

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 7 January 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022, to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Contact:
Geeta Kerai, Caleb Ogwuru, Ed
Pyle and Lynsey Brown
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.
gov.uk
+44 300 0671543

Release date:
7 January 2022

Next release:
21 January 2022

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Introduction](#)
3. [Impact of Plan B measures](#)
4. [Other social impacts of coronavirus](#)
5. [Christmas plans](#)
6. [Goods shortages](#)
7. [Social impacts on Great Britain data](#)
8. [Measuring the data](#)
9. [Related links](#)

1 . Main points

Throughout the period of 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- The majority of adults (96%) wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days, up slightly from 94% in the previous period (1 to 12 December 2021), and similar to one year ago (97% from 22 December 2020 to 3 January 2021); proportions were similar across England (96%), Wales (96%) and Scotland (97%).
- Around two-thirds (66%) of adults reported having received two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines and a booster (compared with 46% in the previous period).
- Around 1 in 10 (9%) adults had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days (excluding when travelling abroad) (8% in the previous period).
- Almost 6 in 10 adults (57%) said they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days (42% in the previous period), with higher proportions of younger people taking one compared with older people.
- The proportion of adults working from home at some point in the past seven days remained stable in this period (32%) while there was a fall in those reporting travelling to work at some point (60%) (compared with 32% and 72% respectively in the period 1 to 12 December 2021).
- Around 4 in 10 (43%) adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days, while over 6 in 10 adults (63%) reported they avoided physical contact with others outside their home in the past seven days; these proportions were higher among older people and those who reported they are clinically extremely vulnerable.
- During the Christmas season, over 6 in 10 adults (63%) reported they planned to visit (or had already visited) family or friends in their homes, while around half (51%) planned to have (or had already had) family or friends visit them in their home; around three-quarters (73%) planned to stay (or stayed) at home if feeling unwell to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 (80% in the previous period).

Estimates included in this release are based on data collected between 15 December 2021 and 3 January 2022, during which new measures against the Omicron variant were introduced. The latest information and guidance in England, Wales, and Scotland can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

2 . Introduction

Following the emergence of the new Omicron variant across Great Britain, each constituent country has introduced new measures aiming to control the spread and protect the NHS, while also accelerating the coronavirus (COVID-19) booster vaccination programmes.

This release provides the first estimates of the impacts of some of these measures, based on data collected in the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

In England, the [move to Plan B](#) was confirmed on 8 December 2021. This included:

- mandatory use of face coverings in most indoor venues from 10 December
- advice to work from home for those who can from 13 December
- mandatory use of NHS COVID Passes for proof of two vaccine doses, or proof of a negative lateral flow test, for entry to large events and venues from 15 December
- advice to test using a lateral flow device, particularly before entering a high-risk setting or visiting a vulnerable person

In Scotland, similar measures on face coverings, working from home and NHS COVID Passes were already in place, with [new measures](#) aimed at reducing social interactions at home and indoor settings recently announced, including:

- advice to reduce social contact by meeting in groups of no more than three households from 14 December
 - large events being limited in capacity with 1-metre physical distancing from 26 December
- a limit to three households meeting at indoor and outdoor venues, such as bars and cinemas from 27 December

In Wales, measures on face coverings, working from home and NHS COVID Passes were also similarly in place, with further measures more recently announced, including:

- a move to [alert level 2](#), reintroducing the “rule of six” and limiting the number of people at indoor and outdoor events from 26 December
- the closure of nightclubs and 2-metre social distancing in public places and offices from 26 December

Estimates for England, Scotland and Wales, and regions in England can be found in the [data tables](#) accompanying this release.

Throughout this bulletin, we refer to “this period” (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022) and the “previous period” (1 to 12 December 2021).

3 . Impact of Plan B measures

Face coverings

During this period, the majority (96%) of adults across Great Britain wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days, up slightly from 94% in the previous period, and similar to one year ago (97% from 22 December 2020 to 3 January 2021).

The proportions of adults who reported wearing face coverings were similar in England (96%, 94% in the previous period), Wales (96%, 94% in the previous period) and Scotland (97%, 98% in the previous period).

