

Statistical bulletin

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

Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey covering the period 16 February 2022 to 27 February 2022 to understand the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on people, households and communities in Great Britain.

Contact:
Mohammed Ali Khan, Jodie
Davis, Bonnie Lewis, Tim Vizard
policy.evidence.analysis@ons.
gov.uk
+44 300 0671543

Release date:
4 March 2022

Next release:
18 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

Throughout the period 16 to 27 February 2022, based on adults in Great Britain:

- There was a continuing decline in the percentage of people working from home, 15% compared with 26% over the period 6 to 16 January 2022; there was also an increase in the percentage travelling to work, 56% compared with 51% over the same period.
- The use of face coverings in shops and on public transport has decreased among adults leaving home to do these activities, with 71% reporting always or often wearing face coverings while in shops (77% in the previous period) and 70% reporting wearing a face covering throughout the journey on public transport (78% in the previous period).
- Almost one-third (32%) of adults reported always or often maintaining social distancing (35% 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 4 in 10 (42%) adults reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days, decreasing from 49% of adults in the previous period.
- Around 4 in 10 adults (41%) reported they were very or somewhat worried about the effect of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on their lives right now; this is also the lowest since the start of the pandemic.

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

- A higher percentage of adults (81%) reported that their cost of living had increased, compared with 76% in the previous period, and 62% when we first asked this (in the period 3 to 14 November 2021).
- Among these adults, the most common reasons reported were an increase in the price of food (92%), an increase in gas or electricity bills (80%) and an increase in the price of fuel (76%).
- The most common actions taken by those who said their cost of living had increased were to reduce spending on non-essentials (51%), shop around more (37%), use less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (37%) and reduce spending on food shopping and essentials (30%).

During the data collection period, the UK Government announced the government's [plan for living with COVID-19](#), which included the easing of restrictions in England, with similar changes to restrictions in Wales and Scotland. The latest information and guidance can be found on the [gov.uk](#) website.

2 . Social impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19)

Estimates in this release are based on data collected between 16 and 27 February 2022 ("the latest period").

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

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 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.

Download the data

[.xlsx](#)

Face coverings

In the latest period, a lower percentage (83%) of adults reported they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past seven days (88% in the previous period, 3 to 13 February 2022). This is a continuing decline, following the removal of Plan B measures at the end of January and is the lowest proportion since the period 6 to 17 October 2021 (82%).

Among those who went shopping in the past seven days, just over 7 in 10 (71%) reported they had often or always worn a face covering while in the shops, down from 77% in the previous period. Among adults who used public transport, 70% said they wore a face covering for their whole journey in the past seven days, down from 78% in the previous period.

Social distancing

Around one-third (32%) of adults reported they always or often maintained social distancing when outside their home in the past seven days (35% in the previous period), the lowest proportion since data collection on this measure started in September 2020.

Lateral flow testing

Around 4 in 10 (42%) adults reported they had taken a rapid lateral flow test in the past seven days compared with 49% in the previous period. This decline 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.

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, this is similar to the previous period (5%).

The main reasons adults reported self-isolating for were:

- they had tested positive for COVID-19 (59%)
- they had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID-19 (21%)
- they had COVID-19 symptoms (18%)

Location of work

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

The percentage of working adults working from home was 15% in the latest period, continuing a decline since 6 to 16 January (26%). 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 7 (15%) 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:

- there was an increase in the percentage travelling to work, 56% compared with 51% over the period 6 to 16 January 2022
- around 1 in 8 (13%) reported both working from home and travelling to work in the past seven days (same as in the previous period)
- around one-third (34%) reported that, compared with before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, they are more likely to work from home if they have a cold (32% in the previous period)

3 . Personal well-being

Around 4 in 10 adults (41%) 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 pandemic (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 remained below pre-pandemic levels:

- life satisfaction (7.0 in this period; 6.9 in previous period)
- feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile (7.3 in this period; 7.2 in the previous period)
- happiness (7.0 in this period; 6.9 in the previous period)
- anxiety (3.9 in this period; 4.0 in the previous period)

Figure 3: Levels of personal well-being remained below pre-pandemic levels

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

[.xlsx](#)

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 (same as previous period).

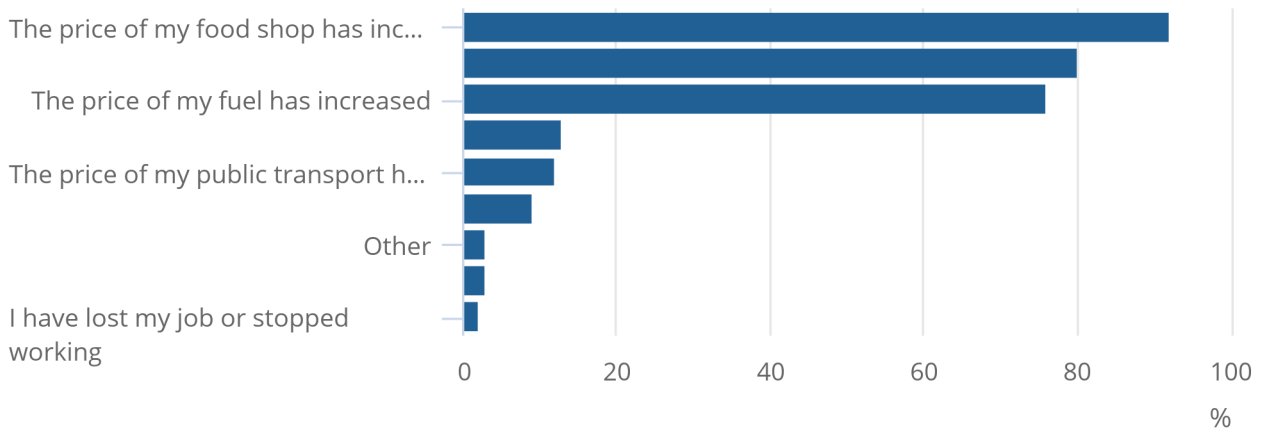
We asked adults about changes in their cost of living over the last month, with 81% reporting their cost of living had increased. This is a higher percentage compared with 76% in the previous period and 62% when we first asked this in the period 3 to 14 November 2021.

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

- an increase in the price of food shopping (92%; 90% in the previous period)
- an increase in gas or electricity bills (80%; 77% in the previous period)
- an increase in the price of fuel (76%; 69% in the previous period)

Figure 4: Price of food shopping was the most common reason for cost of living increases

Figure 4: Price of food shopping was the most common reason for cost of living increases



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

Notes:

1. Over the last month, for what reasons has your cost of living increased?
2. 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 (51%)
- using less fuel such as gas or electricity at home (37%)
- shopping around more (37%)
- spending less on food shopping and essentials (30%)

When asked about their financial situation, less than 6 in 10 (59%) adults reported they were able to pay an unexpected but necessary expense of £850 (57% 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 4 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 4 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 4 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 16 and 27 February 2022 we sampled 4,495 households. These were randomly selected from those that had previously completed the Labour Market Survey (LMS) or OPN. The responding sample contained 3,170 individuals, representing a 70.5% 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: 3 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: 4 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, UK: characteristics of people testing positive for COVID-19, 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 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.