



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
 2. Health and social care (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care>)
 3. Public health (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/public-health>)
 4. Health protection (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection>)
 5. Health surveillance and reporting programmes (<https://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/health-protection-services-health-surveillance-and-reporting-programmes>)
 6. COVID-19: enhanced surveillance of cases in vaccinated individuals
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-enhanced-surveillance-of-cases-in-vaccinated-individuals>)
- Public Health
England (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>)

Guidance

Reporting to the enhanced surveillance of COVID-19 cases in vaccinated individuals

Updated 27 January 2021

Contents

Criteria for reporting

Reporting cases

Minimum sample set

Sample transfer

Follow-up

SIREN study participants

Collection of patient data

Further information

Print this page



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The Public Health England (PHE) Immunisation Department is conducting enhanced surveillance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-enhanced-surveillance-of-cases-in-vaccinated-individuals>) of cases of infection in vaccinated individuals in England, in order to confirm infection, identify risk factors and outcomes, and monitor phenotypic and genetic characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 isolates and to compare these cases to those in unvaccinated individuals. Individuals will mainly be identified by active follow up of a sample of cases identified by linkage between community testing and vaccination data.

Clinicians who are seeing patients face to face are also encouraged to report any confirmed cases in partially or fully vaccinated individuals if they tested positive within the preceding 7 days. This provides an opportunity to get early and complete samples from these cases. This surveillance applies to England only.

Criteria for reporting

The following cases should be reported:

Individuals with a SARS-CoV-2 PCR positive sample with symptom onset date at least 10 days after their first dose of vaccine (this includes any cases who develop symptoms after a second dose of vaccine).

If the case was asymptomatic, test date should be used in place of symptom onset date.

Vaccinated individuals who test positive using a lateral flow device should be confirmed using PCR.

In order that optimum samples are received, reporting is only requested if the case tested positive within the preceding 7 days. This passive reporting is an opportunity to collect acute samples and clinicians are not required to report retrospective cases.

Reporting cases

Cases can be reported using the online form (<https://snapsurvey.phe.org.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=161037673124>).

Minimum sample set

Samples should be sent to the national reference laboratory for confirmatory testing, sequencing and serology.

The following samples are requested from the reporting clinician on identification of the case or as soon as possible afterwards:

- 1 nose and throat swab
- 1 serum sample

Reporting is only requested if patients are seen face to face and clinicians do not need to recall community cases in vaccinated individuals for additional samples if they are not in hospital or being seen in a clinic.

Samples should be taken within 7 days of the positive test.

Sample transfer

Samples should be sent by category B transport with the E59 sample submission form (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-enhanced-surveillance-of-cases-in-vaccinated-individuals>) to:

Virus Reference Department
PHE Colindale
61 Colindale Avenue
London
NW9 5EQ

Further details on packaging and transport requirements (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/packaging-and-transport-requirements-for-patient-samples-un3373>) are available.

Follow-up

For cases meeting the above definition, and where samples have been received, a member of the Immunisation Department at PHE will be in contact to complete an enhanced surveillance questionnaire and arrange a convalescent serum sample. Where the case is in hospital the reporting clinician will be contacted; where the case is in the community the case will be contacted directly.

SIREN study participants

Please note that SARS-CoV-2 Immunity and REinfection EvaluationN (SIREN) study (<https://snapsurvey.phe.org.uk/siren/>) participants are exempted from this enhanced surveillance as they will be investigated within the SIREN study.

If you are aware of a new infection in a vaccinated SIREN participant then you do not need to report this case through this route. Please report any such cases in SIREN participants directly to the SIREN study team siren@phe.gov.uk

Collection of patient data

Surveillance of COVID-19 testing and vaccination is undertaken under Regulation 3 of The Health Service (Control of Patient Information) Regulations 2002 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/1438/regulation/3/made>) to collect confidential patient information under Sections 3(i) (a) to (c), 3(i)(d) (i) and (ii) and 3(3).

Further information

If you would like more information about this surveillance please contact PHE.vaccines@nhs.net

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