

# Royal College of Psychiatrists' briefing

## Analysis of second COVID-19 RCPsych member survey – other key themes

May 2020

The Royal College of Psychiatrists issued a survey to its members working in the National Health Service across the United Kingdom. It was in the field from Friday 1 May until the morning of Wednesday 6 May. 1,369 completed responses were received from across the UK out of a total available sample of c12,900, which equates to a response rate of around 11%.

This summary will explore the following themes covered in the survey: personal protective equipment; access to testing; the wellbeing of psychiatrists during the pandemic; and the suitability of IT equipment available for remote working. A separate summary has already been produced to cover only the indirect harms questions around demand changes for different forms of appointments and interventions.



### Access to the correct level of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Across the UK, 73.0% of all respondents were able to confirm they had access to the correct PPE, equivalent to 990 of 1,357 College members that answered the question (three responses were available – 'yes', 'no' or 'don't know'). If 'don't know' responses are excluded from the analysis, the percentage of 'yes' answers increases to 84.0% (990 of 1,178). These percentages compare to 60.1% and 72.4% respectively from the previous survey, which was in the field from 15-17 April.

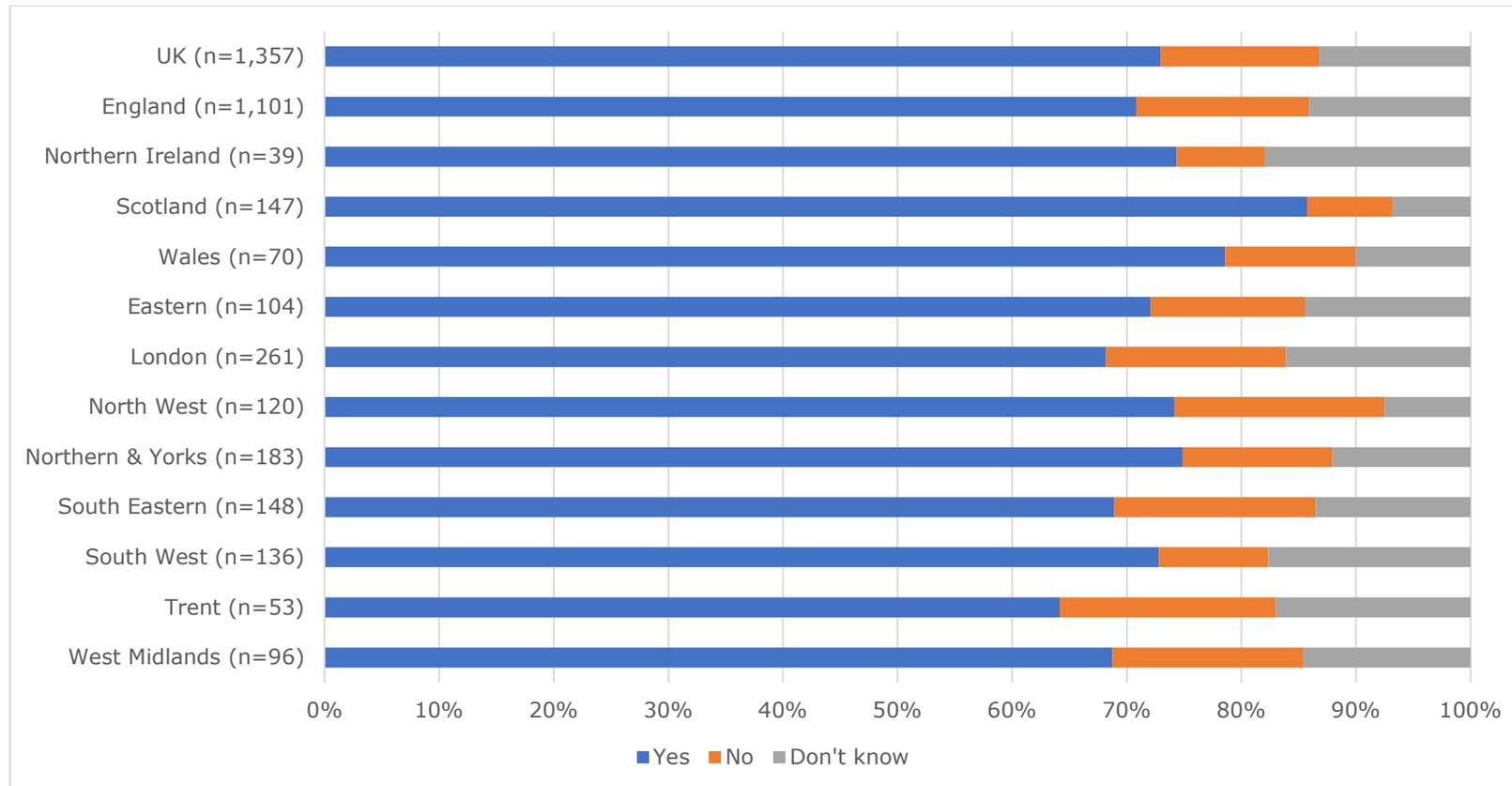
Almost one in seven respondents overall confirmed they did not have access to the correct PPE (13.9% or 188 of 1,357) or almost one in six when 'don't know' is excluded (16.0% or 188 of 1,178). These percentages are a clear improvement on the previous survey (22.9% and 27.6% respectively) but concerns remain about the availability of PPE among the membership.

Data was collected for each of the four nations within the United Kingdom and the eight Royal College of Psychiatrists regions across England (Eastern, London, North West, Northern & Yorkshire, South Eastern, South West, Trent, West Midlands) to also identify whether there were more significant concerns in some areas more than others.

