

A woman with short blonde hair, wearing a bright yellow quilted jacket, a white face mask, and dark brown pants, is walking from left to right on a paved sidewalk. She is in the foreground, partially obscured by a chain-link fence that runs across the middle of the frame. Behind the fence, the silhouettes of other people can be seen, suggesting a public space. The background is dark, possibly a building or a shaded area. The overall scene conveys a sense of restricted movement and social distancing.

THE IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN

STATE OF THE NATION

yourzooki™

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Based on a nationwide survey with 2000 participants. Commissioned by YourZooki and conducted by OnePoll.

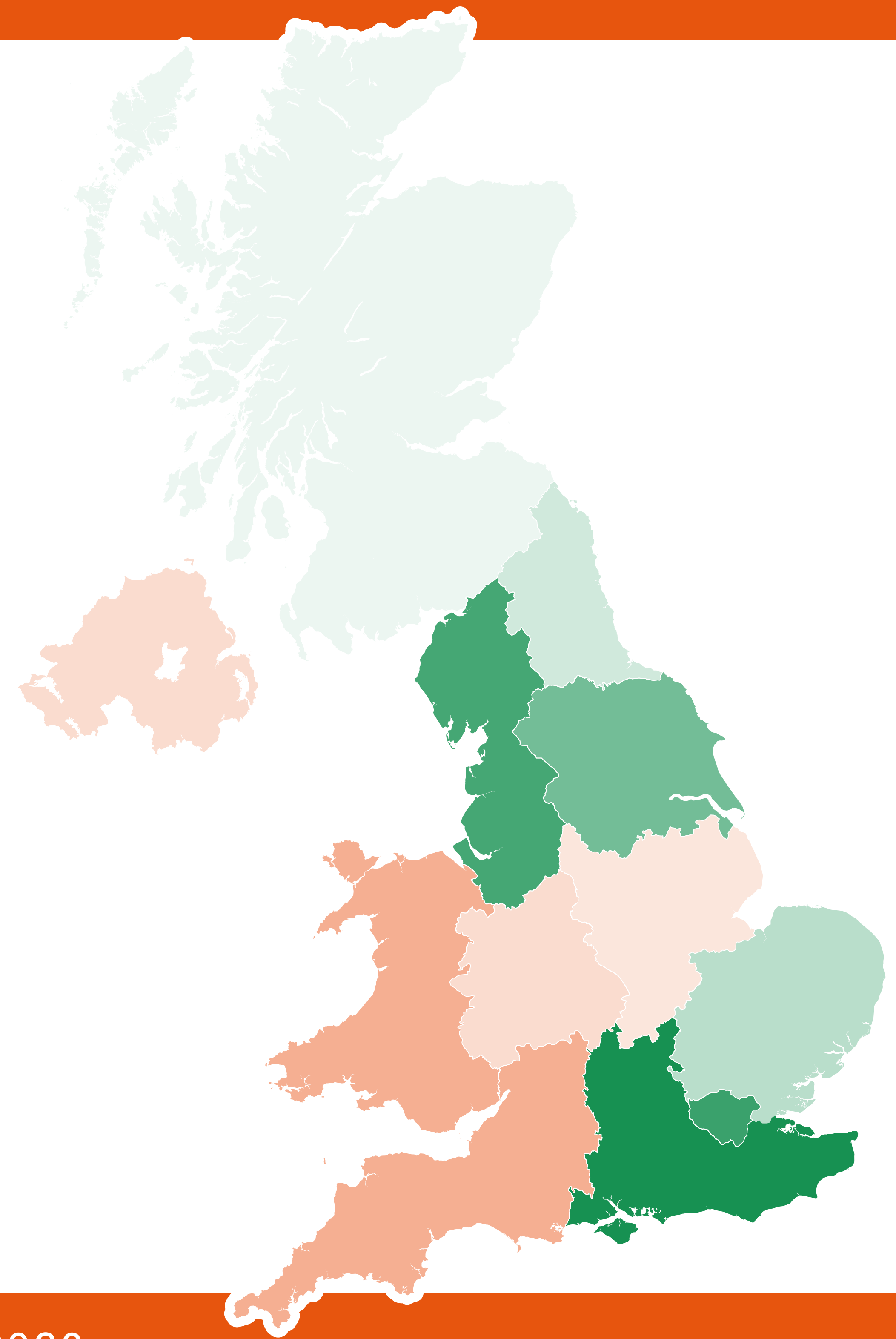
Background

Through lockdown, the global Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the UK's behaviours, habits, health and wellbeing. YourZooki commissioned the State of the Nation research to help better understand The Impact of lockdown on our health, and to gain insight into any long term changes in behaviour that may have implications on our mental and physical health and wellbeing.

