



Research Article

Quality of life, capability well-being, financial strain and physical activity in the short- and medium-term COVID-19 post-lockdown phases in the UK: a repeated cross-sectional study

Katie Breheny,^{1,2*} Ruth Salway,^{1,3} Danielle House,³ Robert Walker,³
Lydia Emm-Collison,³ Kate Sansum,³ Joanna G Williams,^{1,4} Frank de Vocht,^{1,2}
Russell Jago^{1,2,3} and William Hollingworth^{1,2}

¹Population Health Sciences, Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

²The National Institute for Health Research, Applied Research Collaboration West (NIHR ARC West), University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust, Bristol, UK

³Centre for Exercise, Nutrition & Health Sciences, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

⁴Communities and Public Health, Bristol City Council, Bristol, UK

*Corresponding author katie.breheny@bristol.ac.uk

Published September 2024

DOI: 10.3310/LYJG6305

Plain language summary

Quality of life, capability well-being, financial strain and physical activity in the short- and medium-term COVID-19 post-lockdown phases in the UK: a repeated cross-sectional study

Public Health Research 2024

DOI: 10.3310/LYJG6305

NIHR Journals Library www.journalslibrary.nihr.ac.uk

Plain language summary

Why did we do this study?

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected people's mental and physical health. But we don't know how quality of life, well-being and pressure on family finances changed for people after the lockdowns were lifted and society reopened. We also wanted to know if these changes were related to how physically active people were.

What did we do?

Children and a parent/carer answered questions about their quality of life, well-being and family budget pressures. Physical activity data were also collected using devices worn on their waists. We did this in 2021, when society started to reopen after lockdowns, and a year later in 2022 when all restrictions were gone. We explored differences in quality of life, well-being and pressure on family finances between 2021 and 2022. We then looked at whether any of these differences were because of changes in physical activity, and if financial strain was related to quality of life.

What did we find?

We did not find any differences in quality of life or well-being between 2021 and 2022. Financial strain increased slightly. As financial strain increased, quality of life and well-being decreased. This was worse for those experiencing most financial difficulties. Physical activity did not seem to explain differences in quality of life.

What does this mean?

If family finances are stretched, it might be difficult for families to pay for activities that will help their children be more active. We have also found that family financial difficulties are related to quality of life and well-being.