Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Social Activity Measure
Sep 7th – 14th

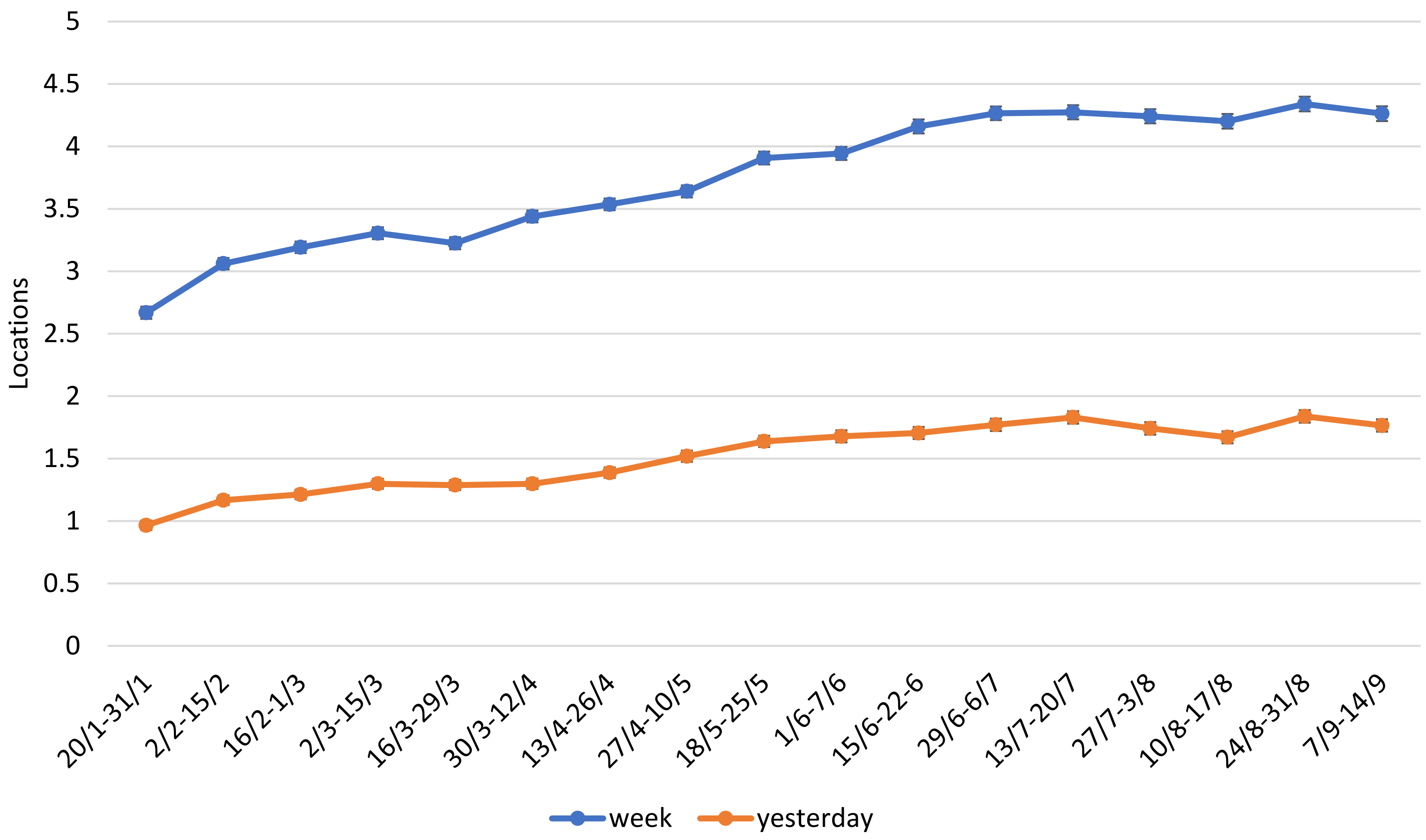
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

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 September 7th and 14th. Data collection took place following the easing of restrictions on a number of indoor and outdoor events and activities, which could operate at between 50% and 75% capacity. Sectors in which easing took place included live music/entertainment, indoor sports, cinemas/theatres and religious ceremonies. Capacity limits on public transport were removed and there was anticipation of the staggered return to offices beginning on 20th September.

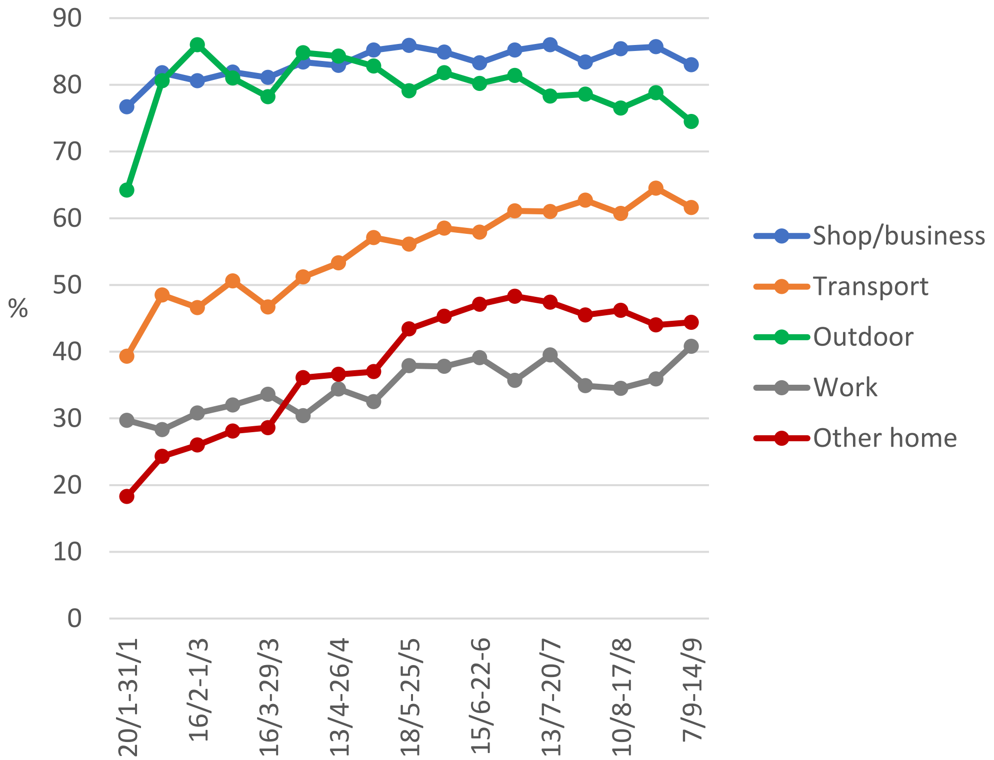
Total locations visited

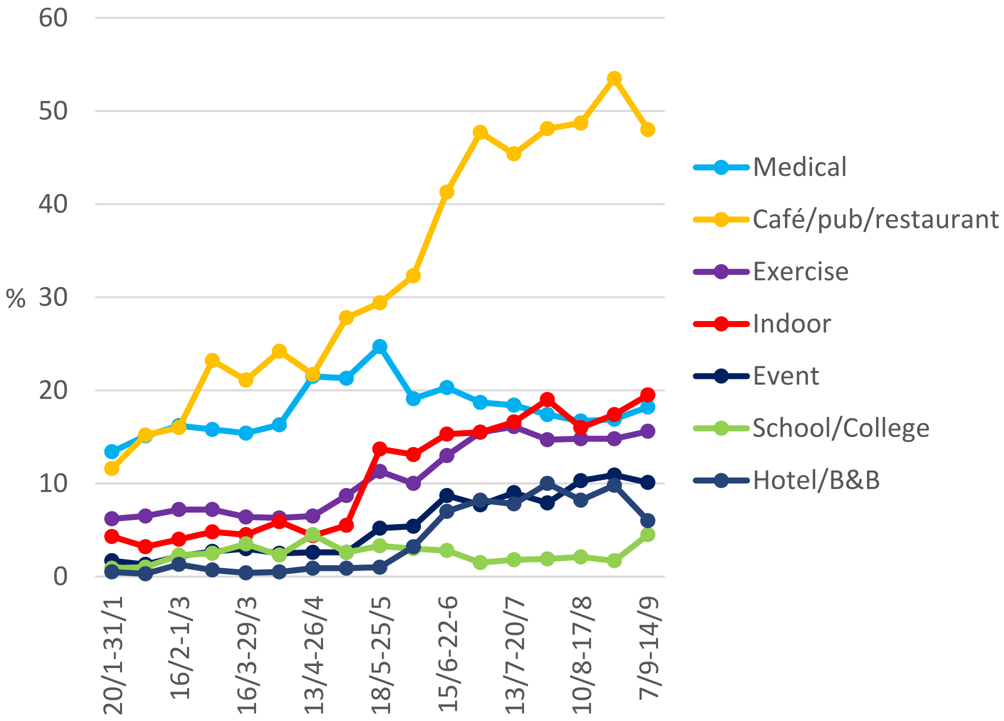


The average number of locations visited outside the home during the previous week and over the previous day remained stable.

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

Locations visited (previous week)

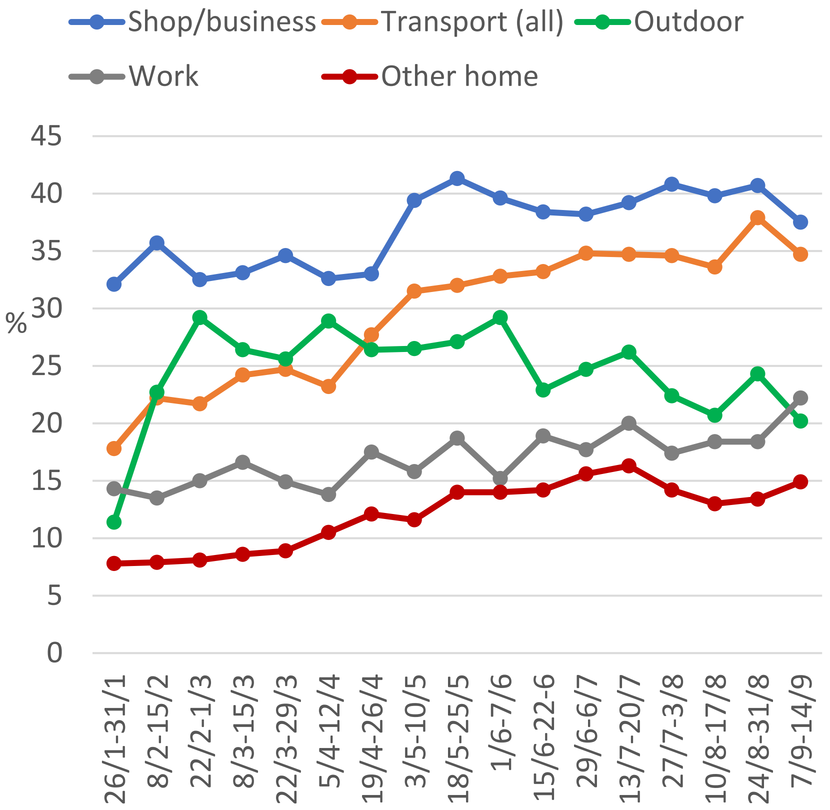


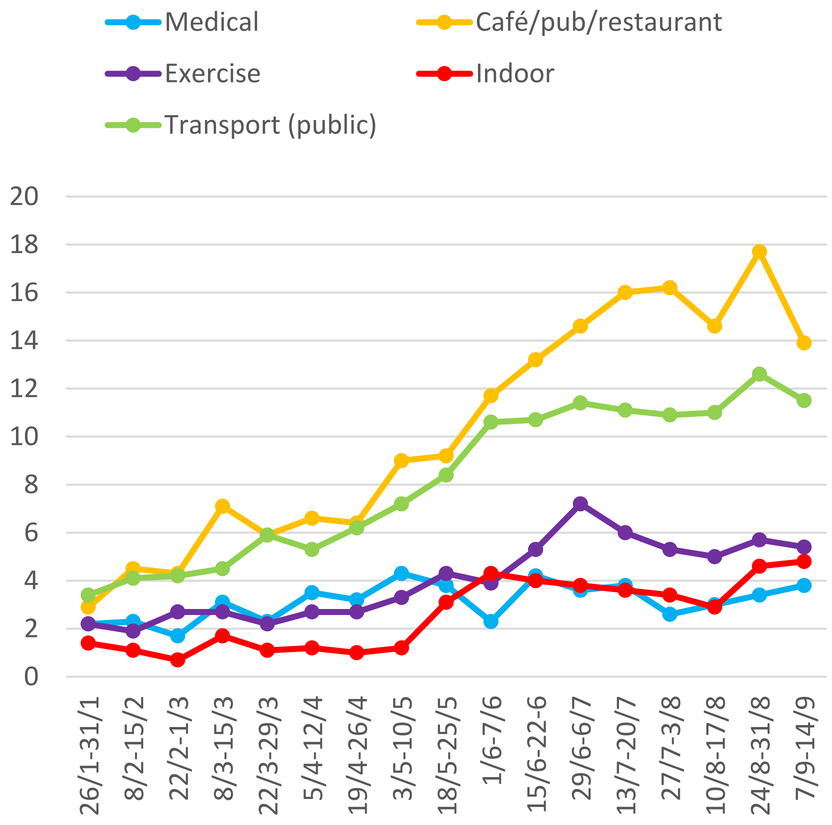


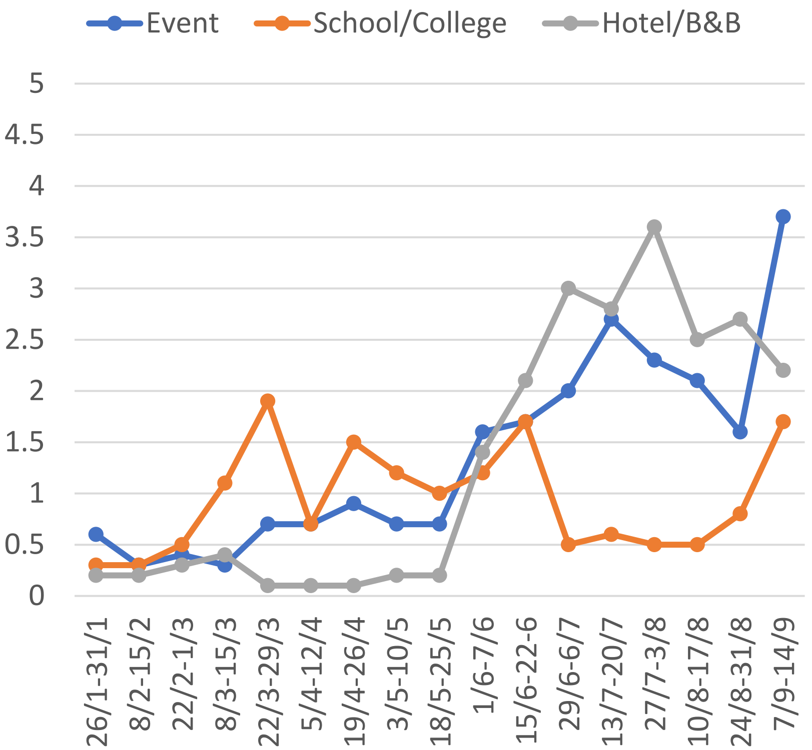
The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point during the previous week. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. Changes compared to the previous round of SAM are in line with the end of summer holidays: fewer people visited outdoor locations and hospitality venues and more people attended work and school/college.

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

Locations visited (yesterday)



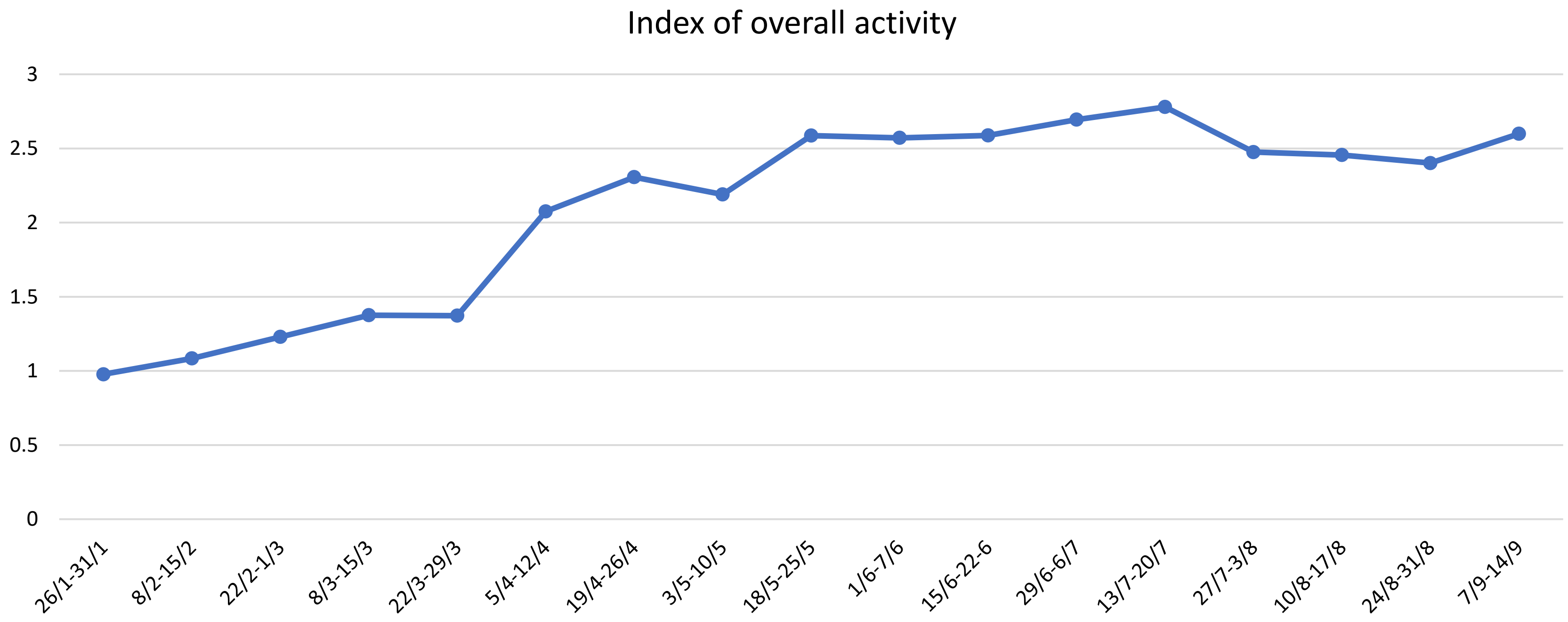




The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point the previous day. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. In line with the end of summer holidays, fewer people visited outdoor locations and cafes/pubs/restaurants and more people attended work and school/college. There was also an increase in visits to others' homes and attendance at events.

