

# Households with children: access to services during the pandemic

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Public hearing on the EU strategy on the rights of the child and the European Child Guarantee  
Meeting at the European Economic and Social Committee

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# Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey

It captures the experience of living and working through the pandemic, with the aim of helping policymakers to bring about an equal recovery from the crisis

**Round 1:** April 2020

**Round 2:** July 2020

**Round 3:** March 2021

Survey participants recruited using online snowball sampling methods and social media advertisements

Explore the results on the website:

[Living, working and COVID-19 data | Eurofound \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/topic/covid-19)

**FIRST FINDINGS**

**Eurofound**

## Living, working and COVID-19 First findings - April 2020

**Introduction**

In the space of just a few weeks, the COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed the lives of people around the globe. Apart from the devastating health consequences on people directly affected by the virus, the COVID-19 pandemic has had major implications for the way people live and work, affecting their physical and mental well-being in a profound way.

To capture the immediate economic and social effects of this crisis, Eurofound launched a large-scale online survey across the European Union and beyond on 3 April. Entitled Living, working and COVID-19, the aim of the survey is to investigate the impact on well-being, work and telework, and on the financial situation of people living in Europe, and on the financial situation of people living in Europe, and on the financial situation of people living in Europe, and on the financial situation of people living in Europe.

By 30 April, more than 15,000 people had already taken part in the e-survey. The survey will remain online over the next few months in order to capture the impact across time of the COVID-19 pandemic on life and work in the EU and the rest of the world and to gauge the spread of the COVID-19 virus among the population.<sup>1</sup>

The first results show a Europe grappling to respond to the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, with many respondents reporting high levels of loneliness coupled with a year of closures and restrictions.

**FACTSHEET**

**Eurofound**

## Living, working and COVID-19 (Update April 2021): Mental health and trust decline across EU as pandemic enters another year

**Introduction**

To capture the economic and social effects of the coronavirus pandemic, Eurofound launched a large-scale online survey across the European Union (EU) in April 2020. Entitled Living, working and COVID-19, the aim of the survey was to investigate the impact on well-being, health and safety, work and telework, people's work-life balance and financial situation. To date, three rounds of the survey have been rolled out. Launched in April 2020, when a large part of European society was shut down following the onset of the crisis, the survey set out to gauge the immediate social and economic effects. A second round took place three months later, in July 2020, when society across Europe began to re-open again following the first, intense lockdown. The third and latest round was rolled in February and March 2021 during a resurgence of COVID-19 cases, leading to further or extended lockdowns in many Member States.

This factsheet presents a selection of main findings from the latest round of the survey and provides a picture of how the social and economic situation of Europeans has evolved during one year of closures and restrictions. While the rapid development and rollout of vaccines across Europe gives reasons to hope that the end of the pandemic is now a real possibility, delays in their delivery as well as unforeseen health risks have slowed down the vaccination process, further stalling the full re-opening of society.

The Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey is open to anyone aged 18 and over with access to the internet and to date almost 230,000 responses have been collected.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence of the sampling methodology, the data are weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the sample in terms of age, gender, region and education of each Member State and for the

**A year of closures and restrictions**

By March 2021, most Europeans had experienced a full year of restrictions on economic activity, mobility and social interactions, with several countries going through a series of full lockdowns. Early responses by governments were similar, with strict measures introduced straightaway, followed by a divergence of measures that depended on health and economic data.<sup>2</sup> Overall, however, much of Europe was under comparatively strict lockdown in spring 2021. This section will highlight some of the most important developments Europeans society during the past year in terms of employment, working from home, schooling, well-being and access to healthcare.

