



How Covid-19 changed community life in the UK

A week by week archive of life during a pandemic. Understanding the impact on people and communities.



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

The Young Foundation's mission is to develop better connected and stronger communities across the UK.

As an UKRI accredited research organisation, social investor and community practitioner, we offer expert advice, training and deliver support to:

Understand Communities

Researching in and with communities to increase your understanding of community life today

Involve Communities

Offering different methods and approaches to involving communities and growing their capacity to own and lead change

Innovate with Communities

Providing tools and resources to support innovation to tackle the issues people and communities care about

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Overview



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE








ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About this document

This document is organised week by week according to significant dates in the public news cycle -- like the introduction of new government guidelines, the Queen's speech or Capt. Tom Moore's fundraiser for the NHS. Drawing on ethnographic principles, personal stories are combined with research insights.

We have been able to identify trends in attitudes and experiences from the first weeks of lockdown all the way through to the more recent lifting of some restrictions. In full, this calendar creates an important digital archive of how UK society responded to the crisis in real-time. Below, we present key insights, our conclusions and, crucially, recommendations aimed at policymakers and community decision-makers.

Timeline Key

-  **Politics**
-  **Testing**
-  **NHS**
-  **Infections/death toll**
-  **Furlough scheme/business**
-  **Lockdown measures**
-  **Royals**

Introduction

Covid-19 has radically changed the way we go about our day-to-day lives. It has shifted where we turn for help and support and how we interact with friends, family and neighbours. It is a historic event but such viral epidemics may be more common in the future. To better understand the short- and long-term impact of the pandemic on UK communities, The Young Foundation launched two projects focused on hearing directly from people all over the country.

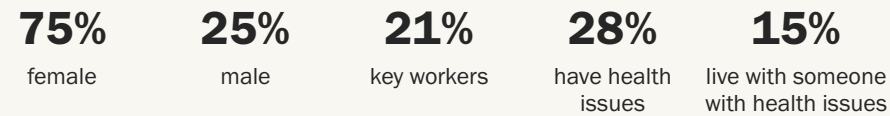
The first, [Covid & You](#) was a citizen science project delivered in partnership with The Open University and focused on understanding people's experiences of Covid-19 and the impact of social distancing on their everyday lives. Members of the public completed a survey that included questions about mental wellbeing, sources of support, challenges faced and unexpected effects of lockdown. Almost 600 adults (18+) from across the UK completed this survey. Demographically: 75% female, 25% male; 21% of respondents are 'key workers'; 28% report having a 'physical or mental health condition or illness'; and 15% report that someone living in their home does.

The second project invited 100 people to complete weekly digital diaries. Tasked with

documenting and recording life during this period in greater detail, participants were asked to complete specific tasks on a regular basis in order to help us gather insights on different issues as the situation evolved. The diaries were hosted on an online platform called Recollective, which allowed respondents to share written responses to weekly questions and polls, as well as upload photos and drawings that reflected their experiences.

Combined, the stories and data captured from April to June through both projects paint a fascinating picture of real life during lockdown; revealing tales of hope and community solidarity, family struggle and boredom, anxiety and resilience, and more, as the pandemic unfolded.

Demographics of almost 600 adult participants:



Key Insights



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“ It has also been very nice to see the local support for the NHS that has been shown by children’s paintings and murals, and at 8pm every Thursday when everyone goes outside to clap, cheer, and bang pots and pans together. ”

Male, 25

“ The ‘clap for carers’ has been an increasingly excruciating experience, the emotional weight of it and the politicisation that has crept in over the weeks left me dreading it. ”

Female, 53

8 overarching key insights

1 At the start of lockdown, community solidarity was on everyone’s agenda

In the early weeks of social distancing being enforced, people were reeling from the number of deaths reported in daily news bulletins. At the same time they marvelled at the ability of their own communities to ‘pull together’ to support the most vulnerable, whilst getting their heads around the implications of spending more time at home - which in practical terms impacted their work, childcare, relationships and use of space within the house. Whilst some worried about the effects of isolation on their mental health, many more actually shared relief at the unprecedented opportunity to ‘slow life down’ and were relieved at having time to cook, clean and go a bit easier on themselves.

Many recognised the power and strength of their communities in response to the crisis and reported local people ‘pulling together’ to confront the challenges of Covid-19. This was particularly the experience for more vulnerable households, with neighbours collecting shopping for elderly residents or those self isolating.

Not exactly surprising, but it has been really heartening to see community efforts to support vulnerable and self-isolating neighbours. *(Female, 36)*

People from across the UK said the response to Covid-19 had brought their communities closer together and even ended the social division they felt in their locality after the Brexit vote. Many more reported forming new and deeper connections with neighbours due to the increased openness to chat for longer and in different places, for instance across garden fences. In smaller villages there was a sense that people who rarely attended events or got involved in community initiatives were starting to take part and become more visible.

For many weeks, the ‘NHS clap’ was a source of community pride and brought about a feeling of togetherness, but was also just one visible moment of communities coming together, whilst many other undocumented acts of daily kindness and caring were happening between neighbours.

However, as the weeks wore on, more people started to question the symbolism and politicisation of the clap for carers and were conflicted about both showing appreciation and support for NHS workers whilst also wanting them to be properly funded by the government.

