

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 13 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 5 to 8 November 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

- This week, from 5 to 8 November 2020, around 8 in 10 (76%) adults in Great Britain strongly supported or tended to support the current lockdown measures where they live.
- A lower percentage of younger adults reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with 40% for those aged 16 to 29 years and those aged 30 to 49 years, compared with 52% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 58% for those aged 70 years and over.
- Among those who met up with people indoors or outdoors, outside of their support bubble or household, a higher proportion of older adults always or often maintained social distancing, with 91% for those aged 50 to 69 years and 94% for those aged 70 years and over, compared with 70% of those aged 16 to 29 years.
- This week, 23% of those aged 16 to 29 years reported physical contact with at least one other person when socialising indoors in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble; this is a decrease from 32% last week.
- This week, a lower percentage of adults left home to meet up with people in a public place in the past seven days, at 15% compared with 21% last week.
- A higher percentage of working adults aged 16 to 29 years (59%) reported that the coronavirus pandemic was affecting their work, compared with working adults aged 50 to 69 years (46%).

On Thursday 5 November, a second national lockdown started in England. Responses for this survey were collected over the period 5 to 8 November 2020, which covers the start of this lockdown. Over this period, Wales was also on a national “firebreak” lockdown, and Scotland had five-tiered “local protection levels”.

## 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. This week, we focus on how the pandemic has affected younger and older adults. This builds on research from the ONS earlier this year looking at the social impacts of the coronavirus on [younger adults](#) and [older adults](#) in Great Britain.

The statistics in this release are based on a survey of 6,031 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 5 to 8 November 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 4,378 responding adults (73% response rate).

This week’s bulletin presents a summary of results, focusing on breakdowns by age. Additional breakdowns by sex, underlying health condition, country and English regions, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [associated datasets](#). Where comparisons between groups are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of this difference.

Throughout this bulletin, “this week” refers to responses collected during the period 5 to 8 November 2020 and “last week” refers to responses collected during the period 28 October to 1 November 2020.

#### 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](#).

## 3 . Lockdown and preventative measures

### Lockdown measures

At the time of data collection, England started its second national lockdown, those in Wales were on a “firebreak” national lockdown, and those in Scotland were under “local protection levels”.

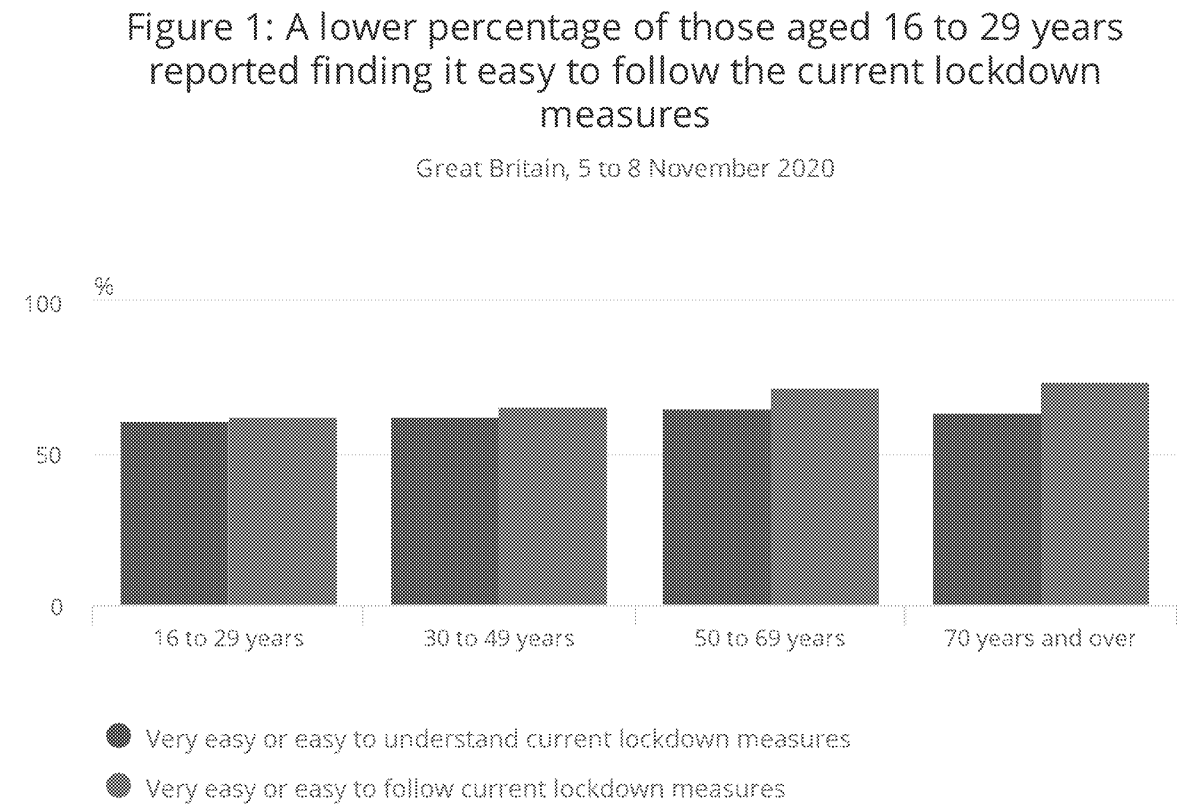
This week, around 8 in 10 (76%) adults in Great Britain strongly supported or tended to support the current lockdown measures where they live. Levels of support appeared to vary slightly across each of the three countries: 76% of adults in England, 84% in Wales and 80% in Scotland. However it should be noted that sample sizes for Wales and Scotland are relatively low, and so these estimates should be treated with caution.

