



Transport User Community

Checking in during lockdown in January

January 2021

What did we ask our community?

Recent events

Thinking about the different things that have been in the news since December, like the vaccine, and the new lockdown, how have our respondents been feeling lately? In particular...

How has the community's thinking changed? Are they feeling more optimistic, pessimistic, or unsure, about the pandemic compared to November 2020?

How has the community's behaviour changed? Do they think they will do anything differently during this lockdown compared to the one in March 2020?

And finally, what should **public transport operators** do differently during this lockdown compared to previous ones, if anything? Are there lessons to be learned for Government or operators when it comes to public transport this time around?

Who is in our rail and bus communities?

60|60

60 people using rail to commute and 60 using bus, prior to Covid-19, with many also driving



Across England, Scotland and Wales



Mix of payment methods



Mix of those currently using public transport and those not



A spread of age, gender and ethnicity



Some have disabilities

Many are feeling more cautiously optimistic during the current lockdown due to the vaccine being rolled out

- The community recognise that two things need to happen – more people need to be vaccinated and case numbers need to decrease through social distancing and face-coverings
- While the vaccine ‘lever’ gives hope for the future, passenger behaviour can deflate expectations and lead some to worry that 2021 will be a direct repeat of 2020
- Hearing reports of passengers not wearing masks on public transport causes concern. The community is mindful of how well the public is following the rules and therefore how hopeful to be for the future
- When we began this research in June 2020, there was a sense that with a strong national effort the virus would have been defeated by now, and our respondents are frustrated that this is not the case

*I am feeling optimistic about the progress we are making as a country with the roll-out of the vaccine, that being said the COVID variants that keep coming to light make me nervous! I also feel people are **not taking it as seriously** as the lockdown back in March 2020.*

Female, 27, Scotland (Rail)

It's strange how people here seem to be feeling optimistic about everything but I'm not. We have record deaths, are one of the worst hit countries in the world when judging by deaths per million of the population. Whatever is happening in England at the moment is not good at all and I don't feel that things are going to get better anytime soon.

Male, 46, South East (Rail)

*I have a greater amount of concern. It's not clear if I'm going to be furloughed or not as my work could still be counted as essential. I'm **caught in a dilemma where I want to work but I'm more fearful** of catching COVID and giving it to family members.*

Male, 31, Scotland (Rail)

It's frustrating that even with a vaccine now, it doesn't feel like we're any closer to a solution. I won't be doing anything much different during this lockdown. I'm already working from home, self isolating and have cut down on travelling which isn't essential massively.

Female, 30, South East (Rail)

Our respondents will not change their behaviour significantly during this third lockdown because they were already largely staying at home

- **Almost unanimously, the bus and rail communities have had a ‘stay at home’ mindset for at least the last three months.**
 - Given the cancellation of (most) respondents’ Christmas plans and the relatively brief reprieve between the second lockdown and the current one, little has changed.
 - Tiers 3 and 4 are read as ‘quasi-lockdowns’ in their own right and as a result the more explicit ‘stay at home’ guidance does not prompt behaviour change.
- **The community is even less optimistic about other people’s behaviour than they were in previous lockdowns.**
 - They have become somewhat more stoic about this: “Lockdown fatigue” is understood, sympathised with, and shared by this community.

*I have again been told to shield as I'm clinically vulnerable. So I will definitely be staying at home. **I'm trying not to think about what I feel this year about the pandemic**, I'm just rolling with the changes again. Like the last lockdown, I'm following government advice and staying home. All public transport should now enforce mask wearing. No mask no ride.*

Female, 46, South East (Bus)

*I think public transport operators should enforce social distancing policies more and ensure that everyone who is not exempt is wearing a mask. **With more people travelling to their workplace this time, operators should make sure that public transport is as safe as it can be.***

Female, 24, York and Humber (Bus)

*Nothing has changed my way of thinking regarding the pandemic that the government and authorities should be **clamping down** on people a lot harder. Hopefully once the vaccine begins to be taken by a large section of the population things might start to begin to change.*

Male, 46, Scotland (Bus)

*I am more worried about catching COVID during this lockdown so I'm more cautious, especially as people don't seem to take notice of the rules. **I've seen on the local news that 28 bus drivers tested positive so I won't be going on public transport any time soon.***

Female, 22, South East (Bus)

Overwhelmingly, a 'zero tolerance' approach is called for in the third lockdown

- **The community is aware that there is a new variant of COVID-19 which is significantly more transmissible**
 - This, coupled with a perceived 'soft touch' approach in previous lockdowns leads many to argue that there must be a stronger driver towards behavioural compliance
 - Again, the community is reasonable here. They recognise that behavioural fatigue is widespread but they do believe that hope is on the horizon in regards to the vaccine.
 - Therefore, they are pushing for one last sustained effort of engagement which reflects recent government messaging.
- **This desire for a zero tolerance approach extends heavily to public transport**
 - As before, bus passengers advocate for bus staff being able to refuse passage to users not wearing a face covering, as do rail users for the train
 - Basic concepts already outlined in previous weeks remain essential: the availability of hand sanitiser, sufficient frequency of buses and trains to allow for social distancing and regular deep cleaning.