CROATIA

Where are we since the COVID 19 outbreak?

June 2020

THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY OVERVIEW

20-minute phone survey to capture impacts of COVID-19 on household well-being and policy uptake

SAMPLING APPROACH, SAMPLE CAPTURED

Sample size	1500 households
Representativeness	National representative sample of households by region and settlement size
Method of interview	Telephone interview (CATI)
Fieldwork	June 2nd to June 25th , 2020
Questionnaire design	All indicators and questionnaire developed by the World Bank

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY OVERVIEW
Comparison of sample and population

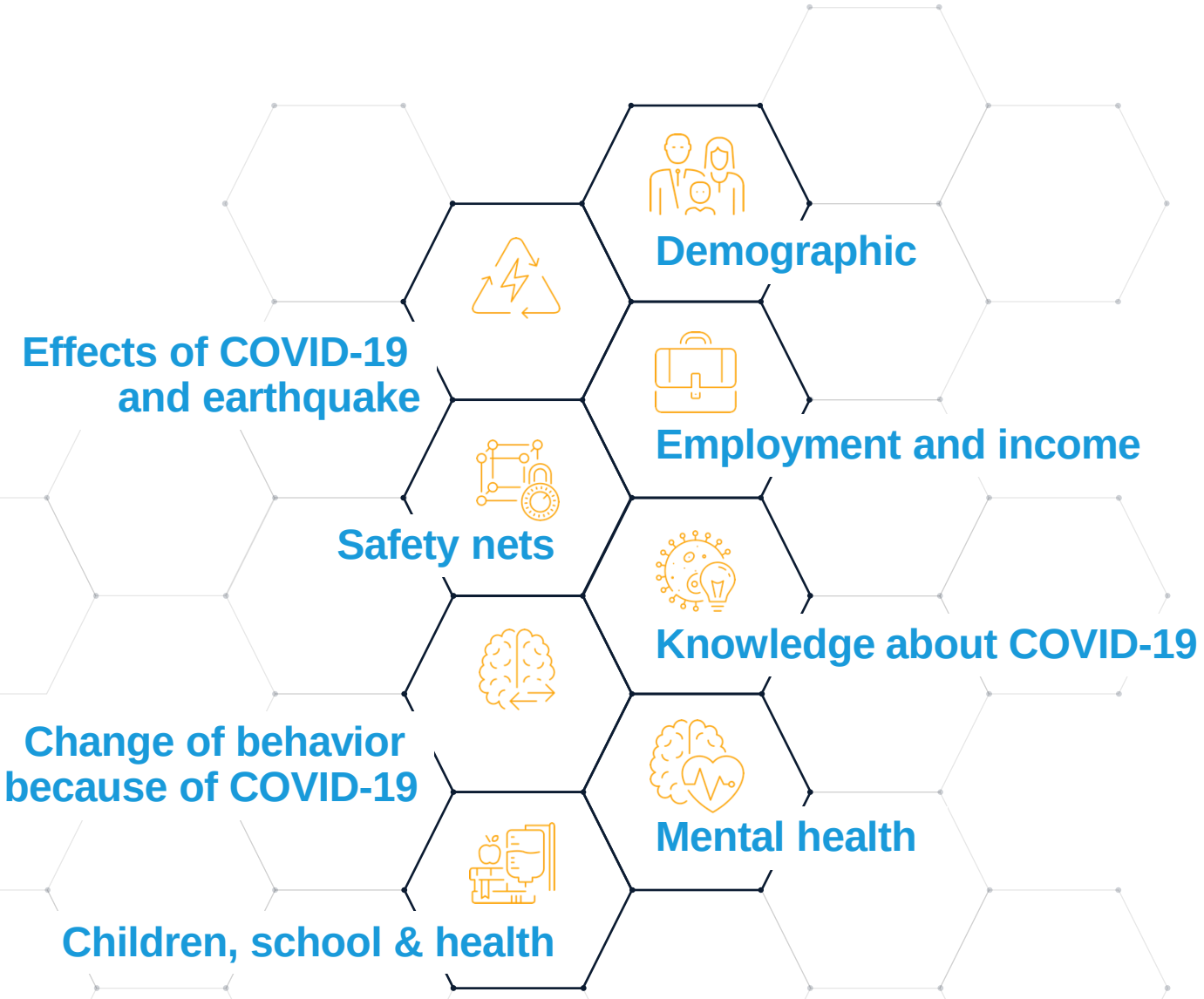
Age structure (using household roster)

	Population			Survey		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
0–17	17.3			17.2	17.6	17.0
18–24	8.1			8.5	9.1	8.0
25–49	32.6			30.4	33.7	27.5
50–64	21.7			20.7	19.7	21.7
65+	20.3			23.0	19.8	25.8

Education structure (using household roster)

	Population 18-64			Survey 18-64		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Primary	15.0			11.6	9.8	13.3
Secondary, vocational	64.5			65.9	67.9	64.1
Tertiary	20.5			19.6	18.9	20.3

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY OVERVIEW
Questionnaire




CITIZEN'S KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD COVID
PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME
EDUCATION
SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING

KEY MESSAGES
Behavior and opinion

Most Croatians (88%) know what to do to prevent the spread of COVID-19

- But women and richer households are more likely to act on it.

A majority of people (77%) approved Government's response to the crisis, with stronger support from women, older people, lower-income group, and urban residents

- But men, young people, people in higher income bracket, or people with a job before the crisis hit are more likely to believe the government's reaction to the current crisis is too extreme.

KEY MESSAGES
Employment and income

COVID-19 has direct and major impacts to employment

- One in four workers stopped working, particularly blue-collared workers.
- 60 percent of work stoppage was due to COVID-19 business loss.
- Even among those continued working, about 15 percent reduced their number of hours and experienced pay cut.

A quarter of Croatian households had a reduction in income

- Younger people and working people are more likely to see their income decline.
- Richer households and households with working members experienced more % income drop.

KEY MESSAGES
Savings and subjective welfare

A worrisome sign is the low rate of savings which make it more difficult for households to cushion the shock

- 58% reported no savings. The situation is more difficult for poorer households, and households without any member working.
- Even among household with savings, 76% of them would run out of savings in the next 6 months, particularly for poor and older people.

Half of Croatian households experienced difficulties making enough money to pay for their current expenses

- Poor households in rural areas, with older household head, or households without any members working suffered the most.

KEY MESSAGES
Access to healthcare

While 90% households worrying about their health situation, access to health services is relatively high

- On average, 40% households needed medical care during the pandemic. The rate is higher among women, lower income, and older people.
- 85% households can get the medical care they needed. But the rate is significantly lower among young and richer people, probably because of the differences in types of treatment (urgency, etc.)

KEY MESSAGES

Access to education

While most school offers some sorts of distant learning, access to *online* learning varies significantly across demographic groups

- 88% students had access to online learning, the most advance and interactive distant learning.
- The rate is significantly lower among girls, rural students, students from lower income households, and households with no working adults.

In addition, distribution of distant learning equipment from school was uneven across groups. And the level is relatively low – only one in three students received a tablet from school

- Interestingly, the poorest and the richest students had equal chance of receiving tablets from school, which may reflect the fact that richer schools were more equipped, and other schools targeted poor students well.

KEY MESSAGES
Access to education

However, almost all students have access to tablets with internet (private)

- The level of shared tablets within a households is higher among poor and rural households.

Students required and received lots of help from another household members, often the non-working members

- 84% Croatian students received support with schoolwork.
- Younger and richer students are more likely to have help.

KEY MESSAGES
Access to education

Despite all the support and equipment, distant learning took a toll on student's mental health

- One in four students were either unhappy or experienced problems with it.
- Boys, younger students, students from households with no adults working, and especially students from higher income, were more likely to have trouble coping with distant learning.

Parents were slightly worried about school reopening

- The most concern is about the child getting infected.
- 16% parents worried about school reopening.
- Poor parents, and parents with high school students tend to worry more.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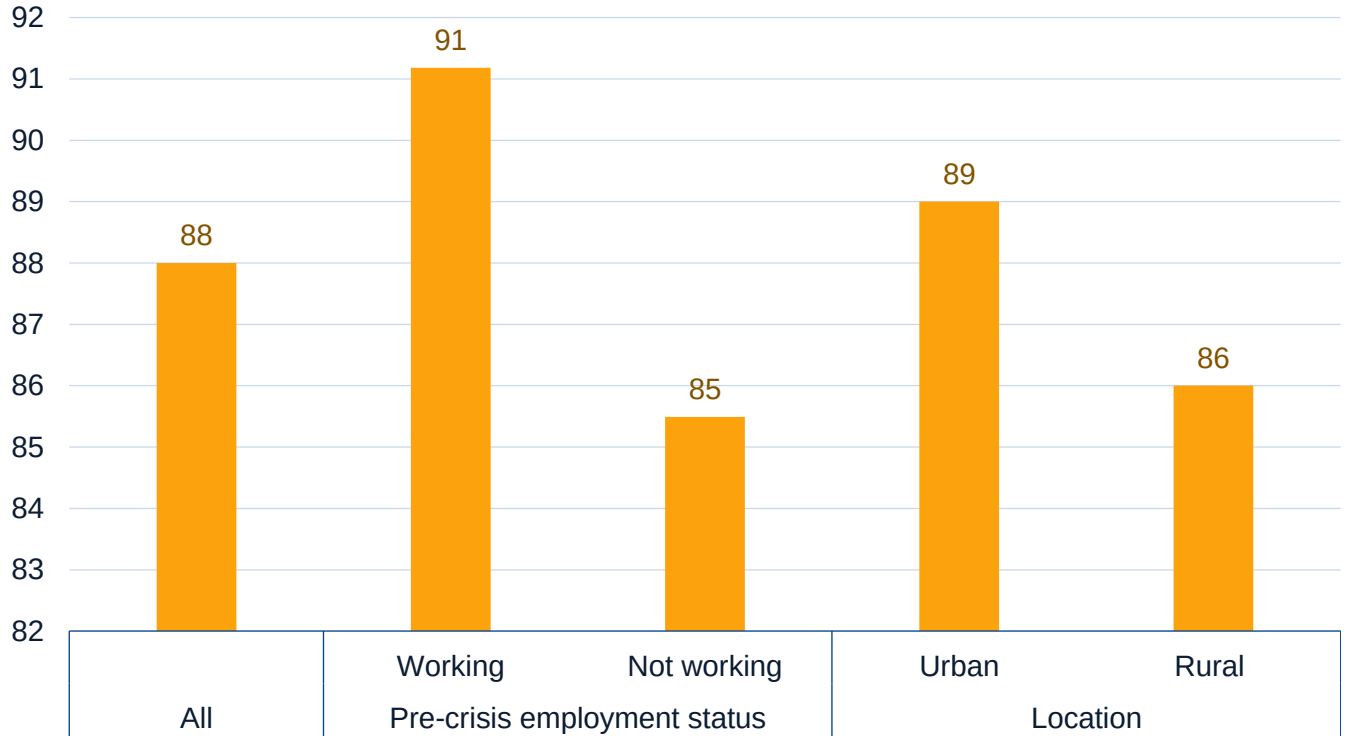
Knowledge about mitigation measures against the spread of COVID-19 is common, albeit at a lower rate among people in rural areas, and among those not working

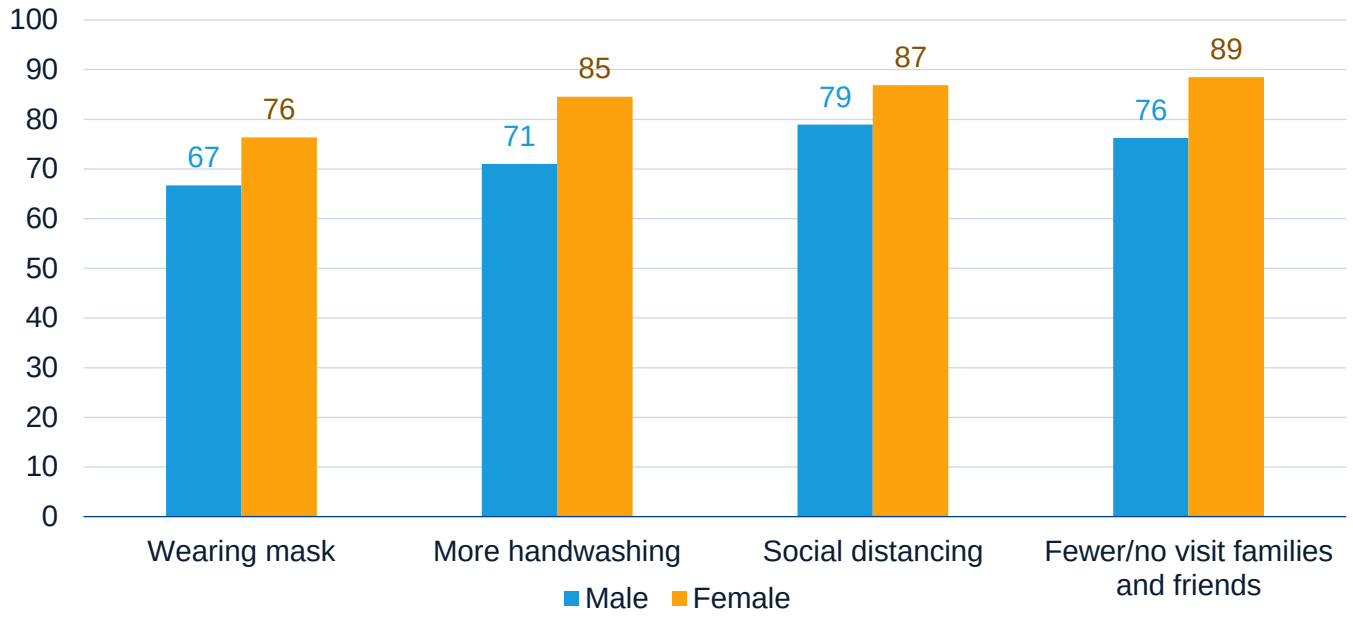
- On average, 88 % of households have received the information on how to reduce the risk.
- The rate is higher in urban areas, and among working people.
- Knowledge of COVID-19 does not vary by age or gender of respondents.

Percentage of households receiving any information on how to reduce the risk of getting COVID-19

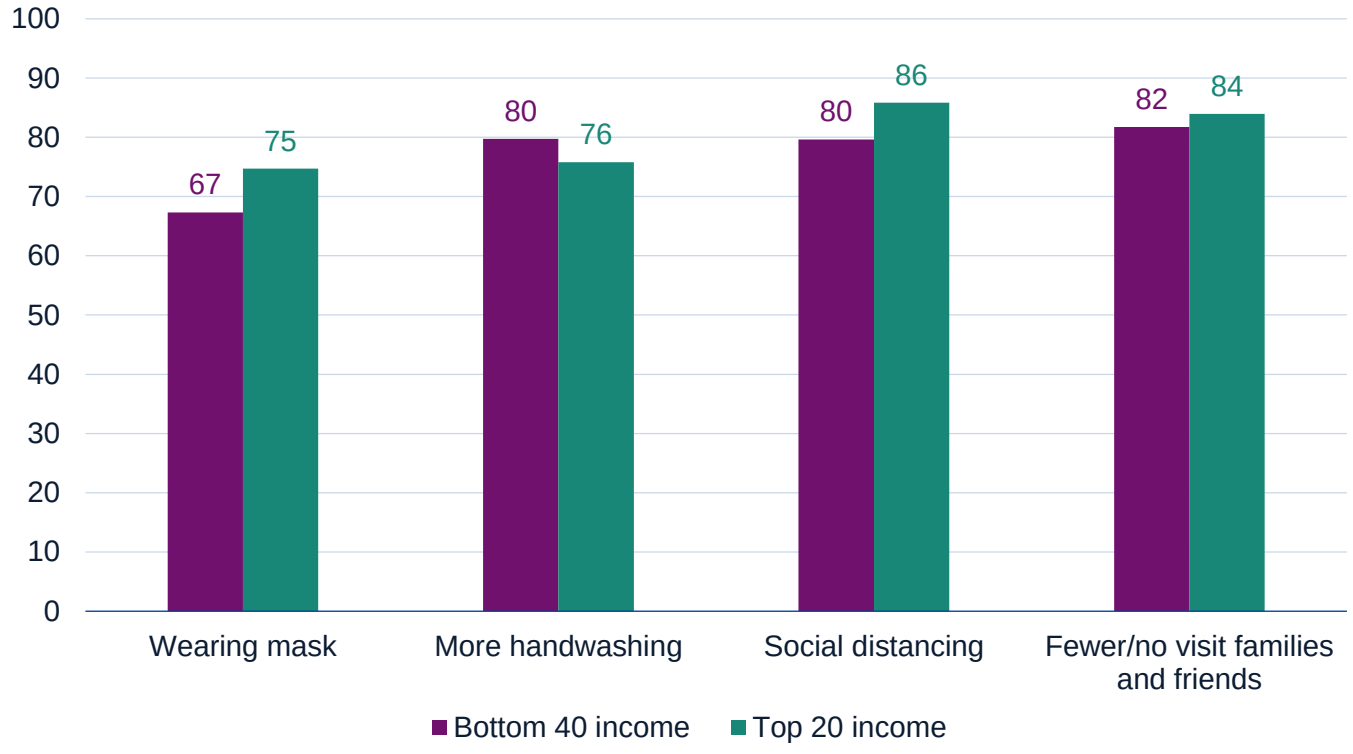


But changes in behavior vary significantly across population groups

Women are significantly more likely to take action



Poorer households tend not to apply mitigation measures as much as better-off households

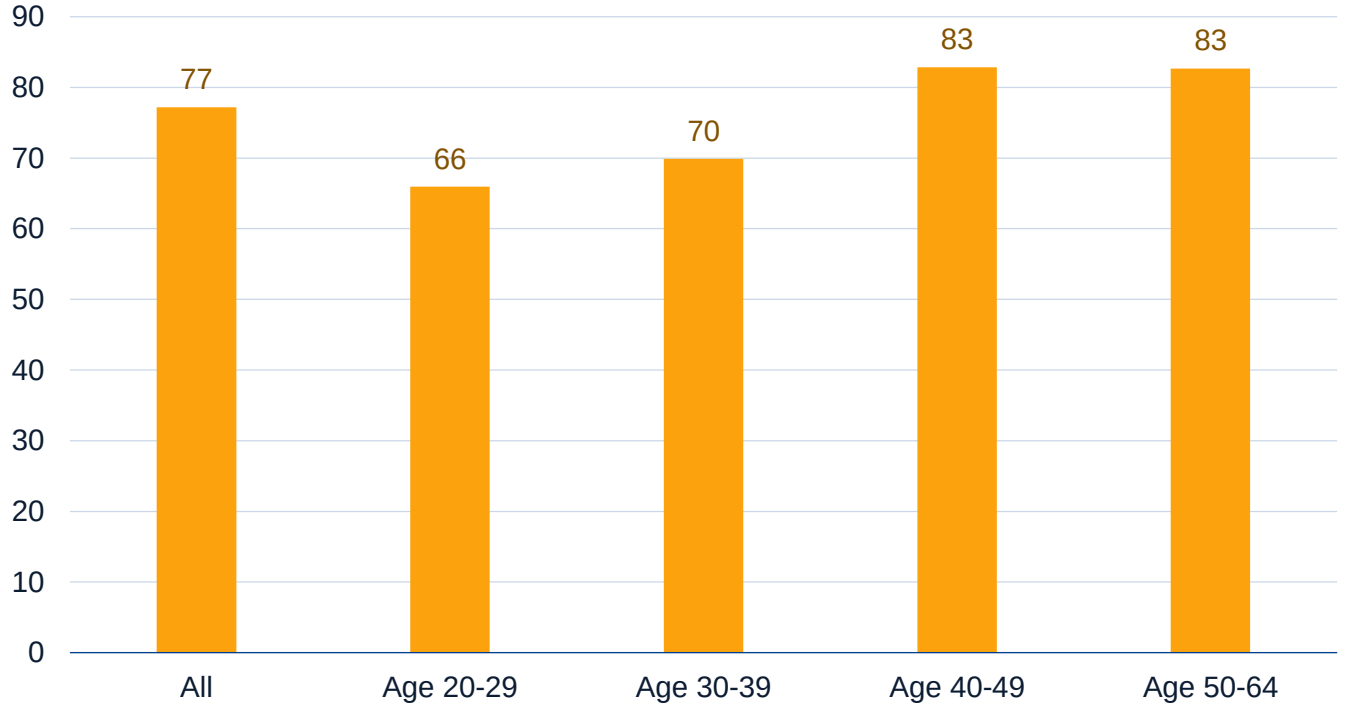


As of June 2020, nearly three quarters of Croatians had already practiced measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 for more than a month

Older people are more likely to apply these measures earlier than their younger cohorts

- However, gender, location, or income level does not impact the time length practicing measures to reduce the risks of contracting COVID-19.

