

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 23 October 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 14 to 18 October 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Contact:  
Tim Vizard  
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.  
gov.uk  
+44 (0)1633 455278

Release date:  
23 October 2020

Next release:  
30 October 2020

## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Understanding the impact on society](#)
3. [Leaving home](#)
4. [Preventative measures](#)
5. [Impact on life and well-being](#)
6. [Impact on work](#)
7. [Impact on school](#)
8. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
9. [Glossary](#)
10. [Measuring the data](#)
11. [Strengths and limitations](#)
12. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Main points

- Levels of socialising indoors in the past seven days were reduced when an individual was in a “local lockdown” area; 17% of those in a local lockdown area said they had not met up indoors with anyone, compared with 11% not in local lockdown.
- Among the 4% of adults who had met up indoors in a group with more than six people, 11% met up with only people from their household, while 56% met up for one of the following reasons: worship service, sports or exercise or child’s activity class.
- Among those who have met up with people from outside their household either outdoors or indoors, the majority (84%) 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 16% this week.
- A lower percentage of those living in local lockdown areas reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic, compared with those not in local lockdown (40% compared to 47%).
- This week, around 7 in 10 (76%) adults were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now; this has increased gradually since the end of the summer (64% over the period 26 to 30 August).
- Adults anxiety scores remained at the highest (4.3) since the beginning of April, and life satisfaction is at its lowest point (6.7), while other measures of personal wellbeing remained stable compared to last week.

Responses to this survey were taken after the UK government announced the introduction of local COVID alert levels in England on 12 October 2020. The analysis includes breakdowns by those living inside and outside local lockdown. This is self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user’s interpretation of lockdown, and may differ from the tier 2 and tier 3 guidance in England. There is also different guidance on local lockdowns in Wales and Scotland.

## 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 14 and 18 October 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 1,653 responding adults (75% response rate).

It contains breakdowns of results by self-reported local lockdown area, 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 definition of local lockdown and full list of conditions is included in [Section 9: 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 14 to 18 October 2020 and “last week” refers to responses collected during the period 7 to 11 October 2020.

There will be a reduced bulletin on 30 October. This is because of methodological changes to the survey, which will increase the achieved weekly sample in England to allow more detailed analytical breakdowns in this report.

### **3 . 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.

This week there was a decrease in the percentage of adults leaving home to eat or drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub, at 20% compared with 26% last week. The proportion of adults meeting up with people in a public or personal place, visiting an outdoor beauty spot, and travel within the UK for holidays and short breaks remained relatively stable.

