

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 4 September 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 26 to 30 August 2020 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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Release date:  
4 September 2020

Next release:  
18 September 2020

## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Understanding the impact on society](#)
3. [Leaving home](#)
4. [Face coverings](#)
5. [Enforcement of rules and targeted lockdown measures](#)
6. [Working](#)
7. [Finances](#)
8. [Return to school](#)
9. [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
10. [Glossary](#)
11. [Measuring the data](#)
12. [Strengths and limitations](#)
13. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Main points

- Of those with school age children in the household in England and Wales, 97% said it was very likely or fairly likely that the oldest school age child in their household will return to school or college when school reopens to them in the new term.
- Nearly half (46%) of parents in England and Wales said the oldest child in their household had mixed feelings about returning to school or college, however 36% said they were looking forward to returning to school or college.
- More than half (53%) of adults who had heard about the Eat Out to Help Out scheme said they had eaten out during the month of August just to make use of the scheme.
- Of all adults, 47% said they would have eaten out during August without the discount from the scheme.
- Over the summer there has been a gradual return to socialising with others and participating in leisure activities; in the last seven days, nearly 3 in 10 (29%) adults met up with people in a public place – an increase from 13% three months ago (period covering 28 to 31 May 2020).
- Around 4 in 10 (37%) adults reported that when buying items such as food and toiletries they have shopped around at different places a little or a lot less than usual to compare price and quality; of those, the most common reason (64%) was that they felt safer buying everything in one place, or fewer places.
- More people are now travelling to work, and fewer are working exclusively at home; this week, 57% of working adults reported they had travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, while 20% had worked exclusively at home.

## 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 2,500 adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain conducted between 26 and 30 August 2020 (inclusive). Results from this week are based on 1,644 responding adults (66% response rate).

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 [Section 10: 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.

Throughout this bulletin, "this week" refers to the period 26 to 30 August 2020 and "two weeks ago" refers to the period 12 to 16 August 2020.

Please note that this bulletin will not be published on 11 September. Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain will return to a weekly publication from 18 September.

## 3 . Leaving home

Of adults in Great Britain, more than 9 in 10 (95%) said they had left their home for any reason in the past seven days, a similar percentage to two weeks ago (94%). However, 53% of adults reported that they felt either very comfortable or comfortable about leaving home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

### Socialising and activities over the summer

Each week we ask people the reasons why they had left their homes since the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Over the summer there has been a gradual return to socialising with others and participating in leisure activities. In the last seven days, nearly 3 in 10 (29%) adults met up with people in a public place – an increase from 13% three months ago (period covering 28 to 31 May 2020).

