

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK: April 2020

Homeworking patterns in the UK, broken down by sex, age, region and ethnicity.

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# 1 . Main points

- In April 2020, 46.6% of people in employment did some work at home.
- Of those who did some work from home, 86.0% did so as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Of those who did some work from home, around one-third worked fewer hours than usual (34.4%), and around one-third worked more hours than usual (30.3%).
- Women were slightly more likely to do some work at home than men, 47.5% and 45.7% respectively.
- People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do some work from home than those in older age groups.
- More than half of people living in London (57.2%) did some work at home.
- Occupations requiring higher qualifications and more experience were more likely to provide homeworking opportunities than elementary and manual occupations.

## 2 . Hours worked

These experimental data are the first published from the Labour Market Survey (LMS). See the [Measuring the data](#) section for further information.

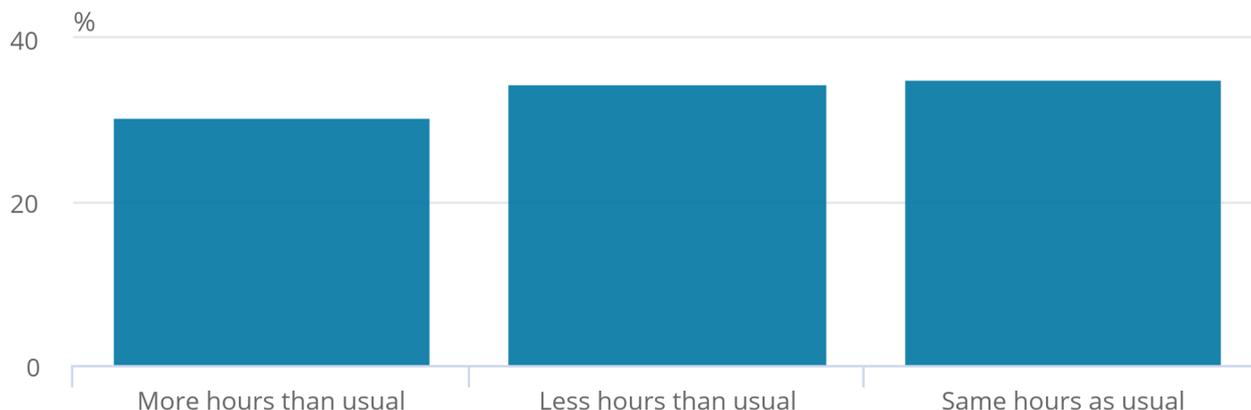
In April 2020, nearly half (46.6%) of people in employment did some of their work from home, with the vast majority (86.0%) of these homeworkers stating that this was because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## Figure 1: People who did some work from home were equally likely to work more or fewer hours than usual

Hours worked rates for homeworkers (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

### Figure 1: People who did some work from home were equally likely to work more or fewer hours than usual

Hours worked rates for homeworkers (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey

#### Notes:

1. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.
2. More, less and same hours are calculated based on the difference between respondents actual and usual hours worked in the reference week.

Around one-third of people who did some work from home in the reference week worked fewer hours than usual (34.4%), and around one-third worked more hours than usual (30.3%).

