

NISRA CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OPINION SURVEY

KEY FINDINGS – PHASE 1

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>

The following is a summary of the key findings from Phase 1 of the NISRA Coronavirus (COVID-19) Opinion survey. Phase 1 relates to addresses which were sampled in the first four weeks of the survey. NISRA is currently planning to carry out four phases of the survey.

The results are based on 925 interviews carried out with members of the public in the period 21 April - 22 June 2020.

Further results from the survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when Phases 2-4 fieldwork periods close.

All figures published in the Phase 1 Results 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%.

Any differences reported in this publication are statistically significant at the 95% Confidence Level.

More information on Significant Differences and on Confidence Intervals and how to interpret the findings can be found in the Technical Report. Each chart in the report is also supported by an excel spreadsheet which provides confidence intervals for each estimate. The Technical Report and the supporting spreadsheets are available at:

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

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 (0.2%) reported that, in the seven days prior to interview, they had been officially diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) by a medical professional (Figure 1).

A further 1% of people had experienced symptoms themselves in the previous seven days (Figure 2).

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 3).

Figure 1: Officially been diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) by a medical professional in previous seven days

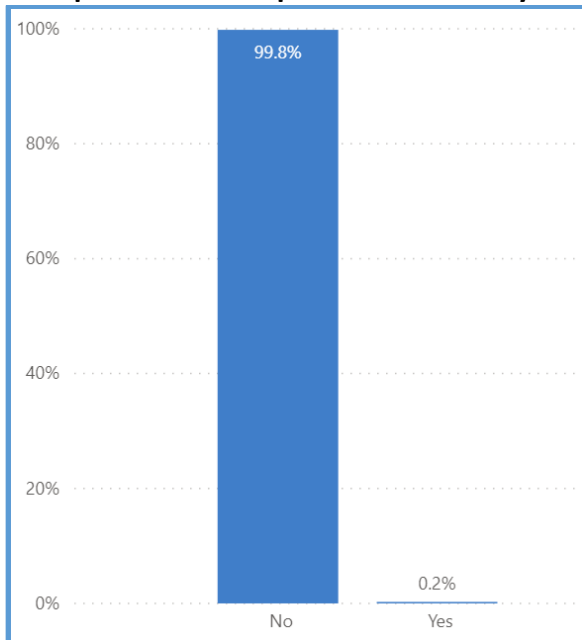
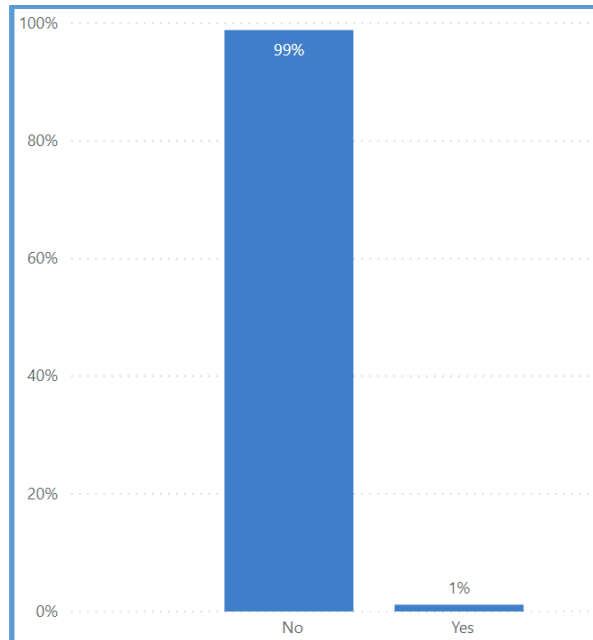
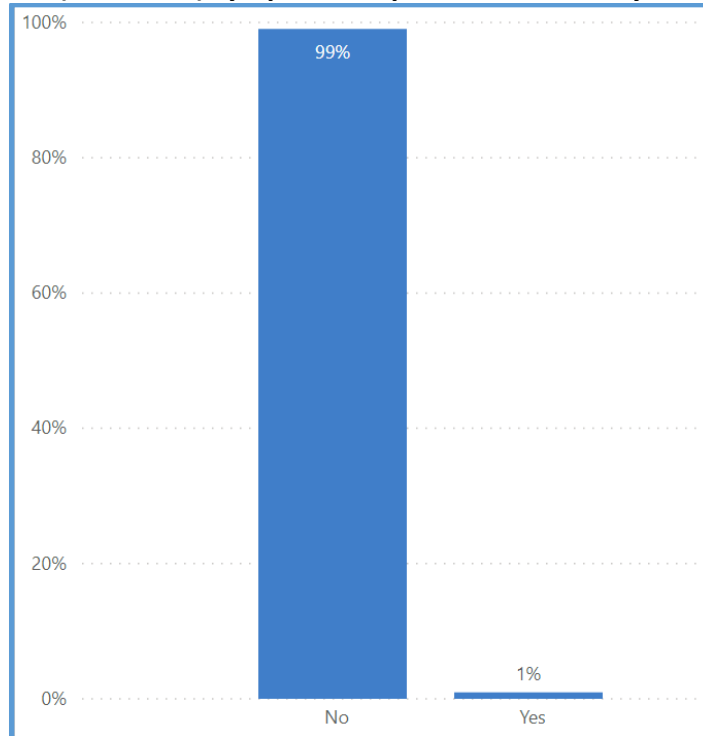


Figure 2¹: Have you had Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in previous seven days?



¹ Only asked of those not diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional in the previous seven days

Figure 3: Anyone else in household had Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms in previous seven days?

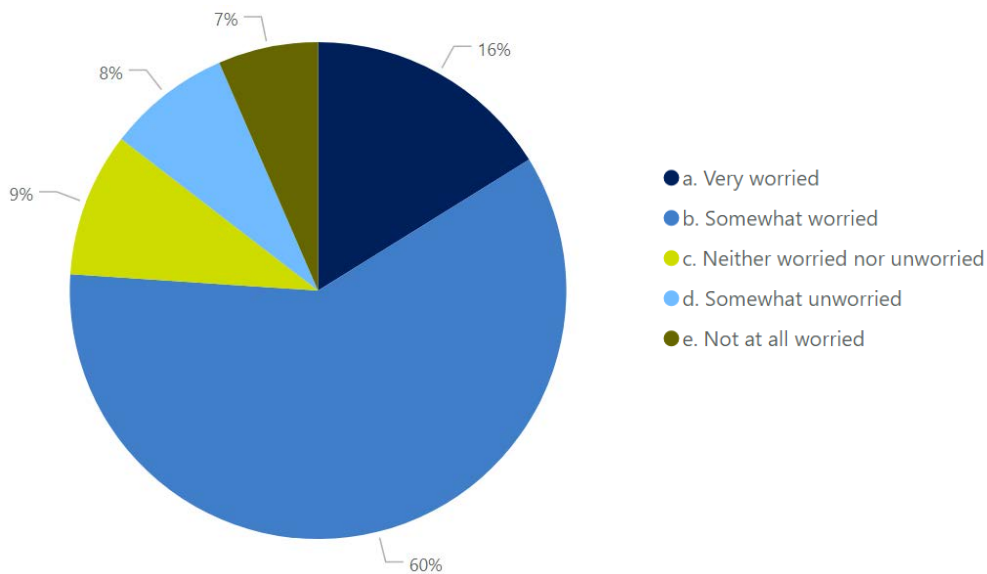


Concerns about the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The survey found high levels of worry among the people interviewed regarding the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

