

COVID-19: Highest Risk -

Survey report - July 2021

August 2021

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Background

An online survey was conducted by the Scottish Government in July 2021 with more than 4,600 people who have been identified as being at highest clinical risk from Covid-19 by clinicians. These were people who had previously received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer advising them to follow guidance for those at highest risk (this may have included asking them to shield).

[The survey](#) explored current views and behaviours of people identified as highest risk, including:

- vaccination status and any barriers to vaccination
- recent activity and moving towards and beyond Level 0
- any impact on face-to-face medical appointments
- expectations around returning to the workplace or education settings

The purpose of this work was to;

- gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of people at highest risk, who may formerly have been asked to shield, for the teams working on delivering support and information to them.
- uncover insights to inform service and policy design from a user centred perspective in a fast-paced environment.

The survey went live on 16 July 2021 and closed on 26 July 2021, it had 4607 responses.

Context

Important external context and changes to restrictions while the survey was live:

- people at highest risk were sent a CMO letter about the plans for moving to Level 0 on 15 July 2021
- this letter also advised that the terminology of shielding would be moving to highest risk
- all areas in Scotland moved to Level 0 on 19 July 2021
- case numbers were relatively high in the run up to and during the survey being live with [1749 positive cases on 16 July and 1371 positive cases on 26 July](#)
- approximately 93% of people on the highest risk list had received both doses of the vaccine
- evidence of the effectiveness of vaccination for those at highest risk and in particular those who were immunosuppressed was emerging at this stage – subsequently published studies demonstrated its efficacy for this group

Therefore, individual's circumstances were different depending on when they completed the survey. This could impact the results for some questions.

Recruitment approach

Participants were recruited via:

- An email sent to individuals signed up to the Highest Risk Research List, who opted-in to being contacted about taking part in research related to the highest risk group – these participants are generally very active and engaged (4050 responses)
- Distributing the link to the survey (557 responses) via:
 - publication on the mygov.scot website's page on shielding
 - asking stakeholder organisations such as charities and local authorities to encourage participation through their existing networks
 - articles shared through Scottish media after mention of the survey in an announcement on the move towards Level 0 from the First Minister on 13 July 2021

Limitations of this research

This survey is not statistically representative of the wider shielding population as it does not represent the make-up of the highest risk list. However, the sample is robust and gives a strong indication of the behaviours and attitudes of the group. A demographic breakdown of participants (including comparison with the overall highest risk population) can be found in the Respondents Profile page in the appendix.

The majority of responses were from those already signed up to the Highest Risk Research List who are a very active and engaged group.

We recognise that people with low digital skills or no internet access would not be able to participate. We were unable to provide an alternative route for submitting responses in the tight timeframe.

None of the questions which respondents answered were mandatory, except the initial screening one. This explains why the total number of responses fluctuates throughout the survey as they could skip past questions they did not want to answer.

Eligibility to participate

At the start of the survey, we asked participants to tell us whether they had received a letter from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer advising them to follow guidance for

those identified as at being highest risk. 2% of respondents answered no and were not permitted to complete the survey.

Key Findings

1. **59% of respondents felt uncomfortable about the move towards Level 0 and beyond in Scotland**

The top reasons provided for those who felt uncomfortable about easing restrictions included:

- concerns about the behaviour of others (100% of respondents cited this as a reason)
 - the high case numbers (at the time of the survey being live)
 - the measures in place not making them feel safer
 - being unsure how effective the vaccine was for them
-

2. **Many people are still not meeting people outside of their household or extended household**

Despite the easing in restrictions and high take up of the vaccine in this cohort, in the last 2 months:

- 24% of respondents had not met people outdoors who were not part of their household or extended household
 - 50% of respondents had not met people indoors who are not part of their household or extended household
 - 2% of respondents had not left their home for any reason
-

3. **73% of respondents who expected to return to work in the coming months felt uncomfortable about this**

From previous research with people at highest risk, we know that returning to work was an area of concern for key workers and those who were unable to work from home. These concerns seems to continue for those who have not had to be in the workplace so far, but may be asked to after the more recent easing in restrictions.

4. **30% of respondents who had chosen not to get a vaccination were worried about side effects**

While the number of people who had not had a vaccination was low (n46), the key reasons for why they had decided not to go ahead were:

- being worried about the side effects (30%)
- thinking the vaccination had been developed too quickly (28%)
- not feeling confident that the vaccine had been tested on people with their health condition (26%)
- being unable to get vaccinated because of their condition (24%)

Vaccination for those at highest risk

We wanted to understand people's vaccination status and any barriers to getting vaccinated.

98% of respondents (n4511) had received both doses of the vaccine.

Of the 87 people who had not received both doses of the vaccine:

- 46% had received one dose
- 54% had not had a vaccination

Of the 38 people who had not received a second dose of the vaccine, the primary reason was having had a bad reaction to the first dose (32%). The next highest number of responses was 'another reason' (26%). The most common of these open text responses were from people who had been through changes to treatment/medication for their condition, or had been ill in between doses, and were advised to wait for a period of time until they could get their second dose.

Of the 46 people who had not had a vaccination, the most common reasons for not going ahead with vaccinations were:

- being worried about the side effects (30%)
- thinking the vaccination had been developed too quickly (28%)
- not feeling confident that the vaccine had been tested on people with their health condition (26%)
- being unable to get vaccinated because of their condition (24%)

Those who selected 'another reason' (17%) gave a range of reasons including: being pregnant, waiting for a specific vaccine to become available in their area and having a bad reaction to other vaccinations.

Booster vaccinations

95% planned to get a booster vaccination when it was offered to them. The most common reasons given by the 218 people who did not want a booster vaccination or felt unsure were:

- they had a bad reaction to the first doses of the vaccine (32%)
- they didn't understand the benefits of a booster vaccination (30%)
- another reason (21%)

Alternative reasons for not wanting a booster vaccination included: concerns about the side effects and safety of the vaccines, wanting more information on effectiveness of the vaccine (with a number of respondents mentioning the use of antibody tests to reassure them) and concerns about the long term effects of the vaccine.

Whether people have had both doses of the vaccine

Yes	98%
No	2%
Response count	4511

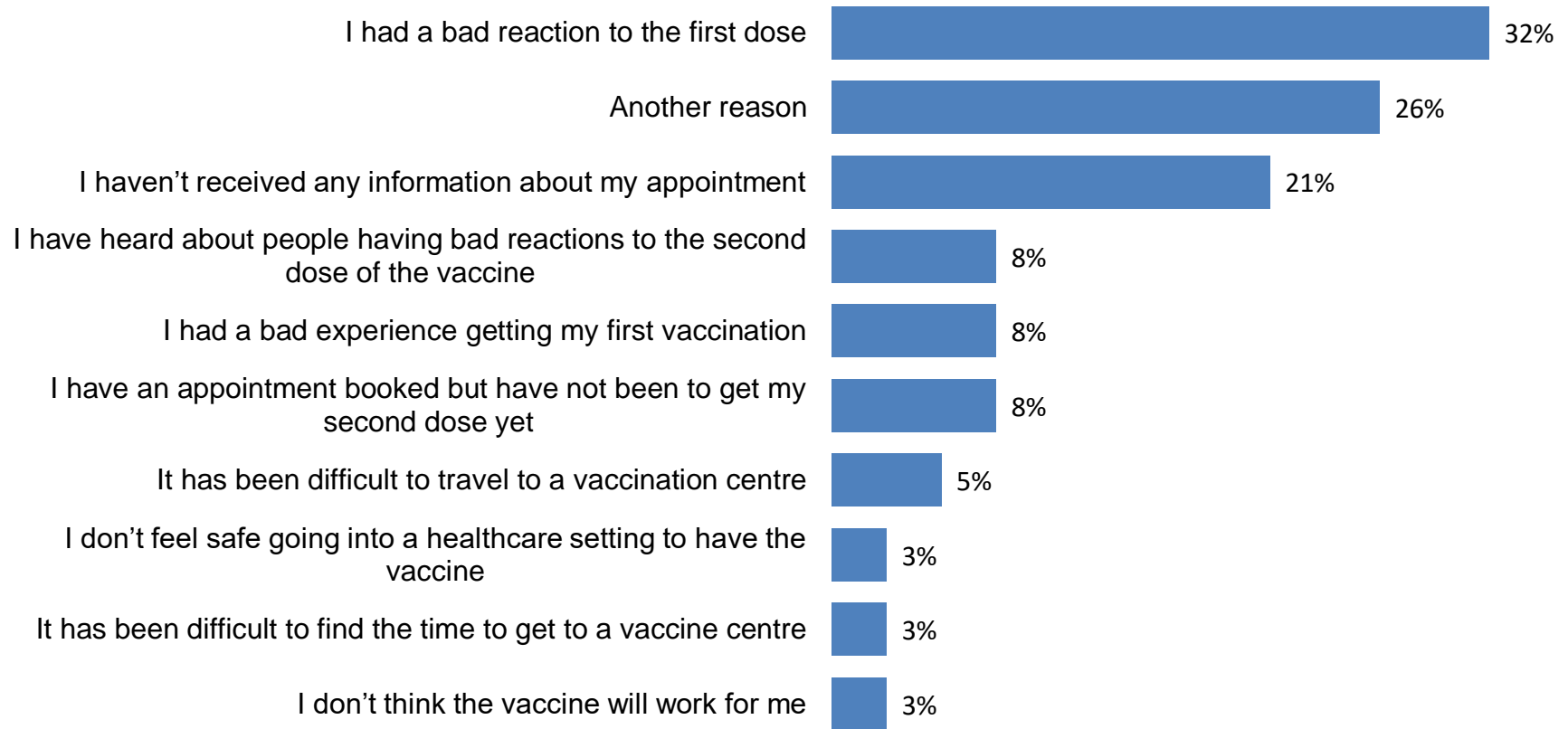
Whether people have had their first dose of the vaccine

