



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Social Activity Measure

Oct 5th-12th

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

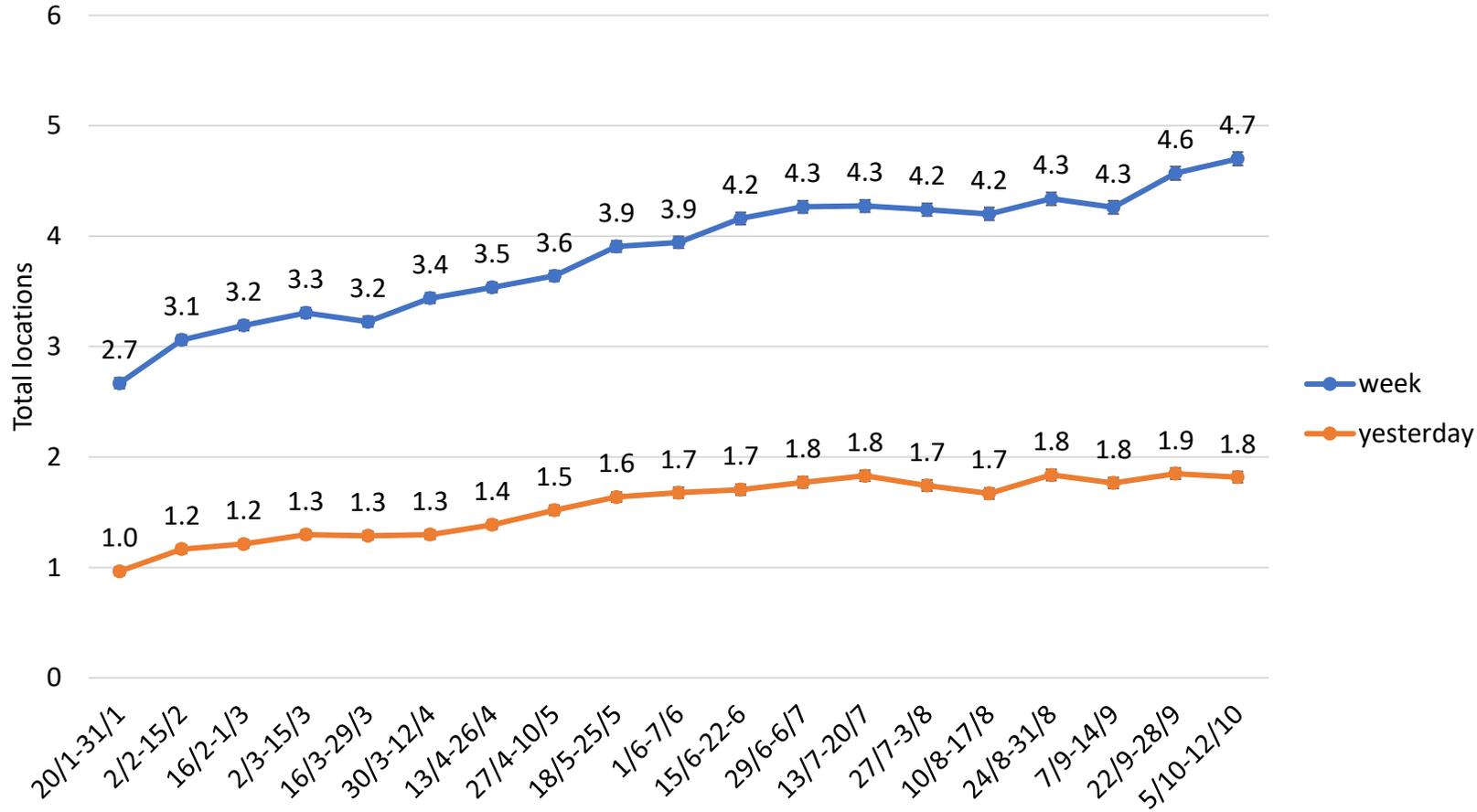
The Social Activity Measure (SAM) is a behavioural study that records the public response to the risk of COVID-19 infection over time. Designed by the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit (BRU), SAM is an anonymous, interactive, online study that surveys people about their recent activity. The study offers 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 survey has been updated in this round to include more detailed information on behavioural changes and future plans in light of the widespread lifting of restrictions in September. 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 October 5th and 12th. Data collection took place during a period in which there was an increase and then a spike in cases, but before the announcement that delays to the final easing of restrictions planned for October 22nd were to be discussed.

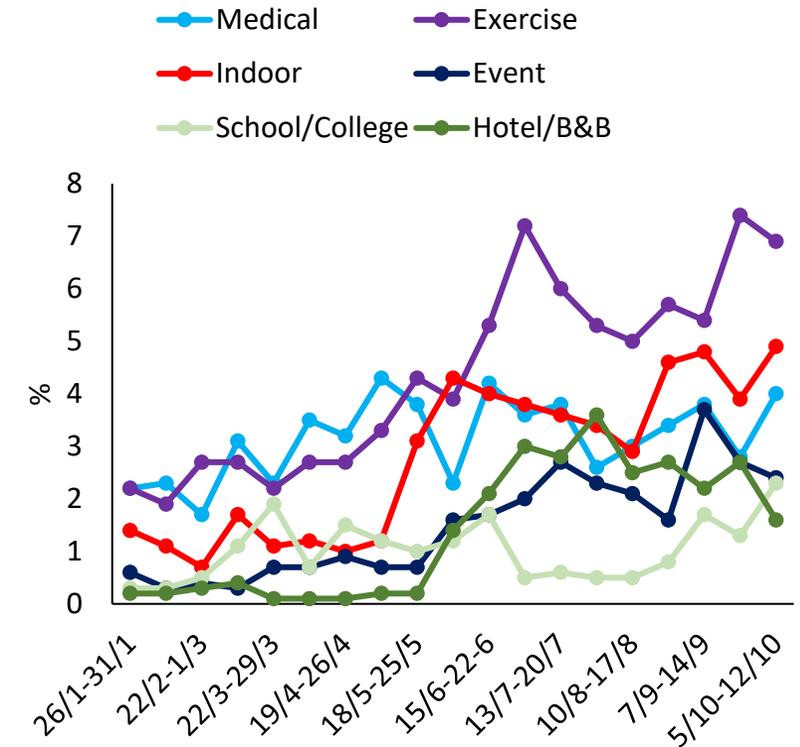
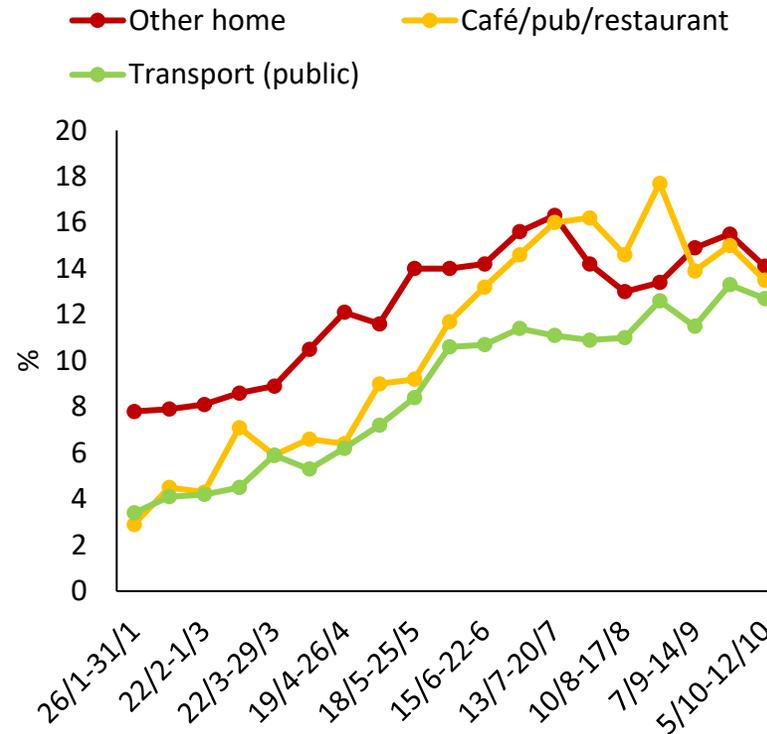
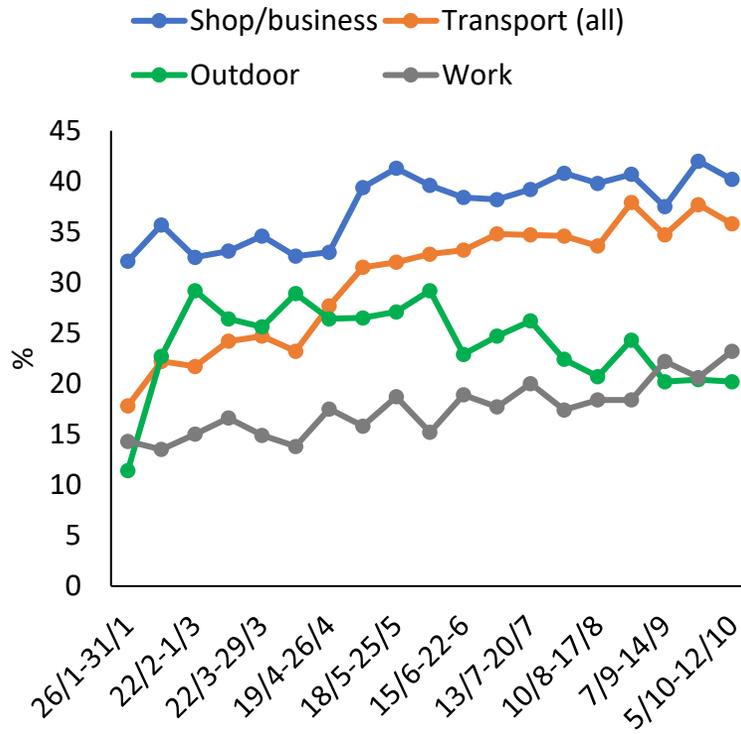


Total locations visited



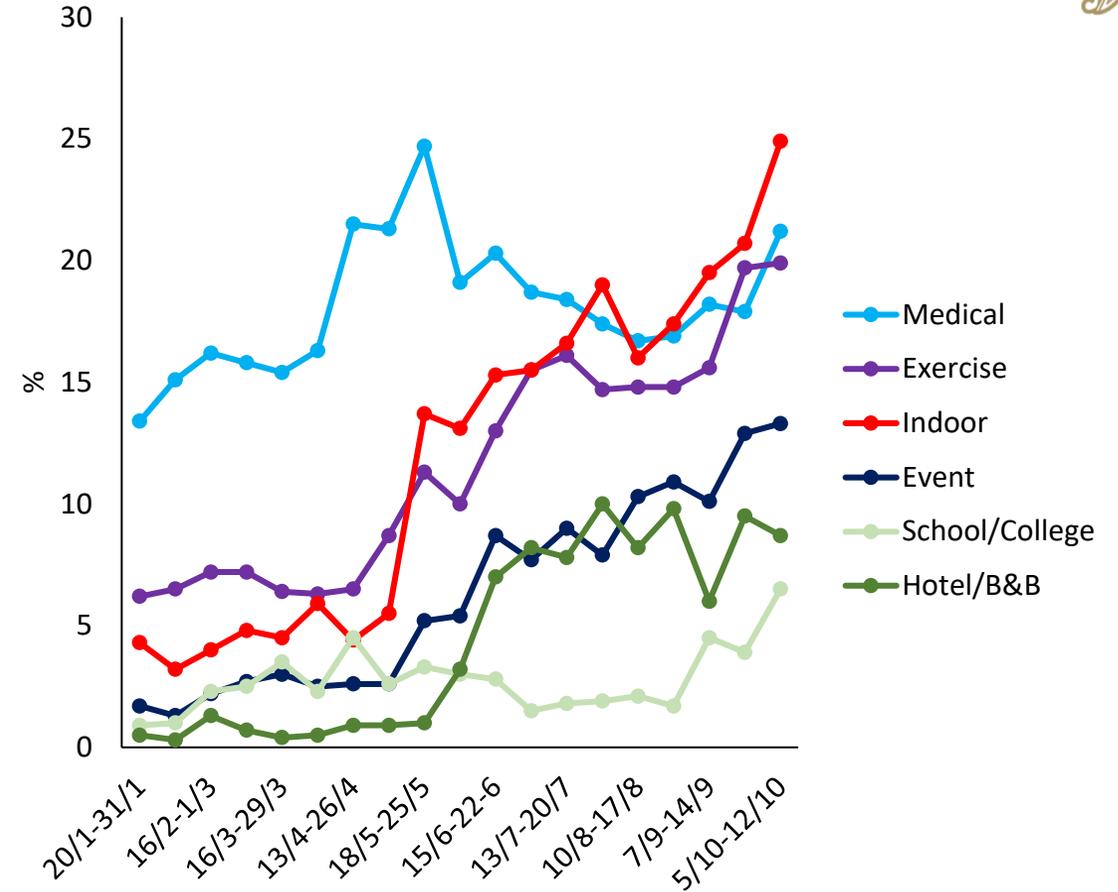
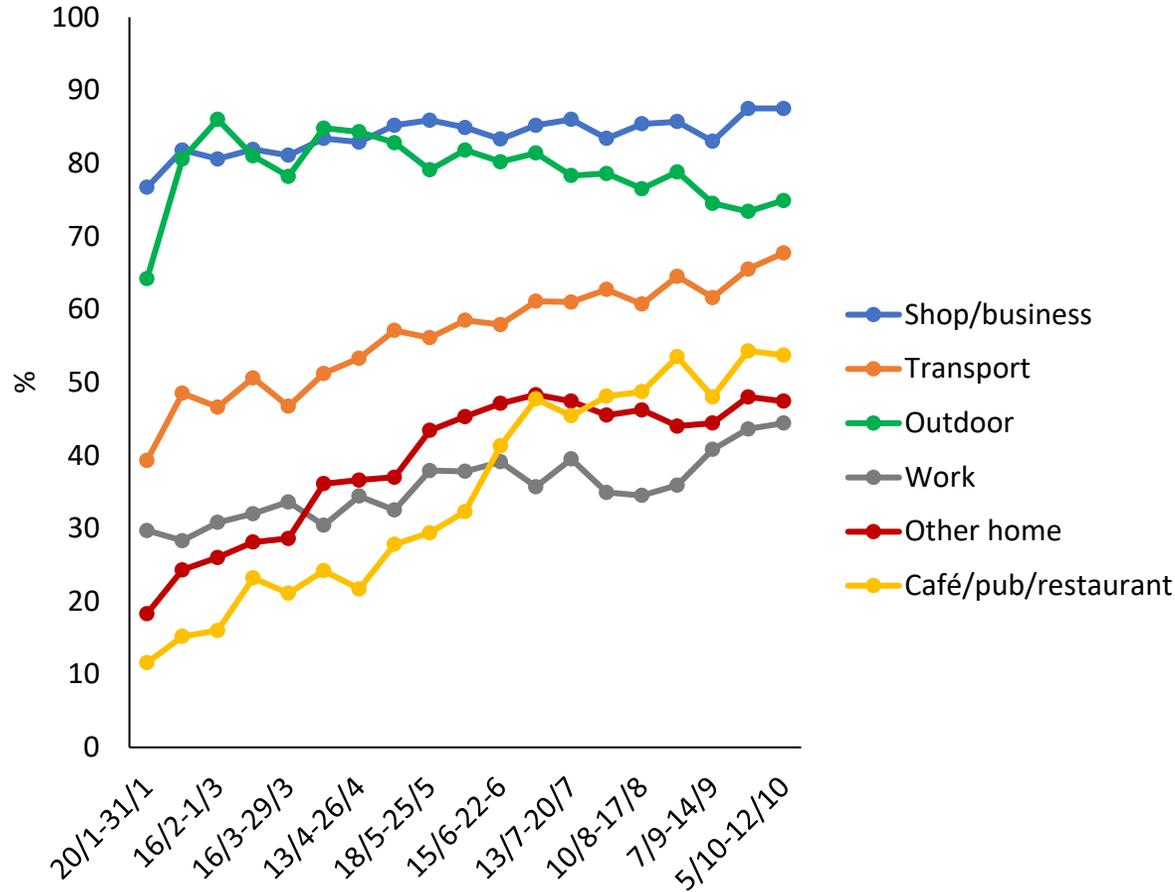
There has been a steady rise increase in activity since January, although it has not risen significantly since September.

