

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 29 May 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 21 May to 24 May 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

- More people have left their home this week, with 90% of adults saying they had left for any reason compared with 86% last week.
- The most common reasons for leaving home continue to be: essential shopping, exercise, work and medical need; however, leaving to meet with others in a public place has seen the largest increase this week.
- Over 4 in 10 adults who had left their home (42%) had visited a park or public green space this week – with 36% of these saying they had met with family or friends from outside of their household.
- Over 1 in 3 adults in employment (36%) said they had left their home to travel to and from work in the past seven days, a similar level to last week.
- Almost 3 in 10 adults (29%) said they felt unsafe or very unsafe when outside of their home this week, compared with over 4 in 10 (41%) last week.
- Almost 3 in 10 adults (29%) reported that they had used face coverings outside of their home in the past week, most commonly whilst shopping.

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.

The statistics in this publication are based on a survey of 1,028 adults (51% response rate) sampled through the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) conducted between 21 and 24 May 2020 (inclusive). This is the second shortened collection period, which allows more timely analysis of how people's lives are changing during the pandemic.

It contains breakdowns of results by sex and for identified “at-risk” groups that have been advised to take additional precautions. This includes those aged 70 years and over and those with certain underlying health conditions. The full list of conditions is included in the [Glossary](#).

This bulletin presents a summary of results, with further data including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates contained in the [associated datasets](#). Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the statistical significance of the change.

3 . Concerns about the coronavirus

Two-thirds of adults (67%) said they were very or somewhat worried about the effect that the coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life now. This has fallen when compared with last week (72%) and continues the downward trend since data collection started (27 March).

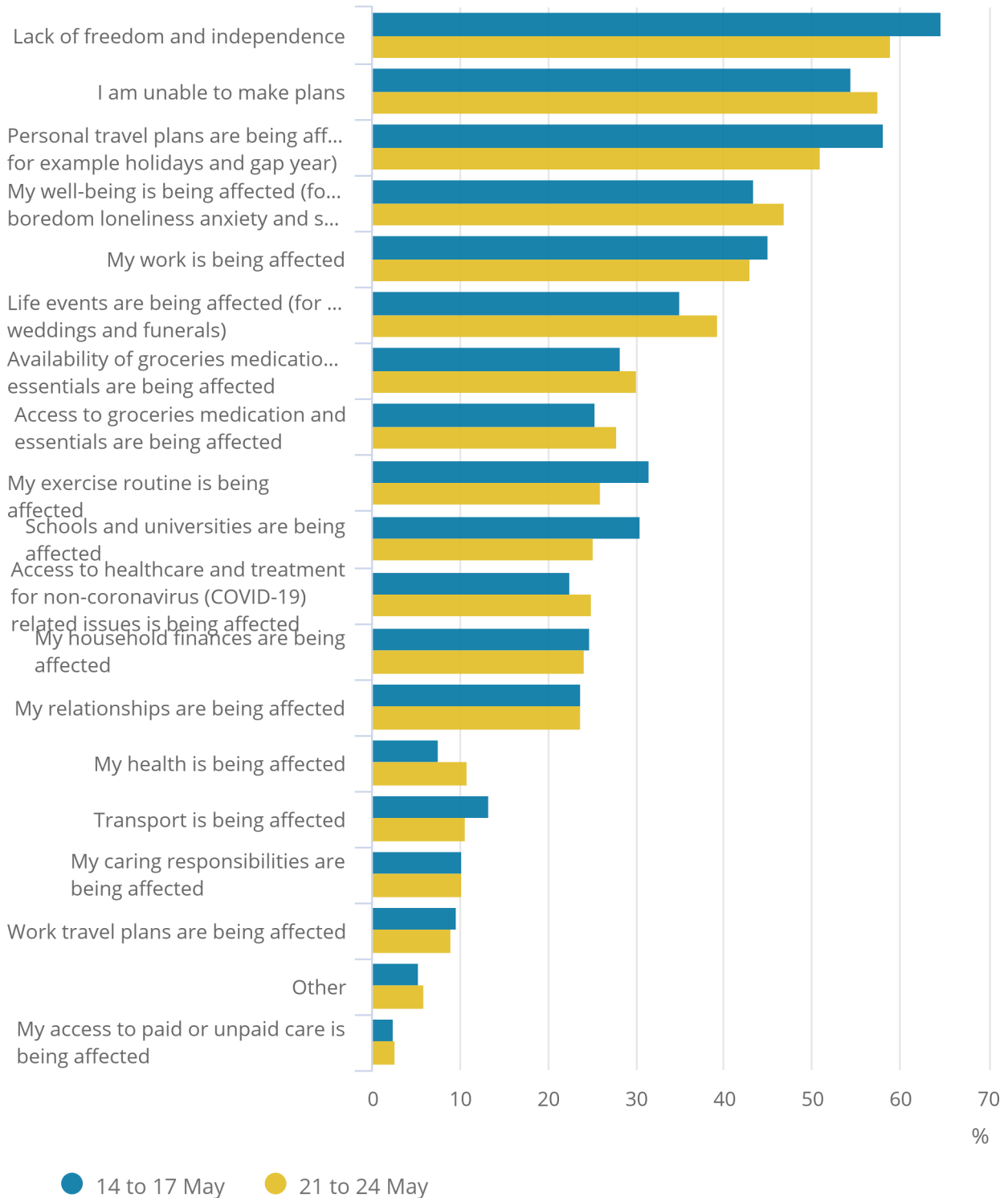
For a second week, the most common impact was a lack of freedom and independence with almost 6 in 10 adults (59%) reporting this. Other common issues were an inability to make plans (58%) and personal travel plans being affected (51%).

