



# Barriers to adherence with COVID-19 restrictions: Findings from qualitative research with individuals in Scotland



**PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES**

# Findings from qualitative research with individuals in Scotland from 4 to 18 December 2020

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## **Introduction**

Scotland's Strategic Framework sets out why compliance and adherence with restrictions and guidance are a crucial part of the response to suppressing COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> This report presents information from research into people's experiences and includes people's own words about how they understand and feel able to adhere to the rules and guidance.

Polling data and other research has previously highlighted practical and emotional barriers that can affect people's ability to adhere to restrictions.<sup>2,3</sup> In order to develop the understanding of these barriers, and to better support people across Scotland to keep themselves and their communities safe, the Scottish Government conducted this new research to look at a number of questions about what people find easy, what they find difficult, and what further support would help them.

An online survey was set up to collect this information. It was available publically on the Scottish Government website from 4 to 18 December 2020. The survey was also promoted through a range of stakeholder organisations. In total, 457 responses were received, including 96 from people with some direct experience of self-isolation.<sup>4</sup>

Although it does not provide a nationally representative sample, this report provides a deeper level of understanding of the issues that people are facing, the links to wider wellbeing, and where additional support may further enable people to adhere to restrictions.

## **Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the people who took part in the research and provided information about their experiences.

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<sup>1</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Scotland's Strategic Framework - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-strategic-framework/pages/introduction.aspx)

<sup>2</sup> [Public attitudes to Coronavirus: November update - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-attitudes-to-coronavirus-november-update/pages/introduction.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): impact on wellbeing - research - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-impact-on-wellbeing-research/pages/introduction.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Further information about the sample and questions can be found in the annex

## **Main findings and observations:**

- The experience of the pandemic so far has been emotional for many. People are tired and are missing social connections.
- Despite this, people appear to care about the impact of their actions on other people – both those they know personally and their wider communities. This motivates some people to adhere.
- Restrictions that have less impact on time and finances, and are less emotionally challenging are easier to adhere to. Face coverings, physical distancing and handwashing were reported as being easiest to adhere to because they are relatively straightforward.
- Restrictions which have more impact on time and finances, and are more emotionally challenging are more difficult to adhere to. Travel restrictions and the impact on social interaction were reported as being difficult to adhere to because of their impact.
- People's capacity to adhere to various restrictions, including self-isolation, is affected by a range of practical factors, including their living arrangements, caring responsibilities, availability of food, finances, and health conditions.
- Finances have a strong impact on people's capacity to adhere to restrictions, including self-isolation and working from home, especially when they are worried about losing income.
- People feel a sense of solidarity and are encouraged to adhere themselves when they see other people following the restrictions. On the other hand, when people see others not adhering, they feel discouraged.
- Clear and accessible communications which justify and explain the importance of restrictions, and off-set the practical and emotional costs of compliance appear to be important elements for improving adherence.

## **1. What restrictions respondents found easiest to follow and why**

### **Clear guidance**

The most commonly reported factor respondents noted as making it easier to follow various restrictions and guidance was clear, regular and accessible guidance. Respondents mentioned various information sources, including daily briefings, BBC News, schools and social media.

**“I think the communication of the restrictions has been excellent, both in terms of the rationale for each of the constraints being well explained, but also the regularity and visibility of the messages”** man aged 70+, retired, not disabled

**“Daily briefings from FM and general communication from FM/Scottish Government have made the rationale behind restrictions clear”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled

**“Regular letters from the school on how they are tackling it has been helpful”** woman aged 55-64, self-employed, not disabled

