

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 National Health Service and independent sector services 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 out from across the UK of a total available sample of c12,900, which equates to a response rate of 13%. This includes 1,384 from among members based in England.

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 PPE

Across England, 61.3% of all respondents were able to confirm that they had access to the correct PPE, equivalent to 845 of 1,379 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 increases to 73.8% (845 of 1,145).

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 (21.8%, 300 of 1,379) or excluded (26.2%, 300 of 1,145).

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.

A free text box was provided for members to make additional comments about the challenges they have been facing regarding PPE. The quotes below do not offer a comprehensive representation of all responses, but are included here to provide anecdotal illustration of the feedback we have received:

- "Last week we did CPR on a patient who had hung themselves with no fit tested PPE."
- "There are extreme shortages of PPE and most of us are at risk. Only very limited supply is obtained and most the time frontline staff are refused, risking their lives. Staff are terrified and afraid."
- "Spitting in COVID positive patients is a real issue and (we are) not able to get the appropriate PPE, social distancing (is) impossible in inpatient settings."

Charts 1 and 2 below illustrate the extent of the regional variation. The proportion of affirmative responses ranged from only 54.6% in the West Midlands (65 of 119) to 67.2% in the South West (119 of 177). South West remains the region with the largest percentage of 'yes' responses when 'don't knows' are excluded (81.0%), however the North West is the region with the greatest level of concern under this approach (only 65.6% of responses being positive).

Chart 1 – Can you access the correct level of PPE? All responses from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020

