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# **Covid-19 Lockdown UK Adult Experiences**

## **Preliminary Results**

**Results based on a nationwide sample of  
1,330 people aged 18+ from across the  
UK.**

**Data collected between 24/03/2022 and  
07/06/2022.**

**July 2023**

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Fiona Tasker**



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# UK COVID-19 Lockdown Adult Experiences

## Preliminary Results

Thanks for taking a look at this summary of the preliminary results from our UK COVID-19 Lockdown Adult Experiences survey, conducted between March 2022 and June 2022. Here we summarize the responses given by the 1,330 adults in the UK who participated in our nationwide survey.

We have released a parallel report on the results from our UK COVID-19 Lockdown Experiences survey for LGBTQ+ respondents on our website [lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com](https://lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com)

This is one of a series of surveys and interview studies that we have undertaken in our international research project on adults' experiences of the coronavirus pandemic and associated restrictions. We hope you will find the results interesting and useful.

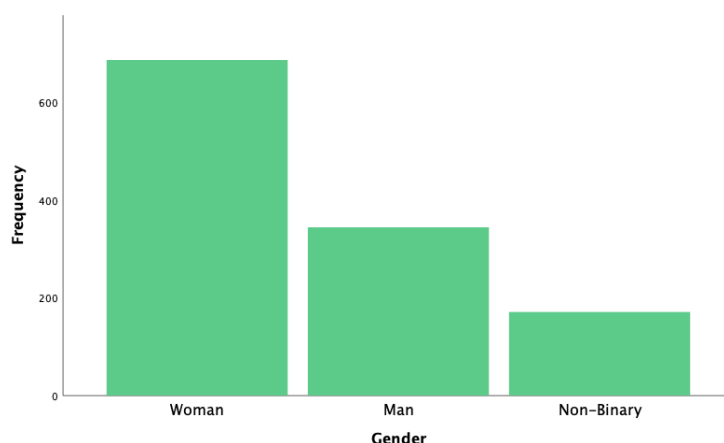
If you have any questions, would like to know more about the results, or would like to quote any of the material here, please do get in touch with the main Research Team at Birkbeck, University of London – Fiona Tasker ([f.tasker@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:f.tasker@bbk.ac.uk)).



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## Who took part in the survey?

**Gender and Sexual Identity.** For the total of 1,330 participants in both of our surveys of the heterosexual and cisgender and the LGBTQ+ groups: 52% of participants identified as a woman, 26% identified as a man, 13% identified as non-binary and 10% preferred not to say.



In the rest of this brief results report, we give the results of our survey of heterosexual cisgender people. In our parallel survey, we had 600 LGBTQ\* people and our results report giving the results for our LGBTQ\* respondents is available from [lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com](http://lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com)

**Age.** The participants ranged in age from 18 to 88. The largest group of participants were those aged 21-35 (30%), and just 5% were aged 18-20. However, the rest of the participants were approximately evenly spread across the 36-50, 51-65, and 66+ age groups.

**Disability.** 45% of those who took part in the survey considered themselves as disabled or had an ongoing physical or mental health problem. Of these participants, 38% said that their disability or ongoing mental or physical health problem reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, either to some extent or a lot.

**Ethnicity.** As 86% of participants identified themselves as white in the survey, BAME groups were under-represented in this survey.

**Nationality.** 85% of participants were UK citizens.

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**Regions and area of the UK.** All participants were based in the UK and the survey had respondents from every are of the UK. The South-East and Greater London combined had the greatest proportion of participants (30% combined), although this does reflect general population density in this area. Areas with underrepresentation included North-East England (2%), Wales (3%) and East of England (5%).

## Personal experience of COVID-19

Approximately a third of survey participants reported that they had currently or at some point previously received a positive diagnosis for COVID-19 (34%). As well as this, a further 7% of our survey recipients said they had experienced some Covid-19 symptoms but had not been diagnosed. Nearly 70% of participants (69%) said that a member of their family or close friend had been infected with COVID-19. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they had received all, some, or none of the vaccinations they were offered, 61% said they received all and only 10% said none.



## Impact of the pandemic

When asked to what extent the pandemic had affected their life in the last 3 weeks, with 0 being 'it has not affected my life at all' and 10 indicating 'it has severely affected my life', 55% of participants said the pandemic had affected their life in some way. The mean score to this question was 3, indicating that life had only been somewhat affected for the majority of participants, with only 5% saying their life was severely affected.

The pandemic has also taken an emotional toll on participants, with 55% indicating that they had been affected emotionally within the last 3 weeks.