Percentage of households practicing mitigation measures for more than one month

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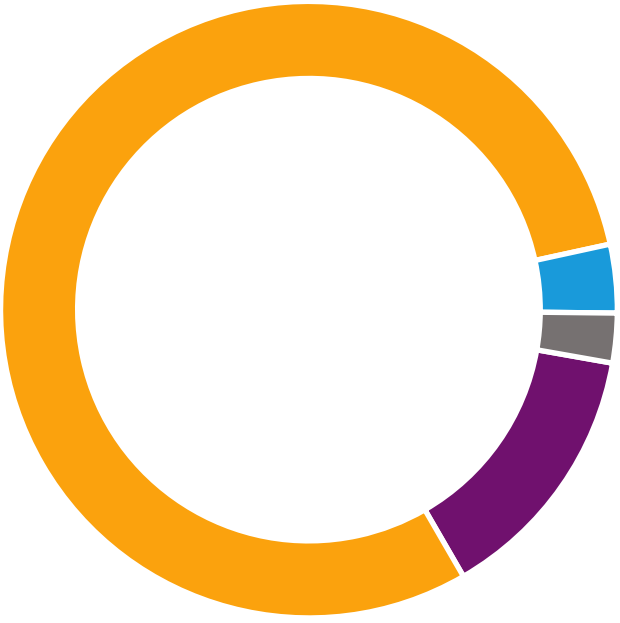
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

There is broad agreement of government policy responses to COVID-19, although nearly 15 percent of respondents considered the response too extreme

Majority agreement with the response can be seen across all population groups, however, some differences by age/gender/income level.



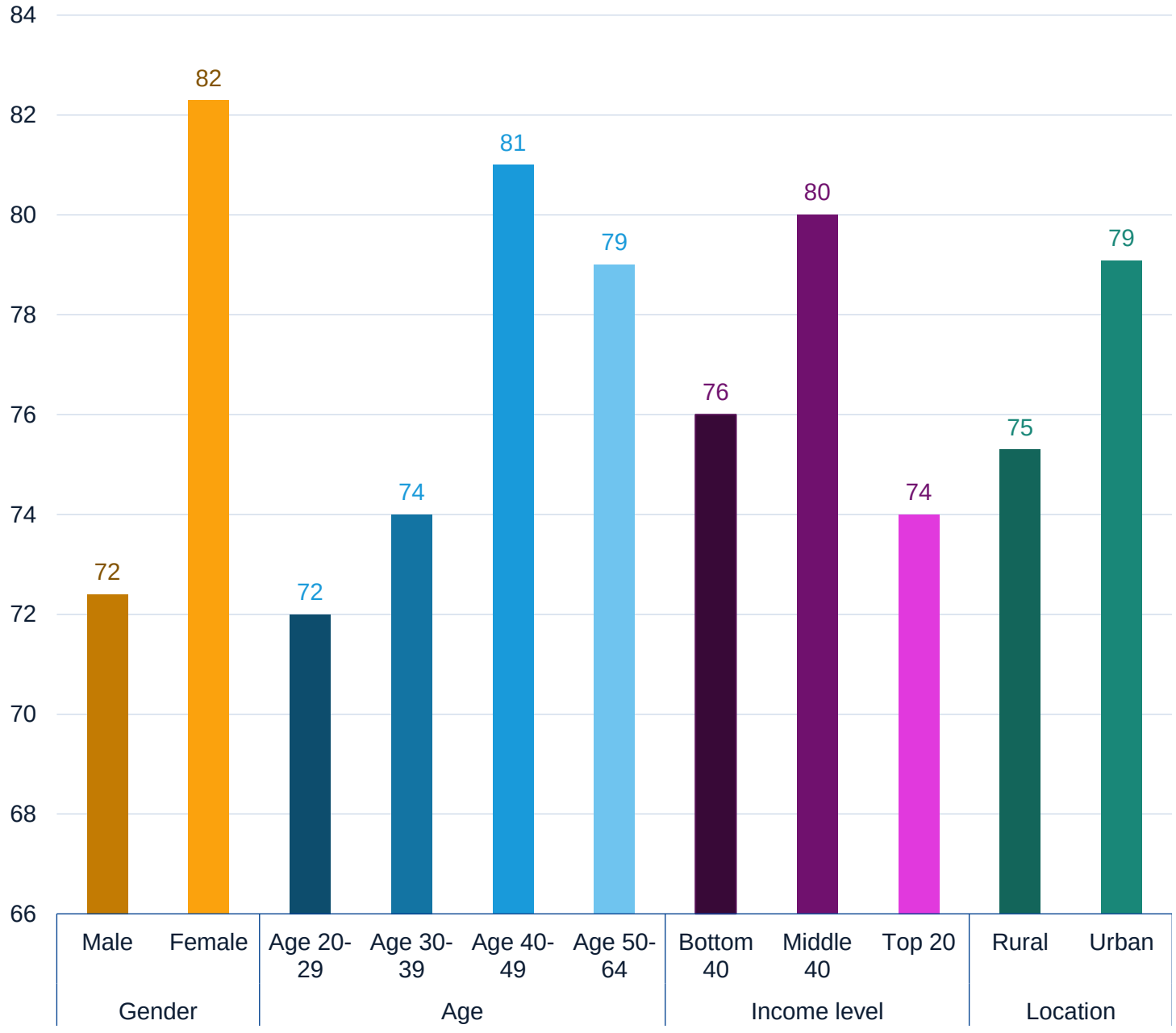
77% of respondents were supportive of government response to COVID-19 in June 2020

5% consider insufficient government response

3% had no reaction

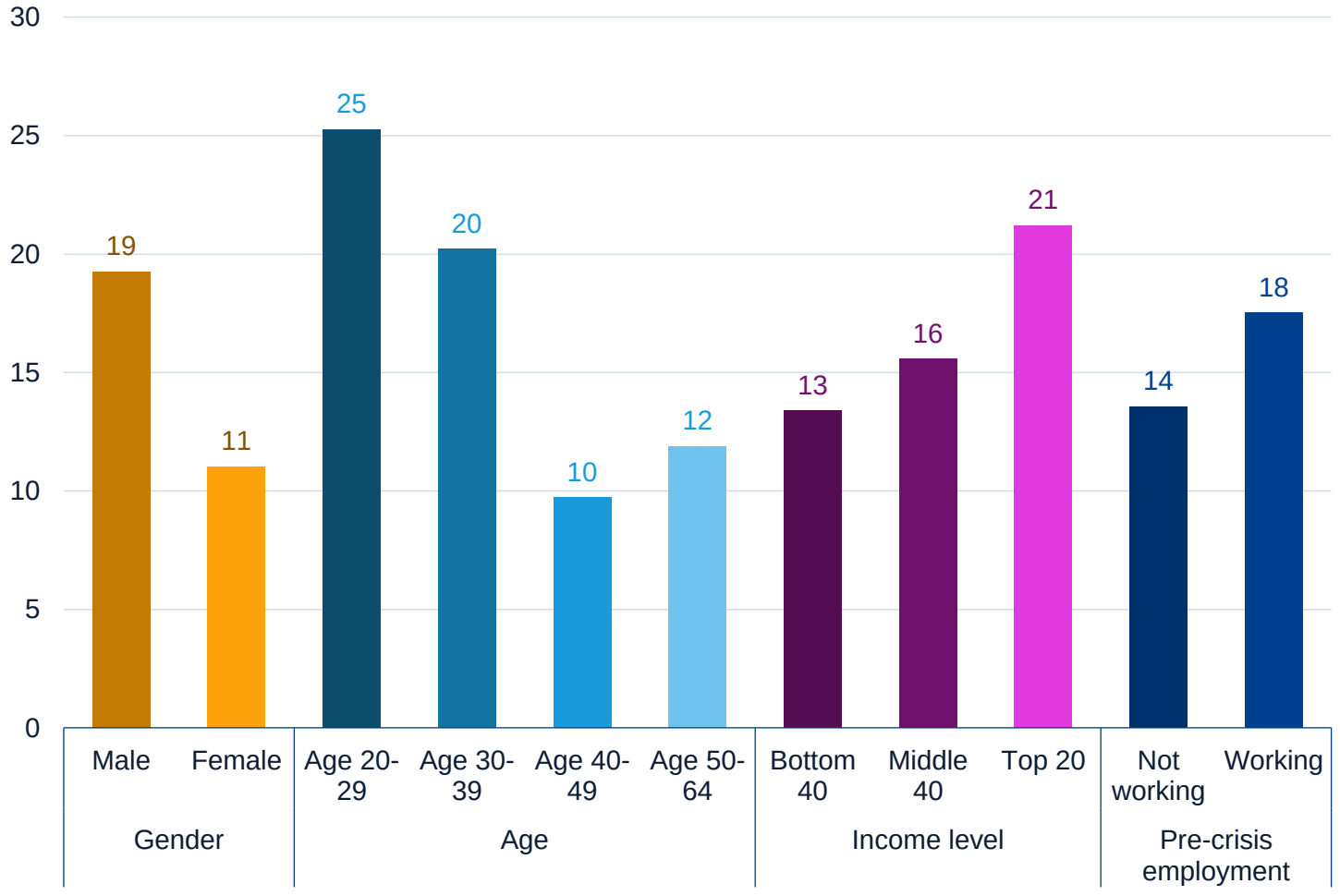
15% considered reaction **too extreme**. Young, male, rich people tend to agree more.

A majority of the population approves the Government's crisis response policies, with stronger support from women, older people, lower-income group, and urban residents



Meanwhile, men, young people, people in higher income bracket, or people with a job before the crisis hit are more likely to believe the government's reaction to the current crisis is too extreme

- However, it important to note that rural residents and people who did not work before the crisis tend to consider the government responses is insufficient although the number is relatively low.

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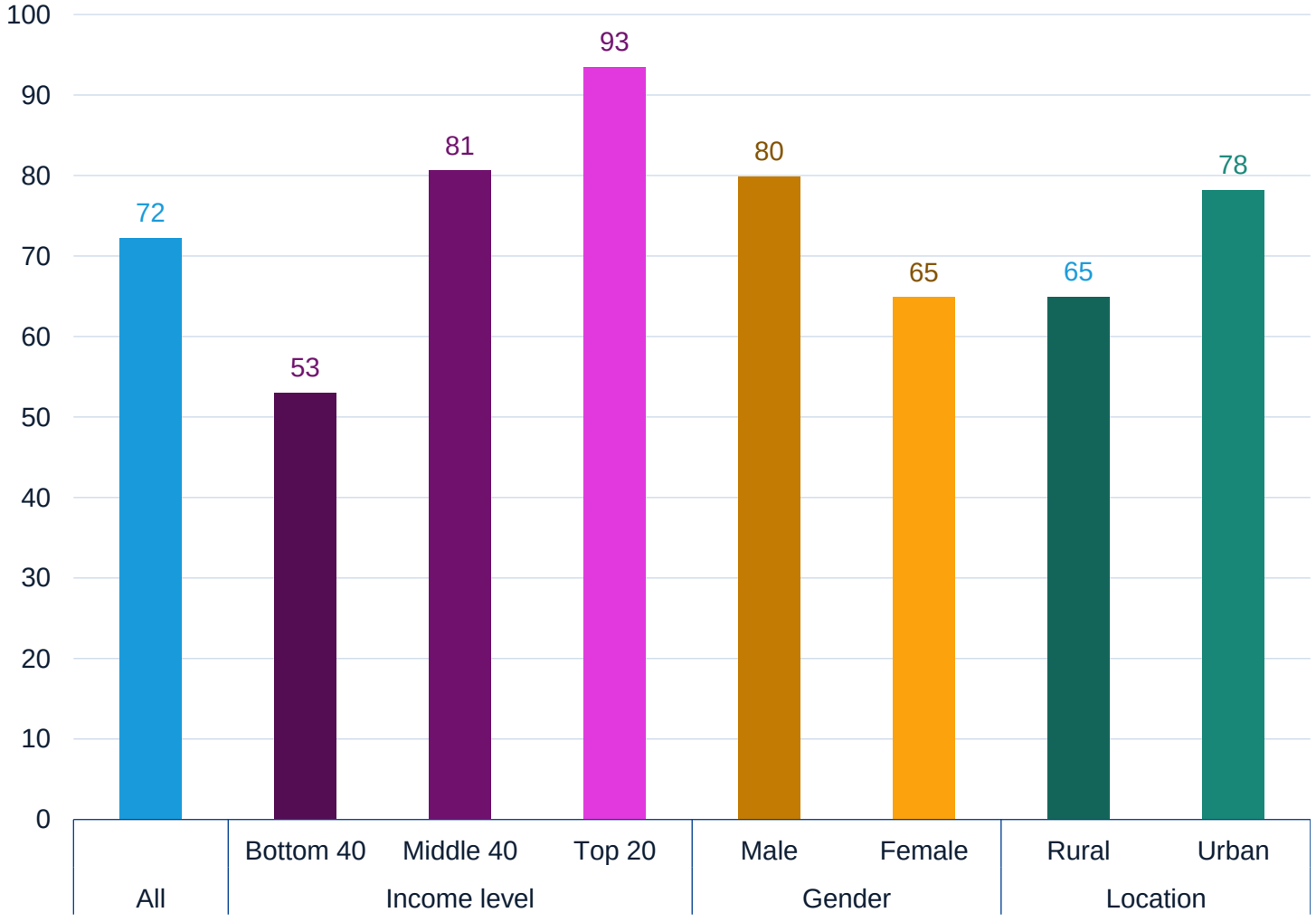
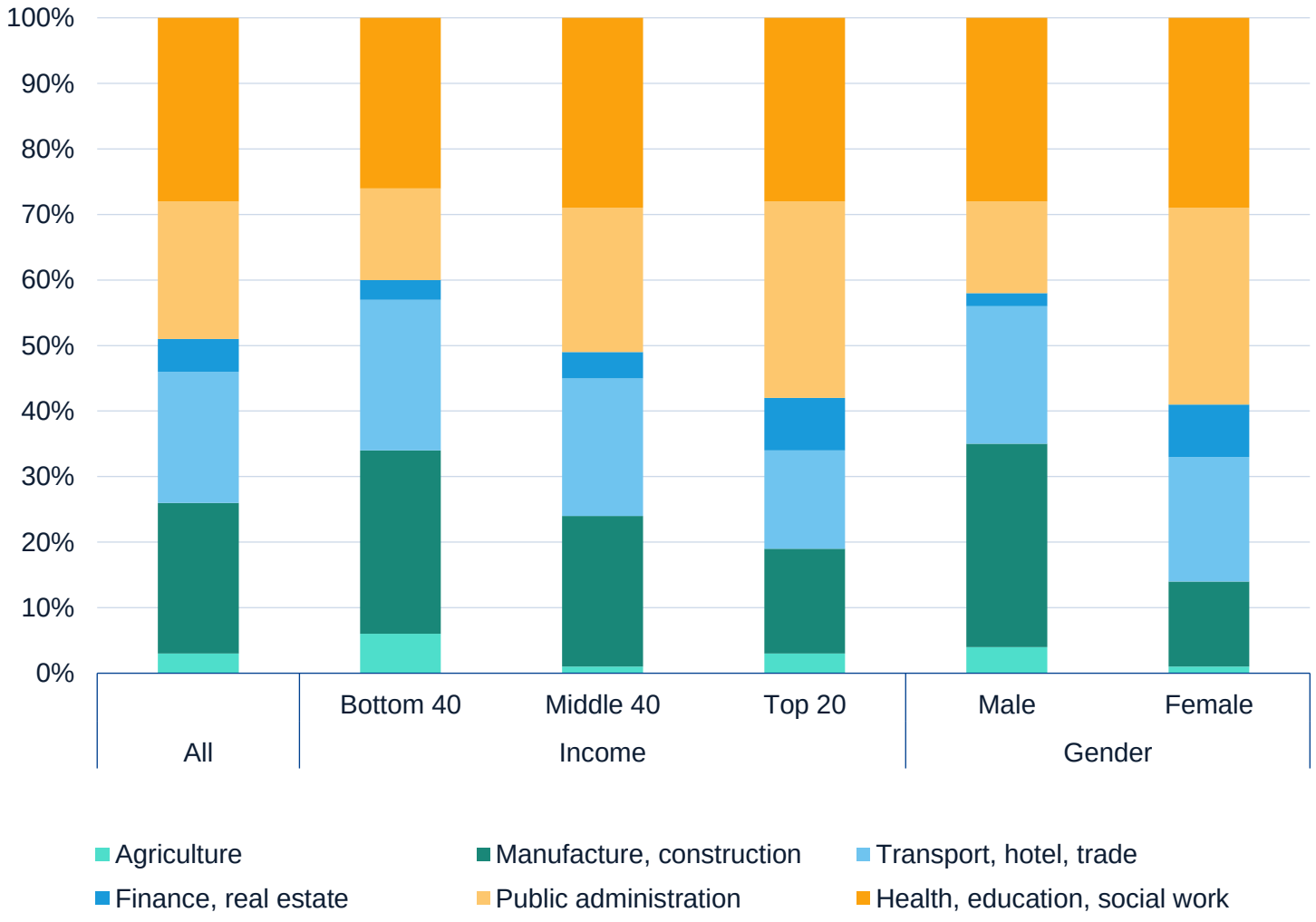
Before the pandemic hit (Feb 2020), two third of household heads were employed

Household heads who are male, live in urban, or in high-income bracket were significantly more likely to work.

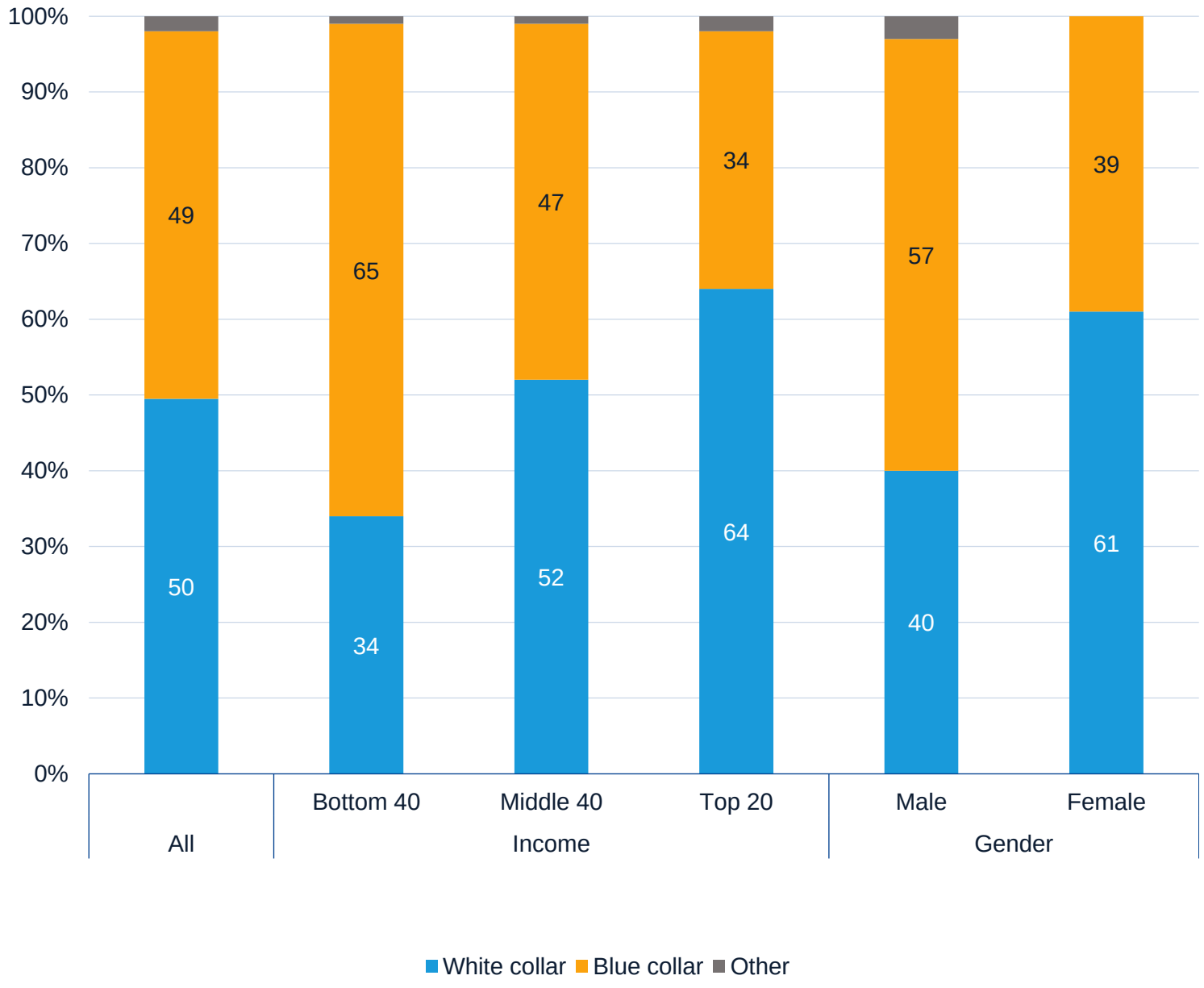


Pre-crisis job structure was very different across population groups

Poor household heads were more likely to work in manufacture and construction sectors, while better-off people worked in public administration. The same pattern is observed among male and female household heads.