**Job loss during pandemic shows no sign of recovery**

A year after the first businesses closed due to the outbreak of COVID-19, 10% of respondents who had been employed before the pandemic were now unemployed, an increase of two percentage points from the situation in the summer of 2020 (8%) and double the figure of spring 2020 (5%) (Figure 1).<sup>3</sup>

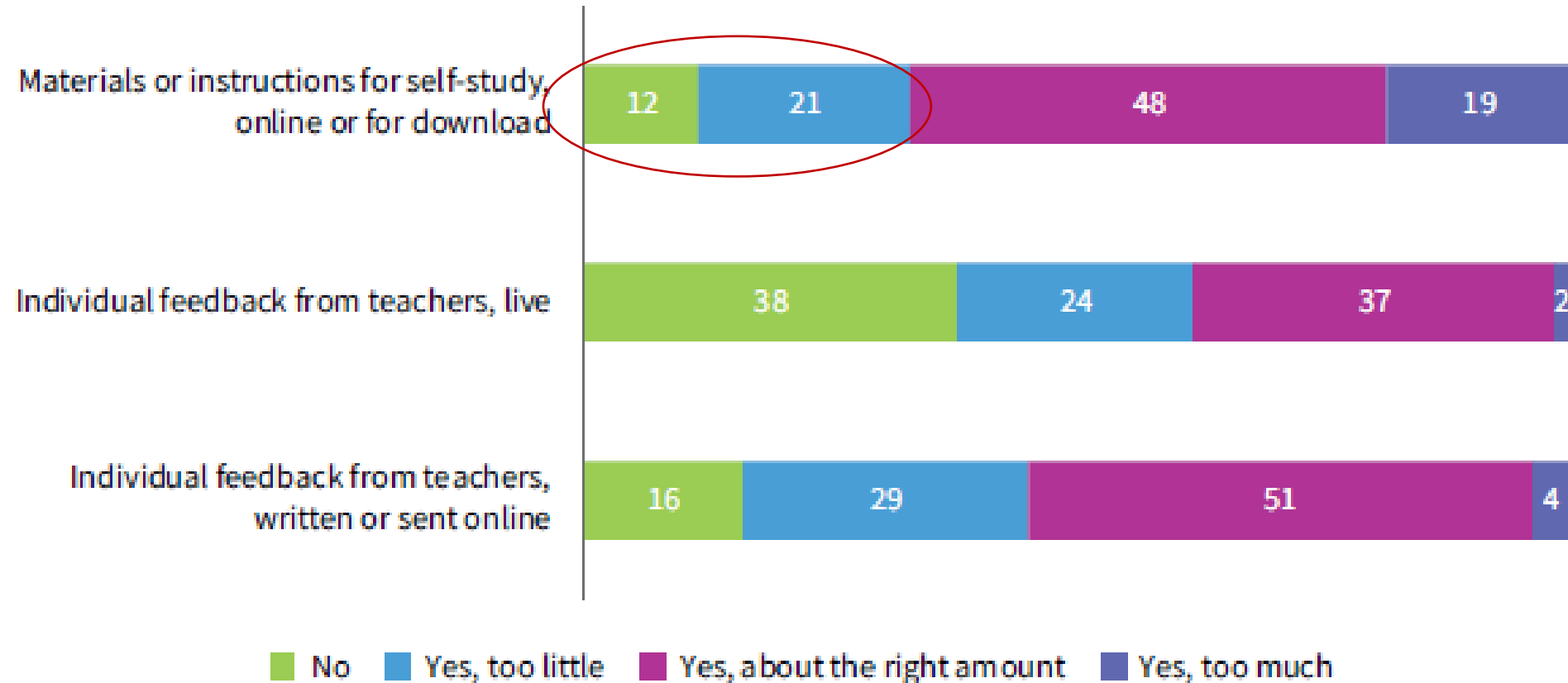
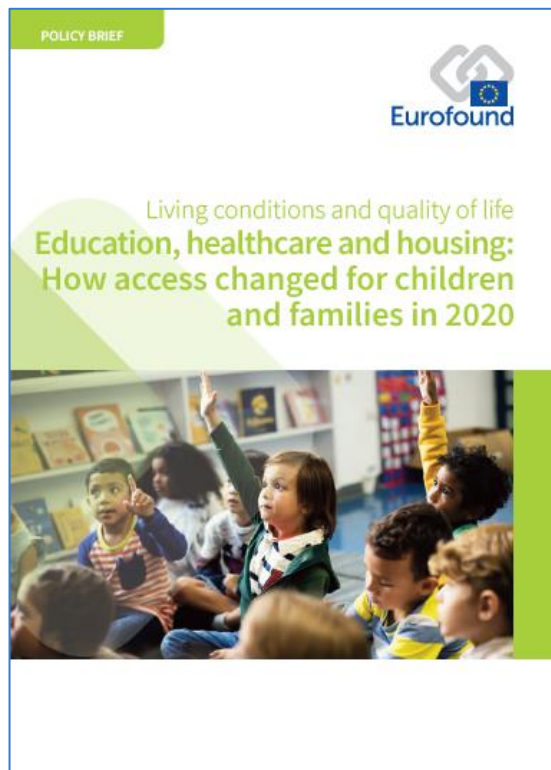
1. For the EU27, the sample consists of 230,000 selected responses: 17,000 from round 1, 140,000 from round 2 and 40,000 from round 3.  
2. This report presents findings from the cross-sectional analysis of the three rounds of data collection carried out in the survey. The e-survey also includes a panel component, whereby the findings of the same questionnaire are tracked over time. For further information on methodology, please see <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eng/2021/04>.  
3. Evidence from the Sustainability 20 Government Response Tracker, cited in The Conversation, 24 March 2021. What we learned from the living working and COVID-19 survey in the world.  
4. Data from Eurostat show that in addition to the usual peaks in the number of absences from work in early January, mid-August and 20th September, there were two further peaks in April and November 2020 due to the COVID-19 epidemics. Eurostat, News, 24 April 2021. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg\\_8\\_8\\_1](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&code=sdg_8_8_1)

