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E-bikes and frozen berries replace alcopops and CDs in inflation basket

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E-bikes, frozen berries and video doorbells have been added to the list of goods and services tracked to calculate inflation in the UK, in changes that reflect the popularity of technology and concern about the environment.

In its annual update to the basket of goods and services used to track inflation, the Office for National Statistics added 26 items and removed 16 from the more than 700 that it selects as representative of the goods on which consumers typically spend their money.

Over the past three years items related to the pandemic, such as hand sanitiser, were added to the basket but this year the impact of Covid-19 "has faded", according to the ONS.

Non-film DVDs dropped out of the collection, reflecting the rise in stream-

ing services. Also out were non-chart CDs and digital cameras.

Mike Hardie, ONS deputy director of prices transformation, said the removal reflected "how most of us listen to music and take pictures straight from our phones these days". Instead, video doorbells and security cameras were added to the basket, along with sound bars and computer game accessories.

Hardie said that with many people seeking to reduce their impact on the environment, e-bikes were also added, reflecting their rise in popularity over recent years.

The changes also showed transformations in food preferences. Frozen berries were introduced for the first time, partly a reflection of the popularity of home-made smoothies. Dairy-free spreads were also included, expanding the range of "free from" products and

capturing the growing number of people switching to a vegan diet.

Cooking apples were taken out of the basket, however, as fewer shops stock them. Alcopops and brightly coloured drinks have also fizzled out, alongside packets of 20 super king-size cigarettes.

Myron Jobson, an analyst at online platform Interactive Investor, said the latest inflation basket reflected a market that was "both increasingly technologically savvy and health conscious".

In a wider transformation in the calculation of prices by the ONS, the agency is also introducing a new data source for rail fares, using 30mn price points provided by rail industry body the Rail Delivery Group. In the coming years it will rely less on collecting the prices of physical goods and instead use information from sources including supermarket scanners and websites.