The data

The research for The Impact of Lockdown: State of the Nation was conducted by OnePoll in July 2020. A sample of 2000 UK adults over the age of 18 was used, weighted for an accurate representation of the UK population.

The research focuses on how our behaviours have changed during lockdown, and looks at the habits we have developed to infer implications for our long term physical health and wellbeing. The research also explores how the current lockdown has impacted on the nation's mental health, and the intentions of a population as lockdown starts to ease.

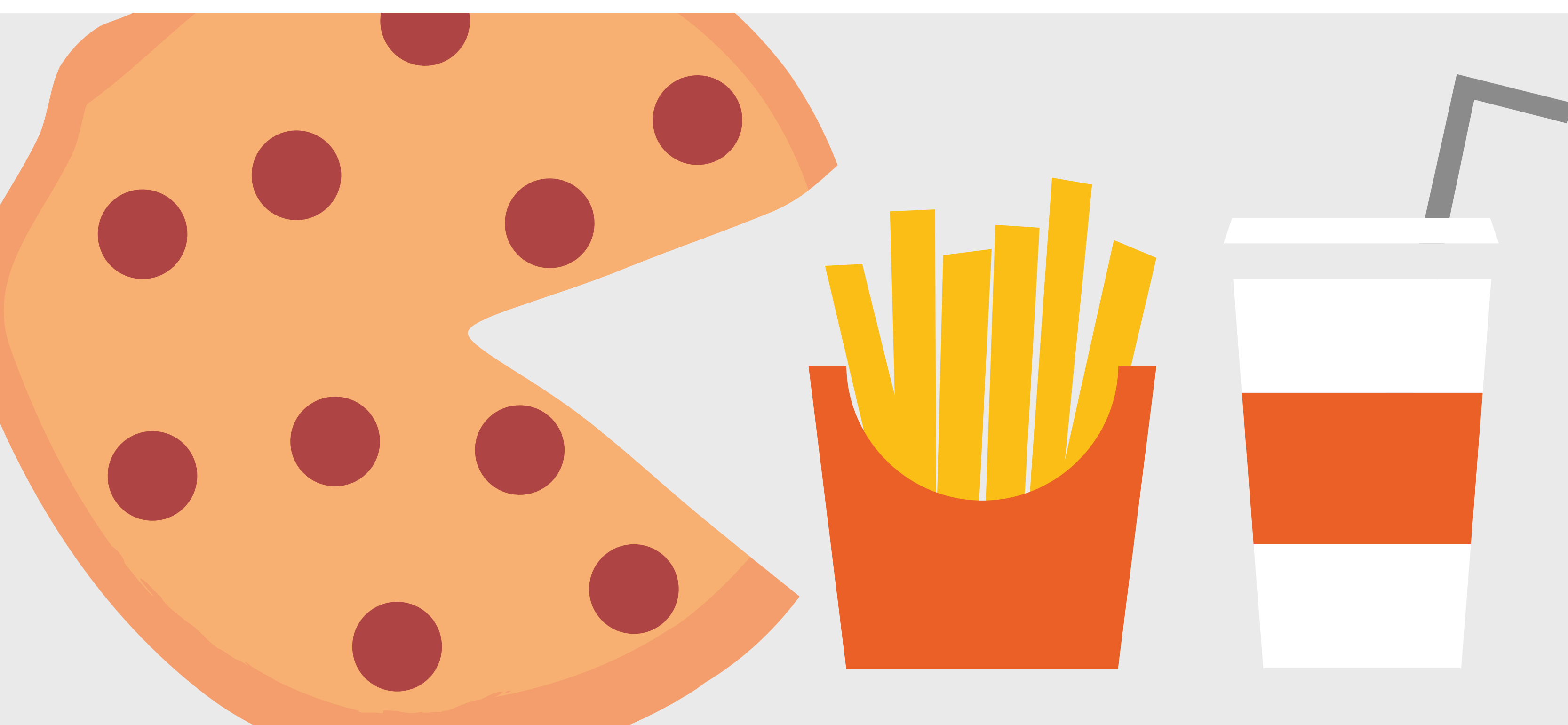