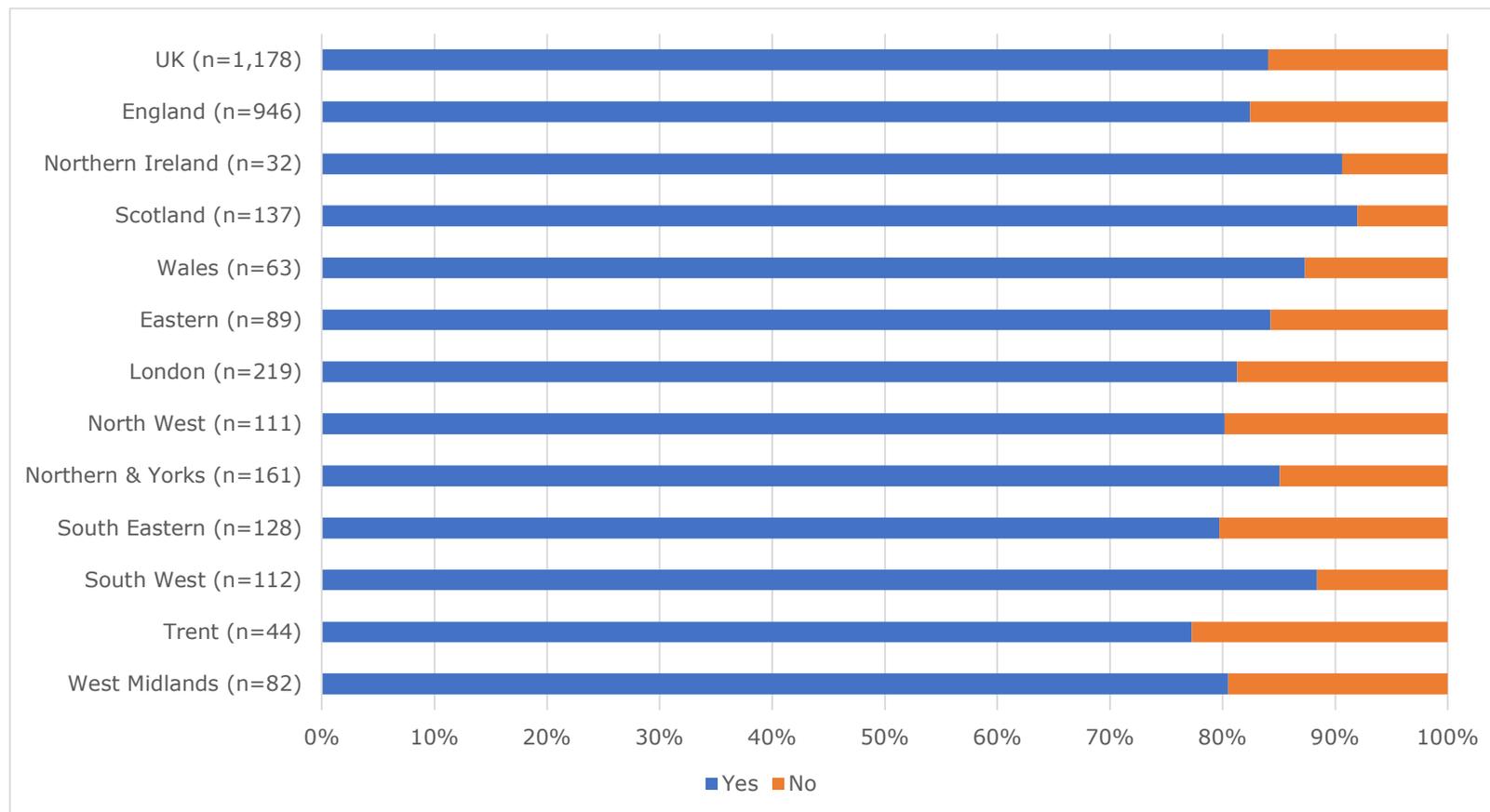
Charts 1 and 2 below illustrate the extent of the regional and nationwide variation. The proportion of affirmative responses ranged from only 64.2% in the Trent region of England (34 of 53) to 85.7% in Scotland (126 of 147). Scotland retains the

largest percentage of 'yes' responses when 'don't knows' are excluded (92.0%), with Trent remaining the area with the greatest level of concern under this approach (77.3% of responses being positive).

