

Theme 1- Enough money to live on

April 2023

Contents

Summary – Enough money to live on.....	2
● Wages.....	3
● Living Wage	6
▲ Housing Prices.....	7
▲ Population Income Deprived	10
● Cost of Living	12
Poverty in Scotland 2022 – JRF report.....	13
Going under and without: JRF’s cost of living tracker, winter 2022/23.....	18
● Consumer Price Inflation and Retail Prices	21
▲ Energy Affordability (Consumer Scotland)	23
● Food Security.....	27

Summary – Enough money to live on

Many of the things that contribute to “Enough money to live on” are outwith local area control. Overwhelmingly the Cost of Living crisis dominates the evidence for “Enough money to live on”.

The Scottish Borders and the rest of the UK are experiencing historically high inflation of 11%, and the prices of essentials are still soaring, energy bills (while capped) have seen two enormous increases since Winter 2021.

Wages clearly contribute to “Enough money to live on” and the challenge for the Scottish Borders is that the wages in the Scottish Borders have consistently been 15% below the Scottish average. The fact that wages in the Scottish Borders are lower compared to Scotland and the UK adds extra burden to households in the Scottish Borders when coping with the Cost of Living. This is further evidenced by the proportion of people earning less than the living wage in the Scottish Borders (21.7%) compared to Scotland (14.4%).

Housing prices in the Scottish Borders are similar to that of Scotland, and again wages are well below the Scottish average.





Within the Scottish Borders there are several communities where the population is significantly more income deprived compared to Scotland, namely: Jedburgh, parts of Galashiels and parts of Hawick.

When looking at energy affordability, the Consumer Scotland Energy tracker found in Autumn 2022 that:

- 36% of households in the South of Scotland felt that they were not managing financially well, similar to Scotland.
- 55% of the households in the South of Scotland felt that in three months’ time the household would be managing financially worse.
- 56% of households in the South of Scotland reported using less energy currently when compared to previous years.
- 65% of South of Scotland household feel that it was more difficult to keep up with their energy bills.
- 67% of households in the South of Scotland expected that they would have to cut back on spending in order to afford paying energy bills.
- 37% of the households in the South of Scotland agreed with the statement: “We can’t afford to heat our home to a comfortable level because of financial concerns”.
- 44% of households in the South of Scotland agreed with the statement: “I/we won’t be able to afford to heat my/our home to a comfortable level because of financial concerns”.

Throughout the UK, and with no exception for the Scottish Borders, there has been a significant increase in the use of food banks since the start of the Covid19 pandemic. The current cost of living crisis has further increased the need and use of food banks.

This report looks at evidence to assess whether the people of the Scottish Borders have “Enough money to live on”, using publicly available data and information. The table below is a guide to what the evidence presents regarding “Enough money to live on” for the Scottish Borders.

Red – Circle – Challenging / not in good state	
Amber (Yellow) - Triangle – Needs monitoring / near danger	
Green – Diamond – Doing well – keep it up	
Blue – Square – Informative only	

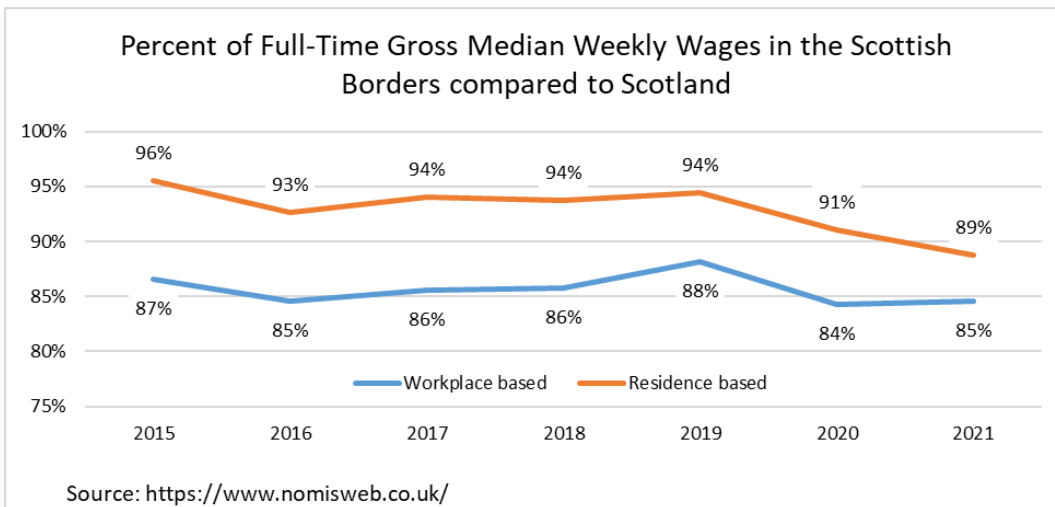
● Wages

Source: [NOMIS](#)

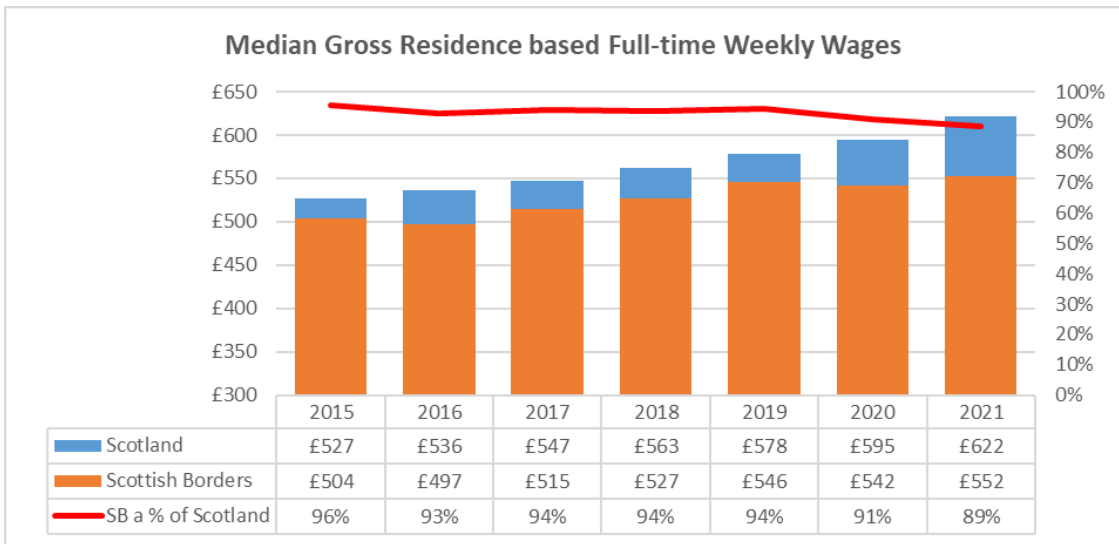
The clearest measure of whether a household is reasonably expected to have “Enough money to live on” is the household’s collective wages from full-time employment. Many households in the Scottish Borders also, or alternatively, receive wages from part-time employment and self-employment but these are too complex to use as measures. The median gross full-time weekly wage for people in the Scottish Borders has consistently been below the median gross full-time weekly wage for Scotland.

The graph below shows the proportion of gross full-time weekly wages for the Scottish Borders compared to Scotland. This includes “Workplace-based,” where the employee works, but does not necessarily live, in the Scottish Borders and “Residence-based,” which is vice versa. Residence-based wages are higher than workplace-based because they tend to be higher-paid, higher-skilled jobs which make it more worthwhile for the employee to commute out of the region.

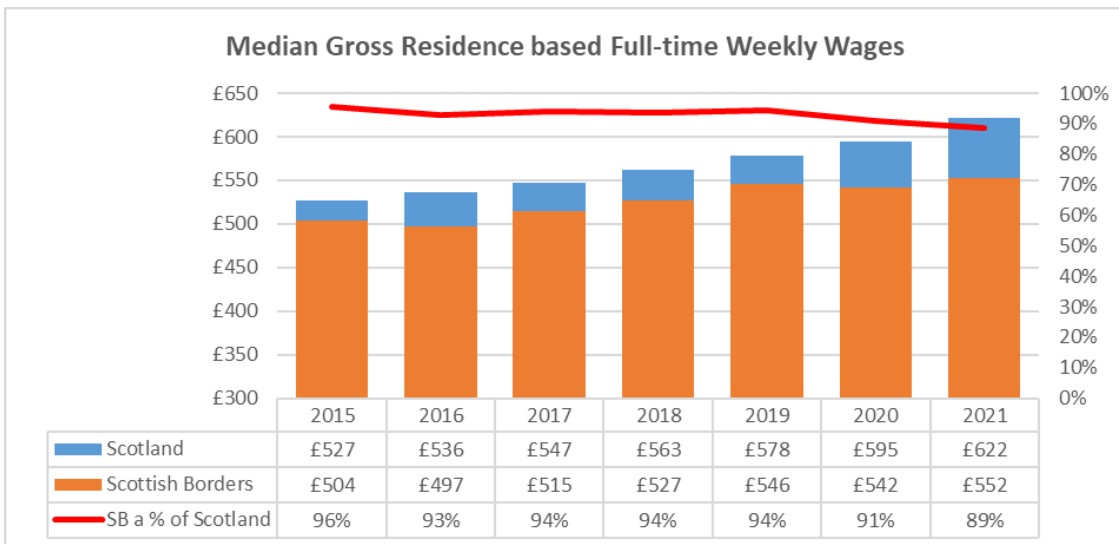
In 2015 the average residence based weekly wage in the Scottish Borders was 96% of the Scottish average, but by 2021 that had dropped to 89%. This shows that Scottish Borderers who commute outside the region for work are doing so for less reward than before, which is compounded by fuel and transport costs also increasing in the same period. Workplace based wages in the Scottish Borders have consistently been below 90% of the Scottish average: 87% in 2015 and 85% in 2021. This means that full-time workers who work in the Scottish Borders earn 15% less than those who work in other parts of Scotland, and this has remained relatively unchanged.



Source: 1 <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157430/report.aspx>



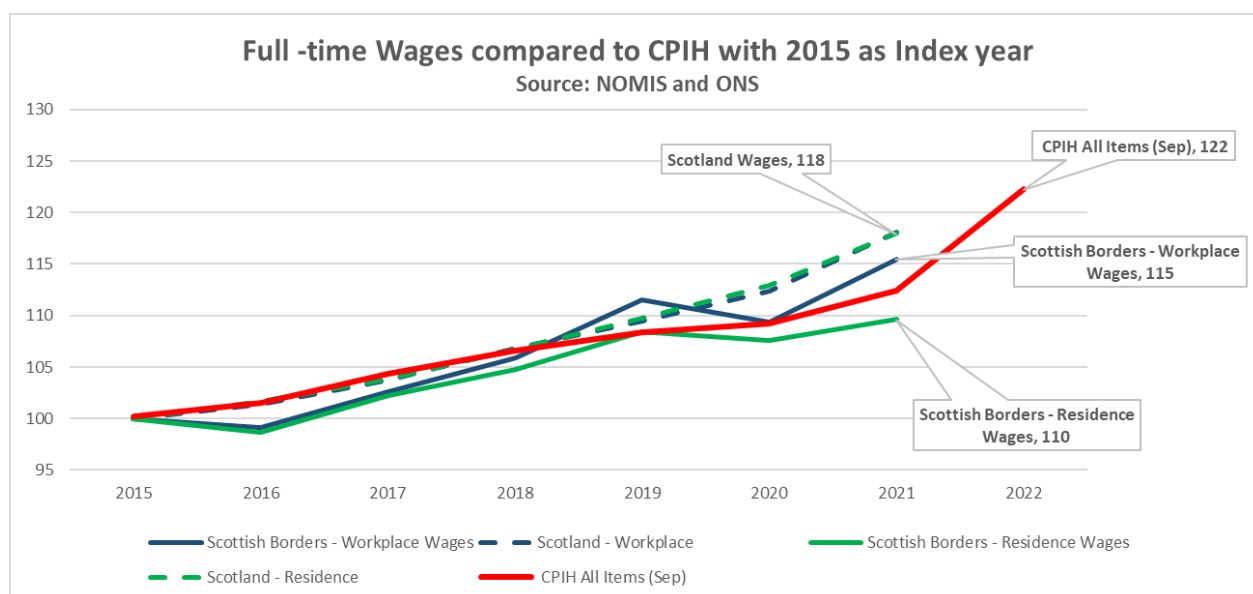
Source: 2 <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157430/report.aspx>



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157430/report.aspx>

It may be argued that it would still be worthwhile living in the Scottish Borders, despite having to commute further to work, as housing costs may be lower in the region than elsewhere. The CPIH is an updated version of the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) which attempts to factor the influence of housing costs (H) into inflation, which are one of the biggest fixed debits from a householder's wage.

According to the CPIH, indexed wages for workplace-based employees in the Scottish Borders are increasing in line with the trend for Scotland, and residence-based wages in Scottish Borders are increasing at a slower pace. The red line on the chart shows that inflation including housing costs in Scotland has increased sharply in 2022. The green dotted line shows that Scottish Wages are also increasing. The Scottish Borders workplace-based wage is increasing in line with this, but the residence-based wage is struggling to increase in line with inflation plus housing costs. If the current trend in the Scottish Borders residence-based wage continues, this gap will continue to widen and working outside the region will become steadily less attractive or financially worthwhile to Scottish Borders residents, despite factoring in the effect of housing costs.