Yes	46%
No	54%
Response count	87

Whether people plan to take up the offer of a booster vaccination

Yes	95%
No	1%
Don't know / haven't decided yet	4%
Response count	4516

Reasons why people have not had a second dose of the vaccine



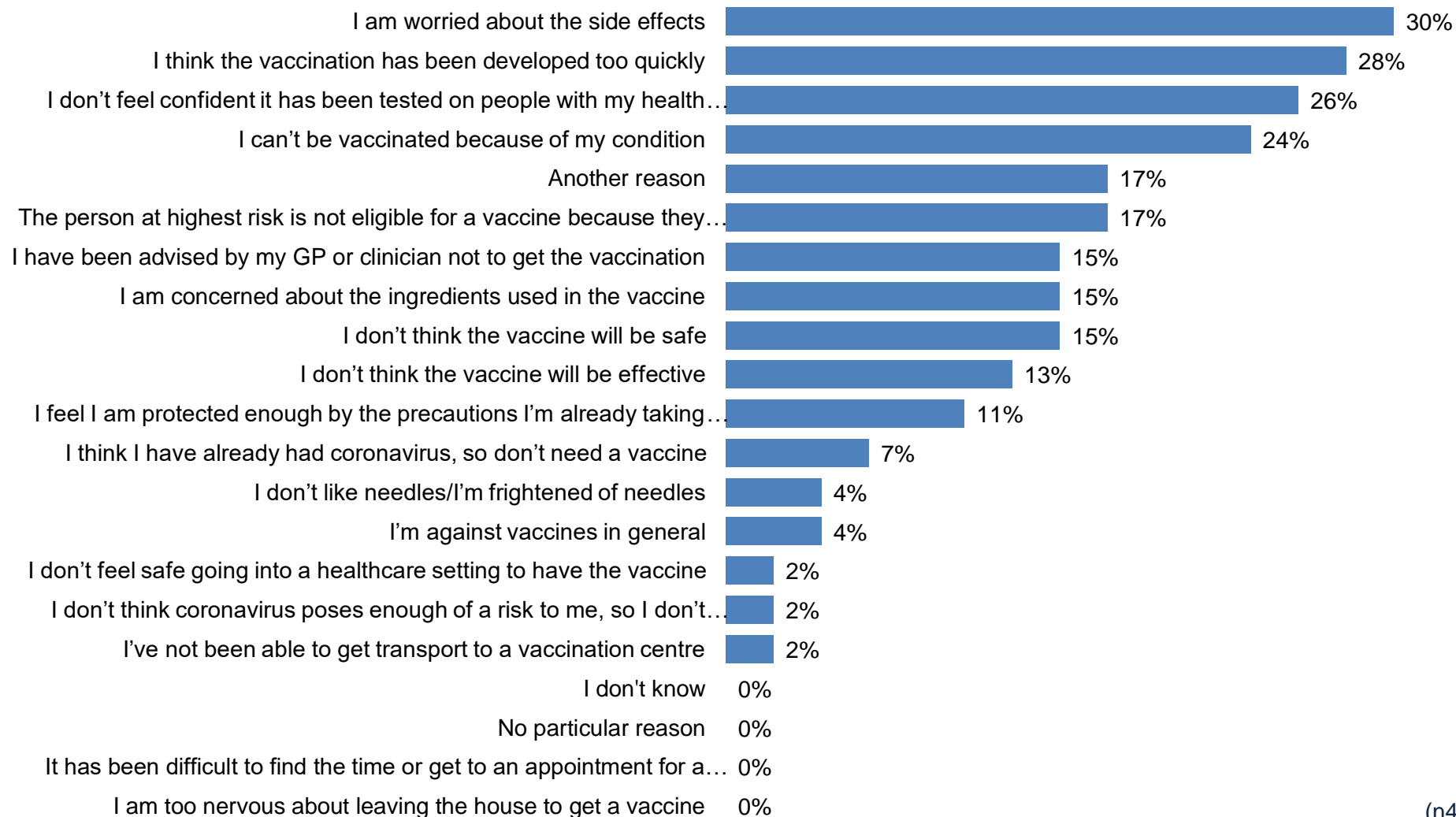
(n38)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I had a bad reaction to the first dose	32%
Another reason	26%
I haven't receive any information about my appointment	21%
I have heard about people having bad reactions to the second dose of the vaccine	8%
I had a bad experience getting my first vaccination	8%
I have an appointment booked but have not been to get my second dose yet	8%
It has been difficult to travel to a vaccination centre	5%
I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine	3%
It has been difficult to find the time to get to a vaccine centre	3%
I don't think the vaccine will work for me	3%
Response count	38

For 'Another reason' (26%) – the most common open text responses were from people who had been through changes to treatment/medication for their condition, or had been ill in between doses and were advised to wait for a period of time until they could get their second dose.

Reasons why people have not had a vaccine



(n46)

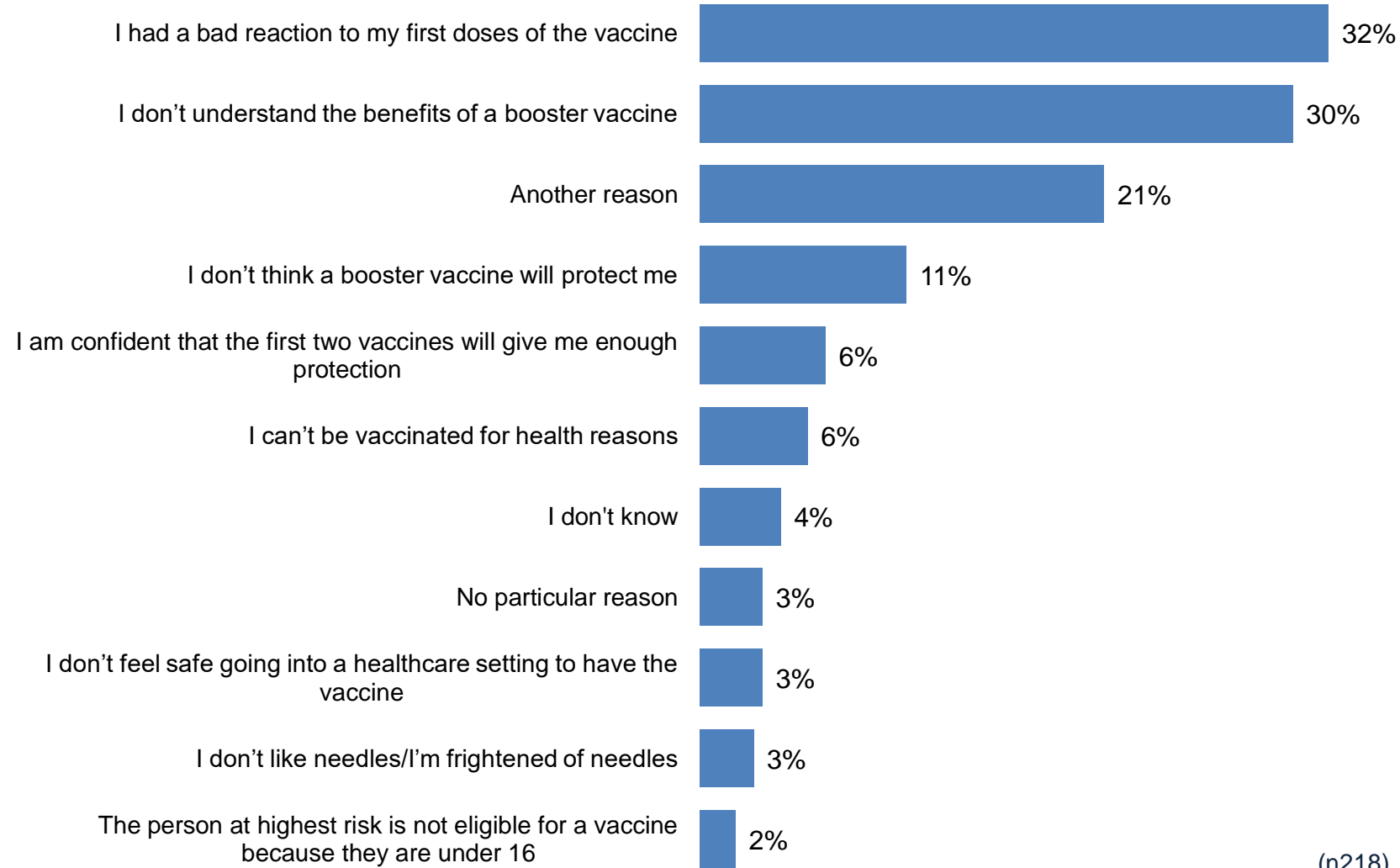
Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I am worried about the side effects	30%
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I think the vaccination has been developed too quickly	28%
I don't feel confident it has been tested on people with my health condition	26%
I can't be vaccinated because of my condition	24%
Another reason	17%
The person at highest risk is not eligible for a vaccine because they are under 16	17%
I have been advised by my GP or clinician not to get the vaccination	15%
I am concerned about the ingredients used in the vaccine	15%
I don't think the vaccine will be safe	15%
I don't think the vaccine will be effective	13%
I feel I am protected enough by the precautions I'm already taking (e.g. washing my hands, staying socially distanced from other people)	11%
I think I have already had coronavirus, so don't need a vaccine	7%
I don't like needles/I'm frightened of needles	4%
I'm against vaccines in general	4%
I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine	2%
I don't think coronavirus poses enough of a risk to me, so I don't need a vaccine	2%
I've not been able to get transport to a vaccination centre	2%
I don't know	0%
No particular reason	0%
It has been difficult to find the time or get to an appointment for a vaccination	0%
I am too nervous about leaving the house to get a vaccine	0%
Response count	46

Those who selected 'another reason' (17%) gave a range of reasons including: being pregnant, waiting for a specific vaccine to become available in their area and having a bad reaction to other vaccinations.