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

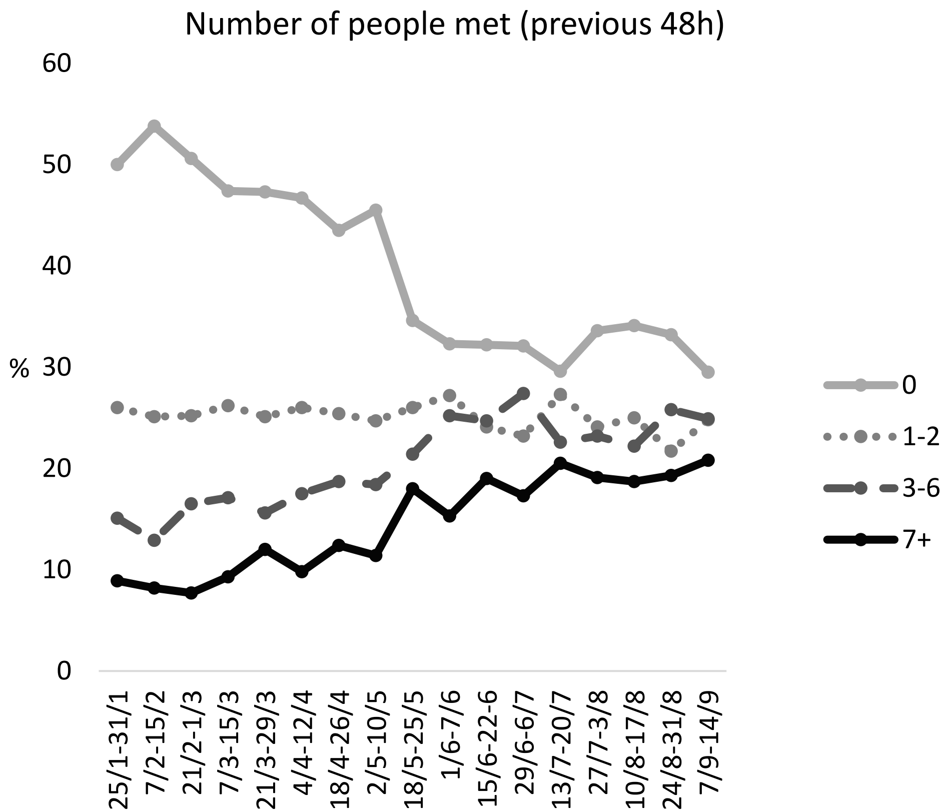
Overall activity

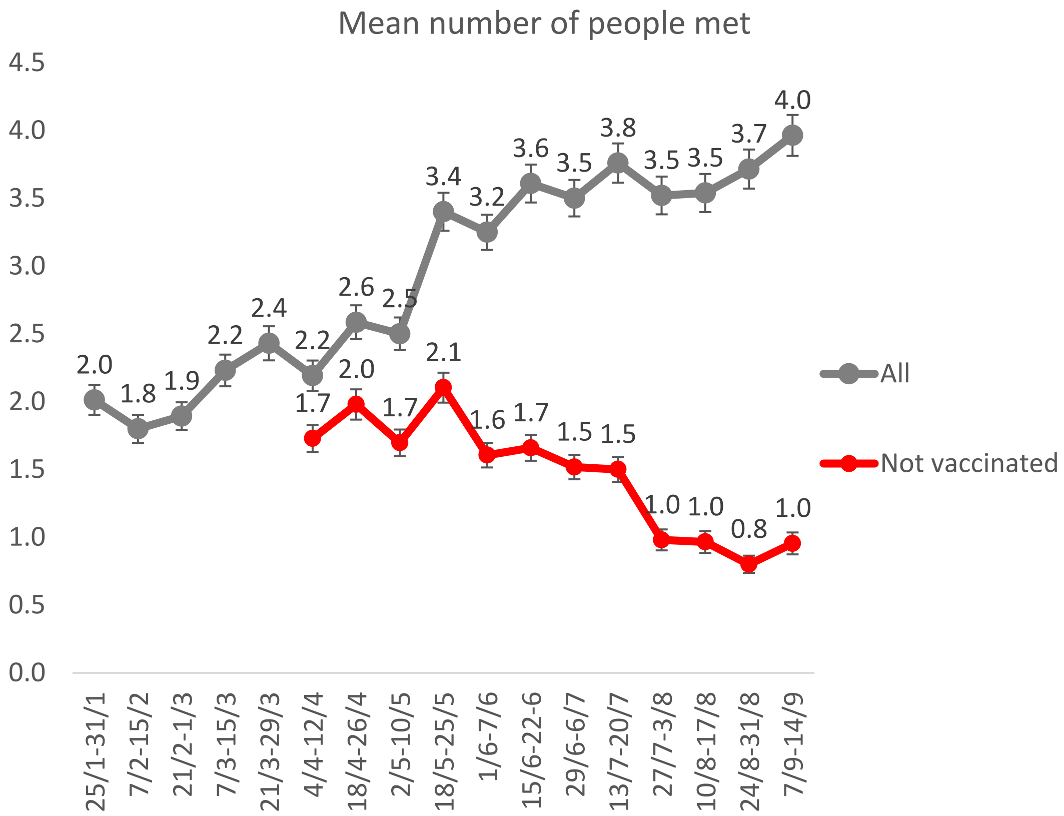


This chart shows an index of how much activity people are engaged in overall (how many places they go, how often and how many people they meet). It shows that over the summer months there has been little change in the amount of activity people have engaged in overall.

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

Meeting people outside the household



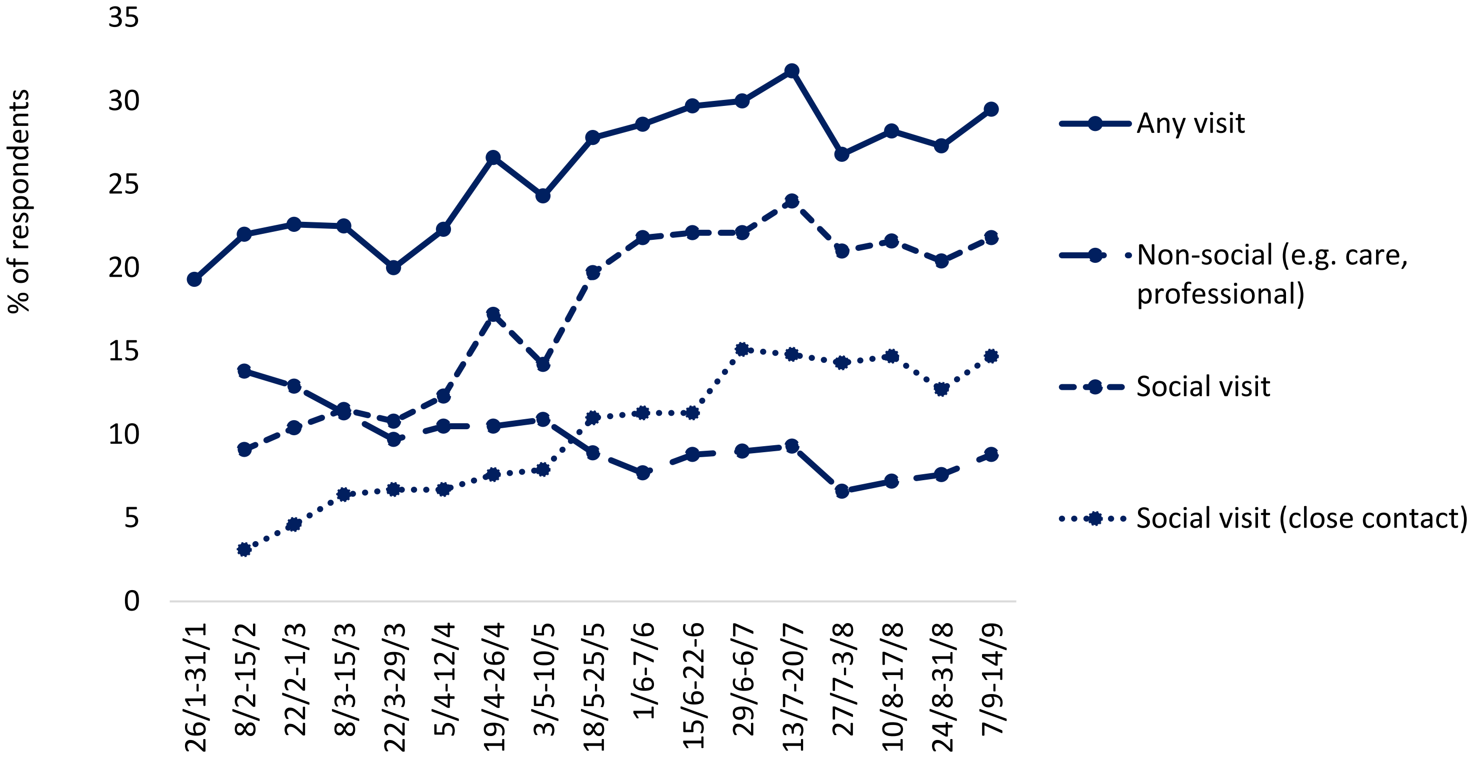


There was no change in the number of people met outside the household compared to the previous wave of SAM but the current figure is significantly higher than rise to 3.4 in May. The proportion who meet no one from outside of their household has remained steady at around 30% over much of the summer months.

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

Visits to homes

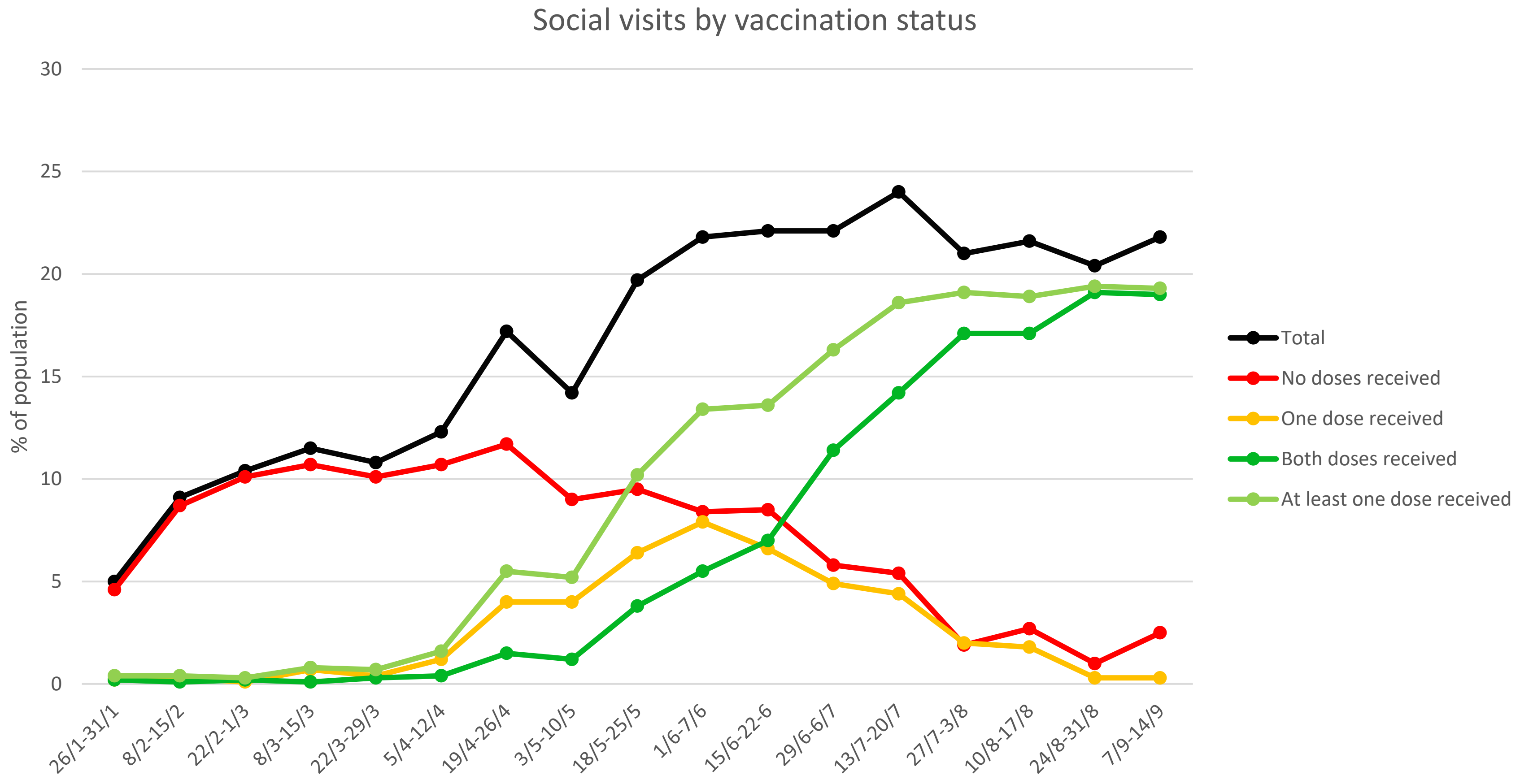
Proportion who had visitors or visited another household (previous day)



Visits to homes for all reasons remained stable.

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

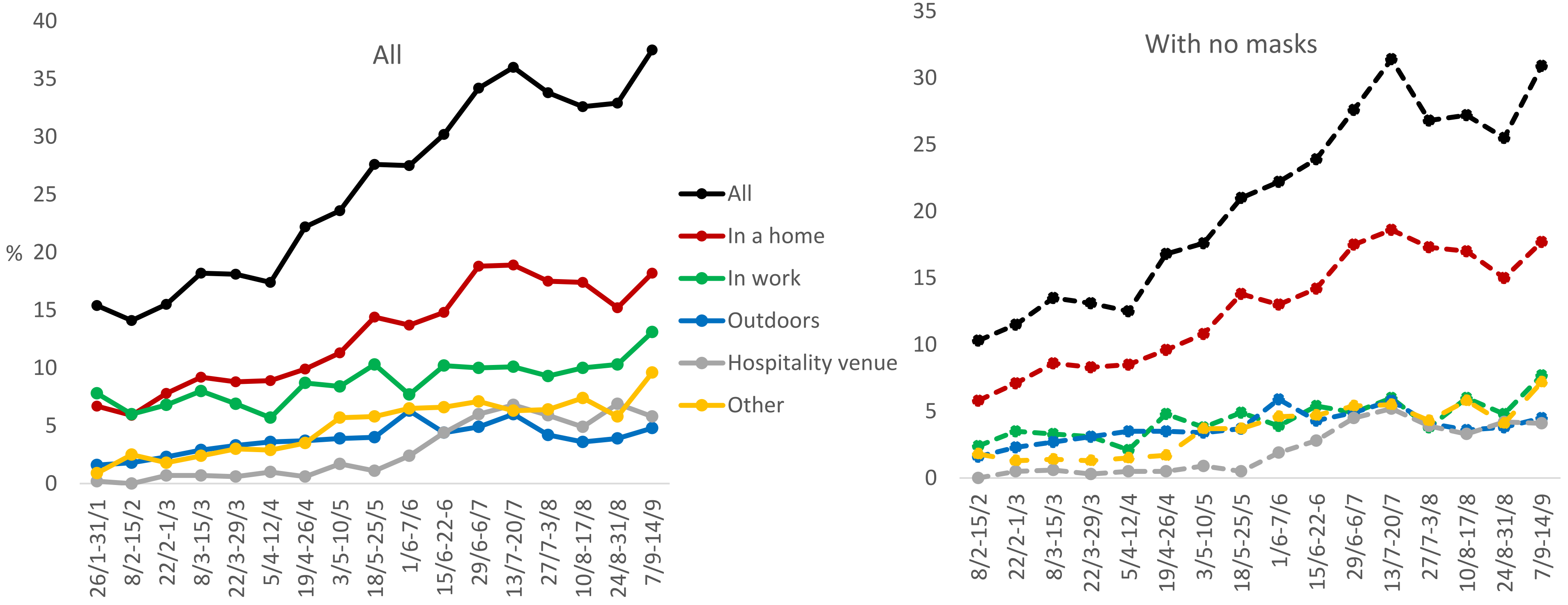
Social visits to homes by vaccination status



Almost 90% of social visits are made by those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

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

Close contacts* (previous day)

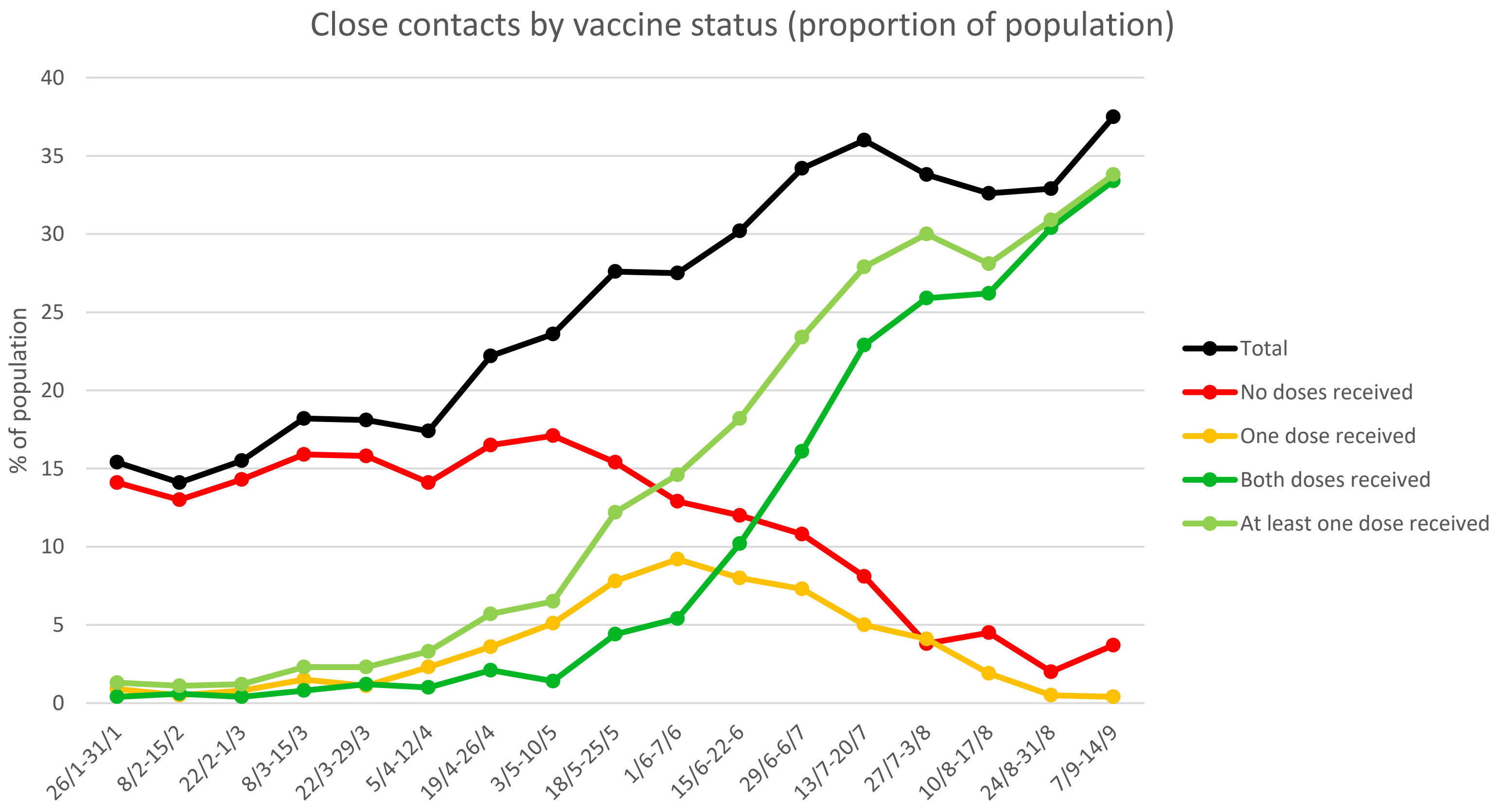


*Close contact interactions are defined as those that are likely to have lasted for longer than 15 minutes without a 2m distance being maintained at all times or that took place indoors for longer than 2 hours in a space that was not well ventilated (hse.ie).

