

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 14 May 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 24 April to 3 May 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. This week: our attitudes to British unity, equality and kindness.

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# 1 . Other pages in this release

Other commentary on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the UK economy and society is available on the following page:

- [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 14 May 2020](#)

## 2 . Main points

- During the period 24 April to 3 May 2020, 8 in 10 adults (80%) in Great Britain continued to say they had either not left their home or only left for the permitted reasons (essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work) in the past seven days.
- Most people think that we will be united and kind following our recovery from the coronavirus pandemic (57% and 67% respectively), but only 22% thought we would be an equal society.
- Expectations for when life will return to normal are getting longer: 46% of adults now think it will be longer than six months compared with 33% after the first week of lockdown.

Data for this survey were collected before the announced changes to lockdown rules on 10 May 2020.

## 3 . 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.

It contains breakdowns of results for identified "at-risk" groups that have been advised to take additional precautions. This includes those aged 70 years and over, those with certain underlying health conditions, and women who are pregnant. The full list of conditions are included in the [Glossary](#). Further breakdowns by sex are included in the [associated datasets](#).

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.

The statistics in this publication are based on a survey of 1,360 adults (68% response rate) sampled through the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), which was conducted online between 24 April and 3 May 2020 (inclusive). Throughout this bulletin, "this week" refers to the period 24 April to 3 May 2020 and "last week" refers to the period 17 to 27 April 2020.

## 4 . Concerns about the coronavirus

This week has seen the largest week-on-week decrease in overall levels of concern. In Great Britain, three-quarters of adults (75%) said they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect that the coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life now, compared with 80% last week. This decrease was also seen among those aged 70 years and over, falling to 72% this week from 75% last week, and for those with an underlying health condition, falling to 75% this week from 80% last week.

Alongside this decreasing level of concern, people's expectations for how long their life will be disrupted are continuing to increase. This week, nearly half of adults (46%) now expect it to be longer than six months before life returns to normal compared with 1 in 3 (33%) after the first week of lockdown.

The inability to make plans remains the most common way that the coronavirus pandemic was impacting people's lives, with 44% saying this was being affected (Figure 1). Around 3 in 10 adults (30%) also say life events such as weddings and funerals are affected and nearly 4 in 10 (39%) say their personal travel plans including holidays are affected.

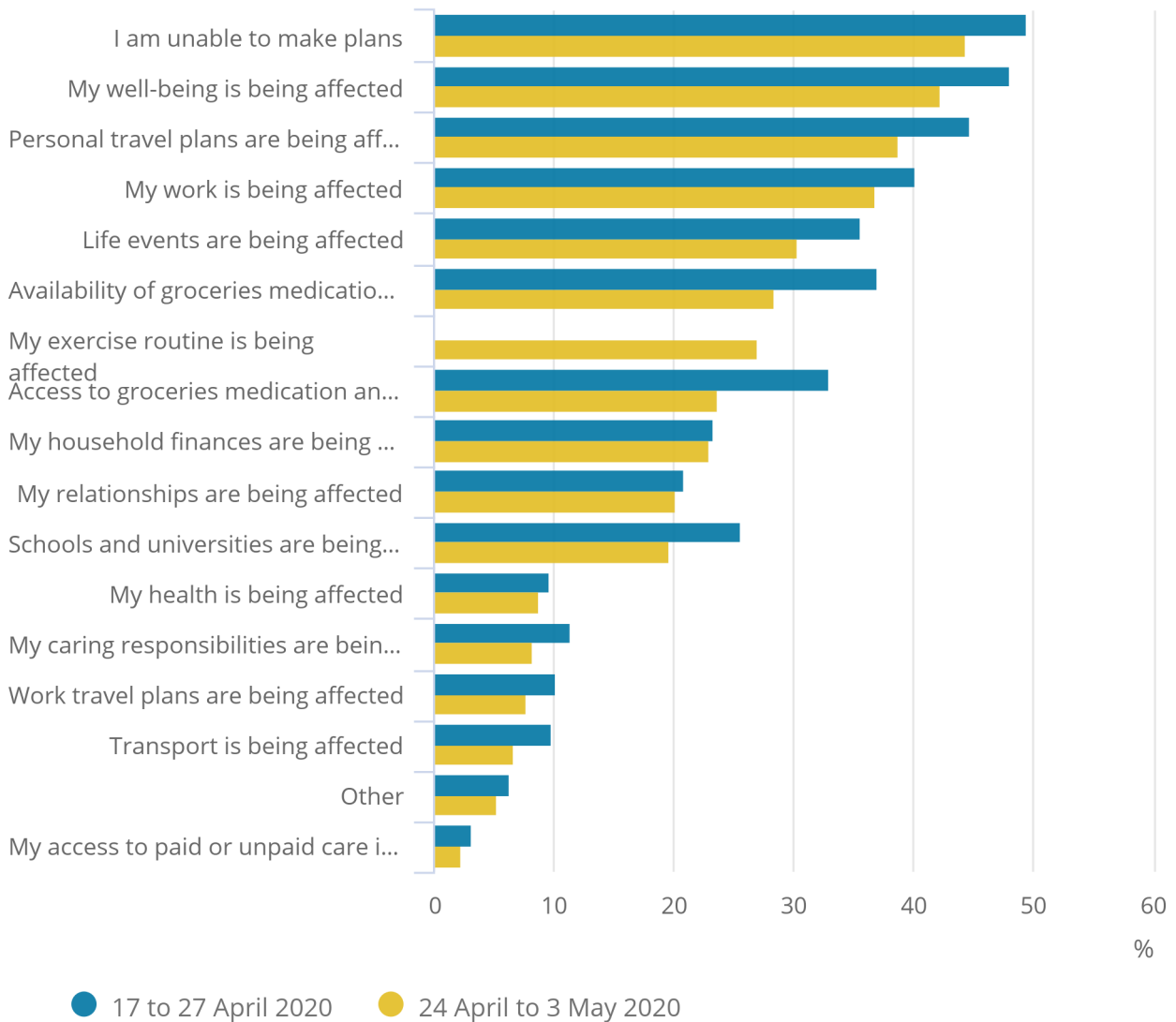
Concern about the availability and access to groceries, medication and toiletries has seen the largest decrease this week amongst the concerns, but still nearly 1 in 4 adults (24%) say their access has been affected.

