

COVID-19 Support Study:

Experiences of and compliance with self-isolation

Interim Report 2
Wave 1 & 2 survey findings

June 2021



Summary

- ScotCen Social Research were commissioned by the Scottish Government to carry out a mixed mode study of adults asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect either because they tested positive for COVID-19, were in contact with someone that tested positive for COVID-19 or recently arrived into Scotland from outside the UK.
- The findings included here are interim findings only and based on online survey fieldwork for waves 1 and 2 which were carried out between:
 - Wave 1: Friday 19th March 2021 and Wednesday 31st March 2021
 - Wave 2: Monday 12th April and Wednesday 5th May 2021
- Data for some measures has been presented for both waves combined, while other slides also include a breakdown by wave, where appropriate and where sample sizes allow.
- Initial observations from the qualitative interviews have been included in the summary section of the slides, where appropriate.

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Study background & aims

1.



Background

The purpose of the Scottish Government's Test and Protect programme and self-isolation approach is to disrupt community transmission of COVID-19 and **save lives**

Self-isolation can present a range of challenges that may not be easy to overcome

Those asked to do so need to be *able* to self-isolate according to the guidelines



Good quality, robust data is needed to:

- Understand these challenges in more detail and how they may vary by individual circumstances
- Identify the specific types of additional support that are needed to help those asked to self-isolate

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Summary

- The Scottish Government commissioned this research in recognition of the need for robust data on compliance with the self-isolation requirement, the various challenges and barriers to isolation that exist and a desire to understand the factors that might facilitate adherence.
- It was also designed to identify knowledge and uptake of the support offer available to those asked to self-isolate and to identify what additional support, if any, people might need during this period.

Study purpose

To understand the challenges and support needed by those asked to self-isolate by exploring 3 key themes:

Knowledge



- How familiar are self-isolators with the key isolation requirements?
- Are self-isolators aware of the support offers available to them?

Attitudes



- Factors that may help understand a person's isolation behaviour
- Do they think self-isolation an effective strategy?
- Willingness/motivation to isolate
- Views on the role of the individual in decision-making

Practice



- Compliance levels (rate and extent)
- Isolation behaviours
- Support accessed, if any
- Support needs

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The study's research questions broadly sit under the themes of knowledge, attitudes and practice.

1. How much do people know about the self-isolation requirement and the support offer available to them?
2. What do they think about what they're being asked to do? And how motivated are they to do it?

And finally,

3. What are they actually doing – in terms of adherence but also in terms of accessing support during isolation?

Study design



2.

Study design

Mixed mode:

 Online/telephone quantitative survey

- Wave 1 - 19th - 31st March
- Wave 2 - 12th April – 5th May
- Wave 3 - 17th May – 2nd June

Fieldwork for waves 2 and 3 extended to maximise the response rate in light of declining case numbers.

 30 follow-up in-depth telephone/video qualitative interviews (mid-April – end of May)

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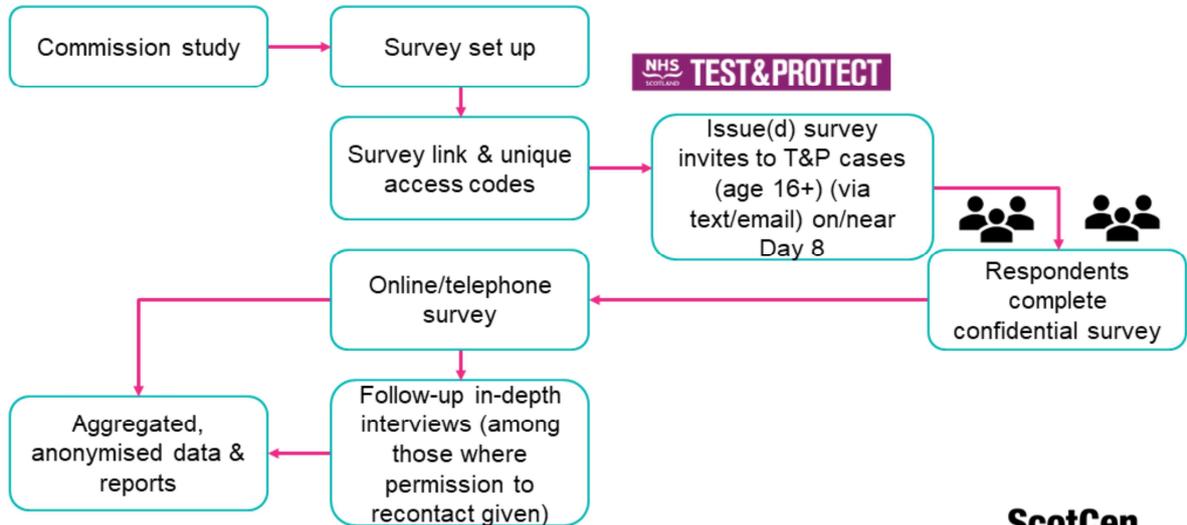
Summary

- The study is mixed mode consisting of 3 waves of survey fieldwork (March, April and May/June) along with in depth follow-up interviews with survey participants.
- The fieldwork periods for waves 2 and 3 have been extended to maximise response rate, particularly among index and contact cases.
- 30 follow-up qualitative interviews were completed in April and May. These were broken down by case type as follows: 10 index cases, 13 contacts and 7 international travellers.