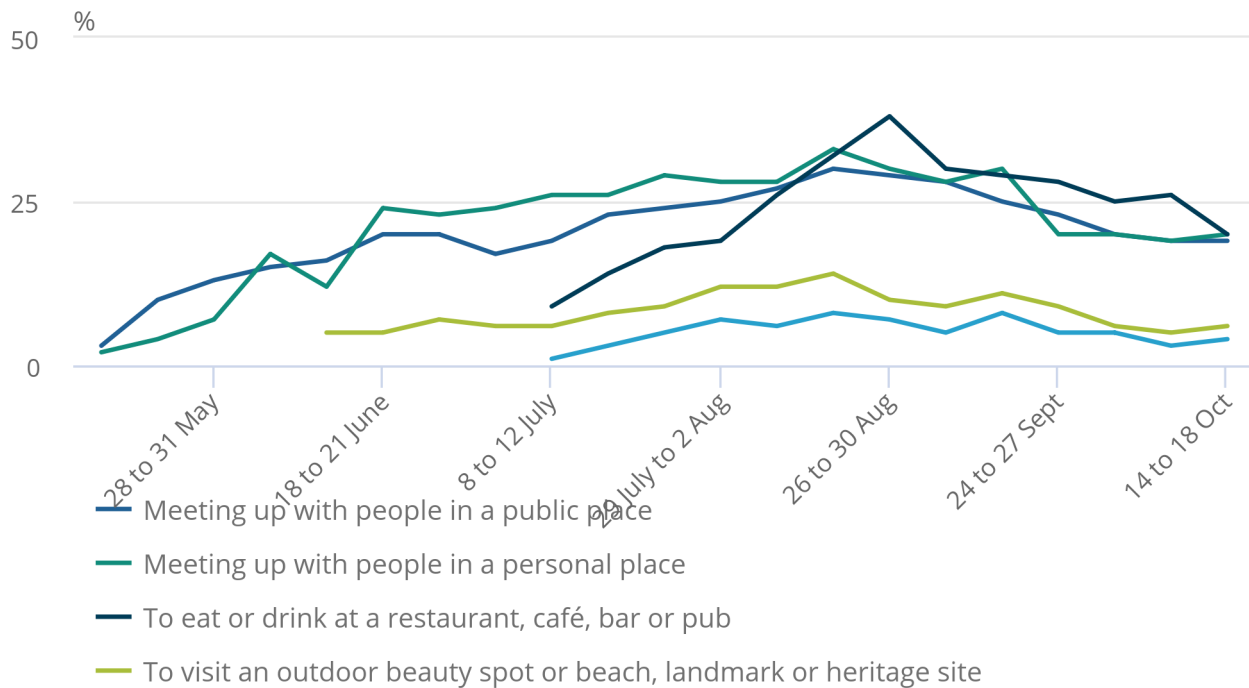
A similar percentage of those living in local lockdown areas reported leaving home to eat or drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub, compared with those not in a local lockdown area, at 19% and 21% respectively. However, a lower percentage of those living in local lockdown areas met up with people in a personal place compared with those not in local lockdown (12% compared to 25%).

**Figure 1: Levels of eating out have continued to decrease this week after increasing through the summer**

Great Britain, May 2020 to October 2020

Figure 1: Levels of eating out have continued to decrease this week after increasing through the summer

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 7 in 10 (68%) adults strongly support or tend to support the "rule of six" measures in the country where they live. This appeared higher for those aged 70 years and over, at 81%. This week, 60% of adults reported that these measures were very simple or simple. For all three of these estimates, the proportions are similar to last week (64%, 79% and 56% respectively).

This week, respondents were asked to think of the largest group they had met up with indoors (excluding work or education), in the past seven days, including themselves. Around 1 in 10 (14%) adults had not met up with anyone indoors in the past seven days. A further 82% said they had met up indoors with between two and six people including themselves.

Fewer than 1 in 20 (4%) adults said they had met up indoors with a group of more than six people including themselves in the past seven days. Among those adults who had met up indoors in a group of more than six, 11% met up with only people from their household. More than half (56%) of adults who met with a group of more than six indoors, met up for one of the following reasons: worship service, sports or exercise or child's activity class. The remaining 43% met up with friends and family, or for other reasons. It should be noted that in Scotland and Wales children (under the ages of 12 and 11 years respectively) are not counted in the total limit of six people, which is not accounted for in the estimates provided.

Levels of socialising indoors in the past seven days were reduced when an individual was in a "local lockdown" area. When thinking of the largest group they had met up with indoors (excluding work or education), in the past seven days, including themselves:

