ESRI

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Social Activity Measure
May 17th – May 24th 2022

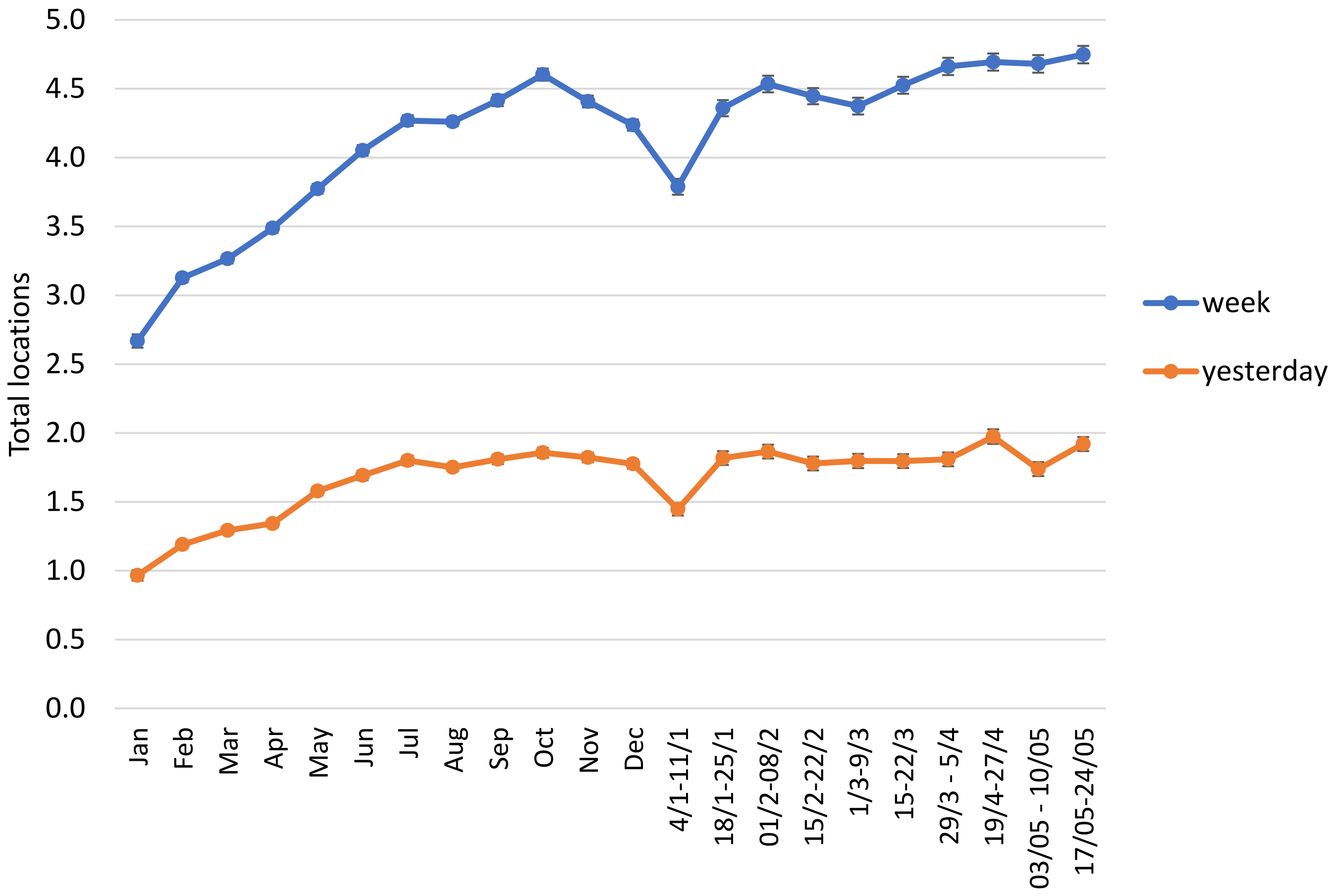
ABOUT THE RESEARCH

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 17th and 24th of May 2022. Hospitalisations fell to their lowest point since August 2021. Cases of Omicron BA.4 were identified in Ireland towards the end of data collection, following cases of BA.5 identified in the UK earlier in the week.

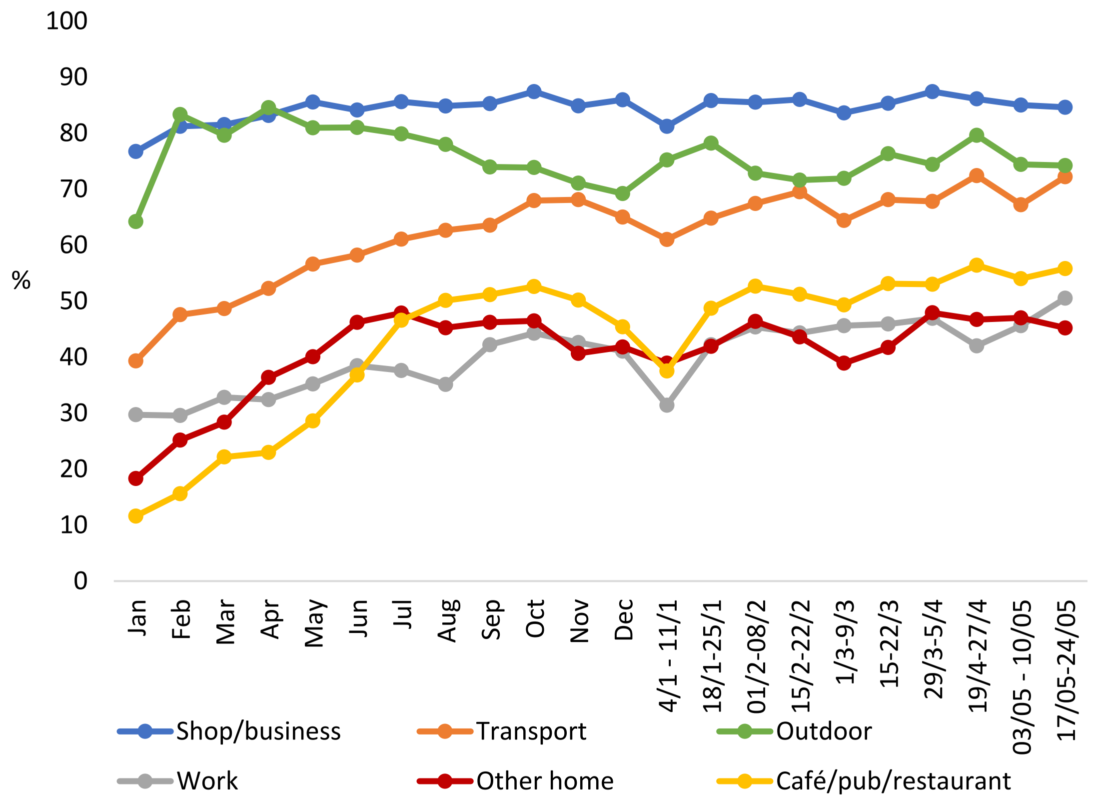
Total locations visited

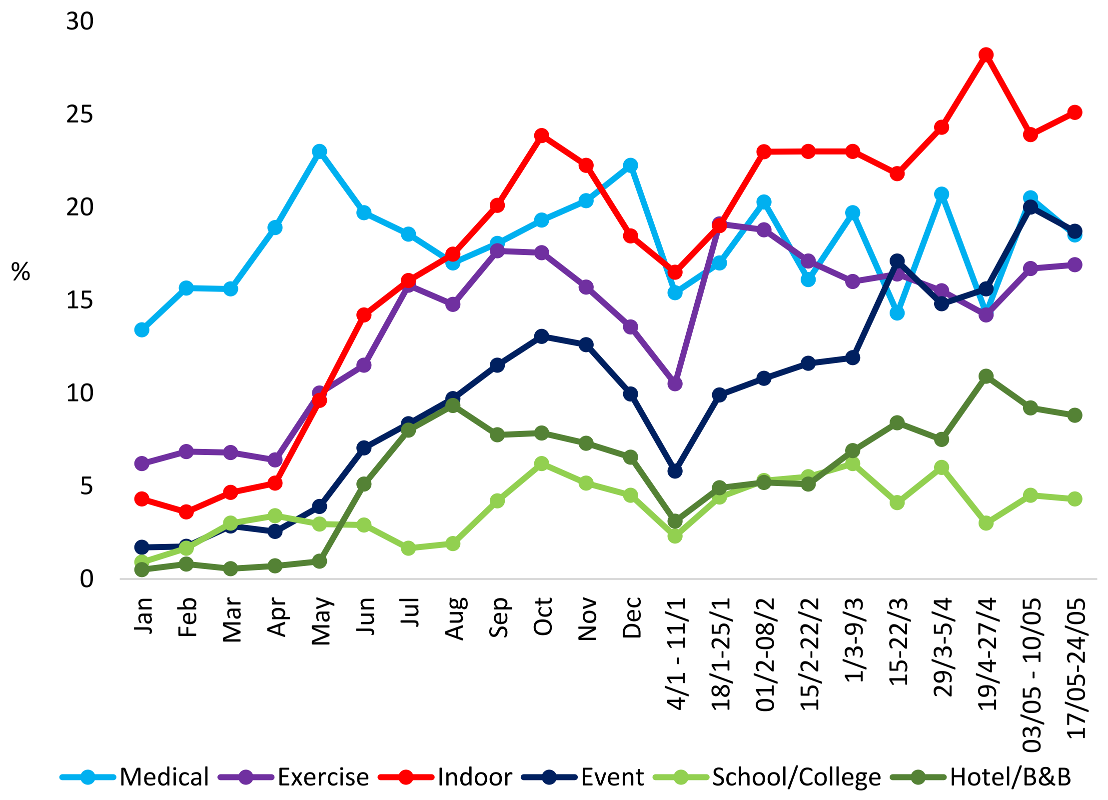


There was no significant change in aggregate locations visited over the previous week. There was an increase in locations visited yesterday after the previous dip.

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

Locations visited (previous week)

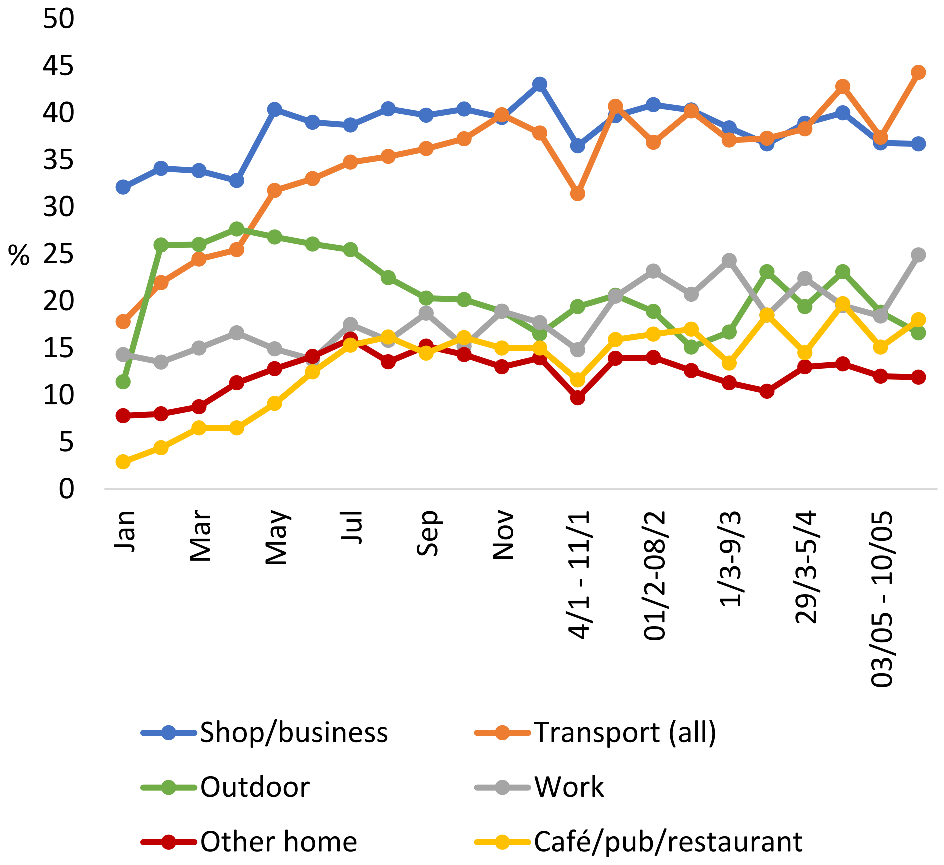


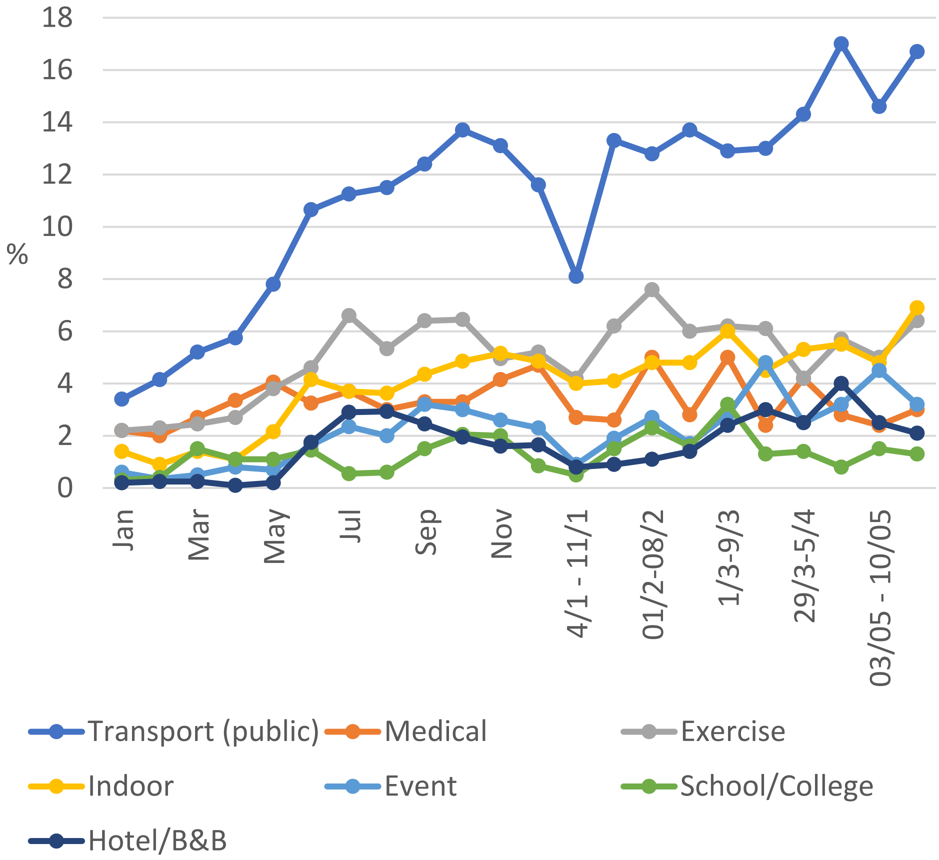


Visits to different locations over the previous week displayed little change. There was an increase in attendance at work and use of public transport compared to the previous wave.

