ESRI

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Social Activity Measure
Aug 24th – 31st

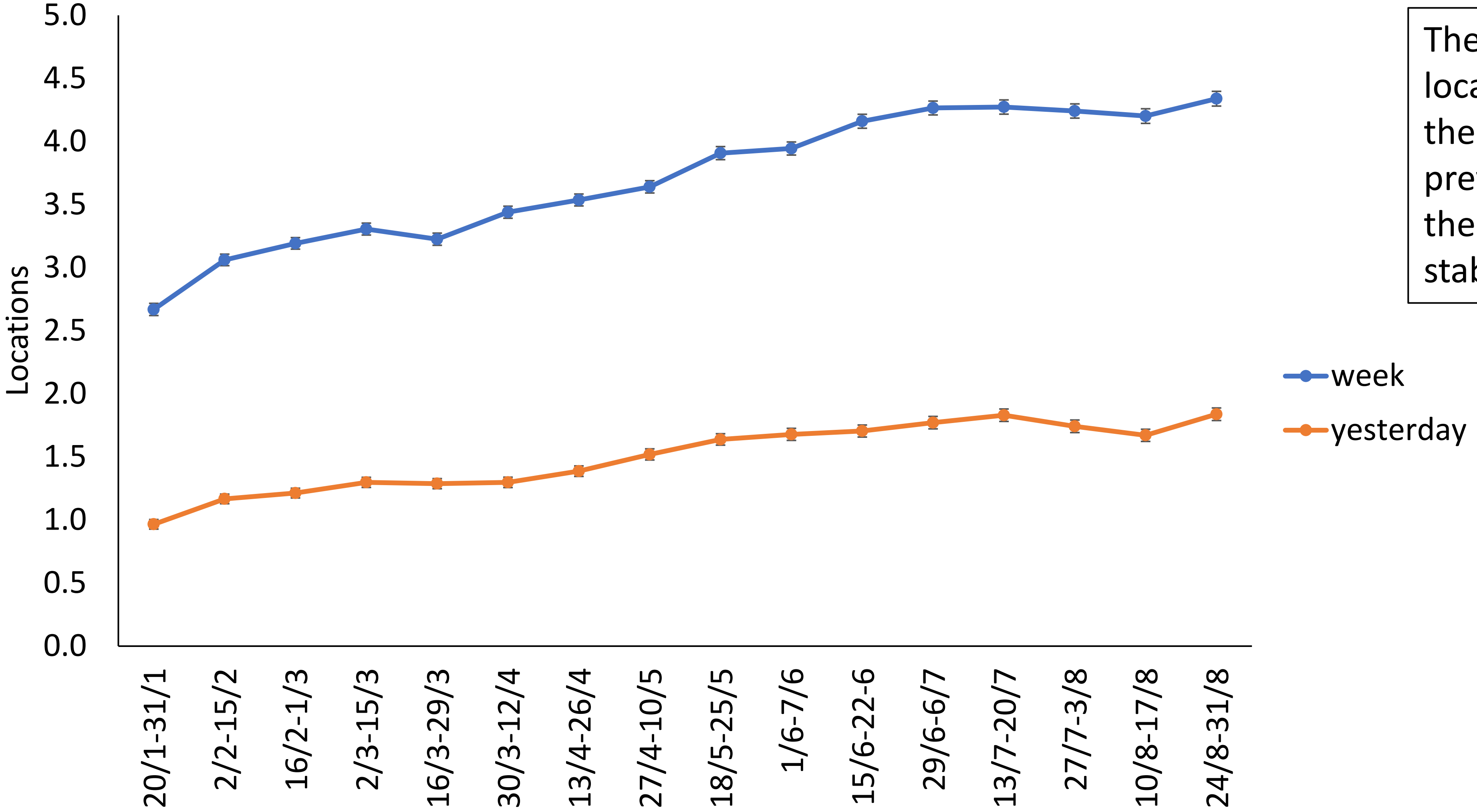
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

The Social Activity Measure (SAM) is a behavioural study that records the public response to the risk of COVID-19 infection over time. Designed by the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit (BRU), SAM is an anonymous, interactive, online study that surveys people about their recent activity. The study offers insight into where and how risks of COVID-19 transmission arise. SAM aims to inform policy regarding the opening of parts of the economy and society, while keeping COVID-19 under control. The research was designed by the BRU in consultation with the Department of the Taoiseach, which funds the work. The survey is completely anonymous. Where comparisons between survey rounds are highlighted, they are statistically significant.

TIMING

This slide deck presents results from a nationally representative sample of 1,000 people aged 18 and over who participated in the study between August 24th and 31st. Data collection took place during a period of speculation about the removal of restrictions. On the last day of data collection, 31st August, the Government announced an easing of most restrictions from 6th September and, prospectively, a full lifting from 22nd October. Vaccination was open for anyone aged 12 and over during this time period.

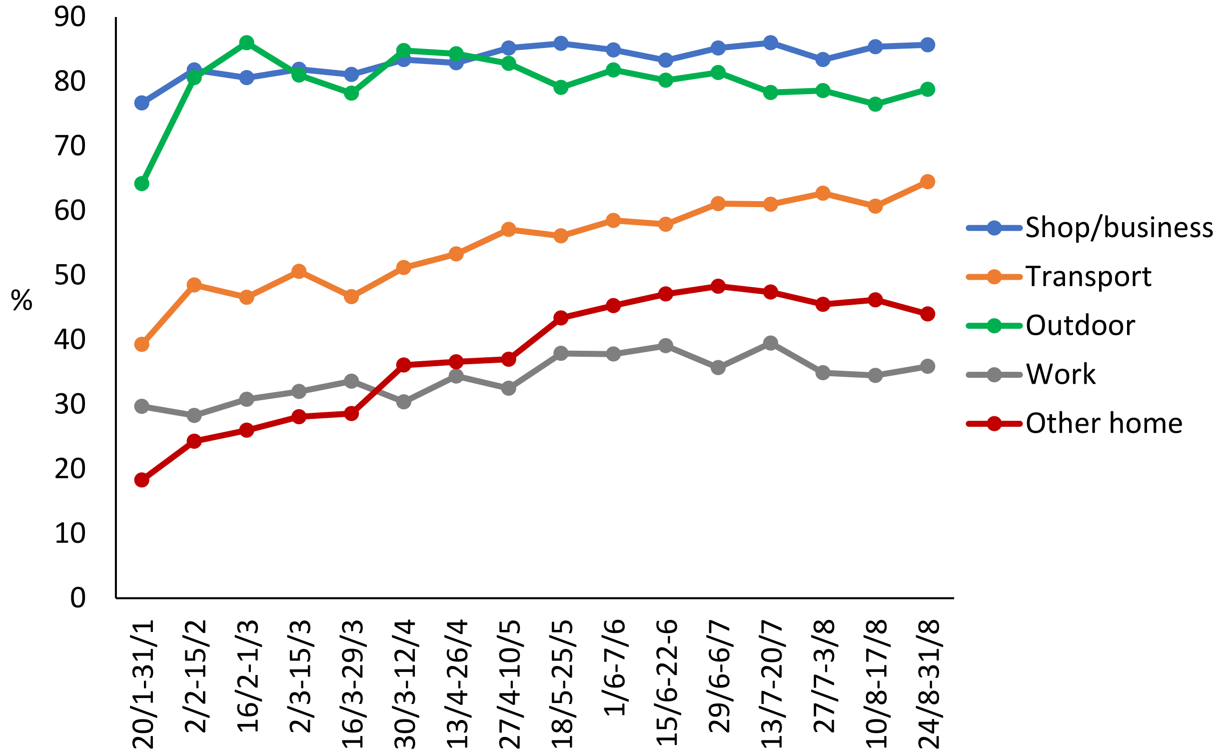
Total locations visited

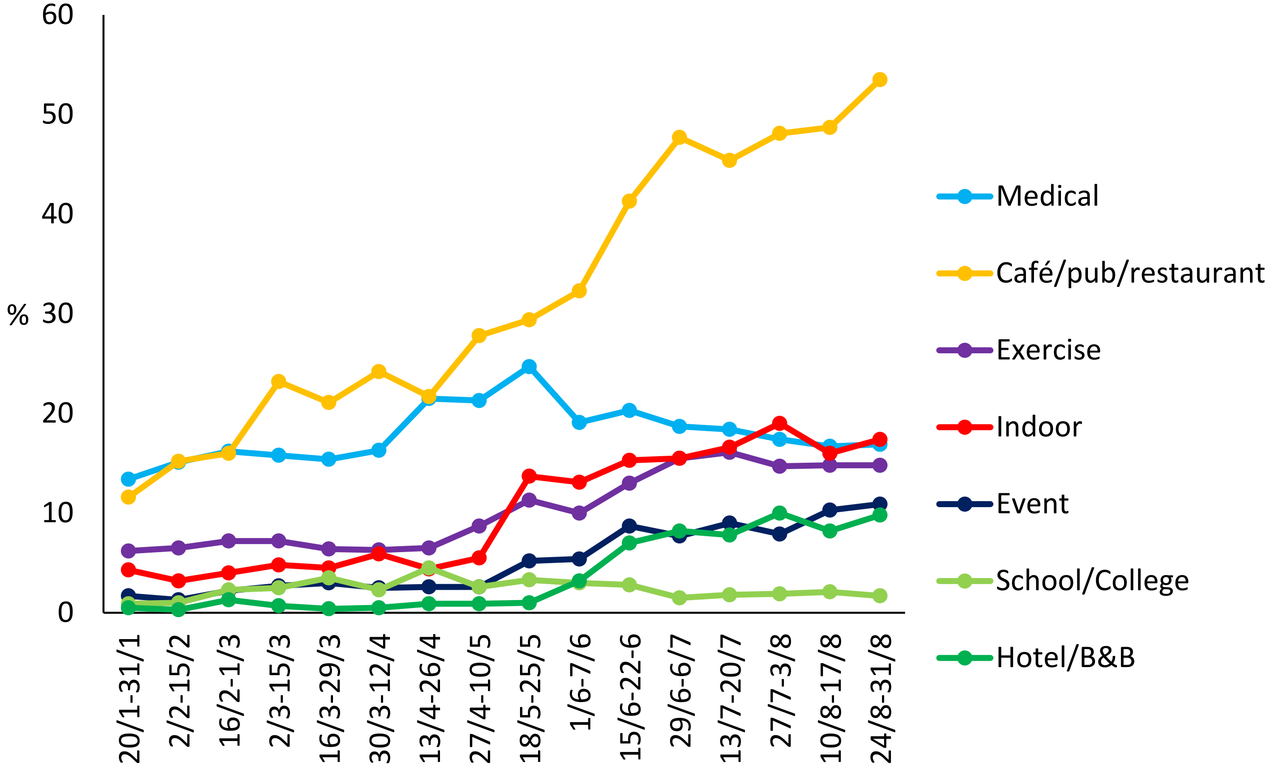


The average number of locations visited outside the home during the previous week and over the previous day remained stable.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Locations visited (previous week)

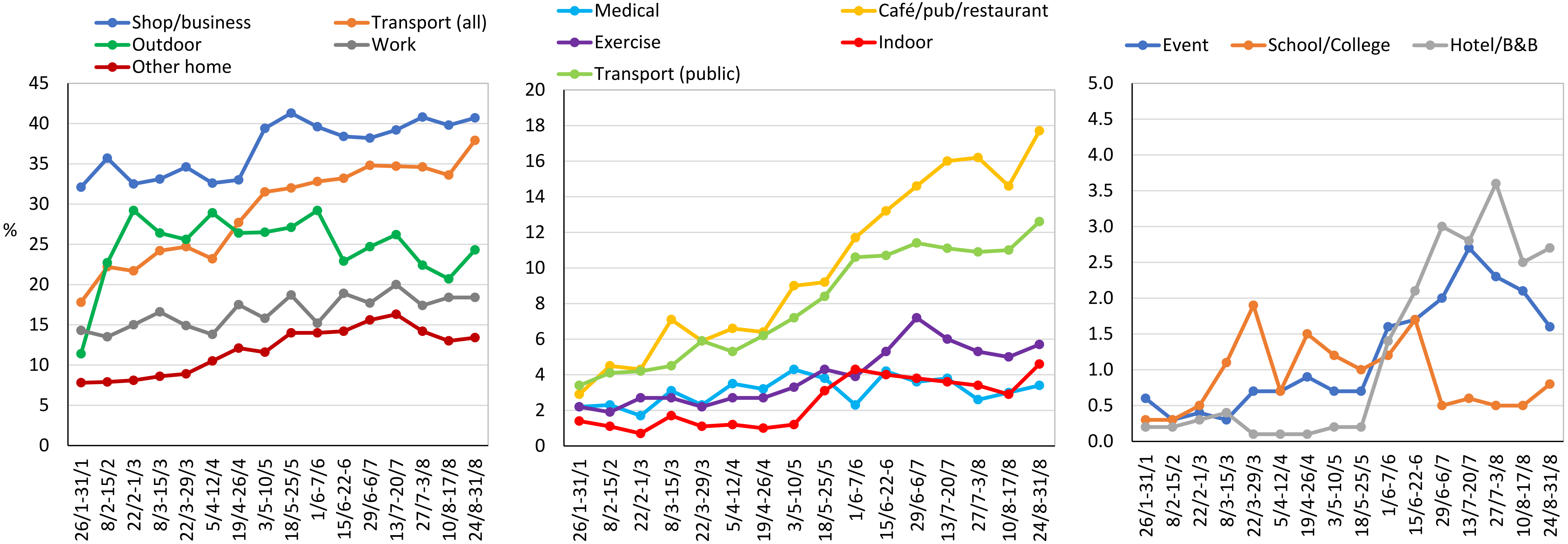




The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point during the previous week. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. There was little change from the previous round except for an increase in the number visiting cafés, pubs and restaurants.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Locations visited (yesterday)

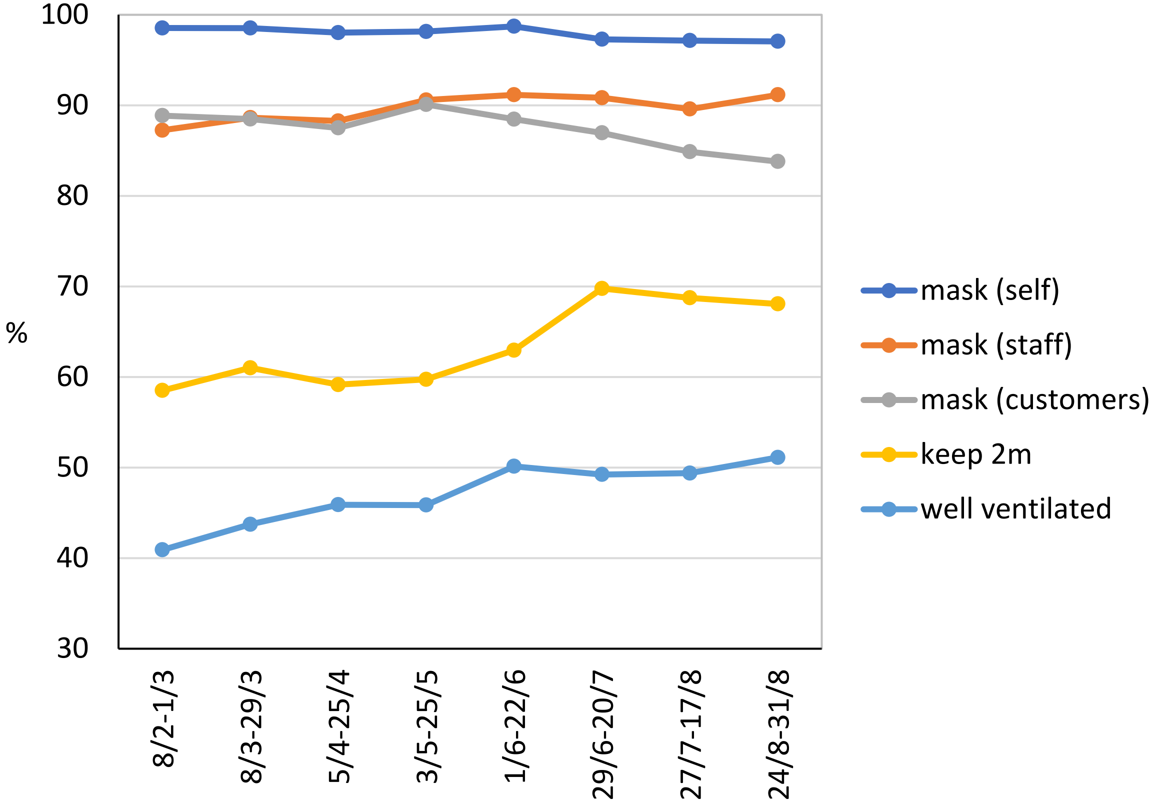


The charts show the proportion of the population who had visited each location at some point the previous day. Note the different scales on the vertical axis. There was an increase in use of transport, visits to outdoor locations, hospitality venues and other indoor locations.

