



CovidLife Survey First Report

17/4/2020 to 07/5/2020

This survey was designed, delivered and studied by the Generation Scotland team and their collaborators. Generation Scotland and these surveys are supported by the Wellcome Trust (2019-2024). Generation Scotland is hosted by the University of Edinburgh.



CovidLifeSurvey First Report: 17/4/2020 to 07/5/2020

Thank you to everyone who volunteered for the CovidLife survey. We are very grateful for your time and interest.

While the survey is still fresh in your minds, we want to share some of the early findings. This report does not cover all of the topics we asked about. We will talk about these in later reports.

The survey is still open to new volunteers. We hope more will join after seeing this report.

We are currently preparing a follow-up survey to follow up on some of our findings and see how you are doing as 'lockdown' measures continue and ease.

Who took the survey?

We launched the survey on 17th April. We invited a few hundred of our contacts to make sure everything was working well. The following week, we rolled the survey out by email and letter to all of our current Generation Scotland volunteers.

Some of our volunteers are also part of the Aberdeen Children of the Nineteen Fifties (ACONF) study. The ACONF team alerted their other members to the study.

Likewise, our colleagues who run the Scottish Health Research Register (SHARE), kindly invited many of the SHARE volunteers to the study.

Finally, we used our social media channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) to advertise the study.

By 7th May, 14,500 volunteers had completed the survey.

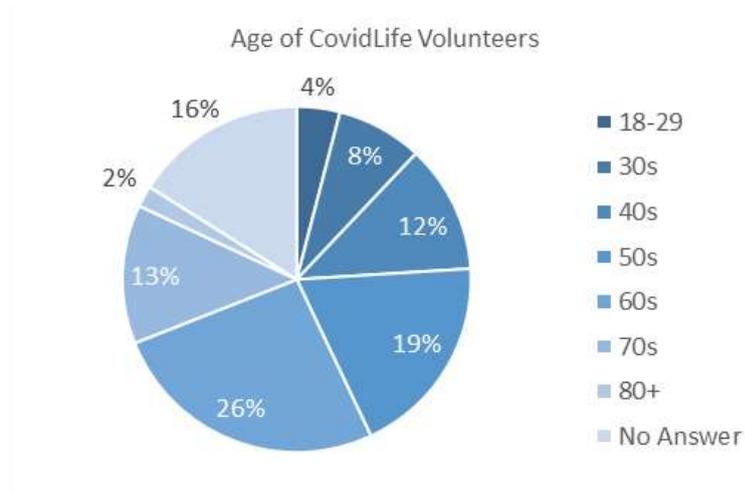
We start with a breakdown of our first 14,500 by sex, age and where they live.

Males and Females

More females (68%) than males (32%) completed the survey. This is not unusual for surveys of this type. However, we'd like to get a better balance. So, if there are any men out there who have half an hour to spare, please take part!

Age range

This survey is open to anyone aged 18 or over. Here and throughout the report, we show the results by 10 year age brackets.



This reflects the age range of our current Generation Scotland volunteers, ACONF and the majority of SHARE volunteers. However, we're keen to boost the younger age groups. A survey for 12-17 year olds will also follow shortly.

The survey is open to anyone resident in the UK. Unsurprisingly though, given our enrolment plan, the majority are from Scotland (80%). That makes it by far the largest survey of its kind to be carried out in Scotland. We have a good number of residents from England (4%), plus a few from Wales and Northern Ireland. (see UK map) The rest didn't say where they were from. We are keen to include volunteers from the other UK nations. We can share our survey with other volunteer studies for direct comparison.



What you told us about the Government guidance under 'lockdown'

The UK Government 'lockdown' measures started on Monday 23rd March. They were in place across the UK for the duration of this report. During that time, there were daily briefings from Westminster and Holyrood. COVID-19 dominated the news.

We asked you whether the 'Stay at home' 'Protect' the NHS' and 'Save lives' message was clear. We also asked if these measures were justified. The full results are shown in the tables below. In summary, the vast majority (85%) said that the message was clear. A good majority (65%) also felt that the measures were justified. Only a small minority (4%) thought they were an overreaction. However, six out of ten (63%) were not confident that the UK Government could prevent another outbreak. This was true whether you were resident in England (68%) or Scotland (62%). By comparison, only 37% of Scottish residents doubted that the Scottish Government could prevent a second wave of infection. (see Tables at the end of this report for full breakdown)

What you told us about your employment and the economy

A little over half of you were confident about your employment after COVID-19s. The rest had concerns, with 15% not very confident. This was true for most occupations. Turning to the economy, a little over half were not confident about a recovery after COVID-19. Interestingly, machine operatives were the most confident about their employment and the economy. The self-employed were least confident about job security and that the economy would recover. The under 40's were least confident and the over 70's most confident that the economy would recover. (see Figures 1 and 2 at the end for this report for a full breakdown)

We asked how you were feeling under ‘lockdown’

40% of you reported feeling more anxious now than before COVID-19, and this was severe in 8%. Levels of anxiety were higher in younger age groups, as was depression. Overall, 40% of you reported feeling depressed, 23% mildly, but 17% moderately to severely so. There was a trend towards more depression and anxiety in manual than management occupations, while, consistent with their optimism about employment and the economy, machine operatives bucked the overall trend.

We also asked about your sleep. Although there was very little change from before COVID-19 in the average amount of sleep, there was a significant change in the quality of sleep. Again, these changes in sleep quality were more pronounced in the younger age group.

We asked you about feelings of loneliness and isolation before and after ‘lockdown’. There was a marked increase in those feeling lonely and isolated, particularly in the under 40’s.

(see Figures 3 - 6 at the end for this report for a full breakdown)

We asked what you were doing differently under ‘lockdown’

It wasn’t all negatives. Over half (58%) had got in touch with an old friend. Many of you reported taking up a new pastime. The ‘top five’ were reading (34%), exercise (30%), listening to music (25%), art (19%) and board games (15%). Around one in every four of you had volunteered, one in ten for the NHS.

Summary

Our survey is by far the largest to be conducted in Scotland under ‘lockdown’. We found a markedly lower level of trust and confidence in Westminster than Holyrood. It will be interesting to see how confidence in the UK and Scottish governments changes over the coming months.

Our survey highlights the way in which the ‘lockdown’ measures have raised major concerns about future employment and the economy. Unsurprisingly, these worries are felt most by young adults and are accompanied by high levels of anxiety and depression. Good mental health and wellbeing are very important for long term physical health and vice versa.

We are now well aware of the marked excess of ‘all deaths’ over and above those directly attributable to COVID-19 infection. As the pandemic wanes, so the numbers attending A&E, hospital and out-patient clinics will rise. For many patients, their condition will be more advanced and harder to treat. The strain on the NHS will continue. Our survey highlights another health service and social welfare burden on the near horizon - the effect of lockdown on mental health and wellbeing is clear to see and felt most by younger adults.

Next steps and exiting ‘lockdown’

It is widely recognised that the exit strategy will be more challenging and complex than imposing ‘lockdown’. While the four nations of the UK entered lockdown together, each has its own exit strategy. We will be asking our volunteers how they are feeling and coping as the ‘lockdown’ measures continue and are gradually relaxed over time.

Our survey has uncovered strong differences between younger and older adults in many issues arising from ‘lockdown’ measures. They emphasise the need to ask similar questions of school children and school

leavers. The effect of school closures and exam cancellation is unprecedented. For this reason, we have adapted the CovidLife survey to poll 12-17 year olds, in Scotland. TeenCovidLife will be launched shortly.

Your views will influence others

We will be sharing this and future reports with our funders and other research organisations, charities, the media, the NHS, Government departments and other stakeholders and policymakers. The Government, NHS and social services must be prepared for a widespread and long term excess of ill-health caused by worries and uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic. Our survey suggests that these will be felt most keenly by young adults and the self-employed. Policy decisions and preparation to reduce these consequences need to be planned for now.

Thank you again for taking part. We do hope you will take the time to complete a follow-up survey soon. We will be in touch.

Best wishes and stay safe,

From the Generation Scotland Team

More detailed information and breakdown of the numbers

“Do you find the Government guidance on COVID-19 easy to understand?”

11782 participants responded

Extremely difficult	0.5%	15%
Somewhat difficult	4%	
Neither easy nor difficult	10%	
Somewhat easy	37.5%	85%
Extremely easy	48%	

“Do you think that the Government guidance and actions on COVID-19 are:”

11760 participants responded

Under-reaction	31%
About right	65%
Over-reaction	4%

“How confident are you that the UK Government can prevent further outbreak of COVID-19?”

11766 responded

Not confident at all	23%	63%
Not very confident	40%	
Somewhat confident	34%	37%
Very confident	3%	

Of this larger group, the **11686 living in Scotland** responded

Not confident at all	22%	62%
Not very confident	40%	
Somewhat confident	35%	38%
Very confident	3%	

The 640 living in England responded

Not confident at all	27%	68%
Not very confident	41%	
Somewhat confident	28%	32%
Very confident	4%	

“How confident are you that the Scottish Government can prevent further outbreak of COVID-19?”

Only people living in Scotland were asked this question. 11686 responded.

Not confident at all	10%	37%
Not very confident	27%	
Somewhat confident	53%	62%
Very confident	9%	

Figure 1a: Confidence in post-COVID employment

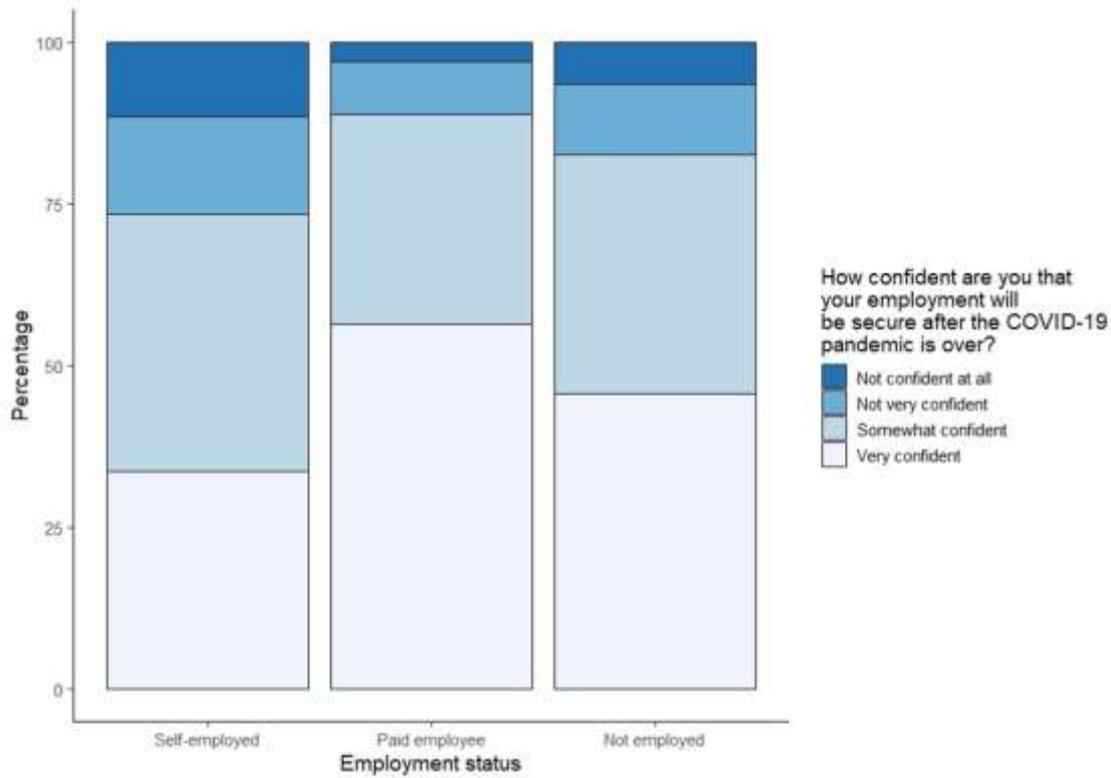


Figure 1b: Confidence in post-COVID employment

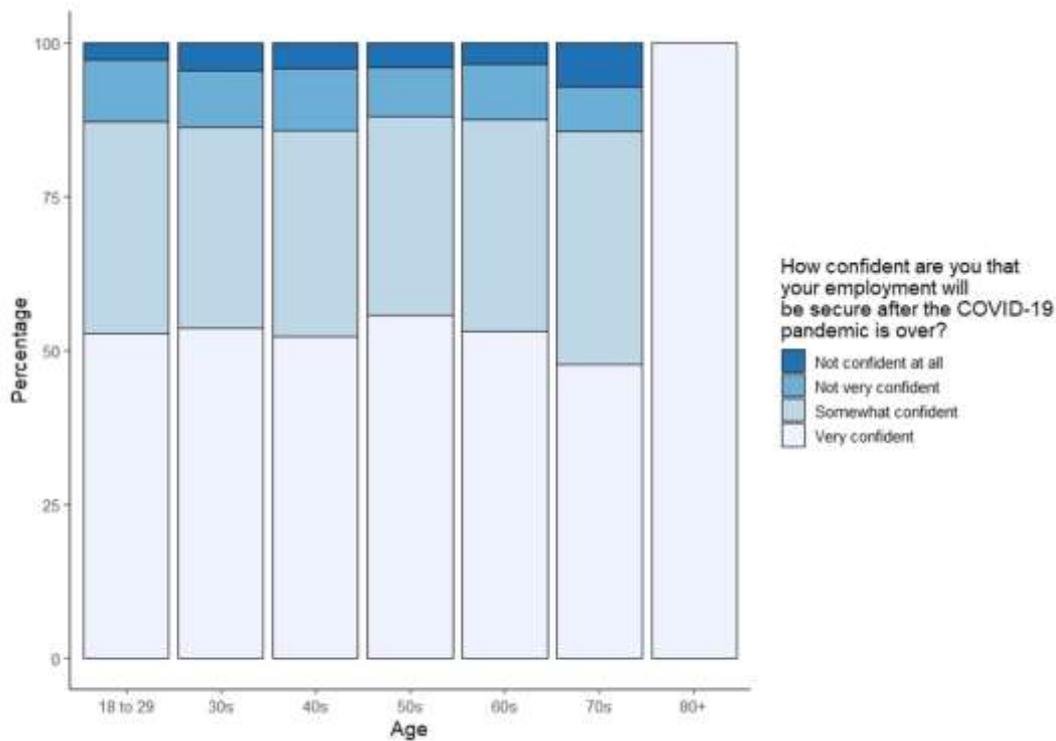


Figure 2a: Confidence in post-COVID economy

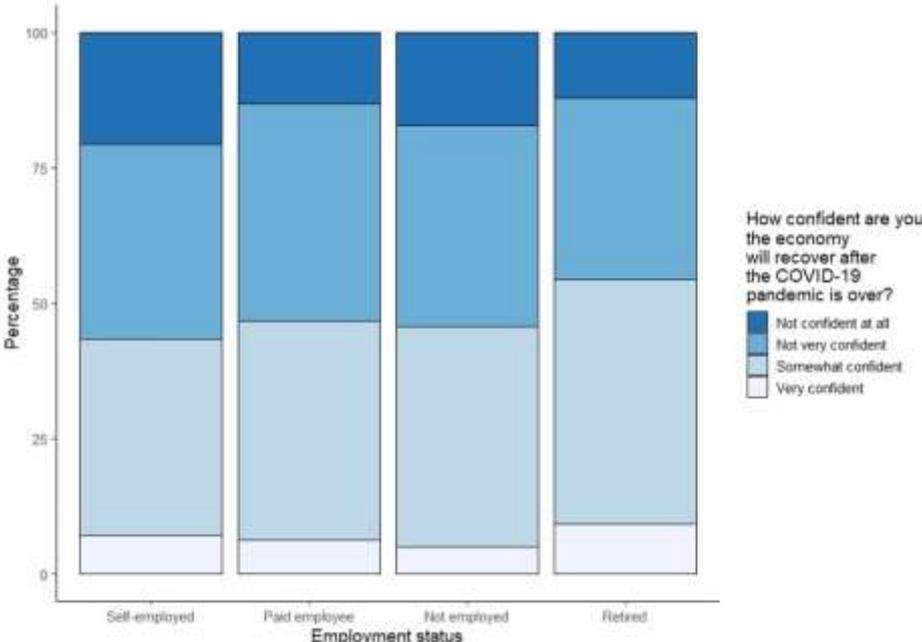


Figure 2b: Confidence in the post-COVID economy

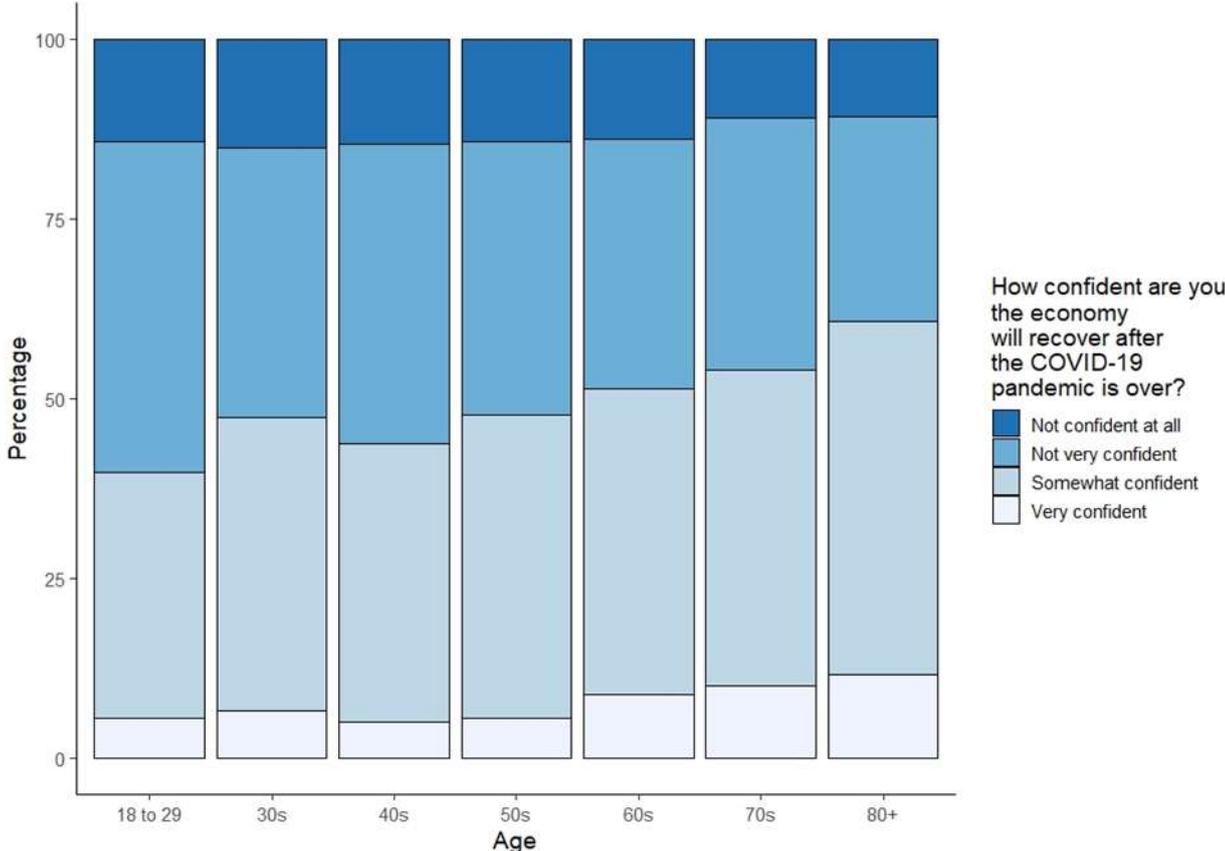


Figure 3: Levels of anxiety under 'lockdown'

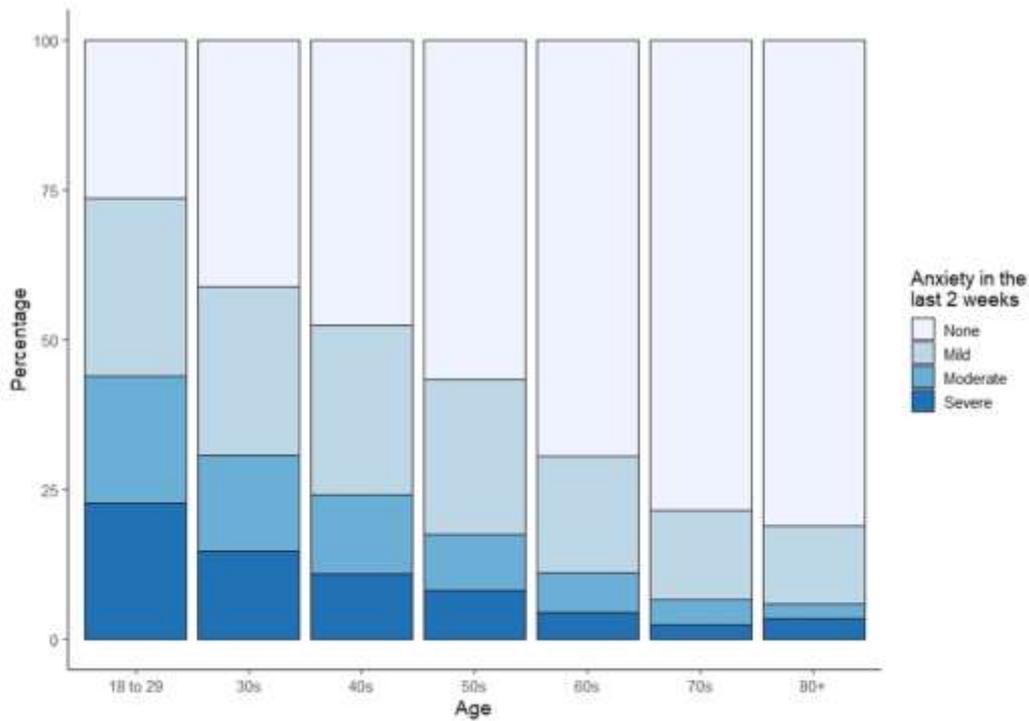


Figure 4: Levels of depression under 'lockdown'

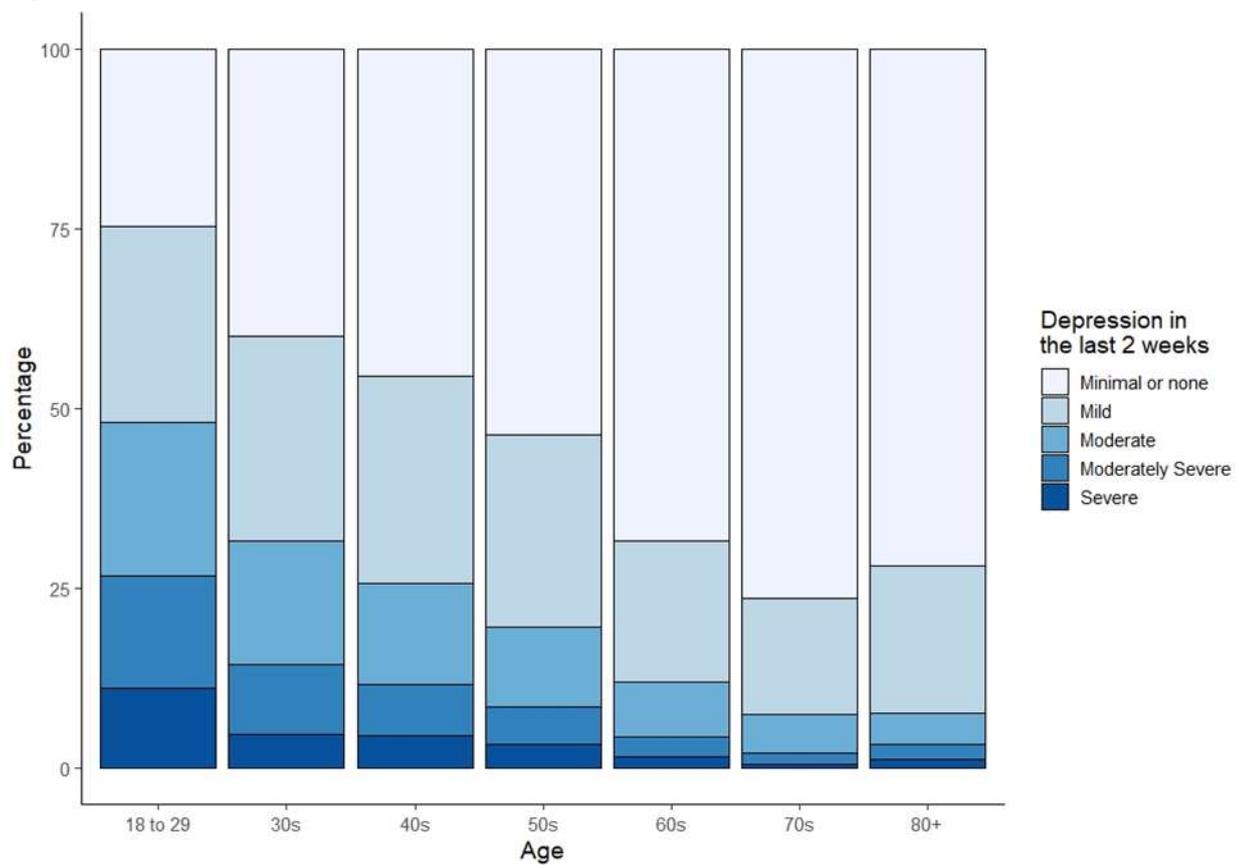


Figure 5: Changes in sleep quality under 'lockdown'

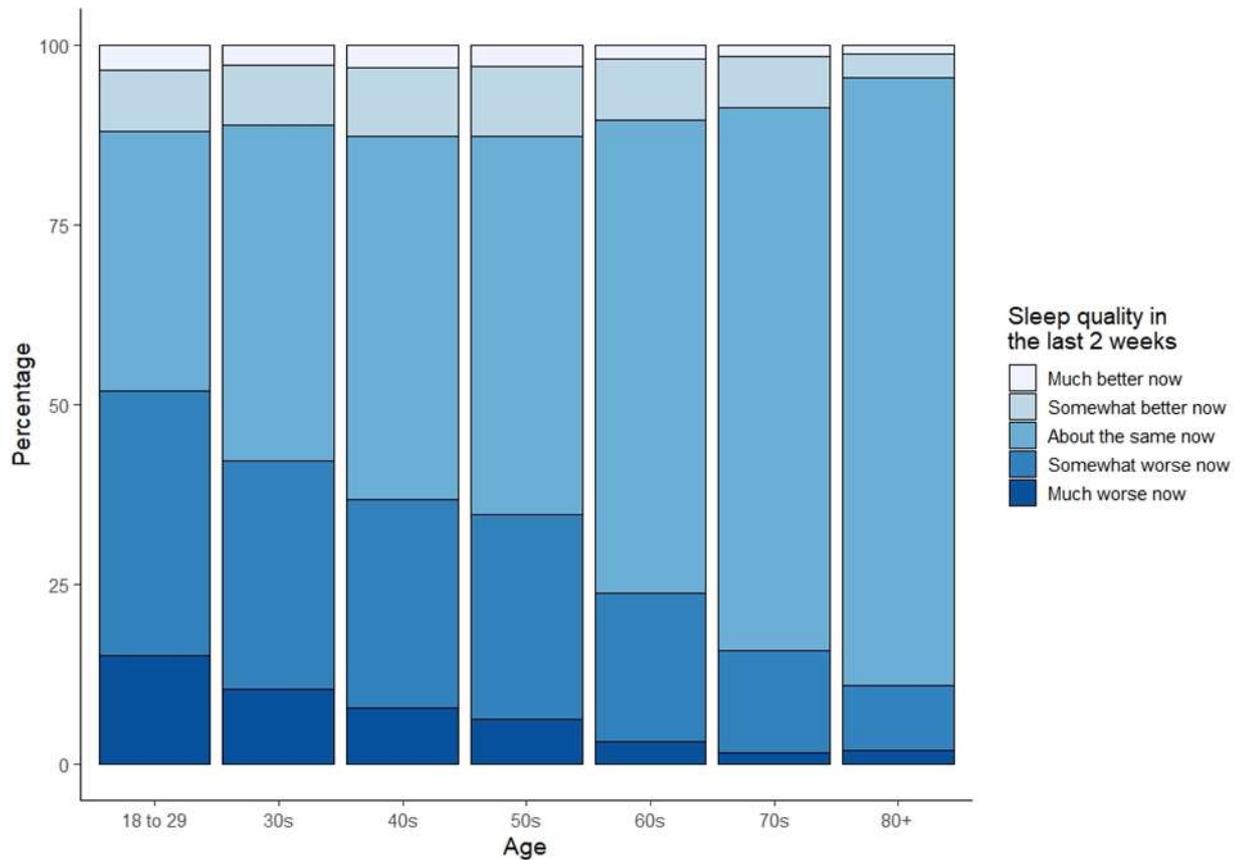
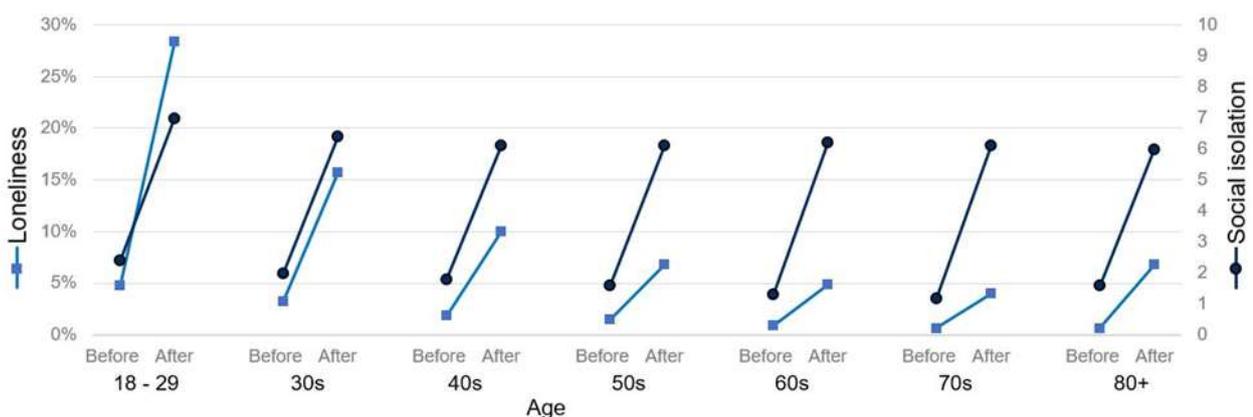


Figure 6: Feelings of loneliness and isolation under 'lockdown'



Here we show how feelings of loneliness and isolation have changed in different age groups from before COVID-19 and after the 'lockdown' was in place and the survey completed. There are increases in all age groups, but most dramatically in the 18-29 group and less in the over 40's.