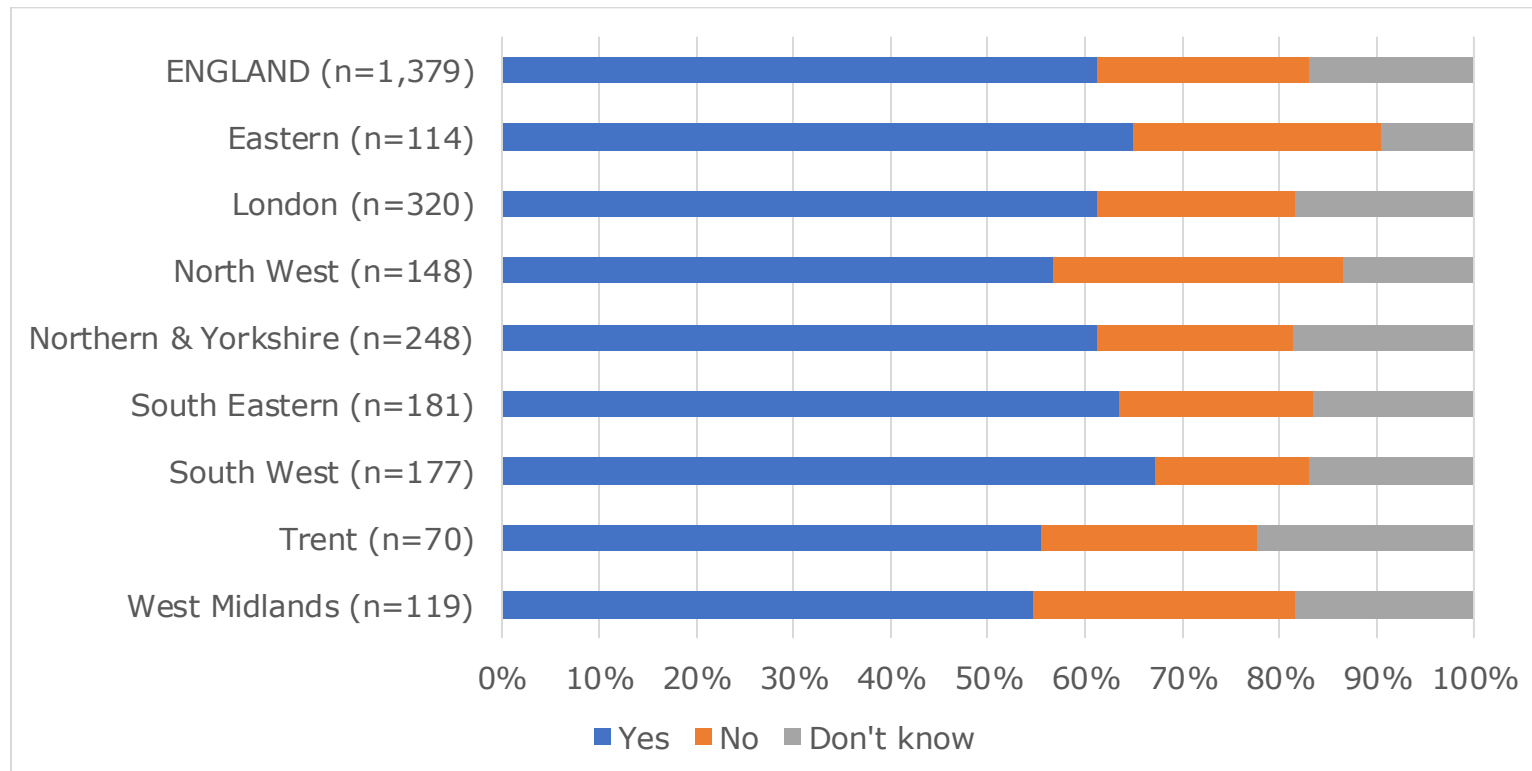