**Chart 1 – Can you access the correct level of PPE? All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



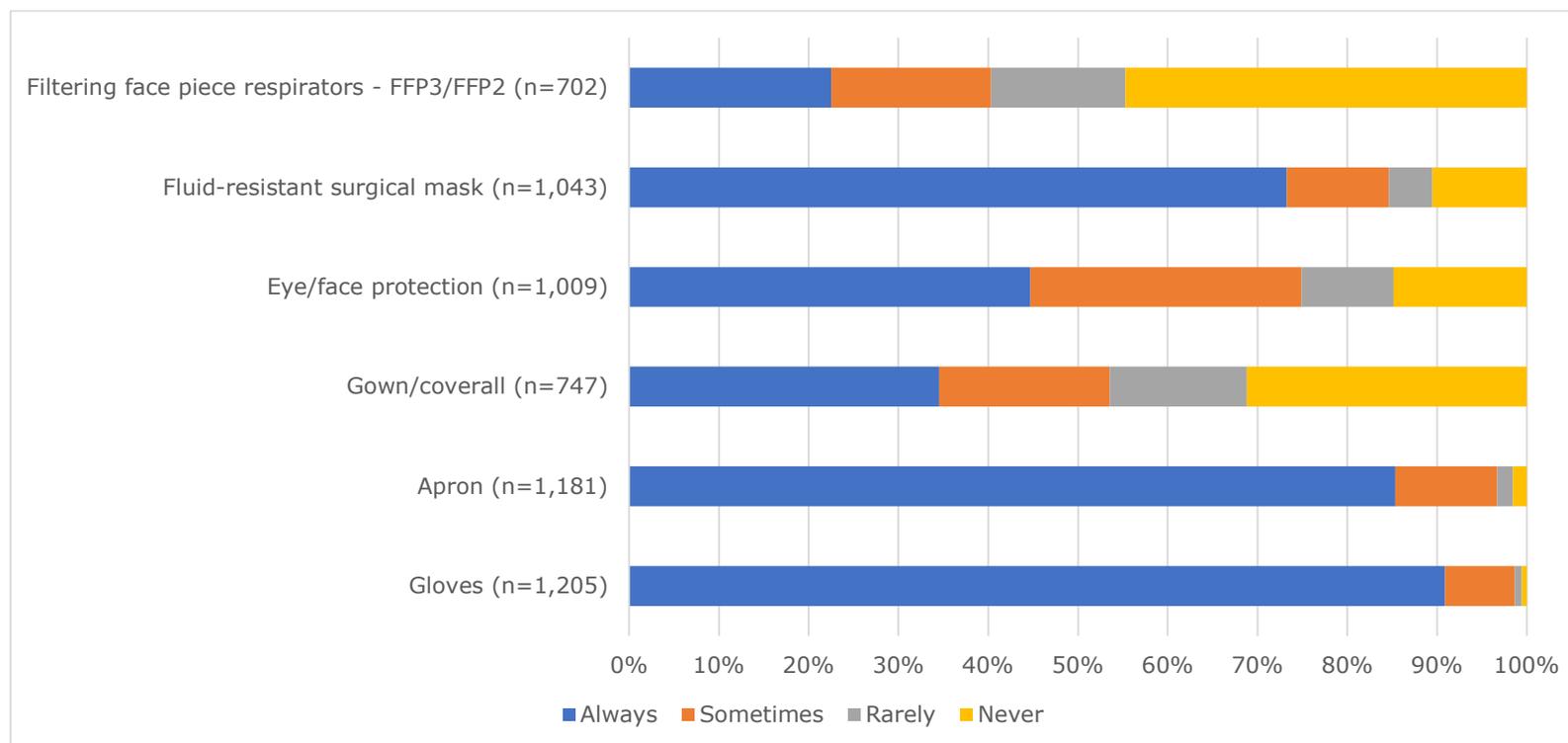
**Chart 2 – Can you access the correct level of PPE? Definitive responses only from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



In this survey, members were also asked about the regularity in supply of various items of PPE. There was substantial variation in the answers for this question. After 'not applicable' answers were excluded, 90.9% of members from across the UK (1,095 of 1,205) confirmed disposable gloves are 'always' available, as did 85.4% of respondents in relation to disposable plastic aprons (1,008 of 1,181). A minority of members were however able to confirm that the following items are 'always' available: eye/face protection (44.7%); disposable fluid-resistant plastic gown/coverall (34.5%); and filtering face piece

respirators (FFP3 or FFP2) (22.5%). The latter was also confirmed to 'never' be available to 44.7% of respondents (314 of 702). The highest percentage of 'always' responses for gloves and aprons were found in Scotland among the four nations (94.2% and 91.8% respectively), whereas the lowest were both in Northern Ireland (82.9% and 76.5% respectively). Chart 3 below illustrates the UK-wide results for this question across each item of PPE.

**Chart 3 – Are you able to access the following PPE kit when you need it (in line with the latest guidance from your organisation)? Responses from across the UK, with 'not applicable' excluded, 1-6 May 2020**

