

Cadet cost-of-living crisis

Surveying the real cost to cadets' basic living expenses during their training

NAUTILUS
INTERNATIONAL

nautilusint.org

April 2023





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EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM

Are you interested in promoting an inclusive maritime workplace? You'll find like-minded people at the Nautilus Equality and Diversity Forums.

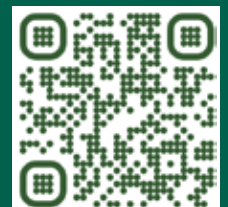
It's a chance to discuss the big issues, network with fellow members and influence Union policy, with the main meeting enhanced by special breakout groups for women members, LGBT+ members and young maritime professionals.

The Union may also set up women members' and young maritime professionals' WhatsApp groups. Members can express their interest in joining these chat groups or registering interest in attending the Forum by emailing the EDF secretary Danny McGowan on dmcgowan@nautilusint.org.

Nautilus remains committed to having a dedicated female organiser available who can deal with any workplace issues or provide advice to members who wish to speak to a female representative. Please contact Rachel Lynch by emailing rlynch@nautilusint.org.

There is also a dedicated young members' organiser available who can deal with any workplace issues or provide advice to members who wish to speak to a younger union representative. Please contact Martyn Gray on mgray@nautilusint.org or YMP@nautilusint.org.

SCAN to check the latest info and to register



Overview

British Merchant Navy cadets are being crushed by debt as the cost-of-living crisis deepens, with a third considering dropping out of training altogether.

Cadets have told Nautilus of increasingly desperate measures being taken to stay afloat, such as cutting back on food and heating. They are also avoiding going out with friends and travelling to see family.

Some cadets report doing part-time work, asking friends and family for money, and taking on loans – and still sliding further into debt.

Money worries are directly affecting their health and well-being, including their emotional and mental health, with some considering quitting training as a result.

In the UK, officer cadets are not employed and are not paid wages as such but receive bursaries from sponsor companies.

Cadets reported receiving monthly bursary payments from as little as £600, with over half of cadets getting paid £750 per month – equivalent to £9,000 per year.

Most cadets (91%) must pay for accommodation, food and other essentials from their monthly allowance. Under the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC), sponsor companies pay for uniforms, travel to and from ship, and safety equipment. Some also cover ENG1 medicals and short courses.

Worryingly, 52% of respondents said that the cost-of-living crisis is affecting their ability to manage their training requirements.

“ These efforts are likely to be in vain if **bursaries remain so low** ”

When asked about personal finances, 16% of respondents said that they do not have enough money for necessities and are getting into debt, with another 30% stating that they only have enough money for necessities.

To make ends meet, nearly 20% of cadets will take on a part time job or other way to supplement their income this year, with over 17% planning to cut back on food spending.

Social activities will be curtailed by close to 14% of cadets, with over 5% stating they could not afford to travel to see family.

Many cadets are already taking steps to save money. Nearly half reported dipping into money from a savings account to make ends meet, with over 26% shopping in a different supermarket to save money, and 21% borrowing from friends and family. Cadets are also using food banks to help fill their cupboards.



CREDIT: Pexels

A hand in a white glove is shown dropping a gold coin into a glass jar. The jar is partially filled with a white substance, possibly representing savings or funding. The background is white.

Funding boost

The UK government's SMarT funding scheme helps shipowners pay for cadet training. In September 2022, this funding was increased from 30% to 50% of the cost of training a cadet, with the sponsoring companies receiving backdated payments for those cadets in the system.

It is expected that this increase in support should translate into higher pay for the cadets. Nautilus understands that some sponsors have passed on the uptick to cadets, such as the Maritime Educational Foundation (MEF) which has increased by 25% its bursaries. However not all sponsor companies have passed on this rise in funding. Nautilus will keep up the pressure on sponsor companies to do so.

The Union is also campaigning for UK government funding to cover 100% of cadet training – as happens in the Netherlands.