Locations visited (yesterday)



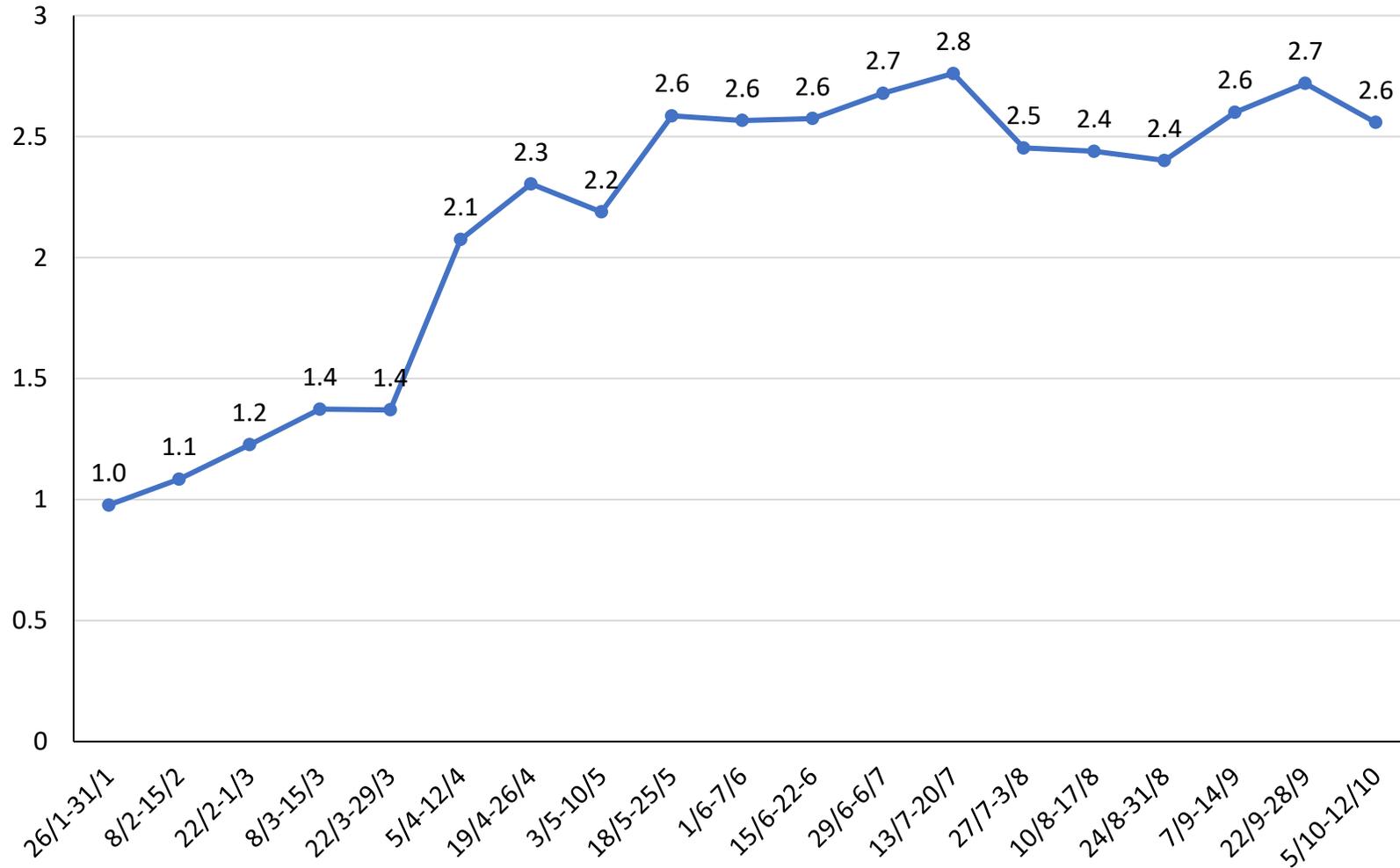
The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point the previous day. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. There were no significant changes in daily activity from last week.

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 was an increase in visits to indoor locations and attendance at colleges.

Index of overall activity

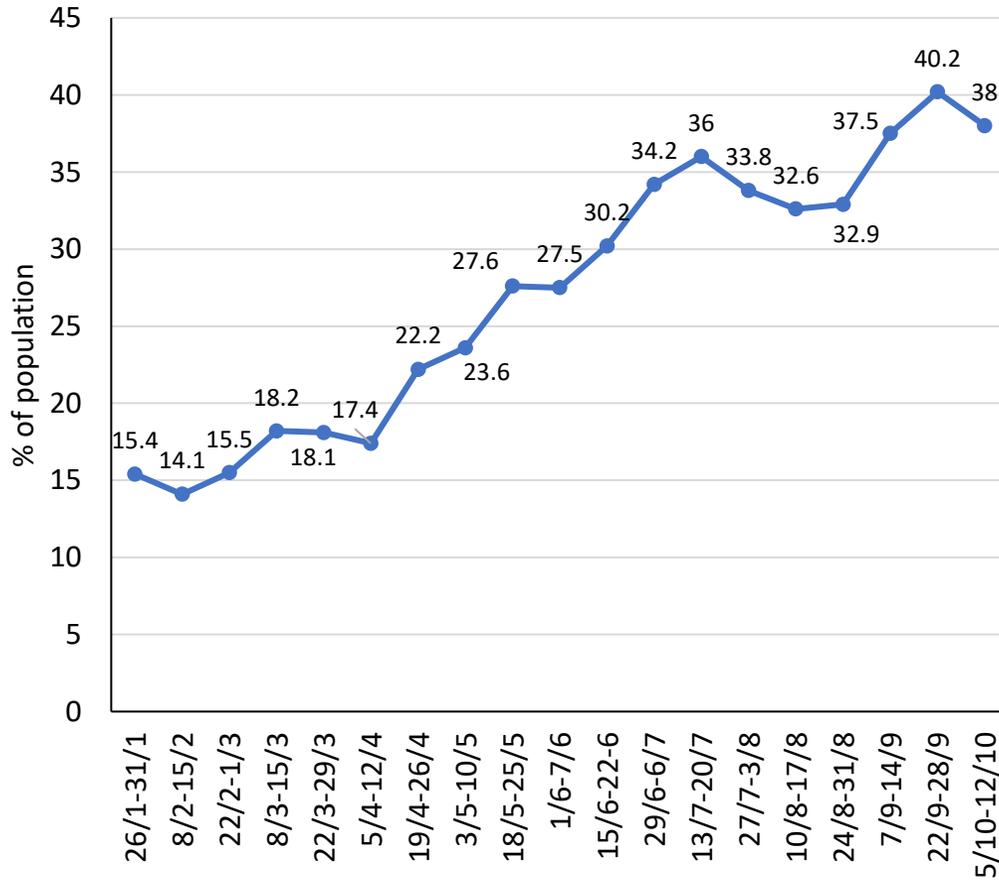


The chart shows an index of how much activity people are engaged in overall (how many places they go, how often and how many people they meet). This has been increasing since January, although there was no significant change from the last round of data collection.

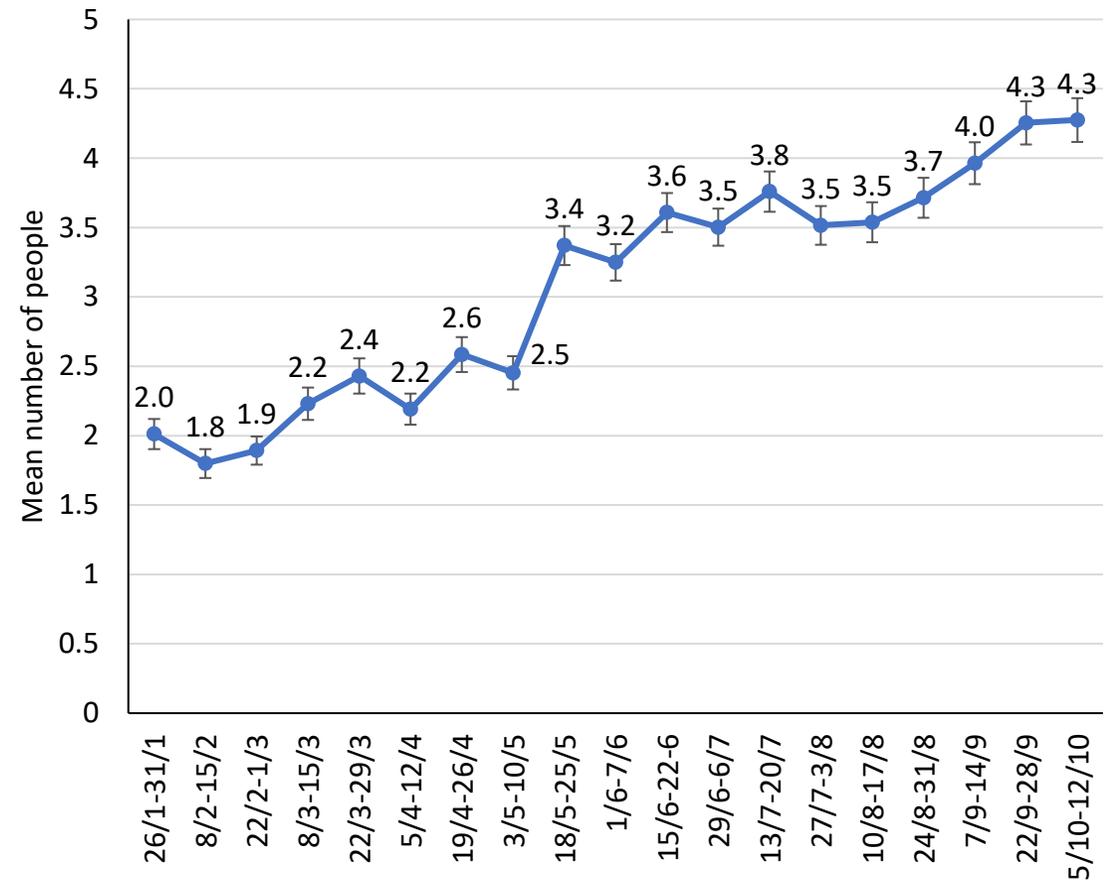
Number of people met and close contacts



Had a close contact the previous day

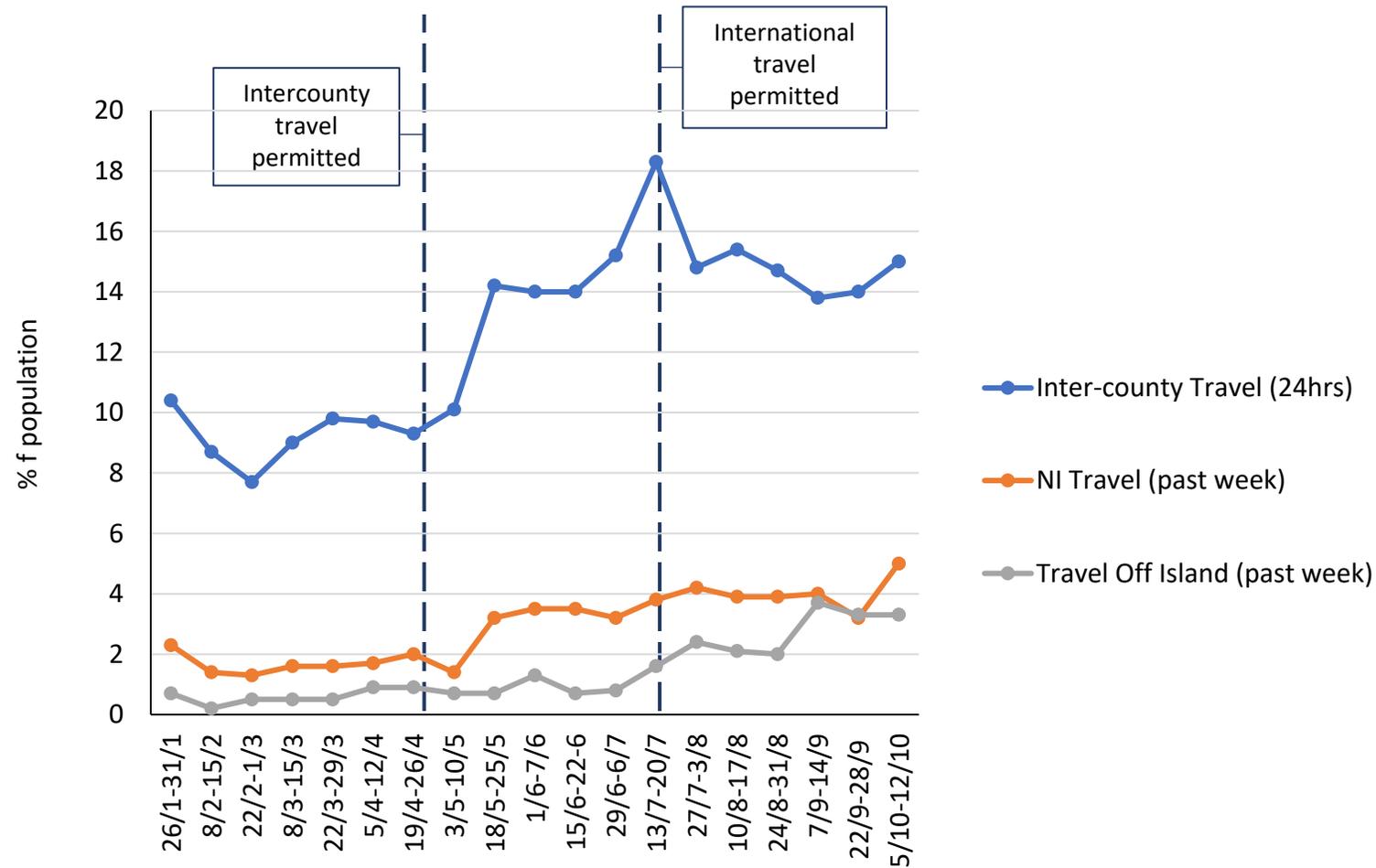


Mean number of people met in past 48hrs



The number of close contacts and people met have both risen gradually over time, although there was no change in early October compared to late September.

National and international travel

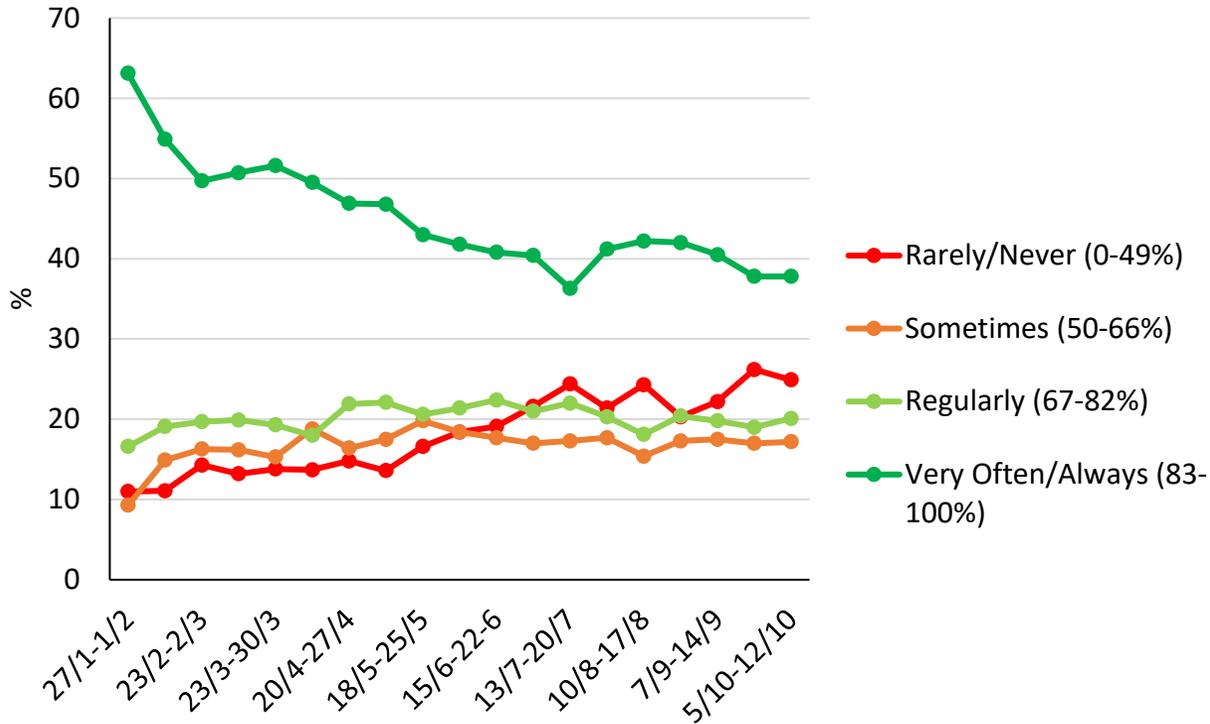


There was a significant increase in the percentage of people who had travelled to Northern Ireland in the previous week. There was no change in inter-county travel or travel off the island.