**Figure 1: People were most worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their ability to make plans, their well-being and their personal travel plans**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

Figure 1: People were most worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their ability to make plans, their well-being and their personal travel plans

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: In which ways is the coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting your life?
2. This question was only asked of those who said they were very worried or worried about the impacts of COVID-19, but the base population for these estimates was all adults aged 16 years or over, to reflect the level of concern among the whole population. These estimates are calculated using Table 4b of the datasets.
3. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
4. A new response category of "My exercise routine is being affected" was added to the survey (24 April to 3 May 2020) last week, so data for previous weeks may not be directly comparable.

#### **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 our studies and surveys are [serving public need](#).

## **Concerns about work**

Of the 37% of adults who said the coronavirus was affecting their work (40% last week), the most common reason was because they had been furloughed – nearly 3 in 10 of these adults cited this reason (28%) compared with 22% last week. Around 1 in 10 (11%) also said they were concerned about their health and safety at work.

A lower proportion of key workers said they were very or somewhat worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their life (75%) compared with 78% last week, and the most common issue was the effect on their work.

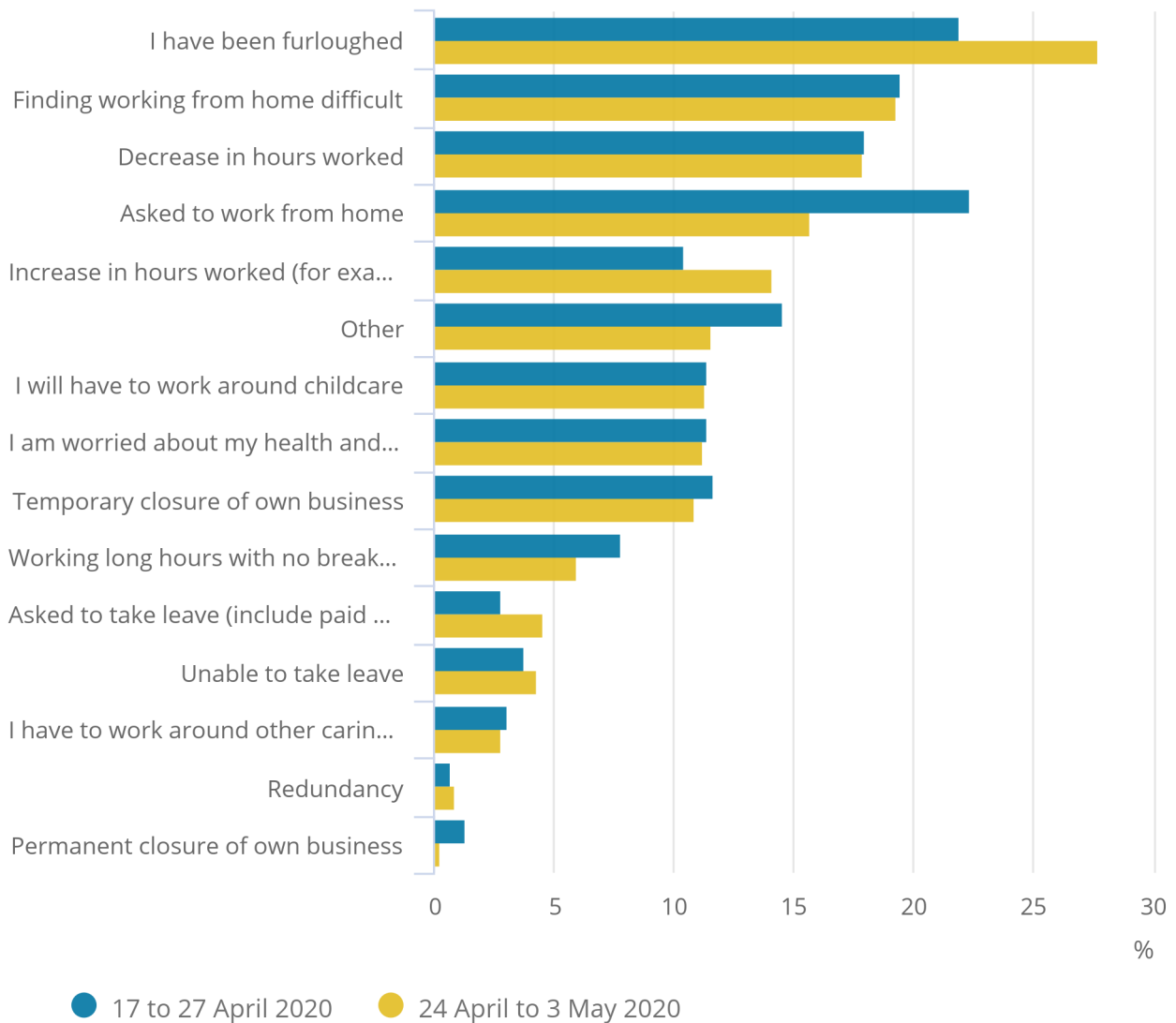
Among key workers, 46% said their work was being impacted, which decreased from last week (54%), and concerns about their health and safety was the most common reason, with over 3 in 10 (35%) saying they were concerned about this (Figure 2). Difficulty in following social distancing advice (86%) and there being limited or no protective clothing available (41%) were the most cited reasons.

