

# NISRA CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OPINION SURVEY

## KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASES 1 TO 10

### Introduction

On 20 April 2020, NISRA launched a new Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey designed to measure how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting peoples' lives and behaviour in Northern Ireland. The NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey questionnaire was based on a similar survey that was being conducted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in Great Britain which can be found at this link: [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain Statistical bulletins](#)

This report provides a summary of the key findings following the completion of Phase 10 of the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion survey. Survey data from Phases 1 to 10 have been merged to produce the information used in this report. In total, interviews have been carried out with 13,142 members of the public in the period 21 April 2020 to 3 April 2021. Users are advised that these results are based on some questions which have been asked in every phase whilst other questions have only been asked in certain phases.

Additional findings are now included in this report on mental well-being, attitudes towards lockdown measures, Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations, home schooling and remote learning. Further analysis is also provided quarterly to show changes over time, where significant differences were found.

Further results from the survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when fieldwork periods close.

All figures published in these Key Findings are weighted estimates. More information on the weighting applied to these results can be found in the Technical Report which accompanies this report.

Due to rounding, the percentages in the charts may not always add up to 100%. Where two or more categories are combined together the sum of the combined proportions may not equal the sum of the individual proportions in the charts or tables due to rounding. Any differences reported in this publication are statistically significant at the 95% Confidence Level.

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## Key Findings

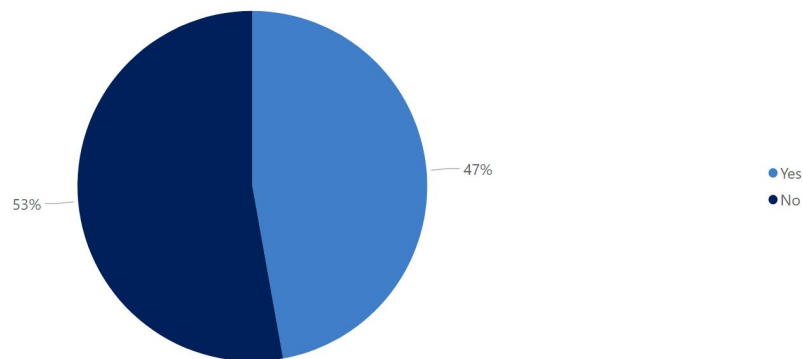
### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Vaccinations

In December 2020, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) mass vaccination programme began in Northern Ireland. The data presented below are self-reported findings and should not be interpreted as official rates for the uptake of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination in Northern Ireland. Official figures on vaccination rates can be found at the following link: [Vaccinations | Coronavirus in the UK \(data.gov.uk\)](https://data.gov.uk/dataset/vaccinations-coronavirus-in-the-uk)

People interviewed in the period January - April 2021, were asked if they had received a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19) and, if so, whether or not they had experienced any side effects.

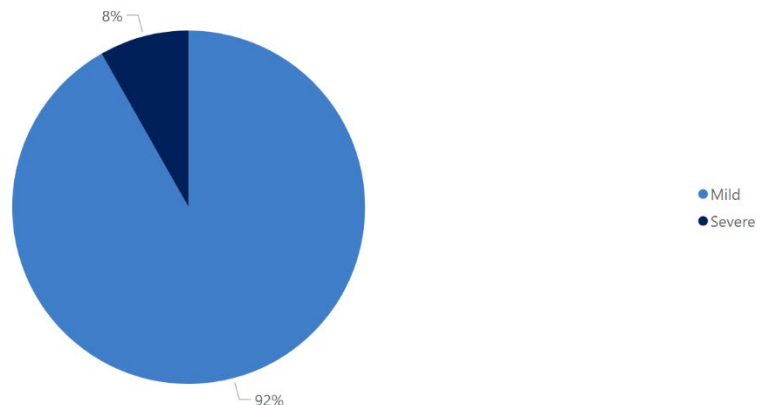
Of those interviewed, 27% reported that they had received a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19). Just under half of these people (47%) said they had experienced side effects after receiving the vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19) (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Proportion of people who experienced side effects after receiving a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19)**



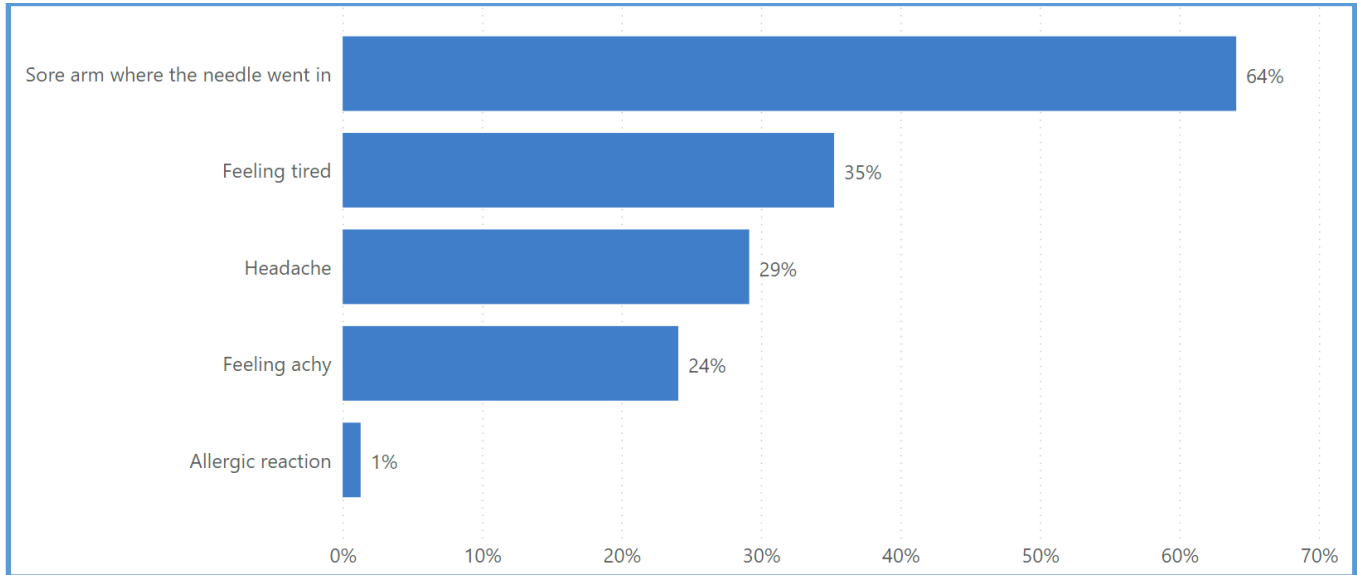
Of those people who reported experiencing side effects, the vast majority (92%) reported describing the side effects as mild, whilst 8% described the side effects as severe (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: The severity of side effects experienced after receiving a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19)**



The most common side effects that were reported were having a sore arm where the needle went in (64%), feeling tired (35%) or having a headache (29%) (Figure 3).

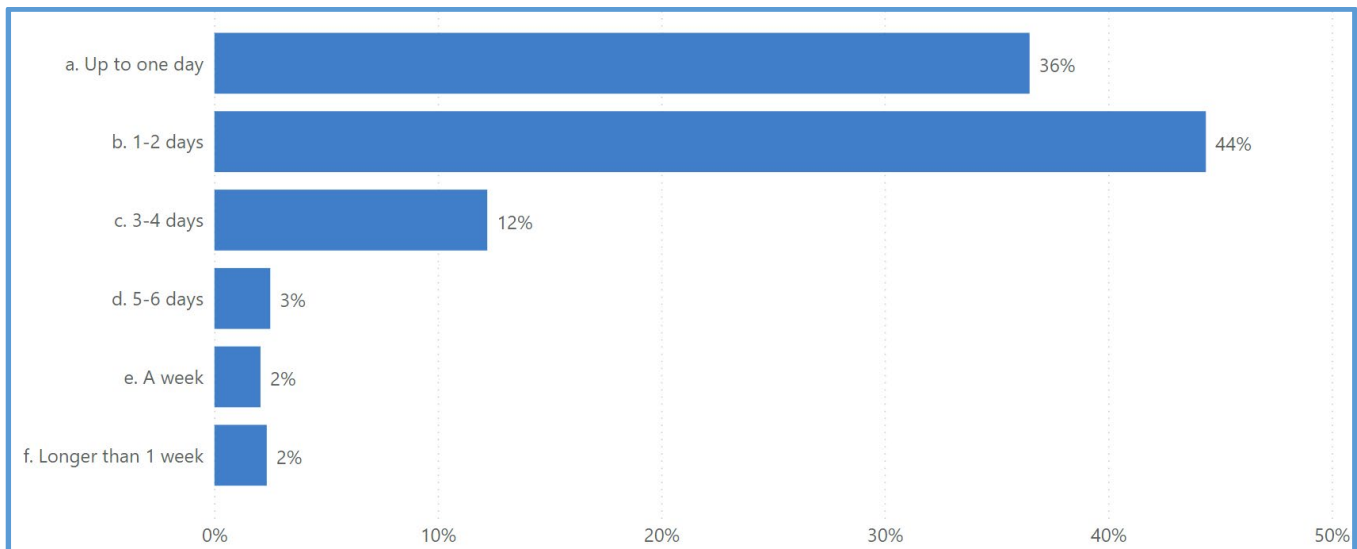
**Figure 3<sup>1</sup>: The side effects experienced after receiving a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19)**



<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed

These people were also asked an additional question about how long the side effects lasted. The majority of people (80%) reported that the side effects lasted up to 2 days (Figure 4).

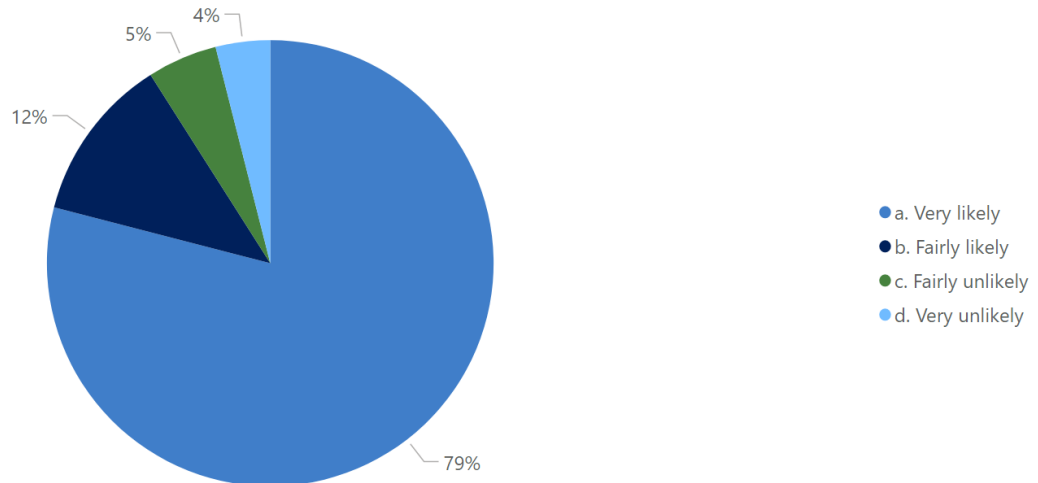
**Figure 4: The length of time side effects lasted after receiving a vaccine for Coronavirus (COVID-19)**



Those people who had not received a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine by the time of interview, were asked a further question about how likely or unlikely they were to have a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.

