

Statistical bulletin

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 22 November to 4 December 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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1 . Main points

The following information is for the latest survey period 22 November to 4 December 2022, based on adults in Great Britain.

- When asked about the issues facing the UK today, 92% of adults reported the cost of living as an important issue; other issues frequently reported as important included the NHS (80%), the economy (77%), and climate change and the environment (63%).
- Around 9 in 10 (92%) adults reported their cost of living had increased compared with a year ago, while a lower percentage (74%) reported an increase in their cost of living compared with one month ago.
- The most common actions reported by adults because of the rising cost of living were spending less on non-essentials (66%), and using less fuel, such as gas or electricity, in their homes (63%); these have increased since we first started asking about this in the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.
- Around 1 in 5 (18%) adults reported that they did not have any savings; people living in the most deprived areas of England (32%) were more likely to report that they did not have any savings compared with those living in the least deprived areas (9%).
- Around 1 in 14 (7%) adults reported that they had had either a direct debit, a standing order, or a bill that they were unable to pay in the past month; this was higher (13%) among those living in the most deprived areas of England compared with those living in the least deprived areas (3%).
- Around 1 in 12 (8%) adults reported that they had cancelled a financial product, such as a pension payment, motor vehicle breakdown cover or dental insurance, in the past month, because of increases in the cost of living, this proportion appeared higher among those living in the most deprived areas of England (11%) compared with those living in the least deprived areas (6%).
- Over half (57%) of adults reported that they were worried (very or somewhat) about keeping warm in their home this winter; people living in the most deprived areas in England (69%) were more likely to be worried about this than those living in the least deprived areas (49%).

2 . Important issues facing the UK

Important issues

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 22 November and 4 December 2022 (the "latest period") and 8 November and 20 November 2022 (the "previous period"). Analysis is based on adults in Great Britain.

In the latest period, we asked adults what they feel are important issues facing the UK today (Figure 1). The most commonly reported issues were the same as in the previous period:

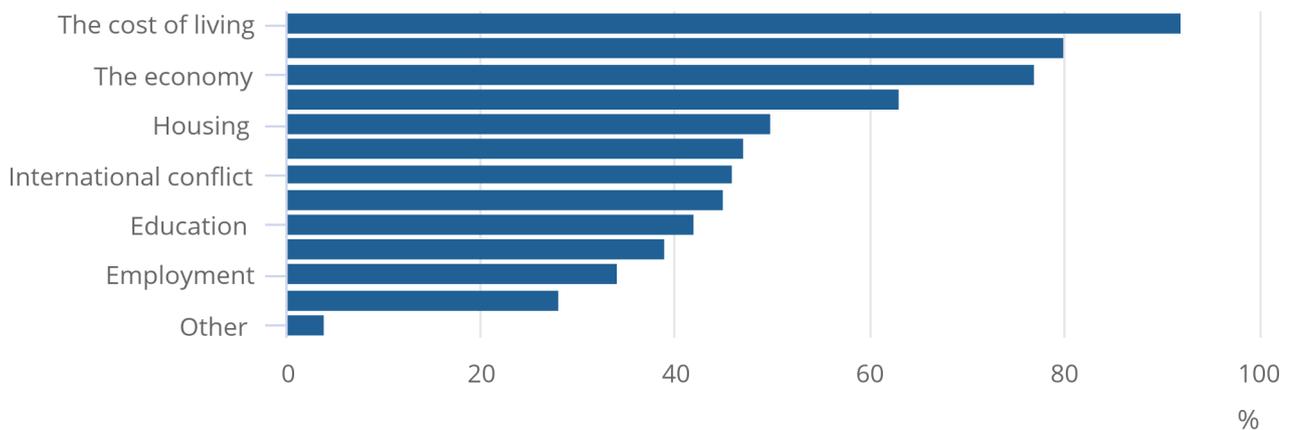
- the cost of living (92%)
- the NHS (80%)
- the economy (77%)
- climate change and the environment (63%)

Figure 1: Around 9 in 10 (92%) reported the cost of living as an important issue facing the UK today

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 22 November to 4 December 2022

Figure 1: Around 9 in 10 (92%) reported the cost of living as an important issue facing the UK today

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain, 22 November to 4 December 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.