# Increase in schooling online and digital deprivation

By spring 2021, satisfaction with and willingness for more schooling online decreased.

However, it is likely to maintain some presence – and therefore has to reach its audience, and needs means and methods that work.

Since the pandemic began, have your children received any of the following as part of their online schooling?



Eurofound (2021), *Education, healthcare and housing: How access changed for children and families in 2020*.

Responses from those with children in primary and secondary education. July 2020.

# Erosion of work–life balance

*The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on women*

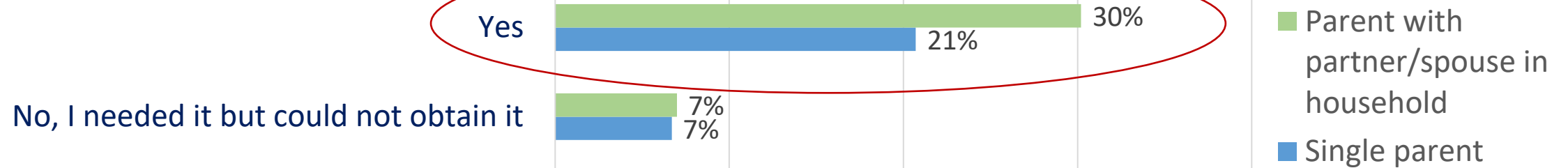
## Proportion of parents declaring they are too tired after work to do household jobs, EU27 (%)

			Summer 2020	Spring 2021
Men	No children under 12	Worked from employer's premises	25	26
		Worked only from home	23	23
	Children under 12	Worked from employer's premises	27	20
		Worked only from home	24	24
Women	No children under 12	Worked from employer's premises	30	36
		Worked only from home	30	30
	Children under 12	Worked from employer's premises	38	44
		Worked only from home	31	39

