

Article

Characteristics of homeworkers, Great Britain: September 2022 to January 2023

Analysis of homeworkers, including prevalence of hybrid working, and breakdowns by personal characteristics. Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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Notice

31 July 2023

We identified a weighting issue on our Opinions and Lifestyle Survey which resulted in some distributions of population totals presented in our datasets not matching official population estimates published by ONS. This is limited to analysis based on pooling a number of waves of OPN data together.

This issue occurred because of a processing error and should not impact any future analysis.

This issue does not appear to affect rounded estimates or messages provided in the release or datasets. However, weighted population counts that are provided in the datasets should not be used. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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1 . Main points

- Among working adults who have worked in the last seven days, 16% reported working from home only and 28% reported both working from home and travelling to work over the period September 2022 to January 2023.
- Workers in the highest income band, those who were educated to degree level or above, and those in professional occupations were most likely to report home only or hybrid working.
- Self-employed workers were twice as likely to work from home only (32%) compared with employees (14%).
- London residents reported the highest levels of hybrid working across Great Britain, with 4 in 10 workers both working from home and travelling to work.

2 . Background

Working from home since the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

Before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, only around one in eight working adults reported working from home. Our [Annual Population Survey data](#) for the 12-month period from January to December 2019 shows that around 12% of working adults reported working from home at some point in the week before the interview. Using the most recent data from our [Public Opinions and Social Trends Survey](#), which uses data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), we can look at working arrangements since the start of the pandemic.

Levels of working from home peaked during the pandemic, with almost half of working adults (49%) reporting having worked from home at some point in the past seven days in the first half of 2020 (3 to 13 April and 11 to 14 June 2020). Two years later (27 April to 8 May 2022), when guidance to work from home was lifted in Great Britain, around 38% of working adults reported having worked from home. In the most recent period (25 January to 5 February 2023) around 40% of working adults reported having worked from home at some point in the past seven days.

Throughout 2022 the percentage of working adults reporting having worked from home has varied between 25% and 40%, without a clear upward or downward trend, indicating that homeworking is resilient to pressures such as the end of restrictions and increases in the cost of living.

Figure 1: Trends in working from home

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to February 2023

First lockdown

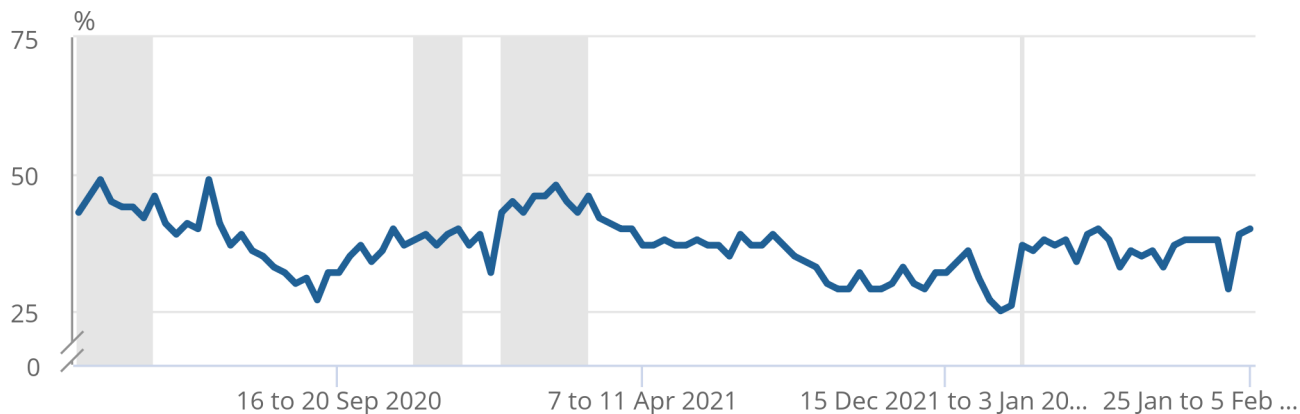
Second lockdown

Third lockdown

Change in question v

Figure 1: Trends in working from home

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to February 2023



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?"
2. Base: All working adults.
3. Prior to the period 30 March to 10 April 2022, respondents were asked "In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?" if they had reported working in the past seven days.
4. COVID-19 measures referenced in annotations refer to those in England only, although the chart presents Great Britain estimates; please note that similar measures were used in Wales and Scotland.

