

The M&S Family Matters Index,
April 2023

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FAMILY MATTERS

M&S AND FAMILIES

THE M&S FAMILY MATTERS INDEX

The M&S Family Matters Index is a continuing journey to understand the priorities, challenges and ambitions of families across the UK.

This latest study, the sixth of our quarterly reports, was conducted at the beginning of 2023 as families look ahead to Spring. Concerns surrounding the cost of living continue to dominate as the removal of the energy price cap looms, but families are notably more optimistic than before Christmas, with many looking forward to upcoming holidays, both domestic and overseas.

In this report we will explore the following four areas of our quantitative research:

1. Family feelings - page 5
2. Sustainable living - page 10
3. The year ahead - page 14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The M&S Family Matters Index provides an overall measure of how confident and resilient families across the UK are feeling and how those feelings may change in the months and years ahead. It also compares how attitudes vary from group to group – for example, by generation or geography. The index has been generated using data from an initial nationally representative survey of 10,000 people across the UK, conducted in March 2021. It is calculated based on their responses to a wide range of detailed questions exploring families’ happiness, optimism, financial security, and the strength and health of what they see as their family unit.

The latest Family Index score for the UK, based on data collected at the end of January, is 51. Index scores range from 0 to 100, with 0 being the lowest, 100 the highest and 50 the mid-point. Index scores above 50 represent a positive, optimistic perspective about family situation and prospects. The latest Family Index score for the UK is 51, rising

over the past three months from 49.

Index scores have increased across virtually all major demographic breaks since the last Index in September 2022. As in each of the previous five reports, the index score for women (50) is slightly lower than for men (52), suggesting that women remain more concerned about societal and financial pressures.

Unemployed people continue to return the lowest index score of all demographic groups (40), followed by those aged 45-54 (47). Retirees (56) remain the group with the highest index score, up 3 points since September – the largest increase of any demographic group.

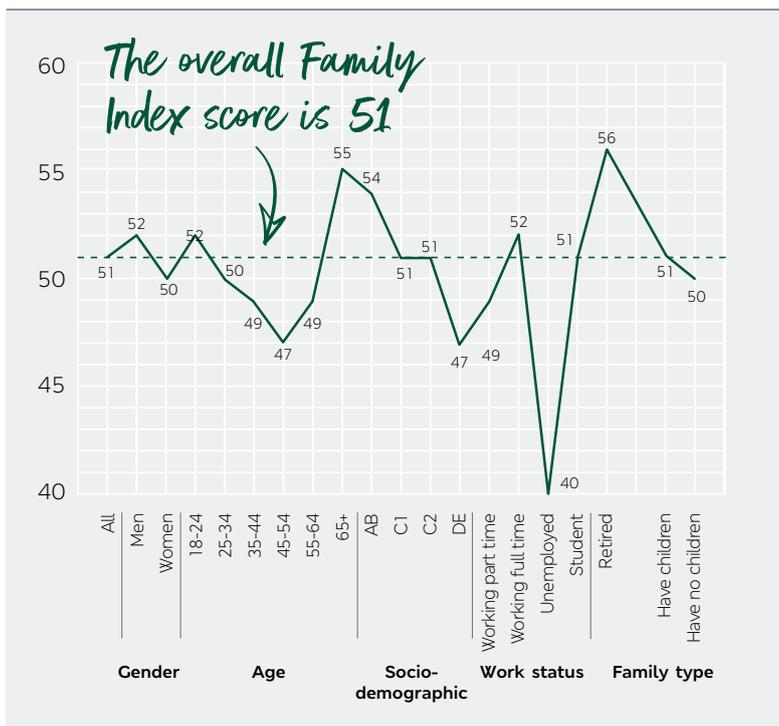
Family optimism has also rebounded this quarter, though still sits shy of April 2022 levels. As in September, there is little variation in index scores by geographic regions, though Northern Ireland is noted for having risen from the lowest scoring region in September to

the highest of all in January – up a staggering 7 points to 53.

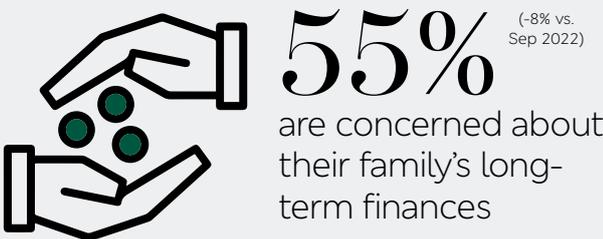
The cost of living remains a concern for the vast majority of people. A significant silver lining, however, is that the number of families concerned about both their long- and short-term financial prospects has dropped for the first time since the M&S Family Matters Index was launched in March 2021. This suggests that the economic turmoil predicted by families pre-Christmas may not have been quite as biting as feared. Rising costs are also encouraging lots of families to make more of an effort to live sustainably, for example, by reducing food waste and making clothes last longer.

Likewise, families are still determined to go on holiday in spite of economic pressures, either within the UK or overseas, with beaches being the destination of choice for many. Living a healthier lifestyle, both physically and dietarily, is also top of mind as we move into Spring.

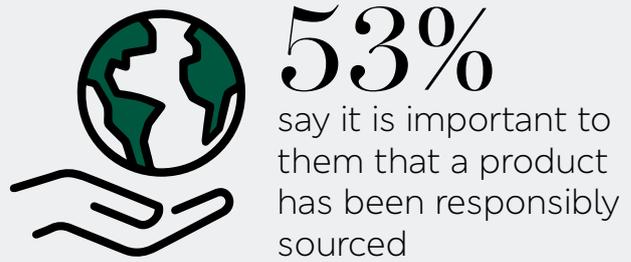
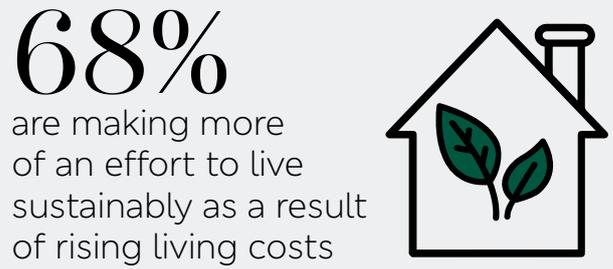
INDEX SCORES



