

Article

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on young people in Great Britain: 3 April to 10 May 2020

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey on the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on young people in Great Britain.

Contact:  
Paola Serafino  
equalities@ons.gov.uk  
+44 (0)1633 651538

Release date:  
22 June 2020

Next release:  
To be announced

## Table of contents

1. [Other pages in this release](#)
2. [Main points](#)
3. [Understanding the impact on different age groups](#)
4. [Impacts of the coronavirus](#)
5. [Coping strategies](#)
6. [Impacts on work](#)
7. [Impacts on education](#)
8. [Impacts on household finances](#)
9. [Impacts on well-being](#)
10. [Impacts on community support](#)
11. [Recent labour market trends and looking forward](#)
12. [Glossary](#)
13. [Measuring the data](#)
14. [Strengths and limitations](#)
15. [Related links](#)

# 1 . Other pages in this release

- [Coronavirus and the social impacts on older people in Great Britain](#)

## 2 . Main points

- Among young people (aged 16 to 29 years) who were worried about the effect the coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives, their main concerns were the effects on schools or universities (24%), their well-being (22%), work (16%) and household finances (16%).
- For those young people (aged 16 to 29 years) who reported that the coronavirus was affecting their work, the most commonly reported impacts were a reduction in hours worked (21%), concerns about health and safety at work (18%) and having been asked to work from home (19%).
- Other than being unable to attend their educational establishments, most young people who reported an impact on schools or universities expressed concerns about the uncertainty over exams and qualifications (58%), the quality of education being affected (46%) and a move to homeschooling (18%).
- Young people who reported that their well-being was being affected were much more likely than either those aged 30 to 59 years or those aged 60 years and over to report being bored (76%) and lonely (51%); they were also much more likely to say the lockdown was making their mental health worse (42%).
- Young people were generally more optimistic than the older age groups about how long they expected the effect of the pandemic to last, and over half of them (55%) reported they expect their lives to return to normal within six months.

### Statistician's comment

“Younger people were generally more optimistic about lockdown, with more than half expecting life to return to normal within 6 months. One of their biggest worries was the impact on schools and universities, in particular being unable to attend them, the quality of their education and uncertainty around exams.

“While they were more optimistic, young people were much more likely to report being bored and lonely during the lockdown period, and 42% of them reported that it was making their mental health worse.

“They turned to TV, friends and family and exercise to help them cope during this time.”

Dawn Snape, Assistant Director of Sustainability and inequalities Division, Office for National Statistics

## 3 . Understanding the impact on different age groups

This release contains data and indicators from a new module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on British society, which is reported on in the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) series of bulletins.

This analysis covers the period between 3 April 2020 and 10 May 2020 (inclusive), when government advice across all three countries in Great Britain was to stay at home and only go out for specified reasons.

For the purposes of this analysis, we have defined young people as aged from 16 to 29 years. This is broader than our usual definition of young people, which is those aged 16 to 24 years. The inclusion of those aged 25 to 29 years in this analysis is mainly to have a large enough sample to ensure the robustness of the estimates. In this article, where the data allows, we have broken this group down into 16 to 19, 20 to 24 and 25 to 29-year olds.

We have defined older people as aged 60 years and over. In the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on older people in Great Britain](#) article this broad group is broken down into those aged 60 to 69, 70 to 79 and 80 years and over, where the data allow. OPN data cover residents of private households only so do not include older people living in care homes and other types of communal establishments. (At the time of the last census in 2011, 3.7% of the population aged 65 years and over lived in communal establishments.)

The statistics presented are estimates and as with all estimates, there is a level of [uncertainty](#) associated with them. 95% [confidence intervals](#) have been included. These indicate the range within which we would expect the true value to lie for 95 out of every 100 samples drawn at random from the population. Wide confidence intervals, often associated with small sample sizes or large sample variance, indicate a wider range of values within which we would expect the true value to lie.

Any changes or differences mentioned in this bulletin are [statistically significant](#). The statistical significance of differences noted within the release have been determined based on non-overlapping confidence intervals.

## 4 . Impacts of the coronavirus

Overall, between 3 April 2020 and 10 May 2020, levels of concern over the coronavirus (COVID-19) were lower among young people.

The majority of the adult population was worried (somewhat or very) about the effect that the coronavirus was having on their lives across all age groups, though most (over half of the adult population in all cases) were only somewhat worried (Figure 1).

Those in the youngest age group, ages 16 to 29 years, were least likely to be very worried (17%) compared with those aged 30 to 59 years (27%) or those aged 60 years and over (24%).

