



# COVID-19 Social Study

**COVIDSocialStudy.org**

Understanding the psychological & social impact of the pandemic

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Data since 21<sup>st</sup> March  
>70,000 participants  
Aged 18+  
Living in the UK

Recruitment strategy:

1. Networks + media
2. Targeted recruitment
3. Vulnerable groups

Weighted to population norms on age, gender, country of living & education using ONS data

Weekly follow-up

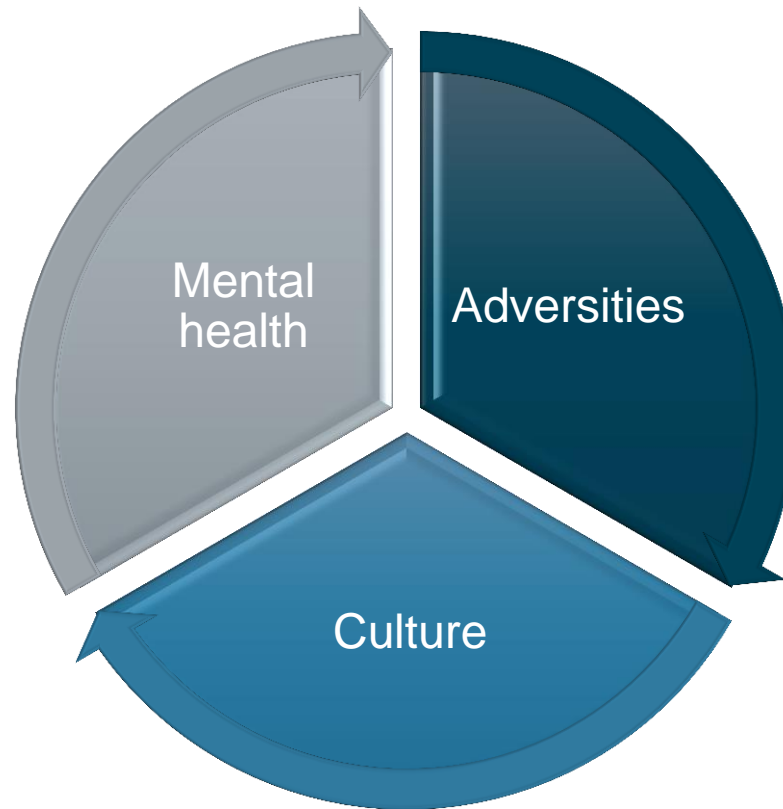
Repeat Qs & new modules

Treated as repeat cross-sectional data (reports) & longitudinal (papers)

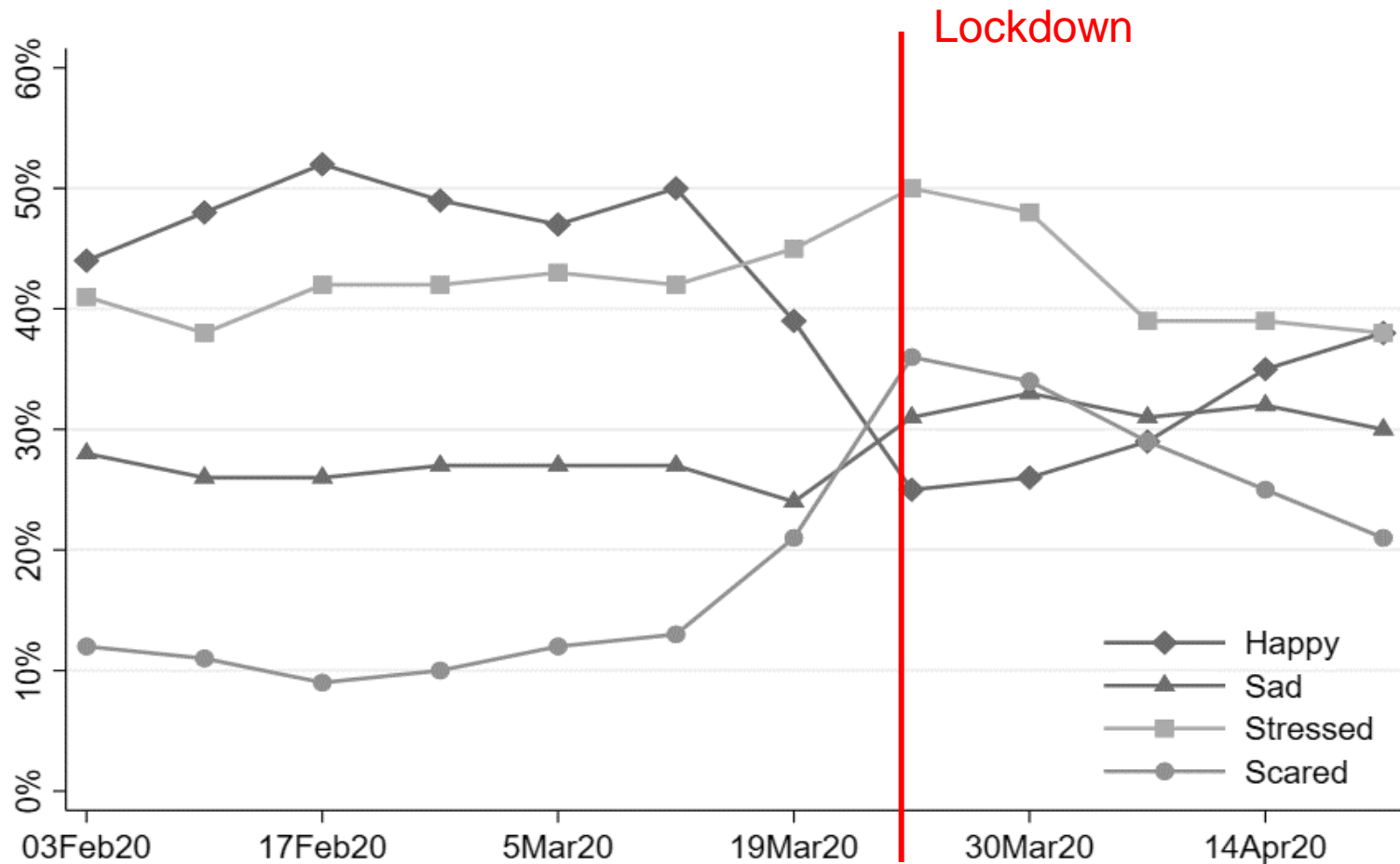
## Demographics

	<b>Raw data</b>	<b>Weighted data</b>
	%	%
<b>Gender, female</b>	73	48
<b>Age</b>		
<b>18-29</b>	10	18
<b>30-45</b>	31	27
<b>46-59</b>	30	24
<b>60+</b>	30	31
<b>Ethnicity, white</b>	95	88
<b>Education</b>		
<b>GCSE or below</b>	15	33
<b>A-levels or equivalent</b>	18	34
<b>Degree or above</b>	67	33
<b>Low household income (&lt;30k)</b>	40	49
<b>Diagnosed mental illness</b>	19	20

## Talk overview



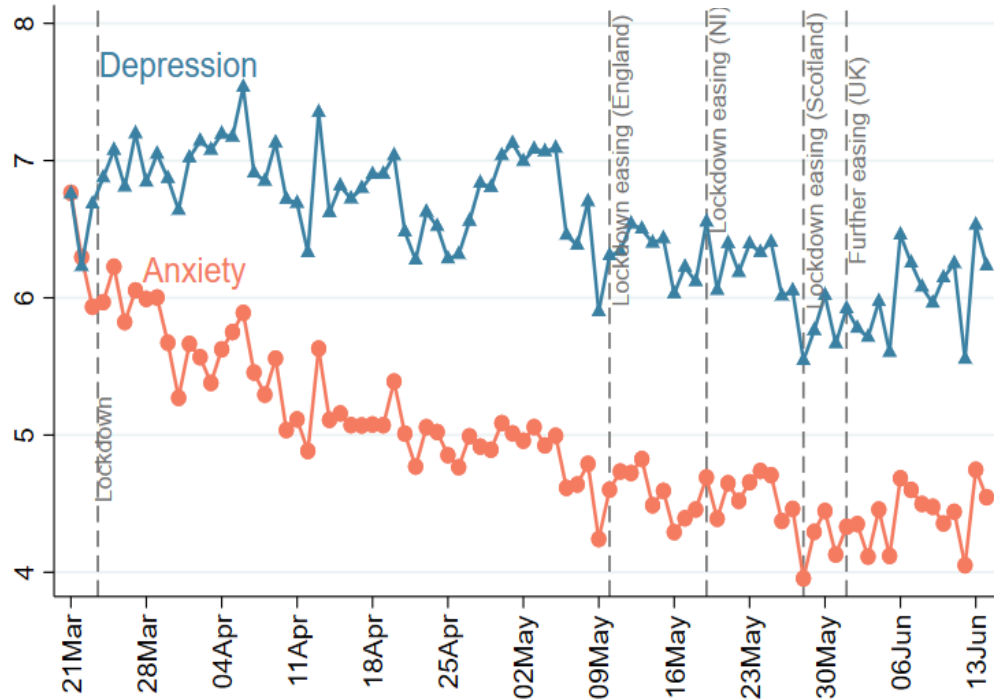
**What happened to mental health  
in the lead up to lockdown?**



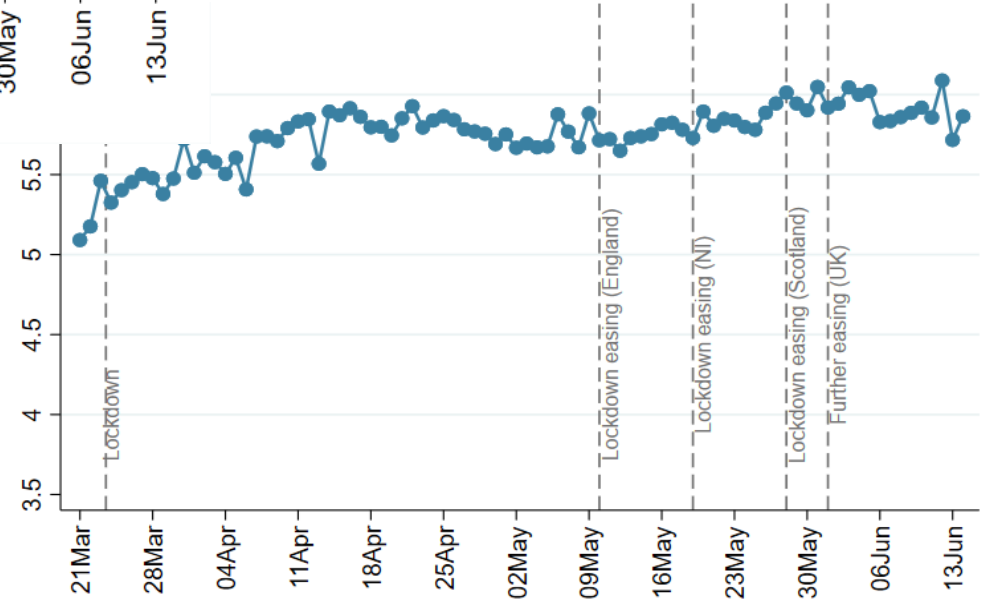
# What has happened to mental health **during** lockdown?



