

# Royal College of Psychiatrists' briefing Analysis of COVID-19 RCPsych member survey – personal protective equipment and testing access



**April 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 Wednesday 15 April until the morning of Friday 17 April.

1,685 completed responses were received from across the UK out of a total available sample of c12,900, which equates to a response rate of 13%.

This summary will focus on the results regarding the accessibility of personal protective equipment (PPE) and availability of COVID-19 testing for patients, members of the household with symptoms and our members themselves with symptoms.

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

Across the UK, 60.1% of all respondents were able to confirm that they had access to the correct personal protective equipment (PPE), equivalent to 1,009 of 1,680 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 72.4% (1,009 of 1,394).

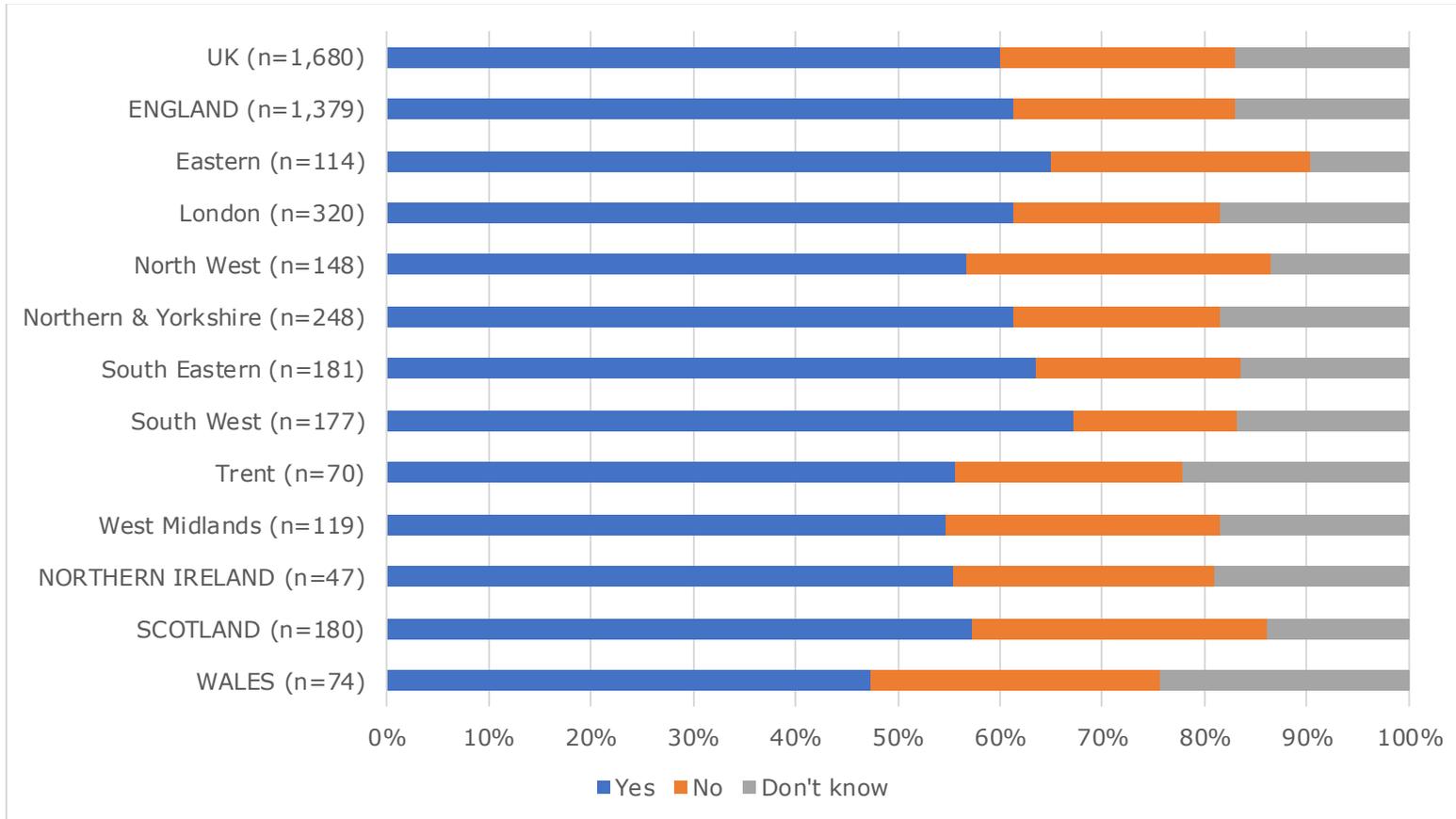
More than one in five respondents confirmed they did not have access to the correct PPE, regardless of whether 'don't know' responses are included (22.9%, 385 of 1,680) or excluded (27.6%, 385 of 1,394).