**Figure 1: Young people were less likely to be very worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their lives than the older age groups.**

**Percentage of adult population by how worried they were about the coronavirus by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

Young people (16 to 29 years) who were worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives, were significantly more likely than those aged 60 years and over to report concerns over the impact on their well-being (66% and 51% respectively) and their work (59% and 15% respectively). The latter is likely to reflect the fact that many in this oldest age group are no longer in work.

Young people were also significantly more likely than either those aged 30 to 59 years (26%) or those aged 60 years and over (23%), to report concerns about the impact of the virus on their relationships (35%).

In terms of the relationships being affected, young people aged 16 to 29 years were much more likely than 30 to 59-year-olds to report being most worried about their relationships with friends (60% and 34% respectively) and with their grandparents (36% and 13% respectively). Friends includes girlfriends and boyfriends, with whom young people are less likely to live, so may have been unable to see during lockdown.

Broadly similar percentages of all age groups who were worried about the impact were likely to report that the pandemic had impacted on their ability to make plans and their personal travel plans. Around 40% of adults across all age groups also reported that they were concerned about the impact on their life events.

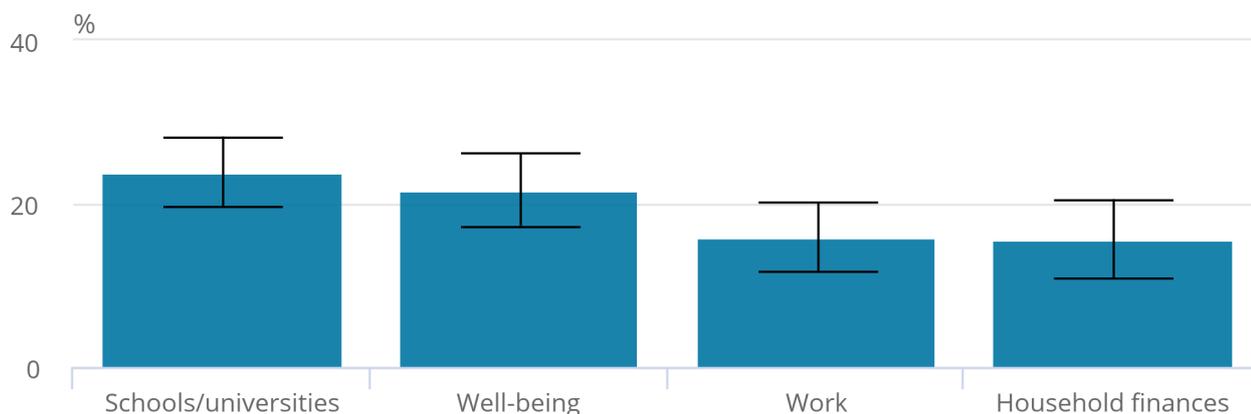
Of the worries that young people had in relation to the coronavirus, those aged 16 to 29 years were most worried about the impact on schools and universities (24%), their well-being (22%), their work (16%) and their finances (16%) (Figure 2). Broadly similar proportions of all age groups reported that the impact on their well-being was their main cause for concern.

**Figure 2: The top worries for young people were the effects on schools and universities, well-being, work and household finances**

Percentage of adult population aged 16 to 29 years who were worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their lives by main concern, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

Figure 2: The top worries for young people were the effects on schools and universities, well-being, work and household finances

Percentage of adult population aged 16 to 29 years who were worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their lives by main concern, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Across all age groups, people were more concerned about the effect of the pandemic on friends and family than they were about the effect on themselves, with a higher percentage reporting that they were very worried for friends and family compared with their worries for themselves (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Most people were somewhat or very worried about the effect the coronavirus was having on their friends and family**

## Percentage of adult population by how worried they were that the coronavirus was affecting their friends and family by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

[Download the data](#)

### Notes:

1. Estimates for unworried (somewhat or very) are not shown as they are based on small sample sizes so are unreliable for some groups.

For those aged 16 to 29 years who were very or somewhat worried about the effect on friends and family, their biggest concern for them was the effect on their health (39%), followed by the effect on their well-being (26%), with the effect on their household finances in third place (15%).

Significantly more young people reported health as their main concern for their friends and family than those aged 60 years and over (29%). This probably reflects the fact that many young people are likely to have family in the older age groups who are considered to be more vulnerable to the disease, while this is less likely to be the case for the older age group, though many of them will have friends in the more vulnerable groups.

#### More about coronavirus

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

## 5 . Coping strategies

Between 3 April 2020 and 10 May 2020, there were some differences in the strategies used by the different age groups to cope whilst staying at home. Across all age groups, similar percentages reported that friends and family, cooking and exercise were helping them to cope. Those aged 16 to 29 years were more likely than those aged 60 years and over to report that other household members, learning, TV and film, working and the internet were helping them to cope and less likely to report reading and gardening.

