



Socio-economic impact of Covid-19

City Intelligence Unit, GLA
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1. Introduction

- This briefing presents evidence on the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on London and Londoners.
- It presents a number of findings on Londoners' financial position, their well-being and health, as well as data about their family situation and the community.
- Topics included in the briefing focus on recent data releases that tell us how social policy issues are evolving in London since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- If you would like to know more about any of the findings or datasets featured, or would like to suggest a topic for inclusion in a future briefing, please email SocialEvidence@London.gov.uk.

2. Household finances

- There is no sign of a let up in the number of Londoners struggling financially in London, while the gap between those whose livelihoods remain unaffected and those who have lost income widens with increasing [inequality](#) between different population groups.
- Although there were signs of some [increased work activity](#) following the first lockdown, people in many areas across the country, but particularly in parts of London, will find it [hard to recover](#), with few opportunities available. Multiple organisations are calling for [investment in jobs creation](#) and training focussing on [good work](#) to support the recovery.
- Until recovery starts, multiple organisations are calling on Government to [continue the welfare support](#) beyond its current end date and [support families](#) in other ways to avoid the rift increasing further.
- The people struggling most financially have few resources left at their disposal as their [financial resilience is eroded](#), with serious [financial stress](#) for many families.
- This section examines the latest evidence for London on household finance issues and how working from home has benefitted both workers and employers.

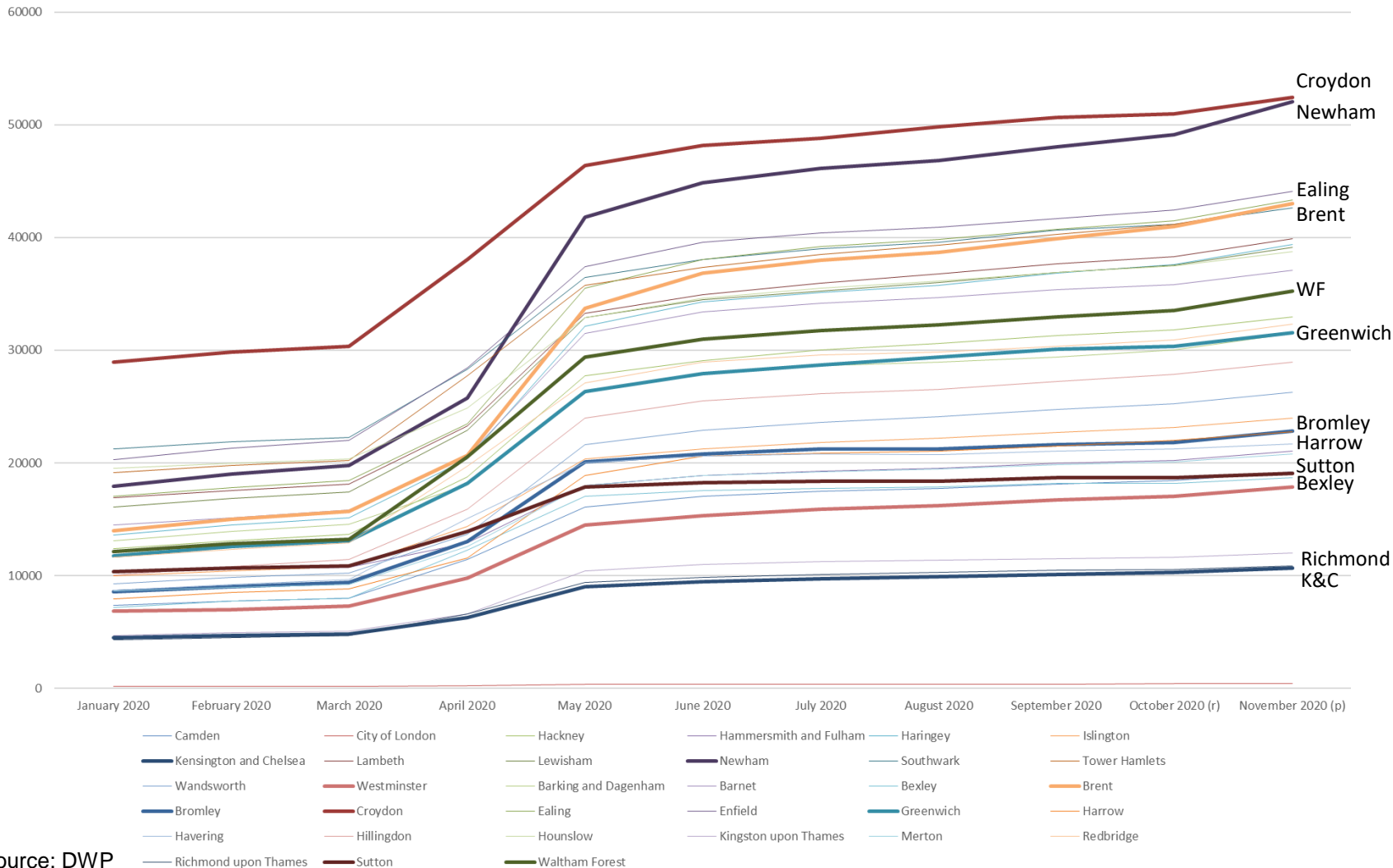
The number of Londoners claiming Universal Credit has more than doubled since March and is still rising



- **Nearly 976,000 Londoners were claiming Universal Credit (UC) in November 2020. More than half had started claiming since the pandemic began.**
- The largest increases in UC claimants have been among the younger age groups, decreasing with age. There were almost 150,000 claimants aged 30-34 in November.
- More than a third of claimants were doing at least some work in November, but 45 per cent were unemployed and looking for work.
- The increase in Universal Credit is greater in London than in other parts of Britain.

Universal Credit claimants have increased in all boroughs, but some more than others

