

Statistical bulletin

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: June 2024

What people reported were the important issues facing the UK, and how views varied among different population groups.

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1 . Main points

The following information is from data collected from 5 June to 30 June 2024, based on adults in Great Britain.

We asked people what they thought were the important issues facing the UK today.

- The cost of living (87%), the NHS (87%), the economy (66%), housing (60%), crime (58%), and climate change and the environment (56%) were the most commonly reported issues.
- Immigration (52%), education (49%), and international conflict (44%) were also commonly reported issues.

We examined what different groups of the population thought were important issues, using data over the period 10 April to 30 June 2024.

- The cost of living was more likely to be reported as an important issue by groups including younger adults (93% among those aged 16 to 29 years), women (90%), and those living in the most deprived fifth of areas of England (90%).
- Adults aged 70 years and over (72%) were more likely to say crime was an important issue compared with those aged 16 to 29 years (45%), however data from the Crime Survey for England and Wales show that younger people were more likely to be the victim of headline crime (for example, theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse or violence with or without injury).
- Housing was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (68%), and those living in London (68%).
- Climate change and the environment was more commonly reported by groups including younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (64%), women (62%), and adults living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (64%).

2 . Important issues facing the UK

Since October 2022, we have asked respondents what they thought were the important issues facing the UK today. This helps us understand how public opinion has changed over time and where more in-depth analysis can offer insights on specific topics and groups of the population.

The cost of living (87%), the NHS (87%), and the economy (66%) continue to be the most frequently reported important issues in the latest period (5 June to 30 June 2024).

The proportion of adults reporting the cost of living or the economy as an important issue has decreased since October 2022, when these proportions were 93% and 79%, respectively. Those reporting the NHS as an important issue has remained relatively stable over the same period.

Other commonly reported issues during this time include housing (60%), crime (58%), and climate change and the environment (56%).

The proportion of adults reporting housing or crime as an important issue has increased since October 2022, when these proportions were 53% and 49%, respectively. The proportion of adults reporting industrial action as an important issue has decreased from 44% in December 2022, when this issue was first asked about, to 19% in the latest period (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The cost of living, the NHS and the economy have been the most commonly reported important issues facing the UK since October 2022

Proportion of adults reporting each important issue, Great Britain, October 2022 to June 2024

Notes:

1. Question: “What do you think are important issues facing the UK today?”.
2. Base: all adults.
3. Respondents could select more than one option; estimates and associated confidence intervals for all response categories are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin.
4. The length of each data collection period presented in this time series may differ.

[Download the data](#)

3 . Important issues facing the UK among different groups of the population

Using a pooled dataset covering 10 April to 30 June 2024 (the “latest pooled period”), we explore what different groups of the population thought were the important issues facing the UK.

Figure 2 shows the proportion of adults who selected each important issue by a variety of personal characteristics. See our [related dataset, Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: Important issues facing the UK](#), for estimates of the proportions of people who selected each important issue by other personal characteristics, including parental status, ethnicity, and housing tenure.

The proportions of people reporting different important issues may vary among different groups of the population. The reasons for this are likely complex, as there are often associations between characteristics that are individually considered in this analysis.

Figure 2: The cost of living was more likely to be reported as an important issue by younger adults, women and those living in the most deprived areas of England

Proportion of adults reporting each important issue by personal characteristic, Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024

Notes:

1. Question: “What do you think are important issues facing the UK today?”.
2. Base: all adults.
3. Estimates by quintile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) are provided among adults in England only.
4. Estimates and associated confidence intervals for all response categories and other personal characteristics are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin.

[Download the data](#)

Adults in Great Britain’s experiences of the cost of living

The cost of living continues to be one of the most commonly reported issues among adults in Great Britain. The latest pooled period shows which groups were more likely to report this, including:

- younger adults: 93% among those aged 16 to 29 years, compared with 79% among those aged 70 years and over
- women: 90%, compared with 85% among men
- those living in the most deprived areas of England: 90% among those living in the most deprived fifth of areas, compared with 83% among those living the least deprived fifth of areas, according to the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)
- housing tenure: those renting socially (90%), privately (92%), or with a mortgage (91%), compared with 82% among those who owned their property outright

In the latest period (5 to 30 June 2024), 51% of adults said their cost of living had increased compared with one month ago (47% said it had stayed the same and 2% said it had decreased). The proportion of adults reporting their cost of living had increased has gradually decreased since October 2022, when 80% of adults reported this.