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

Locations visited (yesterday)

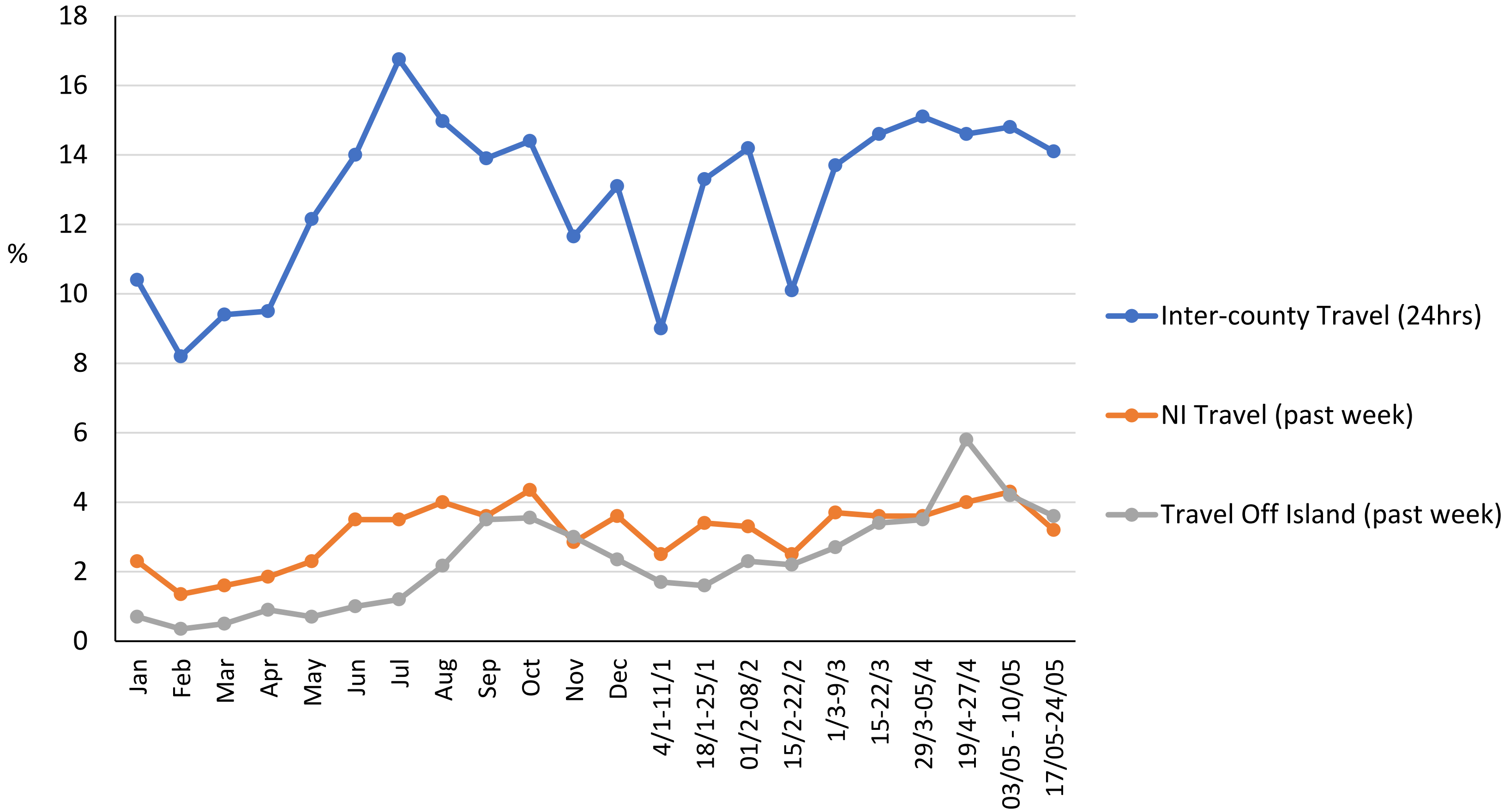




There were increases in attendance at work, use of transportation and visits to indoor locations. Otherwise there were no substantial changes.

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

National and international travel



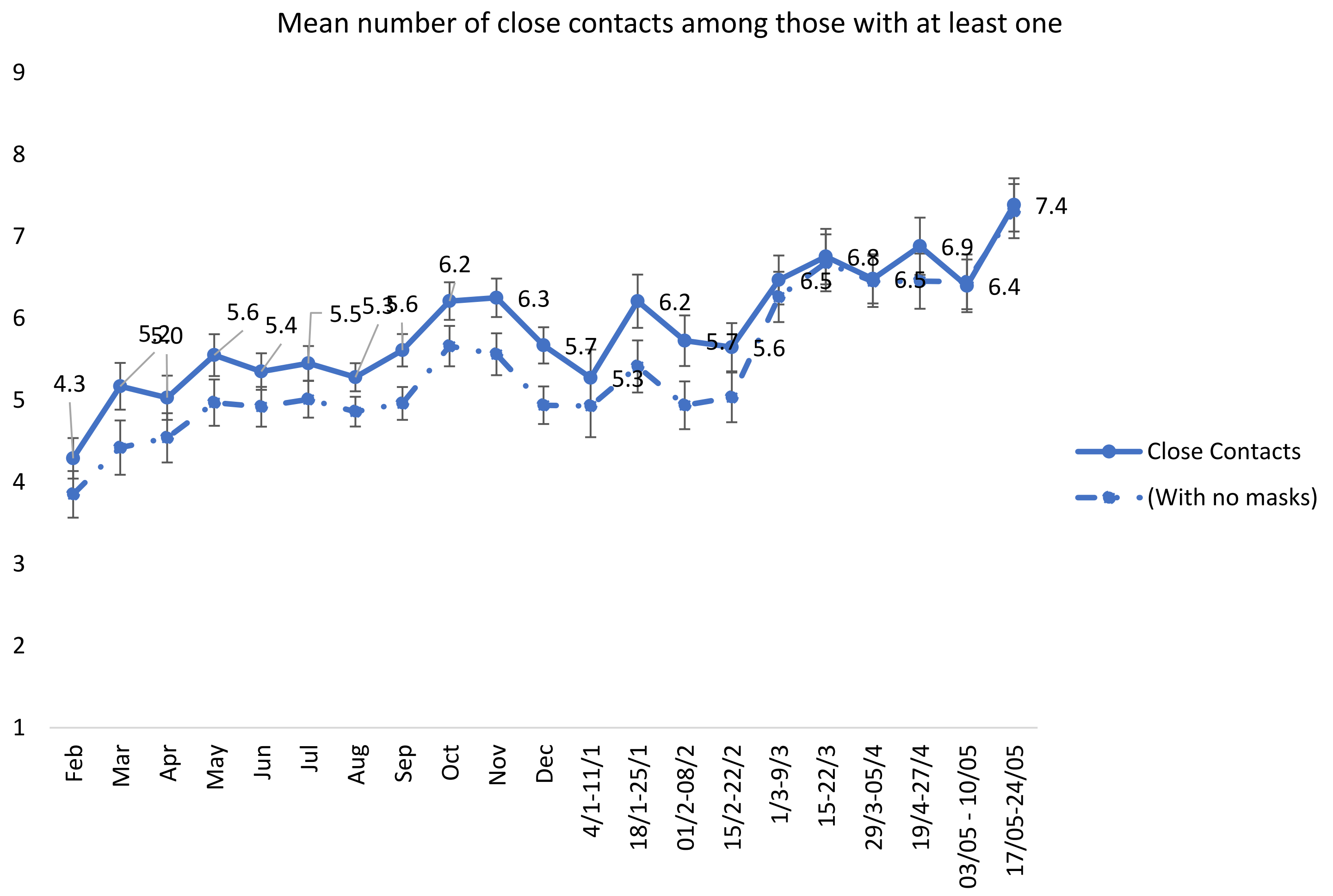
The level of travel remained broadly unchanged. International travel continued to decline after the Easter holidays.

Close contacts

The proportion of people who had a close contact increased significantly after the previous down-tick and continues on its upward trend since late March. It is now at its highest since SAM started.

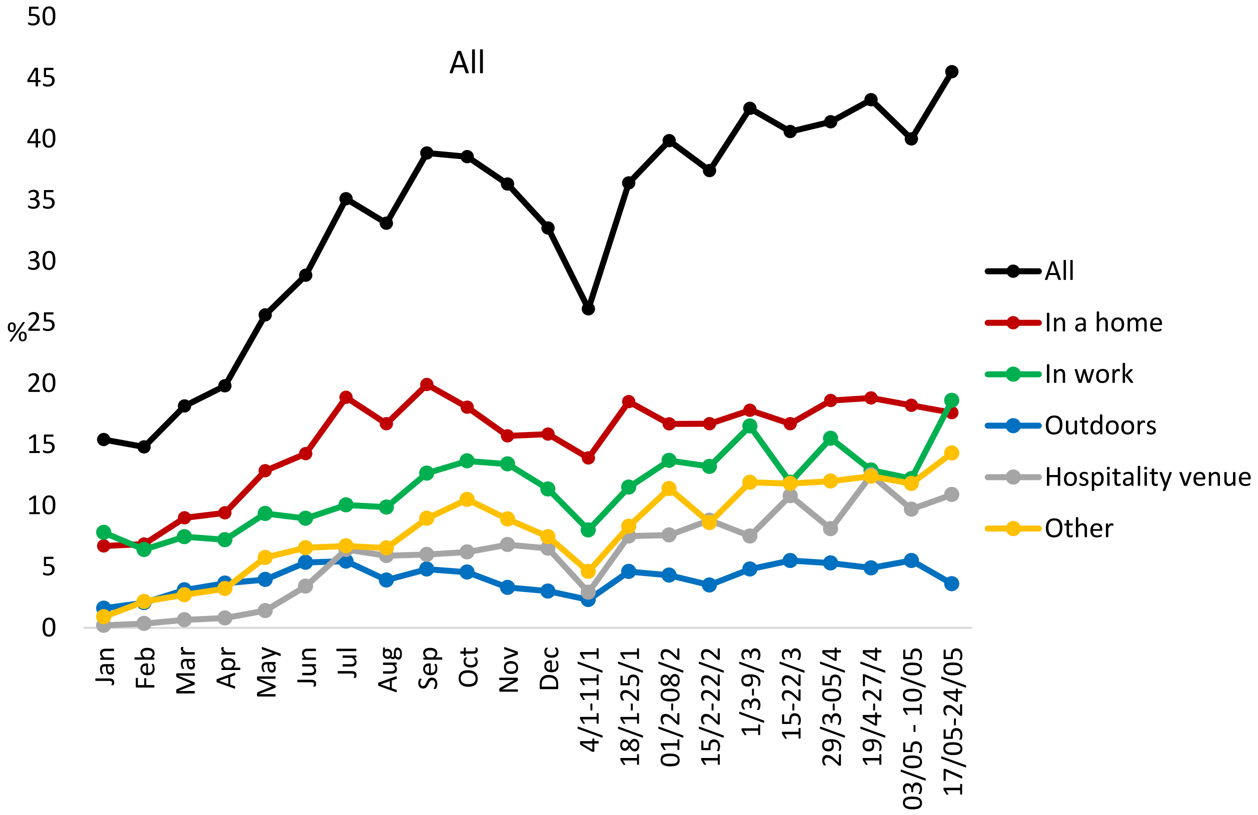
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

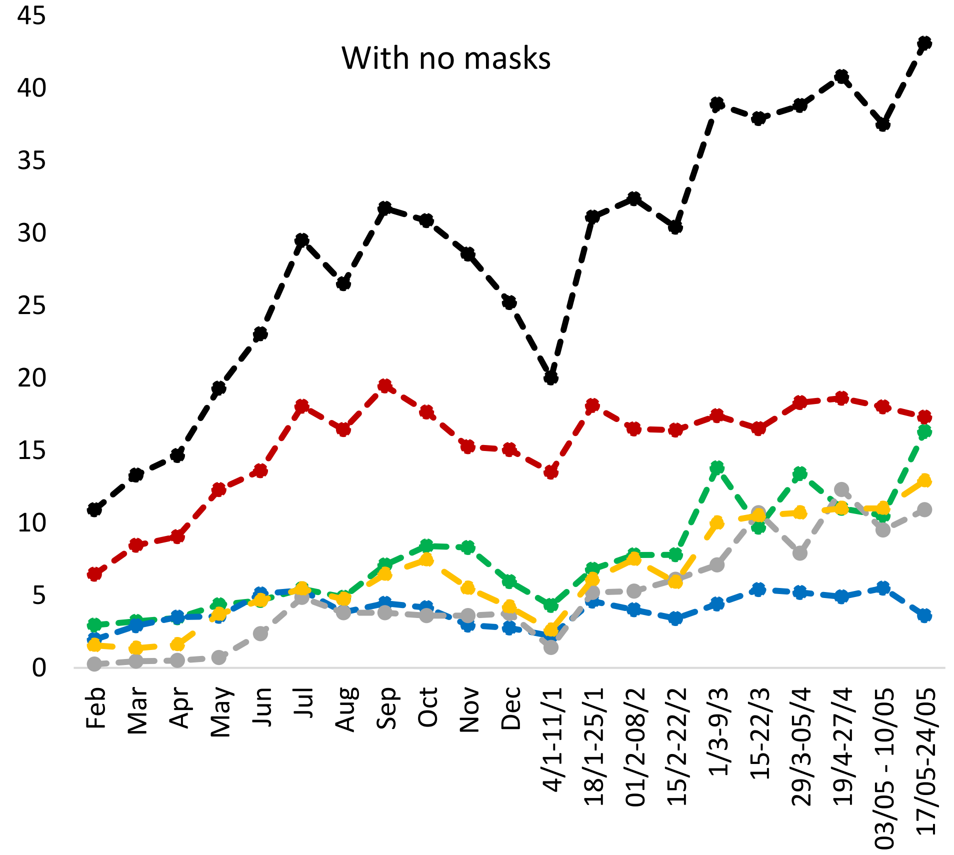
Number of close contacts



Among those who had a close contact the previous day, the mean number of close contacts with and without masks increased significantly.