Study administration



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Summary

The administration of the survey is as follows:

- ScotCen pass a survey link and a list of unique access codes to Test and Protect
- Test and Protect issue invitations (either by SMS or email) to everyone eligible to take part (see next slide)
- Participants take part in the 15 minute online survey (or via phone if they prefer)
- At the end of the survey participants are asked if they would be happy to be re-contacted for the follow-up in depth interviews.

Survey sample

A person was eligible to take part if they were:

- Age (16+)
- In Test and Protect system because they either:
 -  Tested positive for COVID-19
 -  Came into contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or
 -  Arrived into Scotland from outside of the UK
- Were on/close to **day 8** of their advised self-isolation period during the window for issuing invitations

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Summary

Those eligible to take part in the survey were defined as:

- Adults (16+) invited by Test and Protect to self-isolate because they:
 1. Tested positive for COVID-19, or
 2. Were in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or
 3. Because they recently arrived into Scotland from outside the UK.
- Eligible participants were invited to take part when they were on/close to day 8 of self-isolation.

Key topics covered*

Experiences

Current isolation status & reason for self-isolating

Experiences of self-isolation

Experiences of being tested for COVID-19

Support/guidance

Contact & guidance offered

Whether applied for self-isolation support grant

Support offered/ accessed/ needed from Local Authorities

Understanding & opinion

Understanding of self-isolation guidelines

General opinions on self-isolation guidelines & behaviour

9 *The topics shown are covered by the full study. Interim report contents may vary by wave.

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**Survey
response**



3.

Survey response: Waves 1 & 2

	Index cases		Contact cases		International Travellers		Total	
	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2	W1	W2
Invitations issued (n)	3,515	2,456	7,332	10,585	1,904	8,313	12,751	21,354
Total questionnaires completed (n)	384	274	261	435	263	1,029	908	1,738
Response rate* – total questionnaires completed (%)	11%	11%	4%	4%	14%	12%	7%	8%

11 *See summary for additional notes on response rates

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Summary

- To date, 34,105 eligible adults from Test & Protect have been invited to take part in the survey (wave 1 = 12, 751 and wave 2=21,354).
- A total of 2646 adults have participated in the survey to date (wave 1=908, wave 2=1738).
- Response rates vary by case type with international travellers most likely to take part (wave 1=14%, wave 2=12%) and contact cases least likely to participate (waves 1 and 2=4%).
- Response rates across waves 1 and 2 were similar for all case types.
- Wave 3 of the survey is currently still in field.

Notes on response rate:

- The wave 2 fieldwork period was extended to maximise response rate and in light of decline in positive case numbers generally.
- Invites were suspended for the day of the royal funeral on 17th of April 2021 as per Scottish Government/Civil Service protocol.
- Due to an error in the PHS set up, no invites went to index cases for the first 11 days of fieldwork. However, invites were sent to a backlog of cases and the invite period extended to the 4th of May.

Findings - international travellers

4.

Interpreting the findings

The findings presented here should be interpreted with a degree of caution for the following reasons:

- They are based on interim data from two waves of fieldwork
- Tests of statistical significance will only be carried out once all waves of fieldwork have been completed
- The survey was opt-in, therefore the findings cannot be viewed as representative of all those asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect

Summary

- When interpreting the survey findings included in this report it should be borne in mind that:
 - This is an opt-in survey. Therefore findings are representative of survey participants and not all those asked to self-isolate by Test and Protect.
 - The results are based on two waves of data collection only and tests of statistical significance will only be carried out after data collection has been completed.

Compliance measured in two different ways

Self-assessed – Ask people how they feel they did

Which of the following best describe how you managed to comply with self-isolation?

Followed the self-isolation guidance:

- All of the time
- Some of the time
- Was not able to follow at all

Behavioural - Measure adherence to components of the guidance

- **How soon started isolating after developing symptoms/being asked to***
- **Times left home/accommodation to carry out disallowed activity *during* isolation**
- Whether met anyone from outside household during isolation
- **Number of days isolated for**

14 *A participant that did not start straight away, but who only carried out permitted activities before isolating (get/send COVID-19 test), was categorised as compliant and equivalent to someone who did start straight away.

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Summary

- Compliance is measured in two ways in the survey:
 - (1) By asking people directly how well they think they followed the guidelines, and
 - (2) By asking people separately a series of questions designed to measure adherence to specific components of the isolation requirement (the components measured are presented on the right-hand side of the slide).
- Those components in bold, on the right-hand side, were then used to create a more objective summary measure of compliance than a person's own overall self-assessment. So a person's responses to the questions on: how soon they started isolating, whether they left accommodation during the isolation period, and the total number of days they reported isolating for were used to categorise them as either fully, partially or non-compliant with the requirement to self-isolate.
- It should be noted that, for the behavioural measure, a participant was categorised as compliant if they answered that they did not isolate straight away but the only activity they carried out before isolation was to get/send a COVID-19 test. Similarly, a participant was categorised as not having left home during the isolation period if they did report leaving but only to get/send a COVID-19 test.
- **To note, between waves 1 and 2 some additional quality assurance and clarification of the compliance measures was carried out to ensure getting or returning a Covid-19 test during isolation was considered compliant across all relevant measures. This means some of the findings from wave 1 have been updated in this most recent report. In the final report, wave 1 compliance figures will be updated and provided separately.**

**International
travellers –
booking type and
means of arrival**

5.

