

Statistical bulletin

# Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 5 to 16 April 2023

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, industrial action, and energy savings in the home from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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# 1 . Main points

The following information is for the latest survey period 5 April to 16 April 2023, based on adults in Great Britain.

- When asked about the important issues facing the UK today, the most commonly reported issues continue to be the cost of living (92%), the NHS (85%), the economy (73%), and climate change and the environment (64%).
- Around half of adults reported that they were worried about the cost of energy (49%) and the cost of food (49%) in the past two weeks, with over one in three (35%) worried about their general health.
- People living in the most deprived fifth of areas in England more frequently reported being worried about the cost of food (64%), the cost of energy (60%) and their general health (46%) than those living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (40%, 42% and 29%, respectively).
- Around 4 in 10 (39%) adults had been affected by industrial action in the last month, an increase from 27% in the previous period; more adults have been affected by having to spend more money on travel (22%) and more adults were unable to attend a medical appointment (12%) than in the previous period (14% and 5%, respectively).
- When asked what actions adults have taken to look after their well-being during the past two weeks, the most reported actions were being more physically active (46%), trying to get enough sleep (46%), increasing the amount of time spent outdoors (45%) and spending more time with family or friends (39%).

## 2 . Important issues facing the UK

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 5 and 16 April 2023 (the "latest period") and 22 March and 2 April 2023 (the "previous period"). Analysis is based on adults in Great Britain.

### Important issues

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

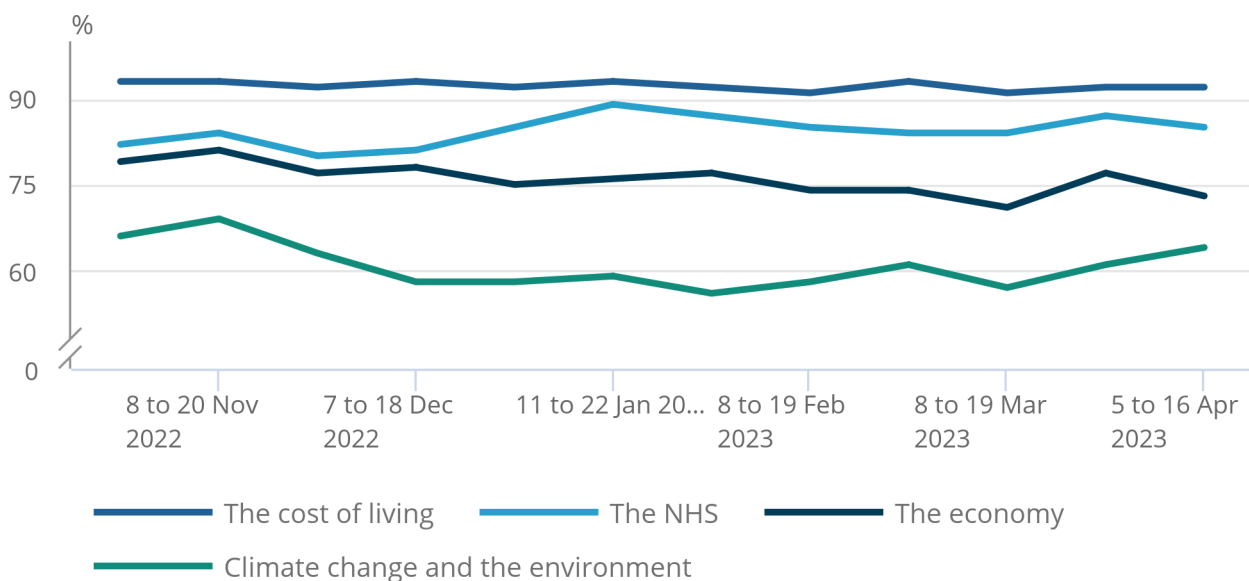
- the cost of living (92%)
- the NHS (85%)
- the economy (73%)
- climate change and the environment (64%)

**Figure 1: The cost of living and the NHS continue to be the most commonly reported important issues**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, October 2022 to April 2023

### Figure 1: The cost of living and the NHS continue to be the most commonly reported important issues

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, October 2022 to April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

