

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 6 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 28 October to 1 November 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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# 1 . Main points

- Those in the North West region of England had the highest proportion of adults reporting they were living under highest coronavirus alert level restrictions, with nearly 8 in 10 (77%) adults living under Tier 3.
- This week, around 7 in 10 (71%) adults in Great Britain strongly supported or tended to support the use of targeted lockdown measures for local areas affected by coronavirus outbreaks; this percentage has been declining since the end of September (86% over the period 24 to 27 September 2020).
- A lower percentage of those living in Tier 2 and Tier 3 (37% and 34% respectively) reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, compared with nearly half (45%) of those in Tier 1.
- Less than a quarter (24%) of adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person indoors, including settings such as the home, cafés, pubs or restaurants in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble.
- This week, life satisfaction (6.5) and worthwhile (7.2) scores were at their lowest since our survey began at the end of March and in comparison to pre-pandemic levels in February 2020, and happiness scores continued to decrease for the third week in a row (6.7).

On Saturday 31 October, the UK government announced a second national lockdown for England, which started on 5 November. Responses for this survey were collected over the period 28 October to 1 November 2020, which covers the announcement and is before this lockdown started.

## 2 . Understanding the impact on society

This weekly bulletin contains data and indicators from a new module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on British society.

The statistics in this publication are based on a survey of 6,023 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 28 October and 1 November 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 4,111 responding adults (68% response rate).

It contains breakdowns of results by country and English regions, including self-reported local COVID alert levels in England, as well as those in self-reported local lockdown areas in Scotland, and those in "firebreak" lockdown in Wales. The new increased survey sample size will allow us to explore additional breakdowns by various characteristics in future publications. The definition of local COVID restrictions and local lockdown is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).

This bulletin presents a summary of results, with further data including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates contained in the [associated datasets](#). Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the change.

Throughout this bulletin, "this week" refers to responses collected during the period 28 October to 1 November 2020 and "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 21 to 25 October 2020.

### 3 . Local COVID restrictions

On 12 October 2020, the UK government introduced a [local COVID Alert System](#) in England. This week we asked people which COVID alert level or "tier" they believed their area was under. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).

This week, nearly half of adults (46%) in England reported they were in Tier 1, while nearly 4 in 10 (35%) reported they were in Tier 2, and more than 1 in 10 (14%) in Tier 3, the remaining 5% did not know or were unsure.

Those in the North West region had the highest proportion of adults reporting they were living under the highest restrictions, with nearly 8 in 10 (77%) adults living under Tier 3.

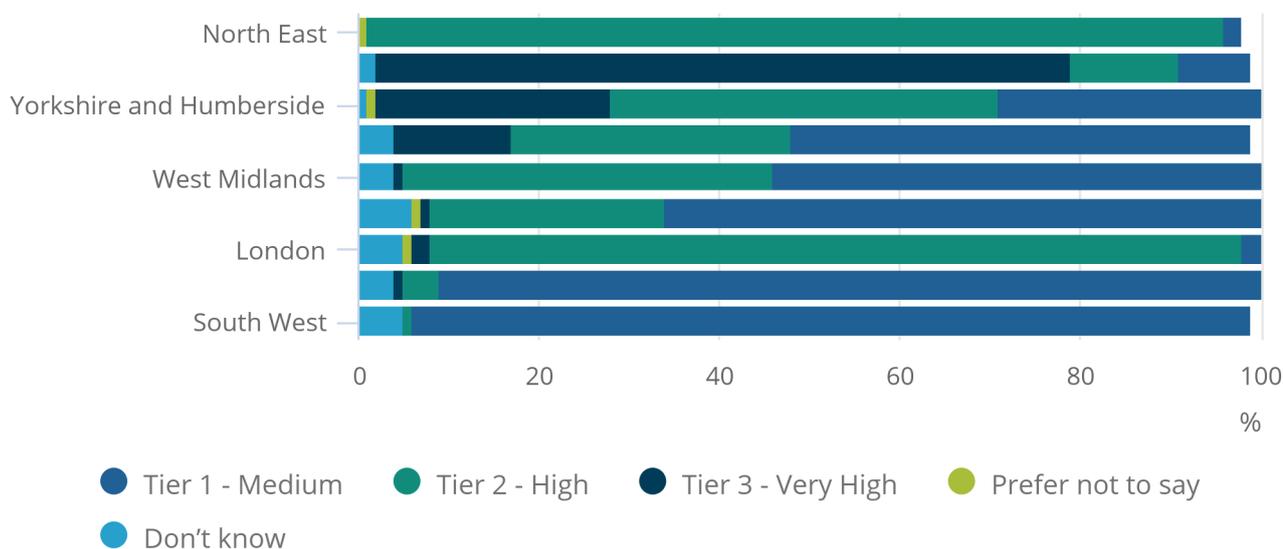
The region with the highest proportion of adults reporting living under Tier 2 restrictions was the North East, with 95%, followed by London (90%). The South West had the highest proportion of people reporting they were living in the lowest level of restrictions, with 93% under Tier 1, followed by the South East (91%).