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 (92%) reported their cost of living had increased compared with a year ago. Around three-quarters (74%) reported an increase in their cost of living compared with one month ago. This was an increase from 62% when we first asked about this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

Reasons for cost of living increases

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%)

Actions taken because of this 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 (66%) and using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their home (63%).

The proportion undertaking the most common actions of spending less on non-essential goods and using less fuel such as gas and electricity in the home has increased since we first started asking about this in the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022. Then, the proportion reporting these actions was 48% and 28%, respectively.

Note there are strong seasonal usage patterns relating to gas and electricity that may affect people's use of fuel gas and electricity even in the absence of energy price increases.

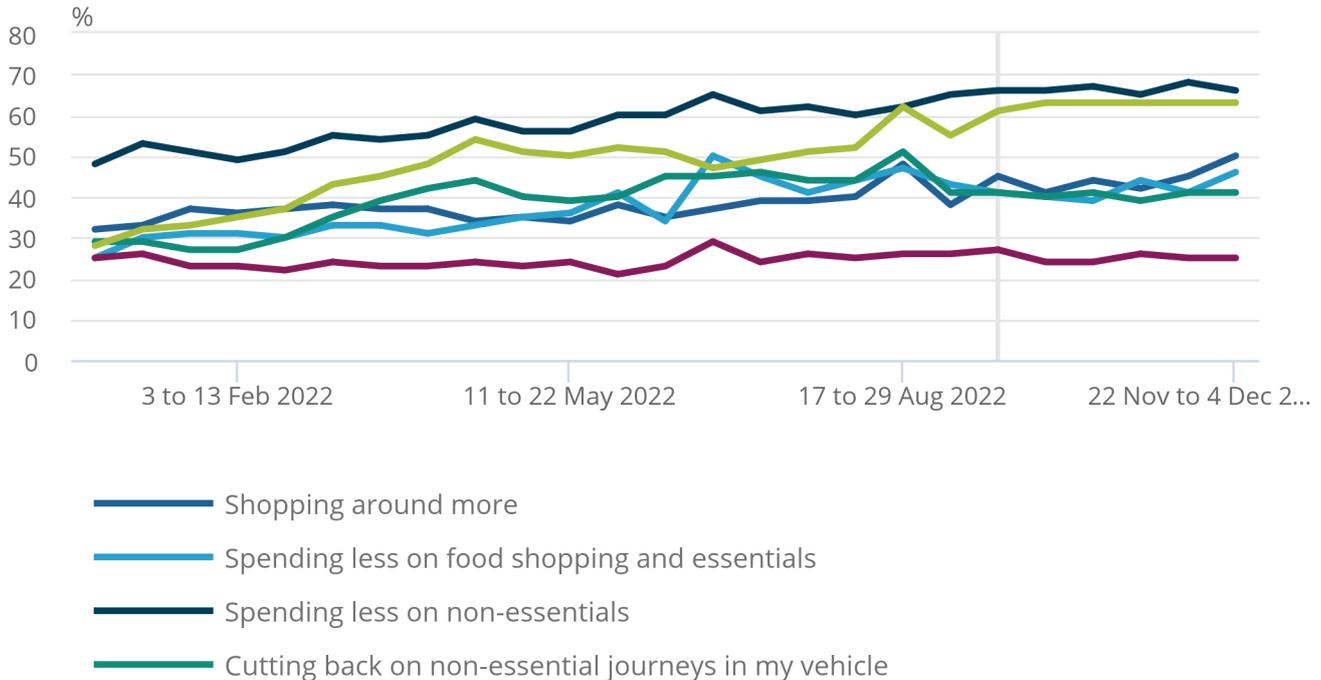
By contrast, the proportion of people reporting using their savings to fund their spending has remained more stable since we first asked this in the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Taking actions because of increases in the cost of living such as spending less on non-essentials and using less gas and electricity has increased during 2022

Proportion of adults taking actions because of increases in the cost of living, Great Britain, December 2021 to December 2022

Figure 2: Taking actions because of increases in the cost of living such as spending less on non-essentials and using less gas and electricity has increased during 2022

Proportion of adults taking actions because of increases in the cost of living, Great Britain, December 2021 to December 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: Adults who said their cost of living has increased over the last month until the period 14 to 25 September from which the base is all adults.
3. Because of changes in the base of the question, there is a break in the time series from the period 14 to 25 September 2022. Data before this period cannot be directly compared with data from this period onwards.
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.

