

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 25 September 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 16 to 20 September 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Understanding the impact on society](#)
3. [Leaving home](#)
4. [Preventative measures](#)
5. [Work](#)
6. [Return to schools and universities](#)
7. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
8. [Glossary](#)
9. [Measuring the data](#)
10. [Strengths and limitations](#)
11. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

- More than 9 in 10 (96%) adults who had left their homes said they had worn a face covering to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) at least once in the past seven days; this has been at a similar level since the end of July.
- There was a further small increase in the proportion of working adults travelling to work this week, with over 6 in 10 (64%) doing so (either exclusively or in combination with working from home), compared with 62% last week.
- Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) working adults said they had changed their work location during the pandemic and were planning on continuing to work from home at least some of the time.
- Among those planning to work from home all or part of the time, 12% said they have considered moving to a different location in the UK, most commonly to rural or coastal areas.
- More than 6 in 10 adults (63%) said they had socialised with between one and five other people from outside their household at the same time and a further 11% said they had socialised with six or more; this was similar for those in local lockdown areas (54% and 8% respectively).

Responses to this survey were taken before the UK Government and devolved administrations announced changes to national measures in response to the coronavirus on 22 September 2020.

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 2,500 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 16 and 20 September 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 1,689 responding adults (68% response rate).

It contains breakdowns of results by sex and for identified "at-risk" groups that have been advised to take additional precautions. This includes those aged 70 years and over and those with certain underlying health conditions. The full list of conditions is included in [Section 8: 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 16 to 20 September 2020 and "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 9 to 13 September 2020.

3 . Leaving home

More than 9 in 10 (96%) adults in Great Britain said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days. This percentage has steadily increased since lockdown measures started to ease and has been over 90% since the end of May (28 to 31 May 2020).

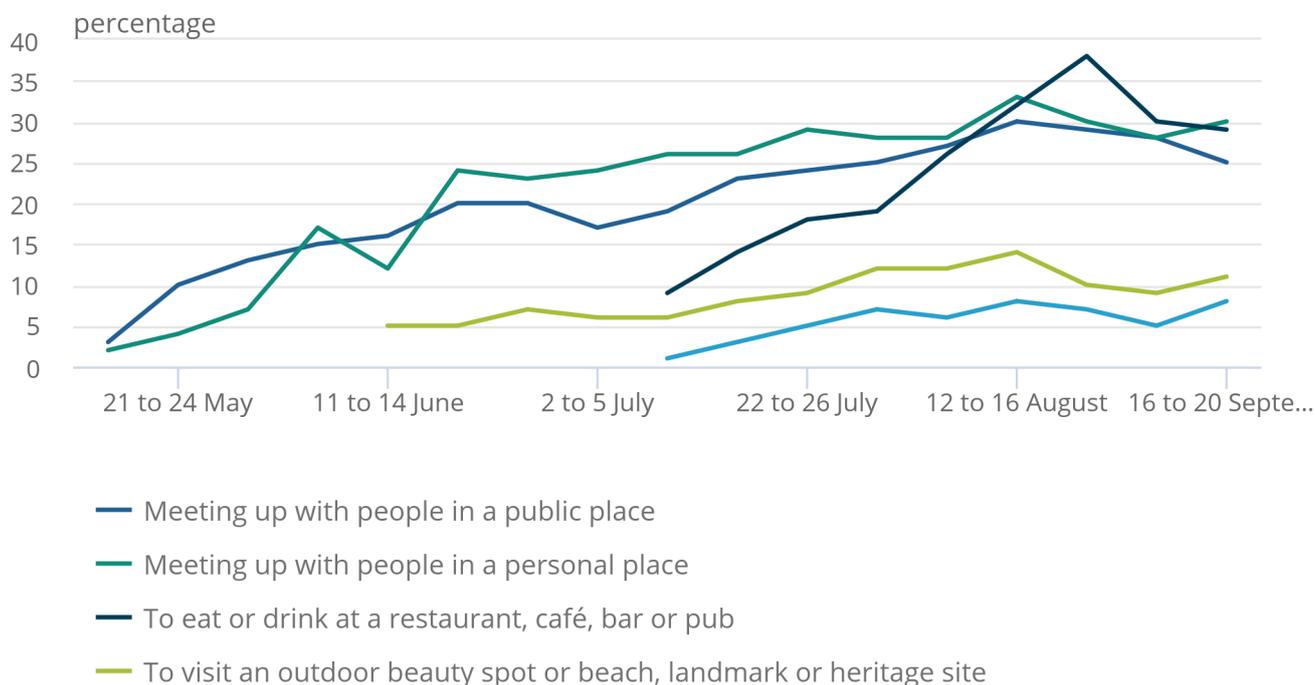
The percentage of adults that left their home to eat or drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub decreased for the second week in a row, following continued increases since early July. This week, less than one in three adults (29%) said they had done so, compared with 30% last week and 38% at the end of August (26 to 30 August) when the Eat Out to Help Out scheme ended.