This lack of interest in gardening may in part reflect that those aged 16 to 29 years were significantly less likely to report their home has a garden (83%) than those aged 60 years and over (93%), though probably also reflects the fact that many are still living with their parents so may leave the gardening to them.

## 6 . Impacts on work

Over three in four (76%) of those aged between 25 and 29 years old who were worried (somewhat or very) about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their lives reported that the coronavirus has affected their work (Figure 4). This was significantly higher than those aged 30 to 59 years (65%), possibly reflecting their less secure status in the labour market and the types of jobs they are likely to do.

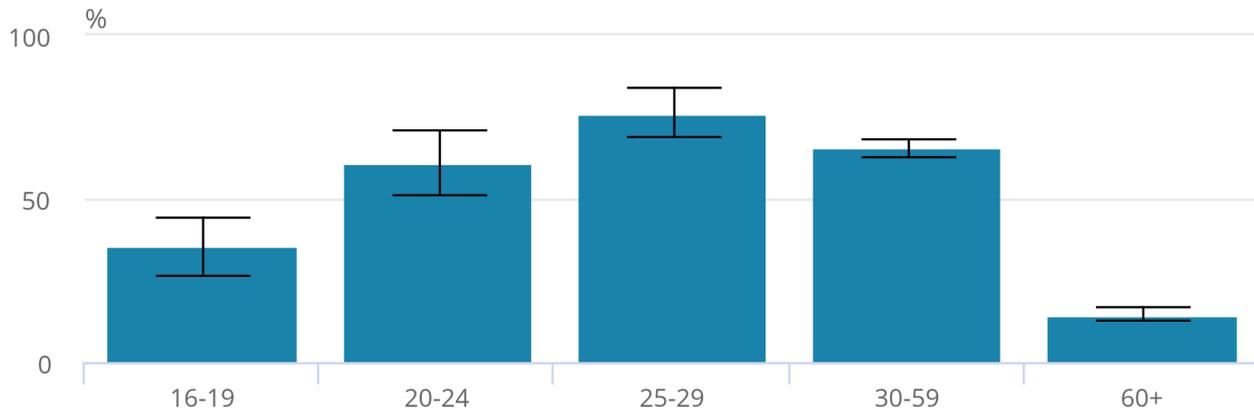
Those aged 16 to 19 years were significantly less likely to report this (36%) than people between 20 and 59 years old, likely reflecting the proportion of this age group in full-time education, while those aged 60 years and over, many of whom will be retired, were the least likely to report this (15%).

#### Figure 4: Those aged between 20 and 59 years were most likely to report an impact on their work

Percentage of adult population worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives who reported an impact on their work by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

### Figure 4: Those aged between 20 and 59 years were most likely to report an impact on their work

Percentage of adult population worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives who reported an impact on their work by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Of those aged 16 to 29 years who reported their work had been affected by the coronavirus, the most common ways in which it was affected were a reduction in hours worked (21%), concerns about health and safety at work (18%) and having been asked to work from home (19%), though half of young people reported that their work had been affected in some other way. This may in part reflect that this category includes those that had been furloughed.

Data from other sources in the period leading up to the pandemic show that young people aged between 16 and 29 years were the most likely to report their working arrangement as a zero-hours contract, with 4.8% of employed young people reporting this in the last quarter of 2019 (October to December) compared with 3.3% of people aged 60 years and over and 1.4% of people aged between 30 and 59 years. As under a zero-hours contract a person is only paid for the number of hours worked, a reduction in hours worked can cause concerns.

Over 4 in 10 of those aged 16 to 29 years who were in work or owned their own business reported that they were unable to work from home in the last seven days, a significantly higher proportion than for either of the other age groups (Figure 5). This group were also significantly less likely than those aged 30 to 59 years to have worked from home (37% compared with 49%). This is likely to reflect the occupations that young people tend to work in, including the hospitality sector.

#### Figure 5: More young people reported being unable to work from home

[Download the data](#)

## 7 . Impacts on education

Of the concerns that young people (aged 16 to 29 years) had in relation to the impact on schools and universities, by far the most commonly reported was not being able to attend their places of education, with almost 8 in 10 reporting this (Figure 6).

