
















## Monthly bulletin: 18 February 2026

Latest data: Cost of living				Snapshot trend analysis	Next data update
Inflation	<i>CPI inflation</i>	3.0%		UK CPI Inflation was 3.0% in January 2026, down from 3.4% in December 2025. Transport, and food and non-alcoholic beverages made the largest downward contributions to the monthly change in annual rates.	25/03/2026
	<i>Food inflation</i>	3.6%		Food inflation was 3.6% in Jan 2026, down from 4.5% the previous month.	25/03/2026
	<i>Bank Rate</i>	3.75%		Bank rate was 3.75% in Feb 2026, remaining the same as Dec 2025.	19/03/2026
Fuel	<i>Petrol (ppl)</i>	132p		Average price of petrol was down by 60p in the week commencing 16 <sup>th</sup> February from its peak in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	<i>Diesel (ppl)</i>	141p		Average price of diesel was down by 58p in the week commencing 16 <sup>th</sup> February from its peak in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	<i>Energy price cap</i>	£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).	25/02/2026
Poverty & Income	<i>Employment (16-64 working age group)</i>	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
	<i>Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)</i>	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
	<i>UC claimants</i>	111,150		111,150 people claimed UC in Leeds in Dec 2025. The number of UC claimants has increased by 15% since Dec 2024.	17/03/2026
	<i>UC Claimants in work</i>	31%	N/A	69% of claimants to UC were not in work, and 31% - 34,587 Leeds claimants were in-work in Dec 2025.	17/03/2026
	<i>Real Living Wage</i>	£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	<i>Housing Affordability Ratio</i>	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
	<i>Evictions</i>	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.	Mar 2026
Advice & Support	<i>Welfare Rights Unit</i>	302		In Jan 2026, 302 benefit checks were made by the WRU, slightly down from 306 in Jan 2025.	Mar 2026
	<i>CAB enquiries</i>	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.	Mar 2026
	<i>Food aid</i>	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
	<i>Household Support Fund</i>	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.	Mar 2026

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To access the live data, visit our dashboard: <https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/home/cost-of-living/>

Key:

Red arrow – negative trend

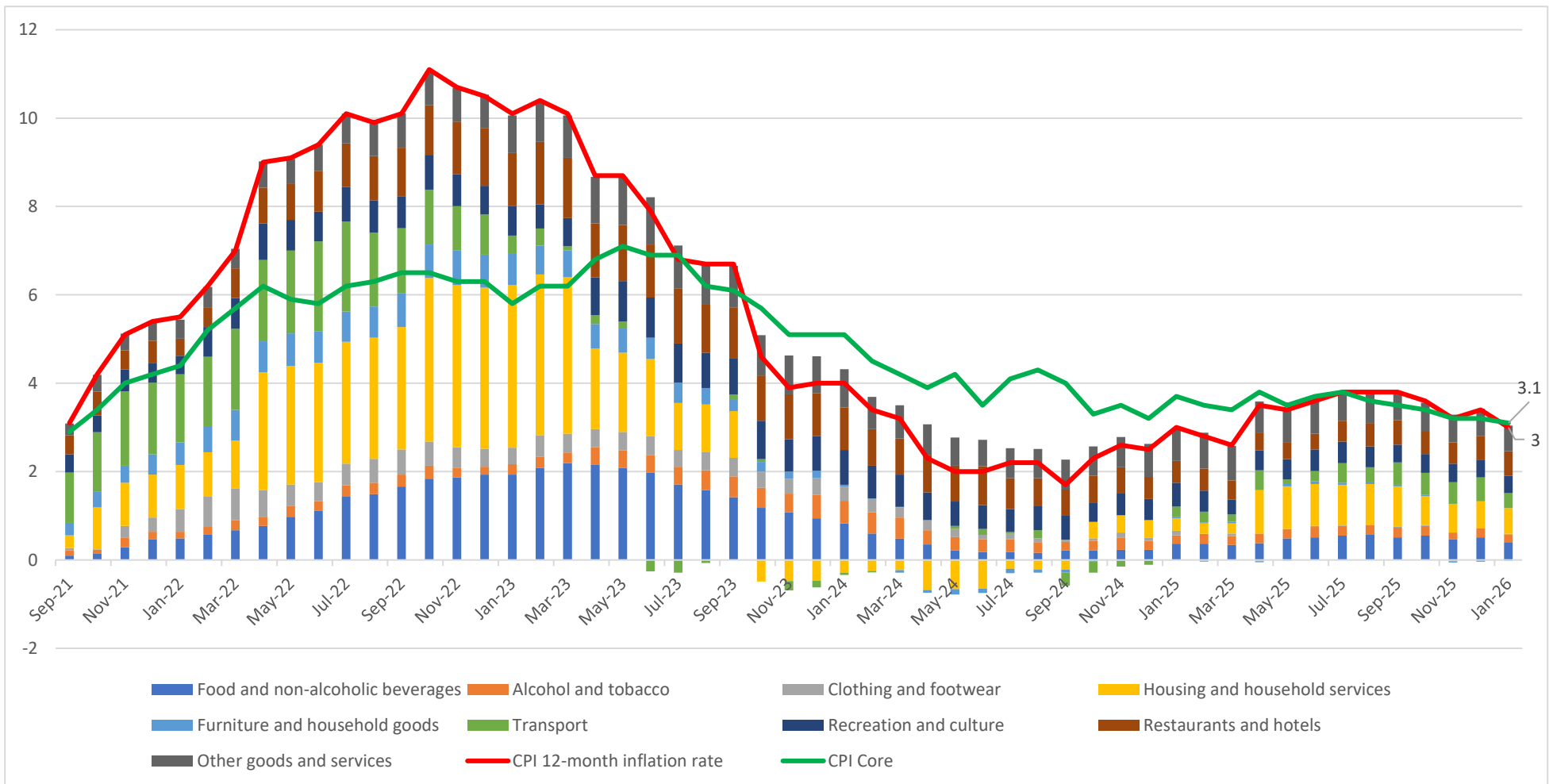
Amber arrow – trend remains the same

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> <i>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.</i>				
RAG	Green arrow	Amber arrow	Red arrow	Further information
<i>CPI inflation</i>	Below 4%	Remains the same	Above 4%	Government target is 2%, however this bulletin is measuring performance since its peak in October 2022
<i>Food inflation</i>	Below 4%	Remains the same	Above 4%	Government target is 2%, however this bulletin is measuring performance since its peak in October 2022
<i>Bank Rate</i>	Below 5.25%	Remains the same	Above 5.25%	5.25% was the most recent peak for Bank Rate
<i>Petrol (ppl)</i>	Below 191.55	Remains the same	Above 191.55	191.55p is the peak price seen in July 2022
<i>Diesel (ppl)</i>	Below 199.22	Remains the same	Above 199.22	199.22p is the peak price seen in July 2022
<i>Energy price cap</i>	Below previous quarter	Remains the same	Up from previous quarter	This indicator is rated on a quarterly basis
<i>Employment (16-64 working age group)</i>	Up from previous quarter	Remains the same	Below previous quarter	This indicator is rated on a quarterly basis
<i>Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)</i>	Below 4.3%	Remains the same	Above 4.3%	4.3% is the pre pandemic rate reached in Dec 2019
<i>UC Claimants</i>	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as UC claimants will continue to increase as more legacy benefits move to UC
<i>Real Living Wage</i>	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as RLW will continue to increase in line with the Cost of Living
<i>Housing Affordability Ratio</i>	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
<i>Evictions</i>	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
<i>Welfare Rights Unit</i>	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
<i>CAB enquiries</i>	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
<i>Food parcels</i>	Below previous year	Remains the same	Up from previous year	This indicator is rated annually
<i>Household Support Fund</i>	-	-	-	This indicator is not RAG rated as the data details the breakdown of how funding has been allocated

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