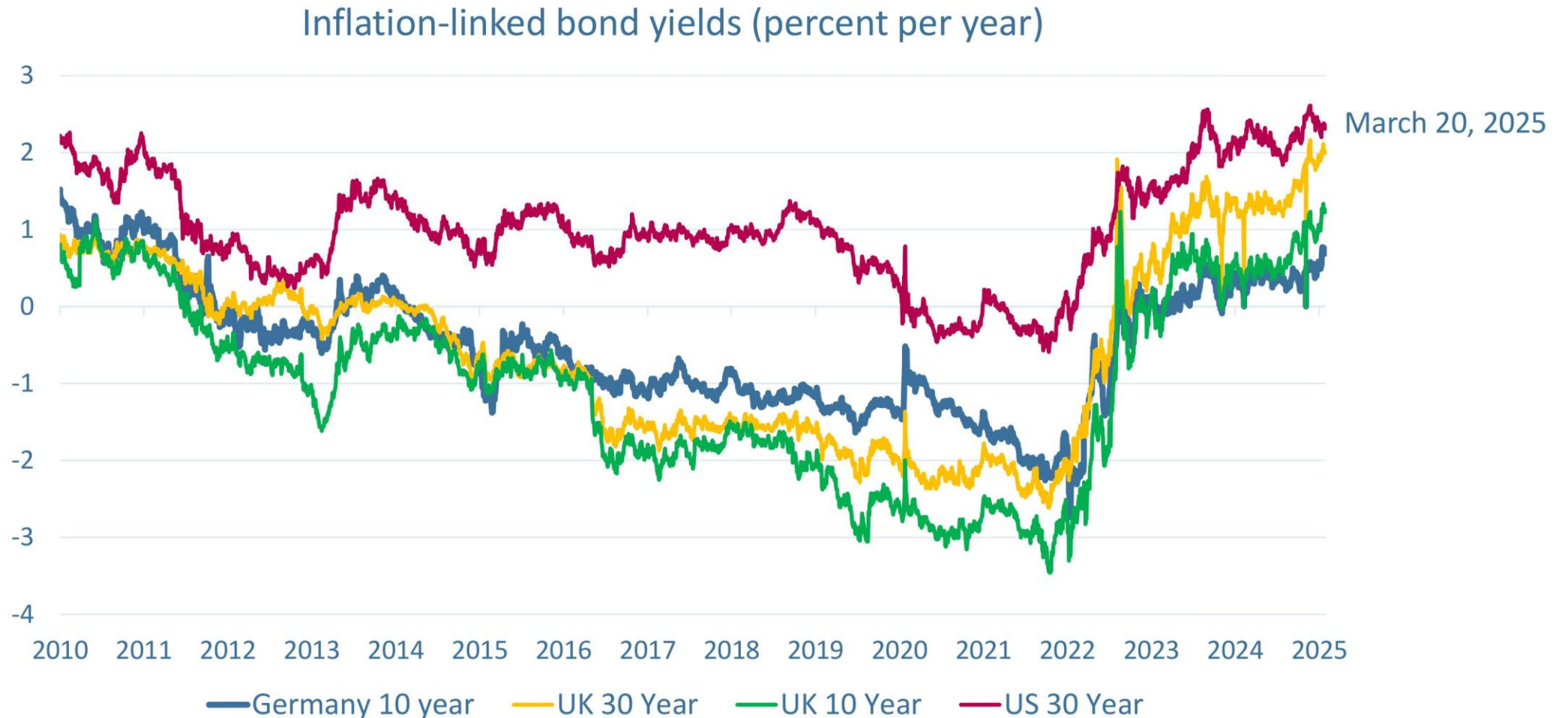
Advanced–economy real interest rates trend together