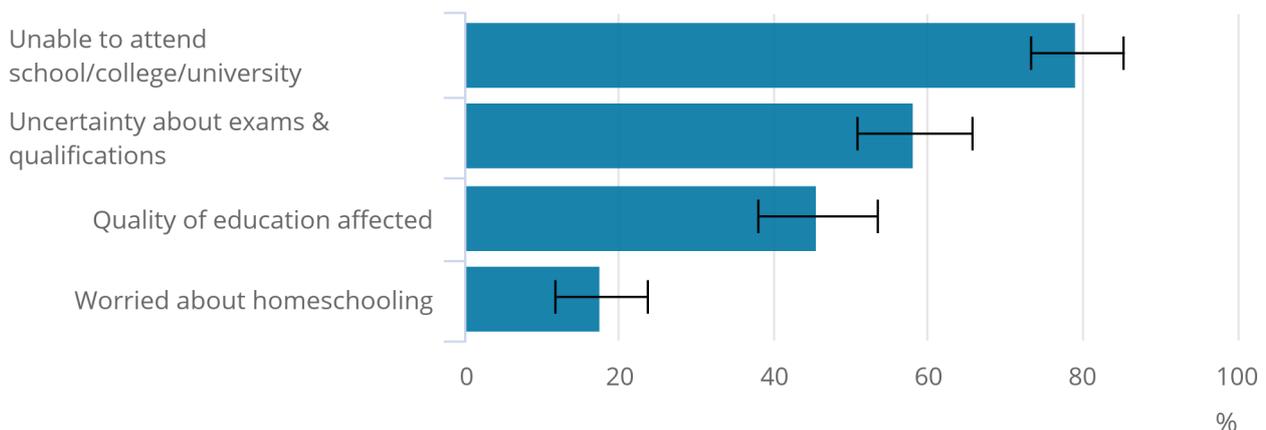
Uncertainty over exams and qualifications (58%) and concerns over the quality of education being affected (46%) were also common concerns. A sizeable percentage (18%) were also worried about the move to homeschooling.

**Figure 6: The most commonly reported impact by young people whose schools or universities had been affected was being unable to attend their schools, colleges or universities**

Percentage of population aged 16 to 29 years worried about the effect of the coronavirus on schools and universities by type of impact, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

Figure 6: The most commonly reported impact by young people whose schools or universities had been affected was being unable to attend their schools, colleges or universities

Percentage of population aged 16 to 29 years worried about the effect of the coronavirus on schools and universities by type of impact, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Among those aged 16 to 24 years who were unable to attend their educational establishments because of the pandemic, around 75% felt that their future life plans will be negatively affected.

Almost half reported that home education was negatively affecting their well-being and a similar percentage indicated they were not confident that they could continue their studies effectively from home.

Over a third reported that home education was putting a strain on their relationships with others in the household and more than a fifth indicated that they did not have access to the resources they needed to continue their studies from home.

## 8 . Impacts on household finances

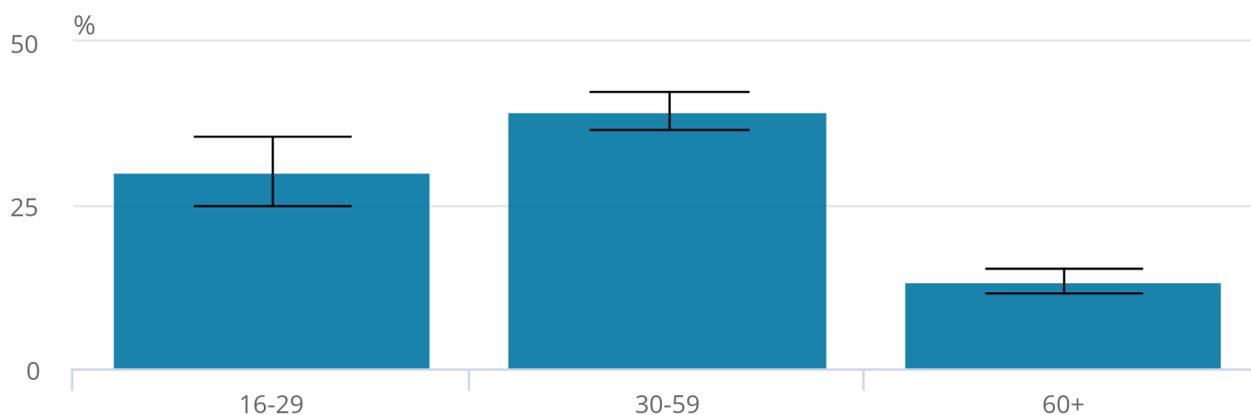
Among those who were worried about the impact the coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives, those aged 16 to 29 years were significantly more likely to report an impact on their household finances (30%) than those aged 60 years and over (13%), though at the household level, people are likely to be living with others in different age groups.

