



# The Behavioural Science of Covid-19

Independent SAGE Briefing  
20<sup>th</sup> October 2023

# Behaviour Matters

Not only as a stop-gap until medical solutions come along

Medical and behavioural sciences each frame new questions for the other



**Getting the  
behavioural  
science right  
matters**

Cumulative number of deaths (1 June)				
Deaths ( <i>CFR</i> )	Natural growth		Counterfactual growth	
	Observed	Modelled	Intervention 1 week earlier	Intervention 2 weeks earlier
Hospital deaths ( <i>CFR</i> <sub>1</sub> )	27,212	27,974 (20,355, 37,020)	7,234 (5,356, 8,946)	1,854 (1,419, 2,221)
All deaths ( <i>CFR</i> <sub>2</sub> )	45,130	46,393 (33,758, 61,397)	11,998 (8,883, 14,836)	3,075 (2,354, 3,683)

## Estimating the effects of lockdown timing on COVID-19 cases and deaths in England: A counterfactual modelling study

Kellyn F. Arnold, Mark S. Gilthorpe, Nisreen A. Alwan, Alison J. Heppenstall, Georgia D. Tomova, Martin McKee 

Peter W. G. Tennant  

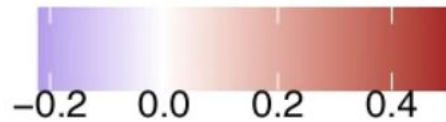
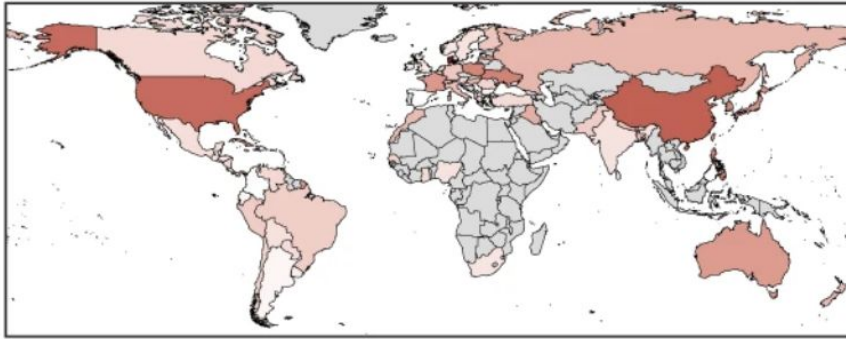
**£10,000  
FINE FOR  
LEAVING  
HOUSE**

soils huge r

## A psychology of distrust



Behavioural fatigue is part of a broader view, in which the public are seen as the problem, especially in a crisis. They are incapable and unwilling to act responsibly. They are to be blamed for what goes wrong and threatened into compliance.

## Spatial Distancing



Article | [Open access](#) | Published: 26 January 2022

### National identity predicts public health support during a global pandemic

[Jay J. Van Bavel](#) , [Aleksandra Cichocka](#), [Valerio Capraro](#), [Hallgeir Sjøstad](#), [John B. Nezlek](#), [Tomislav Pavlović](#), [Mark Alfano](#), [Michele J. Gelfand](#), [Flavio Azevedo](#) , [Michèle D. Birtei](#), [Aleksandra Cislak](#), [Patricia L. Lockwood](#), [Robert Malcolm Ross](#), [Koen Abts](#), [Elena Agadullina](#), [John Jamir Benzon Aruta](#), [Sahba Nomvula Besharati](#), [Alexander Bor](#), [Becky L. Choma](#), [Charles David Crabtree](#), [William A. Cunningham](#), [Koustav De](#), [Waqas Ejaz](#), [Christian T. Elbaek](#), ... [Paulo S. Boggio](#) [+ Show authors](#)

*Nature Communications* **13**, Article number: 517 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

