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**Why did we conduct the survey?**

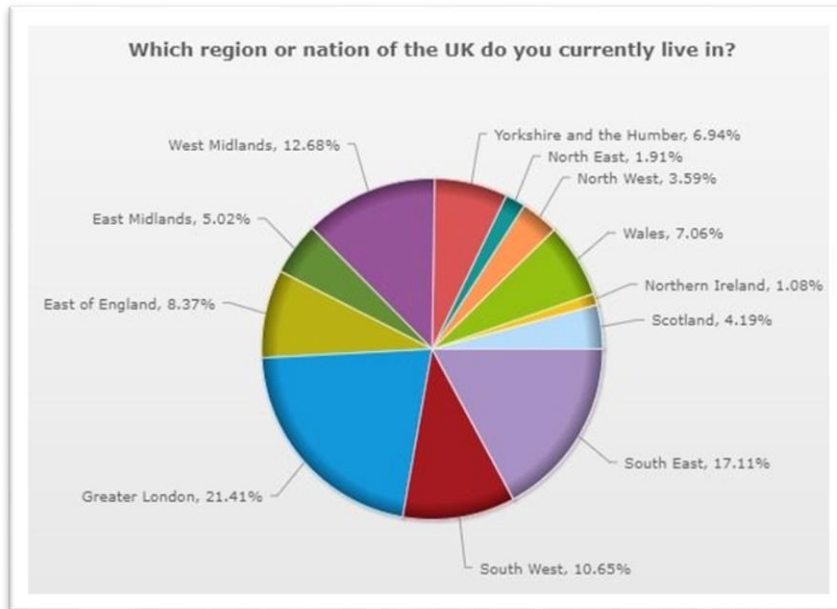
It became clear early on during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown that the effects (both positive and negative) of the virus and lockdown were being felt differently dependent on some protected characteristics, with Age and Disability being quickly identified as considerations for deciding particular vulnerability to the disease and as such advised to shield. Later ethnicity, sex, and employment type emerged as factors in how deadly the virus outcomes are. We felt it was important to understand how these different experiences might be applicable to the archives sector but also how these different characteristics might affect the confidence of users and workers in reopening services.

**Who took part?**

- The survey had 855 respondents, 144 of whom answered question 4, and 588 of whom answered question 5, from which most of the analysis was drawn.
- 62% (530) used archives for research, 23% (197) were employed in archives, 4% (34) volunteer in archives, 2% (17) had never used archives.

We had a good geographical spread of respondents, with the largest representation from Greater London, South East, West Midlands and South West. 16 didn't specify region but 2 of those noted elsewhere that they were based internationally, using the records digitally.

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### **Methodology**

The survey was open between 11 June 2020-30 June 2020 and was distributed within the The National Archives staff networks, on the nra mailing list, via twitter targeting [@museum\\_detox](#), [@museumDCN](#), [@LGBTIQoutside](#), [@switchboardLGBT](#), [@MuslimCouncil](#), [@ageukcampaigns](#), [@AIUCentre](#), [@PregWithoutFear](#), [@MoTransology](#), [@stillillock](#), [@nicetimearts](#), [@littlecog1](#), [@Drake\\_Music](#) and the The National Archives newsletter.

With many respondents answering the survey with responses specific to conducting research at The National Archives, we believe the The National Archives newsletter yielded the majority of responses.

The majority of the analysis is based on responses to questions 4 and 5 of this survey which asked:

3. The Equalities Act protects you from discrimination based on your: (1) Age, (2) Disability, (3) Gender reassignment, (4) Marriage and Civil partnership, (5) Pregnancy and maternity, (6) Race, (7) Religion or belief, (8) Sex, (9) Sexual orientation

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These are the 9 protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, everyone is protected under the Equalities Act.

Do you feel as though any of these 9 characteristics have affected your experience of lockdown?

**4. If 'yes' could you describe in what way?**

**5. Do you have any concerns around re-opening Archive services that are specific to impacts that maybe felt because of your (1) Age, (2) Disability, (3) Gender reassignment, (4) Marriage and Civil partnership, (5) Pregnancy and maternity, (6) Race, (7) Religion or belief, (8) Sex or (9) Sexual orientation?**

We received free text responses to these questions which we categorised into: which protected characteristics were disclosed, the content of the comments and a general sentiment analysis of Positive, Negative or Ambivalent.

It should be noted that these questions were framed around the Equalities Act, the effects of the pandemic and concerns and so while the detailed responses show a tendency towards negative sentiment, this will be in part due to the framing of the question or responding to a question in an ambiguous way that those analysing felt may indicate negative sentiment.

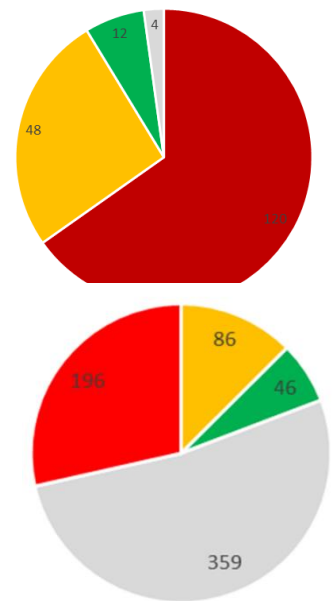
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**Headline findings:**

**Question 4:** 846 people answered question 3 with 25% of people saying ‘yes’ (17.02% 144), ‘unsure’ (6.38% 54) or ‘prefer not to say’ (1.65% 14). 74.94% (634) said ‘no’.

