

## **Cost of Living Crisis – How is this affecting our students and mental health?**

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As we are all well aware, the current inflation rates in the UK has caused higher energy bills, higher taxes, higher house prices, and overall, an increased price to live. This cost of living crisis is affecting many people throughout the United Kingdom, and it is not easy for anyone.

Graduates within the UK are just one of many groups of people that are struggling to adjust to this higher cost of living. This is an added pressure to the struggles that young people living in the UK have faced. [An economist with the Institute for Public Policy Research's Centre for Economic Justice, Shreya Nanda](#), stated that young people already face their own living crisis- 'for many years – in terms of stagnant wages, rents going up, high marginal tax rates faced by young people and their state spending being cut'.

With student loan repayment thresholds rising, rent prices increases, and job security dropping, students and graduates are facing increased pressure to get by. [A study carried out on 3,500 university students by the National Union of Students](#) has shown that one in four students have been unable to pay their rent in full on one or more occasions, with 31% of students relied on commercial debt to cover their costs of living. Not only this but 8% of students have to rely on foodbanks just to feed themselves and 12% have experienced homelessness within their studies.

These struggles are leading students to take longer working hours, with 47% of students working up to 20 hours per week alongside their university course, increasing stress and anxiety levels. Many students are forced to live with their parents post-graduation due to the soaring rent and house prices, as they simply cannot afford to move out. Students are disappointed, feeling as though they have 'taken a step backwards', after losing the freedom they gained from living alone at university.

Students are even struggling to afford course materials, with a huge number of 68% of students experiencing a cost of learning crisis, as they cannot afford course materials. One third of students, after paying rent and bills, have only £50 a month left to spend. 92% of students have stated that their mental health has been affected by this crisis, but only 1 out of 5 students have experienced help from the government.

The strain on mental health caused by the cost of living crisis has been [found to replace COVID](#) as the leading cause of children's anxiety, with children as young as 11 suffering from mental health issues. A survey carried out found that 51% of young people said worrying about money has made them feel angry, unhappy, negative, anxious or stressed in the last 3 months, a 35% rise since this time last year. These feelings are leading to disrupted sleep and eating patterns within young people. Further studies have shown children living in houses that have missed mortgage/rent payments or have fallen behind on bills are more likely to suffer from mental health problems, and they are aware of the stress and anxiety their parents are feeling.

The cost of living crisis is causing mental health issues in people of all ages and backgrounds across the UK, and will continue to do so until we see prices dropping and a more affordable way of life accessible.

If you are struggling with mental health issues this year, please reach out to a service near you that can provide help and support. Food banks, CAMHS and Mind UK are just a few services that may help you or your loved ones get through such a hard time.

