

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 5 March 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 24 February to 28 February 2021 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Contact:
Tim Vizard, David Ainslie and
Tom Evans
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.gov.uk
+44 (0)1633 455278

Release date:
5 March 2021

Next release:
12 March 2021

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Understanding the impact on society](#)
3. [Main indicators](#)
4. [Personal well-being](#)
5. [Perceptions of the future](#)
6. [Attitudes to COVID-19 vaccination](#)
7. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
8. [Glossary](#)
9. [Measuring the data](#)
10. [Strengths and limitations](#)
11. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

This week, over the period 24 to 28 February 2021, based on adults in Great Britain:

- Compliance with most measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) remained high, with 88% of adults reporting always or often handwashing after returning home (89% last week) and 95% using a face covering (96% last week); the same proportion of adults (92%) reported avoiding physical contact when outside their home as last week.
- The proportion of working adults travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days appears to be gradually increasing, at 39% this week compared with 34% in mid-February (10 to 14 February); this proportion is now higher than the proportion of working adults reporting working from home exclusively in the past seven days, this appears to be gradually decreasing, to 32% this week compared with 37% in mid-February.
- The proportion of adults that felt that life will return to normal in six months or less increased to around a third (32%) compared with just over 1 in 5 (22%) last week; the proportion of adults who felt that it will take more than a year for life to return to normal decreased, 2 in 10 (20%) adults reported this compared with just over a quarter (27%) last week.
- All four personal well-being measures improved slightly compared with last week; there has been a gradual improvement in the level of happiness (6.7 this week) since a lowest level recorded on this survey at the end of January (6.4 in the periods between 13 to 31 January); the level of anxiety (4.0 this week) also appears to have gradually improved since a recent high in early January (4.6 in the period 7 to 10 January).
- Levels of life satisfaction (6.6 this week compared with 6.4 last week) and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.1 this week compared with 7.0 last week) began to slightly increase, having since the beginning of 2021 remained consistently at some of the lowest levels recorded on this survey.
- Positive sentiment towards the COVID-19 vaccine remained high; 94% of adults reported they had now either received the vaccine or would be likely to have the vaccine if offered; the same as last week.
- Positive sentiment towards the vaccine appeared to increase with age, with 99% of adults aged 70 years and over reporting this compared with 89% of adults aged 16 to 29 years, 92% of adults aged 30 to 49 years and 97% aged 50 to 69 years.

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 6,028 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 24 and 28 February 2021 (inclusive). Results from this period are based on 4,231 responding adults (70% response rate).

Throughout the bulletin:

- “this week” refers to responses collected during the period 24 to 28 February 2021
- “last week” refers to responses collected during the period 17 to 21 February 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 20 February [a maximum of two households are now able to meet outdoors for exercise](#) with the next review of lockdown restrictions due by March 12. The reporting period for this release covers the week after these announcements, from 24 to 28 February 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 88% of adults reporting always or often handwashing after returning home (89% last week) and 95% using a face covering (96% last week). This week, the same proportion of adults (92%) reported avoiding physical contact when outside their home as last week.

[Download the data](#)

Further statistics on compliance with measures to stop the spread of 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

Around 9 in 10 (93%) of adults in Great Britain reported leaving home this week. Figure 1 shows a selection of reasons adults have reported leaving home for over the course of the coronavirus pandemic. This week, of adults who had left home:

- 77% did so to shop for basic necessities (76% last week)
- 61% did so to exercise, for example, a run, walk or cycle (60% last week)
- 34% did so to travel to and from work (32% last week)
- 16% did so for any medical need, including to get the COVID-19 vaccine (18% last week)
- 7% did so to take children or young people to or from school, college or nursery (5% last week)

Figure 1: Shopping for basic necessities has been the most frequently reported reason for leaving home reported throughout the coronavirus pandemic

Great Britain, May 2020 to February 2021

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?".
2. Base: all adults who reported having in the past seven days left their home for any reason.
3. For more information as to how response options for the question "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?" have changed during the course of the pandemic and comparability of the data shown in this chart over time please see the datasets associated with this bulletin.
4. Not all possible response categories are shown on this chart. For data for all possible response categories to this question please see Table 6 of the dataset associated with this bulletin.
5. Estimates of to take children or young people to or from school, college or nursery for 14 May to 17 May 2020 to 4 to 7 June 2020 should be treated with caution due to small sample sizes.