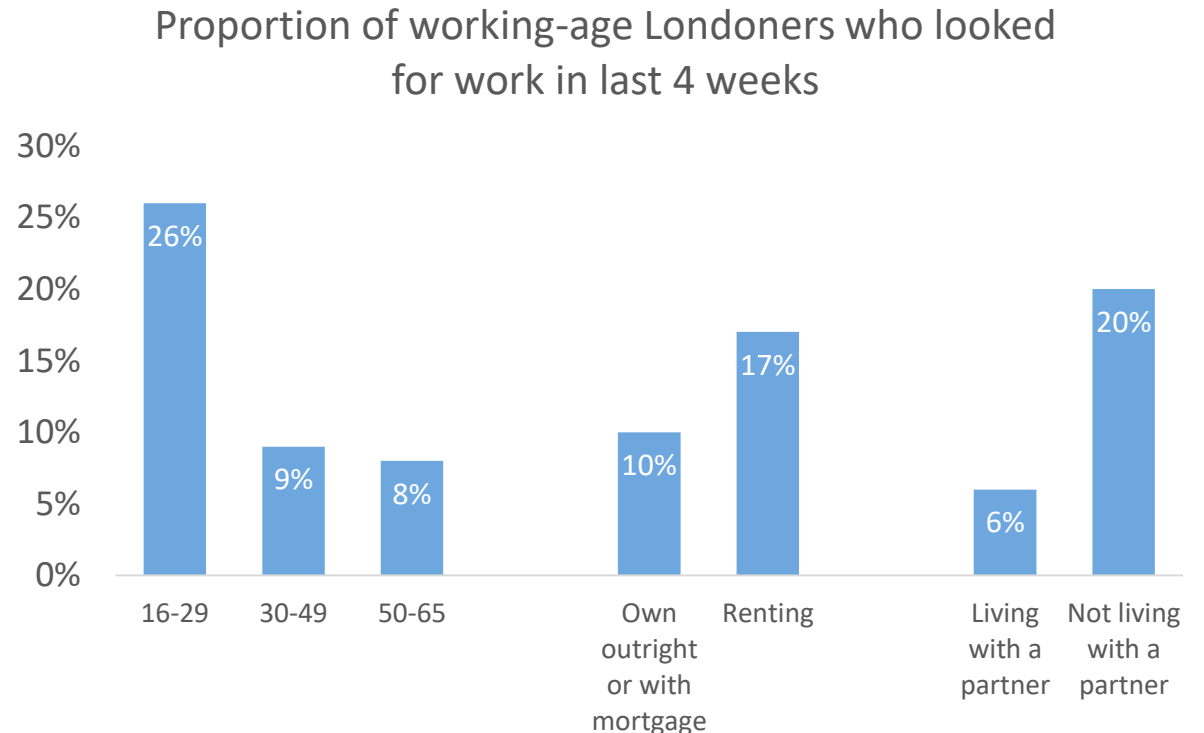
People claiming Universal Credit, London Boroughs



- The numbers of people claiming Universal Credit has increased most sharply in Newham though Brent, Ealing and Waltham Forest (WF) are also among those with big rises. Other boroughs such as Bromley and Harrow have also seen large increases, but from a lower base.
- Croydon remains the borough with the largest number of claimants.
- Greenwich is among the boroughs representing the overall London picture of steep rises in April and May and continuing growth since.
- A small number of boroughs, such as Sutton and Bexley have seen relatively little increase since May.
- The wealthier boroughs, such as Kensington & Chelsea (K&C) and Richmond upon Thames have seen the number of claimants remain at lower levels.

As a tentative indicator of job security, around one in eight working-age Londoners looked for paid work or training in September 2020

- In September 2020 13 per cent of working-age Londoners aged 16-65 looked for paid work or a government training scheme in the last four weeks.
- Younger Londoners aged 16-29 are around three times more likely to have looked for work in the last four weeks, compared with older Londoners aged 50-65 (26 and 8 per cent respectively).
- Renters and Londoners not living with a partner are also more likely to have looked for paid work or training in the last four weeks (17 and 20 per cent respectively) compared with owner occupiers and Londoners living with a partner (10 and 6 per cent respectively).



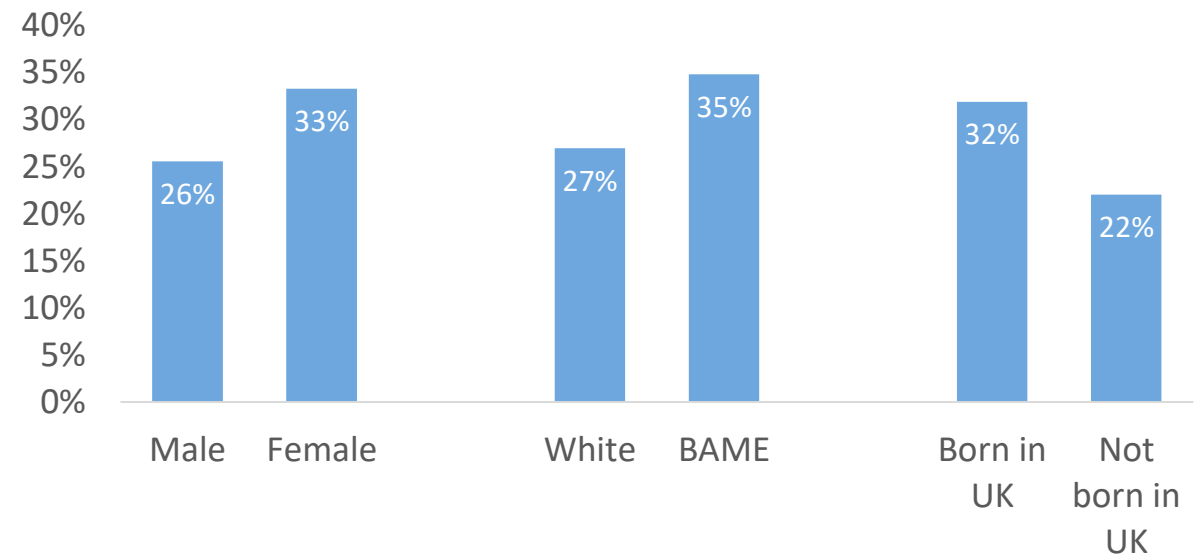
Base: Sept-20 Working-age Londoners aged 16-65: 16-29: 130; 30-49: 374; 50-65: 436; Own outright or with mortgage: 633; Renting: 282; Living with a partner: 589; Not living with a partner: 351

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Around three in ten London workers feel they are more productive than when they were working back in January/February 2020

- In September 2020 29 per cent of workers in London believe they get more done per hour these days than compared with back in January/February 2020. 18 per cent think they get less done, but the majority (52 per cent) think they get the same amount done.
- The most common reason given by those who think they get less done is that there is less work to do (30 per cent).
- The most common reasons given by those who think they get more done is that they have been interrupted less (30 per cent) and they have not needed to commute/travel to work (29 per cent).

Proportion of workers in London who believe they get more done per hour these days than compared with back in January/February 2020



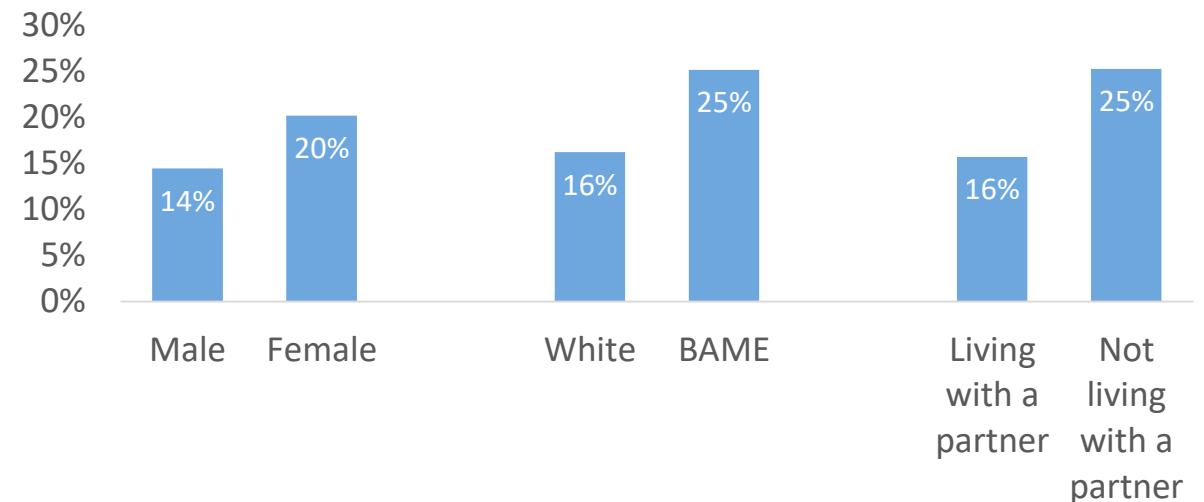
Base: Sept-20 London workers: Male: 301; Female: 423; White: 419; BAME: 292; Born in UK: 482; Not born in UK: 232

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Working at home at least some of the time in future is welcomed by the majority of workers in London who are currently doing so

- Most workers in London currently working at home would like to work at home at least sometimes once social distancing measures are fully relaxed and workplaces go back to normal (97 per cent).
- Around one in five (19 per cent) of these current home workers would like to work at home always in future.
- Making these home working arrangements permanent is preferred by female workers, BAME workers and workers not living with a partner over male workers, White workers and workers living with a partner.