Key Insights



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“ [I've been]...trying to support elderly parents to engage with online services e.g. setting up home milk deliveries for them, getting them to join a Zoom call. They find it difficult and are frustrated that so much is online - e.g. guided daily exercises for older people - “why can't they be on the tv?” is their response. ”

Female, 48

2 Most accepted the 'new normal' very quickly

One early insight was the surprise at how quickly a large number of people adapted their lives in response to lockdown. For those who had always worked from offices, being forced to work from home meant companies who had been previously reluctant to allow home working, suddenly had to accept this as the only way to continue to run their businesses.

The amount of things we were told that couldn't happen that can. I work for a homelessness charity and suddenly the council has found space to house everyone. Jobs we were told couldn't be done from home can. People have wonderfully come together online. (Female, 39)

Whilst technology was a huge enabler - both for work and maintaining social connections - those without access to the internet risked becoming even more isolated, particularly as many support services offered by local authorities and central government required registering online.

There was also a recognition that whilst technology is essential, and offered many a lifeline in terms of connecting with others and providing ways to pass the time, it does not replace the need for face to face communication and physical touch.

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

3

As the pandemic continued, people reported missing physical touch

As lockdown passed month two, people talked more and more about their longing to see family members outside their household in person and, in particular, about missing the physical touch of loved ones. Grandparents worried about bonds with grandchildren being broken or weakened due to lack of physical interaction. Those living alone described one of the biggest impacts on feeling lonely being the realisation that they had gone for weeks without human interaction.

I didn't realise how important being touched is to me. Lack of physical contact is a really big thing for me, it's really affecting my mental health and general sense of well-being. I married at 16 years of age and had

my first child at 17 years of age. I have 4 children and 10 grandchildren so someone is always hugging me kissing me or touching me but now as I've said since this lockdown nobody has touched me except to hand me change whilst I've been out shopping. (Female, 60)

Many of those in relationships and living with their partner talked about being thankful for having someone close to talk to and rely upon during this time. However, for those whose relationships were strained before lockdown, extended periods of time spent in confined spaces exposed further tensions, or simply reinforced that the partner was not the right person to talk to about feelings and emotions.

“ I texted a friend when I wanted to express my frustration with my partner and son (my household). I chose her because she also gets deeply frustrated by her partner so I knew she would empathise. ”

Female, 47

Key Insights



01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

“ Feeling constantly like I’m not doing enough, not making the most, not providing enough, not not not... ”

Female, 51

4 Lockdown shifted family dynamics for better and worse

Despite early reports about the benefits of getting to spend more time with children (alongside the stress of homeschooling), as time wore on a more nuanced picture emerged of life for families spending more time than ever before together. As homeschooling for many entered a second and third month, mothers described guilt at not being able to give children the attention they needed whilst struggling to juggle work and childcare. Some worried about the effect of lockdown on their children’s mental health and behaviour, especially for children with additional needs.

Kids getting very little attention...The children are almost completely ignored from 9am-6pm. They have to homeschool themselves. More successful for 10, 12 and 14 yr old than 7 yr old. Overall they are being very good. (Female, 39)

Women, almost exclusively, described the pressure they felt to be doing more at home, to be carrying out their new home-based roles ‘better’ and the relentless feeling that they should deliver ‘more’ of everything.

5 The ‘sandwich generation’ experienced unique challenges during Covid-19

Pressure on the ‘sandwich generation’ of women caring for both children and parents emerged as a key theme across all locations. Many women found themselves with additional caring responsibilities for older relatives, particularly those who were vulnerable, both in their homes and further away. Older family members who had been independent now required support to get food and medicine, adding an additional layer of responsibility for many who were already juggling working from home, childcare and managing their household.

My 94 year old grandmother has been visiting from Nigeria since December. Due to her age she is shielding at our home. There is the additional stress that Nigeria has suspended international flights. We have to be careful to prevent her from getting ill, feel guilty when we go out because she can’t come with us and feel bad for her as I am sure she is missing home. (Female, 29)

Earlier in the pandemic, those with older parents also expressed frustrations that they were not taking the instructions to self-isolate seriously and either did not understand, or did not care, about the risks of ignoring social distancing measures and leaving their homes. As time passed and more deaths were reported, particularly amongst older people in care homes, fewer respondents reported vulnerable relatives ignoring lockdown rules.

At the other end of the spectrum of worry for middle-aged women (unpaid) caregivers were unique fears about the future for teenagers on the cusp of exams, university and jobs. Many worried about the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their future prospects as well as lack of opportunities to socialise and fill their time in the shorter term.

“ Looking after my elderly father who lives alone about 15 miles away has been the biggest challenge, both in terms of the practicality of making sure that he has food and medicine without unduly exposing himself to risk, and trying to communicate to him the need to stay safe and self-isolate. ”

Male, 50

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Key Insights



01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

“ I have underlying health conditions (asthma) and I’m terrified to leave the house- even for exercise. I can’t go shopping for food or essentials, but I’m not sick enough to be ‘extremely vulnerable’. I know how my body reacts to cold/flu bugs and Covid-19 would quite probably kill me. ”

Female, 40

6 Lockdown took a huge toll on mental health and wellbeing

Many described the effect of Covid-19 on their mental health - both due to health fears related to them, or loved ones, catching the virus and, as the crisis wore on, due to spending extended periods indoors. For some, the loss of control of their lives led to a feeling of powerlessness, reduced confidence in themselves and increasing anxiety, including for those who were separated from partners and family members, or isolating alone. The possibility of serious illness and death was a major worry, particularly for those with existing health conditions.

