

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 4 December 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 25 to 29 November 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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1 . Main points

This week, over the period 25 to 29 November, based on adults in Great Britain:

- compliance with most measures in place to stop the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) remained high, with 89% (88% last week) reporting always or often handwashing after returning home, 97% (97% last week) using a face covering and 90% (91% last week) avoiding physical contact when outside their home

We also examine differences in the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on men and women in Great Britain this week:

- a high proportion of both men (87%) and women (92%) report either always or often handwashing after returning home this week, however, women (73%) were more likely than men (65%) to report doing this always (this finding has been consistent throughout the pandemic)
- of those concerned about the impact of coronavirus on their work, the most frequent reason was a change in hours, both increasing hours worked (19% of men, 20% of women) or decreasing hours worked (19% of men, 16% of women)
- women were slightly more likely than men to report they were concerned about their health and safety at work (16% of women compared with 9% of men) or that they had been furloughed (14% of women compared with 9% of men)
- the majority of both men (95%) and women (93%) in Great Britain said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days although women (32%) were less likely to feel very comfortable or comfortable doing so than men (45%) because of the coronavirus
- women were less likely than men to have left home to collect takeaway food or drinks from a restaurant, bar or pub (10% of women and 19% of men) but were more likely than men to have done so to meet up with people in a public place (17% of women and 12% of men), take children or young people to school or college (21% of women and 14% of men) or to go shopping for food and medicine (80% of women and 74% of men)
- women (43%) were more likely than men (33%) to report having formed a support bubble; the most common reason reported by both women (42%) and men (43%) for choosing who to form a support bubble with was to see family members
- less than two-thirds of men (61%) and women (63%) in England with dependent children were aware they could form a childcare bubble

2 . Understanding the impact on society

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

The latest weekly statistics for Great Britain over the period 25 November to 29 November are examined. This week we examine differences in the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on men and women.

The bulletin presents a summary of the results. Breakdowns by age, sex, underlying health condition, and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [associated dataset](#). Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of this difference.

The latest weekly statistics in this release are based on a survey of 6,028 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 25 and 29 November 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 4,395 responding adults (73% response rate).

Throughout the bulletin:

- "this week" refers to responses collected during the period 25 November to 29 November 2020
- "last week" refers to responses collected during the period 18 November to 22 November 2020

From Wednesday 2 December, a new tier-based system of local coronavirus restrictions applies across England. Responses for this week (25 to 29 November) and last week (18 to 22 November) presented in this bulletin were collected over a period during which a second national lockdown applied in England. During these periods, Scotland was subject to five-tiered local protection levels and national guidance was in place across Wales. For more information please see the [Glossary](#).

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

3 . Main indicators in Great Britain

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

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

Levels of compliance for most measures were high among men and women. A high proportion of both men (87%) and women (92%) reported either always or often handwashing after returning home this week, however, women (73%) were more likely than men (65%) to report doing this always. The finding has been consistent when this question has been asked of respondents throughout the pandemic.¹

Table 1: Main indicators

Great Britain, 18 to 29 November 2020

[Data download](#)

Well-being

This week in Great Britain, average personal well-being scores for life satisfaction (6.8) and feeling that things done in life are worthwhile (7.3) remained the same as last week, while happiness (6.8) decreased slightly compared with last week, and there was a slight increase in the anxiety score (4.2).

Differences in the well-being of men and women during the coronavirus pandemic are examined in [Section 7: Well-being](#).

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

Great Britain, March to November 2020

Notes:

1. Questions: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?", "Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?", "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?" and "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. This question is answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

[Data download](#)

Notes for: Main indicators in Great Britain

1. Estimates in this bulletin are rounded to the nearest whole number. Where individual answer categories for a question have been combined to provide an estimate, this total may not appear to sum to the total of individual categories because of the rounding.

4 . Impact on work

Working adults in Great Britain worked from home (39%) and travelled to work (54%) in similar proportions this week compared with last week (37% and 56% respectively).

