

The University of Leeds, working with the polling company Savanta ComRes, is conducting a national study to investigate how people receive, understand and act upon official messages related to COVID-19.

Different perceptions of risk

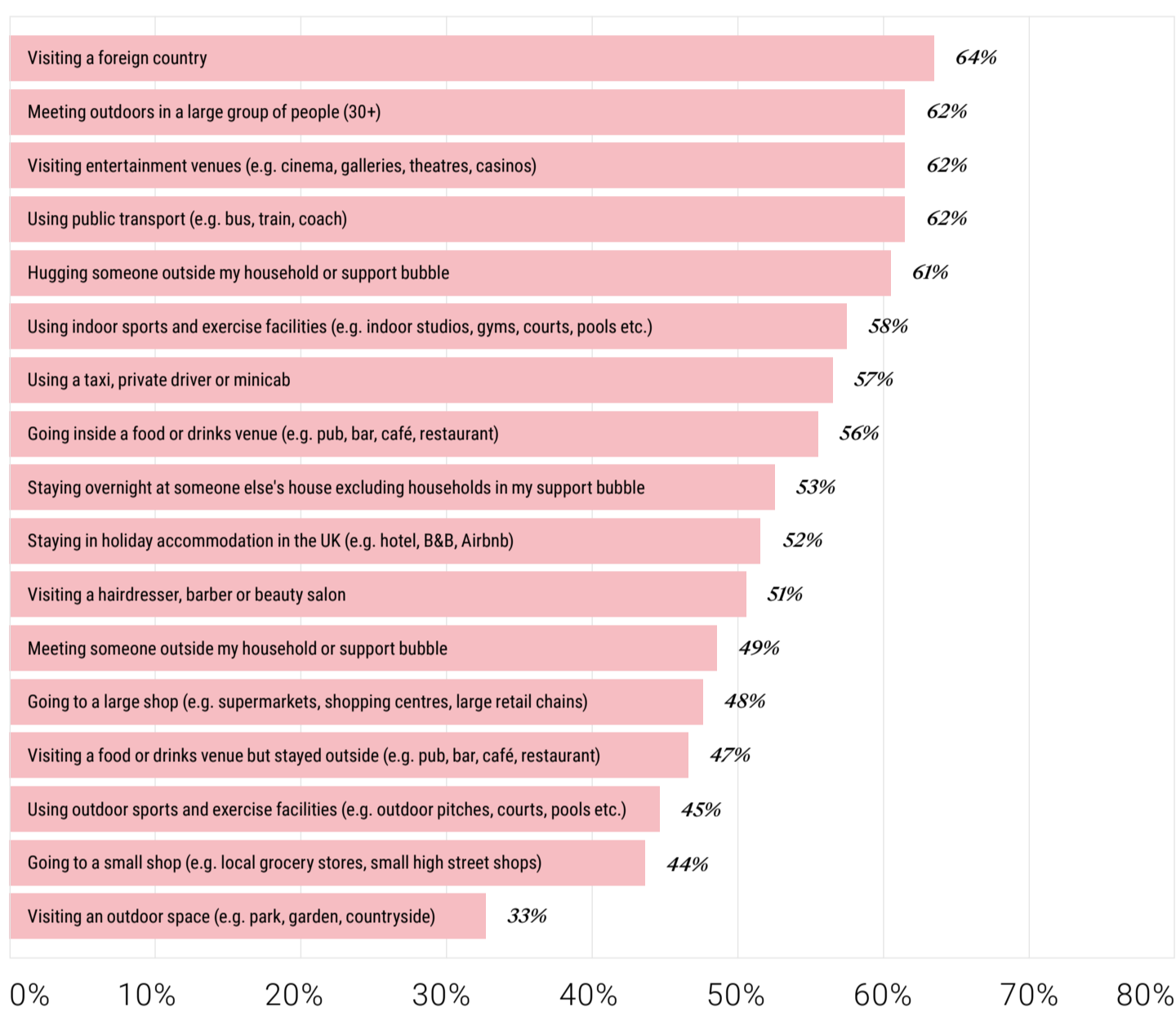
Limiting the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic depends upon **collective behaviour**. An individual can do the right things, but still be exposed to the virus by another member of the public who does not. For public communication to be effective, it should result in nearly everyone adhering to a **common set of rules**.

Initial findings from the second wave of our survey raise questions about how people perceive risks differently and how their ability or inclination to follow the rules vary. (We shall be exploring the reasons for these disparities in our first major analysis next month).

We asked members of the public to rate how concerned or not they felt participating in a range of common activities. Although around half of UK adults indicated that they were concerned about participating in most of these activities, a sizeable proportion indicated that they were not. Even in the case of visiting a foreign country, around one in five (22%) indicated that they were not concerned about doing this. This raises important questions about the type of information specific population groups are receiving and how strongly they associate risk with various activities.