About the data

To provide detailed analysis of the characteristics of those who work from home, the following analysis uses a different definition than the one reported in our Public Opinions and Social Trends (POST) time series data.

Firstly, the base of the question is different. We have removed working adults who have not worked in the past seven days. The main reasons for respondents not having worked in the past seven days include temporary closure of business, being on annual leave or sick leave. This is because we could not infer their working arrangements. In this article we refer to "workers" to identify all those working adults who worked in the previous week.

Secondly, we wanted to look at people's ability to work from home as well as whether they had worked from home within the analysis, so we divided home and hybrid workers into two categories:

- homeworkers – those who only worked from home in the past seven days
- hybrid workers – those who both worked from home and travelled to work in the past seven days

We divided those who only travelled to work into two categories:

- travelled to work, can homework – those who only travelled to work in the past seven days but did have the option to work from home
- travelled to work, cannot homework – those who only travelled to work in the past seven days but did not have the option to work from home

3 . Characteristics of homeworkers

Age and sex

Overall, 44% of workers reported home or hybrid working and 56% reported only travelling to work in the last seven days (September 2022 to January 2023). A higher rate reported hybrid working, with 28% reporting hybrid working and 16% reporting working from home only. A higher rate of workers travelling to work (46%) reported not being able to work at home compared with those who travelled to work but could work from home (10%).

Younger workers continue to be least likely to only work from home (6%). Those aged 16 to 24 years had the highest rate of those travelling to work at 79%, while those aged 34 to 44 years had the lowest rate at 48%. The group aged 16 to 24 years also had the highest rate of workers who did not have the ability to work from home, with just under two in three (65%) reporting this. Those aged 25 to 34 years, 35 to 44 years, and 45 to 54 years reported higher rates of home or hybrid working compared with the group aged 16 to 24 years.

Figure 2: 16- to 24-year-olds were most likely to report travelling to work without the option to work from home

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?" and "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?"
2. Base: Adults who have worked in the past seven days.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

More men reported travelling to work without the option to work from home (48%) compared with women (44%). There was little difference in the levels of homeworking only and hybrid working reported by men and women. 16% of men and 17% of women reporting homeworking only and 27% and 29% reporting hybrid working, respectively.

Income and education

Those with higher incomes were more likely to work from home. The highest levels of home only or hybrid working were seen in workers in the highest income band of £50,000 or more annual earnings – with 8 out of 10 workers in this category reporting home or hybrid working. This contrasts with workers in the lowest income band of up to £10,000 annual earnings where only 14% of workers reported home or hybrid working. Of those in the lowest income band, 3 out of 4 travelled to work and could not work from home (75%), the highest rate among all income bands.

Figure 3. Workers in the highest income band were most likely to report home or hybrid working

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?" and "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?"
2. Base: Adults who have worked in the past seven days.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Those with the highest educational qualifications reported the highest levels of home and hybrid working, with 23% of workers with a degree reporting working from home only, and 44% reporting hybrid working. In contrast, only 5% of workers with no qualifications reported working from home only and 9% reported hybrid working.

