‘THE BIG SQUEEZE’ IS A MAIL METRO MEDIA RESEARCH SERIES THAT TRACKS THE ONGOING IMPACT THAT THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS IS HAVING ON CONSUMER’S FINANCES AND BEHAVIOURS ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF CATEGORIES.

EACH WEEK WE ASK OUR MATTERS COMMUNITY MEMBERS ABOUT THEIR BEHAVIOURS IN ONE CATEGORY TO ASCERTAIN IF AND HOW IT HAS BEEN IMPACTED BY THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS.

OUR AIM IS TO OFFER USEFUL INSIGHTS AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE ON HOW BRANDS CAN NAVIGATE THIS DIFFICULT AND TUMULTUOUS PERIOD.

NEXT IN THE SERIES, WE ARE FOCUSING ON OUR READERS’ FINANCES AND SPENDING BEHAVIOURS, TRACKING HOW THEY HAVE CHANGED SINCE FEBRUARY.
Within this research, we asked our readers about the current state of their finances and how they think they might be impacted in the future.

We also asked about how their behaviours have changed as a result of the cost of living crisis.

**APPROACH:**
10 mins online survey, respondents recruited through Matters Community

**FIELDWORK DATES:**
1. 9th February 2022 – 15th February 2022
2. 13th July 2022 – 25th July 2022

**SAMPLE:**
1. 326 participants
2. 707 participants

Weighted to be representative of the MMM weekly audience by gender, age, socioeconomic group
WHAT WILL WE COVER?

1. KEY FINDINGS
2. CURRENT FINANCES AND BEHAVIOURS
3. LOOKING AHEAD
4. BRANDS AND THE BIG SQUEEZE
5. COST OF LIVING CONTENT
6. IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISERS
CURRENT FINANCES

• Currently 3 in 10 consider their finances to be either in trouble or struggling, up from 1 in 4 in February 2022. Adults aged 55+ are less likely to be in trouble/struggling.

• Nearly 1 in 2 state their finances have gotten worse in the last 12 months, up significantly since February 2022 (33%).

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES

• 46% said they are consciously eating out less/cutting down on takeaways as a measure to control their spending.

• 3 in 10 have substituted their usual food choices for cheaper alternatives, with 1 in 5 having switched supermarkets.

• 36% are cutting back on non-essential journeys in their vehicles.

• 1 in 5 have stopped or cut back on their TV subscriptions.

KEY FINDINGS

SUMMARY
FUTURE FINANCES

• Nearly 1 in 2 expect their finances to get worse in the next 12 months, up drastically since February (3 in 10).

• 18-34s are the most optimistic, with nearly 2 in 5 anticipating their personal financial situation will improve in the next 12 months.

BRANDS AND THE BIG SQUEEZE

• 4 in 5 believe businesses and companies should be doing more to help during the cost-of-living crisis.

• Supermarkets are perceived to have responded to the cost-of-living crisis better than other sectors, with many believing supermarkets genuinely care about ordinary people.

KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY
CURRENT FINANCES AND BEHAVIOURS
MORE CONSUMERS ARE FEELING THE SQUEEZE

30% of consumers describe their finances as struggling or in trouble, up from 25% in February 2022.

Q - Which, if any, of the following best describes your current financial situation?

- Healthy - I have surplus money left at the end of the month
- Ok - I tend to have money left at the end of the month
- Struggling - I have little to no money left at the end of the month
- In trouble - I have to make significant compromises on basics to make ends meet

Source: Tracking – July 2022 | Cost of Living – February 2022
Base: 707 respondents | 326 respondents
THE FINANCES OF ADULTS AGED 55+ ARE MOST INSULATED

18-34s (37%) and parents (46%) are significantly more likely to describe their finances as struggling/in trouble

Q - Which, if any, of the following best describes your current financial situation?

Source: Tracking – July 2022
Base: 707 respondents

Struggling / In-Trouble: 30%, 37%, 20% (Parents: 46%)
A BREAKDOWN OF THOSE IN TROUBLE OR STRUGGLING

Female respondents consider their financial situation to be worse than male respondents. Younger groups are feeling the squeeze more now than in February 2022.

- **26%** vs **19%** (Feb 22)
- **36%** vs **36%** (Feb 22)
- **37%** vs **27%** (Feb 22)
- **36%** vs **33%** (Feb 22)
- **20%** vs **23%** (Feb 22)

Source: Tracking – July 2022 | Cost of Living – February 2022
Base: 707 respondents | 326 respondents
Almost half of respondents state their finances have worsened in the last 12 months.

This is up significantly from February 2022 (47% vs 33%).

Q - Which, if any, of the following statements best describes how your personal financial situation has changed in the last 12 months?

- Got a lot better
- Got a bit better
- About the same / no change
- Got a little worse
- Got a lot worse
- Don’t know / Not sure
- I’d rather not say

Source: Tracking – July 2022 | Cost of Living – February 2022
Base: 707 respondents | 326 respondents
CONSUMERS ARE CONTINUING TO MAKE CONSCIOUS MEASURES TO CONTROL THEIR SPENDING

More consumers are making changes to the way they shop and live. 1 in 3 are cutting back on non-essential journeys in their vehicles.