From late April, respondents sadly started to report family members and loved ones dying as a result of Covid-19. Alongside expected feelings of grief and loss, people described the deep distress that came from not being

able to attend funerals or mourn with friends and family together in the ‘usual’ way. Some hinted at the possibility that the trauma from these experiences would be felt further far into the future, particularly if lockdown eased and families were able to reconnect to mourn their losses together.

My wife’s mother has recently passed away during the lockdown - this has been very difficult for her and her family, not being able to grieve with her family and unable to have a proper funeral service. She did have a funeral, but it was hard with so few people and the vicar shouting prayers from the graveside, everyone on edge and not clear what we’re allowed to do or be. *(Male, 40)*

7 Physical space had a big effect on people’s ability to cope

Unsurprisingly, those with gardens and living in more rural locations described being able to cope with lockdown much better compared to those in small flats with a lack of outdoor space. For some, it has been a time to reassess where they would like to live in the future, including this 29 year old woman.

It’s made me completely re-evaluate where I aspire to live. Before, being in a city-centre flat, surrounded by the buzz of the restaurants, coffee shops, cinemas, shops etc, was amazing. To me, the suburbs seemed boring, quiet, far away. Now, they’re the hubs of activity and community spirit, and the city-centre is lifeless. I sit in one of the two rooms in our tiny flat, scrolling through pictures of people lounging in their gardens, going on long walks in the countryside, pouring another G&T as they bake banana bread in their big kitchens, and feel so stuck, alone and

jealous. There’s no solidarity or feeling that we’re coming together here - no VE day parties, no front-garden socialising. It’s always been much harder to develop relationships with people in flats, and this really emphasises that. As we clap every Thursday, we lean over the railings of our little balcony to see if we can spot the hands of anyone else in our building. We haven’t had any luck yet.

A significant number of people across all age groups and locations also said that a surprising impact of the pandemic had been the opportunity for nature to start to be restored, respected and rebalanced. Whilst there were fears this won’t be sustained beyond lockdown, there were equal hopes that the pace of change in the way people valued and interacted with nature offered hopes that it might be possible to take the kind of collective action needed to combat climate change.

“ I really love how clean the air is, how nature is thriving, how families are cooking from scratch, and wasting less food. How airlines are going bust and fossil fuel companies are struggling is a bonus. I feel sorry for the workers in these industries but it points to the urgent need for government led transition to a low carbon economy where people are supported to change careers. ”

Key Insights



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

“ We are starting to question how necessary commutes to the office and meetings are. Subsequently, we’re questioning the traditional notions of ‘office work’. Rush hour may become a thing of the past, work life balance may increase, and the mandate for a four day week may gain strength. ”

Female, 30

8 As time wore on, worries about the precariousness of the future grew

As respondents look to the future, there are inevitably mixed feelings about what the long term impact will be - both at the individual and the collective level. On an individual level, concerns relate to reduced incomes, job prospects and the ability to make major life decisions.

There are also individual hopes that we will be able to continue to working from home more, particularly now it has been proved possible on a large scale.

At the collective level, there are fears that if we do not take the opportunity to ‘build back better’, the impact of Covid-19 will continue to be felt more keenly by vulnerable communities. At the same time, a small number wonder if this may force our governments to continue providing support to those who need it most.

But perhaps this inequality will force us to question our social safety nets for the most vulnerable and adapt our society to become more inclusive. *(Female, 34)*

Conclusion



OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“ But I’m deaf and lipread; I’m terrified about trying to understand people behind face masks. I don’t know how I will be able to follow instructions in shops, on transport etc. If I can’t, what will happen? ”

Female, over 65

“ You would think that a virus doesn’t discriminate but I think it does. Poorer communities and those with less access to healthcare have been disproportionately affected. ”

Male, 50s

Conclusion

In listening to hundreds of people from across the UK talk about their experiences during the pandemic, it’s clearer than ever that Covid-19 was not ‘the great leveller’ we were initially led to believe it would be. We now know with certainty that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are at a much higher risk of contracting and dying from Covid-19, particularly if they come from poorer households. We also know that ‘people living in deprived areas have experienced Covid-19 mortality rates more than double those living in less deprived areas.’ (Nick Stripe, Head of Health Statistics, Office for National Statistics)

Whilst our diarists and citizen scientists were not representative of the UK population as a whole (and skewed towards white, middle class households), their reflections revealed stark differences in the ways lockdown, social isolation and Covid-19 had impacted their lives. Whilst some were embracing having the time to slow down and connect with themselves, others were worrying how they would survive once furlough ended or changing decisions about life plans as a result of financial instability.

What’s been surprising is the disconnect between people who are seeing this as a slow down and others who are chasing their tails to work and find food. *(Male, 38)*

There were also reminders that decisions made by the government throughout the pandemic can have unintended and unexpected consequences. From the impact of lockdown on women in the ‘sandwich generation’ forced to care for both children and vulnerable parents and relatives, to

the fears that policies designed to protect us can end up putting some at greater risk. Across respondents we were reminded of the strength found in communities, particularly in their support of the most vulnerable and in the absence of reliable formal support for many weeks after social distancing measures were first announced. Local communities across the UK were described as a source of pride and their ‘coming together’ in some places was seen as going a long way to healing the divisions created by Brexit.

By engaging with people over an extended period of time, we were able to uncover insight into what was most valued at different stages of the pandemic. The findings have important implications for planning the response to future crises, and provide an alternative model for listening to people and communities across the UK, including those who are more likely to be adversely affected by the socio-economic fallout from a crisis like Covid-19.