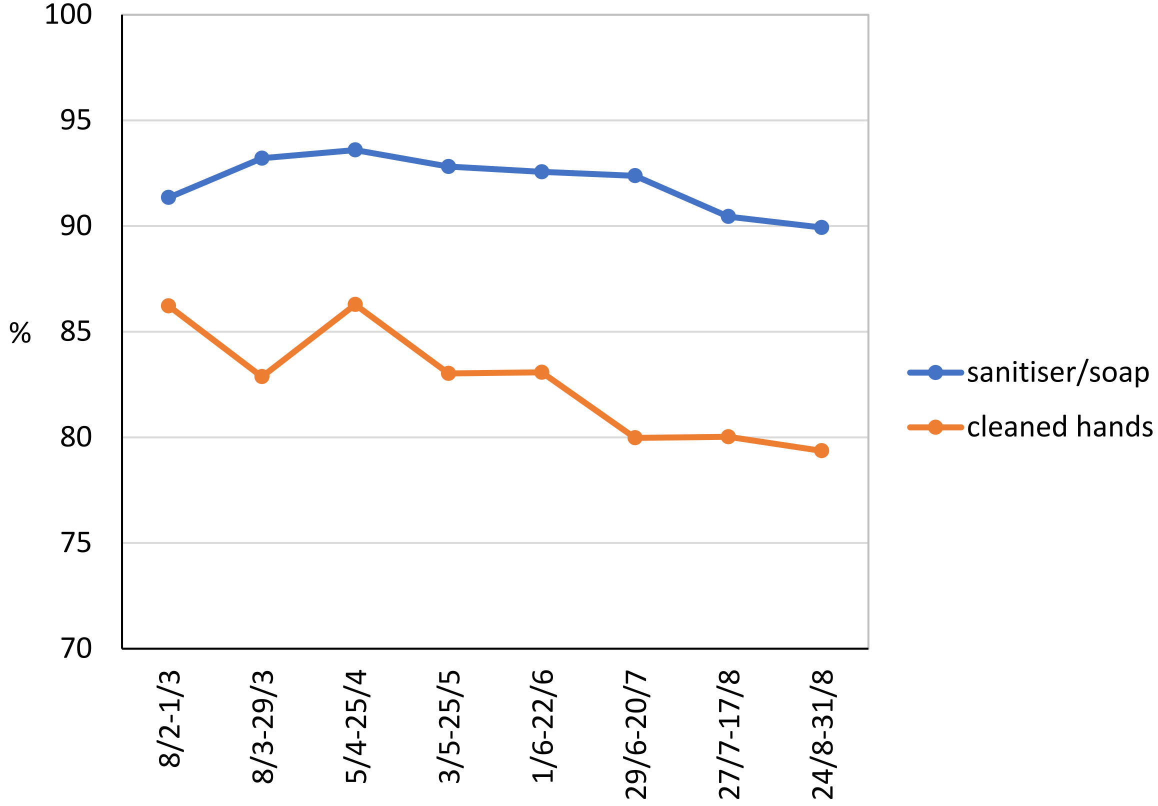
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Mitigation behaviours in the shops

Masks, distance, ventilation



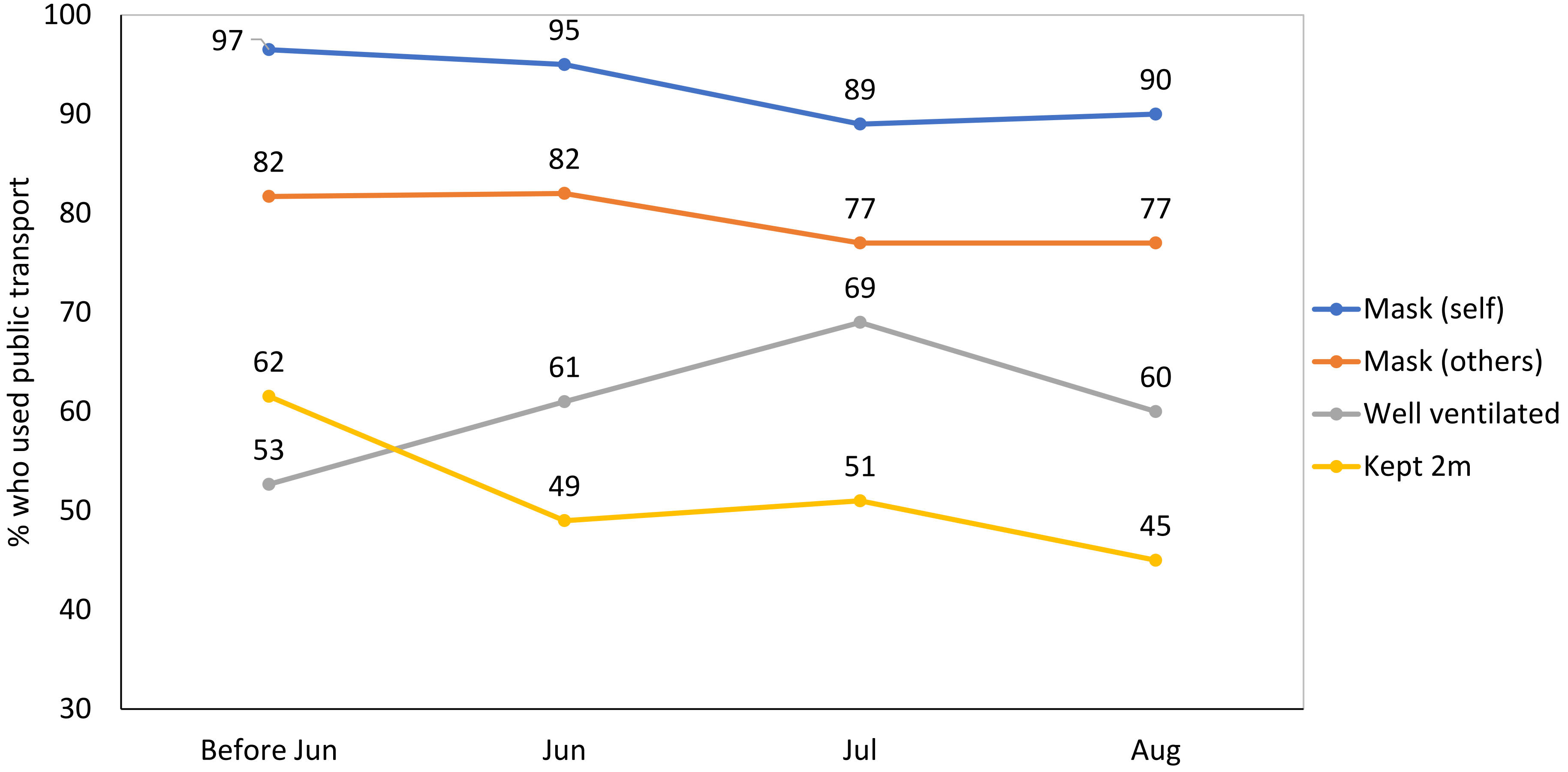
Hand hygiene



Mitigation behaviours at shops remain high – the majority comply with the government advice and take the necessary precautions when shopping.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Mitigation behaviours on public transport

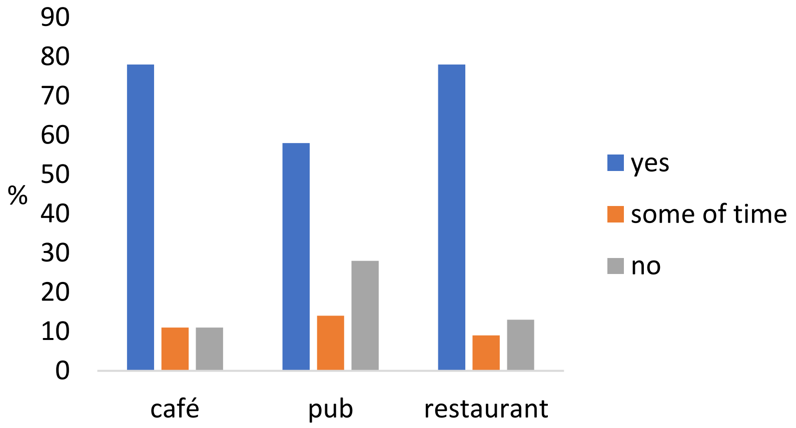


Mitigation behaviours on public transport have not changed significantly over the summer.

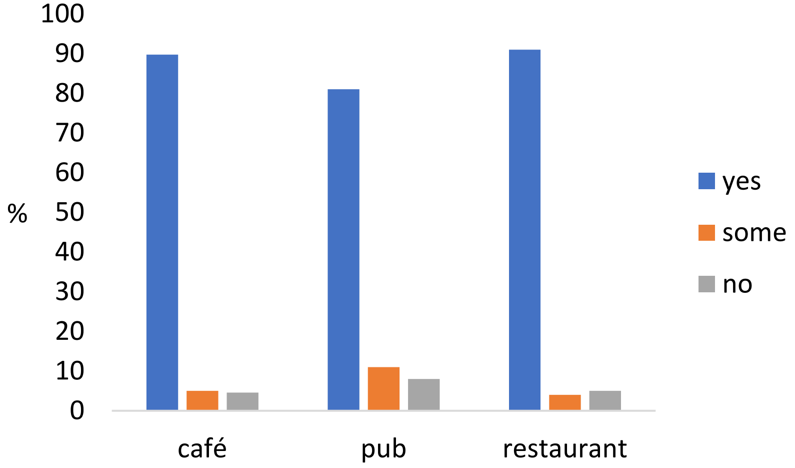
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Mitigation behaviours at hospitality venues

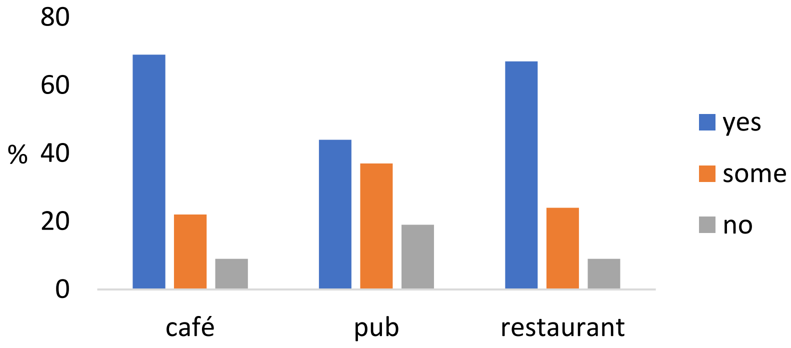
Wear mask (other than while eating/drinking)?



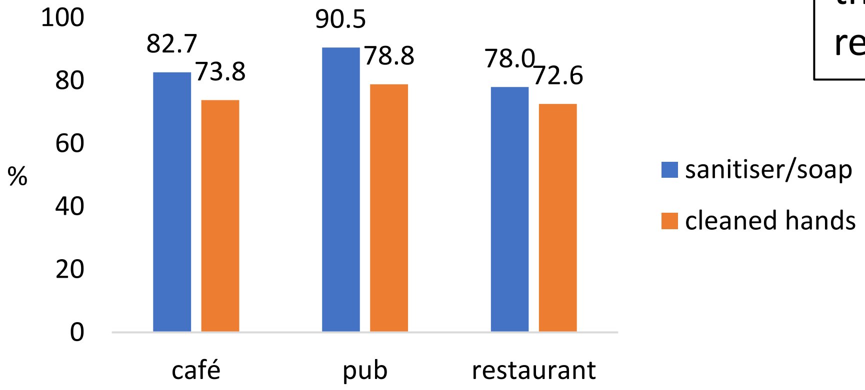
Staff wear masks



Other customers wear mask (other than while eating/drinking)?



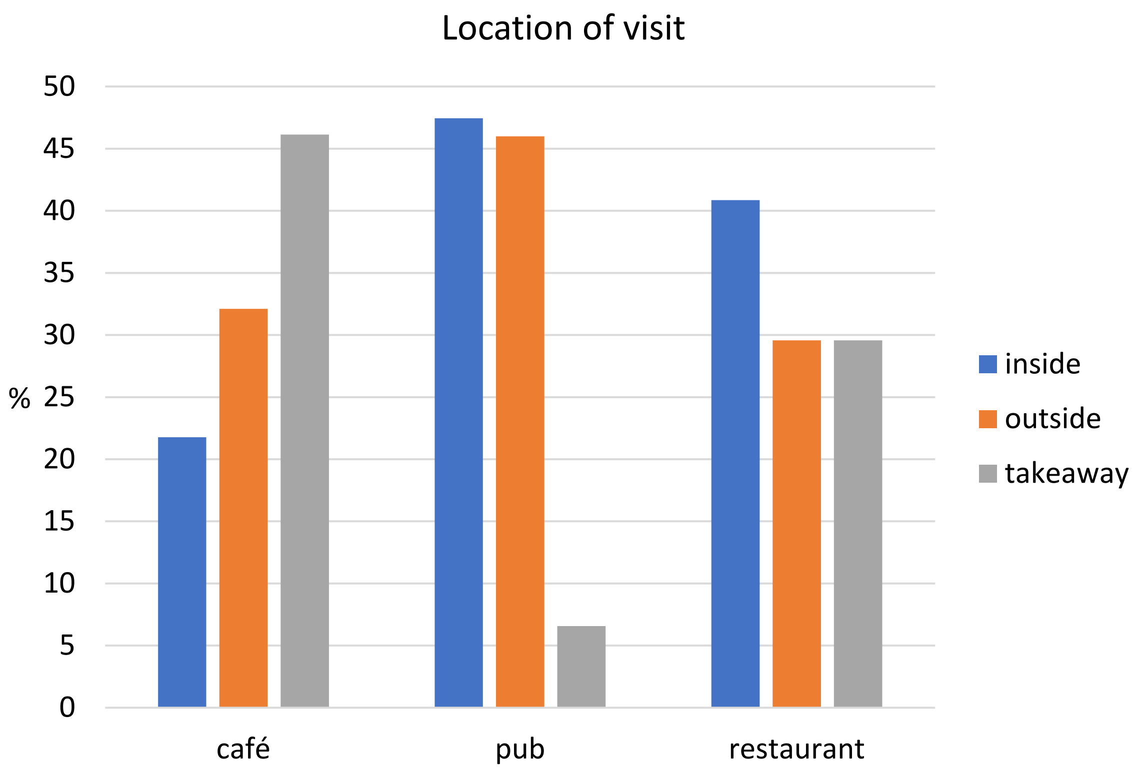
Hand hygiene

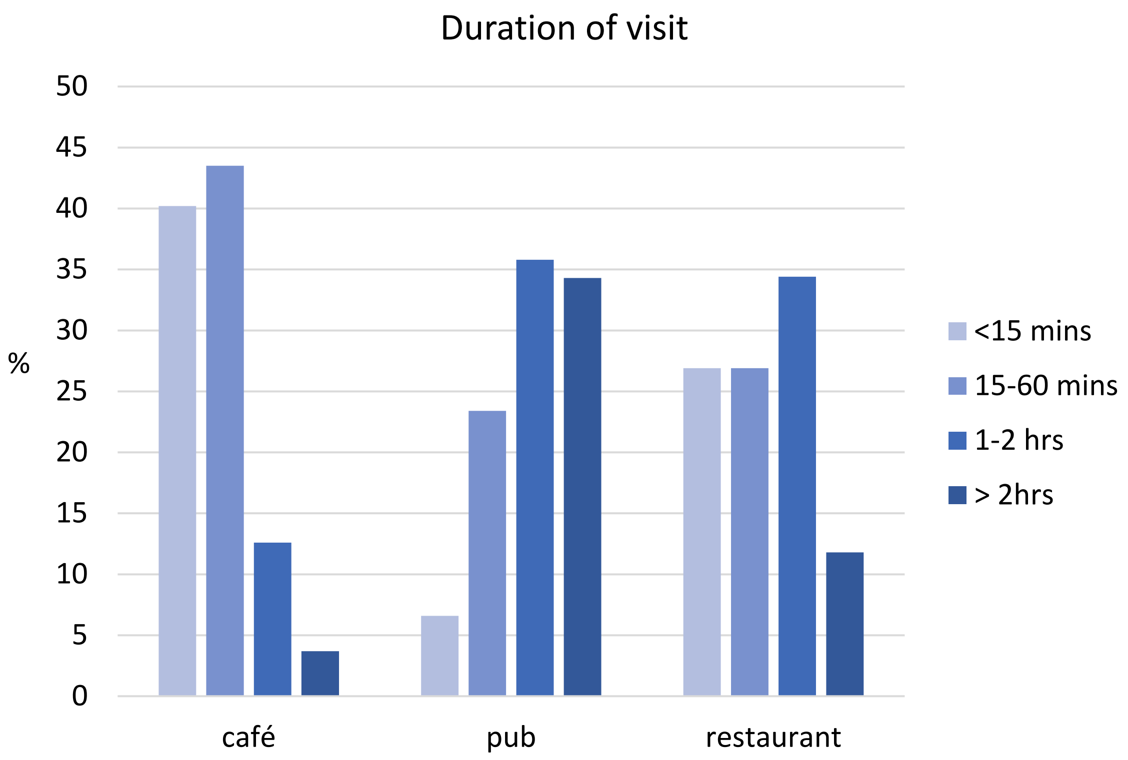


Pubs seem to be the riskiest places – people who visited a pub reported more cases of noncompliance than those visiting cafes and restaurants.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

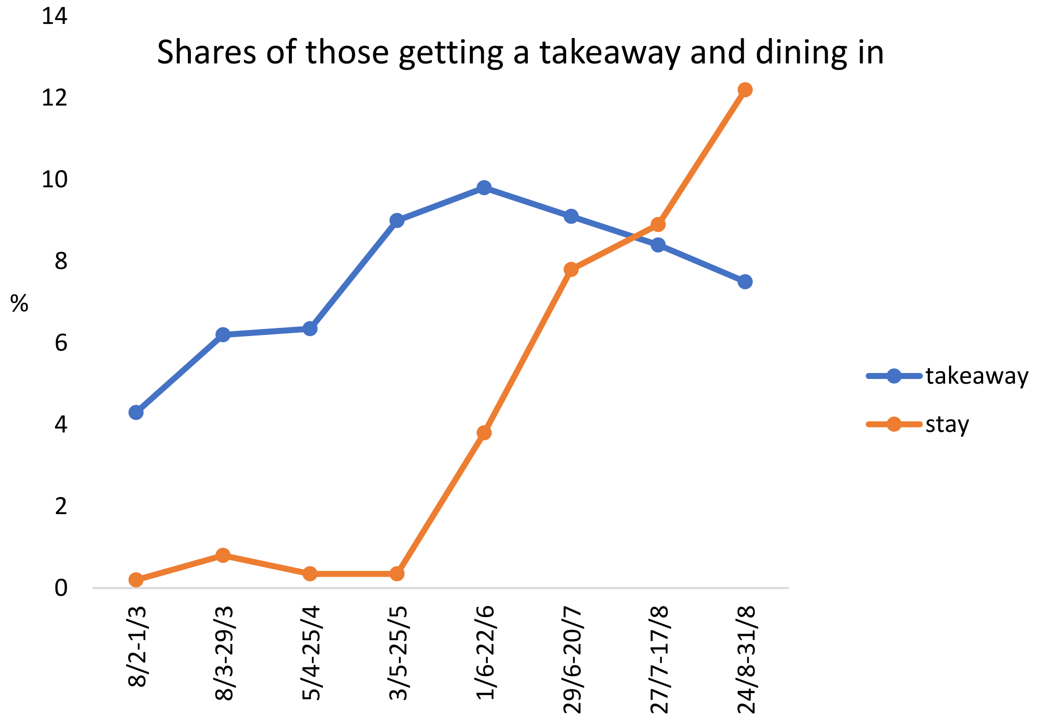
Characteristics of visits to hospitality venues

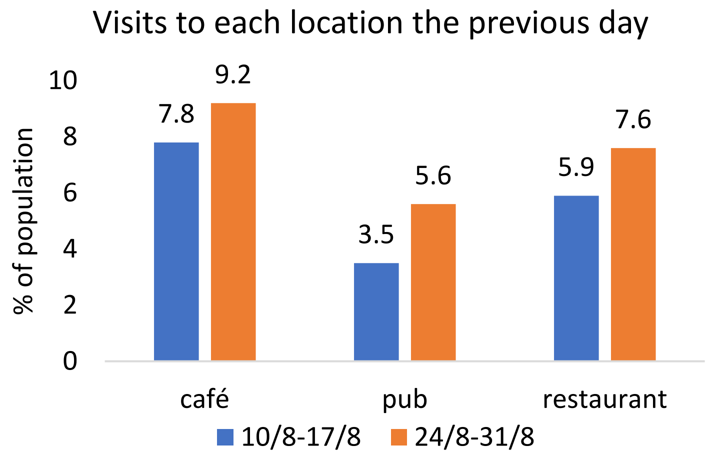


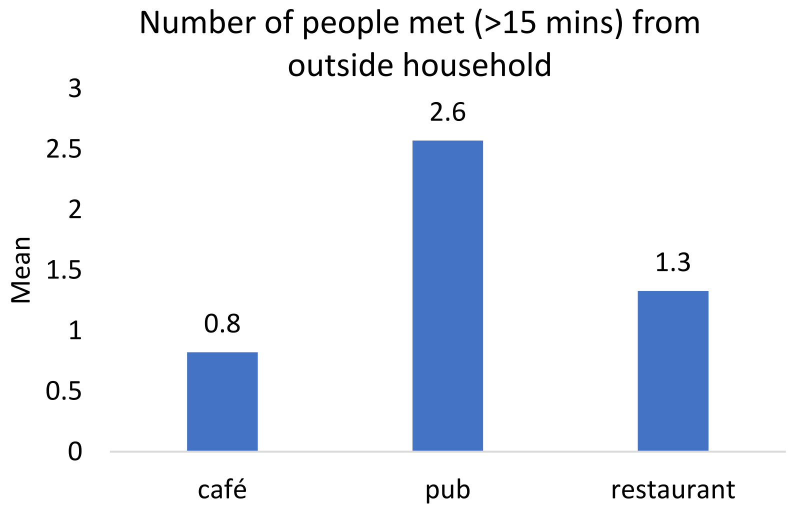


Over the past three waves of data collection, the majority of people eating at the restaurant choose to eat indoors, while most of those who go to a café get a takeaway. Pub visits tend to be the longest, however, almost half of them take place outside.