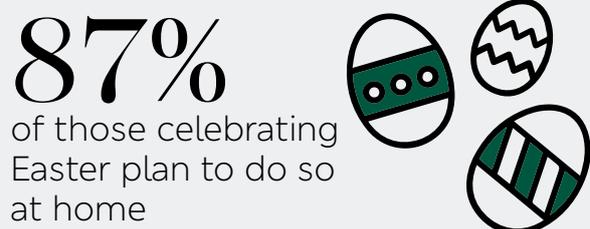
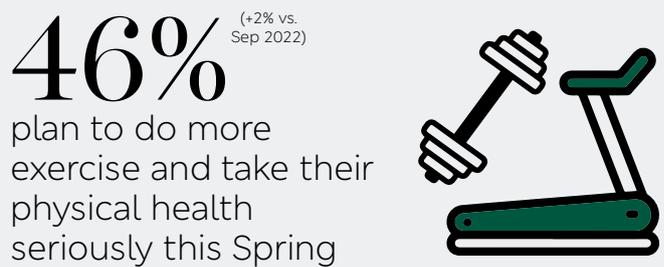
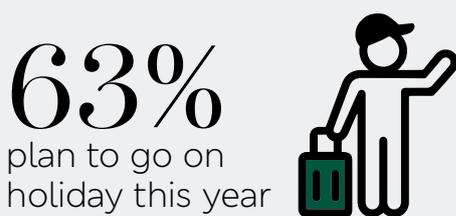
1. Family feelings



2. Sustainable living



3. The year ahead



1. FAMILY FEELINGS

Our latest index finds that cost of living remains the primary concern for families. However, overall, families are less concerned about their finances and generally more optimistic than before Christmas. Value is as big a priority as ever when it comes to making purchases, and non-essential spending continues to be cut back in all areas.

In this section, we will look at:

- a. Rebounding family optimism**
- b. Cost of living concerns**
- c. How are families coping?**



a) Rebounding family optimism

There is a more positive outlook among individuals and families this quarter than previously. The September iteration of the M&S Family Matters Index measured a substantial drop in optimism across the UK, but this has since rebounded with 38% saying they feel optimistic about their family's prospects for the next three months (up 6 percentage points vs September). Though this is heartening, it still sits shy of April 2022 levels (42%) and considerably behind that recorded in the first iteration of the Index back in March 2021 (51%). Just

29% say the past three months have been very positive for them.

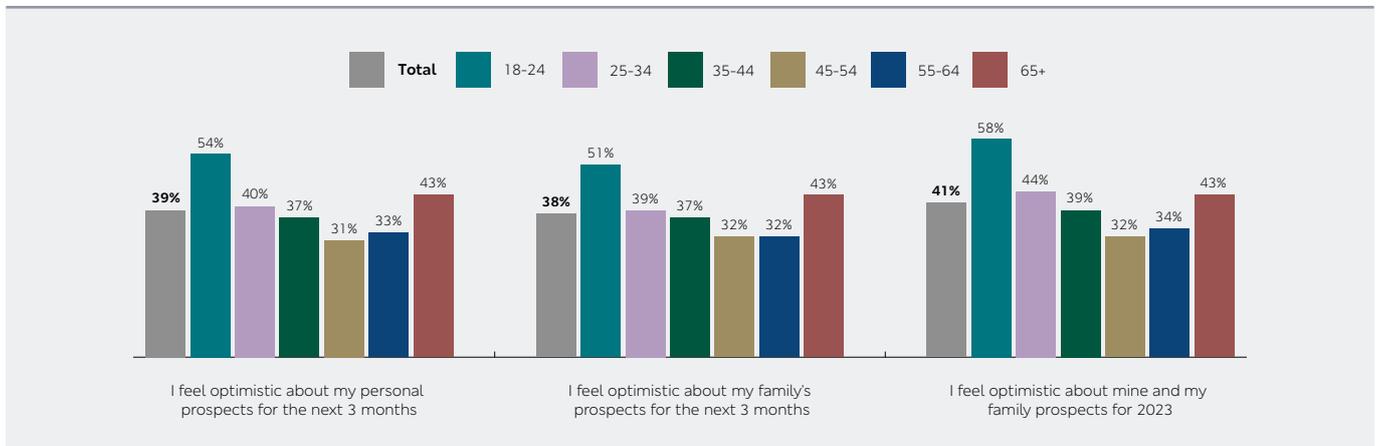
18-24 year olds continue to have the most positive outlook about their family's prospects, with 51% optimistic about the next three months – the only age group where optimism outweighs pessimism and neutrality. The mood is also now significantly brighter than it had been in Northern Ireland, with 45% optimistic about their family's prospects, up a massive 20 percentage points since September, jumping from the most pessimistic region in the country to one of the most optimistic.



