HorizonResearch
LISTENING TO NEW ZEALAND

Attitudes to Self-Isolation

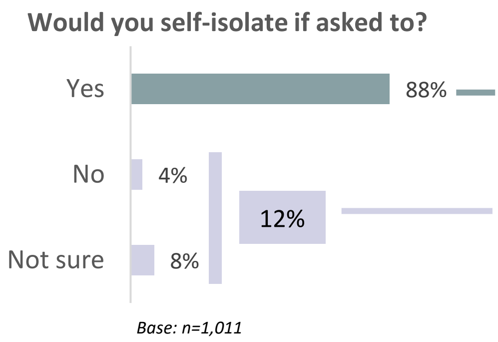
February 2022 Final Report

In association with
the School of Population Health,
University of Auckland.

Prepared for:
Behavioural Insights
Science and Insights Group,
COVID-19 Directorate,
Ministry of Health.

CONTENTS

KEY FINDINGS



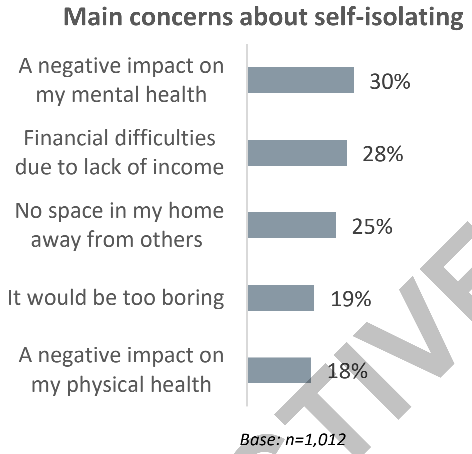
Around 450,000 people will not self-isolate or are unsure about self-isolating if asked to.

If asked to, almost nine out of ten (88%) would self-isolate (equivalent to 3,489,000 people).

However, 4% will not isolate (150,000 people) and 8% are unsure (305,000 people), meaning 12% (455,000 people) are at risk of spreading the virus.

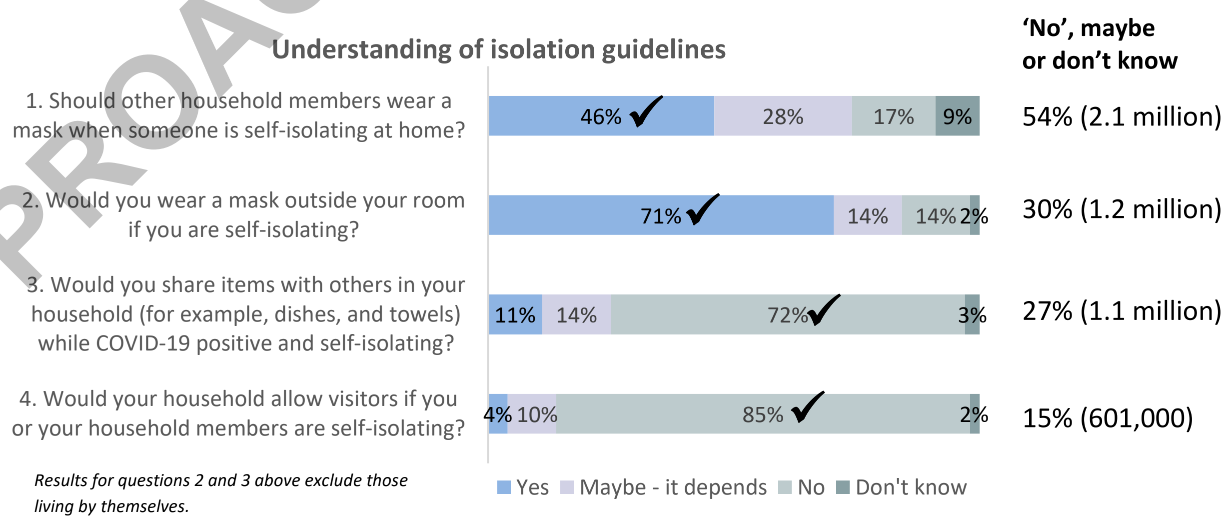
At the 95% confidence level there are no significant differences in likelihood to be vaccinated by ethnicity, income levels, employment status, educational level, identify as disabled or with health issues, household type and household numbers, region or DHB area.

Likelihood to self-isolate	
Less likely ↓	**More likely ↑**
• Male 85% • **Will not get vaccinated 34%**	• Female 92% • Age 45-54 93% • Clerical/Sales Employee 96%



Main concerns about self-isolating relate to people's mental and physical health, financial pressure, not having the space to self-isolate and boredom.