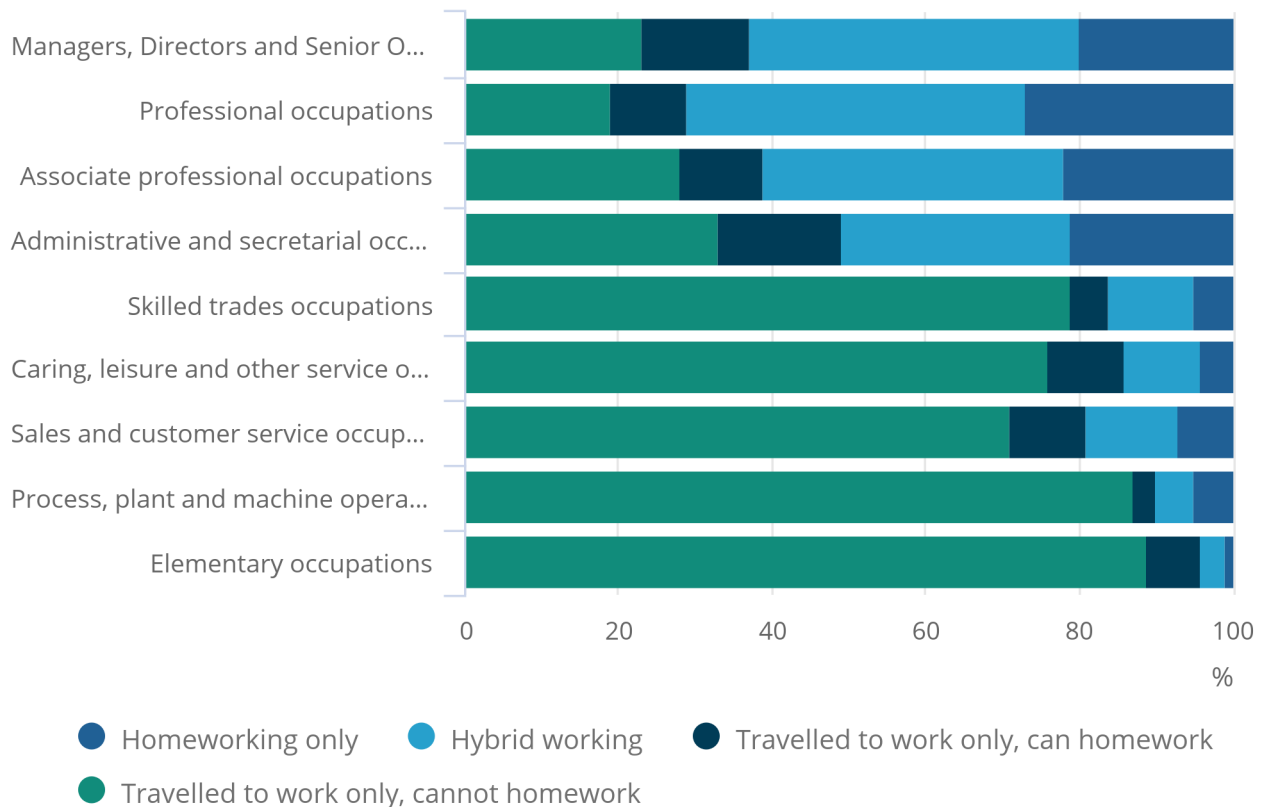
Those in professional occupations reported the highest levels of home and hybrid working, and those in elementary occupations reported the lowest. Professional occupations, associate professional occupations and managers, directors and senior officials were the three occupations with the highest levels of both working from home only (27%, 22% and 21%, respectively) and hybrid working (44%, 39% and 43%, respectively).

Figure 4: Professionals were most likely to report home or hybrid working

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023

Figure 4: Professionals were most likely to report home or hybrid working

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?" and "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?"
2. Base: Adults who have worked in the past seven days.

Elementary occupations, caring, leisure and other service occupations and process, plant and machine operatives had the lowest levels of home only (1%, 4% and 5%, respectively) and hybrid working (3%, 10% and 5%, respectively). The occupations with the lowest levels of home or hybrid working saw higher levels of those who only travelled to work and could not work from home. For more information on which occupations can work from home, please see our [article, from July 2020, Which jobs can be done from home?](#)

Workers in the public sector reported higher levels of hybrid working (35%) than those in the private sector (26%). There were higher rates of workers who only travelled to work and could not work from home in the private sector (50%) compared with the public sector (42%).

Self-employed workers were more likely to work from home only. Nearly 1 in 3 (32%) of self-employed workers reported homeworking only, compared with 14% of employees. Self-employed workers were less likely to have travelled to work without the option to work from home (34%) compared with employees. Nearly half of employees (47%) reporting travelling to work without the option to work from home.

Figure 5: Self-employed workers were twice as likely to work from home only compared with employees

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?" and "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?"
2. Base: Adults who have worked in the past seven days.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Disability and health

Having a disability or long-term illness had little effect on levels of homeworking. Disabled workers reported similar levels of homeworking only (18%) compared with those without a disability (16%). Workers who had a long-term condition for 12 months or more similarly reported homeworking at 18% compared with 15% without.

Ethnicity

Some slight differences were seen between ethnicities, workers in the "Black or Black British" ethnic group reported the highest levels of travelling to work without the option to work from home (60%) compared with workers in the "White British/Irish" ethnic group (46%). Further comparisons between ethnicities are difficult to make because of wide confidence intervals.

