

DEMOS

**BRITAIN
UNDER
LOCKDOWN**

FROM
RENEW NORMAL:
THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSION
ON LIFE AFTER COVID-19

AUGUST 2020

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Report authors:

Dr Heather Rolfe
Rose Lasko-Skinner
Asli Atay
Ellen Judson
Polly Mackenzie
Joe Oakes
Claudia Wood
Sacha Hilhorst
Heather Williams-Taplin

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15 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2DD.
T: 020 3878 3955
hello@demos.co.uk
www.demos.co.uk
Charity number 1042046

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INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK has touched every aspect of our lives. From our sleep to our social lives, from our jobs to our journeys, from our finances to our friendships. It has already cost tens of thousands of lives, and caused suffering, loneliness, bereavement, and turmoil to millions of us.

Covid-19 hasn't just changed individuals' lives. It's changed the economic, political and social landscape in which we live them. It has radically accelerated our transition to working, shopping, learning and interacting online. It has challenged assumptions about who matters in a society and how we relate to one another. It has led to an extraordinary outbreak of compassion, kindness, and mutual support. It has exposed fault lines in our system of social protection, and highlighted the critical risks associated with inequality.

Nine months since the disease was identified, five months since the first person died in the UK after contracting it, we don't know when or if we will get back to the lives we used to live. We wait and hope for a vaccine. Some of us cautiously try to navigate our half-open economy, while others continue to shield themselves at home. We hope we are near the end of this story, but we know this could be just the beginning.

But whatever happens, it is clear this will be a turning point in our history. Months of lockdown acted as a vast, enforced social experiment that has changed what we want for ourselves, for our economy, and for our country.

ABOUT RENEW NORMAL

Renew Normal was established to enable people

in the UK to put forward their ideas for how Britain should change both as we emerge from this crisis, and move beyond it. There is a welcome, and growing movement making that case that we should "build back better." We agree. But first we need to empower people across the country to articulate what better means to them. This report is the first staging post in a six month conversation to answer that question and develop a plan for how to bring citizens' ambitions for change into practical reality.

This report brings together stories and statistics about the change we've lived through in the last few months. Coupled with our microsite at www.renewnormal.co.uk, we aim to help people and policy makers alike reflect on what we've been through and what that might mean for the future.

Our analysis includes contributions from nearly 12,000 members of the public who have already shared their ideas and experiences with us. We feel immensely privileged to have been trusted with such detail, such honesty, and in many cases such raw emotion. Those who have participated have already shaped our understanding and analysis about how to take this project forward, and we hope both they and thousands more will continue to take part over the coming months.

We need them to. Because it is clear that we have the fight of our lives on our hands, if we want to pull this country up to meet the aspirations its citizens have for it.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Our economy has taken a hit three times the size of the global financial crisis. Our public finances have picked up some of the slack, but as economic interventions like the furlough scheme are unwound, things could get substantially worse. Ambitious but expensive plans for levelling up growth between the regions of the UK, decarbonising our economy, or improving funding for our health and social care systems look more important, but less affordable, than ever.

The pandemic is not fully under control within the UK, let alone around the world. Efforts to return the economy to health - let alone build a new economic or social settlement - will not succeed unless and until the health crisis is more fully suppressed.

And our research reveals a third challenge we face as we seek to build back better: political and social divisions that have been, in many cases, reinforced by the turmoil of the last few months. It has been an intense, overwhelming and deeply emotional time for us all. But that intensity is almost the only thing that holds together the extraordinary range of experiences and responses that people have lived through over the last five months.

This report documents and analyses the main changes we have seen. But just a few quotes will make it clear that there is no single, or simple, way to understand what we just lived through. Even these 30 pages are just a snapshot of millions of divergent experiences.

"I've loved the commute - 3 steps to the spare room"

"I have hated working over the internet"

"I have felt so lonely and down."

"I have spent a lot of quality time with my family and really valued it."

"I feel so much anger towards the government that they sacrificed the elderly to save others."

"The support from the community has been wonderful and my local council has been outstanding in their response."

When lockdown started, many people suggested that this would be a great leveller in society, as we were all forced to live under the same strict set of rules. Our research suggests that has not happened. Communities and neighbourhoods have, in many cases, pulled together to coordinate relief efforts, which people were proud to see or be part of. Most people did feel a sense of common purpose around the "Clap for Carers" initiative. But beyond this, the evidence suggests there is a real sense of dislocation between people whose experiences have been so different. Isolating as a family in a small flat is after all very different to isolating in a large house.

There is intense anger and resentment - not just about perceived mistakes by government - but also to those who didn't play by the lockdown rules. Those who lost loved ones, not surprisingly, tend to feel this most deeply. People who were not eligible for government support through furlough or self-employment grants feel incredibly angry, and in many cases resentful towards those who did get support and were able to live relatively comfortably without working.

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

To move forward, as a society, we need to find a space for people to talk about their experiences and try to build empathy with others. We all need to take the time to listen, and process, the stories of other people during this time. Only that process of sharing and listening can bring healing after a national trauma of this kind. Renew Normal is designed to be part of that process. We encourage everyone to take the time to share their story, and to read through the stories of others.

Go to our website and browse through thousands



of answers to the question: what did you learn or change your mind about during the pandemic? And then share your own perspective. All voices are welcome.

We are encouraging everyone who takes part to look for the positives, the lessons and the opportunities from this crisis. To do so is not an attempt to erase the reality that, for many people, these have been the worst months of their lives. It is, instead, an attempt to find solace in our grief. And yet, we recognise that it may be easier for those who have not been too adversely affected to do so.

For example: those who have kept their income while working from home can talk about seeing the value of a slower life. Those who have had no money coming in may have had to focus so intensely on providing for themselves and their family that it hasn't felt like a slower life.

Nevertheless, we think it is worth capturing all the insights about what has brought people wellbeing during these difficult times. Contributors who tell us how much they valued their garden remind us that we should ensure all families have access to green space. It is important, too, to note that many of those contributors acknowledge how lucky they have been.

"I am lucky to have good broadband."

"We are lucky to have a lot of devices."

"I am lucky to have a garden."

"We have been extremely lucky to both be able to work from home."

The unique nature of this crisis, for which no individual could be expected to have prepared, may have shifted people's perceptions of how risk should be shared in society, and that may in turn lead to a change in the kind of welfare safety net we want. This acknowledgement of luck when it comes to personal economic circumstances may be the seed of growing social solidarity.

SHAPING THE FUTURE

The goal of Renew Normal is to identify lessons and opportunities for the future from this period. Moving into the next phase of the conversation, we need to narrow our focus on those issues where people are starting to identify those opportunities.

Our analysis suggests that, while many people are exhausted, angry, or both, there are a whole range of issues on which they are extremely ambitious for the country's future.

"This crisis is also an opportunity to hit the reset button. To really think about what matters, and

to act in accordance with those values."

"The speed with which the government's call for volunteers was filled to overflowing shows how people want to be part of a group and want to help others. We must build on this."

"Super appreciative of how Mother Nature has had a break and how we must learn lessons from this."

We have analysed contributions to the project thus far, and identified three main areas where people would like to see change, as we move on from Covid-19. We will structure the coming months of this conversation around these themes:

- **Our daily lives:** family, wellbeing, communities and the local environment
- **Our working lives:** commuting, urban space, pay inequality, and our industrial strategy
- **The social contract:** our health and care systems, health inequality, and the welfare safety net

To decide exactly where people believe the greatest opportunities for change lie, and how we can build consensus for them, we are launching alongside this report a new survey to gather opinion. We will conduct a nationally representative poll of 10,000 people, and we will separately publish the survey on our website, asking the same questions as the poll, so that they are open to everyone who wants to express their views.

This survey, which explores a range of issues raised by participants in our first study, can be found on our website.

In particular, we are looking for issues on which there is momentum for change, instead of going back to the way things were. But that momentum must have emerged from this crisis in some way. For example:

Theatres have been badly affected by this crisis: but in our analysis thus far, no-one is arguing the industry should change dramatically. Public ambition is to get it back to 'normal'. So we won't look at that sector.

Tax avoidance is an area where, in other Demos work, we have shown the public would like to see change in government policy. But that has not been provoked by this crisis. So we won't look at tax avoidance.

Social care has been badly affected by this crisis, and our research suggests people want to see a better, new settlement rather than returning to the old system. Therefore we will look in depth at social care.

Once the results of that survey are in, we will announce a rolling programme of online consultation

and events to focus on the top opportunities for change identified by the public. This programme will run from now until to the end of October.

In addition, we will be working with colleagues at CASM, Demos' technology hub, to identify the lessons learned from this intense period of living online. These insights will feed into CASM's ongoing work, The Good Web Project, to develop and advocate for a better internet.

TIMELINE

This report published

Survey confirming issues where there is potential to change Britain for the better

September - November:
12 week programme putting a series of issues in the spotlight, with online events and digital democracy tools

November:
Results published

November:
Open discussions on policy choices and priorities

December:
Final report published

THE COMMISSION

The Commission brings together leading figures from sectors across society to steer the project, ensure it reaches those whose voices need to be heard and those who need to hear them. The Commissioners appointed are:

MARTIN LEWIS OBE

FOUNDER, MONEYSAVINGEXPERT.COM AND THE MONEY & MENTAL HEALTH POLICY INSTITUTE

RT HON NICKY MORGAN - BARONESS MORGAN OF COTES

FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION, AND FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

ANDREA SUTCLIFFE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE NURSING AND MIDWIFERY COUNCIL

PROFESSOR DONNA HALL CBE

FORMER CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF WIGAN COUNCIL AND CHAIR OF THE NEW LOCAL GOVERNMENT NETWORK

HETAN SHAH

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE BRITISH ACADEMY

JOSH HARDIE

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, CONFEDERATION OF BRITISH INDUSTRY

MIKE CLANCY

GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE PROSPECT TRADE UNION

NDIDI OKEZIE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, UK YOUTH

NICK TIMOTHY

AUTHOR AND FORMER ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER

STEWART WOOD - LORD WOOD OF ANFIELD

FORMER SENIOR ADVISER TO THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

VIDHYA ALAKESON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF POWER TO CHANGE

ANNA SEVERWRIGHT

CO-CHAIR OF THE COALITION FOR COLLABORATIVE CARE

ALICE BENTINCK MBE

CO-FOUNDER AND GENERAL PARTNER AT ENTREPRENEUR FIRST

FINDINGS

The following pages summarise the results of the first phase of Renew Normal.

This phase was designed to track and document the vast range of changes that happened in the UK over the months of Covid-19 lockdown from March 2020. These included policy and legal changes from central government, disruption to business practice, and adjustments to individuals' daily lives. As part of this first phase, we invited members of the public to tell us about their experiences. We did this through an open access survey which allowed anyone to tell us whatever they wanted.

People were keen to take part and we had a total of 11,577 between 29 May to 30 June. As an open survey, it is not nationally representative, nor does it seek to be.¹ But it captures the experiences, emotions and stories of a large number of people across the UK at a unique point in history. The national and collective experience of Covid-19 is vividly conveyed by our respondents, from their own homes and in their own words.

The findings and insights of our research are grouped into themes:

EMPLOYMENT

Government measures to protect those who have been unable to work - in particular the introduction of the furlough scheme - have been unprecedented and welcomed. But lockdown has left many people uncertain about their jobs. Some have adapted to working at home; while for others - particularly parents - it has been a period of stress and conflicting demands.

EDUCATION

Lockdown measures facilitated a shift towards home-learning for the vast majority of pupils. This, combined with the cancellation of exams, has raised

¹ A demographic breakdown of the respondents can be found in the tables accompanying this report.



concerns about deepening educational inequality. Some parents have enjoyed homeschooling, while others have struggled with time and resources. Many respondents expressed concern about the impact of lockdown on children's progress.

HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDSHIPS

Lockdown threw some people into closer contact with their own household, which was valued by some, and at best tolerated by others. Some found the time to take up hobbies, and eat more healthily. Loneliness was a common thread in many responses. Many missed their family and friends and worried that elderly relatives were unhappy and lonely.

COMMUNITY

In the face of a global threat, people turned to their local communities for solace. People have preferred local shops and shorter journeys. Many have become part of a community group, including through whatsapp. However, others have felt that their community did not pull together and reported tensions around keeping to lockdown rules.

FINANCES

Lockdown was driven by the need to protect public health, but it had a detrimental effect on the economy and public finances. People reported highly variable experiences of lockdown on their personal finances. While lockdown led to unrivalled economic turmoil for some and concerns for the future, others reported little change in their income but a fall in expenditure.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Following the outbreak of the pandemic, all NHS resources were swiftly redirected to managing the healthcare emergency, Public support for the NHS and the dedication of health and social care workers is high. At the same time, the focus on Covid-19 and protecting the NHS has resulted in cancelled appointments, worrying backlogs and a sense of abandonment in social care. Lockdown has impacted on many people's mental health and sense of wellbeing.

DEMOCRACY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The pandemic created a challenge for the government in containing the spread of the virus while protecting the economy and upholding public freedoms. Many respondents were critical of the government's handling of the crisis and many said its performance had undermined public trust.

TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE LIFE

During lockdown, internet usage increased substantially as people endeavoured to continue to work, as well as stay in touch with friends and family. People are grateful for the internet and broadband, though concerned at its patchy coverage and speed, particularly in rural areas. Reliance on technology has also led many to be more concerned than in the past about online safety.

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Tight restrictions on movements outside the home meant that the roads were quieter, during lockdown and carbon emissions dropped significantly in a short space of time. Many people welcomed the change and became more interested in cycling and electric vehicles. People also felt that the short term environmental improvements were proof that change is possible where it is seen as necessary.

RACE AND EQUALITY

Respondents, particularly from BAME groups, recognised that Covid-19 has impacted disproportionately on ethnic minorities who have also played an important role as key workers. Many expressed the hope that this realisation will lead to greater appreciation of the contribution of BAME people to the UK's economy and society. Some respondents had given more thought to the issue of racism under lockdown, encouraged by the Black Lives Matter protests.

EMPLOYMENT

Covid-19 and its life-saving lock down has had some of the most severe impacts on our labour market that most of us have ever seen.

The social distancing measures taken to prevent as much social interaction as possible - and ultimately prevent the spread of the virus - necessitated a legal obligation for people to work from home. For the first time in history, it was an "offence in England to leave home for work unless it was not reasonably possible for that work to be done at home". As of June 1st, it is no longer an offence, but employees who can are still encouraged to work from home.²

These changes have required a distinction between key workers and non-key-workers. Key workers are, technically, people whose work is critical to the coronavirus response, such as doctors, nurses, bus drivers and waste disposal workers. This group has had different guidance and legal rights, enabling them to stay overnight in accommodation (such as hotels), take their children to school and are likely to be unable to work from home. Non-essential workers have been expected to work from home, unless it is not reasonably possible.

Entire sectors have been forced to close, such as non-essential shops (e.g. hairdressers, electrical goods shops, clothes shops) hospitality (e.g. pubs and restaurants), and, initially, most of the construction industry. Some sectors were better prepared than others for working from home. According to the ONS, only one in ten from accommodation and food services have worked from home vs more than half (53%) of the information and communications industry. This is, in part, underpinned by technological investment in the sectors: the information and communication industry



² Practical Law Employment, COVID-19 (Coronavirus and employment law). Thomson Reuters: Practical Law, 2020. Available at: [https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-024-4260?transition-Type=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1#-co_anchor_a439921](https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-024-4260?transition-Type=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1#-co_anchor_a439921) [accessed 12/08/2020]

invested £9,196 per employed worker compared with £272 in the accommodation and food services industry.³ Furthermore, in roughly 60% of occupations, the place of work is fixed (such as for a sales assistant) or requires specialist equipment (such as for a laboratory technician or bus driver) so it is less practically possible to work from home.⁴

These changes have created one of the sharpest divides in our labour market: between remote workers and non-remote workers. Those who are able to work remotely are far more likely to stay in employment and far less likely to catch the virus. Those who are not able to work remotely are often key workers, unable to work from home, and therefore more at risk from catching the virus. They are also workers in sectors that have totally shut down, resulting in large-scale job loss. As a result, the crisis has been dubbed a “sectoral” one, where some sectors have crashed whilst others have been able to stay afloat.

Radical changes have been met by significant government support to employers and to workers. The Job Retention Scheme is considered one of the most radical policies in centuries, providing support to over 9 million employees and costing £22.9bn so far.⁵ Of these, 40% of all furloughed employees are from hospitality and retail.⁶ A similar scheme has been drawn up for the self-employed - the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), that has thus far supported 2.9 million. This equates to over half of the self-employed workforce, but it is possible that some are still missing out.⁷

Despite support, the impacts on the self-employed have in places been acute. In a survey with the self-employed by the LSE, three quarters reported “that they have had less work in April 2020 than they would usually have at that time of year” and over a

third had gone without essentials due to a change in income.⁸ As the self-employed are a heterogeneous group - from the deliveroo driver to the law partner - there have been starkly different experiences for people who are self-employed, for example, those with incomes between £40,000 to £49,999 a year were twice as likely (48%) to claim as those with incomes less than £10,000 (24%).

The Chancellor has boosted sick pay to a slightly higher rate and made it available on day one of sickness to ensure that people who need to self-isolate with the virus or someone in the household who has symptoms are able to do so.⁹ The Government has also launched a digital skills toolkit for those on furlough to learn digital and numeracy skills.¹⁰

It is difficult to assess the success of these schemes - in part because the architecture behind the furlough scheme and bonus for employers to keep them until January 2021 is to keep employers and employees together, rather than employers making them redundant so time will tell as to whether these relationships stick once the financial support is lifted.¹¹ There has been no obligation for employers to furlough individuals and not make them redundant; some have already been made redundant or expect to be once the furlough scheme is over. Predictions suggest that the jobs most at risk are those who earn less, are BAME, and older or younger.¹² Other measures included in the Chancellor's Plan for Jobs, have included a £2billion Kickstarter scheme that offers financial support to employers who hire people who are aged 16-24, on Universal Credit and are deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. This funding will “cover 100% of the relevant National Minimum Wage for 25 hours a week, plus the associated employer National

Insurance contributions and employer minimum automatic enrolment contributions.”¹³

Nonetheless, significant numbers have continued to work from home during the crisis. According to the ONS, only three out of five workers said that they worked from home in April 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.¹⁴ Further, McKinsey estimates “that only around 20 percent of the working-age population (or 40% of those at work and not furloughed) are currently working remotely.”¹⁵

For those who are working from home, their working lives have radically changed. For some, the ability to work from home has helped us cope with the pandemic, with “slightly more than half (51%) of people aged 16 to 64 years who were in employment used work as a means of coping while staying at home in April.”¹⁶

Fewer people - almost 20% - have found it difficult. Indeed, some are having to juggle childcare, that has encompassed their children's education, and work.¹⁷ It seems that many might also be working longer hours, finding it difficult to switch off between work and home without the commute. On average, employees working from home in the UK are spending an extra two hours working per day.¹⁸ In addition, some are also missing the social aspects of worklife and contact with their colleagues.¹⁹

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT

The open access survey asked questions about the impact of the pandemic on jobs and employment. The questions were:

1. Which of the following describes your working situation?
2. Do you look after school age children at the

same time as working?

3. How easy or difficult they have found working from home?
4. Please tell us about any challenges or opportunities coming out of the pandemic you're facing relating to jobs and work. You can say as much or as little as you like.