**Figure 2: The main concern that respondents had about work was that they had been furloughed**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

## Figure 2: The main concern that respondents had about work was that they had been furloughed

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: In which ways is your work being affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19)?
2. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their life right now and said it was affecting their work.
3. Key workers have been identified if a respondent has self-reported they have been given “key worker status” only. It has not been defined by an official list of occupations or industries in which people work.
4. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
5. Response category “I have been furloughed” indicates the level of concern with this and should not be interpreted as the overall level of the working population that has been furloughed. [Estimates of levels of furloughing](#) are available.

Further details on changes to labour market participation and the impact on businesses from the coronavirus can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 14 May 2020](#).

## Concerns about household finances

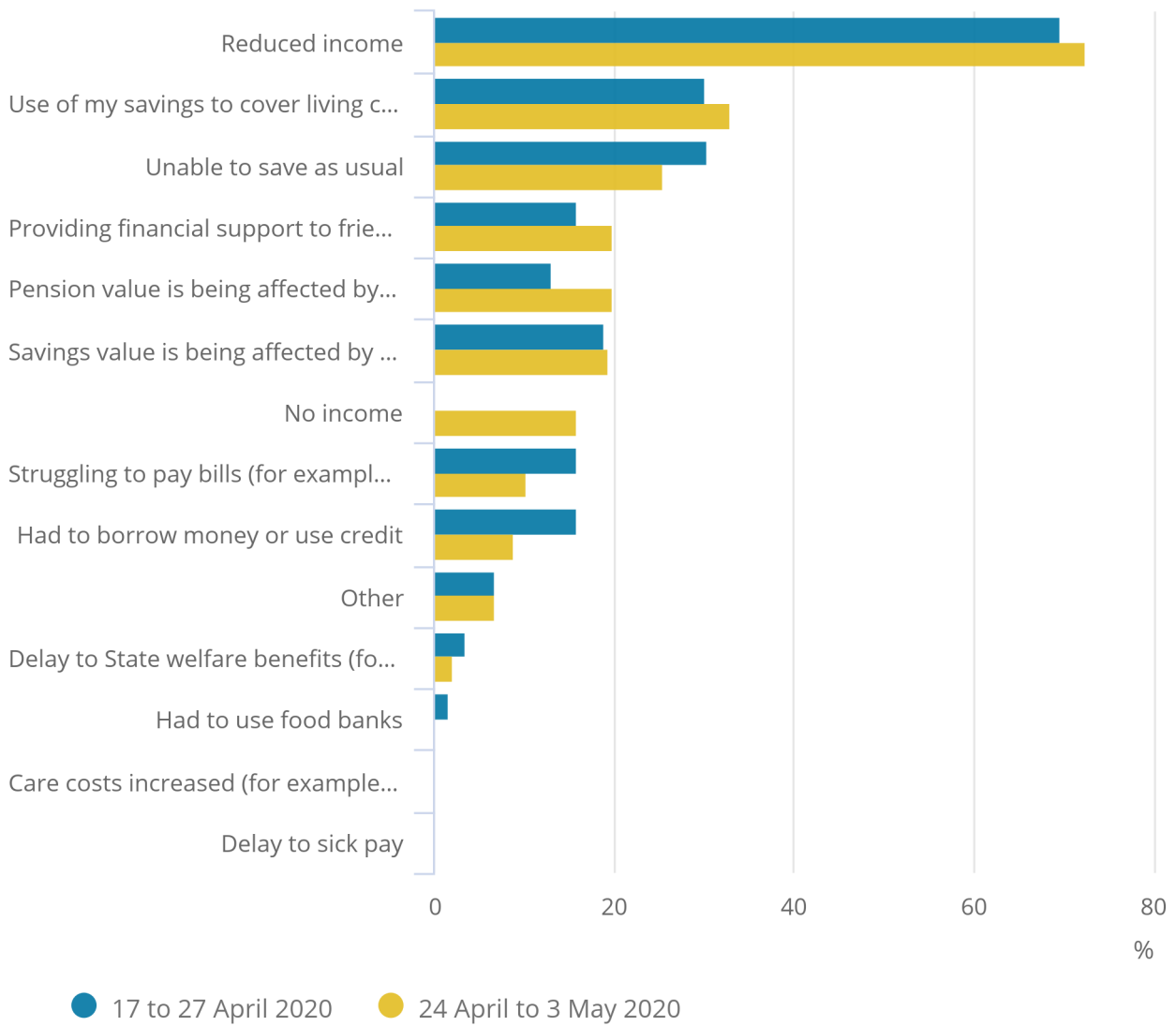
Just under 1 in 4 adults (23%) said the coronavirus was affecting their household finances, and this is consistent with the results from previous weeks. The most common concern among these adults continued to be a reduced income (73%). Issues with different aspects of savings are also important this week with 33% saying they had needed to use savings to cover living costs, 25% saying they were unable to save as usual and 20% saying their savings value is being affected (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: The main concern about household finances was having a reduced income**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