Visits to cafes, pubs and restaurants



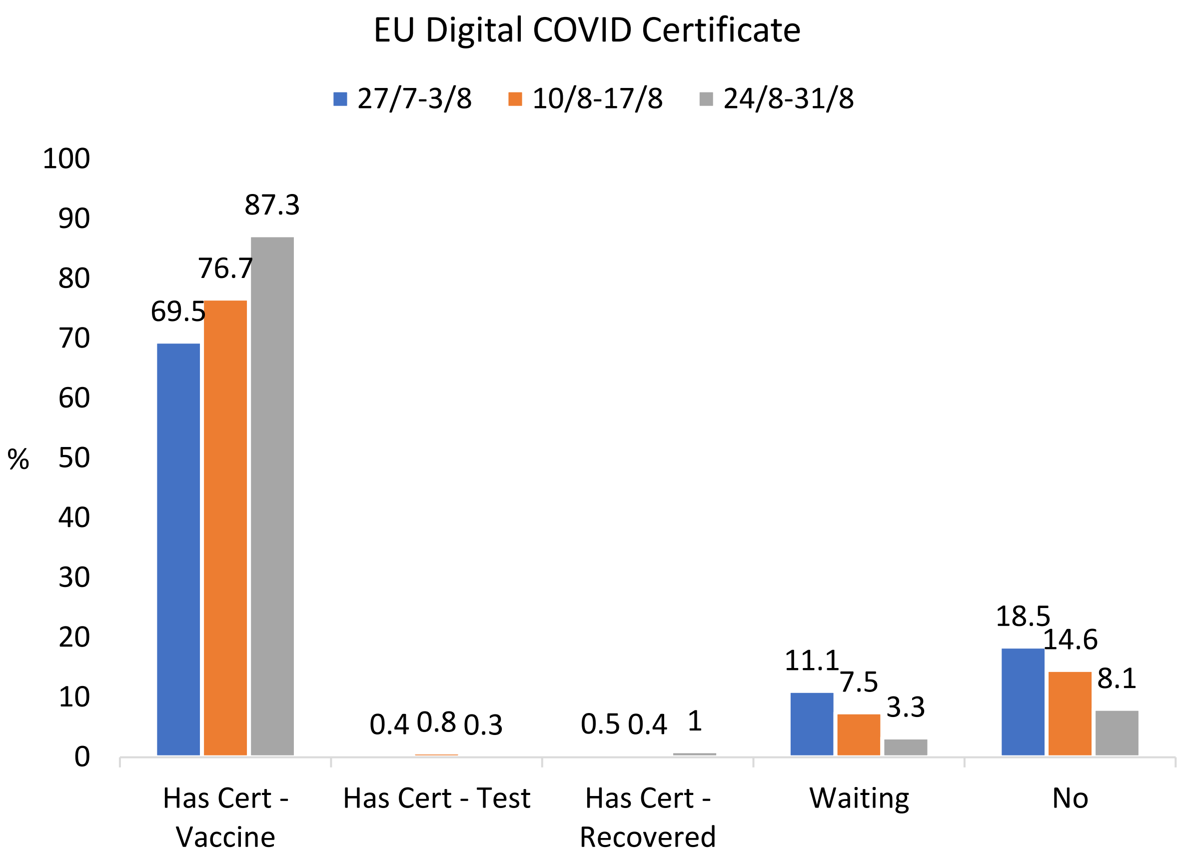


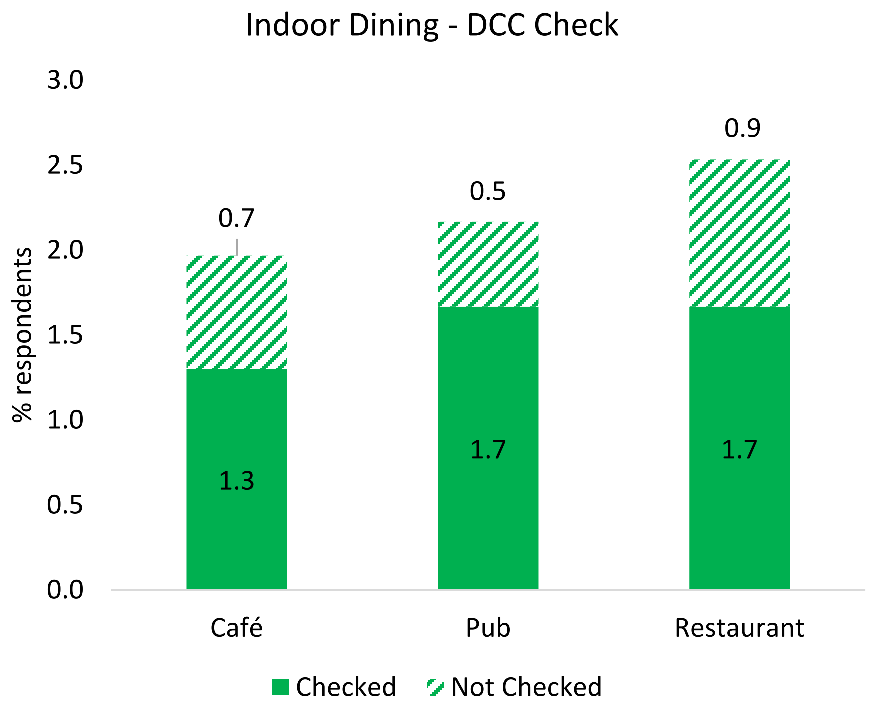


There has been a further increase in the proportion of those visiting cafes, pubs and restaurants in this wave of SAM. Visits to pubs have been the most “socially active” – pub visitors met with an average of 2.6 people from outside of their household.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

EU Digital Covid Certificate

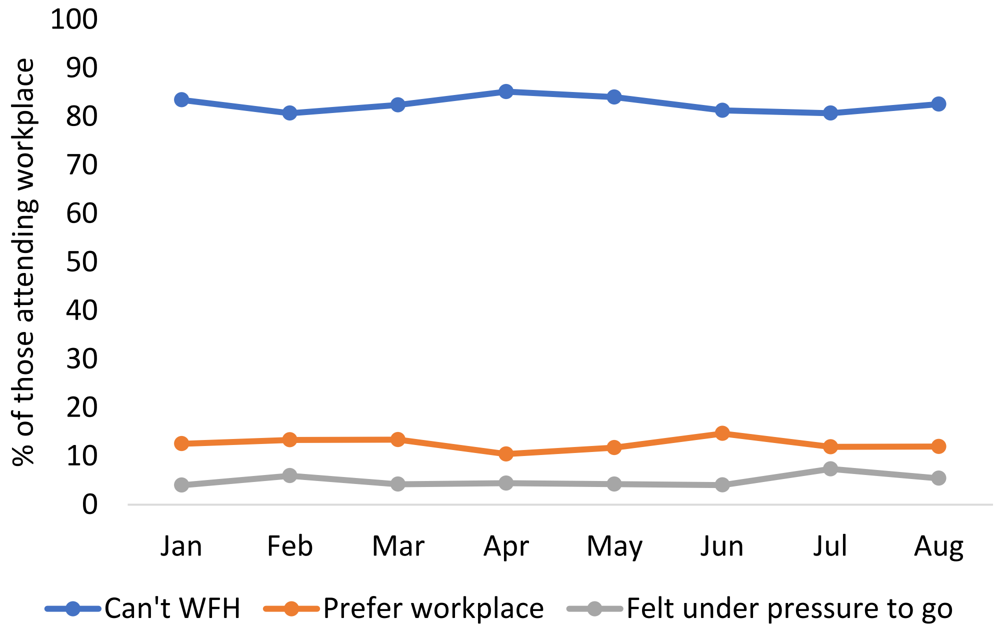




The left-hand chart shows a majority of adults have received their EU Digital Covid Certificate (DCC). Around one third of diners did not have their certificates checked when dining indoors in cafés, pubs or restaurants.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

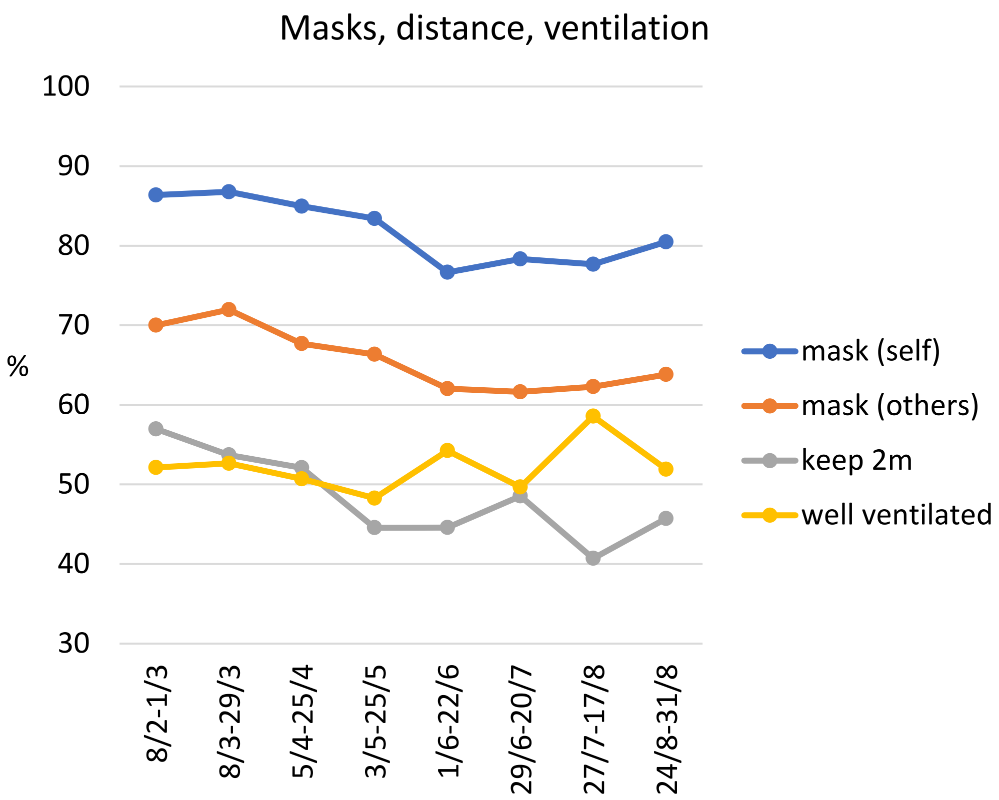
Attendance at the workplace

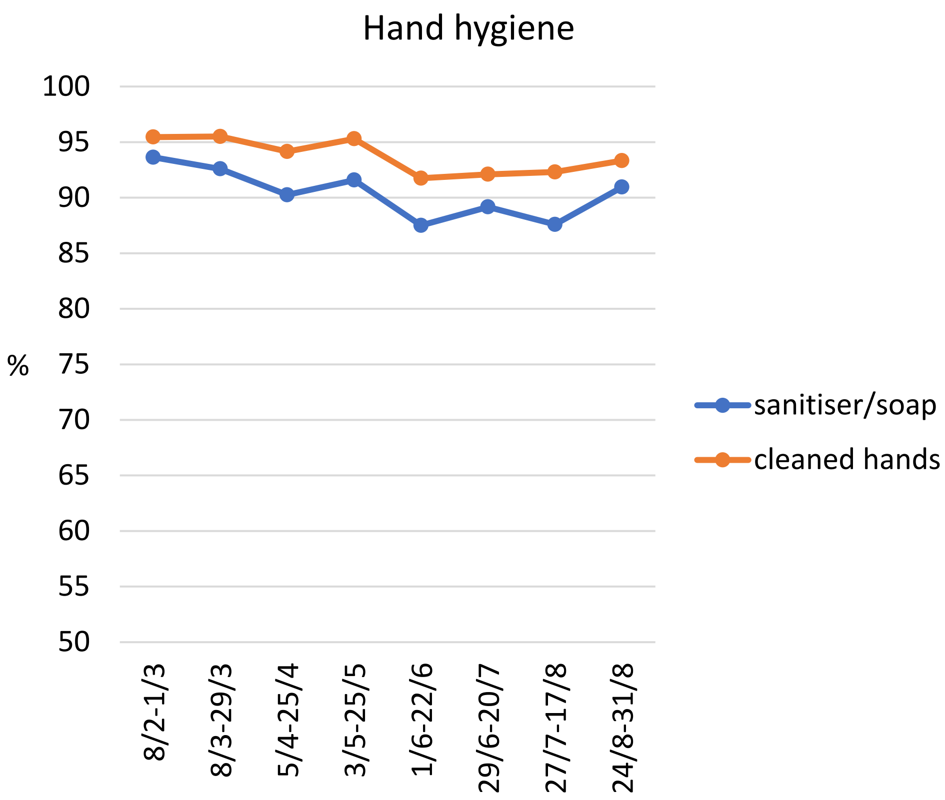


Around 50% of workers attended their workplace at some point in the past week. This has not changed much since January but summer holidays in July and August could mask an upward trend. Most can't work from home (WFH) but 12% say they prefer their workplace and 5% felt pressured to attend even though they could work from home.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Mitigation behaviours in the workplace

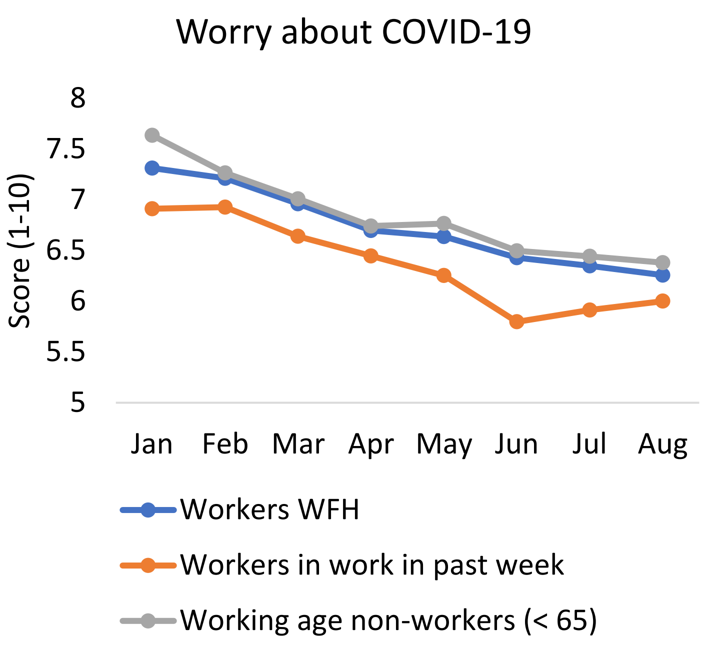


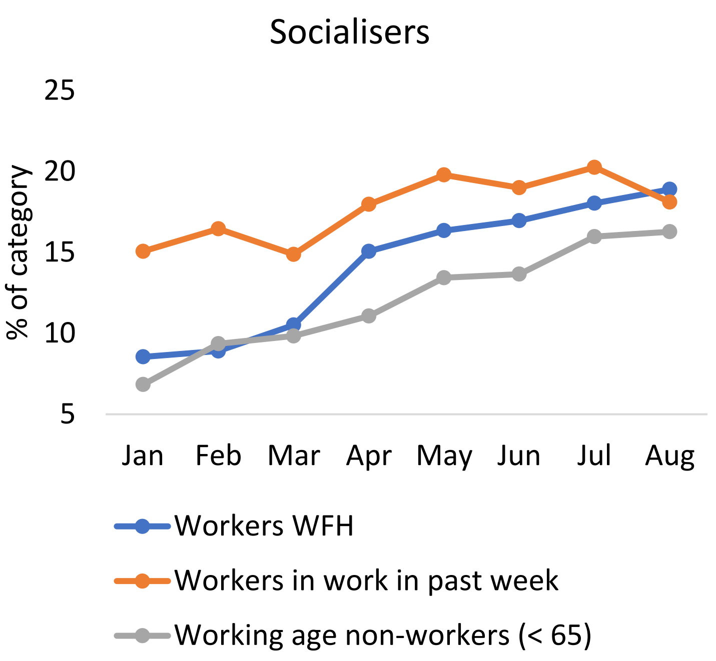


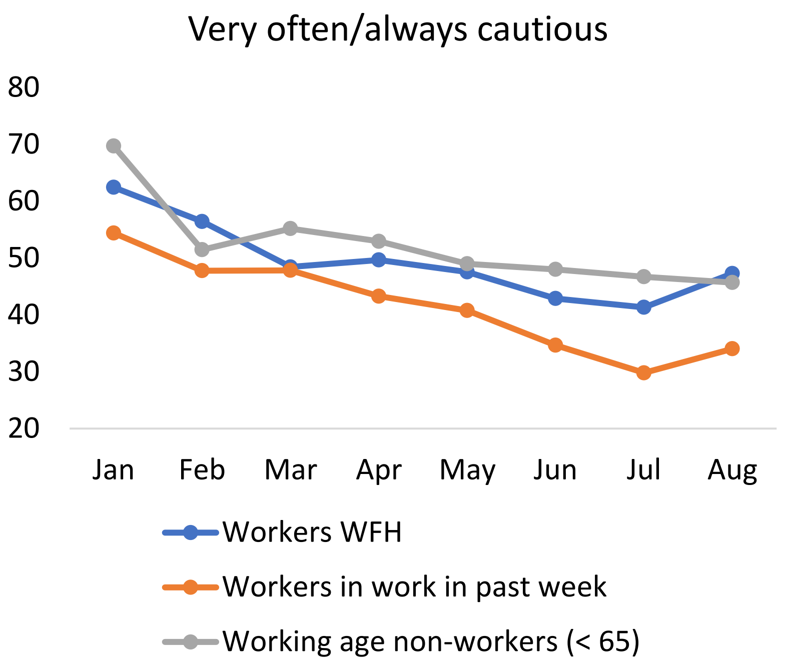
Mitigation behaviours in the workplace had been slowly declining but have stabilised.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Workers WFH and workers in the workplace



