CITY INTELLIGENCE

COVID-19: Summary of external research

23/04 2020

This newsletter series presents a digest of external research that the Greater London Authority is making available for the benefit of external stakeholders in tackling the COVID-19 crisis. These summaries have been prepared under challenging circumstances and to short timescales. They are not intended to be comprehensive and exhaustive and the do not represent the full body of evidence on which Mayoral Policies are or will be based.

1. Introduction and summary

This is the latest edition in a series of briefings highlighting key statistics and external research and recommendations relevant to the GLA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each briefing will offer short summaries and a deep-dive into one or two topics.

Topics in this week's issue include a **summary of external research on the potential impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on UK public finances**, an **explainer on deaths statistics**, and our **regular summary of external research** and **external policy recommendations**.

Public finances key points:

- The unprecedented measures announced by the Chancellor in the last weeks - along with the expected historic drop in the economic activity - will inevitably have an unprecedented impact on UK's public finances in the medium-term.
- Consensus is that both public spending will rise and public revenues will drop by such extent that public borrowing will reach its highest level this financial year since the Second World War.
- Debt-to-GDP ratio might reach 100% next year which will require a long-term adjustment policy to return to a sustainable path for public finances, with its implications on the finances of the UK regional bodies as well.
- Even though Government is currently financing at very low rates and is now benefiting from extra borrowing flexibility from the Bank of England[1], the larger amount of government debt will make UK public finances much more exposed to changes in short-term interest rates meaning that future rises might result in a much larger burdensome for public finances.

[1] On 9th April it was announced that the Bank of England would also expand the 'Ways and Means (W&M) facility' – essentially an overdraft at the Bank that the government can use to smooth its recourse to the gilt markets over a longer period.

1. External research on the potential impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on UK public finances

A brief summary of the approved measures by the Chancellor – as of 23 April 2020 - is the following:

- "Whatever resources the NHS needs, it will get".
- Payment of up to 80% of the wages of furloughed workers for three months up to £2,500.
- Deferral of more than £30 billion of tax payments until the end of the year.
- Nearly 17,000 Time to Pay arrangements for businesses and individuals.
- Available £330 billion of loans and guarantees.
- Cash grants of up to £25,000 for small business properties.
- Cover of the cost of statutory sick pay for small businesses for up to two weeks.
- Lifting the incomes of over four million households with a nearly £7 billion boost to the welfare system.
- Three-month mortgage holidays with lenders and nearly £1 billion more support for renters through the Local Housing Allowance.
- Those whose work or business has been affected by the economic shutdown that Covid-19 has caused would be eligible for a taxable grant worth 80% of their average monthly profits over the last three years, up to £2,500 a month.

These interventions, along with the historic drop in the UK economic activity resulting from both the health crisis and the imposed lockdown restrictions, will have an inevitable impact on UK public finances in both the short-term and the longer-term. A summary of the recent external research on the potential impact of these factors on the national and sub-national finances is provided below.

OBR – UK fiscal implications of the Coronavirus under OBR's reference scenario (14/04/2020)

- Main assumptions for the fiscal analysis:
    a. The first implications for the public finances are assumed to have started at the beginning of the FY 2020-21. However, some receipts and spending in 2019-20 will already have been affected.
    b. In terms of future impact, a three-month lockdown due to public health restrictions followed by another three-month period when they are partially lifted has been assumed. For now, they assume no lasting economic hit.
    c. "The consequences for the budget deficit and public debt have been estimated using our established ready reckoners, adjusted where necessary to capture distinctive features of this particular shock. We have also incorporated ballpark estimates of the effects of the authorities' fiscal and monetary policy measures."
    d. Several issues have not been explored yet such as the effect on local authorities' and public corporations' finances and the costs associated with guarantees on business interruption loan.
- **Receipts in 2020-21** are expected now at £130 billion (**15% lower than assumed in the Budget 2020**), falling 12% relative to 2019-20. That compares with the 3.4% fall between 2007-08 and 2009-10 as a result of the financial crisis and subsequent recession. Relative to GDP, the fall is more modest because receipts and GDP are both lower. Receipts will rebound in 2021-22, returning to roughly the Budget forecast by 2024-25.
- **Spending** in 2020-21 is estimated to be £88 billion (**9% higher than the Budget 2020 forecast**), rising 15% from 2019-20, and matching the 15% rise between 2007-08 and 2009-10. With spending up sharply and GDP down sharply, spending will rise to 52% of GDP – its highest since the Second World War -. Spending will fall back in 2021-22 and return to roughly the Budget

forecast by 2024-25. The rise in 2020-21 is dominated by the cost of policy measures, with higher welfare spending largely offset by lower debt interest costs (despite much higher borrowing).

