
















# Monthly bulletin: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Latest data: Cost of living			Snapshot trend analysis		Next data update
Inflation	<i>CPI inflation</i>	2.8%		UK CPI Inflation was 2.8% in April 2026 down from 3.3% from March 2026. Pre-conflict wholesale prices and energy support packages are behind the lower-than-expected inflation rate according to the ONS.	17/06/2026
	<i>Food inflation</i>	3.0%		Food inflation was 3.0% in April 2026, down from 3.7% the previous month.	17/06/2026
	<i>Bank Rate</i>	3.75%		Bank rate was 3.75% in Apr 2026, remaining the same as Dec 2025.	18/06/2026
Fuel	<i>Petrol (ppl)</i>	157p		Average price of petrol was down by 35p in the week commencing 18 <sup>th</sup> May from its peak 192p in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	<i>Diesel (ppl)</i>	187p		Average price of diesel was down by 12p in the week commencing 18 <sup>th</sup> May from its peak 199p in Jul 2022.	Weekly
	<i>Energy price cap</i>	£1,641		From 1 April to 30 June 2026 energy prices will go down by £117 or 7% for a typical household who use electricity and gas and pay by Direct Debit. Compared to the level between April and June 2025, it is 11% or £208 lower.	27/05/2026
Poverty & Income	<i>Employment (16-64 working age group)</i>	74.2%		In the year to Dec 2025, 388,100 people were estimated to be employed in Leeds, at a rate of 74.2% of the working age population. This was up from 71.6% in the previous quarter (Sept 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%.	Jul 2026
	<i>Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)</i>	4.8%		In the year to Dec 2025, 20,200 people were estimated to be unemployed in Leeds, at a rate of 4.8%. This was above the national rate of 4.5%. This is just above the pre-pandemic rate of 4.3% in Dec 2019.	Jul 2026
	<i>UC claimants</i>	111,395		111,395 people claimed UC in Leeds in Feb 2026. The number of UC claimants has increased by 12.8% since Feb 2025.	18/08/2026
	<i>UC Claimants in work</i>	30%	N/A	70% of claimants to UC were not in work, and 30% - 33,207 Leeds claimants were in-work in Feb 2025.	18/08/2026
	<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>	6.67		With data to Sept 2025, Leeds house prices averaged £245,000 and wages averaged £36,716, it cost the average full-time Leeds resident almost 6.7 times their income to afford a house. This is higher than the 2024 ratio of 6.58	Mar/Apr 2027
	<i>Evictions</i>	334		In Q4 2025, there were 61 evictions in Leeds. This is down from Q4 2024, when there were 66 evictions. YTD there have been 334 evictions, up from 288 the same time last year.	Jun 2026
Advice & Support	<i>Welfare Rights Unit</i>	270		In Apr 2026, 270 benefit checks were made by the WRU, slightly up from 260 in Apr 2025.	Jun 2026
	<i>CAB enquiries</i>	23,195		In Q3 2025/26, there were 23,195 total enquiries. Enquiries on Benefits & tax credits, Universal Credit, Housing, Debt, Consumer, Utilities and Immigration and Asylum were the most sought areas of advice.	Jun/Jul 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

The next bulletin is due on 18<sup>th</sup> June to coincide with the next bank rate release.

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

Key:

Red arrow – negative trend

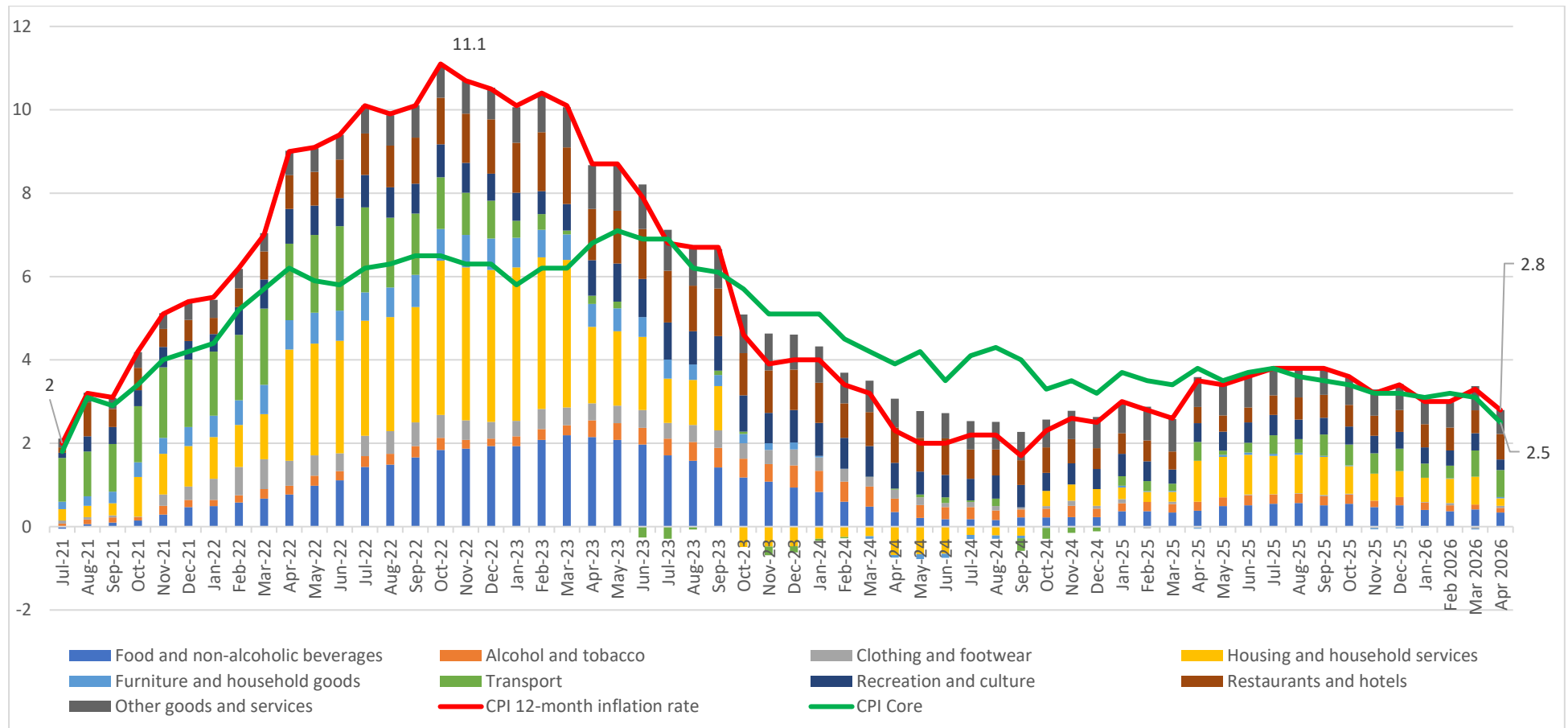
Amber arrow – trend remains the same

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 will be updated in the HSF dashboard which is available here: <a href="https://observatory.leeds.gov.uk/home/cost-of-living/">Leeds Observatory – Financial Inclusion</a>

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