

PUBLIC ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS AROUND CORONAVIRUS

in 50+ charts



April 2022

Public attitudes and behaviours around Coronavirus

April 2022 update

Polling from September 2021 – January 2022

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Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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Key points

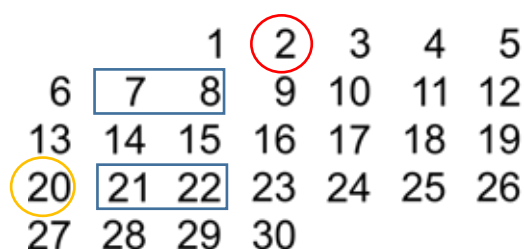
This report draws together findings on key indicators from polling work on public behaviours and attitudes to the Coronavirus pandemic in Scotland. It details how some of the elevated concerns and impacts on wellbeing have persisted even as restrictions have eased. This period covers two major waves of COVID-19: the summer/autumn peak and then the rapid spread of Omicron variant in December.¹

- Loneliness has remained high throughout September to January, with just under half (between 45% and 49%) of respondents saying that they felt lonely at least some of the time. Anxiety has also remained high, with around a third reporting themselves as 'highly anxious'.
- This period saw an increase in the proportions who were worried about the effect of the ongoing pandemic on their mental health.
- Worry about the effects of the pandemic on jobs and the economy has remained high. There is growing concern about personal finances, with an increase in those who are concerned that they won't be able to pay their bills a month from now, or provide for their household.
- In terms of public support in the Scottish Government's handling of the pandemic, from September through to January, around half of respondents agreed that they support the way the pandemic is being handled, with under 3 in 10 (15-27%) disagreeing.
- Throughout this time period, around half (45%-54%) of respondents agreed that they trust the Scottish Government to decide when and how it's best to lift and re-impose restrictions.
- Perceived importance of COVID-19 protective measures, such as wearing a face covering and washing hands, has remained high. However, fewer respondents reported that they were doing these protective behaviours 'very' or 'fairly' well, particularly with opening windows/doors and meeting outdoors where possible. Yet, adherence with protective behaviours broadly remained high and stable.
- There is a split between people who think we need broad guidance around COVID-19 protective behaviours and those who think we need formal regulations. At mid-January, the majority (75%) accepted that some protective measures will still be needed as we continue to live with COVID-19. Just under half of respondents (49%) thought we just need broad guidance going forwards rather than detailed rules and regulations.
- The public are worried about impacts on businesses and the NHS. In December and January 2022, around 7 in 10 (67%-71%) were worried about the negative impact of Omicron on businesses and services and 6 in 10 (61%) were worried that the NHS would not be able to cope with the increased demand.
- Testing for COVID-19 increased over the winter period, with the highest reported testing in January 2022. Over the two-week festive season, over half of respondents (57%) said they had taken a COVID-19 test on at least some occasions before meeting with others.
- In September, over 4 in 10 (42%) parents/guardians with children aged 17 and under reported they were worried about their children's mental health.

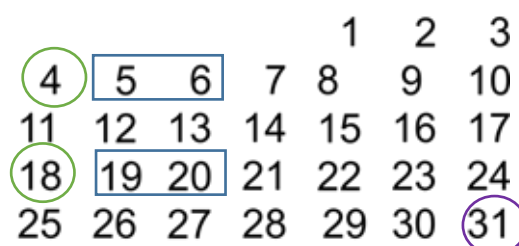
¹ See [Annex A](#) for research background and methods and [Annex B](#) for a more detailed timeline.

Visual timeline

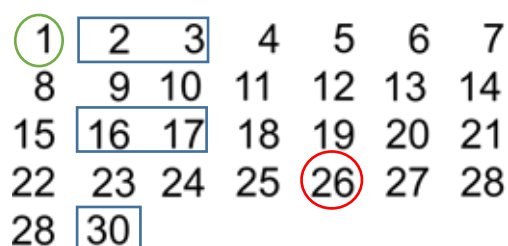
September 2021



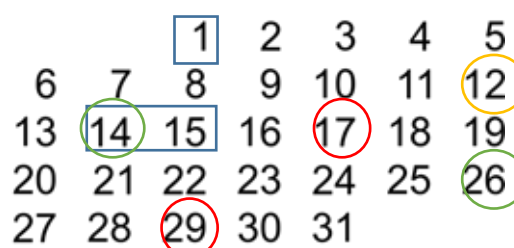
October 2021



November 2021



December 2021



January 2022



Key:

- = COVID-19 development
- = guidance/measures change
- = vaccination development
- = external event
- = fieldwork dates

2 September: peak number of daily positive PCR cases recorded in Scotland (7,526) in summer/autumn wave

20 September: 12-15 year olds able to visit drop-in clinics to be vaccinated ahead of invitations being sent out

4 October: international travel restrictions change to red/non-red list countries. PCR test needed 2 days after arrival in Scotland

18 October: COVID-19 "passport" Certification Scheme becomes fully enforceable

31 October - 13 November: COP-26 underway in Glasgow

1 November: international travel rules change: red-list and quarantine requirements abandoned

26 November: WHO identify Omicron as a Variant of Concern

12 December: FM announces acceleration of booster rollout. All adults to be offered a booster vaccine by Hogmanay

14 December: further protective measures put in place: legal requirements on business/services to make premises safe. Advice to minimise household contact (3 maximum), excluding main Christmas celebrations

14 December: Ministers appoint a Chair and announce Terms of Reference for Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry

17 December: Omicron became dominant variant in Scotland

26/7 December: new restrictions announced: size limits on large events, table service and 1m distancing between groups in hospitality

29 December: peak of Omicron wave with 21,425 positive PCRs recorded in Scotland on this day

17 January: restrictions on large events lifted

24 January: restrictions on indoor events and hospitality measures lifted, no more 3 household limit indoors

1. Wellbeing

Worry and optimism

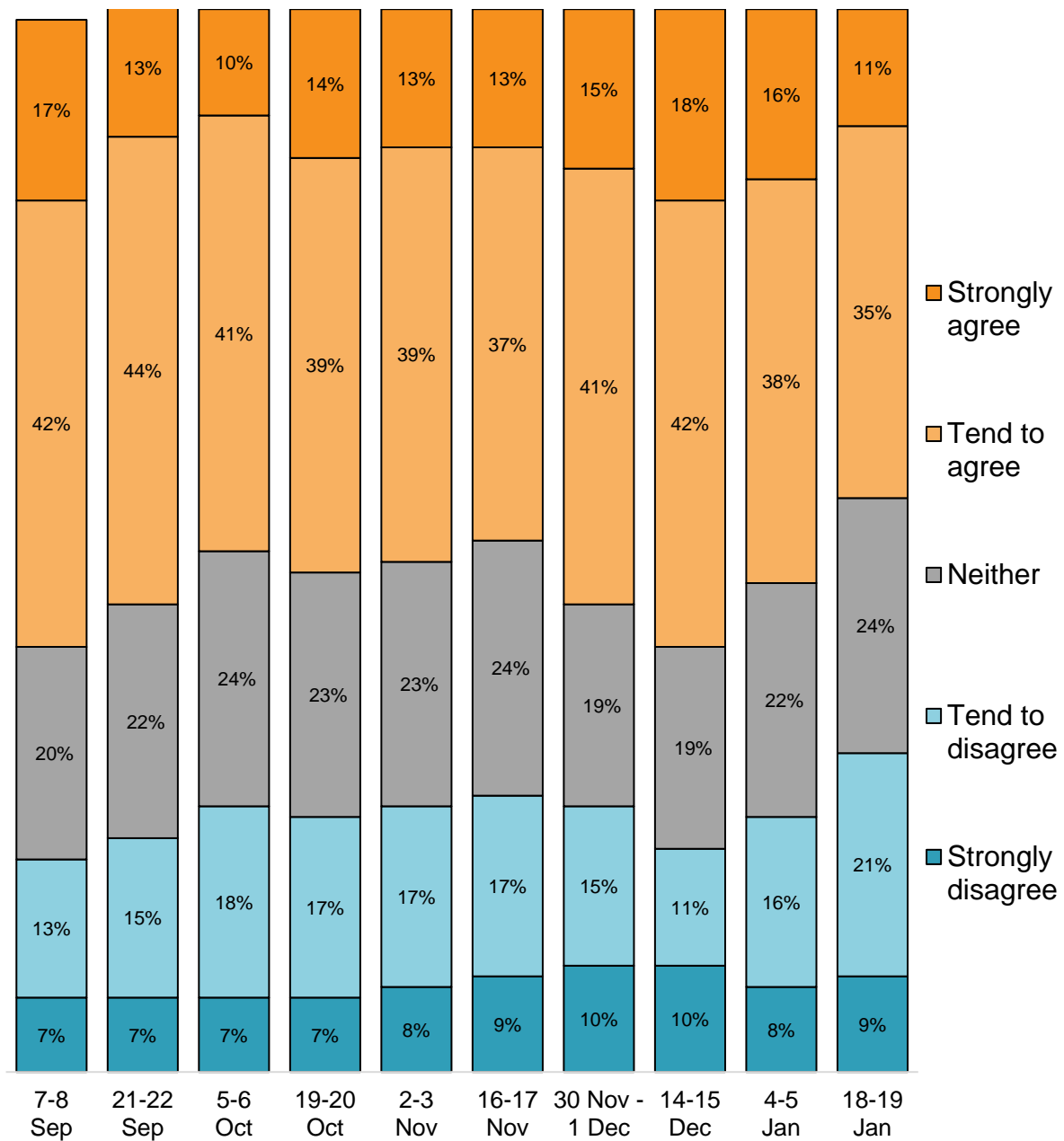
This section covers how people have felt at different points in the pandemic, between September 2021 and January 2022, and thinking ahead. Respondents were asked:

- how they feel about the Coronavirus situation
- whether they believe things will get better soon
- how positive or negative they feel about life in the month and year ahead
- what their main concerns are in 2022

Worry

From September 2021 to January 2022, between 46% and 60% of respondents agreed that they have felt worried about the Coronavirus situation (Figure 1). More people reported feeling worried in the run up to Christmas, at 14-15 December 2021, where 3 in 5 (60%) agreed that they were worried. This was at the time when Omicron was spreading rapidly. By mid-January 2022, worry had reduced to 46%.

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I feel worried about the Coronavirus situation'²



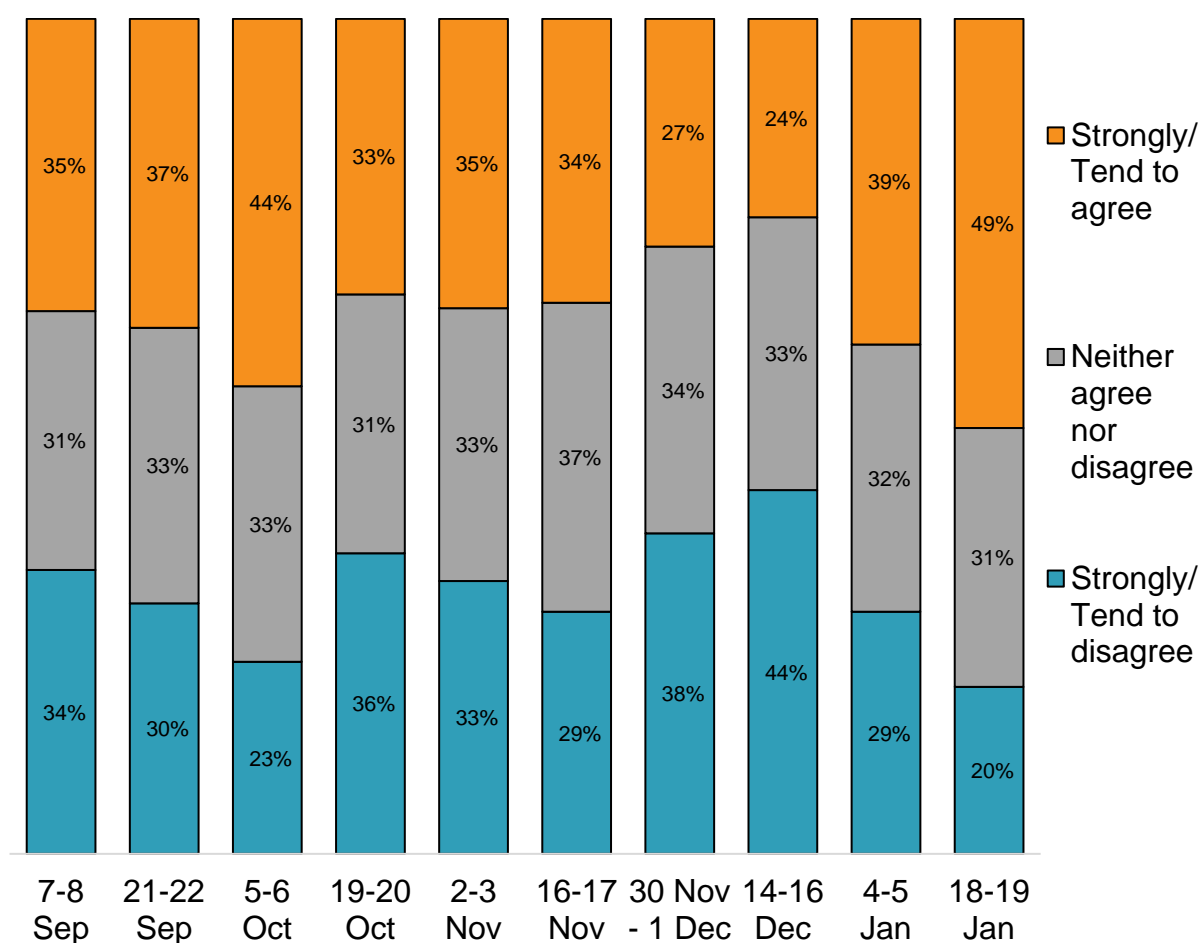
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

² Note for interpretation: where the results do not sum 100%, this may be due to computer rounding.

Optimism

To get a sense of how optimistic people are feeling, survey respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that things will start to get better soon. Between September 2021 to January 2022, responses varied (Figure 2), typically reflecting changes in the COVID-19 situation. Over this time period, between 24% and 49% agreed that things will start to get better soon, while between 20% to 44% disagreed with the statement. Consistent with worry about the Coronavirus situation in Figure 1, people were least optimistic in mid-December 2021 and most optimistic in mid-January 2022.

Figure 2: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I'm sure that things will start to get better soon'



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

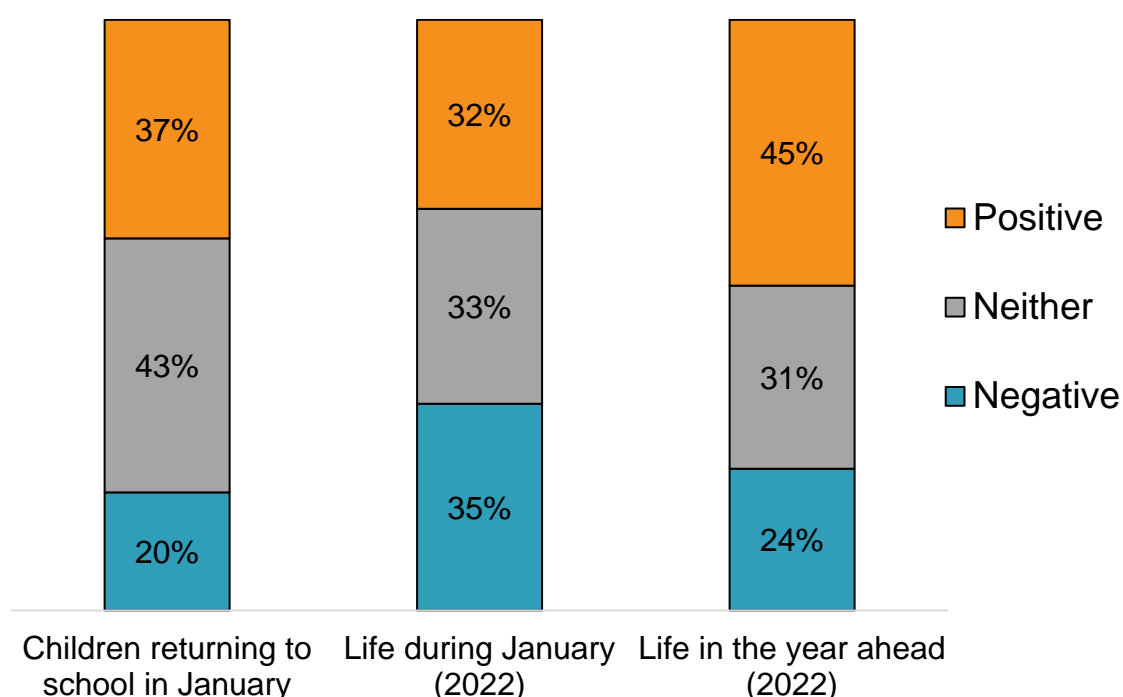
At the beginning of January - a week after Scotland recorded the highest number of COVID-19 infections, according to positive PCRs ([Public Health Scotland](#)) - respondents were asked how positive or negative they felt about the following:

- children returning to school in January
- life during January (2022)
- life in the year ahead (2022)

The data shows a substantial proportion of respondents were worried about all of these things, but the largest worry was about January 2022.

Almost 2 in 5 respondents (37%) (Figure 3) felt positively about children returning to school in January, 1 in 5 (20%) felt negative, and the largest proportion (43%) felt neither positive or negative. When asked about life during the month of January, the responses were more evenly mixed: with around a third of respondents feeling positive (32%), around a third feeling negative (35%), and another third feeling neither positive or negative (33%). More respondents felt positive about the overall year ahead (2022), compared to the immediate month ahead in January. 45% of people reported feeling positive about life in the year ahead, and a quarter felt negatively (24%), with a third (31%) feeling neither.³

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents who felt positive or negative about each of the following as at 4-5 January:



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1012)

³ Note that people can experience lower moods in the winter months ([NHS](#)), so more negative feelings towards life in January may be in keeping with typical trends for this time of year. However, UCL's COVID-19 Social Study did also find that anxiety and depression were particularly high in December 2021, and happiness and life satisfaction were the lowest they had reached since March 2021 ([UCL](#)).

Biggest concerns

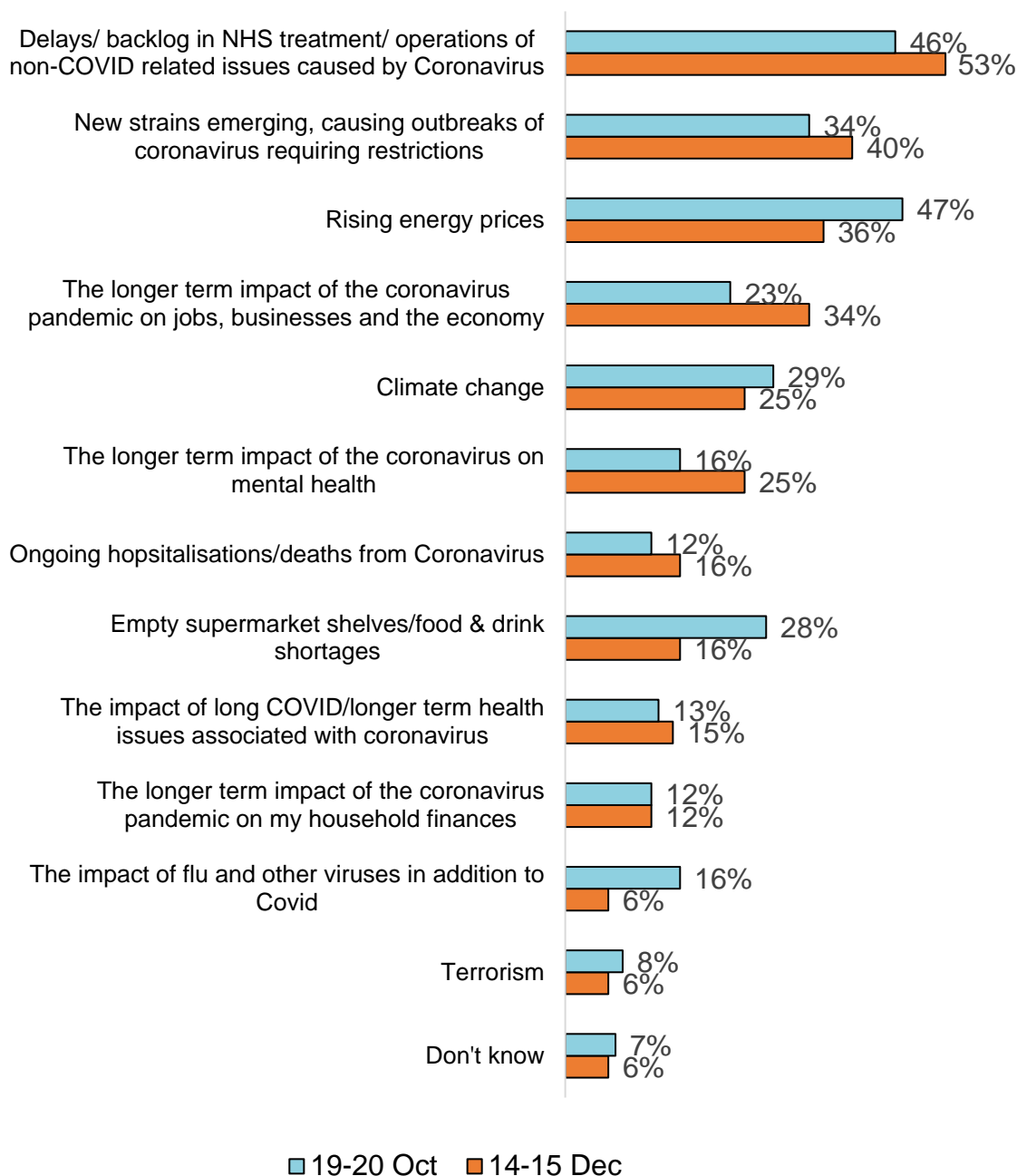
Respondents were given a list of options and asked to select their top three biggest concerns (ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd) when thinking about the year ahead. Figure 4 shows the top ranked concerns, with the percentages representing the proportion of respondents who placed each concern as one of their three biggest concerns.⁴

The ranking of respondents' main concerns were mostly the same at 19-20 October as when the question was repeated two months later, on 14-15 December. However, by December more respondents were concerned about delays/ backlog in NHS treatment/ operations of non-COVID related issues caused by Coronavirus. 46% of respondents placed this in their top 3 concerns in October, increasing to 53% in December. Concern about new strains emerging also increased by 6 percentage points (from 34% to 40%). Also, concerns about the longer term impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on jobs, businesses and the economy rose by 11 percentage points, and concern for the longer term impact on mental health rose by 9 percentage points.

Meanwhile, fewer people were concerned about energy prices by December (36%), compared to 47% in October. However, energy prices remains the third top concern. Concern about empty shelves in supermarkets also decreased from 28% in October to 16% in December.

⁴ [See the October and December 2021 data tables for the breakdown of the rankings, 1st, 2nd and 3rd on the Scottish Government website.](#)

Figure 4: Biggest concerns thinking about the year ahead⁵



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1003-1022)

⁵ YouGov survey question phrasing: 'Thinking about the year ahead (from now until October/December 2022), which of the following are you most concerned about? Please select the top three, where 1 is your biggest concern, 2 your second biggest and 3 your third biggest. (Please drag and drop the options in order into the boxes below, or select the 'Don't know' option).'

