

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

Helen Fox and Ellys Monahan

COVID19Analysis@ons.gov.uk

Social impacts

This section includes analysis on the impact of the pandemic on people's lives and how activities have been affected.

Lack of freedom and independence, inability to make plans and disruption of personal travel plans are the most common ways in which peoples lives have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic

- The proportion of people reporting a lack of freedom and independence was highest in mid-May with 65%; this figure dropped to 46% at its lowest early September but has since started to increase again, which may be because of the introduction of local lockdowns.
- The proportion of people reporting they were unable to make plans peaked at 58% in mid-May and although this fell to 40% both at the end of July and end of August, the proportion of people who feel they are unable to make plans has been gradually increasing throughout September and October.
- Worries about being able to access groceries, medication and essentials was reported by 40% of adults during the first few weeks of the national lockdown; since then, the proportion of people who raise this reason as a way in which their life has been affected has steadily declined.
- The proportion of people who have struggled to get access to health care for non-COVID-19-related issues peaked at 28% in mid-May, remained around 25% from the end of May until the end of August but peaked again at 28% throughout September.

Lack of freedom, inability to make plans and personal travel have remained the most common ways in which people's lives have been impacted throughout the pandemic

Impact on life overall, Great Britain, April to October 2020



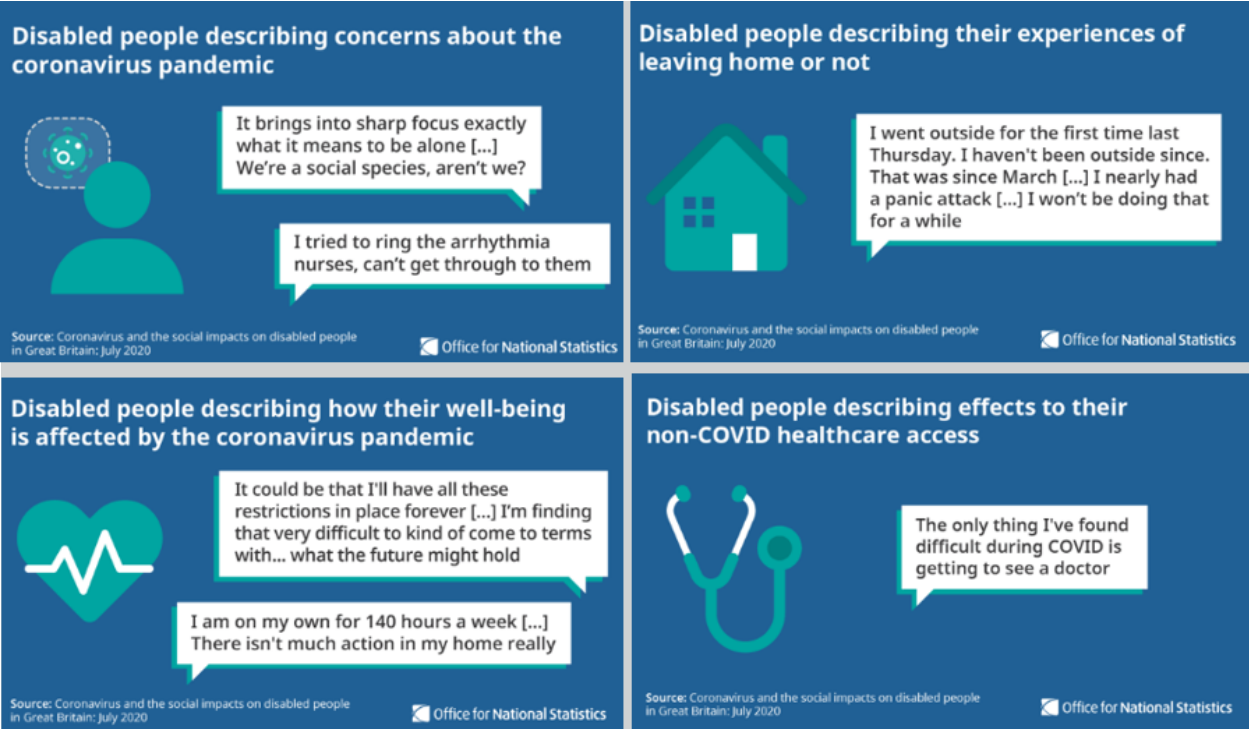
Source: [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, ONS](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Disabled people were most concerned about the impacts of COVID-19 on their well-being and access to health care in July 2020