Figure 3: The main concern about household finances was having a reduced income

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:



1. Question: In which ways are your household finances being affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19)?
2. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their life right now and said it was affecting their finances.
3. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
4. A new response category of "No income" was added to the survey (24 April to 4 May 2020) last week, so data for previous weeks may not be directly comparable.
5. The values for "care costs increased" and "had to use food banks" have been suppressed because of small sample size.

When considering their future, just over 4 in 10 adults (41%) expected the financial position of their household to get a little or a lot worse over the next 12 months. However, a similar proportion (42%) expected it to stay the same.

Many adults were more pessimistic when considering the financial future outside their household. Over 8 in 10 adults (84%) expected the general economic situation in this country to get a little or a lot worse over the next 12 months.

## 5 . Homeschooling

A similar proportion of adults with dependent children said they had homeschooled their child or children in the past seven days this week (62% ) compared with 63% last week, indicating that coming out of the Easter holidays had little effect. This survey only asks for information from the respondent, so other people within the household may be providing the homeschooling or the dependent children in the household may be of pre-school age.

Of those homeschooling, 1 in 3 adults (33%) said it was putting a strain on their relationships in the household, an increase from 25% last week. More adults also thought the well-being of their child or children was being negatively affected, rising to 41% this week from 32% last week.

A larger proportion of adults who homeschooled their child said they were confident in their abilities compared with last week (57% compared with 45%). Nearly 3 in 4 adults (75%) said they had access to the resources they needed to homeschool their children well, with 75% saying their child or children were continuing to learn (Figure 4).

