

Staples such as tea bags, milk and sugar surge in price as food inflation races to new record high

Food inflation surged to a record 11.6% in October – with staple items including tea bags, milk and sugar all seeing significant price rises, according to a retail body.

Overall, shops increased prices by 6.6% in the 12 months to October – the highest level since records began in 2005.

But fresh food has been most vulnerable to surging costs, rising by an average of 13.3% over the past year, the British Retail Consortium (BRC) said.

The interest group's food inflation figure lags well below the [official rate of 14.5%](#) which, the Office for National Statistics said, was the fastest pace since April 1980.

The BRC says the price increases reflect a tight labour market and jumps in energy costs for retailers.

Its chief executive Helen Dickinson said: "It has been a difficult month for consumers who not only faced an increase in their energy bills, but also a more expensive shopping basket."

Mike Watkins, head of retailer and business insight at NielsenIQ, warned: "With pressure growing on discretionary spend across both non-food and food retail, delivering good value is the table stake in the battle for shopper loyalty over the next eight weeks."

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Research from Which? has showed millions of consumers are already skipping meals or struggling to put healthy food on

the table due to the cost of living crisis.

Which? head of food policy Sue Davies said: "It is vital that households get the support they need from the government and businesses.

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"Supermarkets have a crucial role to play in helping their customers navigate the tough months ahead. Budget lines for healthy and affordable essential items need to be widely available across their stores and they should ensure shoppers can easily compare the price of products to get the best value. Promotions should be targeted at supporting those most in need."

Meanwhile, a new report from Legal and General shows households are only 19 days from the breadline, while women are on average just 14 days away from the breadline if they lose their jobs.

Overall, 60% have less than £5,000 in savings and 16% have no savings at all, its research showed.