

SELF-REPORTED ADHERENCE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING

MEASURES

DHSC Tracker Surveys, Wave 10, 30 March – 1 April 2020 (n=2012)

7th April 2020

Summary:

- While Government campaigns are reaching most people (91%+), Government measures are not completely understood. Approximately 25% of the sample think that Government measures allow outings from the home (for groceries/pharmacy, for exercise, and to go to work if necessary) even if they are symptomatic.¹
- Self-reported adherence to self-isolation if symptomatic in the past seven days was poor: 30% reported staying at home for seven days when symptomatic; with 57% staying at home for 14 days when someone in their household was symptomatic.
- Of those who reported experiencing symptoms in the last seven days, a sizeable percentage reported having left the home to help or provide care for a vulnerable person (16%) and to go out to work (13%). This is particularly worrying. However, these results should be taken with caution as few people in the sample reported being symptomatic in the past seven days (n=146).
- Intentions to adhere to self-isolation measures if you become symptomatic (48%) or if someone in your household becomes symptomatic (68%) were also poor. Note that intended behaviours are not always reflective of actual behaviour.
- Having seen or heard Government campaigns about what to do if you or someone in your household becomes symptomatic, and correct knowledge of Government guidelines, were associated with increased intention to self-isolate.

¹ Correct at time of data collection. Advice on the NHS website has since changed, now stating that you must “not leave your home for any reason, other than to exercise once a day – but stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people” <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/> (webpage last updated on 3rd April, due for review on 6th April).

- There was mixed evidence for the role of worry and perceived risk on intention to self-isolate, with these factors being associated only with intention to self-isolate if you become ill.
- Having a coronavirus-relevant chronic illness oneself was associated with decreased intention to stay at home for seven days. We cannot tell if these results are because this group are “shielding” (not leaving the home for 12 weeks); there was no difference in intention to stay at home for 14 days.

Recommendations

- Campaigns should stress that people should not leave the home for any reason (apart from a medical need or exercise) if they, or someone in their household becomes symptomatic.
- Campaigns should clearly address three different populations/situations: if you yourself have or develop symptoms; if someone in your household has or develops symptoms; and, if no one in the household has symptoms. Using separate taglines for each group may help.
- Communications should continue to emphasise that people can spread coronavirus even if they are asymptomatic, and communications should provide clear advice on what the guidelines are if you or someone in your household becomes symptomatic.
- Messages which increase worry and perceived risk of coronavirus may not be effective in influencing intended, and consequently actual, self-isolation behaviour.

Understanding of the measures

- 93% of participants report having seen or heard advice on what to do if you develop symptoms. 91% report having seen or heard advice on what to do if someone in your household develops symptoms. 97% report having seen or heard advice to “stay at home, save lives”.
- The Government advises that you should not go out **for any reason** if you develop symptoms of coronavirus (for seven days) or if someone in your household develops symptoms (for 14 days). However, a sizeable percentage of the sample think that outings are allowed for various reasons irrespective of symptoms (see Table 1).
- 78% of participants correctly selected “staying at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all)” as Government advice if you develop symptoms of coronavirus.
 - Participants could select multiple options for this question. Only 10% (n=194) selected only “staying at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all)”. 11% (n=230) selected staying at home for seven days and leaving the home for a medical need only.
- 79% of participants correctly selected “staying at home for 14 days (not leaving the home at all)” as Government advice if someone in your household develops symptoms of coronavirus.
 - Participants could select multiple options for this question. 21% (n=417) selected only “staying at home for 14 days (not leaving the home at all)”. 24% (n=488) selected staying at home for 14 days and leaving the home for a medical need only.
- 64% of people did not select staying at home for seven or 14 days as government advice if no one in the household has symptoms of coronavirus.
- If they or someone in their household are symptomatic: 27-28% of people think that you can go out to the shops for groceries/pharmacy; 30-32% of people think that you can go out for a walk or some other exercise; 16-25% of people think you can go out to work if necessary; and 18-23% of people think that you can go out to help or provide care for a vulnerable person.
- Endorsement for outings that are not advised in any circumstances is also high. For example, 38% of people think that Government advice states that outings to the shops

for things other than groceries/pharmacy are “allowed” if no one in the household has symptoms.

