

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Review: data and analysis, March to October 2020

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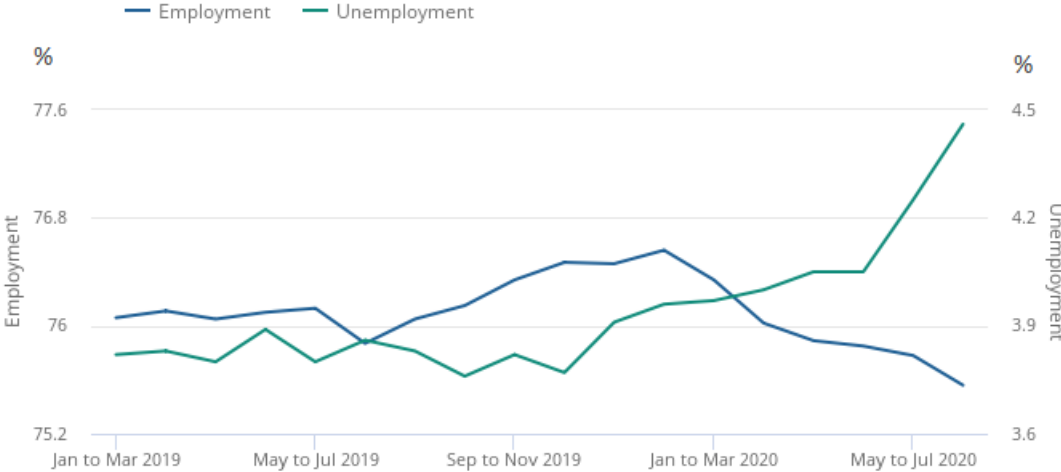
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Labour market impacts

This section includes analysis on the work situations of individuals throughout the pandemic including homeworking

Headline labour market estimates suggest the employment rate has been decreasing since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, while the unemployment rate has started increasing a few months later

UK employment rate (LHS) and unemployment rate (RHS), seasonally adjusted, between January to March 2019 and June to August 2020



Source: [Labour market overview, UK: October 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Bob Watson](#)

Employment and unemployment figures have remained relatively stable over the course of the pandemic partially reflecting those furloughed being classified as employed

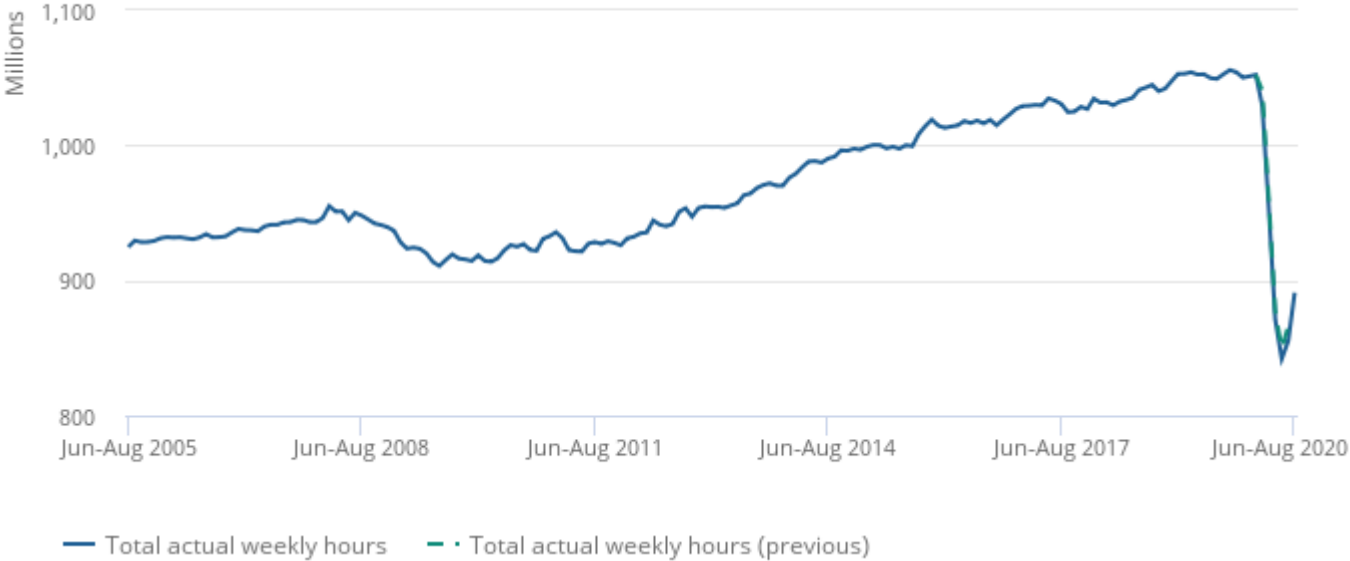
- The employment rate has been decreasing since the start of the coronavirus pandemic reaching 75.6% in June to August 2020; the unemployment rate for all people was 4.5% up by 0.6 percentage points from a year earlier.
- The number of people who are in employment but have been temporarily away from paid work, which includes those who have been furloughed, has fallen from almost 7.3 million people in April to June 2020 to 6.4 million people in June to August 2020.
- Redundancies increased in June to August 2020 by 113,000 on the year, and a record 114,000 on the quarter, to 227,000; the annual increase was the largest since April to June 2009, with the number of redundancies reaching its highest level since May to July 2009.
- [HMRC estimates](#) indicate that there were 28.3 million payroll employees in September 2020; a cumulative decline of 673,000 payroll employees since March 2020.

The impacts of the pandemic on the labour market are most evident in how total hours worked and vacancies are still, in September 2020, considerably below their pre-lockdown levels

- Total hours worked in July to September 2020, while still down 158.2 million hours on the previous year, show signs of recovering with a record increase on the quarter of 20.0 million covering a time when a number of coronavirus lockdown measures were eased.
- After a record low of 343,000 [vacancies](#) in April to June 2020, there has been an estimated record quarterly increase of 144,000 vacancies in July to September 2020; vacancies remain below the pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels and are 332,000 (40.5%) less than a year ago.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation industry has struggled the most during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic with a large quarterly fall in vacancies of 90.7% from January to March 2020 to April to June 2020 and a small recovery in July to September 2020.
- Annual growth in [employee pay](#) strengthened in August 2020 as employees continued to return to work from furlough; this followed strong falls in months since April when pay growth was affected by lower pay for furloughed employees, and reduced bonuses.

Total hours worked, while still low, show signs of recovering with a record increase to Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2020 covering a time when a number of coronavirus lockdown measures were eased

UK total actual weekly hours worked (people aged 16 years and over), seasonally adjusted, between June to August 2005 and June to August 2020