Levels of loneliness, anxiety and happiness

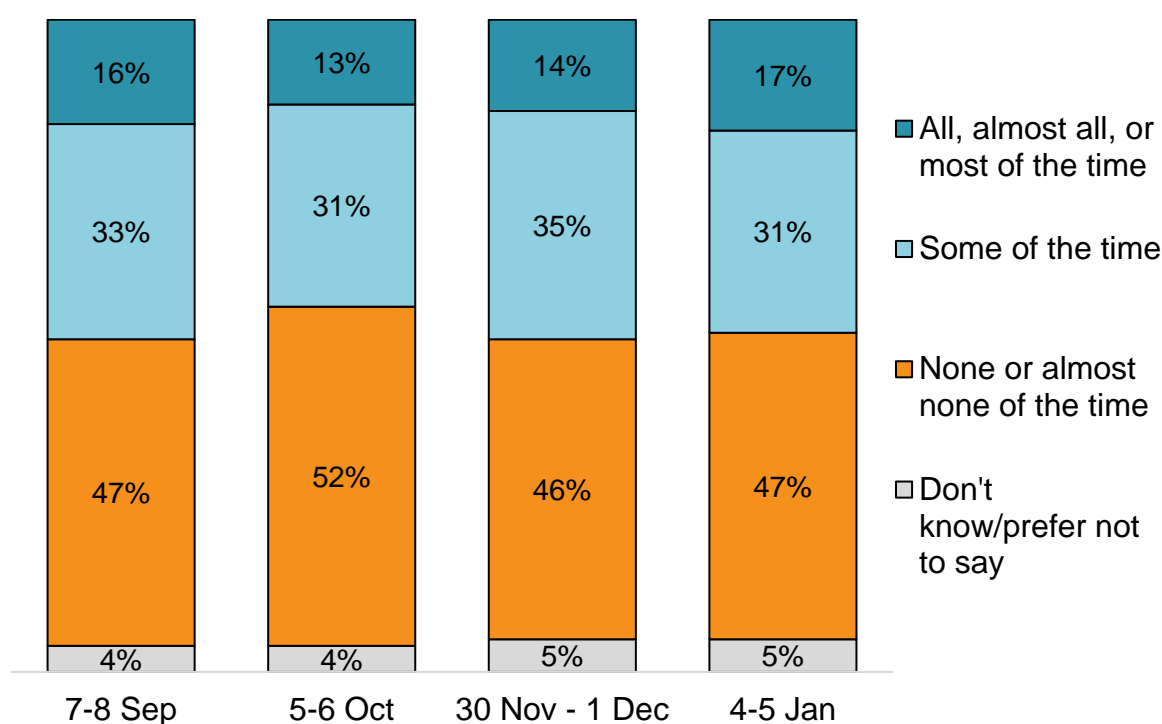
The Coronavirus pandemic continues to have a wide range of impacts on personal wellbeing. This section presents data about the impacts of the pandemic on feelings such as loneliness, anxiety and happiness.

Loneliness

To understand social isolation, respondents were asked how much of the time during the past week they had felt lonely.

The survey found continued high levels of loneliness, with just under half of respondents (between 45% and 49%) reporting that they felt lonely at least some of the time over this period (see Figure 5). This was 49% in September, reducing to 45% at the beginning of October and then returning to 48%-49% at the start of December and January. These levels of loneliness are broadly similar to the level measured in January 2021.

Figure 5: How often respondents felt lonely during the past week



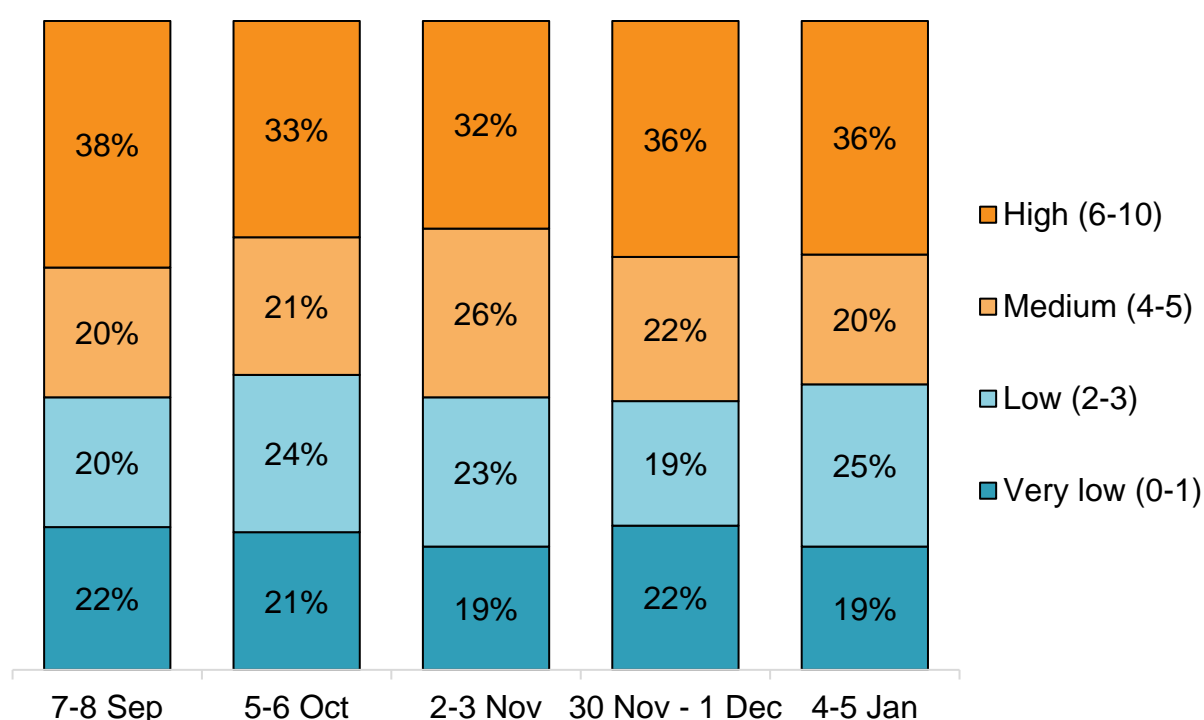
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

The survey also included two of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) wellbeing questions to measure levels of anxiety and happiness. Respondents were asked how anxious, and how happy, they felt 'yesterday', on a scale of 0 to 10.

Anxiety

At least one third of respondents (32% to 38%) consistently reported 'high' anxiety (score of 6-10), see Figure 6. The numbers of respondents with 'high' anxiety remain higher than pre-pandemic measures (23% of the population in Scotland), ⁶ but lower than the high levels (60%) reported at the beginning of the first national lockdown.⁷

Figure 6: How anxious respondents felt yesterday on a scale of 0-10



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

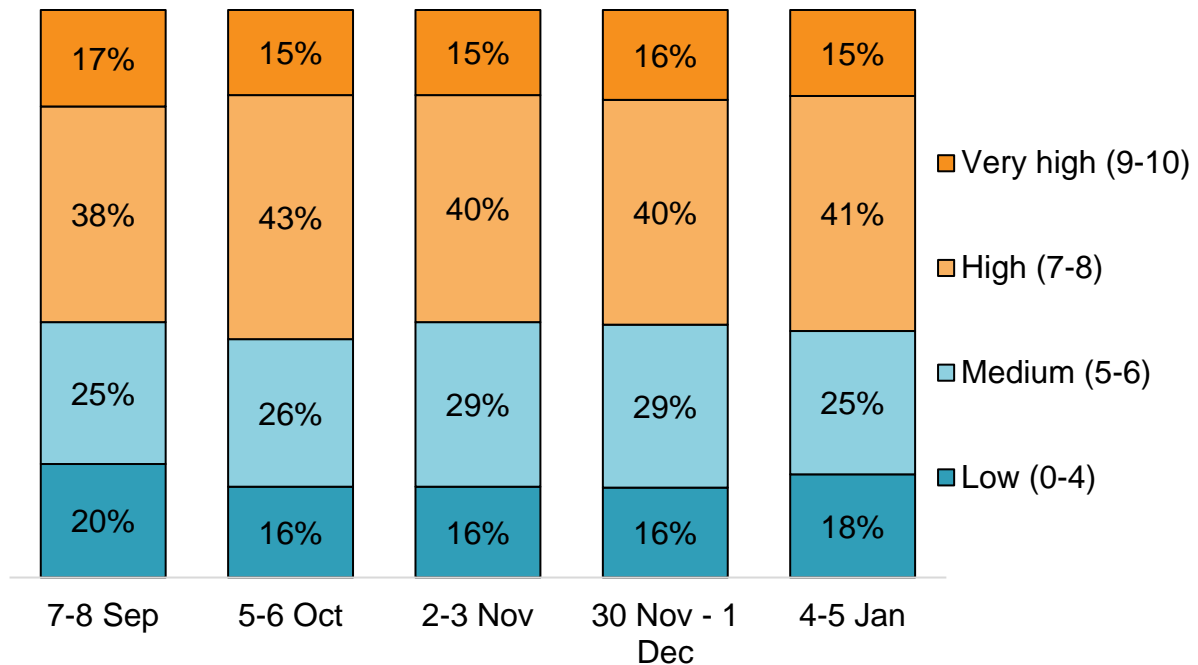
⁶ [ONS, 2020 Respondents are asked 'Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?' and are asked to respond on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "not at all" and 10 is "completely". The Annual Population Survey \(APS\) is a continuous household survey, covering the UK. It uses data from two waves of the main Labour Force Survey \(LFS\). The data comprise 12 months of survey data and are disseminated quarterly. The achieved sample size is approximately 320,000 respondents.](#)

⁷ [Public attitudes to coronavirus: April summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Happiness

1 in 5 respondents or fewer (between 16% to 20%) reported 'low' happiness (score of 0-4).

Figure 7: How happy respondents felt yesterday on a scale of 0-10

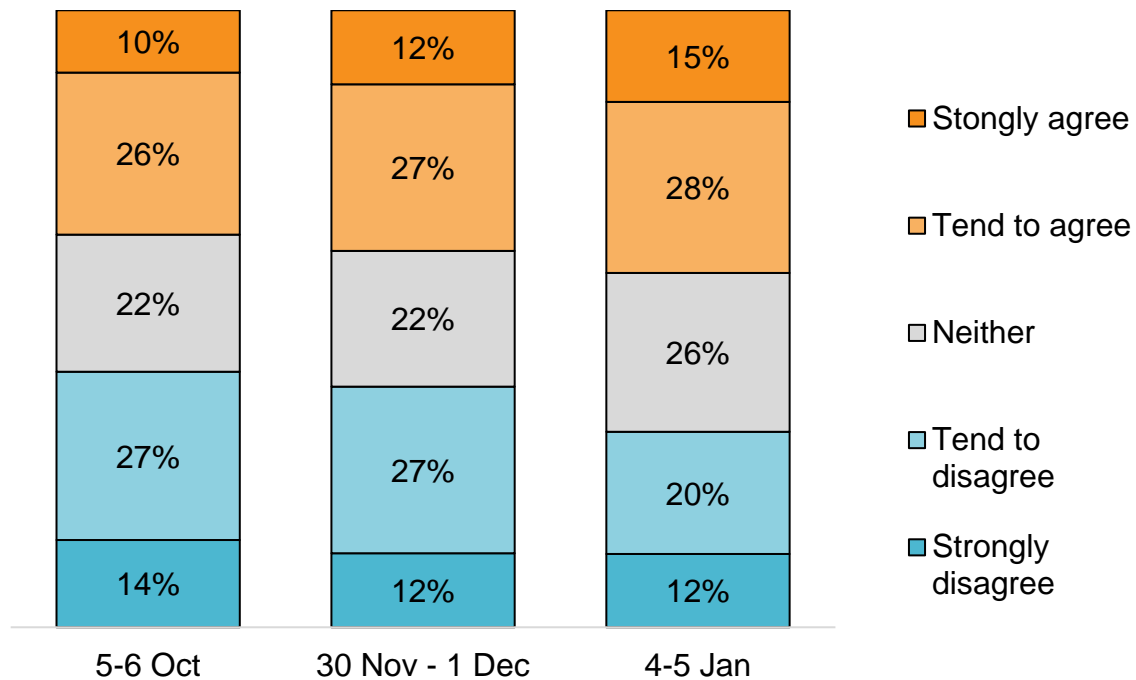


Source: YouGov Scotland survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Mental health

Between October to January, worry about the effect of the ongoing pandemic on mental health incrementally increased: with 37% on 5-6 October, 39% at 30 November-1 December, and 43% by 4-5 January (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I am worried about the effect of the ongoing pandemic on my mental health'



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

2. Impact of Coronavirus

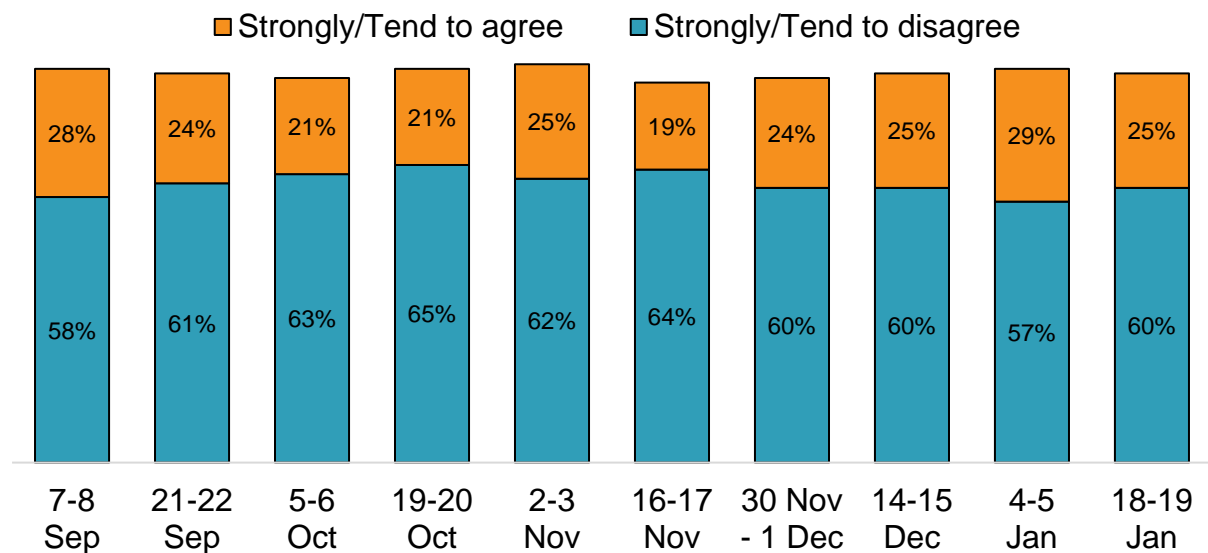
This section presents data on the day-to-day impacts of Coronavirus on people's health and finances.

Health impact

To understand the potential impact on non-COVID-19 related health issues, respondents were asked if they would avoid contacting a GP for immediate non-Coronavirus medical concerns.

From the beginning of September 2021 through to January 2022, between two to three out of ten respondents (19% to 29%) agreed that they would avoid contacting their GP even with an immediate medical concern not related to Coronavirus (Figure 9). The majority (between 57% to 65%) disagreed.

Figure 9: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed that 'I would avoid contacting a GP practice at the moment even with an immediate medical concern'

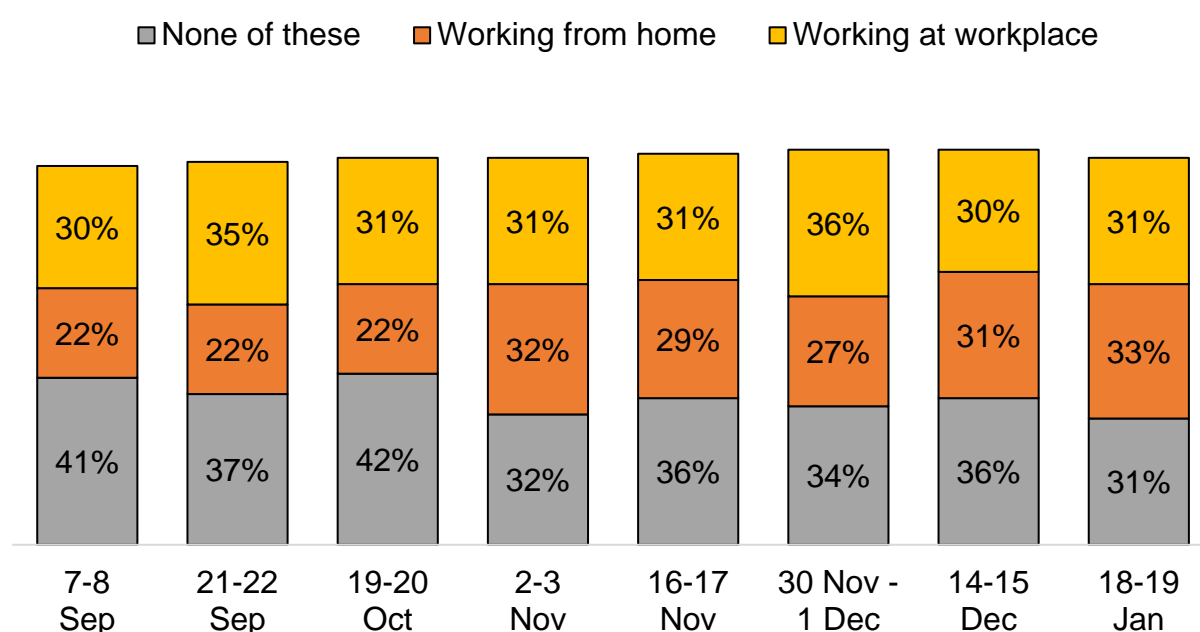


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Work situation

Respondents who are not retired were asked what best describes their current work situation (Figure 10). This included working at a workplace, working from home or none of the options given.⁸ The proportions working from home has varied between September and January, between 22% to 33%. This was lowest in September and October, at 22%, and then increased in November, from which point the Scottish Government encouraged home working.⁹ Working from home then fluctuated between 27% and 33% until mid-January. Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents working at a workplace has remained fairly stable, between 30% to 36% from September through January.

Figure 10: Current working situation for respondents not retired



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: All adults not retired (n=699-741)

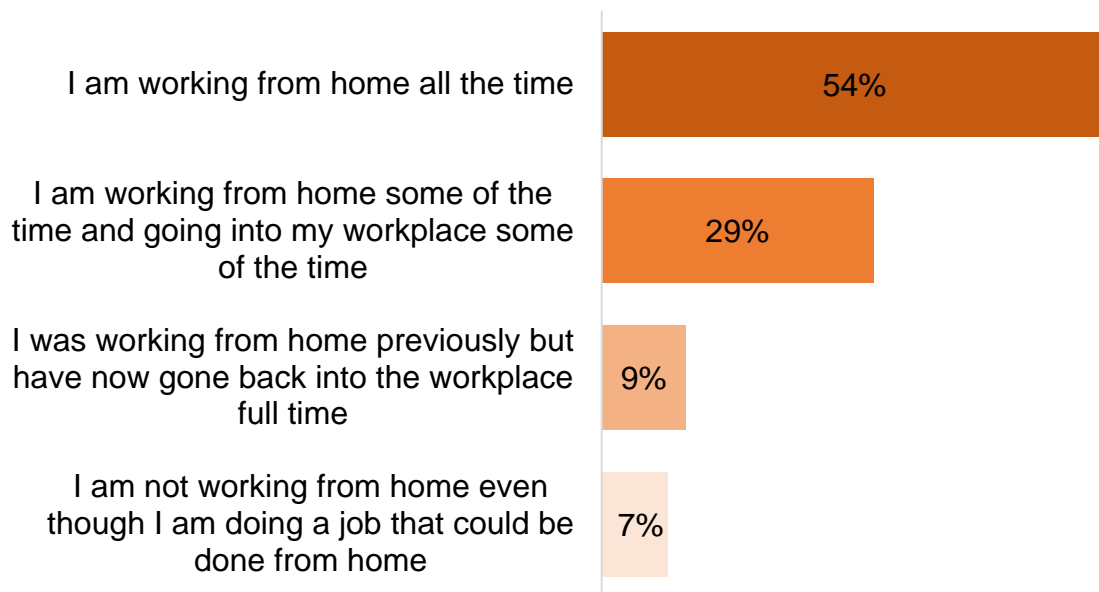
⁸ Respondents were asked to select one option which best described their work situation. Working from home included 'working from home all of the time' and 'working from home some of the time'. Working at a workplace included those where it is not possible to work from home. For a more detailed breakdown of respondents' working situation please see the published data tables: [Public attitudes to coronavirus: tracker - data tables - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/attitudes-to-coronavirus-tracker-data-tables/data-tables.aspx)

⁹ See [gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot) for details

Working from home

At 18-19 January 2022, over half of those that could work from home were doing so all the time (54%), as shown in Figure 11. While around one third of respondents who could work from home (29%) were splitting their time between working from home and in the workplace. Around 1 in 10 (9%) who had been working from home had since returned to the workplace. And 7% were working in the workplace even though they could work from home.

Figure 11: Working status amongst respondents who could work from home as at 18-19 January 2022

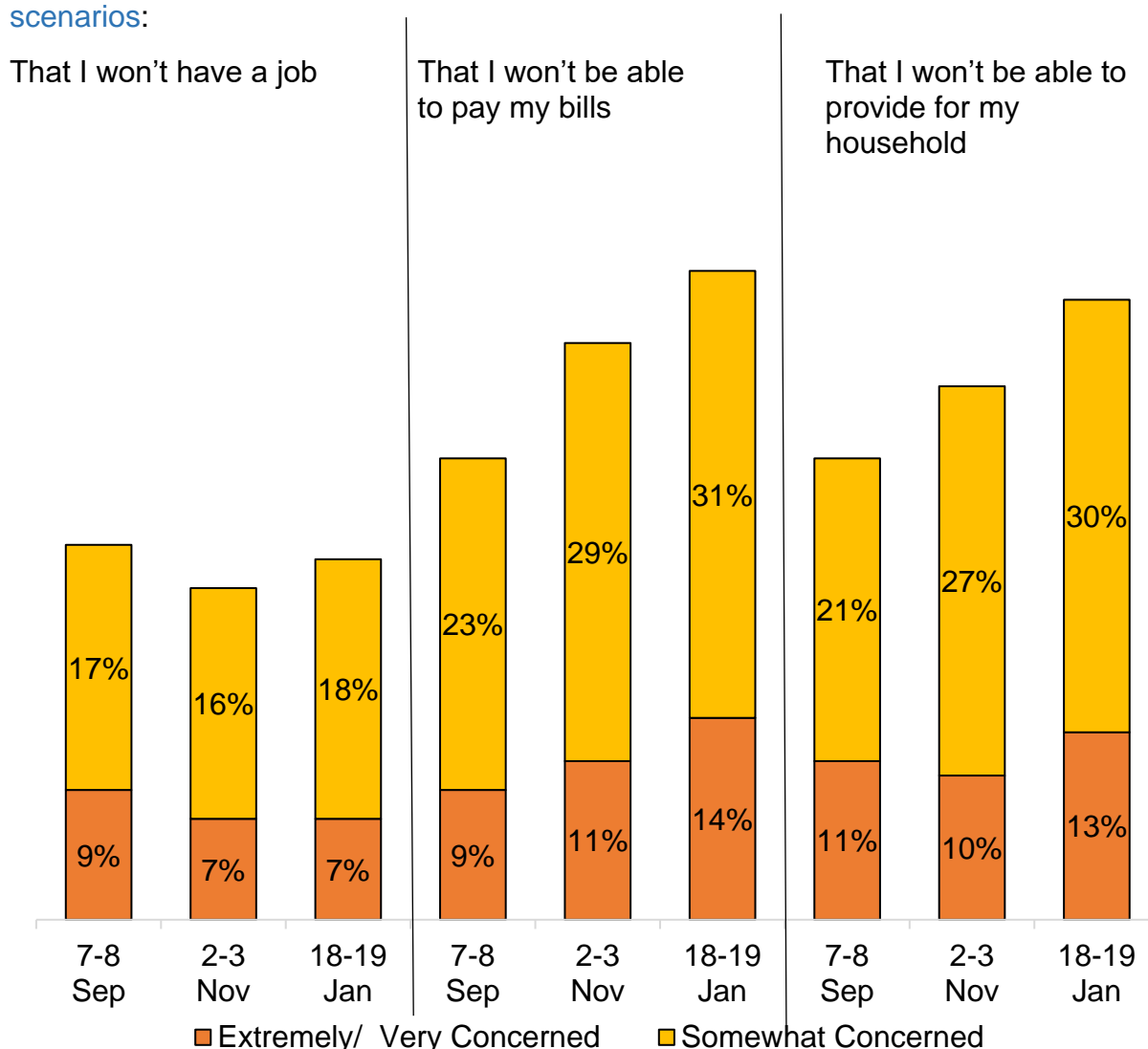


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: All adults not retired who answered that they could work from home (n=310)

Financial impacts

Respondents were asked in September (7-8), November (2-3) and January (18-19) how concerned they felt in the month ahead about paying their bills, not having a job and not being able to provide for their household (Figure 12). Concern about not having a job remained stable, with fewer than 1 in 10 respondents saying that they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned (7% to 9%). The proportion of respondents who were at least 'somewhat' concerned that they won't be able to pay their bills, increased from 33% in September to 45% in January.¹⁰ Respondents 'extremely' or 'very' concerned about being able to provide for their households remained fairly stable in this time period, while the proportion who were 'somewhat' concerned about being able to provide for their household increased from 21% in September to 30% in mid-January.