Around 6 in 10 (63%) adults in Great Britain reported finding it very easy or easy to understand the current lockdown measures where they live. Further, around 7 in 10 (68%) adults reported finding it very easy or easy to follow the current lockdown measures where they live.

There was little difference in how easy different age groups found it to understand the current lockdown measures. However, a lower percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (62%) reported finding it very easy or easy to follow the current lockdown measures than those aged 70 years and over (74%).

**Figure 1: A lower percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years reported finding it easy to follow the current lockdown measures**

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "How easy or difficult is it to understand the current lockdown measures where you live?"
2. Question: "How easy or difficult do you think it is to follow the current lockdown measures where you live?"
3. Base population: all adults

This week, nearly half (47%) of adults reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. A lower percentage was reported by younger adults than older adults, with 40% for those aged 16 to 29 years and those aged 30 to 49 years, compared with 52% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 58% of those aged 70 years and over.

**Preventative measures**

There are several measures in place to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, such as maintaining social distancing, avoiding physical contact, self-isolating, use of face coverings and handwashing. Respondents were asked about preventative measures they had taken over the past seven days; therefore, responses this week may relate to before the current lockdown in England started.

Among those who met up with people indoors or outdoors, outside of their support bubble or household, a higher proportion of older adults always or often maintained social distancing, with 91% for those aged 50 to 69 years and 94% for those aged 70 years and over, compared with 70% of those aged 16 to 29 years.

Less than 1 in 10 (7%) adults said they had self-isolated in the past seven days because of the coronavirus pandemic; this was slightly higher for those aged 70 years and over (10%). It should be noted this was self-reported by adults, and may include some adults who self-isolated due to reasons other than being in contact or testing positive for the coronavirus.

Nearly 9 in 10 (89%) adults always or often washed their hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place. A slightly lower percentage was reported by younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (80%).

This difference was more pronounced in adults who reported always washing their hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place, with more than half (56%) of those aged 16 to 29 years who left their home in the past seven days, compared with 74% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 75% of those aged 70 years and over.

Table 1: Indicators of preventative measures  
Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020

Indicator	Group	This week (%)
<b>Always/often maintaining social distancing</b>	All adults	85
	16-29	70
	30-49	83
	50-69	91
	70+	94
<b>Avoiding physical contact</b>	All adults	88
	16-29	88
	30-49	89
	50-69	92
	70+	92
<b>Self-isolation</b>	All adults	7
	16-29	7
	30-49	6
	50-69	6
	70+	10
<b>Saw everyone /almost everyone wearing face coverings while shopping</b>	All adults	89
	16-29	86
	30-49	88
	50-69	90
	70+	95
<b>Always/often handwashing with soap and water after returning home</b>	All adults	89
	16-29	80
	30-49	91
	50-69	91
	70+	92

Source: Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

1. Question: "In the past seven days, when you have met up with people outside of your support bubble, how often have you maintained social distancing?"; base: adults who met up with people indoors or outdoors, outside of their support bubble or household.
2. Question: "Examples of direct physical contact may include shaking or holding hands, hugging and making contact when passing objects. In the past seven days, have you avoided physical contact with others when outside your home?"; base: adults who left their home in the past seven days.
3. Question: "Self-isolation is defined as staying at home because you have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?"; base: all adults.
4. Question "While shopping in the last seven days, how many other people did you see wearing protective face coverings to help slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19)?"; base: adults who used a face covering while shopping in the past seven days.
5. Question: "In the past seven days, how often did you wash your hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place?"; base: adults who left their home in the past seven days.