## Figure 1: Nearly 8 in 10 adults in the North West self-reported that they were in Tier 3

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020

### Figure 1: Nearly 8 in 10 adults in the North West self-reported that they were in Tier 3

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Question: “What is the current local COVID Alert Level where you live?”
2. Base: all adults.
3. For some regions estimates for those who reported “don’t know” or “prefer not say” have been suppressed because of low sample size.
4. Local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user’s interpretation. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#)

This week, around 7 in 10 (71%) adults in Great Britain strongly supported or tended to support the use of targeted lockdown measures for local areas affected by coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks. This is the same percentage as last week and has been declining since the end of September (86% over the period 24 to 27 September).

A lower percentage of adults supported the use of targeted lockdown measures in Tier 3 (65%) compared with those in Tier 2 and Tier 1 (70% and 76% respectively). In Wales, 70% of adults supported targeted lockdown measures, and for those in local lockdown in Scotland, 80% supported this.

## Information about coronavirus

When asked where they looked for information about the restrictions in their area, nearly 6 in 10 (59%) adults in England referred to television news, while 37% referred to online or print news sources and 34% to the NHS COVID app.

Nearly 8 in 10 (77%) adults in England said that it was easy or very easy to find out about the alert levels in their area, while 5% found it difficult or very difficult.

A lower percentage of those living in Tier 2 and Tier 3 (37% and 34% respectively) reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic, compared with nearly half (45%) of those in Tier 1.

### More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

## 4 . Preventative measures

There are a number of measures in place to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), such as social distancing, avoiding contact, self-isolating, use of face coverings, and handwashing.

This week, a higher percentage of those in Tier 3 (11%) reported self-isolating, compared with 7% in Tier 2 and 5% in Tier 1. There was no [statistically significant](#) difference in avoiding contact, social distancing, handwashing and use of face-coverings between Tiers, regions and countries.

Official guidance varies across England, Wales and Scotland.

Table 1: Indicators of preventative measures  
Great Britain, 28 October to 1 November 2020

Indicator	Group	This week (%)
<b>Often/always maintaining social distancing</b>	All adults	84%
	Tier 1 England	86%
	Tier 2 England	82%
	Tier 3 England	86%
	“Fire break” Wales	..
	In local lockdown Scotland	..
	Not in local lockdown Scotland	..
<b>Avoiding physical contact</b>	All adults	88%
	Tier 1 England	89%
	Tier 2 England	90%
	Tier 3 England	90%
	“Fire break” Wales	88%
	In local lockdown Scotland	92%
	Not in local lockdown Scotland	87%
<b>Self-isolation</b>	All adults	7%
	Tier 1 England	5%
	Tier 2 England	7%
	Tier 3 England	11%
	“Fire break” Wales	13%
	In local lockdown Scotland	..
	Not in local lockdown Scotland	..
<b>Everyone/almost everyone wearing face coverings while shopping</b>	All Adults	90%
	Tier 1 England	93%
	Tier 2 England	85%
	Tier 3 England	89%
	“Fire break” Wales	94%
	In local lockdown Scotland	99%
	Not in local lockdown Scotland	93%
	All adults	89%
	Tier 1 England	91%

<b>Always/often hand washing with soap and water after returning home</b>	Tier 2 England	92%
	Tier 3 England	86%
	“Fire break” Wales	89%
	In local lockdown Scotland	95%
	Not in local lockdown Scotland	89%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