**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.

### Worrying issues

In the latest period, we asked adults which issues, if any, they have been worried about in the past two weeks. Over 8 in 10 (85%) adults were worried about one or more issue. The most reported issues were:

- the cost of energy (49%)
- the cost of food (49%)
- their general health (35%)

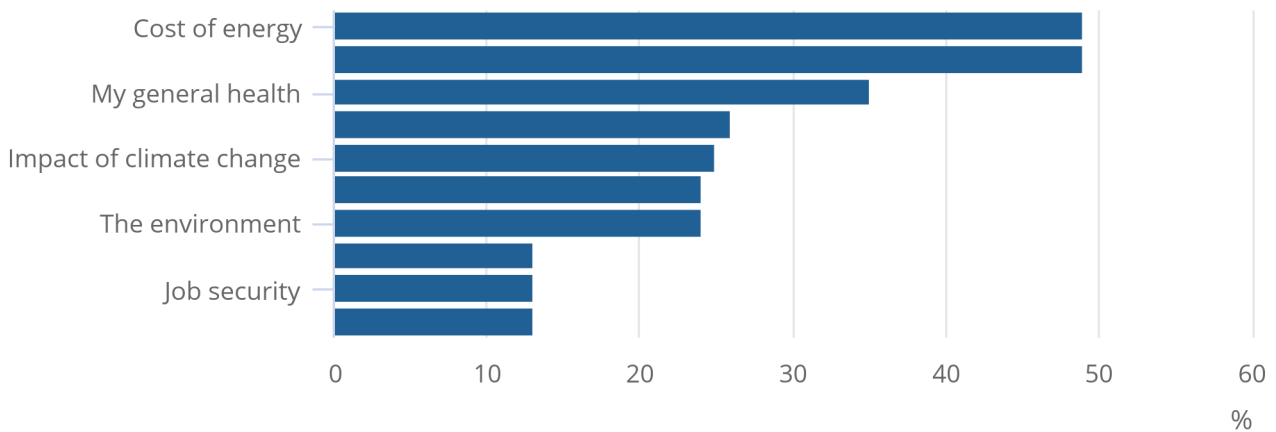
Our upcoming release [Tracking the impact of winter pressures in Great Britain: November 2022 to February 2023](#) will provide further information. This includes more detail on how people's experiences of increases in the cost of energy and food, as well as accessing NHS services, have changed through winter among different groups of the population.

**Figure 2: Around half of adults reported being worried about the cost of energy and the cost of food**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 5 to 16 April 2023

### Figure 2: Around half of adults reported being worried about the cost of energy and the cost of food

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 5 to 16 April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

**Notes:**

1. Question: " Which of the following issues, if any, have you been worried about in the past two weeks?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. 15% of adults reported that they have not been worried about any issues in the past two weeks. This has not been included in the chart because respondents who selected this response option were unable to select any other response option.

When asked about their energy bills and their experiences of food shortages in the latest period:

- around half (47%) of adults who pay energy bills said they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford them
- around 4 in 10 (38%) adults had to spend more than usual to get what they normally buy
- around half (48%) of adults have bought less than usual when food shopping over the past two weeks

## Worries by deprivation

In this release, we have looked at how the issues that adults are worried about vary by the level of deprivation of the area in which they live. This has been based on the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#). We have classified areas into five quintiles, ranging from the most deprived to least deprived fifth of areas. Estimates are provided for England only, given the relatively smaller sample sizes in the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in Scotland and Wales.