### Figure 7: Almost a third of young people reported that the coronavirus was affecting their household finances

Percentage of adult population worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives who reported an impact on their household finances by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

#### Figure 7: Almost a third of young people reported that the coronavirus was affecting their household finances

Percentage of adult population worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives who reported an impact on their household finances by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

The majority of those aged 16 to 29 years whose household finances have been affected have experienced a reduction in income (84%). Being unable to save was the next most commonly reported impact (38%). The proportions of 16 to 29-year-olds reporting these impacts were significantly higher than for those aged 60 years and over.

## 9 . Impacts on well-being

Research prior to the lockdown has shown that [young people report feeling lonely more often than those in older age groups](#). This pattern was also evident during the period of lockdown between 3 April and 10 May 2020 (Figure 8). Young people (aged 16 to 29 years) were much more likely to report feeling lonely some of the time or occasionally than those aged 60 years and over and much less likely to report never feeling lonely.

### **Figure 8: Young people reported feeling lonely some of the time or occasionally more often than those in the older age groups**

**Percentage of adult population by how often they reported feeling lonely by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

Also during this period, across three of the measures of personal well-being: life satisfaction, feelings that things done in life are worthwhile and happiness, young people (aged 16 to 29 years) reported much lower scores on average than those aged 60 years and over (Figure 9).

### **Figure 9: Young people on average were less satisfied with their lives than the oldest age group**

**Average (mean) score of life satisfaction, feeling that things done in life are worthwhile and happiness by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

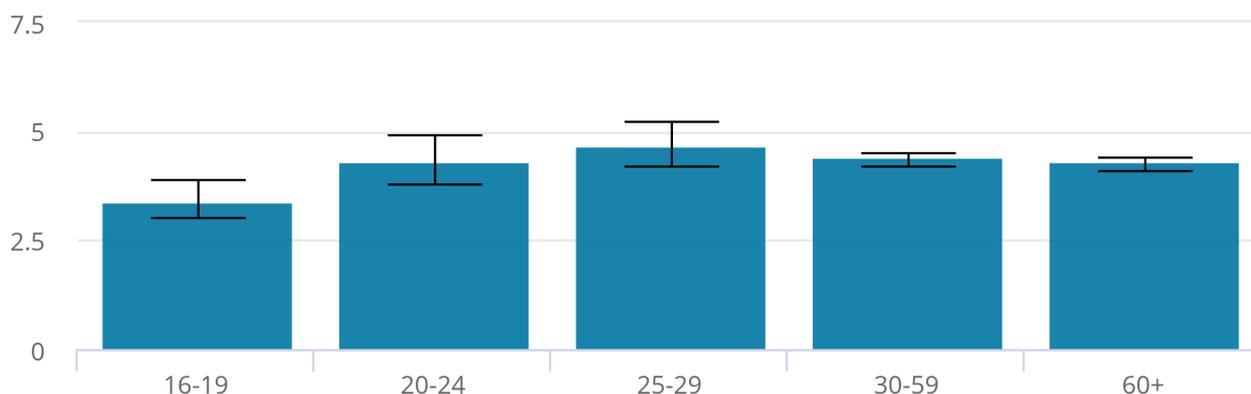
When considering the younger age group as a whole, there was no significant difference in the average anxiety reported by those aged 16 to 29 years and the other age groups. However, those aged 16 to 19 years reported significantly lower levels of anxiety on average (score of 3.4) than those aged 25 to 29 years (score of 4.7), those aged 30 to 59 years (score of 4.4) or those aged 60 years and over (score of 4.3) (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Those in the youngest age group were on average significantly less anxious than all other age groups, except those aged 20 to 24**

Average (mean) score of anxiety by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020

Figure 10: Those in the youngest age group were on average significantly less anxious than all other age groups, except those aged 20 to 24

Average (mean) score of anxiety by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

Between 3 April 2020 and 10 May 2020, two-thirds of those aged 16 to 29 years who were worried about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on their lives, were concerned about the impact on their well-being. Across all age groups, around 70% of those who reported an impact on their well-being, were worried about the future. Relatively few reported that they had no one to talk to, just over 10% in each age group.

Despite the youngest age group (16 to 19-year-olds) across the population as a whole reporting lower anxiety on average than most other age groups, those aged 16 to 29 years who specifically said they were worried about the impact on their well-being were significantly more likely to report being stressed or anxious (72%) than those aged 60 years and over (54%). They were also significantly more likely than either those aged 30 to 59 years or those aged 60 years and over to report feeling bored (76%), lonely (51%) and that the lockdown was making their mental health worse (42%).

In the youngest age group, feeling bored was more likely to be reported by the 16 to 19-year-olds (87%) than those aged 25 to 29 years (65%), likely reflecting the proportions of the older group in work or caring for children. Possibly for the same reason, the youngest age group (16 to 19-year-olds) were also more likely to report spending too much time alone (51%) than those aged 25 to 29 years (26%), those aged 30 to 59 years (20%) or those aged 60 years and over (28%).