Figure 12: Proportion of respondents who were concerned about the following scenarios:



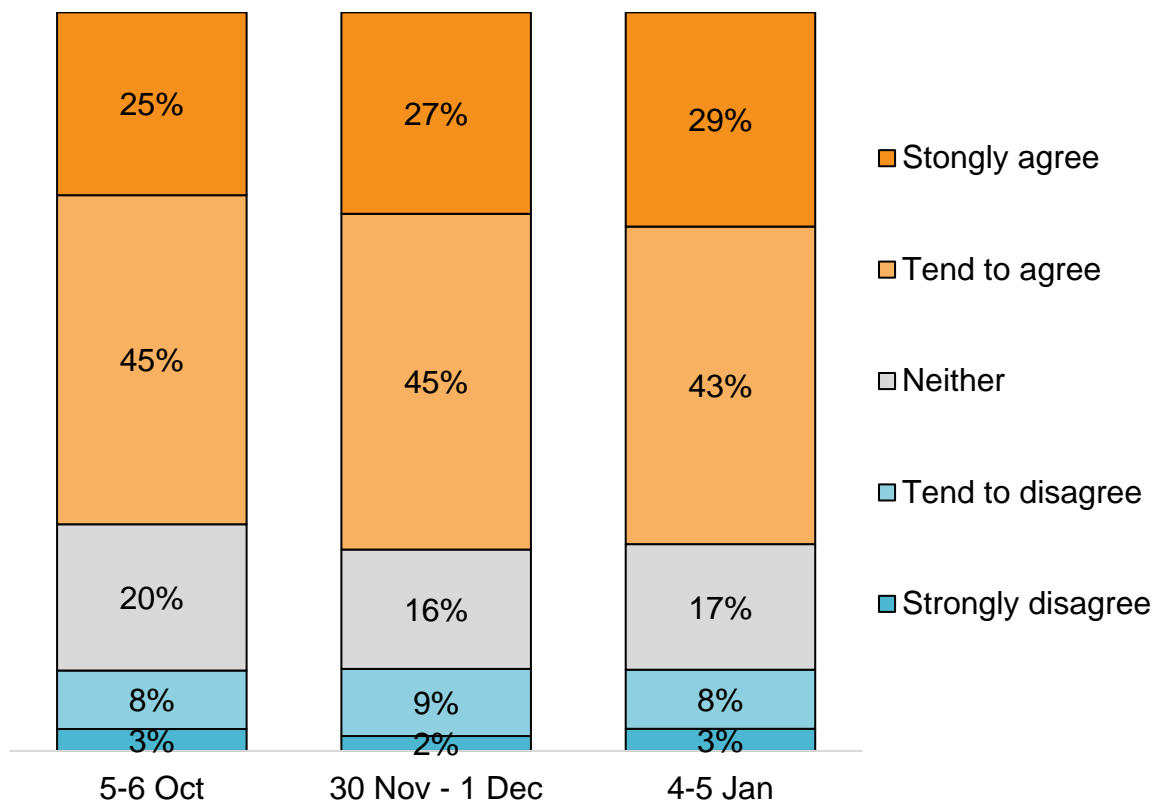
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1002-1021)

¹⁰ This is against the backdrop of over 20 UK energy companies closing in autumn/winter 2021 ([Ofgem](#)) associated with rising wholesale energy prices.

Worry about the effect of the pandemic on jobs and the economy

Worry about the effect of the pandemic on jobs and the economy has remained high (Figure 13). Between October and January, around 7 in 10 respondents agreed that they were worried about the long-lasting effect of the pandemic on jobs and the economy.

Figure 13: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I am worried about the long-lasting effect of the pandemic on jobs and our economy'



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

3. Attitudes toward Coronavirus, measures and guidance

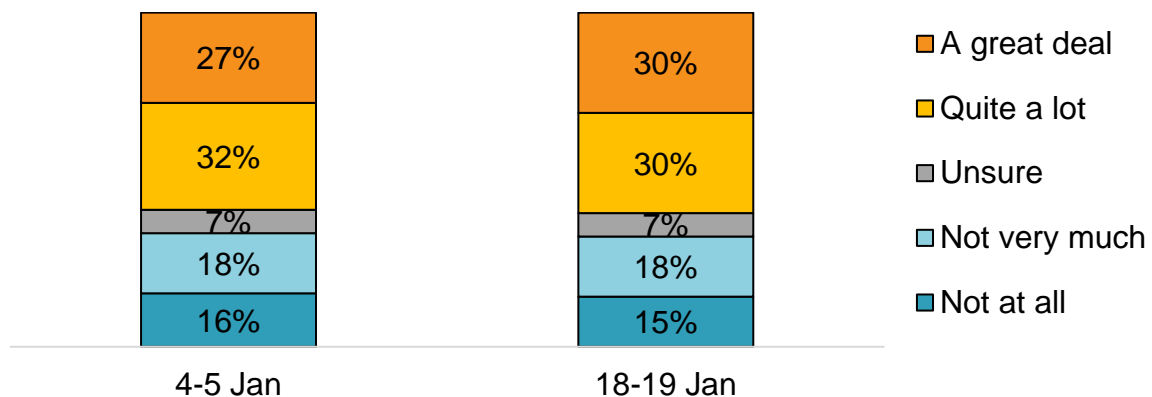
To understand attitudes towards Coronavirus and how it is being managed in Scotland, respondents were asked their views on:

- how the pandemic is being handled
- their trust in the Scottish Government to provide information, to decide when is best to lift/re-impose restrictions, and to act in Scotland's best interests
- whether they thought restrictions/guidance were working
- how they felt about the pace of easing of restrictions
- about what respondents' motivations were to stick to the rules and guidance
- and general attitudes toward Coronavirus

Trust in the Scottish Government

Trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's best interests has remained stable throughout January 2022, with 3 in 5 respondents (59%-60%) saying they trust the Scottish Government either 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' (Figure 14).

Figure 14: To what degree did respondents trust the Scottish Government to work in Scotland's best interests

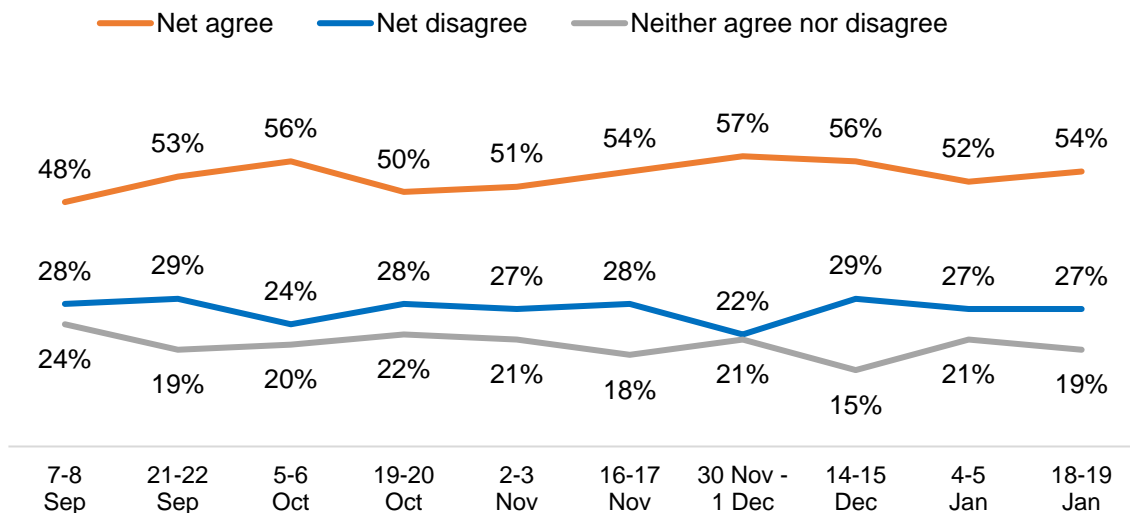


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1005-1012)

Attitudes around the handling of the pandemic in Scotland

From September through to January around half of respondents (between 48% to 57%) supported the way the pandemic is being handled in Scotland (Figure 15). The proportion who disagreed has stayed around 27% to 29%, with a slight dip end of November (22%), and also in early October (24%).

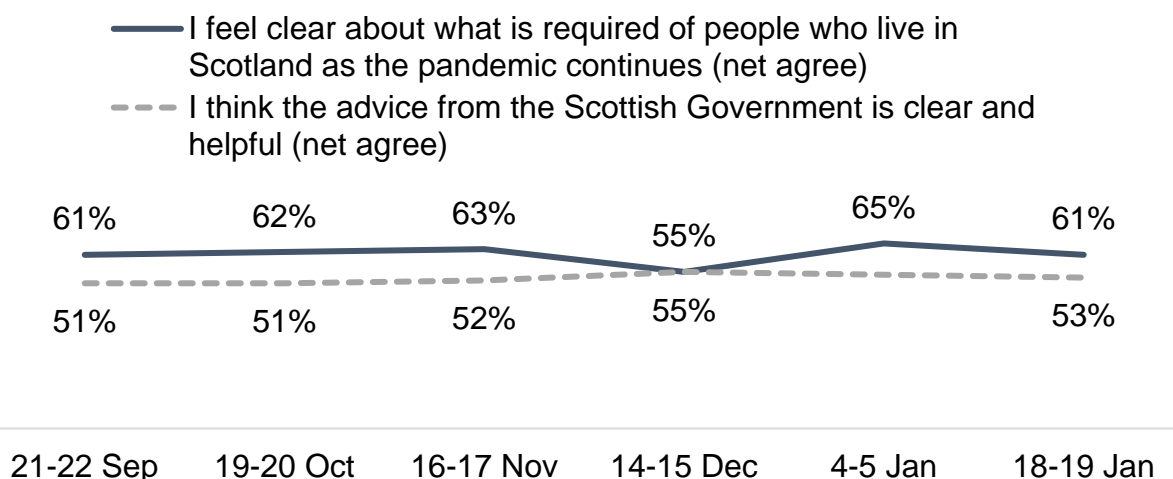
Figure 15: Proportion of respondents who agreed or disagreed with the statement 'I support the way the pandemic is being handled in Scotland'



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Over 6 in 10 respondents (61% to 65%) of respondents agreed that they felt clear about what is required of people who live in Scotland as the pandemic continues (Figure 16), with the exception of 14-15 December (when this dropped to 55%). And over 5 in 10 respondents (between 51% to 55%) agreed that the advice from the Scottish Government is clear and helpful (also Figure 16).

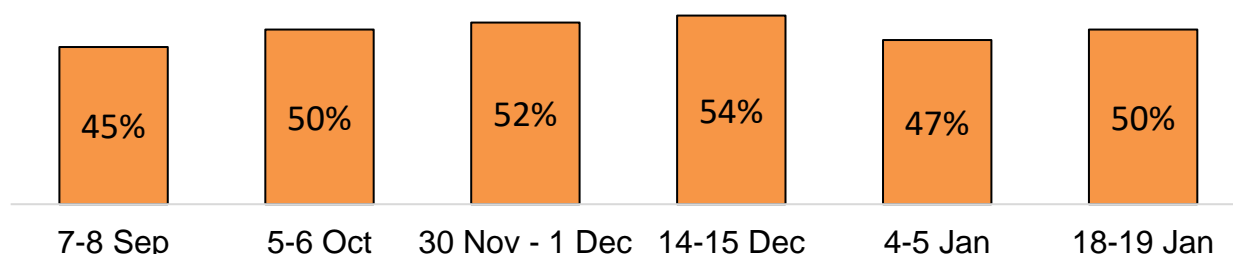
Figure 16: Proportion of respondents who tended to/strongly agreed with the following statements



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1003-1022)

Around half of respondents (between 45% and 54%) agreed that they trust the Scottish Government to decide when and how it's best to lift and re-impose restrictions, this was highest in mid-December (54%) and lowest at the beginning of September (45%), as pictured in Figure 17.

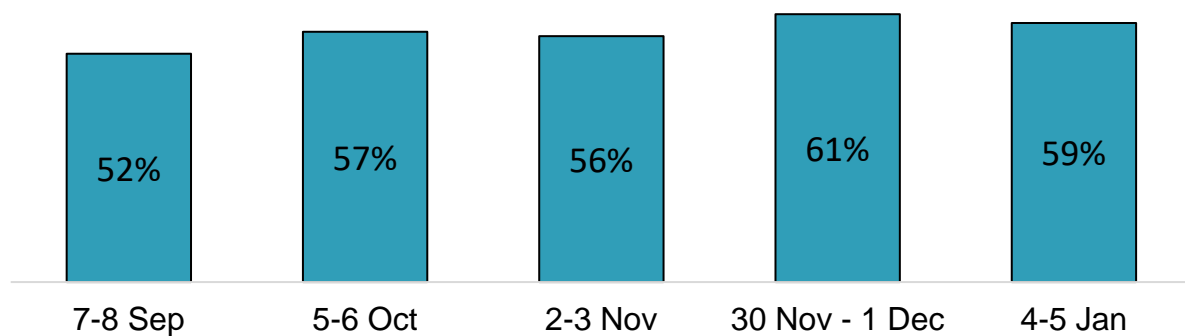
Figure 17: Proportion of respondents who agreed (tended to/strongly) that they trust the Scottish Government to decide when and how it's best to lift and re-impose restrictions



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Trust in the Scottish Government to provide information on the Coronavirus (Figure 18) was slightly higher than trust in Scottish Government to decide on lifting or re-imposing restrictions (Figure 17). Between 5 and 6 in 10 respondents (52% to 61%) said they 'completely' or 'mostly' trust the Scottish Government to provide information on Coronavirus, peaking at 30 November to 1 December.

Figure 18: Proportion of respondents who said they (completely/mostly) trust the Scottish Government to provide information on the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

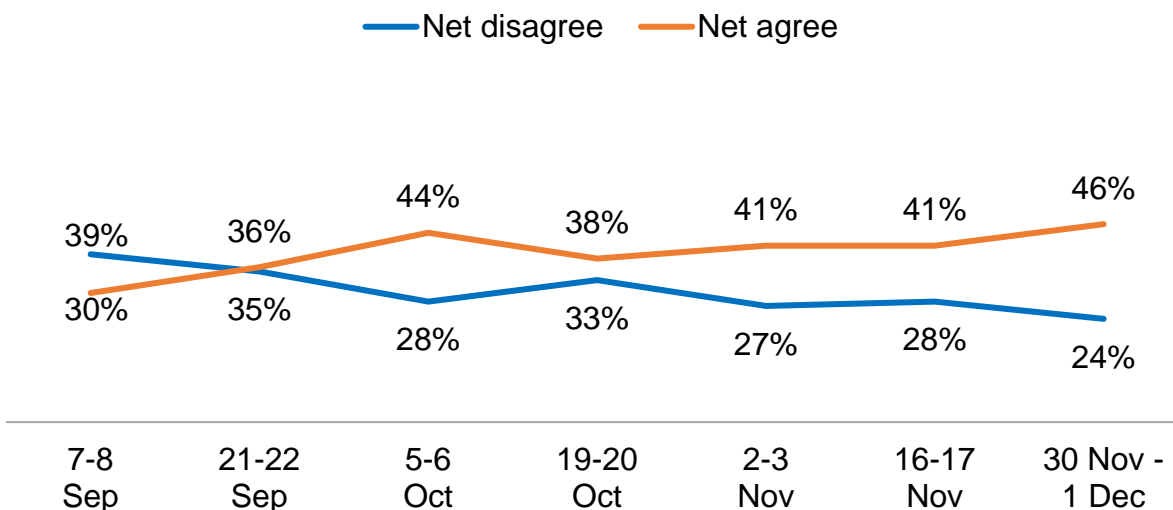


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Attitudes towards restrictions and guidance

There has been an increase in respondents agreeing that they feel restrictions and rules are working in Scotland, from 30% in 7-8 September to 46% at 30 November-1 December (Figure 19). This is lower than in March 2021, when over 6 in 10 respondents agreed that it feels like the rules and restrictions are working.¹¹

Figure 19: Proportion of respondents who (tended to/strongly) agreed or disagreed with the statement 'It feels like the restrictions and rules are working in Scotland'

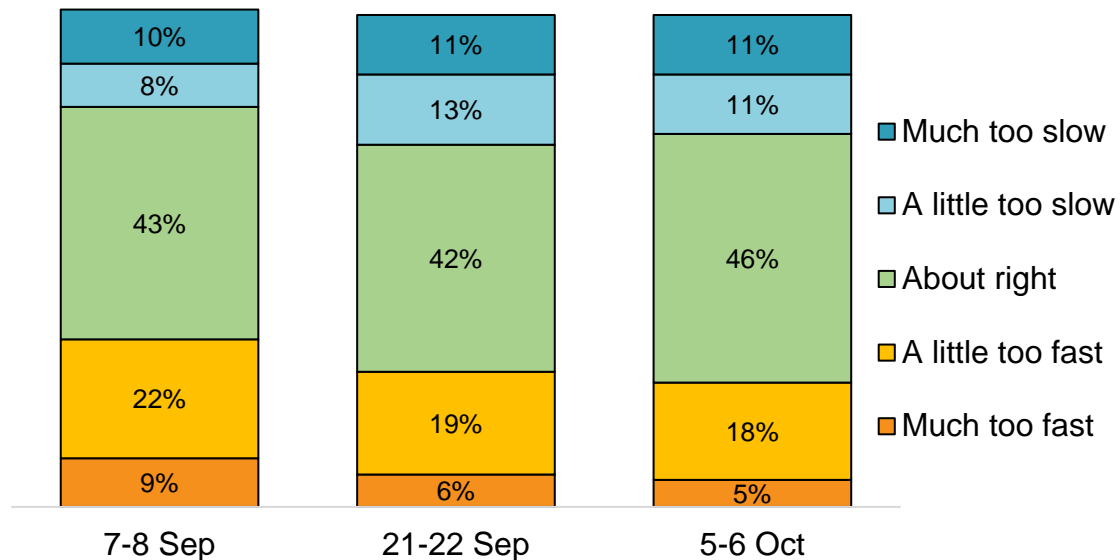


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

¹¹ See in [Public attitudes to Coronavirus: November update \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/public-attitudes-to-coronavirus-november-update)

Respondents had mixed opinions in terms of whether restrictions are being eased too slow or too fast (Figure 20). Over 4 in 10 respondents (between 42% to 46%) think that the speed that the Scottish Government is easing restrictions is about right, as reported in September and October.

Figure 20: Proportion of respondents who felt the restrictions were being eased too fast, too slow or about right



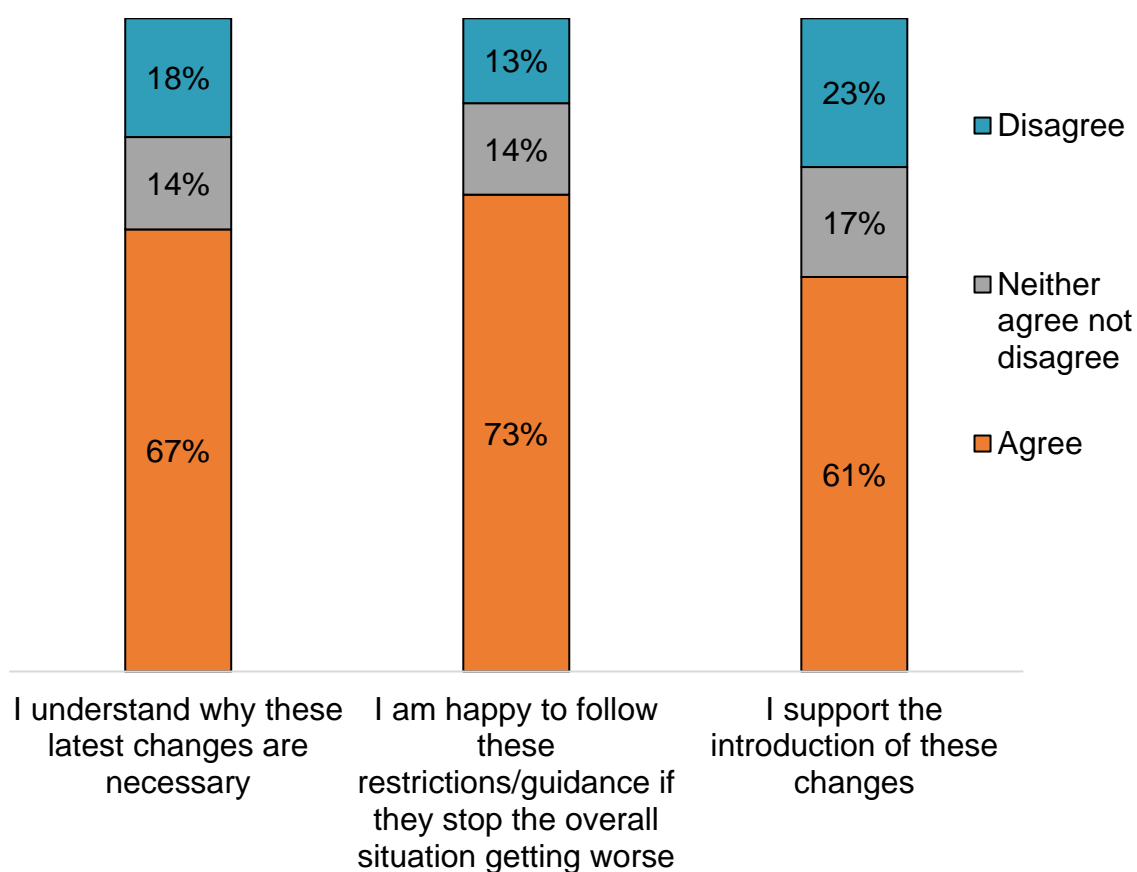
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1005-1044)

Updated restrictions and guidance

Following the increase in spread of Omicron, updated restrictions and guidance for Scotland were introduced from 26-27 December 2021. The new measures included reduced numbers at large events, table service and 1 metre distancing between groups in hospitality, and advice to limit the amount of social contact with other households.

At 4-5 January 2022, just over two thirds (67%) agreed they understood why the changes are necessary, whilst 18% disagreed. Just under three quarters (73%) agreed they were happy to follow the restrictions if it stops the overall situation getting worse, with 13% in disagreement (Figure 21). 61% agreed they were in support of these changes, whilst 23% disagreed.

