

Statistical bulletin

# Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 26 October to 6 November 2022

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, working arrangements and well-being from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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Release date:  
11 November 2022

Next release:  
25 November 2022

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# 1 . Main points

Throughout the period 26 October to 6 November 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- When asked about the issues facing the UK today, 93% of adults reported the cost of living as an important issue; other issues frequently reported as important included the NHS (82%), the economy (79%) and the environment and climate change (66%)
- around 9 in 10 (91%) reported their cost of living had increased compared to a year ago, while a lower percentage (77%) reported an increase in their cost of living compared to one month ago
- the most common actions reported by all adults because of the rising cost of living were spending less on non-essentials (65%), and using less fuel, such as gas or electricity in their homes (63%)
- around 6 in 10 (56%) adults reported that they were very or somewhat worried about keeping warm in their home this winter, this proportion was higher among women (61%) than men (50%) but did not vary significantly by age group
- around half (46%) of adults with a mortgage reported being very or somewhat worried about changes in mortgage interest rates
- around 4 in 10 (37%) of those who are currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported that they are finding it very or somewhat difficult to afford these payments (33% in the previous period); this proportion appears to be gradually increasing in recent months having been around 3 in 10 (27%) in the period 14 to 25 September 2022
- around 5 in 10 (47%) adults reported they do not think they will be able to save money in the next 12 months, this proportion has gradually increased since we first asked in the period 3 to 14 November 2021 when it was around a third (34%)
- around 2 in 10 (22%) adults reported they had to borrow more or use more credit than usual in the last month compared with a year ago, this proportion has remained relatively stable since we first asked in the period 3 to 14 November 2021 (18%)

## 2 . Important issues facing the UK

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 26 October and 6 November 2022 (the "latest period") and 12 and 23 October 2022 (the "previous period").

In the latest period, we asked adults what they feel are important issues facing the UK today. The most commonly reported issues were:

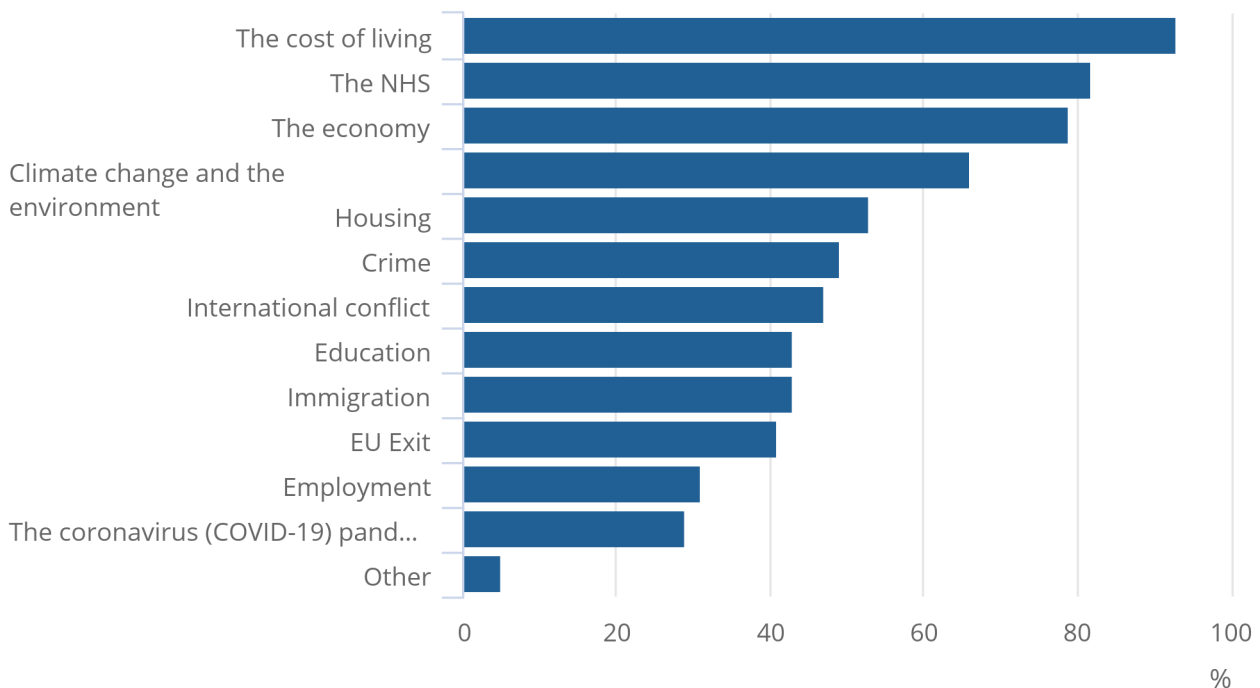
- the cost of living (93%)
- the NHS (82%)
- the economy (79%)
- climate change and the environment (66%) (Figure 1)