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/lq/1946157430/report.aspx> and <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2022>

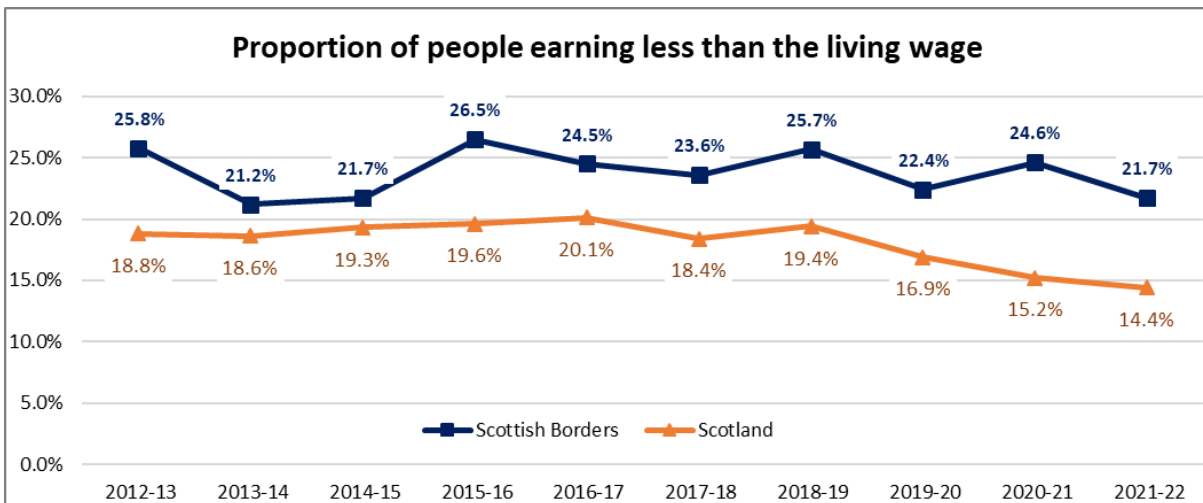
● Living Wage

According to [Living Wage Scotland](#), the real Living Wage is an independently calculated rate based on the cost of living and is paid voluntarily by employers. The rate is currently £10.90 and is calculated annually by The Resolution Foundation on an analysis of the wage that employees need to earn in order to afford the basket of goods required for a decent standard of living. This basket of goods includes housing, childcare, transport and heating costs.

The living wage is informed by the [Minimum Income Standard \(MIS\)](#) which identifies the amount of money different types of households require to achieve a socially acceptable standard of living. MIS is based on detailed research with groups of members of the public specifying what items need to be included in a minimum household budget. The groups are informed by expert knowledge where needed, for example on nutritional standards. The results show how much households need in a weekly budget and how much they need to earn in order to achieve this disposable income.

“A minimum standard of living in the UK today includes, but is more than just, food, clothes and shelter. It is about having what you need in order to have the opportunities and choices necessary to participate in society.”¹

The Scottish Borders has consistently had more people earning less than the living wage compared to Scotland. Between 2012-13 and 2021-22 the proportion of people earning less than the living wage in the Scottish Borders reduced by 4.1%, from 25.8% to 21.7%, a lower reduction compared to Scotland of 4.4%, from 18.8% to 14.4%.



Source: <https://www.improvementservice.org.uk/benchmarking/home>

¹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/minimum-income-standard-uk-2022>

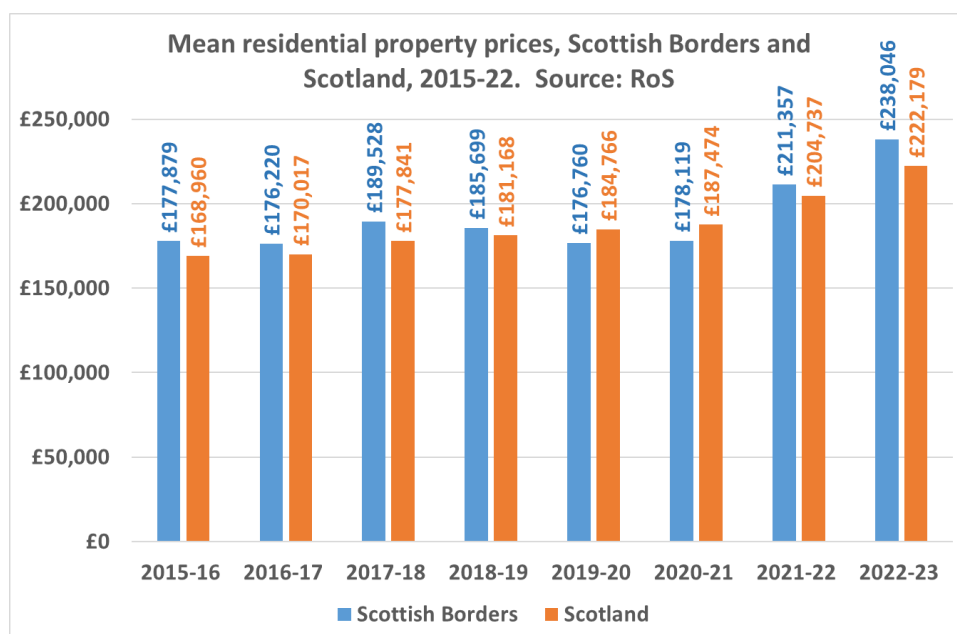
▲ Housing Prices

Source: [House price statistics - Registers of Scotland \(ros.gov.uk\)](https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics)

House prices provide a general indication of the cost of living in an area: the higher the house prices, the more likely the household will have higher mortgage repayments or rent costs, which will directly impact on their cost of living. Between 2015-16 and 2022-23 the mean residential property price in the Scottish Borders has been similar or slightly higher compared to house prices in Scotland as a whole. This indicates that rent and mortgage costs in the Scottish Borders are similar to those elsewhere in Scotland.

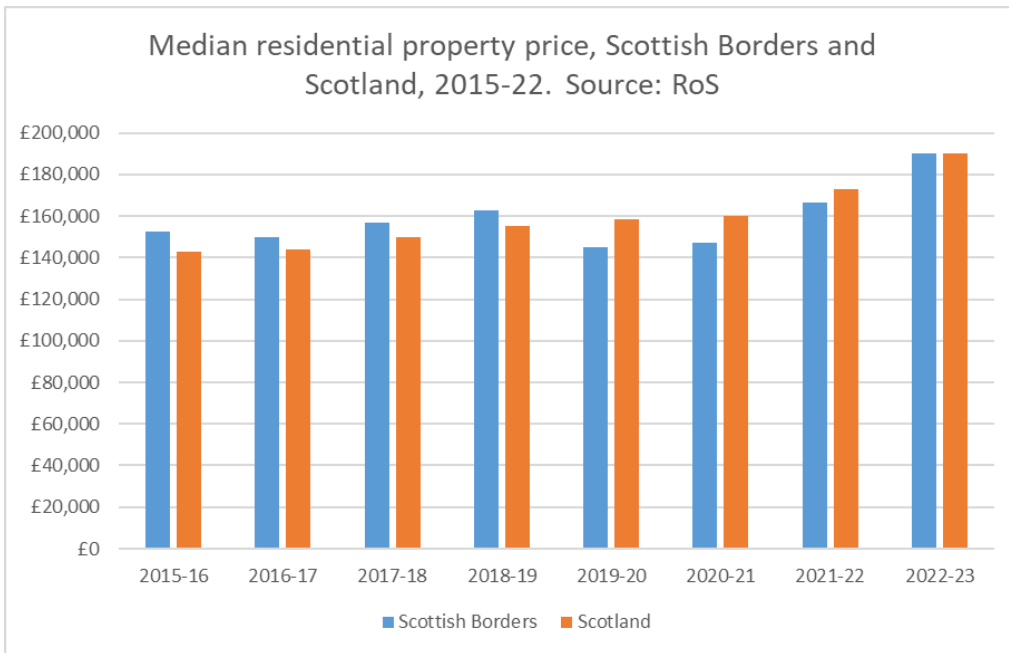
However, wages in the Scottish Borders have consistently been below the Scottish level indicating that housing costs in Scottish Borders are relatively less affordable, compared to households in Scotland as a whole.

The graph below shows that the average property prices have generally increased in Scottish Borders since 2015 and have generally been above the Scottish average. The mean property price includes a smaller number of very expensive properties which push up the average.



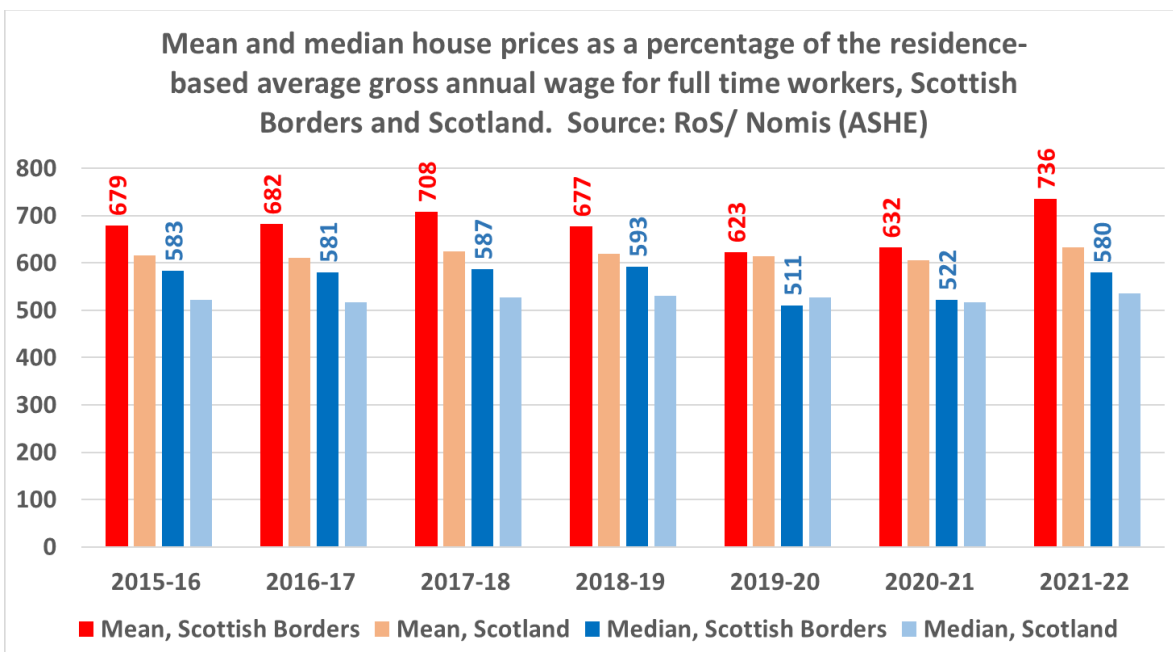
Source: <https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics>

Median house prices reflect the higher volume of “average” property prices and are a more accurate reflection of most people’s house buying behaviour. The graph below shows that the median property price has also increased since 2015 and has generally been above the Scottish average, except for a 3-year property “slump” around the time of the Covid pandemic. The median property price in Scottish Borders is currently similar to the Scottish average, despite lower wages in Scottish Borders than the Scottish average.



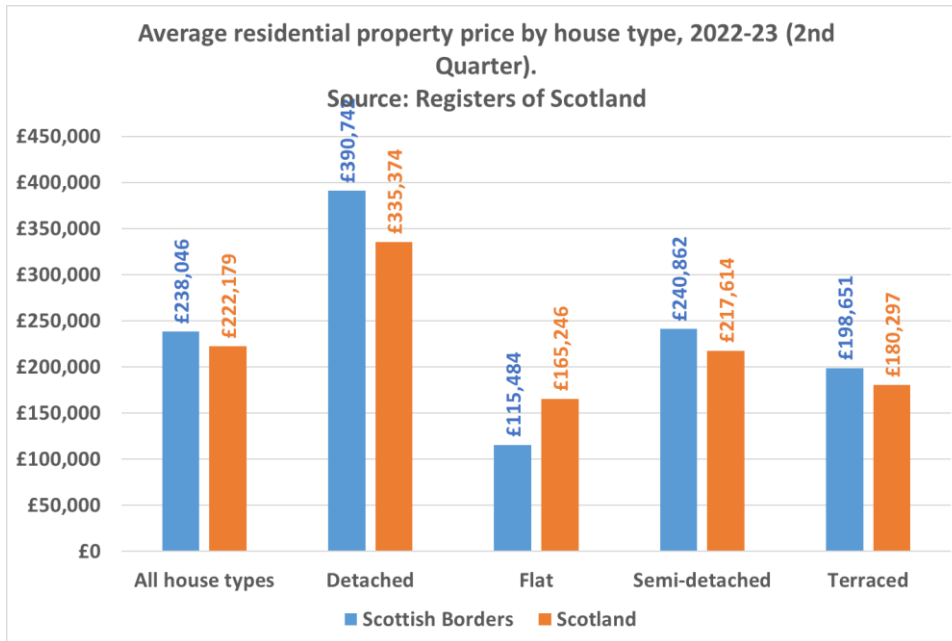
Source: <https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics>

The graph below shows that, not only has it always been more difficult for a Scottish Borders resident to buy a local property than average for Scotland, but it has also become even more difficult since 2015, in terms of affordability. In 2015, the average property price in Scottish Borders was 679% of the gross annual full-time wage. In 2021 it was 736%. Even the prospective buyer looking to buy a modest middle-of-the-range property would find that the median house price is 580% of their average gross annual wage in Scottish Borders. All of these figures are higher than the Scottish averages.



Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157430/report.aspx> and <https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics>

The graph below shows that all types of property in Scottish Borders are less affordable than average, except for flats, which are relatively more affordable. A household moving into, or within, the Scottish Borders can expect to pick up a town centre flatted property for around £115,000 in 2022/23, which is both absolutely and relatively more affordable than a house of any kind in the region, starting at an average of £199,000. Flats are usually smaller and less sought-after than houses, which is reflected in the difference in the selling prices.



