

**THE  
POLICY  
INSTITUTE**

**KING'S**  
*College*  
**LONDON**

# How the UK is sleeping under lockdown

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Supported by:

**NIHR**

Health Protection Research Unit  
in Emergency Preparedness and  
Response at King's College London

# Summary

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This report includes findings from a survey of 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75 by [King's College London](#) in partnership with [Ipsos MORI](#), conducted on 20-22 May.

It finds that significant proportions of the the public say they have experienced changes to their sleep patterns since the UK government announced the lockdown measures to stop the spread of coronavirus on 23 March:

- Half the population say their sleep has been more disturbed than usual.
- 2 in 5 people say they've slept fewer hours a night on average.
- 2 in 5 report having more vivid dreams than usual.
- 3 in 10 say they've slept for longer but felt less rested than they normally would.
- A quarter say they've slept for longer and felt more rested.

Taking together the proportions who say their sleep has been more disturbed, those who say they've slept less a night on average, and those who have slept for longer but felt less rested, 6 in 10 people in the UK report experiencing worse sleep since the lockdown was announced.

The findings also reveal that:

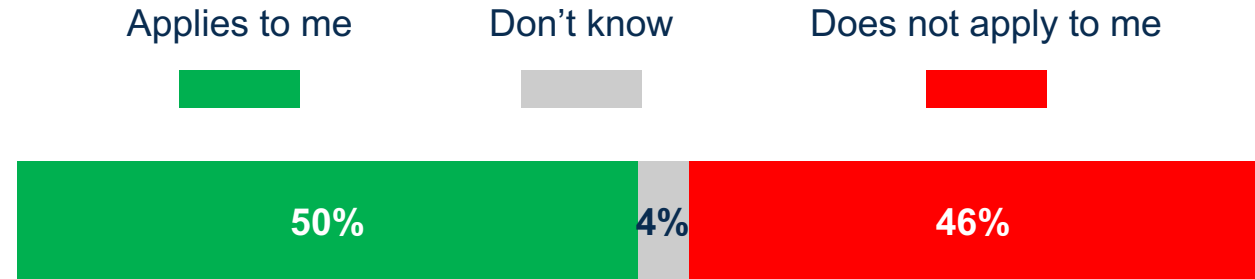
- People who say they're certain or very likely to face significant financial difficulties due to disruption caused by coronavirus are more likely to have slept badly.
- Those who find coronavirus stressful are much more likely than those who don't to have experienced negative sleep impacts.
- Younger people are much more likely than older people to report experiencing changes to their sleep.
- Men are sleeping slightly better than women.

**Half the population** reports that their sleep has been more disturbed than usual.

This rises to **62%** among those who say they're certain or very likely to face financial difficulties because of the impact of coronavirus.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

### My sleep has been more disturbed than usual



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

### % who say statement **applies to them** among different groups



Base: 295 people in the UK who say they are certain/very likely to face financial difficulties, and 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

Those who find coronavirus stressful are **more than twice as likely** as those who don't to report disturbed sleep.

**54%** of people who are very worried about the lockdown restrictions being lifted say they've experienced disturbed sleep, compared with **47%** among those who are not worried.

And **women are slightly more likely than men** to say they've experienced disrupted sleep.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

## My sleep has been more disturbed than usual

### % who say statement **applies to them** among different groups



Base: 954 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020



Base: 1,128 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020



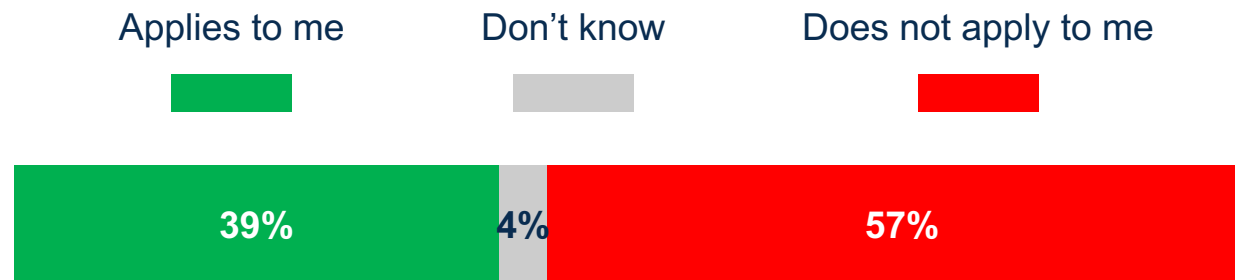
Base: 1,119 men and 1,122 women aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