Type of booking made prior to arriving in Scotland (International Travellers) (%)

Arrangements made before returning to Scotland



Booked a managed
isolation (quarantine)
package
17%



Booked COVID-19 test
kit for self-isolation at
home
82%



Neither
2%

16 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international travellers (1,240)

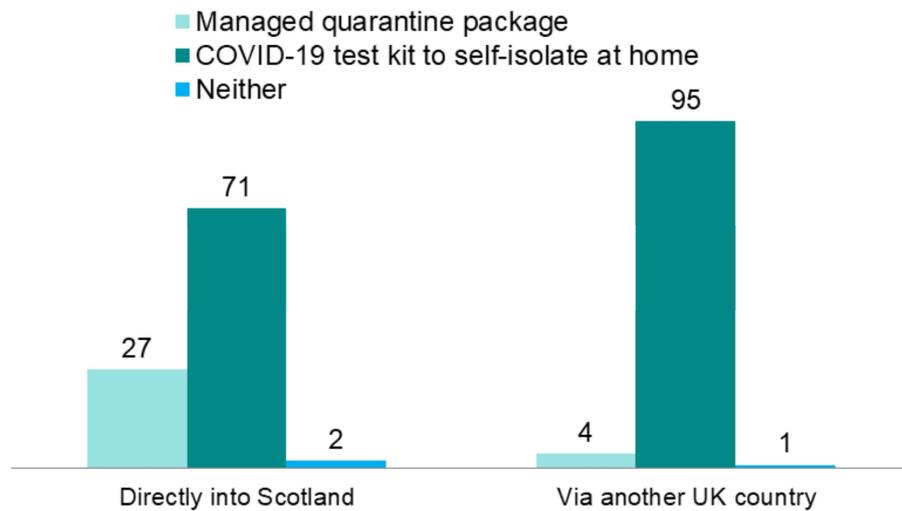
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Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Almost all international travellers that took part made in the survey had made arrangements for their self-isolation before arriving into Scotland, with just 2% reporting that they did not make arrangements in advance.
- Around 8 in 10 (82%) booked a test kit to self-isolate at home, while 17% reported booking a managed isolation (quarantine) package.

Pre-departure arrangements by means of arrival into Scotland (%)



17 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international travellers who arrived directly into Scotland (684); all who arrived via another UK country (553)

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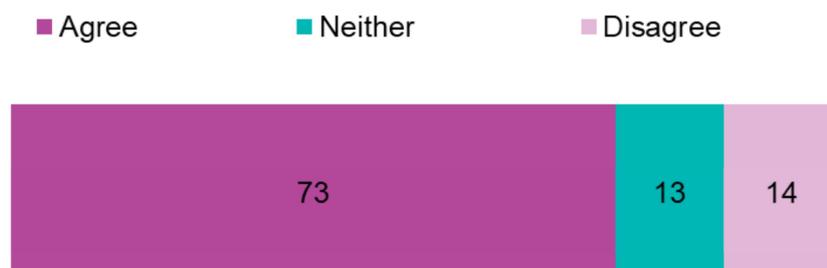
Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- The most common pre-departure arrangements made by international travellers was to book a COVID-19 test kit for home use, this was particularly true among those who arrived into Scotland via another UK country (95%).
- Around a quarter (27%) of those who travelled directly into Scotland had booked a managed hotel quarantine package in advance, while 71% had arranged to self-isolate at home.
- Very small proportions, in both groups, indicated having booked neither a managed quarantine package or a COVID-19 test kit to self-isolate at home.

Agreement with statement on ease of booking self-isolation package (%)

"It was easy to book and pay for my managed isolation accommodation/ my COVID-19 test kit for home isolation"



18 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international travellers who booked either a managed isolation package or booked a COVID-19 test kit to self-isolate at home (1,215)

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Summary

- International travellers that took part in the survey were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the following statement about the type of self-isolation package they themselves had booked "It was easy to book and pay for my managed isolation accommodation/ my COVID-19 test kit for home isolation".

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Three quarters (73%) agreed that it was easy to book and pay for their particular self-isolation arrangement. Fourteen percent did not agree that their arrangement was easy to book and pay for and a similar proportion neither agreed nor disagreed.

**International
travellers -
Compliance with
requirement to
self-isolate**

6.

Self-assessed compliance with the requirement to self-isolate (%)

Which of the following best describe how you managed to comply with self-isolation?

Followed the self-isolation guidance...

