

# **Qualitative assessment of the risk of SARS-CoV-2 to human health through food exposures to deer in the UK: Hazard characterisation**

The symptoms of COVID-19 include headaches, runny nose, sore throat and persistent cough, although vary depending on such things as vaccination status of the individual infected and the variant of SARS-CoV-2. The severity of symptoms varies, with most people experiencing mild to moderate severity disease and recovering without requiring special treatment. Some will experience severe disease requiring medical intervention. This is more likely to occur in older people or those with underlying comorbidities such as cardiovascular or respiratory disease, or cancers; however, anyone can have severe COVID-19 (WHO 2022). In addition, some people infected will go on to experience long COVID; although most will recover from this within 12 weeks, some will experience it for much longer (NHS 2021).

There have been 22,241,858 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in the UK since the virus was first described (data to 1st of December 2022, (GOV.UK)). Of these, there were 993,749 hospitalisations and 209,685 deaths with COVID-19 on the death certificate (data to 1st of December 2022, (GOV.UK)). There has been widespread vaccination in the UK, with 53,813,491 people having received at least one dose, 50,762,968 having received two doses and 40,373,987 of those having also received a booster or third vaccine (data to 1st of December 2022, (GOV.UK)).