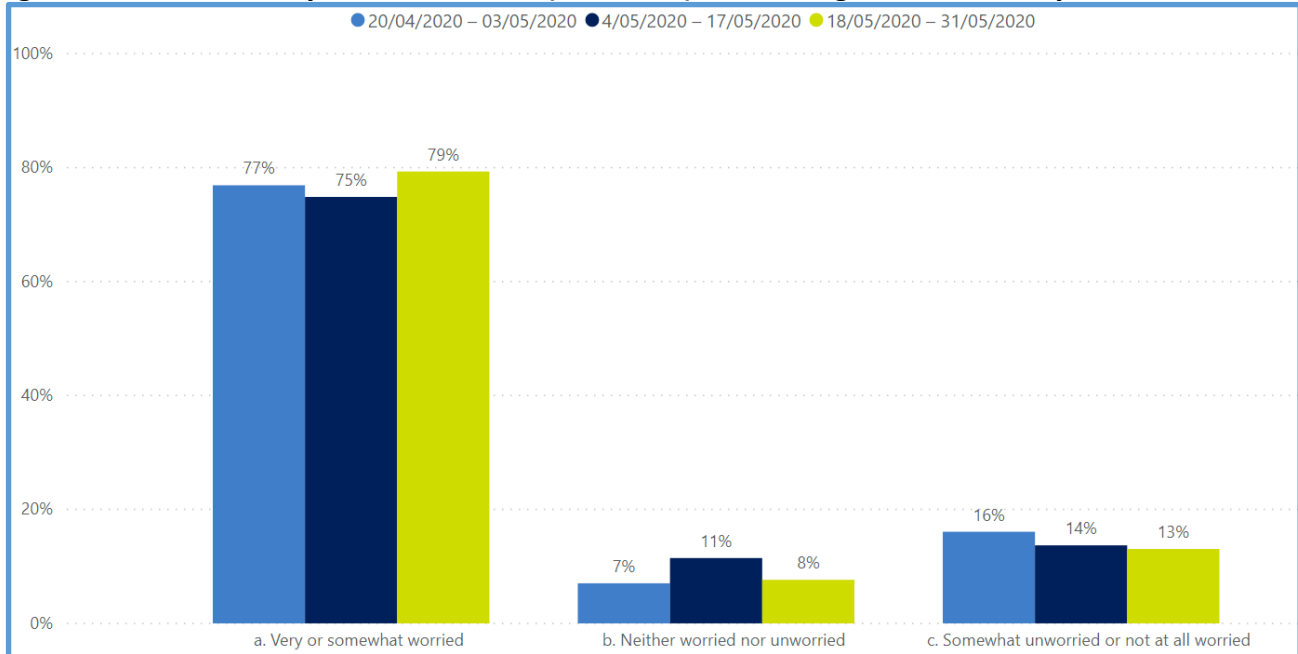
Just over three quarters of people (76%) said that they were very worried or somewhat worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Levels of worry about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their life



This level of worry remained reasonably consistent throughout the period 20 April – 31 May 2020 (Figure 5).

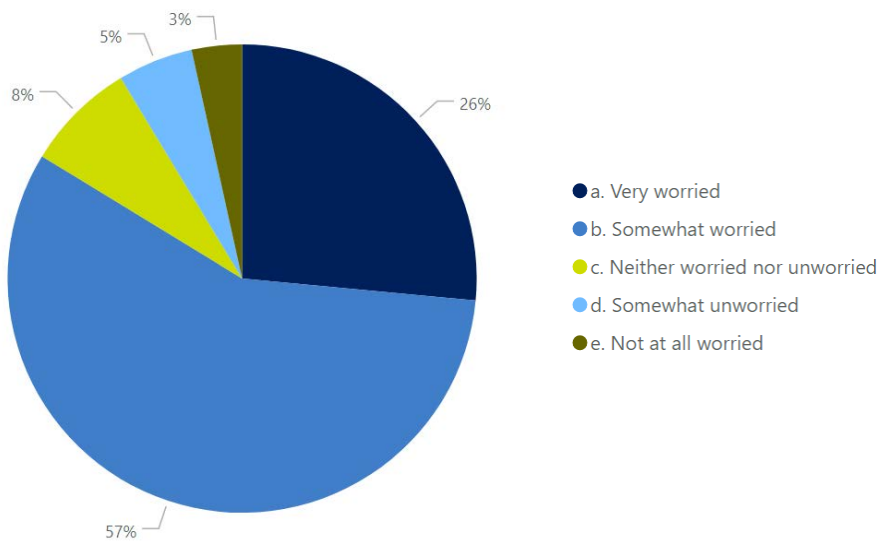
Figure 5: Levels of worry the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives by date of interview¹



¹ The number of interviews carried out after 31 May 2020 are too low to report on separately in the results of Phase 1

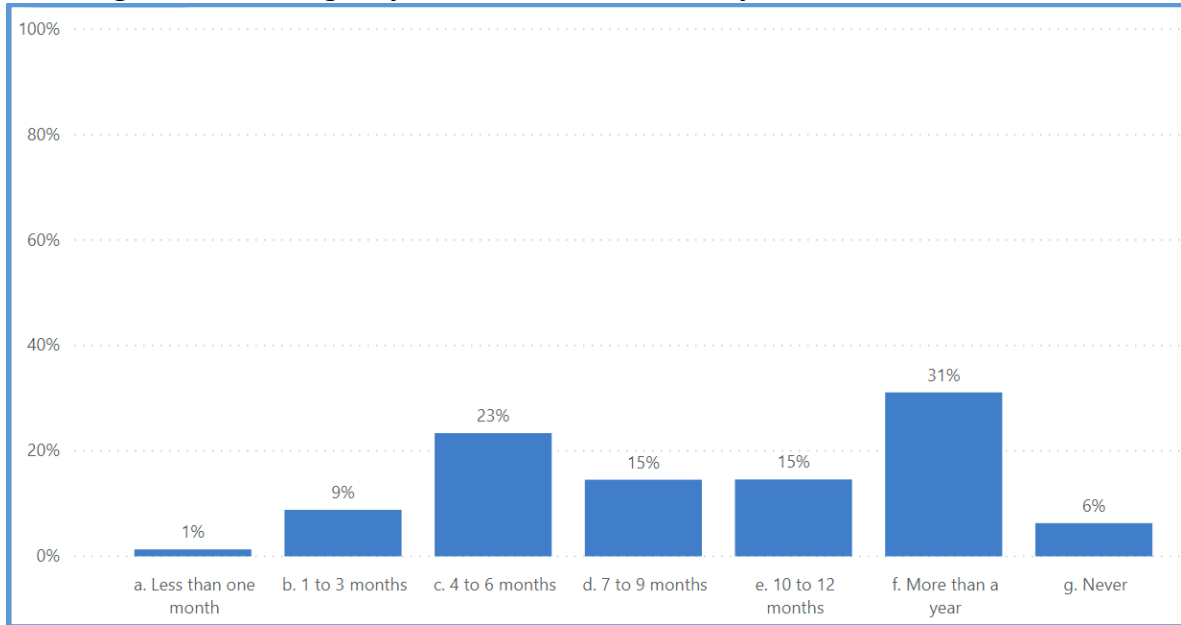
The vast majority of people (84%) said that they were worried about how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting their family and friends (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Levels of worry about how the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting their friends and family.



Just under one third of people (31%) thought it would be more than a year before life returns to normal. A further 6% said that life would never return to normal (Figure 7).

Figure 7: How long do you think it will be before your life returns to normal?