Self-reported behaviour – self-isolation for seven days if you were symptomatic

- 7% of participants (n=146) reported having had a high temperature/fever or a new, continuous cough in the past seven days.
- Participants could select multiple actions that they had taken while symptomatic. Of symptomatic participants, 22% (n=32) reported that they were currently staying at home for seven days (not leaving home at all) (see Table 2 for full breakdown of behaviours).
 - Of symptomatic participants, 32% (n=47) selected that they were currently staying at home for fourteen days (not leaving home at all).
 - Of symptomatic participants, 46% (n=67) did not select staying at home for seven or 14 days.
- The main reasons given for not staying at home for seven days (among those who did not state that they were staying at home for 14 days, n=76) were to go for a walk or some other exercise, to go to the shops for groceries/pharmacy, if their symptoms were only mild and to help or provide care for a vulnerable person (see Table 3 for full breakdown).
- Due to the small number of people who reported that they had experienced symptoms in the last seven days, we did not run any further analyses on these data.

Self-reported behaviour – self-isolation for 14 days if someone in your household was symptomatic

- 6% of participants (n=118) reported that someone else in their household had a high temperature/fever or a new, continuous cough in the past seven days. Of these participants, 59% (n=69) reported also being symptomatic themselves.
- Follow-up questions were only asked to participants who reported that a member of their household was symptomatic and who were not symptomatic themselves (n=49).

Of these, 57% (n=28) reported that they were currently staying at home for 14 days (not leaving home at all).

- Due to small numbers, we did not undertake any further analyses on these data.

Intended behaviour – self-isolation for seven days if you became symptomatic

- Participants could select multiple actions that they intended to take if they became symptomatic. Of participants who reported not experiencing or not knowing if they had experienced symptoms themselves in the last seven days (n=1866), 29% (n=541) reported intending to stay at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all) (see Table 2 for full breakdown of behaviours).
 - Of participants who reported not experiencing or not knowing if they had experienced symptoms themselves in the last seven days, 58% (n=1074) reported intending to stay at home for fourteen days.
 - Of participants who reported not experiencing or not knowing if they had experienced symptoms themselves in the last seven days, 14% (n=251) did not select intending to stay at home for seven or 14 days.
- The main reasons given for not staying at home for seven days (among those who did not state that they would stay at home for 14 days, n=334) were for a medical need, to go to the shops for groceries/pharmacy and to go for a walk or some other exercise (see Table 3 for full breakdown).
- Associations were run between predictive factors and intending to stay at home for seven days (not leaving home at all). It should be noted that a larger proportion of people reported intending to stay at home for 14 days.
- Having a coronavirus-relevant chronic illness was associated with decreased intention to stay at home for seven days. There were no differences by chronic illness status for reasons given for not intending to stay at home for seven days (including leaving for a medical need, or intended to stay at home for 14 days).
- People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to intend to stay at home for seven days, compared to those aged 45 years to 64 years.

- Worry about coronavirus, perceived risk of coronavirus (self and people in UK), perceived severity of coronavirus, and perceived likelihood of catching coronavirus were not associated with intention to stay at home for seven days, nor was credibility of the Government.
- Having seen or heard advice from the Government on what to do if you or someone in your household develops symptoms of coronavirus, and to “stay at home, save lives” were associated with increased intention to stay at home for seven days if you developed symptoms, as was increased satisfaction with the Government.
- Knowledge that Government advice states that if you become symptomatic you should stay at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all) was also associated with increased intention to stay at home for seven days if you developed symptoms.
- Agreeing that people can spread coronavirus even if they are asymptomatic and that you are concerned about spreading coronavirus to someone who is at risk were associated with increased intention to stay at home for seven days.
- There were no associations between intention to self-isolate for seven days if you became symptomatic and any employment variable.

Intended behaviour – self-isolation for 14 days if someone in your household became symptomatic

- These questions were only asked to participants who reported not experiencing or not knowing if they had experienced symptoms themselves in the last seven days, and who reported that a household member had not experienced symptoms in the last seven days or who did not know if a household member had experienced symptoms in the last seven days (n=1817).
- Of these participants, 68% (n=1243) reported intending to stay at home for 14 days (not leaving the home at all). 37% (n=675) reported intending to stay at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all) (see Table 2 for full breakdown of behaviours).

