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## NORTHERN IRELAND HAPPIEST PLACE TO LIVE IN THE UK

- Northern Ireland has overtaken the South West of England as happiest place to live
- London retains place as UK's unhappiest place to live
- Wales rockets from 11<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> place; North East drops from 1<sup>st</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>
- Women overtake men as the happier sex

Northern Ireland has come top of the Lloyds Bank Happiness Index, with a score of 52.5, overtaking last year's title holders, the South West of England, with the cheerful winners becoming even happier following the national lockdown earlier this year.

The Index, now in its second year, is a nationwide annual survey of over 5,000 people, which asks how happy or unhappy people are in their local communities, creating a barometer ranging between -100 (very unhappy) to +100 (very happy). Following an initial survey in March, questions were asked again following lockdown, to understand the extent to which the UK-wide restrictions changed how people feel.

Despite the pandemic, Northern Ireland has improved its happiness score through-out the year, up 5.9 points in June compared to March. [Table 1] Across the UK, happiness dropped slightly, on average, in the 12 months up to March 2020 (42.6 vs 42.5), but recovered to levels slightly above that of the previous year, of 42.9.

**Graph 1: Happiness across the UK (Source: YouGov, 2020)**



## MEDIA CONTACTS

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**Jo Harris, Director, Lloyds Bank said:** “2020 has been a year of immense change for everyone, and we anticipated this to be reflected in the results of our latest Happiness Index, which Lloyds Bank has been running for the past 6 years.

“The results show that the collective mood can be quite different depending on where you live. Following the national lockdown earlier in the year, Northern Ireland has taken the top spot from the South West of England, with other areas also showing improvements, particularly Wales who have rocketed from 11th to 4th place. For some however, happiness levels dropped below those we’ve seen in previous years, including the North East and the East Midlands, suggesting the impacts of the pandemic have been felt differently across the nation.”

The second happiest place to live in the UK is the South West of England whose residents topped the table in 2019. While the South West couldn’t beat Northern Ireland’s overall happiness score, it did show the greatest improvement across 2020 - increasing by 8.1 points - the highest of any UK region.

All areas in the top five places to live, which also includes Wales, the North West of England, and Scotland have become happier throughout the year to date, with improvements in happiness scores of 6.2, 4.7, and 1.3 respectively.

Out of the twelve regions included in the Index, there are four that have seen happiness levels drop following the pandemic; Yorkshire and the Humber, the East of England, the East Midlands and the North East. The decline in the North East since the start of the year has been significant – falling from first place in March 2020 with a score of 53.5 - to 11<sup>th</sup> and a score of 39.2 (-14.3 points). London is the only part of the UK with a lower score, retaining its position as the UK’s unhappiest place to live, with a score of just 37.6.

People rank the amount of green space as the number one factor influencing their personal happiness. Upkeep of the local area and neighbours complete the top three.

Happiness according to age is mixed, with those aged between 35 and 44 and those over 55, feeling happier on average than they did earlier in the year; while all other age groups have seen a decline in happiness. [Table 2] The over 55s are the happiest age group for the second year in a row, and 18 to 24 years olds are now the unhappiest, taking over from 25 to 34 year olds last year.

Both women (+0.5) and men (0.6+) are happier than they were in March, but women have overtaken men, becoming the happier sex since last year’s index. [Table 3] Households of two remain the happiest by a significant margin with a score of 49.0. Families of six or more are the unhappiest, with a score of 35.1.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

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**Table 1: UK happiness by region 2019-2020**

	2019	March 2020	June 2020	Change in 2020
<b>UK</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>+0.4</b>
Northern Ireland	41.4	46.6	52.5	+5.9
South West	51.4	42.5	50.6	+8.1
North West	45.5	41.2	45.9	+4.7
Wales	33.7	38.8	45	+6.2
Scotland	44.6	42.9	44.2	+1.3
Yorkshire & the Humber	48	45.5	43.5	-2.0
West Midlands	37.2	42	43.1	+1.1
East of England	40.6	43.2	41.7	-1.5
South East	43.6	41	41.1	+0.1
East Midlands	40.8	46.1	40.6	-5.5
North East	40	53.5	39.2	-14.3

**Table 2: UK happiness by age, 2019-2020**

	2019	March 2020	June 2020
18 - 24	40.0	31.0	27.5
25-34	29.0	36.3	34.6
35-44	35.6	37.2	41.5
45-54	41.9	40.9	40.4
55+	50.6	50.6	51.0

**Table 3: UK happiness by gender 2019-2020**

	2019	March 2020	June 2020
Women	40.7	44.8	45.3
Men	44.2	39.8	40.4

**Table 4: UK happiness by size of household, 2019-2020**

	2019	March 2020	June 2020
1	36.5	35.6	36.7
2	48.0	48.1	49.0
3	45.5	39.9	41.1
4	38.5	46.3	42.5
5	39.3	39.9	41.1
6+	26.9	34.2	35.1

### Methodology

YouGov fielded a quantitative survey to a nationally representative sample of the UK population, interviewing 5,184 UK panellists who agreed to take part in research in March 2020 and then conducted a follow up quantitative survey in June 2020 amongst a similar sample profile in the UK, interviewing 5,160 UK panellists.

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