

The ability to meet in private outdoor settings (such as gardens) is expected to have benefited disabled people who would struggle to access public spaces for reasons related to mental or physical health. In addition, some disabled people who are more at risk of anxiety and social isolation could be expected to benefit substantially from the 'support bubbling' policy. However, given the bubbling model only applies where one of the households contains a single adult, it will not benefit households where a disabled child lives with two adults or where a disabled adult lives with another adult (unless they bubble with another single adult household).

The evidence has consistently pointed to higher health impacts on men, but disproportionate negative impacts from the social distancing policy on women. [Women were about one third more likely to work in a sector that is now shut down than men.](#)

Women may be less able to benefit from businesses reopening unless this is coupled with the widespread reopening of pre-schools, primary schools and childcare: evidence suggests that, of parents working from home, women have been taking on a larger share of childcare and home-schooling responsibilities at this time than men. [A recent study found that 72% of mothers described themselves as the "default" parent for all or most of the time during lockdown and 70% of women reported being completely or mostly responsible for home-schooling.](#)

[Women are more likely to be on insecure or zero-hours contracts,](#) more likely to be dependent on social security and more likely to be in an insecure housing situation than men, exacerbating the impact of any loss of wages. [Women make up 70% of those on jobs not eligible for statutory sick pay. Research also indicates that women, and BAME women in particular, are more likely to believe they will end up in more debt after the outbreak, struggle to make ends meet in the next three months and be worried about how to pay the rent or mortgage.](#) Returning to employment may therefore be a stronger imperative for women than men.

In a survey by Britain Thinks, female respondents were more likely to indicate that they are not coping as well as usual due to the impact of coronavirus, at 34%, compared to 24% of male respondents.

The government continues to be concerned about domestic abuse, of whom the victims are predominantly women. As of 27 April 2020, calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, run by Refuge, had spiked significantly during the lockdown – seeing an on average increase of around 50% in calls since lockdown measures began. Although restrictions on gatherings have been eased, it is expected that abusers may even increase controlling behaviour in the short term in order to retain control.

As part of a UK-wide package of support, £2 million has been made available to immediately bolster domestic abuse helplines and online support. £750 million of funding has also been made available to the voluntary sector to support charities including those working on domestic abuse.

Concerns remain that pregnant women and new mothers are being impacted economically by business closures. Pregnant women, who are advised to stay at home as they are clinically vulnerable, may be particularly vulnerable to workplace discrimination at this time if employers need to reduce staff. The government has taken steps to prevent furloughing impacting on maternity pay and allowance calculations. Women may find it harder to