Social Activity Measure
# May 18th-25th

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The Social Activity Measure (SAM) is a behavioural study that records the public response to the risk of COVID-19 infection over time. Designed by the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit (BRU), SAM is an anonymous, interactive, online study that surveys people about their recent activity. The study offers insight into where and how risks of COVID-19 transmission arise. SAM aims to inform policy regarding the opening of parts of the economy and society, while keeping COVID-19 under control. The research was designed by the BRU in consultation with the Department of the Taoiseach, which funds the work. The survey is completely anonymous. Where comparisons between survey rounds are highlighted, they are statistically significant.

TIMING

This slide deck presents results from a nationally representative sample of 1,000 people aged 18 and over who participated in the study between 18th and 25th May. Data were collected after a significant easing of restrictions. From 10th May, intercounty travel was permitted and there was increased capacity on public transport. Personal services including hairdressers and barbers reopened. There was a resumption of click-and-collect retail services and galleries, museums and libraries reopened. Outdoor gatherings, including in private gardens were allowed, and religious worship resumed. From 17th May, non-essential shops were allowed to reopen fully.
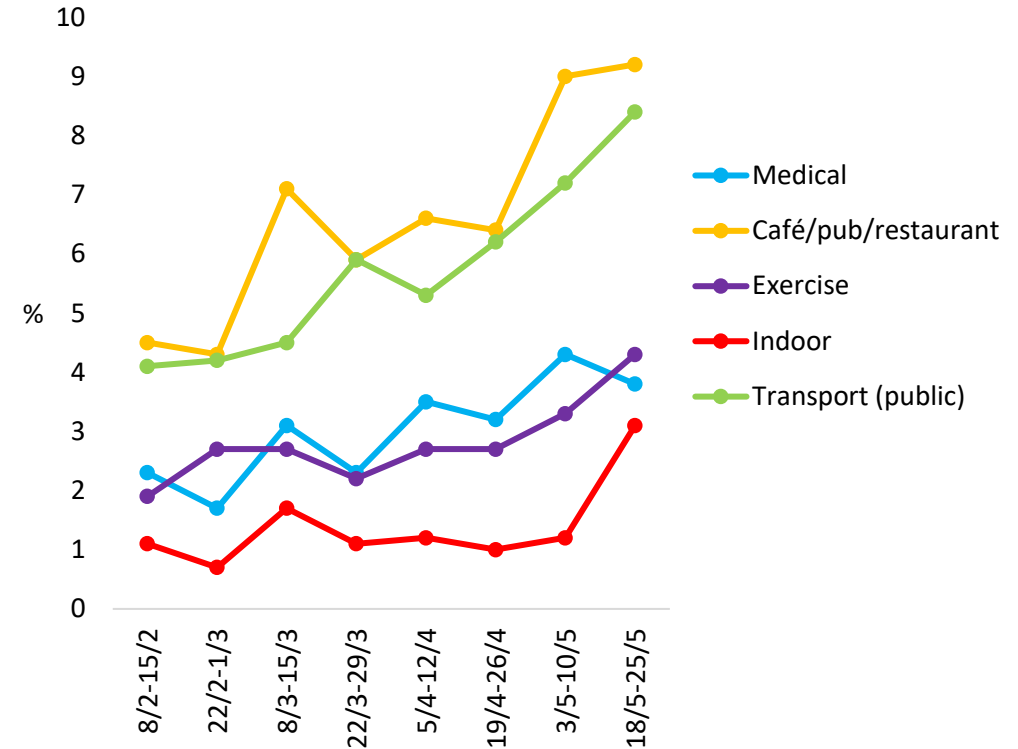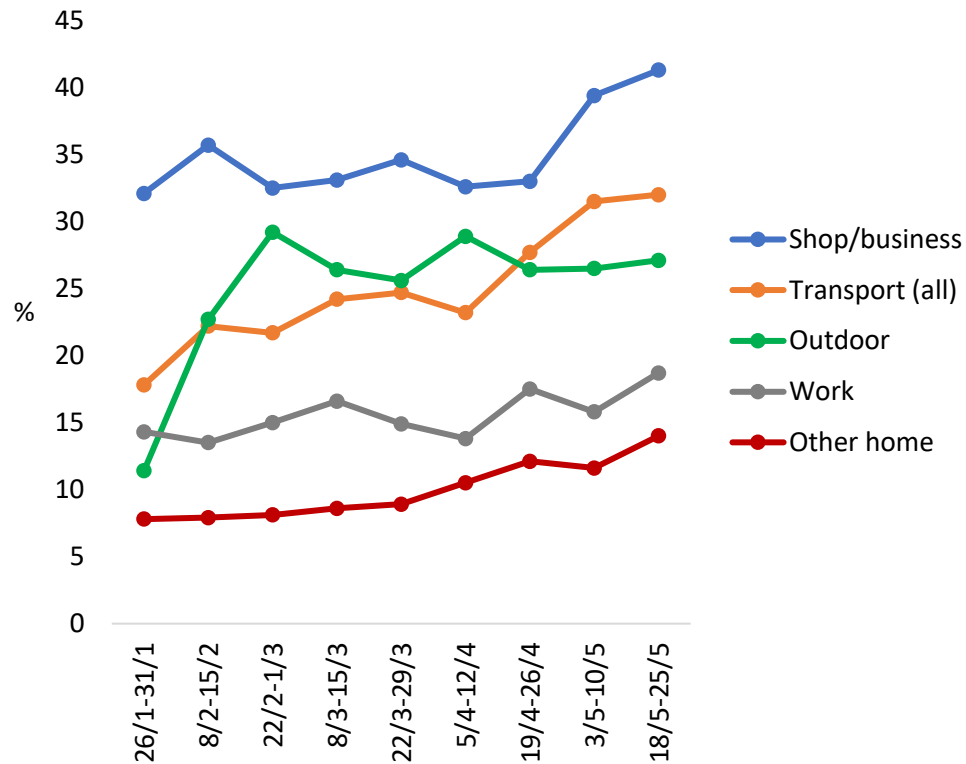
Locations visited (previous week)
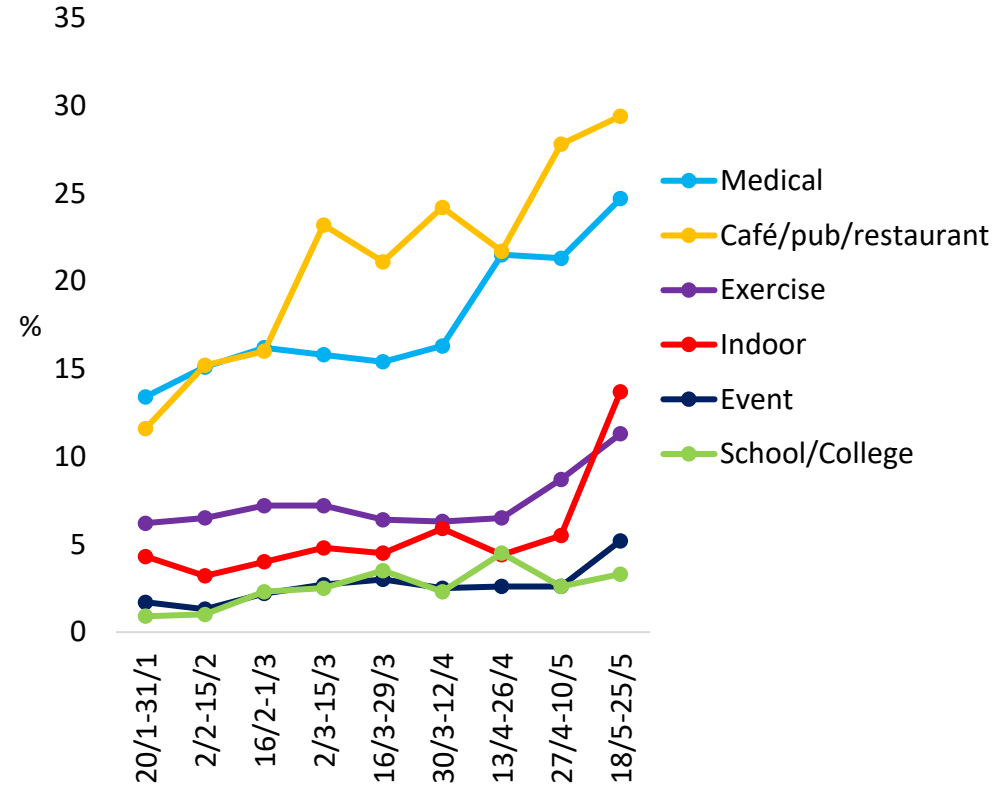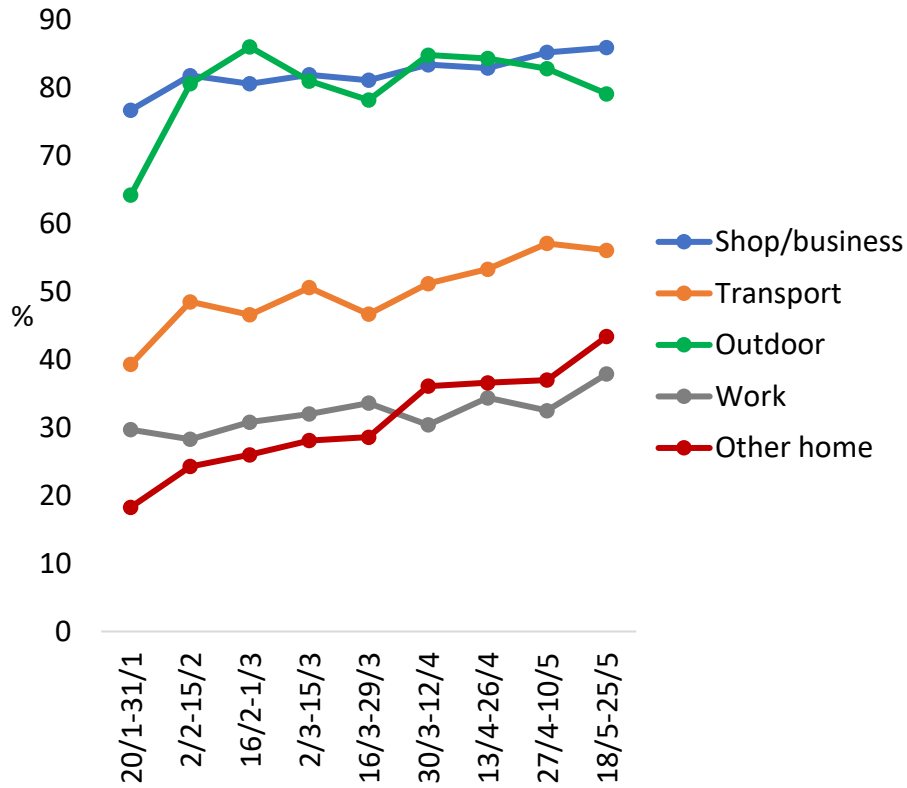
The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point during the previous week. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. There were notable increases in people visiting workplaces, other homes and other indoor locations.

Locations visited (yesterday)

The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point the previous day. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. There was an increase in visits to indoor locations (see Slide 5). Despite shops opening on 17th May, the difference in visits from the last wave was not statistically significant.

