

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 22 October 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 6 to 17 October 2021 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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1 . Main points

Throughout the period of 6 to 17 October 2021, based on adults in Great Britain:

- Around 8 in 10 (82%) adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days, while around 4 in 10 (39%) reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home.
- Among adults with a child aged 12 to 15 years living in their household, 6 in 10 (60%) reported that the child would be very likely or fairly likely to receive a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine.
- Around 9 in 10 (91%) adults who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine would be very or fairly likely to have a booster vaccine if offered.
- Around 1 in 6 (16%) adults reported they had not been able to buy essential food items because they were not available (17% in the previous period), with around 5 in 10 (47%) reporting that everything they needed had been available to buy (57% in the previous period).
- Around 4 in 10 (37%) adults reported they were unable to buy fuel because it was not available (15% in the previous period).

2 . Social impacts of coronavirus

Throughout the period of 6 to 17 October 2021, based on adults in Great Britain:

Face coverings

Most adults (84%) felt that wearing a face covering was either very important or important as a measure to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

At the same time, 82% of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days compared with 86% in the previous period (22 September to 3 October 2021). This continues a trend of gradual decline since the start of July 2021.

Social distancing

Most adults (84%) felt that social distancing from others not in their household was either very important or important, though only 39% reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home. This figure has steadily decreased since the start of May 2021.

Physical contact outside and inside the home

Just over half of adults (55%) reported they avoided physical contact with others outside their home in the past seven days, which remains unchanged from the previous period.

When friends and family had come into their home, the most common actions adults reported to help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) were:

- washing hands regularly (33%)
- opening windows or doors (28%)
- maintaining social distancing (17%)
- cleaning touch points (15%)

Around 4 in 10 adults (42%) reported friends and family had not come into their homes in the past seven days.

Self-isolation

The proportion of adults who reported self-isolating in the past seven days remained stable at 3%, unchanged from the previous period. The main reasons adults self-isolated were:

- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for coronavirus (24%)
- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (24%)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (17%)

Personal well-being measures

The four personal well-being measures all remained stable:

- life satisfaction (7.1 in both this period and the previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.3 in this period, 7.4 in the previous period)
- happiness (7.0 in this period, 7.1 in the previous period)
- anxiety (4.0 in both this period and the previous period)

Location of work

Among working adults:

- 7 in 10 (70%) reported travelling to work at some point in the past seven days (67% in the previous period)
- 3 in 10 (30%) reported working from home at some point in the past seven days (29% in the previous period)

Vaccination of children aged 12 to 15 years

Of adults with a child aged between 12 and 15 years in their household, 6 in 10 (60%) reported the child would be very likely or fairly likely to receive a vaccine for the coronavirus (COVID-19). Around 1 in 6 (17%) said the child had already received a vaccine (4% in the previous period).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) booster vaccine

Among adults who have received both doses of a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, around 9 in 10 (91%) said they would be very likely or fairly likely to have the coronavirus (COVID-19) booster vaccine if offered to them. 1 in 33 (3%) were very unlikely or fairly unlikely to have the booster vaccine if offered.

The most common reasons reported for being very or fairly unlikely to have the booster vaccine if offered were:

- thinking the first and second vaccine will be enough to keep safe (50%)
- being worried about long-term effects on health (34%)
- thinking the vaccine booster should be offered to others instead (33%)
- thinking the vaccine booster will not offer any extra protection (25%)

3 . Goods shortages

In this period, we also asked adults whether they had experienced shortages of any goods at any time in the past two weeks¹:

- around 1 in 6 (16%) reported they had not been able to buy essential food because it was not available
- around 4 in 10 (37%) were unable to buy fuel because it was not available
- around 1 in 4 (23%) reported they had not been able to buy other non-essential food items
- around 5 in 10 (47%) reported that everything they needed had been available to buy

When asked to think about the likelihood of buying more food or fuel over the next seven days:

- Around 6 in 10 (63%) reported they were very unlikely or fairly unlikely to buy more food than usual
- Around 7 in 10 (69%) reported they were very unlikely or fairly unlikely to buy more fuel than usual

Food shortages

When food shopping, around 6 in 10 (61%) adults reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual. The most commonly reported differences were:

- less variety in the shops (43%)
- items needed were not available and a replacement could not be found (21%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement was found (20%)
- having to go to more shops to get what was needed (13%)

Most adults (85%) reported their food shopping habits had not changed in the past two weeks; 6% reported buying more and 9% reported buying less.

