

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 18 March 2022

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

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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 3 to 13 March 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- six in ten (60%) working adults exclusively travelled to work; this was the highest proportion since this measure was first recorded in May 2020 (29% over the period 14 to 17 May 2020)
- around three-quarters (74%) of 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 the 19 to 30 January 2022)
- more than one in four (28%) adults reported always or often maintaining social distancing; this is the lowest proportion since this measure was first recorded in September 2020 (76% over the period 16 to 20 September 2020)
- around 4 in 10 (38%) adults reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days, continuing the decrease seen since January 2022 (61% between 6 to 16 January 2022)
- one-third (33%) of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now; this is the lowest since the start of the coronavirus pandemic (86% between 20 to 30 March 2020)

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

- around 8 in 10 (83%) reported that their cost of living had increased; this is an increase from 62% when this measure was first recorded (in the period 3 to 14 November 2021)
- among these adults, the most common reasons reported were an increase in the price of food (90%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (83%), and an increase in the price of fuel (79%)
- the most common actions taken by those who said their cost of living had increased were to reduce spending on non-essentials (55%), use less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (43%), shop around more (38%), and cut back on non-essential journeys in their vehicle (35%)

2 . Social impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19)

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

During the latest period, most restrictions and guidance to manage the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) had been lifted. The latest information and guidance can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.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.

[.xlsx](#)

Face coverings

In the latest period, a lower percentage (74%) of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days (83% 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) and is the lowest proportion since [face coverings became mandatory in specific settings](#) (84% in the period 22 to 26 July 2020).

Among those who went shopping in the past seven days, around 6 in 10 (58%) reported they had often or always worn a face covering while in the shops; this is down from 71% in the previous period. Among adults who used public transport, 57% said they wore a face covering for their whole journey in the past seven days; this is down from 70% 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)

Social distancing

Nearly 3 in 10 (28%) adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days (32% in the previous period). This is the lowest proportion since this measure was first recorded in September 2020 (76% over the period 16 to 20 September 2020).

Lateral flow testing

Around 4 in 10 (38%) adults reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days; this is a slightly lower proportion compared with 42% in the previous period. This decline follows an increase in self-reported lateral flow testing following the emergence of the Omicron variant in late 2021, which peaked at 61% of adults reporting they took a test in the period 6 to 16 January 2022.

Self-isolation

The proportion of adults in Great Britain who reported self-isolating in the past seven days remained at 4% in the latest period (4% in previous period).

The main reasons adults reported self-isolating for were:

- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (63%)
- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (22%)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (12%)
- they were worried about catching COVID-19 (12%)

Location of work

60% of working adults exclusively travelled to work (didn't work from home) in the last seven days, compared with 56% in the previous period. This is the highest proportion since this measure was first recorded in May 2020 (29% over the period 14 to 17 May 2020).

A slightly lower percentage worked from home exclusively (12% compared with 15% 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: There was a continuing increase in the percentage of working adults 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 one in eight (13%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (13% 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 (34% in the previous period)

3 . Personal well-being

One-third (33%) of adults reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now. This is a further decline from 41% in the previous period, and is the lowest since the start of the pandemic (at its highest, 86% over the period 20 to 30 March 2020) and continues a gradual decrease from 66% during Plan B measures (15 December 2021 to 3 January 2022).

Levels of personal well-being were:

- life satisfaction (7.0 in this period and 7.0 in previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.3 in this period and 7.3 in the previous period)
- happiness (6.9 in this period and 7.0 in the previous period)
- anxiety (4.1 in this period and 3.9 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. The 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.

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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, 17% of adults reported their household finances were being affected (15% in the previous period).

We asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 83% reporting their cost of living had increased. This is part of an increasing trend, compared with 81% in the previous period and 62% when we first asked this question (3 to 14 November 2021).

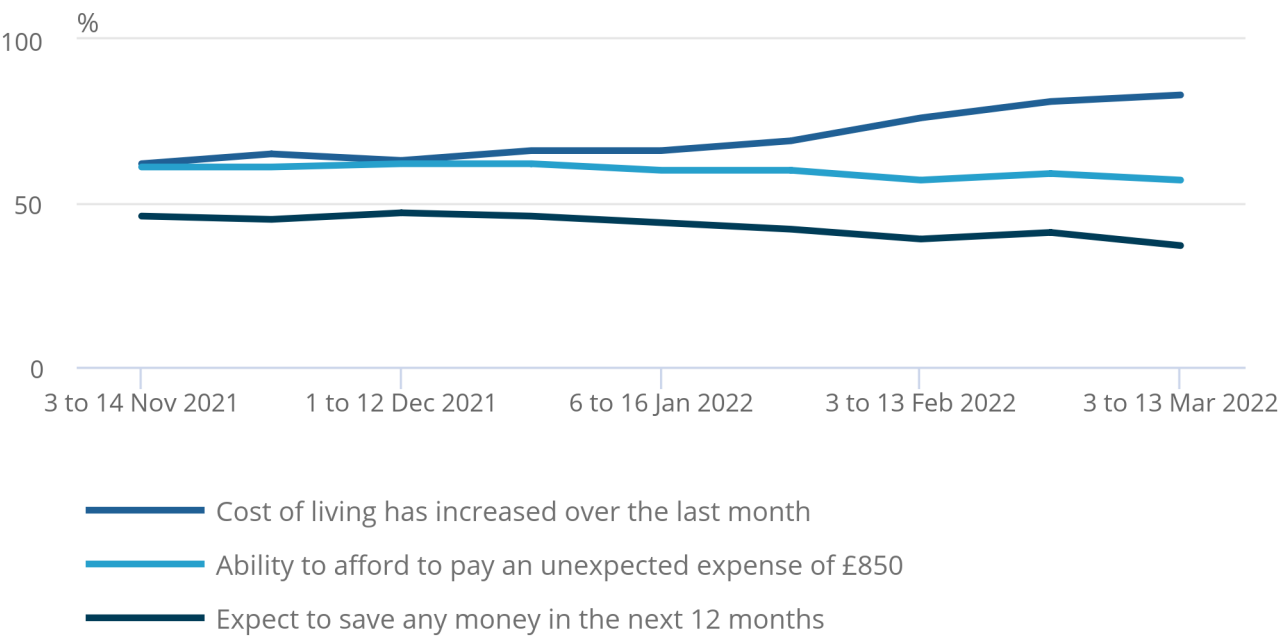
Over the same period, the proportion of adults who think they would be able to save any money in the next 12 months has decreased; the percentage is 37% in the latest period compared with 46% over the period 3 to 14 November 2021. The proportion who reported their household could afford to pay an unexpected, but necessary, expense of £850 showed signs of decline; the percentage was 57% in the latest period compared with 61% over the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

Figure 4: Around 8 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 8 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 (90% compared with 92% in the previous period)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (83% compared with 80% in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (79% compared with 76% 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 (55%)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (43%)
- shopping around more (38%)
- cutting back on non-essential journeys in my vehicle (35%)

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 inflation statistics](#) for January 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 18 March 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 March 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 March 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 and 13 March 2022, we sampled 4,493 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,043 individuals, representing a 67.7% 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: 18 March](#)

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: 18 March 2022](#)

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 key 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 ONS have in relation to the coronavirus pandemic.