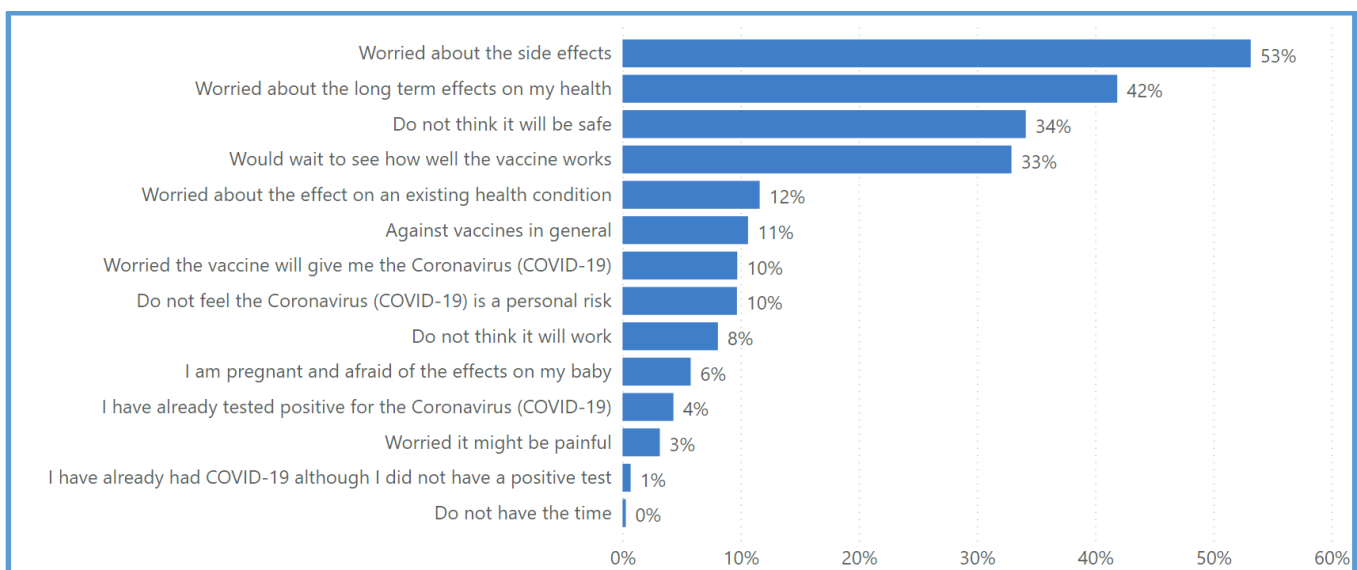
The vast majority of these people (91%) stated that they would be likely to have a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, whilst 9% stated they would be unlikely to do so (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Proportion of people who had not received a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccination at the time of interview who would be likely or unlikely to have the vaccine**



The most common reasons given by those people who said that they were unlikely to have a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine were that they were worried about the side effects (53%), they had worries about the long term effects on their health (42%), they did not think it will be safe (34%) or they would wait to see how well the vaccine works (33%) (Figure 6).

**Figure 6<sup>1</sup>: Reasons people are unlikely to have a Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine**



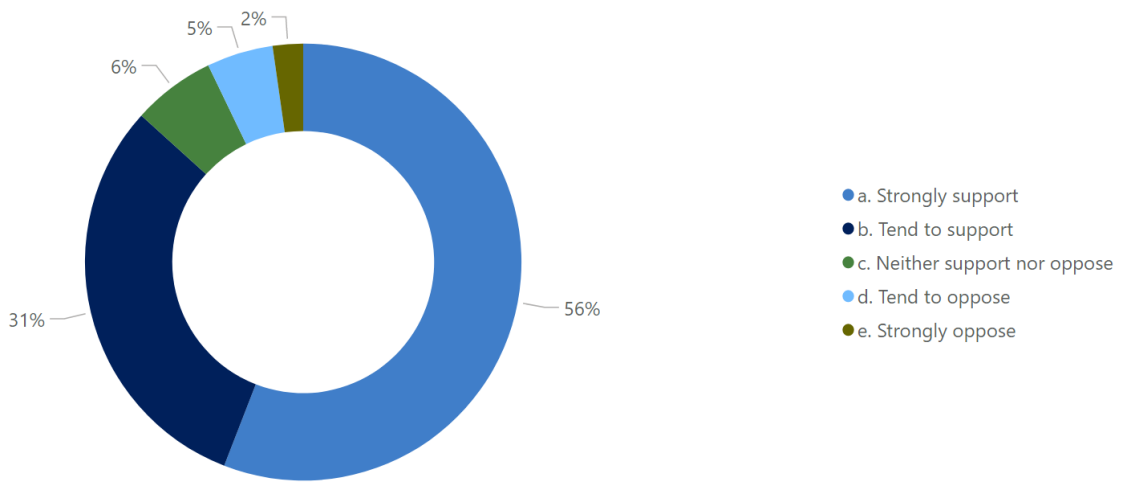
<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed

Lockdown Measures

People interviewed in the period February - April 2021 were asked some questions about lockdown measures and the extent to which they supported or opposed the lockdown measures which were in place at that time.

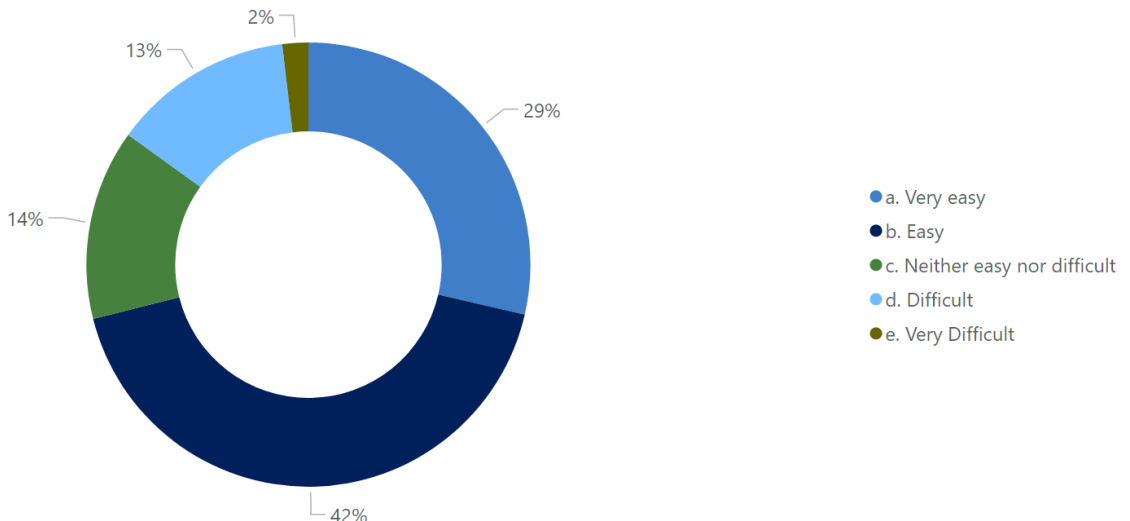
While the vast majority of people (87%) supported the lockdown measures, some 7% (one in fourteen people) opposed them (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Proportion of people who supported, neither supported or opposed, or opposed the lockdown measures where they live**



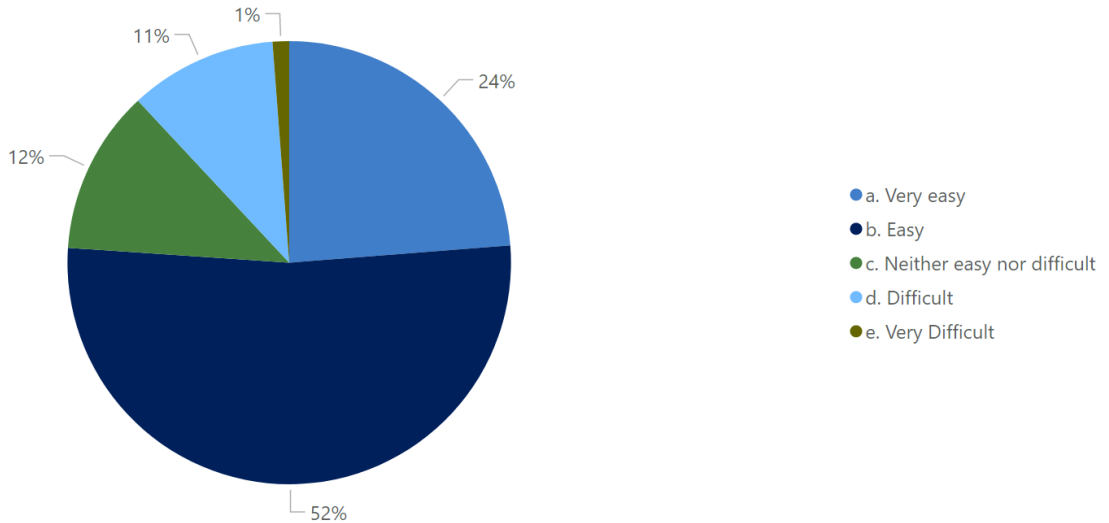
Just over seven in ten people (71%) thought it was easy to understand the lockdown measures, whilst 15% thought it was difficult (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Proportion of people who thought it was easy, neither easy nor difficult, or difficult to understand the lockdown measures where they live**



Over three quarters of people (76%) thought it was easy to follow the lockdown measures, whilst 12% thought it was difficult (Figure 9).

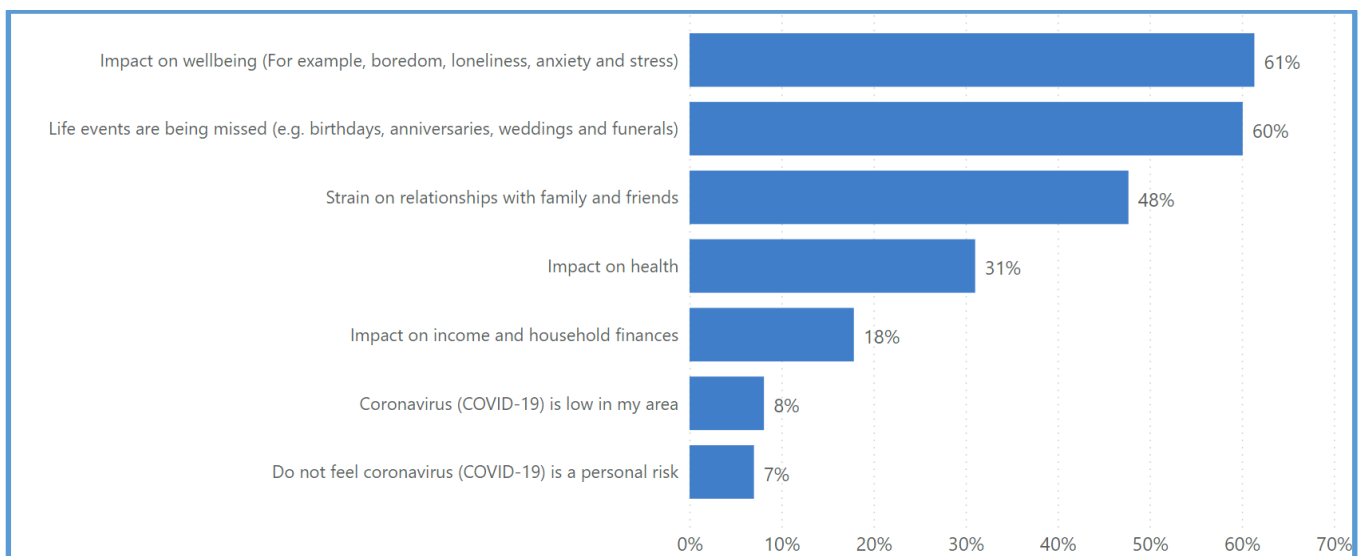
**Figure 9: Proportion of people who thought it was easy, neither easy nor difficult, or difficult to follow the lockdown measures where they live**



Those people who thought it was difficult to follow the lockdown measures were asked for reasons to explain why they found it difficult (Figure 10).

Approximately, six in ten of these people said it was due to the impact on wellbeing (61%) and life events were being missed (60%). Just under half (48%) said it was due to the strain on relationships with family and friends (48%) (Figure 10).