For questions about our working lives, we achieved responses to some of all of the questions from 7741 out of the overall 11,689 people who completed the survey. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

Out of our sample, respondents said that had the following working conditions:²⁰

- Just under two-thirds (63%) said that they had worked from home during the crisis
- Almost one fifth (19%) said that they were key workers
- 16% said that they had continued to work in their normal place of work
- 15% said that they had been furloughed
- A further 25% said that they had been taking care of children at the same time as working

In response to whether people had found it easy or difficult to work from home, we found that:

- Over three quarters of (78%) of respondents had found it easy to work from home, while a fifth (22%) said that they had found it difficult.
- The groups most likely to have found it difficult

3 ONS, Technology intensity and homeworking in the UK. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/technologyintensityandhomeworkingintheuk/2020-05-01> [accessed 12/08/2020]

4 ONS, Technology intensity and homeworking in the UK. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/technologyintensityandhomeworkingintheuk/2020-05-01> [accessed 12/08/2020]

5 GOV.UK, HMRC Coronavirus Statistics. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics> [accessed 13/08/2020]

6 Lasko-Skinner, R. Sector-picking: The role of online learning in transforming the labour market. Demos, 2020. Available at: <https://demos.co.uk/blog/sector-picking-the-role-of-online-learning-in-transforming-the-labour-market/>

7 GOV.UK, HMRC Coronavirus Statistics: Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hmrc-coronavirus-covid-19-statistics#self-employment-income-support-scheme> [accessed 13/08/2020]

8 Blundell, J and Machin S. Five million self-employed in the UK have been hit hard by the pandemic. LSE, 2020. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/covid19/2020/06/01/5-million-self-employed-in-the-uk-have-been-hit-hard-by-the-pandemic/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

9 Thomson Reuters Practical Law, COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and employment law: Is a worker who is in self-isolation entitled to rescheduled holiday? Thomson Reuters: Practical Law, 2020. Available at: [https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-024-4260?transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1#co_anchor_a145356](https://uk.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-024-4260?transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)&firstPage=true&bhcp=1#co_anchor_a145356) [accessed 13/08/2020]

10 Lasko-Skinner, R. Sector-picking: The role of online learning in transforming the labour market. Demos, 2020. Available at: <https://demos.co.uk/blog/sector-picking-the-role-of-online-learning-in-transforming-the-labour-market/>

11 HM Treasury, A Plan For Jobs 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-jobs-documents/a-plan-for-jobs-2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

12 Allas, T., Canal, M. and Hunt, V. COVID-19 in the United Kingdom: Assessing jobs at risk and the impact on people and places. McKinsey & Company, 2020. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/covid-19-in-the-united-kingdom-assessing-jobs-at-risk-and-the-impact-on-people-and-places> [accessed 13/08/2020]

13 HM Treasury, A Plan For Jobs 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-plan-for-jobs-documents/a-plan-for-jobs-2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

14 ONS, Coronavirus and social impacts on the countries and regions of Britain: April 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonthecountriestheregionsofbritain/april2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

15 Allas, T., Canal, M. and Hunt, V. COVID-19 in the United Kingdom: Assessing jobs at risk and the impact on people and places. McKinsey & Company, 2020. Available at: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-sector/our-insights/covid-19-in-the-united-kingdom-assessing-jobs-at-risk-and-the-impact-on-people-and-places> [accessed 13/08/2020]

16 ONS, Coronavirus and social impacts on the countries and regions of Britain: April 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonthecountriestheregionsofbritain/april2020>

17 ibid.

18 Davis, M and Green, J. Three Hours Longer, the Pandemic Workday Has Obliterated Work-Life Balance. Bloomberg, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-23/working-from-home-in-covid-era-means-three-more-hours-on-the-job> [accessed 13/08/2020]

19 Petty, S. UK employees miss office banter and adult conversations as working from home becomes the norm. FE News, 2020. Available at: <https://www.fenews.co.uk/press-releases/44684-uk-employees-miss-office-banter-and-adult-conversations-as-working-from-home-becomes-the-norm> [accessed 13/08/2020]

20 Please note respondents were invited to pick more than one working condition, percentages therefore reflect the number of people who have experienced that particular working condition during the crisis. Percentages do not reflect the number of people working in one condition relative to another.

to work from home were those who were looking after children and those who were students. Around a third of people in both groups said they were finding it difficult.

- Those on lower incomes were also more likely to find it difficult, with 29% of those households earning £20,000 or under finding it difficult to work from home, compared with 21% of those households earning over £50,000.
- Men were somewhat more likely to have found it easy, 82% of men said that they had found it easy or fairly easy in comparison to 76% of women.
- Older people were more likely to have found it easy to work from home than younger people, 85% of people aged over 50 said they were finding it easy or fairly easy to work from home, compared with around three-quarters of those aged under 40.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to jobs and work. Their responses centred on the issues of working from home, work-life balance, and longer term what respondents wanted - or thought was fair - from our working lives as a society. As well as writing about changes to their jobs in the designated section of the survey, respondents also referred to their working lives in their responses to the question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?' These are included here.

We looked at the experiences of different groups, namely those who were working from home, those who were working as key workers and those who were furloughed. This revealed a stark picture of how different types of working conditions have changed under lockdown for different groups: while many have felt idle and bored, others have been struggling to juggle being a key worker and parent. Respondents commonly talked about a change in their productivity and their work-life balance. We found that for those who had children and were looking after them while working this had been particularly difficult. We also found that a lot of respondents, particularly those that had been furloughed, had come to new realisations about their work and what they wanted from their working lives.

A common theme throughout responses was how working from home has impacted their productivity. Many respondents expressed surprise at how much more efficiently they had been working, despite being outside the office and away from colleagues. Respondents recognised that this extended period

of home working had given them a new perspective of working from home and enabled - or for some pushed - them into making working from home work for them. Many respondents recognised that being outside the office itself had enabled them to better concentrate and focus on the work at hand rather than get stressed or distracted.

"At the start I did find it hard to be motivated and to separate my work life and my home life whilst being at home all the time. Previously when away from the office I just forgot it existed so that I can enjoy my home life without worrying about work. But now I feel like the relieved stress of not working in office means that I do not think of my job as something I need to get away from, but I am viewing it as something I can develop."

I have also noticed that being self motivated and not having an office that is constantly monitoring me, has meant that I have become more invested in my role. I am now trying to do what I can to help others in my team more and also login in on the weekends if I feel like it would give me a good head start for the next week."

Woman, 20s, East Midlands

Some respondents also explained their increase in productivity with reference to improved opportunities for flexible working and a better work life balance. Many said that having more time with their families without a commute had transformed their lives, making their lives easier and less stressful. This had in turn enabled them to work better and more productively. This was also a very common theme in responses to the survey question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?': many said that their work-life balance had moved in a more positive direction.

"Working from home, even to manage a team spread across their own homes, has been fantastic. The team feels closer as individuals, productivity has increased, work-life balance is far better and if we could work like this forever (and if I can make it so we will) once the world is back to normal then everybody in the team would be happier."

Man, 30s, North East England

"My husband and I both travelled the world extensively for work and this has stopped completely. From a business point of view, using virtual communications instead, we can now question how necessary this all was and

are unlikely to return to doing this significantly before we retire over the next couple of years. It has given us much more time home together, which we value."

Woman, 50s, East of England

A number of responses to the question about what had changed their minds wrote about the time saved through not commuting to work.

"My pre-covid19 work/life balance was awful. I live 20 minutes away from my workplace but the commute each day takes up to an hour due to traffic. Working from home for 10 weeks has shown me that that commute seriously impacts my family life: I leave work at about 530pm and arrive home at 630pm cooking tea and sorting out means I never have time for my children"

Woman, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

"I was spending too much time commuting and not enough time with family. Life is short. Community is important. Working from home is possible. I want to be more involved in my son's education. It's important to stop and take time for yourself."

Woman, 30s, South East England

Others, particularly some key-workers, felt that the increased use of technology had also helped boost their productivity.

"The increased use of appropriate technology and reduction of bureaucracy would be very beneficial - it's amazing what has been achieved in this crisis."

Woman, 60s, Wales

These feelings of better productivity and work-life balance were, however, not universal amongst respondents. There was a common feeling amongst other participants that working from home was harder. For many this was because the physical space in their homes was uncomfortable or lacked the resources they needed to do a good job. This was also underpinned by missing the atmosphere of being at work, the 'office banter' and being able to switch off when leaving the office.

"I hate working from home. Mentally I work better from an office. My home is my place to rest and switch off from work. I have now bought my work into my home and it's difficult to switch off. Not only that, I don't have the same setup. I sit on an uncomfortable chair and a makeshift desk. My internet connection isn't the best."

Some jobs can be done from home and some people enjoy this. We need to stop shoving the new normal way of working down everyone's throats. It doesn't work for everyone!"

Woman, 40s, London

"Working from home is another thing that is different according to how rich and how poor you are. For some people they can slip away to their study. For me it means I now sit on the sofa 16 hours a day as there is nowhere else in a small flat to work. It is uncomfortable, not like sitting at a desk and my hands and arms sometimes hurt."

I miss the office banter, working from home when you live on your own and in lockdown is very isolating. It is all email and not much conversation, or if it is - it's a meeting that is much more painful to do over zoom or skype or whatever."

Woman, 60s, London

Consistent with the closed answers to the survey, parents who were trying to work at home while taking care of their children were often finding working from home particularly difficult. This resulted from having to juggle childcare with their work responsibilities, with many feeling they were letting either their work or their children down. Those without office space said they had found it very difficult to find a place where they could concentrate away from the children, who were often not able to understand why their parents were working.

"I previously worked from home 1 day a week and office 4 days a week while the children were at school. This worked well and I set up in my dining room as we don't have any other suitable workspace. Now that the children are here it is incredibly difficult to concentrate on work for any decent period of time. I have taken to my bedroom to work but I have not got a proper set up and work with my laptop on the end of my bed. I'm starting to develop an RSI and have made my employer aware."

I feel very guilty trying to keep the children quiet whilst I am on client calls, as they naturally are making noise and want to talk to their parents. I have twins aged 6 and an 8 year old, so they need a lot of support to get through school tasks on Google Classroom. We find it hard to navigate the online work and I often feel extremely stressed trying to juggle everything. The children are not doing as much work as they should be and I feel I am letting them down. It's

almost a daily choice between letting my boss down or letting the children down. I feel I/we cannot continue like this for much longer."

Woman, 40s, Scotland

For key-workers who said that they were working from home, a common difficulty was finding it difficult to switch-off, resulting in a poor work-life balance. Indeed, many found that their workload had increased massively. This was then compounded by working on issues closely related to the pandemic which made it difficult to think about anything else or to rest.

"...my work is directly related to the current crisis and the volume of activity has increased massively. I've basically done the equivalent of a year's work in 10 weeks. I'm exhausted and feel that I'm failing at family life as well as at work. [...] The nature of my role means that I'm dealing with c19 issues all day every day and it has made it difficult to switch off.."

Woman, 30s, London

Further, many respondents were struggling with trying to do more of their work online. From teachers to social workers to funeral directors, respondents explained that trying to do elements of their very human-centred work was particularly difficult.

"The challenge for me as a social worker has been to do the job using social media such as Skype, Zoom etc. It means restrictions on how I communicate with people - there's so much we gain from face to face contact that I'm missing and that impacts on the work being done."

Woman, 60s, London

"Remote learning has been a challenge. There is no way to engage our most vulnerable families. Many have no broadband and no phones - in debt management these contracts are the first things to go. We need free broadband universally. We need more funding to provide the tech to families that don't have it."

Woman, 40s, East of England

Many respondents were having new realisations about what they wanted from their work life. In particular, those respondents who were on furlough felt that the time off had enabled them to think about what they wanted to do next in their career. These often entailed having a different type of job or a shorter commute so that they could spend more time in their local community.

"I've genuinely enjoyed and deeply appreciated the time and space to work on myself, learn more about myself, and try and nail down some more plans for the future. I would like to change career, but I am holding on until the uncertainty of covid is over (or until I lose my job and my hand is forced)."

Man, 30s, East of England

"I really don't mind being furloughed and I don't miss work one bit. Hoping to stay furloughed til at least the end of the summer. I'm considering mentioning to my employer that he should consider me for redundancy. I've been thinking about changing jobs for the past few years, so, even though there will be less job opportunities in the near future, now would be a good time to move on."

Man, 50s, North West England

"Covid has made me reassess my job. Covid strips everything back. I was staying in my job because I wanted stability and enhanced maternity pay whilst starting a family. There's been fertility difficulties and five years on I'm still in the same job because of it. I have a lengthy train commute and covid makes me nervous doing that train journey again. With covid I'm not sure how stable my job is now anyway. So I've taken the brave step and applied for a new job, closer to home."

Woman, 30s, Yorkshire & Humberside

For many other respondents on furlough, their time had been stressful and unpleasant. Many have been plagued by the stress of uncertainty if they will get their job back and how they will provide for themselves and their family in the future. This was often compounded by boredom and feeling idle without work to keep them busy and feeling useful.

"There are no opportunities coming out of the pandemic for me. I work in aviation and my household income has been reduced by 70%. I fear that despite being on furlough, when this government support ends I will likely be made redundant due to contractions in my industry."

"If this were to occur I consider it will be extremely unlikely that I will secure alternative employment due to my age and the large number of other individuals being made redundant by my industry. I have no experience in any other industry. This will put me at risk of losing my home due to inability to pay my mortgage."

Man, 60s, West Midlands

"I really miss my work - not just the money but feeling fulfilled and like I was making a difference"

Woman, 20, West Midlands

For many respondents, their perception of what constitutes valuable work had changed in the light of the coronavirus and the critical nature of contributions from health workers, bus drivers and people who work in essential shops.

"I am also depressed to discover that for many people it has taken this sort of crisis to realise the jobs that really matter. No one will ever stand there and clap for a hedge fund manager or a futures and options trader - who get paid ridiculous sums of money to sell bits of paper that are essentially a gamble on the future. "

Woman, 60s, London

"[there is a] need for a total government rethink around status and pay and conditions for the nursing and caring professions."

This pandemic has really highlighted which members of society are the most valuable - ie key workers generally - and that fact that on the whole they are the least well paid with the least social status. There needs to be a real shake up. A society where a footballer is paid more per day than a nurse or shop worker is per year is not acceptable."

Woman. 60s, South West England

For many, lockdown highlighted the importance of key workers, such as those delivering health and social care, and working in sectors such as retail, wholesale and transport. A greater appreciation of their role was a very common theme in responses to the question

'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?' Respondents felt that key workers, many of whom are considered to be unskilled, are undervalued and underpaid. Concerns were also expressed at lack of protection from the virus for these workers.

"We need to recognise the value of front line healthcare workers, carers, delivery drivers all those that kept the country going during the crises because they were deemed key workers and pay them accordingly."

Woman, 50s, East Midlands

"Our society is interconnected and needs an equal foundation. We are reliant on everyone to do their job to the best of their ability and provide them with the equipment to do so. This includes the NHS, but also means no more zero hour contracts and removing the draconian "unskilled" mentality from our immigration policies. The country is literally running on these people working, while the majority stay in lockdown."

Woman, 30s, South East England

Appreciation and recognition of the value of workers classified as low skilled was therefore one of the changes that many respondents wished to continue beyond the lifetime of the pandemic.

EDUCATION

On 18 March, for the first time in the British history, the government announced the nationwide shut-down of schools.

This meant that up to 8 million pupils in England and their teachers were required to continue their education in their homes.²¹ Vulnerable children and young people and children of the key workers were allowed to go to school.²² A national scheme to support children on free school meals was also announced.

This pandemic also meant the cancellation of A level and GCSE exams for summer 2020. This year's grades were initially awarded based on a statistical model developed by Ofqual.²³ However, after thousands of teacher-predicted grades were downgraded, protests throughout the education community resulted in the reinstatement of teacher-predicted grades unless those awarded by the algorithm were higher.²⁴

Ofqual announced that exams for vocational schools would continue as planned. Many UK education providers prepared resources to help parents and

21 Adams, R and Stewart H. UK Schools to be closed indefinitely and exams cancelled. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/18/coronavirus-uk-schools-to-be-closed-indefinitely-and-exams-cancelled> [accessed 13/08/2020]

22 Department for Education. Supporting vulnerable children and young people during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak - actions for educational providers and other partners. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people>

23 Whittaker, F. Coronavirus: An explainer on how GCSE and A-level grades will be awarded this summer. FE Week, 2020. Available at: <https://feweek.co.uk/2020/04/03/coronavirus-an-explainer-on-how-gcse-and-a-level-grades-will-be-awarded-this-summer/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

24 BBC. A-levels and GCSEs: U-turn as teacher estimates to be used for exam results. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-53810655> [accessed 27/08/2020]

students get through the lockdown process.²⁵

IMPACT ON SCHOOL PUPILS

The gap on mathematical and literary skills between children from low and higher income households typically widens over the summer break.²⁶ Researchers expect that a similar gap in attainment will be found after students return to school. Indeed, the Education Endowment Foundation has stated that school closures are likely to reverse progress made to narrow the gap in the last decade.²⁷ Their research suggests that the estimated attainment gap could widen by up to 36%.²⁸ This attainment gap is likely to be a result of a combination of factors such as access to technology, the homeschooling environment, and lack of necessary additional support.

Much education activity has moved online, although some schools are reported to deliver worksheets to pupils with little or no access to technology. On May 12, YouGov asked more than 800 teachers about the impact of the coronavirus. Almost half of the teachers (44%) said they know at least one pupil who has been unable to access education because of issues with technology. Only 11% said that all of their pupils have been able to connect.²⁹

To close the education gap, the government announced that disadvantaged students who receive support from a social worker and care leavers across England would receive a free tablet or laptop computer and 4G based mobile devices.³⁰ However, we do not know how many of these devices are distributed and anecdotal evidence indicates short-

comings.

Research conducted during lockdown confirms the importance of socio-economic background in opportunities to learn. Research carried out by the Sutton Trust in April 2020 found that only 23% of pupils were participating in daily live or recorded online sessions. Pupils from working class families were much less likely than their middle class counterparts to have such opportunities, at 16% vs 30%.³¹ Private school students were found to be more than twice as likely as those at state schools to be accessing online lessons every day.

A study conducted under lockdown found that nearly two-thirds (64%) of secondary pupils in state schools from the richest households are offered some form of active help by their parents, compared with 47% from the poorest fifth of families.³² A survey by the IFS and the Institute of Education of over 4,000 parents of children aged 4-15 found that the children from better-off families are spending 30% more time on home learning than are those from poorer families.³³

School closures have affected access to an important source of nutritious food for some children.³⁴ In England, about 1.3 million children claimed free school meals in 2019, or about 15% of state-educated pupils.³⁵ Schools have been expected to continue supporting children eligible for free school meals who are at home. These have been delivered either in the form of meals or food parcels through the schools' food provider or using the DfE's centrally funded national voucher scheme. As a result

25 GOV.uk, UK education providers are helping teachers, parents and students respond to the impact of COVID-19 worldwide. 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-education-providers-are-helping-teachers-parents-and-students-respond-to-the-impact-of-covid-19-worldwide> [accessed 13/08/2020]

26 Van Lancker, W and Parolin, Z. COVID-19, school closures, and child poverty: a social crisis in the making. The Lancet, 2020. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30084-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30084-0/fulltext) [accessed 13/08/2020]

27 Education Endowment Foundation. Rapid evidence assessment: Impact of school closures on the attainment gap. 2020. Available at: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/REA_-_Impact_of_school_closures_on_the_attainment_gap_summary.pdf [accessed 13/08/2020]

28 Education Endowment Foundation. Rapid evidence assessment. 2020.

29 Smith, M. At least 44% of teachers know pupils who can't access education due to technology issues. YouGov, 2020. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/education/articles-reports/2020/05/12/at-least-44-teachers-know-pupils-who-cant-acc> [accessed 13/08/2020]

30 Jackson, M. COVID-19 - Free Laptops and 4G Broadband for Vulnerable Kids. ISP Review, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ispreview.co.uk/index.php/2020/04/covid-19-free-laptops-and-4g-broadband-for-vulnerable-kids.html> [accessed 13/08/2020]

31 Cullinane, C and Montacute, R. COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #1: School Shutdown. Sutton Trust, 2020. Available at: <https://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-Impact-Brief-School-Shutdown.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

32 Alison, A and others. Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning. IFS, 2020. Available at: https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/Edited_Final-BN288%20Learning%20during%20the%20lockdown.pdf [accessed 13/08/2020]

33 Alison, A and others. Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning. IFS, 2020. Available at: https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/Edited_Final-BN288%20Learning%20during%20the%20lockdown.pdf [accessed 13/08/2020]

34 Van Lancker, W and Parolin, Z. COVID-19, school closures, and child poverty: a social crisis in the making. The Lancet, 2020. Available at: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(20\)30084-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(20)30084-0/fulltext) [accessed 13/08/2020]

35 Lawrie, E. Coronavirus: What's happening to free school meals this summer? BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-53053337> [accessed 13/08/2020]



of a successful campaign by the footballer Marcus Rashford, the voucher scheme was extended to cover the six week summer break.³⁶

IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

At the beginning of lockdown all universities moved teaching online and many students went back to their family homes. The pandemic's impact will not be limited to the current academic year. Some universities have announced that teaching during the 2020-21 year will also be online. Arrangements will vary by institution but Cambridge's vice-chancellor, announced that its Institute of Continuing Education for adults would offer all its 2020-21 undergraduate teaching online, with no residential requirement.³⁷

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT EDUCATION

The open access survey asked questions about the impact of the pandemic on respondents' children's education and their own education. The questions were:

1. In general, how much of an impact do you think the pandemic and lockdown has had on your child or children's education?
2. How much of an impact do you think the pandemic and lockdown has had on your studies?

