

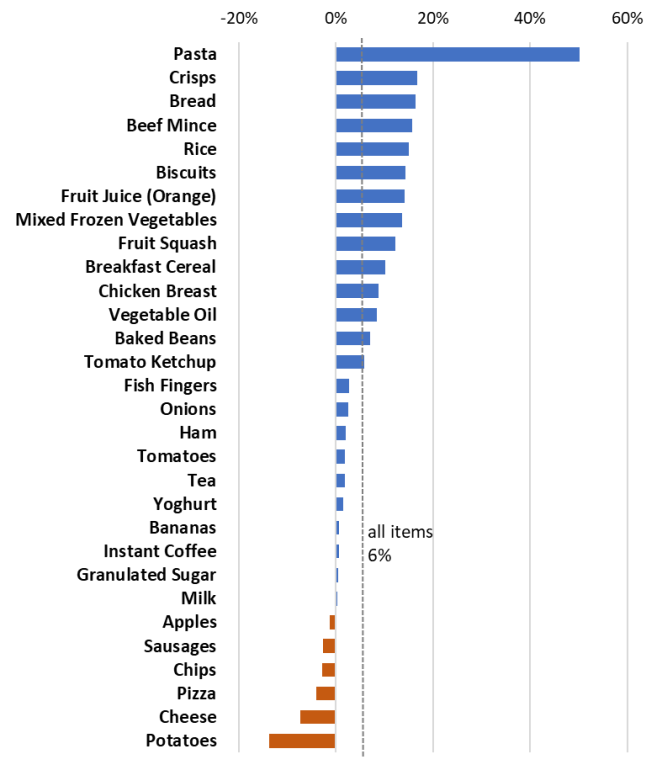
## Cost of living - food

*This bitesize is one of a series showing data for Oxfordshire related to the cost of living and is focused on rising cost of food.*

### Rising prices are having a disproportionate effect on lower income households

- According to ONS<sup>1</sup>, between 25 May and 5 June 2022, 88% of adults reported that their cost of living had increased over the last month, a considerable increase from the 62% of adults reporting the same between 3 and 14 November 2021.
- The main drivers of consumer price inflation over recent months have been energy, transport and food. This impacts lower income households that are less able to switch from non-essential spending.
- ONS experimental analysis of 30 food products in seven supermarkets<sup>2</sup> showed increases in (lowest) prices in the year to April 2022 for 24 out of 30 items.
- The greatest recorded increase in this selection of food products was for (lowest price) pasta which had gone up by 50% in the year.

Lowest price of selected 30 everyday groceries, item-level price changes, April 2022 compared with April 2021



### Free school meals

As of January 2022, a total of 13,879 pupils at schools in Oxfordshire were known to be eligible for Free School Meals<sup>3</sup>. This was 14% of pupils and below the average for the South East region (17.6%) and England (22.5%).

In Oxfordshire's most deprived areas, just over a third (36%) of pupils were eligible for Free School Meals, over double the average of 14%. In the least deprived areas of Oxfordshire the rate was 7%.<sup>4</sup>

### Crisis support

In March 2022, Citizens Advice (national) data<sup>5</sup> showed a continued monthly increase in people needing crisis support (help with Food Banks or Other Charitable Support) with a 44% increase compared with March 2021.<sup>5</sup>

In 2021/22, Citizen's Advice North Oxfordshire and South Northants issued 651 food vouchers used in food banks in Cherwell. Each voucher supported, on average, 2.6 people (1.5 adults and 1.2 children)<sup>6</sup>.

The new [Oxfordshire Food Strategy \(May 2022\)](#) sets out challenges and actions, including tackling food poverty.

The strategy was developed in partnership with Good Food Oxfordshire who are a network of over 150 local organisations committed to a better food system for Oxfordshire.

[1] [Inflation and the cost of living for UK households, overview - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[2] [Tracking the price of the lowest-cost grocery items, UK, experimental analysis - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[3] [Schools, pupils and their characteristics, Academic Year 2021/22 - \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[4] Oxfordshire County Council analysis using IMD2019 (overall index) areas ranked within 10% and 20% most deprived nationally.

[5] [Citizens Advice crisis support record broken again in March - Citizens Advice](#) [6] Data provided by Citizens Advice North Oxon and South Northants