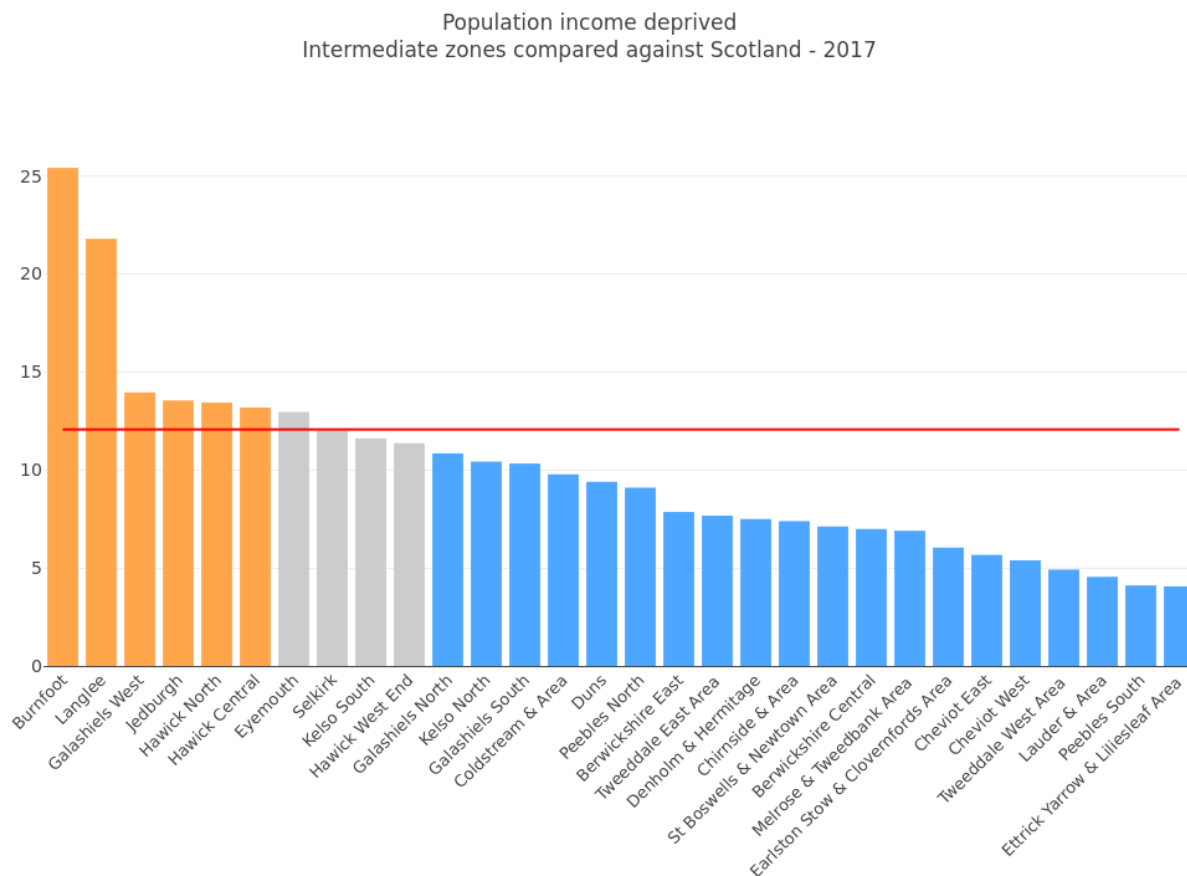
Source: <https://www.ros.gov.uk/data-and-statistics/house-price-statistics>

▲ Population Income Deprived

Income deprivation is one of the domains that contribute to the [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#), and is calculated at both an intermediate zone and a data zone level of geographical detail. The following information is taken from the [Public Health Scotland ScotPHO Profiles](#) tool, which conveniently explores publicly available health and population-related information at a variety of geographical levels.

The graph below shows the proportion of the population who were measured to be “income-deprived” (2017) for each intermediate zone in the Scottish Borders against the Scottish average of 12%.

Within the Scottish Borders, there are six intermediate zones where proportionally more people are income deprived compared to Scotland, these are: Burnfoot, Langlee, Galashiels West, Jedburgh, Hawick North and Hawick Central.



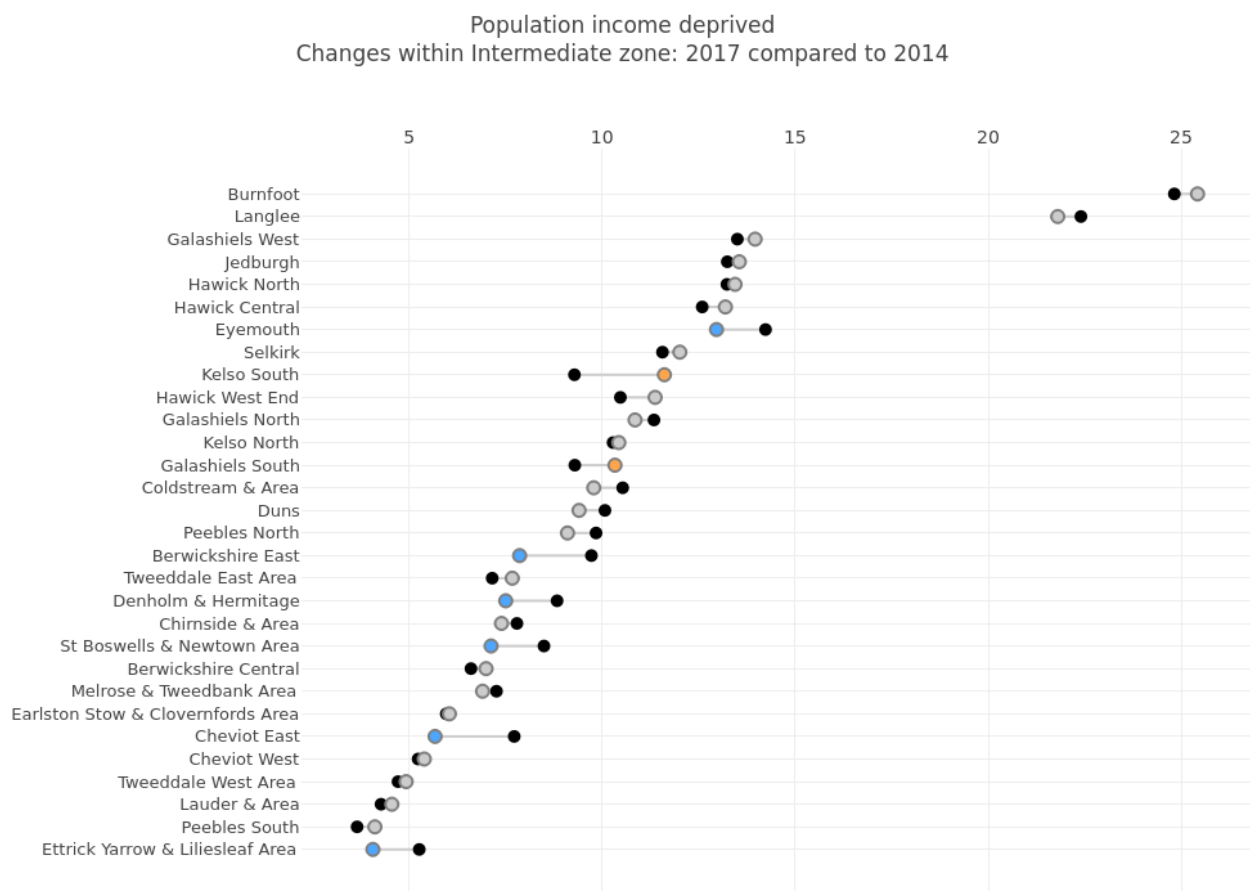
Source: https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/

The graph below shows the change in the population who were measured by the SIMD (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation) to be income-deprived between 2014 and 2017 for each of Scottish Borders' intermediate zones.

The black dots represent the 2014 figure and the colour dot represent the 2017 figure. The grey dot indicates no significant difference between 2014 and 2017; blue is significantly better, and orange is significantly worse.

Two intermediate zones in Scottish Borders had a significant increase in the proportion of population who were income deprived between 2014 and 2017: Kelso South and Galashiels South.

5 areas where income deprivation reduced between 2014 and 2017 were: Eyemouth, Berwickshire East, Denholm & Hermitage, Cheviot East, and the Ettrick, Yarrow and Lilliesleaf Area.



Source: https://scotland.shinyapps.io/ScotPHO_profiles_tool/

● Cost of Living

The 'Cost of Living' crisis has had an impact on the whole of the UK and the Scottish Borders is no exception.

The BBC new website has a dedicated section to the '[Cost of Living](#)' crisis, reporting on people's experiences, and providing insight and a wider context to the crisis.

The [Money Saving Expert](#) (founded by Martin Lewis) website continues to be a key source for helping people to save money and how to cope with the crisis.

The Scottish Government have a dedicated campaign section, [Cost of Living Support Scotland](#), which contains links to the 32 Scottish Local Authority cost of living support, and support for energy & bills, benefits & income, children & families, debt & money, health & wellbeing, older or disabled people support and a link to Scottish Government's [business support](#) portal.

[CACI](#) UK, a data, technology and marketing company have produced a series of podcasts "Understanding the impact of the cost-of-living crisis" which are available on [YouTube](#). CACI uses their Acorn (demographic segmentation too) to provide insight on how the current cost of living crisis may be affecting different household types.

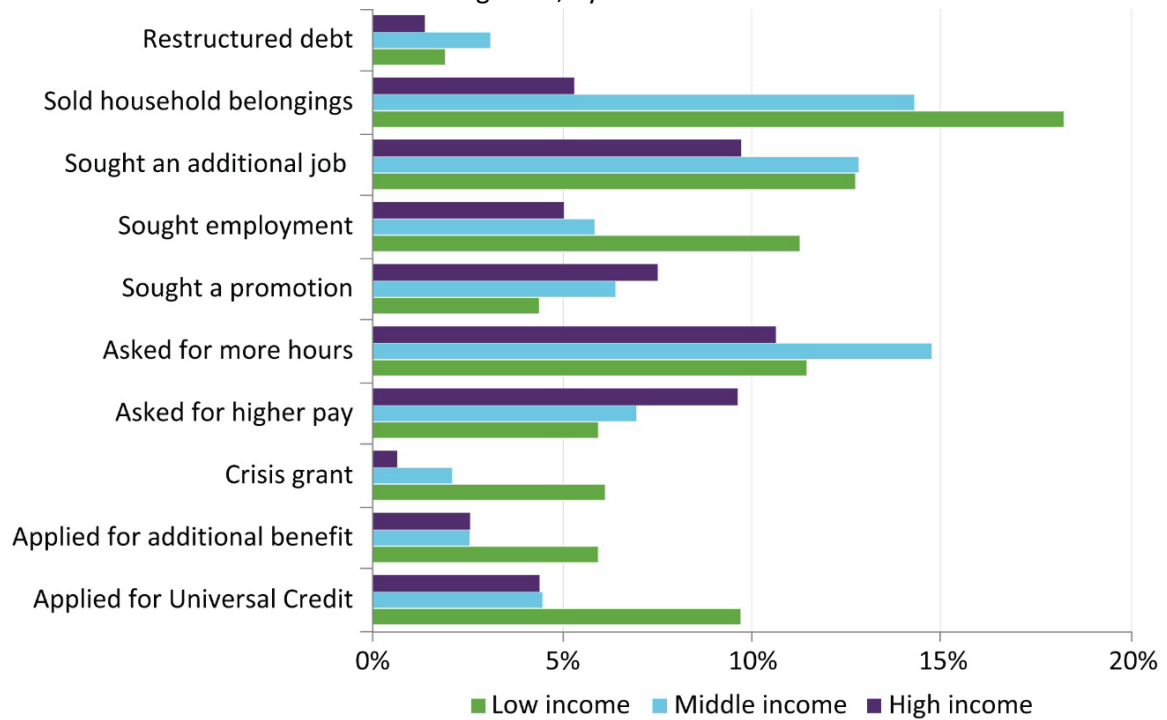
The [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#) (JRF) is an independent social change organisation working to solve UK poverty. Two recent reports by JRF provide a good context for the Scottish Borders regarding to [Poverty in Scotland 2022](#) and [the cost of living for those on the lowest incomes](#).

