Living Costs and Food Survey

User guidance and technical information for the Living Costs and Food Survey.

Contact:
Kate Pugh
LCF_Enquiries@ons.gov.uk
+44 1633 651836

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Table of contents

1. Summary

2. Latest publications

3. Access to LCF datasets

4. Technical report

5. Quality report

1 . Summary

The Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) collects information on spending patterns and the cost of living that reflect household budgets. It is conducted throughout the year, across the whole of the UK, and is the most significant survey on household spending in the UK.

The survey provides essential information for key social and economic measures, such as:

- household spending patterns for the consumer prices index and for GDP figures
- detailed information on food consumption and nutrition for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

It is also an important source of economic and social data for a range of government and other research agencies.

The results are essential for understanding society and planning to meet its needs.

Information about the LCF is available for people selected to take part in the survey.

2 . Latest publications

The LCF releases data on an annual basis. The latest release can be seen on the ONS website.

Results from the Living Costs and Food Survey (LCF) are published in our Family spending bulletins and GOV. UK's Family food statistics. Our bulletin provides a comprehensive overview of household expenditure and income and includes background information on the survey's history and methodology. The family food statistics, produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), provides detailed statistical information on the purchase and consumption of food and drink.

Microdata for the LCF are available from the UK Data Service (UKDS), Secure Research Service (SRS) or the Integrated Data Service (IDS).

3 . Access to LCF datasets

LCF data are made available through the End User Licence at the UK Data Service. The End User Licence is an agreement between the user and the University of Essex to provide users with the right to use the data held at the UK Data Service, this includes LCF data. The End User Licence dataset can be accessed through the UK Data Service (UKDS) website.

4 . Technical report

The technical report describes technical aspects of the sampling, fieldwork and data processing for the LCF:

- Living Costs and Food Survey technical report: financial year ending March 2022
- Living Costs and Food Survey technical report: financial year ending March 2021

5 . Quality report

- Living Costs and Food Survey QMI