

# NISRA CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OPINION SURVEY

## KEY FINDINGS FROM PHASES 1 TO 4

### 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.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsongreatbritain/previousReleases>

This report provides a summary of the key findings following the completion of Phase 4 of the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion survey. Survey data from Phases 1 and 2 have been merged with survey data from Phases 3 and 4 to produce the information used in this report. Users should note that this analysis relates to addresses which were sampled in the first sixteen weeks of the survey. The results are based on 3,405 interviews carried out with members of the public in the period 21 April to 17 September 2020.

Additional findings are now included in this report on home schooling, household finances, social distancing, community safety, ways in which life has changed for the better and the use of face coverings. Further analysis is also provided by month of interview to show changes over time, where significant differences were found.

NISRA is currently planning to carry out seven phases of the survey. Further results from the survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when Phases 5-7 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) Diagnosis and Symptoms

People were asked if they had been officially diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) or had experienced symptoms in the previous seven days. Please note that these figures were collected after 20 April 2020 and are self-reported findings which cannot be verified and, therefore, should not be regarded as official rates of infection or symptom rates for NI.

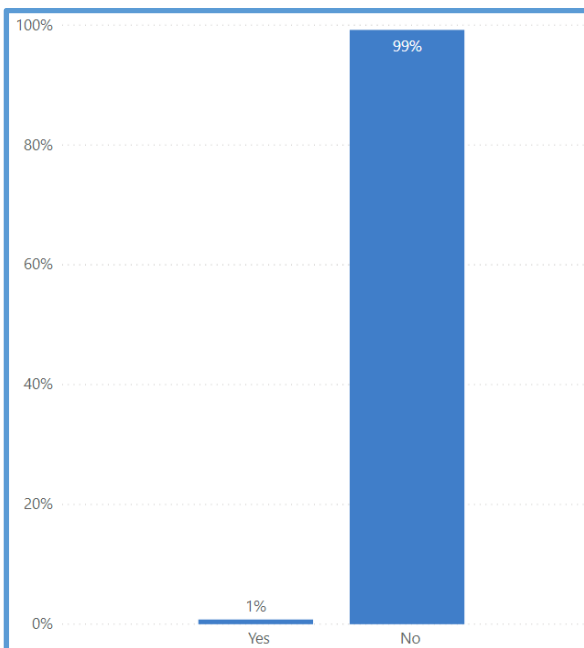
A very small proportion of people (0.1%) reported that, in the seven days prior to interview, they had been officially diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) by a medical professional.

The survey asked questions about whether people, or anyone else in their household, had experienced Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in the seven days prior to interview. Symptoms included a high temperature or continuous new cough, or both.

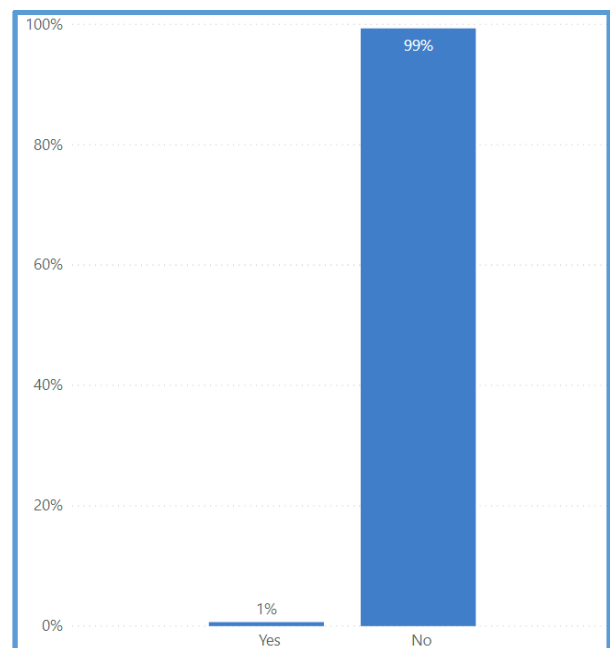
A further 1% of people had experienced symptoms themselves in the previous seven days (Figure 1).

A similar proportion of people (1%) indicated that someone else in their household had experienced symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the seven days prior to interview (Figure 2).

**Figure 1: Proportion of people self-reported as having had Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in the seven days prior to interview**



**Figure 2: Proportion of people self-reported as having someone else in their household with Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in the seven days prior to interview**



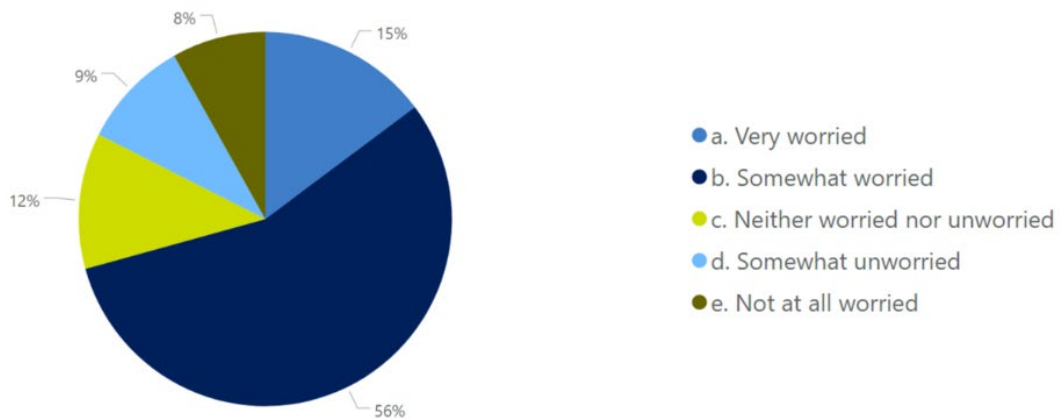
<sup>1</sup> Only asked of those not diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional in the seven days prior to interview.

Concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The survey found high levels of worry among people regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19), however, these levels of worry appear to be decreasing over time.

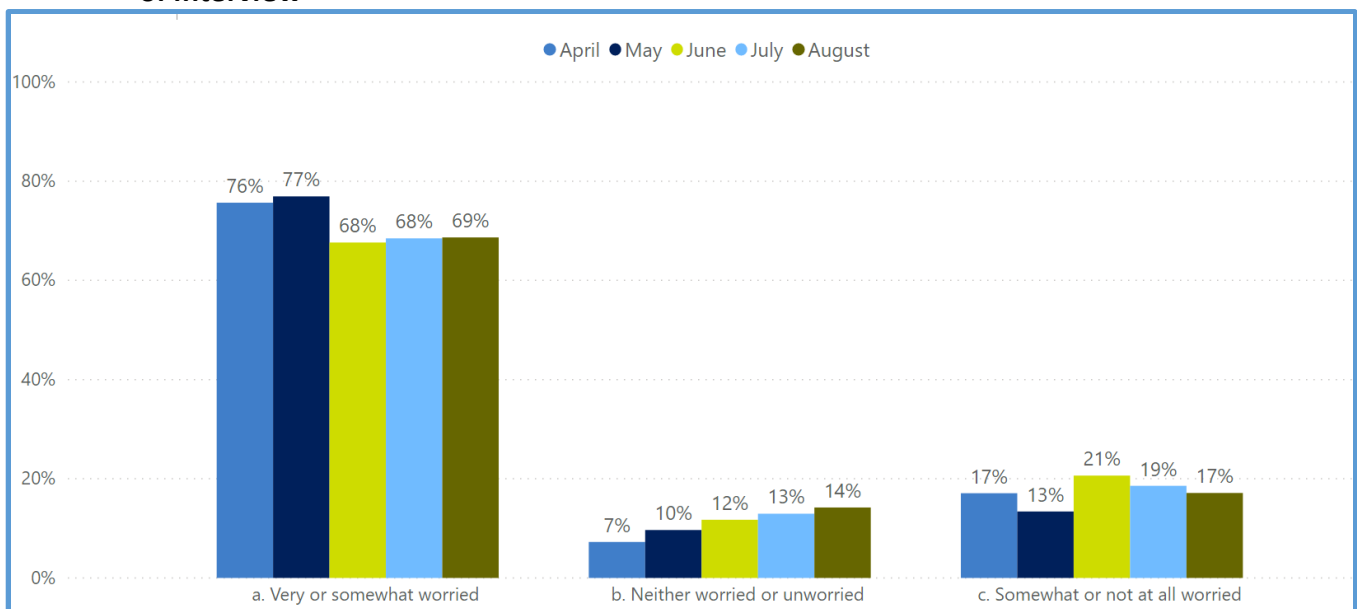
Overall, just over seven out of ten people (71%) said that they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Levels of worry about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life**



In April and May, more than three quarters of people interviewed (76% and 77% respectively) said that they were worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives. This was significantly higher than the period from June onwards, when this proportion decreased and was in the range 68%-69%. (Figure 4).

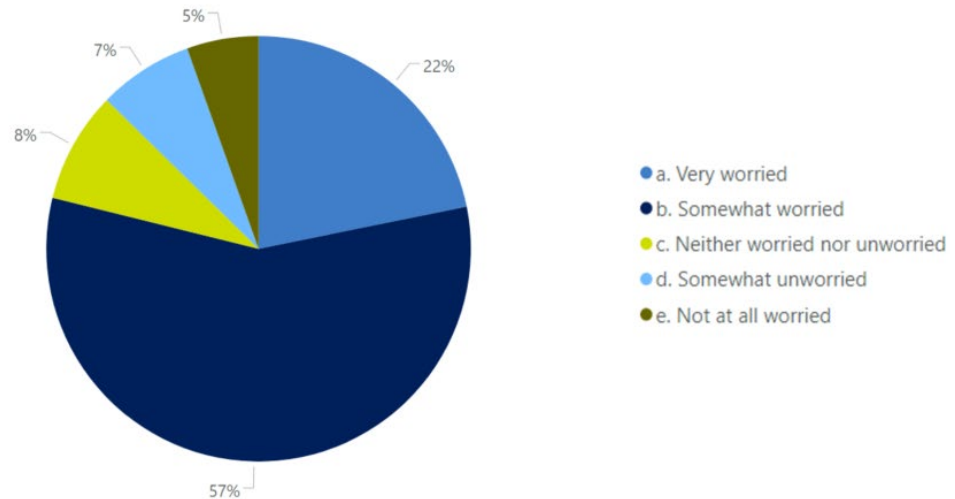
**Figure 4<sup>1</sup>: Levels of worry about the effect Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 are too low to report on separately in these results

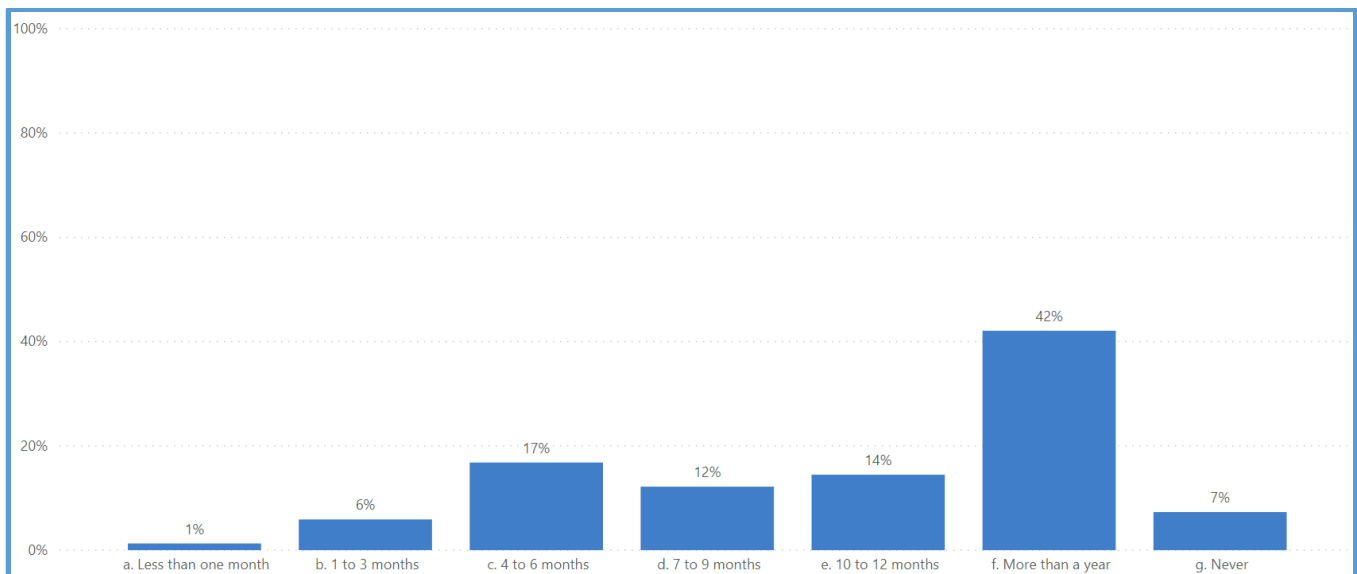
Most people (79%) also said that they were worried about how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting their family and friends (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: Levels of worry about how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting their friends and family**