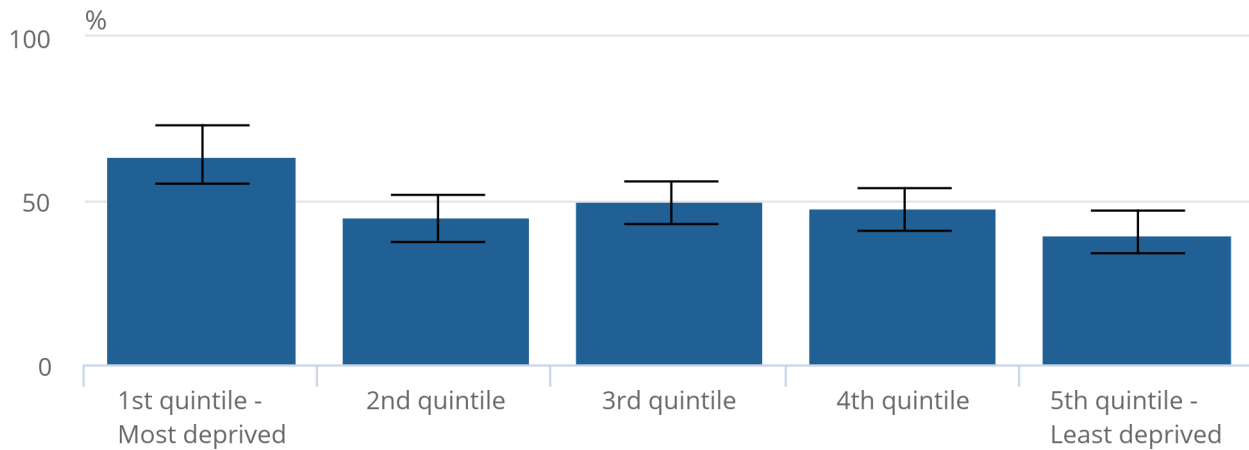
People living in the most deprived fifth of areas in England more frequently reported being worried about the cost of food (64%) and the cost of energy (60%). This was when compared with those living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (40% and 42%, respectively).

### Figure 3: Those in the most deprived areas in England more frequently reported worrying about the cost of food

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they were worried about the cost of food, by deprivation quintile, 5 to 16 April 2023

### Figure 3: Those in the most deprived areas in England more frequently reported worrying about the cost of food

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they were worried about the cost of food, by deprivation quintile, 5 to 16 April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

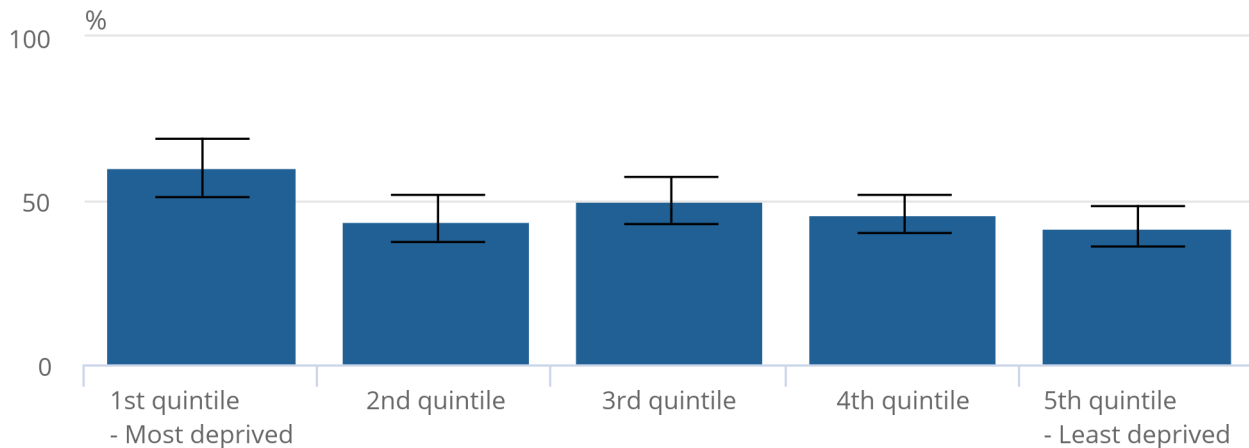
1. Question: "Which of the following issues, if any, have you been worried about in the past two weeks?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. An area's deprivation quintile is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Estimates are provided for England only given the relatively smaller sample sizes on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in Scotland and Wales.
5. Estimates for other issues people worried about broken down by IMD quintile in England can be found in the [personal well-being](#) dataset.

**Figure 4: Those in the most deprived areas in England more frequently reported worrying about the cost of energy.**

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they were worried about the cost of energy, by deprivation quintile, 5 to 16 April 2023

Figure 4: Those in the most deprived areas in England more frequently reported worrying about the cost of energy.