There were no consistent differences in the proportion of working men and women reporting working from home or travelling to work. This week, women (38%) were slightly less likely than men (41%) to have worked from home; last week this pattern was reversed (women 40%, men 34%). A similar proportion of men (53%) and women (54%) travelled to work this week (either exclusively or in combination with working from home); last week this was 60% of working men and 50% of working women.

Around a third of men and women were concerned about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their work (35% men and 30% women this week, 36% men and 32% women last week).

Men and women who were concerned about the impact of the coronavirus on their work this week most frequently reported this was because of an increase (19% of men, 20% of women) or a decrease (19% of men, 16% of women) in their hours worked. Next most frequently, around one in seven men and women reported this was because they were asked to work from home (16% of men, 14% of women) or caused by finding working from home difficult (16% of men 14% of women).

Women were slightly more likely than men to report they were concerned about their health and safety at work (16% of women compared with 9% of men) or that they had been furloughed (14% of women compared with 9% of men) (Figure 2).

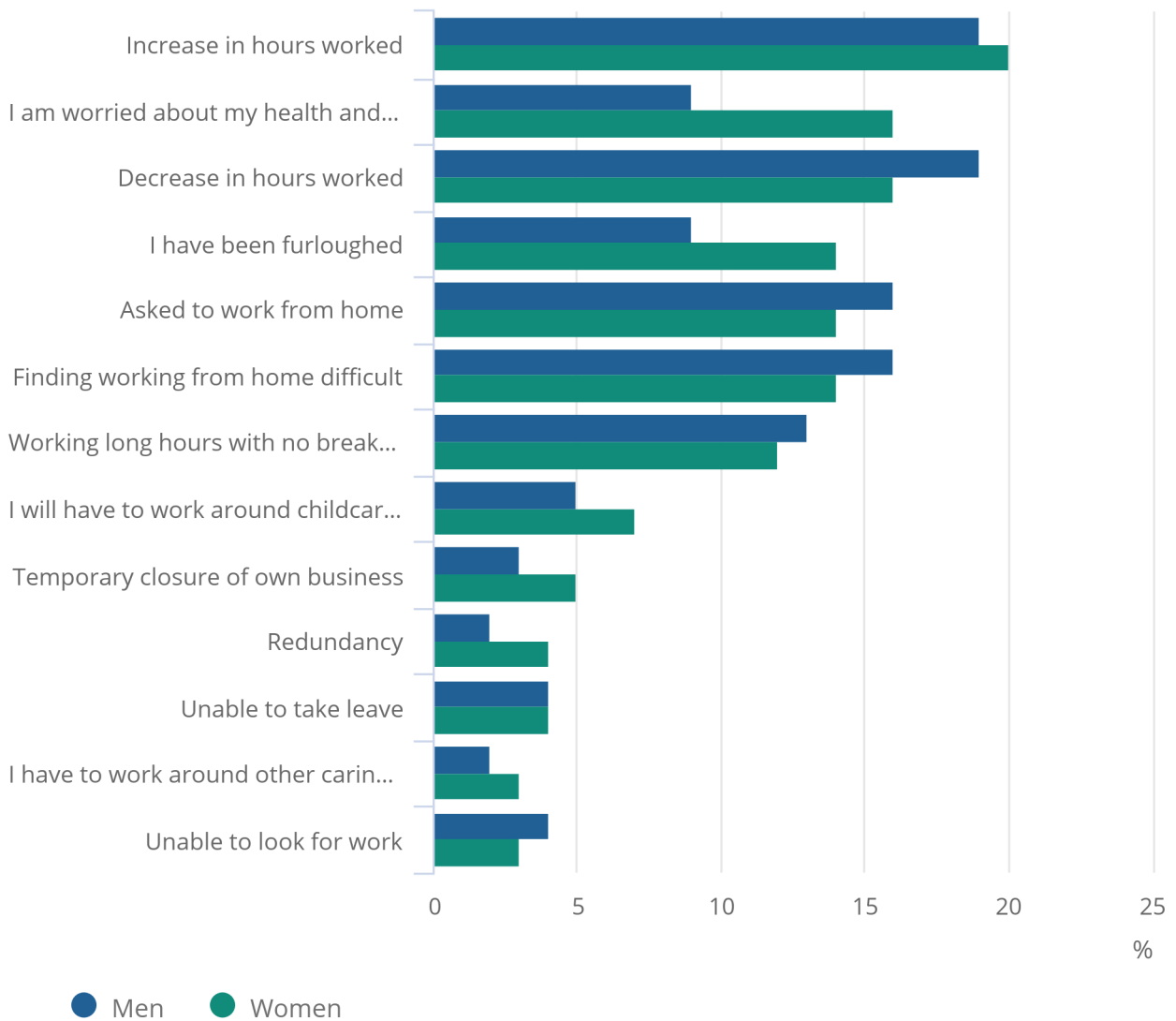
Further details on changes to labour market participation and the impact on businesses from the coronavirus can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society](#).

