

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England: 28 June to 3 July 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 wellbeing and finances. Experimental Statistics.

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1 . Main points

- Data collected from 28 June to 3 July 2021 show that the majority (89%) of those who had contact with a positive coronavirus (COVID-19) case fully adhered to self-isolation requirements throughout their full isolation period.
- Adherence to self-isolation requirements was statistically significantly higher among those who developed COVID-19 symptoms (94%) compared with those who did not (86%).
- Most respondents (91%) reported having no contact with non-household members for their full period of isolation.
- Of those who reported non-adherent behaviour, 79% left their house at least once during the isolation period for a non-permitted reason.
- Over one-third (37%) of all respondents reported that self-isolation had a negative effect on their well-being and mental health, and 28% reported having lost income because of self-isolation.

The statistics presented are [Experimental Statistics](#), so care needs to be taken when interpreting them. It is worth noting this survey has a relatively small sample size of 990.

Statistician's comment

“As infection rates have increased, it is unsurprising that around one third of those required to self-isolate after contact with a positive case reported developing symptoms of COVID-19.

“Adherence to self-isolation requirements was significantly higher amongst those who developed symptoms compared with those who didn't.

“With restrictions easing further, it is important we continue to monitor the behaviour of those required to self-isolate.”

Tim Gibbs, Public Services Analysis team, Office for National Statistics.

Follow the Public Services Analysis team on Twitter: [@HughStick](#)

2 . Indicators of behaviour and experience during self-isolation

Since December 2020, there has been a [legal duty](#) in England to self-isolate for 10 days if you live in the same household as a person who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), or if you have been in close contact with, but do not live with, a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

The data presented in this bulletin were collected from individuals (“contacts”) who had been identified as having been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19. The data were collected at the point when this population had recently reached (or were near to) the end of their self-isolation period. More information on identifying this group of people, self-isolation and collecting the data can be found in the [Glossary](#) and [Measuring the data](#) sections.

Between 28 June and 3 July 2021, the majority (89%) of respondents reported fully adhering to self-isolation requirements throughout the whole isolation period, as shown in Table 1. This was slightly higher than in the previous survey (87% between 1 and 5 June 2021), but [statistically significantly](#) lower than the result between 4 and 8 May 2021 (93%).

Table 1: Indicators of behaviour and experience during self-isolation of those who were in contact with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
England, 4 to 8 May, 1 to 5 June and 28 June to 3 July 2021

| | 4 to 8 May | 1 to 5 June | 28 June to 3 July |
|---|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Percentage reporting full adherence to the requirements for their full isolation period or until the point of the survey | 93% | 87% ¹ | 89% ³ |
| Percentage reporting no contact with non-household members for their full isolation period or until the point of the survey | 97% | 93% ¹ | 91% ³ |
| Percentage who fully understood the self-isolation requirements | 72% | 76% | 80% ³ |
| Percentage who developed COVID-19 symptoms | 21% | 35% ¹ | 34% ³ |
| Percentage who agreed that “it was easy for me to self-isolate” | 79% | 80% | 79% |
| Percentage reporting self-isolation had a negative effect on their well-being and mental health | 34% | 37% | 37% |
| Percentage reporting having lost income due to self-isolation | 25% | 27% | 28% |
| Percentage who downloaded the NHS Test and Trace app | 51% | 57% | 65% ^{2,3} |
| Of those who did not adhere to the requirements, percentage leaving the house for a non-permitted reason | 87% | 83% | 79% |
| Of those who did not adhere to the requirements, percentage who had one or more visitors to their home (excluding visits for personal care) | 15%* | 21% ^{1*} | 27%* |
| Of those who had applied and received the NHS Test and Trace Support payment, percentage who had no contact with non-household members within 24 hours of receiving a notification to self-isolate | 95%* | 95%* | .. |

Source: Office for National Statistics – COVID Test and Trace Contacts Insights Survey

Notes

1. The percentages between 4 to 8 May 2021 and 1 to 5 June 2021 are statistically significantly different.
2. The percentages between 1 to 5 June 2021 and 28 June to 3 July 2021 are statistically significantly different.
3. The percentages between 4 to 8 May 2021 and 28 June to 3 July 2021 are statistically significantly different.
4. If not specified, percentages are based on everyone who was in contact with a positive case.
5. Some percentages in this table are based on sample counts of fewer than 30 respondents and should be treated with caution. These categories are marked with an asterisk (*). Percentages based on sample counts of fewer than 10 respondents have been suppressed for quality and disclosure reasons (marked with “..”).