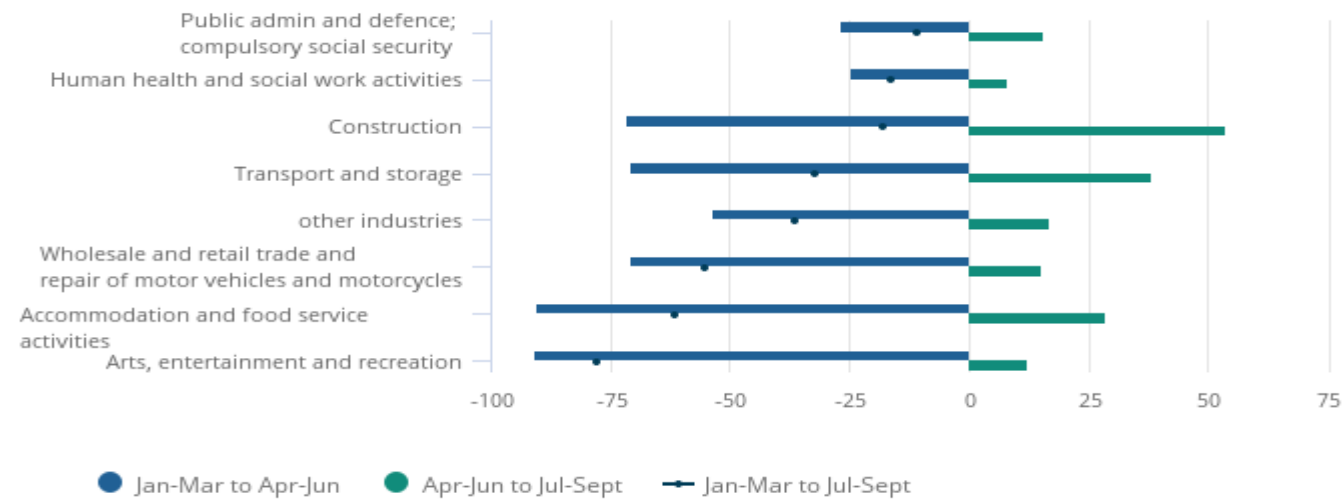


Source: [Employment in the UK: October 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Bob Watson](#)

The impact of a sharp contraction in output and heightened level of uncertainty is reflected in the fall in labour demand immediately following the easing of lockdown restrictions

Three-month average vacancies in the UK, seasonally adjusted, between January to March 2020 and July to September 2020; index January to March 2020=100, difference in percentage points compared with January to March 2020



Source: [Vacancies and jobs in the UK: October 2020](#)

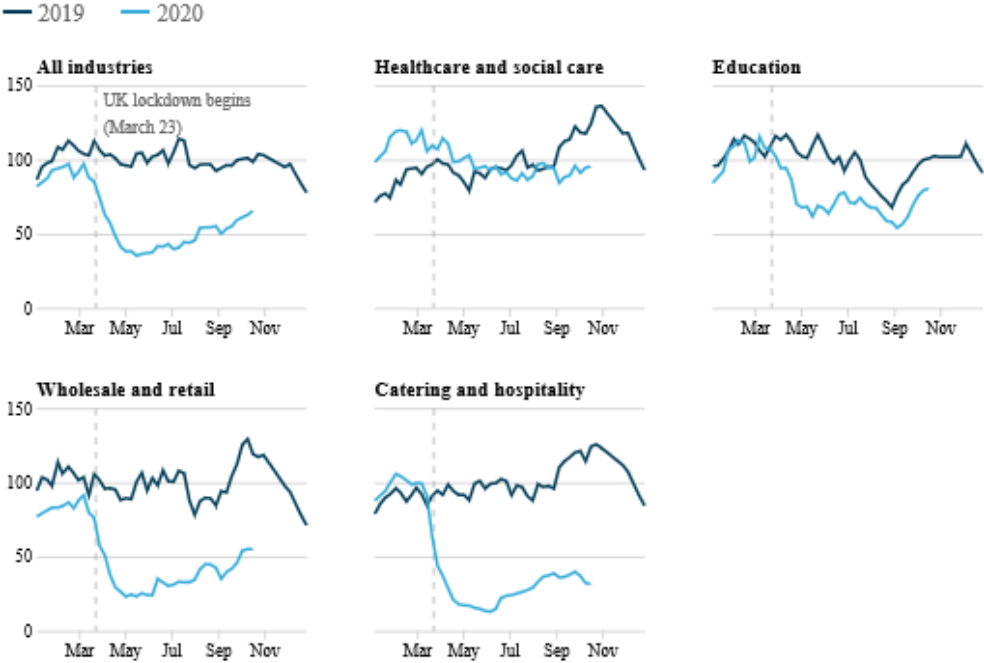
Lead analyst: [Laura Caldwell](#)

Experimental estimates suggest that total online job adverts fell to half of their 2019 average during April 2020

- The total number of online job adverts was relatively stable from the start of 2019 until the beginning of March 2020, after which it began to decline rapidly; this decline continued for two months, with total job adverts levelling off from the start of May to around 40% of its 2019 average.
- The categories of catering and hospitality, and wholesale and retail, both saw very large declines in job adverts, dropping to 13% (June) and 23% (May) of their 2019 averages respectively.
- In contrast, education saw a smaller decline and the volume of job adverts in health and social care saw little change from March to June.
- Between 9 and 16 October 2020, total online job adverts increased for the sixth consecutive week from 63% to 66% of their 2019 average, the highest recorded level since 3 April 2020; however, there may be a seasonal component to this increase, as it is consistent with the previous year's trend.
- London remained the region with the lowest volume of online job adverts for the eighth consecutive week, with 53% of its 2019 average volume; however, like the rest of the UK it has also seen a steady increase in the volume of online job adverts over the previous two months.

The change in the volume of job adverts has differed throughout the pandemic across industry categories

Total weekly job adverts on Adzuna, UK, 4 January 2019 to 16 October 2020, index 2019 average = 100



Source: [Coronavirus and the latest indicators for the UK economy and society: 22 October 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Laura Caldwell](#)

The pandemic has appeared to have had little impact on the number of employed people switching occupations

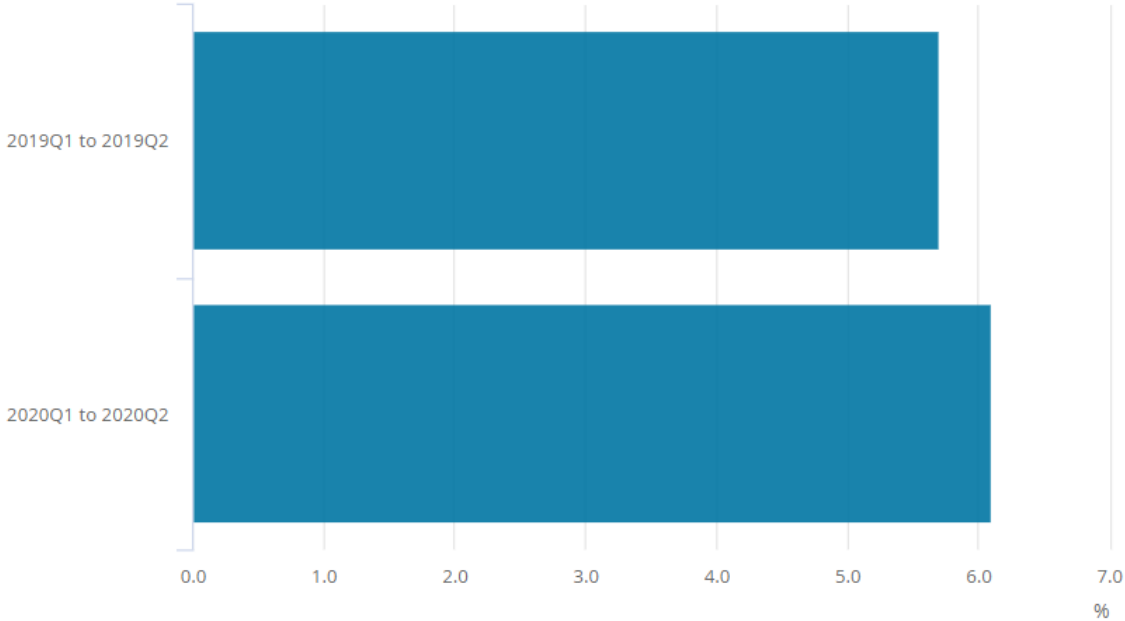
- Of those employed in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) and Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2020, 6.1% changed occupation in the first half of this year compared with 5.7% in the same period last year.
- This may reflect the impact of the government's job retention schemes, which encourage an attachment between individuals and a specific job.
- Of those who have changed occupation in the first half of this year, the largest outflow was associate professional and technical occupations (20.9%). The largest inflow was also into this occupation group with 21.2% of individuals who switched occupation moving into this group.
- Of the workers who changed occupation between Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2020, over half (52.6%) were men, 26.9% were aged 35 to 49 years and 26.9% were aged 50 to 64 years.

