

Cost of Living Crisis Family Survey

October 2022

Home-Start London is a consortium of 12 local Home-Starts across 24 London boroughs. We provide compassionate support to families facing challenging times with at least one child under five. Find out more about our work [here](#). In September we surveyed parents to find out about how the cost-of-living crisis was affecting them. 127 parents responded. The results are heart-breaking.

Survey results

Families are under pressure.

87% of parents said the cost-of-living crisis is putting their family under pressure. A further 11% said it would as winter comes.

- 76% are stressed and anxious
- 46% can't afford household bills
- 38% say relationships in the household are strained
- 45% feel isolated because they can't afford to visit friends and family

We heard from families with a parent/child living with a disability, larger families and single parents who highlighted the extra pressures they face.

Children are paying the price of this crisis.

We asked parents how the crisis is impacting on their children. They told us:

- 50% are missing out on meeting and playing with other children
- 24% are stressed and anxious
- 23% are not getting enough nutritious food
- 18% are not warm enough at home
- 28% do not have adequate clothes or other essentials

Early childhood is a critical period of development, laying the foundation for future physical and mental health. The consequences of this crisis are therefore likely to be severe and long-lasting.

Parents are cutting back on essentials to cope.

55% of parents told us they are having to borrow, use credit and/or use their savings to pay household bills. But for many this isn't enough. They are having to make unimaginable choices:

- 62% are cutting down on food (47% of parents said they are not getting enough nutritious food)
- 58% are cutting down on heating
- 67% are cutting down on family activities
- 70% are cutting down on use of a car/public transport

Community organisations and local charities are providing critical support.

Parents are looking locally for support:

- 28% are using a foodbank, a further 42% expect to as winter comes
- 35% are using a local charity/community organisation to access essentials, a further 34% expect to as winter comes

When asked to identify their three most important sources of support, the most frequently cited by parents were Home-Start (73%), the local authority (67%), family (56%) and friends (34%).

Winter looks bleak.

Parents are deeply worried about getting their families through the winter:

- 74% expect to need financial support to pay for essentials
- 52% expect to need emotional support
- 36% expect to need practical support to look after their children
- 31% expect to need support from a specialist service such as mental health

When we asked what two words parents would use to describe how they felt about winter, the most frequently used were “scared”, “frightened” and “anxious”.

Families feel forgotten.

Only 2% of parents said they felt the government is doing enough to support them.

When asked what more the government could do, parents told us they need accessible childcare, affordable family essentials, support to cover the cost of energy and an increase in benefits including Universal Credit.

Quotes from parents

“I will be at home 24/7 with my children this winter on one income that just covers living costs. No pay rise in the last 10 years. I’m trying to work out how to heat the house and afford food and activities for my children all under pre-school age.”

“Rent is very high and bills and nursery fees going up may make living close to my family unaffordable and we’ll have to move. I want stability for my child and to be close to support networks. Sacrifices may have to be made to social activities to prioritise other costs.”

“We probably won’t be having a nice Christmas. This will make me feel like a failure to my son for not being able to provide the memories I had as a child. And shamed for not being able to treat my sister and her partner because they do so much for us.”

“My child has autism, and this has put us all under immense stress. With the cost of living going up it has made it very hard to just survive.”

How you can support us

Please consider [donating](#) to Home-Start to ensure we can continue to support families through the winter ahead. If you would like to volunteer, you can find out more [here](#). If you need support or know a family that does, find your nearest London Home-Start [here](#).