Figure 1: Levels of socialising, eating out and travel have decreased this week after increasing through the summer

Great Britain, May 2020 to September 2020

Figure 1: Levels of socialising, eating out and travel have decreased this week after increasing through the summer

Great Britain, May 2020 to September 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. Base population: all adults.
3. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

Meeting other people and households

"Support bubbles" in England or "extended households" in Scotland and Wales are where your household can choose to join together with one other household to provide support and help avoid loneliness. We refer to both as "support bubbles" here.

This week, 6 in 10 (60%) adults said they had socialised indoors with at least one household, other than the household in their support bubble. A similar proportion (59%) said they had socialised outdoors with at least one household, excluding their support bubble.

Responses for this survey were collected after [new guidance](#) for England came into effect on 14 September restricting the number of people that are able to meet socially. However, respondents were asked about their socialising over the past seven days, therefore their responses this week may relate to before this guidance was put in place. Official guidance on social gathering varies across England, Wales and Scotland.

Under 3 in 10 adults (26%) said they had not socialised with anyone outside their household in the past seven days, slightly lower than last week (29%). Around 6 in 10 adults (63%) said they had socialised with between one and five other people at the same time, and a further 11% said they had socialised with a group of six or more other people compared with 57% and 13% respectively last week.

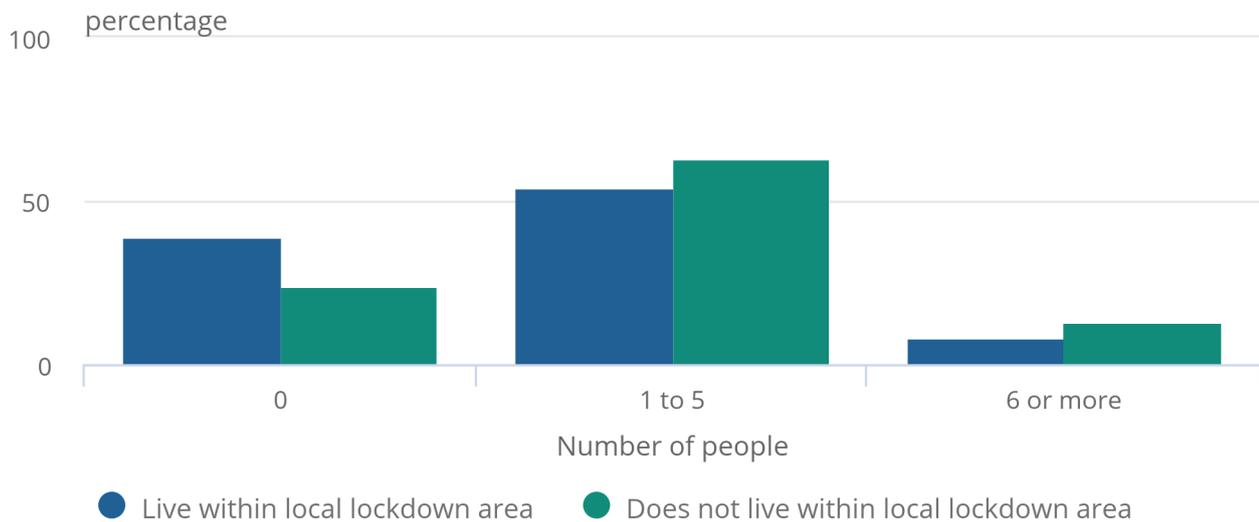
The levels of socialising also varied by whether someone was in a "[local lockdown](#)" area. Of those who said they were in a local lockdown area, 39% said they had not socialised with anyone outside of their household, while 54% said they had socialised with between one and five other people at the same time, and a further 8% said they had socialised with a group of six or more other people. For those who said they were not in a local lockdown area, 24% had not socialised with anyone outside their household, 63% had socialised with between one and five, and 13% with six or more.

