

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 29 November to 4 December 2021

Behaviour of individuals required to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Cases Insights Survey. Includes information on the impact of self-isolation on well-being and finances. Experimental Statistics.

Contact:  
Bella Beynon and Rebecca  
Jones  
publicservicesanalysis@ons.gov.  
uk  
+44 1633 455330

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# 1 . Main points

- The data collected between 29 November and 4 December 2021 show that a similar percentage of respondents who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) fully adhered to the requirements throughout their self-isolation period (74%) and understood the self-isolation guidance (77%).
- The level of adherence with self-isolation requirements is broadly in line with the level reported for July, September and November 2021 (79% in July, 78% in September and 75% in November).
- Adherence with self-isolation requirements was statistically significantly lower between the onset of symptoms requiring self-isolation and receiving a positive test result (71%), compared with the 24 hours following a positive result (98%) and the remainder of the self-isolation period (93%).
- One in four people (25%) reported carrying out at least one activity during self-isolation that was not adherent to the requirements, for example, leaving the home or having visitors for reasons not permitted under legislation.
- The majority (74%) of all respondents who tested positive for COVID-19 reported having no contact with non-household members while they had any symptoms of illness or during the self-isolation period; of all respondents who lived with others, only 21% were able to keep themselves completely separate from those they lived with.
- Approximately one-third (33%) of those who tested positive reported that self-isolation had a negative effect on their well-being and mental health.

The statistics presented are Experimental Statistics, so care needs to be taken when interpreting them. The survey has a relatively small number of respondents (895) and the behaviour of respondents during self-isolation is self-reported.

## 2 . Self-isolation after testing positive data

[Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England](#)

Dataset | Released 23 December 2021

Behaviour of individuals required to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Cases Insights Survey. Includes information on the impact of self-isolation on well-being and finances. Experimental Statistics.

## 3 . Glossary

### Self-isolation

Self-isolation refers to not leaving your home because you have, or might have, coronavirus (COVID-19). It is a legal requirement to self-isolate if you test positive for COVID-19. In addition to staying at home, if you are self-isolating you should not have visitors unless the purpose of the visit is to provide essential care. Your self-isolation period includes the day your symptoms started (or the day you had the positive test result if you do not have symptoms) and the next 10 full days. If you still have symptoms after 10 days, you must continue self-isolating until they are gone.

For further information please see the [NHS guidance on when and how to self-isolate](#).

## Symptoms

Symptoms that require an individual to self-isolate prior to a positive test result are a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or loss of sense of smell or taste.

Symptoms reported by respondents that do not require self-isolation if experienced without a high temperature, a new continuous cough, or loss of sense of smell or taste are:

- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- sore throat
- fatigue
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- severe stomach pain

## Statistical significance

The term “significant” refers to statistically significant changes or differences. Significance has been determined using the 95% confidence intervals, where instances of non-overlapping confidence intervals between estimates indicate the difference is unlikely to have arisen from random fluctuation. More information is available on our [uncertainty pages](#).

## 4 . Measuring the data

### Survey information

The latest quality and methodology information on data from the COVID Test and Trace Cases Insights Survey can be found in the [Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England methodology](#).

## Estimates for Wave 9

This is the ninth bulletin in this series. The ninth wave of data was collected between 29 November and 4 December 2021. The number of respondents was 895.

Respondents were sampled through the Contact Tracing and Advisory Service (CTAS) database, held by NHS Test and Trace, using implicit stratification. Respondents were aged 18 years and over, had tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) and reached day 10 of their self-isolation period between 31 October and 3 November 2021.

The majority (94%) of respondents were interviewed within four days following the end of their self-isolation period (days 11 to 14). The remaining 6% of respondents were interviewed between five and six days (days 15 to 16) after the end of self-isolation.

Of the potential respondents who were successfully contacted by an interviewer, the response rate was 65%. When including cases where contact was attempted but not made, the response rate was 15%.

A low response rate can be expected, as the target population may have been unwell with COVID-19 and so less likely to participate.

Percentages in this report are based on weighted counts that are representative of the population of adults (aged 18 years and over) who had tested positive for COVID-19 and began their self-isolation period between 1 and 28 November 2021.

## 5 . Related links

### [Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England methodology](#)

Methodology article | Released 4 May 2021

Latest quality and methodology information on data from the COVID Test and Trace Cases Insights Survey and its use to examine the adherence to self-isolation guidelines. Experimental Statistics.

### [Stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)

Webpage | Updated 16 December 2021

Guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

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

Webpage | Updated as and when data become available

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

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

Blog | Updated as and when data become available

A roundup of the latest data and trends about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from the ONS and other sources.

### [Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England: 9 to 16 August 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 8 September 2021

Behaviour of individuals required to self-isolate after being in contact with a positive case of COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Contacts Insights Survey. Includes information on the impact of self-isolation on well-being and finances. Experimental Statistics.

### [Coronavirus and behaviour of the vaccinated population after being in contact with a positive case in England: 22 to 27 November 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 17 December 2021

Behaviour of fully vaccinated individuals not required to self-isolate after being in contact with a positive case of COVID-19, from the COVID Test and Trace Contacts Behavioural Insights Survey. Experimental Statistics.