For questions about the education section, 2480 people answered the first question and 307 answered the second. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

Our analysis of responses to these questions found:

- More than 75% of respondents to our survey said the pandemic and lockdown had a moderate or big impact on their child or children's education.
- Almost half of the respondents to our survey (45%) said the pandemic and lockdown had a big impact on their child or children's education with Impact felt across income groups.
- 307 participants in our survey were students, almost half of whom said the pandemic and lockdown had a big impact on their studies.
- Women, disabled people and young people aged 18-24 were much more likely than men or

people aged 25 and over to say the pandemic has had a big effect on their studies.

- 73% of people responding to open-ended questions on education in our survey were female, indicating that the issue is of more salience to women. Out of 6022 female respondents, 31% said they were living with children under 18 years old.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to their own education or that of their children.

The most common themes related to experiences of online teaching and learning from schools, parents' involvement in home-schooling and, for parents of older children, exams. Transition from primary to secondary education and to university was also a recurring theme.

In terms of school provision, participants were aware of wide variation in the extent to which schools were delivering online learning during lockdown. They also commented on perceived variations in quality. Some parents said that schools were relying on worksheets to be completed by pupils, instead of direct teaching.

"I don't think the school has done enough to make the lessons engaging online. There are lots of worksheets and questions, but no interaction. As a result we've taken days off homeschooling to give our son a break from the classes that he finds boring and frustrating."

Woman, 30s, London

Parents also regretted the lack of enrichment activities during lockdown, such as drama and art. The curriculum was reported to have become very focused on a narrow range of academic subjects.

Parents were also aware of a substantial difference in approach between state and private schools, with the latter often delivering a full academic curriculum and even enrichment activities.

"I have a 16 year old who missed sitting his GCSE's who has been given the very odd piece of work from school to complete - so basically he's on holiday until September when he goes back to start A levels. Private school kids it's been business as usual so they will have had

over a third of a year more schooling than state kids. Not a level playing field."

Woman, 50s, North West England

A former teacher and school governor remarked

"It has become evident to me the huge disconnect between the learning opportunities offered by many of the state schools and the daily quite intense routine of timetabled virtual lessons offered in the Independent schools."

Woman, 70+ East of England

Some respondents suggested the Government and agencies such as Ofsted should have provided a stronger steer.

"I think there has been real inconsistencies between what schools have offered for homes learning and in approach. Should have been more government set standards provided to schools for them to follow and adhere to."

Man, 40s, South East England

"Some schools have done an excellent job in supporting the learning but this is very inconsistent (feel OFSTED could have taken a much more proactive role in this both in assessing and rating and in coaching and supporting). An ill judged and missed opportunity! Other schools have been v poor - little or no direct teaching, reams of non differentiated worksheets - or nothing at all."

Woman, 60s, East Midlands

Some respondents, including teachers, reflected on the benefits and also disadvantages of moving teaching online. Concerns focused on differential access of children and young people to PCs and laptops and to reliable broadband. A teacher in the FE sector summed up some of these concerns.

"I have found that it is very effective to deliver certain subjects online - even an arts discipline - more than I thought possible. However I do not think that online education alone is the way forward - it certainly opens the doors for those who may not be able to attend institutions due to proximity, but the interaction is not the same and students seem less confident and open to discourse online whether it be through a typed chat or through video.

Also it has brought to light the great disadvantage that students who live in very crowded households or who do not own computers have. Moving some work online is

easy for teachers and students but only if all parties have functioning technology which is certainly not the case."

Woman, 30s, London

There was a more general and widespread concern by parents and others that school closures were widening the attainment gap, as a result of differential provision of online learning as well as inequalities in access. Parents of children with special needs felt that provision had been especially poor: some children with special needs were having more difficulty learning online and that there was very little tailored support for their learning during lockdown.

"My daughter (aged 11) has a mild visual impairment so written online lessons can be exhausting for her. We have worked with the school (which is private) to address her needs and they have been fantastic. More "live" lessons have helped. She still gets very anxious that she's not doing what she is supposed to - but also can be easily distracted and wander off to YouTube if she doesn't understand a lesson. This has been super stressful"

Woman, 40s, London

At the same time, many respondents commented that teachers are doing a great job in very difficult circumstances. Some respondents also felt that teachers had been unfairly criticised for being reluctant to return to school in June.

Despite the challenges involved, It was clear that many parents who responded to our survey valued the opportunity to deliver home learning to their children.

"It's been lovely having the opportunity to spend more time with my children and take more of an interest in their learning (helping and teaching rather than just asking how school was at end of day)."

Woman, 40s, Scotland

Many found the most successful approaches have involved combining school resources with ones they design themselves. It was also apparent that some families have put a lot of effort into home learning with enrichment activities and play-based learning for younger children.

One respondent, herself a teacher described

"My 3 year old had been attending nursery three days a week which closed at lockdown. I was able to spend lots of time with him at

³⁶ Syal, R. Stewart, H and Pidd, H. Johnson makes U-turn on free school meals after Rashford campaign. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jun/16/boris-johnson-faces-tory-rebellion-over-marcus-rashfords-school-meals-call> [accessed 13/08/2020]

³⁷ Cambridge cancels face-to-face lectures until 2021. Financial Times, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/65a1feb8-2eb6-44c3-815c-e05dfe9e1193> [accessed 13/08/2020]

home. I feel his learning improved. We read, did crafts, played games etc. I appreciate having that time with him which I would not have had. He has had a weekly music lesson online to see his classmates and we have been to online storytelling through a museum. We've watched feeding times at zoos too."

"I think the learning of life skills such as baking, painting, general well-being has been improved through the pandemic with very little impact on our children's education."

For others, home-schooling was very far from the world of planting seeds and creating bug hotels. Many described a much less positive experience. Some respondents said it had been hard to motivate children and young people even to do the school work they had been set, let alone home-generated activities. This was most commonly expressed by working parents who were often struggling to combine work with homeschooling and childcare. As we described in the employment section, this was a challenge reported by many respondents. Parents remarked that they are not teachers, yet have been expected to step into the role with little guidance or support.

"It's great to spend so much more time together, but teaching in a genuinely effective way is not something parents can just magically do... teachers are professionals, and more than ever I can see that. As well as this, home is home and school is school... and mixing them is confusing and frustrating for children I think. Where does one end and the other begin? It can be the best and the worst of both worlds."

Man, 40s, London

Some parents felt there was too little provision from schools, while others were overwhelmed with its volume.

"I have found it almost impossible to support their learning whilst working. I think schools could provide more online lessons through Teams or zoom to help keep them engaged. Now that we are several weeks into home learning they are struggling to motivate themselves".

Woman, 40s, South East England

"Home schooling was a nightmare. It wasn't schooling *at all*. It was more like homework but with volume/more. And the number of links and reading required by me to then support the 'learning' was too much, especially when I

was working and being inundated with similar volumes/styles of emails to "do my job in these unprecedented times"! I gave up pushing it and concentrated on minimum of reading, writing and maths. Now it's a bit more like homework but they do it at school."

Woman, 50s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Many parents were worried about their children's learning gaps and future exam performance. This was expressed most commonly by parents of Year 10 pupils due to take GCSEs in 2021, but also by parents of sixth form students:

"Both my children are due to sit exams next year. They will have big gaps in their learning, I hope the DFE and examination boards take this into account when they are marked and pass levels set."

Woman, 40s, South East England

Significant concern was expressed about the system of estimated grades for GCSEs and A levels. Many parents were concerned that assessed grades will not reflect their child's real performance and abilities. This was reported to be impacting on young people's mental health, and causing anxiety for parents.

"Son's GCSE exams were cancelled, he is a hard worker and feels despondent. He is unsure his results will be fair, and feels a lack of control. All of his aspirations have been halted and he is lost. His work ethic has disappeared and he finds it hard to keep usefully occupied."

Woman, 40s, South East England

"My daughter is 16. She has had all her GCSEs cancelled. The impact has been devastating. She feels her entire schooling has been pointless. She feels her grades are unlikely to reflect on the work she had recently put in to improve on her mocks."

Woman, 40s, Wales

While feeling that online and home learning has been effective to a degree, many respondents were concerned that children and young people have missed out on the social aspects of school and mixing with others. Parents also said that their children were losing out on interaction with teachers, as part of learning. There were also reports of children simply missing their teachers as well as their school friends.

"We have tried our best but I worry about

the impact of not learning in a classroom environment; and whether we are doing enough. My son really misses seeing his teacher and class friends."

Woman, 30s, North West England

The loss of transition experiences, particularly from primary to secondary school, was a source of special concern and regret for some parents. Parents worried that their children were not sufficiently prepared to take the step from primary to secondary school: some said their child was anxious and had missed out on confidence-boosting visits and preparation activities. Many parents felt sad that their child had missed out on end of term and school-leaving activities, and that they had been unable to say goodbye to school-mates and teachers.

"Our son is currently in year 6 and has also missed out on a lot of activities he would have done in preparation for moving up to secondary school next year which has made him more nervous about the transition than he otherwise would have been."

Man, 40s, South West England

"Eldest daughter in year 6. She is missing out on an incredibly important time in her school life. She will soon be leaving primary school and has missed out on vital preparations to move to secondary school. She is also missing her opportunity to say goodbye to friends and teachers and to partake in 'normal' year 6 activities such as leavers assembly, end of primary school play, her last sports days etc. She was already very nervous of the transition to secondary and now this has heightened considerably."

Woman, 30s, South West England

A number of respondents wrote about their own experiences of learning under lockdown, including at university. As with school pupils, many felt the absence of social contact. Online learning was found to be less enjoyable and effective by some, and certainly not a replication of face to face learning.

"I think my education has been affected negatively by going online. I have had online teaching but this is not sufficient replication of classroom learning."

Woman, 18-24, South East England

"As I am currently studying for a degree, I have found the switch to online delivery of lessons challenging as it is not a learning style I suit."

Man, 30s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Some students were worried that their degree result will be adversely affected by the loss of face to face teaching and learning and some parents worried on their behalf.

"Elder child's first year at university has been disrupted to a significant extent and he has lost much of the opportunity that being a first year student offers, with no time in the summer months on campus having chosen a stand-alone campus specifically to benefit from being immersed in university life. He'll never get that back and I am incredibly disappointed for him. He has still had to pay full fees despite receiving a much lower standard of education, which I find completely unacceptable."

Man, 50s, South West England

Respondents therefore expressed considerable concern that the short-term and, for most, unwelcome changes to education delivery will continue for some time beyond the easing of lockdown. There was considerable worry that this would impact on educational performance and outcomes.

HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDSHIPS

While key workers such as health care workers were needed to go to work, for many people the pandemic meant spending more time at home - working, homeschooling or carrying out childcare.

On Wednesday 18 March, the government announced the closure of schools from 20 March onwards. As we noted in the education section, this meant thousands of pupils stayed at their houses and continued their education online or by other means. This was followed by the announcement of measures to close entertainment, hospitality and indoor leisure venues across the country from 23 March to limit the spread of coronavirus. Lockdown has been eased since early July with businesses including restaurants and hair salons allowed to open.

Lockdown has impacted people in different ways. For many, lockdown has meant isolation, anxiety and deterioration of mental health. Research carried out by Ipsos Mori in June found that a fifth of people in their 50s and 60s have experienced deteriorating physical health during the lockdown period. More than a third said their mental health has worsened.³⁸ A report by ONS in May found that the number of people suffering from high levels of anxiety has almost doubled since the end of 2019. Moreover, a survey by YoungMinds found that 83% of young people think that pandemic makes their mental health worse.³⁹

38 Hill, A. Covid-19 crisis risks UK 'lost generation' of people about to retire. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/18/covid-19-crisis-risks-uk-lost-generation-of-people-about-to-retire> [accessed 13/08/2020]

39 Bootle, E. The other epidemic: how coronavirus triggered a surge in mental illness. New Statesman, 2020. Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/health/2020/05/other-epidemic-how-coronavirus-triggered-surge-mental-illness> [accessed 13/08/2020]

"Don't take 'normal life' for granted. It's the simple things in life that are most important - family, friends, home."



Shopping and cooking habits changed during lockdown. In a poll of 2,000 people 90% said their cooking and shopping habits have changed since the lockdown began. One third of participants said they are freezing more food to make their supplies go further and eight per cent said they purchased an additional freezer.⁴⁰ People are also throwing away less food: just under half of the people in a survey said they are throwing less food than before.⁴¹ Of those wasting less food, 51% of people say they were planning meals more carefully.⁴²

People have spent more time cooking and eating at home. According to a research conducted by Kantar Worldpanel, the proportion of in-home meals eaten each week increased by 38%.⁴³ Another study showed that many people are enjoying cooking more since the restrictions began: 44% of people said they enjoy cooking and 47% of people are enjoying spending more time eating with their family or housemates. Over a third of people consider lockdown as an opportunity to improve their cooking skills.⁴⁴

Not surprisingly, people have been shopping online during lockdown. A quarter of British people across all age ranges bought items online they'd previously bought on the high street. Amazon, the online retailer, was the first choice for around one in five people. Around one in seven said they will do less shopping for any type.⁴⁵

When it comes to division of labour at home, some research shows that mothers are spending more time doing household chores and childcare. A research conducted by the Nuffield Foundation suggests that almost half of mothers (47%) had to split their working hours mainly with childcare whereas under one-third (30%) of fathers had to combine their paid hours with other duties.⁴⁶

Lockdown has made some people more aware of the importance of exercising. According to a survey by Sport England, "almost two-thirds of adults [in

40 Grant, K. Covid-19 and cooking: Consumers will seek to avoid food waste 'far beyond' pandemic. inews, 2020. <https://inews.co.uk/news/consumer/covid-19-cooking-consumers-will-avoid-food-waste-pandemic-2841313> [accessed 13/08/2020]

41 Grant, K. Covid-19 and cooking: Consumers will seek to avoid food waste 'far beyond' pandemic. inews, 2020.

42 Restorick, T. How has Covid-19 changed our eating habits? Hubbub, 2020. Available at: <https://www.hubbub.org.uk/blog/how-has-covid-19-changed-our-eating-habits> [accessed 13/08/2020]

43 Clark, T. Covid-19 is transforming UK shopping habits, finds new research. Retail Focus, 2020. Available at: <https://www.retail-focus.co.uk/covid-19-is-transforming-uk-shopping-habits-finds-new-research/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

44 Restorick, T. How has Covid-19 changed our eating habits? Hubbub, 2020. Available at: <https://www.hubbub.org.uk/blog/how-has-covid-19-changed-our-eating-habits> [accessed 13/08/2020]

45 Restorick, T. How has Covid-19 changed our eating habits?

46 Cattan, S. The effects of COVID-19 on families' time-use and child development. Nuffield Foundation, 2020. Available at: <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/project/effects-covid-19-families-time-child-development> [accessed 13/08/2020]

47 Ukactive. Together: How the COVID-19 lockdown might disrupt your members' exercise routines... or help them create new ones. Ukactive, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ukactive.com/journal/together-how-the-covid-19-lockdown-might-disrupt-your-members-exercise-routines-or-help-them-create-new-ones/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

48 Sport England. New exercise habits forming during coronavirus crisis. Sport England, 2020. Available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/news/new-exercise-habits-forming-during-coronavirus-crisis> [accessed 13/08/2020]

England] consider exercise to be more important than ever during the current coronavirus crisis".⁴⁷ Approach to exercise varies between different age groups and socio-economic groups: 43% for those aged 16 to 34 had exercised during the week before the survey, compared to 22% of those aged over 55. People in higher socio-economic groups were also more likely to have engaged in more activity in the past week.⁴⁸

People living in urban areas were found to be less likely to have engaged in activity in the past week than people in rural areas (43% vs 53%) which is likely to reflect poor access to open space for exercise for people in some urban localities.

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT HOUSEHOLDS, FAMILIES AND FRIENDSHIPS

The open access survey asked questions about how respondents' exercising and eating habits changed during the pandemic and whether they developed any new hobbies during this period. The three questions related to this section were:

1. Do you think you are exercising more or less than you did before the pandemic?
2. Do you think you are eating more or less healthily than you did before the pandemic?
3. Have you developed any new hobbies during the pandemic?

To provide context to our analysis, our achieved sample of respondents had the following characteristics:

- 43% were living with their family and 40% of respondents were living with their partner.
- One third were living with children under 18 years old.
- Only 15% were living by themselves.

- Almost half (48%) were aged more than 50 years old, 24% were in their 60s and 6% were in their 70s.
- 86% said they had their own garden. Only a small number of respondents (376 people) said they were sharing their garden with other households.

For questions about households, families and friendships we achieved responses to some or all of the questions from 8570 people. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

Our analysis of responses to questions about exercise, eating and hobbies found:

- A third (31%) said they had been eating more healthily during lockdown, a quarter (25%) said they had been eating less healthily and 44% said it had made no difference.
- More than one third said they had developed new hobbies during the pandemic. Women and people aged under 40 were more likely to say they had done so.
- 40% said they had been exercising more. 36% of respondents said they had been exercising less.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to their household, family and friends. The most common themes related to the opportunity to spend more time as a family, both its benefits and downsides. Loneliness was also a common thread to some responses. Hobbies and exercise featured strongly in open responses, with experiences of these varying according to opportunity.

As well as writing about changes to their jobs in the designated section of the survey, respondents also referred to their family lives in their responses to the question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?' These are included here.

For many, being able to spend more time with their family was a positive experience of lockdown. It was common for respondents to feel that it had brought the family together and that their relationship with their partner or spouse had improved. This was a very common theme of responses to the question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?'. Some respondents had reflected on their lives and had resolved to make family their priority in a way they

had not in the past.

"I've massively re appreciated my time at home. Being able to spend time with my family is so much more important than working the 8-5 Monday to Friday. Flexible working options should be rolled out much more... the vast majority of employers can enable it with no reduced output and all people want is to spend time with their children/partners or reduce childcare and improve their happiness."

Man, 30s, Yorkshire & Humberside

"We as a family have always been family orientated but this experience has cemented this even more. We have found walks around the corner from our home we didn't know were there. We have enjoyed playing board games as a family and we have so missed our extended family. I hope the rest of the nation has also experienced the more simple pleasures in life and that life will continue with these principles in mind."

Woman, 30s, West Midlands

One respondent simply said *"Don't take 'normal life' for granted. It's the simple things in life that are most important - family, friends, home."*

However, other respondents reported less happy experiences, especially during the first weeks of lockdown. Lack of private space was a source of household tension, along with disputes over childcare and homeschooling.

"The kids are 14 and 11 and have not got on very well over lockdown. Tensions can be exacerbated as you can't get away.."

Woman, 40s, London

"Stress, worry and anxiety has caused a number of arguments in the household. Being unable to socialize with friends or assist aging relatives that live a considerable distance away has added to worry. There are no opportunities resulting from the pandemic."

Man, 60s, East Midlands

Many respondents said they had missed family members living outside their own household. An increased use of Zoom and other video calls had helped many to stay in touch, and was a compensation for loss of face to face contact. Many respondents were pleased they were able to use this form of communication to stay in touch with loved ones.

"I have video calls and WhatsApp groups with my friends and family which have included regular on line gatherings for games, quizzes and chats. I recently was able to see my family outside for the first time which was lovely. More time for yoga and gardening, meditation, reading, sewing, games, love."