Partially ex post real rates on long-term government bonds



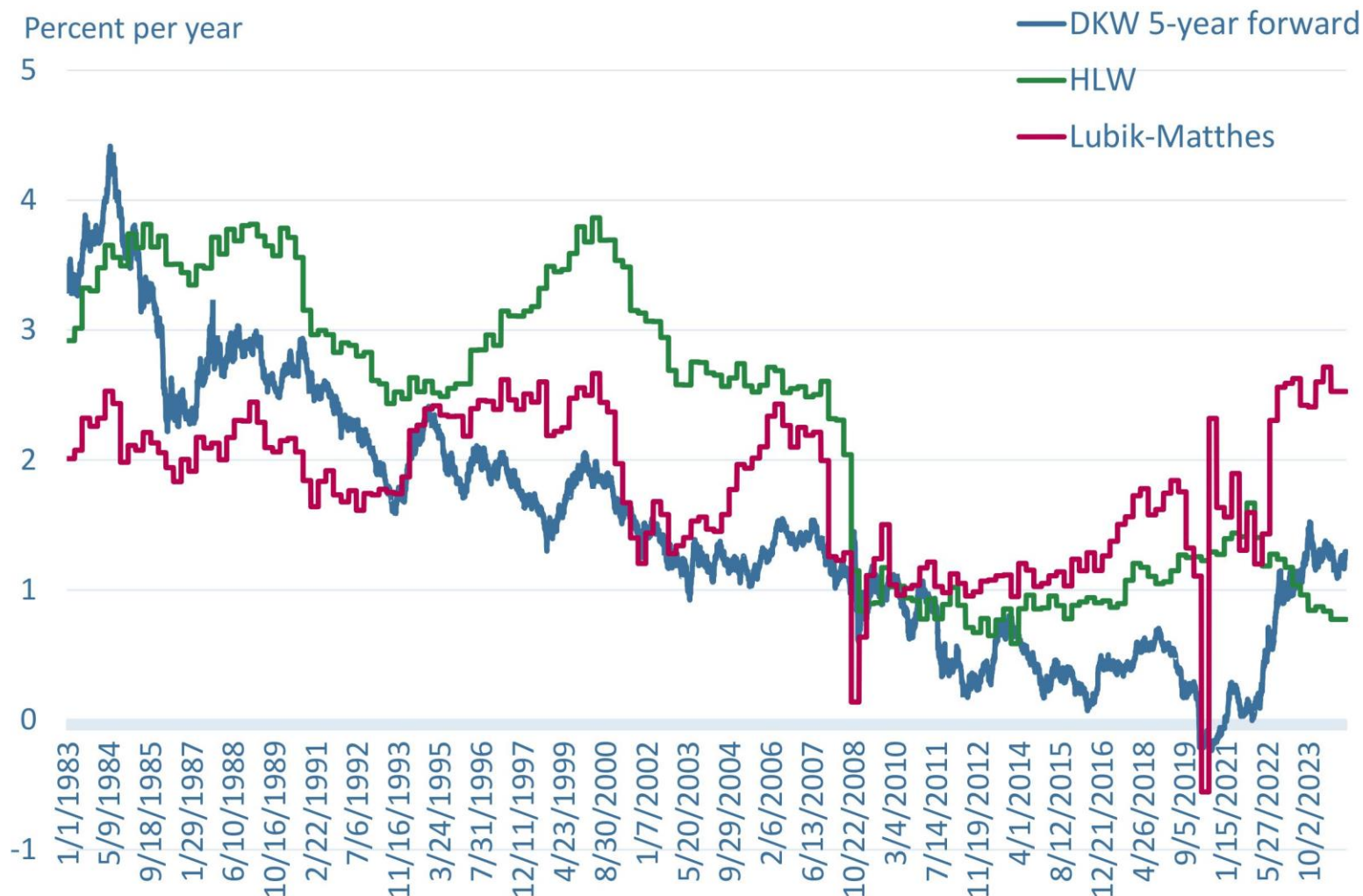
Long-term inflation-linked bond yields indicate higher expected r^* , global gaps