144 responses to Question 4 became 184 comments when separated by content, of these: 65% (120) were negative, 26% (48) were ambivalent, 7% (12) were positive, 2% (4) did not give enough information for sentiment analysis.

**Question 5:** 588 responses became 687 comments when separated by content, of these 28.5% (196) were negative, 12.5% (86) were ambivalent, 7% (46) were positive, 52% (359) did not give enough information for sentiment analysis.

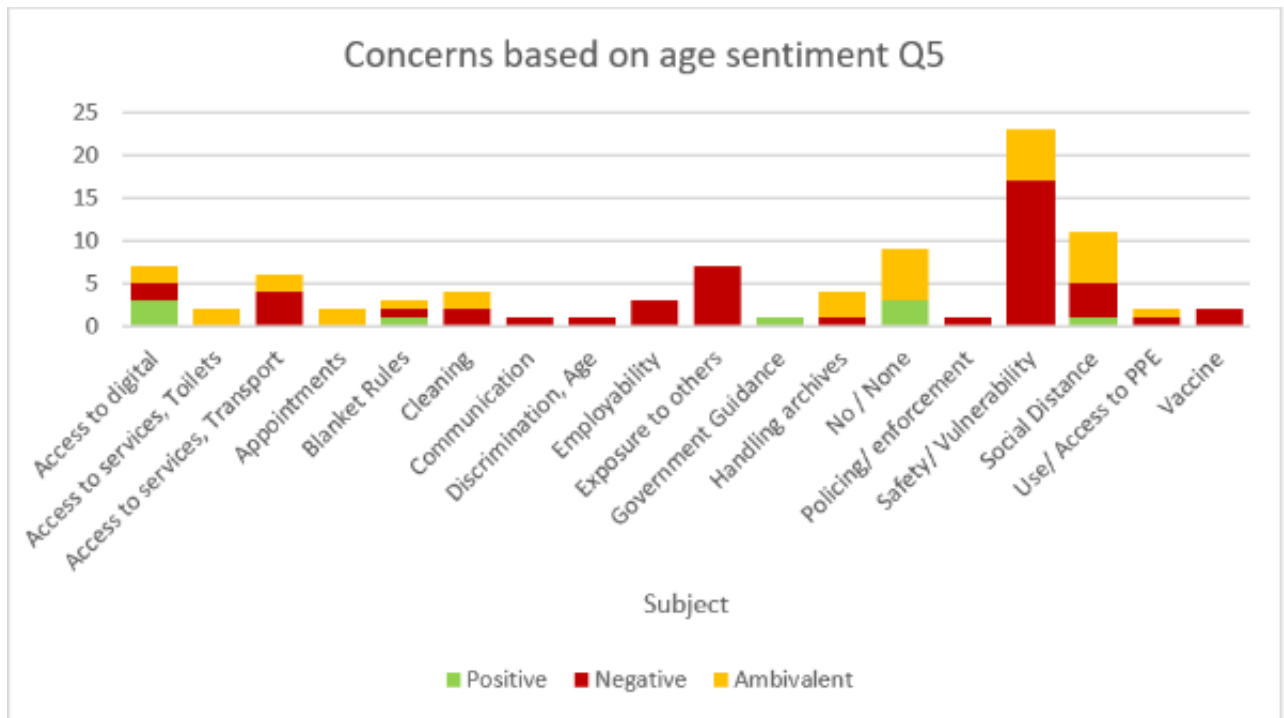
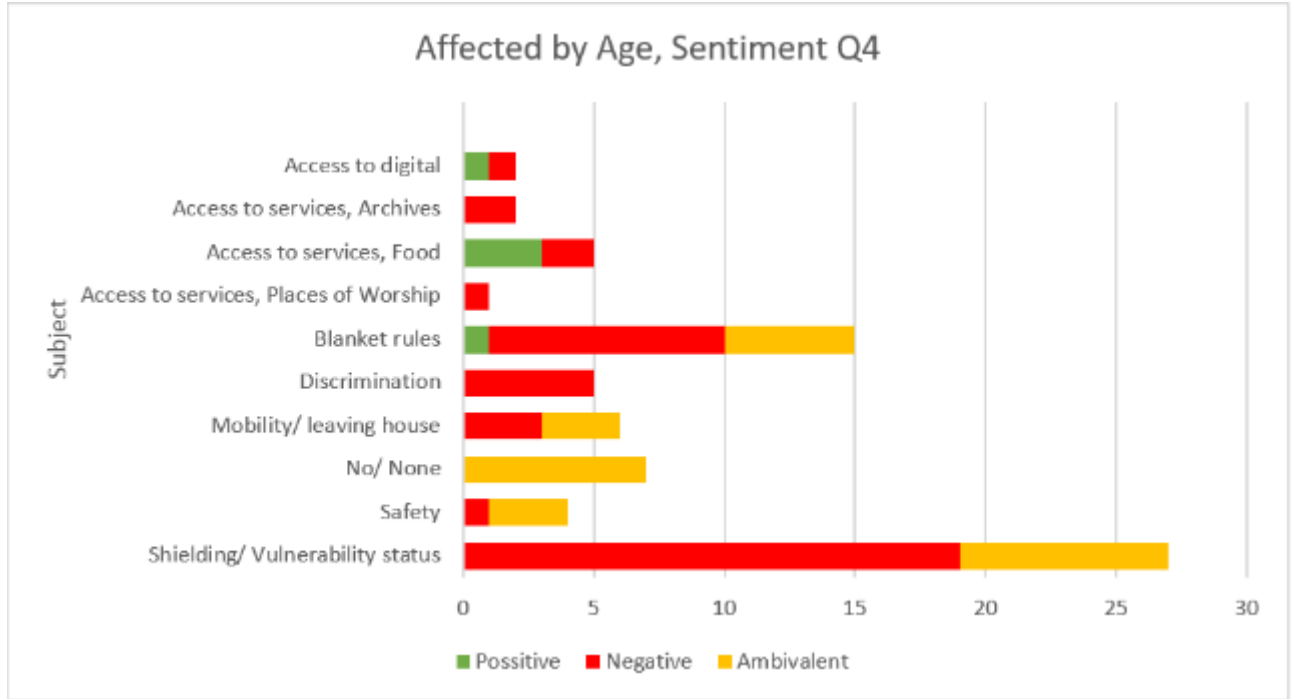