## 10 . Impacts on community support

Across the age groups, there were no significant differences in the percentage of people who agreed (strongly or somewhat) that people would be there if they needed help.

Although 60% of young people aged 16 to 29 years agreed that if they needed help, other local community members would support them during the pandemic, this was significantly lower than those aged 60 years and over, 77% of whom expressed this opinion.

Young people aged 16 to 29 years were more likely to report that they did not check on their neighbours at all in the last seven days (47%) than either of the other age groups, and least likely to report that they checked on them three times or more (Figure 11). This may reflect that they are more likely to live in areas where older and more vulnerable people are not living or that they are still living with parents, who may be more likely to check on older neighbours.

### Figure 11: Young people were more likely to have never checked on their neighbours

**Percentage of adult population by how often they had checked on neighbours who might need help in the last seven days by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

Broadly similar proportions of those aged 16 to 29 years and those aged 60 years and over reported that they had not gone shopping or done other tasks for neighbours in the last seven days. Similar percentages of both these age groups also reported having done this one to two times in the last seven days (around 20%), significantly lower than the percentage of 30 to 59-year-olds who reported this (27%).

Across all age groups, most adults were likely to think that people were doing things to help others more since the outbreak of the pandemic, though this opinion was less likely to be expressed by those aged 16 to 29 years (76%) than either of the older age groups.

## 11 . Recent labour market trends and looking forward

Thinking about the future, young people were in general more optimistic than the older age groups.

When it came to how long they expected the effects of the pandemic to continue, over half of young people aged 16 to 29 years (55%) reported that they think their lives will return to normal within six months, significantly more than either of the other age groups (Figure 12). They were also significantly less likely than the older age groups to report that they expected the impact on their lives to last more than a year (13%).

### Figure 12: Young people were more likely to expect life to return to normal within six months

**Percentage of adult population by how long they expect it to be before their lives return to normal by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

Those aged 16 to 29 years were also significantly more likely to say that they expect the financial position of their household to get better (a lot or a little) in the next 12 months (23%) than those aged 60 years and over (9%) (Figure 13). They are also significantly less likely than those aged 30 to 59 years to say they expect it to get worse (a lot or a little) (37% compared with 45%). This likely reflects the high proportion of this age group who reported an impact on their household finances, many of whom reported a drop in income.

### **Figure 13: Almost a quarter of young people expect that their household's financial position will get better in the next year**

**Percentage of adult population by how they expect the financial position of their household to change in the next 12 months by age group, Great Britain, 3 April to 10 May 2020**

[Download the data](#)

Across all age groups, more people reported that they expect the general economic situation in the country to get worse (a lot or a little) over the next 12 months (over 8 in 10 adults in all age groups) than to get better (a lot or a little).

However, young people (aged 16 to 29 years) were much more likely to say that they think that now is the right time to save than the older age groups; 60% of them saying this, compared with just over 40% of those aged 30 to 59 years and less than 30% of those aged 60 years and over. They were also much more likely to say that they expect to be able to save in the next year than either of the other age groups; over half of those aged 16 to 29 years reported this compared with less than 40% of those aged 30 to 59 years or 60 years and over.

Evidence in relation to how young people have typically progressed in their careers prior to the pandemic and how the previous economic downturn affected this raises questions about their optimism.

At the beginning of the pandemic, unemployment was higher among young people than older age groups. In the period January to March 2020, those aged between 16 and 29 years were the most likely to be unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 7.9% compared with 2.6% for those aged between 30 and 59 years and 3.1% of those aged 60 years and over.