'The MCA is currently investing a huge amount of resource into its Cadet Training and Modernisation programme with the aim of ensuring the industry can attract the best STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students into the sector and retain them,' Nautilus cadet lead Rachel Lynch said.

'These efforts are likely to be in vain if bursaries remain so low that cadets are not even able to meet their most basic living expenses during their training.'

“ The **MCA** is currently investing a huge amount of resource into its **Cadet Training and Modernisation programme** ”

CREDIT: Pexels

Conclusion

It is clear from the evidence presented that more must be done to support UK cadets through the cost-of-living crisis, particularly if the ambition of the government's Maritime 2050 policy paper for the UK to be a global leader in maritime training is to become a reality.



CREDIT: Nautilus International

Many sponsors struggled to provide berths during the pandemic, resulting in extended cadetships. Nautilus continues to work on behalf of those who are still waiting for seetime

Summary of findings

Q1. At what stage of training are you?

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Phase 1	at college	12.90%
Phase 2	sea and leave	6.45%
Phase 3	at college	35.48%
Phase 4	sea and leave	24.19%
Phase 5	at college	20.97%

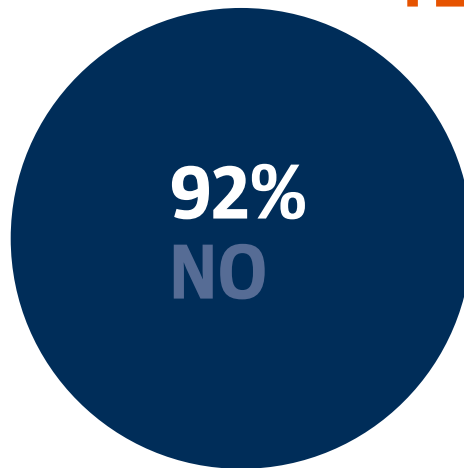
Q2. How much (in total) does your training provider pay you per month?

Average amount = £800

£0*	1
£600	1
£700	8
£750	32
£800	6
£900	7
£1,000	3
£1,100	1
£1,200	2
£1,400**	2
* Paid on ship only	
** Post tax (Gross: £2,260)	

Q3. Does your training provider pay for your accommodation and meals?

8%
● **YES**



“ **Fuel** to college and home for start and end of term times

Limited reimbursement of **travel costs** for the start and finish of phases 1, 3 and 5

Travel at start and end of uni terms; however, car travel is compensated at 20p/mile. I was hoping this would be increased as **fuel costs have escalated** greatly in the last year

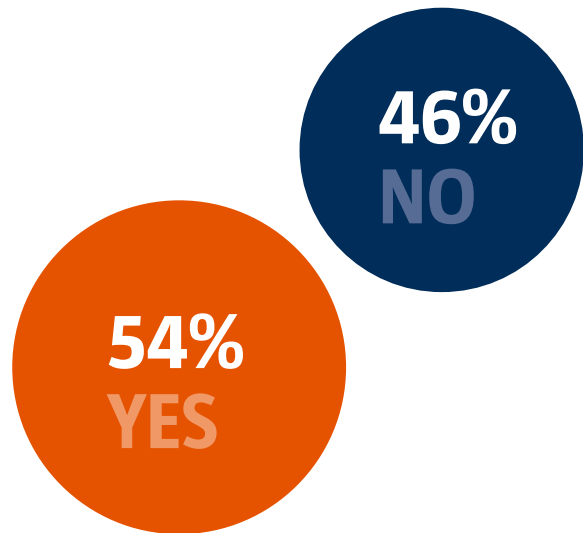
Travel to and from college with **meal allowance** at holidays. Travel to and from joining a vessel with meal allowance

