

## Central London Recovery Tracker – April 2022

### The rising cost of living is hitting central London residents hard

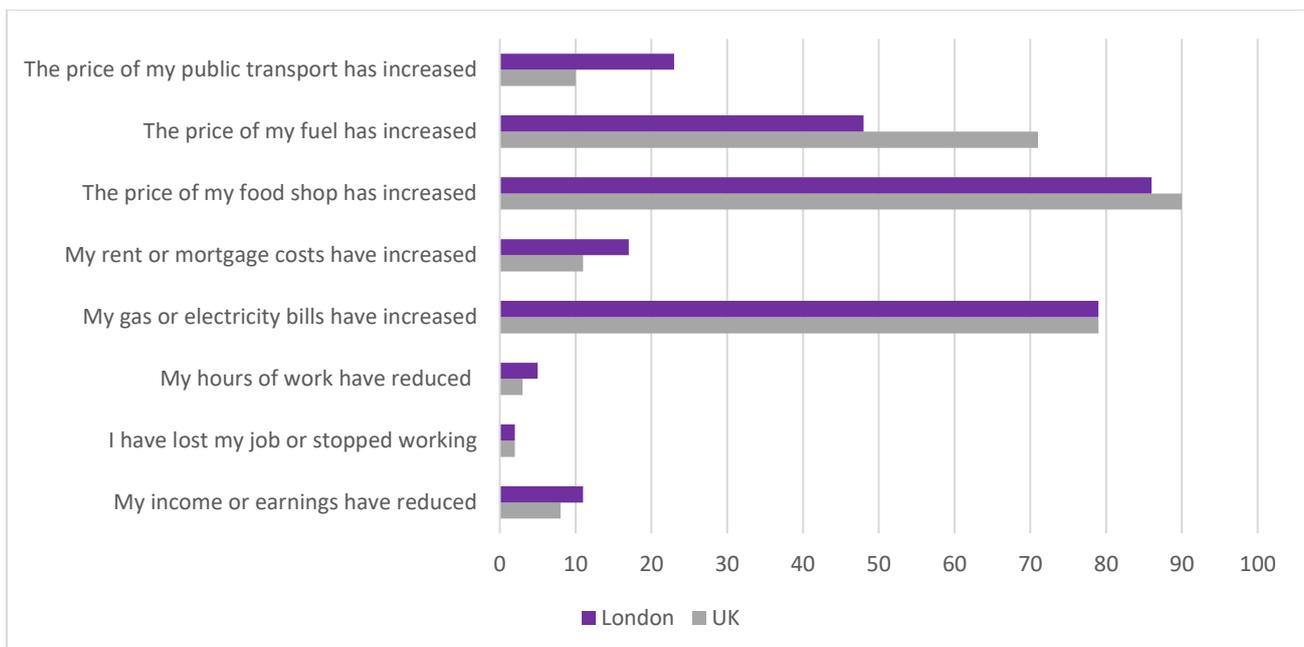
The rapidly rising cost of living is squeezing household incomes across central London. The Ofgem price cap for standard energy bills increased by 50% on 1<sup>st</sup> April, and the 1.25% rise in National Insurance Contributions also came into effect. The crisis in Ukraine has added to instability and contributed to rapidly rising prices.

The official rate of inflation already stood at a new 30-year high. CPI inflation in March was 7% year-on-year, the highest since March 1992. At the Spring Statement the Office for Budget Regulation warned that household disposable income will fall by 2.2%, the biggest decline since records began in 1956.

A recent ONS survey found that a large proportion of Londoners had noticed the price of food (86%) and energy (79%) increasing.