Woman, 50s, South East England

However, loneliness was a common thread of many responses. Many missed their family and friends. Grandparents in particular missed their grandchildren and others worried that their elderly relatives were unhappy and lonely. Respondents commonly talked of feelings of anxiety, hopelessness and anger.

"I have six kids and seven grandchildren so – very sad to not see them. We talk regularly but – it's not the same. Heart-breaking – I only realised how much I'd been affected when I read a Radio Times article – Alison Steadman saying that she had had a very cavalier attitude until her son told her – no. That happened to me too and – reading about it made me cry!! I miss them all. One daughter visits with two grandchildren once in a while so – better than nothing but – the rest..... Sad."

Woman, 60s, London

Respondents took different opportunities to exercise during lockdown, reflecting the divided response to the closed questions. Many commented that they exercised less under lockdown since gyms were closed and they lacked access to an open space. As a result they felt less fit, unhealthy and that their mental health had deteriorated. However, some respondents took lockdown as an opportunity to exercise more regularly. Daily walks became part of a regular routine for many, and some tried new exercises using apps.

"Gyms closed, so unable to lift weights. Shifted to body weight exercise but not the same. Cycling and walking / running much more but do feel a little isolated as would do cardio in a class or swim."

Man, 40s, Wales

"As a family we are taking more walks and bike rides together as we have more time even though I am working. The good weather has helped."

Woman, 40s, East of England

Hobbies were found to be a way to cope with the boredom and anxiety of lockdown. Many hobbies

were reported to involve baking and healthy eating, but gardening was also a lockdown pastime enjoyed by many.

"I also participate in sewing groups. I have been making scrubs, bags etc. and this fills the time but does not make up for the lack of social interaction. Of course, I do miss shopping and having a coffee with my friends."

Woman, 60s, North West England

"I have also taken to baking as a hobby and find that relaxing too. I love seeing the finished article. The only problem is we have to eat the results - comfort food !!! We have struggled to maintain our weight and can feel the difference in our summer clothes."

Woman, 60s, Yorkshire & Humberside

"We have spent more time on arts projects, the pace of life seems to be slower so we're more willing to spend time on activities that are more leisurely."

Woman, 40s, East of England

Others said that their main interests involved mixing with others, which was not possible under lockdown.

"All the hobbies I used to take part in for socialising and exercise, and to deal with stress and loneliness, are not available any more. I don't have a car as I need to take the test, but who knows when that will happen. Life is very limited, and I can't see when it will get better."

Woman, 30s, location not known

Many respondents wanted to hold on to the slower pace of life which had enabled them to find time for hobbies. Other respondents had found the pace of life anything but slow and many pointed out that increased caring and work responsibilities had left them little time for hobbies. Rather, they had found difficulty even meeting competing demands for work, childcare, cooking and housework.

COMMUNITY

Since lockdown, communities across the country have pivoted around the needs of people in their local area. People have become more local, more neighbourly, and hundreds of thousands have volunteered in local community groups or formal public services.

Multiple sources suggest that the majority of people have either helped others or felt supported by others during the lockdown. Polling from King's College London in April 2020 found 60% had offered help to others while a further 47% had received help from others.⁴⁹ Similarly, ONS data suggests that 66% of people thought that if they needed help, then other local community members would support them during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

This help has not necessarily been evenly spread. Some regions have been more likely to check up on each other than others. People in the South West have been most likely to check on their neighbours, with over two-thirds (63%) of people saying that they had checked on their neighbours at least once during the lockdown - compared with under half of people in London (47%).⁵⁰

Large numbers of people across the UK have been more formally volunteering in 'mutual aid'

49 Duffy, B. Life under lockdown: coronavirus in the UK. KCL: The Policy Institute, 2020, p4. Available at <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/coronavirus-in-the-uk.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

50 ONS. Coronavirus and the social impacts on the countries and regions of Britain: April 2020: Effects on communities and personal relationships. ONS, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/april2020#effects-on-communities-and-personal-relationships> [accessed 13/08/2020]

"We formed a street based Whatsapp group at the beginning of lockdown and we keep in touch on an almost daily basis."



groups and public services. In the first call for NHS volunteers - the 250,000 person target was hit within 24 hours, with three quarters of a million people coming forward to volunteer.⁵¹ There are over 4,000 official mutual aid groups across the country.⁵² Furthermore, research from Legal & General and the Centre for Economics and Business Research found that one in five UK adults (19%) have volunteered for community activities since the start of the lockdown on 23 March.⁵³

Over half of people surveyed by the ONS feel united as a result of Coronavirus, twice the proportion who felt this way before the pandemic.⁵⁴ Similarly, significantly more people think we will be more kind in the recovery from the pandemic than we were before (67% vs 39%). Fewer people think we will become more equal as a result: the ONS survey has found only 22% believe progress will be made towards equality, although this is an increase from 16% pre-Coronavirus.⁵⁵

A survey of more than 2,000 people by the Halifax Building Society and YouGov found that 36% of people are now feeling a greater sense of community with their neighbours since the start of lockdown.⁵⁶ However, this has not been equally spread between age groups and types of homes. People aged 55 and over are also more likely to have noticed an improved sense of community (38%) compared to those aged 18 to 24 (31%). Furthermore people living in larger homes have been more likely to feel connected to their community than those in smaller ones: people living in detached houses have felt the greatest increase in ties to their community and neighbours (43%), followed by those in semi-detached houses (41%), bungalows (36%), terraced houses (31%) and flats/apartments (26%).

51 NHS England. NHS volunteer responders: 250,000 target smashed with three quarters of a million committing to volunteer. NHS England, 2020. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/03/250000-nhs-volunteers/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

52 O'Dwyer, E. COVID-19 mutual aid groups have the potential to increase intergroup solidarity - but can they actually do so? LSE, 2020. Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/covid19-mutual-aid-solidarity/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

53 Jones, R. UK volunteering soars during coronavirus crisis. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/26/uk-volunteering-coronavirus-crisis-community-lockdown> [accessed 13/08/2020]

54 ONS. Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 22 May 2020. ONS, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/22may2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

55 ONS. Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 14 May 2020. ONS, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/14may2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

56 Lloyds Banking Group. Positive Brits happier with homes and neighbours during lockdown. Lloyds Banking Group, 2020. Available at: <https://www.lloydsbankinggroup.com/Media/Press-Releases/2020-press-releases/halifax/positive-brits-happier-with-homes/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

57 FSA. The COVID-19 consumer research. FSA, 2020. Available at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/research-projects/the-covid-19-consumer-tracker> [accessed 13/08/2020]

58 Nolsoe, E. COVID-19: Brits turn to corner shops for essentials. YouGov, 2020. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/food/articles-reports/2020/04/17/covid-19-brits-turn-corner-shops-essentials> [accessed 13/08/2020]

59 Local Partnerships. Local Authority Briefing: Housing people who were rough sleeping and those at risk who have been accommodated due to Covid-19. Local Partnerships, 2020, p3. Available at: <https://localpartnerships.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Rough-sleeper-accommodation-guidance-final.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

60 FSA. The COVID-19 consumer research. FSA, 2020. Available at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/research/research-projects/the-covid-19-consumer-tracker> [accessed 13/08/2020]

Lockdown has also impacted people's behaviours in their community. Many have begun shopping locally, including from community-based shops, buying from butchers and greengrocers, rather than supermarkets. According to research by the FSA, over a third (35%) of people said that they had bought locally more so than before.⁵⁷ Further, whilst most people have reduced the amount they shop, 23% say they have used their corner shop more than they did before the lockdown.⁵⁸

Local governments and councils have sprung into action, with additional financial support from the Treasury to adopt joint working with local charities and organisations to tackle community-wide challenges such as homelessness, social isolation and food insecurity. For the first time, we have seen an almost overnight reduction in the number of homeless people. Government data indicates that 90% of known rough sleepers have been accommodated since the beginning of lockdown.⁵⁹ There remains a big question mark over the longevity of these governmental shifts. Moreover, despite the efforts made by many to support people, there have clearly been people falling through the cracks. A poll by the FSA found that 16% in May and 18% in April of UK adults had reduced meal portion sizes or missed meals because of lack of money - translating roughly to 6.3 million and 7.7 million adults respectively.⁶⁰

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

The open access survey asked a question about the impact of the pandemic on our relationship with our community, whether it changed positively or negatively or not at all.

The open access survey asked:

1. Are you a member of a group helping people in your local community to deal with issues relating to the pandemic?
2. Do you think you are on more or less friendly terms with people in your local area than you were before the pandemic, or has it made no difference?
3. Are you able to go to the shops to buy food and other essentials, or do you rely on deliveries and/or help from people outside of your household?

For questions about the local community, we achieved responses to some or all of the questions from 6662 people. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than to the survey as a whole.

- 87% of people were able to go to the shops, while the others said that they were relying on deliveries or help from others. This, unsurprisingly, changed significantly across some demographic groups:
 - Older groups were more likely to be relying on others or deliveries, 43% of people over 70 said that they were relying on other people or deliveries for essentials compared with 7% of those aged between 18-24.
 - The same proportion (43%) of disabled people said that they were relying on others or deliveries for essentials, compared with 11% of non disabled people.

In response to whether people had been a member of a community group to tackle challenges related to the pandemic, we found that:

- Four in ten (39%) said that they had become part of a community group dealing with responses to the pandemic.
- Women were more likely to be part of a community group, 42% of women said that were, compared with 34% of men
- Older people were also more likely to be part of a community group. Almost half of people in their 60s (48%) said that they were part of a community group compared with just over a quarter (28%) of people in their 20s.
- While the majority of respondents said that they were on friendlier terms with their neighbours, those who were in households with higher incomes were more likely to say that they were.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to their local community. There were some strong recurring themes that came through in numerous responses. Many spoke about their relationships with neighbours and the way their community had come together to tackle local problems related to the pandemic. Respondents also wrote about how they had started to live more locally, supporting local business and enjoying their local landscapes and public spaces.

Many said that one of the main positives of lockdown was building relationships with their neighbours or making pre-existing ones closer. Many of these relationships were with neighbours that they had not interacted with previously, but because of the lockdown they had taken the opportunity to check-in on each other and get to know each other.

"We have with our neighbours, friends and the people we have known in the past have all become collectively concerned for each other's well being. We have become stronger and closer and have vowed to be a close knit group when all this is over."

Woman, 60s, South-East England

"I have spoken to neighbours that I've never met before. We have a "kerbside cocktail" hour every Saturday, all maintaining 2m distance."

Woman, 60s, South-East England

Many responses commented on the spirit of their local community during lockdown, and how it had made space and time to be friendlier with others, smiling more and checking in on each other. Some said that this new sense of community spirit had been driven by the 'clap for carers', which had brought most of the street out together once a week, often leading to conversations with one another from over the fence.

"Our road has really pulled together, sharing shopping, giving things away and supporting those in need.[...]The Thursday clap has really brought people together as a community - as has our regular Friday socially-distanced drinks party in the road 'Gin by the bins'."

Woman, 40s, London

"We formed a street based Whatsapp group at the beginning of lockdown and we keep in touch on an almost daily basis. Where we can exchange and swap ideas, update on available slots for supermarkets, and make sure everyone

is doing ok. On VE Day we had a very socially distant street party which helped our community come together even more. We also found that Clap for Carers was such a socially unifying event."

Man, 60s, South-West England

However, some had also noticed that these claps had also been a moment for people to judge others on the street. Those that did not get involved might be criticised and ostracised by the rest of the street. For some respondents, it was an indication of the strength of community spirit in their local area, whether good or bad.

"Our local community is doing very well right now and we now know the names and indeed faces of many neighbours - not hard as we live in a Mews. Everyone chats more. There has been some vigorous encouragement of Thursday night clapping for carers which has been almost at the level of naming and shaming anyone who doesn't as it's so obvious if someone isn't out in the Mews clapping, but it's gone well here."

Woman, 60s, London

"Realised that there is no sense of community round here. The turnout on the weekly 'clap for carers' was pitiful (never above about 40%) and the last one last week was awful: low turnout and disrupted by teenagers playing football and shouting and swearing while the clap was happening (which meant it was even shorter than usual)."

Man 50s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Many responses also highlighted the role of social media in their community groups in facilitating local communication. For many respondents, the ease and efficiency of the group chats had meant that many of them were able to share with a larger group of neighbours. These groups were often experienced as the bedrock of their local communities, enabling people to easily stay in touch at a distance. They also often formed the basis for helping one another and organising community action groups.

"The street has a Whatsapp mutual help group. This acts like a rolling conversation that everyone can see and join in. The result is that I know more about the rest of the street beyond my close group of houses. We ask and offer help and favours. It also means that we now have each other's phone numbers. We are also part of a Whatsapp group that covers our wider area. None of this comes as a surprise. I would say

that it is typical of the neighbourhood."

Woman, 70s, West Midlands

While many had been pleased to be part of a local WhatsApp group, others had found it difficult to navigate the new etiquette of their neighborhoods being online. Respondents were often worried that some of the content other members were sharing might either upset other users who were in different circumstances due to Covid-19, or that other neighbours were using it to break the rules.

"It's good news that our street is now much friendlier and we've looked out for each other thanks to a whatsapp group, whereas before we rarely exchanged more than a few words[...] I am also conscious of some vocal people in chat groups who took extreme positions and alleged anyone who went out at all is threatening their life and breaking rules they imagine were more strict than actually the case."

Man, 60s, South-West England

Despite the multiple responses stating that their community had been an important part of making the lockdown bearable - often emotionally and physically providing help - others reported acutely different experiences with their neighbours. Many explained how tensions had developed from being stuck in close proximity with one another.

"I think tensions have been brought out in the neighbourhood with everyone being stuck in their houses all the time, and on hot, sunny days there have been some problems with consistently noisy neighbours (who maybe weren't so obviously noisy before!) It is understandable that these tensions have arisen given the circumstances, but sometimes it's difficult to empathise when a couple of households are making it intolerable for the whole street."

Woman 20s, East Midlands

Tensions also revolved around lock-down rules. Respondents were regularly upset by those who did not seem to be sticking to the rules. Uncertainty around the rules and what was appropriate or not intensified these tensions, with people feeling they had very different interpretations to others.

"On a more negative side, as lockdown is easing, I have noticed that people's level of fear and feelings about risk are highly variable and at times my own feelings about the pandemic have been at odds with friends and family I am close to, which negatively impacts on relationships."

Woman, 30s, South-West England

A sense of community spirit and closeness to neighbours has not been a universal experience. Some respondents were deeply upset by the lack of community and felt they had personally been left out. Some said they had not felt able to call on their neighbours for help that they needed. This led to them feeling isolated and vulnerable.

“As for being helped ourselves- I realised we have very few local friends to call upon for help who were not vulnerable themselves. We need a community association really. My parents benefited greatly from their community links - especially with their church. We did not have that and I had to ask the pharmacy to deliver a repeat prescription to me when we were in quarantine.”

Woman, 40s, South East England

“VE Day was one of the most challenging days for me. [...] I live on my own and I saw reports in the media showing how lots of streets were throwing socially distanced parties for VE day and thought perhaps I could see what was going on in my area.[...] I went out for a walk later in the afternoon but my street was completely empty. I walked down every street on my entire estate of around 260 houses and only saw 4 people, all in different streets and no signs of any street parties (except for one house which had a flag in the window and small bit of bunting down the side of the house - perhaps they had their party earlier in the day).[...] I was feeling really down by the time I had walked round the estate.”

Man, 60s, South West England

Whilst many respondents had felt left out, many more praised the actions of their local communities. Many commented on the ability of their communities to very quickly organise support groups to help ensure that people in need were identified and helped. At the same time there was concern that this activity might not last once people return to work and spend less time in their community.

“Our support network was up and running within 4 days of the pandemic being declared. I personally have either collected prescriptions or bought shopping for 20 people. Most of those are elderly, living alone and self isolating and one is younger but clinically vulnerable. All are lonely and really welcome the chance to have a socially distanced chat on the doorstep.

We have had no shortage of volunteers coming forward, mainly because people have been unable to go to work or university and this gives them a diversion. As life starts to revert to normal a large void will be left. “

Woman, 60s, South West England

“During lockdown and especially through involvement with the community network either as a volunteer or recipient of help, many residents have encountered other residents from all socio-economic groups and learned a great deal more about who their neighbours are. There is a strengthened sense of community - whether this is because of the unique situation of everyone being at home or because a village is a manageable settlement in terms of its size, time will only tell.”

Woman, 60s, East of England

For many respondents, the success of their local community groups had led them to place a higher value on local-problem solving and the value of local rather than central governments. This was often picked up in the ‘anything else’ question, where respondents had seen their local community groups pull together much faster and sometimes more efficiently than other organisations in the area or the Government.

“We have a great community that pulls together- the town council, a development trust, many volunteer organisations, including a new virtual good neighbours group that has attracted younger volunteers, food bank, meals provision etc. We are working together to create our own solutions- using community resources in addition to bringing in other charities and services. A challenge but we are geared up to solve it.”

Woman, 60s, South-West England

Being confined to local communities had a radical impact on people’s behaviours. For most respondents, lockdown has meant that they lived their lives exclusively in their communities. Without commuting into work or going out for entertainment, people had been forced to stay local and either shop online or in their local shops. This encouraged many to change their shopping habits in support of local businesses, which in turn has made them feel better connected to their local areas.

“We found that because we were unable to get slots from supermarkets for online deliveries, we found alternative suppliers - our diet has improved enormously. We eat good quality fruit

and veg, from a supplier that used to deliver to restaurants but has changed its customer base to residential customers now. We also eat much more fresh fish - also delivered by previously catering based fishmongers. And we have meat delivered from a local butcher. Each of the companies we have chosen to use is local, and we have recommended them to so many of our neighbours.”

Woman, 50s, London

In addition, many respondents explained how their inability to travel had meant that they had to spend their leisure time locally. This for some respondents had led to them rekindling their connection to their local area. Many found joy in getting to know their local areas better and enjoying their local environment.

“It’s been uplifting in many ways. I don’t have to work/commute into London. The weather is amazing. I have discovered just how stunning my local area is and taken up walking. I feel much healthier and less stressed.”

Woman, 60s, South East England

For younger respondents, this was not necessarily the case. Many of them had felt trapped in their local areas, and were keen to go out and explore other areas that are further afield.

“I feel a bit trapped and I’m 18 so I want to be able to experience different places in the UK so after this is finished I think it’s good to go out and experience other things from the local area”

Man, 18-24, South East England

Respondents also referred to changes in their home lives in their responses to the question ‘Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?’ Their responses showed that for many, lockdown had been a time of reflection on life and many felt quite strongly that they wanted to make some permanent changes for the better. Many resolved to achieve a better work/ life balance.

“Our previous way of life was unsustainable. We were working too many hours, prioritising the wrong things and running ourselves into the ground.”

Woman, 60s, South East England

Others had gained a new appreciation for their local community, and particularly its outdoor spaces and natural environment, which we also look at in the

environment section. But there was also a darker side to some reflections, with some respondents feeling their optimistic outlook had been challenged. For some, living through a pandemic had bought home the unpredictability, fragility and brevity of life.

“Learnt that life can be altered without warning. My faith in people has been shattered in many aspects, that being said restored by many.”

Woman, 40s, West Midlands

“How much we need human interaction with our friends and how the need to socialise is so prominent in my life. I learnt that I need to do whatever I want to do in my life after this to enjoy it as life is short.”

Man, 18-24, South East England

“That life is never stable and what we believed to be normal has now changed into what feels like a dystopian novel.”

Woman, 70s South West England

More positively, a young man from London reflected simply, *“I value the simpler things in life more - a bbq, a game of golf, a run in the park.”* Whichever sentiment held sway, it is clear that, for many, lockdown had led to an evaluation of their relationship to others, to their community and to life in general.

FINANCES

All parts of the economy have been impacted by the coronavirus and ensuing lockdown measures. In April 2020, the UK economy shrank by 20.4% - its largest contraction since records began and 3 times bigger than the drop in March 2009 which followed the financial crash.

