

# People feel coronavirus lockdowns were mismanaged by government, survey shows

January 5 2021

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

There is widespread public support for coronavirus restrictions, but most people believe local lockdowns this autumn were mismanaged by the Government, a new survey shows.

A total of 59% of people questioned as part of the research said the first

national [lockdown](#) on July 4th was eased too soon, while 22% said it was the right time.

84% who took part in the University of Exeter study said the lockdowns this year were necessary, but 80% of those who had that opinion said the previous regional tier system had not been run well by the Government.

Just 11% of people thought local lockdowns were unnecessary—mostly because they thought they didn't work.

Academics surveyed 3,600 respondents in England in October and November 2020 as part of UKRI COVID-19 rapid response ESRC-funded research. The same group was asked the same questions in July 2020, shortly after the nation had come out of the first national lockdown. There was little change in numbers who said the lockdown was eased too soon, but in October and November there was a drop in the number of people who thought restrictions were eased at the right time, from 29% to 22%. Total numbers of people who thought they should not have been introduced at all rose from 4% to 8%.

People living in the North West, older people, those who claimed to have complied most fully with lockdown restrictions, Labour Party supporters and respondents living in areas with stricter lockdowns at the time were more likely to say the first national lockdown had been eased too soon. Conservative Party supporters and those who back leaving the EU were least likely to share this view.

When asked what percentage of the time others in their area are complying the average response was 60% of the time. One-third of respondents thought others were complying less than half the time, while 17% didn't know.

Professor Dan Stevens, from the University of Exeter, who co-wrote the

survey, said: "The introduction of the latest tier system from December 2nd has prompted some suggestion that the public is becoming frustrated with lockdowns. While that may be true, this evidence suggests that it is because of the way restrictions are implemented, and not because 'lockdown fatigue' has led to widespread changes in views that they are necessary. There still seems to be strong support for the idea of lockdowns."

Professor Susan Banducci, from the University of Exeter, who also co-wrote the survey, said: "It was interesting to be in the field with our survey when the second national lockdown was announced to see how opinions about the lockdowns of our respondents from July had changed. Because compliance with these restrictions is related to whether or not people feel they are being managed well by government, we may see a dip in compliance. It will be important to understand how perceptions of how government is managing the lockdowns change when we go back to the same respondents early in 2021."

Dr. Katharine Tyler, from the University of Exeter, who is principal investigator of the project said: "These survey findings on people's experiences of the lockdown offer important context for the project's ethnographic research with residents living in the South West, East Midlands and North East of England. This aspect of the research involves in-depth conversational-style interviews with individuals across England about their personal experiences of the lockdowns. This will include people's thoughts and reflections on how the government is managing the pandemic."

The research team have mapped the areas that had the biggest increases in the number of people saying the first lockdown was eased too soon. In two areas, Chester and Lincoln, the proportion who said the lockdowns were eased too soon had risen by 20%. The rate of infection increased in Lincoln to 286 per 100,000 at the end of October and was moved to Tier

2. Chester, also moved to Tier 2 at the end of October before the national lockdown was announced.

Areas that saw a decline in the proportion of people indicating the lockdown was eased to soon include Dorset, which has had one of the lowest infection rates in England. In neighboring Bournemouth, which had an infection rate higher than the average in England, there was an increase in the number of people thinking lockdown had been eased to soon.

Provided by University of Exeter

Citation: People feel coronavirus lockdowns were mismanaged by government, survey shows (2021, January 5) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-01-people-coronavirus-lockdowns-mismanaged-survey.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.