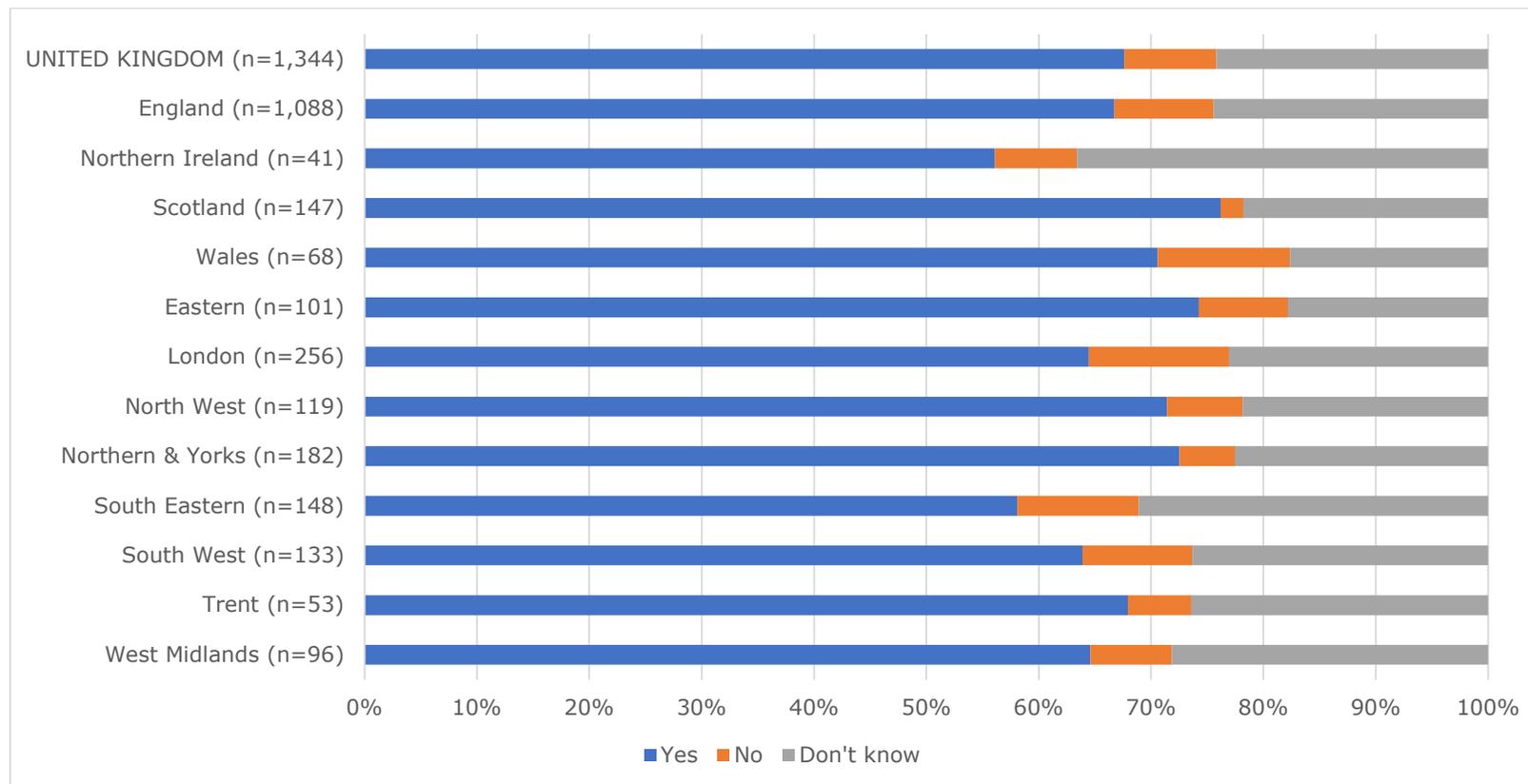


### Access to COVID-19 testing

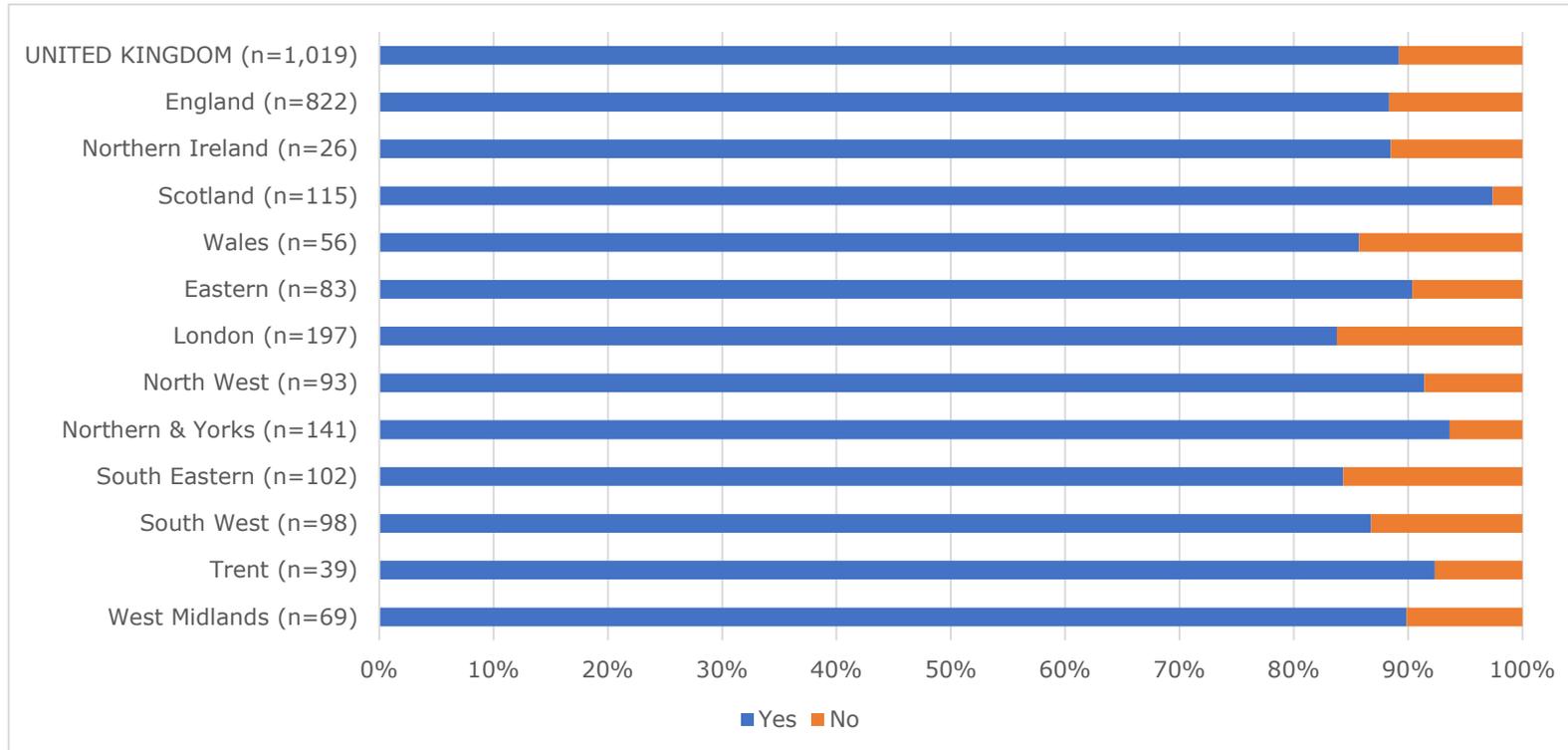
College members were again asked to confirm availability of testing for three specific groups: patients, as per current testing guidance; members of their household with COVID-19 symptoms; and themselves if they developed COVID-19 symptoms.

With all responses factored in, only 67.6% of members (909 of 1,344) across the UK were able to confirm that their patients could access COVID-19 tests when required, ranging from 56.1% in Northern Ireland (23 of 41) to 76.2% in Scotland (112 of 147). Alternatively, if 'don't knows' are excluded, 89.2% of members (909 of 1,019) that were able to confirm whether tests for patients were available indicated that they could. Percentages varied from 83.8% in London (165 of 197) to 97.4% in Scotland (112 of 115). Those headline percentages compare to 53.6% and 75.2% respectively from the previous survey. Full results are illustrated below in Charts 3 and 4.