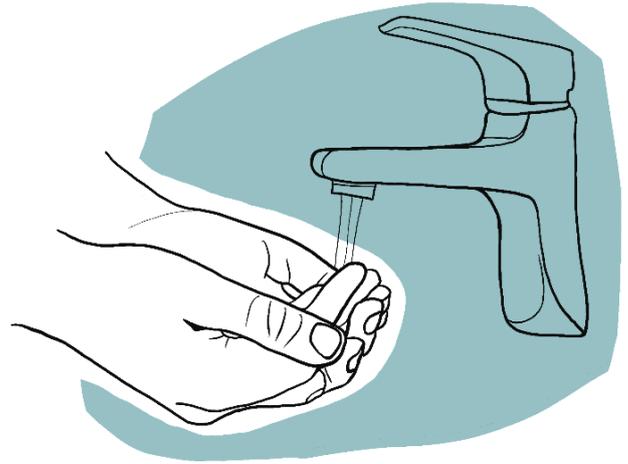
**“Consistent Scottish Government messages. Jason Leitch on Twitter. Janey Godley clips reinforcing message but in a humorous way!”** woman aged 45-54, self-employed, disabled

**“Visual information in BSL and subtitles from BBC Scotland / Scottish Politics at lunch time news”** man aged 65-69, self-employed, not disabled

## **FACTS behaviours**

The most commonly reported restrictions and guidance that people found easiest to follow were wearing face coverings, maintaining physical distancing, and washing their hands regularly.

Far fewer respondents reported that they found avoiding crowded places easy, and only a couple reported finding self-isolating easy. Only a very few respondents also mentioned the FACTS and Hands Face Space guidance explicitly as being helpful.



**“The things that apply to everyone – social distancing, mask wearing, handwashing and keeping to well ventilated places”**

woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“I do not mind wearing a mask. On a cold day it keeps my nose warm”**

woman aged 45-54, not working due to long-term illness or disability

**“the FACTS are good and clear guidance and knowing clear restrictions – even if they seem severe are better than layers and tiers”**

woman aged 55-64, employed full time, not disabled

**“wearing masks, social distancing, hand washing, avoiding crowded places and using establishments with good controls is very easy to follow...HANDS-FACE-SPACE is a good reminder”**

man aged 70+, retired, not disabled

## **Working from home and living arrangements**

Many respondents commented that it has been easy to follow working from home guidance. In particular, respondents noted the benefits of supportive employers and suitable living arrangements, as well as some challenges.

**“I find working from home for the most part easy as I have adapted to it. Although I do miss the face to face contact with my colleagues and my clients...I sometimes feel lonely and isolated working from home but I understand that it is safer for me to be working this way”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“Supportive employer, lucky enough to have the space at home for husband and I to work in separate rooms”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“The organisation I work for have made home working possible, provided flexibility, equipment and a wellbeing support network”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled



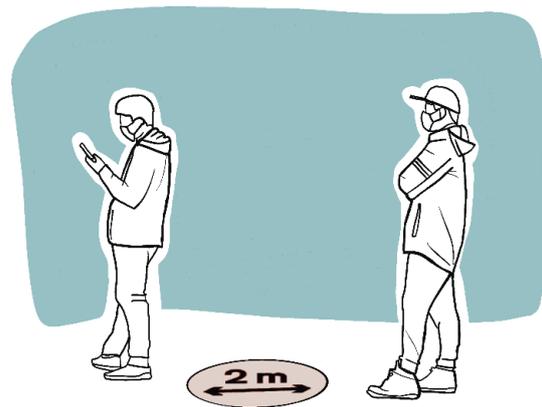
Other respondents acknowledged their comfortable living arrangements which enabled them to work from home and follow other regulations and guidance. Several respondents also noted the benefits of living in a rural area.

**“I am fortunate to have large garden space, good internet connectivity/digital skills, private car and in fairly close (5 minute drive) proximity to essential shops and services. This means I have been able to control my behaviour to the extent of minimising my risk to the virus without much negative impact on my quality of life”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Living in a village while shielding has made it much easier I think. I have open countryside on my doorstep and have still been able to walk my dog in the fresh air and avoid people”** man aged 55-64, not working due to long-term illness or disability, disabled

## Protecting other people

Another theme raised by respondents was a desire to protect other people, which was a helpful motivation that made it easier to follow various restrictions and guidance. This altruism and consideration of others included specific family and friends, as well as others more generally. Respondents also noted that understanding the risk of different behaviours is helpful.