Source: Bloomberg



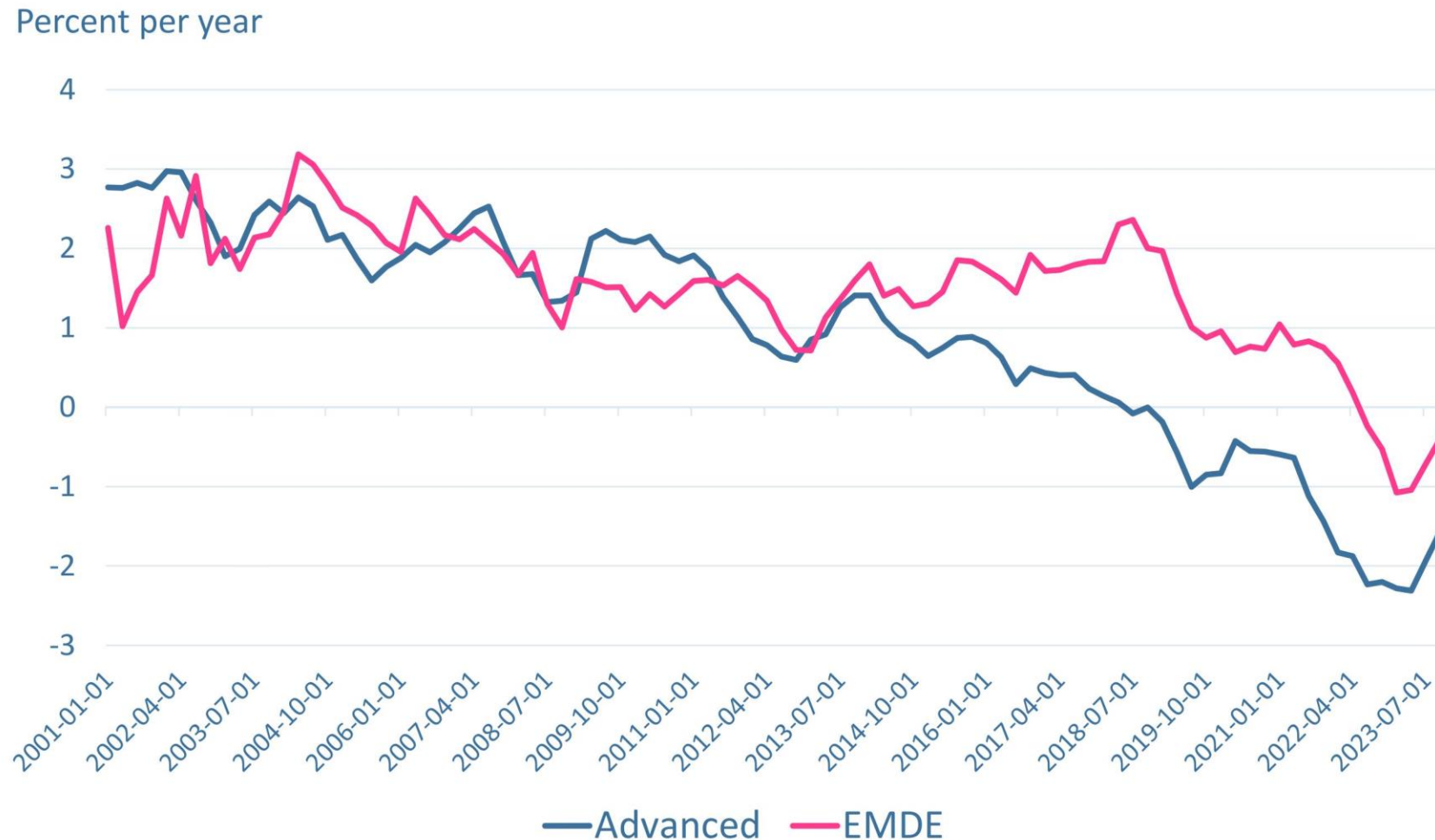
r^* estimates can diverge widely

Results of three different estimation methodologies for the U.S. natural real rate



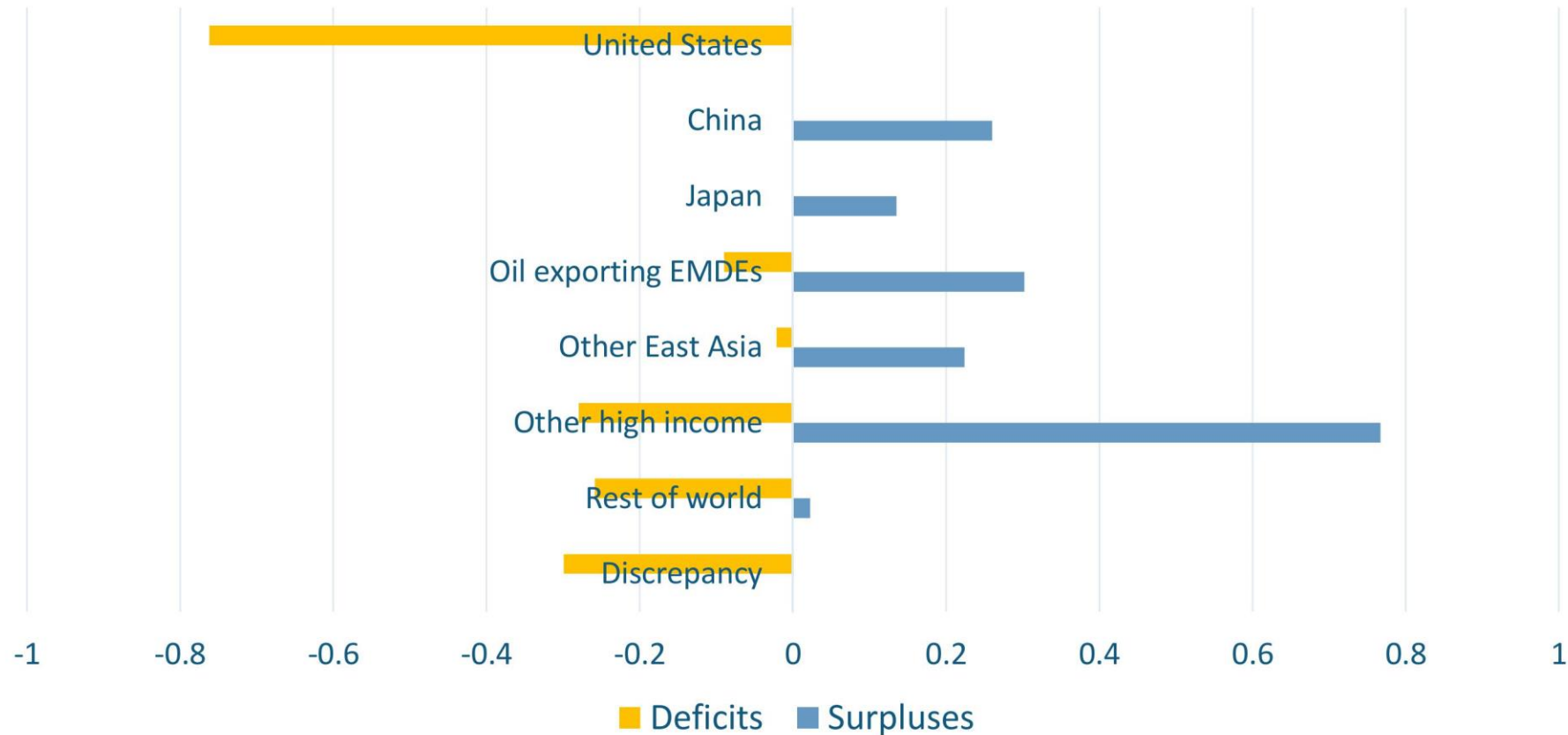
EM rates have been higher than AE rates since the GFC