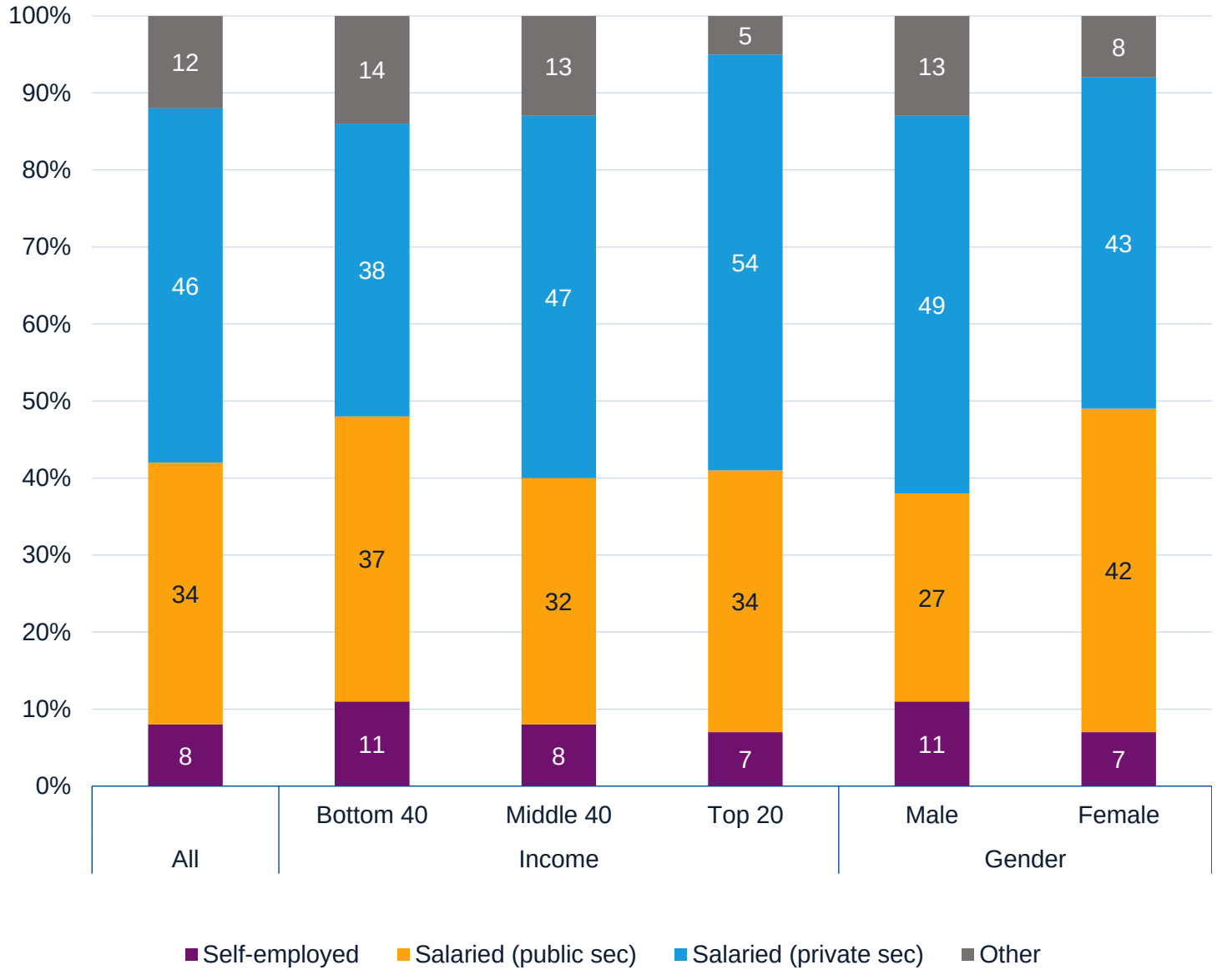


Pre-crisis occupation of household heads was split equally between white and blue collar, but female heads and richer household heads were much more likely to hold a white-collar job



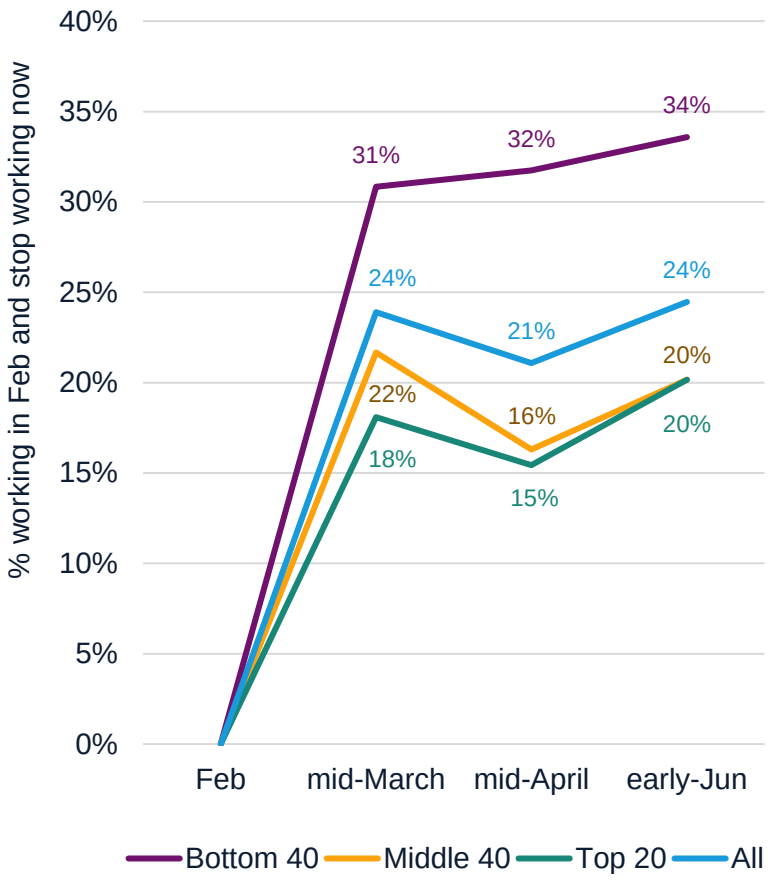
Pre-crisis, nearly half of Croatian heads of households had a salaried job in private sector

But lower-income and female heads were more likely to be salaried employees in public sector.

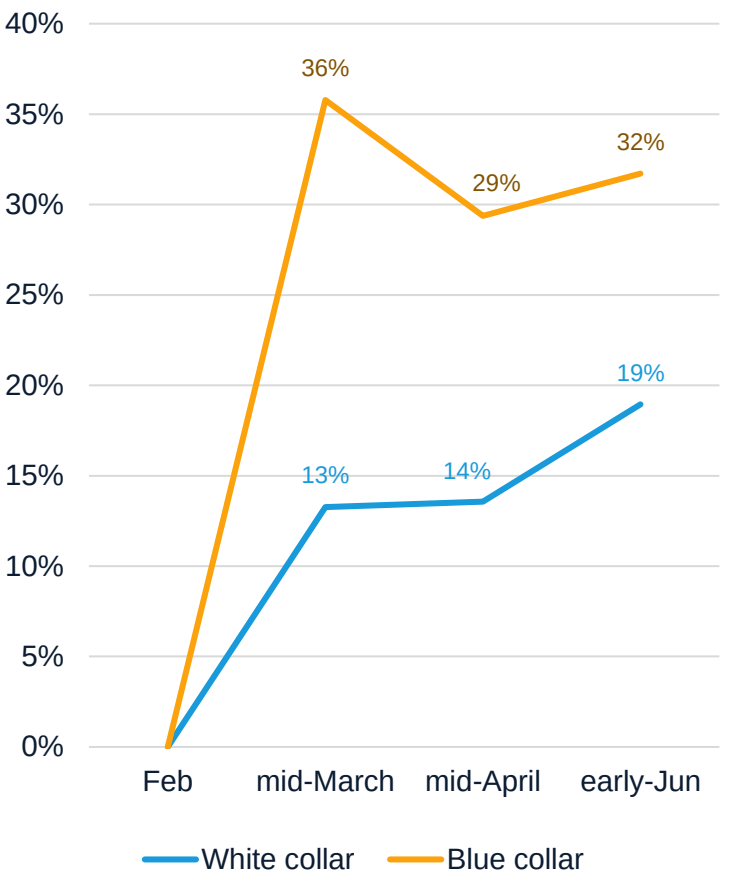


As the pandemic spread, one in four workers* stopped working

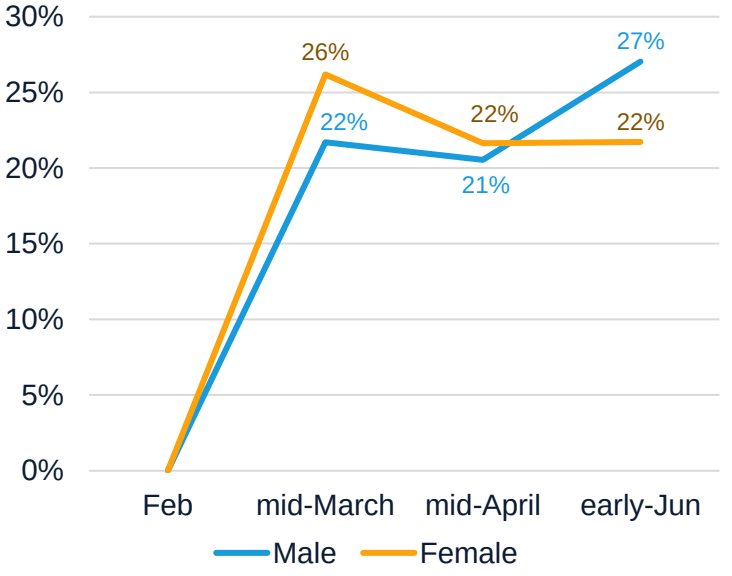
Low-income workers were hit the hardest. One in three stopped working by June



Similarly, blue-collar workers suffered more

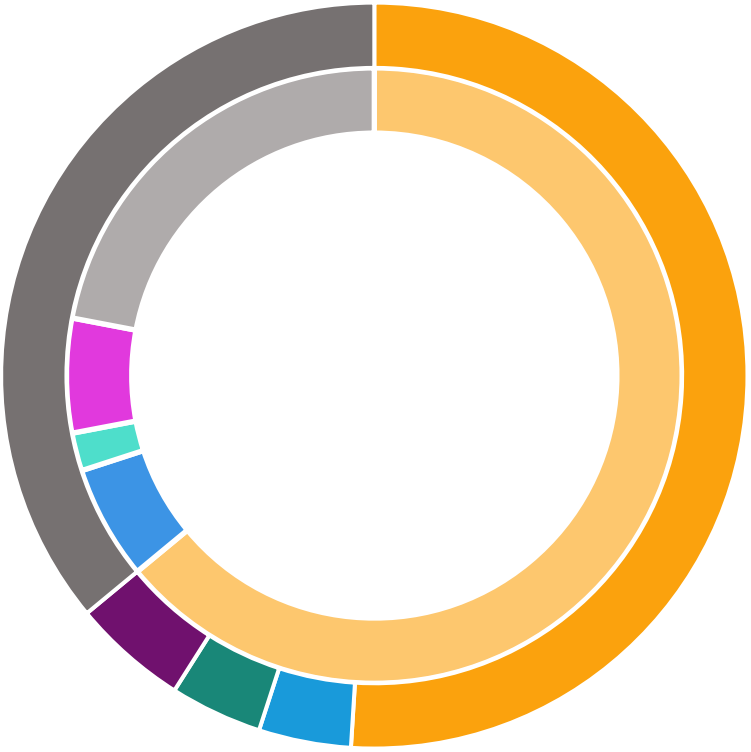


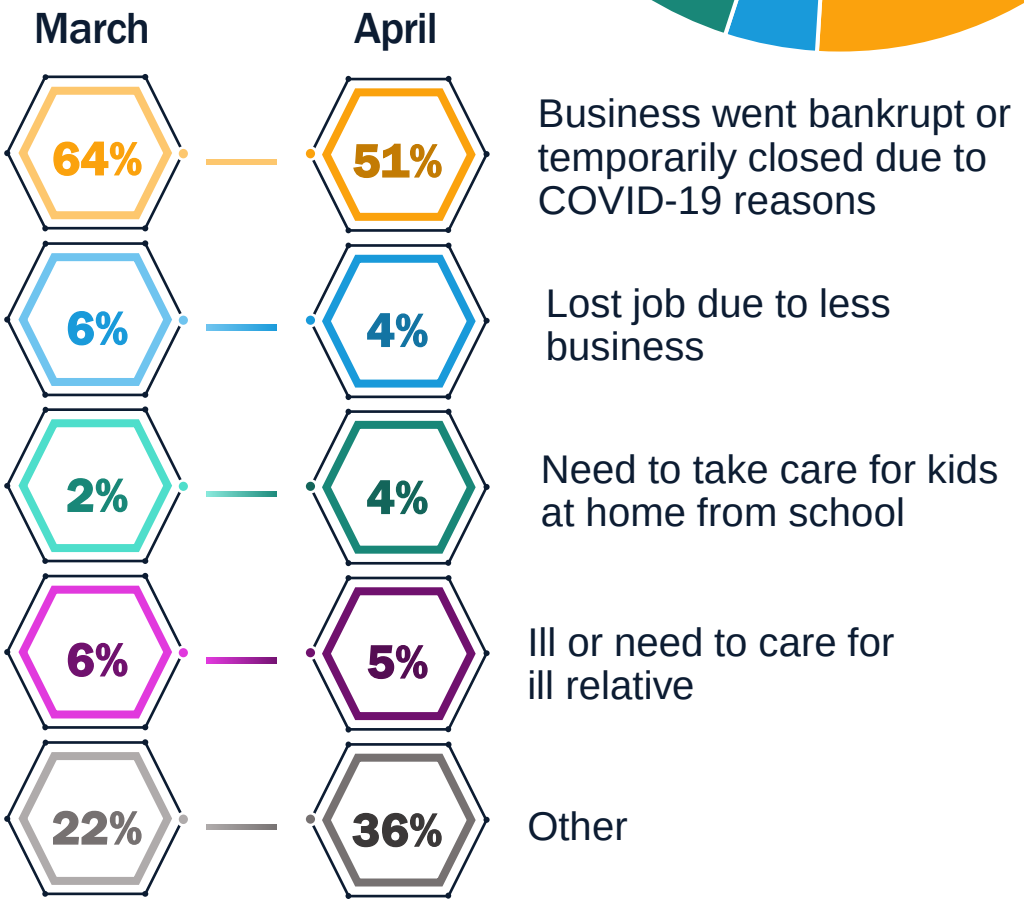
However, while women were more likely to stop working in March, work stoppage was similar between men and women in April. And in June, the pattern was reversed



* household heads who were employed in February

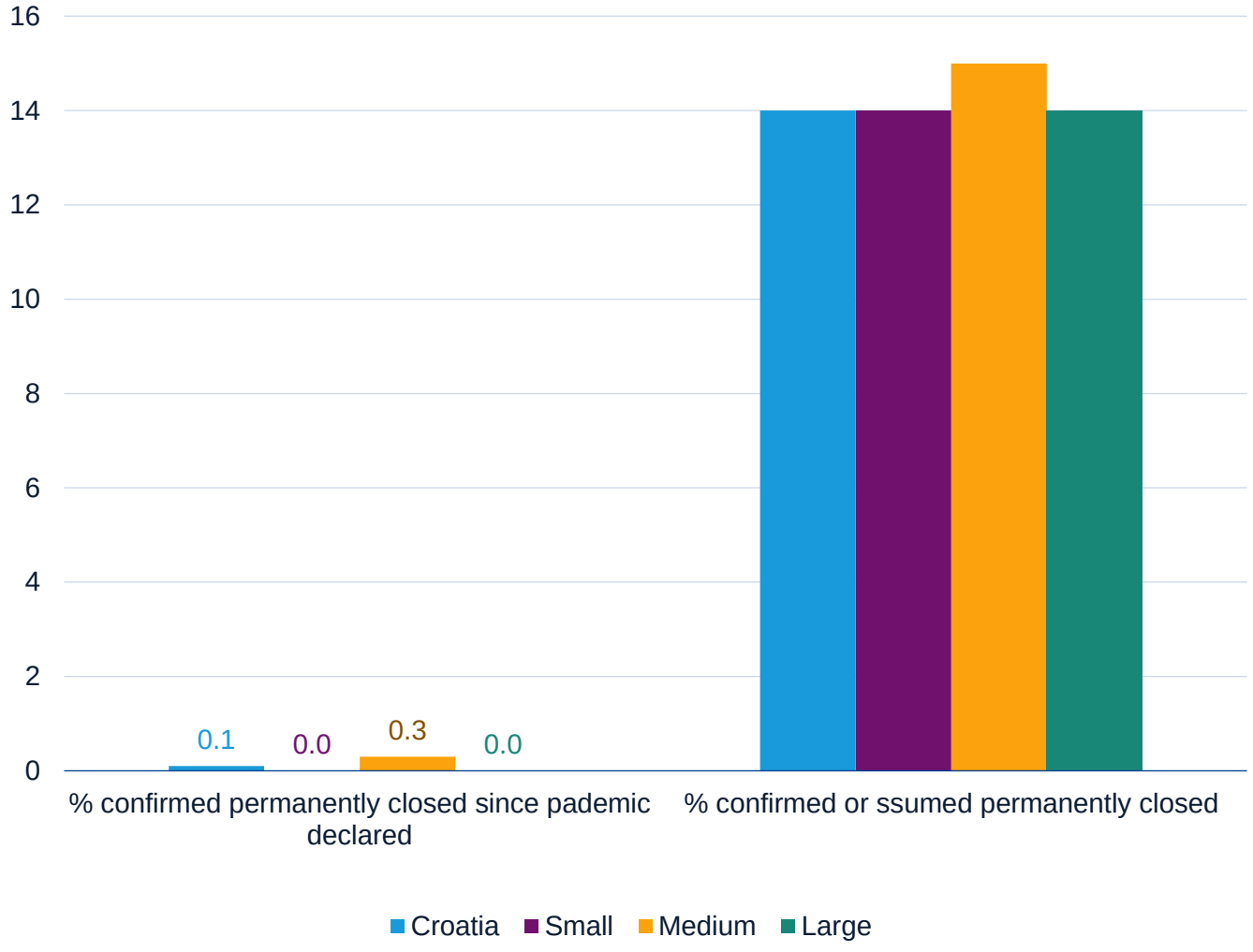
It is clear COVID-19 was the direct cause for two-third of work stoppage in March, and half of work stoppage in April





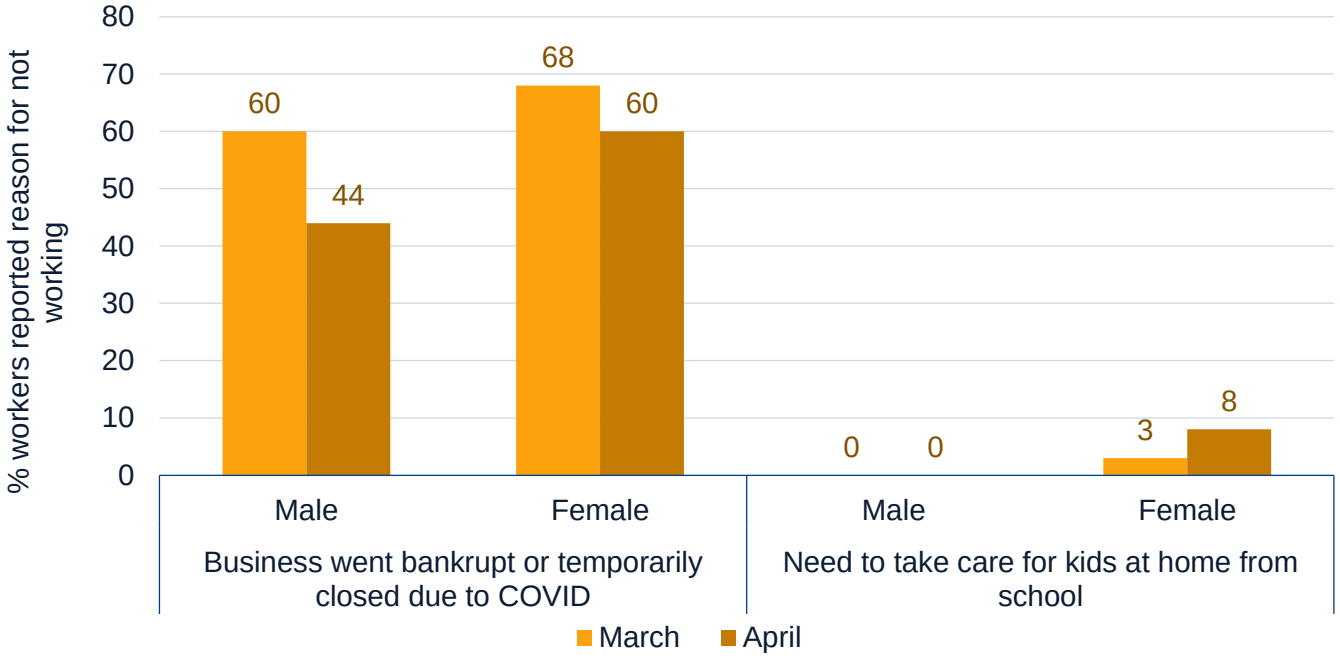
In fact, 14 percent of firms have permanently closed, which contributes to work stoppage during the pandemic

- The left side of the figure shows the share of firms that were confirmed to have closed since the pandemic was declared in March.
- The right side uses a wider definition of closed firms: it includes the firms that closed since 2019 and also firms that could not be contacted during fieldwork and therefore are assumed to have closed.