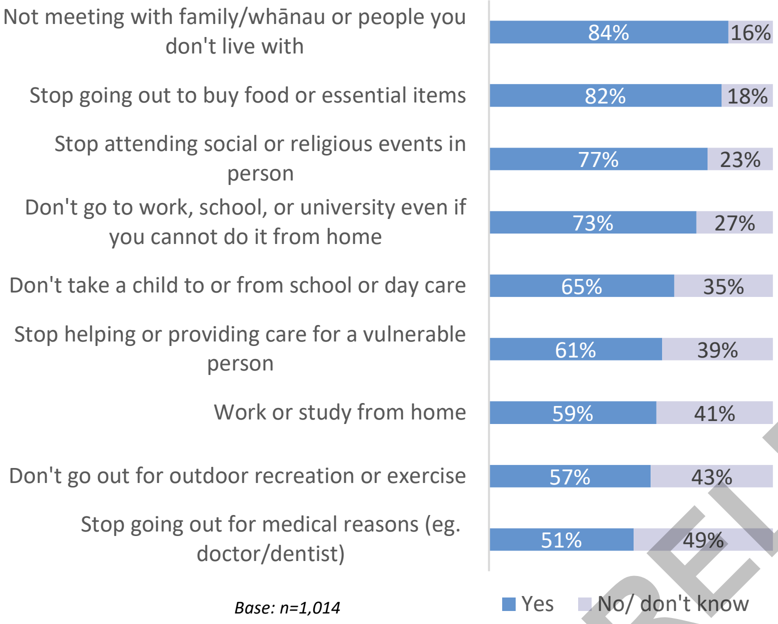
An estimated 1,147,000 people are concerned about negative impacts on their mental health while 997,000 don't have enough space in their homes to self-isolate.



Results for questions 2 and 3 above exclude those living by themselves.
Base for Q 1 and 4: n=1,010
Base for Q 2 and 3: n=855

While most will definitely do the right thing when self-isolating, still large numbers of people will do the wrong thing or are unsure.

Actions people would take if they need to self-isolate



Base: n=1,014

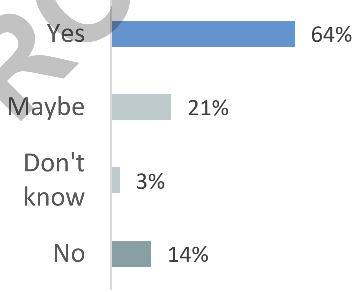
Most common actions include not meeting with family/whanau, not going out to buy household supplies, avoiding events and not going to places of education.

43% indicated they could go out for recreation and 49% for medical reasons.

The extent that people said they will not undertake an activity or don't know is concerning, as not undertaking these activities will place them and others at risk of infection by COVID-19. As an example, 23% (equivalent to 910,000 people nationally) did not say they would stop attending social or religious events. The issue here is that indoor social facilities and church buildings etc. are settings which may have vulnerable people attending with typical behaviours (e.g. singing) being favourable for mass transmission.

NB. This question only asked people to identify the actions they would undertake ('yes' in the above chart). However, for ease of analysis we included a 'no/don't know' category showing those who did not select each action.

Have support person/s outside the home who could help?



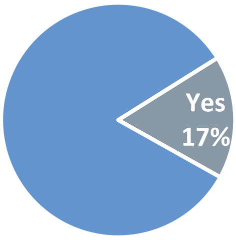
Base: n=1,012

At the 95% confidence level there are no significant differences in having outside support by gender, employment status ethnicity, income levels, educational level, being disabled or having health issues, region or DHB area.

Almost two-thirds (64%) definitely have whānau/family, neighbours or friends outside their household available to support them if needed and another 21% could possibly get this support.

However, 14% do not have outside support (equivalent to 538,000 people nationally).

Likelihood to have outside support ('yes')	
Less likely ↓	**More likely ↑**
• Unemployed/Beneficiary 48% • Living alone 55%	• Age 65 or more 73% • Have 2 doses + booster 70%



Base: n=1,011

Around one in six people had previously self-isolated in the last two years

17% (equivalent to 653,000 people) had self-isolated in the last two years, either at home or at an MIQ facility.
The main reason to self-isolate was waiting for the results of a COVID test that ended up testing negative (10%).

