

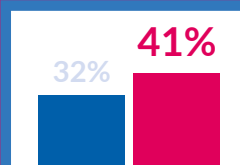
Self care survey 2021

PAGB defines self care as the actions people take for themselves and their families to promote and maintain good health and wellbeing and to take care of their self-treatable conditions.

We wanted to find out whether the shift towards self care in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that was revealed in our 2020 survey had been sustained, or if there was evidence of a drift back towards pre-pandemic behaviours.

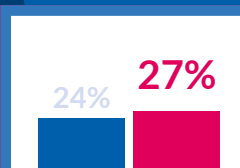
 **2,078**
adults
surveyed

Between 21 May and 3 June 2021, we surveyed 2,078 adults across the UK to ask about their attitudes to self care and accessing health services.



41% said the pandemic had changed their attitude to accessing healthcare services

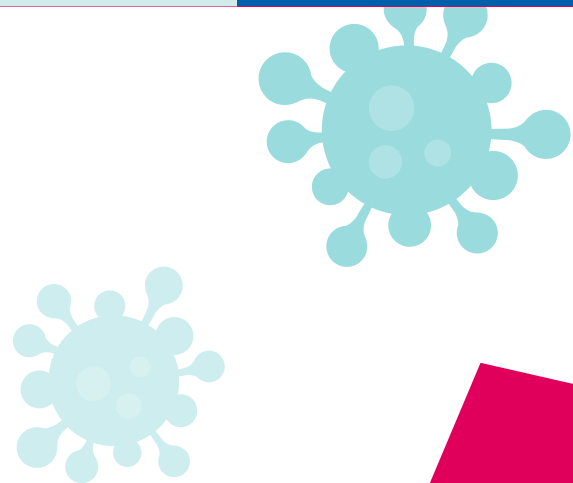
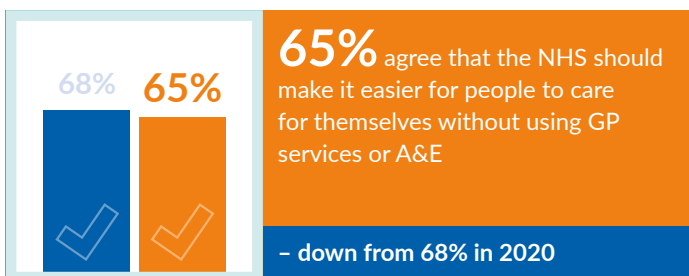
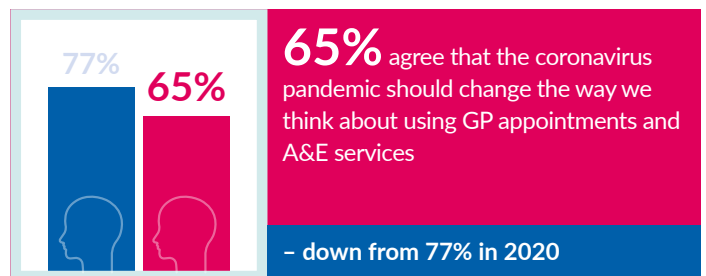
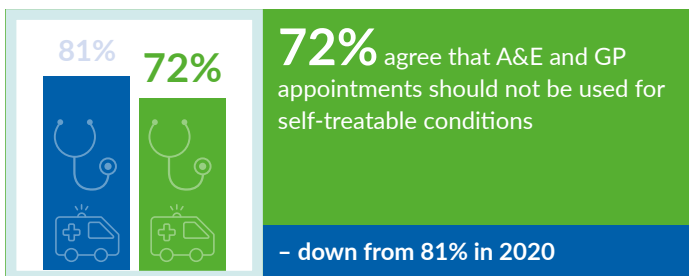
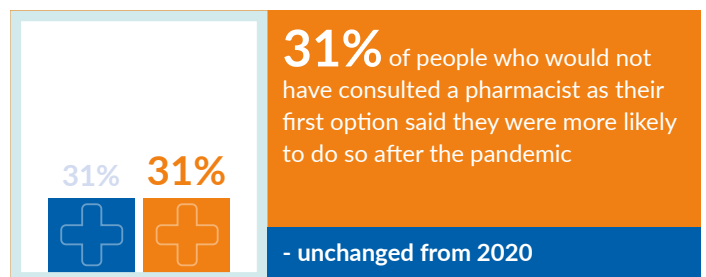
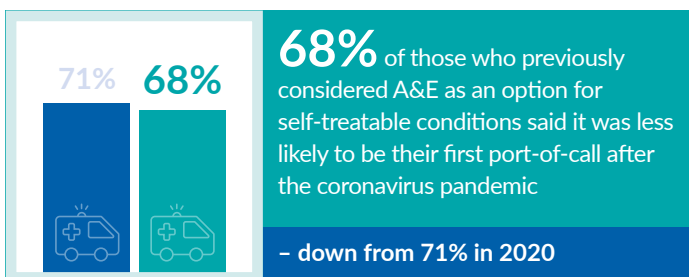
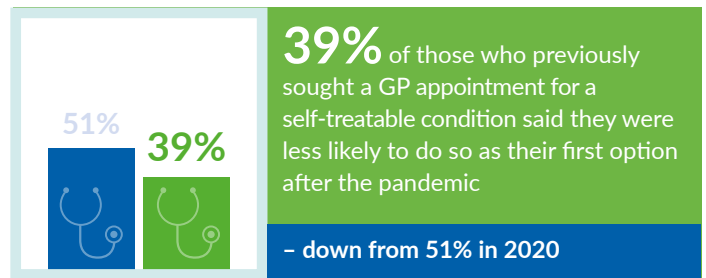
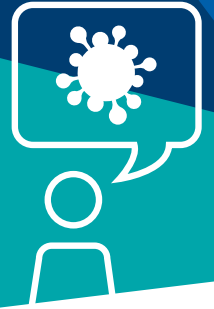
- up from 32% in 2020