There was an increase in close contacts compared to the previous wave. This increase can be attributed to increases in household visits, workplaces and other locations (e.g. events). The trend in non-masked close contacts is the same.

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

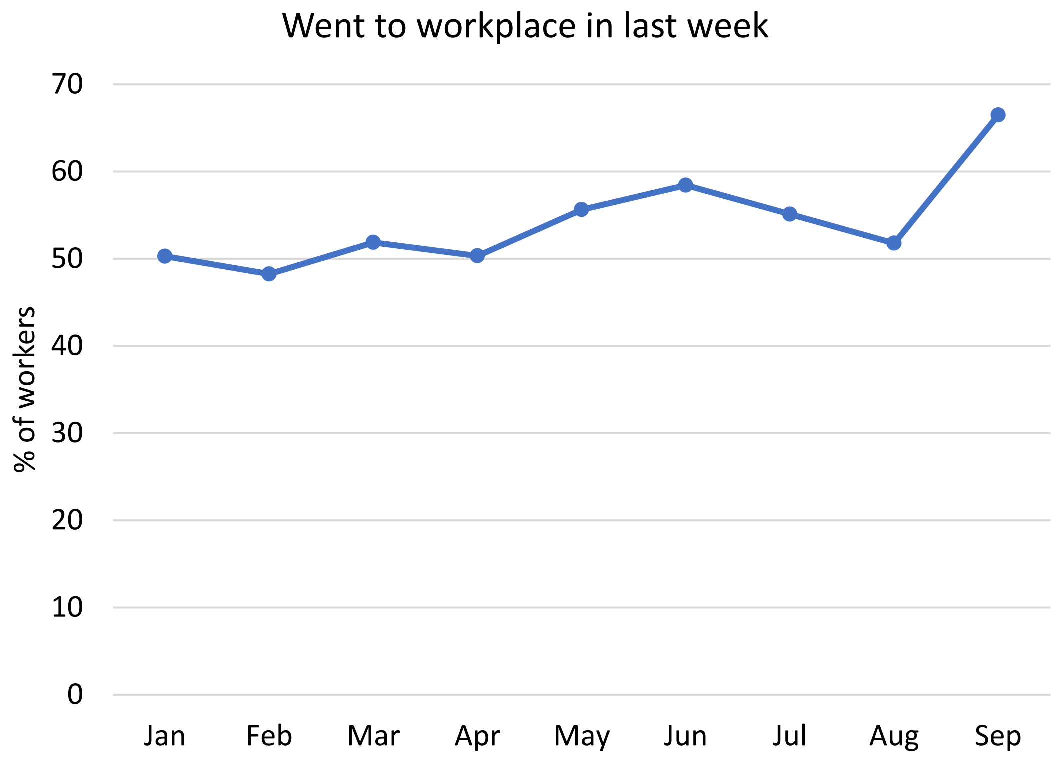
Close contacts by vaccine status

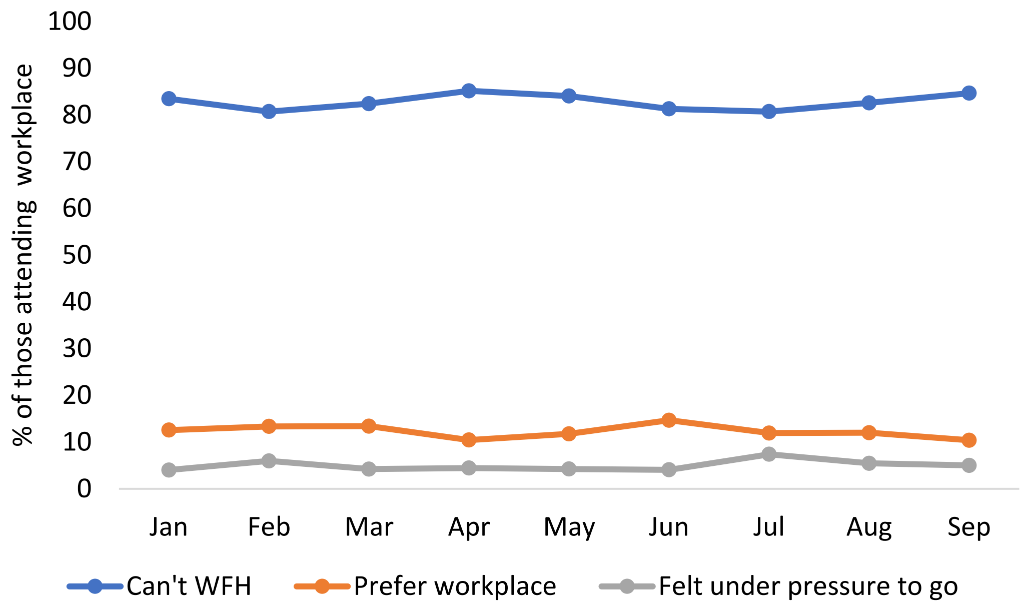


Over 90% of close contacts are now among those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

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

Attendance at the workplace

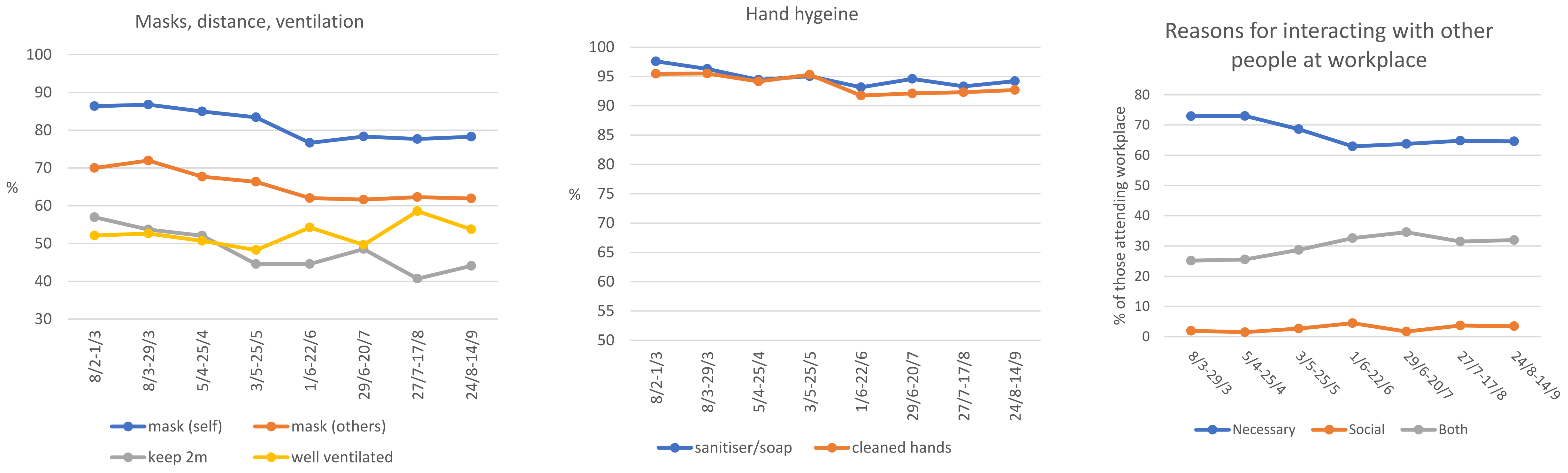




Around two-thirds of workers attended their workplace at some point in the past week, the highest level since SAM began. Most report that they can't work from home (WFH) but 10% say they prefer their workplace and 5% felt pressured to attend even though they could work from home. These levels have remained relatively stable since January.

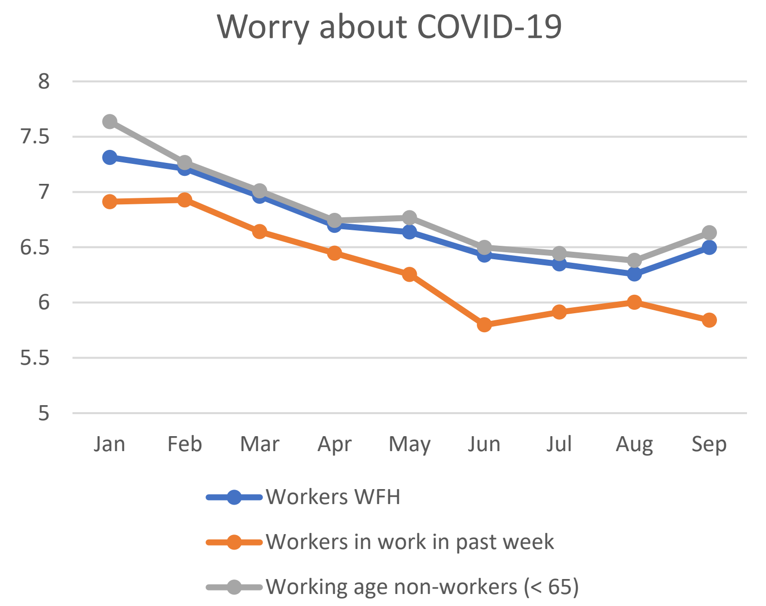
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

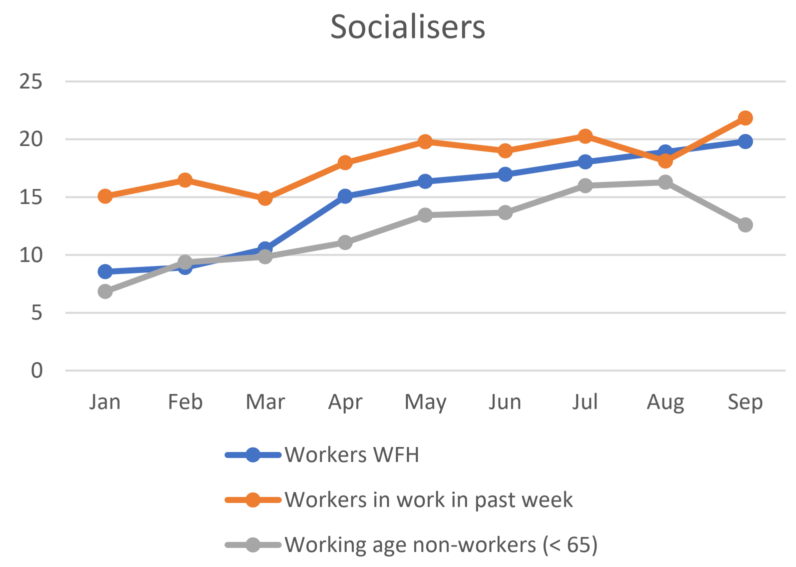
Mitigation behaviours in the workplace

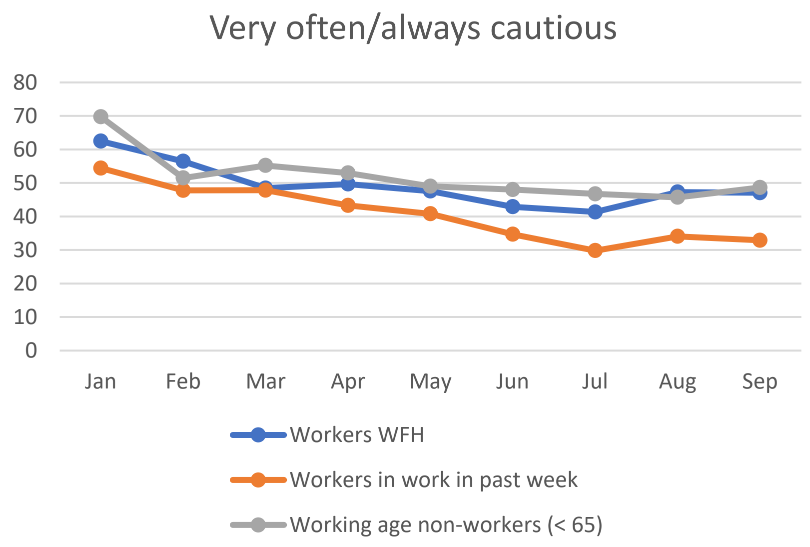


Mitigation behaviours in the workplace had been slowly declining but have stabilised.

Workers WFH and workers in the workplace



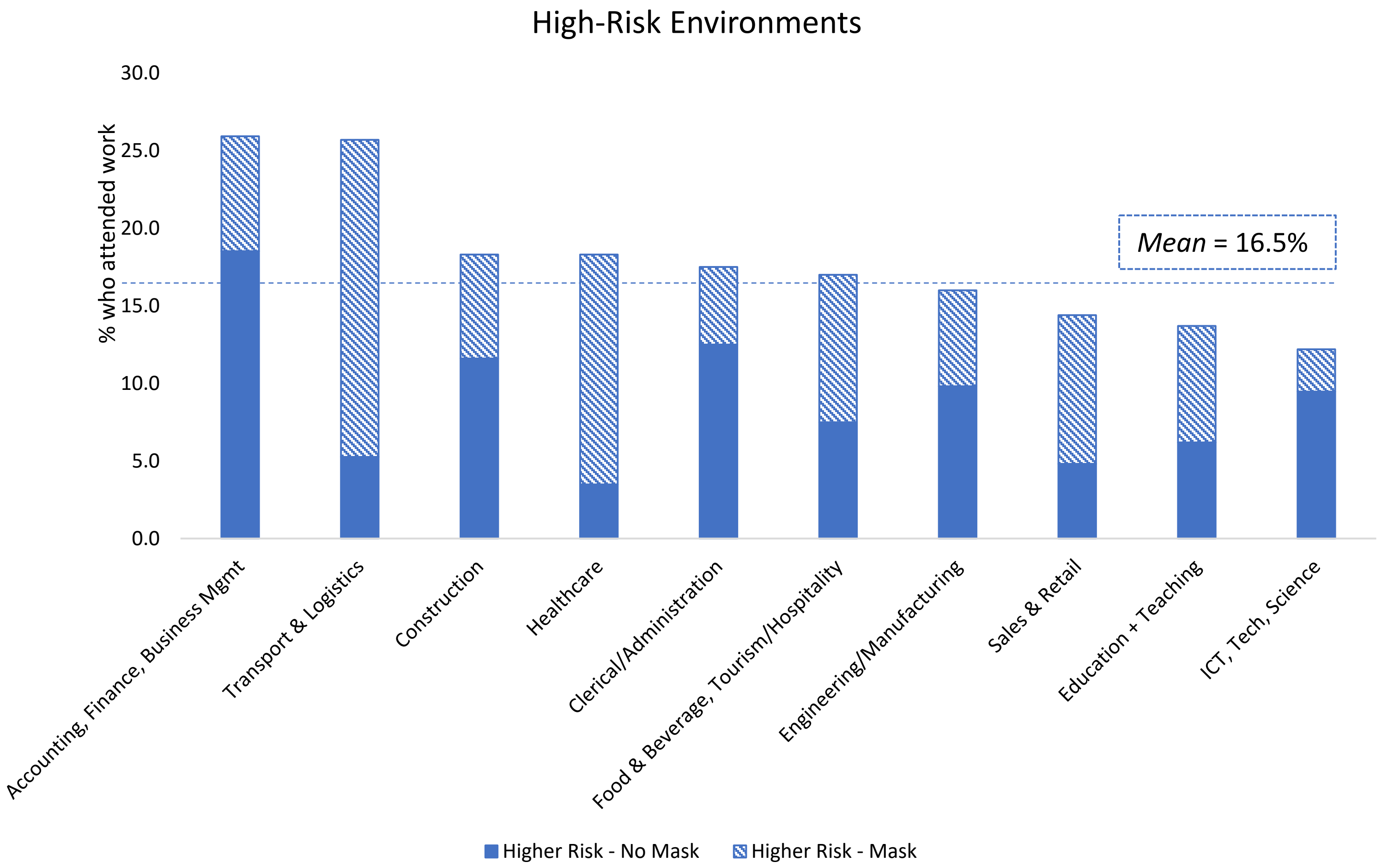




Over time, workers who are working from home (WFH) and people of working age who are not currently working tend to be slightly more worried about COVID-19, slightly less likely to be socialisers and slightly more likely to take prevention action when out than workers who have attended their workplace in the past week.