- **Borrowing therefore rises to £273 billion (14% of GDP) in 2020-21, the highest deficit since the Second World War** and well above the financial crisis peak. That would be £218 billion higher than the Budget forecast, with policy measures accounting for £100 billion of the rise. The deficit falls back quickly in 2021-22 as temporary policy costs end and the economy recovers, returning to the Budget forecast thereafter. **Each additional month of lockdown might add £35 billion to £45 billion to this figure**.
- The effect in the **net debt-to-GDP ratio in 2020-21** - due to higher cash debt and taking into account the consequences of the Bank of England's policy measures – **will be 17 percentage points higher than predicted at the Budget, reaching 95% of GDP.** This scenario would be consistent with the debt-to-GDP ratio topping 100% of GDP during 2020-21. The temporary rise contrasts with the financial crisis, after which a large structural deficit persisted and debt continued to rise as a share of GDP until 2016-17. By 2024-25, net debt will be 10 percentage points of GDP above the Budget forecast.

IFS – The economic response to coronavirus will substantially increase UK government borrowing (26/03/2020)

- **The commitment to replace 80% of the wages of workers placed on furlough is impossible to cost with certainty in advance** as we do not know how many private sector employers will take it up.
- The government has also offered £330 billion of loan guarantees for businesses. These don't count against borrowing this year as they are contingent liabilities. Given the scale of the economic hit, some part of them may crystallise in the future. Deferrals of VAT payments will at least delay receipt of £30 billion and will put a fraction of that at risk.
- **The total package of additional spending would cost more** than £50 billion, or 2.3% of GDP in 2020–21. This is already more **than the dedicated UK fiscal response to the financial crisis**, when the total UK fiscal stimulus package was 0.6% of GDP in 2008–09 and 1.5% of GDP in 2009–10.
- Many other advanced economies have also implemented large packages of support or are planning to do so. However, many continental European economies also start from a more generous welfare system where benefits for short spells of unemployment replace a high fraction of previous earnings, instead of being means- and needs-tested, as has traditionally been the case in the UK. As a result, **the UK probably needs a larger bespoke package than some other countries.**
- **Large increases in borrowing are well-advised at the moment**, to support households and reduce any long-term scarring effects in the economy. But as happened following the financial crisis, the changes in the public finance landscape that the outbreak has brought about will remain with us long after the immediate crisis has passed.
- By the end of 2020–21, we will have much-elevated government debt. Hopefully the Covid-19 outbreak will be behind us, **but the tax and spend trade-offs facing policy makers will be made starker for years**, and more likely for decades, as they strive to bring debt back down over the longer-term.

[IFS – How much emergency coronavirus funding are different councils in England receiving? And is the funding allocation sensible? (10/04/2020)]

- **The government is providing £1.6 billion to English councils** to help them deal with additional spending pressures arising as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This is being allocated **according to assessments of spending needs in 2013–14, with the vast majority being allocated based on the assessments for adult social care** – one of the services likely to be most affected by the pandemic.
- **The amount allocated per resident ranges from £15 in Wokingham to £45 in Knowsley.** In general, it is lowest in the Home Counties, especially to the **west of London**, and highest in parts of Merseyside, Teesside, Tyneside and **inner London**.
- **Funding for deprived areas is higher not only in pounds-per-resident terms, but also measured as a percentage of spending on adult social care.**
- **The populations of different areas have also changed very differently over the last seven years, which is bound to have affected their spending needs.** For example, while the populations of Blackpool and **Kensington & Chelsea** have fallen, the population of **Tower Hamlets** is estimated to have grown by 21.4%.
- The coronavirus could also impact different councils in very different ways that have little to do with their general spending needs.
- Taken together, **the use of out-of-date and overly-general spending needs assessments may mean funding may not end up where it is ultimately needed most.**
- Rather than try to allocate all of the funding in advance, it could loosen the rules to allow councils to borrow to fund day-to-day spending linked to the coronavirus pandemic, allowing them to respond rapidly in a manner they see fit. The government would then have the option of reimbursing councils at a later date once it has a better idea of what the impact of the coronavirus has been in different parts of the country and subject to proper financial safeguards.

