

Between 15 July and 31 August 2022, 1,042 people responded to our online survey. The views in this report represent a significant proportion of the kidney community, particularly of the 68,000 being treated for kidney failure.

The impact of cost of living increases on mental and physical health is profound:

- 98% of people are worried about the rising cost of living
- 60% are worried about it all the time
- 79% of people said increases are having an impact on their physical health, with 11% saying it is impacting them every single day
- 87% of people said increases are having an impact on their mental health, with 15% saying it is impacting them every single day.

The responses demonstrated the additional costs that come with having a chronic health condition:

- 87% of our survey respondents report that having chronic kidney disease (CKD) increased their costs, even before the cost of living crisis. **Additional costs include:**
 - o The need for extra heating because the difficulty many kidney patients have keeping warm
 - o The costs of a special diet required by many with CKD
 - o Transport to and from multiple medical appointments, for dialysis patients this is three round trips a week to dialysis
 - o For people on home dialysis, the cost of running medical equipment at home. This can add over £1,000 per year to energy bills.

Reimbursement policies are in place in some areas of the UK for dialysis travel and home dialysis costs but inconsistencies in access to repayment means many people are funding some or all of these costs themselves.

People with kidney disease are often already living on restricted incomes:

- 33% of respondents to our survey were unable to work. 47% of people receiving renal replacement therapy are in the two most deprived quintiles in society.
- Our survey showed that people are already having to make very difficult choices, already:
 - o 44% of people have missed meals due to cost
 - o 87% have turned their heating down.
- There is huge anxiety about how people will cope over the winter as energy prices and usage rise:
 - o 88% of our survey respondents are worried they will have to turn off the heating over winter
 - o 68% are worried they won't be able to feed their family.

The government has provided £150 to people receiving non-means tested disability benefits, to help them with the particular extra costs they face. This is in addition to the support and interventions provided to specific groups (e.g. pensioners) or the whole population (e.g. energy price freeze) intended to help with general price increases affecting everyone. Yet **£150 falls far short of the actual additional costs many people with kidney disease are facing due to their condition.**

With no long-term solutions in sight, people with kidney disease are left facing impossible decisions about how to make budgets, already on a knife edge, stretch even further.