■ All of the time ■ Some of the time ■ Not able to follow at all



20 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,110)

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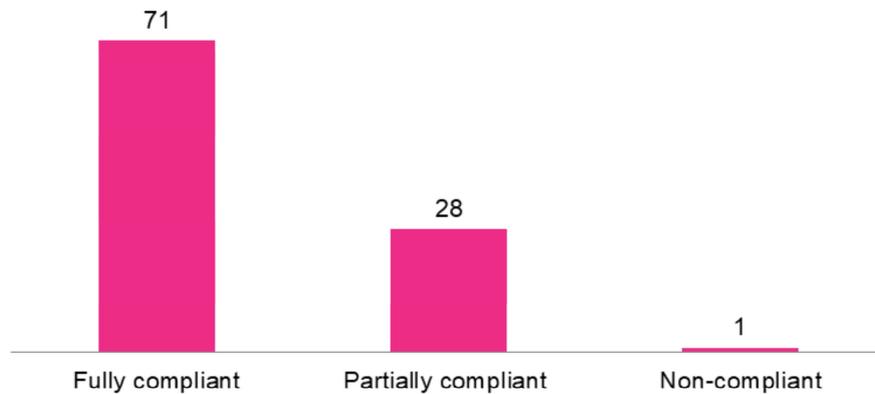
Summary

- This slide presents self-assessed compliance among international traveller participants.

Across waves 1 and 2:

- It is clear that, when asked directly how well they managed to comply with self-isolation, most (92%) international travellers that participated were of the view that they complied “all of the time.”
- While just 8% of international travellers that took part in the survey felt they managed to comply with the requirement to self-isolate “some of the time,” no-one reported being unable to comply with the requirement at all.

Behavioural compliance (%)



21 Base: All Wave 1 and 2 international traveller respondents who answered questions required to derive this summary compliance measure (1,298)

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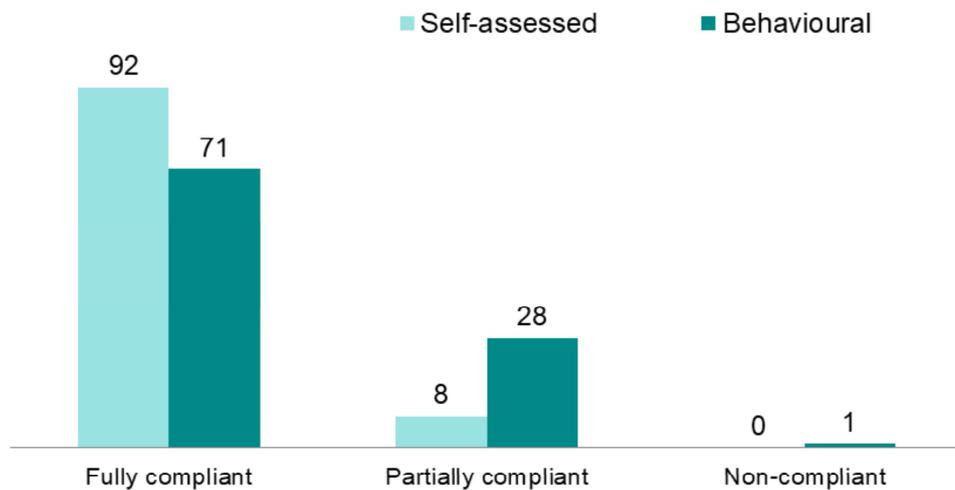
Summary

- This slide shows international traveller compliance on the behavioural measure (derived from responses to (i) how soon began self-isolation, (ii) whether they left self-isolation and (iii) how many days, in total they isolated for. Note that a person who didn't start self-isolation straight away, but who only reported COVID-19 test related activities before starting, was treated as compliant on the 'when started isolation' measure. Similarly someone who reported leaving home/accommodation during isolation for a COVID-19 test related reason only was handled as compliant on this measure.

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Around seven in ten (71%) international travellers fully complied with the requirement to self-isolate based on their responses to questions on when they started isolating, how long they isolated for and whether they left home/accommodation during the isolation period. Just over a quarter (28%) proportion partially complied with the requirement to isolate and 1% were non-compliant based on their responses to these questions.
- There was no significant change in compliance among international travellers between waves 1 and 2 of the survey.

Comparison of compliance measures (%)



22 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents who gave self-assessed compliance response (1,110); all included in behavioural calculation (1,298)

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Summary

- This slide explores self-assessed compliance side by side with the behavioural measure of compliance (derived from responses to questions on when started isolation, total days isolated for and whether left the house during the self-isolation period) for international traveller participants.
- Compliance (based on composite behavioural survey measure) is lower than people's own assessment of how well they think they complied.

Across waves 1 and 2:

- While 92% of international travellers that took part felt they fully complied, according to our derived measure of compliance, full compliance was lower at 71%.
- Eight percent of international travellers reported following the guidelines 'most of the time', whereas partial compliance stood at the higher figure of 28% on the survey derived measure of compliance.
- Non-compliance was low on both the self-assessed and behavioural measures.