Figure 2: Men and women have different concerns about the impact of the coronavirus on their work

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020

Figure 2: Men and women have different concerns about the impact of the coronavirus on their work

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

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. Responses for the categories "Unable to work due to lack of public transport"; "Unable to work at all due to other caring responsibilities"; "I have been asked to return from furlough" and "Unable to work at all due to childcare responsibilities" have been suppressed due to low sample sizes.
5. Responses for the categories "Permanent closure of own business"; "Asked to take leave (include paid and unpaid leave)"; "Unable to work due to self-isolation or shielding (for example, not leaving your home and looking after yourself if you or someone you live with has symptoms)" and "Unable to continue voluntary work" have been removed from the chart due to having a reported proportion for men or women of 1% or less. These estimates are available in the datasets associated with this bulletin.
6. Response category of "Other" has been removed from the chart.
7. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

5 . Leaving home and socialising

Around 4 in 10 (39%) of adults this week reported feeling very comfortable or comfortable leaving their home because of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19). This proportion was lower amongst women (32%) than men (45%).

The majority of adults (94%) in Great Britain had left their home in the past seven days, and high proportions of both men (95%) and women (93%) said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days.

Amongst those who had left home, there were some differences in the most common reasons men and women left home this week. Women were less likely than men to have left home to collect takeaway food or drinks from a restaurant, bar or pub (10% of women and 19% of men) but were more likely than men to have done so to meet up with people in a public place (17% of women and 12% of men), take children or young people to school or college (21% of women and 14% of men) or to go shopping for food and medicine (80% of women and 74% of men) (Figure 3).