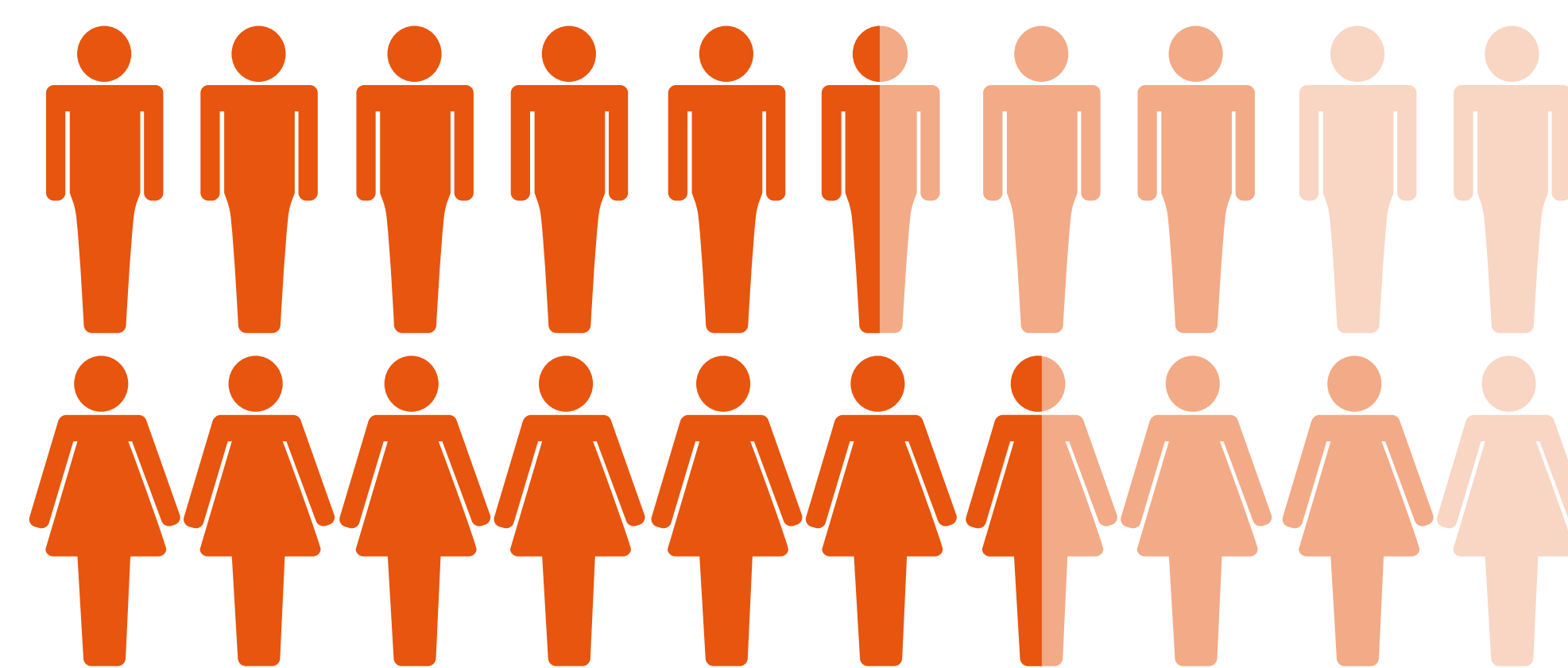


6 in 10 pledge to take better care of their overall health and wellbeing after lockdown ends

Q: As lockdown is gradually lifted and normality begins to resume, will you be taking better care of your overall health and wellbeing?

● Yes ● Not sure ● No

The North East, the North West and Scotland were the most conscious about their health after lockdown, with 68%, 66% and 65% of people voting 'yes' respectively. Wales and the South East were the least conscious regions, with just 55% and 56% saying they would take better care of their health once lockdown is over.