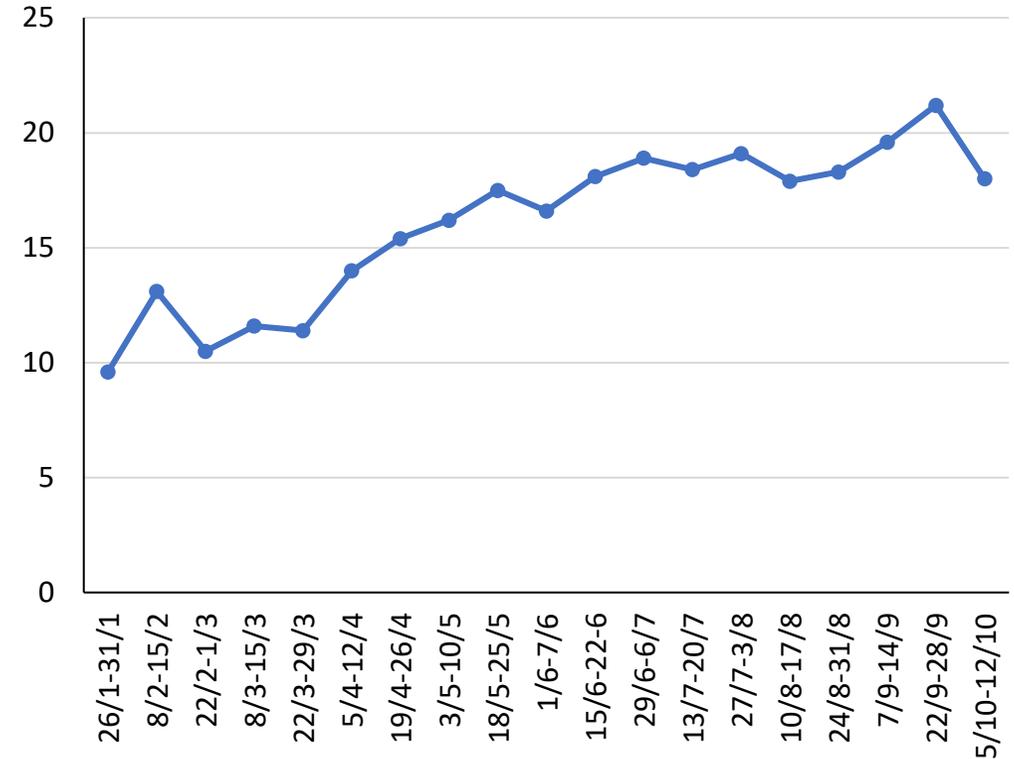
“Mitigators” and “Socialisers”



Caution when leaving home (mitigative behaviours)

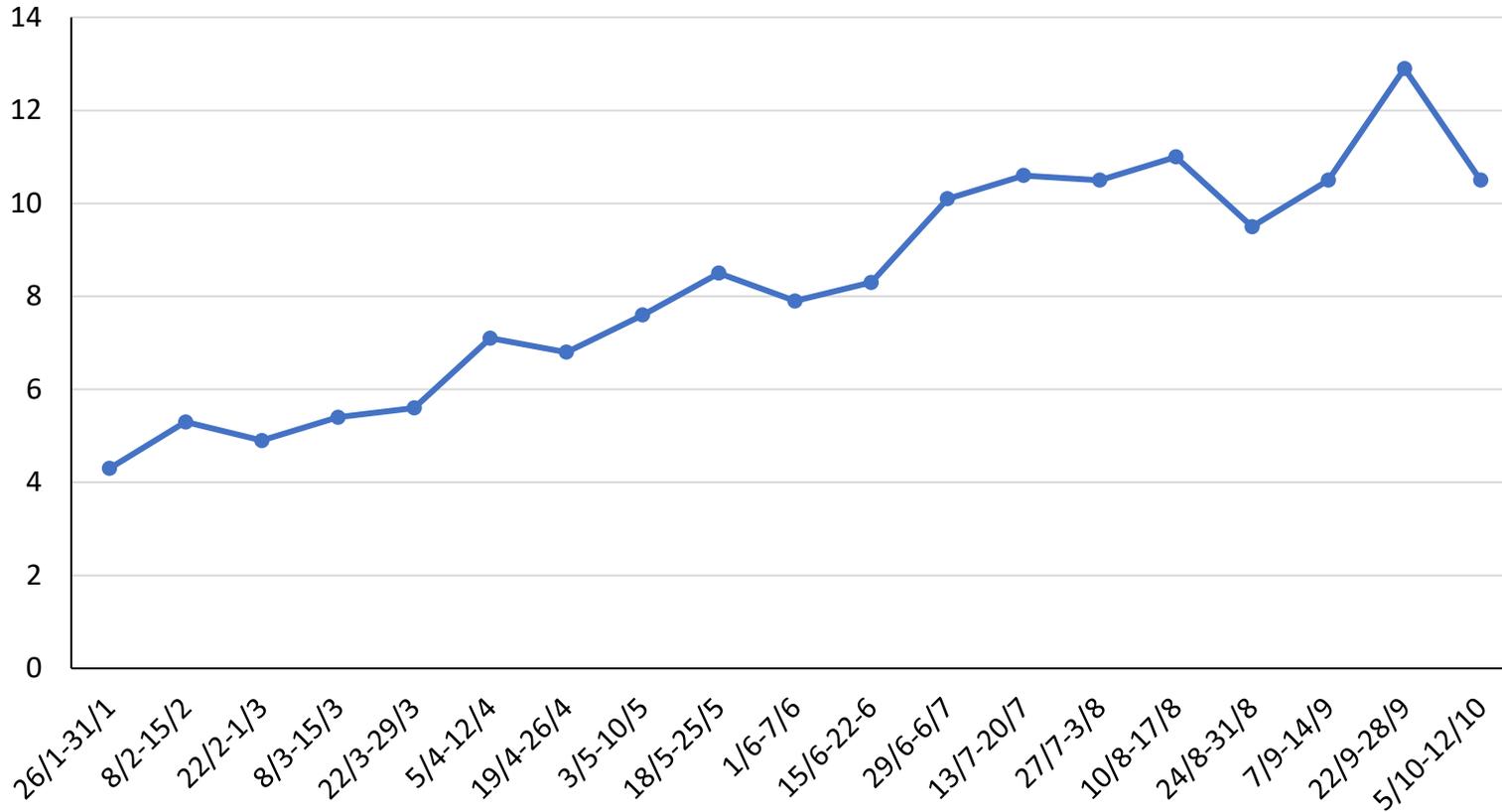


Socialisers



Mitigative behaviours have been gradually falling since January with the percentage of people reporting that they very often/always carry out these behaviours moving from 63% to 38%. However, there was no further decline in these behaviours this round, and the percentage of those who can be defined as highly socially active fell slightly.

Non-mitigating socialisers

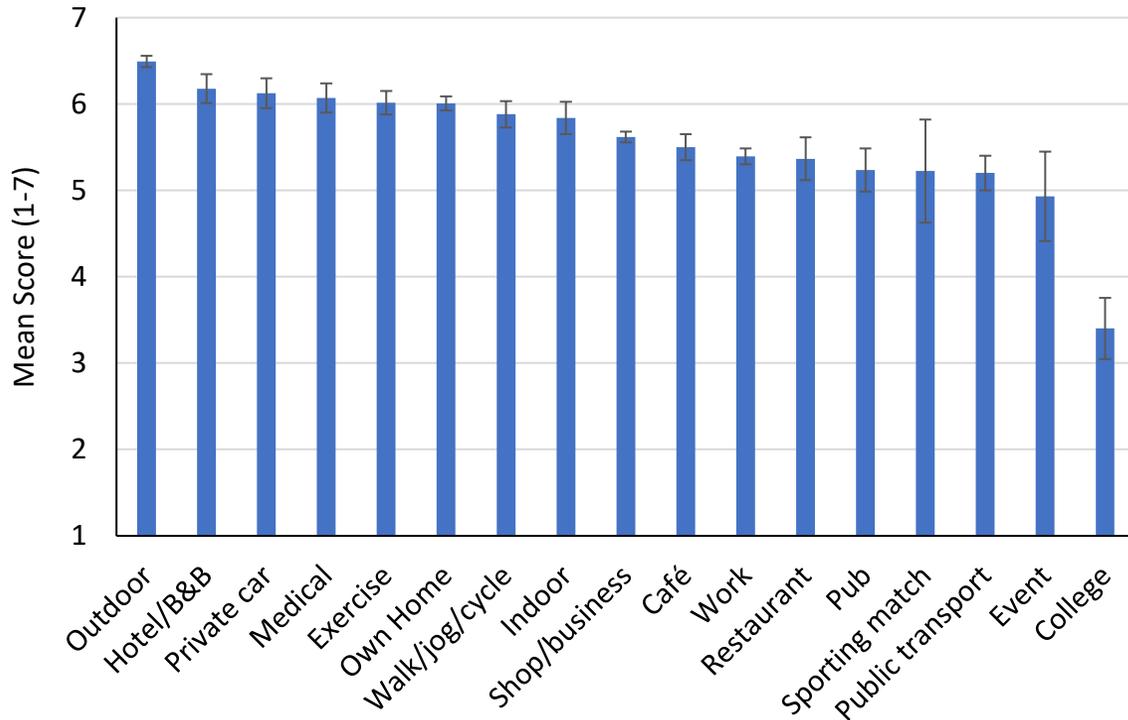


This chart shows the proportion of “non-mitigating socialisers”, i.e. people who engage in a lot of social activity and rarely take precautions. The proportion of people falling into this category has been increasing over time, although it did not increase again this round.

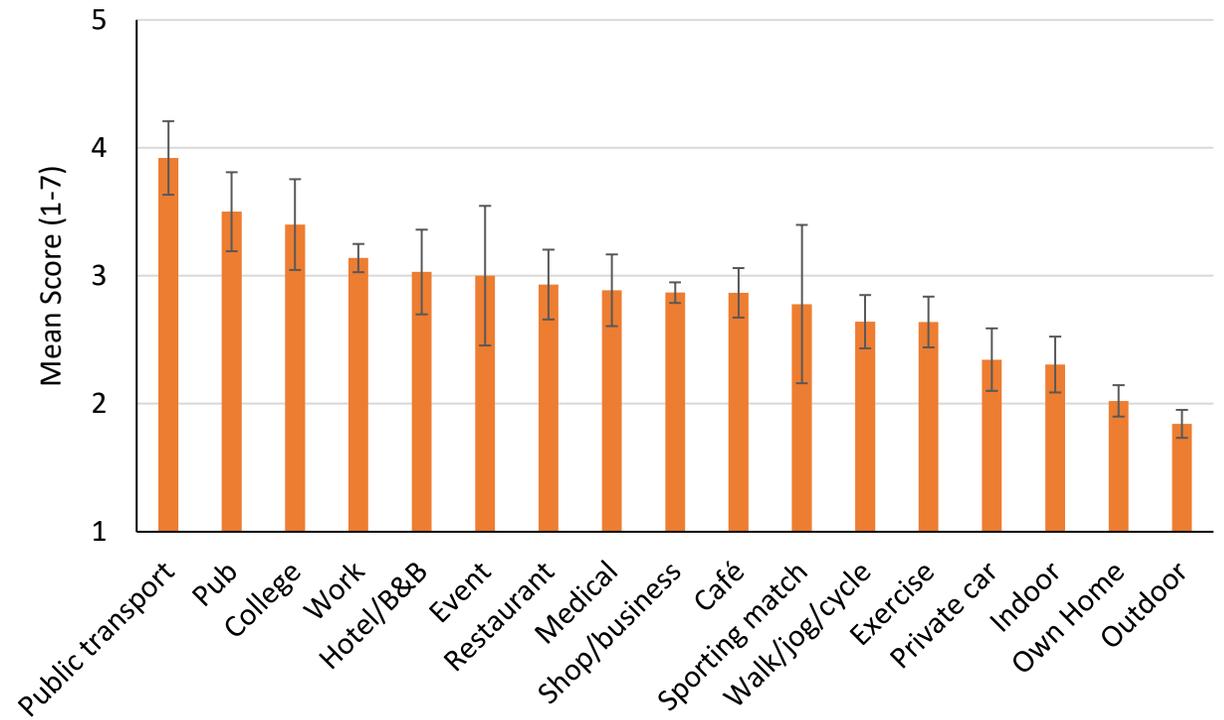
Perceived safety and risk by location



How safe did you feel?



How risky was it relative to other places?

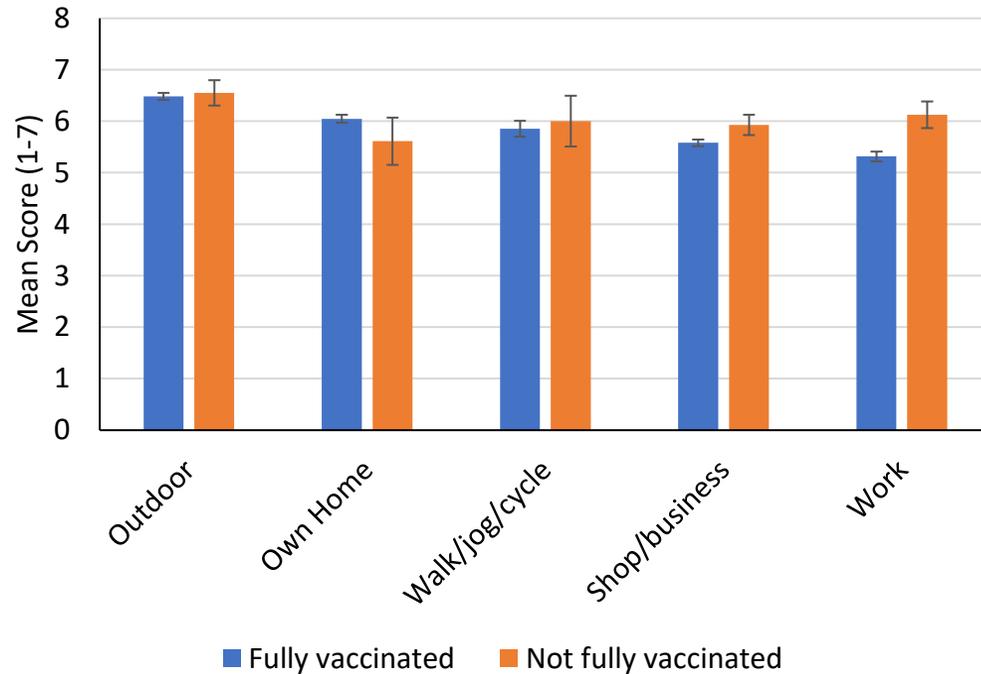


These charts show how safe people felt at various locations in terms of the likelihood that they could catch COVID-19 and how risky they felt the location was compared with other locations they go to. College was rated as the least safe location while public transport was rated as the riskiest one.

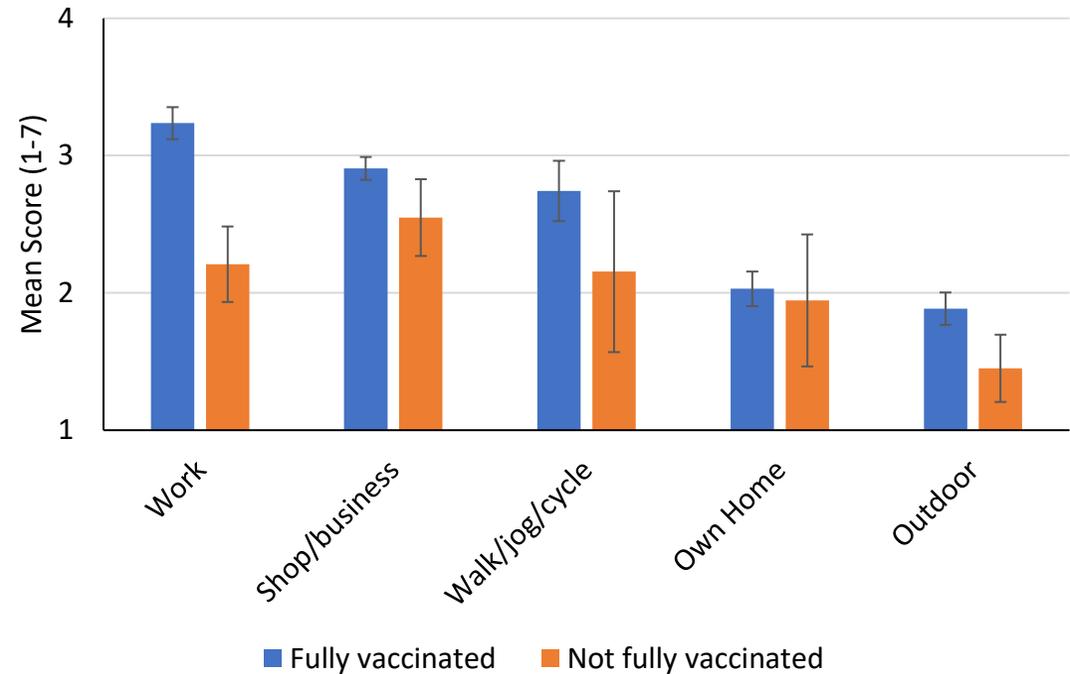
Perceived safety and risk by location and vaccination



How safe did you feel?