Figure 1: The most common concerns amongst adults continue to be a lack of freedom, followed by the inability to make plans

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Figure 1: The most common concerns amongst adults continue to be a lack of freedom, followed by the inability to make plans

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020



Notes:

1. Question: "In which ways is coronavirus (COVID-19) affecting your life?"
2. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

People's expectations for how long their life will be disrupted have decreased when compared with last week. Just over 4 in 10 adults (44%) expect it to be longer than six months before life returns to normal, compared with 48% who felt this way last week. However, this is still considerably higher than the first week of lockdown (27 March to 6 April), when 1 in 3 people (33%) expected it to be longer than six months before life returned to normal.

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 our studies and surveys are [serving public need](#).

Impact on work

Similar levels of people said their work was being affected this week compared with last week. Over 4 in 10 adults (43%) said the coronavirus was having an impact on their work, and of these the most common impacts were similar to previous weeks: being furloughed, needing to work from home and a change in hours worked.

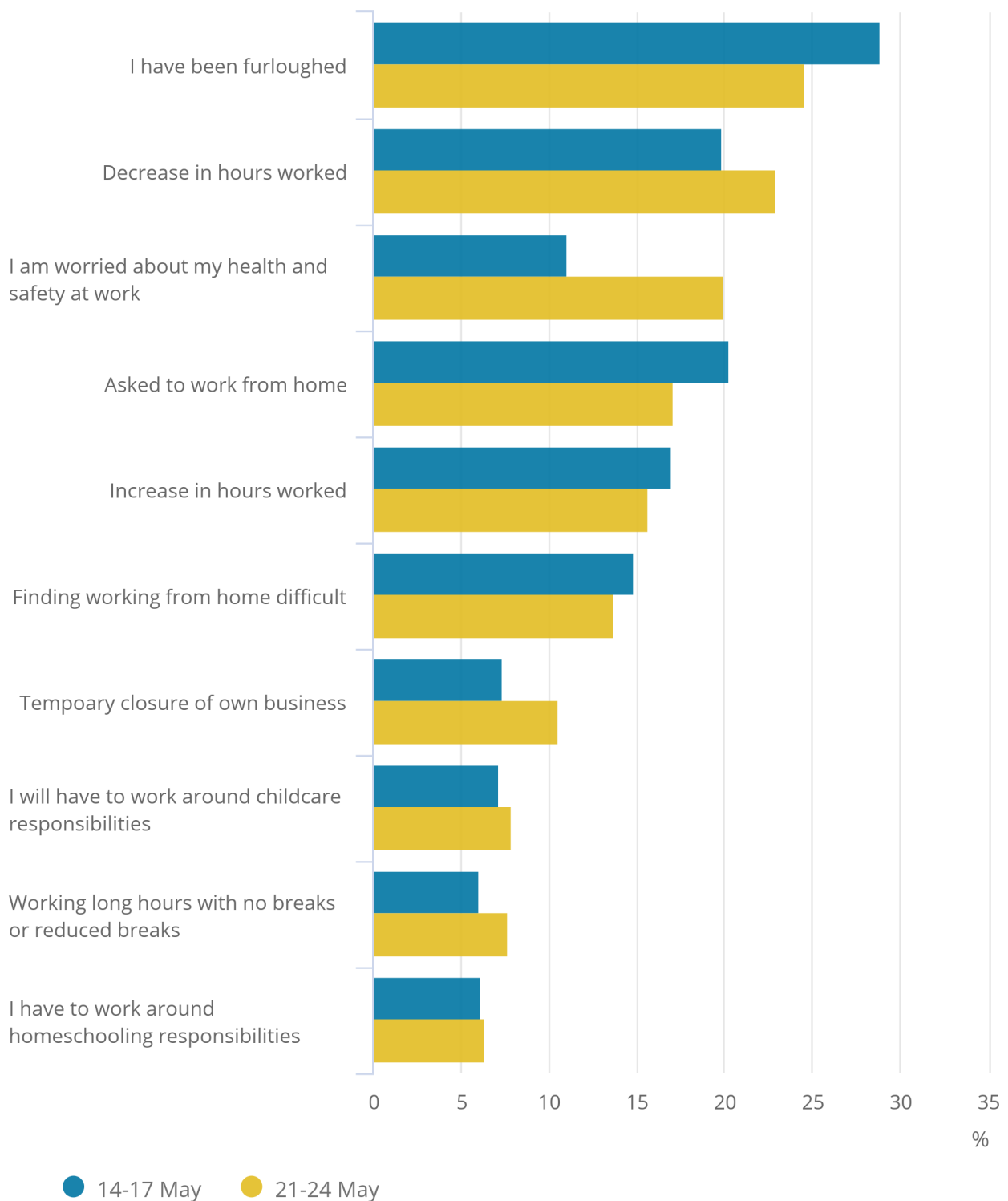
The largest change amongst those who said their work was affected was seen with increasing levels of concern about health and safety at work. This increased to 20% this week from 11% last week. The most common concerns people had around health and safety at their workplace were: difficulties in following social distancing advice, difficulty in following hygiene advice, and limited or no protective equipment in place.

Figure 2: The proportion of people who reported they were worried about their health and safety at work has increased when compared with last week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Figure 2: The proportion of people who reported they were worried about their health and safety at work has increased when compared with last week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020



Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days how has your work been affected?"
2. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said coronavirus was affecting their work.
3. [Estimates of levels of furloughing](#) are available.
4. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
5. The 10 most common reasons (excluding "other") are displayed here, the full breakdown is available in the accompanying dataset.

Further details on changes to labour market participation and the impact on businesses from the coronavirus can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 28 May 2020](#).

4 . Actions undertaken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

Staying at home

Of adults in Great Britain, just over 1 in 10 (11%) said they had not left their home for any reason in the past seven days, a decrease from 14% last week. For those aged 70 years and over, nearly 3 in 10 (27%) did not leave their home, down from 33% last week. And for those with an underlying health condition, almost 2 in 10 (18%) did not leave, also down from 33% last week.

