

30th October 2020

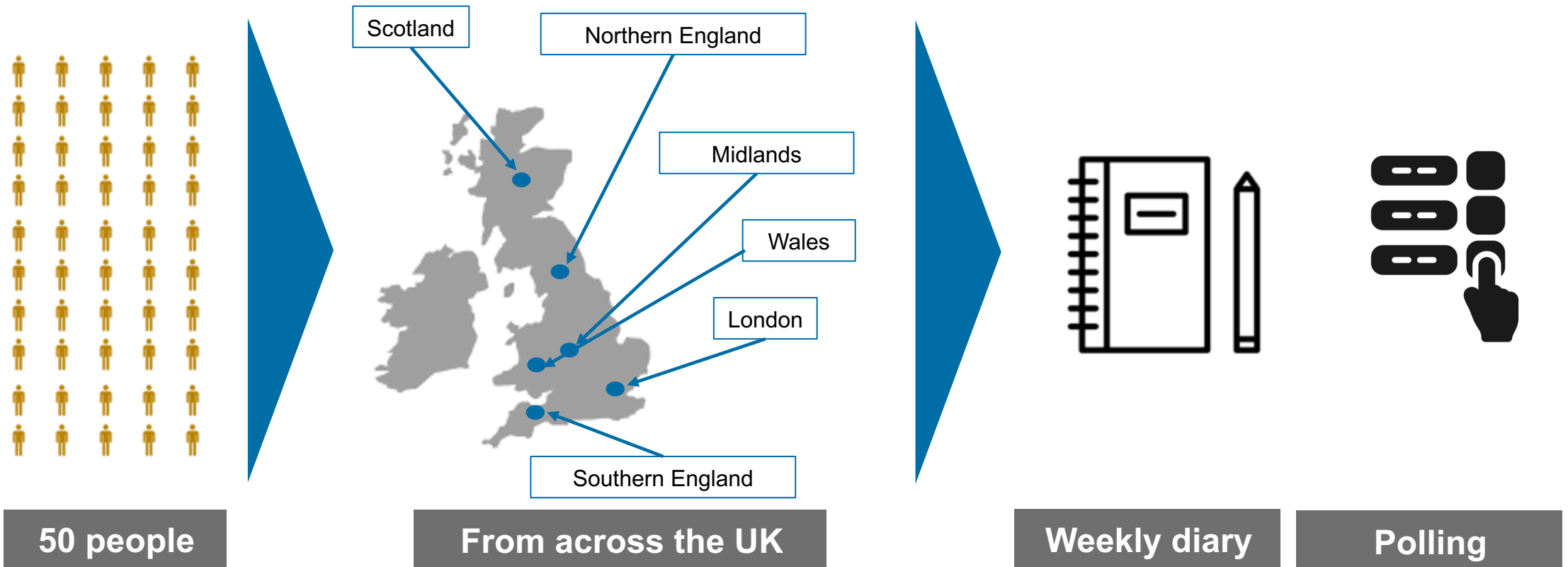
BritainThinks

Coronavirus Diaries

Week 28 Report

britainthinks.com

We have been following the crisis as it plays out in people's lives in real time since early April



Our Diarists come from different locations, lifestyles and backgrounds



Range of
life
stages

Families with
children
under 5



Families with
school-age
children



Young
people
under 25



Vulnerable /
elderly
people



Active older
people



Range of
working
situations

SME
business
owners



Non-frontline
essential
workers



Gig
economy /
insecure
workers

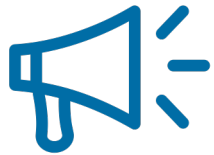


Self
employed
workers



Office
workers
(WFH)

Each week Diarists tell us about their views and experiences of the pandemic:



Context

The news stories that have stood out to Diarists each week



Mood

How Diarists are feeling each week and what's on their minds



Behaviour

What have Diarists been doing differently and how it makes them feel



Reputation

Perceptions of Government, politicians and brands at this time

Key findings

- 1 As the crisis goes on, mental health impacts become more apparent.** Diarists, especially those in Tier 3, are struggling with isolation and a sense of impending doom.
- 2 Fatigue is draining motivation to follow the rules.** Personal fear of the virus has not increased significantly during the second wave. Polling is contradictory on compliance.
- 3 Christmas presents a dilemma.** Whilst most have not yet made up their mind, many say they can't imagine not being with their family.
- 4 Whilst polling shows support for local lockdowns, the reality is more complex.** Diarists are split on whether they think local lockdowns are the best solution available or whether they see them as ineffective and unfair.
- 5 There is concern over the politicisation of the crisis.** Andy Burnham's stand in Manchester raises concerns over the risk that political point scoring will undermine response to crisis.

Lockdowns in the North and Wales and no funding for free school meals over half-term are the news stories that stood out this week

Domestic CV developments:

- **North/South restriction disparities**
- **Manchester refusing to move to Tier 3**
- **No funding for free school meals**
- No funding for the North
- New 5 tier system in Scotland
- Continued impact on hospitality

"Wales and Scotland doing the lockdown thing. London on tier 2."
Parent with school-aged children

"That Manchester are refusing to move into Tier 3 without more money."
Essential worker

"Even worse test and trace results. Incomprehensible decision not to supply free holiday school meals for those in need."
Active older person

"The new Scottish five tier system which only goes up to number 4!!!"
Self-employed

Frustration is mounting as the crisis goes on. Half the population say they are struggling with mental health impacts of the crisis.

3 words used by Diarists to describe how they feel

w/c 26th Oct

50%

of the public
report mental
health problems
resulting from the
crisis

- Diarists feel the situation is getting worse and worse and see no way out.
- Almost everyone in our sample said they were struggling with their mental health.
- Isolation, never-ending nature of the crisis and lack of hope the top challenges cited.

"I think that mental health is becoming a big issue in my community. People have been following the rules. Many people really fed up with the measures and that they are lasting so long and no clear end in sight." Essential worker, East Midlands

For those in Tier 3, the situation feels desperate

Emma, 22, North West

Emma is 22 and lives on her own in Lancashire. Since the Tier 3 restrictions were introduced she hasn't seen anyone, and now that the weather is bad she barely leaves her flat. She wishes we would just have a national lockdown so that we could 'get it over with.'

"I want to be able to see friends and family. I will feel very isolated if we continue in tier 3 for much longer."

Young person under 25, North West

Daniel, 42, Stockport

Daniel is a supermarket worker in Stockport. Since he's still going to work he doesn't find it too bad. But he's worried about his dad, who is 79, and finding the isolation hard. Daniel agrees with the Government's approach but wonders why cases are still going up.

"My dad usually goes to the pub every Saturday and Sunday for a drink with his friends. Now he is stuck at home with nothing to do. He told my mum he feels depressed. I feel sad I can't see him." Essential worker, East Midlands

From polling data, it's difficult to know how compliant people are with the rules. But we can see increasing fatigue.

Ipsos Mori polling shows an **11 point increase** in people following the rules from September to October

vs

Opinium polling shows a **7 point increase** in under 45s not following the rules in first two weeks of October

- In our sample we can see mounting frustration and increased questioning of whether the rules are necessary.

"It becomes harder and harder to comply when one doesn't see any tangible evidence of the virus affecting public health in the way that it did in March-May. One starts to wonder why we're even going through this."

SME business owner, London

Only 28% of public think that Coronavirus poses a personal threat to them. This number has stayed fairly stable since May (Ipsos Mori opinion tracker).

Christmas presents a dilemma. Many say they will break the rules.



Victoria Derbyshire ✓
@vicderbyshire

Good morning. I'm starting the day by saying I'm sorry a few weeks ago the Radio Times asked me (amongst other things) what would potentially happen at Christmas with my own family if the rule of six was still in place.... 1/2

"I haven't made any concrete plans but I'll certainly be visiting my parents in their tier 1 region. My mum would never forgive me if I wasn't home for Christmas."

Young person under 25, Yorkshire and the Humber

Whilst most Diarists say they haven't yet made up their minds what to do about Christmas, there are many who say they will be with family no matter what.

Whilst polling shows strong support for local lockdowns, the reality is more complex



68%

of the public
would support a
local lockdown
where they live if
needed

We can't have another
national lockdown so this is
the best alternative

*"It make more sense to me
than a nationwide
lockdown, but it's easy for
me to say as I live in
London."*

SME business owner,
London

VS

Local lockdowns don't work
and are just breeding
resentment, driving a wedge
between North and South

*"I think it makes it very hard
to adhere to the rules,
easier if it was the same for
everyone."*

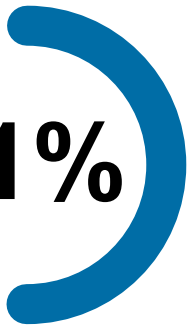
Parent of children under 5,
Scotland

From our sample we can see support for a time-limited ‘circuit breaker’ lockdown if it helps to ‘save Christmas’

- Diarists express a willingness to go back into lockdown if evidence demonstrates its necessity.
- Some suggest that it might be necessary due to non-compliance with existing restrictions — but that people would need to actually adhere to the lockdown.
- There is a desire to get it over with before winter to save Christmas, but uncertainty that it will make a long-term difference and concern that it will further damage the economy.

“I can understand lockdowns being imposed in different areas at different times depending on their local situation; however, this seems to set up resentment from those under lockdown, so maybe a short total UK-wide lockdown as a fire-break should be imposed, similar to that in March.”

Older person, North West.



51%

support another complete national lockdown for a week during October half term

There is concern over the politicisation of the crisis



- Diarists are divided on how they see Andy Burnham's stand in Manchester, with some describing him as a hero and some feeling it was unfair to ask for more for Manchester.
- More widely, Diarists are concerned about the risks of political point scoring and posturing hampering the response to the crisis.

"This became a political/economic crisis and is so frustrating."
SME owner/decision maker,
Yorkshire and the Humber

"By making local councils negotiate they've turned the whole thing into a political circus."
Self-employed, Scotland

Thank you

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