

# Monthly bulletin: 21 January 2026

Latest data: Cost of living				Snapshot trend analysis	Next data update
Inflation	CPI inflation	3.4%		UK CPI Inflation was 3.4% in December 2025, up from 3.2% in November. Alcohol and tobacco, and transport made the largest upward contributions to the monthly change in annual rates.	18/02/2026
	Food inflation	4.5%		Food inflation was 4.5% in December 2025, up from 4.2% in the 12 months to November.	18/02/2026
	Bank Rate	3.75%		Bank rate was 3.75% in Dec 2025, down from 4% in October.	05/02/2026
Fuel	Petrol (ppl)	133p		Average price of petrol was down by 58p in the week commencing 19 <sup>th</sup> January from its peak in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	Diesel (ppl)	142p		Average price of diesel was down by 57p in the week commencing 19 <sup>th</sup> January from its peak in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	Energy price cap	£1,758		Between 1 January and 31 March 2026, the energy price cap is set at £1,758 per year for a typical household who use electricity and gas and pay by Direct Debit. This is an increase of 0.2% compared to the cap set between 1 October to 31 December 2025 (£1,755).	Feb 2026
Poverty & Income	Employment (16-64 working age group)	71.6%		In the year to Sept 2025, 372,900 people were estimated to be employed in Leeds, at a rate of 71.6% of the working age population. This was up from 70.9% in the previous quarter (Jun 2025) and below the national rate of 75.5%. Employment levels in Leeds have fallen since Apr-Mar 2023 when the rate was 76.4%.	Apr 2026
	Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)	4.4%		In the year to Sept 2025, 17,800 people were estimated to be unemployed in Leeds, at a rate of 4%. This was above the national rate of 4.3%. This is just above the pre-pandemic rate of 4.3% in Dec 2019.	Apr 2026
	UC claimants	110,631		110,631 people claimed UC in Leeds in Nov 2025. The number of UC claimants has increased by 16% since Nov 2024.	17/02/2026
	UC Claimants in work	31%	N/A	69% of claimants to UC were not in work, and 31% - 34,770 Leeds claimants were in-work in Nov 2025.	17/02/2026
	Real Living Wage	£13.45		The 2026 Real Living Wage for outside of London has been announced as £13.45 per hour (it is currently £12.60). The National Living Wage for people over 21 is currently £12.21 per hour. In Leeds in 2025, the median average wage was £17.26. 47,434 Leeds residents earned below the RLW (£12.60) in 2025.	Nov 2026
Housing	Housing Affordability Ratio	6.46		With data to Sept 2024, Leeds house prices averaged £234,500 and wages averaged £36k, it cost the average full-time Leeds resident almost 6.5 times their income to afford a house. This is the lowest ratio recorded in the last 3 years.	Mar 2026
	Evictions	273		In Q3 2025, there were 92 evictions in Leeds. This is up from Q3 2024, when there were 76 evictions. YTD there have been 273 evictions, up from 222 the same time last year.	Feb 2026
Advice & Support	Welfare Rights Unit	177		In Dec 2025, 177 benefit checks were made by the WRU, down from 216 in Dec 2024.	Feb 2026
	CAB enquiries	23,274		In Q2 2025/26, there were 23,274 total enquiries. Enquiries on Benefits & tax credits, Universal Credit, Housing, Debt, Consumer, Utilities and Legal were the most sought areas of advice.	Feb 2026
	Food aid	180,994		In 2024/25, 180,994 meals were given out via drop-ins or street outreach. This is up 27% on the previous year.	Jun 2026
	Household Support Fund	74,496	N/A	In Q4 2024/25, HSF supported 74,496 households across Leeds. 78% of the support was on food and 13% on energy and water. YTD households supported is 265,427.	Feb 2026

