

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 20 November 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 11 to 15 November 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Understanding the impact on society](#)
3. [Main indicators in Great Britain](#)
4. [Lockdown measures in England](#)
5. [Physical contact](#)
6. [Leaving home](#)
7. [Impact on life and well-being](#)
8. [Impact on work](#)
9. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
10. [Glossary](#)
11. [Measuring the data](#)
12. [Strengths and limitations](#)
13. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

This week, over the period 11 to 15 November, based on adults in Great Britain:

- around half (51%) of working adults reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home); this is a decrease from 58% last week

This week, we look at how the experiences of adults in England during national lockdown differ from those living under local restrictions (tiers) two weeks ago. We found:

- around 1 in 10 (12%) adults in England reported finding it very difficult or difficult to follow the current lockdown measures where they live; among those, the most common reason they thought it was difficult to follow the current lockdown measures was the impact on well-being (69%)
- half (50%) of adults in England reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic; a similar percentage (45%) was reported by adults living under lower restrictions in tier 1, but this is a higher percentage than those living under tiers 2 and 3 local COVID alert levels (37% and 34% respectively) two weeks ago
- this week, 7 in 10 (70%) adults in England reported that they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their life right now; a slightly higher percentage was reported by adults across all three tiers two weeks ago (tier 1: 76%, tier 2: 77% and tier 3: 78%)
- nearly half (47%) of adults in England reported that their well-being was being affected (for example, boredom, loneliness, anxiety and stress) by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic; this is a similar percentage as those with fewer restrictions in tier 1 (50%) two weeks ago and a lower percentage than those in tiers 2 and 3 (53% and 57% respectively)
- nearly 2 in 10 (18%) adults in England reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person indoors, including settings such as the home, cafés, pubs or restaurants in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble; a similar percentage (19%) was reported by those in tier 3, and a higher percentage was reported by those living under fewer restrictions in tier 1 (27%) and tier 2 (25%) from two weeks ago
- this week, 1 in 10 (10%) adults in England who left home in the past seven days met up with people in a public place; a slightly higher percentage was reported by those in tier 3 (14%), with a large difference when comparing those living under fewer restrictions in tier 1 (25%) and tier 2 (24%) two weeks ago.

Statistician's comment

"We have seen some changes to behaviours and experiences of adults during the national lockdown in England, compared with two weeks prior when England was under local tier restrictions.

"We've found fewer people are leaving the house to meet up with others and are having fewer physical contacts outside their household. We also found fewer people say their wellbeing is being affected by the pandemic than did a fortnight ago."

Tim Vizard, Principal Research Officer, Office for National Statistics

2 . Understanding the impact on society

This weekly bulletin contains data and indicators from a new module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on British society.

This week, we focus on the social impacts during the second national lockdown in England, over the period 11 to 15 November 2020. We compare this to social impacts during the use of local COVID alert levels (tiers) over the period 28 October to 1 November 2020.

Data for Great Britain with additional breakdowns by age, sex, underlying health condition, English regions and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [accompanying datasets](#). Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence interval should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of this difference.

The statistics in this release are based on a survey of 6,029 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 11 and 15 November 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 4,400 responding adults (73% response rate). Results from two weeks ago are based on a survey of 6,023 adults conducted between 28 October and 1 November 2020 (inclusive), with 4,111 responding adults (68% response rate).

Throughout this bulletin, "this week" refers to responses collected during the period 11 to 15 November 2020 and "two weeks ago" refers to responses collected during the period 28 October to 1 November 2020.

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, maintaining social distancing, avoiding physical contact and self-isolating. This week, we have added some additional measures to monitor the social impacts of the coronavirus. These indicators are presented at a Great Britain level in Table 1.

For most of these indicators, there was little change from last week. However, a higher percentage (43%) of adults in Great Britain either stayed at home or only left for work, exercise, essential shopping or medical needs in the past seven days, compared with 32% last week.

Around half (51%) of working adults reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home). This is a decrease from 58% last week.

