Changes in behaviour following 19 July 2021

*6 August 2021*

On 19 July 2021, all remaining legal limits on social contacts were removed.

Aim: to investigate whether behaviours differed after the removal of restrictions.

Findings:

* *Social mixing:* Engagement in highest risk social mixing continues to increase (Figure 1), but at a steady rate: 19 July did not result in a step change.
* *Intention to self-isolate if you were to develop COVID-19 symptoms:* Intention fell dramatically in line with Step 3 of the roadmap out of lockdown (17 May 2021; indoor socialising [rule of six or two households] introduced, foreign travel permitted; Figure 2). When comparing the latest two waves of data collection (before and after 19 July 2021), intention to self-isolate increased.
* *Intention to request a test if you were to develop COVID-19 symptoms:* There was no evidence for a change in intention after 19 July 2021 (Figure 2).
* *Uptake of lateral flow testing (LFT):* Uptake shows a slight increase since becoming available to all adults (April 2021; Figure 3). There was no evidence for a change in uptake after 19 July 2021.
* *Wearing a face covering:* The percentage of people wearing a face covering in all settings (shops, meeting friends/family from other households, hospitality, public transport) fell (Table 1).
* *Deleting the COVID-19 app:* When comparing the latest two waves of data collection (before and after 19 July 2021), the number of people who reporting previously having had the COVID-19 app but having since deleted it increased (Table 2).

# Main report

## Risky social mixing

Figure 1. Patterns of risky social mixing over time (England only; see Appendix 1 for classification of risk).



## Test, trace and isolate

Figure 2. Percentage of people who intend to self-isolate and request a test if they develop COVID-19 symptoms (UK population).



We ran$ χ$2 tests to compare the last two waves of data collection:

* Intention to self-isolate if you were to develop COVID-19 symptoms increased ($χ$2(1)=6.8, *p*=.009).
* There was no evidence for a change in intention to request a test if you were to develop COVID-19 ($χ$2(1)=3.2, *p*=.08).

## Uptake of lateral flow testing (LFT)

Figure 3. Uptake of LFT testing (England and Scotland adults only, completed a test in the last week, excluding people whose latest test was a PCR test).

We ran$ χ$2 tests to compare the last two waves of data collection. There was no evidence for a change in uptake in lateral flow testing ($χ$2(1)=0.2, *p*=.63).

## Wearing a face covering

Table 1. Percentage of people who reported wearing a face covering while engaging in different out-of-home activities (UK population)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | “While you were doing each of these activities in the past seven days, did you wear a face covering?” |
|  |  | 17 – 19 May 2021, % (n) | 1 – 2 June 2021, % (n) | 28 – 30 June 2021, % (n) | 26 – 27 July 2021, % (n) |
| In shops, for groceries/pharmacy | Yes - on all occasions | 75 (1275) | 73 (1265) | 74 (1293) | 65 (1111) |
| Yes - on some occasions | 17 (282) | 18 (311) | 17 (300) | 22 (369) |
| No - not at all | 9 (145) | 10 (165) | 9 (162) | 14 (234) |
| Total n | 1702 | 1741 | 1755 | 1714 |
| When meeting up with friends and/or family that you don't live with | Yes - on all occasions | 30 (267) | 26 (343) | 30 (370) | 24 (309) |
| Yes - on some occasions | 34 (308) | 36 (463) | 33 (413) | 33 (415) |
| No - not at all | 37 (330) | 38 (498) | 37 (453) | 43 (553) |
| Total n | 905 | 1304 | 1236 | 1277 |
| In a restaurant, café, or pub | Yes - on all occasions | 49 (258) | 57 (511) | 55 (487) | 44 (410) |
| Yes - on some occasions | 36 (189) | 30 (266) | 34 (299) | 34 (324) |
| No - not at all | 15 (78) | 13 (113) | 11 (93) | 22 (209) |
| Total n | 525 | 890 | 879 | 943 |
| On public transport or in a taxi/minicab | Yes - on all occasions |  | 67 (417) | 68 (408) | 64 (410) |
| Yes - on some occasions |  | 23 (144) | 20 (122) | 24 (153) |
| No - not at all |  | 10 (59) | 12 (72) | 12 (77) |
| Total n |  | 620 | 602 | 640 |

The percentage of people wearing a face covering decreased after 19 July. Compared to the previous survey wave, wearing a face covering decreased by:

* 9 percentage points in shops.
* 6 percentage points when meeting friends or family from another household.
* 11 percentage points in hospitality settings.
* 4 percentage points on public transport.

## Contact tracing app

Table 2. Percentage of people who reported having the NHS COVID-19 app downloaded on their phone (UK population, only people who reported having a smartphone)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | “Do you have the NHS COVID-19 APP downloaded on your phone?”  |
|  | 17 – 19 May 2021, % (n) | 14 – 15 June 2021, % (n) | 26 – 27 July 2021, % (n) |
| Yes, I downloaded it and I have it on my phone | 50 (762) | 50 (775) | 49 (789) |
| I previously downloaded it but since deleted it | 11 (164) | 8 (122) | 13 (204) |
| I tried to download it but couldn't | 6 (96) | 8 (120) | 6 (99) |
| No, I have not tried to download it | 32 (492) | 33 (515) | 31 (496) |
| Don’t know | 2 (26) | 1 (18) | 1 (10) |
| Total n  | 1540 | 1550 | 1598 |

We ran$ χ$2 tests to compare the last two waves of data collection. There was a significant change (χ2(4)=24.7, *p*<0.001), with more people reporting having previously downloaded the app but since deleting it. However, the actual increase in people deleting the app is relatively small. The *Good Morning Britain*/Survation poll[[1]](#footnote-1) found a bigger increase (albeit using a smaller sample size).

Datasets used:

* Department of Health and Social Care weekly tracker
	+ Tracking DHSC marketing, coronavirus attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, reported behaviour, satisfaction with Government response, credibility of Government.
	+ Data collected weekly (Monday to Wednesday) since late January.
	+ N~2000 per wave.
	+ Market research company commissioned: BMG Research.

*Please note that this work has been conducted rapidly and has not been peer reviewed or subject to normal quality control measures.*

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# **Appendix 1**. Classification of risky social mixing

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Number of meetings in last week | 0 | 1+ |
| Setting |  | Exclusively outdoors | Mostly outdoors | Indoors |
| Close contact |  | Distanced | Not distanced | Distanced | Not distanced | Distanced | Not distanced |
| Total number of households |  | 2 | 3+ | 2 | 3+ | 2 | 3+ | 2 | 3+ | 2 | 3+ | 2 | 3+ |
| Number of people from other households |  | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 | ≤2 | ≥3 |
| RISK | No | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Low | Med | Med | Low | Med | Med | Med | Med | Med | High | High | Med | High | High | High | High | High | High | High |

1. Details available on request. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)