Measures like the furlough scheme and the government's comprehensive loan and grant packages available for businesses will have a detrimental effect on the government's finances.⁶¹ The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) have suggested that public sector net borrowing will reach nearly £300bn for 2020-21.⁶²

Most businesses have suffered from the lockdown. Nearly a quarter of firms in the UK temporarily closed or stopped trading.⁶³ The majority of sectors have suffered historic declines.⁶⁴ The impact is sorest in service sectors, specifically arts, accommodation and food service, roughly 80% of which have ceased trading temporarily.⁶⁵

The government has responded by offering a wide

61 BBC. Coronavirus: More than a quarter of UK workers now furloughed. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52883453> [accessed 13/08/2020]

62 OBR. Coronavirus analysis. OBR, 2020. Available at: <https://obr.uk/coronavirus-analysis/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

63 ONS. Business Impact of COVID-19 Survey (BICS). ONS, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/economicoutputandproductivity/output/datasets/businessimpactofcovid19survey-bics> [accessed 13/08/2020]

64 ONS. Coronavirus and the impact on output in the UK economy: April 2020. ONS, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/coronavirusandtheimpactonoutputintheukconomy/april2020> [accessed 13/08/2020]

65 ONS. Coronavirus and the impact on output in the UK economy: April 2020.

"We haven't been eligible for much help sadly. Thank goodness for mortgage payment and loan payment holidays."



range of loans and grants to businesses depending on their size and industry.⁶⁶ So far, the total value of business loans approved by the government is roughly £40 billion.⁶⁷ Additionally, VAT rates for hospitality and tourism services were cut from 20% to 5%, starting on the 15th of July.⁶⁸ Through the 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme, the Treasury has also offered an unprecedented scheme of support to these industries by paying half of the bill for consumers eating out on Monday to Wednesday in the month of August.⁶⁹

In response to large scale unemployment and significant drops in income following the lockdown measures, the government increased the Universal Credit allowance by an extra £1040 a year above the scheduled uprating.⁷⁰ Additional funding has also been allocated to local authorities to support the financially vulnerable, as well as an extra £1bn for struggling renters through housing benefit and Universal Credit.⁷¹

The furlough scheme is providing significantly more funding for those in work than Universal Credit. On average, those on furlough are losing 9% of their disposable income, whereas those who have lost their jobs and signed up to Universal Credit have lost 46% of their income.⁷²

Universal Credit has been largely successful in providing income to struggling families. Over 90% of payments have been made in full and on time, and 74% of new users of universal credit stated that they were happy with the service provided.⁷³

66 GOV.uk. Financial support for businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19). GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-support-for-businesses-during-coronavirus-covid-19> [accessed 13/08/2020]

67 GOV.uk. HM Treasury coronavirus (COVID-19) business loan scheme statistics. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hm-treasury-coronavirus-covid-19-business-loan-scheme-statistics> [accessed 13/08/2020]

68 BBC. What is VAT and how does it work? BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-53334098#:~:text=Chancellor%20Rishi%20Sunak%20is%20cutting,to%20attractions%20across%20the%20UK.> [accessed 13/08/2020]

69 GOV.uk. Get a discount with the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-a-discount-with-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme> [accessed 13/08/2020]

70 Mackley, A., Hobson, F and Kennedy S. Coronavirus: Claiming welfare benefits (update). House of Commons Library, 2020. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/insights/coronavirus-claiming-welfare-benefits/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

71 Mackley, A., Hobson, F and Kennedy S. Coronavirus: Claiming welfare benefits (update).

72 Brewer, M and Handscomb, K. This time is different – Universal Credit's first recession. Resolution Foundation, 2020. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/this-time-is-different-universal-credits-first-recession/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

73 Brewer, M and Handscomb, K. This time is different – Universal Credit's first recession.

74 Surico, P., Känzig, D and Hacıoglu, S. Consumption in the time of Covid-19: evidence from UK transaction data. CEPR, 2020, p1. Available at: <https://repec.cepr.org/repec/cpr/ceprdp/DP14733.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

75 Bingham, G and Leslie, J. Rainy days. Resolution Foundation, 2020. Available at: <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/publications/rainy-days/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

76 Aldrick, P. Households' record debt repayments. The Times, 2020. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/business/households-record-debt-repayments-gmq8txr8m> [accessed 13/08/2020]

77 Adams-Prassl, A and others. Inequality in the impact of the coronavirus shock: new survey evidence for the UK. University of Cambridge: Faculty of Economics, 2020, p2. Available at: <https://www.inet.econ.cam.ac.uk/working-paper-pdfs/wp2010.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

78 Hargrave, R. Government announces £150m more in coronavirus charity funding. Civil Society, 2020. Available at: <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/government-announces-150m-more-in-coronavirus-charity-funding.html> [accessed 13/08/2020]

79 Collinson, P. Covid-19 pay freezes on UK loans and credit cards start today. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/apr/09/covid-19-pay-freezes-on-uk-loans-and-credit-cards-start-today> [accessed 13/08/2020]

The COVID 19 crisis has seen the biggest drop in household spending ever seen - a drop on average of 40-50%.⁷⁴ In general, the state of household finances has been impacted negatively for those who were already less wealthy. Those who were wealthy prior to the pandemic have increased their savings and paid off their debt, whilst poorer families are more likely to have accrued more debt.⁷⁵ UK households paid off a total of £7.4 billion of debt in April, which the Bank of England have said is unprecedented.⁷⁶

Personal finances are likely to have suffered more among the younger generations - 69% of workers under 30 have said that they lost hours in the first week of lockdown.⁷⁷ This is likely to be, in part, because young people are more likely to have worked in industries which have suffered the most, such as retail and hospitality.

Individuals in difficult financial situations are more likely to need access to credit: March and April saw a significant rise in the share of users incurring some form of bank charges. However there have been some measures implemented to protect those with negative budgets. The FCA introduced an emergency package of 'breathing space' which freezes payments on loans and credit cards, and the government has offered a significant sum of money as part of their charity funding to improve vulnerable people's access to credit.^{78,79}

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT MONEY AND SPENDING

The open access survey asked questions about household income, how personal income and employment changed as a result of this pandemic.

The open access survey asked:

1. What is your household income?
2. What is your personal income?
3. What is your employment status? from a list of options including employed, unemployed, self-employed, full or part time or not looking for work.
4. Has your income fallen due to this pandemic?

7553 out of the 11,689 respondents answered questions about their money and spending. The number of responses varied slightly for the three questions. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than to the survey as a whole.

Our analysis of responses to these questions found:

- People earning up to £20,000 a year were more likely to report significant drops in both household and personal income, as well as the highest proportion of respondents with significant increases in household spending.
- Almost three-quarters of all respondents (72%) said their spending had reduced.
- Respondents in higher income brackets were less likely to report decreased income and more likely to report decreased spending.
- Only 8% on household incomes over £50,000 a year said their spending had increased, while 19% of those on incomes up to £20,000 reported this change.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to money and spending. The most common themes were the change in income and expenditure, impact on savings and pensions and, for business owners, impact on their livelihoods.

Respondents wrote about the change in their incomes, particularly those who experienced a reduction in earnings as a result of furloughing, job loss or reduction in hours. However, many also commented on a reduction in living costs, for

example of travel and work-related expenditure. Others said they were spending less on leisure, partly because of not eating out. Not being able to shop for non-essential goods had resulted in reduced costs for many respondents.

"We have realised how much money we spent going out for meals, drinks, socialising. We do miss this aspect of our lives but have changed our habits (obviously!) and now spend more time creating meals at home."

Woman, 40s, East Midlands

"During the lockdown period since March 23rd, we have spent nothing on going out, so reduced our outgoings. This includes theatre/museum trips, cinema, restaurants, coffee shops, clothes shops and any other entertainment out of the home."

Woman, 50s, South East England

"For me personally it has been an opportunity to save money as I cannot do the usual things I would do; go to the theatre, go to the cinema, go out for dinner, a coffee or a drink. I have had money refunded due to the amount of events I was going to go to being cancelled (theatre and music concerts). So weirdly, I've had more income than usual in April and May."

Woman, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Some respondents were reflecting on their life-style and spending habits. They had become more aware of waste and the impact of consumerism on the environment. Some were resolving to spend less and to reposition their priorities in life away from unnecessary shopping and spending. As part of this resolve, some said they were increasing donations they made to charities. Others had a new interest in shopping locally and with greater consideration for the environment.

"I have been able to save each month, which in all honesty I could have done before, but used to buy far more clothes online, but as most retailers have limited stock. This has given me a much needed opportunity to look at what I was spending and analyse if I miss what I was buying before, and I don't miss it... We weren't particularly materialistic before, but this has given us both an opportunity to assess what is really important to us - where we want to prioritise our spending in future."

Woman, 40s, London

"We are spending far less on fuel as we are

cycling and walking more. Over all our reduction in spending has been greater than our loss in earnings. We have had an opportunity to consider our spending and, although we have always been frugal, are planning to further eschew consumerism for a more basic and sustainable future."

Woman, 50s, South West England

"I have not been tempted to buy things that I didn't really need because I've not visited shops, supermarkets or garden centres. I've not booked a holiday but have cancelled one. The crisis has taught me that I can do without so much and I'm surprised at the surplus in my bank account at the end of each month."

Man, 50s, North West England

Some respondents said they had been able to save more money as a result of spending less. Many receiving the state pension said they felt financially stable. However, others experienced instability and were more reliant than before the pandemic on their savings. They had seen their value fall: some had lost money through the collapse in financial markets; many others were concerned about the future return on their savings and pensions. Some were confident that the value of their savings would recover; others were not.

"My husband was already out of work, and had been for two years before the pandemic...I was made redundant at the end of March. Since then, we've been a zero-income household, reliant upon my redundancy payout (statutory amount for 9 years service), small amount of savings and Universal Credit/JSA [Jobseekers Allowance]."

Woman, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

"We are lucky, our pensions remain the same. Investments have taken a hammering but we have been through that before. Stock market will recover eventually, just have to hope it is not too many years."

Woman, 70s, Scotland

Financial worries loomed larger for business owners, the self-employed and low earners who lacked savings. Owners of hospitality businesses were particularly badly hit, with a number facing liquidation. Uncertainty over the easing of lockdown was a source of anxiety for business owners. Self employed people also said their businesses had been on hold and faced an uncertain or difficult future.

"I realised quickly in February when my overseas work in Singapore and Shanghai were cancelled that coronavirus was going to significantly affect my ability to gain projects. I am a Limited Company, being the sole employee and Director of my company. I have often felt a lot of pride being able to say I have run my own company for 7 years...[The Chancellor] offered the following options - a loan/line of credit that I can't imagine being able to pay back due to the work in the conference industry drying up overnight, or furlough myself and get 80% of my pay."

Woman, 30s, South East England

"Both of us are self employed so have taken a hit, we have had to use our savings. We haven't been eligible for much help sadly. Thank goodness for mortgage payment and loan payment holidays."

Woman, 30s, South West England

Negative experiences were not universal however, with owners of some businesses benefiting from the restrictions on non-essential shopping during lockdown.

"I am an entrepreneur and I find more opportunities to come out of crises than in the good times I like to do things differently and see opportunities everywhere so this environment suits my way of being and thinking I am a super positive person. I think crises open peoples minds to do things differently and with a nothing to lose attitude like the war/ post war. Hardship breeds innovation , so I see a world full of opportunity."

Woman, 60s, London

"As a tutor I am actually busier than before with online opportunities."

Woman, 60s, South East England

"I quickly found that a small enterprise I had been trying to set up came to an immediate halt thanks to not being able to sell on Facebook or eBay . Although Facebook marketplace was still running , it would have broken the lockdown rules to have people come to my house to purchase goods. Again although the post office was open it seemed an extra unfair burden to place on staff to post in essential items . However once lockdown was relaxed slightly my sales actually increased due in part I assume to shops being closed."

Woman, 40s, South East England

Lockdown clearly had a highly variable impact on people's finances, with many suffering large short-term losses which are unlikely to recover. And both the short and longer term impacts will vary by location among other factors. Crucially, they will depend on the extent and effectiveness of support given by the Government in the coming year.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

The pandemic is a health crisis of unparalleled proportions.

HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES

Health services world-wide have been racing to source enough equipment (such as ventilators and other ICU apparatus) and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to treat a massive influx of critically ill, highly contagious patients, as well as developing testing and therapeutics. At the same time their counterparts in health research have been pioneering new techniques to compress the five to ten year development of a vaccine into a matter of months.

The UK government's lockdown strategy has been primarily designed to protect the NHS from becoming overwhelmed – slowing the rate of infection to ensure adequate ICU capacity for all those who need it. The government also provided £6 billion of additional health funding and created seven temporary 'Nightingale' hospitals nationwide, cut red tape to make it easier for hospitals to expand capacity, and removed import taxes and VAT on PPE.⁸⁰ Retired doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals were encouraged to return to work, while medical students had their studies suspended and were sent to work on Covid-19 wards in a "all hands on deck" approach.⁸¹ A range of key workers (including health and care staff) have been given an above inflation pay rise in recognition of their efforts.⁸²

⁸⁰ Charity Tax Group. Coronavirus information hub for charity tax and finance professionals. Charity Tax Group, 2020. Available at: <https://www.charitytaxgroup.org.uk/news-post/2020/coronavirus-information-hub-charity-tax-finance-professionals/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

⁸¹ NHS England. Student doctors and nurses praised for joining 'NHS Army' to tackle historic coronavirus threat. NHS England, 2020. Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2020/04/student-docs-and-nurses-praised-for-joining-nhs-army-to-tackle-historic-coronavirus-threat/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

⁸² BBC. Coronavirus: Above-inflation pay rise for almost 900,000 public sector workers. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53478404> [accessed 13/08/2020]

"My mental health has definitely suffered and I have had trouble sleeping at times."



This approach has in one sense been successful; the NHS was not overwhelmed with critical patients at the peak of the infection, and some of the Nightingale hospitals have closed down having not treated a single patient.⁸³ On the other hand, the UK has one of the highest Covid-19 death rates in the world. Half or more⁸⁴ of those deaths happened in care homes⁸⁵, and the Government has come under severe criticism that the “protect the NHS” strategy was at the expense of the social care sector. A number of measures allowed the virus to spread in care homes: a policy of discharging older people testing positive for Covid-19; inadequate PPE supplies and testing for staff and residents; and slow action to stop visits and agency staff travelling between care homes. These steps led to a catastrophic rate of infection among a very vulnerable population.⁸⁶ This unfolding scandal has led to wider scrutiny of the stagnation in social care policy in recent years and its continued underfunding relative to ring fenced budgets for the NHS. There is a growing consensus that the pandemic could become a defining moment for social care reform.⁸⁷

OUR OWN HEALTH

The pandemic is a challenge for health and care services, but it is also a lived experience for over 300,000 people in the UK who have already contracted Covid-19 at the time of writing. With each new infection the virus is better understood:

a loss of smell and taste, various rashes (the so-called “Covid Toe”⁸⁸) and problems with blood clotting have now become associated with Covid-19. Clotting problems have led to a range of serious complications including renal failure and stroke⁸⁹ as well as pulmonary fibrosis (permanent lung scarring).⁹⁰ A growing proportion of those who have had Covid-19 are also reporting long-term health impacts, weeks or months after becoming ill. These include breathlessness, fatigue, joint pain and cognitive confusion. The term “Long Covid”⁹¹ is now being used as patient groups are being established to advocate for more support for and research into the long term effects of the virus. In July 2020, the NHS launched a rehabilitation service for the estimated tens of thousands of those suffering the after-effects of Covid-19 infection.⁹²

While this new and mysterious threat to our health is occupying politicians, health leaders and the public alike, it is also true that people across the UK are still having heart attacks, are still needing cancer diagnosis and treatment, and are still having babies. There is growing concern, however, that people are not using the NHS as much as they should.

A&E admissions were 57% lower in April compared with April 2019;⁹³ and were still 30% lower in June 2020 compared with June 2019.⁹⁴ 60% fewer people with suspected cancer were referred to specialist treatment and access to services for people with

other pre-existing conditions fell by about 20%.⁹⁵ Many reported that the reason for not accessing healthcare was a lack of availability, or fear of spreading or contracting the virus.⁹⁶

Health analysts are now warning of a “time bomb” of undiagnosed diseases – for example, MacMillan estimates 1900 cancers have gone undiagnosed each week during the pandemic as people put off GP visits or regular check-ups.⁹⁷ By the end of May, the NHS recorded a third fewer heart attack admissions than they would expect.⁹⁸

Many patients have resorted to online or virtual consultations with their physicians, with the use of NHS apps and digital access increasing significantly during the pandemic.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the number of excess deaths that may occur as a result of fewer people being diagnosed and treated for serious conditions during the pandemic is likely to be considerable – up to 35,000 excess deaths for undiagnosed and untreated cancer alone.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, emerging evidence suggests premature births have dropped dramatically during lockdowns in many countries around the world, including the UK. Researchers are exploring whether working from home or more home-based lifestyles, or the drop in air pollution, are contributing factors in this reduction.¹⁰¹

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT HEALTH AND CARE

The open access survey asked people whether anyone in their household had contracted Covid-19. Over 11,000 people responded to this question, with 25% reporting someone in their household had been infected. Of this group, 87% said that this was based on the symptoms experienced; only 3% had their Covid status confirmed by a test.

The survey also asked:

1. Are there any times you have decided not to go to your GP or to hospital when you otherwise would have done due to the pandemic?

2. How damaging, if at all, do you think the pandemic and its effects has been to your mental health?

6456 of the 11,689 respondents answered one or both of these questions. We found:

- 37% of respondents answering the question on access to health services confirmed that there have been times that they avoided going to their GP or hospital because of the pandemic. This was roughly consistent across age groups, except for those in the 18-24 bracket, where this figure increased to 50%.
- Worryingly, 52% of those who reported having a long term health condition also said that they had avoided their GP or hospital.
- Women were more likely than men to say they had avoided going to their GP or to hospital.
- A third of respondents answering the question on mental health said that lockdown had been very or fairly damaging to their mental health. This figure was higher among women.
- Respondents who identified as disabled were more likely to say their mental health had declined during lockdown.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic, relating to health and social care. Concerns about access to health services dominated responses to this open question, with many reporting the cancellation of appointments and operations, and uncertainty around when they would be rescheduled. Several reported the inability to access dental care had caused considerable problems.

“I had spent the first 3 months of the year edging towards an initial consultation with a vascular consultant in April - cancelled. Don't know if I'll have to go through all the hoops again or not.”

83 Day, M. Covid-19: Nightingale hospitals set to shut down after seeing few patients. BMJ, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bmj.com/content/369/bmj.m1860> [accessed 13/08/2020]

84 Savage, M. More than half of England's coronavirus-related deaths will be people from care homes. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jun/07/more-than-half-of-englands-coronavirus-related-deaths-will-be-people-from-care-homes> [accessed 13/08/2020] and The MJ. Long-term care in the wake of COVID-19. The MJ, 2020. Available at: <https://www.themj.co.uk/Long-term-care-in-the-wake-of-COVID-19/218222> [accessed 13/08/2020]

85 Peart, L. Care home COVID-19 deaths continue to fall in July. Care Home Professional, 2020. Available at: <https://www.carehomeprofessional.com/breaking-news-care-home-covid-19-deaths-continue-to-fall-in-july/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

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87 Hill, E. A new deal

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95 Charlesworth, A., Watt, T and Thorlby, R. Early insight into the impacts of COVID-19 on care for people with long-term conditions. The Health Foundation, 2020. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/news-and-comment/blogs/early-insight-into-the-impacts-of-covid-19-on-care-for-people-with-long-term>

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My mother was due a hip replacement on March 20 - cancelled. Is now mostly immobile, in constant pain and sleeping poorly. Have no idea when she might be rescheduled or if she might be further delayed by being deemed at-risk.

Access to a GP - normally very difficult - has become Sisyphean [impossible]. Of course, GPs are the gatekeepers of the NHS so even if there is capacity somewhere in the NHS there's no practical way to access it."

Man, 50s, North West England

However, many respondents also felt reluctant to place demands on the health service during this crisis period and reported avoiding seeing their GP and attempting self-care at home as an alternative. Some were also concerned that going to the GP or hospital might put them at greater risk of contracting Covid-19 and therefore went without the help they needed.

