

**The Telegraph**  
**17 MILLION**  
**CAN'T PAY**  
**UNEXPECTED BILLS**

by

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<http://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/17-million-cant-pay-unexpected-111838837.html>

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More than a third of people [in the UK] were unable to meet unexpected but necessary financial expenses in 2011, up from a quarter before the financial crisis.

The report from the Office of National Statistics also revealed substantially more people are unable to afford an annual holiday. Almost a third, 29.7pc, said they could not afford a holiday in 2011, up from 21.4pc in 2007.

There were smaller increases in the number of people who said they could not afford a car, to pay their mortgage or rent payments or heat their home adequately.

The number of people considered at risk of poverty fell from 18.7pc in 2008 to 16.2pc in 2011, although the report said this was at least partly explained by a reduction in the poverty threshold due to a real-terms fall in median income.

However, there has been a marked increase in the number of people who would be unable to cover an unexpected bill, up from 26.6pc in 2007 to 36.6pc in 2011.

The UK had a lower share of the population considered at risk of poverty or social exclusion. Approximately 14 million people are considered at risk, 22.7pc, compared with an EU average of 24.2pc.

Those suffering from "severe material deprivation", who cannot afford items such as a holiday or a car, was 5.1pc of the UK population in 2011, compared with an EU average of 8.7pc.

The ONS report also showed that the UK's low intensity work rate remains one of the highest in the EU.

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