

Supplementary written evidence submitted by UKHSA
(C190120)

I am writing in response to a commitment made by the UKHSA to provide further information at the Science and Tech Committee hearing held on 14 December 2021 on Omicron:

- Q2748 Prof Riley said that the UKHSA can seek to find a summary of severity across the variants.

On 23 December the UKHSA published an updated briefing on [SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern and variants under investigation in England](#) .

This report shares the detailed variant surveillance analyses which contribute to the variant risk assessments and designation of new variants of concern (VOC) and variants under investigation (VUI). This specialist technical briefing contains early data and analysis on emerging variants and findings have a high level of uncertainty.

- Q2755 Prof Riley said that UKHSA can send some estimates on the effect on the R rate of behavioural changes.

The UKHSA continues to monitor all available data for evidence of behavioural changes. Pre-Christmas the data was mixed. There was a reduction in high-street footfall (source Springboard data) and in the number of people dining in restaurants (Opentable seated diners data) but little change in other data for example Google mobility data. The data over the festive period was also mixed, and interpreting it is more difficult. It is too early to make any assessment of the effect of behavioural changes on transmission.

The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has published its assessment of the effectiveness of different non-pharmaceutical interventions on Covid transmission. [Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions \(NPIs\) table, 21 September 2020, updated 26 October 2021](#). This shows that encouragement to work from home could have a significant effect on transmission, reducing the rate by 0.2 to 0.4 if all who can work from home do so. However, with many people who can work from home already doing so, Google mobility data indicates that work attendance is still 30% below the pre-Covid pandemic levels, the effect of the recent advice to work from home wherever possible may be towards the lower end of the range of estimates.

The Government regularly publishes detailed information on [the R value and growth rate](#). The latest version is dated 7 January 2022.

I hope these responses will provide the Committee with the level of detail required.

January 2022