Figure 2: Levels of socialising varied by whether someone was in a “local lockdown” area

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020

Figure 2: Levels of socialising varied by whether someone was in a “local lockdown” area

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, what is the maximum number of people from outside your household that you have socialised with at the same time?"
2. These estimates exclude people that are part of their "support bubble".
3. A person is considered to be in a local lockdown area if they self-reported as such. This has not been defined by an official list of areas in which people live.
4. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

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

Official guidance varies across England, Wales and Scotland.

Information about the coronavirus

Across Great Britain, nearly 9 in 10 adults (85%) said they had enough information about how to protect themselves from the coronavirus (COVID-19) and this has been at a similar level since June 2020.

This week, respondents were asked if they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic. Across Great Britain, over 4 in 10 adults (41%) said they felt they had. There was a greater variation between lockdown and non-lockdown areas, with 35% of adults living in an area currently under local lockdown reporting that they have enough information compared with 42% of those not in lockdown.

Face coverings

At the time of the survey, face coverings were mandatory on public transport, in shops and in some other enclosed spaces in England, Wales and Scotland. Some different rules applied in local lockdown areas.

More than 9 in 10 (96%) adults who had left their homes said they had worn a face covering to slow the spread of the coronavirus at least once in the past seven days – this has been at a similar level since the end of July.

Face coverings in schools

Over 9 in 10 (96%) adults with children or young people in their household that were due to start or return to school or college this autumn term said they had all attended. For those adults with children or young people attending school, just under half (46%) said that all or some of their children had worn a face covering in school compared with 38% last week. Of those whose children had worn a face covering, 75% said it was mandatory and 20% said it was voluntary.

At the time of the survey, it was mandatory for secondary school pupils to wear face coverings in corridors and communal areas in schools in Scotland, and for children aged five years and over to wear them on dedicated school transport. Face coverings were not mandatory in English schools, but government guidance gave schools and colleges discretion over their use. In Wales, guidance recommended face coverings for those aged over 11 years in indoor settings in which social distancing cannot be maintained, including schools and school transport.

Hand washing

In the past seven days, 7 in 10 (71%) adults who left their home said they always washed their hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place. This is a lower proportion (78%) to the end of May (28 to 31 May 2020), when lockdown measures started to ease. At the beginning of lockdown, over the period 27 March to 6 April 2020, 100% of adults said that in the past seven days they had washed their hands with soap and water to avoid infection.

This week, a lower percentage of men reported washing their hands compared with women (64% and 78% respectively).

5 . Work

Responses to the survey were collected before the change in government guidance on working from home was announced on 22 September 2020.

This week, half of working adults (52%) reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work, a similar percentage to last week at 50%.

The upward trend in the proportion of working adults that report travelling to work at least some of the time continues this week. Over 6 in 10 (64%) working adults travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, compared with 62% last week, the main change coming from those who had exclusively travelled to work. A similar proportion had worked exclusively at home this week - 21% compared with 20% last week.

Among those that had worked from home in the past seven days, the main reasons were:

- their employer had asked them to do so (70%)
- they normally worked from home (23%)
- they were following government advice (30%)

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

Figure 3: Over 6 in 10 working adults said they had travelled to work at some point in the past seven days

Great Britain, May to September 2020

Figure 3: Over 6 in 10 working adults said they had travelled to work at some point in the past seven days

Great Britain, May to September 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Base population for percentage: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in the [Glossary](#).
2. The main reasons for respondents neither working from home nor travelling to work (other) in the past seven days included temporary closure of business or workplace, on annual leave or sick leave, variable hours, being on maternity or paternity leave, and being unable to work because of caring responsibilities.
3. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Future plans for returning to work

