

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 26 March 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 17 March to 21 March 2021 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

- Compliance with most measures to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) remained high this week, with 89% of adults reporting always or often handwashing after returning home (88% last week) and 97% using a face covering (same as last week).
- Since mid-January 2021 (13 to 17 January), more people are leaving home in the last seven days to visit a park or local green space (21% this week, compared with 14% in mid-January); to take children or young people to or from school, college or nursery (16% this week, compared with 5%), or to meet up with people in a public space (12% this week, compared with 5%).
- At least 23% of adults have met up with someone outside their household or support bubble outdoors (excluding work or education); this is a 4 percentage point increase to last week (19%) and a substantial rise since mid-February (14% in the period 10 to 14 February).
- Just over half (51%) of working adults reported leaving home for work in the past seven days; a slight fall from the 53% reported last week despite seeing an increase in the proportion since mid-February (44% in the period 10 to 14 February 2021).
- Personal well-being measures of happiness (6.9) and anxiety (3.9) remained the same as the levels reported last week, following previous gradual improvement throughout 2021; the level of life satisfaction (6.7) and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.2) saw a slight reduction this week following the positive trend seen in recent weeks.
- Positive sentiment towards the COVID-19 vaccine remained high; 94% of adults reported they had now either received a vaccine or would be likely to have a vaccine if offered; the same as last week.
- The most commonly reported reasons why not to have the vaccine, from adults who had declined or were unlikely to have the vaccine, were: feeling worried about the long-term effects on their health (41%); feeling worried about the side effects (36%); and wanting to wait to see how well the vaccine works (34%).
- The majority of adults reported no difficulties when getting the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, based on both experiences of those who have had the vaccine (92%) and expectations of those yet to be vaccinated (84%); and people experienced less barriers when getting the vaccine than their expectations.

2 . Understanding the impact on society

This bulletin contains data and indicators from a 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 bulletin presents a summary of the results. Breakdowns by age, sex, region and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

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 differences.

The latest statistics in this release are based on a survey of 6,027 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 17 and 21 March 2021 (inclusive). Results from this period are based on 4,438 responding adults (74% response rate). Throughout the bulletin:

- "this week" refers to responses collected during the period 17 to 21 March 2021
- "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 10 to 14 March 2021

3 . Main indicators

Compliance with most measures to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) remained high this week (Table 1), with 89% of adults reporting always or often handwashing after returning home (88% last week) and 97% using a face covering (same as last week).

This week there appeared to be a fall in adults avoiding physical contact when outside their home to 88% compared with 92% last week, but this decrease is not significant.

Table 1: Main Indicators

Great Britain, 10 to 21 March

Notes:

1. "This week" refers to responses collected during the period 17 to 21 March 2021.
2. "Last week" refers to responses collected during the period 10 to 14 March 2021.

[Data download](#)

Further statistics on compliance with measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus, including trends over time, can be found in Tables 1a to 6 of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

More about coronavirus

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

Reasons for leaving home

Over 9 in 10 (93%) adults in Great Britain reported leaving home this week, similar to last week at 94%.

Figure 1 shows some of the reasons adults have reported for leaving home that have shown the largest increases since mid-January.

This week, of adults who reported leaving home:

- 16% did so to take children or young people to or from school, college or nursery, reaching similar proportions as before Christmas; this reduced to 5% in mid-January
- 21% did so to visit a park or local green space (14% in mid-January)
- 12% did so to meet up with people in a public place (5% in mid-January)
- 11% did so to shop for things other than basic necessities such as food and medicine (5% in mid-January)
- 16% did so for any medical need, including to get a COVID-19 vaccine (11% in mid-January)
- 14% did so to collect takeaway food or drinks from a restaurant, bar or pub (9% in mid-January)

Figure 1: Leaving home to take young people to or from education, and to meet up with people in a public space continues to increase

Of adults who reported they had left home in the past seven days for any reason, Great Britain, December 2020 to March 2021

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?".
2. Base: adults who reported they had left home in the past seven days for any reason.
3. Not all possible response categories are shown on this chart. For information on response options to these questions, please see Table 6 of the dataset associated with this bulletin.