Close contacts - locations

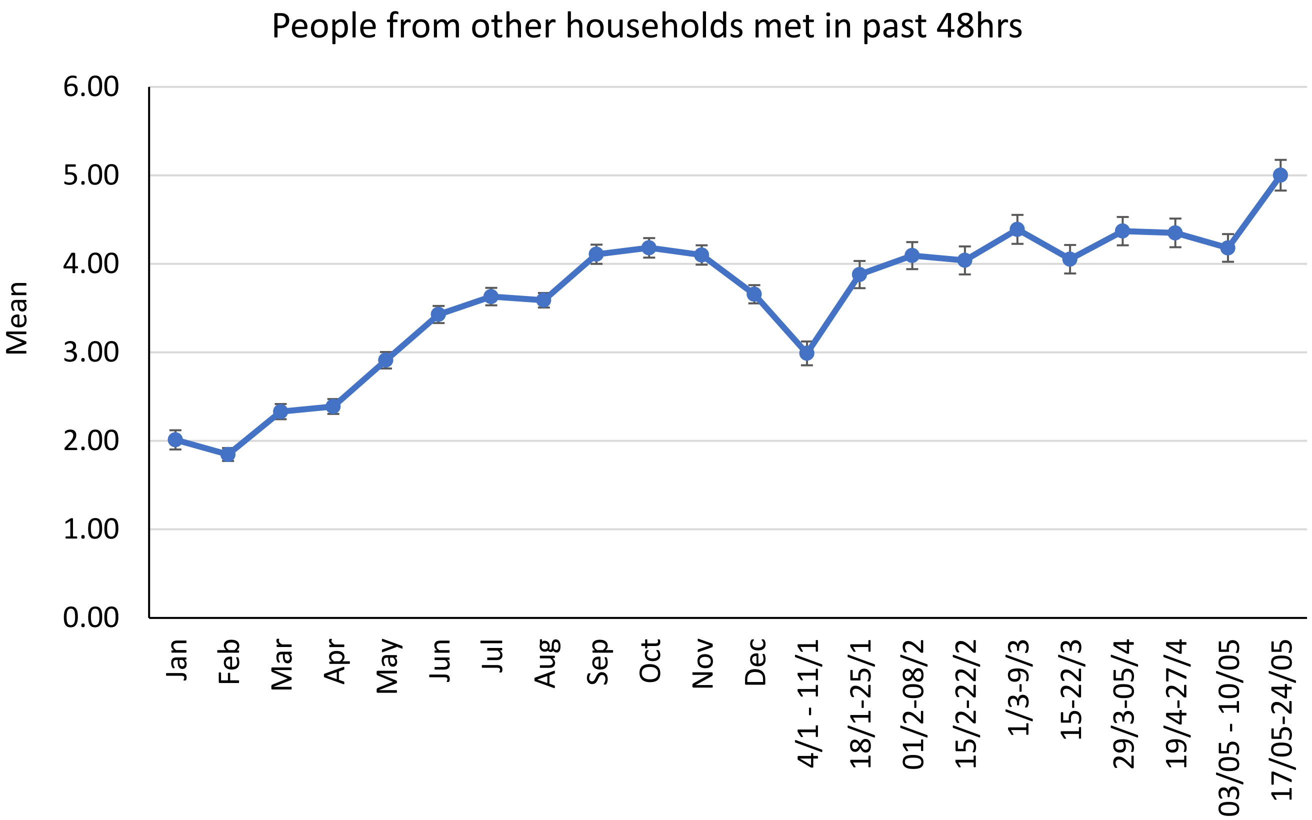




The increase in close contacts was mostly accounted for by an increase in work close contact following the previous decline after the Bank Holiday period.

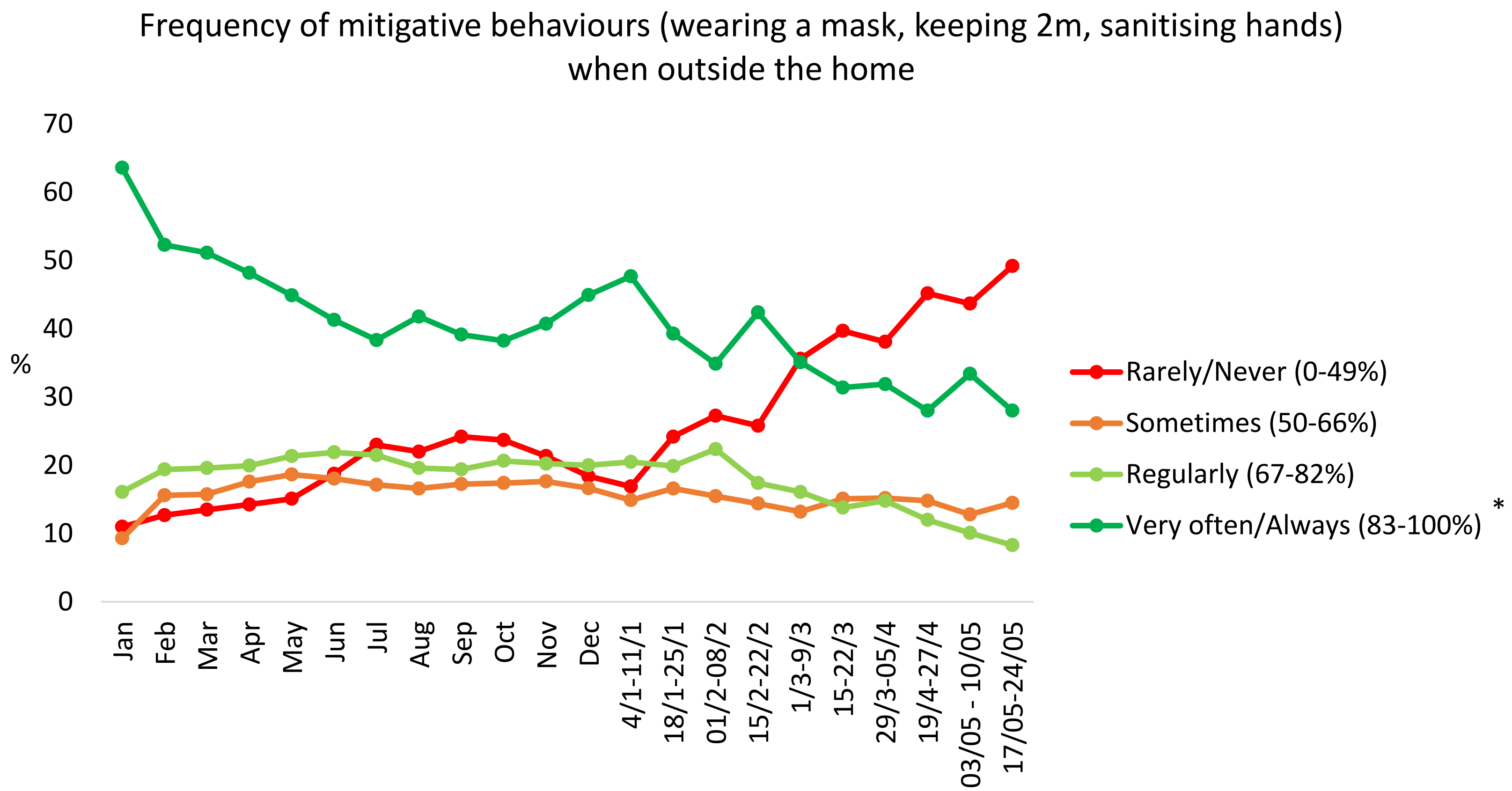
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Number of people met



There was a sharp increase in average number of people met following a period with little to no change.

Mitigation

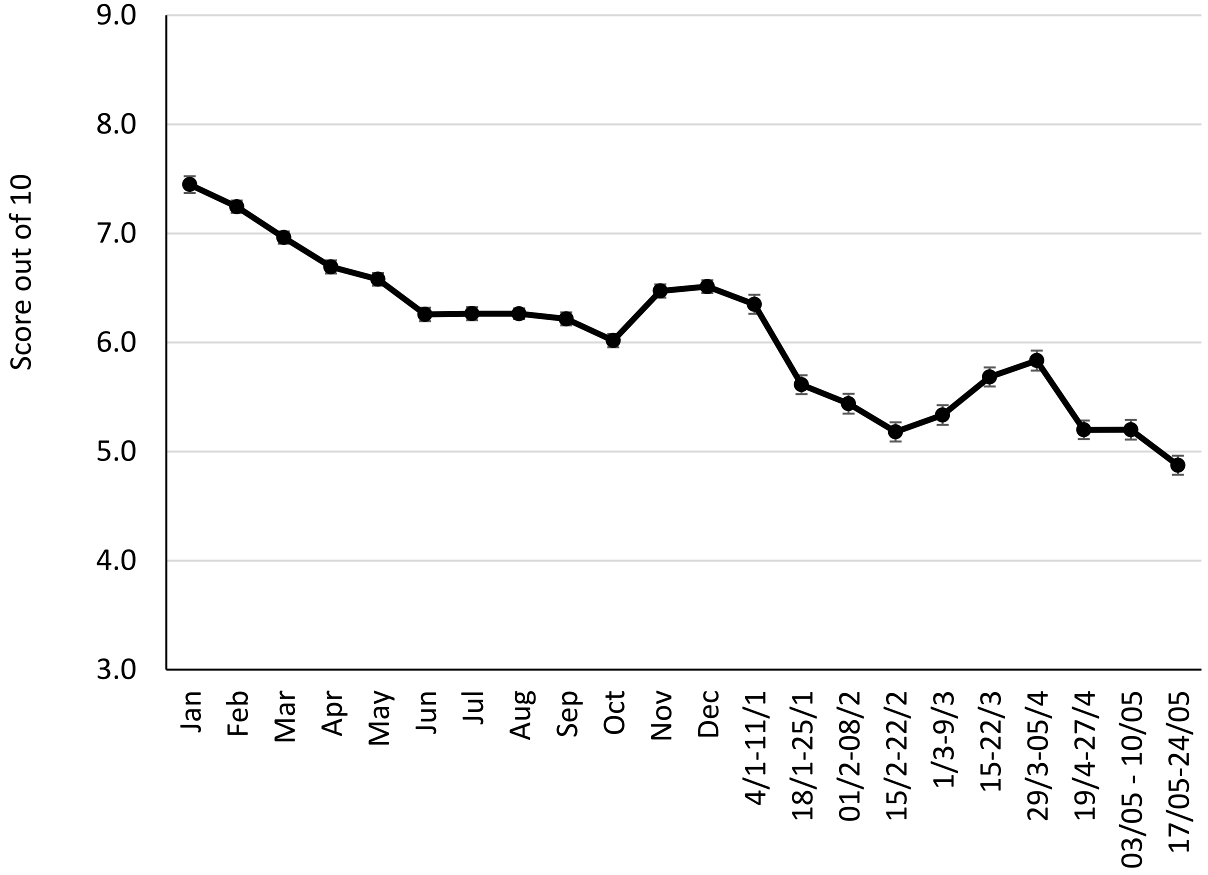


The proportion of people who rarely or never engage in mitigative behaviours continues to rise, to almost 50% of the adult population.

*included in this group are those who did not leave their home or have visitors the previous day.

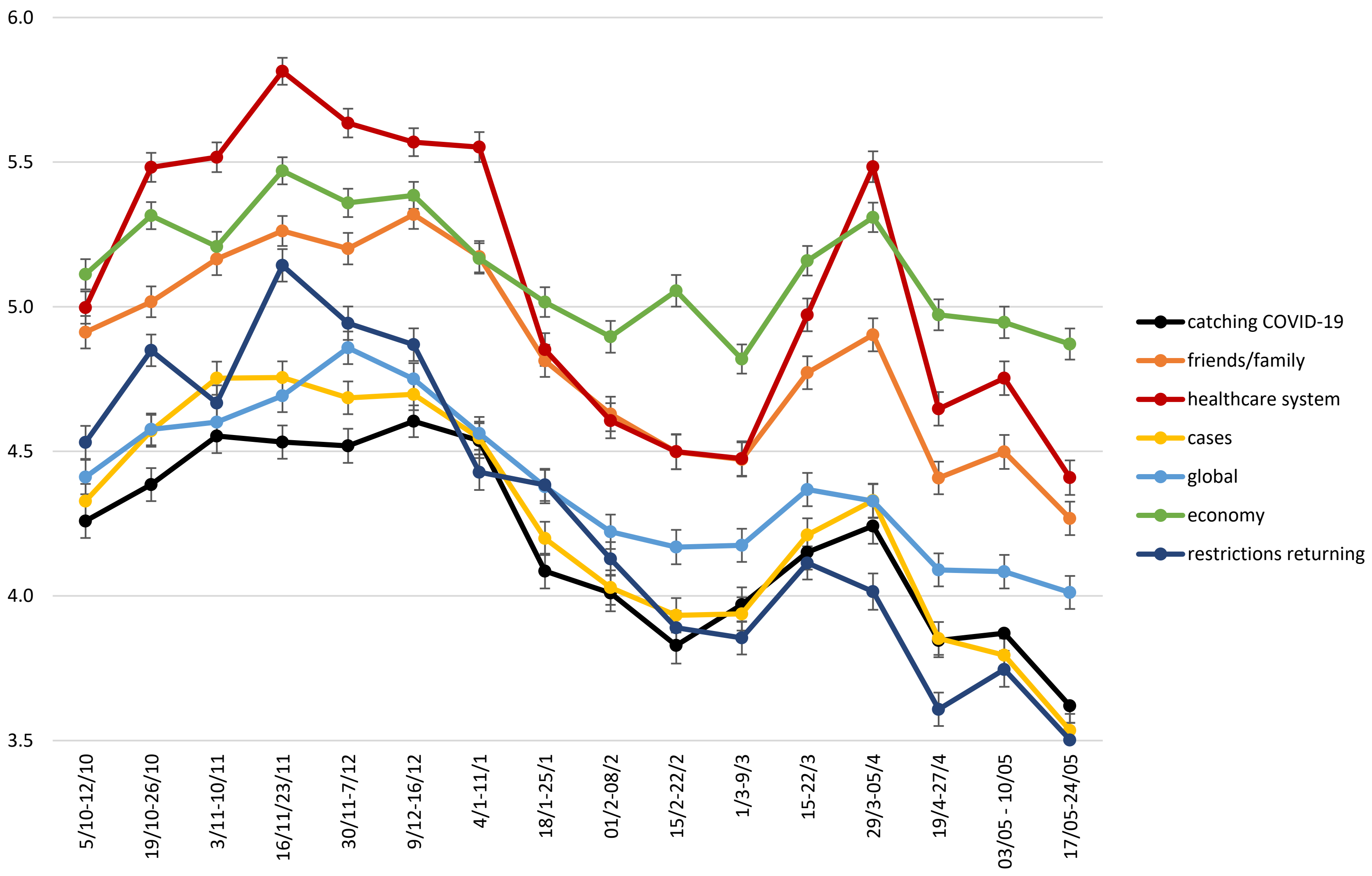
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Worry



