

News Release



HOME LIFE IN LOCKDOWN: TECH, TENSIONS AND TIDYING UP

- Number of 25-34s wishing to end a relationship has tripled since December 2019
- Homeownership aspirations have fallen by around a quarter amongst non-property owners
- 85% of residents have undertaken home improvements during lockdown
- Video call usage has increased by 26% amongst over-55s

A new Aviva study gives a glimpse into home life under lockdown, with relationships, properties and homeownership aspirations all impacted.

The insurer interviewed more than 2,000 UK residents in May 2020 – six weeks into lockdown – regarding their current behaviours and future goals. Selected findings are compared with a similar Aviva survey carried out in December 2019. The research revealed:

Homes receive a touch of TLC

Eighty-five per cent of UK residents have undertaken home improvement activities during the lockdown period, with decluttering proving most popular, a task carried out by more than half the population (56%).

Gardening came a close second, with 52% of UK residents testing out their green fingers, while more than a quarter (26%) have used the time for home decorating.

A [previous Aviva study](#) found seven in 10 homeowners ignored problems in their properties. But with more time at home, a fifth of householders (21%) have tackled home maintenance issues during lockdown.

Relationships bear the brunt as people crave space

However, while homes may be benefitting, many relationships are feeling the strain. The number of people aged 25-34 who wish to **end a relationship** has risen dramatically in recent months. In December 2019, only 2% of 25-34-year-olds had plans to end a relationship. This had increased to 7% by May 2020. Smaller increases can also be seen in other age groups over this period: 3% to 5% for people aged 16-24 and 2% to 3% amongst those aged 35-44.

Perhaps predictably, the proportion of people who wish to **spend more time with their families has decreased**, from 39% in December 2019 to 35% in May 2020. This trend is even more marked amongst people aged 25-34, where the percentage falls from 40% to 27% and those aged 35-44 (48% to 35%).

The number of people in these age groups wanting more time to themselves has also increased slightly, as has the proportion of householders wishing to extend their properties, indicating a desire for personal space.

Homeownership aspirations have shifted

Aviva research from December 2019 found that 68% of non-homeowners hoped to buy a property in the future. But this has now fallen to just 52% of non-homeowners.

In line with this, the number of under-25s hoping to get on the property ladder in the next five years has decreased from 35% in December 2019 to 27% in May 2020.

The number of households looking to trade up to a bigger property has also fallen from 10% to 8%, suggesting the current housing market is causing people to put plans on hold.

Lockdown has changed the way we use online services

The Aviva study also reveals that lockdown has accelerated the way we are using online services and video technology. Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, 30% of UK residents aged 55+ used video calls. This has now risen to 38% of this age group, an increase of 26%.

Online grocery shopping has also increased marginally within this age bracket from 36% prior to lockdown to 38% during - although it has fallen considerably overall from 46% to 37%, suggesting people may have had difficulty obtaining delivery slots.

Interestingly, the number of internet-enabled devices per UK household has increased from 10.3 in December 2019 to 11.6 in May 2020.

However, while technology has proved crucial during lockdown to maintain business services and social connections, there are a number of areas where online usage has fallen dramatically. Just 29% of UK people have shopped for clothes online during lockdown, compared to 69% under normal circumstances. Online takeaway orders have almost halved from 50% to 27%, while appointment bookings (e.g. health, restaurants) have - understandably - shrunk from 50% to 10%.

While there are no pre-lockdown comparisons, online leisure pursuits and services have also proved popular in recent weeks:

Online service	Proportion of UK adults using in lockdown
Recipes	30%
Gaming	25%
Gardening / DIY purchases	21%
Gambling	11%

Gareth Hemming, MD for Personal Lines, Aviva General Insurance says: “The impacts of lockdown are far-reaching, both practically and emotionally. Many people have been making great use of their time at home, maintaining and improving their properties and gardens. Others are embracing new technologies, working from home and keeping in touch with loved ones. But there have been challenges too, with people craving time for themselves and more personal space.

“As the lockdown begins to ease, its legacy is likely to continue as new behaviours become the norm. If people make significant changes at home - whether this means buying new technology, making substantial property improvements, or even changing one’s living arrangements – it’s important that people keep their home insurer informed so they have the appropriate cover in place. As the phrase goes, ‘the only thing that’s constant is change’ so we would encourage customers to keep in touch with their insurers as their situations evolve.”

Ends

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Notes to editors:

Findings are primarily according to an Aviva-commissioned survey of 2,020 adults, randomly selected from across the UK, carried out in May 2020 by Censuswide research. Comparative data is taken from a Censuswide study of 4,004 randomly selected UK residents, carried out in December 2019.

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- Our vision is to earn our customers' trust as the best place to save for the future, navigate retirement and insure what matters most to them. In 2019, we paid £33.2 billion in claims and benefits on behalf of our 33.4 million customers.
- We operate through five business divisions: Investments, Savings & Retirement; UK Life; General Insurance; Europe Life; and Asia Life; and focus on three strategic priorities: deliver great customer outcomes, excel at the fundamentals and invest in sustainable growth.
- Total group assets under management at Aviva group are £510 billion and our Solvency II capital surplus is £12.6 billion (FY19). Our shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange and we are a member of the FTSE 100 index.
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