

Statistical bulletin

# Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 18 February 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 3 to 13 February 2022 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

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Release date:  
18 February 2022

Next release:  
4 March 2022

## 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

This period (3 to 13 February 2022) provides the first insights following the removal of Plan B restrictions in England, with restrictions also easing in Wales and Scotland. Following the easing of these restrictions, we have seen changes including:

- The proportion of working adults who only worked from home in the last 7 days decreased to 17% (22% in the previous period) with the proportion of working adults only travelling to work increasing to 54% from 48% in the previous period (19 to 30 January 2022).
- The use of face coverings in shops and on public transport has decreased with 77% of adults reporting always or often wearing face coverings while in shops (94% in the previous period) and 78% reporting wearing a face covering throughout the journey on public transport (90% in the previous period).
- Just over one-third (35%) of adults reported always or often maintaining social distancing (44% in the previous period); this is the lowest proportion of adults reporting maintaining social distancing since data collection on this measure started in September 2020.
- Around half of adults (49%) reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days, decreasing slightly from 53% of adults in the previous period.
- The proportion of adults who reported that they had difficulty getting a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days has continued to fall (2% compared with 9% in the previous period).
- The proportion of adults reporting that they were worried or somewhat worried about the effect of coronavirus (COVID-19) on their lives decreased to around 4 in 10 (43%), continuing the gradual decrease from 66% in the Christmas period (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022) while also being the lowest proportion since October 2021.

In this period, we also found an increase in concerns about the cost of living:

- Over three-quarters of adults (76%) reported that their cost of living had increased (69% in the previous period, 62% when we first asked this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021).
- Among these adults, the most common reasons reported for this was an increase in the price of food (90%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (77%) and an increase in the price of fuel (69%).
- The most common actions taken by those who said their cost of living had increased were to reduce spending on non-essentials (49%), shop around more (36%), use less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (35%) and reduce spending on food shopping and essentials (31%).

Estimates included in this release are based on data collected between 3 and 13 February 2022, the first period after Plan B measures were removed in England on the 27 January 2022. The latest information and guidance for England, Wales, and Scotland can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

## 2 . Social impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 3 and 13 February 2022 ("the latest period"). This is the first period after Plan B measures requiring mandatory use of face coverings in indoor settings, COVID-19 pass certification to gain entry to venues and events and advice to work from home where possible, were removed in England (from 27 January 2022).

This section provides the latest estimates of compliance with such preventative measures to this point, as well as showing how this may have changed over a longer time period (Figure 1).

## Figure 1: Impacts of preventative measures on behaviours

Percentage of adults practising preventative measures to slow the spread of coronavirus, Great Britain, January 2021 to February 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. The questions regarding the measures "Taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days" and "Covid passes" were first asked in the period 20 to 31 October 2021.

### Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

## Face coverings

In the latest period, 88% of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days (95% in the previous period, 19 to 30 January 2022). This decline follows the removal of Plan B measures in England and is the lowest proportion since the period 18 to 28 November 2021 (84%).

More than three-quarters of adults (77%) reported they had often or always worn a face covering when they went shopping in the past seven days, down from 94% in the previous period. Among adults who used public transport, 78% of adults said they wore a face covering for their whole journey in the past seven days, down from 90% in the previous period.

## Social distancing

Around one-third (35%) of adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days (44% in the previous period), the lowest proportion since data collection on this measure started in September 2020. This comes after an increase in the proportion of adults reporting they always or often maintained social distancing during the Christmas period (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022).

## COVID passes

Around 1 in 14 (7%) adults reported they had been asked to show proof of a COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days to be let into a venue or an event (8% in the previous period).

These proportions have remained relatively stable since these data were first collected at the end of October 2021.

## Lateral flow testing

Around half of adults (49%) reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days compared with 53% in the previous period. This follows an increase in lateral flow testing reported in late 2021, following the emergence of the Omicron variant, with 61% of adults reporting that they took a rapid lateral flow test in the period 6 to 16 January 2022.

The proportion of adults reporting difficulties getting a rapid lateral flow test decreased to 1 in 50 (2%) from around 1 in 10 (9%) in the previous period, continuing a gradual decrease from 22% in the period 6 to 16 January 2022.

## Self-isolation

The rules regarding self-isolation have been changing recently in [England](#), [Wales](#) and [Scotland](#).

The proportion of adults in Great Britain who reported self-isolating in the past seven days remained at 5% in the latest period, the same as in the previous period.

The main reasons adults reported for self-isolating were:

- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (63%)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (22%)
- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (21%)

Most adults (89% in this and the previous period) reported they could self-isolate for a period of 10 days if they had to. Among those who reported they would be unable to self-isolate, as well as those who reported they did not know or preferred not to say, the main reasons were:

- they needed to leave the house to buy essentials (50%)
- it would negatively affect their mental health (40%)
- they could not afford to miss work (37%)

## Location of work

Figure 2 shows the longer-term trend of location of work in Great Britain since January 2021.

Following the end of Plan B measures, the percentage of working adults working from home has decreased to 17% in the latest 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 1 in 6 (17%) reported working from home only in the past seven days

Percentage of working adults, Great Britain, January 2021 to February 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 6 (17%) reported working from home only in the past seven days (22% in the previous period)
- more than half (54%) reported travelling to work only in the past seven days (48% in the previous period)
- just over 1 in 10 (13%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (same as in the previous period)
- around one-third (32%) reported that, compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold (33% in the previous period)

### 3 . Personal well-being

Around 4 in 10 adults (43%) reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now. This has decreased since the previous period when around half (52%) of adults reported this and continues a gradual decrease from 66% in the Christmas period (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022). This is also the lowest proportion since 42% of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried in October 2021.