## Mental health



## Wellbeing

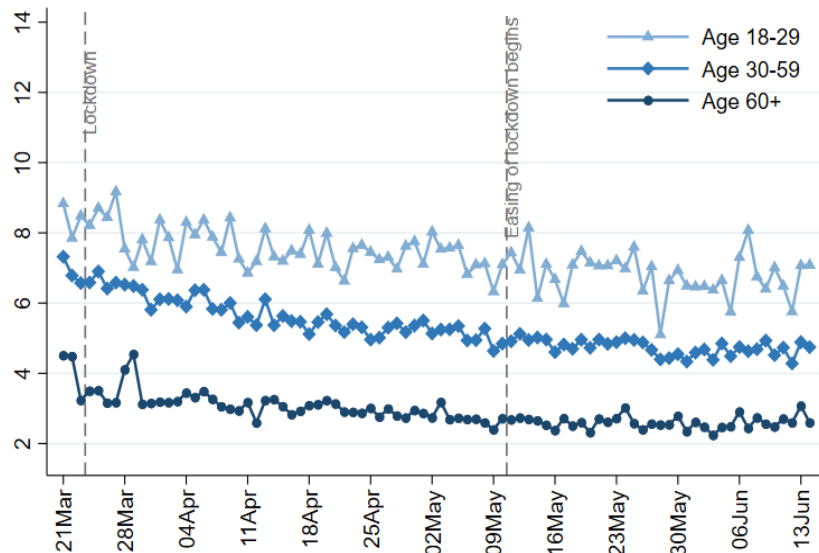


Fancourt, Bu, Mak & Steptoe  
Covid-19 Social Study Reports

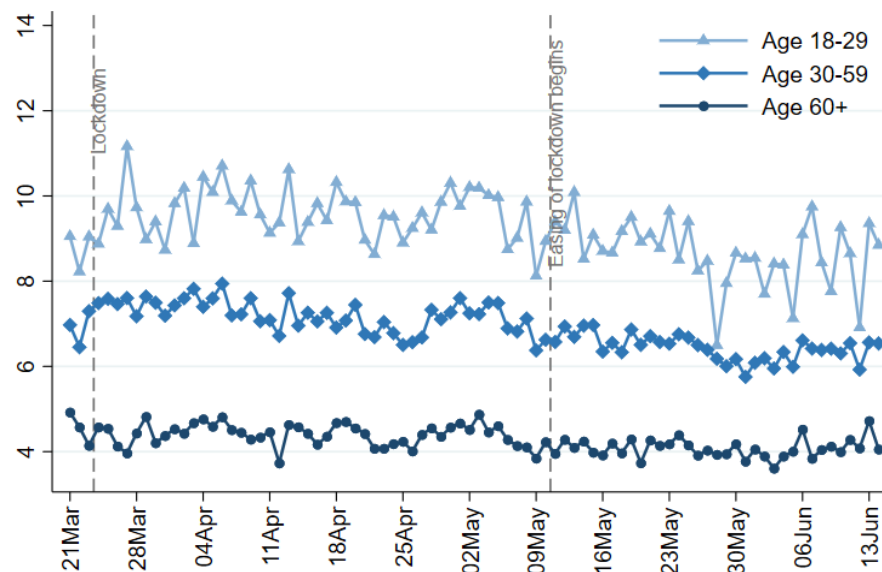
[www.COVIDSocialStudy.org](http://www.COVIDSocialStudy.org)