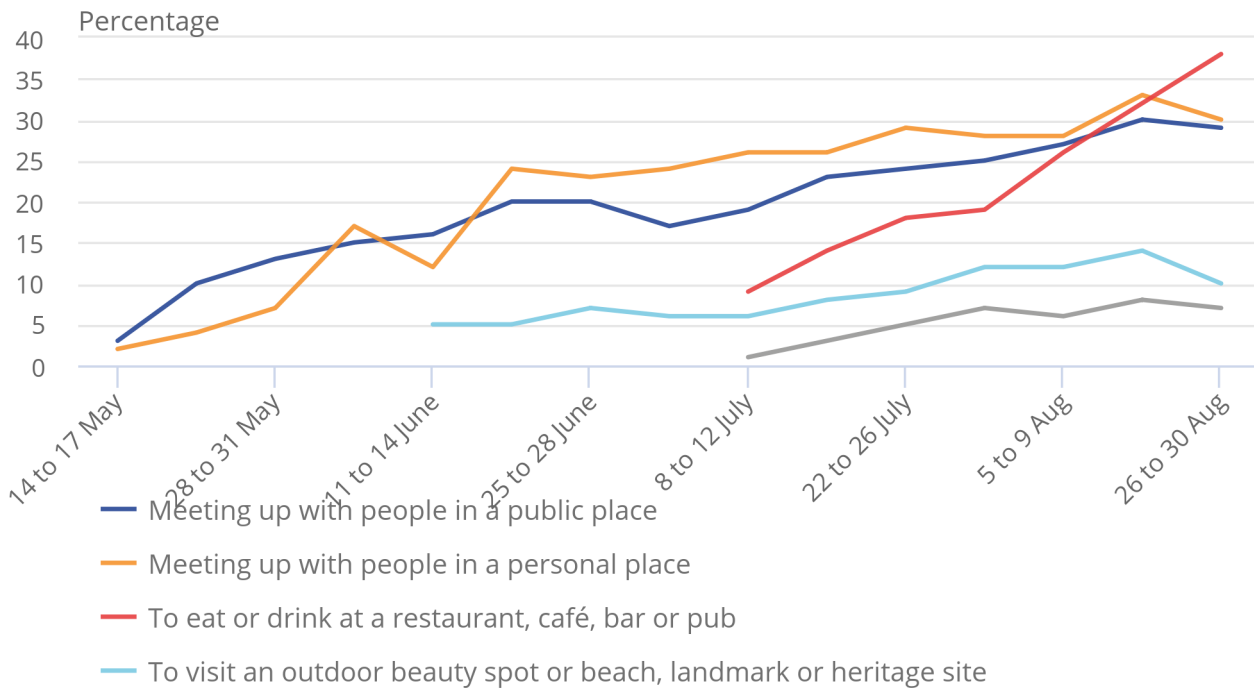
From the start of July, we've seen more people say they would feel comfortable or very comfortable to eat indoors at a restaurant. This week, 51% of adults said they would feel comfortable or very comfortable to eat indoors at a restaurant, an increase from 43% two weeks ago. Of those people who had left their homes this week, just under 4 in 10 (38%) said they had visited a restaurant, café, bar or pub, an increase from around 1 in 10 (9%) seven weeks ago (period covering 8 to 12 July 2020). Cafés, pubs and restaurants reopened indoors in [England](#) from 4 July, in [Scotland](#) from 15 July and in [Wales](#) from 3 August.

**Figure 1: Levels of socialising, eating out and travel increased through the summer**

Great Britain, May 2020 to August 2020

## Figure 1: Levels of socialising, eating out and travel increased through the summer

Great Britain, May 2020 to August 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: all adults.
3. Respondents asked to select all that apply.

The government [Eat Out to Help Out scheme ran from 3 to 31 August](#). Through the scheme, some restaurants, cafés, bars and pubs offered a 50% discount on food and/or non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in (up to a maximum of £10 discount per diner) from Monday to Wednesday during August.

This week, 95% of adults said they had heard about this scheme, this is compared with 93% two weeks ago. Of those who had heard about the scheme, more than half (53%) of adults said they had eaten out during the month of August just to make use of the scheme. However, in general 47% of adults said they would have eaten out during August without the discount from the scheme.

## 4 . Face coverings

Official guidance varies across England, Wales and Scotland.

More than 9 in 10 (96%) adults who had left their homes said they had worn a face covering to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) at least once in the past seven days – a similar percentage (95%) to two weeks ago.

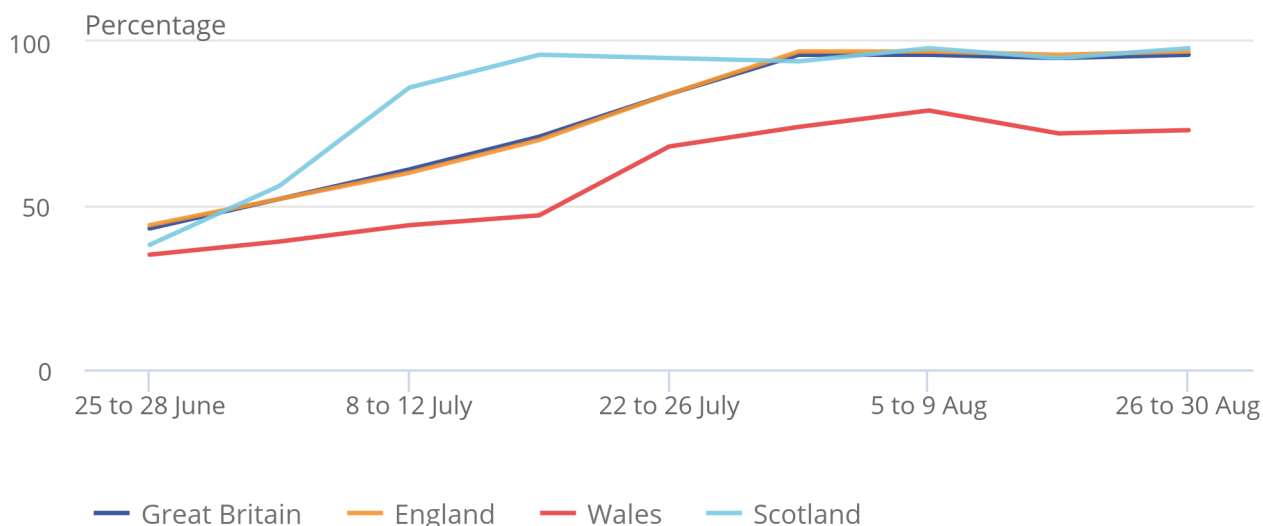
The proportion of people who reported they had worn a face covering outside of their home at least once in the past week varied between Scotland (98%), England (97%) and Wales (73%), although all three countries have seen an increase in the reporting of face coverings being worn over the past two months. Face coverings are mandatory on public transport, in shops and in some other enclosed spaces in England and Scotland but only on public transport in Wales.