**“Knowing that my actions benefit others and, in particular, keep my elderly parents as safe as possible”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Thoughts of my sister and her safety have always been top in my thoughts with everything I have done”** man aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“A sense of civic duty and social solidarity”** man aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“I am concerned for others rather than myself, so do not want to be responsible for passing on the virus to anyone, so this makes me very wary and willing to follow the restrictions”** woman aged 45-54, employed part time, disabled

**“I understand that these are not normal times and that activities where people come together are high risk for transmission”** woman aged 45-54, employed part time, disabled

## **Compliance of other people**

Respondents also shared that the compliance of other people helped to make it easier to follow various restrictions and guidance, with specific comments highlighting peer pressure as well as appreciation of, and support from, others in the same situation.

**“Since there are always at least two people or households involved, ‘peer’ pressure makes it easier to follow the rules. If ‘I’ don’t want to break the rules, it is difficult for ‘you’ to make me do so!”** woman aged 55-64, self-employed, not disabled

**“The glaring from others when you don’t follow the rules”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, disabled

**“High degree of compliance, the behaviour of others reminding you”** man aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Friends/family understanding the guidance and also following it”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“We are all in the same mind and keep each other going”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

## **2. What restrictions respondents found most difficult to follow and why**

### **Travel restrictions**

The most commonly reported restrictions and guidance that people found difficult to follow were travel restrictions. Several respondents noted some confusion about how such restrictions were applied, as well as what restrictions meant for those living near local authority boundaries.

**“Travel restrictions most difficult. I care for a sister who lives in a different Council area 15 miles from my home... She was in a level 4 area while I was in a level 3 area and I was unsure whether I could continue helping her”** woman aged 70+, retired, not disabled

**“It’s hard to know where you are allowed to travel to. Which parts of the Pentlands can I walk in for example. Where does Edinburgh end and Midlothian begin?!”** man aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“The travel restrictions have hit me hard as well because my family live in another city so I haven’t been able to see them as often as I would have liked”** woman aged 35-34, employed full time, not disabled

**“Where can you travel to e.g. 5 miles for exercise but from where – your house or the local authority border?”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“Where I stay is right on the cusp of the border with other LA areas and so I found this confusing and it increased my anxiety that I would be ‘caught’ going to my local Asda once per week for the family shop”** man aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

## **Restrictions on gatherings and socialising**

A large number of respondents also shared how difficult they found restrictions on meeting other households. Respondents mentioned missing loved ones, and limited opportunities to meet people.

**“It’s difficult not seeing the people that are most important to you face to face but we are lucky with today’s technology”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, disabled

**“Not being allowed to visit children and grandchildren is the hardest of all”** woman aged 55-64, retired, not disabled

**“Lack of ability to meet others, particularly now evenings are dark. I’m a single parent with a 19 year old student living at home so can’t bubble...single people have immense difficulty”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“I miss the support they give me and my husband and daughter, I miss being able to support them, I just miss the people I love”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

Restrictions on indoor home gatherings, including the rationale behind such restrictions, were noted by many.

**“The hardest part is not being allowed to have anyone round...as someone living on my own I would like to be able to have a friend round for a cup of coffee”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“If our child could see her grandparents inside a café...why can’t she see them in their own home...we find it non-sensical and frustrating but have stuck to it anyway”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“My parents are elderly and live 5 mins away from me. I am utterly desperate to be able to go into their house and sit down to have a cup of tea and a chat with them”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, disabled

The financial impact of restrictions on gatherings were also highlighted.

**“Financial insecurity and having to spend more money in public spaces to socialise outside your household, rather than more cheaply in your house”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled

**“I do not have the finances to go out for a meal whenever I need to see another household”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled

## **Compliance of other people**

Many respondents commented that seeing other people not following the rules was frustrating, particularly when affecting relationships with family and friends.