**Chart 3 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for your patients, as per current testing guidance? All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



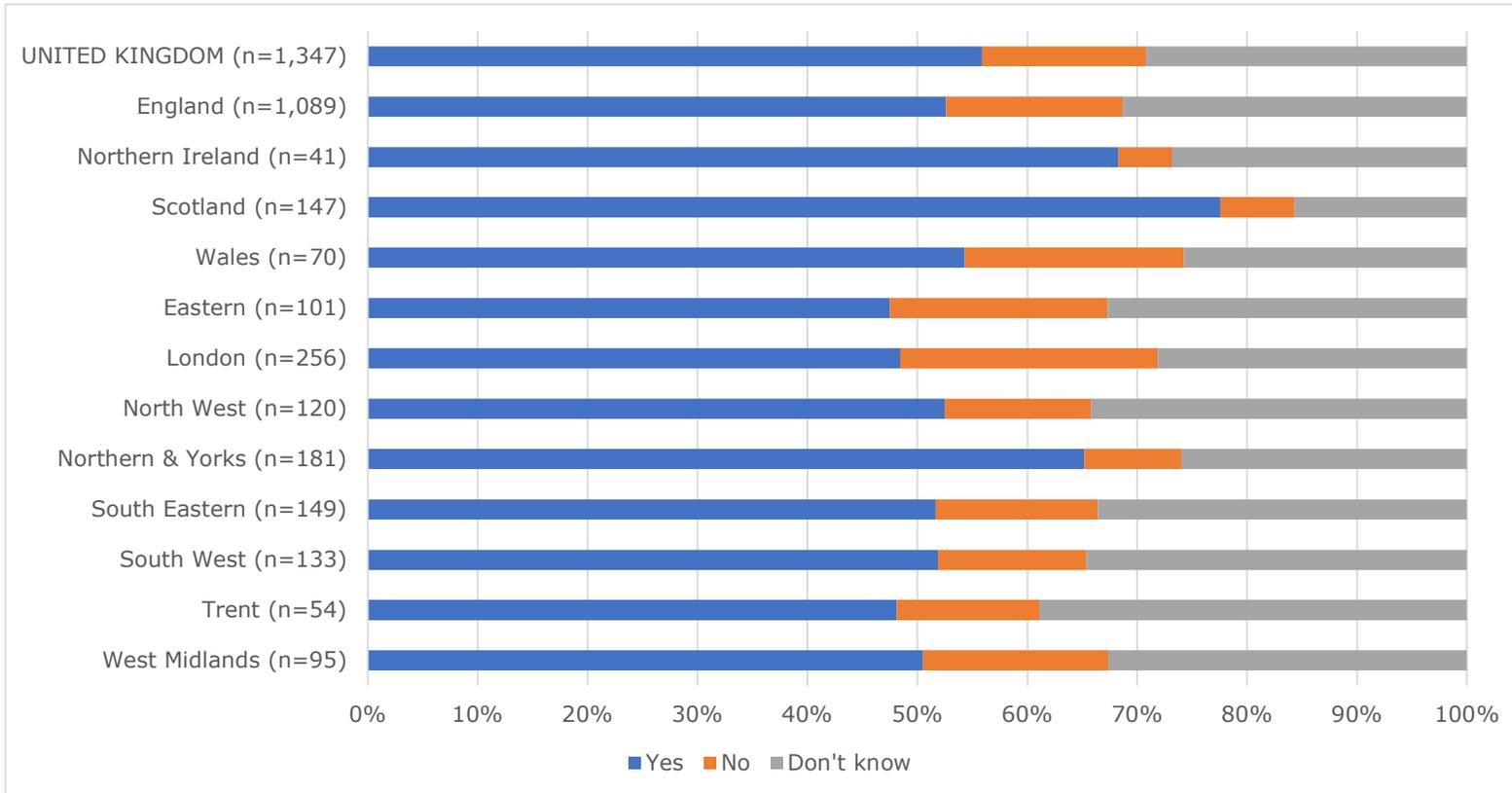
**Chart 4 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for your patients, as per current testing guidance? Definitive responses only from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