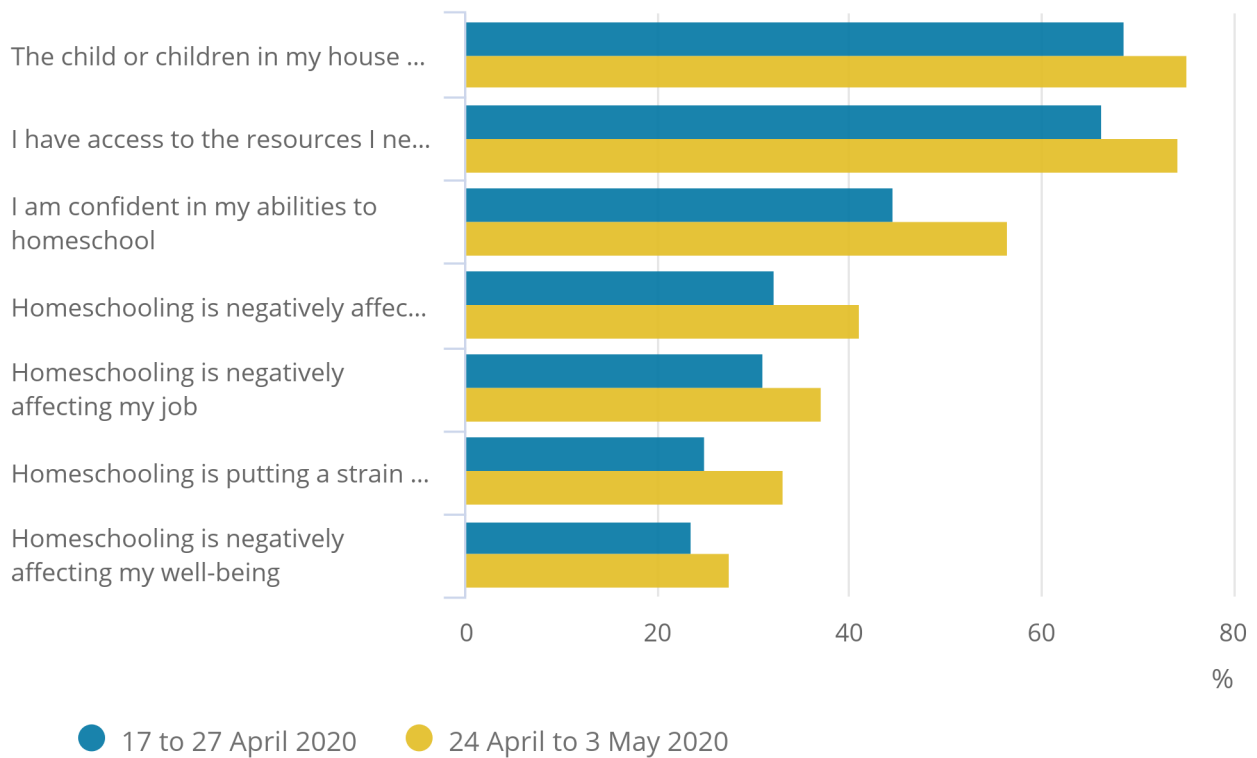
For those that did not agree they had the resources they needed, the most common aspects affecting their child's ability to continue learning were limited support from teachers (43%) or limited or no suitable space to work or study (also 43%).

**Figure 4: About 3 in 4 parents said their children were continuing to learn while being homeschooled**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

Figure 4: About 3 in 4 parents said their children were continuing to learn while being homeschooled

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement on homeschooling?
2. All adults with a dependent child or children who said they strongly or somewhat agree with the statement on homeschooling.
3. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said they had a dependent child or children.

## 6 . Actions undertaken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

This survey was completed before the changes to official government guidance were announced on Sunday 10 May. Responses will reflect people's actions at this time, when the advice was for everyone to stay in their homes apart from for a limited number of reasons such as essential shopping, medical reasons, one form of daily exercise and key workers travelling to work where it is not possible to work from home.

### Staying at home

The same proportion of adults (80%) said they had either not left their home or only left for one of the permitted reasons listed earlier, in the past seven days compared with last week. This increased to 88% for those aged 70 years and over, and for those with an underlying health condition it was 84%.

Of the 21% who said they had left their home for something else, the main reason was to run errands.

Overall support for the Stay at home measures continued to be high, although there is a continuing trend for people to move from "strongly support" (78% this week, down from 81% last week) to "tend to support" (18% this week, up from 16% last week).

### Self-isolation

Alongside the Stay at home guidance, official advice is that people should self-isolate if they or someone in their household experiences symptoms related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Some people may choose to self-isolate for other reasons, so these results should not be interpreted as an estimate of those with COVID-19 symptoms or those diagnosed with COVID-19.

In the past seven days, 1 in 4 adults (25%) said they had self-isolated, a slight fall compared with last week (29%). For those aged 70 years and over, 51% said they had self-isolated, while for those with an underlying health condition (all ages) it was 42%.

For those who said they had self-isolated over the past seven days, 28% of them said they had not left their home for the full seven days. Someone could have left their home at the start of the week and then started self-isolating or, conversely, completed their self-isolation at the start of the week and then left their home.

Over 1 in 5 adults (23%) said someone in their household had self-isolated in the past seven days, a similar level to last week (21%). For those aged 70 years and over, nearly half (48%) said someone in their household had self-isolated, while for those with an underlying health condition it was over a third (38%). Similarly, 21% of people were in households where everyone had self-isolated over the past seven days.

### Working from home

A similar proportion of adults in employment said they had worked from home at some point this week (44%) compared with last week (44%).

This consisted of 36% of adults who had only worked from home and 9% who had both worked from home and travelled to work (both key workers and non-key workers). A further 1 in 4 adults in employment (26%) said they had travelled to work in the last seven days and had not worked from home.

The remaining 31% of adults in employment had neither worked from home nor travelled to work; the reason for this is not known but could be that the person was on leave, on sick leave, furloughed or off-shift during the reference seven days.

More detailed information on changes to labour market participation can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 14 May 2020](#).