Proportion of workers in London currently working at home who would like to work at home always in future, once social distancing measures are fully relaxed and workplaces fully go back to normal



Base: Sept-20 London workers currently working at home: Male: 201; Female: 264; White: 289; BAME: 171; Living with a partner: 327; Not living with a partner: 139

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

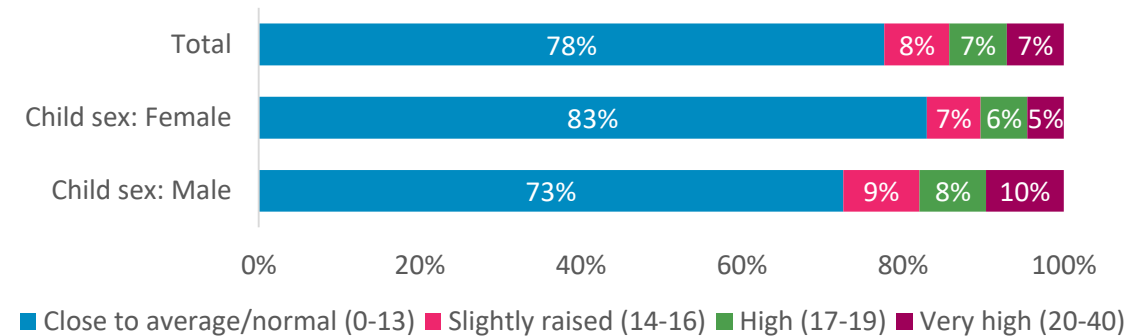
3. Well-being

- The [Covid-19 Social Study](#) has been running since the beginning of the pandemic and seeks to understand the psychological and social impacts of the pandemic on adults in the UK. Some of its most recent findings include:
 - People with long-term physical health conditions are more concerned about catching and becoming seriously ill from the virus, and are experiencing higher depression and anxiety levels and lower life satisfaction and happiness.
 - Women have found the pandemic psychologically more challenging than men, with higher levels of depression, anxiety and loneliness and lower levels of life satisfaction and happiness.
- Since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020, the [Co-SPACE study](#) has been tracking parents, children, and young people's mental health. Some of its most recent findings include:
 - Behavioural and restless/attentional difficulties increased through the lockdown from March to June. This was especially the case in primary school aged children (4-10 years old).
 - Behavioural, emotional, and restless/ attentional difficulties appear to have decreased after the lockdown eased, from July, throughout the summer holidays, and through the opening of schools in September (especially in primary school aged children).
- This section builds on this by examining the health and wellbeing of children using an instrument known as the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ). The SDQ measures a child's strengths and difficulties in a number of areas: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity or inattention and peer relationship problems. These are also known as SDQ subscales.
- The section will conclude by looking at other evidence produced on Londoners' wellbeing during the crisis.

Across the country parents of boys were more likely to assess their child with higher total difficulties than parents of girls

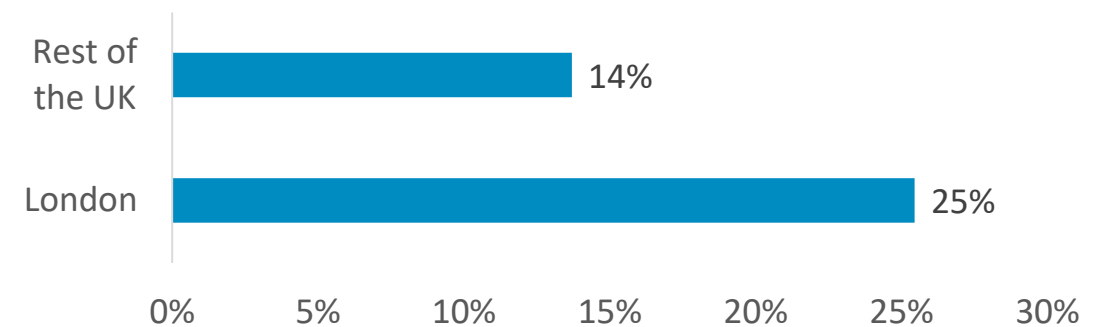
- A **total difficulties score** is the sum of scores across the SDQ subscales. The score can range from 0 to 40.
- The July and September waves of the Understanding Society Covid-19 Study included a SDQ for parents of 5-11 year olds. The results can be categorised as: normal (0 to 13), slightly raised (14 to 16), high (17 to 19), very high (20 to 40).
- **In September, 14 per cent of parents with a 5-11 year old assessed their child as having a high or very high total difficulties score in the UK.** Boys (18 per cent) were more likely to be assessed with high and very high scores by their parents than girls (11 per cent). In July, high and very high scores were as likely to be reported for girls (11 per cent) and more likely for boys (21 per cent).
- Focusing just on the conduct problems subscale, parents were more likely to assess their child with high or very high scores for conduct problems in London (25 per cent) than in the rest of the UK (14 per cent).

Total Difficulties score by category, proportion of parental assessments of children aged 5-11 years in the UK



Base: UK parents aged 16+ (1,379), Child sex: female (632), Child sex: male (734)

Proportion of parents assessing their 5-11 year old child with a high or very high conduct problems score



Base: Parents aged 16+: Rest of the UK (1,243), London (136) **CITY INTELLIGENCE**