According to age, higher proportions of older adults reported wearing face coverings (97% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 70 years and over) compared with younger people (94% of those aged 16 to 29 years and 96% of those aged 30 to 49 years), though these differences were not [statistically significant](#).

Among adults who left home to shop in the past seven days, 95% reported wearing a face covering often or always, while around two-thirds (66%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering when doing so (compared with 88% and 47% respectively in the previous period).

Among adults who travelled on public transport in the past seven days, 9 in 10 (90%) reported wearing a face covering for the whole journey, while around two-thirds (65%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering while doing so (compared with 84% and 45% respectively in the previous period).

Among adults who had been inside a restaurant, café, or bar in the past seven days, over one-third (36%) reported often or always wearing a face covering when doing so. At the same time, around 3 in 10 (29%) reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering in these settings (compared with 28% and 19% respectively in the previous period).

Most adults (90%) reported they felt wearing a face covering was important or very important in slowing the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) (unchanged from the previous period). This proportion appeared to increase with age; 86% of those aged 16 to 29 years, 88% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 93% of those aged 50 to 69 years, and 96% of those aged 70 years and over reported this.

Location of work

Usual work and work location patterns may have been affected by Christmas and New Year holidays during this survey period.

Among working adults:

- around 3 in 10 (32%) reported working from home at some point in the past seven days (32% in the previous period)
- 6 in 10 (60%) reported travelling to work at some point in the past seven days (72% in the previous period)
- around 1 in 10 (11%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (18% in the previous period)
- around one-third (34%) reported that, compared with before the pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold (37% in the previous period)

COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters

Around two-thirds (66%) of adults reported having received two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations and a booster, compared with 46% in the previous period.

Among adults who have received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine but not yet a booster, around 9 in 10 (89%) said they would be very likely or fairly likely to have a booster COVID-19 vaccine if offered to them. Meanwhile, 6% said they would be very unlikely or fairly unlikely to have a booster vaccine if offered.

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

- thinking the booster vaccine would not offer them any extra protection (45% compared with 58% in the previous period)
- thinking the first and second vaccine would be enough to keep them safe (33% compared with 44% in the previous period)
- being worried about having a bad reaction to the booster jab (29% compared with 30% in the previous period)
- being worried about long-term effects on their health (17% compared with 47% in the previous period)

Of all adults with a child aged between 12 and 15 years living in their household, more than half (54%) said the child had already received a COVID-19 vaccine (50% in the previous period). Around one-quarter (26%) reported the child would be very likely or fairly likely to receive it, a slight decrease from 30% in the previous period, while around 1 in 10 (12%) reported the child would be very unlikely or fairly unlikely to receive it, similar to the previous period (13%).

The estimates presented here are based on self-reports from a sample of adults and may differ from [official administrative data](#) on the number of individuals, including children aged 12 to 15 years, who have received COVID-19 vaccines and booster vaccines in Great Britain and its constituent countries.

Proof of COVID-19 vaccination or negative lateral flow test

Around 1 in 10 (9%) adults had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days (excluding when travelling abroad) compared with 8% in the previous period. This was highest among younger people (18% of those aged 16 to 29 years) compared with older people (8% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 7% of those aged 50 to 60 years and 3% of those aged 70 years and over).

The most frequently reported settings where adults were asked for proof of vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in order to attend were:

- a theatre or comedy performance (21%)
- a nightclub or bar (19%)
- an indoor concert (17%)
- a work or training event (14%)
- a sporting event (12%)

Lateral flow testing

Almost 6 in 10 adults (57%) said they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days (42% in the previous period).

Higher proportions of younger adults took rapid lateral flow tests (65% of those aged 16 to 29 years and 30 to 49 years) compared with older adults (54% of those aged 50 to 69 years and 38% of those aged 70 years and over).

The most common reasons for taking a test were:

- before meeting family and friends (46%)
- before going to work or college (29%)
- doing so at regular intervals regardless of activity (25%)
- feeling ill or having cold- or flu-like symptoms (22%)

4 . Other social impacts of coronavirus

Self-isolation

Around 1 in 14 adults (7%) reported self-isolating because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) in the past seven days, a slight increase from 5% in the previous period.