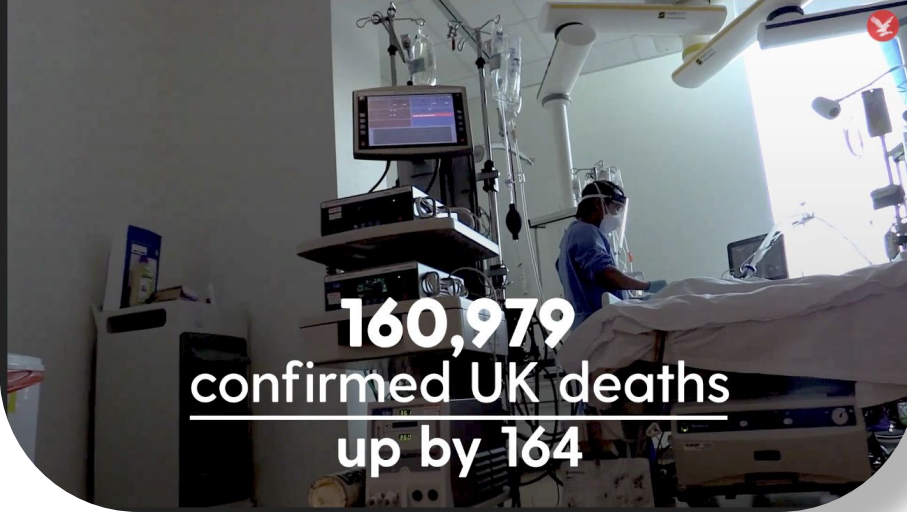
# Neglecting Community

This is a psychology which neglects community, neglects solidarity, neglects how these are the basis of resilience and also misrepresents the roots of non-compliance: lack of support

# Self-isolation payments held down to deter 'gaming' of system, Matt Hancock reveals

Labour accuse health secretary of showing 'contempt' for working people

Andrew Woodcock Political Editor • Thursday 10 June 2021 13:56 BST • [3](#) Comments



## Undermining Community

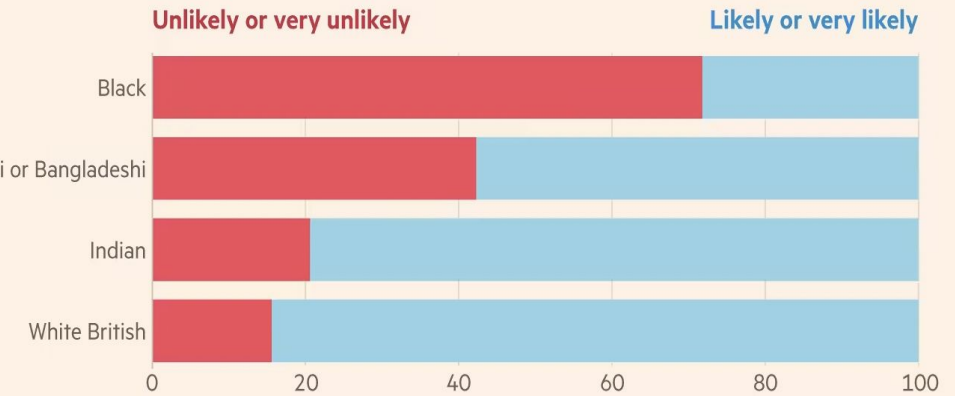
Worse, this is a psychology which undermines community, solidarity and resilience, destroys trust and justifies lack of support.

# From problems to partners

Above all, the UK Government espoused an approach that stopped us building partnerships with the public: engaging with communities, building trust, and providing support

Most ethnic minorities in the UK are hesitant about taking the Covid-19 vaccine

Stated likelihood of taking the vaccine, by ethnicity (%)



Sources: Understanding Society survey; University of Glasgow; Ipsos MORI; Public Health Scotland  
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**The public are the most valuable asset you have in a crisis if brought together, trusted and given the support they need.**

**Due to their psychology of mistrust, the UK Government squandered that asset.**