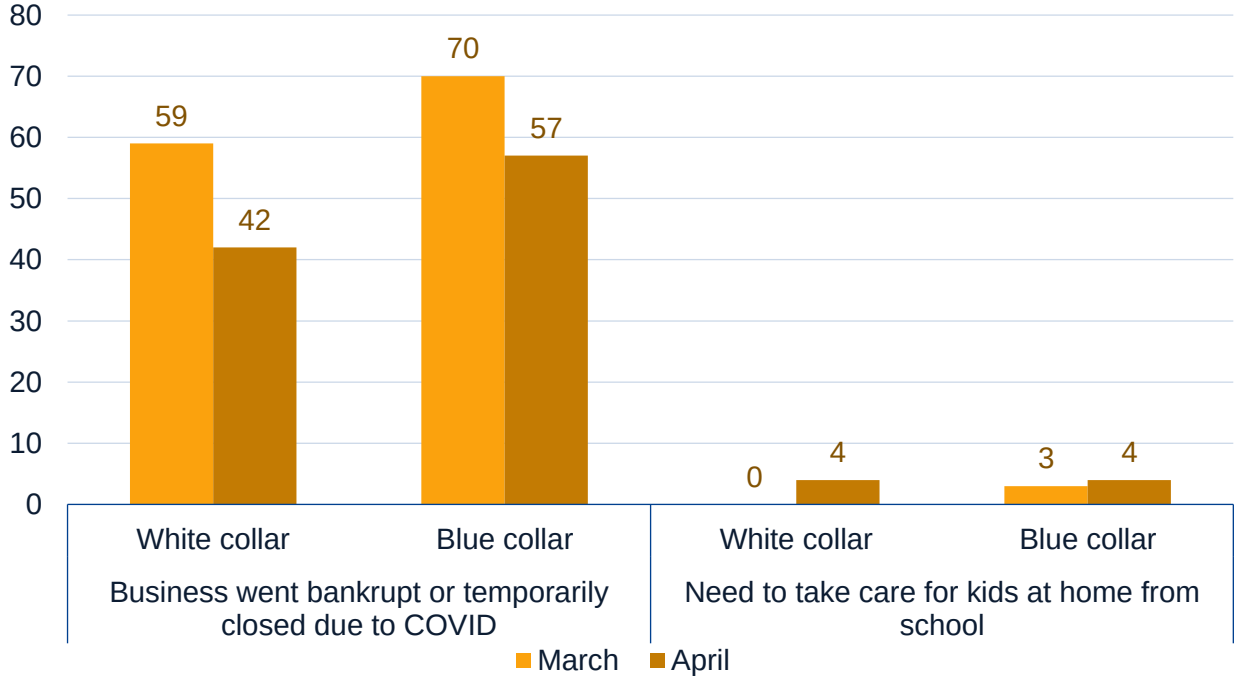


For those workers stopped working in March and April, the impacts of COVID-19 were more severe for women and blue-collar workers

60 percent of women who stopped working in April reported their reason as business closure due to COVID-19, compared to 44 percent of men



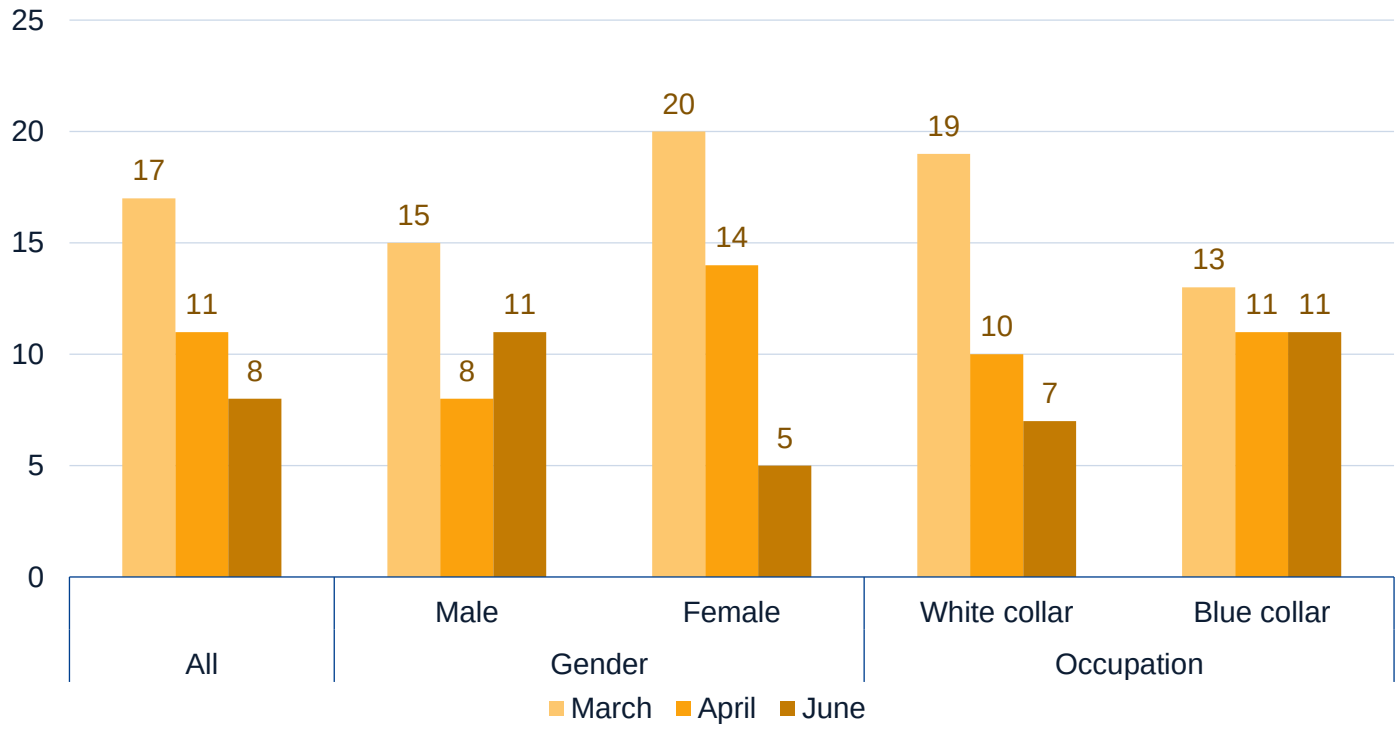
Similarly, 57 percent of blue-collar workers reported COVID-reasons compared to 42 percent of white collars



Even among those continuing to work during the pandemic, the number of hours of work was cut significantly

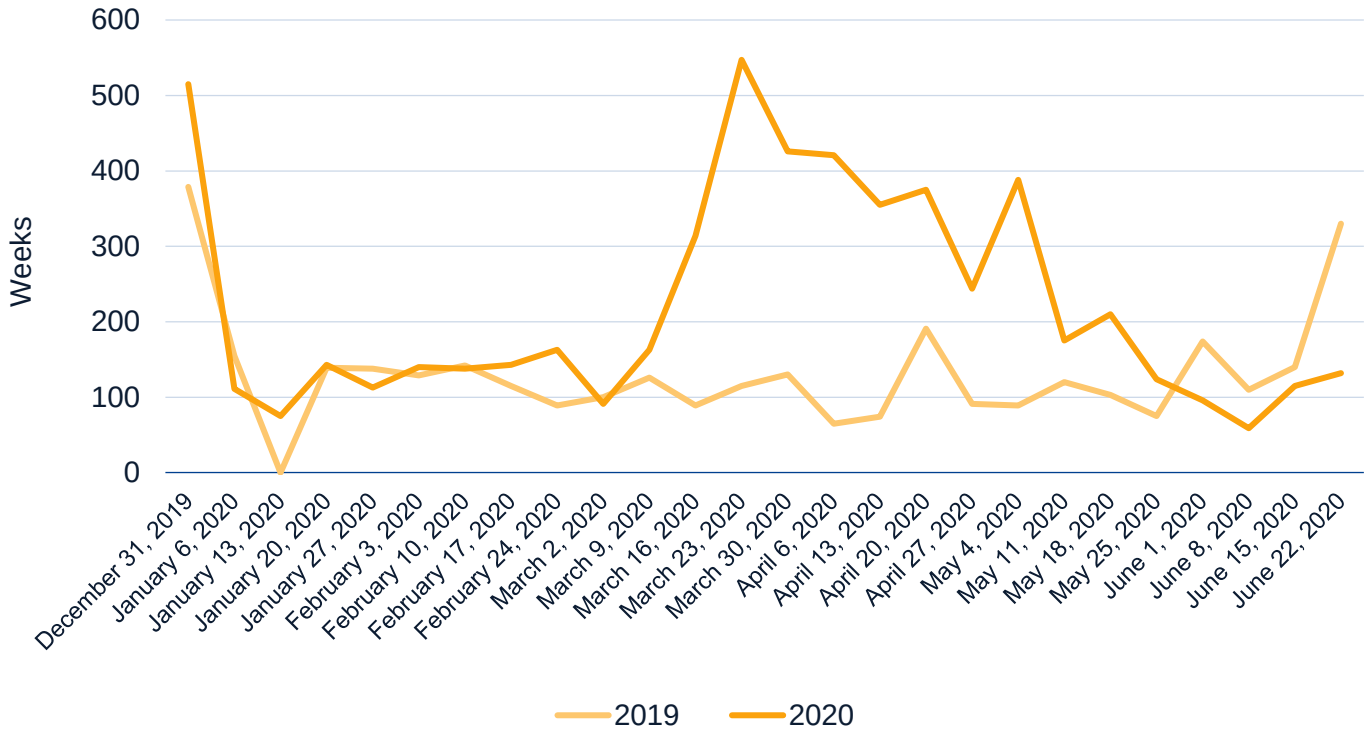
However, the trend appears to slowly revert to the pre-crisis level

- 17% of those who continued to work in March reported a reduction in work hours. However, this number has gradually declined to 8 percent in June.
- Female workers experienced a reduction in work hours more than men in the period right after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic (March and April). But the trend was reversed in June.
- White-collar workers suffered the most in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19, but the reduction has been lessened over time.
- Meanwhile, blue-collar workers have seen stable reduction of work hours over time.

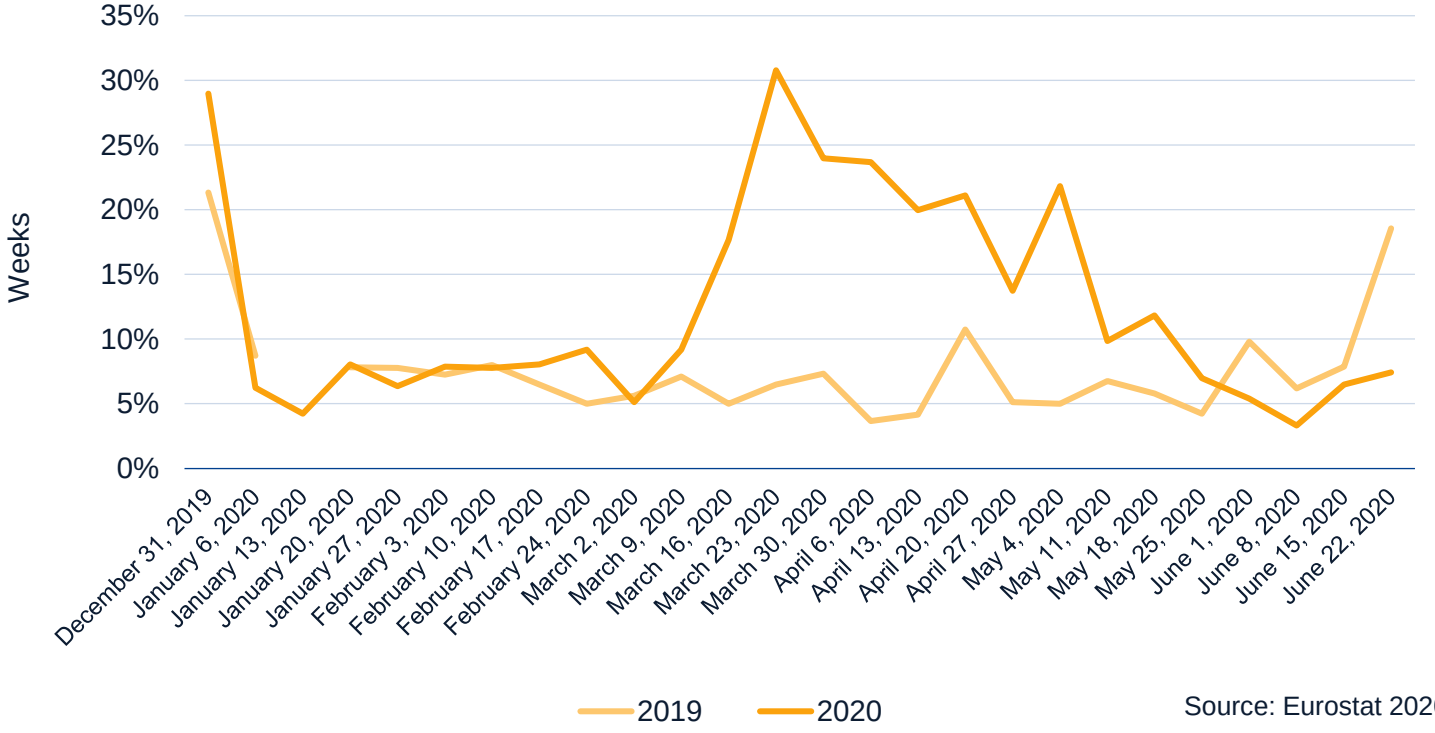


Compared to the same time last year, the number of people absent from work increased dramatically in March and April

Number of people absent from work in Croatia in 2020, compared to 2019



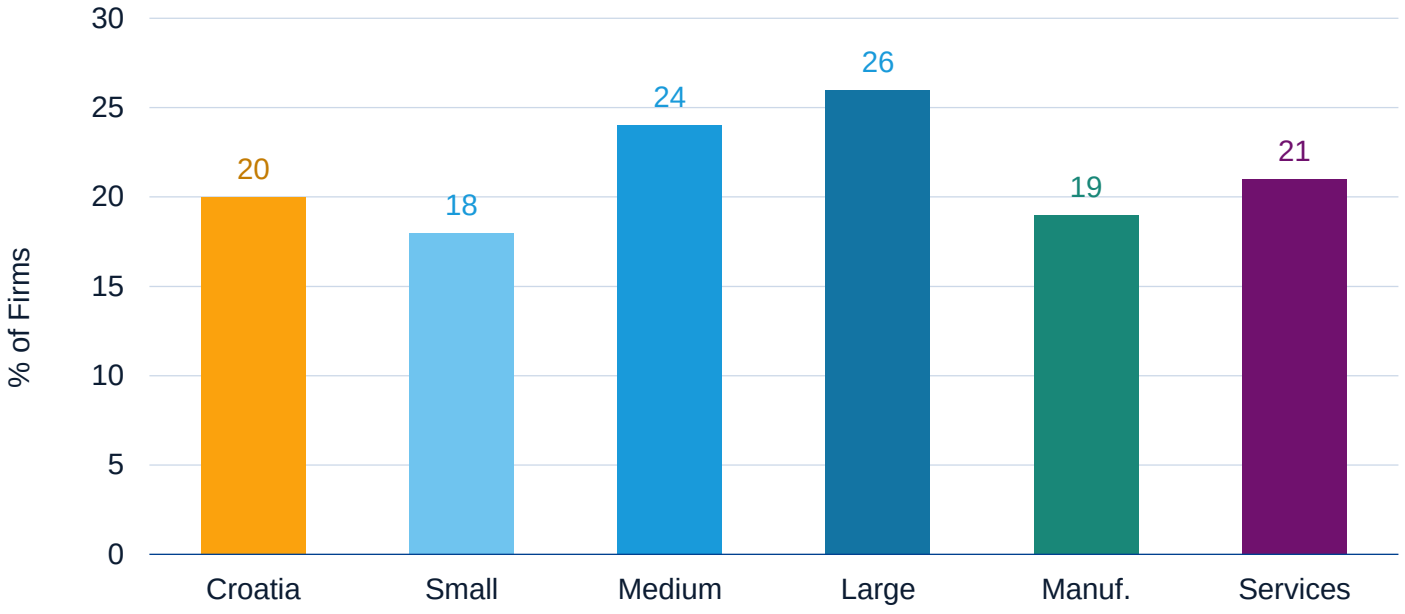
Share of employment (as % od Q4, 2019 employed)



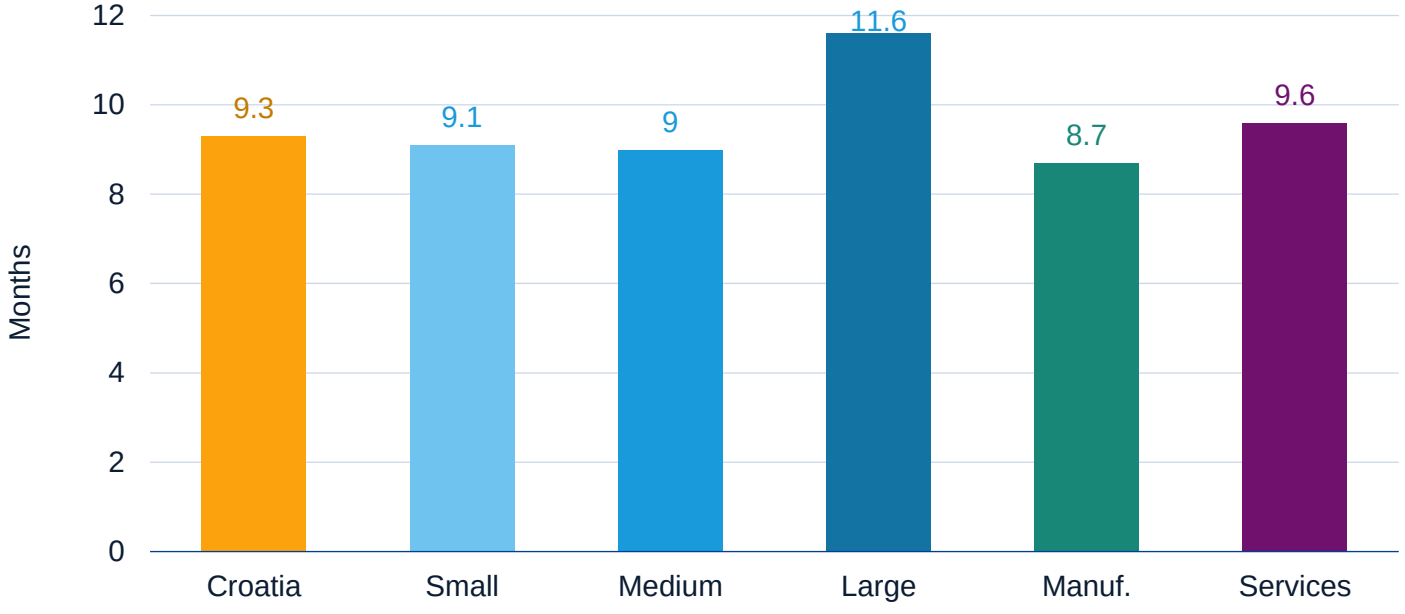
Source: Eurostat 2020

The impacts of the pandemic also reflect at firm level

A quarter of firms reported a decrease of weekly hours worked relative to before the outbreak



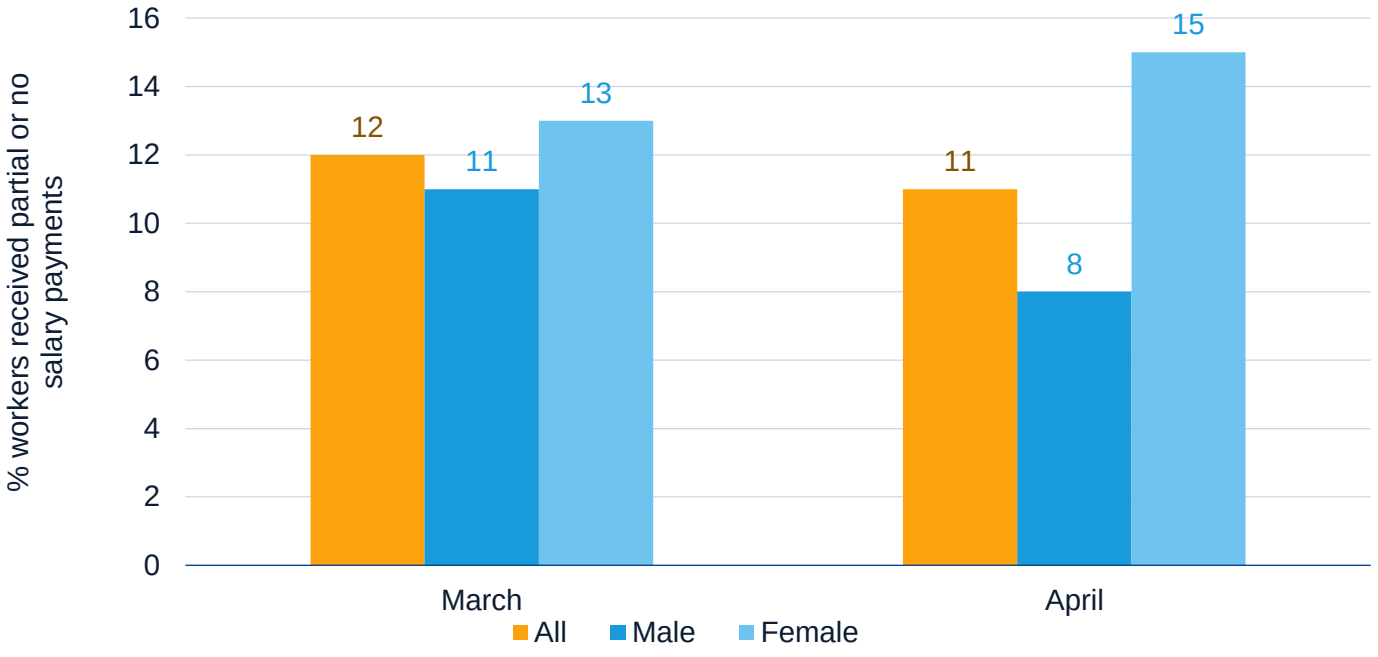
On average, it would take about 9 months before firms could return to their normal level of business. It would take even longer for large firms



