



Cost-of-Living Impact 2022 - 2023 (South)

Youth Voice



43 Responses

Felixstowe Peninsula CP

Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula CP

Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and villages CP

and Feedback from East Suffolk Young People's Action Group (ESYPAG)

August 2023

Context

3 Community Partnership areas in the south of the district focused on the impact of the cost of living on young people in our area via a Youth Voice survey targeting secondary schools. The majority of Ease the Squeeze initiatives focused on the challenges facing adults during the cost-of-living crisis and whilst some projects were inclusive of families the wider impact of the cost-of-living on our young people was not necessarily considered. The following report highlights the key issues for young people and areas for future consideration.

Please note that survey responses have been quoted as the original wording and spelling

Felixstowe - 39 Responses (Age range 9 - 23yrs)

- 9-12 years = 9 responses
- 13-15 years = 18 responses
- 16-18 years = 10 responses
- 19+ years = 1 response
- Unknown = 1 response

Q1: What is your understanding of the current financial and cost of living crisis?

Little understanding = 12 responses, Understand fairly well = 26 responses, Not Sure = 1 response

Q2: Do you have any further comments about your understanding of the current financial and 'cost-of-living' crisis?

Why is everything up in price? It can't possibly be due to the war in Ukraine.

When will it end?

It all makes sense as I watch the news and that gives me an understanding. But I don't understand why the pound has dropped in value?

Prices rising, food expensive

Everything going to garbage

I think its utterly absurd that were even in a damn crisis. I mean i am not bloody surprised but oh my god why are we so stupid...we dont need to be in one if the government sorted there priorities out!

About inflation? why is it rising why are our familys going through this?

I know for certain that the 'cost of living crisis' is not a laughing matter. Prices are going up all over the UK, and I know it must be a very stressful time for many adults.

Cost of living is being increased due to shit government

Its making families struggle to live

High prices - gone up too much

Q3: What impact is the current financial crisis having on you and your family?

The following themes were identified: Rising cost, food and shopping, gas and electricity bills/heating, family time, holidays or not much impact

Families Struggling:

Making days out harder

Struggling to afford food shop – stressful

Mum has 3 jobs and stepdad has 1 but still struggling to make ends meet

We have to be careful on what we buy. If there's a cheaper option for something we often get that as we're a family of 5 but it hasn't had a massive impact on us in general for everyday living or basic needs such as clothes. Although, in the winter we didn't have the heating on unless one of us was having a shower/bath because it costs so much.

Prices of bills are expensive. food and drinks are getting quite expensive We still buy all of our normal items but we just complain about how much items are for example a box of cereal can be from 2-4 pounds. And sometimes for like 5 items its £20+

We are having to shop in larger quantities and are considering alternative shops

We aren't going on massive holidays like a few years ago. We still are going abroad but not to a get to by plane country. For Christmas my Mum, Dad and grandparents had to limit what we get for Christmas

Not being able to pay bills

Gas and electric bills are high, we constanly have to make sure we are not using too much eletricity but i need to use my laptop for schoolwork, therefore it is a hard task to complete as we do not want to use too much electric.

I know my family are struggling with the cost of living crisis and it will continue to get worse for my family unless there is a solution to stabilize the cost of living

Things are more expensive so we have to be more careful about things and we can't buy as many things.

Struggling with paying bills, no longer being able to afford non-necessities

I cant go into detail or youll be reading for weeks. Its barbaric and absurd!

Our family is affected by the gas, electricity, and hot water bills. We can rarely have heating on and when we do it is only for a couple of hours a night

In my family, we do the little things to keep the bills for water or gas down. For example, we keep the temperature in our house at a certain level and we usually don't go above that

Gas and electric bills are high, we constanly have to make sure we are not using too much eletricity but i need to use my laptop for schoolwork, therefore it is a hard task to complete as we do not want to use too much electric.

My parents are struggling with the current financial crisis and have had to cut down on the food we buy and haven't been able to turn the heating on much and can't afford firewood.

Food is extortionate. I'm on benefits and can't afford to live. I'm using food banks and have no luxuries if I want to eat well!

Had to reduce back on food usage because the bills are so expensive and the morgate

It's hard, mainly because we have a lot of family

The raising of food prices and energy bill prices are making it harder and stricter for our parents which makes them less at ease which may lead to restrictions to us children. Such as harder to do online school work and some effects on mental health

Less impact:

It's made life only slightly harder

It's fine I guess

Not much of impact

Were ok

Not too bad

My family seem to be doing alright. We have been doing energy saving hours where we turn off anything that uses electricity.