29%

are having **more unhealthy foods and drinks**

Q: Since the start of lockdown, would you say you consume more, less, or the same amount of unhealthy snacks/drinks?

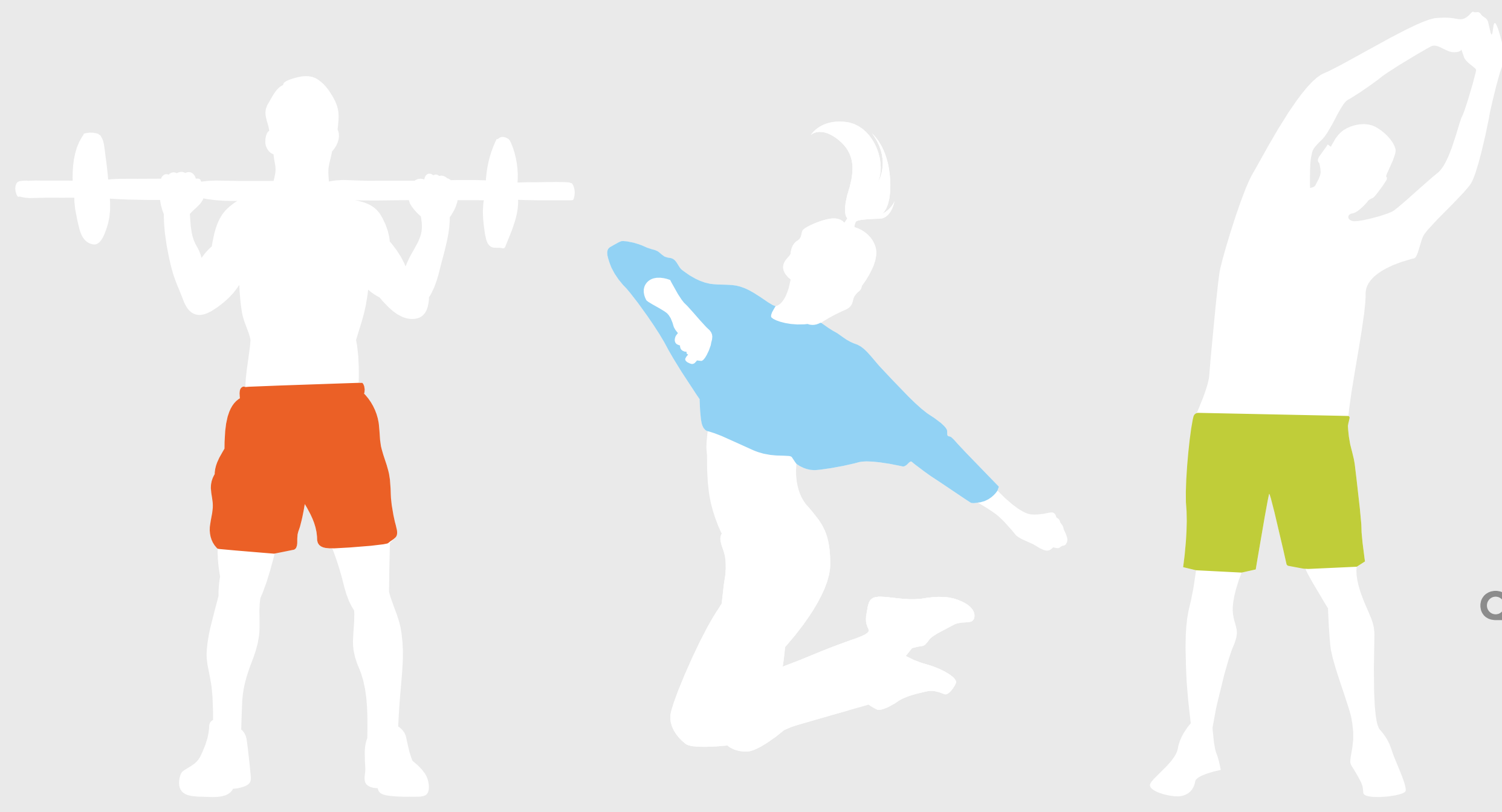
A: More: 28.75% | The same: 51.75% | Less: 12.05%
N/A - never consume unhealthy snacks/drinks: 7.45%

1 in 4

have **increased** the amount of **alcohol** they drink at home

Q: Do you think lockdown has increased, decreased, or had no effect on the amount of alcohol you consume at home?