- 25% of disabled people who were receiving medical care before the pandemic reported now receiving treatment for only some of their conditions (7% for non-disabled people in a similar situation).
- Disabled people were more likely to report leaving their homes for medical needs or to provide care to a vulnerable person (19%) than non-disabled people (7%) but less likely to report leaving their home to eat or a drink at a restaurant, café, bar or pub.
- More disabled people (37%) had still not met up with other people outside their home than non-disabled people (29%).
- 9% of disabled people indicated feeling very unsafe outside their home because of COVID-19, compared with 3% of non-disabled people.

Disabled people were most concerned about the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their well-being and access to health care in July 2020



Source: [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: July 2020](#)

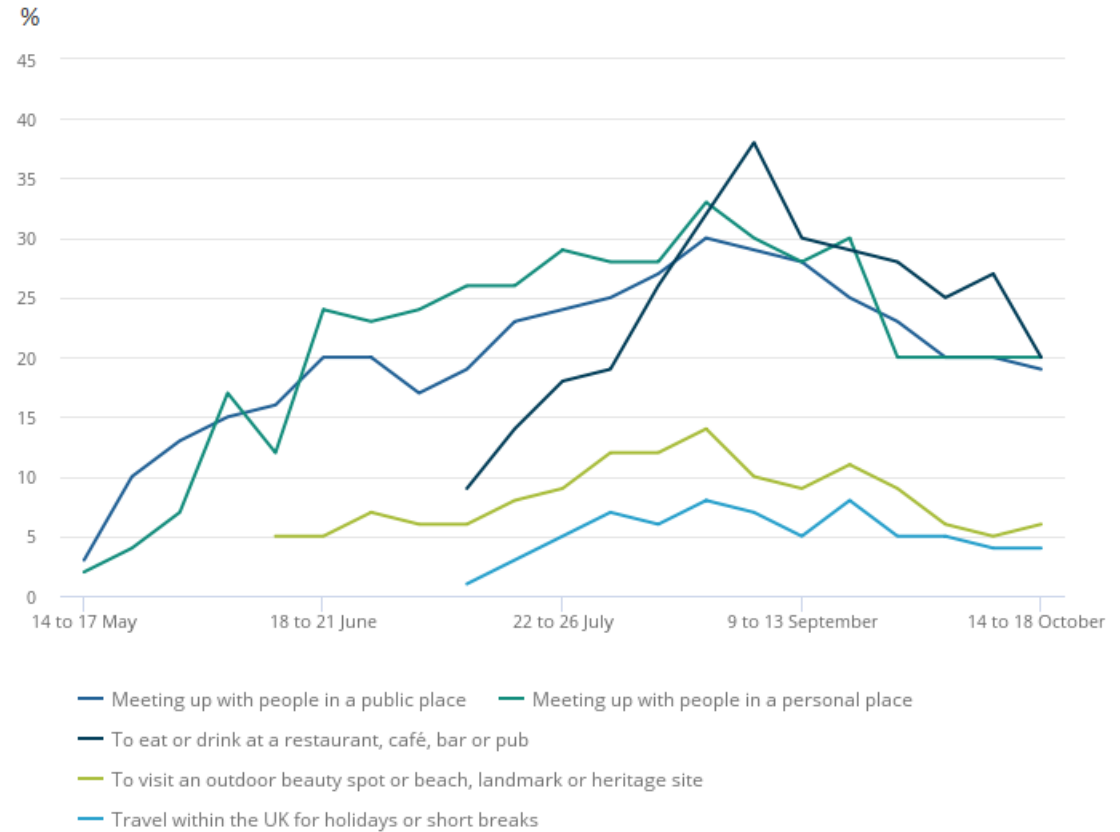
Lead analysts: [David Ainslie](#) and [Josephine Foubert](#)

There was a gradual return to socialising throughout the summer, but this began to fall through September

