

Statistical bulletin

Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving into the UK: September 2021 to February 2022

Monthly figures on the attitudes of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK towards coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions and guidance, and the proportion who had been vaccinated, using unweighted results from the International Passenger Survey for the period covering September 2021 to February 2022 (Experimental Statistics).

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1 . Main points

- In February 2022, most UK residents (91%) and overseas residents (88%) arriving in the UK said they had received at least two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations.
- Two in three UK residents and half of overseas residents arriving in the UK had received more than two COVID-19 vaccinations.
- The proportion of travellers arriving in the UK with more than two COVID-19 vaccinations has continued to rise for both UK and overseas residents (68% and 50% respectively; February 2022).

This bulletin contains unweighted data. This means the results are based on the responses of only the people interviewed, and do not account for any differences in the respondent group compared with all people travelling during the period. Therefore, the results should not be considered indicative of the travelling population as a whole and cannot be compared with weighted data. See [Section 8: Strengths and limitations](#).

2 . COVID-19 vaccination among international passengers

In February 2022, 9 in 10 travellers arriving in the UK had received at least two coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccinations (91% of UK and 88% of overseas residents).

The proportion of travellers who had received more than two vaccinations has continued to increase. More than two-thirds (68%) of UK residents arriving in the UK and half (50%) of overseas residents arriving in the UK had received more than two COVID-19 vaccinations (Figure 1).

The increase in the percentage of UK residents who had received more than two vaccinations reflects the expansion of the National Health Service (NHS) booster programme to all adults over 18 years of age, with those eligible to have been offered a vaccination by the end of February 2022. This follows the advice given to UK health departments by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) in light of the new Omicron variant.

The [UK coronavirus dashboard](#) shows 92% of all UK residents had received at least one vaccination by 28 February 2022, with 85% having received two vaccinations and 67% having received a booster or three vaccinations. In line with the vaccine rollout programme, UK residents arriving into the UK in the older age groups were more likely to have received their first vaccination earlier in the year. Proportions reporting that they have had at least one vaccination have remained stable among these older age groups from September 2021 but have increased in younger age groups.

Figure 1: The majority of UK and overseas residents, arriving in the UK, had received at least two COVID-19 vaccinations

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents, arriving in the UK, categorised by number of COVID-19 vaccinations received by month, UK, September 2021 to February 2022

[Download the data](#)

More about coronavirus

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

3 . Understanding and accessibility of UK and overseas COVID-19 restrictions

The majority of UK residents (85% in February 2022) returning from abroad said that they find it "easy" or "very easy" to follow the coronavirus (COVID-19) restriction information for the country that they had visited (Figure 2).

Of those who reported finding it "difficult" or "very difficult" to follow the COVID-19 restrictions, the main reason given was finding the restrictions "difficult to follow, or overly restrictive" (28% in February 2022). These proportions have remained consistent since February 2021.

Figure 2: Most UK residents, arriving in the UK, find it easy or very easy to follow overseas COVID-19 restrictions

Proportion of interviewed UK residents, arriving in the UK, categorised by how difficult they found it to follow overseas restrictions by month, UK, September 2021 to February 2022

[Download the data](#)

The majority of overseas residents arriving in the UK said they understood UK COVID-19 restrictions well and could confidently access information about the restrictions, a trend that has remained consistent since March 2021. In February 2022, 95% of overseas residents said that they understood UK restrictions "quite well" or "very well", and 95% said that they felt "very confident" or "somewhat confident" in accessing UK restrictions.

Only 2% felt "not at all confident" or "not very confident" in accessing information about the UK's COVID-19 restrictions.

4 . Attitudes towards prevention measures

Most travellers arriving in the UK think that having a coronavirus (COVID-19) test prior to arrival is either "very important" or "quite important" for safety (69% of UK residents and 78% of overseas residents in February 2022).

Less than half of all travellers arriving in the UK said that they think having a COVID-19 test prior to arrival is "very important" for safety, in February 2022 (36% of UK residents and 43% of overseas residents) (Figure 3).

Figure 3: UK and overseas residents, arriving in the UK, said COVID-19 testing was quite or very important for safety, over time

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents, arriving in the UK, categorised by how important they think taking a COVID-19 test is for safety by month, UK, September 2021 to February 2022

[Download the data](#)

Travellers continue to feel that the wearing of face coverings and the provision of hand sanitiser made them feel safe during their journey. In February 2022, three-quarters of travellers (75% of UK and 78% of overseas residents) said that the wearing of face coverings made them feel safe during their journey into the UK (Figure 4). Three-quarters of travellers also said that the availability of hand sanitiser during their journey also made them feel safe (74% of UK and 75% of overseas residents).