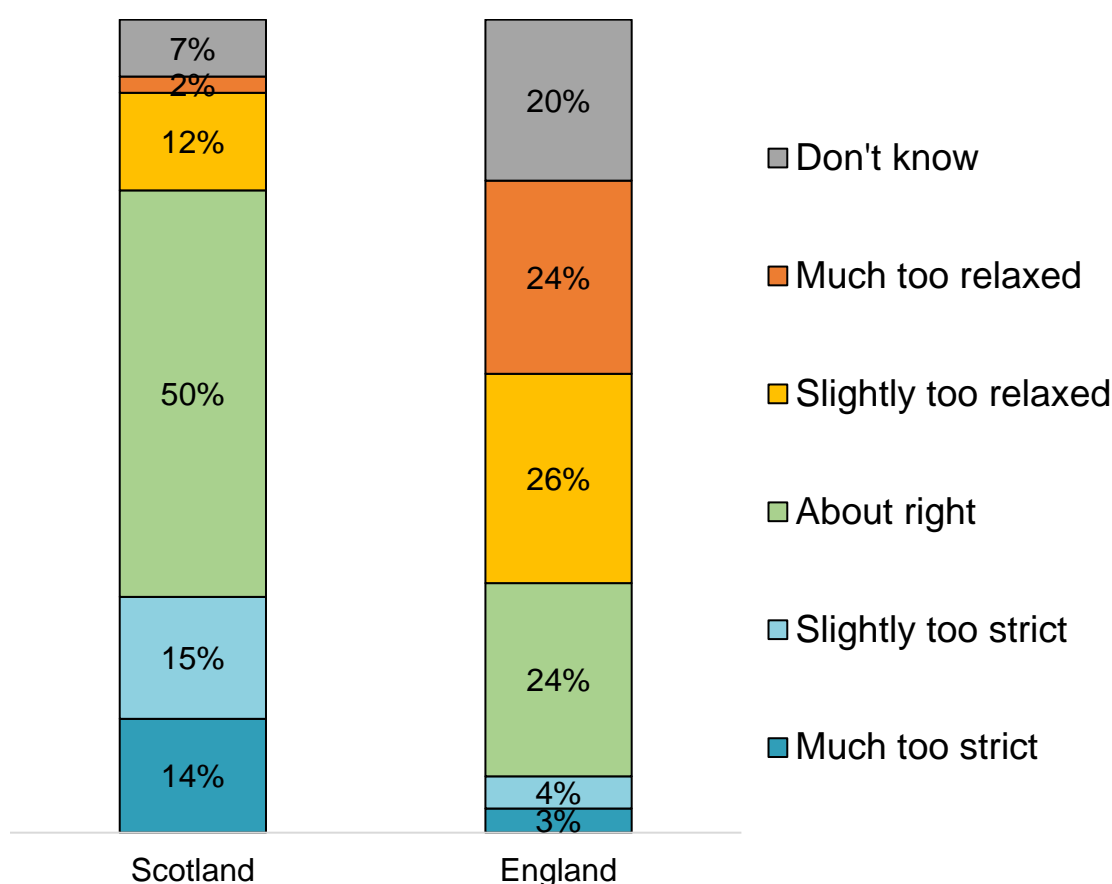
Figure 21: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the following statements:



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: All Scottish Adults (n=1012), 4-5 January 2022

Due to the different rules and guidance in place in different UK nations following the festive period,¹² respondents were asked whether they thought the rules and restrictions both in Scotland and in England were too strict, too relaxed or about right as at 18-19 January 2022 (Figure 22). Half of respondents (50%) thought the restrictions and rules were about right in Scotland, while only a quarter (24%) said the same of the restrictions and rules in England. Just under a third (29%) thought the rules and restrictions were either ‘much’ or ‘slightly too strict’ in Scotland. Meanwhile half of respondents (50%) thought the rules and restrictions in England were either ‘slightly’ or ‘much too relaxed’.

Figure 22: Proportion of respondents who thought the rules and guidance in Scotland and in England were too relaxed, too strict or about right as at 18-19 January 2022

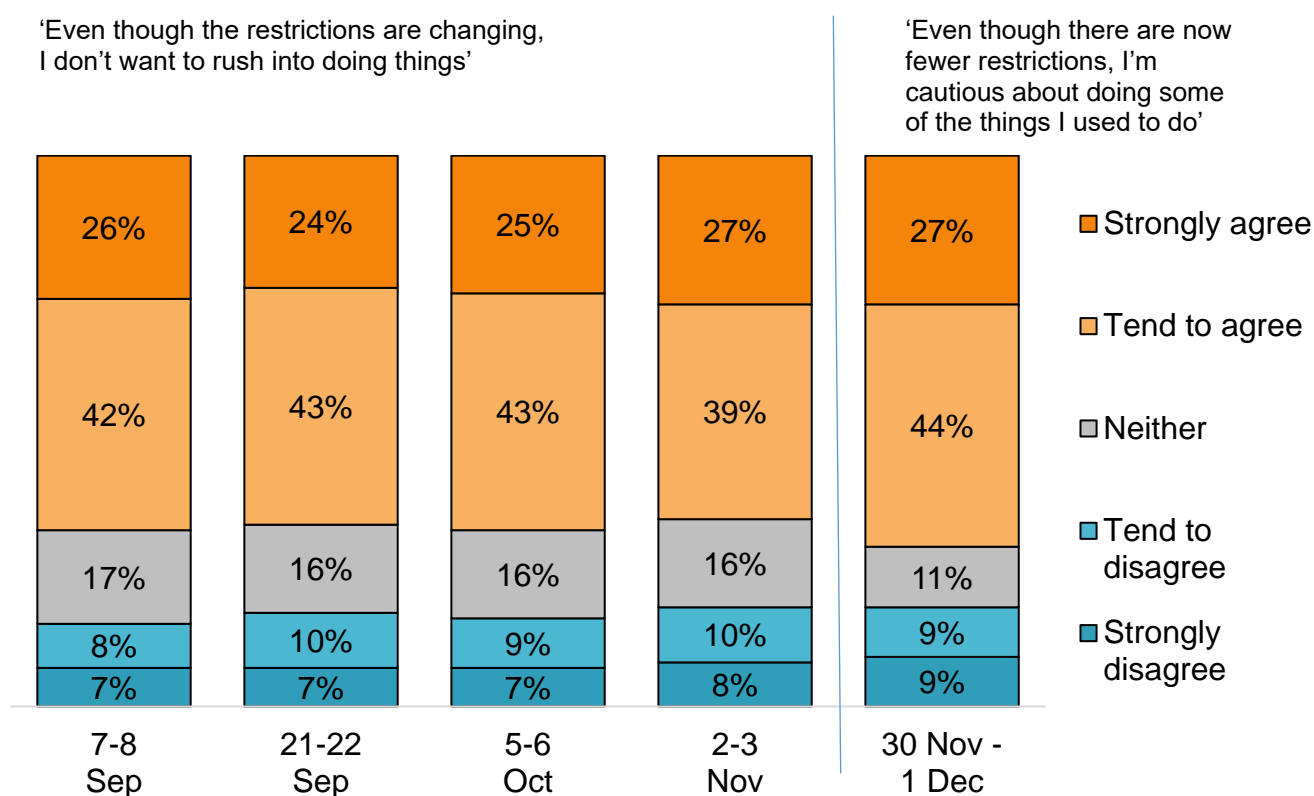


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1005)

¹²For the measures that were introduced in Scotland from 26/27 December see gov.scot, and for details of the ‘Plan B’ response in England see gov.uk

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement 'Even though restrictions are changing, I don't want to rush into doing things' which was changed to 'Even though there are now fewer restrictions, I'm cautious about doing some of the things I used to do' in late November (Figure 23). Consistently, the majority of respondents (between 66% to 71%) 'strongly' or 'tended to agree' that they were cautious about returning to normal activities.

Figure 23: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement...

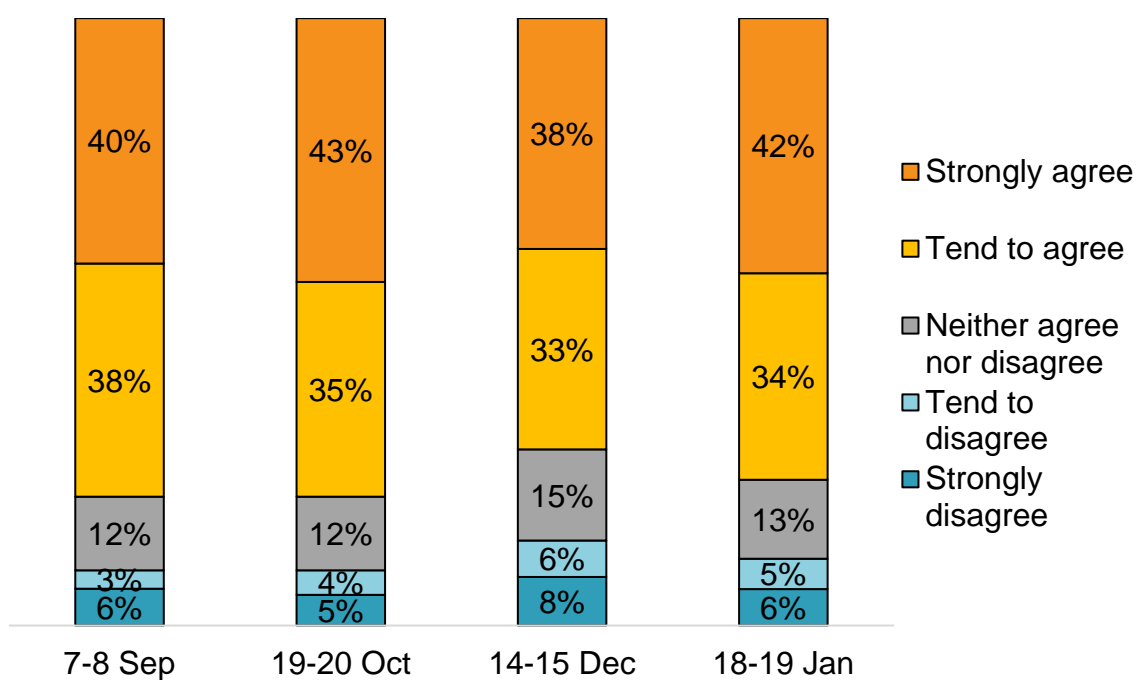


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001=1044)

Personal responsibility to follow rules/guidance

Over 7 in 10 respondents (71% to 79%), throughout the period September to January, agree that they have a responsibility to follow the rules and guidance from the Scottish Government to keep others safe (Figure 24).

Figure 24: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I have a responsibility to follow the rules and guidance from the Scottish Government to keep others safe'



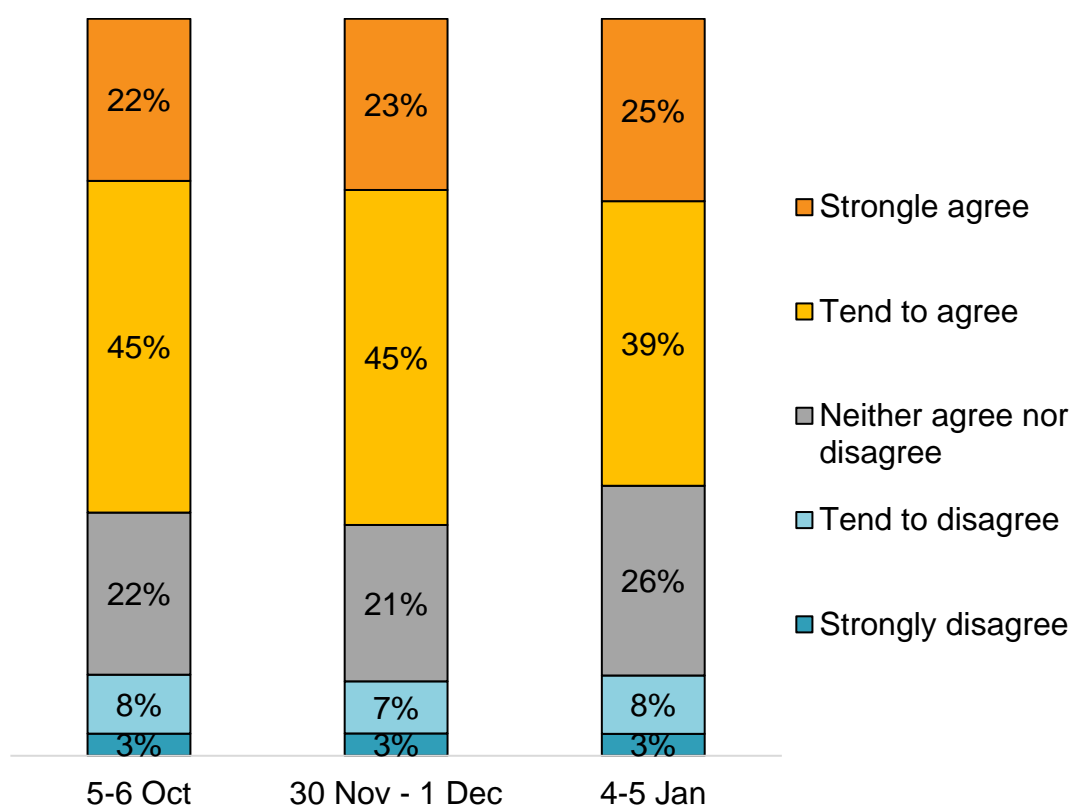
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1003-1022)

Trust in others

Respondents were also asked about whether they had trust in others to do what is needed to keep the virus at bay (Figure 25). At 5-6 October, 30 November-1 December and 4-5 January around two thirds of respondents (64% to 69%) either strongly or tended to agree that they did not trust others in this regard.

Whilst respondents felt that they were adhering to protective measures well themselves (see Figure 36), they did not have trust in others to do the same.

Figure 25: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed that they do not trust others to do what is needed to keep the virus at bay

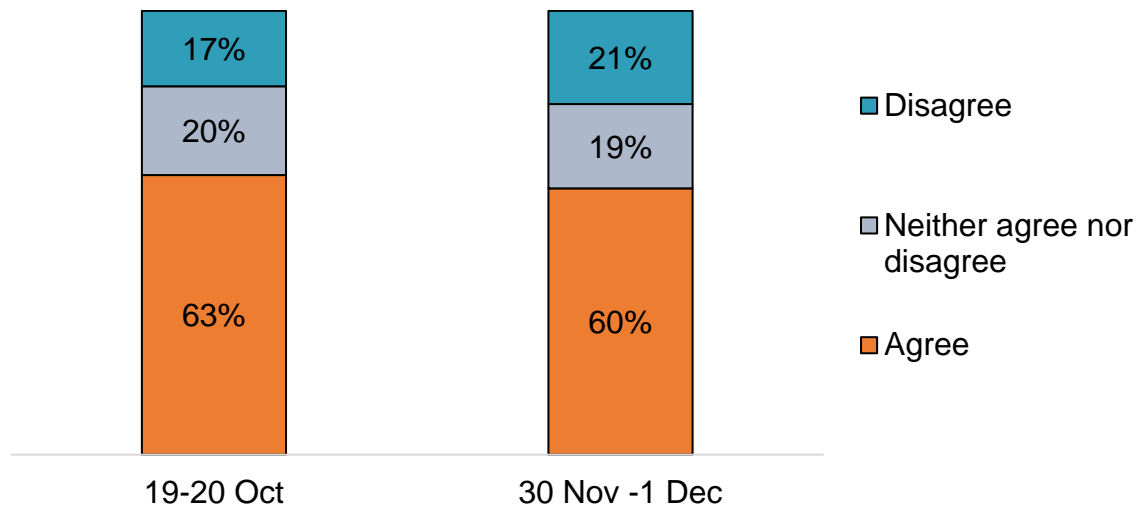


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: All Scottish Adults (n=1001-1004)

Attitudes around Coronavirus

Around 3 in 5 respondents (60% to 63%) agree that climate change is as serious as Coronavirus (Figure 26).

Figure 26: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed that climate change is as serious as Coronavirus

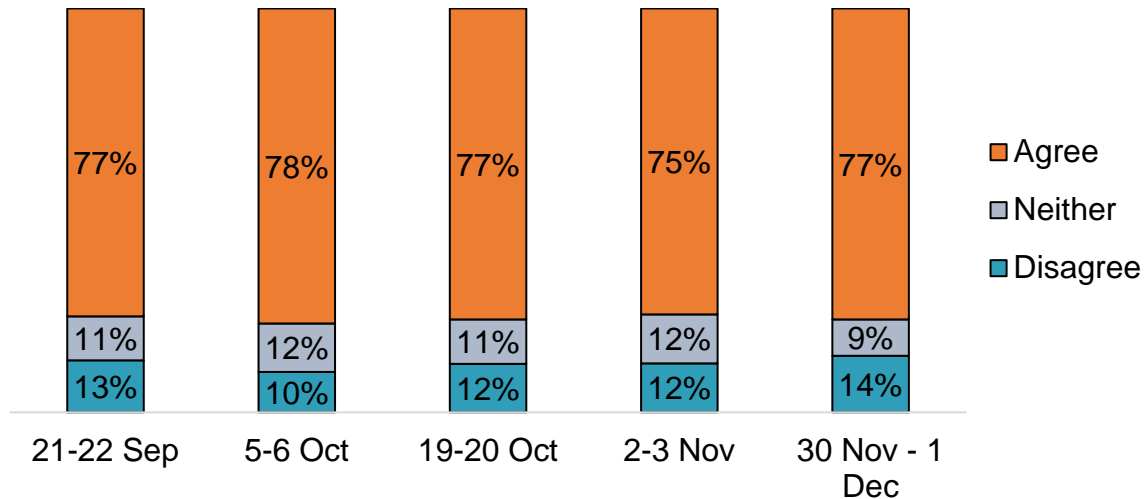


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1003)

Living with COVID-19

Around three quarters of respondents or more (75%-78%) agreed that we will all need to adapt our way of living to keep ourselves and others safe as we live with COVID-19 (Figure 27). This attitude remained constant throughout the time period September to early December.

Figure 27: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the statement 'I accept that we will all need to adapt our way of living to keep ourselves and others safe as we live with COVID'

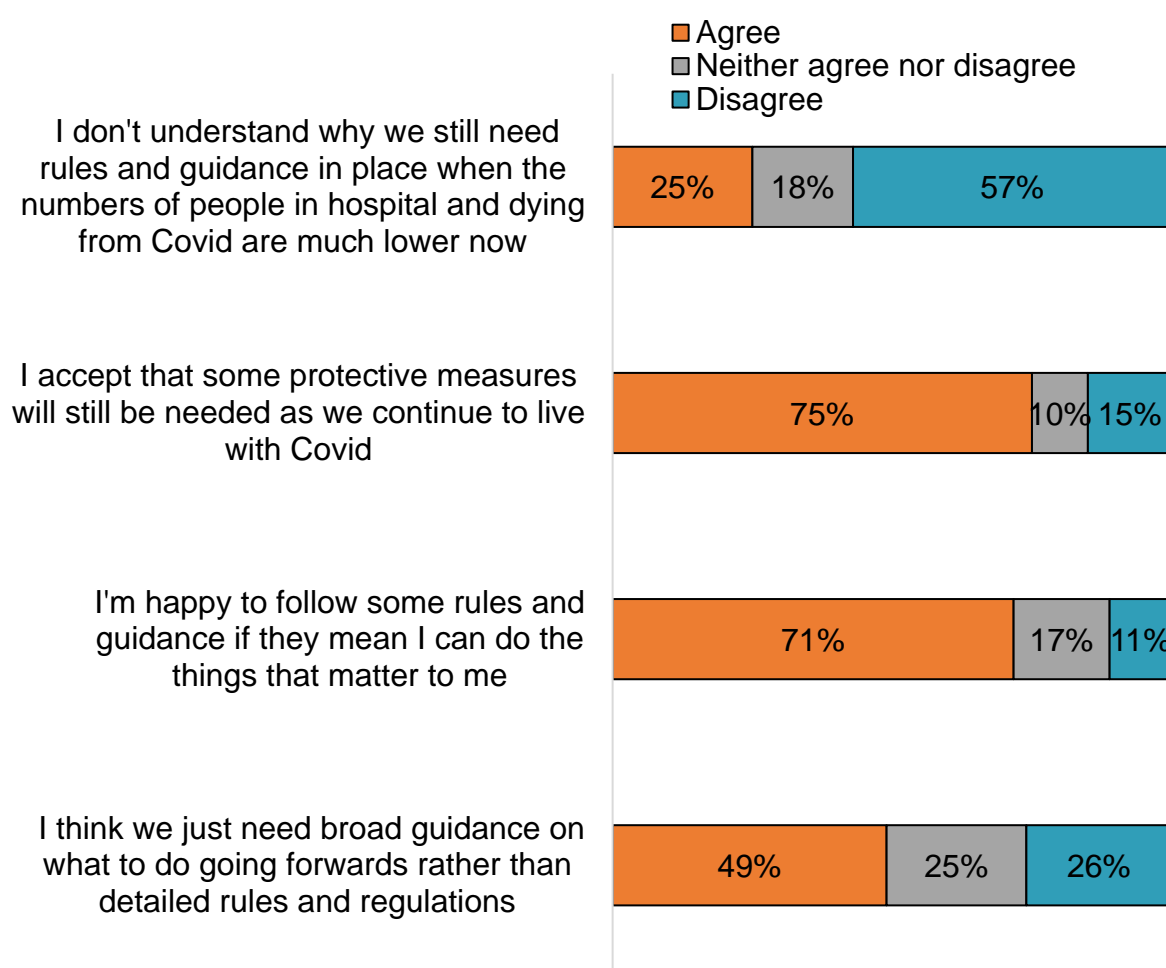


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Protective measures going forward

Almost 6 in 10 (57%) respondents disagreed with the statement 'I don't understand why we still need rules and guidance in place when the numbers of people in hospital and dying from COVID-19 are much lower now' (Figure 28). A quarter (25%) agreed. 75% accept that some protective measures will still be needed as we continue to live with COVID-19. Just over 7 in 10 respondents (71%) agree they are happy to follow some rules and guidance if they mean they can do the things that matter to them. Just under half of respondents (49%) think we just need broad guidance on what to do going forwards rather than detailed rules and regulations, while 1 in 4 (26%) disagree.

Figure 28: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed with the following statements at 18-19 January:



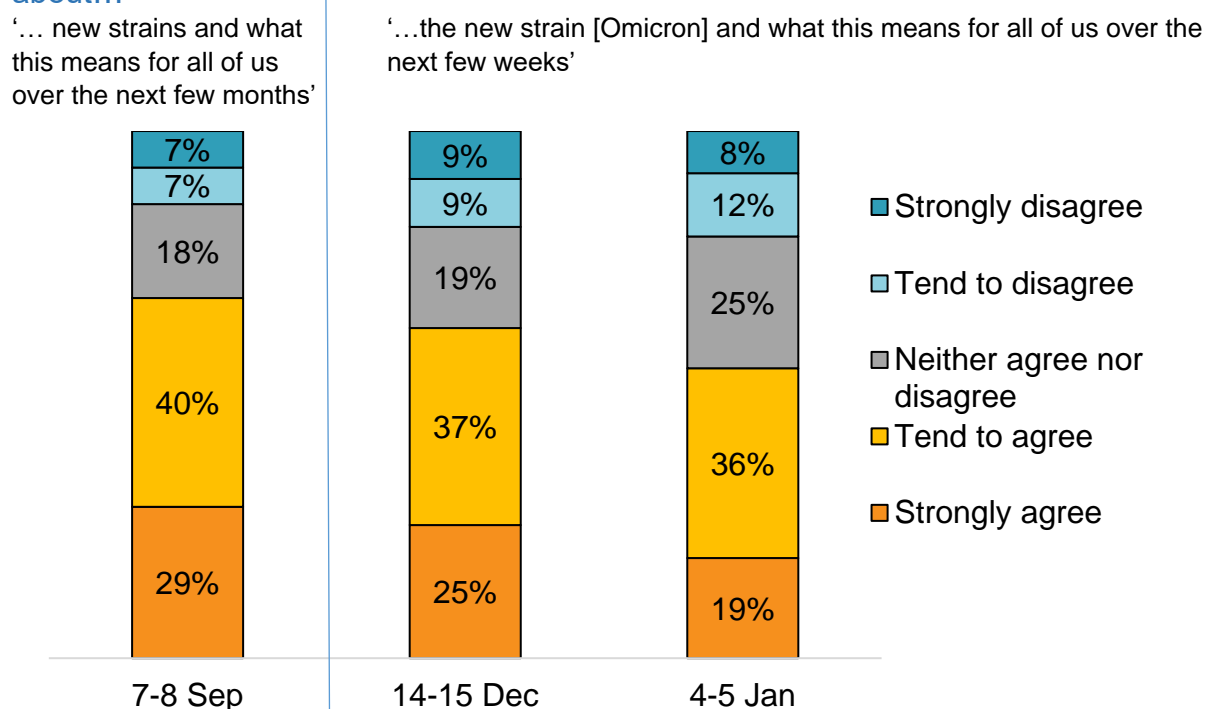
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults, 18-19 January 2022 (n=1005)

4. New variant

This section covers attitudes and behaviours around the emergence of new strains. Between September to November 2021, respondents were asked about new variants in a general sense. In November 2021, cases of a new variant, Omicron, started to appear in Scotland. The new variant was spreading faster than previous strains. By mid-December 2021, Omicron had become the dominant variant in Scotland, meaning more people were being infected with Omicron than with other strains of the Coronavirus.