- As lockdown restrictions eased in May and June, there was a steady increase in the proportions of adults meeting up with other people throughout the summer.
- However, as more local lockdowns were announced in September, alongside guidance on the number of people you could meet with indoors or outdoors, measures of leaving home started to fall throughout September.
- Guidance varied and continues to vary across England, Scotland and Wales as to how many people you can meet with and in which situation, but overall the percentage of adults in Great Britain who met with people in a personal space, such as their home or garden, increased from 2% in mid-May to over 30% at the end of August.
- However, with local lockdowns, and guidance on the number of people you can meet with indoors or outdoors being introduced in more places, this fell to 20% by the end of September.
- There was a sharper rise in the percentage of adults who started to eat out or drink at restaurants, cafés, bars or pubs as they re-opened.
- Only 10% of adults who left their home visited these places in mid-July, but this rose to 40% by the end of August.
- The Eat Out to Help Out scheme ran throughout August, and 95% of adults reported they had heard of this scheme; of those, more than half (53%) said they had eaten out in August just to make use of the scheme.

Levels of socialising, eating out and travel increased through the summer, before falling again in autumn

Reasons for leaving home, Great Britain, May to October 2020



Source: [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, ONS](#)

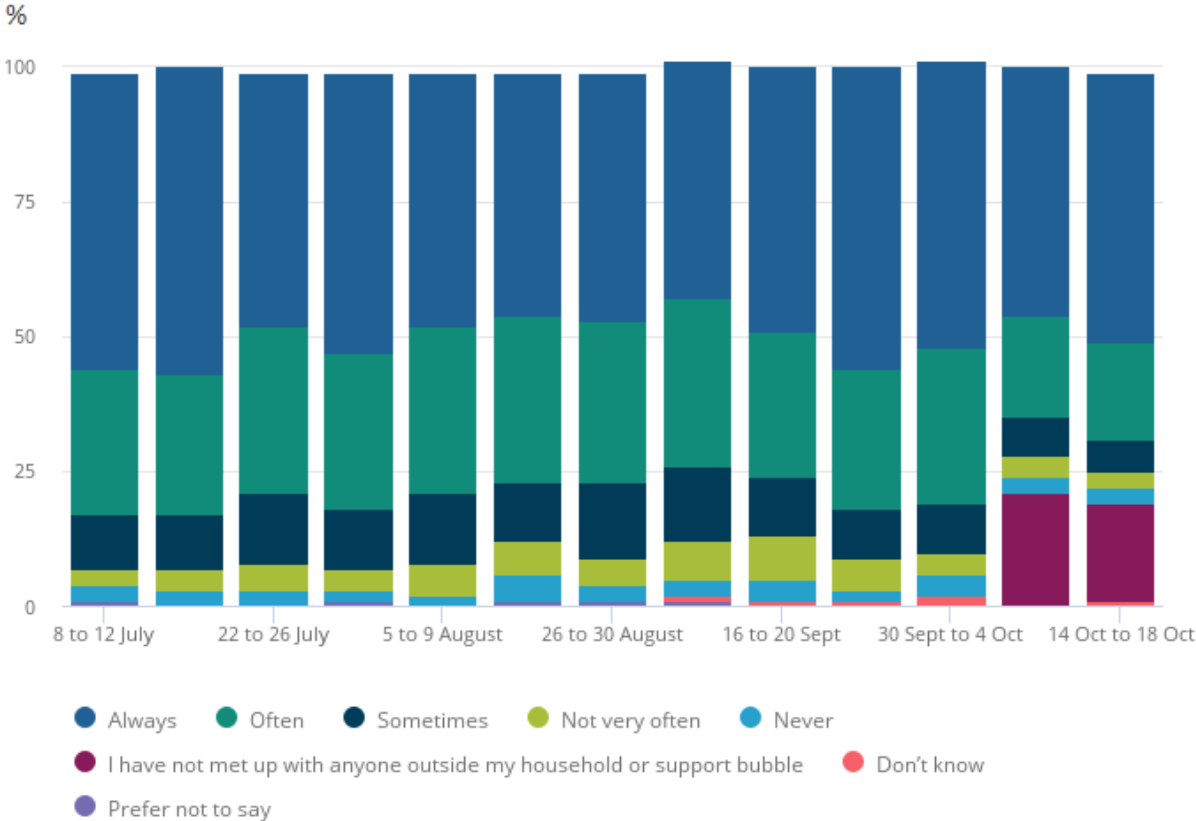
Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Over 80% reported they had maintained social distancing often or always, but a consistent proportion reported not social distancing when they met up with others

