



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

17 FEBRUARY 2023

Dear colleagues,

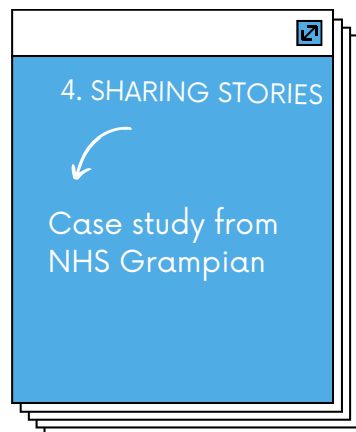
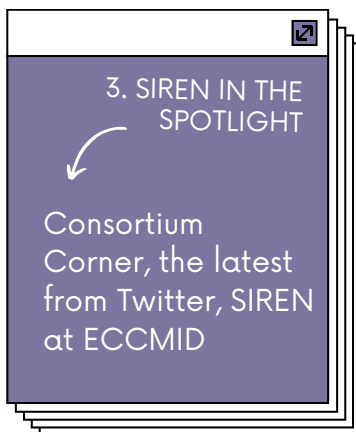
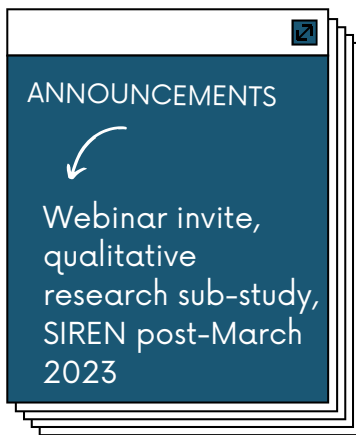
Welcome to a bonus issue of the SIREN newsletter. It is a busy time for the SIREN study and we are excited to share a number of updates and opportunities, so we are straying from the usual two-monthly schedule to share these with you.

SIREN is shaped by your feedback and we'd really like to hear from you. If you would like to submit your reflections to be included as a case study in an upcoming issue of the SIREN newsletter, [please fill out our form.](#)

As ever, thank you for your ongoing contribution to the SIREN study.



## Coming up in this issue..





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

17 FEBRUARY 2023

## 1. Announcements

### A) SIREN Webinar

We hope you can join us for a SIREN webinar on 17 March 2023, 12:30-13:30!

Register for the webinar [here](#), or by clicking the button below.



Join us to hear how your participation has contributed to the latest SIREN findings. We'll look back at the impact the study over time and provide an update on plans post-March 2023.

The webinar will be live there will be an opportunity to ask questions during the event. We look forward to seeing you there!

In the meantime, if you would like to keep up with the latest about the SIREN study please head to our [webpage](#). You can also join the conversation on Twitter by searching [#SIRENstudy](#) and following [@Victoria\\_jhall](#) and [@SMHopkins](#).

## B) NEW qualitative research sub-study!

We are delighted to share that SIREN has obtained funding to introduce a new qualitative research sub-study, subject to ethical approval. We would really welcome your input in this exciting new area of research.



### WHAT?

SIREN has commissioned experts in qualitative research to facilitate a number of focus groups. This includes focus groups with participants, site teams and the wider SIREN site workforce. Each focus group will involve 6-8 individuals who will be asked to respond to and discuss a series of questions. There are no right answers, and we would welcome your open and honest responses.

Questions will vary between focus groups but topics may include:

- The impact of SIREN on participants
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on participants
- Attitudes towards regular vaccinations during the course of the study
- Feedback on how the SIREN study is run

### WHY?

We are keen to value all the hard work and effort participants

have contributed over the course of the study. Introducing a qualitative research sub-study will help us add depth to, and further explore, the quantitative findings of the SIREN study to date whilst generating new insights.

### WHEN?

We will be running participant focus groups on:

- 27 February, 18:00 - 20:00
- 21 March, 12:00 - 14:00

### HOW?

If you would like to take part please fill in the form. If you are selected we will email you a participant information leaflet and a consent form for signing. You will be offered an honorarium for your time.





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

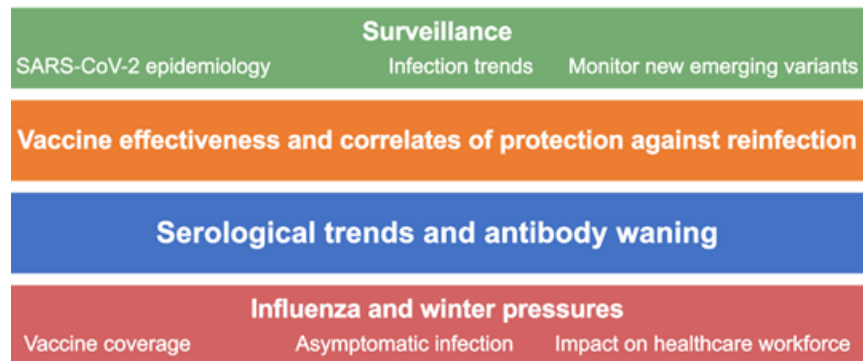
# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

17 FEBRUARY 2023

## C) SIREN beyond March 2023

SIREN is continuing to make an important contribution to our understanding of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses.