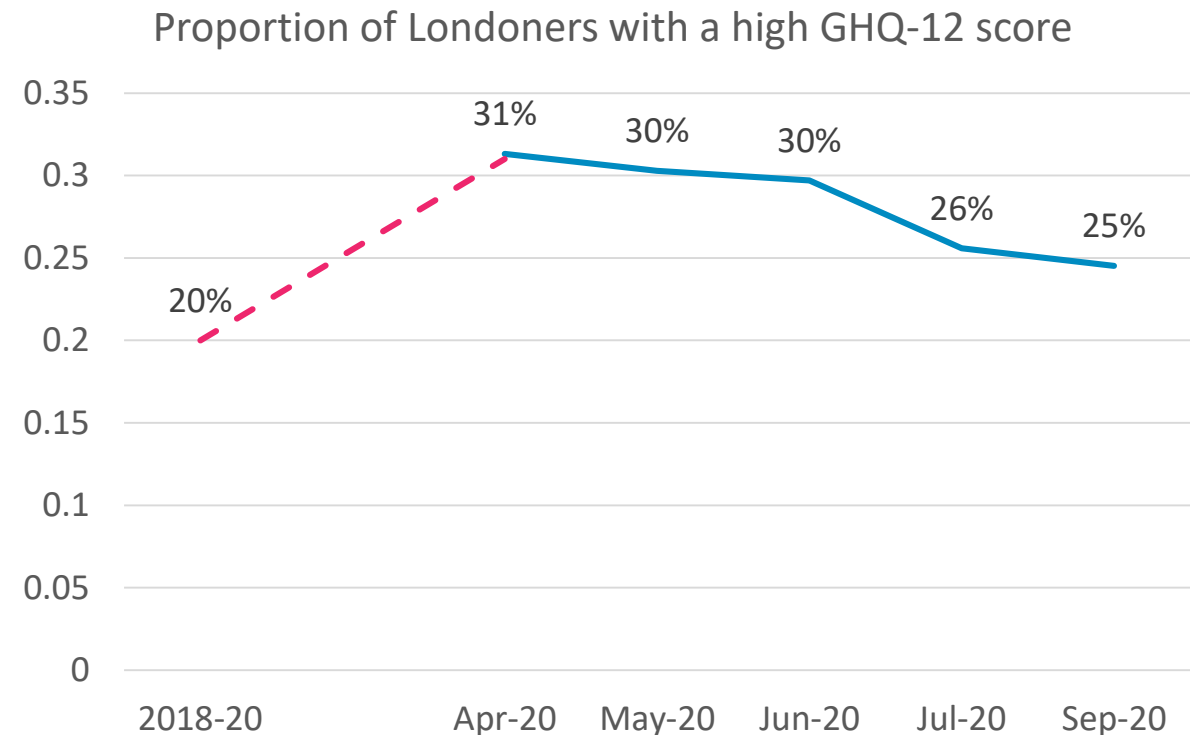
Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Notes: Values provided by mother/main female guardian if available; or father/main male guardian if mother/main female guardian is not available.

The proportion of Londoners who have poorer mental health continues to be higher during Covid-19 but is gradually declining towards its pre-pandemic level

- The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) helps to identify minor psychiatric disorders in the general population. Higher scores are indicative of poorer mental health.
- **In September 2020, around a quarter (25 per cent) of Londoners aged 16+ reported characteristics of poor mental health, which has decreased slightly from 31 per cent in April.** The pre-pandemic estimate from this survey in 2018-20 was 20 per cent, so the prevalence has increased.
- **Younger Londoners are more likely to display features of poorer mental health than older Londoners:** 35 per cent of Londoners aged 16-29 in September 2020 reported characteristics of poor mental health, compared with 19 per cent of Londoners aged 50+.
- **Female Londoners continue to be more likely than male Londoners to show a GHQ-12 score of 4 or more** (in September 2020: 27 per cent of females; 21 per cent of males).
- **Fewer Londoners living with a partner had aspects of poor mental health** in September 2020 (17 per cent compared with 33 per cent not living with a partner).

Note: The General Health Questionnaire focuses on two major areas: the inability to carry out normal functions; and the appearance of new and distressing phenomena, with each of the 12 items rated on a four-point response scale. A coding method was used whereby the maximum score for any respondent is 12, with higher values indicating poorer mental health. A threshold of 4 or more was set as the difference between 'no or few mental health problems' and 'poorer mental health'.

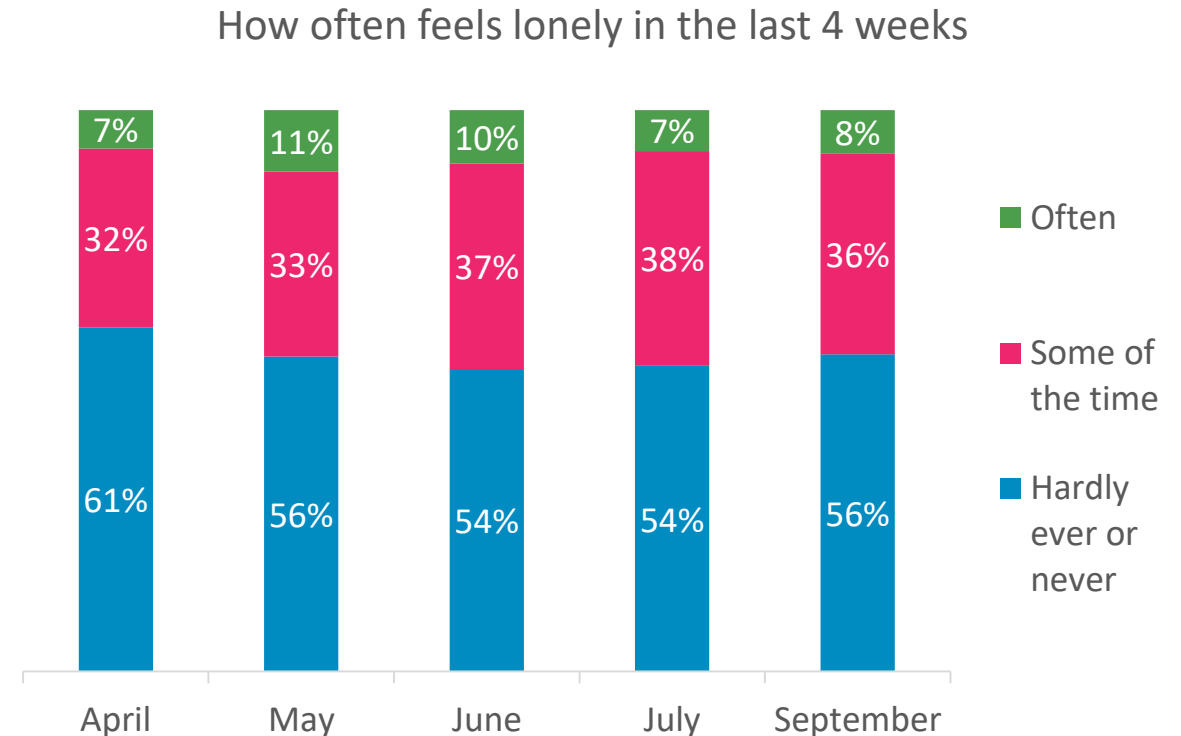


Base: Londoners aged 16+ 2018-20: 3,607; April-20: 1,617; May-20: 1,419; June-20: 1,295; July-20: 1,297; Sep-20: 1,129

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

The proportion of Londoners feeling lonely at least some of the time has remained about the same since May

- In September 2020, 8 per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reported that they felt lonely 'often' in the last 4 weeks. A further 36 per cent reported feeling lonely 'some of the time' in the last 4 weeks.
- Younger Londoners continue to be more likely to cite chronic loneliness (lonely often in the last 4 weeks): 14 per cent of Londoners aged 16-29 in September 2020 reported this, compared with 5 per cent of Londoners aged 50+.
- Fewer Londoners living with a partner experienced chronic loneliness in September 2020 (4 per cent compared with 12 per cent not living with a partner).