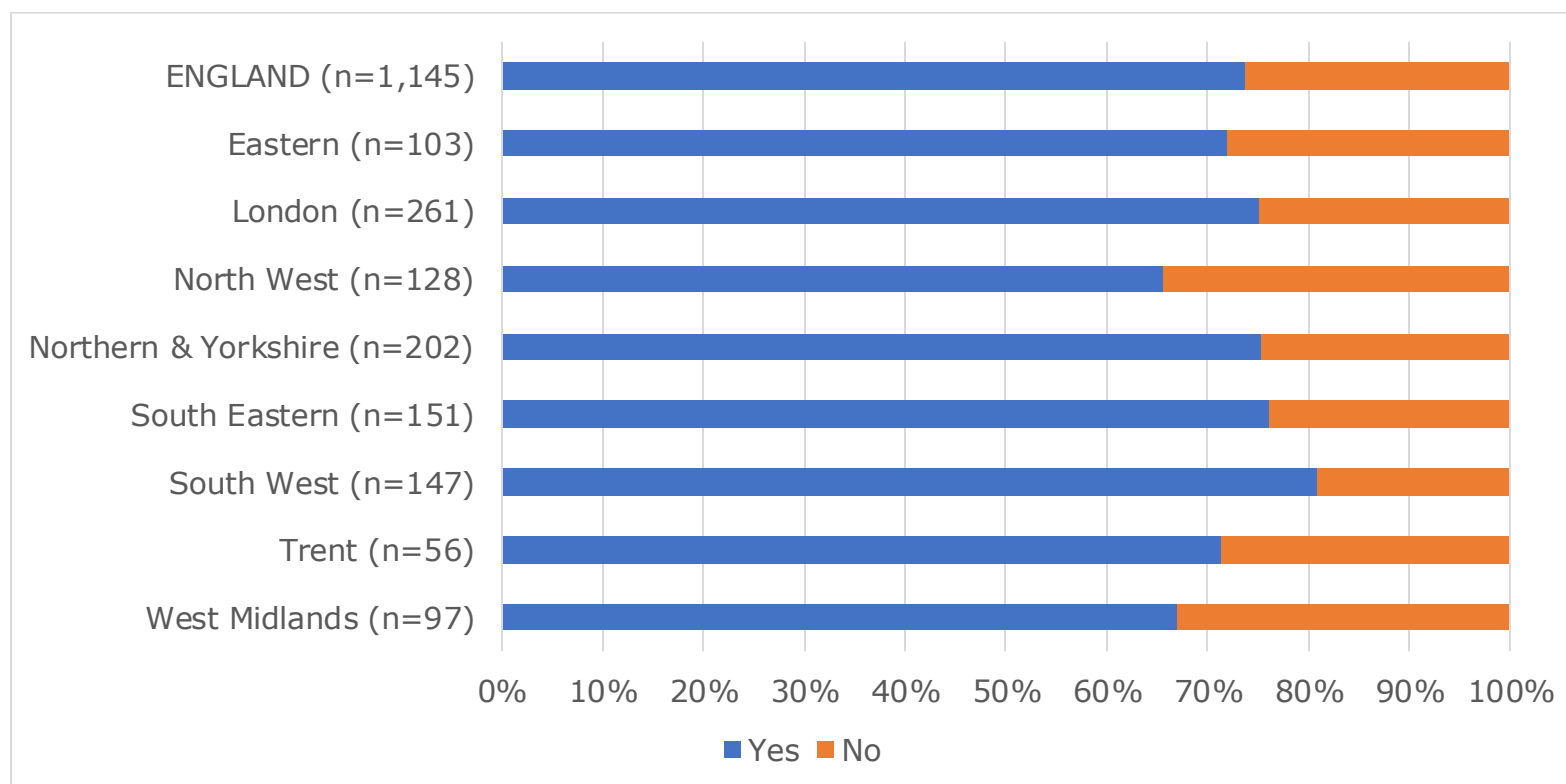