**Figure 1: Around 9 in 10 (93%) reported the cost of living as an important issue facing the UK today**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022

Figure 1: Around 9 in 10 (93%) reported the cost of living as an important issue facing the UK today

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

**Notes:**

1. Question: "What do you think are important issues facing the UK today?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

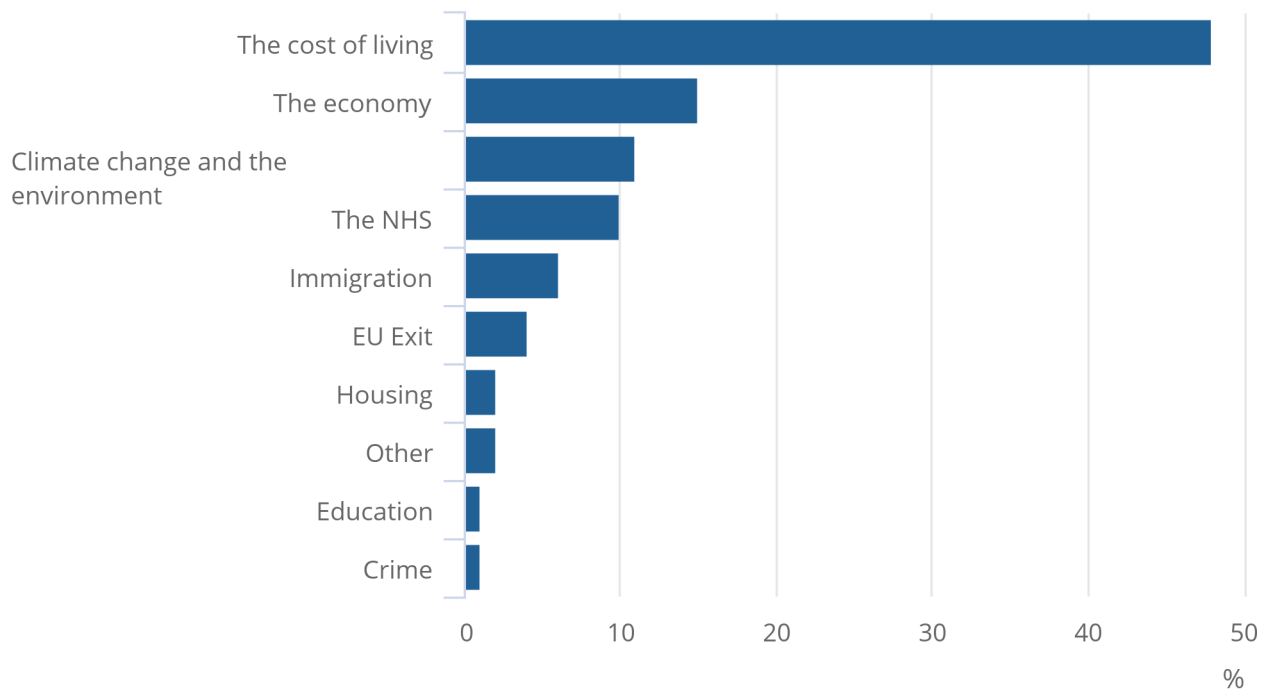
Adults who reported more than one issue facing the UK today were asked which of these issues they felt was the most important; around half (48%) reported the cost of living as the most important issue (Figure 2).