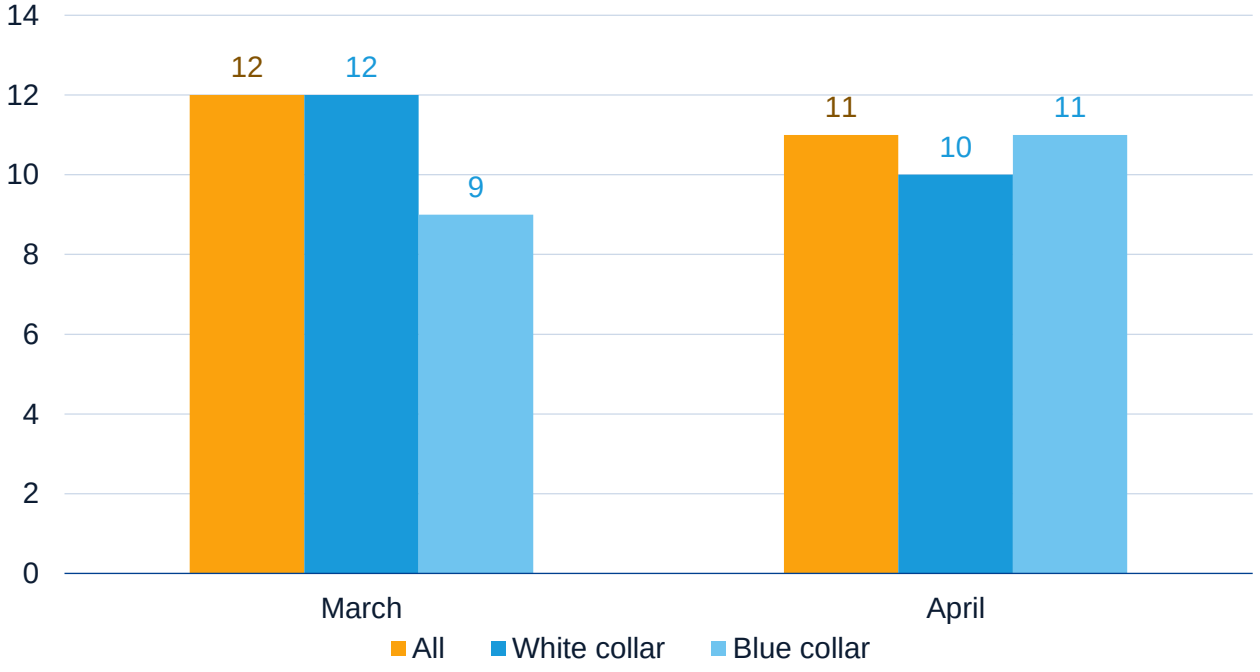
Source: Croatia Enterprise Survey 2020

Following a cut in work hours, workers experienced a reduction in salary

Women tends to face a reduction in salary more than men, especially in April



But interestingly, while blue-collar workers were more likely to stop working, those who continued to work did not appear to have more reduction in salaries than white-collar workers



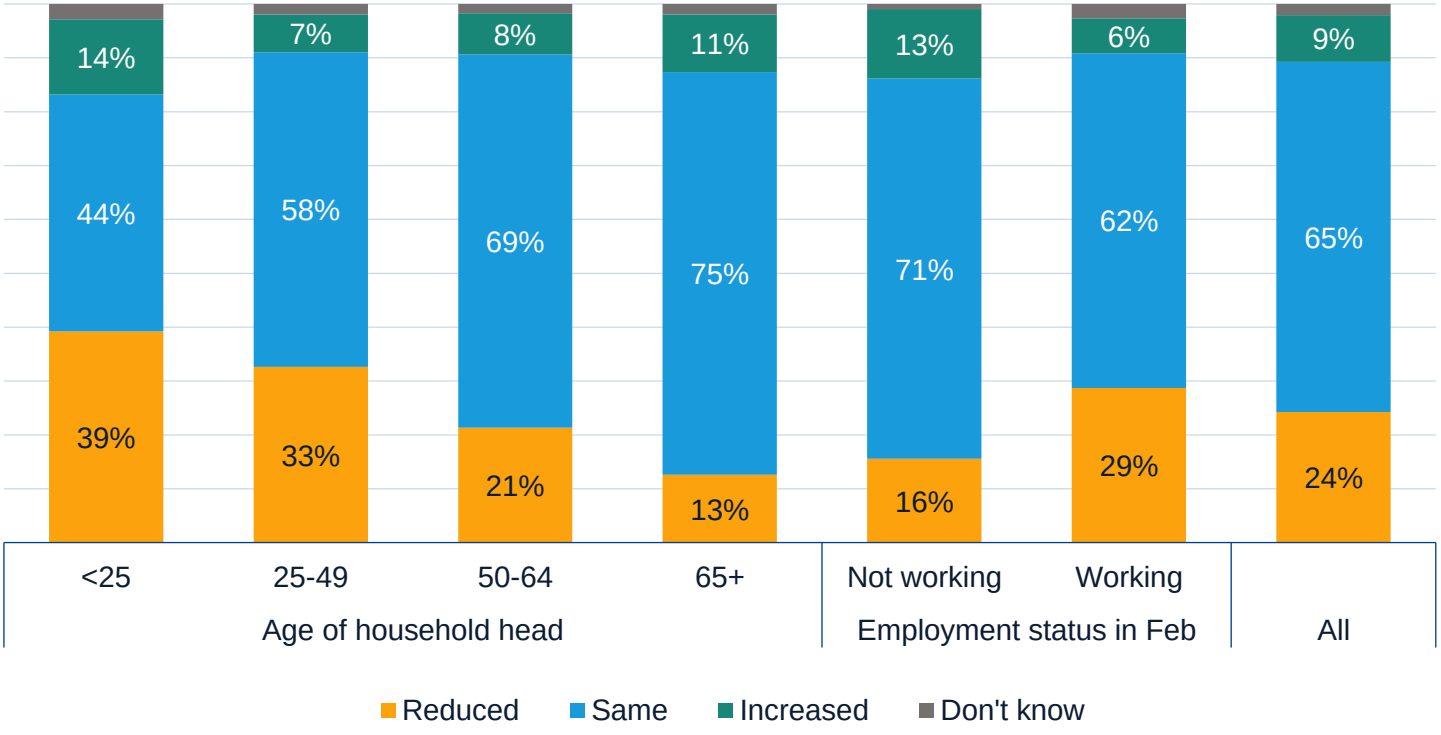
With higher work stoppage, reduction in work hours and salary, it is expected that household income would decline. In fact, one in four households reported so

24% of households report income drops. Households with younger household head tend to report a decline in income.

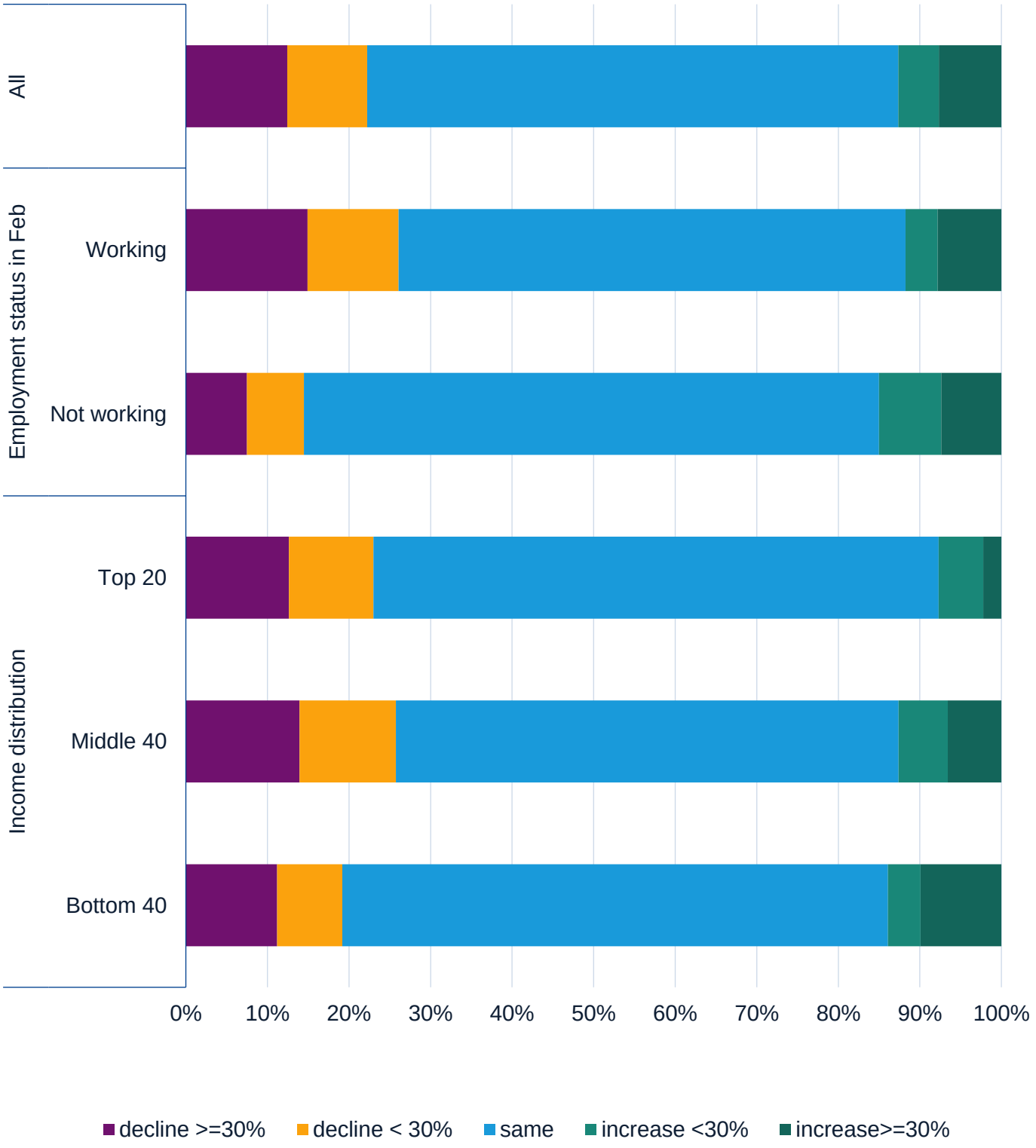
Employment channel is clear for incomes***:

- Households with employed members are most likely to report drops in income, 29% reported decreased income.
- Among 34% of households reporting no working members living in the household, only 16% report deteriorating incomes.
- However, gender of household head does not play a significant role in household income reduction.

Percentage of households reporting declines in income since February 2020

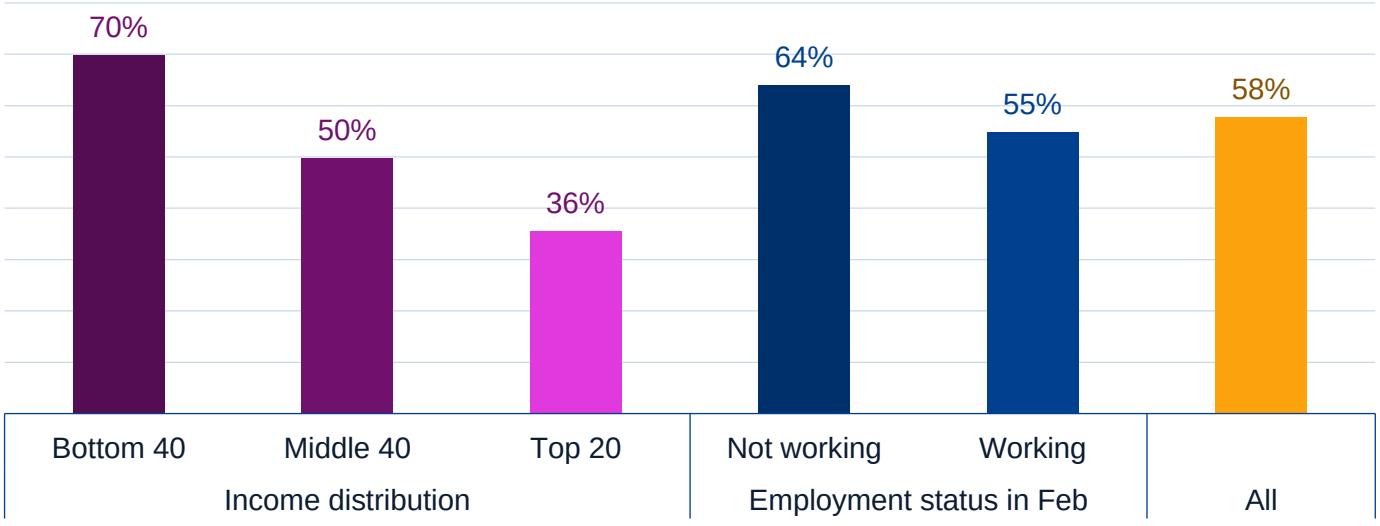


Richer households, and households with at least one member working in February tend to have a larger decline in income

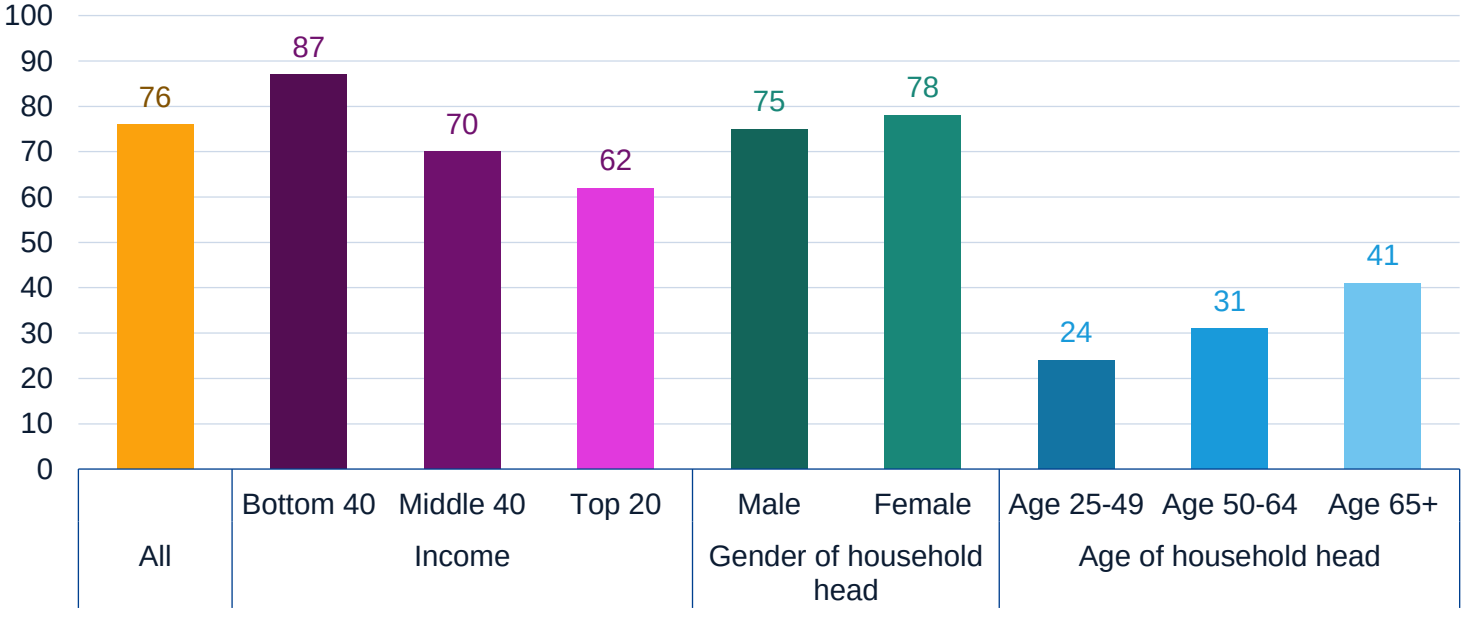


Moreover, a low rate of savings make it more difficult for households to cushion the shock

58% households reported no savings to deal with any reduction in income. The situation is more difficult for poorer households, and households with no member working in February



Even among household with savings, 76% of them would run out of savings in the next 6 months. Poor households and households with older household head are more likely to run out savings

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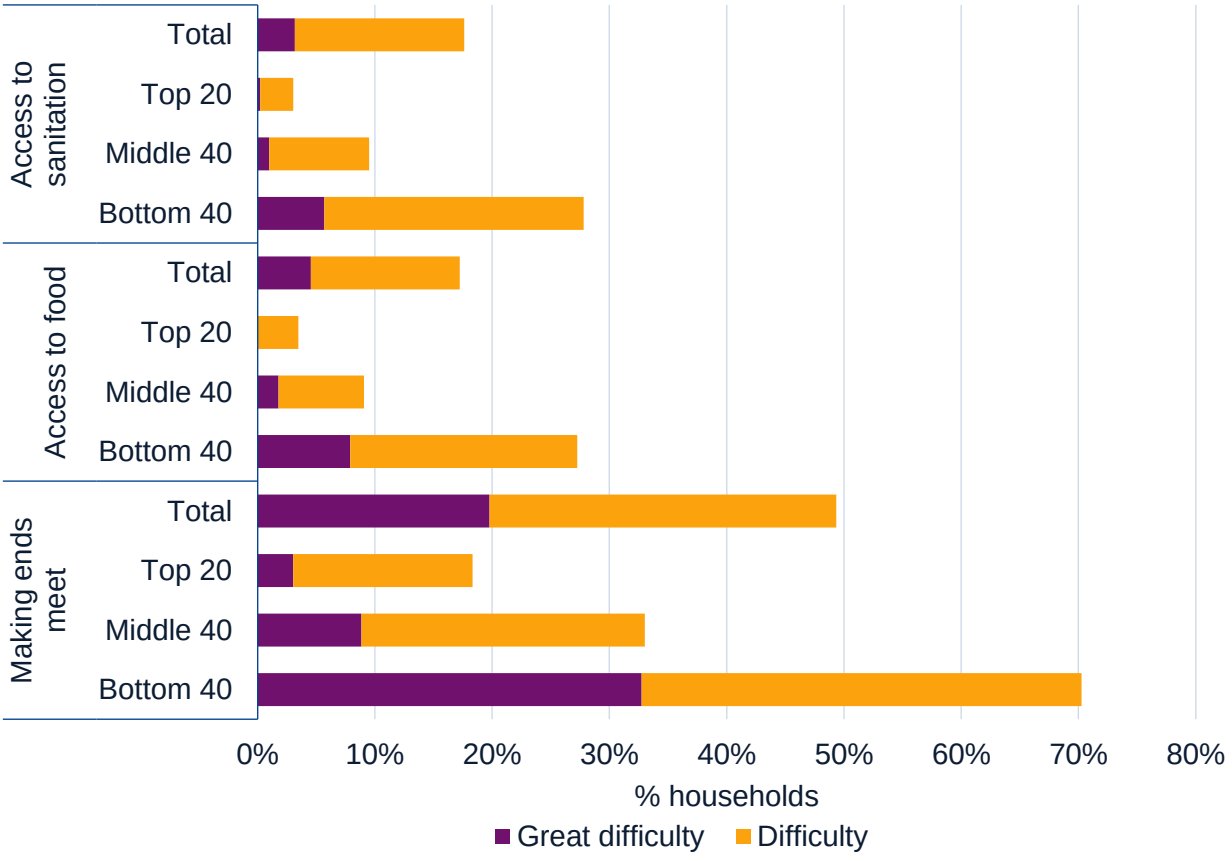
It is expected that many households faced difficulty to make ends meet during the pandemic

50% of all households reported difficulties with their current income level to pay for their needs in June. Poor households suffered the most. So did rural households, or households with older household head or with household head not working prior to the crisis.

- 70% of poorer households report they're finding it difficult making ends meet.
- About one-third of the traditionally "middle class" households report difficulties, even though these are traditionally less economically vulnerable.
- However, female-headed households did not appear to face more difficulties than male-headed households.
- The share of those having difficulty accessing food and sanitation as normal is likely a factor of logistics during lockdown as well as financial situation deterioration.

