

UK inflation hit by energy costs

UK inflation was unchanged in January compared to December. Housing made the largest contribution to the annual rise of 2.7% (CPIH) at 0.52%. This includes the impact of higher water, electricity and gas bills and the Council Tax. Motor fuel made the second largest contribution at 0.43% reflecting the further dollar rise in oil prices partially offset by the strength of the pound against the dollar. The third highest contributor was recreation and culture at 0.41%. These are domestic charges for entry to events and places of interest. These three items accounted for one half of the rise.

Other commentators may tell you motor fuel contributed to a fall and recreation contributed to the rise, as they compare the rate of increase this January with the rate the preceding January. This however can be misleading, as what matters most is the actual contributions of each item to the total in the month in question.

Those commentators who keep telling us the inflation is all to do with a fall in sterling should be asked why they hold this view when the three largest contributions had nothing to do with sterling, or in one case benefitted from a rise in sterling against the dollar in recent months.