Parental status

Parents of a dependent child or children reported higher levels of hybrid working (31%) compared with those without a dependent (26%). The age of the dependent child or children had little effect: 31% of parents with children aged under five years, and 32% of parents with children aged five years or older, reported hybrid working.

Non-parents were more likely to report travelling to work without the option to work from home (48%) compared with parents (42%).

Figure 6. Parents of a dependent child reported hybrid working more than those without a dependent

Proportion of working adults in Great Britain, September 2022 to January 2023

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?" and "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?"
2. Base: Adults who have worked in the past seven days.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Workers who were married, cohabiting or in a civil partnership reported higher levels of home only or hybrid working at 48% compared with 36% for single workers and reported 52% and 64%, respectively, for travelling to work only.

Households with two single adults or more than two adults in a household were least likely to work from home only (8%), and most likely to report travelling to work without the option to work from home (63%). Being in a single-adult household had little effect on levels of homeworking, only (19%) compared with households with two adults who were in a couple (18%).

Those currently paying off a mortgage were more likely to report hybrid working (33%) compared with those who own their property outright (23%). However, there was little difference in reported levels of solely working from home between the two groups, at 16% and 17%, respectively.

Country and region

In London, 4 in 10 workers (40%) reported hybrid working, this was higher than in any other English region. The next highest was the East of England (30%). Those in London were least likely to have travelled to work without the option to work from home (31%), the next least likely was the South East region at 42%.

Workers in England were slightly less likely to travel to work than those in Wales or Scotland. Those in Scotland were most likely to travel to work (59%), compared with 58% in Wales and 56% in England.

Travel-to-work type

Commuters who used a train, underground, metro, light rail, or tram were most likely to be hybrid workers. Of those who travelled to work by train, 64% were hybrid workers and of those who used underground, metro, light rail, or tram services, 65% were hybrid workers. With London reporting the highest levels of hybrid working in Great Britain, it follows that train, underground, metro, light rail, and tram services were the most popular for hybrid workers.

For all other types of transport (bus, minibus, coach, car or car-pooling, van, motorcycle, scooter, moped, bicycle, on foot or other) the most frequent users were not hybrid workers but those who travelled to work and did not have the option to work from home.

4 . Homeworking and spending

The Google Workplace Mobility Index reports movement trends over time in workplaces and provides an additional measure of homeworking. The Bank of England's aggregate Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) is an indicator of credit and debit card purchases.