Chart 2 – Can you access the correct level of PPE? Definitive responses only from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020



Notwithstanding the concerns raised by the responses to our survey from across England, the devolved nations each had lower 'yes' percentages, ranging from only 47.3% in Wales to 57.2% in Scotland based on all responses or from 62.5% in Wales to 68.4% in Northern Ireland after 'don't knows' are excluded.

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 50.5% of members (683 of 1,353) across England were able to confirm that their patients could access COVID-19 tests when required, ranging from 43.8% in the South Eastern region (78 of 178) to 55.3% in the Eastern region (63 of 114). Alternatively, if 'don't knows' are excluded, 72.3% of members (683 of 945) that were able to confirm whether tests for patients were available indicated that they could. Regional percentages varied from 62.4% in South Eastern (78 of 125) to 84.4% in Trent (38 of 45). 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 England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020

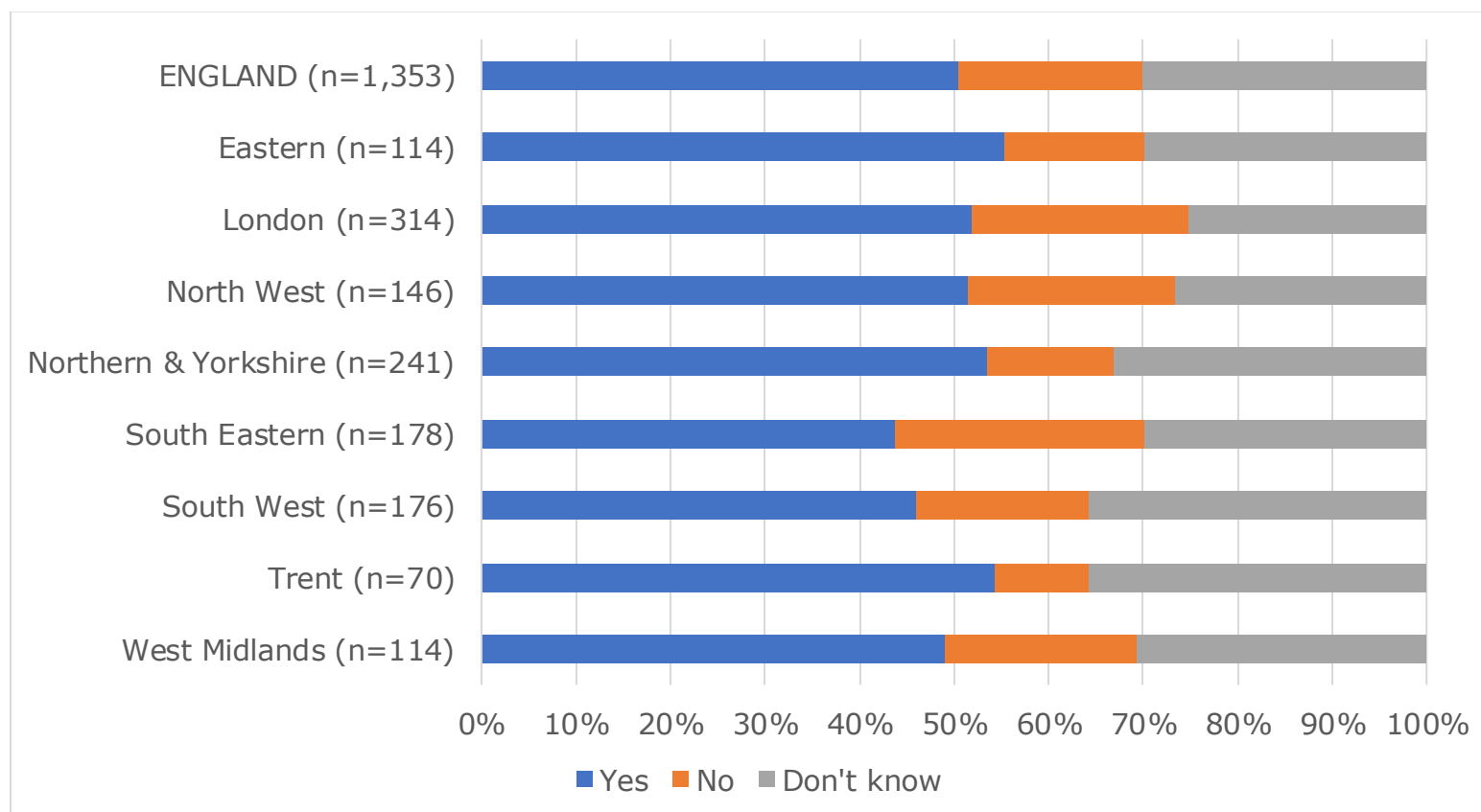
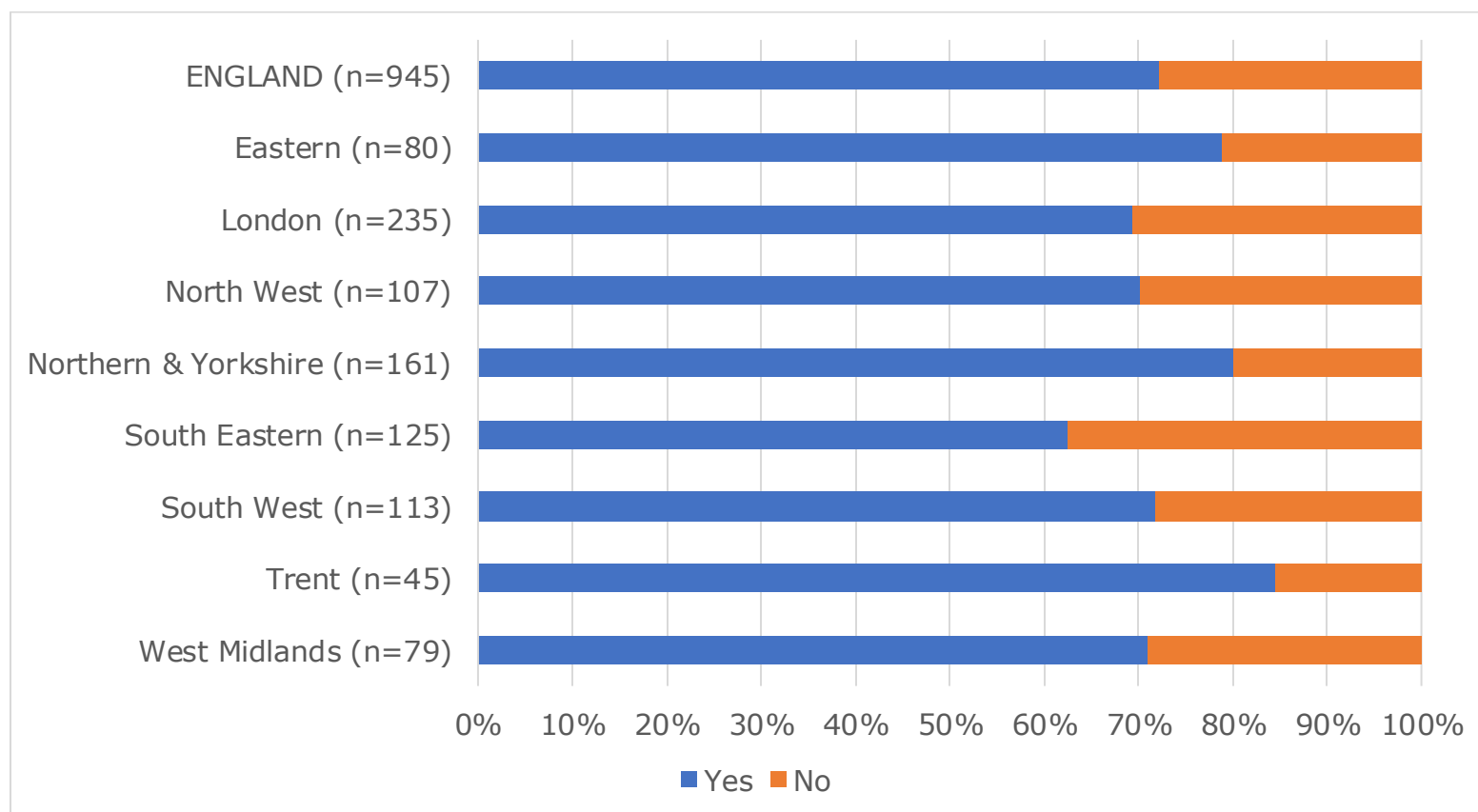