Reasons people would not take up a booster vaccine



(n218)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I had a bad reaction to my first doses of the vaccine	32%
I don't understand the benefits of a booster vaccine	30%
Another reason	21%
I don't think a booster vaccine will protect me	11%
I am confident that the first two vaccines will give me enough protection	6%
I can't be vaccinated for health reasons	6%
I don't know	4%
No particular reason	3%
I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine	3%
I don't like needles/I'm frightened of needles	3%
The person at highest risk is not eligible for a vaccine because they are under 16	2%
Response count	218

For 'another reason' (21%), the most common responses were: concerns about the side effects and safety of the vaccines, wanting more information on effectiveness of the vaccine (with a number of respondents mentioning the use of antibody tests to reassure them) and concerns about the long term effects of the vaccine.

Recent activities

In the months leading up to the survey, restrictions in Scotland changed significantly - lockdown measures were lifted and many previously restricted activities opened up. People at highest risk were asked to start to follow the same advice as for the general population at Levels 1 and 0. We wanted to understand if these changes had impacted those who had been identified as highest risk, and whether people felt reassured enough to begin to return to previous activities as restrictions eased.

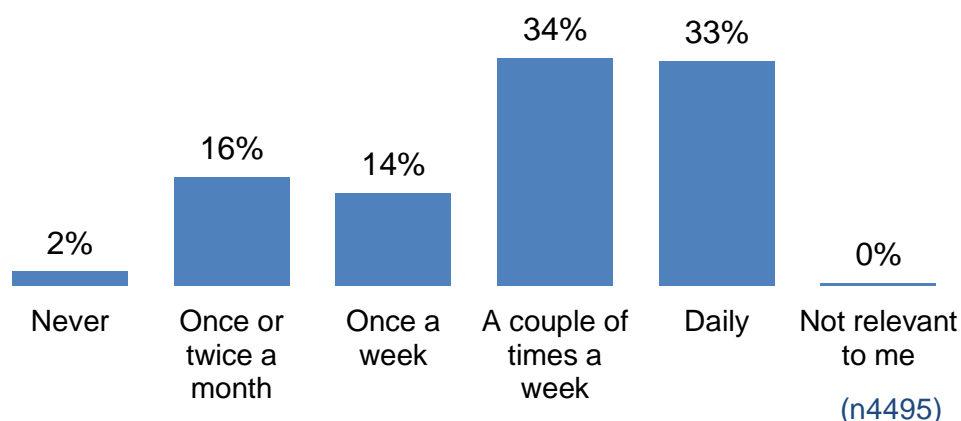
Despite the easing of restrictions (including the whole of Scotland moving to [Level 0](#) on 19 July 2021), there were still a number of day-to-day activities that respondents were choosing not to participate in, including:

- 14% never visited shops
- 24% never met people who were not part of their household or extended household outdoors
- 50% never met people who weren't part of their household or extended household indoors
- 79% never been on public transport

Similarly, there were still 2% of respondents (n4494) who had chosen not to leave their home for any reason. While the proportion might be relatively small, this points to people who were potentially still very fearful of coronavirus and were taking measures over and above the advice to keep themselves safe.

We asked participants how often they had undertaken the following activities from May – July 2021:

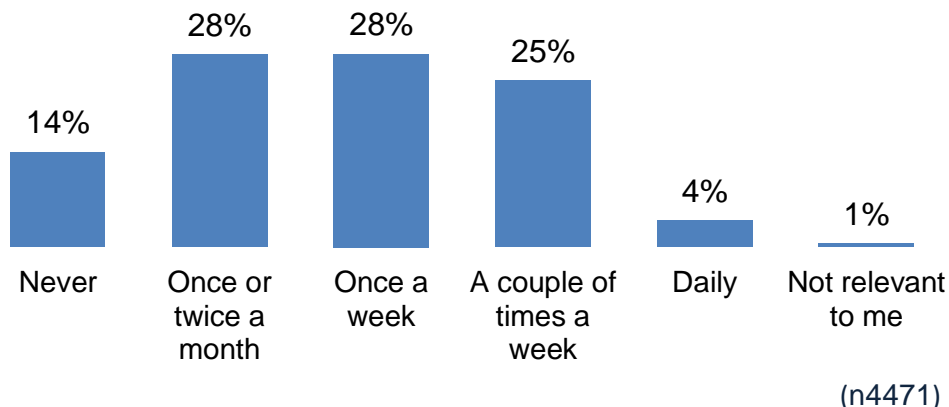
Left home for any reason



Never	2%
Once or twice a month	16%
Once a week	14%
A couple of times a week	34%

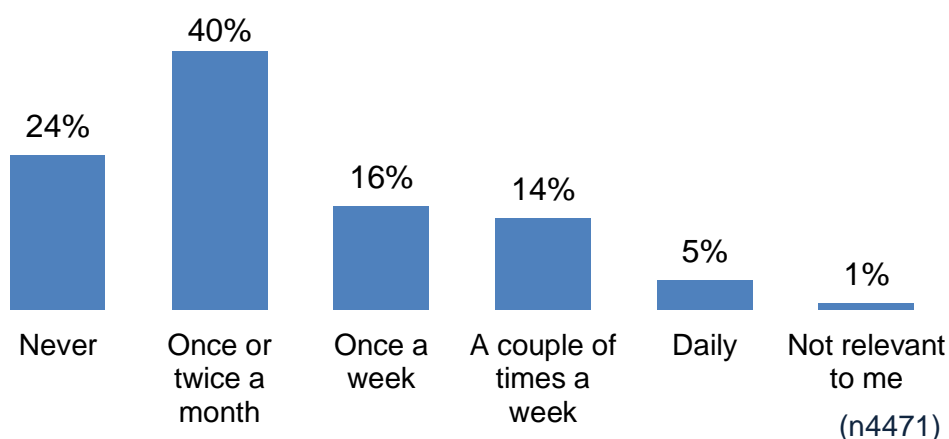
Daily	33%
Not relevant to me	0%
Response count	4495

Visited shops



Never	14%
Once or twice a month	28%
Once a week	28%
A couple of times a week	25%
Daily	4%
Not relevant to me	1%
Response count	4471

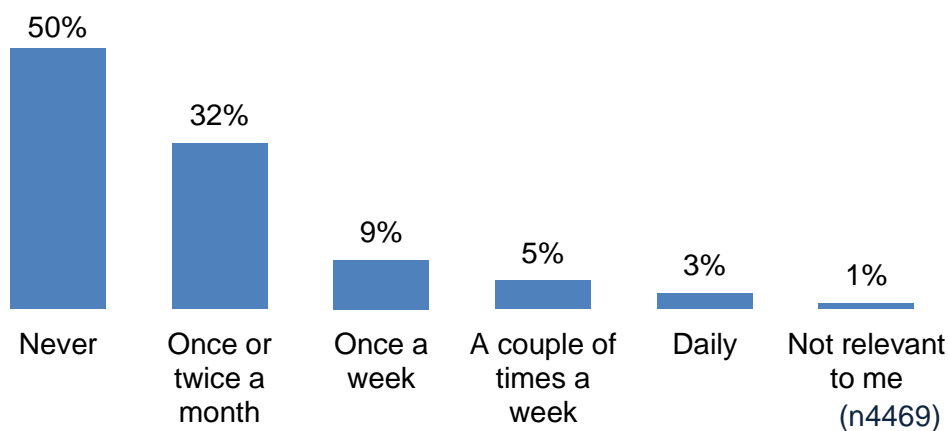
Met people outdoors who are not part of your household or extended household



Never	24%
Once or twice a month	40%
Once a week	16%
A couple of times a week	14%
Daily	5%
Not relevant to me	1%

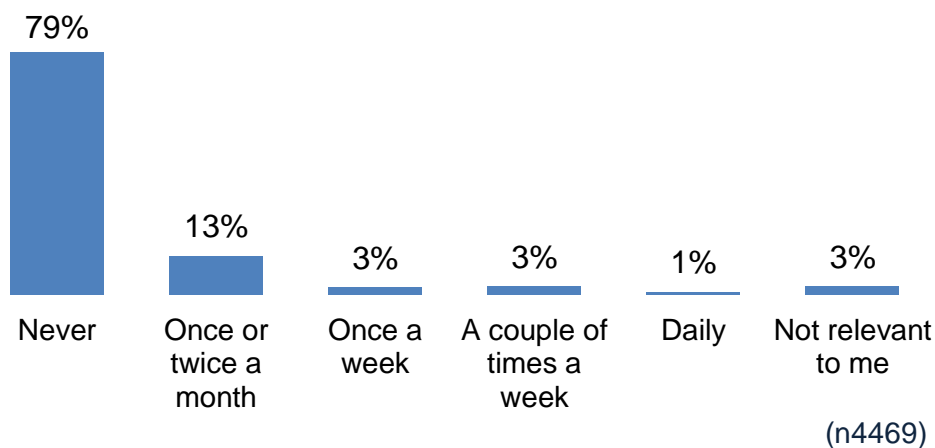
Response count	4471
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Met people indoors who are not part of your household or extended household



Never	50%
Once or twice a month	32%
Once a week	9%
A couple of times a week	5%
Daily	3%
Not relevant to me	1%
Response count	4469