Data was collected for each of 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.

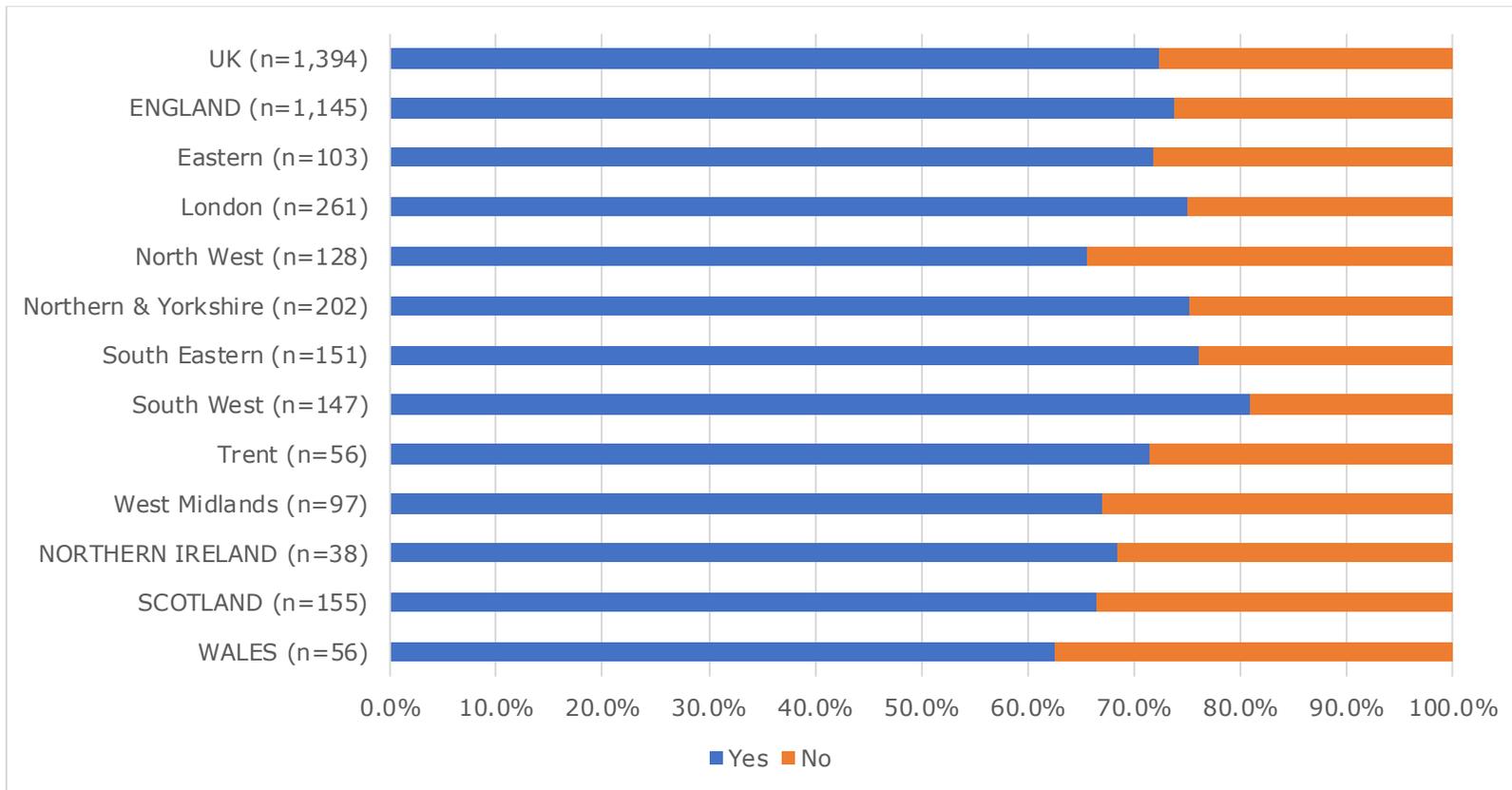
Charts 1 and 2 below illustrate the extent of the regional and nationwide variation. The proportion of affirmative responses ranged from only 47.3% in Wales (35 of 74) to 67.2% in the South West of England (119 of 177). South West remains the