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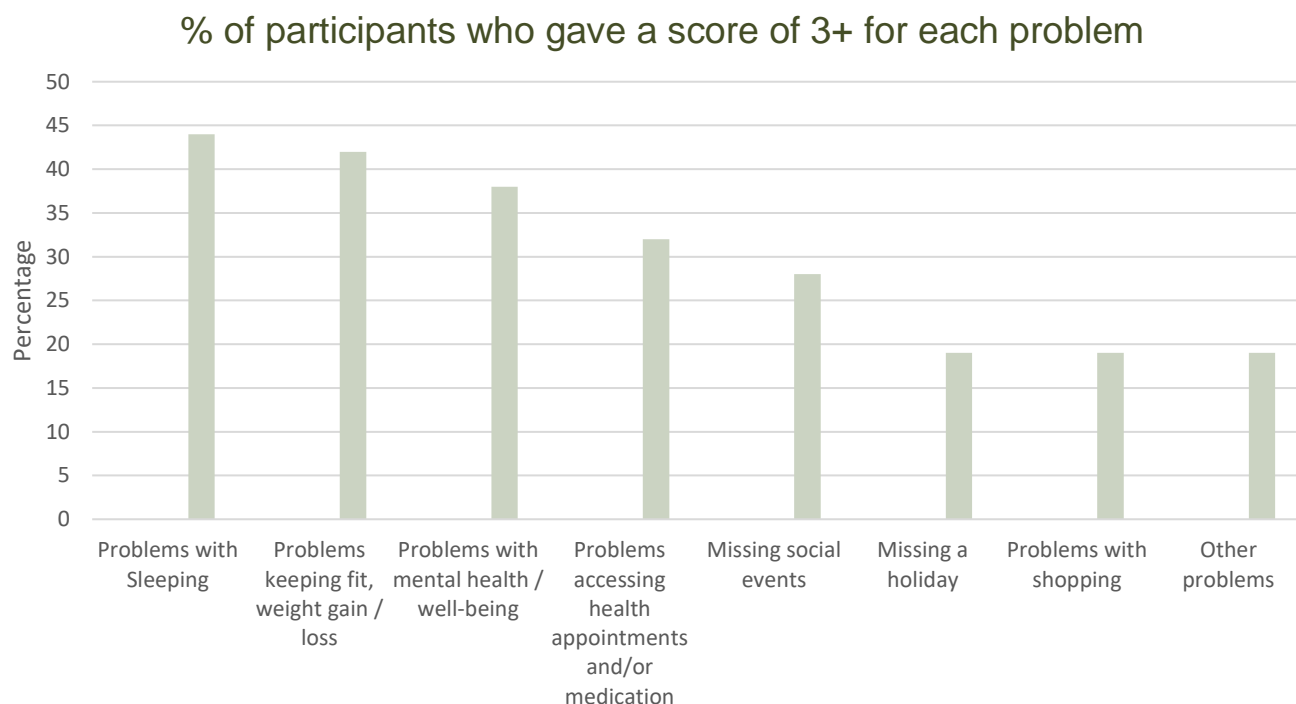
Additionally, 47% of respondents said that their life had felt limited in the last 3 weeks due to the pandemic.

## **Problems caused by the Pandemic**

In comparison to the previous findings, participants reported fewer problems caused by the pandemic. The highest scoring issue was problems with sleep, with 44% of participants giving a score of 3+ (on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being 'not a problem' and 5 being 'a big problem'). Conversely, the lowest scoring issue was problems seeing or looking after their children, with only 3% of participants giving a score of 3+.

Other issues experienced by participants during the pandemic included problems with keeping fit, weight gain or weight loss, problems with mental health or well-being, problems accessing healthcare appointments and/or medication. When looking at the percentage of participants who gave a score of 3+, 42% of participants had experienced problems with keeping fit, weight gain or weight loss, 38% of participants had experienced problems with their mental health or well-being, and 32% of participants had experienced problems with accessing healthcare appointments and/or medication.