Indoor Locations (48h)
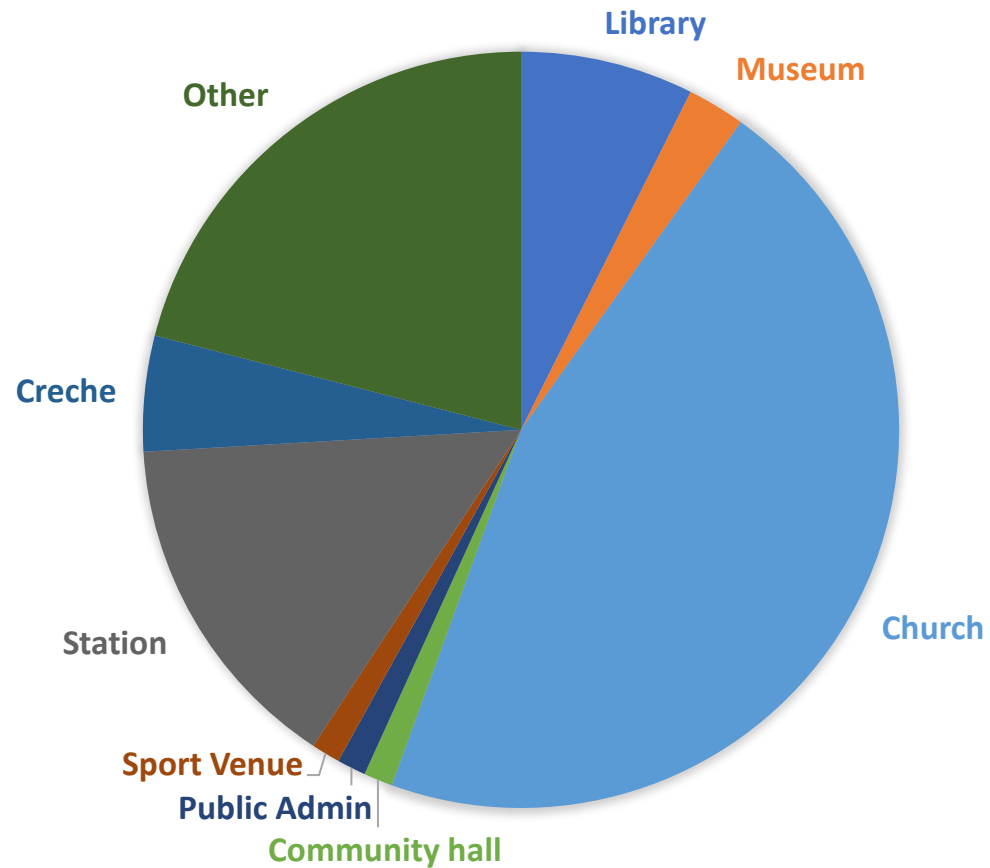
This chart shows the breakdown of the types of indoor locations that people visited in the previous 48 hours. Churches accounted for most of the rise in visits to indoor locations.
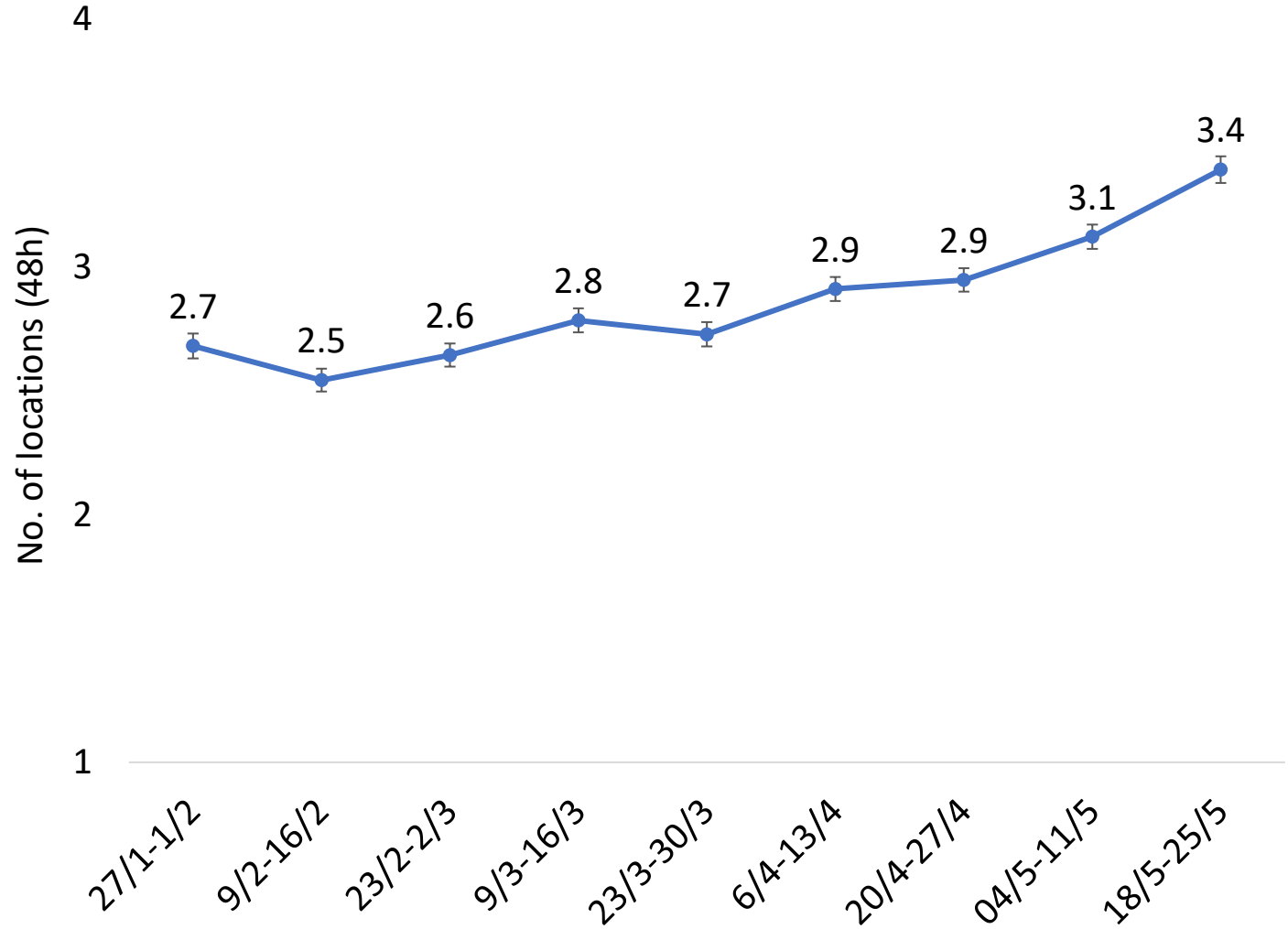
Outdoor Locations (48h)
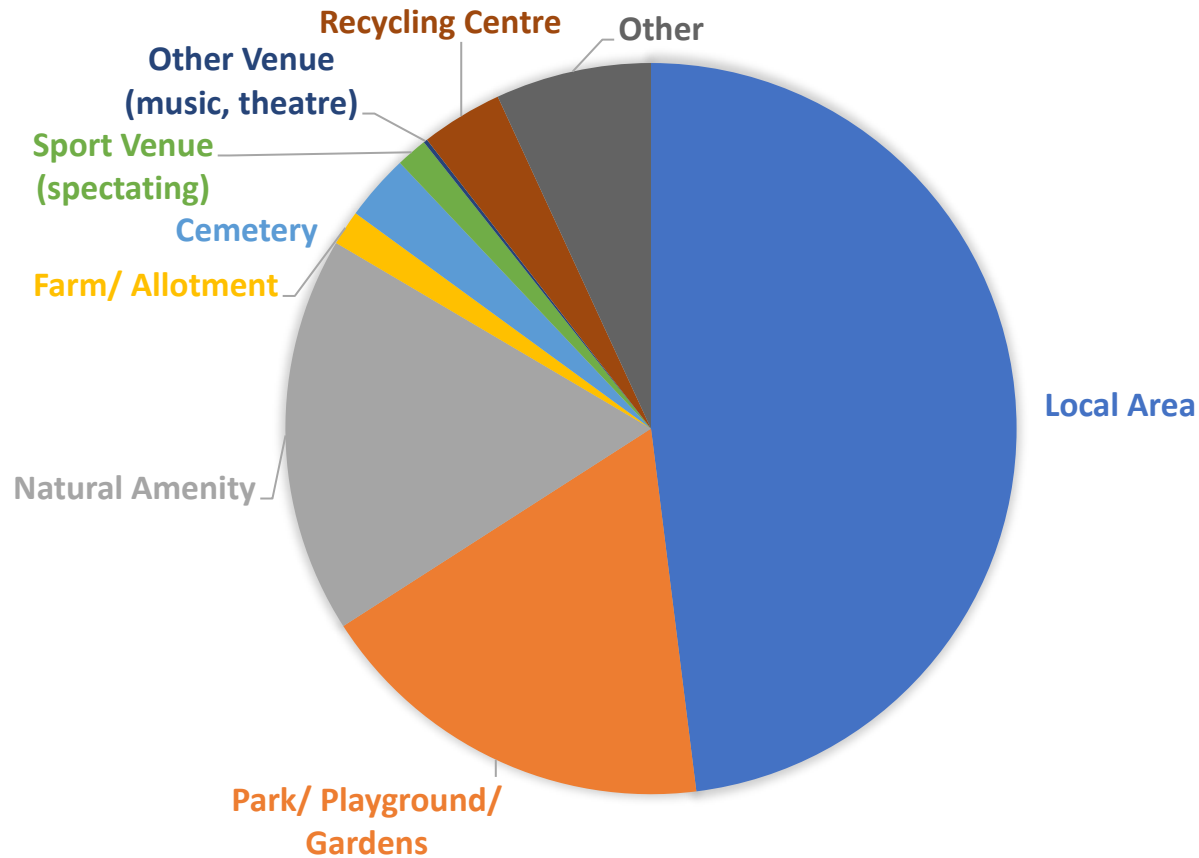
This chart shows the breakdown of the types of outdoor locations that people visited in the previous 48 hours. The most common was the neighbourhood or local area followed by natural amenities and parks and playgrounds.
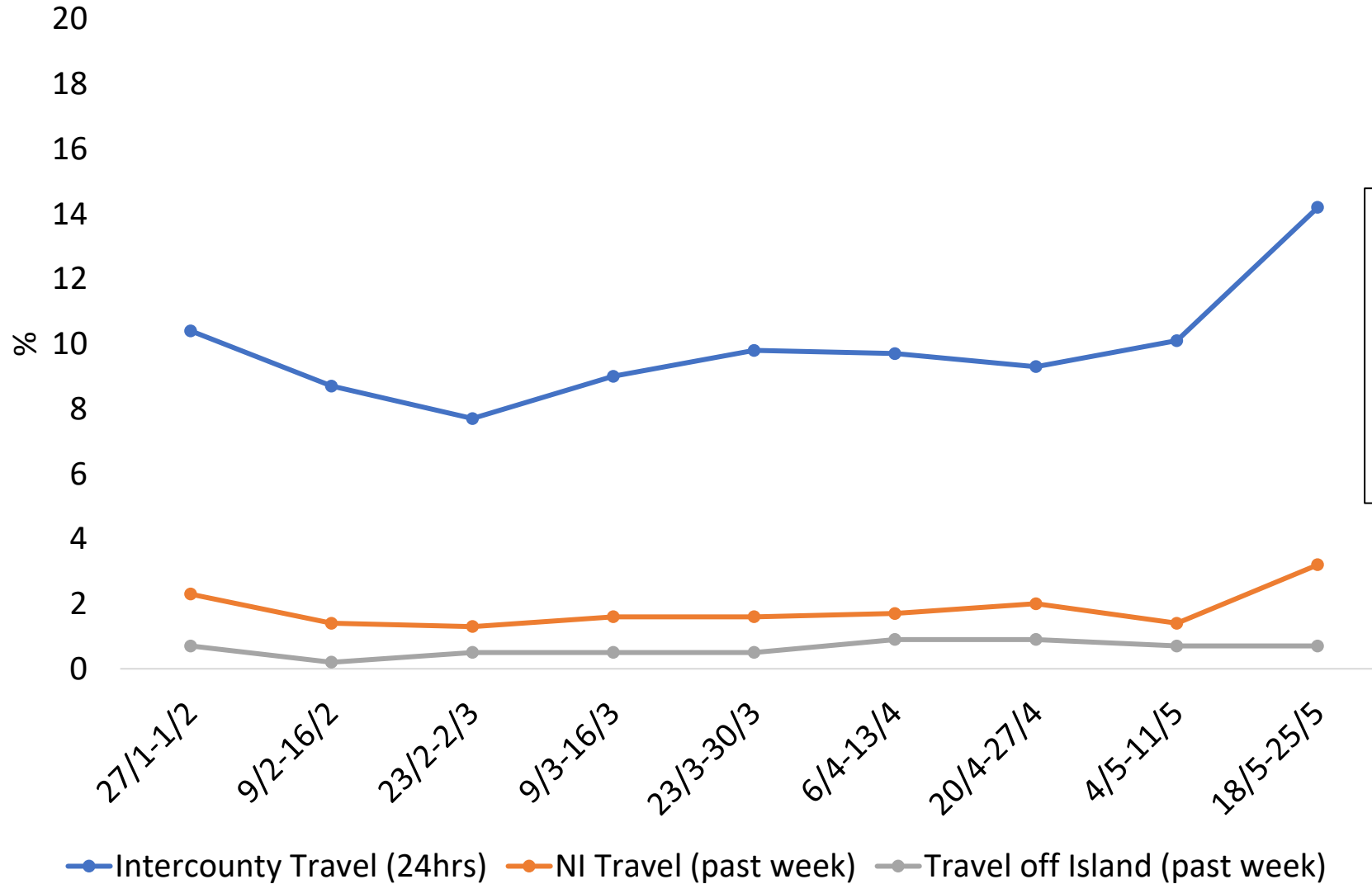
Total locations visited (past week)
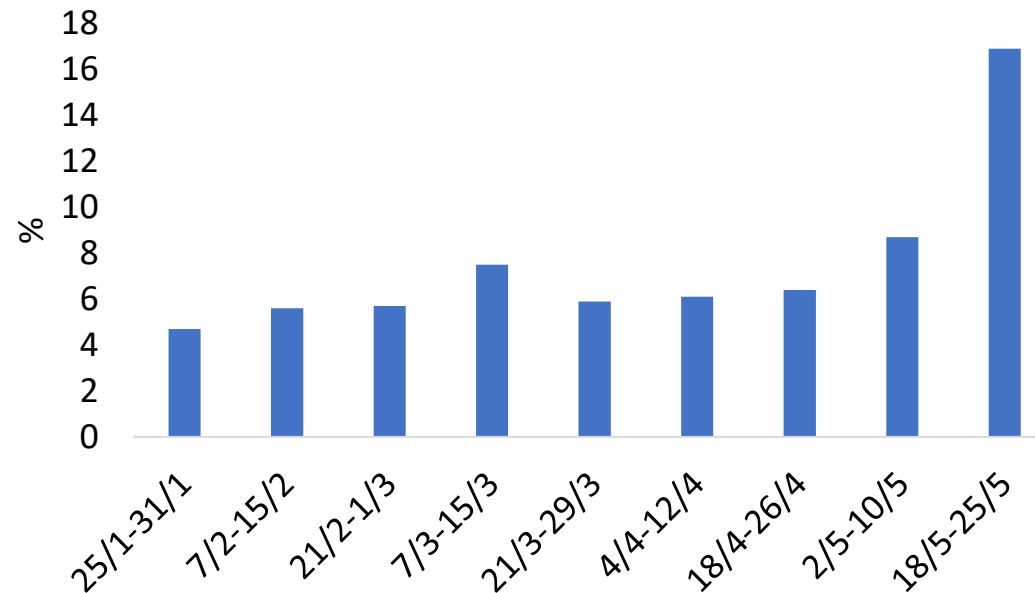
National and international travel

There has been a significant increase in the percentage of people travelling outside the county and into Northern Ireland, but not outside the country.