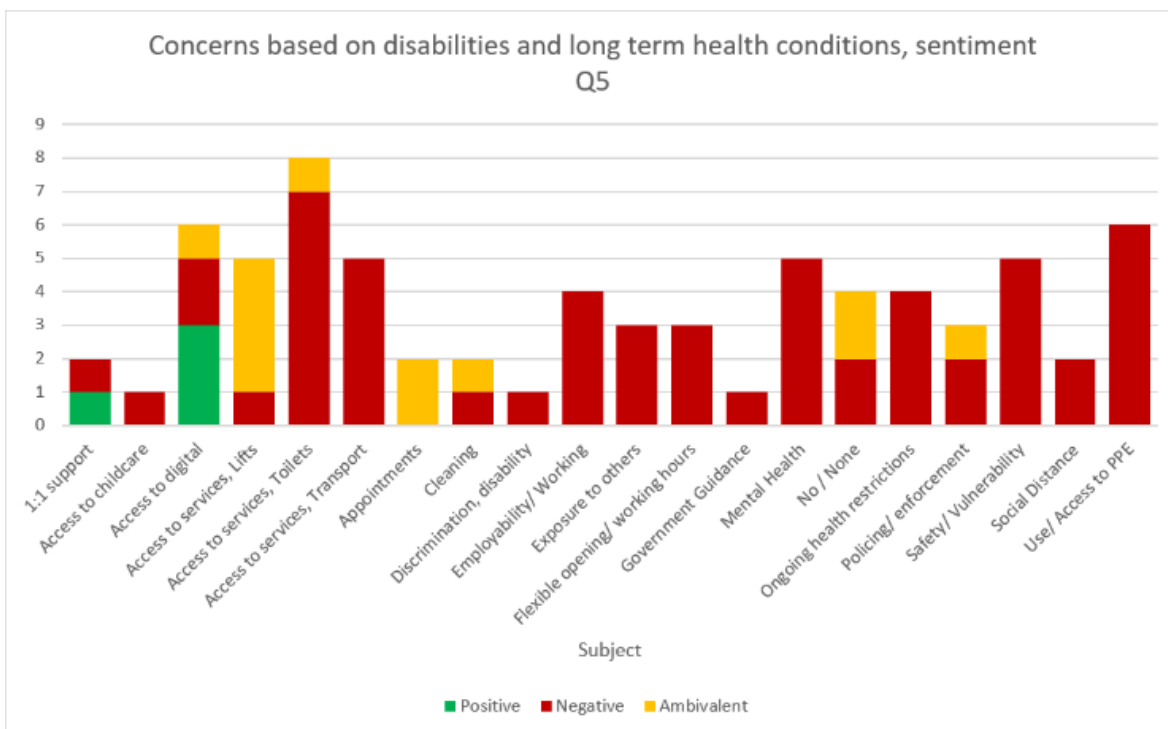
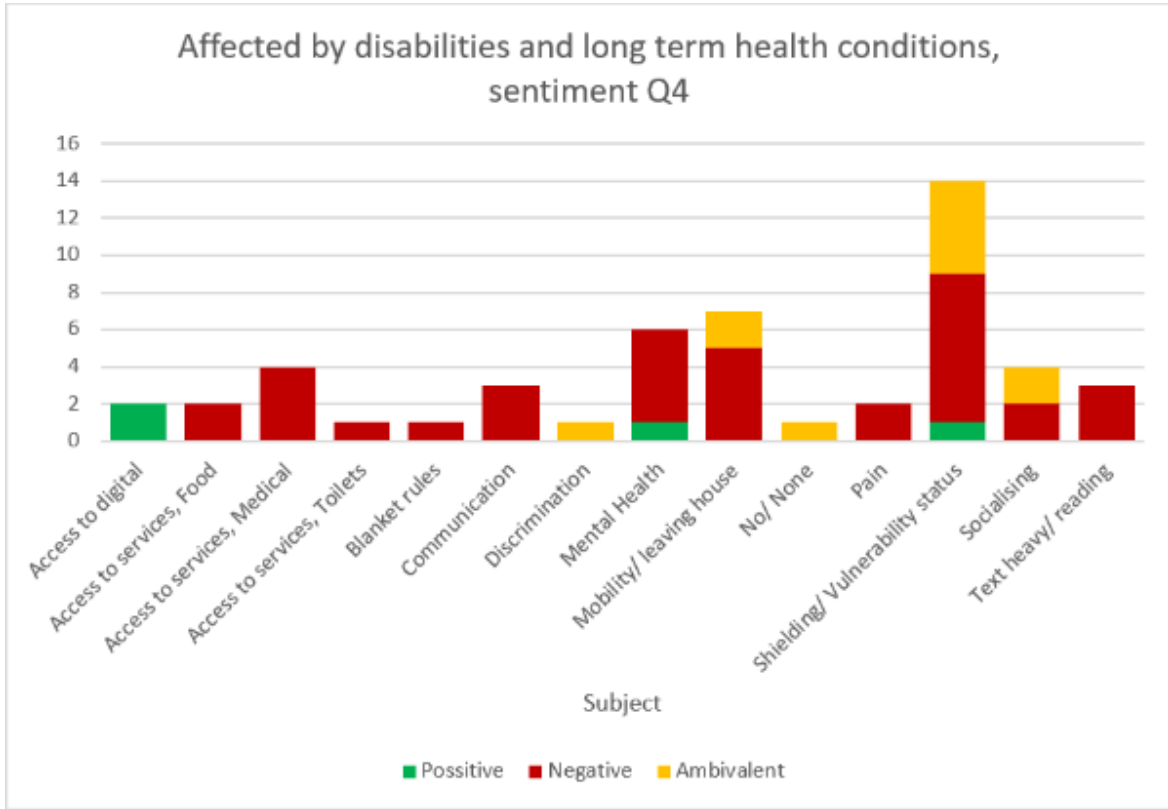
Sentiment analysis question 4 and question 5

