Monthly bulletin: 17th September 2026

Latest data: Cost of living				Snapshot trend analysis	Next data update
Inflation	*CPI inflation*	3.1%	↑	Inflation was 3.1% in August 2026, transport, particularly motor fuels, made the largest upward contribution to the monthly change according to the ONS.	21/10/2026
	Food inflation	1.3%	↔	Food inflation was 1.3% in August 2026, which remained the same as the previous month.	21/10/2026
	Bank Rate	3.75%	↔	Bank rate was 3.75% in Aug 2026, remaining the same since Dec 2025.	05/11/2026
Fuel	*Petrol (ppl)*	168p	↓	Although the average price of petrol was down by 24p in the week commencing 14th September from its peak 192p in Jul 2022 it has risen from 161p in August.	Weekly
	Diesel (ppl)	191p	↓	Although the average price of diesel was down by 8p in the week commencing 14th September from its peak 199p in Jul 2022 it has risen from 181p in August.	Weekly
	Energy price cap	£1,723	↑	From 1 October to 31 December 2026 energy prices will go up by 4% This increase is a result of higher wholesale gas prices. Ofgem has attributed this to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.	26/11/2026
Poverty & Income	*Employment (16-64 working age group)*	75.8%	↑	In the year to Mar 2026, 396,500 people were estimated to be employed in Leeds, at a rate of 75.8% of the working age population. This was up from 74.2% in the previous quarter (Dec 2025) and above the national rate of 75.4%. Employment levels in Leeds have fallen since Apr-Mar 2023 when the rate was 76.4%.	Oct 2026
	Modelled Unemployment (16+ age group)	4.6%	↑	In the year to Mar 2026, 19,600 people were estimated to be unemployed in Leeds, at a rate of 4.6% This was above the national rate of 4.5%. This is just above the pre-pandemic rate of 4.3% in Dec 2019.	Oct 2026
	UC claimants	111,082	⇧	111,082 people claimed UC in Leeds in Apr 2026. The number of UC claimants has increased by 9.7% since Apr 2025.	Nov 2026
	UC Claimants in work	35.2%	N/A	64.8% of claimants to UC were not in work, and 35.2% - 38,721 Leeds claimants were in-work in Apr 2026.	Nov 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*	6.67	↑	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
	Evictions	66	↓	In Q2 2026, there were 66 evictions in Leeds. This is down from Q2 2025, when there were 98 evictions. YTD 2026 there have been 127 evictions.	Dec 2026
Advice & Support	*Welfare Rights Unit*	259	↑	In August 2026, 259 benefit checks were made by the WRU, slightly up from 188 in August 2025.	Oct 2026
	CAB enquiries	93,594	↓	In 2025/26, total enquiries decreased by 4.5% compared to 2024/25. Enquiries on Benefits & tax credits, UC, Consumer, Debt, Housing and Utilities were the most sought areas of advice.	Oct 2026
	Food aid	166,654	↓	In 2025/26, 166,654 meals were distributed through drop-ins and street outreach services, a 7.9% decrease from the 180,994 meals distributed in the previous year.	Aug 2027

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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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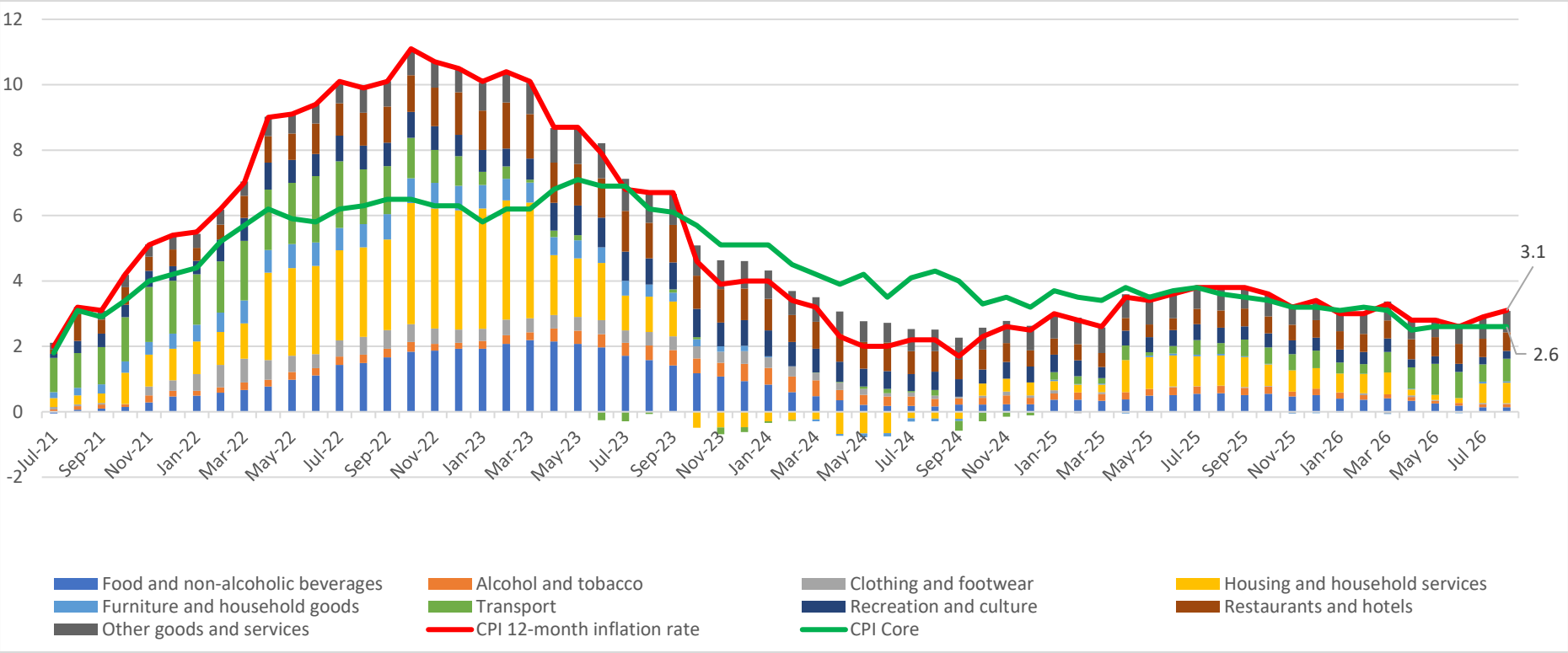
Timeline of the Cost-of-Living Crisis

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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Trend analysis *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 will be updated in the HSF dashboard which is available here: Leeds Observatory – Financial Inclusion

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