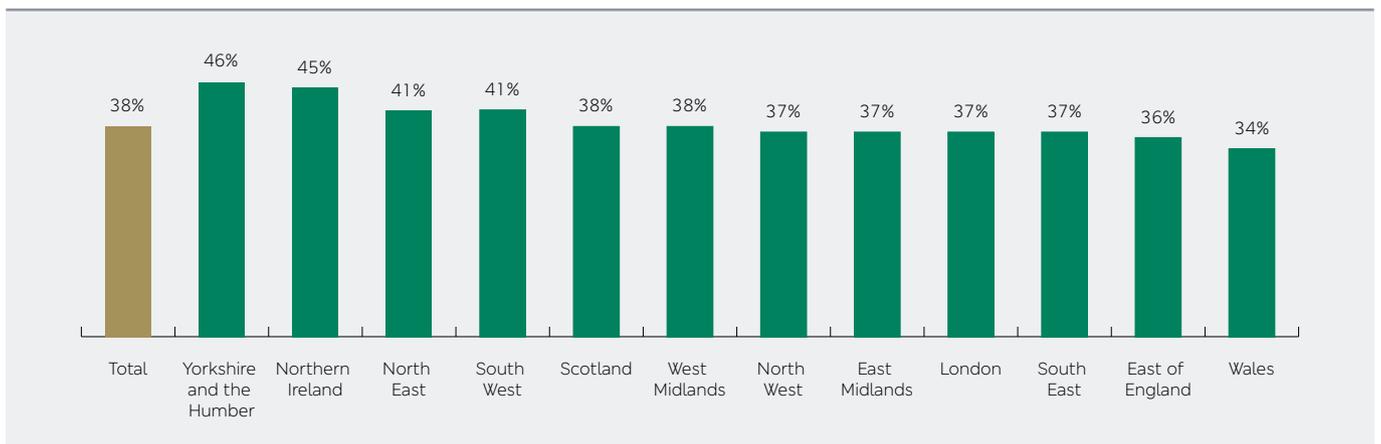
TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

% agree	Mar 21	Aug 21	Nov 21	Apr 22	Sept 22	Jan 23
I feel optimistic about my personal prospects for the next three months	48%	46%	40%	43%	33%	39%
I feel optimistic about my family's prospects for the next three months	51%	47%	40%	42%	32%	38%
I feel optimistic about mine and my family's prospects for 2023	-	-	-	-	34%	41%
My family has been in a happy place over the past three months	33%	40%	45%	46%	42%	41%
The past three months have been very positive for me	26%	32%	32%	34%	29%	29%

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS? Charts show % agree



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL OPTIMISTIC ABOUT YOUR FAMILY'S PROSPECTS FOR THE NEXT 3 MONTHS? Charts show % agree



b) Cost of living concerns

The cost of living remains the most far-reaching concern, affecting 83% of UK families. As reported in previous M&S Family Matters indexes, it affects virtually every demographic group and families of every shape and size. Londoners are the least concerned of all geographic regions in the UK (79%), though perhaps are less susceptible, having battled with high living costs for many years.

Concerns surrounding COVID have continued to ease. The pandemic feels, for many, firmly in the past, and now only four in ten (41%) are concerned about another wave of the pandemic (down 2% vs September).

Perhaps exacerbated by the context of teacher strikes, six in ten (61%) parents with children under 18 are worried about their children’s education, up 6 percentage points since September.

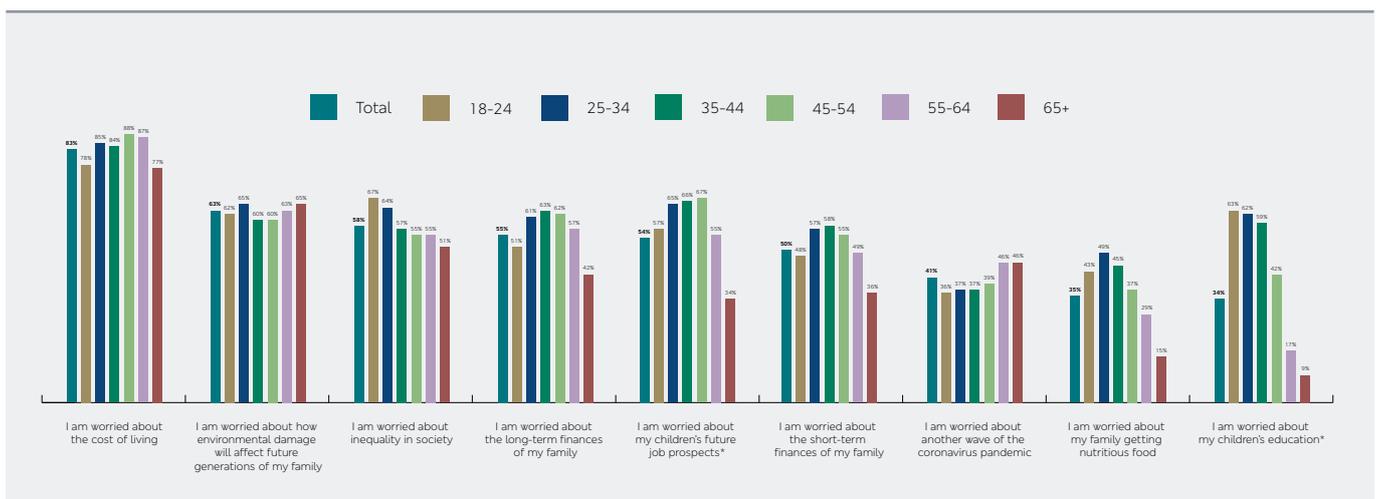


TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

% agree	Mar 21	Aug 21	Nov 21	Apr 22	Sept 22	Jan 23
I am worried about the cost of living	-	-	72%	82%	85%	83%
I am worried about how environmental damage will affect future generations of my family	61%	64%	65%	64%	63%	63%
I am worried about inequality in society	54%	55%	58%	56%	-	58%
I am worried about the long-term finances of my family	36%	37%	45%	55%	63%	55%
I am worried about my children’s future job prospects*	53%	48%	50%	50%	54%	54%
I am worried about the short-term finances of my family	29%	30%	37%	48%	57%	50%
I am worried about another wave of the coronavirus pandemic	-	-	-	50%	43%	41%
I am worried about my family getting nutritious food	22%	23%	25%	33%	35%	35%
I am worried about my children’s education*	37%	33%	31%	32%	32%	34%

