



# Government Office for Science

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Date 17/02/21  
Ref no: GOS-COV-250121-0148

Dear Mr Jones,

Thank you for your email of 25/1/21 where you requested the following information:

*“Subject: C J 107: Covid 19 - SARS-CoV-2: New variant from South Africa*

*I note, from an announcement on 24 January 2021 by the Rt Hon Matt Hancock Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, that 77 cases of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus has been detected in the UK, originating from South Africa. Accordingly, I would be grateful if you could arrange to provide the following information under the F O I Act 2000.*

- A copy of the guidance provided to Public Health Laboratories on how to recalibrate the RT-PCR test to detect the new variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus from South Africa, and*
- The reference number allocated to this new "Variant of Concern" from South Africa.“*

## Response

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and is based on information held.

We do not hold the information you request about how to recalibrate the RT-PCR test. The reference number allocated to the new variant is available on the Public Health England (PHE) website, please see link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-variants-identified-in-uk>

## Appeals procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to:

Government Office for Science Internal Reviews  
Government Office for Science  
10 Victoria Street  
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Email: [foi.reviews@go-science.gov.uk](mailto:foi.reviews@go-science.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

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