Chart 4 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for your patients, as per current testing guidance? Definitive responses only from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020



A mere 25.9% of respondents (349 of 1,348) were able to confirm that members of their own household with symptoms had access to tests, with regional percentages of 'yes' responses varying from 17.8% in the South West (31 of 174) to 37.8% in the Northern & Yorkshire region (91 of 241).

Meanwhile, even if 'don't know' responses are excluded, the overall percentage of positive answers to this question nationwide was still only 38.1% (349 of 915), ranging from 27.2% in the North West (28 of 103) to 52.0% in Northern & Yorkshire (91 of 175, the only region where a majority of definitive answers were 'yes').

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 England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020**

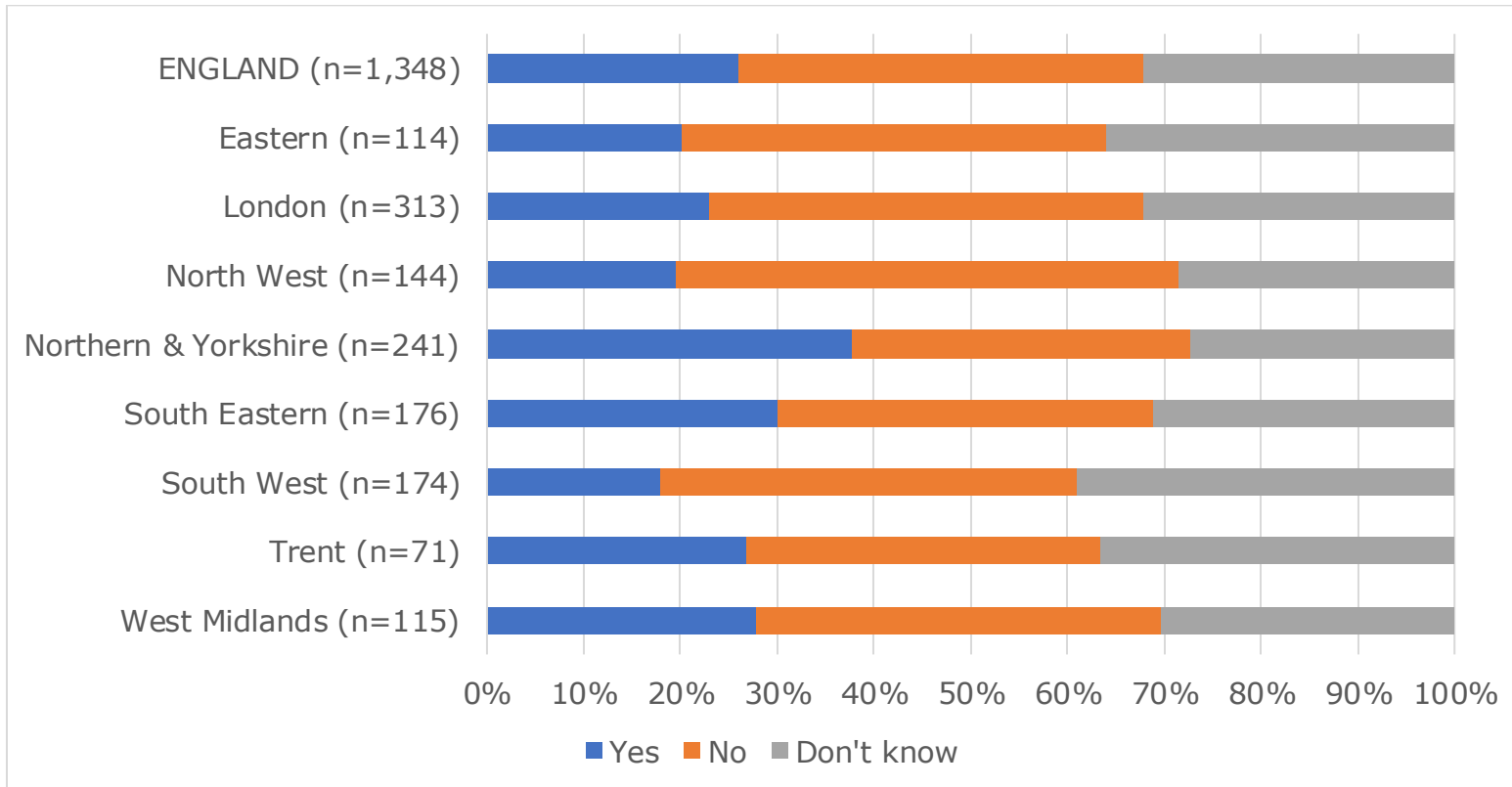
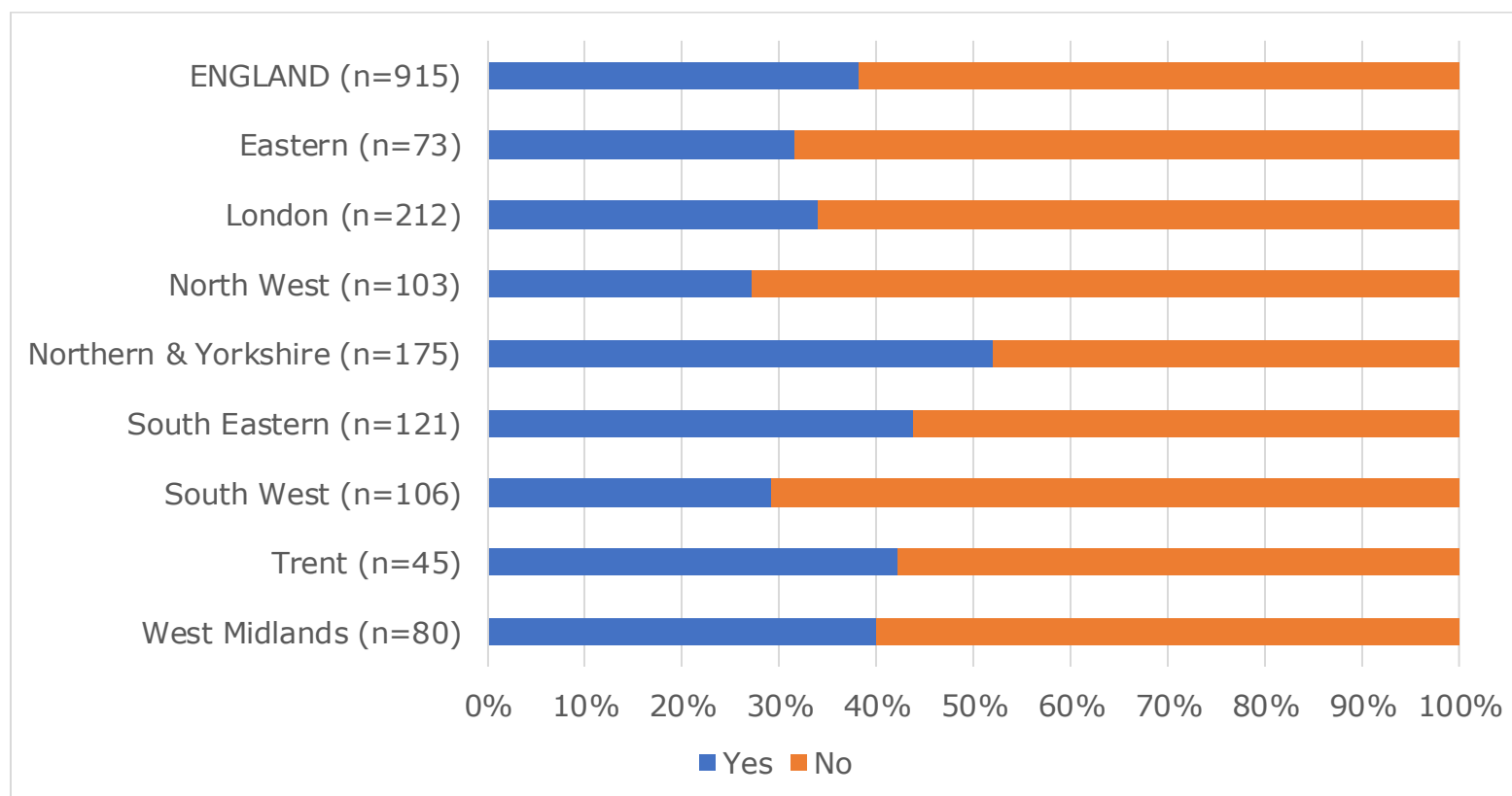