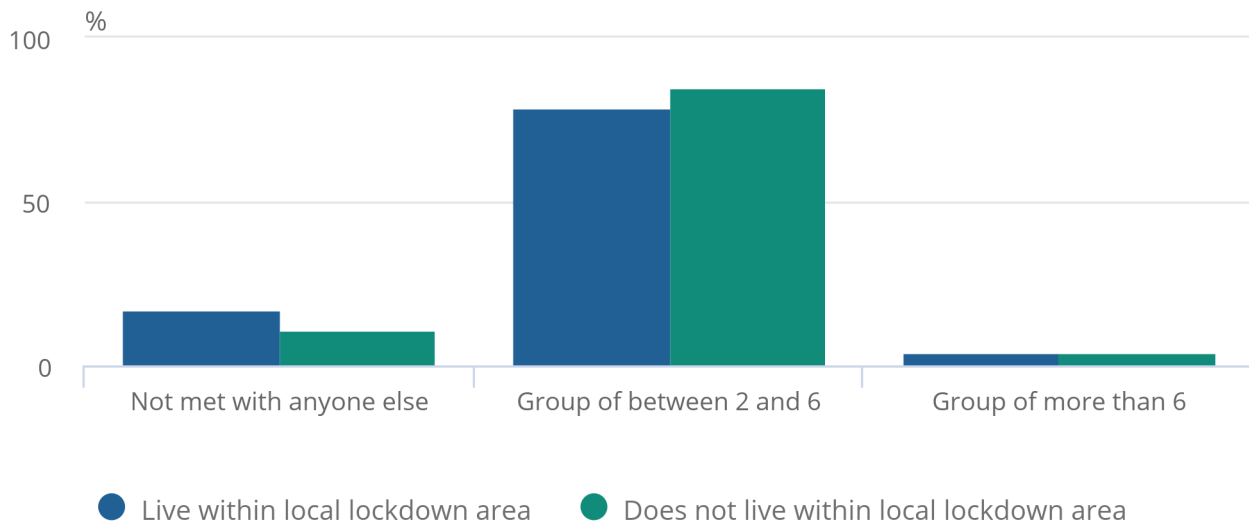
- 17% of those in a local lockdown area said they had not met up indoors with anyone, compared with 11% not in local lockdown
- 79% of those in a local lockdown area said they had met up indoors with between two and six people including themselves, compared with 85% not in local lockdown
- 4% of those in both a local lockdown area and not in local lockdown said they had met up indoors with a group of more than six people including themselves

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

Great Britain, 14 to 18 October 2020

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

Great Britain, 14 to 18 October 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Question: "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?"
2. 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. The definition is included in the [Glossary](#).
3. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

## 4 . Preventative measures

Official guidance varies across England, Wales and Scotland.

### Information about coronavirus

Across Great Britain, nearly 9 in 10 adults (87%) 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. A similar proportion was reported by those living in and outside local lockdown areas (86% and 88% respectively).

Respondents were also asked if they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic. This week a higher proportion (44%) said they felt they had, compared with 37% last week.

A lower percentage of those living in local lockdown areas reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic, compared with those not in local lockdown (40% compared with 47%). 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.

## 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 (84%) adults said they always or often maintained social distancing, a similar proportion (82%) to last week. An additional 16% 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).

Similar results were reported by those living in local lockdown and those not in local lockdown. Around eight in ten adults often or always social distanced (84% in local lockdown areas compared with 83% in not a local lockdown area). In comparison, 14% of adults in a local lockdown area and 15% not in a local lockdown area sometimes, not very often or never social distanced.

## 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.

Of those who wore a face covering in the past seven days while shopping, 86% said that while they were in the shop, they saw everyone or almost everyone wearing protective face coverings. A lower percentage was reported by those living in local lockdown areas (82%), compared with those not in local lockdown compared (89%). 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.

## Handwashing

In the past seven days, around 9 in 10 (91%) adults who left their home said they always or often washed their hands with soap and water straight away after returning home for a public place. This is a lower proportion than the end of May (28 to 31 May 2020) – at 94% – when national 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. Similar results were reported by those living in local lockdown compared with those not in lockdown (90% and 91% respectively).

## 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](#).

## 5 . Impact on life and well-being

This week, around 7 in 10 (76%) adults were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now. This has increased gradually since the end of the summer (64% over the period 26 to 30 August). The main concerns reported by adults were personal travel plans being affected (56%) and a lack of freedom and independence (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 (78% compared with 76%).

However, there were some differences in concerns reported between those living in local lockdown compared to those not in local lockdown. The concerns with the largest difference between those living in local lockdown compared with those not in lockdown was the percentage that reported they are unable to make plans (56% compared with 46%), and those who reported that their wellbeing is affected (55% compared with 46%).

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

This week, average anxiety scores for all adults remained stable, at 4.3 – the same score as two weeks ago, which was the highest figure since 3 to 13 April (4.9). Around 4 in 10 (37%) reported high anxiety levels (a score of 6 or above), compared with 33% last week. The prevalence of high anxiety was similar for those living in local lockdown areas compared with those not in local lockdown areas (37% and 36%, respectively).