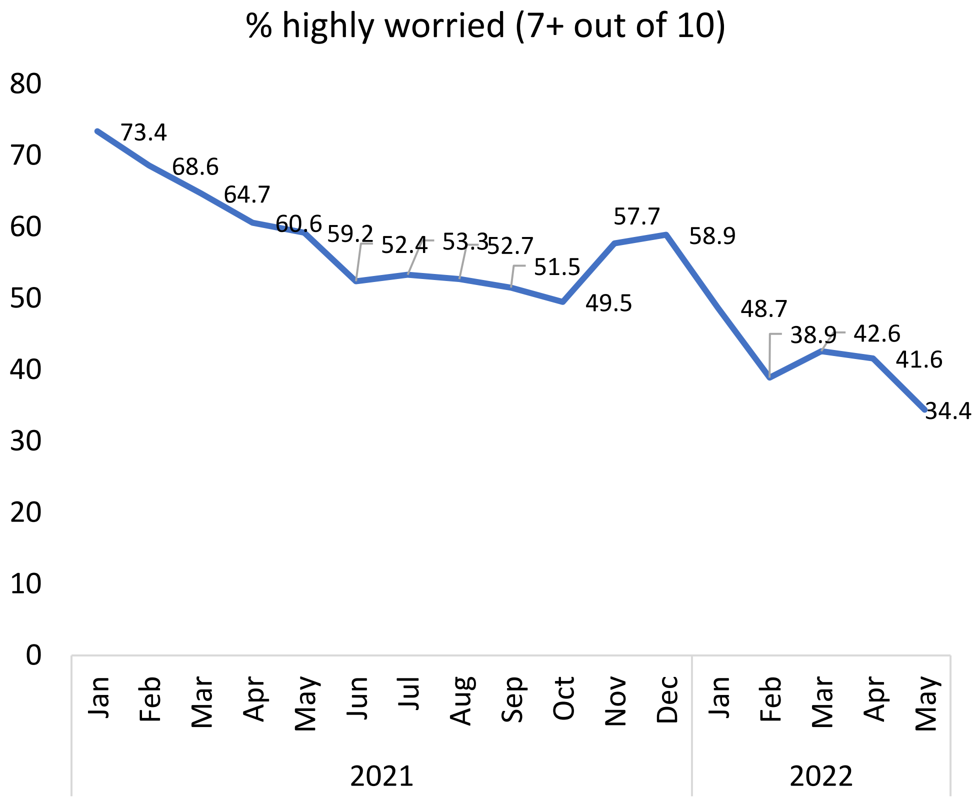
There was a further significant decline in worry.

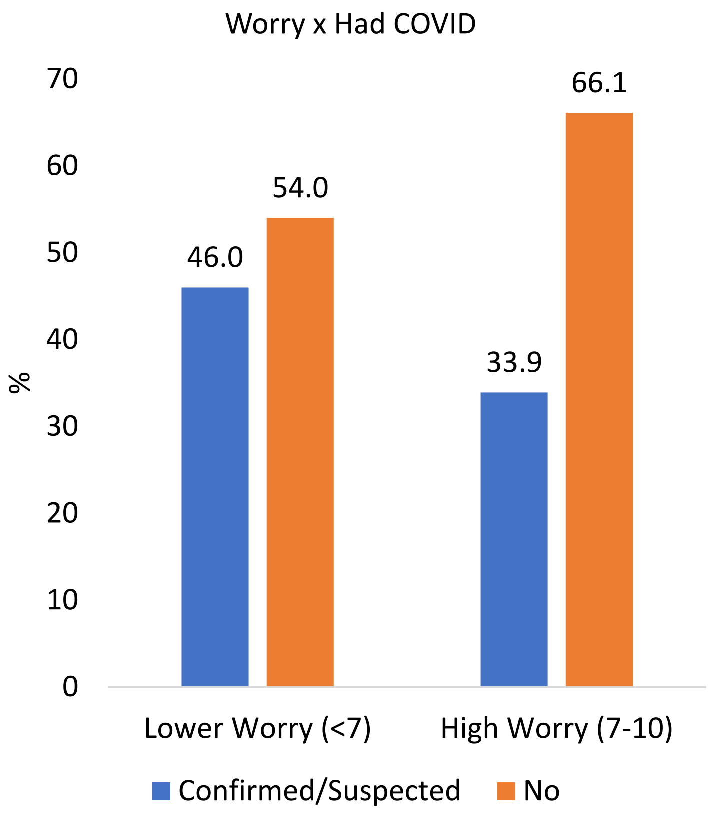
Components of worry



All components of worry declined, except global worry and worry about the economy.

Worry

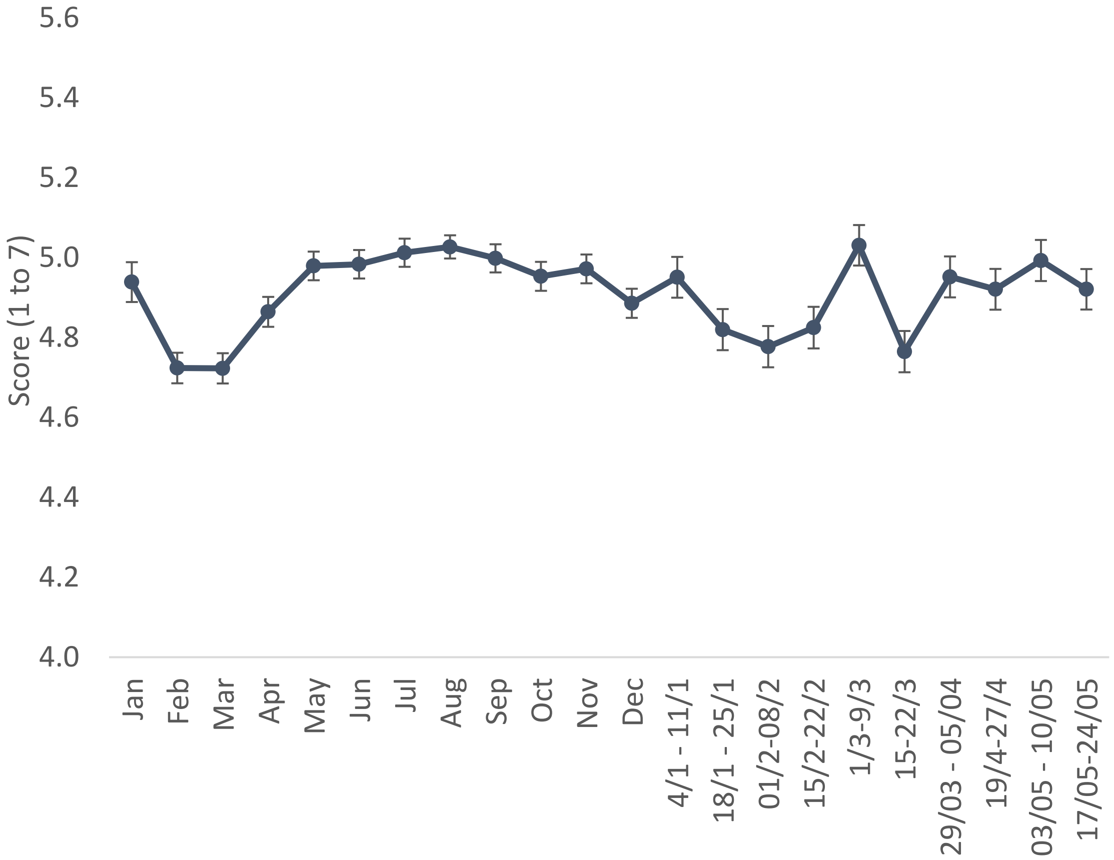


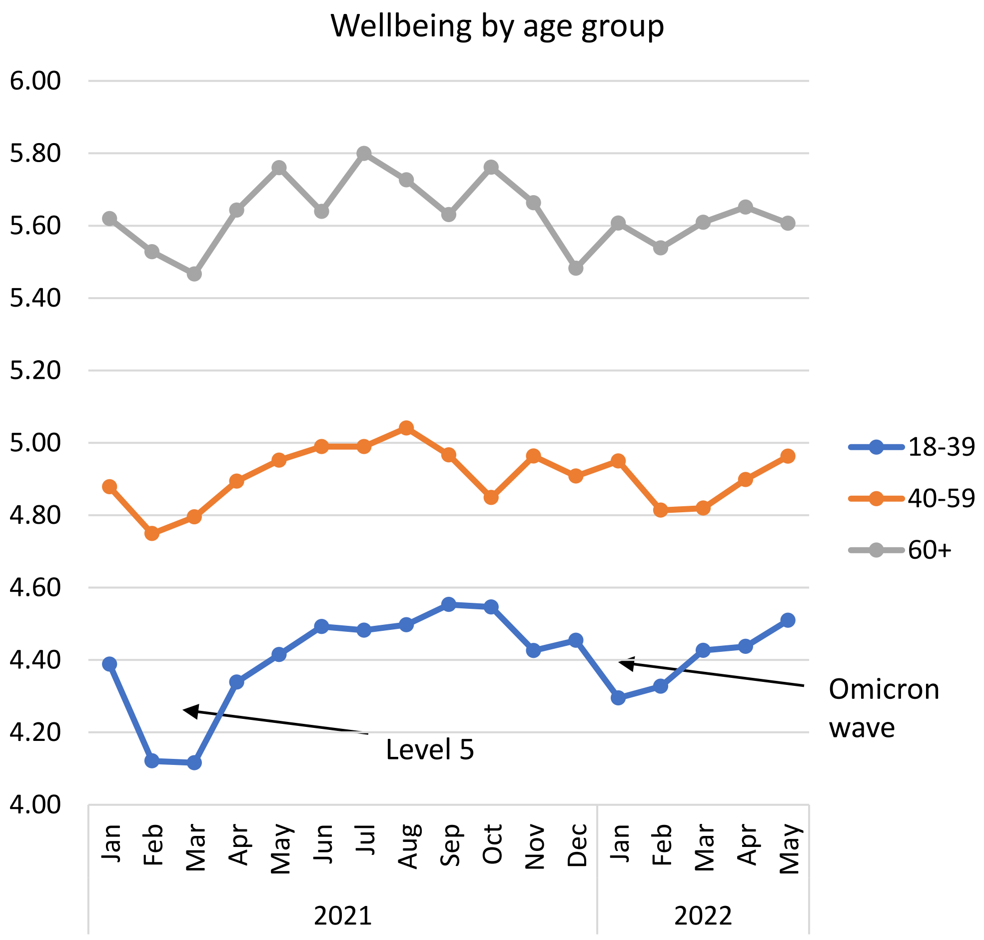


The downward trend in worry is also observed in the proportion of people who report being highly worried (a 7 or above out of 10), which has fallen to its lowest level. One-in-three adults report high levels of worry about the virus.
A highly significant predictor of being highly worried is not having contracted COVID-19.

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

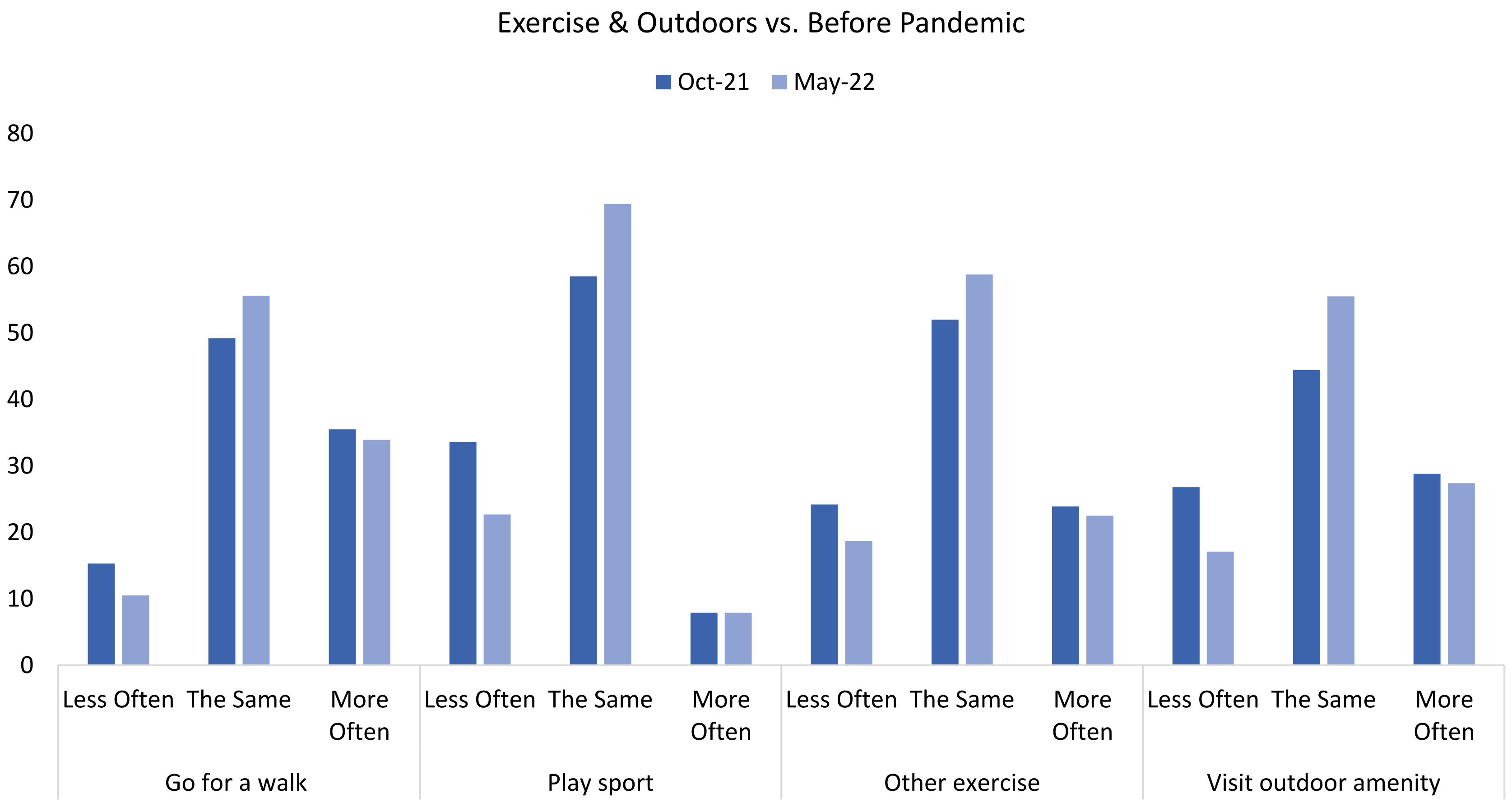
Wellbeing





Well-being remained unchanged this wave.