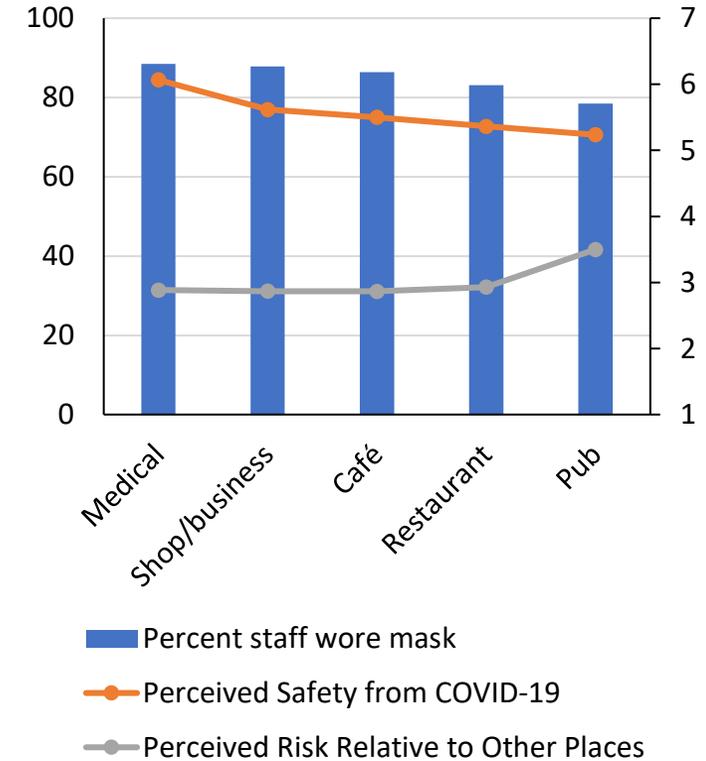
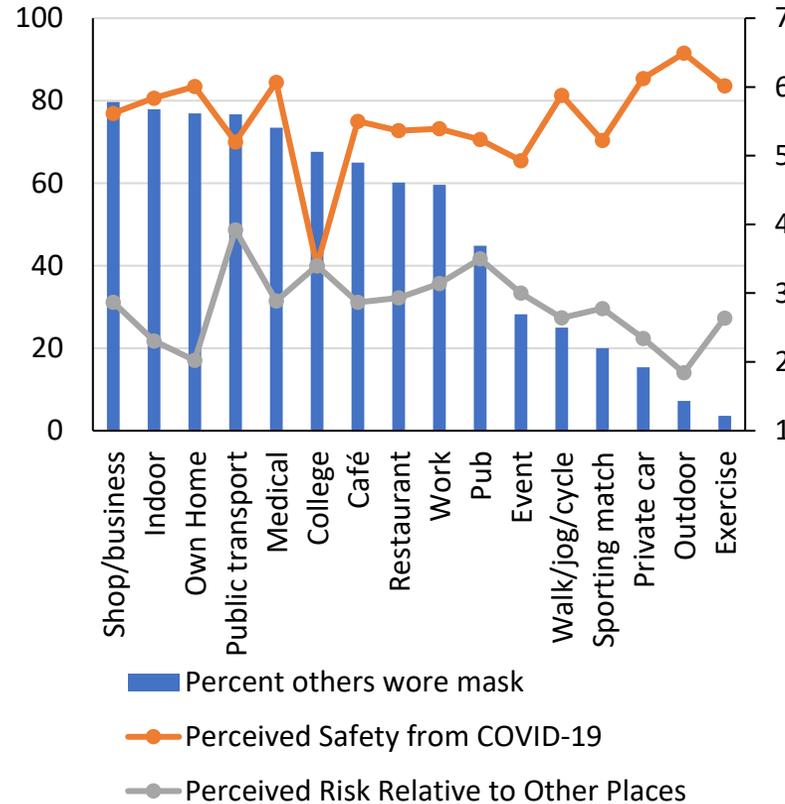
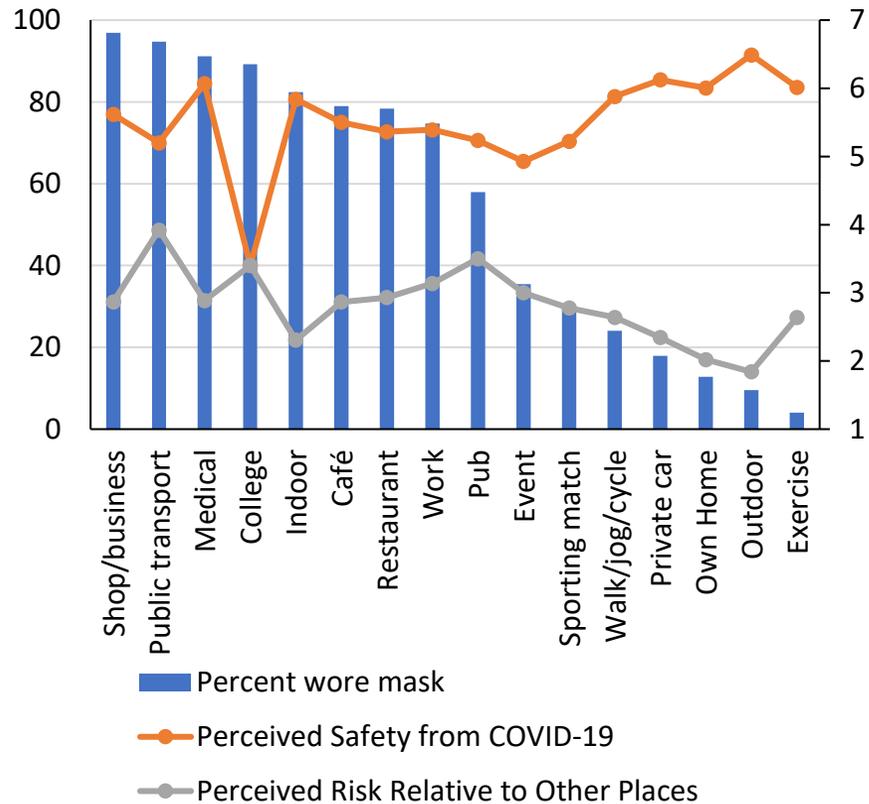


How risky was it relative to other places?



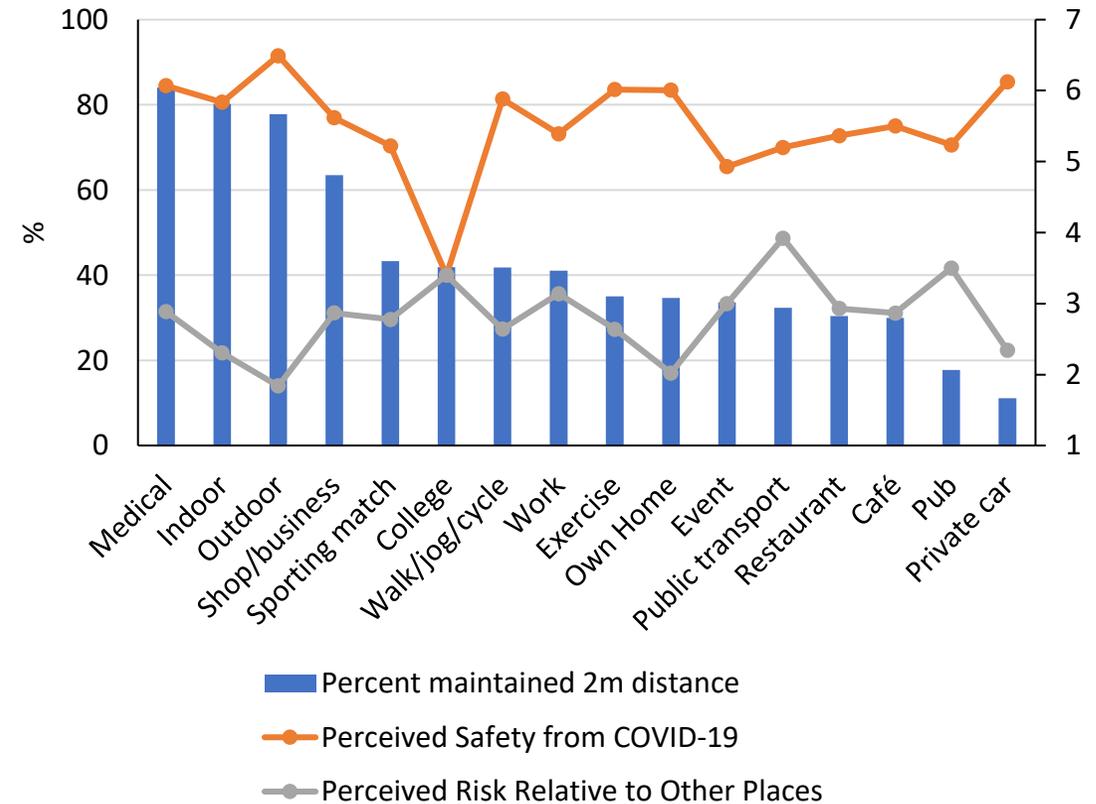
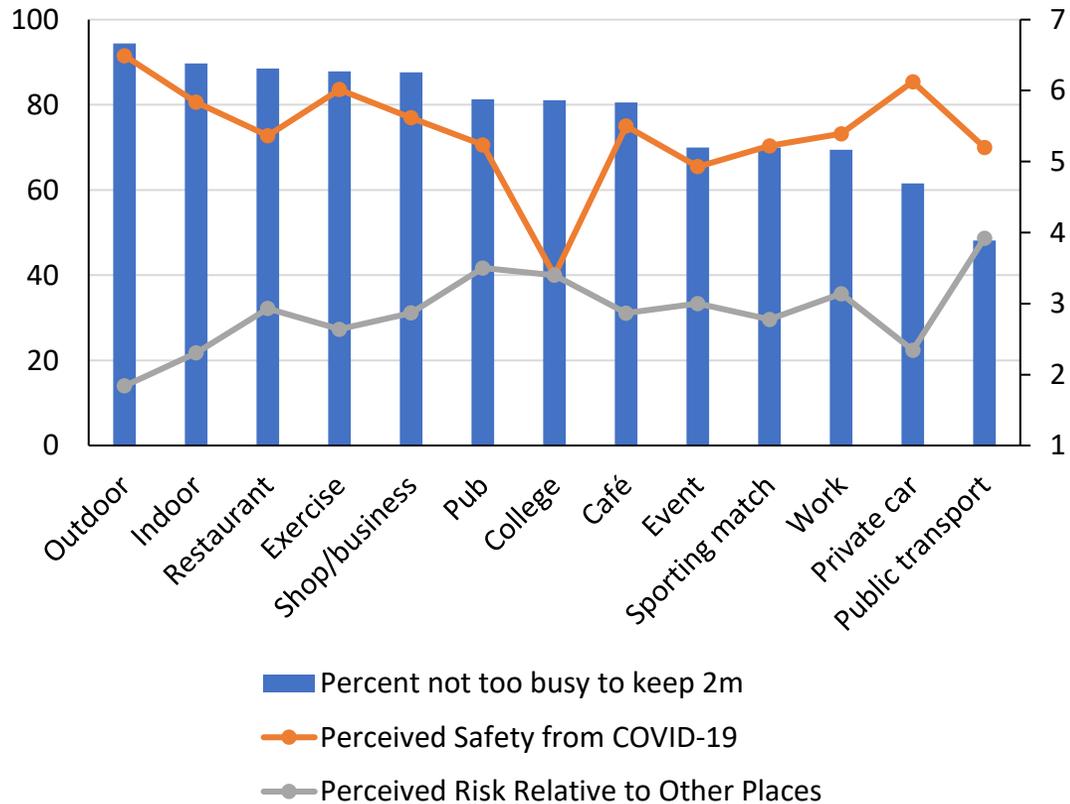
These charts show how safe people felt at various locations in terms of the likelihood that they could catch COVID-19 and how relatively risky they felt the location was by vaccination status. Only the workplace was statistically significantly different between vaccinated and unvaccinated.

Perceived & actual mitigation by location (mask wearing)



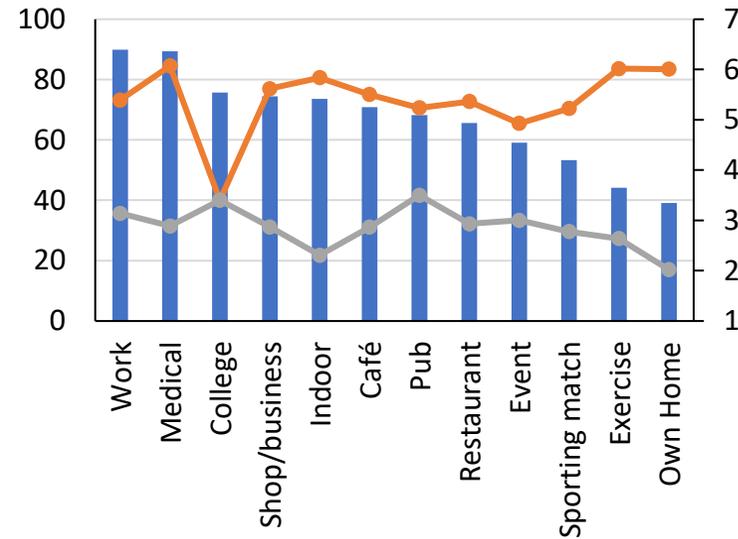
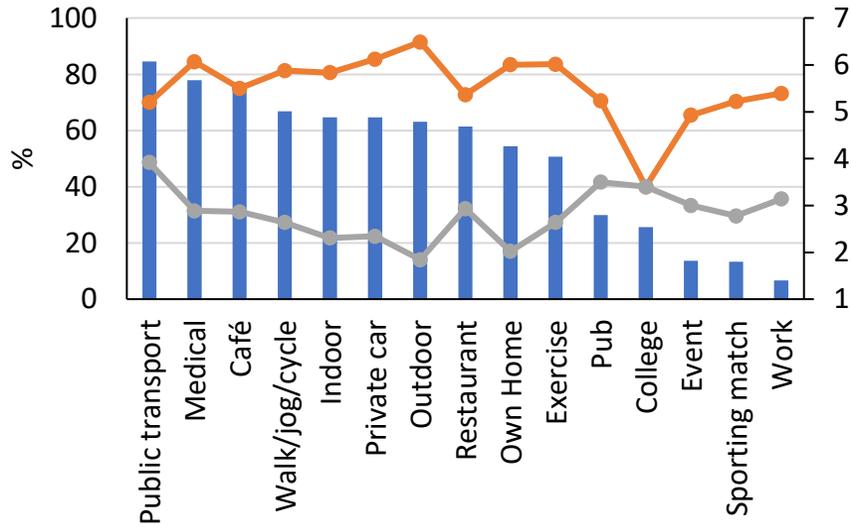
These charts show mask wearing in different locations along with how safe or risky people believe those locations to be. Mask wearing varies across locations but does not show a very strong relationship with perceived risk or safety.

Perceived & actual mitigation by location (distance)



These charts show the frequency of social distancing across locations along with how safe or risky people believe those locations to be. There is a discrepancy between the numbers reporting that it would have been possible to maintain a 2m distance from others, and the number who did.

Perceived & actual mitigation by location (other)



■ Percent stayed <1hr
—●— Perceived Safety from COVID-19
—●— Perceived Risk Relative to Other Places

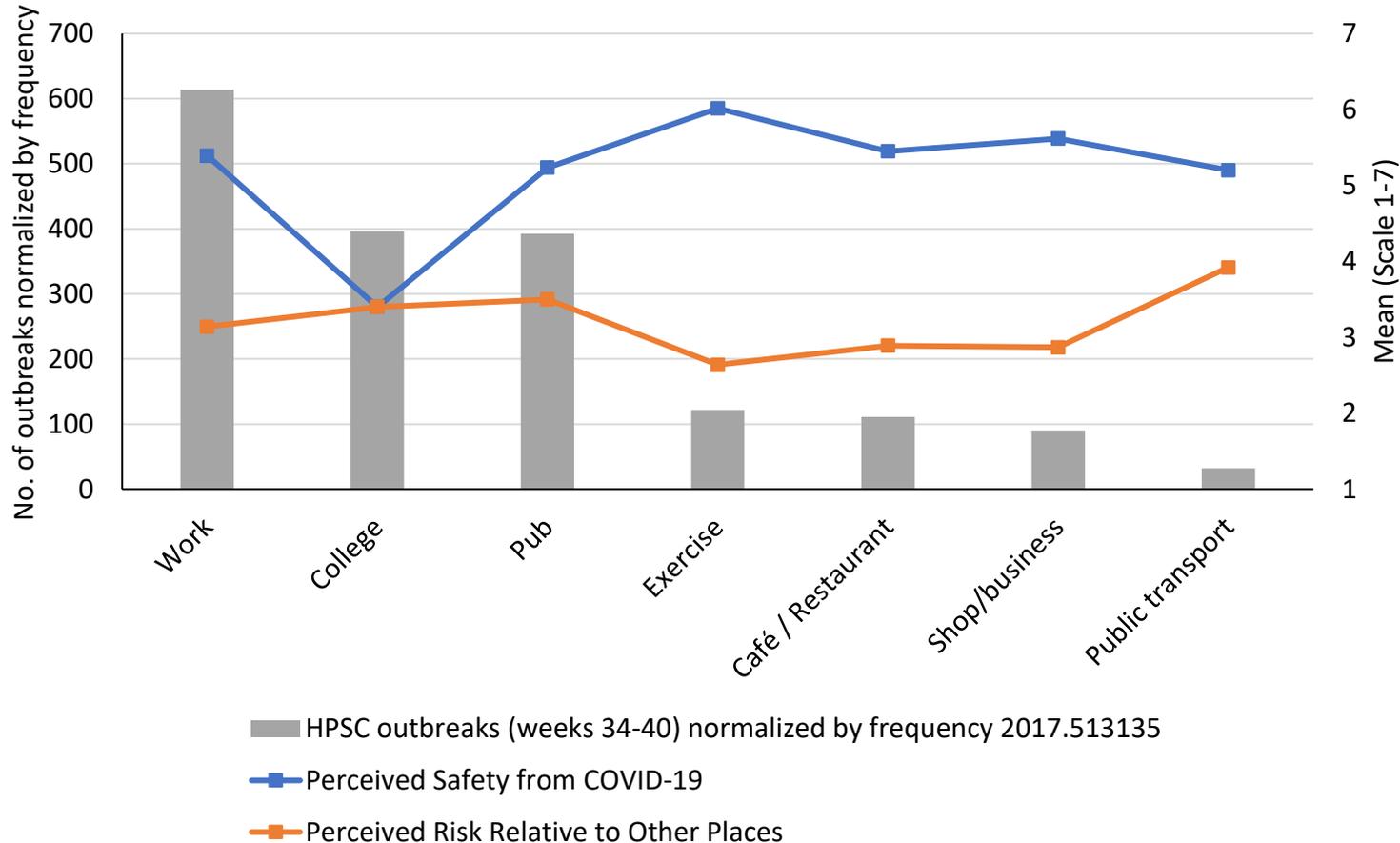
■ Percent sanitized hands
—●— Perceived Safety from COVID-19
—●— Perceived Risk Relative to Other Places

These charts show the frequency of short duration visits and hand sanitization across locations along with how safe or risky people believe those locations to be.