[House of Commons library – Coronavirus: Effect on the economy and public finances (27/03/2020)]

- **Government's direct tax and spending measures are equivalent to around 2% of GDP. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme aren't included in this estimate**. Their cost depends on take-up and duration, but they could add over £10 billion to the cost (roughly a further 0.5% of GDP).
- The Bank of England is purchasing government bonds to get money into the economy. This means that **government's debt interest costs will be lower than they would have been if the bonds remained in the private sector**. The effective rate paid on them by government is the Bank's main interest rate, i.e., the Bank rate.
- **The steps taken by the Government** won't prevent a wider slow-down in the economy. Nor are they necessarily designed to do so. The measures aim to **help ensure that inevitable negative effects on the economy are temporary, rather than permanent.**
- As the economy slows, less will be collected in taxes and government spending – in areas such as unemployment benefits – will increase. **The Government will have to borrow even more to fund its increasing deficit.**
- **Over 85% of the current Government's total debt has been raised by selling gilts and bills**, mainly to financial institutions. Just under 10% is from National Savings and Investments (NS&I). NS&I is the Government-owned savings bank.

- Currently, **the majority of Government debt has a medium or long maturity (7+ years).** But, during the year, some gilts and bills will mature and the Government will have to pay the original loan back.
- **Insurance companies and pension funds are the biggest holders of gilts and bills** with around 32% of the total value. A further 28% are held overseas. Since 2009 the Bank of England has become a large holder of debt – by September 2019 it held 23% of the value -.
- Going into the coronavirus outbreak, **markets were willing to lend to the Government at historically low rates**. The Government was set to take advantage of the low rates and borrow for investment spending.

IFS – For sale: £45 billion of gilts (01/04/2020)

- The Debt Management Office announced on 31 March 2020 that will raise additional gilt auctions to reach a total of £45 billion funding in April 2020.
- This quantity would be more than three times the largest amount raised in a single month in 2019 and slightly more than was raised at the peak of the financial crisis.
- **Even prior to the main response to the Covid-19 crisis in the UK, the Government was already planning to raise substantial sums from the markets**.
- It is worth noting that the borrowing increase does not require the private sector to own substantially more gilts at the end of 2020–21 than was expected at the time of the Budget. This is because the Bank of England (BoE) programme of QE will be expanded by £200 billion to purchase the majority of the gilts increase.
- But, although current low interest rates will allow the Government to increase borrowing very cheaply at this moment, this does not mean it is costless. **The larger amount of government debt held by the BoE will make UK public finances much more exposed to changes in short-term interest rates meaning that future rises might result in a much larger burdensome for public finances.**

For more details on this analysis, please contact Eduardo.Orellana@london.gov.uk

2. Making sense of deaths data

The pandemic has created unprecedented interest and media coverage of death statistics in recent weeks. However, the different measures and statistics can sometimes be difficult to interpret correctly. The following is a quick guide to making sense of the data. For those that want to monitor the situation in London, the City Intelligence Unit maintains a page on the London Datastore updated each afternoon with the latest data.

Deaths data for England comes from two different sources – the Office for National Statistics and NHS England. Each organisation is responding to the crisis by making an increasing amount of data available to meet the needs of users. Data from both sources need to be considered together to get the fullest picture of what is happening.

The Office for National Statistics

- publishes weekly statistics on deaths that have been registered
- characteristics are taken from the information on the death certificate, including
  - date the death occurred and when it was registered
  - whether Covid-19 is mentioned anywhere on the certificate
  - place of usual residence
  - the place of death (i.e. hospital, home, care home)

