

# The Mental Health Index™ report

United Kingdom, August 2020



**LifeWorks**  
by Morneau Shepell





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## Executive summary

Heading into the month of August, the impacts of COVID-19 remain front and centre across the United Kingdom. Daily COVID-19 cases are among the lowest levels since the global pandemic began, despite a slight up-tick in the number of new cases early this month.<sup>1</sup> England continues to report the highest number of daily COVID-19 cases, followed by Scotland and Wales, and Northern Ireland is reporting very low case counts early this month. Social restrictions have eased generally with greater relaxation of COVID-19 measures coming mid-August. Isolated outbreaks, such as those in the north of England, are being met with the targeted reintroduction of social restrictions.

The global pandemic has had a major impact on public health and on the British economy with a fall in GDP twice as large as the drop in the United States<sup>2</sup> and the highest recorded death toll from COVID-19 in Europe.<sup>3</sup> Some return to growth is being reported in the services sector that accounts for about 80% of the UK's economic output.<sup>4</sup> Britons are being encouraged to return to work. Government stimulus programs continue to play an essential role in supporting the British economy. Initiatives include broad support for opportunities and apprenticeships for young people in the workplace as well as the hospitality sector through a publicly funded discount program for meals in restaurants and pubs<sup>5</sup>. Schools in Scotland open this month and plans are underway to reopen schools across the UK this Fall.

For the fifth consecutive month, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to have an impact on the mental health of Britons, with a decline this month, reversing the trend toward modest improvement since April.

1 <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/gb>

2 <https://covid19.who.int/region/euro/country/gb>

3 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/world/europe/britain-economy-coronavirus.html?searchResultPosition=2>

4 <https://sports.yahoo.com/coronavirus-uk-services-sector-pmi-sees-fastest-growth-since-2015-083635791.html>

5 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/business/britain-economy-recession-coronavirus.html?searchResultPosition=4>



## Mental Health Index™

**The overall Mental Health Index™ for August 2020 is -13 points.** This index represents the deviation from pre-2020 benchmark. A negative score indicates poorer mental health relative to the benchmark, and a positive score indicates better mental health. The benchmark reflects mental health data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. A 13-point decrease from the pre COVID-19 benchmark<sup>6</sup> reflects a population whose mental health is similar to the most distressed one per cent of the benchmark population.

The lowest Mental Health Index™ sub-score is for the risk measure of optimism (-17.1), followed by depression (-16.0), anxiety (-16.0), work productivity (-12.7), and isolation (-12.2). The risk measure with the highest mental health score is financial (5.2), followed by general psychological health (-5.0). However, the latter has declined when compared with the prior month (-4.1).

- After a period of slow but steady improvement, the Mental Health Index™ score declined in the United Kingdom in August.
- All but two of the Mental Health Index™ sub-scores have worsened when compared to the prior month. Financial risk has improved from 3.8 in July to 5.2 in August and work productivity has remained nearly the same as the prior month (-12.8 in July to -12.7 in August).
- The financial score continues to improve with a score of 5.2 points and is above the pre-2020 benchmark. This indicates that Britons are saving more than they did before the pandemic and are increasing their saving month over month since the pandemic.
- Individuals without emergency savings continue to experience a lower score in mental health (-27.4) than the overall group. Those reporting an emergency fund have an average mental health score of -8.7.
- Females (-15.4) continue to have a lower mental health score than males (-11.4); and as observed in prior months, mental health scores improve with age.
- Respondents identifying as South Asian have the lowest mental health score (-20.2), followed by those identifying as East Asian (-16.9).

The overall Mental Health Index™ for August 2020 is -13 points, down one point from the prior month

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<sup>6</sup> The raw score for the Mental Health Index™ benchmark is 75/100. The August 2020 score is 62/100.



- Individuals identifying as Black had 5.8 point decline since last month, which is the largest decline but have the highest mental health score (-8.7), followed by those identifying as White (-13.1).
- There is a 4.0 point variance in the mental health score between those with one child (-15.5) and those without children (-11.5), with a lower score for those with one child. The gap between these two groups has been evident since April.

From April to July, regional Mental Health Index™ scores have shown general improvement; however, all regions are showing declines in mental health from July to August. The largest decline in the mental health score is observed in Wales (-2.3 points), followed by Northern Ireland (-2.2 points), Scotland (-0.9 points), and England at -0.7 points.

Overall, 4 per cent of respondents are unemployed. While most individuals remain employed, 22 percent report reduced hours or reduced salary since April 2020.

- Individuals reporting reduced salary when compared to the prior month have the lowest mental health score (-23.0), followed by individuals reporting reduced hours when compared to the prior month (-19.0), and those not currently employed (-14.1).
- Respondents who report working for companies with 51-100 employees have the lowest mental health score (-14.9). Self-employed individuals have the highest mental health score (-10.3)

The highest mental health scores in August are observed among individuals employed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-5.6), Other services (except Public Administration) (-7.3), and Manufacturing (-10.7) industries.

- Students had an 11.1 point decline since last month, which is the most significant decline, and have the lowest mental health score (-25.0), followed by individuals in Retail Trade (-16.9), and Food Services (-16.7).
- Individuals employed in Wholesale Trade, Construction, and Food Services have seen the greatest improvement in mental health since last month.

For the fifth consecutive month, the two key drivers of the Mental Health Index™ are financial risk and isolation.

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## Mental Stress Change

**The Mental Stress Change score for August 2020 is 57.8.** This indicates that 24 percent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 8 percent experiencing less. This is the fifth consecutive month where the Mental Stress Change score reflects increased mental stress in the population overall. Considering geography, the greatest increase in stress month over month is for respondents living in Wales (63.0), followed by England (57.9), Northern Ireland (54.2), and Scotland (54.1).

- The greatest increase in mental stress is seen in employed people with reduced hours (65.5), followed by employed people with reduced salary (64.2), when compared to unemployed people (57.2) and employed people with no change to salary or hours (55.6).
- As was reported in prior months, and as evidenced again in August, younger respondents are experiencing a greater increase in mental stress when compared to older respondents.
- Further, since April 2020, females have larger increases in mental stress when compared with males.
- Respondents identifying as South Asian have the least favourable mental stress change score (61.5), followed by those identifying as East Asian (60.7).
- Individuals identifying as Black have the most favourable mental stress change score (54.3), followed by respondents identifying as White (57.7).

Mental Stress Change scores for Information and Cultural Industries, and Other services (except Public Administration) industries are less steep when compared to the prior month.

- Students have the most significant increase in Mental Stress Change score (65.0) followed by individuals employed in Utilities (64.3), and Administrative and Support services (62.4).



## Additional findings

### The impact of the ongoing pandemic on mental health

In June, individuals were asked to report the main emotion they were experiencing most often. The same question was repeated in August and similar to the June findings, worry (23 per cent), calm (22 per cent), and frustration (19 per cent) are the most commonly reported emotions.

- Consistent with the June findings, individuals reporting positive emotions (i.e. calm, happiness, hopefulness, or gratitude) have much higher Mental Health Index™ scores than individuals reporting negative emotions (i.e. anger, disbelief, frustration, helplessness, and worry).
- This further validates the suggestion from June that an individual's personal outlook contributes significantly to how well that individual is coping with the strain of the pandemic and that this effect is reflected in the Mental Health Index™ scores.
- In August, 55 per cent note negative emotions. The proportions are largely the same as in June.

Using text analysis when respondents were asked to explain their emotion, certain frequently occurring words appearing in the responses were selected and the average mental health score of individuals using each word was determined.

- Individuals using words and ideas such as calm, happiness, and hope have the highest mental health scores .
- Individuals using words and ideas such as COVID, work, lockdown, uncertainty, or money have significantly lower mental health scores than the pre-pandemic benchmark.
- Those using the word money have the lowest mental health score.

### Likelihood of a return to the pre-pandemic state

- Fifty per cent of respondents feel that it is unlikely that things will return to the pre-pandemic state, with 26 per cent undecided.
- The mental health score for individuals feeling that it is very unlikely that things will return to the pre-pandemic state is the lowest (-22.8).
- An increasing trend in mental health scores is observed from very unlikely (-22.8) to very likely (0.1).



### Top of mind issues

- The most commonly reported top of mind issue is the ongoing impact of the pandemic related to finances and the economy (48 per cent). This is followed by the ongoing impact of the pandemic not related to finances and the economy (27 per cent), change of plans for major life event (12 per cent), other (10 per cent), anti-racism (2 per cent), and the upcoming US election (1 per cent).
- The lowest mental health score is among individuals reporting that their top of mind issue is a change of plans for a major life event (-16.1).
- The mental health score for individuals reporting that their top of mind issue is the upcoming US election is considerably higher (-0.9) than the mental health scores of individuals reporting any of the other issues.
- Individuals that selected 'Other' as a top of mind issue were prompted to input a text response. Text analysis revealed that the most commonly reported other issues relate to work, health, family, BREXIT, and COVID-19.

### Adaptation

Respondents were asked to report how well they feel that they are adapting financially, to changes to their work life, and to changes to their personal life. The results suggest that where there is difficulty adapting, it is more likely to be in one's personal life than either work or finances.

- Thirty-five per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their personal life or personal routine, and their mental health score is lower than other groups (-27.5) and significantly lower than the average (-13).
- Thirty per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their finances, and their mental health score is -28.3.
- Twenty-nine per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their work life or work routine, and their mental health score is -28.2.
- Seventy per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their finances, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -6.7.

Nearly half of respondents indicated that their top of mind issue is the ongoing impact of the pandemic related to finances and the economy

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- Sixty-five per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their personal life or personal routine, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -5.7.
- Seventy-one per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their work life or work routine, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -7.0.

### Additional data and analyses

Demographic breakdown of sub-scores, and specific cross-correlational and custom analyses are available upon request. Benchmarking against the national results or any sub-group, is available upon request Contact [MHI@morneaushepell.com](mailto:MHI@morneaushepell.com)

Individuals who report adapting poorly to changes in their personal life have a mental health score twenty-two points below individuals who report adapting well to change in this area

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## Overview of the Mental Health Index™

The mental health and wellbeing of a population is essential to overall health and work productivity. The Mental Health Index™ provides a measure of the current mental health status of employed adults in a given geography, compared to the benchmarks collected in the years of 2017, 2018 and 2019. The increases and decreases in the Index are intended to predict cost and productivity risks, and inform the need for investment in mental health supports by business and government.

### The Mental Health Index™ report has three main parts:

1. The overall Mental Health Index™ (MHI), which is a measure of change compared to the benchmark of mental health and risk.
2. A Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score, which measures the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month.
3. A Spotlight section that reflects the specific impact of current issues in the community.

### Methodology

The data for this report was collected through an online survey of 2,000 Britons who are living in the United Kingdom and are currently employed or who were employed within the prior six months. Participants were selected to be representative of the age, gender, industry and geographic distribution in the United Kingdom. The same respondents participate each month to remove sampling bias. The respondents were asked to consider the prior two weeks when answering each question. The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, starting in April 2020. The benchmark data was collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The data for the current report was collected between July 21 to July 31, 2020.

Collected through an online survey of 2,000 Britons

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## Calculations

To create the Mental Health Index™, the first step leverages a response scoring system turning individual responses to each question into a point value. Higher point values are associated with better mental health and less mental health risk. Each individual's scores are added and then divided by the total number of possible points to get a score out of 100. The raw score is the mathematical mean of the individual scores.

To demonstrate change, the current month's scores are then compared to the benchmark and the prior month. The benchmark is comprised of data from 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was a period of relative social stability and steady economic growth. **The change relative to the benchmark is the Mental Health Index™. A score of zero in the Mental Health Index™ reflects no change, positive scores reflect improvement, and negative scores reflect decline.**

A Mental Stress Change score is also reported given that increasing and prolonged mental stress is a potential contributor to changes in mental health. It is reported separately and is not part of the calculation of the Mental Health Index™. The Mental Stress Change score is  $(\text{percentage reporting less mental stress} + \text{percentage reporting the same level of mental stress} * 0.5) * -1 + 100$ . The data compares the current to the prior month. **A Mental Stress Change score of 50 reflects no change in mental stress from the prior month. Scores above 50 reflect an increase in mental stress, scores below 50 reflect a decrease in mental stress.** The range is from zero to 100. A succession of scores over 50, month over month, reflects high risk.

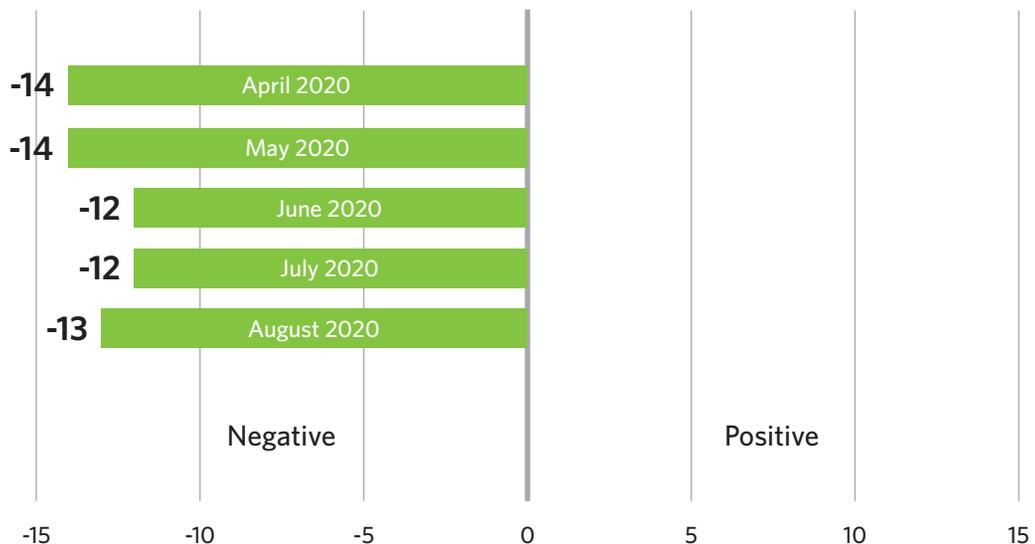


# The Mental Health Index™

The Mental Health Index™ (MHI) is a measure of deviation from the benchmark<sup>7</sup> of mental health and risk.

## MHI

<b>Current month</b> <b>August 2020</b>	<b>-13</b>	
July 2020	-12	
<b>MHI sub-scores<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>August</b>	<b>July</b>
Optimism	-17.1	-16.5
Depression	-16.0	-14.6
Anxiety	-16.0	-14.9
Work productivity	-12.7	-12.8
Isolation	-12.2	-10.7
Psychological health	-5.0	-4.1
Financial risk	5.2	3.8



The overall Mental Health Index™ is -13 and continues to reside below the benchmark for the fifth consecutive month. The current score of 62 is equivalent to the first percentile of the benchmark.

<sup>7</sup> The benchmark reflects data collected in 2017, 2018 and 2019.  
<sup>8</sup> The demographic breakdown of sub-scores are available upon request.



Employment status	August	July
<b>Employed</b> (no change in hours/salary)	<b>-11.1</b>	<b>-10.4</b>
Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)	-19.0	-17.2
<b>Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)</b>	<b>-23.0</b>	<b>-18.9</b>
Not currently employed	-14.1	-14.2
Age group	August	July
<b>Age 20-29</b>	<b>-19.5</b>	<b>-18.2</b>
Age 30-39	-17.2	-16.7
Age 40-49	-15.5	-14.2
Age 50-59	-10.6	-10.4
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>-5.6</b>	<b>-5.7</b>
Number of children	August	July
<b>No children in household</b>	<b>-11.5</b>	<b>-10.7</b>
1 child	-15.5	-15.4
2 children	-17.1	-15.7
<b>3 children or more</b>	<b>-17.7</b>	<b>-18.3</b>

Numbers highlighted in **orange** are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in **green** are the least negative scores in the group.

**Available upon request:**

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses

Region	August	July
England	-13.4	-12.7
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	<b>-16.1</b>	<b>-13.9</b>
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>-11.3</b>	-10.4
Wales	-12.6	<b>-10.3</b>
Gender	August	July
<b>Male</b>	<b>-11.4</b>	<b>-11.1</b>
Female	<b>-15.4</b>	<b>-14.2</b>
Income	August	July
<b>Household income &lt;£15K/annum</b>	<b>-18.9</b>	<b>-20.2</b>
<b>£15K to &lt;£30K/annum</b>	<b>-18.9</b>	-17.6
£30K to <£60K	-12.6	-11.5
£60K to <£100K	-8.8	-9.0
<b>£100K and over</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>-2.0</b>

Racial identification	August	July
<b>Black</b>	<b>-8.7</b>	<b>-2.9</b>
East Asian	-16.9	-16.5
<b>South Asian</b>	<b>-20.2</b>	<b>-17.9</b>
White	-13.1	-12.4
Other*	-14.8	-14.4
Employer size	August	July
<b>Self-employed/sole proprietor</b>	<b>-10.3</b>	<b>-10.4</b>
2-50 employees	-11.7	-10.5
<b>51-100 employees</b>	<b>-14.9</b>	<b>-15.2</b>
101-500 employees	-13.7	-12.4
501-1,000 employees	-13.9	-13.8
1,001-5,000 employees	-13.9	-14.3
5,001-10,000 employees	-11.6	-12.9
More than 10,000 employees	-14.2	-10.9

\* Included in this category are Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian, Indigenous/Aboriginal, South East Asian, Latin, South or Central American, Pacific Islander, Mixed (Black and other), Mixed (Other), and Prefer not to answer, as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.



## The Mental Health Index™ (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The highest mental health scores are observed in Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (-5.6), Other services (except Public Administration) (-7.3), and Manufacturing (-10.7). Students (-25.0) have the lowest mental health score followed by individuals working in Retail Trade (-16.9), and Food Services (-16.7). Improvements from the prior month are shown in the table below:

Industry	August 2020 MHI	July 2020 MHI	Improvement
Wholesale Trade	-15.2	-20.2	5.1
Construction	-10.7	-13.8	3.2
Food Services	-16.7	-18.8	2.1
Information and Cultural Industries	-10.8	-12.7	1.9
Utilities	-15.6	-16.5	0.9
Finance and Insurance	-11.7	-12.4	0.7
Other services (except Public Administration)	-7.3	-7.7	0.4
Educational Services	-12.3	-12.2	-0.1
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	-5.6	-5.5	-0.1
Manufacturing	-10.7	-9.7	-0.9
Transportation and Warehousing	-14.1	-12.7	-1.4
Other	-12.9	-11.3	-1.6
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	-10.8	-9.1	-1.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	-14.4	-12.5	-1.9
Retail Trade	-16.9	-14.8	-2.1
Public Administration	-14.7	-12.5	-2.3
Administrative and Support services	-16.1	-13.4	-2.7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	-16.2	-11.5	-4.7
I am a student	-25.0	-13.9	-11.1

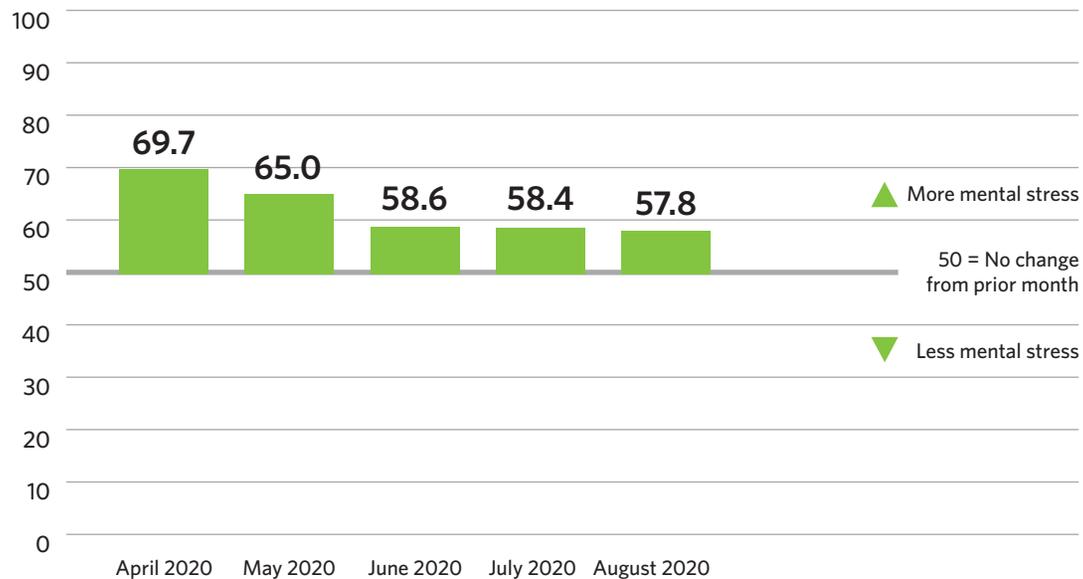


# The Mental Stress Change score

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress, compared to the prior month.

MStress Chg	
Current month August 2020	<b>57.8</b>
July 2020	58.4

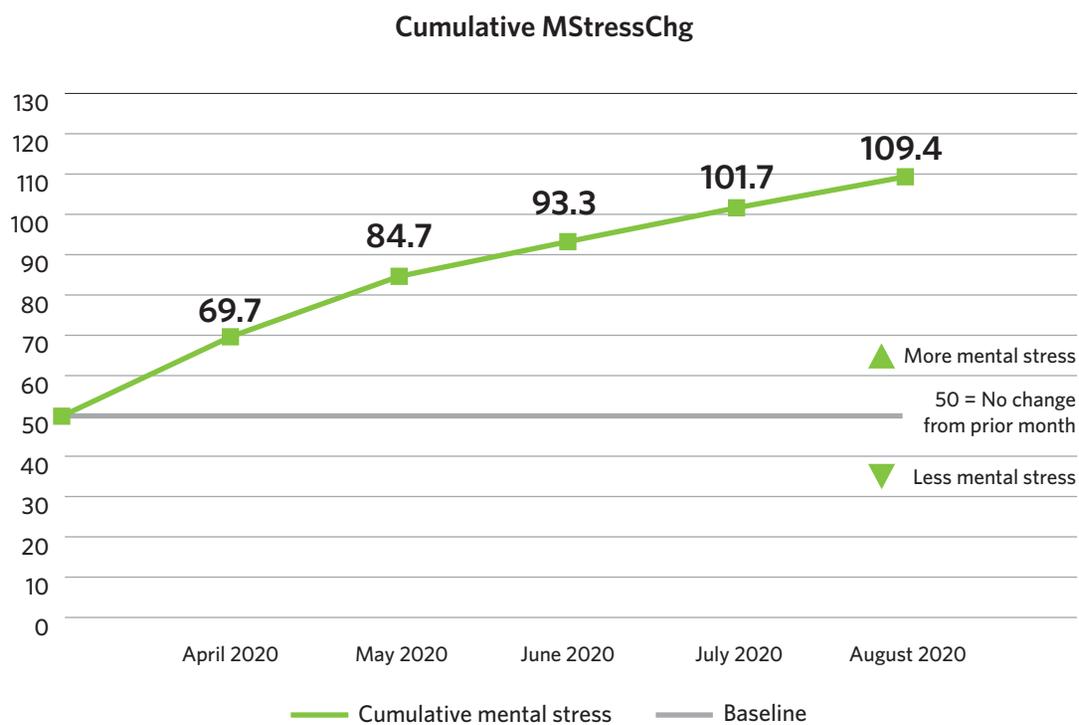
The Mental Stress Change score for August 2020 is 57.8. This reflects an increase in mental stress when compared to the prior month. The steepness of the increase has been declining month-over-month since April. The current score indicates that 24 per cent of the population is experiencing more mental stress compared to the prior month, with 8 per cent experiencing less. A continued increase in mental stress over the last five months, when compared to the benchmark, indicates a significant accumulation of strain in the population.





# The Mental Stress Change (cumulative)

The Mental Stress Change (MStressChg) score is a measure of the level of reported mental stress compared to the prior month. The change is rooted against a value of 50 implying no net mental stress change from the previous month, while values above 50 indicate a net increase in mental stress and values below 50 indicate a net decrease in mental stress. The cumulative mental stress score is shown in the graph below:





Employment status	August	July
<b>Employed</b> (no change in hours/salary)	<b>55.6</b>	<b>56.9</b>
<b>Employed (fewer hours compared to last month)</b>	<b>65.5</b>	61.4
Employed (reduced salary compared to last month)	64.2	<b>64.4</b>
Not currently employed	57.2	57.8

Age group	August	July
<b>Age 20-29</b>	<b>61.1</b>	<b>62.7</b>
Age 30-39	59.2	61.6
Age 40-49	59.5	58.1
Age 50-59	55.6	57.4
<b>Age 60-69</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>54.7</b>

Number of children	August	July
<b>No children in household</b>	<b>56.6</b>	<b>57.1</b>
1 child	59.0	60.2
<b>2 children</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>62.1</b>
3 children or more	60.5	58.5

Region	August	July
England	57.9	58.4
Northern Ireland	54.2	57.6
<b>Scotland</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>59.7</b>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>63.0</b>	<b>57.3</b>

Gender	August	July
<b>Male</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>58.3</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>58.5</b>

Income	August	July
Household income <£15K/annum	59.3	57.6
<b>£15K to &lt;£30K/annum</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>59.9</b>
£30K to <£60K	56.2	58.7
£60K to <£100K	57.4	58.2
<b>£100K and over</b>	<b>51.3</b>	<b>53.2</b>

Racial identification	August	July
<b>Black</b>	<b>54.3</b>	<b>52.2</b>
East Asian	60.7	<b>62.1</b>
<b>South Asian</b>	<b>61.5</b>	55.0
White	57.7	58.6
Other*	58.3	58.5

\* Included in this category are Arab/Middle Eastern/West Asian, Indigenous/Aboriginal, South East Asian, Latin, South or Central American, Pacific Islander, Mixed (Black and other), Mixed (Other), and Prefer not to answer, as the minimum threshold for reporting was not met for each group.

Employer size	August	July
Self-employed/sole proprietor	56.0	58.3
2-50 employees	56.8	56.6
<b>51-100 employees</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>61.6</b>
101-500 employees	58.0	58.9
501-1,000 employees	56.7	57.8
1,001-5,000 employees	58.3	60.6
<b>5,001-10,000 employees</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>56.4</b>
More than 10,000 employees	58.7	57.6

Numbers highlighted in **orange** are the most negative scores in the group.

Numbers highlighted in **green** are the least negative scores in the group.

**Available upon request:**

Specific cross-correlational and custom analyses



## The Mental Stress Change (industry)

The mental health of individuals across industries can differ immensely depending upon market and societal conditions. The most favourable mental stress changes are observed in Information and Cultural Industries (52.1), and Other services (except Public Administration) (53.1). The least favourable mental stress changes are observed among Students (65.0), along with those in Utilities (64.3), and Administrative and Support services (62.4) industries.

Mental Stress changes from the last two months are shown in the table below:

Industry	August 2020 MStress Chg	July 2020 MStress Chg
Information and Cultural Industries	52.1	55.8
Other	52.7	54.6
Other services (except Public Administration)	53.1	53.6
Food Services	54.0	59.4
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	54.2	54.7
Wholesale Trade	55.5	60.9
Construction	56.7	59.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	56.8	56.6
Finance and Insurance	56.9	57.4
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	57.4	59.6
Public Administration	57.8	58.5
Manufacturing	57.8	61.0
Educational Services	58.4	58.5
Transportation and Warehousing	59.1	58.3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	59.3	57.0
Retail Trade	60.5	60.5
Administrative and Support services	62.4	57.7
Utilities	64.3	55.0
I am a student	65.0	57.5

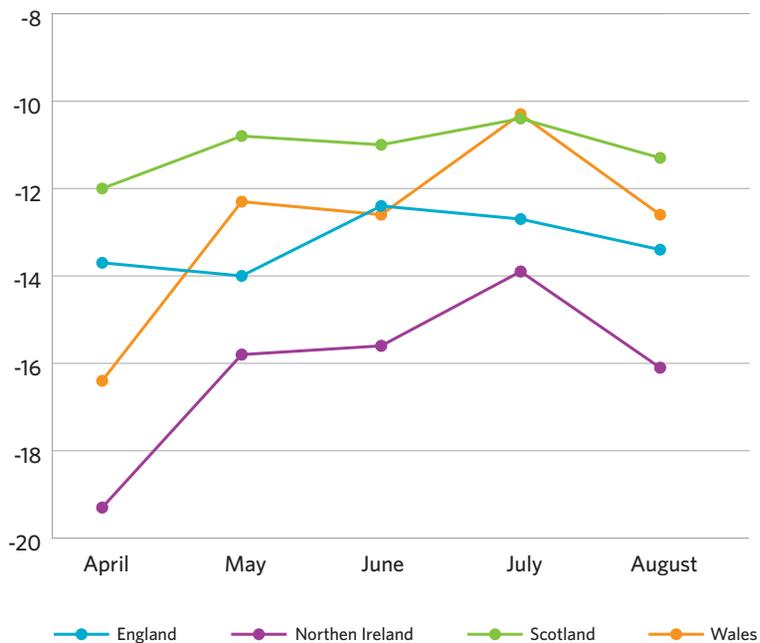


# Mental health trends by region

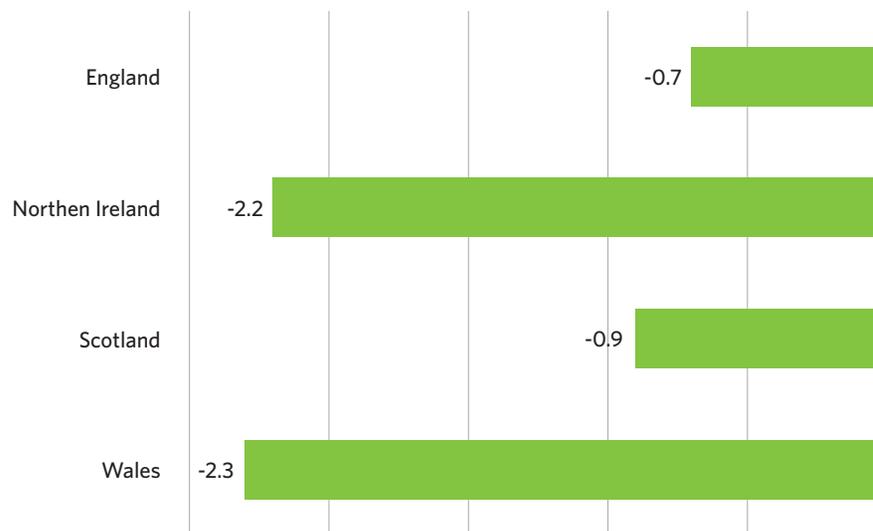
From April to July, regional Mental Health Index™ scores have shown general improvement; however, all regions are showing declines in mental health from July to August.

The largest decline in the mental health score is observed in Wales (-2.3 points), followed by Northern Ireland (-2.2 points), Scotland (-0.9 points), and England at -0.7 points.

United Kingdom Mental Health Index™ scores



July to August change





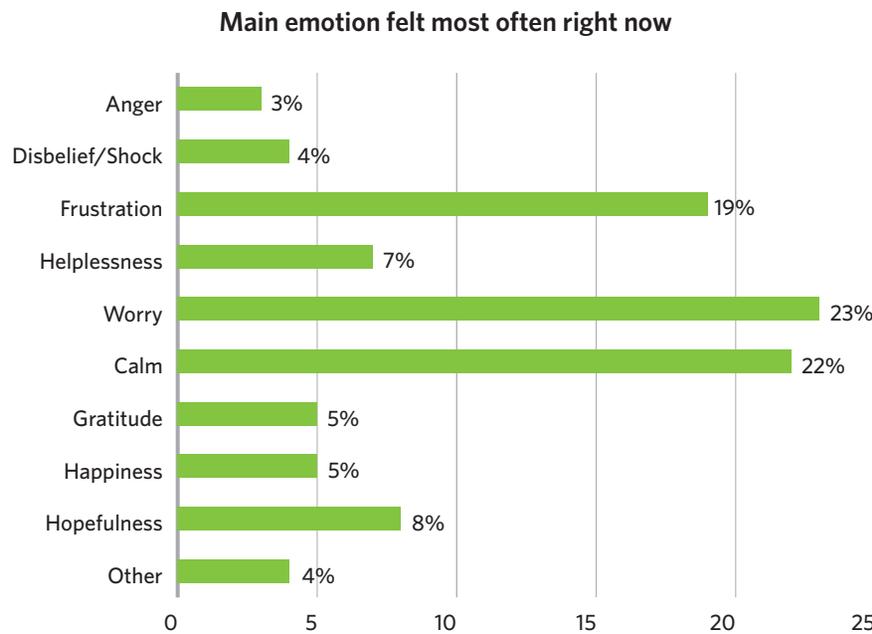
# The impact of the ongoing pandemic on mental health

## Main emotion being felt most often right now

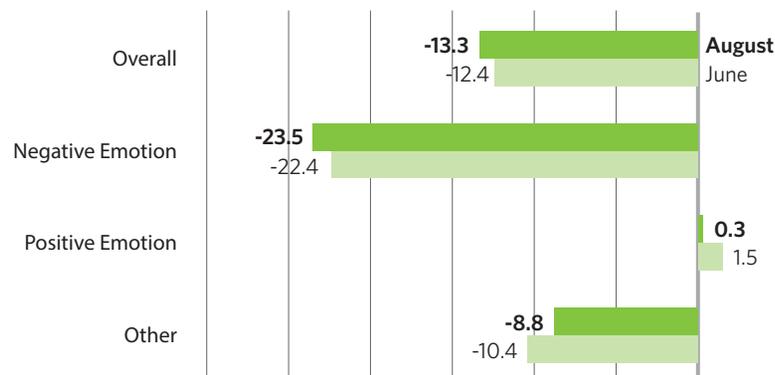
In June, individuals were asked to report the main emotion they were experiencing most often. The same question was repeated in August and similar to the June findings, worry (23 per cent), calm (22 per cent), and frustration (19 per cent) are the most commonly reported emotions.

Consistent with the June findings, individuals reporting positive emotions (i.e. calm, happiness, hopefulness, or gratitude) have much higher Mental Health Index™ scores than individuals reporting negative emotions (i.e. anger, disbelief, frustration, helplessness, and worry).

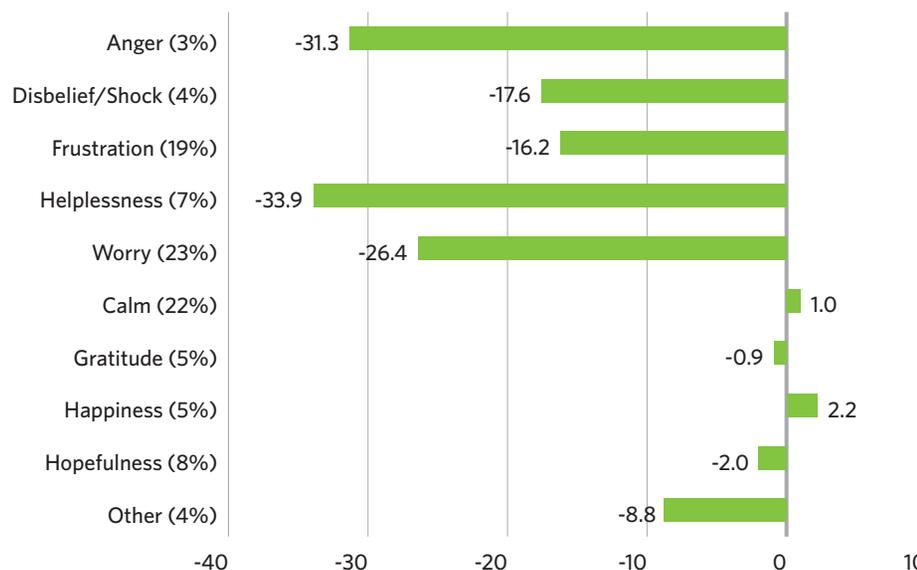
When comparing the overall positive and negative emotions from June and August, similar Mental Health Index™ scores are observed.



## Comparison of emotion type and MHI score from June to August



## Main emotion felt most often right now and MHI score

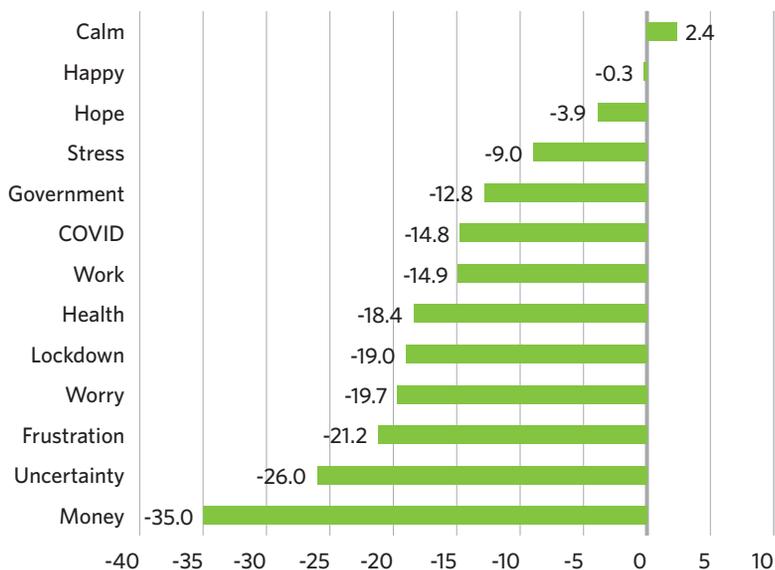




In August, a follow-up question was included asking respondents to express the reason for selecting the main emotion they reported feeling. Using text analysis, certain frequently occurring words appearing in the responses were selected and the average mental health score of individuals using each word was determined.

Individuals using words and ideas such as calm, happiness, and hope have the highest mental scores. Individuals using words and ideas such as COVID, work, lockdown, uncertainty, or money have significantly lower mental health scores than the pre-pandemic benchmark. Those using the word money have the lowest mental health score.

Word usage and Mental Health Index™ scores



“I hate not being able to control anything or know when things will get better. I am constantly worried.”

“I am about to lose my job and I have children who feel scared and anxious.”

“I have taken stock of everything I have and feel generally grateful to have them, particularly now.”

“Things are what they are you just have to carry on with life as near normal as possible.”

“Loss of income, freedom, lifestyle, contact with relatives & friends. I worry about my health and the future.”

“I feel as if I am in a dark space with no light at the end of the tunnel.”

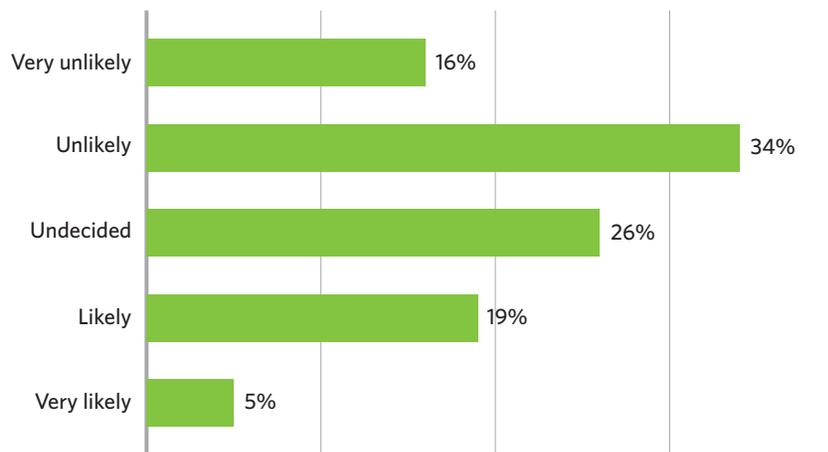


### Likelihood of a return to the pre-pandemic state

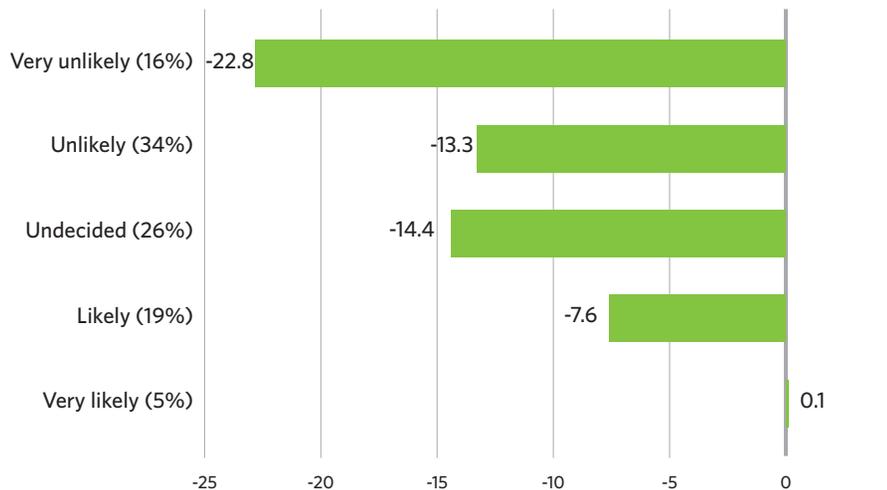
Individuals were also asked how likely it is that things will return to the pre-pandemic state. Fifty per cent of respondents feel that it is unlikely that things will return to the pre-pandemic state, with 26 per cent undecided.

The mental health score for individuals feeling that it is very unlikely that things will return to the pre-pandemic state is the lowest (-22.8). An increasing trend in mental health scores is observed from very unlikely (-22.8) to very likely (0.1).

Likelihood of return to pre-pandemic state



Likelihood of return to pre-pandemic state: MHI scores



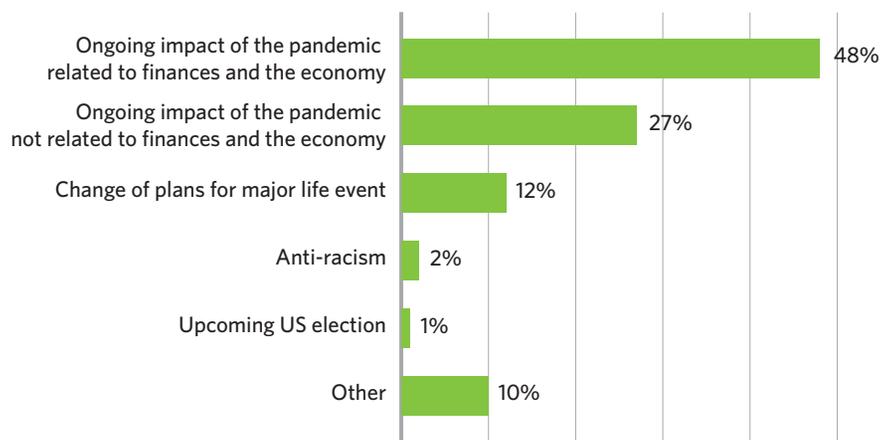


### Top of mind issues

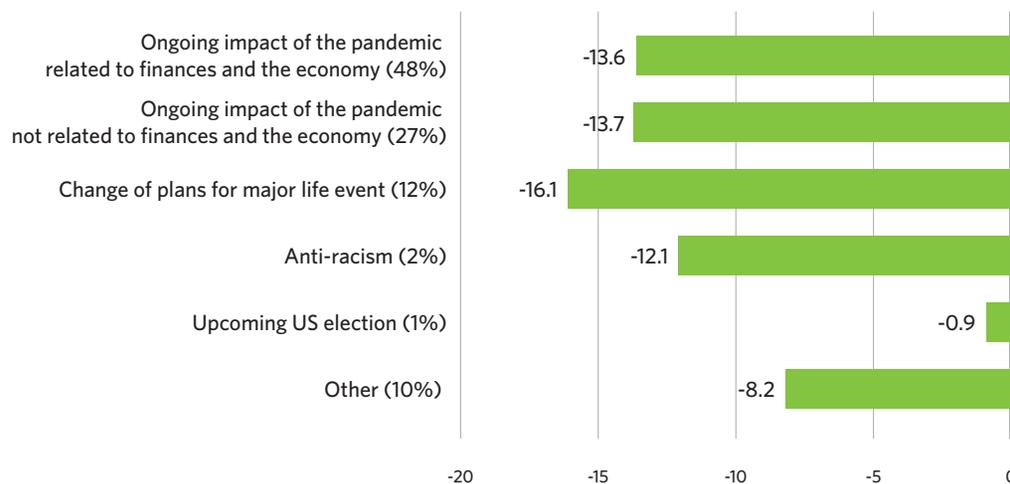
The most commonly reported top of mind issue is the ongoing impact of the pandemic related to finances and the economy (48 per cent). This is followed by the ongoing impact of the pandemic not related to finances and the economy (27 per cent), change of plans for major life events (12 per cent), other (10 per cent), anti-racism (2 per cent), and the upcoming US election (1 per cent).

The lowest mental health score is among individuals reporting that their top of mind issue is a change of plans for a major life event (-12.5).

Top of Mind Issues



Top of Mind Issues: MHI scores

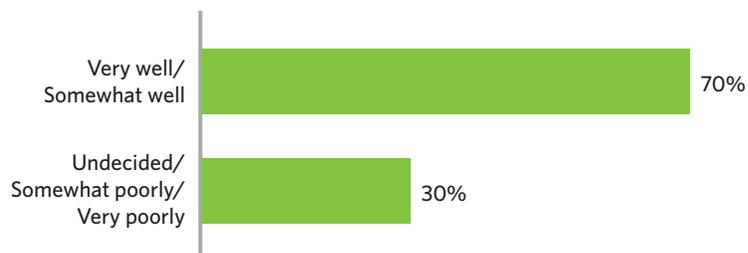




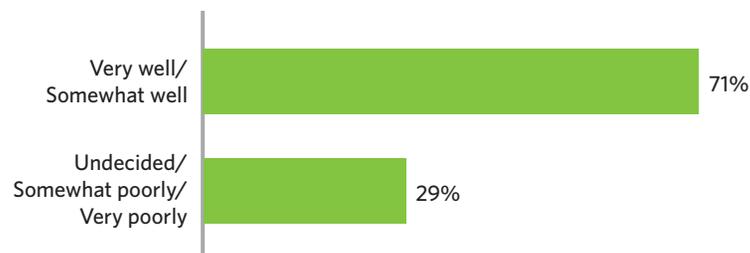
Individuals that selected 'Other' as a top of mind issue were prompted to input a text response. Text analysis revealed that the most commonly reported other issues relate to work, health, family, BREXIT, and COVID.



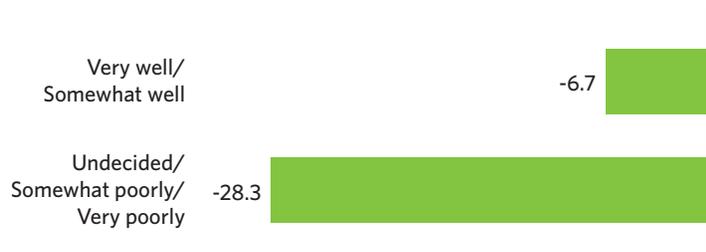
### Financial adaptation



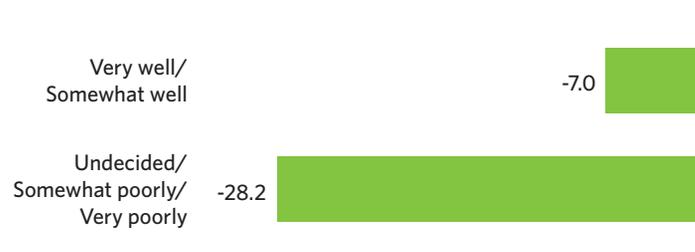
### Change to my work life/routine adaptation



### Financial adaptation: MHI scores



### Change to my work life/routine adaptation: MHI scores



## Adaptation

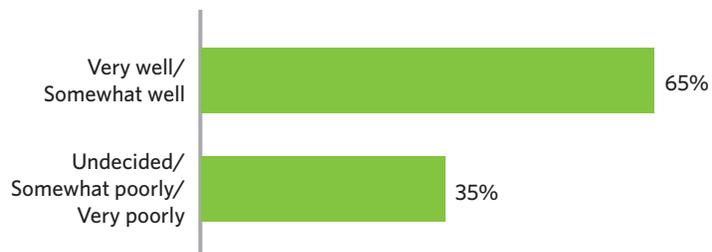
Respondents were asked to report how well they feel that they are adapting financially, to changes to their work life, and to changes to their personal life. The results suggest that where there is difficulty adapting, it is more likely to be in one's personal life than either work or finances.

Seventy per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their finances, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -6.7, whereas thirty per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their finances, and their mental health score is -28.3.

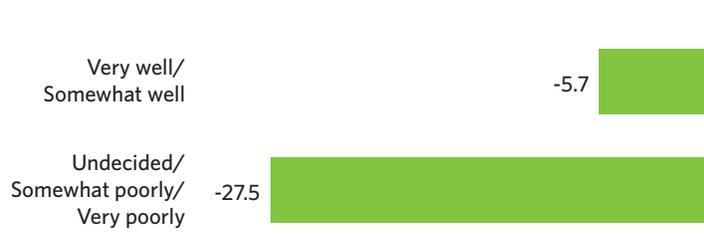
Seventy-one per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their work life or work routine, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -7.0, whereas twenty-nine per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their work life or work routine, and their mental health score is -28.2.



### Change to my personal life/routine adaptation



### Change to my personal life/routine adaptation: MHI scores



Sixty-five per cent of respondents feel that they are adapting well to changes in their personal life or personal routine, and these individuals have mental health scores averaging -5.7, whereas thirty-five per cent of respondents are undecided or feel that they are adapting poorly to changes in their personal life or personal routine, and their mental health score is lower than other groups (-27.5) and significantly lower than the average (-13.0).

## Implications

The current scores for the Mental Health Index™ are a clear warning regarding the mental health impact of the pandemic. The Index shows a significant decrease in the mental health in the United Kingdom. We also see a significant increase in mental stress compared to the prior month and a definitive link to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. While the physical health risk of COVID-19 is the focus of much attention, the mental health impact requires similar attention and action. Well after the risk of infection reduces, the mental health impact may remain. This has implications for the quality of life of individuals, the stability of families, the risk of health and disability costs for organizations as well as the level of participation in the economy, which is a concern for government, given its impact on the speed of economic recovery.

### To address this situation, action is required on at least three levels:

1. **Individuals** need to attend to the impact of the pandemic on their mental health. While some strain would be expected as a result of such a massive change, feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope, or feeling stuck and unable to adapt, are clear warning signs requiring support from a trusted confidant or a counselling professional.
2. **Businesses** need to attend to the risk among employees. The Mental Health Index™ measures the mental health risk and status of the working population. The current scores suggest a risk to the longer-term wellbeing of employees, which may impact business productivity, health costs and disability absence. Business would do well to increase the focus on mental health through communication that increases the awareness of mental health warning signs, campaigns to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health support, and the promotion of health plans and public resources.
3. **Governments** need to attend to the mental health of the population. A population under strain is less likely to participate fully in the economy. The current focus on health and safety needs to expand to include a significant focus on mental health. This should include clear messages regarding coping strategies and the promotion of public resources.

The Mental Health Index™ is published monthly, and measures trends over time.

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