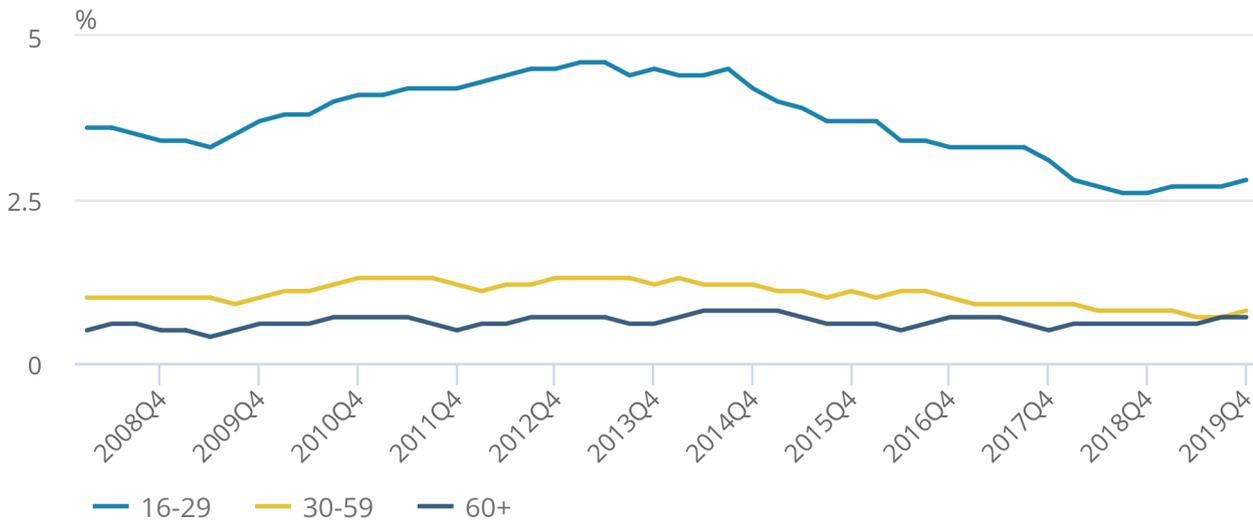
However, Figure 14 shows that a larger proportion of unemployed young people re-entered employment than older age groups.

## Figure 14: Young people are more likely to move from unemployment to employment than older age groups.

Percentage of people moving from unemployment to employment by age group, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2008 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2019, UK

### Figure 14: Young people are more likely to move from unemployment to employment than older age groups.

Percentage of people moving from unemployment to employment by age group, Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2008 to Quarter 4 (Oct to Dec) 2019, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics – Labour Force 2-Quarter Longitudinal Survey

Recent experimental statistics using Adzuna online job advert data have shown that [the number of online job adverts decreased drastically](#) between the start of March and the start of May 2020 and the latest estimates currently stand at under half of what they were on average in 2019. This could indicate a decrease in the opportunities for new jobs.

Even for people who continue to be employed, young people are more likely to move jobs more frequently. Throughout the period between 2008 and 2019, those aged between 16 and 29 years were consistently more than twice as likely as those aged between 30 and 59 years to have moved jobs within a three-month period, though after the last economic downturn, the proportion of young people moving jobs fell from 5.3% in Quarter 1 (January to March) 2008 to a low of 3.3% in Quarter 4 (October to December) 2009. [Analysis of job changers and stayers](#) has shown that employees who switch jobs typically have higher pay growth compared with those who do not.

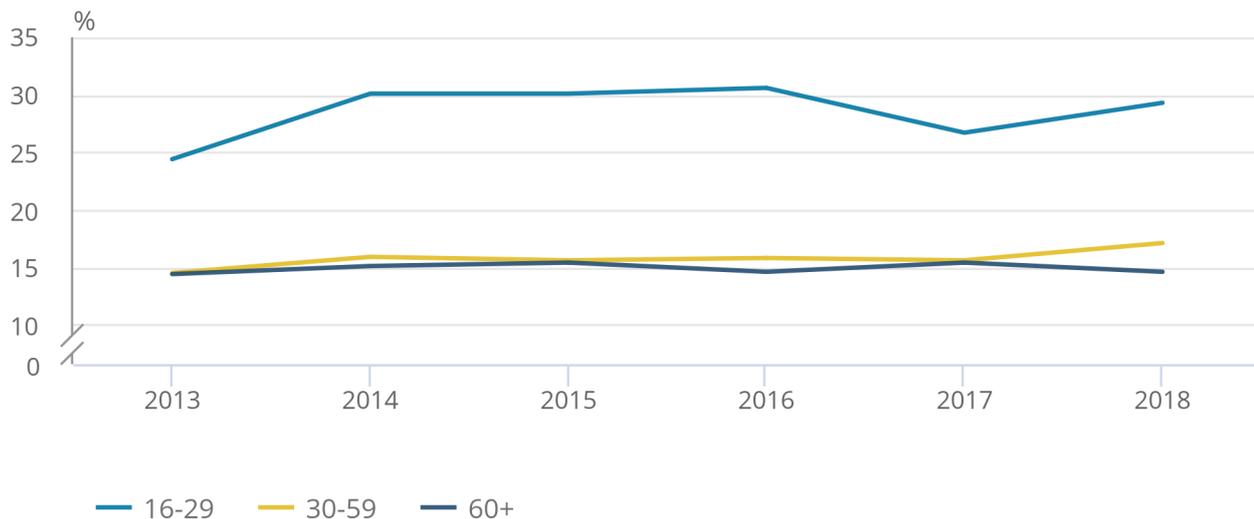
The availability of new jobs is also important from a career progression perspective. Figure 15 shows that young people have typically been the most likely to progress into high-skilled occupations such as managerial and professional occupations (see [Glossary](#) for definitions of skill levels). Throughout the period from 2013 to 2018, a higher percentage of people aged 16 to 29 years moved from low- and mid-skilled occupations to high-skilled occupations within a year than people aged 30 to 59 years.