Over half of respondents (55%-69%) agreed that they were worried about the emergence of new strains and what the implications may be (Figure 29).¹³ More respondents (69%) expressed worry about new strains in a general sense in September. This question was not asked in November when cases of a new variant, Omicron, started to appear in Scotland. When asked about worry toward the Omicron variant after it took hold in the UK, worry was slightly lesser: with 62% of respondents saying they were worried in mid-December, down to 55% by January. However, worry around (new) variants still remained high.

Figure 29: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed that they are worried about...

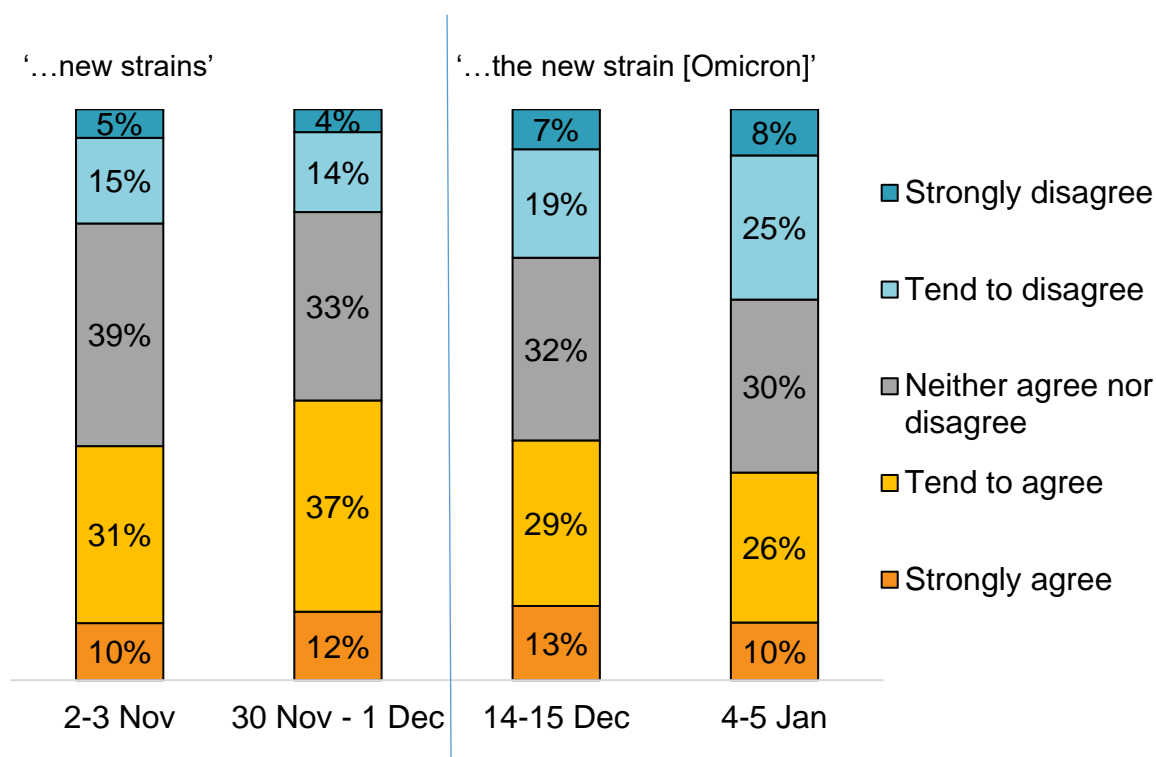


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1012-1022)

¹³ The question was at first generic, referring to new strains in general. From 14-15 Dec, the question specifically refers to the new Omicron strain and talks about the next few weeks rather than months as before.

Between 36% and 49% of respondents said they were concerned that vaccines will not work against new strains (Figure 30).¹⁴ Concern was greatest at 30 November-1 December, with just under half (49%) saying they were concerned. This was at the time when Omicron became known as a variant of concern and cases started to appear in Scotland. This development sped up the Covid booster jab rollout which was then offered to all adults across Scotland. However this concern then declined, and by 4-5 January just over a third (36%) of respondents agreed they were concerned about the effectiveness of vaccines against the new variant.

Figure 30: Proportions that agreed/disagreed that 'I am concerned that vaccines will not work against...'



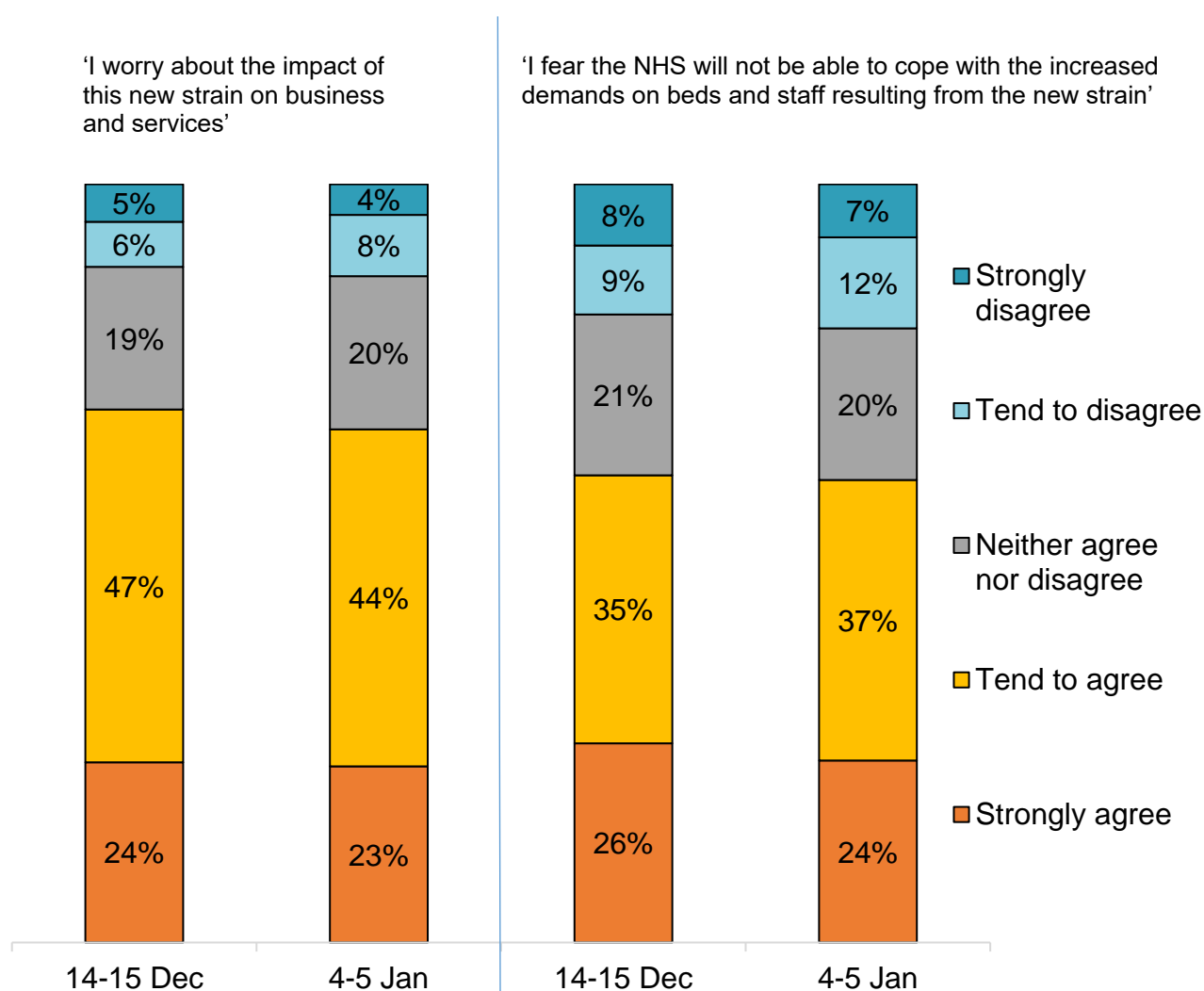
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1022)

¹⁴ Once again, from 14-15 December, the question changed from asking about new variants in a general sense to asking about the new variant: Omicron.

Worry about impacts of the new strain: Omicron

More respondents expressed worry about the impact the new strain, Omicron, may have on businesses than on the NHS (Figure 31). Around 7 in 10 respondents (71% in December, 67% in January) were worried about the negative impact the new strain could have on businesses and services. Meanwhile 3 in 5 respondents (61% at 14-15 December and at 4-5 January) agreed that they feared the NHS would not be able to cope with the increased demands on beds and staff resulting from the new strain (Omicron). The responses to both statements show that most people were worried about the various negative impacts that the new strain could bring.

Figure 31: Worry about different impacts of the new strain, Omicron



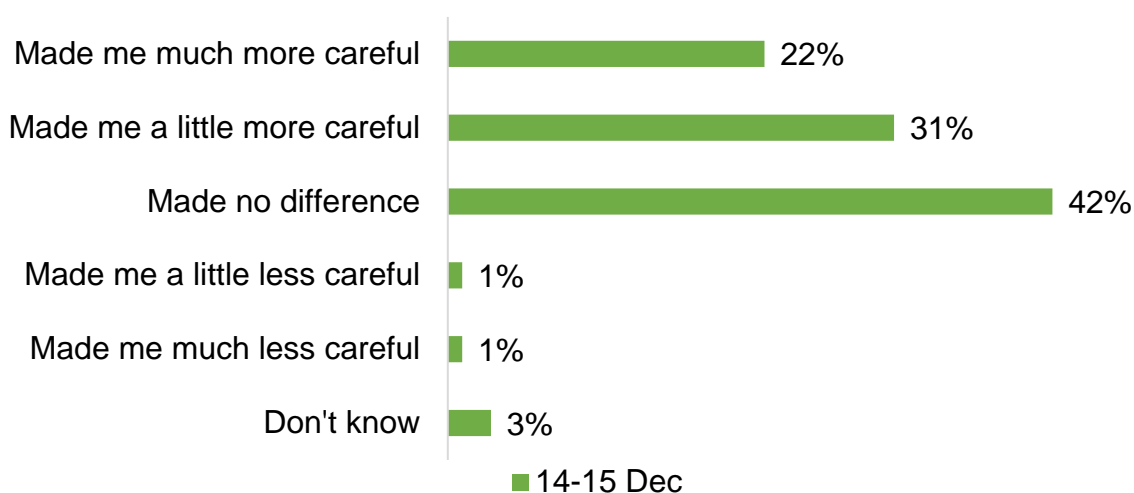
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1012-1022)

Behaviour change since Omicron

At 14-15 December, respondents were told the following: *‘As a reminder, since November, the existence of a new strain of the virus, known as Omicron, has been reported. The new strain is believed to be more infectious than the Delta strain, although there is a lot about the strain that we still don't know. In general, have reports of the new strain made you more or less careful in what you do, or has it made no difference?’*

Figure 32 shows that just over half of respondents (53%) said that news of the new strain Omicron made them ‘much more’ or ‘a little more’ careful in what they do. 2 in 5 respondents (42%) said that it ‘made no difference’ to how careful they were.

Figure 32: Have reports of the new strain (Omicron) made you more or less careful in what you do, or has it made no difference?



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1022)

5. Compliance

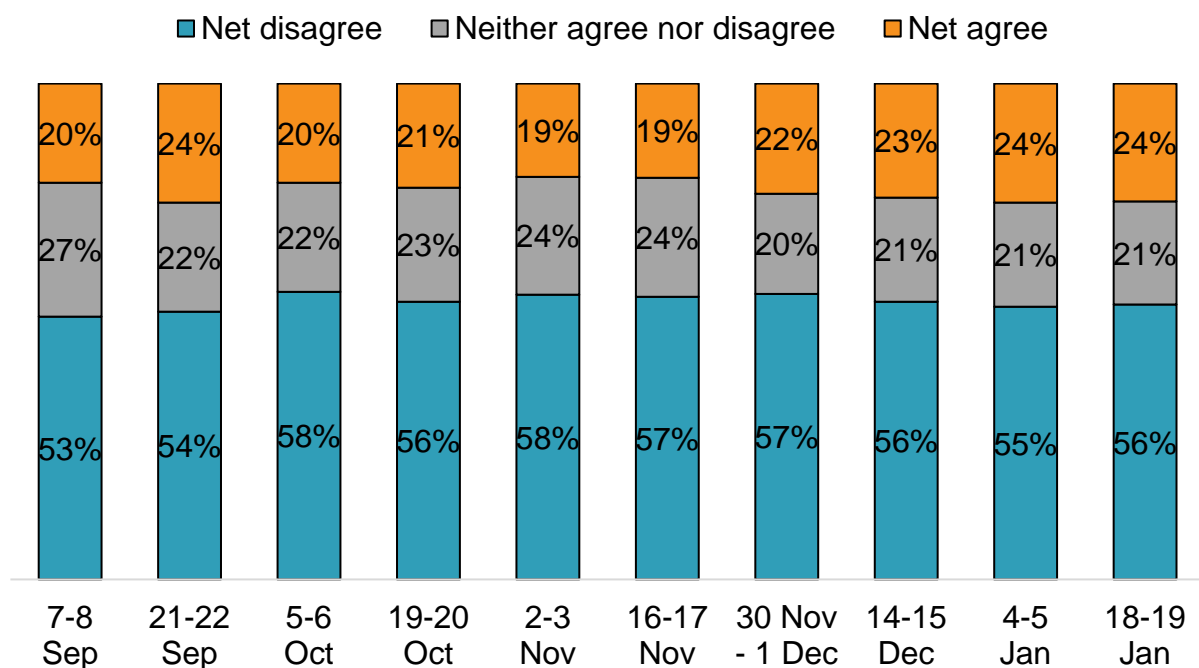
This section presents data about public awareness of, and reaction to, Coronavirus measures.

Following the guidance

Respondents were provided with statements about government advice and guidance, and asked about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each.

From 7-8 September to 18-19 January, between 19% and 24% of respondents strongly/tended to agree with the statement 'I am finding it hard to always stick to the government guidelines' (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Proportion of respondents who agreed/disagreed that they are finding it hard to always stick to the government guidelines



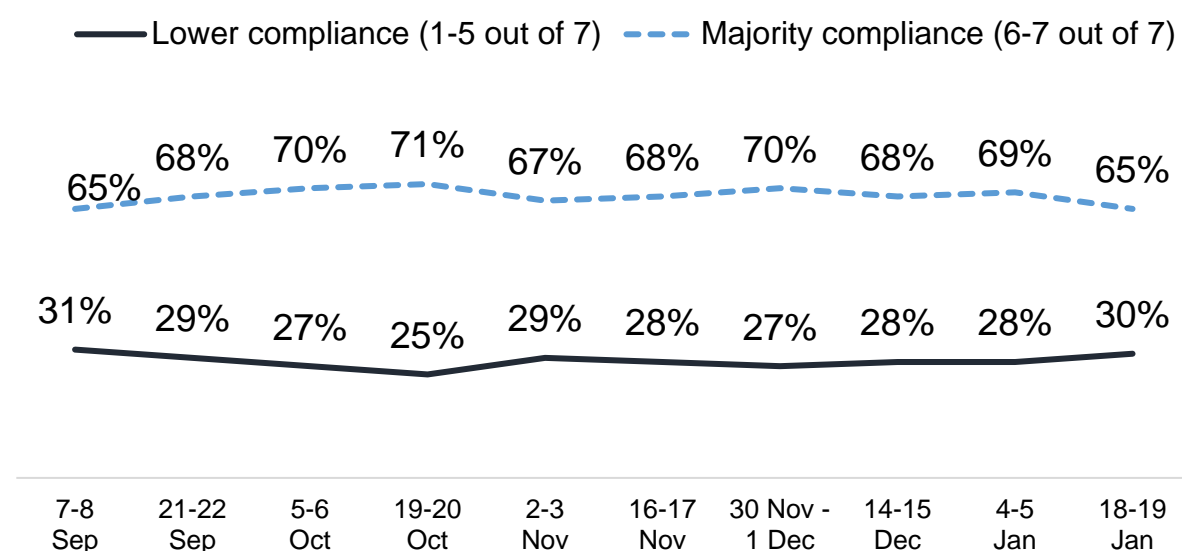
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Compliance with restrictions

Respondents were asked to what extent, on a scale of 1-7, they felt they were following all the regulations and guidance on what to do and not to do during the Coronavirus pandemic. Levels of compliance have remained high and stable throughout this period.

In early September, around two thirds (65%) reported 'majority' compliance (score 6-7) and just under one third (31%) 'lower' compliance (score 1-5), as shown in Figure 34. From 21-22 September through to 18-19 January, 'majority' compliance ranged between 65% and 71%, and 'lower' compliance between 25% and 30%.

Figure 34: Proportion of respondents who rated their compliance as 1-5 (lower) or 6-7 (majority)










Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Protective measures

Respondents were asked how important they felt different measures are for keeping Coronavirus under control, and how well they felt they were adhering to these measures.

Throughout the period September to January, a high proportion of respondents rated the protective measures as being 'very' or 'fairly' important (Figure 35). Respondents have consistently rated 'washing/sanitising hands' as being the most important measure (88%-92%), alongside self-isolating and booking a test at the first sign of symptoms (87% to 92%). Over time, there has been a decline in how important respondents think some of the protective measures are. The importance of opening windows/doors decreased from 80% on 7-8 September to 72% on 18-19 January, and the importance of meeting outdoors decreased from 84% to 77%.

Figure 35: Proportion who rated the following as 'very' or 'fairly important' in helping to keep the spread of Coronavirus under control, in descending order (based on the latest time point)







Protective measure		7-8 Sep	21-22 Sep	5-6 Oct	19-20 Oct	2-3 Nov	16-17 Nov	30 Nov-1 Dec	14-15 Dec	4-5 Jan	18-19 Jan
	Washing/sanitising hands when out and about	91%	91%	90%	89%	92%	89%	90%	89%	90%	88%
	Self-isolating and booking test at first sign symptoms	91%	N/A	91%	N/A	92%	89%	N/A	89%	N/A	87%
	Avoiding crowded/busy places	88%	87%	87%	86%	87%	84%	87%	86%	87%	83%
	Wearing a face covering	85%	84%	83%	82%	84%	81%	84%	83%	84%	80%
	Meeting others outdoors in the fresh air whenever possible	84%	83%	81%	82%	82%	78%	82%	78%	82%	77%
	Staying at least 1m/3 feet away from others not in household	N/A	81%	N/A	80%	N/A	78%	82%	N/A	83%	N/A
	Opening windows/doors if with people from different household	80%	77%	75%	74%	75%	72%	73%	77%	76%	72%

Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Respondents were also asked how well they thought they were doing various activities. It appears that the perceived importance of protective measures does not guarantee that these protective measures will be followed to the same extent. Throughout this period, a high proportion of respondents reported that they were adhering to each of the protective measures either 'very' or 'fairly well' although there have been some notable declines. 90% to 92% of respondents have consistently

reported wearing a face covering, if required, either 'very' or 'fairly well', and 87% to 90% washing/sanitising hands. A lower proportion of respondents have reported they are opening windows/doors when with people from different households, falling from 77% on 7-8 September to its lowest level of 58% at 18-19 January. There has also been a decline in those who report meeting outdoors whenever possible, from 82% to 73%.


Figure 36: Proportion of respondents who reported doing each protective measure 'very' or 'fairly' well, in descending order (based on latest time point)

Protective measure	7-8 Sep	21-22 Sep	5-6 Oct	19-20 Oct	2-3 Nov	16-17 Nov	30 Nov-1 Dec	14-15 Dec	4-5 Jan	18-19 Jan
 Wearing a face covering (when required)	90%	92%	92%	91%	91%	91%	91%	90%	90%	90%
 Washing/sanitising hands regularly when out and about	90%	90%	89%	88%	89%	88%	87%	88%	89%	87%
 Avoiding crowded/busy places	86%	83%	86%	86%	83%	84%	82%	85%	87%	84%
 Staying at least 1m/3 feet away from other people not in household	76%	76%	76%	77%	75%	76%	76%	76%	80%	75%
 Meeting others outdoors in the fresh air whenever possible	82%	77%	75%	77%	73%	73%	71%	70%	74%	73%
 Opening windows/doors if with people from different household	77%	72%	65%	66%	62%	61%	59%	61%	62%	58%

Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044) venue in the past 7 days (n=319-506)

From September to January, between 29% and 45% of respondents who had visited a hospitality venue¹⁵ in the past week stated that everyone in their party had been asked for their contact details (Figure 37). This has remained fairly low and stable, with a drop at 14-15 December to 29%.

Figure 37: Proportion of respondents who had been asked for contact details in hospitality

		7-8 Sep	21- 22 Sep	5-6 Oct	19- 20 Oct	2-3 Nov	16- 17 Nov	30 Nov- 1 Dec	14- 15 Dec	4-5 Jan	18- 19 Jan
	Everybody in the party was asked for contact details in hospitality	45%	39%	42%	37%	35%	35%	36%	29%	34%	36%

Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults who visited a hospitality (n=319-506)

¹⁵ This included café, bar, restaurant or pub.

Motivations to stick to restrictions, test and follow protective measures

Respondents were asked what positive motivations most encourage them to stick to restrictions, do testing and follow other protective measures.¹⁶ Figure 38 shows the ranking of different reasons which encourage respondents to change their behaviours as at 14-15 December. The percentages show the proportion of respondents that identified each option as being a top motivation, with respondents asked to identify all that apply.

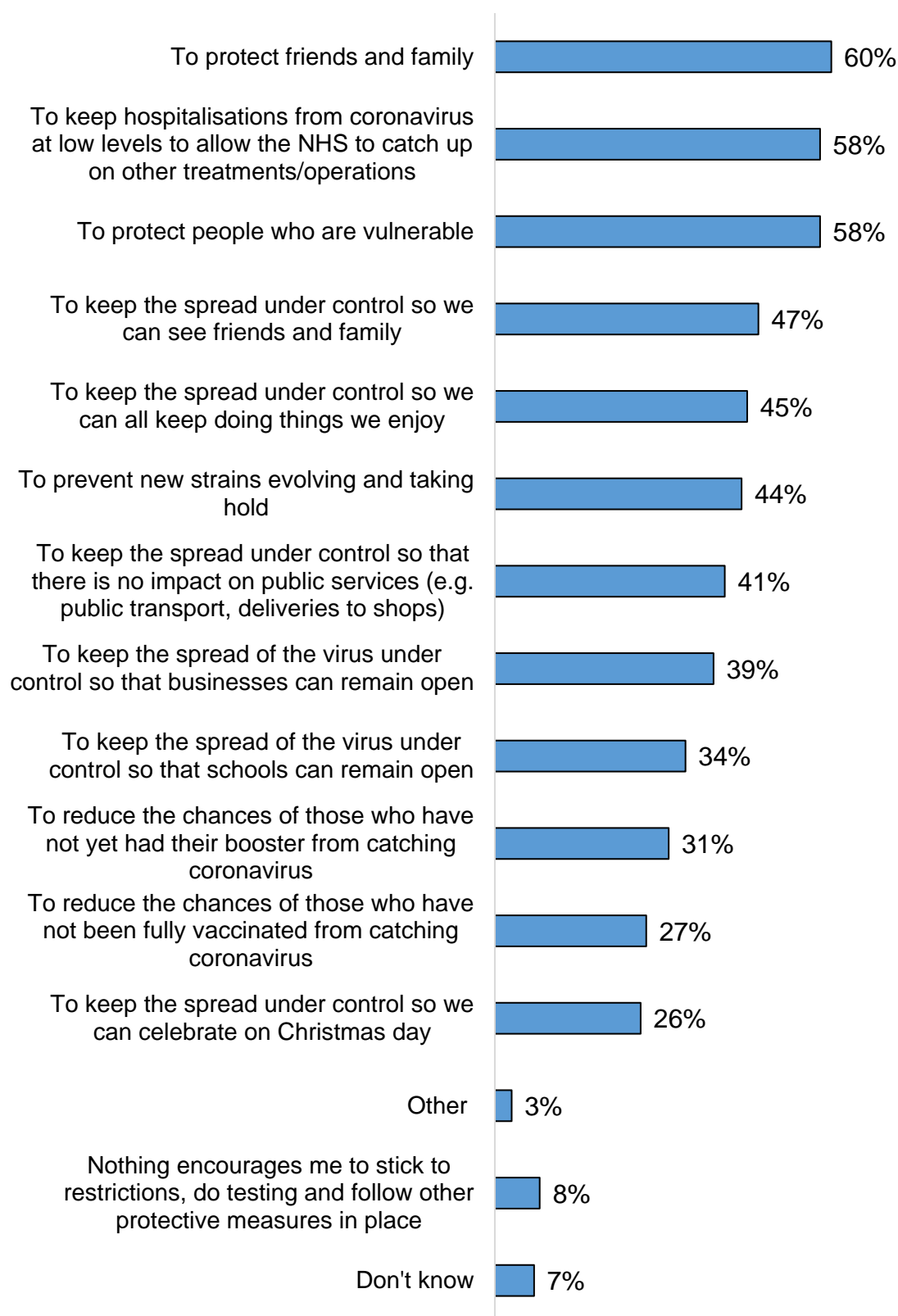
Protecting others (loved ones, then strangers) and keeping health services running were cited as being the most compelling reasons to stick to restrictions, test and follow protective measures.