**Figure 2: Almost all adults in Great Britain who left home this week reported wearing a face covering at least once, but this varies by country**

Great Britain, June to August 2020

Figure 2: Almost all adults in Great Britain who left home this week reported wearing a face covering at least once, but this varies by country

Great Britain, June to August 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: “In the past seven days, have you used a face covering when outside your home to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?”
2. Base population: Adults who have left their home in the past seven days.

Of those who had been shopping this week, more than 9 in 10 (95%) adults said they had worn a face covering while doing so – a similar proportion (94%) to two weeks ago.

At the time of the survey, it was mandatory to wear face coverings while shopping in Scotland and England. In Scotland and England, 97% had worn face coverings when shopping in the last seven days, while 78% had done so in Wales (where it is not mandatory to wear them).

It became mandatory to wear [face coverings on public transport in England on 15 June](#), in [Scotland on 22 June](#) and in [Wales on 27 July](#). Of those adults in Great Britain who had used public transport in the past seven days, 88% reported they had worn a face covering while doing so, compared with 92% two weeks ago.

## 5 . Enforcement of rules and targeted lockdown measures

This week, around 8 in 10 (75%) adults reported that they think the police should be very strict or strict in enforcing rules to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), for example, rules on social distancing, lockdown measures and wearing face coverings. However, only 20% of adults think police are very strict or strict in enforcing these rules. This is compared with 69% and 15% two weeks.

We also asked adults whether they supported the targeted lockdown measures for local areas affected by COVID-19 outbreaks, and more than half (53%) of all adults reported that they strongly supported these measures. Those aged 70 years or over (66%) were most likely to strongly support local lockdown measures. These proportions have both decreased (63% and 80% respectively) from the period 22 to 26 July. The proportion of people living in Wales and Scotland (61% and 63% respectively) that strongly support local lockdown measures this week are comparable with the period 22 to 26 July.

## 6 . Working

This week, less than 4 in 10 (39%) adults reported that the coronavirus pandemic was affecting their well-being; of these adults, 9% reported that they were worried about a possible job loss and 9% reported they were worried about returning to work. Two weeks ago the figures were 15% and 10% respectively.

Of all working adults, 77% said they had either worked at home or travelled to work this week – the same percentage as two weeks ago. Compared with two months ago, more people are now travelling to work, and fewer are working exclusively at home. This week, 57% of working adults reported they had travelled to work (either exclusively or in combination with working from home) in the past seven days, while 20% had worked exclusively at home.