Government websites and healthcare providers are the most preferred COVID-19 information sources

Four most trusted sources	Top four places people would go for information	Top four sources of information if people test positive
73% **Healthcare providers**	73% **NZ Government websites**	68% **Healthcare providers**
66% **NZ Government websites**	62% **Healthcare providers**	51% **NZ Government websites**
35% **Hotline services** (e.g. Healthline)	30% **Hotline services** (e.g. Healthline)	48% **Hotline services** (e.g. Healthline)
24% **New Zealand news media**	24% **New Zealand news media**	9% **My employer**

Some verbatim comments

"I am the sole earner in my family and if I had to isolate for too long would not have enough income to pay bills, especially if other members in the household have to isolate too."

"My wife and I have decided that if one of us were to require isolation we would isolate together, so the questions about isolating alone don't really apply."

"My mental health will really struggle with self-isolating."

"Need to get on with life and treat people equally whether vaccinated or not. Go convoy!!"

"I don't think that self-isolating from other members of my household would make a difference... they would get it in anyway."

"Family or friend support is fine but in a massive outbreak we could all be self-isolating- what then?"

"I am effectively self-isolating now, not because I am unwell but out of fear."

APPENDIX 1 – SOCIAL EQUITY ISSUES

The analysis following focuses on vulnerable groups in the community. We examined whether the following groups are particularly disadvantaged by having to self-isolate:

- Māori and Pasifika
- elderly people and young adults
- disabled people and those living with impairments or long-term health conditions (described as 'with significant health issues')
- people living by themselves and flatting or boarding
- low income people

If asked to, would NOT self-isolate by vulnerable group

At the 95% confidence level, **no significant higher results** were identified compared with the total (4% of the total would not self-isolate if asked to).

Do NOT have outside support by vulnerable group

Only one vulnerable group is **more likely** than the total not to have outside support:

- **those with the lowest household incomes.**

All other results including those for Māori and Pasifika are in line with the total.

	Total %	Significantly more likely ↑	
Do NOT have whanau/family, neighbours or friends outside your household available to support if help is needed	13%	'Earn less than $20,000 household income per year	26%

Concerns of vulnerable groups

Young adults aged 25-34 are particularly concerned about:

- **Their mental health**
- **Boredom**
- **Having caring responsibilities that would make self-isolation impossible.**

Those aged 18 to 24 are more likely to say they don't have the space at home to self-isolate. The concerns of Māori and Pasifika are similar to the total population except Pasifika have relatively more financial concerns. Those who are flatting or boarding are especially concerned about their mental health and boredom. Not surprisingly, disabled people and those with significant health issues are more likely to say they have health or medical needs that would make it hard to self-isolate.

Main concerns about self-isolating	**Total %**	**Significantly more concern ↑**	
Self-isolation would have a negative impact on my **mental health**	30%	Those flatting or boarding Young adults aged 25-34	51% 37%
Financial difficulties due to lack of income from self-isolating	28%	Pasifika	44%
I **don't have a space** in my home away from others	25%	Those flatting or boarding Those aged 18 to 24	48% 46%
Self-isolation would be too **boring**	19%	Young adults aged 18-24	34%
Self-isolation would have a negative impact on my **physical health**	18%	*No groups identified*	
I have **health or medical needs** that would make it hard	12%	Identify as disabled Have significant health issues	43% 27%
I have **caring responsibilities** that would make self-isolation impossible	10%	Young adults aged 25-34	18%

Understanding isolation guidelines by vulnerable groups

The only significantly lower results than the total involve young adults:

- People from two age groups (18 to 24 and 25 to 34) are less likely to say that other household members should wear a mask when someone is self-isolating at home.
- The 25 to 34 year age group is also less likely to say they would NOT share items with other household members.

Understanding isolation guidelines	Total %	Significantly lower responses ↓	
Agree that other household members should wear a mask when someone is self-isolating at home (% yes)	46%	Aged 18-24 Aged 25-34	30% 38%
Would personally wear a mask outside your room if you are self-isolating (% yes) *Results exclude those living alone*	71%	*No significantly lower results were identified*	
Would NOT share items with others in your household (for example, dishes, and towels) while COVID-19 positive and self-isolating (% no) *Results exclude those living alone*	72%	Aged 25-34	65%
Your household would NOT allow visitors if you or your household members are self-isolating (% no)	85%	*No significantly lower results were identified*	

Actions vulnerable groups will undertake if they have to self-isolate

As shown in the table below, three vulnerable groups indicated they are less likely than the total to take some recommended actions if they have to self-isolate:

- Those who identify as disabled
- Those with significant health problems
- People who live by themselves.