Legend: Intercounty Travel (24hrs) — NI Travel (past week) — Travel off Island (past week)

X-axis: 27/1-1/2, 9/2-16/2, 23/2-2/3, 9/3-16/3, 23/3-30/3, 6/4-13/4, 20/4-27/4, 4/5-11/5, 18/5-25/5

Non-essential shops

Non-essential shops and businesses (48h)

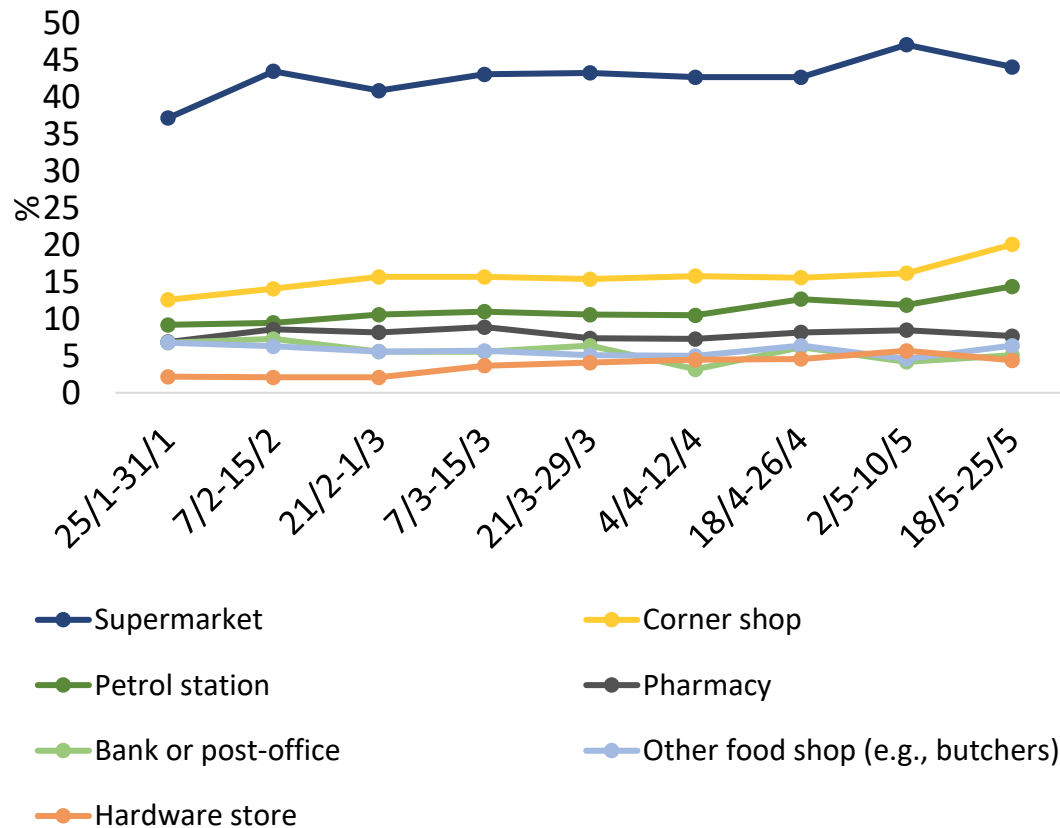

There has been an increase in visits to non-essential shops and businesses since early May. This is unsurprising given that some businesses (e.g. hairdressers) were able to open by appointment from 10th May and all retail was opened on 17th May.
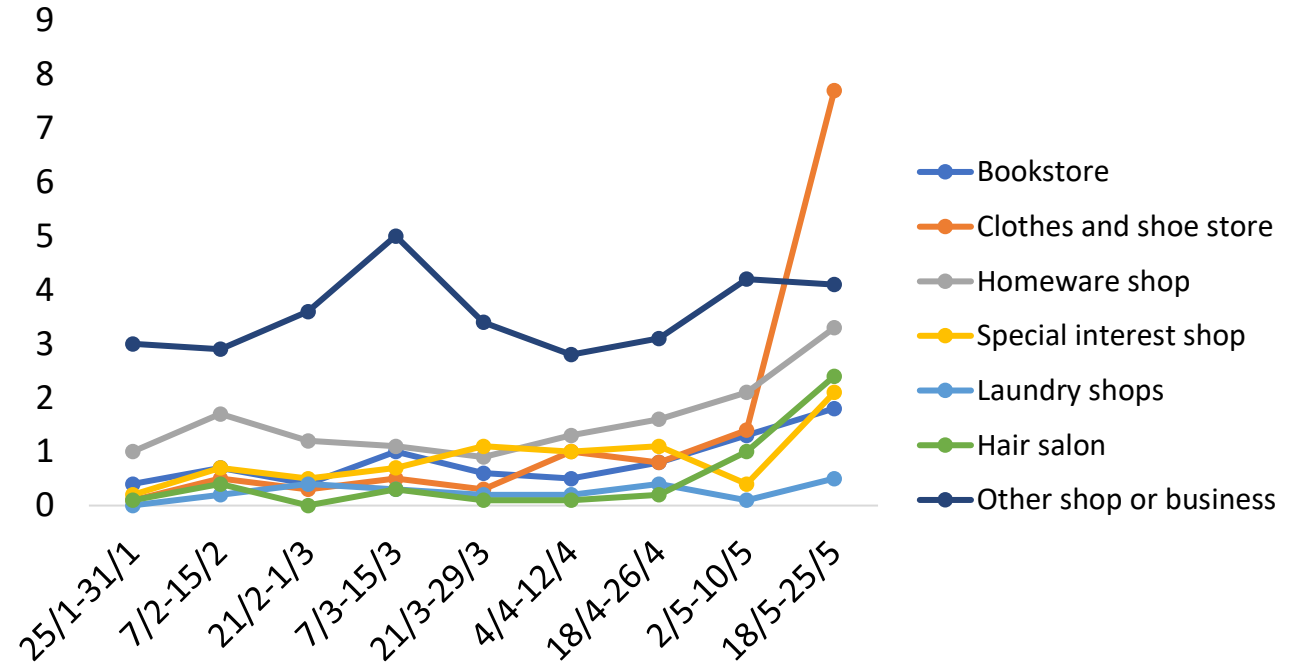
Visits to shops and businesses
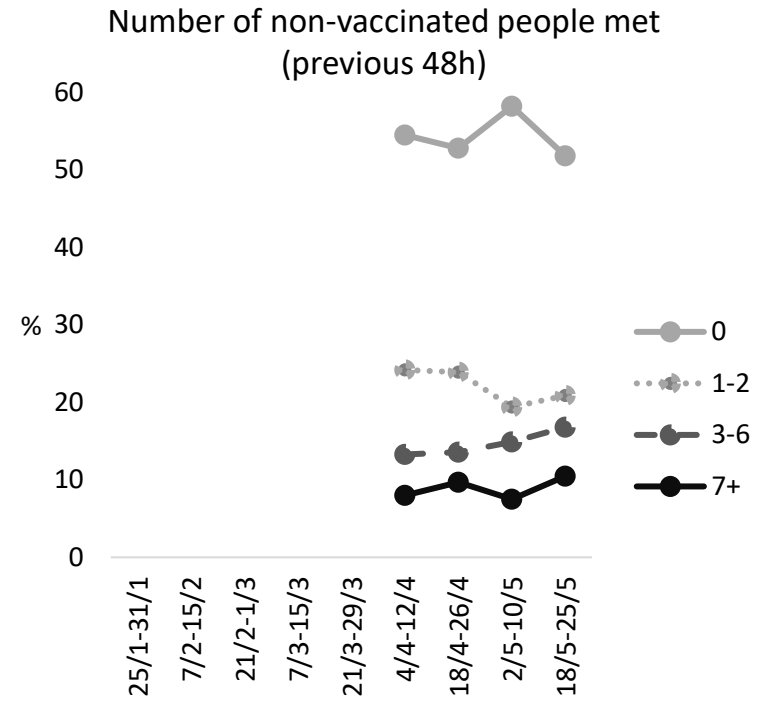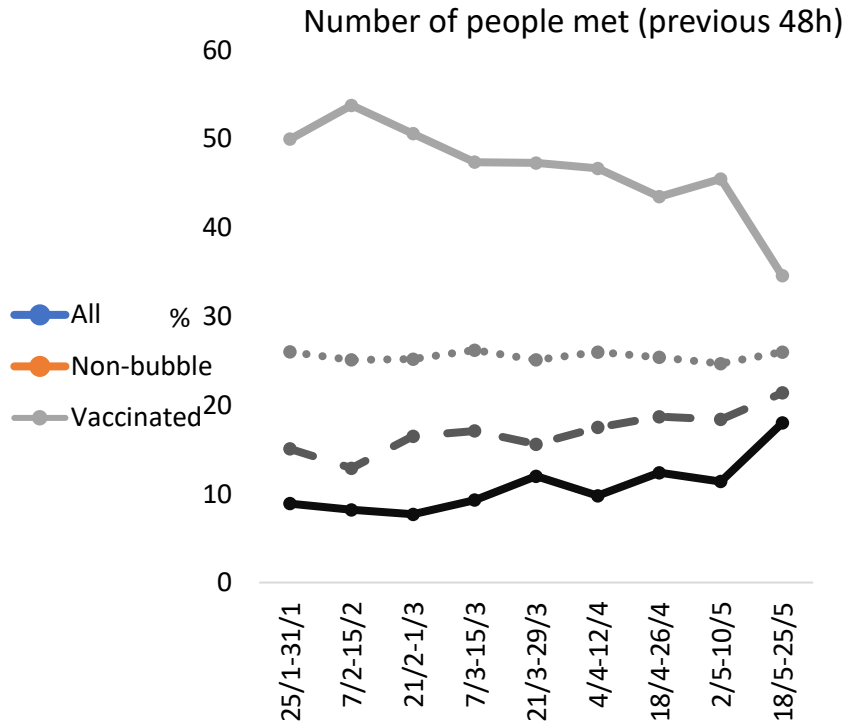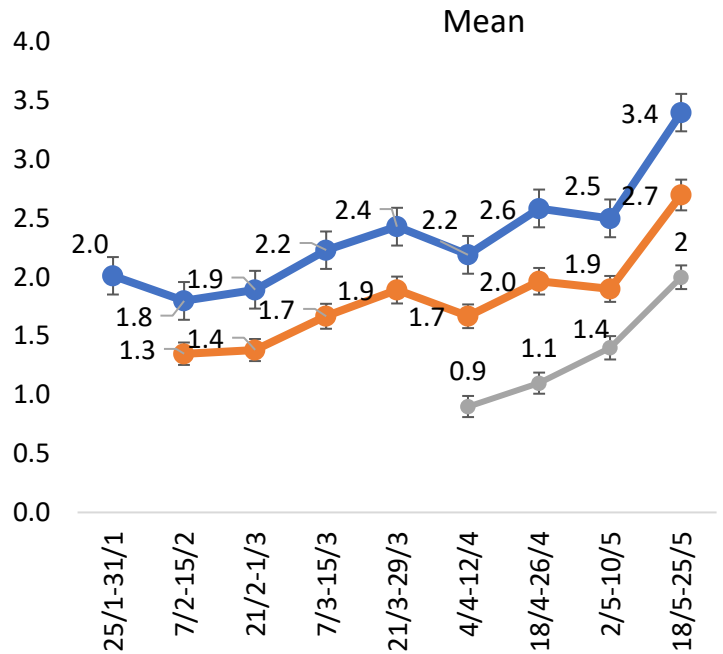
Essential shops and businesses (48h)

Legend:
- Supermarket
- Corner shop
- Petrol station
- Pharmacy
- Bank or post-office
- Other food shop (e.g., butchers)
- Hardware store

Visits to non-essential shops and businesses (48h)

Legend:
- Bookstore
- Clothes and shoe store
- Homeware shop
- Special interest shop
- Laundry shops
- Hair salon
- Other shop or business

The share of people visiting essential shops remains stable across all the waves of SAM. The increase in visits to non-essential shops and businesses is explained mostly by visits to clothes and shoe stores. Note the different axes on the two graphs, the numbers visiting non-essential shops and businesses are much smaller.
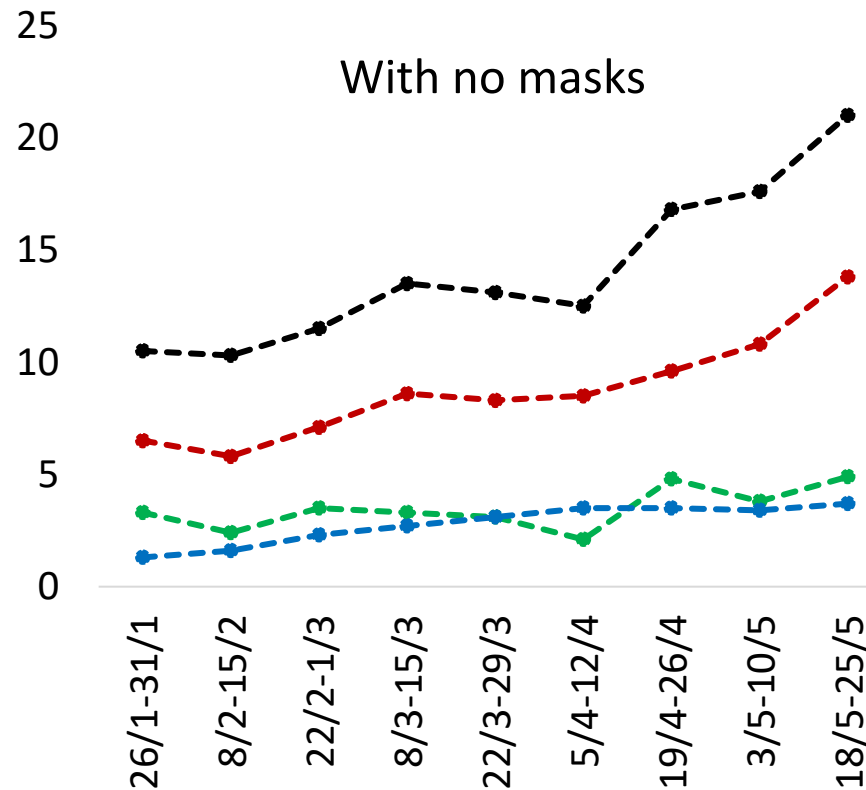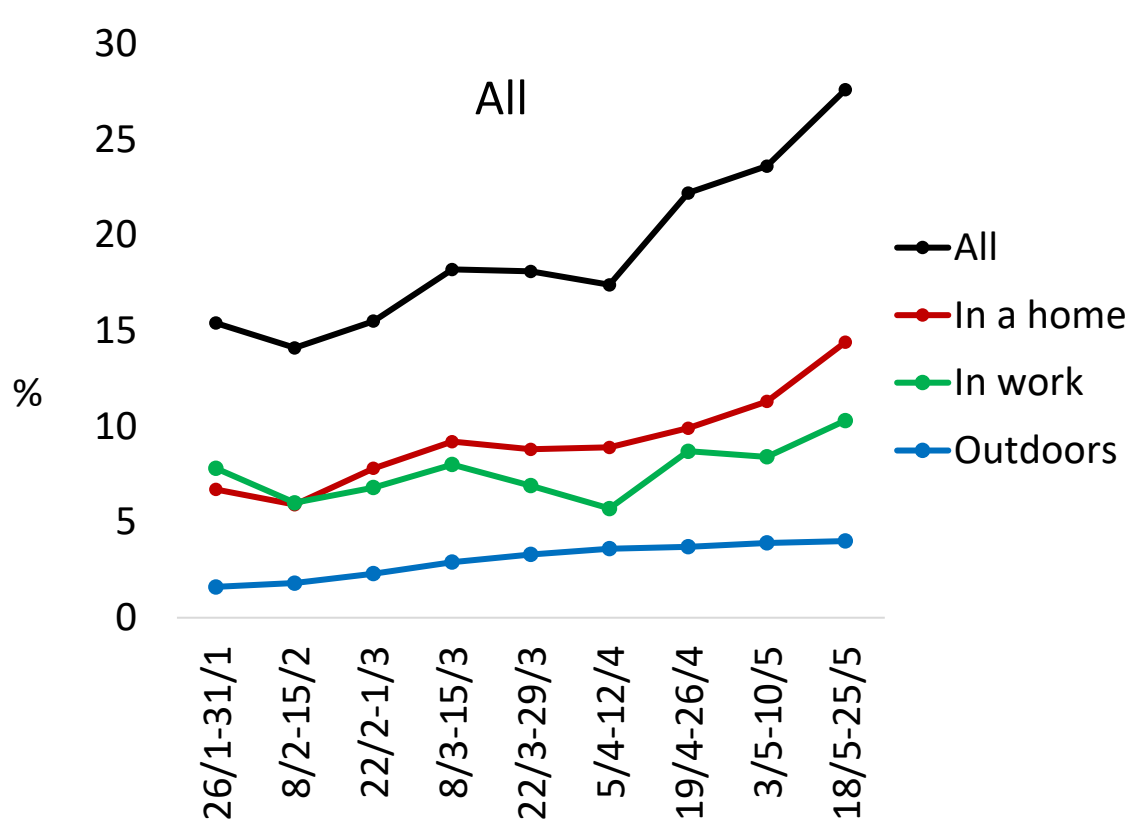
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Meeting people outside the household

