Statistical bulletin

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: October 2026

Social insights on important issues facing the UK, from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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1 . Main points

The following information is based on data collected from 7 October to 1 November 2026.

- The cost of living (90%), the NHS (79%), and the economy (71%) were the most commonly reported issues facing the UK today; these have been the three most commonly reported issues since we started asking this question in October 2022.
- Adults aged 16 to 29 years were more likely to report the cost of living (94%), housing (65%) and employment (63%) as important issues, compared with those aged 70 years and over.
- Adults aged 70 years and over were more likely to report the NHS (83%), immigration (77%), the economy (75%), crime (69%), and international conflict (64%) as important issues, compared with those aged 16 to 29 years.
- Women were more likely to report the cost of living (92%), the NHS (82%), climate change and the environment (62%), and employment (55%) as important issues, compared with men, who were more likely to report the economy (75%).

2 . Important issues over time

Since October 2022, we have asked adults in Great Britain about the important issues facing the UK today.

In the latest period (7 October to 1 November 2026), the most commonly reported issues were:

- the cost of living (90%)
- the NHS (79%)
- the economy (71%)

These have been the top three issues since we first started asking this question in October 2022.

Nearly 6 in 10 (59%) adults reported immigration as an important issue in the latest period. This has been relatively stable since January 2026, having fallen from a high of 65% in August 2025. However, it remains higher than when we first started asking this question in October 2022 (43%).

Over half (56%) of adults reported crime as an important issue in the latest period. This is down from highs of 65% in August to September 2024, and June 2025, but up from 49% when we first started asking this question in October 2022.

Just over half (51%) of adults reported employment as an important issue in the latest period. This has been relatively stable since November 2025, following an increase from a low of 30% between 22 May and 2 June 2024, and up from 31% when we first started asking this question in October 2022.

Industrial action was reported by 1 in 10 (10%) adults as an important issue in the latest period. This has been relatively stable since around May 2026 but is a decrease from 44% when we first added this response to the question in December 2022.

Figure 1: The proportion of adults reporting immigration, crime and employment as important issues has increased since 2022, while reporting of industrial action has decreased

Proportion of adults reporting each important issue, Great Britain, October 2022 to October 2026

Notes:

1. Respondents could select more than one option.
2. The length of each data collection period presented in this time series may be different.
3. Industrial action was first included as a response option between 21 December 2022 and 8 January 2023.
4. See our accompanying dataset for confidence intervals, additional response options and related footnotes.

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3 . Important issues by age and sex

In the latest period (7 October to 1 November 2026), there were differences in some of the issues reported by age group (Figure 2).

Adults aged 16 to 29 years were more likely than those aged 70 years and over to report:

- the cost of living (94%, compared with 83%)
- housing (65%, compared with 48%)
- employment (63%, compared with 45%)

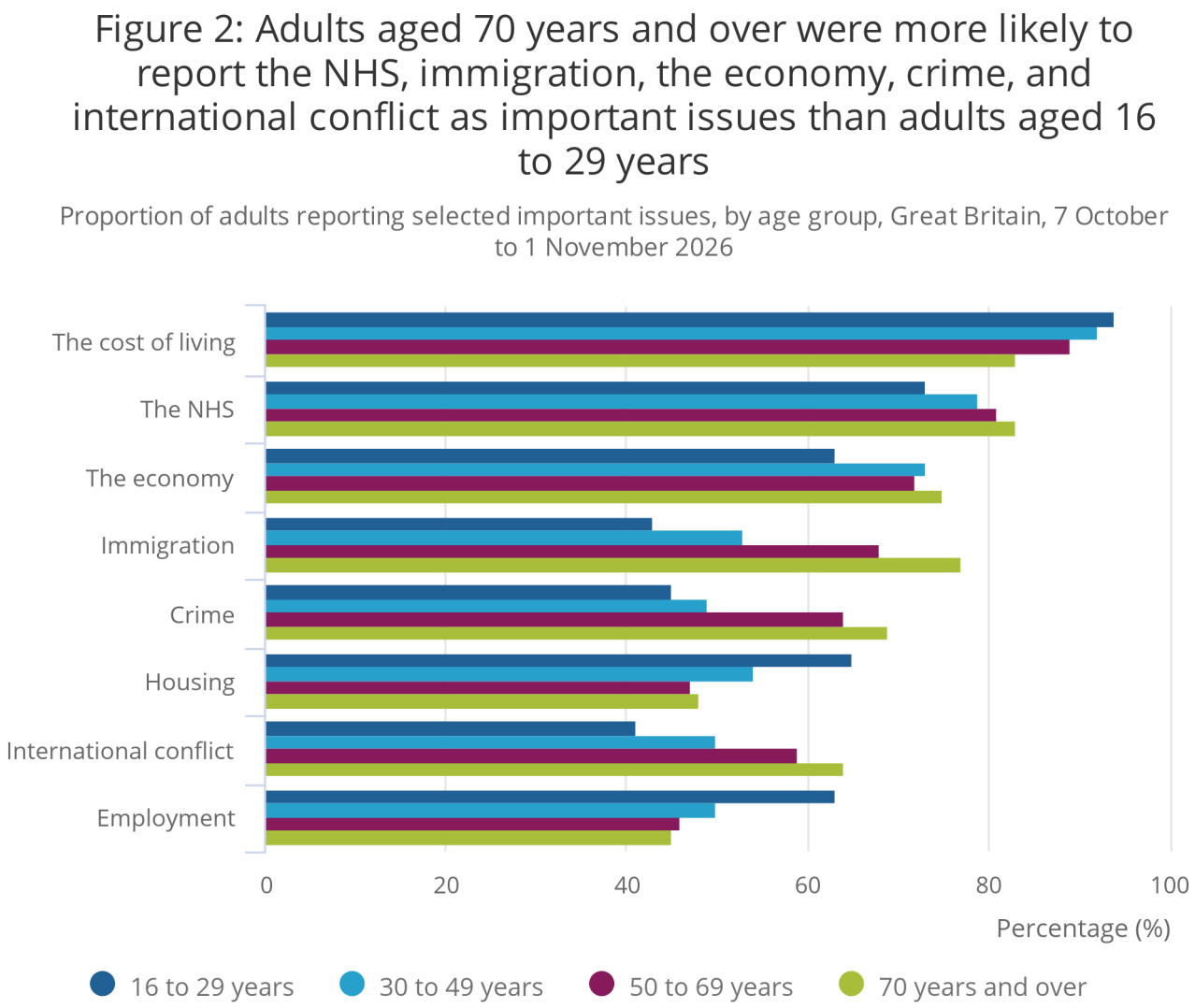
By contrast, adults aged 70 years and over were more likely than those aged 16 to 29 years to report:

- the NHS (83%, compared with 73%)
- immigration (77%, compared with 43%)
- the economy (75%, compared with 63%)
- crime (69%, compared with 45%)
- international conflict (64%, compared with 41%)

Breakdowns for all the age groups and important issues we asked about are available in our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness dataset.

Figure 2: Adults aged 70 years and over were more likely to report the NHS, immigration, the economy, crime, and international conflict as important issues than adults aged 16 to 29 years

Proportion of adults reporting selected important issues, by age group, Great Britain, 7 October to 1 November 2026



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

Notes:

1. Respondents could select more than one option.
2. See our accompanying dataset for confidence intervals, additional response options and related footnotes.

Men were more likely than women to report the economy as an important issue facing the UK today (75%, compared with 67%). By contrast, women were more likely than men to report:

- the cost of living (92%, compared with 88%)
- the NHS (82%, compared with 75%)
- climate change and the environment (62%, compared with 53%)
- employment (55%, compared with 46%)

Breakdowns by sex for all the important issues we asked about are available in our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness dataset.

All data from the latest period, including additional topics not covered in this bulletin, are available on our Related data page.

4 . Data on public opinions and social trends

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness
Dataset | Released 20 November 2026
Personal well-being, loneliness and what people in Great Britain felt were important issues; indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

Opinions and Lifestyle Survey: sample sizes, response rates and user requested data
Dataset | Released 20 November 2026
Survey information including sample sizes, response rates and user requested data for the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

5 . Data sources and quality

Sample

The analysis in this bulletin is based on adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain.

In the latest period, 7 October to 1 November 2026, we sampled 8,710 households. This sample was randomly selected from people who had previously completed the Transformed Labour Force Survey (TLFS) or Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

There were 3,520 individuals in the responding sample for the latest period, representing a 40% response rate.

Data quality

We applied survey weights to make estimates representative of the population, based on our population estimates. Estimates for some groups of the population may be subject to greater uncertainty because of smaller sample sizes for these groups (for example, younger adults).

From the 1 to 26 April 2026 data collection period onwards, the population totals used in weighting OPN estimates are based on 2024 mid-year estimates using updated population projections. They are initially projected forward using scaling factors derived from 2022-based subnational population projections by local authority, age, and sex, and subsequently constrained to 2022-based national population projection totals. Further, these estimates are adjusted to cover only the population living in households and student halls of residence.

We provide confidence intervals for all estimates in the datasets. Where comparisons between estimates are made, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the statistical significance of the differences.

Further quality and methodology information (QMI) on the survey design and quality is available in our Opinions and Lifestyle Survey quality and methodology information (QMI).

6 . Related links

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: July 2026
Bulletin | Released 14 August 2026
Social insights on daily life, including experiences of the cost of living and water use and restrictions, from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: April 2026
Bulletin | Released 15 May 2026
Social insights on daily life, including cost of living and attitudes to important issues and elections, from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

Economic activity and social change real-time indicators, UK, dashboard
Online tool | Last updated 19 November 2026
An overview of the UK economy and society, based on rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and innovative methods.

7 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 20 November 2026, ONS website, statistical bulletin, Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: October 2026