Chart 6 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for members of your household with symptoms? Definitive responses only from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020



A minority of all members that responded were able to confirm that they themselves had access to a test if they had symptoms (48.2% or 653 of 1,354), with regional rates of 'yes' answers varying from 32.7% in Eastern (37 of 113) to 59.0% in Northern & Yorkshire (144 of 244). This question had the smallest number of 'don't know responses', but it remained almost one in four (24.2%). Once these are excluded from the analysis, 63.6% of the members providing definitive responses nationwide confirmed they could access tests in such circumstances (653 of 1,027), 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 & Yorkshire, at 73.8% or 144 of 195). 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 England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020

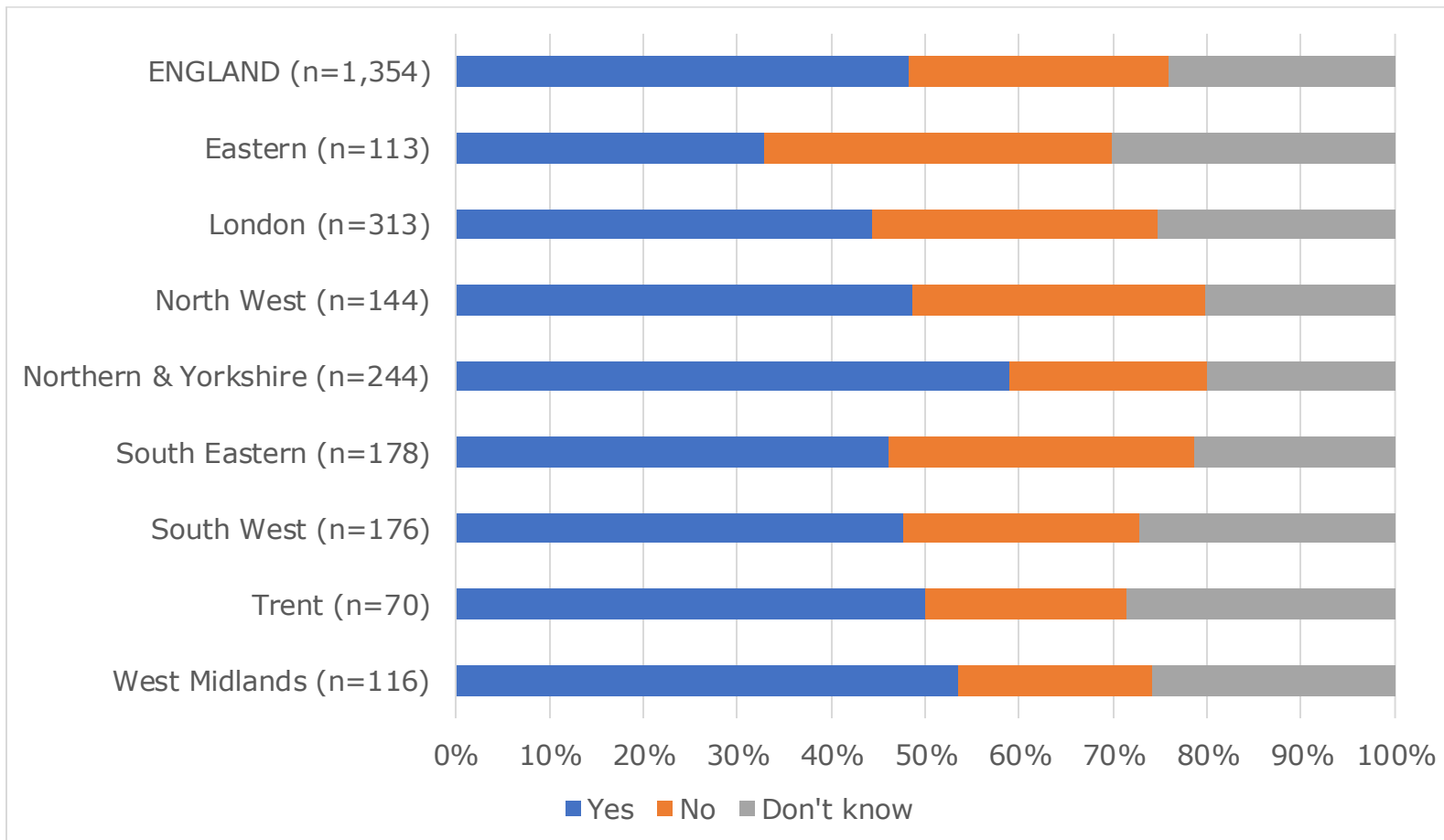


Chart 8 – Are you able to access COVID-19 testing that you need for yourself, if you have symptoms? Definitive responses only from across England and each of the RCPsych regions, 15-17 April 2020

