

Statistical bulletin

Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving into the UK: August 2021 to January 2022

Monthly figures on the attitudes of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK towards coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and guidance, and the proportion who had been vaccinated, using unweighted results from the International Passenger Survey (IPS) for the period covering August 2021 to January 2022 (experimental statistics).

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1 . Main points

- In January 2022, most UK residents (98%) and overseas residents (96%) arriving in the UK said they had received at least two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations.
- The proportion of UK residents arriving in the UK who had received more than two COVID-19 vaccinations doubled between December and January, increasing from 28% to 56%.
- Most travellers arriving in the UK continue to think that having a COVID-19 test prior to arrival is either “very important” or “quite important” for safety (81% of UK residents and 87% of overseas residents in January 2022).

This bulletin contains unweighted data. This means the results are based on the responses of only the people interviewed, and do not account for any differences in the respondent group compared with all people travelling during the period. Therefore, the results should not be considered indicative of the travelling population as a whole and cannot be compared with weighted data. [See Section 8.](#)

2 . COVID-19 vaccination among international passengers

In January 2022, nine in ten travellers arriving in the UK had received at least two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations (98% of UK and 96% of overseas residents). More than half (56%) of UK residents arriving in the UK had received more than two COVID-19 vaccinations (Figure 1). This proportion doubled between December 2021 and January 2022 (rising from 28% in December 2021). The proportion of overseas residents arriving in the UK who had received more than two COVID-19 vaccinations also doubled between December 2021 and January 2022 (18% and 38%, respectively).

The increase in the percentage of UK residents who had received more than two vaccinations reflects the expansion of the NHS booster programme to all adults aged over 18 years; all those eligible were offered a vaccination by the end of January 2022. This follows the advice given to UK health departments by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) because of the new Omicron variant.

The [UK Coronavirus dashboard](#) shows that 91% of all UK residents had received at least one vaccination by 31 January 2022, with 84% having received two vaccinations and 65% having received a booster or three vaccinations. In line with the vaccine rollout programme, UK residents arriving in the UK in older age groups were more likely to have received their first vaccine earlier in the year. Proportions reporting that they have had at least one vaccination have remained stable among these older age groups from August 2021 but have increased in younger age groups.

Figure 1: The majority of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK had received at least two COVID-19 vaccinations

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK categorised by number of COVID-19 vaccinations received by month, UK, August 2021 to January 2022

Download the data:

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3 . Understanding and accessibility of UK and overseas COVID-19 restrictions

Most UK residents (83% in January 2022) returning from abroad said that they find it “easy” or “very easy” to follow the coronavirus (COVID-19) restriction information for the country that they had visited (Figure 2). Of those who reported finding it “difficult” or “very difficult” to follow the COVID-19 restrictions, the information “kept changing over time” is still the main reason (39% in December 2021 and 27% in January 2022).

Figure 2: Most UK residents arriving in the UK find it easy or very easy to follow overseas COVID-19 restrictions

Proportion of interviewed UK residents arriving in the UK categorised by how difficult they found it to follow overseas restrictions by month, UK, August 2021 to January 2022

Download the data

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Most overseas residents arriving in the UK said they understood UK COVID-19 restrictions well and could confidently access information about the restrictions, a trend that has remained consistent since March 2021. In January 2022, 95% of overseas residents said that they understood UK restrictions “quite well” or “very well”, and 96% said that they felt “very confident” or “somewhat confident” in accessing UK restrictions.

Only 2% felt not at all confident or not very confident in accessing information about the UK’s COVID-19 restrictions.

4 . Attitudes towards prevention measures

Most travellers arriving in the UK (81% of UK residents and 87% of overseas residents in January 2022) think that having a coronavirus (COVID-19) test prior to arrival is either “very important” or “quite important” for safety (Figure 3). In January 2022, half of all travellers arriving in the UK said that they think having a COVID-19 test prior to arrival is “very important” for safety (49% of UK residents and 54% of overseas residents).

Figure 3: UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK said COVID-19 testing was quite or very important for safety over time

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK categorised by how important they think taking a COVID-19 test is for safety by month, UK, August 2021 to January 2022

Download the data

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Travellers continue to feel that the wearing of face coverings and the provision of hand sanitiser made them feel safe during their journey. In January 2022, four-fifths of travellers (78% of UK and 81% of overseas residents) said that the wearing of face coverings made them feel safe during their journey into the UK (Figure 4). Three-quarters of travellers said that the availability of hand sanitiser during their journey also made them feel safe (75% of UK and overseas residents).

In England, on 10 December 2021, the [legal requirement](#) to wear face coverings was re-introduced for indoor settings and on public transport, having been previously removed on 19 July 2021. The legal requirement to wear face coverings was then removed on 22 January 2022. However, individual settings can require the wearing of face coverings or the use of hand sanitiser and most major UK airports and airlines have chosen to do so.

