



Addressing Living Standards: A Call for Action

As the UK approaches its next general election on 4 July, concerns over living standards are at the forefront of many voters' minds. Here at Lewes District Citizens Advice, we're acutely aware of the challenges our community faces. A recent survey by Citizens Advice reveals a striking lack of confidence among the electorate regarding future improvements in living standards, highlighting the urgent need for tangible solutions from the incoming government.

The Current Crisis

We've seen firsthand the surge in demand for support with essential living costs. Since the last general election in 2019, Citizens Advice has reported:

- A 221% increase in individuals requiring food bank referrals or emergency support.
- A 113% rise in people seeking help due to falling behind on energy bills.
- A threefold increase in working people needing access to food banks or emergency support.

These figures underscore the ongoing struggle faced by many households, even as inflation shows signs of easing and the broader economy begins to recover.

Voter Sentiment

The polling data commissioned by Citizens Advice paints a sobering picture:

- 52% of voters do not believe that living standards will improve after the upcoming election.
- 43% of UK voters find it harder to afford essentials now compared to six months ago.

This pervasive pessimism is reflected in voter priorities, with nearly 48% citing the cost of living or living standards as a key factor influencing their vote. This issue ranks just behind health and the NHS (58%) and ahead of other significant concerns like immigration (31%) and the economy (28%).

A Call to Action

Dame Clare Moriarty, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice, emphasizes the urgency of the situation: "This is the living standards election. Voters will judge the next government on what they'll do to tackle this."

Here at Lewes District Citizens Advice, we echo her sentiment. We see the impact of the cost-of-living crisis every day. We're helping someone with a living standards issue every five seconds. Too many people are barely treading water, constantly worried about the next bill dragging them under completely. Tackling falling living standards requires more than just lip service. It's vital we see action that'll make a genuine difference to people's lives within the first 100 days of a new government.

Our Role at Lewes District Citizens Advice

At Lewes District Citizens Advice, we provide free, impartial advice on a wide range of issues. In the past year alone, Citizens Advice assisted 2.66 million people through face-to-face consultations, phone calls, emails, and web chats, and our website saw over 60 million visits.

Our extensive support network, backed by over 16,000 trained volunteers across more than 1,600 outlets, makes Citizens Advice the largest provider of free, multi-channel debt advice in the UK. This unique position offers invaluable insights into the financial struggles faced by individuals and families across the nation.

Moving Forward

As the election draws near, it is imperative that political candidates address the pressing issue of living standards with actionable plans. Voters are looking for more than reassurances—they demand concrete measures to alleviate the financial pressures many currently endure. The data from Citizens Advice serves as a stark reminder of the challenges at hand and the critical need for effective governance that prioritizes the welfare of all citizens.

Here at Lewes District Citizens Advice, we are committed to supporting our community through these challenging times. We stand ready to offer advice and assistance to those in need and will continue to advocate for effective solutions to improve living standards for all.