**Figure 10<sup>1</sup>: Reasons people reported it was difficult to follow the lockdown measures where they live**



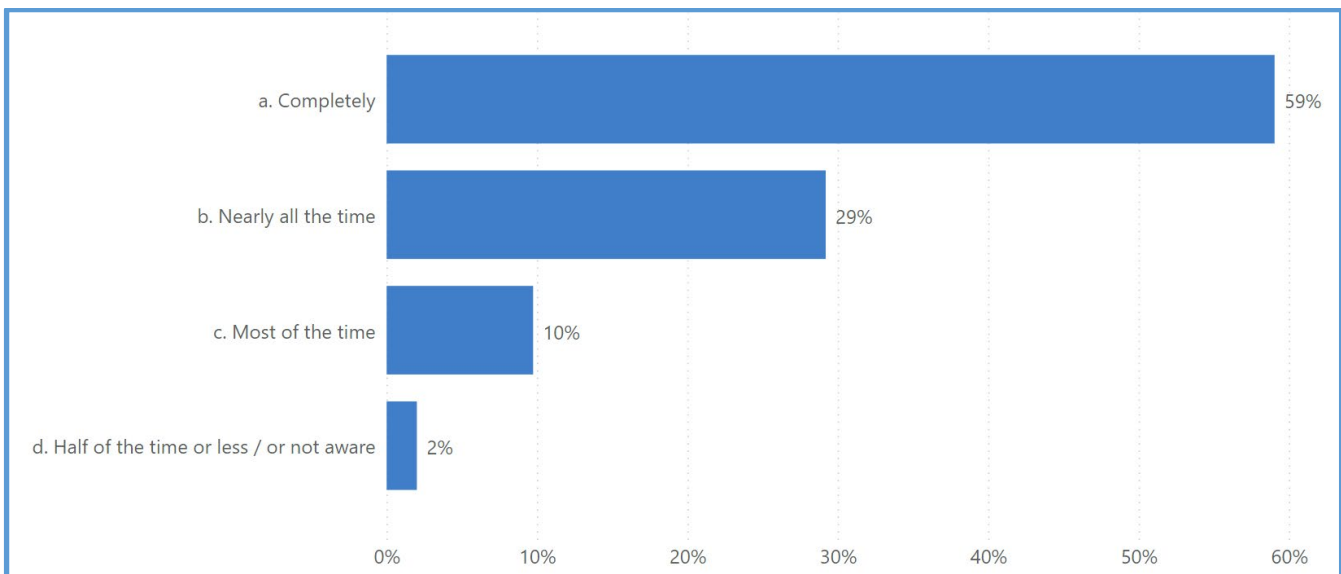
<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed

## Compliance with Coronavirus (COVID-19) Regulations and Guidelines

The survey asked people interviewed in the period November 2020 - April 2021 if they felt like they had enough information about government plans to manage the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak and about the extent to which they were personally following the Northern Ireland Executive’s regulations and guidelines on how to respond to the pandemic.

Approximately, six in ten people (59%) said that they were completely following the Northern Ireland Executive’s regulations and guidelines on how to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. Some 29% stated that they were doing so nearly all of the time and a further 10% of people reported that they were following the regulations or guidelines most of the time (Figure 11).

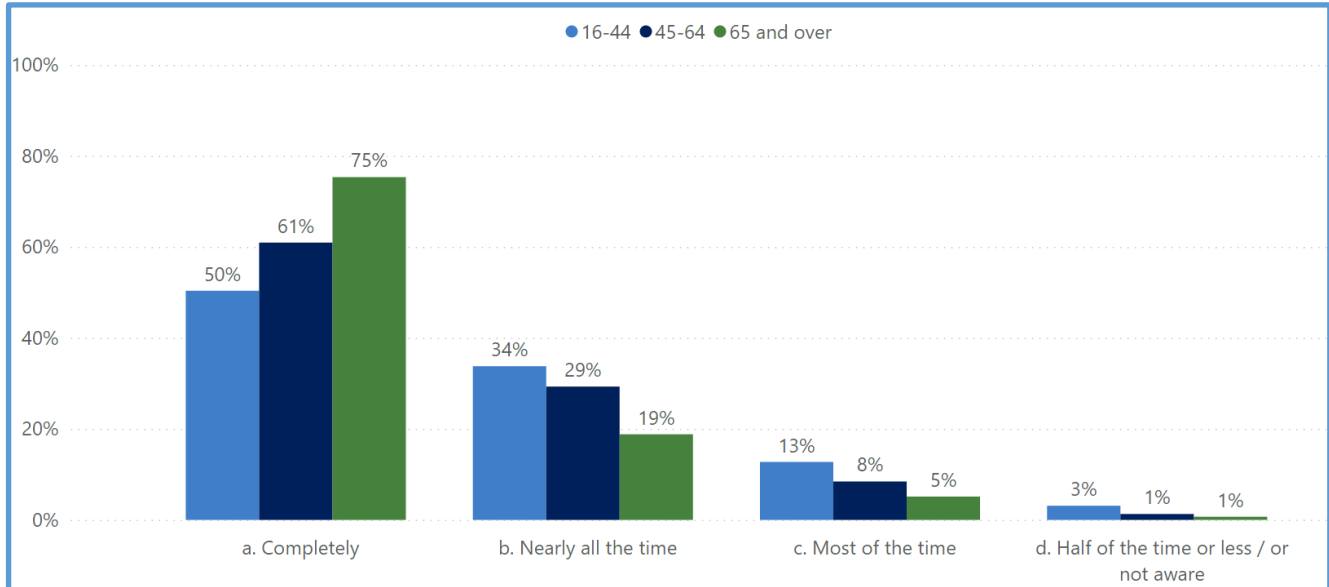
**Figure 11: Extent to which people reported following the Northern Ireland Executive’s regulations and guidelines on how to respond to the pandemic**



Stricter adherence to the regulations and guidelines was associated with increasing age. Three quarters of people aged 65 and over (75%) reported that they were completely following the regulations and guidelines. This was significantly higher than for those aged 45-64 years (61%) and those aged 16-44 years (50%) (Figure 12).



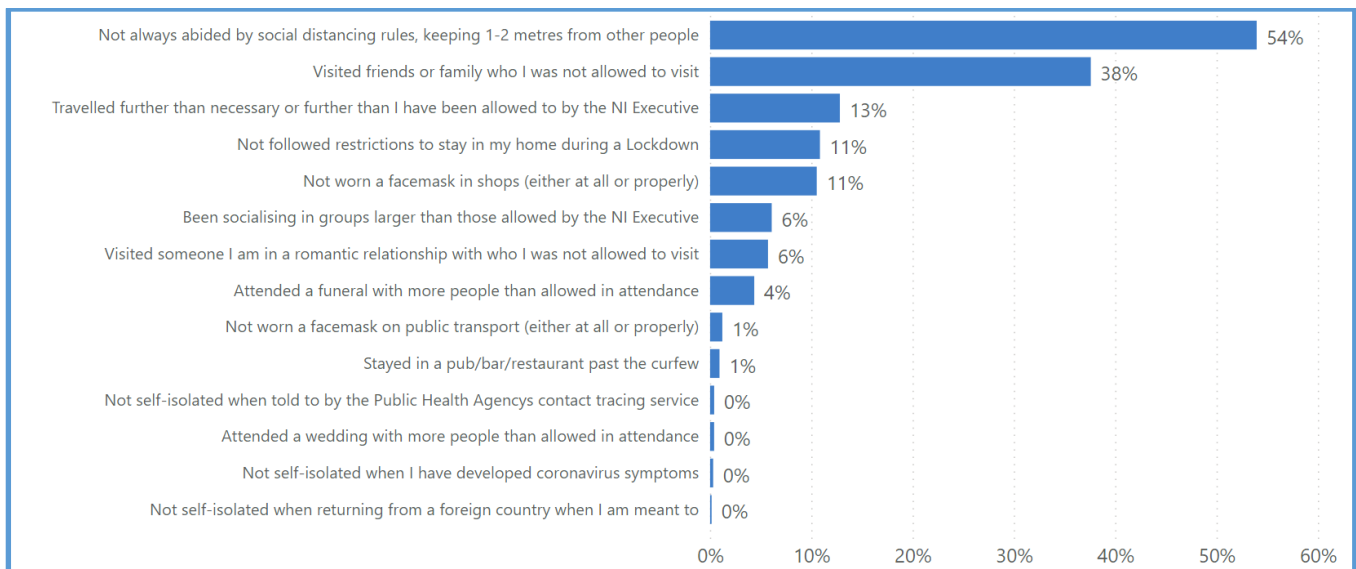
**Figure 12: Extent to which people reported following the Northern Ireland Executive’s regulations and guidelines on how to respond to the pandemic, by age group**



Those people who said that they were not completely following the regulations and guidelines were asked an additional question about the ways in which they had not done so.

More than half of these people (54%) said that they had not always abided by social distancing rules, keeping 1-2 metres apart from other people. Some 38% of people reported that they had visited family or friends when they were not allowed to do so. Approximately, one in ten people stated that they had travelled further than necessary or restrictions allowed (13%), not followed restrictions to stay at home during a lockdown (11%) or not worn a face covering in shops (11%) (Figure 13).

**Figure 13<sup>1</sup>: Ways in which people had not followed the Northern Ireland Executive’s regulations and guidelines on how to respond to the pandemic**

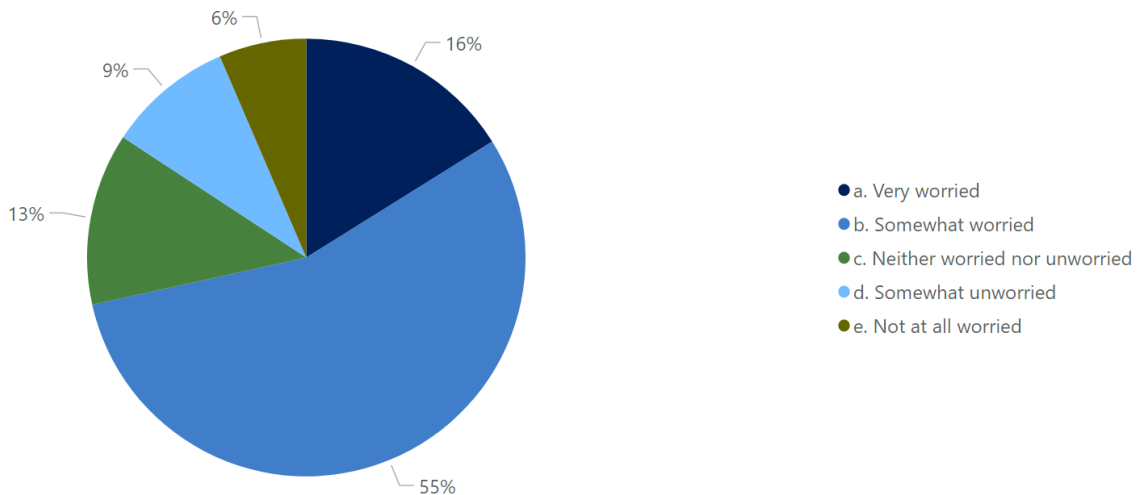


<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed

Concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

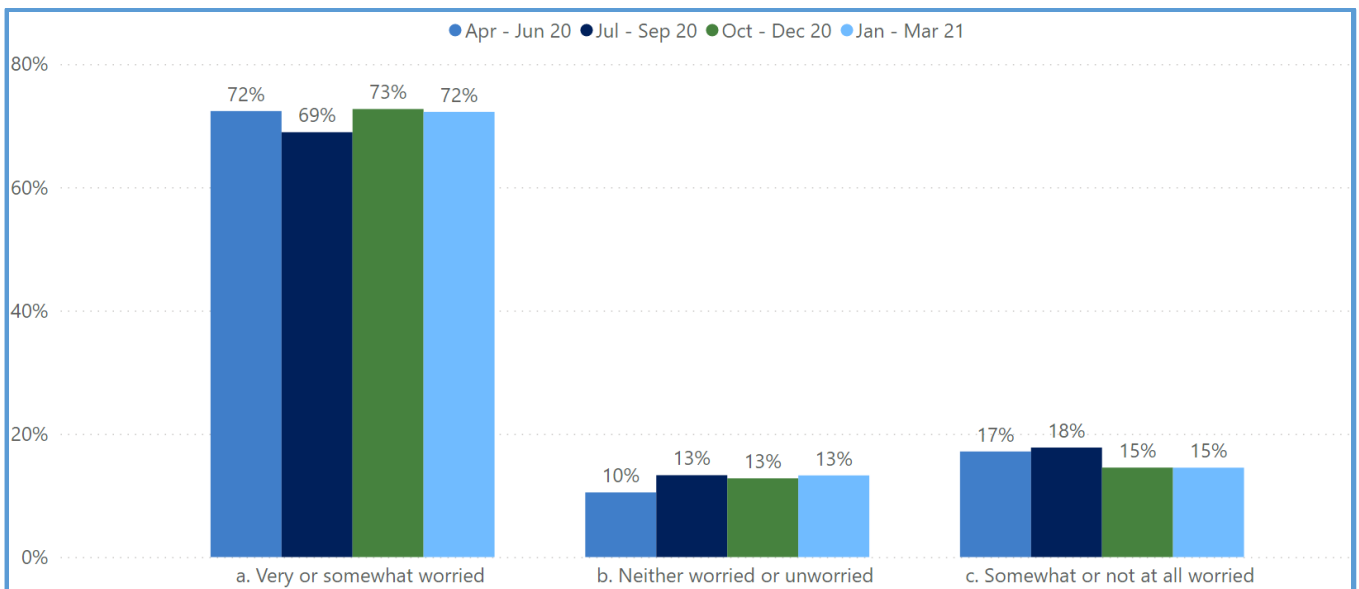
The survey continued to find high levels of worry among people regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Overall, some seven out of ten people (71%) said that they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Levels of worry about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life**



Almost three quarters of people (72%) interviewed in the period January to March 2021 said that they were worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives. This was consistent with the levels of worry reported in previous time periods during the pandemic when transmission rates of the virus were increasing in communities (Figure 15).