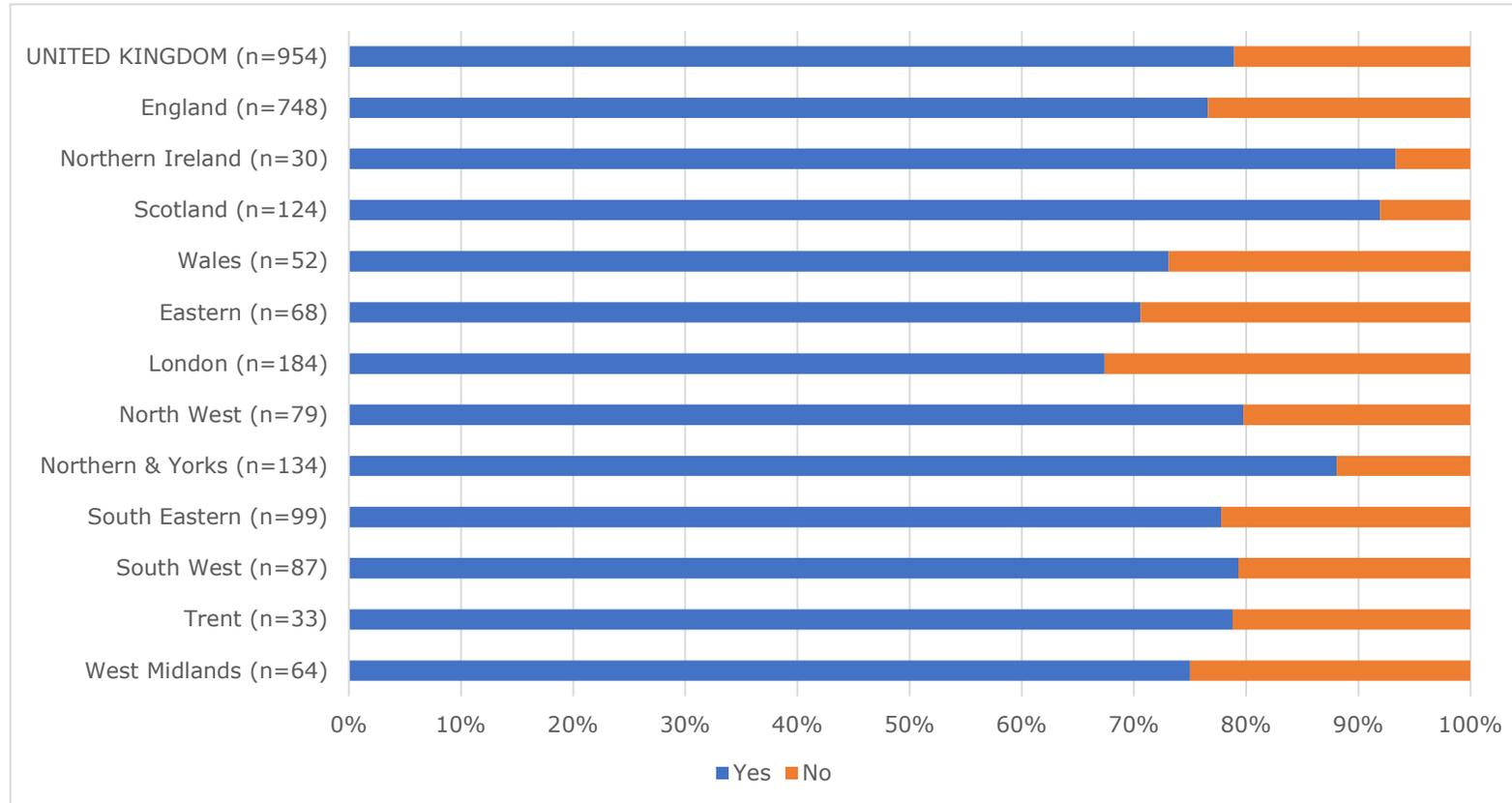
Only 55.9% of respondents (753 of 1,347) were able to confirm that members of their own household with symptoms had access to tests, with percentages of 'yes' responses varying from 47.5% in Eastern England (48 of 101) to 77.6% in Scotland (114 of 147). Once 'don't know' responses are excluded, the overall percentage of positive answers to this question nationwide does rise to 78.9% (753 of 954), ranging from 67.4% in London (124 of 184) to 93.3% in Northern Ireland (28 of 30). The headline percentages of 'yes' responses can be compared to 30.0% and 44.0% respectively in the last survey.

The full set of results are captured in Charts 5 and 6 below.

**Chart 5 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for members of your household with symptoms?  
All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



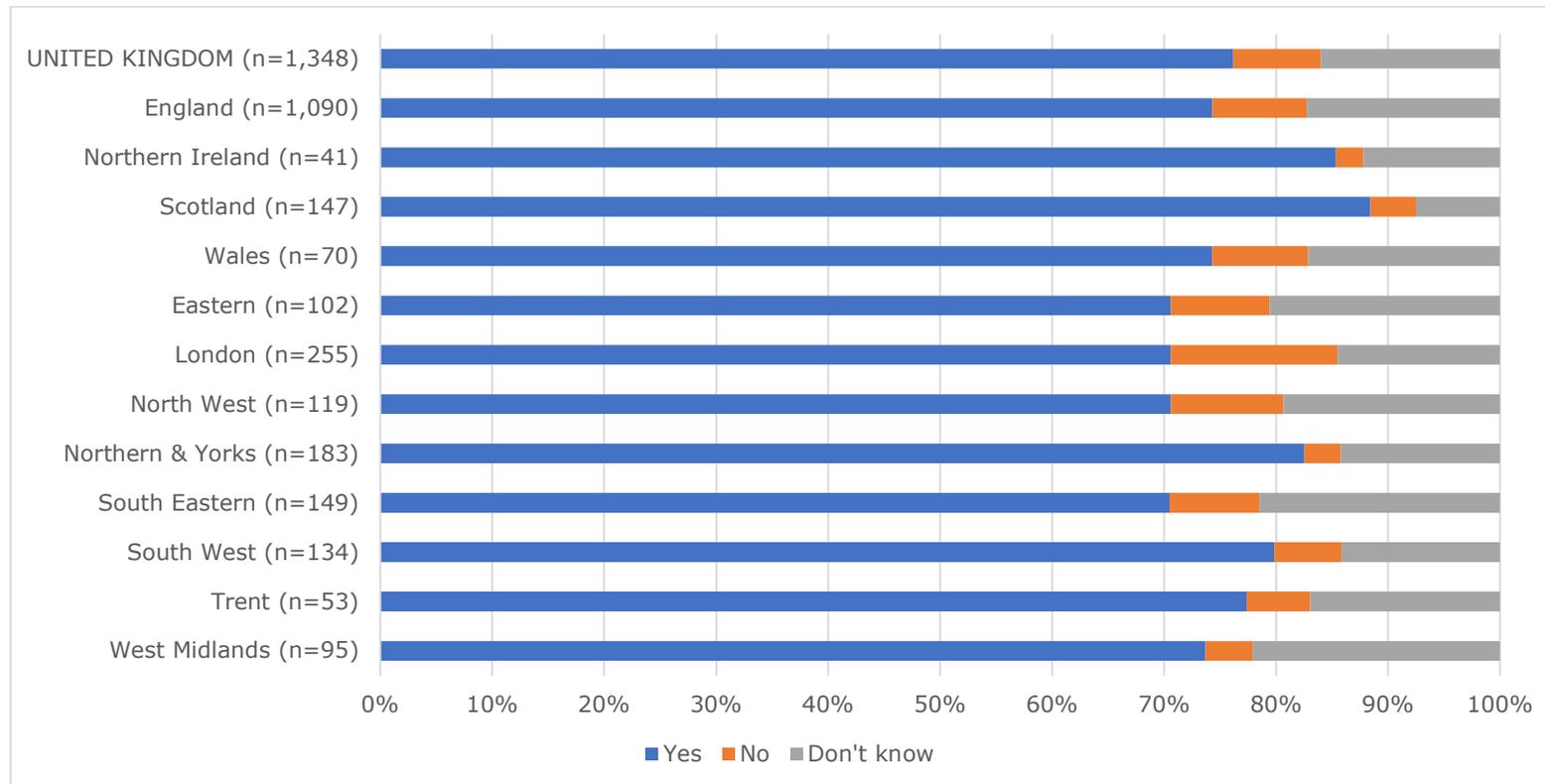
**Chart 6 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for members of your household with symptoms? Definitive responses only from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