Notes: From 13 October 2020, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) estimates have been reweighted to account for the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on survey interviewing methods. The LFS estimates used in this analysis have not been reweighted.

Occupational switching can be defined as a change in a worker's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) from one quarter to the next, which would not be reflected in the traditional flows between employment, unemployment and inactivity. This analysis focussed on the population who has been in employment for both periods.

Of those employed in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) and Quarter 2 (Apr to June) 2020, 6.1% switched occupation

Proportion of those in employment who changed occupation in the pre-pandemic period (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2019) and during the pandemic period (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2020)



Source: [Coronavirus and occupational switching: January to June 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Marina Romiti](#)

Nearly two-thirds of working adults said their work was being affected by the coronavirus pandemic in May, but this has decreased to just under half of working adults in October

The percentage of working adults¹ that said their work had been impacted because of the pandemic has been gradually declining. During May, around two-thirds of working adults¹ said this, but by August this had fallen to under half. The main impacts have however remained consistent over these months:

- furloughed;
- asked to work from home;
- decrease in hours worked and
- finding working from home difficult.

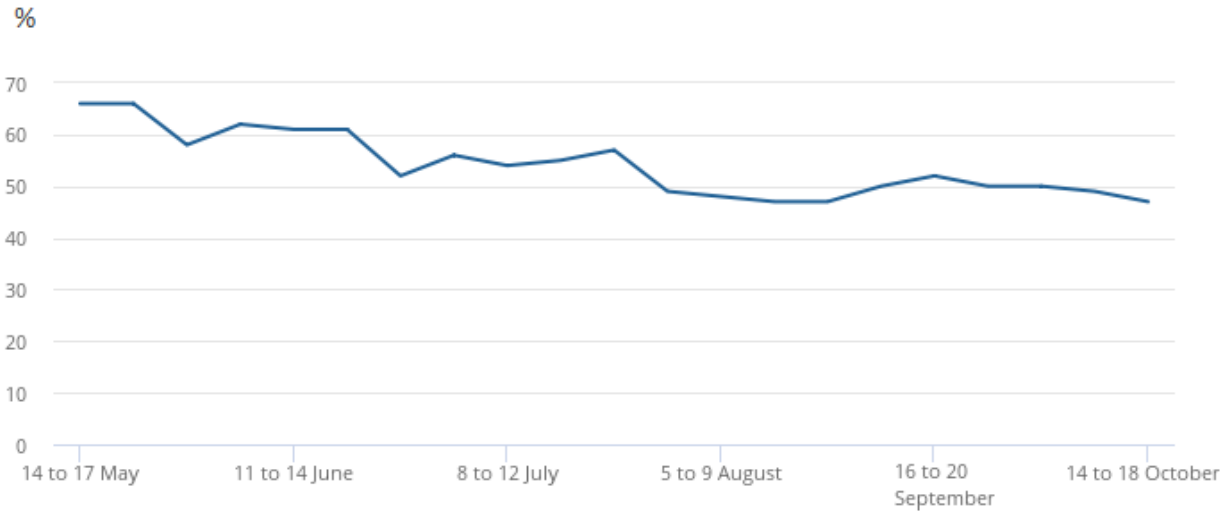
As lockdown restrictions eased, there has been a steady rise in the percentage of working adults travelling to work, either exclusively or in combination with working from home.

¹The working population is those that said they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; or they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

The percentage of working adults¹ that say their work is being affected by the coronavirus pandemic is gradually declining over time

Percentage of working adults, Great Britain, May to October 2020

¹The working population is those that said they had a paid job, either as an employee or self-employed; or they did any casual work for payment; or they did any unpaid or voluntary work in the previous week.

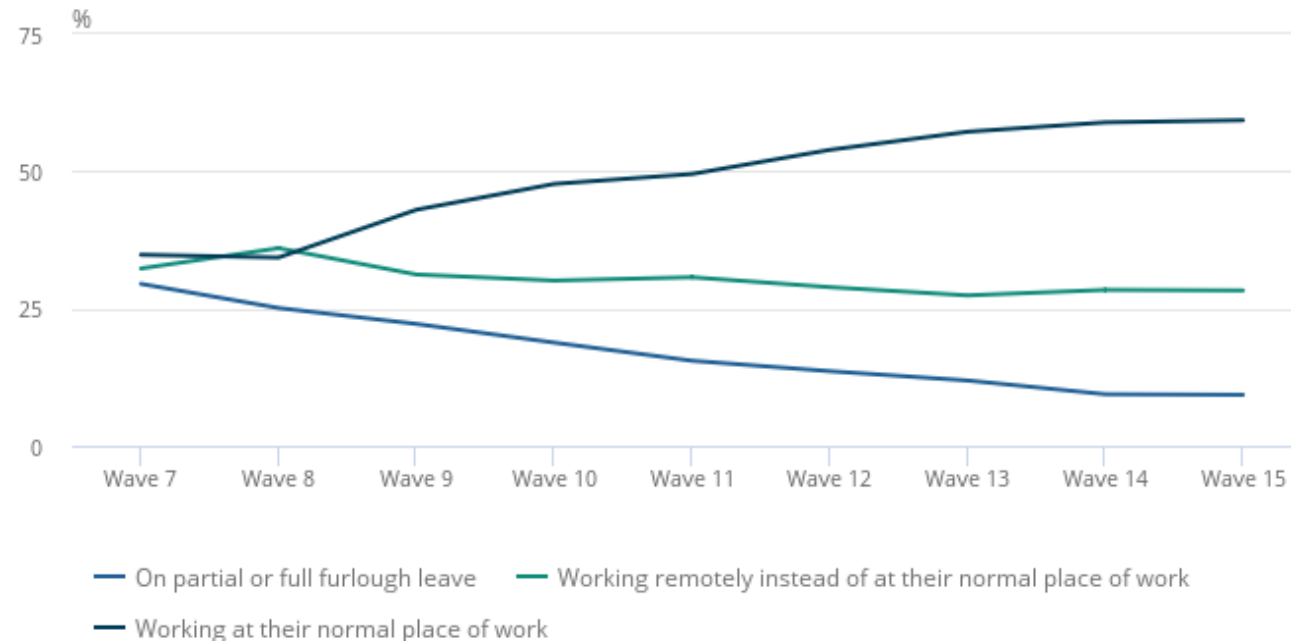


Source: [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

The proportion of the workforce on furlough has decreased from more than 25% as lockdown was announced to less than 10% in September

Working arrangements, businesses that have not permanently stopped trading, broken down by Wave, weighted, UK, 1 June to 4 October 2020



Source: [Coronavirus and the economic impacts on the UK: 22 October 2020](#)