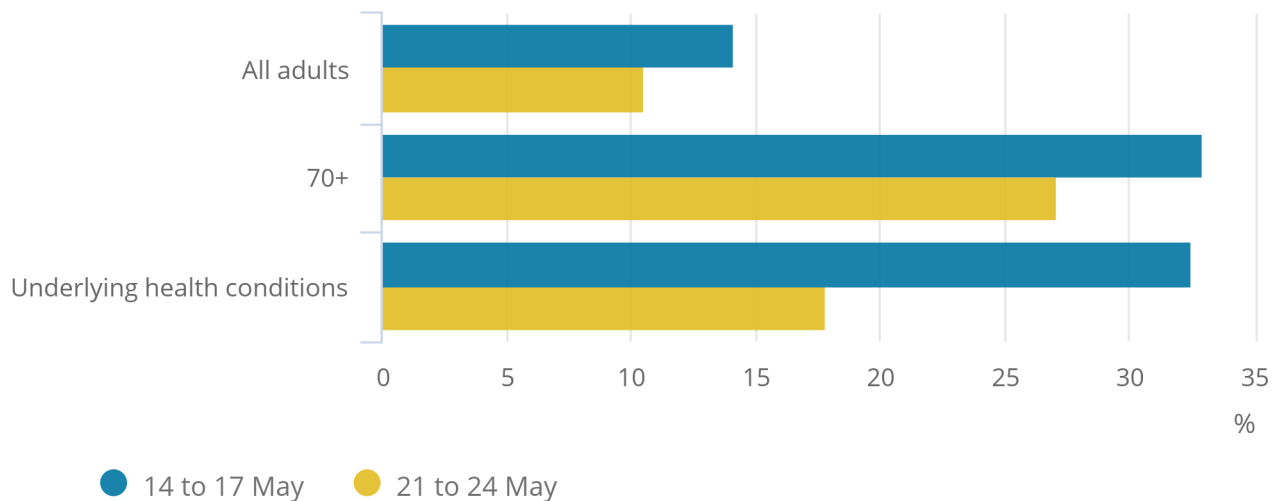
Official guidance on staying at home varies across England, Wales and Scotland. This section gives the reasons people are leaving their home but an estimate of compliance is not provided. Results are for Great Britain only, unless stated otherwise.

Figure 3: The proportion of people who had not left their home in the past seven days fell compared with last week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Figure 3: The proportion of people who had not left their home in the past seven days fell compared with last week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you left your home for any reason?"

Although official guidance on reasons to leave the home has been updated, for comparison with previous weeks, the proportion of people that said they had either not left their home or only left for the four main reasons that were permitted through the lockdown period (travel to and from work; to do essential shopping; for medical reasons or to exercise) is at its lowest level of 73%. This compares with 81% last week and a peak of 85% between 3 to 13 April.