Life satisfaction scores are at their lowest this week (6.7), while average scores for worthwhile (7.3) and happiness yesterday (6.9) are around similar levels to last week. This recent decrease in life satisfaction could in part be explained by seasonal variation. A technical report on [Personal well-being quarterly estimates](#) found that, on average, life satisfaction scores decrease by 0.1% between Quarter 3 (July to September) and Quarter 4 (October to December).

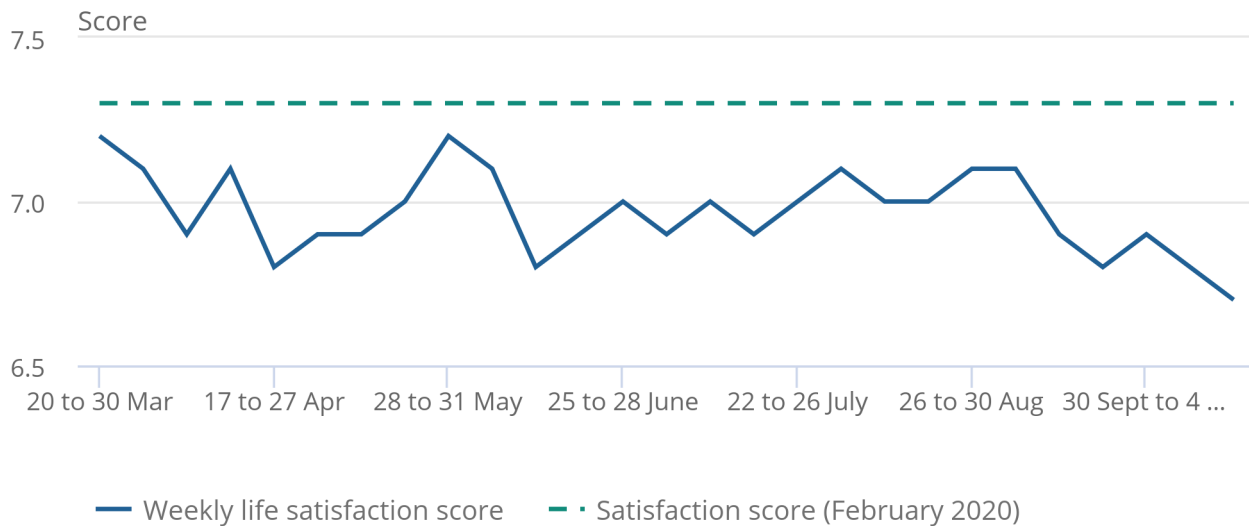


### Figure 3: Life satisfaction scores are at their lowest this week since our survey began

Great Britain, March to October 2020

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Great Britain, March to October 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Question: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?".
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

## 6 . Impact on work

This week, around half of working adults (47%) reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work, a similar proportion to last week (49%).

This week, 60% of working adults travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, compared with 65% last week. A slightly lower percentage (55%) of those living in local lockdown reported travelling to work, compared with those not in local lockdown (62%). 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.

The proportion of people travelling to work (exclusively, and not in combination with working from home) decreased this week to 49% compared with 54% last week. There was a small increase 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 (15% this week, up from 12% last week). The percentage that worked exclusively at home this week was 25% compared with 23% 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 (56%)
- they were following government advice (48%)
- they normally worked from home (28%)