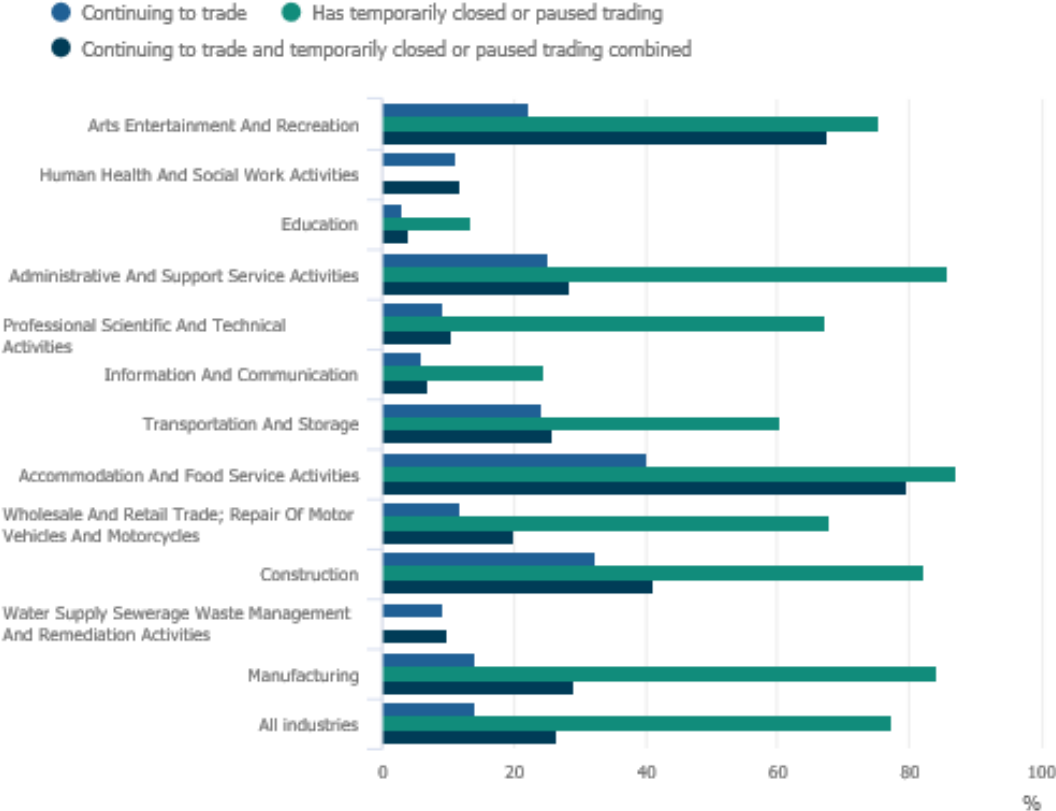
Lead analyst: [Jon Gough](#)

The proportion of the workforce been furlough differed over time and by industry

- According to estimates from the Business Impact of Coronavirus Survey, in the 2-weeks following the lockdown announcement, 23 March to 5 April 2020, 27% of the workforce had been furloughed across businesses that were still trading or had temporarily paused trading. Less than 1% of the workforce had been made redundant.
- For the workforce of businesses that had not permanently closed, the highest incidences of furloughing were in the accommodation and food service activities (80%) and arts, entertainment and recreation (68%) industries.
- Between 21 September to 4 October 2020, 9% of the workforce were on partial or full furlough leave, unchanged from early September and after a steady decrease from 30% in early June.
- The arts, entertainment and recreation and the accommodation and food service activities industries continued to have the highest proportions of their workforce furloughed at 28% and 24% respectively.
- Young people have higher employment intensity in industries that were significantly affected by the coronavirus.
- At a top level, estimates of the proportion of furloughed jobs from the BICS are similar to HMRC's proportion of employments furloughed, for the months of May, June and July 2020.

The arts, entertainment and recreation and the accommodation and food service activities industries had the highest proportion of their workforce on furlough leave during the pandemic

Proportion of the workforce furloughed by industry and trading status of the employing business, UK, 23 March 2020 to 5 April 2020

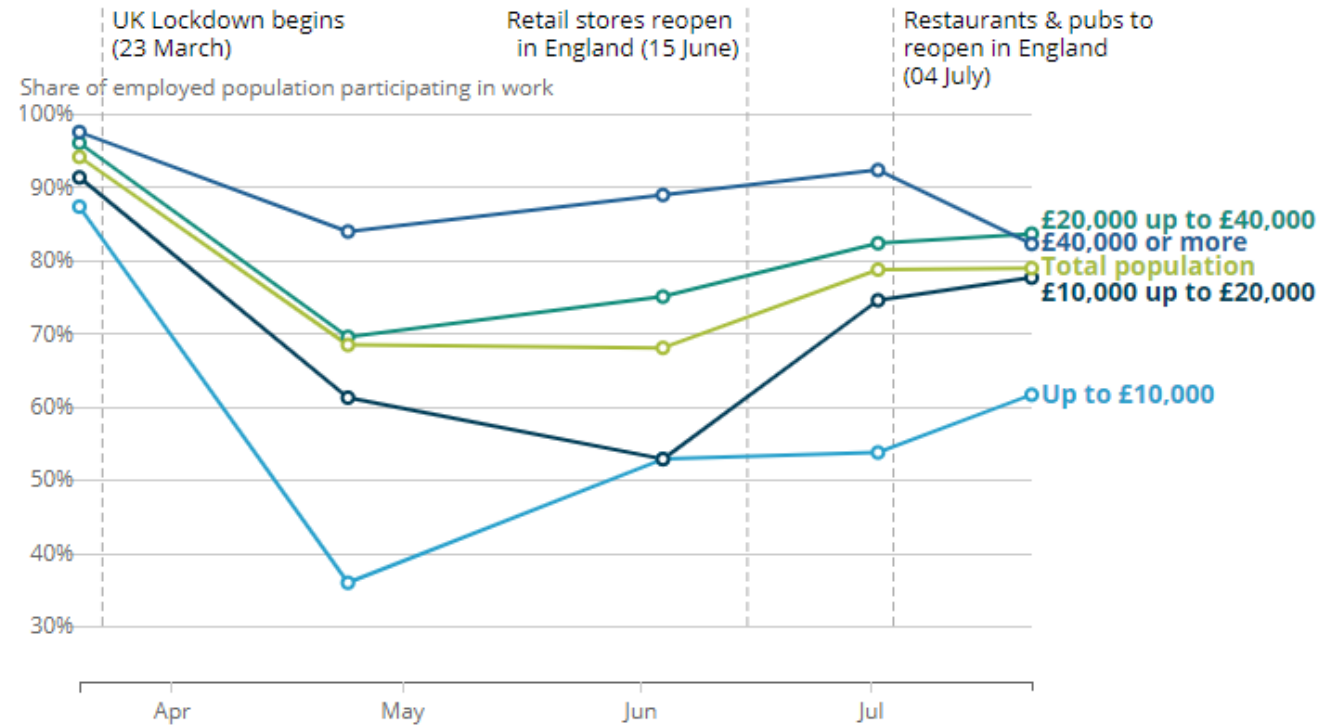


Source: [Furloughing of workers across UK businesses](#)

Lead analyst: [Ellys Monahan](#)

The share of the employed population participating in work throughout the pandemic differs by income level

Share of the employed population who said they did any work in reference week by annual personal income level, Great Britain, 20 March to 26 July 2020.