Outbreaks by perceived safety and risk



HPSC outbreaks (weeks 34-40) by perceived safety and risk

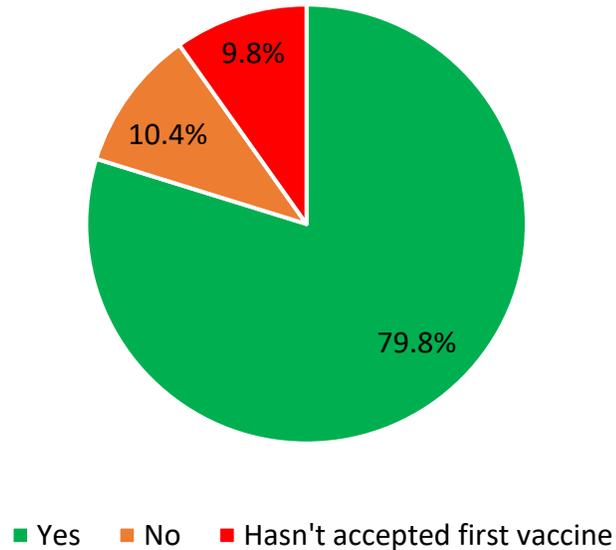


This chart shows the number of outbreaks by location over weeks 34-40 of the year as reported by the Health Protection Surveillance Centre. This does not show the absolute numbers of outbreaks, but the number of outbreaks taking into account the proportion of the population who went to each of these locations over roughly the same period as estimated by the SAM data. Excluding private homes, most outbreaks happen in workplaces, colleges and pubs. These locations are all rated as slightly less safe and relatively riskier than locations with a lower numbers of outbreaks.

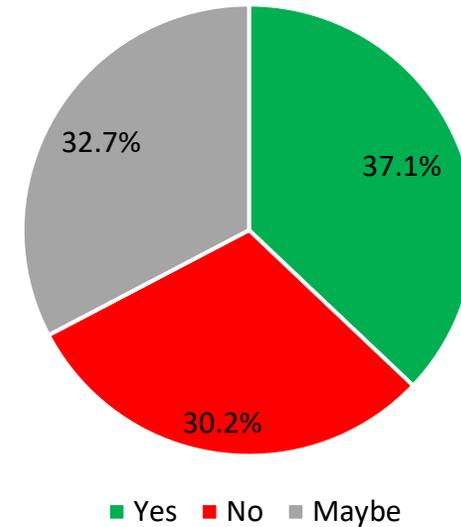
Vaccine Intentions



Would you accept a vaccine booster?

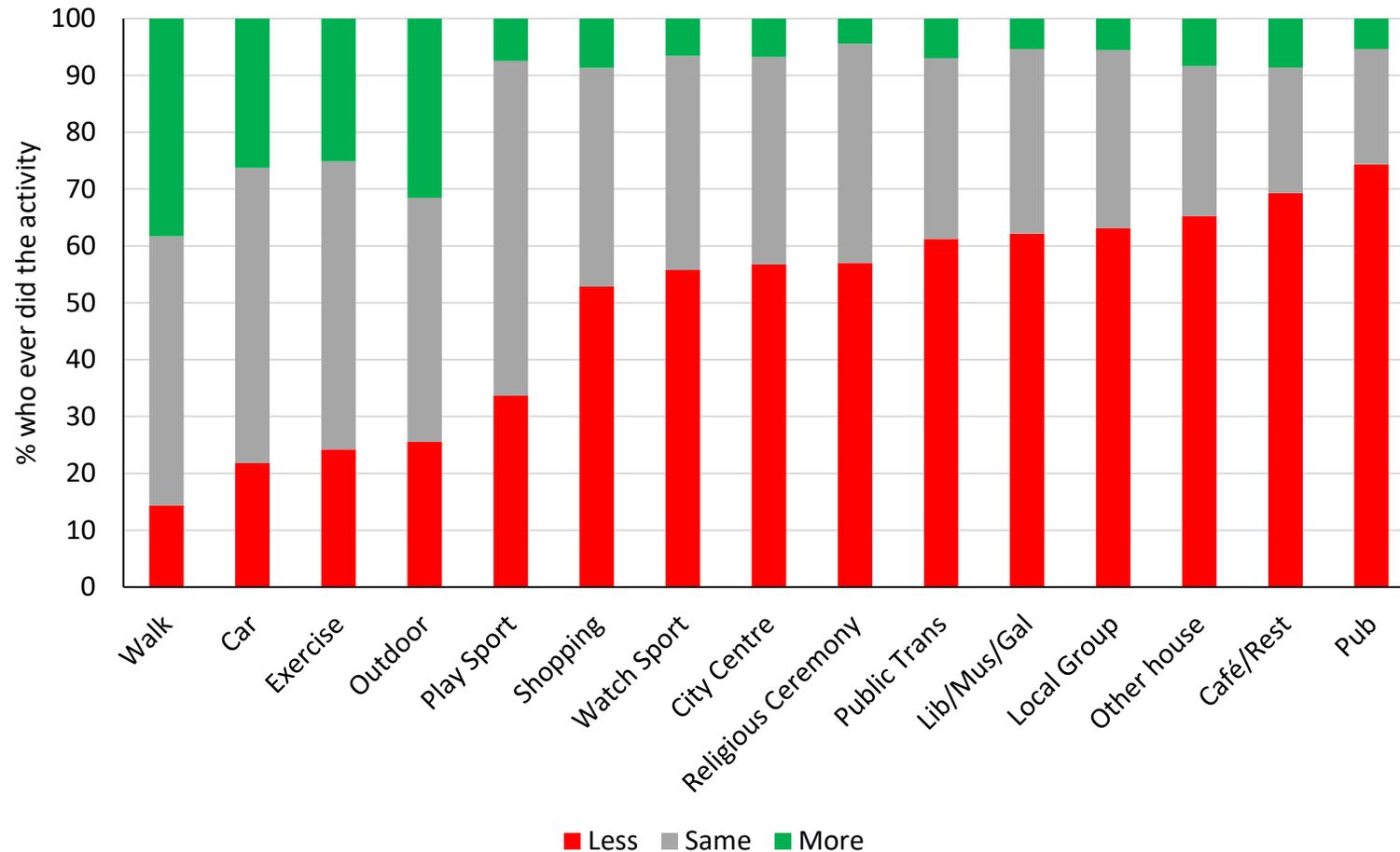


Would you let your child under 12 get vaccinated?



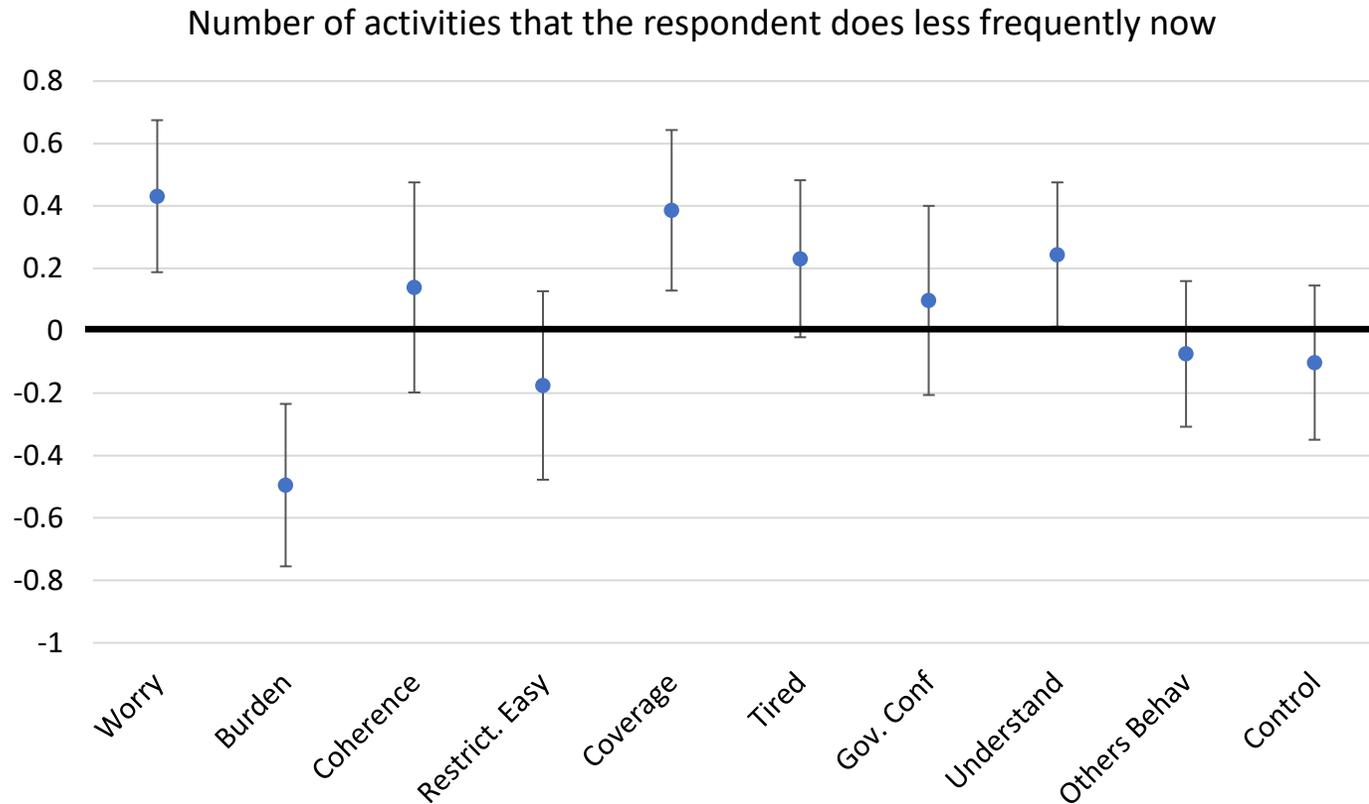
Most people say they would accept a vaccine booster if it was recommended, but a smaller proportion than accepted the first vaccine. Parents are divided on whether to allow their children under 12 be vaccinated if it was recommended. More parents are unsure than definitely against it.

Change in activities since March 2020



People are doing most activities on the list less than they did in March 2020. The biggest difference is in people going to pubs, cafés, restaurants and other houses. Activities that take place mainly outdoors are more likely to have increased. Just under 40% of people walk more now than before 2020. Some report doing more exercise and visiting outdoor locations more frequently. Car use has mostly increased or stayed the same, while use of public transport has decreased.

What predicts a decline in activities?

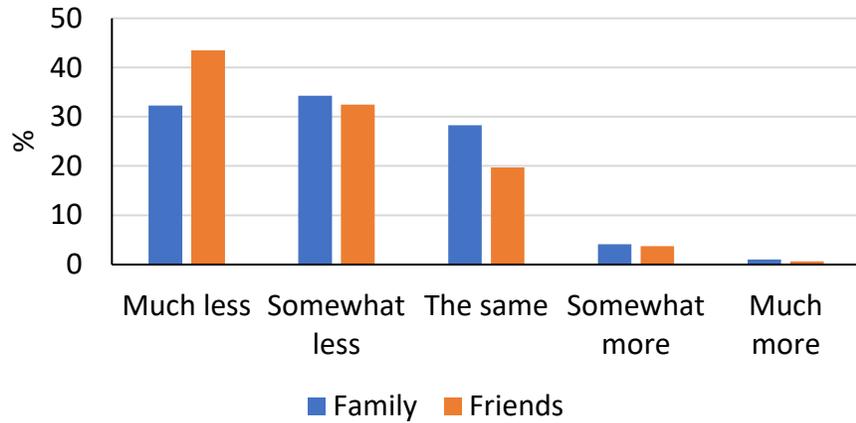


This chart shows associations between attitudes towards the pandemic, and the number of activities that people are doing less now than they did in March 2020. Reduced activity is associated with worry about COVID-19, prioritising preventing the spread of the virus over the burden of restrictions on oneself, reported understanding of how different activities affect the chance of getting COVID-19 and following news coverage about COVID-19.

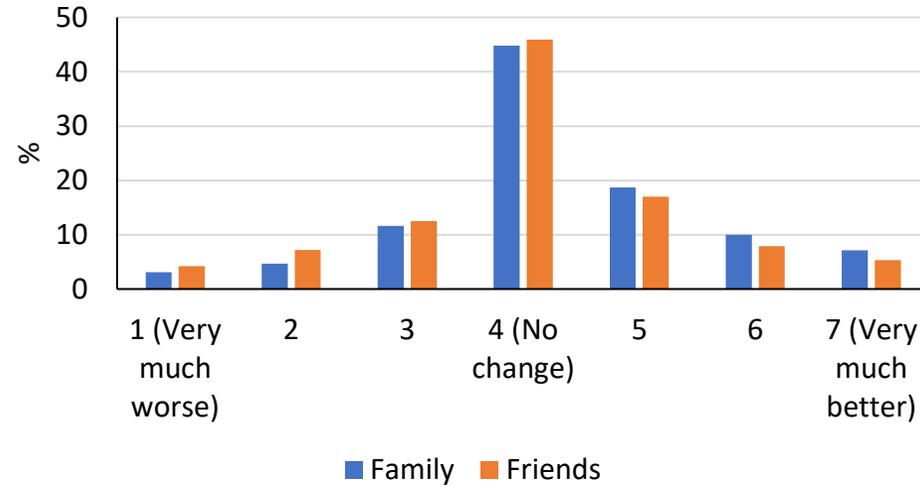
Relationships



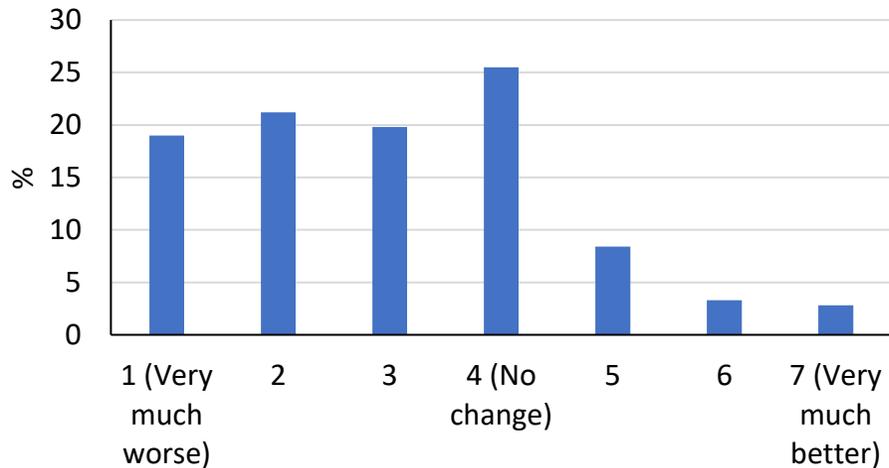
Do you see your family/friends...