**2 in 5 people** say they've got less sleep each night on average.

Again, those who have found Covid-19 stressful are **much more likely** than those who haven't to say they've had their sleep impacted in this way.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

### I have slept fewer hours a night on average



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

### % who say statement **applies to them** among different groups



Base: 954 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

As well as disrupted sleep, financial difficulties are associated with getting less sleep in general: **48%** of those who say they're certain or very likely to face such difficulties are sleeping fewer hours on average, compared with **39%** among the population overall.

16-24-year-olds are most likely to say they've slept fewer hours, with **46%** reporting this is the case. At the other end of the spectrum, **36%** of those aged 35 to 44 and 55 to 75 say the same.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

## I have slept fewer hours a night on average

### % who say statement applies to them among different groups



Base: 295 people in the UK who say they are certain/very likely to face financial difficulties, and 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020



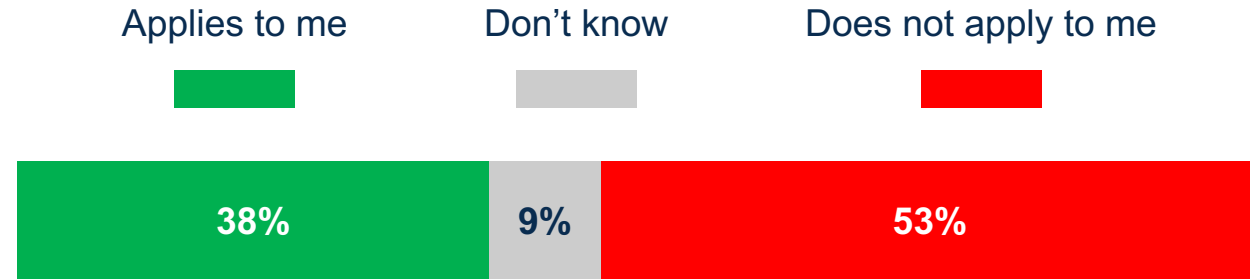
Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

**2 in 5 people** also report having more vivid dreams than usual.

**43%** of women say this applies to them, 10 percentage points higher than the **33%** of men who say it does.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

### I have had more vivid dreams than usual



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

### % who say statement **applies to them** among different groups



Base: 1,119 men and 1,122 women aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

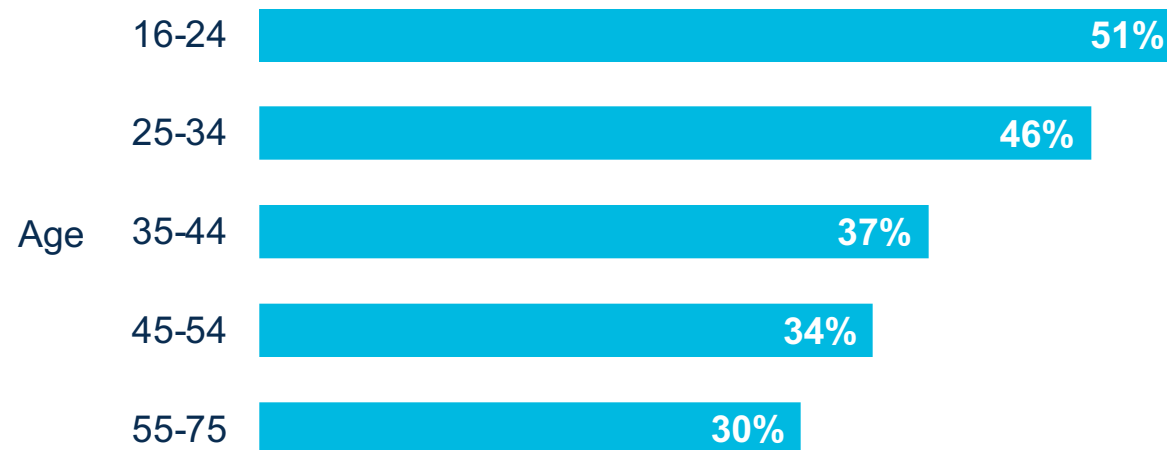
The likelihood of having experienced more vivid dreams than normal decreases with age. **Half** of 16-24-year olds say they've experienced such dreams, which declines to **30%** among those aged 55 to 75.