Poverty in Scotland 2022 – JRF report

In October 2022 the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) published their Poverty in Scotland report, working with Savanta ComRes, who interviewed 4,196 adults aged 18+ in Scotland online between 11 July and 2 August 2022, and End Poverty Scotland Group for lived experience. Key findings in the report that may be applied to the Scottish Borders (as part of Scotland) include:

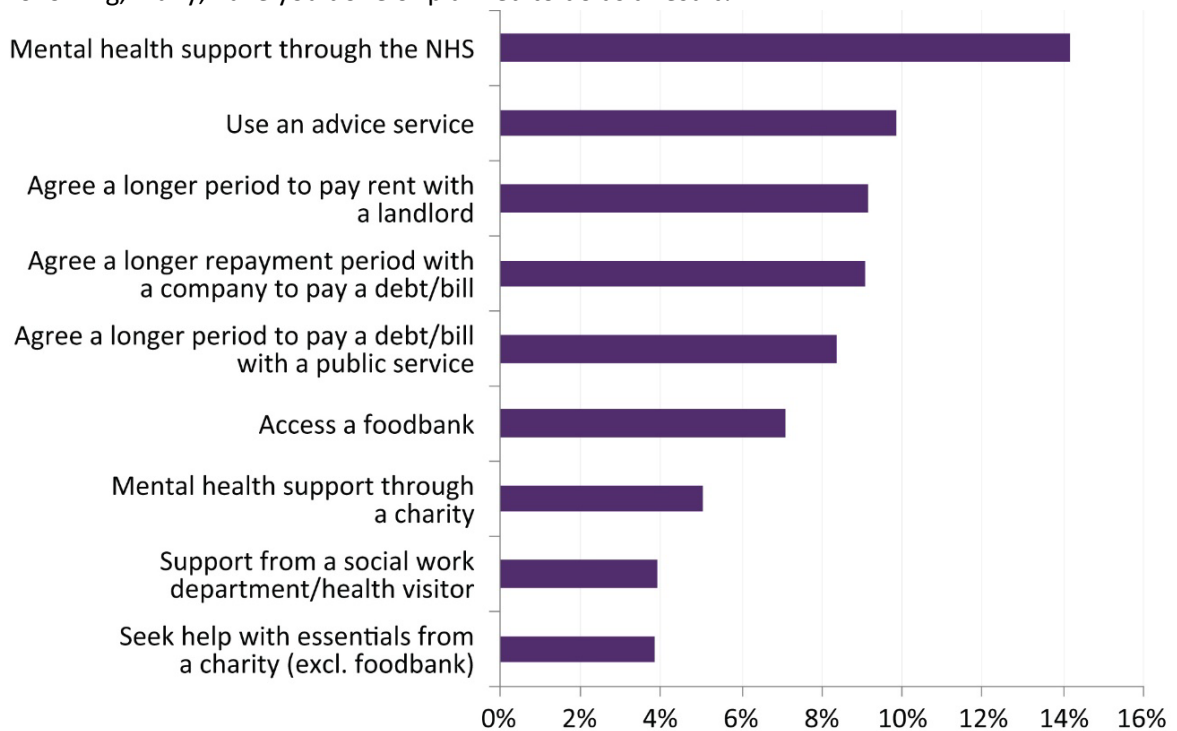
- One-third of households have very little or no savings (that is, less than £250) and three-quarters of those households have no savings at all.
- As well as having fragile incomes and limited savings, almost half (47%) of all households have at least one debt.
- 7% of households have three or more debts and two in five (41%) households with debt have more than £2,500 of debt – roughly equivalent to almost two months of take-home pay for a person working full-time at the minimum wage.
- Almost one in five households (18%) were already behind on one or more bills or payments; that increases to 26% for low-income households (earning less than £2,063 per month before housing costs).
- People who are in a state of financial crisis described that:
 - *Going without essentials is endemic* – around two in three (65%) have cut back on an essential while one in four (26%) have cut back on three or more essentials.
 - *Even the basics are hard to come by* – three in four households have already cut back on the basics.
 - *Despite families' efforts, children are going without* – one in four (26%) families with children have cut back on things their child needs, such as food or childcare.
 - *Almost one in five low-income families are neither heating nor eating* – 18% of low-income households have skipped or reduced the size of meals and not heated their home due to the cost-of-living crisis. Over one in four (27%) households that do not have savings have done the same. Aside from low-income households, more than one in ten (13%) of all households in the general population are in this position.
 - *Being in arrears and going without essentials go hand in hand* – 85% of families in arrears have cut back on essentials and 39% of those in arrears with children have cut back on items for their children. Of people who are in arrears to a public service, 87% have cut back on essentials.
- Food insecurity is rife - One in three households have reduced the amount of money they spend on food for adults, one in four have changed how they cook (for example, they have used the oven less) and one in five have skipped or reduced the size of their meals.
- Isolation is not just a feature of the Covid-19 pandemic – families are cutting back on things that increase isolation for both adults and children like reduced socialisation, reduced transport spending and spending on children's activities.

- Efforts are being made to increase incomes - there are differences ways people have tried to increase their income to deal with rising costs, by income:



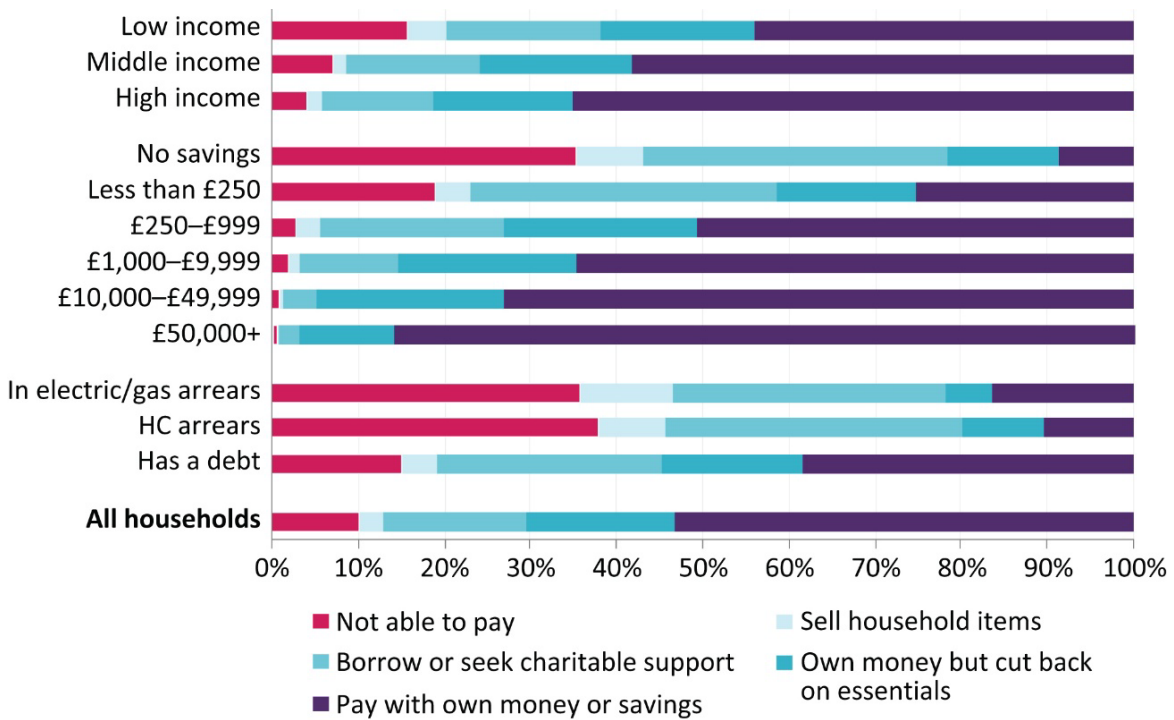
Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

- Some households are accessing support - respondents were asked "You mentioned that you have reduced your spending on household expenses as a result of the rising cost of living. Which of the following, if any, have you done or planned to do as a result?"



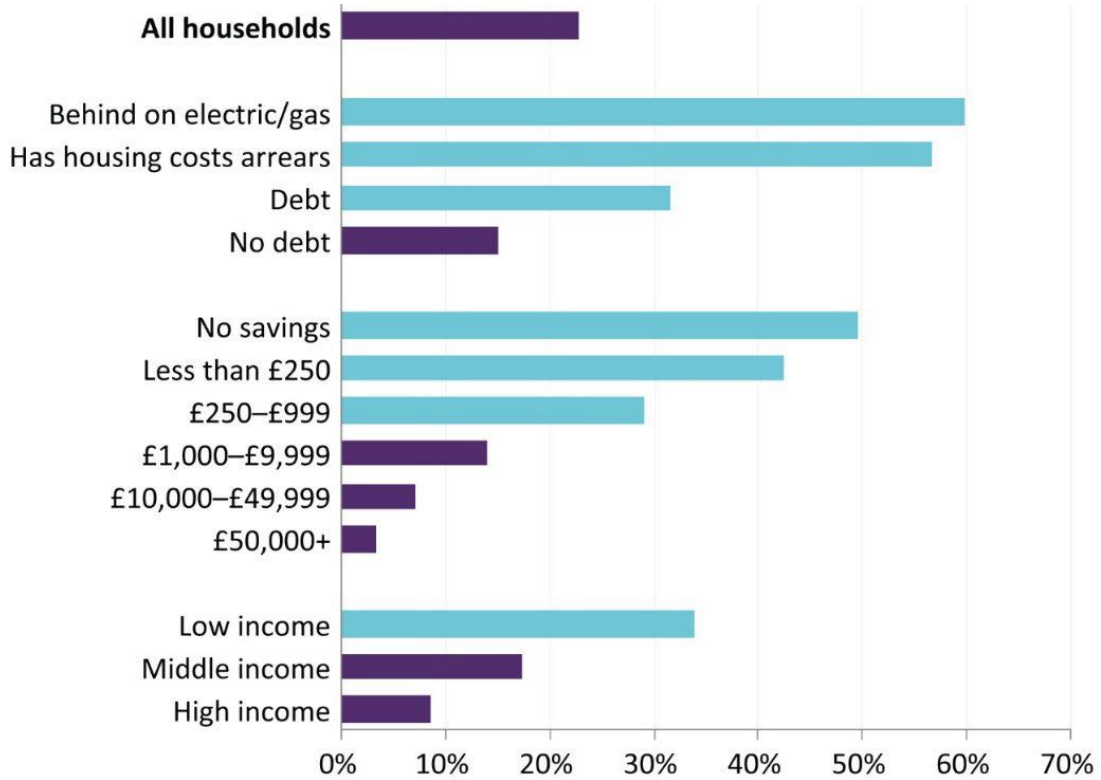
Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

- The cost-of-living crisis has increased precariousness of financial security where just over 50% of households could pay an unexpected bill of £200 with their own money or savings. The graph below shows the breakdown by level of income, amount of household savings and if the household is in arrears or debt. Households in debt/arrears, with low income or no/little savings were less likely to be able to pay an unexpected bill of £200 from their own money or savings.



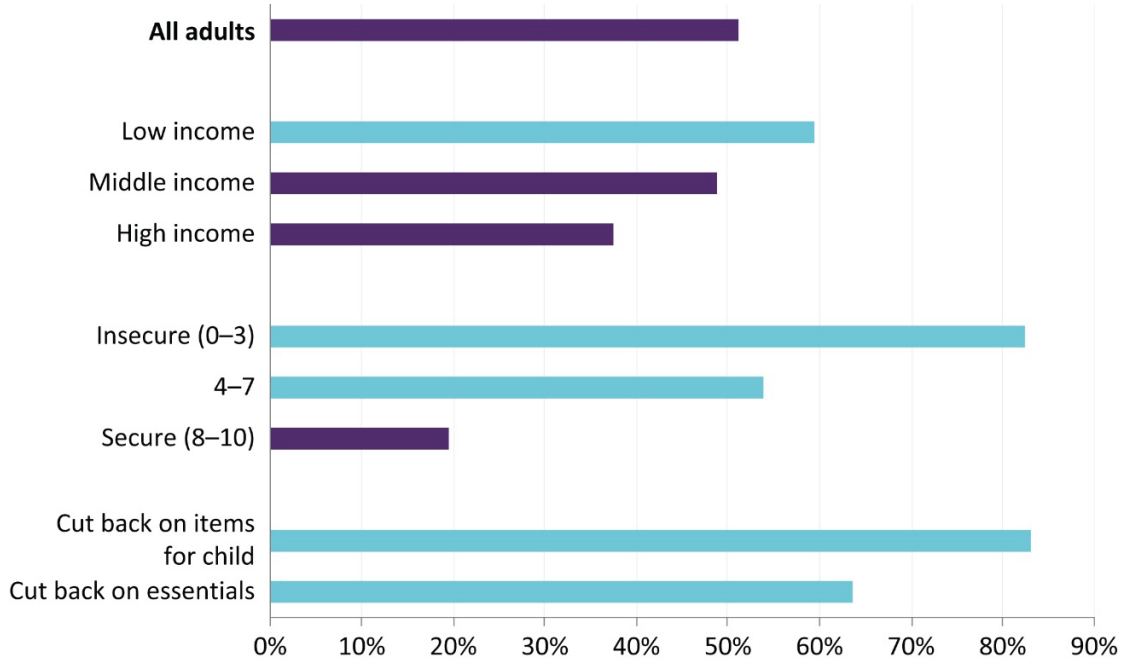
Source: <https://www.irf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

- Households with low income, no savings or in debt/arrears are more likely to feel financially insecure.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

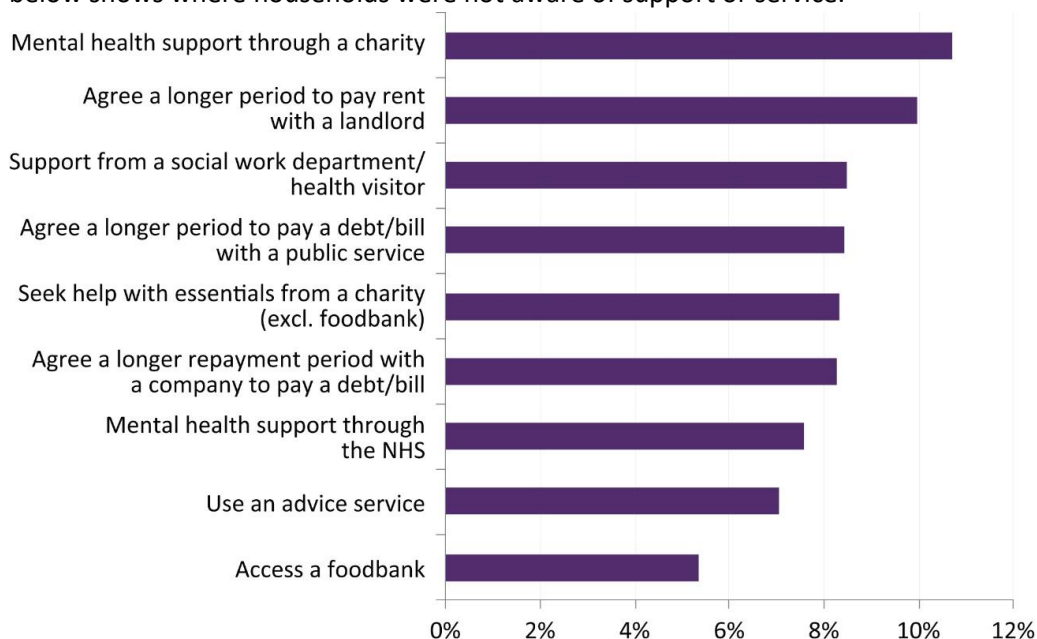
- Over 50% of adults have reported that the rising cost of living has negatively affected their mental health. This becomes starker for those in low income, those not financially secure and those that have cut back on essentials or items for a child.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

- When asked about support to tackle the cost-of-living crisis the results were very clear (note the poll was conducted between 11 July and 2 August 2022):
 - 92% think the UK Government are not doing enough.
 - 90% think businesses are not doing enough in setting prices.
 - 86% think that their local council is not doing enough.
 - 85% think the Scottish Government is not doing enough.
 - 84% think that employers are not doing enough in terms of setting wages and working conditions.