Medicine shortages

Around 2 in 10 (21%) adults who had tried to buy medicine or get a prescription reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual. The most commonly reported differences were:

- having to wait longer for their prescription (13%)
- having to go to more pharmacies to find what they needed (4%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement was found (3%)
- items needed were not available and a replacement could not be found (3%)

Notes for: Goods shortages section

1. Totals for estimates regarding adults' experiences of shortages of goods may not sum to 100% as respondents were able to choose more than one option. Please see the datasets provided with this bulletin for further detail.

4 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain](#)

Dataset | Released 22 October 2021

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain. Includes breakdowns by age, sex and region.

[Coronavirus and the social impact on Great Britain: Likelihood of a child receiving a vaccine for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

Dataset | Released on 22 October 2021

Dataset from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the likelihood of children aged between 12 and 15 years receiving a coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine, covering the period 6 to 17 October 2021.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: Personal experience of shortage of goods](#)

Dataset | Released on 22 October 2021

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on whether people experienced shortage of goods such as food, medicine and fuel when shopping, covering the period 6 to 17 October 2021.

5 . Measuring the data

This release contains data and indicators from a module being undertaken through the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on British society.

Breakdowns by age, sex, region and country, including [confidence intervals](#) for the estimates, are contained in the [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain dataset](#).

Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this bulletin, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the [statistical significance](#) of the differences.

Sampling and weighting

From the period between 4 and 8 August 2021 onwards, the OPN sample size was reduced to around 5,000 households in each period to help ensure the survey remains sustainable. In this period between 6 and 17 October, we sampled 5,901 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 4,004 individuals, representing a 68% response rate.

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population (based on September 2021 population estimates). Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in the [Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#).

6 . Related links

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest data and analysis](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

Latest data and analysis on coronavirus (COVID-19) in the UK and its effects on the economy and society.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) latest insights](#)

Web page | Updated as data become available

An interactive tool to explore the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and other sources.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) harmonisation guidance](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This page provides harmonisation guidance on how best to collect data about the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Users can also find a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (ONS) surveys related to coronavirus (COVID-19) to be used in other surveys to further support harmonisation and questionnaire development. This bank also provides users with an understanding of what data ONS has in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.

[One in ten adults report being asked for COVID-19 vaccination or test proof](#)

Article | Released 10 September 2021

Data and analysis on the percentage of adults in Great Britain who have been asked to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative coronavirus (COVID-19) test, to be let into a venue or event.

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 21 October 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 21 October 2021

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources, and experimental methods.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19, UK: 21 October 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 21 October 2021

Characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19 from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. This survey is being delivered in partnership with University of Oxford, University of Manchester, Public Health England and Wellcome Trust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse Laboratories to collect and test samples.

[Monthly mortality analysis, England and Wales: August 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 21 September 2021

Provisional death registration data for England and Wales, broken down by sex, age and country. Includes deaths due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and leading causes of death.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey: antibody and vaccination data, UK: 16 September 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 16 September 2021

Antibody and vaccination data by UK country and regions in England from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey. This analysis has been produced in partnership with the University of Oxford, the University of Manchester, Public Health England, and Wellcome Trust. This study is jointly led by the ONS and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) working with the University of Oxford and Lighthouse Laboratories to collect and test samples.

[Coronavirus and depression in adults, Great Britain: July to August 2021](#)

Bulletin | 1 October 2021

Analysis of the proportion of the adult population of Great Britain experiencing some form of depression in summer 2021, based on the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey. Includes analysis by age, sex and other characteristics and comparisons with early 2021, 2020 and pre-pandemic estimates.