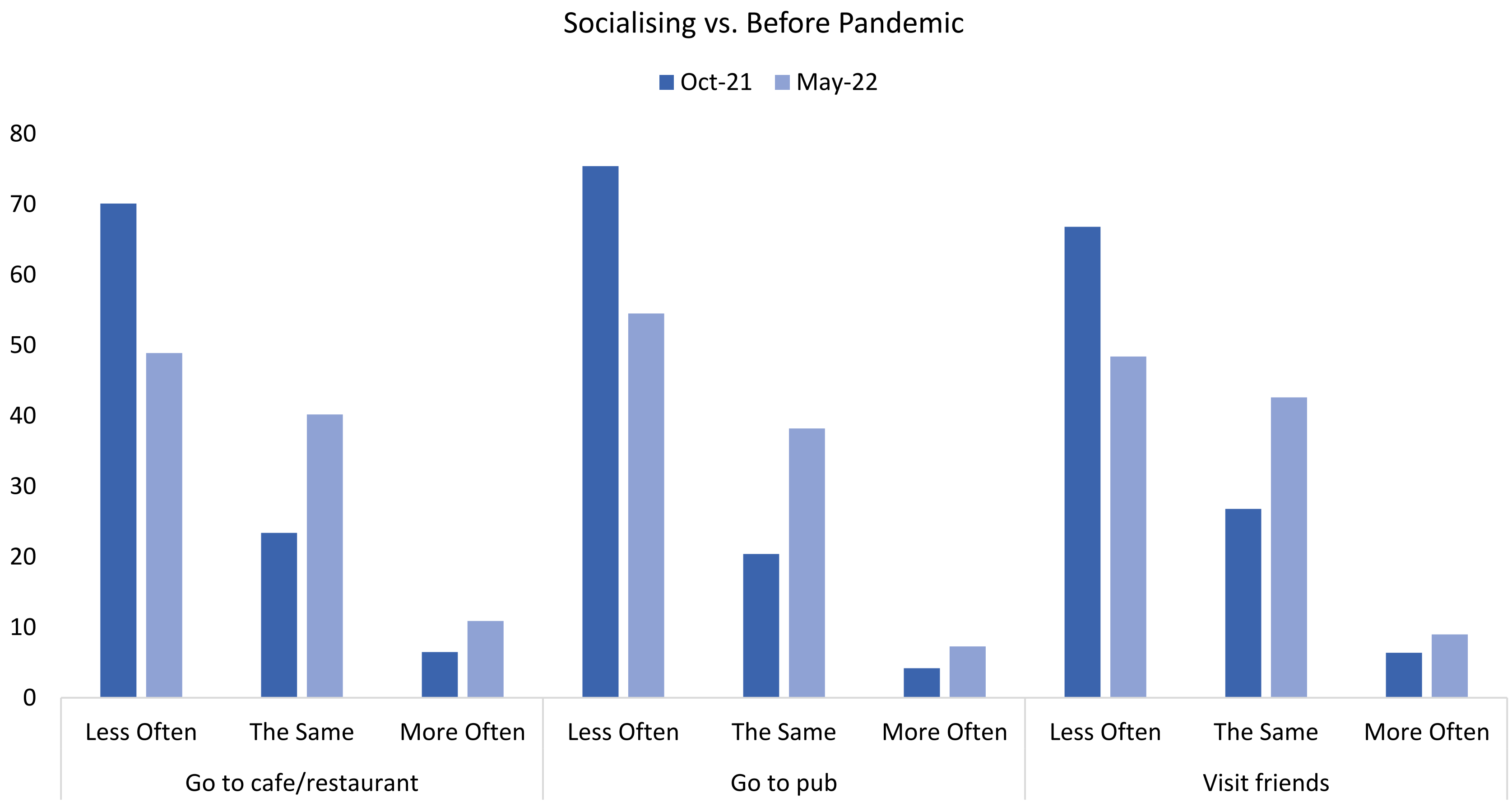
Return to Normal



Most people engage in exercise or visit outdoor amenities as often or more often than they did before the pandemic. The number of people reporting they are exercising or visiting outdoor amenities less than they were before the pandemic is lower now compared to when this measure was asked in October 2021.

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

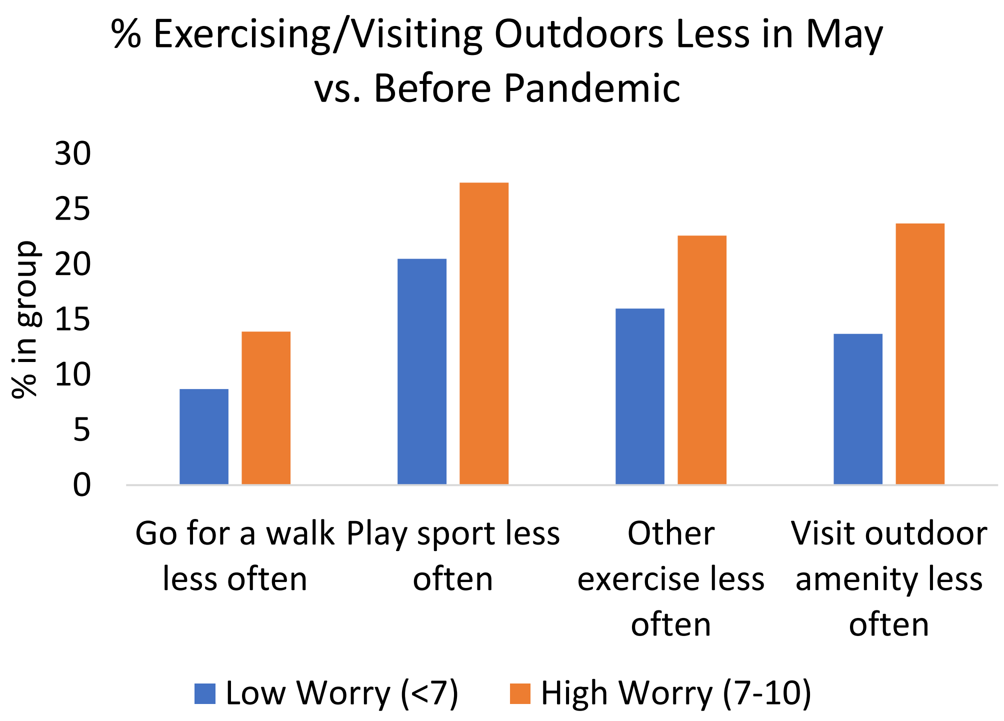
Return to Normal

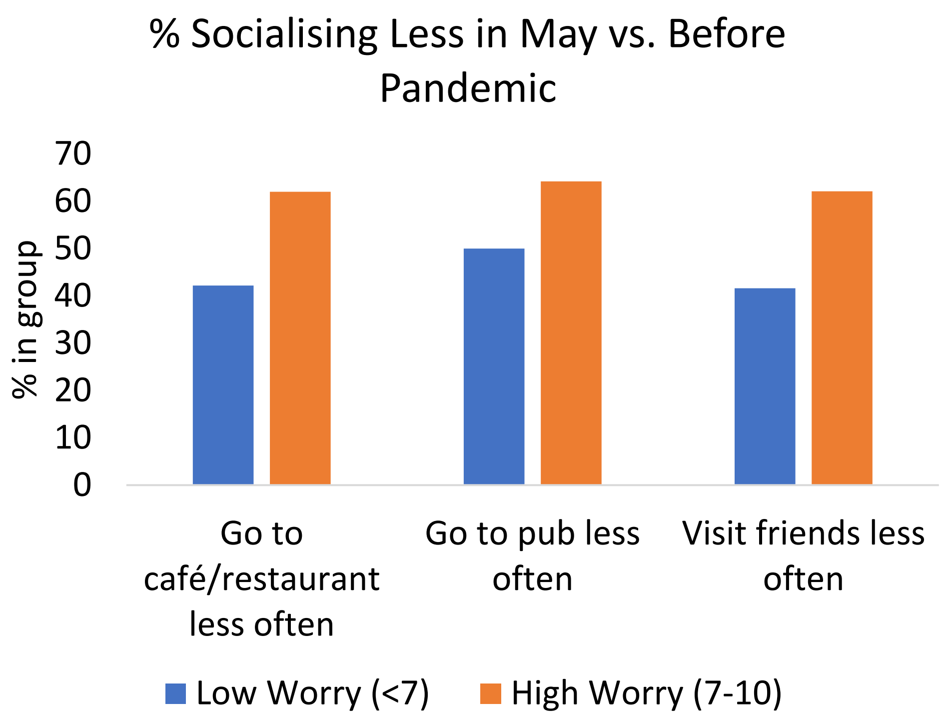


People are split approximately 50:50 when asked if they are socialising less often than before the pandemic. In October, more than two-thirds of people were socialising less often.

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

Return to Normal - Worry

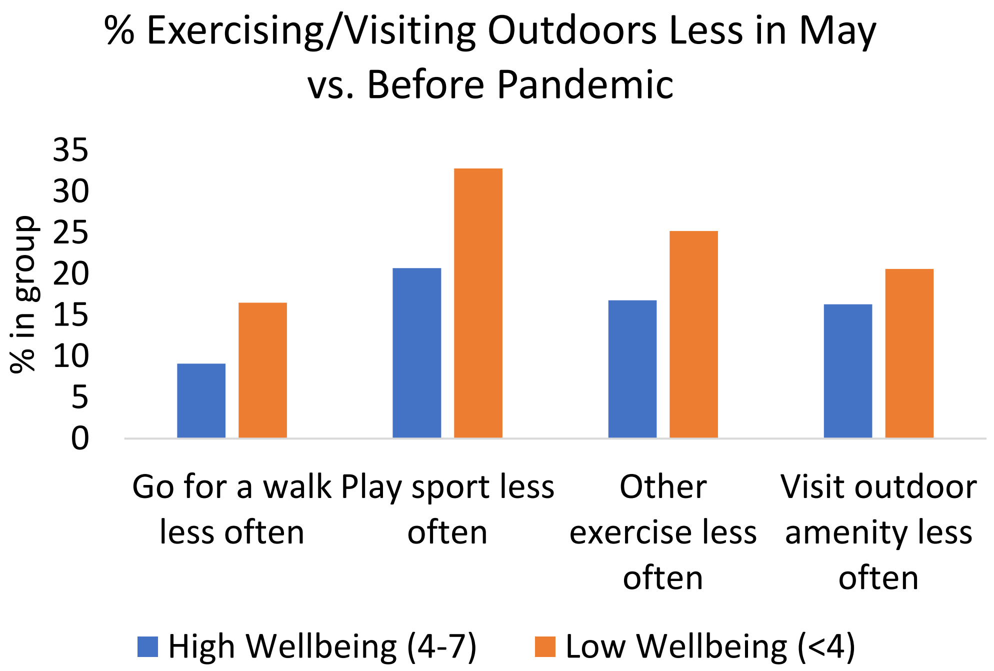


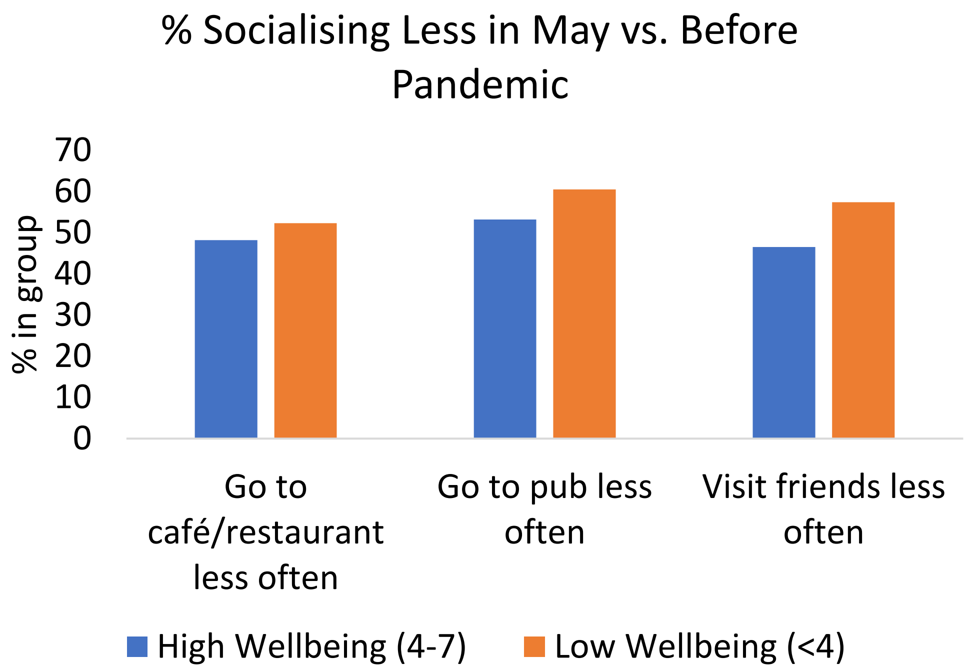


In statistical models that control for socio-demographic characteristics, being more worried about COVID-19 remains a significant predictor of exercising less, visiting outdoor amenities less often and socialising less than before the pandemic.

