

How are we doing in Wales?

Public Engagement Survey on Health and Wellbeing during Coronavirus Measures

Part 1: A focus on those with health conditions who are at greater risk of more severe symptoms if infected with coronavirus

Part 2: A focus on the key workers of Wales

Public Health Wales are conducting a public engagement telephone survey to ask members of the public in Wales how coronavirus and related control measures are affecting their health and wellbeing.

The survey collects information from **500 or more randomly selected individuals** each week. In some weeks, new questions are added and others removed, depending on emerging issues at that time. A sample of individuals from each week's surveys are also followed up with a second call which explores some different aspects of the pandemic.

This week's report uses data from over 4,800 individuals surveyed across eight weeks of surveying (from 13th April to 7th June 2020) to focus on the experiences of two specific population groups:

- Adults with health conditions that make them 'clinically vulnerable', and
- Adults identifying as key workers

We thank the people of Wales for giving us their valuable time to support this work.



Part 1: Health conditions / those who are 'clinically vulnerable'

23%

↑ of vulnerable individuals are **very worried about getting coronavirus**
(compared with 13% of those with no vulnerabilities)

32%

↑ of vulnerable individuals worry a lot about **becoming seriously ill** with the virus
(compared with 18% of those with no vulnerabilities)

25%

↑ of vulnerable individuals are worrying a lot about their **mental health and wellbeing**
(compared with 14% of those with no vulnerabilities)

68%

↓ of vulnerable individuals think that **current restrictions are about right**[#]
(compared with 73% of those with no vulnerabilities)

63%

↑ of vulnerable individuals would **prefer to stay in lockdown** until there is no chance of catching the virus
(compared with 48% of those with no vulnerabilities)

58%

↑ of vulnerable individuals think people should be **made to wear face masks** in public places
(compared with 45% of those with no vulnerabilities)

[#]27% of vulnerable individuals and 20% of those with no vulnerabilities think that current restrictions are too little.

Part 2: Key workers

17%

of key workers think they **have or have had coronavirus**

(compared with 13% of employed non-key workers)

25%

of key workers are worrying a lot about **becoming seriously ill** with the virus

(compared with 19% of employed non-key workers)

16%

of key workers are **worrying a lot about finances**

(compared with 22% of employed non-key workers)

70%

of key workers think that **current restrictions are about right**[#]

(compared with 76% of employed non-key workers)

58%

of key workers would **prefer non essential workplaces to remain closed** until there is no chance of catching the virus

(compared with 53% of employed non-key workers)

93%

of key workers think that **social distancing measures should be required in all workplaces**

(the same percentage as employed non-key workers)

[#]2% of key workers and 14% of employed non-key workers think that current restrictions are too little.

Why focus on Health conditions?

Evidence suggests that people in the UK with certain long-term health problems are at greater risk of coronavirus and serious health complications from the disease. Welsh Government refer to these individuals as ‘clinically vulnerable’, and suggest that they should be particularly stringent with social distancing. This includes those who have chronic respiratory diseases, heart disease or chronic neurological conditions.¹

Many of the people in Wales who are considered most at risk (i.e. ‘extremely vulnerable’) received a letter from Welsh Government in March instructing them to ‘shield’ for an initial period of 12 weeks, during which time they did not leave their homes. Shielded individuals are now permitted to leave home for exercise. This extremely vulnerable group includes people with certain cancers, as well as severe single organ disease.²

As different guidance has applied to residents in Wales with chronic health conditions, and they have been told they are at greater risk, their experiences of the pandemic and attitudes towards its restrictions may be different to those who are less vulnerable.

Experiences may also be different for those who are living with someone who is clinically or extremely vulnerable.

¹See <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-social-distancing-guidance> for a full list of conditions; ²See <https://gov.wales/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable-from-coronavirus-covid-19-html>

To try to understand the experiences of clinically vulnerable residents of Wales, we have described a vulnerable group that could be used across all weeks of the survey. This is based on individuals' self-reported health conditions or status and therefore includes anyone who themselves felt they were at greater risk due to their health:

- Diagnosed with diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or cancer;
- Has any other health condition placing them at greater risk;
- Received a shielding letter from Welsh Government;
- Identified as not working due to long term sickness or disability.

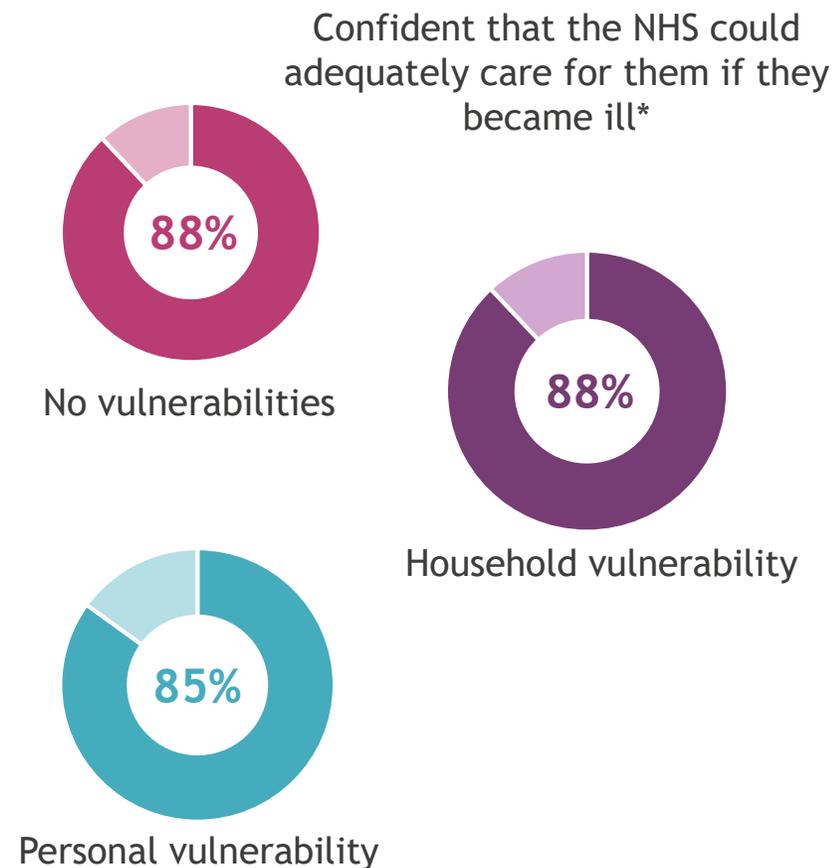
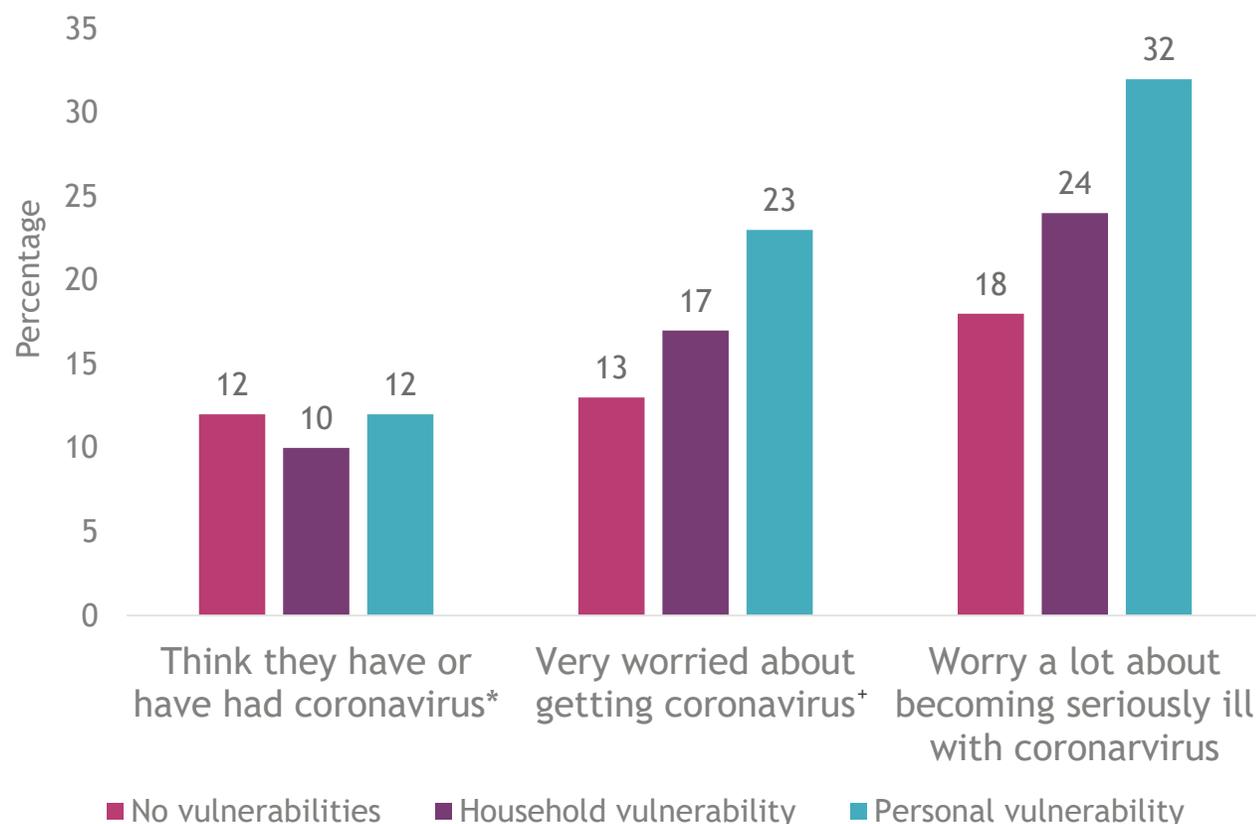
We have also identified those who are not vulnerable themselves, but live with a vulnerable household member.

Who are the people in the vulnerable group?

In our national survey of 4846 people:

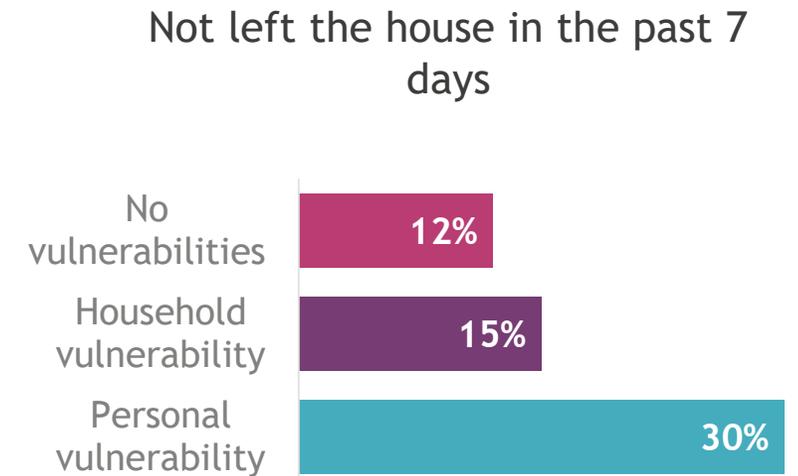
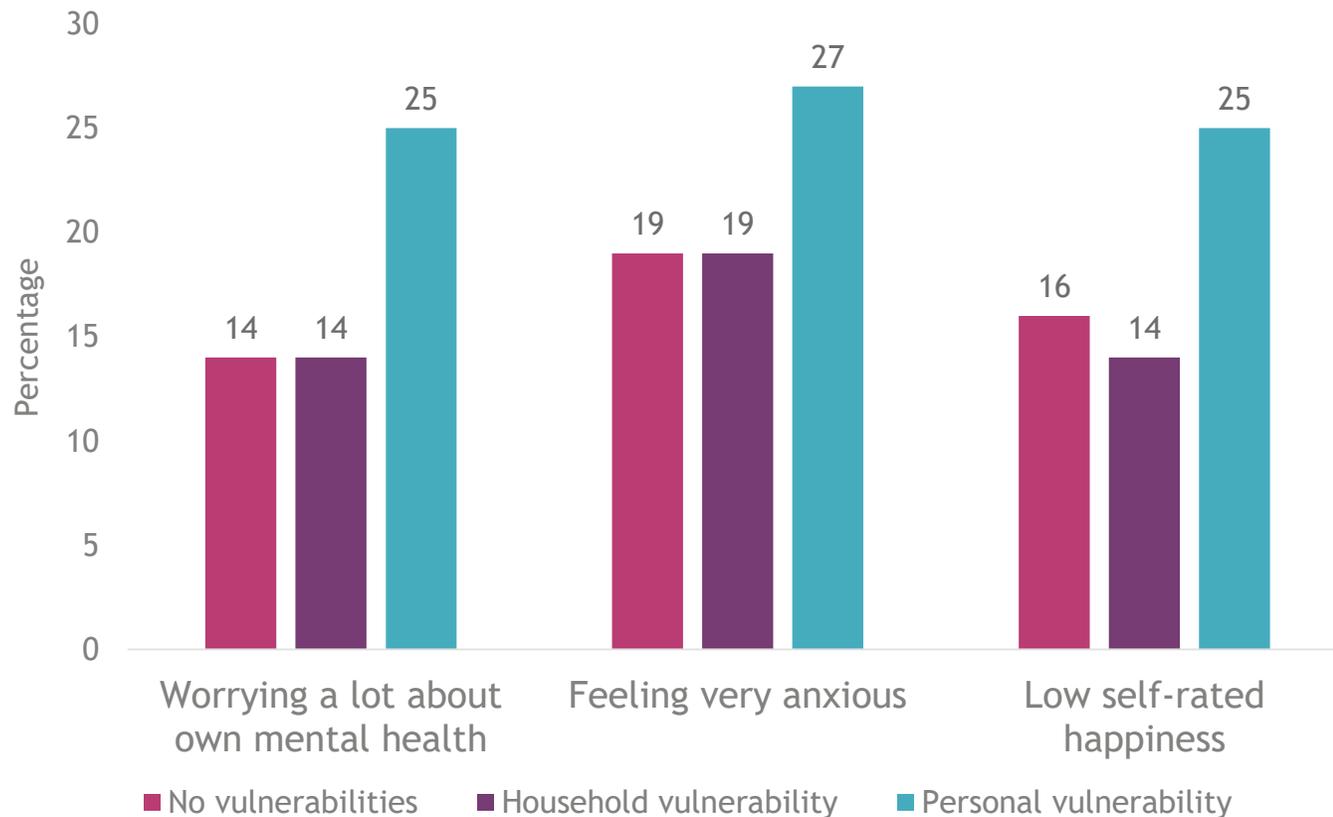
- Two thirds (66%) of those in the vulnerable/higher risk group are female;
- Just under half (48%) of vulnerable individuals are aged 55-65 years;
- A quarter (25%) of vulnerable individuals live in the most deprived quintile (fifth) in Wales;
- A quarter (24%) of people in the vulnerable group live alone, with 17% having children (under 18 years) in their household.

Clinically vulnerable respondents are more likely to worry about getting coronavirus and becoming seriously ill. However, they are as confident as those who are less vulnerable that the NHS could care for them if they did become unwell.

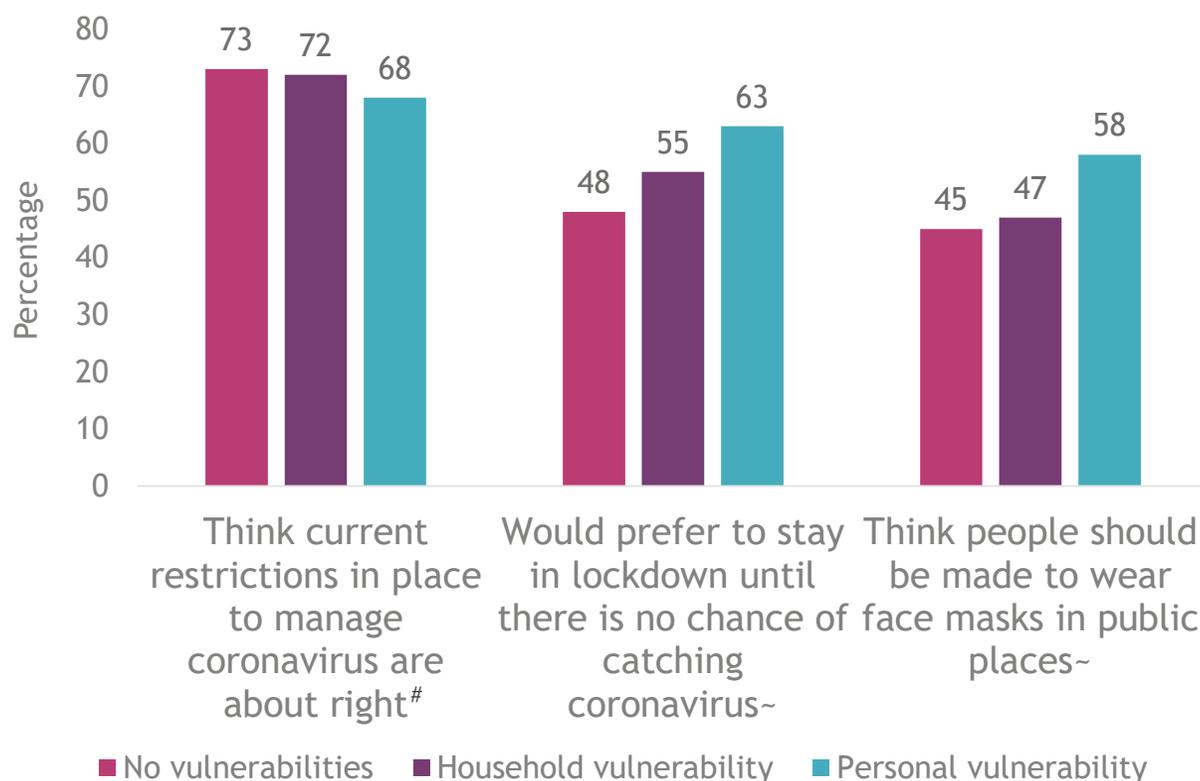


All percentages adjusted for age, gender, deprivation and week; *Differences not statistically significant; [†]Excludes those who think they have already had the virus.

Those who are clinically vulnerable report poorer mental health and wellbeing, with a quarter worrying a lot about their mental health. Having someone in the household who is clinically vulnerable (household vulnerability) does not appear to negatively impact mental wellbeing in the same way.



Those who are clinically vulnerable are more likely to support remaining in lockdown, as well as the use of face masks in public places. However, in spite of this, their current mask use remains low.



Wear a face mask 'most of the time' when out^{+~}



[#]27% of vulnerable individuals and 20% of those with no vulnerabilities think that current restrictions are too little.

All percentages adjusted for age, gender, deprivation and week. ⁺Excludes those who do not go out; [~]Measured in weeks 6 to 9 only.

Why focus on Key workers?

Since restrictions for coronavirus began, many businesses have been closed and employees have been required to work from home, wherever possible.³ However, those in certain critical or key roles have continued to attend work, to ensure the health and safety of others, as well as continued access to food, medicines etc.

This includes those working in health and social care, education and childcare, key public services (e.g. the justice system), local and national government, food and other necessary goods, public safety and national security, transport, and utilities, communication and financial services.⁴

Whilst there has been much attention paid to the ways in which the general public have given their thanks to these key workers, less is known about how their personal experiences of the pandemic may have differed from workers without key worker status.

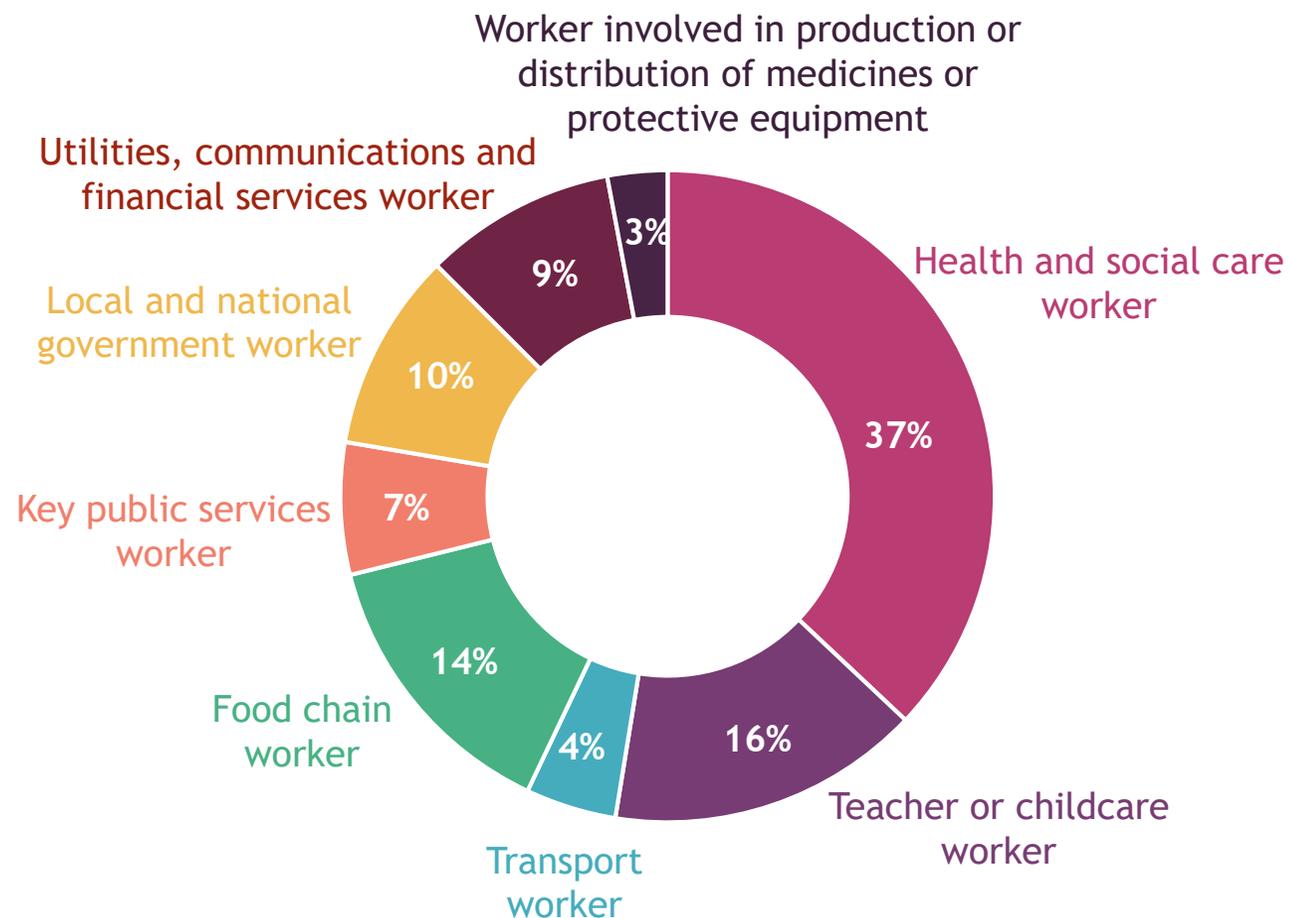
³See <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-closure-businesses-and-premises-0> ;

⁴See <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-critical-key-workers-childcare-and-education-provision>

Who are our key workers in Wales?

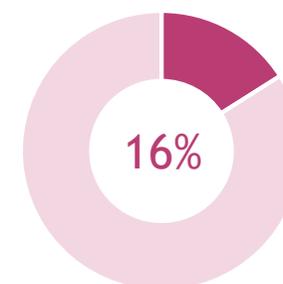
In our national survey of 4846 people, which includes 2384 people currently in employment:

- Just over two thirds (68%) of key workers are female;
- Just under half (49%) of all key workers are aged 35-54 years. One in five are 18-34 years;
- Key workers are drawn from all deprivation quintiles (fifth) across Wales - 16% are from the most deprived communities; 22% are from the least deprived;
- Key workers left home for work on average 2.5 days per week#. They left home for any reason (e.g. including shopping, exercise and caring for others) an average of 4.3 days per week, more than any other group.



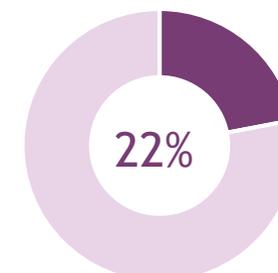
#The survey sample may miss those working full time or extended hours, who would not be present at home when called to participate in the telephone survey.

	Key worker	Employed non-key worker
Think they have or have had coronavirus	17%	13%
Very worried about getting coronavirus ⁺ *	19%	17%
Worrying a lot about becoming seriously ill with coronavirus	25%	19%
Worrying a lot about their own mental health and wellbeing*	16%	17%
Feeling very anxious*	21%	20%
Feeling isolated*	18%	21%
Worrying a lot about the wellbeing of their children [#] *	52%	48%



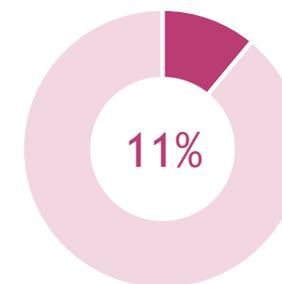
Key worker

Worrying a lot about finances

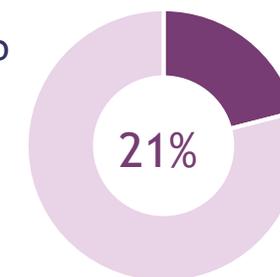


Employed non-key worker

Worrying a lot about losing their job or being unable to find one



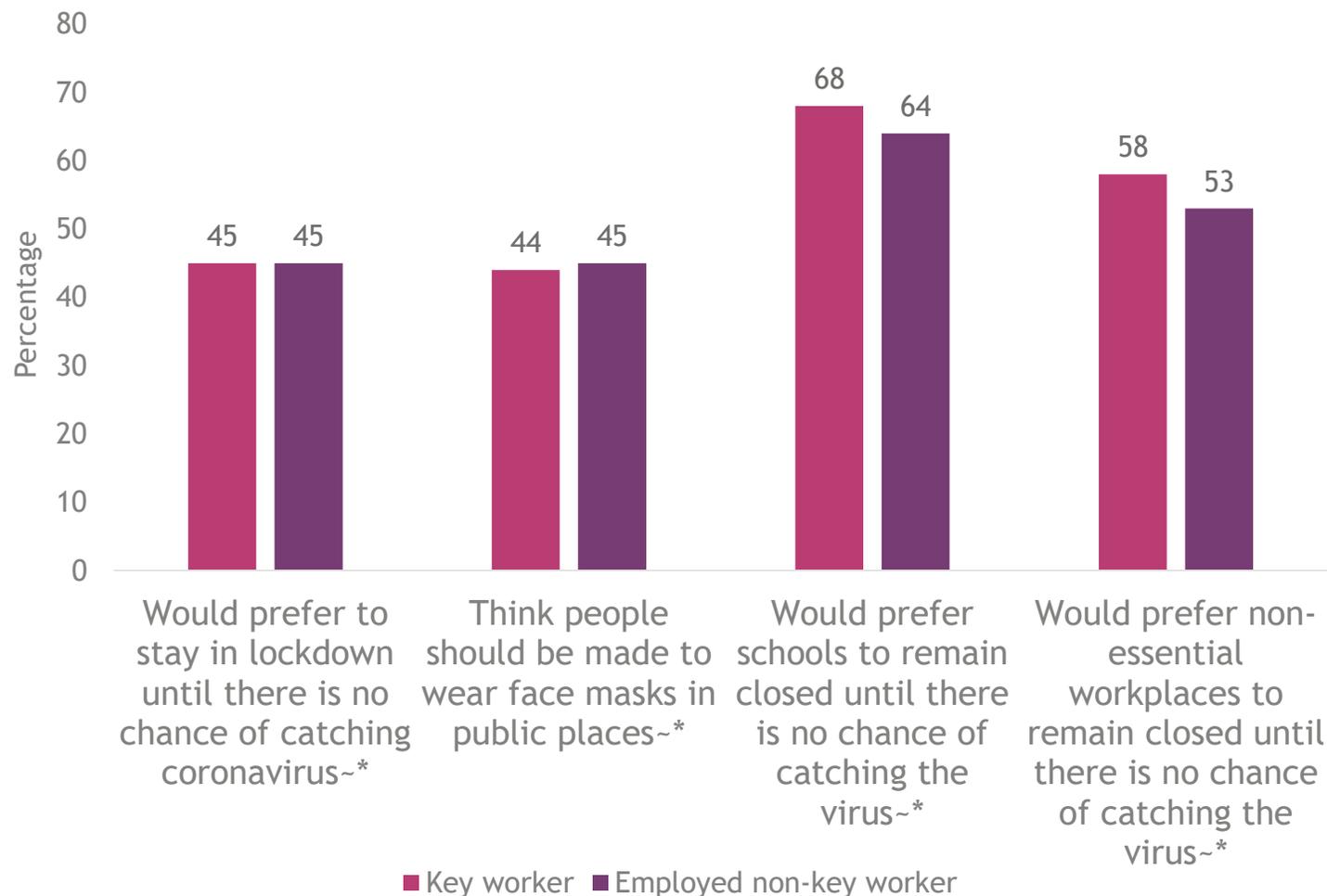
Key worker



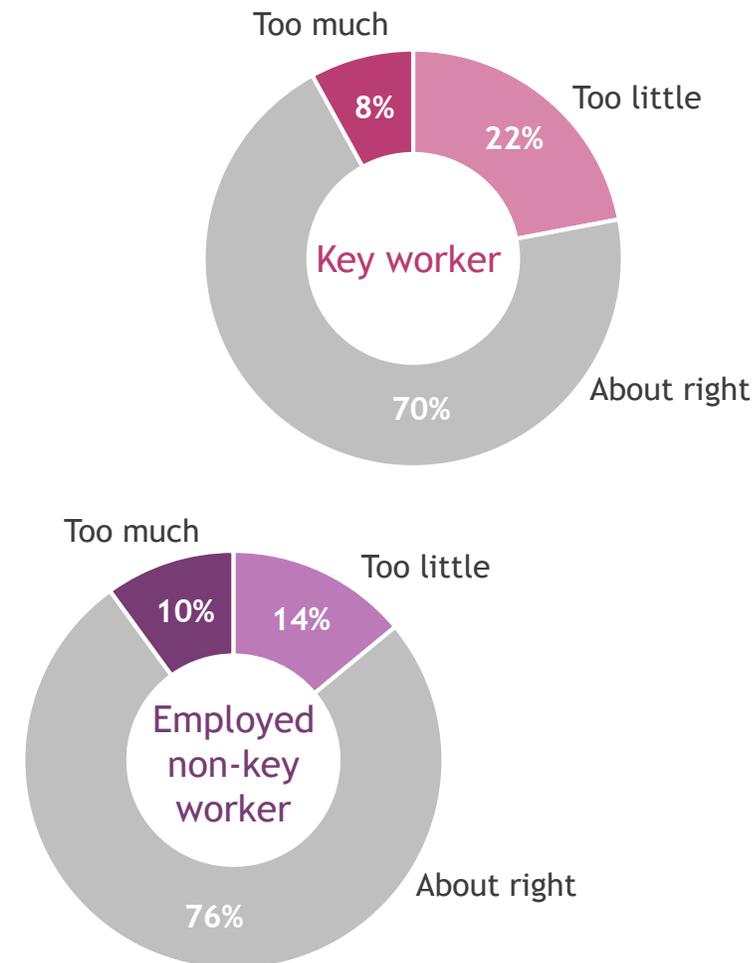
Employed non-key worker

Percentages adjusted for age, gender, week and deprivation. ⁺Excludes those who think they have already had the virus; [#]Of those with children in the household; *Differences not statistically significant.

Whilst views about specific restrictions are often similar, key workers are more likely to think that overall restrictions at present are too little.

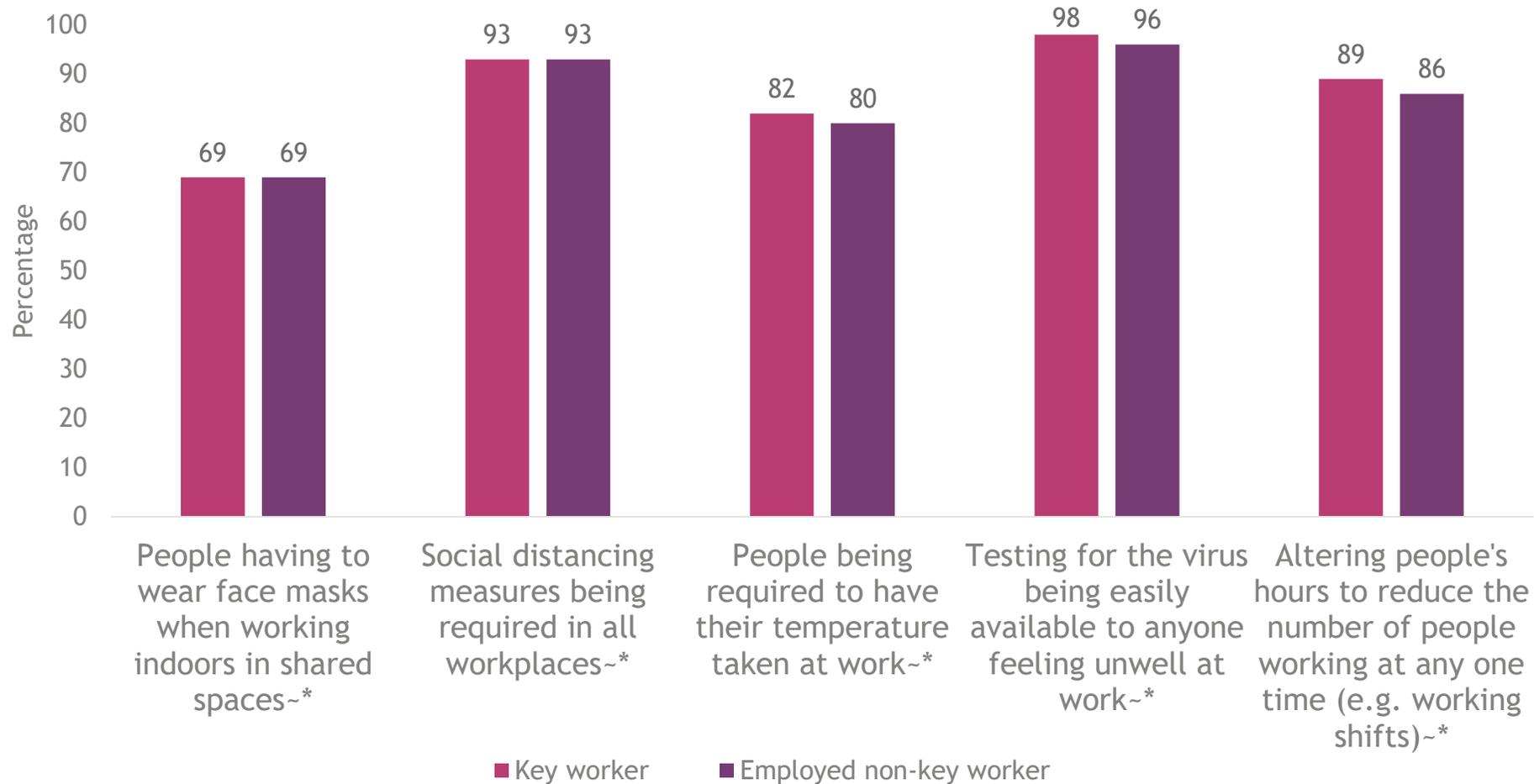


Think current restrictions are...



All percentages adjusted for age, gender, deprivation and week; ~Measured weeks 6-9 only; *Differences not statistically significant.

Key workers and employed non-key workers share positive views of potential workplace restrictions.



All percentages adjusted for age, gender, deprivation and week; ~Measured weeks 6-9 only; *Differences not statistically significant.

The survey

A national telephone survey conducted with adults (>18 years old) currently resident in Wales.

Data collection began at the beginning of **April 2020** and is ongoing.

So far, nearly 5,000 people have told us about how the virus and the lockdown is impacting them.

Our analyses

These analyses consider how experiences of coronavirus may be different for different groups in society. We are not able to look at individual health conditions or job roles due to small sample sizes for some categories. Instead, larger over-arching categories were created based on the following:

Vulnerable/at risk due to chronic health conditions = respondents who answered ‘yes’ to having one of the following chronic health conditions - diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, cancer; or answered ‘yes’ to having any other health condition that may place them at greater risk; or answered ‘yes’ to having received a letter instructing them to shield; or identified their employment status as ‘long term sick and disabled’.

Vulnerable/at risk household member = respondents who were not identified as vulnerable themselves, but answered ‘yes’ to living with someone with one of the above health conditions, or who is currently pregnant.

Employed as a key worker = respondents who answered ‘yes’ to working full or part-time in one or more of the following roles: health, social care or support worker; teacher or childcare worker; transport worker; food chain worker; key public services worker (e.g. justice, religion, mortuary, press); local or national government worker delivering essential public services; utilities, communications and financial services worker; worker involved in medicines or protective equipment production or distribution.

A **generalized linear model** function was used to explore independent relationships between outcomes of interest and health/vulnerability or key worker status, whilst adjusting for age, gender and deprivation.

Analyses were also corrected for time (i.e. week of survey). However, trends over time are not the main focus of this report and are reported elsewhere.

Findings

Key differences are presented for those considered vulnerable/at risk vs. those with lesser risk, and those employed in key worker roles vs. those employed as non-key workers. Unless highlighted, differences are statistically significant at $p < .05$. Findings are drawn from data collected from weeks 2 to 9 of the survey, unless otherwise stated in footnotes.

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How are you doing?

For general information on how to look after yourself, your friends and family during the coronavirus restrictions visit:
phw.nhs.wales/howareyoudoing