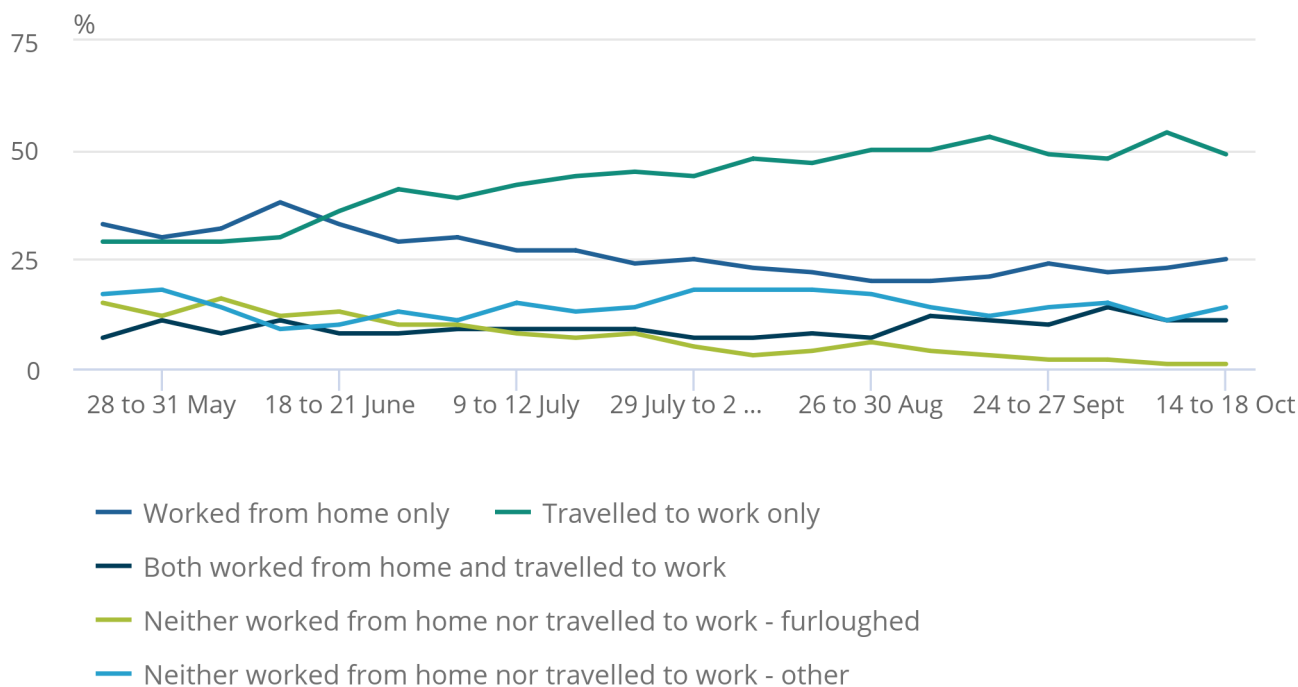
Official estimates of labour market participation can be found in the [Labour market overview](#).

**Figure 4: The percentage of working adults that had travelled to work in the past seven days decreased**

Great Britain, May to October 2020

Figure 4: The percentage of working adults that had travelled to work in the past seven days decreased

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.

## 7 . Impact on school

This week, adults with dependent children were asked how the coronavirus pandemic is affecting children or young people within their household attending school or college this term.

More than a quarter (26%) of adults with dependent children of school age reported the coronavirus is affecting their child’s feelings about going to school or college a lot.

Around 6 in 10 (64%) adults with dependent children were very or somewhat worried about them going to school or college this term. Among those who were worried about going to school and college this term, the most common concern reported was about them catching the coronavirus (COVID-19) at school or college. In addition, 50% of adults with dependent children were worried about the impact on their child's mental health or wellbeing due to changes in school or college because of the coronavirus.

