

We want to hear from you – how is the rising cost of living affecting your life in the Braintree District?

We know that the rising cost of living continues to affect many people across our communities in different ways. Whether it's the price of food, energy bills, housing costs, or access to essential services, these pressures can have a real impact on everyday life.

At Braintree District Council, we want to hear directly from our residents. Your experiences matter, and by completing this short survey, you'll help us to:

- Understand how the rising cost of living is continuing to affect people locally
- Identify where support is most needed
- Shape future services and initiatives to better meet community needs

The survey is completely anonymous and should take around 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will help us build a clearer picture of the challenges residents are facing and how we can respond more effectively.

To complete the survey online,
simply scan the QR code or visit:
www.braintree.gov.uk/xfp/form/727



A Impact of the Cost of Living

1. In what areas have you noticed the greatest impact of rising costs? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Food & essentials
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Pet care
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Clothing & shoes
- ☐ School uniforms
- ☐ Health (e.g. prescriptions, dental)
- ☐ Homes maintenance (e.g. cleaning, repairs)
- ☐ Energy (e.g. gas, electricity, oil)
- ☐ Mobile or broadband
- ☐ Council tax
- ☐ Rent, mortgage, accommodation
- ☐ Caring for someone
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other *Please specify:*

2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much is the rising cost of living continuing to affect you affecting you?

(Tick your answer,
1 = not at all, 5 = very much)

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
1 2 3 4 5



3. In the past 12 months, which of the following have you needed advice or help with?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Food & essentials
- ☐ Money advice (e.g. debt, budgeting, discounts, savings)
- ☐ Benefit entitlement (e.g. applications, benefit checks, appeals)
- ☐ Household fuel & energy
- ☐ Employment support
- ☐ Getting / staying connected with other people
- ☐ Health & wellbeing support
- ☐ Digital support
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Mobile or broadband
- ☐ Council tax
- ☐ Rent, mortgage, accommodation
- ☐ Caring for someone
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

4. Which of the following are you able to access support for within walking distance of your home?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Food & essentials
- ☐ Money advice (e.g. debt, budgeting, discounts, savings)
- ☐ Benefit entitlement (e.g. applications, benefit checks, appeals)
- ☐ Household fuel & energy
- ☐ Employment support
- ☐ Getting / staying connected with other people
- ☐ Health & wellbeing support
- ☐ Digital support
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Mobile or broadband
- ☐ Council tax
- ☐ Rent, mortgage, accommodation
- ☐ Caring for someone
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

5. Which of the following are you able to access support for online?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Food & essentials
- ☐ Money advice (e.g. debt, budgeting, discounts, savings)
- ☐ Benefit entitlement (e.g. applications, benefit checks, appeals)
- ☐ Household fuel & energy
- ☐ Employment support
- ☐ Getting / staying connected with other people
- ☐ Health & wellbeing support
- ☐ Digital support
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Mobile or broadband
- ☐ Council tax
- ☐ Rent, mortgage, accommodation
- ☐ Caring for someone
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

B Food

6. In the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household done any of the following because you couldn't afford or get access to food?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Ate smaller meals than usual
- ☐ Skipped meals
- ☐ Been hungry but not eaten
- ☐ Not eaten for a whole day
- ☐ None of the above

7. Which of the following is currently most important to you when choosing food for yourself and your household?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Food that is filling / keeps my household satisfied
- ☐ Food that is healthy
- ☐ Food that tastes good
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

8. In the last 12 months, which of the following changes have you experienced as a result of the rising cost of living?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ I rely more on microwave meals, cereal or sandwiches
- ☐ I rely more on food banks or community fridges
- ☐ I find it harder to afford culturally / ethnically diverse foods
- ☐ I buy fewer fresh fruit and vegetables
- ☐ I rely more on processed or ready-made foods
- ☐ I eat out or order takeaways less often
- ☐ I avoid buying food specific to dietary needs (e.g. gluten free, dairy free)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

9. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you in being able to cook healthy meals on a low budget for you and your household?

(Tick your answer,

1 = not at all, 5 = very much)

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

10. If given the opportunity, would you attend a cooking course which focuses on cooking healthy meals on a low budget?

(Tick your answer)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

C Housing

11. In the last 12 months, have you ever experienced homelessness or been at risk of homelessness due to issues relating to the cost of living?

(Tick your answer)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know

12. **OPTIONAL** – If yes, what were the initial triggers before things escalated? E.g. debt, loss of job, change in income, illness, addiction, benefit issues, change in household circumstances.

(Please write your answer in the space below in a few words)

13. On a scale of 1 to 5, how concerned are you about the rising cost of living affecting the stability of your current housing / accommodation? This includes being able to pay rent or mortgage payments.