[Data downloads](#)

Leaving home to meet others

We asked respondents to think of their largest gathering in the last seven days and found that:

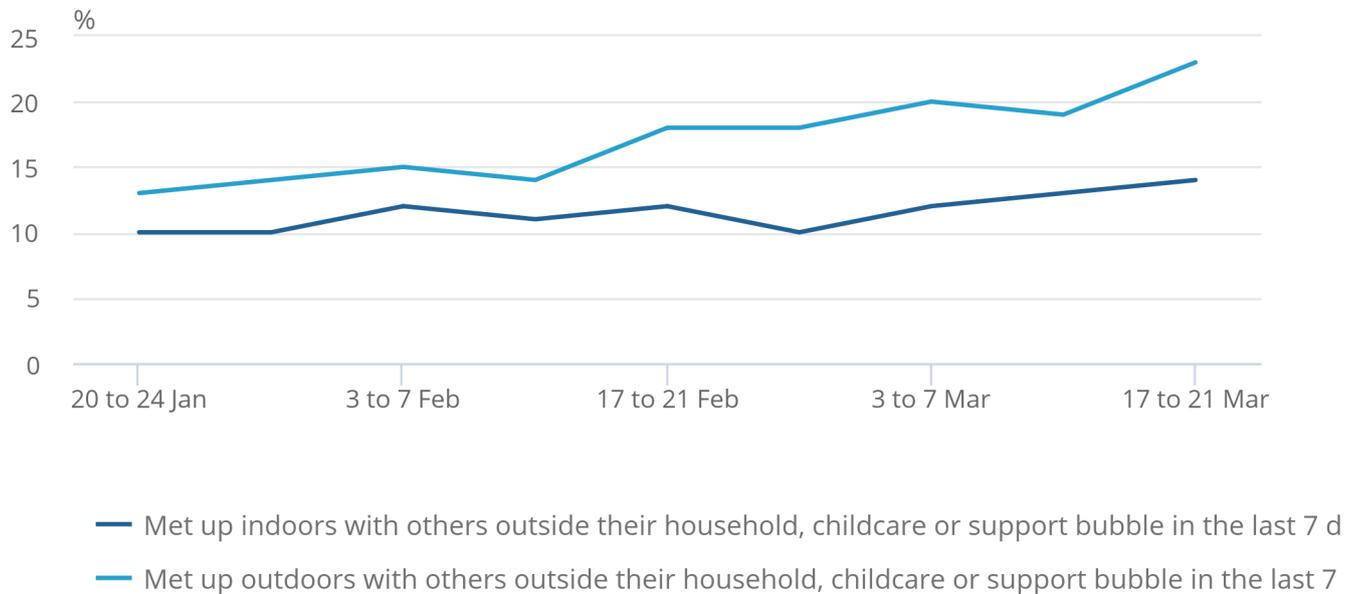
- at least 14% of adults have met up indoors with someone outside their household, childcare or support bubble (excluding work or education); this was similar to last week (13%) and has increased steadily in recent weeks
- at least 23% of adults have met up with someone outside their household, childcare or support bubble outdoors (excluding work or education); this is a 4 percentage point increase to last week (19%) and a substantial rise since mid-February (14% in the period 10 to 14 February)

Figure 2: The proportion of adults meeting up outdoors with someone not in their household, childcare or support bubble has increased to nearly a quarter (23%)

Adults in Great Britain, January 2021 to March 2021

Figure 2: The proportion of adults meeting up outdoors with someone not in their household, childcare or support bubble has increased to nearly a quarter (23%)

Adults in Great Britain, January 2021 to March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics - Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Questions: "Excluding work or education, please think of the largest group that you have met with indoors in the past seven days. How many people were in the group including yourself?", "Excluding work or education, please think of the largest group that you have met with outdoors in the past seven days. How many people were in the group including yourself?" and "How many of those people were from outside your household, support, or childcare bubble?".
2. Base: all adults.