Ways the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting lives

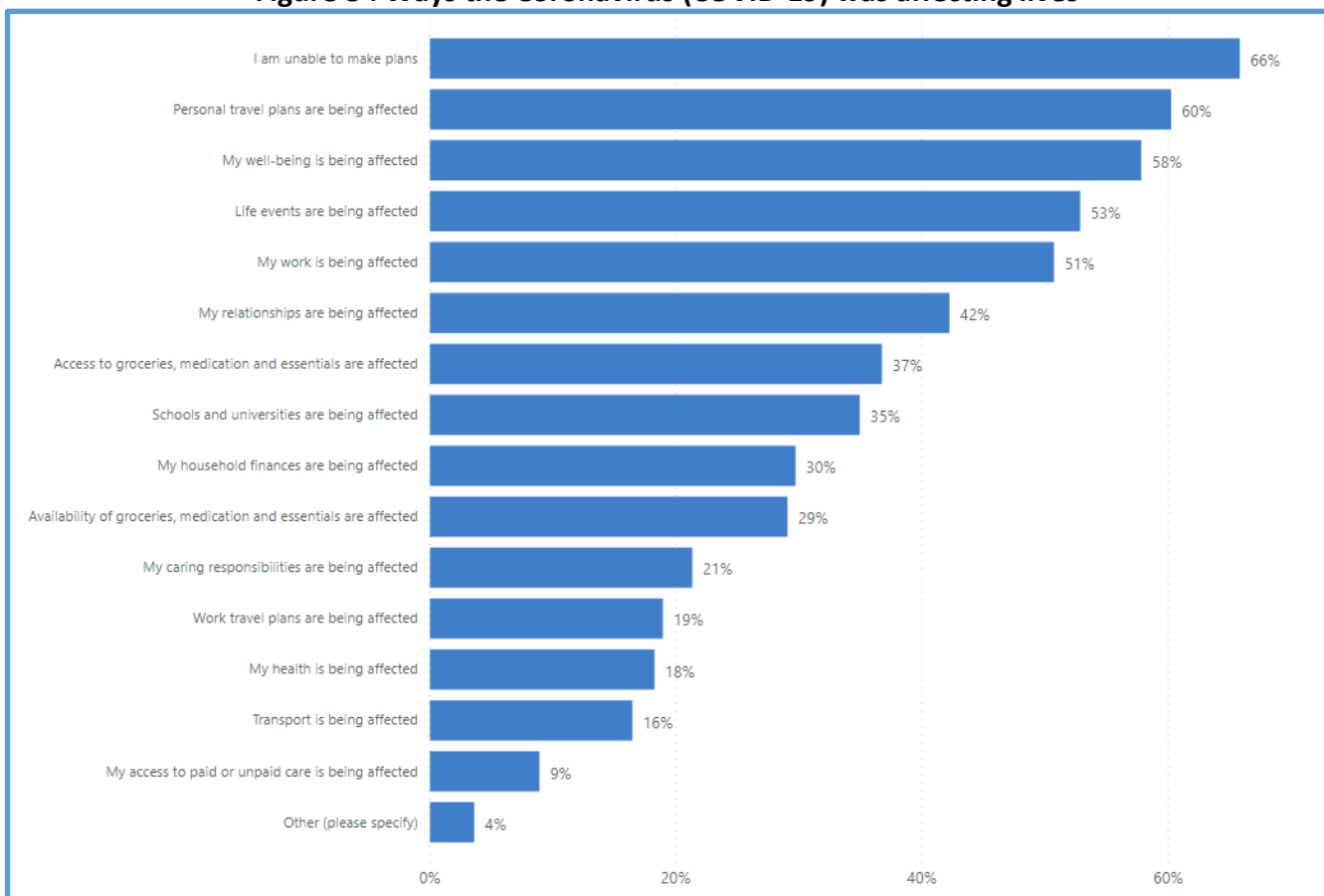
Those people who said that they were worried about the effect the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives were asked some additional questions about how it was affecting them.

The most common way that the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their lives was on their ability to make plans, with 66% saying this was being affected (Figure 8).

Approximately, six out of ten people said their personal travel plans or their well-being was being affected.

Just over half of people stated that life events or their work were being affected by the pandemic.

Figure 8¹: Ways the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was affecting lives



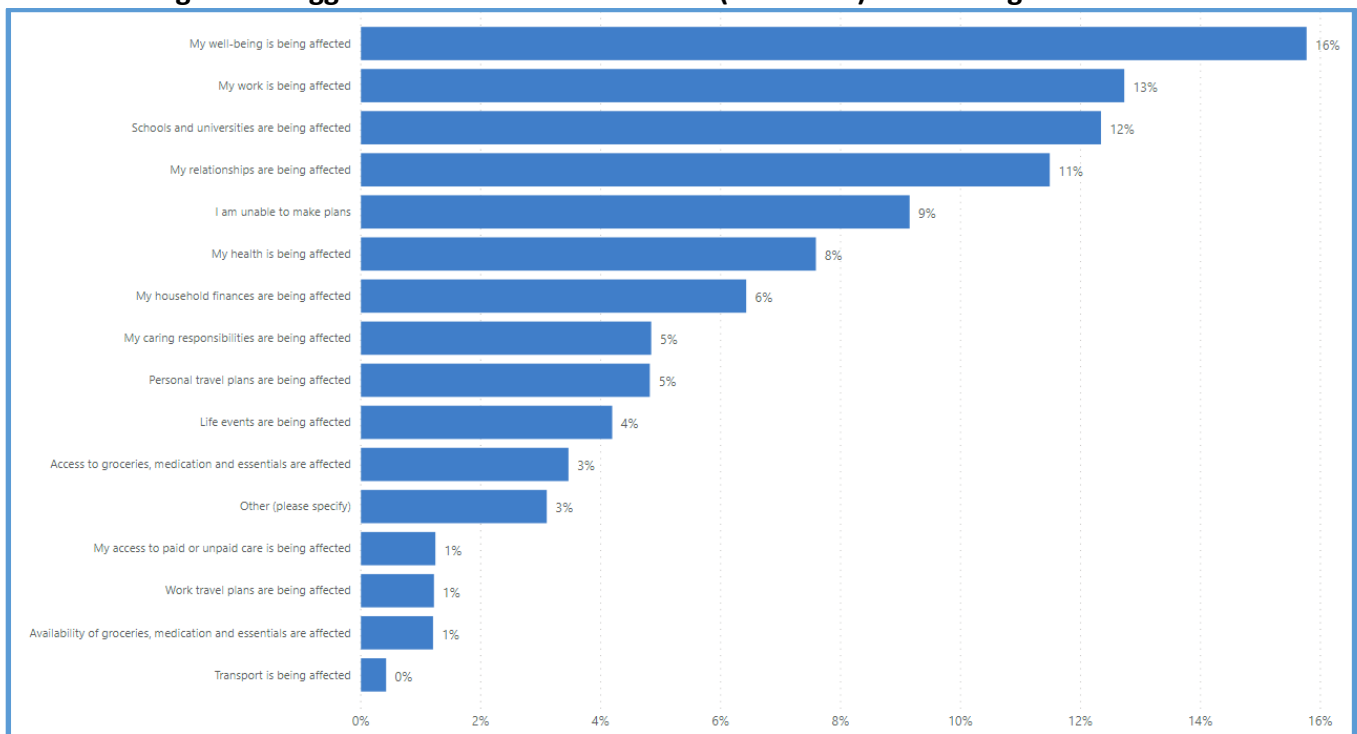
¹ Multiple responses allowed. Only asked of people who stated they were either very worried or somewhat worried about the impact Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives

These people were asked to select their single biggest concern from all of the worries they had reported to the previous question.