### Figure 1 – Londoners are seeing rising costs

*Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: November 2021 to March 2022*



Source: [ONS](#)

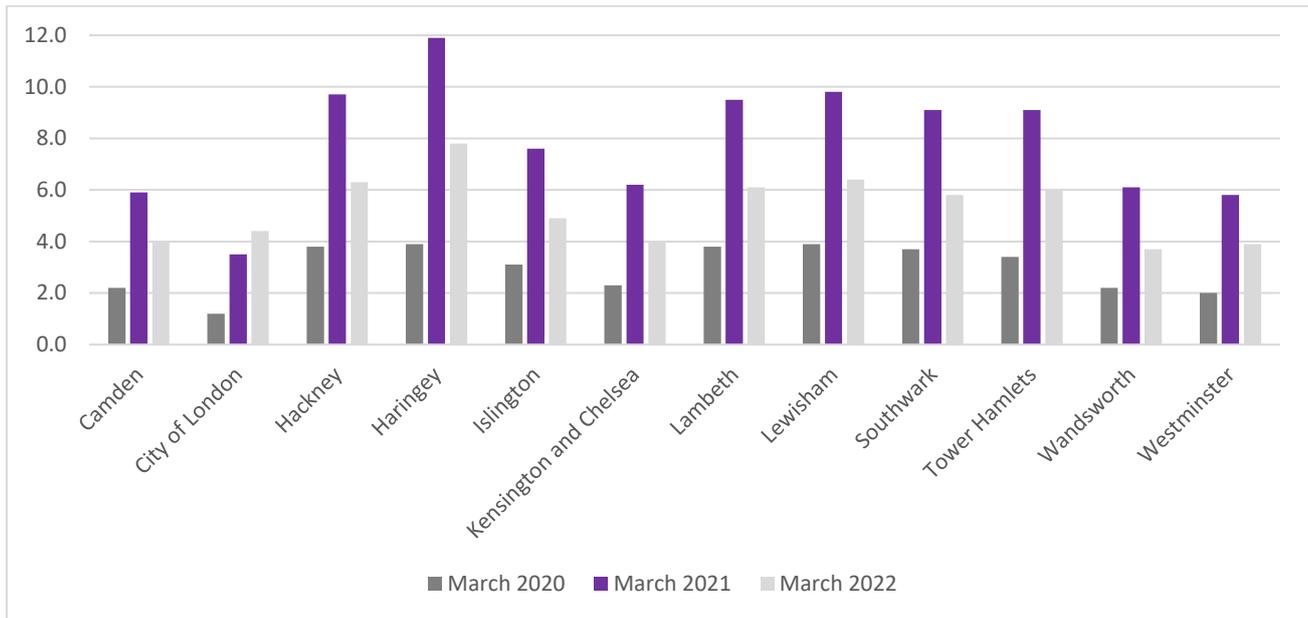
### The claimant count remains far higher than pre-pandemic levels

Unemployment – which rose very rapidly at the start of the pandemic – has fallen back significantly as the economy has recovered.

However, as figure X below shows, the proportion of residents claiming unemployment-related benefits in March 2022 remains significantly higher in every central London local authority than in March 2020 at the onset of the pandemic.

**Figure 2 – The claimant count rate has declined but remains higher than pre-pandemic**

*Claimant count as a proportion of adults aged 16 – 64*



Source: [NOMIS](#)