## 4 . Physical contact

From 5 November 2020, new rules were introduced in England asking adults to avoid meeting people they do not live with, except for specific purposes. This week, we asked respondents to think about when they had direct physical contact with people outside of their household or support bubble in the last 24 hours. Examples of direct physical contact may include shaking or holding hands, hugging, and making contact when passing objects.

Around 2 in 10 (22%) adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person when socialising indoors, including settings such as the home, cafés, pubs or restaurants in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble. This is a similar percentage to last week (24%).

This week, 23% of those aged 16 to 29 years reported physical contact with at least one other person when socialising indoors in the past 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble; this is a decrease from 32% last week. Physical contact with at least one other person when socialising indoors was highest for those aged 50 to 69 years (25%) and lowest for those aged 70 years and over (17%).

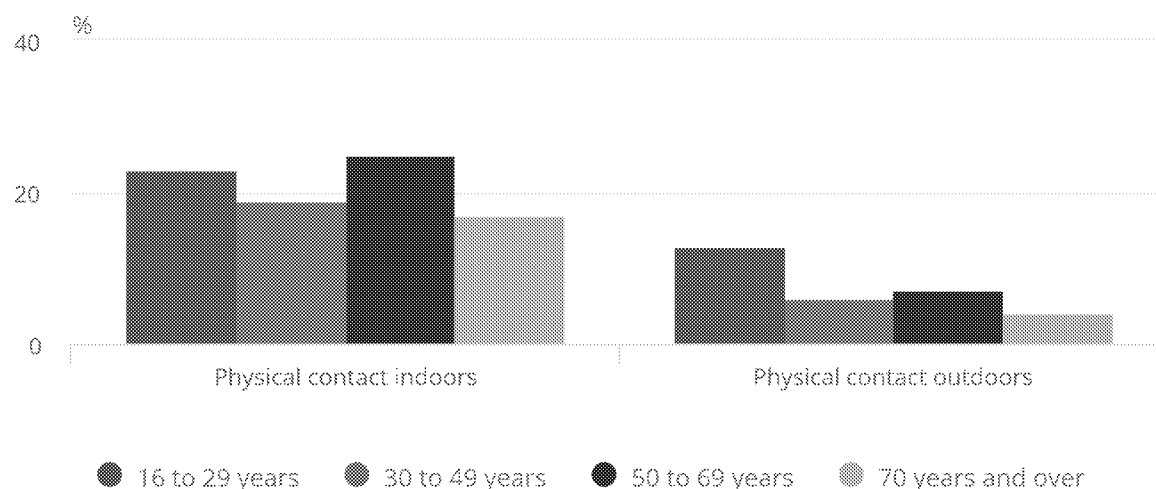
Less than 1 in 10 (7%) adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person, excluding those in their household or support bubble, when socialising outdoors in the last 24 hours. The highest percentage was reported by those aged 16 to 29 years (13%) and the lowest by those aged 70 years and over (4%).

**Figure 2: A higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years reported direct physical contact outdoors, excluding those in their household or support bubble**

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020

Figure 2: A higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years reported direct physical contact outdoors, excluding those in their household or support bubble

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

**Notes:**

1. Question: "Over the last 24 hours, how many people have you had direct physical contact with when socialising indoors both at home and at "venues such as cafés, pubs or restaurants?"
2. Question: "Over the last 24 hours, how many people outside of your household have you had direct physical contact with when socialising outdoors?"
3. Base population: all adults.

## 5 . Leaving home

Under the current lockdown restrictions, people are required to stay at home except for specific purposes, with different rules applied in Wales and Scotland. This week, adults were asked about leaving home over the past seven days, which includes before new restrictions in England were put in place.

More than 9 in 10 (94%) adults in Great Britain said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days. A similar percentage was reported for most age groups (95% of each age group: 16 to 29 years, 30 to 49 years and 50 to 69 years) with a slightly lower percentage reported by those aged 70 years and over (90%).



A higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (49%) reported that they were very comfortable or comfortable about leaving home due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) than those aged 70 years and over (28%).

