

Over a quarter of people say their lives are very different now compared to before COVID-19

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Despite the easing of lockdown measures, 28% of adults have reported that their lives are currently "completely different" or have "lots of differences" compared to prior to COVID-19, find UCL researchers as

part of the COVID-19 Social Study.

In addition to this, a third (33%) of adults have said there are "quite a few" differences and over a third (35%) have said there are at least a few differences to their lives. Just 4% of those asked said that their lives are "entirely the same" as they were before the pandemic.

These figures are some improvement on during strict lockdown, when 4% still said their lives were "entirely the same," but half (50%) of adults said their lives were "completely different" or had "lots of differences," 28% said there were "quite a few" differences and just under a fifth (18%) said their life was a little different. However, as more social restrictions are introduced again, it is likely that people's lives may become further disrupted.

Launched in the week before lockdown started, the ongoing UCL COVID-19 Social Study is funded by the Nuffield Foundation with additional support from Wellcome and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It is the UK's largest study into how adults are feeling about the lockdown, government advice and overall wellbeing and mental health with over 70,000 participants who have been followed across the last 24 weeks.

Lead author, Dr. Daisy Fancourt (UCL Epidemiology & Health Care) said: "Our study highlights the level of disruption to people's lives that has been brought about by the pandemic and by lockdown measures brought in to reduce COVID-19 transmission. What's interesting is that even with the level of easing that has happened since then, many people are still reporting at least substantial changes in their current lives compared to before the coronavirus pandemic. This shows that whilst many aspects of society are operating again, we're far from a return to 'normal' and the virus is still very much having an impact on people's everyday lives."

As lockdown has progressed, people have gradually been going out more days each week and spending less time just in their homes or gardens. However, this has plateaued since mid-July, with people on average spending two days a week not leaving their property.

People with lower household incomes have spent the more time in their homes than those with higher incomes, and people with a diagnosed mental illness also spend more time at home (an average of around 2.5 days a week). Key workers have been out of their homes more than the average (spending an average of around 1.5 days a week at home), likely due to the demands of their jobs.

Cheryl Lloyd, Education Program Head at the Nuffield Foundation said: "The COVID-19 Social Study continues to show that household income is an important factor in determining the social and psychological impact of the COVID-19 crisis. Adults with lower household incomes are not only more likely to have spent time in their homes since March, but are also more likely to report feeling lonelier, less happy and having lower levels of life satisfaction than those on [higher incomes](#). As the crisis continues, the government should focus on addressing not only the health and economic impacts of the pandemic, but also on its social implications."

The study team has also received support from Wellcome to launch an international network of longitudinal studies called the COVID-MINDS Network. Through the network, dozens of scientists and clinicians are coming together internationally to collate results from mental health studies running in countries around the world and compare findings. The initiative will support launching new mental health studies in other countries and show whether actions taken in specific countries are helping to protect [mental health](#).

More information: Understanding the psychological and social impact

of the pandemic: www.covidsocialstudy.org/

Provided by University College London

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