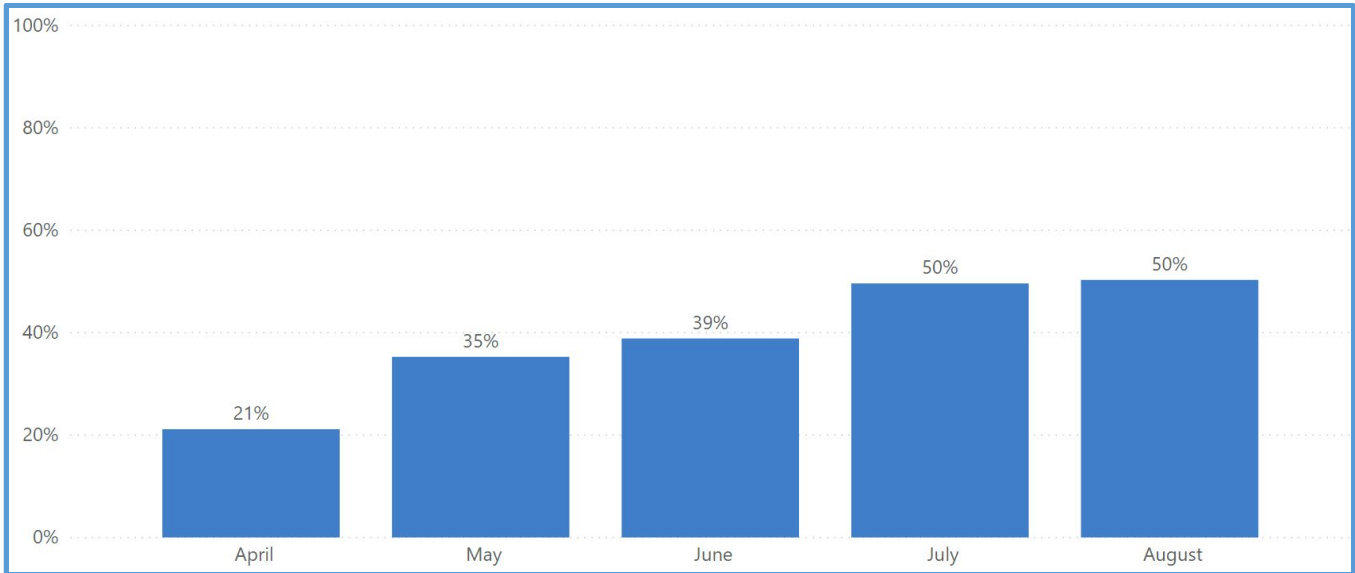
Just over two fifths of people (42%) thought it would be more than a year before life returns to normal. A further 7% said that life would never return to normal (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Proportion of people who thought life would return to normal, by length of time**



As we move through the pandemic period, more people are stating that it will take longer before life returns to normal. Half of people (50%) interviewed from July onwards, said it would be more than a year before life returns to normal. In contrast, of those people interviewed in April and May, only (21% and 35% respectively) thought that would be the case (Figure 7).

**Figure 7: Proportion of people who stated it would be more than a year before life would return to normal, by month of interview**



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.

The most common way that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their lives was on their ability to make plans, with 56% saying this was being affected.

Of all the worries reported to the previous question, these people were asked to select their single biggest concern. The top ranking concern was that their wellbeing was being affected (15%).

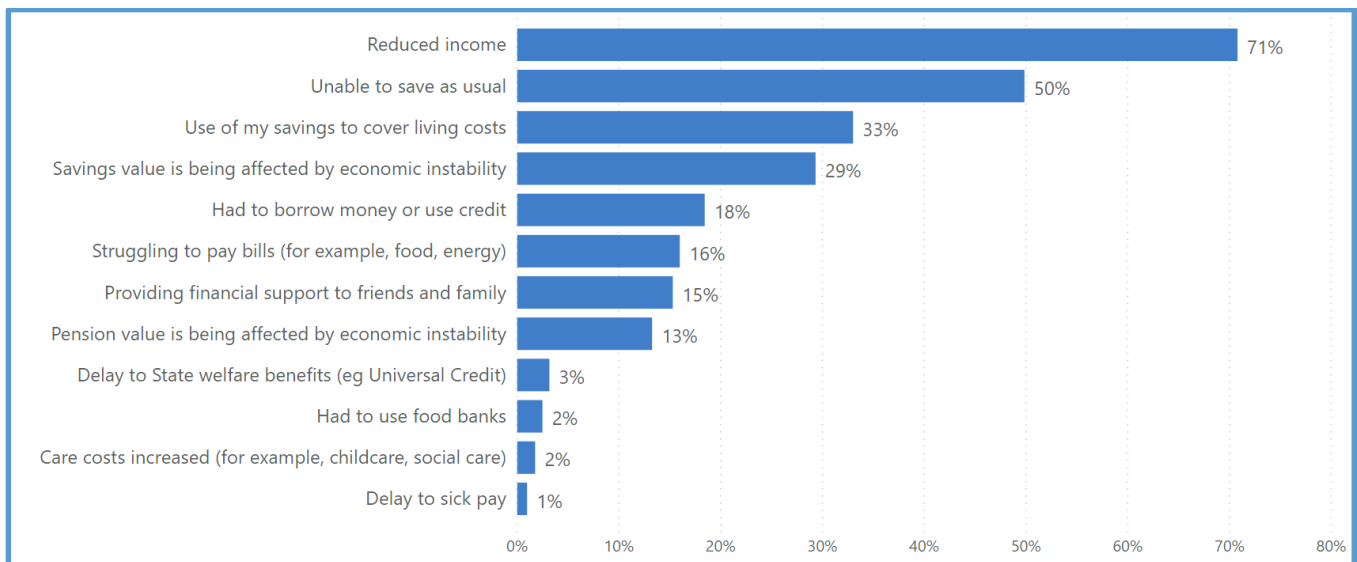
**Worries about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Household Finances**

Over a quarter of people (27%) stated that they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their household finances.

These people were asked an additional question about how their household finances had been affected in the seven days prior to interview.

The most common ways their household finances had been affected was reduced income (71%), unable to save as usual (50%) or use of savings to cover living costs (33%) (Figure 8).

**Figure 8<sup>1</sup>: Ways in which the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting household finances in the seven days prior to interview**



<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 and that their household finances were being affected.

## Home Schooling

The survey asked those with dependent children whether or not a child in their home had been home schooled due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. It was not possible to distinguish whether or not all dependent children were of school age.

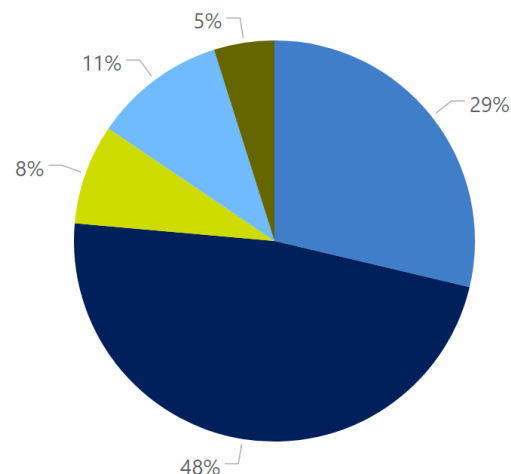
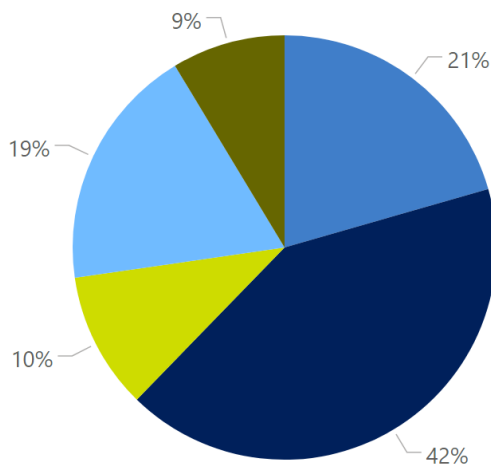
However, for those respondents who reported that a child in their home had been home schooled, questions were asked about whether or not people agreed or disagreed about perceptions on home schooling.

Just over six in ten of these people (62%) agreed that they were confident in their abilities to home-school their children but just over a quarter (27%) strongly or somewhat disagreed (Figure 9).

Most of these people (76%) strongly or somewhat agreed that the child/children within their household were continuing to learn whilst being home-schooled, whilst fewer than one in five (16%) somewhat or strongly disagreed (Figure 10).

**Figure 9: Proportion of people home schooling who were confident in their abilities to home school the child/children in their household**

**Figure 10: Proportion of people home schooling who thought that the child/children within their household were continuing to learn whilst being home-schooled**



- a. Strongly agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Somewhat disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

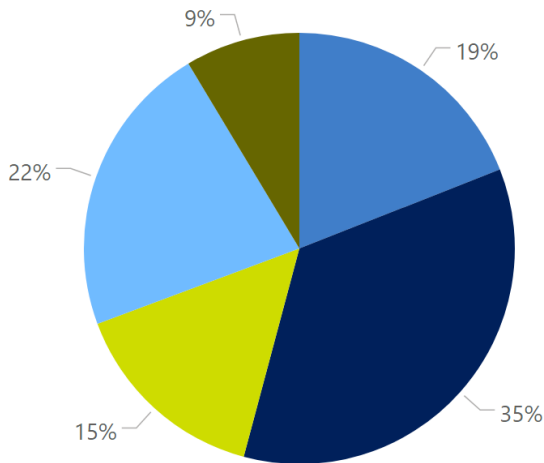
Prior to July the question specifically asked about home schooling in the seven days prior to interview. As other household members may have undertaken the home schooling, it was not possible to provide an accurate proportion of those people who had home schooled their child/children.

Over half of those who had home-schooled their children (54%) agreed home schooling was negatively affecting the well-being of the child/children in their household, but almost a third (31%) strongly or somewhat disagreed (Figure 11).

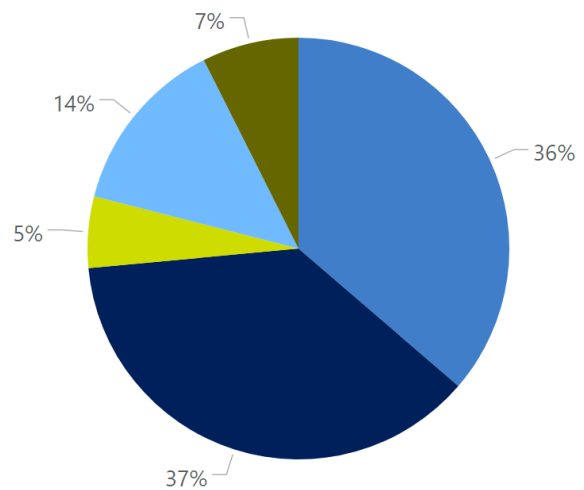


Almost three quarters (74%) strongly or somewhat agreed that they had access to the resources they needed to help them home school their child/children well, whilst just over one in five (21%) somewhat or strongly disagreed (Figure 12).

**Figure 11: Proportion of people home schooling whose wellbeing of the child/children in their household was negatively affected**



**Figure 12: Proportion of people home schooling who has access to the resources they needed to help home school well**



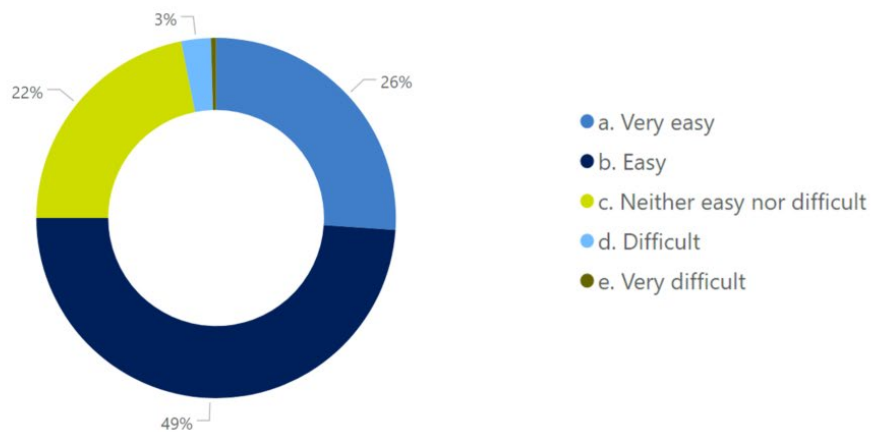
- a. Strongly agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Somewhat disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Financial Concerns

Almost three out of ten people (29%) expected the financial position of their household to get worse in the next 12 months. Slightly more than half (58%) expected their household financial situation to stay the same whilst 13% expected it to get better.

