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COVER data explained

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What is COVER?

- COVER stands for Cover Of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly. It is a standard measure of vaccine uptake in children aged 0 to 5 – a proxy measure of UK protection. Published by NHS Digital [online](#) and available as a [dashboard](#).
- Started in [2005](#), so very useful for long term trends.
- It is published nationally so useful for benchmarking.
- In North East London, it is populated by patient identifiable GP data, which flows via the Discovery Data Service to the Child Health Information Service (CHIS) to NHS Digital.
- CEG was commissioned to produce this data (faster than NHS Digital) to support enhanced services in the past, but we are no longer commissioned to do this. We have continued publishing out of good will. We follow [NHSE rules](#) in the same way as NHS Digital, but do not include unregistered children.
- **Cohorts change quarterly**, so COVER dashboards show children **becoming** 1, 2, or 5 years old **in the quarter** (not all children aged 1, 2, or 5). There is an extra report at the end of the financial year which includes all children becoming 1, 2, or 5 in the year.

What COVER is not

- COVER does not show the impact of recent interventions or events (the effects of March 2020 lockdowns on 1st MMR dose did not show in COVER until one year later, and for pre-school boosters a year and a half later)
- It is not related to practice payment (QOF is)
- It does not count the number of vaccines given in a particular period (ImmForm does)
- It cannot be used for basic call/recall, because it does not include all children. (Practices in North East London should use the CEG [APL-Imms tool](#) for this)
- It will not tell you the total number of unvaccinated children, so it cannot be used to plan a catch-up campaign
- It is not good to plot trends for small surgeries where one or two children can move the performance from 100% to, say, 75%
- It does not show monthly trends, because the cohorts remain the same for one whole quarter and they include children who should have been vaccinated a long time ago.

Example of possible data misreading

First MMR, 24m cohort, in a NEL Place:

Patients becoming 24m within quarter: **1,350**
Of those, **1,150** had had their first MMR

- Does this mean that the number of children aged two who have not had their first MMR is **200**? NO
- It means that 200 children **born between 1 Oct 2021 - 31 Dec 2021** had not had their first MMR
- In fact, the number of registered children who were age two on the 31 December 2023 in that Place was around 5,350 and about **700** of them had not had their MMR by that date. And if we wanted to target all children under age 6, we would have to look at those aged 3, 4 and 5 as well.