27% said the pandemic had changed their attitude to self care

- up from 24% in 2020

How have attitudes shifted during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic?



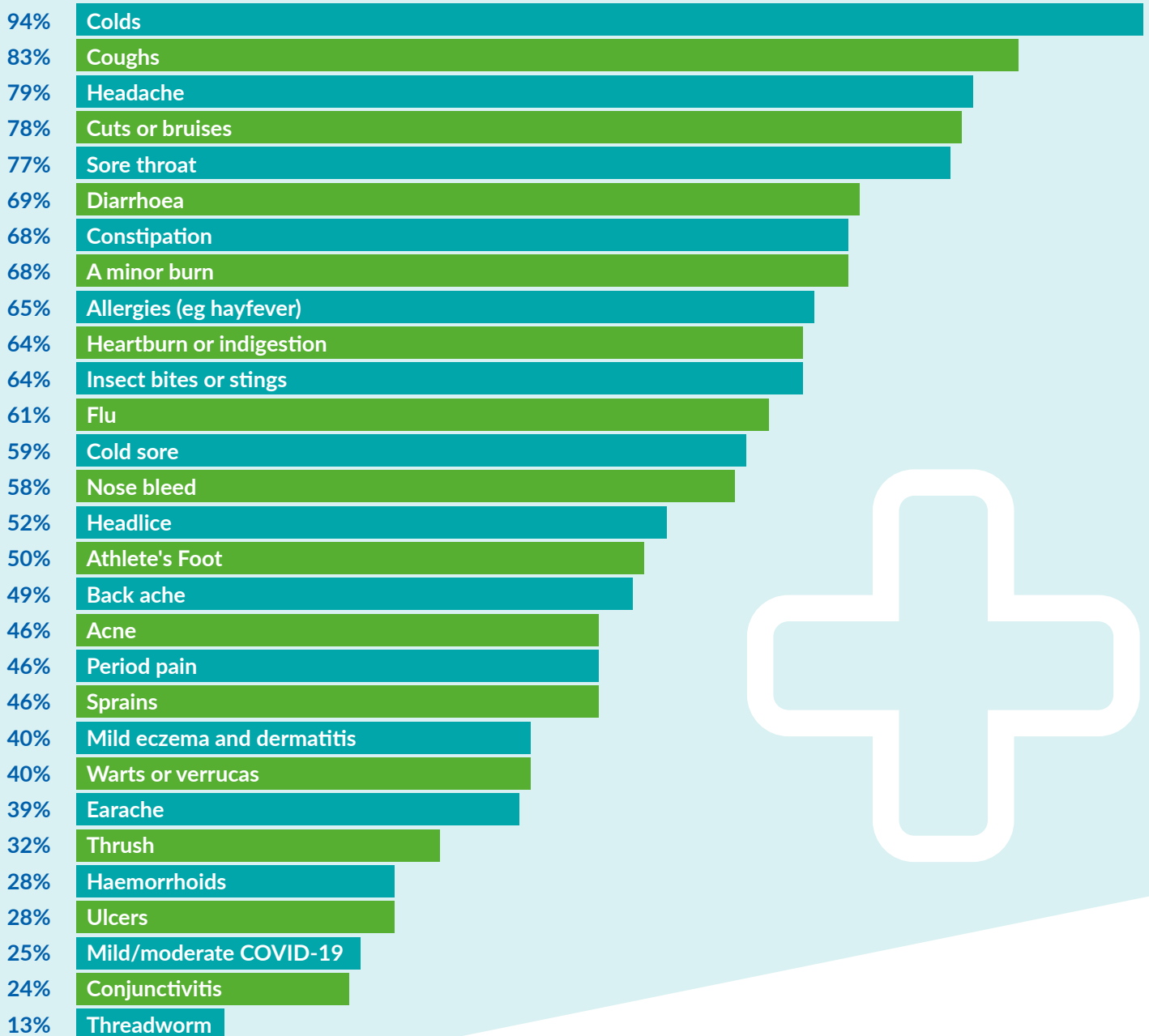
Confidence to self care



We asked people what conditions they felt confident in dealing with themselves and then what they had actually done, if they had experienced symptoms.



Which of the following self-treatable conditions do you feel confident treating by yourself?

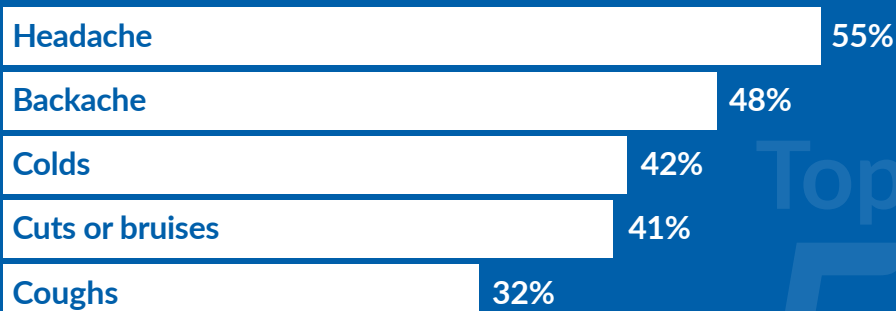


Top five self-treatable conditions

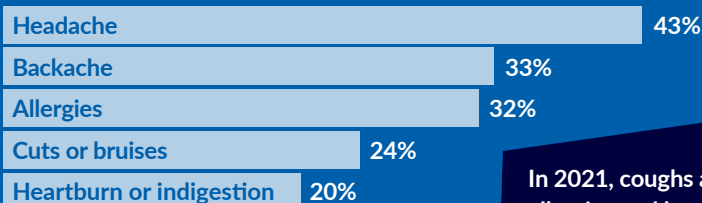
The difference in the way people responded to a cough in 2021 compared with 2020, with more practising self care and fewer consulting a GP or doing nothing, suggests that many respondents followed NHS advice to stay at home and self-treat mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms.

This demonstrates the positive impact a clear, national public education campaign can have on people's willingness and ability to self care.

