



Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

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[MHRA Website](https://www.mhra.gov.uk)

Our Ref: **FOI2026/00951**

23 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FoI) request received on 25 August. You wrote:

I would like to request:

-the Covid-19 vaccine analysis print for batch number AB0002 made by AstraZeneca (of the kind given in response to FOI 2024/00400).

-a breakdown of the top 50 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine batches by number of ADR reports (and if possible, also showing the number of fatal reports) up to and including 25/08/2026.

-I would also like to know why the total number of reports for AB0002 was reduced from 3,182 (as per FOI 23/143 answered on 20 March 2023) to 2,857 (as per FOI 2025/00445 answered on 3 June 2025).

MHRA Response

We confirm that we hold some of the information you have requested.

We can confirm the MHRA has received a total number of 3190 UK spontaneous suspected Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) reports associated with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine batch number AB0002 up to and including the 15/09/2026.

Please be aware that on a Yellow Card report, the batch number is an optional field and is entered in a free-text format. As a result, this information may not always be provided, or when this information is provided, the format can vary between reports depending on how the reporter has entered this information. As such, to extract this information we account for the possible variations in how a batch number might be reported, as outlined below:

- A space/dash/hyphen between letters and numbers.
- Variations between the number 0 and letter O.
- Variations between the number 2 and letter Z.
- Variations between uppercase and lowercase letters.

It is important to note that not all batches of the COVID-19 vaccines are the same size, and some batches may have had more wastage than other batches or be distributed more widely

outside of the UK. Therefore, we would not expect the number of ADR reports for all batches to be the same as they have been administered to different numbers of patients.

Furthermore, different batches would have been used at different stages of the vaccination campaign, and in different patient groups, which could also impact reporting rates. For example, reporting rates were typically higher at the beginning of the vaccination campaign as individuals received their first dose and the likelihood of experiencing a reaction, as well as the propensity to report it, differs across patients of different ages.

Please refer to the attached Vaccine Analysis Print (VAP) which lists all the reactions reported to the MHRA in association with the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine batch number AB0002 up to and including the 15/09/2026. Please note that the total number of reactions in the VAP will not be equal to the total number of unique reports as one report may contain more than one reaction. Attached is a guidance sheet which provides you with further information on how to interpret the print.

Upon review of your request, we have determined that the information regarding top 50 AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine batches you have requested is exempt under section 12 of the FOIA. Section 12 of the Act allows public authorities to refuse requests where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for central government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 24 working hours in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

The reason for this exemption, is that "Batch number" is a free text field on a Yellow Card form and as such includes vast amounts of variation where reporters have mistyped, added spaces/hyphens, or included expiry dates, for example. Upon review of the data held, there are 11680 variations of the batch number field for COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine Yellow Card reports. To be able to provide this information, initially all variations will have to be reviewed in order to discount any that definitively do not relate to batch numbers.

Any remaining variations will then need cross-checking against known batch numbers to exclude any that firstly do not correspond to the COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccine but to other vaccines, if for instance more than one vaccine has been reported in a single report.

After this is complete the remaining batch number variations are reviewed to ensure no further variation should be included where it is obvious the text provided relates to a known batch number. Once the variations are grouped, a report is built and then run via our systems for each batch. Lastly after each run is complete the data needs to be put into an acceptable format to complete retrieval.

You may be aware that we have previously provided similar information in response to an earlier FOI request. However, following a review, it was identified that the methodology previously used to group batch numbers was not consistent with the validated approach outlined above. As the grouping process relied on subjective interpretation, the data was susceptible to human error and inconsistencies, resulting in some batch numbers being duplicated and presented as separate entries. Consequently, the previously published information has been removed, and the dataset provided in this response has been generated using the revised methodology to ensure greater accuracy and consistency.

When section 12 is applied, we are required to provide advice and assistance to the requester, to help them make a new request which could be dealt with within the 24-hour appropriate limit. We can provide what you have requested but for the 5 batch numbers associated with the highest volume of reports, with the above variations of batch number as

stated. If you are interested in receiving data under a refined request as suggested, please submit a new FOI request.

Finally, we would like to apologise for any confusion caused by the differences in data provided in FOI 23/143 and FOI 2025/00445.

For FOI 2025/00445, the information was extracted using only the exact batch number "AB0002". The search did not take account of possible variations in the way the batch number may have been recorded within the free-text field, as described above. As a result, reports containing variations of the batch number were not included in the dataset, and the total number identified was therefore lower than would be expected when applying the broader methodology used for both FOI 23/143 and the present response.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team
Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency

Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing foi.request@mhra.gov.uk or by writing to: MHRA Central Freedom of Information Team, 10 South, Colonnade, Canary Wharf, London, E14 4PU

Any request for an internal review must be received by us within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please note we are not obliged to provide a review if it is requested after more than 40 working days.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

Website: [ICO FOI and EIR complaints](#) or telephone 0303 123 1113.

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