Recommendations



CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

01/2

03

04

05

06

07

08

09

10

11

12

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Recommendations

1 Recognise that people do not necessarily want things to return to how they were before

The changes that have been possible during lockdown - from supporting the most vulnerable and coming together as communities, to working from home and valuing family more - have the potential to permanently shift the ways we live and work in the future. Focusing on 'getting life back to how it was' fails to acknowledge the positive impacts of a crisis on our collective experiences. *Are there different ways of building community and sustaining community life, and can these help build a strong case for a 'new normal' that puts community at its heart?*

2 Take a systems-approach to old and emerging challenges in work, housing and tech inequality

Business leaders and policymakers have an opportunity to bring a systems view to the plans being put in place to weather the looming unemployment problem. For example, as part of the new normal, we've learned that employers can facilitate remote working rapidly and that staff have adjusted equally rapidly, notwithstanding the pressures of homeschooling and care etc. *Is this a time to bring the technology and housing agendas into conversations about the future of work, using this as an opportunity to finally decentralise where people live in order to work? Should access to kit, skills and connectivity to make use of digital technology be a basic right in a 21st Century society?*

3 Take the unexpected insights forward to inform other global challenges

Those with gardens or access to outside space faced the crisis with more resilience than others, as did environment-focused campaigns. Many of our recipients mentioned the natural world in relation to their well-being. *Could this be a moment to maximise people's awareness of their need to connect with nature, with specific support to mobilise, inspire community action to protect the environment, acknowledging our next global disaster could be environmental?*

4 Explore ways to sustain community strength and engagement outside of times of crisis

The vast majority of respondents recognised the enormous potential of their communities to rally and respond; claps, neighbourhood food drops, mutual aid

groups. This isn't a surprise but the question is how to maintain this energy and community cohesion outside of a collective crisis? *What can be learned and sustained into the future without asking communities to step in where formal services should be providing support?*

5 Put well-being and mental health at the heart of all decision-making

The crisis has confirmed what matters to communities, what we really value and need - to feel connected, close to others and connected physically with family and friends. The impact of being isolated from those we love and trust has had huge effects on mental wellbeing and is likely to be felt far beyond the end of lockdown, particularly by those processing the trauma of losing family members to Covid-19. *What national role do organisations like Action for Happiness play in equipping individuals and communities to move forward from trauma and work through loss, whether that be personal or collective?*

6 Take steps to build trust now and respond to the need for positive stories about the future

This is an opportunity to maintain the focus on the positive actions and stories coming out of communities, helping to shift the narrative away from division and to unity. Community involvement by the public sector and other institutions which influence local economies and wellbeing should be a central pillar of any strategy for renewal. *How do we enhance community involvement in cross-sector planning at the local and hyper local level to be most effective?*

7 Make space for social innovation

The speed at which employers, institutions and individuals were able to adapt to change has demonstrated what many working in social innovation already knew - that the best solutions often emerge as a result of having constrained resources, and clear unmet needs. There are now opportunities to further test and scale innovative approaches that 'proved concept' during lockdown. The fusion of local economic renewal with social value to tackle already serious challenges such as homelessness, care for people who need it and transitioning young people into work presents a pressing need for more support for social innovation, enterprise and support for mission-led businesses, as well as a burning platform for innovations such as basic income for retraining for a new, green economy. *How can this appetite for change and social innovation be sustained once lockdown is lifted?*

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Week 1-2 insights



Next week

• People start to get used to slowing down

In the early weeks of social distancing being enforced, people were reeling from the number of deaths reported in daily news bulletins. At the same time they marvelled at the ability of their own communities to 'pull together' to support the most vulnerable, whilst getting their heads around the implications of spending more time at home - which in practical terms impacted their work, childcare, relationships and use of space within the house.

Whilst some worried about the effects of isolation on their mental health, many more actually shared relief at the unprecedented opportunity to 'slow life down' and were relieved at having time to cook, clean and go a bit easier on themselves.

“ I think it's realising that you can feel a sense of calm doing less, not running around as much and going out all the time...

How exhausted we all were by the daily grind and how much we expected of ourselves and our children. ”

Early Stages of the pandemic overview

- 23 March** Mon • 2020
Lockdown introduced, non-essential shops close
- 24 March** Tue • 2020
Call to recruit NHS volunteers, more than 1/2 a million apply in two days
- Nightingale Hospital being prepared at the ExCel
- 25 March** Wed • 2020
Prince of Wales tests positive

- 26 March** Thu • 2020
Support package for self-employed announced
- Clap for our Carers campaign begins
- 27 March** Fri • 2020
Boris Johnson and Matt Hancock test positive for COVID-19
- 28 March** Sat • 2020
Number of infections reaches c.600k worldwide
- First front line NHS worker dies after testing positive

- 29 March** Sun • 2020
Deputy Chief Medical Officer says normal life will not resume for at least 6 months
- 2 April** Thu • 2020
Boris Johnson continues isolation but briefly appears to join NHS claps for carers
- Hancock sets goal for 100,000 tests per day by end of April
- 1m confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide
- 5 April** Sun • 2020
Queen delivers televised message to the nation.

- WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH
- WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL
- WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL
- WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL
- WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL
- WEEK 07: 4TH MAY
- WEEK 08: 11TH MAY
- WEEK 09: 18TH MAY
- WEEK 10: 25TH MAY
- WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE
- WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

Weekly Overview

- 5 April** Sun • 2020
PM admitted to hospital as 'precautionary step'
- 7 April** Tue • 2020
First patients admitted to NHS Nightingale
- 8 April** Wed • 2020
Royal College of Nursing warns lack of PPE is 'fundamentally compromising' care for patients
- 10 April** Fri • 2020
Worldwide death toll hits 100,000
- 11 April** Sat • 2020
Priti Patel apologises for if anyone has felt there have been failings over PPE
- National Police Chiefs' Council announces 21% drop in overall crime in past 4 weeks compared to same time last year
- 12 April** Sun • 2020
UK hospital deaths hits 10,000

Week 3 insights

- Communities report** coming together

Many recognised the power and strength of their communities in response to the crisis and reported local people 'pulling together' to confront the challenges of Covid-19.

Mutual aid groups emerging across the country made people hopeful and a huge amount of respondents reported being grateful for the NHS' work as well as moved by the large number of volunteers who offered their help to more vulnerable people where they live. There are also new community activities blossoming online.

People from across the UK said the response to Covid-19 had brought their communities closer together and even ended the social division they felt in their locality after the Brexit vote. Many reported forming new and deeper connections with neighbours due to the increased openness to chat for longer and in different places, for instance across garden fences. In smaller villages there was a sense that people who rarely attended events or got involved in community initiatives were starting to take part and become more visible.

A variety of respondents said they miss the way community manifested in the past, like going to the pub, meeting friends or taking part in community activities or seeing public spaces crowded on a sunny bank holiday weekend.

“...so many hitherto unknown people in the village have “come out of the woodwork” to join a WhatsApp group... Never seen them at any village events before and all of a sudden they are keen to be part of a community”

This week respondents think that things will...

42%

get worse

58%

stay the same

0%

get better

50%

are working from home

18%

have kids at home

24%

say daily life isn't that different

>

Next week

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Weekly Overview

- 12 April** Sun • 2020
 PM discharged from hospital and makes statement about NHS saving his life with 'no question'
- 13 April** Mon • 2020
 Care sector warns daily death toll is 'airbrushing out' hundreds of elderly deaths at care home
- 14 April** Tue • 2020
 Rishi Sunak warns the Government cannot protect every business and household
- 15 April** Wed • 2020
 National Police Chief's Council announces 3,200+ fines for alleged breaches of lockdown issued
- 16 April** Thu • 2020
 Lockdown extended for at least three weeks
- 17 April** Fri • 2020
 Captain Tom's 100th Birthday walk finishes, raising money for NHS charities together
- 18 April** Sat • 2020
 Matt Hancock describes level of testing as 'frustrating'
- 18 April** Sat • 2020
 15,000+ reported UK hospital deaths after testing positive

Week 4 insights

- Ways of working are changing in response to lockdown**

There was surprise at how quickly a large number of people adapted their lives in response to lockdown. For those who had always worked from offices, being forced to work from home meant companies who had been previously reluctant to allow home working, suddenly had to accept this as the only way to continue to run their businesses.

“ The amount of things we were told that couldn't happen that can. I work for a homelessness charity and suddenly the council has found space to house everyone. Jobs we were told couldn't be done from home very much can. People have wonderfully come together online. ”

“ [I've been]...trying to support elderly parents to engage with online support and services e.g. setting up home milk deliveries, getting them to join a Zoom call. They find it difficult and are frustrated that so much is online - e.g. guided daily exercises for older people - “why can't they be on the tv?” is their response. ”

- Technology and Covid-19**

Whilst technology was a huge enabler - both for work and maintaining social connections - those without access to the internet risked becoming even more isolated, particularly as many support services offered by local authorities and central government required registering online.

There was also a recognition that whilst technology is essential, and offered many a lifeline in terms of connecting with others and providing ways to pass the time, it does not replace the need for face to face communication and physical touch.



Next week

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Weekly Overview

20 April Mon • 2020
+ Mounting frustration over lack of PPE - Government says officials are working round the clock to ensure NHS staff receive correct amounts

21 April Tue • 2020
📁 Rishi Sunak announces 140,000+ applied to retention scheme on morning of launch

22 April Wed • 2020
👑 Duke of Edinburgh makes statement praising those tackling the pandemic in the UK

22 April Wed • 2020
🏛️ First time in history MPs contribute to PMQs via video link

22 April Wed • 2020
🩺 Hancock says Government will introduce contact tracing at a 'large scale'

23 April Thu • 2020
🩺 Millions become eligible for testing under expansion of programme for essential workers and their households

23 April Thu • 2020
🩺 20k households to be contacted to take part in first wave of study tracking Covid-19

23 April Thu • 2020
🧬 First people injected as part of human trials in UK, led by Oxford Uni

23 April Thu • 2020
🔒 UK reaches one month lockdown mark

25 April Sat • 2020
🧬 UK hospital deaths pass 20,000

26 April Sun • 2020
🧬 Hospital death rate rises by 413 in lowest increase since end of March

Week 5 insights

• Serious illness becomes a concern

The possibility of serious illness and death was a major worry, particularly for those with existing health conditions.

I have underlying health conditions (asthma) and I'm terrified to leave the house- even for exercise. I can't go shopping for food or essentials, but I'm not sick enough to be 'extremely vulnerable'. I know how my body reacts to cold/flu bugs and Covid-19 would quite probably kill me. (Female, 40)

• Trust in the Government starts to fall

When respondents were asked who they felt had a "very good response" to the outbreak, central government's performance was rated worst.

