



CALL FOR EVIDENCE – AN INQUIRY INTO THE COST-OF-LIVING IN RURAL AREAS

APPG for Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse

Closing date: 25th November 2022

The APPG for Rural Business and the Rural Powerhouse is holding an inquiry into the cost-of-living in rural areas.

The UK is in a cost-of-living crisis. Inflation is currently at 9.9% and not expected to go down quickly, energy prices are soaring, leading to a considerable financial squeeze on consumers and businesses alike. Rural areas face inherent challenges such as access to transport which makes the cost of living more expensive on average. They have lower productivity and slower growth than urban areas, whilst rural house prices have soared out of line with rural wages leading to an affordability gap.

The inquiry will look at the impact of the cost-of-living crisis in rural areas to consider if rural areas are disproportionately affected by the economic situation, as well as considering what the longer-term political consequences will be for rural areas, and what steps can be taken to mitigate the impacts.

The APPG will seek both oral and written evidence which will feed into a report to be published in early 2023. The APPG invites you to submit evidence on the below themes. There is no requirement to provide answers to all the questions or themes, and we ask that each answer is no longer than 300 words. The closing date for written submissions is Friday 25th November 2022.

The inquiry will look at four themes:

1. General impact on business and consumer
2. Employment
3. Housing
4. Energy

Earlier this year, the APPG ran an inquiry into rural productivity. Its [report](#) contained 27 recommendations to create prosperity and strengthen rural communities. The APPG was pleased to see some of these recommendations in Defra's recent rural proofing [report](#). Implementing the rest of these policies would no doubt mitigate some of the worst effects of the cost-of-living crisis.

General impact on business and consumer

What are the main impacts of the current crisis on businesses and consumers? Are there challenges uniquely faced in rural areas?

How long do you expect the economic downturn to last? Will this downturn be more pronounced in rural areas?

Are there ways in which businesses and consumers can mitigate the impacts? Who is best placed to deliver advice for businesses and consumers on this?

What sort of government support would you like to see for rural businesses and consumers? Is the choice between direct financial aid and lower-tax, lower-regulation?

Employment

What is the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on employment in rural areas?



Do you expect to see wage price inflation?

Are specific industries being affected more?

Will this crisis lead to a restructuring of rural businesses?

Are there any opportunities for new labour pools to fill employment gaps in rural areas?

If industrial action was to continue to increase, how would it affect rural businesses and rural areas?

Would rural areas be disproportionately affected?

Housing

How is the cost-of-living crisis affected by the supply of rural housing?

What will be the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the private rented sector in rural areas?

What impact has rising house prices caused in rural communities?

What is needed to help rural landlords support their tenants?

Following Scotland's recent announcement on a rent cap, should England follow suit?

Energy

Is the current energy price cap for consumers appropriately set? Is the six-month support package for businesses enough?

What support is needed for households not on the gas or electric grid?

Are those living in rural areas more at risk of fuel poverty? What should be done to reduce this?

What impact, if any, will the cost-of-living crisis have on efforts to decarbonise?

What are the main barriers to increasing power and heat security in rural areas? (e.g., through the production of renewable energy, battery storage and local grids)

To submit evidence please email ruralpowerhouse@cla.org.uk and indicate the area(s) you wish to answer, as well as providing contact details. The closing date for evidence is 25th November 2022.