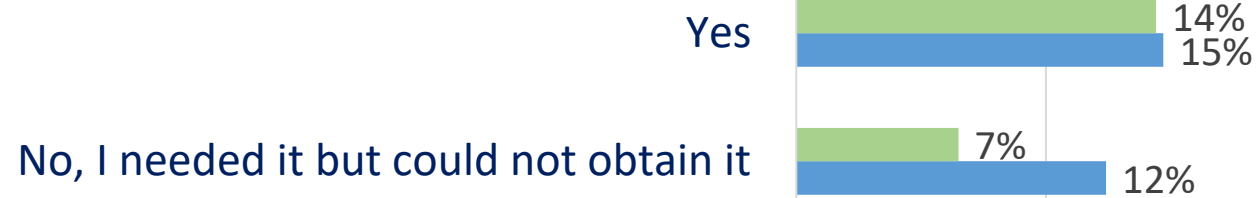
# Lower use of childcare/after-school care by single parents

*Have you used any of the following types of services or support during the last 12 months?*

## PROFESSIONAL CHILDCARE (for under 12s)



## TUTORING (for under 18s)



Source: Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey. Data from round 3, **March 2021**.

Note: Professional childcare services for pre-school children and after-school care (either paid or unpaid)

# Use of healthcare services

■ Parent with partner/spouse in household ■ Single parent ■ EU27

*Positive story:*

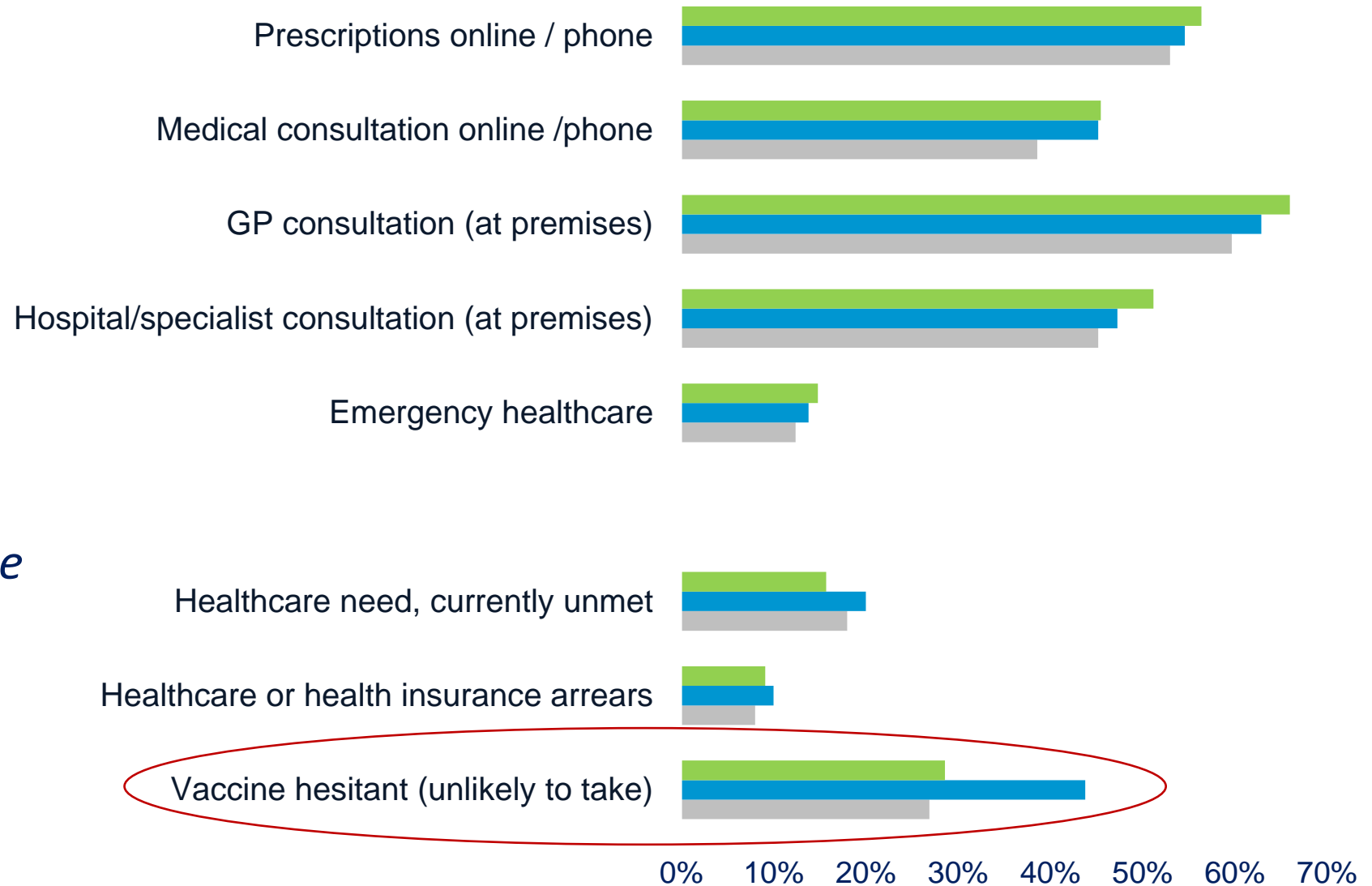
*Relatively minor differences in using main medical services*

