

Statistical bulletin

Coronavirus and the social impacts on Great Britain: 4 February 2022

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 19 to 30 January 2022, to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Contact:
David Ainslie, Catarina Figueira,
Joe Shepherd and Tim Vizard
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.
gov.uk
+44 300 0671543

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1 . Main points

Throughout the period of 19 to 30 January 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- Just over 5 in 10 adults (52%) reported they were worried or somewhat worried about the effect of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their lives, compared with around 6 in 10 (61%) in the previous period (6 to 16 January 2022).
- Just over 5 in 10 adults (53%) reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days, decreasing from around 6 in 10 (61%) in the previous period; this decrease was largest among those aged 16 to 29 years (53% in this period; 73% in the previous period).
- Around 1 in 10 (9%) adults reported they had difficulty getting a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days; this has decreased from over 2 in 10 (22%) in the previous period.
- Around 1 in 13 (8%) adults reported they had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days to be let into a venue or an event (7% in the previous period).
- 1 in 20 adults (5%) have self-isolated in the past seven days compared with 1 in 10 (10%) in the previous period; the proportion of adults self-isolating in the latest period appeared to decrease among all age groups.
- Over two in three adults (69%) reported that their cost of living had increased (66% 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 were an increase in the price of food.
- Around 2 in 10 (19%) of adults reported they had found it very difficult or difficult to pay their usual household bills in the last month, compared with a year ago; looking at this by age group, this proportion appeared to be highest among those aged 30 to 49 years (27%).

Estimates included in this release are based on data collected between 19 and 30 January 2022; some Plan B measures were removed in England from 27 January 2022. The latest information and guidance in 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 19 and 30 January 2022. This is a period in which 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 January 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.

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Face coverings

In the latest period (19 to 30 January 2022), 95% of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days, the same in the previous period (6 to 16 January 2022). This follows a gradual decline in face mask use since July 2021, before an increase seen in late 2021 with the introduction of Plan B measures in England.

Social distancing

Less than half (44%) of adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days (44% in the previous period). This follows a slight increase in social distancing since late 2021 but remains below levels seen earlier in the coronavirus pandemic.

COVID passes

Around 1 in 13 (8%) adults reported they had been asked to show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent negative COVID-19 test in the past seven days to be let into a venue or an event (7% 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

Just over 5 in 10 adults (53%) reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days compared with around 6 in 10 (61%) in the previous period.

This decrease was largest among 16 to 29 years olds (53% in this period, 73% in the previous period) and appeared to be smaller among other age groups:

- 63% in this period and 68% in the previous period among 30- to 49-year-olds
- 53% in this period and 55% in the previous period among 50- to 69-year-olds
- 37% in this period and 44% in the previous period among those aged 70 years and above

This follows an increase in lateral flow testing reported in late 2021 across all age groups, following the emergence of the Omicron variant.

Around 1 in 10 (9%) adults reported they had difficulty getting a rapid lateral flow test; this has decreased from over 2 in 10 (22%) in the previous period.

Among those who reported experiencing difficulties getting a lateral flow test, around 8 in 10 (81%) said it did not stop them from doing anything they had planned (85% in the previous period).

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 decreased to 1 in 20 (5%) in the latest period compared with 1 in 10 (10%) in the previous period. The proportion of adults self-isolating in the latest period appeared to decrease among all age groups.

The main reasons adults reported for self-isolating were:

- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (56% in this period; 51% in the previous period)
- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (34% in this period; 25% in the previous period)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (17% in this period; 23% in the previous period)

Most adults (89% in this period; 90% in 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 that they needed to leave the house to buy essentials (50%), that it would negatively affect their mental health (46%) or that 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, back to January 2021.

Following the introduction of work from home guidance as part of Plan B measures in England (10 December 2021) there had been an increase in the percentage of working adults who were working from home. This followed a decline in working from home since coronavirus restrictions were lifted in July 2021.

Figure 2: Around 1 in 5 (22%) reported working from home only in the past seven days

Percentage of working adults, Great Britain, January 2021 to January 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.

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Among working adults in this latest period (19 to 30 January 2022) that includes the lifting of some Plan B restrictions in England from 27 January 2022:

- around 1 in 5 (22%) reported working from home only in the past seven days (26% in the previous period)
- fewer than half (48%) reported travelling to work only in the past seven days (51% in the previous period)
- just over 1 in 10 (13%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (8% in the previous period)
- one-third (33%) reported that, compared with before the coronavirus pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold (the same as in the previous period)

3 . Personal well-being

Around half of adults (52%) 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 6 in 10 (61%) of respondents reported this.

Following a reduction in personal well-being scores in early January, personal well-being scores remained relatively stable with the exception of anxiety, which has improved in recent periods:

- life satisfaction (6.9 in this period; 6.8 in previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.3 in this period; 7.2 in the previous period)
- happiness (6.9 in this period; 6.8 in the previous period)
- anxiety (3.9 in this period; 4.1 in the previous period)

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

Adults in Great Britain, March 2020 to January 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

A recent article from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) examined [energy prices and their effects on households](#). This section provides the latest data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on how adults in Great Britain view their 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 (14% in the previous period, 6 to 16 January 2022).

We asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 69% reporting their cost of living had increased (66% in the previous period; 62% when we first asked this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021). This proportion has been consistently lower among younger adults. In the latest period, around 4 in 10 (38%) of those aged 16 to 29 years reported this compared with almost three quarters (73%) of those aged 30 to 49 years and 8 in 10 (80%) of those aged 50 to 69 years or 70 years and above.

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

- an increase in the price of food shopping (89%; 87% in the previous period, January 6 to 16 2021)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (80%; 79% in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (68%; 71% in the previous period) (Figure 4)

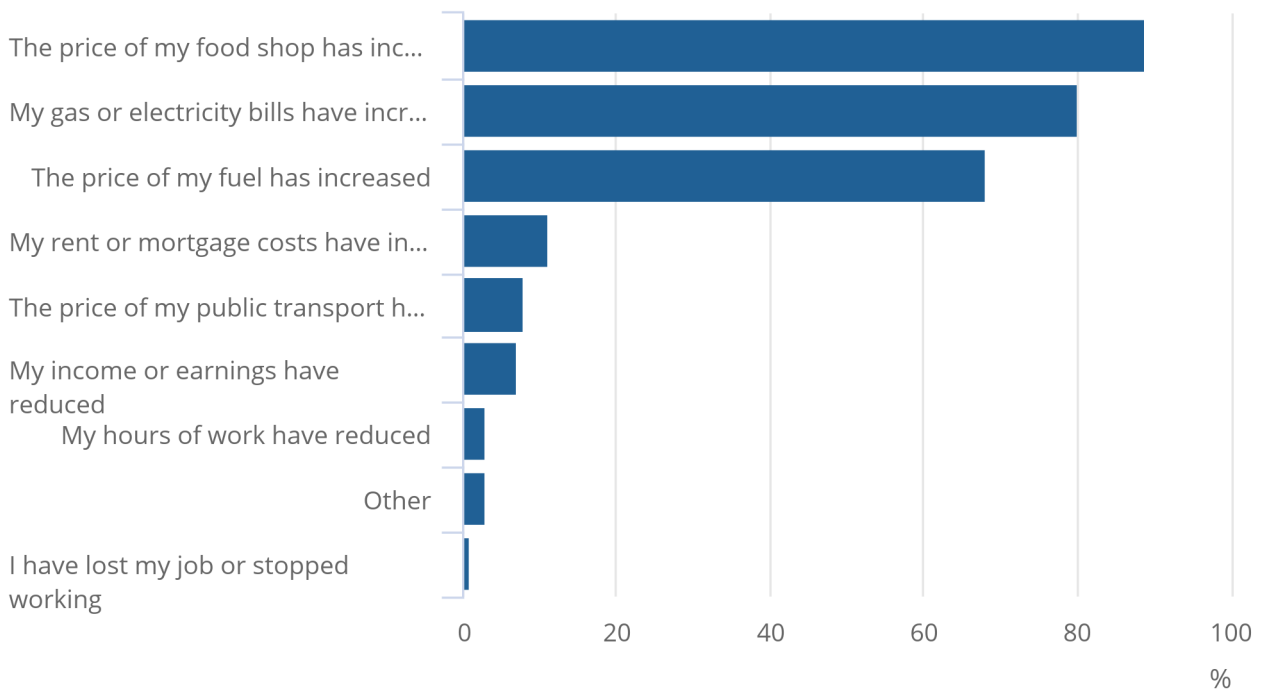
The most common reasons were the same among all age groups.

Figure 4: Around 9 in 10 (89%) adults reported an increase in the price of food shopping was a reason for their cost of living increasing over the past month

Percentage among adults who reported their cost of living had increased over the last month, Great Britain, 19 to 30 January 2022

Figure 4: Around 9 in 10 (89%) adults reported an increase in the price of food shopping was a reason for their cost of living increasing over the past month

Percentage among adults who reported their cost of living had increased over the last month, Great Britain, 19 to 30 January 2022



Source: Office for National Statistics - Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

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.

When asked about their financial situation, 6 in 10 (60%) adults reported they were able to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850, the same as the previous period. This proportion appeared to increase with age, with 53% of those aged 16 to 29 years reporting this, compared with 73% of those aged 70 years and above.

Fewer than 2 in 10 (17%) adults reported they have had to borrow more money or use more credit than usual in the last month compared with a year ago (16% in the previous period). Looking at this by age, this proportion appeared to be highest among those aged 30 to 49 years (24%).

Around 2 in 10 (19%) of adults reported they had found it very difficult or difficult to pay their usual household bills in the last month, compared with a year ago (17% when this question was last asked in the period 3 to 14 November 2021). Looking at this by age, this proportion appeared to be highest among those aged 30 to 49 years (27%).

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 December 2021.

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 4 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 4 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 4 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 19 to 30 January 2022 we sampled 4,496 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,441 individuals, representing a 77% 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: 3 February](#)

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 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.