NHS England

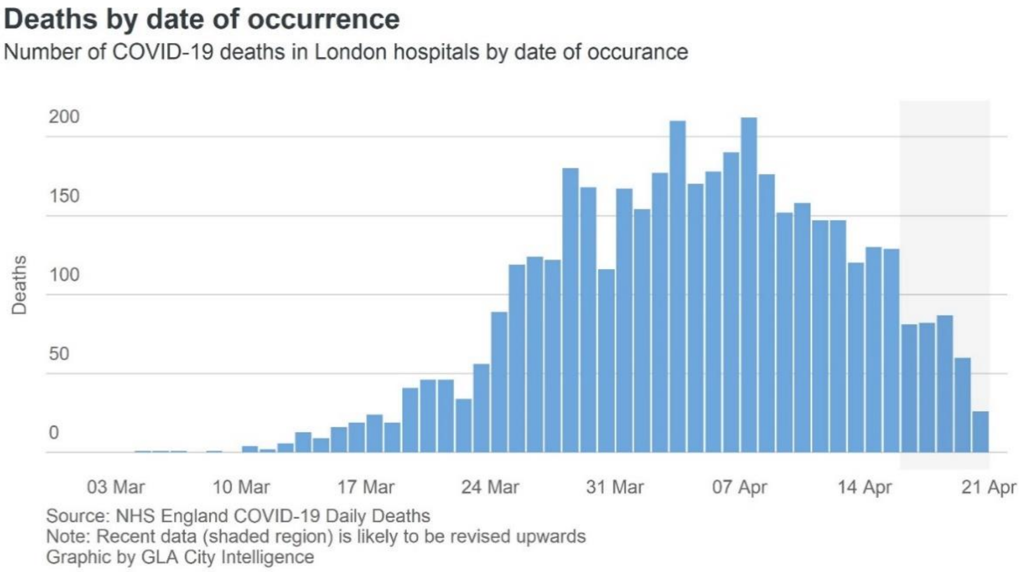
- publish daily statistics on patients that have died in hospitals and who have also tested positive for coronavirus
- deaths are announced each day that were reported in the twenty-four-hour period ending at 5pm the previous day
- deaths are reported by the location of the hospital in which they occurred rather than where the deceased lived
- data includes both when the death was reported and when it occurred

Timing of deaths

One of the biggest sources of confusion with the data is to do with the timing of deaths.

A lot of attention is focused on the number of deaths that are announced each day as part of the NHS release. However, because of the delay between deaths occurring and them being reported in the statistics the announced figure contains deaths that have occurred over the previous week (or longer). The figure therefore provides a rather muddied picture of trends – especially because reporting is not consistent between weekdays and weekends.

A better measure to pay attention to from the NHS data is deaths by date of occurrence. This provides a much clearer picture of trends. However, caution is still needed as the delay in reporting means that the figures for recent days are far from complete and will be revised upwards as more deaths are reported.



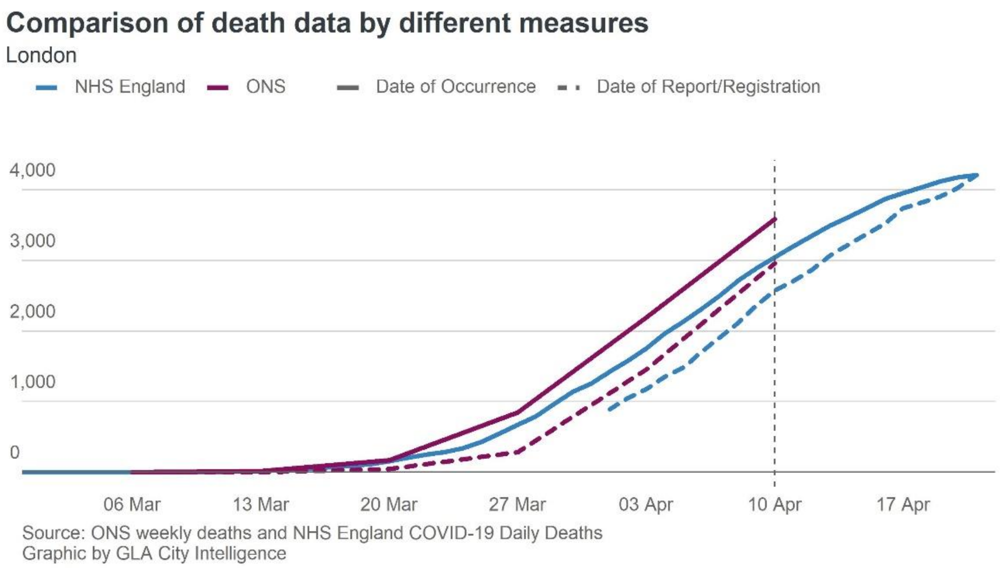
There is similar scope for confusion when considering the ONS data. Until recently this data was only released by the week that the death was registered and delays between occurrence and registration made it difficult to align with the NHS data. However, ONS have responded by now publishing the data by week of occurrence and incorporated more recently registered deaths. This provides a more timely picture of the situation and is easier to compare with other sources. However, as with the NHS data, these figures will continue to be revised upwards as more deaths are registered.