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they were worried about the cost of energy, by deprivation quintile, 5 to 16 April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "Which of the following issues, if any, have you been worried about in the past two weeks?"
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. An area's deprivation quintile is based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Estimates are provided for England only given the relatively smaller sample sizes on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in Scotland and Wales.
5. Estimates for other issues people worried about broken down by IMD quintile in England can be found in the [personal well-being](#) dataset.

Those living in the most deprived fifth of areas were more likely to report being worried about their general health (46%) than people in least deprived areas (29%).

Those living in the most deprived fifth of areas in England were also more likely to report being worried about the cost of rent or mortgage payments (35%) and feeling safe in their neighbourhood (28%). This was when compared with those living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (18% and 13%, respectively)

Estimates for other issues that people worried about, broken down by IMD quintile in England, can be found in our [personal well-being and loneliness dataset](#).



## 3 . Cost of living

Consumer price inflation data released in our [Consumer price inflation, UK: March 2023 bulletin](#) show that the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 10.1% in the 12 months to March 2023, down from 10.4% in February 2023. This section explores individuals' experiences and responses to continued high inflation and the increased cost of living.

Over 9 in 10 (93%) reported that their cost of living had increased compared with a year ago. Compared with one month ago, 70% reported an increase in their cost of living (76% in the previous period). This is an increase from 62% compared with when we first asked about this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

### Reasons for cost of living increases

The most commonly reported reasons given by adults for the rise in their cost of living over the past month were increases in:

- the price of food shopping (96%)
- their gas or electricity bills (77%)
- the price of fuel (42%)

Data released in our [Consumer price inflation, UK: March 2023 bulletin](#) show that food costs and housing costings (including energy, electricity and other fuel) have consistently been drivers of CPI.

### Actions taken because of the rising cost of living

The most common actions reported by all adults because of the rising cost of living in the latest period were:

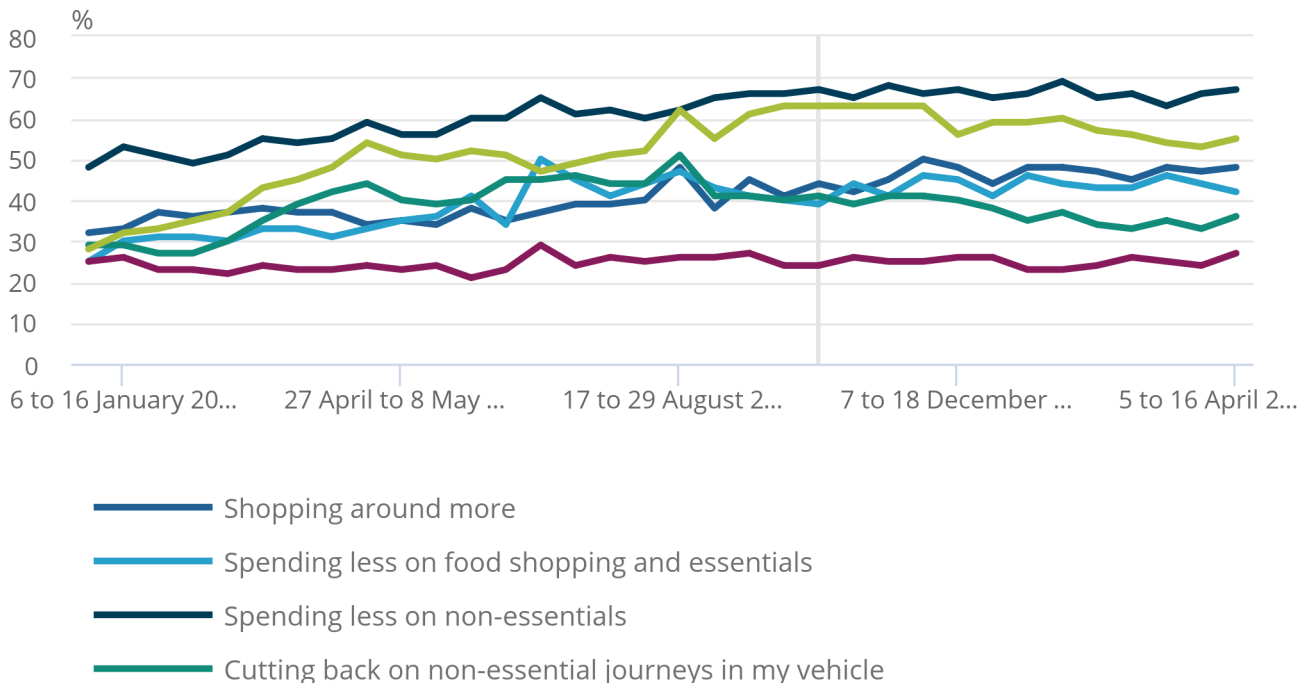
- spending less on non-essentials (67%)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their home (55%)
- shopping around more (48%)
- spending less on food shopping and essentials (42%)