% complied to individual isolation requirements

Guidance	Complied	Did not comply
Started isolating straight away/ did not isolate straight away but only reported activity was to get/send COVID-19 test	89%	10%
Do not leave home/accommodation during isolation or only leave to get/send COVID-19 test	80%	20%
Avoid contact with people outside HH <i>during</i> isolation	86%	14%
Isolate for 10 days/still in isolation	99%	1%

Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents who answered questions on when started isolation (1,219); whether did activities before starting (1,201); whether left accommodation (1,197); if left home, whether did any of the activities listed (498); whether met people from outside home (1,170); number of days isolated (1,290); numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding

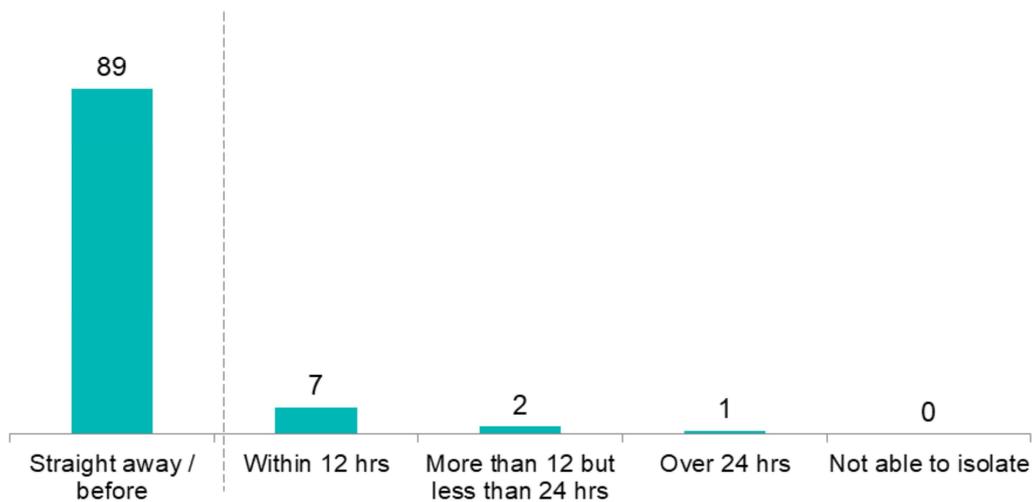
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Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Around nine in ten (89%) international travellers that took part in the survey reported complying with the requirement to begin self-isolation immediately. Those who did not start straight away, but only carried out the permitted activity of getting/sending a COVID-19 test beforehand, were categorised as having started straight away on this measure.
- Eight in ten international traveller participants complied with the requirement not to leave their home/accommodation during their self-isolation period or only left to get/send a COVID-19 test (80%).
- Fourteen percent of international travellers reported being in close contact with someone from outside their household/accommodation during their period of self-isolation.
- While just 1% appeared unable to comply with the requirement to self-isolate for 10 days, other data collected indicate that the proportion of participants reporting leaving their home/accommodation during this period was higher than this.

How soon started isolating (%)*



* If a participant did not isolate straight away/before but the only activity they reported carrying out before starting isolation was 'get/send COVID-19 test' they were categorised as isolating 'straight away/ before'. Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,219)

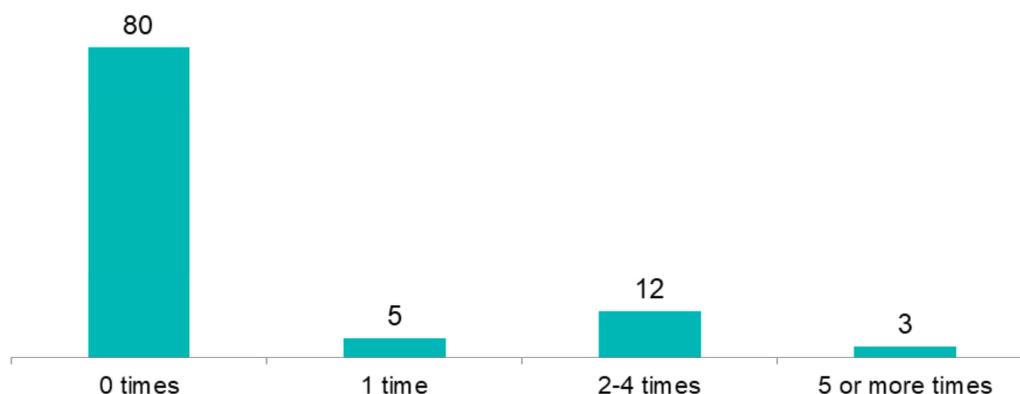
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Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Around nine in ten (89%) international traveller participants reported starting their period of self-isolation either straight away once advised to do so by Test and Protect, or in advance of being asked to do so.
- Seven percent managed to begin isolating within 12 hours, 2% between 12 and 24 hours and the remainder took over 24 hours to start their self-isolation.
- International travellers may need to travel from an airport to begin their self-isolation.

Number of times left accommodation for a non-compliant reason (%)*



25 *If a participant reported leaving home/accommodation during isolation but the only activity carried out was permitted i.e. 'get/send COVID-19 test' they were categorised as having left home '0 times' here.