*A concern:*

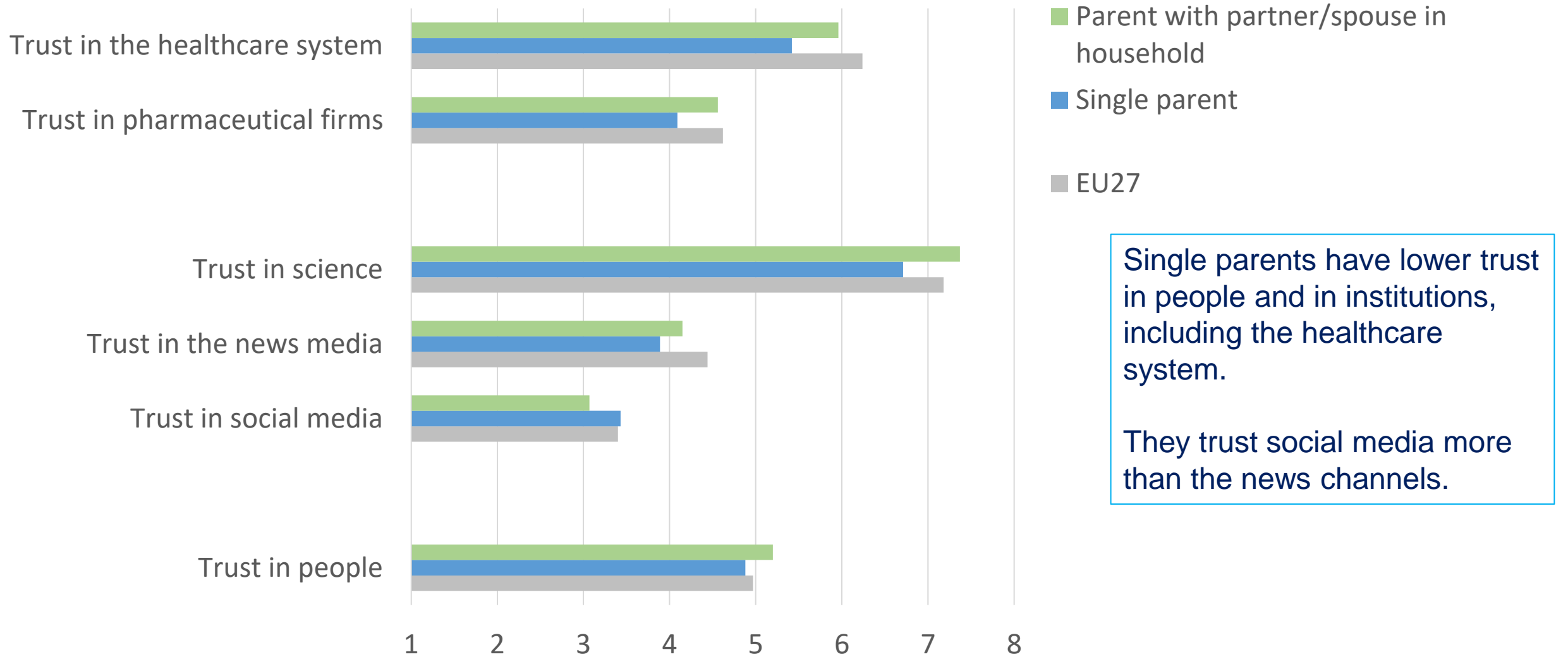
*20% of single parents have an unmet medical need*