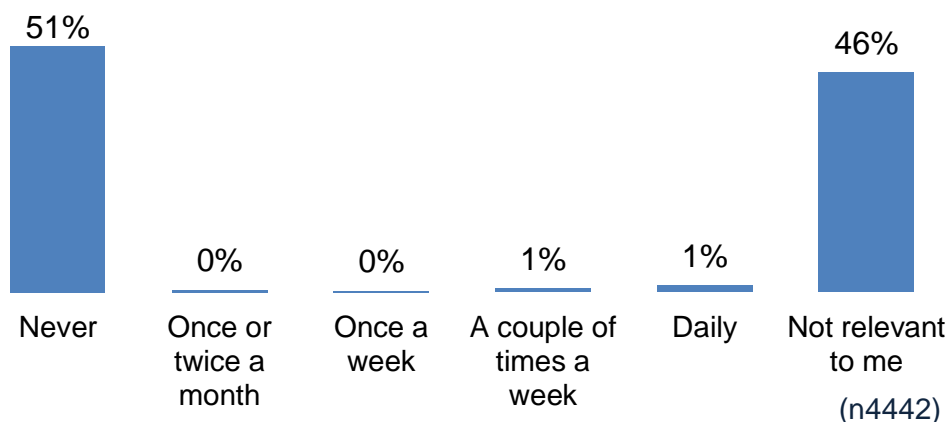
Been on public transport



Never	79%
Once or twice a month	13%
Once a week	3%
A couple of times a week	3%
Daily	1%
Not relevant to me	3%
Response count	4469

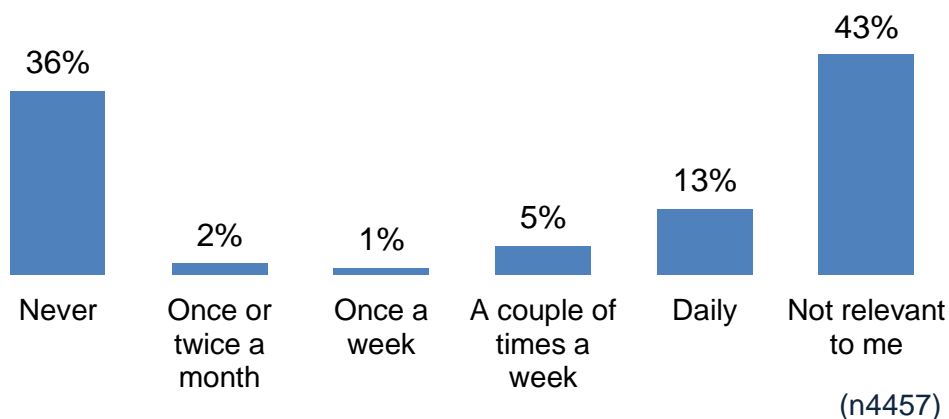
Gone to school, childcare or college

Note that based on final demographic data only 1% of participants identified as being 'in education'. We suspect that the majority of those who answered 'Never' should largely be in the 'Not relevant to me' column.



Never	51%
Once or twice a month	0%
Once a week	0%
A couple of times a week	1%
Daily	1%
Not relevant to me	46%
Response count	4442

Gone to work if they cannot work from home



Never	36%
Once or twice a month	2%
Once a week	1%
A couple of times a week	5%
Daily	13%
Not relevant to me	43%
Response count	4457

Easing restrictions

In the weeks leading up to the launch of the survey, Scotland moved down restriction levels. The week that it went live, the First Minister made an announcement about the move to Level 0 from 19 July, and people at highest risk received [a letter from the Chief Medical Officer](#) advising what this meant for them.

59% of respondents (n4516) said they felt uncomfortable about the move towards Level 0 and beyond in Scotland. The most common reasons provided from those who felt uncomfortable (n2462) included:

- the behaviour of others (100%)
- high case numbers (92%)
- the measures in place did not make them feel safer (56%)
- being unsure about how effective the vaccine was for them (46%)

Some respondents also chose to share further detail about what specifically was concerning them about the moves towards Level 0. It is important to note that at this stage, evidence as to the efficacy of the vaccine for those at highest risk, and in particular for the immunosuppressed, was emerging. Later published reports, [including one by the University of Edinburgh](#) demonstrate clearly the efficacy of the vaccine for this group.

An extract of some of the responses is provided to illustrate some of the issues underlying people's discomfort with the easing of restrictions.

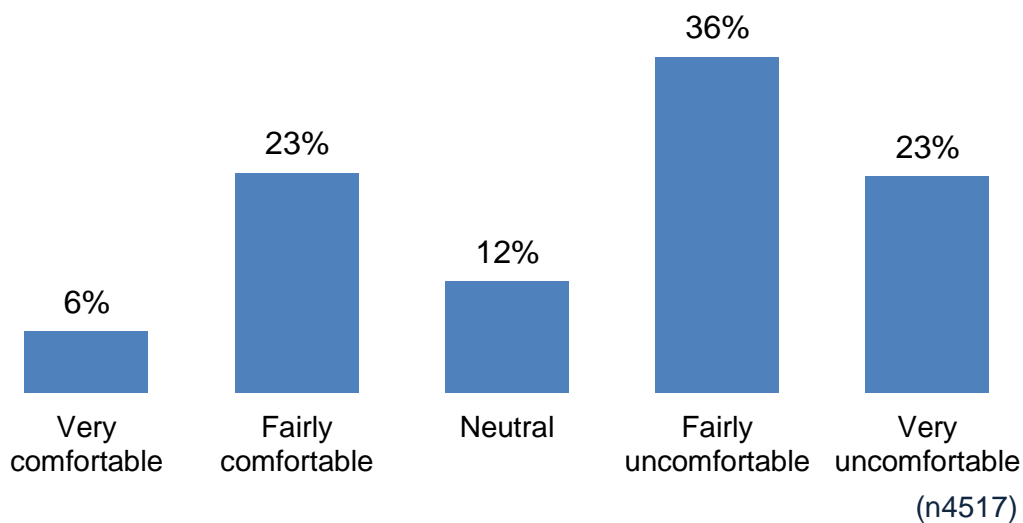
“My children have not been vaccinated or at school for a year and a half since shielding, they and us will have weak immune systems, my partner is immune suppressed he has no spleen, winter flu is also a high danger to him, it has been advised the vaccine will have less effect with those immune suppressed, and as given the astra [zenica vaccine] which is the weaker vaccine statistically he will have little cover...”

“Media reports of poor outcomes for CLL [Chronic lymphocytic leukemia] patients and reports that CLL patient not mounting antibody response have frightened me...”

“Morally opposed to putting vulnerable people's lives at risk to help the less vulnerable return to 'normal' life while we remained isolated and in a two tier society as we will have to continue shielding.”

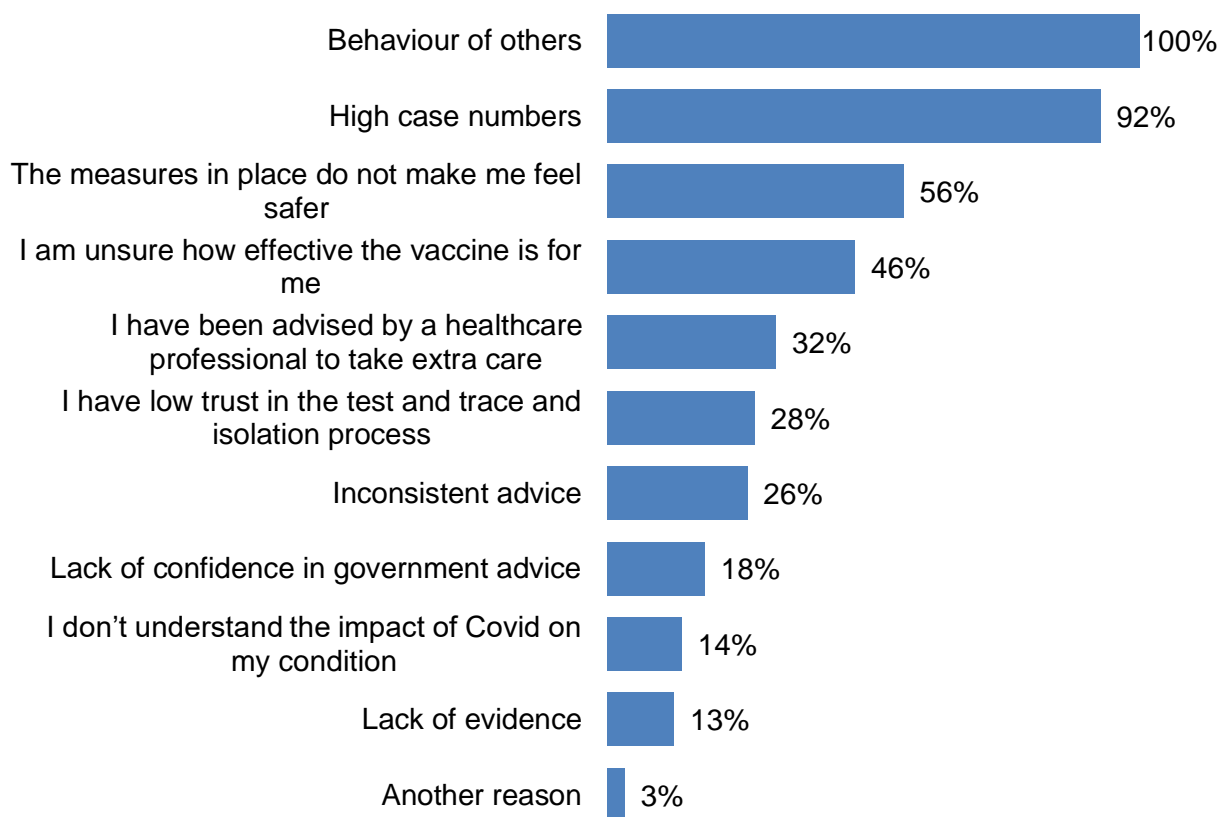
“I want to have the vaccine but my condition makes it impossible to receive it so I feel unprotected. I also cannot receive hospital care due to my condition so the prospect of catching the virus is terrifying.”