When looking at those who had met up with others outside their household, childcare or support bubble (either indoors or outdoors), 87% of adults reported always or often maintaining social distance when meeting up with people outside their support bubble this week (88% last week).

It is worth noting that there may be valid reasons why people are unable to maintain social distancing (essential appointments, shopping, and so on) and it does not necessarily mean that adults are breaking lockdown rules.

Leaving home for work

This week, just over half (51%) of working adults reported leaving home for work in the past seven days. This proportion has been gradually increasing since mid-February (44% in the period 10 to 14 February 2021) but has fallen slightly from the 53% reported last week.

Looking at this week in more detail:

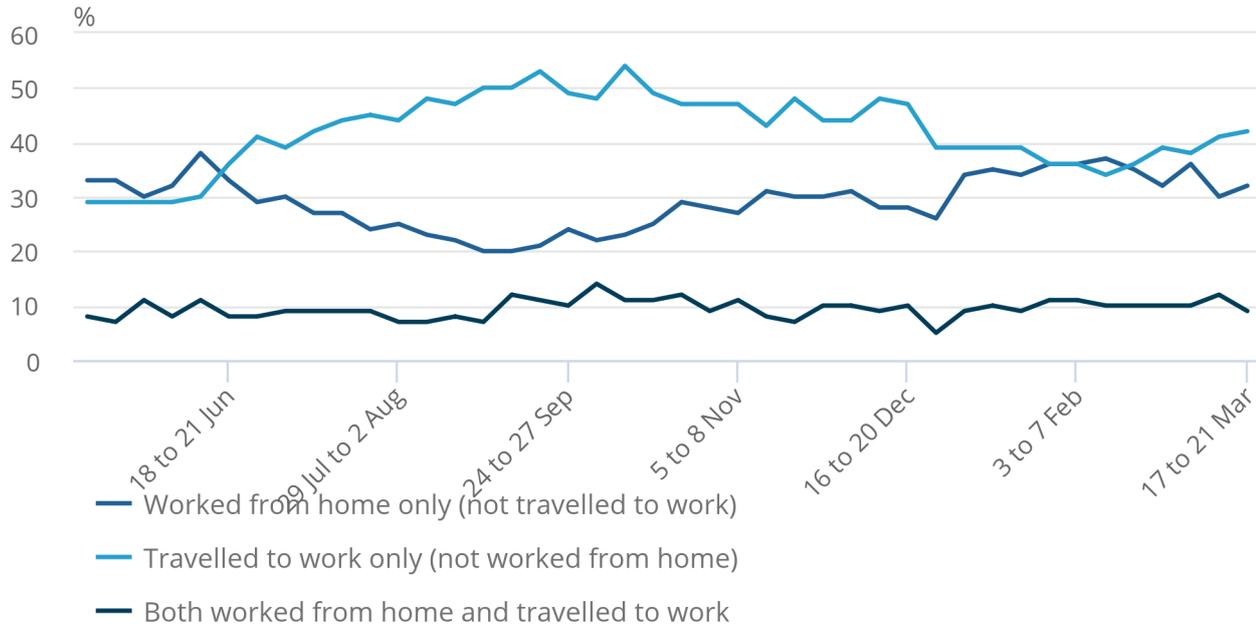
- The proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days this week (42%) was similar to last week (41%).
- The proportion of working adults reporting working from home exclusively in the past seven days was 32% this week compared with 30% last week.
- Just under 1 in 10 (9%) working adults reported both working from home and travelling to work this week compared with over 12% last week (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days is gradually increasing

Working adults in Great Britain, May 2020 to March 2021

Figure 3: The proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days is gradually increasing

Working adults in Great Britain, May 2020 to March 2021



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: all working adults.
3. Over the Christmas period, there were lower numbers of adults who said they had either travelled to work or worked from home in the last seven days. This was most likely because of changing work plans over the Christmas break.
4. A person is "working" if they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; or they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.
5. Response categories for "Furlough" and "Other" are not shown on this chart.