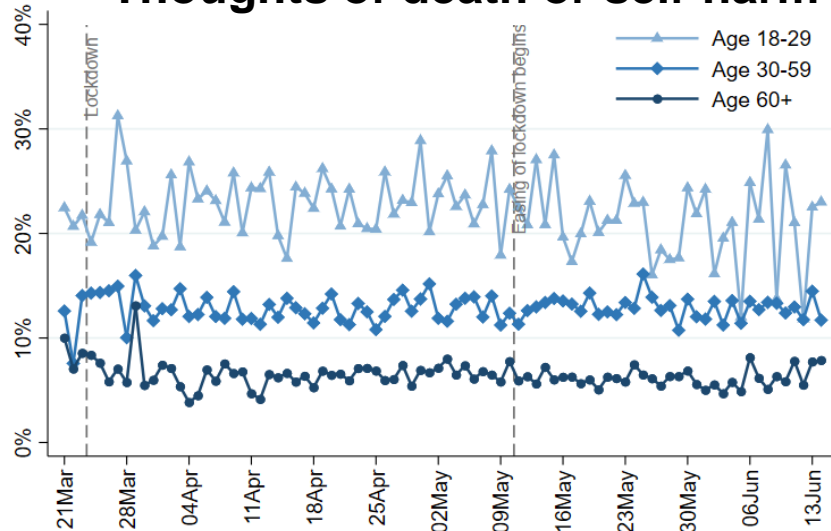
## Anxiety



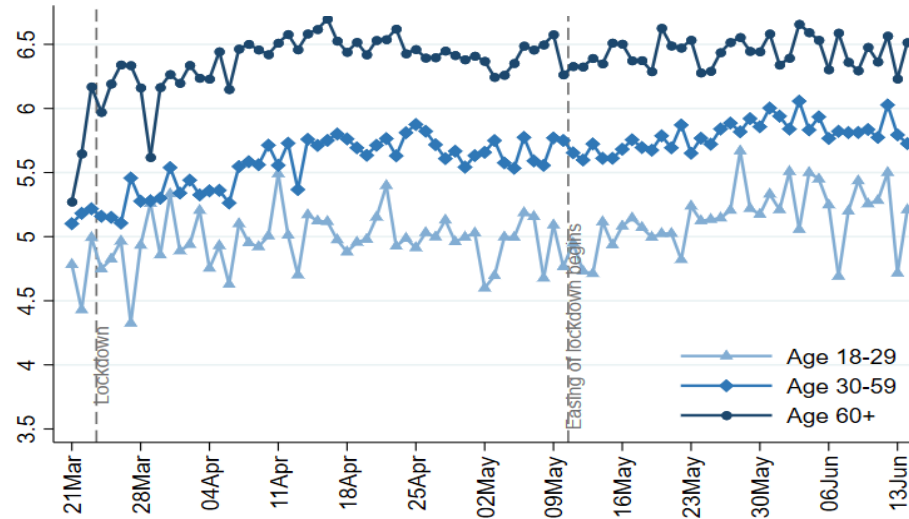
## Depression



## Thoughts of death or self-harm

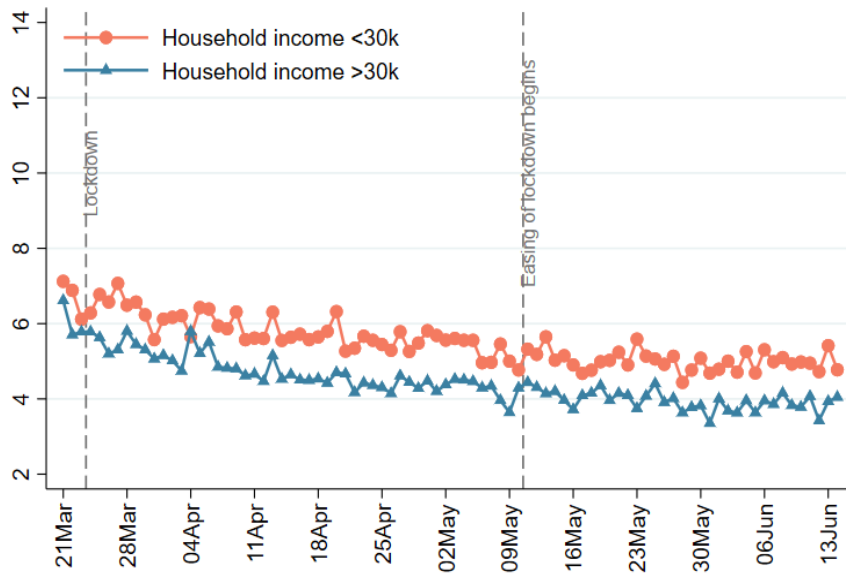


## Life satisfaction

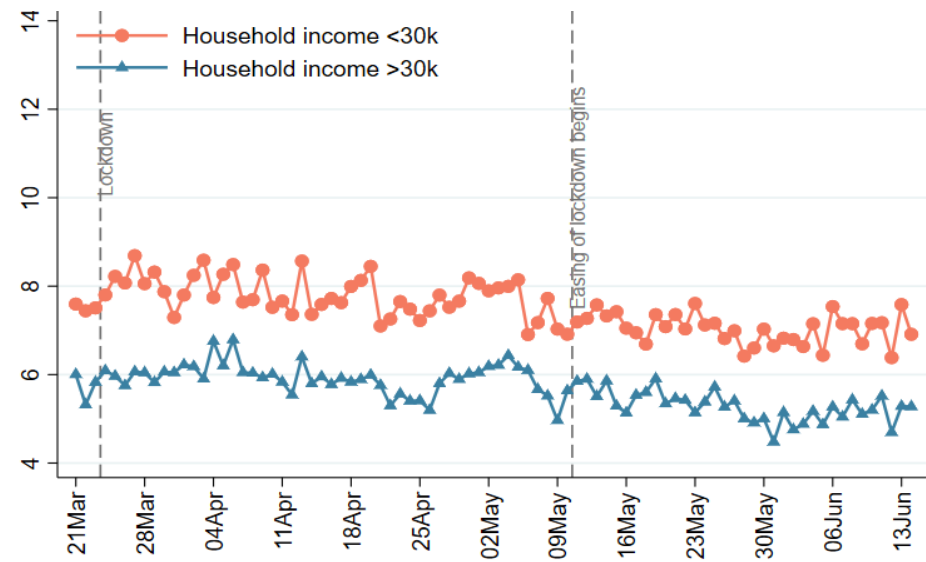




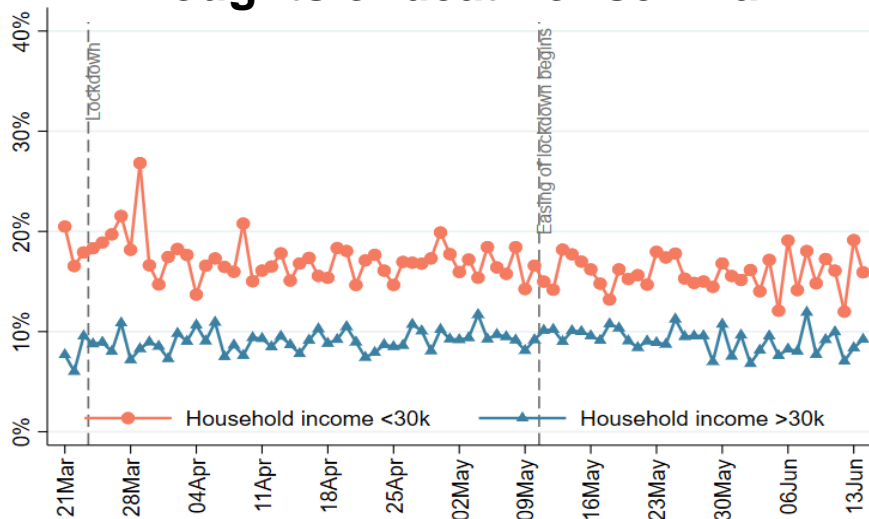
## Anxiety



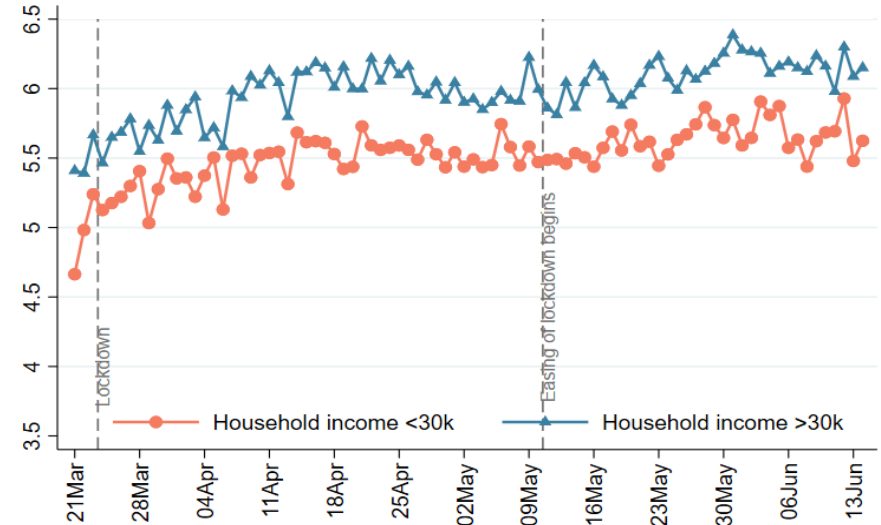
## Depression



## Thoughts of death or self-harm

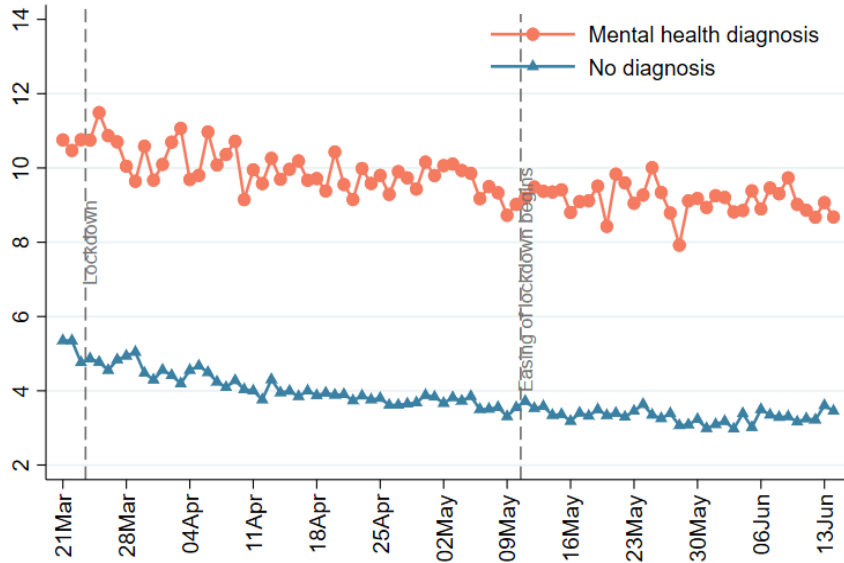


## Life satisfaction

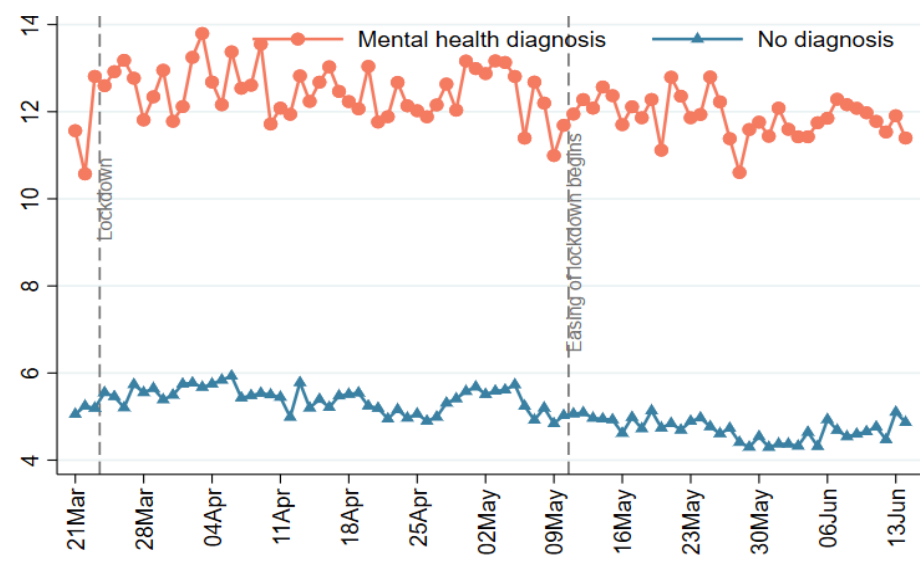




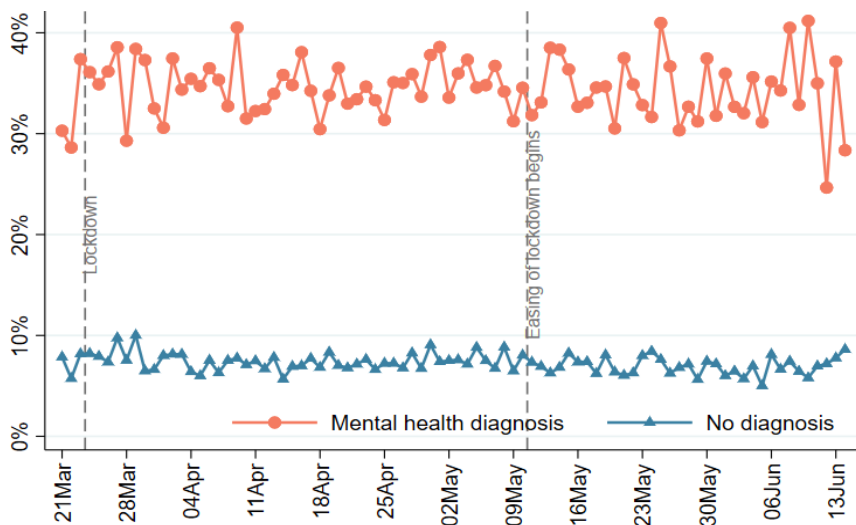
## Anxiety



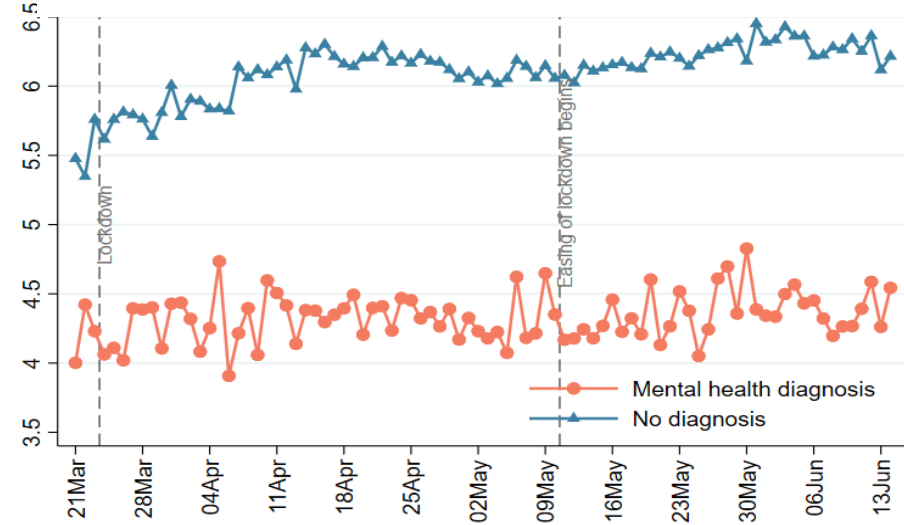
## Depression



## Thoughts of death or self-harm



## Life satisfaction



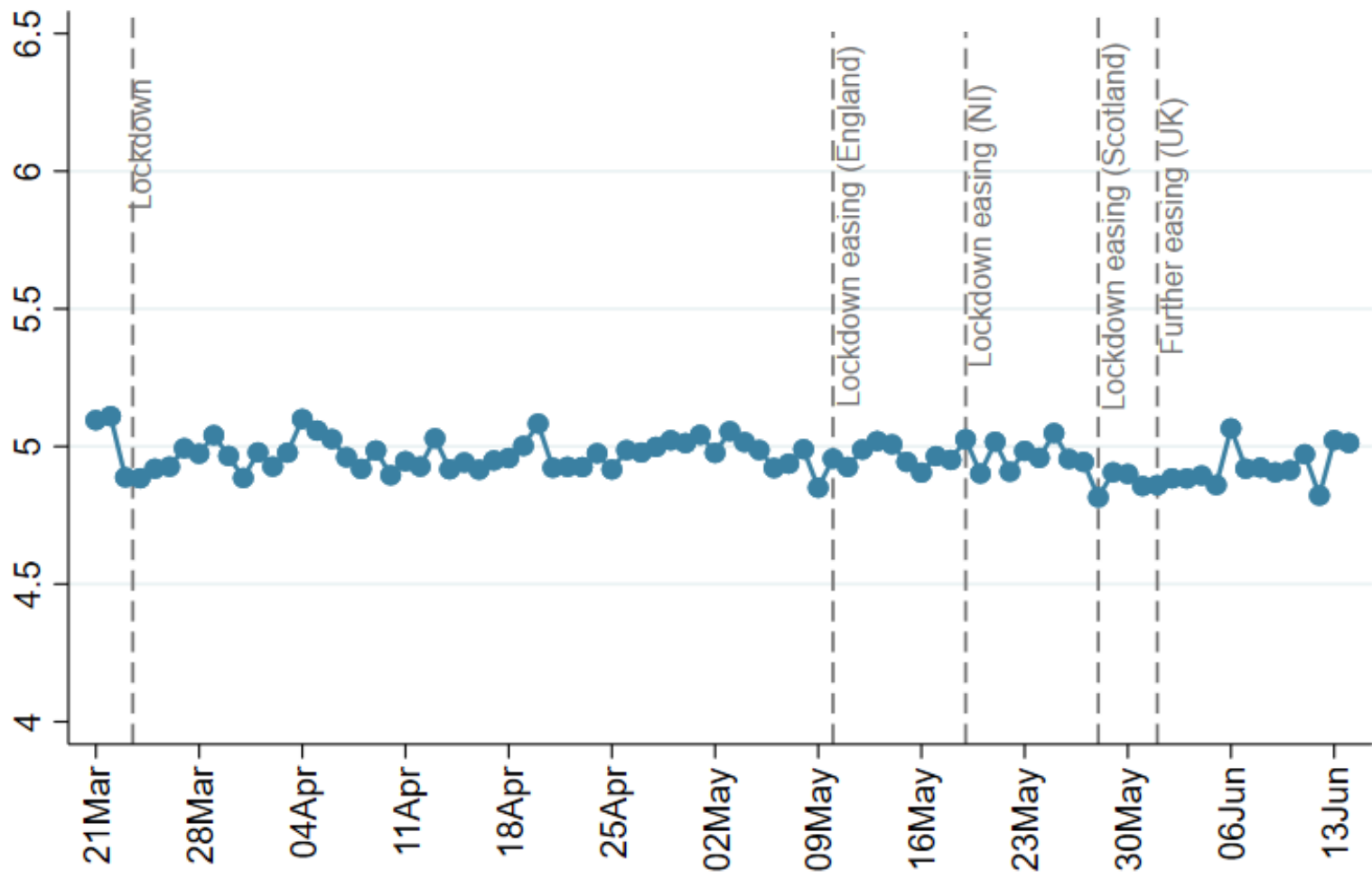


# Loneliness

	<b>Pre-COVID-19</b>	<b>During COVID-19</b>
	Understanding Society (UKHLS) (2017-19)	UCL Covid-19 Social Study (Week 1) (21-27/03/20)
UCLA-3: score 3	48.4%	34.0%
UCLA-3: score 4	13.9%	13.8%
UCLA-3: score 5	11.8%	12.9%
UCLA-3: score 6	15.7%	17.0%
UCLA-3: score 7	4.0%	7.6%
UCLA-3: score 8	2.6%	5.9%
UCLA-3: score 9	3.5%	8.8%
<b>How often do you feel lonely</b>		
Hardly ever/never	62.9%	49.2%
Sometimes	28.6%	32.5%
Often	8.5%	18.3%