## Notes

1. Question: “In the past seven days when you have met up with people outside of your support bubble how often have you maintained social distancing?”; Base: Adults who met up with people indoors or outdoors outside of their support bubble or household.
2. Question: “Examples of direct physical contact may include shaking or holding hands, hugging and making contact when passing objects. In the past seven days, have you avoided physical contact with others when outside your home?”; Base: Adults who left their home in the past seven days.
3. Question: “Self-isolation is defined as staying at home because you have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?”; Base: all adults.
4. Question “While shopping in the last seven days, how many other people did you see wearing protective face coverings to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)?”; Base: Adults who used a face covering while shopping in the past seven days.
5. Question: “In the past seven days, how often did you wash your hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place?”; Base: Adults who left their home in the past seven days.
6. The table includes breakdowns by the different COVID alert levels in England, those on a “firebreak” lockdown in Wales, and those in and out of local lockdown in Scotland. Local lockdown and local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user’s interpretation.
7. “..” indicates that estimates have been suppressed due to low sample size.
8. Local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user’s interpretation. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in Section 10: Glossary.

## 5 . Meeting up with others

### Rule of six

“Rule of six” measures are in place to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Official guidance on social gathering varies by local COVID alert level in England, and across Wales and Scotland.

The rule of six applies both indoors and outdoors for Tier 1. For those in Tier 2, people are not allowed to meet with anyone outside their household or support bubble indoors, whilst the rule of six applies outdoors. For Tier 3, people are not allowed to meet up with anyone outside their household or support bubble both indoors and outdoors.

A lower proportion of adults in Tier 3 and Tier 2 (62% and 63% respectively) said they strongly support or tend to support the rule of six measures, compared with 72% in Tier 1.

Around half of adults (51%) in Tier 3 reported that the rule of six measures were very simple or simple, a lower percentage than those in Tier 1 and Tier 2 (67% and 59% respectively).

## **Guidance on meeting up with others**

Under the local COVID Alert System, different rules applied in different parts of the country for meeting up with others outside their household or support bubble.

This week, we asked adults about the rules that applied where they live. In Tier 1, 89% of adults identified with the rule that people must not meet in groups larger than six indoors.

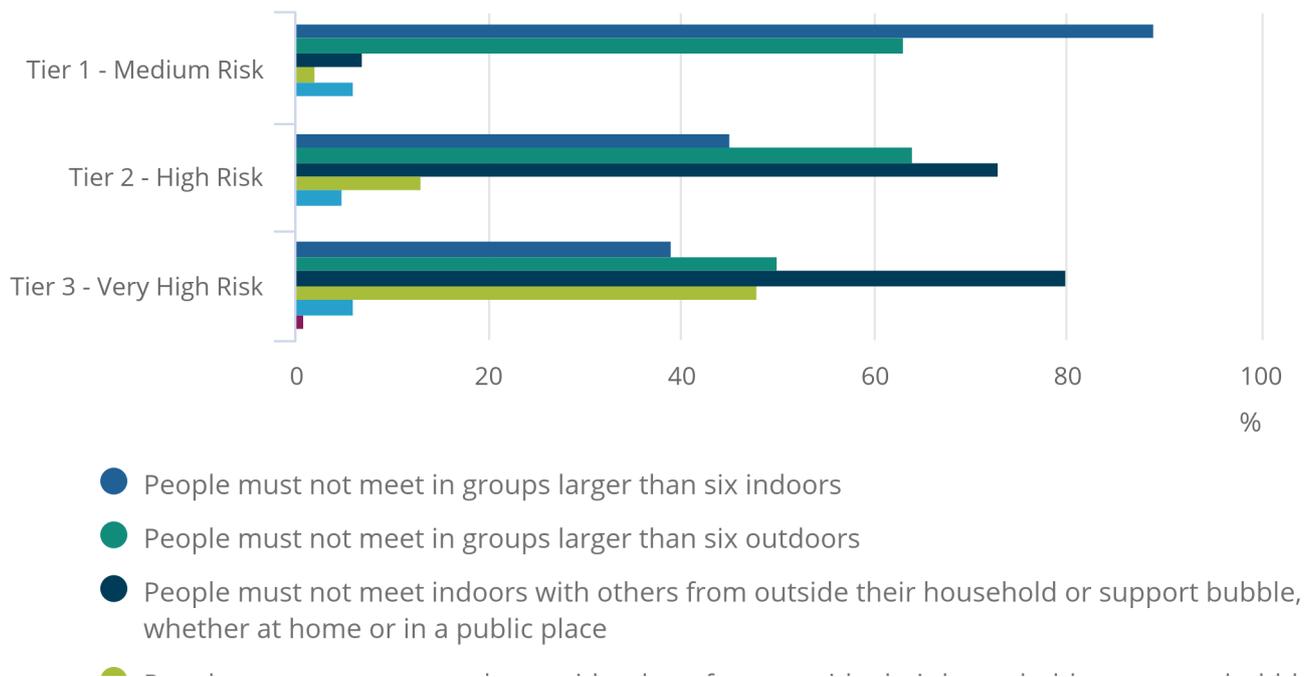
In Tier 2 and Tier 3, the majority of adults (73% and 80% respectively) identified with the rule that people must not meet indoors with others from outside their household.