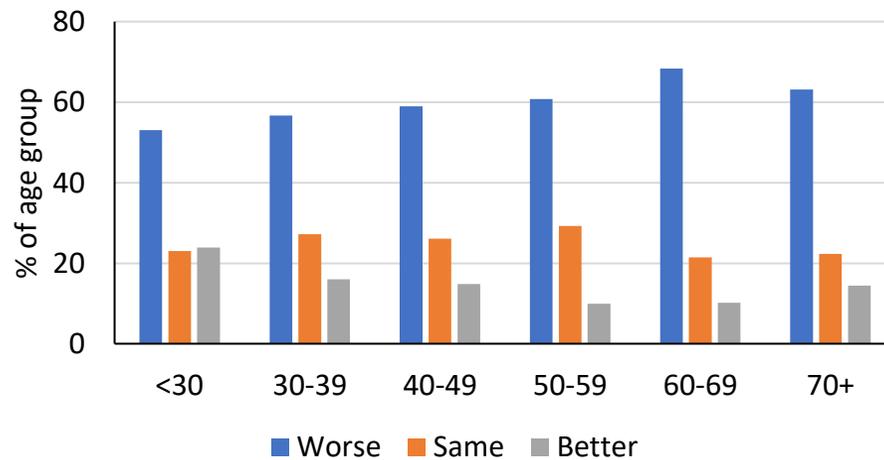
Quality of Relationship



Quality of social life

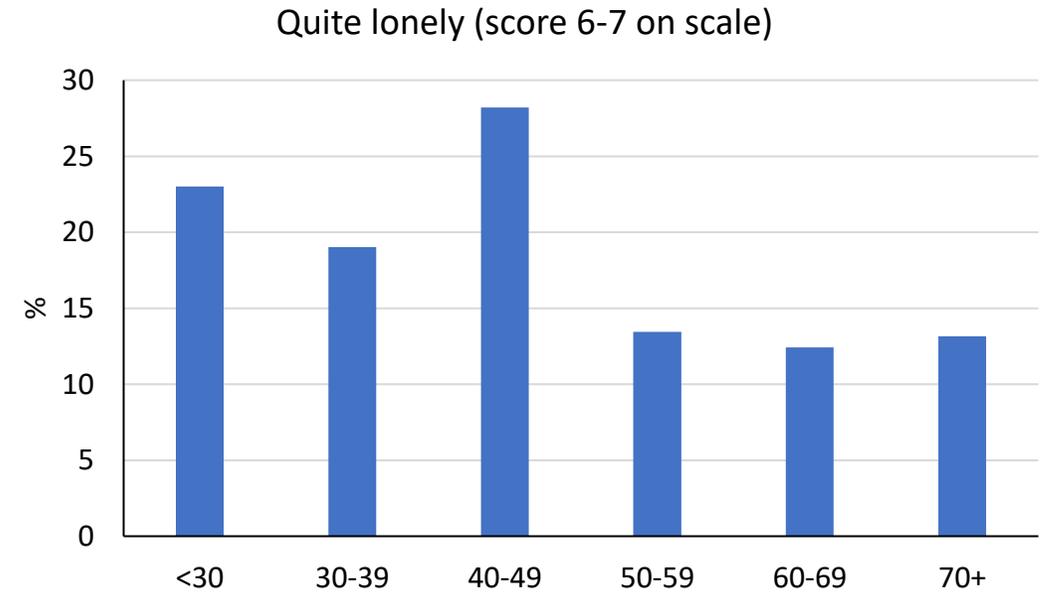
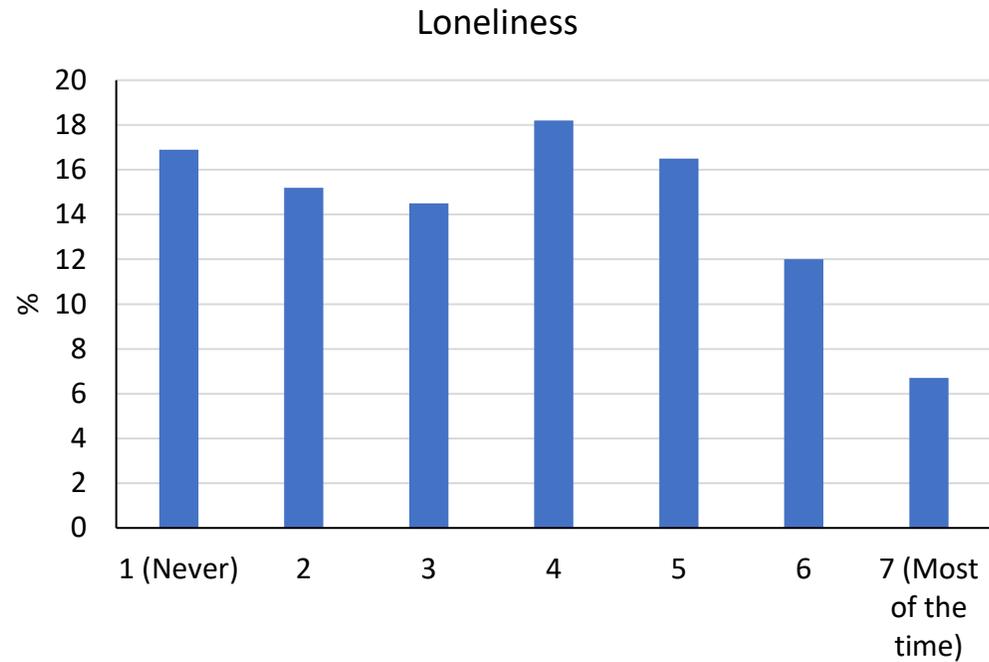


Quality of Social Life by Age



Most people are seeing friends and family less now than before the pandemic and most say that their social life is worse. Three in four people say that the quality of their relationships has not changed or has improved.

Loneliness

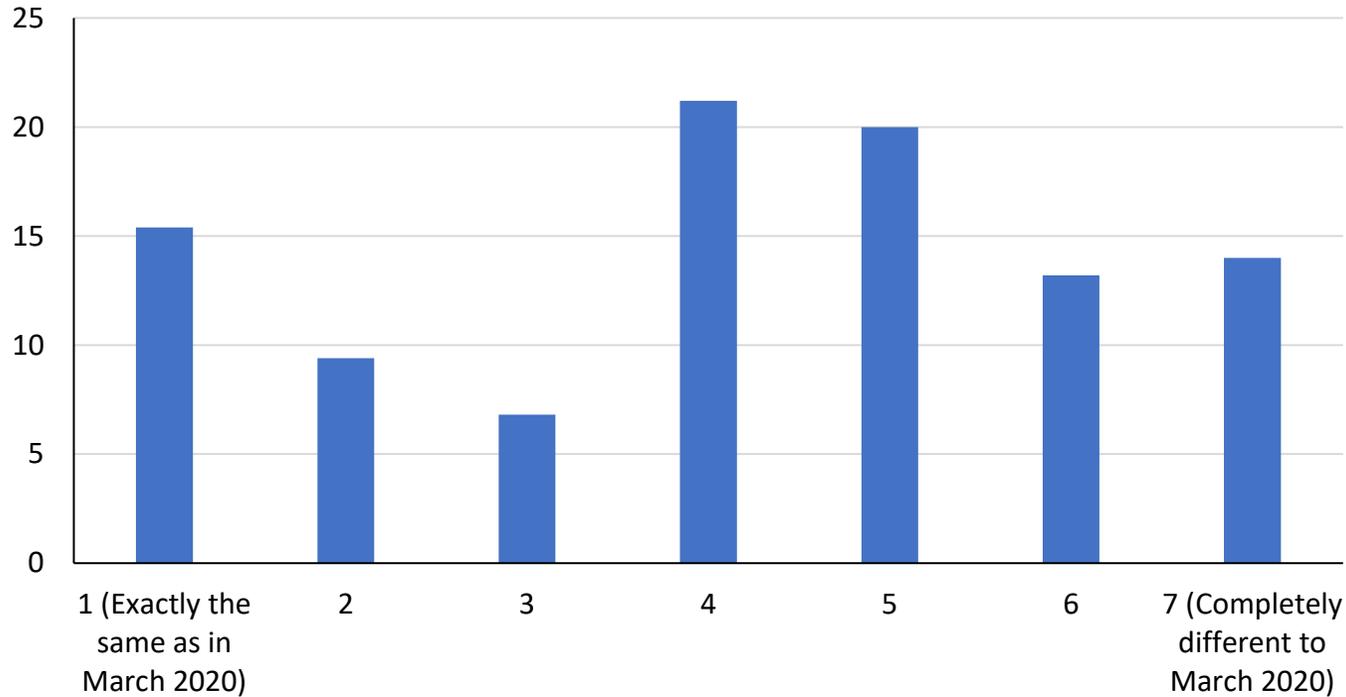


A significant proportion of people report being quite lonely, with the highest proportion in those aged 40-49.

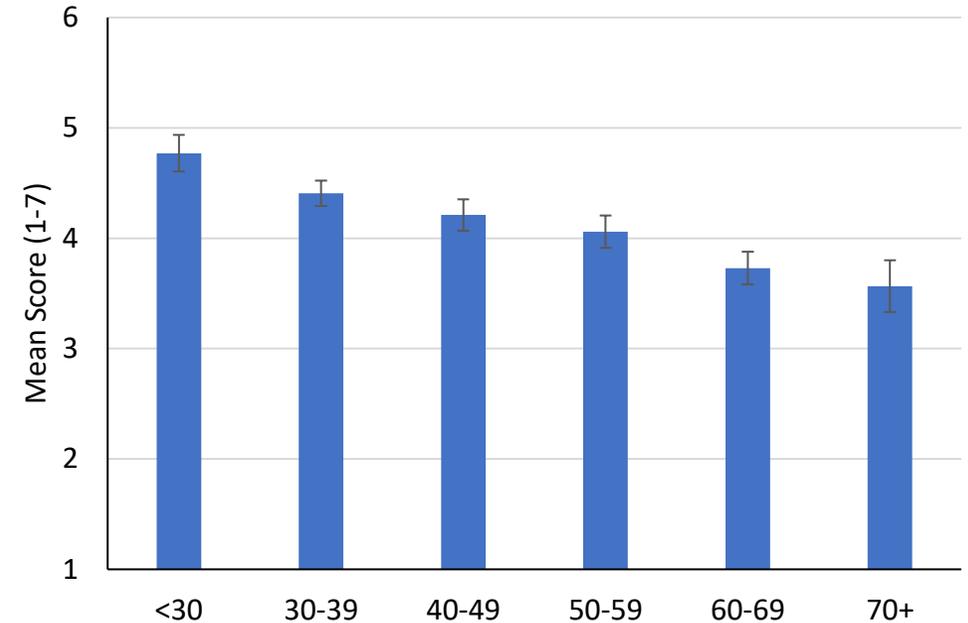
Return to pre-pandemic normality



If all restrictions were lifted, would you want your day-to-day life to be...

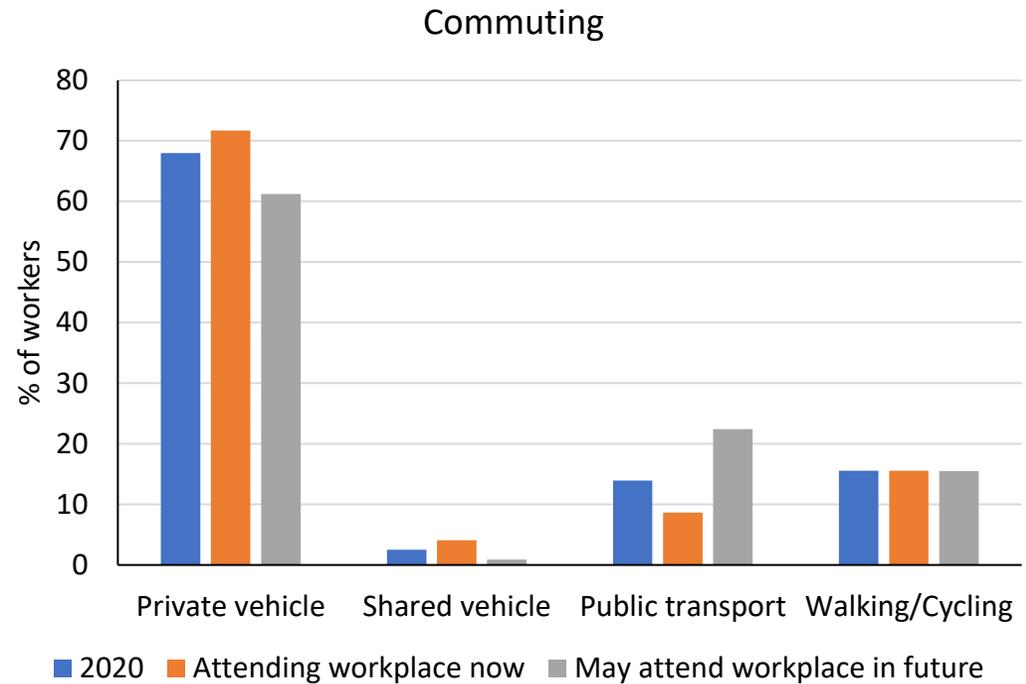
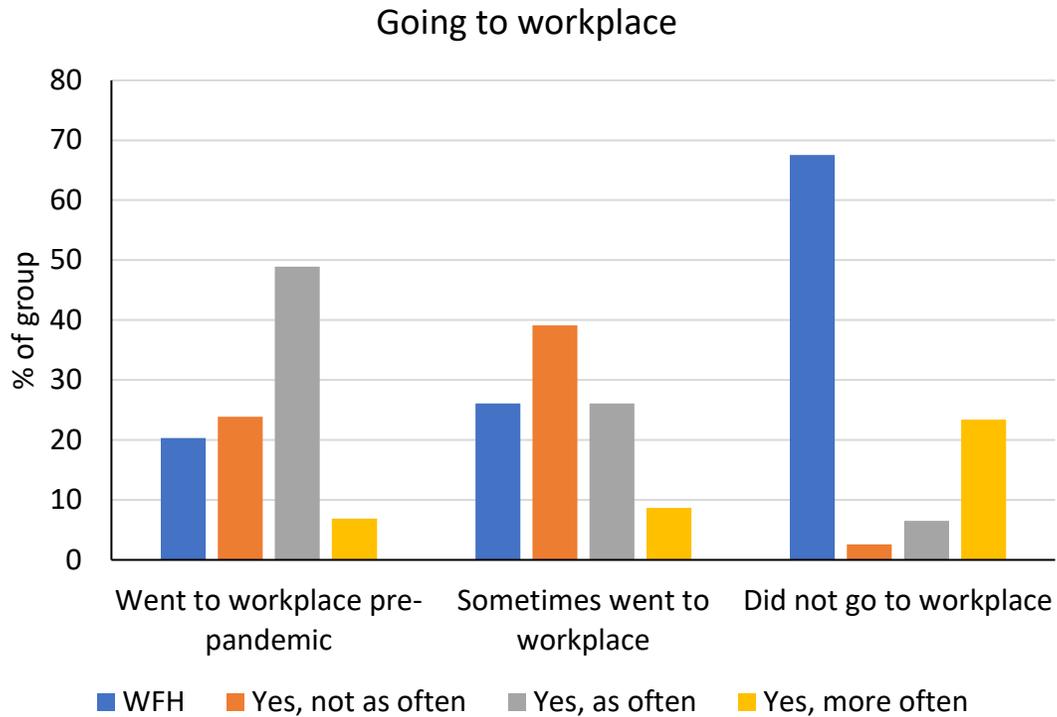


Desire for change from pre-March 2020 normality



Most people want their day-to-day life to be somewhat different to how it was in March 2020, with around 1 in 7 saying they want their life to be completely different. Younger people are more likely to want their lives to be different from March 2020 than older people.

Changes in workplace habits

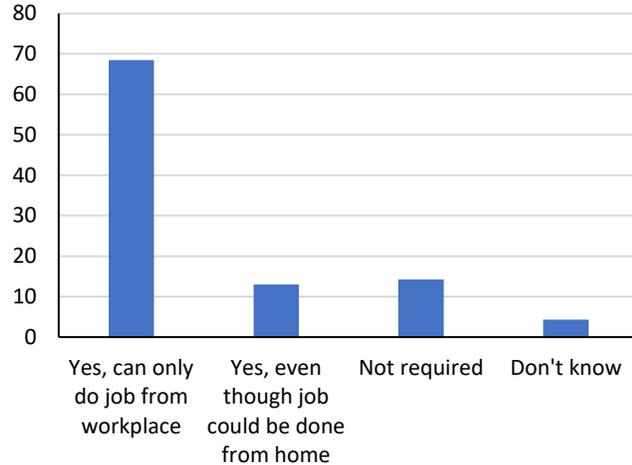


Nearly 1 in 2 workers who used to go to the workplace before the pandemic, go as often as they used to now. One in five work from home and a similar number go to the office but not as often.

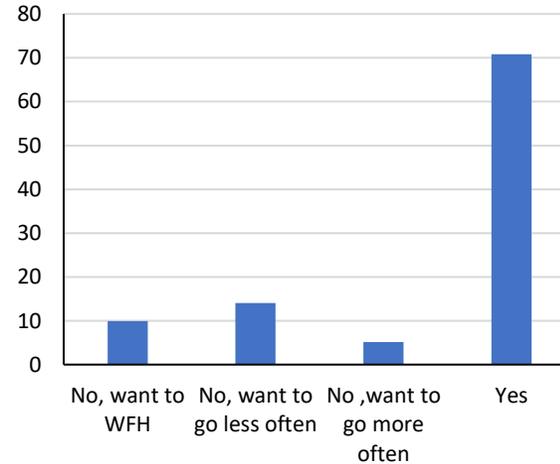
Satisfaction with working habits



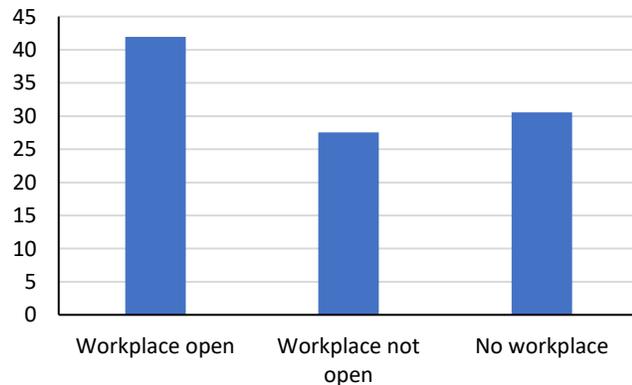
Workplace Workers: Mandatory?



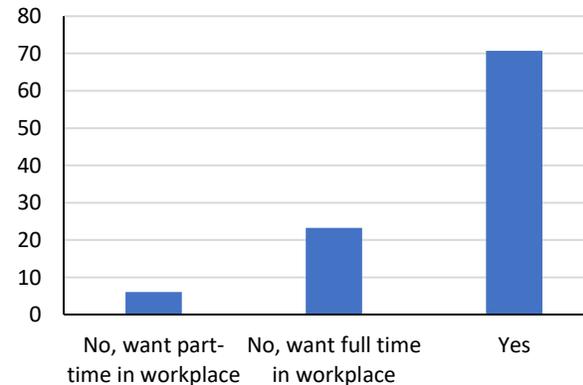
Workplace Workers: Happy?



WFH Workers: Workplace?



WFH Workers: Happy?