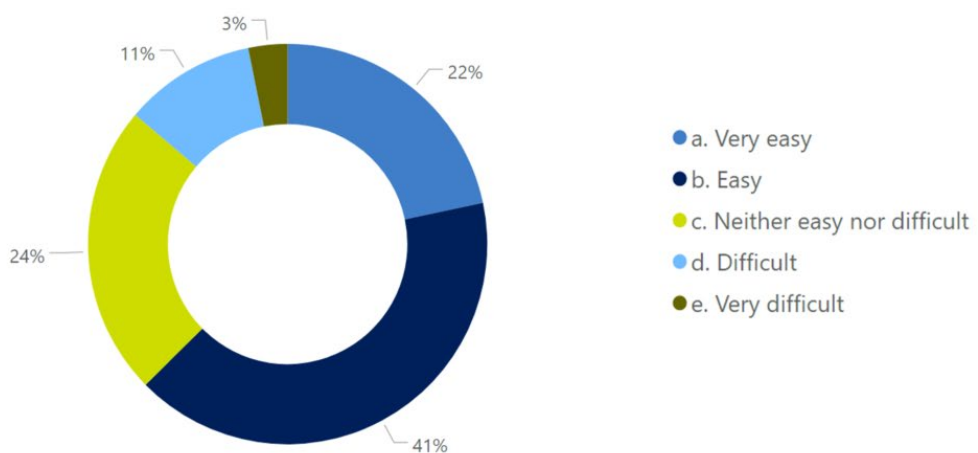
Before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, three quarters of people (75%) thought it was easy to pay their usual household bills. Just over one in five people (22%) reported it was neither easy nor difficult, whilst 3% thought it was difficult (Figure 13).

**Figure 13: Proportion of people who thought it was easy, neither easy nor difficult, or difficult to pay their usual household bills before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



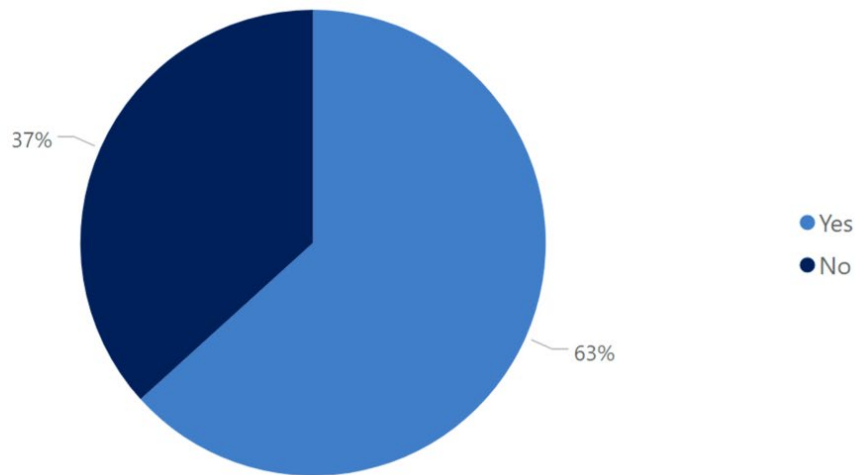
However, since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, perceptions around paying usual household bills have changed, with fewer people (63%) reporting it was easy to pay their usual household bills and more people (14%) stating it was difficult to do so (Figure 14).

**Figure 14: Proportion of people who thought it was easy, neither easy nor difficult, or difficult to pay their usual household bills since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



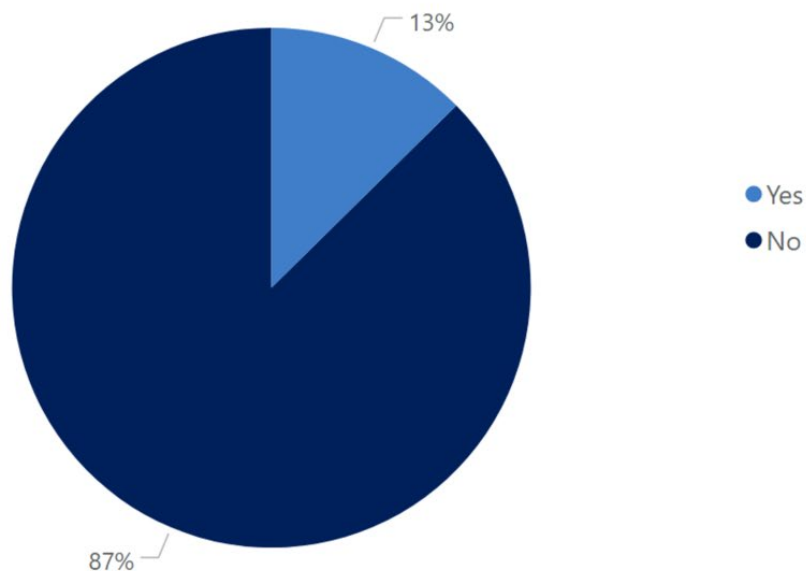
Almost two thirds of people (63%) thought they would be able to save any money in the next twelve months, whilst over a third of people (37%) thought they could not (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Proportion of people who thought they could save any money in the next twelve months, in view of the general economic situation**



Over one in ten people (13%) interviewed from July onwards, said they had borrowed more money or used more credit cards than usual since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, whilst the majority of people (87%) did not (Figure 16).

**Figure 16: Proportion of people who had to borrow more money or use more credit than usual since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



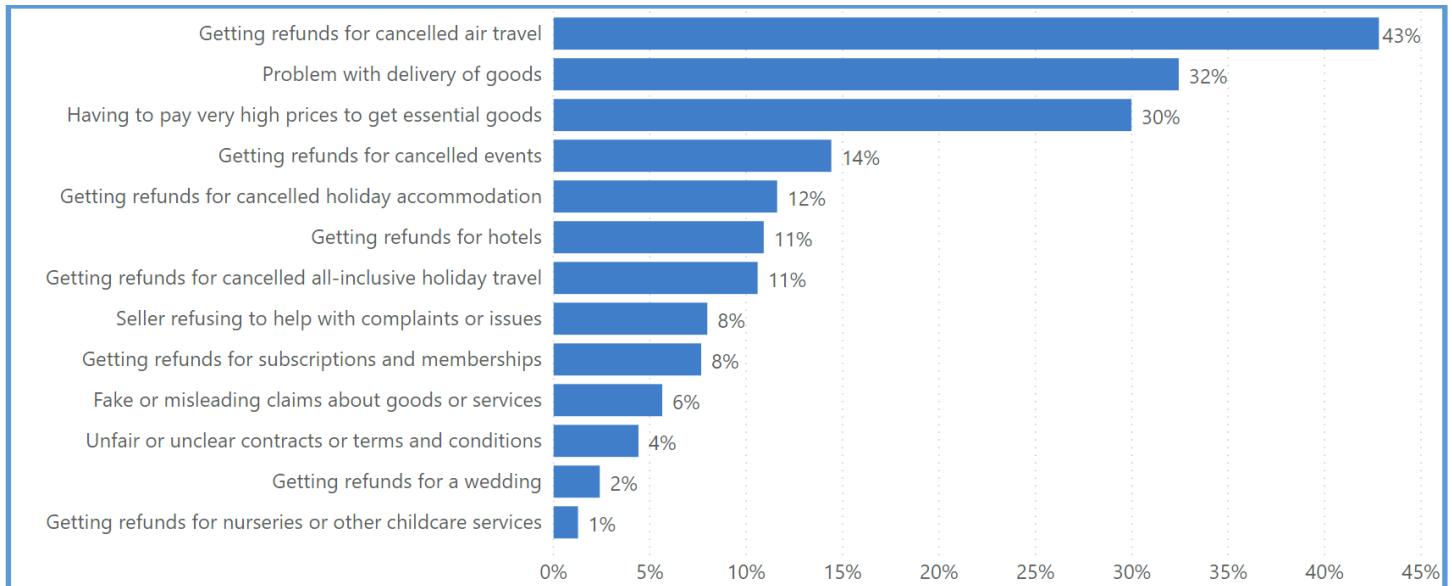
Consumer Support

Between 20 May and 21 August 2020, the survey asked a multiple response question to establish what problems, if any, people had experienced with companies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Some companies were supporting their consumers in many ways, such as offering refunds for cancelled events or trips.

Over half of people (55%) reported that they had not experienced any problems with companies since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. However, due to limitations around the question, it is not possible to differentiate between those people who had not experienced a problem because they did not have any contact with a company and those who had contact with a company but did not experience any problems with them.

Of those people who had experienced a problem with a company, 43% said they had difficulty with getting refunds for cancelled air travel. Just under one-third of people (32%) reported problems with delivery of goods or having to pay very high prices to get essential goods (30%) (Figure 17).

**Figure 17<sup>1</sup>: Problems experienced with companies since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed.

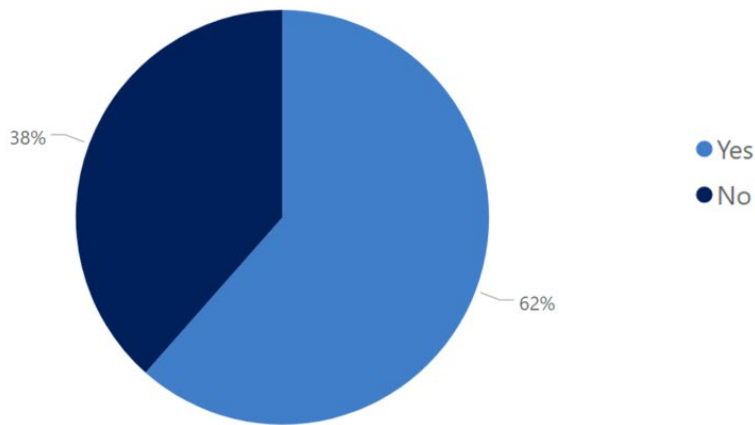
Social Distancing

People interviewed from 17 June 2020 onwards were asked some questions about visiting public spaces and meeting family and friends outside of their household.

Just under half of people (47%) said they had visited a park or public green space. Most of these people (77%) said they met with friends or family members who lived outside their household in these public places.

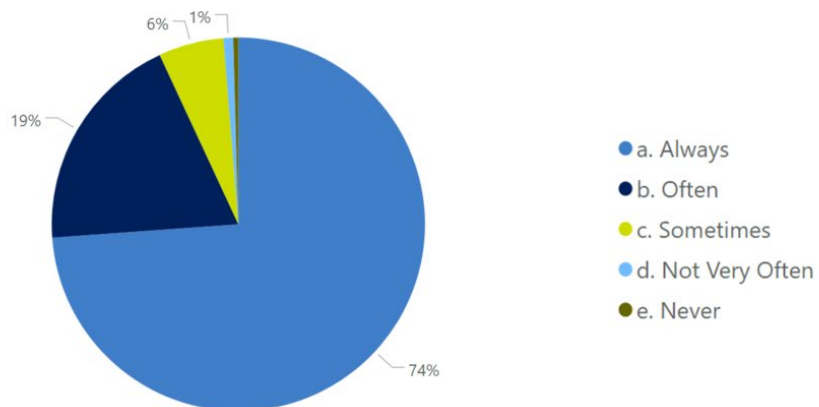
Overall, more than three fifths of people (62%) reported meeting with friends or family members who lived outside their household, somewhere else apart from in a park or public green space (Figure 18).

**Figure 18: Proportion of people who met with friends or family members who live outside their household, anywhere else apart from in a park or a public green space**



The vast majority of people (93%) reported, staying always or often, at least two metres away from other people when outside their home (Figure 19).

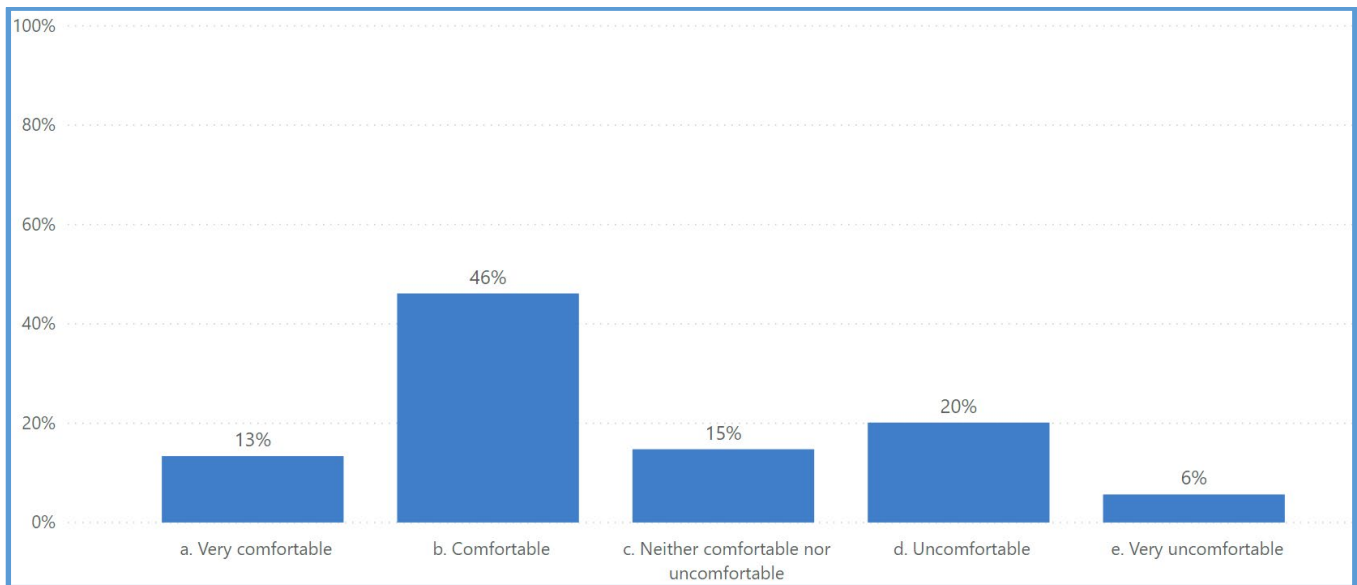
**Figure 19: Proportion of people who reported staying at least two metres away from other people when outside their home**



People interviewed from 14 July 2020 on were asked questions about having someone in their home to do emergency and non-emergency work.