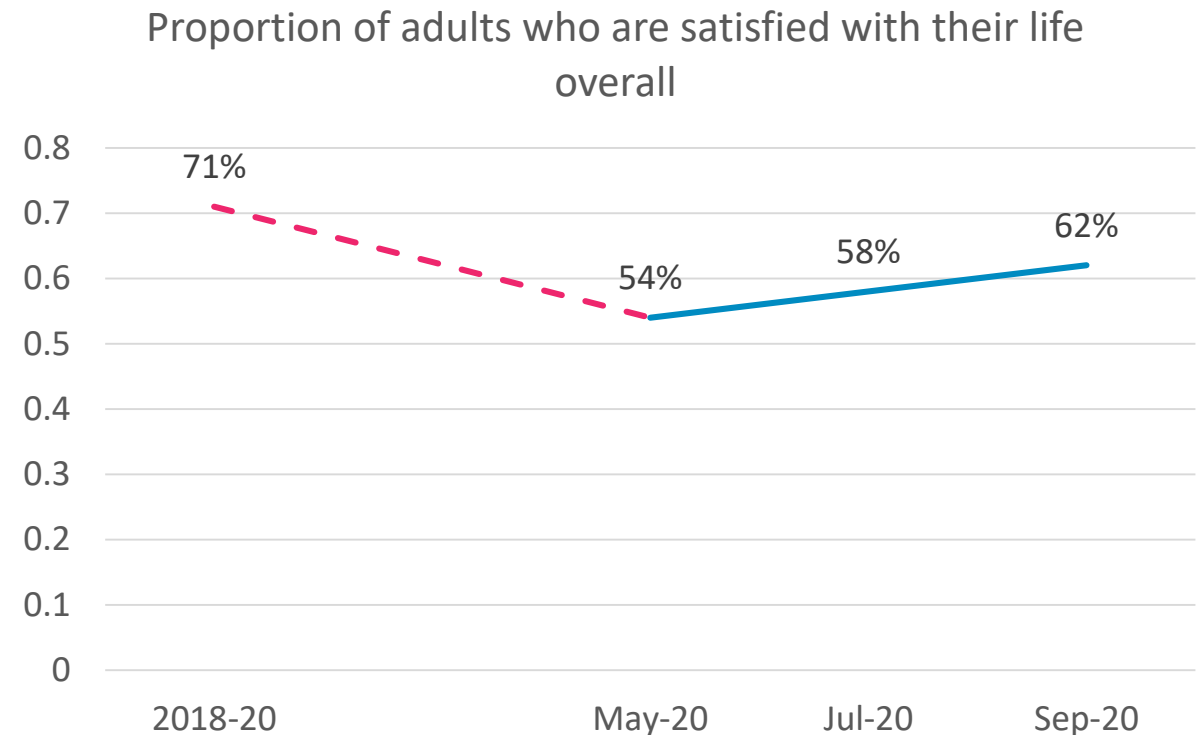


Base: Londoners aged 16+ April-20: 1,813; May-20: 1,475; June-20: 1,341; July-20: 1,349; Sept-20: 1,194

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Life satisfaction is much lower during the pandemic than before but is gradually climbing towards its pre-pandemic level

- In September 2020, around six in ten (62 per cent) Londoners aged 16+ reported that they were satisfied with their life overall. This compares with 54 per cent in May. The pre-pandemic estimate from this survey in 2018-20 was 71 per cent, so has decreased.
- Around seven in ten (71 per cent) Londoners who are owner-occupiers are satisfied with their life currently compared with around half (48 per cent) of Londoners who rent.
- Londoners not living with a partner were less likely than those living with a partner to be satisfied with their life currently (51 per cent and 72 per cent respectively).



Base: Londoners aged 16+ 2018-20: 3,661; May-20: 1,426; July-20: 1,308; Sep-20: 1,138

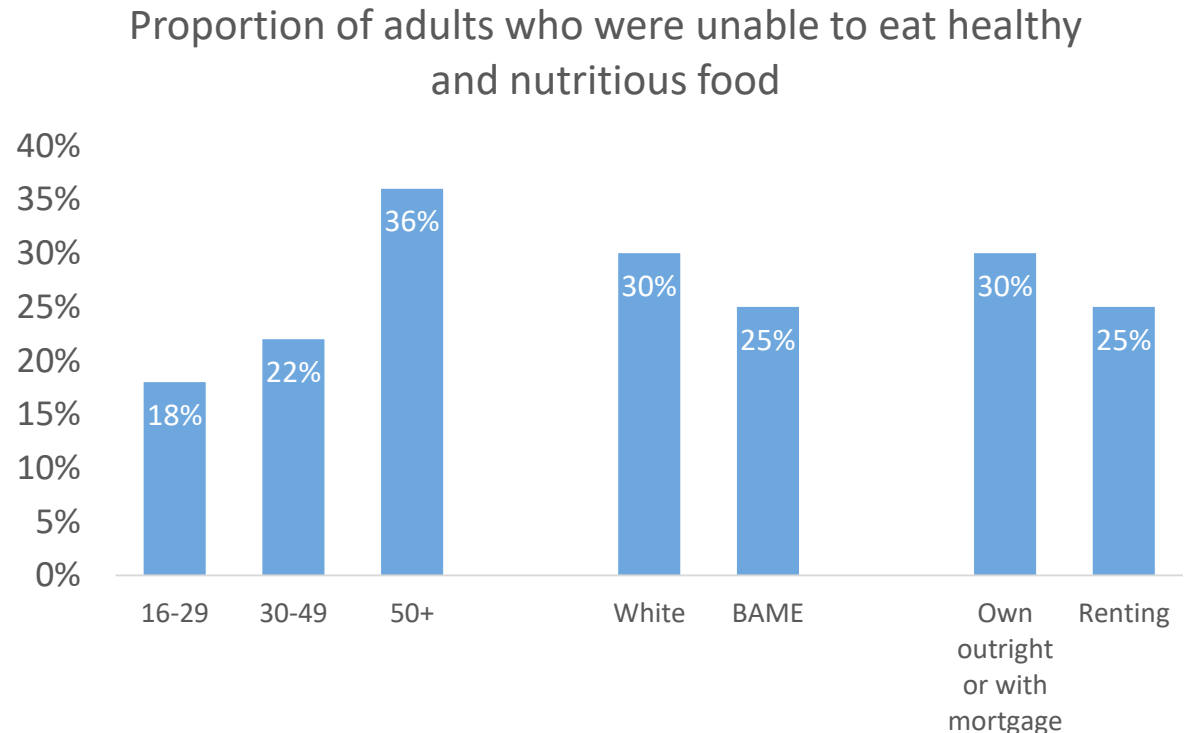
Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

4. Health

- This section will look at some of the most recent evidence produced on Londoners' health during the pandemic, drawing mainly on data produced from the [Understanding Society Covid-19 Study](#).
- Other recent evidence produced on this topic include a [report](#) from the UCL Institute of Health, published in December 2020, investigating how the pandemic has affected health inequalities in England. One of its key findings is that the economy and health are strongly linked – managing the pandemic well allows the economy to flourish in the longer term, which is supportive of health.
- Public Health England (PHE) regularly update a [monitoring tool](#) that looks at the wider impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on population health, including in areas like air quality, dementia and reproductive health.