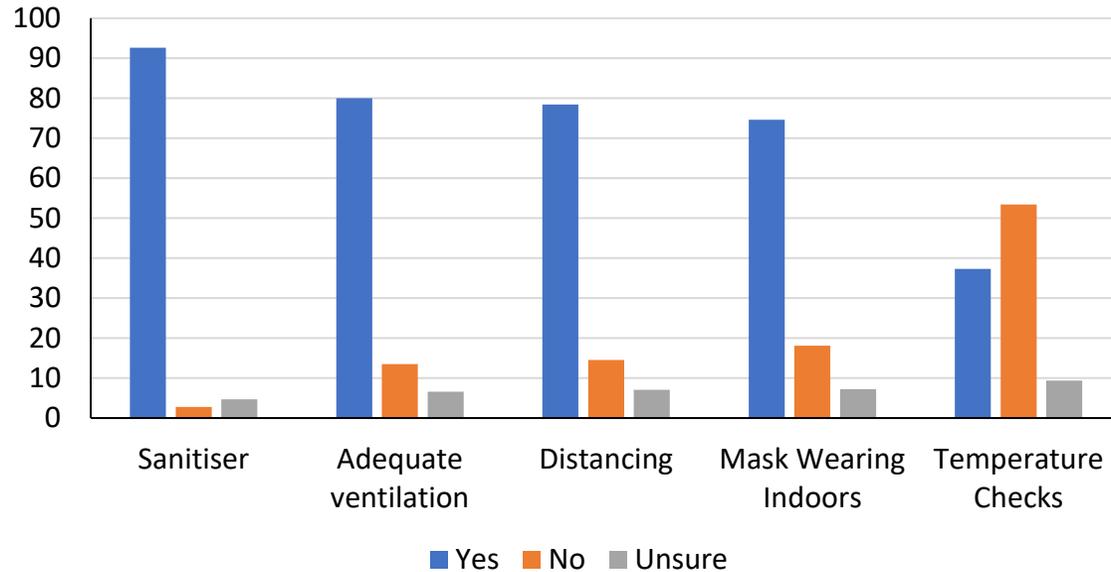


These charts show how workers who work from their workplace and workers who work from home feel about their working situation. Most workers who work from the workplace say they can only do their job from there, but around 13% say they are required to attend even though the work could be done at home. Most workers are happy with their situation, but a significant minority of both workplace workers and working from home workers would prefer to move closer to the alternative.

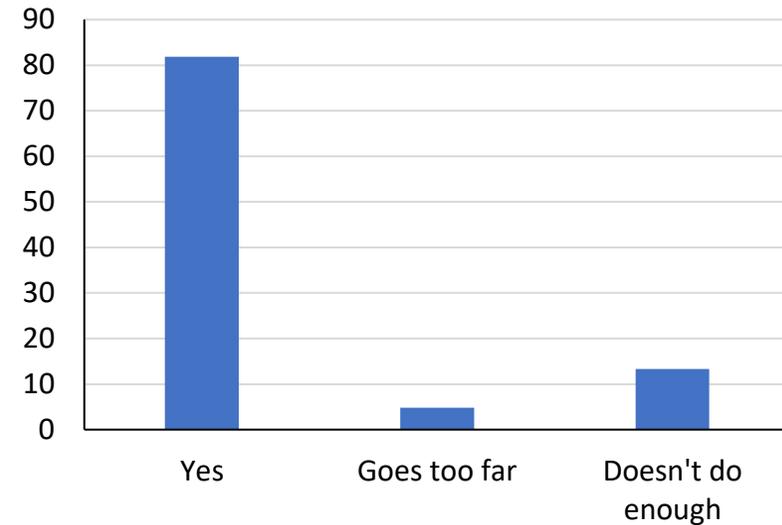
Workplace mitigation



Workplace Mitigation

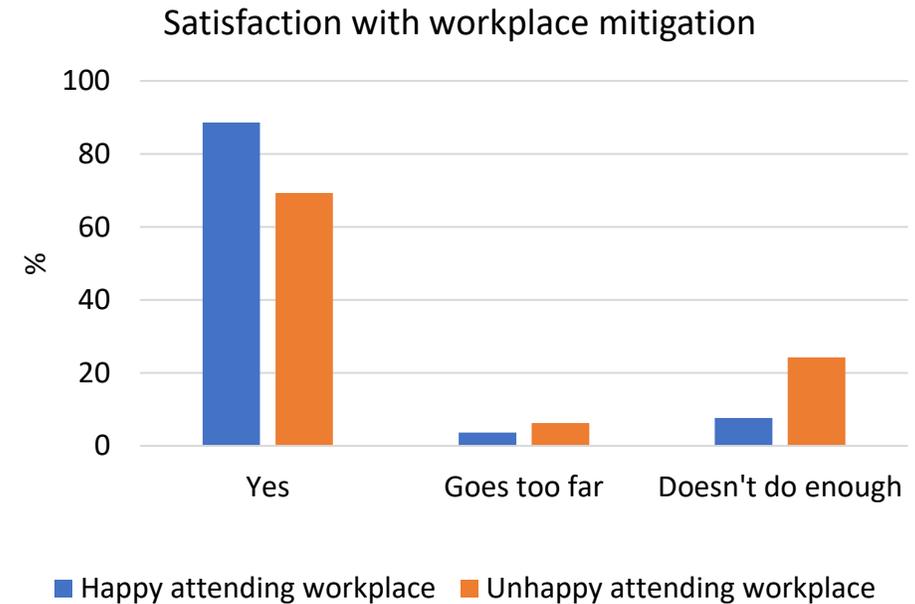
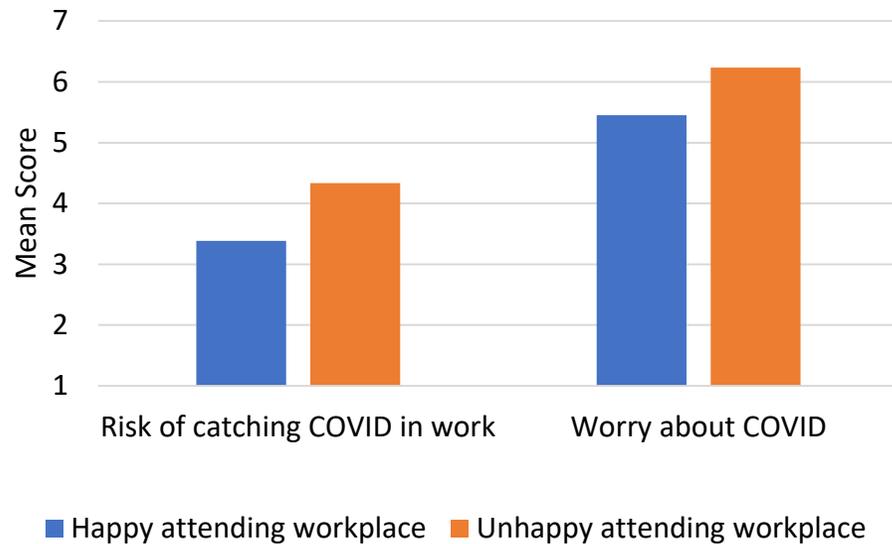


Satisfied with workplace measures?



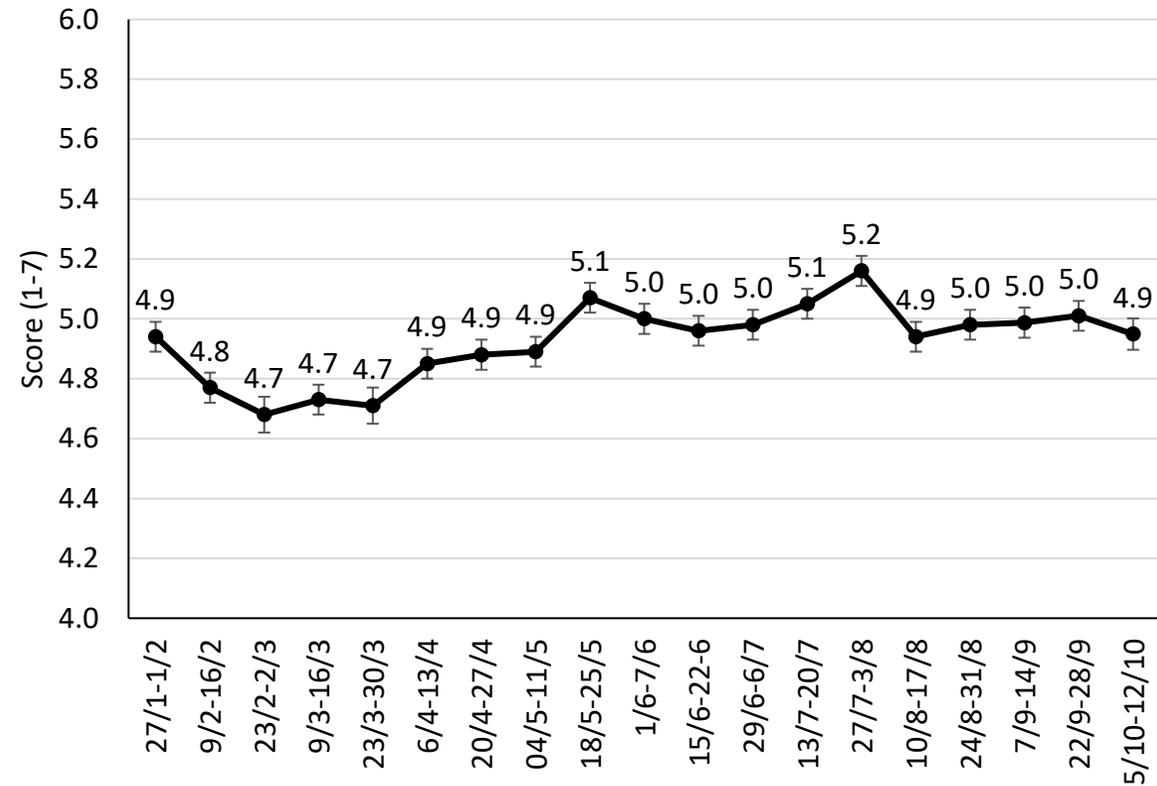
Most workplaces provide sanitiser. The percentage with adequate ventilation, distancing, mandatory mask wearing indoors and temperature checks as reported by employees is less. One in five are not satisfied with their workplace mitigation measures. More people think that their workplace does not go far enough with mitigation measures than goes too far.

Associations with happiness in the workplace



Perceiving a higher risk of catching COVID-19 and believing that workplace mitigation measures are not sufficient is associated with unhappiness at attending the workplace.

Wellbeing

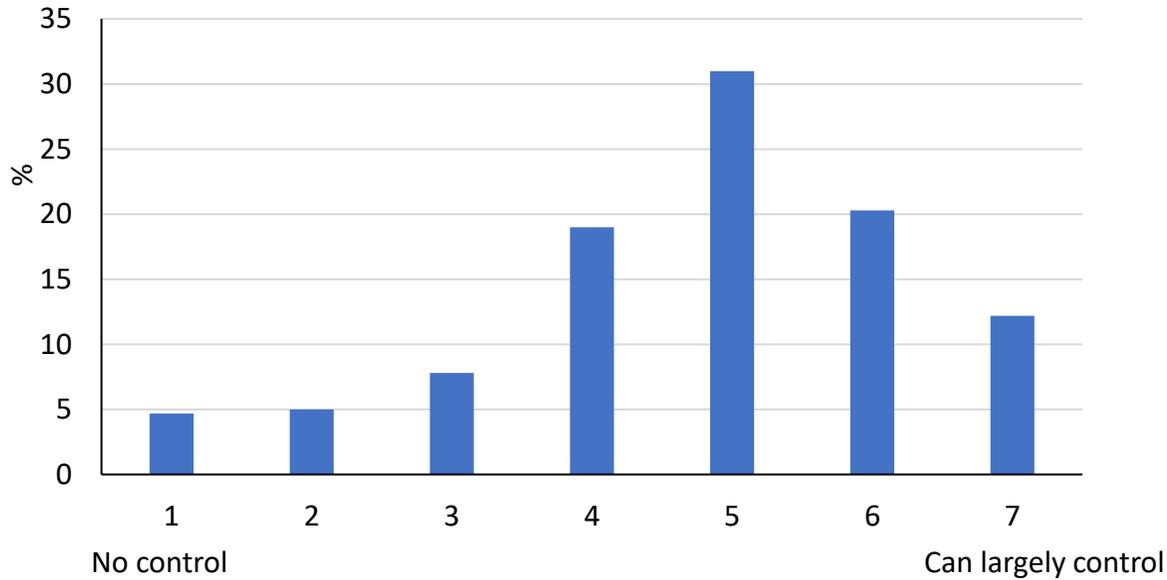


Wellbeing has stayed stable over the past number of months.