In the latest period, among the 51% who told us that their cost of living had increased over the last month, rises in the price of food shopping (93%), fuel (52%), or gas and electricity bills (47%) remain the most commonly reported reasons why.

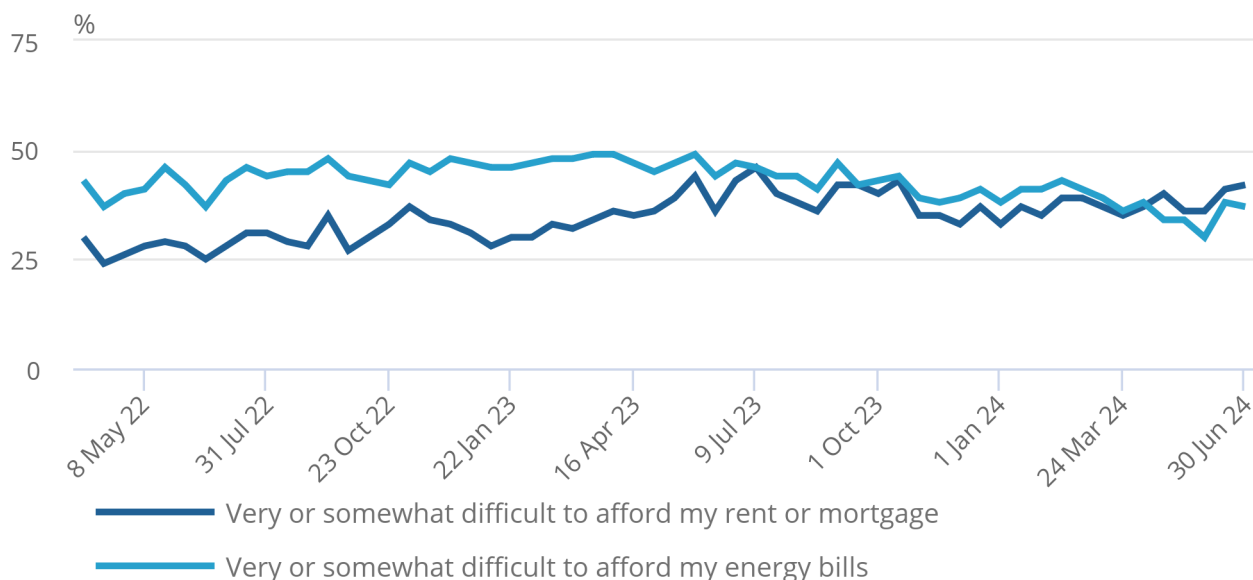
Over the past two years, the proportion of people finding it very or somewhat difficult to afford their rent or mortgage has gradually increased from around 3 in 10 (30% in the period 16 March to 27 March 2022) to around 4 in 10 (42% in the latest period). In contrast, over the same period, those finding it very or somewhat difficult to afford their energy bills has decreased from 43% to 37% in the latest period (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Around 4 in 10 adults are finding it difficult to pay their energy or housing bills

Proportion of adults who find it difficult to pay energy bills, rent or mortgage, March 2022 to June 2024, Great Britain

Figure 3: Around 4 in 10 adults are finding it difficult to pay their energy or housing bills

Proportion of adults who find it difficult to pay energy bills, rent or mortgage, March 2022 to June 2024, Great Britain



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

Notes:

1. Questions: “How easy or difficult is it to afford your energy bills?” and “How easy or difficult is it to afford your rent or mortgage payments?”.
2. Base: adults who pay for energy bills and adults who pay rent or mortgage.
3. From 17 to 29 May 2023, changes were made to the survey design to allow us to route to the questions on rent and mortgage payments more accurately. This change does not appear to have impacted responses to this question.
4. From 16 to 27 March 2022, changes were made to the survey design to allow us to route to the questions on energy payments more accurately. This change does not appear to have had an impact on responses to this question.
5. Estimates and associated confidence intervals for all response categories are available in the datasets associated with this release.
6. The length of each data collection period presented in this time series may differ.