2021

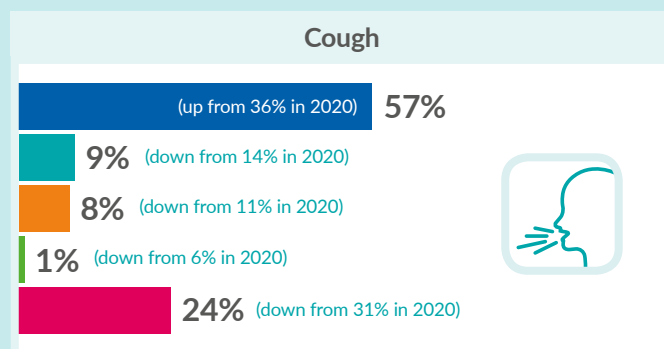
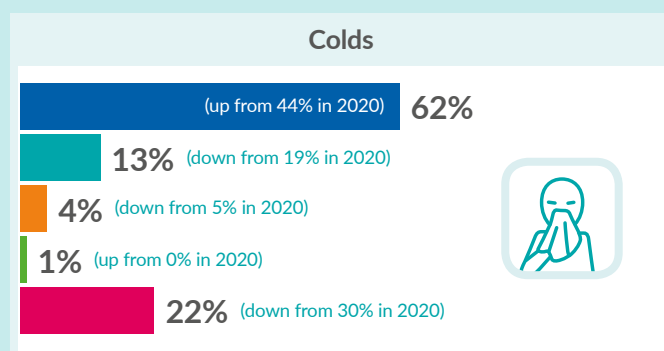
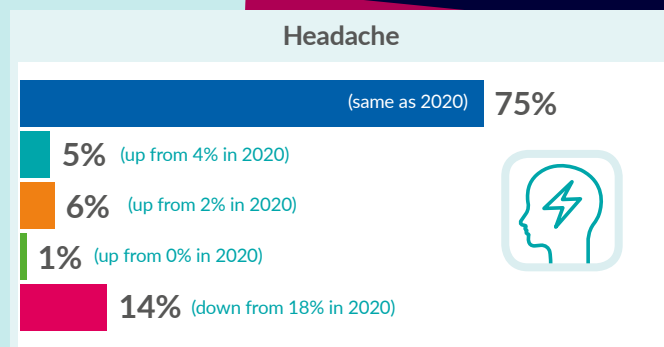
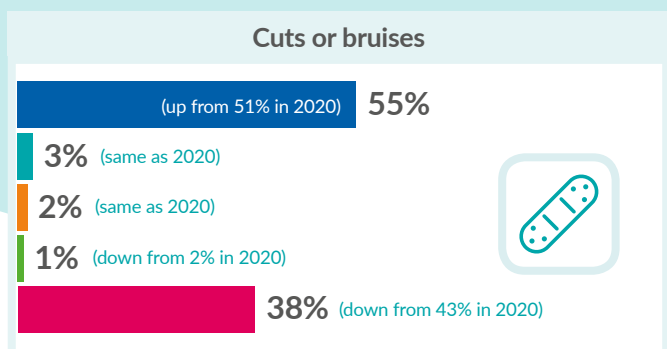
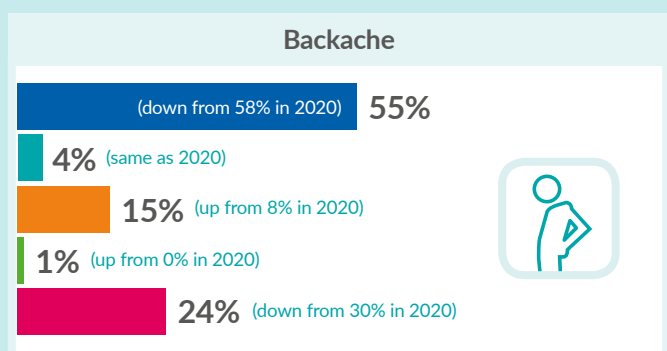


2020



In 2021, coughs and colds replaced allergies and heartburn/indigestion in the top five most commonly-reported self-treatable conditions from 2020.

Did you seek advice or treatment for these conditions?*



* respondents chose all that applied

Attitudes to pharmacy

Community pharmacies have a key role to play in supporting people to self care, offering advice and support with over-the-counter products and treatments.