I was surprised at just how badly the government cocked it up. I used to work in contingency planning, I know we have the plans, the experience, but I didn't realise how much a decade of austerity had eroded those, or just how inept Johnson would be (Female, 30)

People disagree most whether information from the following sources can be trusted;

- Central government
- Community groups on facebook
- Other social media

People are most trusting of the following information sources;

- Friends/Family who work in gov/NHS
- Public Health Experts
- Scientists
- NHS

Respondents report:

5%

losing their jobs
(0% in week 1)

10%

reduced work hours

Respondents feel the following groups had a "very good response"

72%

Community Groups

75%

NHS

70%

Individual health workers

58%

Other key workers



Next week

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Week 6 insights

- **The deaths of loved ones start being reported**

From late April, respondents sadly started to report family members and loved ones dying as a result of Covid-19. Alongside expected feelings of grief and loss, people described the deep distress that came from not being able to attend funerals or mourn with friends and family together in the 'usual' way. Some hinted at the possibility that the trauma from these experiences would be felt further far into the future, particularly if lockdown eased and families were able to reconnect to mourn their losses together.

My wife's mother has recently passed away during the lockdown - this has been very difficult for her and her family, not being able to grieve with her family and unable to have a proper funeral service. She did have a funeral, but it was hard with so few people and the vicar shouting prayers from the graveside, everyone on edge and not clear what we're allowed to do or be. *(Male, 40)*

- **Other illnesses not being treated**

People weigh the impact of loosening lockdown with potential health risks resulting from people not getting treatment. They also start to wonder about the benefits of reopening some shops and allowing more social contact to alleviate mental health problems that have been exacerbated by lockdown.

Of 200 responses collected:

17%

of respondents report being "less able to pay their bills"

4-7%

reported the same in the early weeks of project



Next week

Weekly Overview

- **27 April** Mon • 2020
 - + NHS issue alert over coronavirus-related inflammatory syndrome emerging in children
 - 🇬🇧 PM returns to work
- **29 April** Wed • 2020
 - 🦠 UK now second worst-hit county in Europe
- **30 April** Thu • 2020
 - + Captain Tom celebrates 100th Birthday and is made an honorary colonel by the Queen. His appeal to raise money for the NHS reaches £32m
 - 📁 Boris announces UK is 'past the peak' of coronavirus outbreak
- **1 May** Fri • 2020
 - 🔒 Plans announced to reopen fertility clinics on 11th May

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Weekly Overview

- 5 May** Tue • 2020
 -  Trials of the NHS contact-tracing app start on the Isle of Wight
 -  Airline Virgin Atlantic announces it has shed more than 3,000 jobs and ended operations at Gatwick Airport
- 6 May** Wed • 2020
 -  Study suggests coronavirus was in UK weeks before first acknowledged cases, with different strains of viruses present
 -  UK deaths become highest in Europe, passing 30,000 deaths
 -  Prof. Neil Ferguson quits government role after breaking social distancing measures
- 7 May** Thu • 2020
 -  The Bank of England warns that the economy is on course to shrink by 14% in 2020 due to COVID-19, pushing the UK into its deepest recession on record
 -  Notting Hill Carnival cancelled
- 8 May** Fri • 2020
 -  6-week old baby becomes UK's youngest victim
- 9 May** Sat • 2020
 -  Queen gives VE Day speech
- 10 May** Sun • 2020
 -  PM's 'go to work' advice sparks confusion as he outlines 'conditional' plan to slowly reopen UK economy including threat level alert system, with 'stay alert' slogan

Week 7 insights

• Mental Health issues heighten

Many describe the effect of Covid-19 on their mental health - both due to health fears related to them, or loved ones, catching the virus and, as the crisis wore on, due to spending extended periods indoors. For some, the loss of control of their lives led to a feeling of powerlessness, reduced confidence and increasing anxiety, including for those who were separated from partners and family members, or isolating alone.

Anxiety was also a problem for those who have vulnerable family members or partners who are key workers and those concerned about losing their jobs. A small number described being signed off work with stress, including Joanna, 54, who said she had been plagued with fear, anxiety and panic attacks and that despite considering herself a 'strong person' the pandemic had caused serious mental health issues.

• Frustration with the government response grows

People are vocal about their frustrations around the Government's slow response at the beginning of the crisis and a lack of transparency throughout the pandemic. There are strong voices demanding that the Government learns from its detrimental decision to delay the lockdown in the beginning and looks more towards the approaches taken by other countries – what has worked and what hasn't – when deciding on the UK's exit strategy.

Additionally, there are demands for the UK Government to work collaboratively with other countries, as people feel many nations across the world have adopted an 'each-to-their-own' approach, when they should have been sharing learning to help their citizens.

Much frustration and confusion about "stay alert" messaging. Almost all participants agree it is too early to start easing lockdown measures.

In terms of personal outlook, respondents think things:

50%

will get worse

36%

will stay the same

14%

will get better

“ The government should just be honest about what's working and what's not working. ”

Female, 35



Next week

Weekly Overview

11 May Mon • 2020



Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, writes to Matt Hancock seeking clarity on the targets for the number of tests, and the reporting of the number carried out each day.