This includes through:



We are really keen to investigate options for continuation beyond March 2023. We are still waiting for confirmation of funding but we look forward to seeking feedback and providing you with an update as soon as possible.

## 2. Study reminders

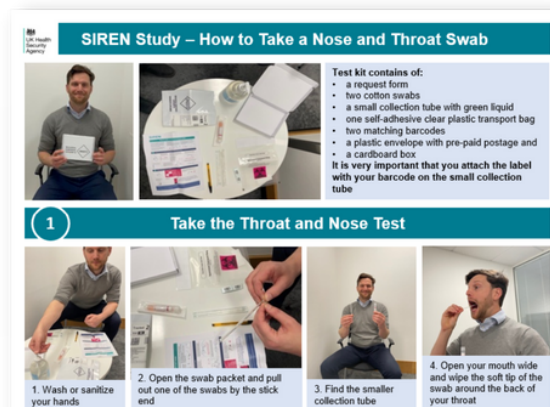
### Flu and Winter Pressures postal pathway



To encourage participation in the sub-study we invited participants from closed out SIREN sites to join via a **postal pathway** – submitting PCRs and follow-up questionnaires only, independent of any site. We were really pleased that over 3,400 participants joined through this pathway!

**Postal pathway participants ONLY** - based on your feedback we have provided additional instructions for carrying out, labelling and posting the swab kits.

You should have received an email or text message this week. If you **did not receive this, please get in touch.**





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

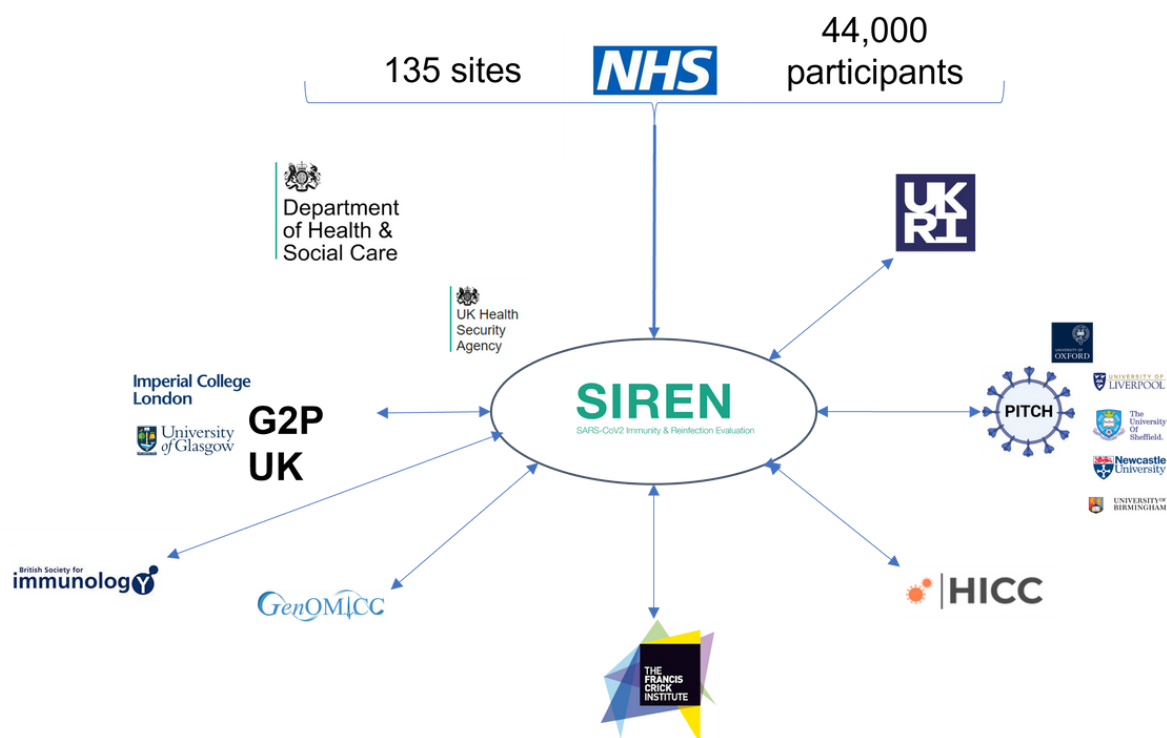
17 FEBRUARY 2023

## 3. SIREN in the spotlight

### A) Consortium corner

The SIREN Consortium is a unique, multidisciplinary collaboration established to answer key questions about the mechanisms and durability of COVID-19 immunity.

