

British Lifestyles - UK - November 2020

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Consumer spending plummets in 2020
- A long road to recovery
- What learnings can be taken from the last recession?

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most significant event in generations, with the initial lockdown and ensuing social distancing measures changing consumer lifestyles in a way that would have previously been considered inconceivable. This has had a profound impact on consumer spending, with total spend falling an astonishing 15% from 2019.

Despite initially encouraging signs of recovery across the summer months in many sectors, this has been insufficient to secure the sharp 'V-shaped' recovery that had initially been hoped for. The impact of COVID-19, though, hasn't been felt evenly. We expect retail sales of alcoholic drinks to grow by 16% over the course of 2020, compared to a 70% fall in holiday spending.

The UK remains an intensely challenging and unpredictable market in which to do business. The intensification of lockdown measures across all UK nations in the second half of October and throughout November poses further challenges for the already beleaguered leisure and travel markets. Extensions of these into December would be devastating for retailers in the most important shopping period of the year. Government support measures have mitigated some of the economic fallout, and the extension of the government's furlough scheme until the end of March 2021 will help to protect more households' finances during this period. The announcement, though, came too late for many. Unemployment rose to 4.8% in the three months to September 2020, and a record 314,000 redundancies were made over the same period.

Against this ongoing adversity, consumers have proven their resilience, with many taking the opportunity to reflect on their lifestyles and the world around them and to reconsider their priorities. Some of the trends already established



"The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most significant event in generations, changing lifestyles in a way that would have previously been considered inconceivable. To weather this period, businesses will need to think long term and address the core consumer issues of health and wellbeing, sustainability and social cohesion."

– Jack Duckett, Associate Director – Consumer

Lifestyles Research
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before the outbreak will now be turbo-charged, with health and wellness and the environment set to become even greater purchase drivers. The pandemic also reawakened Britain's sense of community, and brands can win favour by supporting communities in their efforts to rebuild.

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Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

- **Key issues covered in this Report**
- **COVID-19: market context**
- **Economic and other assumptions**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Impact of COVID-19 on total consumer spending**
Figure 1: Short-, medium- and long-term impact of COVID-19 on consumer spending, 15 October 2020
- **Britain today**
- **The people**
- **The economy**
Figure 2: Quarter-on-quarter change in GDP, Q1 2012-Q2 2020
- **The COVID-19 outbreak**
Figure 3: Recorded daily number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths registered as relating to the virus, 31 December-5 November 2020
- **Vaccine hopes increase**
- **Consumers' response to the EU referendum**
- **The market**
- **Consumer spending plummets in 2020**
Figure 4: Market size and forecast for total consumer spending, 2015-25
- **A long road to recovery**
- **What learnings can be taken from the last recession?**
- **The consumer**
- **Consumer anxiety traces case numbers**
Figure 5: Mintel COVID-19 exposure anxiety and lifestyle impact index, 28 February-11 November 2020
- **Life has shifted in home**
Figure 6: In-home leisure activities people did as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 9-16 April 2020
- **Consumers remain anxious about crowded spaces**
Figure 7: How comfortable people would feel participating in selected leisure activities, 24 September-1 October 2020
- **A new set of priorities emerge**
Figure 8: Changes in priorities since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, 8-19 October 2020

THE PEOPLE

- **Population growth will slow**

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- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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Figure 9: Trends in the UK population, 1993-2043

- An ageing population**

Figure 10: Population, by age group, UK, 1966-2041

- Death rates to surge in 2020**

Figure 11: Annual number of deaths in the UK, 2005-20^

- Birth rates continue to fall**

Figure 12: Trends in the number of live births, England and Wales, 2000-18

THE ECONOMY

- UK enters deepest recession on record...**

Figure 13: Quarter-on-quarter change in GDP, Q1 2012-Q2 2020

- ...with the speed of economic recovery dependent on what happens next**

- The labour market**

Figure 14: Unemployment rate, aged 16 and over, January 2008-August 2020

- Real wage growth plummets**

Figure 15: Headline CPIH inflation (12-month percentage change), vs average weekly earnings (3-month average), February 2015-August 2020