- Lower levels of socialising were reported in September, as the “rule of six” measures came into place; measures vary across Britain, but at the end of September over 6 in 10 adults (64%) strongly supported or tended to support the “rule of six” measures.
- Levels of socialising also varied by whether someone lives in a local lockdown area – of those in lockdown areas, 34% had not socialised with anyone outside their household, compared with 25% of those not in local lockdown areas.
- However, 7% of people in a lockdown area still said they had socialised in a group with six or more people; this was 9% for those not living in a lockdown area.
- As people continue to meet up with others where possible, social distancing is an important preventative measure; for those people who had socialised with others outside their household, 83% said they had always or often maintained social distancing in mid-July (15 to 19) – this remained at a similar level through the summer, with 82% saying this at the end of September.
- However, the proportion reporting they maintained social distancing sometimes, not very often or never also remained fairly consistent over this period and was at 17% at the end of September.

The proportions reporting they maintain social distancing, or do not maintain social distancing, have remained fairly consistent

Great Britain, May to October 2020

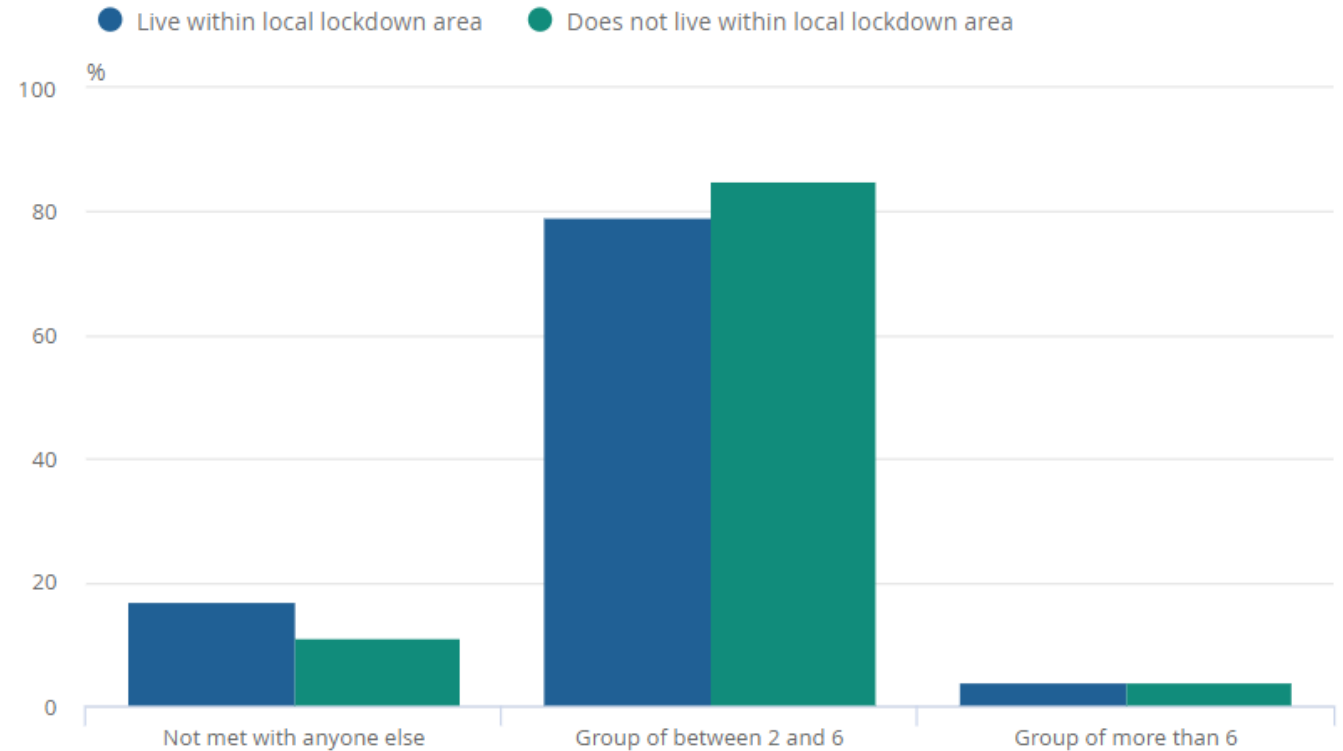


Source: [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, ONS](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Levels of socialising indoors varied by whether someone was in a “local lockdown” area

