Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: 25 May to 5 June 2022

Social insights on daily life and events, including impacts on health and well-being, the cost of living, and goods shortages from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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1 . Main points

The following information is on the latest period, 25 May to 5 June 2022, based on adults in Great Britain.

- Around three-quarters of adults were worried (very or somewhat) about the conflict in Ukraine (78%) or rising cost of living (74%).

- A smaller proportion of adults were worried about the environment (55%), new variants of the coronavirus (COVID-19) (47%) or the impact of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic on their lives right now (36%).

- Around 9 in 10 (88%) adults continued to report their cost of living had risen over the past month (the same as in the previous period, 11 to 22 May 2022); when we first started asking this question in the period 3 to 14 November 2021, this proportion was 62%.

- The most common reasons given by adults who reported their cost of living had increased in the latest period continued to be an increase in the price of food shopping (94%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (85%), and an increase in the price of fuel (77%).

- Over 4 in 10 (46%) adults reported that they were buying less food when food shopping in the past two weeks; this proportion appears to be increasing (44% in the previous period and 18% at the beginning of 2022).

- Around 7 in 10 (71%) of working adults travelled to work at some point in the past seven days, a slight decrease compared with 75% in the previous period.

- Among working adults who travelled to work, the most frequently reported method was by a private vehicle such as a car, van or motorbike (64%); smaller proportions reported travelling to work on foot (20%); by train (14%); by bus (11%); by underground, metro, light rail or tram (8%); or by bike (8%).

- Among the 14% who reported they travelled to work by train, the most frequently reported alternatives if they were unable to travel by train were: working from home (50%); travelling by bus, minibus or coach (32%); or by private transport (25%).

2 . Household finances and cost of living

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 25 May and 5 June (the "latest period") and 11 to 22 May 2022 (the "previous period"). The latest period included school half term in many parts of Great Britain and the Jubilee Bank Holiday.

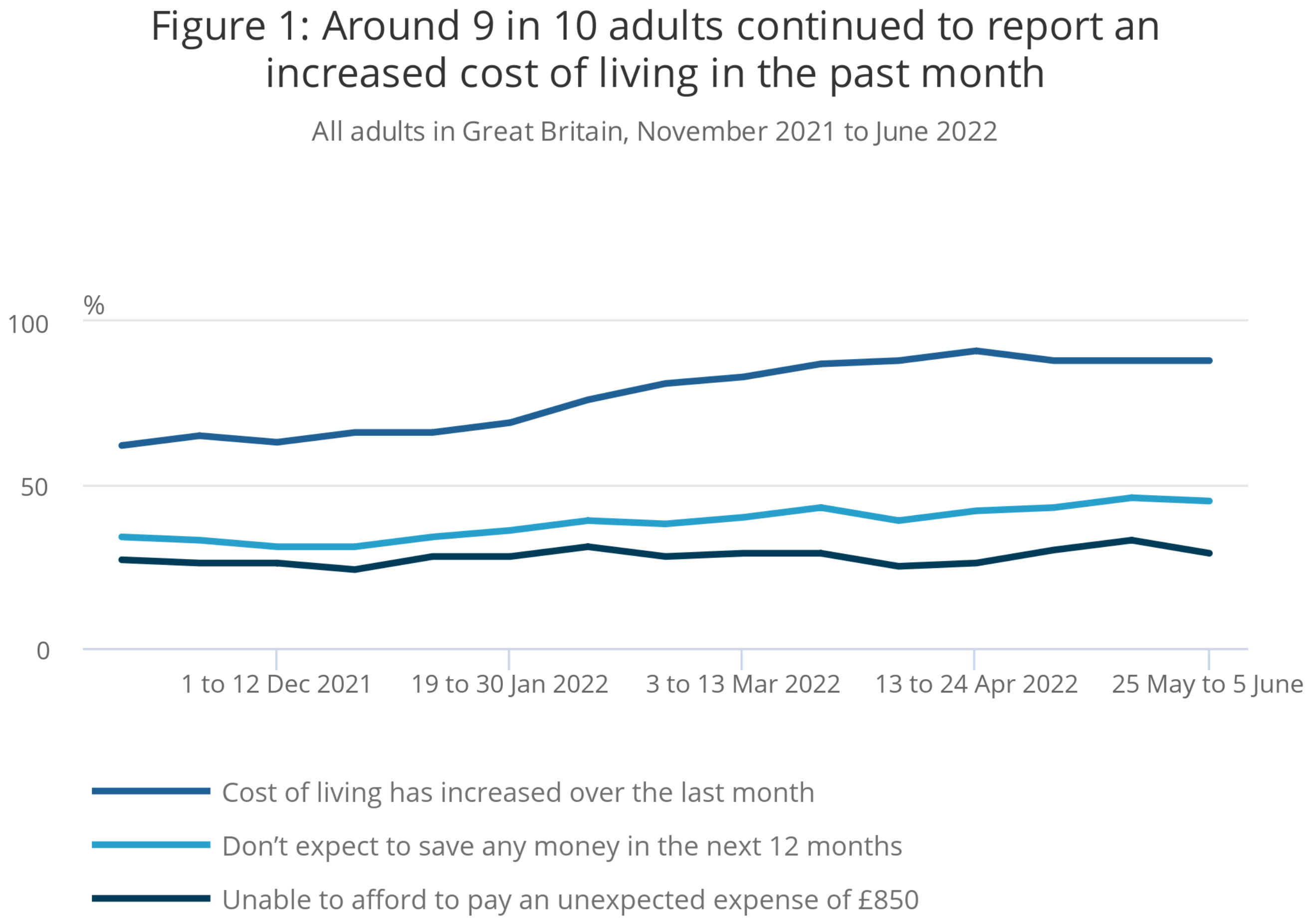
Further demographic breakdowns of these and other estimates in this bulletin are available within our accompanying Public opinions and social trends datasets.