- Just less than one in ten were unaware of services that may help with the cost of living. The graph below shows where households were not aware of support or service.



Source: <https://www.irf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2022>

- Across households that cut back, between 2% and 3% of people said that they had tried to access a service but had been unsuccessful (for example, they had been unable to get there, or had been turned away).

Going under and without: JRF's cost of living tracker, winter 2022/23

Published in December 2022, the tracker covers the whole of the UK, households in the Scottish Borders that are in the bottom 40% of incomes are likely to have similar experiences. The third in a series of large-scale studies of households in the bottom 40% of incomes, conducted in October 2021, May / June 2022, and October / November 2022. It reveals that the hardship being faced by low-income households remains severe and looks at the proportion of families who have fallen behind on their bills, experienced food insecurity, gone without basics like showers and toiletries, taken on high-cost credit debt from payday lenders and loan sharks and had to borrow money to pay bills.

Three groups with a sharply rising risk of going without and getting behind with bills: people on Universal Credit, private renters, and young adults.

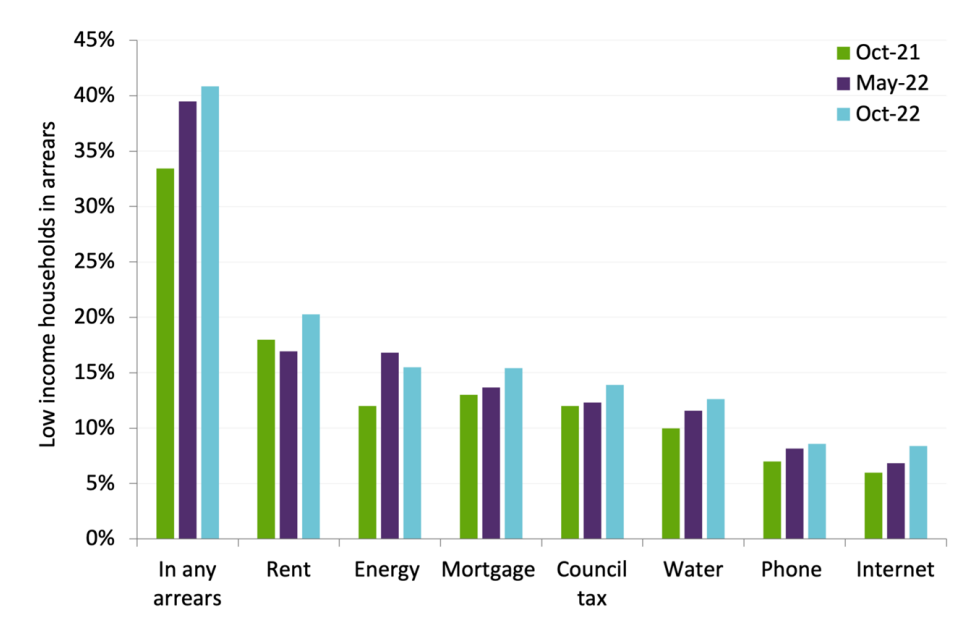
Key findings from the report were:

Area of focus	Bottom 20% household income	20 – 40% household income	Total low-income households (0- 40%)
Going without essentials ^	75% (4.3 million)	49% (2.9 million)	62% (7.2 million)
In arrears with at least one household bill or lending repayment	53% (3.1 million)	29% (1.7 million)	41% (4.7 million)
Has a high-cost credit loan	33% (1.9 million)	16% (940,000)	25% (2.8 million)
Has taken on borrowing or used a credit card to pay bills during cost-of-living crisis	26% (1.5 million)	16% (940,000)	21% (2.4 million)

^ Experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days or went without basics such as showers, toiletries, or essential journeys since June 2022.

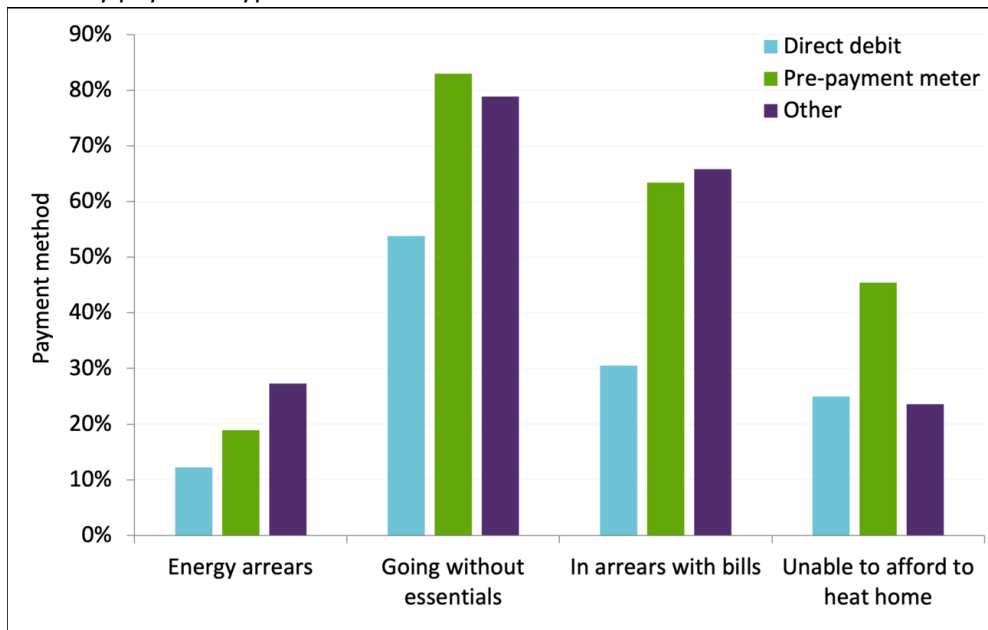
Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

The proportion of households in arrears with each different household bill has risen over the last 12 months for every bill. The same holds true for every bill over the last six months, except for energy.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

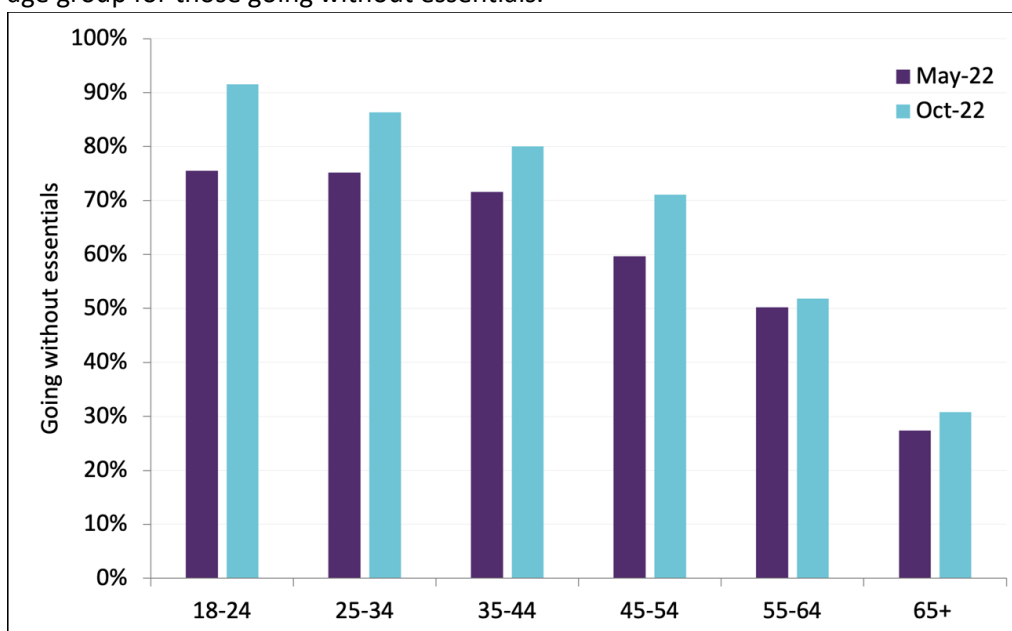
How energy is paid for is a determinant of low-income household financial situation; households are more likely to be in arrears for energy if they do not pay by direct debit. The graph below shows proportion households in energy arrears, going without essentials, in arrears with bills or unable to afford to heat home by payment type.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

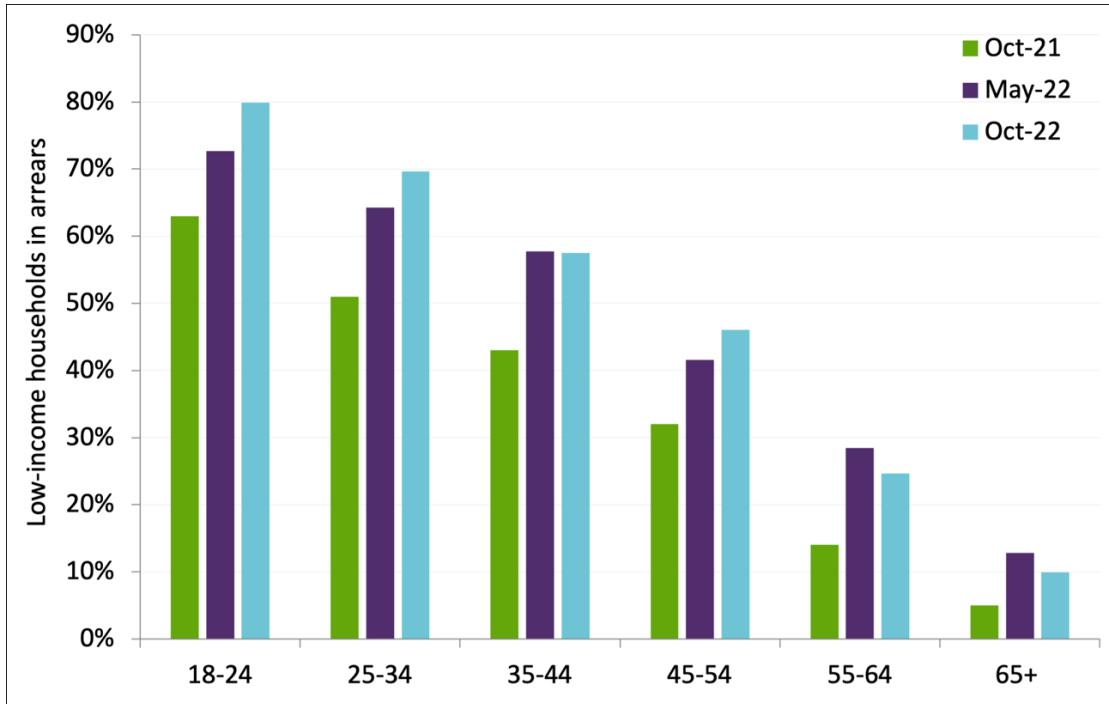
Households with younger adults are disproportionately struggling in the cost-of-living crisis.

Almost all low-income households with an adult aged 18-24 (92%) have reported going without essentials, up from 76% six months ago. The graph below shows the changes between May 2022 and October 2022 by age group for those going without essentials.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

Younger households have seen big increases in the proportion in arrears, while the opposite is true for older households as seen in the graph below.



