

Adults remain at home despite lockdown easing

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People in the UK are continuing to spend several days a week at home, despite lockdown measures being eased, finds UCL's COVID-19 social study.

The research shows that adults on average stayed at home or in their gardens four days a week at the start of lockdown, when one daily

exercise and essential trip were allowed.

And despite lockdown measures being eased to allow for non-essential trips and travel, people are still spending two or three days a week not leaving their homes. Across the last three months, people with lower household incomes and those with a mental health diagnosis have spent the most time within their homes.

Launched in the week before lockdown started, this [ongoing study](#) is funded by the Nuffield Foundation with additional support from Wellcome and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It is the UK's largest study into how adults are feeling about the lockdown, government advice and overall wellbeing and mental health.

The study shows that at the start of lockdown, around 60% of adults were worried about friends or family outside of their household, whilst 30% were worried about those within their household. These numbers have since decreased to 40% and 20% respectively but there has been little further improvement in the past two weeks despite further lockdown easing taking place.

The figures also show that levels of depression and anxiety have stopped falling and have now plateaued at a level which is lower than at the start of lockdown but above usually-reported averages. Similarly, [life satisfaction](#) and happiness levels have stopped increasing in the past two weeks.

Lead author, Dr. Daisy Fancourt (UCL Epidemiology & Health Care) said: "Our study shows that many people have continued to opt to stay at home even though lockdown has eased and they have been allowed to exercise once a day and take essential trips for medicine and food since the start of lockdown.

"This could be in response to poorer weather, or continued worries about the virus."

Respondents were also asked how much confidence they had in their Government's handling of the COVID-19 epidemic from one (not at all) to seven (lots). The study finds that the difference in confidence between the governments of the devolved nations and the UK Government continues to grow with English confidence currently around 3.3-3.8 amongst those over 30 and 2.6 amongst those under 30. In contrast, confidence remains around 4.5 in Wales and Northern Ireland and 5 in Scotland.

Levels of 'complete' compliance with lockdown measures have also fallen further, with a greater decrease and lower levels in people with higher household incomes, people in England (compared to Scotland or Wales), and people in cities. However, 'majority' compliance remains relatively steady, with around 90% of people surveyed aged 30 and over still showing a large degree of compliance with the rules, although this has dropped to 80% in younger adults.

There has been little change in thoughts of self-harm, self-harming, reports of abuse or loneliness levels in spite of the increased lockdown easing, but major and minor stress around catching COVID-19, unemployment, finance or getting food has not increased over the past week.

Cheryl Lloyd, Education Programme Head at the Nuffield Foundation said: "As lockdown eases, we are seeing that people with lower household incomes, a mental health diagnosis, younger adults, those living alone and those in urban areas are less likely to go outdoors for at least 15 minutes a day. These groups are also most at risk of loneliness, depression and anxiety, so as [lockdown](#) relaxes we must ensure those most vulnerable have access to appropriate support to limit the longer-

term psychological impacts of the pandemic."

The study team has also received support from Wellcome to launch an international network of longitudinal studies called the COVID-MINDS Network. Through the network, dozens of scientists and clinicians are coming together internationally to collate results from mental health studies running in countries around the world and compare findings. The initiative will support launching new mental health studies in other countries and show whether actions taken in specific countries are helping to protect [mental health](#).

Provided by University College London

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