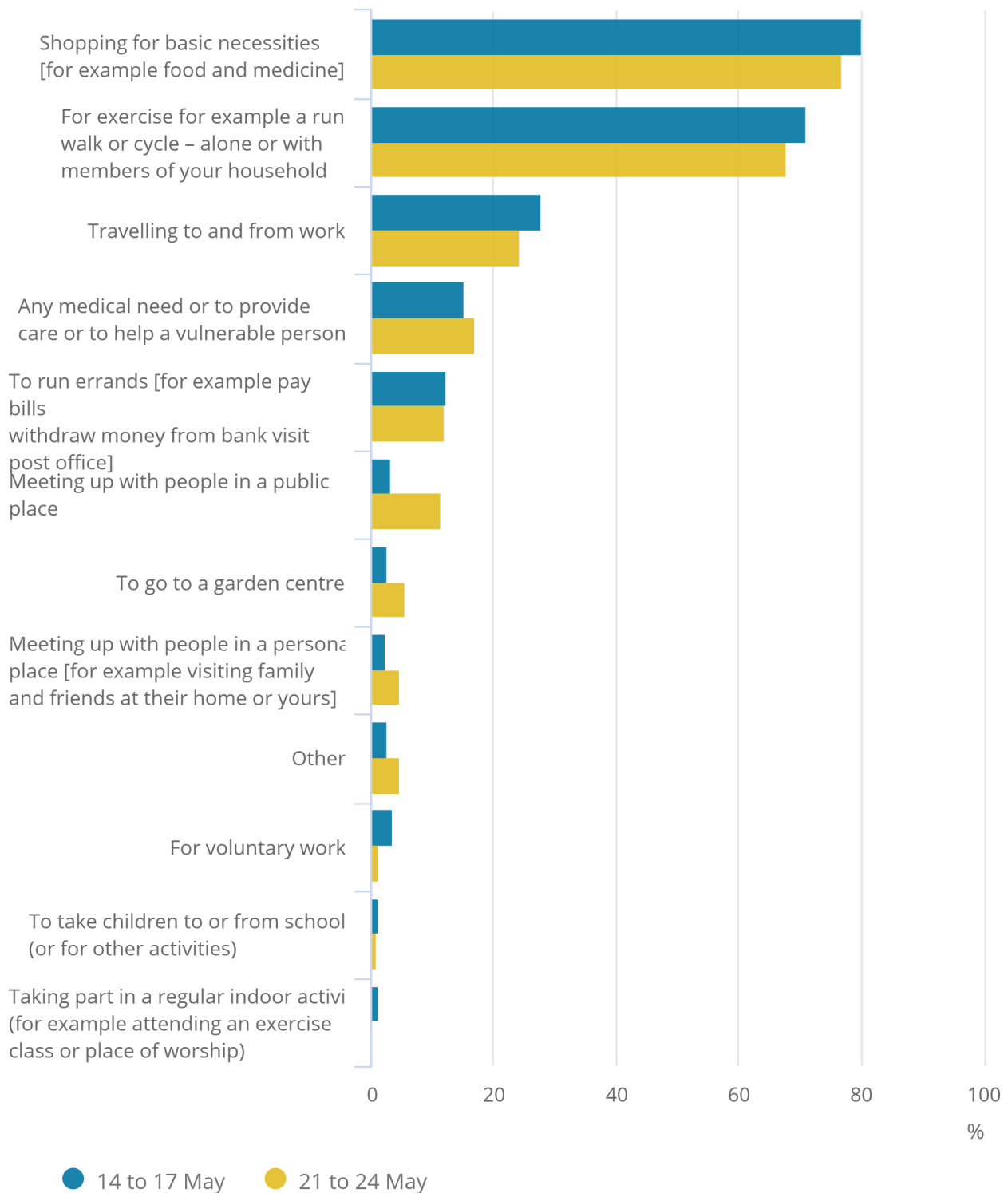
The largest increase in other reasons for leaving the home, is for people meeting others outside their household in a public place.

Figure 4: The most common reasons for leaving home continue to be shopping for basic necessities, and exercise

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Figure 4: The most common reasons for leaving home continue to be shopping for basic necessities, and exercise

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020



Notes:

1. Question: In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?
2. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
3. The values for "to visit a tourist attraction"; "travel within the UK for holidays or short breaks"; "travel outside of the UK for work"; "travel outside of the UK for holidays or short breaks" and "to visit a library" have been suppressed because of small sample size.
4. Base population: adults that said they had left their home in the past seven days.

Over 4 in 10 adults (42%) said they had visited a park or public green space this week. Of these, 36% said they had met up with friends or family from outside of their household.

Across Great Britain, just under 3 in 10 adults (29%) said they felt unsafe or very unsafe when outside of their home which has decreased from 41% last week.

At the time of the survey, lockdown restrictions had started to change in England. For those living in England, feelings of safety varied for different activities outside of the home. While over half of adults (55%) felt safe when meeting with someone outside of their household outdoors, this fell to around 1 in 3 who felt safe when visiting shops (37%).

Almost 8 in 10 adults (79%) said they had enough information about how to protect themselves from the coronavirus (COVID-19), which is similar to last week (80%).

Face coverings

Almost 3 in 10 adults (29%) have worn a face covering outside of their homes in the past seven days in order to slow the spread of the coronavirus. For those that had worn a face covering, the most common situation was whilst shopping (67%), followed by exercising outdoors and running errands (both 20%).

Regardless of whether they had worn a face covering in the past, over 4 in 10 adults (41%) said they were either very or fairly likely to wear one in the next seven days.