## **Social distancing**

Social distancing guidance at the time of data collection stated that physical contact with others should be kept to a minimum. A large majority of adults continue to say that they are avoiding contact with other people when outside their homes. This has been over 90% since week 1 of the survey and this week is 93%.

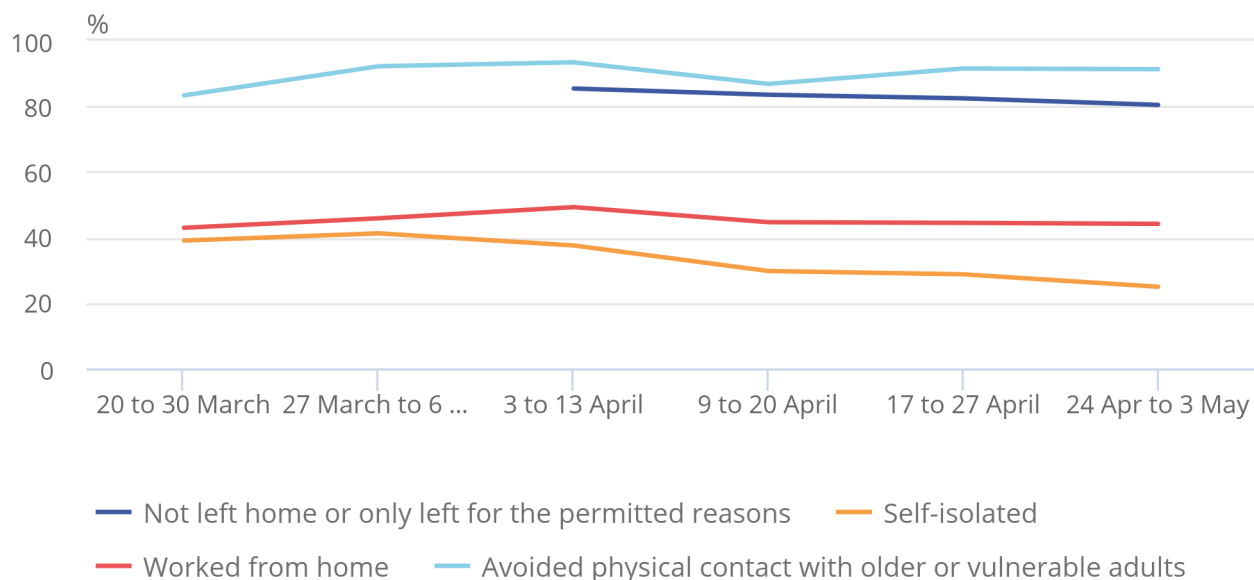
Shielding older or vulnerable people from the risk of infection is also important. Again, a consistently high proportion of adults say they are avoiding contact with older or vulnerable adults, this week it is 91% (Figure 5). Amongst these, 11% say the people they are avoiding are those to whom they provide care.

## Figure 5: People continue to follow government advice, although there has been a fall in the proportion of people self-isolating

Great Britain, between 20 to 30 March and 24 April to 3 May 2020

### Figure 5: People continue to follow government advice, although there has been a fall in the proportion of people self-isolating

Great Britain, between 20 to 30 March and 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Questions: In the past seven days, have you avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?; In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

## 7 . Unity, equality and kindness

Through the different weeks of the survey, measures of community spirit have increased. This week we see attitudes and expectations towards societal unity, kindness, and equality in Great Britain have also been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

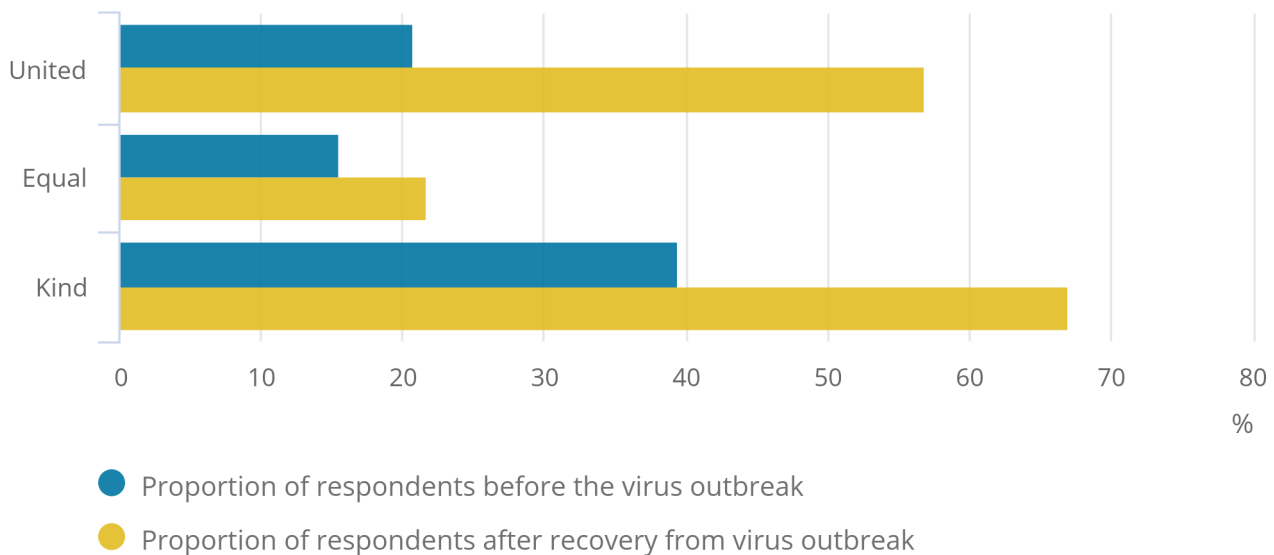
The largest change is in people's expectations for unity. Just over 2 in 10 (21%) believed that Britain was very or somewhat united before the coronavirus pandemic. However, nearly 6 in 10 (57%) said they thought that Britain would be united once we have recovered from the coronavirus pandemic (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: More people believe that Britain will be more united and kinder following the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, than it was before the pandemic**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