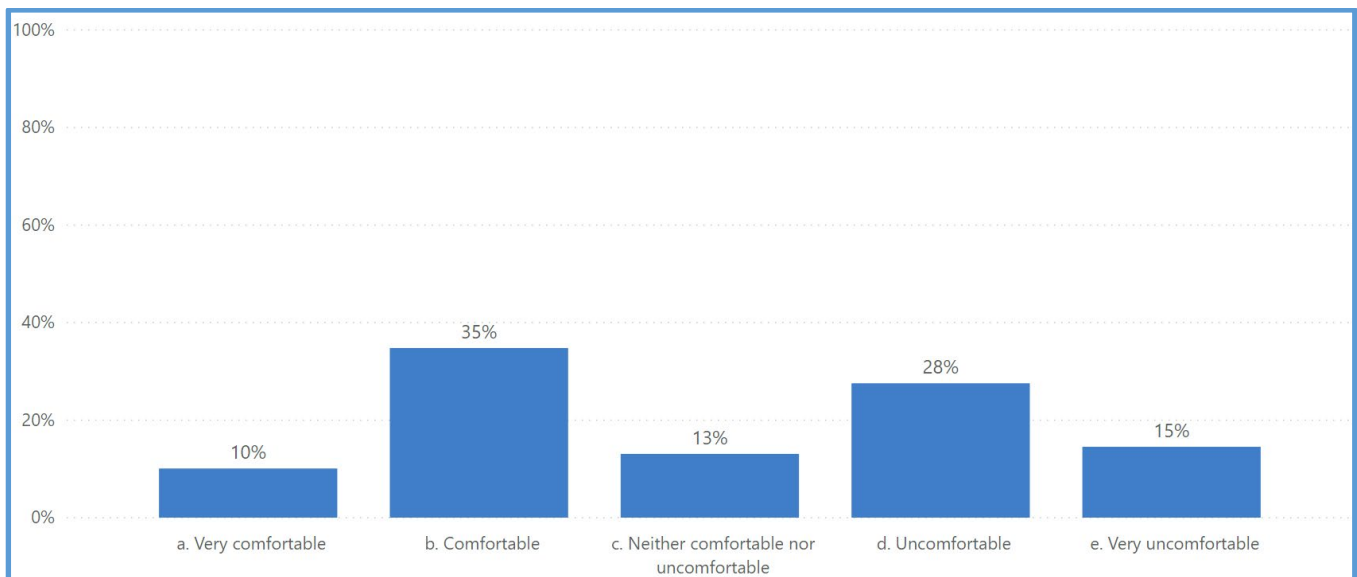
Approximately, six out of ten people (59%) said that they were comfortable having someone in their home to do emergency repairs, such as fixing the boiler or electrics, whilst just over a quarter (26%) were not (Figure 20).

**Figure 20: Proportion of people who reported feeling comfortable or uncomfortable about having someone in their home to do emergency repairs**



Almost half of people (45%) said that they were comfortable having someone in their home to do non-emergency work, whilst just over two-fifths (42%) were not (Figure 21).

**Figure 21: Proportion of people who reported feeling comfortable or uncomfortable about having someone in their home to do non-emergency work**



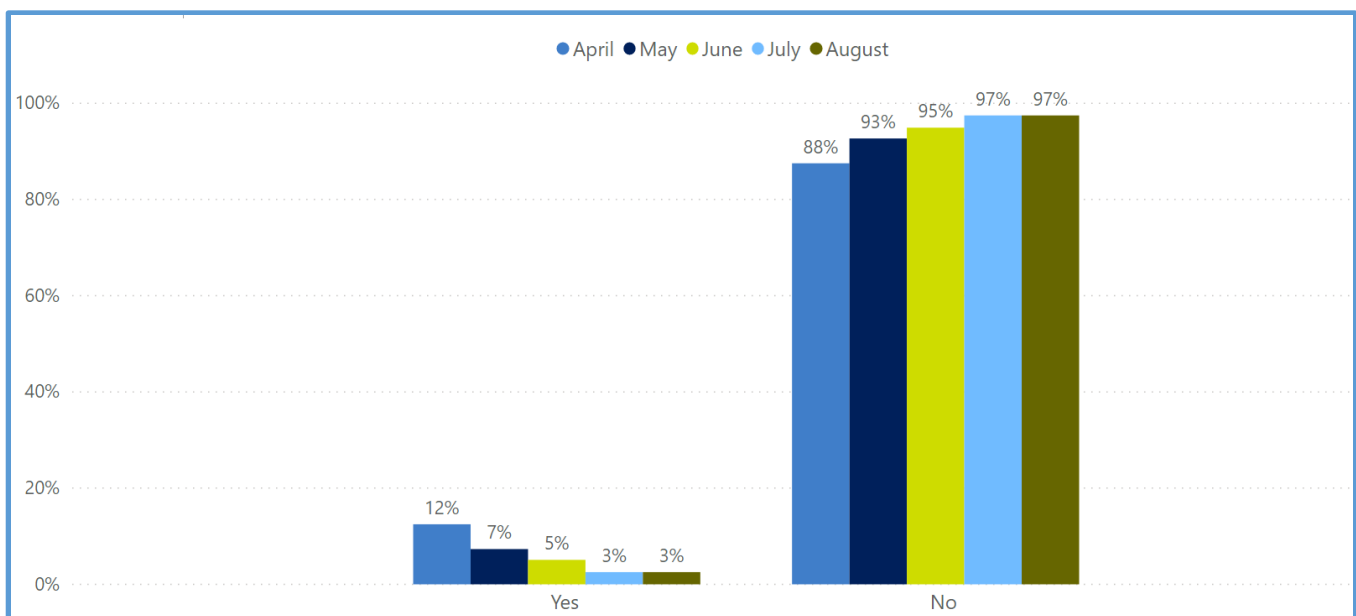
## Self-Isolation

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).

Overall 5% of people interviewed had self-isolated at home, in the seven days prior to interview, because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

As might be expected, the proportion of those self-isolating at home in the seven days prior to interview, was highest in the peak of the pandemic in April (12%) and decreased over time to 3% in August (Figure 22).

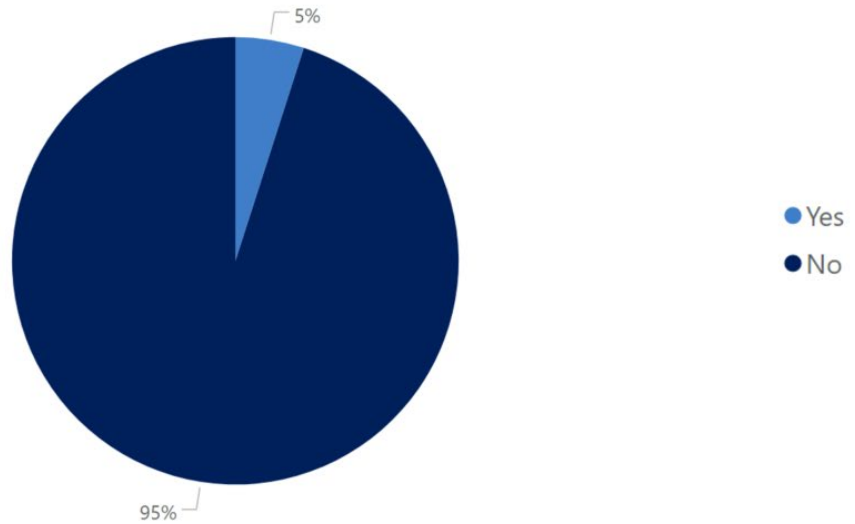
**Figure 22<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who had self-isolated at home in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 are too low to report on separately in these results

Overall some 5% of people reported that another member of their household had self-isolated at home because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the seven days prior to interview (Figure 23).

**Figure 23<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people with someone else in their household in the seven days prior to interview who had self-isolated because of Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



<sup>1</sup>Excludes single person households

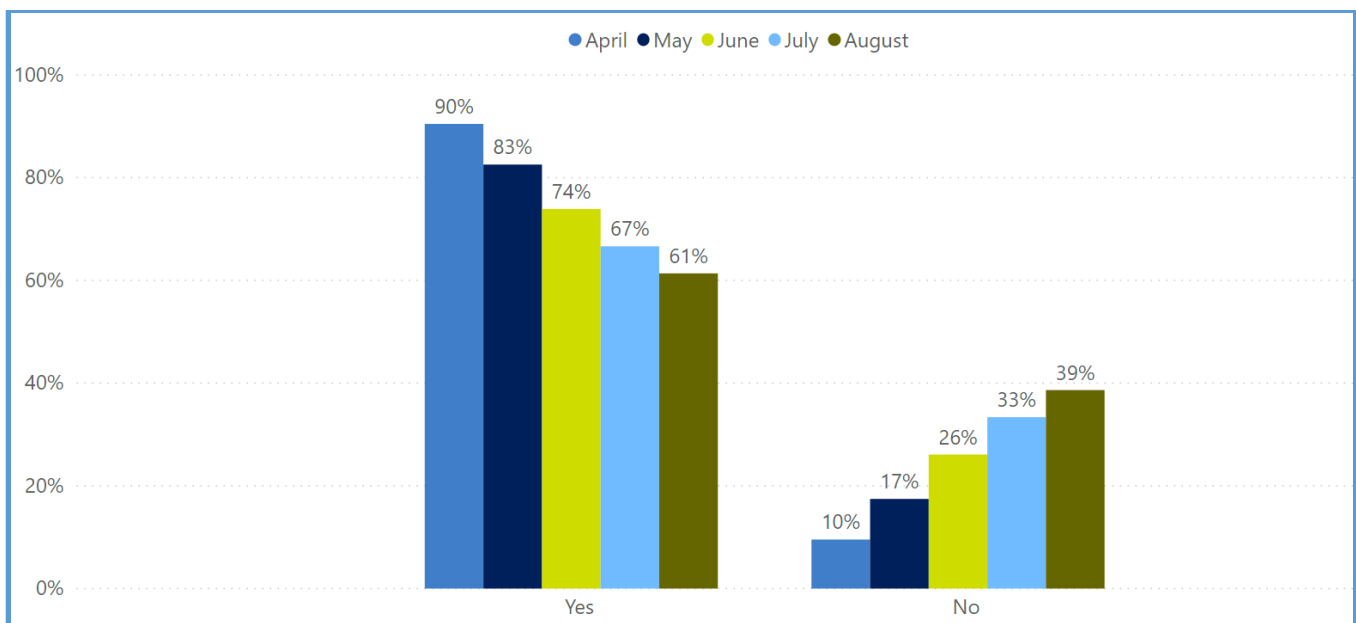


Protecting Older and Vulnerable People

The majority of people (73%) said they had avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The results show that this proportion decreased over time. Nine out of ten people (90%) interviewed in April 2020 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. This proportion decreased to 61% in August 2020 (Figure 24).

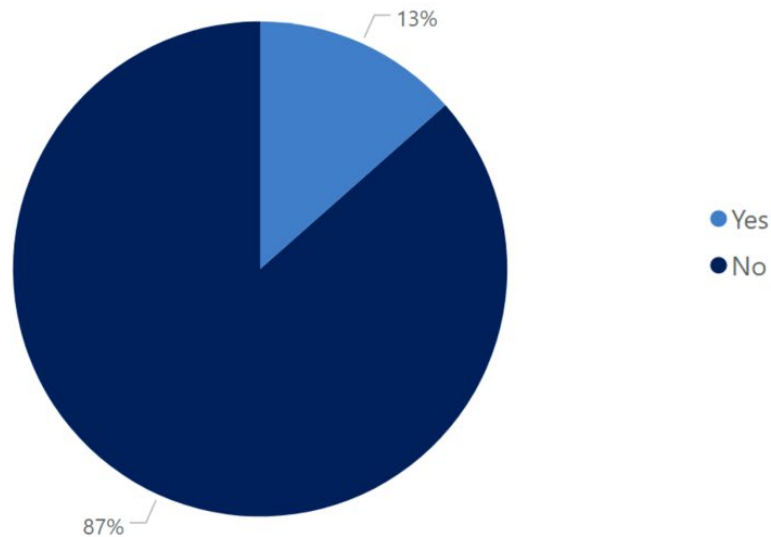
**Figure 24<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview**



<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 are too low to report on separately in these results

Of those people who had reported they had avoided contact with older or vulnerable people in the seven days prior to interview because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, over one in ten (13%) said that they had care responsibilities for the people they had avoided contact with (Figure 25).

**Figure 25: 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, with or without caring responsibilities for those people**



## 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:

- 7.63 out of 10 for ‘**life satisfaction**’
- 7.91 out of 10 for **feeling that what you do in life is ‘worthwhile’**
- 7.63 out of 10 for ‘**happiness**’ yesterday
- 3.20 out of 10 for ‘**anxiety**’ yesterday

The average (mean) wellbeing rating of people interviewed in the period April-September 2020 for ‘life satisfaction’ was significantly lower than that reported by NISRA for the 2018/19<sup>1</sup> year (Table 1).