**Figure 5: Around 7 in 10 adults reported spending less on non-essentials because of the rising cost of living**

Proportion of adults taking actions because of increases in the cost of living, Great Britain, December 2021 to April 2023

Figure 5: Around 7 in 10 adults reported spending less on non-essentials because of the rising cost of living

Proportion of adults taking actions because of increases in the cost of living, Great Britain, December 2021 to April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "Which of these, if any, are you doing because of the increases in the cost of living?"
2. Base: Adults who said their cost of living has increased over the last month until the period 14 to 25 September 2022 from which the base is all adults.
3. Due to changes in the base of the question, there is a break in the time series from the period 14 to 25 September 2022.
4. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
5. Not all response options are included in this chart. Please see the datasets associated with this release for estimates for each option.

## 4 . Personal well-being

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

- life satisfaction: 6.9 in the latest period (7.0 in the previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile: 7.2 in the latest period (7.4 in the previous period)
- happiness: 7.0 in the latest period (7.0 in the previous period)
- anxiety: 3.9 in the latest period (4.0 in the previous period)

Section 3 of our [Personal well-being quarterly estimates technical report](#) provides more information on the seasonal variation associated with measures of personal well-being. You can learn more about the Measures of National Well-being from our [Quality of life in the UK: February 2023 bulletin](#) and our [Measures of National Well-being dashboard](#), which provides longer-term trends in well-being since 2012.

### Figure 6: Levels of personal well-being

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to April 2023

#### Notes:

1. Questions: "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?", "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](#)

### Actions to look after well-being

In the latest period, we also asked what actions adults have taken to look after their well-being during the past two weeks. Around 9 in 10 (87%) adults had taken at least one action to look after their well-being in the last two weeks. The most reported actions were:

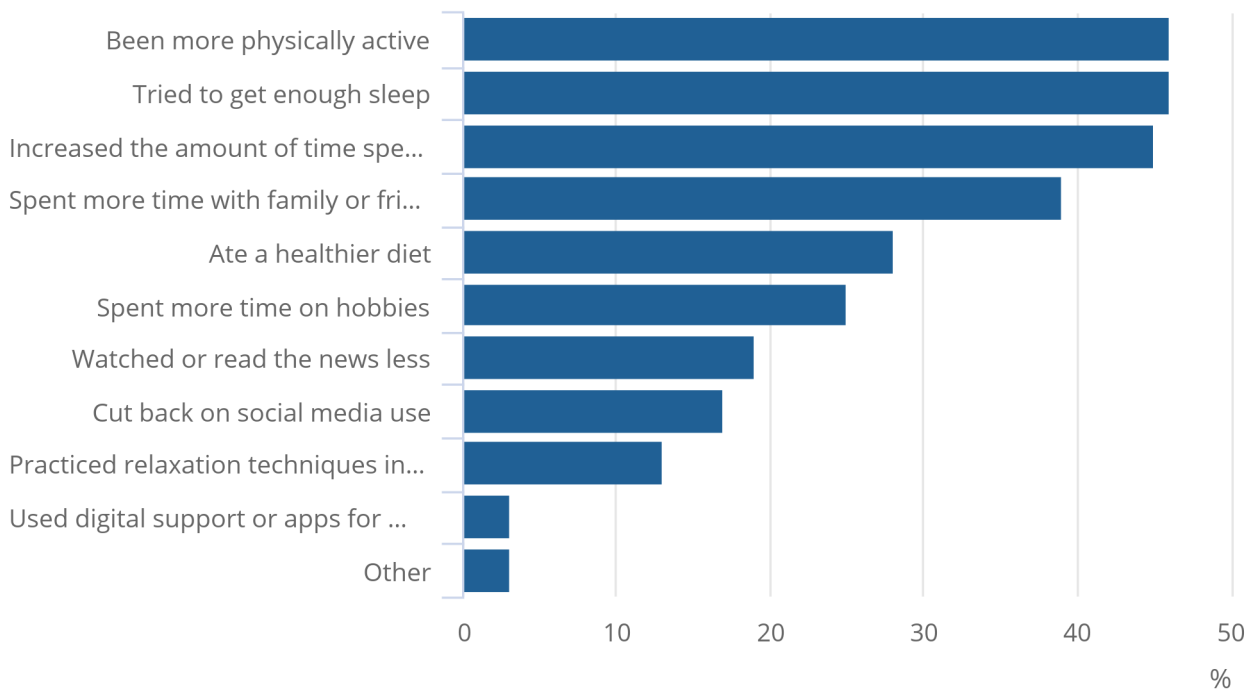
- being more physically active (46%)
- trying to get enough sleep (46%)
- increasing the amount of time spent outdoors (45%)
- spending more time with family or friends (39%)

**Figure 7: Around half of adults reported being more physically active to look after their well-being.**

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 5 to 16 April 2023

Figure 7: Around half of adults reported being more physically active to look after their well-being.

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 5 to 16 April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: " Over the past two weeks, which of these actions, if any, have you done to look after your well-being?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. 13% of adults reported that they have not been taking actions to look after their well-being in the past two weeks. This has not been included in the chart because respondents who selected this response option were unable to select any other response option.

## 5 . Impacts of industrial action

In the latest period, 38% of adults reported industrial action as an important issue in the UK today.

During the latest period, we asked whether people have been affected by industrial action over the last month. Around 4 in 10 adults (39%) reported that they had been affected by industrial action in the last month, an increase from 27% in the previous period 22 March to 2 April 2023. This period coincided with industrial action in [the NHS](#) in England from 11 to 15 April 2023, and [His Majesty's Passport Office](#) from 3 April to 6 May 2023.

Among those affected by industrial action, the largest changes in the way adults have been impacted by industrial action included:

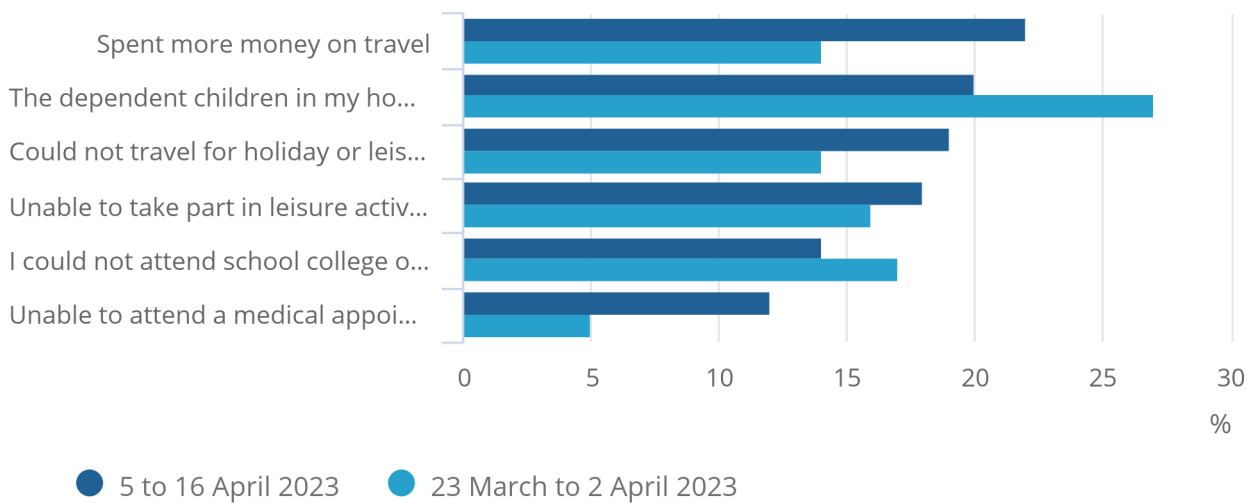
- spending more money on travel: 22% in the latest period (14% in the previous period)
- unable to attend a medical appointment: 12% in the latest period (5% in previous period)