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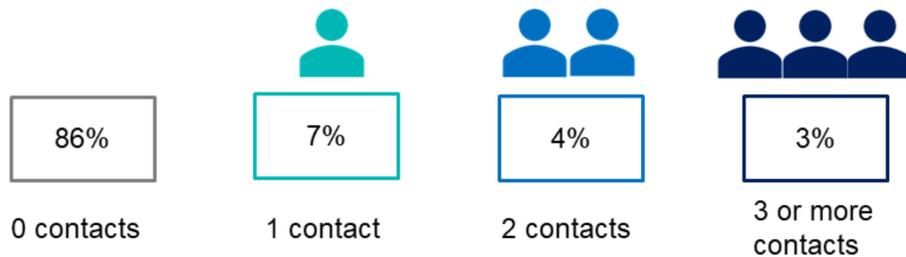
Summary

- Those that reported managing to self-isolate were asked how many times, if at all, they left their home/accommodation during the isolation period. A participant was treated as compliant (by having their response reset to zero) on this measure if they reported leaving once, or more often, but only to carry out a COVID-19 test related activity.

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Eight in ten (80%) international traveller participants reported that they did not leave their home/accommodation during their self-isolation period or only left to get/send a COVID-19 test.
- A small proportion (5%) reported leaving once while just over one in ten (12%) left 2-4 times while isolating.

Number of contacts with people outside household during self-isolation (%)



26 Base: All Wave 1 and 2 international traveller respondents (1,166)

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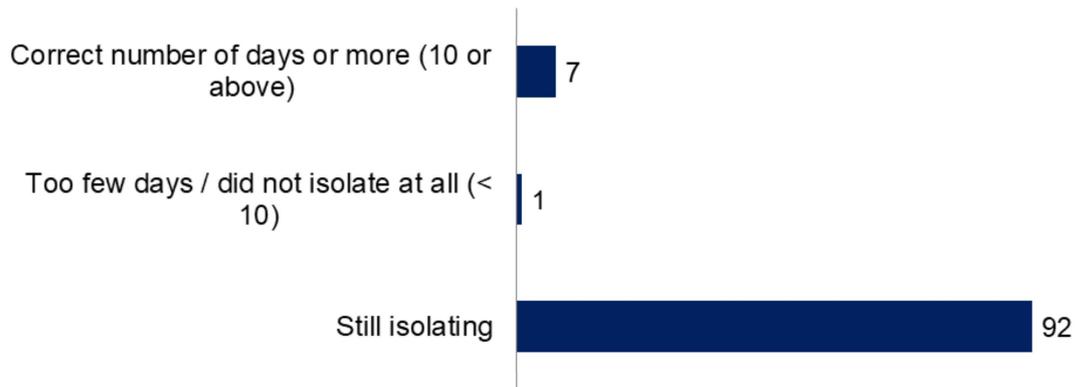
Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- The vast majority (86%) of international traveller participants did not come into close contact with anyone from outside their home/accommodation during their period of self-isolation. Seven percent reported coming into close contact with one person, 4% with 2 people and 3% came into close contact with 3 or more people from outside their place of isolation.
- Those in managed quarantine were more likely than those self-isolating at home to report not coming into close contact with anyone from outside their home or accommodation during isolation.

Isolation length (%)

Days able to isolate for (%)



27 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,290)

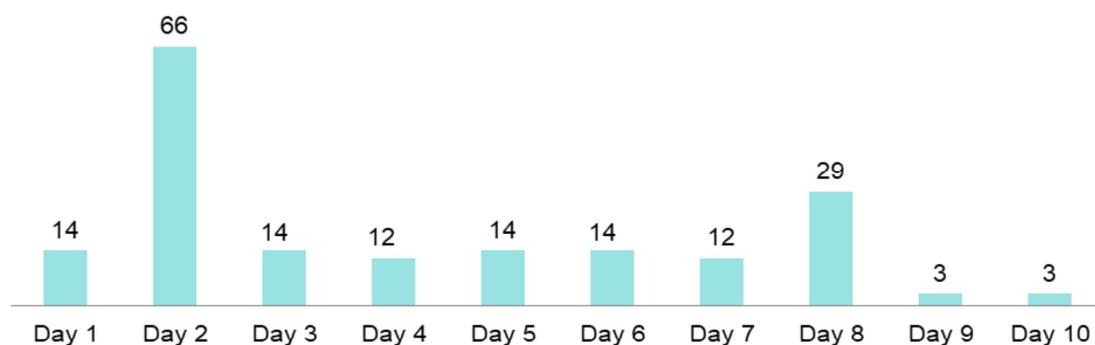
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Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- More than nine in ten (92%) of international traveller participants were still isolating when they participated in the survey, 7% had finished and isolated for the correct number of days, while just 1% either did not isolate at all or isolated for too few days.