Anxiety levels in the same period were also significantly higher than that reported by NISRA for 2018/19 (Table 1).

There were no significant differences observed in the wellbeing ratings of people feeling what they do in life is ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ when compared with that reported by NISRA for the 2018/19 year (Table 1).

**Table 1: Comparing Personal Wellbeing averages with the latest NISRA published data (2018/19)**

Average (mean)	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
Phases 1 – 4 (April-September 2020)	<b>7.63*</b>	<b>7.91</b>	<b>7.63</b>	<b>3.20*</b>
Personal Wellbeing in NI 18/19	7.89*	8.07	7.69	2.83*

\*A significant difference has been observed

However, as we move through the pandemic period, ‘Life Satisfaction’ ratings appear to be increasing and ‘anxiety’ levels are decreasing.

<sup>1</sup>NISRA report on Personal Wellbeing in Northern Ireland 2018/19- <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/personal-wellbeing-northern-ireland-201819>

The average (mean) ‘life satisfaction’ rating of people interviewed when restrictions had eased in August 2020 (7.79) was significantly higher than that reported during the lockdown period in May 2020 (7.42) (Table 2).

In contrast, the average (mean) ‘anxiety’ rating was significantly higher during the lockdown period in May 2020 (3.51) than when restrictions had eased in August 2020 (3.01) (Table 2).

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

Average (mean) rating by month of interview	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
April 2020	7.66	7.81	7.46	3.25
May 2020	7.42*	7.85	7.48	3.51*
June 2020	7.67	7.93	7.67	3.18
July 2020	7.69	7.89	7.68	3.02
August 2020	7.79*	8.04	7.77	3.01*

\*A significant difference has been observed

Feelings of ‘life satisfaction’, what you do in life is ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ were significantly higher for people aged 65+ when compared to other age groups, however, there were no significant differences observed between people aged 16-44 and 45-64 for these measures. Similarly, feelings of ‘anxiety’ for people aged 65+ were significantly lower than those aged 16-44 and 45-64 (Table 3).

Females reported a significantly higher ‘anxiety’ score on average than males, which is indicative of poorer wellbeing in this measure (Table 3).

People with a limiting longstanding illness reported significantly lower wellbeing averages for ‘life satisfaction’, ‘worthwhile’ and ‘happiness’ than those without. The average ‘anxiety’ score is higher for those with a limiting longstanding illness than those without (Table 3).

**Table 3: Variation in average personal wellbeing ratings by Gender, Age and Limiting Longstanding Illness**

Average (mean)	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	7.67	7.85	7.67	2.97*
Female	7.60	7.97	7.59	3.42*
<b>Age-group</b>				
16 – 44	7.52**	7.83**	7.56**	3.24**
45 – 64	7.53**	7.84**	7.54**	3.28**
65 & over	8.04**	8.19**	7.91**	2.99**
<b>Limiting Longstanding Illness</b>				
Yes	6.97*	7.34*	6.95*	4.20*
No	7.84*	8.10*	7.85*	2.88*
<b>Overall</b>				
Overall Phases 1 – 4 (April-September 2020)	<b>7.63</b>	<b>7.91</b>	<b>7.63</b>	<b>3.20</b>

\*A significant difference has been observed

\*\* A significant difference has been observed in between one or more age 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.

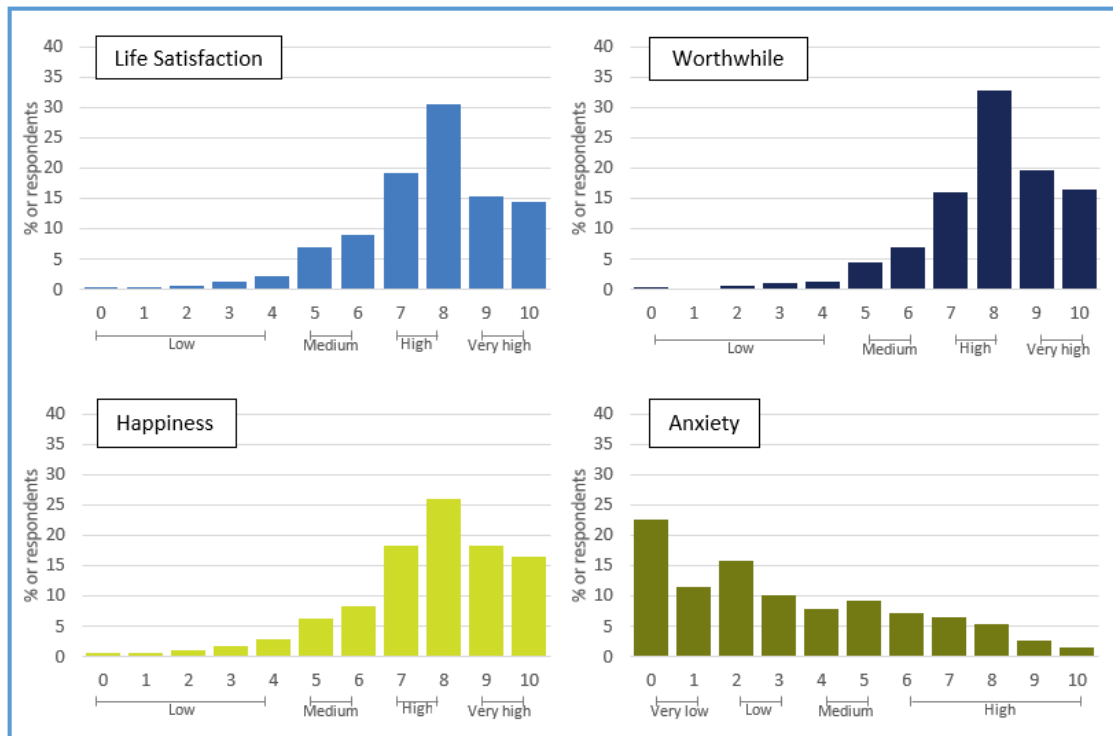
The proportion of people reporting 'Very high' (score of 9 or 10) levels of personal wellbeing, indicating better personal wellbeing was:

- 30% for 'life satisfaction'
- 37% for feeling that what you do in life is 'worthwhile'
- 33% for 'happiness'.
- 

In terms of 'anxiety', where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 35% of people reported a 'Very low' score (0 or 1).

Figure 26 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 26: Proportion of respondents scoring 0 to 10 on each of the personal wellbeing scales**



For the period April-September 2020, the proportion of people reporting better personal wellbeing for 'life satisfaction', 'worthwhile' and 'anxiety' were significantly lower than those reported by NISRA for the 2018/19 year (Table 4).

**Table 4: Comparing the proportion of people reporting better personal wellbeing with the latest NISRA published data for 2018/19**

	Very high (score of 9 or 10)		Very low Score (0 or 1)	
Proportion of people reporting better wellbeing scores	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety <sup>#</sup>
Phases 1 – 4 (April-September 2020)	30%*	36%*	35%	34%*
Personal Wellbeing in NI 18/19	37%*	42%*	38%	41%*

\*A significant difference has been observed

## 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 5% of people interviewed in the period April to September 2020 reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’. This is the same as the NISRA published figure for 2018/19<sup>2</sup> (5%). However, the proportion of people reporting they feel lonely ‘some of the time’ (14%) was significantly higher than the figure reported in the 18/19 annual data (12%). Similarly, a quarter of people (26%) reported feeling lonely ‘never’, significantly lower than 33% in 2018/19. More than one third of people (36%) reported feeling ‘Hardly ever’ lonely, significantly higher than 32% in 2018/19. (Table 5).

**Table 5: Frequency of loneliness in people aged 16+**

	Often/always	Some of the time	Occasionally	Hardly ever	Never
Total Phases 1 - 4	5%	14%*	18%	36%*	26%*
Loneliness in NI 2018/19	5%	12%*	18%	32%*	33%*

\*A significant difference has been observed

Some 38% of people reported feeling ‘more often lonely’ (condensed category<sup>3</sup>). This figure is not significantly different than the 18/19 figure published by NISRA (35%) (Figure 27).

### Comparing the frequency of loneliness during the Pandemic

The proportion of people who felt ‘more often lonely during the lockdown period in May 2020 (42%) was significantly higher than when restrictions had eased in August 2020 (34%) (Table 6).

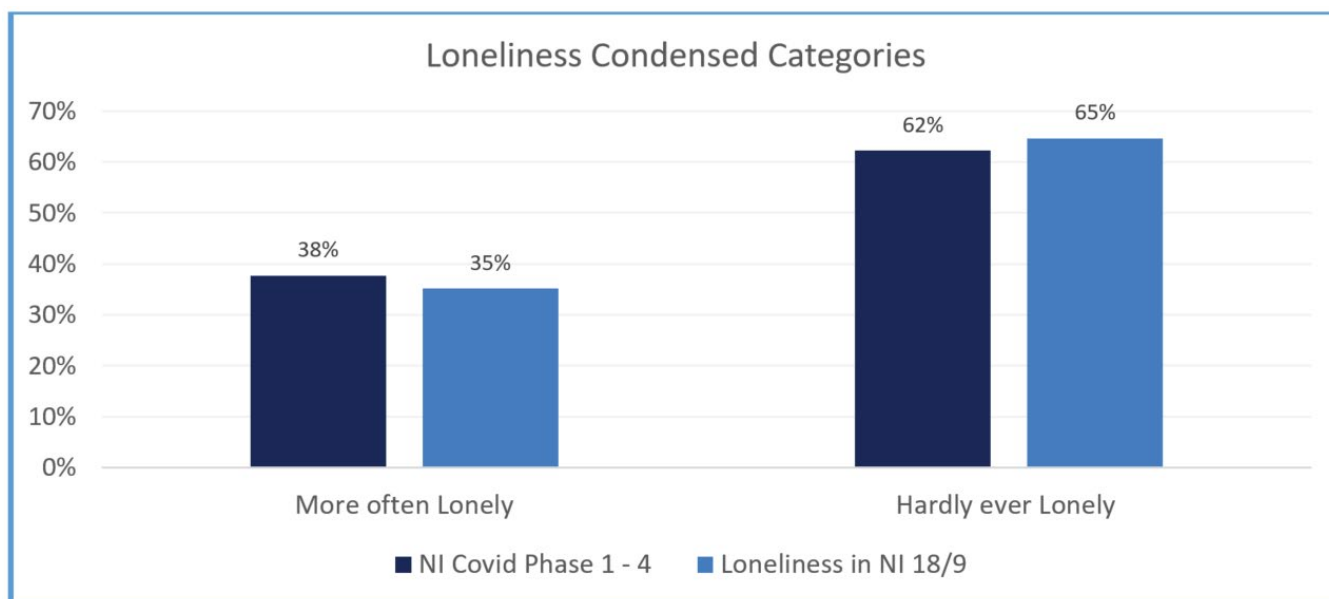
**Table 6: Comparing frequency of loneliness in people aged 16+ during the Pandemic**

Percentage of respondents feeling ‘More Often Lonely’ or ‘Hardly ever Lonely’ by month of interview	More often Lonely	Hardly ever Lonely
April 2020	35%	65%
May 2020	42%*	58%*
June 2020	38%	62%
July 2020	36%	64%
August 2020	34%*	66%*

<sup>2</sup> NISRA report on Loneliness in Northern Ireland 2018/19 - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/loneliness-northern-ireland-201819>

<sup>3</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’.

**Figure 27: Frequency of loneliness (Condensed Categories)**



**Variation in frequency of loneliness by limiting longstanding illness**

Some 14% of people with a limiting longstanding illness reported feeling lonely ‘often/always’, this is significantly higher than those without a limiting longstanding illness (3%). In contrast 16% of those with a limiting longstanding illness reported never feeling lonely, significantly lower than those without a limiting longstanding illness (30%) (Table 7).