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

Return to Normal - Wellbeing

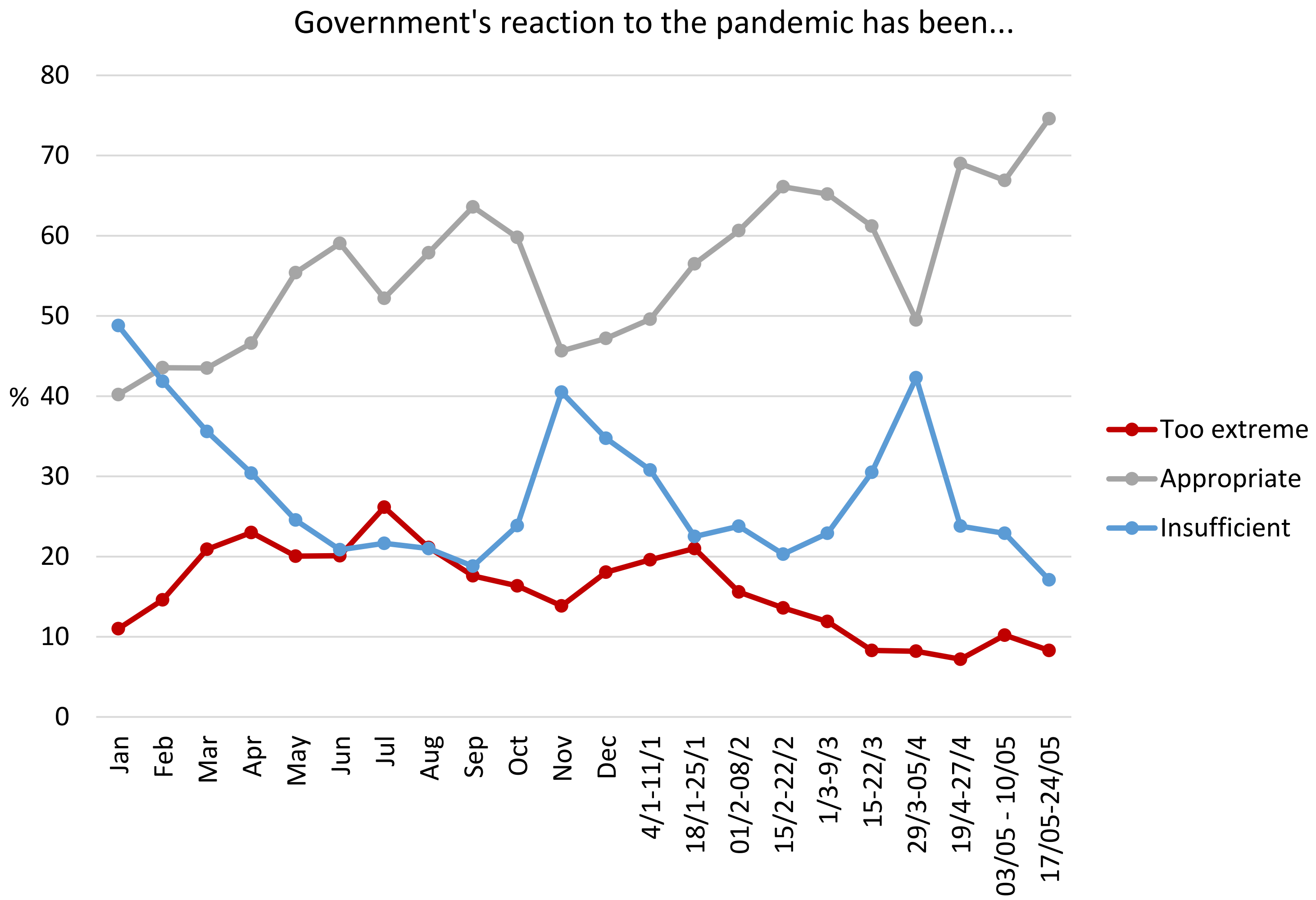




In statistical models that control for socio-demographic characteristics, exercising less, visiting outdoor amenities less often and socialising less than before the pandemic is significantly related to lower levels of general wellbeing.

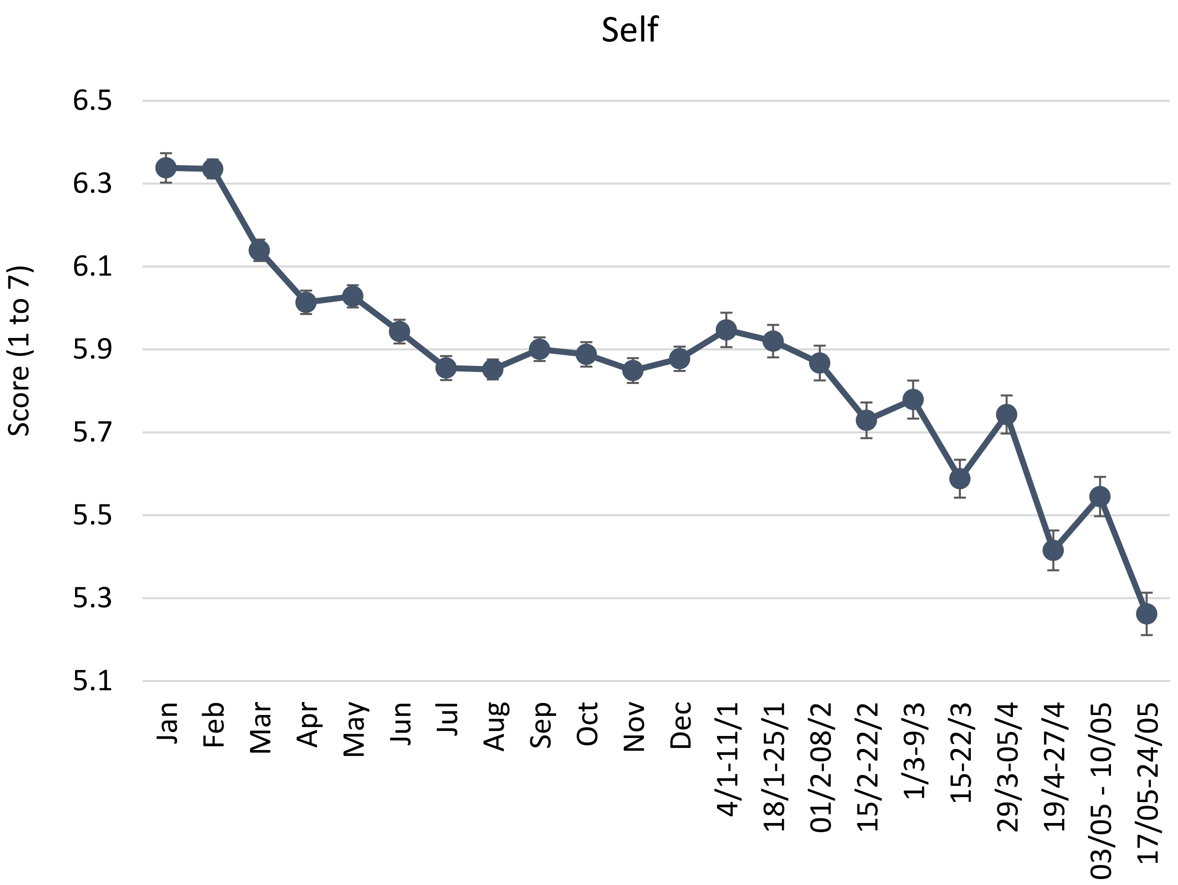
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

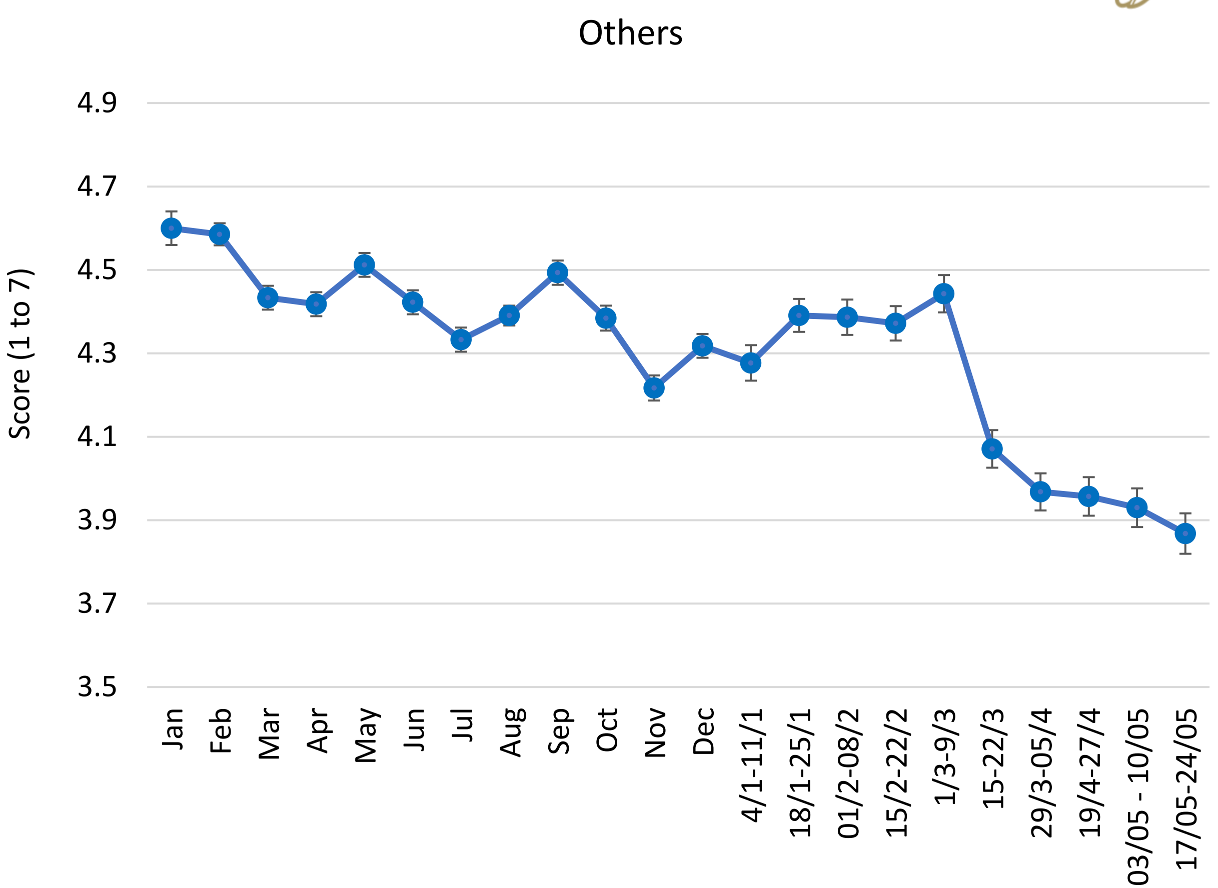
Government Response to the Pandemic



The number of people stating that the Government’s response to the pandemic was appropriate increased significantly this wave, while the proportion viewing it as insufficient declined.

Self-reported compliance

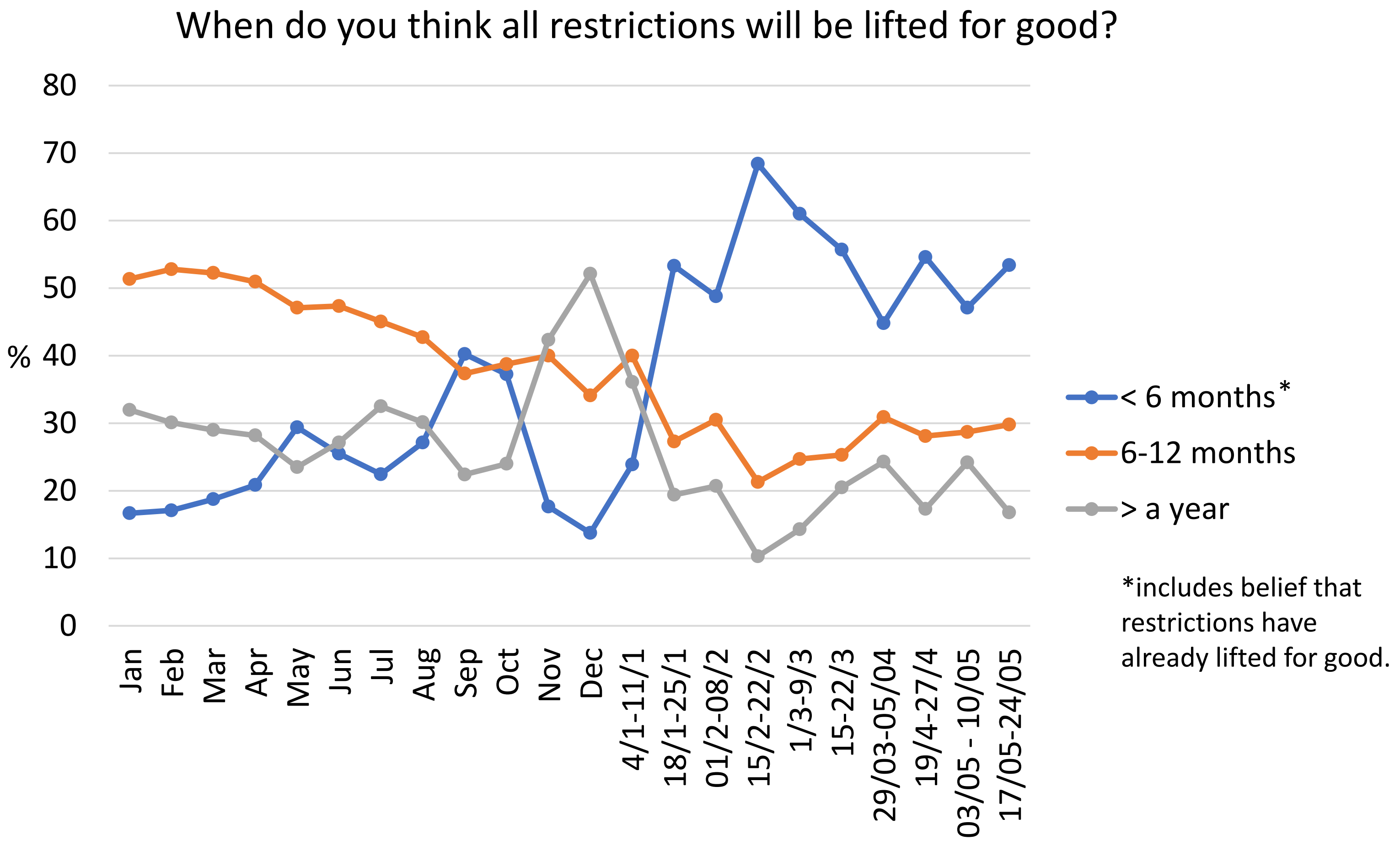




Self-reported compliance with public health recommendations continues to fall. No changes in perceived compliance of others. Despite the large falls that have occurred over the past 14 months, people have at all times believed that others are less compliant than they are themselves.