- The main reasons given for not staying at home for 14 days (n=574) were that they would stay at home for seven days, to go to the shops for groceries/pharmacy, and for a medical need (see Table 3 for full breakdown).
- Associations were run between factors and intending to stay at home for 14 days (not leaving home at all).
- Female gender and having a household member with a chronic illness were associated with increased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms.
- Being aged 16 years to 24 years (compared to those aged 35 years to 64 years), and thinking that you have had coronavirus were associated with decreased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms.
- Worry about coronavirus, perceived risk of coronavirus (self and people in UK), and perceived severity of coronavirus, were associated with increased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms of coronavirus. There was no association with perceived likelihood of catching coronavirus.
- Having seen or heard advice from the Government on what to do if you or someone in your household develops symptoms of coronavirus, and to “stay at home, save lives” were associated with increased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms, as was increased satisfaction with the Government (however, credibility of the Government was not associated).
- Knowledge that Government advice states that if someone in your household becomes symptomatic you should stay at home for 14 days (not leaving the home at all) was associated with increased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms.
- Agreeing that people can spread coronavirus even if they are asymptomatic and that you are concerned about spreading coronavirus to someone who is at risk were associated with increased intention to stay at home for 14 days if someone in your household developed symptoms.

Please note that this work has been conducted rapidly and has not been peer reviewed or subject to normal quality control measures.

Table 1. Number (n, and percentage %) of people who endorse each statement as being Government advice for staying at home measures if you are symptomatic, someone in your household is symptomatic, and if no one in your household is symptomatic (correct options highlighted in bold, total n=2012):

You should stay at home...	You have symptoms, n (%)	Someone in household has symptoms, n (%)	No one in household has symptoms, n (%)
for seven days (not leaving the home at all) – TOTAL who selected this option	1569 (78.0)	1159 (57.6)	550 (27.3)
for 14 days (not leaving the home at all) – TOTAL who selected this option	1558 (77.4)	1581 (78.6)	523 (26.0)
<i>ONLY for seven days selected*</i>	332 (16.5)	209 (10.4)	193 (9.6)
<i>ONLY for 14 days selected*</i>	321 (16.0)	631 (31.4)	166 (8.3)
<i>For seven and 14 days BOTH selected*</i>	1237 (61.5)	950 (47.2)	357 (17.7)
<i>NEITHER for seven or 14 days selected*</i>	122 (6.1)	222 (11.0)	1296 (64.4)
but can go out if your symptoms are mild	179 (8.9)	177 (8.8)	-
but can go to the shops for groceries/pharmacy	538 (26.7)	559 (27.8)	1750 (87.0)
but can go to the shops for things other than groceries/pharmacy	233 (11.6)	284 (14.1)	762 (37.9)
but can go for a walk or some other exercise	648 (32.2)	595 (29.6)	1754 (87.2)
but can go out to work if necessary	498 (24.8)	329 (16.4)	1557 (77.4)
but can go out for a medical need	762 (37.9)	722 (35.9)	1722 (85.6)
but can go out to help or provide care for a vulnerable person	452 (22.5)	364 (18.1)	1580 (78.5)
but can go out to meet up with friends and/or family	127 (6.3)	143 (7.1)	238 (11.8)

*As this question allowed participants to select multiple answers, participants could select either stay at home for seven days only, stay at home for 14 days only, both answers, or neither answer. In *italics* is a breakdown of the percentages who selected each combination of options (displaying either correct, partially correct, or incorrect knowledge of Government advice).