Great Britain, 14 to 18 October 2020



Source: [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

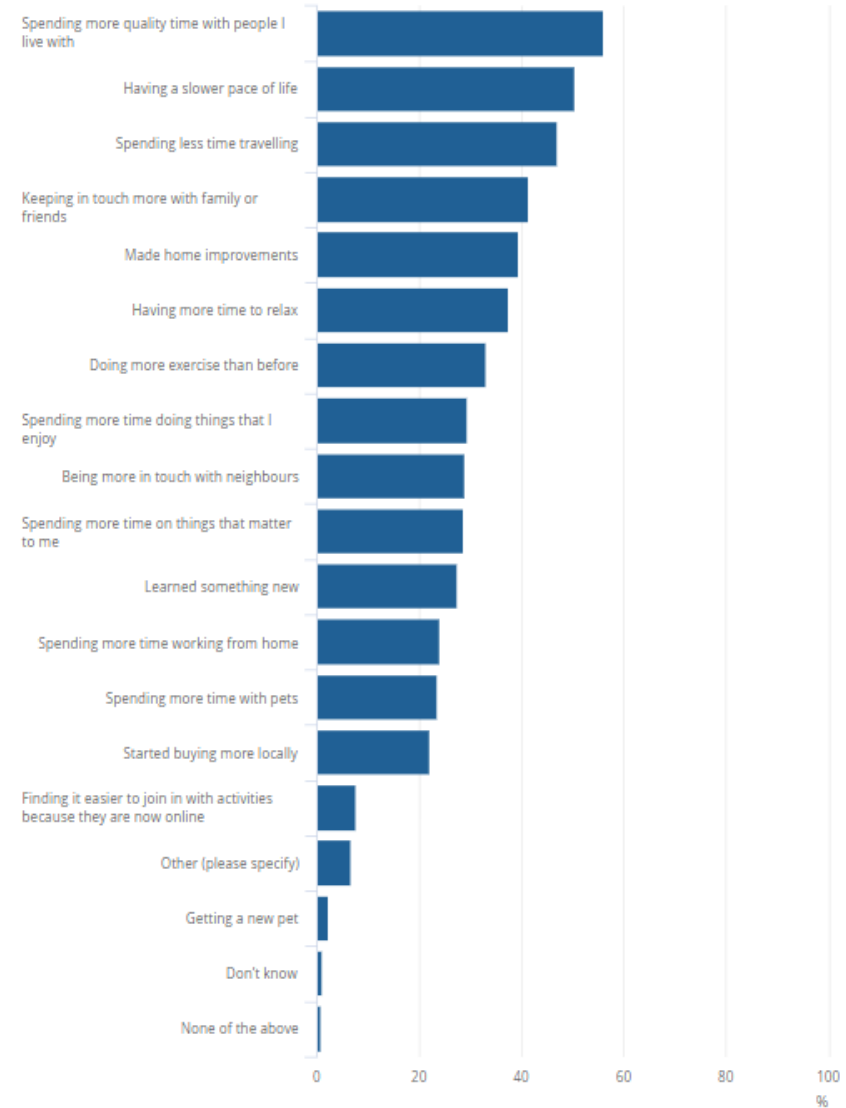
Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Over 40% of adults reported positive lifestyle changes resulting from the pandemic

- Some people have reported positive impacts resulting from the pandemic; 4 in 10 adults (43%) reported they had experienced positive lifestyle changes resulting from the pandemic.
- Of those who had experienced positive changes, the most common was spending more quality time with people they live with; half of adults who had made changes said they are enjoying a slower pace of life and 47% preferred that they are spending less time travelling.
- Other positive changes included cleaner air and less pollution, saving money through not commuting or going out, and having more time for hobbies and interests; quotes from respondents also reflected this: **“I don't spend money as freely because I can't. I appreciate the little things that matter more.”** **“I have tackled some tasks that might otherwise have been left undone.”**
- Around a quarter of adults said they planned to make big changes to their life after the country has recovered from the pandemic – the most popular ones being changes to work, relationships or where they live; people also said they wanted to continue exercising more and travel more after the pandemic.