**Figure 8: Changes in the ways industrial action has affected adults since the previous period**

Proportion of adults affected by industrial action in Great Britain, 8 March to 16 April 2023

Figure 8: Changes in the ways industrial action has affected adults since the previous period

Proportion of adults affected by industrial action in Great Britain, 8 March to 16 April 2023



Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past month, in what ways, if any, has industrial action affected you?".
2. Base: all adults who reported that they had been affected by industrial action.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
4. Not all response options are included in this chart. Please see the datasets associated with this release for estimates for each option.

Other ways that adults have been impacted by industrial action in the latest period included:

- dependent children being unable to attend school (20%)
- not been able to travel for holiday or leisure as planned (19%)
- being unable to take part in leisure activities (18%)
- not being able to attend school, college, or university (14%)

Please note that the easter school holidays were during the latest data collection period and estimates of some impacts may be affected by the proportion of our sample experiencing certain disruptions. For example, not all of our sample are parents or working adults.

## 6 . Public opinions and social trends data

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

Dataset | Released 21 April 2023

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 21 April 2023

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 21 April 2023

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 21 April 2023

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.

## 7 . 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).

Breakdowns by age and sex, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in our [Public opinions 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 (5 April to 16 April 2023), we sampled 4,980 households. This sample was randomly selected from people who had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample for the latest period contained 2,053 individuals, representing a 41% response rate. This is lower than the previous periods following the removal of an incentive to the OPN temporarily introduced to the survey.

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 Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).



## 8 . Related links

### [The impact of winter pressures on different population groups in Great Britain: 15 to 26 February 2023](#)

Article | Released 30 March 2023

In-depth analysis on how increases in the cost of living and difficulty accessing NHS services have impacted people's lives across the winter period.

### [Tracking the impact of winter pressures in Great Britain: 18 to 29 January 2023](#)

Article | Released 27 February 2023

Insights from our Winter Survey, examining how cost-of-living rises, and difficulty accessing NHS services are affecting people during the winter months.

### [Characteristics of adults experiencing energy and food insecurity in Great Britain: 22 November to 18 December 2022](#)

Article | Released 13 February 2023

Understanding the characteristics associated with experiencing energy and food insecurity; logistic regression analysis using data from the Winter Survey.

### [Cost of living insights](#)

Web page | Updated frequently

The latest data and trends about the cost of living. Explore changes in the cost of everyday items and how this is affecting people.

### [Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: September 2022 to January 2023](#)

Article | Released 20 February 2023

Analysis of the proportion of the population that are affected by an increase in their cost of living, and of the characteristics associated with financial vulnerability, using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle survey.

### [How increases in housing costs impact households](#)

Article | Released 9 January 2023

Mortgage interest rates started to increase during 2022, this is likely to make borrowing more expensive for those with fixed rates deals coming to an end in 2023. Those with variable rate mortgages and private renters are also facing higher housing costs.

### [Census 2021: how homes are heated in your area](#)

Article | Released 5 January 2023

As more than half of adults report worry about keeping warm this winter, we explore how homes are heated across England and Wales.

### [Cost of living and depression in adults, Great Britain: 29 September to 23 October 2022](#)

Article | Released 6 December 2022

Analysis into the prevalence of depression among adults in Great Britain in autumn 2022. Exploring this in the context of the rising cost of living.

### [Quality of life in the UK: February 2023](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 February 2023

An update on the UK's progress across 10 domains of national well-being: personal well-being, relationships, health, what we do, where we live, personal finance, economy, education and skills, governance, and the environment.

## 9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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