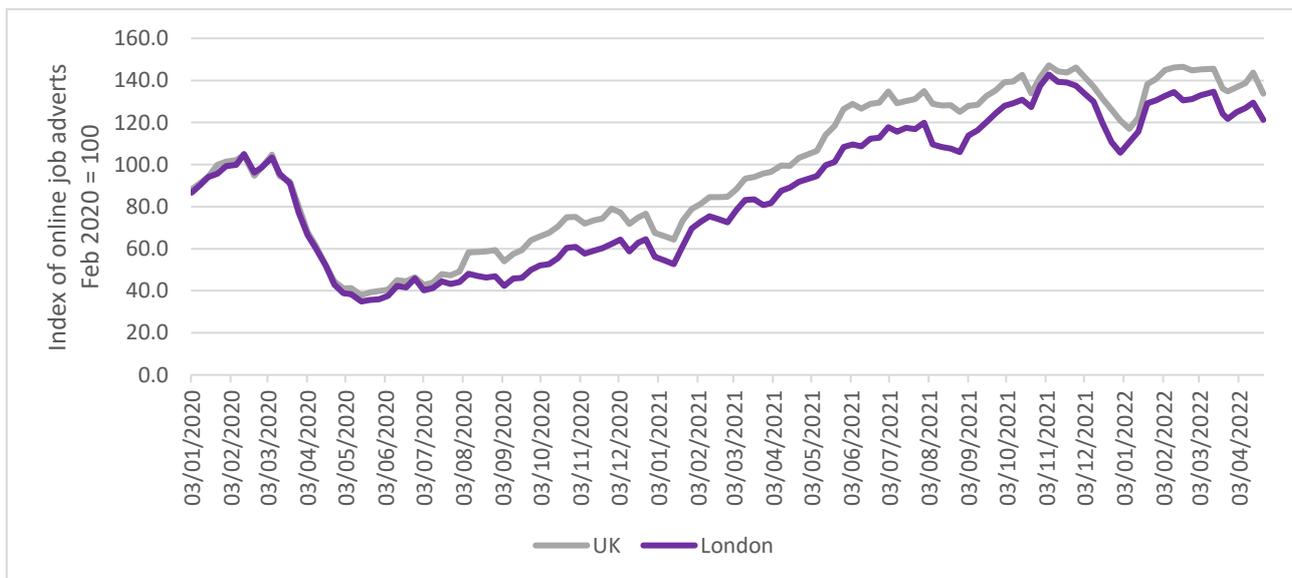
**Vacancies continue to remain high**

The number of vacancies in the capital remains higher than pre-pandemic levels.

ONS data from Adzuna show the number of online job adverts in London recovered rapidly from a dip during the Omicron wave, and they remain a fifth (21.2%) higher than February 2020, before the onset of the pandemic.

**Figure 3 – Online job adverts continue to rise above pre-pandemic levels**

*Index of online job adverts, February 2020 = 100*



Source: [ONS](#)

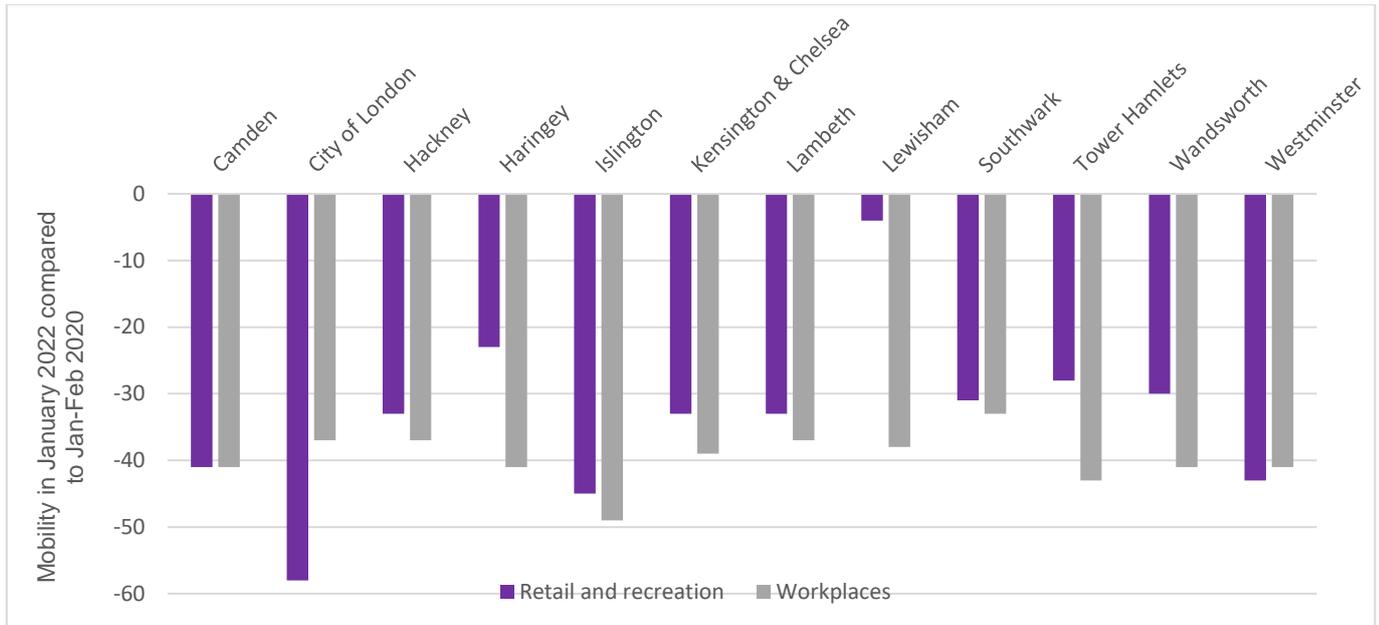
### Mobility is slow to recover in every borough

