



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

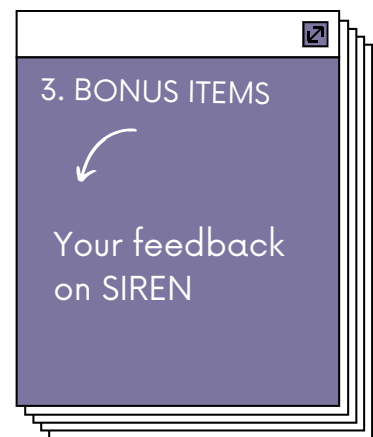
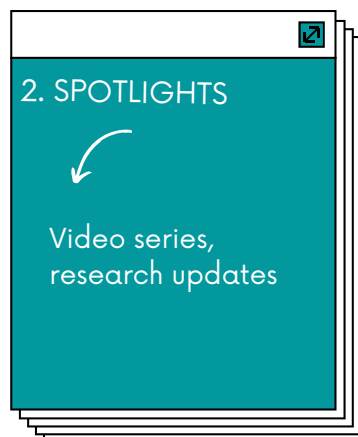
# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

**Dear colleagues,**

Welcome to the latest issue of the SIREN newsletter. We are excited to share some key study updates and research outputs below.

As always we welcome your feedback and encourage you to reach out with any questions or suggestions, either through filling out the form on [this link](#) or contacting us via our dedicated inbox at [phe.siren.participants@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:phe.siren.participants@ukhsa.gov.uk).





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## 1. Announcements

### A) Restart of postal pathway

Following the success of the winter pressures sub-study, we have re-invited participants to continue testing via the postal pathway using a fortnightly swab by post and a questionnaire. This will ensure SIREN participants continue to provide data on RSV, influenza and SARS-CoV2 that can help shape future national policy.

Eligible participants were re-invited to participate in May and we are delighted that a total of 1,519 participants have signed up to continue testing via this pathway which will run until June 2023.





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## B) New SIREN study portal



### Welcome to the SIREN Study Portal

This website is for SIREN participants and aims to keep you updated about your participation in the study.

The purpose of this study is to understand whether prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) protects against future infection with the same virus. The study has received approval from the NHS Health Research Authority Berkshire Research Ethics Committee and is funded by the National Institute of Health Research and UK Health Security Agency.

We are pleased to share a new updated version of the SIREN Portal, our dedicated website where we will keep you updated about your participation in the study. On the website you can find a copy of our latest study newsletter, ways of managing your communication preferences and contact details with the study team.

You can access the SIREN study portal [here](#).



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## C) Second Participant Involvement Panel (PIP) cycle

A big thank you to all the members of our Participant Involvement Panel (PIP), who met for the final time in April. The PIP is a collaboration between SIREN study participants, researchers, coordinated by the British Society for Immunology (BSI). This second round of PIP has met 6 weekly between October 2022 and April 2023, and provided an opportunity for participants to feedback on all aspects of the trial from design to delivery.

We hope to hold a further PIP recruitment. Please keep an eye out in future editions of this newsletter for details of how to apply to our PIP.





UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## 2. SIREN in the spotlight

### A) SIREN video series

To showcase findings from the SIREN study, over the next few months we are recording a series of video interviews with key SIREN researchers. In our first interview we hear from Ana Atti, SIREN Clinical Research Lead, and Edward Carr, Clinical Scientist at University College London (UCL) and Visiting Scientist at the Francis Crick Institute. In this video Ana and Ed share their exciting research on antibody correlates of protection for COVID-19.

Stay tuned for our next video interview which will be filmed in June!



You can access the video interview series [here](#).



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## B) Qualitative research update



SIREN has been working with researchers at Birmingham City University to understand the role of data within SIREN. So far, we have conducted a total of five focus groups, and carried out individual semi-structured interviews with 23 individuals. We have identified a number of common themes which impact participants, study sites and the wider workforce. All focus groups and structured interviews have been conducted and transcribed, and analysis of this data has now begun. We will share the results of this exciting piece of research in due course.