Simple averages for 12 high-income and 23 middle-income economies



Global current accounts in 2023: High-income economies dominate for global real interest rates

Percent of world GDP



Some takeaways

- Real rates, even at long term, aren't fully equalized across countries
- Even bigger divergences in real policy rates are possible
- But international capital markets have expanded markedly
- For high-income economies, real rates trend together (Del Negro et al., *JIE*, 2019)
- Indexed bond markets show long-term r gaps – something of a puzzle
- Emerging market rates have been persistently higher since the GFC
- Rates in high-income group largely determined by high-income factors
- Everywhere, global events influence domestic r^*
- The external trade balance (current account) matters for r^* , which depends on a real exchange rate that could be out of equilibrium in the short run – e.g., if the currency is stronger, r^* is lower



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Thank you.

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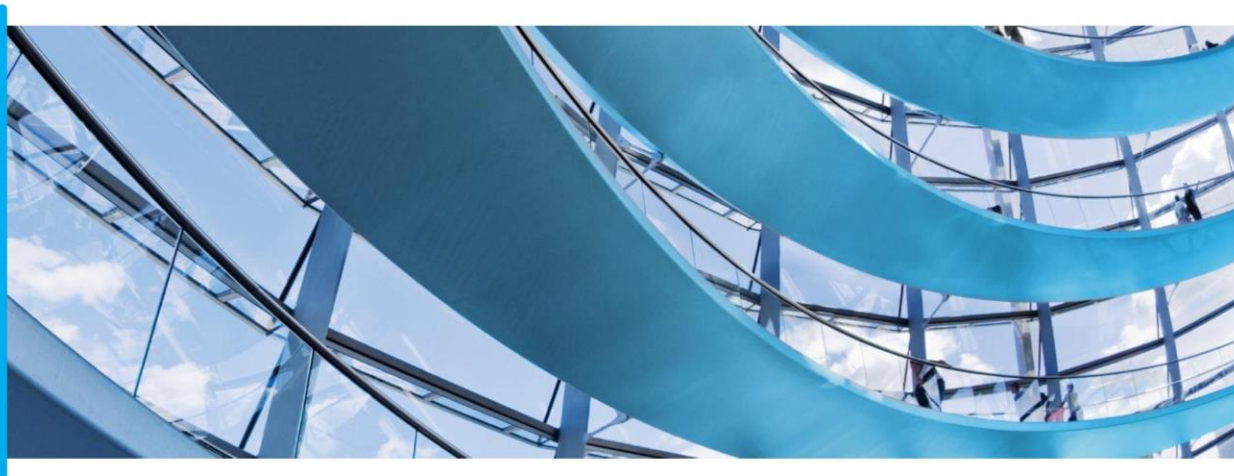
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The neutral rate of interest