- Financial confidence slips...**

Figure 16: Financial wellbeing index, February 2009-September 2020

- ...but confidence for the year ahead continues to ebb**

Figure 17: The financial confidence index, January 2009-October 2020

CONSUMERS' RESPONSE TO THE EU REFERENDUM

- Terse Brexit trade negotiations slow**

- Anxiety remains high for Brexit implications**

Figure 18: Level of concern over the impact of the EU referendum, July 2016-October 2020

- COVID-19 intensifies concerns**

Figure 19: Consumer views on the impact of the EU referendum, October 2020

THE COVID-19 TIMELINE

- Phase 1 – January-March: coronavirus arrives in the UK**

Figure 20: Recorded daily number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and deaths registered as relating to the virus, 31 December-5 November 2020

- Phase 2 – April: cases and deaths reach a peak**

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Executive Summary

Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

Interactive Databook

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Figure 21: Recorded daily number of deaths registered as relating to the virus, 31 December–5 November 2020

- **Phase 3 – May-August: falling case numbers soften lockdown measures**
- **Phase 4 – September-October: wave 2 takes hold in autumn**

Figure 22: Government three-tier COVID-19 alert system

- **Phase 5: October-present: a return to lockdown**
- **Hopes centre on vaccine development**
- **UK outbreak and lockdown in context**

Figure 23: Cumulative figures for total case numbers and deaths in the EU/EEA and the UK, 31 January–5 November 2020

THE MARKET – KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Consumer spending plummets in 2020**
- **Foodservice, leisure and travel worst hit...**
- **...but food and drink sales benefit from shift in home**
- **A long road to recovery**

MARKET SIZE AND FORECAST

- **COVID-19 drives sharp downturn in consumer spending**
Figure 24: Short-, medium- and long-term impact of COVID-19 on consumer spending, 10 November 2020
- **Consumer spending plummets in 2020**
Figure 25: Total UK consumer spending, 2015–25
- **The long road to recovery**
- **Market drivers and assumptions**
Figure 26: Key drivers affecting Mintel’s market forecasts, 2015–25, 15 October 2020
- **What happened in the last recession?**
- **Sharp cutbacks in some areas of spend**
- **‘Treat culture’ supported spend on premium products**
- **A continued shift to the experience economy**
- **A long-lasting impact on confidence, trust and spending**
Figure 27: Total consumer spending, 2007–12
- **What learnings can be taken from the last recession?**
- **Forecast methodology**

MARKET SEGMENTATION

- **Housing costs dominate consumer outgoings**
Figure 28: Consumer expenditure, by sector (£ billion), estimated, 2020
- **Lockdown damages leisure and foodservice market...**

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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Figure 29: Percentage change in spending levels, by category, 2019-20

- **...but benefits some FMCG categories**

Figure 30: Projected growth in retail spend on food, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, 2019-20

- **British desire for holidays offers hope for embattled holidays market**

Figure 31: Projected percentage change in spending levels, by category, 2020-25

FOOD (RETAIL MARKET)

- **What we think**

- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**

Figure 32: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the food retail market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020

- **Impact on the market**

- **Economising habits keep a lid on in-home food growth**

Figure 33: UK central forecast value sales of the food retail market, at current prices, 2015-25

- **Sales are predicted to fall back in 2021**

- **Opportunities**

- **Immune-boosting claims set to remain popular**

- **Niche channels become an increasingly important revenue stream**

- **Keen interest to keep cooking at home more**

- **The desire to support local enterprises could be lasting**

- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**

Figure 34: Assessing Mintel's early COVID-19 predictions for retail food sales, November 2020

- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**

- **Frozen and ambient food in high demand**

- **Dairy and meat experienced surge in demand**

- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**

- **On-the-go dented by shift to in home**

- **Ready meals lose out as more cook at home during COVID-19**

- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**

- **Value to become a greater consideration...**

- **...with private label set to benefit further**

- **Cutbacks on eating out likely to boost retail food sales**

- **Increased demand for health**

- **Proactive environmentally friendly habits will rebound**

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Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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- Impact on key consumer groups
- Family shoppers to be particularly price-sensitive
- Older shoppers increasingly embrace online retail channels
- Concerns about unhealthy eating and weight gain keenest amongst the young

NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS (RETAIL MARKET)

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 35: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the non-alcoholic drinks retail market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Retail sales rose as foodservice outlets were forced to close**
Figure 36: UK central forecast value sales of the non-alcoholic drinks retail market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Sales slowdown expected in 2021 as on-trade channels regain ground**
- **Opportunities**
- **Green behaviours to return with renewed vigour**
- **Immune system-boosting ingredients**
- **Premiumisation in hot drinks**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 37: Assessing Mintel's COVID-19 predictions for retail sales of non-alcoholic drinks, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Hot drinks get a big boost from COVID-19**
- **The rise in at-home alcohol drinking is a boon for mixers**
- **Cordials, squashes and juices do well**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **SMEs to struggle**
- **Bottled water sales slump**
- **Sport and energy drinks**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Price to become an even greater consideration...
...but this could prove a boon for retail**
- **A re-energised alcohol moderation drive will benefit sales**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **The younger generation's lifestyles to be less on-the-go**
- **Value for money will be most important to family shoppers**

ALCOHOLIC DRINKS (RETAIL MARKET)

- **What we think**

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
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- Previous editions

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- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 38: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the alcoholic drinks retail market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Retail sales of alcohol grow as pubs, bars and restaurants close...**
Figure 39: UK central forecast value sales of the alcoholic drinks retail market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **...with slow recovery anticipated**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 40: Assessing Mintel's COVID-19 predictions for retail sales of alcoholic drinks, November 2020
- **Opportunities**
- **Low- and non-alcoholic drinks to remain a key trend**
- **Hard seltzers target calorie-conscious drinkers**
- **Local premium drinks brands should make the most of interest in buying local**
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Beer and wine retail sales boosted by pub closures and good weather**
- **Sales of gin keep on growing through pandemic**
- **RTDs boosted by ongoing NPD**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Champagne and sparkling wines lose their fizz**
- **Cognac sales continue to fall**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Recession triggered by COVID-19 poses a big risk to drinks spending**
- **Premium own-label alcoholic drinks and discounters in good position to benefit**
- **'Savvy luxuries' will steal a march**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **18-24s emerge as moderate drinkers**
- **Targeting the older population, more insulated from the recession, is timely**

BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 41: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the beauty and personal care market; short-, medium- and long term impact, November 2020

What's included

- Executive Summary

- Full Report PDF

- Infographic Overview

- Powerpoint Presentation

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- **Impact on the market**
- **Severe disruptions in 2020....**
Figure 42: UK central forecast value sales of the beauty and personal care market, 2015-25
- **...with slow recovery anticipated**
- **Opportunities**
- **Masstige brands offer a new price tier**
- **Align 'clean beauty' with health and immunity**
- **Communicate self-care**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 43: Assessing Mintel's COVID-19 predictions for beauty and personal care, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Women's facial skincare**
- **Hand, body and footcare**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Colour cosmetics**
- **Fragrances**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Rethink value to drive repeat purchase**
- **Redefine luxury**
- **Online strategies need refining**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **16-24s to cut back as finances are impacted**
- **Women to edge away from appearance goals**
- **A bigger shift to 'conscious consumerism'**

OTC AND PHARMACEUTICALS

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 44: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the OTC and pharmaceuticals market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Healthcare stabilises as consumers stock up**
Figure 45: UK central forecast value sales of the OTC and pharmaceuticals market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Recession could cause slowdown in growth**
- **Opportunities**
- **Encourage self-care behaviours**
- **Focus on immunity**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**

What's included

- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
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Figure 46: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for the OTC and pharmaceuticals market, November 2020

- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Cough, cold and flu remedies**
- **Vitamins and supplements**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Sexual health**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Health will be a bigger priority**
- **Pharmacies will rise in prominence**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Young people are prioritising their health**
- **Over-65s will experience longer social distancing measures**