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

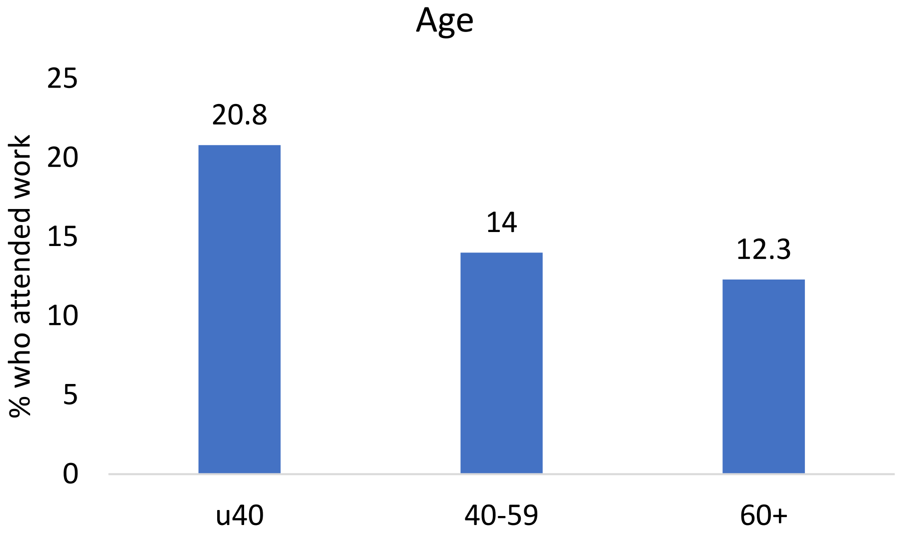
Workplace Risk by Sector

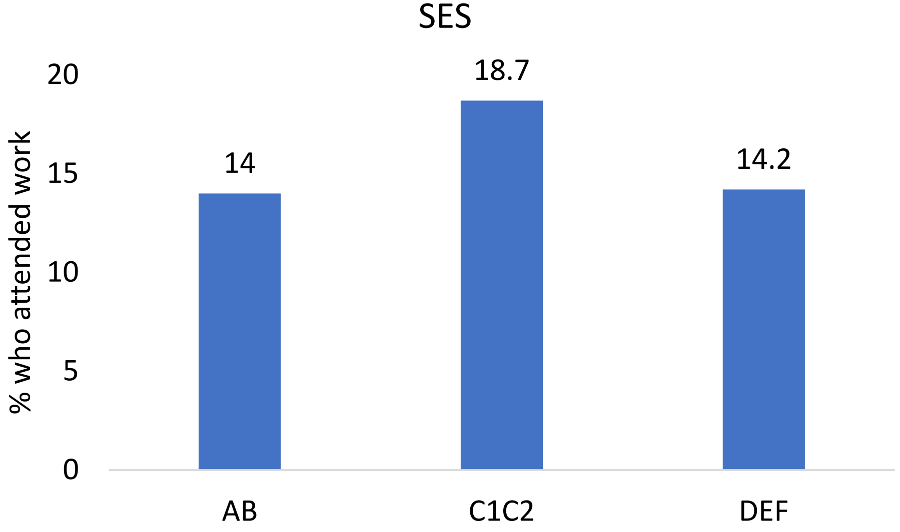


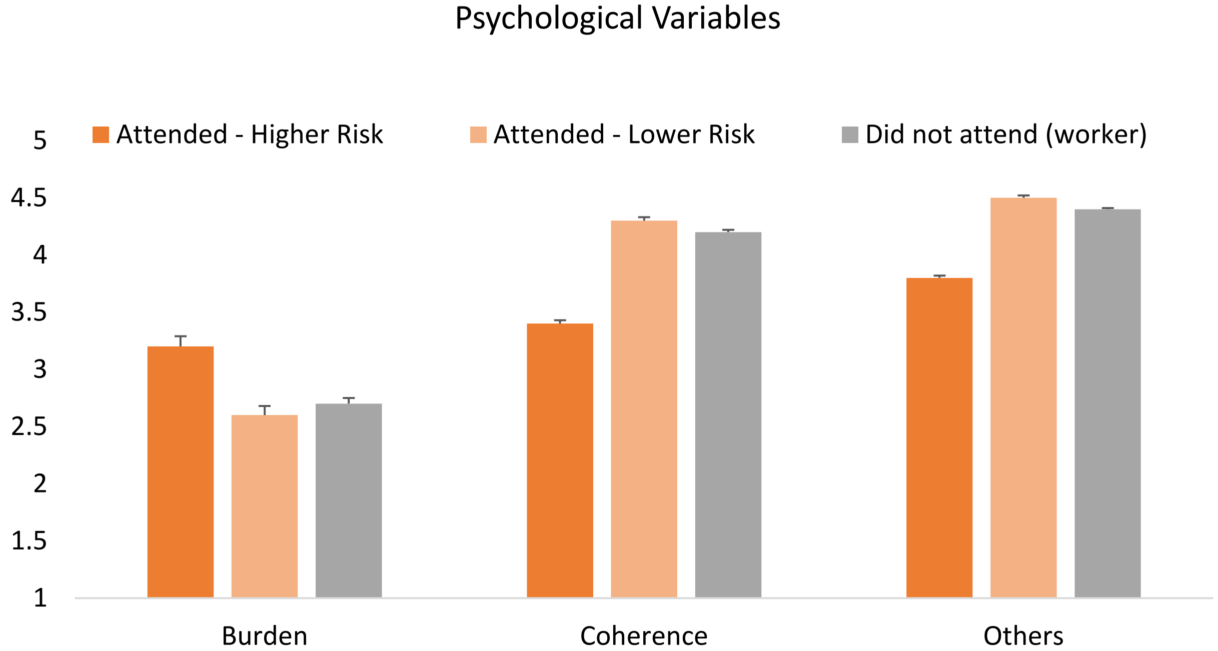
We classified some workplaces as 'risky' based on the environment workers are in: if workers who attended work reported that they (i) typically had contact with others (colleagues or the public), (ii) worked indoors at least some of the time, (iii) other people did not always wear a mask and (iv) the environment was not well ventilated. The chart on the left shows the proportion of 'risky' work environments by sector among those who attended their workplace and for sectors that had at least 100 observations. The solid bars show the proportion of workers who did not wear a mask while working. The striped bars shows the proportion of workers who wore a mask. The chart shows that those working in Accounting/Finance/Business Management are most likely to work in a higher risk environment and few workers mitigate this risk by wearing a mask at work. In contrast, while Transport & Logistics work environments are riskier than average, most workers wear a mask.

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

Workplace Risk - Predictors



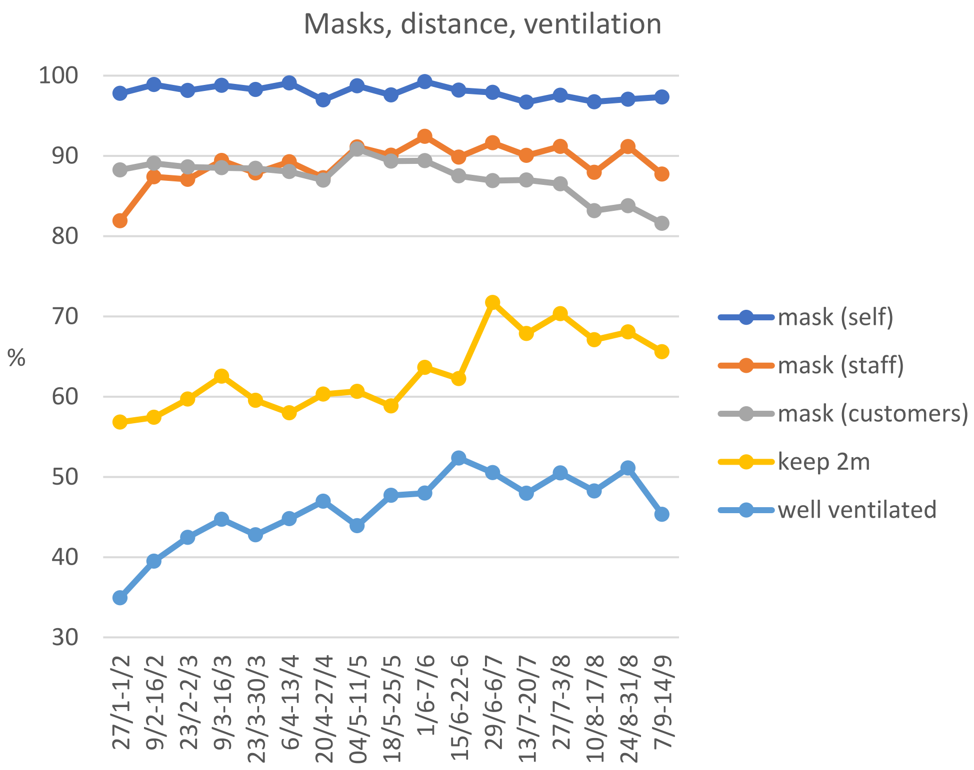


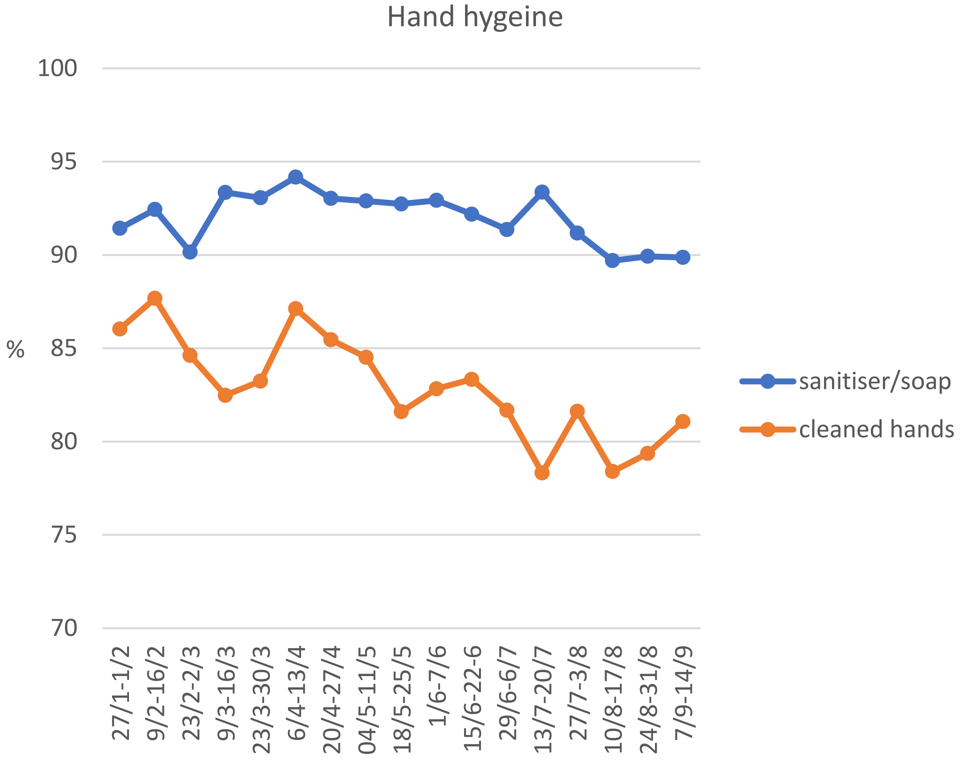


Age and socio-economic status were significant socio-demographic predictors of working in a higher risk environment, with younger people and those from C1C2 (supervisory/junior managerial roles and skilled manual workers) social grade. Controlling for socio-demographics, those working in higher risk environments judge restrictions to be less coherent and believe others are follows guidelines less than workers who attended less risky workplaces or who worked from home. 'Higher-risk' workers also judge preventing the spread of the virus to be less important than the burden of restrictions compared to the other two groups.

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

Mitigation behaviours in the shops

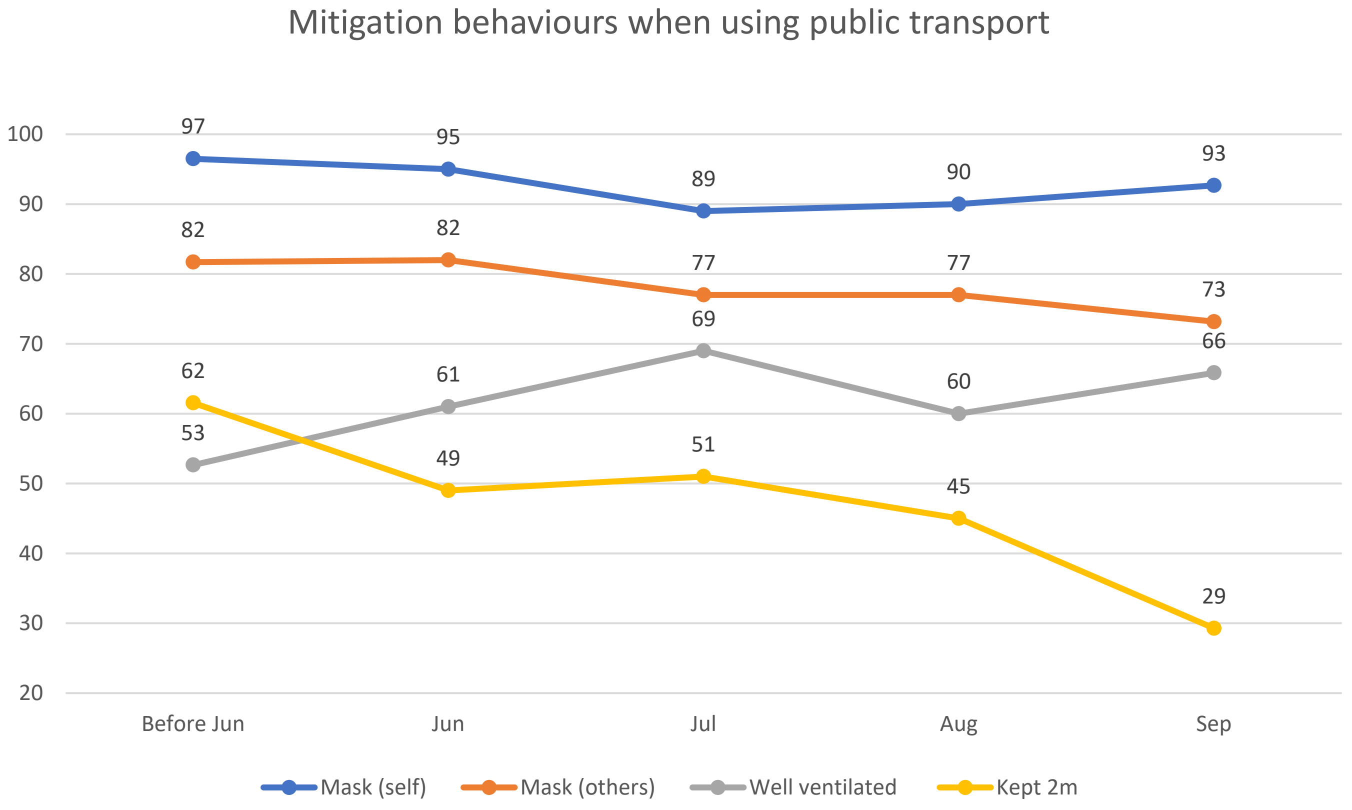




Mitigation behaviours at shops remain high – the majority comply with the government advice and take the necessary precautions when shopping. While self-reported mask wearing remains high, there is a downward trend in reports that other customers are wearing masks. Hand-sanitiser use also follows a downward trend.

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

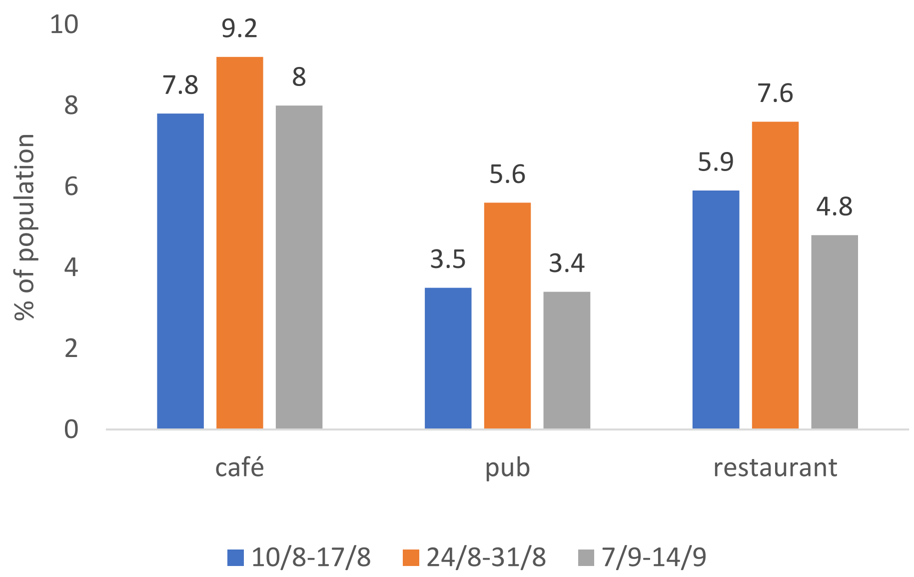
Mitigation behaviours on public transport

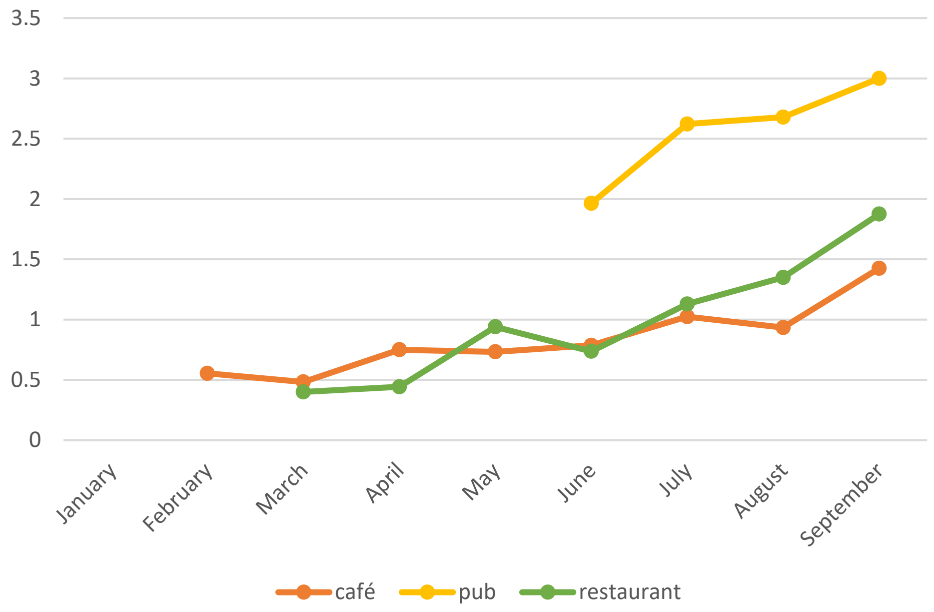


Maintaining social distance on public transport continues to decline since the early summer, in line with increased capacity.