**Question 4:** 8.5% respondents declared no protected characteristics. Of those that did, 44% (76) declared age impacted their experience of lockdown, 30% (51) declared disability or illness, 8% (14) declared sex, 4% (7) declared race, 3% (5) declared marriage or civil partnership, 3% (5) declared religion, 2% (4) declared pregnancy or maternity, 1.8% (3) declared sexual orientation, 1.7% (1) declared affect by association with someone else’s characteristic. None declared Gender reassignment, although it mentioned as concern held by someone who didn’t feel affected by it personally.

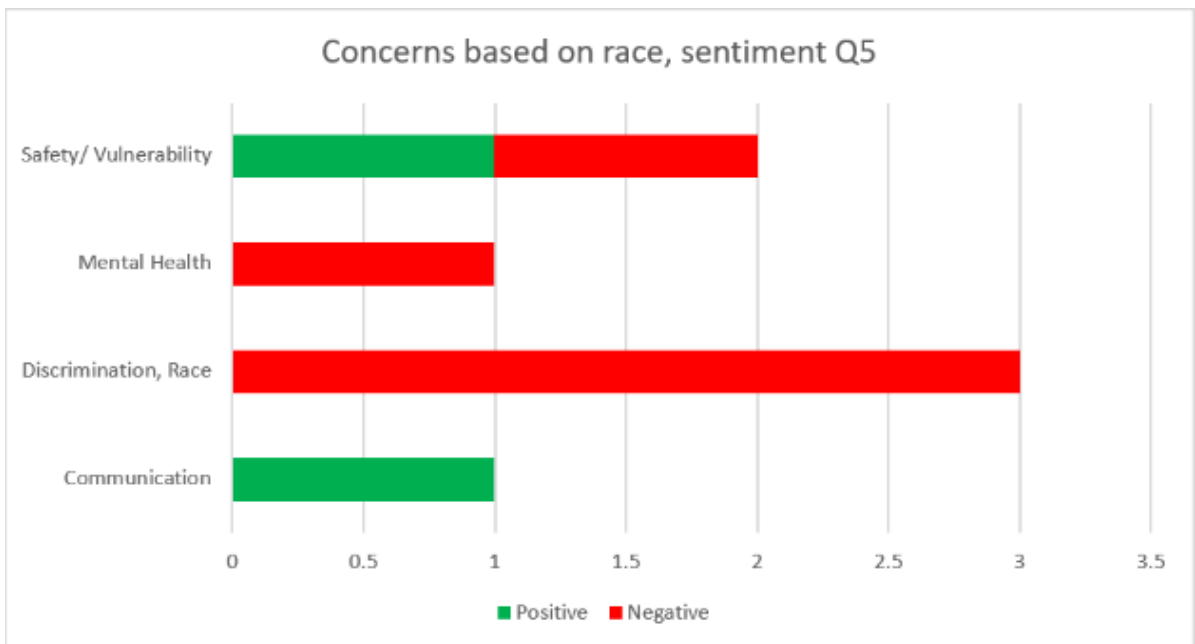
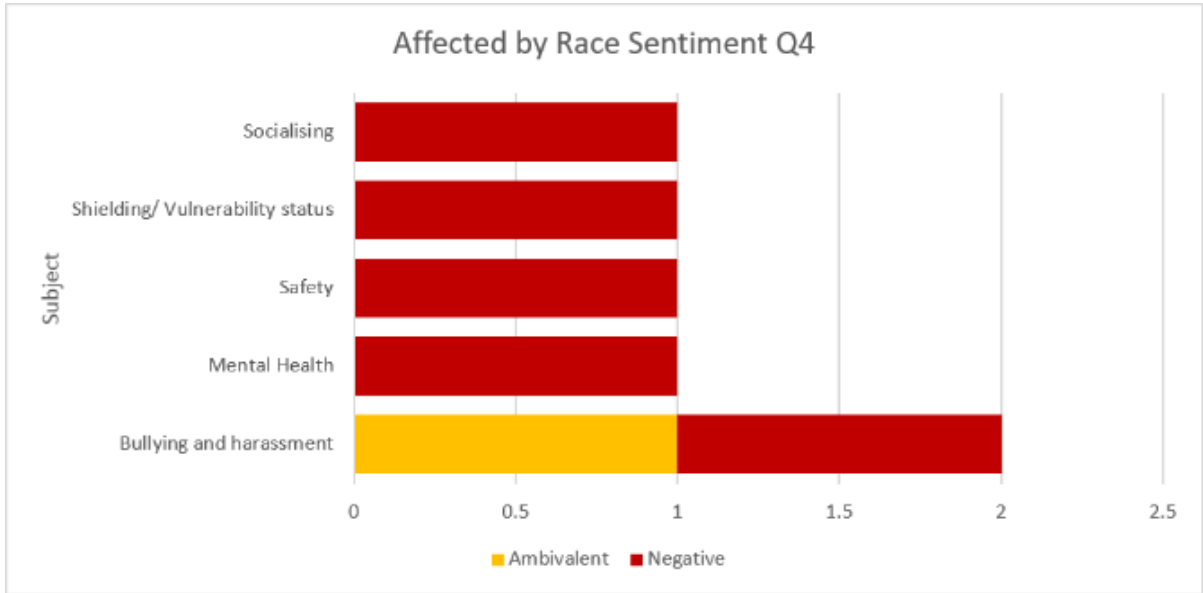
**Question 5:** 67% of respondents declared no protected characteristics. Of those who declared, 45% (100) commented about concerns related to age, 25% (56) related to physical disabilities, 8% (18) related to a mixture of characteristics.