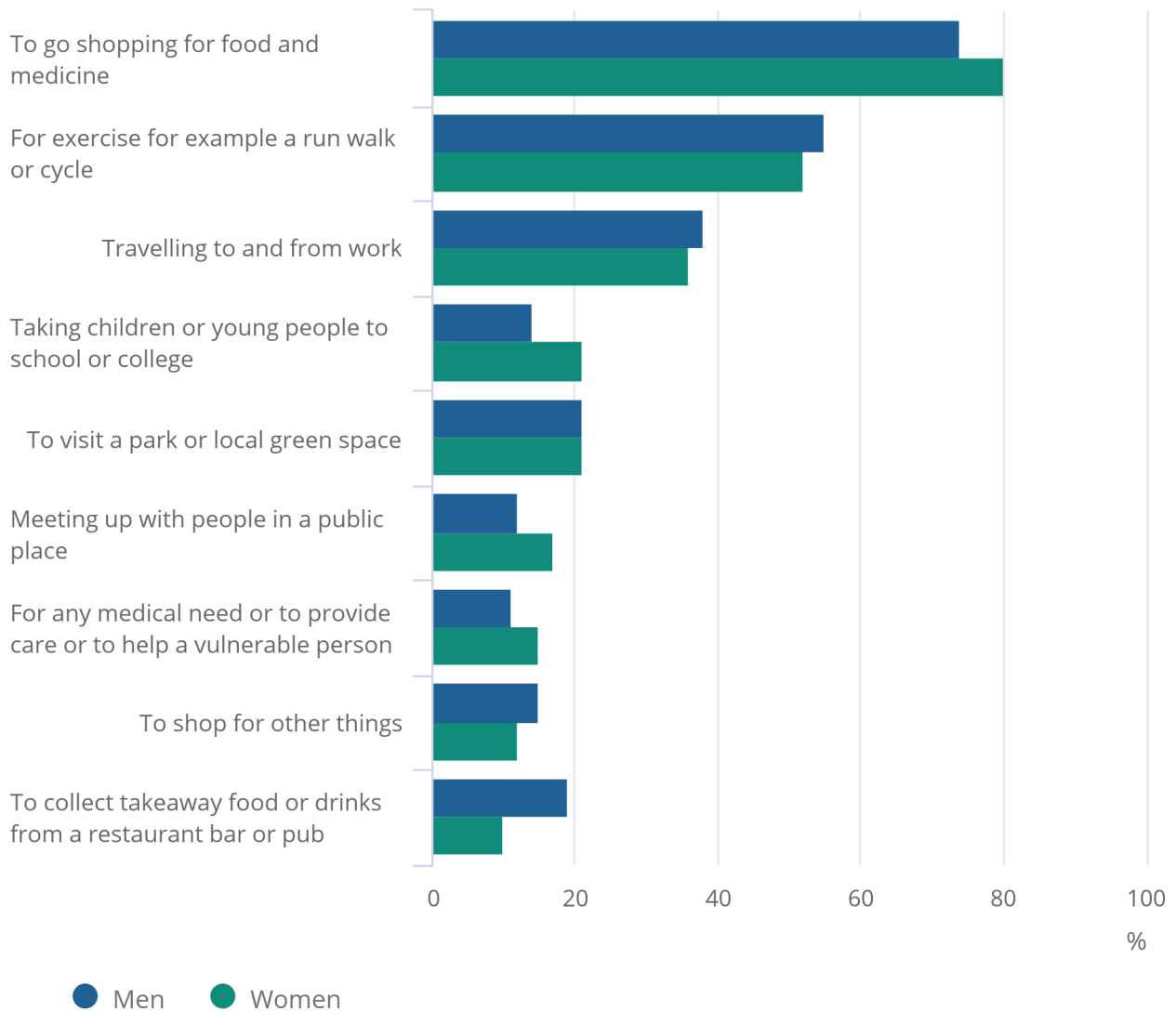
Of those who had met up with people to socialise, women (68%) were slightly more likely than men (63%) to always maintain social distancing when meeting up with someone outside of their support bubble. This is similar to the pattern found in previous weeks.

Figure 3: Women were less likely than men to leave home to collect takeaway food or drinks from a restaurant, bar or pub

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020

Figure 3: Women were less likely than men to leave home to collect takeaway food or drinks from a restaurant, bar or pub

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, for what reasons have you left your home?"
2. Base population: adults who said they had left their home in the past seven days.
3. Responses for the categories "To visit an indoor tourist attraction including museums and aquariums" and "Travel within the UK for holidays or short breaks " have been suppressed due to low sample sizes.
4. Responses for the categories "Meeting up with people in a personal place"; "To attend school or college"; "To visit an outdoor beauty spot or beach, landmark or heritage site"; "To take children to or from activities"; "To do leisure activities "; "Visiting a partner living separately"; "To eat or drink at a restaurant, bar or pub"; "For voluntary work"; "To attend university"; "To visit a hair salon or barber"; "To visit an outdoor gym or playground"; "Taking part in a regular indoor activity" and "To visit an outdoor tourist attraction including funfairs, farms, and adventure parks" have been removed from the chart due to having an reported proportion for men or women of less than 10%. These estimates are available in the datasets associated with this bulletin.
5. Response category of "Other" has been removed from the chart.
6. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

6 . Support and childcare bubbles

In Great Britain, although the exact rules vary, forming a support bubble – a group of people with whom you have close physical contact – is generally allowable under current coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.