## Key:

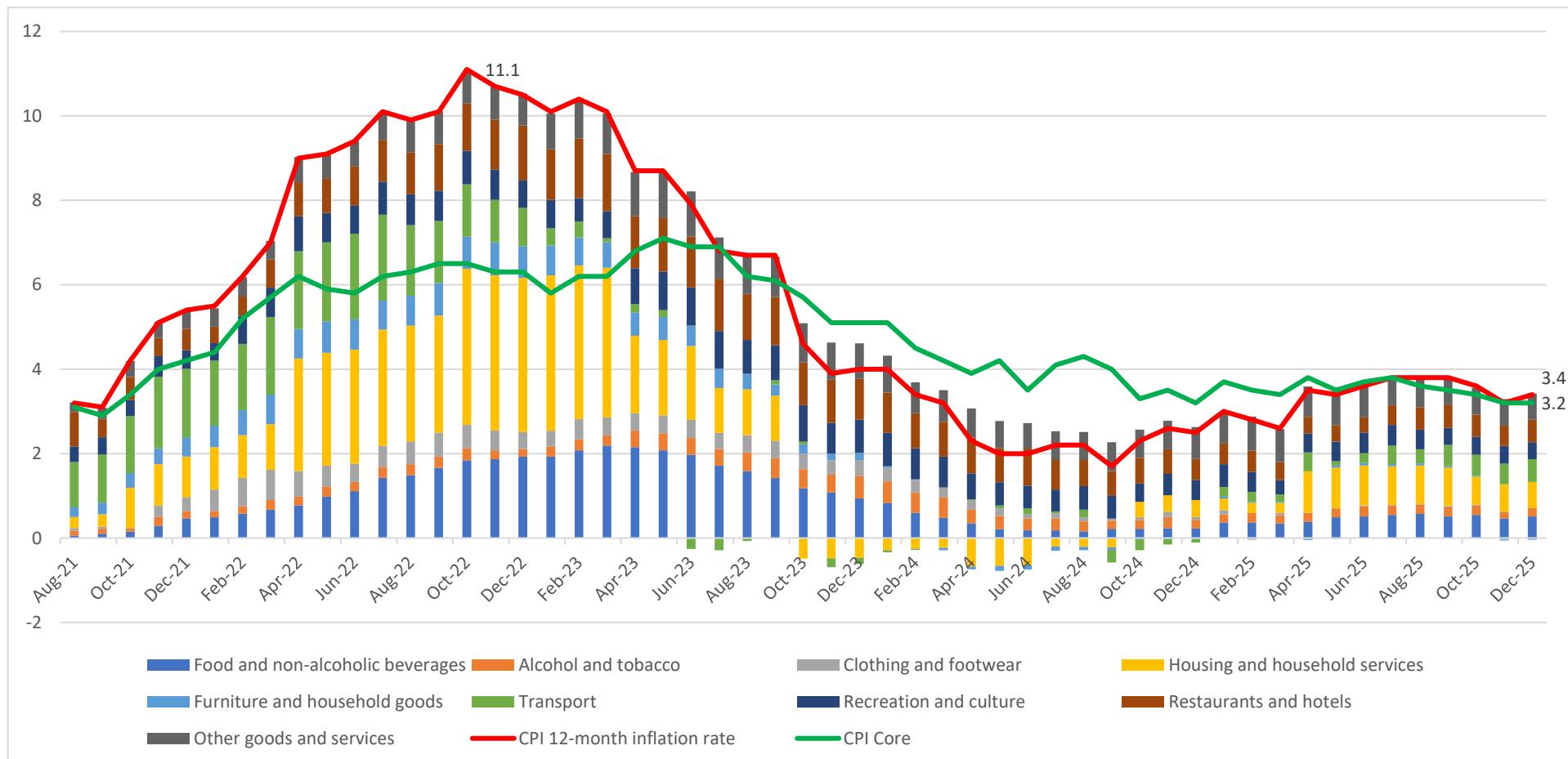
The next bulletin is due on 18<sup>th</sup> February to coincide with the next inflation release.  
To access the live data, visit our dashboard: <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/home/cost-of-living/>

Red arrow – negative trend  
Amber arrow – trend remains the same  
Green arrow – positive trend

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## Timeline of the Cost-of-Living Crisis

The Government target is to maintain inflation at 2%. This timeline graph displays key impacts on prices during the cost-of-living crisis. July 2021 coincides with Covid Lockdown rules easing and more spaces starting to reopen. From that point, supply and demand issues in the global economy, affecting fuel prices and food supplies started to push up prices and the cost-of-living crisis began to take effect, with inflation exceeding 2% and peaking at 11.1% in October 2022.



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<b>Trend analysis</b> The arrow direction reflects whether an indicator has gone up, down or remained the same. The RAG rating provides a visual analysis of whether a trend is positive, negative or remains unchanged.				
RAG	Green arrow	Amber arrow	Red arrow	Further information
CPI inflation	Below 4%	Remains the same	Above 4%	Government target is 2%, however this bulletin is measuring performance since its peak in October 2022
Food inflation	Below 4%	Remains the same	Above 4%	Government target is 2%, however this bulletin is measuring performance since its peak in October 2022
Bank Rate	Below 5.25%	Remains the same	Above 5.25%	5.25% was the most recent peak for Bank Rate
Petrol (ppl)	Below 191.55	Remains the same	Above 191.55	191.55p is the peak price seen in July 2022
Diesel (ppl)	Below 199.22	Remains the same	Above 199.22	199.22p is the peak price seen in July 2022
Energy price cap	Below previous quarter	Remains the same	Up from previous quarter	This indicator is rated on a quarterly basis
Employment (16-64 working age group)	Up from previous quarter	Remains the same	Below previous quarter	This indicator is rated on a quarterly basis
Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)	Below 4.3%	Remains the same	Above 4.3%	4.3% is the pre pandemic rate reached in Dec 2019
UC Claimants	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as UC claimants will continue to increase as more legacy benefits move to UC
Real Living Wage	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as RLW will continue to increase in line with the Cost of Living
Housing Affordability Ratio	Below previous year	Remains the same	Up from previous year	If this indicator increases, it shows that house prices are not affordable on current income levels
Evictions	Below previous year	Remains the same	Above previous year	RAG rating compares year to date evictions in Leeds to the same period the previous year as its baseline
Welfare Rights Unit	Below previous year	Remains the same/minimal change	Up from previous year	This RAG rating and arrow is based on the annual/YTD figures, as monthly/quarterly changes can be due to lack of resource rather than demand
CAB enquiries	Below previous year	Remains the same/minimal change	Up from previous year	This RAG rating and arrow is based on the annual/YTD figures, as monthly/quarterly changes can be due to lack of resource rather than demand
Food parcels	Below previous year	Remains the same	Up from previous year	This indicator is rated annually
Household Support Fund	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as the data details the breakdown of how funding has been allocated

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