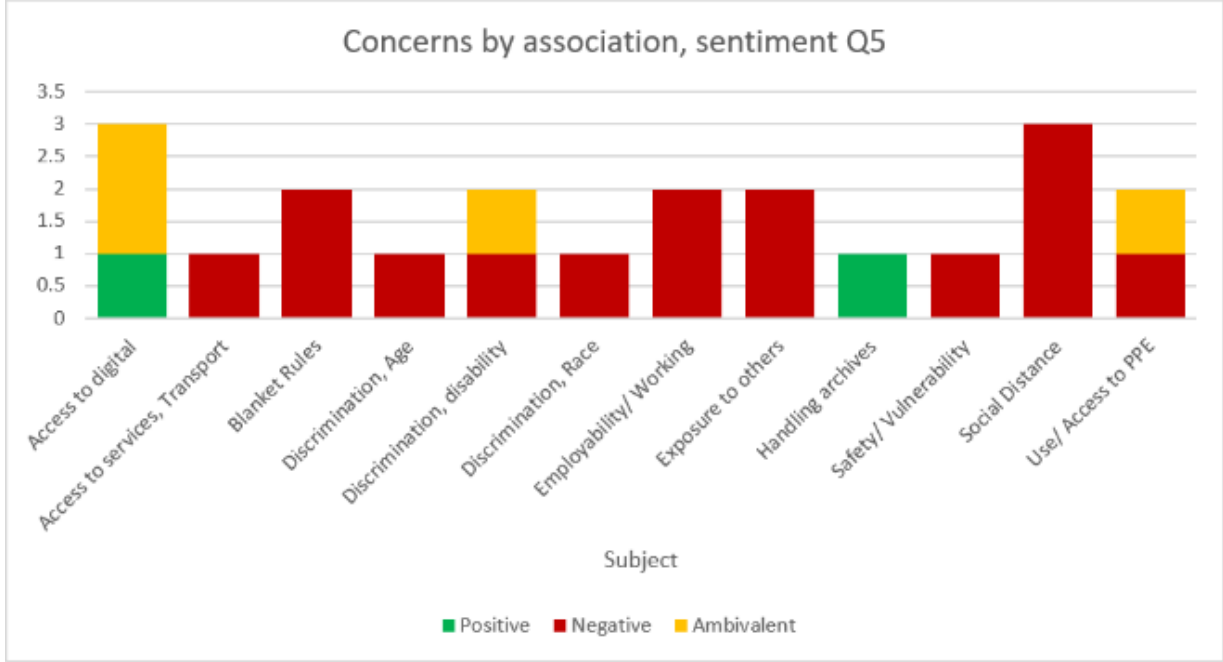
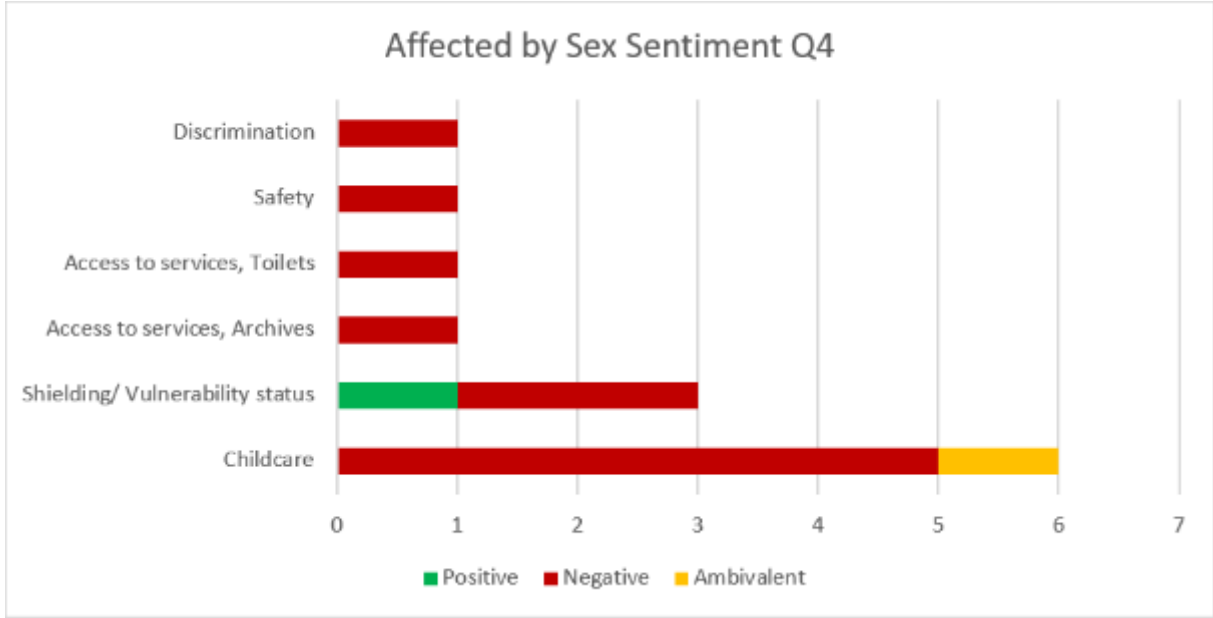
**Sentiment Analysis- Charts**





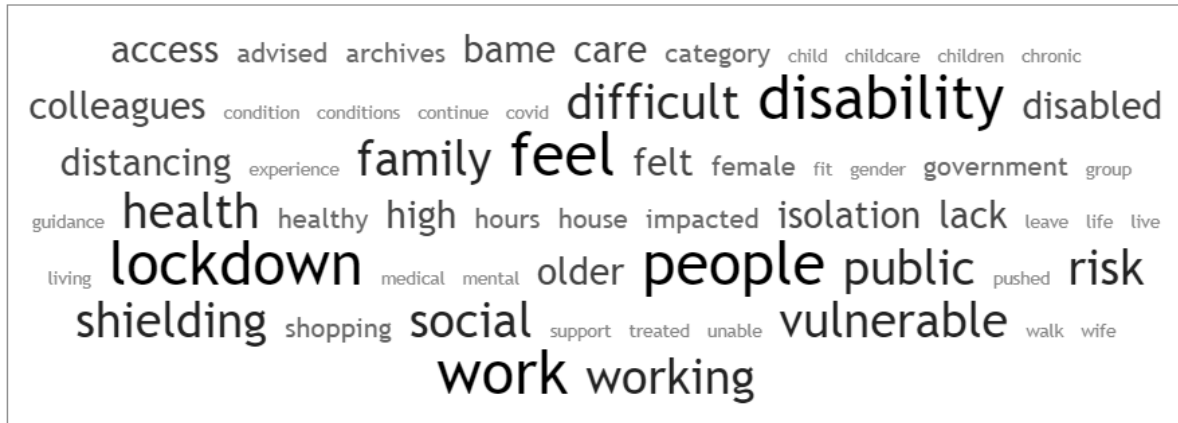
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Word Cloud Lockdown experiences, answers to Question 4

### **Responses broken down by content**

The following are excerpts and summery of the most discussed and relevant issues raised by respondents sorted into content groups.

#### Access to digital

There was overall praise for digital content and access to records provided by The National Archives and the sector, and requests for this to continue while also requesting digitisation of records to be resumed/increased. The reason given for many is that they will not feel safe to travel to, nor use the archives in person until the pandemic is over.

But some concerns were that due to their age some responded they did not have the IT skills needed to participate in the digital engagement.

#### Trust in archive staff

56% (374) of respondents to Question 5 said that they had no concerns and many explicitly shared their trust in the archives, to the extent that some did not see the question of equality as relevant.