Self-isolation

Official advice is that people should self-isolate if they or someone in their household experiences symptoms related to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Some people may choose to self-isolate for other reasons, so these results should not be interpreted as an estimate of those with COVID-19 symptoms or those diagnosed with COVID-19.

In the past seven days, around 1 in 5 adults (19%) said they had self-isolated, which is a similar proportion to last week (20%); this is the lowest level across all the weeks data have been collected. For those aged 70 years and over, 36% said they had self-isolated, while for those with an underlying health condition (all ages) it was 33%. Both represent a lower proportion than reported last week.

Fewer than 1 in 5 adults (17%) were in households where everyone had self-isolated over the past seven days, which was the same as last week, and the lowest proportion across the weeks.

Working from home

At the time of the survey, [government advice](#) for workers in England stated they should travel to work if their workplace was open and they could not work from home.

A similar proportion of adults in employment in Great Britain said they had worked from home at some point this week (39%) compared with last week (41%). Over 1 in 3 of adults in employment (36%) said they had left their home to travel to and from work in the past seven days. Of these, 14% said they had changed their mode of transport because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Table 1: Place of work
Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Place of work	24 Apr- 3 May	14- 17 May	21-24 May
Percentage of people who worked from home only	36	33	33
Percentage of people who both worked from home and travelled to work	9	8	7
Percentage of people who travelled to work only	26	29	29
Percentage of people who neither worked from home nor travelled to work	31	30	32

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

1. Base population for percentage: all adults in employment. [Back to table](#)
2. The definition of adults in employment is included in the Glossary. [Back to table](#)
3. The reasons for respondents neither working from home nor travelling to work are not known, but could include being on sick leave or annual leave, being furloughed or not on shift. [Back to table](#)
4. Percentages may not sum due to rounding. [Back to table](#)

More detailed information on changes to labour market participation can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 28 May 2020](#).

Social distancing

Social distancing guidance advises physical contact with others should be kept to a minimum. Nearly all adults (98%) said they had tried to stay at least two metres away from other people when outside their home.

Shielding older or vulnerable people from the risk of infection is also an important element of advice. Again, a consistently high proportion of adults said they are avoiding contact with older or vulnerable adults, this week it is almost 9 in 10 (88%). Amongst these, 1 in 10 (10%) said the people they are avoiding are those to whom they provide care.

5 . Indicators of well-being and loneliness

Nearly half of adults (47%) said their well-being was affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the last week, an increase from 43% the previous week. The proportion of those aged 70 years and over who reported their well-being had been affected (35%) continued to be lower than the general population but for those with an underlying health condition it was similar at 48%.

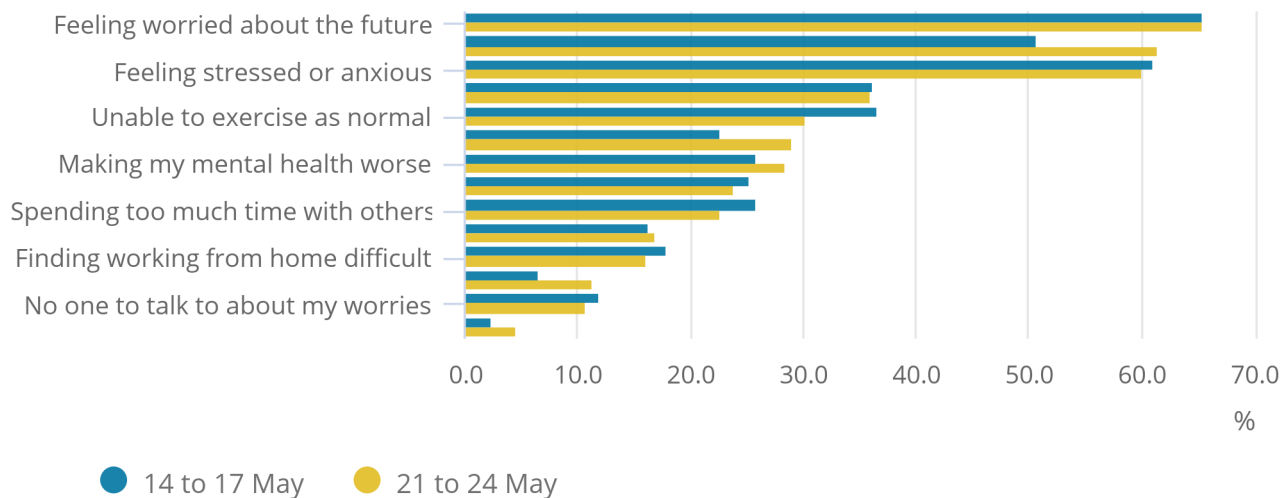
The most common issue affecting well-being continues to be feeling worried about the future. Amongst all adults (regardless of whether their well-being had been affected), over 1 in 5 people (21%) said they expect it would be more than a year before life returns to normal, and over 1 in 3 (36%) expected the financial position of their household to worsen over the next 12 months.