Source: [Personal and economic well-being in Great Britain: September 2020](#)

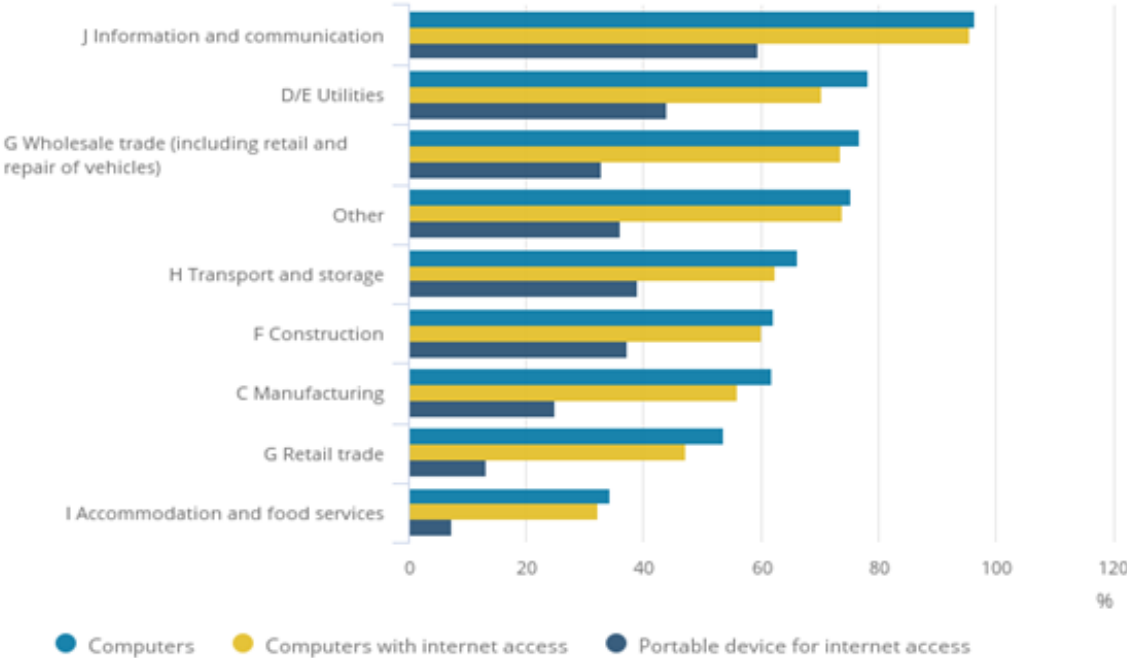
Lead analyst: [Gueorguie Vassilev](#)

Homeworking opportunities vary significantly between industries depending on the role

- Homeworking opportunities vary significantly between industries, with 10% of employees within the accommodation and food services industry reporting having ever worked from home (in 2019) compared with 53% of those in the information and communication industry.
- The extent to which an employee can work from home depends on whether a specific physical environment, tools, or proximity to other people are required for the role.
- Technology can be an enabling power for homeworking, providing employees have the access to, and skills required for, technology.
- The E-commerce Survey shows that in 2018, less than half of all employees were provided with a portable device for work, except in the information and communication industry where around 60% of employees were provided with a portable device.
- The Office of Communications (OFCOM) found superfast broadband coverage reached 95% of residential homes in the UK in September 2019.
- In the accommodation and food services, and retail industries, over 85% of businesses using social media, used it to develop brand image and for marketing purposes.

Less than half of all employees were provided with a portable device for work, except in the information and communication industry

Proportion of employees with access to use computers and the internet for work by industry, UK, 2018



Source: [Technology intensity and homeworking in the UK](#)

Lead analyst: [Darnell Wilkinson](#)

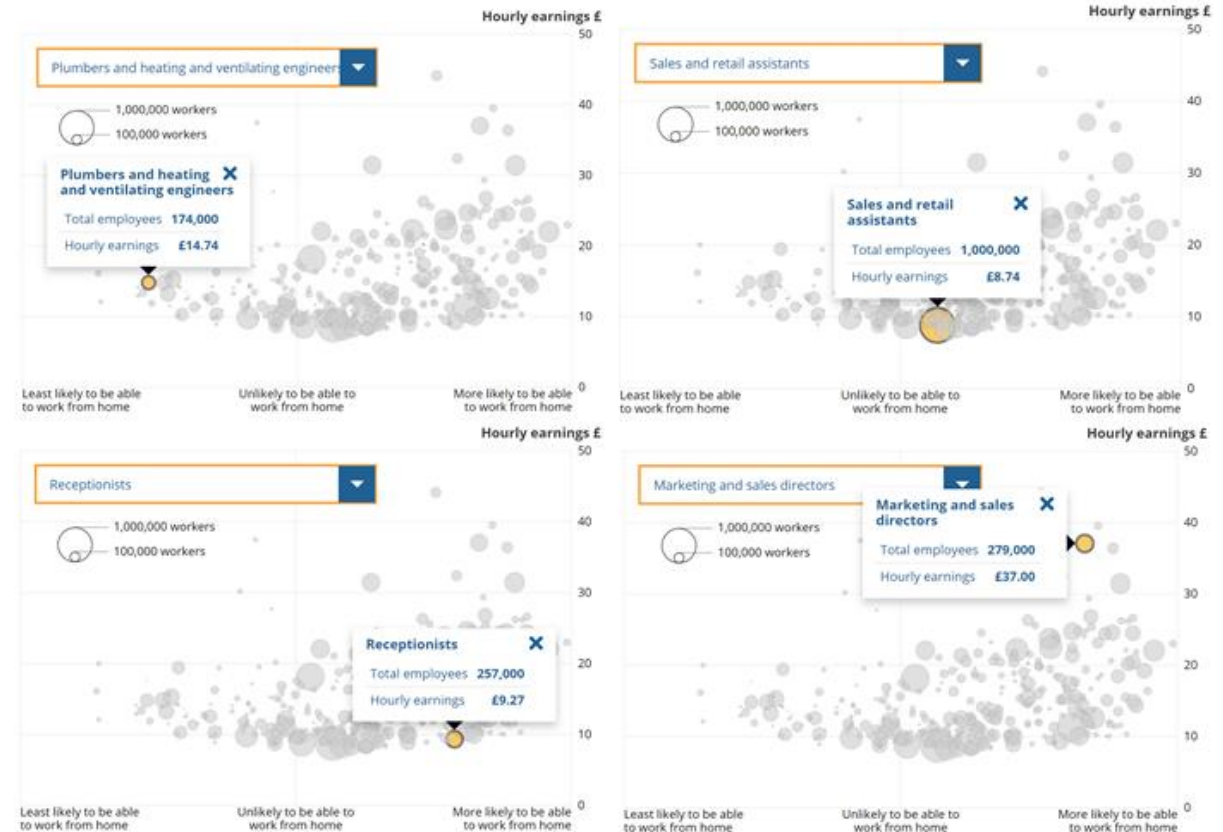
Higher-paying jobs have most potential for homeworking

- Employees in higher-paying jobs are more likely to be able to work from home, according to analysis of how adaptable jobs are to remote working.
- Chief executives and senior officials, whose median hourly earnings are £44.08, are among those most able to work remotely, as are financial managers and directors (£31.38) and programmers and software development professionals (£21.97).
- In contrast, gardeners, whose median hourly earnings are £10.27, are very unlikely to be able to work from home, as are carpenters and joiners (£13.18) and elementary construction occupations like labourers (£10.25).
- The median earnings of employees in the 20% of the workforce most likely to be able to work from home is £19.01, compared with £11.28 for workers in the 20% of workers in jobs least likely to be adaptable to home working.