*A challenge:*

*44% of single parents unlikely to get vaccinated*



# Challenge of trust



Source: Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey. Data from round 3, **March 2021**.

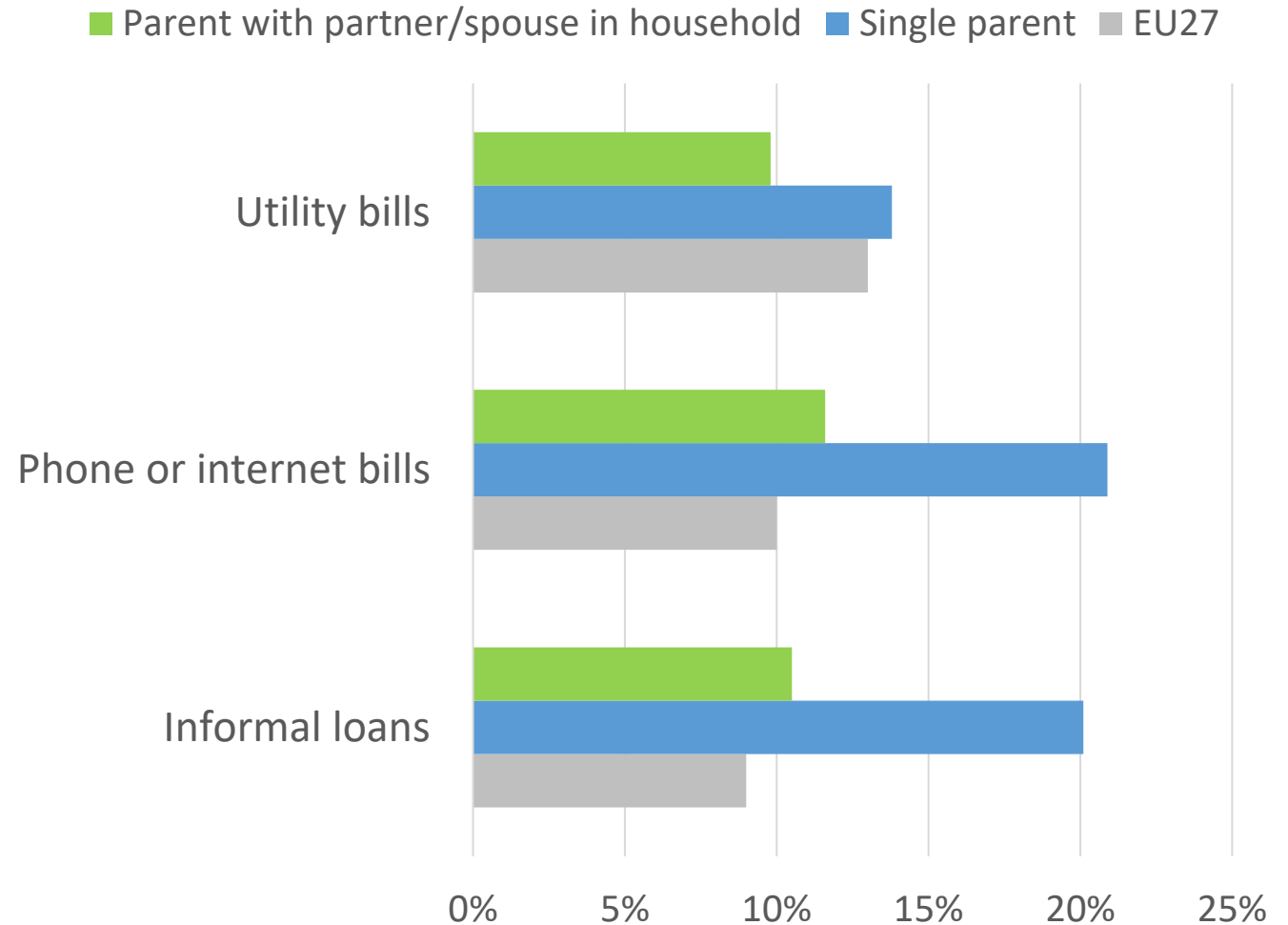
Note: Trust on a scale of 1–10.