**Figure 2: Awareness of local COVID alert rules varied by tier**

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020

Figure 2: Awareness of local COVID alert rules varied by tier

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

**Notes:**

1. Question: " Under the new local COVID Alert System different rules apply in different parts of the country for meeting up with others outside your household or support bubble. Which rules apply where you live?"
2. Base population: all adults
3. Respondents asked to select all that apply.
4. Local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).

## Meeting up with others indoors

This week, people were asked to think of the largest group they had met up with indoors (excluding a work or education setting) in the past seven days, including themselves. It is important to note that this group size could include people (partially or solely) from within an individual's household and/or support bubble. Therefore it should not be considered a precise measure of compliance with government guidance.

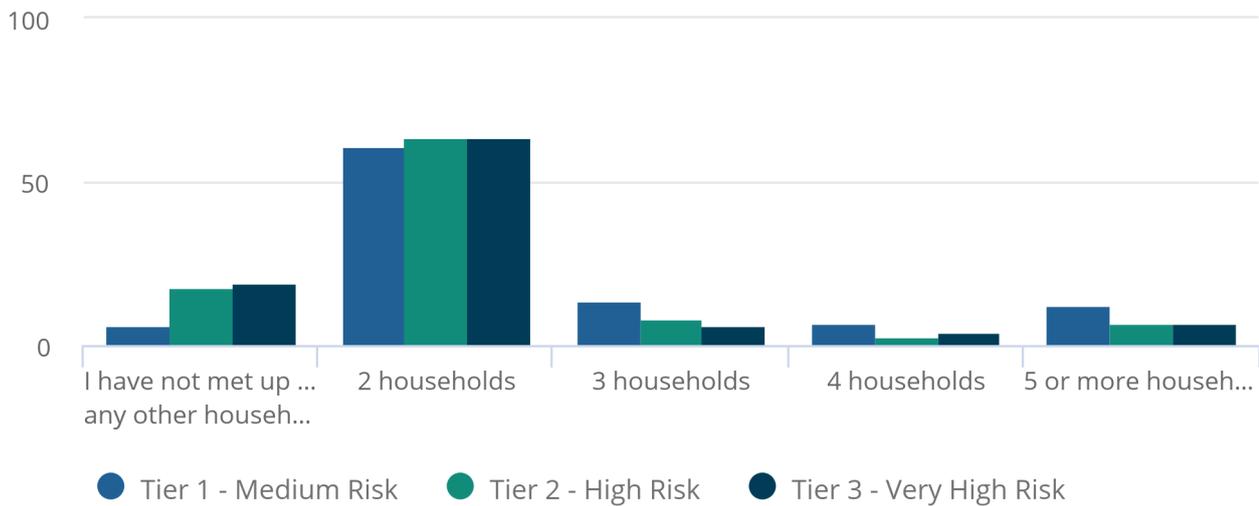
This week, 19% of those in Tier 2 and 18% in Tier 3 had not met up with another household, compared with 6% of those in Tier 1. Among those who had met up with another household, a lower percentage in Tier 2 and 3 (71% and 70% respectively) reported meeting up with friends and family compared with 83% in Tier 1.

**Figure 3: "A higher percentage of those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 had not met up with another household indoors"**

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020

Figure 3: "A higher percentage of those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 had not met up with another household indoors"

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: " "How many households were part of that group, including your own?"
2. Base population: adults who met up with at least one other person in the past seven days.
3. Respondents asked to select all that apply.
4. Local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).