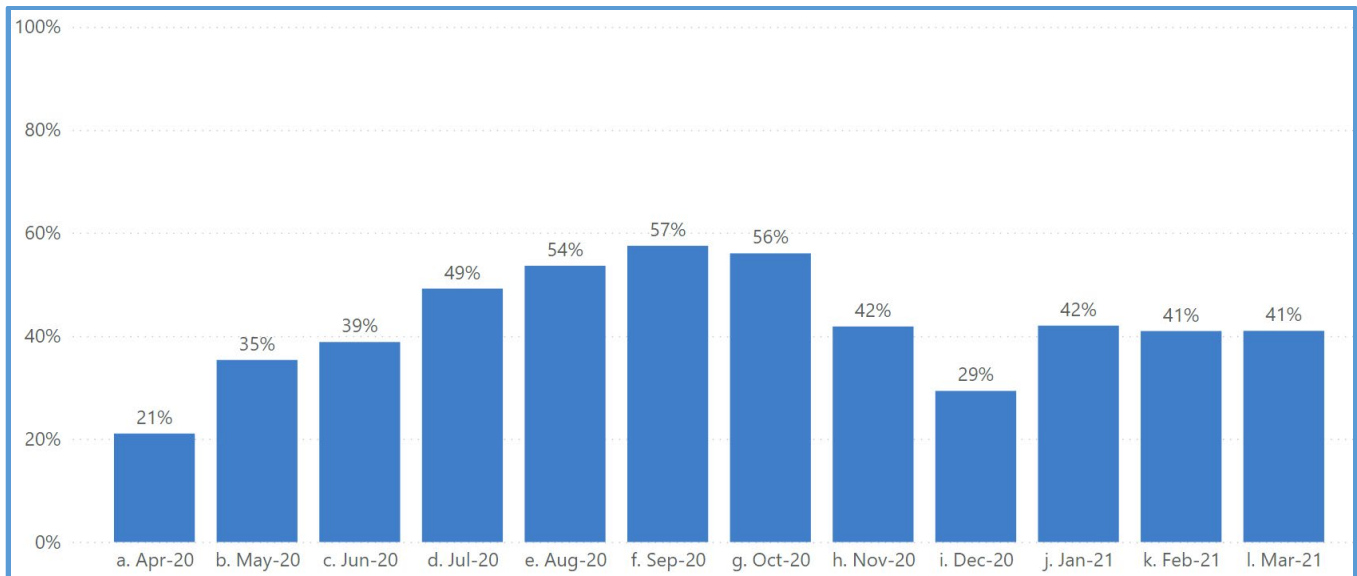
**Figure 15<sup>1</sup>: Levels of worry about the effect Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are too low to report on separately in these results.

In December 2020, there appeared to be growing optimism that life might return to normal in the next twelve months or so. However, the proportion of people who said it would be more than a year before their life returned to normal increased from 29% in December 2020 to 42% in January 2021 and has remained consistent at this level throughout February and March (Figure 16).

**Figure 16<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who stated it would be more than a year before their life would return to normal, by month of interview**



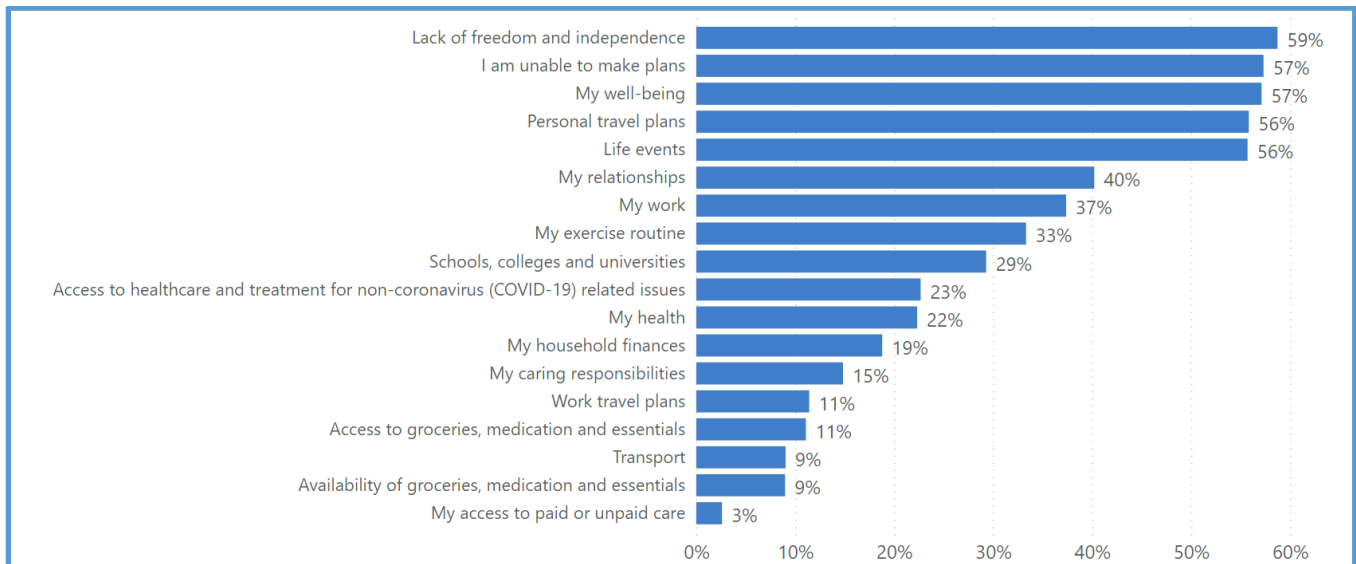
<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are too low to report on separately in these results.

## Ways the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting lives

Those people who said that they were worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives were asked some additional questions about how it was affecting them.

In the period November 2020 – April 2021, more than half of people said the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their freedom and independence (59%), their ability to make plans (57%), their wellbeing (57%), personal travel plans (56%) and life events (56%) (Figure 17).

**Figure 17<sup>1</sup>: Ways in which the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting lives**



<sup>1</sup> Only asked of people who stated they were either very worried or somewhat worried about the impact Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives. Multiple responses allowed.

## Mental Health GHQ-12

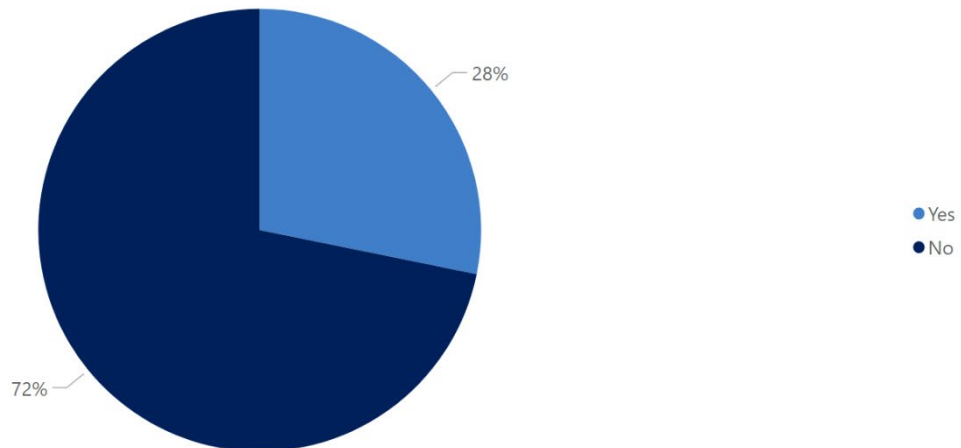
People interviewed during the months of January – April 2021 completed the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12)<sup>1</sup>.

The GHQ is a screening tool designed to detect the possibility of psychiatric morbidity in the general population. The questionnaire used contains 12 questions about recent general levels of happiness, depression, anxiety and sleep disturbance. An overall score of between zero and twelve is constructed, with a score of 4 or more being classified as a respondent with a possible psychiatric disorder, and referred to as a 'high GHQ-12 score'.

### High GHQ-12 scores

In the period January – April 2021, some 28% had a high GHQ-12 score, which could indicate a possible mental health problem (Figure 18). This was significantly higher than the most recent figure published from the Health Survey Northern Ireland<sup>2</sup> for 2019-20 which found that 19% of people in Northern Ireland had a high GHQ-12 score.

**Figure 18: Proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score**

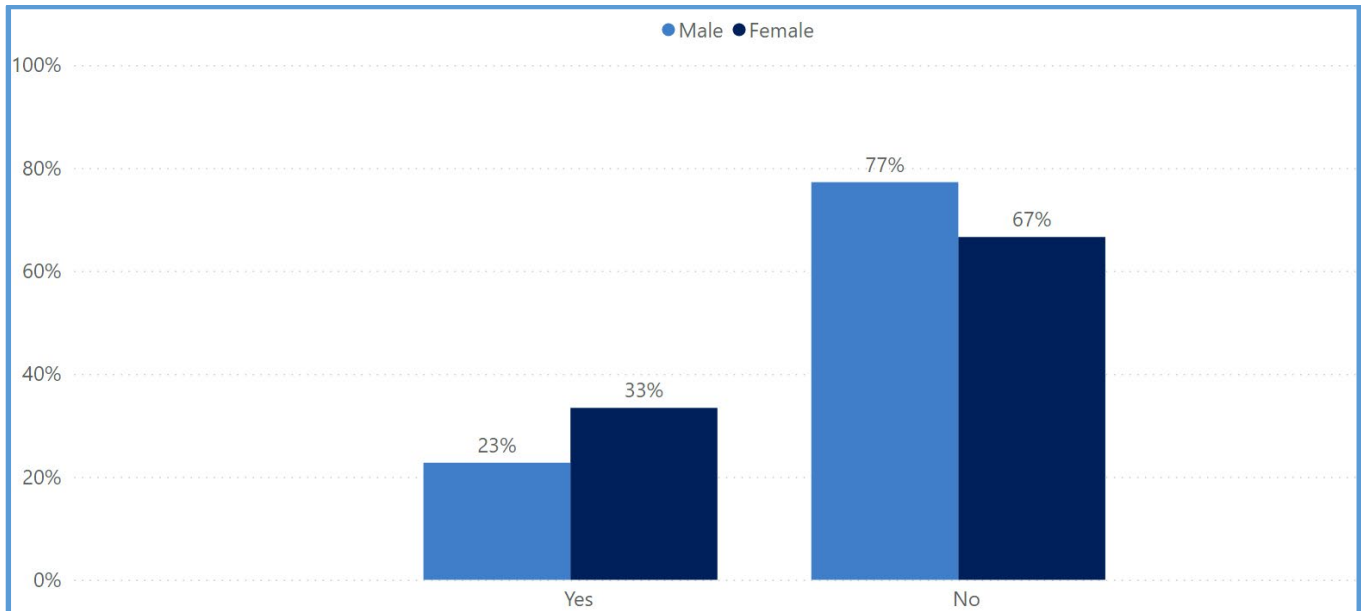


<sup>1</sup> General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) ©David Goldberg, 1978

<sup>2</sup> Users should be aware that the GHQ-12 questionnaire was completed by self-completion in the 2019-20 Health Survey Northern Ireland, whereas the GHQ-12 questionnaire was administered over the telephone in the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey. It is not known what effect, if any, the change in data collection mode has on GHQ-12 outcomes and, therefore, caution should be applied when making comparisons between the two sets of results.