Table 1: Main indicators
Great Britain, 5 to 15 November 2020

Indicators	This week (%)	Last week (%)
Percentage of adults always/often handwashing with soap and water after returning home from a public place	89	89
Percentage of adults that have used a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days	97	98
Percentage of adults always/often maintaining social distancing when meeting up with people outside their support bubble	88	85
Percentage of adults avoiding physical contact when outside their home in the past seven days	90	88
Percentage of adults self-isolated in the past seven days	7	7
Percentage of working adults that have worked from home at some point in the past 7 days	39	38
Percentage of working adults travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home)	51	58
Percentage of adults who have either stayed at home or only left for work, exercise, essential shopping or medical needs in the past 7 days	43	32
Percentage of adults very or somewhat worried about the effect of COVID-19 on their life right now	71	71

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

1. Question: "In the past seven days, how often did you wash your hands with soap and water straight away after returning home from a public place?"; base: adults who left their home in the past seven days.
2. Question "In the past seven days, have you used a face covering when outside your home to help slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?"; base: adults who left their home in the past seven days.
3. Question: "In the past seven days, when you have met up with people outside of your support bubble, how often have you maintained social distancing?"; base: adults who met up with people indoors or outdoors, outside of their support bubble or household.
4. 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.
5. Question: "Self-isolation is defined as staying at home because you have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has symptoms or has tested positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the past seven days, have you self-isolated because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?"; base: all adults.
6. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?"; base: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).
7. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?"; base: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in [Section 10: Glossary](#).
8. This series was originally reported during the first national lockdown as a proxy for adherence to "stay at home" measures. Though these measures have since been superseded in the tiered lockdown system and then second national lockdown, we continue to report these estimates as an indication of individuals' activity outside of the household.
9. Question: "How worried or unworried are you about the effect that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is having on your life right now?"; base: all adults.

Well-being

This week, average personal well-being scores for worthwhile (7.3) remained the same, while life satisfaction (6.7) and happiness (6.7) decreased slightly compared with last week, and there was a small increase in the anxiety score (4.2).

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.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

4 . Lockdown measures in England

Support and understanding of local lockdown measures

On 31 October, the UK government announced a second national lockdown for England, which started on 5 November. The rest of this bulletin takes a specific look at the experiences with adults during the second week in national lockdown, over the period 11 to 15 November.

Many of the responses relate to the last seven days, so this week's bulletin is the first to fully capture the social impacts of the second national lockdown in England.

Comparisons are made to the experiences of adults before the national lockdown, specifically between 28 October and 1 November, when local COVID alert levels in England were in place, prior to the start of the second national lockdown on 5 November. The definition of local COVID restrictions is included in [Section 11: Measuring the data](#).

This week, nearly 8 in 10 (76%) adults in England strongly supported or tended to support the current lockdown measures where they live.

Around 6 in 10 (65%) adults in England reported finding it very easy or easy to understand the current lockdown measures where they live. However, around 1 in 10 (12%) adults in England reported finding it very difficult or difficult to follow the current lockdown measures where they live. Among those, the most common reasons given for why it was difficult to follow the current lockdown measures were:

- impact on well-being (69%)
- life events are being missed (54%)
- strain on relationship with family and friends (53%)

This week, half (50%) of adults in England reported that they had enough information about government plans to manage the coronavirus pandemic. This is a higher percentage than all three local COVID alert levels (tier 1: 45%, tier 2: 37% and tier 3: 34%) two weeks ago.

Preventative measures

There was no [statistically significant](#) difference when comparing the behaviours of adults in national lockdown in England this week to those in different local COVID alert levels tiers, in terms of the percentage of adults that reported maintaining social distancing, handwashing and use of face coverings.

This week, a higher percentage (8%) of adults in England reported that they self-isolated in the past seven days; this is a similar percentage to those in tier 2 two weeks ago (7%). A slightly lower percentage was reported by those living in areas with the least restrictions in tier 1 (5%), and a slightly higher percentage was reported by those with the most restrictions in tier 3 (11%) two weeks ago.

5 . Physical contact

From 5 November 2020, new rules were introduced in England asking adults to avoid meeting people they do not live with, except for specific purposes.