We continued to ask adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with around 9 in 10 (88%) reporting it had increased in the latest period (the same as in the previous period). The proportion of adults reporting this has increased since November 2021, when 62% of adults reported this (3 to 14 November 2021).

The proportion of adults who think they would not be able to save any money in the next 12 months (45% in the latest period, 34% in November 2021) has increased more gradually over the same time period. The proportion who could not afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850 (29% in the latest period, 27% in November 2021) has remained relatively stable over this time period (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Around 9 in 10 adults continued to report an increased cost of living in the past month

All adults in Great Britain, November 2021 to June 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Questions: “Could your household afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850?”, “In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next 12 months?”, and “Over the last month, has your cost of living changed?"

2. “Don’t expect to save any money in the next 12 months” refers to the proportion of respondents who answered “No” to “In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next 12 months?”

3. “Unable to afford to pay an unexpected expense of £850” refers to the proportion of people who answered “No” to “Could your household afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850?”

The most common reasons reported by adults who said their cost of living had increased in the latest period continued to be:

- an increase in the price of food shopping (94%, compared with 93% in the previous period)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (85%, the same as in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (77%, compared with 78% in the previous period)

Of these reasons, over 6 in 10 (63%) reported being most worried about an increase in gas and electricity bills (57% in the previous period).

Actions following cost of living increases

The most common actions reported by adults who reported their cost of living had increased continued to be:

- spending less on non-essentials (60%, compared with 56% in the previous period)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (52%, compared with 50% in the previous period)
- spending less on food shopping and essentials (41%, compared with 36% in the previous period)
- cutting back on non-essential journeys in a vehicle (40%, compared with 39% in the previous period)

When asked about their shopping habits in the past two weeks, over 4 in 10 (46%) adults reported that they were buying less food when food shopping. This proportion appears to be increasing, having been 44% in the previous period and 18% at the beginning of 2022.

Around 4 in 10 (42%) of adults reported they had to spend more than usual to get what they normally buy in the latest period (46% in the previous period and 19% at the beginning of 2022).

Energy bills

Around 4 in 10 (42%) of adults who pay energy bills reported they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford them in the latest period a slight decrease compared with 46% in the previous period.

In comparison, over 4 in 10 (47%) adults who pay energy bills reported it was very or somewhat easy to afford their energy bills in the latest period a slight increase compared with 42% in the previous period.

Among those who reported they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, 5% reported they were behind on these bills (4% in the previous period). This proportion has appeared to be relatively stable since we first start asking this question in March 2022.

There are strong seasonal spending patterns relating to gas and electricity that may affect the results presented in this section. For more information on this and recent price rises for gas and electricity, please see our latest Consumer price inflation bulletin for April 2022.

For estimates on people's experiences regarding cost of living including breakdowns by age, sex and trends over time, please see our household finances dataset. For more estimates on people's experiences when shopping specifically, please see our personal experiences of shortages of goods dataset.

Our article The cost of living, current and upcoming work provides a summary of Office for National Statistics' (ONS') current and future planned work regarding cost of living.