* denotes where statements were asked only to parents

TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS? Chart shows % agree

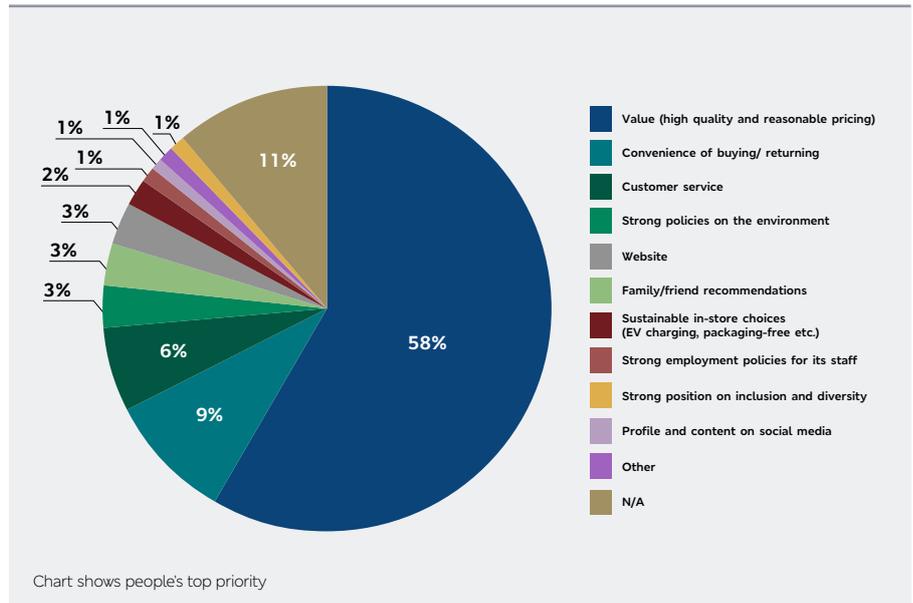


c) How are families coping?

In much the same way as reported in September, families are tightening their belts to weather the rising cost of living. Value remains by far and away the single most important factor when deciding where to shop: almost 6 in 10 (58%) rank it as their top priority, falling only slightly since September. It continues to dwarf the next two most important factors, convenience of buying / returning (9%) and customer service (6%).



WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR TO YOU WHEN DECIDING WHERE TO SHOP?



SINCE THE START OF 2023, HOW, IF AT ALL, HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR SPENDING AROUND EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OR ACTIVITIES? [ALL RESPONDENTS, CHART SHOWS NET: STOPPED / REDUCED SPENDING (SIGNIFICANTLY / SLIGHTLY)]

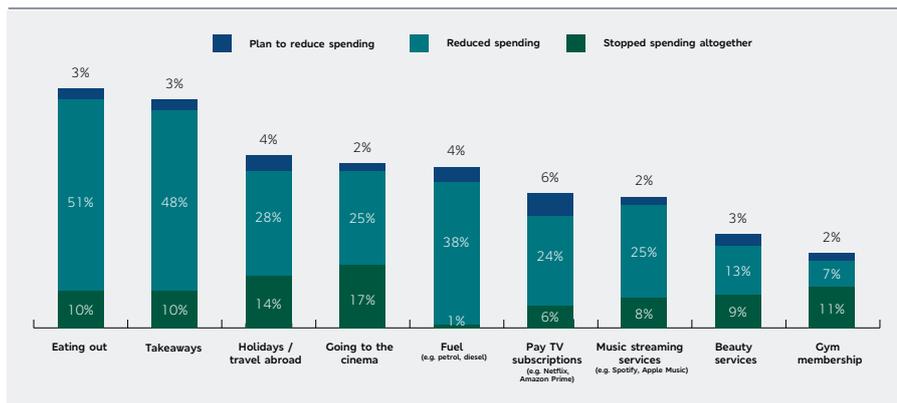
	Sept 22	Jan 23
Eating out	62%	61%
Takeaways	59%	58%
Holidays / travel abroad	45%	42%
Going to the cinema	44%	42%
Fuel (e.g. petrol or diesel)	38%	40%
Beauty services	36%	33%
Pay TV subscriptions (e.g. Netflix, Amazon Prime)	33%	30%
Music streaming services (e.g. Spotify, Apple Music)	24%	22%
Gym membership	20%	18%

Roughly 6 in 10 have made cutbacks on eating out and takeaways. As recorded in September, this trend is more common among younger people (two thirds of 18-34 year olds, vs just over half (54%) of over 55s for eating out), while over seven in ten families with children under 18 are ordering fewer takeaways.

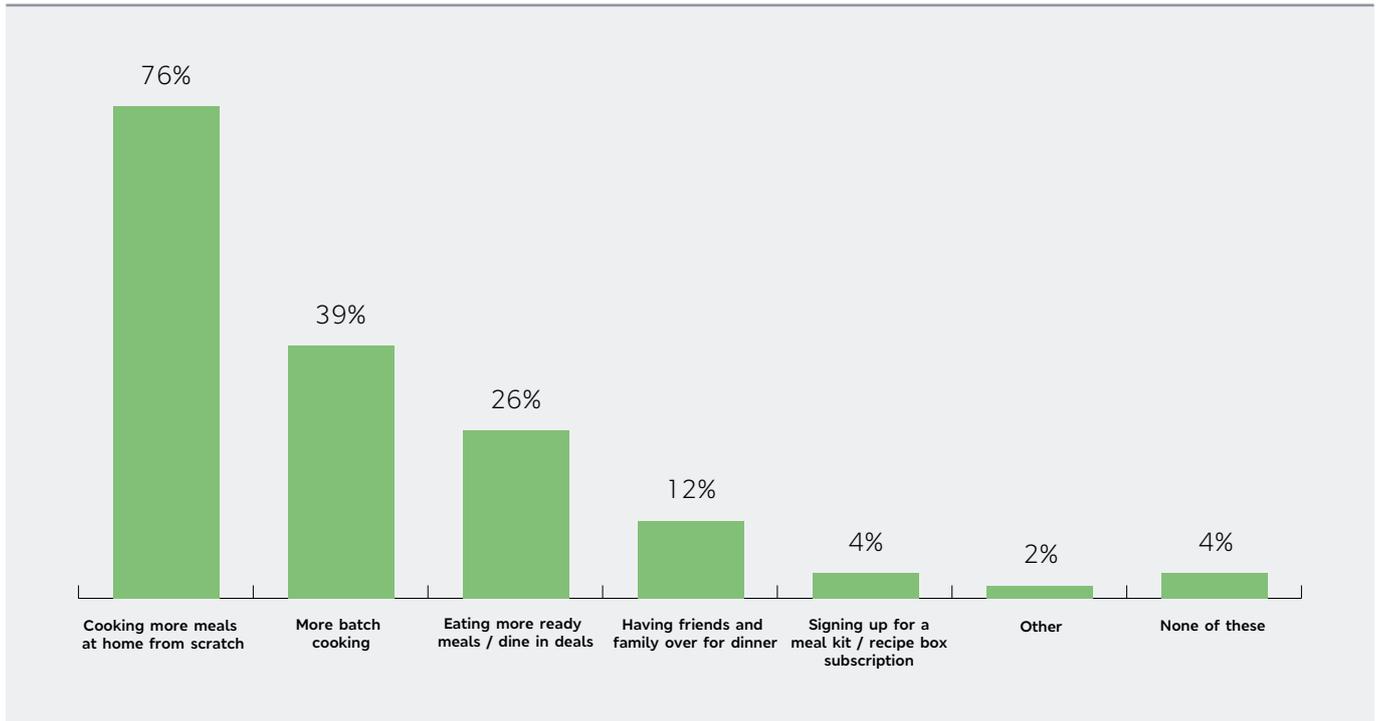
Those cutting back on meals out are turning mostly to home cooking, with three quarters making more meals from scratch. 18-24 years are again the least likely age group to have switched to home cooking (70%), instead being more likely than average to reach for ready meals and dine in deals (35% vs 26% average). However, they are also twice as likely to be inviting friends and family over for dinner than those aged 65 and over (20% vs 11%).