4 . Personal well-being

This week, personal well-being measures of happiness (6.9) and anxiety (3.9) remained the same as the levels reported last week, following previous gradual improvement throughout 2021.

The level of life satisfaction (6.7) and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.2) saw a slight reduction this week following the positive trend seen in recent weeks (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Levels of life satisfaction and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile fall slightly from last week

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to March 2021

Notes:

1. Questions: "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?" and "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. These questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

[Data download](#)

5 . Perceptions of the future

This week, just under 3 in 10 (29%) adults in Great Britain felt that life will return to normal in six months or less (30% last week).

After a period of optimism at the beginning of March, this week the proportion of adults that felt it will take more than a year for life to return to normal increased to 23% from the 21% reported last week (Figure 5).

Figure 5: This week, nearly a quarter (23%) of adults reported they felt it will take more than a year for life to return to normal

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to March 2021

Notes:

1. Question: "How long do you think it will be before your life returns to normal?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Response categories of "7 to 12 months", "Never", "Not sure" and "Prefer not to say" are not shown on this chart.

[Data download](#)

Further statistics on how both people and businesses have adapted their behaviour through the COVID-19 pandemic is available in [Comparing behaviours and economic activity during lockdown periods: March 2021](#).

Further statistics on well-being, loneliness, perceptions of the future and worries, including trends over time, can be found in Table 1b, Table 7 and Table 8 of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

6 . Attitudes to COVID-19 vaccination

This week, 94% of adults reported they had now either received at least one dose of a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine or would be likely (very or fairly likely) to have a vaccine if offered. This is the same as last week, and includes adults who have accepted and are waiting to receive one.

In early December 2020, around 8 in 10 (78%) adults indicated they would be likely to accept a vaccine if offered it (Figure 6).

The estimates presented here are from a sample of adults, and may differ from the latest official administrative data on the [number of adults in Great Britain and its constituent countries who have received COVID-19 vaccination](#).

Figure 6: Over 9 in 10 (94%) adults have received or would be likely to accept a COVID-19 vaccine if offered

Adults in Great Britain, December 2020 to March 2021

Notes:

1. Questions: "Have you received a vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19)?", "Have you been offered the vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19)?" and "If a vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19) was offered to you, how likely or unlikely would you be to have the vaccine?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Questions asked about attitudes toward COVID-19 vaccination have changed over the survey periods shown so interpretation of this time series should be made with caution. For more information please see the datasets associated with this bulletin.
4. Categories of "Adults who have been offered and declined the vaccine or would be very or fairly unlikely to have the vaccine if offered", "Neither", "Don't know" and "Prefer not to say" are not shown on this chart.

[Data download](#)

The 94% of adults in Great Britain this week who reported this "positive vaccine sentiment"¹ is made up of those who reported either that they:

- had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (52%)
- had been offered a vaccine and were awaiting it (7%)
- had not yet been offered a vaccine but were likely (very or fairly) to have one when offered (35%)

Positive vaccine sentiment appeared to increase with age, with the majority (98%) of adults aged 50 to 69 years or 70 years and over (99%) reporting they had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, were awaiting one, or would be likely to accept one if offered. This is compared with 85% of adults aged 16 to 29 years and 93% of adults aged 30 to 49 years. (Figure 7).

Our survey does not include adults living in care homes or other establishments, so will not capture vaccinations in these settings. Because of small sample sizes, the percentage of adults who have declined the vaccine should be treated with caution. For more information please see the [Glossary](#).