People feeling stressed about coronavirus are **twice as likely** as those who aren't to have had more vivid dreams.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

## I have had more vivid dreams than usual

### % who say statement **applies to them** among different groups



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020



Base: 954 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020



**3 in 10 people** feel less rested despite getting more sleep than usual, rising to **4 in 10** among those who think they're certain or very likely to face financial difficulties.

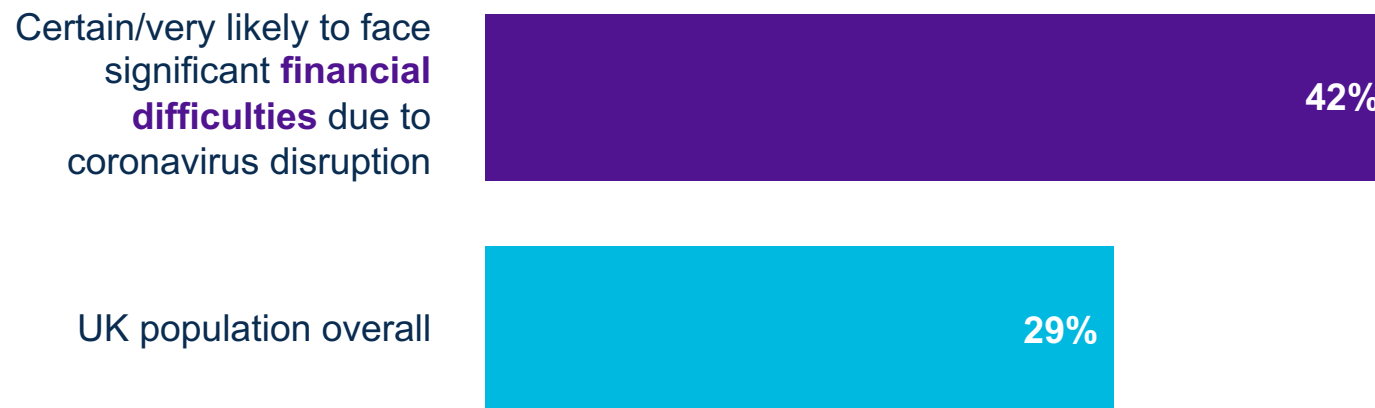
Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