All areas of non-essential spending (e.g. trips to the cinema, music streaming subscriptions etc.) are facing cutbacks similar to those reported previously, though January data suggests people are cutting back to a lesser extent versus September. This could suggest that people are feeling more secure economically than at the start of winter.

SINCE THE START OF 2023, HOW, IF AT ALL, HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR SPENDING AROUND EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OR ACTIVITIES?



YOU SAID THAT YOU HAVE REDUCED THE AMOUNT YOU SPEND, OR HAVE STOPPED SPENDING ALTOGETHER, ON EATING OUT. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU BEEN DOING INSTEAD?



2. SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Families are still determined to try and be more sustainable – with the cost of living encouraging even more to live sustainably as a way of reducing costs.

In this section, we will look at:

- a. How have sustainable habits been affected by rising living costs?**
- b. High expectations of Government and businesses**



a) How have sustainable habits been affected by rising living costs?

Overall, families are still keen to pick up green habits and live sustainable lives. Habits that have the added benefit of saving money, such as reducing food waste (73%) and making clothes last longer (50%) are as popular as ever. In fact, almost seven in ten (68%) say that they are making more of an effort to live sustainably as a direct result of rising living costs. This is especially true among females, three quarters of whom are trying to live greener lives because of the cost of living (vs 60% of men).

Younger people are also more likely to be making an effort to live sustainably than older people as a direct result of the rising cost of living, with 71% of 18-34 year olds making more environmentally

conscious choices vs 66% of people aged 55+. Similarly, parents – particularly those with children under 18 – are more actively taking steps to be greener than those without children (73% vs 64%, respectively).

Moreover, almost half of people (45%) say that the availability of Fairtrade goods in shops is important to them, with a further four in ten willing to pay extra for these goods to guarantee a fair price for farmers globally.

However, there appears to be a decreasing appetite when it comes to other sustainable habits, particularly those that incur costs. While changes since September are very minor, a clearer trend is visible when comparing against data from earlier iterations of the M&S Family Matters Index. For example, 35% of families say they have made changes in the food that they buy to take account of

climate change - 6 percentage points lower than in November 2021. Equally, only 62% would like shops and supermarkets to provide clearer information about the origins and environmental impact of products, compared to 70% just over a year ago. This is likely a consequence of the intense focus on value above all else (though it could also reflect the successes of certain shops to be more transparent on sustainability).