#### 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](#).

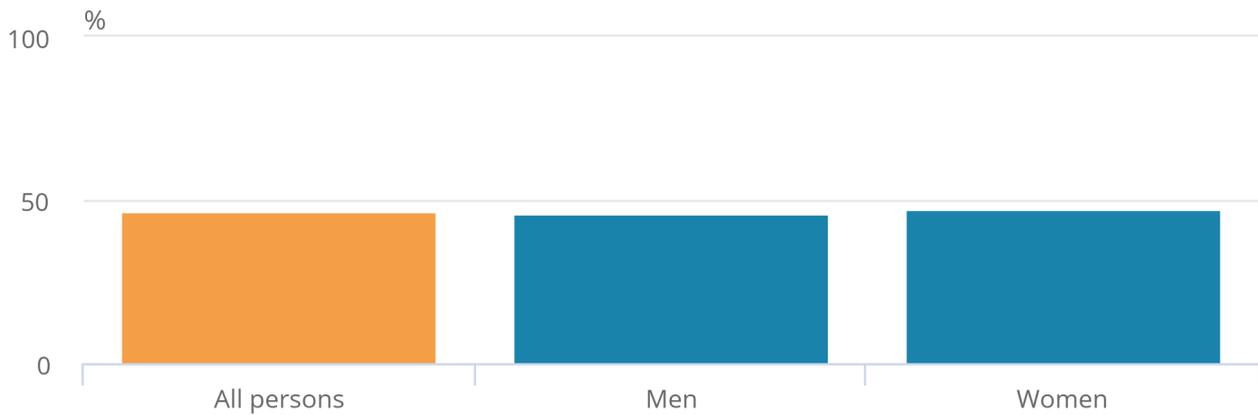
### 3 . Homeworking by sex

**Figure 2: Women were slightly more likely than men to do some work from home**

Homeworking rates, by sex, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

#### Figure 2: Women were slightly more likely than men to do some work from home

Homeworking rates, by sex, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey

**Notes:**

1. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.

There was little variation between the percentage of men and women working from home in the reference week, with women a little more likely to have worked from home than men (47.5% compared with 45.7%), as shown in Figure 2.

Men and women were similarly likely to cite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as the main reason for working from home (86.0% and 85.9% respectively).

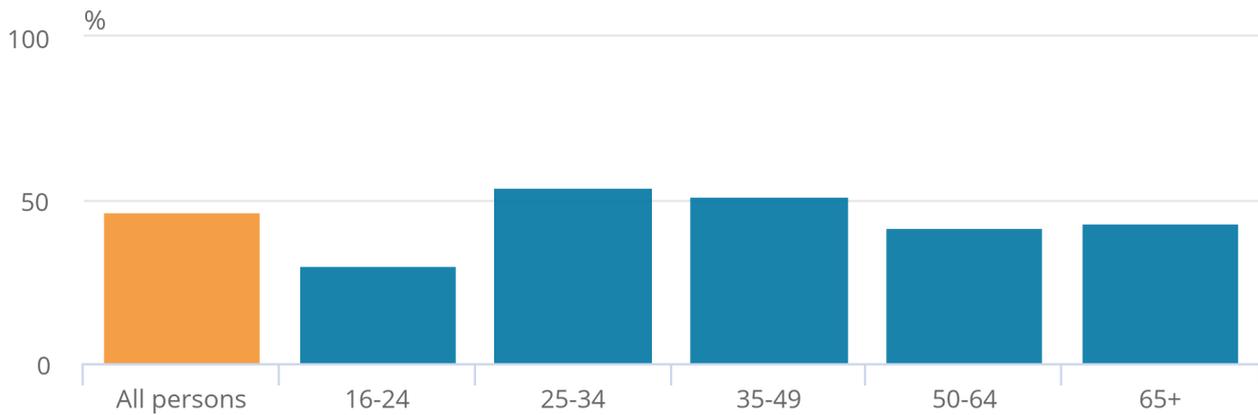
## 4 . Homeworking by age

**Figure 3: People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do any work from home than other age groups**

Homeworking rates, by age, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

### Figure 3: People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do any work from home than other age groups

Homeworking rates, by age, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey

**Notes:**

1. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.

Younger workers (aged 16 to 24 years) were least likely to do any work from home (30.2%); however, over half of 25- to 34-year-olds (54.3%), and 35- to 49-year-olds (51.3%) did some work from home in the reference week.

Those aged 16 to 34 years were more likely to cite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as the main reason for homeworking (95.2%), whereas those aged 50 years and over were less likely (76.1%).