Table 2. Reported and intended behaviour if symptoms of coronavirus developed (adhering to Government advice in bold – only for “staying at home” options)

	Self-reported behaviour	Intended behaviour	
	Symptomatic oneself, n (%) (total n=146)	Symptomatic oneself, n (%) (total n=1866)	Household member symptomatic, n (%) (total n=1817)
Go out to work as normal	-	5 (0.3)	10 (0.6)
Staying at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all) – TOTAL who selected this option	44 (30.1)	888 (47.6)	675 (37.1)
Staying at home for 14 days (not leaving the home at all) – TOTAL who selected this option	47 (32.2)	1074 (57.6)	1243 (68.4)
<i>ONLY for seven days selected*</i>	32 (21.9)	541 (29.0)	256 (14.1)
<i>ONLY for 14 days selected*</i>	35 (24.0)	727 (39.0)	824 (45.3)
<i>For seven and 14 days BOTH selected*</i>	12 (8.2)	347 (18.6)	419 (23.1)
<i>NEITHER for seven or 14 days selected*</i>	67 (45.9)	251 (13.5)	318 (17.5)
Ask/advise other members of my household to stay at home and avoid contact with other people	37 (25.3)	747 (40.0)	589 (32.4)
Take over the counter medicine, such as painkillers or cold and flu medicine	26 (17.8)	620 (33.2)	-
Take alternative treatment or remedies	16 (11.0)	74 (4.0)	-
Book a face-to-face appointment with my GP	8 (5.5)	19 (1.0)	15 (0.8)
Go to A&E	7 (4.8)	18 (1.0)	4 (0.2)
Visit a Pharmacist/Chemist for advice	10 (6.8)	13 (0.7)	24 (1.3)
Visit another NHS service such as a walk-in centre or minor injuries unit	14 (9.6)	22 (1.2)	20 (1.1)
Speak to a GP or another healthcare professional on the phone	24 (16.4)	272 (14.6)	219 (12.1)
Call NHS 111 (England, Wales, Scotland) / 0300 200 7885 (Northern Ireland)	31 (21.2)	796 (42.7)	653 (35.9)
Go to NHS 111 online	31 (21.2)	731 (39.2)	612 (33.7)
Call 999 / ambulance service	4 (2.7)	28 (1.5)	29 (1.6)
Look online for advice	33 (22.6)	510 (27.3)	444 (24.4)
Ask family or friends for advice	16 (11.0)	109 (5.8)	60 (3.3)
Don't know (SINGLE CODE)	2 (1.4)	11 (0.6)	26 (1.4)
Nothing (SINGLE CODE)	9 (6.2)	28 (1.5)	39 (2.1)

*As this question allowed participants to select multiple answers, participants could select either stay at home for seven days only, stay at home for 14 days only, both answers, or neither answer. In *italics* is a breakdown of the percentages who selected each combination of options (displaying either adherence or non-adherence to Government advice).

Table 3. Reasons given for not selecting “correct” self-reported action if symptomatic, or intended action if symptomatic.

	Self-reported behaviour Symptomatic oneself, those who reported they were staying at home for 14 days excluded, n (%) (total n=76)	Intended behaviour If became symptomatic oneself, those who selected that they would intend to stay at home for 14 days excluded, n (%) (total n=344)	If household member symptomatic, n (%) (total n=574)
Mild symptoms	15 (19.7)	25 (7.5)	38 (6.6)
Shopping for groceries/pharmacy	15 (19.7)	62 (18.6)	152 (26.5)
Shopping for things other than groceries/pharmacy	11 (14.5)	29 (8.7)	27 (4.7)
Walking or some other exercise	18 (23.7)	56 (16.8)	73 (12.7)
Going out to work if necessary	10 (13.2)	16 (4.8)	21 (3.7)
Going out for a medical need	13 (17.1)	112 (33.5)	113 (19.7)
Going out to help or provide care for a vulnerable person	15 (19.7)	23 (6.9)	26 (4.5)
Going out to meet up with friends and/or family	12 (15.8)	11 (3.3)	9 (1.6)
Don't think it's necessary for me to stay at home	11 (14.5)	15 (4.5)	16 (0.8)
Stay at home for seven days (not leaving the home at all)	-	-	224 (39.0)

Table 4. Associations between personal characteristics, employment characteristics and intending to adhere to self-isolation measures (staying at home for 7 days if self becomes symptomatic, staying at home for 14 days if household member becomes symptomatic)