# Household indebtedness

The pandemic's impact on children goes beyond emotional well-being:

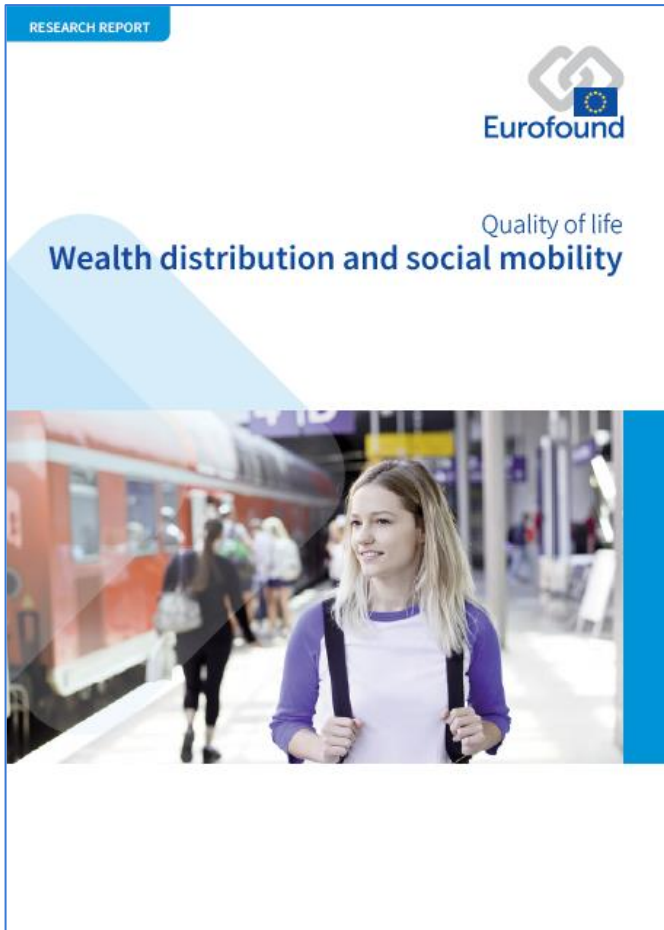
The actual use of services (access) during the pandemic and afterwards could be affected by social and family background.

Arrears in past 3 months





# From immediate to a lifelong perspective



- Better housing conditions during upbringing lead to better educational outcomes.
- Having a tertiary-educated parent greatly increases the likelihood of completing tertiary education; this has become more significant in recent decades.

Public policies for equal opportunities to counterbalance wealth differences should focus on:

- securing good living conditions during childhood
- ensuring (or raising) minimum educational attainment
- promoting access to higher education

**Thank you**

*tle @ eurofound.europa.eu*