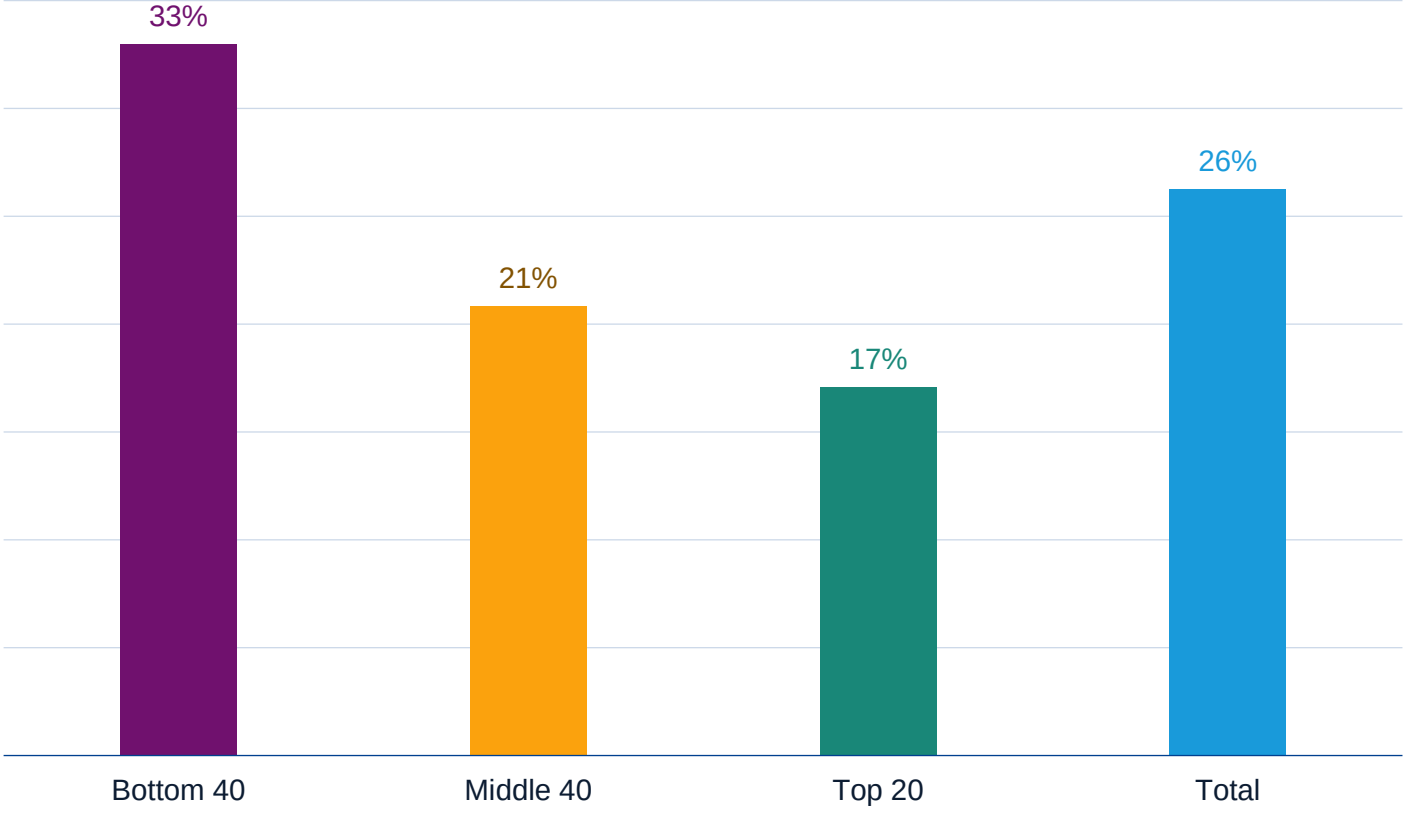


Compared to February (pre-crisis), a quarter of households reported deteriorating economic situation

The pattern is similar across population groups (gender, age, location, employment status)

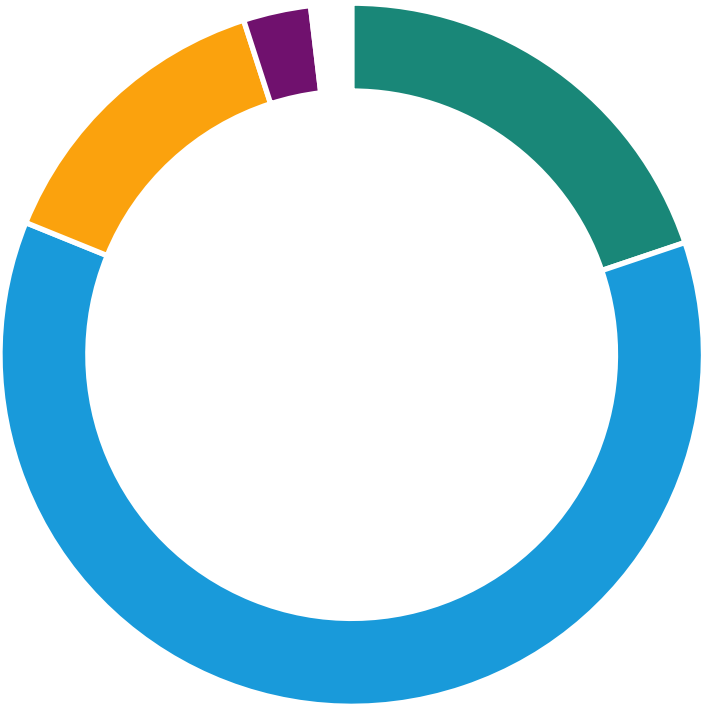
- Poorer households report greater difficulty making ends meet in June compared to February.
- But the difficulty gaps by household heads' gender, age, location, and employment status is not significant.

More difficult to make ends meet in June compared to February



The level of economic stress reported due to the COVID-19 pandemic is high across the board

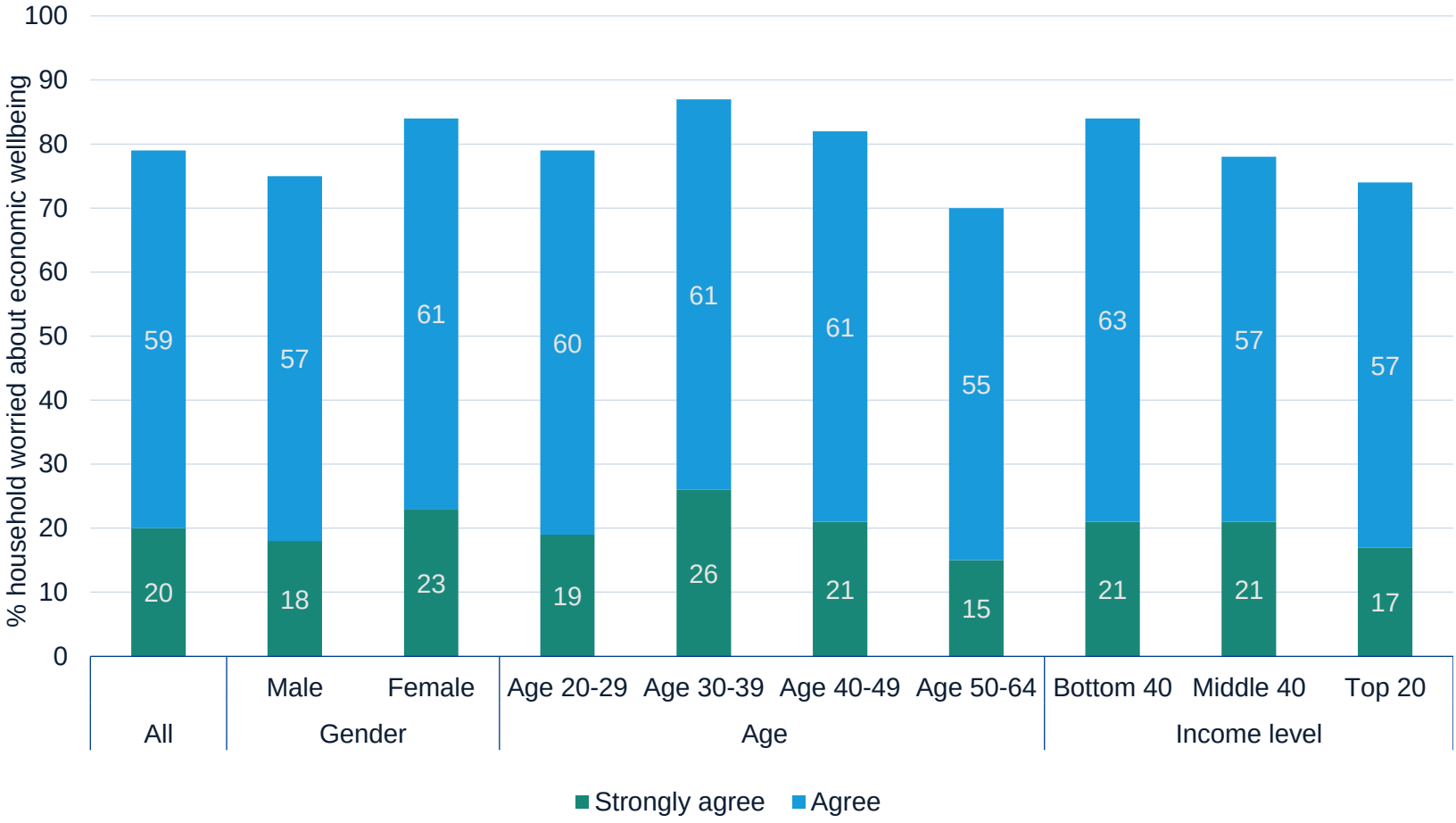
81% households indicated that they were worried about the economic well-being of themselves and their family members.



- **20%** Strongly agree
- **61%** Agree
- **14%** Disagree
- **3%** Strongly disagree

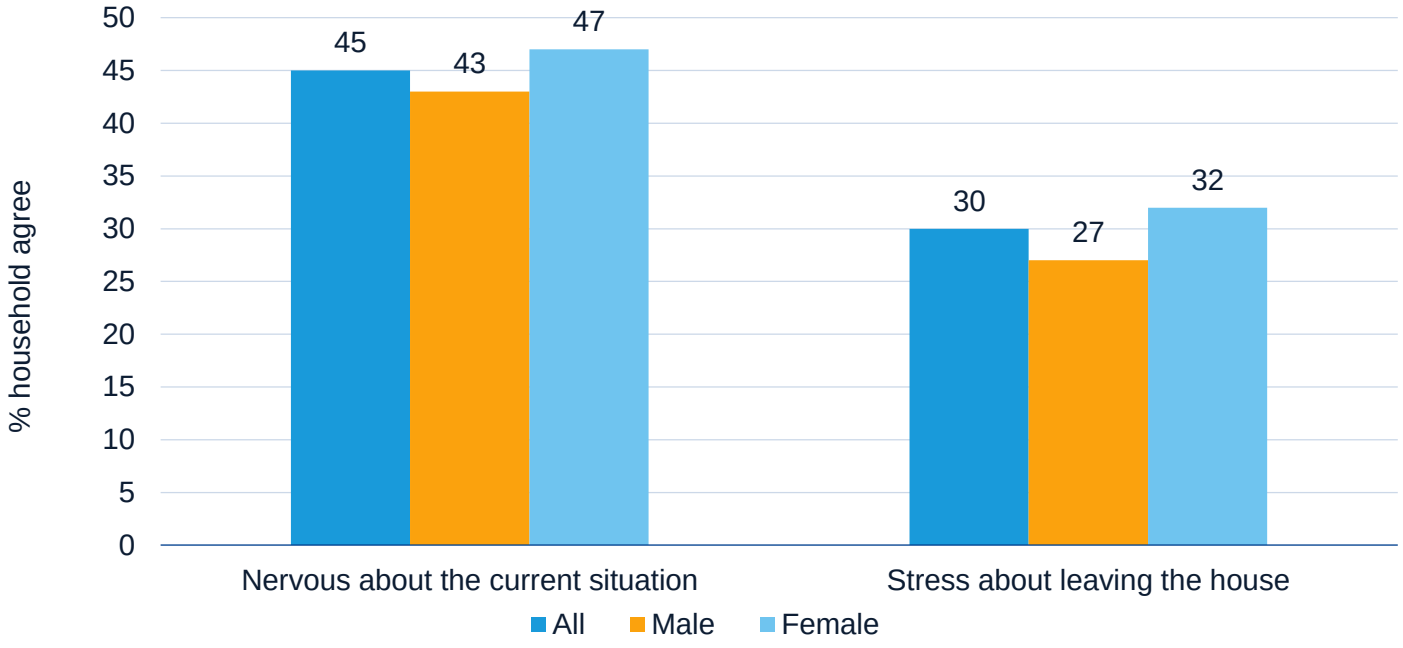
But economic stress varies across the population

Women, young, and poor households had significantly higher stress

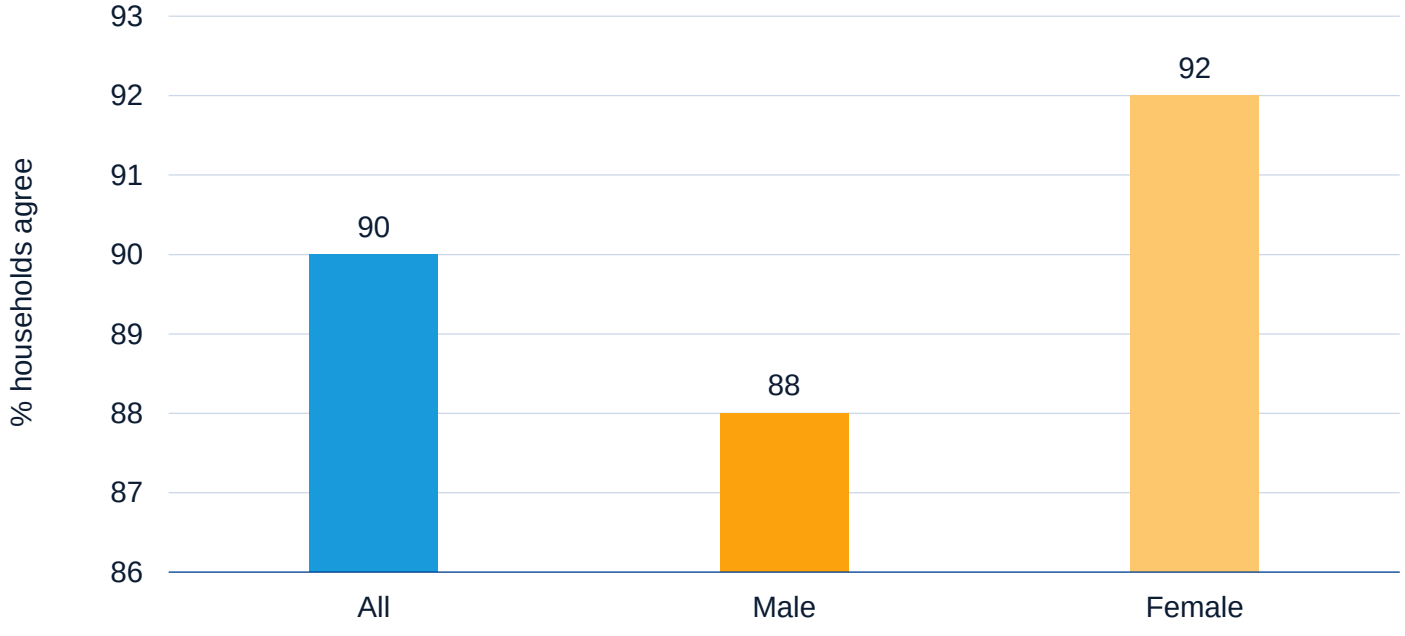


Moreover, women had more stress in multiple dimensions

47% women feeling nervous about the current situation, and 32% being stressful about leaving the house, compared to 43% and 27% for men respectively

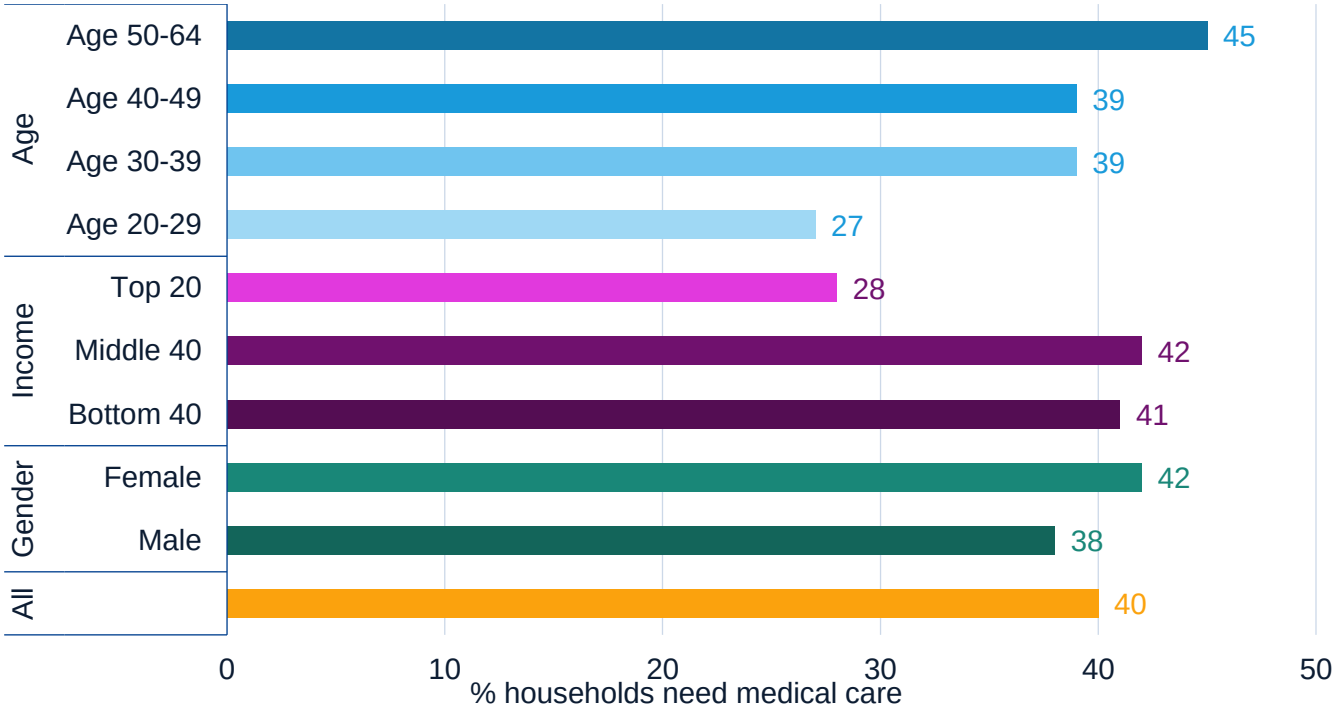


92% women worrying about their health or health of their family members, compared to 88% men

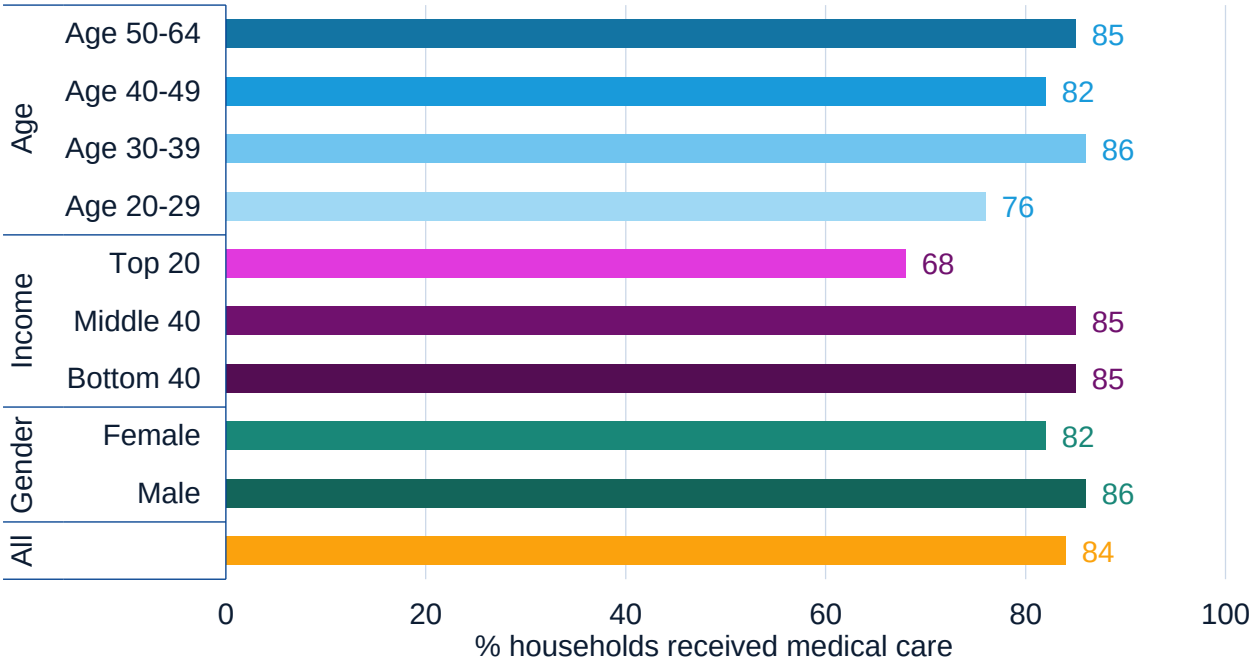


While 90% households worrying about their health situation, access to health services is relatively high

On average, 40% households needed medical care during the pandemic. The rate is higher among women, lower income, and older people