No significantly lower results were identified for Māori or Pasifika.

Actions people will undertake	Total %	Significantly lower responses ↓	
Not meeting with family/whānau or people you don't live with	84%	*No significantly lower results were identified*	
Stop going out to buy food or essential items	82%		
Stop attending social or religious events in person	77%		
Don't go to work, school, or university even if you cannot do it from home	73%	Identify as disabled From a single person household Have significant health issues	56% 65% 68%
Don't take a child to or from school or day care	65%	Identify as disabled From a single person household	51% 56%
Stop helping or providing care for a vulnerable person	61%	*No significantly lower results were identified*	
Work or study from home	59%	Have significant health issues	53%
Don't go out for outdoor recreation or exercise	57%	*No significantly lower results were identified*	
Stop going out for medical reasons (e.g. to the doctor/dentist)	51%		

APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the survey is to understand the attitudes of adult New Zealanders to self-isolating during the current pandemic.

Key objectives are to:

- Record whether people will self-isolate if asked to
- Determine whether people have had to self-isolate in the last two years and if so, the reason why
- Assess their attitudes and stated behaviour regarding:
    - Mask wearing while self-isolating
    - Sharing items with others in the household
    - Allowing visitors into the household
    - Actions they would take if asked to isolate
    - The concerns they have around self-isolating.
- Establish whether people have whānau/family, neighbours or friends outside their household who could help them while self-isolating
- Establish what information sources they trust and would use for general information and to establish their options if they test positive to COVID-19
- Determine their general attitudes to COVID-19 via a broad open-ended question – 'do you have any final comments about COVID-19 vaccines?'
- Record peoples' vaccination status
- Ask personal and household demographic questions in order to cross-analyse the results for different sub-groups of the population e.g. Māori and Pasifika.

APPENDIX 3 – METHOD

Research approach

An online survey of people aged 18 or older.

Sample sources

Members of the nationwide HorizonPoll and Horizon Research Māori panels as well as two third-party respondent panels: s 9(2)(ba)(i) [redacted]

Fieldwork dates

4 to 14 February 2022

Sample size

n=1,014

Survey reliability

For the total sample the maximum margin of error is ±3.1% at the 95% confidence level.

Quotas

Demographic quotas were used to ensure a representative sample. In addition, quotas for Māori and Pasifika respondents were boosted to achieve sufficient interviews to ensure reliable results for these ethnic groups.

Weighting

The total sample is weighted on age, gender, ethnicity, highest education and personal income to match the adult population at the most recent census.

Questionnaire design

The survey includes 31 questions (30 pre-coded questions as well as 1 open-ended question). The majority of questions were compulsory to answer. To ensure good quality data, only those people who answered 25 or more questions were included in the survey sample.

Interview duration

The median time to complete the survey took 5.9 minutes.

Sample profile

See Appendix Three.

National population size for estimates

All estimates are based on Statistics NZ's Q3 2021 population projection of 3,956,300 New Zealanders aged 18 or more.

Guide to interpretation

Cross analysis of the results only features statistically significant differences from the total. These results are indicated by the following symbols:

↓ significantly **less** than the total ↑ significantly **more** than the total.

APPENDIX 4 – SAMPLE PROFILE

A) BY PERSONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Male	493	48.6%	48.4%
Female	515	50.8%	50.9%
Another gender	6	0.6%	0.7%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Age	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
18-24	60	5.9%	7.0%
25-34	249	24.6%	23.8%
35-44	137	13.5%	13.4%
45-54	188	18.5%	20.6%
55-64	93	9.2%	8.2%
65-74	165	16.3%	14.9%
75 or more	122	12.0%	12.1%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Ethnicity	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Asian	60	5.9%	4.7%
Indian	40	3.9%	3.2%
Māori	180	17.8%	15.2%
NZ European/Pakeha	652	64.3%	69.1%
Other European	64	6.3%	6.0%
Pasifika	90	8.9%	9.5%
Other	48	4.7%	4.0%
Total	**1,134 responses**	**111.8%**	**111.8%**