How those at highest risk are feeling about the move towards Level 0 and beyond in Scotland



Very comfortable	6%
Fairly comfortable	23%
Neutral	12%
Fairly uncomfortable	36%
Very uncomfortable	23%
Response count	4517

Reasons why people at highest risk feel uncomfortable about the move to Level 0 and beyond



(n2641)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

Behaviour of others	100%
High case numbers	92%
The measures in place do not make me feel safer	56%
I am unsure how effective the vaccine is for me	46%
I have been advised by a healthcare professional to take extra care	32%
I have low trust in the test and trace and isolation process	28%
Inconsistent advice	26%
Lack of confidence in government advice	18%
I don't understand the impact of Covid on my condition	14%
Lack of evidence	13%
Another reason	3%
Response count	2641

Support options

We explored how respondents felt about the idea of being offered a small wearable item to indicate that they would prefer people to keep their distance as restrictions, particularly around physical distancing, eased. This was following similar schemes in other parts of the UK. This question was asked in order to better understand user responses and to help inform any future decisions around a voluntary scheme. 73% of respondents (n4508) said they would be interested, 12% would not be interested and 16% were unsure.

The high number of people interested indicates the majority of people were receptive to the idea. However, the reasons people gave for why they were unsure or did not like the idea (n518) included:

- feeling it would not help or change anything (66%)
- feeling everyone should be sticking to restrictions even if they are not highest risk (49%)
- not wanting people to know they are at highest risk (28%)
- worrying about being discriminated against (28%)

The open text responses from people who were opposed to the idea voiced some strong opinions and concerns about this type of identifier could represent. For example:

“A wristband would be too small and in winter would not be noticeable under clothes... Whatever is decided it needs to be as effective as the vaccines and booster jabs to instil confidence within me.”

“I might as well wear a sign round my neck and ring a bell shouting UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN!”

“That is the most patronising idea I have ever heard. Our families have already been ‘othered’ during this crisis. Do you really want to single us out even more?”

The 3279 respondents who felt this might be something they would use, said that they felt a small wearable could helpfully signal to other people:

- that they are at highest risk (86%)
- to keep a safe distance from them (85%)
- to wear a face mask around them (69%)

Open text responses for people who were positive about the idea but wanted to provide more detail about why included:

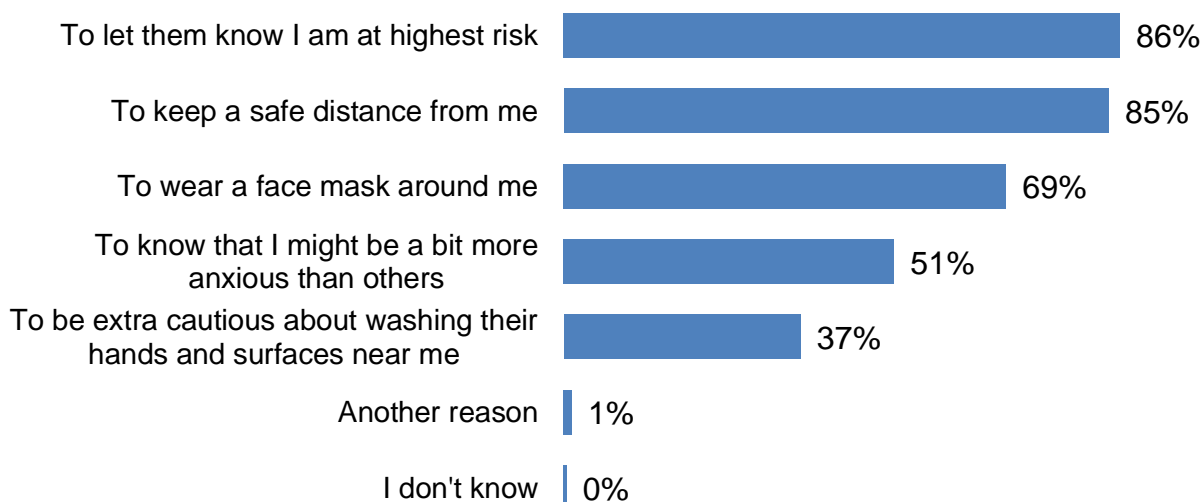
“I would hope that it would make people think twice about their behaviour around me but I fear that the Covid-sceptics would not notice or choose to ignore a band. I have found that the people who are least likely to keep their distance are also the people who refuse to wear a mask...”

“It could be worn when you feel anxious. In my case an officially branded lanyard would be good for those of us who are public facing for our jobs... “

If people were offered something small to wear, such as a wristband, to indicate that they’d prefer people to keep their distance or wear a mask near them, would they use it?

Yes	73%
No	12%
Don't know / haven't decided yet	16%
Response count	4508

What people would expect a small wearable item to indicate to others

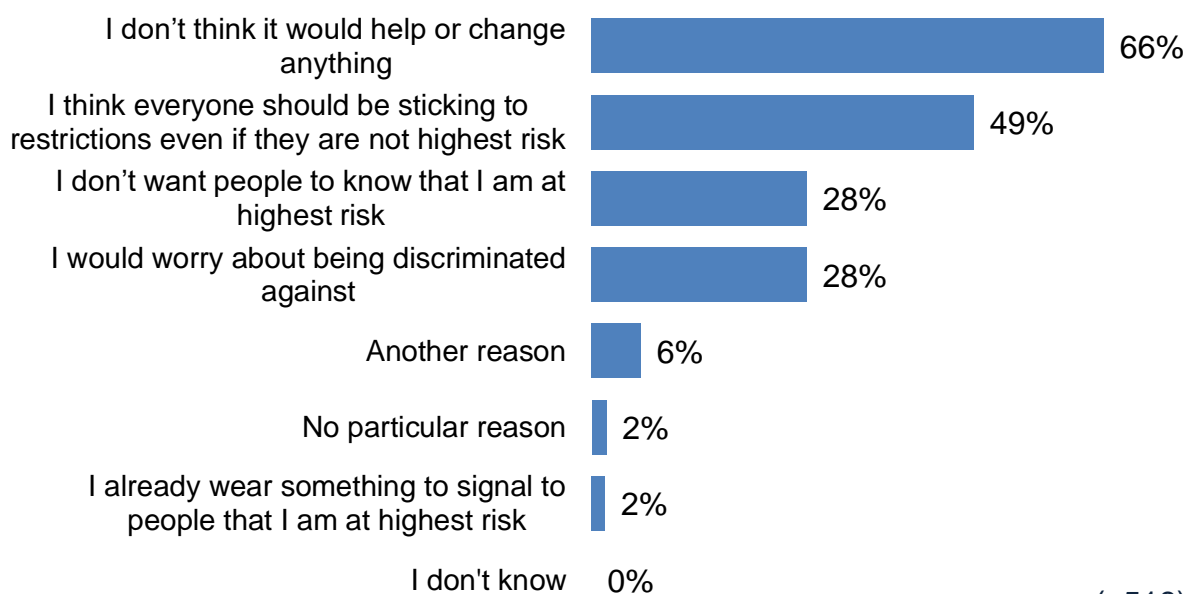


(n3279)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

To let them know I am at highest risk	86%
To keep a safe distance from me	85%
To wear a face mask around me	69%
To know that I might be a bit more anxious than others	51%
To be extra cautious about washing their hands and surfaces near me	37%
Another reason	1%
I don't know	0%
Response count	3279

Why people would not want to use a small wearable item to indicate that they would prefer people to keep their distance



(n518)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I don't think it would help or change anything	66%
I think everyone should be sticking to the rules even if they are not highest risk	49%
I don't want people to know that I am at highest risk	28%
I would worry about being discriminated against	28%
Another reason	6%
No particular reason	2%
I already wear something to signal to people that I am at highest risk	2%
I don't know	0%
Response count	518

Impact on face-to-face medical appointments

Many people at highest risk have needed to attend regular medical appointments to manage their health condition(s). In the early stages of the pandemic, many were unable to attend their regular appointments, which could have had a knock on effect on their health and wellbeing. We wanted to understand whether this was still the case, with restrictions relaxed, and whether any further support or guidance was needed to help people get back to the appointments or treatments that they need.

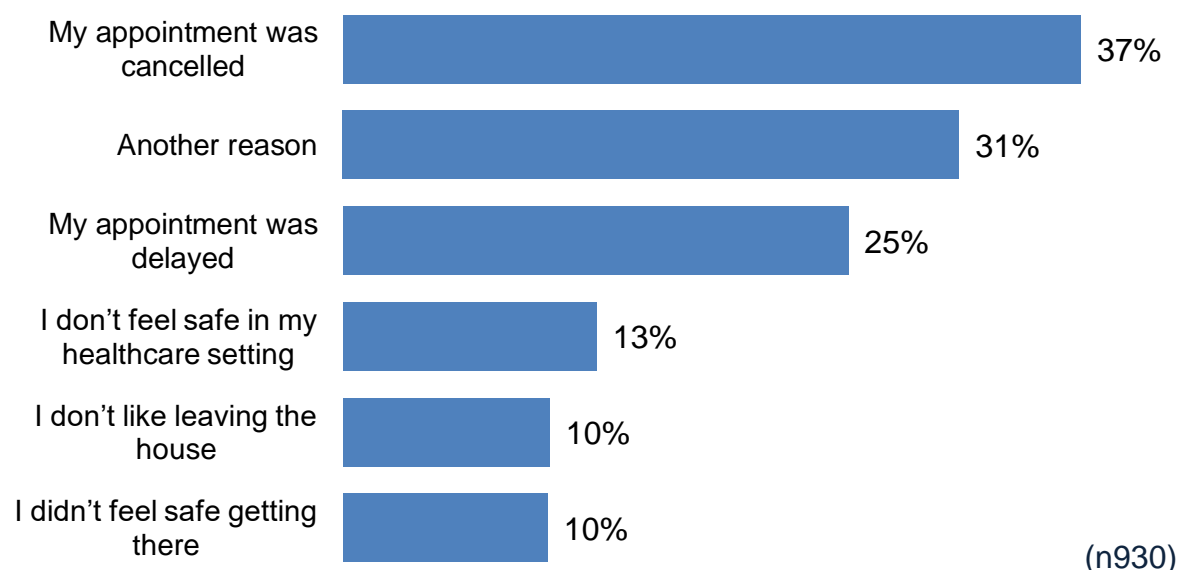
21% of respondents (n4509) had missed a face-to-face medical appointment (excluding vaccination) between May – July 2021. When asked why they had missed medical appointments, the reasons given included:

- appointment was cancelled (37%)
- another reason (31%) – the majority of these responses wanted to clarify that they still had regular appointments, but that these were done over the phone or through video calls rather than face-to-face
- appointment was delayed (25%)

Whether respondents had missed any face-to-face medical appointments, other than vaccination, between May – July 2021

Yes	21%
No	79%
Response count	4510

Why respondents had missed face-to-face medical appointments between May – July 2021



Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

My appointment was cancelled	37%
Another reason	31%
My appointment was delayed	25%
I don't feel safe in my healthcare setting	13%
I don't like leaving the house	10%
I didn't feel safe getting there	10%
Response count	4517

For 'Another reason' (31%) – the majority of these responses wanted to clarify that they still had regular appointments, but that these were done over the phone or through video calls rather than face-to-face

Returning to work

From previous research with people at highest risk, we know that being in the workplace was an area of concern for key workers and for people who were unable to work from home. As restrictions continue to ease in Scotland, people who have been working from home so far may eventually be asked to return to the office – at their employer’s discretion. We wanted to understand how respondents felt about potentially returning to work, and whether there were any areas where Scottish Government could provide further guidance or support.

Of the 1615 respondents who were working:

- 42% were going to the workplace
- 40% were still working from home
- 13% were doing a mixture of working from home and going to the workplace
- 5% were unable to work from home but were choosing not to go to the workplace

Those who were choosing not to go to the workplace (n75) said that they had either been signed off work (56%), didn’t feel safe returning (52%) or had been advised not to return to the workplace by their doctor (25%).

Of those who were now going to the workplace (n880), 91% of them had returned in the three months prior to the survey. 66% of the respondents who had returned to work had felt supported in their return to the workplace.

The 34% (n273) of people who did not feel supported in their return to the workplace felt that this was because of:

- other people not sticking to the rules (67%)
- the measures not being properly enforced (56%)
- the measures that were being put in place not making them feel safer (54%)

Of those who were still working from home (n632), 48% expected to be asked to return to the workplace once restrictions allowed.

73% (n629) of those expecting to be asked to return to work felt uncomfortable about the prospect of being asked to return to the workplace.

Where respondents are currently working from

Working from home	40%
Going to the workplace	42%
A mixture of working from home and going to the workplace	13%

Unable to work from home but not going to the workplace	5%
Response count	1595

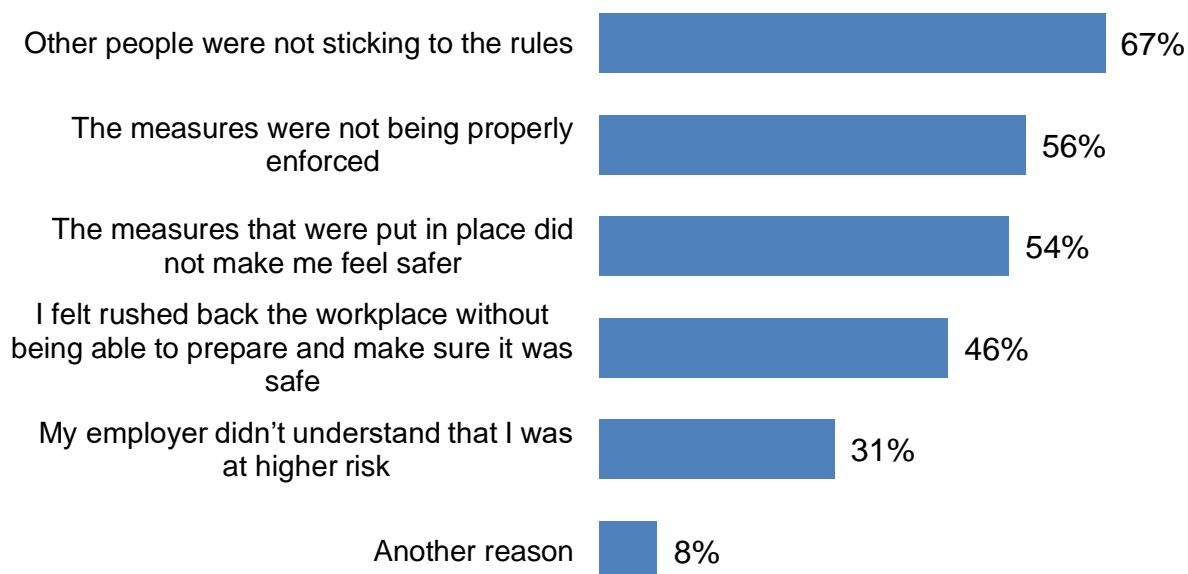
Whether respondents who were going to the workplace had needed to return in the last 3 months

Yes	91%
No	9%
Response count	880

Whether respondents who had returned to the workplace felt supported in their return

Yes	66%
No	34%
Response count	795

Why respondents felt unsupported when they returned to the workplace



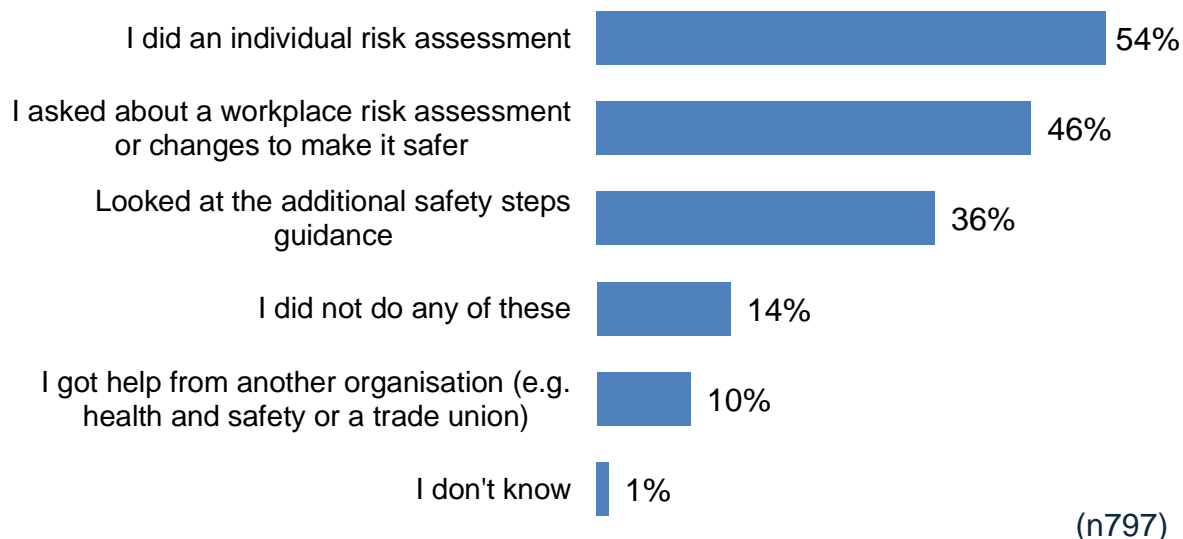
(n273)

Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

Other people were not sticking to the rules	67%
The measures were not being properly enforced	56%
The measures that were put in place did not make me feel safer	54%
I felt rushed back to the workplace without being able to prepare and make sure it was safe	46%
My employer didn't understand that I was at higher risk	31%

Another reason	8%
Response count	273

Guidance read or followed in advance of returning to the workplace



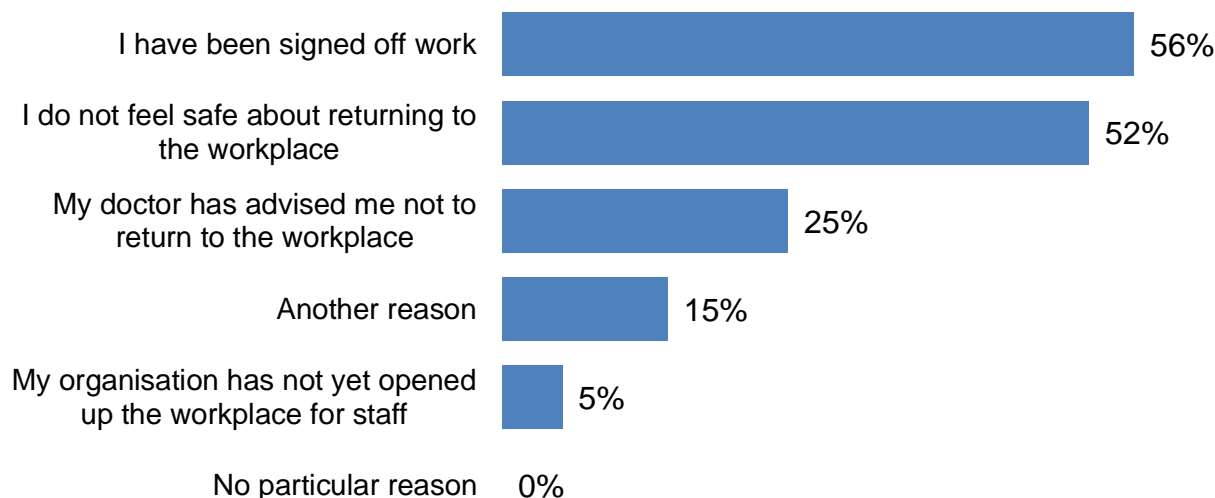
Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I did an individual risk assessment	54%
I asked about a workplace risk assessment or changes to make it safer	46%
Look at the additional safety steps guidance	36%
I did not do any of these	14%
I got help from another organisation (e.g. health and safety or a trade union)	10%
I don't know	1%
Response count	797