region with the largest percentage of 'yes' responses when 'don't knows' are excluded (81.0%), with Wales remaining the area with the greatest level of concern under this approach (only 62.5% 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, 15-17 April 2020**



**Chart 2 – Can you access the correct level of PPE? Definitive responses only from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020**

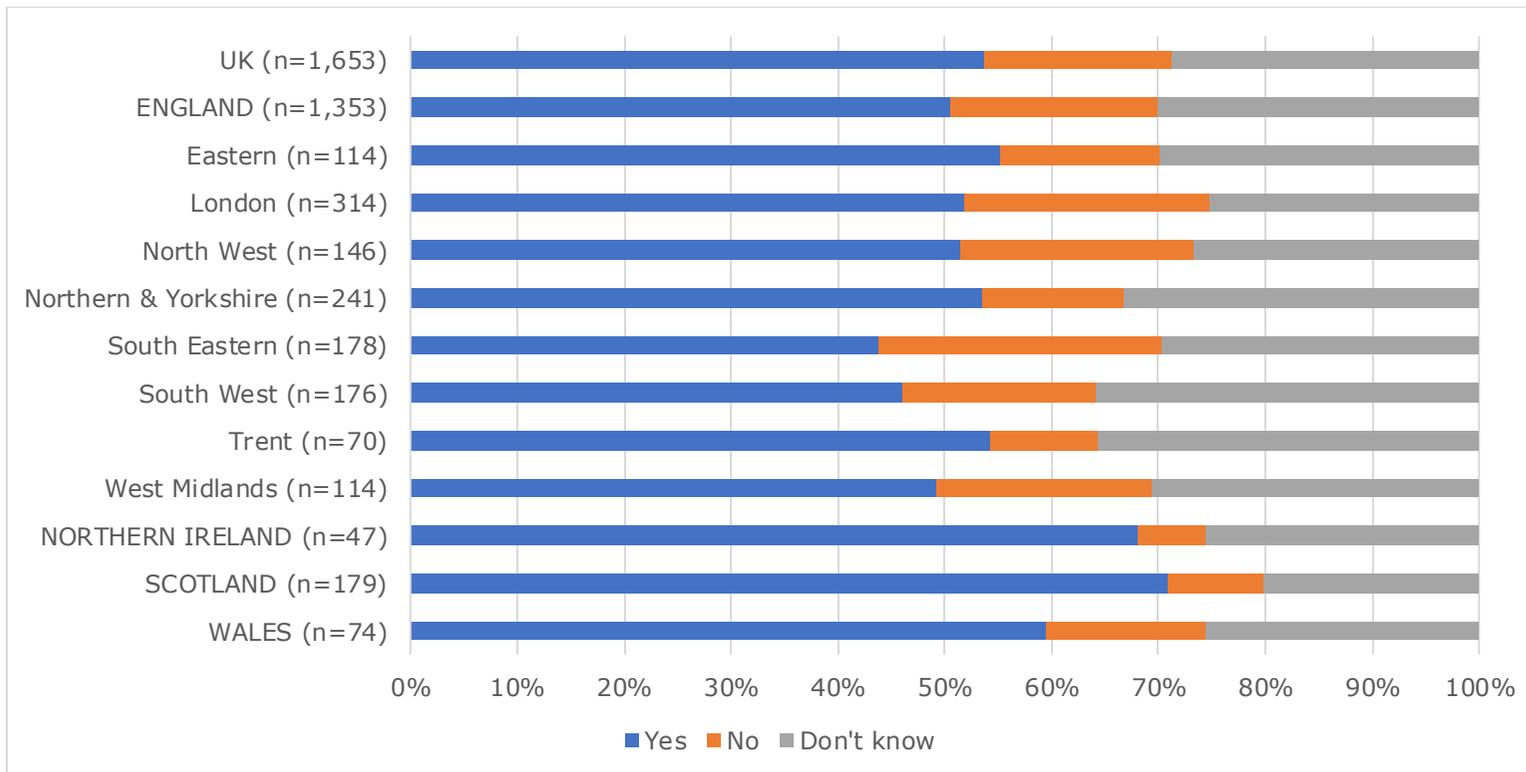


**Access to COVID-19 testing**

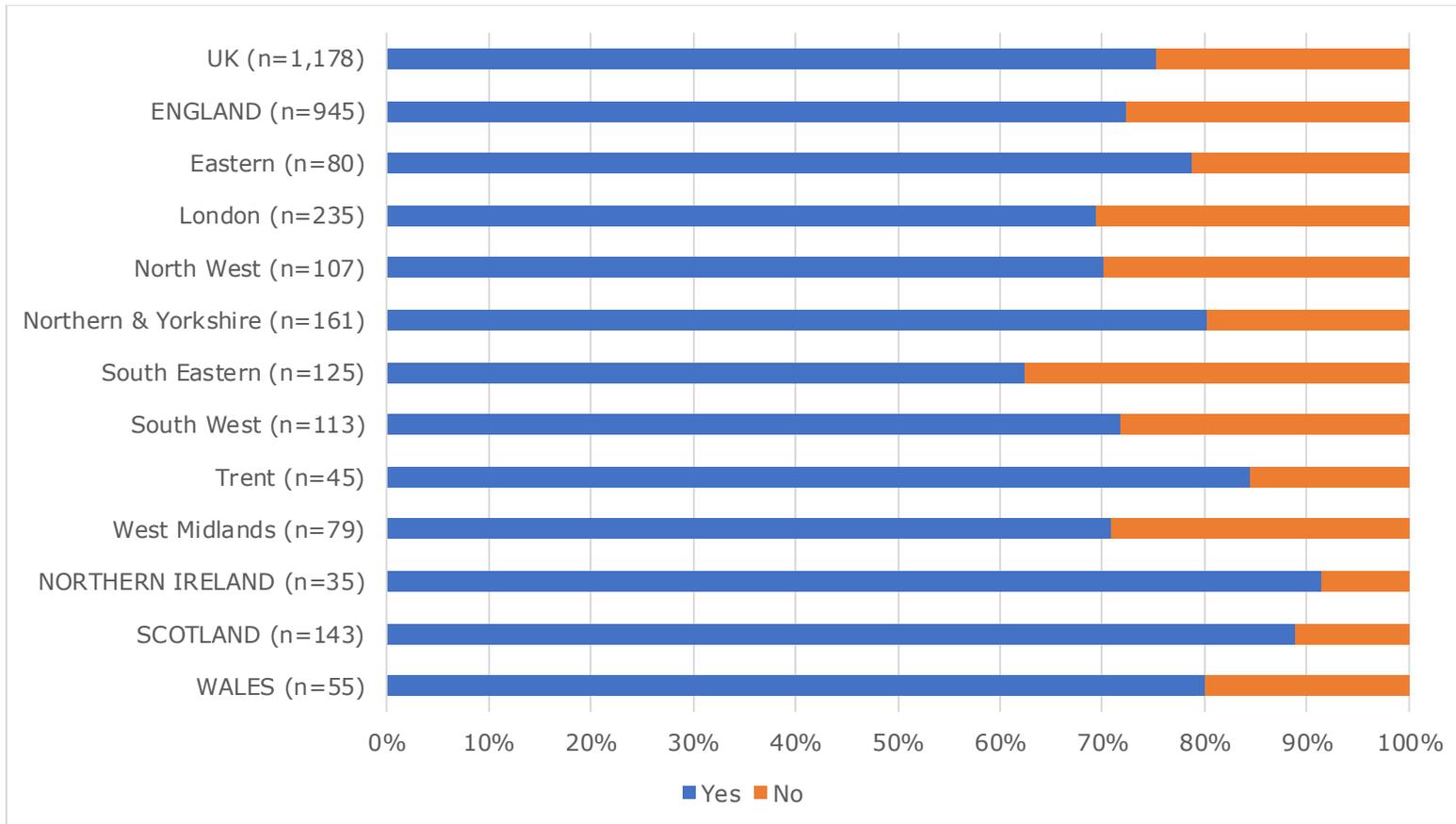
College members were also asked to confirm the availability of testing for three specific groups: patients, as per current testing guidance; members of their household with COVID-19 symptoms; and themselves if they developed COVID-19 symptoms.

