

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 27 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 18 to 22 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, over the period 18 to 22 November, based on adults in Great Britain:

- over half (56%) of working adults reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home); this is a slight increase from 51% last week

This week, we also examine the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in different areas of England during the second national lockdown and during the use of local COVID-19 alert levels (tiers), comparing the period 5 November to 15 November (the first fortnight of lockdown), with the period 21 October to 1 November (the fortnight prior to lockdown):

- the proportion of adults avoiding physical contact with others when outside their home remained high across the different areas of England in both periods; Shropshire and Staffordshire, and Merseyside had the biggest increase in avoiding physical contact, with a 10 percentage point increase in adults reporting they avoided contact with others in the first fortnight of lockdown compared with the fortnight prior to lockdown
- around 4 in 10 people in England left home to go to work and the proportions of people working from home during the second national lockdown in November ranged from 23% in Cumbria to over 60% in Inner London
- for the majority of areas in England, the proportion of adults either very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives decreased during the second national lockdown in November; North Yorkshire and Dorset and Somerset both showed the largest decrease (13 percentage points), while Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly showed the largest increase (11 percentage points)

2 . Understanding the impact on society

This weekly 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 latest weekly statistics for Great Britain over the period 18 November to 22 November are examined. Additional breakdowns by age, sex, underlying health condition, and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [associated 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 this difference.

The latest weekly statistics in this release are based on a survey of 5,994 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 18 and 22 November 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 3,631 responding adults (61% response rate).

In this bulletin, we also examine the social impacts of the coronavirus in different areas of England during the second national lockdown, over the period 5 November to 15 November. We compare this with social impacts during the use of local COVID-19 alert levels (tiers), over the period 21 October to 1 November. This builds on research from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) earlier this year looking at the social impacts of the coronavirus on the [countries and regions of Great Britain](#). This regional analysis presents results for England only. Information relating to other areas in Great Britain are available in the [associated datasets](#).

Throughout the bulletin:

- "this week" refers to responses collected during the period 18 November to 22 November 2020
- "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 11 November to 15 November 2020
- "first fortnight of lockdown" refers to responses collected during the period 5 November to 15 November 2020
- "the fortnight prior to lockdown" refers to responses collected during the period 21 October to 1 November 2020

For information on the tier status of different areas of England immediately prior to the second national lockdown please see Figure 7 included in the [Glossary](#).

For information on sample sizes and response rate for these periods see the section: [Measuring the data](#).

On Thursday 5 November, a second national lockdown started in England. Responses for the period "first fortnight of lockdown" were collected over 5 to 15 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". Prior to this period, different local restrictions were in place across Great Britain. For some questions, respondents were asked to consider the past seven days; therefore, some responses may relate to before the period stated.

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 . Main indicators in Great Britain

There are several measures in place to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), such as handwashing, use of face coverings, avoiding physical contact and self-isolating. These indicators are presented at a Great Britain level in Table 1.

Compliance with most measures remained high this week, with 88% (89% last week) reporting always or often handwashing after returning home, 97% (97% last week) using a face covering and 91% (90% last week) avoiding physical contact when outside their home; 86% (88% last week) of adults reported always or often maintaining social distance when outside their support bubble this week.

Over half (56%) of working adults reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home). This is a slight increase from 51% last week.¹

Table 1: Main indicators

Great Britain, 11 to 22 November 2020

[Data download](#)

Well-being

This week, average personal well-being scores for worthwhile (7.3) remained the same, while life satisfaction (6.8) and happiness (6.9) increased slightly compared with last week, and there was a slight decrease in the anxiety score (4.1).

Figure 1: Personal well-being scores remained relatively stable compared with last week

Great Britain, March to November 2020

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](#)

Notes for: Main indicators in Great Britain

1. 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 the rounding.

4 . Preventative measures in different areas of England

In the rest of this bulletin, we examine the social impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in different regions of England during the second national lockdown, over the period 5 November to 15 November. We compare this with social impacts during the use of local COVID-19 alert levels (tiers), over the period 21 October to 1 November. Regions are based on Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS2) areas (for more information on NUTS2 areas please see the [Glossary](#)).