This week, we asked respondents to think about when they had direct physical contact with people outside of their household or support bubble in the last 24 hours. Examples of direct physical contact may include shaking or holding hands, hugging and making contact when passing objects. It's important to note that such contact may not indicate non-compliance with official guidance around social distancing.

Nearly 2 in 10 (18%) adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person indoors, including settings such as the home, cafés, pubs or restaurants in the last 24 hours, excluding those in their household or support bubble. A similar percentage (19%) was reported by those in tier 3, whilst a higher percentage was reported by those living under fewer restrictions in tier 1 (27%) and tier 2 (25%) from two weeks ago.

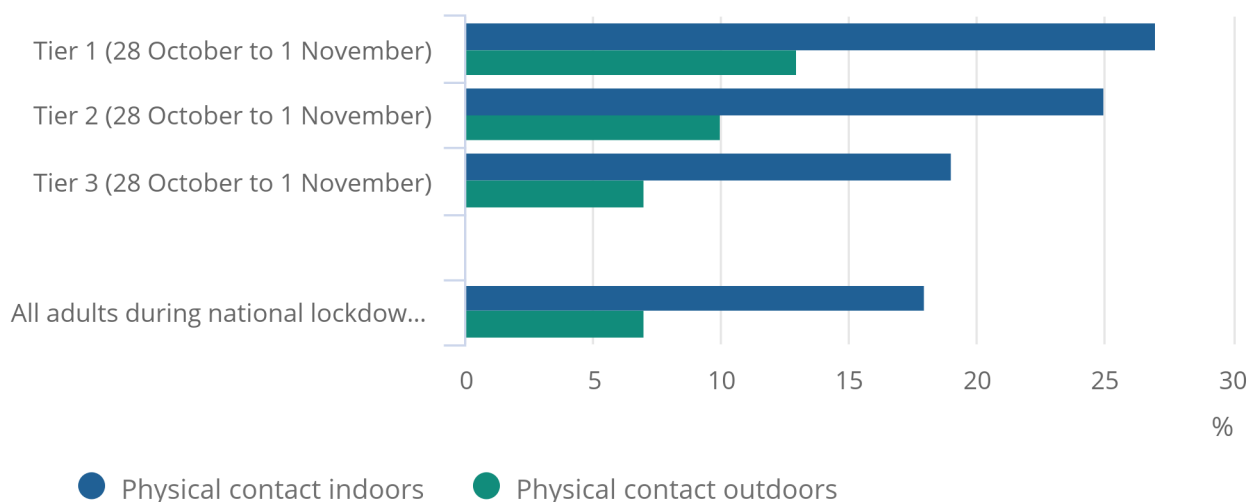
Less than 1 in 10 (7%) adults reported that they were in direct physical contact with at least one other person, excluding those in their household or support bubble, when socialising outdoors in the last 24 hours; the same percentage was reported by those living under the greatest restrictions in tier 3 (7%) two weeks ago. A similar percentage was reported by those with fewer restriction in tier 2 (10%) from two weeks ago and a higher percentage was reported by those with the least restrictions in tier 1 (13%).

Figure 2: During national lockdown, a lower percentage of adults reported physical contact indoors in the last 24 hours

England, 28 October to 15 November 2020

Figure 2: During national lockdown, a lower percentage of adults reported physical contact indoors in the last 24 hours

England, 28 October to 15 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "Over the last 24 hours, how many people have you had direct physical contact with when socialising indoors both at home and at venues such as cafés, pubs or restaurants?"
2. Question: "Over the last 24 hours, how many people outside of your household have you had direct physical contact with when socialising outdoors?"
3. Base population: all adults.

6 . Leaving home

Under the current lockdown restrictions, people are required to [stay at home](#) except for specific purposes.

More than 9 in 10 (92%) adults in England said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days. A similar percentage was reported by those in tiers 2 and 3 two weeks ago (94% and 92% respectively). Compared to those in national lockdown this week, a higher percentage was reported by those living under lower restrictions in tier 1 (96%) two weeks ago.

This week, around 4 in 10 (39%) adults in England reported that they were very comfortable or comfortable about leaving home due to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Two weeks ago, a similar percentage was reported by adults across all three tiers (tier 1 and 2: both 36%, and tier 3: 37%).

