

Statistical bulletin

# Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: 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 (COVID-19) pandemic on people and households in Great Britain.

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## Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [What has changed during lockdown](#)
3. [How has lockdown changed for different parts of the population](#)
4. [Disproportionately impacted groups](#)
5. [Personal and economic well-being data](#)
6. [Glossary](#)
7. [Measuring the data](#)
8. [Strengths and limitations](#)
9. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Main points

- While our day-to-day emotions like happiness and anxiety have improved since the beginning of lockdown, our assessment of life overall, such as our life satisfaction and feeling that the things we do are worthwhile, have remained subdued since 20 March 2020.
- As average anxiety has fallen, the time we think it will take for things to return to normal has increased, with one in four of us expecting it will take over a year or will never go back to normal.
- An estimated 12.5 million people say their households have been affected financially by the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19), a similar share to the beginning of lockdown. The share of employees and self-employed actively working fell in the first two weeks of lockdown and remained comparable up to 7 June 2020, at 67.0% and 79.9% respectively.
- There are some signs of increasing economic inequality, with more people on lower personal incomes reporting reduced income in the household because of the coronavirus as lockdown has continued, working fewer hours, and being less able to save for the future, while fewer people with higher incomes have been impacted financially.
- Parents and those who do not feel safe at home or people who are lonely were amongst the groups most likely to be impacted financially and to feel more anxious, with all less likely to be able to save in the year ahead.
- Parents were more than twice as likely to report reduced income, less than half were able to cover a large necessary expense, and they were more likely to have been furloughed than adults without children in the house, with over 20% finding childcare impacting their work.
- Since the easing of some restrictions, average life satisfaction worsened for those with a health condition before bouncing back to the level comparable with those without a health condition in the latest period up to 7 June.

## 2 . What has changed during lockdown

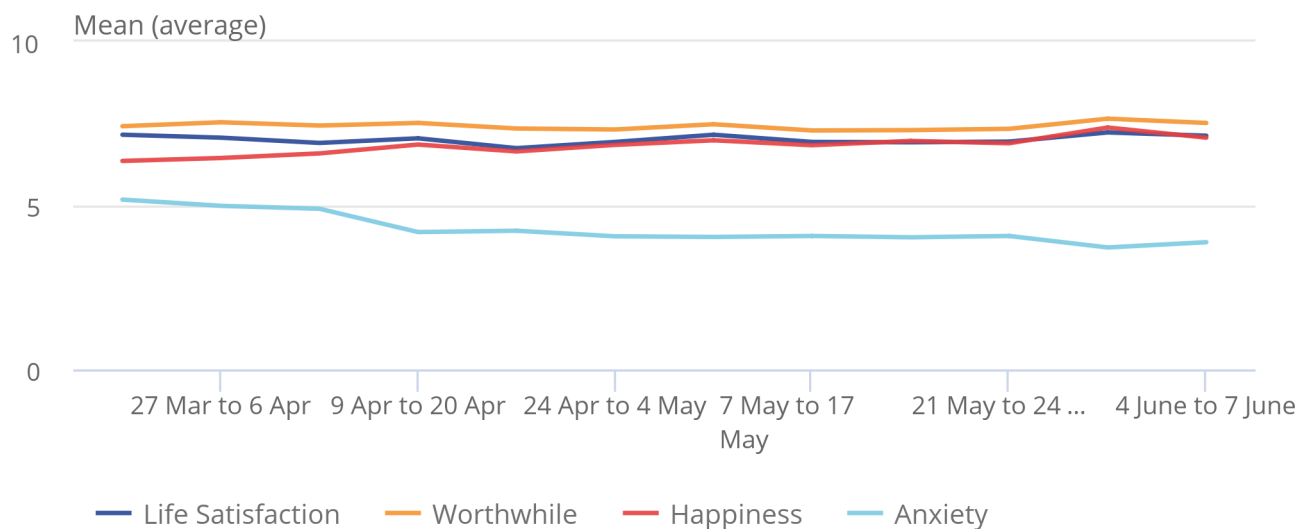
## Personal well-being headline estimates

**Figure 1: Anxiety and happiness have improved since lockdown, while life satisfaction remains diminished, as does feeling that the things we do are worthwhile**

Average well-being measures since the beginning of lockdown, Great Britain, 20 March 2020 to 7 June 2020

Figure 1: Anxiety and happiness have improved since lockdown, while life satisfaction remains diminished, as does feeling that the things we do are worthwhile

Average well-being measures since the beginning of lockdown, Great Britain, 20 March 2020 to 7 June 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

### Notes:

1. Question: "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?", "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. Each of these questions is answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".

Changes have appeared between the short-term "affective" measures of anxiety and happiness, and the longer-term "evaluative" measures of life satisfaction and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile. The affective measures capture our short-term emotions, giving a snapshot of how people feel right now, while the evaluative measures require a step back to make a general assessment of how things are going in our lives.

Average ratings for both anxiety and happiness have improved during lockdown, between 30 March and 7 June 2020. For the 10 days up to 30 March, anxiety rose to 5.18 then fell most prominently between 3 and 20 April, with average ratings falling from 4.90 to 4.19 during this period.

Through the peak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and as lockdown was extended, average anxiety levels flattened out and now remain at 75% of those seen in the first week of lockdown. Similarly, average happiness is 11% higher than it was in the first week of lockdown.

Academic evidence shows [we can adapt to both positive and negative events](#). Also, some of the measures put in place, such as furloughing and mortgage relief, as well as increased community support and clapping for the NHS, carers and other key workers may have stabilised and helped balance the impacts on anxiety and happiness levels during these times.

By contrast, both life satisfaction and the extent of feeling that the things we do in life are worthwhile remain as they were at the beginning of lockdown. They continue to be lower than the end of 2019 before the coronavirus pandemic. These measures ask us to take a step back and consider not only what is happening right now, but what the future may hold.