This bulletin presents a summary of results for England only, with information relating to other areas in Great Britain available in the [associated datasets](#). Throughout the rest of the bulletin:

- "first fortnight of lockdown" refers to responses collected during the period 5 November to 15 November 2020
- "the fortnight prior to lockdown" refers to responses collected during the period 21 October to 1 November 2020

For some questions, respondents were asked to consider the past seven days; therefore, some responses in the first fortnight of lockdown may relate to before the current lockdown in England started. Areas of England may have changed tier levels within the fortnight prior to lockdown. Responses in the fortnight prior to lockdown may relate to before the tier indicated by the date of this period.

Preventative measures

There are several measures in place to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, such as handwashing, use of face coverings and avoiding physical contact.

In England, around 9 in 10 (89%) adults reported they had washed their hands often or always after returning home from a public place. The proportion of adults reporting this in both the first fortnight of lockdown and the fortnight prior to lockdown was the same. Likewise, 97% of adults in England reported they used a face covering when outside their homes in both the first fortnight of lockdown and the fortnight prior to lockdown. These patterns were similar across the different areas of England.

The proportion of adults avoiding physical contact with others when outside their home remained high and relatively consistent across the different areas of England in both the first fortnight of lockdown and the fortnight prior to lockdown, as shown in Figure 2.

The biggest increases in avoiding physical contact in the first fortnight of lockdown compared with the fortnight prior to lockdown were reported in Merseyside, and Shropshire and Staffordshire, where an increase of 10 percentage points was seen in these areas. While we also saw reductions in some areas, including a decrease of 13 percentage points in Tees Valley and Durham, the reasons are likely to be complex, and are not necessarily an indication of a reduction in compliance in these areas.

In the fortnight prior to lockdown, the highest rates of avoiding physical contact with others were seen in northern parts of England in Tees Valley and Durham, and South Yorkshire (96% of adults reported avoiding contact with others when outside their home). Similar rates were seen in Cumbria (94%), North Yorkshire (92%), West Midlands and Inner London – East (91%).

Figure 2: The biggest increases in avoiding physical contact in the first fortnight of lockdown were in Merseyside, Shropshire and Staffordshire

England, 21 October to 15 November 2020

Notes:

1. 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. Base population: all adults.
2. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

[Data download](#)

Further information on people's adherence to and opinions on preventative measures (such as avoiding contact with older or vulnerable people, self-isolating and feeling as if they have enough information to protect themselves) across the areas of England and the rest of Great Britain is available in the [datasets](#) accompanying this bulletin.

5 . Leaving home and working from home in different areas of England

Leaving home

Around 4 in 10 people in England said they felt comfortable or very comfortable leaving their home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in both the fortnight prior to lockdown (38%) and the first fortnight into lockdown (39%), with around 9 in 10 (94%) people leaving their home in these periods. This pattern was fairly consistent across the areas of England, with people in Inner London – West being the most likely to feel comfortable leaving their home.

Amongst people who had left their home, around three-quarters of them left their home to go shopping for food or medicine, and this pattern was seen fairly consistently across England in both periods of time. Similarly, about half of people left their home for exercise (such as a run, walk, or cycle) in both periods.

Regional differences appear when we examine the proportion of people who left their home to meet with other people. In England, 26% of people left their home to meet other people in the fortnight prior to lockdown, whether this was in a private or a public place. This fell to only 15% of people doing so in the first fortnight of lockdown.

People in all areas were less likely to have left their home in the first fortnight of lockdown. The difference was most noticeable in the southern areas of England. People in the North East, North West and in Yorkshire and The Humber were 6 percentage points less likely to leave their house to meet other people in the first fortnight into lockdown compared with the fortnight prior to lockdown, whereas, on average, this difference was 15 percentage points in the rest of England (Figure 3). This may have been as a result of northern areas being likely to have been in higher tiers prior to the countrywide lockdown beginning in England on 3 November.