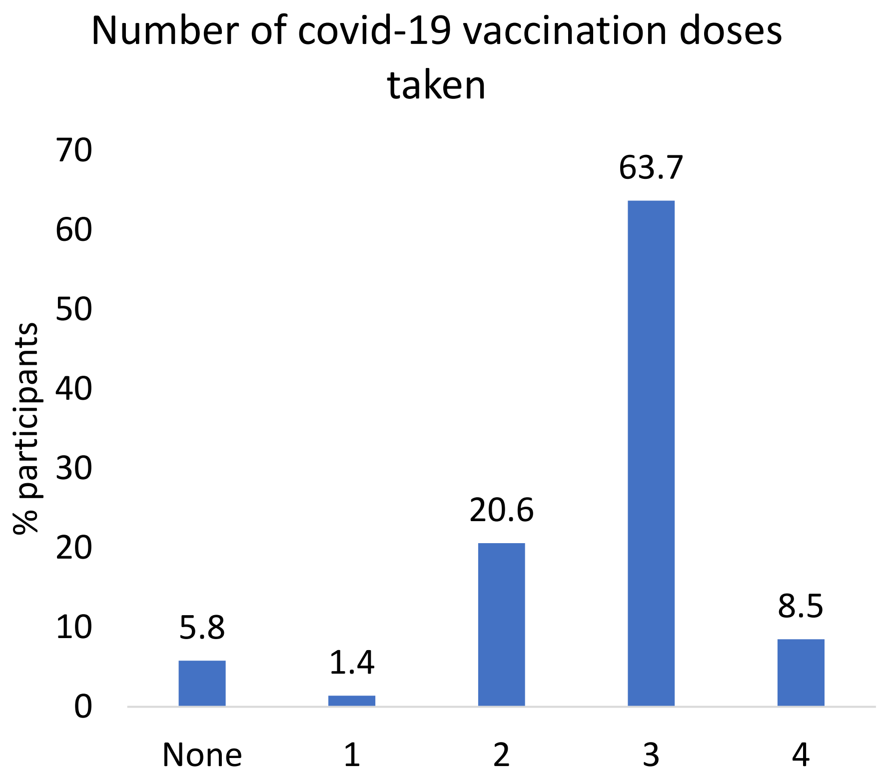
Source: ESRI Social Activity Measure for the Department of the Taoiseach

Long-term expectations



Long-term expectations have displayed some volatility in recent rounds of SAM, but remain similar to one month ago.

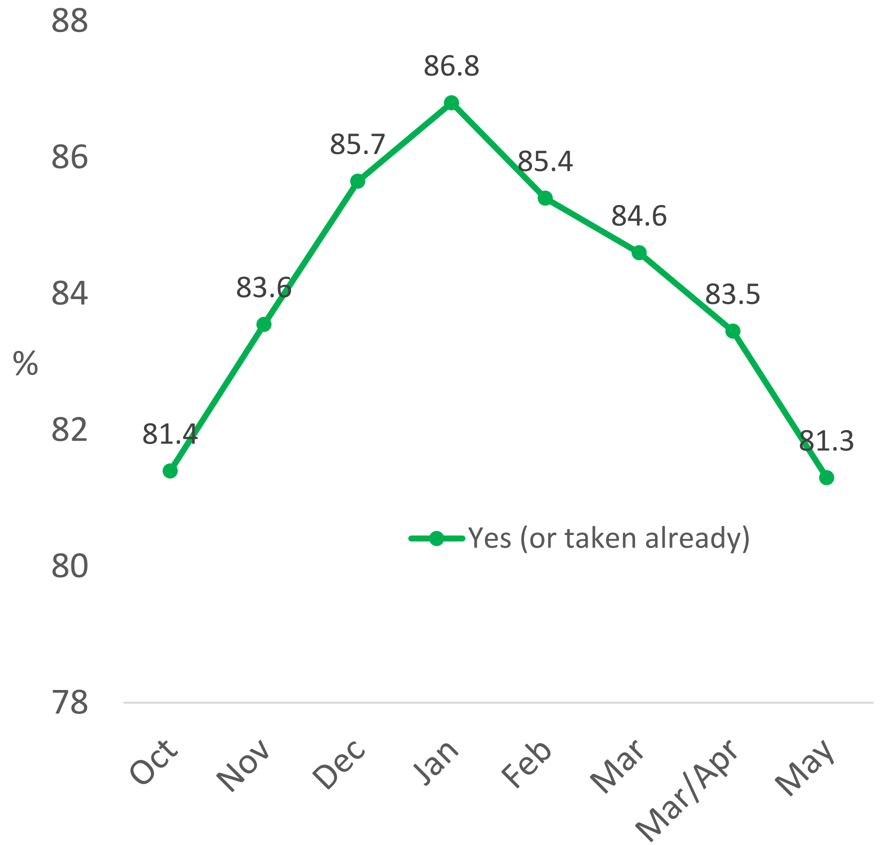
Vaccines

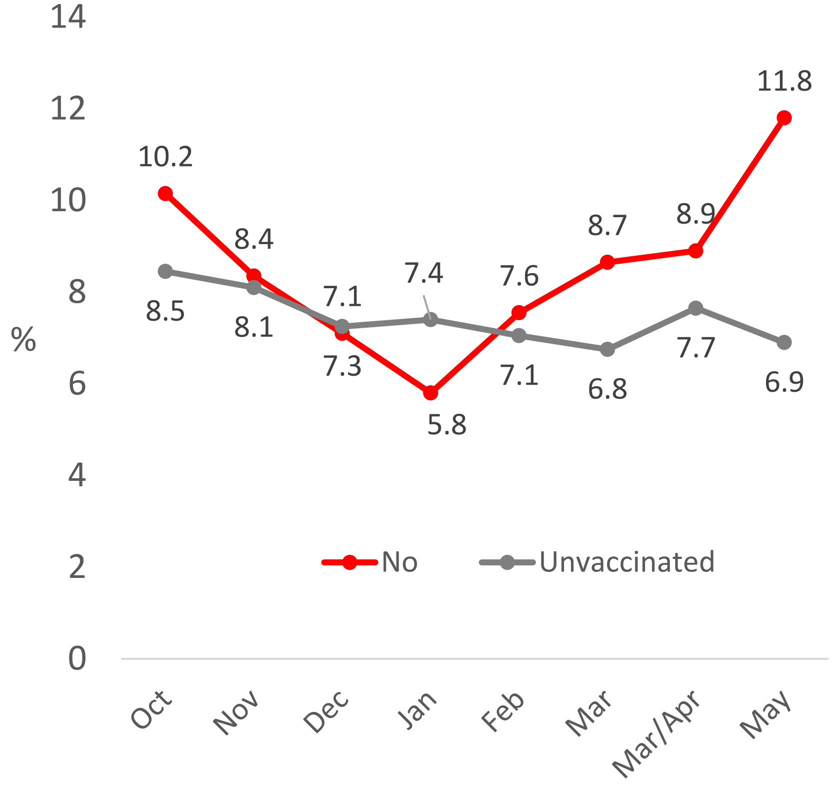


More than 70% have of adults report having taken at least one booster vaccine.

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

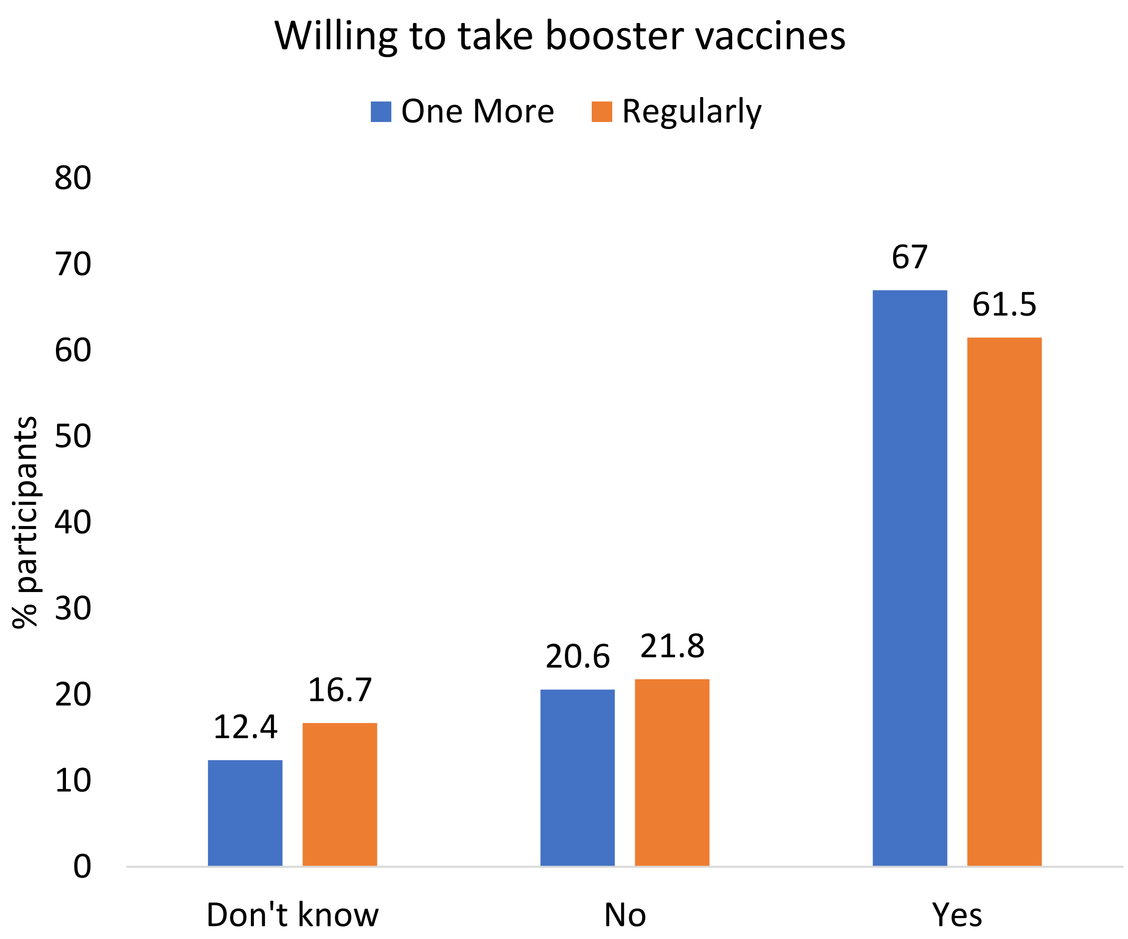
Booster vaccine intentions (adults)





More than 80% have either taken a booster vaccine or intend to take one, but the proportion saying that they will not take a booster has climbed to its highest level thus far, at over 10%.

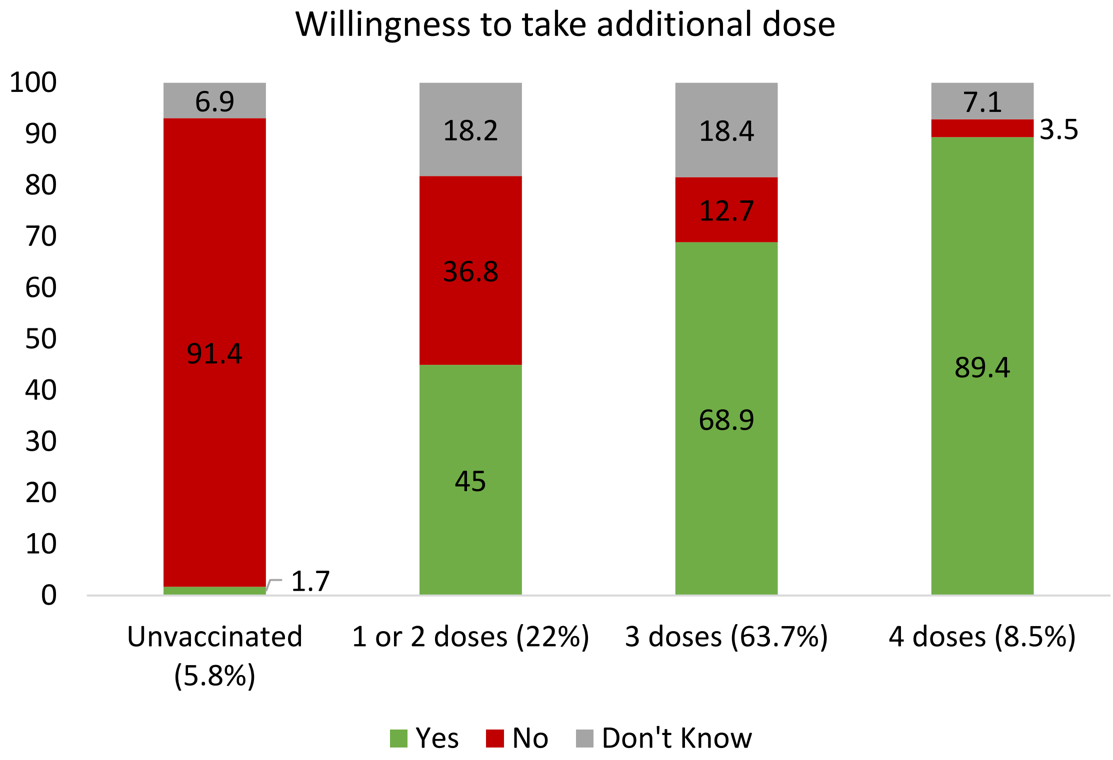
Booster Intentions

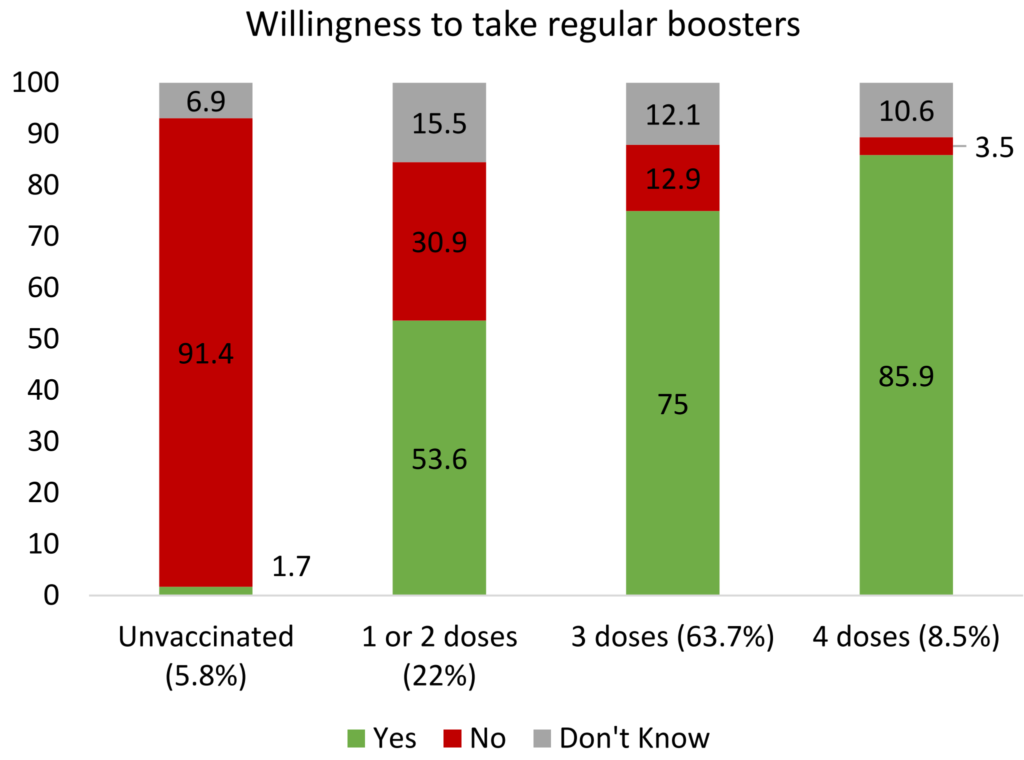


The majority report being willing to take an additional vaccine and to take booster vaccines regularly, although significantly fewer report the latter. One in five report being unwilling to take even one additional vaccine.