#### **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](#).

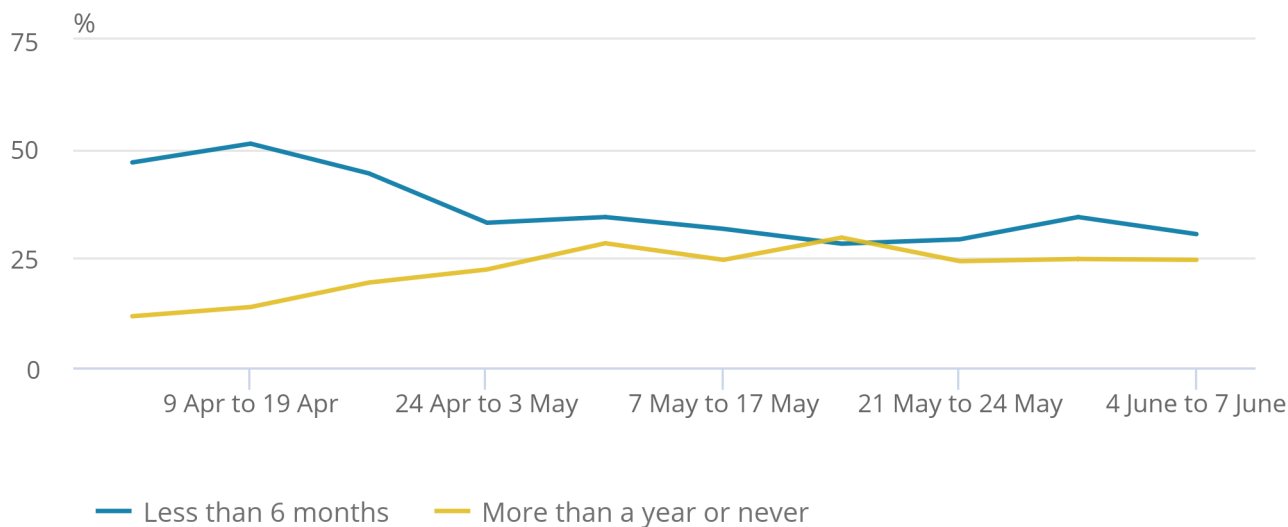
## Expectations for when life will go back to normal

**Figure 2: The longer the coronavirus pandemic has continued, the longer people think life will take to get back to normal, if at all**

Share of the population on when they think an individual's life will return to normal, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 7 June 2020

Figure 2: The longer the coronavirus pandemic has continued, the longer people think life will take to get back to normal, if at all

Share of the population on when they think an individual's life will return to normal, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 7 June 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Question: "How long do you think it will be before your life returns to normal?"

As time in lockdown has progressed, more people think it will take longer for their life to return to normal. In the four days up to 7 June, nearly one in four people (24.6%) said that it will take more than a year for their life to return to normal, or that it never would. That is 5.1 million more than said so in the 10 days leading up to 12 April while 8.5 million people fewer reported it would take less than six months over the same period.

This was true for both young and old people. For example, more young people, aged between 16 and 29 years, thought it would take over a year or never to go back to normal over the recent weeks, going from 7.7% at the start of lockdown to 20.8% in the four days ending 7 June, as it had for those aged 60 years and over. More detail on differences between young and old people can be seen in a forthcoming [article](#) to be published on 22 June.

Furthermore, even after lockdown restrictions had been eased, a greater proportion of employees felt that their work was being affected by the coronavirus, with 64.8% saying so in the four days to 24 May, up from 47.7% in the 11 days leading up to 10 May. Workplaces slowly re-opening safely, despite with reduced numbers and social distancing, could impact expectation on work being affected. This was reflected in a growing trend in the four days to 24 May surrounding concern about health and safety in the workplace as reported in our weekly publications on the [social impacts from the coronavirus](#).

## Increasing concerns about future economic prospects

**Figure 3: The expectations for the general economy for the year ahead are at their worst level recorded**

Aggregate balance of expectations and unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over, seasonally adjusted), UK, Jan 2004 to May 2020

### Figure 3: The expectations for the general economy for the year ahead are at their worst level recorded

Aggregate balance of expectations and unemployment rate (aged 16 years and over, seasonally adjusted), UK, Jan 2004 to May 2020



Source: European Commission – Eurobarometer Consumer Survey

**Notes:**

1. The Eurobarometer Consumer Survey is collected by GfK (Growth from Knowledge) for the European Commission.
2. Data for this survey has been collected since 1985, the time period in this figure is to show the scale of the pandemic in reference to the 2008 economic downturn.
3. A negative balance means respondents expected the measure to decrease either slightly or sharply. A positive balance means that respondents expected the measure to increase either slightly or sharply. A zero balance indicates no change.
4. Unemployment rate is calculated for those aged 16 years or over.

As more people continue to report that their work has been impacted, they also had lower expectations for the general economic situation for the year ahead, and higher expectations for unemployment to rise. These expectation figures are comparable with those recorded in the 2008 global financial recession.

People's expectations for the general economic situation fell at their fastest rate between the period before lockdown in March 2020, and April 2020, then fell further in May 2020 to negative 51.5, which was slightly lower than in any month during 2008 and 2009.

The largest month-on-month rise on record for people's expectation for unemployment was between the period before lockdown in March 2020, and April 2020, rising by 30 points, and a further increase in May 2020. This reached the largest level of expectations for unemployment to increase in over eight years. The highest previous level was in January 2012, which followed the peak of unemployment following the 2008 recession.

People's expectations of their financial situation fell at the fastest rate since records began, in the month up to April 2020, but recovered slightly in May. The rating remains slightly more positive than it had at the height of the 2008 recession.

