

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 1 April 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (covering 16 to 27 March 2022) of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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Notice

29 April 2022

This page has been superseded by the [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain](#) page. This will be the new title and location of the bulletin for 29 April 2022 and future releases. It will continue to present indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, along with other insights into daily life and events, including health and well-being, cost of living and goods shortages.

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Social impacts of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
3. [Personal well-being](#)
4. [Household finances and cost of living](#)
5. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
6. [Measuring the data](#)
7. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

Throughout the period 16 to 27 March 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- around 6 in 10 (57%) working adults exclusively travelled to work; although slightly lower than the previous period (60%) this remained higher compared with the trend over the past two years
- around 7 in 10 (68%) adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days; this is the lowest proportion since the removal of "Plan B" measures in England (95% between 19 and 30 January 2022)
- around 1 in 3 (29%) adults reported always or often maintaining social distancing; a similar percentage to the previous period (28%), which was the lowest since this measure was first recorded in September 2020 (76% over the period 16 to 20 September 2020)
- 4 in 10 (40%) adults reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days; this follows a decline from a high of 61% over the period 6 to 16 January 2022
- over one-third (35%) of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now; this follows a decline from 66% during the "Plan B" measures (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022)

In this period, we continued to find increased concerns about the cost of living. For example:

- nearly 9 in 10 (87%) reported that their cost of living had increased; this is an increase compared with 83% in the previous period and 62% when this measure was first recorded (over the period 3 to 14 November 2021)
- among these adults, the most common reasons reported were an increase in the price of food (88%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (83%) and an increase in the price of fuel (77%)
- among those who pay energy bills, 4 in 10 (43%) said they found it very or somewhat difficult to pay their bills
- among those who said they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, 6% reported they were behind on their gas or electricity bills

2 . Social impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 16 and 27 March 2022 ("the latest period"), while the "previous period" is based on data collected between 3 and 13 March 2022.

During the latest period, most restrictions and guidance to manage the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) had been lifted. The latest [coronavirus information and guidance](#) can be found on the GOV.UK website.

This section provides the latest estimates of preventative measures used by adults in Great Britain to live with and manage the coronavirus pandemic. It also shows how this may have changed over a longer time period (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Impact of restriction easing on behaviours

Percentage of adults practising preventative measures to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), Great Britain, January 2021 to March 2022

Notes:

1. COVID-19 measures referenced in annotations refer to those in England only, although the chart presents Great Britain estimates; please note that similar measures were used in Wales and Scotland.
2. On January 27 2022, "Plan B" measures were relaxed in England. This included removal of the legal requirement to wear face coverings and for COVID passes.
3. The legal requirement to self-isolate in England ended on 24 February 2022. From this date, the NHS Test and Trace service closed, the NHS app no longer advised people to self-isolate, and self-isolation support payments were no longer available.
4. On 21 February 2022 an announcement was made on living with COVID for England. From 1 April 2022 in England, the government will no longer provide free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public. The data reported were collected prior to this change.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Face coverings

In the latest period, a lower percentage (68%) of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days (74% in the previous period). This is a continuing decline, following the removal of "Plan B" measures at the end of January (95% over the period 19 to 30 January 2022).

Among those who went shopping in the past seven days, 5 in 10 (50%) reported they had often or always worn a face covering while in the shops; this is down from 58% in the previous period.

Among adults who used public transport, 50% said they wore a face covering for their whole journey in the past seven days; this is down from 57% in the previous period.

Social distancing

Nearly 3 in 10 (29%) adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days. This is a similar percentage to the previous period (28%), which was the lowest proportion since this measure was first recorded in September 2020 (76% over the period 16 to 20 September 2020).

Lateral flow testing

Among adults, 4 in 10 (40%) reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days, compared with 38% in the previous period. This follows a decline from a high of 61% over the period 6 to 16 January 2022.

These data were collected between 16 and 27 March 2022 when the UK government were still providing free universal symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for the general public in England.

Self-isolation

A higher percentage of adults reported self-isolating in the past seven days, 7% compared with 4% in the previous period.