Household finances

In this section we look at various aspects of people's household finances by the level of deprivation of the area in which they live. This is based on the [Index of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#). We have classified areas into five quintiles ranging from the most deprived to the least deprived areas. Estimates are provided for England only given the relatively smaller sample sizes on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey in Scotland and Wales.

Around 2 in 10 (18%) adults reported that they did not have any savings. People living in the most deprived areas of England (32%) were more likely to report that they did not have any savings compared with those living in the least deprived areas (9%) (Figure 3).

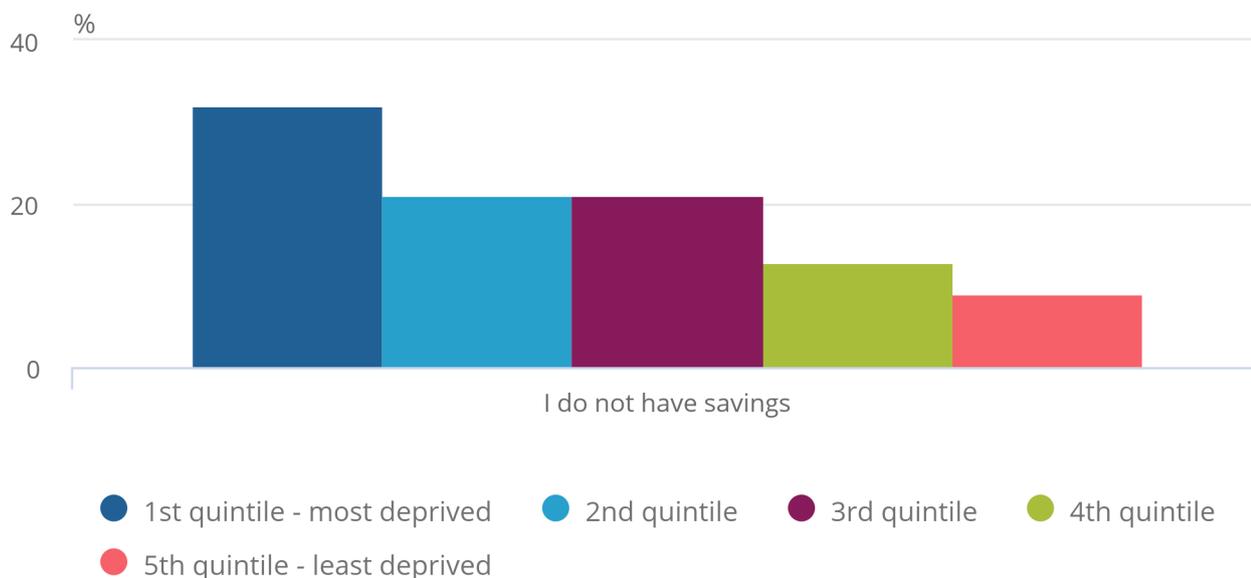
Around a third of adults (34%) reported that they had saved less this month compared with a month ago, 38% of adults reported they had saved the same, and 4% had saved more.

Figure 3: People living in the most deprived areas were more likely to not have any savings

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they did not have any savings, by deprivation quintile, 22 November to 4 December 2022

Figure 3: People living in the most deprived areas were more likely to not have any savings

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they did not have any savings, by deprivation quintile, 22 November to 4 December 2022



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

Notes:

1. Question: "Compared to one month ago, how has the amount of money you have saved changed, if at all?".
2. Base: All adults in England.
3. 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.
4. Estimates of other ways in which people's saving behaviour has changed compared with one month ago, broken down by Index of Multiple Deprivation quintile in England can be found in the household finances dataset.