The top 3 motivations respondents listed were:

1. to protect friends and family (60%)
2. to keep hospitalisations from Coronavirus at low levels to allow the NHS to catch up on other treatments/operations (58%)
3. to protect people who are vulnerable (58%)

¹⁶ Respondents were asked 'Which, if any, of the following MOST encourage YOU to stick to restrictions, do testing and follow other protective measures? (Please select all that apply)'.

Figure 38: Positive motivations to stick to restrictions, do testing and follow other protective measures as at 14-15 December:



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1022)

6. Testing and self-isolation

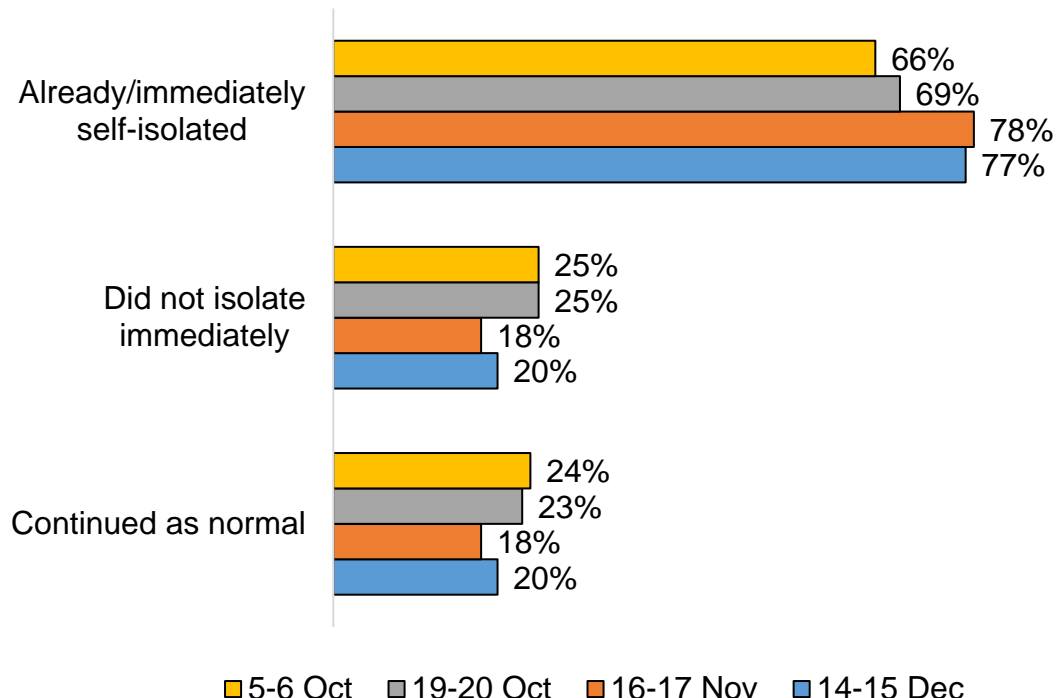
This section presents the findings around testing, including:

- people's responses to coming into contact with Coronavirus and whether they self-isolated
- behaviours around testing, including over the festive period
- reasons for testing
- recording of tests online, and reasoning why (not)

Self-isolation

Respondents who had some experience or possible contact with Coronavirus were asked what they did on the most recent occasion (Figure 39). At 5-6 October, around two thirds (66%) of respondents said that they were already self-isolating or immediately self-isolated as a result of coming into contact with someone who had Coronavirus. This increased at 16-17 November to 78% and stabilised mid-December at 77%. 24% reported on 5-6 October they had continued as normal, on 14-15 December this had fallen to 20% (please note the small sample sizes).

Figure 39: Proportion of respondents who reported the following actions after some experience of, or possible contact with, Coronavirus



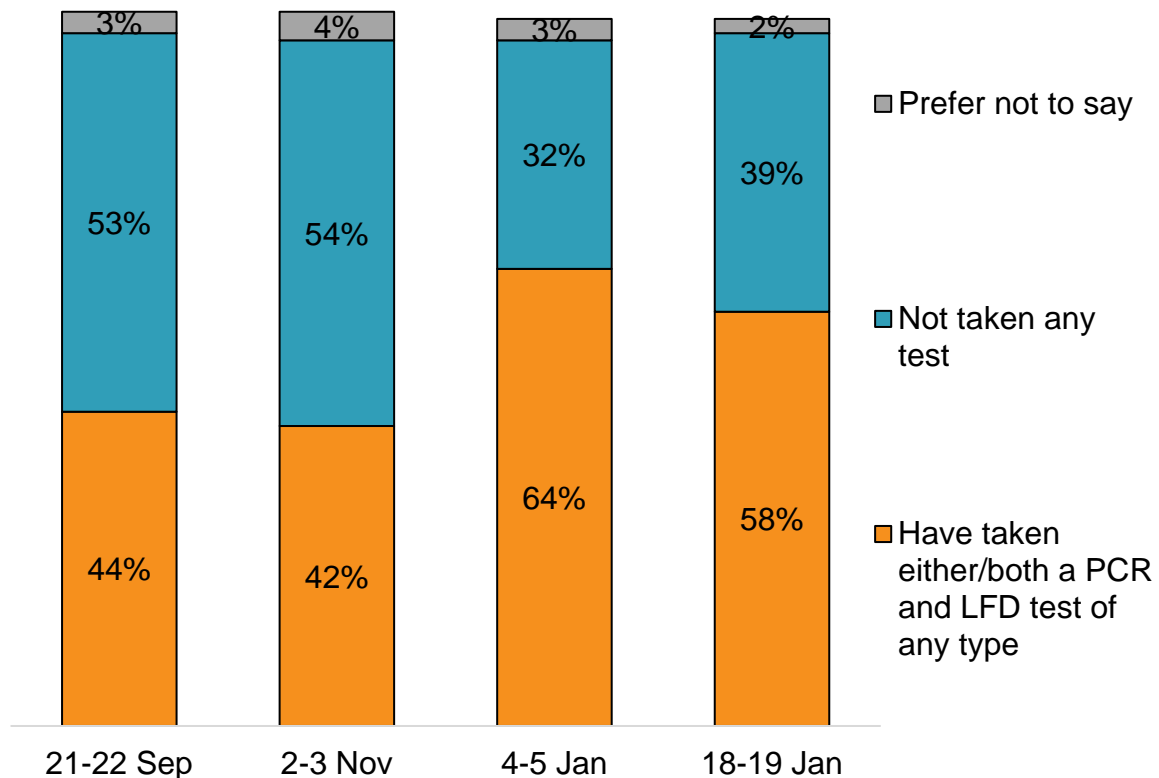
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults who had some experience of or possible contact with Coronavirus (n=134-186)

Testing for COVID-19

Respondents were asked if they had taken either a rapid 'Lateral Flow Device' (LFD) test or a PCR test in the past week.

There was an increase in the use of COVID-19 testing over time (Figure 40). On 21-22 September, 44% had taken a COVID-19 test in the past week. On 4-5 January this had risen to 64%, reflecting increased testing over the festive period and in light of the rise of the Omicron variant. On 18-19 January testing had then declined slightly to 58%.

Figure 40: Proportion of respondents who had taken any COVID-19 test in the past week

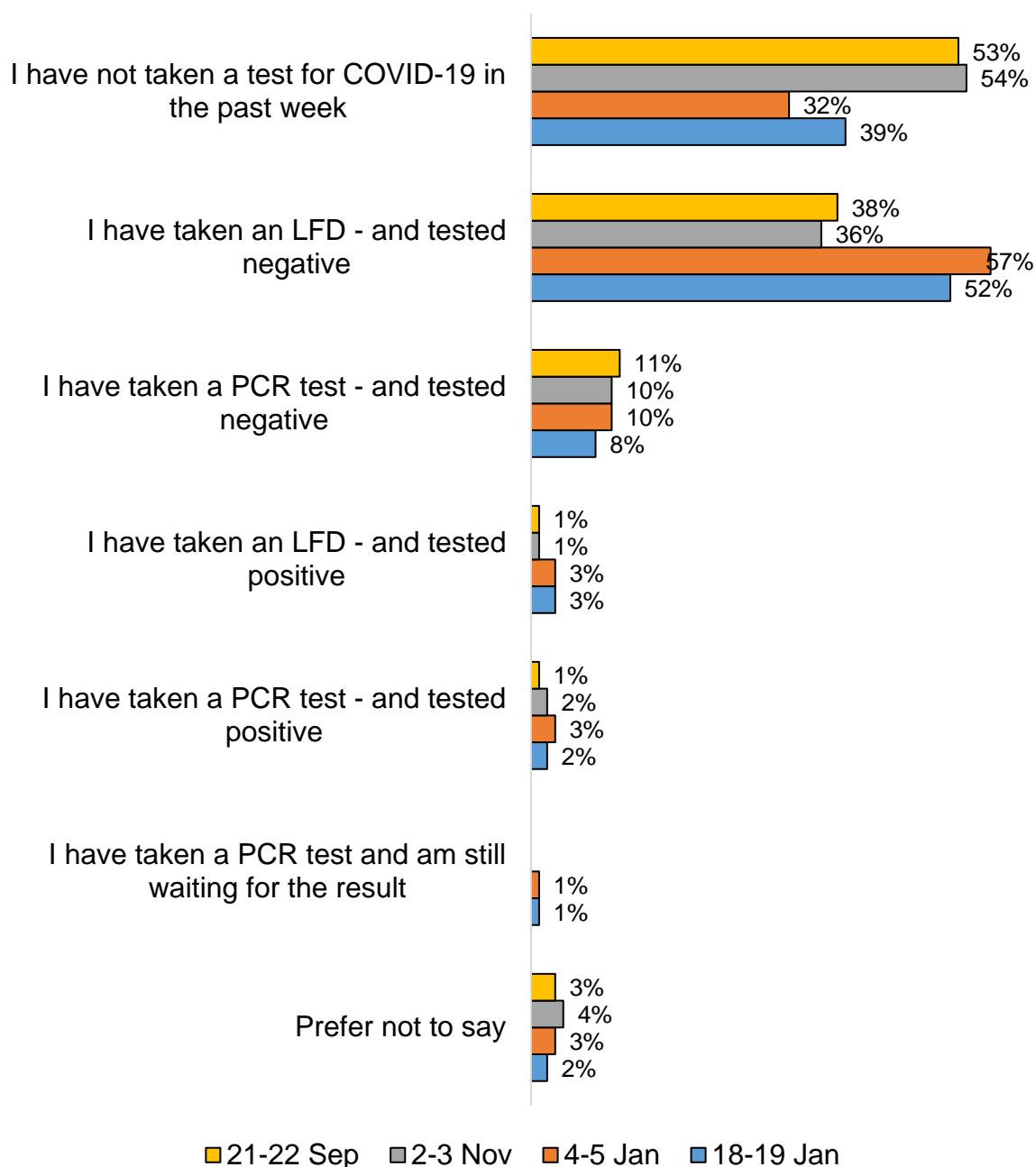


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1002-1012)

Breakdown of testing behaviour by test type and result

Between 21-22 September and 18-19 January there was an increase in the use of LFD testing, with the highest reported use on 4-5 January 2022 (Figure 41). On 21-22 September, 38% of respondents had taken a LFD test and tested negative, and 1% a LFD test that tested positive. On 4-5 January 57% had taken a LFD test that was negative, and 3% positive.

Figure 41: Breakdown of COVID-19 testing in the past week by type of test and result



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1002-1012)

Reasons for taking a COVID-19 test

Respondents who had taken a COVID-19 test in the past week were then asked what their reasons were for taking one (selecting all that applied). At 4-5 January, the most common reason for taking a COVID-19 , according to 42% of respondents, was to reassure before or after socialising with friends, family or work colleagues (Figure 42). The second most popular reason for testing was to generally reassure themselves that they didn't have COVID-19 (39%).

Figure 42: Reasons for taking a COVID-19 test in the previous week at 4-5 January



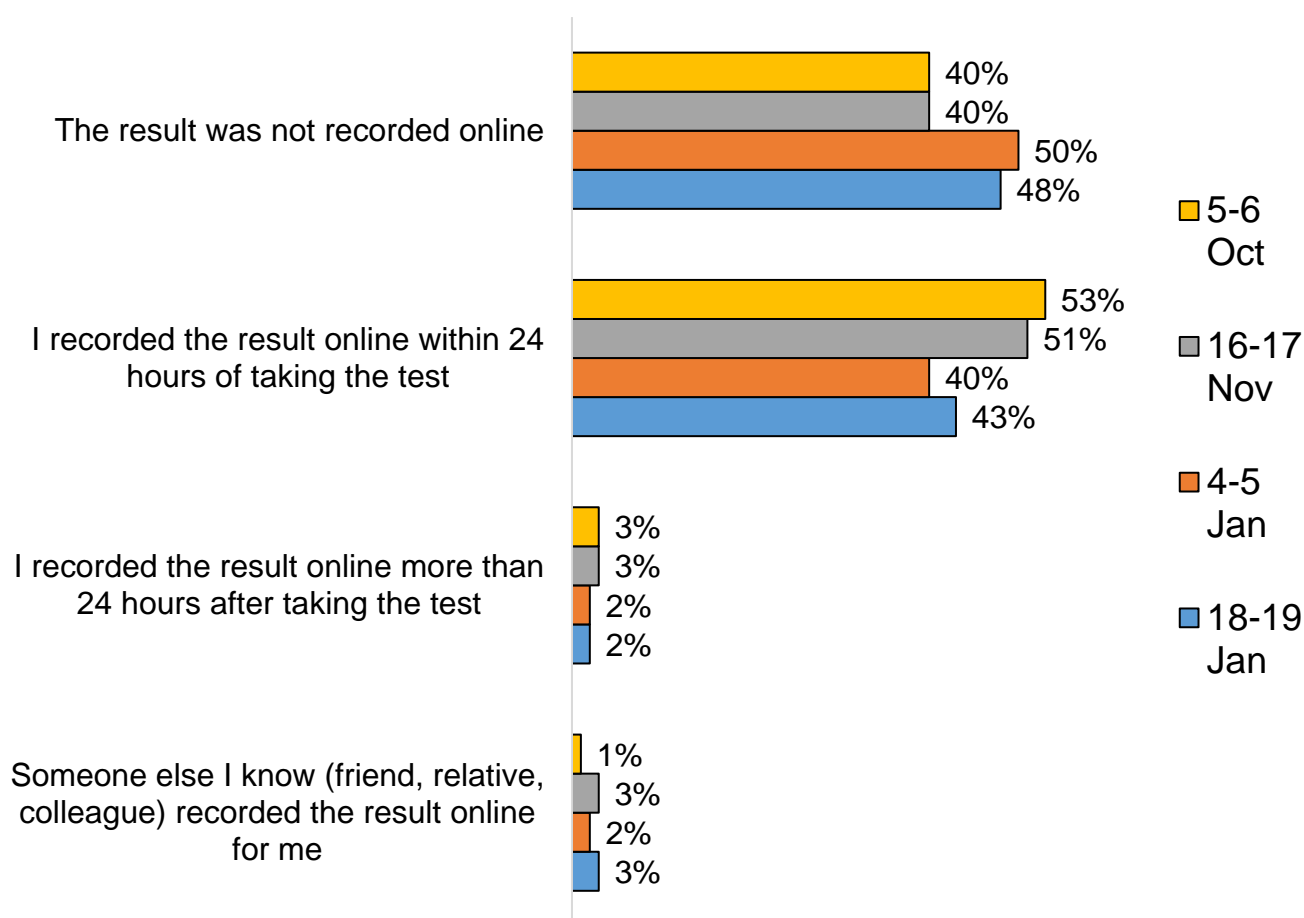
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults who have taken a test in the past 7 days (n=663)

Recording LFDs online

Respondents who had taken a LFD test were also asked if their results were recorded online (Figure 43). There was a decrease in the proportions of respondents who had recorded their results online (within 24 hours of taking the test). This decreased from 53% on 5-6 October to 40% on 4-5 January and 43% on 18-19 January.

The Scottish Government announced on 5 January 2022 that those who test positive with a LFD no longer need to get a confirmatory PCR test.¹⁷ This change makes online recording of LFDs increasingly important.

Figure 43: Proportion of respondents who did the following after taking their most recent LFD test.¹⁸



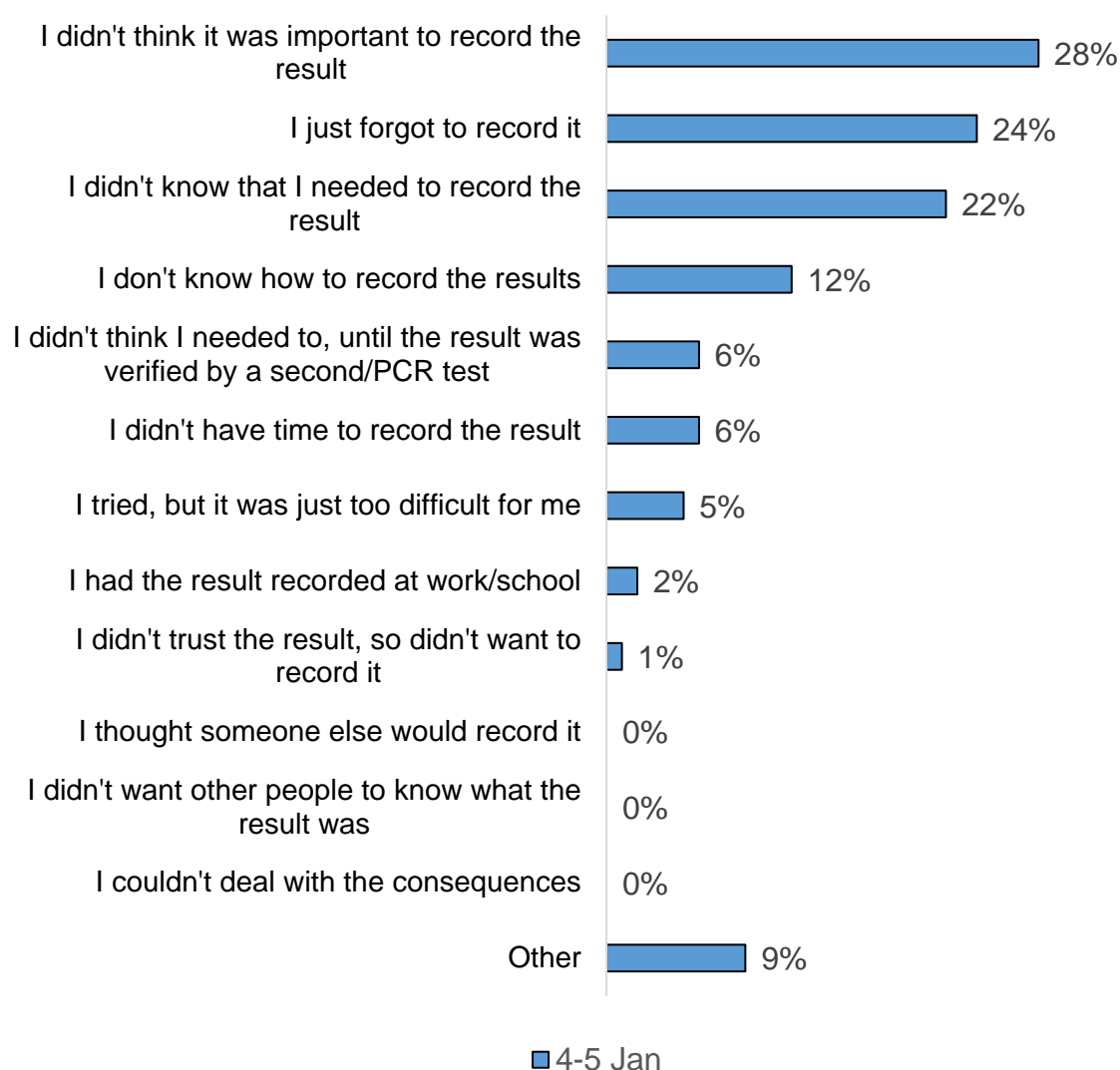
Source: YouGov Scotland survey. Base: Adults who have used a test (n=550-620)

¹⁷ [Self-Isolation and testing changes - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/self-isolation-and-testing-changes)

¹⁸ Note question wording changed from 'Thinking about the tests available in this way that you have ordered or collected, and not including any tests that have been provided by / collected in your workplace....Which of the following best describes you in relation to the most recent one of these tests you have used?' to 'Thinking about the LAST lateral flow/antigen test you did in the past week...Which of the following best describes you in relation to that test?' on 4-5 January.

At 4-5 January, respondents who said they did not record the result of their most recent LFD test online were asked why not (Figure 44). 28% said that they did not think it was important to record the result, and 24% said they forgot to record it. 22% did not know that they needed to record the results.

Figure 44: Reasons selected for not recording LFD results online at 4-5 January



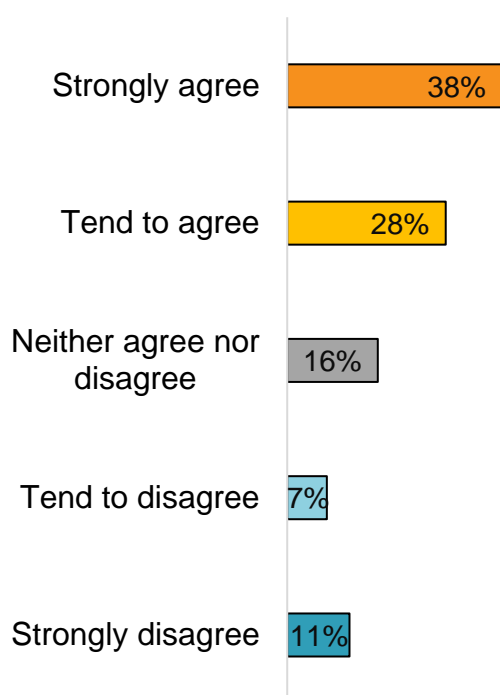
Source: YouGov Scotland survey. Base: Adults who did not record the results online themselves (n=327)

Testing over the festive period

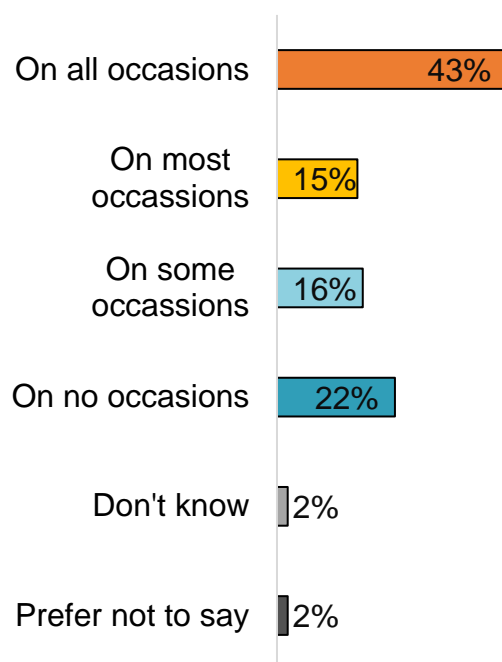
Respondents were asked on 14-15 December about their plans for taking COVID-19 tests over the festive season. They were then asked on 4-5 January about what COVID-19 tests they had taken in this period. As shown in Figure 45, on 14-15 December, 38% of respondents strongly agreed that they would take a test before meeting with others over the festive season, and 28% tended to agree. On 4-5 January, 43% of respondents said they had taken a test before meeting with others on all occasions over the festive season (i.e. over the past two weeks). Almost three quarters (73%) of respondents said they had taken a COVID-19 test on at least some occasions before meeting with others.