With all responses factored in, only 53.6% of members (886 of 1,653) across the UK were able to confirm that their patients could access COVID-19 tests when required, ranging from 43.8% in the South Eastern region of England (78 of 178) to 70.9% in Scotland (127 of 179). Alternatively, if 'don't knows' are excluded, 75.2% of members (886 of 1,178) that were able to confirm whether tests for patients were available indicated that they could. Percentages varied from 62.4% in South Eastern (78 of 125) to 91.4% in Northern Ireland (32 of 35). 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, 15-17 April 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, 15-17 April 2020**



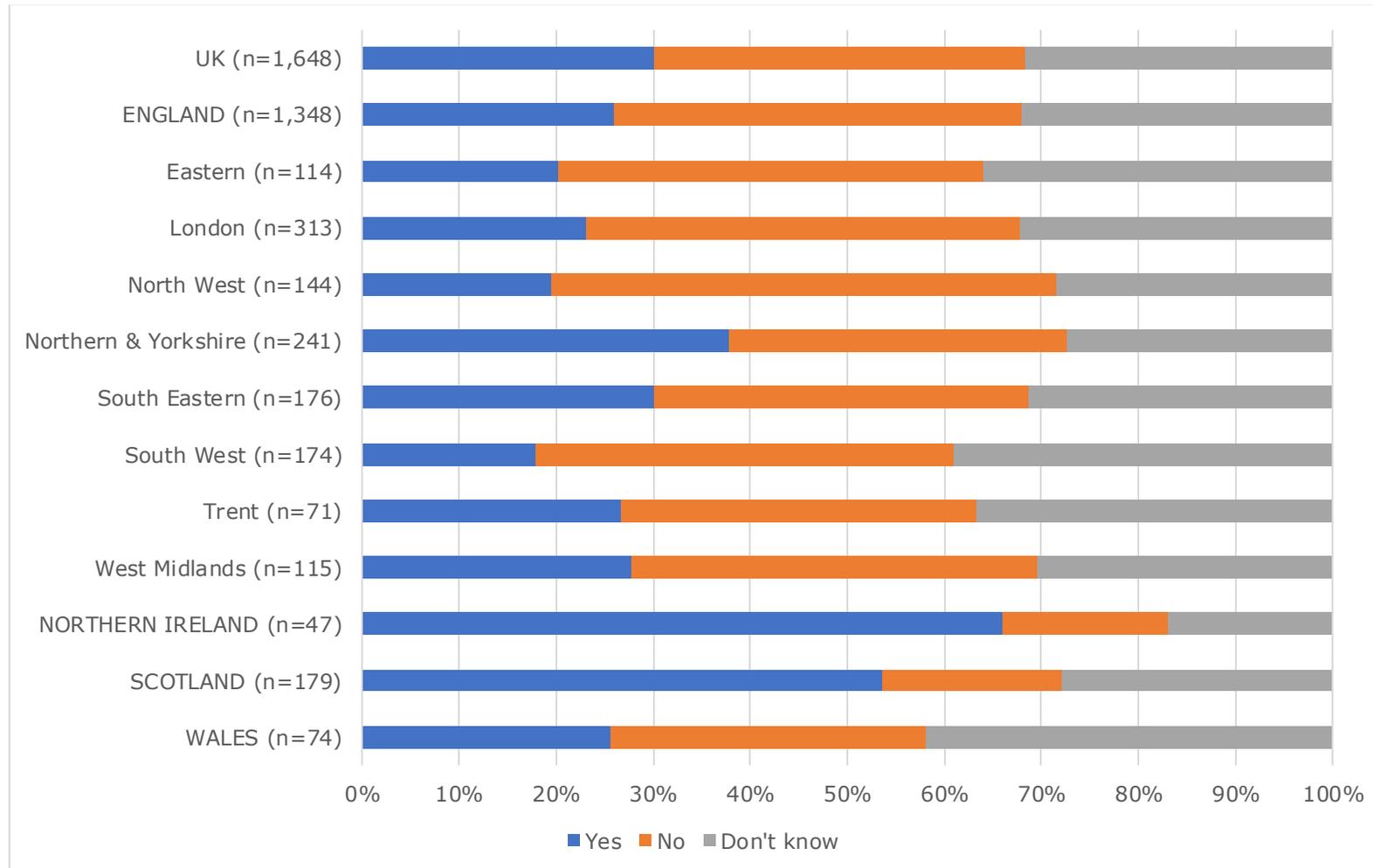
A mere 30.0% of respondents (495 of 1,648) were able to confirm that members of their own household with symptoms had access to tests, with percentages of 'yes' responses varying from 17.8% in the South West of England (31 of 174) to 66.0% in Northern Ireland (31 of 47).

Meanwhile, even if 'don't know' responses are excluded, the overall percentage of positive answers to this question nationwide was still only 44.0% (495 of 1,126), ranging from 27.2% in the North West of England (28 of 103) to 79.5% in Northern