Mean

Number of people met (previous 48h)

Number of non-vaccinated people met (previous 48h)

All — Non-bubble — Vaccinated

0 — 1-2 — 3-6 — 7+

There was a significant increase in the number of people met outside of the household and a significant decline in the percentage of people who have met no one outside of their household over the past 48 hours. 50% of people report meeting no un-vaccinated others in the past 48 hours.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Close contacts* (previous day)

All

With no masks

Legend (left chart):
- All (black)
- In a home (red)
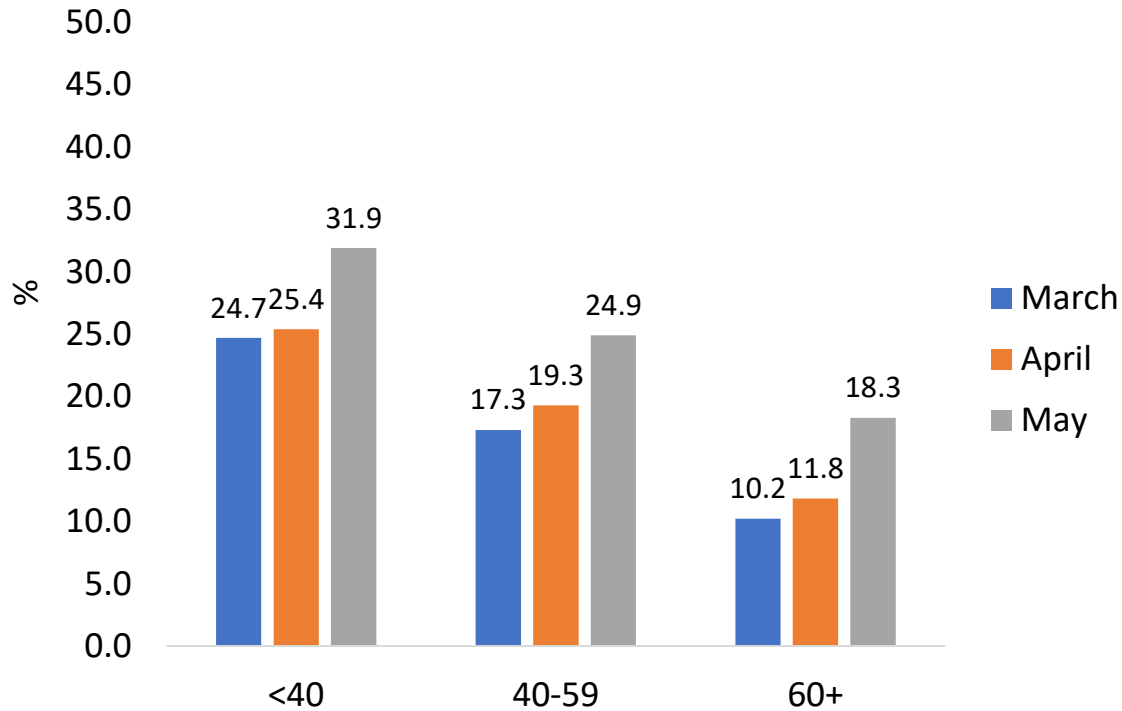- In work (green)
- Outdoors (blue)

There was a further rise in close contacts, driven mostly by more close contacts in homes. The increases also applied to close contacts in which people were not wearing facemasks.

*Close contact interactions are defined as those that are likely to have lasted for longer than 15 minutes without a 2m distance being maintained at all times or that took place indoors for longer than 2 hours in a space that was not well ventilated (hse.ie).
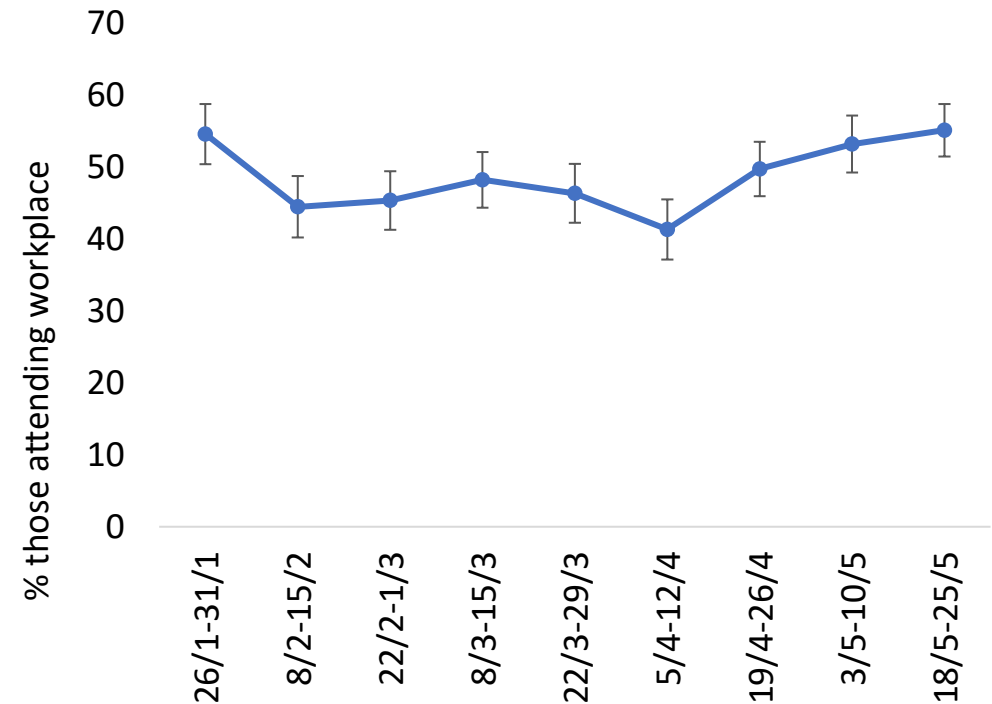
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Close contacts – other factors

Increase in close contacts in different age groups

Legend:
- March (blue)
- April (orange)
- May (grey)

Data:
- <40: 24.7, 25.4, 31.9
- 40-59: 17.3, 19.3, 24.9
- 60+: 10.2, 11.8, 18.3

Proportion going to workplace who had close contact at work (previous day)

Y-axis: % those attending workplace
X-axis: 26/1-31/1, 8/2-15/2, 22/2-1/3, 8/3-15/3, 22/3-29/3, 5/4-12/4, 19/4-26/4, 3/5-10/5, 18/5-25/5
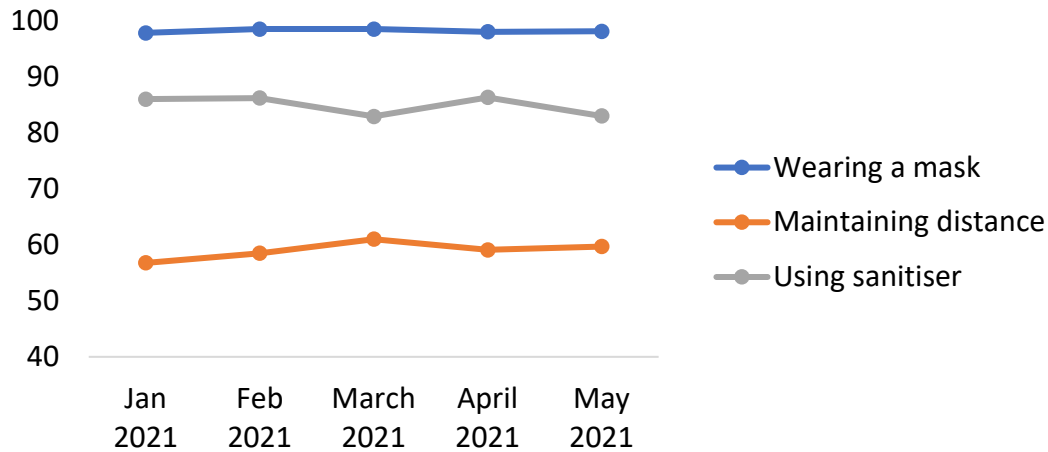
The rise in close contacts seems to be evenly spread across age groups.
The chance that workers who attend work on a given day experience a close contact has remained relatively stable at around 50%.
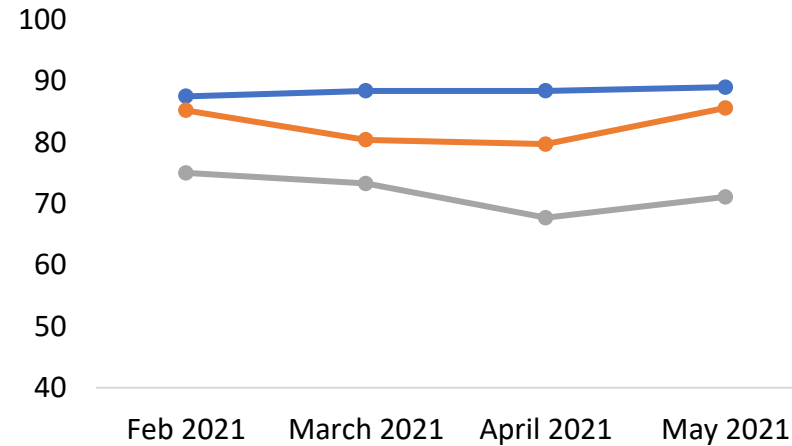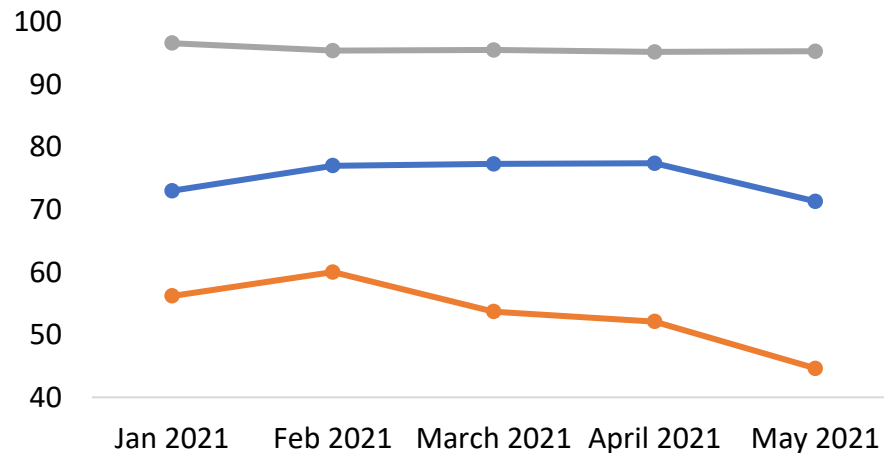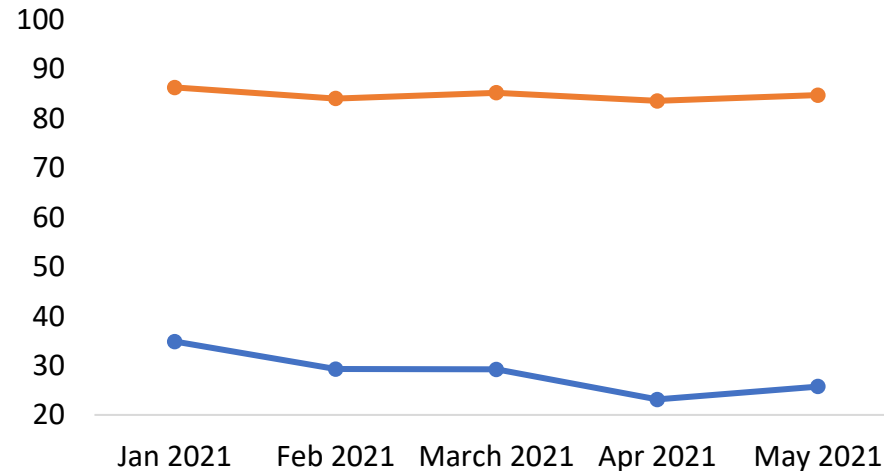
Precautions by location