"I didn't contact my GP surgery initially when my asthma got suddenly worse. I felt they were needed elsewhere and didn't feel safe attending a hospital or the surgery. I tried to control my symptoms as best I could at home."

Woman, 50s, Scotland

"I have a slipped disc at the bottom of my spine- I would normally be going to the GP to consider treatment options - I have stayed away to allow my Doctors to cope with more pressing issues."

Woman, 40s, South West England

Around a third of respondents to the mental health question in our survey reported their mental health was fairly or very badly affected by the pandemic and lockdown. The open question responses can be categorised loosely into three groups:

One distinct group of respondents reported their mental health deteriorating due to anxiety about contracting Covid-19 or about their financial situation, or due to depression linked to social isolation. Many reported trouble sleeping and feeling anxious when leaving the house.

A second group reported having pre-existing mental health conditions (depression, PTSD etc), the symptoms of which have either been exacerbated during this period or neglected due to limited access to treatments.

"I have found the whole situation very worrying and stressful. At the beginning I was worried about the availability of food and feeding my

family. My mental health has definitely suffered and I have had trouble sleeping at times."

Woman, 30s, South East England

"Unfortunately I have been told that my options with getting therapy for my depression are severely limited at the moment so I'm having to wait longer than I might have done otherwise."

Woman, late 20s, London

"My partner was diagnosed with a mental health condition and was part way through therapy when lockdown started. His therapy was stopped as the staff have been switched to "frontline NHS" support. He was told he was in the next most serious group of patients but he has been unable to restart NHS therapy. In the meantime his mental health has got much worse with terrible flashbacks, trouble sleeping and depression."

Woman, 50s, London

A third group buck this trend, and actually report improved mental health, less anxiety and stress – linked to being away from work, and having time to spend with family and pursue hobbies or spend more time outdoors.

"Overall my life has been calmer, easier and more relaxed during the pandemic than in normal times. I have enjoyed having my partner and daughter at home all the time as we have eaten together, watched TV and films and played board games and walked together, which we never usually have time or opportunity to do."

Woman, 40s, South East England

"I have benefitted from not having to travel, allowing a far better work life balance. My mental health has improved as work is less stressful. The quality of my work has improved as I have more time to think and focus, and fewer distractions."

Woman, 40s, South East England

Many respondents to our survey report that their perceptions of the NHS and care services have changed. While most already recognised the value of the NHS and felt this had been reaffirmed during this period, several respondents reported a new, greater appreciation of the social care sector and care workers. This may well be due to the increased media coverage regarding the impact of Covid-19 in the care sector: many respondents expressed shock

and anger at the way in which the virus has spread and killed so many care home residents. Others referenced public expressions of gratitude such as the 'Care' badge and "clap for carers".

Themes arising in the responses included that social care services are the NHS's "poor relation" and this reflected poorly on the Government's aim of protecting old and vulnerable people. Respondents also raised the need for parity of esteem between health and social care and improved pay and conditions for care staff.

"What's important and what isn't has changed so much I feel a complete overhaul of the County is needed. We don't need banks etc but we do need the NHS and social care. These should be prioritised and fully funded from now on."

Woman, 40s, North East England

"I want the options for care for older and vulnerable people to be expanded, properly paid for and imaginative opportunities explored.. What is available at present does not honour or value our senior citizens, and the attitude from the UK government in particular, seemingly writing off care homes as irrelevant, has proved a costly mistake."

Woman, 70+, Scotland

These responses reflect the views of many that the pandemic has created an opportunity to re-evaluate our priorities and to create a new, more sustainable future for our health and care services.

DEMOCRACY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

This section of the report looks at legislation changes, parliamentary processes and the criminal justice system. It also looks at the impact on political beliefs.

LEGISLATION CHANGES

On the 25th of March, the Coronavirus Act was passed in the House of Commons without a vote.¹⁰² The provisions of the bill expire after two years, and the government must report to the House about the continued use of these provisions and allow them to vote on it every six months.¹⁰³ The powers which the Act handed to the government are seen by some as the greatest restriction on individual liberty in British history.¹⁰⁴

The Home Secretary has been given the power to significantly restrict the freedom to gather and the movement of people. This includes the power to close airports and places of worship and to restrict access to any place. The Home Secretary has also been granted significantly increased investigative powers.¹⁰⁵ Detaining individuals for the sake of public safety has also become far easier to carry out, as assessment criteria have been relaxed and

"I feel it has become very clear that there is one set of rules for ordinary people and another for those with power and privilege, and this is not a good thing."



102 Nice, A. Legislation to manage the coronavirus pandemic. Institute for Government, 2020. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/legislation-manage-coronavirus-pandemic>

103 Nice, A. Legislation to manage the coronavirus pandemic. Institute for Government, 2020. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/legislation-manage-coronavirus-pandemic>

104 Snowdon, C. Liberty After The Lockdown. IEA, 2020. Available at: <https://iea.org.uk/publications/liberty-after-the-lockdown/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

105 Department for Health and Social Care. What the Coronavirus Bill will do. DHSC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do/what-the-coronavirus-bill-will-do> [accessed 13/08/2020]

detainment can last for longer periods of time.¹⁰⁶ Significant fines have been issued to those who have not complied with the rules.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCESSES

In response to lockdown, parliament made some of the fastest and most far reaching reforms to its process in its history. Parliament as it is normally conducted was ceased to allow for members and staff to practise social distancing. Technology was built into the chamber to allow for MPs to ask questions and attend sessions in the chamber remotely. However, even with these installments, a maximum of 120 MPs have been allowed in the chamber at any time, only 50 of whom are allowed to be physically present and must be two metres apart on the benches.¹⁰⁷

Overall, this means that parliament has not been able to carry out as much scrutiny as usual. Some have argued that this has led to a significant impact on the transparency and accountability of the government in the chamber, particularly as the speaker has asked members to refrain from asking non-urgent questions.¹⁰⁸ Some have also suggested that the format minimises opportunity for spontaneity and hence the effectiveness of parliamentarians in scrutinising government legislation.¹⁰⁹

Some have urged for some virtual elements of change to remain following the end of lockdown measures - in particular the ability for non-present members to submit written questions to the chamber. Committees have also suggested that virtual settings have increased their ability to scrutinise as members do not need to be present.

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107 Parliament.uk. Return of the House of Commons: update on first steps to a virtual House. Parliament.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2020/april1/return-of-the-house-of-commons-update-on-first-steps-to-a-virtual-house/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

108 White, H. How could a virtual parliament work? Institute for Government, 2020. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/virtual-parliament.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

109 Lilly, A and White, H. Parliament's role in the coronavirus crisis: Holding the government to account. Institute for Government, 2020, p2. Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/parliament-role-coronavirus-crisis-holding-government-account.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

110 Amnesty International. UK: Government's coronavirus Bill explained. Amnesty International, 2020. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/coronavirus/uk-coronavirus-bill-explained> [accessed 13/08/2020]

111 Alders, G. Rising to the policing challenge of COVID-19: Looking beyond the crisis. PwC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/government-public-services/public-sector-research-centre/policing-challenge-of-covid-19.html> [accessed 13/08/2020]

112 GOV.uk. Coronavirus (COVID-19): increased risk of fraud and cybercrime against charities. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-covid-19-increased-risk-of-fraud-and-cybercrime-against-charities> [accessed 13/08/2020]

113 Interpol. COVID-19 cyberthreats. Interpol, 2020. Available at: <https://www.interpol.int/en/Crimes/Cybercrime/COVID-19-cyberthreats> [accessed 13/08/2020]

114 Alders, G. Rising to the policing challenge of COVID-19: Looking beyond the crisis. PwC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/government-public-services/public-sector-research-centre/policing-challenge-of-covid-19.html> [accessed 13/08/2020]

115 Alders, G. Rising to the policing challenge of COVID-19: Looking beyond the crisis.

POLICE, PRISONS AND JUSTICE

The Coronavirus Act (2020) gave the police extra powers to manage the crisis. At the beginning of the pandemic, police were given the powers to detain and hold people that they thought could be infectious for up to 48 hours.¹¹⁰ Criteria for detaining individuals under the mental health act were also loosened, meaning that police powers to detain were generally increased. Following some relaxation in lockdown, the police were instructed to be less invasive on public liberty. However, under the coronavirus act, they are still technically able to exercise powers.

With the increased use of the internet during the pandemic, the police have shifted their focus slightly toward managing cybercrime, as well as the government issuing guidance for firms on how to protect themselves against potential threats.¹¹¹¹¹² Cyber-criminals have been regularly creating new sites under the guise of coronavirus information - malware and ransomware are being found across coronavirus related sites online.¹¹³

Violence within households increased during lockdown with Refuge's National Domestic Abuse Helpline receiving 25% more phone calls than normal.¹¹⁴ As less social interaction occurs outside of family spaces, it has, in some ways, become much harder for police to identify cases of domestic abuse.¹¹⁵

Following a fear that prisons may become infection engines at the beginning of the pandemic, lockdown measures were imposed particularly stringently. All visits were stopped, as friends and relatives of prisoners were encouraged to write in or call; 55 prisons across the UK provided the inmates with a mobile phone so that they could contact designated

contacts.¹¹⁶

Some risk-assessed prisoners who were within two months of their scheduled release date were also granted an early release temporarily in order to minimise the total contact within the prisons.¹¹⁷¹¹⁸ Over 20% of these were female prisoners.¹¹⁹

In mid-March, all parole hearings were cancelled.¹²⁰ Some main court hearings have been held online, with witnesses minimised and reporting journalists given the opportunity to follow cases remotely. This has led to concerns that this environment makes it harder to achieve the same level of empathy as might have been possible in face-to-face cases.¹²¹ Nonetheless, research suggests that there are positives to be taken from the managerial benefits provided by the use of technology in courtrooms.¹²²

POLITICAL BELIEFS

At the beginning of the pandemic, faith in governments across the world skyrocketed, with double figures gains in surveys about public trust.¹²³ However, as predicted by the Edelman Trust's paper on trust during the pandemic, double digit gains are usually 'bubbles', which are quickly followed by declines. In the UK, approval ratings of the government reached new highs around the time of the official lockdown, but have since cut down significantly, reaching negative approval ratings in mid-May.¹²⁴

Initially, there were some signs of at least a pause in political division as public opinion was generally unified: the majority of the public were in favour of lockdown measures. However, research by King's College London has suggested that this trend was

relatively short-lived as people have now begun to return to political tribalism along the lines of trust in the government.¹²⁵ Those trusting the government are now more likely to want lockdown measures to continue; those who don't, believe that lockdown measures should be released sooner.

Some pre-existing political divisions have continued. Increased patriotism and faith in the government to represent the country's interests on foreign affairs has increased and is highest among people who voted Conservative in the 2019 election.¹²⁶ Labour-leave voters are more likely to be isolationist, whilst those who voted Conservative last year and were also remain voters have become drastically more interventionist.¹²⁷ The public are now also more likely to want Britain to be more involved in foreign affairs.¹²⁸

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT DEMOCRACY

The open access survey asked questions about how they perceived the government's response to the pandemic.

The questions in this section were as follows:

1. Do you think the government has exerted too much or too little power over what people are allowed to do during the pandemic, or have they got it about right?
2. Do you think the government has done a good or bad job communicating to people about the pandemic, the lockdown and how to stay safe?

7472 out of the 11,689 respondents answered one or both questions about democracy. Percentages in this section will therefore refer to the number of people

proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

Our analysis of responses to questions about democracy found:

- Almost two-thirds believed that the government had done a bad job in communicating to the public about the pandemic.
- Belief that the government had done a good job increased with age.
- More than half believed that the government used too little power, a third believed it used too much, and just over one in ten believed it hadn't used enough.
- This was generally consistent across income bands. However, self-employed people were less likely than others to feel the government should have used more power.
- Respondents who reported having had Coronavirus were not more likely to believe that the government had exerted too little power than the overall average.
- Those who were self isolating were more likely to believe the government had not used enough power; 65% of those self isolating said they believed that the government had not exerted enough power, 11% higher than the overall average.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to democracy and government. Their responses indicate heightened concerns about political processes, faith and trust in the government, communications about the pandemic and the role of the media. As well as writing about challenges or opportunities relating to democracy and government in the designated section of the survey, respondents also referred to these issues in their responses to the question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?' These are included here.

Many respondents expressed concerns about lack of clarity and consistency in government messaging over the pandemic. This included rules around travel and social distancing. These were seen as often unclear and not always based on evidence. The relationship between politicians, advisers and scientists was seen as less constructive than it should have been; some respondents saw this as responsible for the confusion they observed.

For many, the behaviour and treatment of the adviser Dominic Cummings resulted in loss of trust that the government would deal with the pandemic fairly and effectively. The view that politicians 'look after their own' and are not concerned about the health of the public was very widely expressed. Many said they felt upset and even offended that they had made sacrifices while some people in power had not.

"I think the government did well at the beginning going into lockdown, however it's been a shambles coming out. Especially with the Cummings situation. All in all the British public have been obedient and to some degree scared to go out of the house, and now it seems the politicians only care about the economy starting up - understandable - however the public still are wary to leave a lockdown routine!"

Woman, 20s, South West England

"I feel it has become very clear that there is one set of rules for ordinary people and another for those with power and privilege, and this is not a good thing. I have far less faith in the government to manage such a crisis and to do the best for everyone."

Man, 60s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Faith in the government and in democracy was a very common theme of responses to the question 'Is there anything you feel you have learned or changed your mind about as a result of this crisis?'. Many respondents expressed the view that the government has failed to sufficiently protect people, but has prioritised those with vested interests, in particular businesses and politicians.

"[I have learned] that our government are responsible for one of the highest death rates in Europe. That they lied and cheated, and that I have no respect or trust for or in them. They have put money before people."

Woman, 40s, London

"[I have learned] I no longer have trust in the elected government to make the right decisions for the country as I feel their motives are not driven by public health."

Woman, 50s, Yorkshire & Humberside

The media was also seen to have played a role in shaping public attitudes and the government's response to the pandemic. Many respondents were of the view that the media has been too critical of the government, fuelling public fear and reducing trust in their ability to deal with the pandemic.

116 GOV.uk. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and prisons: Prison social visits in England and Wales. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons#prison-social-visits-in-england-and-wales> [accessed 13/08/2020]

117 GOV.uk. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and prisons: What we are doing to keep people safe in prisons. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons#prison-social-visits-in-england-and-wales> [accessed 13/08/2020]

118 Seymour, H. How the prison service is responding to COVID-19. ISFEC Global, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ifsecglobal.com/security/how-the-prison-service-is-responding-to-covid-19/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

119 Grierson, J. Coronavirus: only 55 prisoners freed early in England and Wales. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/may/12/coronavirus-only-55-prisoners-early-release-england-wales> [accessed 13/08/2020]

120 GOV.uk. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and prisons: Changes to regimes. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-and-prisons#changes-to-regimes> [accessed 13/08/2020]

121 Bowcott, O. Has coronavirus changed the UK justice system for ever? The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/law/2020/may/24/has-the-uk-justice-system-been-changed-for-ever-by-the-coronavirus> [accessed 13/08/2020]

122 Ryan, M., Harker, L. and Rothera, S. Remote hearings in the family justice system: a rapid consultation. Nuffield Family Justice Observatory, 2020, p36. Available at: <https://www.judiciary.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/remote-hearings-rapid-review.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

123 Edelman. Edelman Trust Barometer. Edelman, 2020. Available at: www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2020-05/2020%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Spring%20Update.pdf [accessed 13/08/2020]

124 YouGov. Government Approval. YouGov, 2020. Available at: https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/trackers/government-approval?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=website_article&utm_campaign=government_approval_tracker [accessed 13/08/2020]

125 YouGov. Government Approval.

126 Gaston, S. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Public Opinion on Global Britain. The British Foreign Policy Group, 2020, p1. Available at: <https://bfpgrp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Public-Opinion-on-Global-Britain-COVID-19-Sophia-Gaston-BFPG.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

127 Gaston, S. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Public Opinion on Global Britain. The British Foreign Policy Group, 2020, p1. Available at: <https://bfpgrp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Public-Opinion-on-Global-Britain-COVID-19-Sophia-Gaston-BFPG.pdf> [accessed 13/08/2020]

128 Gaston, S. The COVID-19 Pandemic and Public Opinion on Global Britain. p2

"The media has inflamed the whole situation and it seemed that the UK government gave in to the pressure from them and the public whom the media had frightened into demanding lockdown."

Woman, 50s East Midlands

"All governments have made mistakes, including ours. I feel the media coverage has been negative and biased. It is not useful or good for society to constantly dwell on negatives and pick things apart. The news needs to have drawn more of the positive messages."

Woman, 40s, South West England

A number of respondents said that, although they had initially felt that the government was doing a good job to control the spread of the virus and communicate public health measures, they had since changed their mind. They gave a number of reasons for this: that the message had become too complicated as the lockdown measures began to ease; and that their messaging had been inconsistent. Some respondents identified ways in which democratic processes might be improved, for example by improving representation from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

The continuation of political party divisions was a source of concern for some respondents who were dismayed by the frequency of political 'point-scoring' between political leaders.

"I don't like the way that the unity is starting to fall apart and party political point scoring is returning. Managing the epidemic is not a hard road map. The science is only advice and guidance so decisions have to be made to the best of people's ability. Using hindsight to criticise is not helpful at this stage and undermines the messaging going forward."

Woman, 50s, East of England

Some respondents made unfavourable comparisons between the performance of the UK and other national governments, including South Korea and Sweden. Some were of the view that the UK government's performance has been the 'worst in the world'.

"I'm not convinced the government has done a good job. The per capita deaths are some of the worst in the world - clearly beating the USA and other badly hit countries. More should have been done earlier on when the virus hit the UK and more done to follow the example of countries like South Korea and Japan who have

experience dealing with respiratory infections."

Woman, 40s, London.

Others compared national and local government responses to the pandemic, expressing the view that the latter had been more timely, helpful or effective.

"My local councillors on the other hand have been absolutely brilliant. They've organised the sewing scrubs, they've used people to deliver food parcels and to help out and they themselves have participated in showing leadership within their own community and obeying the rules themselves. They have been a beacon of clarity and shining light In contrast to the behaviour of the government over the last 10 days. I'm sorry to say this but it is true."

Woman, 50s, Yorkshire & Humberside

This difference in perspectives on the performance of local vs national government was also a theme of other responses, for example on changes in local communities. Of course, local councils have the advantage of being local. At the same time, there were mixed reports on the effectiveness of MPs at constituency level, with some respondents saying they had been helpful, and others that they had not. Given that the real experiences of people have been within their localities, it is not surprising that people placed value on support from politicians locally.

TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE LIFE

Since the start of the pandemic people have been spending more time online, increasingly using the internet for work, shopping¹²⁹ and leisure¹³⁰.

More than a quarter (28%) of people who previously did not use video calls have started to do so; Zoom has seen an increase of 21% in users since the end of 2019, and social media use has increased across platforms, particularly in younger age groups.¹³¹

Higher levels of internet use have also increased fears over harms proliferating online, such as Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA), with one in ten 7-17 yr olds claiming they were completely unmonitored online during lockdown.¹³² More government advice has been published to help people stay safe online.¹³³ However, there have been concerns raised about the lack of more significant

"When internet goes down then the children meltdown."