Jobs that pay higher hourly wages are more likely to be adaptable to working from home

Source: [Which jobs can be done from home?](#)

Lead analyst: [Piotr Pawelek](#)

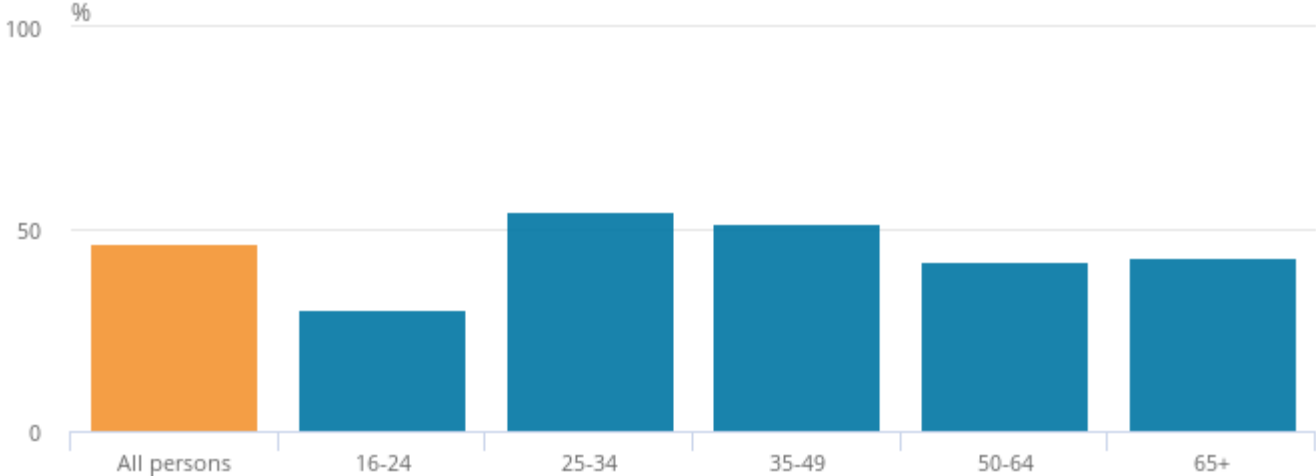


During April 2020, most people who did some work at home did so as a result of COVID-19

- 46.6% of people in employment did some work at home during April 2020; 86.0% of these individuals did so as a result of COVID-19.
- Of those who did some work from home, around one-third worked fewer hours than usual (34.4%), and around one-third worked more hours than usual (30.3%).
- Women were slightly more likely to do some work at home than men, 47.5% and 45.7% respectively.
- People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do some work from home than those in older age groups.
- Occupations requiring higher qualifications and more experience were more likely to provide homeworking opportunities than elementary and manual occupations.

People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do any work from home than other age groups in April 2020

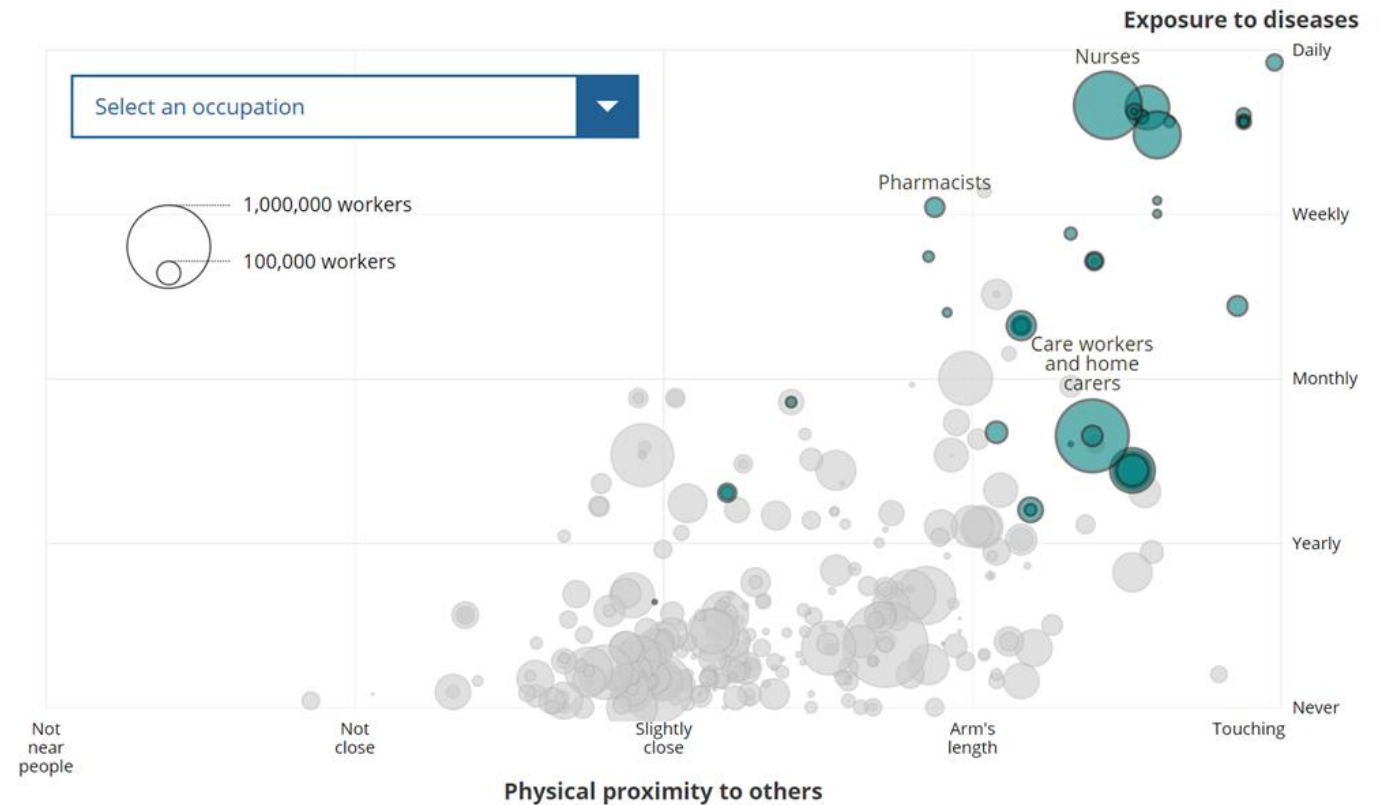
Homeworking rates, by age, of those in employment (aged 16 years and over), UK, April 2020



Source: [Coronavirus and homeworking in the UK: April 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Alastair Cameron](#)

Healthcare workers such as nurses and dental practitioners unsurprisingly both involve being exposed to disease on a daily basis, and they require close contact with others, though during the pandemic they are more likely to be using PPE



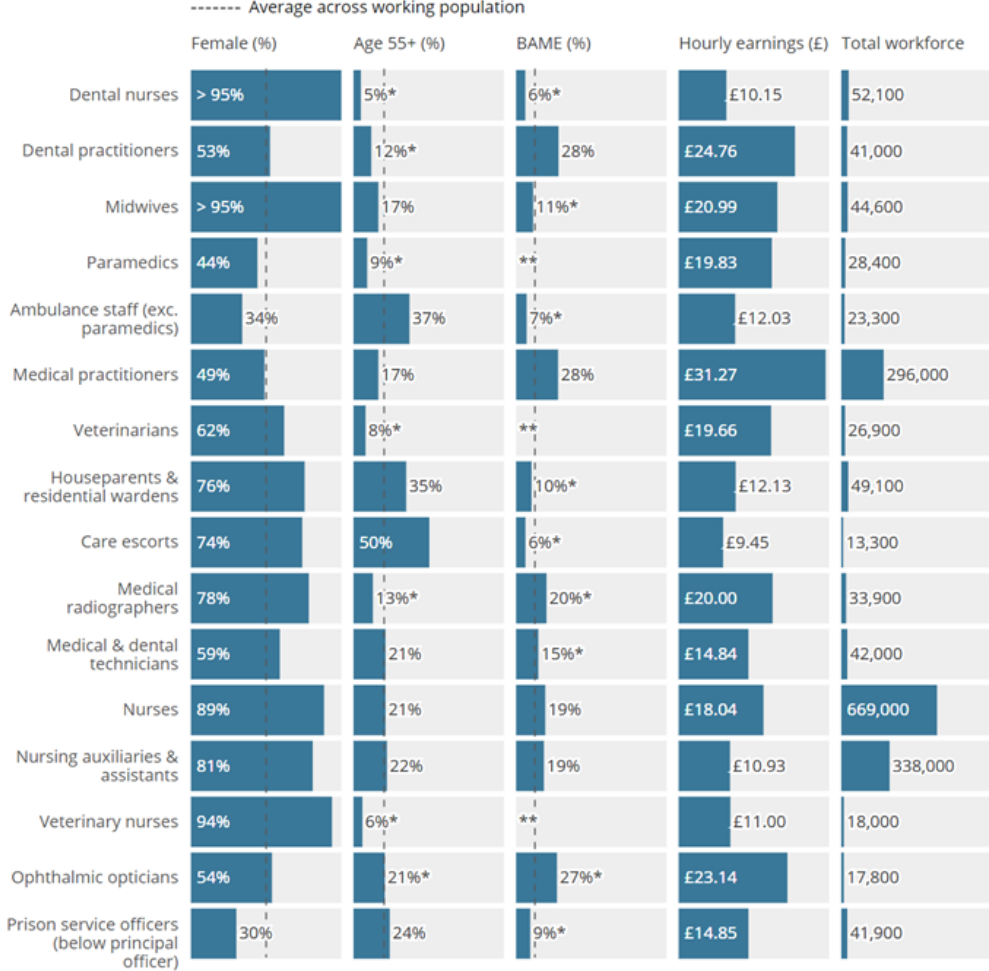
Source: [Which occupations have the highest potential exposure to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\)?](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Looking at the characteristics of workers in highest exposure occupations provides insight into who is more likely to be exposed to the virus