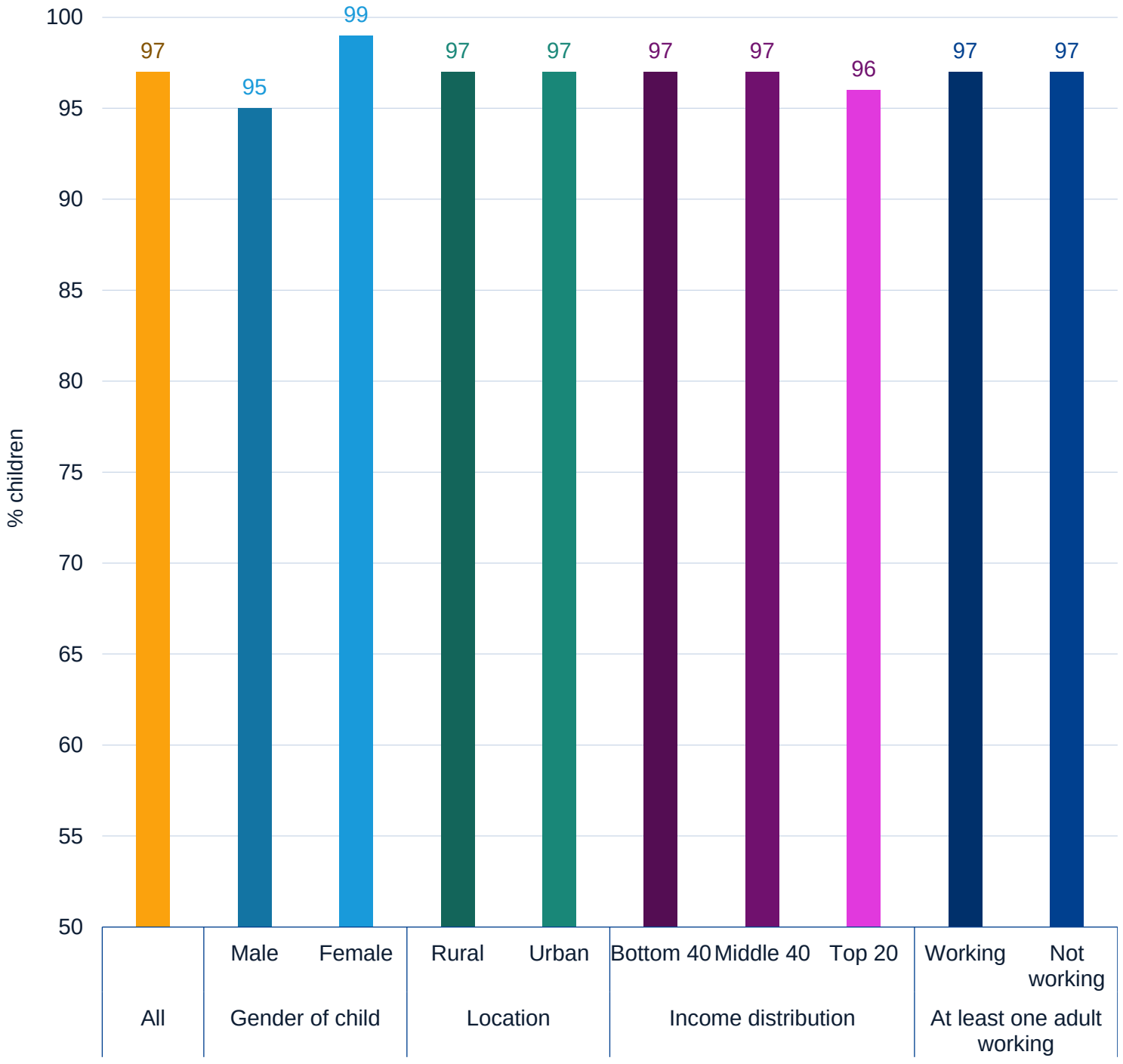


Among those in need of healthcare, 84% received treatment. The difference is not significant between men and women. However, the rate is significantly lower among young and richer people. This observation may be explained by the differences in types of medical treatment needed for different population groups



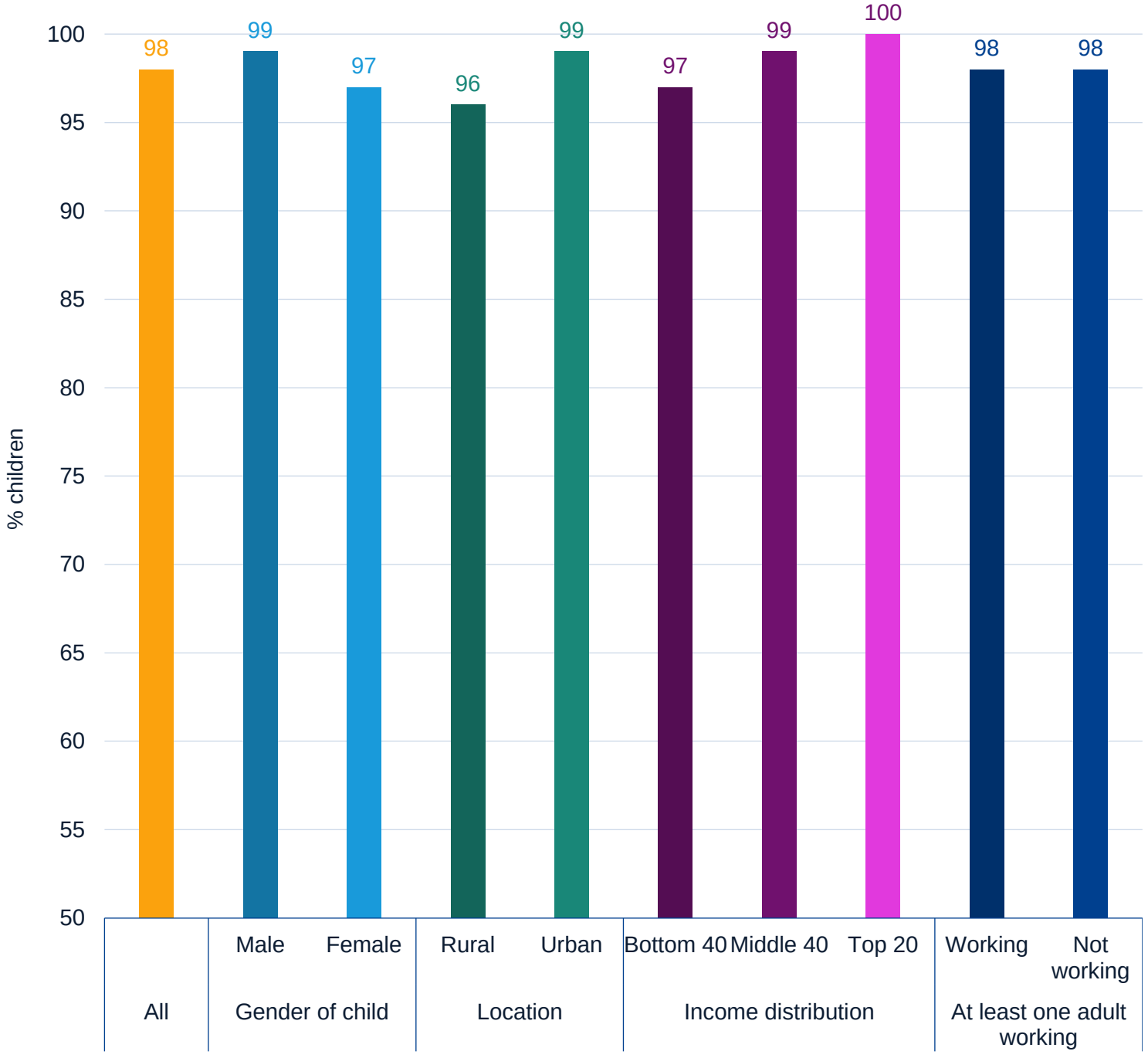

EDUCATION
CITIZEN'S KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOR TOWARD COVID
PERCEPTIONS OF GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

While school enrollment is high across the board...



and schools quickly offered some types of distant learning (online, printed materials, distant homework, etc.) during the pandemic...

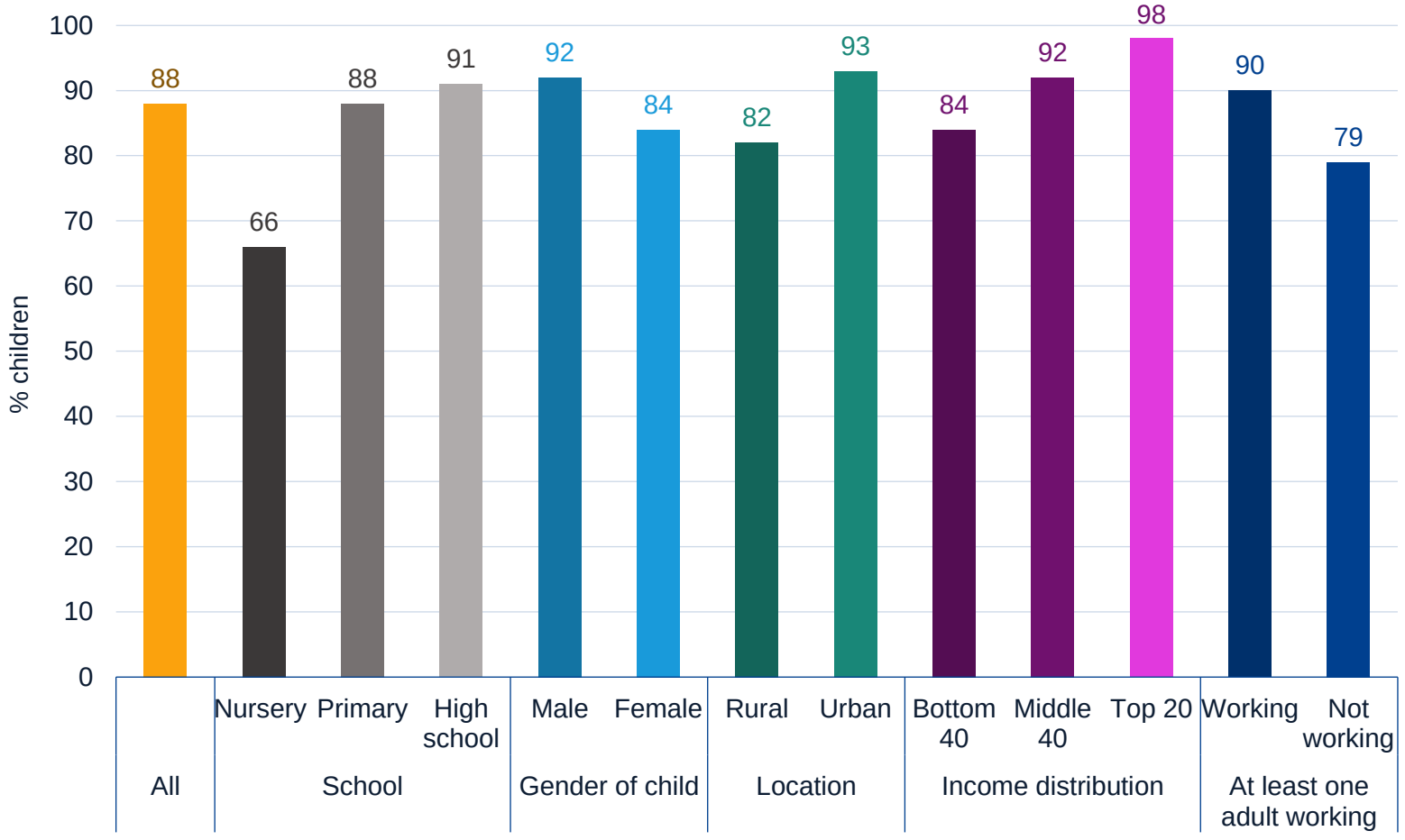
Any type of distant learning



But access to online learning — the most advance and interactive distant learning — varies significantly across demographic groups

Girls, rural students, students from lower income households, and students from households with no adults working had limited opportunities.

Online distant learning

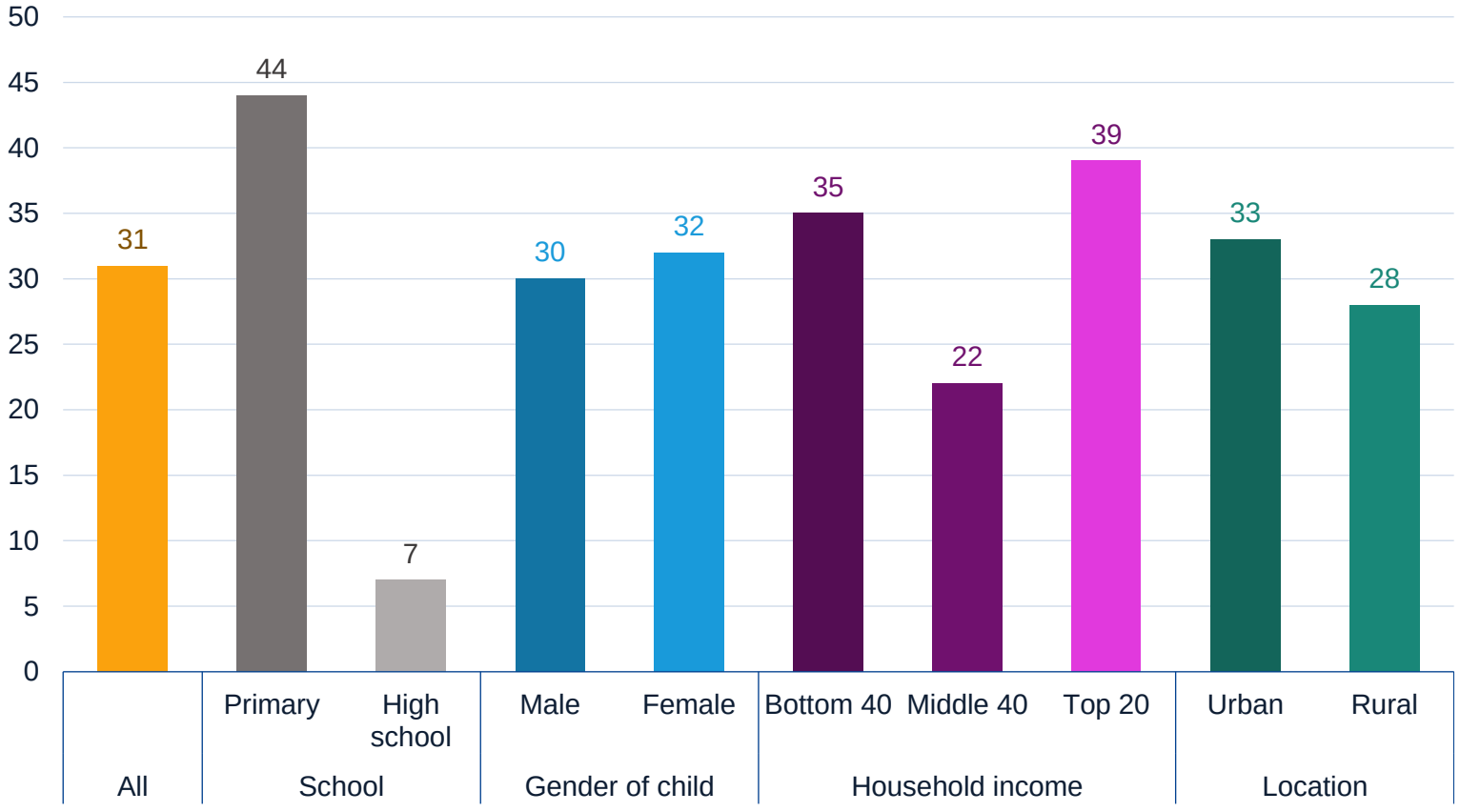


In addition, distribution of distant learning equipment from school was uneven across groups

And the level is relatively low — only one in three students received a tablet from school

- Primary schools and urban schools were more likely to give out tablet.
- Interestingly, the poorest and the richest students had equal chance of receiving tablets from school, which may reflect the fact that richer schools were more equipped, and other schools targeted poor students well. However, students in middle-class families were less likely to receive support.

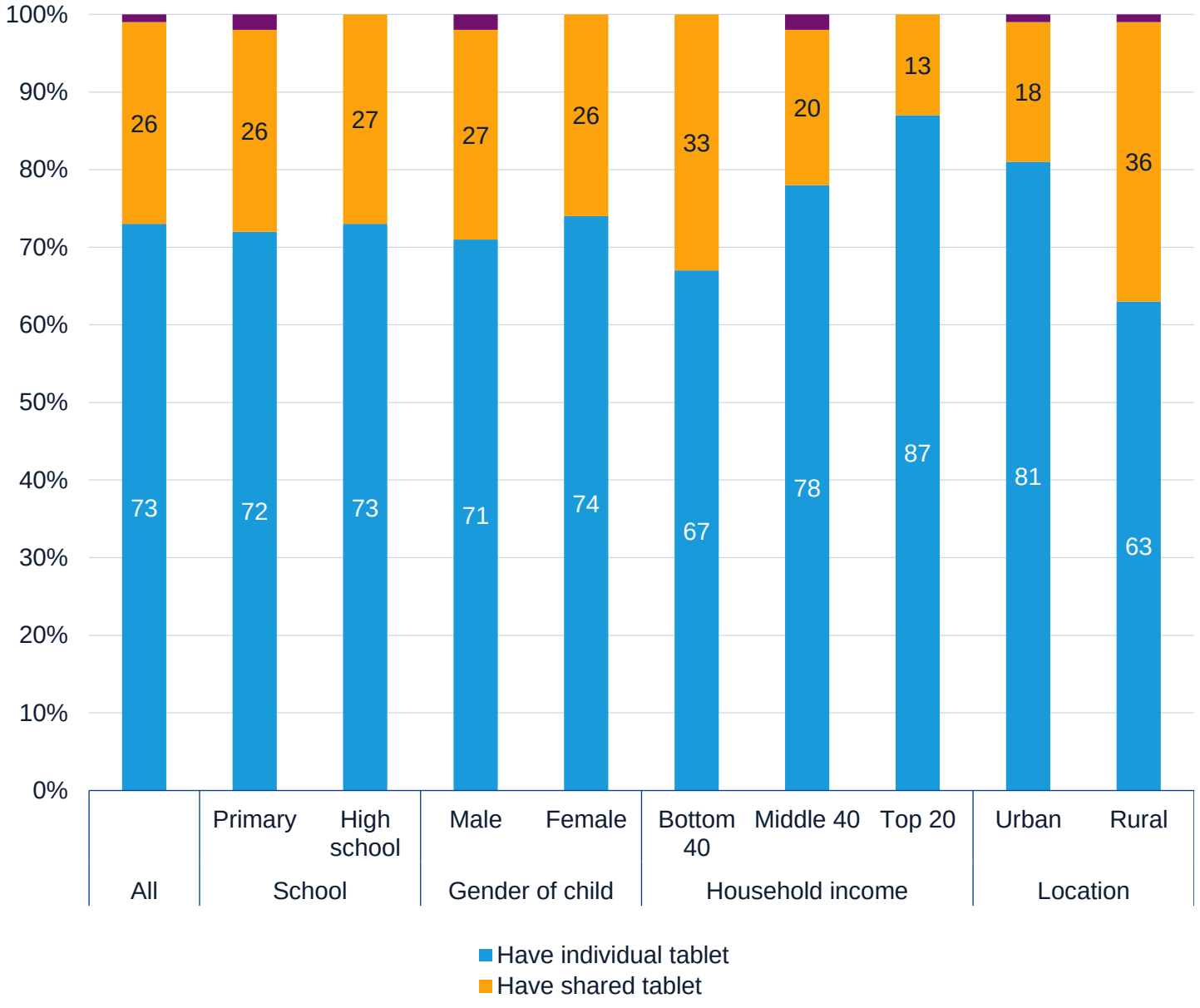
Tablet from school



However, to support distant learning, almost all students have access to tablets with internet

The level of shared tablets within a households is higher among poor and rural households.

There is no significant difference by children's gender or school levels

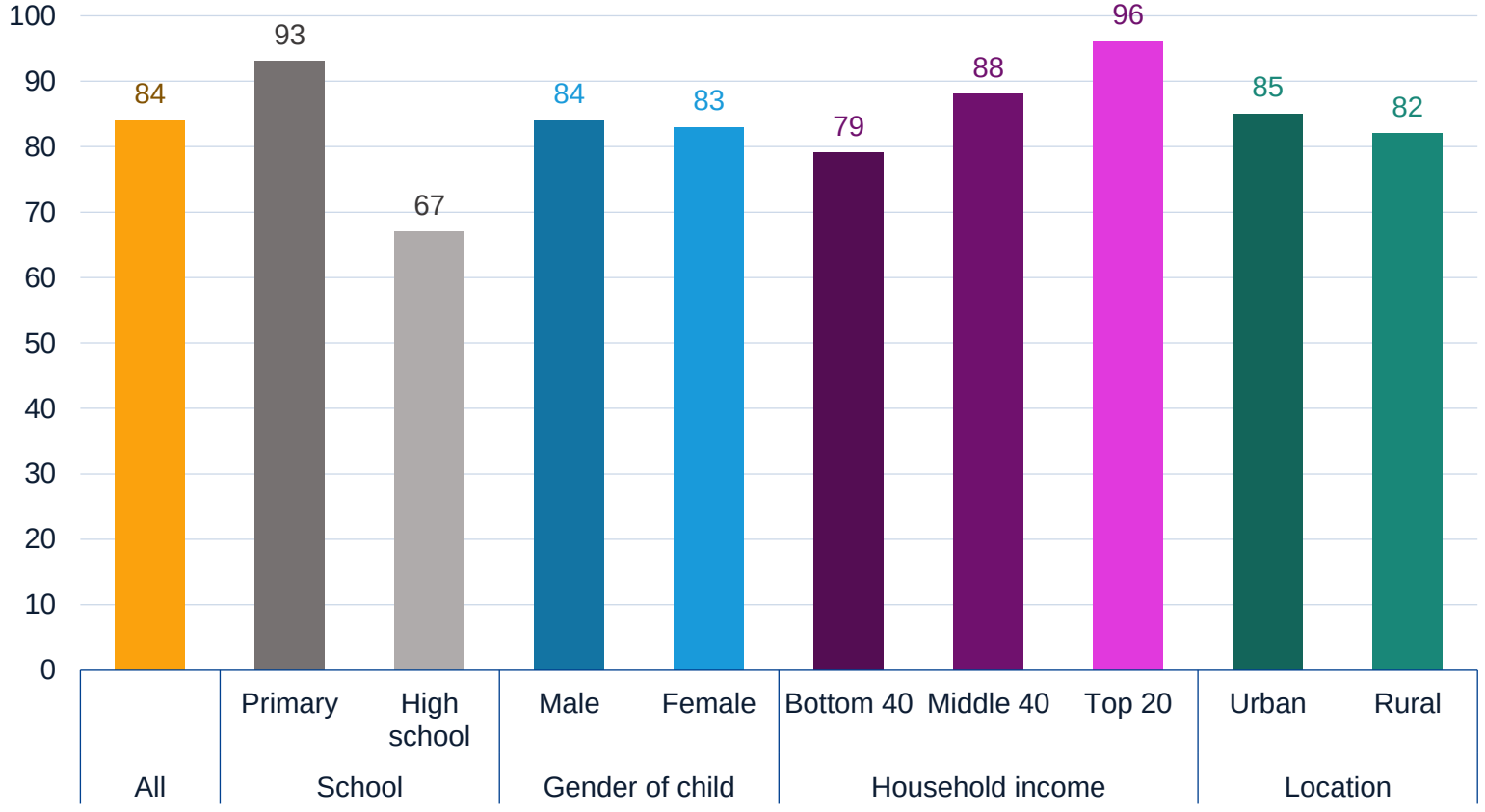


Lots of support from households were provided to cope with distant learning

84 percent of students received help from another household members, often the non-working members

- Younger students are more likely to require support. 93 percent of primary student received help from home to do their distant learning schoolwork.
- Richer students are also much likely to receive support, partially because they could afford more than poorer students. Almost all students in the top 20 percent of the income distribution got private help.

