

Warning as rising cost of living threatens national physical health crisis

Submitted by: Definition (formerly Limelight PR)

Wednesday, 24 August 2022

The UK faces a physical health crisis as individuals are increasingly turning to unhealthy habits to manage the rising cost of living, according to research by mutual healthcare provider, Benenden Health.

The new research shows that more than a third (34%) of adults across the UK already feel that their health has deteriorated as a result of the cost of living crisis, with negative impacts on their physical or mental health.

The survey of 2,000 adults in the UK highlights a number of concerning effects of the rising cost of living, with a third (31%) of respondents experiencing poor sleep due to concerns about finances, putting them at greater risk of developing serious medical conditions including heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

Meanwhile, a quarter (24%) of adults also admitted that they have turned to drinking more alcohol, smoking more or beginning to take other illegal substances as a result of worries about the rising cost of living.

With almost a fifth of Brits (16%) finding themselves eating more unhealthy foods due to spiraling costs and one in ten (9%) cancelling their gym or personal training membership, the potential impact on the nation's long-term health is proving a serious concern.

As a result of its findings, Benenden Health is encouraging individuals to do what they can to maintain a healthy lifestyle during this challenging time and seek professional support should they find that their health is being detrimentally affected by the cost of living crisis.

Matron at Benenden Health, Cheryl Lythgoe, said: "It is well established that the cost of living crisis is having a negative impact on the population's mental health, with our research finding that more than three in ten people have experienced increased stress as a result. However, ongoing financial pressures are also putting the nation at risk of a real physical health crisis too with people turning to unhealthy habits in order to cope.

"Whilst it is extremely difficult to mitigate the impact of these challenging times, it is really important that we don't sacrifice our wellbeing. It is clear that cutting costs is going to be essential for most of us, but there are still ways to maintain a balanced, healthy lifestyle without financial burden, so I urge everyone to ensure their wellbeing remains a priority at this time and to look out for friends and family to ensure they are coping too."

Benenden Health is a mutual organisation offering high quality, private healthcare at the same affordable cost for everyone. This includes round the clock care such as 24/7 GP and Mental Health helplines, plus speedy access to services such as physiotherapy and medical treatment.

For more information about Benenden Health and to for tips on how to deal with financial stress, head to:

<https://www.benenden.co.uk/be-healthy/mind/7-tips-how-to-deal-with-financial-stress/>

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Notes to editors

The research was conducted by Censuswide, with 2,037 adults in UK between 03.08.2022 - 05.08.2022.

Benenden Health is a not-for-profit organisation, founded in 1905 with the purpose of people joining together to help pay for medical care. It is one of the UK's longest serving and most respected mutual healthcare societies, offering an affordable alternative to health insurance to more than 820,000 members.

Many UK businesses have also chosen to offer Benenden Health membership as part of their employee benefits package.

Further data from the survey is available on request.