Figure 6: More people believe that Britain will be more united and kinder following the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, than it was before the pandemic

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Questions: How united or divided do you think Britain was before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; How united or divided do you think Britain will be after we have recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; How equal or unequal do you think Britain was before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; How equal or unequal do you think Britain will be after we have recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; How kind or unkind do you think Britain was before the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?; How kind or unkind do you think Britain will be after we have recovered from the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak? All respondents were asked these questions.
2. These are new questions added to the survey last week (24 April to 3 May 2020).

Younger adults saw the largest change in their feelings of unity. For adults aged between 16 and 69 years, 19% believed Britain was united before the coronavirus, compared with 56% thinking this would be the case afterwards. For adults aged 70 years and over, the change was from 28% to 59%.

Similarly, nearly 4 in 10 (39%) adults believed that Britain was somewhat or very kind before the coronavirus pandemic, and a larger proportion of just under 7 in 10 (67%) said that Britain would be kind once we have recovered from the coronavirus pandemic.

Again, the change is larger for younger adults. For adults aged between 16 and 69 years, 37% believed Britain was kind before the coronavirus, compared with 66% believing people will be kind following the recovery. For those aged 70 years or over, the change was from 51% to 72%.

There was a smaller change in expectations for equality in Britain. Around 1 in 6 adults (16%) felt that Britain was somewhat or very equal before the pandemic, with the proportion feeling that Britain would be equal after the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic rising to 22%.

Younger people had lower expectations for a change in equality. For adults aged between 16 and 69 years, 16% believed Britain was equal before the pandemic, compared with 20% expecting it to be equal following the recovery. For those aged 70 years or over the change was from 16% to 29%.

## **8 . Indicators of well-being and loneliness**

The proportion of adults who said their well-being was affected decreased this week (42%) compared with last week (48%). The proportion remained higher for those with an underlying health condition, at 45%, and lower for those aged 70 years and over, at 32%.

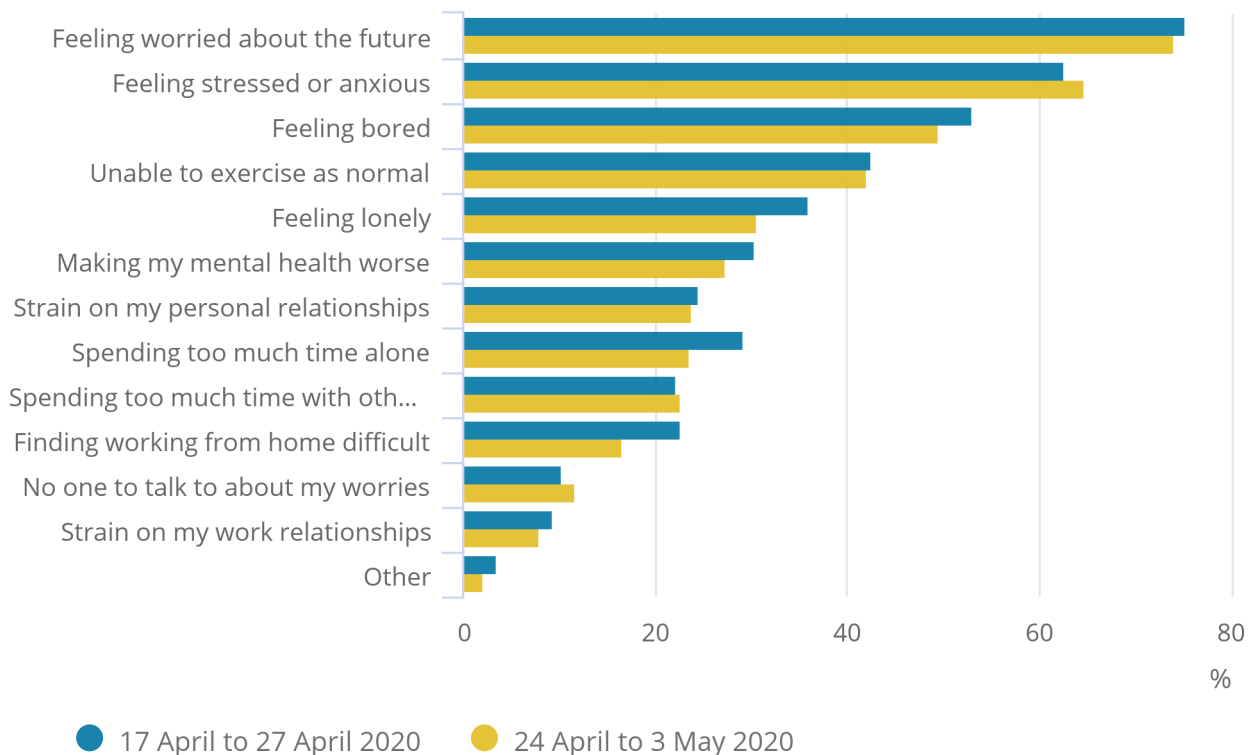
The most common issues affecting people's well-being are comparable with previous weeks. About 3 in 4 (74%) of those who said their well-being was being affected said they were feeling worried about the future, with nearly 2 in 3 (65%) feeling stressed or anxious and a half (50%) feeling bored. Over 4 in 10 (42%) also said not being able to exercise as normal was impacting their well-being (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Of those who were concerned about the impact of the coronavirus on their well-being, the majority felt worried about the future, stressed or anxious**