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

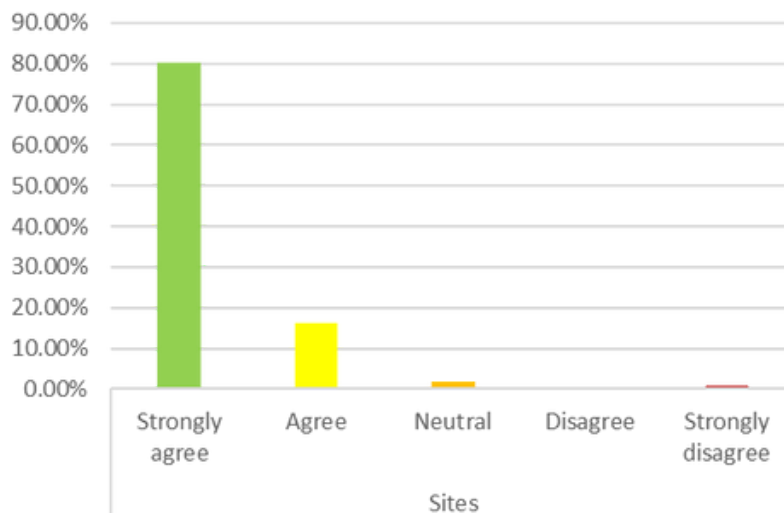
31 MAY 2023

## C) Winter pressures evaluation

We are currently running a qualitative evaluation of the winter pressures pathway which ran from November to March 2023. We asked participants to respond to a survey on their experience of the pathway and are pleased to have received very positive feedback:

- **1090 respondents** to the evaluation survey for winter pressures
- **Over 90%** of participants felt respected (strongly and/or agree)
- **Over 90%** of participants would consider taking part again (strongly and/or agree)
- The least positive feedback was about results – which we are taking on board!

Research staff have always treated me  
with courtesy and respect



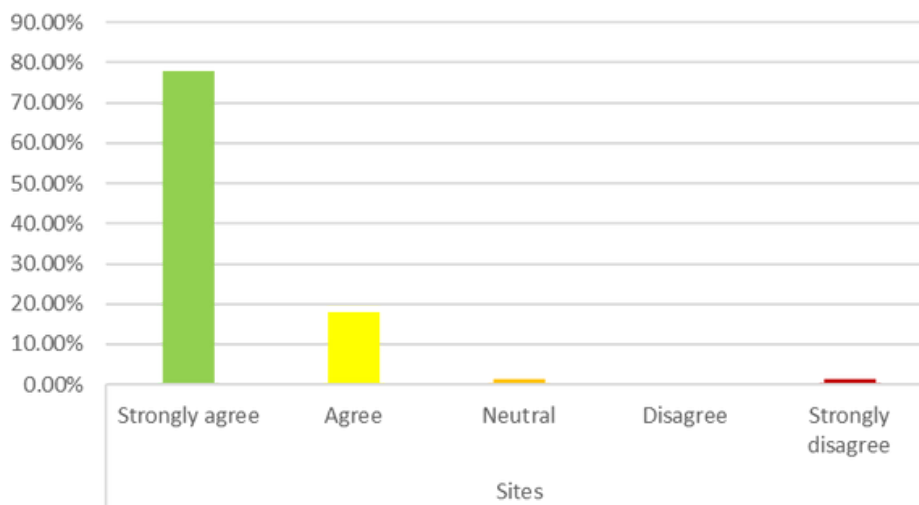


UK Health  
Security  
Agency

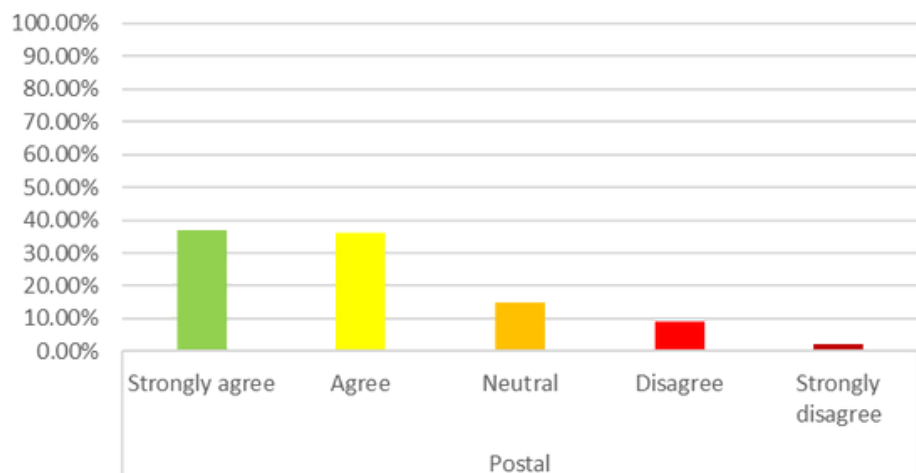
# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

I would consider taking part in research again



I know how I will receive the results of the research



**Thank you to all those who took part in our evaluation survey, and we hope to share our full results in a future newsletter.**



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## D) New research from SIREN: protection against COVID-19 infection from vaccination boosters