The most common reason to leave home in the past seven days was to go shopping for food and medicine, with 70% of all adults reporting this. The lowest percentage was reported by those aged 16 to 29 years (55%), compared with older age groups.

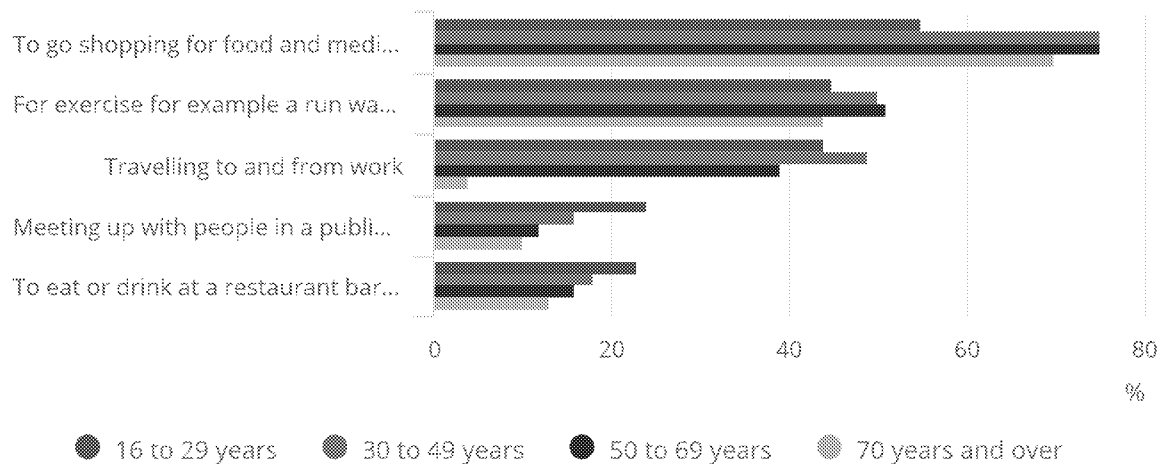
This week, a lower percentage of adults left home to meet up with people in a public place in the past seven days, at 15% compared with 21% last week. Nearly a quarter (24%) of those aged 16 to 29 years met up with people in a public place in the past seven days; this was a higher percentage than older age groups, compared with 10% of those aged 70 years and over. Similarly, a higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (23%) left home to eat or drink at a restaurant, bar or pub in the past seven days, compared with 13% of those aged 70 years and over. It should be noted that these questions were asked in reference to the past seven days, which includes before new restrictions in England were put in place.

**Figure 3: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 29 years met up with people in a public place**

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020

**Figure 3: A higher percentage of people aged 16 to 29 years met up with people in a public place**

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020



**Source:** 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. Additional response options for reasons that adults left their home in the past seven days are included in the [datasets](#).
3. Base population: All adults.
4. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

## 6 . Impact on life and well-being

This week, 7 in 10 (71%) adults reported that they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now. A similar percentage was reported by all age groups.

Nearly 6 in 10 (57%) adults reported lack of freedom and independence as their main concern, with a similar percentage reported by all age groups.

Nearly half (49%) of adults reported that their well-being was being affected (for example, boredom, loneliness, anxiety and stress) by the coronavirus pandemic. This week, average personal well-being scores for life satisfaction (6.8), worthwhile (7.3) and happiness (6.8) increased slightly compared with last week. There was also a small decrease in anxiety score (4.1).

#### **Figure 4: Personal well-being scores remained relatively stable compared with last week**

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. 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.

#### Data download

A higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (60%) reported that their well-being is being affected by the coronavirus pandemic compared with all other age groups (54%, 46% and 32% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 50 to 69 years and 70 years and over, respectively). Average personal well-being scores appeared lowest for younger adults aged 16 to 29 years. For example, worthwhile scores increased with age from the lowest average score of 6.9 for those aged 16 to 29 years through to 7.8 for those aged 70 years and over. This pattern of increasing well-being with age appears to differ from the traditional pre-pandemic pattern as reported in [At what age is Personal Well-being the highest](#). We will continue to monitor the differences in well-being by age in future publications.

## **7 . Impact on work**

This week, around half of working adults (51%) reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work. This was higher for working adults aged 16 to 29 years (59%) than working adults aged 50 to 69 years (46%).

More than half (54%) of working adults aged 30 to 49 years reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home). This was a lower percentage than those aged 16 to 29 years (66%). However, it should be noted that this is not a [statistically significant](#) difference (see [Section 11: Strengths and limitations](#)).

