



Scotland's
Viewpoint
August 2022

THE BIG ISSUES IN SCOTLAND IN AUGUST 2022:

THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS, FUELED IN PARTICULAR BY SOARING ENERGY COSTS IS, BY SOME DISTANCE, THE KEY CONCERN OF THE SCOTTISH POPULATION

Scotland's Viewpoint is a quarterly survey of a statistically representative sample of the Scottish population, undertaken by 56 Degree Insight. The most recent wave of the survey ran on the 1st & 2nd August 2022 - 1,007 Scots were interviewed. We can also accommodate client confidential questions - please just get in touch:



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10 MAIN ISSUES MENTIONED SPONTANEOUSLY BY SCOTS

When asked to think about what's happening in Scotland and the wider world at the moment, and to identify (without prompting) the issues giving them most cause for concern, over half of Scots mentioned the **cost of living crisis** (53%) - especially amongst those in the 25-34 age group (64%). Closely linked to this, 24% mentioned **rising fuel and energy prices** (especially families and C2DEs (28%)). More generally, **the economy** and whether or not we are heading into recession and soaring inflation were mentioned by 14%.

The **climate emergency** was mentioned by a quarter of Scots - but it continues to resonate most amongst the youngest adults (31% of 18-24s).

Political issues such as **IndyRef 2** (both sides of the debate), the turbulence of **Westminster politics** and the **impacts of Brexit** were each mentioned by 22%, 8% and 8% respectively - and especially so amongst those in the 35-44 age groups.

War in Ukraine continues to be high in the minds of 16% of Scots, whilst 12% mentioned **NHS funding** as an issue of concern. Only one in twelve spontaneously mentioned **Coronavirus** (8%) - now relegated to 10th place in terms of current concerns for Scottish adults (it was 4th in April and 2nd in January).

Increasing cost of living



Economy/recession



Climate emergency



NHS / health funding



Increasing energy & fuel prices



Westminster politics



IndyRef2 / Independence



Impacts of Brexit



War in Ukraine



Covid-19 continued impacts



ON PROMPTING ENERGY & FUEL COSTS AND SPIRALLING COSTS OF LIVING ARE BY SOME DISTANCE, CAUSING THE GREATEST CONCERN

As was the case in mid April, when presented with a range of different issues, in early August two of them emerged as priorities to be tackled - **increasing energy costs** and the **spiralling costs of living**. As in April, each was deemed very important by 85% of Scots (increases from 70-75% at the start of the year). Energy costs are especially key issues to those aged 55+ (90% very important), women (89%) and those in the mid-upper income C1 socio-economic groups (87%). Tackling the cost of living crisis is especially important again to women (89%) and C1s (87%) but also to families (87%). There is clear evidence, amongst Scots at least, that the new Prime Minister simply has to treat these issues as her key initial priorities after she enters Downing Street this week.

Although the levels of concern for energy and living costs have remained at the same high levels as in April, for most other issues there has been a slight decrease in importance - perhaps suggesting that most other issues are becoming slightly less important in relative terms in comparison - living costs trump everything else at the moment. That said, **increasing investment in the NHS** remains the third key issue to be addressed with two thirds of Scots saying this is very important (67%). It is especially the case for those aged 55+ years (74%).

Three issues are each deemed very important by just over half of Scots:

- **Reducing inequalities in society (homelessness, poverty etc.)** - 56%. This is especially important to our youngest adults (61%) as well as women and DEs (each also 61%)
- **Doing what we can at the national level to minimise our impacts on climate change**: 55% deem this very important, and this has retained this level of support consistently across the three waves of interviewing in January, April and August.
- **Improving the quality of education in our schools** (54%) - especially important amongst families (67%) and C2s (62%)

At the time of the first wave of the survey in January, the **war in Ukraine** was only a threat - and just under a quarter of Scots deemed it very important that support was provided (24%). By the time we surveyed in April, the war had been taking place for two months and 60% of Scots felt it was very important that support was provided. This has decreased in August to 43% - perhaps reflecting a notable decrease in front-page newspaper and first-item television news coverage in recent weeks.

Although support for the **removal of all Coronavirus restrictions** has remained fairly consistent throughout the year (40% in January and April and 38% in August), the proportions wanting to **continue to apply restrictive measures** has decreased throughout the year from 55% in January to 37% in August. Overall, this tends to suggest support for continuing to be cautious where necessary, but there is a clear appetite for restrictions only to be in place when absolutely necessary.