When shopping

- Wearing a mask
- Maintaining distance
- Using sanitiser

Visiting cafes, pubs, or restaurants

In the workplace
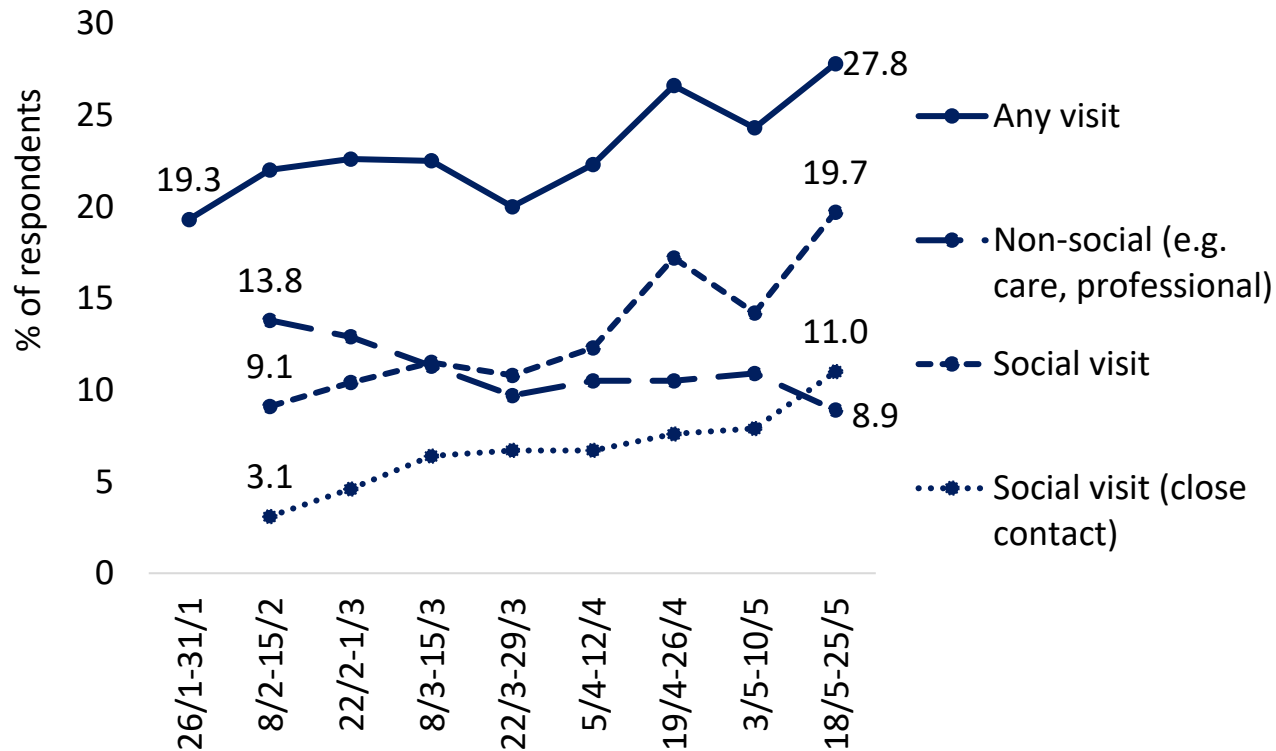

At outdoor locations

Most people continue to abide by public health guidelines while in different locations, but there has been a decrease in social distancing in the workplace since April. Note that the base for analysis is the people who visited the location the previous day .
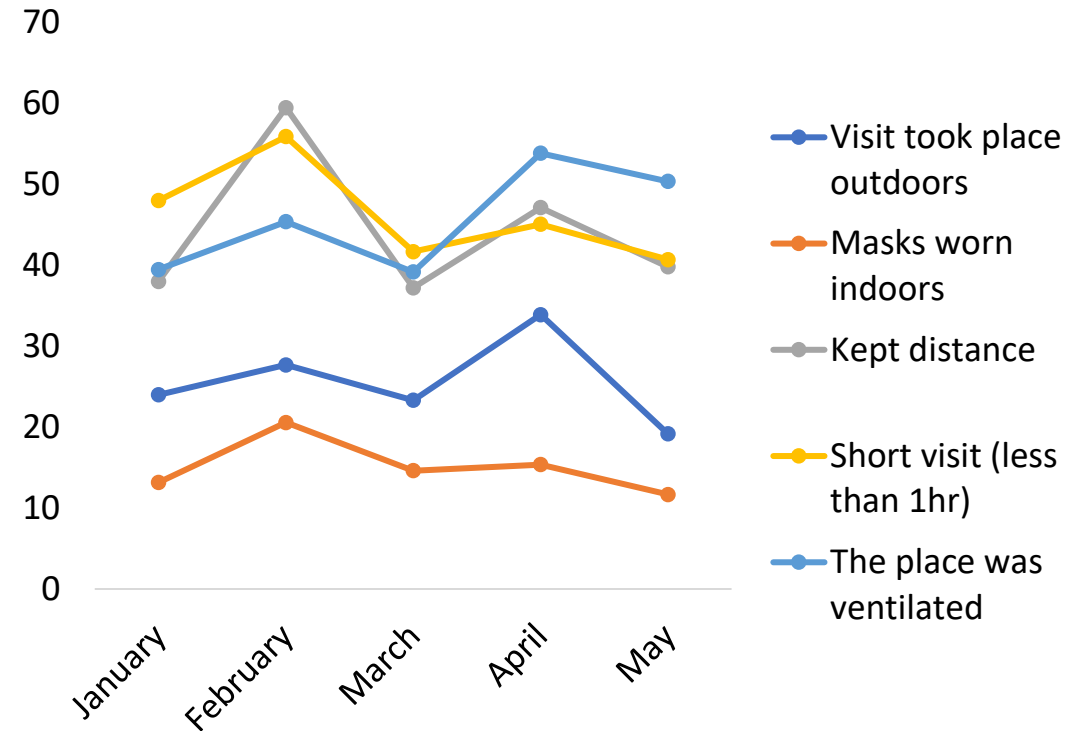
Visits to homes

Proportion who had visitors or visited another household (previous day)

Any visit — 19.3 ... 27.8

Non-social (e.g. care, professional) — 13.8 ... 8.9

Social visit — 9.1 ... 19.7

Social visit (close contact) — 3.1 ... 11.0

Risk factors during social visits

- Visit took place outdoors
- Masks worn indoors
- Kept distance
- Short visit (less than 1hr)
- The place was ventilated

There was an increase in social visits to homes and resulting close contacts. There has been a decrease in the number of visits taking place outdoors since April.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Post-vaccination behaviour
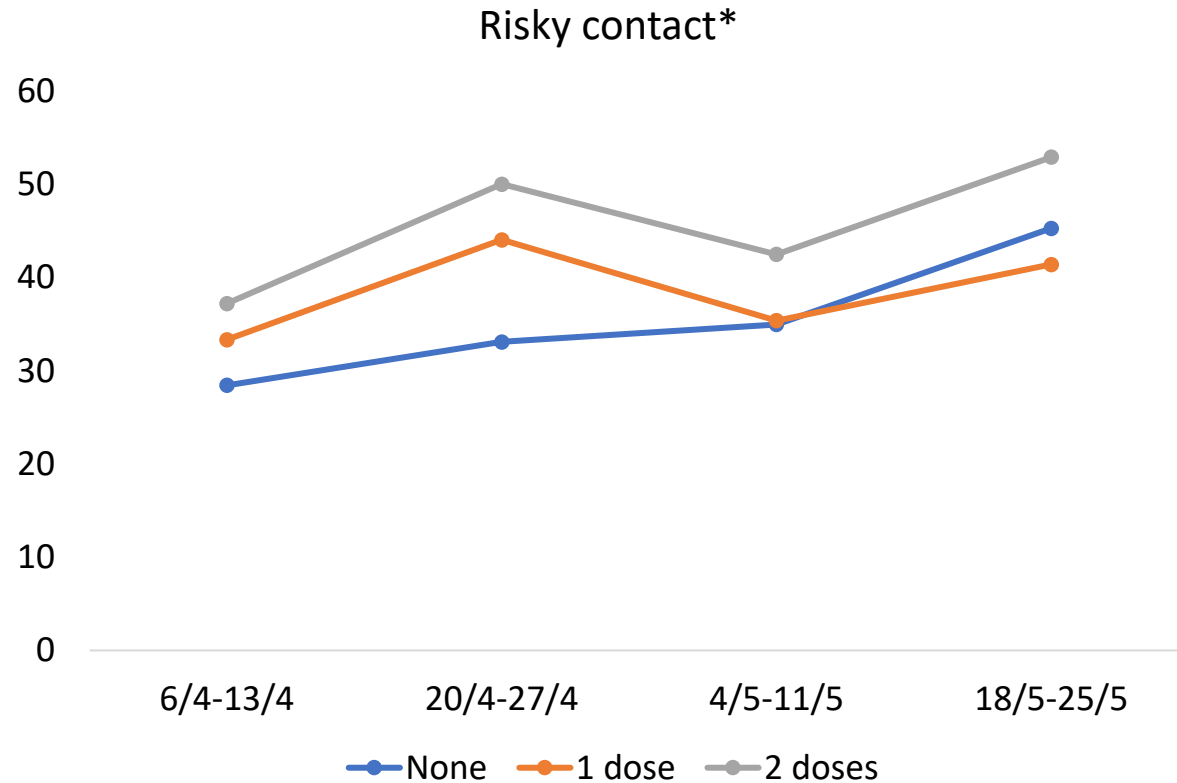
Risky contact*

People who have been vaccinated are more likely to have had a close contact, had a social visit or met more than 4 people outside their household in the past 48 hours. However risky contacts are increasing in non vaccinated individuals.
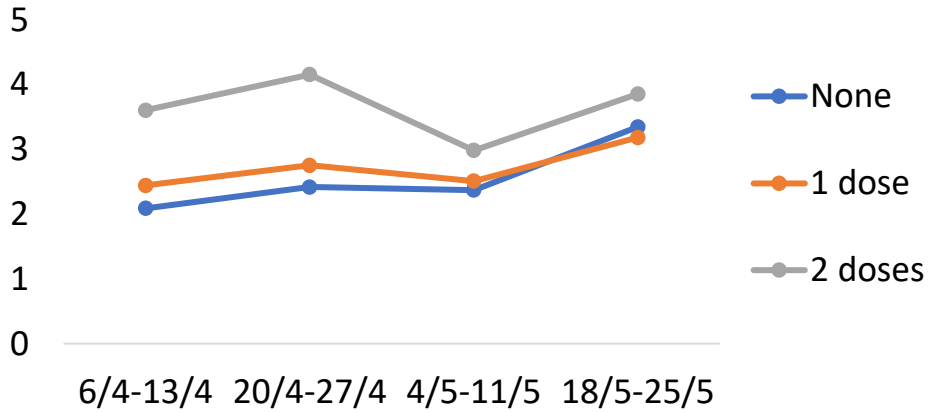
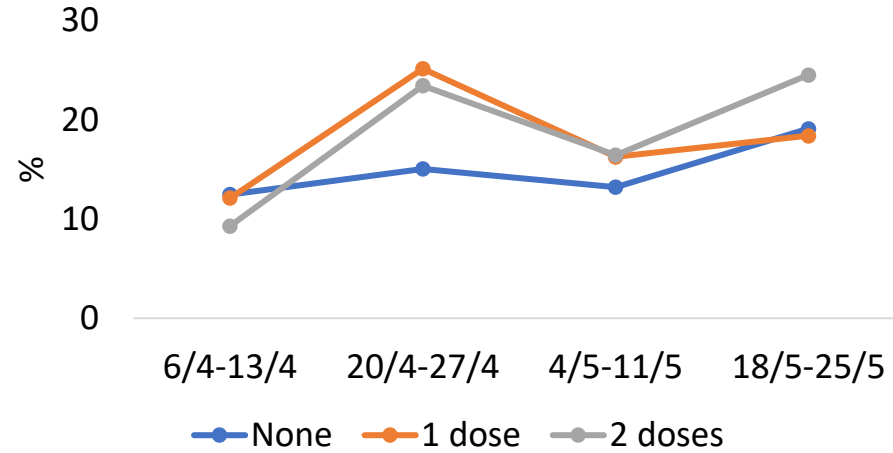*close contact, social visit or met more than 4 people outside household
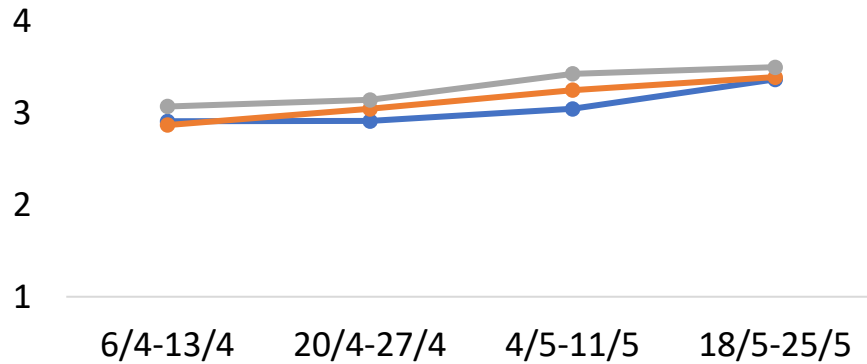
Post-vaccination behaviour
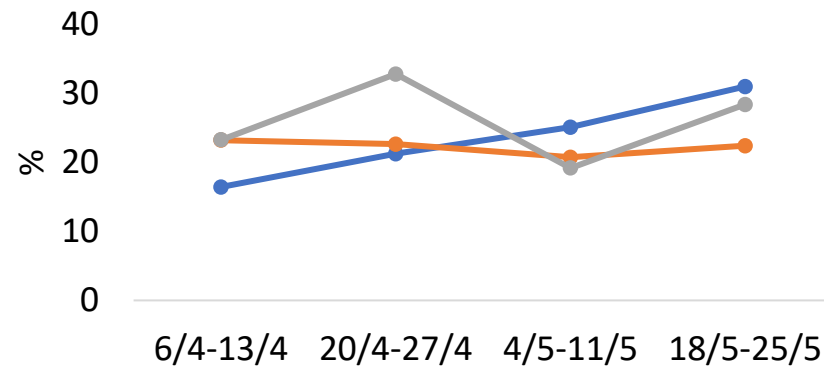
People met outside household


Social Vists

Locations visited

Close contact

Over all waves of data collection, people who have been vaccinated are more likely to have met more people and had a close contact. This effect may be weakening in recent waves as all activity increases.
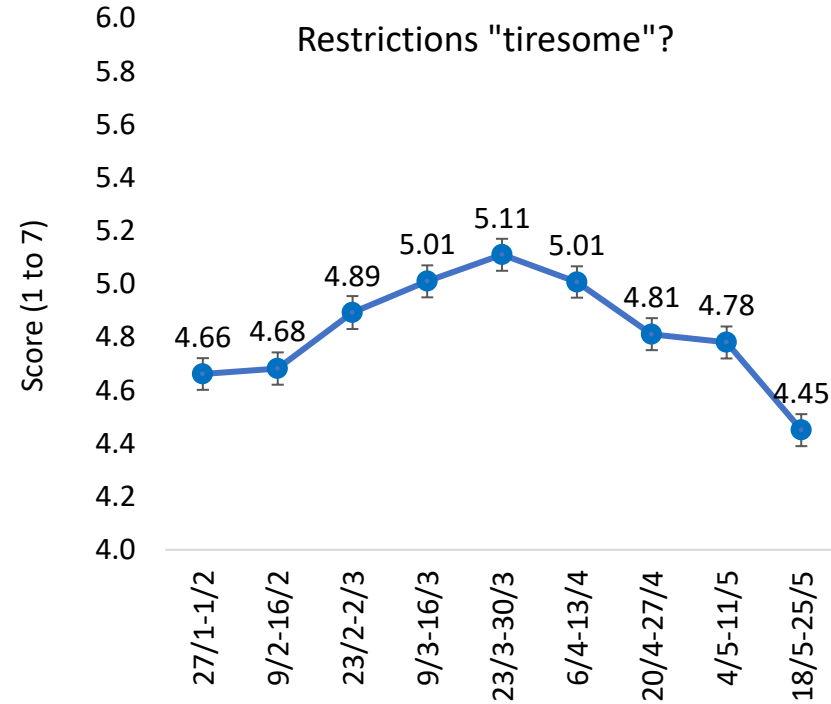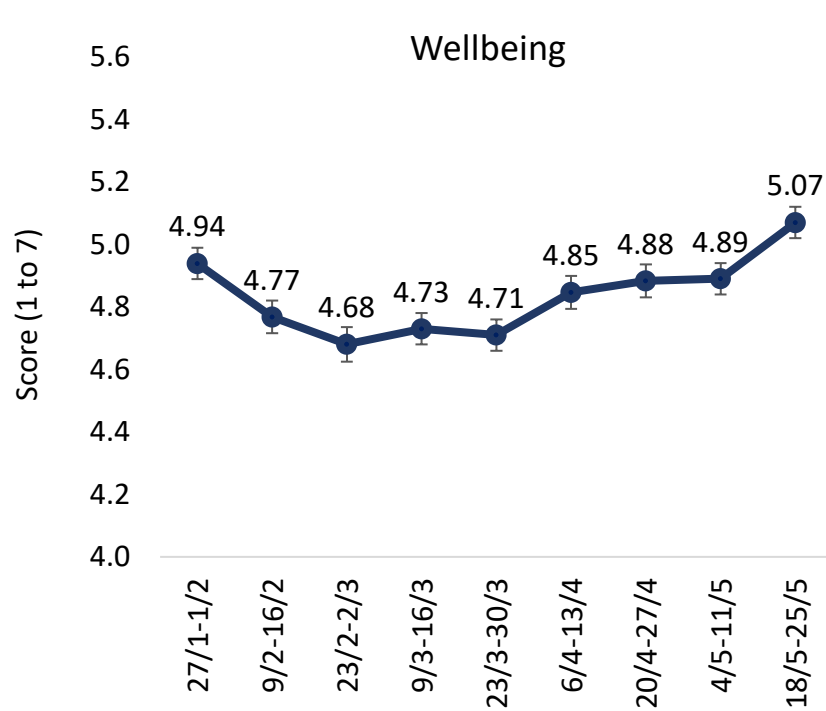
Close contacts at home by vaccination