Multiple responses were allowed; hence the totals add to more than 100%

Highest education level	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Postgraduate degree (Masters degree or PhD)	103	10.2%	7.7%
Undergraduate (Bachelor) degree	206	20.3%	15.7%
Vocational qualification (includes trade certificates, diplomas etc)	176	17.4%	14.2%
University Bursary or 7th form	77	7.6%	6.1%
Sixth form/UE/NCEA Level 2	125	12.3%	17.3%
NCEA Level 1 or School Certificate	157	15.5%	18.6%
No formal school qualification	134	13.2%	15.8%
Prefer not to say	36	3.6%	4.5%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Current occupation	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Professional/Senior Government Official	77	7.6%	6.2%
Business Manager/Executive	59	5.8%	4.9%
Business Proprietor/Self-employed	59	5.8%	5.4%
Teacher/Nurse/Police or other trained service worker	81	8.0%	7.1%
Clerical/Sales Employee	135	13.3%	13.1%
Farm Owner/manager	13	1.3%	1.3%
Technical/Mechanical/Skilled Worker	118	11.6%	10.8%
Labourer/Agricultural or Domestic Worker	51	5.0%	6.4%
Home-maker (not otherwise employed)	47	4.6%	5.2%
Student	57	5.6%	6.1%
Retired/Superannuitant	210	20.7%	20.6%
Unemployed/Beneficiary	62	6.1%	8.1%
Don't know/prefer not to say	45	4.4%	4.9%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Look after or help others because of their long-term health issues	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Yes	150	14.8%	15.0%
No	854	84.2%	83.9%
Prefer not to say	10	1.0%	1.1%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Personal income	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Less than $20,000 per year	219	21.6%	24.1%
Between $20,001 and $30,000 per year	201	19.8%	21.5%
Between $30,001 and $50,000 per year	239	23.6%	24.0%
Between $50,001 and $70,000 per year	110	10.8%	8.4%
Between $70,001 and $100,000 per year	89	8.8%	6.6%
Between $100,001 and $150,000 per year	48	4.7%	3.5%
Between $150,001 and $200,000 per year	12	1.2%	1.0%
More than $200,000 per year	11	1.1%	0.8%
Don't know/prefer not to say	85	8.4%	10.2%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

B) BY HOUSEHOLD DEMOGRAPHICS

Household income	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Less than $20,000 per year	85	8.4%	9.9%
Between $20,001 and $30,000 per year	133	13.1%	14.4%
Between $30,001 and $50,000 per year	182	17.9%	18.5%
Between $50,001 and $70,000 per year	145	14.3%	14.1%
Between $70,001 and $100,000 per year	153	15.1%	14.3%
Between $100,001 and $150,000 per year	137	13.5%	11.5%
Between $150,001 and $200,000 per year	50	4.9%	3.9%
More than $200,000 per year	38	3.7%	2.8%
Don't know/ prefer not to say	91	9.0%	10.6%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Household composition	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Single person household	169	16.7%	16.7%
Couple only (no children/none at home)	314	31.0%	29.7%
Two parent family, one or two children at home	239	23.6%	22.5%
Two parent family, three or more children at home	58	5.7%	6.3%
One parent family, one or two children at home	81	8.0%	8.1%
One parent family, three or more children at home	16	1.6%	1.6%
Flatting or boarding - not a family home	78	7.7%	8.4%
Extended family	44	4.3%	4.7%
Prefer not to say	15	1.5%	1.9%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Where are you living?	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
House	767	75.6%	76.1%
Townhouse	74	7.3%	6.9%
Unit or flat	110	10.8%	10.9%
Studio	6	0.6%	0.5%
Apartment	36	3.6%	3.3%
Care facility in a room with others	1	0.1%	0.1%
Boarding house	8	0.8%	1.0%
Something else	12	1.2%	1.2%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

C) BY HEALTH & DISABILITY STATUS

Live with impairments or long-term health conditions	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Yes	327	32.2%	33.8%
No	673	66.4%	64.8%
Prefer not to say	14	1.4%	1.4%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

Identify as disabled	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Yes	82	8.1%	9.4%
No	919	90.6%	89.2%
Prefer not to say	13	1.3%	1.4%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

D) BY VACCINATION STATUS

Vaccination status	n= (unweighted)	% (unweighted)	% (weighted)
Had two doses and a booster	529	52.2%	50.4%
Had two doses	402	39.6%	40.8%
Had one dose	9	0.9%	0.9%
Not vaccinated - but have booked	2	0.2%	0.3%
Not vaccinated - but will book	4	0.4%	0.4%
Not vaccinated and won't be one	53	5.2%	5.7%
Prefer not to say	15	1.5%	1.5%
Total	**1,014**	**100%**	**100%**

APPENDIX 5 – TECHNICAL REPORTS

Excel tables (cross-tabs) and the raw survey data including verbatim comments and questionnaire are provided separately from this report.