## Figure 15: Young people are most likely to move from low- and mid-skilled jobs to high-skilled jobs

Proportion of people moving from low and mid skilled to high-skilled jobs by age group, UK, 2013 to 2018

### Figure 15: Young people are most likely to move from low- and mid-skilled jobs to high-skilled jobs

Proportion of people moving from low and mid skilled to high-skilled jobs by age group, UK, 2013 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Annual Population 2-Year Longitudinal Survey

High-skilled occupations are more likely to require higher qualifications, and as students decide whether to go straight to university or not in the next academic year, recent analysis using data from the Annual Population Survey prior to the pandemic suggests that [deferring university entry does not necessarily negatively impact on the future prospects](#) of those who defer. Analysis of the outcomes of those aged 16 to 35 years with a degree level qualification, by whether they deferred entry to university or not, showed that, on average, undergraduate students who deferred were more likely to be in a high-skilled occupation.

## 12 . Glossary

### Occupation skill-levels

The “low”, “mid” and “high” skilled occupations are created by grouping jobs together based on their occupation, in line with the definitions set out in the [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\)](#). “High-skill” equates to occupations in SOC skill level 4, “Mid-skill” equates to occupations in SOC skill levels 2 and 3, “Low-skill” equates to occupations in SOC skill level 1.

## Statistical significance

Any changes or differences mentioned in this bulletin are [statistically significant](#). The statistical significance of differences noted within the release are determined based on non-overlapping [confidence intervals](#).

## 13 . Measuring the data

The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) is a monthly omnibus survey. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we have adapted the OPN to become a weekly survey used to collect data on the impact of COVID-19 on day-to-day life in Great Britain.

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

The estimates provided in this article are based on data collected from this survey with a sample of approximately 6,400 adults (64% response rate) between 3 April and 10 May 2020 (inclusive).

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

## Sampling

A sample of 2,010 households were randomly selected from the Annual Population Survey (APS), which consists collectively of those respondents who successfully completed the last wave of the Labour Force Survey (LFS) or the local LFS boost. From each household, one adult was selected at random but with unequal probability. Younger people were given higher selection probability than older people because of under-representation in the sample available for the survey. Further information on the sample design can be found in the [OPN QMI](#).

## Weighting

The responding sample contained approximately 6,400 individuals (64% response rate). Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population.

The weights of the pooled waves 3 to 7 dataset were obtained by re-weighting the pooled dataset using the scaled weights of the component datasets as the starting weights in calibration. This ensures that each week is equally represented in the pooled dataset. Subsequently, the scaled component weights were calibrated to satisfy population distributions considering the following factors: sex by age, region, tenure, highest qualification, employment status, National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) group by sex, and smoking status.

For age, sex and region, population totals based on projections of mid-year population estimates for April 2020 were used. For the remaining factors, the distributions were based on estimates obtained from APS 2019. The resulting weighted sample is therefore representative of the Great Britain adult population by a number of socio-demographic factors and geography.

The calibration process helps in adjusting for potential bias stemming from attrition in the last waves of LFS and its local boost, the samples from which OPN samples are selected, non-consent to follow-up and non-response in OPN.

## 14 . Strengths and limitations

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

- it allows for timely production of data and statistics that can respond quickly to changing needs
- it meets data needs; the questionnaire is developed with customer consultation, and design expertise is applied in the development stages
- robust methods are adopted for the survey's sampling and weighting strategies to limit the impact of bias
- quality assurance procedures are undertaken throughout the analysis stages to minimise the risk of error

The main limitations of the OPN include:

- the sample size is relatively small; 2,010 individuals per week with fewer completed interviews, meaning that, even with pooled data, detailed analyses for subnational geographies and other sub-groups are difficult
- comparisons between groups must be done with caution as estimates are provided from a sample survey; as such, confidence intervals are included to present the sampling variability, which should be considered when assessing differences between groups, as true differences may not exist

More quality and methodology information on strengths, limitations, appropriate uses, and how the data were created is available in [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#) and the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey QMI](#).

## 15 . Related links

### [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

Latest data and analysis on the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effects on the economy and society.

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

Bulletin | Weekly

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

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

Article | Released 15 June 2020

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

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

Bulletin | Released 8 June 2020

Analysis of loneliness in Great Britain during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.