Following a worsening of personal well-being scores in early January, personal well-being scores remained relatively stable:

- life satisfaction (6.9 in this period; 6.9 in previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.2 in this period; 7.3 in the previous period)
- happiness (6.9 in this period; 6.9 in the previous period)
- anxiety (4.0 in this period; 3.9 in the previous period)

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

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to February 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, 15% of adults reported their household finances were being affected (17% in the previous period).

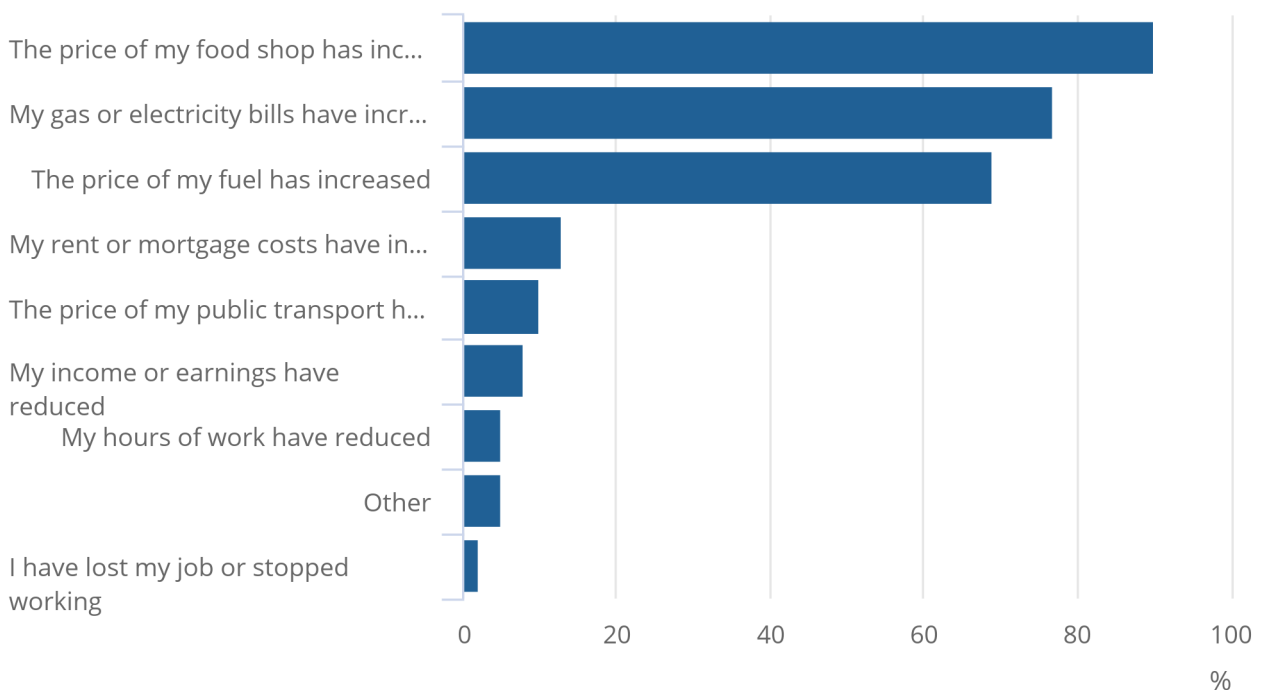
We asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 76% reporting their cost of living had increased (69% in the previous period; 62% when we first asked this in the period 3 to 13 November 2021).

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

- an increase in the price of food shopping (90%; 89% in the previous period)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (77%; 80% in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (69%; 68% in the previous period)

**Figure 4: Reported by 9 in 10 (90%) adults, an increase in the price of food shopping was the most common reason for their cost of living increasing over the past month**

Figure 4: Reported by 9 in 10 (90%) adults, an increase in the price of food shopping was the most common reason for their cost of living increasing over the past month



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

**Notes:**

1. Question: "Over the last month, for what reasons has your cost of living increased?".
2. Base: Adults who reported their cost of living had increased over the last month.
3. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

The most common actions taken because of an increase in the cost of living were:

- spending less on non-essentials (49%)
- shopping around more (36%)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (35%)
- spending less on food shopping and essentials (31%)

When asked about their financial situation, less than 6 in 10 (57%) adults reported they were able to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850 (60% in the previous period).

It should be noted that 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 the latest [Consumer price statistics](#) for January 2022.

Further demographic breakdowns of these estimates are available within the accompanying [datasets](#).

## 5 . Social impacts on Great Britain data

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

Dataset | Released 18 February 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 18 February 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 18 February 2022

Data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the way in which people report the 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 3 to 13 February 2022 we sampled 4,464 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,126 individuals, representing a 70% 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 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.

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

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 \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey: UK: 18 February 2022](#)

Bulletin | Released 18 February 2022

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.

### [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 key items driving changes.

### [Coronavirus and the social impacts on disabled people in Great Britain: March 2020 to December 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 2 February 2022

Analysis of the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on disabled people in Great Britain during periods throughout the pandemic from March 2020 to December 2021. Based on estimates from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

### [Energy prices and their effect on households](#)

Article | Released 1 February 2022

Analysis of the impact that rising gas and electricity prices are having on the cost of living in Great Britain.

### [COVID-19 Question Bank](#)

Webpage | Updated frequently

This page provides a bank of questions from multiple Office for National Statistics (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 ONS have in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.