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### Childcare

There was a general concern both for access to childcare to ensure that workers could return to working on site, and fear of increased risk of contracting and passing on the virus if children were going to public childcare/school.

Supplementary concerns were around an increased risk of passing on the virus from children to vulnerable family members acting in a childcare capacity if parents returned to working on site.

### Social distancing

There were general concerns for self and others about the ability to maintain social distancing, and a few questions on how procedures will be enforced.

There was a repeated worry about needing to shield or maintain social distancing and the impact of this on employability:

“Yes. I have health conditions that mean I still cannot mix [with] other people. I am worried about losing my job if I cannot physically return to the office.”

“... I'm concerned about how well any measures taken by my employer to reduce risk will be implemented, how strictly my colleagues will adhere to such measures and the behaviour of customers which in some cases can be unpredictable at the best of times...”

“I am also concerned that furlough will transition into redundancy, and that entering the job market at this time would not necessarily be helped by my disability.”

Though there was some concern around PPE including questions of accessibility and masks regarding communicating in general and communication with our D/deaf or hard of hearing visitors and colleagues:

“If all staff wear masks then it would be difficult to lip read them and make interactions more difficult. If they wear visors or masks with transparent sections over the mouth this would be easier.”

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Declaring vulnerability

There was a repeated question about how to declare vulnerabilities as a way of ensuring extra caution was taken by those more cavalier around those who felt more vulnerable:

“Disability. I have M.E. and if the Records Office decide on an appointment system I would be grateful if such hidden disability could be taken in to account - it would be useful if the Records Office ensured that such a scheme allowed users to elect a time to attend.”

“Due to my level of isolation and disability [I] feel very anxious about interaction with others, and that [I] will have to explain [the] importance of PPE, by opening up about my disability. [I’m] also not feeling [great] about sound.”

Anxiety:

“I am anxious to restart my research but am reluctant to do so in person.”

There was general anxiety about navigating public spaces after lockdown, and in particular concerns about public transport. The nervousness extended to those managing staff who are struggling themselves with their mental health.

“I am worried that the hours will be shorter, face masks will be demanded (I cannot wear one) and that I will generally not be able to get much done in the archives.”

There was anxiety as well from staff around interacting with users, both about contracting the illness but also in enforcing the new safety guidelines:

“Yes, I worry about how our service users will react to whatever new systems we put in place. As an Autistic person, I find conflict particularly difficult to manage well, and I do not want to be placed in a conflict situation due to our users not following or finding issue with new guidelines. As a younger female staff member I often feel our users (who are often 20-30 years older) give me less respect than they would a

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senior/male member of staff. I also feel as if I am not in a good position to assert authority, which is complicated by the social communications issues I have as an Autistic individual.”

Invisibility

There was an overwhelming feeling of invisibility, with respondents mentioning either feeling ignored or caught within blanket rules that felt discriminatory (specifically around age):

“I’m disabled and have underlying health conditions - our voice has been totally ignored throughout the COVID lockdown, with conversations about 'the vulnerable' instead focusing on care homes and the elderly. All we got from the government was pretty much a 'Stay indoors and [shut up], we'll get to you later' It's been unbelievably horrible to have really important medical procedures and appointments, including cancer biopsies and tests, cancelled with no further information. My social worker quit at the start of lockdown and I still haven't had a replacement.”

Physical access needs

There was a reminder of the necessity of some facilities, specifically toilets, parking, lifts and places to rest as a number of persons were concerned about their ability to wait in long queues without pain. Others required carers to accompany them:

“Being able to receive the support I need as I have a disability. I bring my own support when I need it but I would require them to sit with me. This would be ok as we cohabit so don't need to social distance.”

Similar request for a ‘household appointment’:

“I have knee problems and am therefore daunted by the walk from the car park to the building. I do not like the self-service catering for the same reason.”

Specific issues were raise about Asthma:

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"Yes as an asthmatic whose asthma is often triggered by fragrance and VOCs (chemicals in the air) concerns about cleaning products/disinfectant and hand sanitiser in enclosed spaces. Still looking for a face mask that suits glasses and asthma. "

"What will happen when I cough because of my asthma? Can I take hard boiled sweets in to prevent that, who will decide if I can go in without a face mask etc.? "

### Grief

Some expressed the value of archives in battling loneliness and mentioned grieving recent losses. Considering the scale of loss we will have all suffered I believe the idea of grief, mourning and loneliness will be very important to keep in mind as empathetic organisations.

"I have arthritis in my knees - it's probable my knee operations will now be delayed - my husband died two months ago so now I will need to use public transport and a folding disability scooter - will access be OK? I am nearly 67 so am I at risk if I visit archives. I need to research - as need to keep active now I am unexpectedly alone."

### Booking appointments:

Concerns were raised by dyslexics regarding ability to read under time pressure constraints, and others about the flexibility of appointments considering public transport issues.

"I have fairly severe dyslexia. The result is I read slowly and need to look at lists for a long time to spot what I need. Any shortening of opening hours or reduction in facilities would be [disastrous] for my research."

### Race and Racism

There were comments and responses to increased racial tension and conversations about anti-racism. Including request for sensitivity around disproportionate effect on COVID-19 on BAME communities

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“Not in regard to myself. But recent events instigated worldwide by BLM means a re-set, I'm pushing for a more expansive view of what opposing racism in our sector looks like - I expect this to be quite a lonely road.”