Figure 9 ranks these concerns from highest to lowest based on the proportion of people stating each response. The top five highest ranking concerns were:

- Their well-being being affected (16%)
- Their work being affected (13%)
- Schools and universities being affected (12%)
- Their relationships being affected (11%)
- Being unable to make plans (9%)

Figure 9¹: Biggest concern the Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives

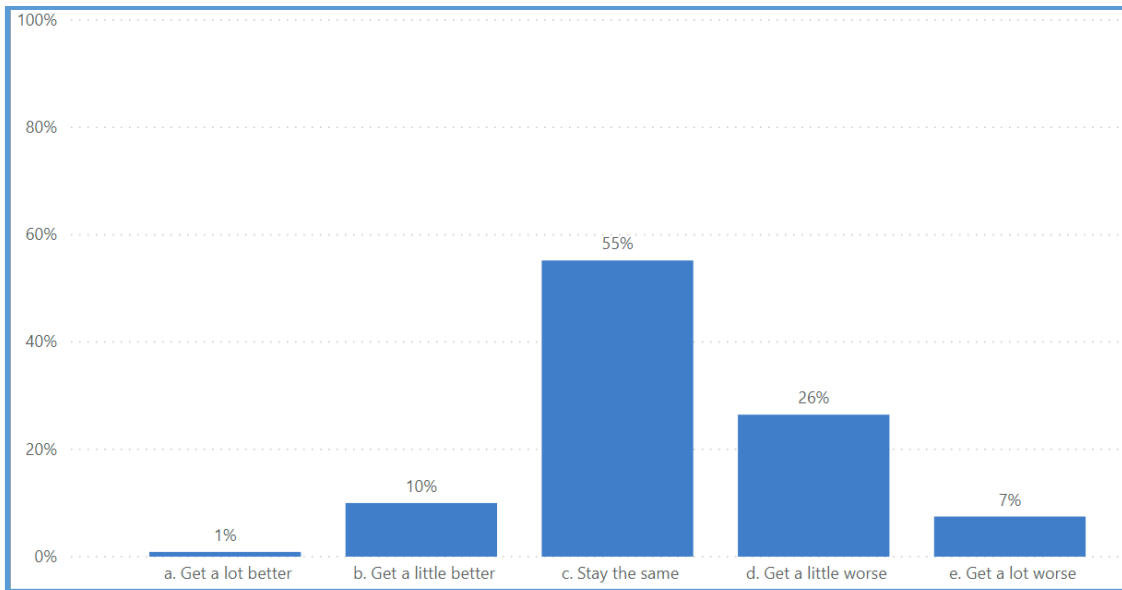


¹ Only asked of people who stated they were either very worried or somewhat worried about the impact Coronavirus (COVID-19) was having on their lives

Financial Concerns

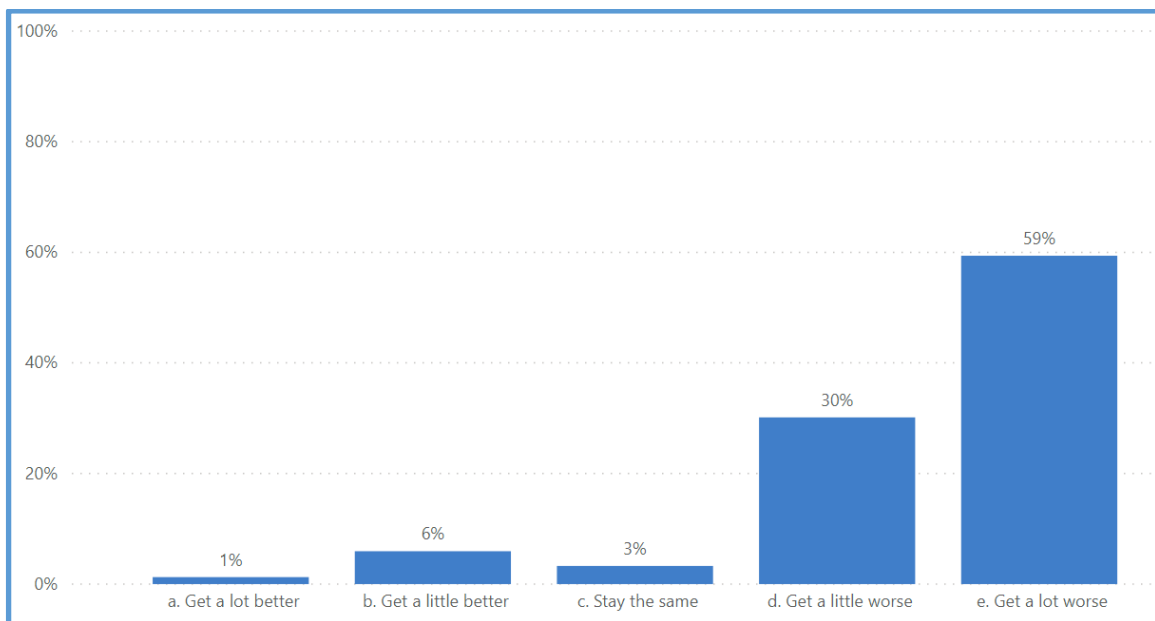
Just over one third of people (34%) expected the financial position of their household to get worse in the next 12 months (Figure 10). Slightly more than half (55%) expected their household financial situation to stay the same whilst 11% expected it to get better.

Figure 10: How do you expect the financial position of your household to change over the next 12 months?



Nine out of ten people (90%) expected the general economic situation to get worse in the next 12 months (Figure 11). Almost six out of ten people (59%) said that they expected it to get a lot worse.

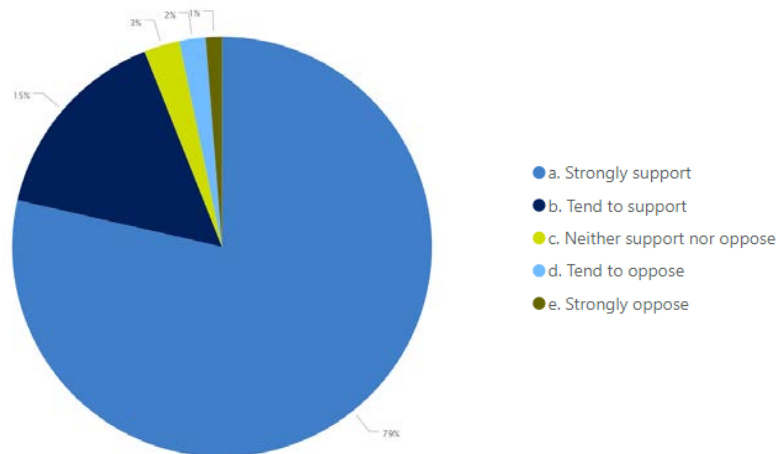
Figure 11: How do you expect the general economic situation in this country to develop over the next 12 months?