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

Booster Intentions

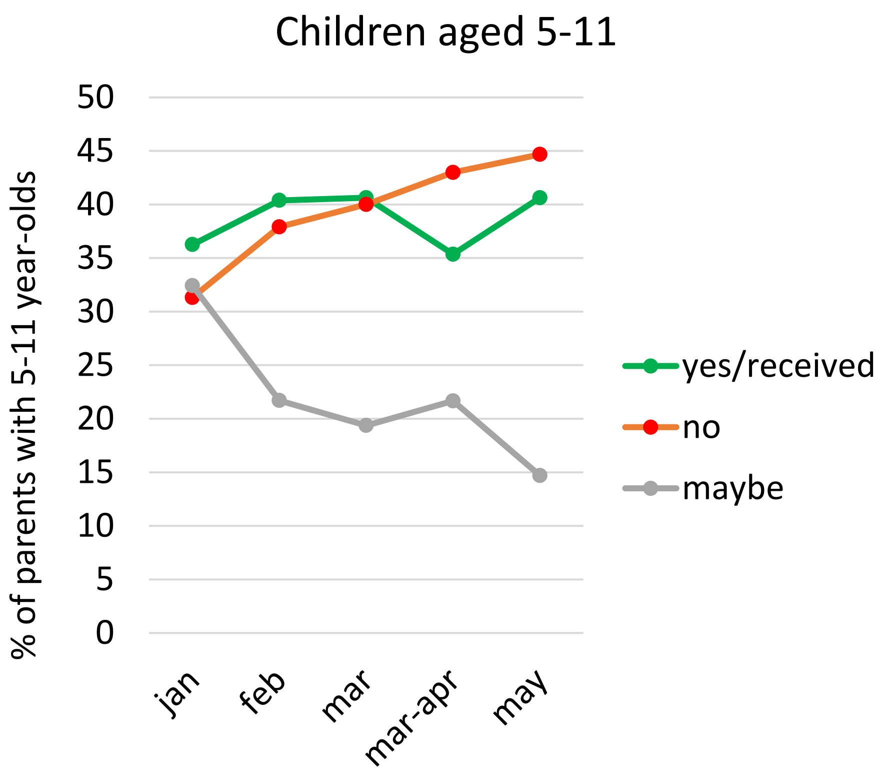


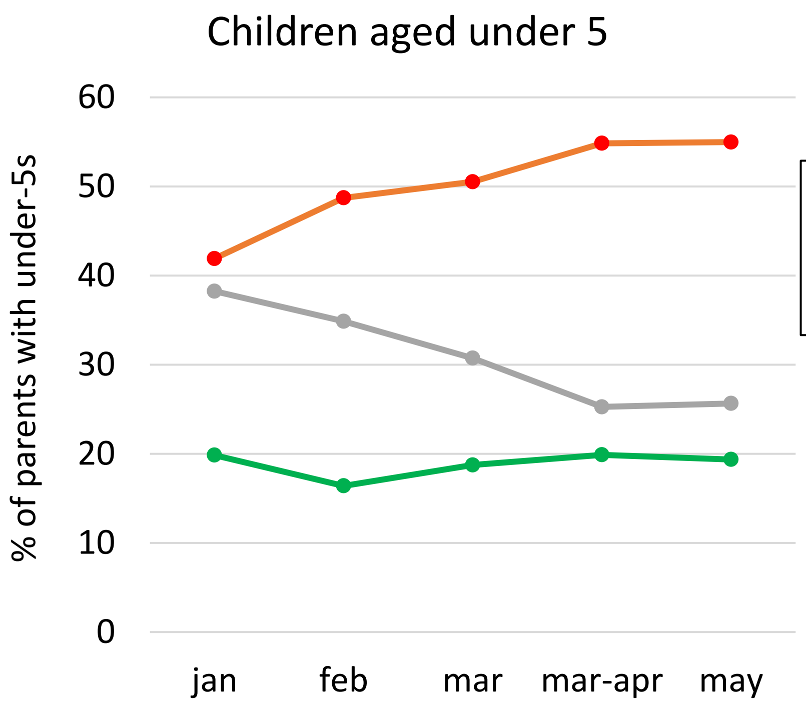


Approximately half of those who initially took the vaccine but have not yet taken a booster (22% of the adult population) report being willing to take an additional dose but have not yet done so. The majority of those who have taken a booster report being willing to take additional doses.

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

Vaccine intentions (children)

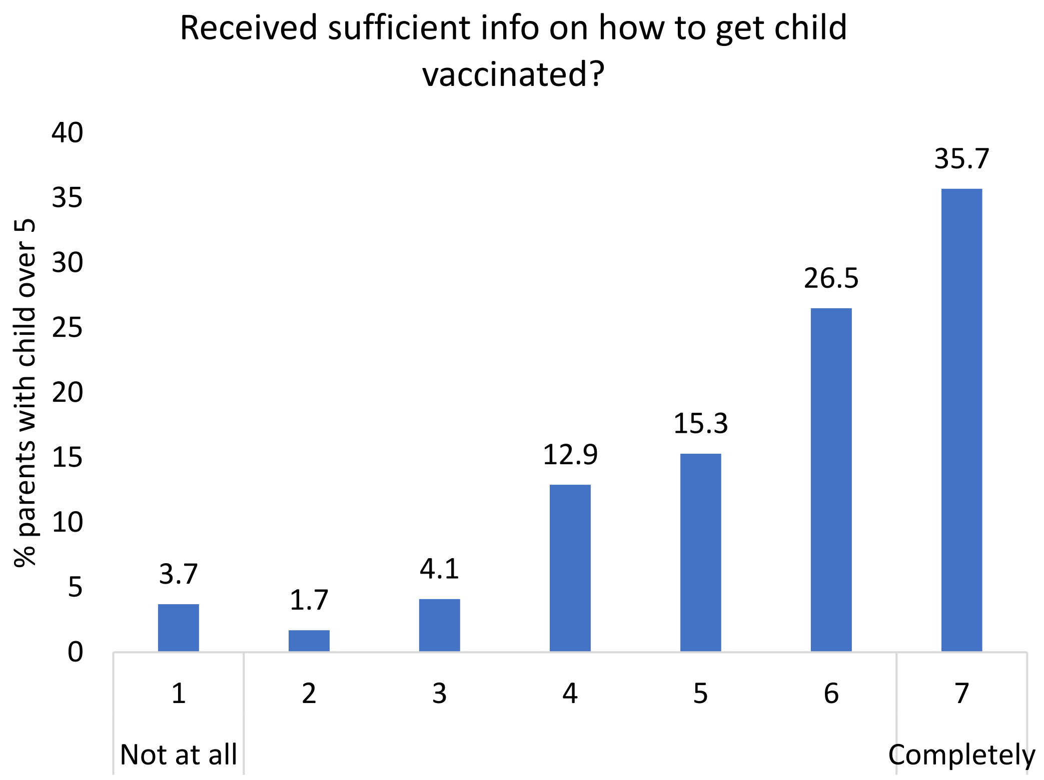


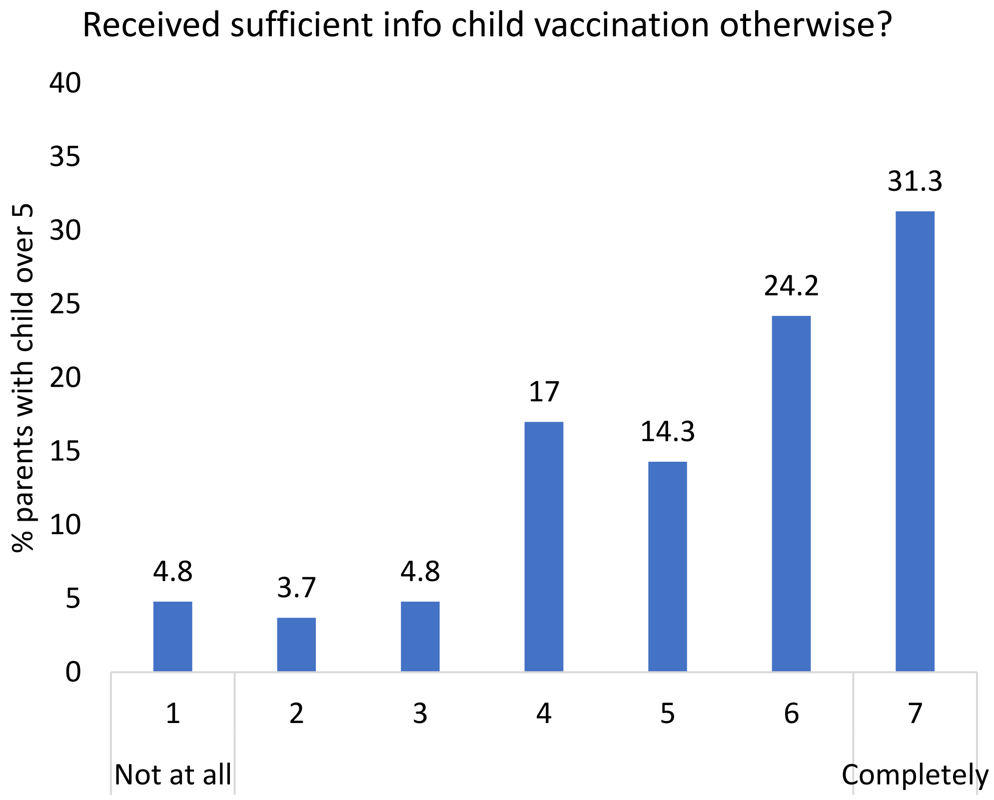


In the past month there has been no difference in the proportion of parents willing to vaccinate children.

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

Parental Vaccine Info Satisfaction

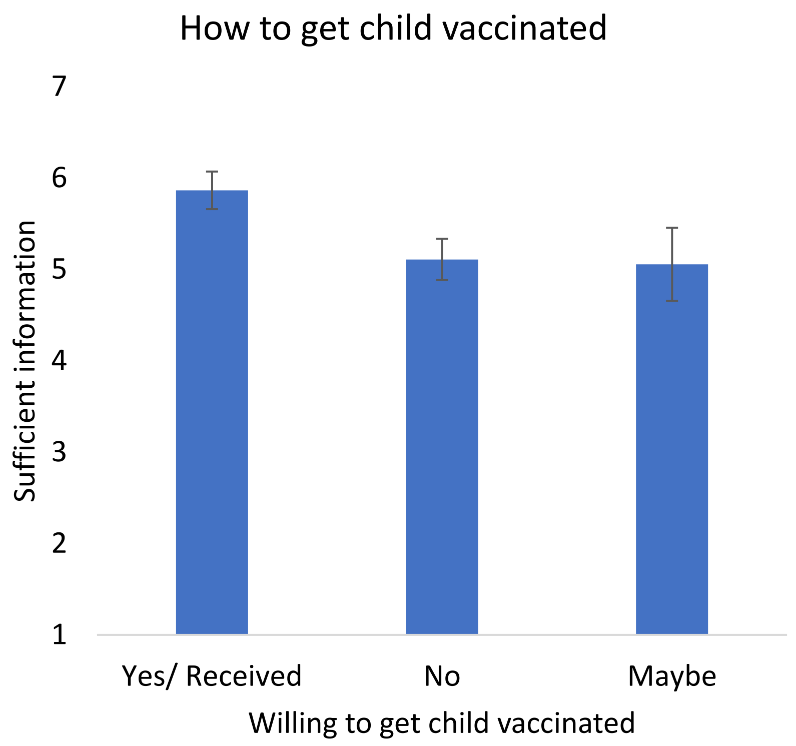


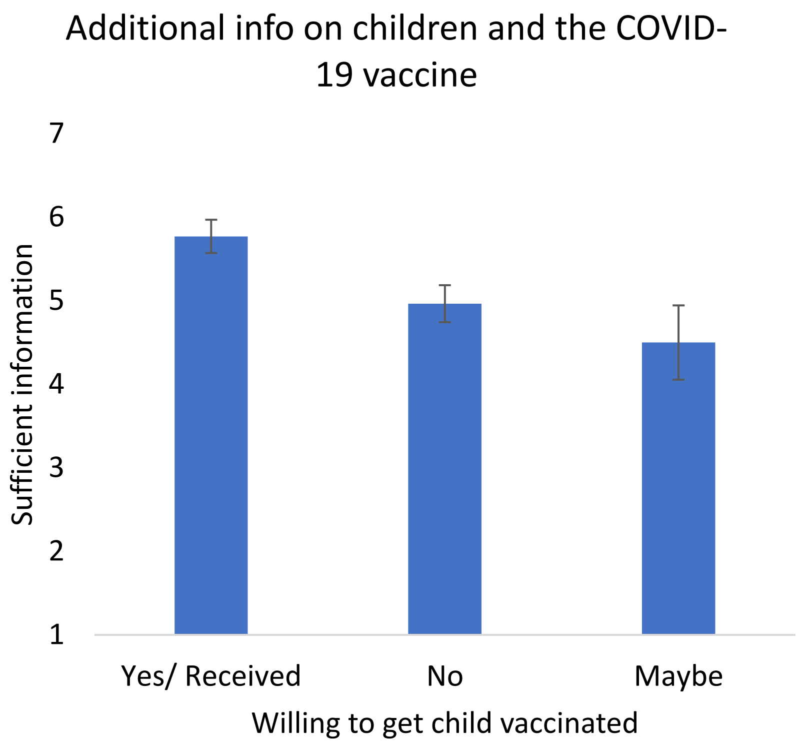


The majority of parents with a child over 5 years old (n=294 in this wave) report being satisfied with the information they have received regarding getting their child vaccinated.

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

Satisfaction with vaccine information for children 5-11





Those who were willing to or already had vaccinated their child aged between 5-11 were more likely to view the information around children and the covid-19 vaccination as sufficient than those who were not willing to/ were maybe willing to vaccinate their child.

* Only results from one wave will need to confirm with further waves

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