[Download the data](#)

Leaving home to meet others

Other possible reasons for people to leave home may be to meet others either indoors or outdoors. We asked respondents to think of their largest gathering in the last seven days and found that:

- at least 10% of adults have met up indoors with someone outside their household or support bubble in the last seven days (excluding work or education); this was slightly less than last week (12%)
- at least 18% of adults have met up with someone outside their household or support bubble outdoors in the last seven days (excluding work or education); this was the same as last week

When looking at those who had met up with others outside their household or support bubble (either indoors or outdoors), 86% of adults reported always or often maintaining social distance when meeting up with people outside their support bubble this week. This was the same as 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, 49% of working adults reported leaving home for work in the past 7 days. Looking at this in more detail:

- the proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days appears to be gradually increasing, at 39% this week compared with 34% in mid-February (10 to 14 February).
- 1 in 10 (10%) working adults reported both working from home and travelling to work this week, this has been similar since we started asking this question on the survey in May 2020.

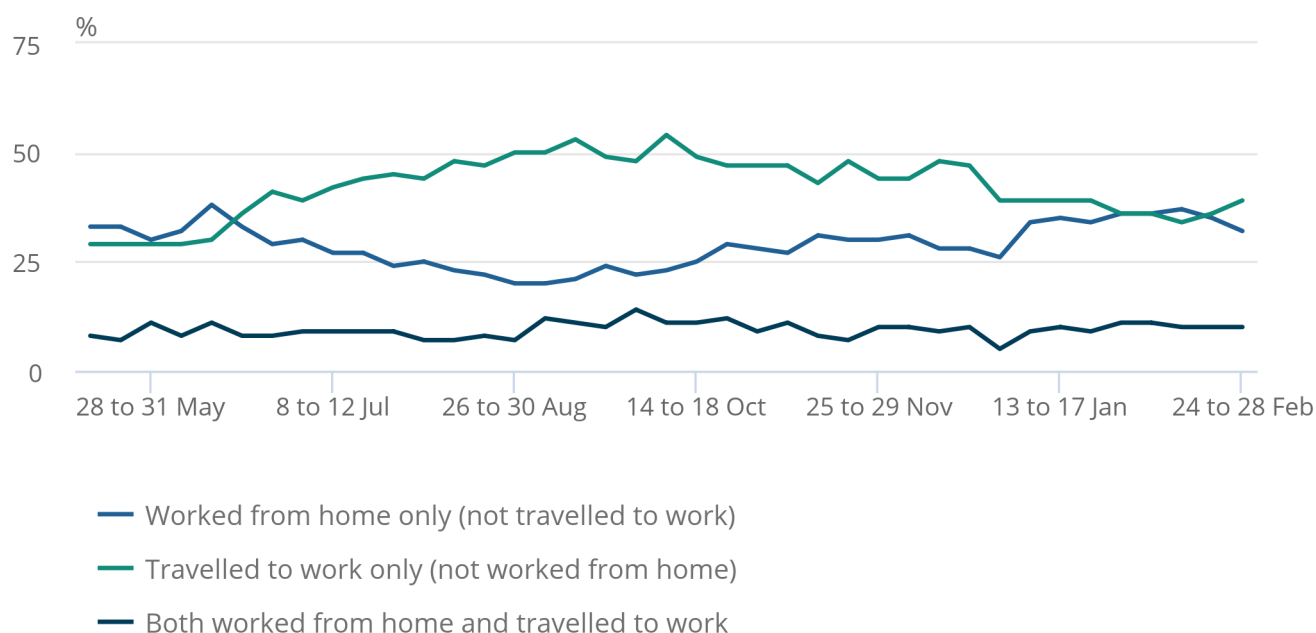
The proportion of working adults reporting working from home exclusively in the past seven days appears to be gradually decreasing, to 32% this week compared with 37% in mid-February (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days appears to be gradually increasing

Great Britain, May 2020 to February 2021

Figure 2: The proportion of working adults reporting travelling to work exclusively in the past seven days appears to be gradually increasing

Great Britain, May 2020 to February 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 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 due to the 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.

4 . Personal well-being

This week, all four personal well-being measures improved slightly compared with the levels reported last week.

There has been a gradual improvement in the level of happiness (6.7 this week) since a lowest level recorded on this survey in January (6.4 in the periods 13 to 31 January). The level of anxiety (4.0 this week) also appears to have gradually improved since a recent high in early January (4.6 in the period 7 to 10 January).

This week, the level of life satisfaction (6.6) and feeling that things done in life are worthwhile (7.1) improved slightly, having remained consistently at some of the lowest levels recorded on this survey since the beginning of 2021 (Figure 3).

The proportion of adults who were worried (very or somewhat) about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now also fell to 66% this week compared with 71% last week.

Figure 3: Levels of happiness and anxiety appear to be gradually improving

Great Britain, March 2020 to February 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.

