

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 16 October 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 7 to 11 October 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

- Among those who have met up with people from outside their household either outdoors or indoors, the majority (82%) said they always or often maintained social distancing; the total proportion of those who said they did so sometimes, not very often, or never has stayed fairly consistent over the last three months and was 17% this week.
- A high percentage (99%) of those who wore a face covering in the past seven days while shopping, reported that they always or often wear a protective face covering while inside the shop to help slow the spread of the coronavirus; however, when asked about other shoppers a lower percentage (87%) said they saw everyone or almost everyone wearing protective face coverings.
- This week, around 7 in 10 (74%) adults were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now; the same proportion as two weeks ago, which was the highest proportion since the end of April.
- A higher percentage of those in local lockdown reported lack of freedom and independence (67%) as their main concern, compared with 56% of those not in local lockdown.
- This week, 65% of working adults travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, compared with 62% last week; this is the highest percentage since national lockdown restrictions started easing at the end of May.

Responses to this survey were taken before the UK government announced the introduction of local COVID alert levels in England on 12 October 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 2,200 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 7 and 11 October 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 1,663 responding adults (76% 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 7: 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 7 to 11 October 2020 and "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 30 September to 4 October 2020.

3 . Leaving home

More than 9 in 10 (95%) adults in Great Britain said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days.

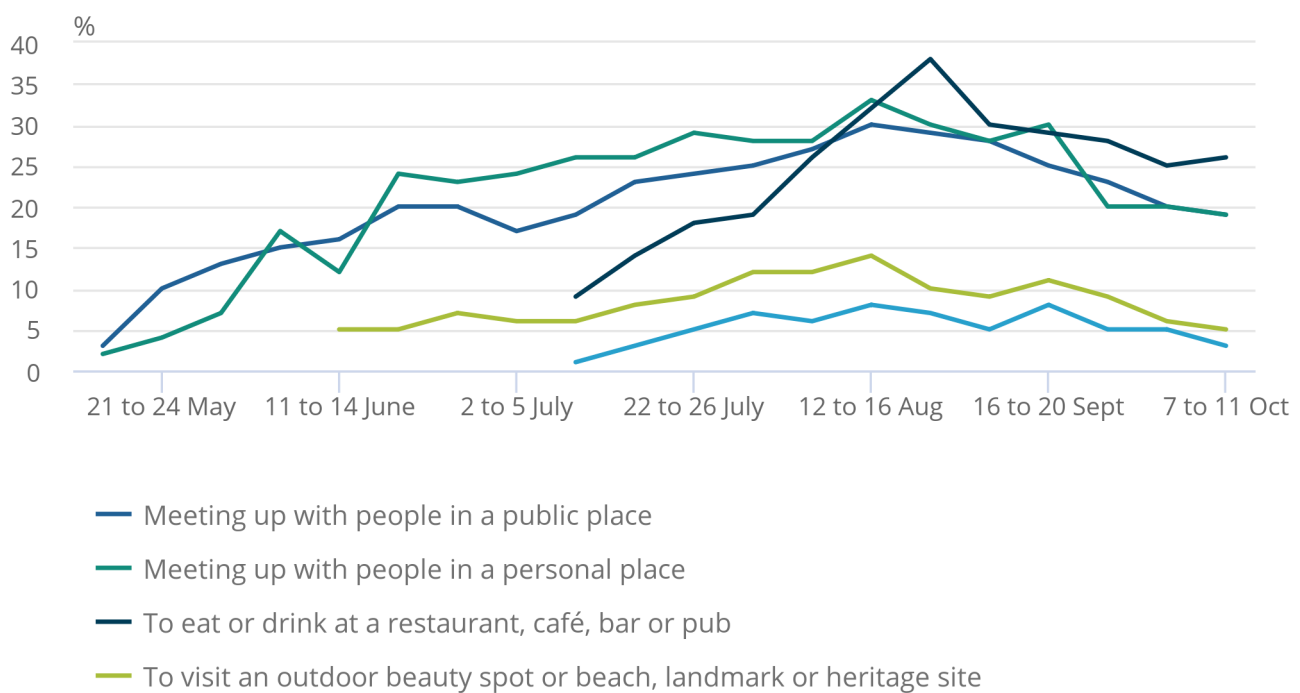
There were small reductions in the percentages of adults meeting people in a public or personal place, visiting an outdoor beauty spot, and travel within the UK for holidays and short breaks. The proportion of adults eating or drinking at a restaurant, café, bar or pub remained stable, at 26% this week compared with 25% last week. Among those, 11% reported that they always or very often order their food and drinks at the counter, compared with 7% last week.