Staying at Home

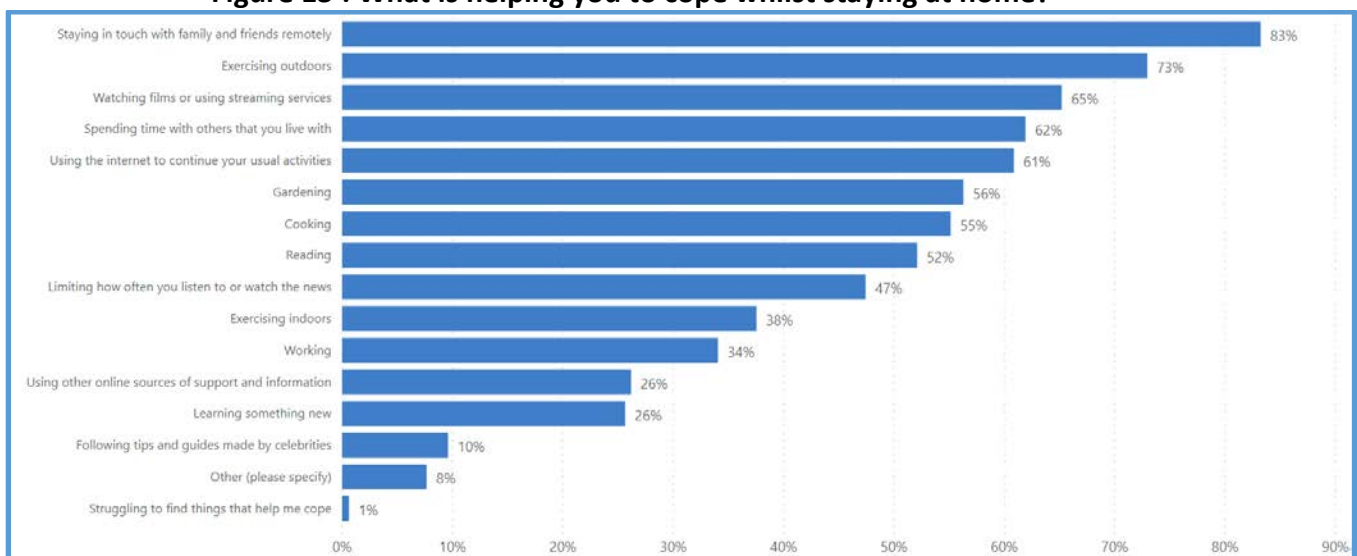
Practically all people (94%) supported the 'Stay at Home' measures put in place by the Government (Figure 12). Almost eight out of ten people (79%) strongly supported these measures.

Figure 12: Do you support or oppose the stay at home measures put in place by the Government?



People were asked what helped them to cope whilst staying at home. The most common responses given by people were keeping in touch with family and friends remotely (83%), exercising outdoors (73%), watching films or using streaming services (65%), spending time with others that they lived with (62%) and using the internet to continue their usual activities (61%) (Figure 13). A very small proportion of people (1%) said they were struggling to find things to help them cope whilst staying at home.

Figure 13¹: What is helping you to cope whilst staying at home?



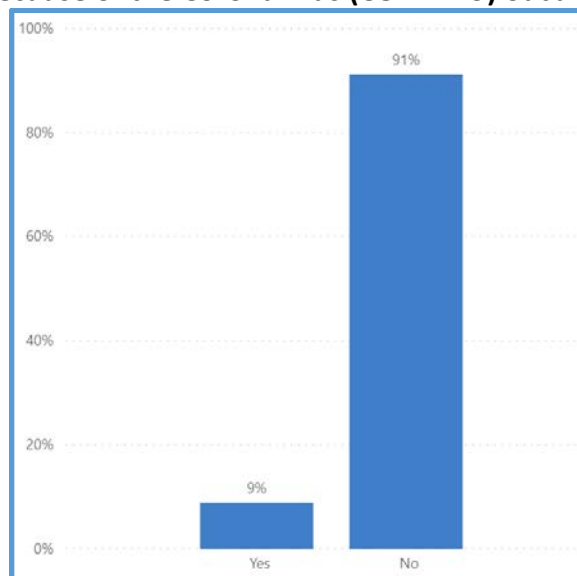
¹ Multiple responses allowed in this question

Self-Isolation

People were asked about whether or not they had self-isolated in the previous seven days. 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, 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).

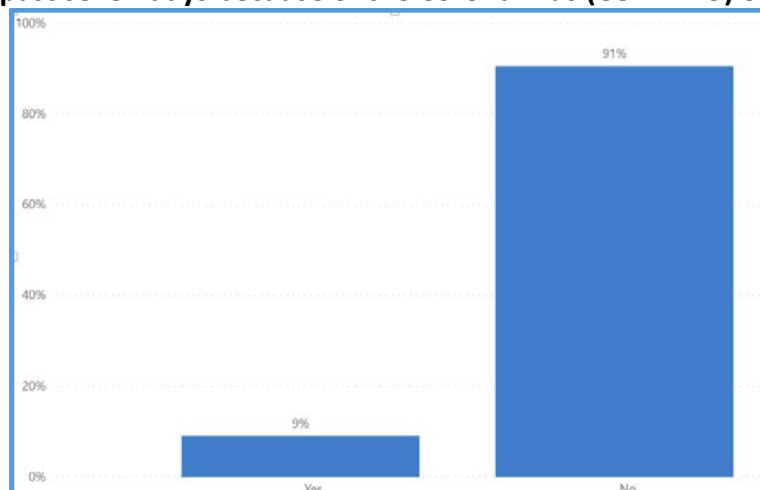
Some 9% of people had self-isolated at home, in the seven days prior to interview, because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Have you self-isolated at home in the past seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?



A similar proportion of people (9%) reported that another member of their household had self-isolated at home because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the previous seven days (Figure 15).

Figure 15¹: Has anyone else in your household self-isolated at home in the past seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