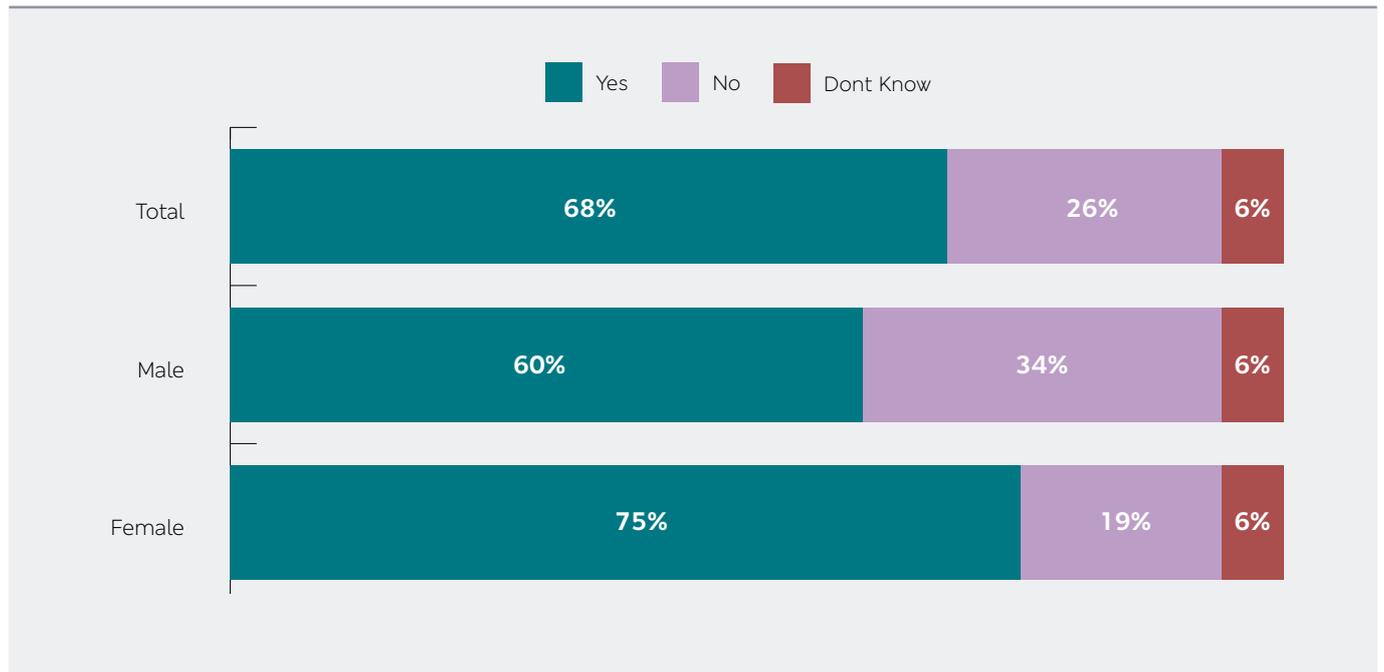


TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

% agree	Aug 21	Nov 21	Apr 22	Sep 22	Jan 23
I am reducing the amount of food that I waste	-	-	72%	74%	73%
I am reducing the amount of single use plastic that I use	-	-	71%	71%	70%
I make an effort to educate myself about how I can reduce my environmental impact as a consumer	-	60%	56%	57%	55%
I am making my clothes last longer because of climate change	-	-	48%	51%	50%
I am happy to pay more for Fairtrade products that guarantee a fair price for farmers globally	-	-	-	-	40%
I have made changes in the food that I buy to try and take account of climate change	40%	41%	37%	37%	35%
I have made changes in the clothing that I buy to try and take account of climate change	35%	36%	32%	33%	32%
I am eating less meat because of climate change	-	-	31%	30%	28%
I don't see why I should change my habits because it won't make a difference to helping solve climate change	-	18%	17%	18%	17%
I am vegan or vegetarian to reduce my impact on the environment	-	-	14%	14%	13%
I drive an electric vehicle	-	-	-	-	6%
I hire clothes from online shops or websites	-	-	6%	6%	6%

Chart shows % agree

HAS THE RISING COST OF LIVING MADE YOU MAKE MORE OF AN EFFORT TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY? (E.G. BY MAKING THINGS LAST LONGER, WASTING LESS FOOD)



b) High expectations of Government and businesses

The majority of adults (seven in ten) would like to see the Government and big businesses doing more to help combat climate change. This is a view held equally among age groups, with older people just as likely to agree as younger generations.



TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

% agree	Aug 21	Nov 21	Apr 22	Sep 22	Jan 23
I'd like to see the Government and big businesses doing more to help combat climate change	-	-	-	73%	71%
Shops and supermarkets should provide clearer information about the origins and environmental impact of products	-	70%	67%	66%	62%
It is important to me that a product I buy has been responsibly sourced	-	-	-	-	53%
It is important to me that the shops I buy from are making their products as environmentally sustainable as possible, to make it easier for me to make sustainable choices	57%	58%	55%	52%	51%
It's important to me that the shops I buy from sell Fairtrade products that guarantee a fair price for farmers globally	-	-	-	-	45%

Chart shows % agree

3. THE YEAR AHEAD

Thinking ahead to the coming months as we move towards Spring, saving money, exercising more, and eating more healthily remain the most common aspirations. Easter is also on the horizon, with most seemingly set for low-key celebrations at home rather than extravagant trips out.

Financial concerns are not, however, stopping families from looking forward to a wide range of holidays this year, be it staycations or travelling overseas. Beaches are the destination of choice for many, particularly families with children, though city breaks are more popular with young people.

In this section, we will look at

- a. **What are families planning for the coming months?**
- b. **What holidays are families looking forward to in 2023?**



a) What are families planning for the coming months?

Thinking about general plans for Spring, doing more exercise (46%), eating more healthily (43%) and consciously spending less and saving more (40%) top the list. Similar trends within

demographic breakdowns are ever-present too, such as young adults being particularly focused on improving their diets. Meanwhile women are keener than men to save more money (46% vs 34%) as well as take both their physical and mental health more seriously (50% vs 42% and 32% vs 22%, respectively).



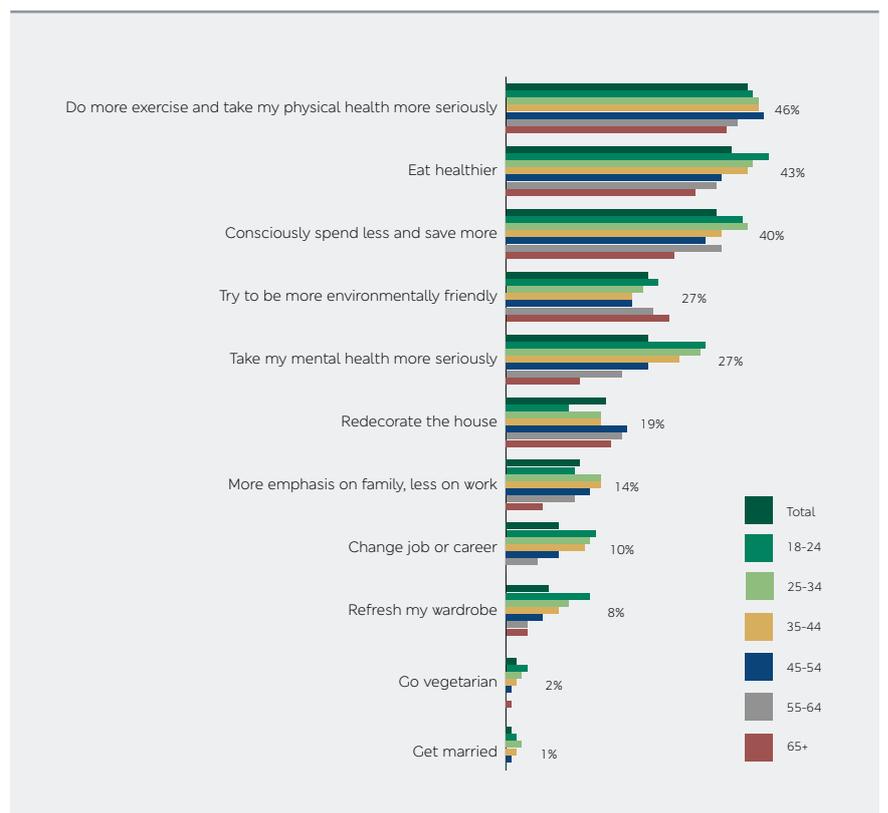
THINKING AHEAD TO SPRING 2023, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING, IF ANY, ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?