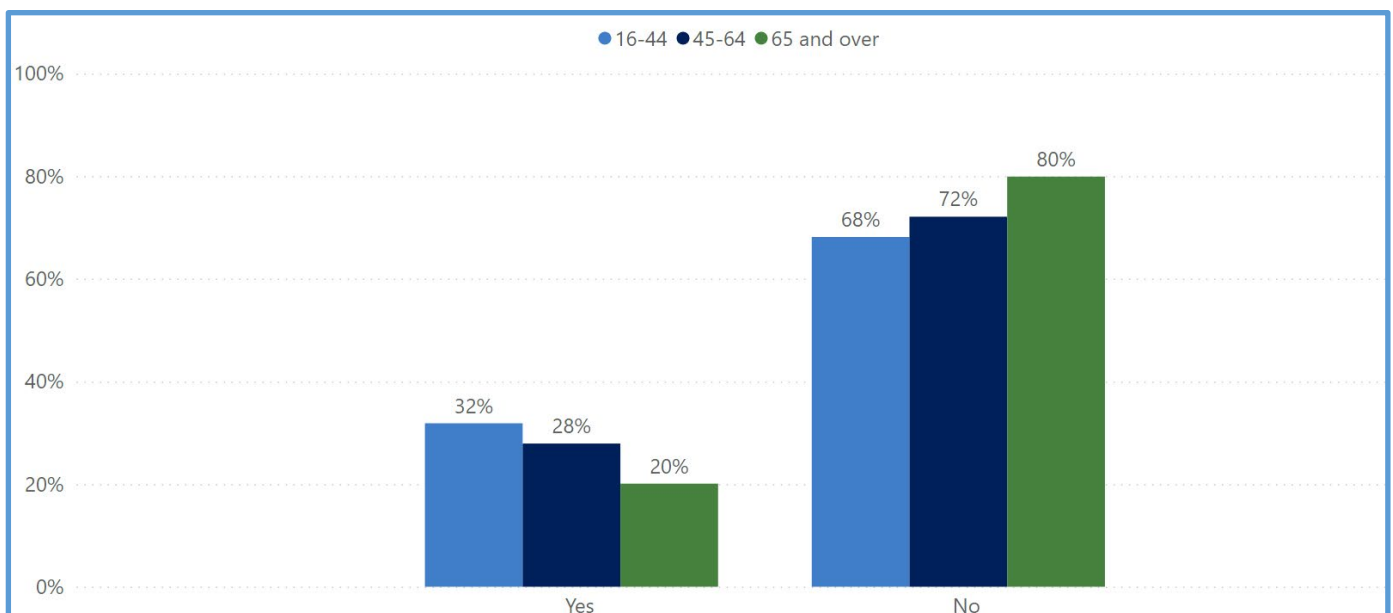
One in three females (33%) had a high GHQ-12 score, which was significantly higher than for males (23%) (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score, by sex**



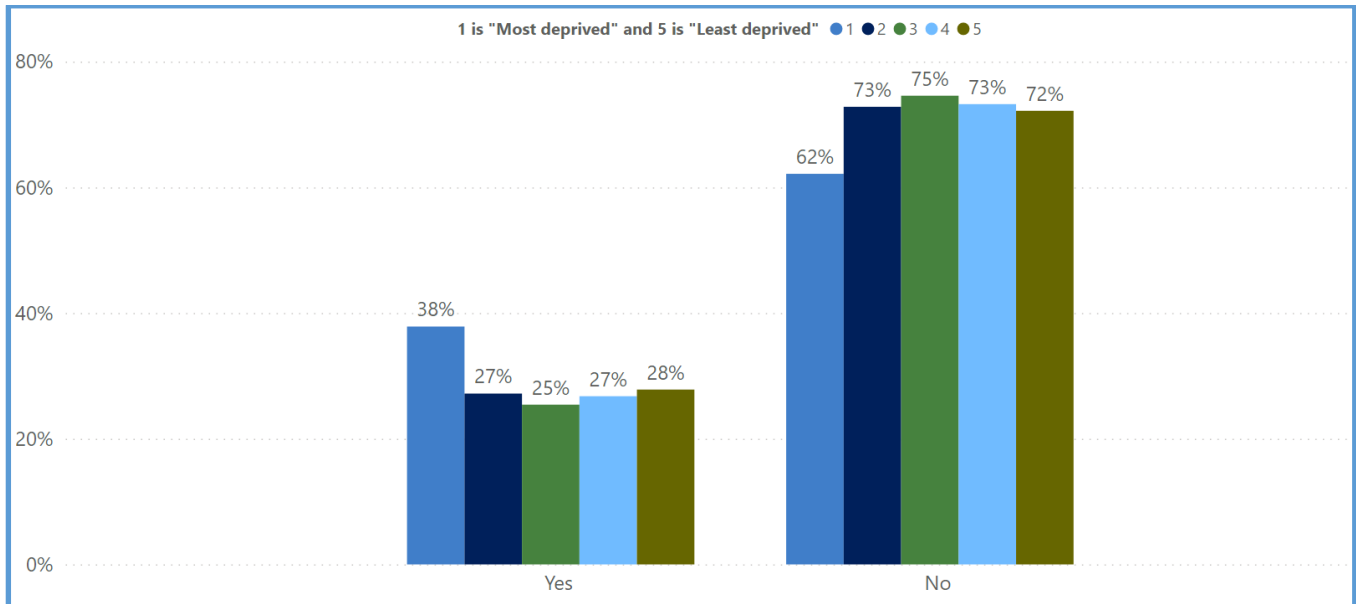
Almost one third of people (32%) aged 16-44 years had a high GHQ-12 score. This was significantly higher than for those aged 45-64 years (28%) and those aged 65 years and over (20%) (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score, by age group**



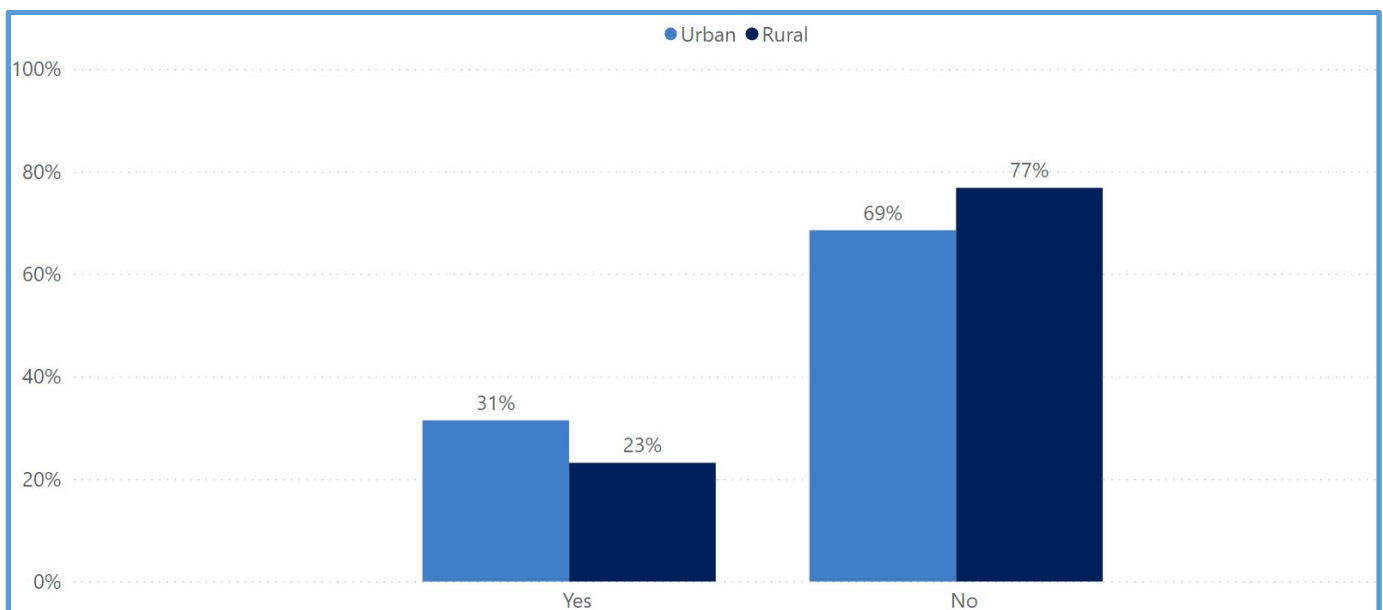
Almost four out of ten people living in the most deprived areas (38%) were found to have a high GHQ-12 score. This was significantly higher compared to people living in lesser deprived areas where the proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score was in the range 25%-28% (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score, by deprivation quintile**



Around one in three people living in urban areas (31%) had a high GHQ-12 score, which was significantly higher than for those living in rural areas (23%) (Figure 22).

**Figure 22<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people with a high GHQ-12 score, by urban/rural classification**



<sup>1</sup> The Urban/Rural analysis included is based on the 2015 NISRA Urban/Rural classification. Further information regarding urban/rural classification can be found on the NISRA webpage at: <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/support/geography/urban-rural-classification>

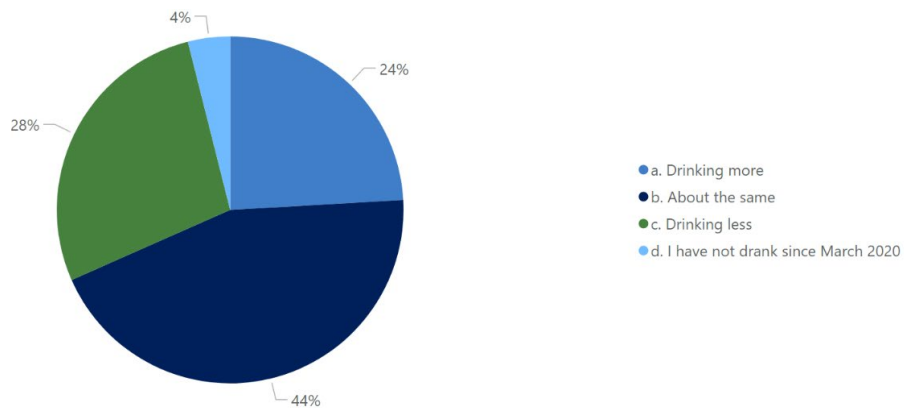
## Alcohol Consumption

People who were interviewed in the period November 2020 - April 2021 were asked about their alcohol consumption since the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Over one quarter of people (27%) interviewed in this period stated that they do not drink alcohol at all.

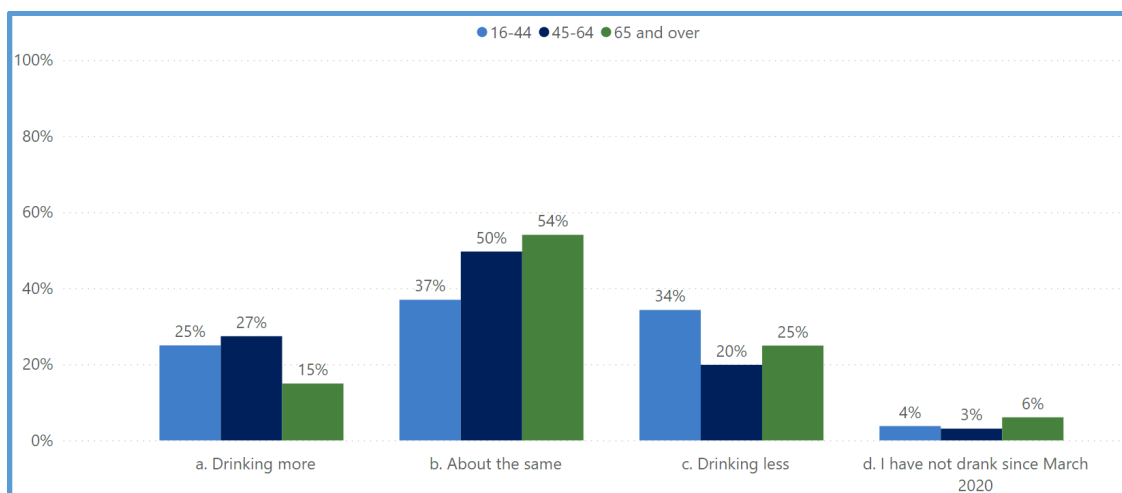
Of those people who do drink alcohol, approximately a quarter of people (24%) said that they were drinking more alcohol since the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Almost half of people (44%) were drinking about the same, whilst just over a quarter of people (28%) said they were drinking less. A small proportion (4%) said that they had not drunk alcohol since March 2020 (Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Proportion of people who reported drinking alcohol more, about the same, or less since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



An increase in drinking, since the beginning of the pandemic, was reported by 25% of people aged 16-44 and by 27% of those aged 45-64. This was significantly higher than for those aged 65 and over (15%). However, 34% of those aged 16-44 stated that they were drinking less since the start of the pandemic and this was a higher proportion compared to the other age groups (Figure 24).