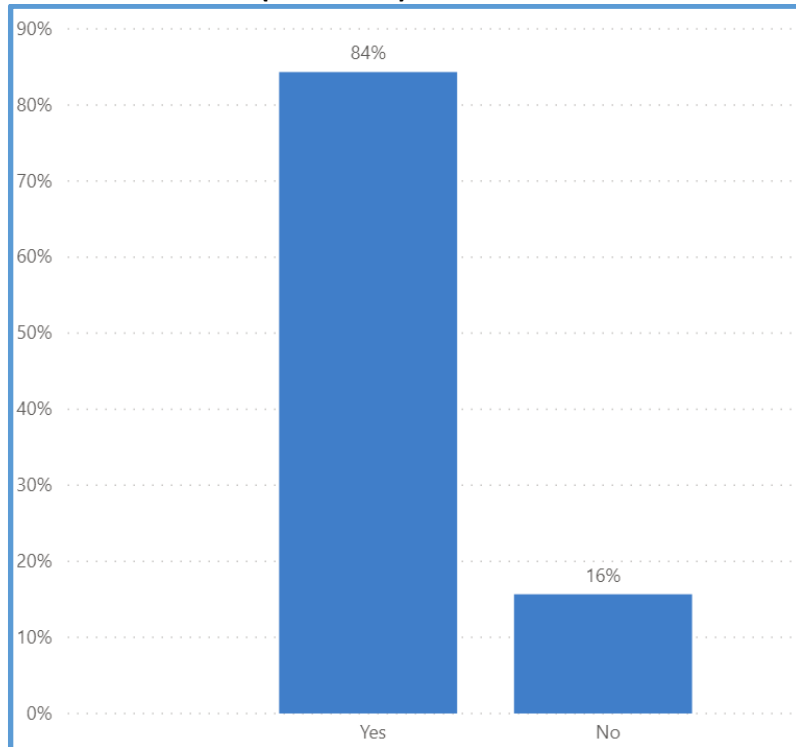


¹ Excludes single person households

Protecting Older and Vulnerable People

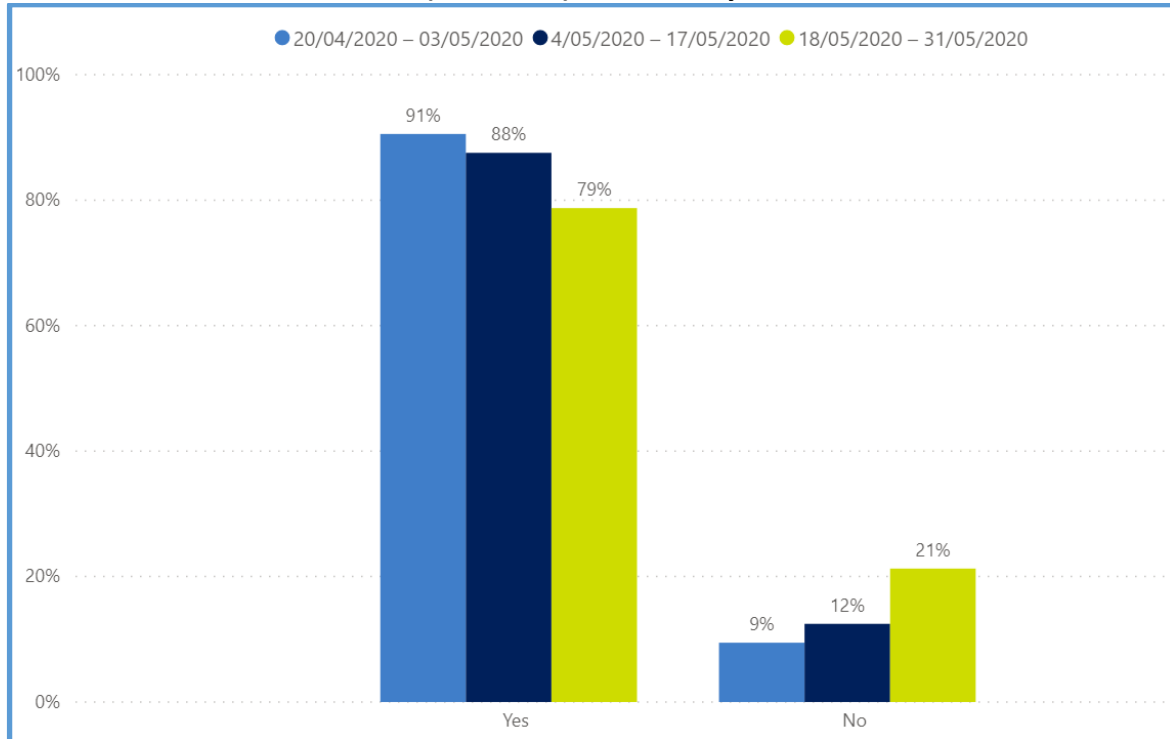
The vast majority of people (84%) said they had avoided contact with older people or other vulnerable people in the previous seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Figure 16).

Figure 16: Avoiding contact with older people or other vulnerable people in the previous seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?



The results show that this proportion decreased over time. Approximately, nine out of ten people interviewed in the period 20 April to 17 May 2020 said that they had avoided contact with older or vulnerable people in the previous seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This proportion decreased to 79% in the two-week period after 18 May 2020 (Figure 17).

Figure 17¹: Avoided contact with older or vulnerable people in the previous seven days because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak by date of interview¹



¹ The number of interviews carried out after 31 May 2020 are too low to report on separately in the results of Phase 1

Personal Wellbeing Indicators

This section contains estimates of Life Satisfaction, Feeling that things done in life are Worthwhile, Happiness and Anxiety for those people interviewed in Phase 1. These statistics are reported on in two different ways; the average (mean) rating and the proportion of respondents scoring within each of the thresholds.

The average (mean) wellbeing ratings of people interviewed in Phase 1 for Life Satisfaction (7.47) and Happiness (7.47) were significantly lower than those reported by NISRA for the same indicators in their latest published figures for 2018-19 (7.89 and 7.69 respectively) (Table 1).

The average (mean) wellbeing rating for Phase 1 respondents for Anxiety (3.55) was significantly higher than that reported by NISRA for the 2018-19 data (2.83) (Table 1).

There was no significant difference observed in the wellbeing rating of people feeling what they do in life is worthwhile when compared with that reported in 2018/19 (Table 1).

There were no significant differences found across genders or age groups for people interviewed in Phase 1 for the four personal wellbeing averages (means) (Table 1).

Table 1: Average wellbeing (scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely') by Gender and Age Group

Average (mean)	Life Satisfaction	Worthwhile	Happiness	Anxiety
Gender				
Male	7.55	7.76	7.54	3.35
Female	7.40	7.91	7.40	3.72
Age-group				
16 – 44	7.34	7.86	7.35	3.59
45 – 64	7.38	7.73	7.49	3.66
65 & over	7.89	7.96	7.68	3.29
Total				
Phase 1 Respondents	7.47	7.84	7.47	3.55
Personal Wellbeing in NI 18/19	7.89	8.07	7.69	2.83

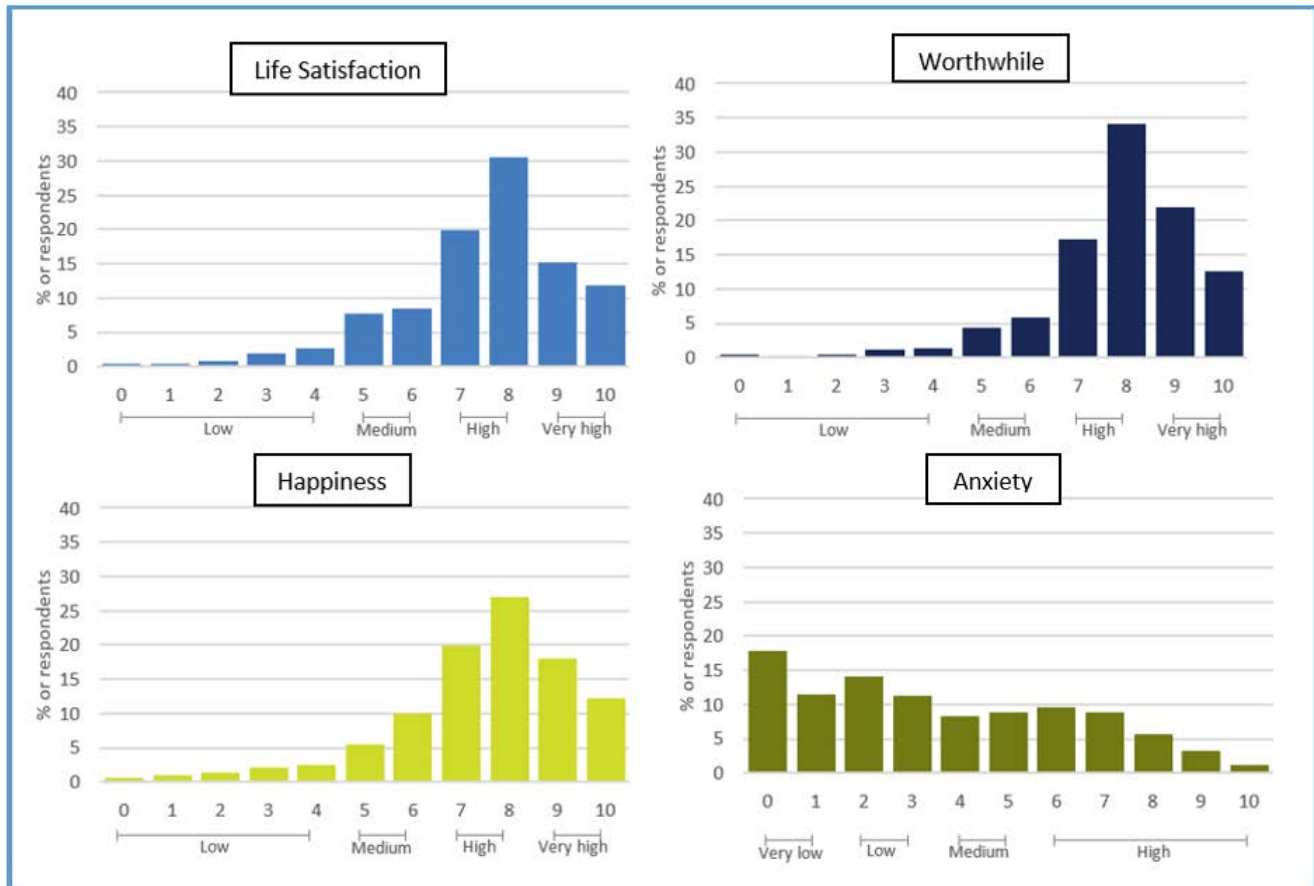
There were significant differences in the proportion of people scoring within a number of the thresholds (outlined in the table below) of the personal wellbeing scales when compared with the 2018/19 data.