In England, single adults living alone – or single parents whose children are under 18 years – can form a support bubble with one other household. This has still been the case during the second national lockdown in England.

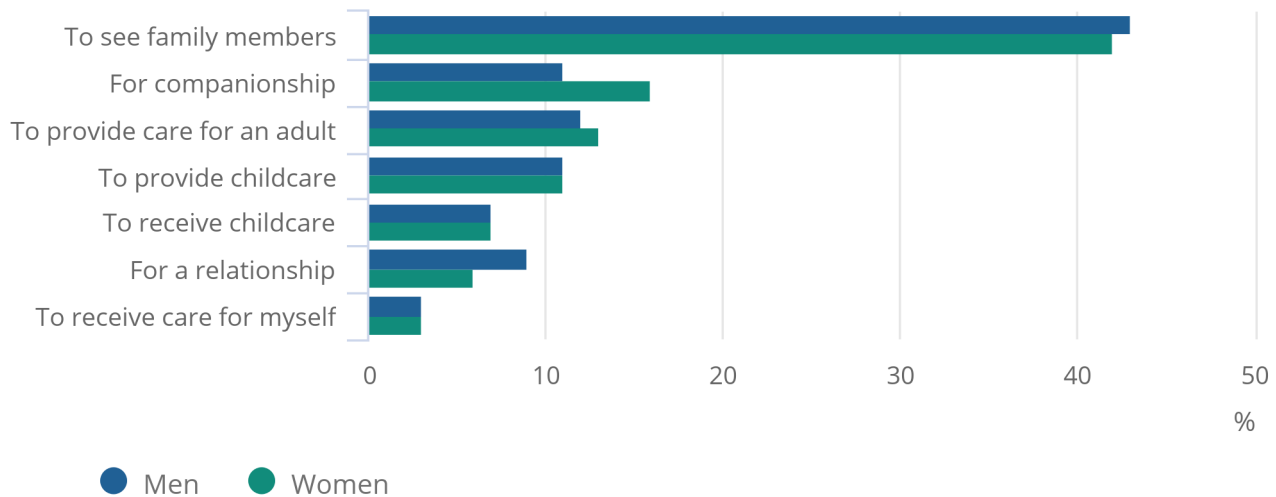
In Great Britain, women (43%) were more likely than men (33%) to report having formed a support bubble but the reasons men and women reported for choosing a household to form a support bubble with were generally similar. Around 4 in 10 men (43%) and women (42%) reported they had chosen a household to form a support bubble in order to see family members. Slightly more women (16%) than men (11%) reported forming a support bubble with another household for companionship whereas slightly less women (6%) than men (9%) reported forming a support bubble with another household for a relationship (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The most common reason for choosing another household to form a support bubble with amongst both men and women was to see family members

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020

Figure 4: The most common reason for choosing another household to form a support bubble with amongst both men and women was to see family members

Great Britain, 25 November to 29 November 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "What was the main reason you chose the other household in your 'support bubble'?"
2. Base population for percentage: adults aged 16 years or over who said they had formed a support bubble with another household.
3. Responses for the category "for work or business" has been suppressed due to low sample sizes.
4. Response category of "Other" has been removed from the chart.
5. Confidence intervals are provided in the datasets associated with this bulletin. As a general rule, if the confidence interval around one estimate overlaps with the interval around another, we cannot say with certainty that there is more than a chance difference between the two estimates.

This week, in England, around 9 in 10 (88%) adults reported they were aware that single adult households could form a support bubble. A slightly higher proportion of women (90%) than men (86%) reported they were aware of this.