Source: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/going-under-and-without-jrfs-cost-living-tracker-winter-202223>

● Consumer Price Inflation and Retail Prices

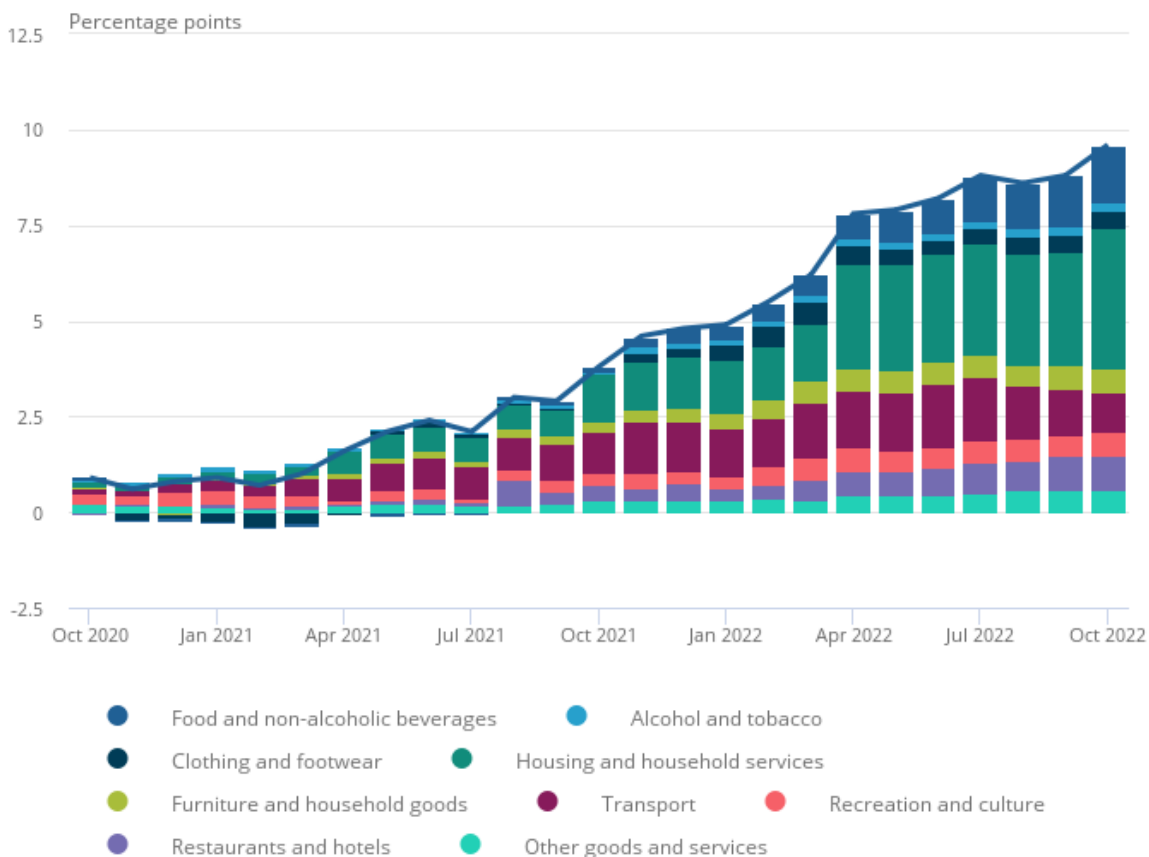
The ONS produce the [Consumer Price Inflation](#) each month which provides National Statistics for price indices, percentage changes and insight for the changes. The key findings from the October 2022 report include:

- The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 9.6% in the 12 months to October 2022, up from 8.8% in September 2022.
- Despite the introduction of the government's Energy Price Guarantee, gas and electricity prices made the largest upward contribution to the change in both the CPIH and CPI annual inflation rates between September and October 2022.
- Rising food prices also made a large upward contribution to change with transport (principally motor fuels and second-hand car prices) making the largest, partially offsetting, downward contribution to the change in the rates.

Below, figure 6 of the October 2022 report shows how the different price sectors contributed to the overall 9.6% CPIH for the UK.

Figure 6: Contributions to the CPIH annual rate from housing and household services rise

Contributions to the annual CPIH inflation rate, UK, October 2020 to October 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics – Consumer price inflation

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2022>

In the September 2022 report ONS published the average retail price for selected items. It is important to acknowledge that these figures do not meet the full requirements to be National Statistics but are informative.

Between September 2021 and September 2022, the average retail price of many items increased by 15% or more. Most notably the cost of Heating Oil increased by 98%. Only dessert apples and pears had a reduction in price

Average retail prices of selected items between September 2021 and September 2022

Retail items	% Price difference
Best beef mince, per kg	18%
Lamb Loin chop/steak, kg	18%
Pork Loin (with bone), per kg	16%
Back Bacon , per kg	18%
Fresh or chilled Chicken : roasting, oven ready, per kg	21%
Salmon fillets, per kg	26%
Bread White loaf, sliced, 800g	20%
Bread Wholemeal loaf, sliced, 800g	11%
Self raising Flour , per 1.5kg	32%
Butter Block, per 250g	27%
Cheddar Cheese type, per kg	21%
Pasteurised Milk , per pint	44%
Tea bags, per 250g	15%
Pure, instant Coffee , per 100g	22%
Granulated Sugar , per kg	7%
Potatoes , old white, per kg	21%
Potatoes , new loose, per kg	3%
Tomatoes , per kg	22%
Cabbage , hearts, per kg	10%
Cauliflower , each	8%
Broccoli , per kg	18%
Carrots , per kg	18%
Onions , per kg	2%
Mushrooms , per kg	5%
Cucumber , each	27%
Lettuce - iceberg, each	23%
Apples , cooking, per kg	9%
Apples , dessert, per kg	-6%
Pears , dessert, per kg	-5%
Oranges , each	12%
Bananas , per kg	14%
Grapes , per kg	1%
Avocado pear, each	0%
Grapefruit , each	2%
Wine , per 175ml glass	-1%
Draught bitter , per pint	9%
Draught lager , per pint	6%
Heating oil , per 1000 litres	98%
Ultra low sulphur diesel , per litre	33%
Ultra low sulphur/unleaded petrol , per litre	24%

Source:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/consumerpriceinflation/october2022>

▲ Energy Affordability (Consumer Scotland)

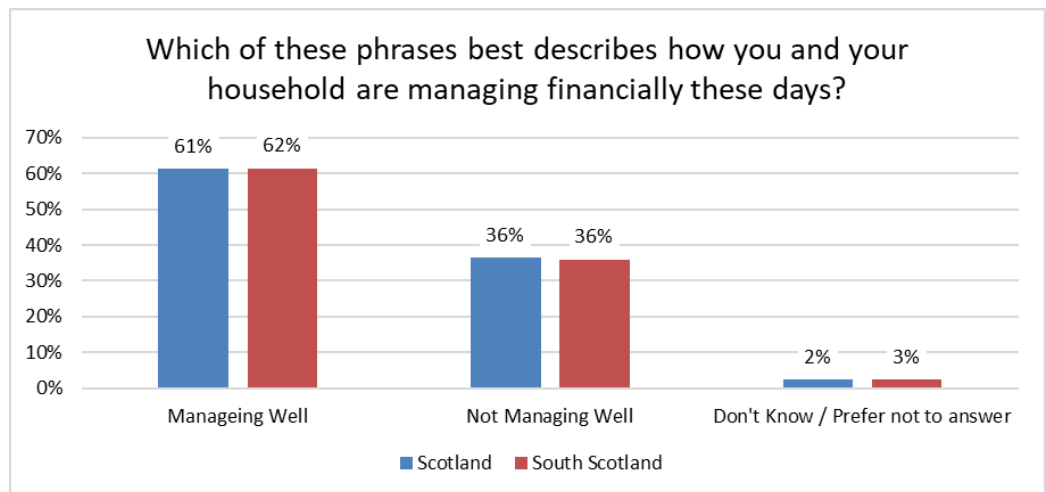
Source: [Consumer Spotlight | Consumer Scotland](#)

Consumer Scotland commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct a series of online quantitative surveys to regularly monitor the impact of the cost-of-living crisis for energy consumers in Scotland. The fieldwork for the first of these tracker surveys was undertaken 27th September – 10th October 2022. This covered the period spanning the end of the last Energy Price Cap and the introduction of the Energy Price Guarantee on 1st October 2022.

In November 2022 Consumer Scotland published the results from Tracker 1. Several questions relate to 'Enough money to live on.' The results were published for Scotland, selected respondent characteristics like gender, age, social grade, and Scottish Region; of which South Scotland was a distinct region.

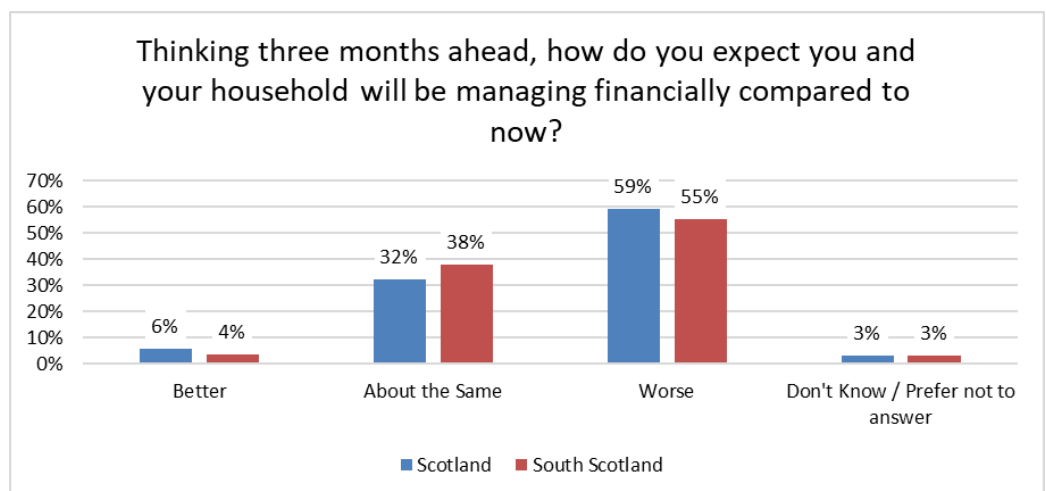
These are the results from [Consumer Scotland - Energy tracker - autumn 2022](#) for questions with a focus on 'Enough money to live on' for Scotland and South Scotland. Overall, the results for the South of Scotland are similar to the results for Scotland.

36% of households in the South of Scotland felt that they were not managing financially well, similar to Scotland.



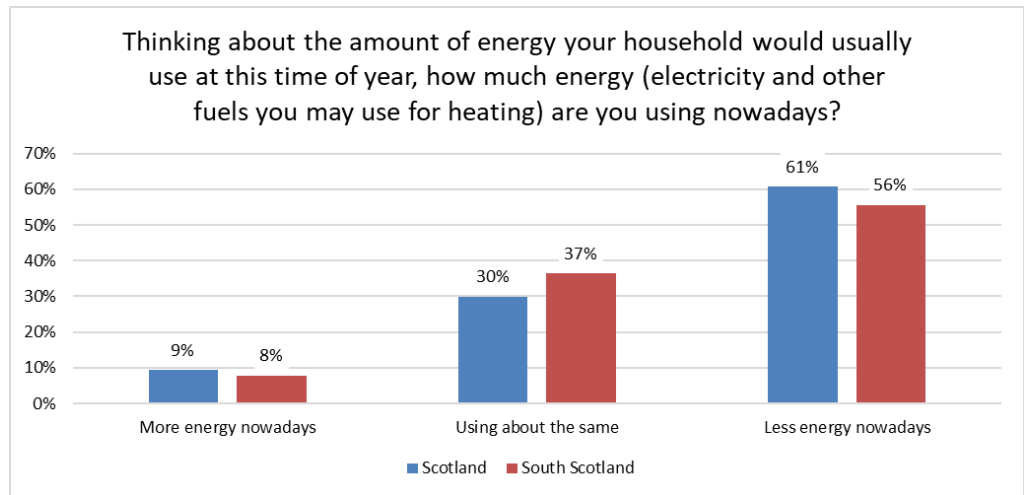
Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

55% of the households in the South of Scotland felt that in three months' time the household would be managing financially worse, slightly lower than the level for Scotland. This may reflect the perceived resilience of households in the South of Scotland.



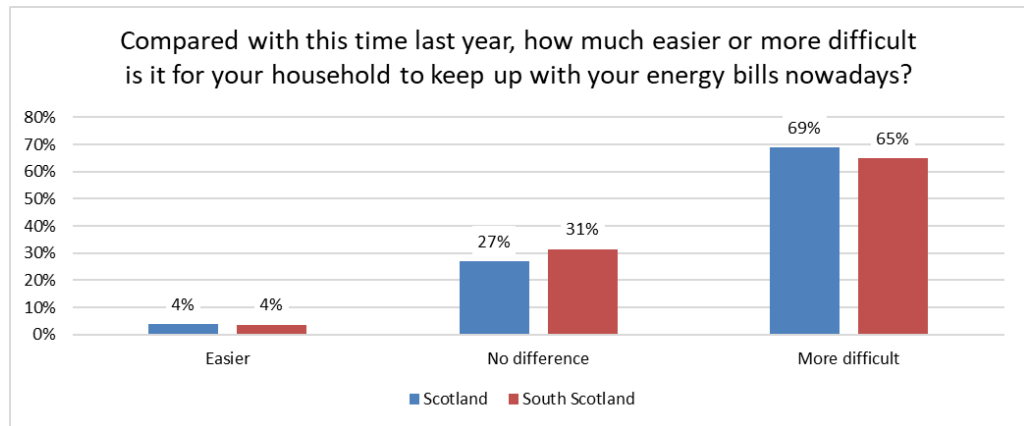
Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

56% of households in the South of Scotland report using less energy currently when compared to previous years, slightly less than the 61% for Scotland.