Onboard expenses, uniform, certification

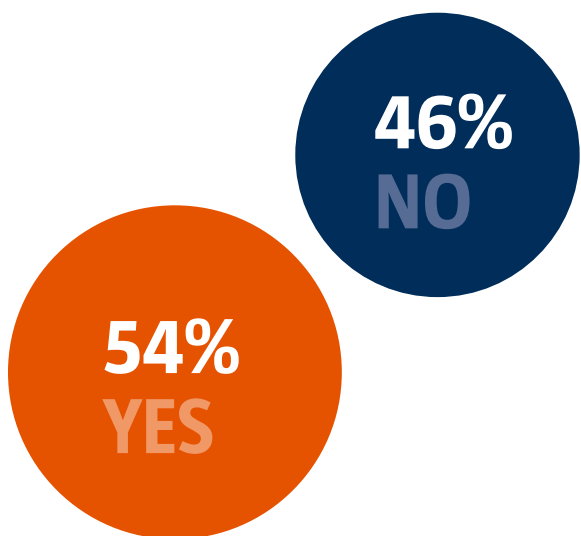
Travel from home to short courses, **£20/day** for dinner when on a short course, and short course accommodation. Largest proportion of phase is studying remotely “at home”, so I am paying my **own rent and food** (*not covered by company*) ”



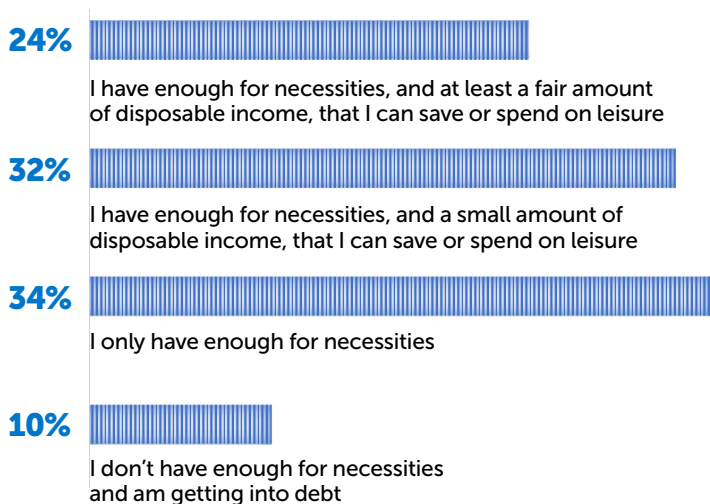
Q4. Is there anything else your training provider pays for ?



Q5. Is the cost of living affecting your ability to manage your training requirements?



Q6. Which of the following best describes your current financial status?



“ It is a **disgusting the level of pay cadets receive** and I am re-evaluating my options

I have had to **reduce the amount of food that I am eating everyday** and reduce attending fitness classes and social meets. Both of these have affected my mental and physical wellbeing and I know not having a full stomach is **affecting my concentration**

I had pre-existing costs coming into the cadetship. This was JUST manageable before the rise in the cost of living, but now due to the rise in costs. I am **unable to meet payments** to live without going into debt or relying on family

I can't afford to have my heating on very often so my flat is often so cold I can do little but sit covered in blankets and jumpers. **I can't really effectively study like this** ”

“ I can't afford flights or trains to see family



Cutting back on food, going out, and travelling to see friends. Basics are unaffected, but the "nice to haves" are gone

Not socialising as much.