- There are more women working in occupations that are more likely to be in frequent contact with people and also frequently exposed to disease. Three in four workers (75%) in these roles are women. These include dental nurses, midwives, and veterinary nurses, where women make up the majority of workers.
- One in five of those working in these occupations are aged 55 years or over.
- One in five workers in these occupations are from black and minority ethnic (BAME) groups, compared with 11% of the working population.
- When it comes to pay, 6 out of 16 of these occupations have a median pay of lower than £13.21, the median hourly pay across the UK.

Characteristics of workers in highest exposure occupations



Source: [Which occupations have the highest potential exposure to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\)?](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

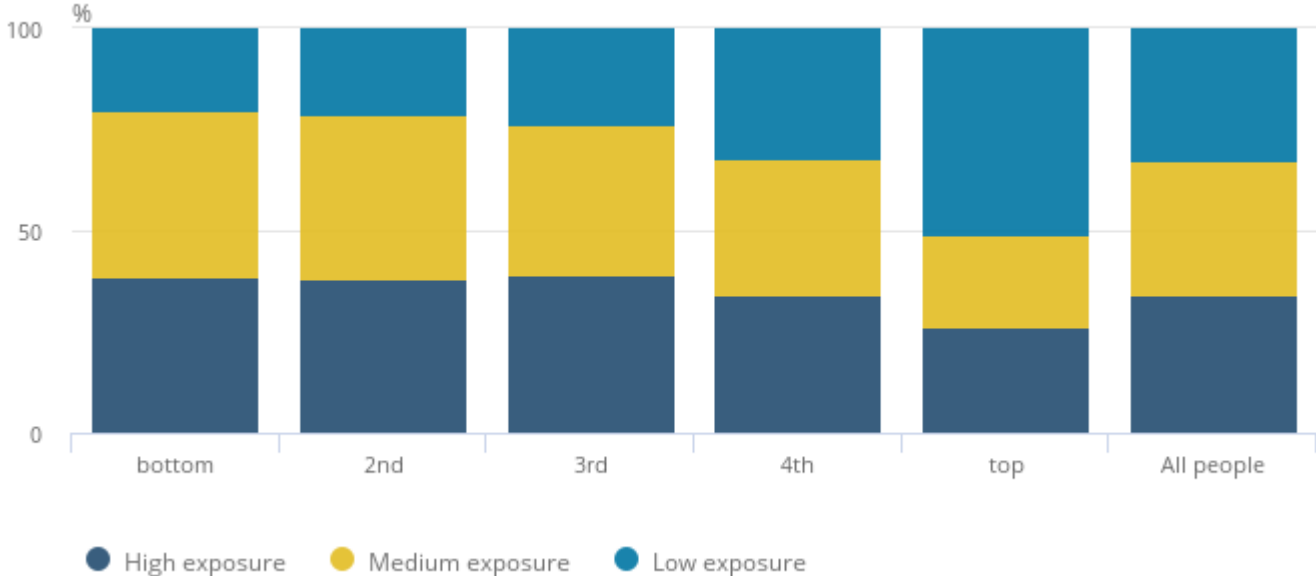
* Data is based on low sample sizes and should be used with caution
 ** The sample size is too small to produce a reliable estimate

A higher proportion of workers (40%) in the poorest fifth of people has greater potential exposure to COVID-19 than the richest fifth of people (25%)

- Almost 40% of workers in the poorest fifth of people worked in occupations that have greater potential exposure to the COVID-19 – for instance, care workers and catering assistants – in the FYE 2019, compared with just over 25% of workers in the richest fifth of people.
- While overall employees who were defined as key workers had similar household incomes to non-key workers (£35,300 versus £35,400), key workers in the food and necessary goods occupation group had an average household disposable income of £28,000.
- Employees who were working in occupations with a higher propensity for homeworking were on average more likely to have higher household disposable income in the FYE 2019.

Almost 40% of workers in the poorest fifth worked in occupations that had the highest exposure to COVID-19, compared with just over 25% of the richest fifth

Proportion of employees within each quintile, by exposure to COVID-19, UK, financial year ending 2019



Source: [Effects of taxes and benefits on UK household income: financial year ending 2019](#)

Lead analyst: [Dominic Webber & Jeena O'Neill](#)

Occupations involving close and frequent interaction with others generally had the highest rates of death involving COVID-19 among those of working age in England and Wales (9 March and 25 May 2020)

- Among men, elementary workers had the highest rate of death involving COVID-19, double the rate seen among men of the same age in the general population. This group includes jobs such as factory workers, security guards, construction workers, and cleaners.
- Men working in a range of other occupations with either direct or indirect contact with others had elevated rates, including bus drivers and taxi drivers, chefs, and sales and retail assistants.
- Women and men working in health and social care occupations, those on the frontline of the pandemic, also had elevated rates when compared to those of the same age and sex in the population.
- Social care occupations had the highest rates in the health and social care sector, explained by the number of registered deaths among men and women working as care workers and home carers.

Source: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) related deaths by occupation, England and Wales: deaths registered between 9 March and 25 May 2020](#)

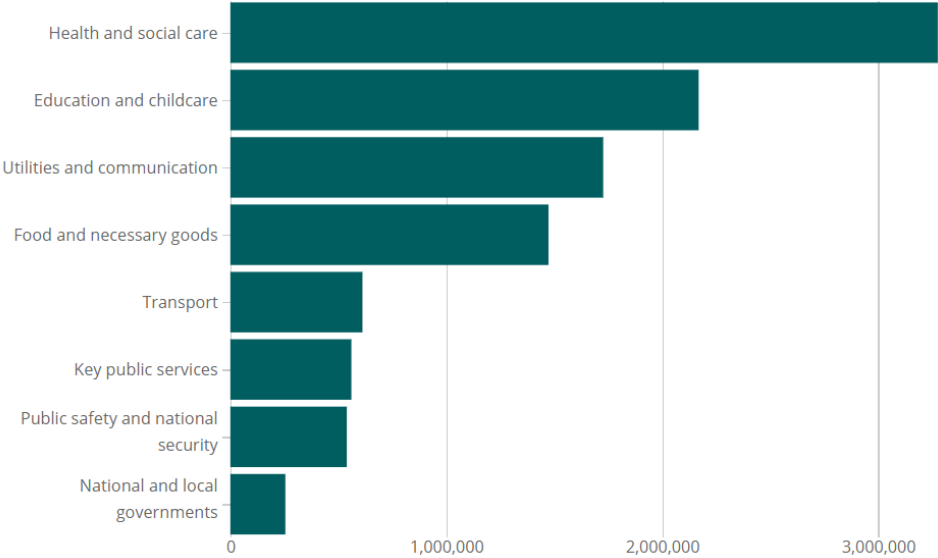
Lead analyst: [Ben Windsor-Shellard](#)

