

CoCoNet Round 1 - Findings

Since 23 March 2020, social distancing measures were implemented in the UK to reduce SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Round 1 of CoCoNet, a cross-sectional survey to measure social contact and mobility, was conducted between 28 July and 14 August 2020. The aim of the analysis summarised below was to relate social mixing behaviours to demographic, occupational status and COVID circumstance information of participants to better understand how people are responding to social distancing. We also considered the effect of shielding and isolating on contact patterns.

5143 participants completed an online questionnaire. As recruitment was not random, there are some biases in the demography of participants. The sample underrepresented males, people under the age of 20 and those aged 80 and over.

Participant characteristics associated with the daily rate of non-household contacts were identified through negative binomial regression models and model selection.

Key results:

- Mean rate of daily non-household contacts per person found to be 2.9.
- 58.8% of participants reported they had maintained social distance at all times with the people they had met the previous day.
- Participants attending a workplace, self-employed, or working in healthcare reported significantly more contacts than those working from home.
- Participants self-isolating as a precaution or following Test and Trace instructions made fewer non-household contacts than those not self-isolating.
- We found limited evidence that those shielding reduced their interactions outside the household to non-shielders.

Conclusions

The daily rate of non-household interactions remains lower than pre-pandemic levels, suggesting continuing adherence to social-distancing guidelines. Individuals asked to isolate following contact tracing had reduced contact outside households. Shielding and self-isolating individuals may need greater support to enable them to reduce their infection risk.

A more detailed report will be made available shortly.