Around 1 in 14 (7%) of adults reported that they had a direct debit, a standing order, or bill that they were unable to pay in the past month. This proportion was higher among those living in the most deprived areas in England (13%) compared with those in the least deprived areas (3%).

Around 1 in 12 (8%) of adults reported that they had cancelled at least one financial product in the past month because of increases in the cost of living. This included 2% of adults reporting cancelling their pension payment, 2% motor vehicle breakdown cover, and 1% dental insurance.

The proportion of adults who cancelled at least one financial product appeared to be higher among those living in the most deprived areas of England (11%) compared with those living in the least deprived areas (6%).

Worries about cost of living

Around three-quarters (73%) of adults reported being worried (very or somewhat) about rising costs of living in the past two weeks (77% in the previous period).

People living in the most deprived areas in England appeared more likely to be worried about the rising cost of living (77%) than those in the least deprived areas (68%).

Energy bills

Around half (48%) of adults who pay energy bills said they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford them in the latest period (45% in the previous period).

This proportion was around 6 in 10 (60%) among those living in the most deprived areas in England compared with around 4 in 10 (41%) among those living in the least deprived areas in England.

Among those who reported they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, around 1 in 25 (4%) reported they were behind on their bills. This proportion has appeared to be relatively stable since we first started asking this question in March 2022. Around 1 in 7 (14%) of those living in the most deprived areas in England reported this compared with 2% among those living in the least deprived areas in England.

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

Rent or mortgage payments

Around 3 in 10 (30%) adults who are currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported that these payments have gone up in the last six months (the same as in the previous period).

Around a third (33%) of those who are currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported that they are finding it very or somewhat difficult to afford these payments (34% in the previous period). There was not a clear trend in difficulty affording rent or mortgage payments by deprivation of the area in England in which people lived, with the proportion ranging from 32% to 37% by deprivation quintile.

Around 1 in 33 (3%) of those currently paying rent or mortgage payments reported they were behind with these payments. This proportion appeared higher among those living in the most deprived areas in England (8%) compared with those living in the least deprived areas (2%).

Among adults with a mortgage, around 4 in 10 adults (43%) reported being very or somewhat worried about the changes in mortgage interest rates, and around 3 in 10 (29%) reported being somewhat unworried or not at all worried.

Our [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.

Our [upcoming 15 December 2022 article, The impact of winter pressures on adults in Great Britain: 22 November to 4 December 2022](#) will provide further insights on how increases in the cost of living and difficulty accessing NHS services are affecting peoples' lives during the autumn and winter months.

4 . Worries, personal well-being and loneliness

Keeping warm this winter

In this period, we asked adults how worried they were about keeping warm in their home this winter:

- over half (57%) reported being very or somewhat worried (55% in previous period)
- around 1 in 5 (22%) reported being neither worried nor unworried (20% in previous period)
- around 1 in 5 (18%) reported being somewhat unworried or not at all worried (22% in previous period)

