



**The 2022 Life Search Health, Wealth and Happiness Index shows UK citizens' overall wellbeing score is at a 10-year low. When studied in isolation, the nation's 'health' is almost back up to pre-pandemic levels, but rising cost of living has been most detrimental to peoples' mental health in the last two years, ahead of COVID restrictions and the conflict in Ukraine.**

But the UK's 'wealth' is falling again after a brief uplift in 2021, with 72% expecting to be worse off this year by an average of £3,020 (£252 per month), rising to £3,859 in London.

Britons' 'happiness' is at lowest level in a decade – 45% say the pandemic has negatively impacted their mental health, rising to 52% of ethnic minority groups.

Commissioned with the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) and supported by consumer research from among 2,000 adults in the UK and further bespoke research among 502 ethnic minorities, the annual update of the combined Life Search Health, Wealth and Happiness Index reveals record lows in the decade-long series.

Looking at each of the three indices in isolation, Britons' happiness has been hit the hardest in the last year, falling to its lowest point in the last decade as the conflict in Ukraine and the rising cost of living took their toll. In comparison, the nation's health saw the largest improvement in the index.

However, while UK citizens' wealth saw strong gains in 2021, up 11% on 2020, it has since been on the decline in 2022, dropping 8% in the first three months compared to the previous period. The rising cost of living is having a detrimental effect on our mental health, too. When polled in April 2022, 74% of adults said their mental health has been negatively impacted in the last two years and of these, the "rising cost of living" (28%), closely followed by "COVID restrictions" (27%), were the top causes. And it may get worse still, as 72% of all people surveyed expect to be worse off financially this year as inflation soars, expecting to be £3,020 per year (£252 per month) out of pocket on average.

The overall health score has improved but mental health impact is significant with women, young people and ethnic minorities hit the hardest.

In fact, over half (51%) think the COVID pandemic has had a negative impact on their access to healthcare, rising to 57% of women and 62% of those aged 55+. While the figure is a little lower (49%) among all ethnic minorities, it is higher (55%) amongst those of Pakistani/Bangladeshi origins.

Added to this, almost one in two (45%) in the study believe the COVID pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental health (10% "very negative"), rising to 50% of women and younger people. The impact is even higher (52%) among people from ethnic minority groups; rising

still among women in this community (58%) and among Pakistani/Bangladeshi ethnic groups (59%). But it is not just COVID that has impacted mental health, the rising cost of living has also been a major factor over the last two years.

Debbie Kennedy, chief executive at Life Search, said:

*“While there may be a sense that after two long years the worst of the pandemic is behind us, the nation’s health, wealth and happiness is still not close to being back to levels seen pre-COVID. In fact, our happiness is at a record low, mental health issues remain high and the energy crisis, inflation and conflict in Ukraine point at another chapter of uncertainty.”*

*“At a more granular level, our study reveals the pandemic pressures and consequences faced specifically by people in ethnic minority communities, where many have been hit harder over the last two years and the ripple effect may continue much longer. Many in those communities feel they’ve had to work harder, dig deeper and risk more to stay afloat.”*

Jabeer Butt OBE, CEO of the Race Equality Foundation, commented:

*“Across education, finances and general happiness, it’s clear ethnic minorities are suffering. These major findings reflect our own knowledge that Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities continue to bear the*



*brunt of the effects of the pandemic and cost of living crisis. We urgently need targeted support to take account of and effectively address these unequal impacts if we want to see a healthier, wealthier and happier Britain in the coming years.”*

## The study also found:

- Over a third (35%) of all British parents think the pandemic has had a negative impact on their children’s educational opportunities (12% “very negative”), rising to 42% of ethnic minority families and 48% among mixed race families
- Over half (51%) of people from ethnic minority groups feel the pandemic has adversely impacted their household finances, compared to just 38% of white Brits and rising to 58% of Pakistani/Bangladeshi adults
- Almost two-thirds (63%) of ethnic minorities have seen their cost of living negatively impacted by the pandemic (59% of all UK adults)
- Almost a third (29%) of people from ethnic minority groups, compared to just 15% of all Brits, think the pandemic has had an adverse effect on their position in society.

In fact, a larger proportion of ethnic minorities (26%) than white British adults (19%) felt that they were more at risk of getting COVID than the average UK citizen due to their day-to-day circumstances (e.g. job they have, where they live etc). Furthermore, 35% of people from ethnic minority groups felt that the pandemic meant that they couldn’t do their job safely, rising to 44% of Black Britons. This compares to just 19% of all white British adults.

Source:  
**Life Search**  
[www.lifesearch.com/hwh22](http://www.lifesearch.com/hwh22)