



The PROTECT COVID-19 National Core Study on transmission and environment

Partnership for Research in Occupational, Transport and Environmental COVID Transmission.

The PROTECT study is a UK-wide research programme improving our understanding of how SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) is transmitted from person to person, and how this varies in different settings and environments. This improved understanding will enable more effective measures to stop transmission, **saving lives and getting society back towards 'normal'**.

The PROTECT study is led by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE)'s Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Andrew Curran and is part of the COVID-19 National Core Studies spearheaded by UK Government Chief Scientific Adviser Sir Patrick Vallance.

Theme 1 of the PROTECT study is on outbreak investigations

What is the COVID-OUT study?

On-the-ground investigations of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with workplaces to identify outbreak causes, which will help prevent and control further outbreaks

We want to know

What are environmental conditions associated with SARS-CoV-2 outbreaks?

What interventions and mitigation activities prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission?

What are the risk factors for SARS-CoV-2 infection?

What are the potential transmission routes of SARS-CoV-2?

What information are we collecting? (questionnaire)



What are the risk factors for SARS-CoV-2 infection?

About you

- Demographics
- Pre-existing health conditions
- Household
- Lifestyle (e.g., attend gym)
- Travel
- Contact patterns

About COVID-19

- Vaccines
- Test results
- Symptoms

About their job

- Job role
- Financial impact of self-isolation
- Work activities
- Work setting
- PPE

What information are we collecting?

What are the potential transmission routes of SARS-CoV-2?

Bring data together to generate hypotheses on the routes of transmission and their relative importance.

- COVID-OUT outbreak investigation data
- Local health protection teams' investigation reports
- Company testing data, as available
- Local authority data on community infection rates

Why has our workplace been chosen?

What are the criteria for outbreak suitable for the COVID-OUT study?

- 1) Outbreaks in food processing plants, general manufacturing facilities, packaging and distribution centres, or **large office buildings**, with **100** workers or more in any of these sites;
- 2) An attack rate (ie. the proportion of the workers who become infected) of 5% or more at the time of notification. An outbreak with an attack rate below 5% but with **five confirmed cases or more** in a workplace, will be monitored and included.
- 3) Early notification is critical

Why take part?

- **COVID-OUT is a research study, not a regulatory activity.**
- By participating in this study, **you and your organisation will play a critical role in some of the most important science going on in the UK (and the world) today**, helping make all workplaces safer and getting working life, and society, back towards 'normal' in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Participating in the COVID-OUT study will enable us to collect invaluable data that would not be available elsewhere and to gain insight to where and how the COVID-19 virus was transmitted.**
- **All data collected as part of the study, such as questionnaire responses and COVID-19 test results, will be anonymous.** Information on individual employees will not be shared with the employer, nor will the organisation itself be identified in any resulting research publications.

Information for employers



What do I need do and how long will it take?

- Work with study team, read study information sheet and sign consent form. The study is voluntary, you can partake parts of the study, all data you provide would be anonymised
- Identify a point of contact to provide data on workforce and work activities, such as shift patterns
- Work with study coordinator to recruit volunteers (emails / letters / flyers would be provided)

Information for employees

What do I need do?

- Read study information sheet, agree to take part, complete baseline questionnaire (takes 30 minutes)
- The study is voluntary and all data collected is anonymised. Information you provide as part of this research study, including test results or the answers to questionnaires will not be shared with your employers.

Are there any direct benefits to me?

- To thank you for your participation, you will be able to claim a £20 voucher once you complete the consent form and the first questionnaire.