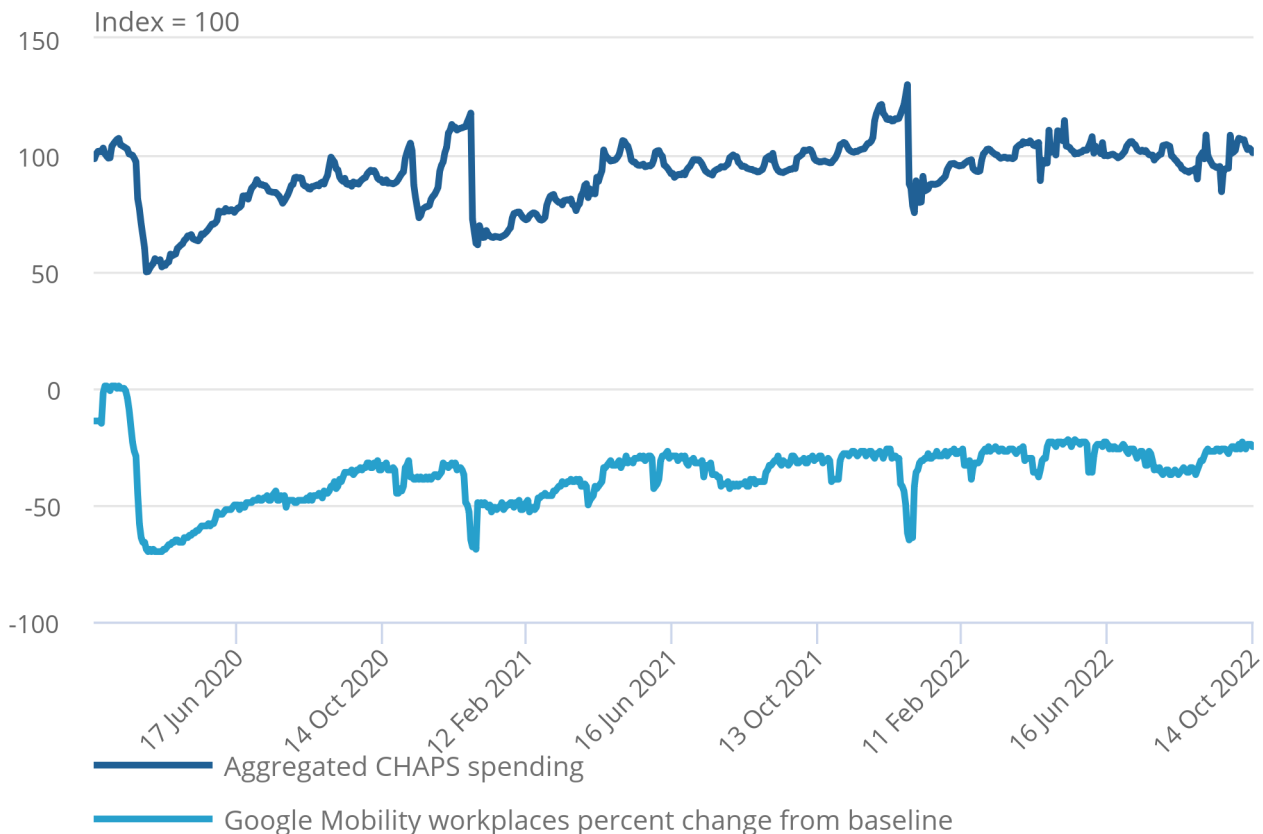
The Google Workplace Mobility Index is closely linked with aggregated CHAPS spending. However, in 2022, the Google Workplace Mobility Index explained only 10.8% of the variation in aggregated CHAPS spending, while before 2022 it explained 53.2% of the variation. This suggests that, as the UK moves away from coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic restrictions, people travelling to work has become a less important determinant of spending. This might be partly because of the end of COVID-19 restrictions but will also have been affected by inflation.

Figure 7: Spending on credit and debit cards has become less linked with the number of people in workplaces over 2022

Aggregated Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) card spending index, Google Workplace Mobility Index, UK, February 2020 to October 2022

Figure 7: Spending on credit and debit cards has become less linked with the number of people in workplaces over 2022

Aggregated Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) card spending index, Google Workplace Mobility Index, UK, February 2020 to October 2022



Source: Bank of England, Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) payments, Google Mobility Index

Notes:

1. The aggregate CHAPS-based index: February 2020 = 100, is a backward looking seven-day rolling average, non-seasonally adjusted.
2. Google Workplace Mobility data are reported as the change in mobility, relative to a five-week base period in January to February 2020. In plotting both indices in figure 6, 100 has been added to the Google Workplace Mobility index.
3. The CHAPS indicator lacks data for weekends and bank holidays.
4. Data for weekends and bank holidays were also removed from the Google Workplace Mobility index to maintain consistency and allow for direct comparisons.
5. The Google Mobility Index stopped being updated on 15/10/2022.

5 . Characteristics of homeworkers, Great Britain data

[Characteristics of homeworkers, Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 13 February 2023

This dataset contains breakdowns of homeworkers by different characteristics using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 25 January to 5 February 2023](#)

Statistical bulletin | Released 10 February 2023

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, working arrangements and well-being from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[UK spending on credit and debit cards](#)

Dataset | Released 9 February 2023

These data series are experimental real-time indicators for monitoring UK spending using debit and credit cards. They track the daily Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates, based on data supplied by the Bank of England.

[Google COVID-19 Community Mobility Report](#)

Dataset | Released 17 October 2022

Note: this is an external dataset produced by Google.

6 . Glossary

Homeworkers

We have defined a "homeworker" as any working adult who has only worked from home in the reference week.

Hybrid workers

We have defined a "hybrid" worker as any working adult who has worked at home for at least one day and has also travelled to work for at least one day in the reference week.

Travelled to work, can homework

Any working adult who has exclusively travelled to work in the reference week and has the option to work from home.

Travelled to work, cannot homework

Any working adult who has exclusively travelled to work in the reference week and does not have the option to work from home.