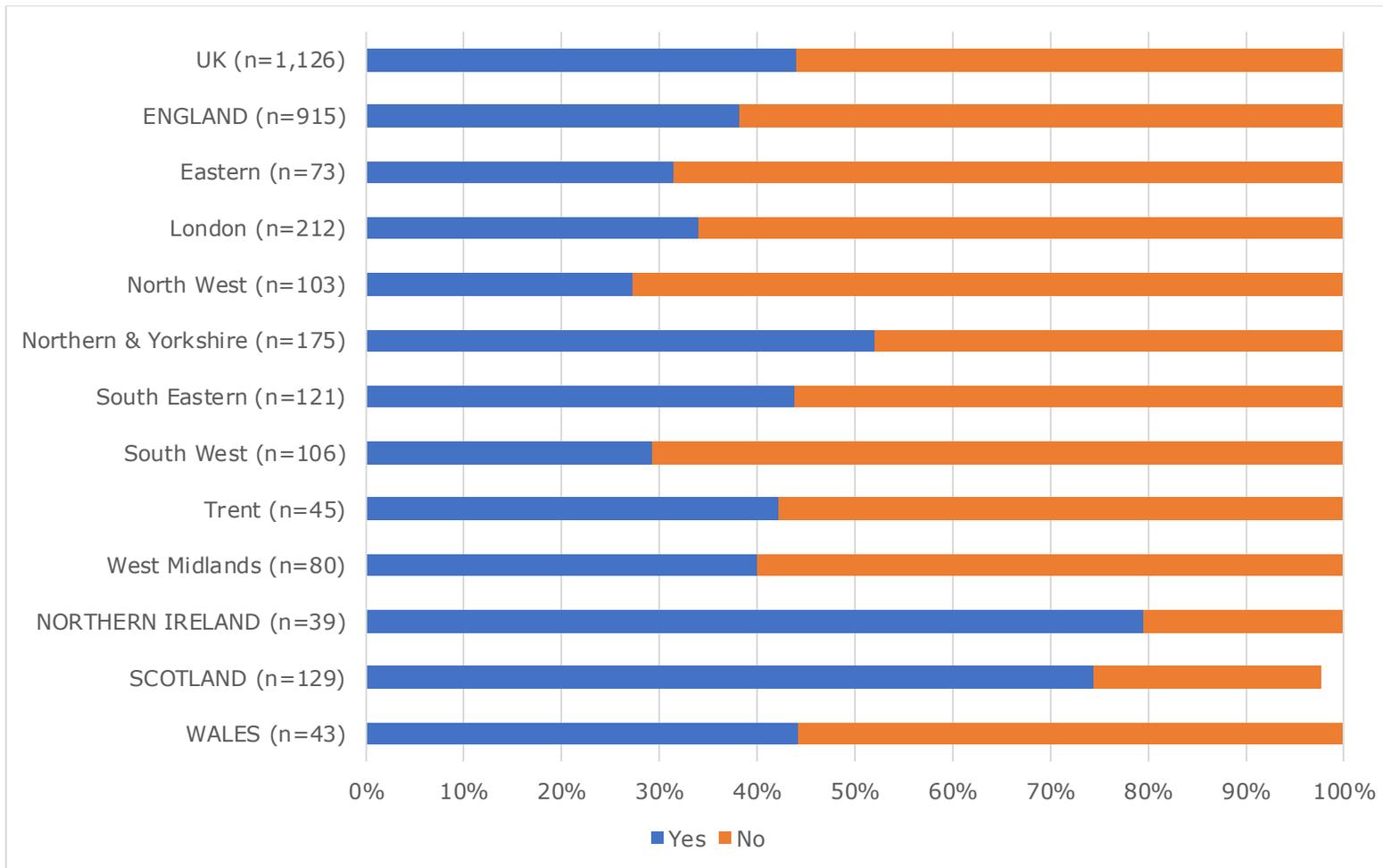
Ireland (31 of 39). Only one region in England – Northern & Yorkshire - had a majority of definitive answers that were 'yes', at 52.0% (91 of 175).