3 . Worries, personal well-being and loneliness

Worries

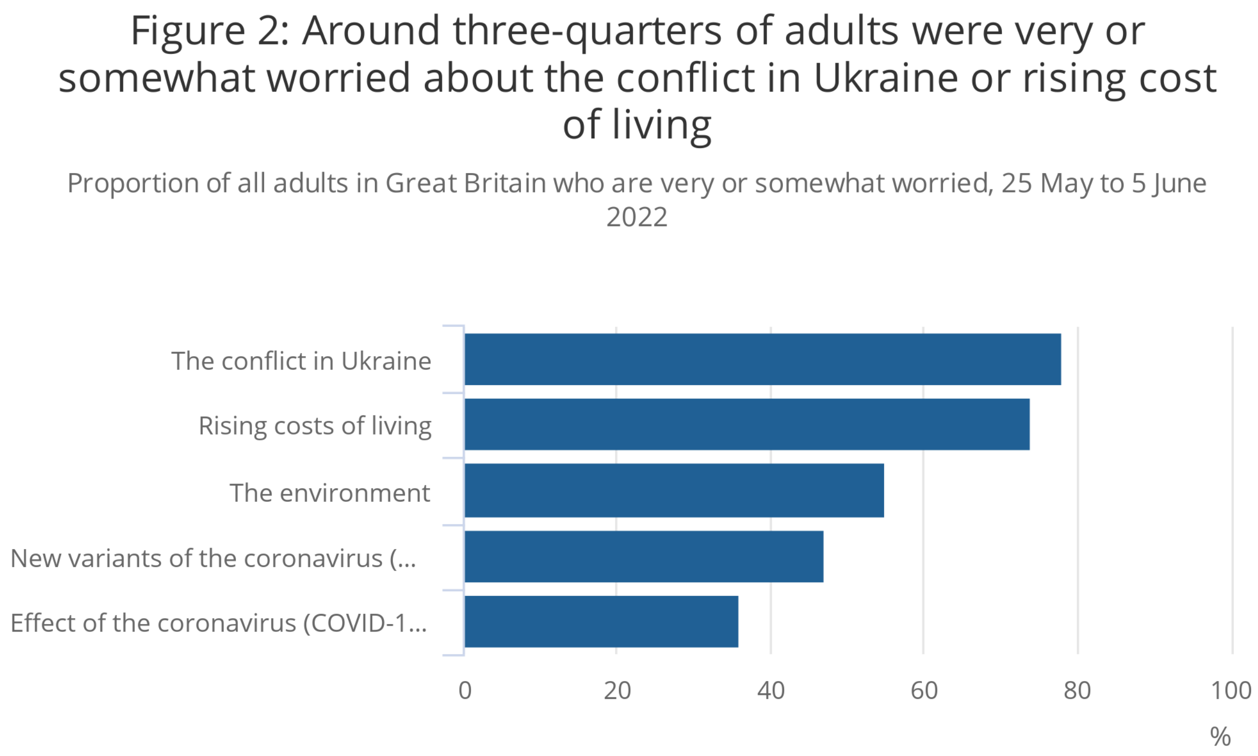
This week, we asked respondents about how worried they were regarding a range of issues; the conflict in Ukraine, increases in the cost of living and the environment. We also continued to ask respondents how worried they were about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their life right now or new variants of COVID-19.

The most frequently reported worries (being very or somewhat worried) were about the conflict in Ukraine (78%) or the rising cost of living (74%).

More than half (55%) reported they were worried about the environment. A smaller proportion reported being worried about new variants of COVID-19 (47%) or the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on their lives (36%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Around three-quarters of adults were very or somewhat worried about the conflict in Ukraine or rising cost of living

Proportion of all adults in Great Britain who are very or somewhat worried, 25 May to 5 June 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Questions: "In the past two weeks, how worried or unworried have you been about rising costs of living?", "In the past two weeks, how worried or unworried have you been about the environment?", "In the past two weeks, how worried or unworried have you been about the conflict in Ukraine?", "How worried or unworried are you about the effect that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is having on your life right now?" and "How worried or unworried are you about new variants of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?"

2. Base: all adults.

In our article Worries about the rising costs of living we take a more detailed look at the characteristics (such as disability status, parental status or income level) of those reporting one of the most frequently reported worries - increases in the cost of living.