Disability status

To define disability in this publication, we refer to the [Government Statistical Service \(GSS\) harmonised "core" definition of disability](#): this identifies "disabled" as a person who has a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. The GSS harmonised questions are asked of the respondent in the survey, meaning that disability status is self-reported.

Ethnicity

The ethnicity disaggregation used has been chosen to provide the most granular breakdown possible, while producing robust estimates based on sample sizes, in line with the [GSS ethnicity harmonised standard](#).

The five-category ethnicity breakdown includes:

- White: White British, White Irish, Other White
- Mixed and Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian or Any other Mixed and Multiple ethnic background
- Asian or Asian British: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or any other Asian background
- Black or Black British: African, Caribbean or Any other Black, African or Caribbean background
- Other ethnic background group: Arab or Any other ethnic group

If respondents answered "Don't know" or "Prefer not to answer" to this question, they are excluded from this analysis.

Dependent children

A dependent child is any person aged 0 to 15 years in a household (whether in a family or not), or a person aged 16 to 18 years in full-time education and living in a family with their parent(s) or grandparent(s). It does not include any people aged 16 to 18 years who have a spouse, partner or child living in the household.

Highest qualification

Highest education level, as defined in this [UK government page covering qualification levels](#), refers to the level of the highest qualification obtained by a respondent when they were initially surveyed by the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). Qualifications have been grouped into the following groups for ease of analysis and communication:

- Degree or equivalent: Level 6 or higher qualification obtained anywhere
- Below degree level: Level 1 to 5 qualifications (including GCSEs, A Levels, or equivalent)
- Other qualification: Other qualification obtained in the UK not included in the other categories, or any qualification obtained outside the UK which is not a degree
- None: No formal qualifications

7 . Data sources and quality

Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Comparing data sources

This release contains data and indicators from the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN). The proportion of people who work from home is captured in multiple surveys. For more information, see our [blog about different home working data sources and to what extent they are comparable](#). Quality and methodology information on the OPN and its strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#).

Sampling

The OPN analysis in this article is based on 6,670 working adults in Great Britain, from a pooled dataset comprising eight waves of data collection, covering the following periods:

- 14 to 25 September 2022
- 29 September to 9 October 2022
- 12 to 23 October 2022
- 26 October to 6 November 2022
- 8 to 20 November 2022
- 22 November to 4 December 2022
- 7 to 18 December 2022
- 21 December 2022 to 8 January 2023

Pooling eight waves of data together increases sample sizes allowing detailed analysis for different groups of the population.

Weighting

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population. Weights were adjusted for non-response. Subsequently, the weights were calibrated considering the following factors: sex by age, region, tenure, education, and employment status.

For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for June 2021 were used. The resulting weighted sample is therefore representative of the Great Britain adult population by several socio-demographic factors and geography.

CHAPS spending data

This release also contains data on UK debit and credit card spending. These data series are experimental real-time indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily Clearing House Automated Payment System (CHAPS) payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card transactions made by customers at their stores, both through physical and online platforms.

The dataset is not seasonally adjusted or adjusted for card payments representing an increasing share of all payments through time. More information on the indicator is provided in the [accompanying methodology article, published on the Bank of England website](#).

Google Workplace Mobility Index

The Google Workplace Mobility Index reports aim to provide insights into what has changed in response to policies aimed at combatting COVID-19. The reports chart movement trends over time by geography, across different categories of places, such as retail and recreation, groceries and pharmacies, parks, transit stations, workplaces, and residential.

8 . Related links

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 25 January to 5 February 2023](#)

Statistical bulletin | Released 10 February 2023

Social insights on daily life and events, including the cost of living, working arrangements and well-being from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

[Homeworking in the UK – regional patterns: 2019 to 2022](#)

Article | Released 11 July 2022

Homeworking during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, focusing on changes and how they have altered the distribution of labour across the UK.

[Is hybrid working here to stay?](#)

Digital content article | Released 23 May 2022

Almost half of working adults were working from home at times during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, but what will business as usual look like with restrictions lifted?

[Which jobs can be done from home?](#)

Digital content article | Released 21 July 2020

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, government advice has said people in the UK should work from home if possible. This is easier for some workers than others, and jobs that pay more are more likely to be done remotely.

9 . Cite this article

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 13 February 2023, ONS website, article, [Characteristics of homeworkers, Great Britain: September 2022 to January 2023](#)