### **3 . How has lockdown changed for different parts of the population**

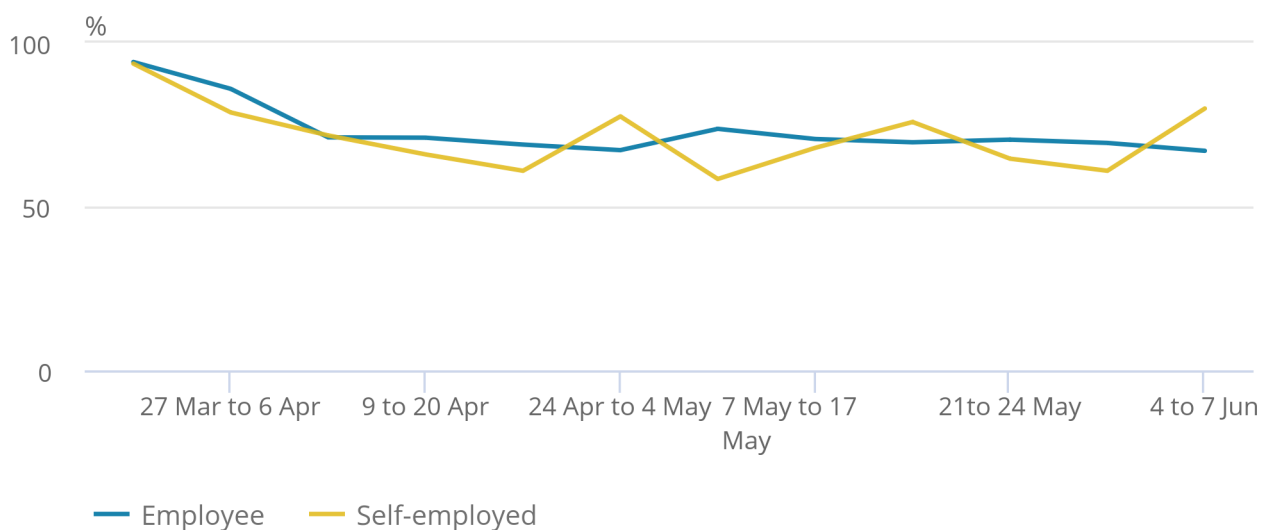
## Impacts to work

**Figure 4: The share of employees and self-employed actively working fell in the first two weeks of lockdown and remained comparable up to 7 June 2020**

Proportion of employed population with work completed in paid job in reference week by employment status, Great Britain, 20 March to 7 June 2020

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Proportion of employed population with work completed in paid job in reference week by employment status, Great Britain, 20 March to 7 June 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

### Notes:

1. Question "Have you completed work in your paid job this week?".
2. The base population is that of the employed population as the question was only applicable if respondents had a paid job.

For those still in employment, the proportion of employees and the self-employed completing some paid work in the past week fell in the first few weeks of lockdown. This is likely due to a combination of people being furloughed, not able to work due to temporary business closures, self-isolating, caring, or being sick. Since then, the proportion of employees completing paid work has remained subdued, standing at 67.0% up to 7 June 2020. For those who were still self-employed, the proportion of people actively working stayed the same since the period ending 13 April, and stood at 79.9% up to 7 June.

There are some tentative signs of more people who are still employed going back into work up to 14 June, as commented in our [latest indicators](#) release.



## Impacts to finances

Across the whole population, economic impacts have stayed consistent since the beginning of lockdown, but there is some variation in experience across groups. Generally, the self-employed were more likely to be affected than employees - with the proportion reporting reduced household income staying broadly stable between the beginning of lockdown and 7 June, despite grants for the self-employed starting to come through from the end of May.

At the same time, there was a worsening for low-income individuals. Those with total annual income between £10,000 and £20,000 experienced reduced income, with 26% being impacted in the four days to 24 May, an increase of 15 percentage points from the 11 days up to 20 April.

By contrast, there was some improvement in finances for high-income individuals. For those with total annual income of £40,000 or higher, only 3.2% could not afford a one-off expense of £850 in the four days to 17 May, compared with 13.4% in the 11 days to 20 April. This is reflected in anxiety ratings for this income group - they were 14% lower on average between 3 April and 10 May, compared with those with an income up to £10,000.

## Anxiety differences by sex

Throughout the course of lockdown, anxiety has fallen slightly more for men when compared with women, with overall decreases of 22.6% and 14.7% respectively. However, as previously reported, women were consistently reporting higher anxiety on average than men.

This trend continued into the latest period, the four days to 7 June, with women reporting an anxiety rating of 6.00 compared with men reporting a rating of 4.70.

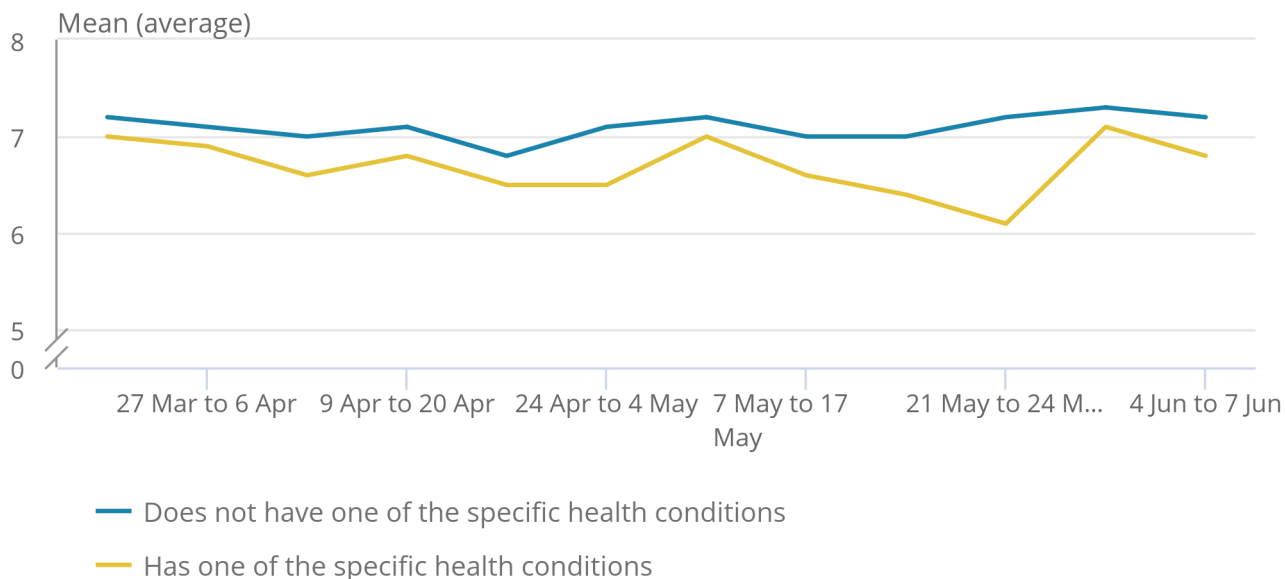
## Life satisfaction for those with a health condition

