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## **NO SUCH THING AS FREE TIME**

### **Second Spare Time Spending report shows leisure costs continue to rise**

The cost of leisure activities has risen again in the last 12 months, as families continue to feel the pinch on funding free time, according to the latest Spare Time Spending from Halifax.

The price of Premier League football tickets has seen the largest rise in the past year, up 16% - close to eight times the rise in inflation over the same period (2%). Other large rises include adult off-peak train fares (8%) and a typical broadband package (7%).

In fact, 17 of the 19 leisure costs included in the research have increased over the last 12 months, seven of which have done so at a faster rate than inflation. However, keen readers have seen the price of digital books fall by 18% and those bought off the shelf by 2%. (See Table 1)

The cost of participating in 13 of the 19 activities covered in the report has risen faster than the increase in 30% rise in consumer prices since 2003.

#### **Anthony Warrington, director of current accounts, Halifax said:**

"Many families will be all too aware of the increasing costs of the activities they do to fill their spare time. The fact that these costs are continuing to rise, and some at a faster rate than inflation, will put even more pressure on households as they try to plan ahead for the May Bank Holidays and half term."

#### **Funding football still tops sports costs**

Football remains the highest cost in the report, with an average monthly spend, based on tickets for two Premier League matches, of £85.85. Whilst this represents an increase of 16% in the last year, compared to the monthly cost of football tickets in 2003, the cost has increased 198% in a decade.

Despite the Olympics effect, membership costs for all other sports have increased in the last 12 months, but only gym memberships have risen at a faster rate than inflation (3%) and now stand at an average £37.93 a month.

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The most expensive membership cost is golf, where the average monthly membership fee is £66.08; an increase of 54% since March 2003. Over the last decade the only sporting cost to decrease has been for a cycling membership. At an average of £1.19 in 2003, it was already by far the cheapest monthly cost for a sport and, having dropped 19% in the last ten years, now represents just 96p a month.

## **On the road or getting out of the front door**

Just getting off the driveway can be an expensive business with the average cost of a tank of car fuel rising to £97.56 now, compared to £55.30 in 2003 - an increase of 77%. Those looking to get away on the train instead have not fared much better. The average cost of an away day train ticket has grown by 72% from £13.34 to £22.88 in the same period.

## **Carry on camping?**

For many people going away on holiday can be one of their biggest annual costs as a result 'staycationing' has become popular for those who are cost conscious.

People looking to pitch up a tent on a camping site can expect an average daily spend of £35.38 per unit (or pitch) on entertainment, provisions and local services, up from £24.25 in 2003 – this is in addition to an average site fee of £20 per pitch per night for a family tent. Those looking for fun in one of the country's major theme parks can expect to pay an average entrance cost of £40.44; 38% higher than in 2003 (£29.35).

## **Staying in vs. going out**

Even when staying in, home entertainment can still come at a cost. Watching TV can cost on average £48.62 per month to cover a TV license fee and a starter cable/satellite subscription; an increase of 39% in the last decade. An alternative option could be to stay in with a good book, which would set you back an average of just £4.70 (or £4.20 online). Surfing the net has become considerably cheaper compared to a decade earlier; with broadband access now costing £16 per month compared £27 in 2003 – a decrease of 41%.

Getting a takeaway now costs £10.50 on average, up by a third (32%) since 2003. However, the cost of eating out is double that (£20.40 and has increased by 41% in the past decade. A pint down the local is also more expensive; now costing an average £3 compared to just over £2 a decade earlier.

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## Anthony Warrington adds:

"Even for those who are looking to do something for 'free', it will hard not to be impacted by rising fuel costs and, as average pay has declined in real terms in recent years, it is likely that people will be unable to pursue some spare time activities simply because of the cost."

**Table 1 – Cost of Spare Time Activities by category, March 2003- March 2013**

	March 2003 £s	March 2012 £s	March 2013 £s	1 year % change	10 year % change
Football tickets	28.85	73.82	85.85	16%	198%
Swimming	7.28	13.09	13.27	1%	82%
Car fuel	55.30	96.95	97.93	1%	77%
Golf	42.83	65.19	66.08	1%	54%
Train ticket	13.34	21.22	22.88	8%	72%
Gym	25.81	36.83	37.93	3%	47%
Camping	24.25	34.43	35.38	3%	46%
Beer	43.55	61.82	62.40	1%	43%
Cinema	4.44	6.24	6.34	1%	43%
Eating out	14.57	20.00	20.41	2%	40%
Theme parks	29.35	39.64	40.44	2%	38%
TV (including Pay TV)	34.92	45.75	48.62	6%	39%
Takeaway	7.96	10.20	10.52	3%	32%
Gardening	14.24	17.90	17.90	0%	26%
Tennis	10.29	12.14	12.31	1%	20%
Books - Physical	4.90	4.80	4.70	-2%	-4%
Books - Online	5.20	5.12	4.20	-18%	-19%
Cycling	1.19	0.95	0.96	1%	-19%
Broadband	27.00	15.00	16.00	7%	-41%
CPI				2.2%	30%