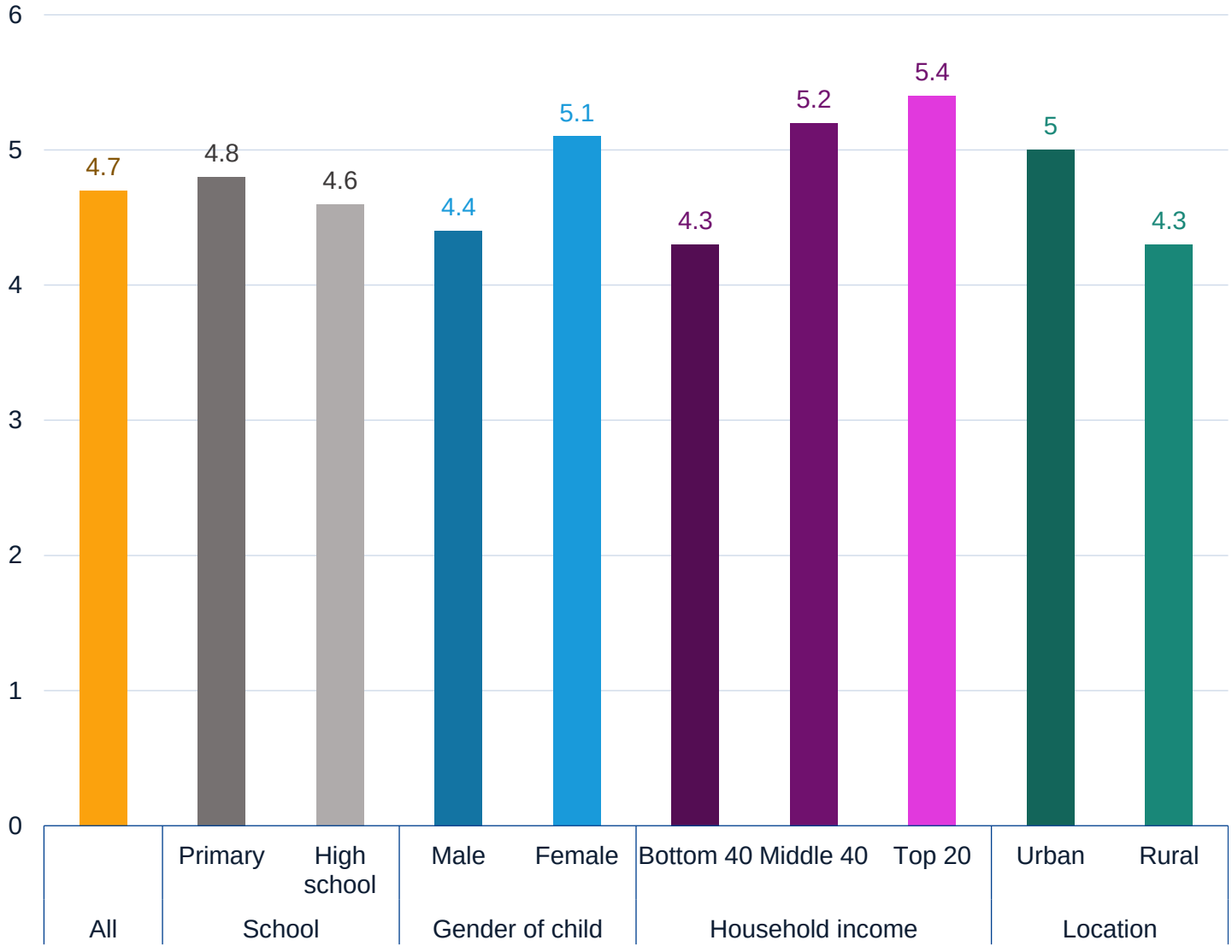
Help with schoolwork



On average, students spent 4.7 hours per day on schoolwork

The amount of time is slightly higher among girls, urban students, and better-off students. This could partially be explained by the fact that urban and better-off students were more likely to have individual tablets and have help with homework.

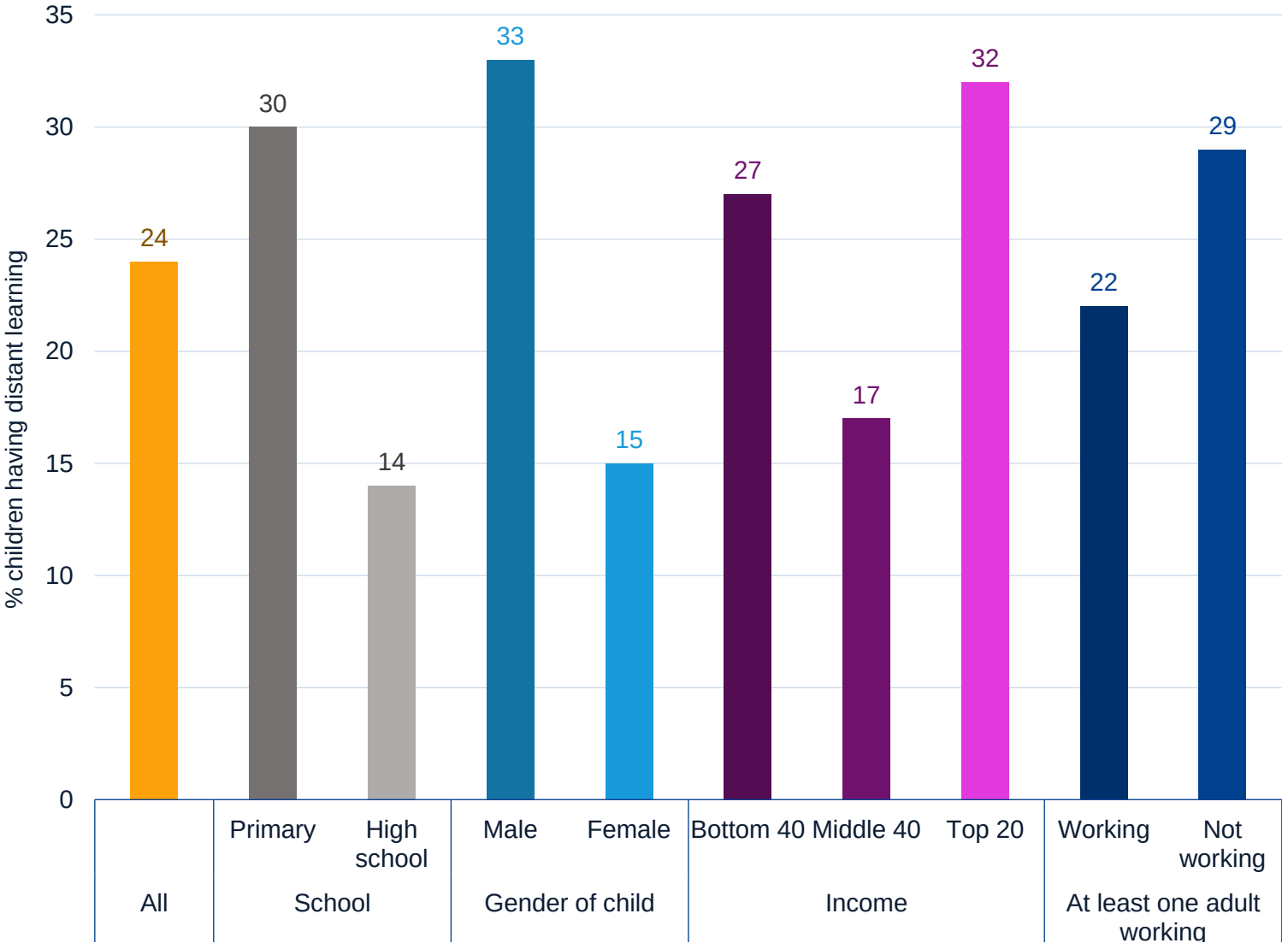
Average number of hours



But distant learning took a toll on student's mental health

One in four students were either unhappy or experienced problems with it. Boys, younger students, students from households with no adults working, and especially students from higher income households (despite all the support), were more likely to have trouble coping with distant learning.

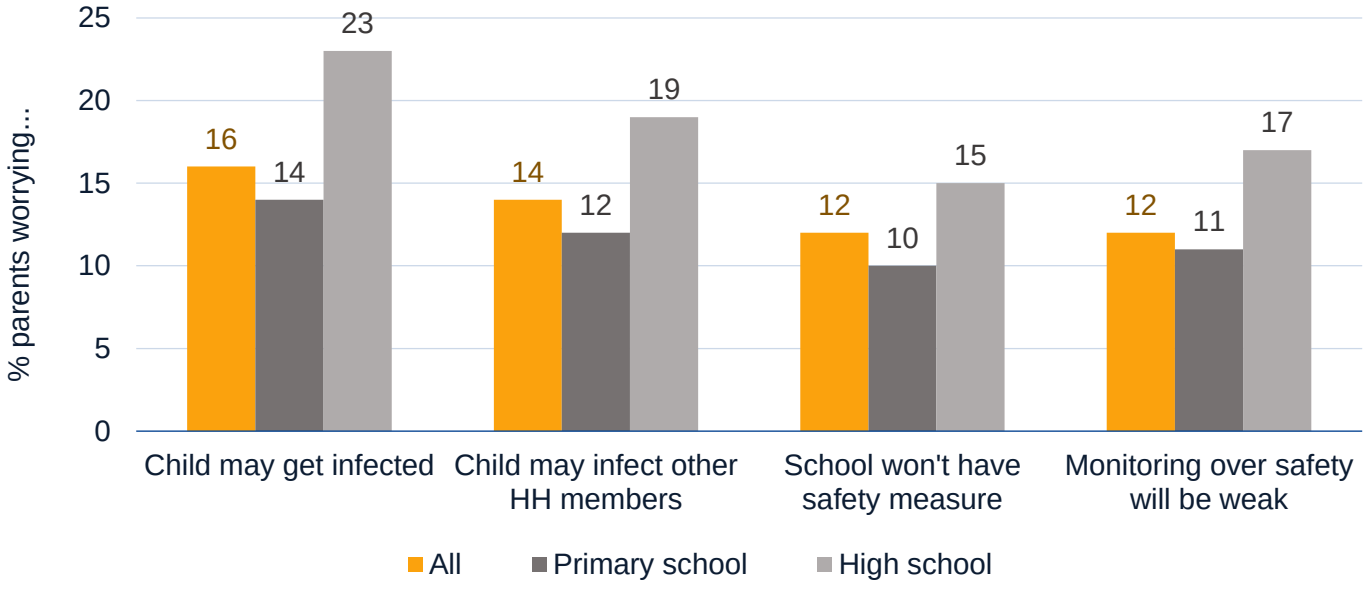
Have trouble or unhappy



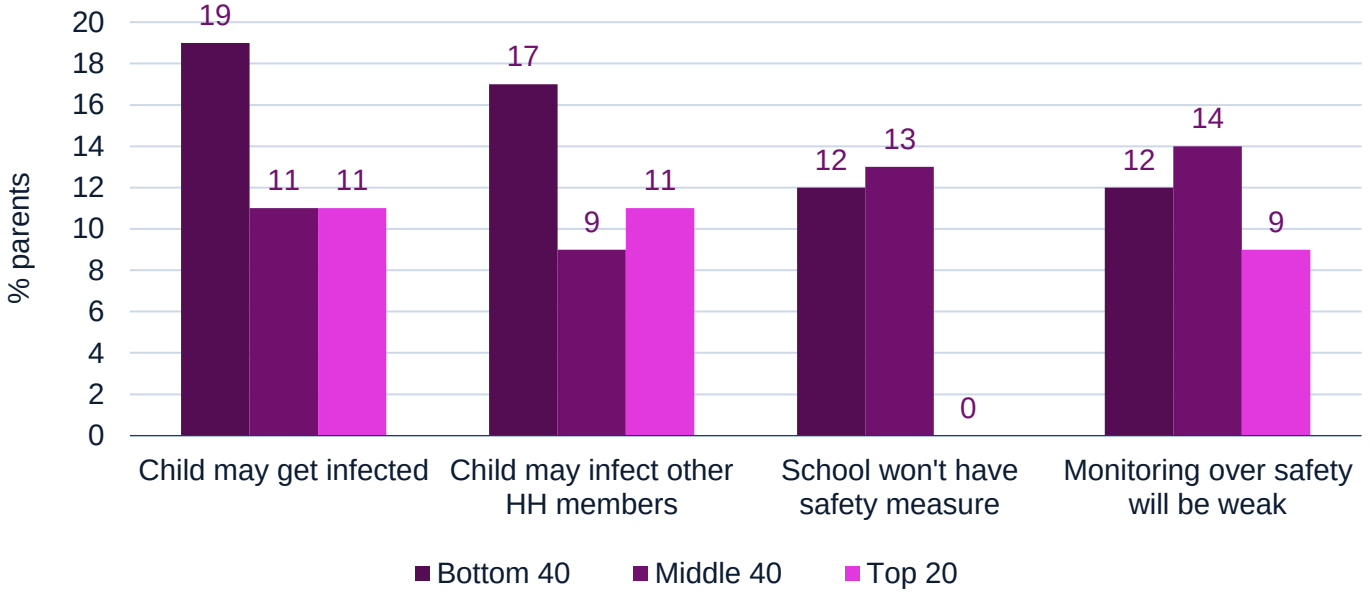
Parents were slightly worried about school reopening, especially poor parents or parents with high school students

The most concern is about the child getting infected

23 percent parents with high school students worried that their children may get affected, much higher than parents with young children

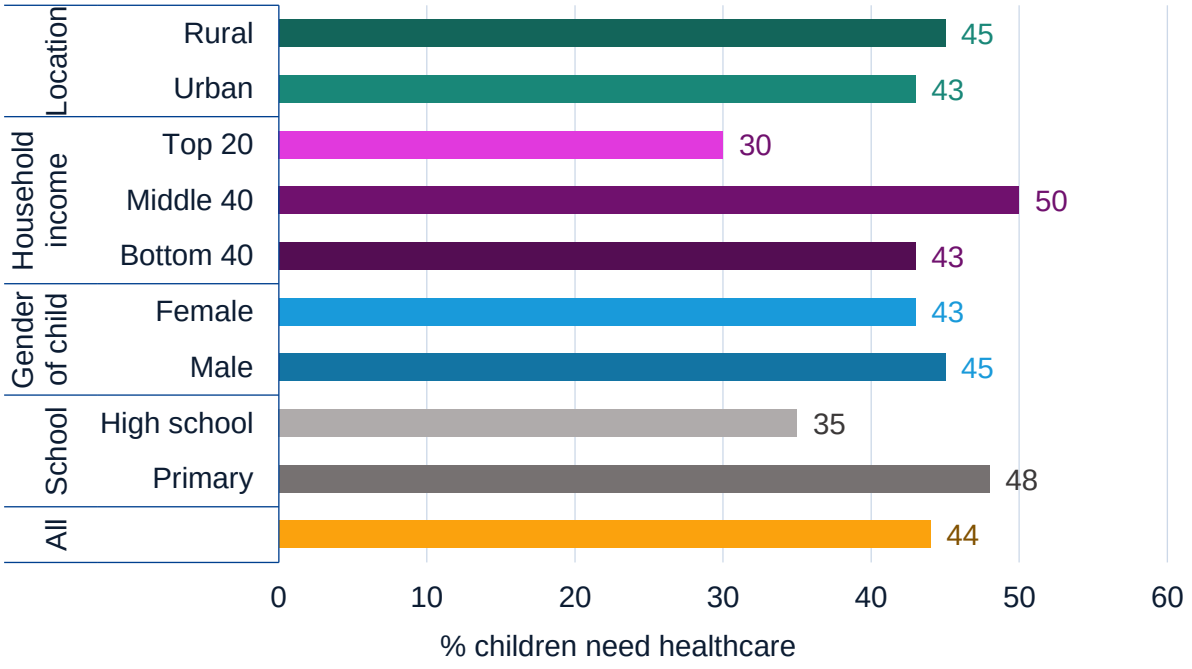


19 percent of parents in the lowest income bracket worried about their child's infection. The rate is about half among parents with higher income

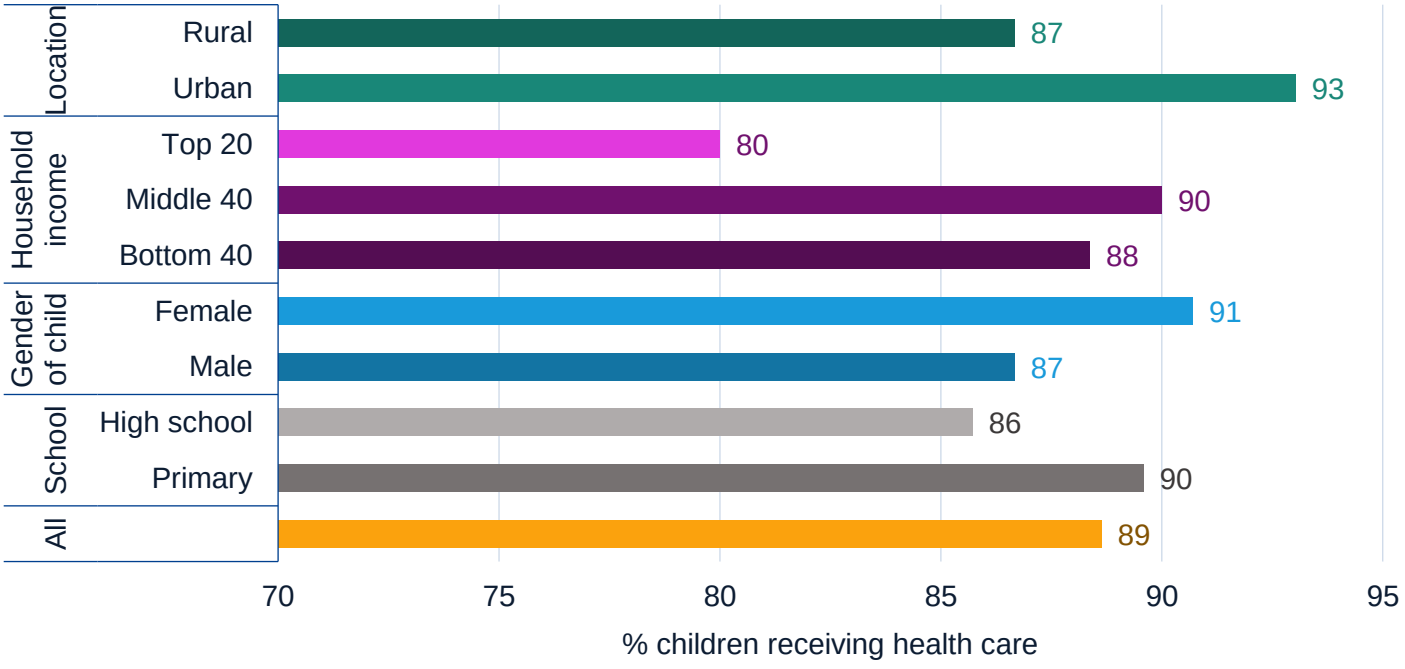


Access to healthcare services for children is quite high during the pandemic, although children in rural areas tend to have slightly less access

About half of the children need health services during the pandemic. The demand is lower among older children, and among higher income families



Among those in need, nearly 90 percent received heath care services. A lower rate was reported in rural areas which could be due to the availability of health staff and facility. Meanwhile, a lower rate among better off households could reflect the type of health care required, or the urgency of treatment



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