**I have slept longer hours, but I feel less rested when I wake up**



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

**% who say statement applies to them among different groups**



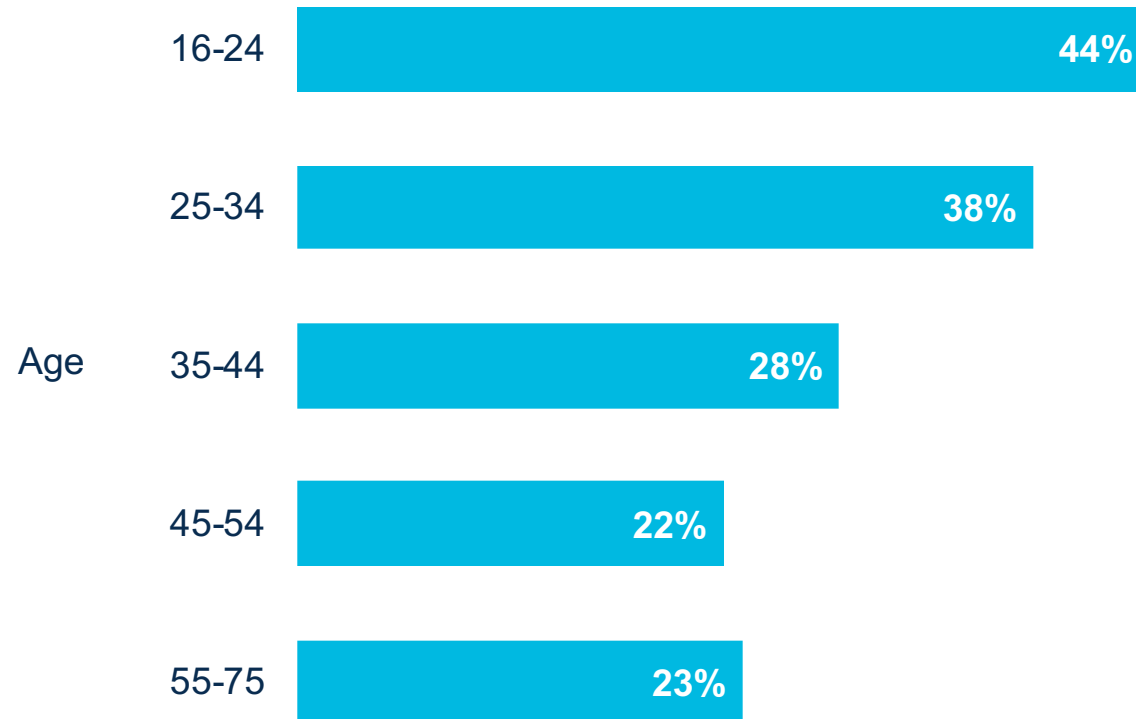
Base: 295 people in the UK who say they are certain/very likely to face financial difficulties, and 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

As with other sleep impacts, younger age groups are **significantly more likely** than older age groups to say their sleep has been affected in this way.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

**I have slept longer hours, but I feel less rested when I wake up**

**% who say statement **applies to them** among different groups**



**A quarter of the population** is getting more sleep than usual and feeling more rested when they wake up, with **men sleeping a bit better than women.**

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

### **I have slept longer hours and feel more rested when I wake up**



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

### **% who say statement **applies to them** among different groups**



Base: 1,119 men and 1,122 women aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

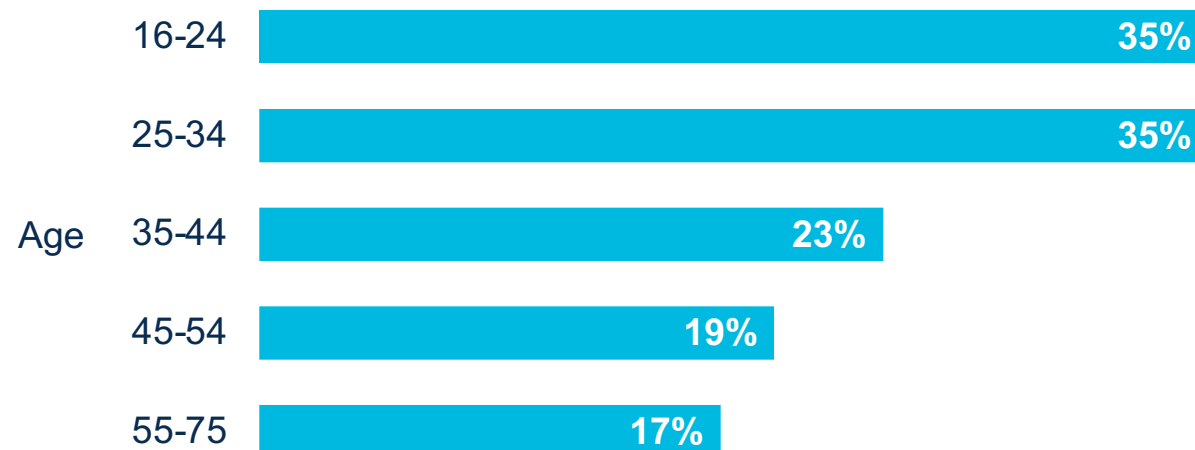
People aged 16-34 are **significantly more likely** than other age groups to say they've slept for longer and feel more rested.