Source: Halifax, ONS, (see editors notes full list of sources and the quantities of each activity)

## Editors' Notes:

The review is compiled using a range of statistics (see below). Historical data has been estimated using the relevant official inflation series unless stated otherwise

## **Data Sources:**

**Car fuel:** Uses data from the AA monthly fuel report and refers to Unleaded 95 Octane petrol and is based on filling up a 70 litre fuel tank. Figures refer to all travel rather than just for leisure activities.

**Train ticket:** Estimated using an average adult off-peak fare of six different return trips (Durham to Berwick upon tweed, Glasgow to Stranraer, London to Birmingham, Norwich to Sheringham, Southampton to Oxford and London to Brighton) for one person and the relevant inflation series. Figures refer to all travel rather than just for leisure activities.

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**Camping** – Based on a survey by the **Camping and Caravanning Club** across 100 camping sites, the average daily spend campers in the year to August 2007 was £29.55 on entertainment, provisions and local services.

**Theme parks:** Estimated using the average adult ticket for gate entry to Alton Towers, Thorpe Park, Chessington, Drayton Manor and Legoland (<http://www.themeparks-uk.com/>).

**TV:** Estimated as an average of the costs of pay and terrestrial television licence fee. Pay TV includes latest Sky starter bundle includes Sky Entertainment (40 channels + free to air), Sky box, plus Sky broad band and free weekend calls; Virgin starter bundle includes Sky 1 and Sky Living, Virgin HD box , 30 mbps unlimited broadband and free weekend calls.

**Books** (physical and online) – Publishers Association /Nielsen Bookscan. Halifax estimate for March 2013.

**Takeaway:** Estimated using average spends on a range of different types of takeaways.

**Eating out:** Estimated using average cost of a single three-course meal from Horizons' latest biannual Menurama research. Horizon is food services consultancy.  
[http://www.hrzn.com/mint/pepper/tillkruess/downloads/tracker.php?url=http://www.hrzn.com/files/Horizons-Menurama-April\\_13-final.pdf&force&inline](http://www.hrzn.com/mint/pepper/tillkruess/downloads/tracker.php?url=http://www.hrzn.com/files/Horizons-Menurama-April_13-final.pdf&force&inline)

**Beer:** Price per pint of beer from British Beer and Pub Association – it is assumed the average drinker consumes 5 pints per week.  
<http://www.beerandpub.com/statistics>).

**Gym:** refers to the average adult gym membership and has been estimated using research by Sainsbury's Bank:  
[http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/moneymatters/articles/houseandhome\\_exp\\_opin\\_fitforfun.shtml](http://www.sainsburysbank.co.uk/moneymatters/articles/houseandhome_exp_opin_fitforfun.shtml)

**Membership fees** for golf, swimming, tennis and cycling are based on figures by Sports and Recreation Alliance in Sports Clubs Survey 2011. Halifax estimates for 2003 and 2013 are based on CPI for recreational and sports services. Figures refer to club subscriptions only and do not cover the cost of equipment. These are based on annual membership fees but stated as monthly averages.

**Football tickets:** Refers to a single adult attending two games per month. Premier League tickets has been estimated using data from the BBC price of football survey: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/14367608> and Guardian research: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/david-conn-inside-sport-blog/2011/aug/16/premier-league-football-ticket-prices>, <http://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-2027382/Premier-League-football-tickets-soar-1-000-decades.html>. Growth rates have been estimated by taking the average growth rate since 1990.

**Cinema:** Uses average UK ticket prices for one adult from the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (<http://www.cinemauk.org.uk/facts-and-figures/uk-cinema-industry-economics/average-uk-ticket-prices-2000-2011/>) 2012 data has been estimated.

**Gardening:** Estimated using ONS expenditure data.

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**Broadband** – monthly costs based on BT entry level DSL from Point Topic.

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