HOUSEHOLD CARE

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 47: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the household care products market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020

- **Impact on the market**
- **Household care sales spike on hygiene fears**
Figure 48: UK central forecast value sales of the household care market, at current prices, 2015-25

- **The home environment takes on more importance**
- **Own-label set to make further gains**
- **Opportunities**
- **Opportunities for further growth in own-label**
- **Promote health beyond hygiene**
- **Increase transparency to boost eco credentials**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**

Figure 49: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for the household care market, November 2020

- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Hard surface cleaners**
- **Dishwashing products**
- **Paper products**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Laundry detergents**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Further cutbacks in spending will be much harder**
- **Own-labels will step in to appeal to those trading down**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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- **Hygiene concerns to remain high among vulnerable older population**
- **Parents to take holistic approach to household hygiene**
- **Younger consumers learn a lot about the category**

HOLIDAYS

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 50: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the holidays market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, October 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Travel industry has faced its biggest challenge in history with overseas travel taking the biggest hit**
Figure 51: UK central forecast value sales of domestic^{^^} and overseas[^] holidays taken by UK residents, at current prices, 2015-25
- **The recovery will be slow but the long-term outlook remains positive**
- **Opportunities**
- **Marketing that focuses on escapism will appeal**
- **Perceptions of value to transcend price, as consumers look for safety information before booking**
- **New way of working provides opportunities to cater for working holidays**
- **Investments in customer service necessary to keep trust levels high**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 52: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for the holidays market, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Holiday rental properties**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Cruises**
- **Business travel**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Travellers will be more price-sensitive**
- **Consumers likely to cut back on short breaks**
- **Price of holidaying likely to rise once demand bounces back**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Younger generation will play a key role in recovery of hardest-hit segments**

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- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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- Family holidays will be prioritised, but safety and value will be key
- Over-55s likely to cut back on travel, stay closer to home or drive to neighbouring countries
- Luxury travellers in a better position to afford exclusive travel

LEISURE

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 53: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the leisure market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Leisure sector sees sharp decline**
Figure 54: UK central forecast value sales for the leisure market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Recovery may be too slow for many venues**
- **Opportunities**
- **Technology will bridge the gap between in-home and out-of-home leisure**
- **Social restrictions boost demand for private and exclusive experiences**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 55: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for the leisure market, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Digital fitness**
- **Online gambling**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Music concerts and festivals**
- **Cinemas**
- **Nightclubs**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Online is an extension not a replacement**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Youth unemployment presents major threat to leisure markets**

FOODSERVICE

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**

What's included

- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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Figure 56: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the foodservice market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020

- **Impact on the market**
- **Value of foodservice sector plunges in 2020**
Figure 57: UK central forecast value sales for the foodservice market, at current prices, 2015-25

- **Sharp recovery expected after record decline in market value**
- **Opportunities**
- **New distribution channels**
- **Pop-ups in local neighbourhoods**
- **Optimising kitchen capabilities**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**

Figure 58: Assessing Mintel's COVID-19 predictions for the foodservice market, November 2020

- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Quick-service restaurants (QSRs)**
- **Dark kitchens**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Wet-led pubs/bars**
- **Lunchtime sandwich shops/food-to-go outlets**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Value-added deals**
- **Suburban/rural areas**
- **An occasional treat**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Under-35s living with parents**
- **Parents of under-18s**
- **Over-45s**

TRANSPORT

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 59: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the transport market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Car sales slump as consumers shun big-ticket purchases...**
Figure 60: UK central forecast value sales for the transport market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **...with slow recovery anticipated**
- **Opportunities**