In Tier 1, the only local COVID alert level where rule of six guidance for meeting indoors applied, less than 1 in 10 (5%) adults said they had met up indoors with a group of more than six people including themselves in the past seven days. Among those, 6% met up with only people from their household.

Among those in Tier 1 who met up with more than six people, and the group included people from outside their household, more than half (52%) met up for one of the following reasons: funeral, worship service, sports or exercise. The remaining 44% met up with friends and family, or for other reasons.

## Physical contact

This week, respondents were asked to think about when they have had direct physical contact with people outside of their household or support bubble in the last 24 hours. Examples of direct physical contact may include shaking or holding hands, hugging, and making contact when passing objects.

Less than a quarter (24%) of adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person indoors, including settings such as the home, cafés, pubs or restaurants in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble.

## 6 . Leaving home

More than 9 in 10 (94%) adults in Great Britain said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days. A lower percentage (92%) of those in Tier 3 left home in the past seven days, compared with those in Tier 2 and Tier 1 (94% and 96% respectively).

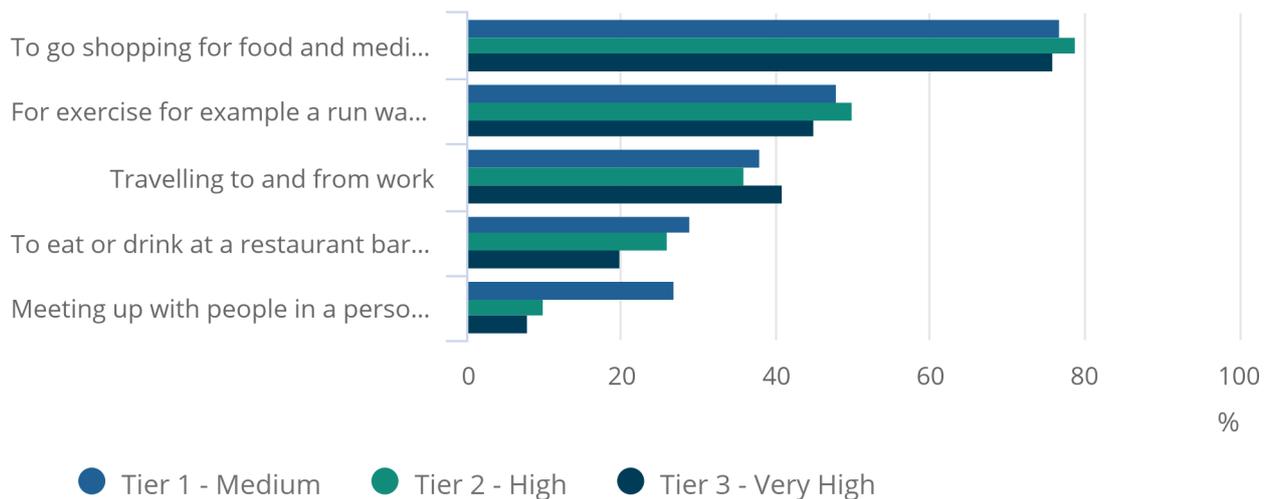
Among those who left their home in the past seven days, a lower percentage (8%) of those living in Tier 3 areas met up with people in a personal place compared with those in Tier 1 and 2 (27% and 10% respectively). Similarly, a lower percentage of those in Tier 3 reported leaving home to eat or drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub, at 20% compared with 29% in Tier 1 and 26% in Tier 2.

## Figure 4: A lower percentage of those in Tier 3 local COVID alert levels met up with people in a personal place

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020

### Figure 4: A lower percentage of those in Tier 3 local COVID alert levels met up with people in a personal place

England, 28 October to 1 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?"
2. Additional response options for reasons that adults left their home in the past seven days are included in the [data tables](#). This also includes data for all adults in Great Britain.
3. Base population: adults who left their home in the past seven days.
4. Local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#)

## 7 . Impact on life and wellbeing

A similar percentage of adults reported that they are very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now across each of the local COVID alert levels (76% in Tier 1, 77% in Tier 2 and 78% in Tier 3).