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

Figure 18 shows the distribution of the scores for each of the four personal wellbeing indicators for people interviewed in the Phase 1 reporting period.

Figure 18: Proportion of respondents scoring 0 to 10 on each of the personal wellbeing scales during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) (Phase 1) reporting period.



The proportion of people reporting ‘Very high’ (score of 9 or 10) levels of personal wellbeing in Phase 1 was as follows:

- 27% for Life Satisfaction, significantly lower than 37% in 2018/19;
- 34% for Feeling that what you do in life is Worthwhile, significantly lower than 42% in 2018/19;
- 30% for Happiness, significantly lower than 38% in 2018/19.

In terms of anxiety, where a lower score indicates better personal wellbeing, 29% of people reported a ‘Very low’ score (0 or 1), significantly lower than 41% in 2018/19.

Loneliness

Approximately, four out of ten people (42%) reported feeling “more often lonely” (condensed category including those who responded feeling lonely ‘often/always’, ‘some of the time’ and ‘occasionally’). This was significantly higher than the latest NI figures reported in the 2018/19 publication¹ (35%) (Figure 19).

Some 6% of people reported feeling lonely “often/always” (Figure 19). This is similar to the last NISRA published figure for 2018/19 (5%).

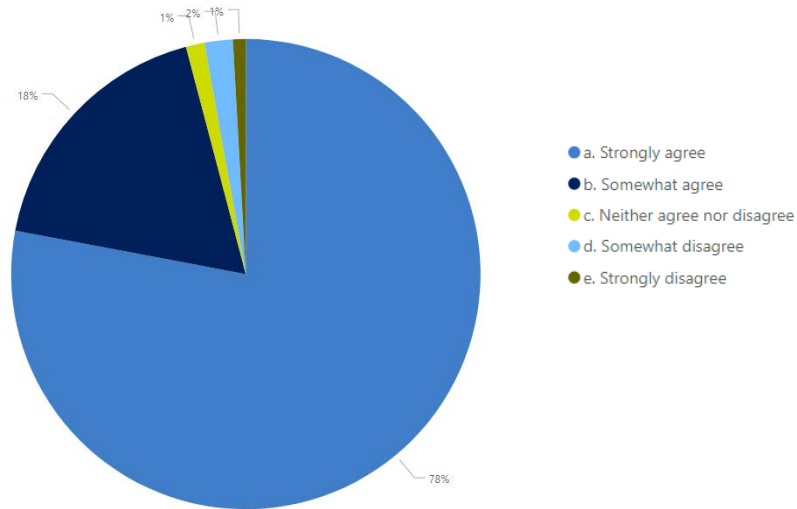
Figure 19: Frequency of loneliness in people during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) (Phase 1) reporting period.



¹ NISRA report on Loneliness in Northern Ireland 2018/19 - <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/loneliness-northern-ireland-201819>

Despite these feelings of loneliness, almost all people (96%) agreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that if they needed help, people would be there for them

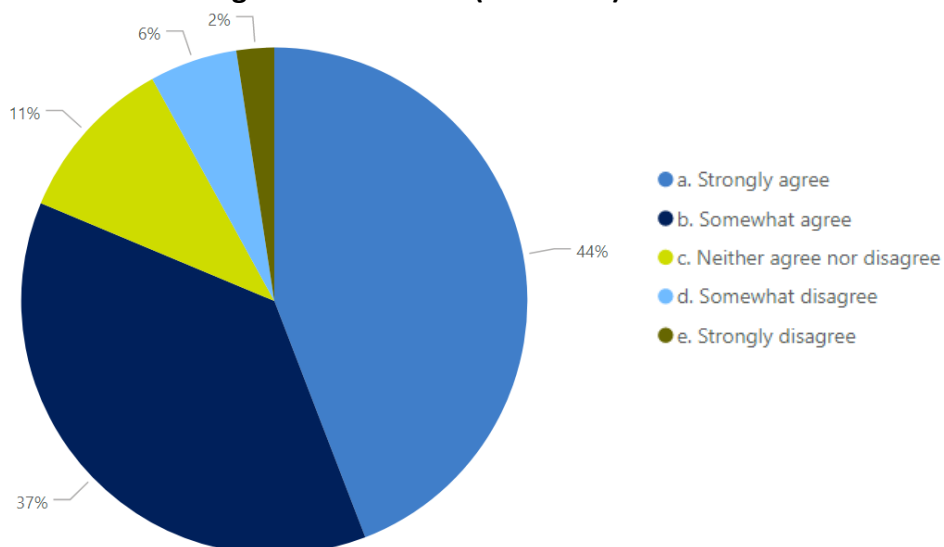


Community Support

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.

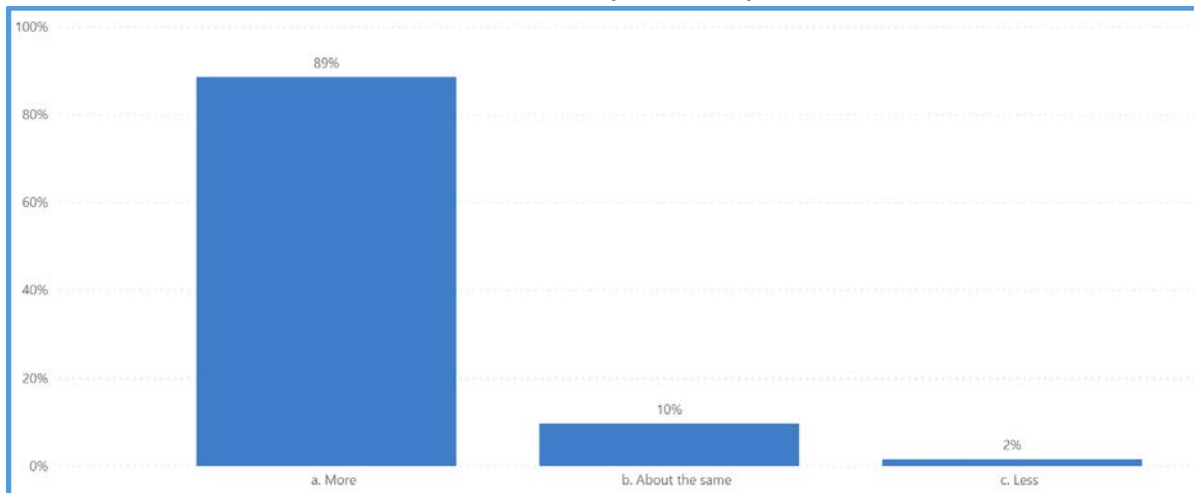
Just over eight out of ten people (81%) agreed that if they needed help, other local community members would help them during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Proportion of people who agreed or disagreed that if they needed help, other local community members would support them during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.