Mobility trends for retail and recreation, including places such as restaurants, cafés, shopping centres, and museums, remain well below that of February 2020. The City of London is showing the slowest recovery with levels of mobility for retail and recreation at less than half (-58%) of pre-pandemic levels.

Workplace mobility has shown signs of recovery in the first quarter. However, workplace mobility for the central London sub-region remains 40% below the pre-pandemic baseline.

**Figure 4 – Retail and recreation footfall, and workplace mobility remains low**

Mobility data in March 2022 compared to baseline of Jan-Feb 2020

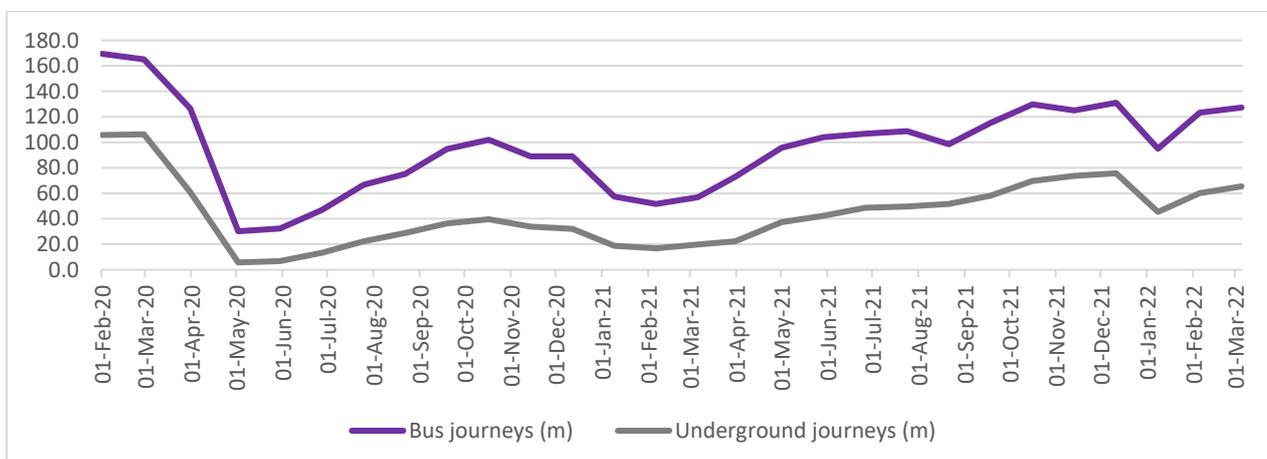


Source: [Google](#)

Following work from home guidance at the beginning of the year to curtail the spread of the Omicron variant, public transport usage in the capital dipped but seems to be recovering. However, transport usage overall is still 30% below pre-pandemic levels, with underground usage particularly low.

**Figure 5 – TfL passenger figures are recovering but remain below pre-pandemic levels**

Public transport journeys from February 2020 to March 2022



Source: [TfL](#)