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

Visits to cafes, pubs and restaurants

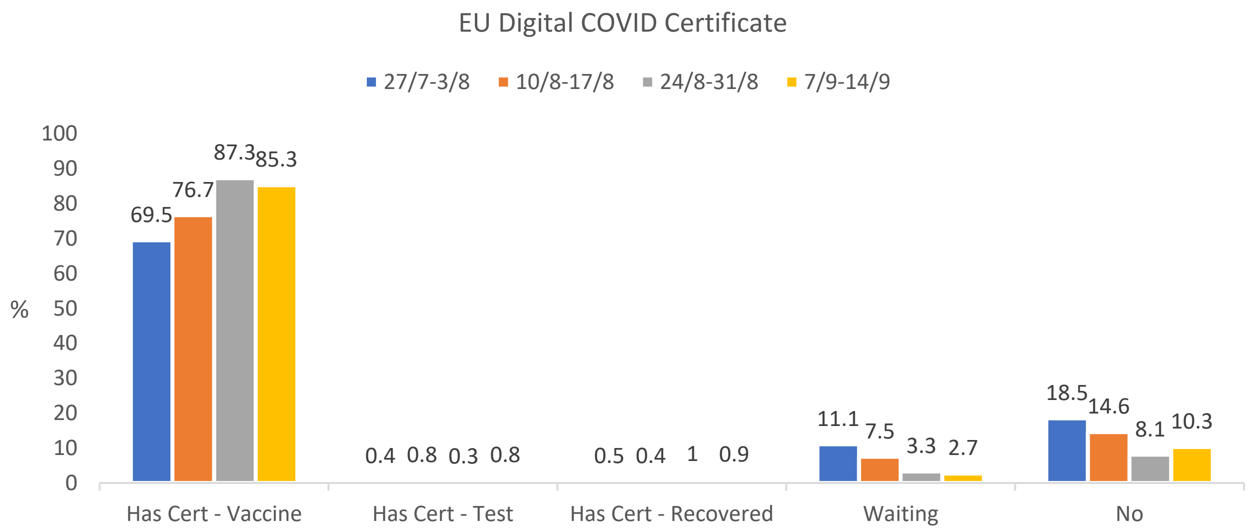




The proportion of those visiting cafes, pubs and restaurants had been increased since indoor dining resumed although the latest wave of SAM showed a decline in visits to all locations as summer holidays ended. The number of people met during these visits has risen steadily across all locations, with pubs remaining the most "socially active".

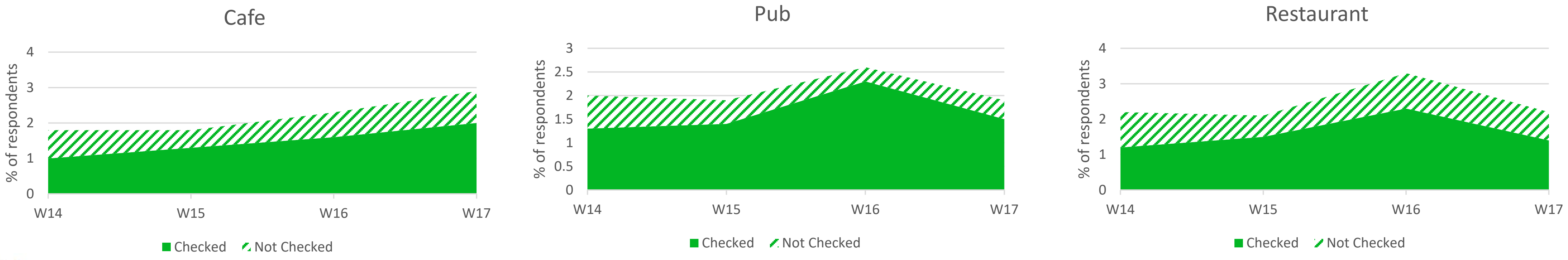
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

EU Digital Covid Certificate



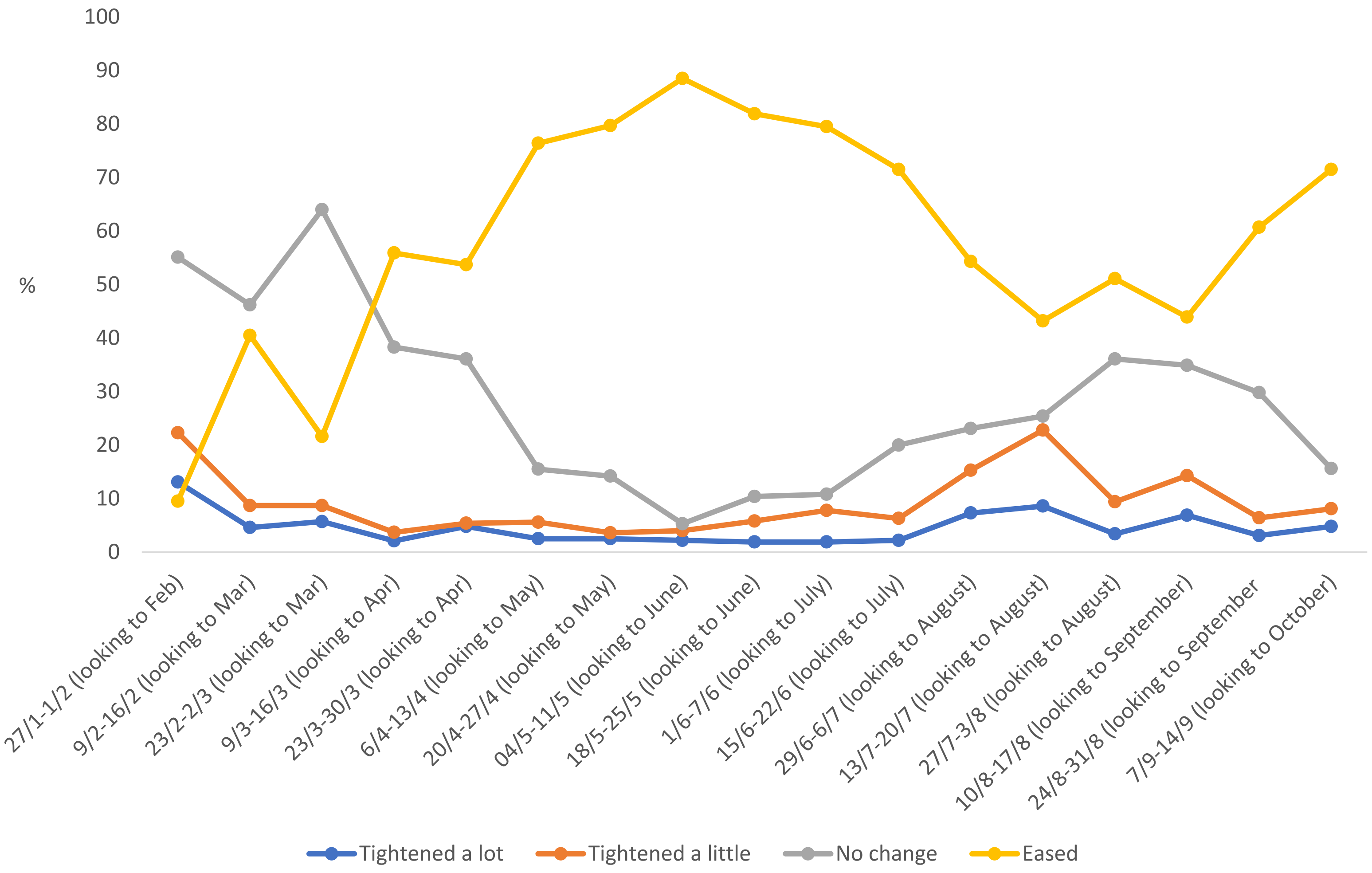
The left-hand chart shows a majority of adults have received their EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC). Around one third of diners did not have their certificates checked when dining indoors in cafés or restaurants and one quarter of diners when dining indoors in pubs. There has been little improvement in DCC checks since indoor dining re-opened, although a higher proportion of pubs are now checking DCCs.

Indoor Dining – DCC check



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

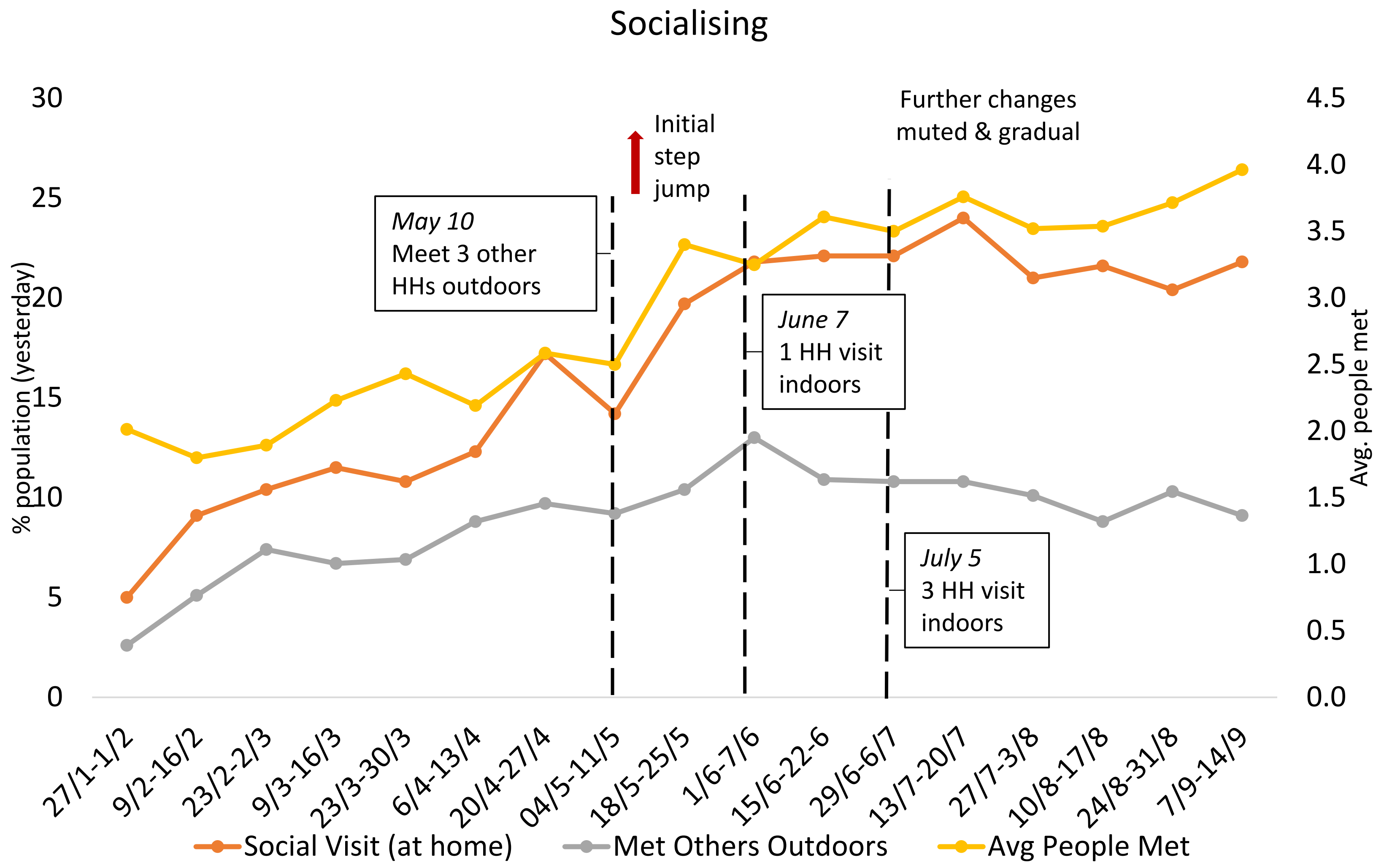
Expectations for easing restrictions (next month)



The proportion of people who expect further easing of restrictions continues to rise, with a corresponding fall in those who expect no change.

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

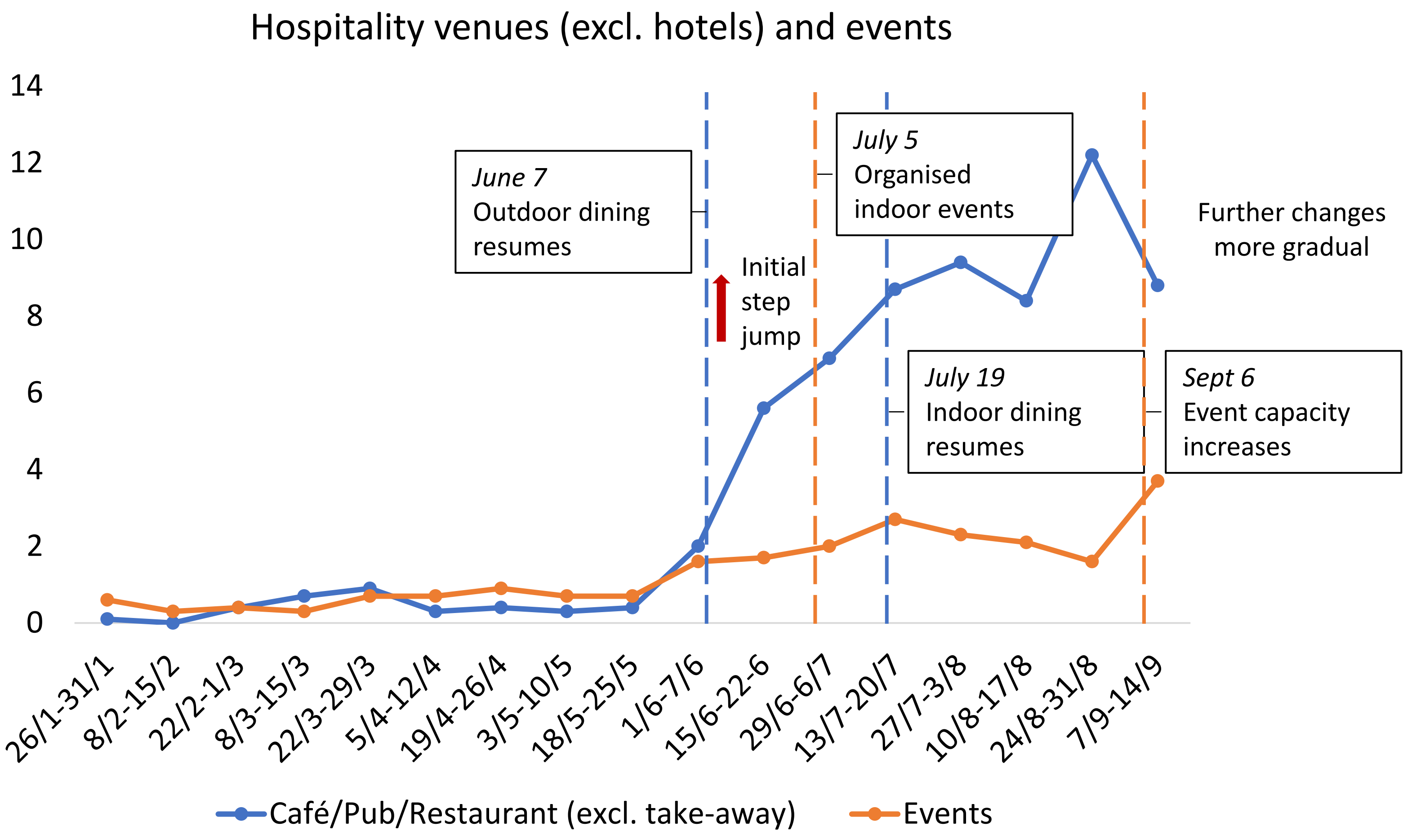
Effects of easing restrictions



The chart shows a step-jump in social visits in homes and at outdoor locations and in the overall number of people met following changes to restrictions in mid-May. Easing of further restrictions on social visits had a more muted effect.

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

Effects of easing restrictions

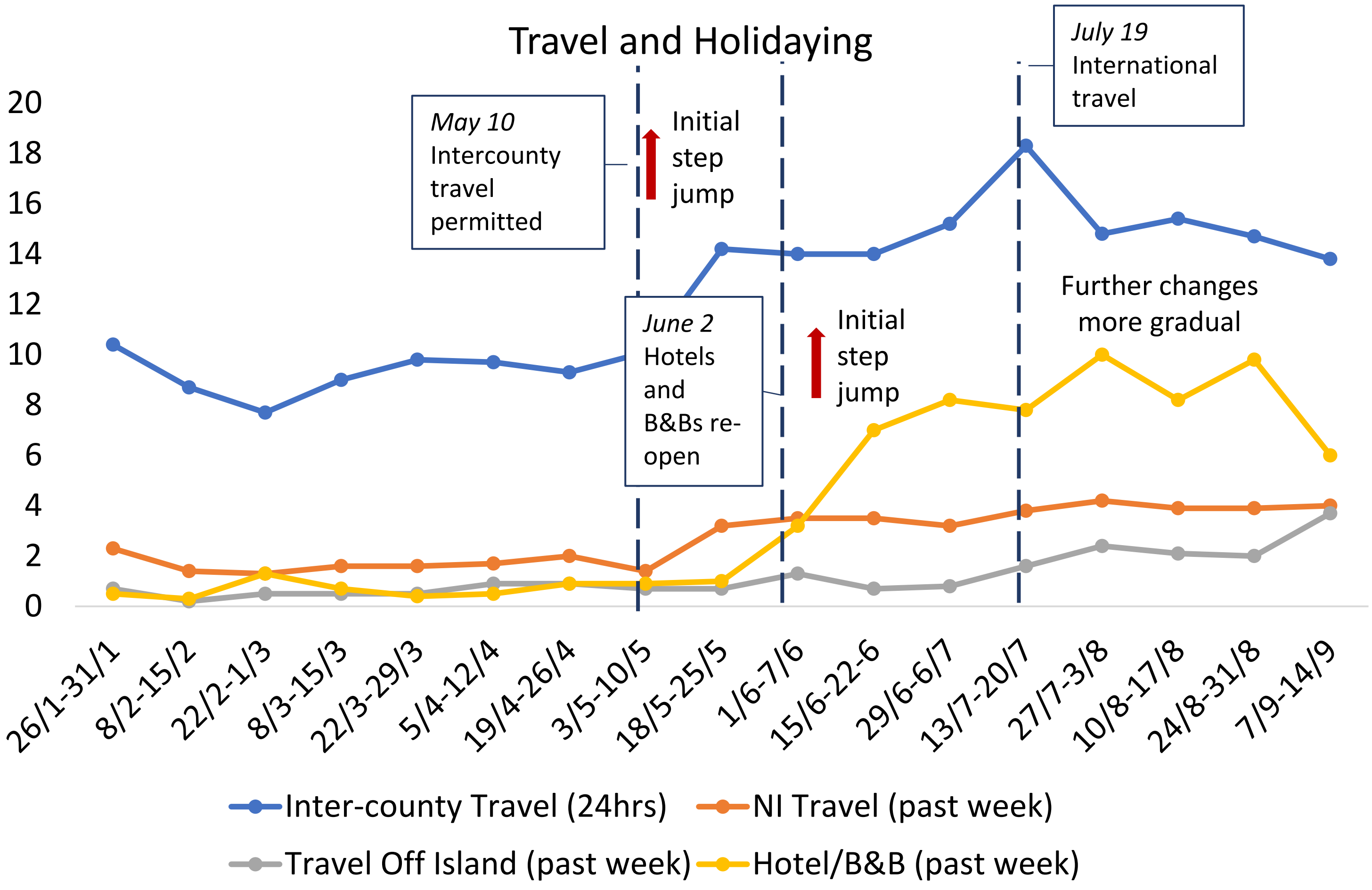


The chart shows a step-jump in visits to cafes, pubs and restaurants when outdoor dining resumed, followed by more gradual increases. There is no obvious effect of indoor dining, except for an increase in late August that was not sustained.