A: Increased: 24.90% | No effect: 44.70% | Decreased: 9.90%
N/A - don't drink alcohol at home: 20.45%



30%

of people are doing **more exercise**; 24% are doing less

Q: Since the start of lockdown have you done more, less, or the same amount of weekly exercise?

A: More: 29.95% | The same: 37.30% | Less: 23.55% | N/A - never exercise: 9.20%

42% of 18-24 year olds have done more exercise compared to just **23% of <55**.
40% of people in Yorkshire are doing more exercise compared to just **23% in Scotland**.

7 in 10

people now take **vitamin supplements**

Q: Has lockdown increased, decreased or had zero effect on the amount of vitamin supplements you take?

A: Increased: 16.50% | No effect: 51.15% | Decreased: 2.65% | N/A - never take vitamins : 29.70%

18-44 year olds were **twice as likely** to have increased the amount of Vitamins they take compared to over 55s. **30% of Londoners** increased the amount of vitamin supplements they take, 20% of Northern Irelands and just 7% in the East Midlands.



39%

of people have been **preparing more meals from scratch**

Q: Do you think lockdown has increased, decreased or had zero effect on the amount of meals you prepare from scratch? **A:** Increased: 38.65% | No effect: 54.40% | Decreased: 3.05% | N/A - never cook: 3.90%

50% of 18-24 year olds increased the amount of meals they prepare from scratch

70% of the UK population are anxious at the thought of being in busy places



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? 'I feel anxious at the thought of being in busy places with lots of other people when lockdown fully lifts'

Nationwide

Strongly agree: **34.5%**
Somewhat agree: **35.9%**
Neither agree nor disagree: **17.6%**
Somewhat disagree: **6.8%**
Strongly disagree: **4.75%**
Prefer not to say: **0.45%**

Women

Strongly agree: **42%**
Somewhat agree: **35%**

18-24 year olds

Strongly agree: **27%**
Somewhat agree: **40%**

Men

Strongly agree: **26%**
Somewhat agree: **37%**

Over 55s

Strongly agree: **38%**
Somewhat agree: **34%**



40%

will go to **pubs** and **restaurants** less often after they re-open

Q: When pubs and restaurants re-open, are you likely to attend pubs and restaurants more often, less often, or the same as before lockdown?

A: More: 8.4% | The same: 39.55% | Less: 41.2% N/A - never go to pubs/restaurants: 10.85%

48% of over 55s said they'll go to pubs and restaurants less often compared to **30% of 18-24** year olds. **46% of women** say they'll go less often compared to **35% of men**.

46%

of people now **working from home** have had their **mental health** affected

Q: How has working from home affected your mental health?

A: Positively: 25.05% | No effect: 50.65% | Negatively: 21.36% | Prefer not to say: 2.95%

18-24 year olds are more likely to have working from home **negatively** affect their mental health.

25-34 year olds are most likely to have working from home **positively** affect their mental health.

Londoners were **twice as likely** to see a positive impact on their mental health whilst working from home during lockdown.



Over 50%

of the UK population are spending **more time** on their **phones, tablets** and **laptops**

Q: Since the start of lockdown have you spent more, less, or the same amount of time each day on mobile devices? (E.g. phone, tablet, laptop)