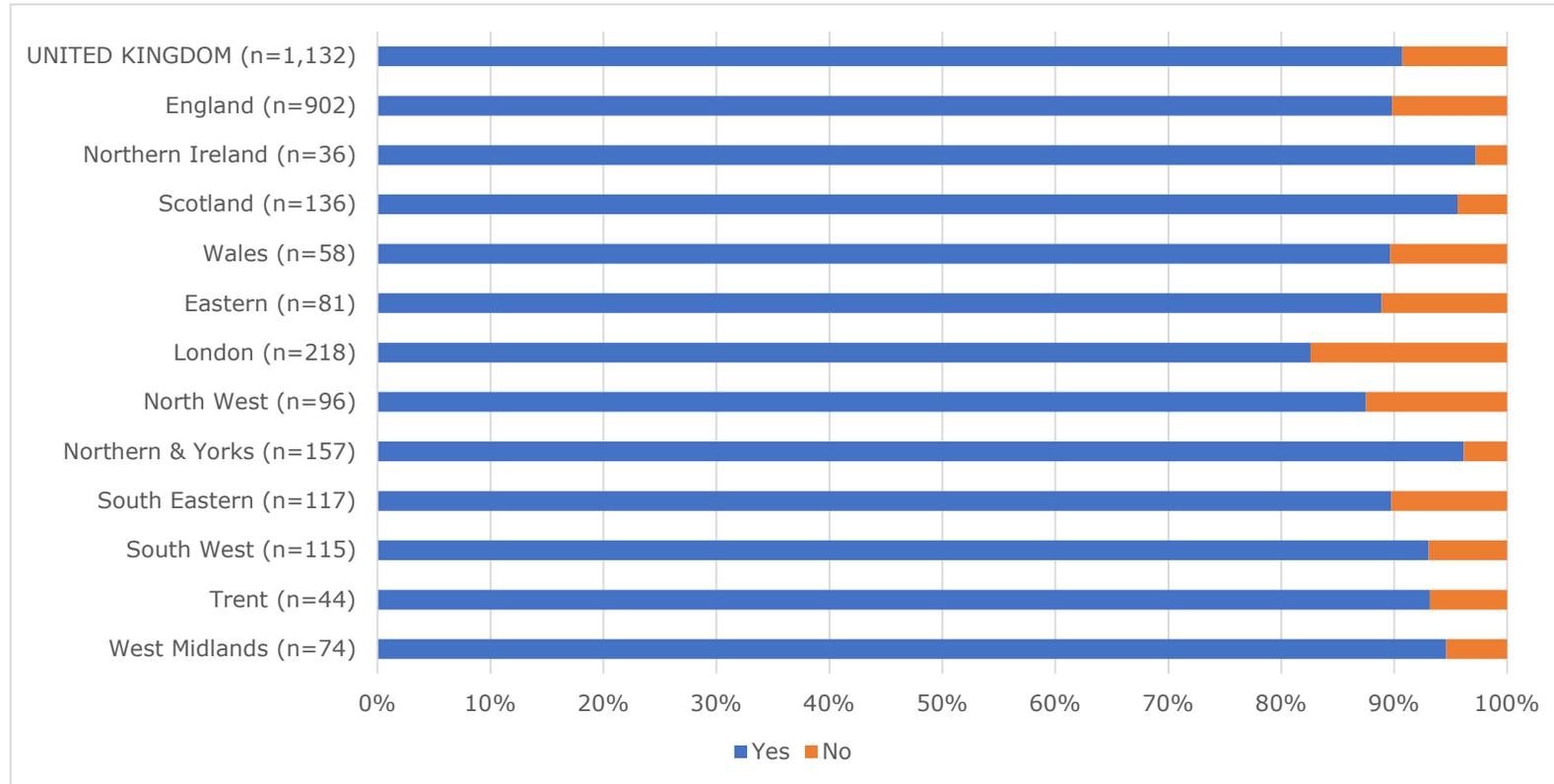
Just over three-quarters of all respondents across the UK were able to confirm that they themselves had access to a test if they had symptoms (76.2% or 1,027 of 1,348), with regional and national rates of 'yes' answers varying from 70.5% in South Eastern England (105 of 149) to 88.4% in Scotland (130 of 147). This question had the smallest number of 'don't know responses', at 7.8%. Once these are excluded from the analysis, 90.7% of the members providing definitive responses nationwide confirmed they could access tests in such circumstances (1,027 of 1,132), with the discrepancy found between the region with the lowest percentage of 'yes' responses (London at 82.6%, or 180 of 218) and the highest (Northern Ireland, at 97.2% or 35 of 36) having narrowed considerably from the last survey when it was almost 51 percentage points. The headline

percentages of 'yes' responses compare to 50.9% and 67.0% respectively from the previous survey. Full results are illustrated in Charts 7 and 8 below.