Figure 7: 98% of adults aged 50 to 69 years said they had received at least one dose of a vaccine, were awaiting one or would be likely to accept one

Adults in Great Britain, 17 to 21 March 2021

Notes:

1. Questions: "Have you received a vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19)?", "Have you been offered the vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19)?" and "If a vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19) was offered to you, how likely or unlikely would you be to have the vaccine?".
2. Base: all adults.
3. Totals may not sum to 100% because of rounding and because proportions of less than 1% are not included in this chart.

[Data download](#)

Of all adults who said they would be unlikely to have a COVID-19 vaccine if offered, or had decided not to have a vaccine when offered, people appeared to be more worried about the side effects than whether the vaccine was safe. The most commonly reported reasons were:

- feeling worried about the long-term effects on their health (41% this week, 43% last week)
- feeling worried about the side effects (36% this week, 29% last week)
- wanting to wait to see how well the vaccine works (34% this week, 30% last week)
- preferring someone in more need of the vaccine to receive it before me (29% this week, 25% last week)
- feeling that coronavirus is not a personal risk (27% this week, 22% last week)
- not thinking it will be safe (26% this week, 31% last week)

The proportions of all possible reasons why not, as well as further statistics on attitudes to vaccines this week can be found in Table 12 of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

Barriers to vaccination

This week, we also looked at the barriers people either faced or expected to face when getting their vaccine. We asked adults who have received at least one dose of the vaccine to tell us whether they experienced any difficulties when getting the vaccine. We also asked adults who have not yet received a vaccine to tell us whether they were expecting any difficulties.

We found that the majority of adults reported no difficulties when getting the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, based on both experience (92%) and expectation (84%). This suggests that people experienced less barriers when getting the vaccine than their expectations.

Looking at the various barriers that people experienced, or expected to experience, we found that;

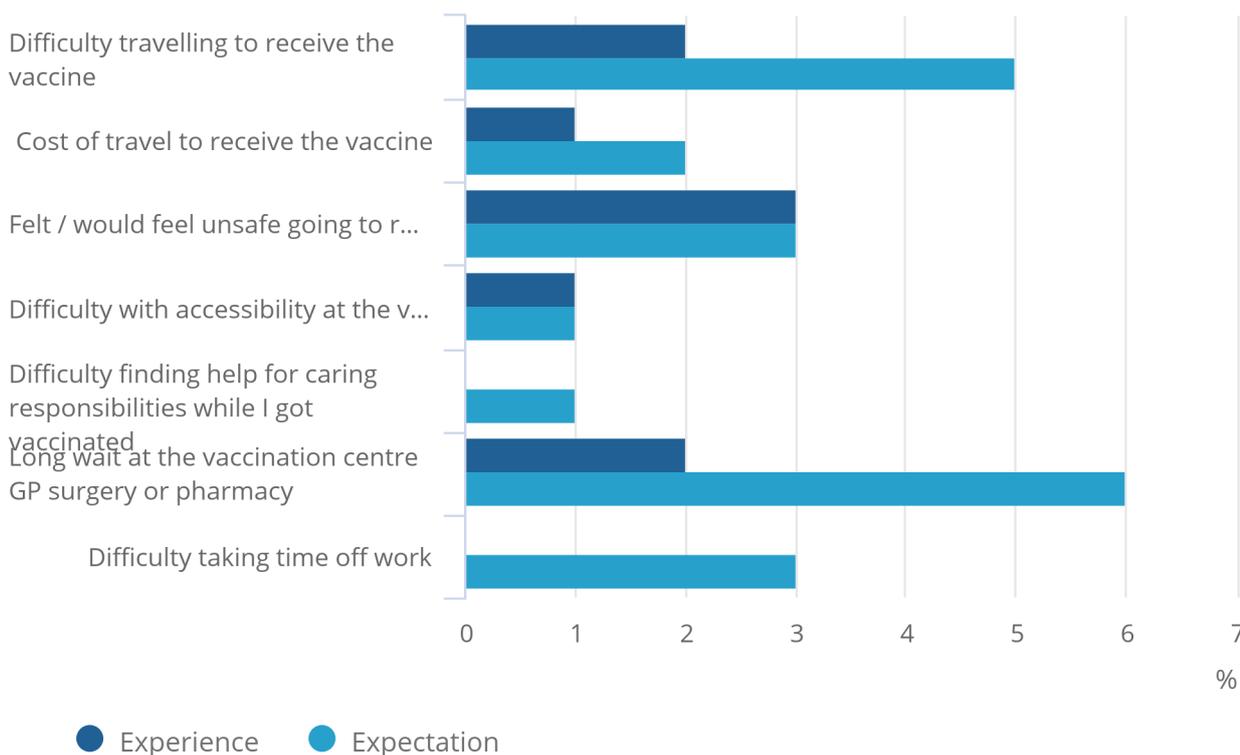
- more adults (6%) expected a long wait at the vaccination centre, GP surgery or pharmacy than adults that had experienced this wait (2%)
- a similar proportion of adults reported that they felt unsafe (3%) or would feel unsafe (3%) going to get the vaccine due to the risk of catching coronavirus (COVID-19)
- 3% of adults expected to experience difficulty taking time off work, while less than 1% of adults experienced this difficulty. It is important to note that a high proportion of adults reporting their experience to getting vaccinated were in the older age groups and not necessarily in the working age population.