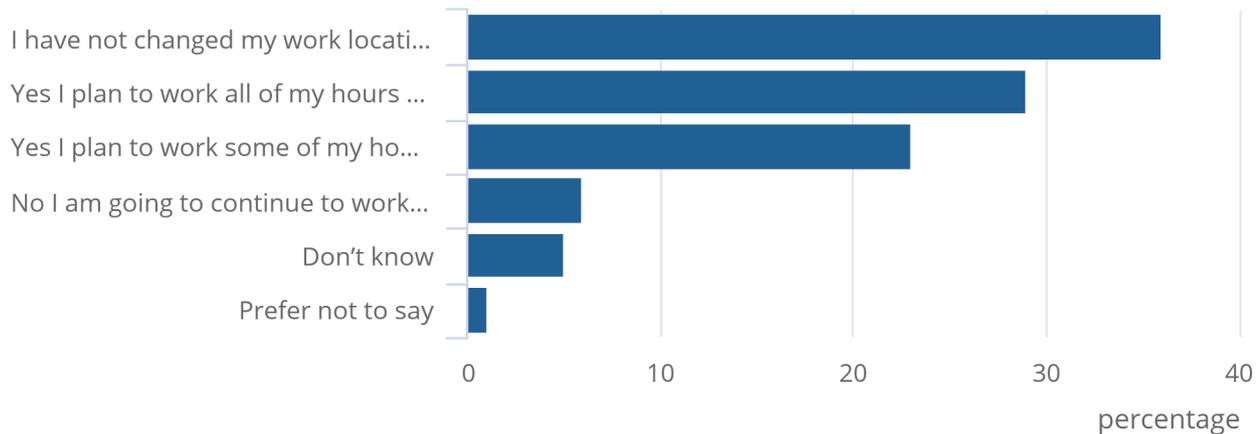
Many people have been working from home during the coronavirus pandemic. This week respondents were also asked about future plans for returning to a work location away from home.

Figure 4: Around 3 in 10 working adults said they will continue to work from home all or part of the time

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020

Figure 4: Around 3 in 10 working adults said they will continue to work from home all or part of the time

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: “Are you planning to return to a work location away from your home?”
2. Base population for percentage: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in the [Glossary](#).
3. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Less than 1 in 10 (6%) working adults said they are going to continue to work all of their hours from home. An additional 23% of working adults said they plan to work some hours at a work location, and some hours at home.

Among those continuing to work from home all or part of the time, 12% said they have considered moving to a different location in the UK. Of those thinking of moving, 60% said they were thinking of moving to a rural area, and 40% a coastal area.

6 . Return to schools and universities

Children and young people have started to return to schools and universities for the autumn term.

Of those whose children were due to start or return to school or college for the autumn term, 96% said all the children or young people in their household attended.