[Download the data](#)

5 . Perceptions of the future

This week, the proportion of adults in Great Britain that felt that life will return to normal in six months or less increased to around a third (32%) compared with just over 1 in 5 (22%) last week.

The proportion of adults who felt that it will take more than a year for life to return to normal decreased; 2 in 10 (20%) adults felt it will take more than a year for life to return to normal, compared with just over a quarter (27%) last week (Figure 4).

On 22 February 2021, the government announced a four-step [roadmap](#) to ease lockdown restrictions in England. This roadmap notes that the government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact in England no earlier than 21 June 2021. On 23 February the Scottish government published an update to the [strategic framework](#) for easing lockdown restrictions in Scotland. In Wales, from 20 February [a maximum of two households are now able to meet outdoors for exercise](#) with the next review of lockdown restrictions due by March 12. The reporting period for this release covers the week after this announcement, from 24 to 28 February 2021.

Figure 4: The proportion of adults who report they feel that it will take less than six months for life to return to normal is continuing to increase

Great Britain, March 2020 to February 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.

[Download the data](#)

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 the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine or would be likely (very or fairly likely) to have the vaccine if offered; the same as reported last week. This also includes adults who have accepted and are waiting to receive it. In early December 2020, around 8 in 10 (78%) adults indicated they would be likely to accept the vaccine if offered it (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Over 9 in 10 (94%) adults have either received, are awaiting, or would be likely to accept the COVID-19 vaccine if offered

Great Britain, December 2020 to February 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. Category of "Adults who have received the vaccine, are awaiting, or would be likely to have the vaccine if offered" includes those who reported they have either received the COVID-19 vaccine, accepted an offer of a vaccine and are awaiting vaccination, or would be very or fairly likely to have the vaccine if offered.
5. 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.

[Download the data](#)

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

- had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine (39%)
- had been offered the vaccine and were awaiting it (5%)
- had not yet been offered the vaccine but were likely (very or fairly) to have it when offered (50%)

Positive vaccine sentiment appeared to increase with age, with the majority (99%) of adults aged 70 years and over reporting they had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, were awaiting it or would be likely to accept it if offered, compared with 89% of adults aged 16 to 29 years, 92% of adults aged 30 to 49 years and 97% aged 50 to 69 years¹ (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](#).

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 6: The majority (99%) of adults aged 70 years or over reported they had received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, were awaiting it or would be likely to accept it

Great Britain, 24 to 28 February 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% due to rounding and that proportions of less than 1% are not included in this chart.

[Download the data](#)

Of all adults who said they would be unlikely to have the COVID-19 vaccine if offered, or had decided not to have the vaccine when offered, the most commonly reported reasons why not were:

- feeling worried about the long-term effects on their health (45% this week, 43% last week)
- wanting to wait to see how well the vaccine works (39% this week, 34% last week)

Further statistics on attitudes to vaccines and mass testing this week can be found in Table 12 of the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

For more information on attitudes to vaccines amongst different sub-groups of the population, including breakdowns by age, sex, ethnic group and disability status, see [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 29 January 2021](#) and [Coronavirus and vaccine attitudes and behaviours in England: over 80s population, 15 February to 20 February 2021](#). Analysis of [differences in hesitancy to the COVID-19 vaccine between sub-groups of the population in Great Britain](#) will be published on 8 March 2021.

Notes for: Attitudes to COVID-19 vaccination

1. Totals for the combined category of “positive vaccine sentiment” 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 5 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.

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 20 February [a maximum of two households are now able to meet outdoors for exercise](#) with the next review of lockdown restrictions due by March 12. The reporting period for this release covers the week after these announcements, from 24 to 28 February 2021.

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, the COVID-19 vaccination is now being provided in various locations across the country. The vaccine is 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 vaccine](#) is available.

More information on the [number of people who have received the 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

In employment

A respondent is said to be “in employment” if their employment status is either employee, self-employed or unpaid family worker. This is different to the definition used in [our labour market estimates](#), which also include a small number of people on government training schemes. The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) does not ask whether a person is on a government training scheme.

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, 6,028 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 70% (or 4,231 individuals) for the survey conducted from 24 to 28 February 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 [Quality and Methodology for the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#).

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 the vaccine if offered, but were not specifically asked if they had already been offered or received the vaccine.

Sampling

A sample of 6,028 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 24 to 28 February 2021 contained 4,231 individuals (70% 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 February 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 [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#).

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.

[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 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.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 19 February 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 March 2021

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 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 (April to June) 2011 through to Quarter 3 (July to September) 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 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.

[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.