

ONS – Covid-19 Schools Infection Studies

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Overview of the Data Fellowship

Over 8 weeks I worked alongside a small group of data analysts working for one of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) 'Health Analysis and Pandemic Insight' teams called SIS (School Infections Survey).

Throughout my internship I had the chance to meet many employees from different branches of ONS, opening my eyes to what roles are available postgraduate. I had never considered a career in data analysis before this internship, and while I don't think actual data work is for me, I did thoroughly enjoy learning about the process of creating a government publication. The internship pushed me out of my comfort zone and was an experience like no other I've had.

- A highlight for me was helping with the quality assessment of the school infection team's August (2020) publication. I saw the report be refined and perfected and even had the chance to give my own input and improvements (some of which were acknowledged).
- The SIS team produced two publications in August. These were 'COVID-19 School Infection Survey, England: Round 6, June 2021' and 'COVID-19 School Infections Survey, England: Round 4, pupil antibody data, March 2021'.

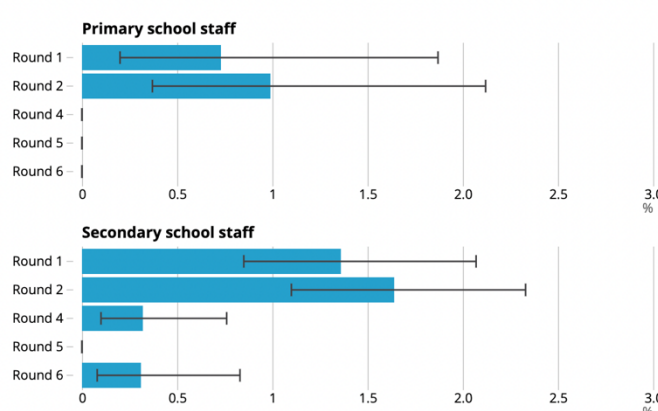
Data Analysis

Unfortunately, for my internship I was not granted full security clearance in time which meant that I could not access the raw SIS data. For this reason most of the analysis I did was creating charts in excel and quality assessing the work of my fellow colleagues.

- Using SIS data, I practiced creating charts to show the changing prevalence of COVID-19 in a sample of schools from 14 Local Authorities in England.
- I did this using Excel, and while I had used Excel many times before, I picked up on so many more efficient ways of doing things from my colleagues (e.g., as simple as how to change the format of all cells so that they match each other).
- Below is an example of a charts produced in one of the August publications. This is not something I personally created, but is very similar to what I worked on.

Figure 3: Percentage of primary and secondary school staff testing positive for current COVID-19 infection across rounds

England, 3 to 20 November 2020 (Round 1), 30 November to 11 December 2020 (Round 2), 15 to 31 March 2021 (Round 4), 5 to 21 May 2021 (Round 5) and 14 June to 6 July 2021 (Round 6)



Source: Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Schools Infection Survey

Findings

I did not have an individual project that I completed during my internship due to issues with security clearance. However, here I will discuss some interesting findings from the August (2021) publications as I was very involved in the refining and quality assessment of these

- Prevalence of infection among pupils sampled in school was consistently lower than prevalence among children in the wider community across all time periods – this supported the hypothesis that “school gate” measures have reduced the risk of infection in school and the rapid asymptomatic testing programme may have enhanced this by keeping a higher proportion of infected pupils out of school in the summer term.
- By the end of June 2021, 92.93% of staff had received at least one dose and 70.47% had received both doses of a COVID-19 vaccination.
- 40% of primary school parents and 54% of secondary parents would definitely want their child to have a COVID-19 vaccine if offered

Source: Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Schools Infection Survey



ONS's London Office – I got the chance to spend a day here and meet my team face-to-face for the first time.

Key Skills Learnt

I learned so many valuable skills from my Q-step internship. I will carry all of these skills onwards from university and into employment

- One of the most valuable things I learned was how to work collaboratively. The team I worked in was only small (5 ONS employees + me) but everyone was so willing to chip in and help out when needed. I learned that it's not just about finishing your task, but about picking up where your teammates are struggling and sharing the workload. I also found that this was how I learned more about different areas
- The internship also developed my confidence immensely. I was incredibly anxious about having to communicate with people over zoom and e-mail but my motivation to get the most out of the experience pushed me out of my comfort zone. I took up every opportunity to meet with ONS employees from other teams to learn as much as I could about the organisation.