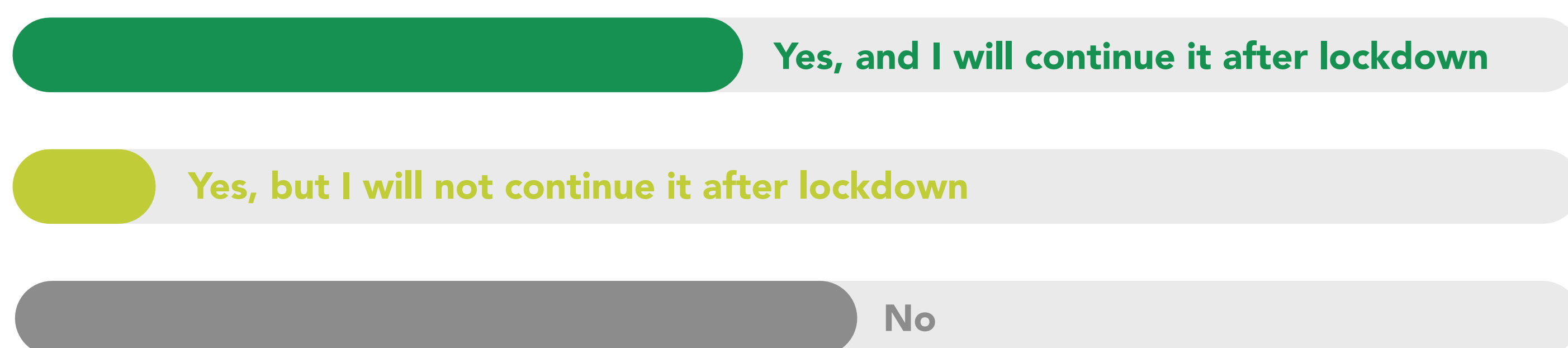
A: More: 50.65% | The same: 42.50% | Less: 4.05% | N/A - don't own a device: 2.80%

70% of 18-24 year olds spent **more time** on mobile devices compared to **42% of over 55s**. **59% of London** spent **more time** on mobile devices compared to **41% of the East Midlands**.

44%

of the UK have taken up a new hobby they intend to carry on doing after lockdown ends

Q: Did you take up a new hobby during lockdown?



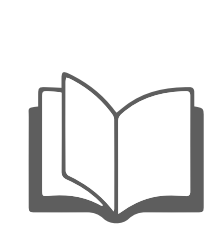
Q: Since the start of lockdown, which of the following activities have you spent more time doing? (Please select all that apply)