What's included

- Executive Summary
- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
- Interactive Databook
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- **Reimagining the car buying experience during COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Avoidance of public transport an opportunity to target non-car owners**
- **Scope for onboard entertainment and wellness services**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
Figure 61: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for the transport market, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Hybrid and EVs**
- **Used cars**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Diesel cars**
- **Airlines**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Accelerated shift to pure electric and hybrid cars**
- **Renewed interest in online sales**
- **Companies will cut back on business travel**
- **Travellers by plane expected to prioritise value in the short to medium term**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **COVID-19-induced financial hardship cause younger car buyers to choose used over new**
- **Older drivers still need convincing to switch to electric**
- **Younger generation will lead the recovery of travel by plane**

FASHION

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 62: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the clothing and footwear market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Drop in appetite for fashion**
Figure 63: UK central forecast value sales for the fashion market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Recovery will be gradual, with store closures inevitable**
- **Opportunities**
- **Face masks**
- **Investment in digital fit technology**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**

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Figure 64: Assessing Mintel's COVID-19 predictions for the fashion market, November 2020

- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Underwear, nightwear and loungewear**
- **Sportswear**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Womenswear**
- **Footwear**
- **Luxury fashion**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Value retailers will benefit at expense of mid-market**
- **Greater shift towards online**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Women most concerned**
- **Young generations shun fashion trends**

HOME AND GARDEN

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 65: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the home and garden market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Spending will drop amid uncertainty...**
Figure 66: UK central forecast value sales for the home and garden market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **...before a more convincing recovery in 2021**
- **Opportunities**
- **Online home sales to boom**
- **Extended periods inside will push the home up the agenda**
- **The shift to working from home brings a new wave of demand**
- **Smaller businesses benefit from an increased sense of localism**
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Big-box DIY specialists**
- **Home office furniture**
- **Small domestic appliances**
- **Garden products**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Kitchens and bathroom**
- **Big-ticket furniture**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**

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- **A slowdown in the housing market**
- **Suppressed appetite for big-ticket purchases**
- **A renewed focus on value**

HOUSING

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 67: Expected impact of COVID-19 on housing; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **A sharp drop in mortgage lending will reduce overall housing spend**
Figure 68: UK central forecast for consumer expenditure in housing market, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Recovery depends on the resilience of the housing market**
- **Opportunities**
- **First-time buyers set to benefit from renewed government support**
- **Fixing consumer finances is a challenge and opportunity for lenders**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Rising unemployment will threaten household finances**
- **Housing market dynamics will shift**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Young adults will be most impacted**

PERSONAL FINANCE

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
Figure 69: Expected impact of COVID-19 on personal finance; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Consumer credit falls sharply but savings are boosted**
Figure 70: UK central forecast for consumer expenditure on personal finance, at current prices, 2015-25
- **A steady recovery is anticipated from 2021**
- **Opportunities**
- **The shift to digital banking will help to drive cost efficiencies**
- **Flexible credit products will move to the fore**
- **Products that deliver reassurance will resonate with consumers**

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- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Support measures will pose a challenge to banks**
- **Insurers face longer-term challenges**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Older Millennials looking for flexible credit**
- **A formative experience for Gen Z**

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

- **What we think**
- **Short-, medium- and long-term impact on the industry**
 Figure 71: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the technology market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
 Figure 72: Expected impact of COVID-19 on the media market; short-, medium- and long-term impact, November 2020
- **Impact on the market**
- **Tech and media markets proving resilient in 2020**
 Figure 73: UK central forecast for value sales of technology and media, at current prices, 2015-25
- **Return to growth expected in 2021**
- **Opportunities**
- **Companies can connect more closely with consumers online**
- **Trusted news sources can boost subscribers**
- **Focus on mental health and wellbeing provides opportunities for tech**
- **Video calling boom can give manufacturers a new focus**
- **Reassessing Mintel predictions**
 Figure 74: Assessing Mintel’s COVID-19 predictions for technology and media expenditure, November 2020
- **Winning sub-categories in 2020**
- **Video games consoles**
- **Streaming subscriptions**
- **Losing sub-categories in 2020**
- **Print media**
- **Televisions**
- **How a COVID-19 recession will reshape the industry**
- **Suppressed hardware sales inevitable but tech cycles can provide some resilience**
- **Reduced advertising spend will hit all media sectors**
- **Impact on key consumer groups**
- **Older consumers turning to tech**