**“My teenagers are constantly upset because their friends are meeting indoors and ignoring the restrictions, it feels like we are punishing them by following guidelines”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“There is much due to social pressure. Some of my friends do not follow the rules and still meet up at each other’s homes. It is therefore hard to constantly have to reject joining them and it makes me worried about how it might affect our relationships in the future”** man aged 25-34, employed part time, disabled

**“People not following or blatantly ignoring the rules and putting me at risk”** man aged 55-64, employed part time, disabled

**“Family members not appreciating the danger of mixing households and the risks to everyone”** man aged 18-24, studying at school, college or university, not disabled

Many respondents specifically highlighted the impact of other people not keeping physically distanced.

**“Other people do not stick with the 2 metres guidance so it makes it difficult to always follow this myself as others come too close”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled

**“Shops and pavements are frequently too cramped to properly distance from others and other people often disregard the distancing rules”** man aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled

## **Understanding and trusting guidance**

Many respondents also commented that it was difficult to keep track of what current restrictions were in place. Specific comments referenced guidance changing too often, difficulty understanding changes, and national variation.

**“Knowing where exactly I am allowed to travel because it has varied...working out what to do if the Levels change can be confusing”** man aged 70+, retired, disabled

**“There has been too much conflicting information on TV/online/sent in emails. Which makes for Covid-19 Overload. I stopped paying attention quite a while ago because of this. Better to follow my own common sense”** woman aged 55-64, disabled

**“It would have been beneficial to have a UK approach with Tiers in use across the country and these could be administered by the devolved administrations etc”** man aged 70+, retired, not disabled

**“The complexity of these rules long ago went past the stage when they could be effective. Public health measures need to be understood to be effective”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

Several respondents also noted challenges in trusting guidance from official sources because of perceived lack of evidence and failings of government.

**“Knowing that care home residents were not protected and the Government had failed in this respect made it difficult to trust what the Government was telling me”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, disabled

**“Lack of concrete evidence for many of the rules of restrictions. Seemingly contradictory advice and guidance. Lack of clear leadership from government”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

## **Caring responsibilities**

Many respondents also noted difficulties related to their caring responsibilities for family members, specifically related to not understanding guidance and adapting to keep people safe.

**“Supporting vulnerable person – not clear at times what is allowed”** woman aged 55-64, employed full time, not disabled

**“Unpaid Carer for my son who has recently moved into his own home. Tried to limit contact but difficult when having to recruit more staff to support him”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled

**“Difficult to always know what to do for my 84 year old dad who lives on his own in a different LA area”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“Not visiting my Mum at home...as she lives on her own and she often needs help to bits and bobs – I couldn’t call myself her carer though”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Travel to support my Dad concerns me, but he requires the support”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

## Health conditions and disability

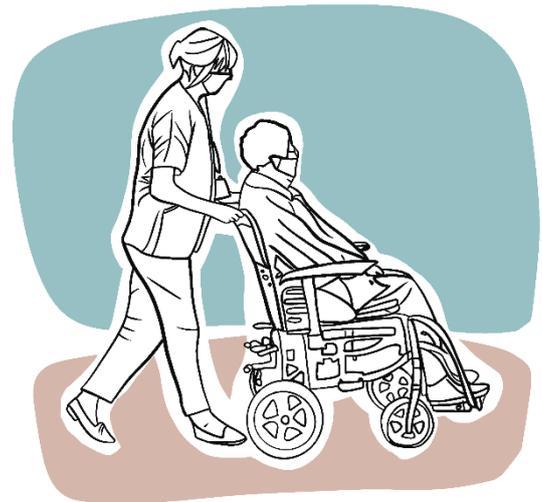
Several respondents noted the impact of their own health conditions, particularly on interacting with others.