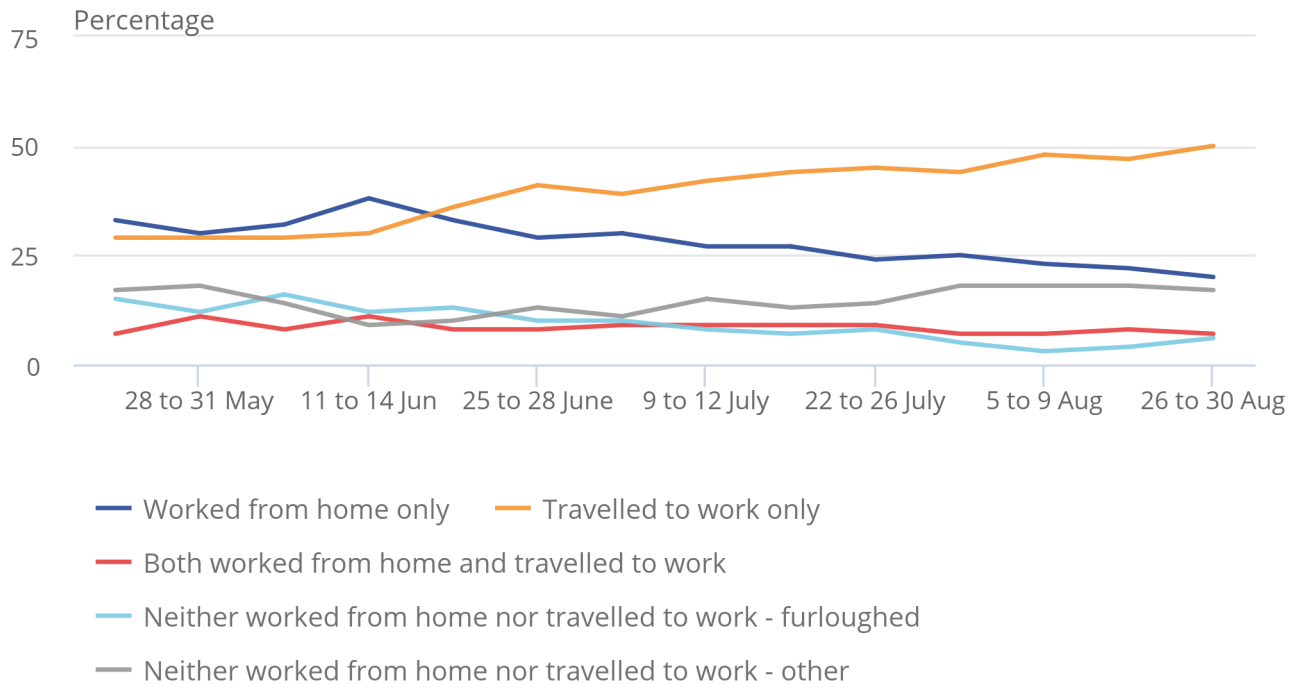
Official estimates of labour market participation can be found in the [Labour market overview](#).

**Figure 3: More people are now travelling to work, and fewer are working exclusively at home, when compared with data from two months ago**

Great Britain, May to August 2020

Figure 3: More people are now travelling to work, and fewer are working exclusively at home, when compared with data from two months ago

Great Britain, May to August 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Base population for percentage: working adults. This definition is different to some other surveys and is included in the [Glossary](#).
2. The main reasons for respondents neither working from home nor travelling to work (other) in the past seven days include temporary closure of business or workplace, on annual leave or sick leave, variable hours, being on maternity or paternity leave or being unable to work because of caring responsibilities.
3. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

More detailed information on changes to labour market participation can be found in [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 3 September 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](#).

## 7 . Finances

More than 2 in 10 (22%) adults reported that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was affecting their household finances, and amongst this group reduced income (66%) was most commonly reported. This is similar to two weeks ago (21% and 59% respectively). Less than 3 in 10 (25%) adults expect that the financial position of their household will get a little or a lot worse over the next 12 months.

This week, respondents were asked a series of questions about their shopping behaviour. Around 4 in 10 (37%) adults report shopping around to compare price and quality less than usual when buying food and toiletries since the outbreak. Of those who shopped around a little or a lot less, the most common reason (64%) was that when they have been going out to the shops they have felt safer buying everything in one place, or fewer places.

When buying non-essential items such as clothes and toys, 42% of adults reported that they shopped around a little or a lot less than usual at different places to compare the price and quality. Of those who shopped around a little or a lot less, the most common reason (44%) was that when they have been going out to the shops they have felt safer buying everything in one place, or fewer places.

## 8 . Return to school

Schools in England and Wales started to reopen to all pupils this week. Adults with dependent children were asked a series of questions about the oldest school age child in their household returning to school or college. Of those with school age children in the household in England and Wales, 97% said it was very likely or fairly likely that the oldest school age child in their household will return to school or college when school reopens to them in the new term.