This week, 45% of adults in England either stayed at home or only left for work, exercise, essential shopping or medical needs in the past seven days, compared with 23% in tier 1, 31% in tier 2 and 35% in tier 3 two weeks ago.

The most common reason to leave home in the past seven days was to go shopping for food and medicine, reported by 75% of adults who left home in the past seven days in England. A similar percentage was reported across all three tiers two weeks ago (tier 1: 77%, tier 2: 79% and tier 3: 76%).

This week, 10% of adults in England who left home in the past seven days reported that this was to shop for other things. This is a lower percentage than those in all three tiers two weeks ago (tier 1: 27%, tier 2: 24% and tier 3: 25%).

This week, 1 in 10 (10%) adults in England who left home in the past seven days met up with people in a public place. A slightly higher percentage was reported by those in tier 3 (14%), with a large difference when comparing those living under fewer restrictions in tier 1 (25%) and tier 2 (24%) two weeks ago.

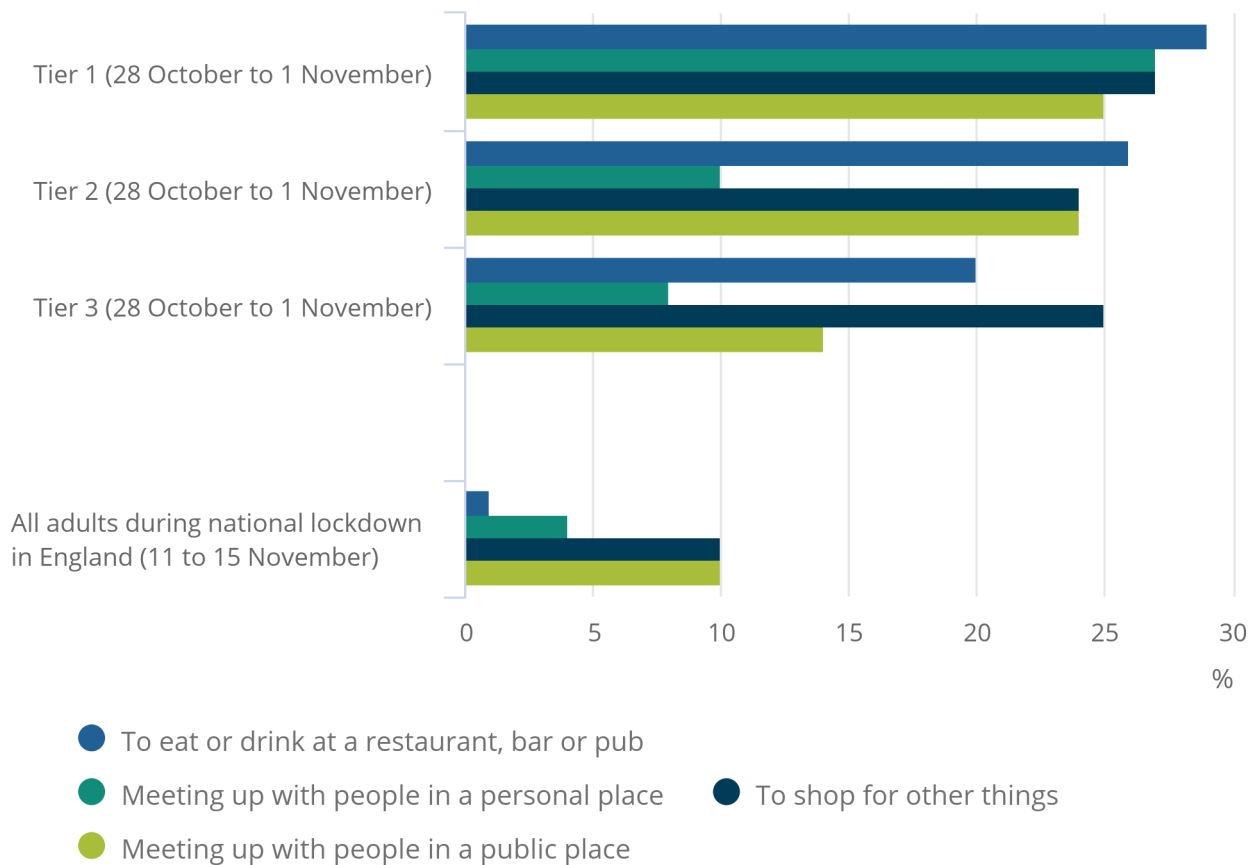
This week, 4% of adults left their home in the past seven days to meet up with people in a personal place, compared to 27% in tier 1 two weeks ago.