3 . Adherence to self-isolation requirements

Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents who fully adhered to self-isolation requirements following contact with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19), according to selected characteristics.

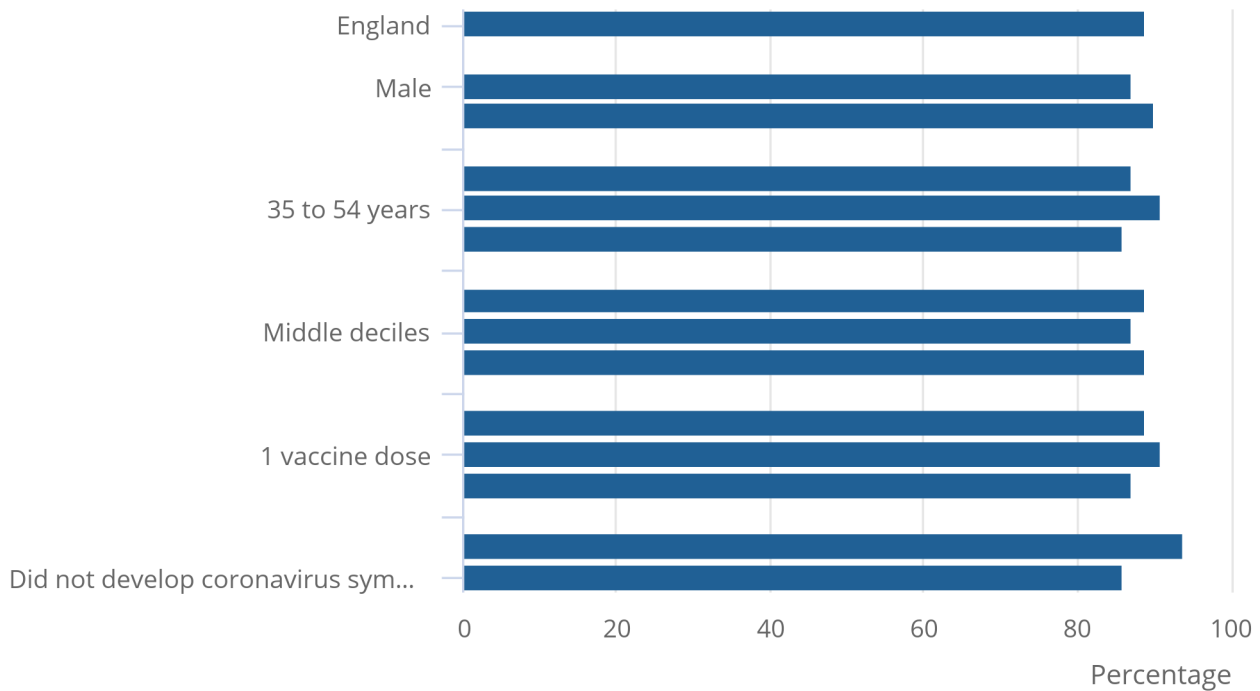
Adherence to self-isolation requirements was [statistically significantly](#) higher among those who developed COVID-19 symptoms (94%) compared with those who did not develop symptoms (86%). Differences within other groups (by sex, age, area deprivation and vaccination status) were not significant.

Figure 1: Adherence to self-isolation requirements was significantly higher among those who developed COVID-19 symptoms compared with those who did not

Percentage of respondents who fully adhered to self-isolation requirements: by selected characteristics, England, 28 June to 3 July 2021

Figure 1: Adherence to self-isolation requirements was significantly higher among those who developed COVID-19 symptoms compared with those who did not

Percentage of respondents who fully adhered to self-isolation requirements: by selected characteristics, England, 28 June to 3 July 2021



Source: Office for National Statistics – COVID Test and Trace Contacts Insights Survey

Notes:

1. Deprivation was measured using the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Areas have been grouped into deciles and then further grouped into three categories: Most deprived deciles (deciles 1 to 3); Middle deciles (deciles 4 to 7); and Least deprived deciles (deciles 8 to 10).
2. The results in Figure 1 for this survey (28 June to 3 July 2021) are not statistically significantly different from the results in the previous survey (1 to 5 June 2021).

