



Policy paper

Summary of badger vaccination in 2022

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Applies to England



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Background

The government's strategy [\[footnote 1\]](#) on tackling bovine tuberculosis in England includes badger vaccination.

Badgers are a protected species. This means a licence is required to capture them in cage traps before they are vaccinated. A licence is also needed to temporarily mark a badger to show it has been vaccinated. In 2022, these licences were issued by Defra and Natural England.

Individuals must have explicit permission from the relevant landowner to access land they want to place traps on. Individuals must provide proof of relevant training when they register for a licence to set cage-traps and/or mark badgers [\[footnote 2\]](#).

Number of badgers vaccinated in England in 2022

The open season for vaccinating badgers runs each year from 1 May to 30 November.

Licensed individuals must submit to Defra and Natural England an annual return of the number of badgers trapped, marked and vaccinated during the open season.

In 2022, licenced individuals vaccinated 2434 [\[footnote 3\]](#) badgers across England.

County	Badgers vaccinated
Avon	74
Berkshire	20
Cheshire	116
Cornwall	249
Derbyshire	105

County	Badgers vaccinated
Devon	45
Dorset	31
East Sussex	488
Gloucestershire	440
Greater Manchester	4
Hereford And Worcester	140
Oxfordshire	139
Shropshire	33
Somerset	224
Staffordshire	17
Surrey	3
Warwickshire	31
Wiltshire	135

Vaccination of badgers in Cumbria

Badgers vaccinated in Cumbria are part of a badger control intervention area, which has been granted a Low Risk Area Badger Disease Control licence. Vaccination was undertaken over a total area of 140.4km², of which 91.04km² was accessible.

County	Total area (km²)	Licensed accessible area (km²)	Badgers vaccinated
Cumbria	214.3	141.3	140

Field monitoring

Cage-trapping is a long established method of catching badgers and the welfare of badgers captured in cage-traps has been investigated before^[footnote 4].

In 2022, Natural England conducted compliance monitoring visits on 20 (13.3%^[footnote 5]) licensed individuals authorised to cage-trap, mark and vaccinate badgers. All individuals were compliant with licence conditions.

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1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-officially-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england> (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-officially-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england>)
 2. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bovine-tb-badger-vaccination-training> (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bovine-tb-badger-vaccination-training>)
 3. Based on a preliminary analysis of the return forms submitted to Natural England in December 2022.
 4. Woodroffe, R, Bourne, FJ, Cox, DR, Donnelly, CA, Gettinby, G, McInerney, JP, and Morrison, WI (2005) 'Welfare of badgers (*Meles meles*) subjected to culling: patterns of trap-related injury', *Animal Welfare*, 14 (1), pp. 11-17.
 5. Based on the number of compliance visits conducted as a proportion of the total number of licensed individuals
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