**Chart 7 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for yourself, if you have symptoms? All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



**Chart 8 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for yourself, if you have symptoms? Definitive responses only from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**

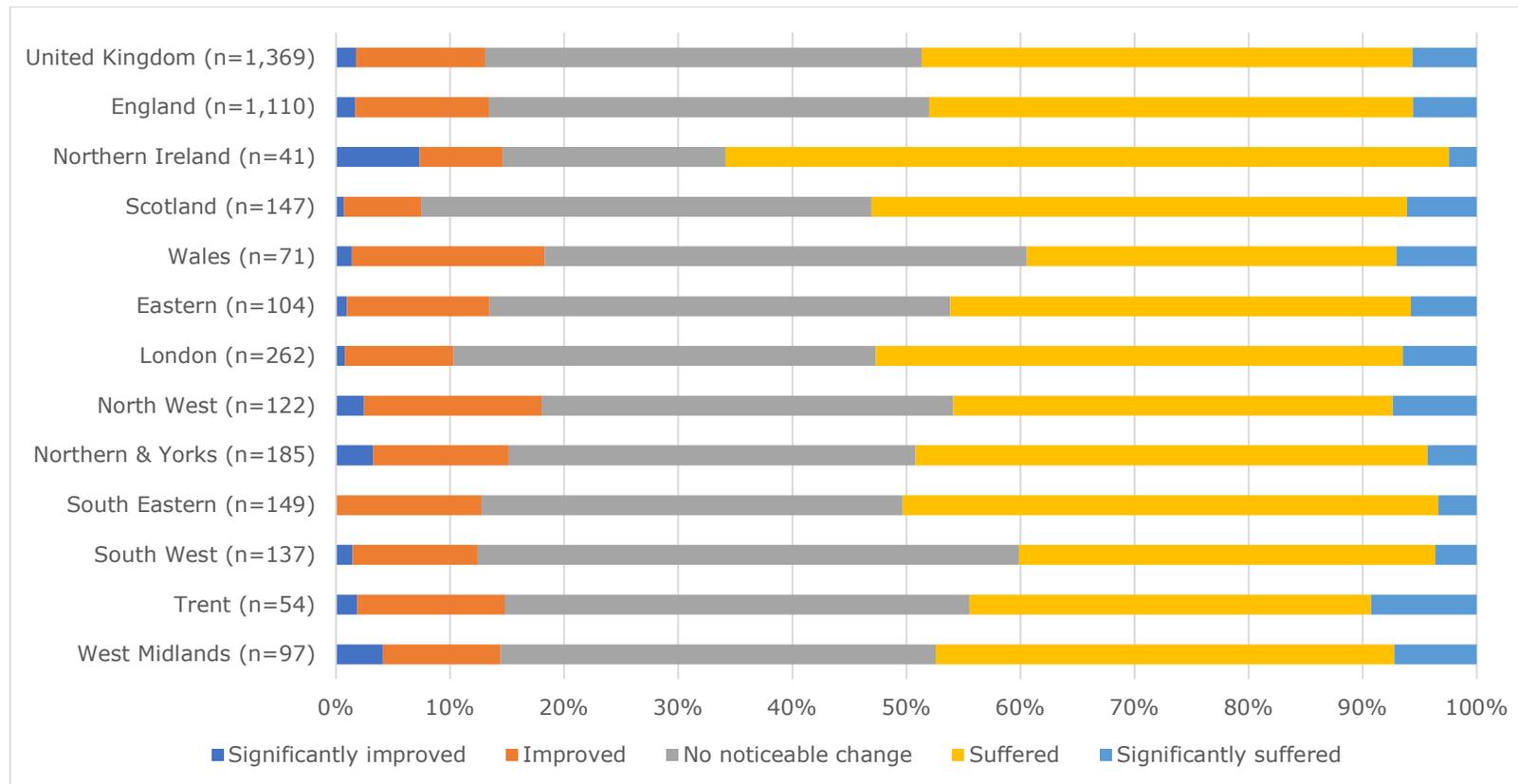


**How has the wellbeing of psychiatrists been impacted by the pandemic and lockdown?**

Overall, 48.6% of 1,369 members from across the UK confirmed their wellbeing had either 'suffered' (43.0%) or 'significantly suffered' (5.6%) as a result of COVID-19 and the lockdown. A majority of respondents from two nations (Scotland – 53.1%, Northern Ireland – 65.9%) and two regions in England (London – 52.7%, South Eastern – 50.3%) confirmed their wellbeing had suffered or significantly suffered.

Meanwhile a mere 13.1% responded that their wellbeing had 'improved' (11.3%) or 'significantly improved' (1.8%). The highest combined percentages of 'significantly improved' and 'improved' were recorded in Wales (18.3%), the North West of England (18.0%) and the Northern & Yorkshire region (15.1%).

**Chart 9 - How has your wellbeing been impacted by COVID-19 and the lockdown? All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 1-6 May 2020**



## How well equipped are psychiatrists for remote working?

With remote working becoming increasingly widespread across mental health services, a new question was added to this survey to determine how psychiatrists assessed the IT equipment available to them and to what extent this enabled them to fulfil their duties at work.

A mere 20.7% of members from across the UK (270 of 1,303) felt they were 'fully equipped' (ranging from 12.1% in Wales to 29.3% in Eastern England) with a further 39.4% (514) responding that they were 'well-equipped' (however this varies from 10.5% in Northern Ireland to 50.8% in South West England). At the other end of the scale, 6.8% confirmed that their current IT equipment left them 'unequipped to conduct most/all duties', although this percentage was considerably higher in Scotland (12.1%) and Wales (24.2%).

**Chart 10 - How would you assess the IT equipment available to you to conduct your duties remotely? All responses from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions excluding 'not applicable/don't know', 1-6 May 2020**