The positive lifestyle change people most commonly reported was spending more quality time with the people they live with

Great Britain, 18 to 21 June 2020



Source: [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

Lead analyst: [Andrea Lacey](#)

Compared with a two-month average in the pre-lockdown period, there was a significant 32% reduction in total crime during April and May 2020 (excluding fraud and computer misuse)

Headline police recorded crime April 2020 figures compared to April 2019:

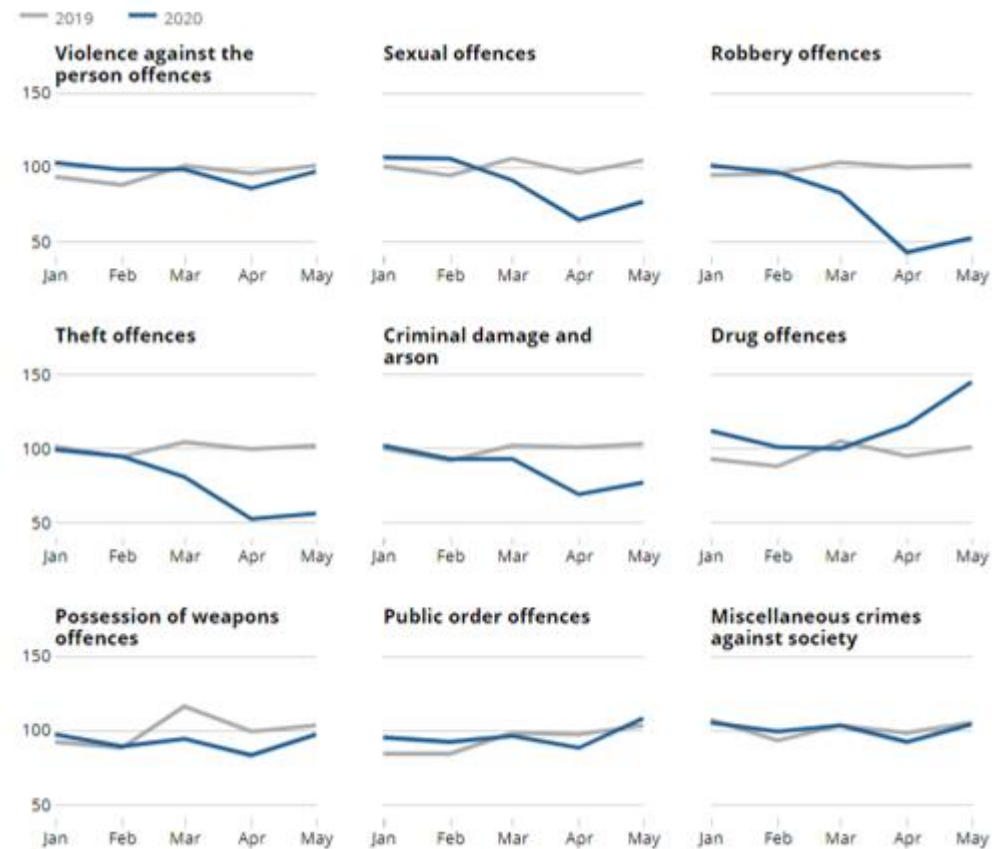
- ↓ 47% decrease – theft
 - ↓ 31% decrease – criminal damage and arson
 - ↓ 15% decrease – fraud and computer misuse
 - ↓ 10% decrease – violence against the person
 - ↑ 22% increase – drug offences
- The rise in recorded drug offences reflects proactive police activity in pursuing these crimes during lockdown.
 - The Crime Survey for England and Wales showed 21% of adults perceived anti-social behaviour to have decreased in their local area during lockdown, while 20% reported witnessing or experiencing anti-social behaviour in the past three months.

Over half (51%) reported they had observed others breaching lockdown restrictions

- 51% reported they had observed others breaching lockdown restrictions; 7% said they had reported the breach to the police.
- 91% of adults were satisfied with the way local police were responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic: 20% said the police were doing an excellent job in their local area, 49% thought they were doing a good job and 6% thought they were doing a poor or very poor job.
- 28% of parents thought their child was more at risk of negative experiences online; 8% of parents said they were aware their child had encountered a negative experience online in the last month.

Falls in police recorded theft offences and rises in drug offences during lockdown, compared with 2019 average

England and Wales, January to May 2019 and January to May 2020: scale indexed where 100 = 2019 monthly average level.



Source: [Coronavirus and crime in England and Wales: August 2020](#)

Lead analyst: [Nick Stripe](#)