The main reasons adults self-isolated were:

- having tested positive for COVID-19 (30%)
- having been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (28%)
- being worried about catching COVID-19 (17%)

Social distancing

Around 43% of adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days (40% in the previous period).

According to age, this was higher among older adults compared with younger adults: 58% of those aged 70 years and over, 52% of those aged 50 to 69 years, 37% of those aged 30 to 49 years, and 25% of those aged 16 to 29 years.

Among those who reported they are clinically extremely vulnerable, more than half (55%) said they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days compared with 42% of those who are not.

Overall, most adults (86%) reported they felt social distancing was important or very important in slowing the spread of COVID-19 (87% in the previous period).

Physical contact outside and inside the home

Over 6 in 10 adults (63%) reported they avoided physical contact with others outside their home in the past seven days (57% in the previous period).

Higher proportions of older adults reported this compared with younger adults: 74% of those aged 70 years and over, 66% of those aged 50 to 69 years, 60% of those aged 30 to 49 years, and 52% of those aged 16 to 29 years.

Clinically extremely vulnerable adults were more likely to report they avoided physical contact with others outside their home in the past seven days than those who are not (71% compared with 62%). This was also similar for those who reported they are disabled (69%) compared with those who are not (61%).

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

- washing hands regularly (36%; 32% in the previous period)
- opening windows or doors (26%; 20% in the previous period)
- maintaining social distancing (22%; 17% in the previous period)
- cleaning touch points (18%; 13% in the previous period)

Around 4 in 10 adults (38%) reported friends and family had not come into their home in the past seven days, a slight decrease from the previous period (45%).

Socialising

Around 7 in 10 (69%) adults met up or socialised indoors, while almost half (47%) of adults met up or socialised outdoors, with others outside their household in the past seven days (excluding for work or education). This is similar to the previous period at 68% and 46% respectively. A higher proportion of younger adults met up or socialised outdoors with others outside their household (64% of those aged 16 to 29 years) compared with older adults (43% of those aged 30 to 49 years, 44% of those aged 50 to 69 years, and 41% of those aged 70 years and over). There were no significant differences between age groups for those who met with others indoors.

Information about the COVID-19 pandemic

Almost half of adults (47%) felt they had enough information about how to protect themselves from COVID-19, compared with around one-third (32%) of adults feeling they did not have enough information to protect themselves. In addition, the majority of adults (93%) felt they had enough information about the UK's plan to deal with the pandemic, with 2% of adults feeling they did not.

Personal well-being

The personal well-being measures during this period were:

- life satisfaction: 7.0 - unchanged from the previous period (6.7 in a similar period last year, 22 December 2020 to 3 January 2021)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile: 7.3 - unchanged from the previous period (7.2 in a similar period last year)
- happiness: 7.0 - unchanged from the previous period (6.9 in a similar period last year)
- anxiety: 4.2 - a slight increase compared with 4.0 in the previous period (4.0 in a similar period last year)

Return to normal

Around one-third of adults (35%) reported they expect life to return to normal in more than a year (39% in the previous period, and an increase from 20% in a similar period last year: 22 December 2020 to 3 January 2021), while around 1 in 8 (13%) said that they never expect this to happen (14% in the previous period, and 3% in a similar period last year).

Around 1 in 14 (7%) adults reported they expected life to return to normal in less than six months (unchanged from the previous period, and down from 25% in a similar period last year), while around 1 in 20 (4%) felt their life had already returned to normal.¹

Impact on life

Among all adults, around two-thirds (66%) were very or somewhat worried about the effect that the pandemic is having on their lives (56% in the previous period, and 75% in a similar period last year: 22 December 2020 to 3 January 2021). Meanwhile, around 1 in 8 (12%) reported that they are somewhat unworried or not worried at all about the impact on their lives (16% in the previous period, and 10% in a similar period last year).

Among those who reported they are clinically extremely vulnerable, 73% said they were very or somewhat worried about the effect that the pandemic is having on their lives compared with 65% who are not clinically extremely vulnerable. This was similar among those who reported they are disabled (72%) compared with those who are not disabled (64%).