¹²⁹ Sky News. Coronavirus: You might think Amazon profits are soaring right now. You'd be wrong. Sky News, 2020. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-amazon-faces-loss-with-4bn-covid-19-spending-11981723> [accessed 13/08/2020]

¹³⁰ Kaurin, D. A Place Where We Can Be Together. Medium, 2020. Available at: <https://medium.com/berkman-klein-center/a-place-where-we-can-be-together-82e12bc726b9>; [accessed 13/08/2020] www.kantar.com/Inspiration/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Barometer-Consumer-attitudes-media-habits-and-expectations

¹³¹ Kantar. COVID-19 Barometer: Consumer attitudes, media habits and expectations. Kantar, 2020. Available at: www.kantar.com/Inspiration/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Barometer-Consumer-attitudes-media-habits-and-expectations [accessed 13/08/2020]; YouGov. Survey Report. YouGov, 2020. Available at: https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/9pcfeu5rmv/Internal_HabitChanges_200326.pdf [accessed 13/08/2020]

¹³² Home Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Committee Oral evidence: Home Office preparedness for Covid19 (Coronavirus), HC 232. House of Commons, 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/451/default/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

¹³³ GOV.uk. Coronavirus (COVID-19) - staying safe online. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-staying-safe-online>; [accessed 13/08/2020]; DCMS, DfE and Home Office. Coronavirus (COVID-19): support for parents and carers to keep children safe online. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-parents-and-carers-to-keep-children-safe-online> [accessed 13/08/2020]

action, with the number of suspicious websites being taken down drastically reducing since the start of the pandemic.¹³⁴

Online harms, as we see in times of crisis, are morphing. Zoom has become a significant tool for people to connect with family, friends and colleagues, and as such has been a target for 'Zoombombing' where a Zoom meeting is accessed by someone unintended for the purposes of sharing racist abuse or CSEA material.¹³⁵ Fraud has also changed shape into often being Covid-related.¹³⁶

Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, the debate about harmful content online in the UK centred around the Online Harms White Paper, presented by the Government in 2019. Under this proposal, platforms would have a duty of care to ensure that they had adequate systems in place to tackle harmful content from terrorism and CSEA material to disinformation and bullying. What this would look like in practice once made legislation, however, has been increasingly contested - whether platforms would only be required to uphold their own terms of service, submit their algorithmic systems for scrutiny by an independent regulator, and what harms would be in or outside of scope.

Political will to pursue this agenda has also become increasingly unclear: the Government signalled that actual legislation could be pushed back

until 2023.¹³⁷ However, Select Committees have continued to engage throughout the crisis with issues of online harms, including summoning more senior representatives from Facebook, Twitter and Google after an initial round of questioning was deemed to have provided inadequate evidence given the severity of the danger of Covid-19 health misinformation.¹³⁸

Covid-19 misinformation is a widespread concern, with conspiracy theories ranging from far-right conspiracies to the targeting of 5G masts to false and dangerous beliefs about cures for coronavirus.¹³⁹ These conspiracies are not only being shared on fringe online platforms, but some are echoed by mainstream media and commentators.¹⁴⁰ An Oxford University study found that around 20% of people agree to some extent with a prominent Covid-19 conspiracy theory.¹⁴¹

Frontline health workers have reported dealing with significant numbers of people concerned because of misinformation.¹⁴² Half of people surveyed say that they have seen fake news online, and a majority would support more public health campaigns on television and via phone after Covid-19 - although people are also concerned about politicians spreading misinformation themselves.¹⁴³

The Covid-19 crisis has acted, however, as an important test of platform self-regulation. Platforms

have acted with much more concerted and collaborative effort to tackle it than we have seen on other issues, where claims of 'free speech' or 'public interest', alongside targeting content to users, have meant that harmful content is often left up rather than actioned, and 'bad information' may be more easily surfaced than 'good information'.

Platforms have introduced a variety of measures to try and tackle Covid-19 health misinformation, which have been subdivided into several categories:¹⁴⁴

- CURATION OF INFO: Information centres, banners and redirects to push authorised sources, such as the NHS and WHO, in response to searches about coronavirus
- SUBTRACTING BAD INFO: Extending terms of service to ban dangerous Covid misinformation; labelling misinformation; blocking certain ads
- ADDING GOOD INFO: pushing information to those who have seen misinformation;¹⁴⁵ free ads to health services

However, this has flagged the limits of current platform regulation, and the low likelihood that this is a change that will 'stick' or expand to other areas of platform moderation. And many people do not trust platforms to provide them with good

information.¹⁴⁶

Firstly, the furloughing of content moderators has shown the limits of relying more on automated content regulation, with AI increasing the chance of false positives.¹⁴⁷ Other forms of abuse are slower to be taken down than Covid misinformation as moderators struggle with workload.¹⁴⁸

Platforms have not been transparent about how they are enforcing their new policies, and are doing so in a reactive way rather than proactively or consistently.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, Covid-19 is particularly easy to employ such policies on. It is a global crisis, where scientific consensus has been established. As such, it is easier than for many issues to decide what is misinformation and what is verified information, especially given the proactive decision by organisations like the WHO and NHS to engage directly with social media platforms.¹⁵⁰

Platforms have been more aggressive in censoring the speech of world leaders such as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro when their speech contravenes their Covid policies. At the same time, Facebook's failures in policing hate speech and incitement to violence shows that in the long term, it is more likely that commercial incentives will shift

134 Elmore, C. During the coronavirus pandemic, the need to safeguard children online cannot be understated. The House, 2020. Available at: www.politicshome.com/thehouse/article/during-the-coronavirus-pandemic-the-need-to-safeguard-children-online-cannot-be-understated [accessed 13/08/2020]

135 Sky News. More than 120 'Zoombombing' child abuse cases investigated by UK authorities. Sky News, 2020. Available at: <https://news.sky.com/story/more-than-120-zoombombing-child-abuse-cases-investigated-by-uk-authorities-11990648> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Wakefield, J. Coronavirus: Racist 'zoombombing' at virtual synagogue. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52105209> [accessed 13/08/2020]

136 Home Affairs Committee, Home Affairs Committee Oral evidence: Home Office preparedness for Covid19 (Coronavirus), HC 232. House of Commons, 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/451/default/> [accessed 13/08/2020]; BBC. Coronavirus: UK forces hundreds of scam Covid-19 shops offline. BBC, 2020. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52361618 [accessed 13/08/2020]; Townsend, M. Fraudsters exploiting Covid-19 fears have scammed £1.6m. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/04/fraudsters-exploiting-covid-19-fears-have-scammed-16m [accessed 13/08/2020]

137 Hymas, C. Exclusive: New duty of care laws to protect children from online harms could be pushed back to 2023, says NSPCC. The Telegraph, 2020. Available at: www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2020/04/26/exclusivenew-duty-care-laws-protect-children-online-harms-could/ [accessed 13/08/2020]

138 Commons Select Committee. Twitter, Facebook and Google recalled to Parliament. Parliament.uk, 2020. Available at: www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/digital-culture-media-and-sport-committee/sub-committee-on-online-harms-and-disinformation/news/social-media-recalled-to-parliament-chairs-comments-19-21/ [accessed 13/08/2020]

139 Scott, M and Overly S. 'Conspiracy bingo': Transatlantic extremists seize on the pandemic. POLITICO, 2020. Available at: www.politico.eu/article/far-right-conspiracy-theorists-coronavirus-covid19-pandemic-lockdown-protests/ [accessed 13/08/2020]

140 Make it illegal to persistently spread Covid-19 conspiracy theories, MP urges. Express and Star, 2020. Available at: www.expressandstar.com/news/uk-news/2020/05/18/make-it-illegal-to-persistently-spread-covid-19-conspiracy-theories-mp-urges/ [accessed 13/08/2020]

141 Conspiracy beliefs reduce the following of government coronavirus guidance. University of Oxford, 2020. Available at: www.ox.ac.uk/news/2020-05-22-conspiracy-beliefs-reduces-following-government-coronavirus-guidance# [accessed 13/08/2020]

142 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Sub-Committee on Online Harms and Disinformation, Oral evidence: Online Harms and Disinformation, HC 234. House of Commons, 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/459/pdf/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

143 Hochlaf, D and others. Coronavirus misinformation warning as half of Britain says it has been exposed to "fake news". IPPR, 2020. Available at: www.ippr.org/news-and-media/press-releases/coronavirus-misinformation-warning-as-half-of-britain-says-it-has-been-exposed-to-fake-news [accessed 13/08/2020]; Fletcher, R., Kalogeropoulos, A and Nielsen, R. Trust in UK government and news media COVID-19 information down, concerns over misinformation from government and politicians up. Reuters Institute, 2020. Available at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/trust-uk-government-and-news-media-covid-19-information-down-concerns-over-misinformation> [accessed 13/08/2020]

144 Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Sub-Committee on Online Harms and Disinformation, Oral evidence: Online Harms and Disinformation, HC 234. House of Commons, 2020. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/459/pdf/> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Hillier, L. As usage soars, what are social media platforms doing to help support and inform users. Econsultancy, 2020. Available at: <https://econsultancy.com/coronavirus-as-social-media-usage-soars-what-are-platforms-doing-to-help-users-be-better-connected-informed-and-supported/> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Tech Company Claims. CCDH, 2020. Available at: <https://www.counterhate.co.uk/tech-company-claims> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Trendall, S. Twitter directs #Coronavirus searches to NHS website as government steps up social media push. Public technology, 2020. Available at: www.publictechnology.net/articles/news/twitter-directs-coronavirus-searches-nhs-website-government-steps-social-media-push [accessed 13/08/2020]; Gregory, S., Kayyali, D and Faife C. Covid-19 Misinformation and Disinformation Responses: Sorting the Good from the Bad. WITNESS, 2020. Available at: <https://blog.witness.org/2020/05/covid-19-misinformation-response-assessment/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

145 Tidy, J. Coronavirus: Facebook alters virus action after damning misinformation report. BBC, 2020. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52309094 [accessed 13/08/2020]

146 Kantar. COVID-19 Barometer: Consumer attitudes, media habits and expectations. Kantar, 2020. Available at: www.kantar.com/Inspiration/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Barometer-Consumer-attitudes-media-habits-and-expectations [accessed 13/08/2020]

147 Matsakis, L and Martineau P. Coronavirus Disrupts Social Media's First Line of Defense. Wired, 2020. Available at: www.wired.com/story/coronavirus-social-media-automated-content-moderation/ [accessed 13/08/2020]; Douek, E. COVID-19 and Social Media Content Moderation. Lawfare Blog, 2020. Available at: www.lawfareblog.com/covid-19-and-social-media-content-moderation [accessed 13/08/2020]; Faddoul, M. COVID-19 is triggering a massive experiment in algorithmic content moderation. Brookings, 2020. Available at: www.brookings.edu/tech-stream/covid-19-is-triggering-a-massive-experiment-in-algorithmic-content-moderation/ [accessed 13/08/2020]

148 Ankel, S. Instagram revenge porn pages are exploding during lockdown — and victims say it's harder than ever to get their images taken down. Insider, 2020. Available at: www.insider.com/revenge-porn-victims-struggle-to-report-content-on-instagram-2020-6 [accessed 13/06/2020]

149 CCDH. #WilltoAct: How social media giants have failed to live up to their claims on the Coronavirus 'infodemic'. CCDH, 2020. Available at: www.counterhate.co.uk/willtoact [accessed 13/08/2020]

150 Hillier, L. As usage soars, what are social media platforms doing to help support and inform users. Econsultancy, 2020. Available at: <https://econsultancy.com/coronavirus-as-social-media-usage-soars-what-are-platforms-doing-to-help-users-be-better-connected-informed-and-supported/> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Tech Company Claims. CCDH, 2020. Available at: <https://www.counterhate.co.uk/tech-company-claims> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Trendall, S. Twitter directs #Coronavirus searches to NHS website as government steps up social media push. Public technology, 2020. Available at: <https://www.publictechnology.net/articles/news/twitter-directs-coronavirus-searches-nhs-website-government-steps-social-media-push> [accessed 13/08/2020]; Gregory, S., Kayyali, D and Faife C. Covid-19 Misinformation and Disinformation Responses: Sorting the Good from the Bad. WITNESS, 2020. Available at: <https://blog.witness.org/2020/05/covid-19-misinformation-response-assessment/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

platform's more general policies, rather than that they will change in response to the Covid crisis.¹⁵¹

Debates around surveillance and data protection have also surged during the Covid-19 crisis, particularly around the possibility of a contact-tracing app. There is majority support for an app: 62% say they are likely to download an app:¹⁵² but there are significant differences by education, occupation and age which risk perpetuating health inequalities. The app has still not been developed: after presenting the app as an essential part of any track and test system, to be built with world-beating privacy and ethical design, the proposed centralised system was widely critiqued on privacy grounds. After an unsuccessful trial, the app was scrapped and a new app proposed on a decentralised principle, linked to the Apple/Google app. When this will be ready or if the technical challenges have been overcome is not yet clear, though trials are currently underway.

There are uncertainties around how health data should be protected, for example whether employers will be able to require the provision of health data. Police powers around enforcing health restrictions using technology to surveil people have also been challenged, though some see them as necessary.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

The open access survey asked respondents how much they had relied on technology during the pandemic; whether they had learnt to use new technologies; how often they had seen misinformation about Covid-19, and whether they would be willing to download a contact-tracing app.

7079 people chose to answer some or all of the questions in the technology section of the survey. Percentages will therefore refer to the proportion of the number of people in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

- 83% said that they relied more on technology and the internet during the pandemic than they did before, and just 17% said it made no difference.
- More than half said that they had learned to use some new technology that they did not use at all before the start of the pandemic, this was higher among the over 50s.

- Almost two-thirds said they would be willing to download a smartphone app that tracked personal data in order to control the spread of the virus. This was lower among disabled respondents, those from ethnic minorities, and those on lower incomes.
- One in five said they had seen or heard 'fake news' or misinformation about coronavirus very often, and 39% had seen or heard it fairly often.

We asked respondents to tell us about any challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to technology and online life. Their responses focused very strongly and directly on the track and trace app for which they were asked a closed question. Other concerns centred on the internet and broadband. Fake news also featured in written responses, though to a lesser extent than the other themes.

Concerns about the track and trace app centred on privacy issues, over security and use of the data collected. These were strongly linked to lack of trust in the government not to make use of, share or even sell personal data.

"The app is disaster willingness to think the solution built by some of the worlds best software engineers at Google and Apple that does it best to protect people civil liberties isn't fit for the UK can only mean one of two things the Government have no idea about technology development or they deliberately want to infringe on civil liberties. "

Man, 40s, North West England

Others expressed concerns about the trustworthiness of private firms contracted to deliver the track and trace system. There was support for the idea in principle: some said they would be happy to use an app hosted by an independent body other than the government, and others said they would do so when convinced it is safe.

Apps were mentioned more generally in the context of their role in keeping in touch with family and friends during lockdown. Many were pleased to have made use of Whatsapp and platforms such as Zoom, for social and work purposes. However, there was also concern for people without smartphones or other equipment to make use of communications

apps.

"I have made much more use of my smartphone and learnt more about WhatsApp. The street where I live set up a WhatsApp group which has been very supportive and resulted in a real sense of community. Hopefully this will continue. I think it probably will."

Woman, 60s, North West England

"Elderly people need support! Fortunately my elderly mother was familiar with a smartphone and tablet but it has taken several weeks for her to become comfortable with video apps and interactions even though her family is able to support her. I can't imagine how difficult it must be for elderly people (or anyone else for that matter) who don't own devices, have broadband or are unable to learn how to use technology."

Woman, 50s, East of England

The internet and broadband was the other main theme in responses to this open question.

Many respondents said how much they relied on the internet for work and social contact and were very grateful for its existence. Others said they strongly dislike working on the internet and feel it is no substitute for human contact with work colleagues.

"Zoom and the embracing of internet video technology generally have created good possibilities in the broad arena of my work. However, my work is intrinsically linked to gatherings of people, both small and large, which will create huge challenges for as long as social distancing is necessary. I don't use social media very much and don't like it as a rule, so I don't relish a future where it is more central to interpersonal interaction."

Man, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Another common theme was the negativity of content on the internet generally and its role in the spread of false or dangerous ideas:

"The pandemic has shown that some groups and/or individuals use the internet to spread their ideas, misconceptions or conspiracy theories and make them accessible to millions of people which can be dangerous if not controlled as people are probably more susceptible to these ideas during a crisis. Being able to control the spread of misinformation is important but it is also difficult to do this with a medium which is easily accessible and without getting into a "zone" where everything will be controlled and

censored to halt the spread of misinformation."

Man, 50s, Northern Ireland

A very common complaint was that the internet has not been up to the challenge of lockdown use. Respondents with children at home had found their broadband capacity under severe strain with adults accessing it for work and children for learning. More generally, poor broadband speeds were a common complaint, especially among people living in rural areas. Respondents felt that variation in speeds across the country should be urgently addressed. The Labour Party's General Election pledge for free broadband was supported by some who had been sceptical at the time. Whether linked to this proposal or not, there was a widespread view that broadband should be regarded as an essential, and therefore free service.

"We live in a rural part of the UK and the internet is pants. Five in a house, a small fortune for the best that BT has to offer and still...it's an essential service and the government has been talking about it forever and nothing changes."

Woman, 50s, South East England

"When internet goes down then the children meltdown."

Man, 40s, South West England

On the issue of fake news, respondents' main concern was that the government spread false and unsubstantiated information during the pandemic. Its daily briefings were seen by some as the vehicle for fake news around the spread of the virus and death rates. While some felt the government intended to mislead, others put this down to lack of information and poor understanding by politicians.

"The fake news and misinformation has mainly come from the government and mainstream media."

Man, 50s, East of England

Either way, many respondents said they felt unable to judge whether news delivered by the government was real or fake. Other written comments about fake news concerned its spread through social media:

"How do I know if news is fake? My iPhone news feed is not an unbiased source of information and I do not trust it to give me a fair view of the world but am unsure how to change that! It is also not updated often enough for my liking."

Woman, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

151 BBC. Lori Klausutis death: Twitter will not remove Trump's 'horrifying lies'. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52810661> [accessed 13/08/2020]; BBC. Twitter tags Trump tweet with fact-checking warning. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52815552> [accessed 13/08/2020]

Constine, J. Facebook deletes Brazil president's coronavirus misinfo post. Tech Crunch, 2020. Available at <https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/30/facebook-removes-bolsonaro-video/> [accessed 13/08/2020]

152 Majority in UK support use of mobile phones for coronavirus contact tracing. Financial Times, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/1752affb-24dc-4ad9-8503-78f9ce1adca9> [accessed 13/08/2020]

“There has been a huge amount of misinformation, especially in the community. It has been very difficult to reason with people who are easily led by misinformation and fake news. It’s causing real world problems such as the damaging of 5G masks or people changing behaviours as a result.”

Man, 30s, London

This led some to reduce, or stop, their use.

“I do not use social media any more, it used to be good and then the weirdos started to show up! I find it a very unhelpful tool particularly because of the spread of fake news, and negative information and comments posted on these sites.”

Woman, 50s, South East England

Those who had taken this step appeared to see it as permanent, rather than restricted to lockdown, though many saw it as a period of heightened negativity online.

TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In this section we look at changes made to policies relating to transport and to the environment.

The lockdown period was characterised by a significant change in transport use: it meant that only essential journeys by public transport were permitted and walking and cycling were encouraged. Lockdown rules meant that car use fell dramatically as many people remained at home, leaving only for daily exercise or to buy food and essential items.

A substantial reduction in emissions and measurable air quality was recorded during lockdown, particularly in built-up areas. London, Manchester, Birmingham and other cities across the UK saw considerable falls in toxic nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels. Much of this will have been due to reductions in road traffic, which accounts for about 80% of nitrogen dioxide emissions in the UK. Similar changes were noted internationally.¹⁵³

Prior to the COVID 19 lockdown measures, the government had already committed to improving access to lowering emissions and promoting non-polluting modes of transport, in particular the use of bikes. In February £5 billion was committed by the government to improve local bus and cycle links and to promote low-emission travel.¹⁵⁴

E-scooter trials have been brought forward to give people more transport options, and the government has also increased funding for electric vehicles.¹⁵⁵ While also making social distancing easier than on

¹⁵³ Le Quéré, C and others. Temporary reduction in daily global CO₂ emissions during the COVID-19 forced confinement. Nature Climate Change, 2020. Available at: www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-0797-x [accessed 14/08/2020]

¹⁵⁴ Major boost for bus services as PM outlines new vision for local transport. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/news/major-boost-for-bus-services-as-pm-outlines-new-vision-for-local-transport [accessed 14/08/2020]

¹⁵⁵ £2 billion package to create new era for cycling and walking. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking> [accessed 14/08/2020]

“Corona has offered the opportunity for gratitude- to notice all the things I’m grateful for. It has allowed me to re-engage with nature and being outdoors. I love the peace and the gentle pace of life. I love the roads being quiet and the air feeling clean.”



public transport, these new forms of transport are also intended to reduce congestion and pollution.