**“I’m clinically vulnerable, but I miss seeing people so much. I miss the office, I miss my friends. I miss being a human”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, disabled

**“I use a wheelchair and I need help to go anywhere at all. If I am to meet anyone then it has to be inside due to my health issues”** woman aged 55-64, retired, disabled

**“Communication barriers – Closed face masks are difficult to follow and they are unsuitable for people with deafness. It covers bottom half of facial expressions and mouth/lip movements and also the sound of a voice muffled when talking”** man aged 65-69, self-employed, not disabled

**“Deafness and the need to communicate to keep me from lowering mood. It’s been very isolating”** man aged 55-64, retired, disabled



Other respondents who work with disabled people noted confusion around changing restrictions and challenges communicating.

**“I work with individuals with learning disability and they really struggle when the restrictions change as they find it confusing”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“I work with people with dementia, strokes and brain injuries, learning difficulties and disabilities. Communication with these groups can be difficult using technology, particularly since I have a mild hearing impairment myself”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

## Schooling and childcare

Several respondents also noted challenges related to schooling, including the detrimental impact on learning, limited support for home learning, and difficulties arranging childcare.

**“My son not wanting to go to school but not receiving support to learn at home”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, disabled

**“The schools are still open. This is causing a huge amount of stress with the whole family. My son has had to self isolate 3 times now, missing 6 weeks of school and is still expected to sit higher exams...there is no support for home learning due to the schools being open which is causing a great deal of inequality in learning”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, disabled

**“Having a toddler is difficult at the best of times. Both my partner and I are nurses, it has been difficult to obtain child care whilst observing lockdown policy. Also, engaging in activity with our child has been difficult”** man aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled



### **3. Whether respondents found it easier to follow local restrictions in operation during December 2020 than the national lockdown from March to June 2020**

#### **Harder now – confusion, fatigue, winter weather, and the compliance of others**

A large number of respondents mentioned that the national lockdown between March and June 2020 was easier to understand, and so easier to follow than the Levels system. In particular, current rules were described as confusing and hard to keep up with.

**“I have no idea what the restrictions are for all the different elements of my life and my children's lives”** woman aged 45-54, employed part time, not disabled

**“We all knew just where we were. Now there are so many different bits of info which can be interpreted differently according to people’s perceptions”** woman aged 65-69, employed part time, disabled

**“I work with individuals with Learning disability and they really struggle when the restrictions change as they find it confusing”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

Many respondents expressed fatigue and weariness about the length of time the virus and restriction measures have been about. Some noted that they are finding it hard to face restrictions again after these were relaxed.

**“Needs more dedication now - people are tired and tired of the rules. Life feels as if it is on hold and will never be the same again. So it’s harder now”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“The longer restrictions go on for the harder it is. It’s difficult to go back to some level of normality (e.g. meet friends, go to cinema) and then that to be unavailable again”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

Some respondents noted that dark nights, and cold and wet weather made these restrictions harder to follow compared to the previous national lockdown, both practically and emotionally.

**“Much harder. This is mostly due to living on my own and trying to cope with the restrictions when getting out is a little harder now, due to the colder/wetter weather and the evenings are so long and dark. I feel very isolated”** woman aged 55-64, not working due to long-term illness or disability

**“We've really exhausted all the local walks and play parks and it's getting colder and wetter and harder to keep everyone busy”** woman aged 25-34, employed part time, not disabled

**“Because of the dark nights and colder weather [it's] much more difficult to feel positive and to meet people out of doors”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

Perceptions that people are not taking social distancing or restrictions as seriously as last March were also evident in respondents' accounts. In particular, distancing in shops was mentioned several times as a concern.

**“Compliance appears to have reduced. It is harder to not go to visit family and friends when most people are travelling for work”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Earlier in the year there was more attention paid to social distancing especially in supermarkets/shops etc. That has completely gone now and commonly I find people barging by with no heed paid at all to social distancing”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled



### **Easier now – more freedom and familiarity**

Several respondents described the December restrictions as easier as they found the relaxation of some rules gave them more flexibility and choice over what they can do. Others noted they found it easier than lockdown as, over time, they have adapted their lives to a 'new normal'.