Figure 5: People continue to be concerned about the future, and feelings of boredom have increased this week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

Figure 5: People continue to be concerned about the future, and feelings of boredom have increased this week

Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: In the past seven days, how has your well-being being affected?
2. Respondents were asked to select all that apply.
3. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said COVID-19 was affecting their well-being.

Following a downward trend through the lockdown period, anxiety levels have been stable over the past couple of weeks, with around 1 in 3 people (33%) reporting high levels of anxiety.

The full scores for the four measures of personal well-being are included in the associated [datasets](#).

Table 2: Indicators of well-being
Great Britain, 21 to 24 May 2020

	Group	14 - 17 May (%)	21 - 24 May (%)
Wellbeing is being affected	All adults	43	47
	70 years and over	34	35
	Underlying health	55	48
Mean anxiety score*	All adults	4.0	4.1
	70 years and over	3.9	3.5
	Underlying health	4.7	4.6
Percentage with high anxiety (score 6-10)*	All adults	32	33
	70 years and over	32	28
	Underlying health	47	44
Feeling lonely often/always or some of the time	All adults	23	27
	70 years and over	19	16
	Underlying health	31	43

Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes

- * Anxiety is measured on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely” [Back to table](#)

6 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 29 May 2020

New 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.

7 . Glossary

Underlying health condition

In this bulletin, adults with an underlying health condition include those with:

- Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- angina or long-term heart problem
- asthma
- a learning disability such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or Asperger's (Asperger syndrome)
- conditions affecting the brain and nerves, such as Parkinson's disease
- cancer
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or long-term lung problem
- diabetes
- kidney or liver disease
- a weakened immune system such as the result of conditions as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or treatment for cancer
- problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease, or if you have had your spleen removed
- being overweight (having a BMI of 40 or above)
- given an organ transplant
- stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis
- rheumatoid arthritis

In employment

For this survey, a person is said to be "In employment" if they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

8 . 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, 2,010 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 51% (or 1,028 individuals) for the survey conducted from 21 to 24 May 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 complete the survey online were given the opportunity to take part over the phone.

Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated [confidence intervals](#), which are included in the associated datasets, indicate their significance.

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

Sampling

A sample of 2,010 households were randomly selected from the Annual Population Survey (APS), which consists collectively of those respondents who successfully completed the last wave of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or the local LFS boost. From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger people were given higher selection probability than older people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey. Further information on the sample design can be found in the [OPN QMI](#).

Weighting

The responding sample contained 1,028 individuals (51% 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, employment status, National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) group and smoking status. For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for May 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.

9 . 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:

- the sample size is relatively small: 2,010 individuals per week with fewer completed interviews, meaning that detailed analyses for subnational geographies and other sub-groups are not possible
- 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

10 . Related links

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) product page](#)

Product 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 15 May 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 26 May 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](#)

Article | Released 24 April 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) covering the period 27 March 2020 to 13 April 2020 on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain.

[Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: May 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 4 May 2020

Estimates looking across personal well-being and economic well-being covering the period October 2019 to April 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people and households in Great Britain.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) roundup](#)

Blog | Updated as and when data become available

Catch up on the latest data and analysis related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on our economy and society.