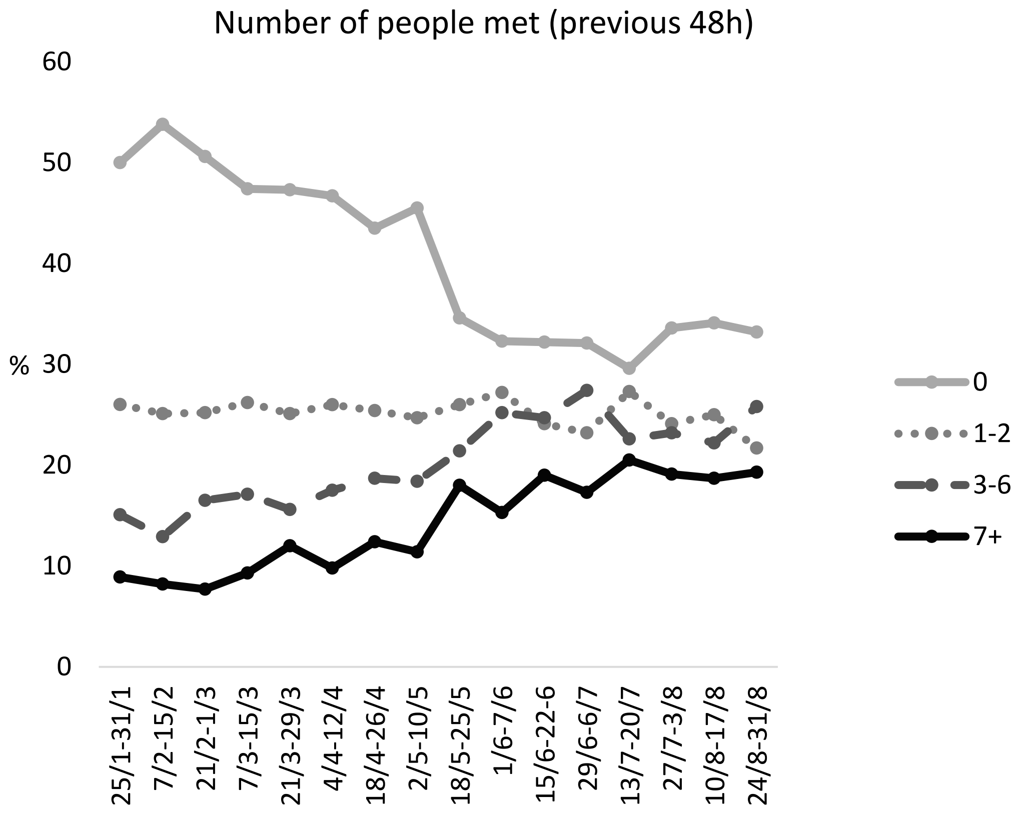


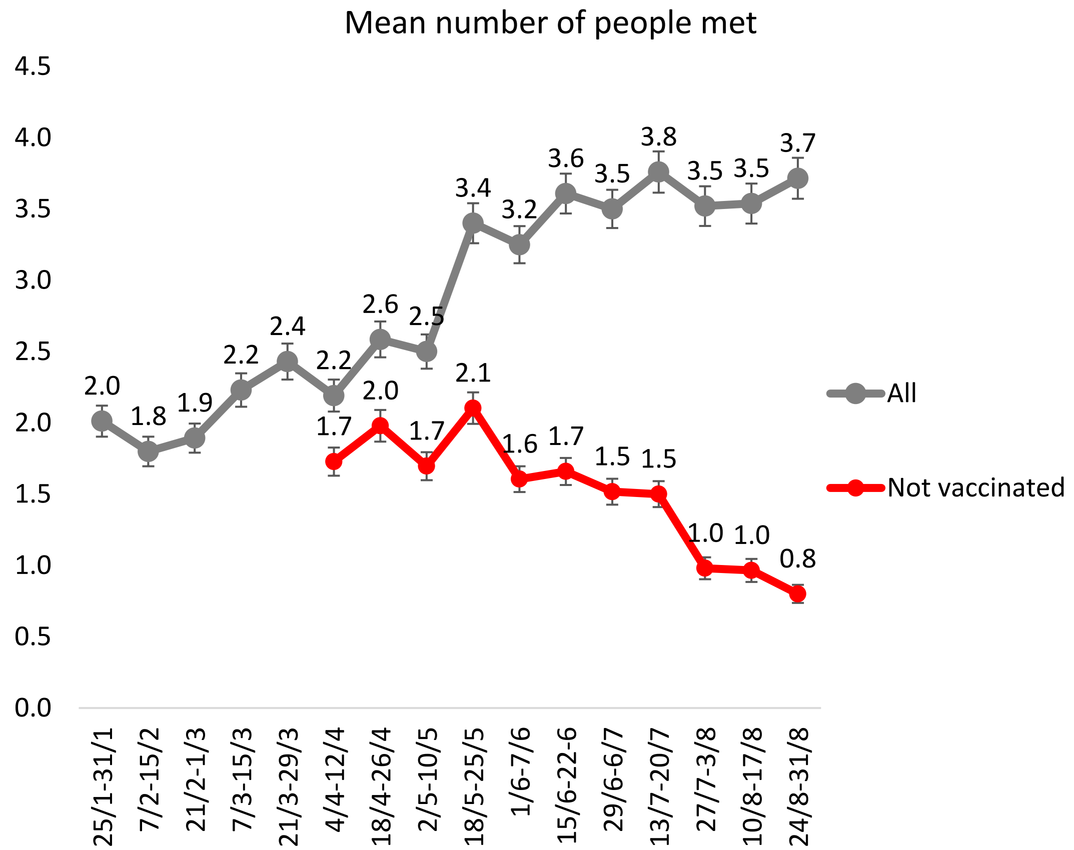


Over time, workers who are working from home (WFH) and people of working age who are not currently working tend to be slightly more worried about COVID-19, slightly less likely to be socialisers and slightly more likely to take prevention action when out than workers who have attended their workplace in the past week.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Meeting people outside the household

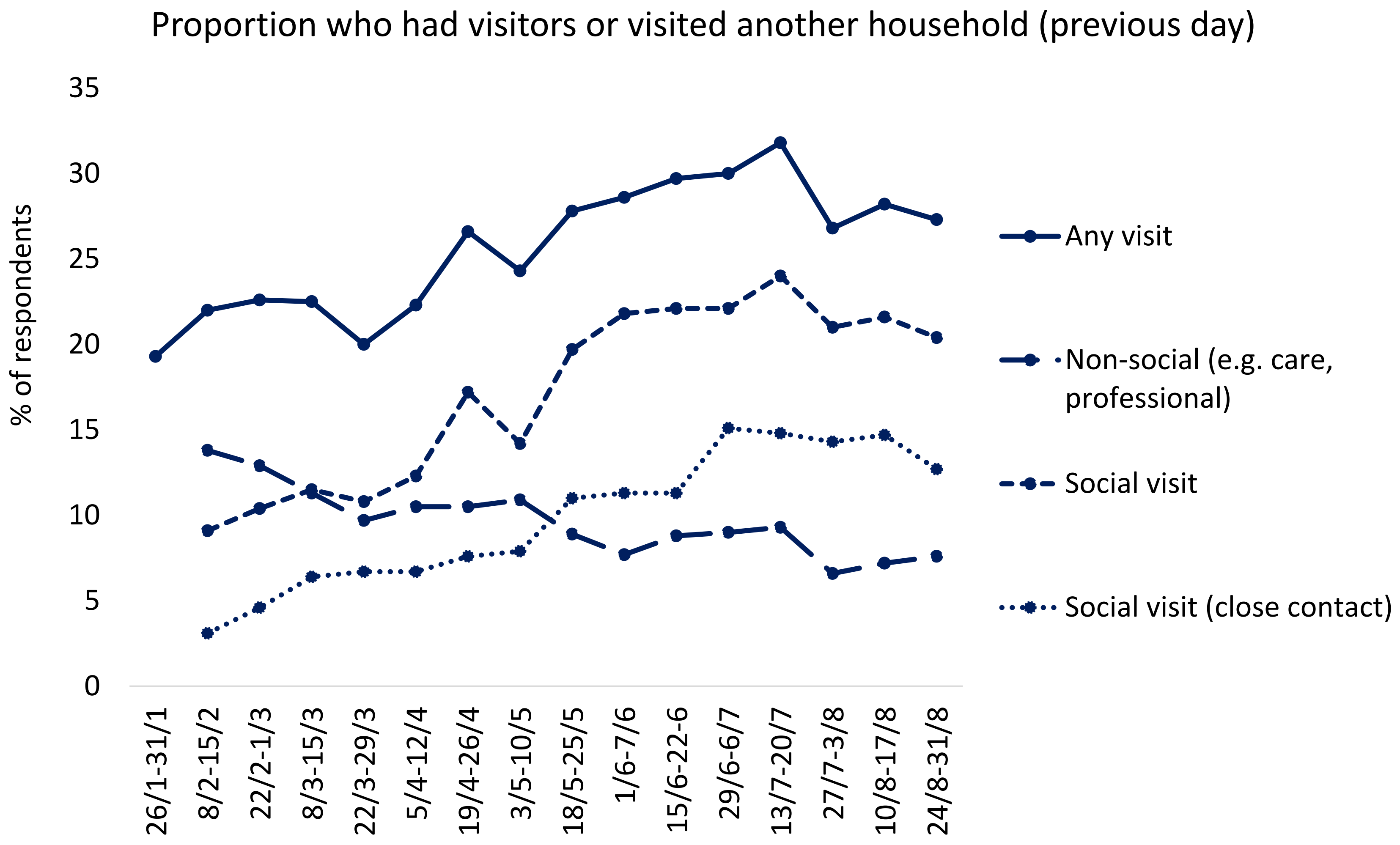




There was no change in the number of people met outside the household. The proportion who meet no one from outside of their household has remained steady at just over 30% over much of the summer months.

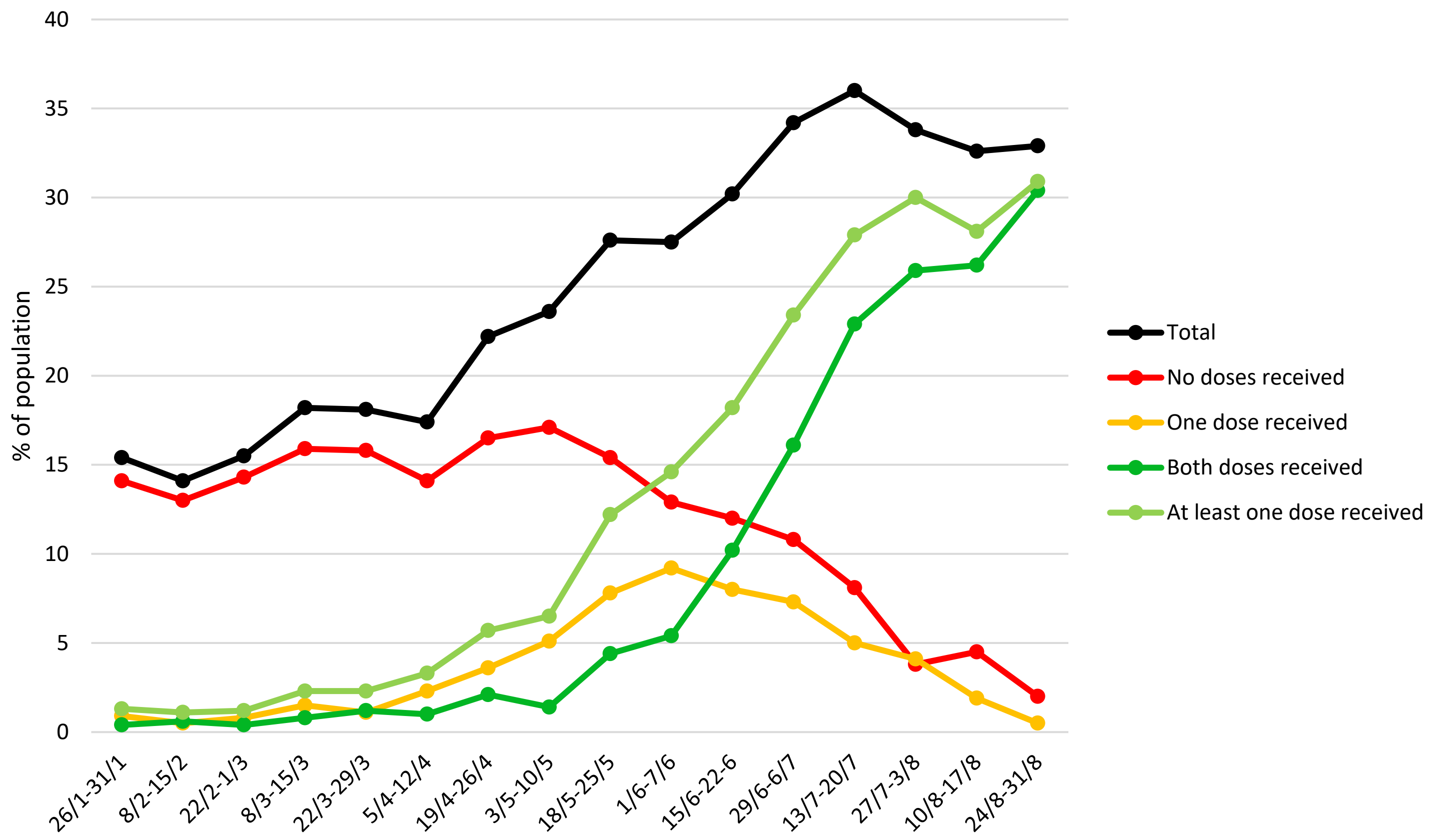
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Visits to homes



Visits to homes for all reasons remained stable.

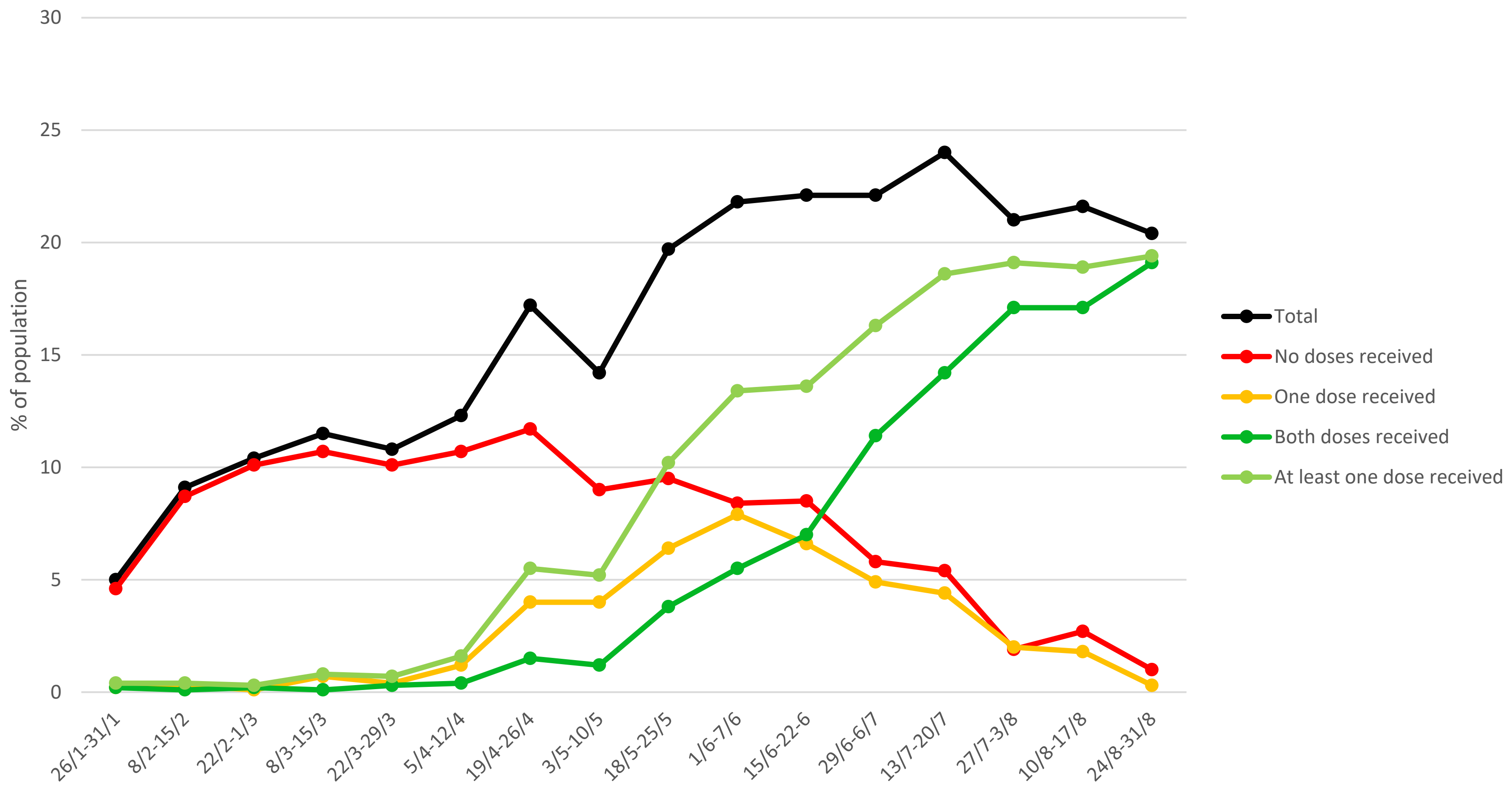
Close contacts by vaccine status



94% of close contacts are now in those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 92% in those who are fully vaccinated.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