Figure 1: Levels of socialising, visiting an outdoor beauty spot, and travel within the UK have continued to decrease this week after increasing through the summer

Great Britain, May 2020 to October 2020

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Great Britain, May 2020 to October 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.

Socialising

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

Around 6 in 10 (64%) adults strongly support or tend to support the "rule of six" measures in the country where they live. This was higher for those aged 70 years and over, at 79%. Around half of adults (56%) reported that these measures were very simple or simple. These are similar proportions to last week (64%, 80% and 56% respectively).

Social distancing

Among those who had socialised indoors or outdoors with people outside their household or support bubble in the past seven days, around 8 in 10 (82%) adults said they always or often maintained social distancing, the same proportion as last week. This was higher for those aged 70 years and over, at 91%. A lower percentage of those in local lockdown areas reported social distancing always or often, compared with those not in local lockdown (77% compared with 83%). However, it should be noted that this is not a [statistically significant](#) difference (see [Strengths and limitations](#) section). We will continue to monitor the differences between areas with higher local restrictions in future publications.

This week, 17% of adults said they sometimes, not very often, or never maintained social distancing. This has remained relatively consistent over the last three months (17% last week and 16% over the period 8 to 12 July 2020 when this question was first asked).

In England, local authorities are introducing the coronavirus "Secure Marshals" to help advise and support members of the public and businesses about the government's coronavirus measures on social distancing. Around 6 in 10 (58%) adults in England said they strongly support or tend to support their introduction, compared with 62% last week.

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 (98%) 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.

Of those who wore a face covering in the past seven days while shopping, 99% said they always or often wear a protective face covering while they were inside the shop to help slow the spread of the coronavirus. Around 9 in 10 (87%) also said that while they were in the shop in the last seven days they saw everyone or almost everyone wearing protective face coverings.

This week, we asked respondents how easy or difficult they find it to talk to someone who is wearing a protective face covering. Around 4 in 10 (38%) adults said they find it very easy or easy to talk to someone who is wearing a protective face covering.

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 . Impact on life and well-being

This week, around 7 in 10 (74%) adults were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now. This is the same proportion as two weeks ago, which was the highest proportion since the end of April (75% over the period 24 April to 3 May). The main concerns reported by adults were a lack of freedom and independence (58%), and personal travel plans being affected (55%).