A new SIREN study pre-print has been published looking into the protection from a booster dose against Delta and Omicron infection, and comparing individuals who were never infected with those who were previously infected. We have included a summary of key findings below and will share full details of the published paper in due course.

medRxiv

THE PREPRINT SERVER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES



BMJ Yale

**Effectiveness of BNT162b2 mRNA vaccine third doses and previous infection in protecting against SARS-CoV-2 infections during the Delta and Omicron variant waves; the UK SIREN cohort study September 2021 to February 2022**

Victoria J Hall, Ferdinando Insalata, Sarah Foulkes, Peter D Kirwan, Dominic Sparkes, Ana Atti, Michelle Cole, Elen de Lacy, Lesley Price, Diane Corrigan, Colin S Brown, Jasmin Islam, The SIREN Study Group, Andre Charlett, Susan Hopkins

doi: <https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.05.22.23290197>

**This article is a preprint and has not been certified by peer review [what does this mean?]. It reports new medical research that has yet to be evaluated and so should not be used to guide clinical practice.**



Abstract

Info/History

Metrics

Preview PDF



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## What did we look at?

- The protection against COVID-19 infection provided by a **third vaccine dose** (the first booster)
- Was there a difference in protection provided by the vaccine against the **Omicron variant compared to the Delta variant**
- Was there a difference in protection if you had been **previously infected and vaccinated versus vaccination alone**

## How did we investigate this?

- We compared the proportion of participants infected (rates of infection) after **3 doses** of vaccine with the proportion of participants infected after **2 doses**
- We compared this rate of infection in participants who had **never been infected and those who had previously been infected** to see the difference (hybrid immunity)
- We also compared the rates of infection when the Delta variant was circulating against when the Omicron variant was circulating



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## When was this data collected?

- Delta period: September to November 2022
- Omicron period: December 2022 to February 2023

## What did we find?

- **The third vaccine dose offered an increased protection against all variants of COVID-19** but the effectiveness was higher against Delta infection than Omicron
- Protection from the booster dose **waned much more rapidly against Omicron than Delta** with no additional benefit against Omicron after >4 months than 2 booster doses
- However, if you had been infected by COVID-19 in the last year and received a booster dose (hybrid protection) your protection was higher against both Delta and Omicron



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## Why is this important?

This research is important because it tells us the following:

- The COVID-19 vaccines were effective against Omicron, but less so than against previous strains
- The vaccine effectiveness (protection after booster) waned faster against Omicron than previous strains
- Even if you had been infected with COVID-19, a booster vaccination improved your protection compared with infection or vaccination alone. This highlights the importance of vaccination even if you have been infected previously

**[You can read the pre-print here](#)**



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

## 3. Bonus items

### A) Your feedback on SIREN

SIREN is shaped by your feedback. We have loved hearing your experiences of being part of the SIREN community:

"I feel this study has been immensely important and I'm happy to have been able to help SIREN with regular testing."

**James Walmsley,  
Derbyshire Support  
and Facilities Service**

"Being part of SIREN has been very insightful, the study provides us with continual learning opportunities and supports further learning and development"

**Annabel De Souza,  
King's College Hospital**

"I really felt I was making an active contribution towards this research. I contracted covid 6 months after my first vaccination so it was useful to see how this would impact my results going forwards."

**Amanda Gardiner, Mid and  
South Essex Foundation Trust**



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

"The information that I provided and all my swabs and bloods have helped with this research. I have enjoyed being a part of the study and receiving information from SIREN. The Black County Healthcare Foundation Trust Research have been wonderful and we have built good relationships with them."

**Tracey Marcelle Spooner,  
Black County Healthcare  
Foundation Trust**

"Despite a dislike of needles I felt it was important to take part if it would help discover more about covid and help shape future medicine. Due to my job role I was unable to help in any practical ways so this was my way of doing my bit."

**Karen Plumpton, University  
Hospitals Plymouth**

"Being part of SIREN and helping research was the best way of 'doing my bit' Hopefully my experiences helped in some small way, it has made me proud that I could help."

**Carol Rogers, LPFT**



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

# SIREN PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER

31 MAY 2023

Please continue to share your reflections and experiences of being part of SIREN using [this link](#).



## Sharing stories: reflections and stories from SIREN sites and participants

SIREN is shaped by your feedback and case studies are a key part of that.

Please submit your reflections below to be featured in a future issue of the SIREN newsletter.

1. Please use the space below to share your reflections on the SIREN study. For SIREN sites, please feel free to use the space below to share more about initiatives or achievements at your site.

Enter your answer