Figure 3: Almost everybody was less likely to meet other people in lockdown compared with prior to lockdown, particularly in the Midlands and southern England

England, 21 October to 15 November

Notes:

1. Question: In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?" Responses were grouped into, meeting up with people in a public place, meeting up with people in a personal place and visiting a partner living separately.
2. Base: adults who responded 'yes' to the question: "In the past seven days, have you left your home for any reason".
3. Please note, estimates in shaded cells in this table are based on small sample sizes and should therefore be treated with caution.
4. Estimates for each area of England for both the period the fortnight prior to lockdown and the first fortnight of lockdown, are available in the datasets associated with this bulletin.
5. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

[Data download](#)

Visitors to eat or drink at a restaurant, bar or pub decreased from 23% to 10% in England between these periods, which seems to be as a result of the lockdown across England. This fall was most noticeable in southern England and London. The proportion of people collecting takeaway food or drinks remained around 13% in both periods in all areas of England. In this week's data these proportions stood at less than 1% for visitors to a restaurant, bar or pub and 14% for collecting takeaway food or drinks.

Working from home

In England, the proportion of workers who travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the first fortnight into lockdown was 3 percentage points lower than the fortnight prior to lockdown. In some locations, including Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire, there was almost no change. These places were in Tiers 2 or 3 of the government's "local COVID alert levels" in the fortnight prior to lockdown so would have been less impacted by the England-wide lockdown.

The largest changes in England were seen in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly where proportions fell from 72% of workers who travelled to work in the fortnight prior to lockdown to 49% in the first fortnight of lockdown, Cumbria, which fell from 86% to 65%, and Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, which fell from 74% to 57%. These three places were in Tiers 1 or 2 of local COVID alert levels in the fortnight prior to lockdown.

In London, about 32% of working adults travelled for work in the first fortnight of lockdown. This is partially because more than half of working adults in London worked from home, most notably in Inner London where this was more than 60%, although many of these adults did still mix travelling to work as well as working from home (Figure 4).

The proportion of working adults working from home varied across different areas of England, with people in Cumbria amongst the least likely to be working from home, slightly fewer than one-quarter doing so in both time periods (Figure 5).

Figure 4: Fewer people travelled to work in the first fortnight into lockdown than the fortnight prior to lockdown in Cornwall, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear

England, 21 October to 15 November 2020

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?".
2. Base population: those who said they were working.
3. 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; or they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work.
4. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.
5. People travelling to work includes those who report either exclusively travelling to work or travelling to work in combination with working from home.

[Data download](#)

Figure 5: People in Inner London were the most likely to work from home and people in Cumbria the least likely in the first fortnight of lockdown

England, 21 October to 15 November 2020

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?".
2. Base: adults who reported they had been working: 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.
3. Please note, estimates in shaded cells in this table are based on small sample sizes and should therefore be treated with caution.
4. Where changes in results from previous weeks or differences between groups are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals, which are included in the accompanying datasets, indicate their significance.
5. People working from home includes those who report either exclusively working from home or working from home in combination with travelling to work.

[Data download](#)

There was no clear regional pattern in whether the people who were not working from home were choosing to not work from home, or were not able to work from home. This is likely to be related to the types of jobs and the industrial structure differing in each area. More information on this can be found in [The spatial distribution of industries in Great Britain](#).

Further information on leaving home and working from home across the areas of England and the rest of Great Britain is available in the [datasets](#) accompanying this bulletin.

6 . Worry and well-being in different areas of England

Worry about the effect of the coronavirus on life

The proportion of adults reporting that they were very or somewhat worried about the effect the coronavirus (COVID-19) is having on their life varied across England in the fortnight prior to lockdown and the first fortnight of lockdown.

In the first fortnight of lockdown, the proportion of adults reporting that they were very or somewhat worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their life ranged from 62% in Dorset and Somerset to 76% in Outer London – West and North West. Three of the five London areas were amongst the areas where the highest proportion of worry was reported. In the fortnight prior to lockdown, this ranged from 60% in Cornwall to 83% in Cheshire (Figure 6).

In the first fortnight of lockdown, the majority of areas reported a decrease compared with the fortnight prior to lockdown. North Yorkshire, and Dorset and Somerset both showed the largest decrease (13 percentage points) in the proportion of adults reporting that were very or somewhat worried. Of the six areas that saw an increase, only Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (11 percentage points) showed an increase of more than 10 percentage points.