More about coronavirus

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

4 . Contact with non-household members

The majority (91%) of those required to self-isolate following contact with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19) reported having no contact with non-household members throughout the whole self-isolation period. This result was similar to the previous survey (93% during 1 to 5 June 2021).

The proportion of respondents who did not have contact with a non-household member was higher in the first 24 hours of self-isolation (97%) compared with the rest of the isolation period (93%). Of those who had contact with a non-household member at least once, four in 10 (40%) met two to five non-household members at any one time.

5 . Understanding of self-isolation requirements

Respondents were asked about their interpretation of the requirements for self-isolation to determine how well they understood them. Eight out of 10 people (80%) fully understood the requirements, compared with two in 10 people (20%) who either misunderstood or were unsure. There were no significant differences in understanding across all age groups.

In the first 24 hours after they had been informed to self-isolate following contact with a positive case of coronavirus (COVID-19), those who understood the guidance were [statistically significantly](#) more likely to adhere to it (96%) compared with those who misunderstood or were unsure of the guidance (91%).

Across the whole period of self-isolation, the proportion of those who understood the guidance and adhered to it was [statistically significantly](#) higher (92%) than the proportion of those who misunderstood or were unsure of the guidance (73%).

6 . Data on self-isolation after contact with a positive case

[Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England](#)

Dataset | Released 16 July 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.

7 . Glossary

Self-isolation

Self-isolation refers to not leaving your home because you have been informed by NHS Test and Trace that you are a contact of a person who has had a positive test result for the coronavirus (COVID-19). You must stay at home and complete 10 full days of isolation. It is a [legal requirement](#) to self-isolate if you have been notified to by the NHS Test and Trace service. Your isolation period includes the date of your last contact with them and the next 10 full days. If you develop symptoms, stay at home and arrange to have a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for COVID-19. In addition to staying home, if you are self-isolating you should not receive visitors, unless the purpose of the visit is to provide essential care.

For further information please see NHS guidance on [When to self-isolate and what to do](#).

Lockdown

On 5 January 2021, the UK government announced a further national lockdown for England. On 22 February 2021, the UK government published a [four-step roadmap](#) to ease lockdown restrictions in England. Step 2 of the roadmap (which allowed the re-opening of more businesses and activities) was implemented on 12 April 2021. Step 3 (which eased limits on social contact and allowed further re-opening of businesses and activities) was implemented on 17 May 2021. Step 4 (the final stage of unlocking coronavirus restrictions) was due to be implemented on 21 June 2021 (before this survey), but will now be implemented on 19 July 2021.

8 . Measuring the data

Survey information

The latest quality and methodology information on data from the COVID Test and Trace Contacts Insights Survey can be found in the [Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England: methodology](#).

Estimates for this survey

The data were collected between 28 June and 3 July 2021. The sample consisted of 990 adults and was stratified to be representative of the age, sex and regional distribution of the “contacts” population.

Percentages in this report are based on weighted counts that are representative of the population of adults (aged 18 years or over) notified as being in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 between 31 May and 27 June 2021 and are adjusted to address age, sex and regional bias in responses.

Of those potential respondents who were successfully contacted by an interviewer, the response rate was 58.4%. When including cases where contact was attempted but not made, the response rate was 17.6%. As with all surveys, these estimates have an associated margin of error.

Respondents were randomly sampled through the Contact Tracing and Advice Service (CTAS) database, held by NHS Test and Trace. The majority (more than 99%) of respondents were interviewed within four days of the end of their self-isolation period, in order to minimise recall bias. The longest time between the end of self-isolation and interview was six days.

9 . Strengths and limitations

Information on the strengths and limitations of this survey are available in the [Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England: methodology](#).

10 . Related links

[Coronavirus and self-isolation after being in contact with a positive case in England: methodology](#)

Methodology article | Released 14 May 2021

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

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for contacts](#)

Webpage | Updated 24 June 2021

Guidance for contacts of people with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection who do not live with the person.

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

Bulletin | Weekly

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

[Coronavirus and self-isolation after testing positive in England: 7 June to 12 June 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 28 June 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.