Adults in Great Britain’s experiences of the NHS

The NHS continues to be one of the most commonly reported issues, alongside the cost of living. In the latest pooled period (10 April to 30 June 2024), this was more likely to be reported among:

- older adults: 90% among those aged 70 years and over, compared with 82% among those aged 16 to 29 years
- women: 89%, compared with 83% of men

In the latest period (5 June to 30 June 2024), we continued to ask about people’s health-related experiences, including access to their GP practice. Around two-thirds (65%) of adults reported their health in general was very good (21%) or good (44%). This proportion has decreased since we first asked about this at the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; 77% in the period 20 March to 30 March 2020 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of adults reporting very good or good health has decreased since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Proportion among all adults, Great Britain, March 2020 to June 2024

Figure 4: Proportion of adults reporting very good or good health has decreased since the start of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Proportion among all adults, Great Britain, March 2020 to June 2024



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

Notes:

1. Question: "How is your health in general?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Estimates and associated confidence intervals for all response categories are available in the datasets associated with this release.
4. The length of each data collection period presented in this time series may differ.

In the latest period, among the 51% of adults who had tried to contact a GP practice in the past month, 46% reported it was very easy or easy to make contact. This proportion has remained relatively consistent since May 2023, when we first started asking about this.

Adults in Great Britain's experiences of other important issues

The economy has continued to be one of the most commonly reported issues. This was more likely to be reported by men (70%, compared with women 66%), adults with a degree (72%, compared with 60% of adults with no qualification), and those who reported being self-employed (74%) or employed (69%). This is compared with 59% who were economically inactive for other reasons, including people who are studying, have caring responsibilities, or are disabled.

Some important issues that were less frequently reported across all adults in Great Britain were particularly important to some groups of the population.

Housing was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including:

- young adults aged 16 to 29 years: 68%, compared with 50% among those aged 70 years and over
- those living in London: 68%, compared with 52% in the East Midlands

Education was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including:

- parents (56%), compared with 46% of adults who did not have a dependent child
- adults living in Scotland (55%), compared with adults living in England (47%)
- adults from Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (51%) and White adults (49%), compared with Asian or Asian British adults (30%)

Employment was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including:

- those who were unemployed (58%), compared with those who were employed (32%)
- younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (40%), compared with adults aged 70 years and over (29%)
- adults living in Scotland (40%), compared with adults living in England (32%)
- those living in the most deprived fifth of areas of England according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (37%), compared with those living in the least deprived fifth of areas (27%)

Crime was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including:

- older adults aged 70 years and over (72%) and aged 50 to 69 years (67%), compared with those aged 16 to 29 years (45%)
- those living in the North East of England (69%), compared with those living in the South East of England (53%, the area of England that reported this least frequently)
- those with no qualifications (67%), compared with those with a degree or equivalent (45%)

While older adults were more likely to report crime as an important issue, data from our [Crime in England and Wales, victim characteristics: year ending March 2023 article](#) show that people aged 55 years and over had lower chances of experiencing headline crime (theft, robbery, criminal damage, fraud, computer misuse, or violence with or without injury).

Around 2 in 10 (20%) adults aged 16 to 24 years reported being a victim of a headline crime, compared with around 1 in 10 (10%) among those aged 75 to 84 years.

Climate change and the environment was more frequently reported as an important issue by groups including:

- younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (64%) and older adults aged 70 years and over (61%), compared with those aged 30 to 49 years (54%)
- women (62%), compared with men (55%)
- those with a degree or equivalent (70%) compared with those with no qualifications (49%)
- those living in the least deprived fifth of areas in England (64%), compared with those living in the most deprived fifth of areas (49%)

Immigration and international conflict were important issues, with large differences between age groups. Immigration was more likely to be reported as an important issue by older adults aged 50 to 69 years (65%) and those aged 70 years and over (75%), compared with 35% among those aged 16 to 29 years. International conflict was more frequently reported by older adults aged 70 years and over (61%), compared with those aged 16 to 29 years (41%) and 30 to 49 years (42%).

Estimates of the proportion of adults reporting each important issue among all the different groups of the population considered in this analysis are available in our [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: Important issues facing the UK dataset](#), provided with this bulletin.