**Figure 24: Proportion of people who reported drinking alcohol more, about the same, or less since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak by age group**



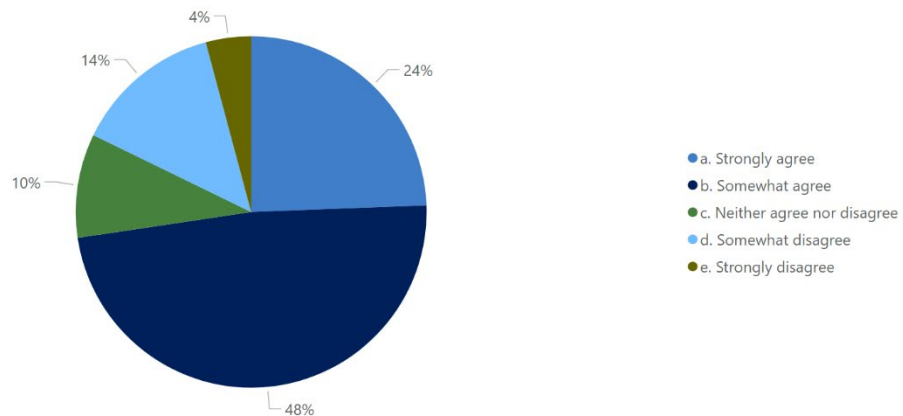


## Home Schooling and Remote Learning

During the months of January – April 2021, people with school aged children in their household were asked about home schooling and remote learning.

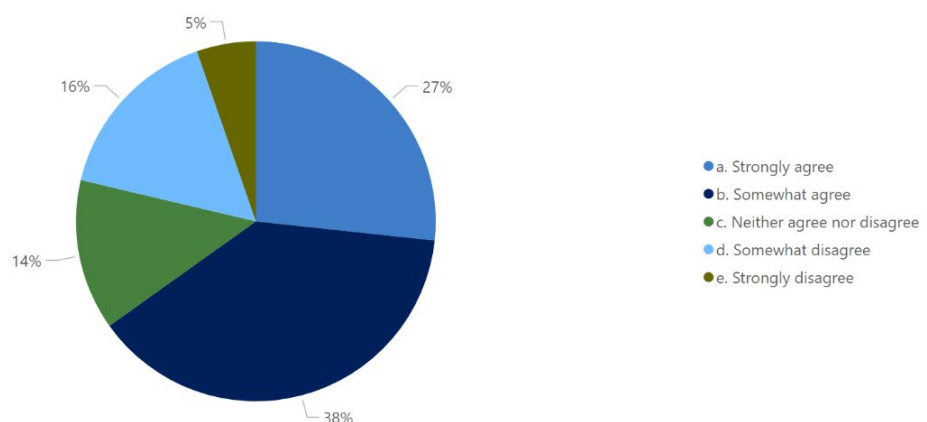
Some 72% of these people agreed that the child/children in their household were continuing to learn whilst being home schooled or receiving remote learning, while 18% disagreed (Figure 25).

**Figure 25: Proportion of people who thought that the child/children within their household were continuing to learn whilst being home schooled or receiving remote learning**



Almost two thirds (65%) agreed that home schooling or remote learning was negatively affecting the well-being of the children in their household, but almost 21% disagreed (Figure 26).

**Figure 26: Proportion of people who thought that home schooling or remote learning was negatively affecting the wellbeing of the child/children in their household**

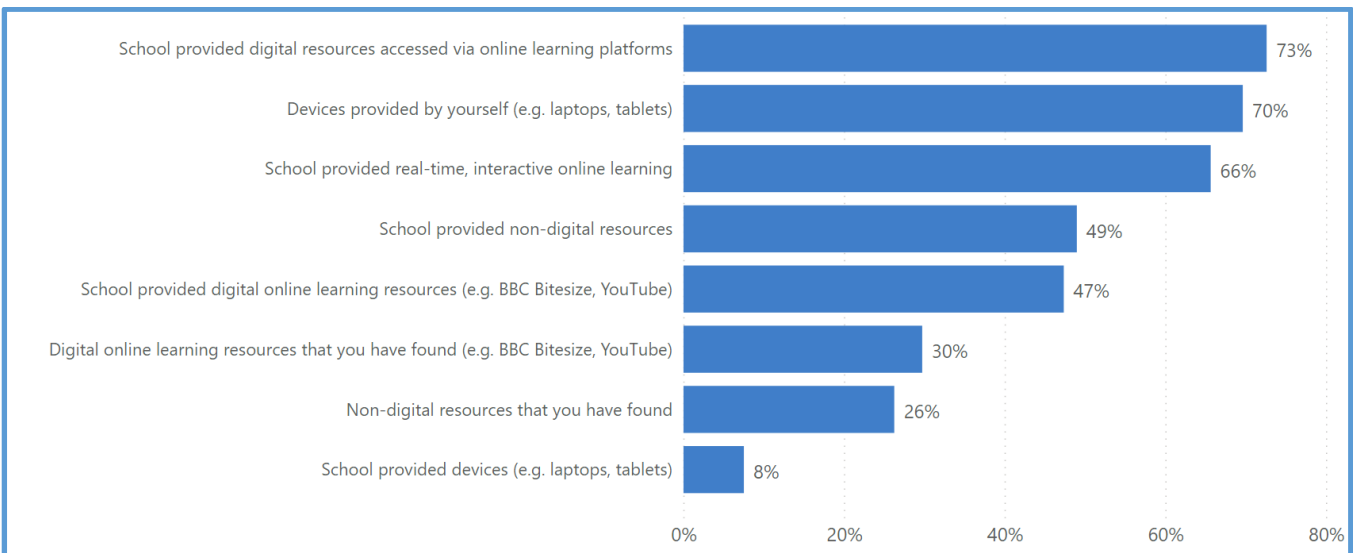


These people were also asked about which resources they had used or received for home schooling or remote learning (Figure 27).

Figure 27 ranks these resources from highest to lowest based on the proportion of people stating each response. The top three highest ranking resources used or received were:

- School provided digital resources accessed via online learning platforms (e.g. pre-recorded lessons, assignments, e-workbooks) (73%).
- Devices provided by yourself (e.g. laptops, tablets) (70%).
- School provided real-time interactive online learning (e.g. ‘live’ teaching, video conferencing or online chatting) (66%).

**Figure 27<sup>1</sup>:** Resources used or received for home schooling or remote learning



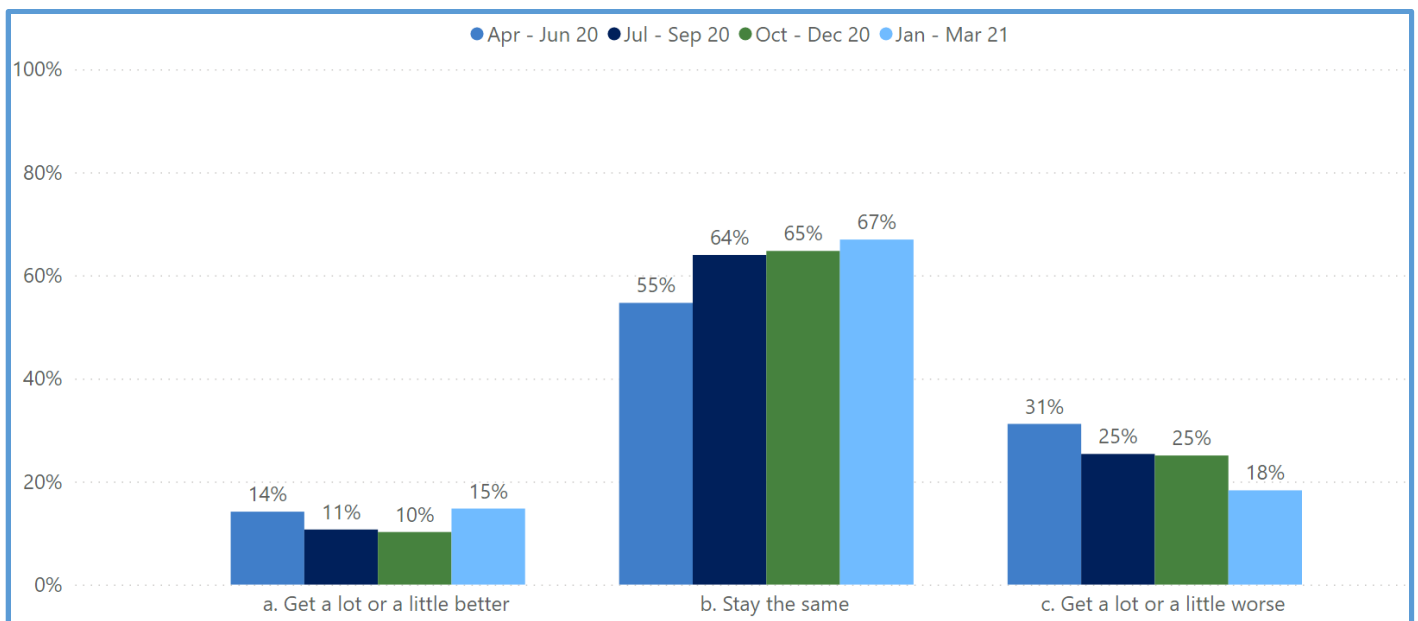
<sup>1</sup>Multiple responses allowed

## Financial Concerns

Overall, just under a quarter of people (24%) expected the financial position of their household to get worse in the next 12 months. Some 64% expected their household financial situation to stay the same whilst 12% expected it to get better.

Over time, these financial concerns appeared to have eased. The proportion of people, who expected the financial position of their household to get worse, was highest at the beginning of the pandemic in the months of April – June 2020 (31%) but decreased to 18% in the months of January – March 2021 (Figure 28).

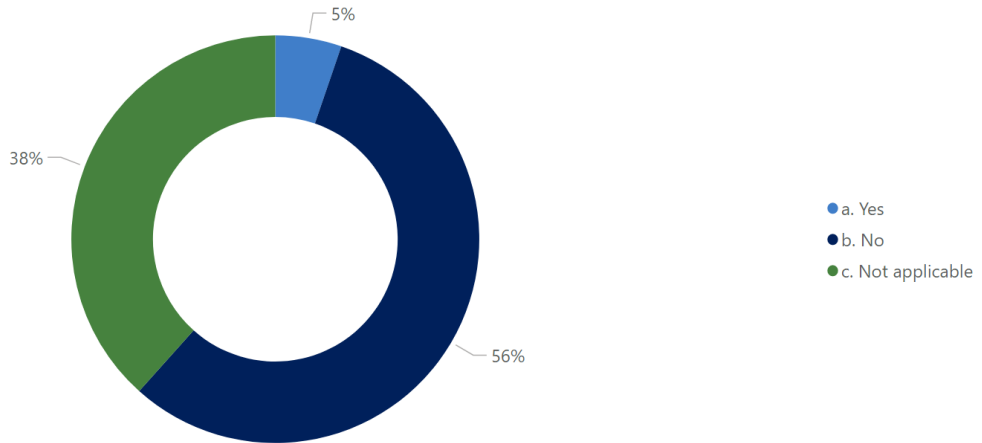
**Figure 28: Proportion of people who expected the financial position of their household to change, or not, in the next 12 months, by month of interview**



The proportion of people who reported that it was difficult to pay their usual household bills has increased from 3% to 12% since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Some 5% of people interviewed in the period January - April 2021 said that they had received a mortgage payment holiday since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Figure 29).