% planning to do the following...	Summer 2022	In The New Year (2023)	Spring 2023
Do more exercise and take my physical health more seriously	47%	44%	46%
Eat healthier	53%	42%	43%
Consciously spend less and save more	39%	42%	40%
Take my mental health more seriously	28%	28%	27%
Try to be more environmentally friendly	22%	30%	27%
Redecorate the house	21%	19%	19%
More emphasis on family, less on work	14%	15%	14%
Change job or career	8%	12%	10%
Refresh my wardrobe	16%	10%	8%
Go vegetarian	2%	2%	2%
Get married	-	2%	1%

Chart shows % planning



THINKING AHEAD TO SPRING 2023, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING, IF ANY, ARE YOU PLANNING TO DO?

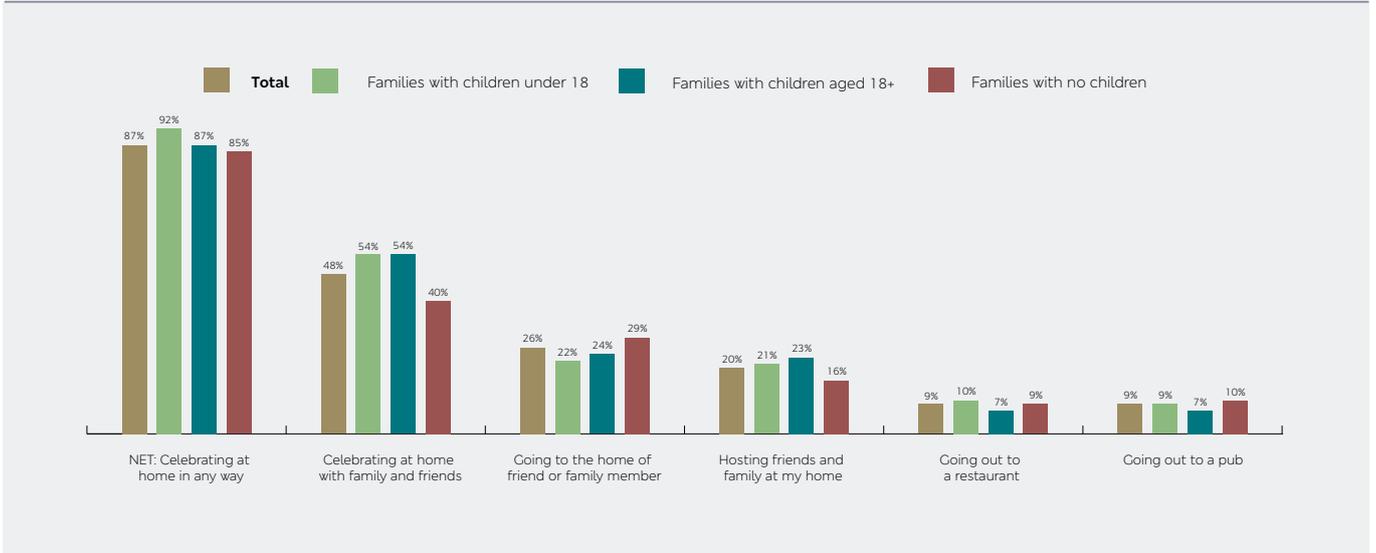


Many will also be looking forward to spending Easter with their loved ones. Of those celebrating, 20% are planning to host friends and family at their home, while a further 26% intend to go to the home of a friend or family member to celebrate. Only 17% say they will go out for their Easter

celebrations, to either a restaurant or pub. Families with children under 18 are the most likely to be celebrating Easter at home in some way (92% vs 85% of those without children), as are younger people (88% of 18-24 year olds vs 83% of those aged 55+).



THINKING AHEAD TO EASTER, HOW, IF AT ALL, ARE YOU PLANNING TO CELEBRATE? [ALL RESPONDENTS PLANNING TO CELEBRATE EASTER]



b) What holidays are families looking forward to in 2023?