Figure 45: Testing over the festive season – intentions beforehand and reported behaviour afterwards

'I'll make sure I take a Covid test before meeting with others over the festive season' as at 14-15 December:



'I took a Covid test before meeting with others over the festive season' as reported at 4-5 January:



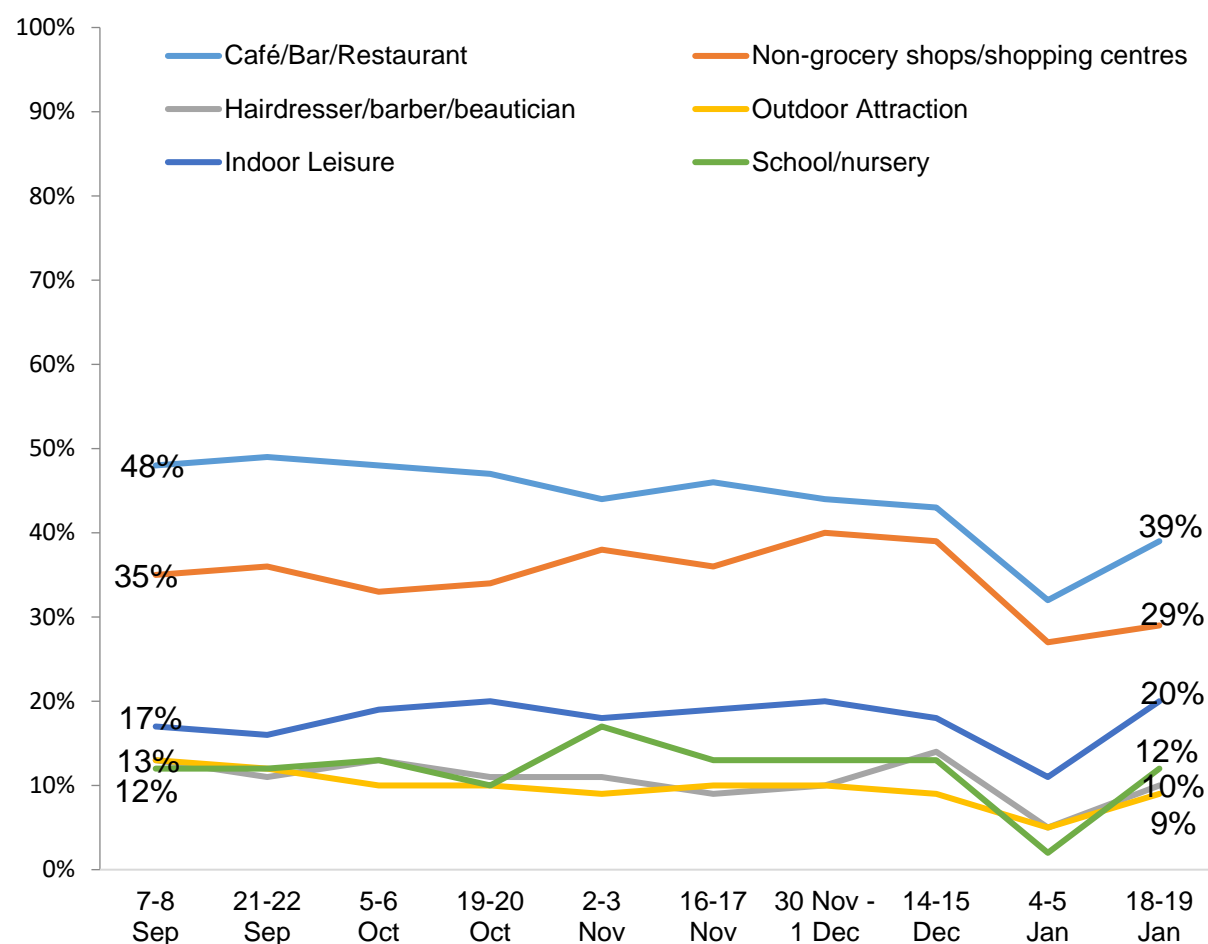
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults excluding those who said 'not applicable' (n=929 on 14-15 December, n=788 on 4-5 January)

7. Behaviours as restrictions changed

This section presents information about people's behaviours between September and January. This includes visits to different places and socialising with groups. During this period a COVID-19 certification scheme was launched in Scotland. In December, during the spread of Omicron, further protective measures were put in place. This included asking the public to minimise contacts with other households (3 maximum), not including main Christmas celebrations.

Respondents were asked which places they had visited in the previous week (Figure 46). From 7-8 September to 14-15 December visits across all settings remained fairly stable, although all then saw declines on 4-5 January before rising again on 18-19 January. The proportion who had visited a café/bar/restaurant declined from 43% on 14-15 December to 32%, before rising to 39% on 18-19 January.

Figure 46: Proportion of respondents who visited the following places in the previous week

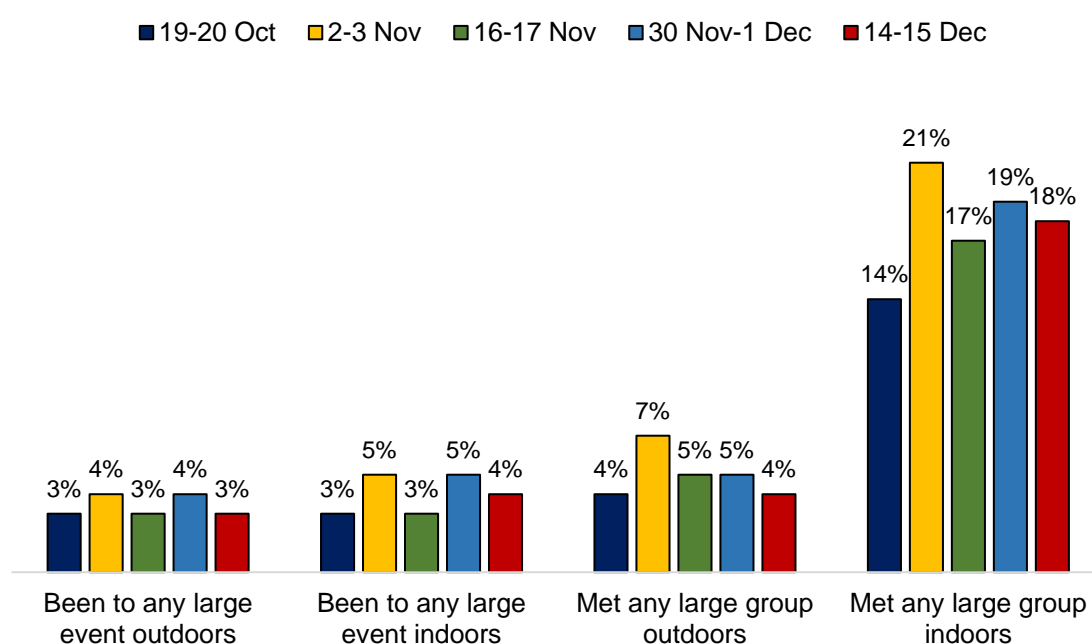


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1001-1044)

Large events and large group activities

Between 19-20 October and 14-15 December, the proportions of respondents who had been to any large event outdoors or indoors, or met any large group outdoors, remained low and fairly stable (Figure 47). There was more fluctuation in the proportions who met in any large group indoors. On 2-3 November, 21% reported meeting any large group (eight or more people over 12 years old) indoors in the past seven days.

Figure 47: Proportion of respondents who attended any large event or met in a large groups over the past week¹⁹

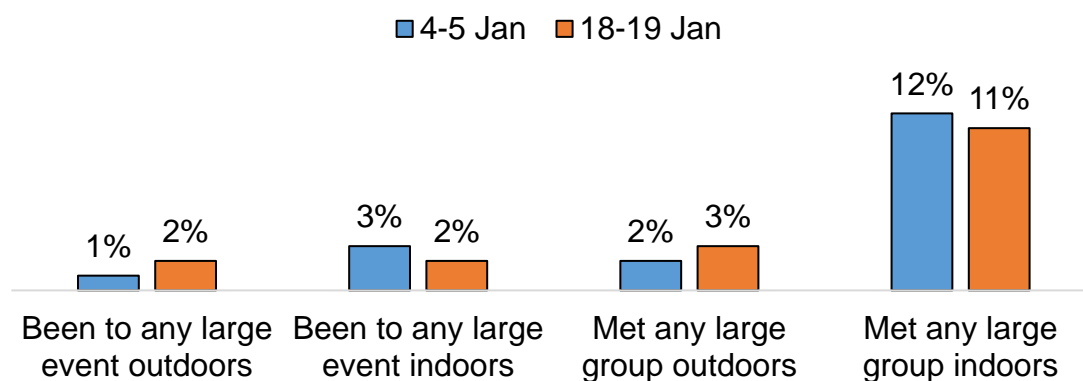


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=988-1008)

¹⁹ This question was asked from October through to January, however the question wording change from 4-5 January as a result of changes to capacity limits in place from 28 December. The rules changed from 500+ unseated indoors and 10,000+ seated indoors, 4000+ outdoors unseated and 10,000+ outdoors seated, to up to 100 unseated and up to 200 seated indoors and up to 500 outdoors.

From 26/27 December, the Scottish Government changed capacity limits and advised the public to reduce contact with other households as far as possible (maximum of three households). Throughout January, consequently, fewer respondents reported attending large events or meeting in large groups, as shown in Figure 48.

Figure 48: Proportion of respondents who attended any large event or met in a large group over the past week in January



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (n=1005-1012)

8. Vaccines

The vaccination programme was in full swing throughout September to January, with the focus moving to booster jabs. By 1 September 2021, 83.5% of Scottish adults had received two doses of the vaccine.²⁰ However, with the effectiveness of vaccines waning over time, third/booster vaccines were recommended.²¹ Boosters started to be administered to care home residents from 20 September, with other priority groups to follow. With the arrival of the Omicron variant and rapid infections, there was greater urgency to deliver the booster rollout. By December, boosters were being offered to all adults across Scotland.

This section covers:

- how many respondents have received a vaccine and how many doses
- respondents' likeliness to get a vaccine if they haven't yet received/aren't fully vaccinated
- reasoning behind why some are unlikely to get a vaccine/booster
- attitudes towards the vaccine certification scheme

²⁰ Public Health Scotland COVID-19 Vaccination in Scotland [COVID-19 Daily Dashboard | Tableau Public](#)

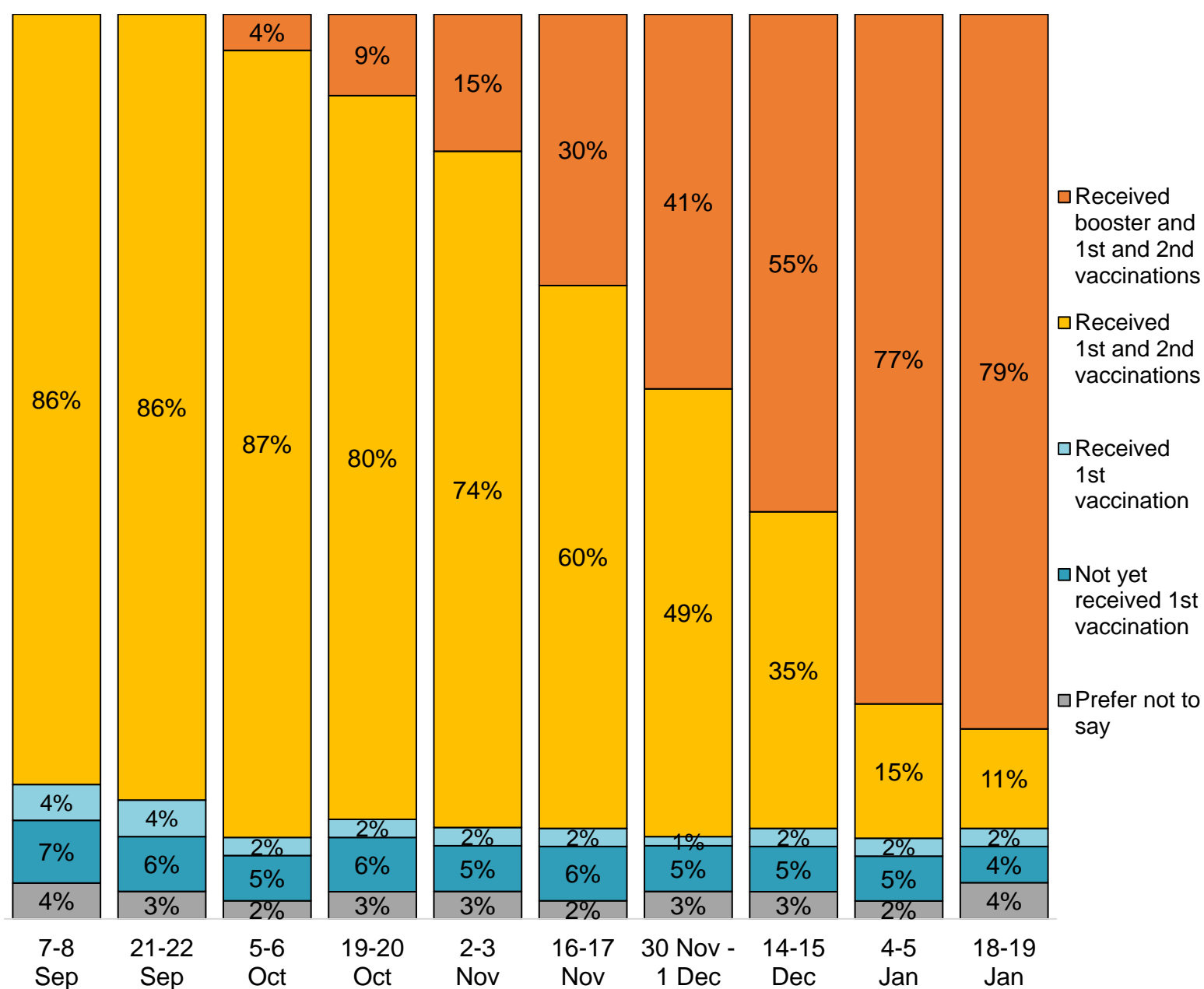
²¹ NHS Scotland Scotland's Autumn and Winter Vaccination Strategy, September 2021 [Scotland's Autumn and Winter Vaccination Strategy \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Vaccines received

Figure 49 visualises booster uptake, shown in orange, amongst respondents over autumn/winter. As we would expect to see, as time progressed, more respondents received a booster vaccine as it was made available to them. By the beginning of October, respondents had started to receive their booster vaccines (4%). This increased steadily throughout this time period, and at 18-19 January, 79% of respondents had received their booster vaccine in addition to their first and second vaccines.

The percentage of respondents who had not received *any* COVID-19 vaccine was highest at 7% at 7-8 September. The proportion of respondents who had not received a vaccine from mid-September to January hovers around 5% (4%-6%). In other words, 1 in 20 respondents had not received any COVID-19 vaccine. And a further 2% to 4% preferred not to answer.

Figure 49: Proportion of respondents who had received a COVID-19 vaccine



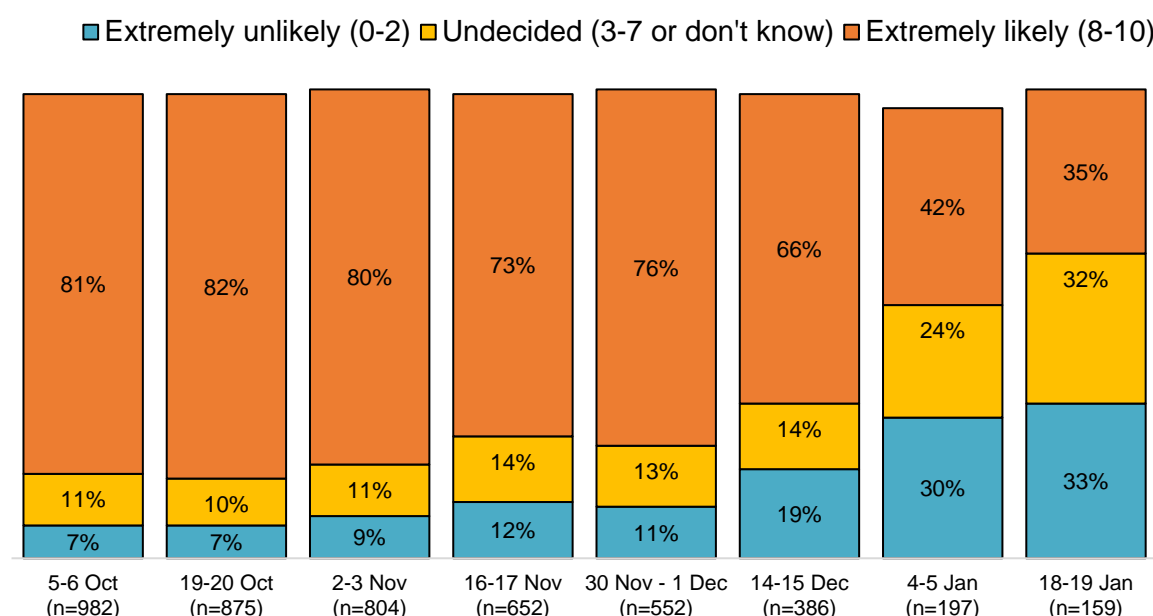
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (1001-1044)

Respondents who were still awaiting any vaccine were then asked how likely or unlikely they were to be vaccinated for Coronavirus when a/their next vaccine became available to them (Figure 50). This was asked on a scale of 0-10, with 0 being 'extremely unlikely' and 10 being 'extremely likely'. If respondents had already received a first vaccination, they were asked how likely or unlikely they were to have their second. And if they had already received their second vaccination, they were asked how likely or unlikely they were to have a Coronavirus booster vaccine when it was offered to them.

From October to January, the number of respondents who had not yet received their 1st or 2nd vaccine was increasingly fewer. This goes hand-in-hand with the large proportion of these respondents who had said they were 'extremely likely' (scoring 8-10) to get a vaccine or booster dose once available to them. As we would expect to see, more respondents took up the vaccine as they became available to them over time. As time goes on, the sample of respondents who had not yet received a 1st or 2nd vaccine gets smaller (n=982 at 5-6 October, n=159 at 18-19 January), while the proportion among those who are undecided gets bigger: from around 1 in 10 respondents to 3 in 10 (10%-32%). However, in actual numbers (not proportions/percentages), only a small number of respondents are undecided due to the decreasing sample of unvaccinated respondents.

The trend in the proportion of respondents who are 'extremely unlikely' to get vaccinated is similar to the 'undecided'. As the number of respondents who haven't yet received a 1st or 2nd vaccine decreases, the proportion among them who scored 0-2 (total unlikely) gets bigger: from 7% in October to 33% in January.

Figure 50: Likelihood of getting vaccinated for COVID-19



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults who are still to have any vaccination (n=159-982)

Reasons why respondents were less likely to get a vaccine/booster

Respondents who had scored 0-7 (from the scale where 0 is 'extremely unlikely' and 10 is 'extremely likely') on likelihood to get any vaccine (1st, 2nd or booster) were asked to select all/any reasons that apply for why not (Figure 51). Separately, at 21-22 September, respondents were asked specifically about their likelihood to get a *booster* once it became available to them and for their reasons why not (Figure 52).

Note that people may have different views towards receiving different doses of the vaccine. For example, 42% of respondents said they'd be less likely to get a booster vaccine at 21-22 September because they deem two doses to be sufficient (see Figure 52).

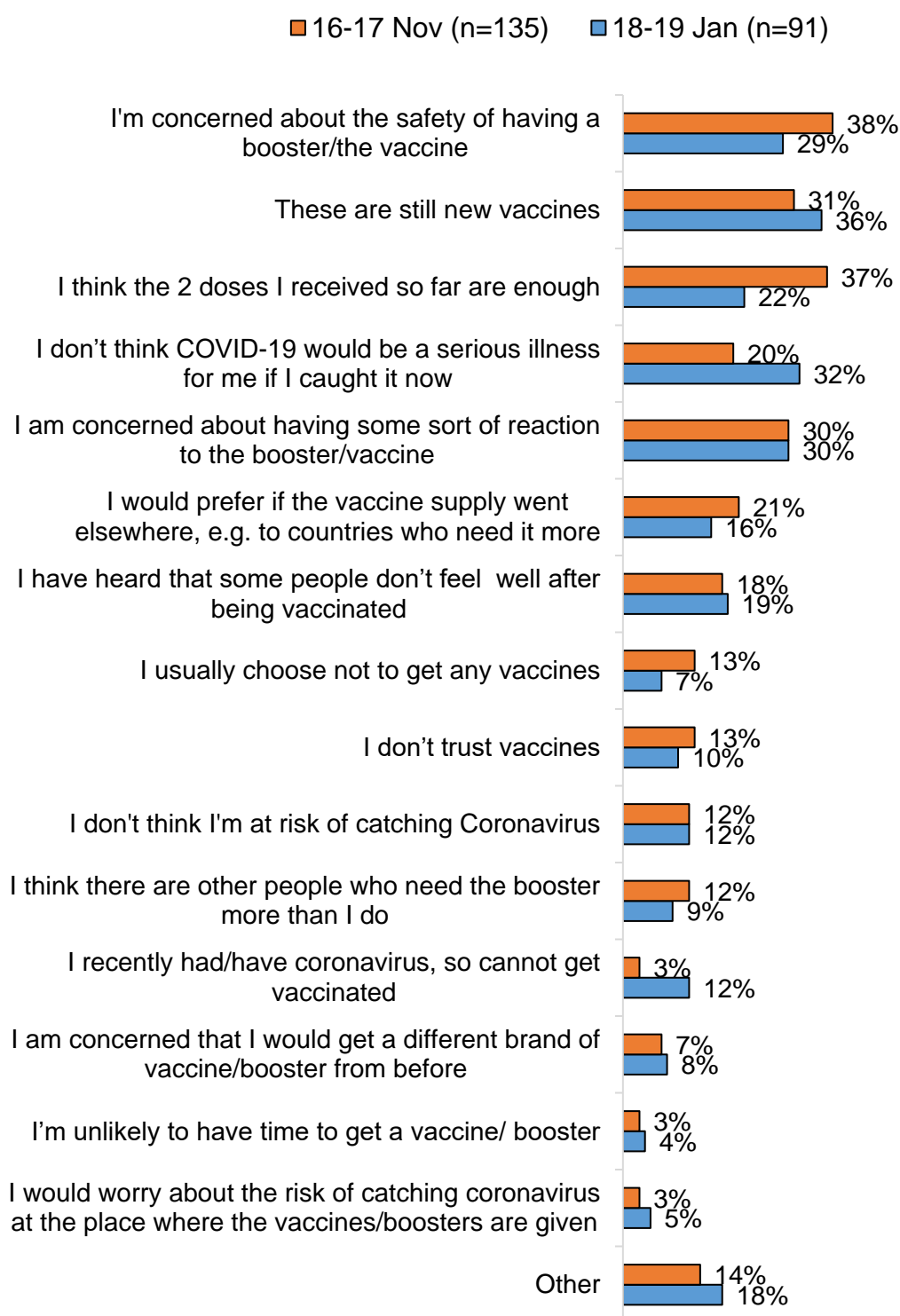
The main reasons respondents gave for why they would be less likely to take **any vaccine/booster** at 16-17 November and 18-19 January were to do with **personal safety concerns, or lack of concern**. The top reasons included:

- any mention of vaccine safety concerns (42% in November to 46% in January)
- any mention of a having a reaction to the vaccine (36% to 35%)
- any mention of the virus being low risk/not serious (24% to 37%)
- any mention of other people/countries needing vaccines more (26% to 23%)
- any general vaccine barrier (20% to 15%)