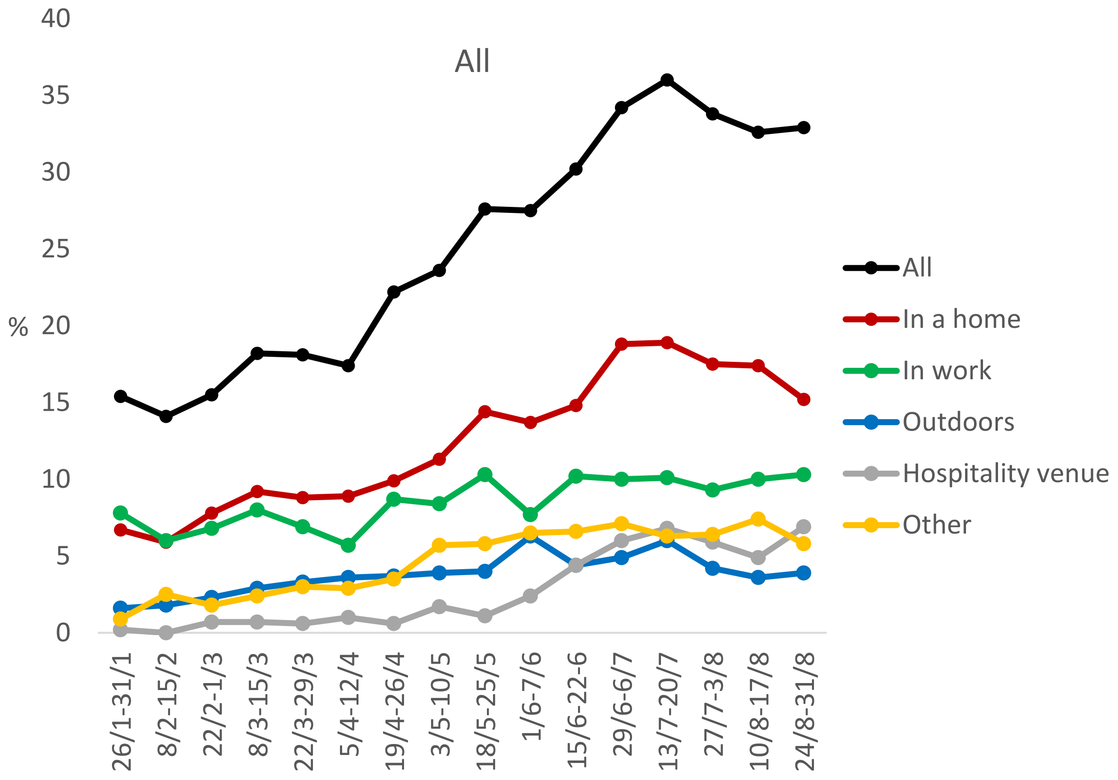
Social visits to homes by vaccination status

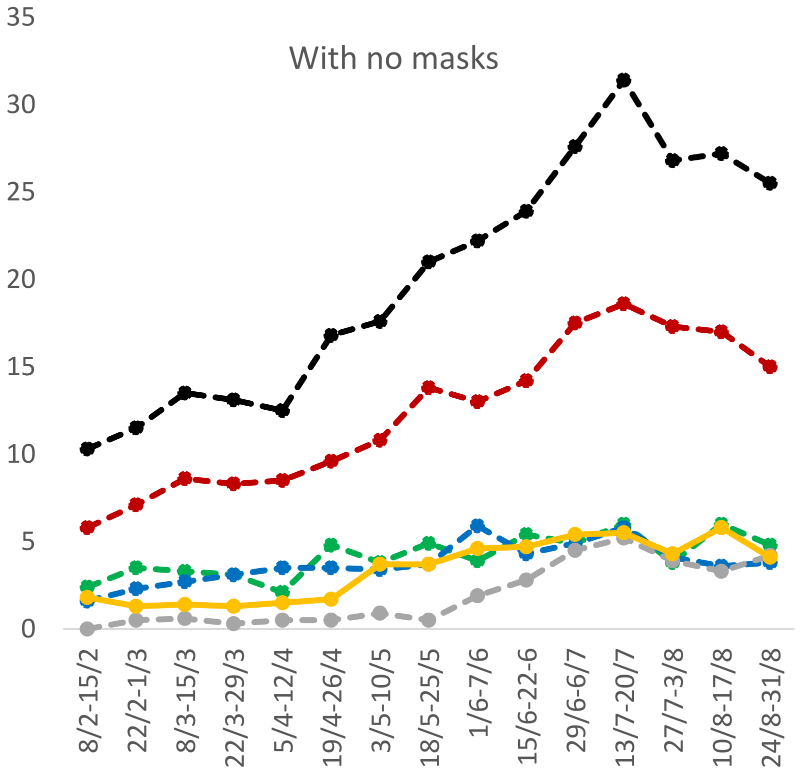


95% of social visits are made by those who have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Close contacts* (previous day)



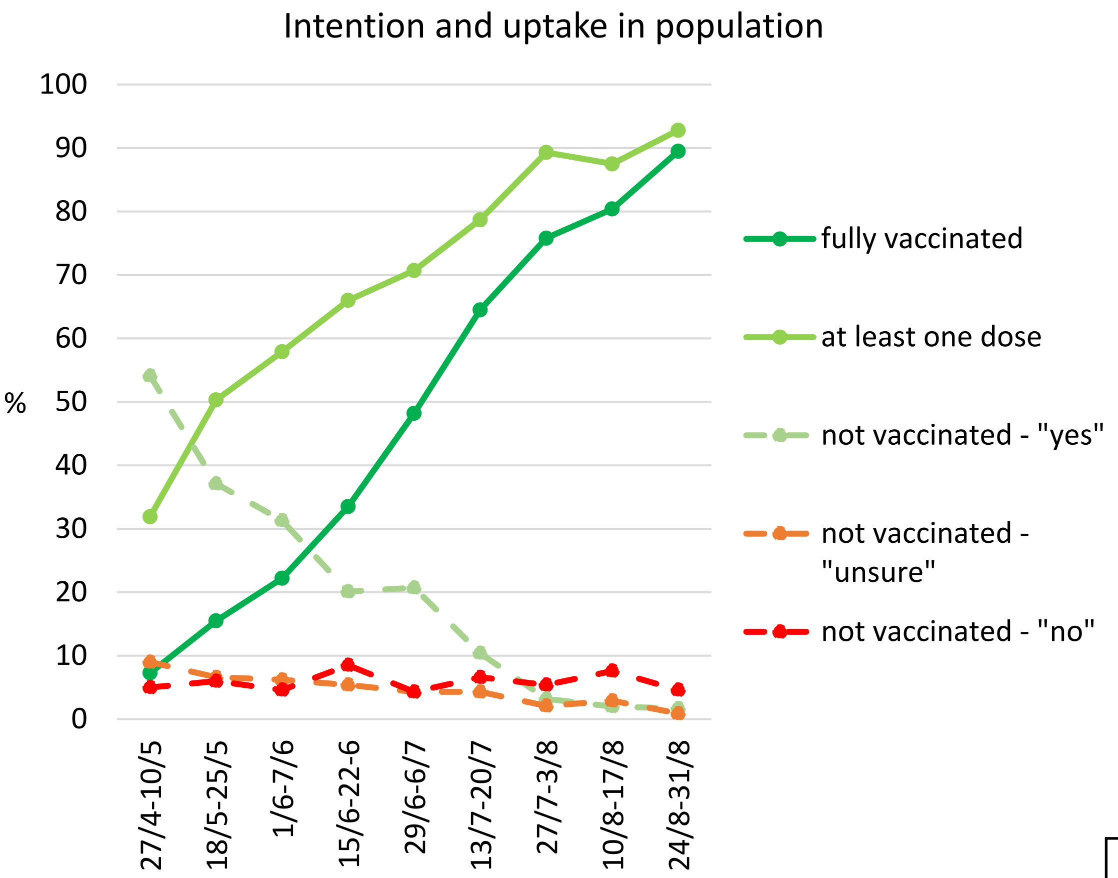


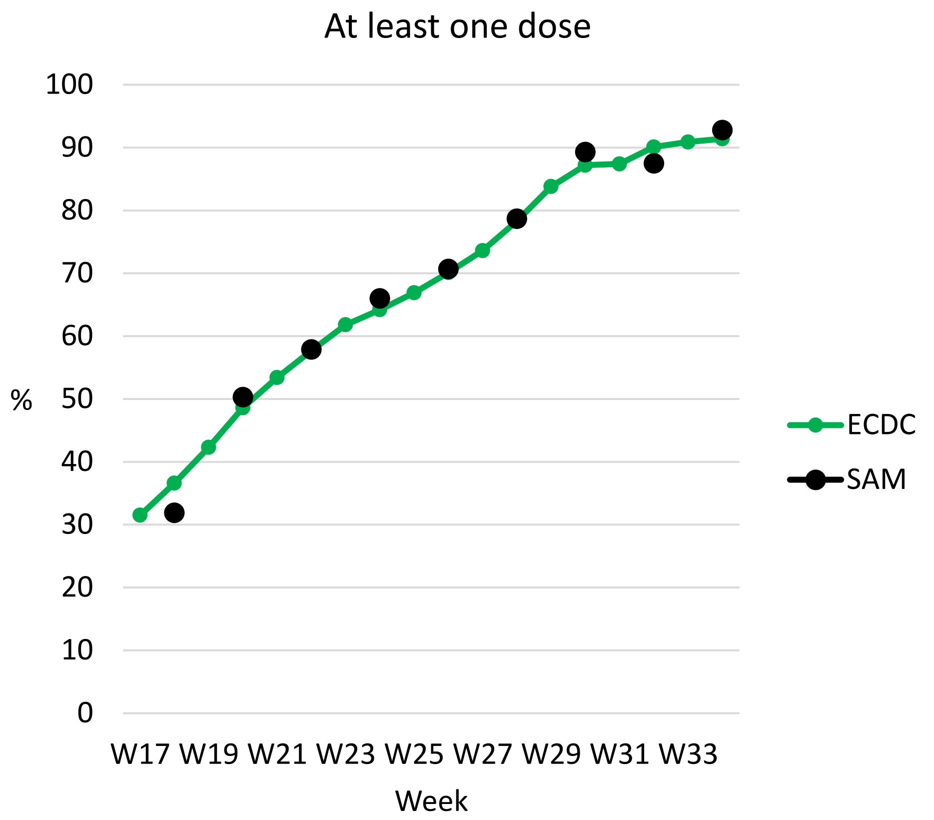
*Close contact interactions are defined as those that are likely to have lasted for longer than 15 minutes without a 2m distance being maintained at all times or that took place indoors for longer than 2 hours in a space that was not well ventilated (hse.ie).

Close contacts remained stable overall but there was a small increase in close contacts at hospitality venues.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Vaccine uptake and intention

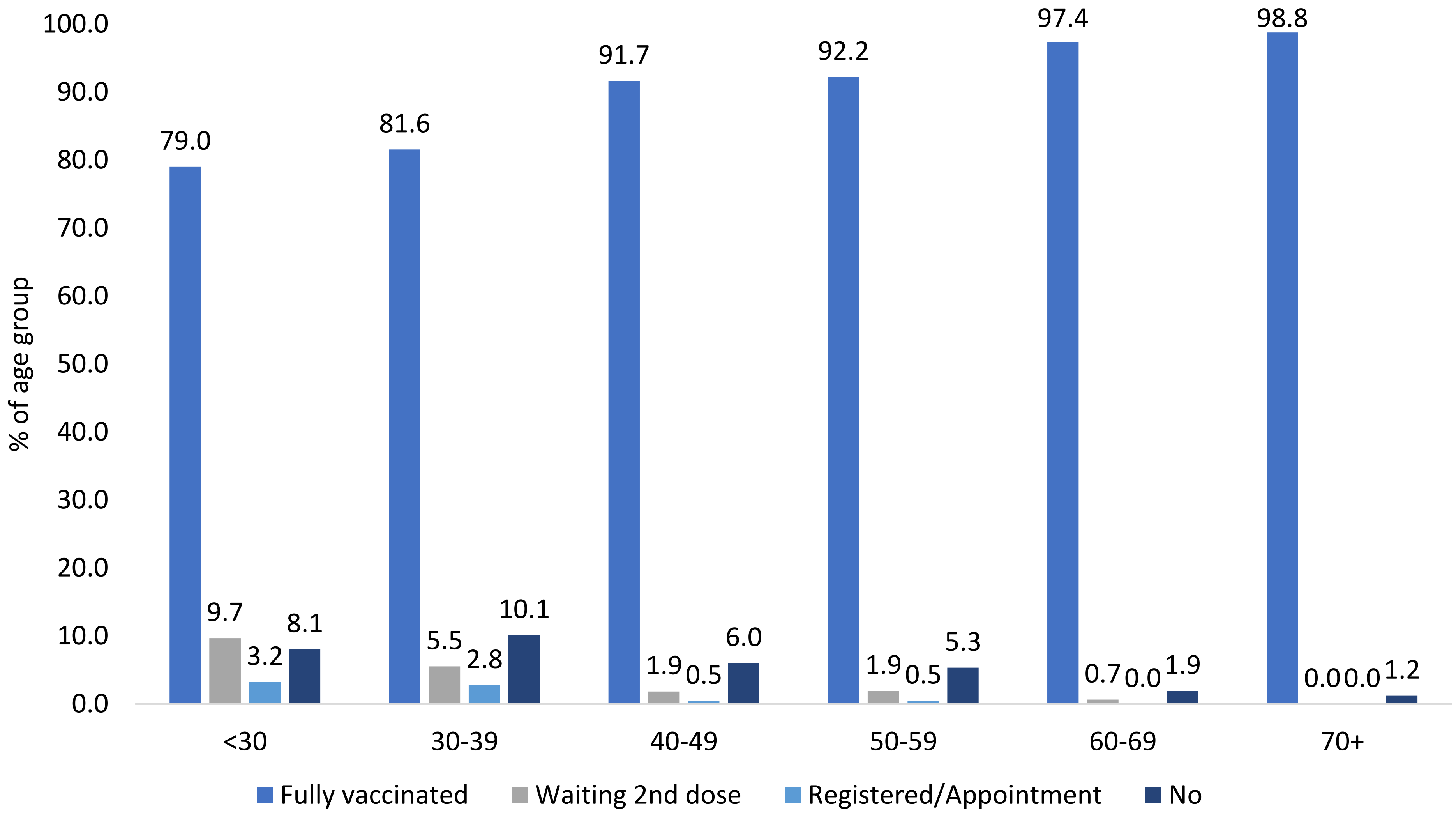




The left-hand chart shows trends in vaccine status and intention. The right-hand chart compares the measure of vaccine uptake in SAM with figures reported to the European Centres of Disease Control, with which it is in close alignment.

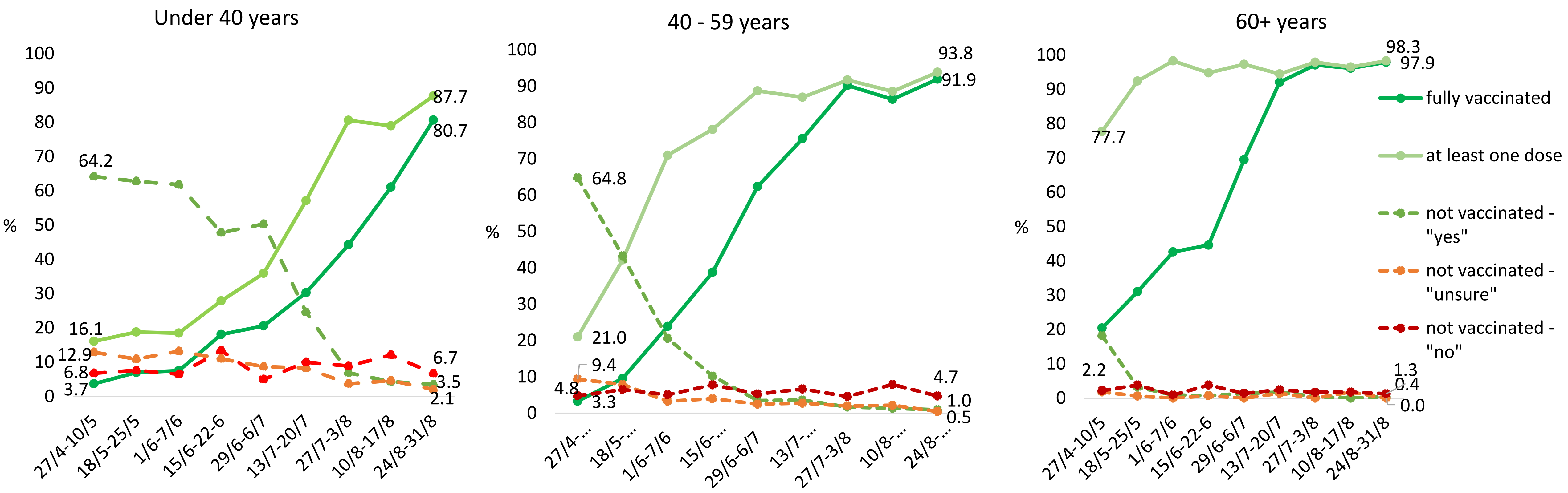
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Vaccine status by age



Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

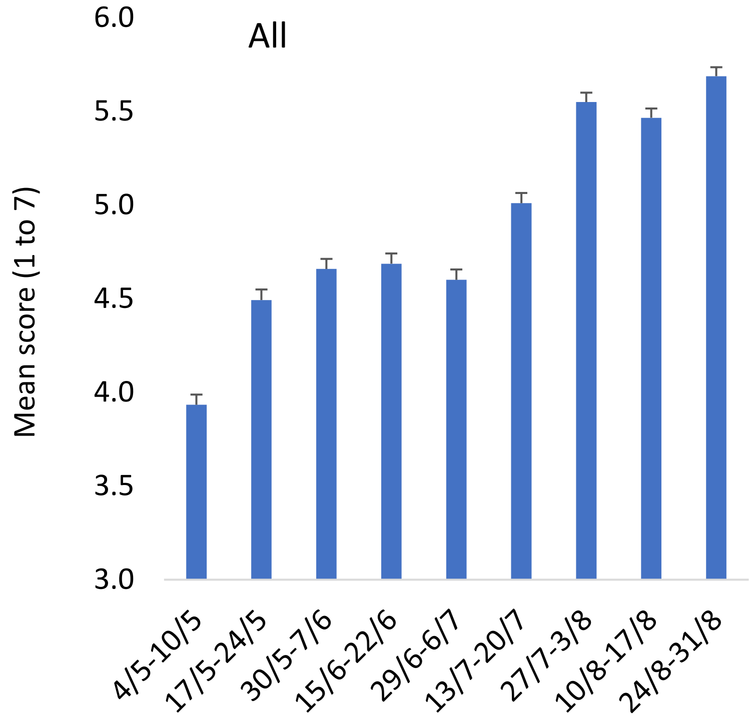
Uptake and intention by age group

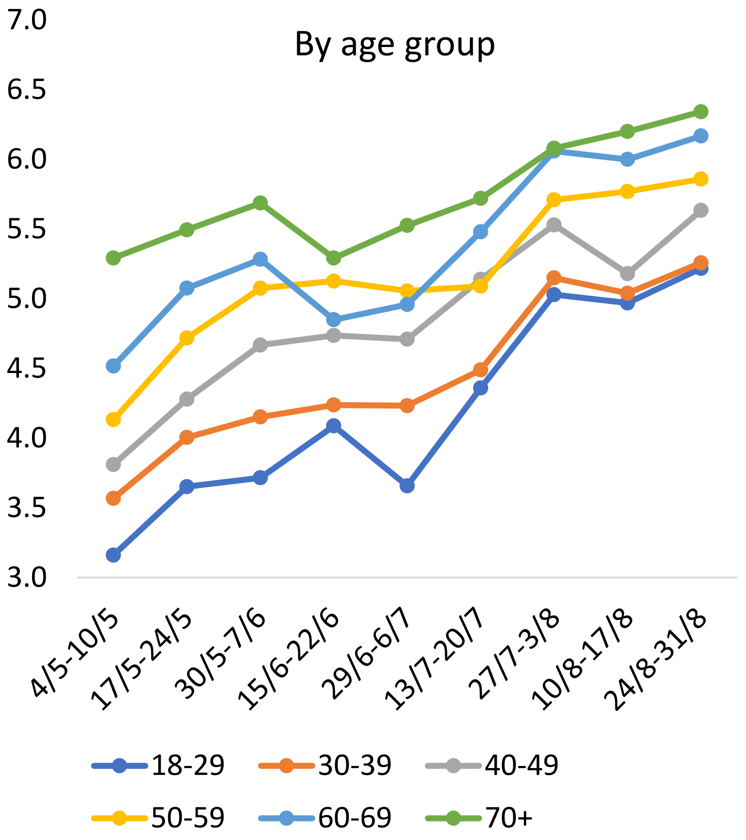


The charts show uptake of the vaccine and intention by age group. Hesitancy remains greatest among the under 40s, but accounts for only a small minority.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Vaccine rollout satisfaction

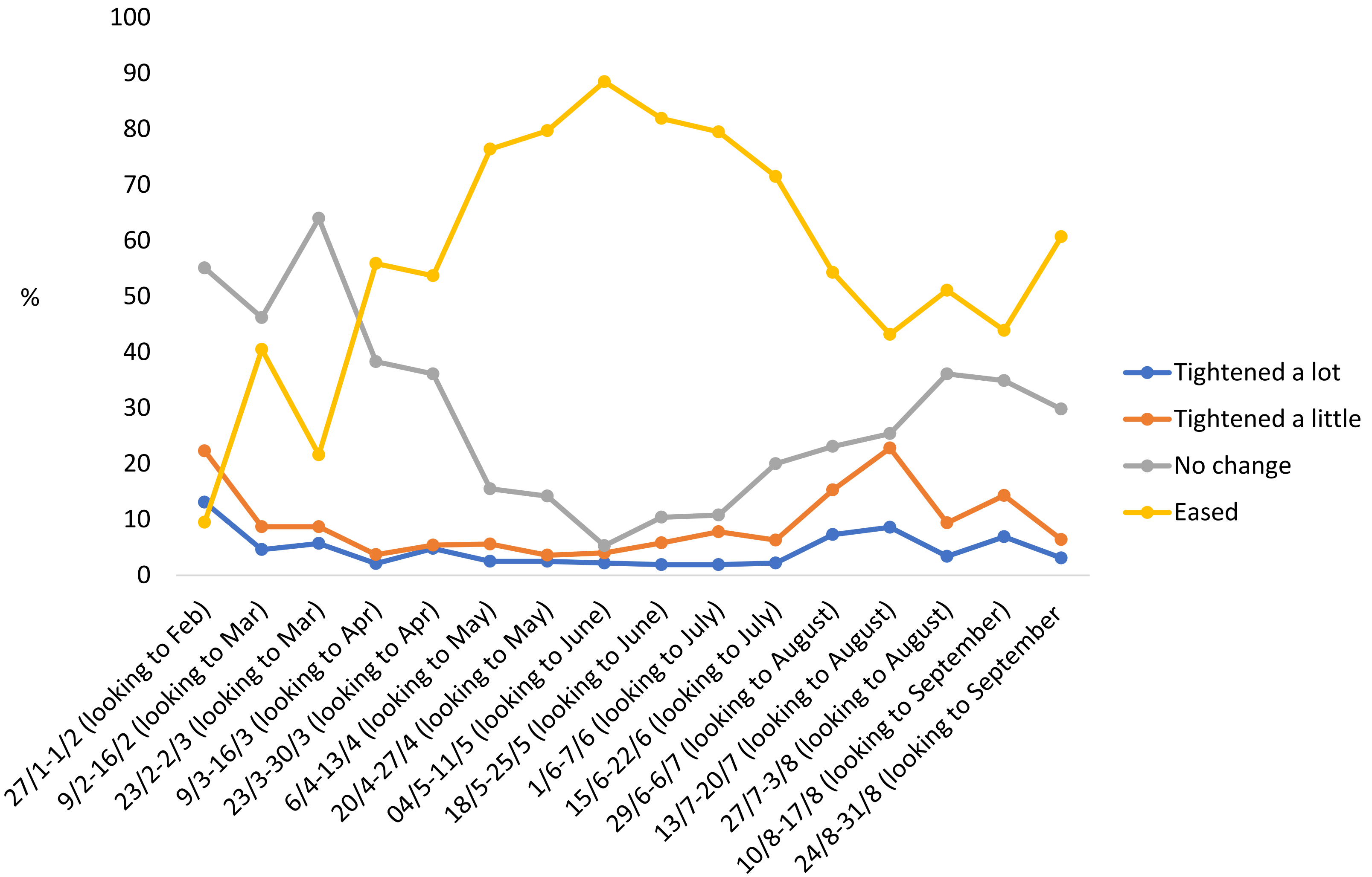




There has been an increase in satisfaction with the vaccine roll-out.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

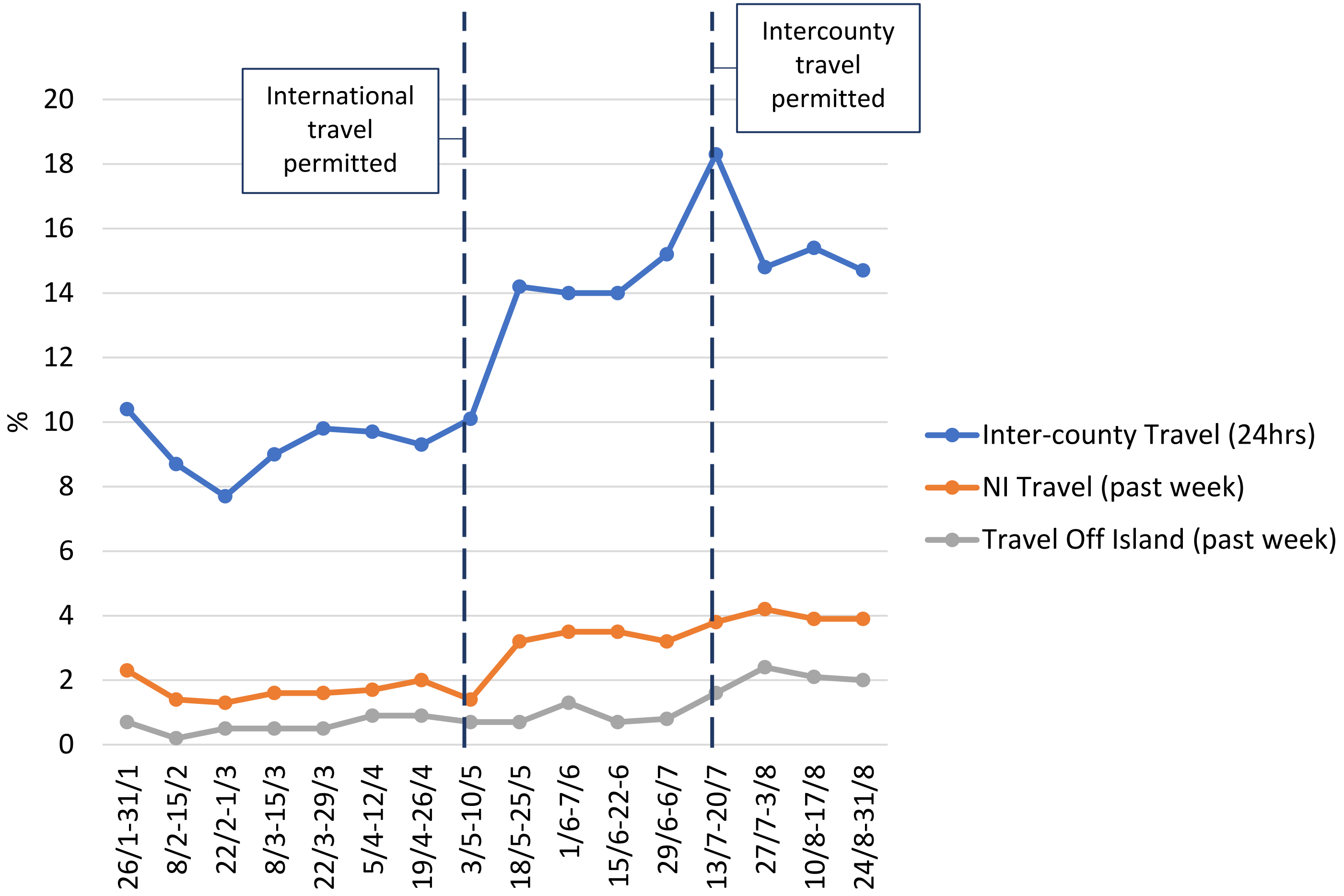
Expectations for easing restrictions (next month)



Since the last wave, there was a large uptick in the numbers expecting restrictions to be eased somewhat. This is unsurprising given speculation about the announcement in advance. However, a substantial minority continued to expect no change or a tightening of restrictions in September.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

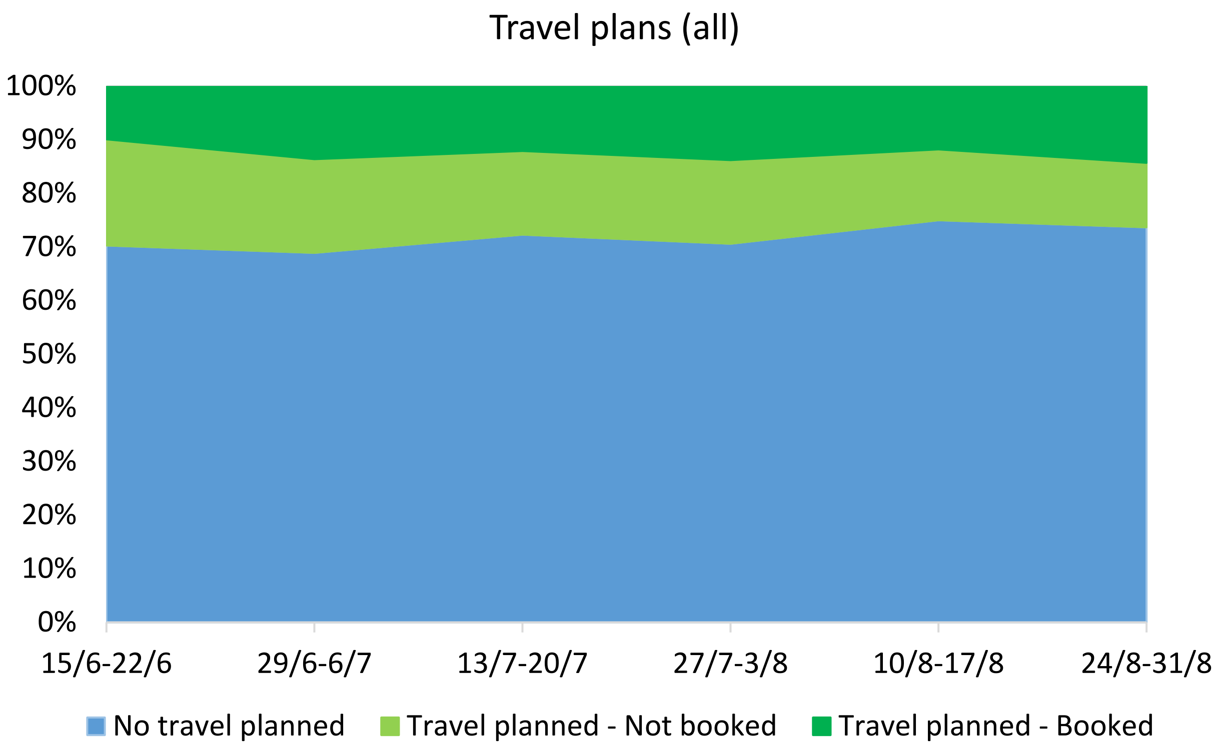
National and international travel



The small increase in international travel that was seen in July, has levelled off. International travel remains uncommon.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

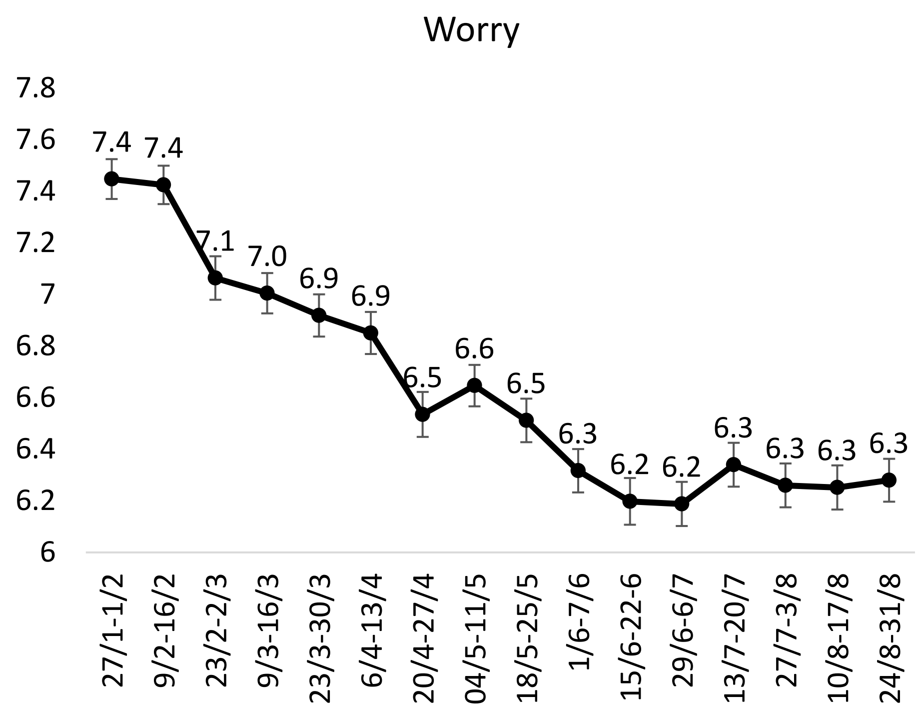
Planned travel

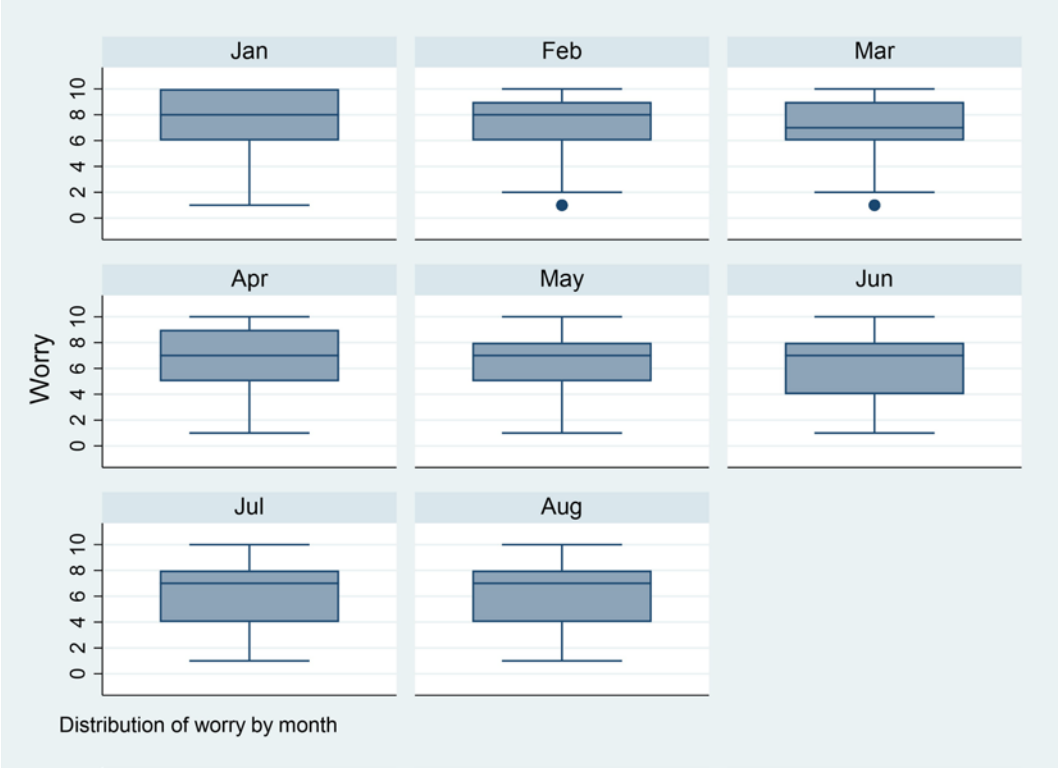


There has been no change in the proportion of people intended to travel internationally in 2021.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Individual differences in worry