And as might be expected, those who do not find coronavirus stressful are getting more sleep and rest than those who do.

Thinking about your sleeping patterns during the lockdown, and how they compare with your sleeping patterns from before the lockdown started, which, if any, of these have applied to you?

**I have slept longer hours and feel more rested when I wake up**

**% who say statement **applies to them** among different groups**



Base: 2,254 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

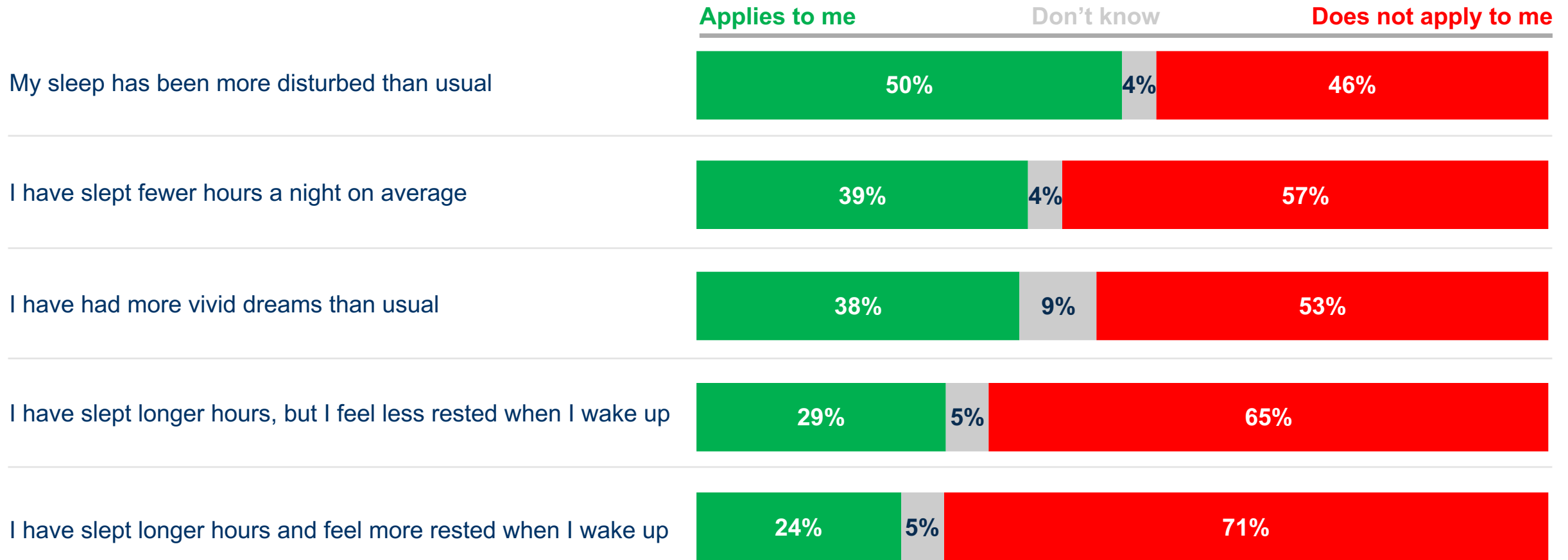
**Do not find coronavirus stressful** 27%

**Find coronavirus stressful** 19%

Base: 954 UK residents aged 16-75, interviewed 20-22 May 2020

## Summary

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