**Figure 5: Since the easing of some measures of lockdown by 10 May 2020, those with a health condition have experienced a decrease in life satisfaction**

Changes in life satisfaction for people with a health condition, Great Britain, 20 March 2020 to 7 June 2020

Figure 5: Since the easing of some measures of lockdown by 10 May 2020, those with a health condition have experienced a decrease in life satisfaction

Changes in life satisfaction for people with a health condition, Great Britain, 20 March 2020 to 7 June 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Notes:

1. Chart axis has a break in it.
2. Respondents were asked whether they have any of several specific health conditions. A full list of the specific conditions can be found in the glossary.

While life satisfaction for the population overall has remained at a low level as seen in the period just before lockdown, for those who reported having a specific health condition that put them in the “at risk” category of the coronavirus (COVID-19), it has fallen significantly since the 11 days ending 10 May.

On 10 May, some easing of lockdown in England was scheduled, which included allowing unlimited exercise, a return to work if unable to work from home and for two people from different households to meet outside, at a distance of two metres. These new freedoms may not apply to those with a specific health condition, as some are at a higher risk and are therefore “shielding”, which may partly explain the fall in life satisfaction for this group. However, life satisfaction saw a significant bounce back for those with a health condition during the period of 21 to 24 May, returning to a similar level seen at the beginning of lockdown.

## 4 . Disproportionately impacted groups

Approximately 12.5 million people in Great Britain were estimated to have had their finances affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) for the period 4 June to 7 June 2020.

The following section has used pooled data, representing a time span of 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020. This allows for more in-depth analysis. This also reflects the main period of government-imposed lockdown and the height of the impacts and adjustments from the coronavirus pandemic. Analysis that looks at respondents who had been furloughed, and for those who could afford to pay a necessary but unexpected expense if needed, used data from 9 April to 4 May.

The subsequent sections focus on parents, self-employed individuals, lower- and middle-income households, those who reported feeling unsafe because of the coronavirus and those who reported feeling lonely. These are the groups that reported the biggest impacts in terms of personal and economic well-being.

Those who responded that their household finances had been impacted by way of reduced income also reported a higher average anxiety level of 4.95 (out of 10), 19% higher on average than those who did not report a reduced income.

Those with reduced income also tended to report multiple impacts. Of the one in five people reporting a reduction in financial income, the majority also reported either struggling to pay bills, using savings to cover living costs, having to borrow or use a credit card to cover costs, or being unable to save as normal, or a combination of these impacts. For instance, an estimated 2.6 million people who reported an impact on their finances reported that they had reduced income and were using savings to cover living costs.

At the same time, impacts were not solely work-related, but rather finance-related. For instance, only 21.6% of people with reduced income also reported reduced or no work hours.

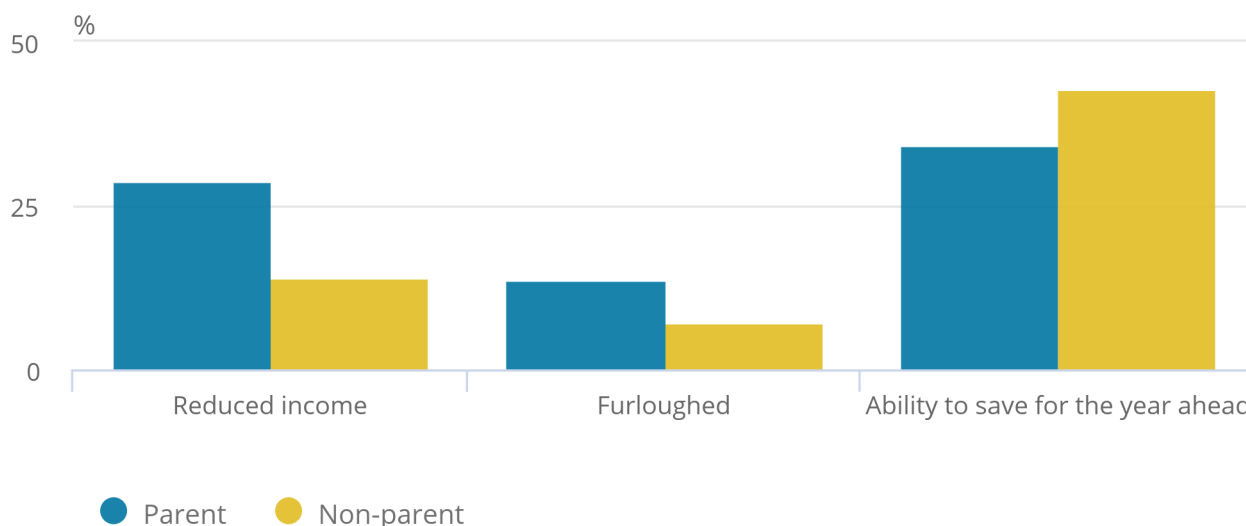
## Parents

**Figure 6: Parents' economic well-being has been affected more than those without children in the house**

Comparisons of economic well-being between parents and non-parents, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020

### Figure 6: Parents' economic well-being has been affected more than those without children in the house

Comparisons of economic well-being between parents and non-parents, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Responses to the question "In the past seven days, how have your household finances been affected?", "In the past seven days, how has your work been affected?" and "In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next twelve months?"
2. Share of respondents who responded "Reduced income"; "I have been furloughed"; and for the latter question, "Yes".
3. For definition of parent used here, please see glossary.
4. Data for the response "I have been furloughed" uses pooled data covering the period 9 April to 4 May.