Not a massive impact, less branded things

It isn't having much problems yet, however as we turn into a recession I believe things would be soon to change

It isn't impacting my family -these brokies are complaining too much just make some money

For me and my family we haven't be really that greatly affected other than being aware of it and careful with the general things like leaving lights on and stuff like that. Also because of the cost of living i know there's been a slight change in my Dance club fees or prices for costumes for our upcoming show but that's it really.

Don't know

Q4: Are there clubs, groups or activities that you will no longer be able to attend due to the cost?

NO = 30 Responses Yes = 9 Responses

The Yes responses referred to activities no longer able to attend:

- Gym
- Kickboxing
- Air Training Corps
- Ballet, gym and Judo
- Games Nights
- Scouts, football, basketball
- Gold Outside of School
- No money for games
- *I used to do ballet and gymnastics and judo (all different times in my life) but i had to stop all of those.*
- *I go to a games night on a Friday but now cannot afford to get the bus every Friday. I also attended airsoft once a month which I can't do now*

Q5: Do the news reports regarding the financial crisis impact on your mental health?

NO = 19 responses

Maybe = 11 responses

Yes = 8 responses

Struggle

I swear about the politicians as they are all useless

have therapy but doesn't help

I cut my wrists and legs

Listen to Music

Keep it to myself

Take medicines

I don't know if I'll ever be able to afford University and im scared of debt wich i know ill be in if the cost of living continues to go up..lets linger on that - COST OF LIVING ... I DIDNT EVEN WANNA BE BORN BUT ITS "ALL PART OF GODS PLAN" THEY SAY...BUT WHY ON EARTH DO I HAVE TO PAY TO HAVE THE LIFE I DONT EVEN WANT..hey maybe we should statt taxing birds and cows and bares and sharks and all the animals "taking up our space" and "living rent free" the rich to have to worry about a thing while the rest of us are working 2+ jobs to keep kids in school, affording luxuries such as TAMPONS - and im not even going to continue because im drained...so screw doing ballet..i just wanna be able to live..

Q6: What would you like to learn more about regarding the cost-of-living?

Top theme, with 15 responses, centred around money management, opening bank accounts, costs to run a household, understanding tax

The next theme centred around wanting to understand why this is happening, how people are being affected including their parents, the role of the government.

Only 4 responses said they did not want to learn more about the cost of living, one response stating to know more would only worry them more.

What caused it, the war in Ukraine couldn't have caused around 25% inflation by itself and how in lockdown due to covid would that effect today's inflation.

Why it is happening and how to save money on small products like food

Why are things so expensive now- Why aren't they lowering prices

I'd like to learn more about the way costs are affected by the cost of living crisis, as it isn't normally a "child problem" so to speak.

I would like to know why the pound keeps dropping in value. I also want to know if we are the only country that is having this severe impact on the cost of living crisis.

More general knowledge about finances, how to manage in a crises

Think how to pay bills and manage money should be a top priority in school because when students leave school most are clueless on how to actually manage their own money and how to actually pay bills.

As I'm coming of an age where I am experiencing more independance I would like/need to know more about bank accounts like how to set one up and manage it especially because of the increase in cost of living it would be useful aswell when I get a job in college.Finance in general.

What it costs to run a household or other. I would like to get a better idea of how much it would be to own my own house one day

How about the government lower prices and tax the rich

How to manage money and save for my future to give me a good start as an adult

Q7: If you had a grant to help people through the cost-of-living crisis, what would you spend it on?

3 key themes emerged:

- Food and drink (including healthy eating and cooking on a budget)
- Paying bills in particular electricity and heating
- Basic necessities

Miscellaneous themes including:

- Supporting or setting up a charity
- Leisure activities e.g. gym membership
- Schools – further education, excursions
- Budgeting
- Helping People (including their own parents and own home)

I would send checks to people with minimum wage or who can't afford to pay for food and rent. I would also deliver food to people.

Food. It is probably one of the things most affected by the cost of living crisis. Otherwise I'd spend it on helping with fuel, another very expensive thing to many

I would spend it on lower heating bills because i understand that some people have to choose between food and heating which I think should never be a choice you have to make

Healthier food options. People are now turning to junk food as their main source of food as it is always cheaper than healthier options e.g vegetables and fruits

I would use the money to help begin a charity which would be able to fund more money to benefit those struggling on the cost of living crisis

Food and water because it's getting ridiculously expensive for a basic human necessity.

Buy parents their dream stuff

Anything I could to help, I would probably buy myself up in the world enough to change the laws and buy out taxing companies and all that rubbish along with lowering the living cost. Idk..its all just a dream huh

I'm not entirely sure as I have always been a saver than a spender but I guess i would put it towards future plans e.g. hobbies, school excursions, university, further ahead. Or as it's a lot of money donate some to my family/charity because there's others who need it more.

Educate people in budgeting , meal plans, cooking and how to live on a budget.