Whether respondents found the additional guidance on safety steps useful

Yes	85%
No	15%
Response count	288

Why those who are unable to work from home have not returned to the workplace



(n75)

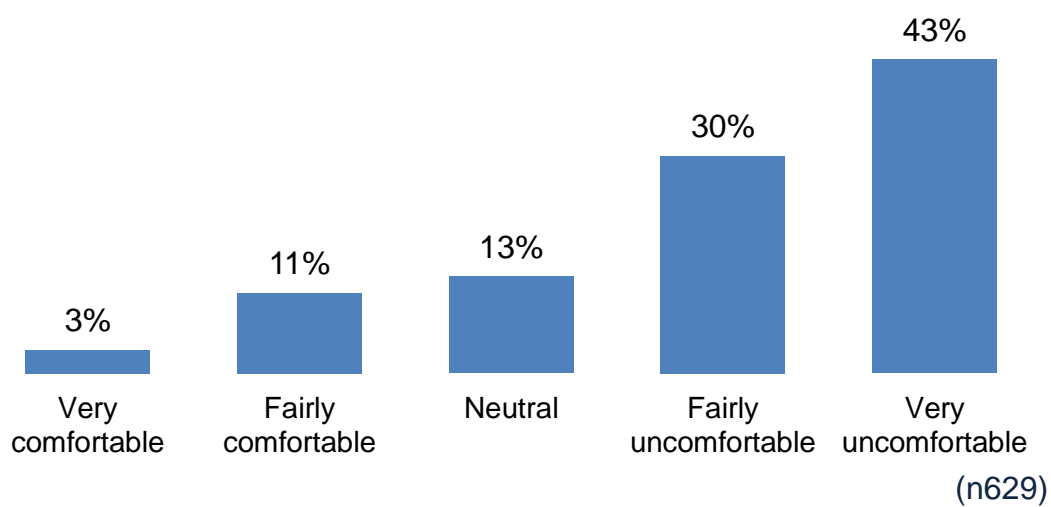
Percentages do not add up to 100 as respondents could select multiple options.

I have been signed off work	56%
I do not feel safe about returning to the workplace	52%
My doctor has advised me not to return to the workplace	25%
Another reason	15%
My organisation has not yet opened up the workplace for staff	5%
No particular reason	0%
Response count	75

Whether respondents expect to be asked to return the workplace when restrictions allow

Yes	48%
No	29%
I don't know	23%
Response count	632

How comfortable respondents feel about returning to the workplace



Very comfortable	3%
Fairly comfortable	11%
Neutral	13%
Fairly uncomfortable	30%
Very uncomfortable	43%
Response count	629

Attending school or education settings

With children in Scotland set to return to school or education settings from mid-August (after the summer holidays) we wanted to understand how parents in households with a child or young person identified as highest risk were feeling about the return to school.

11% of survey respondents had children living in their household, and 94% of these children (n486) regularly attended school, nursery or another education setting.

45% of respondents felt uncomfortable about their children returning to an education setting after the summer break.

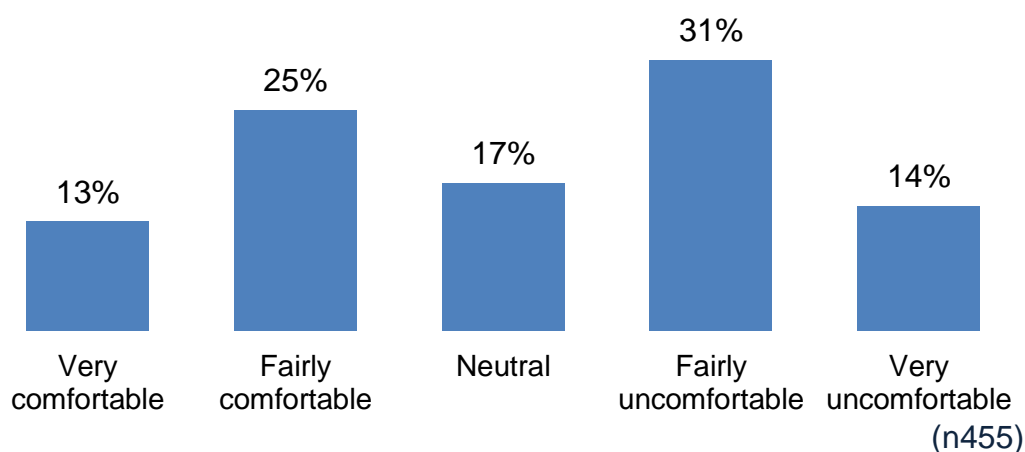
Number of children (under 16) living in respondents' households

None	89%
One child	6%
2 children	4%
3+ children	0%
Response count	4511

Whether children in the household regularly attend school, nursery or another education setting

Yes	94%
No	6%
Response count	486

How respondents felt about children in their household returning to school, nursery or another education setting after the summer break



Very comfortable	13%
Fairly comfortable	25%
Neutral	17%
Fairly uncomfortable	31%
Very uncomfortable	14%
Response count	455

Appendix 1 – respondent profiles

Criteria	Survey Respondents	Wider Highest Risk Group ¹
Gender	35% Male 65% Female	45% Male 55% Female
Age	38% 65+ 62% <65	51% 65+ 49% <65
Condition that categorises them as at highest risk²	44% severe respiratory condition 36% immunosuppression 13% treatment for cancer 9% rare disease 5% organ transplant 0.2% pregnant + significant heart disease 25% advised to shield by clinician 0.5% down's syndrome 2% kidney impairment (Stage 5 Chronic Kidney Disease) 0.6% receiving renal dialysis treatment 0.8% liver cirrhosis (Child-Pugh Class B and C) 1% don't know why they are at highest risk	40% severe respiratory condition 20% immunosuppression 13% treatment for cancer 6% rare disease 3% organ transplant 0.04% pregnant + significant heart disease 29% advised to shield by clinician ³
Local Authority⁴	9% Glasgow 8% Edinburgh 6% North Lanarkshire 6% South Lanarkshire 7% Fife	13% Glasgow 7% Edinburgh 7% North Lanarkshire 6% South Lanarkshire 6% Fife
Indicator or (possible) proxy indicator	93% access to internet at home	26% 1 st SIMD quintile 23% 2 nd SIMD quintile 20% 3 rd SIMD quintile

¹ Based on data from the social research Dashboard, last updated 28/4/2021

² The percentages do not add to 100% because an individual may fit more than one category.

³ Data unavailable for people with down's syndrome or kidney impairment in wider shielded group data

⁴ The local authorities mentioned are the five local authorities with the highest total number of shielded individuals among their residents. The wider shielded group data was last updated on 28/4/2021

of socio-economic vulnerability	54% unexpected £100 expense no problem 25% unexpected £100 expense a bit of a problem 12% unexpected £100 expense a big problem 8% unexpected £100 expense impossible	17% 4 th SIMD quintile 14% 5 th SIMD quintile
--	--	--

Detail about survey respondents that cannot be compared to baseline data	
Type of area lived in	18% live in a city 39% live in a town 16% live in a suburb 26% live in a village/rural area 1% live on an island
Employment **	43% retired 32% employed 4% self-employed 1% furloughed because of COVID-19 2% unemployed 1% looking after home or family 18% not working because of long-term condition or disability 1% in education 2% something else
Caring	5% caring for an adult (16+) on the shielding list 0.3% caring for a child (under 16) on the shielding list
Ethnicity	98.7% white 0.5% Mixed 0.3% Asian 0.2% African, Caribbean or Black 0.3% Other ethnic group
Health condition⁵	30% have a physical disability 35% have chronic pain lasting at least 3 months 75% have another long term condition 15% have a mental health condition 8% have deafness or severe hearing impairment 2% have blindness or severe vision impairment 2% have a learning disability
Additional support needs	1% do not speak English as a first language 9% need help to complete forms 3% need help with reading

⁵ The percentages do not add to 100% because an individual may fit more than one category.

Appendix 2 – survey design

Introduction

This survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

We are running this survey to inform and develop guidance and support for people at highest risk from COVID-19 across Scotland. By taking part, you will help us understand what is most important to you.

You do not need to take part in this survey if you would prefer not to. Taking part will not affect the support that you get in any way. All of the questions are optional: please only tell us what you want to tell us.

Your answers will be kept anonymous. We will share the results of the study with other people working on the response to COVID-19. This may include people in the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, local authorities, local health boards and other NHS boards. We will write a report to tell the public about the results, which will be published at on the [Scottish Government website](#). No one will be able to identify you when we share results or write reports.

Before you begin

Did you (or the person you care for) previously receive a letter from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer advising you to follow guidance for those at highest risk (this may have included asking you to shield)? Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

[If yes] Continue to questions.

[If no] Take to 'sorry but...' exit page

Unfortunately this survey is only open to people who received a letter from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer advising them (or the person they care for) to follow guidance for people who are at highest risk from covid.

If you didn't receive a letter but would like to share your opinion, there are a number of options available to you. You can provide feedback by contacting:

- Your [local NHS health board](#)
- Your [local council](#)
- The [Scottish Government](#).

If you received a letter from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer and would like to continue filling in the survey, please click on the back button to return to the questions.

Who was advised they are at highest risk?

1. Who was advised that they are at highest risk by the Chief Medical Officer?

Please choose all that apply:

- I was identified as highest risk
- I am caring for an adult (16 or older) who was identified as highest risk
- I am caring for a child (under 16) who was identified as highest risk

2. Which of the following explains why you (or the person you care for) were identified as at highest risk? Please choose all that apply:

- Severe respiratory condition
- Immunosuppression therapy
- Treatment for cancer
- Previously received an organ transplant
- A rare disease
- Pregnant and have significant heart disease
- Down's Syndrome
- A kidney impairment (Stage 5 Chronic Kidney Disease)
- Receiving renal dialysis treatment
- Liver cirrhosis (Child-Pugh Class B and C)
- Advised by my GP or consultant
- I don't know

Covid-19 vaccination program

We are interested in understanding experiences of the vaccination program and how successful it has been at reaching those who are at highest risk.