Parents' finances were more impacted during the initial weeks of lockdown (3 April to 10 May), when compared with adults in households with no children.

During this period, parents were reporting average anxiety ratings of 4.4 out of 10. This was marginally higher than the average ratings for those without dependent children in the house, at 4.2 out of 10. They were more than twice as likely to report having reduced financial income than those without children, yet they were just as likely to report reduced working hours. However, parents were nearly twice as likely to report that they had been furloughed (13.6%) when compared with those without children (7.2%).

Of all adults with children in the household, 62.7% reported that the coronavirus had impacted their work, which was marginally higher than those without children in the household. Of all adults with children in the household, 21.2% reported that their work had been affected because of having to work around childcare. However, fewer parents (30.0%) reported that they had been unable to work from home when compared with those without children (36.8%).

Parents were also less economically prepared for the future, as they were 20.5% less likely to say they are able to save for the year ahead. This was significantly fewer compared with those without children in the house, 42.9% of whom reported they would be able to save for the year ahead.

In terms of economic resilience, fewer than half (45.1%) of parents reported being able to afford an unexpected but necessary expense of £850. For those without children in the household, a significantly higher proportion of 60.8% responded that they would be able to afford this unexpected expense. This equates to 5.9 million parents, 3 million fewer than said they were able to afford a similar necessary expense before lockdown, in 2018.

This indicates reduced financial resilience, and according to the resilience taskforce reporting in 2019, the repercussions to an income shock can be widespread and long-lasting. These include mental health issues, low productivity in work and the accrual of problem debt, all of which can lead to more long-term and wider issues. Furthermore, longer-term impacts include reduced life chances for the children of those impacted.

As well as financial impacts, parents' lives have been impacted in other ways, such as homeschooling their children. Parents from all income bands similarly reported that they were confident in their ability to homeschool (between 43.1% and 55.1%), and between 68.8% and 75.6% agreed that their children continued to learn whilst being homeschooled.

Homeschooling was having a more negative effect on parents' jobs in higher income bands - 43.6% of those with gross income of £40,000 or more per year, compared with 24.3% of those earning between £20,000 and £40,000, and less on lower incomes. At the same time, those in lower income bands (up to £20,000 per year) were more likely to have their well-being affected by homeschooling. Conversely, those in the higher income bands (£20,000 per year and over) were more likely to say homeschooling had negatively affected their children's well-being.

Further analysis on parents' and families impacts during lockdown will be published in the coming weeks.

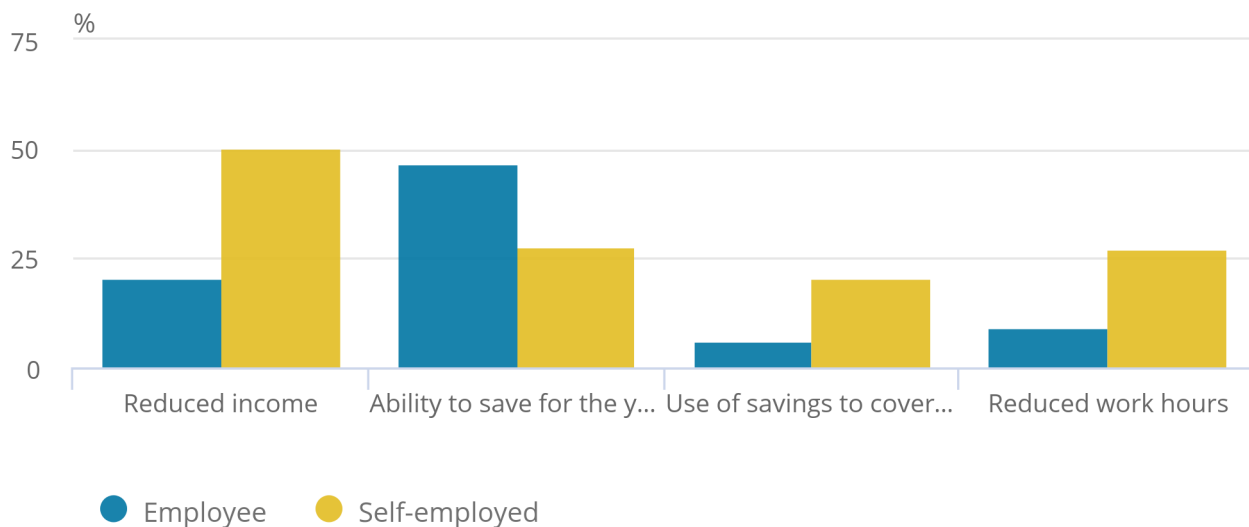
## Self-employed

### Figure 7: One in two self-employed have reduced household income, more than twice the proportion of employees

Comparisons of economic well-being between employee and self-employed, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020

#### Figure 7: One in two self-employed have reduced household income, more than twice the proportion of employees

Comparisons of economic well-being between employee and self-employed, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

#### Notes:

1. Responses to the question "In the past seven days, how have your household finances been affected?", "In the past seven days, how has your work been affected?" and "In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next twelve months?"
2. Share of respondents who responded "reduced income"; "I have been unable to save as usual"; "use of savings to cover living costs"; "hours down"; and for the latter question "Yes".

People who are self-employed reported similar anxiety levels when compared with employees. However, their economic impacts have been more widespread. Half of self-employed people reported having reduced financial income, more than twice as likely as employees. The larger difference in reduced income was most likely driven by the higher percentage of self-employed (27.2%) who reported a reduction of hours worked during the same period, while a third had experienced temporary closures to their businesses.

