

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and opinions of those previously required to self-isolate, England: 25 April to 10 May 2022

Behaviours and opinions of individuals previously interviewed as part of the Test and Trace Cases Insights Study or the Test and Trace Contacts Insights Study. Includes information on attitudes to government coronavirus advice, current self-isolation measures, as well as the impact on employment and personal well-being. Experimental Statistics.

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1 . Main points

- Respondents in this survey had previously participated in either the Test and Trace Cases Insights Study or the Test and Trace Contacts Insights Study before the legal requirement to self-isolate in England ended; the data for this bulletin were collected between 25 April to 10 May 2022, which was between 3 and 15 months after respondents were interviewed as part of these surveys.
- Almost all (97%) respondents reported that they felt able to accurately report whether they fully isolated when they were last surveyed by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
- The majority (79%) of respondents held the opinion that the government's self-isolation strategy throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was effective at keeping the public safe.
- Of those who are fully aware of the current government guidance put in place 1 April 2022 (50% of all respondents), 41% said the current government advice for keeping the public safe from coronavirus (COVID-19) is sufficient.
- 7 in 10 (70%) respondents reported taking additional measures to keep themselves safe from COVID-19; the most common measure was wearing a face mask, reported by 47% of all respondents.
- Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) respondents had missed out on work as a result of isolating and 2% of respondents said they had lost their job because they were isolating; of these, approximately one-fifth (20%) said that they have been unable to recover financially.
- Approximately three-fifths (61%) of all respondents said that the coronavirus pandemic has had a negative effect on them.

The statistics presented are Experimental Statistics so care needs to be taken when interpreting them. The survey has a relatively small number of respondents (815), and the behaviour of respondents is self-reported.

2 . Coronavirus (COVID-19) and opinions of those previously required to self-isolate data

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and opinions of those required to self-isolate, England: 25 April to 10 May 2022](#)

Dataset | Released 15 June 2022

Behaviours and opinions of individuals previously interviewed as part of the Test and Trace Cases Insights Study or the Test and Trace Contacts Insights Study. Experimental Statistics.

3 . Glossary

Self-isolation

Self-isolation refers to not leaving your home or having visitors because you have, or might have, coronavirus (COVID-19). You may self-isolate if you have symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID-19, or have come into contact with a positive case.

On 1 April 2022, the government released new guidance aimed at all those who had either tested positive for COVID-19 or were experiencing symptoms of a respiratory infection, including COVID-19. The guidance advises those with symptoms or those who had been in contact with a positive case to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, especially those at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell. This is until they no longer have symptoms or feel unwell. The guidance also advises that additional measures are taken if leaving the home, including wearing a face covering and avoiding crowded places. Those that test positive are advised to follow this guidance for five days from the day they took their test.

For more information, see the [People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 guidance](#) on the gov.uk website.

Symptoms

When self-isolation was a legal requirement, symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) that indicated an individual should self-isolate prior to a positive test result were:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough
- a loss of sense of smell or taste

The NHS has published [an updated list of COVID-19 symptoms](#) to be followed from 1 April 2022. The symptoms of COVID-19 in adults can include:

- a high temperature or shivering (chills) - a high temperature means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough - this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste
- shortness of breath
- feeling tired or exhausted
- an aching body
- a headache
- a sore throat
- a blocked or runny nose
- loss of appetite
- diarrhoea
- feeling sick or being sick

The NHS advises that individuals should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID-19. This is if they also have either a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or do normal activities.

4 . Measuring the data

Survey information

The COVID Self-Isolation Insights Study aims to understand the "impacts" of self-isolation and how they differed on reflection to when individuals were first interviewed. It aims to gain a deeper insight into their experience and views on self-isolation once a reasonable period of time has passed since isolating. The study aims to investigate the current views, attitudes, and experiences of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic among these individuals.

Estimates

This is the first and only bulletin on this topic.

The experimental statistics presented in this bulletin are based on a survey of 815 people in England who had previously participated in either the [Test and Trace Cases Insights Study](#) (waves 1-11) or the [Test and Trace Contacts Insights Study](#) (waves 1-12). This was before the legal requirement to self-isolate in England ended. Those originally surveyed had met the criteria to self-isolate because they either tested positive for COVID-19 or were in close contact with someone who tested positive.

A sample was drawn from those who had indicated that they were willing to be recontacted and had either agreed or disagreed with the statement "it was easy for me to self-isolate". Respondents were sampled using implicit stratification by region, sex and age. Those who said that they disagreed with the statement were oversampled.

The data were collected between 25 April and 10 May 2022. The majority (67%) of respondents were interviewed between 6 and 15 months since their previous survey, while the remaining 33% were interviewed between 3 and 6 months.

The survey was conducted via the telephone and all answers were self-reported.

Of potential respondents who were successfully contacted by an interviewer, the response rate was 60%. When including cases where contact was attempted but not made, the response rate was 26%.

Percentages in this bulletin are weighted to be representative of a specific population of adults (aged 18 years and over). This group had previously been contacted for a cases or contacts survey between 1 February 2021 and 12 February 2022 and had agreed to be recontacted. They are adjusted to address bias in response rates for age, sex, region and agreement with the statement "it was easy for me to self-isolate".

As with all surveys, these estimates have an associated margin of error.

Experimental Statistics

The statistics presented are Experimental Statistics, so care needs to be taken when interpreting them. The survey has a relatively small number of respondents (815) and the behaviour of respondents during self-isolation is self-reported.

5 . Strengths and limitations

The main strengths of the COVID Self-Isolation Insights Study include timely production of data and statistics that can respond quickly to changing needs. The sample was stratified to be representative of the population being sampled and quality assurance procedures were undertaken throughout the analysis stages to minimise the risk of error. Confidence intervals have been used to determine whether differences are statistically significant. More information about [statistical significance](#) is available in our Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology.

The main limitations of the COVID Self-Isolation Insights Study are that people who did not respond to the survey may have been less likely to engage in self-isolating behaviour than those who did, leading to bias in the results. The behaviour of respondents is self-reported and may be subject to recall-bias, which influences how accurately respondents are able to recall past events and experiences.

Only participants who had previously taken part in the [Test and Trace Cases Insights Study](#) (waves 1-11) or the [Test and Trace Contacts Insights Study](#) (waves 1-12) were invited to take part. This excludes people who have shown symptoms, tested positive or come into contact with someone who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) but were not part of these surveys. Respondents may be unwilling to report behaviour that they believe may not be viewed favourably by others, such as leaving the house after testing positive; this is also known as social-desirability bias.

The [experimental statistics](#) presented in this bulletin contain [uncertainty](#); as with all survey data based on a sample, there is an element of uncertainty as they are susceptible to respondent error and bias.

6 . Related links

[People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19](#)

Web page | Last updated 10 June 2022

Guidance on the gov.uk website for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19.

[COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19](#)

Web page | Last updated 6 May 2022

Guidance on the gov.uk website about the government's plan for removing the remaining legal restrictions while protecting people most vulnerable to COVID-19 and maintaining resilience.

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

Web page | 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](#)

Web page | Updated as and when data become available

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

[Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 28 March to 2 April 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 10 May 2022

Behaviour of individuals advised to self-isolate after testing positive for COVID-19, from the COVID-19 Attitudes Study. Includes information on the impact of self-isolation on well-being and finances. Experimental Statistics.

[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.