However, there were some differences in concerns reported between the local COVID alert levels. The concerns with the largest difference between those in Tier 3 compared with those in Tier 1 were:

- lack of freedom and independence (Tier 3: 68% compared with Tier 1: 57%)
- well-being (for example, boredom, loneliness, anxiety and stress) (Tier 3: 57% compared with Tier 1: 50%)
- life events (for example, weddings and funerals) (Tier 3: 48% compared with Tier 1: 41%)
- relationships (Tier 3: 29% compared with Tier 1: 23%)

This week, life satisfaction scores (6.5) and worthwhile (7.2) scores were at their lowest since our survey began at the end of March and in comparison with pre-pandemic levels in February 2020, and happiness scores continue to decrease for the third week in a row (6.7). The recent worsening of life satisfaction, happiness and feelings that things done in life are worthwhile could in part be explained by seasonal variation. A technical report on [Personal well-being quarterly estimates](#) found that, on average, happiness scores decrease by 1.0% between Quarter 3 (July to September) and Quarter 4 (October to December). The technical report found some worsening to all four personal well-being scores with the greatest impact being to average scores of happiness and anxiety.

### **Figure 5: Life satisfaction and worthwhile scores at their lowest this week since the survey began**

Great Britain, March to October 2020

**Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey**

[Data download](#)

#### **Notes:**

1. Question: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?", "Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?", "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?", "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. This question is answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults

## **8 . Impact on work**

This week, around half of working adults (51%) reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work. A similar percentage of working adults reported travelling to work (exclusively, and in combination with working from home), in each of the local COVID alert tiers: 57% in Tier 1, 52% in Tier 2 and 61% in Tier 3.

A higher percentage of those in Tier 2 (44%) reported that they had worked from home in the past seven days, compared with those in Tier 1 and Tier 3 (both 35% respectively).

Among those that had worked from home in the past seven days, 30% of those in Tier 3 said the reason they had worked from home is because they live in a local lockdown area and have been advised to work from home, compared with 8% in Tier 2.

In London, 60% of working adults reported working from home in the past seven days - a higher percentage compared with adults who had worked from home in the North East (23%).

More than half (56%) of working adults in Wales reported not being able to work from home, compared with 19% of those living in London.

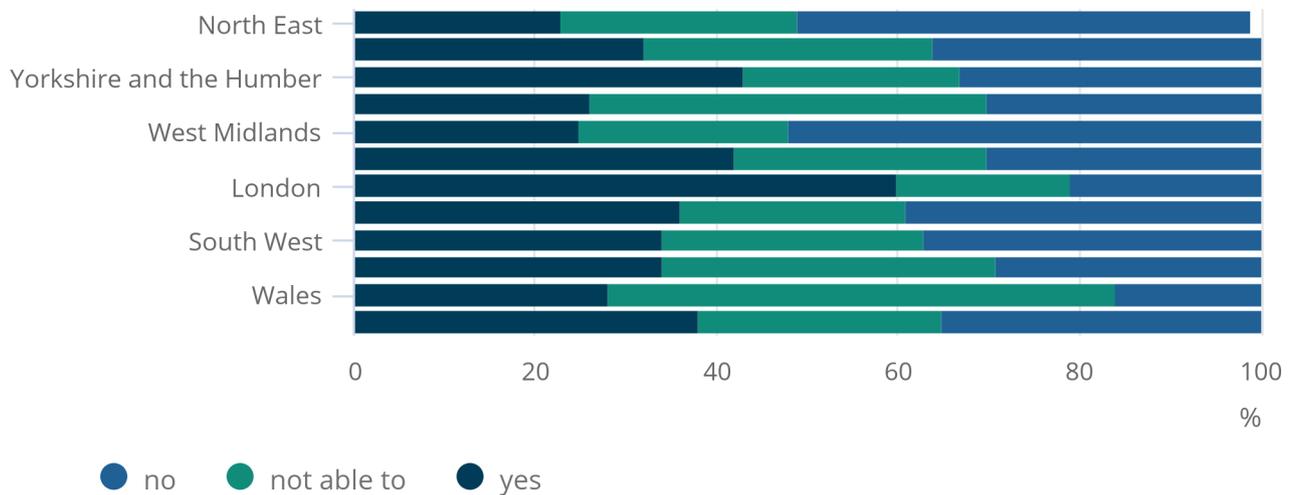
Official estimates of labour market participation can be found in the [Labour market overview](#).