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- **Men’s enthusiasm for tech sees them less inclined to cut spending**
- **Families have more need than ever for technology and media**
- **Changes in older demographics’ media habits likely to stick**

THE CONSUMER – KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Phase 1: 28 February-9 April – Consumers Go into Lockdown**
- **Phase 2: 9 April-18 June – Adapting to Life in Lockdown**
- **Phase 3: 18 June-28 August – Emerging from the Initial Lockdown**
- **Phase 4: 28 August-19 October – Consumers and the Next Wave**

PHASE 1: 28 FEBRUARY-9 APRIL – CONSUMERS GO INTO LOCKDOWN

- **Surge in consumer anxiety**
Figure 75: Mintel COVID-19 exposure anxiety and lifestyle impact index, 28 February-11 November 2020
- **Change in attitude most marked among older consumers**
Figure 76: Changes in the proportion of adults indicating extreme levels of concern ('5') about being exposed to the coronavirus, by age within gender, 28 February-25 March 2020
- **Consumers adopted pro-hygiene behaviours as virus spread**
- **COVID-19 has triggered a need for NPD in the BPC market**
Figure 77: Behavioural changes made as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 28 February-9 April 2020
- **A renewed enthusiasm for household care...**
Figure 78: (Unilever) Domestos’ ‘What is the science behind bleach?’ campaign, March 2020
- **...with demand for eco-friendly solutions only likely to grow**
- **Shoppers stocked up as wartime mentality set in...**
Figure 79: Behavioural changes made as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 28 February-9 April 2020
- **...giving an opportunity to refresh the ambient food sector**
- **Online retail became an essential channel**
Figure 80: Proportion of adults who have increased the amount of shopping they do online as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, by age, 28 February-9 April 2020

PHASE 2: 9 APRIL-18 JUNE – ADAPTING TO LIFE IN LOCKDOWN

- **Consumer anxiety starts to soften**

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- Powerpoint Presentation
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Figure 81: Mintel COVID-19 exposure anxiety and lifestyle impact index, 28 February–11 November 2020

- **Middle-aged groups continued to worry about their lifestyle**

Figure 82: Proportion of adults indicating extreme concern ('5') about how the outbreak might impact their lifestyle, by age, 9 April–18 June 2020

- **Home cooking booms**

Figure 83: In-home leisure activities people did as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 9–16 April 2020

- **Surge in home workouts**

Figure 84: In-home leisure activities people did as a result of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, by age, 9–16 April 2020

- **Digital communication becomes a necessity**

- **Strain on consumer finances begins to show...**

Figure 85: Changes in financial situation since the start of the outbreak, by age within gender, 21–28 May 2020

- **...with less affluent households worst affected**

Figure 86: Changes in financial situation since the start of the outbreak, by household income, 21–28 May 2020

PHASE 3: 18 JUNE–28 AUGUST – EMERGING FROM THE INITIAL LOCKDOWN

- **Anxiety plateaued as consumers returned to life out of home**

Figure 87: Mintel COVID-19 exposure anxiety and lifestyle impact index, 28 February–11 November 2020

- **Protective shopping behaviours became habit...**

Figure 88: Changes in shopping behaviours since the start of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 16 April–28 August 2020

- **...accelerating the shift away from cash**

- **Packaging became critical...**

Figure 89: Consumer attitudes towards product packaging during COVID-19 outbreak, 18–24 June 2020

- **...paving the way for hygiene-focused innovation**

- **Environmental concerns will remain a challenge for packaging industry**

PHASE 4: 28 AUGUST–19 OCTOBER – CONSUMERS AND THE NEXT WAVE

- **Anxiety takes off as cases go back up**

Figure 90: Mintel COVID-19 exposure anxiety and lifestyle impact index, 28 February–11 November 2020

- **Anxiety climbs across all age groups**

Figure 91: Proportion of adults registering higher levels of concern (ie '4' or '5') about being exposed to the virus and