Household Visit Close Contacts

Legend:
- ■ No one vaccinated
- ▨ Person visited/all visitors vaccinated
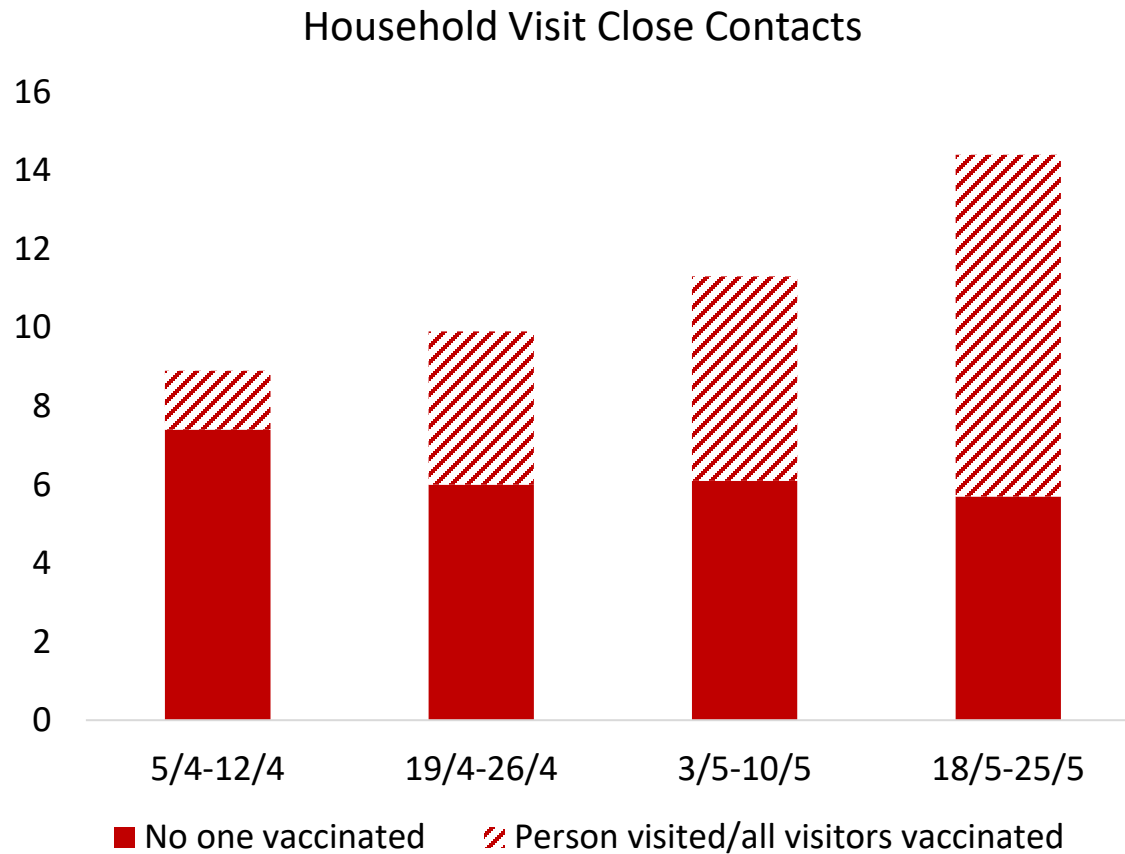
The chart shows the percentage of the population who had a close contact with others in a home. The striped bars show incidents where at least one of the households was fully vaccinated. The chart suggests that a greater proportion of household close contacts are with at least one vaccinated person rather than non vaccinated people, but it should be noted that people may just have had one vaccine and also that the percentage who have received a vaccine has increased substantially since the last wave.

Wellbeing and Fatigue

Wellbeing

Score (1 to 7)

- 4.94 (27/1-1/2)
- 4.77 (9/2-16/2)
- 4.68 (23/2-2/3)
- 4.73 (9/3-16/3)
- 4.71 (23/3-30/3)
- 4.85 (6/4-13/4)
- 4.88 (20/4-27/4)
- 4.89 (4/5-11/5)
- 5.07 (18/5-25/5)

Restrictions "tiresome"?

Score (1 to 7)

- 4.66 (27/1-1/2)
- 4.68 (9/2-16/2)
- 4.89 (23/2-2/3)
- 5.01 (9/3-16/3)
- 5.11 (23/3-30/3)
- 5.01 (6/4-13/4)
- 4.81 (20/4-27/4)
- 4.78 (4/5-11/5)
- 4.45 (18/5-25/5)

Wellbeing has increased to higher than January levels and the extent to which people are tired of restrictions is at its lowest point since SAM started.
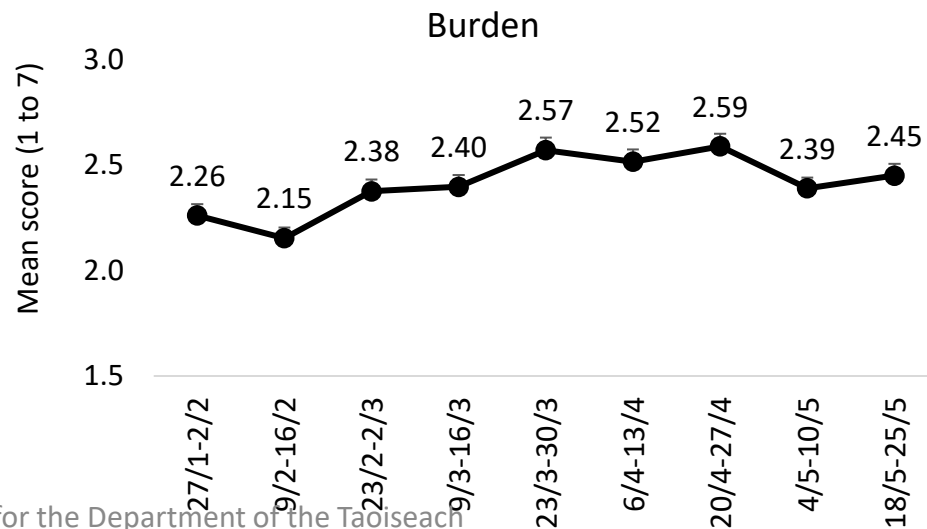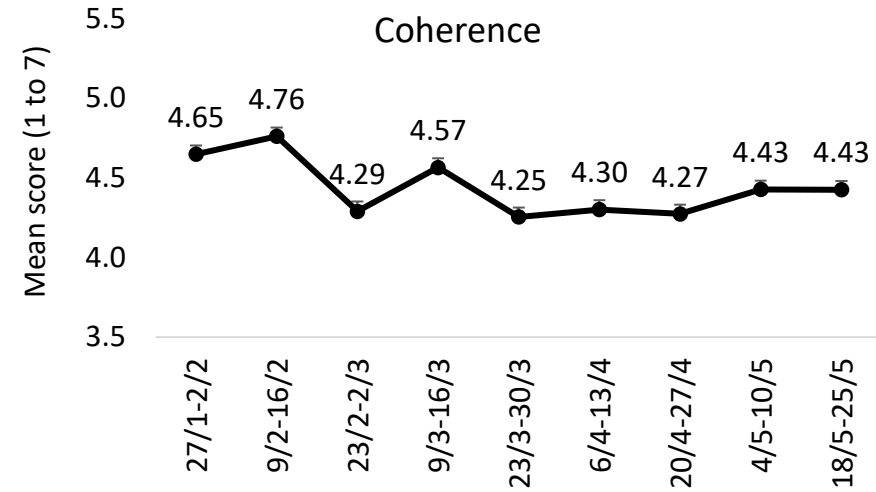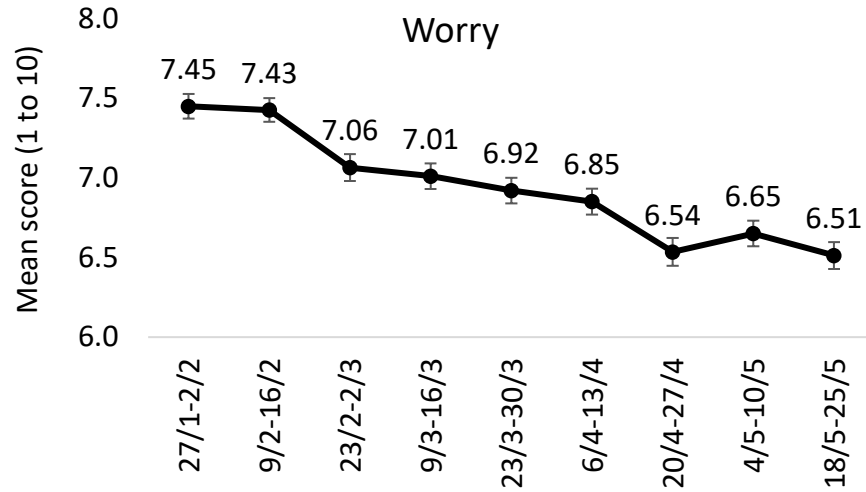
Vaccination status and wellbeing
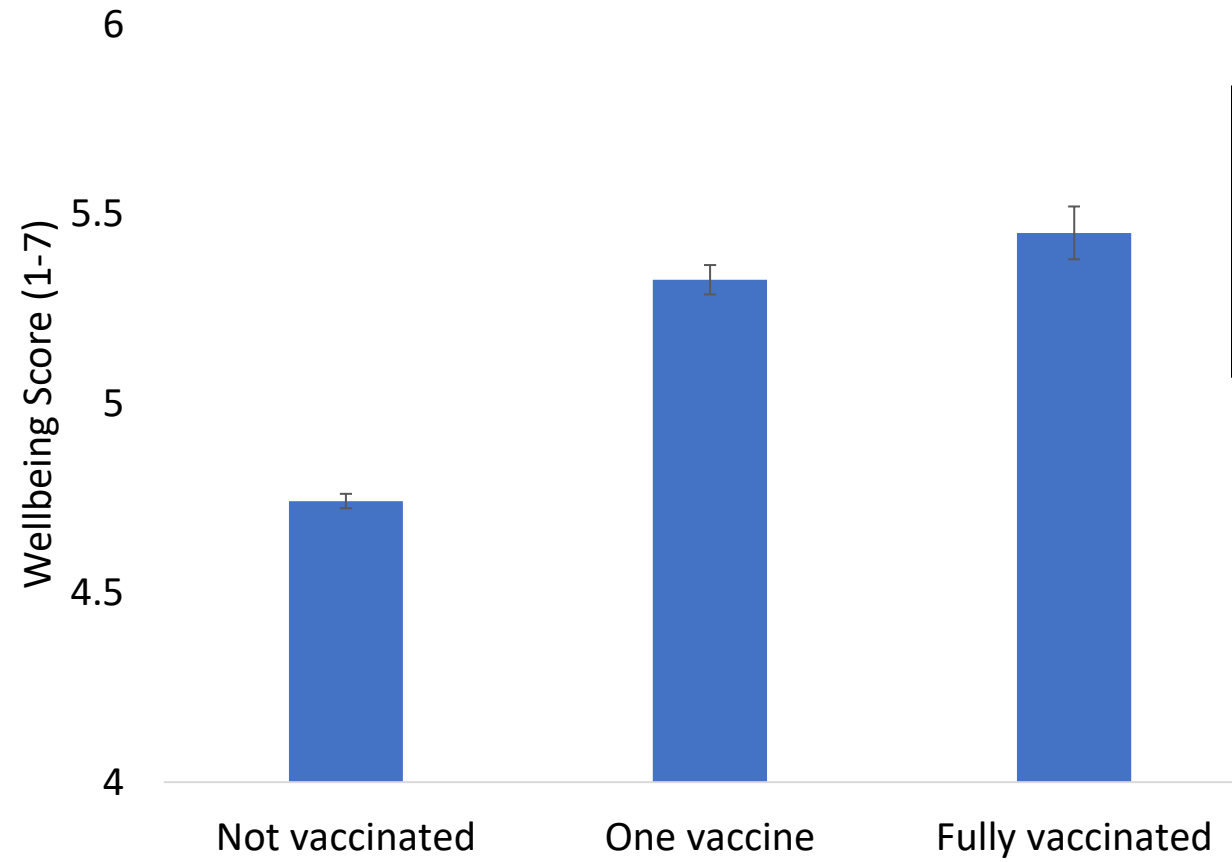
People who have received at least one vaccine report higher wellbeing than those who have not been vaccinated, even after controlling for sociodemographic variables.