**“School has assisted with this since it enables a routine and less onus on the parents. In saying that, I do feel some nervousness around transmission in school and passing to parents/ family members”** woman aged 45-54, working part time, not disabled

**“Slightly easier as the travel restrictions are extended to local authority but this is the restriction we find most tempted to break”** woman aged 45-54, working full time, disabled

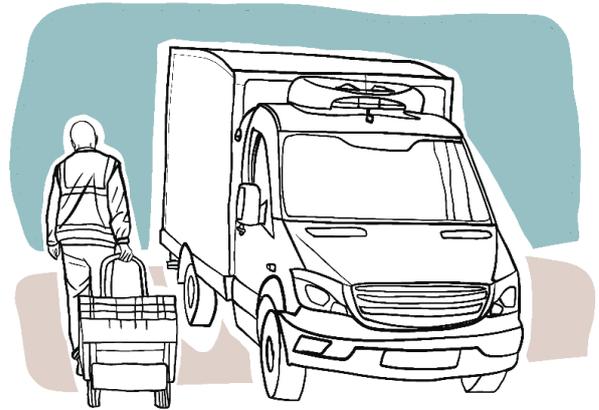
**“I feel as a family we have found our routine with it now and are accepting that this is our life at the moment”** woman aged 45-54, working full time, not disabled

**“Easier (but it's still difficult), probably because it's become a way of life now”** woman aged 45-54, working full time, disabled

## 4. Experiences of self-isolation and suggestions to make it easier to self-isolate

### Food provision

The most commonly reported difficulty relating to self-isolation was accessing food and other essential supplies. This was true for all respondents whether or not they had experienced self-isolation. Specifically, respondents noted difficulty accessing supermarket delivery slots, and having friends and family nearby to support them.



**“We had to leave home for exercise and to buy food as we have no one to rely on to help us and the online shopping was both prohibitively expensive and inaccessible due to high demand”**

man aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“I did not have family living nearby and all the supermarket delivery slots were taken. It was difficult to get essentials”**

woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“It was OK but because both people in the home had to isolate we relied on friends for supplies and were concerned that we were therefore putting them at higher risk...despite assurances that supermarkets prioritised online delivery for people having to isolate it was not the case”**

woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“Food shopping as it is impossible to stick to budget when other people doing your shopping”**

woman aged 55-64, self-employed, not disabled

**“Getting food. I don’t really have anyone I could ask to do that for me”**

woman aged 55-64, not working due to long-term illness or disability

## **Living arrangements**

Many respondents noted the impact their living arrangements had, or would have, on their experience of self-isolating. Comments highlight the differences in experiences between respondents with large homes and financial resources, and those in small or potentially crowded housing.

**“We have a large house and garden staying home was straightforward. We had already been buying extras to ensure we could cope if we couldn’t go out so getting food wasn’t a problem...don’t have any caring responsibilities...didn’t have financial worries”** woman aged 55-64, employed full time, disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“For me I would be OK – I can afford online food deliveries and have a lovely garden to go outside, but if people have limited funds and live in flats or with no garden the confinement must be awful”** woman aged 55-64, employed full time, not disabled

**“I found it very challenging as I had to work from home with my four year old son. As I am currently staying with family whilst I wait for my own home this was crowded and not ideal”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“The house is too small to be able to keep safely away from each other. There’s only one bathroom for instance”** woman aged 45-54, not working due to long-term illness or disability

## Finances

Many respondents highlighted the impact that their financial situation had, or would have, on self-isolating. Specific comments related to being able to afford household bills and food, the impact of reduced and uncertain incomes, and unexpected costs associated with self-isolation, such as paying for dog walkers.