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, 15-17 April 2020**



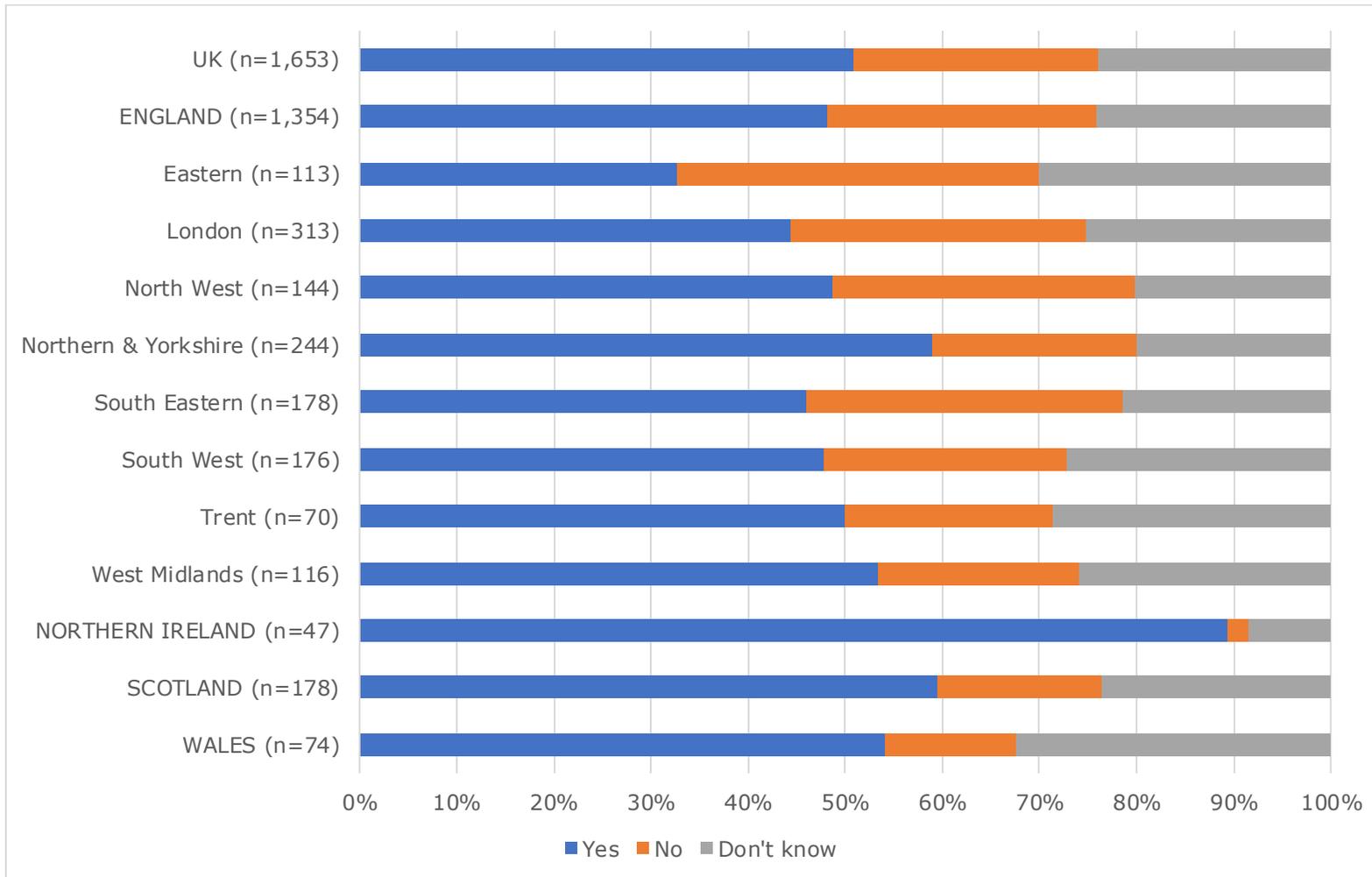
**Chart 6 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for members of your household with symptoms? Definitive responses only from across the UK and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020**



A small majority of all members across the UK that responded were able to confirm that they themselves had access to a test if they had symptoms (50.9% or 841 of 1,653), with regional rates of 'yes' answers varying from 32.7% in Eastern (37 of 113) to 89.4% in Northern Ireland (42 of 47). This question had the smallest number of 'don't know responses', but it remained almost one in four (24.0%). Once these are excluded from the analysis, 67.0% of the members providing definitive

responses nationwide confirmed they could access tests in such circumstances (841 of 1,256), with a considerable discrepancy found between the region with the lowest percentage of 'yes' responses (Eastern at 46.8%, or 37 of 79) and the highest (Northern Ireland, at 97.7% or 42 of 43). 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, 15-17 April 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, 15-17 April 2020**