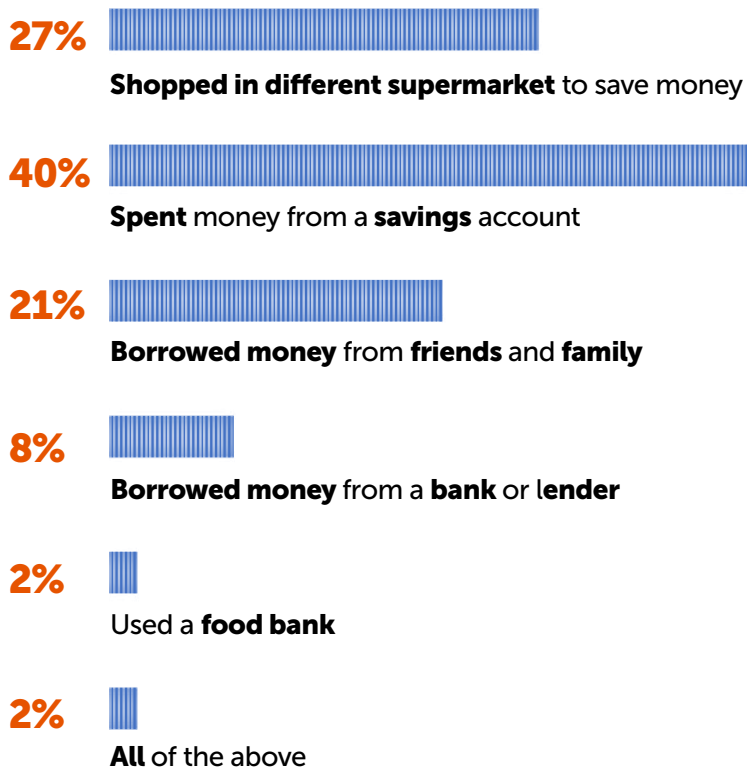
Cutting back on seeing family due to travel. Can't pay my health care bills and food at the same time

Cutting back on everything, working part time and getting into debt ”

Q7. How do you think your lifestyle will be affected by the cost-of-living crisis ?



Q8. What money saving activities have you undertaken in the past six months ?



10% of
Cadets responded
they are getting
into **debt for
necessities**

Q9. Is the cost-of-living crisis directly affecting your health or your wellbeing (including your emotional or mental health) ?

44%
YES



“ I’m debating if I can **continue the course** because it will cost me more money and I will lose more and more money continuing. Ways to fix it simply is more money; however, at least having a open conversation with Clyde about money would be something easily achievable. Currently their standard response is something like ‘we understand your concerns however, **we cannot do anything about it** because the government decides/ too expensive’ etc, etc

A higher wage. Private companies should not be **profiting off cadets training**. Thousands of pounds have been spent on training resources per cadet that we never asked for. I don’t even have time to use these, because I’m forced to work an extra job to cover my bills. There needs to be a **serious review into where SMaRT funding is going**

Stressed about saving and not having enough at the end of the month, having to **borrow** money all the time which further puts me in **debt**”

“ I could be earning very good money on yachts and **not bother with a cadetship**. If any of my exams become a problem I will be dropping out, with approx **50% of my class** from speaking with people

I may need to start working full time locally to catch up on **loan payments**

Money worries, lack of support and funding for cadets

My **cadetship is frozen** and I'm not getting paid because I've had to take leave **for medical treatments** so I have no money to pay for anything. I cannot find extra work because of my condition currently and am **stuck unemployed and unsponsored** ”



Q10. Have you considered dropping out of training due to the cost-of-living crisis ?



Nautilus support for Merchant Navy cadets

The maritime industry can be a challenging place, especially when cadets first go sea. When things go wrong, it's vital to have union support.

Nautilus members benefit from emergency support 24 hours a day.

Expert organisers are also available to help with a whole range of issues, such as problems with the college, training provider or sponsor.

Cadet members are entitled to full legal support, including on areas such as bullying and harassment.

Nautilus makes a real difference to the lives of seafarers – from getting cadets home during the Covid pandemic to securing 50% funding for cadetships from the UK government. The Union is influential in the UK and internationally, but as a democratic organisation it is our members – including cadets – who decide what we should fight for.

As a **member** you will receive:

- 👉 **24 hours a day emergency support**
- 👉 **expert advice**
- 👉 **legal support**

Find out more about the benefits of joining Nautilus:



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**Pensions
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Your **Life**, Your **Money**

- ▶ **Focal point** for seafarer pension scheme members, increasing their influence and knowledge of the Merchant Navy Officers Pension Fund and other schemes
- ▶ **Represents** all members of the MNOFF and Ensign retirement plans
- ▶ **Professional advice**, as well as specific information on legal and government developments on pensions and lobbying
- ▶ **Provides** a 'one-stop shop' for advice
- ▶ **Operates** as a democratic organisation, because it is a Nautilus Council body

NPA Membership Services

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