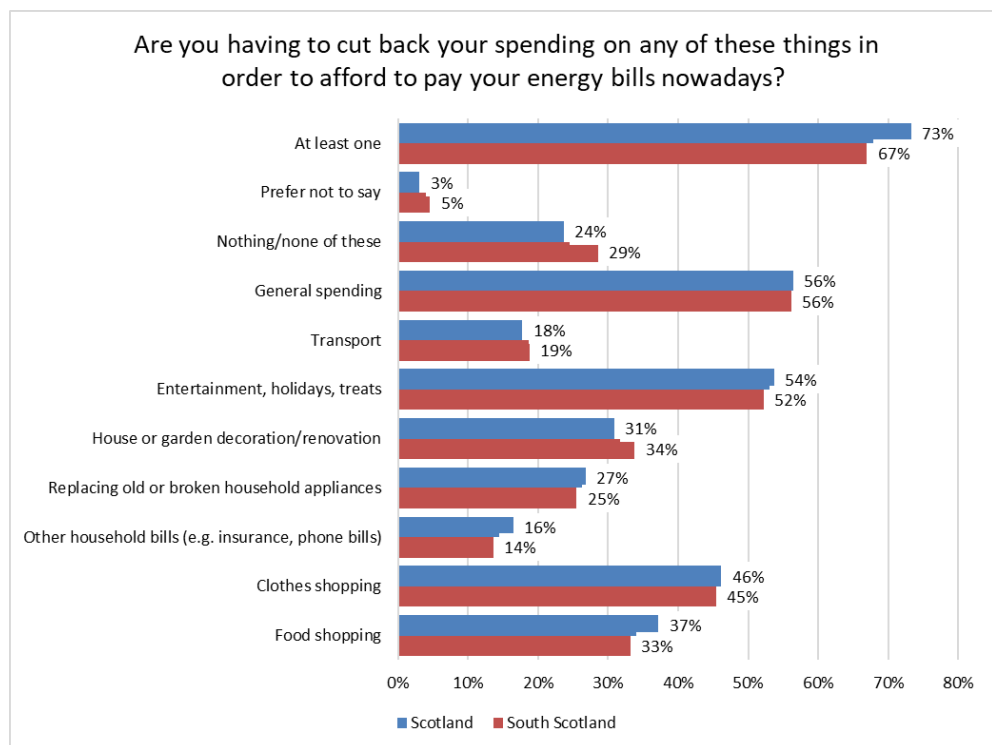
Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

65% of South of Scotland household feel that it is more difficult to keep up with their energy bills, slightly lower than the 69% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

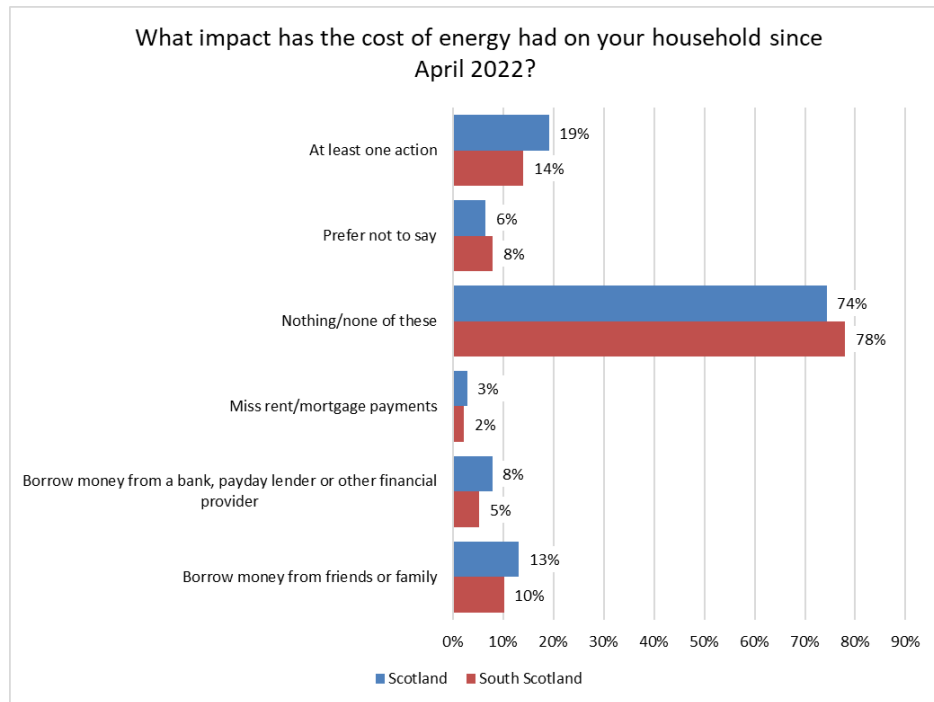
67% of households in the South of Scotland expect that have to cut back spending in order to afford paying energy bills, slightly less than the 73% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

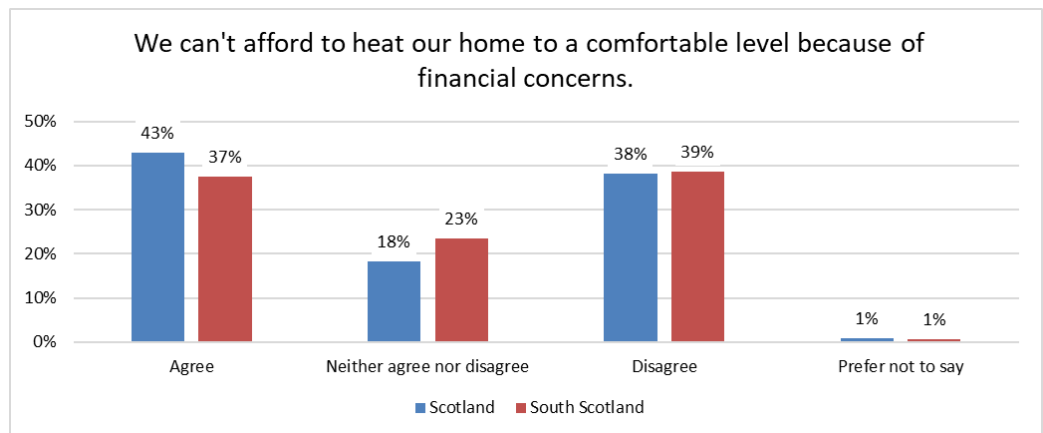
14% of households in the South of Scotland had to take actions to cope with the impact of the cost of energy since April 2022, lower than the 19% for Scotland. The actions identified are:

- Miss rent / mortgage
- Borrow money from provider (bank)
- Borrow money from friends or family



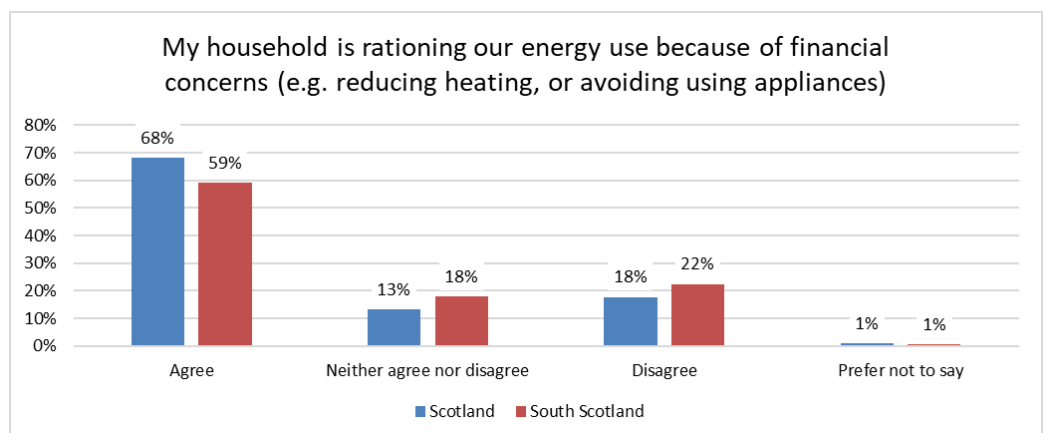
Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

37% of the households in the South of Scotland agree “We can’t afford to heat our home to a comfortable level because of financial concerns”, slightly less than the 43% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

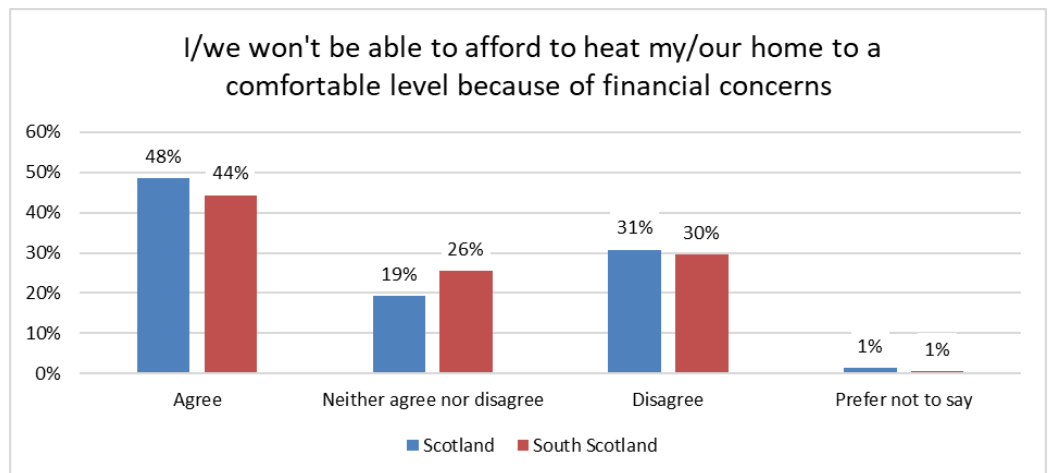
59% of South of Scotland households agree “My household is rationing our energy use because of financial concerns (e.g., reducing heating, or avoiding using appliances)”, less than the 68% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

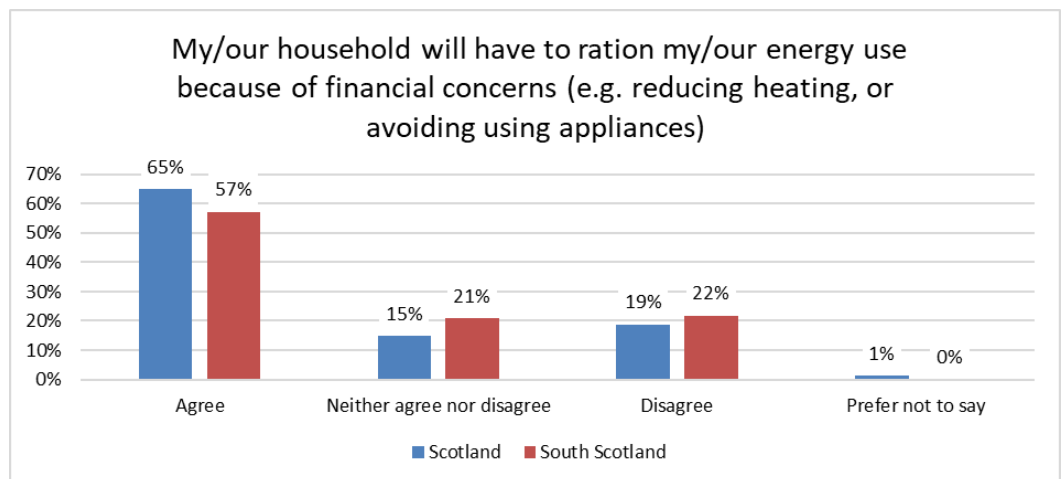
Respondents were asked: Thinking about the approaching winter time and cost of your energy from the 1st of October 2022, to what extent do you agree or disagree, if at all, with these statements:

44% of household in the South of Scotland agreed, "I/we won't be able to afford to heat my/our home to a comfortable level because of financial concerns", slightly less than the 48% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

57% of households in the South of Scotland agreed, "My / our household will have to ration my/our energy use because of financial concerns (e.g., reducing heating, or avoiding using appliances), less than the 65% for Scotland.



Source: <https://consumer.scot/publications/consumer-spotlight/>

● Food Security

One of the starkest gauges for “Enough money to live on” relates to food security and the use of food banks, community launders or other food aid activity. Throughout the UK, and the Scottish Borders is no exception there has been a significant increase in the use of food banks since the start of the Covid19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis has further increased the need and use of food banks.

The Independent Food Aid Network (IFAN) and the Trussell Trust both report challenges relating to food security and the wider cost of living.

In its [October 2022 survey of food banks](#), IFAN (Independent Food Aid Network) reported that independent food banks are increasingly struggling to meet the needs of their users. The Cost-of-living crisis is causing a rapidly increasing number of referrals combined with a reduction in donations and increased costs of utility bills in their contact centres.

- Following the cut in Universal Credit in October 2021, organisations saw demand for their services rise, and 91% of them have seen demand rise even further since July 2022
- 82% of organisations have been impacted by supply issues since July 2022
- 85% of organisations say they have regular customers who were constantly struggling to afford food between July and September 2022.
- Half of the organisations surveyed said they may not be able to support everyone who needs their help this winter or will need to reduce the size of their food parcels to meet increasing demand.

In their March 2022 report on the [True cost of living](#), the Trussell Trust reports that people who were already struggling to afford the essentials before the current cost of living crisis are facing new levels of food poverty because they are being failed by the social security system.

It was reported that, out of the 5.7 million people on Universal credit:

- 56% are going without at least one of the absolute essentials we need to keep warm, fed, and clothed
- 50% are either already behind on their bills or are facing a constant struggle to keep up with them
- 40% have already fallen into debt following the Universal Credit cut in October 2021
- 33% had more than one day in the last month when they only had one meal or had no meal at all due to not being able to afford adequate food

In their February 2022 report [Debt to government](#), the Trussell Trust reports on the increase in food bank usage due to Universal Claimant credits being in debt to the (DWP (Department of Work and Pensions)). It found that nearly half of people referred to food banks in the Trussell Trust network in mid 2020 were in debt to the DWP. Examples of these debts include:

- Advance payments taken to cover the five-week wait for Universal Credit
- The repayment of Tax Credit overpayments
- Council tax arrears

Many of these debts were deducted automatically from the claimant’s UC payments, leaving them with incomes far below what was needed to afford the essentials and forcing them to turn to food banks. Other impacts include poor mental health, further spirals of debt, poor client-government authority relations and avoidable homelessness and destitution, which government services then have to deal with.