In England, on 10 December 2021, the [legal requirement to wear face coverings](#) was re-introduced for indoor settings and on public transport, having been previously removed on 19 July 2021. The legal requirement to wear face coverings was then removed on 22 February 2022. However, individual settings can require the wearing of face coverings or the use of hand sanitiser and most major UK airports and airlines chose to continue to do so throughout February 2022.

Figure 4: The majority of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK said that the wearing of face coverings made them feel safe during their journey

Proportion of interviewed UK and overseas residents, arriving in the UK, categorised by how safe they felt because of the wearing of face coverings by month, UK, September 2021 to February 2022

[Download the data](#)

5 . Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving in the UK data

[Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving into the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 6 April 2022

Results from the International Passenger Survey for the period covering February 2021 to February 2022. Includes monthly figures on the attitudes of UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK towards social distancing, wearing face coverings, and COVID-19 restrictions and the proportion who had been vaccinated. These data are unweighted (Experimental Statistics).

6 . Glossary

Overseas resident

A person who, being permanently resident in a country outside the UK, visits the UK for a period of less than 12 months. UK citizens resident overseas for 12 months or more coming home on leave are included in this category. Visits abroad are visits for a period of less than 12 months by people permanently resident in the UK (who may be of foreign nationality).

Traffic light system

For the period these data cover, there was a coronavirus (COVID-19) traffic light system for travel in place, banding countries in "green", "amber" and "red" lists. It is important to note that the categorisation of countries has changed throughout the period of July to December 2021, and this should be considered when analysing the results of the data on understanding and accessing information on restrictions. On 4 October 2021, the traffic light system was simplified to a single red list of countries, which is reviewed every three weeks.

Vaccine rollout

The rollout of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine across the UK, phase one of which began in December 2020, following the Department for Health and Social Care's [full UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan](#).

7 . Measuring the data

Methods used to produce these findings - International Passenger Survey

This bulletin uses data from questions added to the International Passenger Survey (IPS) in February 2021 measuring the attitudes towards and experience of coronavirus (COVID-19) and associated restrictions, among travellers arriving in the UK.

Totals used to calculate percentages include all overseas arrivals (international visitors to the UK and UK residents arriving back in the UK) and exclude travellers leaving the UK. For the purpose of this bulletin, all Crown dependencies have been counted as overseas residents and data from travel via tunnel and sea (except for Dover ferries) have been excluded because of small numbers.

This release will continue to be updated monthly; therefore, in May we will publish data up to March 2022.

8 . Strengths and limitations

The International Passenger Survey (IPS) sample used for both UK and overseas residents arriving in the UK across the study (September 2021 to February 2022) totals 62,145. Individual breakdowns by residency and month cannot be supplied because of [disclosure control](#) of low counts.

Around 90% of international traffic in and out of the UK is subject to IPS sampling. If a person under 16 years was sampled, they were not asked the COVID-19 questions unless their parent or guardian gave permission.

It is difficult to predict interview numbers as interviews are being conducted under coronavirus restrictions and passenger flow is likely to be very low. We have attempted to offset the effects of the low numbers of anticipated travellers by reducing sampling intervals (so a higher proportion are selected for interview).

Using unweighted data

To provide the timeliest insights, this bulletin contains unweighted data based on the actual numbers of people interviewed for the International Passenger Survey (IPS), meaning no account is taken of the different numbers of travellers represented by each respondent to the survey. Trends observed over time may be because of changes in the composition of survey respondents, rather than trends for the whole travelling population. Analysis comparing the weighted and unweighted data for the IPS for February and March 2021 found little difference in trends, suggesting this unweighted data can be considered as broadly indicative.

Further information can be found in [Section 8 of our January 2022 Attitudes towards COVID-19 among passengers arriving in the UK release](#).

9 . Related links

[Overseas travel and tourism, provisional: January to March 2021](#)

Article | Released 23 July 2021

Quarterly estimates of visits to the UK by overseas residents, air visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using the International Passenger Survey and administrative sources of passenger travel data for the period covering April to December 2020.

[Overseas travel and tourism: 2020](#)

Article | Released 24 May 2021

Annual estimates of visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using administrative sources of passenger travel data for the period covering April to December 2020.

[Travelpac: travel to and from the UK](#)

Dataset | Released 24 July 2020

Quarterly data on travel to and from the UK, taken from the International Passenger Survey (IPS). Includes detail on age and sex of travellers, purpose and length of trip, and spending. These data are in a form suitable for small businesses and students.

[Travel trends: 2019](#)

Article | Released 22 May 2020

Annual estimates of travel and tourism visits to the UK (of less than 12 months' duration) and associated earnings and expenditure between the UK and the rest of the world.

[Overseas travel and tourism, UK, provisional: July to September 2021](#)

Bulletin | Released 7 February 2022

Visits to the UK by overseas residents, visits abroad by UK residents and estimates of spending by travellers, using administrative sources of passenger travel data.