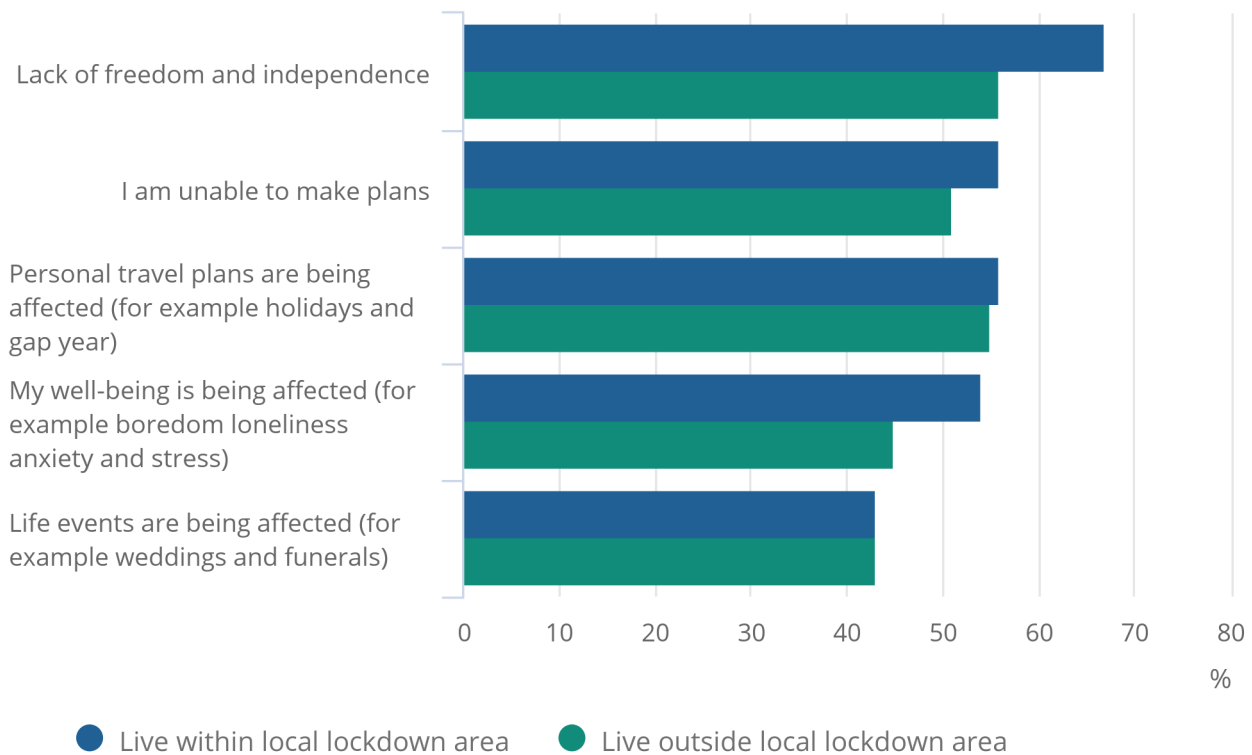
A similar percentage of adults in local lockdown areas reported that they are very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their life right now, compared with those not in local lockdown (76% compared with 75%). However, a higher percentage of those in local lockdown reported lack of freedom and independence (67%) and their well-being being affected (54%) as their main concerns, compared with those not in local lockdown (56% and 45% respectively).

Figure 2: A higher percentage of adults in local lockdown areas reported lack of freedom and independence as their main concern compared with those living outside local lockdown areas

Great Britain, 7 to 11 October 2020

Figure 2: A higher percentage of adults in local lockdown areas reported lack of freedom and independence as their main concern compared with those living outside local lockdown areas

Great Britain, 7 to 11 October 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "In which way is the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak affecting your life?"
2. Base: all adults.
3. This figure only includes the top five main concerns (highest proportion reported) about how coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting their lives. Other reported concerns are included in the [datasets](#).
4. 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.
5. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

This week, average anxiety scores for all adults remained relatively stable, at 4.0 compared with 4.3 last week – the highest figure since 3 to 13 April (4.9). A third of adults (33%) reported high anxiety levels (a score of 6 or above) rising to 40% of adults with a health condition.

Of those who said their well-being has been affected by the coronavirus, around 6 in 10 (57%) said they felt stressed or anxious, and a similar proportion (60%) said they felt worried about the future. These are lower percentages compared with last week (63% and 64% respectively).

Average scores for life satisfaction (6.8), worthwhile (7.4) and happiness yesterday (7.0) are around similar levels to last week.

5 . Impact on work

This week, half of working adults (49%) reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work, a similar proportion to last week (50%).

Despite government guidance to work from home wherever possible on 22 September 2020, there is no indication that the longer-term trend of travelling to work has changed.

This week, 65% of working adults travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days compared with 62% last week. This is the highest percentage since national lockdown restrictions started easing at the end of May.

