

24 March 2009

**Coverage**  
United Kingdom

**Theme**  
The Economy



## CPI inflation rises to 3.2 per cent in February

Rising prices for food and drink, recreation and transport pushed Consumer Prices Index (CPI) annual inflation – the Government's target measure – to 3.2 per cent in February, up from 3.0 per cent in January.

The increase this month follows four successive months of falls in CPI inflation.

Annual inflation measured by the Retail Prices Index (RPI) – which includes housing costs such as mortgage interest payments and council tax – slowed to 0.0 per cent in February, down from 0.1 per cent in January.

The largest upward pressure on the CPI came from food and non-alcoholic beverages. This category saw widespread increases, although the largest individual factor was the price of vegetables.

Prices for fruit, mineral water, soft drinks and juices, bread and cereals and meat all recorded smaller upward pressures, but these were partially offset by coffee, tea and cocoa where prices fell this year.

Prices also rose within the recreation and culture category with the main pressures coming from games, toys, hobbies, computer games and pre-school activity toys.

Within the transport category, costs rose by more than a year ago mainly due to the price of fuels and lubricants. The average price of petrol rose by 3.2 pence per litre between January and February, to stand at 89.5 pence, compared with a rise of 0.1 pence last year.

Diesel prices also rose, by 2.1 pence per litre compared with 0.5 pence last year. The increases in the transport category were partially offset by falling airfare prices.

The only large downward pressure on the CPI annual inflation rate came from housing and household services. This reflected trends in

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gas and electricity bills which were unchanged this year but rose a year ago when many suppliers increased their rates.

Factors affecting the RPI annual inflation rate were broadly the same as those influencing the CPI rate, although the RPI also experienced a strong downward pressure from housing costs, notably mortgage interest payments. House price depreciation also had a small downward effect on RPI inflation.

RPIX inflation – the all-items RPI excluding mortgage interest payments – was 2.5 per cent in February, up from 2.4 per cent in January.

As an internationally-comparable measure of inflation, the CPI shows that the UK inflation rate in January, at 3.0 per cent, was above the provisional figure for the EU as a whole of 1.7 per cent.

The CPI/RPI figures for March are published on 21 April 2009.

## BACKGROUND NOTES

1. More details of these figures are found in the Consumer Price Indices first release published today at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/cpi0309.pdf>
2. Both the CPI and the RPI are compiled each month using the same underlying price data, based on a large and representative selection of more than 650 separate goods and services for which price movements are measured in around 150 areas throughout the UK. Around 120,000 separate price quotations are used each month to compile the indices. For further information please go to our website at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/about/newsroom/statements/measuring-the-costof-living.html>
3. The Government's target for the inflation rate is 2.0 per cent - based on the CPI measure.
4. ONS has a personal inflation calculator on its website as a guide for the public to measure their own inflation. For further details go to: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pic/>
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