Notes for Other social impacts of coronavirus:

1. This response option was not available in previous survey periods.

5 . Christmas plans

In this period, we asked adults about their travel and social plans during the Christmas period and actions they took (or were planning to take) to help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The most frequently reported travel and social activities planned over the Christmas period were:

- visiting family or friends in their homes (63%, 62% in the previous period)
- having family or friends visit me in my home (51%, 48% in the previous period)
- meeting up with family or friends in restaurants, pubs, bars or cafes (29%, 34% in the previous period)
- visiting a Christmas market (13%, 22% in the previous period)

The most commonly reported actions people took (or were planning to take) to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 over the Christmas period were:

- washing their hands regularly (77%, 79% in the previous period)
- staying at home if feeling unwell (73%, 80% in the previous period)
- wearing a face covering (72%, 71% in the previous period)
- socially distancing where possible (68%, 71% in the previous period)

6 . Goods shortages

In this period, we continued to ask adults whether they had experienced shortages of any goods at any time in the past two weeks. Around one-third (32%) of adults reported experiencing shortages (31% in the previous period).

Food

Around 1 in 7 (15%) reported they had not been able to buy essential food because it was not available, up slightly from 13% in the previous period. When food shopping, around 6 in 10 (57%) reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual. The most commonly reported differences were:

- less variety in the shops (37%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement was found (18%)
- spending more than usual to get what I normally buy (18%)
- items needed were not available, and a replacement could not be found (16%)

Medicine

In this period, less than 1 in 20 (4%) adults reported they were unable to buy medicine because it was unavailable. Around one-quarter (26%) of adults who had tried to buy medicine or get a prescription, reported experiencing some differences compared with the usual (22% in the previous period). The most commonly reported differences were:

- having to wait longer for their prescription (16%)
- having to go to more pharmacies to find what they needed (6%)
- items needed were not available, but a replacement could be found (4%)
- items needed were not available, and a replacement could not be found (4%)

7 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 7 January 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: Christmas planning behaviours](#)

Dataset | Released 7 January 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on what people are planning to do during the Christmas period and any steps taken to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, covering the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.

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

Dataset | Released 7 January 2022

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 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: Information about COVID-19](#)

Dataset | Released 7 January 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on headline indicators broken down by disability status and whether a respondent is critically extremely vulnerable (CEV status), covering the period 1 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.

[Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: Headline indicators by disability and clinically extremely vulnerable \(CEV\) status](#)

Dataset | Released 7 January 2022

Headline indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 1 December 2021 to 3 January 2022 by disability and clinically extremely vulnerable status.

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

Dataset | Released on 7 January 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the ways in which people report the coronavirus pandemic has affected their household and personal finances, covering the period 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022.

8 . 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.

Provisional estimates for 15 to 19 December 2021

On 23 December 2021, we published provisional estimates relating to the period 15 to 19 December 2021. These were based on the first 3,134 responses achieved from the full survey, which took place from 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022, representing a response rate of 46% as of 19 December 2021. Comparison of provisional estimates for the period 15 to 19 December 2021 with estimates from previous and future data collection periods should be made with caution.

Sampling and weighting

In the period between 15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022 we sampled 6,740 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 4,700 individuals, representing a 70% response rate. The sample in this period is larger than in previous periods as the collection period was lengthened by seven days because of the Christmas and New Year holidays.

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](#).

9 . 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 and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 29 November to 4 December 2021](#)

Bulletin | 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.

[Coronavirus and behaviour of the vaccinated population after being in contact with a positive case in England: 25 to 30 October 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 November 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

[Coronavirus and changing attitudes towards vaccination, England: 7 to 16 September 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 9 November 2021

Changes in uptake and attitudes towards the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines, among adults who previously reported vaccine hesitancy.

[Eight in ten adults think social distancing is important – but four in ten actually do it](#)

Article | Released 22 October 2021

Data and analysis on the percentage of adults in Great Britain practicing preventative measures to slow the spread of coronavirus and how important these measures are considered to be.

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 6 January 2022](#)

Bulletin | Updated frequently

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

Article | Released 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-coronavirus estimates.