Further impacts reported by the self-employed were being less economically prepared for the future, as 20.8% said they used savings to cover living costs during the period, and just 27.5% reporting that they would be able to save for the year ahead. This is significantly lower than employees, 47.0% of whom reported that they would be able to save for the year ahead in the current economic climate.

Additionally, the self-employed have found it increasingly harder to save when compared with employees. In the 10 days to 13 April, 43.6% of employees and 27.1% of the self-employed were able to save as usual. This gap has since become larger, with 48.3% of employees and 21.5% of the self-employed being able to save in the four days to 7 June.

Despite this, a similar proportion of the self-employed (65.1%) reported that they would be able to afford an unexpected but necessary expense of £850, when compared with employees, 56.6% of whom reported being able to afford this expense. At the same time, the self-employed were more likely to think the financial situation of their household would get worse over the next year.

## People with low and middle personal incomes

**Figure 8: People with up to £20,000 in overall personal annual income are most likely to have reported a loss of income**

Economic well-being income band comparisons, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020

Figure 8: People with up to £20,000 in overall personal annual income are most likely to have reported a loss of income

Economic well-being income band comparisons, Great Britain, 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

**Notes:**

- Responses to the question "In the past seven days, how have your household finances been affected?"; "In the past seven days, how has your work been affected?"; and "In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next twelve months?"
- Share of respondents who responded "reduced income"; "hours down" and "I have been furloughed"; and for the latter question, "Yes".
- Data for the response "I have been furloughed" uses pooled data covering the period 9 April to 4 May.

Those on overall personal incomes of £10,000 to £20,000 annually were the most likely to have experienced reduced income, along with people on incomes up to £10,000. This could be because of those on lower incomes being the most likely to report being unable to work from home, with one in two reporting not being able to, at a time when most workplaces had effectively shut down.

Those on personal incomes of £20,000 to £40,000 annually were more likely to have been furloughed compared with the other income bands, at 12.7%, followed closely by those earning between £10,000 and £20,000 annually at 11.1%. According to Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme statistics](#), the most common industries where people have been furloughed are in wholesale and retail, and in accommodation and food services. The level of furloughing may be reflected in a decreased level of financial security, as 45.2% of people in this income band said they would not be able to save money in the year ahead.

Meanwhile, those on the lowest personal incomes, up to £10,000 annually, were in the most vulnerable position financially. Those on incomes up to £20,000 annually were most likely to report a reduction in financial income, while particularly those with up to £10,000 annually were least likely to report that they would be able to save any money in the upcoming year (31.7%) and a larger share of them would not be able to afford an unexpected but necessary expense of £850, relative to people in other income bands. Of those on incomes of up to £10,000 annually, 43.6% reported being able to cover this expense during lockdown, which was 16.4 percentage points less than in 2018, before lockdown.

People on incomes of £40,000 or over were more likely to report their work being affected than those on the lowest incomes. The main reason for this was because of switching to work from home, with 78.1% reporting this impact, while over 4 in 10 of those on incomes up to £20,000 were unable to work from home. At the same time, those on incomes of £40,000 or over were less likely to report their work hours being reduced than those on incomes up to £20,000.

## **Those who felt unsafe because of the coronavirus**

Those who reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe because of the coronavirus were also more anxious, reporting an mean anxiety score of 5.8, which is significantly higher than both those who felt safe (4.5) and those who felt very safe (3.7). They were also more likely to be impacted economically.

Compared with people who reported feeling safe, those who reported feeling unsafe or very unsafe because of the coronavirus were 76.4% more likely to have had a financial impact from the coronavirus up to 10 May, with 34.0% of them saying their finances had been impacted by the coronavirus. Just over one-quarter (25.9%) of those reporting they felt unsafe or very unsafe reported that they would be able to save for the year ahead, compared with 38.1% of those feeling very safe and 49.5% of those feeling safe. In addition, they were more likely to report struggling to get groceries (including toiletries and medicines) with two in three saying they struggled, compared with 34.9% of those who feel safe struggling to get groceries.

People with annual income up to £20,000 were more likely to say they felt unsafe or very unsafe than those with higher income. More information on impacts to this group can be seen in our [Coronavirus and anxiety](#) release.

## **Those who felt lonely**

People reporting that they had felt lonely were also reporting higher levels of anxiety, with a mean anxiety score of 6.5 for those reporting that they felt lonely often or always, and 5.2 for those who reported feeling lonely some of the time, which is significantly higher than all other groups.

Those who said they often or always feel lonely were less likely than others to work from home, with 25.6% reporting working from home, compared with 46.7% for those who never feel lonely. Furthermore, more than half of those reporting feeling lonely also reported struggling to get groceries (including toiletries and medicines), compared with 31.4% of those who hardly ever feel lonely, and 29.0% of those who never feel lonely. They were also more likely to report not feeling safe at home.



In terms of income groups, people with annual income up to £20,000 were more likely to report feeling often or always lonely than those with incomes of £20,000 and above. As well as impacts on their personal well-being, those who reported feeling often or always lonely reported larger impacts to their finances. They were also less likely to say they would be able to save in the next 12 months; 17.1% of those reporting they often or always, or sometimes felt lonely, compared with 45.3% of those reporting they hardly ever and 46.5% of those reporting they never felt lonely. Of those who occasionally felt lonely, 39.4% reported they would be able to save in the next 12 months.

It should be noted that the link between loneliness and personal and economic well-being is complex, and low levels of personal and economic well-being could well cause loneliness, as well as loneliness triggering lower levels of well-being and financial impacts.

More information on people who are lonely during this pandemic can be found in our [Coronavirus and loneliness article](#).

## 5 . Personal and economic well-being data

### [Coronavirus personal and economic well-being impacts](#)

Dataset | Released 18 June 2020

Weekly estimates of personal well-being including anxiety and life satisfaction, and financial and work impacts from coronavirus (COVID-19) for the population and select sub-groups in Great Britain.