**Table 7: Frequency of loneliness for people with and without a limiting longstanding illness**

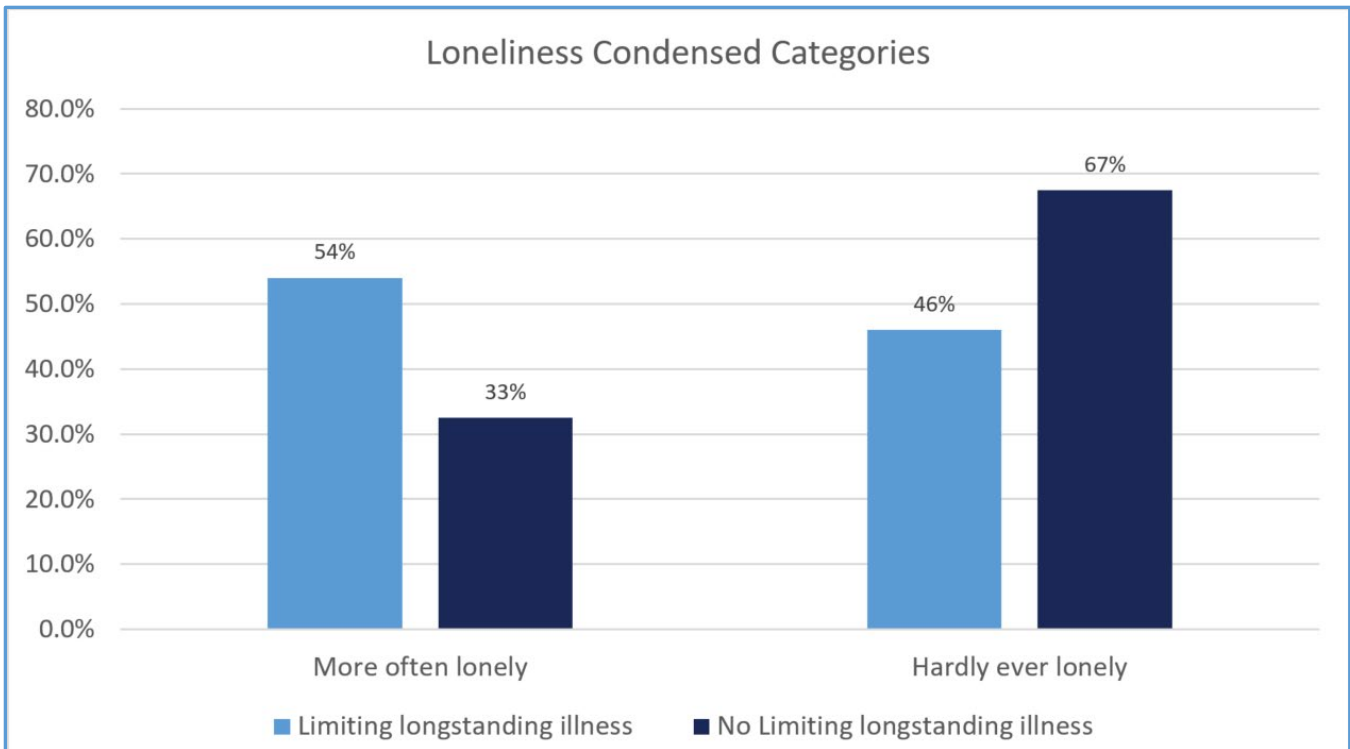
Frequency of loneliness	Often/always	Some of the time	Occasionally	Hardly ever	Never
With limiting longstanding illness	14%*	20%*	20%	30%*	16%*
Without limiting longstanding illness	3%*	12%*	17%	38%*	30%*
Total Phases 1 - 4	5%	14%	18%	36%	26%

\*A significant difference has been observed

Some 54% of respondents with a limiting longstanding illness reported feeling ‘more often lonely’, this is significantly higher than those without a limiting longstanding illness (33%) (Figure 28).

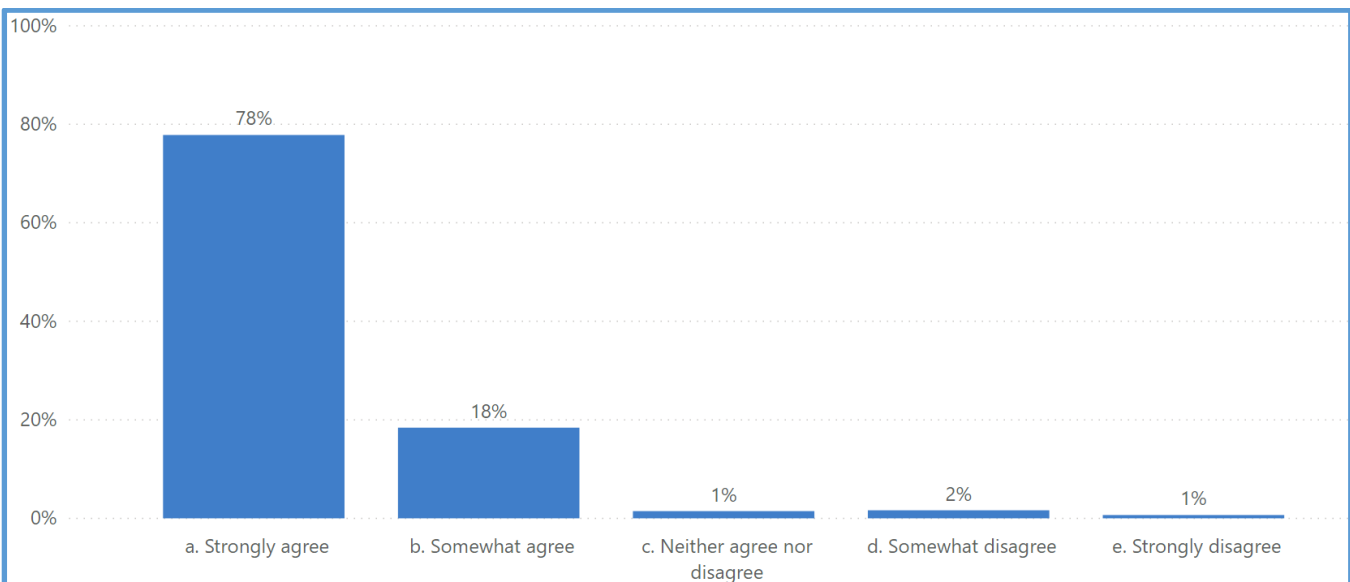


**Figure 28: Estimated of loneliness for people with and without a limiting longstanding illness (Condensed categories)**



Despite these feelings of loneliness, almost all people (96%) agreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them (Figure 29).

**Figure 29: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them**



Community Support and Safety

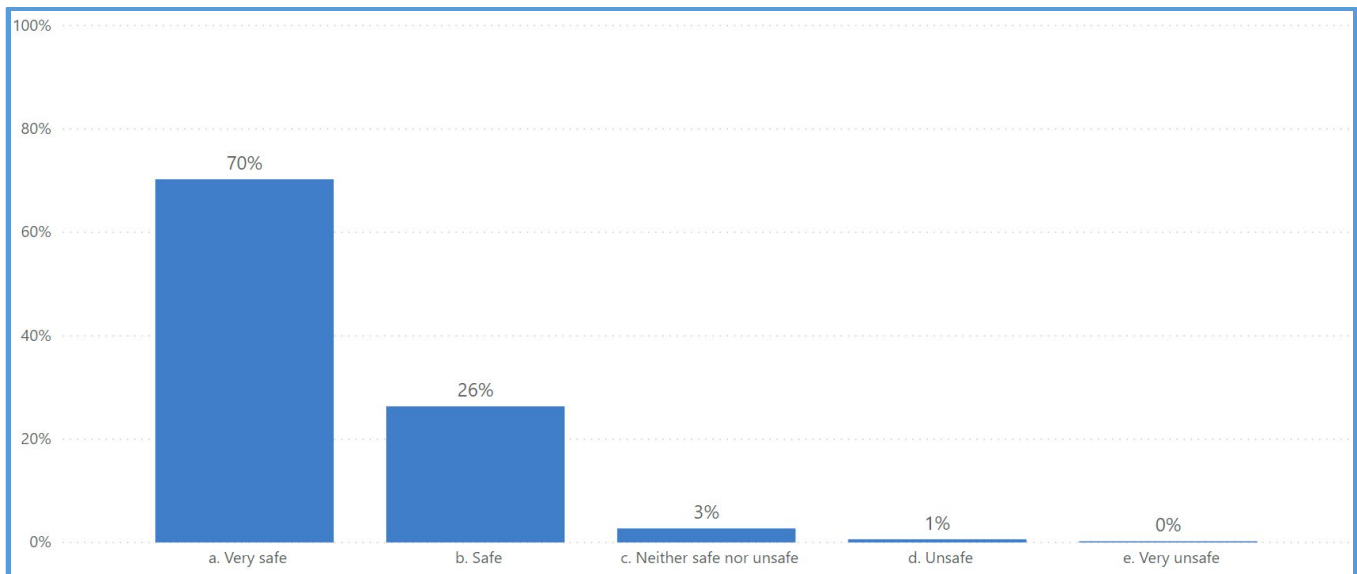
There was a general good feeling amongst people that there would be a high degree of community support if they needed it because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Just over eight out of ten people (82%) agreed that if they needed help, other local community members would help them during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

People interviewed from 17 June on were asked about how safe or unsafe they felt inside and outside of their homes.

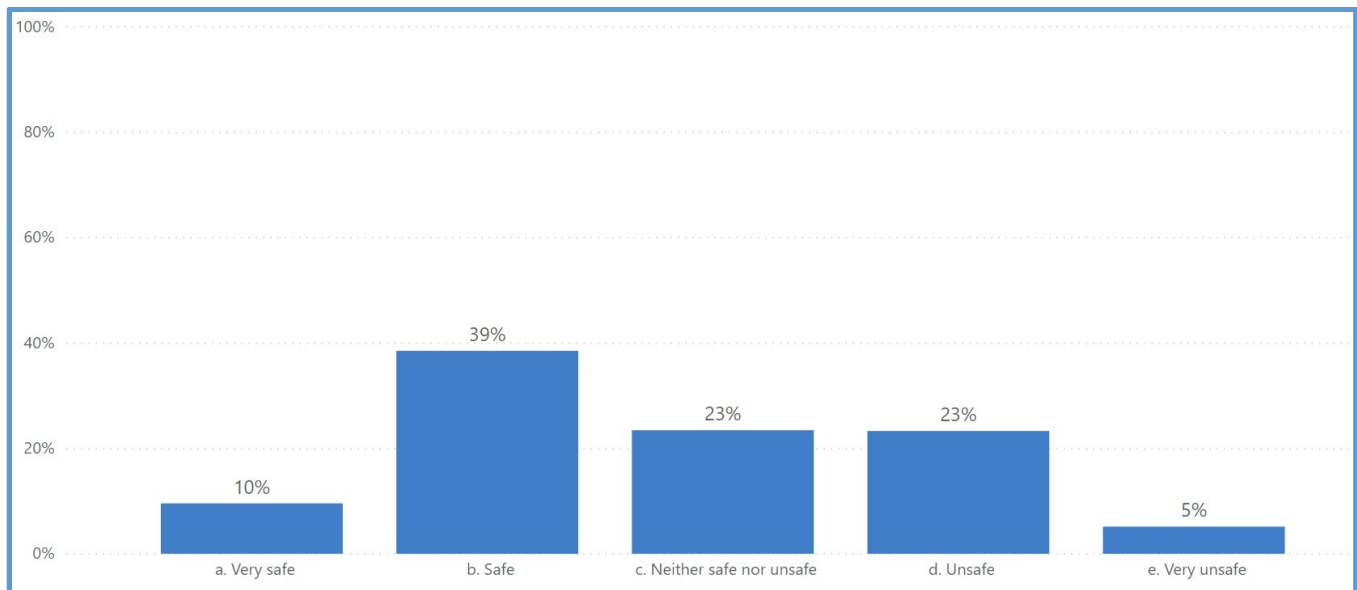
The vast majority of people (97%) reported feeling safe in their home since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Figure 30).

**Figure 30: Proportion of people who feel safe or unsafe in their home since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



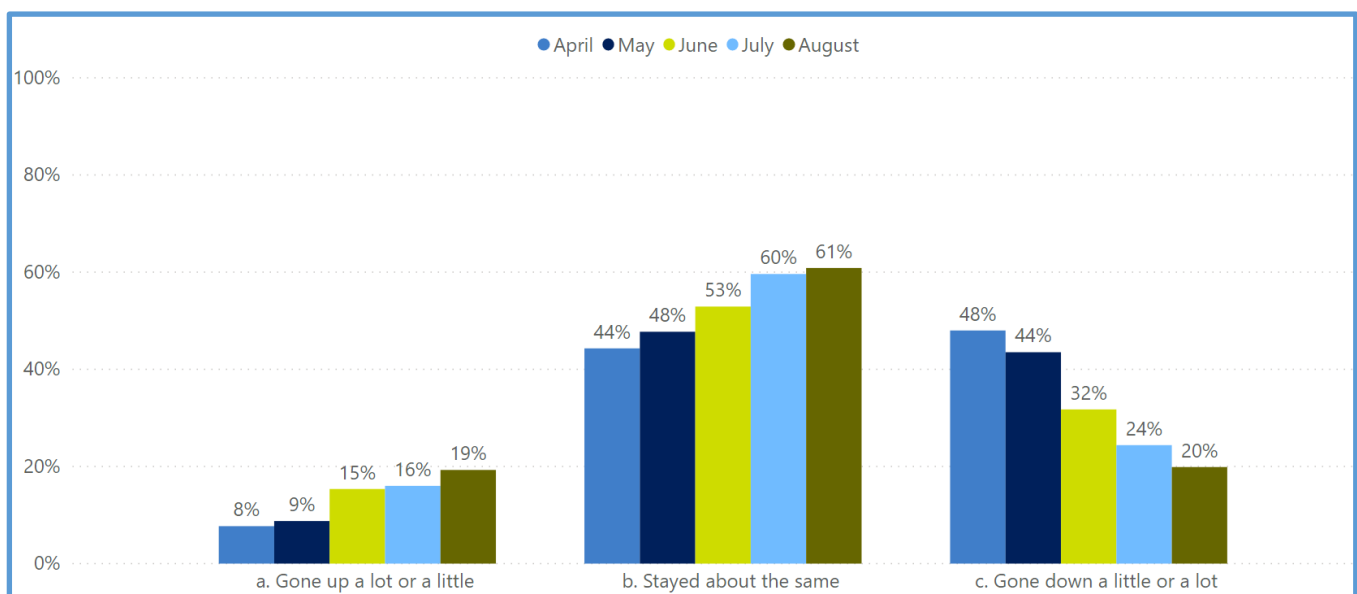
Almost half of people (48%) said they felt safe outside their home since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, but more than one quarter (28%) reported they felt unsafe (Figure 31).