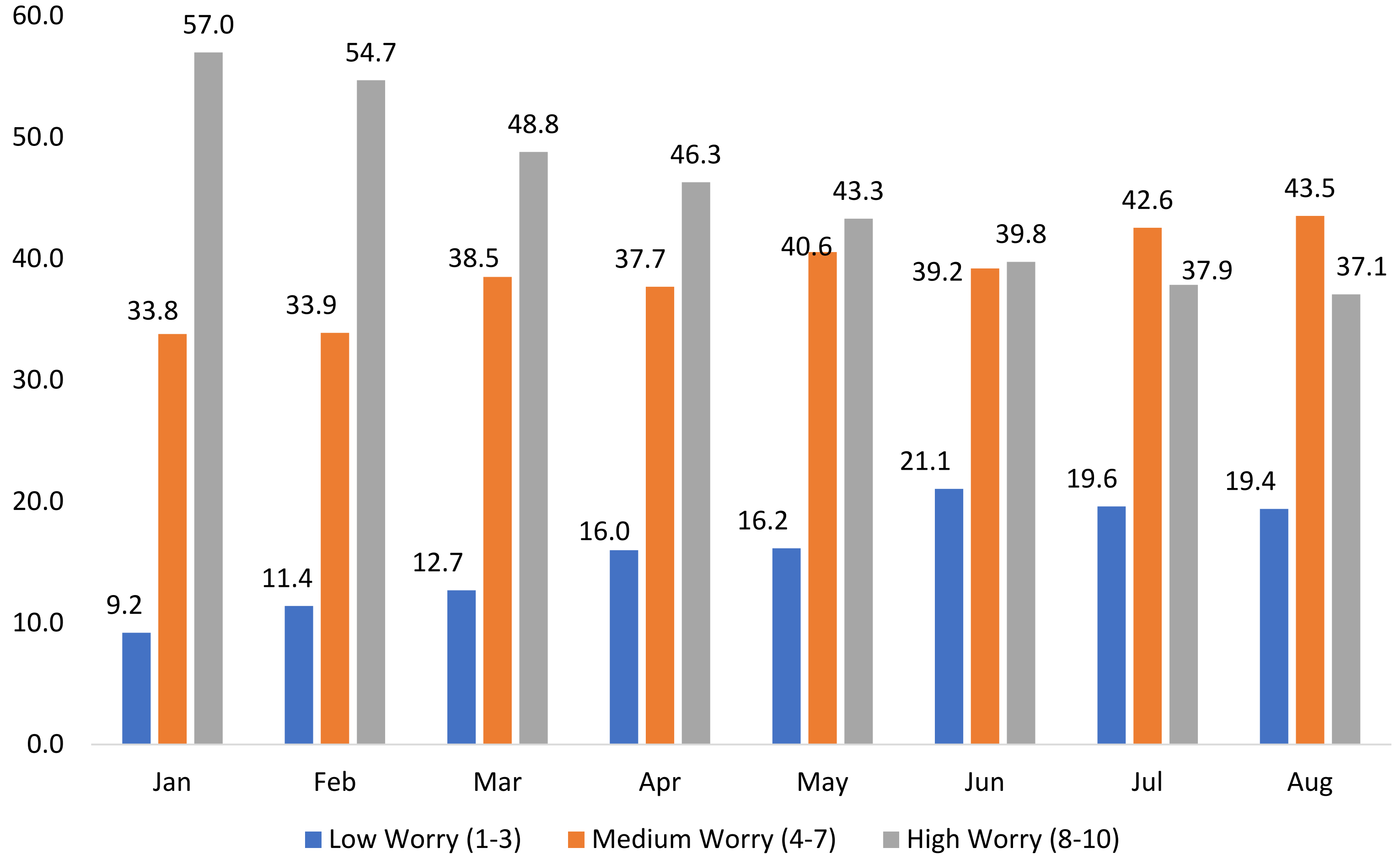


The chart on the left shows the average level of worry since the start of SAM. The chart on the right shows the range in worry responses for each month since the start of the year. Average worry has declined since January, but the range of worry scores has remained widely spread throughout the year with some people reporting 1 and some reporting 10 every month.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Individual differences in worry

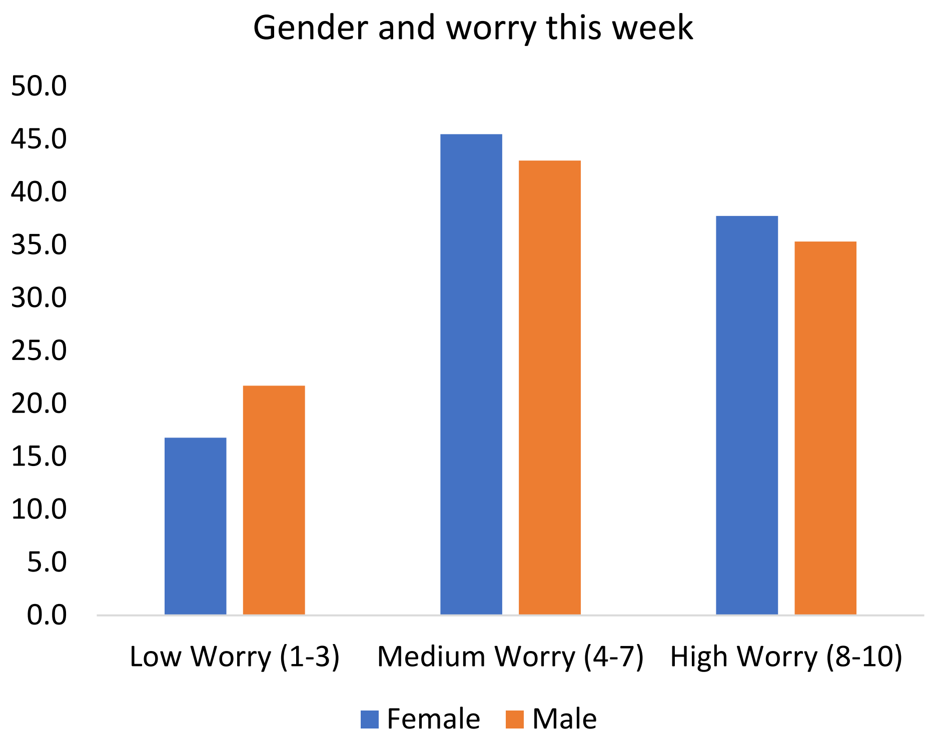
Levels of worry since January

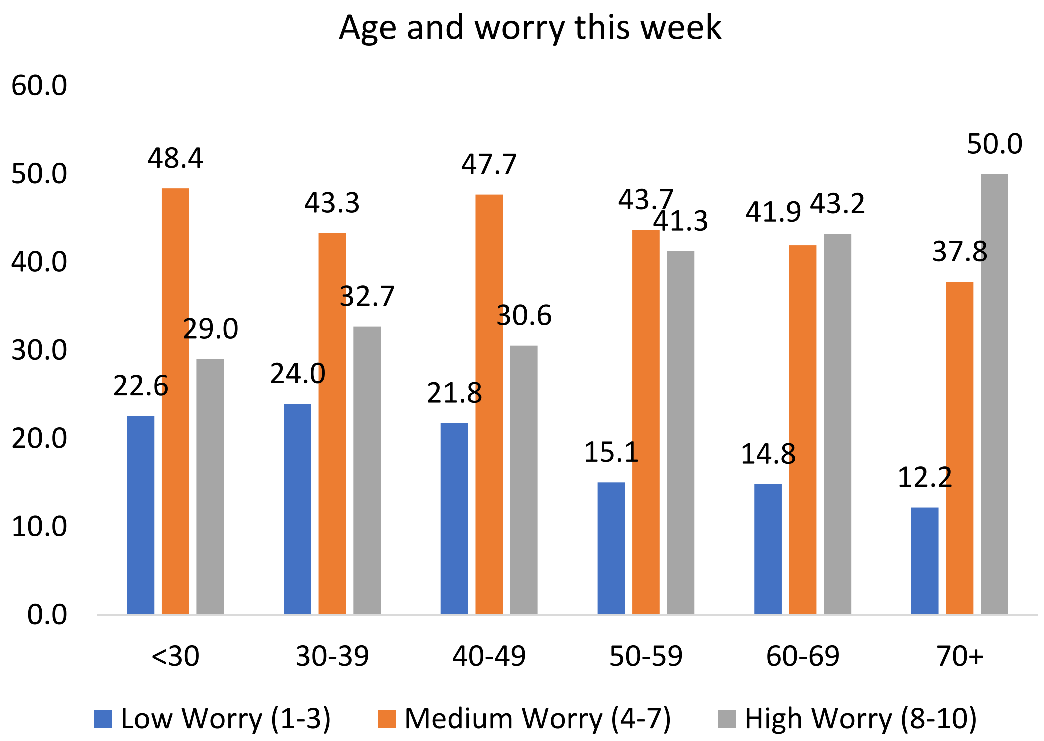


These charts show how the range of worry scores has changed over the year. Although average levels of worry have fallen since the start of the year, scores have not shifted dramatically. When breaking worry down into low worry (a score of 1-3), medium worry (a score of 4-7) and high worry (a score of 8-10), 37% of people remained highly worried about COVID-19 in August.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Sociodemographic characteristics of worry

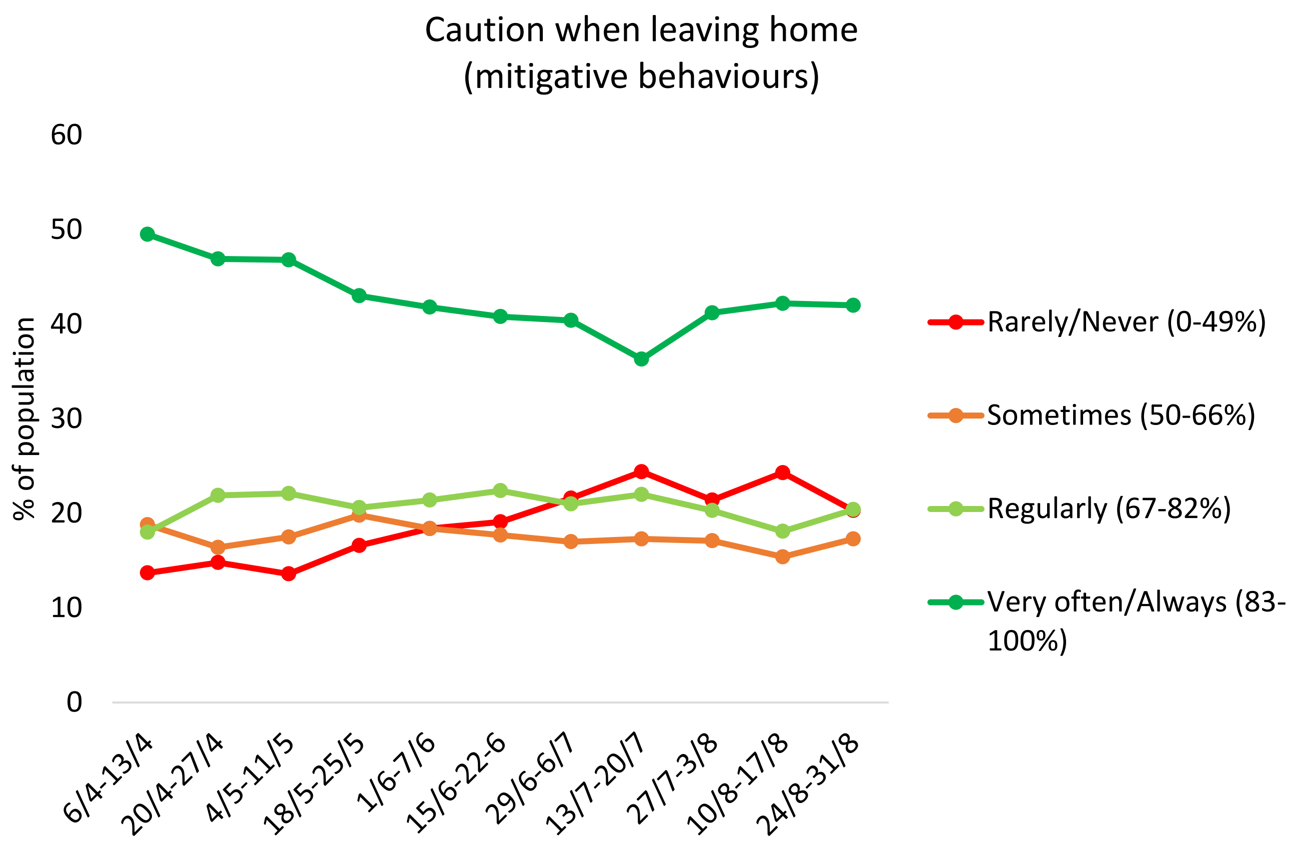




These charts show differences in levels of worry by age and gender in the last wave of data collection from 24th-31st August. There are no significant differences by gender. Older people remain more worried than younger people but note that nearly 1 in 3 people under 30 report being highly worried about COVID-19.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

"Mitigators" – those who are careful when out and about

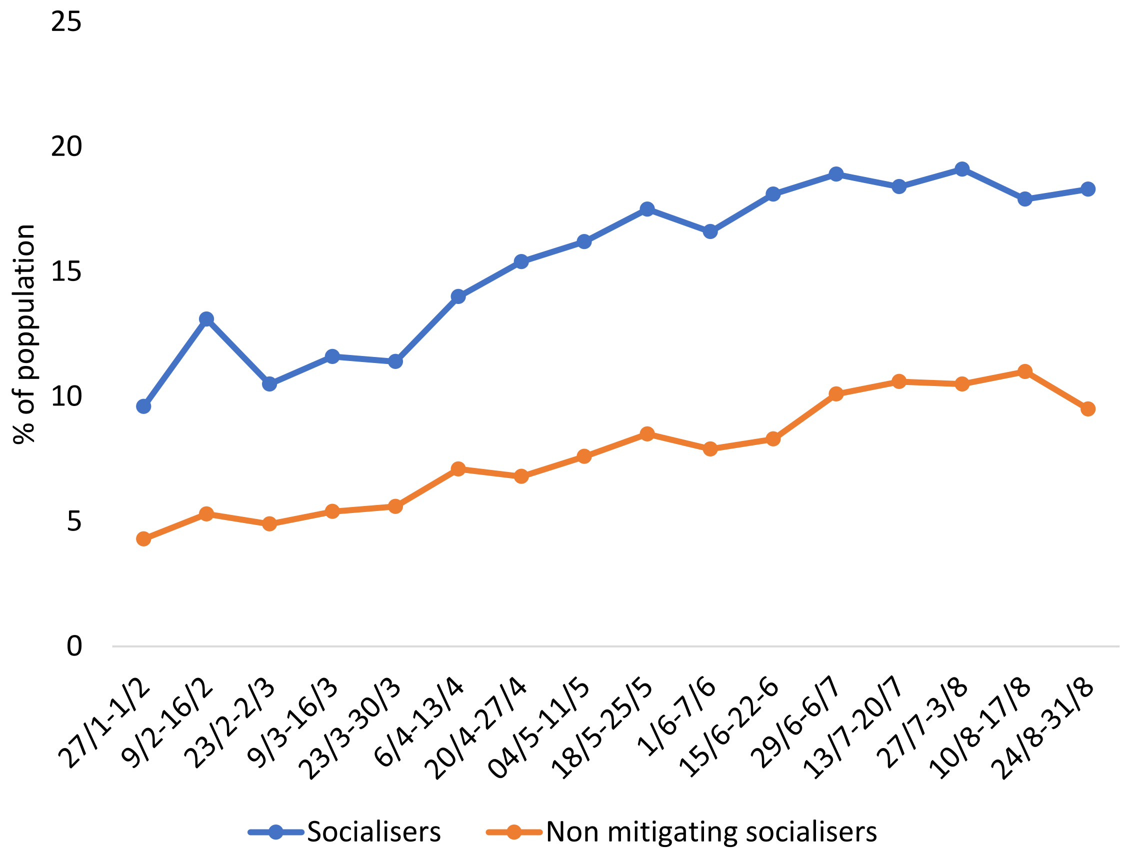


Broadly speaking, people risk transmission in two ways: (i) deciding where they go, (ii) how they behave once there.