Days left home if left house at least once during self-isolation period (%)



28 Base: All international traveller respondents that left at least once during self-isolation for any reason (503)

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Summary

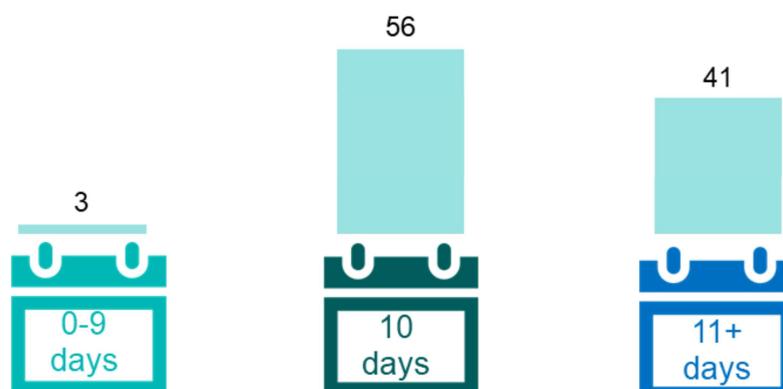
Across waves 1 and 2:

- Among those international travellers that reported leaving home/accommodation during self-isolation (irrespective of whether it was for a permitted activity or not), the most commonly cited days to leave were day 2 (66% of those who reported leaving home mentioned doing so on this day) and day 8 (29% reported leaving on day 8). These are the dates international travellers are expected to carry out testing, so may leave home to return their tests on these days.
- The group of international travellers that reported leaving their home/accommodation during their period of self-isolation was almost exclusively made up of those self-isolating at home.

**International
travellers -
Knowledge of self-
isolation
guidelines**

7.

Knowledge of required number of days to self-isolate (%)



30 Base: All Wave 1 and 2 international traveller respondents (1,144)

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Summary

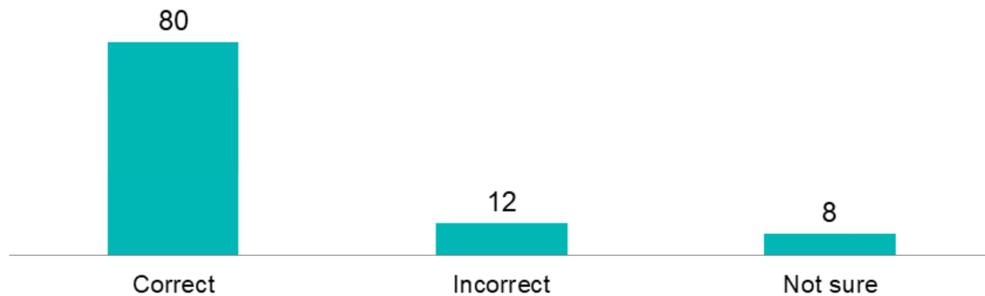
- International traveller participants were asked: “According to official guidance from the Scottish Government/NHS Scotland, for how many days in total should someone self-isolate if they test positive for COVID-19...?” A list of answer options were not presented, instead the participant was invited to enter an exact figure for the number of days they thought was required.

Across waves 1 and 2:

- When asked how many days someone should self-isolate for if they tested positive for COVID-19, just over half (56%) of international traveller participants answered 10 days.
- A significant proportion (41%) reported the requirement was to isolate for 11 days or more, with 14 days being the most common answer given (37% of all international travellers). Just 3% reported that the official guidance was to isolate for fewer days than is actually the case.

Knowledge of requirement to isolate after negative test (%)

Someone who has been informed that they have been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should self-isolate for 10 days, even if they later test negative themselves...



31 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,153)

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Summary

Across waves 1 and 2:

- Eighty percent of international travellers that took part reported that it was 'correct' that a person should self-isolate for 10 days if they've been informed they have been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, even if they later tested negative themselves.
- Around one in ten (12%) reported that the statement was 'incorrect' while 8% weren't sure either way.

International travellers - Testing

8.

Result of last COVID-19 test taken (%)

	All international travellers
	%
Negative	94
Positive	0
Inconclusive/ void	0
No result yet	5

33 Base: All Wave1 & 2 international traveller respondents who have ever been tested for COVID-19 (1,111)

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Summary

Across both waves 1 and 2:

- Most (94%) international travellers that took part and reported having been tested for COVID-19 reported that the result of their most recent test was negative. At the time of taking part in the survey, the remainder of the international traveller sample had not received the result of their most recent test.
- It was not possible to explore compliance by result of last COVID-19 test given the high proportion (94%) of international travellers that tested negative at their most recent test.

**International
travellers -
Attitudes &
experiences**

9.

Impact of self-isolation on mental health (%)



35 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,126); all Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents who lived with others (896)

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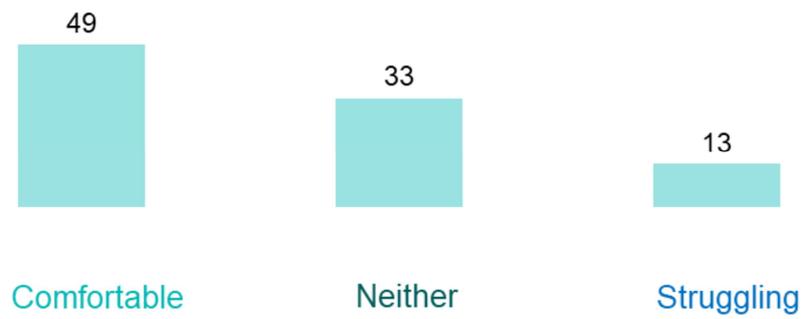
Summary

- International travellers were asked whether they thought self-isolation had a positive or negative impact on their own mental health or did not impact on it either way.