**Figure 29<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who had received a mortgage payment holiday since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



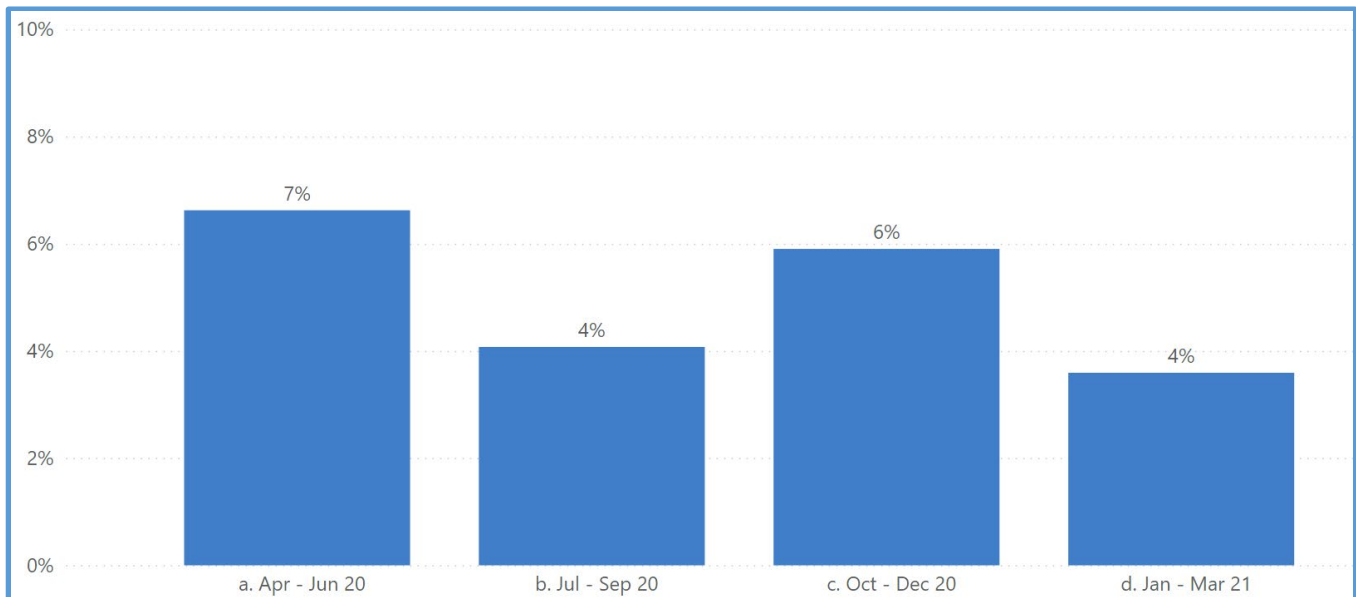
<sup>1</sup>This question was asked of all respondents and it was not possible to separate respondents with a mortgage from those without.

## Self-Isolation

People were asked about whether or not they had self-isolated in the seven days prior to interview. Self-isolation was defined as staying at home because they had symptoms or they had been in contact with someone who had symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19). People may have self-isolated at home for other reasons and the question refers to the seven days prior to interview, so the figures presented below should not be interpreted as estimates of all those with Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms or those diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19).

The proportion of those self-isolating at home during April 2020 – March 2021 in the seven days prior to interview, was highest at the beginning of the pandemic in the months of April – June 2020 (7%). In the most recent period January-March 2021, the proportion who had self-isolated in the previous seven days was 4% (Figure 30).

**Figure 30<sup>1</sup>:** Proportion of people who had self-isolated at home in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview



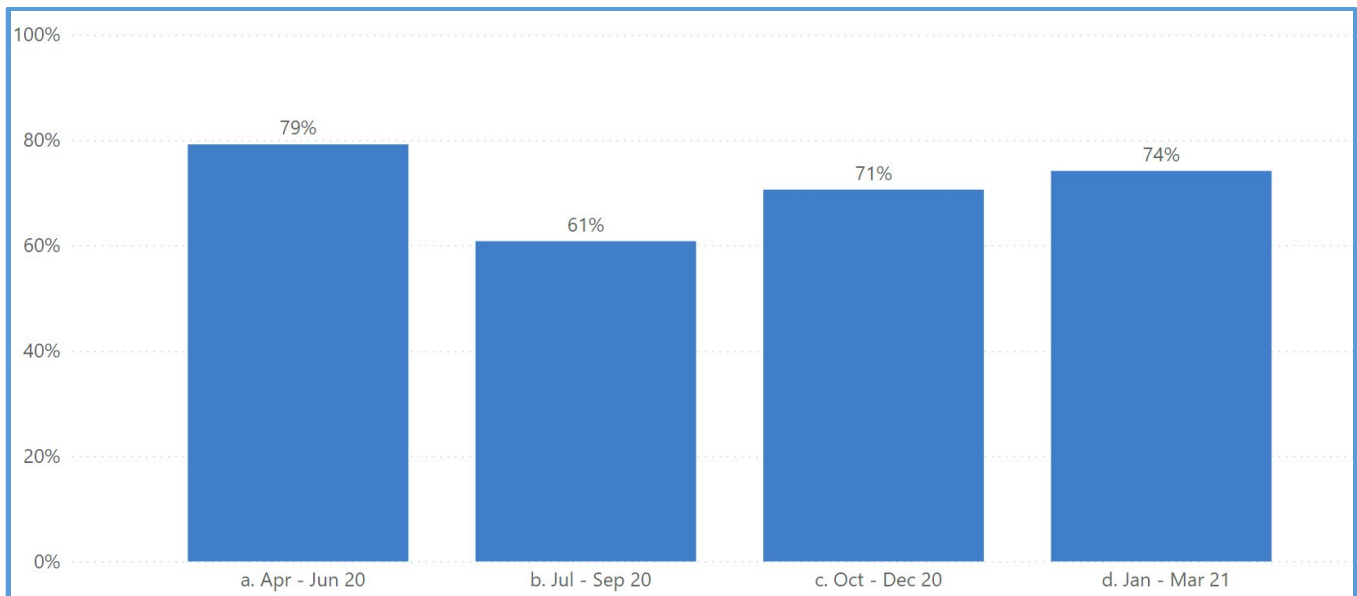
<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are too low to report on separately in these results

## Protecting Older and Vulnerable People

Since the start of the pandemic, seven out of ten people (70%) interviewed said that they had avoided contact with older or vulnerable people in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The results show that this proportion was highest in April - June 2020 (79%) and lowest in July - September 2020 (61%) (Figure 31).

**Figure 31<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are too low to report on separately in these results.

## Personal Wellbeing Indicators

This section contains estimates of reported ‘life satisfaction’, feeling that things done in life are ‘worthwhile’, ‘happiness’ and ‘anxiety’ for those people interviewed in the reporting period.

Personal wellbeing statistics are reported on in two different ways; (i) the average (mean) rating and (ii) the proportion of respondents scoring within each of the thresholds.

People are asked to respond to each question on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”. This means that a **higher score** indicates **better wellbeing** in relation to ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’, and a **lower score** indicates **better wellbeing** for ‘anxiety’.

### (i) Average (mean) Wellbeing ratings

The average (mean) wellbeing ratings across the four measures of personal wellbeing were:

- 7.36 out of 10 for ‘life satisfaction’
- 7.84 out of 10 for **feeling that what you do in life is ‘worthwhile’**
- 7.43 out of 10 for ‘happiness’ yesterday
- 3.37 out of 10 for ‘anxiety’ yesterday

The average (mean) wellbeing rating of people interviewed in the period April 2020-April 2021 for ‘life satisfaction’, feeling that things done in life are ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ were significantly lower than that reported by NISRA for the 2019/20<sup>3</sup> year, signifying poorer wellbeing in these measures (Table 1).

Anxiety levels in the same period were also significantly higher than that reported by NISRA for 2019/20, which is indicative of poorer wellbeing in this measure (Table 1).

**Table 1: Comparing Personal Wellbeing averages with the latest NISRA published data (2019/20)**

Average (mean)	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
Phases 1 – 10 (April 2020-April 2021)	<b>7.36*</b>	<b>7.84*</b>	<b>7.43*</b>	<b>3.37*</b>
Personal Wellbeing in NI 19/20	7.86*	8.05*	7.68*	3.00*

\*A significant difference has been observed

The average ‘life satisfaction’ score reported in the period October–December 2020 (when restrictions were reintroduced) and January-March 2021 (when restrictions increased) were both significantly lower than that reported in the periods April-June 2020 and July-September 2020. Indeed in the period

<sup>3</sup>NISRA report on Personal Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2019/20 <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/personal-wellbeing-northern-ireland-201920>

January-March 2021, feelings for ‘life satisfaction’ were significantly lower than for all previous periods since the start of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Feelings that things done in life are ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ were also significantly lower in the period January-March 2021 compared to earlier time periods.

Feelings of ‘anxiety’ were significantly higher in October-December 2020 and January-March 2021 (when restrictions were reintroduced) than in July-September 2020 (when restrictions were easing).

**Table 2: Comparing Personal Wellbeing averages during the Pandemic**

Average (mean) rating by month of interview	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
April – June 2020	7.56**	7.88**	7.57**	3.32
July – September 2020	7.62**	7.93**	7.67**	3.17**
October – December 2020	7.30**	7.88**	7.37**	3.43**
January – March 2021	7.06**	7.70**	7.21**	3.53**

\*A significant difference has been observed

\*\* A significant difference has been observed in between one or more categories (details in commentary)

**(ii) The proportion of respondents scoring within each of the Personal Wellbeing thresholds**  
**Labelling of Thresholds**

**Life satisfaction, Worthwhile and Happiness scores**

**Anxiety scores\***

Response on an 11 point Scale	Label	Response on an 11 point Scale	Label
0 to 4	Low	0 to 1	Very low
5 to 6	Medium	2 to 3	Low
7 to 8	High	4 to 5	Medium
9 to 10	Very high	6 to 10	High

\* A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

The proportion of people reporting ‘Very high’ (score of 9 or 10) levels of personal wellbeing, indicating better personal wellbeing was:

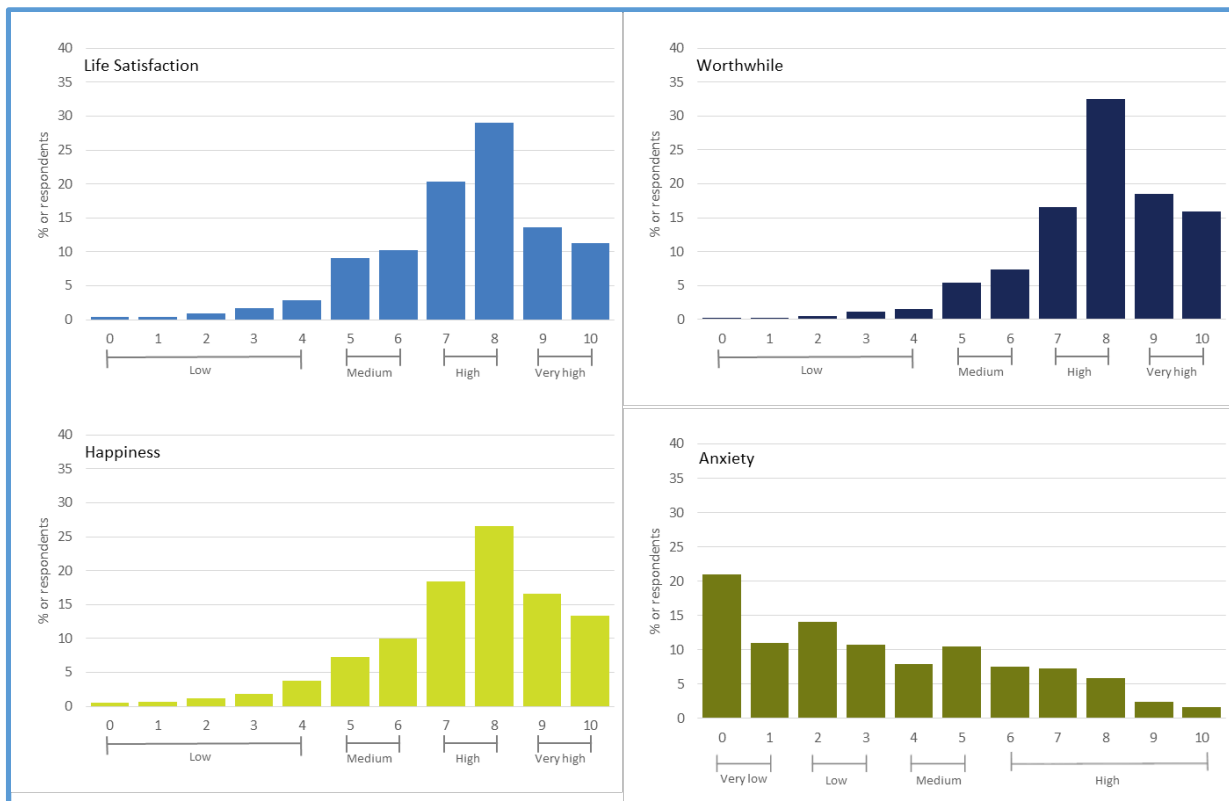
- 25% for ‘**life satisfaction**’
- 34% for feeling that what you do in life is ‘**worthwhile**’
- 30% for ‘**happiness**’.