Personal well-being

This week, we continued to ask respondents about their personal well-being. Average levels of personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction - 7.0 in the latest period and 6.9 in the previous period
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile - 7.3 in the latest period and 7.2 in the previous period
- happiness - 7.1 in the latest period and 6.9 in the previous period
- anxiety - 3.9 in the latest period and 4.0 in the previous period

These estimates of personal well-being may differ from those in our Personal well-being in the UK, quarterly: April 2011 to September 2021 bulletin, based on the Annual Population Survey. To find out more about the difference between these two data sources, you can view our Data collection changes due to the pandemic and their impact on estimating personal well-being methodology.

Figure 3: Levels of personal well-being remained relatively stable in the latest period

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to June 2022

Notes:

1. Questions included "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. These questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

Download the data

.xlsx

Loneliness

Around 1 in 14 (7%) adults reported feeling lonely always or often in the latest period (8% in the previous period).

This increased to around a quarter of adults (26%) reporting feeling lonely always, often or some of the time in the latest period (25% in the previous period).

For further estimates on people's personal well-being and loneliness, including breakdowns by age, sex and trends over time, please see our personal well-being and loneliness dataset.

4 . Location of work

Around 7 in 10 (71%) of working adults travelled to work at some point in the past seven days (75% in the previous period).

This comprised 48% of working adults who only travelled to work (53% in the previous period) and 23% of adults who both worked from home and travelled to work (22% in the previous period).

Some 15% of working adults said they worked from home exclusively in the past seven days (the same as in the previous period).

Also, 14% neither travelled to work or worked from home (11% in the previous period). Reasons for working adults neither working from home nor travelling to work in the past seven days might include being on annual or sick leave.

Figure 4: Almost half (48%) of working adults only travelled to work in the latest period

Working adults in Great Britain, 25 May to 5 June

Notes:

1. Questions "In the past seven days, have you travelled to work?" and "In the past seven days, have you worked from home?"