**“not being able to heat the house or use electricity, due to no salary not being able to attend work and not getting paid, then worrying how to pay bills and buy food”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“If it happened repeatedly – worrying about the financial impact. I could cope okay with a couple of weeks on SSP [statutory sick pay] but more than that would start to get tricky”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“Only receiving statutory sick pay of £91 per week, this would cause huge financial pressures and debt”** woman aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“My partner is on a zero hours contract. If they needed to self-isolate there would be no pay for that period”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, disabled

**“I have a dog and no garden – cost for a cheap dog walker is 10 per day. Even then it’s not fair on the dog to only get out for a pee once a day – practically this is just very hard to get around...shopping delivery costs are fairly high”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

## **Caring responsibilities**

Many respondents highlighted the impact that that self-isolation had, or would have, on their caring responsibilities, particularly for those who are sole carers.

**“As we are carers for my father in law who has dementia it was very difficult managing his care especially when it came to shopping...our young son did not understand the need to self isolate and was getting frequently distressed”** woman aged 45-54, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“The main worry was that no one else could attend to my father”** woman aged 45-64, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“I have a disabled daughter and an elderly mother who rely on me for shopping, prescriptions and medical appointments”** woman aged 45-64, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

## **Suggestions to make self-isolation easier**

Respondents suggested a range of ideas including ensuring availability of supermarket delivery slots, financial support, allowing outdoor exercise (including caring for pets), support or befriending phone calls, and greater enforcement.

**“A priority food delivery service to make sure you have healthy and fresh food”** woman aged 25-34, employed full time, not disabled, experience of self-isolation

**“being sent a food money voucher with free delivery for an online shop from a major supermarket”** woman aged 55-64, employed part time, not disabled

**“Help with shopping, dog walking and a regular call from someone to chat to”** woman, aged 70+, retired, disabled

**“It should be recognised that not everyone have supportive network around them to do their shopping or walk their dogs”** woman, aged 70+, retired, not disabled

**“Being able to go for a walk, perhaps early or late, when it is quiet”** woman, aged 35-44, employed full time, not disabled

**“clearer guidance on self isolation and proper enforcement (it’s very hard to follow guidelines when you see everyone you know bend and break those very same rules with no consequences)”** man aged 25-34, employed part time, disabled, experience of self-isolation



## Annex

### Sample details:

Respondents were self-selecting and were recruited through engagement with partner stakeholder organisations working across Scotland. Basic demographic information was collected from respondents to support analysis. It is not a nationally representative sample. It is not representative of the wider Scottish population.

- **Age** – Around three fifths (59%) of respondents were aged between 45 and 64, around a quarter (27%) were aged 18-44, and around one in ten (13%) were aged 65+
- **Gender** – the majority (79%) of respondents were women, and under a fifth (18%) were men
- **Disability** – around one third (34%) of respondents reported having a long-standing physical or mental impairment, illness or disability which is expected to last 12 months or more
- **Ethnicity** – the majority (98%) of respondents were white
- **Employment** – over half (56%) of respondents were employed full-time in March of 2020, under a fifth (18%) were employed part-time, and just over one in ten (12%) were retired

### Questions:

Respondents were asked to respond freely to the following questions.

1. Which parts of the restrictions and guidance do you find it easiest to follow?
2. What has made it easier for you to follow these restrictions?
3. What parts of the restrictions and guidance do you find it most difficult to follow?
4. What has made it difficult for you to follow these restrictions?
5. Are you finding it easier or harder to follow the current local restrictions now than the national lockdown restrictions earlier in the year (from March to June)?
6. Have you been required to self-isolate for any of these reasons (not including shielding) since the beginning of March 2020? [Yes/No]
7. If yes, please could you describe your experience(s) of self-isolation, including anything that made it difficult for you to stay at home?
8. If yes, please could you share what would have made the experience easier and allowed you to stay at home for the full time required?
9. If no, what do you think would be most difficult about having to self-isolate for 14 days if required to do so?
10. What do you think would make it easier to self-isolate for 14 days if required to do so?

Responses were analysed thematically by Scottish Government researchers. Common themes were identified and excerpts from different respondents were used to illustrate these themes.

### Limitations:

The sample for this research was self-selected, and is not representative of the wider Scottish population. Furthermore, the nature of online research inherently excludes those who do not have internet access. This report nevertheless provides useful and timely information, as long as appropriate caveats are applied.



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