Across both waves 1 and 2:

- Just under half (48%) of international travellers reported that self-isolation had a negative impact on their mental health, 43% said it made no difference, while 9% said it had impacted positively.
- Participants were also asked what impact, if any, their own requirement to self-isolate had on the mental health of others in their household/accommodation. Around a third (36%) of international travellers reported that their own requirement to self-isolate had negatively impacted on the mental health of others in the home. Over half (56%) reported that it had neither a positive or negative impact on the mental health of others in their household/accommodation.

How household managing financially during self-isolation (%)



Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveller respondents (1,112)

36

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Summary

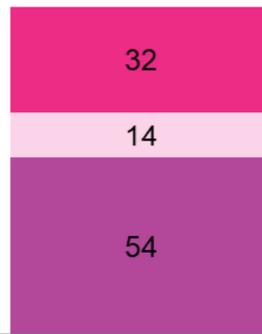
Across both waves 1 and 2:

- Around half of the international travellers that took part indicated that they had managed/were managing comfortably on their household income at the time of taking part (49%), while 13% indicated that they had struggled/were struggling over the period.

Agreement on ease of understanding international travel rules (%)

"It was easy to understand the Scottish Government information on international travel rules during the pandemic"

■ Strongly agree/agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree/strongly disagree



All International Travellers

37 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international travellers (1,215)

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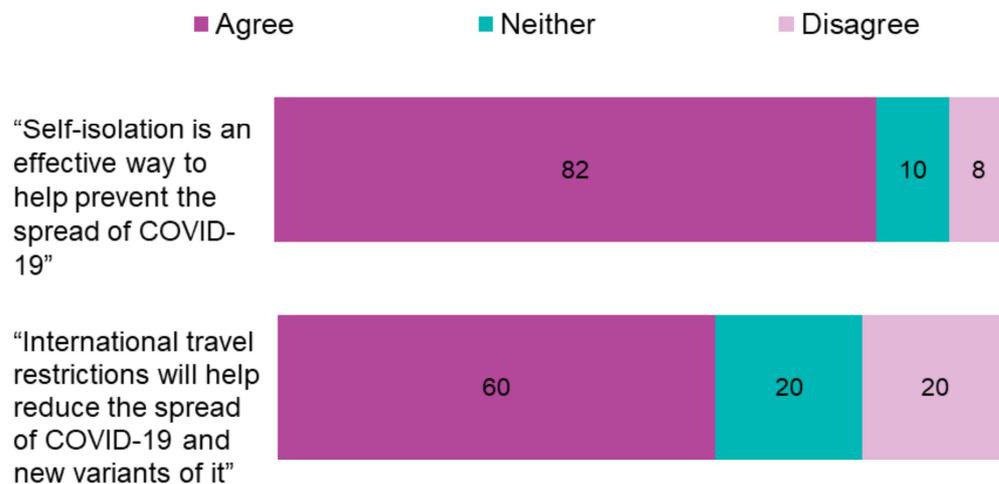
Summary

- International travellers that took part in the survey were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the statement that "It was easy to understand the Scottish Government information on international travel rules during the pandemic".

Across both waves 1 and 2:

- While just over half (54%) of all international travellers agreed that the Scottish Government information was easy to understand, around a third (32%) did not agree that this was the case.

Levels of agreement with statements on self-isolation strategy and international travel rules(%)



38 Base: All Wave 1 & 2 international traveler respondents who answered question: on 'self-isolation is an effective strategy...(1,116); on 'international travel rules...' (1,214)

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Summary:

Across both waves 1 and 2:

- Around 8 in 10 (82%) international travellers that took part in the survey were in agreement that self-isolation was an effective way of helping prevent the spread of COVID-19. Just 8% disagreed with the statement suggesting they do not view self-isolation as an effective strategy.
- When asked if they agreed or disagreed that international travel restrictions would help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and new variants of it, 6 in 10 international travellers agreed that they would. Two in 10 (20%) disagreed with the statement and a similar proportion (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Agreement with statement on individual judgement on self-isolation (%)

"It should be up to the individual, not the government, to decide whether they need to self-isolate or not"

■ Strongly agree/agree ■ Neither ■ Disagree/strongly disagree



All respondents

87 Bases for Wave 1 & 2 combined international traveller respondents (1,117)

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Summary:

Across both waves 1 and 2:

- The majority (70%) of international travellers that took part did not agree that it should be up to individuals to decide whether to self-isolate or not (70%). Fourteen percent agreed with the statement that it should be left to the individual to decide, while a similar proportion (16%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Contact

Lisa Rutherford

Research Director

E. lisa.rutherford@scotcen.org.uk

Vicky Wilson

Senior Researcher

E. victoria.wilson@scotcen.org.uk

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