Attendance at events has increased more gradually, with the largest increase not observed until the latest wave of SAM.

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

Effects of easing restrictions

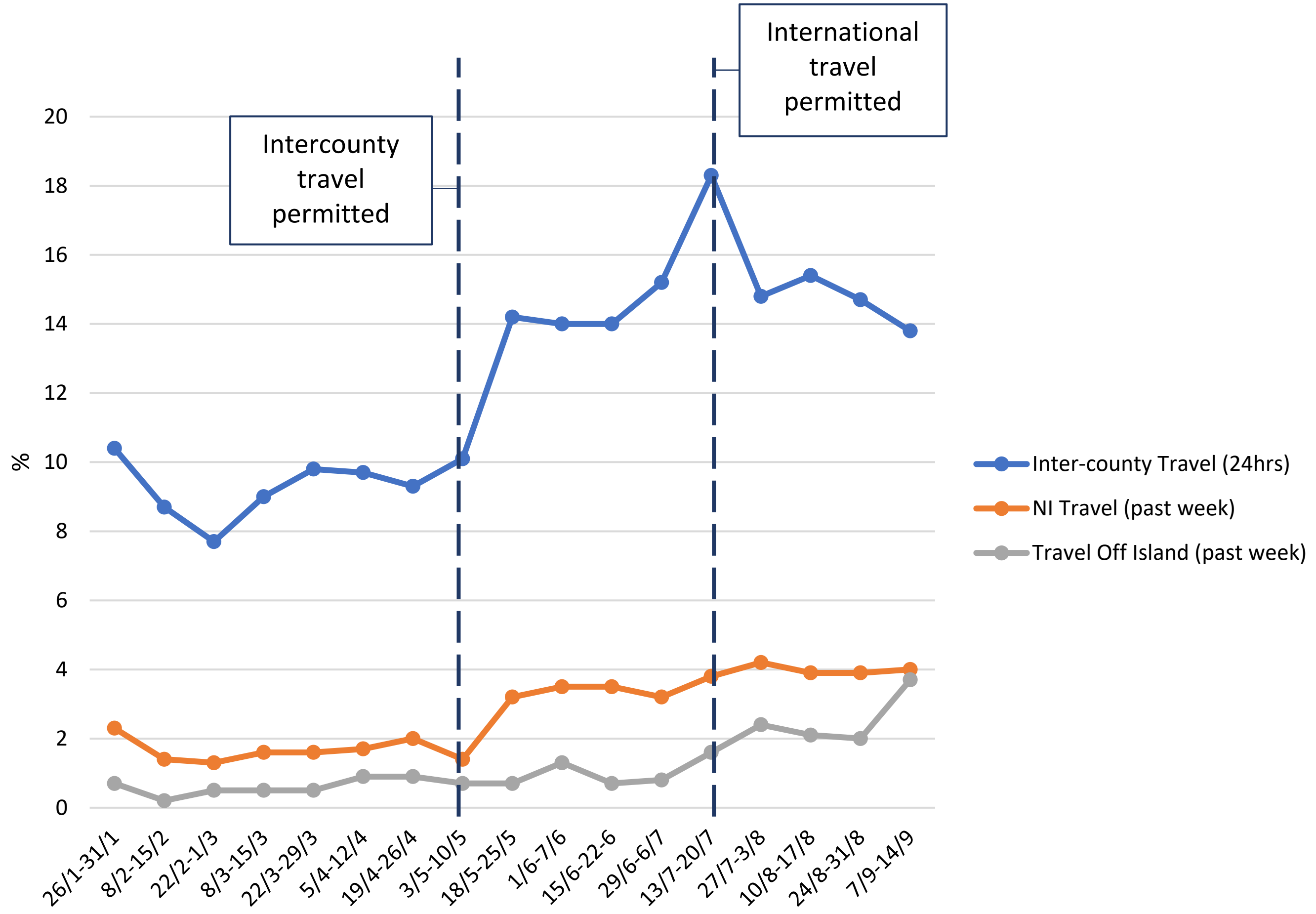


The chart shows a step-jump in intercounty travel once it was permitted from mid-May, which peaked in July and has since stabilised at the late-May level. Hotels and B&Bs saw an initial jump in visits once they re-opened that has stayed relatively stable.

The change in international travel since being permitted has been more gradual, with the largest increase observed in early September.

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

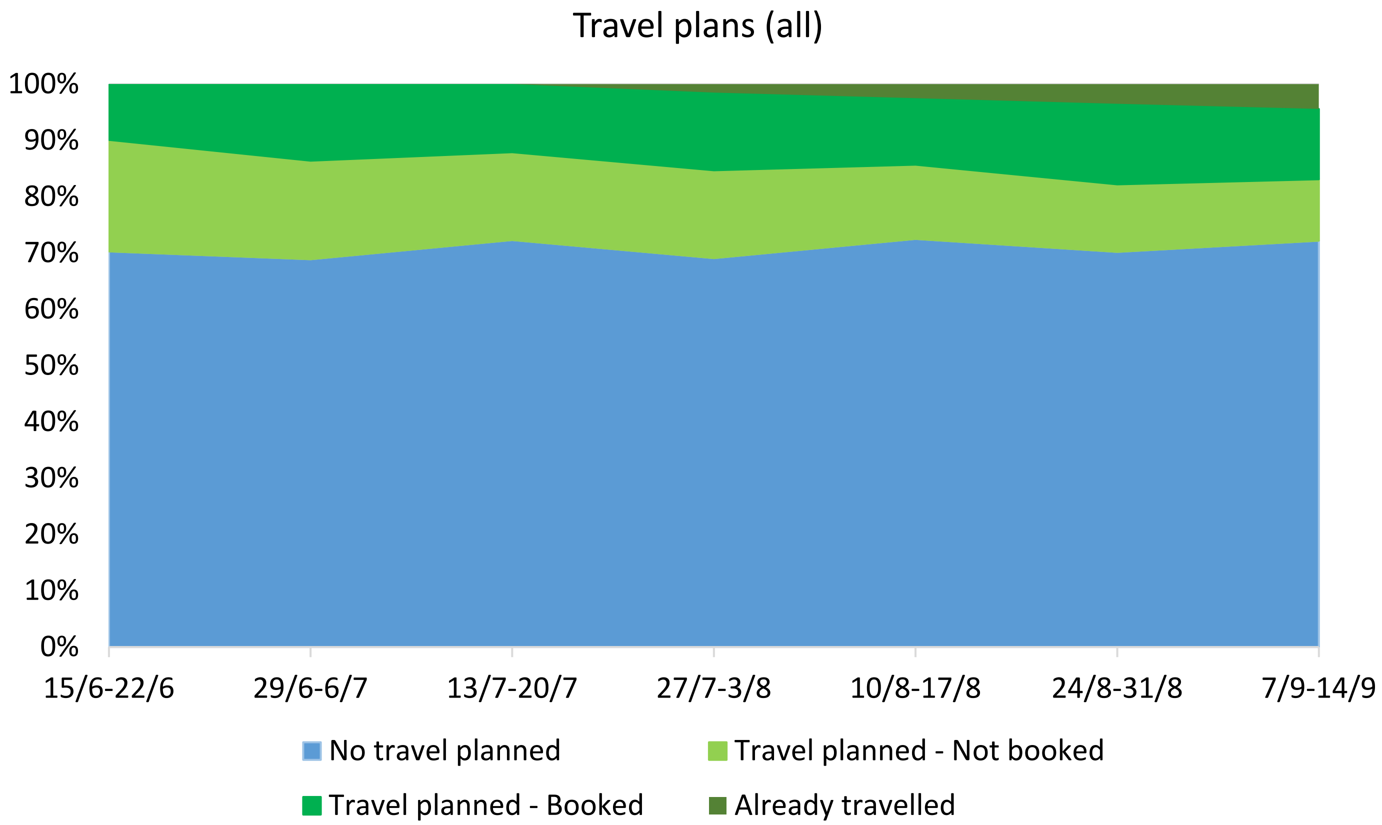
National and international travel



International travel remains uncommon but increased to its highest level in the latest round of SAM, with 3.7% of people reporting that they travelled off the island of Ireland in the past week.

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

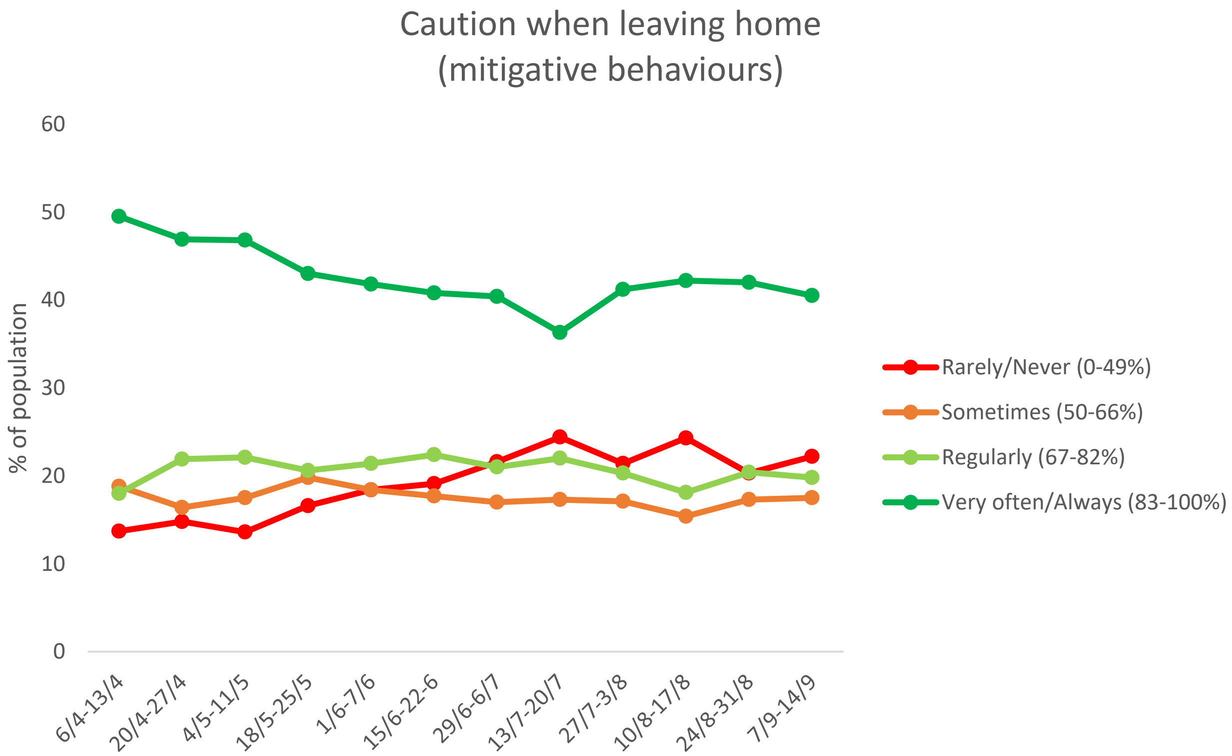
Planned travel

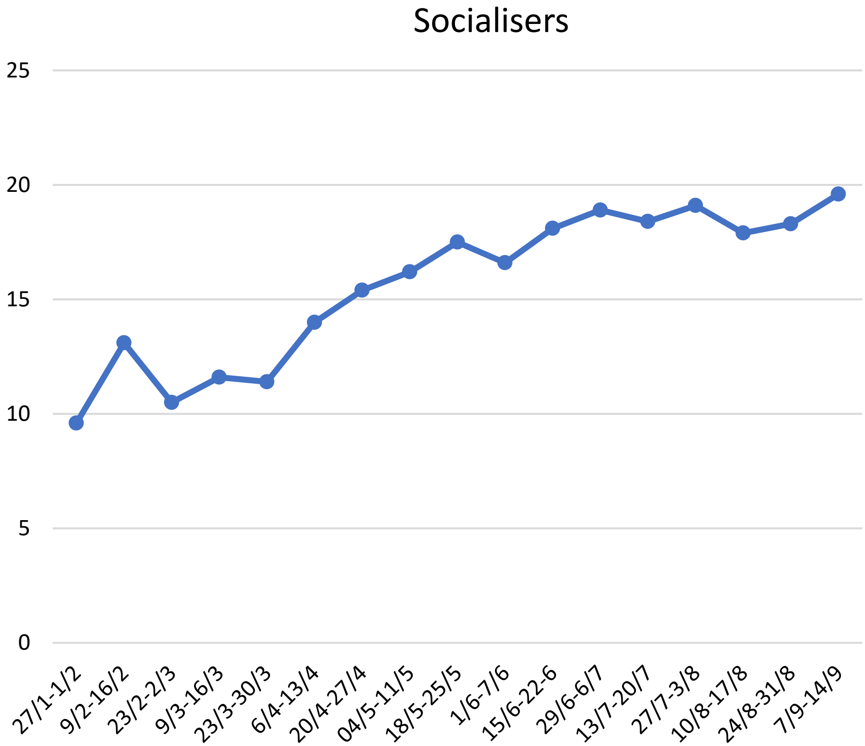


Plans to travel abroad have been slowly falling over the last four waves as the small proportion of people with travel planned have taken their trips.

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

“Mitigators” and “Socialisers”

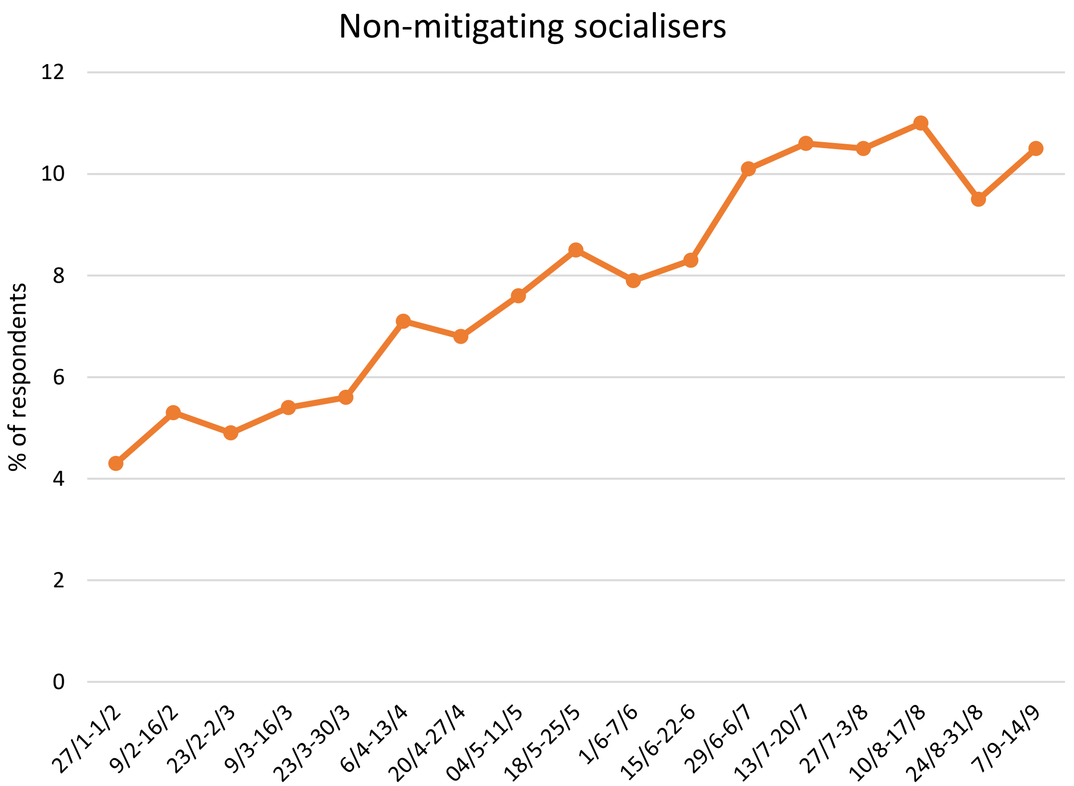




The frequency of mitigative behaviours (such as keeping distance, ventilating, washing hands and wearing masks) remains steady.
Almost 80% of people forego some mitigative behaviours at least some of the time.
The proportion of people who engage in a lot of social activity (“socialisers”) rose slightly but has been quite stable since May.