(Tick your answer,

1 = not concerned at all, 5 = very concerned)




- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

14. Are you currently experiencing any of the following issues as a result of the rising cost of living?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Mortgage arrears
- ☐ Rent arrears
- ☐ Debt
- ☐ Difficulty accessing accommodation
- ☐ None of the above

If you are worried about accommodation due to rent arrears, mortgage arrears or you are struggling to access accommodation due to the cost of living, you can contact our Housing Options Team:

-  01376 552525 – ask to speak with the Housing Options Duty Officer
-  housing.optionsservice@braintree.gov.uk
-  www.braintree.gov.uk/directory/113/cost-of-living-directory/category/702

D Household Income & Bills

15. What is your total household income before tax?

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Less than £10,000
- ☐ £10,000 to £19,999
- ☐ £20,000 to £29,999
- ☐ £30,000 to £39,999
- ☐ £40,000 to £49,999
- ☐ £50,000 to £59,999
- ☐ £60,000 and over
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ I don't know

16. How has your household income before tax changed over the last 12 months?

(Tick one answer only)

- ☐ Increased significantly
- ☐ Increased slightly
- ☐ Stayed the same
- ☐ Decreased slightly
- ☐ Decreased significantly
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ I don't know

17. Over the last 12 months, have you or any member of your household had to rely on any of the following to help pay your everyday bills? This includes utility bills and council tax.

(Tick your answer)

- ☐ Borrowing from family or friends
- ☐ Buy now, pay later schemes
- ☐ Benefit advance or loan
- ☐ Credit card
- ☐ Pay day loan
- ☐ Credit union loan
- ☐ Overdraft
- ☐ Cut costs on non-essential spending
- ☐ Purposely missed / paid less towards other bills
- ☐ Sought an extra / second job
- ☐ Reduced the amount of food eaten / purchased
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other Please specify:

E Employment

18. What is your current employment status

(Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Employed full-time
- ☐ Employed part-time
- ☐ Self-employed
- ☐ Unemployed – seeking work
- ☐ Unemployed – not seeking work
- ☐ Unable to work due to disability or illness
- ☐ Homemaker or carer
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Student
- ☐ Other Please specify:

19. How many adults (18+) in your household are currently employed?

(Tick your answer,

1 = not concerned at all, 5 = very concerned)

- ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3+

F Transport

20. What are your main methods of transportation?

(Tick a maximum of three)

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Mobility scooter
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Car
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Taxi
- ☐ E-scooter
- ☐ Other Please specify:

21. On a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent does the cost of transport limit your ability to do each of the following?

(Tick one box per activity,

1 = not at all, 5 = very much)

A. Going about your daily life

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

B. Accessing the most affordable food

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

C. Securing employment

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

D. Taking part in leisure activities

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

E. Accessing services

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

F. Seeing friends or family

- ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 1 2 3 4 5

G About You

22. What type of accommodation do you currently live in?

(Tick one answer only)

- ☐ Flat
- ☐ House
- ☐ Bungalow
- ☐ Room
- ☐ Annexe
- ☐ Caravan
- ☐ Mobile home
- ☐ Boat
- ☐ Homeless – sofa surfing
- ☐ Homeless – rough sleeping
- ☐ Homeless – temporary accommodation / hotel / B&B
- ☐ Other Please specify:

23. What is your current housing situation?

(Tick one answer only)

- ☐ Renting from private landlord
- ☐ Renting from housing association / council
- ☐ Living in supported accommodation
- ☐ Homeowner with mortgage
- ☐ Homeowner without mortgage
- ☐ Living with family
- ☐ Living with friends
- ☐ Renting a room
- ☐ Lodging
- ☐ Homeless – temporary accommodation / hotel / B&B
- ☐ Homeless – rough sleeping
- ☐ Homeless – sofa surfing
- ☐ Other Please specify:

24. Which town / village do you currently live in?

(Write your answer in the space below)

25. How many adults (18+) are in your household, including yourself?

(Write your answer in the space below)

26. How many children (under 18s) are in your household?

(Write your answer in the space below)

27. How old are you?

(Tick one answer only)

- ☐ 18 to 24
- ☐ 25 to 34
- ☐ 35 to 44
- ☐ 45 to 54
- ☐ 55 to 64
- ☐ 65 and over

28. What is your gender?

(Tick one answer only)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other Please specify:

Thank You

Thank you for sharing your experiences
– your voice helps us build better support
for our community.

Please return the completed form to:

**Michael Graham
Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Bocking End
Braintree
CM7 9HB**

Please visit the Cost of Living pages on our
website for more information:

www.braintree.gov.uk/costofliving