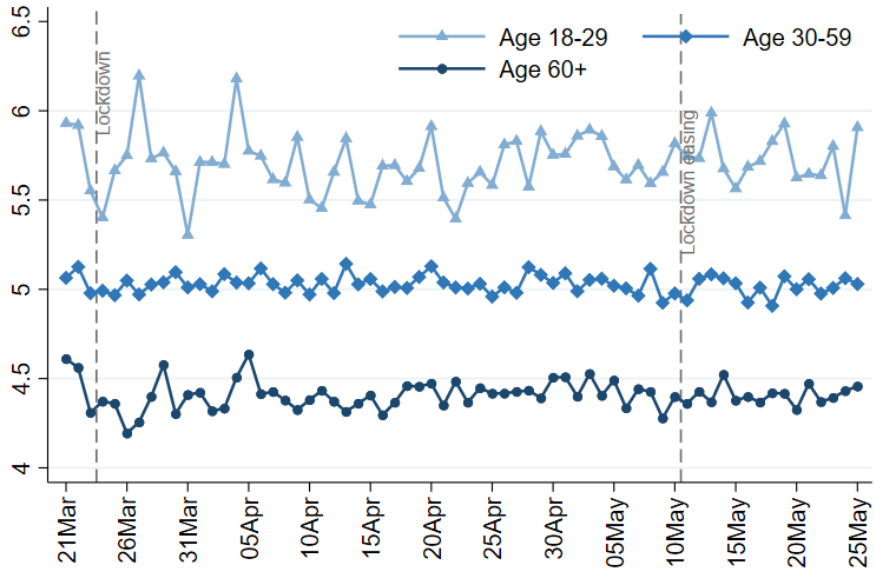


### Loneliness across lockdown

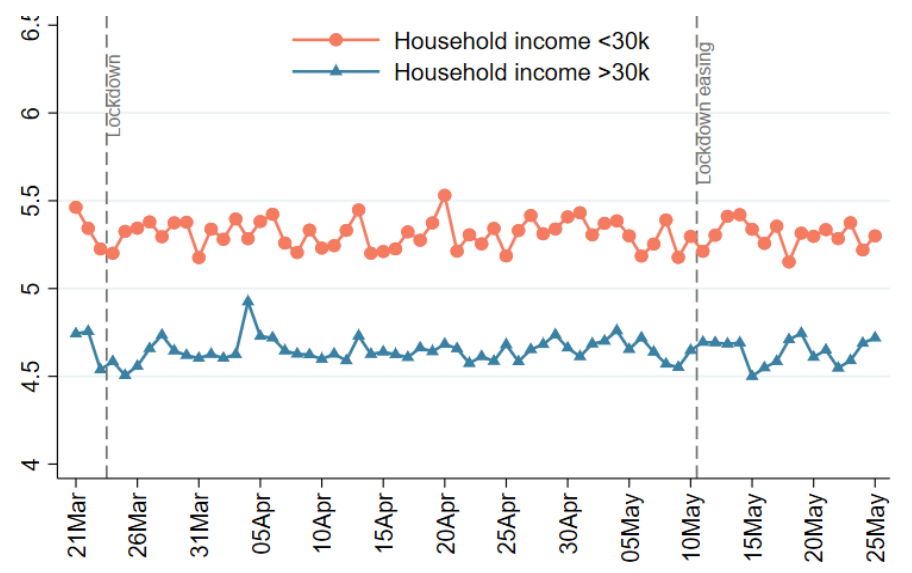




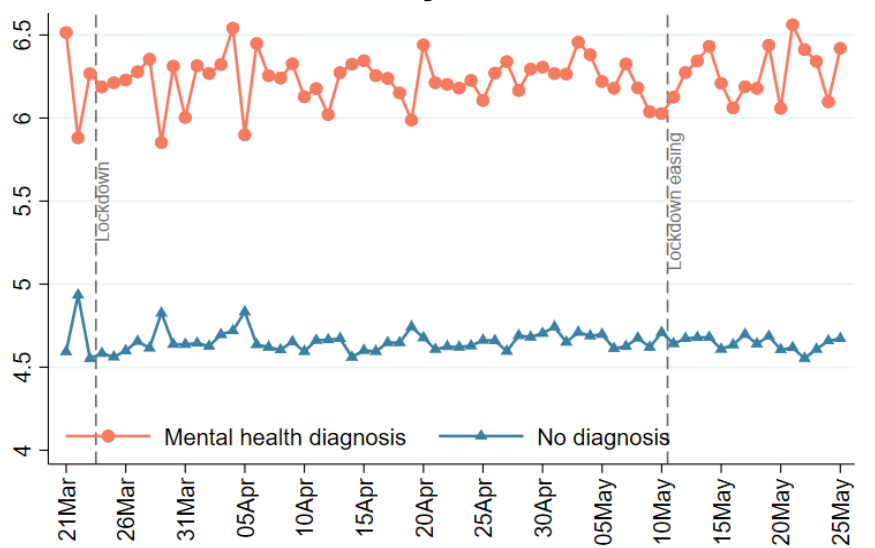
### Loneliness by age



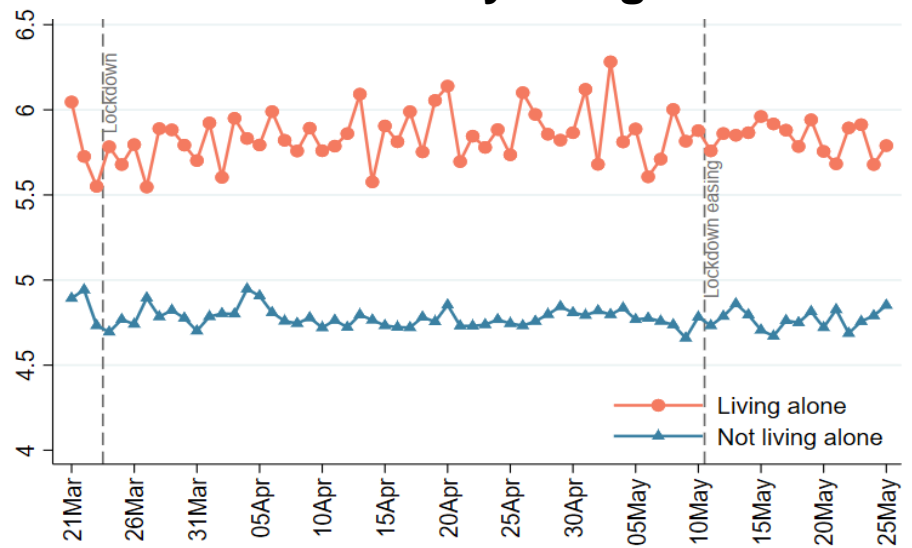
### Loneliness by income



### Loneliness by mental illness



### Loneliness by living alone



### Risk factors prior to COVID-19

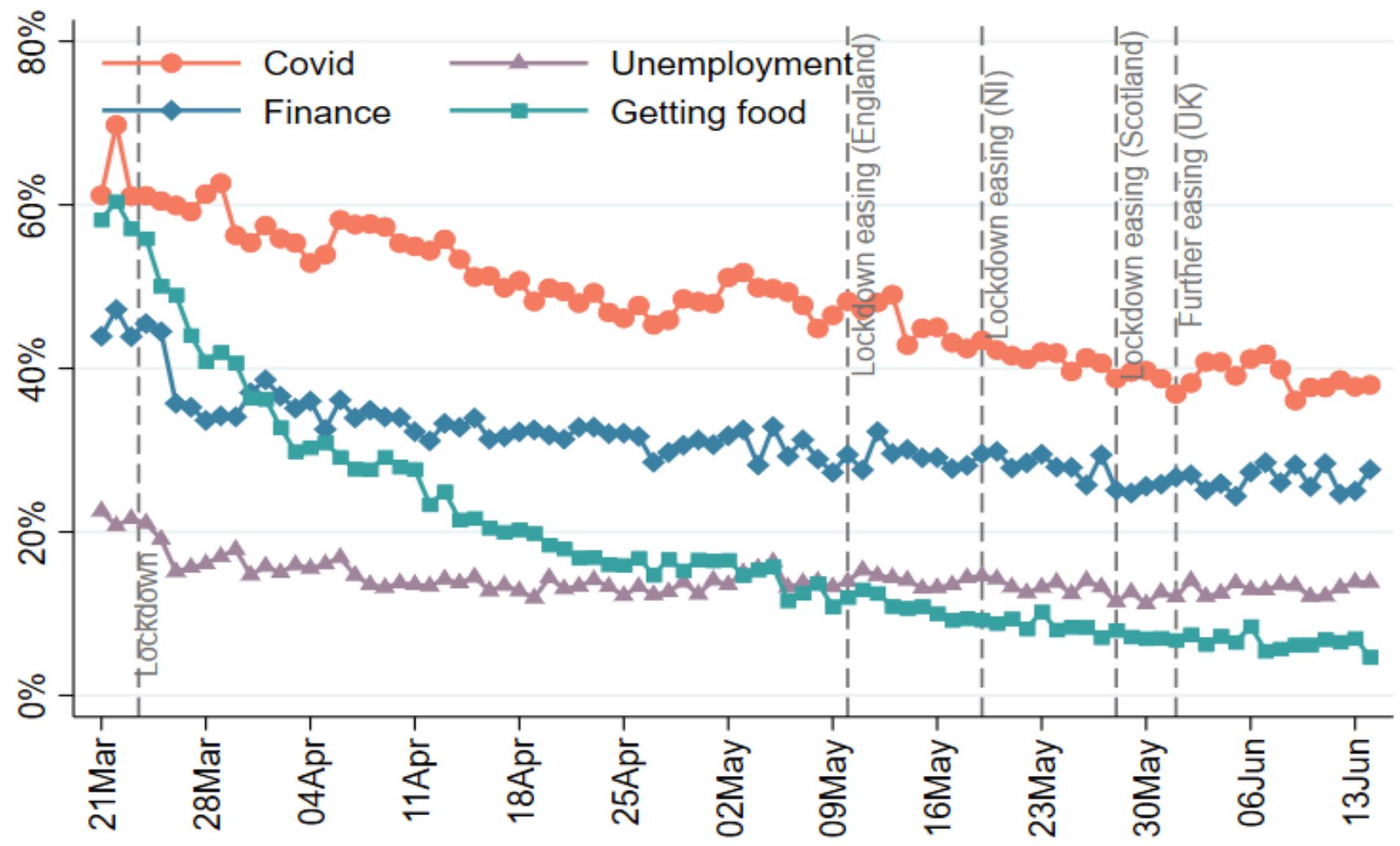


### Risk factors during COVID-19



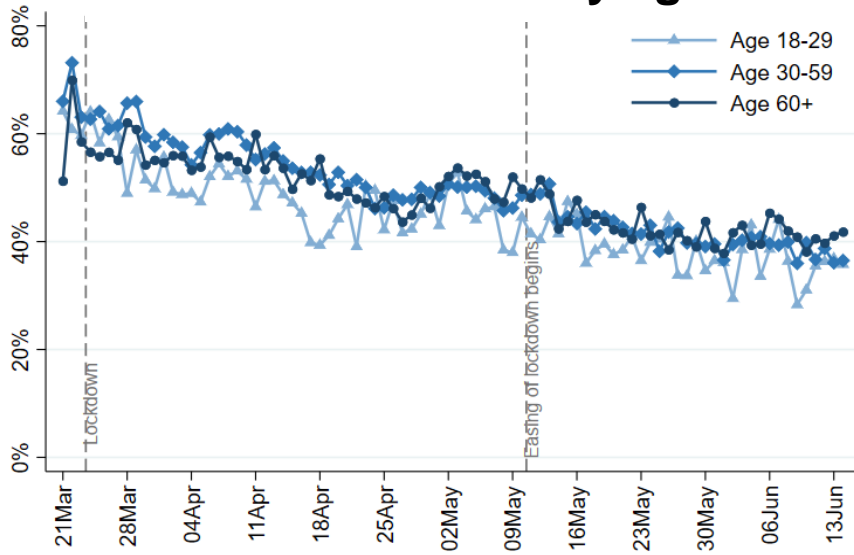


# Stressors

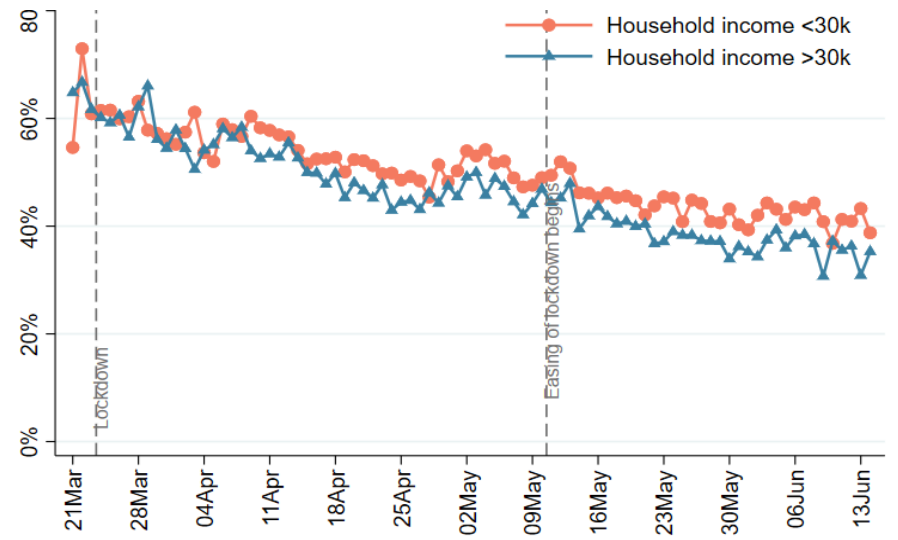




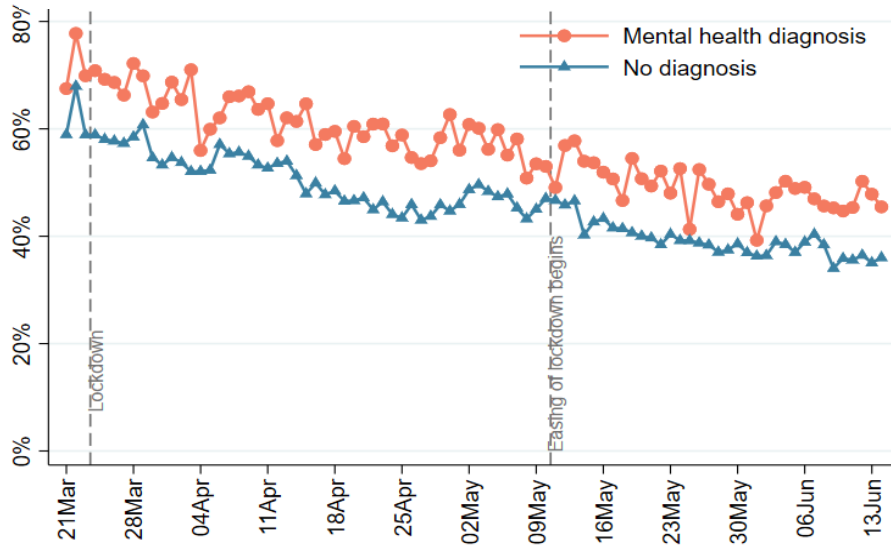
### Covid-19 stress by age



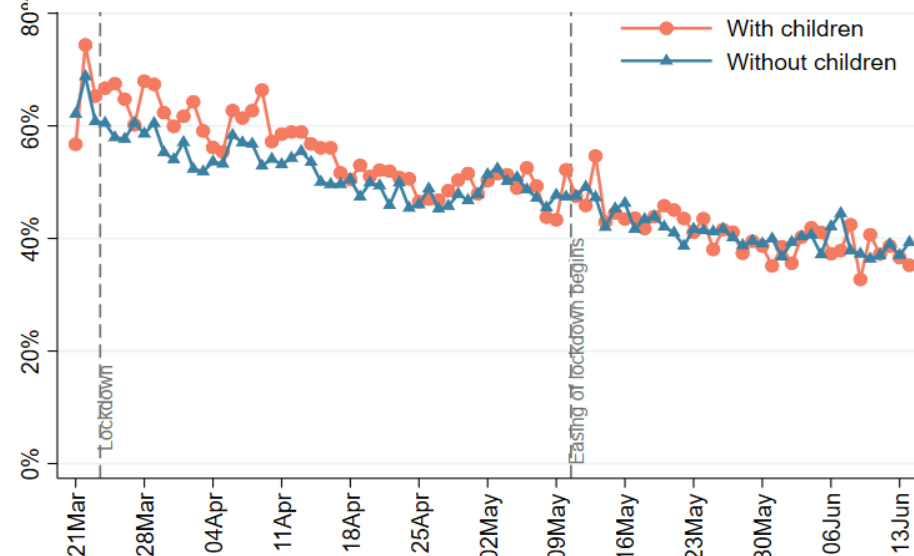
### Covid-19 by income



### Covid-19 stress by mental illness

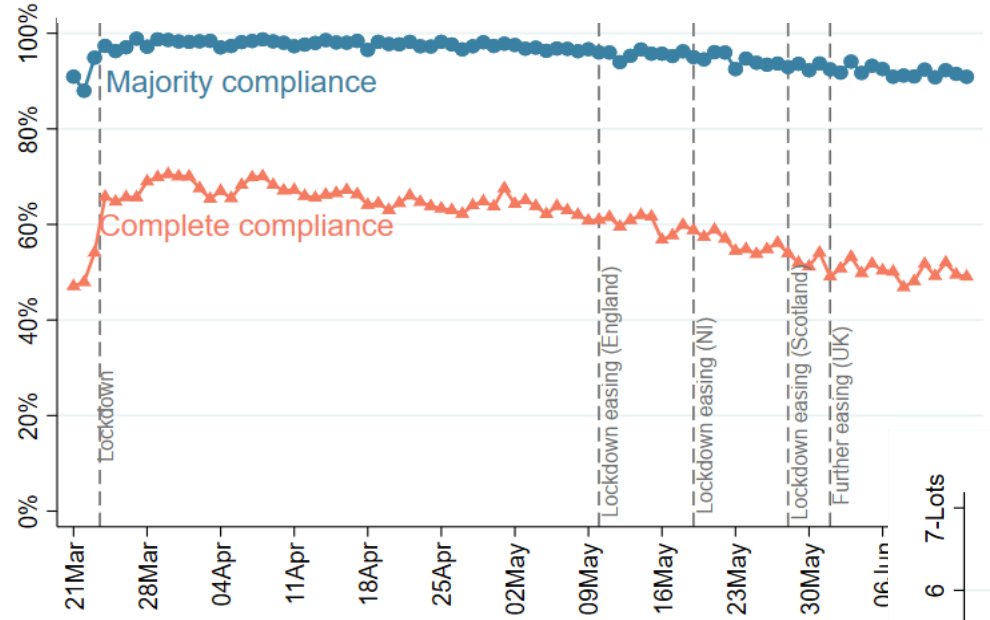


### Covid-19 stress by living w/ children

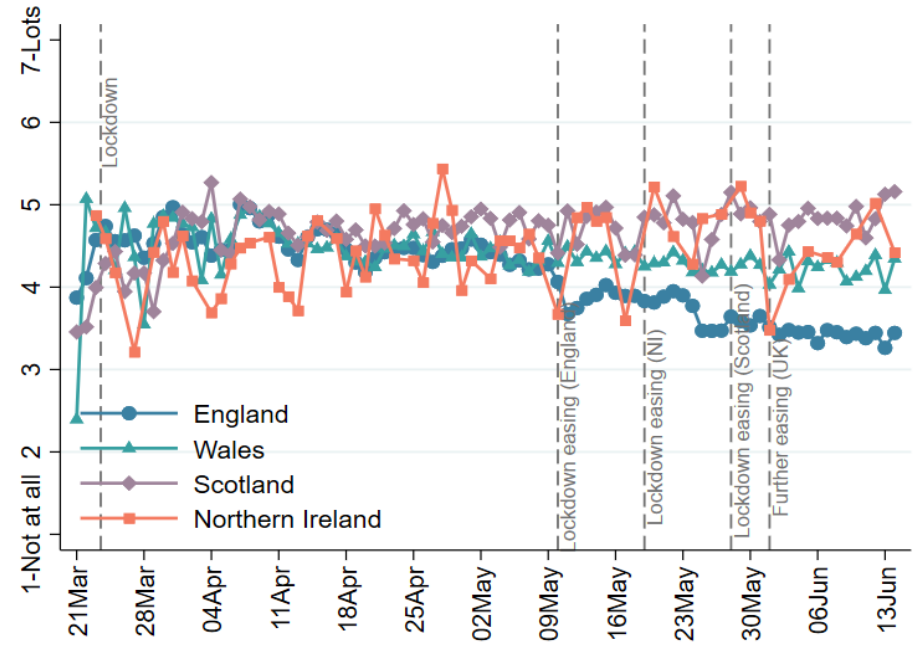




# Compliance

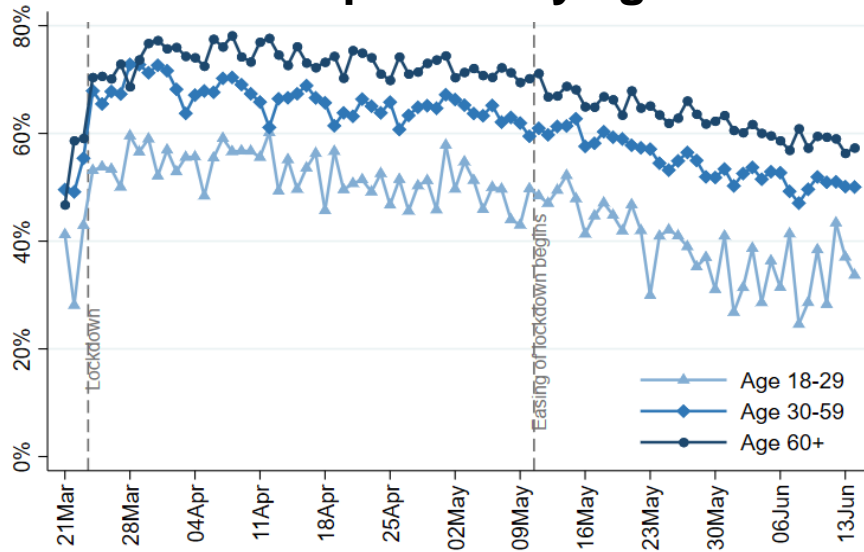