Figure 8: More adults (6%) expected a long wait at the vaccination centre, GP surgery or pharmacy than adults that had experienced this wait (2%)

Adults who have received at least one dose of the vaccine, along with adults who have not yet received a vaccine in Great Britain, 17 to 21 March 2021

Figure 8: More adults (6%) expected a long wait at the vaccination centre, GP surgery or pharmacy than adults that had experienced this wait (2%)

Adults who have received at least one dose of the vaccine, along with adults who have not yet received a vaccine in Great Britain, 17 to 21 March 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Questions: " Did you experience any of the following difficulties when going to get your vaccine?" and " Are you expecting any of the following difficulties when going to get your vaccine?".
2. Base: adults who have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and adults who are yet to receive a dose of the vaccine.
3. Proportions of less than 1% are not included in this chart.
4. The category "Other, please specify" are not shown on this chart.

For more information on attitudes to COVID-19 vaccines among different sub-groups of the population, including breakdowns by age, sex, ethnic group and disability status, see:

- [Coronavirus and vaccine hesitancy by sub-group, Great Britain: 13 January to 7 February 2021](#)
- [Coronavirus and vaccine attitudes and behaviours in England: over 80s population, 15 February to 20 February 2021](#)

Notes for: Attitudes to COVID-19 vaccination

1. Totals for the combined category of “positive vaccine sentiment” or “vaccine hesitancy” may appear to be different than if combining the individual category estimates shown in Figure 6 because of rounding.

7 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 26 March 2021

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.

[Worries about return to school or college](#)

Dataset | Released 12 March 2021

Analysis on worries about children or young people's return to school or college. Based on the coronavirus (COVID-19) module of the OPN, collected between 3 and 7 March 2021.

[Coronavirus and vaccine hesitancy, Great Britain](#) Dataset | Released 8 March 2021\ Estimates of vaccine sentiment with breakdowns by different population groups, and the reasons for reporting negative vaccine sentiment for these groups. Analysis based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

[Coronavirus and homeschooling in Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 19 February 2021

Analysis of homeschooling in Great Britain during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). Data relate to homeschooling from the COVID-19 module of the OPN, collected between 13 January and February 2021.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: February 2021](#)

Dataset | Released 11 March 2021

Indicators from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey to understand the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain.