### [Personal well-being estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 4 May 2020

Combined annual, quarterly (experimental), monthly and weekly estimates, confidence intervals and sample sizes for life satisfaction, feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, happiness and anxiety in the UK.

### [Economic well-being estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 4 May 2020

Estimates of economic well-being in the UK, including household income, spending and wealth, distribution of wealth and income, whole economy wealth, and unemployment.

### [Personal and economic well-being combined estimates](#)

Dataset | Released 4 May 2020

Estimates of personal and economic well-being from the new module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) for Great Britain to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

## 6 . Glossary

### Economic well-being

Our economic well-being measures present a rounded and comprehensive basis for assessing changes in economic well-being through indicators that adjust or supplement more traditional measures such as gross domestic product (GDP).

### Personal well-being

Our personal well-being measures ask people to evaluate, on a scale of 0 to 10, how satisfied they are with their life overall, whether they feel they have meaning and purpose in their life, as well as about their emotions (happiness and anxiety) during a particular period.

## Personal income

Respondents are asked about their personal income and grouped into bands accordingly. This is the total annual income for that individual from all sources, gross of tax.

## Household income

Respondents are asked about the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their household income. This is the total income from all sources for all individuals in the same household.

## Parent

In this publication, a respondent is classified as a parent if they live with a dependent child aged under 16 years.

## Lockdown

Lockdown is the shutting down of all non-essential activities to slow the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). In the UK, this has seen strict limits imposed on daily life, including:

- people ordered to only leave the house for essentials such as food, medicine, exercise or to care for a vulnerable person
- the closure of non-essential shops
- the banning of gatherings of more than two people

The UK lockdown was applied on 23 March 2020. This has formed the basis for each nation's Stay at home guidance. Specific stay at home guidance for [England](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) and [Northern Ireland](#) is available. During the majority of the period covered in this release, all countries of the UK remained in strict lockdown, but from 1 June 2020 the limits in England were relaxed, with groups of up to six people allowed to meet while socially distancing. The data in this release only cover England, Scotland and Wales.

## Thresholds

Thresholds are used to present dispersion in the personal well-being data. For the life satisfaction, feeling that things done in life are worthwhile and happiness questions, ratings are grouped in the following way:

- 0 to 4 (low)
- 5 to 6 (medium)
- 7 to 8 (high)
- 9 to 10 (very high)

For the anxiety question, ratings are grouped differently to reflect the fact that higher anxiety is associated with lower personal well-being. The ratings for anxiety are grouped as follows:

- 0 to 1 (very low)
- 2 to 3 (low)
- 4 to 5 (medium)
- 6 to 10 (high)

## **Specific health conditions**

Respondents were asked if they had any of several specific health conditions. The conditions listed were as follows:

- angina, heart failure or long-term heart problem
- asthma
- learning disability
- conditions affecting brain and nerves
- cancer
- COPD, cystic fibrosis or another long-term lung problem
- diabetes
- kidney or liver disease
- weakened immune system
- problems with spleen
- being overweight (BMI over 40)
- given an organ transplant

## **7 . Measuring the data**

### **Data sources**

Throughout this bulletin, analysis using the weekly module of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) will refer to periods as follows.

- The first wave refers to a survey of 1,588 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 20 March 2020 and 30 March 2020 (inclusive). The 10-day data collection period spans the introduction of the [lockdown measures](#) by the government on Monday 23 March. Over three-quarters of responses were collected before this date, with the results more likely to reflect opinions at this time, so this period can be considered as pre-lockdown.
- The second wave refers to a survey of 1,581 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 27 March 2020 and 6 April 2020 (inclusive). This period and those succeeding it can be considered as during government-imposed lockdown.
- The third wave refers to a survey of 1,203 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 3 and 13 April 2020 (inclusive).
- The fourth wave refers to a survey of 1,430 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 9 and 20 April 2020 (inclusive).
- The fifth wave refers to a survey of 1,327 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 17 and 27 April 2020 (inclusive).
- The sixth wave refers to a survey of 1,360 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 24 April and 3 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The seventh wave refers to a survey of 1,108 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 30 April and 10 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The eighth wave refers to a survey of 1,181 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 7 and 17 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The ninth wave refers to a survey of 995 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 14 and 17 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The 10th wave refers to a survey of 1,028 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 21 and 24 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The 11th wave refers to a survey of 1,224 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 28 May and 31 May 2020 (inclusive).
- The 12th wave refers to a survey of 1,914 adults sampled through the OPN, which was conducted online between 4 and 7 June 2020 (inclusive). This data collection period is after the easing of lockdown restrictions in England on 1 June 2020, allowing groups of up to six people to meet while socially distancing.

The data underpinning the personal and economic well-being indicators come from various sources with different timeliness and coverage. This release is based on the most recent data available as of the beginning of June 2020.

The economic expectations estimates are sourced from the Eurobarometer Consumer Survey, which is collected by GFK (Growth from Knowledge) for the European Commission. [The questions included in the survey \(PDF, 285KB\)](#) provide information on the general perception of the financial and economic situation.

Joint personal and economic well-being analysis related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) uses the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), usually a monthly omnibus survey. In response to the coronavirus 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. 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. In the most recent wave, 2,500 individuals were sampled, with a response rate of 77% (or 1,914 individuals) for the survey conducted from 4 June to 8 June 2020.

Combined, or "pooled" datasets were also used. The first is a combined dataset that combines five rounds of data collection by the OPN, providing survey data from 6,430 adults surveyed between 3 April and 10 May 2020. The second, used to analyse data on questions introduced in later rounds of the OPN data collection, combines three rounds of data collection by the OPN, providing survey data from 4,117 adults surveyed between 9 April and 3 May 2020. Using pooled datasets with an increased sample size allows us to produce detailed analysis on groups such as those who have been furloughed, which are too small in individual waves for effective statistical analysis.

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](#).