Pharmacies should be people's first port of call for self-treatable conditions, ensuring GP appointments are available to those who really need them.

PAGB welcomes the Community Pharmacist Consultation Service, through which people who phone NHS111 or contact their local GP surgery with symptoms of self-treatable conditions can be referred for a consultation with a pharmacist, and we would like to see this enhanced so more people can benefit from self care advice from their local pharmacy.

47% of people told us they consulted a pharmacist as a first step for advice or medication to help with a self-treatable condition. **up from 37% in 2020**

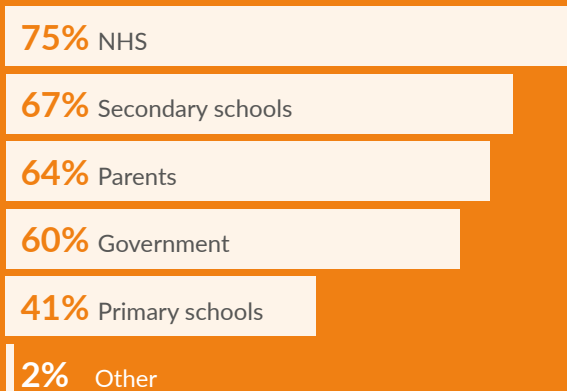
69% of people think it's a good idea for GPs to refer those with self-treatable conditions to a pharmacist.

What would make you more likely to ask your local pharmacist for advice?



85% of people said we need self care education in the UK

Who should be responsible for self care education?



Health literacy and self care education

NHS England estimates that between 43% and 61% of English working-age adults routinely do not understand health information¹. This low level of health literacy has a direct impact on people's ability to practise self care, and a negative effect on the NHS. It is estimated that a lack of understanding costs between 3% and 5% of the annual UK health budget², with up to £1.5bn (pre-pandemic) spent on inappropriate use of NHS services for self-treatable conditions³.

1. NHS England (2016), Does health literacy matter?, available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/blog/jonathan-berry/>
2. Klaus Eichler et al. The costs of limited health literacy: a systematic review. International Journal of Public Health 54, 2009, available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00038-009-0058-2>
3. PAGB. A Self Care White Paper: supporting the delivery of the NHS Long Term Plan. March 2019, available at: https://www.pagb.co.uk/content/uploads/2019/03/PAGB_Self-Care_White-Paper_v1-0.pdf

Access to digital information about self care

The NHS has worked with global technology and social media companies to ensure people searching for online information about COVID-19 are directed towards reliable sources. We are urging a similar approach to all online self care information.



We'd like to see a separate self care section on the NHS website and more NHS signposting to quality-assured self care apps.

Covid



79%

of people said they had used the internet to look up the symptoms of COVID-19

up from 63% in 2020



59%

of people said they had used the internet to look up general health symptoms

up from 39% in 2020



32%

of people look online for information before taking over-the-counter medicines

Sore throat



22%

of people always look up their symptoms online



23%

of people say they don't know which online health information to believe



PAGB is calling for measures including an enhanced role for pharmacists and the introduction of self care education in schools as part of a broader national strategy to encourage and support self care.