Comparing between sources

Both the ONS and NHS data are useful – the NHS updates provide a very timely view of the situation in hospitals, while the ONS data is more comprehensive, but less up-to-date.

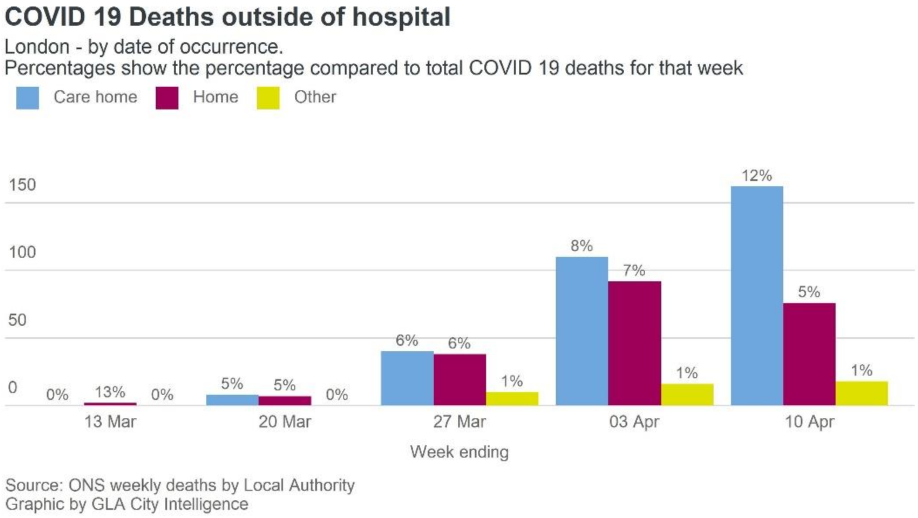
When comparing the two sources, it's best to compare deaths by date of occurrence and to be mindful of the differences between what each is capturing.

- NHS only covers hospitals, whereas ONS covers all places of death
- The NHS counts those patients that have tested for coronavirus, ONS those where the it was mentioned on the death certificate – in neither case is it necessarily the primary cause of death
- Data is added to each set as more deaths are reported/registered. The data becomes more comparable over time as each set becomes more complete.

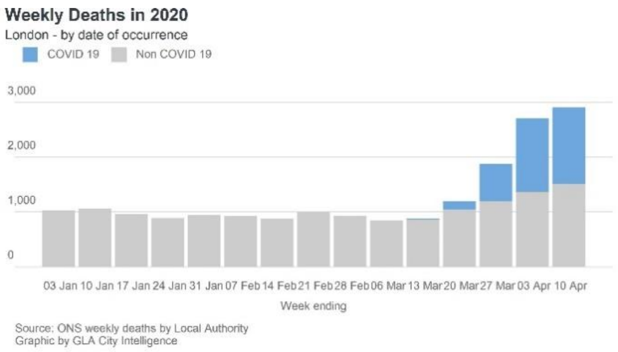


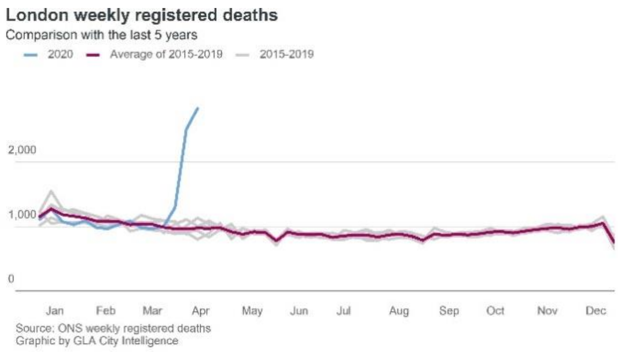
Deaths outside of hospitals

ONS's recent addition of place of death in the local data is useful as it helps us to understand the impact of coronavirus in care homes and other locations. This data shows that a small, but growing proportion of deaths are occurring outside of hospitals.