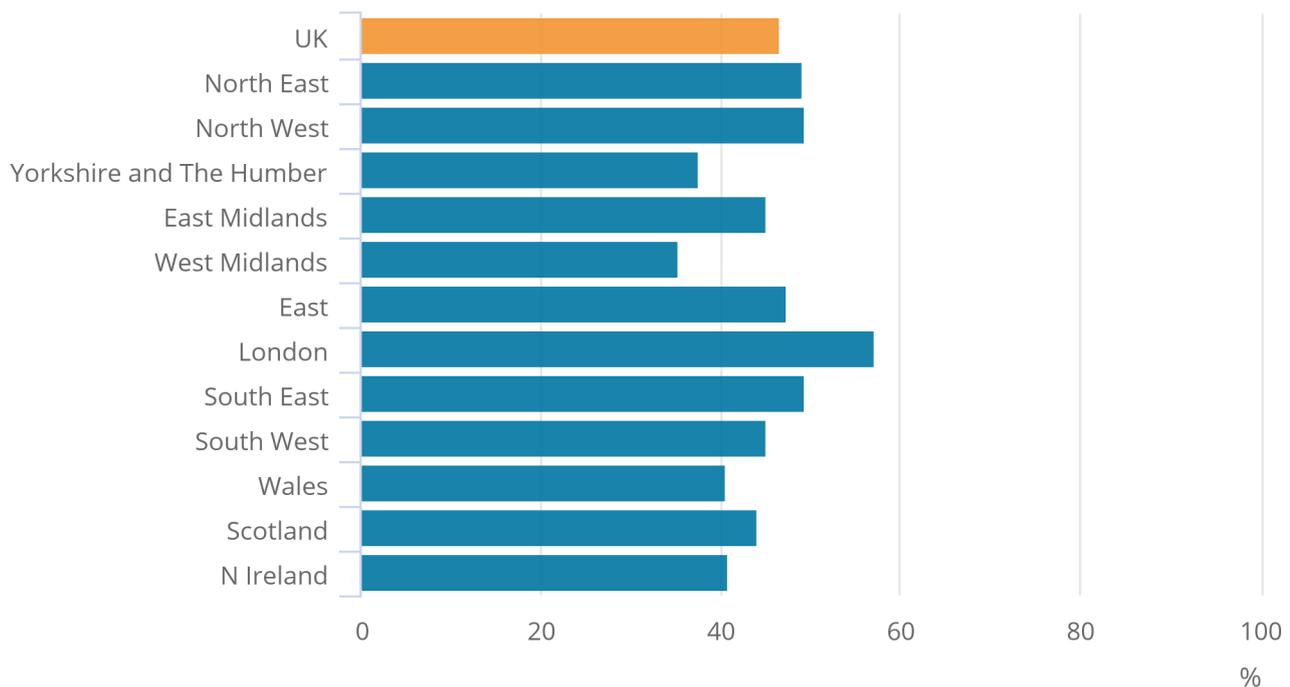
## 5 . Homeworking by region

**Figure 4: Residents of London were more likely to do some work from home than other regions of the UK**

Homeworking rates, by region, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

### Figure 4: Residents of London were more likely to do some work from home than other regions of the UK

Homeworking rates, by region, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey

**Notes:**

1. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.

There are regional variations for those doing some of their work at home. More than half (57.2%) of workers living in London did some work from home, while just over one-third of workers living in the West Midlands (35.3%), and Yorkshire and The Humber (37.6%) did some of their work from home.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland saw broadly similar proportions of homeworkers (approximately 40%).

Of those residents of London who did some work at home, 91.6% cited the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as their main reason for doing so. Conversely, the North East (76.6%) and the South West (79.1%) were the two regions where respondents were least likely to cite the coronavirus pandemic as the main reason for homeworking.

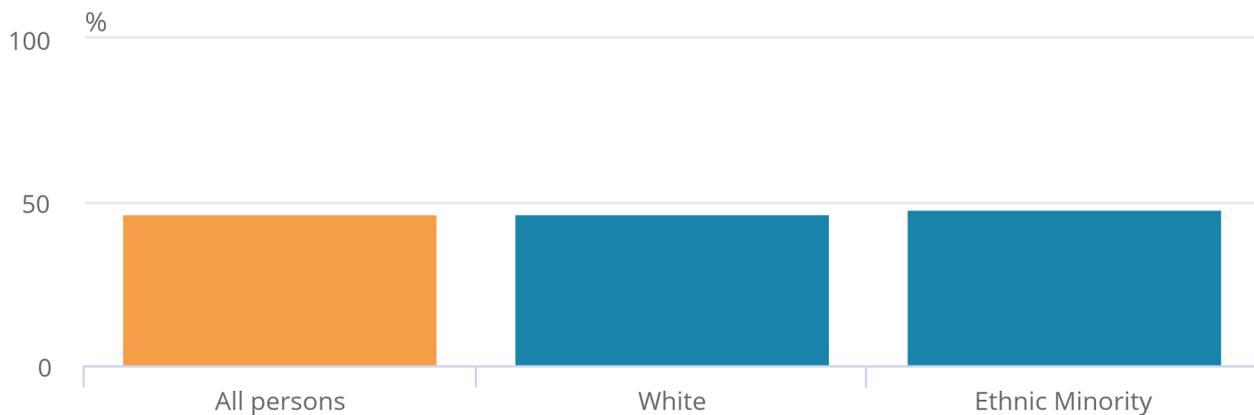
## 6 . Homeworking by ethnicity

**Figure 5: White and Ethnic minority groups had around the same proportion of people doing some work from home**

Homeworking rates, by ethnicity, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

Figure 5: White and Ethnic minority groups had around the same proportion of people doing some work from home

Homeworking rates, by ethnicity, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



**Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey**

**Notes:**

1. Ethnic minority includes all people stating their ethnicity as “Mixed”, “Indian”, “Pakistani”, “Bangladeshi”, “Chinese”, “Black/African/Caribbean” or “Other”.
2. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.