The main reasons adults reported for self-isolating in the latest period were:

- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (65% compared with 63% in the previous period)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (32% compared with 12% in the previous period)
- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (28% compared with 22% in the previous period)
- they were worried about catching COVID-19 (10% compared with 12% in the previous period)

Location of work

Of all working adults, 57% exclusively travelled to work (did not work from home) in the last seven days, compared with 60% in the previous period.

The percentage of working adults who had worked from home exclusively remained at 12% (also 12% in the previous period). This comes after the increase in the percentage of working adults working from home while "Plan B" measures were in place in England (10 December 2021 to 27 January 2022).

Figure 2: Around 6 in 10 (57%) of working adults were travelling to work only in the past seven days

Percentage of working adults, Great Britain, January 2021 to March 2022

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past seven days, have you worked from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak?".
2. Base: working adults.
3. COVID-19 measures referenced in annotations refer to those in England only, although the chart presents Great Britain estimates; please note that similar measures were used in Wales and Scotland.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Among working adults in this latest period:

- around 1 in 7 (14%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (13% in the previous period)
- around one-third (33%) reported that, compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold (32% in the previous period)

More about coronavirus

- Find the latest on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in the UK](#).
- [Explore the latest coronavirus data](#) from the ONS and other sources.
- All ONS analysis, summarised in our [coronavirus roundup](#).
- View [all coronavirus data](#).
- Find out how we are [working safely in our studies and surveys](#).

3 . Personal well-being

Over one-third (35%) of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now. This follows a decline from 66% during the "Plan B" measures (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022).

Levels of personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction (7.1 in this period and 7.0 in the previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.3 in this period and 7.3 in the previous period)
- happiness (7.1 in this period and 6.9 in the previous period)
- anxiety (4.0 in this period and 4.1 in the previous period)

These estimates of personal well-being may differ from the [headline personal well-being statistics](#) based on the Annual Population Survey. Our methodology article on [data collection changes due to the pandemic and their impact on estimating personal well-being](#) details the differences between these two data sources.

Figure 3: Levels of personal well-being remained relatively stable

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to March 2022

Notes:

1. Questions: "Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?", "Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?", "Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?" and "Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?".
2. These questions are answered on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely".
3. Base: all adults.

Download the data

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4 . Household finances and cost of living

When asked how the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was affecting their life in the past seven days, 19% of adults reported their household finances were being affected (17% in the previous period).

We asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 87% reporting their cost of living had increased. This is part of an increasing trend, compared with 83% in the previous period and 62% when we first asked this question (3 to 14 November 2021).

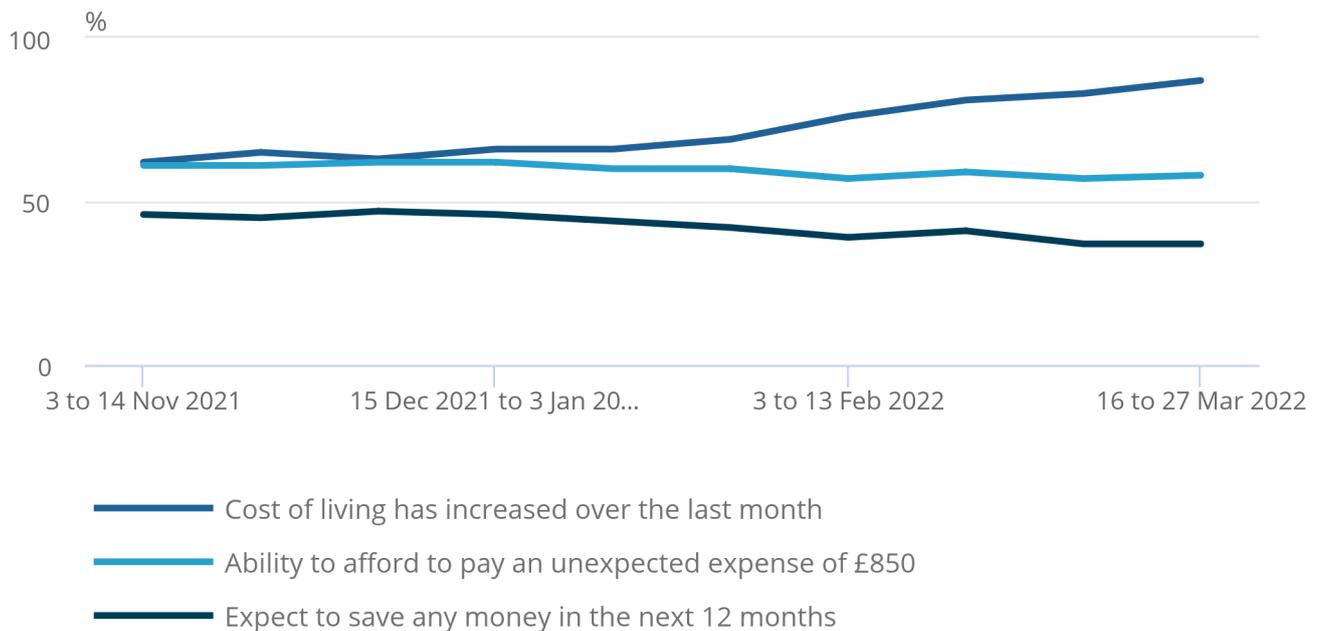
Over the same period, the percentage of adults who think they would be able to save any money in the next 12 months has decreased; 37% in the latest period compared with 46% over the period 3 to 14 November 2021. The percentage who reported their household could afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850 was 58% in the latest period compared with 61% over the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