However, the data also raises the question of how complete this picture is. When weekly deaths are compared with data from previous years and other causes, the impact of coronavirus, especially for London, is stark. In addition to the extra deaths attributed to coronavirus, the number of deaths from other causes has also increased. While there are other possible explanations for this increase, at least some of this rise may be accounted for deaths linked to coronavirus that have not been recorded as such. As such, the actual toll of deaths in the community may yet prove to have been significantly greater than is captured by current statistics.





Characteristics of those who have died

There is growing interest in the extent to which coronavirus has disproportionately affected different population groups and communities. Understanding these issues is a priority for the City Intelligence Unit and we will be working to provide analysis of the situation over coming weeks. One challenge we currently face is the lack of sufficiently detailed data to fully understand this complex topic. As a result, we'll be looking to work with partner organisations to try and build a more complete picture of how the pandemic is affecting communities across London.

ONS publishes [weekly updates] each Tuesday at 9.30am

NHS England publishes [daily updates] each afternoon at 2pm

3. COVID-19 external research

This section highlights external research into the economic and social impact of COVID-19.

Capital Economics – Update on UK forecasts (21/04/2020)

- The UK's economy will take a few years to recover from an **unprecedented hit to GDP of around 25%** triggered by the lockdown implemented to contain the coronavirus.
- The **unemployment rate will probably still leap from 4% to 9%** as many business will go bust.
- By the end of 2022, the economy may be 5% smaller than it would have been without this crisis.
- These forecasts are based on the assumption that the measures put in place by the government to contain the spread of the coronavirus last for three months. They also assume that the Brexit transition period will be extended for one year.
- **Investment will fall by more than GDP** like in most recessions.
- **Consumer spending will be hit similarly to investment**.
- **Both UK exports and imports will plunge**.

Institute for Social Economic Research - New analysis of the impact of lockdown on UK jobs (18/04/2020)

- Estimates produced by the ISER at the University of Essex suggest **the lockdown can take more than 6.5million jobs out of the UK economy**, around a quarter of the total.
- The baseline scenario predicts an **overall contraction in GDP and employment of around 20%,** including direct and indirect effects.
- **The most badly affected sector is Accommodation & Food Services (-75%), followed by Services and retail (almost halved), and transport (-44%).**

Resolution Foundation – Update of the economic effects of the Coronavirus in the UK (17/04/2020)

- Data show that **the reduction in employment is huge and unprecedented, but may not be increasing further.** The number of new Universal Credit (UC) claimants has reached 1.4 million since the crisis started. The number of new applicants fell to 220,000 in the most recent week, down from its peak of 540,000 in the final week of March This is, however, still more than twice as bad as the worst of the financial crisis.
- The latest ONS data suggest that **only 52% of workers are currently working but just 0.4% of staff at businesses which are still operating have been made redundant**. This is consistent with unemployment rises being limited by the widespread use of the JRS as at least 16% of workers were reported as furloughed.
- **73% of households have reported falls in income. This is likely to be driven by falls in employment, and ONS data suggesting 29% of firms reducing working hours. This has resulted in 32% of households now using savings to cover living costs.**
- Not all sectors of the economy are being equally affected. While, on average, **almost 30% of businesses have responded to the economic crisis by laying off at least some workers in the short term, over half of businesses in the accommodation and food services industry are laying off workers.**
- Weekly data on shipping volumes are starting to show small falls in the number of visits to UK ports. However, these data are likely to lag the underlying economic effects for those ships which started their journeys prior to the crisis starting in Europe. Flight traffic, which may be more responsive has fallen 92% compared to a year ago in the UK.

Oxford Economics - Which UK regions are more or less able to adopt home-working? (14/04/2020)

- **The UK government's lockdown will be impacting businesses very differently across the UK regions.** Companies that can arrange for some or all staff to work from home are mostly doing so. But the ability to do that varies by region. **In 2019, over a third of South East residents worked from home at least sometimes, with Londoners close behind.** But in Northern Ireland the figure was less than a fifth, with Scotland and the North East not much higher.
- **Industrial structure and occupational patterns explain some of the variations by region, but by no means all. People in managerial, professional and associated occupations are most likely to work at home. But other factors are at work, perhaps including the rate of adoption of new technology, together with age and perhaps working cultures.**
- The jobs where home-working is least common are sales & customer service occupations, process plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations. These also tend to have lower wage levels, and in some cases, higher rates of casual employment.