Other variables

Worry

Mean score (1 to 10)								
7.45	7.43	7.06	7.01	6.92	6.85	6.54	6.65	6.51
27/1-2/2	9/2-16/2	23/2-2/3	9/3-16/3	23/3-30/3	6/4-13/4	20/4-27/4	4/5-10/5	18/5-25/5

Coherence

Mean score (1 to 7)								
4.65	4.76	4.29	4.57	4.25	4.30	4.27	4.43	4.43
27/1-2/2	9/2-16/2	23/2-2/3	9/3-16/3	23/3-30/3	6/4-13/4	20/4-27/4	4/5-10/5	18/5-25/5

Burden

| Mean score (1 to 7)								
2.26	2.15	2.38	2.40	2.57	2.52	2.59	2.39	2.45
27/1-2/2	9/2-16/2	23/2-2/3	9/3-16/3	23/3-30/3	6/4-13/4	20/4-27/4	4/5-10/5	18/5-25/5

The trend shows that overall levels of worry, perceived coherence of restrictions and burden of restrictions have stabilised. All three predict social activity with worry being the strongest predictor (Slide 22).
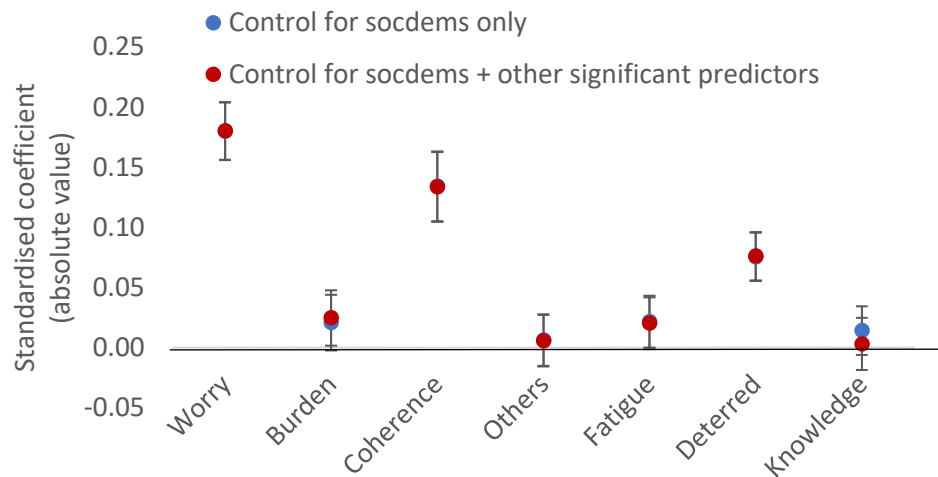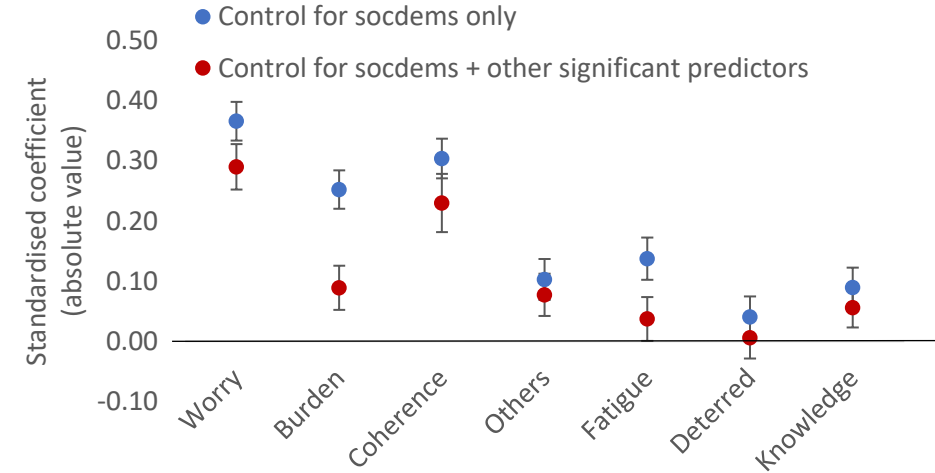
Psychological Variables

Liklihood of Close Contact
(all waves)

Liklihood of Social Visit
(all waves)
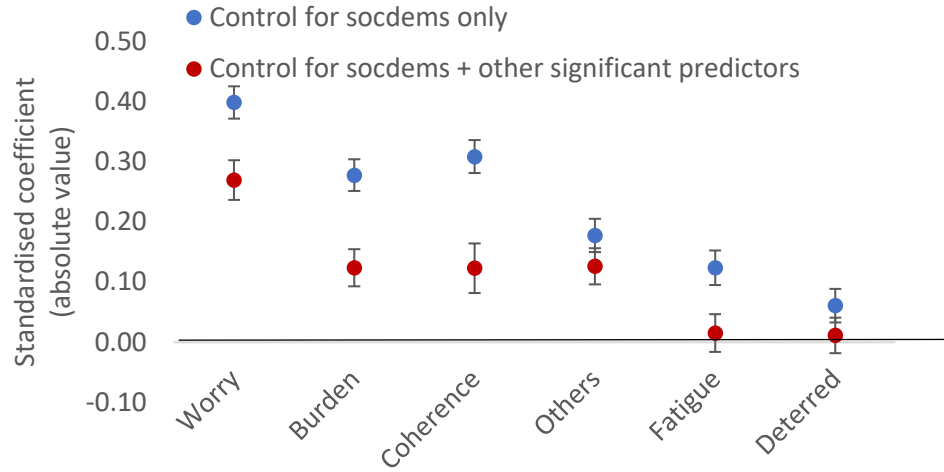
Liklihood of Meeting More People
(all waves)

The charts show the relative strength of the association between psychological predictors of behaviour on having a close contact, a social visit and meeting more people. Blue dots show the relationship between only that predictor and the outcome variable, controlling for socio-demographic characteristics. Red dots show the association when all other significant psychological predictors are controlled for. As in previous weeks, worry, burden and coherence are the most consistent predictors, with perceptions of others important for close contacts and social visits and deterrence important for meeting more other people.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach
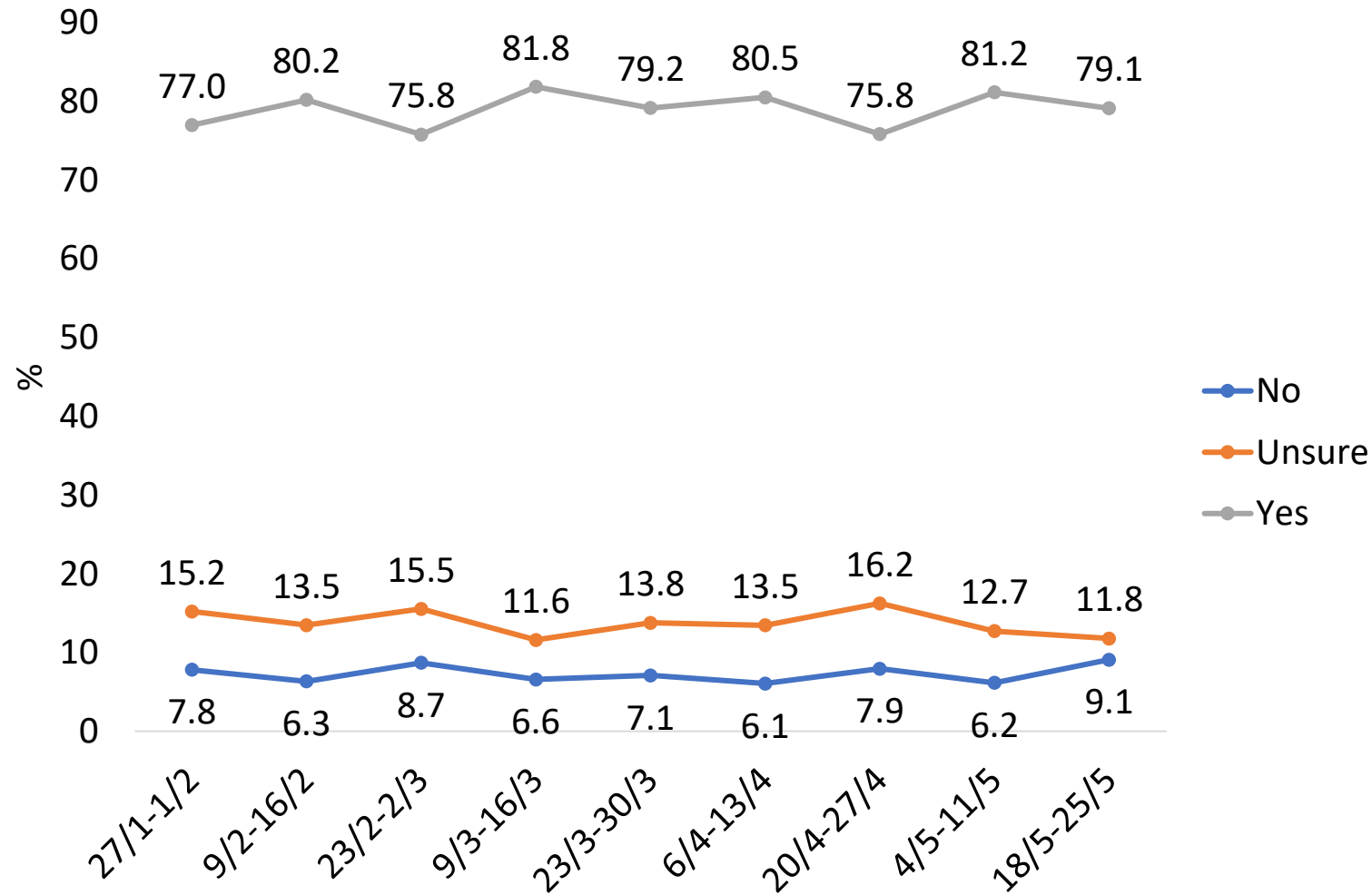
Vaccine intention

The level of support for the vaccine has remained consistently high among those not yet vaccinated. This chart shows intention among those who have not yet been offered the vaccine.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

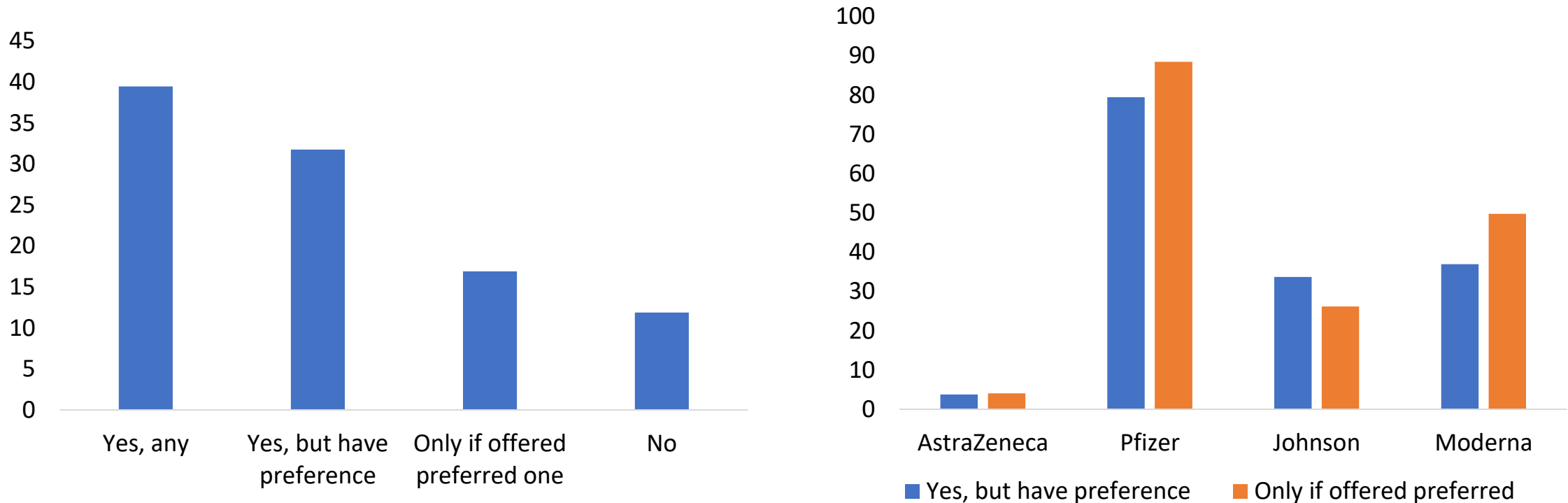# Vaccination and intention to be vaccinated by age group
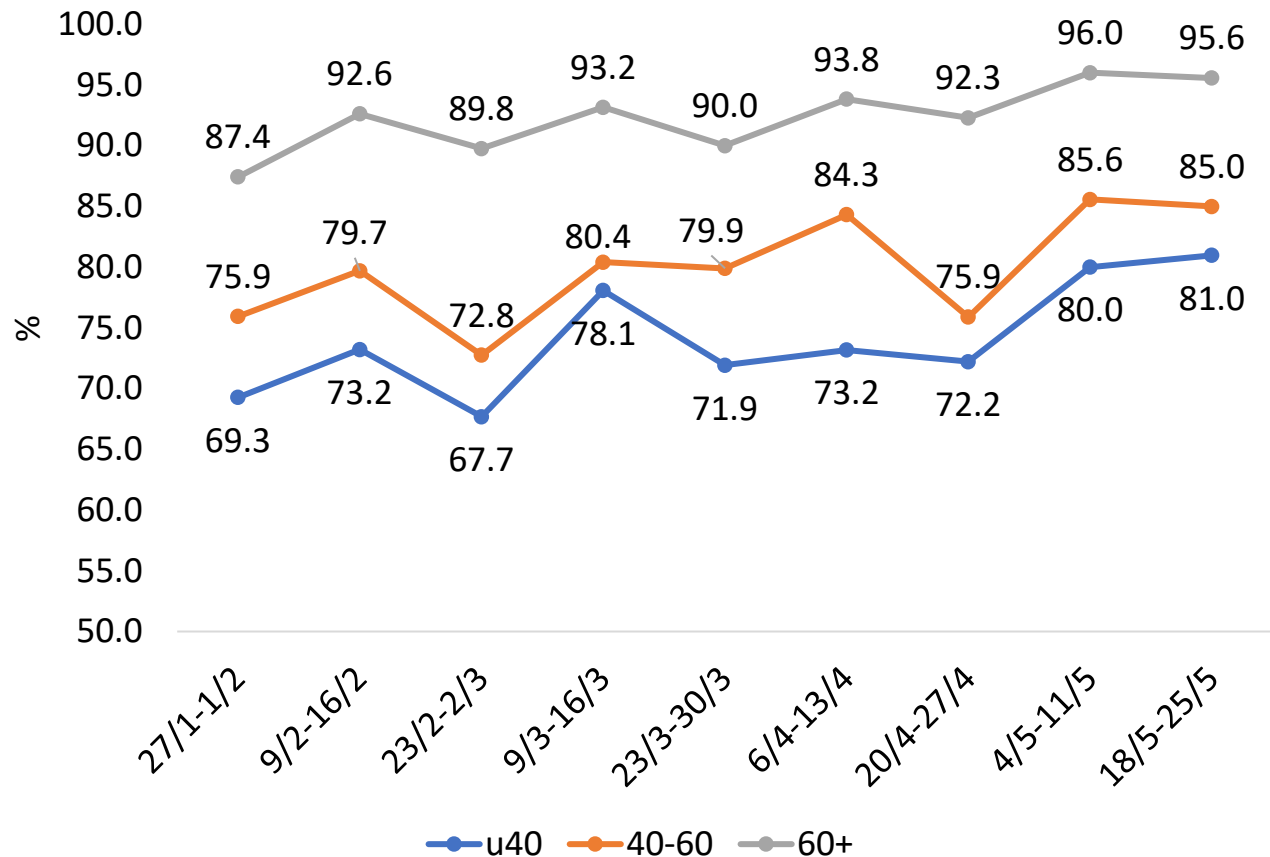
The level of support for the vaccine is less in the under 40s than the over 60s, but has risen in all groups. This chart shows the percentage of people in each age group who say they intend to take the vaccine or who have already taken it.
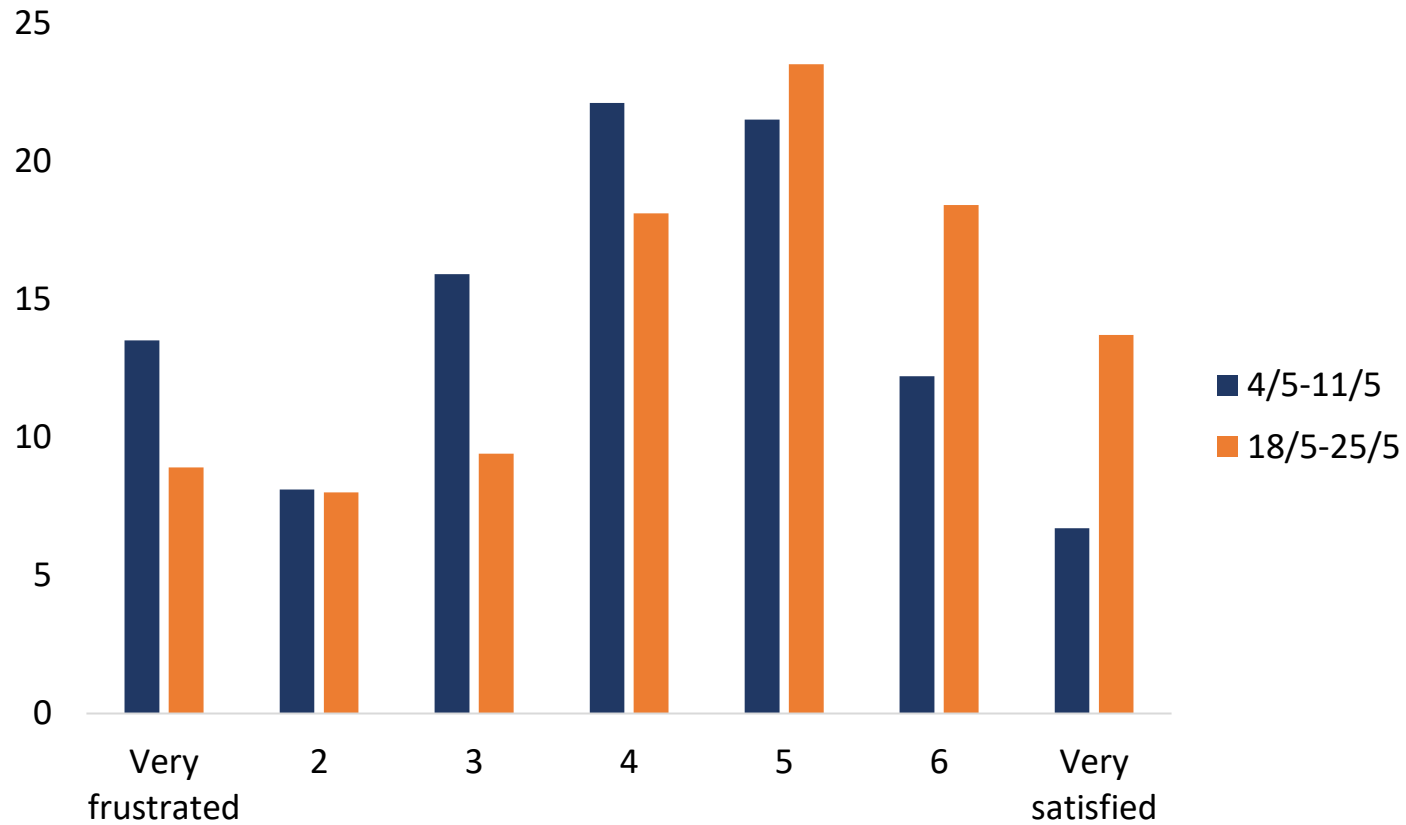
Vaccination intention by vaccine type