Bank of England Watchers' Conference 2025

Outline

1. Global neutral interest: *Quo vado?*

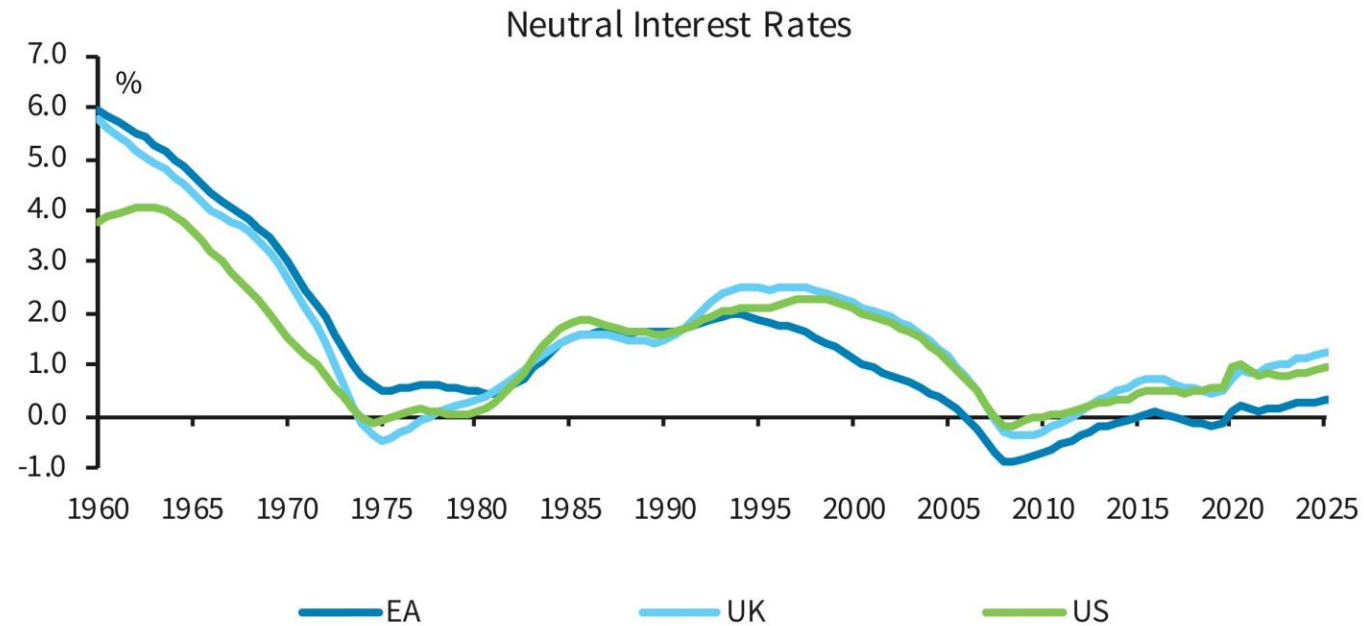
1. The demographic drag
2. The productivity bounce back
3. The supply of safe assets

2. Central Bank Watchers' focus: neutral or terminal?

Analysis uses model, data, replication codes from Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Determinants of Global Neutral Interest Rates, Journal of International Economics, vol. 145