In 2019, 33% of the total workforce were in key worker occupations and industries

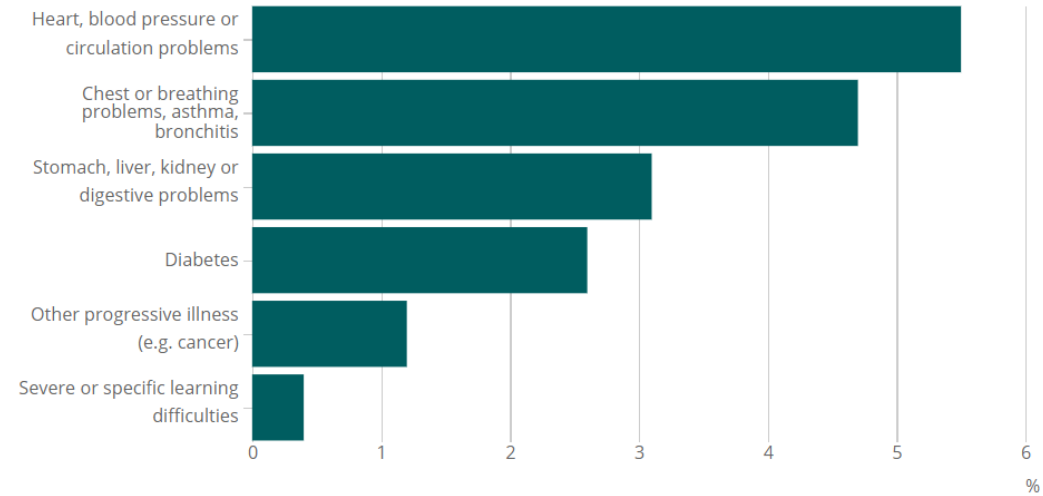
- The largest group of those employed in key worker occupations worked in health and social care (31%).
- 31% of key workers have children aged between 5 and 15 years; 16% have children aged 4 years or under.
- Nearly three-fifths of all key workers were women (58%) and 42% were men.
- The majority of key workers were of White ethnicity (86%), with 14% belonging to an ethnic minority. Of the ethnic minority categories, Asian and Black/African had the highest proportions of key workers at 8% and 4% respectively.

The largest group of key workers worked in health and social care and heart problems were the most common condition for key workers at moderate risk

Number of key workers by occupation group



Key workers at moderate risk, by risk type



Source: [Coronavirus and key workers in the UK](#)

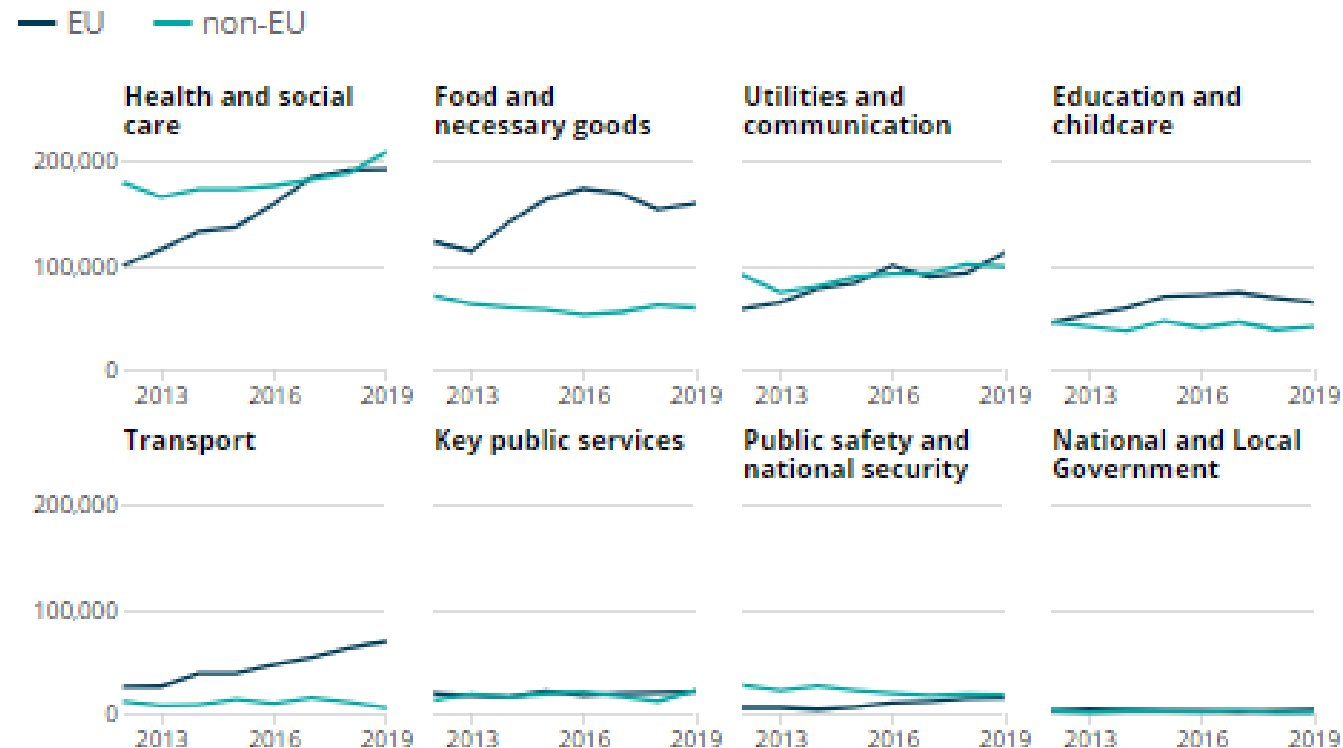
Lead analyst: [Rachel McSweeney](#)

Between 2017 and 2019, the largest group of key workers worked in health and social care (3.2 million), of which 12% were non-British nationals with an equal split between EU and non-EU nationals

- Data collected between 2017 and 2019, indicates there were 32.3 million people employed in the UK workforce, with roughly a third (10.5 million) employed in key worker occupations and industries.
- 10% of key workers were non-British nationals, with EU and non-EU nationals making up 6% and 4%, respectively; 18% of key workers were born outside of the UK.
- The largest number of key workers worked in health and social care (3.2 million), of which 12% were non-British nationals with an equal split between EU and non-EU nationals.
- The key worker occupation group with the largest proportion of non-British nationals was food and necessary goods; there were around 1.5 million people who worked in that group, of which 15% were non-British nationals, including 11% EU nationals.
- From 2012 to 2019, the number of non-British nationals employed in key worker occupations and industries grew (from 826,300 to 1,097,100); this was mainly driven by a steady increase in EU nationals working in health and social care (from 100,200 in 2012 to 192,300 in 2019).

The number of non-British key workers has varied over time

Count of EU and non-EU nationals by key worker occupation group, 2012 to 2019



Source: [Coronavirus and non-UK key workers](#)

Lead Analyst: [Megan Bowers](#)