Most people (70%) will take any vaccine that is offered to them, but just under half of those have a preference. A significant minority (17%) will only take the vaccine if they get their preferred one. The most common preference is for Pfizer and the least common is AstraZeneca.
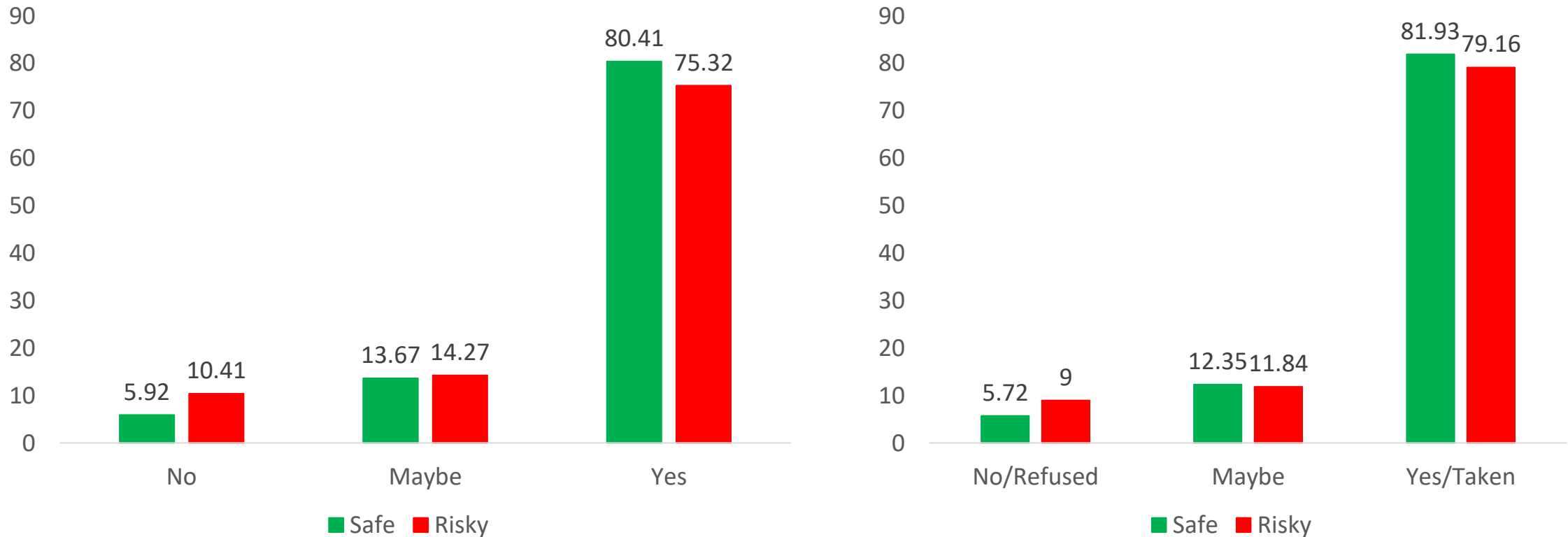
Vaccine perceptions

Satisfaction with vaccine rollout

Legend:
- ■ 4/5-11/5
- ■ 18/5-25/5

This chart shows increased satisfaction with vaccine rollout since early May.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Vaccination and intention to be vaccinated by risky behaviour

Risky behaviour is defined as having a close contact, meeting more than 4 people or having a social visit. People who do not intend to take the vaccine when offered are more likely to engage in risky behaviour.
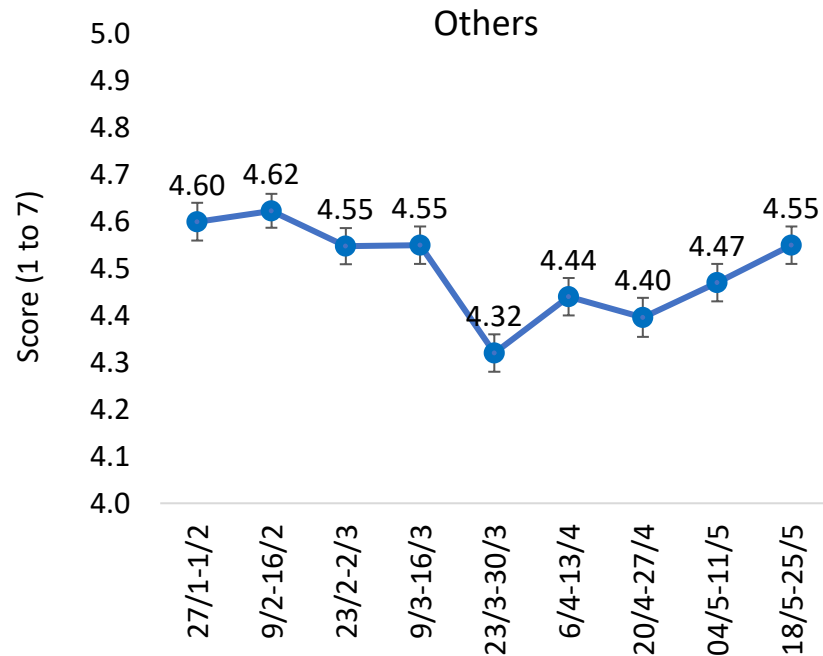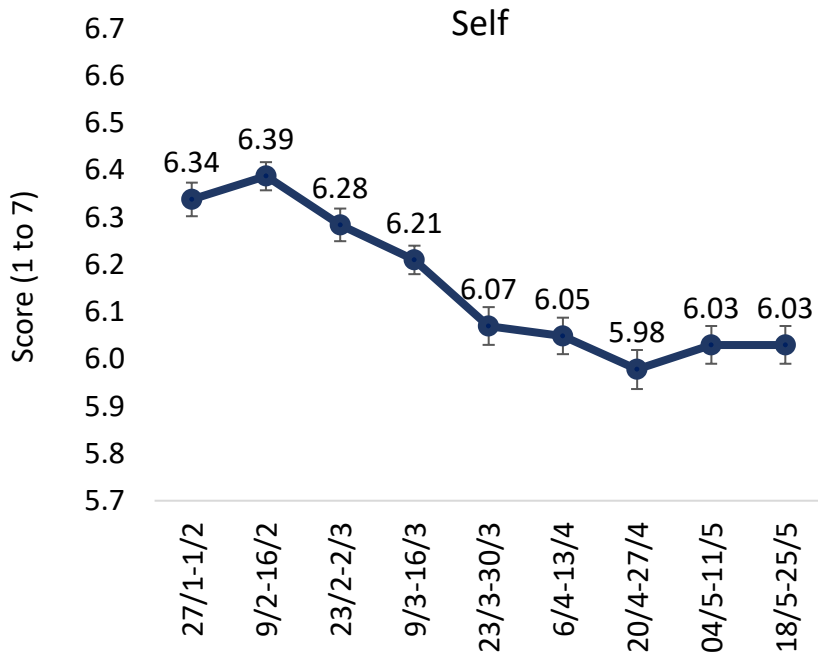
Expectations for easing restrictions (next month)
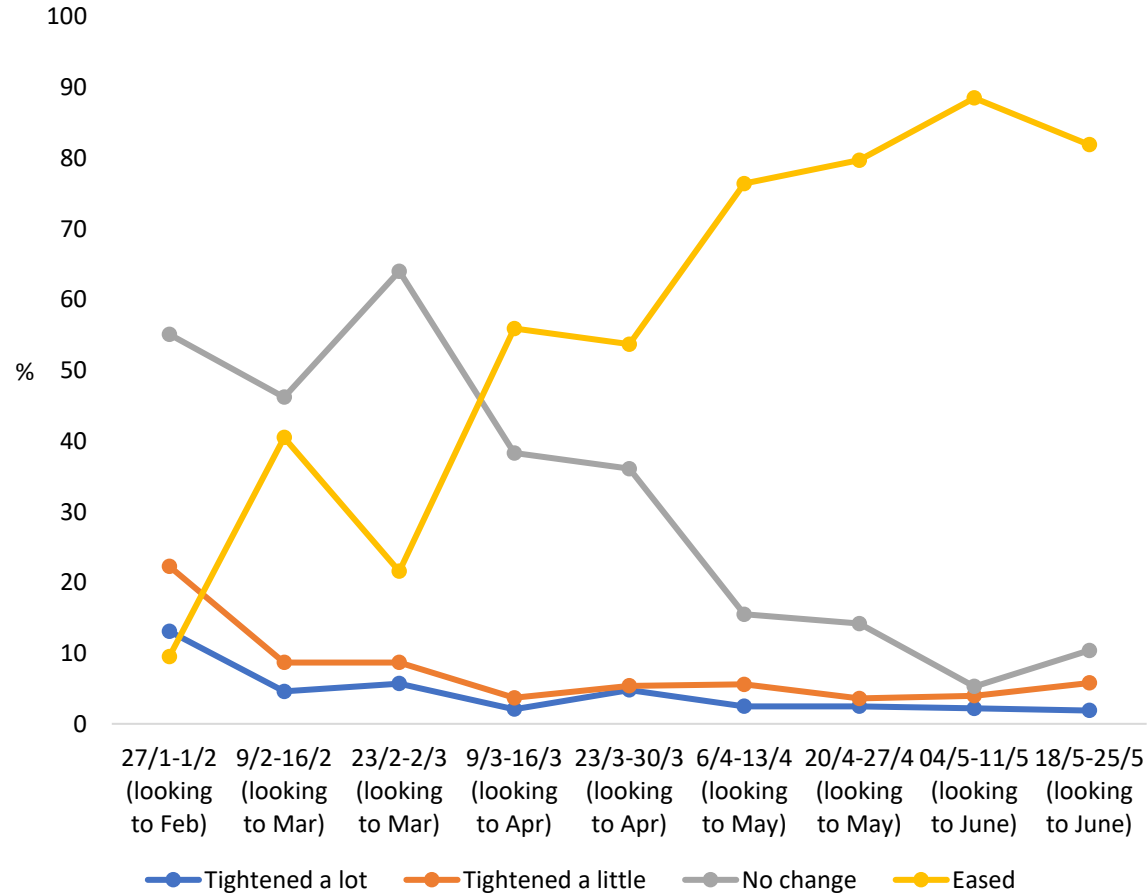
There has been a decrease in the percentage of people expecting easing of restrictions in June and an increase in those expecting no change.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Compliance

Self-reported compliance remains the same. There was an increase in reported compliance of others.