8 . Glossary

Lockdown

On 5 January 2021, the UK government announced a further national lockdown for [England](#). Similar rules applied for [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#), particularly the message to "stay at home" meaning that adults in Great Britain were under a national lockdown at the start of the year in 2021.

On 22 February 2021, the UK government published a four-step [roadmap](#) to ease lockdown restrictions in England. On 23 February, the Scottish government published an update to the [strategic framework](#) for easing lockdown restrictions in Scotland. In Wales, from 13 March stay at home restrictions were replaced with [stay local restrictions](#).

Personal well-being

Personal well-being measures ask people to evaluate, on a scale of 0 to 10, how satisfied they are with their life overall, whether they feel the things they do in life are worthwhile, and happiness and anxiety yesterday.

For the latest estimates of personal well-being available from the Annual Population Survey (APS) and more information on the comparability of estimates of personal well-being between the APS and the estimates provided in this bulletin from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), see [Personal well-being in the UK, quarterly: April 2011 to September 2020](#).

Vaccination for COVID-19

Following the first coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine being given in the UK on 8 December 2020, COVID-19 vaccination is now being provided in various locations across the country. The vaccines are currently being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local vaccination centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres.

[National Health Service \(NHS\) guidance on the COVID-19 vaccines](#) is available.

More information on the [number of people who have received a COVID-19 vaccine to date](#) is available.

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

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 the latest wave, 6,027 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 74% (or 4,438 individuals) for the survey conducted from 17 to 21 March 2021.

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. Survey estimates may be subject to non-response bias, which could result in some groups of the population being less likely to take part. Steps have been taken to minimise the impact of non-response bias, which can be found in published information about the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

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.

Estimates in this bulletin are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where individual answer categories for a question have been combined to provide an estimate, this total may not appear to sum to the total of individual categories because of this rounding.

Estimates of attitudes towards vaccination provided since 13 to 17 January should be used with caution when compared with any weeks prior to this. In the weeks prior to this, adults were asked their likelihood of having a vaccine if offered, but were not specifically asked if they had already been offered or received a vaccine.

Sampling

A sample of 6,027 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 people were given higher selection probability than other people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey. The survey also includes a boosted sample for England, to allow more detailed analysis at a regional level, which are available in the [datasets](#).

Weighting

The responding sample in the week 17 to 21 March 2021 contained 4,438 individuals (74% 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 March 2021 were used. The resulting weighted sample is therefore representative of the Great Britain adult population by a number of socio-demographic factors and geography.

For more information, see the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

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:

- analysis of estimates in Wales and Scotland are based on low sample sizes, and therefore caution should be used with these estimates
- 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.

[Comparing behaviours and economic activity during lockdown periods: March 2021](#)

Article Released 19 March 2021

Understanding how COVID-19 has affected society, work, mobility and consumer consumption during the different lockdown periods.

[Coronavirus and vaccine hesitancy by sub-group, Great Britain: 13 January to 7 February 2021](#)

Article | Released 8 March 2021

Analysis of differences in hesitancy to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine between sub-groups of the population in Great Britain, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 13 January to 7 February 2021.

[Coronavirus and vaccine attitudes and behaviours in England: over 80s population, 15 February to 20 February 2021](#)

Article | Released 4 March 2021

Analysis of people aged over 80 years in England during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including attitudes, behaviours and well-being in relation to the COVID-19 vaccination.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on behaviours during different lockdown periods, Great Britain: up to February 2021](#)

Article | Released 5 February 2021

Attitudes towards staying and working at home, meetings in personal and public places, compliance with lockdown rules, well-being and when life will return to normal.

[Quarterly estimates of personal well-being in the UK: April 2011 to September 2020](#)

Article | Released 4 February 2021

Quarterly estimates of life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety at the UK level, created using the Annual Population Survey (APS). Covering the periods from Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2011 through to Quarter 3 (July to Sept) 2020.

[Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: January 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 20 January 2021

Estimates looking across personal and economic well-being covering the period from March to December 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.