More than half (52%) adults in England and Wales with children of school age in the next term reported that they were very worried or somewhat worried about the oldest school age child in their returning to school or college as the new term begins. The main concern (58%) reported by adults with children of school age in the next term, is that they are worried about the oldest age child in their household catching the coronavirus (COVID-19) at school or college.

Children may feel a range of emotions about returning to school or college. Adults in England and Wales with children of school age in the next term were asked to report on how the oldest child in their household feels about returning to school. Nearly half (46%) of parents said the oldest child in their household has mixed feelings about returning to school or college, however 36% said they were looking forward to returning to school or college. Nearly 8 in 10 (77%) said that the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has affected their feelings about returning to school or college this year a lot or a little. Those aged 16 to 18 years in full time education below degree level in England and Wales were also asked to describe how they feel about returning to school or college this year – their responses were similar to those provided by parents.

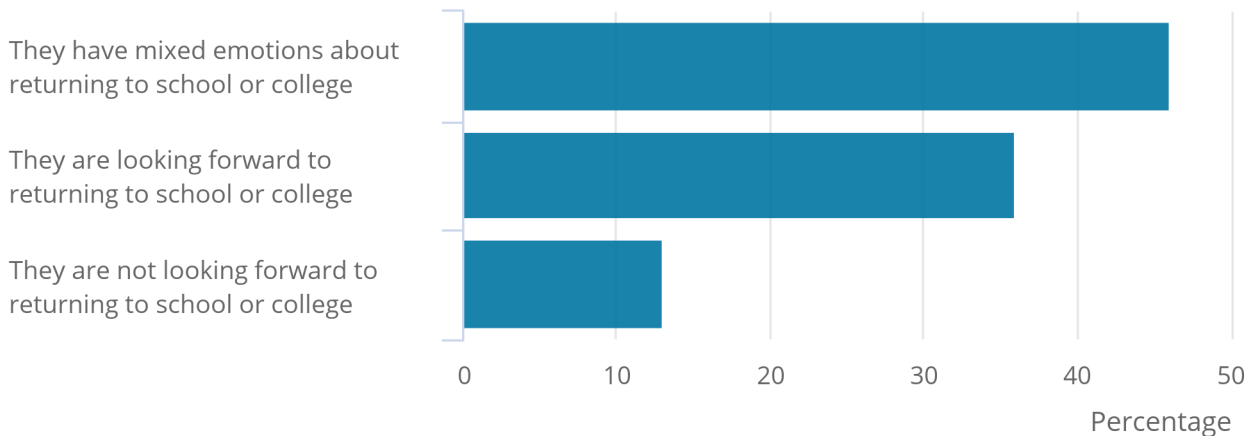


**Figure 4: Nearly half (46%) of parents said the oldest child in their household has mixed feelings about returning to school or college**

England and Wales, 26 to 30 August 2020

Figure 4: Nearly half (46%) of parents said the oldest child in their household has mixed feelings about returning to school or college

England and Wales, 26 to 30 August 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "Children may feel a range of emotions about returning to school or college. Thinking about the oldest child in your household, which of the following statements best describes how they feel about returning to school or college this year?"
2. Base population: Adults in England and Wales, with dependent children of school age next term.

## 9 . Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 4 September 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

## Underlying health condition

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

- Alzheimer's disease or dementia
- angina or a 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 a 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)
- an organ transplant
- stroke or cerebral haemorrhage or cerebral thrombosis
- rheumatoid arthritis

## 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, 2,500 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 66% (or 1,644 individuals) for the survey conducted from 26 to 30 August 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.

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

## Sampling

A sample of 2,500 households was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Force Survey (LFS). 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 1,644 individuals (65.8% 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 and National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) group. For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for August 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.

## 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:

- the sample size is relatively small: 2,500 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

## 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 31 July 2020](#)

Bulletin | Released 11 August 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 young and older people in Great Britain: 3 April to 10 May](#)

Articles | Released 22 June 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on young and older people in Great Britain. This release uses five waves of survey results covering the period from 3 April to 10 May 2020.

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

Bulletin | Released 18 June 2020

Estimates looking across personal and economic well-being covering the period from 20 March to 7 June 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.