**Consortium members include:**



Each SIREN Consortium member focuses on its own particular research area. To provide more insight into the Consortium and some of the people behind the research, we asked representatives from different organisations to share a bit about themselves and their work with SIREN.

We introduced the first two members last month, and introduce two more below. **Please click the videos below to watch.**



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

17 FEBRUARY 2023

*"Hi, I'm Dr Ash Otter. I'm the Principal Investigator for the emerging pathogens serology lab at UKHSA Porton Down.*

*Our involvement with the SIREN Consortium is to carry out a lot of the immunological testing for the SIREN project. This involves anti-nucleocapsid and anti-spike antibody testing as well as a panel of other different assays to monitor antibody responses – both from infection and vaccination."*



*"Hi my name is Alex Richter, I'm Professor of Clinical Immunology based at the University of*

*Birmingham and my background is as a Clinical Immunologist looking after patients with primary and secondary immune deficiency. I've been involved with the SIREN study through the healthcare worker cohort we recruited and the PITCH study. More latterly I've been helping to lead the VIBRANT study which is looking at vaccine breakthrough and whether underlying medical conditions make people more predisposed to vaccine breakthrough"*

## B) The latest from Twitter

**UK Health Security Agency** @UKHSA

Leading the #SIRENstudy team, @victoria\_jhall explains more about how SIREN has expanded to look at data on #flu and #RSV in her thread below.

Find out more about the SIREN study and its expansion in our blog: [ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/07/the...](https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/07/the...)

**Victoria\_jhall** @victoria\_jhall · Feb 8  
(1/7) Interested in how we set up the SIREN Flu and Winter Pressures sub-study? Over the last few months we have introduced several new testing pathways #SIRENstudy  
[Show this thread](#)

**Victoria\_jhall** @victoria\_jhall

(4/7) How did we achieve this?

We worked in an agile way at scale and speed building on our existing #SIRENstudy collaborations, formed during the pandemic. @publichealthni @P\_H\_Official @PublicHealthW @SHIPGCU @NIHRresearch

**Victoria\_jhall** @victoria\_jhall

(5/7) The #SIRENstudy Participant Involvement Panel gave timely advice on our plans and helped communicate study changes to participants thanks @britsocimm.

@HRA\_Latest provided rapid ethics review (thanks Kev!) and Charlotte and team @NIHRCRN\_nthames provided expert support.

**jasmin islam** @dr\_jas\_islam

Great to see ongoing research addressing winter pressure #SIRENstudy @UKHSA

**The VIBRANT Study UK** @vibrant\_uk

Really pleased to announce that we have issued our 100th report - 100 to go! @UKHSA @victoria\_jhall @EPS\_Porton @AlexRichter3 @Susannajd @PKIenermanLab

**Victoria\_jhall** @victoria\_jhall

Delighted that the #SIRENstudy has been awarded funding from @HDR\_UK to support the SIREN Influenza and Winter Pressures study! This winter we have integrated Influenza and RSV PCR testing alongside SARS-CoV-2. Great example of building on the COVID-19 research infrastructure

**Ash Otter** @asherichia

Check out the new #SIRENstudy testing pathways, meaning we are now able to look at SARS-CoV-2, Influenza and RSV 🤧

**Health Data Research UK (HDR UK)** @HDR\_UK · Jan 23

In partnership with @NIHRresearch, we're supporting 16 projects that will use health data to understand and tackle 'winter pressures' faced by the NHS - compounded this year by #COVID19, a record flu season, and the cost-of-living crisis.

[hdruk.ac.uk/news/nhs-winte...](https://hdruk.ac.uk/news/nhs-winte...)  
[Show this thread](#)

**UK Covid Vaccine Research Hub** @UKCovidVaxHub

In November 2022 the #SIRENstudy expanded to study #flu and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

@UKHSA's new blog explores how the SIREN team is filling important knowledge gaps.  
[ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/07/the...](https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2023/02/07/the...)

#COVID19 #research #RSV



## C) SIREN at ECCMID

We are pleased to share that the SIREN team have had a **number of abstracts accepted** for the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID) 2023.

If you are also attending the conference in April please do keep an eye out for SIREN posters and presentations, and **come say hello!** We would be delighted to see you there.



## 4. Sharing stories



Thanks to all those who have submitted reflections on being part of the SIREN study.

**To feature in a future newsletter please fill out [this form](#).**

*"After 2 years of regular blood samples, along with hundreds of infections and vaccinations, lots of participants were wondering what their spike antibodies were doing.*

*In response to this, we made individual graphs showing participants own spike antibody levels over time.*

*We incorporated this into a letter that explained and put into context the results. In our monthly local SIREN newsletter, we then included a graph showing the average results for everyone in our cohort so that participants could compare what their own spike antibody trends looked like compared to the average.*

*Participants have given us excellent feedback, have enjoyed discussing and comparing, and have found it interesting seeing the effects of infection and/or vaccination on their antibody levels."*

Harriet Carroll  
NHS Grampian, Scotland