In England, families with children aged 13 years or under (as well as to vulnerable adults) can also form a childcare bubble with one other household to provide informal (unpaid and unregistered) childcare. This must always be between the same two households. They can provide the childcare in either or both of the homes from the two households. This [has still been the case during the second national lockdown in England.](#)

Less than two-thirds (62%) of adults in England with dependent children were aware they could form a childcare bubble. Similar proportions of women and men reported they were aware they could form a childcare bubble (women 63%, men 61%).

Amongst adults in England with dependent children, 27% reported they had formed a childcare bubble. Slightly more women (30%) than men (24%) reported this.

Around 4 in 10 (42%) adults in England who had formed a childcare bubble reported that their childcare bubble was with the same people they had formed a support bubble; 4 in 10 (40%) of those who had formed a childcare bubble reported they did not have a support bubble and almost 2 in 10 (17%) reported their childcare bubble was with a different household than their support bubble. This pattern was similar amongst both men and women.

There are different rules regarding forming of support and childcare bubbles in the different countries of Great Britain. For more information on support and childcare bubbles see the [Glossary](#). Information regarding adults in Wales and Scotland who report being aware of or having formed a support bubble and the reasons why are available in the [datasets associated with this bulletin](#).

7 . Well-being

This week, women reported a higher average anxiety (4.6) score than men (3.8). Men reported slightly higher average scores for life satisfaction (6.9), feelings that things done in life are worthwhile (7.4) and happiness (6.9) than women (6.7, 7.3 and 6.7 respectively).

Prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, research has tended to find that [women in the UK usually report higher average scores than men for life satisfaction, feeling that things done in life are worthwhile, and happiness](#). Differences in these scores between men and women have varied during the pandemic.

Previous research also found that women usually report higher average scores of anxiety than men, this has remained the case throughout the pandemic (Figure 5).

More information on the [variety of factors that influence life satisfaction](#) prior to the coronavirus-19 pandemic and [anxiety during the coronavirus pandemic](#) are available.

Figure 5: Personal well-being scores for both men and women remained relatively stable compared with last week

Great Britain, March to November 2020

Notes:

1. Questions: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?", "Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?", "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?" and "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. This question is answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

[Data download](#)

8 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 4 December 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.

9 . Glossary

Local COVID restrictions

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

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

At the time of data collection for this bulletin, England was under a second national lockdown. From Wednesday 2 December, a new tier-based system of local COVID restrictions applies across England.

[Further information about the local COVID alert level tiers](#) in England is available, as is further information on the [five tiered protection levels in place in Scotland](#) and the [national guidelines in place in Wales](#).

Support and childcare bubbles

In England, eligibility for forming a [support bubble](#) with one other household has been restricted to specific groups, however the second household can be of any size.

In England, for people who have a child or children aged under 14 years, it is also possible to form a [childcare bubble](#). This allows friends or family from one other household to provide informal childcare.

In Wales, as of 9 November 2020 when the national "firebreak" lockdown was lifted, [two households of any size can form an extended household and meet in their own homes and gardens](#).

In [Scotland](#), across all protection levels, people who live on their own or couples who do not live together can form an extended household with people from one other household.

The rules described were in place during the data collection period covered in this bulletin. Guidance on forming a "Christmas bubble" between 23 and 27 December in [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#) is also now available.

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

10 . Measuring the data

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is a monthly omnibus survey. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have adapted the OPN to become a weekly survey used to collect data on the impact of the coronavirus on day-to-day life in Great Britain. In the latest wave, 6,028 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 73% (or 4,395 individuals) for the survey conducted from 25 to 29 November 2020.

The survey results are weighted to be a nationally representative sample for Great Britain, and data are collected using an online self-completion questionnaire. Individuals who did not want to or were unable to complete the survey online had the opportunity to take part over the phone.

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

Sampling

A sample of 6,028 households was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or the Labour Market Survey (LMS). From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger people were given higher selection probability than other people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey. The survey also includes a boosted sample for England, to allow more detailed analysis at a regional level, which are available in the datasets.

Weighting

The responding sample in the week 25 November to 29 November contained 4,395 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.

11 . 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

12 . 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 20 November 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 1 December 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.