

19/09/2016

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

If you want to avoid a Christmas cash hangover... 'tis the season to start budgeting

- Average cost of last Christmas was £506
- Consumers need to put aside £36 a week to cover the cost by Christmas Day
- On average, consumers continued to pay off last year's Christmas bill until April

Whilst it might feel a bit early to start thinking about your Christmas list, with only 14 weeks to go until the big day, those who haven't already put any money aside will need to start budgeting around £36 a week¹ to avoid being caught out by the cost.

According to the latest data from Halifax, people spent an average £506 on Christmas 2015, including all spending on gifts, food, drink and socializing – an eight per cent rise in spending since 2014.

Despite the fact there was an increase in spending in 2015, 44 per cent of Christmas spenders said they spent the same as the previous Christmas. Almost a third (29%) admitted to spending more than they did in 2014, and of those who did increase their Christmas spend, nearly one in five (18%) spent over £200 more.

One in three (31%) consumers surveyed still had payments outstanding at the start of February, and of these, the Christmas financial hangover was expected to last until April. Of these, just over a third (34%) were concerned they may need to make cut backs on non-essential spending to pay for the cost of the previous Christmas. Almost one in eight (12%) thought they might have to forego a holiday this year as a result. One in ten spenders made, or expected to make, cut backs on food shopping to cover the cost of Christmas 2015.

Giles Martin, Head of Halifax Savings, said:

“With the typical cost of Christmas increasing to over £500 and the hangover stretching to a third of the year for some, it's never too early to think about how you will pay for it. If you can afford to save regularly to spread the cost, then the earlier you start saving the less you need to find each month.”

A third (34%) of festive spenders surveyed saved specifically for Christmas. Over half (55%) funded some of their Christmas spending through their salary and around one in three (31%) relied on a form of credit, with credit cards (26%) being the most popular choice. Seven per cent ended up dipping into savings that they were not planning to spend on Christmas.

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PRESS RELEASE



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Regional big spenders and scrooges

In the North East, consumers spent the most money on Christmas (£591.08), 17 per cent more than the national average. Meanwhile, people in the South West were the most frugal and spending £415.08, 18 per cent less than the average (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: Average amount spent per region on Christmas 2015

Region	Average amount
North East	591.08
Scotland	578.98
East of England	551.77
North West	537.37
South East	536.67
West Midlands	485.19
East Midlands	479.27
London	472.96
Yorkshire and the Humber	463.47
Wales	452.96
South West	415.08

Marital status and gender differences

Christmas spenders who have never been married spent an average of £327.92, with those who are married or in a civil partnership spending close to double (£620.38). The average woman spent nearly £100 (£99.45) more than the average man.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGovPlc. Total sample size was 2,352 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st and 2nd February 2016. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

ⁱ Weekly amount calculated by average total spend on Christmas in 2015 (£505.90), divided by the number of weeks left until Christmas (14 weeks)

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