Figure 4: Around 9 in 10 adults reported a cost of living increase in the past month

All adults in Great Britain, November 2021 to March 2022

Figure 4: Around 9 in 10 adults reported a cost of living increase in the past month

All adults in Great Britain, November 2021 to March 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS) – Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN)

Notes:

1. Questions: “Could your household afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850?”, “In view of the general economic situation, do you think you will be able to save any money in the next 12 months?”, “Over the last 12 months, has your cost of living changed?”

The most common reasons reported by adults who said their cost of living had increased were:

- an increase in the price of food shopping (88% compared with 90% in the previous period)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (83% compared with 83% in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (77% compared with 79% in the previous period)

The most common actions reported by adults who said their cost of living had increased were:

- spending less on non-essentials (54%)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (45%)
- cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle (39%)
- shopping around more (37%)

Among those who pay energy bills, 4 in 10 (43%) said they found it very or somewhat difficult to afford their energy bills. In comparison, nearly half (47%) reported it was very or somewhat easy to afford their energy bills.

Among those who said they have gas or electricity supplied to their home, 6% reported they were behind on their gas or electricity bills.

These data were collected between 16 and 27 March 2022, prior to the increase in the domestic energy tariff cap on 1 April 2022.

There are strong seasonal spending patterns relating to gas and electricity that may affect the results presented in this section. For more information on this and recent price rises for gas and electricity, please see [our latest Consumer price inflation statistics](#) for February 2022.

Further demographic breakdowns of estimates in this bulletin are available within the accompanying [Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain datasets](#).

5 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 1 April 2022

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 impacts on Great Britain: Personal experience of shortage of goods](#)

Dataset | Released on 1 April 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on whether people experienced shortage of goods such as food, medicine and fuel when shopping.

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

Dataset | Released on 1 April 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the way in which people report the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has affected their household finances in the past seven days, if people report their costs of living has changed in the last month and why, and on people's financial situation in the last month.

6 . 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

In the period between 16 and 27 March 2022, we sampled 4,471 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,100 individuals, representing a 69.3% response rate.

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

7 . Related links

[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.

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

Bulletin | Released weekly

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, UK](#)

Bulletin | Released weekly

Estimates for England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. This survey is being delivered in partnership with University of Oxford, University of Manchester, UK Health Security Agency 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 Laboratory to collect and test samples.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey, characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19, UK: 2 March 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 March 2022

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, UK Health Security Agency 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 Laboratory to collect and test samples.

[Homeworking and spending during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, Great Britain: April 2020 to January 2022](#)

Article | Released 14 February 2022

Examines the effect of homeworking on individual finances, spending, and the main items driving changes.

[COVID-19 Question Bank](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This page provides a bank of questions from multiple ONS surveys related to 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 the ONS have in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.