## Figure 2: Around half (48%) reported the cost of living as the most important issue facing the UK today

Proportion of those who reported more than one important issue facing the UK today, Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November

### Figure 2: Around half (48%) reported the cost of living as the most important issue facing the UK today

Proportion of those who reported more than one important issue facing the UK today, Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

#### Notes:

1. Question: "Of these, which do you think is the most important issue facing the UK today? "
2. Base: all adults.
3. The responses "Employment", "The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic" and "International conflict" are not included in this chart because less than 1% of adults selected these responses.

## 3 . Cost of living

## **Cost of living increases**

In the latest period, we continued to ask adults about changes to their cost of living. Around 9 in 10 (91%) reported their cost of living had increased compared to a year ago. Around three-quarters (77%) reported an increase in their cost of living compared to one month ago, an increase from 62% when we first asked about this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

The main reasons reported by adults for the rise in their cost of living over the past month were an increase in:

- the price of food shopping (94%)
- their gas or electricity bills (76%)
- the price of fuel (53%)

The most common actions reported by all adults because of the rising cost of living were spending less on non-essentials (65%) and using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their home (63%) (Figure 3).

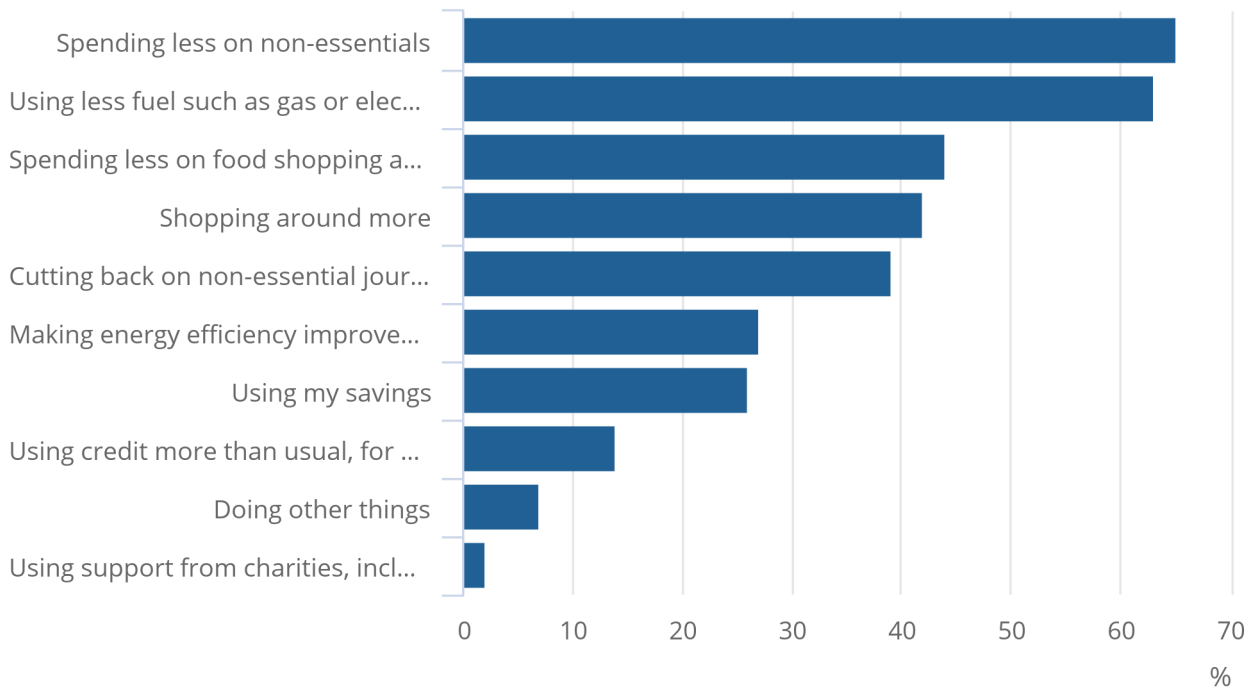
Around three-quarters (76%) of adults reported being very or somewhat worried about rising costs of living in the past two weeks (79% in the previous period).