I am currently homeless and living in a hostel so I'd save the grant until I can move into my own place and pay for things I need

I would give some money to those who are struggling the most and if i have any to spare i would buy as much long lasting food as i could and give it to a food bank that could give to the most people.

gas so we have heating more often

Q8: Are you aware of anything your school is doing to help students or families through the cost-of-living crisis?

No = 23 responses Yes = 13 responses Unsure = 2 response N/A = 1 responses

Stationary and some uniform are being handed out if that student is having issues at getting the correct things for school then FXS will sort that out

If we can't afford pens for school then they will give us some.

We have a breakfast club so all students can get breakfast

They are issuing school supplies and grants to the most needing families.

No, however I believe they would do something if I child really was struggling

They are doing nothing

Only bursaries

They have been giving free school meals to people who don't have enough money to afford normal school meals

I have heard that my school is being more understanding and supportive with the school uniform and equipment prices.

Help students by giving them equipment if families can't afford it.

o, nothing new but more chances for free school meals would help a little more.

Melton, Woodbridge and Deben Peninsula CP area

2 Responses 1 x 14yrs Sudbourne 1 x 15yrs Tunstall

1 x does not understand cost-of-living crisis 1 x understands fairly well

1 x family impacted by cost-of-living crisis *not having a lot of money to spend on food*

No family had received help in the form of food parcels, fuel vouchers or other benefits due to the cost-of-living crisis

No young people affected by news reports – no impact on mental health

1 x response indicating clubs, groups or activities that no longer be able to attend due to the cost *volleyball, horse riding and gym*

No responses re wanting to learn more about the cost-of-living

2 x responses re mental Health needs NOT met at school

Not able to fully express how or what i need.

Too much homework

Aldeburgh, Leiston, Saxmundham and villages

2 Responses: 1 x 14yrs, 1 x 18yrs - both Saxmundham

2 x family impacted by cost-of-living crisis

Shorter showers, turning lights off

An immense impact- we are finding it difficult to keep up with costs of food, travel to schools as well as energy bills

2 x young people affected by news reports – impact on mental health

2 x response indicating clubs, groups or activities that no longer be able to attend due to the cost

Musical theatre, dance, drama

1 response re wanting to learn more about the cost-of-living

How to be cost effective, budgeting for food as well as mortgages and university bills during the financial crisis

1 x responses re mental Health needs NOT met at school (18yr old)

ESYPAG Feedback

- Financial Resilience courses commissioned via Christians Against Poverty to help young people understand the financial pressures facing their parents
- A Poverty Proofing in schools project is running to address these issues. 7 schools involved up to the end of term with a report provided to each. This will then feed into a report for Suffolk with recommendations.
- Noted that pupils were looking shabbier and that this could be the impact of the COL either direct cost of uniform or washing less due to fuel/water costs.
- One item raised was why can't pupil's parents purchase non-labelled shirts etc rather than more costly items with the school logo on? The jumpers cover up the labelled shirt!
- Jo shared a story of a pupil repeatedly wearing his school jumper for PE, Xmas jumper day – leading to unintended bullying.
- Another example was a pupil in household with hoarding issues, no bed linen. The office assistant bought a duvet etc but the mother told her to 'f*** ***'. The mother did apologise stating so much stress.

Hungry children

Another example – near empty lunchboxes “*mum can't afford shopping*”; pupil/parent stress “*all I hear about is mortgages, debt and credit cards*”

Noted that there were still enquiries about the Field to Fork project and others, and how could people be encouraged to join the journey and accept help.

- A breakfast club set up earlier in the year at Farlingaye High School had no take-up, with this considered to be due to pride.
- Where a holiday activity offered a free hot meal, that it was greatly appreciated, and one young person had 3 servings.
- Youth clubs who previously may have provided free pastries perhaps once a month, were now offering these weekly.
- Should safe spaces for young people offered for mental health support, also need to incorporate cost of living support, such as snacks & hot drinks?

High School Transition – have we lost the love and care?

It was mentioned that there needs to be more support for high school transition. Pupils can go from love and care in primary school to detention in year 7 – it feels like we have lost the ‘love and care’

Cost of Living and Sexual Health

National news item - New STI data shows 24% increase in rates in England-

Key statistics include:

- 50% increase in gonorrhoea since 2021.
- 24% increase in chlamydia since 2021.
- 15% increase in syphilis since 2021.
- 8% increase in number of consultations at sexual health services since 2021.
- 26% increase in STI diagnoses among young people aged 15 to 24 since 2021.
- 21% increase in chlamydia in young people despite no increase in testing among this group.
- The latest UKHSA figures prove that the Government has no vision or ambition for improving sexual health.

Terence Higgins Trust advised that there has been an increase in requests for free condoms. The cost of living has caused increase in cost of condoms and cost and access to travel for treatment prohibitive.