In April 2020, those from both the White and Ethnic minority groups had broadly the same proportions of people doing some work from home (46.4% and 48.1% respectively).

Ethnic minorities were slightly more likely to cite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as the main reason for working from home compared with white people (87.3% and 85.8% respectively).

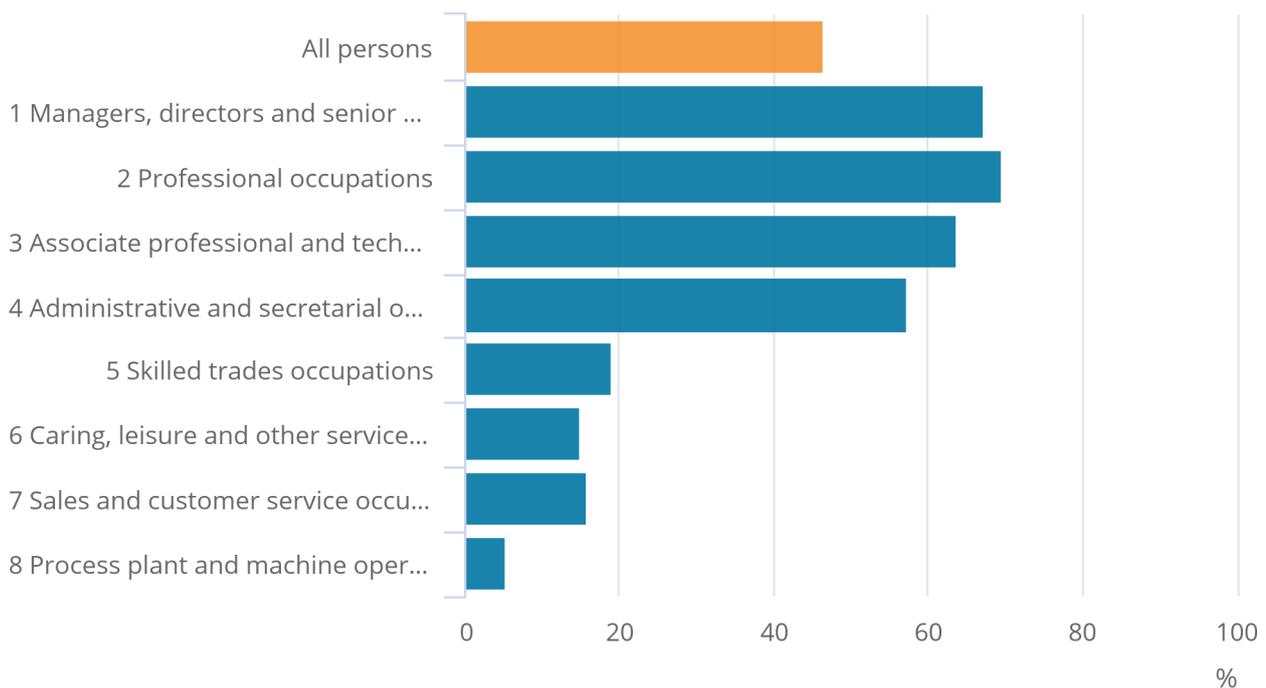
## 7 . Homeworking by occupation

**Figure 6: Occupations requiring higher qualifications and experience were more likely to do some work at home**

Homeworking rates, by occupation, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020

### Figure 6: Occupations requiring higher qualifications and experience were more likely to do some work at home

Homeworking rates, by occupation, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Labour Market Survey

**Notes:**

1. A homeworker refers to a person who did any working from home in the reference week.
2. Elementary occupations have been suppressed as sample size too small for reliable estimate.

Occupations requiring higher qualifications and experience are more likely to provide homeworking opportunities than elementary and manual occupations. The first four major occupations all saw over half of their workers doing some amount of homeworking. Over two-thirds (69.6%) of the professional occupations did some work at home.

Conversely, the last five major occupations (except "Elementary Occupations" which has been excluded because of small sample sizes) all saw under 20% of their workers doing some amount of homeworking.