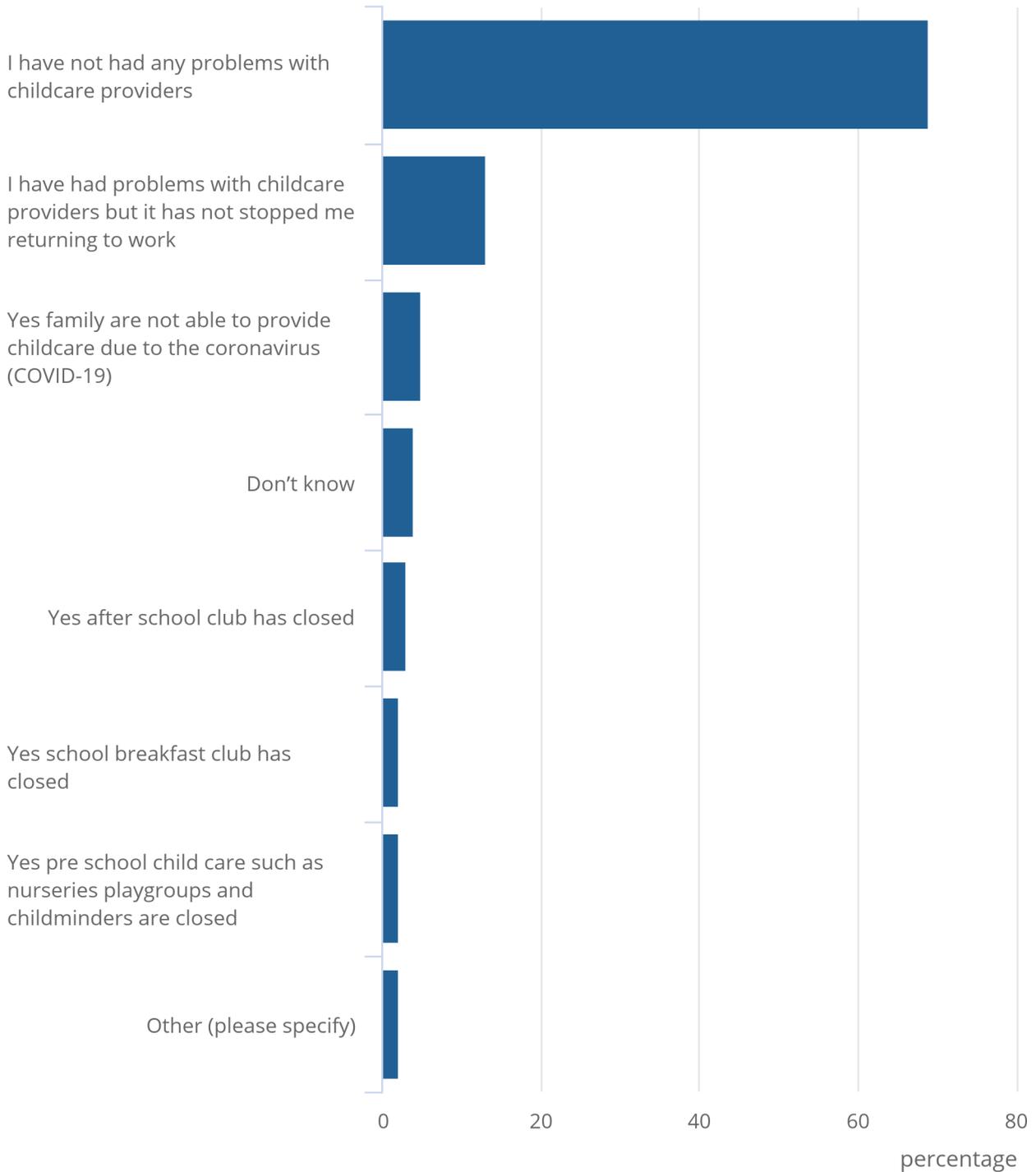
Among working adults with dependent children, 12% reported that they have had problems with childcare providers that have stopped them from returning to work or being able to work the number of hours that they wanted to. The most common reason being that family were not able to provide childcare because of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

Figure 5: More than 1 in 10 working adults with dependent children said they had problems with childcare providers that affected their work

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020

Figure 5: More than 1 in 10 working adults with dependent children said they had problems with childcare providers that affected their work

Great Britain, 16 to 20 September 2020



Notes:

1. Question: “In the past seven days, have you had problems with childcare providers that have stopped you from returning to work or being able to work the number of hours that you want to?”
2. Base population for percentage: working adults with dependent children. This definition of working adults is different to some other surveys and is included in the [Glossary](#).
3. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

This week also sees the start of the new university term for many students. Of those starting and returning to university this autumn, 43% said they will attend their university course online and in person. An additional 17% said they would attend all online, and 6% all in person. The majority of the remainder responded that they did not know.

7 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 25 September 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.

8 . Glossary

Underlying health condition

In this bulletin, adults with an underlying health condition include those with:

- Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- angina or a long-term heart problem
- asthma
- a learning disability such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or Asperger's (Asperger syndrome)
- conditions affecting the brain and nerves, such as Parkinson's disease
- cancer
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or a long-term lung problem
- diabetes
- kidney or liver disease
- a weakened immune system such as the result of conditions as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or treatment for cancer
- problems with your spleen -- for example, sickle cell disease, or if you have had your spleen removed
- being overweight (having a BMI of 40 or above)
- an organ transplant
- stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis
- rheumatoid arthritis

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 lockdown areas

A person is considered to be in a local lockdown area if they self-reported as such. This has not been defined by an official list of areas in which people live.

9 . 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, 2,500 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 68% (or 1,689 individuals) for the survey conducted from 16 to 20 September 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.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [OPN QMI](#).

Sampling

A sample of 2,500 households was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Force Survey (LFS). From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger people were given higher selection probability than older people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey.

Further information on the sample design can be found in the [OPN QMI](#).

Weighting

The responding sample contained 1,689 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, employment status, National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) group and smoking status. For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for September 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.

10 . 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:

- the sample size is relatively small: 2,500 individuals per week with fewer completed interviews, meaning that detailed analyses for subnational geographies and other sub-groups are not possible
- 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.

11 . 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 11 September 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 22 September 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](#)

Articles | 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.