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

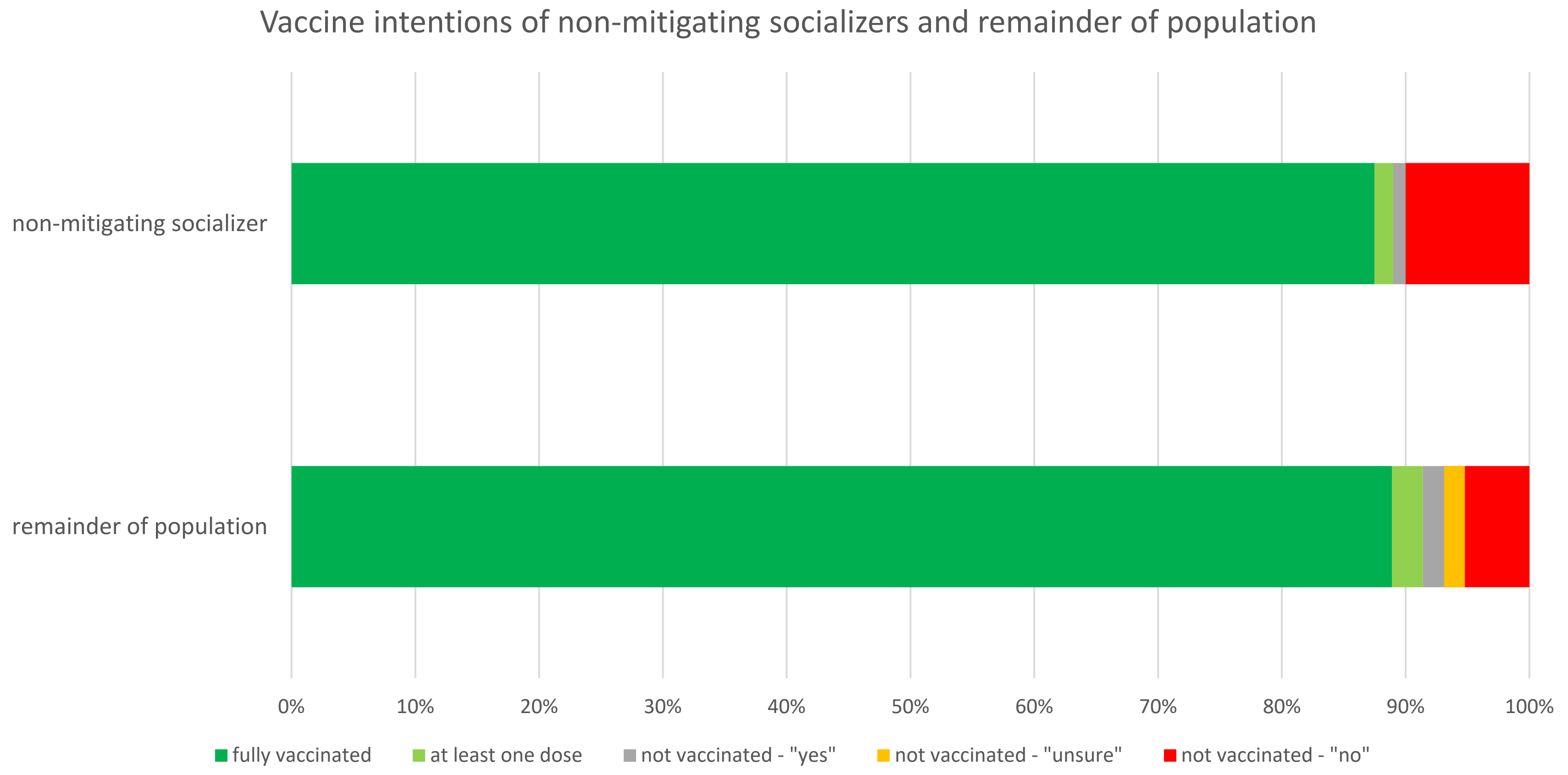
Non-mitigating socialisers



This chart shows the proportion of non-mitigating socialisers, who engage in a lot of social activity and rarely take precautions. The proportion of people falling in this category remains stable at about 10%.

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

Non-mitigating socialisers and vaccines

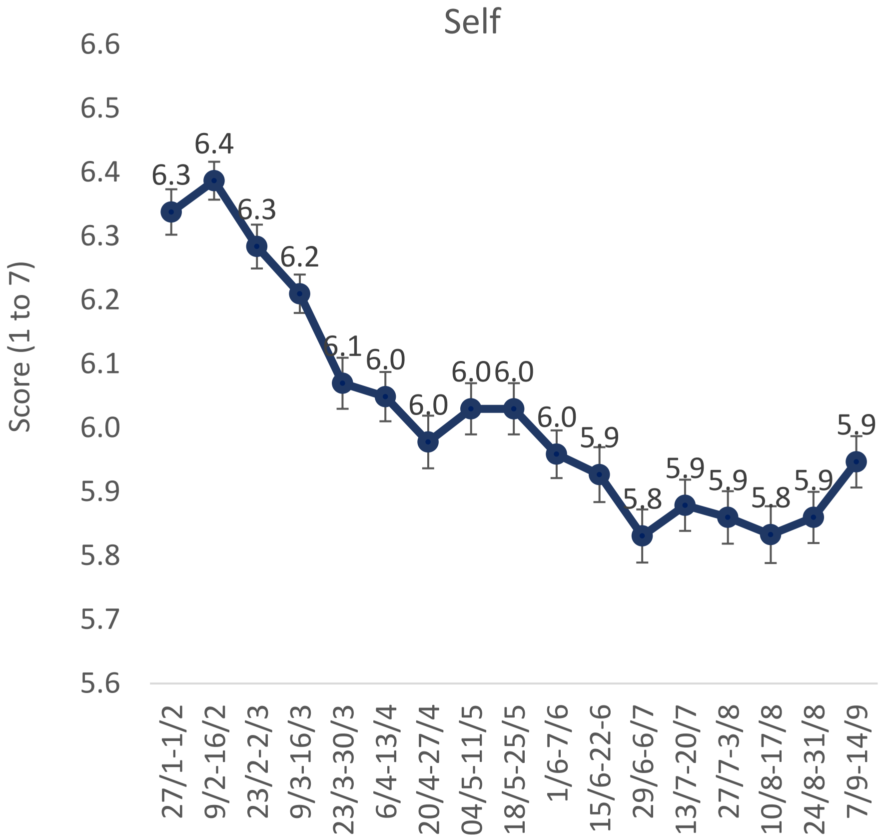


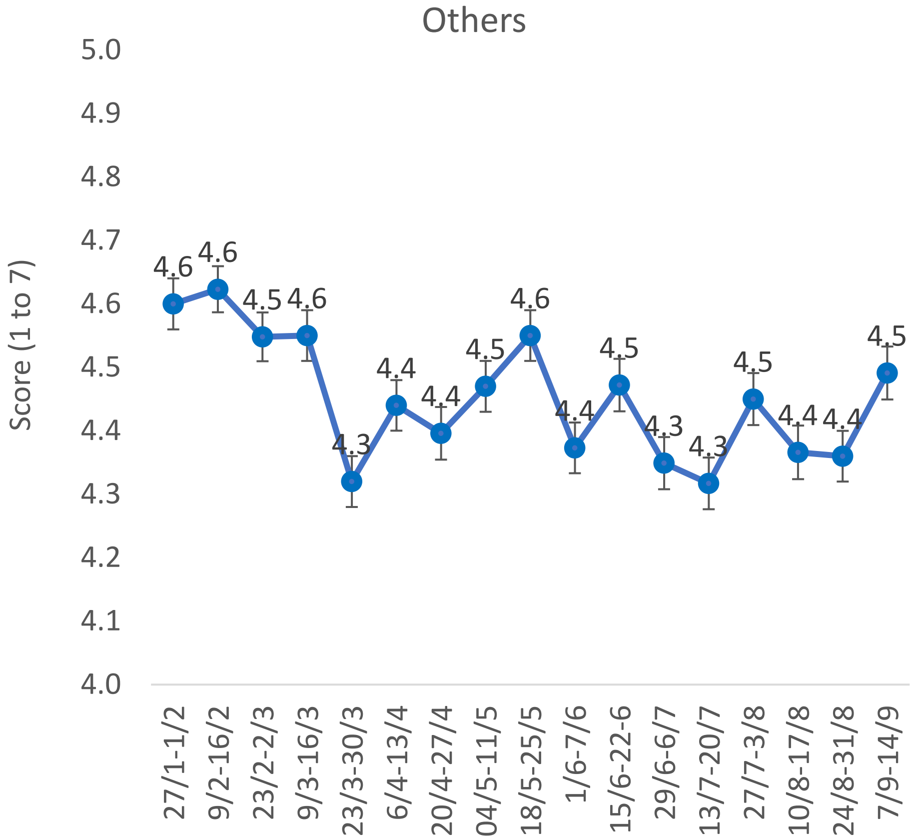
Non-mitigating socializers are twice as likely as the rest of the population to say that they will definitely not take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Those who are both non-mitigating socialisers and vaccine resistant make up about 1% of respondents.

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

Compliance

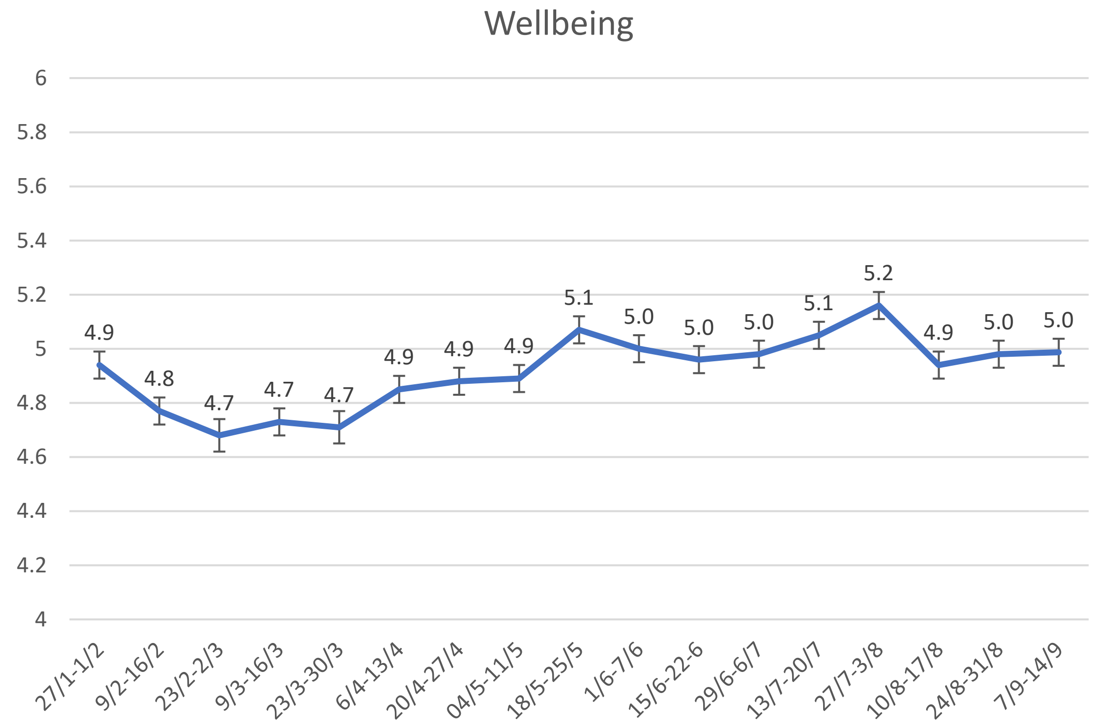


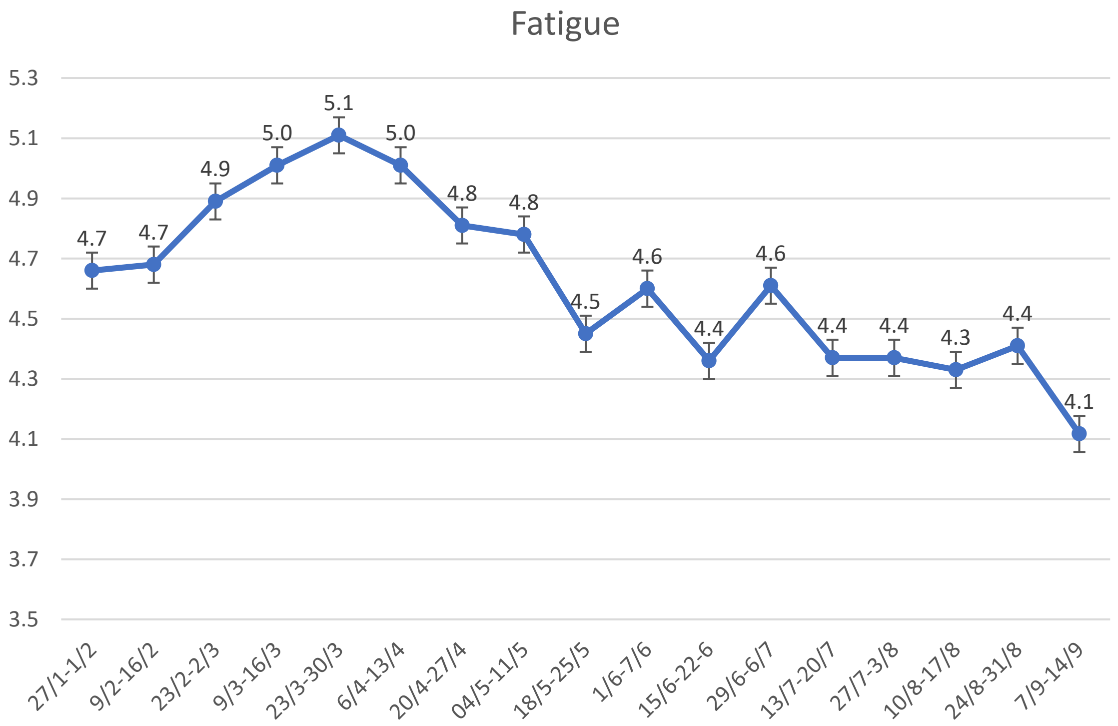


Self-reported compliance with restrictions and perceptions that others are complying have increased significantly since August, although the changes are small.

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

Wellbeing and Fatigue

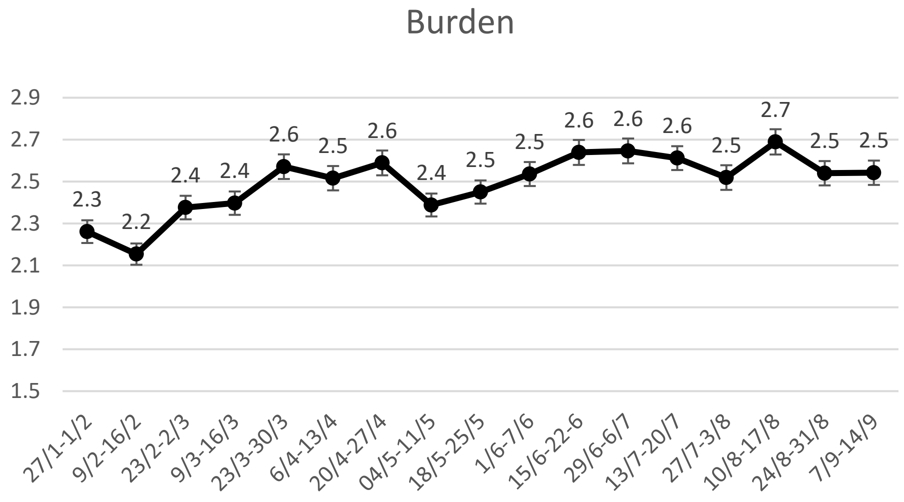


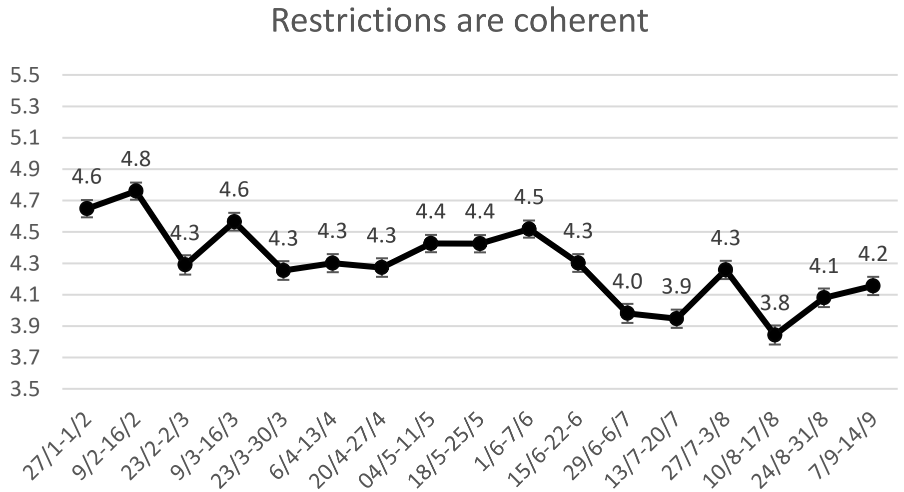


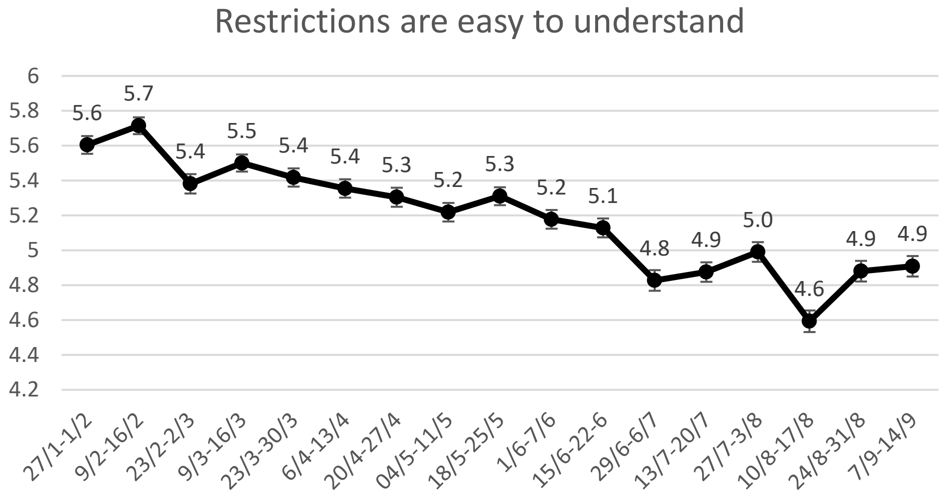
Reported wellbeing remains stabled. Tiredness with restrictions has fallen to its lowest level since SAM began and is down significantly compared to August.