Meanwhile, the top reasons around the unlikelihood of getting a **booster**, specifically, asked at 21-22 September, were to do with other people/countries needing vaccines more (42%), as well as the belief that the two doses they had received so far were enough (also 42%).²²

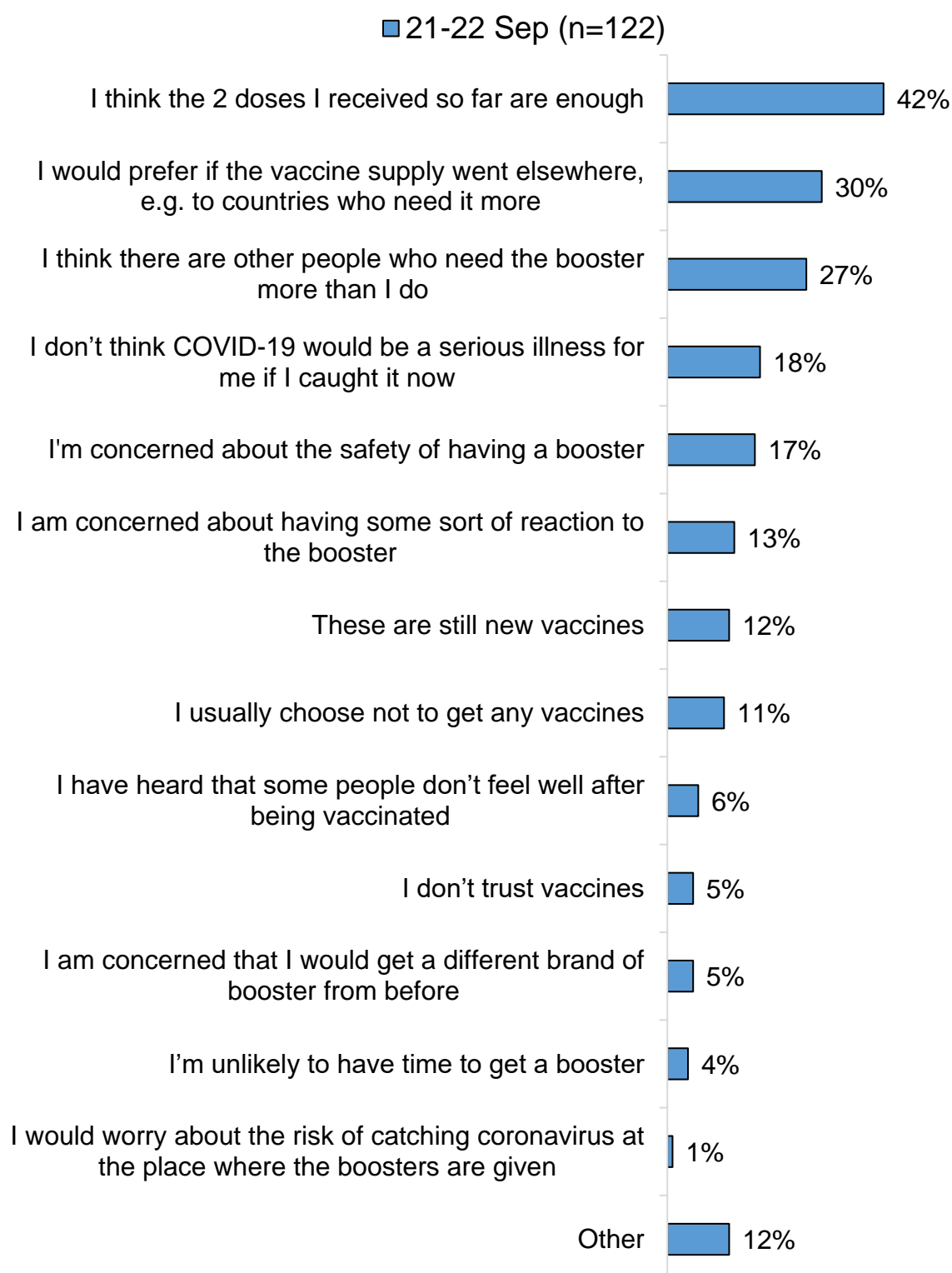
²² Please note the small sample sizes for these questions, as indicated in the following charts.

Figure 51: Reasons selected for being less likely to receive vaccine/booster (amongst those who rated themselves as less likely to receive it)



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: All adults who ranked 0-7 on likelihood to get a COVID-19 booster or have first or second vaccine (n=91-135)

Figure 52: Reasons selected for why respondents were less likely to receive a booster



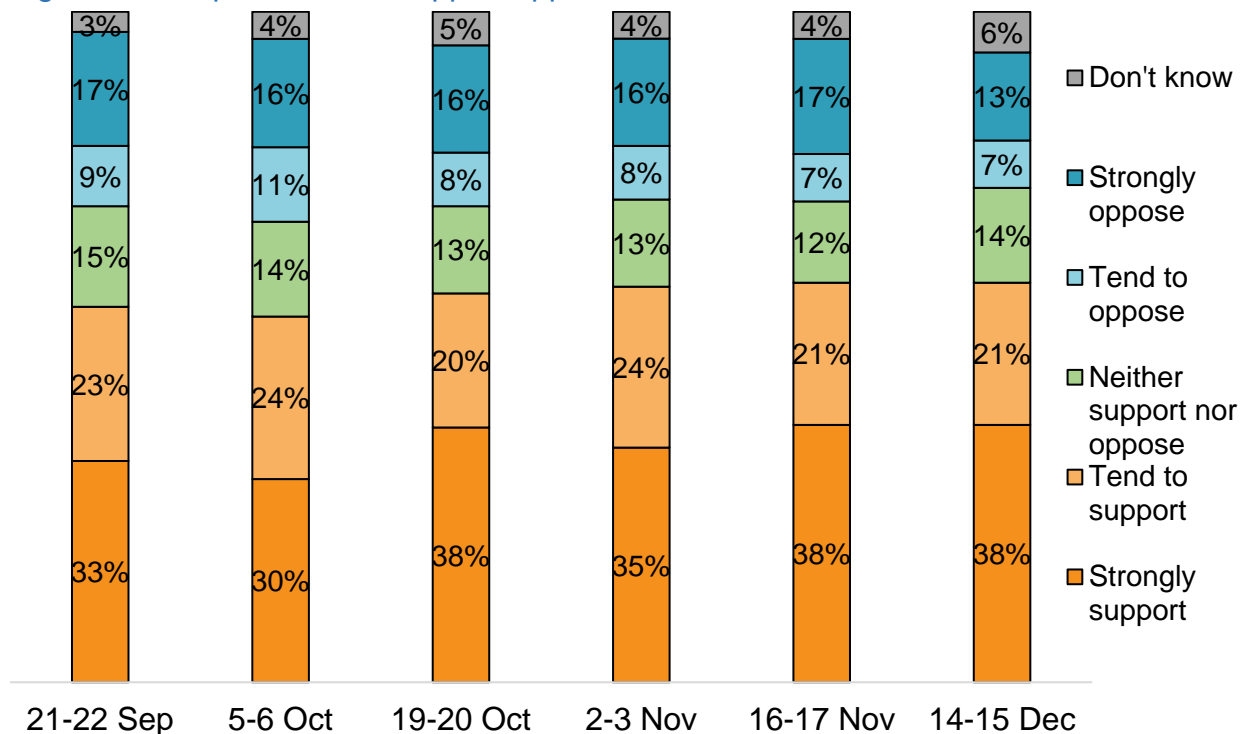
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults who ranked 0-7 on likelihood to get COVID-19 booster (n=122)

Certification

The Scottish Government launched a [COVID-19 certification scheme](#) (also known as a "Covid passport" scheme), enforced from 18 October, for entry to venues such as nightclubs and for large events.²³

Support for the COVID-19 certification scheme remains fairly stable, with over half of respondents (54% to 60%) supporting it from before its launch in September and after it was implemented and enforced from October through to December (Figure 53). Meanwhile around 1 in 5 respondents opposed the scheme (20% to 27%). All respondents were asked this question. However, only a small proportion each time had attended venues where they would need to show COVID-19 certification.

Figure 53: Proportions that support/oppose the COVID-19 certification scheme



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults (1002-1044)

²³ Respondents were given the following information before they were asked if they support/oppose the scheme: 'The Scottish Government introduced a Covid certification scheme (also known as a "Covid passport") for entry to nightclubs / other late night venues with music, dancing and alcohol and large events (that is unseated indoor live events with more than 500 people in the audience, unseated outdoor live events with more than 4,000 people in the audience, and any event that has more than 10,000 people in attendance). People visiting these venues or attending events of this size either have to show proof that they are fully vaccinated or prove that they are exempt from vaccination or testing before entering. The easiest way of proving vaccine certification is to show a QR code on the Covid Status app, but you can also download a certificate or obtain a letter by visiting [nhsinform.scot](#). Proof of a negative lateral flow test must take the form of an email from NHS COVID-19 Notification or a text message from NHS Result.' At 14-15 December, the scheme also included proof of a negative lateral flow test within the preceding 24 hours.

9. Parents/guardians and children

This section covers parents' and guardians' attitudes towards:

- their children getting vaccinated
- worry about the effect of the pandemic on their children's mental health
- awareness of changes to their children's play/behaviour due to the pandemic

Context

The pandemic has had a significant impact on children's education and social life. From disruption to schooling to limited social interactions and having to adapt to protective behaviours.

Children in Scotland went back to school in mid-August after the summer holidays. This was in the build-up to a peak of the Delta variant wave of infections, where 7,526 daily positive PCR cases were recorded on 2 September.²⁴ Similarly, when children returned to school in January after the festive break, this was just after the peak of the Omicron variant wave, with 21,425 positive PCR tests recorded on 29 December.²⁵

In September, the Scottish Government announced that vaccines would be administered to children aged 12-17 years.²⁶

²⁴Public Health Scotland [COVID-19 Statistical Report - 8 September 2021 - COVID-19 statistical report - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

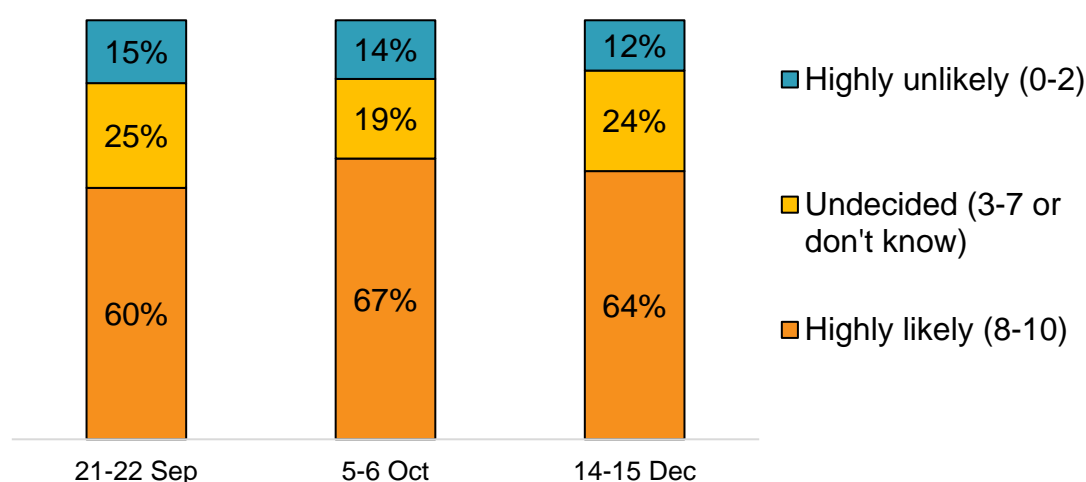
²⁵Public Health Scotland [COVID-19 statistical report - 7 January 2022 - COVID-19 statistical report - Publications - Public Health Scotland](#)

²⁶[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) update: First Minister's statement – 14 September 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Parents'/guardians' support for their children getting vaccinated

6 in 10 parents/guardians (between 60% and 67%) said they were 'highly likely' (scoring 8-10) to support their children aged 12-17 getting vaccinated (Figure 54). Those unlikely are around 1 in 10 (12% to 15%). And the undecided fluctuated around 2 in 10, between 19% and 25%. Note that due to the small sample sizes and limited data entry points, interpreting trends should be approached with caution.

Figure 54: Likelihood of parents/guardians with children aged 12-17 to support their child/children receiving the vaccine now that it is available to them

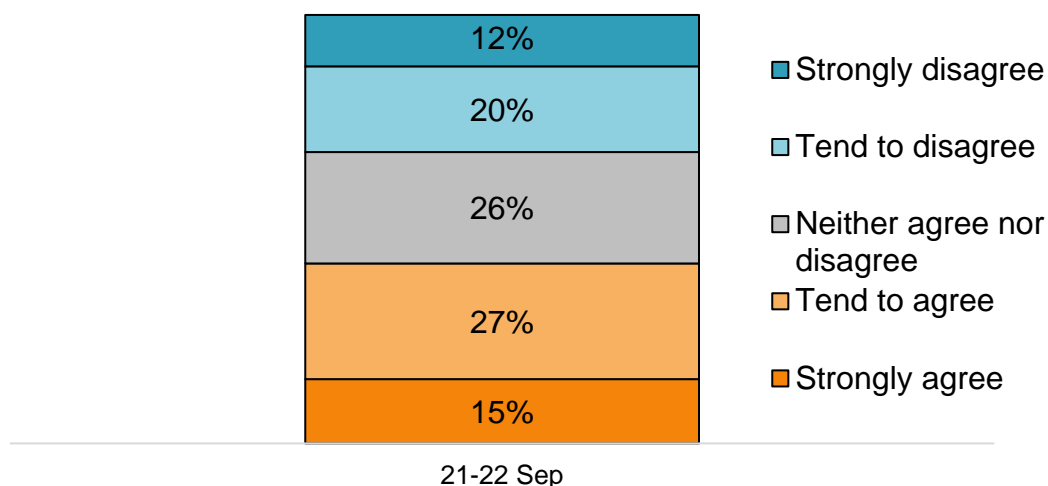


Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults with children aged 12-17 (n=75-93)

Parents'/guardians' worry about their children's mental health²⁷

Over 4 in 10 parents/guardians with children aged 4 to 17 (42%) agreed that they were worried for their child's/children's mental health (Figure 55). 3 in 10 (32%) were not worried, and just over a quarter (26%) neither agreed nor disagreed that they were worried for their children's mental health.

Figure 55: Proportion of parents/guardians who agreed/disagreed that they are worried about their child/children's mental health



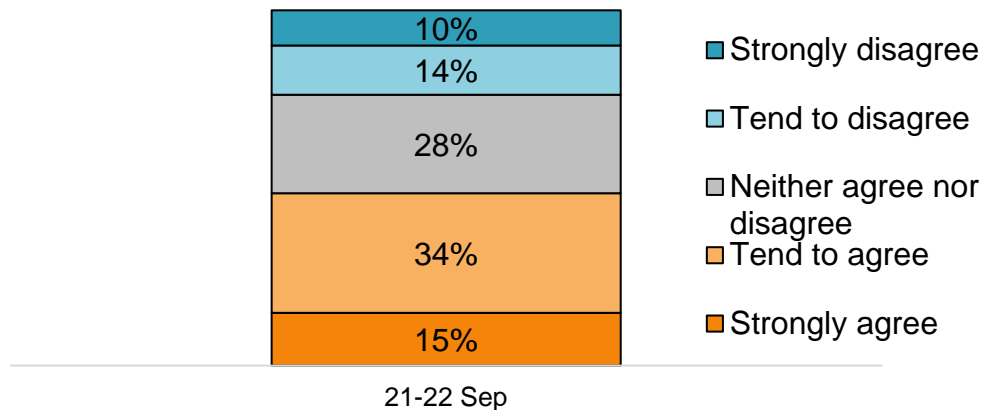
Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults with children aged 4-17 (n=189)

²⁷ If respondents had more than one child they were asked to respond in relation to their eldest child.

Changes in children's play/behaviour

Just under half of parents with children aged 4-17 (49%) agreed that they have noticed changes in the way their children play or behave as a result of the pandemic (Figure 56).

Figure 56: Proportion of parents/guardians with children aged 4-17 who agreed/disagreed that they can see changes in the way their children play/behave as a result of the pandemic



Source: YouGov Scotland Survey. Base: Adults with children aged 4-17 (n=189)

Annex A: Methodology

Introduction

This report draws together findings on key indicators from polling work on public behaviours and attitudes to the Coronavirus pandemic in Scotland. Eight reports covering earlier survey work were published on [8 May 2020](#), [12 June 2020](#), [5 August 2020](#), [9 October 2020](#), [20 November 2020](#), [29 January 2021](#), [24 March 2021](#), and [30 Nov 2021](#). As with previous reports, it is not intended to provide comprehensive analysis of the large amount of polling information available, but rather to draw together findings on some key indicators and present these visually. The report contains brief descriptions and explanations of the data from surveys which took place between September 2021 and January 2022. In addition to the visual timeline at the beginning of the report, is a more detailed timeline of key events that occurred while fieldwork was taking place, found in [Annex B](#). These provide wider context when interpreting the data in relation to things such as case numbers and the regulations in place at the time.

Results should be interpreted with the understanding that the surveys were designed and undertaken during a rapidly changing situation and bearing in mind the limitations of the data source noted below.

Data sources

The source is an online survey by YouGov. It is a bespoke commission by the Scottish Government. See the [sample sizes](#) for further information about this source, and the [data tables are published on gov.scot website](#). This report contains results from 7 September to 19 January 2022, inclusive. This period covers two major waves of COVID-19: from just after the summer/autumn peak of Delta variant cases in September 2021, and then the emergence of the Omicron variant in November and its rapid spread in December. On 29 December 2021, Scotland recorded the highest number of positive PCRs to date, with 21,425 positive cases ([Public Health Scotland](#)).

In the time period covered, September to January, Scotland has seen a rapid booster rollout. Guidance and measures around Coronavirus have also changed over this period. This included the introduction of the [COVID-19 certification “passport” scheme](#) in October for entry to late night venues and large events. For a more detailed overview of key events during this time period, see the timeline.

Fieldwork dates are provided alongside the [sample sizes](#). These dates and what was happening in relation to the pandemic should be kept in mind when interpreting the data. Due to the evolving situation and government responses to Coronavirus (see the [visual timeline](#) and [Annex B](#)), questions were introduced at different times, or not asked at all waves.

Limitations

A polling survey has a number of limitations. Sub-group analysis is not always possible due to small [sample sizes](#). Furthermore, the nature of online research

inherently excludes those who do not have internet access. The data source nevertheless provides useful and timely information, applying appropriate caveats. As the survey has been conducted using a quota sample, rather than a random probability sample, statistical significance can only be used on an indicative basis. Differences over the survey waves are only highlighted if they are likely to be significant, however not all possible significant differences have been described.

Sample sizes

YouGov results are based on a sample of c.1,000 adults 18+ across Scotland at each wave. YouGov apply weighting to the data to match the population profile to adjust for any over/under representations and to maximise consistency from wave to wave. Parameters used include age, gender, social class, region and level of education. Fieldwork dates cover the period where the bulk of the survey fieldwork was completed.

Name	Sample size	Age group	Field dates
YouGov weekly survey	Wave 77: 1021	18+	7-8 September
	Wave 79: 1005		21-22 September
	Wave 81: 1044		5-6 October
	Wave 83: 1003		19-20 October
	Wave 85: 1002		2-3 November
	Wave 87: 1009		16-17 November
	Wave 89: 1001		30 November-1 December
	Wave 91: 1022		14-15 December
	Wave 94: 1012		4-5 January
	Wave 96: 1005		18-19 January

Annex B: Timeline of key events around fieldwork dates

7-8 September

just after Delta wave peak

- Case numbers remained high with 38,340 cases recorded in the week to 5 September ([Public Health Scotland](#)), but it seemed that the rate of increase had been slowing down
- Plans for a COVID-19 certification scheme for entry to some venues, such as night clubs and large sporting events and concerts, were debated in Parliament and passed on 9 September, to begin on 1 October ([parliament.scot](#))

21-22 September

12-15's offered vaccine

- Case numbers fell to 23,254 in the week to 19 September but numbers in hospital and ICU remained high ([PHS](#)), due to the lag between infection and hospitalisation (potentially levelling off)
- Booster vaccination programme was underway: care home residents started to get booster jabs from 20 September and other priority groups were to follow
- From 20 September, 12-15 year olds were able to visit drop-in clinics to be vaccinated ahead of invitations being sent out ([gov.scot](#))

5-6 October

easing around international travel

- Cases continued to fall but remained relatively high ([PHS](#))
- Traffic light system for international travel changed to red/non-red list. Fully vaccinated adults from non-red list countries no longer needed to provide test result before travelling to Scotland, but needed PCR test on day 2 after arriving ([gov.scot](#))
- COVID-19 certification scheme launched on 1 October, not enforced for another 2 weeks

21-22 October

COVID-19 certification scheme enforced

- Cases lower than had been seen recently but remained relatively high, at 15,363 cases in the week to 24 October ([PHS](#))
- Scottish Government confirmed it is monitoring new Delta+ variant and that face coverings would continue to be worn in secondary schools after October holidays ([gov.scot](#))
- COVID-19 certification scheme, launched on 10 October, became fully enforceable on 18 October 2021([gov.scot](#))

2-3 November

COP-26 held in Glasgow

- Decline in new cases slowed, number of new cases per day was still higher than previous low periods, at 15,688 recorded in the week to 31 October ([PHS](#))
- Hospitalisations remained steady ([PHS](#))
- Remaining countries on "red list" removed as of 1 November, along with quarantine requirements ([gov.scot](#))

- [COP26](#) was underway in Glasgow, which saw protests and crowds at times

16-17 November **88% of 18+ received 2 vaccine doses**

- Cases were rising again but the numbers in hospital had reduced in recent weeks ([PHS](#))
- COP26 was not thought to be resulting in increased cases
- Announcement that the COVID-19 certification scheme may be expanded to other venues / to allow evidence of a recent negative test result (to be confirmed 23 November, implemented 6 December) ([gov.scot](#))
- 88% of 18+ year olds had now received 2 doses of the vaccine ([PHS](#))
- Some countries in Europe were facing rising case numbers ([Our World in Data](#))

30 November-1 December **Omicron identified as variant of concern, booster rollout accelerated**

- COVID-19 cases had decreased from the previous week ([PHS](#))
- Scottish Government announced COVID-19 certification scheme will not be expanded ([gov.scot](#))
- Omicron variant was highlighted as a variant of concern, with cases found in Scotland ([gov.scot](#))
- First Minister reminded everyone of importance of protective behaviours ([gov.scot](#))
- COVID-19 booster jab to be offered to all adults across Scotland ([gov.scot](#))

14-15 December **Omicron rapidly spreading, measures on businesses**

- Omicron variant was spreading rapidly, set to become dominant variant within days ([gov.scot](#))
- Further protective measures were put in place: legal requirements on businesses/services to make premises safe/minimise risk of transmission, public asked to minimise contacts with other households (max. 3), not including main Christmas celebrations. Testing before socialising recommended ([gov.scot](#))
- Ministers appointed a Chair and announced the Terms of Reference for the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry ([gov.scot](#))

4-5 January **just after Omicron peak, guidance on socialising**

- Omicron continued to spread rapidly, with record number of new cases recorded in Scotland. 91,544 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the week to 2 January ([PHS](#))
- In the week ending 4 January 2022, there were 1,003 admissions to hospital with a laboratory confirmed test of COVID-19, an increase of 43% from the previous week ([PHS](#))
- New restrictions/guidance from 26/27 December included size limits on large events, table service and 1m distancing between groups in hospitality and advice to limit contact with other households ([gov.scot](#))
- Booster rollout continued at pace ([PHS](#))

18-19 January

cases falling, some restrictions easing

- Drop in number of reported new cases, with hospital admissions and numbers in ICU decreasing from the previous week ([PHS](#))
- Restrictions on large outdoor events lifted from Monday 17 January ([gov.scot](#))
- Remaining restrictions on indoor events and hospitality measures would be lifted Monday 24 January, as would guidance on three households limit indoors ([gov.scot](#))



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