In terms of ‘**anxiety**’, where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 32% of people reported a ‘Very low’ score (0 or 1).

Figure 32 shows the distribution of scores for each personal wellbeing measure. All four personal wellbeing measures are skewed towards the positive end of the scale (note that a lower score in the anxiety scale represents better personal wellbeing).



**Figure 32: Proportion of respondents scoring 0 to 10 on each of the personal wellbeing scales**



For the period April 2020-April 2021, the proportion of people reporting ‘Very high’ personal wellbeing for ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ were significantly lower than those reported by NISRA for the 2019/20 year, which indicates poorer wellbeing in these measures. (Table 3).

For the same time period, the proportion of people reporting ‘Very low’ personal wellbeing for ‘anxiety’ (ie. those who reported a very low score of 0 or 1) was significantly lower than the 2019/20 figure, also signifying poorer wellbeing for this measure.

**Table 3: Comparing the proportion of people reporting better personal wellbeing with the latest NISRA published data for 2019/20**

Proportion of people reporting better wellbeing scores	Very high (score of 9 or 10)			Very low Score (0 or 1)
	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety <sup>#</sup>
Phases 1 – 10 (April 2020-April 2021)	25%*	34%*	30%*	32%*
Personal Wellbeing in NI 19/20	36%*	41%*	39%*	41%*

\*A significant difference has been observed  
# A lower score indicates better wellbeing for anxiety.

## Loneliness

This measure asks people the question, ‘How often do you feel lonely?’ with the following 5 response options: ‘often/always’, ‘some of the time’, ‘occasionally’, ‘hardly ever’ and ‘never’. This question therefore measures the frequency with which people report feeling lonely, but not the level of loneliness they experience.

Some 6% of people interviewed in the period April 2020 to April 2021 reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’. This is similar to the NISRA published figure for 2019/20<sup>4</sup> (5%). However, the proportion of people reporting ‘never’ feeling lonely (26%) was significantly lower than the figure reported in the 2019/20 annual data (30%) (Table 4).

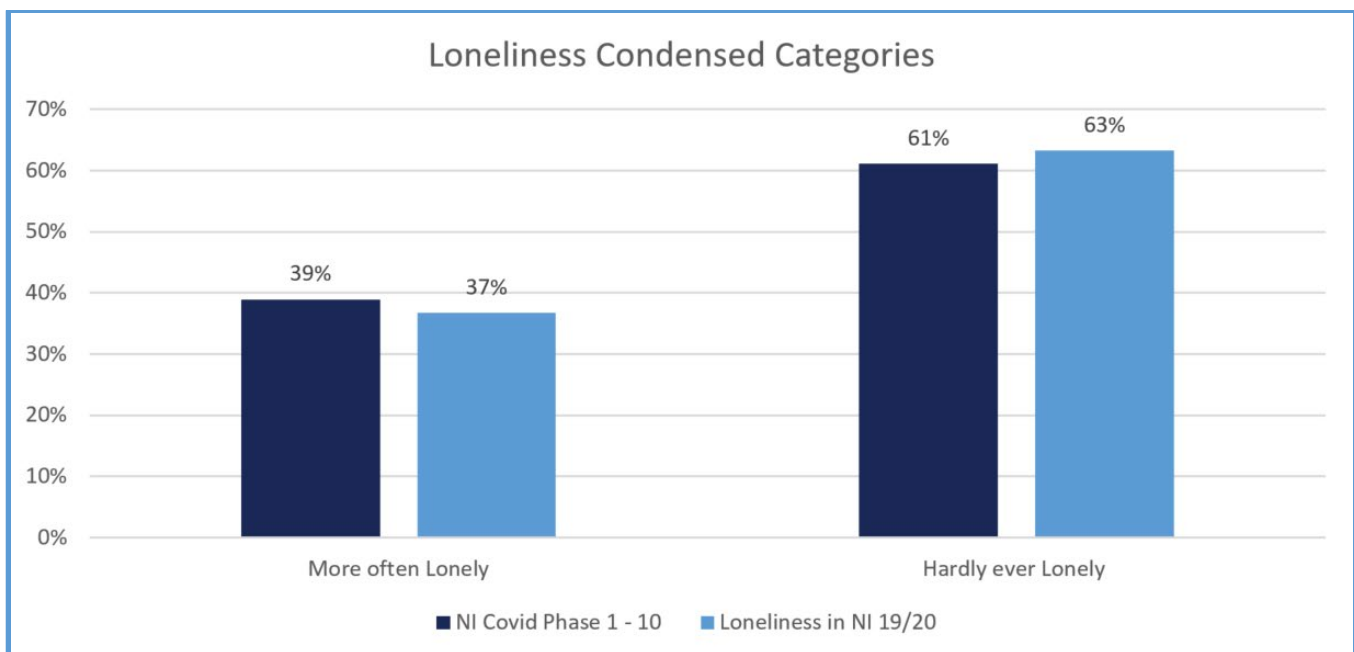
**Table 4: Frequency of loneliness in people aged 16+**

	Often/always	Some of the time	Occasionally	Hardly ever	Never
Total Phases 1 - 10	6%	15%*	18%	35%	26%*
Loneliness in NI 2019/20	5%	12%*	19%	33%	30%*

\*A significant difference has been observed

Some 39% of people reported feeling ‘more often lonely’ (condensed category<sup>5</sup>). This figure is not significantly different to the 2019/20 figure published by NISRA (37%) (Figure 33).

**Figure 33: Frequency of loneliness (Condensed Categories)**



<sup>4</sup> NISRA report on Loneliness in Northern Ireland 2019/20 - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/loneliness-northern-ireland-201920>

<sup>5</sup> For condensed categories responses ‘often/always’, ‘some of the time’ and ‘occasionally’ were grouped into a single category called ‘more often lonely’ and responses ‘hardly ever’ and ‘never’ were grouped into the category ‘hardly ever lonely’.

### Comparing the frequency of loneliness during the Pandemic

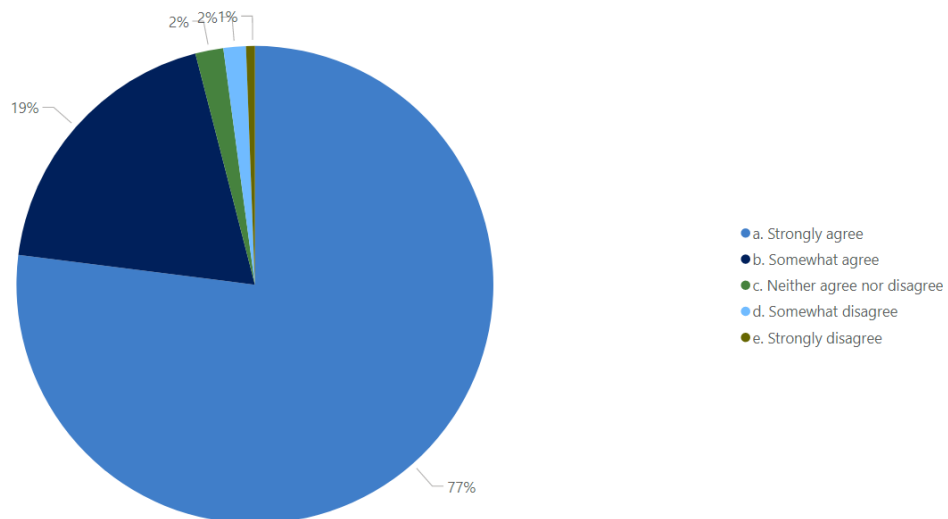
Some 42% of respondents felt ‘more often lonely’ in the period January-March 2021 when restrictions were reintroduced, significantly higher than in the period July-September 2020 (35%), when initial restrictions were easing.

**Table 5: Comparing frequency of loneliness in people aged 16+ during the Pandemic**

Percentage of respondents feeling ‘More Often Lonely’ or ‘Hardly ever Lonely’ by month of interview	More often Lonely	Hardly ever Lonely
April – June 2020	40%	60%
July – September 2020	35%*	65%*
October - December 2020	38%	62%
January - March 2021	42%*	58%*

Despite these feelings of loneliness, almost all people (96%) agreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them (Figure 34).

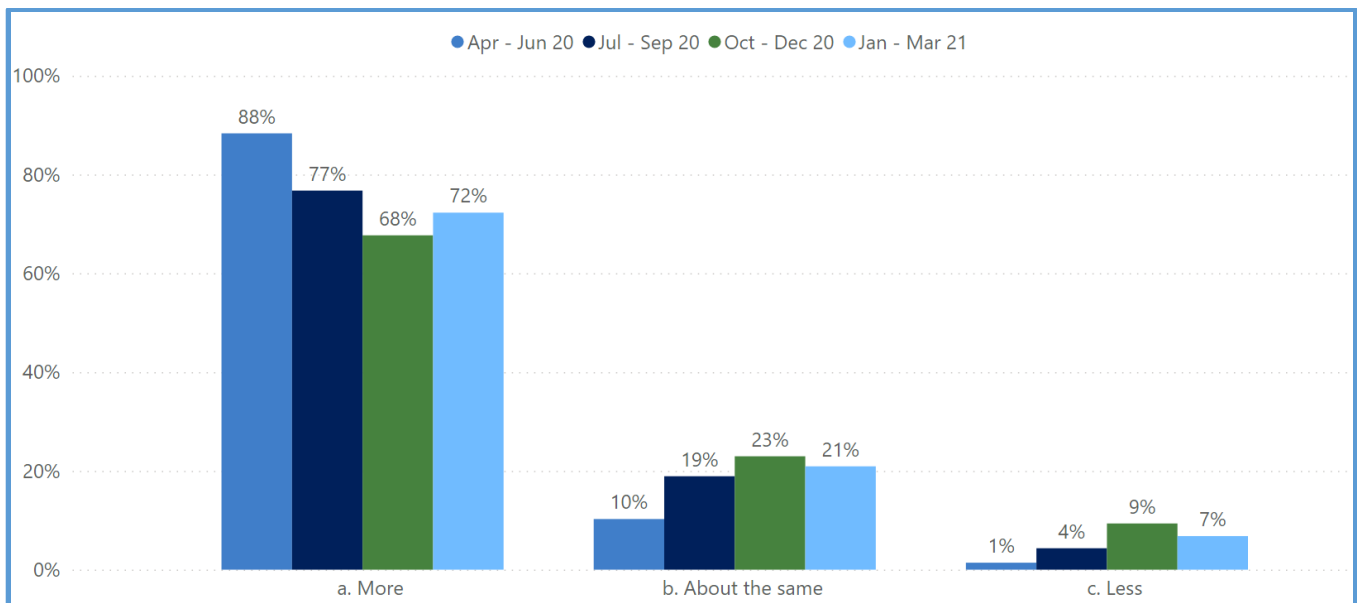
**Figure 34: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them**



## Community Support

The proportion of people who said that people were doing more to help others during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak decreased significantly over the pandemic period from 88% in the period April - June 2020 to 68% during October - December 2020, before increasing to 72% in the months of January - March 2021 (Figure 35).

**Figure 35<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who think people are doing things to help others more, about the same or less since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 are too low to report on separately in these results.

## [Further Information](#)

NISRA would like to thank the survey interviewers and members of public who collected and provided the data for this report.

## [Results and Tables](#)

Each chart in the report is also supported by an excel spreadsheet which provides confidence intervals for each estimate. Additional tables for other variables asked in Phases 1-8 have also been published in this release, where validated data is of a sufficient quality to release. A visual representation of these findings can also be found at the following webpage:

[NISRA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Opinion Survey Visualizations](#)

## [Technical Report](#)

The technical report includes further details on the sampling method, data collection mode, respondent selection, fieldwork, weighting, sampling error, confidence intervals, significant differences and strengths and limitations of the survey:

[NISRA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Opinion Survey Technical Report](#)

## [Previous Publications](#)

Previous publications of the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey Key Findings are available at: [NISRA Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Opinion Survey Previous Results | Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency](#)

## [Related Links to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Statistics](#)

The latest data and analysis on Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Northern Ireland and its effects on the economy and society can be found at the following link:

[NI summary statistics - Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) statistics](#)

## [Further Research](#)

NISRA is currently working with research partners on the Northern Ireland Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. The household study will help provide a better understanding of the Coronavirus and help the government work out how to manage the pandemic better moving forward. The latest findings for Northern Ireland from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey can be found at:

[NI Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey](#)

Further results from the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when fieldwork periods close.

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