

Article

# The cost of living, current and upcoming work: February 2023

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

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# 1 . Overview of the cost of living

UK inflation continues to remain at a high level, with a 40-year high recorded in October 2022. This higher level of inflation has continued into 2023 with food and non-alcoholic beverages continuing to be a large contributing factor. The price of these items rose by 16.9% in the 12 months to December 2022, up from 16.5% in November.

The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 9.2% in the 12 months to December 2022, slightly down from 9.3% in November. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 10.5% in the 12 months to December 2022, down from 10.7% in November. More information can be found in our [Consumer price inflation, UK: December 2022 bulletin](#).

Our previous release [The cost of living, current and upcoming work: September 2022 article](#) provided information about work produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) that relates to the cost of living. This article provides an update, outlining our progress since September, as well as our upcoming and new analytical work.

## 2 . Our current position

Since September, we have continued to provide new analysis on the impact of the rising cost of living through a range of different data sources. We have also published our regular suite of statistics, which provide insights into the rising inflation. Examples of work from the last four months includes:

- the launch of our interactive [Cost of Living latest insights tool](#), which provides an overview of the latest data and trends about the cost of living; users can explore changes in the cost of everyday items and how these changes are affecting people
- releasing insights from a new winter survey, which provides monthly updates on how increases in the cost of living and difficulty accessing NHS services are affecting people's lives during the autumn and winter months; [The impact of winter pressures on adults in Great Britain: December 2022 article](#), and an in-depth analysis on [The impact of winter pressures on different population groups in Great Britain: 22 November to 18 December 2022 article](#)
- publishing [Inflation and cost of living for household groups, UK: October 2022 article](#), demonstrating that increasing energy and food prices have widened the gap between low- and high-income inflation rates since April 2022
- continuing to release fortnightly insights from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) within the [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain bulletin](#), including breakdowns by age, gender, and deprivation quintiles
- using OPN insights to investigate [Cost of living and depression in adults, Great Britain: 29 September to 23 October 2022 article](#)
- releasing experimental statistics from our new [Student Cost of Living Insights Study \(SCoLIS\)](#) which aims to understand the behaviours, plans, opinions and well-being of higher education students compared with the adult population of Great Britain (as surveyed by the OPN)
- publishing multiple releases on household income, including our annual [Average household income, UK: financial year ending 2022 bulletin](#) and our [Household income inequality, UK: financial year ending 2022 bulletin](#), to show how measures of income have changed over time

- providing insights on changing prices relating to housing, including our [Housing Purchase Affordability, Great Britain: 2021 bulletin](#) and a subsequent article, our [Private rental affordability, England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 2021 bulletin](#), and a deep dive on [How increases in housing costs impact households article](#)
- releasing insights in our [Energy efficiency of housing in England and Wales: 2022 article](#) including the environmental impact, carbon dioxide emissions and the main central heating fuel type for new and existing homes by property type, tenure and property age; these are supported by new insights from Census 2021 in our [Census 2021: how homes are heated in your area article](#)
- adding wholesale electricity data from Elexon into our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators bulletin](#) to complement the already published wholesale gas data from the National Gas Transmission, meaning we now have a fuller picture of emerging trends in the energy market
- publishing a further release of our [Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis](#), as well as an analysis on [how the rising cost of pasta, bread and other everyday foods leaves the most vulnerable the worst off](#)
- updating our [Income and earnings coherence workplan](#), which brings together the work of the Office of National Statistics (ONS), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) into a single place; updates include new work such as [Transforming the ONS's household financial statistics](#), as well as updating completed and ongoing projects
- continuing to publish our regular cost of living newsletter and social media thread, pulling together relevant research and analysis from the ONS and across government; to subscribe, please visit our [sign-up](#) page and select "Cost of living newsletter" under our subscription topics

## 3 . Upcoming work

### Real-time indicators: impacts on business and individuals, energy consumption and costs

We will continue to monitor the impacts of rising prices and winter pressures felt by individuals and businesses through our real time surveys: the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey \(OPN\)](#) and the [Business Insights and Conditions Survey \(BICS\)](#). Both surveys provide fortnightly insights on how individuals and businesses are feeling in relation to rising costs, as well as actions they are taking to mitigate these costs. We review the questions on both surveys regularly to ensure that they are appropriate and useful for our users.

While these surveys provide regular insights at a more aggregated level, we are committed to understanding the disproportionate effect that rising prices have on particular groups. We will continue to produce quarterly estimates to look at different groups using pooled data from the OPN in our [Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain articles](#).

Following initial releases from the new winter survey, upcoming work will include a regression analysis looking at which groups of the population are more likely to experience energy insecurity and food insecurity. We will also publish a longitudinal analysis looking at how the experiences of the same group of adults have changed between late 2022 and early 2023.