# Confidence in government to handle the pandemic

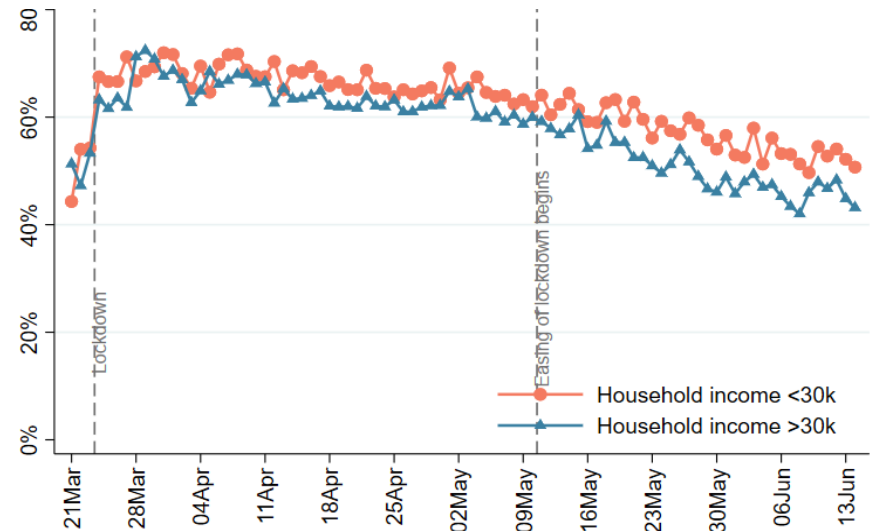




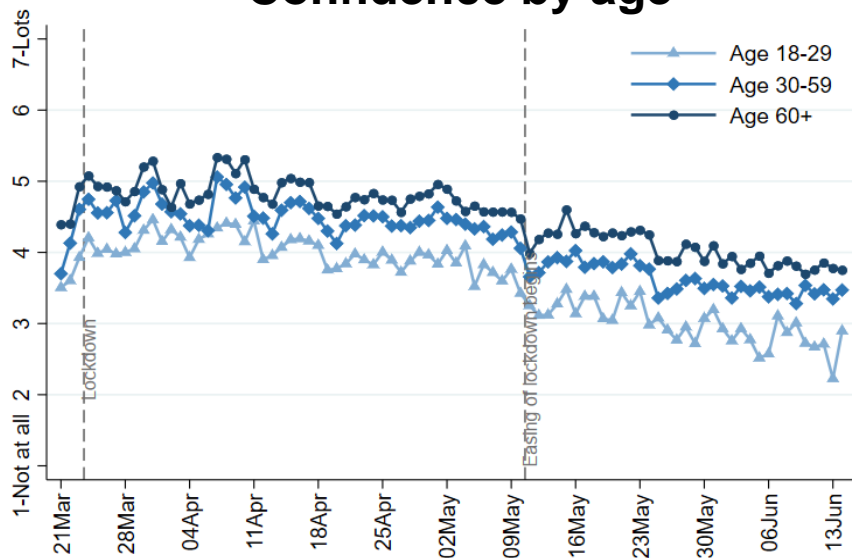
### Compliance by age



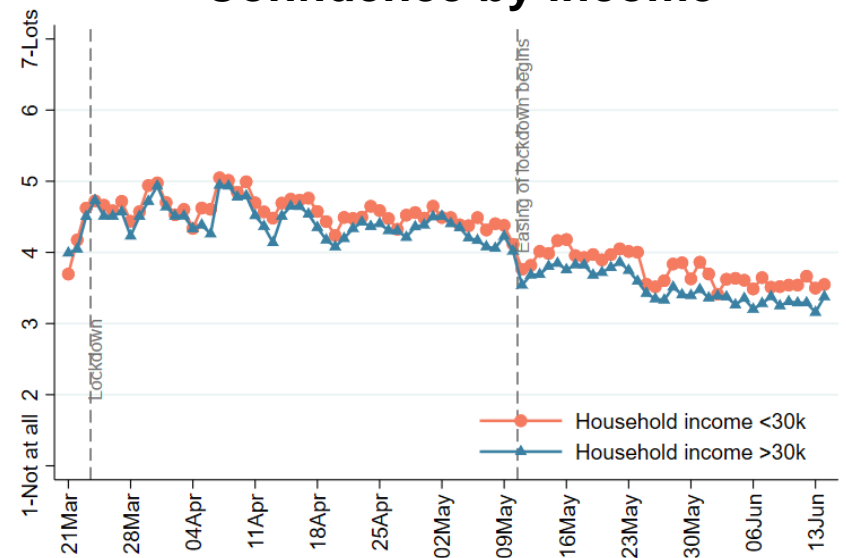
### Compliance by income



### Confidence by age



### Confidence by income





## Take home points

- Mental health got worse in the lead up to lockdown coming in
- Levels during lockdown appear higher than usual
- Depression improved a bit as lockdown eased but has plateaued. Anxiety was decreasing but has also plateaued
- Loneliness is also higher than usual and has not improved across lockdown.
- Young people have worse mental health on every measure
- There is a clear socio-economic gradient in mental health
- Specific stressors around basic needs and finances have decreased
- Many people are not particularly scared of the virus itself
- Decreases in fear about Covid have occurred alongside decreases in compliance and confidence in the government to handle the pandemic