Teaching unions express their concern at government plans to reopen schools on 1 June, describing them as “reckless” and unsafe

12 May Tue • 2020



Reading and Leeds Festivals cancelled

14 May Thu • 2020



1 in 400 people in England is infected with coronavirus

16 May Sat • 2020



Coronavirus protests involving the gathering of people are held at venues around the UK, including Hyde Park in London, and Glasgow Green in Glasgow

17 May Sun • 2020



UK daily death figure dips to lowest since day after lockdown began.



Business Secretary Alok Sharma announces a further £84m of funding to help mass-produce a COVID-19 vaccine being trialled by the University of Oxford and that should be available by September.

Week 8 insights

• The novelty of homeschooling wears off

Despite early reports about the benefits of getting to spend more time with children (alongside the stress of homeschooling), as time wore on a more nuanced picture emerged of life for families spending more time than ever before together. As homeschooling for many entered a second and third month, parents described guilt at not being able to give children the attention they needed whilst struggling to juggle work and childcare. Some worried about the effect of lockdown on their children’s mental health and behaviour, especially for children with additional needs.

Women, almost exclusively, described the pressure they felt to be doing more at home, to be carrying out their new home-based roles ‘better’ and the relentless feeling that they should deliver ‘more’ of everything.

• People start to think about ‘building back better’

There is hope that the exit strategy is an opportunity to rethink old structures and systems rather than return to the old pre-Covid ways of doing things. This is particularly true for issues around the environment.

Of 425 responses:

8%

were less able to pay bills

9%

had working hours reduced

4%

less able to pay mortgage

4%

have lost their job

“ I hope the people in Government who are looking at what the ‘new normal’ will look like are applying creativity and long term thinking when creating their vision. And looking at positives that have emerged from this situation – for example, a huge reduction in CO2 emissions ”



Next week

Week 9 insights

- **Many long for human interaction and touch**

As lockdown passed month two, people talked more and more about their longing to see family members outside their household in person and, in particular, about missing the physical touch of loved ones. Grandparents worried about bonds with grandchildren being broken or weakened due to lack of physical interaction.

Those living alone described one the biggest impacts on feeling lonely being the realisation that they had gone for weeks without human interaction.

Speaking now, I haven't hugged anyone or had a reassuring pat on the back, hand shake, peck on the cheek, or hand hold for two months and it's becoming very isolating and lonely. *(Female, 30)*

- **Lockdown heightens difficult relationships**

Many of those in relationships and living with their partner talked about being thankful for having someone close to talk to and rely upon during this time. However, for those whose relationships were strained before lockdown, extended periods of time spent in confined spaces exposed further tensions, or simply reinforced that the partner was not the right person to talk to about feelings and emotions.

Although I can tell my partner that I am anxious or unhappy, he seems perplexed about how to deal with these emotions so I find it easier to explain to my women friends how I am feeling and get their feedback and advice, and vice versa. We will have long conversations on the phone or by email where we can offload our shared concerns, irritations and joys...*(Female 50)*

“ I texted a friend when I wanted to express my frustration with my partner and son (my household). I chose her because she also gets deeply frustrated by her partner so I knew she would empathise. ”

Female, 47



Next week

Weekly Overview

18 May Mon • 2020



Boris Johnson faces criticism after it is revealed he missed COBRA meetings in January and February



Those aged 5 and over with symptoms now eligible for test

22 May Tue • 2020



Newspapers break the story that Dominic Cummings drove from London to Durham with suspected coronavirus



Government announces travellers arriving from 9th must self-isolate for 14 days

24 May Thu • 2020



News of second trip made by Dominic Cummings revealed, PM backs him amidst pressure for him to resign



PM announces measures to reopen schools

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

Week 10 insights

• What people are really thinking...

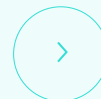
This week people were experiencing a broad range of emotions- from those who were quietly guilty about how much they have been enjoying lockdown, to those who were deeply sad and craving human touch/being able to see their family members again. Relationships at home have been put to the test and some have really suffered. There is a sense of resentment amongst some people, who feel that others have had it easy compared to them. Almost everyone feels anxious due to the uncertainty of how long this will continue to go on for.

"I already live my two adult boys, it has been particularly difficult as they do not get on, their personalities are chalk and cheese, one being more focused and able to follow the guidelines without difficulty....As a parent I have felt stressed off the map, as I understand his views but also understand why the other son needs to be out, seeing his partner, as his demons affect him negatively when he is sitting at home and left to his own thoughts."

95%

think the Cummings affair will make it harder for the UK government to communicate future lockdown messaging.

“ I also resent the fact that my husband is working on the front line. That it's my husband who is out there when others have their partner safer at home. Having a hard time too, sure, but not like him. I resent that I'm by myself all day. I also resent that neighbours - and even relatives - are flouting the easiest of eased lockdown rules. I feel angry all the time - at minor things. Realistically it's a reaction to the lack of control and general anxiety about what's going on. ”



Next week

Weekly Overview

25 May Mon • 2020



Dominic Cummings holds press conference to defend actions



PM announces plans to reopen car show rooms and markets from 1st, and non-essential shops from 15th

26 May Tue • 2020



Turner Prize announces it will not be awarded this year due to Covid-19

28 May Thu • 2020



PM announces from 1 June groups of up to six people will be able to meet in gardens and outdoor private spaces and dental practices will be allowed to reopen from 8 June



Premier League announces games will restart from 17th

29 May Tue • 2020



Rishi Sunak announces that job retention scheme will end in October. The self-employed will receive second and final grant in August

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

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WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

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WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS



Next week

Week 11 insights

- **Concern grows about impact of Covid-19 on BAME groups**

People reflect on how varying social groups have been impacted by Covid19 and almost all acknowledge the disproportionate impact on BAME communities during the pandemic.