This chart shows (i) and is a measure of how much people engage in risk mitigation when visiting locations outside their home. Four groups are defined based on whether they reported keeping 2m distance, wearing a mask, and cleaning their hands in each location visited.
The share of the population being highly cautious had been steadily falling since January, but has remained stable over the summer.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Socialisers and non-mitigating socialisers

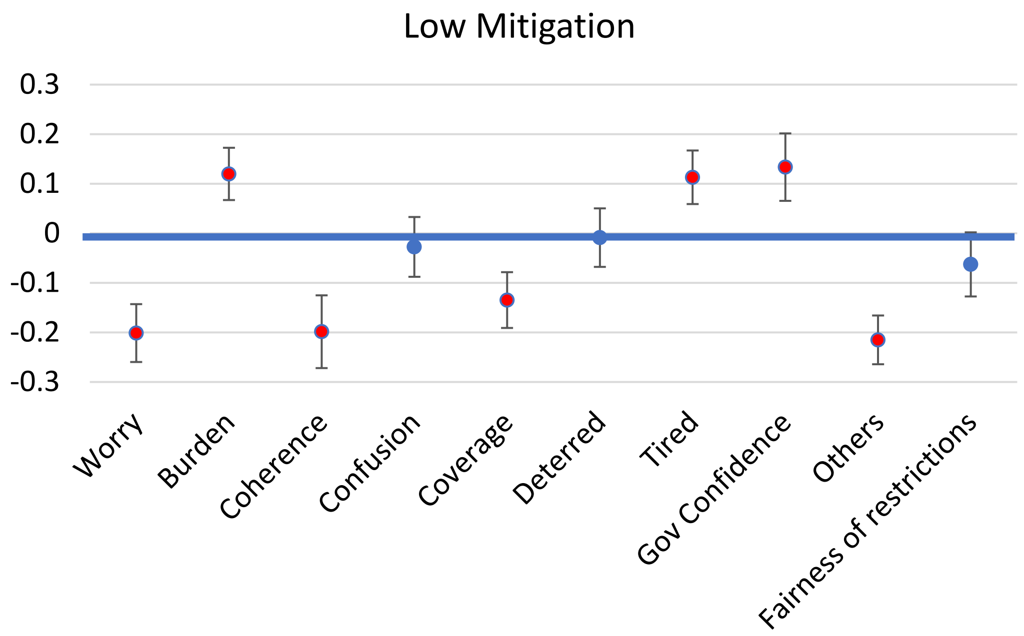


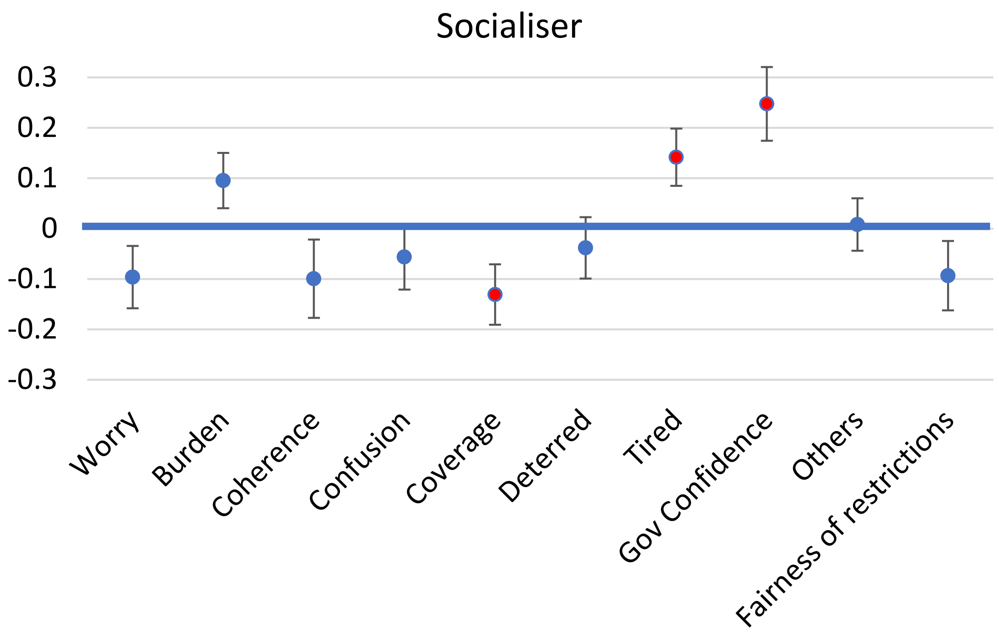
As described in Slide 30, people risk transmission in two ways: (i) deciding where they go, (ii) how they behave once there. This chart shows a combination of both. The socialisers variable captures how often people visited various settings and events, while also accounting for the riskiness of the settings. Points are added based on how many people were present in settings attended, the number of close contacts, the number of people met who were not vaccinated, and whether the individual travelled beyond the county, into Northern Ireland or abroad. Most people have a low score on this socialising index. However, a minority are described as “socialisers”, as they are much more active and expose themselves to greater risk. The proportion of socialisers has increased since January but has remained stable over the summer. It now accounts for approximately 1-in-6.

There is also a group we call non-mitigating socialisers who are socialisers but rarely carry out mitigating behaviours (see slide 30) to reduce risk when socialising. The number of these people has doubled since January but has been stable in recent months.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

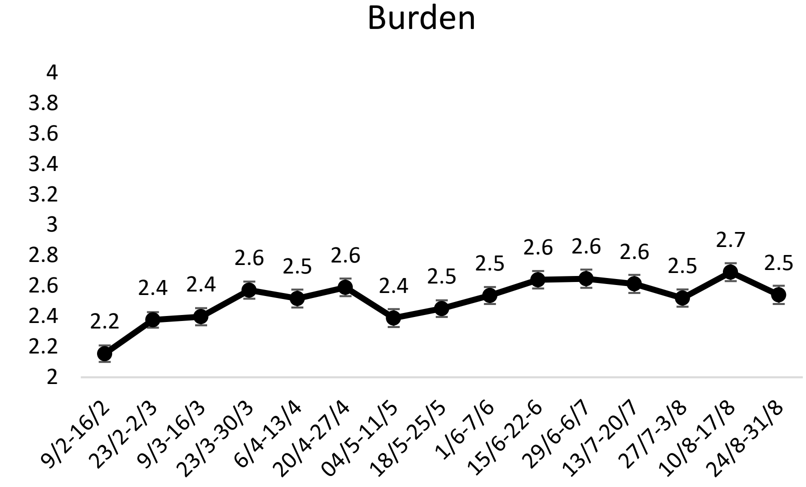
Psychology of mitigators and socialisers

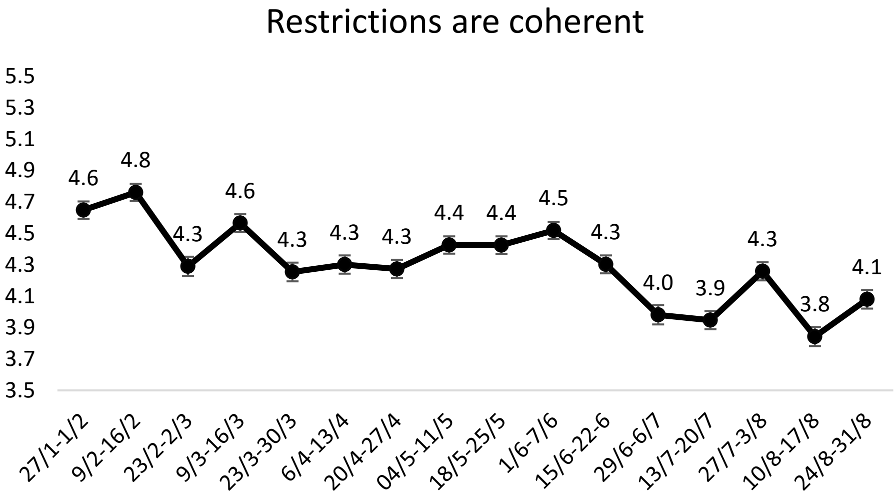


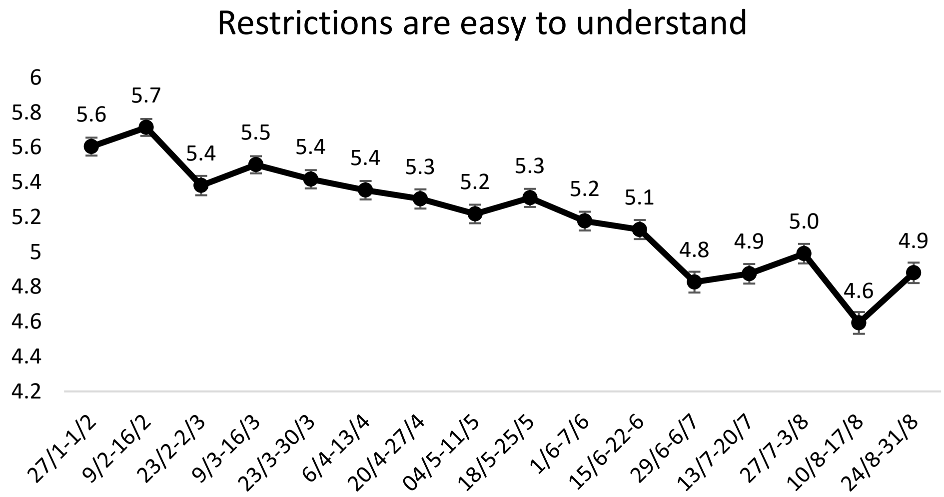


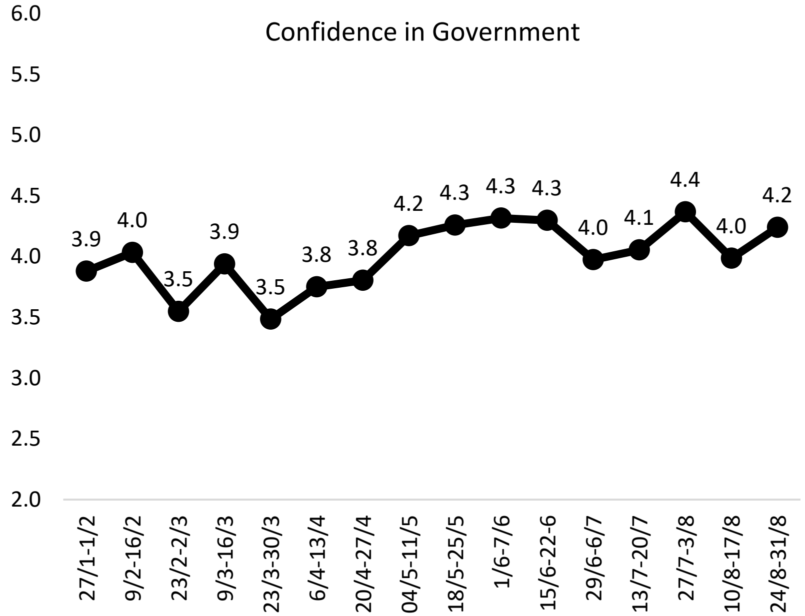
These charts show the psychological variables that are associated with being a socialiser or a non-mitigator. The further a dot is from 0, the stronger the relationship. Red dots show statistical significance. There are a few important differences to highlight, non-mitigators are less worried about COVID-19 and more likely to think others are not following the guidelines. These two psychological variables are not strongly associated with whether someone is a socialiser or not.

Restrictions





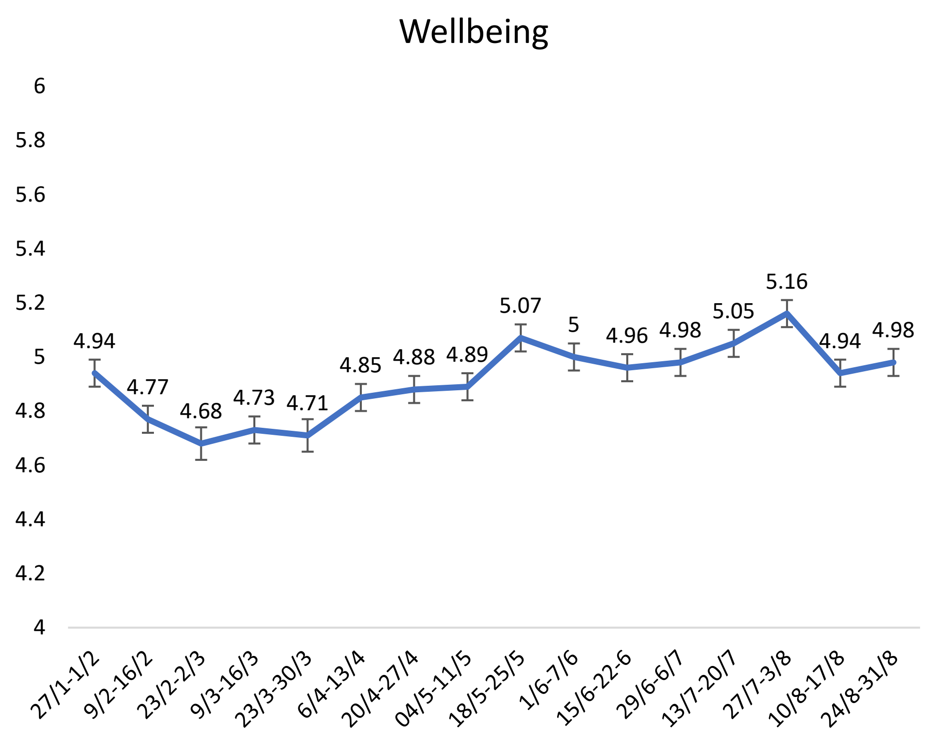


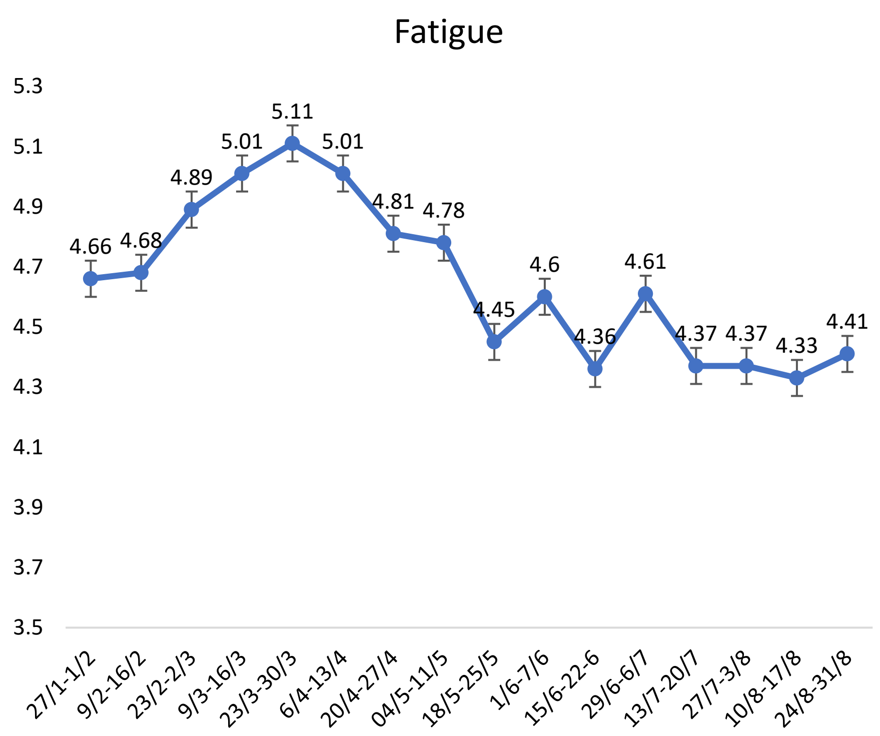


A majority still judge preventing the spread of the virus to be more important than the burden of restrictions. There was an increase in the perception that restrictions are coherent and easy to understand.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Wellbeing and Fatigue

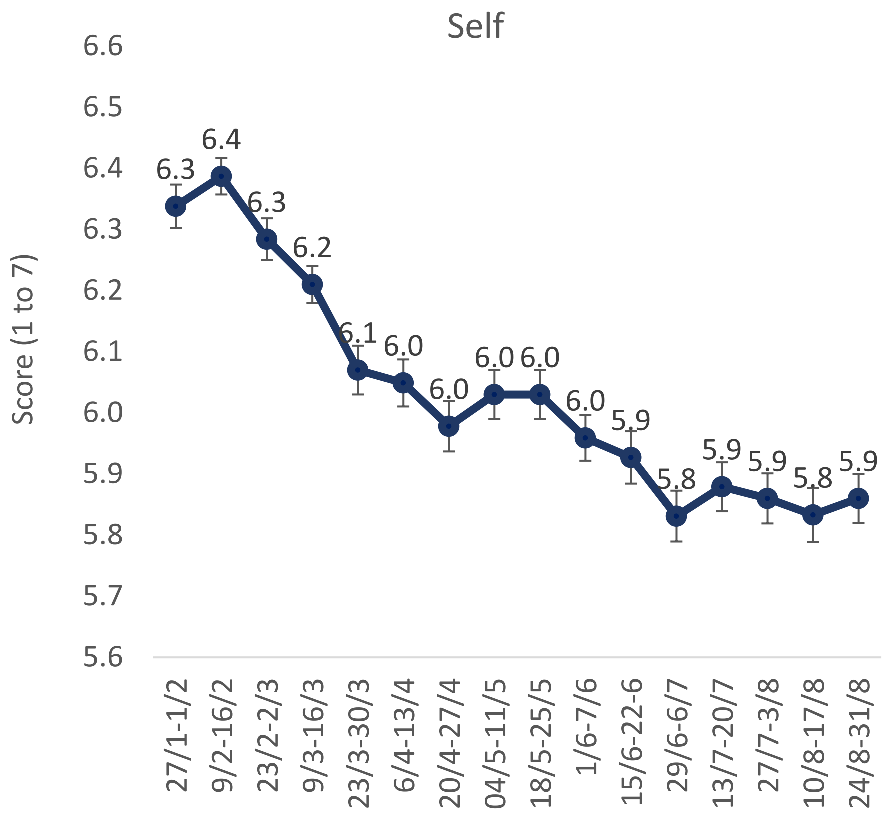


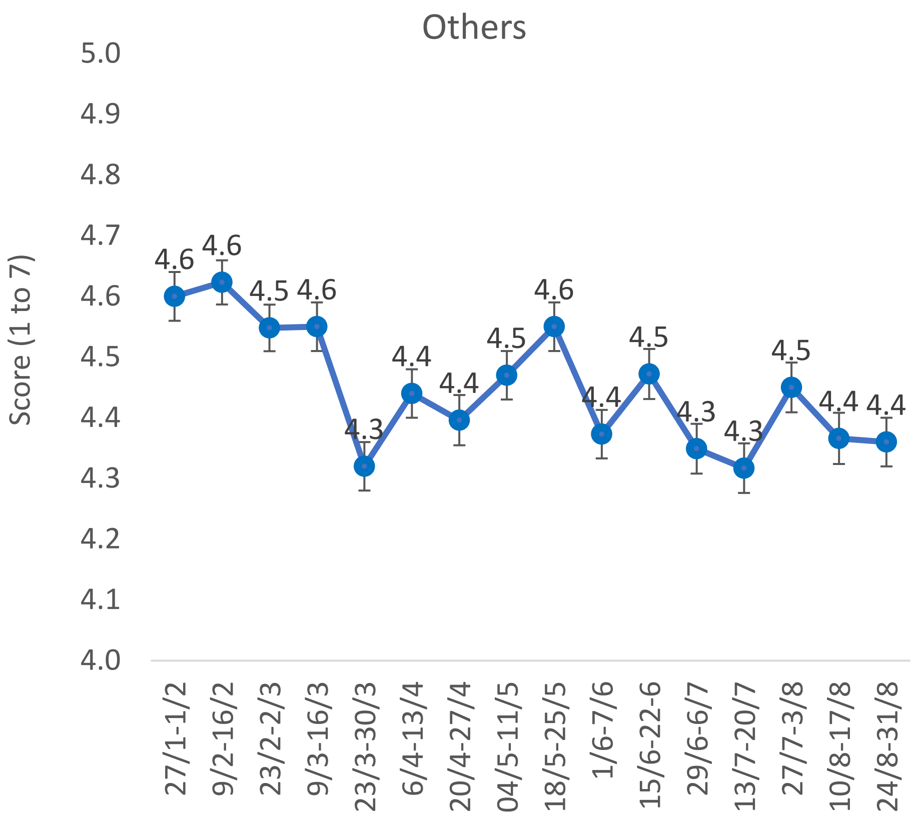


There was no change in wellbeing or fatigue.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Compliance





There was no change in self-reported compliance with restrictions or in perceptions that others are complying.

Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach