COVID-19: impact on mental health

14th May 2021

**Title:** Covid-19 and the nation's mental health

Centre for Mental Health | 12th May 2021

The implications of the pandemic are wide-reaching. Covid-19 has hospitalised nearly half a million people in the UK, over 127,000 people have died, and the economy has shrunk significantly. All of this has an impact on the mental health of the nation, and a new model by The Centre for Mental Health forecasts how many people are likely to need mental health support as a result of the pandemic.

This report confirms that 10 million people (8.5 million adults and 1.5 million children and young people) in England will need support for their mental health as a direct result of the pandemic over the next three to five years.

Based on an analysis of over 200 high-quality studies from around the world, the model (developed by clinicians, researchers and economists from the NHS and Centre for Mental Health) identifies key groups of people who face an especially high risk of poor mental health as a result of the pandemic. These groups include people who have survived severe Covid-19 illness (especially those treated in intensive care), those working in health and care services during the pandemic, people economically impacted by the pandemic, and those who have been bereaved.

While the NHS is already investing in additional mental health services, the predicted levels of demand are two to three times that of current NHS mental health capacity within a 3-5 year window. This briefing makes it clear that Government and the NHS must take action now to meet a very steep increase in demand for mental health support. It is also vital to develop services to meet the specific needs arising from the pandemic – for example, specialist bereavement support and evidence-based help for those with trauma symptoms.

Full report: [Covid-19 and the nation's mental health. Forecasting needs and risks in the UK: May 2021](https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/publication/download/CentreforMentalHealth_COVID_MH_Forecasting4_May21.pdf)

**Title:** 11 tips to cope with anxiety about coming out of lockdown

Every Mind Matters | nhs.uk

Easing of lockdown will allow us to get back to the people and things we love, but it's OK if you feel worried about going back to something more "normal" as lockdown restrictions loosen.

Even positive change can lead to anxiety, and it can take time to readjust to things we have not done for a while. Feelings of post-lockdown anxiety are likely to pass with time as we get used to the "new normal" but it's important to do what we can to take care of our mental health.

Presented here are the following top tips for taking care of your mental health as things change:

1. Go at your own pace

2. Do not avoid things entirely

3. Get your information from the right sources

4. Discuss any changes with others

5. Make time to relax

6. Challenge unhelpful thoughts

7. Tell someone how you feel

8. Plan social occasions

9. Find routine where you can

10. Write down your thoughts

11. Focus on the present

Full detail: [11 tips to cope with anxiety about coming out of lockdown](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/tips-to-cope-with-anxiety-lockdown-lifting/)

See also: [Coronavirus (COVID-19) and mental wellbeing](https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/) | Every Mind Matters

**Title:** Mental health: should we be worried?

National Centre for Social Research | April 2021

This report provides an overview of the public’s mental health and how it is affecting people’s lives. It also provides new, previously unpublished, analysis by NatCen from the Understanding Society longitudinal study showing the impacts of the COVID–19 pandemic on the public’s mental health.

Full report: [Mental health: should we be worried?](https://natcen.ac.uk/media/2050456/Society-Watch-2021-Mental-Health-Should-We-Be-Worried.pdf)

**Title:** Tackling the mental health impact of the COVID-19 crisis: An integrated, whole-of-society response

OECD | 12th May 2021

The COVID‑19 crisis has heightened the risk factors generally associated with poor mental health – financial insecurity, unemployment, fear – while protective factors – social connection, employment and educational engagement, access to physical exercise, daily routine, access to health services – fell dramatically.

This has led to a significant and unprecedented worsening of population mental health. Across countries, the mental health of unemployed people and those experiencing financial insecurity was worse than that of the general population – a trend that pre‑dates the pandemic, but seems to have accelerated in some cases.

OECD countries have responded with decisive efforts to scale‑up mental health services, and put into place measures to protect jobs and incomes, thereby reducing mental distress for some. However, the scale of mental distress since the start of the pandemic requires more integrated, whole‑of-society mental health support if it is not to lead to permanent scarring.

An integrated whole‑of-society response means:

* Access to existing mental health services should be assuredeither in-person or via telemedicine, or both, and increasing access to evidence‑based services should be a priority, including alternatives to mental health promotion programmes in schools or workplaces which have been particularly disrupted;
* Employers must contribute to supporting the mental health of employees, including those who have been on job retention schemes. Policy makers should look further at the implications of long-term teleworking on mental health, and countries should consider scaling-up mental health support for jobseekers through public employment services.

Full detail: [Tackling the mental health impact of the COVID-19 crisis: An integrated, whole-of-society response](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1094_1094455-bukuf1f0cm&title=Tackling-the-mental-health-impact-of-the-COVID-19-crisis-An-integrated-whole-of-society-response&_ga=2.39258915.1006928773.1620916522-1548871934.1620916522)

**Title:** Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of adults with mental health conditions in the UK: A qualitative interview study

medRxiv | 7th May 2021

*This article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.*

People with mental health conditions have been identified as particularly vulnerable to poor mental health during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. However, why this population have faced these adverse effects, how they have experienced them and how they have coped remains under-explored.

The aim of this paper was to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the mental health of people with existing mental health conditions, and to identify coping strategies for positive mental health.

Full paper: [Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health and wellbeing of adults with mental health conditions in the UK: A qualitative interview study](https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.12.01.20241067v2.full.pdf)

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We also produce a range of subject-specific news feeds to ensure our clinical and professional teams stay up to date with developments in their work areas. Please visit our [website](http://www.trftlibraryknowledge.com/) for more information

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