Figure 3: During national lockdown, there has been a decrease in the percentage of adults leaving home for various restricted reasons

England, 28 October to 15 November 2020

Figure 3: During national lockdown, there has been a decrease in the percentage of adults leaving home for various restricted reasons

England, 28 October to 15 November 2020



Source: England, 28 October to 15 November 2020

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?"
2. Additional response options for reasons that adults left their home in the past seven days are included in the [accompanying datasets](#).
3. Base population: Adults who left home in the past seven days.
4. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

7 . Impact on life and well-being

This week, 7 in 10 (70%) adults in England reported that they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their life right now. A slightly higher percentage was reported by adults across all three tiers two weeks ago (tier 1: 76%, tier 2: 77% and tier 3: 78%).

Around 6 in 10 (62%) adults in England reported lack of freedom and independence as their main concern. This is a slightly lower percentage than those living under similar restrictions in tier 3 (68%) two weeks ago. A slightly lower percentage was reported by those living under fewer restrictions in tier 1 (57%) and tier 2 (59%) two weeks ago.

Nearly half (47%) of adults in England reported that their well-being was being affected (for example, boredom, loneliness, anxiety and stress) by the coronavirus pandemic. This is a similar percentage to those with fewer restrictions in tier 1 (50%) two weeks ago, and it is a lower percentage than those in tiers 2 and 3 (53% and 57% respectively).

8 . Impact on work

This week, around half of working adults (52%) in England reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their work. A similar percentage was reported across all three tiers (tier 1: 48%, tier 2: 52% and tier 3: 54%) two weeks ago.

Half (50%) of working adults in England reported travelling to work (exclusively and in combination with working from home). This is a decrease from 60% last week, with similar percentages reported across all three tiers (tier 1: 57%, tier 2: 52% and tier 3: 61%) two weeks ago.

A similar percentage of working adults (40%) in England reported working from home because of the coronavirus pandemic in the past seven days, compared with across all three tiers two weeks ago (tier 1: 35%, tier 2: 44% and tier 3: 35%).

Among those who worked from home in the past seven days, 16% reported that they live in a lockdown area and have been advised to work from home. This is a lower percentage than the 30% of working adults who worked from home in tier 3 two weeks ago. Official estimates of labour market participation can be found in the [Labour market overview](#).

9 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 20 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.

10 . Glossary

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

11 . Measuring the data

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is a monthly omnibus survey. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have adapted the OPN to become a weekly survey used to collect data on the impact of the coronavirus on day-to-day life in Great Britain. In this wave, 6,029 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 73% (or 4,400 individuals) for the survey conducted from 11 to 15 November 2020. Two weeks ago, 6,023 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 68% (or 4,111 individuals) for the survey conducted from 28 October to 1 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 [accompanying datasets](#), indicate their significance.

Sampling

A sample of 6,029 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 and older (over 74 years) 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 contained 4,400 individuals (73% 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.

Local COVID-19 restrictions

Local COVID alert levels, reported over the period 28 October to 1 November, are self-reported and not measured using an official list of where people live. This is based on a user's interpretation.

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, which 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.

12 . Strengths and limitations

The main strengths of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) include:

- it allows for timely production of data and statistics that can respond quickly to changing needs
- it meets data needs: the questionnaire is developed with customer consultation, and design expertise is applied in the development stages
- robust methods are adopted for the survey’s sampling and weighting strategies to limit the impact of bias
- quality assurance procedures are undertaken throughout the analysis stages to minimise the risk of error

The main limitations of the OPN include:

- 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

13 . 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 6 November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 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.