**How have people been  
affected by adversities?**



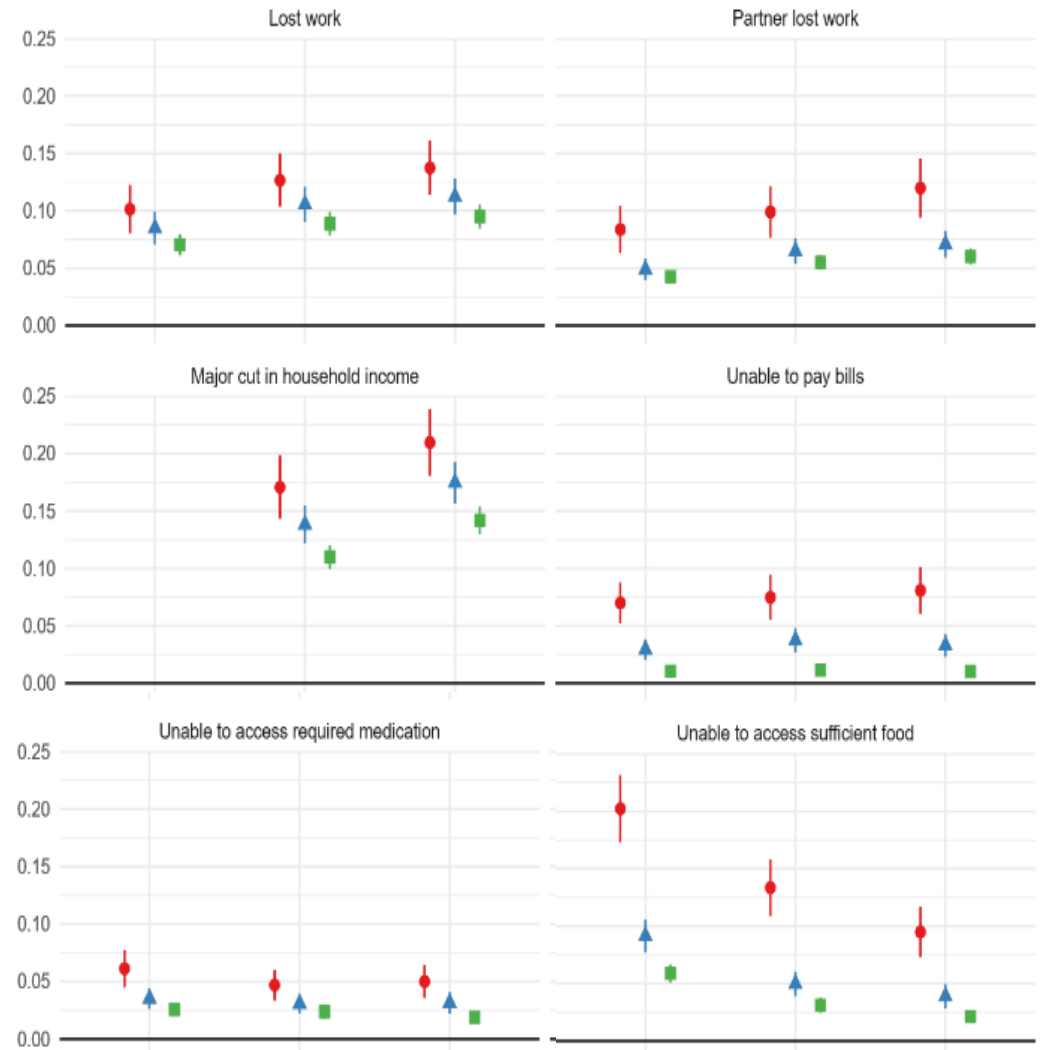
## Indicators of low socio-economic position

- Annual household income <£30,000
- Highest educational qualification GCSE or lower
- Unemployed
- Renting (vs owning) accommodation
- Living in over-crowded accommodation

Low SEP Index  2+  1  0



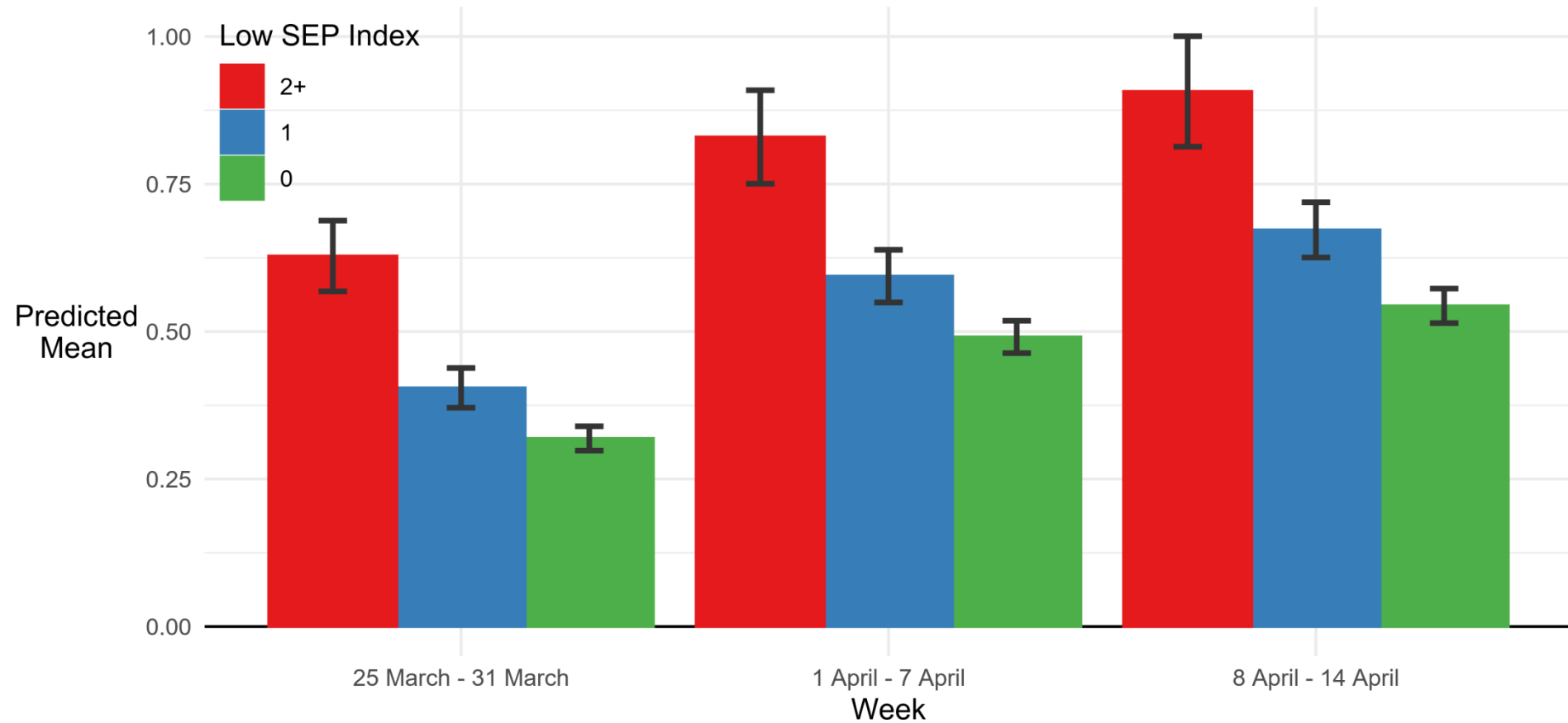
# Adversities during COVID-19



Wright, Steptoe & Fancourt (2020) Are we all in this together? Longitudinal assessment of cumulative adversities by socio-economic position in the first 3 weeks of lockdown in the UK. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community health*



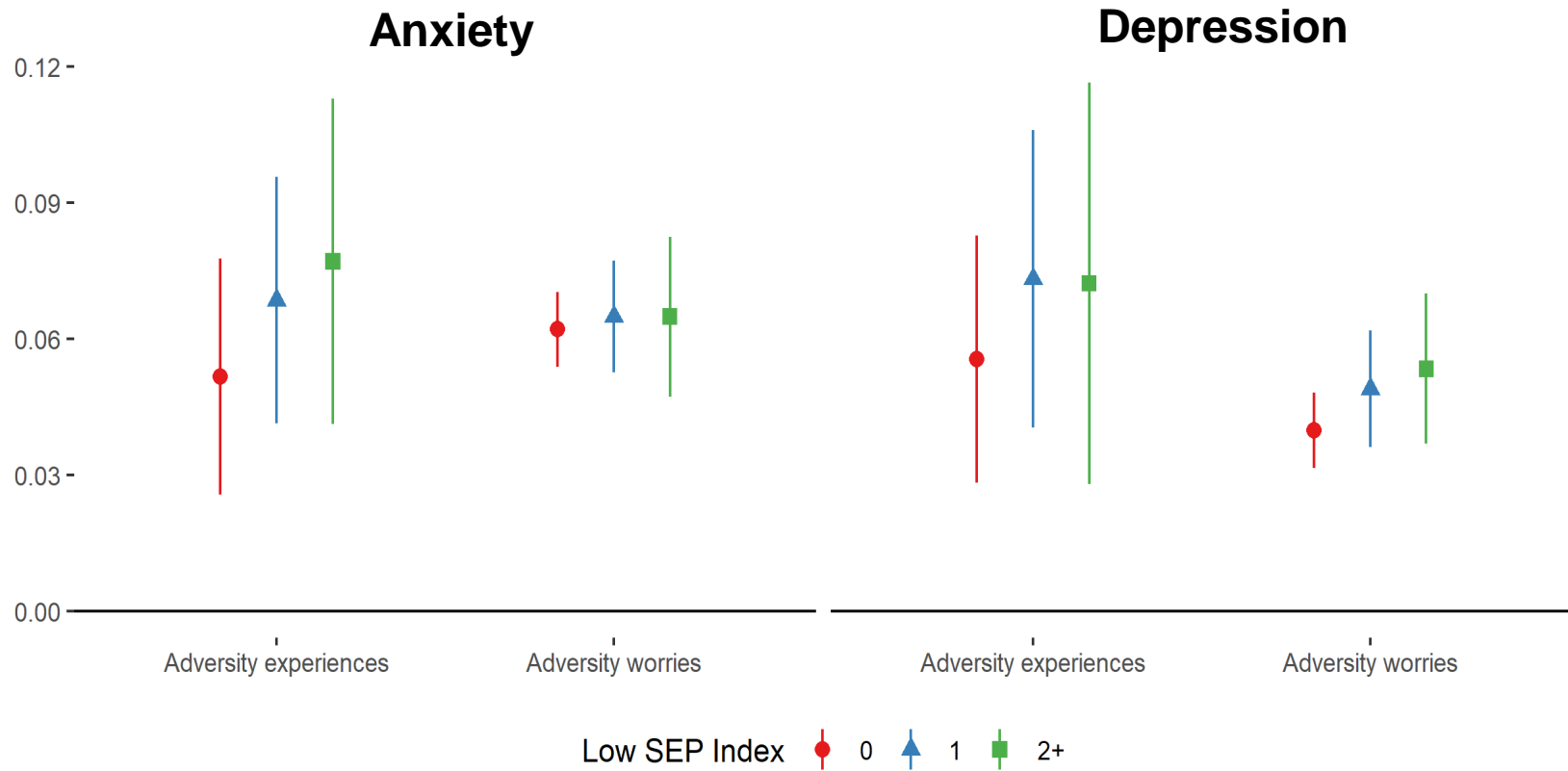
# Number of adversities experienced during COVID-19



Wright, Steptoe & Fancourt (2020) Are we all in this together? Longitudinal assessment of cumulative adversities by socio-economic position in the first 3 weeks of lockdown in the UK. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community health*



# Worries & experiences of adversities and mental health



How are adversities during COVID-19 affecting mental health? Differential associations for worries and experiences and implications for policy  
Liam Wright, Andrew Steptoe, Daisy Fancourt  
medRxiv 2020.05.14.20101717

## Take home points

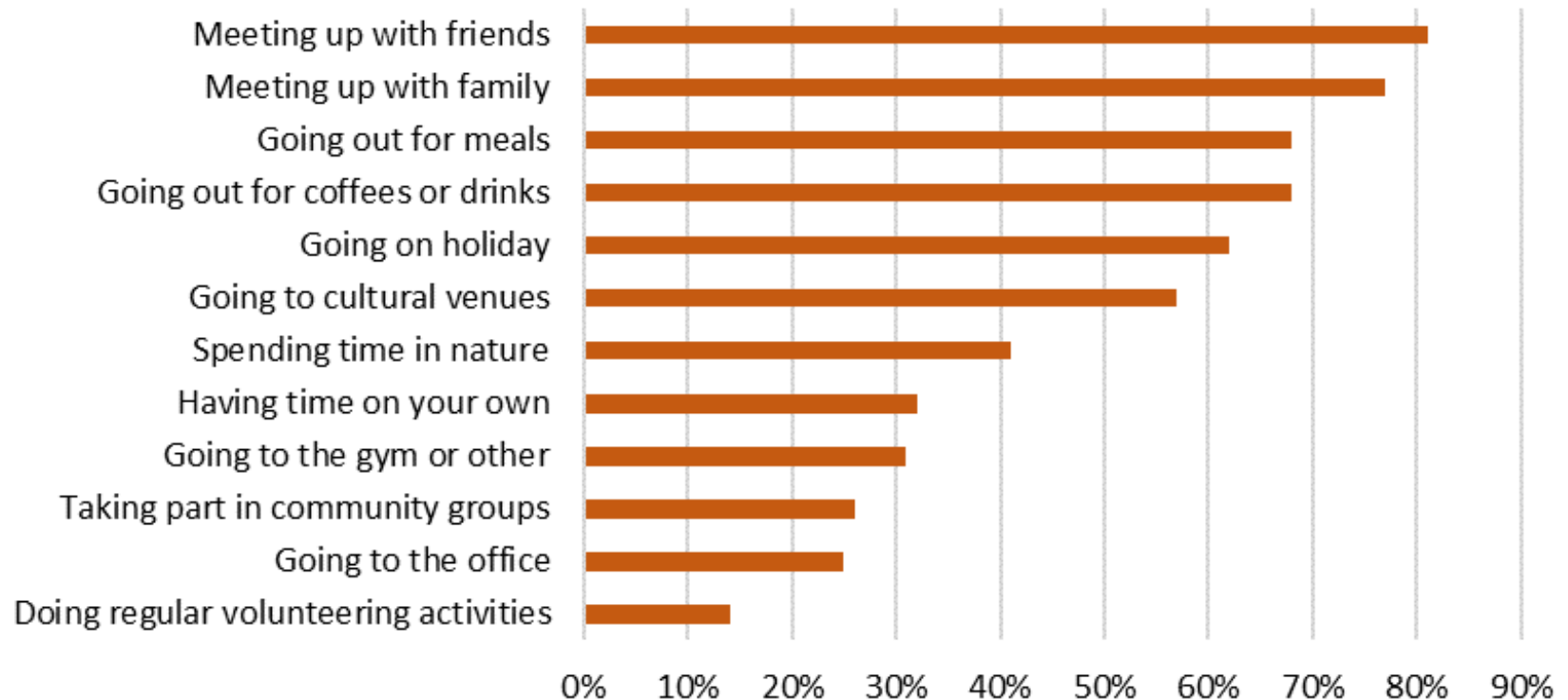
- People of lower socio-economic position (SEP) have been disproportionately affected by adversities during the pandemic
- This has not improved in the early weeks of lockdown even in spite of measures taken (e.g. furlough schemes)
- People of lower SEP have also worried more about adversities
- Both worries about adversities and experience of adversities appear to have been driving poorer mental health during lockdown
- The relationship between adversities and mental health has been stronger in people of lower SEP

**In other words, people of low SEP have been hit three times:**

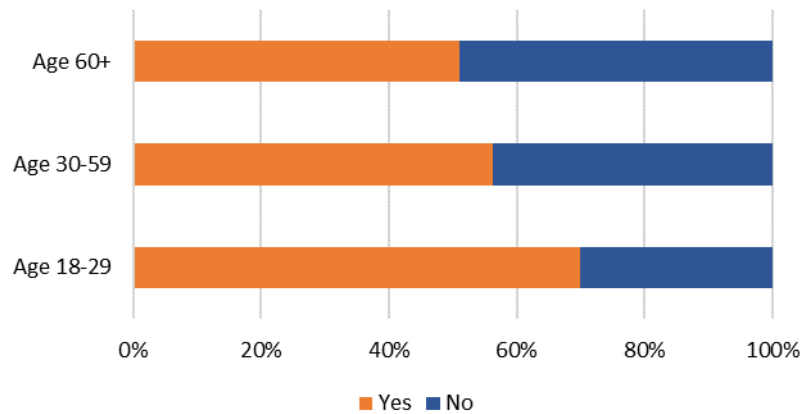
- 1. More worries about adversities**
- 2. More experience of adversities**
- 3. More of an impact of adversities on their mental health**

# Lockdown continuation and easing...

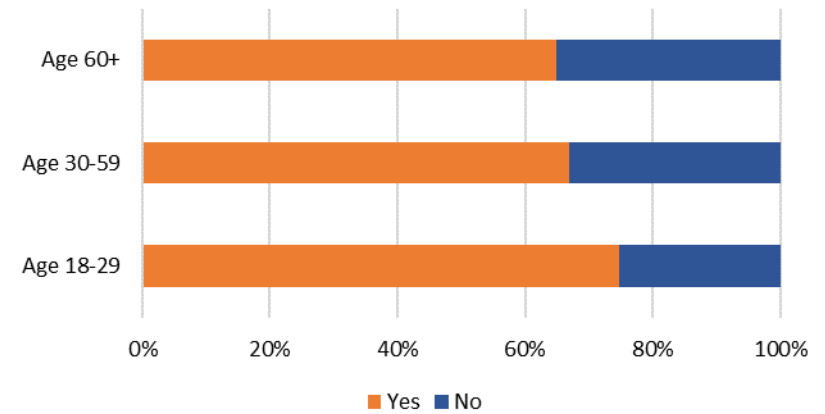
# What are people missing most?



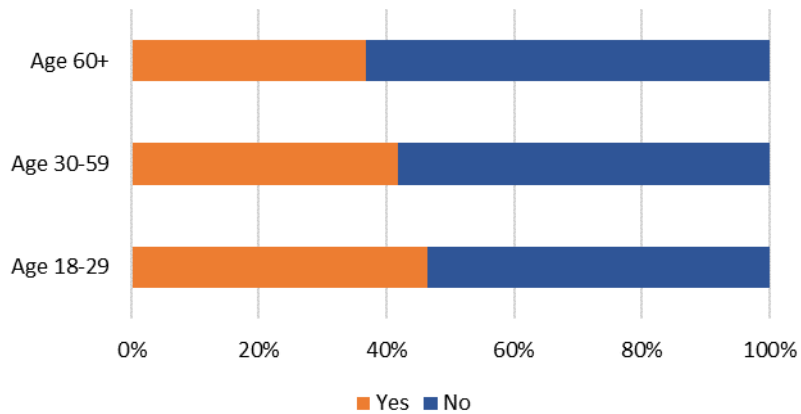
## Going to cultural venues



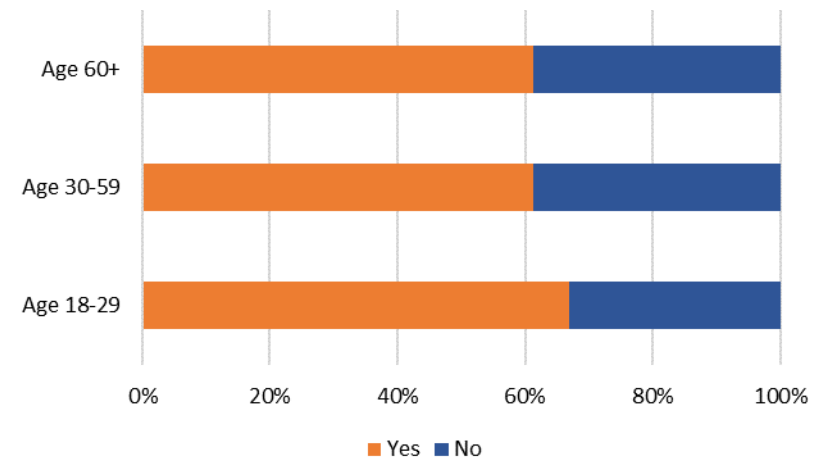
## Going out for coffee/drinks



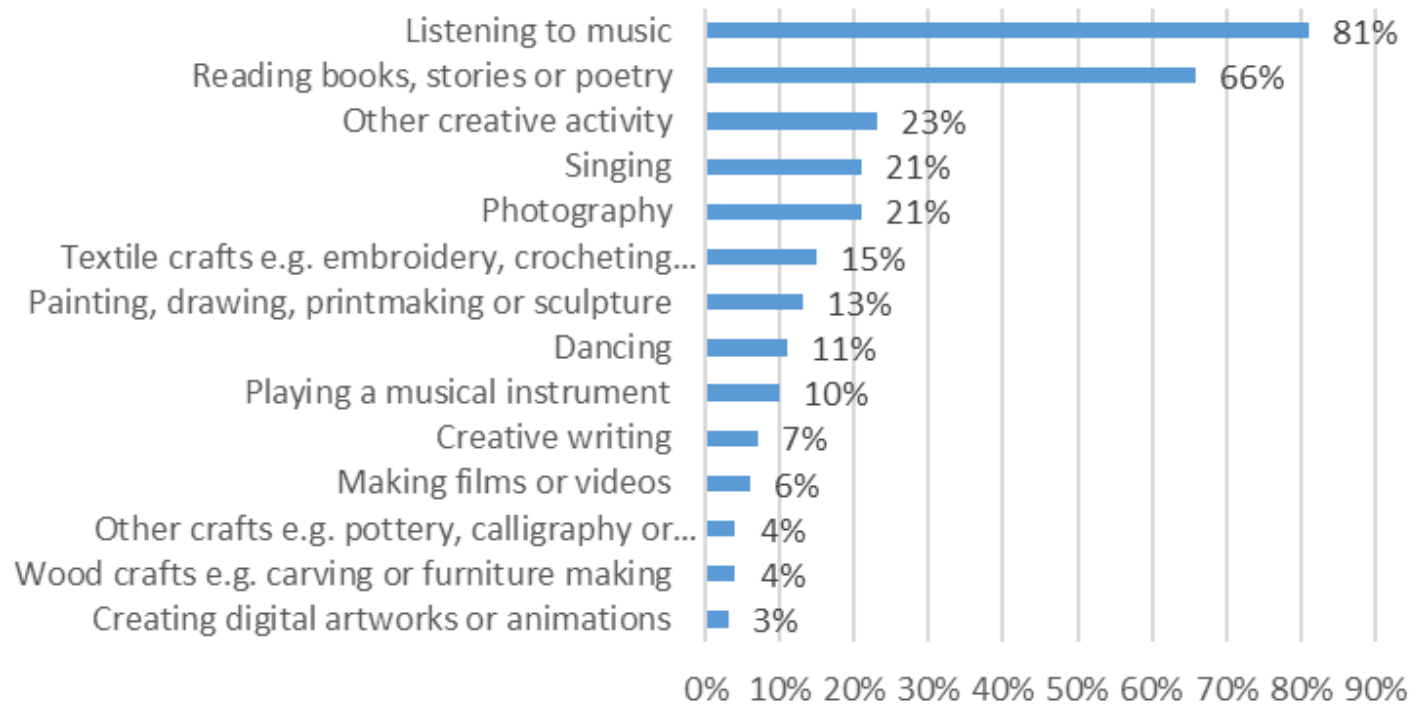
## Spending time in nature



## Going on holiday



## Arts activities



Less than usual: 16.4%

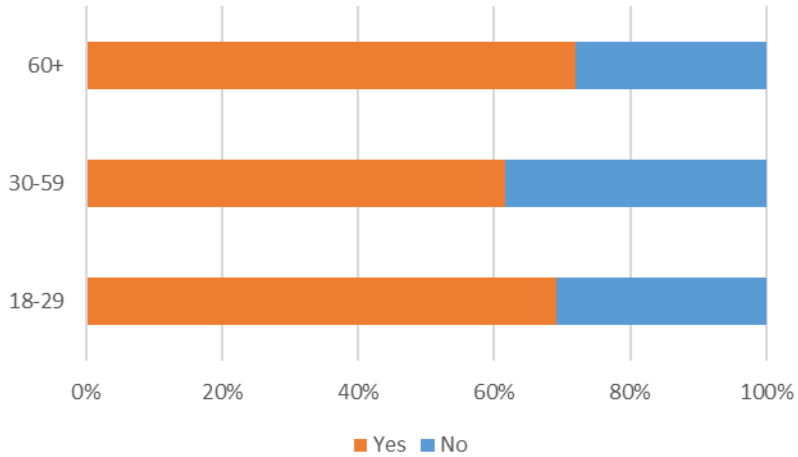
About the same: 62.1%

More than usual: 21.4%

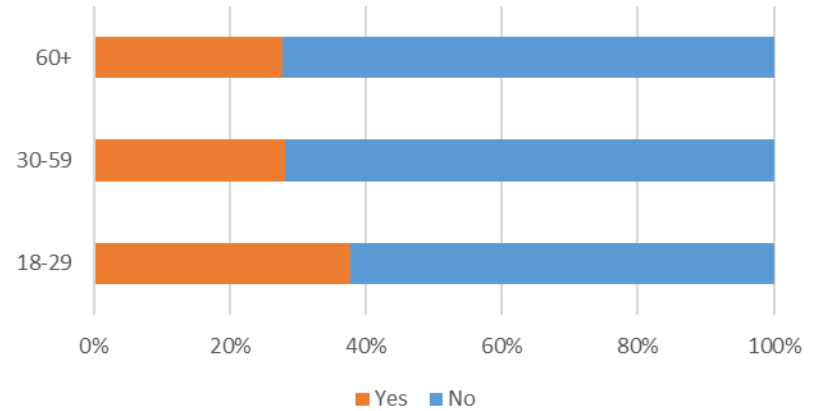
How does this  
compare to normal?