**Figure 31: Proportion of people who feel safe or unsafe outside their home due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



Peoples' perceptions of anti-social behaviour changed over the course of the pandemic period. In the lockdown months of April and May, almost half of people (48% and 44% respectively) thought that anti-social behaviour had gone down a little or a lot since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. Conversely, people interviewed in August were twice as likely (19%) to think that anti-social behaviour had gone up a lot or a little compared to people interviewed in April (8%) and May (9%) (Figure 32).

**Figure 32<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who think that levels of anti-social behaviour have gone up, stayed the same or gone down since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, by month of interview**



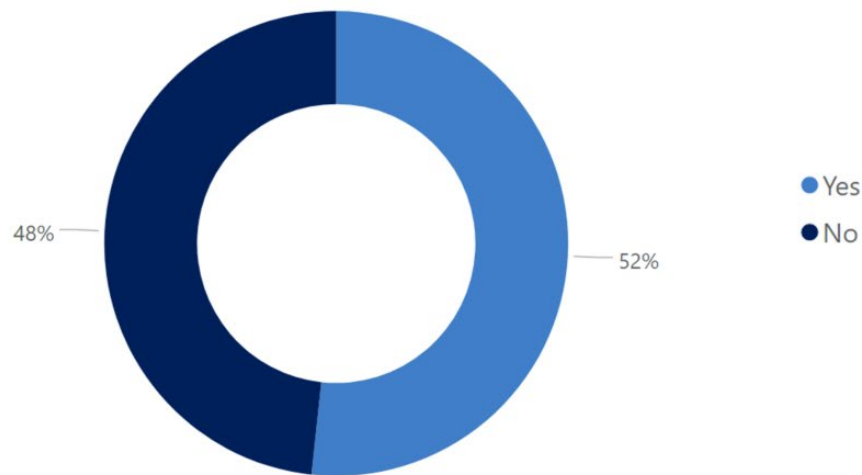
<sup>1</sup> The number of interviews carried out after 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 are too low to report on separately in these results

## Lifestyle

Those people who were interviewed between 17 June and 17 September 2020 were asked about aspects of their life before and after the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Approximately, half of people (52%) thought that some aspect of their lifestyle had changed for the better since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, whilst just under half (48%) did not (Figure 33).

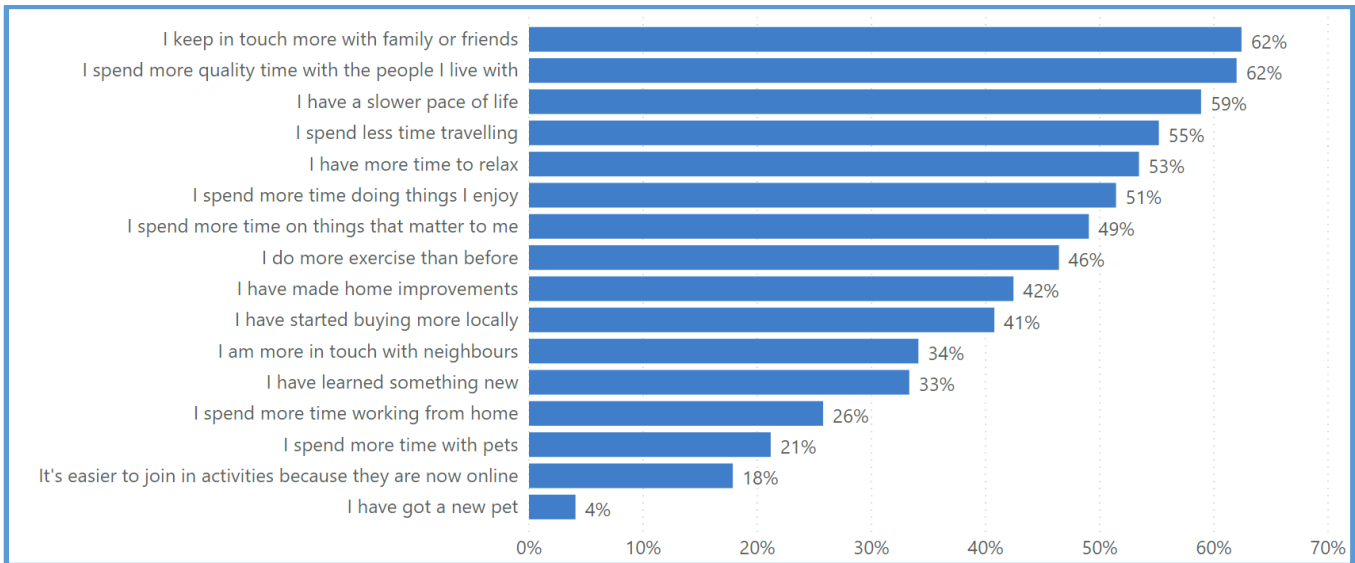
**Figure 33: Proportion of people who thought an aspect of their lifestyle had or had not changed for the better since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



Those people who felt that some aspect of their lifestyle had changed for the better since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak were asked which aspects had improved.

Approximately, six in ten of these people said they were keeping in touch more with family and friends (62%), spending more quality time with the people they live with (62%) or they had a slower pace of life (59%). About half of these people also said they spent less time travelling (55%), had more time to relax (53%), spent more time on things they enjoyed (53%), spent more time on things that mattered to them (49%) or they did more exercise than before (46%) (Figure 34).

**Figure 34<sup>1</sup>: Aspects of people’s lifestyle that had changed for the better since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed.

Information and Advice

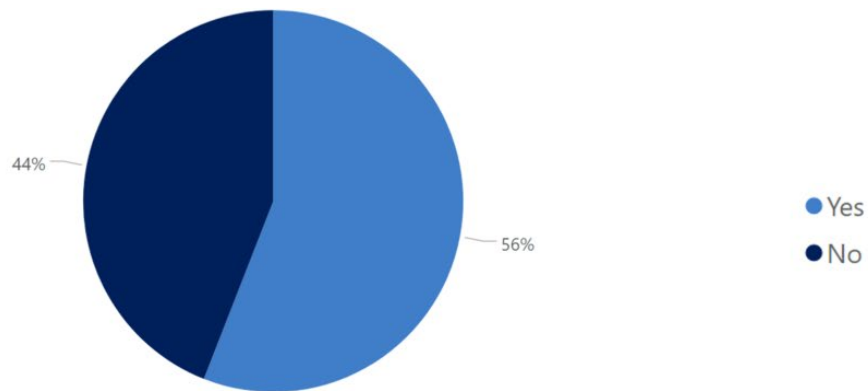
Practically all people (95%) felt they had received enough information on how to protect themselves from Coronavirus (COVID-19).

**Easing of stay-at home measures**

People who were interviewed on or after 17 June 2020 were asked some questions about the easing of restrictions and whether or not they supported the easing of stay-at-home measures.

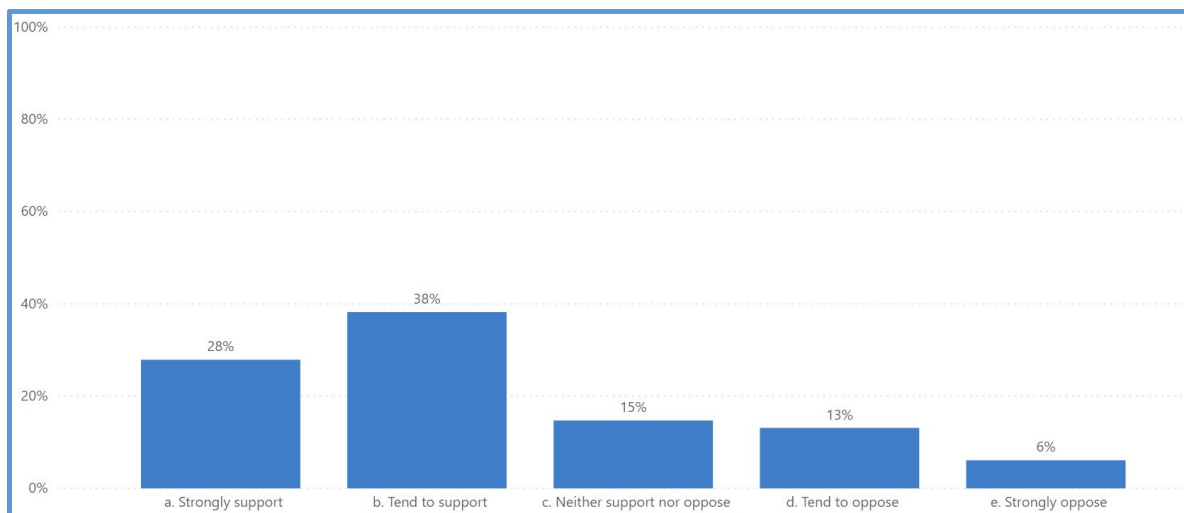
Just over half of people (56%) said that they had enough information about Government plans for the easing of restrictions due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, whilst just over two-fifths (44%) felt they did not (Figure 35).

**Figure 35: Awareness of government plans for easing restrictions due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak**



Two thirds of people (66%) supported the easing of stay-at-home measures put in place in Northern Ireland, but almost one in five people (19%) did not (Figure 36).

**Figure 36: Proportion of people who supported or opposed the easing of stay-at-home measures put in place in Northern Ireland**

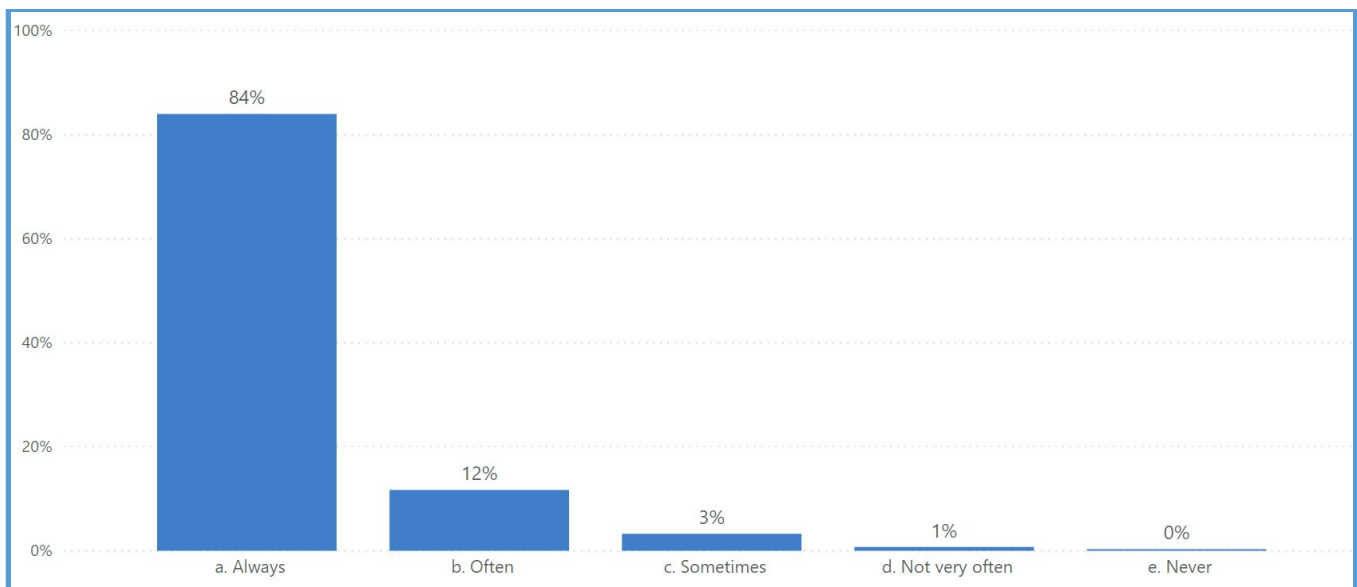


## Hygiene Behaviour

Most people (94%), interviewed on or after 17 June 2020, said that they had left their home for some reason.

The vast majority of these people (96%) washed their hands with soap and water, always or often, after returning home from a public place (Figure 37).