When thinking about the last week around three in ten Londoners were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food in September 2020

- In September 2020, 28 per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reported not being able to eat healthy and nutritious food in the last week, compared with 20 per cent in July.
- Older Londoners aged 50+ are around twice as likely to report being unable to eat healthy and nutritious food compared with younger Londoners aged 16-29 (36 and 18 per cent respectively).
- White Londoners and owner occupiers are also more likely to report being unable to eat healthy and nutritious food in the last week (both 30 per cent) compared with BAME Londoners and renters (both 25 per cent).
- In September 2020, less than one per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reported using a food bank in the last 4 weeks, compared with 4 per cent in July.



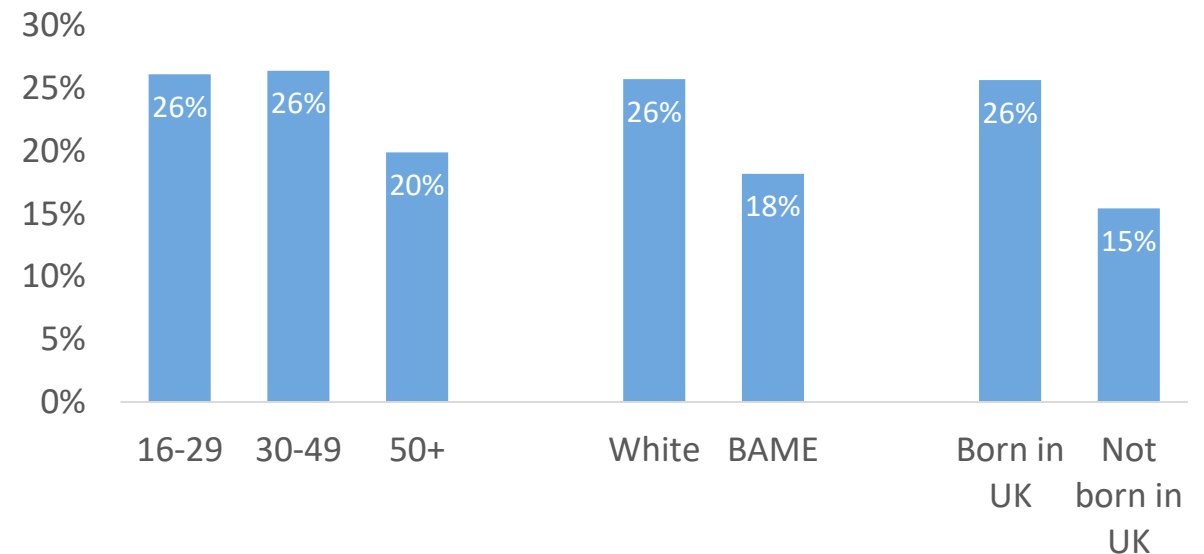
Base: Sept-20 16-29: 129; 30-49: 363; 50+: 657 White: 676; BAME: 447; Own outright or with mortgage: 817; Renting: 299

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Around a quarter of Londoners reported binge drinking at least once during September

- In September 2020 around a quarter (23 per cent) of Londoners reported having six/eight* or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the last 4 weeks.
- This behaviour was less common among older Londoners aged 50+ (20 per cent) compared with younger Londoners aged under 50 (26 per cent).
- White Londoners were more likely to have binge drunk in September 2020 than BAME Londoners (26 per cent and 18 per cent respectively).
- Londoners born in the UK were also more likely to have done this at least once compared with Londoners not born in the UK (26 per cent and 15 per cent respectively).

Proportion of adults who have had six/eight or more drinks on a single occasion at least once in the last 4 weeks



Base: Sept-20 16-29: 129; 30-49: 363; 50+: 654; White: 674; BAME: 446; Born in UK: 761; Not born in UK: 366

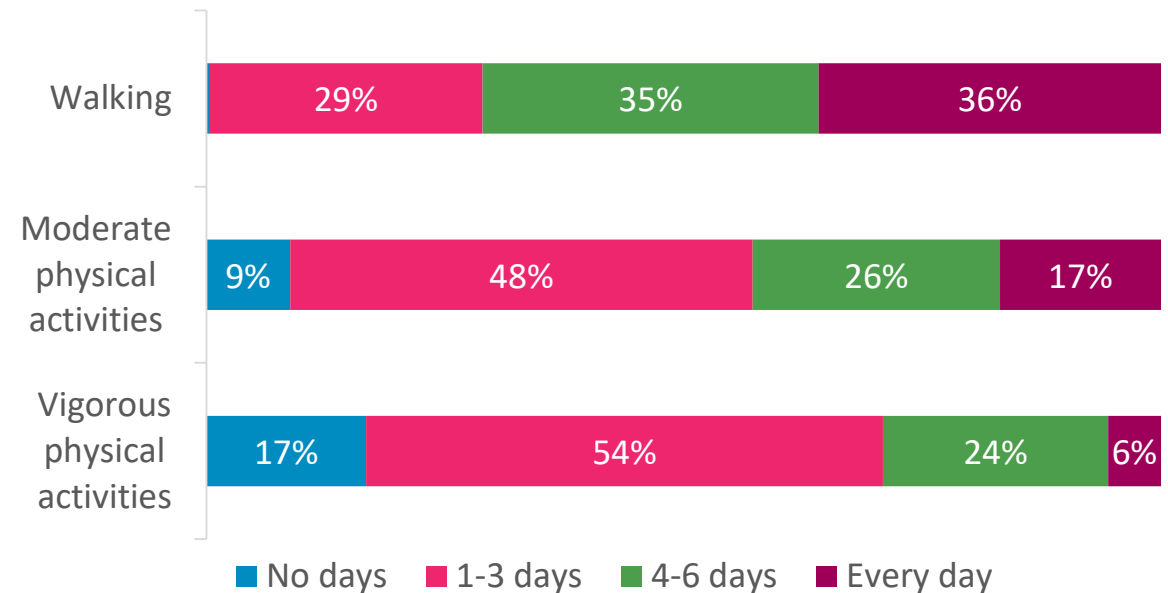
Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Note: For women, the question was worded '6 or more units'; for men, the question was worded '8 or more units'. A 'unit' was defined as '1/2 pint of beer, a glass of wine or a single measure of spirit or liqueur'.

White Londoners are more active in terms of walking for at least 10 minutes every day compared with BAME Londoners

- In September 2020, around one third (36 per cent) of Londoners aged 16+ reported that, during the last 7 days, they had walked for at least 10 minutes at a time every day.
- White Londoners were more likely to report that, during the last 7 days, they had walked for at least 10 minutes at a time every day compared with BAME Londoners (45 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).
- When asked about moderate physical activities e.g. carrying light loads, bicycling at a regular pace, or doubles tennis, 17 per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reported that they had done this every day in the last 7 days.
- When asked about vigorous physical activities e.g. heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast bicycling, 6 per cent of Londoners aged 16+ reported that they had done this every day in the last 7 days.