The proportion of people travelling to work increased this week to 54%, up from 48% last week. This was met with a corresponding decrease in the proportion of people who are not in work for reasons such as temporary closure of their business or workplace, being on annual leave, or being unable to work because of caring responsibilities, or being furloughed (12% this week, down from 17% last week). The percentage that worked exclusively at home this week also remained stable – 23% compared with 22% 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 (59%)
- they were following government advice (50%)
- they normally worked from home (24%)

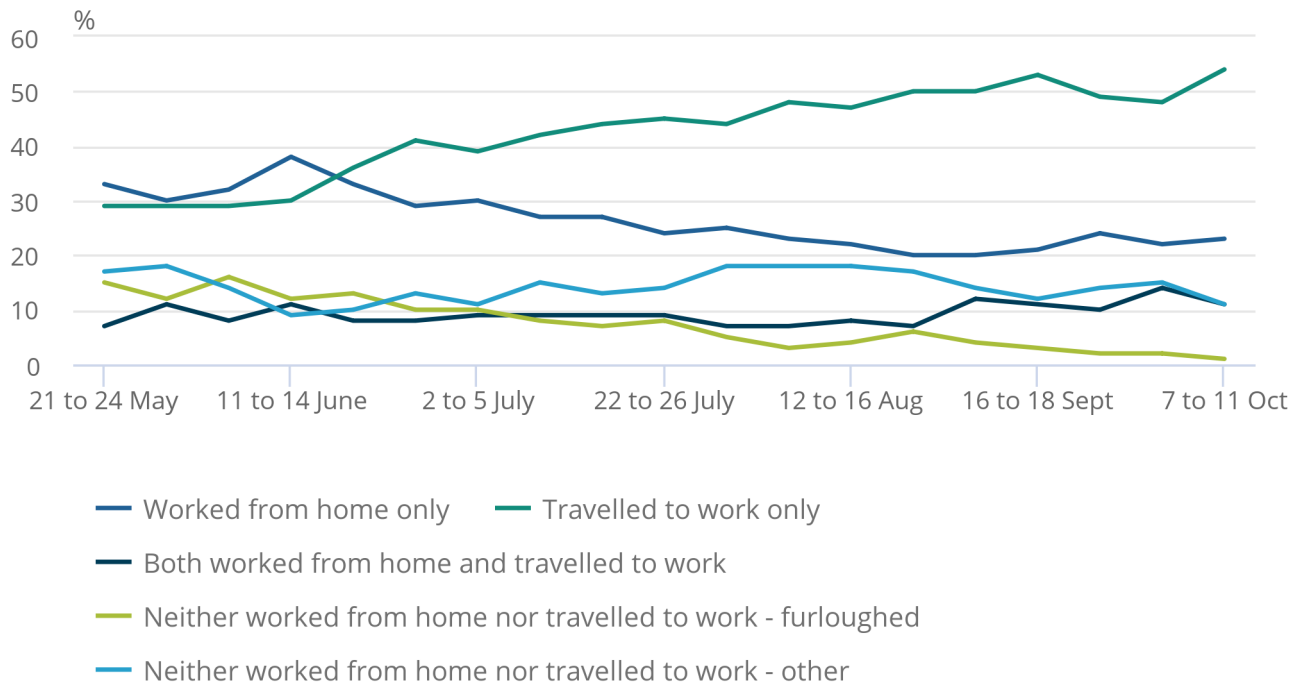
Official estimates of labour market participation can be found in the [Labour market overview](#).

Figure 3: The percentage of working adults that had travelled to work in the past seven days is at its highest point since national lockdown restrictions started easing

Great Britain, May to October 2020

Figure 3: The percentage of working adults that had travelled to work in the past seven days is at its highest point since national lockdown restrictions started easing

Great Britain, May to October 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 include temporary closure of business or workplace, on annual leave or sick leave, variable hours, being on maternity or paternity leave or being unable to work because of caring responsibilities.
3. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

6 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 16 October 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.

7 . Glossary

Underlying health condition

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

- 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

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.

8 . 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, 2,200 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 76% (or 1,663 individuals) for the survey conducted from 7 to 11 October 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 2,200 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.

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

Weighting

The responding sample contained 1,663 individuals (76% 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.

9 . 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: 2,200 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

10 . 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 2 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.