A higher percentage of working adults aged 30 to 49 years (44%) reported working from home because of the coronavirus pandemic, compared with working adults aged 16 to 29 years (34%) and 50 to 69 years (32%).

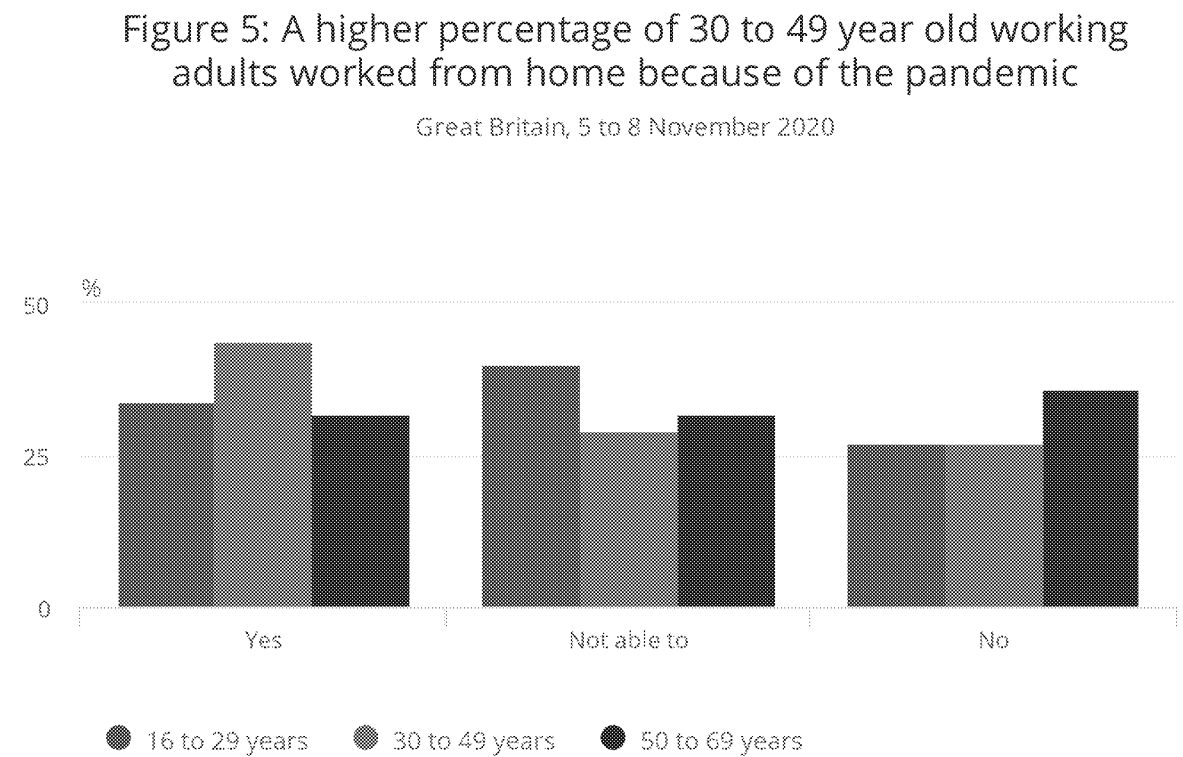
Among those who worked from home in the past seven days, a lower percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (19%) reported that they normally work from home some or all of the time, compared with 35% of those aged 50 to 69 years.

A higher percentage of those aged 16 to 29 years (40%) were not able to work from home, compared with those aged 30 to 49 years (29%).

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

Figure 5: A higher percentage of 30 to 49 year old working adults worked from home because of the pandemic

Great Britain, 5 to 8 November 2020



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) pandemic?"
2. Base population: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in [Section 9: Glossary](#).
3. Estimates are also available for working adults aged 70 years and over and are included in the [associated datasets](#).
4. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

## 8 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 13 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) measuring the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Includes breakdowns by age, sex, underlying health condition, region and country.

## 9 . Glossary

### Working adults

For this survey, a person is said to be working if last week they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work.

## 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, 6,031 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 73% (or 4,378 individuals) for the survey conducted from 5 to 8 November 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.

### Sampling

A sample of 6,031 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. 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 contained 4,378 individuals (73% 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:

- 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

## 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 30 October 2020

Bulletin | Released 10 November 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: September 2020

Article | Released 11 November 2020

The social impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain based on indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). 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.