Bank of England – Monetary policy during pandemics: inflation before, during and after Covid-19 (16/04/2020)

- **Both supply and demand are likely to fall sharply in UK affected sectors.** The closure of businesses could be considered a fall in supply, as it lowers hours worked and output for those firms, even if consumers would have otherwise continued buying their products. But it seems likely that even without restrictions, demand would also have fallen sharply, or even stopped completely, in many social consumption sectors, given the increased risk of Covid-19 transmission.
- **There will be a fall in employment** where businesses fail or workers are made redundant. These occurrences should be ameliorated by the policy measures that have been put in place, but will not be prevented in full. **The fall in output in the most affected sectors will be amplified by losses in income and increases in uncertainty** for many other sectors not directly affected. Falls in activity across the world, and the associated breakdown of supply and demand chains, will weigh on trade and investment. **Labour supply or productivity will also fall** for many workers who fall ill or are required to self-isolate, care for others, or work less efficiently remotely. Housing transactions and investment will stall.
- Firms that relied on social interaction or non-essential visits have had to close down temporarily, while others that can offer services remotely or by delivery have been less directly affected. **But all sectors are likely to suffer from falls in demand** owing to lower income and increased uncertainty elsewhere in the economy.
- BoE recent actions have been to ensure that the economic effects of the outbreak are temporary, by minimising business failures and job losses that could cause a lasting reduction in the supply capacity of the economy. These actions should also help to support demand in sectors of the economy still operating, and help offset any persistent negative effects on demand.
- During Covid-19, large, temporary changes in relative prices and consumption expenditure shares will make inflation data difficult to interpret. We may be able to learn more about how inflation will evolve after Covid-19 by better understanding the behaviour of inflation before the crisis started.

Trust for London London's Poverty Profile 2020 (April 2020)

Latest in the Trust's series of overview of poverty in London. Provides a useful baseline for the level and composition of poverty in the pre-COVID period. Key findings include:

- Over the past five years, the employment rate in London has risen (from 72 to 76 per cent), but **the proportion of Londoners living in poverty has not fallen**, rising slightly from 27 to 28 per cent.
- **The proportion of children living in poverty who are in working households has risen** from 68 to 76 per cent.

- Notes that poverty rates in inner London are 10 percentage points higher than in many parts of North England
- Depending on household composition, the cost of living in London for a household is between 15 and 58 per cent higher than in the rest of the UK
- Contains a range of other data on topics relevant to poverty in London

The Sutton Trust: Impact brief on school shutdown (20/04/2020)

New polling of teachers and parents to understand the impact of school closures on social mobility. Key findings include:

- **Pupils from independent schools are twice as likely to take part in online lessons every day**
- 60% of private schools and 37% of schools in the most affluent areas had an online platform to receive work, compared to 23% in the most deprived schools
- Less than 50 per cent of parents without higher education qualifications feel confident directing their child's learning
- A third of children earning over £100k a year have had over £100 spent on their learning
- **Over half of secondary school teachers cite provision of tech devices as their preferred strategy to prevent some pupils falling behind**
- The brief includes a number of policy recommendations

Fetzer et al Global Behaviours and Perceptions in the COVID-19 Pandemic (22/04/2020)

Survey based on a 'snowball sampling' technique to understand beliefs and attitudes towards citizens' and governments' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample 58 countries and over 100,000 respondents across March and April. The study includes a case study on the UK. Key findings include:

- The study compares British respondents' answers before and after the 23rd March (the date of lockdown) with respondents in other countries where a lockdown was not implemented on that date
- **The lockdown in the UK increased perceptions that the government's response was appropriate**, **increased trust** in the government and **increased perceptions of the government's truthfulness**.
- The lockdown also led to respondents looking more favourably on the response of other citizens, suggesting people do not think others comply voluntarily

RSA Low pay, lack of homeworking: why workers are suffering during lockdown (20/04/2020)

Short piece analysing a recent data release from the ONS on **home-working**.