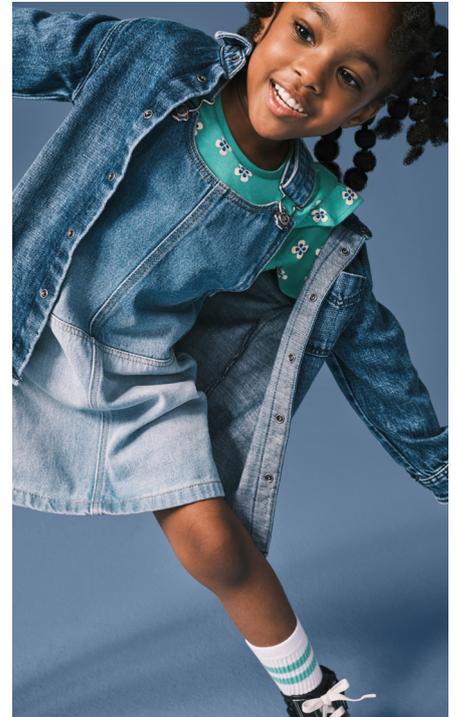
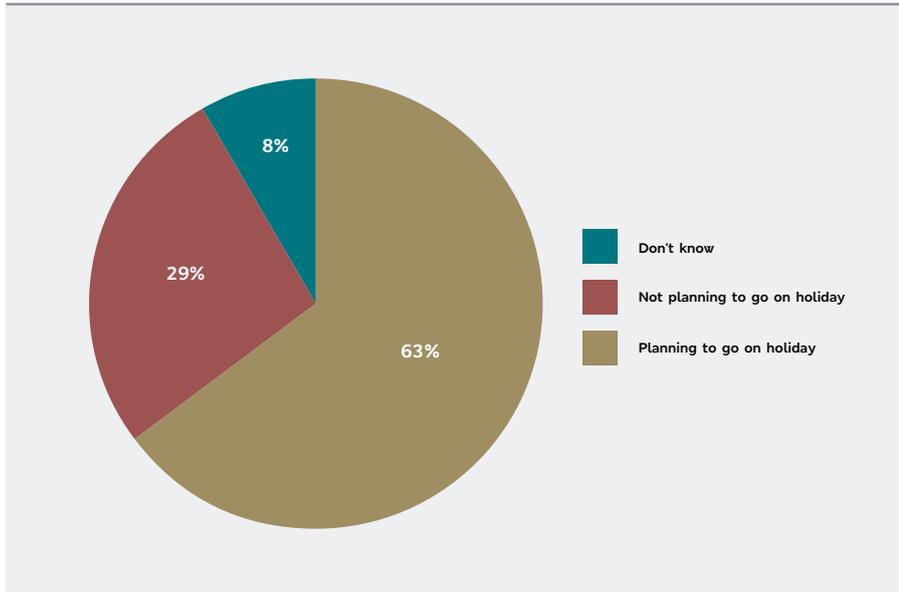
Despite financial concerns, families are still determined to get away on holiday this year. While many have already reduced spending on holidays and travel abroad since the start of the year, some two thirds (63%) are planning a trip for 2023. Looking at the nation as a

whole, staycations are more popular than international holidays (42% vs 34%), though the opposite is true for those aged 18-24 (50% vs 55%), who are particularly keen to travel - over three quarters are planning holidays for the year ahead.

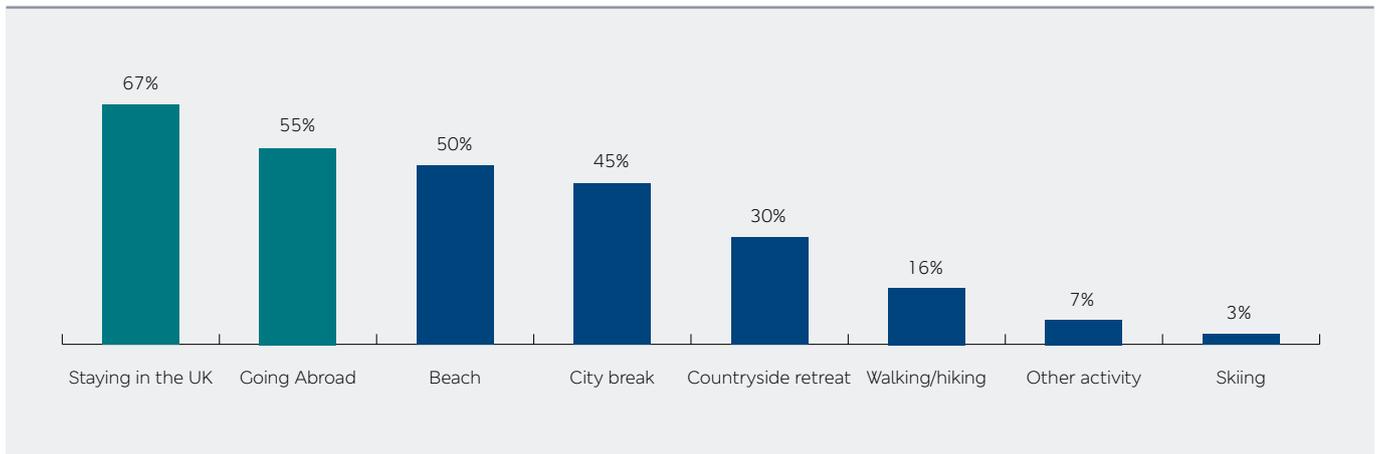
For those that are planning a holiday, beach holidays are the most popular

choice, with half (50%) planning a trip to the coast, rising to six in ten (59%) when considering just families with children under 18. Conversely, those without children are more likely than average to be planning city breaks (55% vs 45% average) or walking holidays (20% vs 16% average).

NOW THINKING OF 2023 AS A WHOLE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS ARE YOU PLANNING, IF ANY?



NOW THINKING OF 2023 AS A WHOLE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS ARE YOU PLANNING, IF ANY? [ALL RESPONDENTS PLANNING A HOLIDAY]



CONCLUSION

The sixth iteration of the M&S Family Matters Index finds families still very concerned about the cost of living, but increasingly optimistic for the months ahead.

Value for money remains by far the single most important priority when deciding where to shop. A significant number of families are also cutting back on meals out and takeaways, instead opting for more home cooking and dine-in deals.

An interesting dynamic is emerging between rising living costs and sustainability. Families have tended to continue the green habits they picked up in September, such as reducing food waste and making clothes last longer, which are positives both for the wallet and the planet. However, there is an emerging sense that habits requiring greater commitment (or cost), such as changing the foods they eat, are paused for now.

Holidays may be less extravagant than previous years as non-essential expenditure is curtailed, but that is not deterring most families from getting away in some form. Staycations are seemingly more popular than the more expensive overseas travel, while beach holidays are the most common type of holidays, particularly among families with children under 18.

Thinking ahead, people's priorities are to exercise more, eat more healthily and save money.

With growing optimism in spite of uncertain economic conditions, our ongoing M&S Family Matters Index will continue to explore how families across the UK are feeling.

METHODOLOGY & SAMPLE

Yonder interviewed 5,023 adults online between 24th & 30th January 2023. Interviews were conducted across the UK and data weighted to be representative of the whole population. Data is accurate to a margin of error of +/- 1.4% at 95% confidence. Analysis of demographic sub-groups is based on a minimum sub-sample of 100.