The [Food Foundation](#) with a vision of “a sustainable food system which delivers health and wellbeing for all” with key pillars of

- Improving children’s diets
- Increasing vegetable consumption

- Influencing food policy
- Inspiring change in food businesses and investment

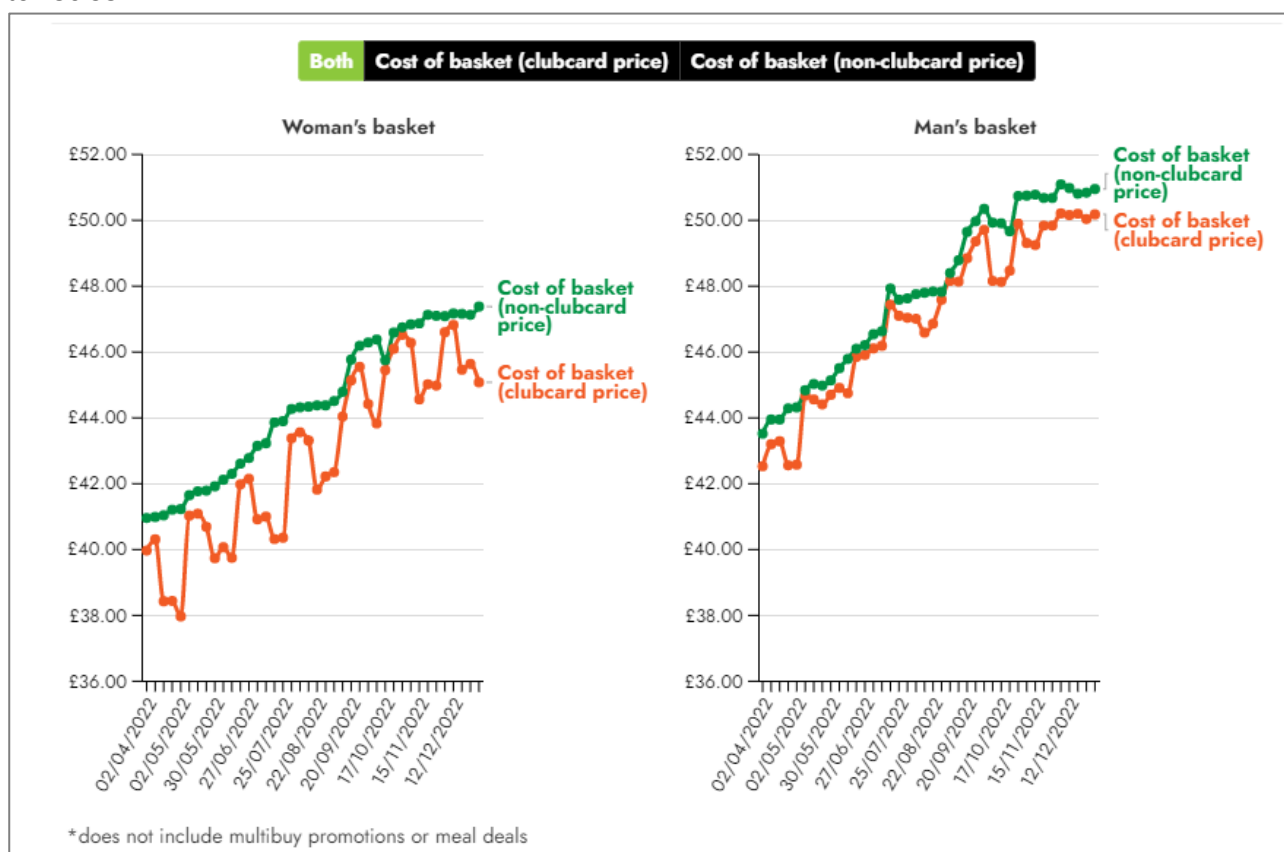
The Food Foundation have a food price tracker and a food insecurity tracker.

The [Food Foundation's Basic Basket](#)² tracker measures weekly prices of a basket of food for an adult male and adult female as part of a reasonably costed, adequately nutritious diet (using Tesco prices). The tracker aims to provide a benchmark to give an indication of trends in food prices and how this might be impacting on the cost of buying sufficient food.

The products in the basket are based on the [Minimum Income Standard \(MIS\) basket](#) developed by Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP), funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The male basket has slightly more items and men have higher calorie requirements and so this basket costs slightly more than the female basket.

The baskets do not reflect what people on the lowest incomes are able to afford or would regularly purchase. It is based on the established Minimum Income Standard research which is rooted in public consensus about what constitutes a socially acceptable diet.

The figure below shows the costs of the woman's and man's basket with and without 'Clubcard' prices between April 2022 and January 2023. From the figure it is clear to see that the cost for the basket of good for both men and women has increased. The woman's basket (non-Clubcard) increased by £6.42 or 16%, from £40.96 to 47.38). The cost of the man's basket (non-Clubcard) increased by 17% or £7.43, from £43.52 to £50.95.

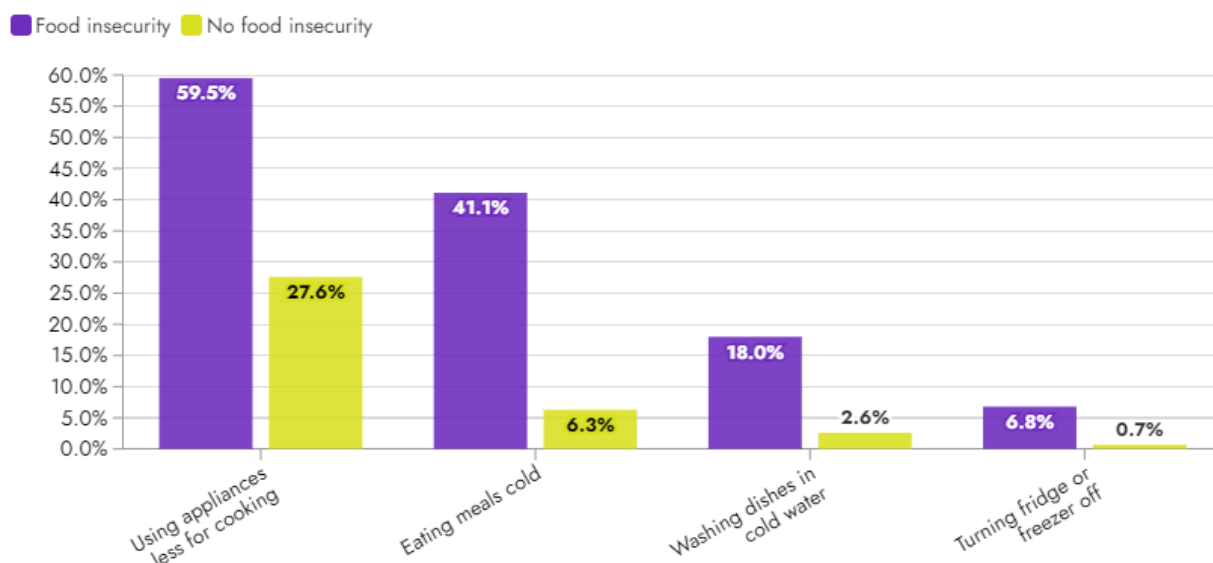


Source: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/initiatives/food-prices-tracking#/undefined/Weekly-Price-Changes>

² Loughborough University's Centre for Research in Social Policy develop a number of different baskets for different configurations of family type. The Food Foundation chose to look at just two of them – the working age male and working age female baskets. These baskets are not reflective of what people on the lowest incomes are able to afford or would regularly purchase. Although they do show the change in prices which impact on the cost-of-living.

The Food Foundation commissioned a series of nationally representative surveys since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in March 2020 assessing the impact of household food insecurity across the UK. The most recent round was conducted by [YouGov Plc in September 2022](#) with 4280 online responses. The key findings were:

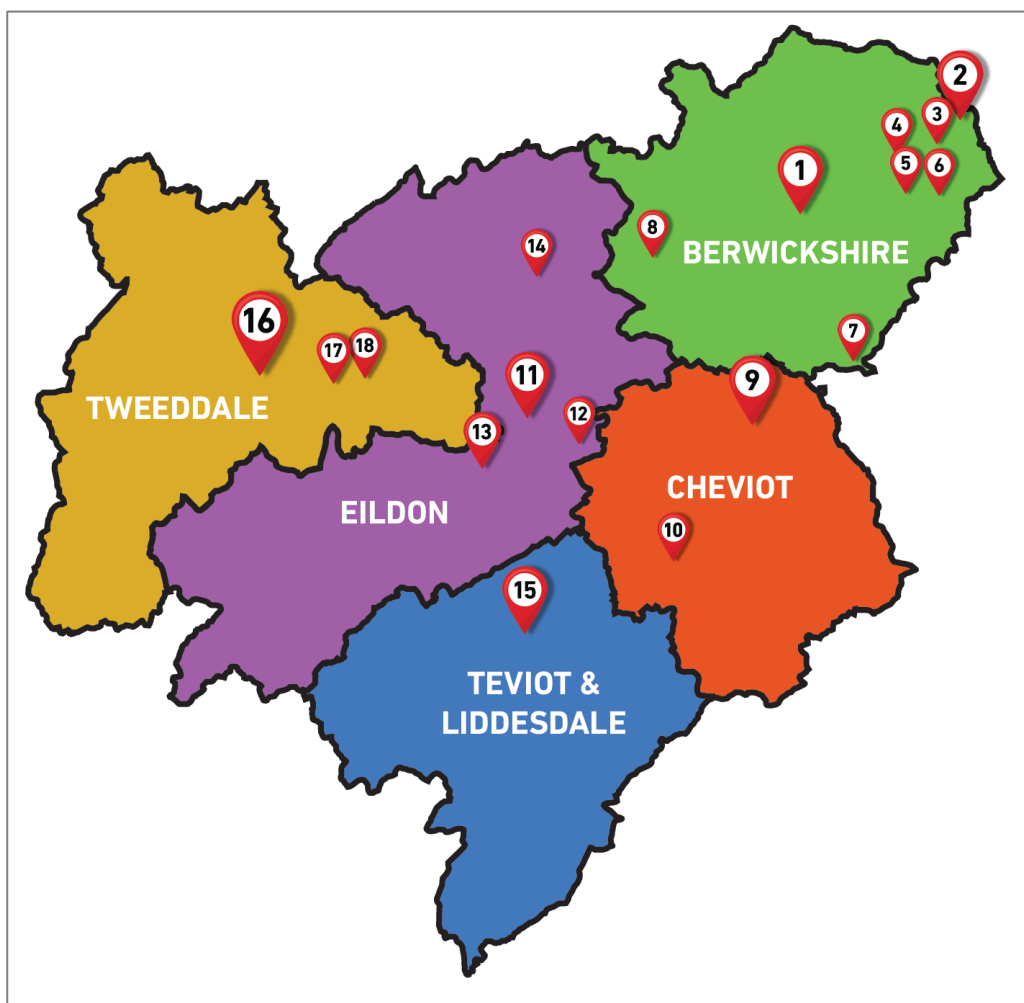
- One in four households with children (4 million children) have experienced food insecurity in the past month (From 12.4% in May 2020 to 25.8% in September 2022).
- Households with three or more children are more likely to be experiencing food insecurity 42.2% compared to households with no children 16.0% or households with one or two children 25.0%.
- 9.7 million adults (18.4% of households) have experienced food insecurity in the past month in September 2022, compared to 9.3% of households in May 2020.
- Households on Universal Credit are more likely to experience food insecurity and the proportion has increased by over 10% between April 2022 (42.1%) and September 2022 (53.8%).
- Households who are food insecure are more likely to be affected by rising energy costs



Source: <https://foodfoundation.org.uk/initiatives/food-insecurity-tracking#tabs/Round-11->

- Households who are food insecure are cutting back on their purchases of healthy foods (fruit and vegetables) more than households who are food secure.
- Over two thirds of UK households (68.1%) are worried about increasing energy prices meaning they have less money to buy enough food for their household's needs.
- There has been a widening of inequalities experienced by people with disabilities.

Scottish Borders Council has a dedicated to Cost-of-Living Support section with a page focusing on '[help with access to food](#)'. The map below shows pins where there are food banks / community launders (the bigger the pin the more local organisations). The listing for each locality / pin is below the map.



BERWICKSHIRE

1. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Duns; A Heart For Duns – Duns; BAVS – Duns; Connect Youth Berwickshire – Duns; Duns Foodbank – Duns
2. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Eyemouth; Eyemouth Community Fridge – Eyemouth; Eyemouth Foodbank – Eyemouth; Eyemouth Larder – Eyemouth
3. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Ayton
4. Reston & Auchencrow Larder – Reston
5. Chirnside Community Larder – Chirnside
6. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Foulden
7. Coldstream Larder – Coldstream
8. Westruther Food Hub – Westruther Berwickshire

CHEVIOT

9. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Kelso; Cheviot Youth – Kelso; Kelso Foodbank – Kelso
10. Jedburgh Foodbank – Jedburgh

EILDON

11. Galashiels & Area Foodbank – Galashiels; Café Recharge – Galashiels; Langlee Early Years Centre – Galashiels; TD1 Youth Centre – Galashiels
12. Rowlands – Selkirk; Selkirk Early Years Centre – Selkirk; Selkirk Foodbank – Selkirk
13. Newtown Community Help – Newtown St Boswells
14. Lauder Larder – Lauder

TEVIOT & LIDDESDALE

15. Abundant Borders Community Garden – Hawick; Burnfoot Community Futures – Hawick; Burnfoot Early Years Centre – Hawick; Salvation Army – Hawick

TWEEDDALE

16. Food Foundation – Peebles; Kingsland Primary Share Shed – Peebles; Peeblesshire Foodbank – Peebles; Tweeddale Youth Action – Peebles;
17. Swap & Share Shed – Innerleithen
18. Food Hugs – Walkerburn