## Problems experienced during the pandemic



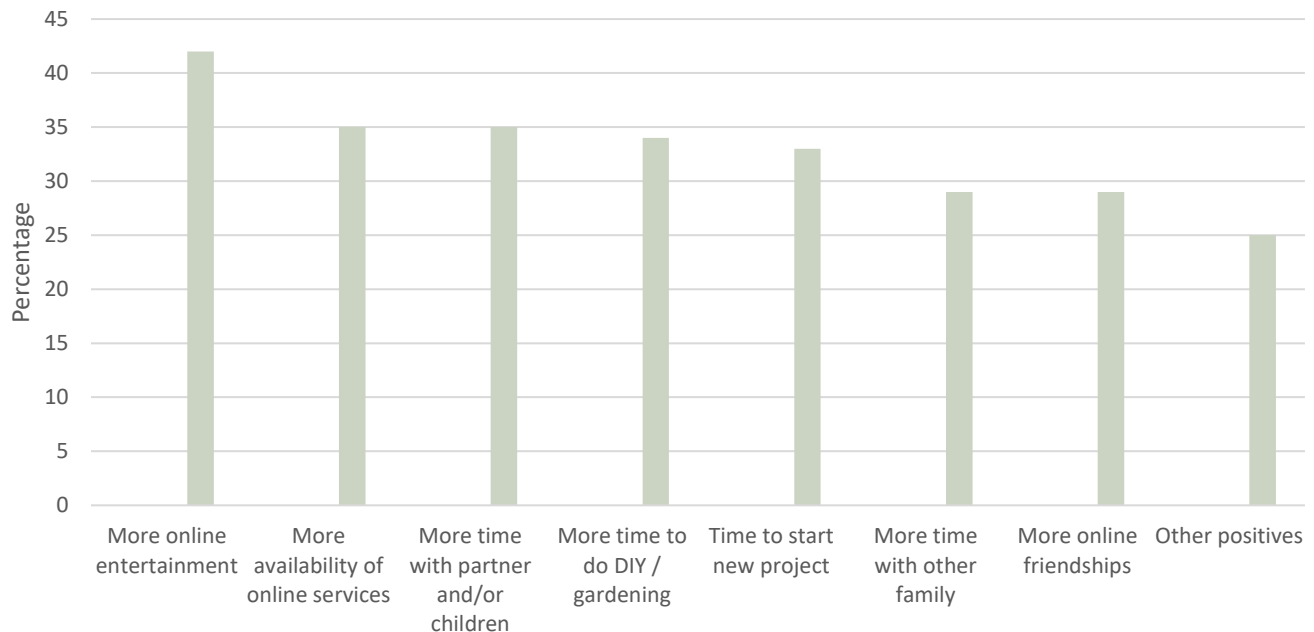
## Benefits of the pandemic

Despite the negatives and problems of the pandemic, some people experienced some positive gains or benefits during the pandemic. The highest scoring benefit of the pandemic was more online entertainment, with 42% of participants giving a score of 3+ (on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being 'not been a positive' and 5 being 'a big positive').

Other benefits of the pandemic include more time to complete DIY projects or do gardening, more time with family, and more availability of online services. When looking at the percentage of participants who gave a score of 3+, 34% of participants enjoyed more time to complete DIY projects or do gardening, 65% enjoyed spending more time with their partner and/or children, and other family members combined, and 35% found a positive in more availability of online services generally.

## Positives experienced during the pandemic by participants

% of participants who gave a score of 3+ for each positive



## The effects of the pandemic in participants' own words

Participants were asked to describe their experiences of the pandemic and lockdowns; we think these provide a good reflection of living through a pandemic.



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Aside from the serious consequences of illness and bereavement, there were a range of problems experienced by participants some of which were attributable to social restrictions.

***“My partner only being allowed to visit for 2 hours after the birth of our baby despite me having a c section and being unable to care for the baby. Short-staffed midwives meant that nobody came to support me when I pressed for help.”***

***“Inability to travel biggest issue, this had been a few years when we had planned some big trips before we got too old.”***

***“Resuming social interactions”***

***“Social isolation from family particularly young grandchildren.”***

However, there were also positives that had come out of the pandemic, with some participants really enjoying spending more time at home:

***“I enjoyed lockdown, the roads were quieter, the neighbours were friendlier”***

***“Working from home, more time with pets.”***

***“Better fitness and healthier eating”***

***“Gardening, time to reflect, time to rethink priorities”***

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## Conclusions

We hope that you have found this summary of our initial findings useful. The results reflect the range of experiences throughout the pandemic.



It is undeniable that the pandemic has affected most participants' lives in some way. There were a range of issues associated; illness, loss, and bereavement, problems with sleeping, keeping fit, weight gain or loss, and problems with mental health were the biggest problems reported. Others included missing a holiday and social events. Many participants also described issues with healthcare.

However, there were also positives that came out of the lockdowns, more time with family, more availability of online services and more time to do DIY and gardening were amongst the biggest positives. Participants reported enjoying spending more time at home, and for those who were not overwhelmed by serious problems they gained the chance to re-think priorities and boost wellbeing.

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## Thank you and future research

Firstly, we would like to offer our thanks to everyone who participated in the survey. Thank you for the time and thought you put into taking part.

Thanks also to all the organizations and individuals who helped in publicizing the survey and read drafts of the survey. We would also like to thank the British Academy and Birkbeck, University of London for the funding which have made our series of surveys possible. And we want to thank our team of undergraduate and postgraduate students for their energetic and enthusiastic help with our survey research projects.

We plan to explore associations within our findings further to find out more about both the problems and benefits that people living in the UK have experienced.

For more information about our research project, the results we have found so far and our future plans, do please visit our websites:

[yourcovid19experiences.wordpress.com](https://yourcovid19experiences.wordpress.com) and  
[lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com](https://lgbtq1835c19lockdown.wordpress.com)

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Please do get in touch with us – Fiona Tasker ([f.tasker@bbk.ac.uk](mailto:f.tasker@bbk.ac.uk))  
– if you have any  
questions, would like to know more about the results, or would like to  
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Vulnerability and Resilience Over Time