These changes are also likely to be bolstered by a fresh approach to urban planning. Statutory guidance encouraging local authorities to reallocate road space for cyclists was brought forward.¹⁵⁶ In London temporary cycle lanes and wider pavements have been introduced¹⁵⁷ as well as a significant increase in congestion charge to reduce the number of cars in the city centre.¹⁵⁸

These changes are largely supported by the British public who do not want to see a return to pre-COVID emission levels.

An increasing desire to prioritise no/low emission form of transport is also likely to result from changing attitudes towards pollution. Transport and Environment research conducted with YouGov in mid May found that four out of five city residents in the UK now favour measures to reduce car use and emissions and 71% of the British public approve of the introduction of zero emission zones.¹⁵⁹

The public's personal travel habits are also likely to change in the longer term as attitudes to cycling are becoming increasingly positive in the UK. The same Transport and Environment survey found that reallocating road space to make more room for pedestrians is supported by 76% of the British public, while 63% support additional cycle lanes.¹⁶⁰ This has provided part of the rationale for the government's new bike repair scheme, whereby bike repairs will be subsidised £50 each to enable increased cycling.¹⁶¹

The pandemic has heightened awareness of the environmental impact of climate change among policy makers, the public and business leaders. There have been calls for a green recovery plan, gaining support from representatives from Heathrow, HSBC and National Grid among others.¹⁶² MPs have called upon the government to deliver £30bn in green aid to help to accelerate 'faster, further, fairer' action to

help tackle the climate crisis, as well as the economic consequences of the coronavirus lockdown.¹⁶³

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT TRANSPORT

Our survey had questions about how often people used various forms of transport and whether they followed social distancing measures or not.

The questions were as following:

1. Which of the following is closest to how often you have used the following forms of transport since the start of the lockdown? (Car, cycling, train, bus, tram and walking)
2. How often, if ever, have you been able to follow social distancing advice while on public transport?

For questions about use of transport we received responses to one or both questions from 5992 out of the 11,689 survey respondents. In this section, percentages will therefore refer to the number of people proportionally in this sample that responded to the question in the section, rather than overall.

Our analysis of responses to the closed survey questions on transport found:

- Almost two-thirds said they didn't know whether transport has been handled well or badly during lockdown
- Since the start of the pandemic, walking has been the most common form of transport, with almost three-quarters of respondents saying they had walked every day and 94% at least weekly.
- 10% said they used a car daily and a further 51% on a weekly basis.
- 29% said they cycled at least once a week
- Very few respondents had traveled by train or bus during lockdown.

We asked respondents to tell us about any

challenges or opportunities they were facing as a result of the pandemic relating to transport. The most common themes concerned pollution and an increased interest in cycling. Respondents also expressed concerns about using public transport during lockdown.

Lockdown was seen as having a positive side-effect of reduced emissions from road and air traffic. Noise reduction was cited as a related benefit. Many responses focused on interest in cycling and electric vehicles, both as a personal option and a policy needing development and implementation.

"The reduction in traffic has been lovely. I live on a main road which still has had traffic on it but far less than normal and it is nice to see more people out and about walking. Although the pedestrian crossing is adjacent to my house I know that there is far less traffic as people are able to cross the road without needing to use the crossing, it's nice not to hear the constant beep beep beep of the traffic lights."

Woman, 40s, South West England

We live on a very main road in a small market town. It has been wonderful having less traffic noise and fumes during lockdown. Even now the traffic is getting back to 'normal' the morning and evening rush hours are quieter. Especially the morning rush hour."

Woman, East of England, 50s

Many respondents said they had cycled more, or had taken up cycling as a form of transport and of exercise. The increase in cycling, and of walking as means of transport were developments which many welcomed and wished to continue beyond lockdown.

"I have cycled more since lock down for exercise first and foremost, and have enjoyed doing so and the exercise has been good for me. More families seem to be out and about on bikes which is good to see, given the obesity crisis!"

Man, 30s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Whether for their own use or not, many said that the infrastructure for cycling, including lanes and bike stands, should be improved. More generally, there was a view that the government should do more to encourage cycling as an alternative to car use. At the same time, respondents were also aware that cycling is not for everyone and should not be seen as a solution to the country's transport problems - during or outside of a pandemic.

"Would be good if we had more dedicated cycle lanes and lower speed limits on country lanes. (If everyone who learnt to drive, had to get on a bike as well, they'd understand how frightening it can be if a car drives too close to you). Our city is old with narrow roads. It would be wonderful if bikes could have dedicated cycle lanes despite this. I have thought of having a go at cycling in the city whilst the traffic is less but would have been too scared to give it a go before lockdown."

Woman, 40s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Reflecting recent survey findings, it was clear from respondents' accounts that many have concerns about travelling on public transport, explaining low rates of personal use reported. Their fears centred on not only spreading the virus and contributing to potential second wave of infections, but also their own personal health concerns - a sentiment expressed particularly strongly among those who were elderly or medically vulnerable.

"I don't want to use buses or underground in London now. I am not sure if I would use the train. It's too early to know how the release (abandonment?) a lockdown will affect a second wave. I do not want to catch the virus because I have fairly poor lungs probably from living on a main road. I have had bronchitis twice in recent years. My chemotherapy in the past means my immune system isn't great. So I will be very cautious. I do not have a car and haven't had one for over 25 years. I do not have enough income to afford one even if I could still drive safely and wanted to."

Woman, 50s, East of England

"When I have to go back to travelling for work I will be genuinely scared of other people getting too close. I don't much like commuting anyway but with COVID-19 I am nervous."

Woman, 60s, South East England

However, many respondents expressed concerns about a societal shift toward cycling, stating that it is likely to benefit younger, healthier people and leave behind the elderly and vulnerable.

"As an elderly non-driver who cannot afford a bike and has an underlying medical condition, how do I safely travel further than I can walk?"

Woman, 60s, South West England

Some said they had used their cars more during lockdown, through concerns to avoid public

156 Reallocating road space in response to COVID-19: statutory guidance for local authorities. GOV.uk, 2020. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities [accessed 14/08/2020]

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160 Transport and Environment, 4 in 5 city residents want cars to give way to bikes, buses and walking to tackle air pollution.

161 BBC, 'Fix your bike' vouchers launch, as cycling to be prescribed by the NHS. BBC, 2020. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53558629>

162 Ambrose, J. Top business leaders call on Boris Johnson to set out green recovery plan. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jun/01/top-business-leaders-call-on-boris-johnson-to-set-out-green-recovery-plan> [accessed 14/08/2020]

163 Watts, J. UK MPs call for extra £30bn to aid green recovery from Covid-19. The Guardian, 2020. Available at: www.theguardian.com/world/2020/may/27/uk-green-recovery-covid-19-mps-climate-nature [accessed 14/08/2020]

transport. Others, without access to a car, felt that their work and educational activity had been impacted through avoiding public transport.

“My partner doesn’t drive. Going forward I will be driving more as I am not prepared for him to take the risk of bus transportation.”

Man, 30s, West Midlands

Many respondents rated the risks of public transport as very high and it was clear that they would prefer to travel by car, or not at all, for some time to come.

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Our survey did not include specific questions about the environment. However, it was mentioned in responses to other questions. It featured strongly in responses to the question ‘Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences relating to the pandemic?’ which invited respondents to tell us about anything that was missing from the topic covered. Many said that the environment was a key missing issue and it was clearly one which many felt strongly about.

As we described earlier, many people welcomed the reduction in air pollution and noise resulting from the fall in road and air traffic during lockdown. This was noted by people in all areas of the country:

“Living in the centre of a city, there have been 2 huge benefits of the lock-down - the noise from traffic has almost ceased although it is picking up again now, and the air is so very much clearer and cleaner. Pollution is very much reduced, and noise pollution also.”

Woman, 70+, Scotland

The experience led many to the view that taking action on the environment could be achievable in the short-term and that political and practical objections have lost their validity. For some, the lockdown measures were proof that changes can be put in place very quickly if there is political will and conviction.

“I hope that with all the problems and illness this has caused, people will realise that there is a much bigger lesson to be learnt. What lockdown has demonstrated is that we can make massive changes quickly and with one and another we can make things better.”

Man, 40s, South East England

Some respondents suggested specific measures as priorities for recovery. These included investment in green technology and clear targets to reduce

emissions.

“A lot of people are clearly viewing lockdown as a potential springboard into a more environmentally sustainable future for the country. This is one of the key changes i would like to see over the coming year, clear actions to take us towards net zero by 2050 including a big focus on transport- discouraging petrol car use, encouraging rail, cycle and walking.”

Man, 30s, East of England

“I would really like to see more investment in green technology and reducing carbon emissions as this is a great opportunity to sort our other emergency, climate change.”

Woman, 30s, London

We have noted in other sections that many respondents were of the view that life should not just return to how it was before the pandemic: it is an opportunity to re-think political, economic and social priorities and to build a better future. This view was expressed particularly strongly in relation to the environment. Many respondents saw the pandemic and the experience of lockdown as a real opportunity to tackle climate change. It was also apparent that many respondents saw action on the environment as impacting positively on other policy agendas, in particular addressing inequality, poor work-life balance and political and social exclusion.

“My main concern now is that we do not go back to ‘normal’. How do we engage people, communities, local and national government so that we can ‘build back better’ to a new normal where the UK is a much more equal, less divided society, and where we do not live beyond the resources of the planet. The climate and ecological emergency is still with us and as urgent as ever. I hope that we can all learn to face up to and deal with this crisis now.”

Woman, 70+ South East

“I strongly believe we cannot go back to business as usual. Business as usual is killing life on Earth. The changes as a result of C 19 have shown what is possible when there is political and individual will... What’s not to like about clean air, better respiratory health, better mental health, more engaged community, free public transport, growing your own food, being less on a treadmill of work, valuing family and community more?”

Woman, 60s, East of England

We noted in the section on communities that lockdown had led some respondents to develop or to renew an affinity with their local area. Many contributors to the question ‘Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences relating to the pandemic?’ also expressed this appreciation. It was expressed by some as a commitment to protecting green spaces in cities and towns and encouraging access and use by local people.

“When we were able to go out for walks/cycles around the local area we started to appreciate even more the beauty of where we live and there was a sense of pride locally in protecting that environment”

Woman, 40s, West-Midlands

Some had gained a new appreciation for their local community, and particularly for green space and for less hussle and noise:

“I have learnt to appreciate my local community and surroundings a lot more, to use and support local businesses and to be grateful for our outdoor space and countryside. I have reassessed my views on what is important in life..”

Woman, 40s, South East England

“Corona has offered the opportunity for gratitude- to notice all the things I’m grateful for. It has allowed me to re-engage with nature and being outdoors. I love the peace and the gentle pace of life. I love the roads being quiet and the air feeling clean.”

Woman, 30s, West Midlands

There was also a view that, if working from home could continue, countryside life might become feasible for more people. As the following respondent points out, this could have the benefit of repopulating rural areas which have slowly emptied out.

“I have realised how important parks and green spaces are for people who live in cities, and how many people only live in cities for work and would rather live in the countryside if they could work from home. If working from home could be encouraged rural areas could be repopulated by families and working people. I want us to leave this pandemic with policies which prioritise the natural environment and reducing climate change.”

Woman, 20s, Scotland

As well as reflecting on the opportunity for action on the environment and to tackle climate change, respondents wrote about their immediate natural world. A number of respondents commented that grass verges in their neighbourhood had been left un-mowed by their local council, and welcomed the benefits for insects, plant diversity and wildlife.

“Councils have left verges uncut and the insects and wildlife have thrived and we have all enjoyed seeing that.”

Woman, 50s, Wales

“I have enjoyed nature far more than previously. The reduction in grass verge cutting has been great for wildlife and should inform future policy decisions.”

Man, 50s, Yorkshire & Humberside

For many, the reduction in noise and air pollution had raised their awareness of wildlife on their doorstep. Hearing birdsong without background traffic noise was a particular pleasure, and some respondents believed that birds sang more loudly during lockdown.

“Less cars, less pollution, seeing more wildlife and hearing the birds everyday has been one of the best perks of the pandemic.”

Woman, 30s, Yorkshire & Humberside

Many respondents with a garden had lavished greater attention on their plants and lawns and were also appreciating wildlife which they had previously ignored. Some had seized the opportunity to educate their children about the wildlife and insects in their midst.

“I have had the opportunity to discover the local wildlife, especially in my garden, as have my children - which I feel is important.”

Woman, 30s, North West England

Perhaps the strongest message from respondents about the impact of the pandemic on the environment was the renewed hope it gave in a better world. As we noted in earlier sections, the experience of lockdown, of the rapid response of the government, NHS and other services, was seen as evidence that change is possible.

“I hope that we may learn that if we protected the world better, then we might in turn be better protected. That there might be an end to destruction of habitats and environments, that

we may care so much more for the natural world and its wildlife. That economics doesn't have to drive every single thing we do. That loving and caring are the ways forward, in all and everything we do. Hoping"

Woman, 50s, West Midlands

The view expressed by this respondent reflected the hopes of many that the pandemic might lead to a rebalancing of priorities to include the environment and climate change, and health and wellbeing more widely.

RACE AND EQUALITY

"The Covid-19 crisis has thrown into sharper focus the way racial and other inequalities blight people's lives from cradle to grave", according to the Runnymede Trust.¹⁶⁴

Racial disparities in health outcomes are not new, but they have become uniquely high-profile during the pandemic. As newspapers published the images of doctors and nurses who lost their lives while fighting the epidemic, it became apparent that many of them were from BAME backgrounds. The first ten doctors to die from COVID-19 were all people of colour and almost two thirds (63%) of healthcare workers who are known to have died from the virus up to its peak in mid-April were black British or British Asian.¹⁶⁵

BAME doctors are more likely to be in medical specialisms which require close patient contact, such as geriatric medicine, in part because of racial discrimination in access to other branches of medicine.¹⁶⁶ The British Medical Association found that from late April 2020, BAME doctors were also hit hardest by the lack of personal protective equipment and were almost twice as likely as white doctors to feel pressured to work in settings with inadequate

"It is not acceptable that knowing the numbers affected that nothing has been put in place to protect BAME people."



¹⁶⁴ Khan, O. The colour of money. Runnymede Trust, 2020. Available at: <https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/publications/pdfs/2020%20reports/The%20Colour%20of%20Money%20Report.pdf> [accessed 14/08/2020]

¹⁶⁵ Cook, T., Kursumovic, E. and Lennane, S. Exclusive: deaths of NHS staff from covid-19 analysed. HSJ. Available at: <https://www.hsj.co.uk/exclusive-deaths-of-nhs-staff-from-COVID-19-analysed/7027471.article>. [accessed 14/08/2020]

¹⁶⁶ See for example, Bailey, S. and West, M. Covid-19 Deaths and Ethnic Minorities: What do we know? King's Fund, 2020. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/blog/2020/04/ethnic-minority-deaths-covid-19> [accessed 14/08/2020]; Raghuram, P., Bornat, J., and Henry, L. The co-marking of aged bodies and migrant bodies: migrant workers' contribution to geriatric medicine in the UK. *Sociology of health & illness*, 2011, 33(2), 321-335.

PPE.¹⁶⁷

In June 2020, Public Health England published research confirming that BAME people were significantly overrepresented in the COVID-19 death toll. When controlling for region, deprivation, age and sex, the researchers found that people of Bangladeshi descent were twice as likely to die from the coronavirus as people who were ethnically white. People of “Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity” also had a higher risk of death, by 10 to 50% compared to the white reference group.¹⁶⁸

Some researchers have suggested that comorbidities such as obesity can explain the patterns¹⁶⁹, while others have pointed to systemic racism in housing, employment and healthcare. The two explanations can exist side by side, as obesity and hypertension may themselves be a result of racial disparities in access to healthy food and adequate medical care.¹⁷⁰ Some BAME groups are more likely to be key workers and are more likely to work in occupations which saw a high death rate¹⁷¹, as the virus particularly affected care workers, taxi drivers and security guards.¹⁷² Overcrowded housing and multi-generational households is also likely to be a factor.

The racial inequalities laid bare by the pandemic caused many to reflect on the role of race and racism in public life, especially as the pandemic coincided with the renewed global Black Lives Matter movement. In the UK, this was explicitly linked to the COVID-19 response when protesters demanded justice for Belly Mujinga, a black British ticket officer who had died from the coronavirus after allegedly being spat on at work.¹⁷³

WHAT YOU TOLD US ABOUT RACE AND EQUALITY

In line with other research, we find that the pandemic has affected white and non-white people differently. The survey results include responses from 526 non-white people from a range of backgrounds, allowing us to split out a number of findings by race/ethnicity. We find:

- BAME people have seen their mental health worse affected by the pandemic, with 39% saying the pandemic had been fairly or very damaging to their mental health, compared to 32% among white people.
- Black British and British Asian respondents were less likely to feel that the government had done a good job communicating to people about the pandemic, the lockdown and how to stay safe, with 73% opting for “a bad job”, compared to 64% of white respondents. Among BAME people overall, 69% felt that the government had done a bad job communicating.
- The survey records no difference by ethnicity in falls in income, with three in ten (31%) respondents across groups indicating a significant drop in income, although the extent of the income drop may differ between groups on average.

When asked what they had learned from the pandemic and what would need to change in society after, many respondents spontaneously mentioned race and equality. This was mentioned by white and non-white respondents alike and included people from all parts of the country. One theme in the responses about race and racism concerned appreciation. Several respondents expressed the hope that the heroic and highly visible efforts of non-white essential workers would garner appreciation and diminish racial prejudice. One British Asian man was cautiously optimistic.

“Due to my age and my wife’s diabetes we have been self-isolating since before official lockdown began as it was obvious our government were not responding well. It has been invaluable having contact, albeit by WhatsApp, with people on our road with whom we had never had contact and didn’t know. Neighbours have been so helpful getting prescriptions and been generous with their time.

What we both feel even more strongly than before is that this must lead to a much more

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170 Bell, C. N., Kerr, J., and Young, J. L. Associations between obesity, obesogenic environments, and structural racism vary by county-level racial composition. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 2019. 16(5), 861.

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172 Public Health England. Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19. PHE, 2020. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/892085/disparities_review.pdf [accessed 14/08/2020]

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MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

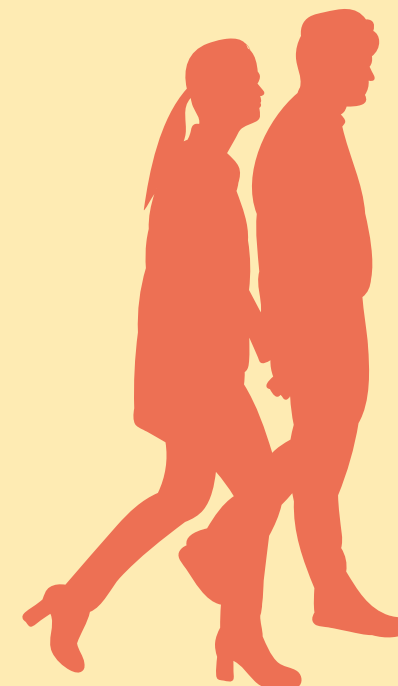
What next?

This report presents stories people shared with us about the change we’ve lived through in the last few months. Read more stories and add your own on our microsite at www.renewnormal.co.uk. All voices are welcome.

Moving into the next phase of the conversation, we will narrow our focus to the issues where people are starting to identify opportunities for the future. To decide exactly where the public believes the greatest opportunities for change lie, and how we can build consensus for them, we’ve launched a new survey to gather opinion. It’s open to everyone who wants to express their views, and can be found at our website.

Building on the results of that survey, we will announce a rolling programme of online consultation and events to focus on the top opportunities for change identified by the public. Keep up to date on how to participate via our website.

Towards the end of the year we will hold open discussions on policy choices and priorities, before publishing a final report in December, outlining a plan for how to bring citizens’ ambitions for change into practical reality.



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15 WHITEHALL, LONDON, SW1A 2DD
T: 020 3878 3955
HELLO@DEMOS.CO.UK
WWW.DEMOS.CO.UK