Most people interviewed (89%) also said that people were doing more to help others during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Do you think people are doing things to help others more, about the same or less since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?

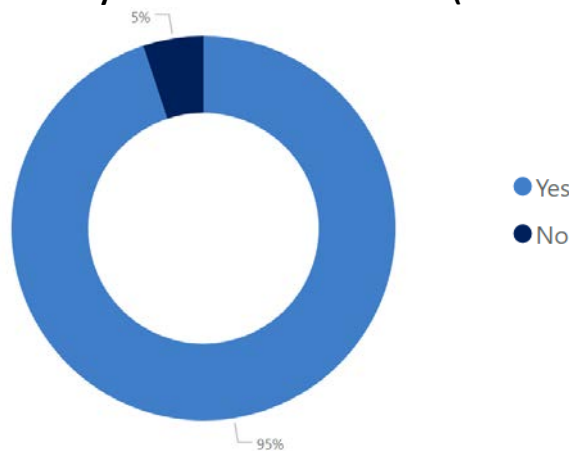


Information and Advice

Those people who were interviewed in Phase 1 were asked about their personal experience of finding information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Practically all people (95%) felt they had received enough information on how to protect themselves from Coronavirus (COVID-19) (Figure 23).

Figure 23: Do you feel like you have enough information about how to protect yourself from Coronavirus (COVID-19)?



People also reported very high levels of awareness (typically 95%-99%) of NHS guidance and official Government advice (Figure 24).

Figure 24¹: Which of the following NHS guidance and official government advice statements are you aware of?



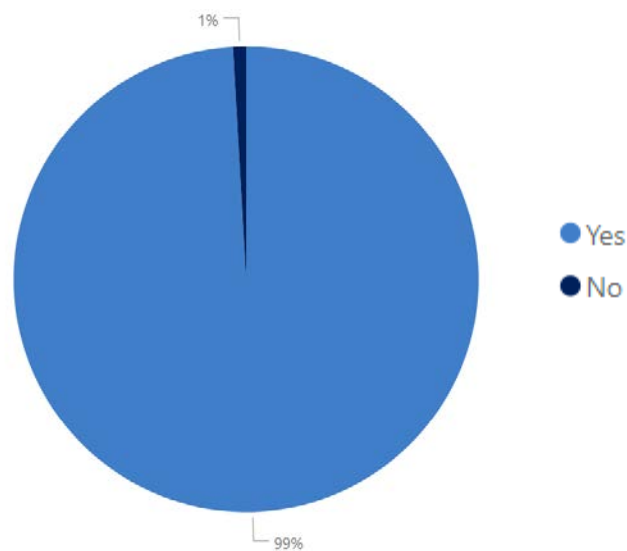
¹ Multiple responses permitted in this question

Hygiene Behaviour

People were asked about the actions they had taken to protect themselves and others against the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

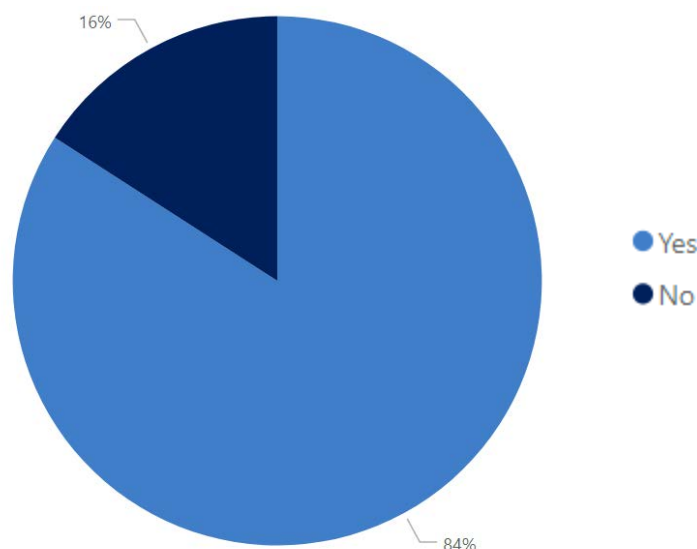
Practically all people (99%) said they had washed their hands in the previous seven days with soap and water to avoid infection (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Have you washed your hands with soap and water in the past seven days to avoid infection?



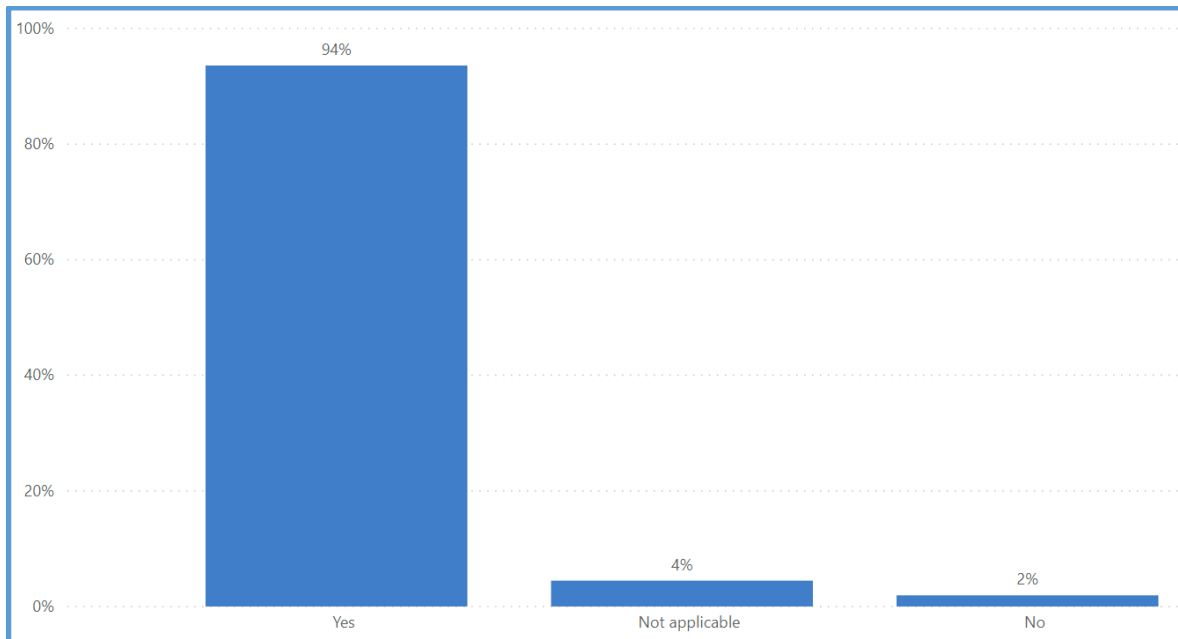
The vast majority of people (84%) said they had cleaned their hands with a sanitiser in the previous seven days to avoid infection (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Have you cleaned your hands with a sanitiser in the past seven days to avoid infection?



Of those people who had either washed their hands with soap and water or used sanitiser to clean their hands in the previous seven days, nearly all (94%) said they had cleaned their hands straight away after arriving home. (Figure 27).

Figure 27¹: Have you washed your hands with soap and water or sanitiser straight away when arriving at home?



¹ It is assumed that those who answered 'Not applicable' to this question did not leave their home

Further Information

Results and Tables

A visual representation of the findings and also the resulting data tables can be found at the following webpage:

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

Future Plans

Further results from the survey will be published periodically as more data becomes available when Phases 2-4 fieldwork periods close.

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