



Key Trends

Cost of Living –
Consumer Trends

This content has been collated to provide information on the **Cost of Living Consumer Trends** in Scotland.

This report was produced in **April 2026**. As the cost-of-living issue is rapidly changing, you can access the latest data using the relevant links below.

Alternatively contact us on info@bgateway.com with your question and we'll answer with the latest information available for your business.

How are your customers affected by the cost of living?

The following summary statistics and links have been extracted from market research reports and reliable resources to give an overview of how the current cost of living changes are affecting consumer buying and spending behaviour.

- ◆ **Public opinions and social trends Great Britain: March 2026** from the **Office of National Statistics** ([Public opinions and social trends](#)). Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) found that two-thirds (67%) of adults reported that their cost of living had increased compared with a month ago, which is up from 56% in February 2026. The price of food shopping remained the most commonly reported reason (91%); the proportion reporting the price of fuel (75%) as a reason for increased living costs increased from February 2026, when it was 38%.
- ◆ **Family spending in the UK: April 2023 to March 2024** from **Office of National Statistics (released Sep 2025)** ([Family spending in the UK](#)). The report publishes average weekly household expenditure on goods and services in the UK, by age, income, economic status, socio-economic class, household composition and region. The average weekly household expenditure was reported to be £623.30 in the financial year ending (FYE) 2024, a nominal increase of £55.60 from the previous year (10%); after accounting for inflation this was a real-terms increase of £15.40 (3%). The proportions of total expenditure spent on food and non-alcoholic drinks, transport, and recreation and culture have recovered, while restaurants and hotels remain below pre-pandemic FYE 2020 levels. The poorest fifth of households continue to spend the greatest proportion of total expenditure (27%) on housing (net), fuel and power.
- ◆ **PWC Consumer Sentiment Survey – Autumn 2025** ([PWC Consumer Sentiment Survey](#)) reports that the majority (85%) of consumers say they are concerned about the rising cost of living, with every demographic more worried than they were at the start of 2025. Across most demographics, but especially younger and lower-income groups, more people now expect to reduce their expenditures than three months ago. Around a third (35%) plan to choose cheaper items at the same stores and a quarter (26%) say they'll shift some or all their grocery shopping to lower-cost retailers, signalling a return to the trading down behaviour that retailers saw at the height of the cost-of-living crisis. Meanwhile 28% intend to go out less, compounding the challenges faced by the hospitality and leisure sector.
- ◆ **BBC Business** ([UK inflation rises after Iran war pushes up fuel prices - BBC News](#)). As of 22 April 2026, the UK inflation rate rose to 3.3% in the year to March, after the US-Israel war with Iran caused the largest jump in petrol and diesel prices in over three years. The rise from 3% was largely due to increased fuel prices, while airfares and food also contributed, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.
- ◆ **Office of National Statistics (ONS)** have produced **Family Spending Explorer** ([Family Spending Explorer](#)) which is an interactive family spending tree map to find out how much families spend on **recreation and culture, restaurants and hotels, clothing and footwear, food and non-alcoholic drinks, household goods and services, communication, alcoholic drinks, and health.**

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- ◆ **Nomis** (nomisweb.co.uk/) provides statistics on employment, earnings, occupations and economic inactivity statistics in Scotland and smaller regions. You can download a **Labour Market Profile** for an area of your choice. Select which type of area you would like more details on and then enter postcode or place name in the 'search' box on the next page. You can then select which type of profile from the results. This website also allows users to compare results with other UK regions, cities, or towns.

Business Support

For information on **reducing the cost of running your business**, please visit our **Rising Costs Support** page (bgateway.com/rising-costs-support), additionally the following resources might also be useful;

- ◆ **Find Business Support** (findbusinesssupport.gov.scot/) is a comprehensive site where businesses can browse all of Scotland's public sector support options including advice, funding, training, webinars and more. Their extensive section [Cost of Doing Business](#) offers businesses guides on topics such as: reducing energy costs, managing your finances as well as sector- and region-specific funding and support links.
- ◆ **Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)** - support for [Cost of Doing Business](#) is a springboard for support and resources for those businesses based in the Highlands and Islands region. There are links to Digital Support, Scottish Manufacturing Advisory Service and Zero Waste Scotland, along with links on how to get in touch with a specialist.
- ◆ **Scottish Chambers of Commerce (SCC) - Business Support** ([Business Support](#)) This offering will link businesses to a range of services covering International Trade, Business Mentoring (including Finance Mentoring), the SCC Network in London and a Global Chamber Network.
- ◆ **The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) - Cost of living & the #RunningCostsCrisis** ([SCVO.scot](https://scvo.scot)) highlights the challenges for voluntary organisations and the people they support. The SCVO talks about the need for both short- and long-term solutions for funding voluntary organisations. The page has links on how to save on costs; tax, legal and investment advice; policy and influencing articles and documents; as well as links to their information service among other resources.
- ◆ **Business Energy Scotland** (businessenergyscotland.org/) Free impartial support and access to funding to help businesses save energy, money and carbon.

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Your local Business Gateway can offer events, workshops and 1:2:1 support on all aspects of starting and developing your business. Call the helpline on **0300 013 4753** to find out what is available in your area.

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