**Figure 3: Around two-thirds (65%) are spending less on non-essentials because of the increases in the cost of living**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022

**Figure 3: Around two-thirds (65%) are spending less on non-essentials because of the increases in the cost of living**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Question: "Which of these, if any, are you doing because of the increases in the cost of living?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. % of adults reported "None of these". This has not been included in the chart because respondents who selected this response option were unable to select any other response option.

## Energy bills

Around half (47%) of adults who pay energy bills said they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford them in the latest period (42% in the previous period).

Among those who reported they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, around 1 in 20 (5%) reported they were behind on these bills (3% in the previous period). This proportion has appeared to be relatively stable since we first started asking this question in March 2022.

There are strong seasonal spending patterns relating to gas and electricity that may affect the results in this section. For more information on this and recent price rises for gas and electricity, please see our latest [Consumer price inflation, UK: September 2022 bulletin](#).

## Rent or mortgage payments

Around one-third (34%) of those who are currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported that these payments have gone up in the last six months (32% in the previous period).

Around 4 in 10 (37%) of those who are currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported that they are finding it very or somewhat difficult to afford these payments (33% in the previous period). This proportion appears to be gradually increasing in recent months having been around 3 in 10 (27%) in the period 14 to 25 September 2022.

Around 1 in 20 (5%) of those currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported they were behind with these payments (3% in the previous period).

Among adults with a mortgage, around half (46%) reported being very or somewhat worried about the changes in mortgage interest rates (48% in the previous period), and around a quarter (25%) reported being somewhat unworried or not at all worried (21% in the previous period). The [Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: June to September 2022 article](#) explores the impact that increases in the cost of living have had in more detail. It includes the characteristics of adults who are experiencing difficulty affording or are behind with their energy bills, mortgage or rent payments.

## Household finances

We also asked all adults about changes to their general household finances including their use of credit and ability to save.

Around 2 in 10 (22%) adults reported they had to borrow more or use more credit than usual in the last month compared with a year ago (20% in the previous period). This proportion has remained relatively stable since we first asked in the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

Around 5 in 10 (47%) adults reported they do not think they will be able to save money in the next 12 months (44% in the previous period). This proportion has gradually increased since we first asked in November 2021 when it was around a third (34% in the period 3 to 14 November 2021).

# 4 . Worries, personal well-being and loneliness

## Keeping warm this winter

In this period, for the first time, we asked adults how worried they were about keeping warm in their home this winter and found that:



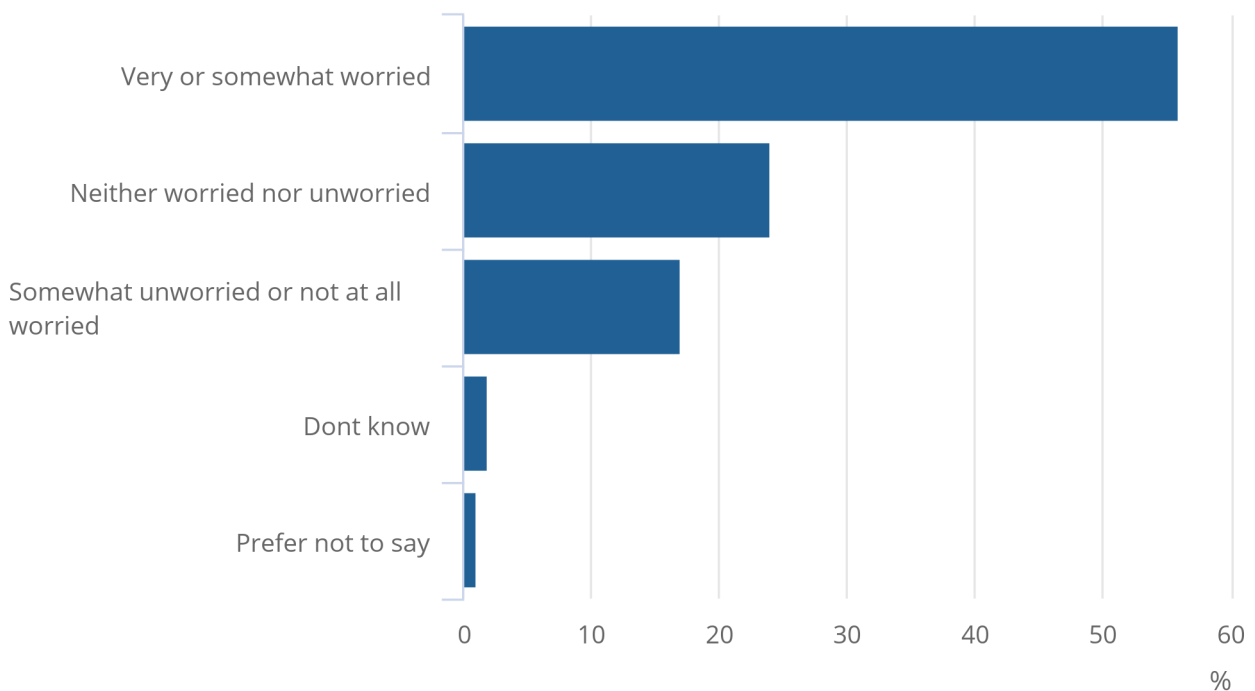
- around 6 in 10 (56%) reported being very or somewhat worried
- around one-quarter (24%) reported being neither worried nor unworried
- around one in six (17%) reported being somewhat unworried or not at all worried (Figure 4)

**Figure 4: Around 6 in 10 (56%) were very or somewhat worried about keeping warm in their home this winter**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022

Figure 4: Around 6 in 10 (56%) were very or somewhat worried about keeping warm in their home this winter

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 26 October to 6 November 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

**Notes:**

1. Question: "In the past two weeks, how worried or unworried have you been about keeping warm in your home over winter?".
2. Base: all adults.

There were differences in the proportions of adults who were very or somewhat worried about keeping warm in their home this winter by sex. Around 6 in 10 (61%) women reported this compared with around half of men (50%).

There were no [statistically significant](#) differences in reporting being very or somewhat worried about keeping warm in their home this winter when examining this by age. It was reported as being 55% among those aged 16 to 29 years, 60% among those aged 30 to 49 years, 55% among those aged 50 to 69 and 51% among those aged 70 years and over.

## Personal well-being

This period, we continued to ask respondents about their personal well-being. Average levels of personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction: 6.8 in the latest period (6.9 in the previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile: 7.1 in the latest period (7.2 in the previous period)
- happiness: 6.8 in the latest period (7.0 in the previous period)
- anxiety: 4.0 in the latest period (4.1 in the previous period)

On 3 October 2022, we launched a review of the existing Measures of National Well-being and the national well-being data communication tools. You can share your feedback and contribute to the review by filling in our [online survey](#), which is open until 25 November 2022. You can learn more about the Measures of National Well-being from our [Quality of life in the UK: November 2022 bulletin](#) and [Measures of National Well-being dashboard](#).

### Figure 5: Levels of personal well-being

#### Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to November 2022

##### Notes:

1. Questions included: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?", "Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?", "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?", and "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?"
2. These questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

##### Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

## Loneliness

Around one-quarter (25%) of adults reported feeling lonely always, often, or some of the time in the latest period (27% in the previous period).

For further estimates on people's personal well-being and loneliness, including breakdowns by age, sex and trends over time, please see our [Personal well-being and loneliness dataset](#).

