

Cost of living crisis means winter is already worrying Londoners, research shows

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Just 7% of more than 1,000 Londoners polled had no concerns about heating their homes this winter, while around two-thirds (65%) said they were very or fairly concerned. When asked what puts most pressure on

their living costs, almost half (48%) said energy bills and a quarter (23%) rent or mortgage payments, while others cited household expenses like food and petrol.

The new research showed that Londoners want to see immediate action to relieve the pressures on household budgets; for example, almost two-thirds (64%) would support a windfall tax on the profits of the energy companies—which Rishi Sunak recently hinted was not "off the table" in efforts to tackle rapidly rising inflation.

Unsurprisingly, the polling found widespread anger at [tax avoidance](#) following high-profile allegations recently against the health secretary and the chancellor. A quarter (73%) said it's wrong for those who hold public office to "legally avoid tax," and more than half (55%) said it's also wrong for the [general public](#) to make use of tax loopholes.

Roughly half (49%) said the amount of tax they and their family currently pay is too high. Overall, three in ten (30%) of Londoners felt their tax levels were about right, while just three in a hundred (3%) said they were too low. People were slightly more likely to say their tax levels were too high among Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (58%) and the 25–49 age group (56%).

Spiraling living costs are even challenging [public support](#) for the NHS, with the data also revealing considerable resistance to further tax rises to fund the service. Almost half (47%) opposed the recent 1.25% National Insurance rise, with stronger criticism among Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups (52%). Proposals to increase the basic rate of income tax by 1% to help fund the NHS proved slightly more popular, with 47% in favor of the move—but 38% would not support it.

Dr. Patrick Diamond, director of the Mile End Institute at Queen Mary University of London, explained: "These new figures really emphasize

the dilemma for politicians: public services in the capital are clearly stretched and in need of investment, but Londoners already feel they pay too much tax. Ahead of local elections this week, voters' unwillingness to pay more tax leaves council leaders facing tough decisions on how to fund the services their residents need while addressing serious concerns about quality of life."

Despite the war in Ukraine, which has been blamed for provoking the spike in energy prices, the research suggests the national defense budget is not a priority for Londoners. Just one in ten (11%) said they would put more money into defense, when asked if they'd rather see Government spending increased for the NHS or for defense.

While these stats show the public love of the NHS, they also highlight the strain the system is under. One in five people polled were on an NHS waiting list for an appointment or procedure, and most (53%) said it was difficult to see their GP when they needed help.

More information: www.qmul.ac.uk/mei/projects-pollings/polling-london/

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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