Global neutral interest rates: long-run trend and recent past

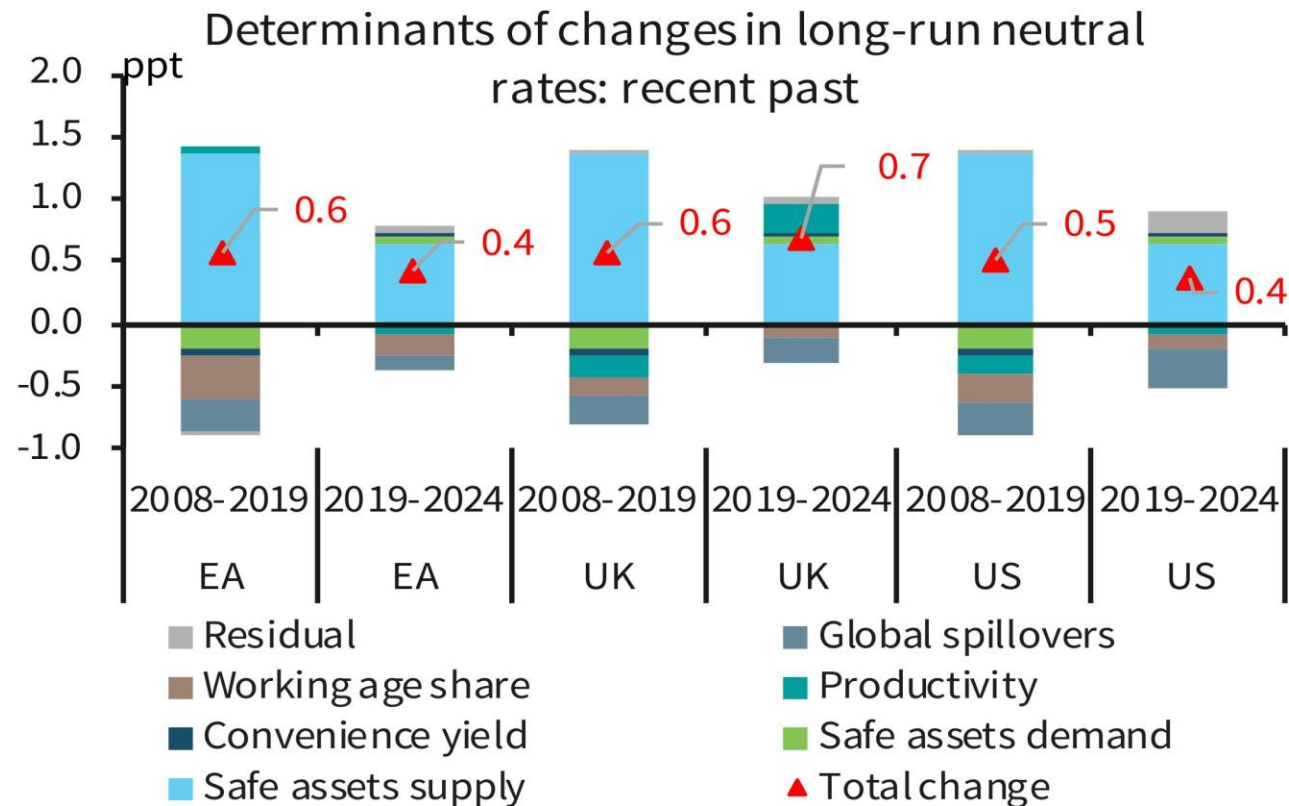
A long decline and the recent uptick



Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Determinants of Global Neutral Interest Rates, Journal of International Economics, vol. 145

Global neutral interest rates: long-run trend and recent past

Safe assets supply offset most other determinants

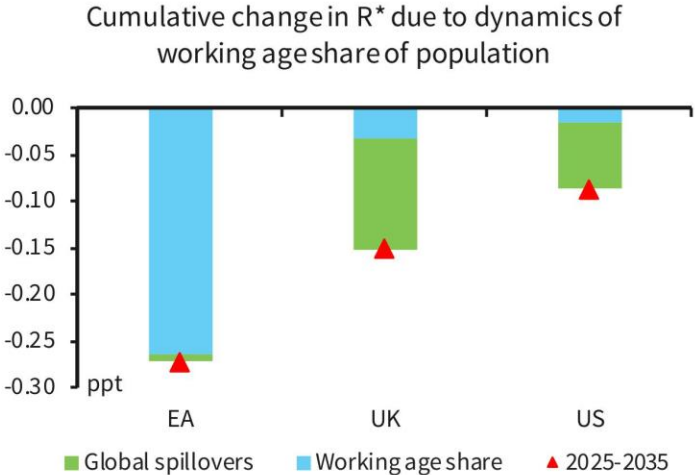
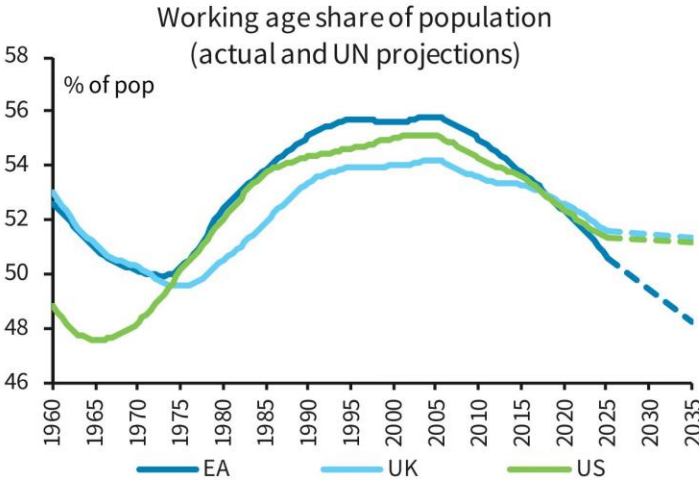


Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Determinants of Global Neutral Interest Rates, Journal of International Economics, vol. 145

Global neutral interest rates: the next 10 years

Ageing society will be a drag...