Figure 6: The proportion of adults worried about the coronavirus in the first fortnight of lockdown ranged from 62% in Dorset and Somerset to 76% in Outer London – West and North West

England, 21 October to 15 November 2020

Notes:

1. Question: "How worried or unworried are you about the effect that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is having on your life right now?".
2. Base population: all adults.
3. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

[Data download](#)

Well-being

In the latest week of data (18 to 22 November), average personal well-being scores in England for worthwhile (7.3) remained the same as last week, while life satisfaction (6.8) and happiness (6.9) increased slightly compared with last week, and there was a slight decrease in the anxiety score (4.0).

In this section, considering average personal well-being during the first fortnight of lockdown across the areas of England, adults in North Yorkshire, and Shropshire and Staffordshire reported the highest level of life satisfaction (both at 7.1), whilst adults in Outer London – West and North West reported the lowest level of life satisfaction (6.3) as well as the second-lowest score when asked whether they considered the things they did in their life were worthwhile.

Adults in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire, Dorset and Somerset, Essex, East Anglia, and Lancashire and Cumbria reported the highest levels of happiness during the first fortnight of lockdown (all at 7.1), whilst adults in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear reported the lowest levels (6.3).

Adults in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear, and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire reported the highest levels of anxiety (both at 4.8), whilst adults in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire reported the lowest level of anxiety (3.4).

When asked about loneliness, adults in Outer London – West and North West (32%) and Inner London – West (31%) reported the highest levels of often, always or sometimes feeling lonely during the first fortnight of lockdown, whilst adults in Lincolnshire (14%) and Cumbria (19%) reported the lowest levels of loneliness during the first fortnight of lockdown.

Further information on people's well-being, loneliness and worry about the coronavirus across the areas of England and the rest of Great Britain is available in the [datasets](#) accompanying this bulletin.

7 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 27 November 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.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on NUTS2 regions in Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 27 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on people, households and communities, by NUTS2 area.

8 . Glossary

Local COVID restrictions

The [local COVID Alert System](#) in England was categorised into three tiers as follows:

- Tier 1 is the "medium" alert level and consists of a series of measures including not socialising in groups larger than six (indoors and outdoors), also known as the "rule of six"
- Tier 2 is the "high" alert level, for areas with a higher level of infections where some additional restrictions are in place, particularly limiting socialising with anybody outside your household or support bubble in any indoor setting
- Tier 3 is the "very high" alert level, for areas with a very high level of infections and where tighter restrictions are in place, these extend restrictions further around mixing with different households indoors and outdoors; Tier 3 also introduces restrictions in terms of pubs and bars not serving a substantive meal

At the time of data collection, further restrictions may have also been in place depending on agreements between national and local government. [Further information about the local COVID alert level tiers](#) is available.

Please see Figure 7 for information on local COVID alert tier status of areas of England prior to the second national lockdown.

Figure 7: Local COVID alert tier status of areas of England prior to the second national lockdown

England, October to November 2020

Notes:

1. The tiers presented are based upon the tier system proposed by the Prime Minister to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic in England in this period. More information about this system is [available](#).

[Data download](#)

NUTS areas

The Nomenclature of Units for Territorial Statistics (NUTS) is a hierarchical classification of administrative areas, used across the EU for statistical purposes. There are 12 NUTS1 regions or countries in the UK: Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the nine former English Government Office Regions. [These NUTS1 regions are broken down further into 40 smaller NUTS2-level geographies.](#)

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

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, 5,994 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 61% (or 3,631 individuals) for the survey conducted from 18 to 22 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 5,994 households was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or 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 18 November to 22 November contained 3,631 individuals (61% 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 November 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.

Pooled datasets

To enable more detailed analysis, such as the breakdowns included in this bulletin, two waves of the weekly OPN data have been pooled together and reweighted to create larger datasets. By pooling data, we improve the sample size available to create smaller breakdowns of individual questions at the expense of having to report on a wider time period (two weeks rather than one week).

The pooled dataset representing the first fortnight of lockdown contains 8,778 individual responses, representing an overall response rate of 73% for the waves of the survey conducted from 5 November to 8 November, and 11 November to 15 November. The dataset representing the fortnight prior to lockdown contains 8,337 responses, representing an overall response rate of 68% for the waves of the survey conducted from 21 October to 25 October and 28 October to 1 November.

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.

[Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional: week ending 13 November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 24 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.