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Full Report PDF

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Powerpoint Presentation

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about how it could impact their lifestyle, by age, 27 August-11 November 2020

- Consumers anxious about crowded spaces**
 Figure 92: How comfortable people would feel participating in selected leisure activities, 24 September-1 October 2020
- Troubles remain for travel industry**
- Opportunities to reassure travellers**
 Figure 93: Airbnb's Enhanced Cleaning Protocol for UK hosts, 19 June 2020
- Majority of Brits consider masks important in public spaces...**
 Figure 94: Situations people consider it important to wear face masks/coverings, 10-17 September 2020
- ...posing opportunities for fashion...**
 Figure 95: Burberry launches £90 facial mask, September 2020
- ...and beauty brands**
- Spending intentions remain low**
 Figure 96: Expected changes in spending habits in the coming month, by category, 8-19 October 2020

A NEW SET OF PRIORITIES EMERGE

- A new set of priorities emerge**
- Family and friends; balancing online and real-world connections**
 Figure 97: Changes in priorities since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, 8-19 October 2020
- Health and wellbeing trend to further grow...**
- ...with a growing focus on mental wellbeing**
- A re-emergence of community**
 Figure 98: Changes in shopping behaviours since the start of the COVID-19/coronavirus outbreak, 16 April-11 November 2020
- Sustainably concerns to return to the fore**
 Figure 99: L'Oréal and TerraCycle beauty packaging recycling initiative, September 2020

HOW COVID-19 HAS DRIVEN BROADER CONSUMER TRENDS

- Mintel Trend Drivers**
- Initial lockdown (March-June 2020)**
 Figure 100: Key Mintel Trend Drivers and Pillars during the 'lockdown' phase, March-June 2020
- Re-emergence (July 2020-December 2021)**

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- Full Report PDF
- Infographic Overview
- Powerpoint Presentation
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Figure 101: Key Mintel Trend Drivers and Pillars during the 're-emergence' phase, July 2020–December 2021

- **Recovery (2022-25)**

Figure 102: Key Mintel Trend Drivers and Pillars during the 'recovery' phase, 2022-25

APPENDIX – DATA SOURCES, ABBREVIATIONS AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- **Abbreviations**
- **Consumer research methodology**
- **Forecast methodology**

APPENDIX – MARKET SIZE AND FORECAST

Figure 103: Market size and forecast for total consumer spending, at current and constant prices, £ million, 2015–25

Figure 104: Market size and forecast for total consumer spending, at current and constant prices, £ trillion, 2015–25

APPENDIX – FOOD (RETAIL MARKET)

Figure 105: UK retail value sales of food (retail market), at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS (RETAIL MARKET)

Figure 106: UK retail value sales of non-alcoholic drinks (retail market), at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – ALCOHOLIC DRINKS (RETAIL MARKET)

Figure 107: UK retail value sales of alcoholic drinks (retail market), at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE

Figure 108: UK retail value sales of beauty and personal care products, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – OTC AND PHARMACEUTICALS

Figure 109: UK retail value sales of OTC and pharmaceuticals, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – HOUSEHOLD CARE

Figure 110: UK retail value sales of household care products, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

What's included

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Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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APPENDIX – HOLIDAYS

Figure 111: Value of UK holiday spending, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – LEISURE

Figure 112: Value of UK leisure spending, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – FOODSERVICE

Figure 113: Value of UK foodservice spending, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – TRANSPORT

Figure 114: Value of UK transport market, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – FASHION

Figure 115: UK retail value sales of clothing and accessories, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – HOME AND GARDEN

Figure 116: UK retail value sales of home and garden products, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – NEWSAGENTS’ GOODS

Figure 117: UK retail value sales of newsagents’ goods, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – HOUSING

Figure 118: UK housing market spending, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – PERSONAL FINANCE

Figure 119: UK retail value sales of personal finance products, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

Figure 120: UK retail value sales of technology and communication products, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

APPENDIX – MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE

Figure 121: Miscellaneous expenditure, at current and constant prices, 2015–25

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Full Report PDF

Infographic Overview

Powerpoint Presentation

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