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey collects data on a wide range of topics. Our accompanying datasets provide estimates regarding people in Great Britain's experiences of their household finances, their personal well-being and loneliness, artificial intelligence (AI), accessing their GP practice, and their working arrangements.

4 . Data on public opinions and social trends

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

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

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 19 July 2024

Indicators from the OPN of personal well-being, loneliness, and what people in Great Britain felt were important issues.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: GP practice access](#)

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

Indicators from the OPN related to people's experiences of GP practice access in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: artificial intelligence \(AI\)](#)

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

Indicators from the OPN on the public's awareness, opinions, and expectations about artificial intelligence (AI).

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: working arrangements](#)

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

Indicators from the OPN related to the working arrangements of people in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: social media use and attitudes towards elections](#)

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

Indicators from the OPN related to people's social media use and attitudes towards elections in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: Important issues facing the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 19 July 2024

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of what people report are the most important issues facing the UK. Uses longer data collection periods to allow estimates from various personal characteristics.

5 . Glossary

Deprivation

Deprivation is represented by the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (IMD) and is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area). Deciles are calculated by ranking the 32,844 small areas in England from most deprived to least deprived and dividing them into 10 equal groups. These range from the most deprived 10 percent of small areas nationally to the least deprived 10 percent of small areas nationally. To ensure robust sample sizes, we have further grouped deciles into quintiles.

Disability status

To define disability, we refer to the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) harmonised "core" definition of disability](#). This identifies "disabled" as a person who has a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Respondents are asked the GSS harmonised questions in the survey, meaning that disability status is self-reported.

Parental status

In the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), an adult is defined as a parent if they are the parent of a dependent child living in the household. In this case, dependent children include children and stepchildren.

A dependent child is someone aged under 16 years, or someone who is aged 16 to 18 years, has never been married, and is in full-time education.

Statistical significance

This bulletin presents the OPN data as a summary of results. Further data, including confidence intervals for the estimates shown in the charts presented, are contained in our associated datasets. Where comparisons between groups are presented, 95% confidence intervals should be used to assess the statistical significance of the change. For more information on these terms, see our [Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology](#).

Other definitions

Definitions of all breakdowns of estimates used in this bulletin are available in more detail in the Notes tab of our accompanying [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: Important issues facing the UK dataset](#).

6 . Data sources and quality

This release contains data and indicators from our Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

Sampling and weighting

The analysis in this bulletin is based on adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain. This is based on two time points. Data referring to the "latest period" are based on 1,540 responding adults for the period 5 June to 30 June 2024.

The analysis of what different groups of the population reported were important issues facing the UK is based on the "latest pooled period". This comprises responses from 11,755 adults collected during six waves of data collection from April to June 2024, during the following periods:

- 10 April to 21 April 2024
- 24 April to 6 May 2024
- 8 May to 19 May 2024
- 22 May to 2 June 2024
- 5 June to 16 June 2024
- 19 June to 30 June 2024

Pooling six waves of data together increases sample sizes and allows us to carry out detailed analysis for different groups of the population.

Survey weights were applied 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).

For all estimates in the datasets, [confidence intervals](#) are provided. Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this release, or comparisons between estimates are made, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the differences.

Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in our [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information \(QMI\)](#).

7 . Related links

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 18 July 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 July 2024

Early data on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

[Measuring progress, well-being and beyond GDP in the UK: May 2024](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 May 2024

Exploring quality of life in the UK, drawing on the latest economic, environmental and social statistics. This quarter we focus on the quality of life of individuals.

[UK Measures of National Well-being Dashboard](#)

Online tool | Released 9 May 2024

An overview of well-being in the UK on an individual, community and national level. Considers change across 58 measures of well-being, grouped by 10 topic areas.

[Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: July to October 2023](#)

Article | Released 4 December 2023

Analysis of the groups of the population affected by recent increases in the cost of living using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey and of the characteristics associated with financial resilience from the Wealth and Assets Survey.

[Private rent and house prices, UK: July 2024](#)

Article | Released 17 July 2024

The Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) produces rent price and inflation statistics for the UK, tracking prices paid for new and existing tenancies in the private rental sector. Includes headline UK House Price Index statistics.

8 . Cite this statistical bulletin

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