2. Base: working adults.

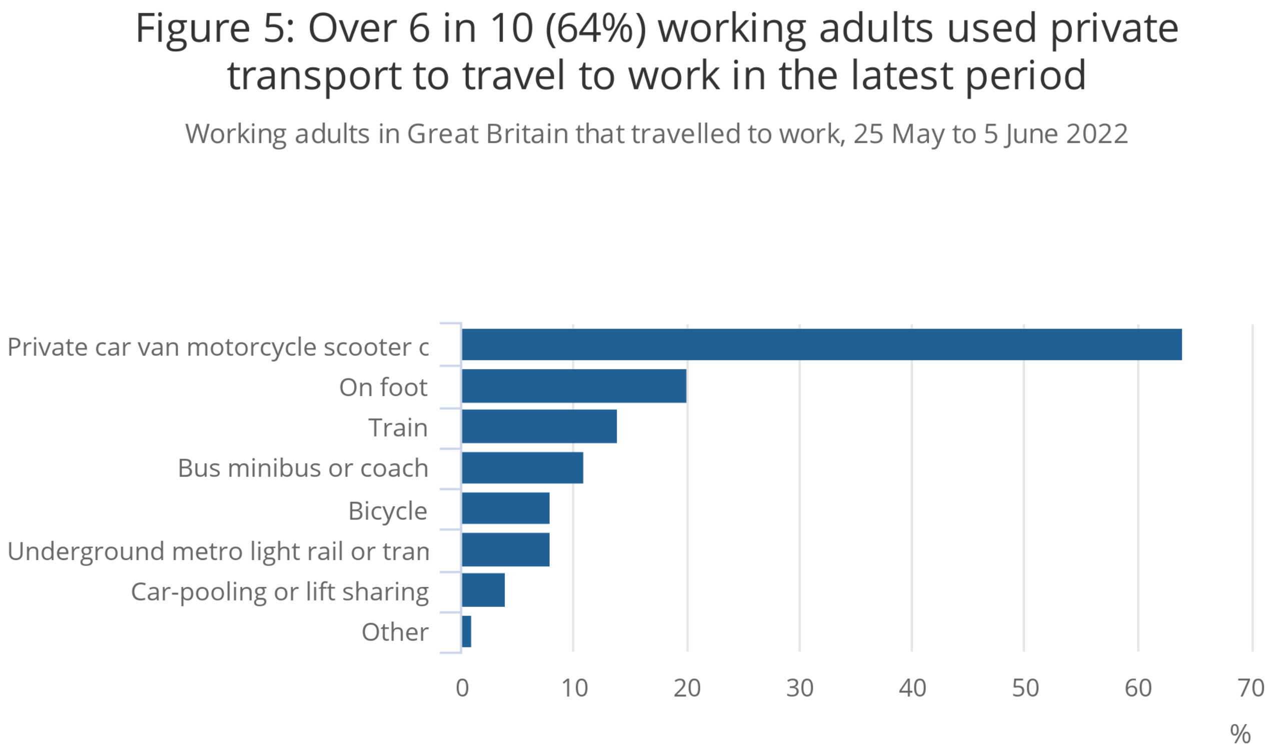
Download the data

.xlsx

This week, for the first time, we asked working adults who travel to work what method of transport they took. The most frequently reported method was by a private vehicle such as a car, van or motorbike (64%), smaller proportions reported travelling to work on foot (20%), by train (14%), by bus (11%), by underground, metro, light rail or tram (8%) or by bike (8%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Over 6 in 10 (64%) working adults used private transport to travel to work in the latest period

Working adults in Great Britain that travelled to work, 25 May to 5 June 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, which of the following types of transport have you used to travel to and from work?”
2. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.
3. Base: working adults that travel to work.

Among the 14% who reported they travelled to work by train, the most frequently reported alternatives if they were unable to travel by train were:

- working from home (50%)
- travelling by bus (32%)
- by private transport (25%)

A small number of respondents (4%) reported they would not be able to work if they were unable to travel by train. This estimate should be treated with caution because of the relatively small sample size for this question.

Further estimates regarding the location of work, including breakdowns by age and sex and trends over time, can be found in Tables 3, 10 and 11 of our Coronavirus (COVID-19) and other illnesses dataset.

Our Is hybrid working here to stay article provides information on people's future plans regarding their location of work, including examination of the characteristics of those most likely to hybrid work (both work from home and travel to work).

5 . Social impacts of COVID-19 and other illnesses

Our Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest insights tool provides a roundup of the latest data and trends about the COVID-19 pandemic from the OPN and other sources.

Further estimates regarding the social impacts of COVID-19, including use of face masks, handwashing, social distancing, self-isolation and lateral flow tests, including breakdowns by age and sex, can be found in our Coronavirus (COVID-19) and other illnesses dataset.

6 . Public opinions and social trends data

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: coronavirus (COVID-19) and other illnesses
Dataset | Released 10 June 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) related to the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and other illnesses on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal experiences of shortages of goods
Dataset | Released on 10 June 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of whether people experienced shortages of goods such as food, medicine, or fuel when shopping in Great Britain.

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: household finances
Dataset | Released on 10 June 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of people's experiences of changes in their cost of living and household finances in Great Britain.

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness
Dataset | Released on 10 June 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of personal well-being and loneliness in Great Britain.

7 . Measuring the data

This release contains data and indicators from a module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

From the period 30 March to 10 April 2022, changes were made to the OPN to enable us to provide ongoing indicators on a wide range of public opinions and societal issues.

Changes were made to the OPN survey design, for example, sample size, the questionnaire, and financial incentives to participate. These changes may result in small changes to the responding sample. We therefore advise caution with comparing estimates from this period onwards with those published prior to this period.

Breakdowns by age and sex, including confidence intervals for the estimates, are contained in our Public opinion and social trends, Great Britain datasets. Breakdowns by region are no longer provided within these datasets because of the smaller responding sample size of the OPN survey.

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 differences.

Sampling and weighting

In the latest period (25 May to 5 June 2022), we sampled 5,012 households. This sample was randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample for the latest period contained 2,250 individuals, representing a 44.9% response rate.

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population (based on June 2021 population estimates). Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in our Opinions and Lifestyle Survey quality and methodology information (QMI).

8 . Related links

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain
Bulletin | Released 1 April 2022
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (covering 16 to 27 March 2022) of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest insights
Web page | Updated as data become available
An interactive tool to explore the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other sources.

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators
Bulletin | Released weekly
Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and experimental methods.

The rising cost of living and its impact on individuals in Great Britain: November 2021 to March 2022
Article | Released 25 April 2022
Analysis of how different groups in the population have been affected by an increase in their cost of living, using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

The cost of living, current and upcoming work: June 2022
Article | Released 10 June 2022
A collation of ONS' current and future work contributing to the cost of living analysis.

Worries about the rising costs of living, Great Britain: April to May 2022
Article | Released 10 June 2022
People's worries about the rising costs of living and the impact on people's well-being, using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey collected between 27 April and 8 May.

Is hybrid working here to stay?
Article | Released 23 May 2022
Almost half of working adults were working from home at times during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, but what will business as usual look like with restrictions lifted?

COVID-19 Question Bank
Web page | Updated frequently
Government Statistical Service page that provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to COVID-19 to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data the ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.