Figure 4: The majority of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK said that the wearing of face coverings made them feel safe during their journey

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK categorised by how safe they felt because of the wearing of face coverings by month, UK, August 2021 to January 2022

Download the data

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5 . Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving in the UK data

[Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving into the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 9 March 2022

This dataset includes data collected from the International Passenger Survey and the Civil Aviation Authority's Passengers Survey.

Results from the [International Passenger Survey](#) for the period covering February 2021 to January 2022 includes monthly figures on the attitudes of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK towards social distancing, wearing face coverings, and COVID-19 restrictions and the proportion who had been vaccinated. This data is unweighted (experimental statistics).

Results from the Civil Aviation Authority's Passenger Survey for the period covering June 2021 to December 2021. This includes monthly figures for the proportion that have received a coronavirus vaccination and attitudes on how satisfied passengers were with the ability to socially distance at the airport and the wearing of face coverings at the airport. These questions were removed from the survey in January 2022. This data is unweighted (experimental statistics).

6 . Glossary

Overseas resident

A person who, being permanently resident in a country outside the UK, visits the UK for a period of less than 12 months. UK citizens resident overseas for 12 months or more coming home on leave are included in this category. Visits abroad are visits for a period of less than 12 months by people permanently resident in the UK (who may be of foreign nationality).

Traffic light system

For the period that these data cover there was a coronavirus (COVID-19) traffic light system for travel in place, banding countries in "green", "amber" and "red" lists. It is important to note that the categorisation of countries has changed throughout this period of August 2021 to January 2022, and this should be considered when analysing the results of the data on understanding and accessing information on restrictions. On 4 October 2021, the traffic light system was simplified to a single red list of countries, which is reviewed every 3 weeks.

Vaccine rollout

The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine across the UK, phase one of which began in December 2020, following the Department for Health and Social Care's full [UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#).

7 . Measuring the data

Methods used to produce these findings - International Passenger Survey

This bulletin uses data from questions added to the International Passenger Survey (IPS) in February 2021 measuring the attitudes towards, and experience of, coronavirus (COVID-19) and associated restrictions among travellers arriving in the UK.

Totals used to calculate percentages include all overseas arrivals (international visitors to the UK and UK residents arriving back in the UK) and exclude travellers leaving the UK. For this bulletin all Crown dependencies have been counted as overseas residents and data from travel via tunnel and sea (except for Dover ferries) have been excluded because of small numbers.

This release will continue to be updated monthly. In April we will publish data up to February 2022.

8 . Strengths and limitations

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) sample used for both UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK across the study (August 2021 to January 2022) totals 58,832. Individual breakdowns by residency and month cannot be supplied because of disclosure control of low counts.

Around 90% of international traffic in and out of the UK is subject to IPS sampling. If a person under 16 years was sampled, they were not asked the coronavirus (COVID-19) questions unless their parent or guardian gave permission.

It is difficult to predict interview numbers. Interviews are being conducted under coronavirus restrictions and passenger flow is likely to be very low. We have attempted to offset the effects of the low numbers of anticipated travellers by reducing sampling intervals (so a higher proportion are selected for interview).

Using unweighted data

To provide the timeliest insights, this bulletin contains unweighted data based on the actual numbers of people interviewed for the IPS, meaning no account is taken of the different numbers of travellers represented by each respondent to the survey. Trends observed over time may be because of changes in the composition of survey respondents, rather than trends for the whole travelling population. Analysis comparing the weighted and unweighted data for the IPS for February and March 2021 found little difference in trends, suggesting this unweighted data can be considered as broadly indicative.

Further information can be found in [Section 10 of the previous release](#).

9 . Related links

[Overseas Travel and Tourism, provisional: January to March 2021](#)

In depth analysis | Released 23 July 2021

Quarterly estimates of visits to the UK by overseas residents, air visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using the International Passenger Survey and administrative sources of passenger travel data for the period covering April to December 2020.

[Overseas Travel and Tourism: 2020](#)

In depth analysis | Released 24 May 2021

Annual estimates of visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using administrative sources of passenger travel data for the period covering April to December 2020.

[Travelpac: travel to and from the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 24 July 2020

Quarterly data on travel to and from the UK, taken from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). Includes detail on age and sex of travellers, purpose and length of trip, and spending. These data are in a form suitable for small businesses and students.

[Travel Trends: 2019](#)

In depth analysis | Released 22 May 2020

Annual estimates of travel and tourism visits to the UK (of less than 12 months' duration) and associated earnings and expenditure between the UK and the rest of the world.

[Overseas travel and tourism, UK, provisional: July to September 2021](#)

In depth analysis | Released 7 February 2022

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using administrative sources of passenger travel data.