...particularly in the euro area



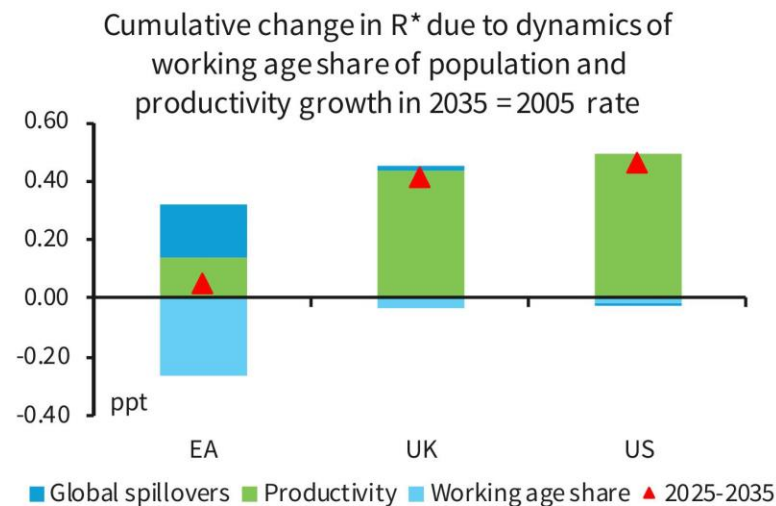
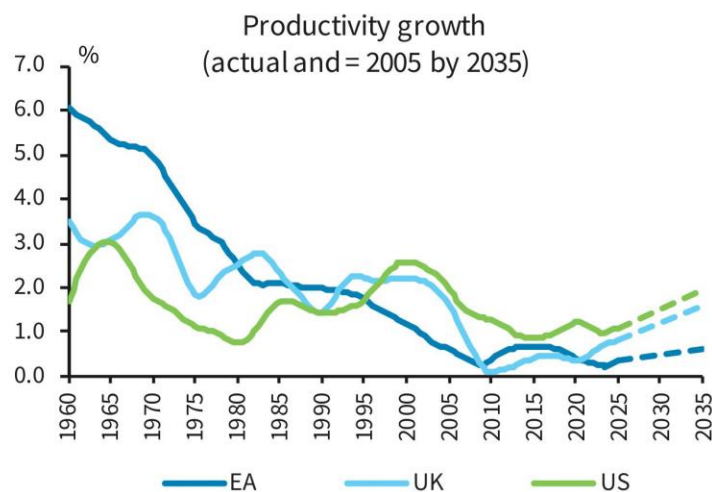
Source: United Nations, Eurostat, Barclays Research

Notes: Contributions to changes in R^* uses methodology and estimates based on Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Journal of International Economics, vol. 145
Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), United Nations, Eurostat, Barclays Research

Global neutral interest rates: the next 10 years

A bounce back of productivity to pre-GFC would...

...not make much difference for the EA neutral rate

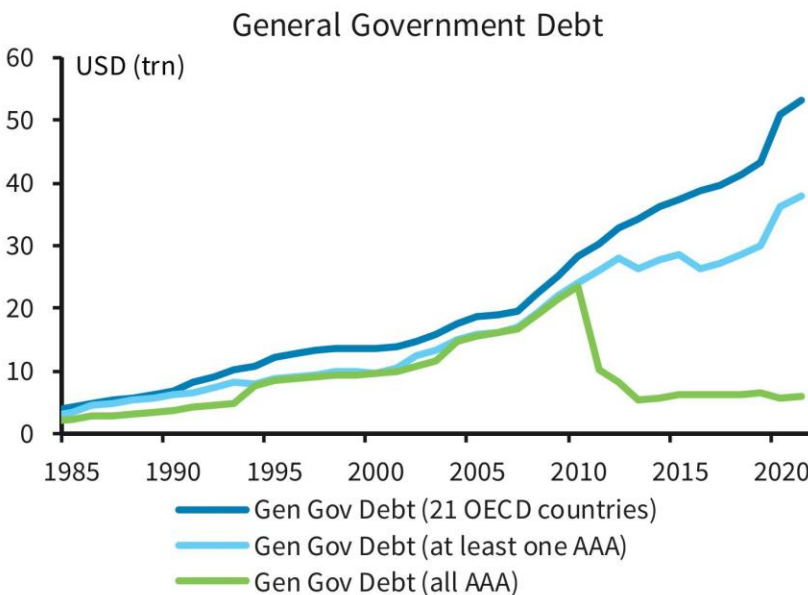


Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Barclays Research

Notes: Contributions to changes in R^* uses methodology and estimates based on Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Journal of International Economics, vol. 145
Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), United Nations, Eurostat, Barclays Research