How concerned or not do you feel doing each of the following activities right now? (1-10 scale)

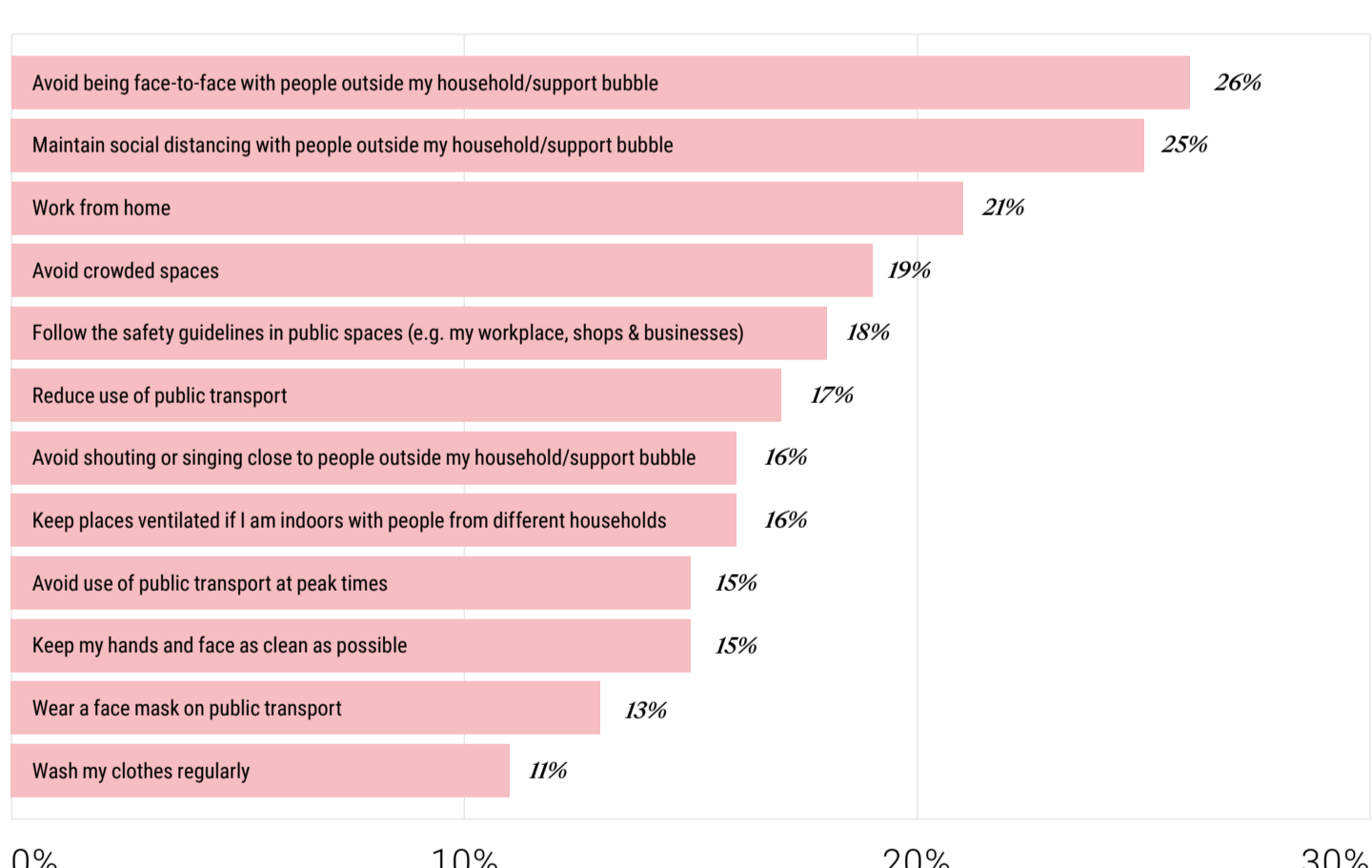
Showing % concerned (6-10)



Over the coming months we will be publishing detailed and comprehensive reports setting out the key factors that might help explain the reach, intelligibility, and effectiveness of official communication relating to the pandemic, suggesting which combination of communication channels or messages are important to prioritize for specific groups based on their shared attitudes, values and experiences.

How easy or difficult have you found it to do each of the following? (1-10 scale)

Showing % difficult (1-5)



We also explored the ease with which the public has been able to adhere to the public health advice that government has been promoting by asking how easy or difficult it has been to take various safety measures, such as wearing face masks on public transport. Here again, the data suggests that most people have found it easy sticking to the rules, but a minority have found it difficult. For example, one in five (19%) indicate that they have found it difficult to avoid crowded spaces.

We are sharing this with you as someone we have identified as having an interest or role in the development and deployment of messaging related to COVID-19. If you would like more information about our work, please contact the Principal Investigator. Similarly, if you think a colleague would be interested in our research, please share their contact details so we can add them to our list.



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