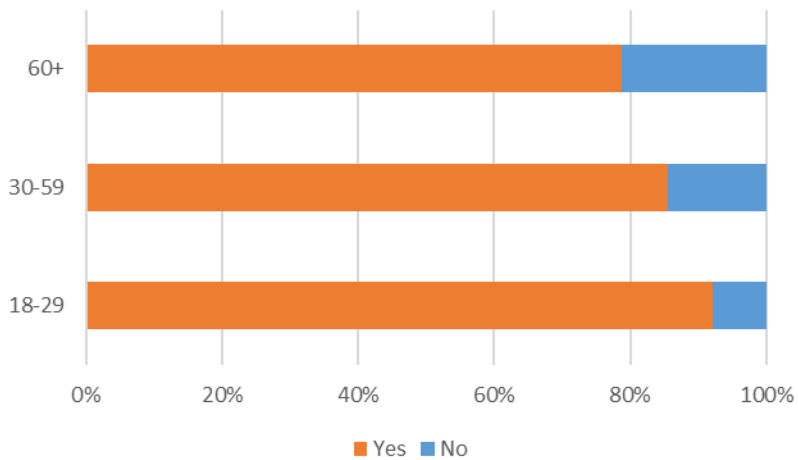
### Engaging in reading by age groups



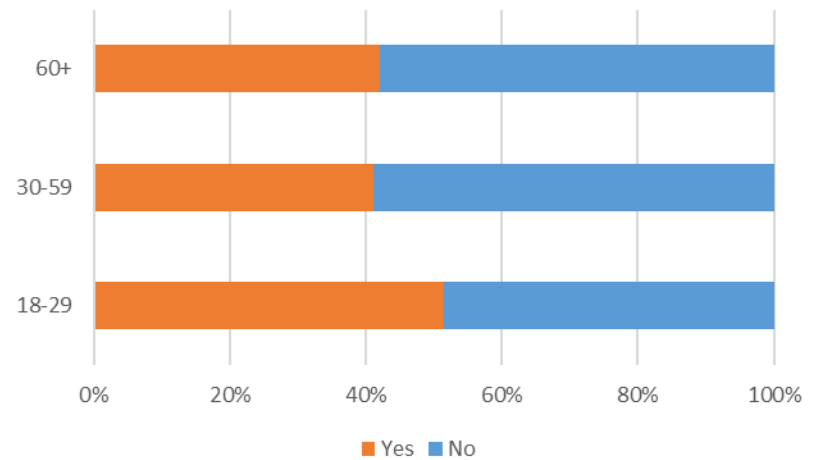
### Engaging in digital arts & writing by age groups



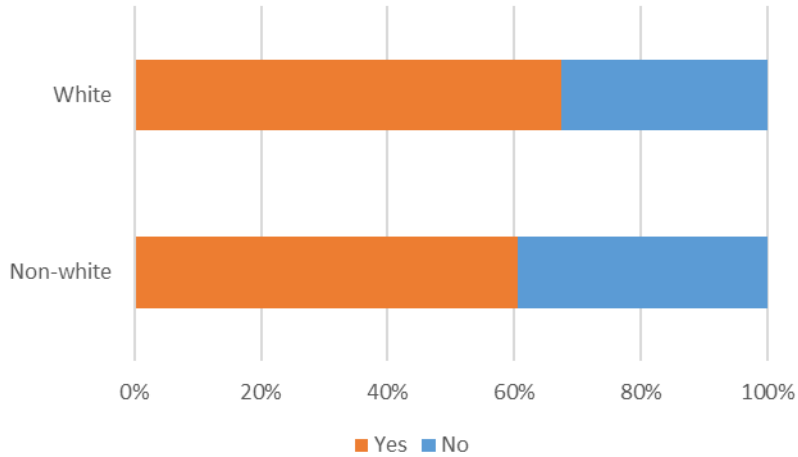
### Engaging in performing arts by age groups



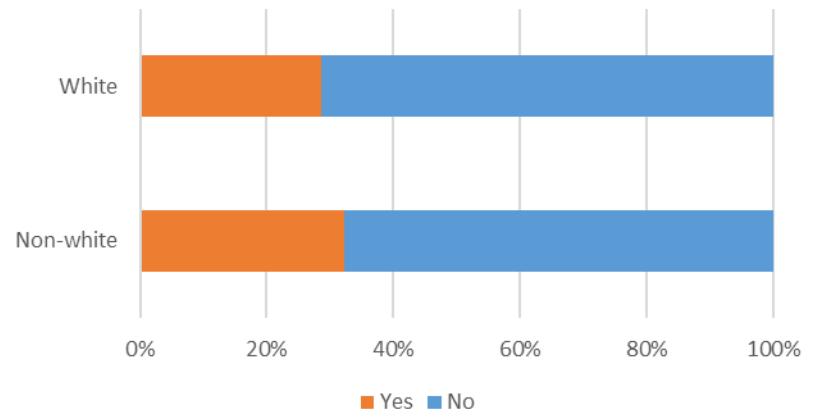
### Engaging in crafts by age groups



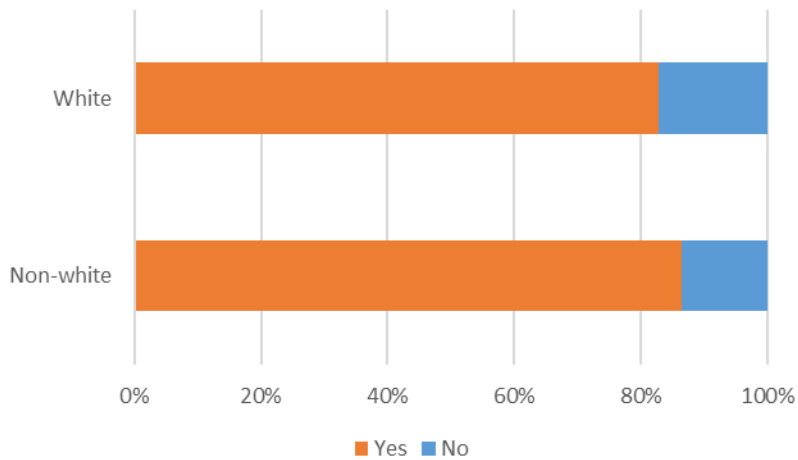
### Engaging in reading by ethnicity



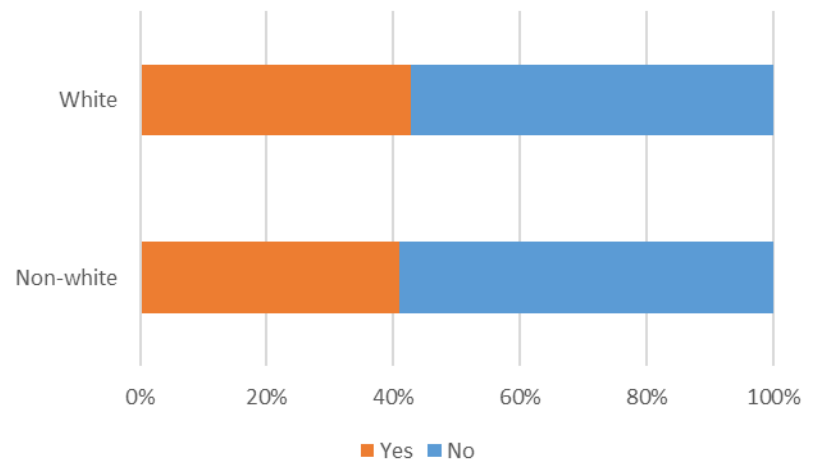
### Engaging in digital arts & writing by ethnicity



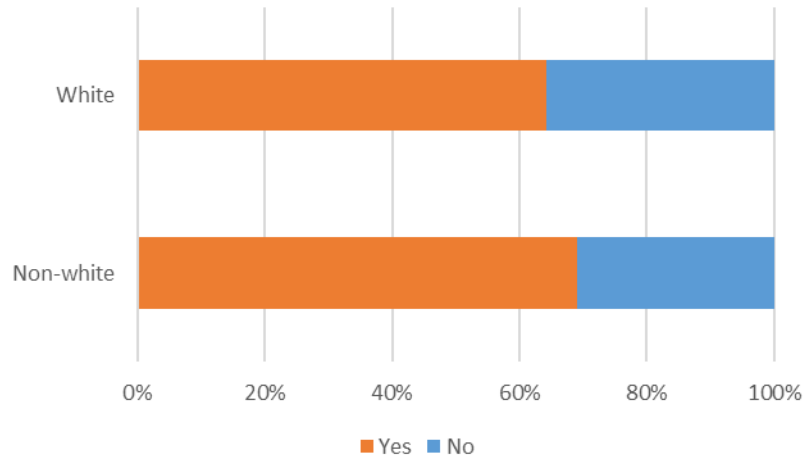
### Engaging in performing arts by ethnicity



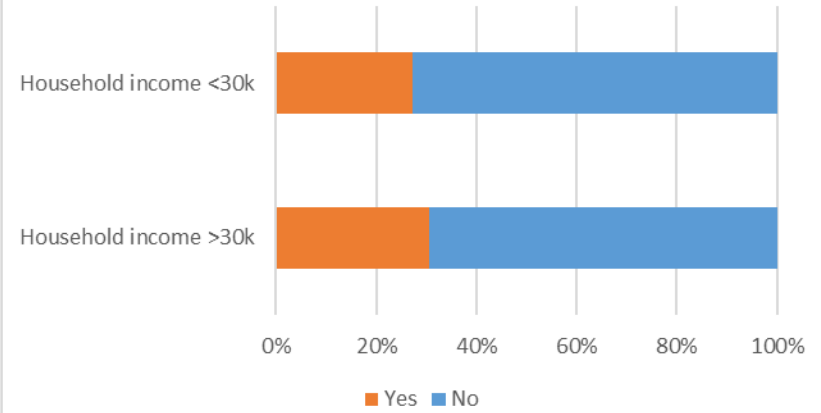
### Engaging in crafts by ethnicity



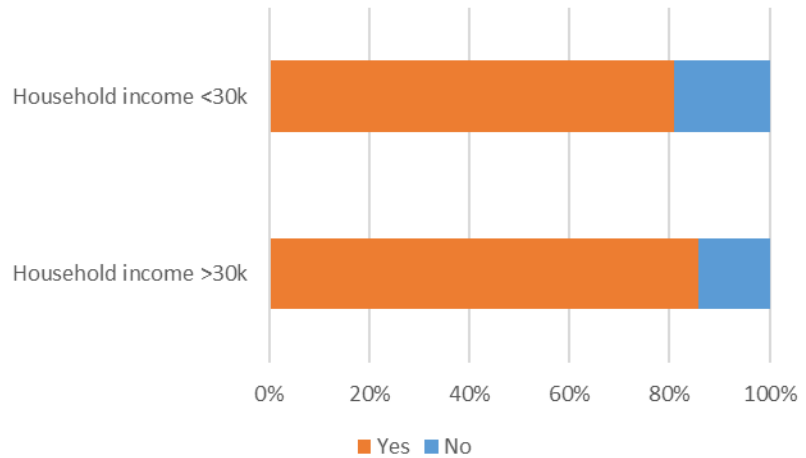
### Engaging in reading by income



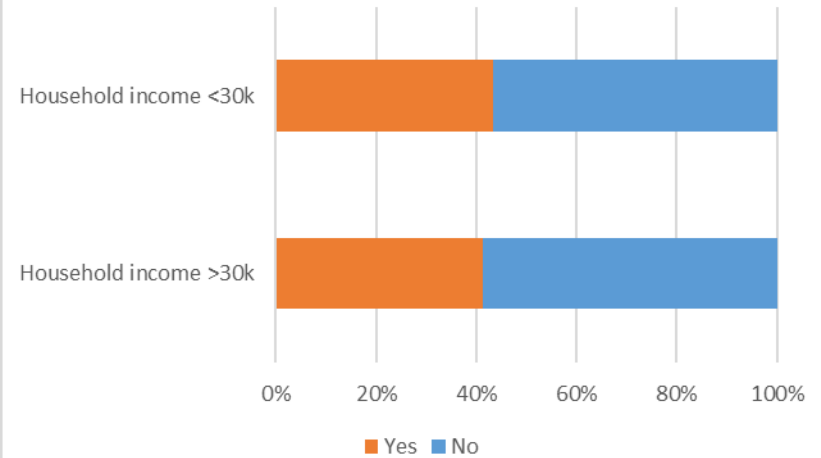
### Engaging in digital arts & writing by income



### Engaging in performing arts by income



### Engaging crafts by income



## Take home points

- The factors people are missing most are seeing family and friends, but other cultural and leisure activities are also being missed
- Young people are missing leisure and culture the most
- Many people have been turning to the arts during lockdown, especially listening to music
- A large number of people (21%) have been engaging more than normal in the arts (we have gained more than we have lost across lockdown)
- Engagement in the arts has been most common amongst younger adults but patterns have varied by arts type for ethnicity and SES

## Final messages

- Particularly vulnerable groups include young people, people of lower socio-economic position, and people living alone. The pandemic seems to be widening inequalities.
- Mental health has got worse at times of uncertainty. Lockdown does not appear to have made it worse but has not improved it. Easing of lockdown has helped a bit but improvements have plateaued.
- The worry of potential adversities (financial or basic needs) is currently having the same negative effect on mental health as experience of adversities
- People are turning to the arts, including new audiences.
- A worry is that lockdown measures that prevent arts organisations re-opening could force many arts organisations to close, and could also remove access to activities and venues that people usually use to support social engagement and manage their mental health.



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