Q - Which, if any, of the following changes have you consciously made to control your spending in the last 12 months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Total (Feb 22)</th>
<th>Total (Jul 22)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eating out less / cut down on takeaways</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut down the amount I have the heating on</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopped at discount stores</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taken less holidays / days out</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substituted my usual food choices for cheaper alternatives</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialising less</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switched supermarkets</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stopped / cut down the amount I eat / skipped meals</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopped at charity shops</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using credit more than usual (e.g. credit cards, loans, buy now pay later)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switched broadband provider</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changed my diet (e.g. vegan / vegetarian)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tracking – July 2022 | Cost of Living – February 2022
Base: 707 respondents | 326 respondents
THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS IS CAUSING MANY TO FEEL WORRIED, ANXIOUS AND FRUSTRATED

Women and adults aged 35-54 are feeling the impacts more than other cohorts.

Q - You said you have felt the following emotions and feelings recently, which, if any, are due to the impact of the cost of living crisis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>18-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>55+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOOKING AHEAD
Almost half of the respondents expect their finances to worsen in the next 12 months, an 8% point increase since February.

Q - How, if at all, do you think your personal financial situation will change in the next 12 months?

Source: Tracking – July 2022 | Cost of Living – February 2022
Base: 707 respondents | 326 respondents
YOUNGER GROUPS ARE THE MOST OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THEIR FINANCES

3 in 5 adults aged 55+ expect their financial situation to get worse in the next 12 months – a significantly more negative outlook than other age groups.

Q - How, if at all, do you think your personal financial situation will change in the next 12 months?

Source: Tracking – July 2022
Base: 707 respondents

60% of 55+s anticipate their finances to worsen, significantly higher than other ages

Key: Get a lot better, Get a bit better, About the same / no change, Get a little worse, Get a lot worse, Don’t know / Not sure, I’d rather not say
BRANDS AND THE BIG SQUEEZE
SUPERMARKETS ARE PERCEIVED TO HAVE RESPONDED BEST TO THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Q - Which, if any, of the following sectors do you believe have responded well to the cost of living crisis?

- Supermarkets: 24%
- Restaurants / Food chains: 9%
- Energy sector: 6%
- Banks: 6%
- Utilities: 5%
- Fashion industry: 4%
- Media: 4%
- Travel companies: 4%
- Telecoms providers: 3%

Source: Tracking – July 2022
Base: 707 respondents

= significant at 95% confidence
SUPERMARKETS WERE LARGELY BELIEVED TO GENUINELY CARE ABOUT NORMAL PEOPLE

Tesco, Iceland and Co-op were perceived as the most caring towards ordinary people.

Q - Which brands or companies do you believe genuinely care about ordinary people?

Source: Tracking – July 2022
Base: 707 respondents
How should businesses and companies act during the cost-of-living crisis?

**Consumer First**
87% believe companies should have consumers in mind when making decisions.

**Profits Second**
78% believe businesses and companies should focus less on profits to protect consumers during this time.

**Do more**
Consumers aren’t satisfied with the responses to the cost-of-living crisis from businesses and companies, with 78% believing they should be doing more to help.
COST OF LIVING CONTENT
ARTICLE VIEWS ON COST-OF-LIVING HAVE BEEN TRENDING UPWARDS SINCE FEBRUARY

As the cost-of-living crisis continues, MailOnline is providing more engaging content surrounding the crisis.

Source: Google Analytics 2022
TOP TOPICS ON MAILONLINE MONEY / THISISMONEY

Content about saving money, practical advice and making the most of your current financial situation performed well online.

PENSIONS
• Can I top up my nine-year NI record to get a state pension?
• Is my state pension too low because the final NI year is missing?

GOVERNMENT/TAX
• Millions of British households to receive £326 cost-of-living payment
• National insurance changes: Millions see monthly pay rise as threshold changes

BANKING
• Barclays scraps overdrafts amid the cost-of-living crisis
• Best buy savings rates: Nationwide now offering competitive easy-access
• Best saving rates: compare brand and online accounts

ADVICE
• Ten money rules and tips to live a richer life
• The new app that rewards you with shopping discounts just for walking
• Fire retire early movement explained: Is it worth it?
IMPLICATIONS FOR ADVERTISERS

THEMES THAT MATTER

FINANCES UNDER PRESSURE
1 in 2 MMM readers believe their finances have gotten worse in the last 12 months. The same amount expect their finances to get worse in the next 12 months.

PARENTS FEELING THE SQUEEZE
46% of parents described their finances as struggling or in trouble. Significantly higher than the MMM average (30%).

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS
36% of MMM readers are cutting back on non-essential journeys and 46% say they are eating out less.

FINDING CHEAPER ALTERNATIVES
3 in 10 MMM readers stated they have substituted their usual food choices for cheaper alternatives. 1 in 5 have switched supermarkets.

CONSUMERS DEMANDING MORE
78% of MMM readers agree that brands should be doing more to help consumers.

PRACTICAL ADVICE
Many households need help now and more will in the coming months. Tips and tricks to help them navigate the crisis are still popular with readers.

HELP THROUGH ACTION
Many of the businesses and companies that polled well for ‘genuinely caring’ have services in place to help people during the cost of living crisis or offer good value options, protecting consumers in the short term.

OFFER CHEAPER/VALUE ALTERNATIVES
With concerns surrounding costs and spending, consumers are seeking cheaper alternatives or cutting back on their usual services. Offering cheaper, quality substitutes could entice consumers, whilst also helping them.

OFFER AN ESCAPE
Although consumption may be curbed, many are still prioritising socialising and holidays. Continue to promote how your products and services can have a positive impact on wellbeing.

USE NEWSBRANDS
Personal finance content in newsbrands is trusted and has high levels of engagement. Using newsbrands can help enhance your brand credibility and build stronger relationships with consumers.