3. Have you (or the person you care for) had both the first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Yes
- No

4. **[If no to Q3]** Have you (or the person you care for) had the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?

- Yes
- No

5. **[If yes to Q4]** Is there any particular reason why you (or the person you care for) have not had the second dose of covid-19 vaccine? Please choose all that apply:
- I had a bad reaction to the first dose
 - I don't think the vaccine will work for me
 - I haven't received any information about my appointment
 - I have an appointment booked but have not been to get my second dose yet
 - I had a bad experience getting my first vaccination
 - I have heard about people having bad reactions to the second dose of the vaccine
 - It has been difficult to find the time to get to a vaccine centre
 - It has been difficult to travel to a vaccination centre
 - I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine
 - Another reason: _____
6. **[If no to Q4]** Is there any particular reason why you (or the person you care for) have not had a COVID-19 vaccine? Please choose all that apply:
- The person at highest risk is not eligible for a vaccine because they are under 16
 - I am worried about the side effects
 - I don't think the vaccine will be safe
 - I am concerned about the ingredients used in the vaccine
 - I don't think the vaccine will be effective
 - I think the vaccination has been developed too quickly
 - I don't feel confident it has been tested on people with my health condition
 - I feel I am protected enough by the precautions I'm already taking (e.g. washing my hands, staying socially distanced from other people)
 - I don't think coronavirus poses enough of a risk to me, so I don't need a vaccine
 - I'm against vaccines in general
 - I am too nervous about leaving the house to get a vaccine
 - I don't like needles/I'm frightened of needles
 - I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine
 - I think I have already had coronavirus, so don't need a vaccine
 - It has been difficult to find the time or get to an appointment for a vaccination
 - I've not been able to get transport to a vaccination centre
 - I can't be vaccinated because of my condition
 - I have been advised by my GP or clinician not to get the vaccination
 - No particular reason
 - Don't know

Another reason: _____

7. Later this year, there are plans to offer some people booster vaccinations for COVID-19. Would you (or the person you care for) take up the offer of a booster vaccination?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know / I haven't decided yet

8. **[If no or I don't know to Q7]** Is there any particular reason why you would not take up a booster vaccination? Please choose all that apply:

- The person at highest risk is not eligible for a vaccine because they are under 16
- I am confident that the first two vaccines will give me enough protection
- I don't understand the benefits of a booster vaccine
- I don't think a booster vaccine will protect me
- I had a bad reaction to my first doses of the vaccine
- I can't be vaccinated for health reasons
- I don't like needles/I'm frightened of needles
- I don't feel safe going into a healthcare setting to have the vaccine
- No particular reason
- Don't know
- Another reason: _____

Recent activities

9. In the last 2 months, how often have you (or the person you care for):

Have you done any of the following:	Never	Once or twice a month	Once a week	A couple of times a week	Daily	Not relevant to me
Left your home for any reason						
Visited shops						
Met people outdoors who are						

not part of your household or extended household						
Met people indoors who are not part of your household or extended household						
Been on public transport						
Gone to school, childcare or college						
Gone to work if you can't work at home						

10. How are you feeling about the move to level 0 and beyond in Scotland? Please select one option:

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Neutral
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

11. [If fairly or very uncomfortable] Is there any particular reason that you feel uncomfortable about the move to level 0 and beyond in Scotland?

- The measures in place do not make me feel safer
- Behaviour of others
- High case numbers
- Lack of confidence in government advice

- Inconsistent advice
- Lack of evidence
- I don't understand the impact of Covid on my condition
- I am unsure how effective the vaccine is for me
- I have low trust in the test and trace and isolation process
- I have been advised by a healthcare professional to take extra care
- Another reason: _____

12. If you were offered something small to wear, such as a wristband, to indicate that you'd prefer people to keep their distance or wear a mask near you, would you use it?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

13. **[If yes to Q12]** What specifically would you expect this to signal to other people? Please select all that apply:

- To keep a safe distance from me
- To wear a face mask around me
- To be extra cautious about washing their hands and surfaces near me
- To know that I might be a bit more anxious than others
- To let them know I am at highest risk
- Don't know
- Another reason: _____

14. **[If no to Q12]** Is there any particular reason why you would not use something like this? Please select all that apply:

- I don't want people to know that I am at highest risk
- I would worry about being discriminated against
- I think everyone should be sticking to restrictions even if they are not highest risk
- I don't think it would help or change anything
- I already wear something to signal to people that I am at highest risk
- No particular reason
- Don't know
- Another reason: _____

Attending healthcare appointments

15. Have you (or the person you care for) missed any face-to-face medical appointments, other than vaccination, in the last 2 months?

- Yes
- No

16. **[If yes to Q15]** Is there any particular reason you have missed face-to-face medical appointments in the last 2 months?

- My appointment was cancelled
- My appointment was delayed
- I don't feel safe in my healthcare setting
- I don't like leaving the house
- I didn't feel safe getting there
- Another reason: _____

Work

17. What is your employment situation (or the employment situation of the person you care for)? Please tell us which of the following best describes your situation:

- Retired
- Employed
- Self-employed
- Furloughed because of COVID-19
- Unemployed
- Looking after the home or family
- Not working because of a long-term condition or disability
- In education
- Something else

18. **[If they pick employed or self-employed in Q17]** Where do you currently work from? Please select one option:

- I am working from home
- I go to my workplace
- I do a mixture of working from home and going to my workplace
- I can't work from home but not going to the workplace

19. **[If they pick workplace or mixture in Q18]** Did you have to return to the workplace in the last 3 months?

- Yes
- No

20. **[If yes to Q19]** Did you feel supported in your return to the workplace?

- Yes

No

21. **[If no to Q20]** Is there any particular reason that you felt unsupported?
- I felt rushed back to work the workplace without being able to prepare and make sure it was safe
 - My employer didn't understand that I was at higher risk
 - The measures that were put in place did not make me feel safer
 - The measures were not being properly enforced
 - Other people were not sticking to the rules
 - Something else: _____
22. **[If yes to 19]** Did you do any of the following when you returned to work?
[Please select all that apply:]
- I asked about a workplace risk assessment or changes to make it safer
 - I did an individual risk assessment
 - I got help from another organisation (e.g. health and safety or a trade union)
 - Looked at the additional safety steps guidance
 - I don't know
 - I did not do any of these
23. **[If looked at the additional safety steps guidance in Q22]** Did you find the additional guidance on safety steps useful?
- Yes
 - No
24. **[If Can't work from home but not going to the workplace in Q18]** Is there any particular reason why you have not returned to the workplace? Please choose all that apply:
- I do not feel safe about returning to the workplace
 - My organisation has not yet opened up the workplace for staff
 - My doctor has advised me not to return to the workplace
 - I have been signed off work
 - No particular reason
 - Something else: _____
25. **[If working from home in Q18]** When your workplace does open up again, do you expect to be asked to return?
- Yes
 - No
 - I don't know

26. **[Any response from Q25]** How comfortable do you feel about returning to the workplace when this happens?

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Neutral
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

Attending school or education settings

27. How many children (aged under 16) are living in your household? Please select one option:

- None
- One child
- 2 children
- 3 children
- 4 children
- 5 children
- More than 5 children

28. **[If they pick any option except none in Q27]** Does your child/children usually attend school, nursery or another education setting?

- Yes
- No

29. **[If yes to Q28]** How comfortable do you feel about your child/children attending school, nursery or another education setting after the summer break? Please select one option:

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Neutral
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable

About you

We want to know a bit more about you. This helps us make sure we're hearing from a broad range of people who are at highest risk. We will also use this information to understand whether particular groups have different experiences or needs.

29. What is your age (or the age of the person you care for)? Please select one option:

- Under 16
- 16-24
- 25-44
- 45-64
- 65-69
- 70-74
- 75-79
- 80+

30. What is your gender (or the gender of the person you care for)? Please select one option:

- Female
- Male
- Other

31. What is your ethnic group (or the ethnic group of the person you care for)? Please select one option:

- White
- Mixed
- Asian
- African, Caribbean or Black
- Other ethnic group

32. Where in Scotland do you (or the person you care for) live? Please select one option:

- Aberdeen
- Aberdeenshire
- Angus
- Argyll and Bute
- Clackmannanshire
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Dundee
- East Ayrshire
- East Dunbartonshire

- East Lothian
- East Renfrewshire
- Edinburgh
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Glasgow
- Highland
- Inverclyde
- Midlothian
- Moray
- Na h-Eileanan Siar
- North Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Orkney
- Perth and Kinross
- Renfrewshire
- Scottish Borders
- Shetland
- South Ayrshire
- South Lanarkshire
- Stirling
- West Dunbartonshire
- West Lothian
- I don't live in Scotland
- I don't know

33. What type of area do you (or the person you care for) live in? Please select one option:

- City
- Town
- Suburb
- Village / rural area
- Island

34. If you suddenly had to find £100 to meet an unexpected expense, how hard would this be? Please select one option:

- Impossible
- A big problem
- A bit of a problem

No problem

35. Which of these do you (or the person you care for) have access to at home?

Please select one option:

Internet-connected PC

Internet-connected smartphone or tablet

Basic mobile phone with no internet connection

Landline phone

None of the above

Support needs

36. Do you have any of the following conditions? Please select all that apply:

A physical disability

Chronic pain lasting at least 3 months

Another long-term condition

Mental health condition

Deafness or severe hearing impairment

Blindness or severe vision impairment

A learning disability

None of the above

Prefer not to say

37. Is English your first language?

Yes

No

38. Do you need help to complete forms?

Yes

No

39. Do you need help with reading?

Yes

No



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