“It is [evident] that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups have suffered disproportionately from/ under COVID. There needs to be sensitivity around this when The National Archives opens up. The National Archives needs to staff dedicated to engaging with BAME groups. Indeed, there should be specific posts designed to engage these groups, sensitive to their needs, histories and heritages, with staff cognisant of the historic-to-present-day [contexts]. For these such groups, this would serve to make engaging with The National Archives more encouraging and potentially fruitful.”

“I have had a particularly difficult time personally with the ongoing racial [violence] and [harassment] that has played out on the world scale. Coupled with this was the feeling that pre-lockdown in my organisation complaints about bullying and [harassment] were not taken seriously and BAME colleagues were continually pushed into a corner and not given voices or the same spaces or legal rights that white colleagues had and ignored time & again. Post lockdown you find that BAME colleagues are the first to be pushed back into work, in unsafe dingy dark environments or in service or front of house roles predominantly with short term or fixed contracts. This is of course on top of and as proven by the deaths of other predominantly BAME key workers in the UK. On top of this BAME colleagues are expected time and again to reiterate calling out this lack of [support] and facing continued bullying and [harassment], where they have to deal with HR that do not seem fit for purpose and who are constantly demonising [whistle-blowers]. BAME colleagues are going above and beyond the call of duty and to very emotionally exhausting places to make their work environments better - and this is taking a huge toll. It is also making BAME colleagues very angry.”

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### Conclusions and next steps

While the Office of National Statistics (ONS)<sup>1</sup> will continue to monitor how the virus is affecting people differently based on their various identities, jobs and lifestyles, there is a role in monitoring different impacts on a local level the impact for archive users and workers. It is clear that there is both a demand for inclusive practice from users and workers, but also a need to encourage and support inclusive policy and practice going forward. Having to respond both to lockdown, and the easing of lockdown as well as the increased awareness and urgency in the fight for racial equality.

1. The first step is amplifying the perspectives that people who completed this survey took the time to write and share.
2. The second step is to host a webinar or series of webinars to support Archive service managers and workers to keep inclusive thinking at the forefront of their practice as we adapt our practices in the face of our new challenges

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#### <sup>1</sup> ONS related research

1. Ethnicity, Disability, Religion: Which groups are at most risk of death involving COVID-19? <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2020/06/19/ethnicity-disability-religion-which-groups-are-at-most-risk-of-death-involving-covid-19/>
2. Coronavirus and the social impacts on older people in Great Britain: 3 April to 10 May 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/aging/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonolderpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020>
3. Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonthosewithadisabilityingreatbritain>
4. Coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths by ethnic group, England and Wales: 2 March 2020 to 10 April 2020 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>
5. Which occupations have the highest potential exposure to the coronavirus (COVID-19)? <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/articles/whichoccupationshavethehighestpotentialexposuretothecoronaviruscovid19/2020-05-11>

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3. The third will be to keep monitoring workers' and users' differing experience, and their concerns based upon these experiences. This is a changeable time and as the ongoing emergency develops our experiences and feelings will change, but by staying in touch and listening we can try our best to remove as many barriers to access as we can while keeping everyone as safe as possible.



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**Appendix - Survey Questions**

Covid-19 and archives in the UK: reopening inclusively

Welcome to the survey

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies (like local councils, hospitals, and publicly-funded service providers) to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics. This is the Public Sector Equality Duty.

As we begin discussions about returning to work, and reopening archive services across the country, we want to gather further information to understand how different protected characteristics have impacted your experience of the lockdown, and how this might likely affect your experience of the lifting of lockdown

This survey is for anyone who works within archives in a paid or volunteer capacity but also anyone who uses archives. Any information you provide will be anonymised. Headline findings from the survey will be shared.

The answers to this survey will help to ensure that resources are in place to support people with different needs when archive services open back up to staff and the public.

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### Survey questions

1. Which region or nation of the UK do you currently live in?

- Scotland
- Northern Ireland
- Wales
- North West
- North East
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- West Midlands
- East Midlands
- East of England
- Greater London
- South West
- South East

2. Which best describes your main relationship with archives?

- I use archives for research
- I use archives for other reasons (e.g. visit exhibitions, meet with friends, visit café)

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- I have never used archives
- I volunteer to work with archives
- I am an employee within the archive sector
- Other (please specify):

3. The Equalities Act protects you from discrimination based on your: (1) Age, (2) Disability, (3) Gender reassignment, (4) Marriage and civil partnership, (5) Pregnancy and maternity, (6) Race, (7) Religion or belief, (8) Sex, (9) Sexual orientation. These are the 9 protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010. Everyone is protected under the Equalities Act. Do you feel as though any of these 9 characteristics have affected your experience of lockdown?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Prefer not to say

4. If you answered 'yes' above, could you describe in what way?

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5. Do you have any concerns around re-opening archive services that are specific to impacts that may be felt because of your (1) Age, (2) Disability, (3) Gender reassignment, (4) Marriage and civil partnership, (5) Pregnancy and maternity, (6) Race, (7) Religion or belief, (8) Sex or (9) Sexual orientation?