## 5 . Working arrangements

## Cost of living impacts on work

This period, we asked working adults how the increasing cost of living was affecting their work. Most working adults (55%) reported they were not doing anything differently in terms of their work situation because of increases in the cost of living (57% in the previous period).

The impacts on work most reported by working adults because of increases in the cost of living were looking for a job that pays more money, including a promotion (21% in the latest period and 20% in the previous period), and working more hours than usual in their main job (19% in the latest period and 18% in the previous period).

## Location of work

Around 7 in 10 (71%) working adults travelled to work at some point in the past seven days (72% in the previous period). This includes 46% who only travelled to work in the past seven days (48% in the previous period), and 25% who reported both working from home and travelling to work (hybrid working) in the past seven days (24% in the previous period).

Around 12% of working adults said they worked from home exclusively in the past seven days (13% in the previous period). A further 16% neither travelled to work nor worked from home (15% in the previous period).

## 6 . Actions taken to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses

Estimates regarding the actions taken to reduce the spread and the social impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19) and other illnesses, with trends over time and breakdowns by age and sex, can be found in our [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and other illnesses dataset](#).

The latest available estimates cover the period 12 to 23 October 2022. An update to these estimates will be available for the period 8 to 20 November 2022 alongside the next edition of this bulletin on Friday 25 November 2022.

### More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- [Explore the latest coronavirus data and analysis](#) from the ONS and other sources.
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

## 7 . Public opinions and social trends data

### [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: household finances](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of people's experiences of changes in their cost of living and household finances in Great Britain.

### [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of worries, personal well-being and loneliness in Great Britain.

### [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: working arrangements](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) related to the working arrangements of people in Great Britain.

### [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal experiences of shortages of goods](#)

Dataset | Released 11 November 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of whether people experienced shortages of goods such as food, medicine, or fuel when shopping in Great Britain.

## 8 . Measuring the data

This release contains data and indicators from a module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

From the period 30 March to 10 April 2022, changes were made to the OPN to enable us to provide ongoing indicators on a wide range of public opinions and societal issues. For more information about these changes on our methods, please see our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\) report](#).

Breakdowns by age and sex, [including confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in our [Public opinion and social trends, Great Britain datasets](#).

Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin or comparisons between estimates are made, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the differences.

### Sampling and weighting

In the latest period (26 October to 6 November 2022), we sampled 4,943 households. This sample was randomly selected from those who had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample for the latest period contained 2,058 individuals, representing a 42% response rate.

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population (based on ONS population estimates). Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

## 9 . Related links

### [Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: June to September 2022](#)

Article | Released 25 October 2022

Analysis of the proportion of the population that is affected by an increase in their cost of living, and of the characteristics associated with having difficulty affording or being behind on energy, mortgage or rental payments, using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

### [The cost of living, current and upcoming work: September 2022](#)

Article | Released 28 September 2022

A summary of ONS' current and future analytical work related to the cost of living.

### [Quality of Life in the UK: November 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 11 November 2022

An update on UK's progress across ten domains of national well-being which include personal well-being, relationships, health, what we do, where we live, personal finance, economy, education and skills, governance, and the environment. Change over time and sub-population breakdowns by age, sex and region are provided where available.

### [Review of the Measures of National Well-being](#)

Online survey | Open 3 October to 25 November 2022

An online survey collecting user feedback on the ONS Measures of National Well-being and the data communication tools we use to report the national well-being statistics. Respondents can contribute their opinions until 25 November 2022. The collected feedback will be incorporated into a recommendations report due to be published in spring 2023.

### [Climate change insights: Land Use](#)

Article | Released 11 November 2022

Quarterly publication bringing together the latest climate change-related statistics and analysis from a range of sources.

### [COVID-19 question bank](#)

Web page | Updated frequently

Government Statistical Service page that provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to COVID-19 to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data the ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

## 10 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 11 November 2022, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 26 October to 6 November 2022](#)