46% watched more TV/Netflix



38% did more gardening



38% did more reading



37% did more walking



36% did more cooking/baking



32% did more cleaning/organising



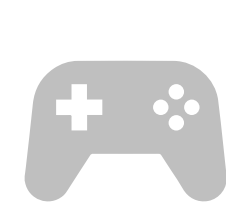
27% spent more time on social media



26% spent more time video calling



19% spent more time doing puzzles/board games



16% spent more time gaming



14% of people learnt a new skill



11% did more cycling



10% spent more time running



7% spent more time meditating



7% of people did more yoga



5% explored a new business venture



4.3% spent more time volunteering



4% spent more time doing pilates

Regional impacts of lockdown

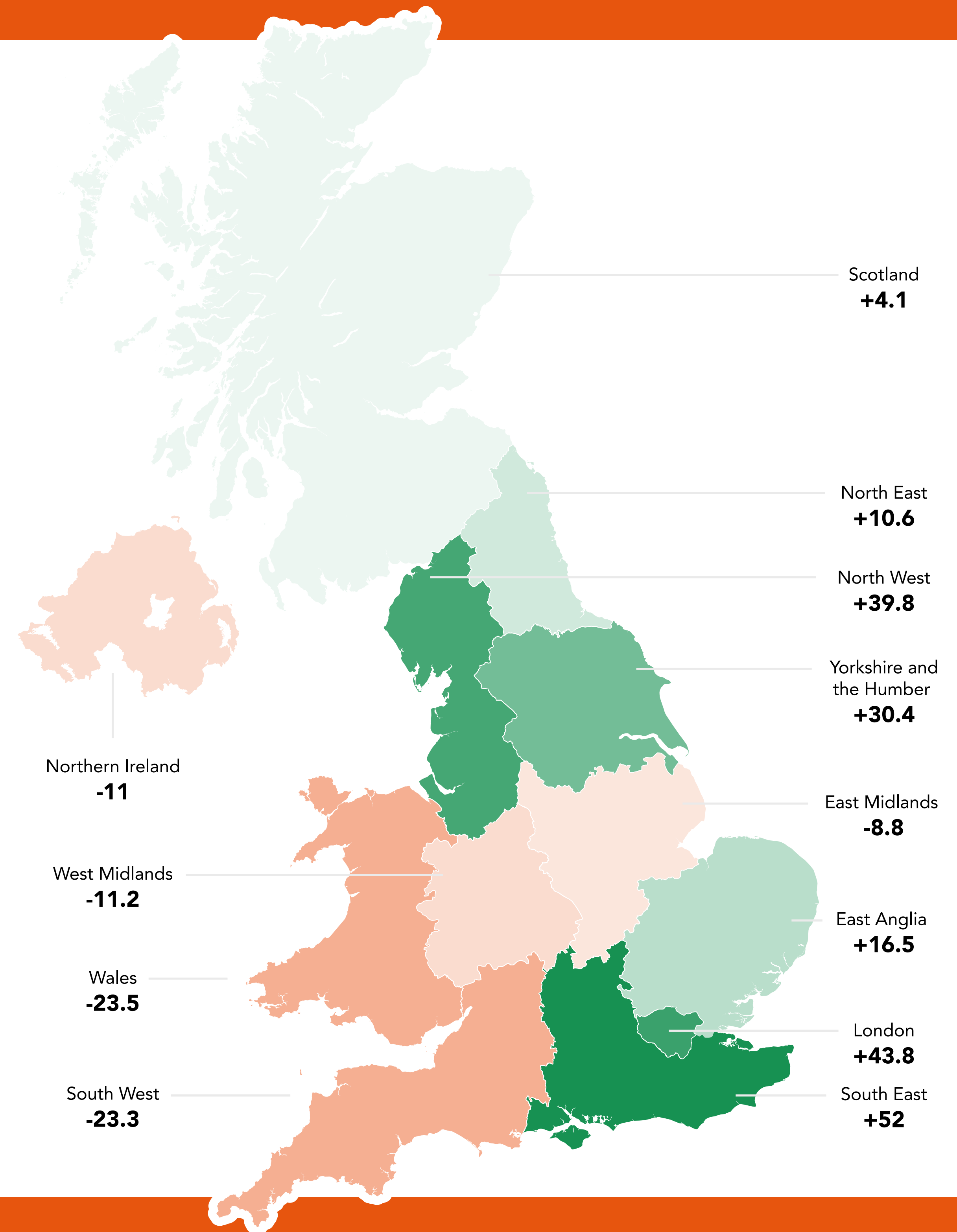
From our survey results, we devised a simply weighted metric to visualise how regions in the UK have been disproportionately affected by lockdown. This map is **not** a representation of which region in the UK is the healthiest/unhealthiest.

South East

As a result of lockdown, people living in the South East were the least likely to have increased their alcohol consumption, the 2nd most likely to have increased the amount of exercise they do, the most likely to have seen a boost to their mental health from working at home, the 2nd least likely to feel anxious in busy places, had the 2nd lowest increase in unhealthy snacks/drinks consumed and had the 2nd highest increase in the amount of vitamin supplements they take.

Wales

As a result of lockdown, people living in Wales had no overall increase in the amount of exercise they do, saw a large increase in the amount of unhealthy foods/drinks consumed, increased the amount of alcohol they drink at home, were anxious at the thought of being in busy places and were the most likely to experience a negative effect on their mental health from working at home.



Expert advice and analysis



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Crises are times of vulnerability and volatility. During personal crises, such as following a job loss, bereavement or divorce, people find themselves unusually prone to negative emotions. The same is true of collective crises. The pandemic of 2020 is one such collective crisis episode. During the months of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have found ourselves all in a crisis together, and correspondingly the level of anxiety has spiked in the general population. Anxiety during a crisis is, in large part, a result of uncertainty and unpredictability, which creates a fear of the future and a fear of the unknown. The level of uncertainty during the pandemic has been unprecedented. Below I provide some suggestions for how to deal with anxiety and hence navigate through the emotions of our collective crisis. Learning such skills may be part of the silver lining of the crisis. It is worth considering that the Chinese character for crisis means both danger and opportunity, and there is real opportunity for positive change at the moment, if you embrace it.