Read more at
www.pagb.co.uk/policy/self-care/

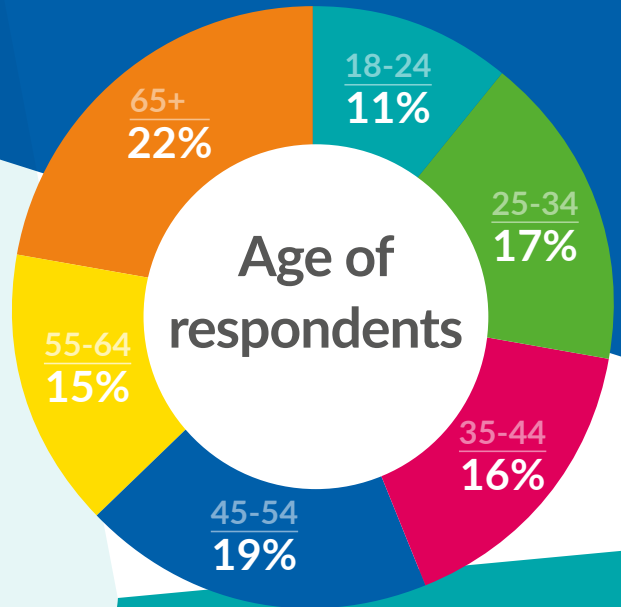
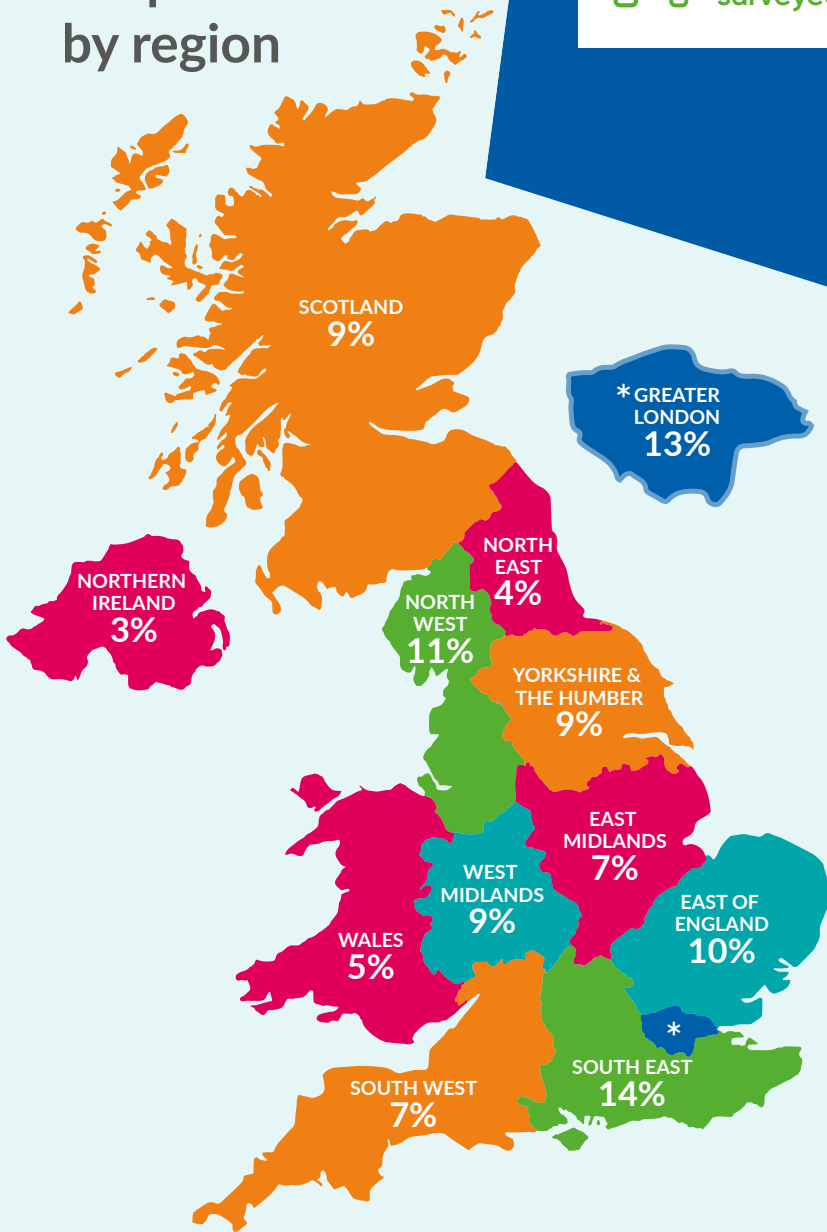
About the survey



2,078
adults
surveyed

The survey of 2,078 UK adults was carried out by Pureprofile on behalf of PAGB between 21 May and 3 June 2021.

Respondents by region



Employment status

10%	Not currently employed
5%	Student
6%	Homemaker
22%	Retired
37%	Full time employed
14%	Part time employed
6%	Self employed



53% Female



47% Male