We are continuing to expand our suite of real-time indicators published weekly through our [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators](#) bulletin, with the focus of adding more indicators that provide commentary on rising costs. We are developing indicators using smart meter data, which will help inform how electricity consumption habits are changing because of these pressures.

## Prices transformation: using transaction, scanner, and administrative data

We are currently undertaking a programme of transformation across our consumer price statistics. We will use data from the Rail Delivery Group on rail ticket sales in our headline measures of consumer prices from March 2023. These data will increase the number of rail fare price points to around 30 million from an aggregated single annual estimate produced by the Office of Rail and Road.

The historic impact on headline data would have been small. However, these data will also provide insights into the reasons behind changing prices and the potential to better understand trends as we will be producing six new indices by fare type. We published an [impact analysis on the transformation of UK consumer price statistics](#) ahead of including these data in headline consumer price statistics from February 2023 (published in March 2023).

We are continuing to transform the way we measure prices to understand people's spending patterns in a more detailed and timely manner. For example, we work with supermarkets to use scanner (point-of-sale) data in our measurement of grocery prices. For more information, see our [Transformation of consumer price statistics: April 2022 article](#).

We have been developing web-scraping capabilities, as part of our consumer prices transformation. This has allowed us to use supermarket data, alongside new and experimental methods, to capture price changes of everyday grocery items in our [Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis: April 2021 to September 2022 article](#).

We will continue to update our [personal inflation calculator](#) and we will build additional interactive tools to help users understand how inflation affects them.

## Income, spending and wealth

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is seeking to transform household financial statistics, covering income, expenditure, and wealth of UK households. Our aim is to ensure that the household financial statistics and analysis we produce continue to meet the evolving needs of policymakers, citizens, and other data users. Our ambition is that our statistics and analysis should provide inclusive, coherent, timely and granular insights into wider aspects of the financial well-being of households with improved coverage and accuracy. More information on our plans for household financial statistics transformation can be found in our [Household Financial Statistics Transformation \(HFST\) consultation document \(PDF, 763KB\)](#) and our accompanying [blog](#). An opportunity to give us your views can be found in our online consultation, which closes on 23 February 2023.

To support our regularly published data from Revolut within our [Economic activity and social change in the UK bulletin](#), an upcoming release will use financial transactions card spending data to assess how discretionary spending over a period covering Black Friday, Christmas and Boxing Day compares with previous years. This in-depth analytical article will investigate whether factors including the rising cost of living, rail strikes, and adverse weather caused any potential changes in consumer behaviours over the festive period. It will be published on the 21 February 2023.

## 4 . Future developments

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is committed to providing evidence and analysis to central government, devolved administrations and the public about the impact these factors are having across the population. Through the wide range of available data, and developments in how we gather and analyse it, we will continue to ensure our evidence provides clear insights into the impacts of the rising cost of living.

We will continue to update on our progress approximately three months from the date of publishing.

## 5 . Provide feedback

We welcome users' views about ideas for statistics and analysis, identification of gaps, offers of data, and expertise to further develop our work. Please email us at [coordination@ons.gov.uk](mailto:coordination@ons.gov.uk).

## 6 . Publication schedule for February to April 2023

Regular publications we publish related to the cost of living:

- [Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators](#) (weekly publication)
- [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#) (fortnightly publication)
- [Business insights and impact on the UK economy](#) (fortnightly publication)
- [Retail sales, Great Britain](#) (monthly publication)
- [Consumer price inflation, UK](#) (monthly publication)
- [Producer price inflation, UK](#) (monthly publication)
- [UK House Price Index](#) (monthly publication)
- [CPIH-consistent inflation rate estimates for UK household groups](#) (quarterly publication)
- [Family spending in the UK](#) (annual publication)
- [Housing affordability in England and Wales: 2022](#) (annual publication)

Non-regular and ad-hoc publications related to the cost of living:

- 7 February 2023: [Impact analysis on transformation of UK consumer price statistics: rail fares and second-hand cars, February 2023](#)
- 13 February 2023: [Characteristics associated with experiencing energy and food insecurity among adults in Great Britain: 22 November to 18 December 2022](#) (provisional date)
- 20 February 2023: [Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: September 2022 to January 2023](#)
- 21 February 2023: [How has discretionary spending been impacted in recent winters?](#)
- 27 February 2023: [Tracking the impact of winter pressures in Great Britain: 18 to 29 January 2023](#)

Non-regular and ad-hoc publications related to the cost of living with no confirmed publication date:

- Cost of living and higher education students (February 2023 provisional date)
- How debt has affected people over Winter (February 2023 provisional date)
- The recent drivers of food and drink producer price inflation in the UK (March 2023 provisional date)
- Tracking the impact of winter pressures in Great Britain (March 2023 provisional date)

# 7 . Cite this article

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