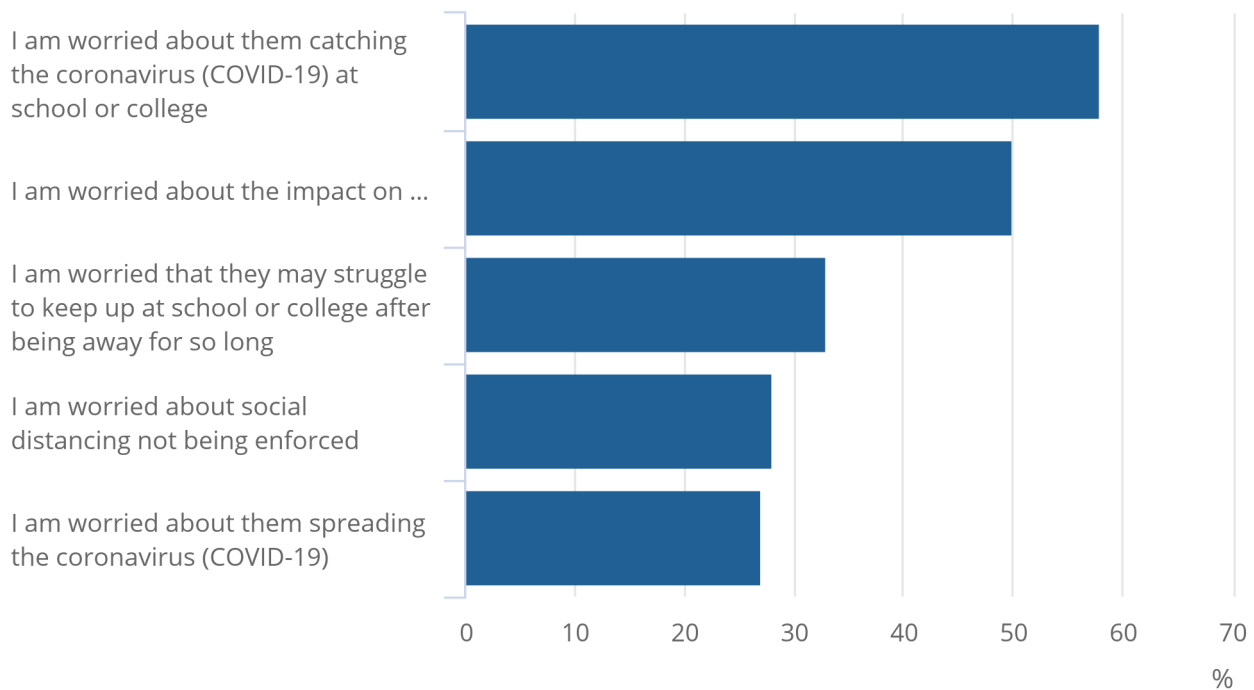
[Figures published by NHS Digital](#) yesterday found one in six children aged 5 to 16 had a probable mental disorder in July 2020, an increase from one in nine children in 2017. The research also found children with a probable mental disorder were less likely to have received regular support from their school or college during the April to July 2020 school term compared to children unlikely to have a mental disorder.

**Figure 5: Among adults with dependent children who were worried about them going to school or college this term, the main concern was catching the coronavirus (COVID-19) at school or college**

Great Britain, 14 to 18 October 2020

### Figure 5: Among adults with dependent children who were worried about them going to school or college this term, the main concern was catching the coronavirus (COVID-19) at school or college

Great Britain, 14 to 18 October 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

**Notes:**

1. Question: “What are your worries about the child or young person in your household going to school or college this term?”
2. Base population: Adults with dependent children, that reported they are worried about them going to school or college this term.
3. This figure only includes the top five main concerns (highest proportion reported) about children and young people going to school or college this term. Other reported concerns are included in the reference tables.
4. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

This week, we asked adults with dependent children if they felt the school or college was giving the oldest child in their household help to catch up with education missed during spring and summer due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Around 7 in 10 (66%) adults with dependent children reported that they had a lot or some support.

This week, 8% of adults with dependent children reported that the oldest child or young person in the household had been sent home from school or college this term due to a coronavirus outbreak in their class, year group or bubble. Of the remaining adults whose oldest child had not been sent home, 41% said their school or college has had an outbreak of coronavirus this term.

Among those adults with dependent children whose oldest child had either been sent home, or had a coronavirus outbreak at school or college, 74% reported that they strongly agree or agree that their school or college had done a good job in their handling of their coronavirus outbreak this term.

## 8 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 23 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.

## 9 . 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

Those that live in a local lockdown area are those who responded 'yes' to the question "Do you live in an area that is currently under local lockdown measures?", therefore it is self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation of lockdown, and may differ from the Tier 2 and Tier 3 guidance in England. There is also different guidance on local lockdowns in Wales and Scotland.

## 10 . 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 75% (or 1,653 individuals) for the survey conducted from 14 to 18 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 1,653 individuals (75% 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.

## 11 . 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



## 12 . 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.