The supply of safe assets: regime shifts

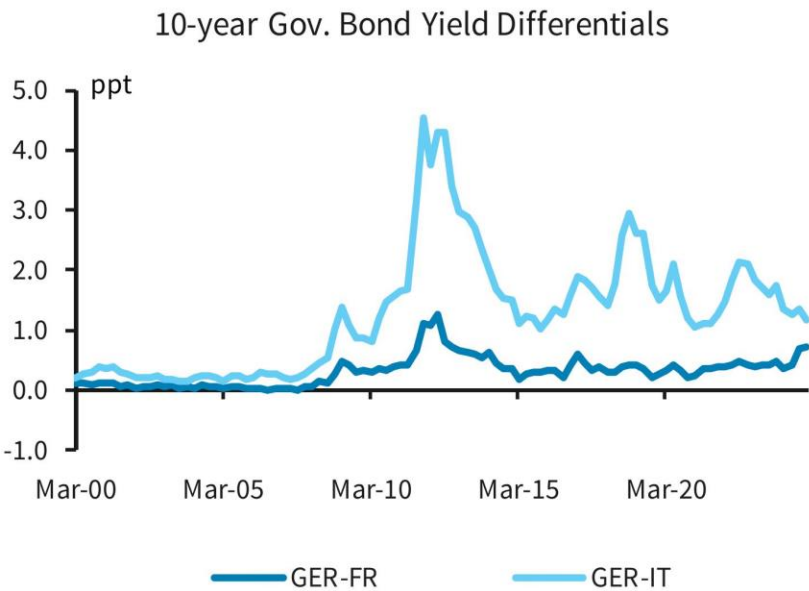
The pool of safe assets can change abruptly



Sovereigns rated AAA by all three starting in 2008

AUT	FRA	NLD	SWE	US
CAN	GER	NOR	SWI	
FIN	IRE	SPA	UK	

Financial markets tend to anticipate rating agencies



Sovereigns not rated AAA by all three starting from

2009	IRE	2012	AUT, FRA
2010	SPA	2013	NLD, UK
2011	US		

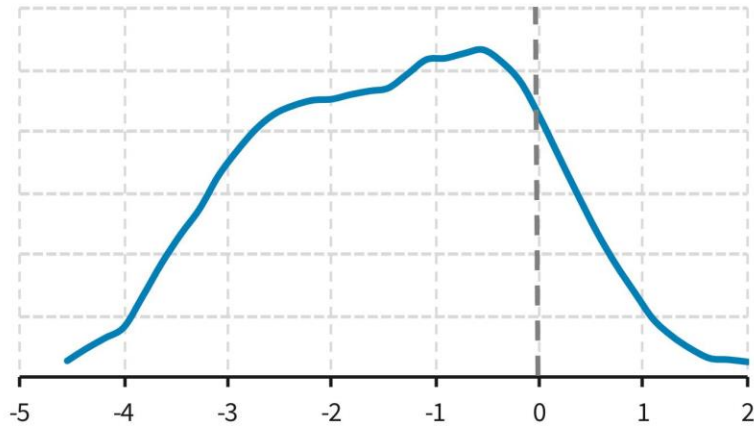
Source: OECD, Bloomberg, Barclays Research

CB Watchers' focus: neutral or terminal?

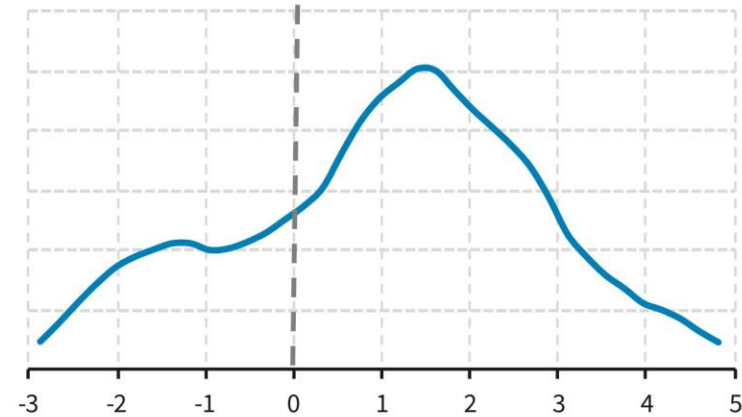
Terminal rate more likely to be below neutral in cutting cycles but...

...above it in hiking cycles

Terminal-neutral rate differential in cutting cycles starting from 2000



Terminal-neutral rate differential in hiking cycles starting from 2000



Source: Ferreira T., S. Shousha (2023), Barclays Research

Key conclusions

1. Global neutral interest rate: *Quo vado?*

- i. Demographics dynamics point to low neutral rate particularly for the EA, with spillovers also to UK and US.
- ii. A pretty significant bounce back in productivity in major economies would be needed to offset the drag from demographic forces for the neutral rate to increase in EA over the next 10 years, in our view. The evidence is less clear-cut for the UK and US.
- iii. The supply of safe assets increased in the past 10 years and pushed the neutral rate higher. However, what is safe today might not be safe tomorrow. Mind non-linearities/multiple equilibria/financial stability: regime shift from “high” to “low” R^* .

2. CB Watchers' bank for the buck: neutral or terminal?

The terminal rate is more likely to be lower than the neutral rate in cutting cycles and more likely to be higher in hiking cycles.

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