**Figure 6: London had the highest percentage of adults who worked from home in the last seven days**

Great Britain, 28 October to 1 November 2020

Figure 6: London had the highest percentage of adults who worked from home in the last seven days

Great Britain, 28 October to 1 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: “In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?”
2. Base population: working adults.
3. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

## 9 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 6 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Includes breakdowns by at-risk age, sex and underlying health condition.

## 10 . Glossary

### Working adults

For this survey, a person is said to be a "working adult" if:

- they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed
- they did any casual work for payment
- they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week

### Local COVID restrictions

At the time of this survey there was different guidance on local COVID restrictions in England, Wales and Scotland. Local lockdown and local COVID alert levels are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation.

The [local COVID Alert System](#) in England was categorised into three tiers as follows:

- Tier 1 is the "medium" alert level and consists of a series of measures including not socialising in groups larger than six (indoors and outdoors), also known as the "rule of six"
- Tier 2 is the "high" alert level, for areas with a higher level of infections where some additional restrictions are in place, particularly limiting socialising with anybody outside your household or support bubble in any indoor setting
- Tier 3 is the "very high" alert level, for areas with a very high level of infections and where tighter restrictions are in place, these extend restrictions further around mixing with different households indoors and outdoors; Tier 3 also introduces restrictions in terms of pubs and bars not serving a substantive meal.

At the time of data collection, further restrictions may have also been in place depending on agreements between national and local government. [Further information about the local COVID alert level tiers](#) is available.

## 11 . Measuring the data

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is a monthly omnibus survey. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have adapted the OPN to become a weekly survey used to collect data on the impact of the coronavirus on day-to-day life in Great Britain. In this wave, 6,023 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 68% (or 4,111 individuals) for the survey conducted from 28 October to 1 November 2020.

The survey results are weighted to be a nationally representative sample for Great Britain, and data are collected using an online self-completion questionnaire. Individuals who did not want to or were unable to complete the survey online had the opportunity to take part over the phone.

Where changes in results from previous weeks or differences between groups are presented in this bulletin, associated [confidence intervals](#), which are included in the associated datasets, indicate their significance.

### Sampling

A sample of 6,023 households was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS). From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger and older (over 74 years) people were given higher selection probability than other people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey.

### Weighting

The responding sample contained 4,111 individuals (68% response rate). Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population.

Weights were first adjusted for non-response and attrition. Subsequently, the weights were calibrated to satisfy population distributions considering the following factors: sex by age, region, tenure, highest qualification and employment status. For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for October 2020 were used. The resulting weighted sample is therefore representative of the Great Britain adult population by a number of socio-demographic factors and geography.

## 12 . Strengths and limitations

The main strengths of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) include:

- it allows for timely production of data and statistics that can respond quickly to changing needs
- it meets data needs: the questionnaire is developed with customer consultation, and design expertise is applied in the development stages
- robust methods are adopted for the survey's sampling and weighting strategies to limit the impact of bias
- quality assurance procedures are undertaken throughout the analysis stages to minimise the risk of error

The main limitations of the OPN include:

- comparisons between periods and groups must be done with caution as estimates are provided from a sample survey; as such, [confidence intervals](#) are included in the datasets to present the sampling variability, which should be taken into account when assessing differences between periods, as true differences may not exist

## 13 . Related links

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effects on the economy and society.

### [Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 16 October 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 13 October 2020

Provisional counts of the number of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, by age, sex and region, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: July 2020](#)

Article | Released 20 August 2020

The social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain based on indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. Insights from qualitative research commissioned by the Cabinet Office Disability Unit and conducted by Policy Lab help illustrate how these indicators can be experienced by disabled people in day-to-day life.

### [Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: September 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 September 2020

Estimates looking across personal and economic well-being covering the period from 20 March to 26 July 2020, to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people and households in Great Britain.

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#)

Blog | Updated as data become available

Catch up on the latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on our economy and society.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on the countries and regions of Britain: April 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 May 2020

Indicators from the OPN to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people, households and communities in the countries and regions of Great Britain. This release uses four waves of survey results covering April 2020 to present results for Wales, Scotland and the nine English regions.