1. Learn how to breathe in ways that lessen anxiety

When we get anxious, our breathing tends to become fast and shallow. We also tend to hold our breath without noticing when we are anxious. When we breathe deeply, in a rhythmic and relaxed way, this tells our brain there is nothing to fear, so leads to a reduction in feelings of anxiety. There are two steps to learning how to breathe in this way. Firstly, you need to learn how to do diaphragm breathing or 'belly breathing'. There are a range of good YouTube videos to support you in this task. Secondly, once you have got the hang of diaphragm breathing, learn the practice of 'square breathing', where you breathe in and out on a four-part rhythm. A good app to support square breathing is the Calm app. The 'breathe bubble' breathing exercise for square breathing is free (click 'More' in the app menu to locate it). You will find that if you feel anxious when you are in a public place, practice square breathing for a few minutes and the feelings and physical symptoms of anxiety will dissipate.

2. Make a post-lockdown plan: Set small goals first when going to public places again

Part of the difficulty of the Covid-19 situation is the fact that other people and open places are now perceived as a source of potential danger, as they are all potential carriers of the virus. You may find that you now feel anxious in places that previously caused you no anxiety at all. It may seem strange that you need to manage the anxiety of post-lockdown, given that lockdown itself has been so anxiety-provoking for many of us, and we have all longed for our freedoms back. But you do need to be ready for a new kind anxiety as you venture forth into environments that are potentially less safe than home. You need to ease yourself back into normal life, step by step. A good strategy to handle this is gradually increasing the size and scope of journeys away from home; starting off local and small-scale and gradually build from there. So, it is recommended that make a post-lockdown plan with a set of goals. Each goal involves going a bit further away from home and/or experiencing more kinds of places: supermarkets, restaurants, shopping centres, other towns and so on. Having a plan such as this also helps you to feel in control, which is critical when so much remains uncertain. Monitor how you feel as you are doing it and use your feelings as a guide.

3. Be assertive – don't let others draw you into behaviours that could help allow the virus to spread again

After the lockdown, you will be navigating a range of new rules when socialising or meeting others for work. Social distancing; face masks; avoiding physical contact in greetings and goodbyes, and hand washing are all features of this new social environment. Having not seen your friends for so long, when you see them it may be tempting to fall in line with old patterns and to ignore the new rules. But this is a great opportunity to practice acting assertively and ensure that no-one else's behaviour makes you feel anxious. If someone is behaving in a way that goes against guidance and could help the virus to spread again, stand up for what you think is right and tell them. Being assertive has been shown to lessen feelings of anxiety, so it is great for your mental health too. Assertive communication is never accusatory, angry or aggressive. It means always starting your statement with something positive or empathic, that shows the person you understand their situation, then putting forward your point of view calmly rather than a statement of fact and holding to it. Here is a good resource for assertive communication strategies.

4. The joy of routine: Using schedules and daily rituals to keep your mind at ease

One of features of working life that people appreciate most is that it imparts a predictable structure to life, hence reduces uncertainty and unpredictability. With the increase in home working, routines and schedules that have been developed over years, which may include commutes, coffee breaks, exercise and lunches out, have disappeared for many. A key challenge with home working is to create your own routines and rituals that structure each day in an enriching way. You need to be your own boss. Sticking to a routine can be challenging. A good way of ensuring that you do so is by writing it out clearly and formally on a piece of paper, signing it at the bottom (as a way of committing yourself to it), and then putting it in a visible location where you often look. This external notice then acts a clear stimulus for keeping your days ordered and balanced. In sum, goals, plans and schedules all work much better when they are written down.

5. Strategically limit how much you check the news and social media feeds

Our brains are evolutionarily wired to pay attention to threatening information. News channels and social media platforms use this fact to their advantage – they know people are far more likely to tune in or click the link if the headline is a threatening or shocking one rather than a positive one. This is good for their traffic but bad for our mental health. During the coronavirus pandemic, consumption of news coverage has reached ‘unprecedented levels’. This is understandable as people want to keep informed, but the downside of too much news is elevated anxiety. To keep your own anxiety at manageable levels, you can intentionally limit your exposure to the news. For example, you can limit your checking of social media platforms and/or news websites to particular times in the day. As part of this, you can avoid doing so for an hour after you wake up and for an hour before going to sleep. Researchers have found that not looking at screens for an hour before bedtime boosts the chance of a restful night’s sleep, which in turn is conducive to better mental health.

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