## Measuring "people and prosperity"

In November 2010, we set up the [Measuring National Well-being programme](#) to monitor and report UK progress by producing accepted and trusted measures of the well-being of the nation. We have pioneered the measurement of well-being in the UK in addition to traditional measures of prosperity, enabling policymakers to make better, well-informed decisions. We have also been monitoring economic well-being by assessing how households are faring using measures of household wealth and disposable income.

Traditionally, we reported our quarterly updates on personal well-being and economic well-being in separate publications; however, a [recent user feedback survey](#) suggested the need for more in-depth analysis on the relationship between personal and economic well-being.

In February 2019, we introduced [a new series on "people and prosperity"](#) as part of our "[Beyond GDP](#)" initiative bringing together personal and economic well-being for the first time. The aim is to provide timely, quarterly indicators and analysis of household financial health as well as personal well-being. In measuring economic growth, we want to know the extent to which it affects different groups in society. This will make it easier for policymakers and other users to consider questions such as whether changes in the size of the economy, and the distribution of that income, are reflected in our personal well-being.

## Quality and methodology information

The [Personal well-being in the UK Quality and Methodology Information](#) report contains important information on the strengths and limitations and uses of the data as well as how outputs are created, and the quality and accuracy of those outputs. For more information on personal well-being, please see the [Personal well-being user guidance](#) and [Harmonised principles of personal well-being](#).

The framework and indicators for economic well-being used in this release were outlined in [Economic well-being, framework and indicators](#), published in November 2014. Basic quality and methodology information for all economic well-being indicators typically included in this statistical bulletin is available from:

- [Gross domestic product \(GDP\) Quality and Methodology Information report](#)
- [Consumer Price Indices Quality and Methodology Information report](#)
- [Wealth and Assets Survey Quality and Methodology Information report](#)
- [Effects of taxes and benefits on household income Quality and Methodology information report](#)
- [Labour Force Survey \(LFS\) Quality and Methodology Information report](#)

## Feedback and future publications

In February 2019, alongside our [previous publication](#), we launched a survey to gather user feedback about our personal and economic well-being outputs. Users told us that our work fitted their requirements well - the language used, analytical detail and visual analyses met their needs. But the feedback also highlighted ways in which we could improve the quality and usability of our outputs such as shortening the length of bulletins. Additionally, there were requests to focus on more in-depth analysis, such as more insights into regional data and inequalities, and providing more information or explanation of more technical aspects.

Over the coming months, we will continue to address feedback and engage further with our users to improve the usability and usefulness of our work. We also aim to better promote our well-being dashboard and explore opportunities to improve our interactive tools. Your feedback will be very valuable in making our results useful and accessible. If you have any questions, please contact us at [PeopleAndProsperity@ons.gov.uk](mailto:PeopleAndProsperity@ons.gov.uk).

## 8 . Strengths and limitations

### Data quality

We first published quarterly data for the personal well-being figures in November 2019 as [Experimental Statistics](#). The aim is to use the quarterly data to explore short-term changes in personal well-being by looking at fluctuation over the years and comparisons over quarters one year apart. Additionally, using quarterly estimates has the benefit of being more comparable with the economic well-being estimates, which use quarterly data for their indicators.

### Seasonal adjustment

The data published for our quarterly personal well-being figures are all seasonally adjusted (although non-seasonally adjusted estimates are also available). This aids interpretation by removing recurring fluctuations caused, for example, by holidays or other seasonal patterns. Further information on the seasonality in the quarterly personal well-being can be found in the accompanying [Personal well-being quarterly estimates technical report](#).

### Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) data weighting

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 March 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.

The pooled datasets are weighted to reflect the size and composition of the population in Great Britain. Weights were first adjusted for non-response and attrition, then calibrated to satisfy population distributions considering the following factors: sex by age, county or region, tenure, highest qualification, employment status, [National Statistics Socio-economic group Classification \(NS-SEC\)](#) group and smoking status. For age, sex and geography, totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for April 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.

# Strengths and limitations of the data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

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

- timely production of data and statistics that can respond quickly to changing needs
- 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
- pooled data with a large sample size allows for in-depth analysis of sub-groups too small to be analysed on a week-by-week basis

The main limitations of the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) pooled dataset include:

- from pooling data across five waves some week-on-week changes may be masked
- the weekly sample size is relatively small: with fewer completed interviews, meaning that detailed analyses for subnational geographies and some 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

## Statistical significance

Please note that:

- any changes mentioned in this publication are [statistically significant](#)
- comparisons have been based on unrounded data
- the statistical significance of differences noted within the release are determined based on non-overlapping confidence intervals

We are considering alternative measures of testing significance, because of the new methodology introduced in deriving quarterly estimates for personal well-being. One way is to examine the [variance of change](#) between quarters. This would allow us to analyse significance on seasonally adjusted data directly. We would be interested in getting your thoughts, and other ways that may be suggested; if you have any comments, please contact us at [PeopleAndProsperity@ons.gov.uk](mailto:PeopleAndProsperity@ons.gov.uk).

## 9 . Related links

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

Bulletin | Weekly

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

### [Coronavirus and anxiety, Great Britain: 3 April 2020 to 10 May 2020](#)

Article | Released 15 June 2020

The number of people reporting high levels of anxiety has sharply elevated during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This article will provide insights into which socio-demographic and economic factors were most associated with high levels of anxiety during the first weeks of lockdown.

### [Beyond GDP: How ONS is developing wider measures of well-being](#)

Article | Released 4 February 2019

A summary of how the ONS is continuing to develop new ways of measuring and reporting the UK's economic and social progress and an introduction to the Personal and economic well-being publication.

### [Optimism and personal well-being: technical report](#)

Methodology | Released 12 March 2020

Exploratory analysis of the relationship between optimism and personal well-being using questions from the 2019 Opinions and Lifestyle (OPN) Survey.

### [Personal well-being quarterly estimates technical report](#)

Methodology | Released 14 November 2019

Description of the statistical methods and techniques used to create and analyse quarterly estimates for personal well-being in the UK.