Those working in associate professional and technical occupations were most likely to cite the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic as the main reason for homeworking (91.1%), while those in skilled trades occupations were least likely to do so (65.0%).

## 8 . Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK data

[Labour Market Survey Homeworking Tables](#)

Dataset | Released 8 July 2020

Homeworking data from the Labour Market Survey (LMS), split by age, sex, region, ethnicity and occupation.

## 9 . Glossary

### Homeworking

Homeworking, for the purposes of the Labour Market Survey (LMS), refers to someone doing some work from home in the reference week of the survey.

### People in employment

People in employment are defined as all those of working age (aged 16 years and over) who, during the reference week, had a job or business for pay or profit. They comprise of employed persons "at work" (that is, who worked in a job for at least one hour) and employed persons "not at work" because of temporary absence from a job or because of working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexi-time and compensatory leave for overtime).

## 10 . Measuring the data

At the end of March 2020, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) launched the online Labour Market Survey (LMS), a survey of around 18,000 households per quarter. Respondents are asked questions on employment, unemployment and economic inactivity relating to a reference week one to two weeks prior to interview.

In addition to being asked about their employment status, respondents are also asked if they did any work at home, and if their main reason for doing this was the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Labour Market Survey (LMS) is a systematic random sample of households (addresses) drawn from the Postcode Address File. The geographical ordering of the frame implicitly stratifies the sample, ensuring a geographic spread of addresses. The quarterly sample is then issued across 13 weeks, with each week containing a consistently representative proportion of addresses, by UK country and English region.

Currently data collection for the LMS is online only but additional modes of collection will be explored in the future. The reference week for data collection is, like the Labour Force Survey (LFS), fixed to a particular week and the data collection period covering each reference week lasts for around 10 days. For further information see [Labour Market Survey: research and results overview](#).

## Homeworking questions

### Homeworking question (HOMEREF)

Did you do any working from home in the week Monday [date] to Sunday [date, year]?

IF PROXY: Did [First name, Second name] do any work from home in the week Monday [date] to Sunday [date, year]?

1. Yes
2. No

Homeworking proportions are calculated as follows:

$\% \text{ doing any work from home in the reference week} = (\text{number doing any work from home in the reference week}) * 100 / (\text{number of persons in employment})$ .

The number of respondents who are asked the HOMEREF question is similar to the number in employment, with a few minor differences based on routing and exclusions.

### Homeworking due to COVID question (HOMCORONA)

ASK IF HOMEREF = yes

Was the main reason you were working from home in that week due to reasons related to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

IF PROXY: Was the main reason they were working from home in that week due to reasons related to coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Yes - Including place of work closing, staying at home to avoid contact with others, or recovering from illness

No

Homeworking due to Covid-19 rates are calculated as follows:

$100 * (\text{number stating their main reason for working from home was a reason related to Covid-19}) / (\text{number doing any work from home in the reference week})$ .

Prior to the collection of LMS data used in this bulletin, a mixed-mode statistical test of LMS was run. The aim of the test was to compare with LFS figures; a [comparison report](#) was published in February 2020.

Occupation data was generated by manual coding of write-in responses to occupation questions.

## 11 . Strengths and limitations

Information on the strengths and limitations of the Labour Market Survey (LMS) is available in today's [blog](#).

### Comparability between LMS and other sources

The LMS shows strong comparability with the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey \(OPN\)](#), with 46.6% reporting doing some of their work at home in April 2020 on the LMS, while 44.6% reported doing some level of work from home from the period of 9 to 20 April 2020 on the OPN. The LMS also shows similar homeworking proportions to the [Business Impact of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Survey \(BICS\)](#), with 46.8% reporting “working remotely instead of their place of work” from the period of 6 to 19 April 2020.

## 12 . Related links

### [Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK labour market: 2019](#)

Article | Released 24 March 2020

The extent to which different people in the labour market work from home, either on a regular or occasional basis.

### [Technology intensity and homeworking in the UK](#)

Article | Released 1 May 2020

Recent trends and insights into technology as an enabler for homeworking. Analysis considers differences in technology usage across industries.

### [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 2 July 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 July 2020

The indicators and analysis presented in this bulletin are based on responses from the voluntary fortnightly business survey, which captures businesses' responses on how their turnover, workforce prices, trade and business resilience have been affected. These data relate to the period 1 June 2020 to 14 June 2020.

### [Coronavirus and the social impact on Great Britain: 3 July 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 3 July 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 25 June to 28 June 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.