- **those who are unable to work from home tend to be paid less than those who are able to**
- Suggests that in recent years there has been growth in both high-paid roles amenable to home working and low-paid roles that cannot work from home
- Many key worker roles are both unable to work from home and low paid

4. COVID-19 external policy recommendations

This section highlights policy recommendations that have been published in the last week by influential external organisations. Inclusion in this section does not mean the recommendations are endorsed in any way by the City Intelligence Unit.

Tony Blair Institute A sustainable exit strategy: managing uncertainty, minimising harm (20/04/2020)

Highlights the need for a sustainable exit strategy, due to the economic and health costs of a lockdown. Argues that countermeasures are needed or exiting lockdown will quickly lead to more deaths. Recommends:

- **An exit strategy should comprise containment, to reduce transmission through masks, testing and tracing, and shielding of the clinically vulnerable**
- This should be accompanied by a **contingent exit plan**, moving from a 'hard lockdown' strategy to 'soft lockdown' if daily cases are less than 500, testing capacity above 100,000 and tracing capacity over 50 per cent, and to a 'soft open' if daily cases fall below 100
- The paper sets out the features of the three strategies, covering what types of businesses would be allowed to open with what restrictions (e.g. mask wearing in retail), and what the guidance to individuals would be regarding leaving home and public gatherings
- **The contact tracing strategy recommended relies on an app-based solution with take-up of 60 per cent**, as well as scaled-up manual contact-tracing

Ada Lovelace Institute COVID-19 Rapid Evidence Review: Exit through the app store? 20/04/2020

Review of the evidence on technical considerations and societal implications of digital contract tracing, symptom tracking apps and immunity certification. Key findings include:

- **The evidence does not suggest that technology exists that can simultaneously provide accuracy, technical capability, address practical/legal issues and protect against exacerbating inequalities**
- **Any deployment of technology will be contingent on public trust and confidence**, and to support this there should be an oversight mechanism and convening of an expert group to review evidence, advise and oversee, similar to a group recently convened in Canada
- **Primary legislation should be introduced regulating data processing and digital contact tracing** with strict purpose, access and time limitations
- Digital immunity certificates need to be accompanied by consideration of the far-reaching societal implications of any such scheme
- **Premature deployment of ineffective apps could undermine public trust and confidence in the long-term**, hampering the widespread uptake of tracking technologies which may be critical to their eventual success

Policy Exchange Exiting Lockdown: Using Digital Contact Tracing to Defeat COVID-19

Argues for digital contact tracing to be added as the sixth 'pillar' of a new governmental testing and tracing strategy. Recommends:

- **A new 24/7 Testing and Tracing Command Centre should be established** to analyse spread, enforcing self-isolation and social distancing in outbreak hotspots and communicating key messages to the public
- **The command centre should urgently launch a national voluntary app** to improve contact tracing while protecting privacy
- The Government should legislate to regulate how the data is acquired, stored, analysed and used
- The app should be accompanied by a national advertising campaign from Central Government
- **The Government should take active steps to enhance technological skills of some people not used to using digital apps**, drawing on NHS volunteers

NHS Providers Confronting Coronavirus in the NHS The story so far (15/04/2020)

Detailed briefing setting out the steps NHS trust have taken to prepare and deal with the coronavirus outbreak. It also highlights some concerns going forward, what trust leaders need right now and implications for the NHS post-crisis:

- Concerns include distribution of PPE to trusts, as well as to the much larger number of organisations in primary and social care settings. They also mention PPE guidance and broader sustainability of the PPE supply. Other issues include testing, ventilator supply, oxygen system delivery capacity, quality of care and the implications for other areas of care.
- **Trust leaders' immediate asks include** meeting the above concerns, as well as **more clarity on how the new surge capacity provided by Nightingale hospitals will be reinforced** when surge capacity is needed in less urban localities. They also want **more help and guidance on the best way to use the extra private sector capacity** that has been secured.
- **Trust leaders call for the government to take full account of the NHS' needs in the formulation of any exit strategy and ongoing approach**, with a potential second peak coinciding with the usual Winter peak of particular concern. Leaders also highlight other areas of care and the need to manage a balance between coronavirus-related demand, normal demand, and a likely significant increase in non-coronavirus demand such as mental health services.
- Looking to the medium-term, trust leaders call for a full debate on which temporary changes should be adopted permanently. The provide a starter for ten, including **digital transformation, integration of health and care** and **the permanent removal of red tape** that has been temporarily suspended during this crisis

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