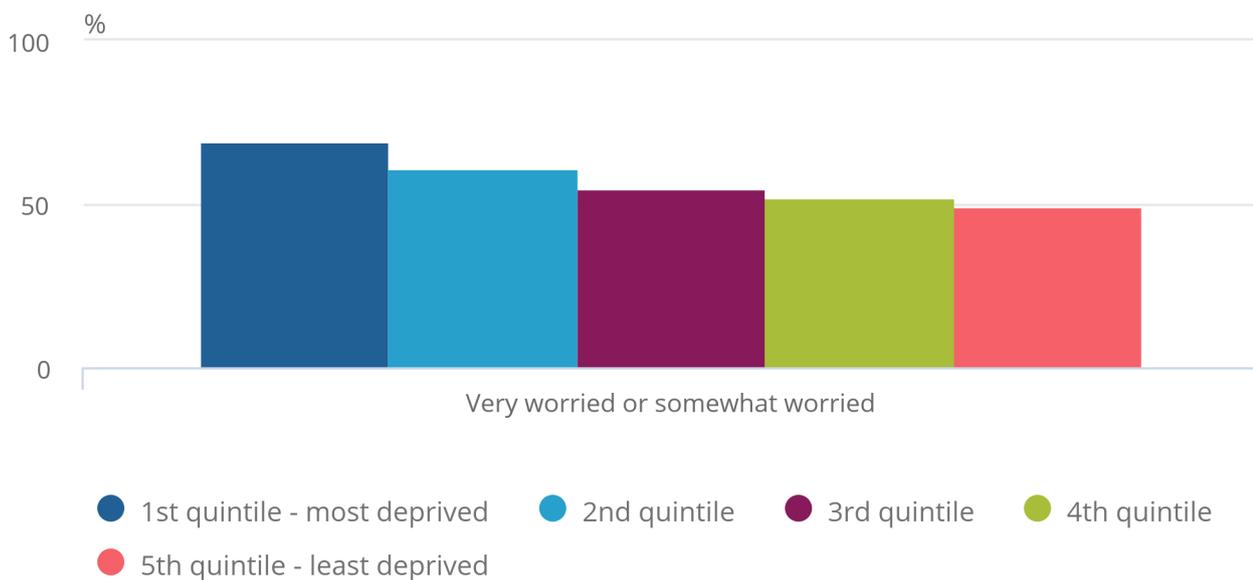
People living in the most deprived areas in England were more likely to be very or somewhat worried about keeping warm (69%) than those living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (49%). (Figure 4).

Figure 4: People living in the most deprived areas were more likely to be very or somewhat worried about keeping warm this winter

Proportion of all adults in England, by deprivation quintile, 22 November to 4 December 2022

Figure 4: People living in the most deprived areas were more likely to be very or somewhat worried about keeping warm this winter

Proportion of all adults in England, by deprivation quintile, 22 November to 4 December 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 in England.
3. 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.

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 (the same as in in the previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile: 7.2 in the latest period (the same as in in the previous period).
- happiness: 6.8 in the latest period (the same as in the previous period)
- anxiety: 4.2 in the latest period (4.1 in the previous period) (Figure 5)

Average levels of life satisfaction, happiness and anxiety appear to have worsened slightly since August 2022 (3 to 14 August 2022). 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: November 2022 bulletin](#) and [Measures of National Well-being dashboard](#).

Figure 5: Levels of personal well-being

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to December 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 (26%) of adults reported feeling lonely always, often, or some of the time in the latest period (the same as 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

Location of work

Around three-quarters (73%) of working adults travelled to work at some point in the past seven days (72% in the previous period). This includes:

- 48% who only travelled to work in the past seven days (47% in the previous period)
- 25% who reported both working from home and travelling to work (hybrid working) in the past seven days (the same as in the previous period)

Around 13% of working adults said they worked from home exclusively in the past seven days (the same as the previous period). A further 14% 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 8 November to 20 November 2022. An update to these estimates will be available in early 2023.

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus latest insights](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).

7 . Public opinions and social trends data

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: household finances](#) Dataset | Released 9 December 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: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and other illnesses](#) Dataset | Released 25 November 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) related to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other illnesses on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness](#) Dataset | Released 9 December 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 9 December 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 9 December 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).

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 (22 November to 4 December 2022), we sampled 4,962 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 2,524 individuals, representing a 51% response rate. This is higher than in previous periods following the addition of an incentive to the OPN to encourage participation through the winter months.

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 the Office for National Statistics' (ONS's) current and future analytical work related to the cost of living.

[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: November 2022](#) Bulletin | Released 11 November 2022 An update on UK's progress across 10 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.

[Cost of living and higher education students, England: 24 October to 7 November 2022](#) Article | Released 23 November 2022 Experimental statistics from the Student Cost of Living Insights Study (SCoLIS) in England. Includes information on the behaviours, plans, opinions and well-being of higher education students in the context of the increases in cost of living.

[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

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