	Participant characteristics	Level	Intended to adhere Symptomatic oneself, n (%) (total n=)	Household member symptomatic, n (%) (total n=)
Personal characteristics	Gender	Male	Reference	Reference
		Female	0.89 (0.73 to 1.08)	1.52 (1.22 to 1.88)*
	Age	16-24 years	Reference	Reference
		25-34	0.81 (0.52 to 1.26)	1.14 (0.71 to 1.81)
		35-44	1.3 (0.84 to 2.00)	2.21 (1.36 to 3.58)*
		45-54	1.76 (1.15 to 2.68)*	1.9 (1.19 to 3.02)*
		55-64	2.02 (1.31 to 3.12)*	1.76 (1.09 to 2.82)*
		65-74	1.53 (0.97 to 2.42)	1.5 (0.92 to 2.46)
		75+	1.1 (0.68 to 1.77)	1.23 (0.74 to 2.05)
	Dependent children	No	Reference	Reference
		Yes	0.87 (0.68 to 1.10)	0.87 (0.66 to 1.14)
	Coronavirus-relevant chronic illness - self	None	Reference	Reference
		Present	0.76 (0.6 to 0.96)*	1.03 (0.79 to 1.33)
	Any chronic illness – other household member	None	Reference	Reference
		Present	1.01 (0.78 to 1.29)	1.87 (1.38 to 2.53)*
	Employment status	Not working	Reference	Reference
		Working	0.98 (0.76 to 1.25)	1.27 (0.97 to 1.68)
	Work for NHS - self	No	Reference	Reference
		Yes	0.69 (0.43 to 1.09)	0.45 (0.28 to 0.74)*
	Work for NHS – members of my family	No	Reference	Reference
Yes		0.94 (0.74 to 1.20)	1.17 (0.89 to 1.55)	
Work for NHS - friends	No	Reference	Reference	
	Yes	1.14 (0.89 to 1.47)	1.24 (0.92 to 1.66)	
Socioeconomic group (Index of multiple deprivation)	1 st quartile (least deprived)	Reference	Reference	
	2 nd quartile	0.91 (0.68 to 1.2)	0.94 (0.68 to 1.29)	
	3 rd quartile	1.00 (0.75 to 1.34)	0.92 (0.67 to 1.27)	
	4 th quartile (most deprived)	0.77 (0.57 to 1.03)	0.94 (0.68 to 1.3)	
Ethnicity	White	Reference	Reference	
	Black and Minority	1.15 (0.78 to 1.69)	1.4 (0.89 to 2.19)	
Highest educational or professional qualification	GCSE/vocational/A-level/No formal qualifications	Reference	Reference	
	Degree or higher (Bachelors, Masters, PhD)	1.16 (0.94 to 1.43)	1.17 (0.92 to 1.49)	
Ever had coronavirus	Don't know or think have not	Reference	Reference	
	Think have, or have had it confirmed	0.78 (0.52 to 1.16)	0.62 (0.4 to 0.96)*	
Employment characteristics	Employment type‡	Permanent job	Reference	Reference
		Other	0.83 (0.55 to 1.24)	0.94 (0.59 to 1.48)
	Self-employed‡	No	Reference	Reference
		Yes	0.97 (0.58 to 1.62)	1.04 (0.57 to 1.89)
	Key worker‡	No	Reference	Reference
Yes		1.07 (0.82 to 1.40)	0.91 (0.67 to 1.24)	
	Not manual worker	Reference	Reference	

Highest earner in household	Manual worker	1.01 (0.81 to 1.27)	1.25 (0.97 to 1.62)
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†Adjusted for personal characteristics (not including ever having had coronavirus) and region

‡Not adjusting for employment status (employment type and key worker questions only asked to a subsection of sample based on answers to employment question; self-employment taken as answer from employment status)

- Employment type asked only to those who were in full-time, part-time or self-employment.
- Self-employment asked only to those who were in full-time, part-time or self-employment.
- Key worker as defined by question in D3B of questionnaire.

Datasets used:

- Department of Health and Social Care weekly tracker
 - o Tracking DHSC marketing, coronavirus attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, reported behaviour, satisfaction with Government response, credibility of Government.
 - o Data collected weekly (Monday to Wednesday) since late January.
 - o N~2000 per wave.
 - o Market research company commissioned: BMG Research.
 - o *This survey is not designed to collect the views of NHS workers and respondents in this sample working in the NHS are not representative of the wider NHS workers in general. In particular, the sample in the survey is of NHS staff who have time to participate in on-line polls. In the context of a major public health crisis this poses very substantial limitations.*

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