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020

Figure 7: Of those who were concerned about the impact of the coronavirus on their well-being, the majority felt worried about the future, stressed or anxious

Great Britain, 24 April to 3 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: In which way is your well-being being affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19)?
2. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
3. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect COVID-19 was having on their life right now and said it was affecting their well-being.

Although it is not known how many people who said their well-being was affected had mental health issues prior to the coronavirus pandemic, nearly 3 in 10 (27%) of those whose well-being has been affected said it was making their mental health worse, a decrease from 31% last week.



Table 1: Indicators of well-being

Indicator	Group	This week (%)	Last week (%)
<b>Well-being is being affected</b>	All adults	42	48
	70 years and over	32	39
	Underlying health	45	51
<b>Mean anxiety score*</b>	All adults	4.1	4.2
	70 years and over	3.8	4
	Underlying health	4.5	4.3
<b>Percentage with high anxiety (score 6-10)*</b>	All adults	33	37
	70 years and over	29	33
	Underlying health	40	38
<b>Feeling lonely often/always</b>	All adults	5	6
	70 years and over	3	2
	Underlying health	10	10
<b>Feeling lonely some of the time</b>	All adults	16	16
	70 years and over	12	13
	Underlying health	21	18

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes

- \* Anxiety is measured on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”. [Back to table](#)
- “This week” refers to the period 24 April to 3 May 2020, and “last week” refers to the period 17 April to 27 April 2020. [Back to table](#)

The full scores for the four measures of personal well-being are included in the [associated datasets](#).

## 9 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 14 May 2020

New 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.

## 10 . Glossary

## Underlying health condition

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

- Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- angina or 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 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)
- given an organ transplant
- stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis
- rheumatoid arthritis

This also includes pregnant women.

## Dependent children

Questions about homeschooling are asked when the responding individual has a dependent child in their household. A dependent child is defined as someone who is under the age of 16 years or someone who is aged 16 to 18 years, has never been married and is in full-time education.

## In employment

For this survey, a person is said to be "In employment" if 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 in the previous week.

## Key workers

Key workers have been identified if a respondent has self-reported they have been given "key worker status" only. It has not been defined by an official list of occupations or industries in which people work.

## 11 . 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, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 68% (or 1,360 individuals) for the survey conducted from 24 April to 3 May 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 complete the survey online were given the opportunity to take part over the phone.

Where changes in results from previous weeks 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 [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

### Sampling

A sample of 2,010 households were randomly selected from the Annual Population Survey (APS), which consists collectively of those respondents who successfully completed the last wave of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or the local LFS boost. From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger people were given higher selection probability than older 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 1,360 individuals (68% 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, employment status, National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) group and smoking status. For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for April 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.

## 12 . 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: 2,010 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

## 13 . Related links

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) product page](#)

Product 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 1 May 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 12 May 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](#)

Article | Released 24 April 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 27 March 2020 to 13 April 2020 on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain.

### [Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: May 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 4 May 2020

Estimates looking across personal well-being and economic well-being covering the period October 2019 to April 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people and households in Great Britain.

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#)

Blog | Updated as and when data become available

Catch up on the latest data and analysis related to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on our economy and society.