How many days in the last 7 days have done different types of physical activity



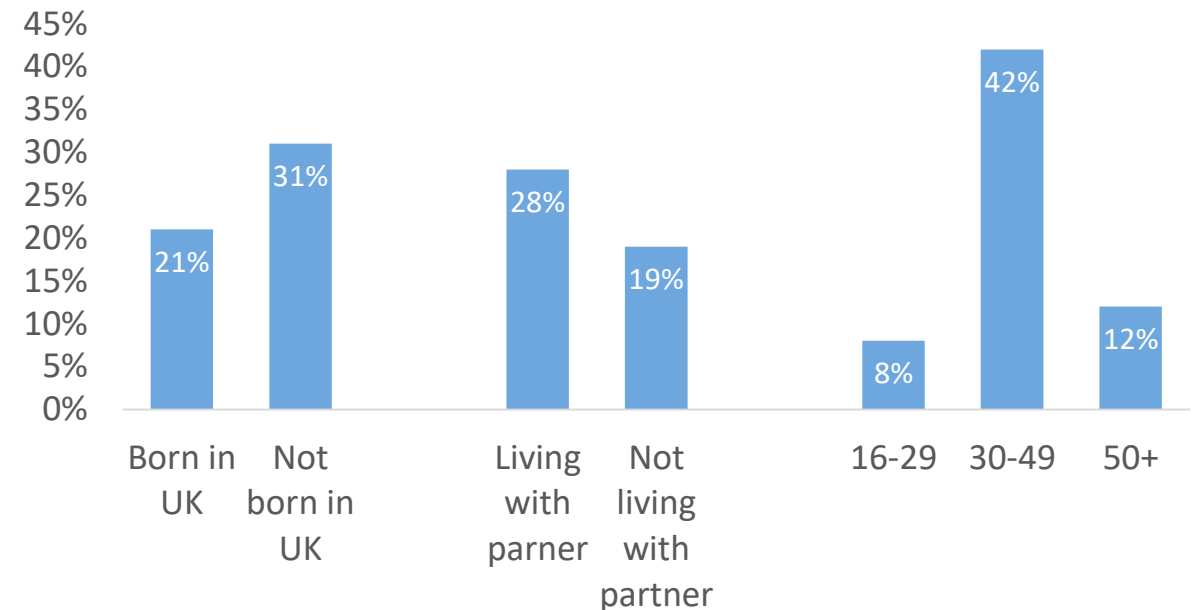
Base: Sept-20 Walking: 1,028; Moderate physical activities: 708; Vigorous physical activities: 607

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Moving home for more garden or outdoor space is cited as a reason by around a quarter of Londoners who said that they might move home in the next 12 months

- In September 2020 around one third (35 per cent) of Londoners said that there was a chance that they would move home in the next 12 months.
- Around a quarter (23 per cent) of Londoners who said that they might move home cited having more garden or outdoor space as one of the reasons for moving.
- Londoners not born in the UK are more likely to give this reason than those born in the UK (31 per cent and 21 per cent respectively).
- Londoners living with a partner are also more likely to give this reason than those not living with a partner (28 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).
- It is a more popular reason for 30-49 year old Londoners (42 per cent) compared with younger Londoners aged 16-29 (8 per cent) and older Londoners aged 50+ (12 per cent).

Proportion of adults expected to move for more garden or outdoor space



Base: Sept-20 Born in UK: 271; Not born in UK: 131; Living with a partner: 225; Not living with a partner: 183; 16-29: 77; 30-49: 162; 50+: 169

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

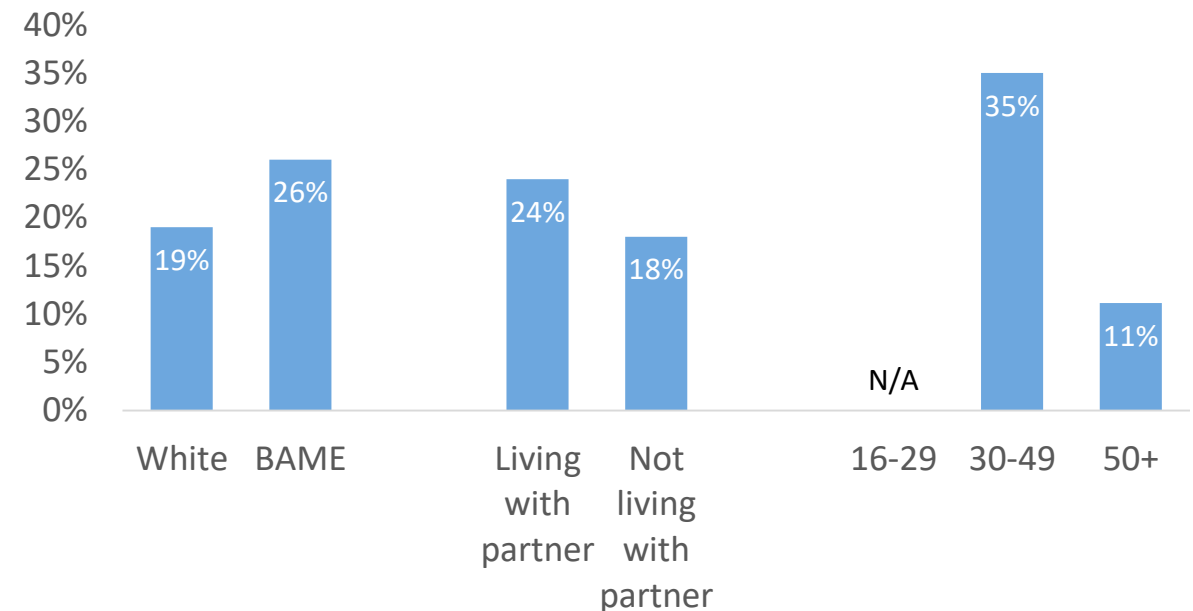
5. Families and community

- This final section examines other aspects of family and daily life in London, in particular, Londoners' relationships with their children, the domestic division of labour and confidence in using the internet.
- This latter issue is particularly pertinent given that 83 per cent of UK adults have revealed that they received [no support to improve their tech skills](#) over the last six months, despite the pandemic moving many aspects of personal and professional life online.
- Other research into people's daily lives during the pandemic have included a national study looking at people's levels of [cultural, digital and sporting engagement](#) during the initial months of the pandemic.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also continues to publish their weekly study into [coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#). The survey has recently incorporated a boosted sample for England, to allow for more detailed analysis at a regional level (including London).

Though the majority of parents have reported that the ‘stay at home’ policy has not affected the relationship with their children, a greater proportion have cited it resulting in a better relationship than the other way round

- In September 2020, around one in five (22 per cent) London parents reported that the relationship with their child(ren) since the Government’s “stay at home” policy was better than before. The majority cited no effect (74 per cent) and only 4 per cent said that the policy had resulted in a worse relationship with their children.
- BAME parents were more likely than White parents to report a better relationship (26 per cent and 19 per cent respectively).
- Parents aged 30-49 were also more likely to report having a better relationship with their children (35 per cent) compared with older parents aged 50+ (11 per cent).