“My partner and 2 of my sons are ‘mixed race’. Directly we haven’t been affected, although we are well aware of the higher death rates amongst black people and other ethnic minorities. Black lives matter has certainly impacted on my wider family - reactions ranging from active participation, to wanting to protest but unable to risk the vulnerable person in their home, to feeling excluded by the main narrative.”

Of 552 responses:

28%
things would get worse

28%
things would get better

- **Social class is also seen as a key factor affecting experiences of lockdown**

There is an appreciation that the implications of lockdown are very different between people, with differences falling along socioeconomic/class lines.

“I rent a flat. That made me and my family seriously vulnerable. We have a good relationship with my landlady who agreed for us to pay half the rent for three months.

I did lose all my income due to the virus and I have no other source of income. My husband is hourly paid lecturer, meaning no income during summer. Yes I suppose my class is extremely vulnerable as we are hand to mouth, we do not have much room to manoeuvre...The only good thing is that we applied and received Universal Credit.”

- **The environment is front of mind for many**

In looking to a post-Covid future, people seem most preoccupied with the Environment and how we can use this unique situation as a ‘breaking point’ from old habits. People are also keen to carry over a new-found sense of focusing on what is truly important (e.g. family, friends...), living respectfully and collaboratively with one another, and being able to slow down where needed.

Weekly Overview

30 May Mon • 2020



Some government scientific advisors warn against lifting lockdown measures too early



Culture Secretary announces competitive sport will be allowed behind closed doors from 1st

1 June Tue • 2020



Primary schools reopen



Public Health England releases its report into the disproportionately high number of people from ethnic minorities dying from COVID-19

4 June Thu • 2020



MP Alok Sharma tested for coronavirus after appearing visibly ill in parliament



More than 1/3 of testing kits found to be postal



Transport Secretary announces that face coverings will be compulsory on public transport from 15 June

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

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WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS

Weekly Overview

- 8 June** Mon • 2020
UK daily death drop to pre-lockdown level
- 9 June** Tue • 2020
Over one in four UK workers furloughed
Spain says 'no' to air bridge for UK holidaymakers, as plans in place for German tourist pilot scheme
Plan dropped for all primary pupils back to school
- 10 June** Wed • 2020
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warns that UK is likely to be the hardest hit by Covid-19 among major economies
Scientist who advised government at the beginning of the pandemic say earlier lockdown would have halved UK death toll
- 11 June** Thu • 2020
England test and trace identifies 31,000 close contacts of those with Coronavirus
Scientists believe there wasn't a UK 'patient zero', it may have entered the country on 1,356 separate occasions
Confederation of British Industry says UK business 'can't cope with no deal & virus'
Calls grow to scrap two-metre distancing
Greece reopens but UK travellers banned
- 13 June** Sat • 2020
'Support bubbles' begin in England & NI

Week 12 insights

• Returning to normal doesn't feel right

There is confusion and concern about how quickly things are easing up and how the UK seems to be going back to 'normal' in many ways.

"Part of me feels baffled about much of the UK is seemingly going back to normal when there are still so many deaths daily, no

vaccine and no proper contact tracing. I am worried that the numbers will start to increase and wish that we had had a stricter, longer lockdown as opposed to the threat of more lockdowns later in the year. People seem to want to start hugging again and I feel slightly odd asking them not to touch me."

• Black Lives Matter becomes a key issue

Although there are some concerned voices around the BLM protests and risk of a wave of infections, the more dominant narrative is one of support for the social movement.

Generally, people don't feel that coronavirus has shifted the types of issues that they care about, but rather, that it has truly magnified those topics that they were previously already passionate about.

"I'm torn between the merits of the BLM cause and the risks associated with mass gatherings. I've not personally participated, but that's more to do with my age and underlying health conditions. Calls from senior government ministers to not participate in mass gatherings have clearly fallen on deaf ears. A demonstration of the levels of trust the general population has in messages from senior politicians – largely down to the "Cummins effect"."

“ Racism is a public health emergency that has damaged and even ended considerably more lives than COVID-19. Indeed, in countries like the UK we can see that the experience of COVID-19 is distributed unfairly with the greatest burden falling on BAME and poorer people ”



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to all the participants and contributors to the research projects. With particular thanks to The Open University and nQuire team for collaborating with us on the citizen science projects, Covid-19 and You & Covid-19 and Your Community. Zoe Dibb, Helen Goulden, Jana Tauschinski and Franca Roeschert authored the report.



Back cover

WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

12

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

11

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

10

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

09

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

08

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

07

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

06

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

05

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

04

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

03

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

01/2

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS



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WEEK 12: 8TH JUNE

WEEK 11: 1ST JUNE

WEEK 10: 25TH MAY

WEEK 09: 18TH MAY

WEEK 08: 11TH MAY

WEEK 07: 4TH MAY

WEEK 06: 27TH APRIL

WEEK 05: 20TH APRIL

WEEK 04: 13TH APRIL

WEEK 03: 6TH APRIL

WEEK 01 + 02: 23RD MARCH

CONCLUSION + RECOMMENDATION

OVERVIEW + KEY INSIGHTS