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

Restrictions



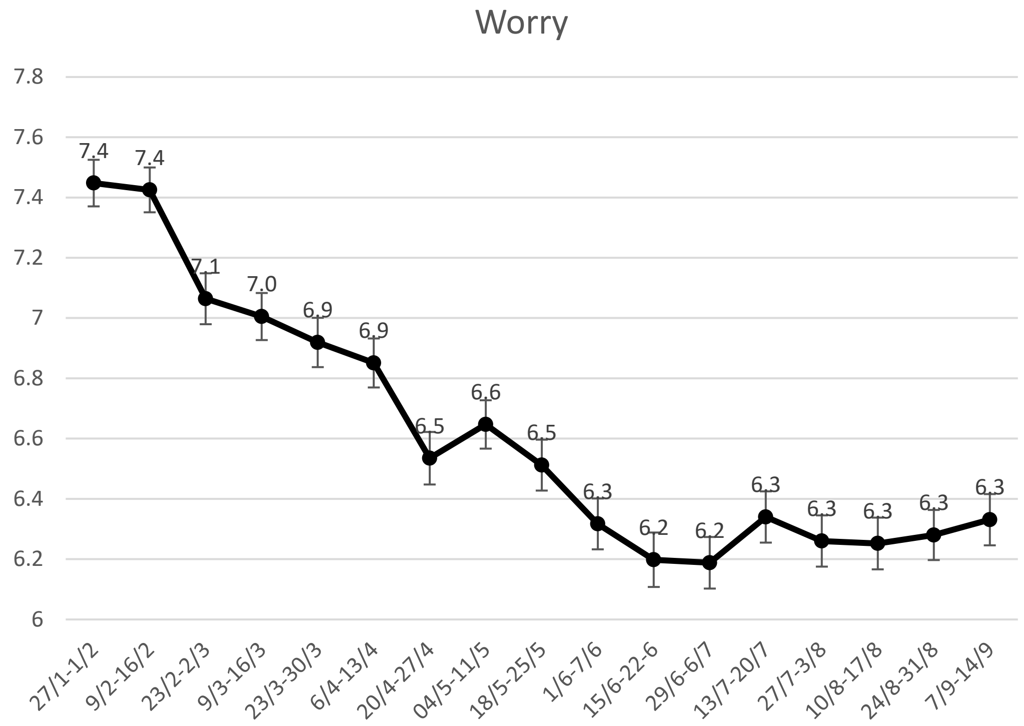


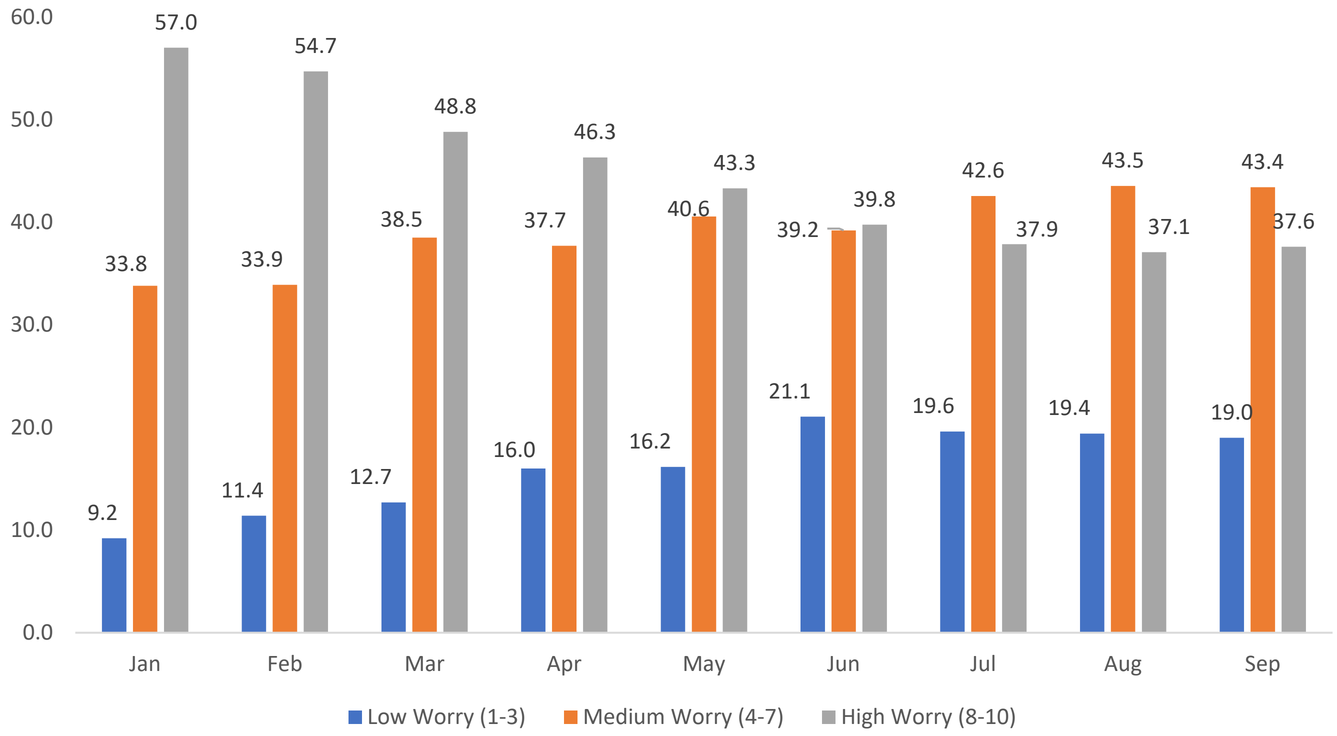


A majority still judge preventing the spread of the virus to be more important than the burden of restrictions. Perceived coherence of restrictions and ease of understanding restrictions have recovered following a dip in mid August.

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

Worry

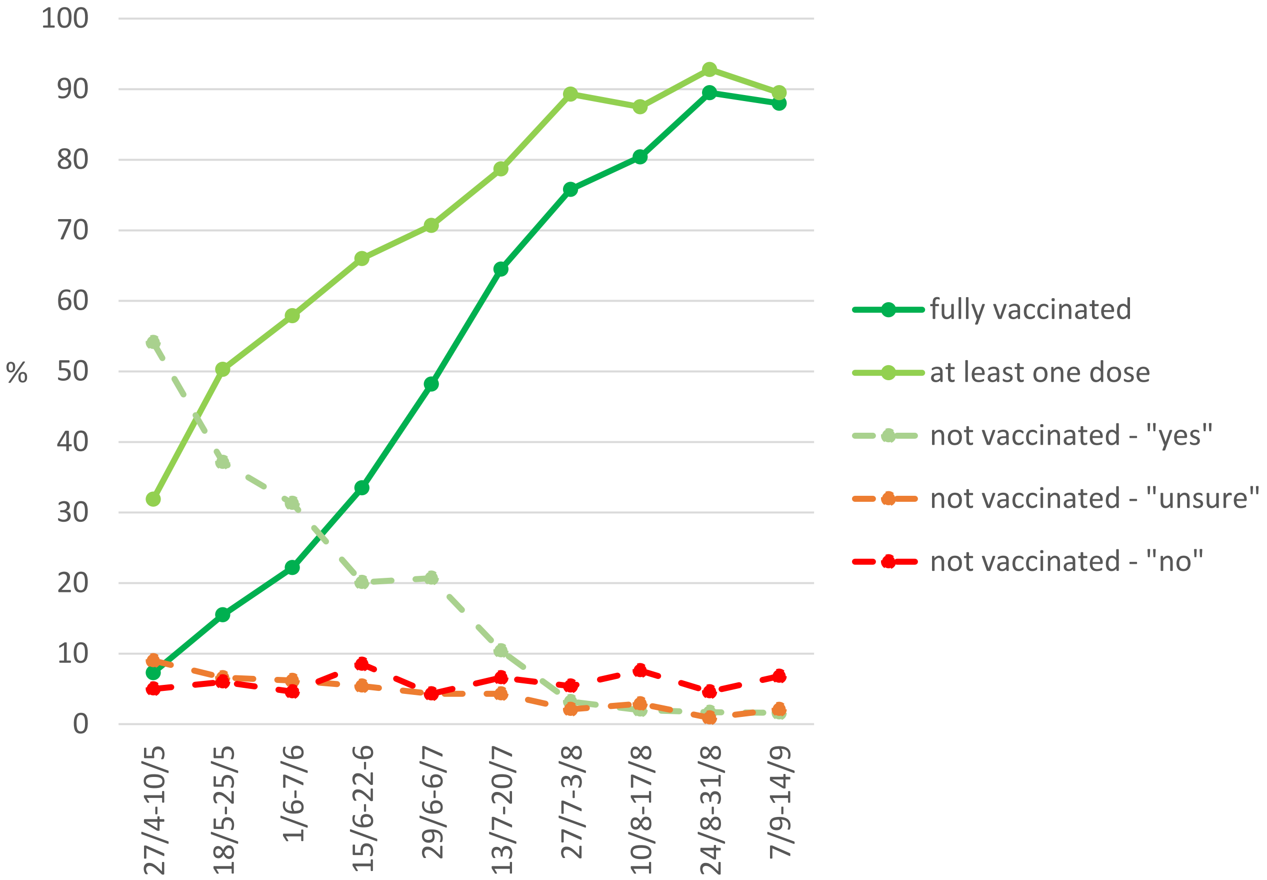




The chart on the left shows the average level of worry since the start of SAM. Average worry has declined since January and remains stable. The chart on the right shows that over one third of people are still “highly worried”.

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

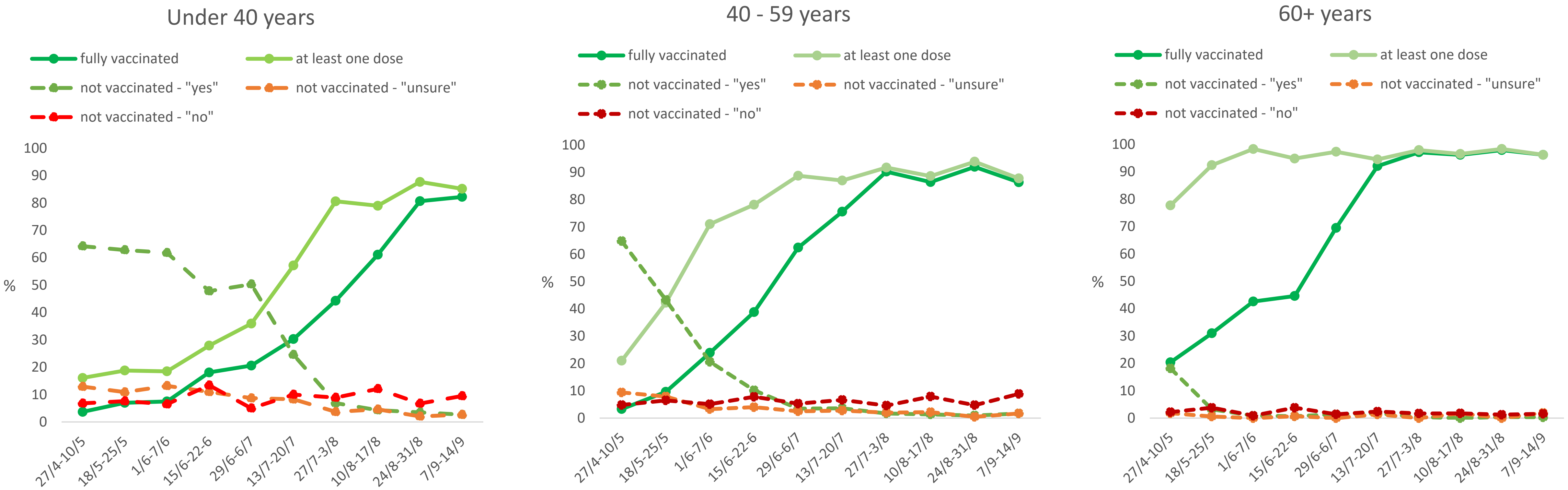
Vaccine uptake and intention



The left-hand chart shows trends in vaccine status and intention, which have plateaued. Most of those who are not yet vaccinated do not intend to take the vaccine.

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

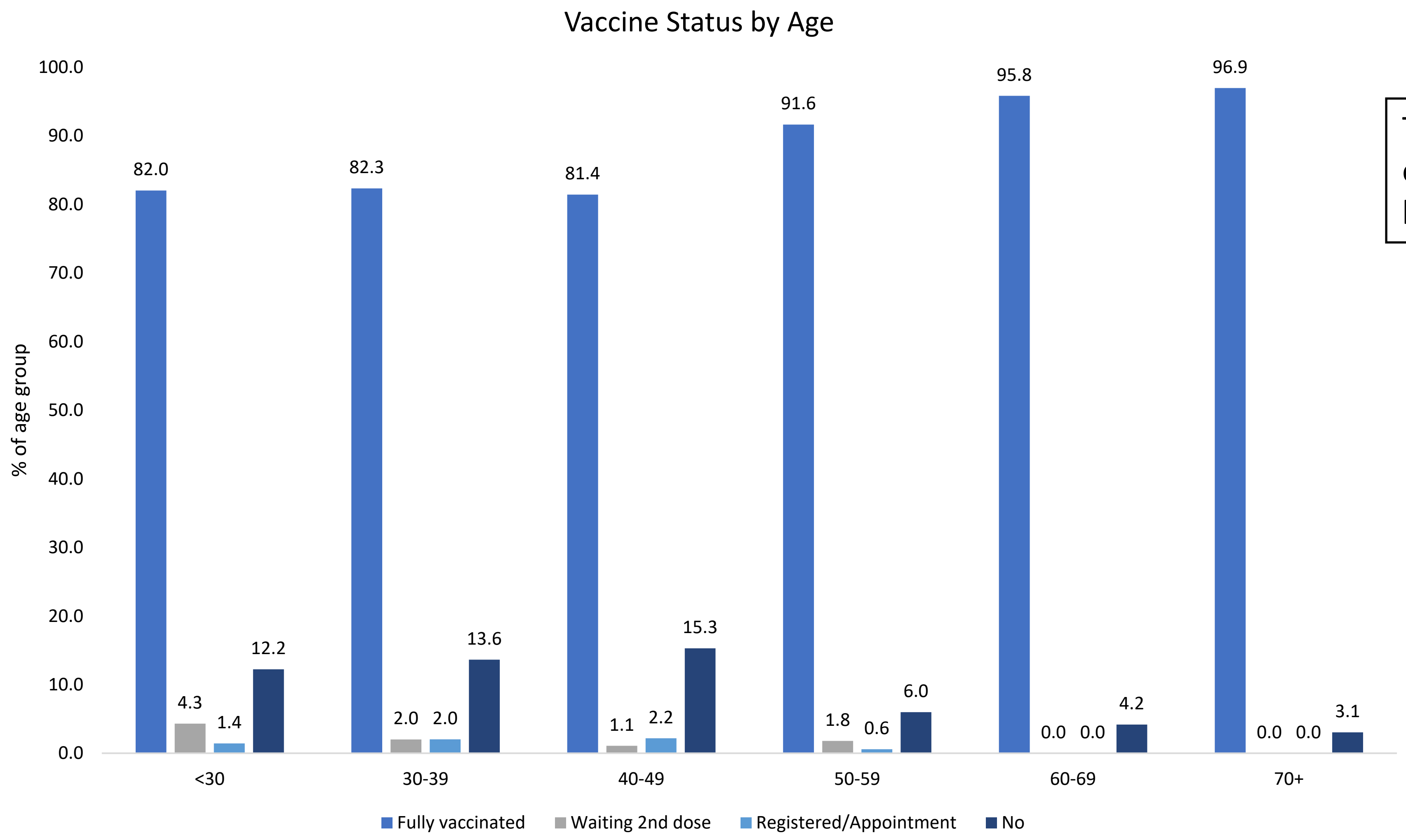
Uptake and intention by age group



The charts show uptake of the vaccine and intention by age group. Hesitancy remains greatest among the under 40s, but accounts for only a small minority.

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

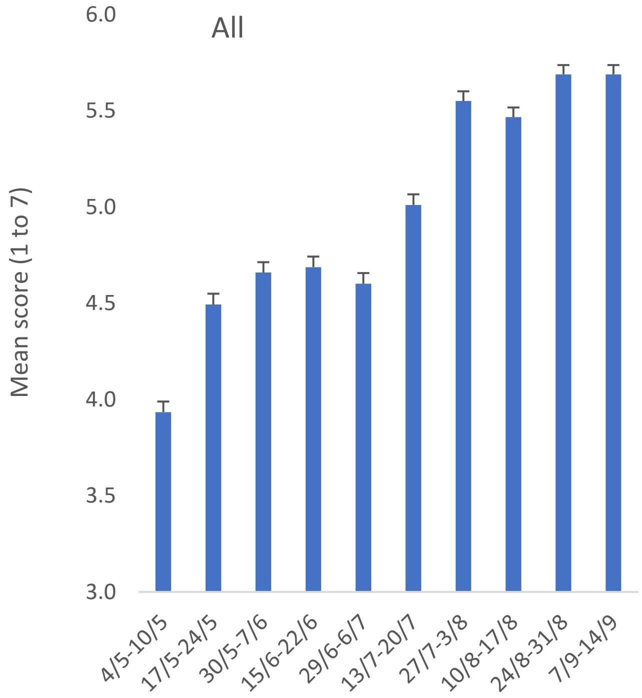
Vaccine status by age

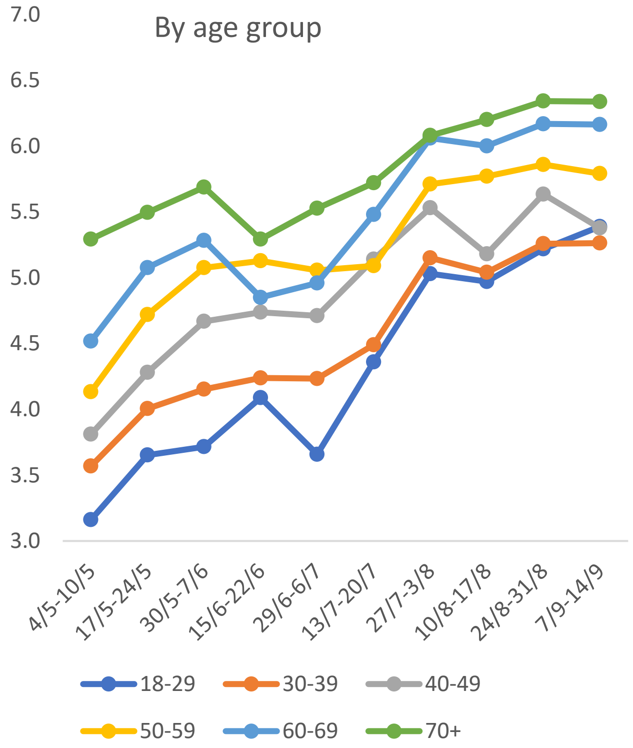


The majority of adults have either been fully vaccinated or have not yet registered.

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

Vaccine rollout satisfaction





Satisfaction with the rollout has stabilised at a very high level among all age groups.

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