Proportion of adults who say the relationship with their children has gotten better since staying home



Base: Sept-20 London parents with a child in the household: White: 268; BAME: 231; Living with a partner: 416; Not living with a partner: 90; 16-29: 5; 30-49: 222; 50+: 279

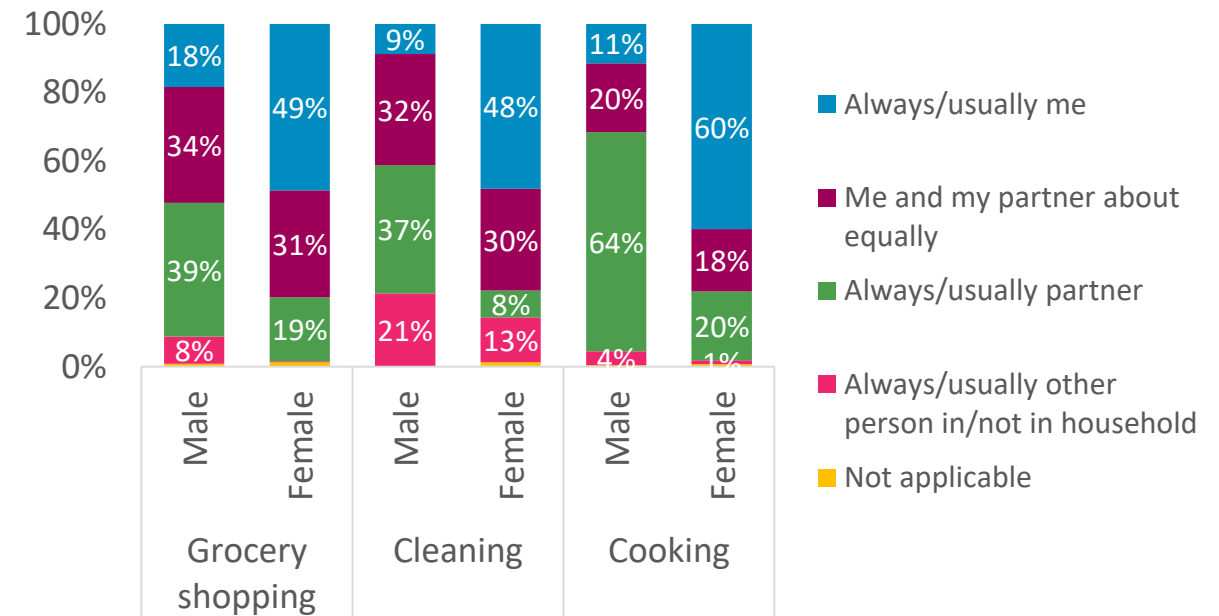
Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Note: Data not shown for age 16-29 due to low sample size.

In couples, women take on more of the domestic workload than men

- In September 2020, around half (49 per cent) of female Londoners aged 16+ living with a partner reported that they always or usually do the grocery shopping these days (not their partner). This compares with 18 per cent of male Londoners living with a partner.
- Similarly around half (48 per cent) of female Londoners aged 16+ living with a partner reported that they always or usually do the cleaning these days (not their partner). This compares with 9 per cent of male Londoners living with a partner.
- Responsibility for cooking falls even more heavily on the female member of a couple, with six in ten (60 per cent) female Londoners aged 16+ living with a partner reporting that it is always or usually them who does it these days. This compares with 11 per cent of male Londoners living with a partner.

Within couples in London, who is responsible for a range of domestic chores



Base: Sept-20 Grocery shopping: Male Londoners living with a partner: 334; Female Londoners living with a partner: 393; Cleaning: Male Londoners living with a partner: 335; Female Londoners living with a partner: 393; Cooking: Male Londoners living with a partner: 334; Female Londoners living with a partner: 393

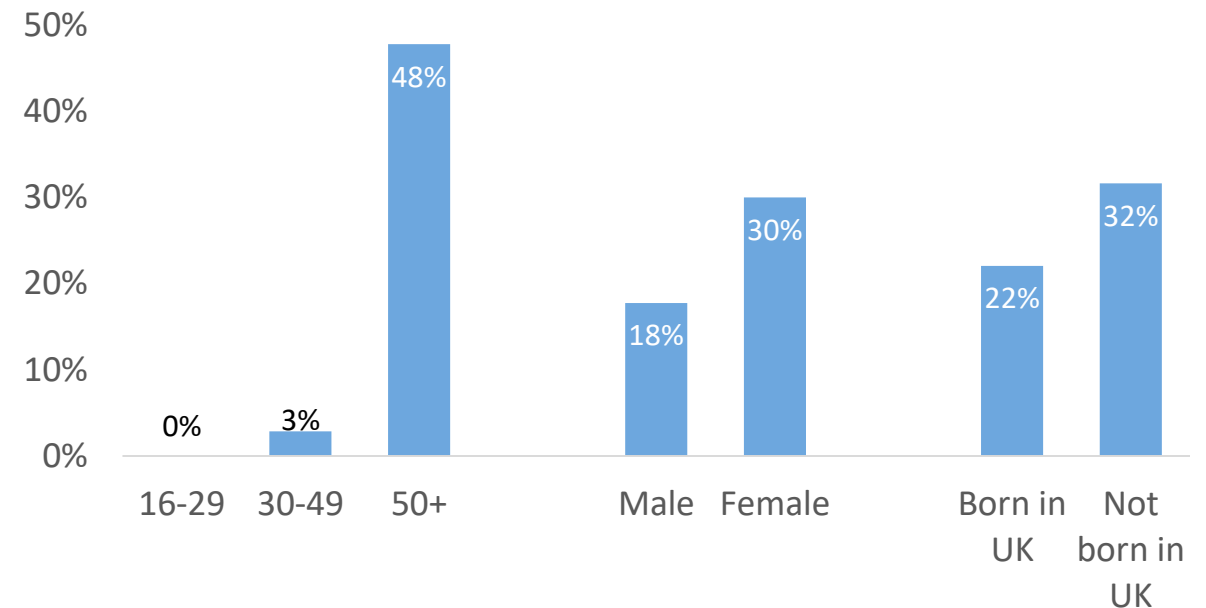
Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.

Lower confidence in using the internet affects older Londoners aged 50+, female Londoners and Londoners not born in the UK

- In September 2020, around three quarters (76 per cent) of Londoners aged 16+ are confident or very confident in their ability to use the internet. This leaves 24 per cent who are only somewhat confident or not confident.
- Around half (48 per cent) of older Londoners aged 50+ report only being somewhat confident or not confident in their ability to use the internet. This compares with only 3 per cent of younger Londoners aged 30-49 and no Londoners aged 16-29.
- Female Londoners are less confident in using the internet than male Londoners (30 per cent and 18 per cent respectively).
- Londoners not born in the UK are also less confident than Londoners born in the UK (32 per cent and 22 per cent respectively).

Note: The results in this slide are taken from a survey that was conducted online, so results should be interpreted with this in mind.

Proportion of adults who are only somewhat confident or not confident in using the internet



Base: Sept-20 16-29: 129; 30-49: 364; 50+: 658; Male: 477; Female: 672 Born in UK: 764; Not born in UK: 368

Source: University of Essex, Institute for Social and Economic Research. (2020). Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020.



6. Contact details

If you would like to know more about any of the findings or datasets featured, or would like to suggest a topic for inclusion in a future briefing, please email SocialEvidence@London.gov.uk