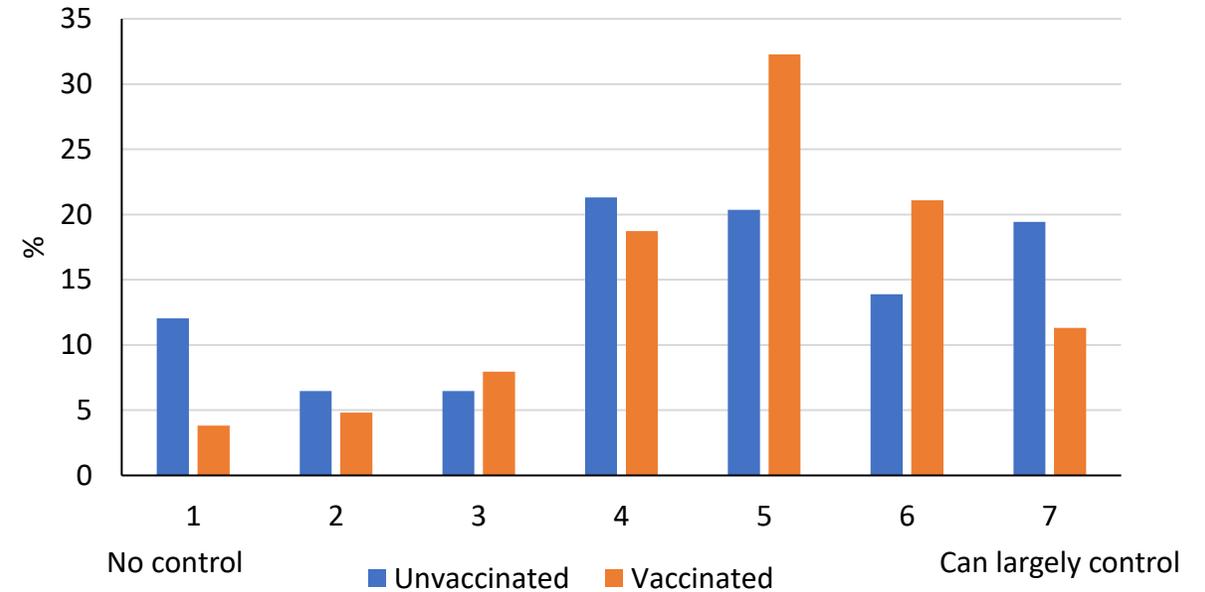
Perceived Control



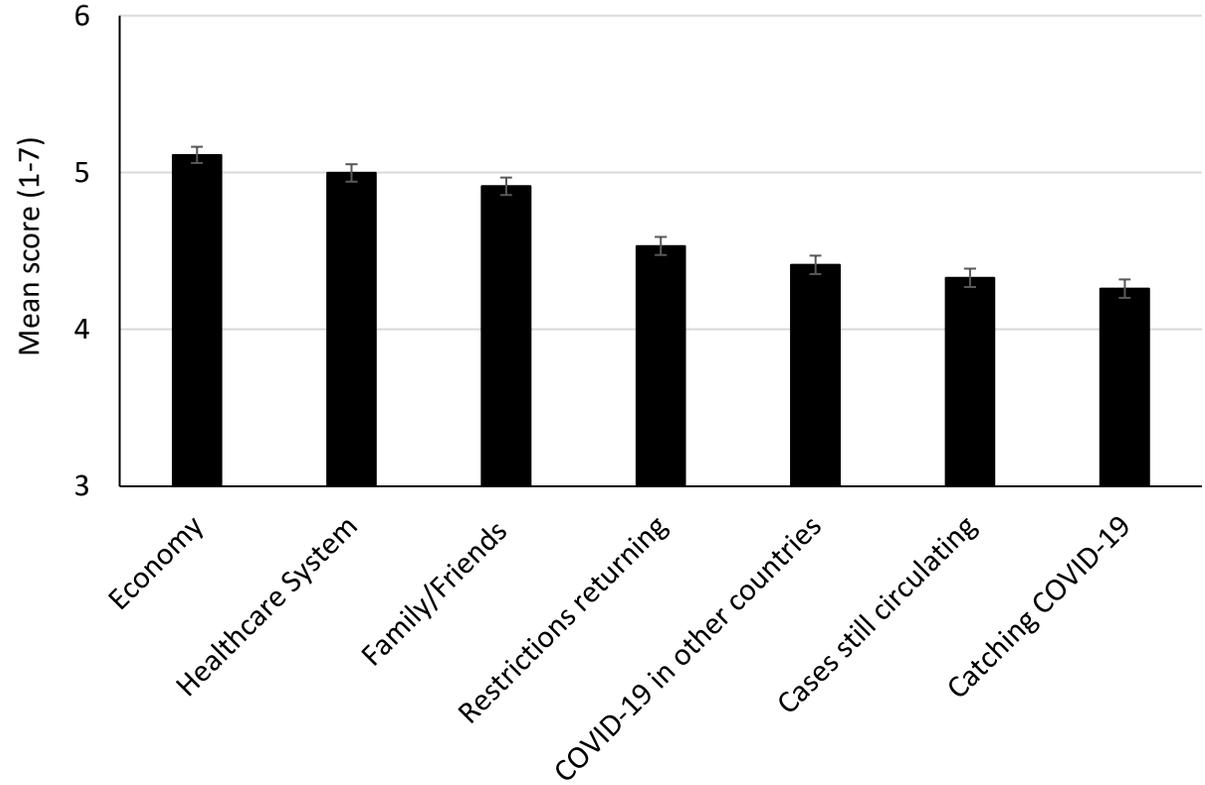
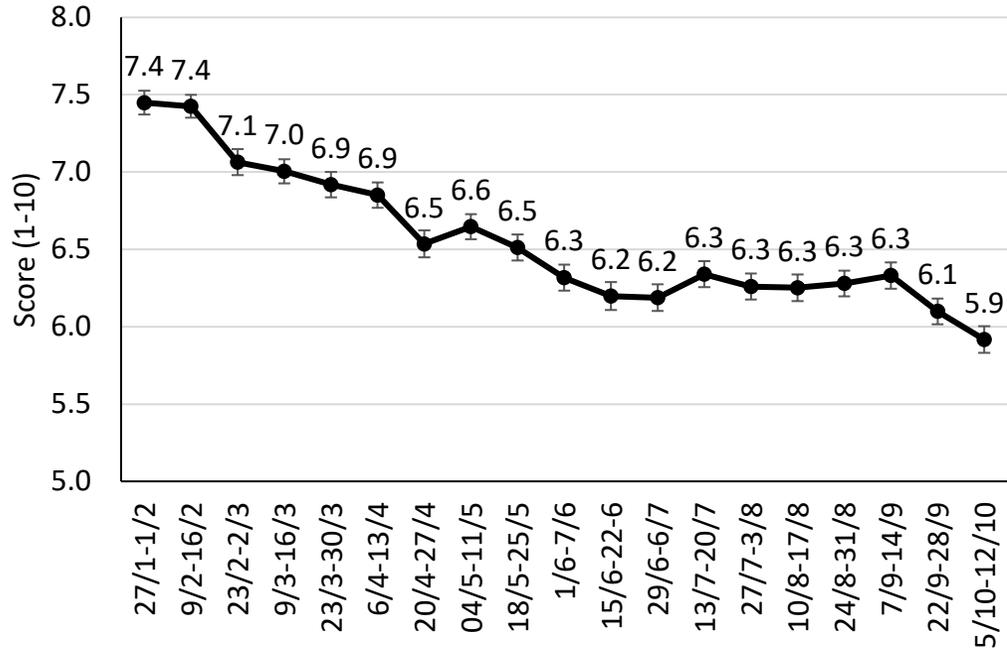
How much control do you think you have over whether you get COVID-19 or not?



How much control do you think you have over whether you get COVID-19 or not?



On average, people think that they have some control over whether they catch COVID-19. Vaccinated people believe they have slightly more control than unvaccinated people.

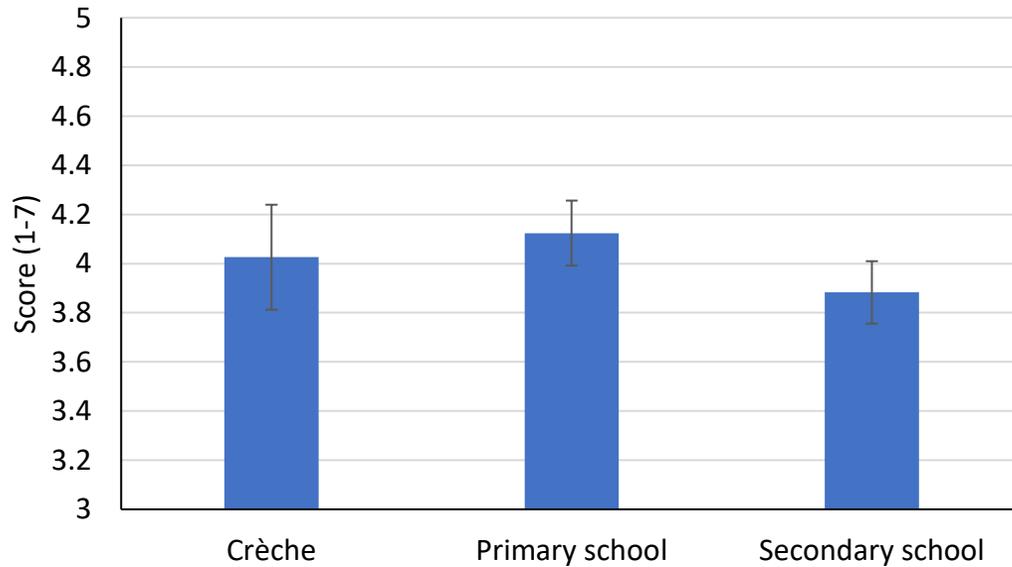


The chart on the left shows the average level of worry since the start of SAM. It has declined since January, but a significant proportion of the population remain very worried. The chart on the right shows the average level of different aspects of worry related to COVID-19.

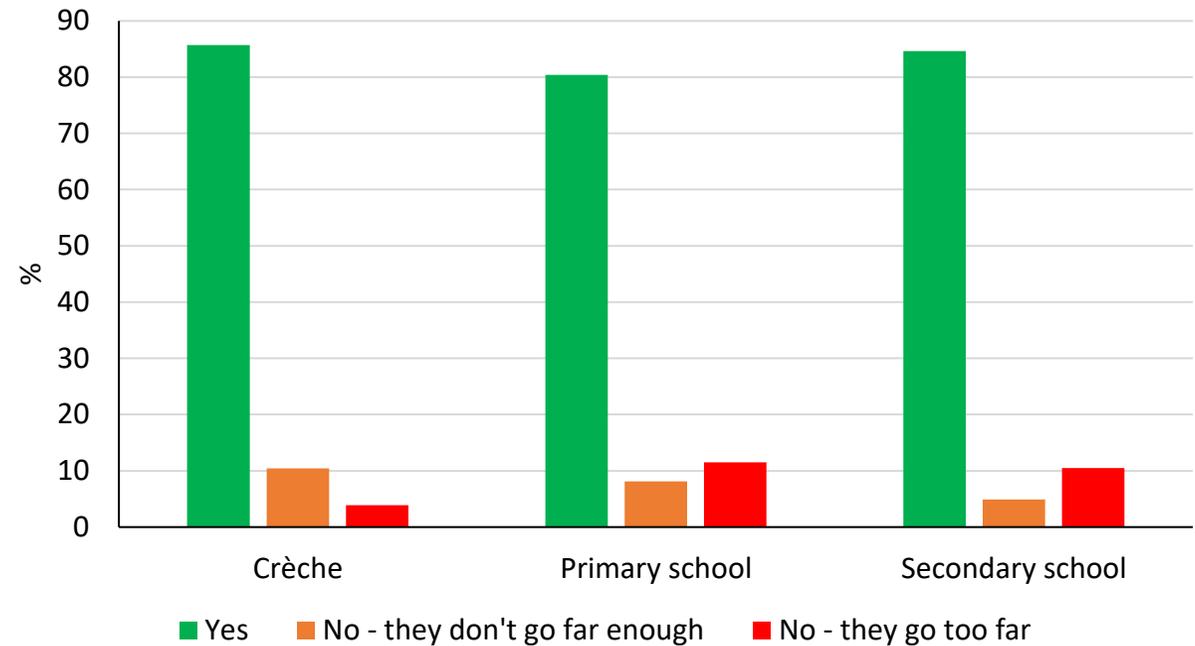
Risk of COVID-19 for children



How likely do you think it is that your child could catch COVID-19 at...

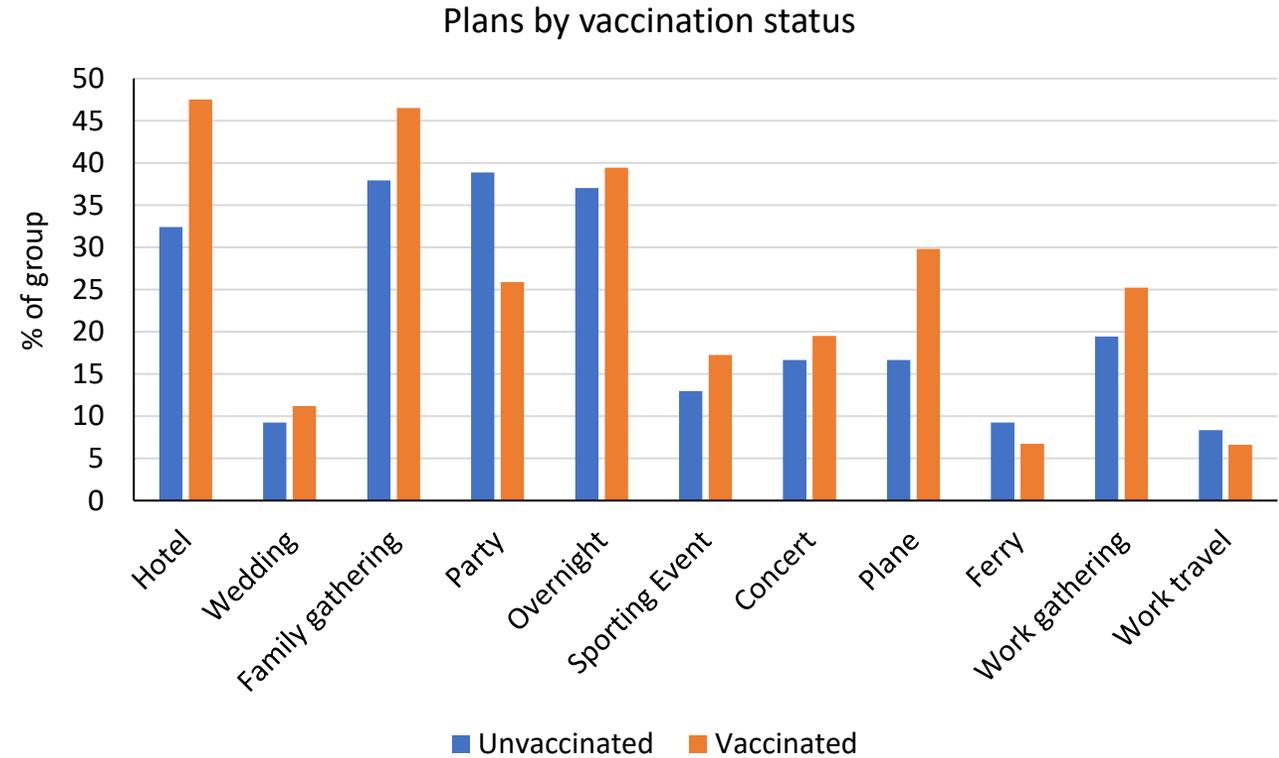
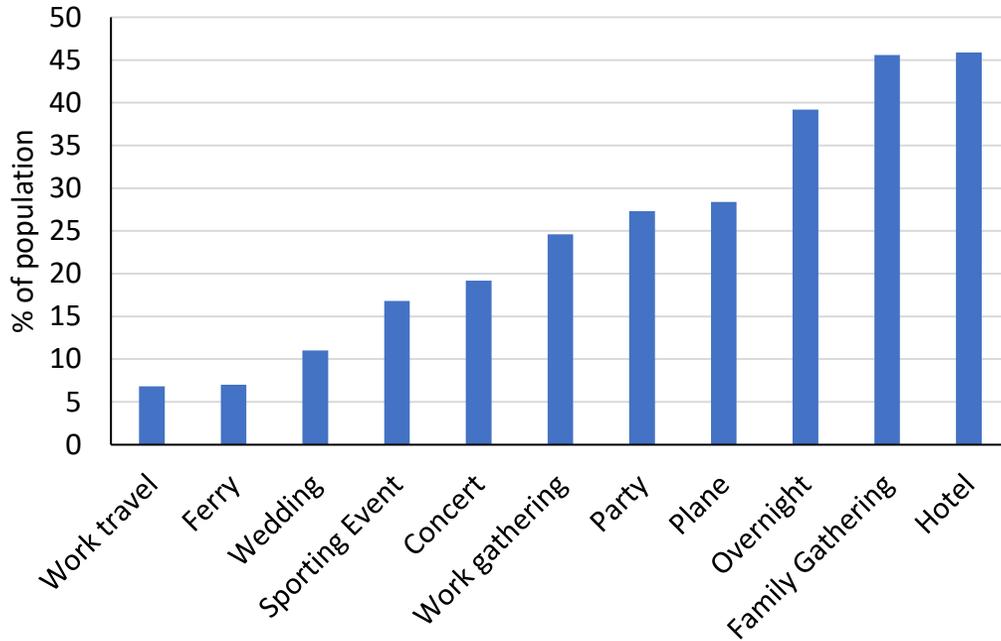


Are you satisfied with COVID-19 measures in place at your child's...



Parents think there is some likelihood (average 4 out of 7) that their child could catch COVID-19 in crèche or school, but most are satisfied with the mitigation measures in place to protect against it.

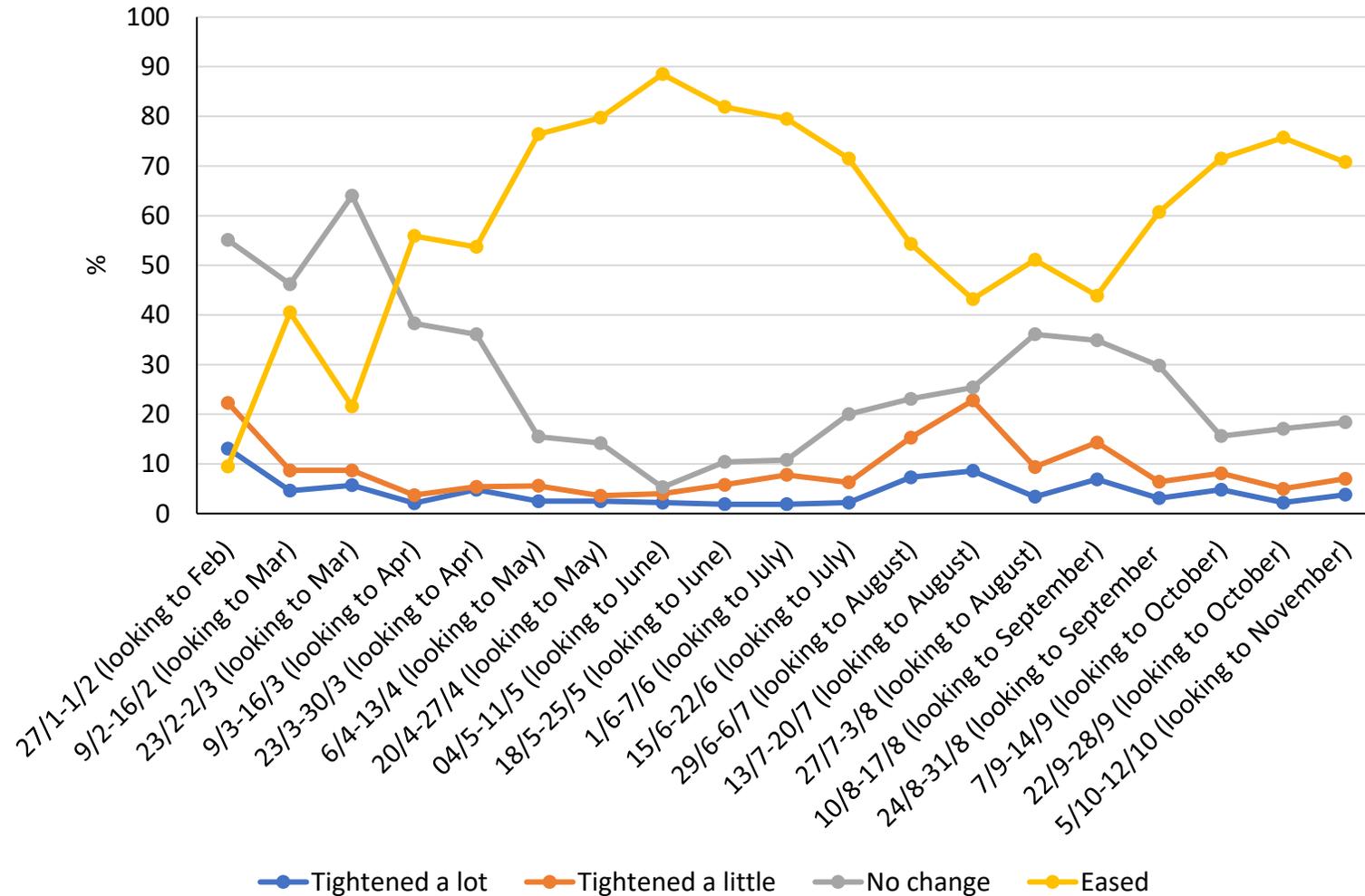
Plans in next 3 months



These charts shows the percentage of people who plan to do each of these activities in the next 3 months. Note that respondents were asked to only include definite plans that have a date attached. People with more vague plans for any of these activities are not included in the percentages.



Expectations for easing restrictions (next month)



The rise in people expecting restrictions to ease in November was halted. This data was collected before the announcement that the full easing of restrictions planned for 22nd October may be delayed, but may reflect the spike in case numbers during data collection.