**Figure 37: Proportion of people who had washed their hands with soap and water, straight away after returning home from a public place in the seven days prior to interview**

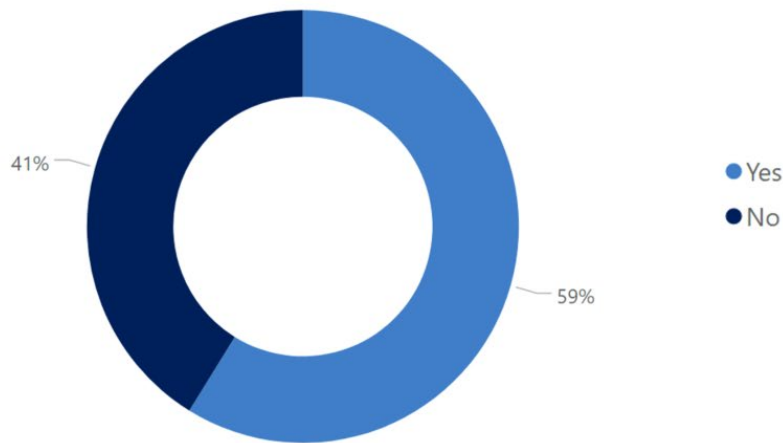


Face Coverings

Those people who were interviewed on or after 17 June 2020 were asked questions about the use of face coverings outside of the home.

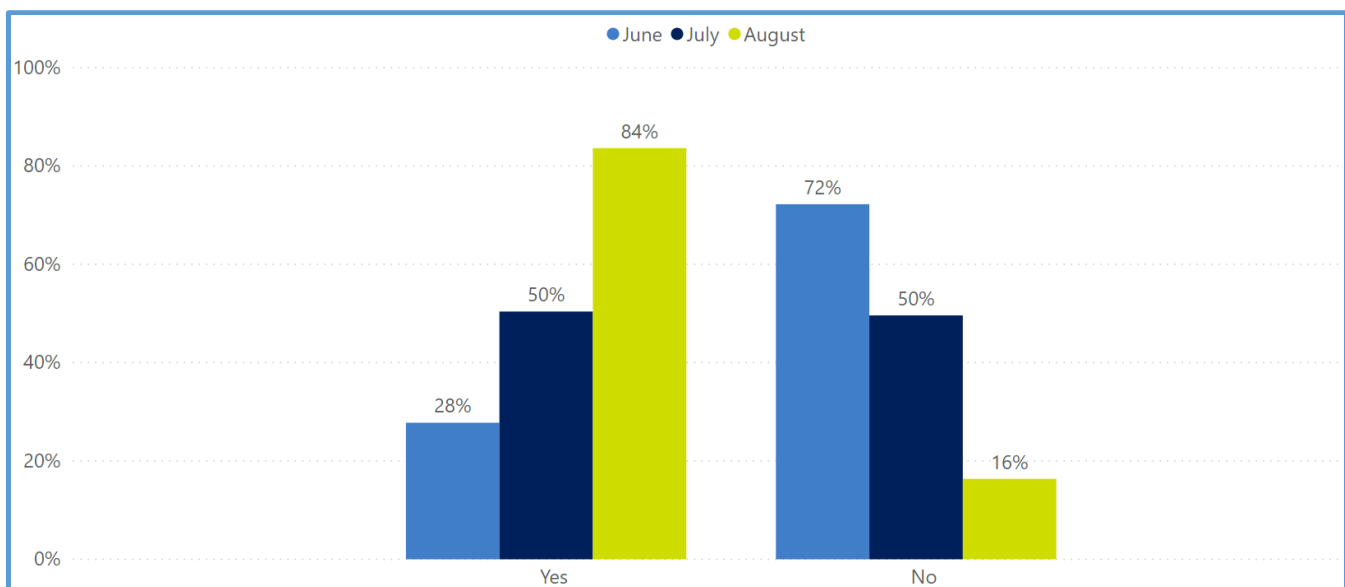
Approximately, six in ten people (59%) said they had used a face covering outside their home to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19), but just over two-fifths (41%) had not (Figure 38).

**Figure 38: Proportion of people, who had used a face covering when outside their home to help slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the seven days prior to interview**



The use of face coverings outside the home, has increased significantly over the pandemic period, from 28% in June to 84% in August (Figure 39).

**Figure 39: Proportion of people, who had used a face covering when outside their home to help slow the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the seven days prior to interview, by month of interview**



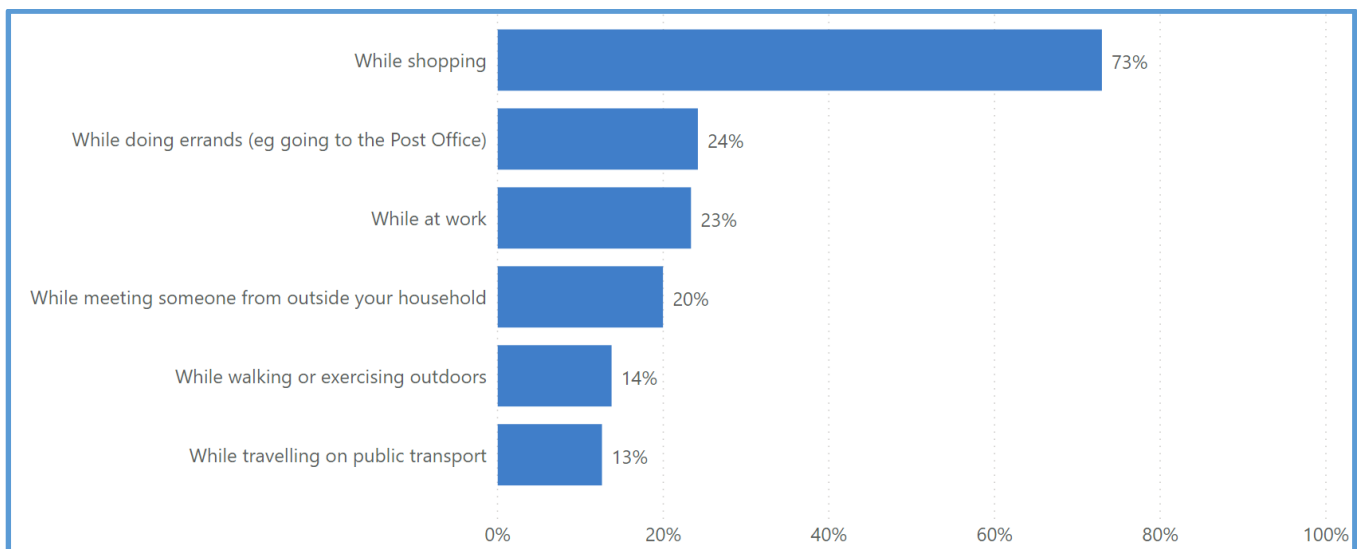
Those people who reported wearing a face covering were asked to provide details of the situations in which they had used a face covering in the previous seven days.



Figure 40 ranks the frequency of these from highest to lowest based on the proportion of people stating each response. The top three situations or locations when face coverings were used were:

- While shopping (73%)
- While doing errands (for example going to the Post Office or the Bank) (24%)
- While at work (23%)

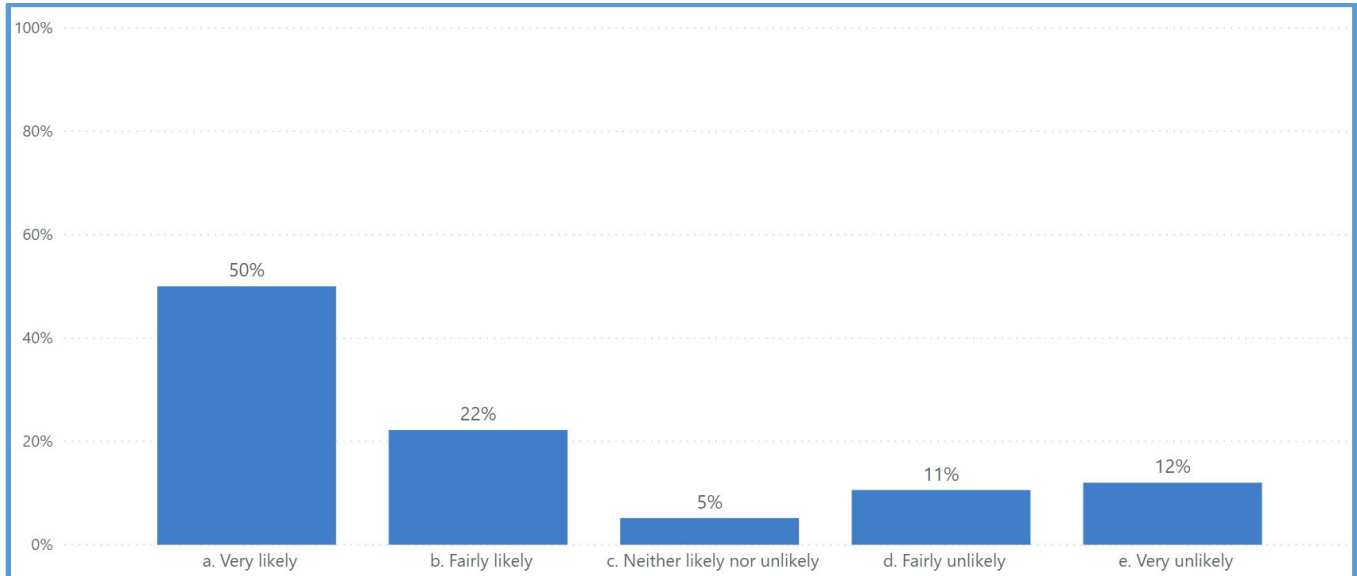
**Figure 40<sup>1</sup>: Situations in which people had used a face covering in the seven days prior to interview**



<sup>1</sup> Multiple responses allowed.

Approximately, seven in ten people (72%) reported they were likely to wear a face covering when outside their home, in the seven days following the interview, to help slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). However, just under one quarter of people (23%) said they would be unlikely to wear a face covering (Figure 41).

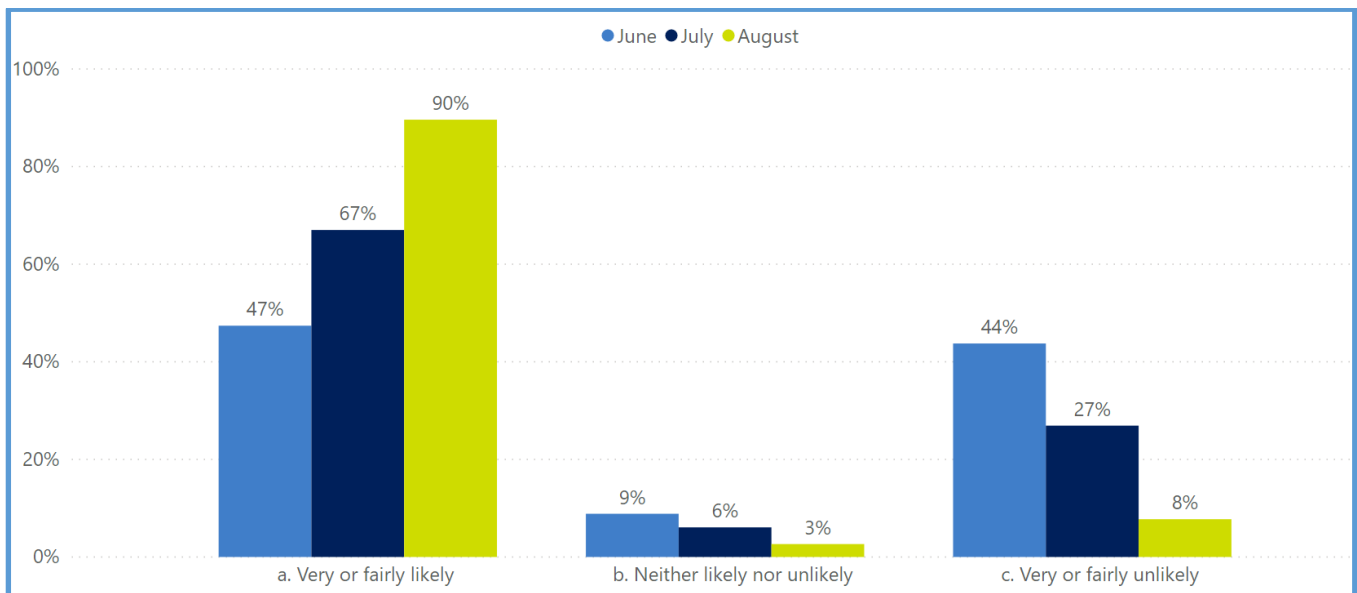
**Figure 41<sup>1</sup>: Proportion of people who were likely or unlikely to wear a face covering in the seven days following interview**



<sup>1</sup> Those who answered NA have been excluded from the analysis as these people may not be leaving home in the next seven days or were medically exempt from wearing a face covering.

The proportion of people who reported that, they would be unlikely to wear a face covering when outside their home in the seven days following interview, has decreased significantly over the pandemic period from 44% in June to 8% in August (Figure 42).

**Figure 42: Proportion of people who were likely or unlikely to wear a face covering in the seven days following interview, by month of interview**



## [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 1-4 have been 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:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nisra-coronavirus-covid-19-opinion-survey>

## [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:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nisra-coronavirus-covid-19-opinion-survey>

## [Previous Publications](#)

Previous publications of the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey Key Findings are available at:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/nisra-coronavirus-covid-19-opinion-survey-phases-1-and-2-results>

## [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:

<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/ni-summary-statistics/coronavirus-covid-19-statistics>

## [Further Research](#)

NISRA is currently working with research partners on a new and important research project, 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: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/covid-19-infection-survey>

Further results from the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion Survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when Phases 5-7 fieldwork periods close.

## [Contacts](#)

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