



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Science Evidence Advice

Weekly Surveillance Report

29 May 2024



Science Evidence Advice (SEA)

gov.wales

Providing evidence and advice for Health and Social Services
Group on behalf of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Health

Science Evidence Advice: Weekly Surveillance Report

Top Line Summary

- Overall, COVID-19 infections have **increased** slightly in the most recent week.
- COVID-19 hospital admissions **increased** in the most recent week (week 18).
- RSV activity in children under 5 years remained **stable** at low intensity levels.
- Influenza cases are **stable** with 33 confirmed cases in the latest week.
- Whooping Cough notifications have **increased** slightly in the most recent week.
- Scarlet Fever notifications have remained **stable** slightly in the most recent week.

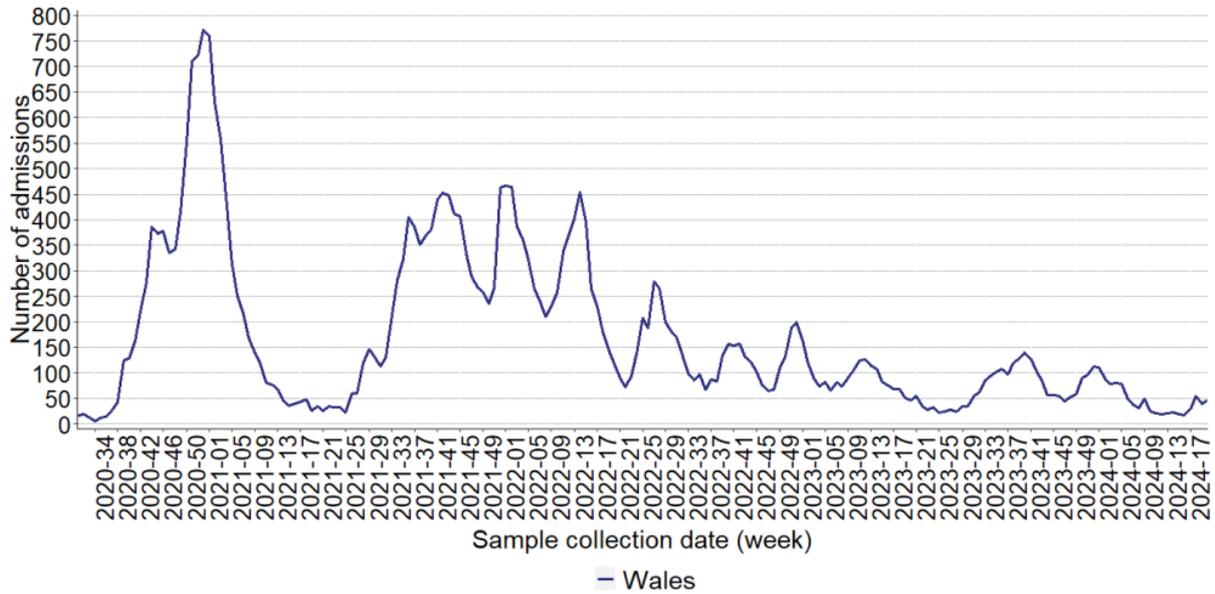
1. COVID-19 Situation Update

Overall, COVID-19 infections have increased slightly in the most recent week. While not consistent across all indicators, many of the indicators remain relatively stable.

- At a national level, the weekly number of confirmed case admissions to hospital and the number of cases who are inpatients has increased in week 20, following a gradual declining trend in recent weeks.
- As of 19 May 2024, **302** people currently in hospital have had a positive COVID-19 test, with 1 in ICU (compared to **218** and none in the previous week (week 18)). Please note that hospital admissions data is not available from Public Health Wales for week 19 due to a technical issue.
- The all-Wales incidence as estimated using PCR episodes remains at low levels.
- The number of deaths from any cause has decreased in the latest reported data available from ONS and remains above the 5-year average.
- In the last four reporting weeks, V-23DEC-01 (Omicron, JN.1) is the most dominant variant in Wales, accounting for **97.1%** of all sequenced cases.
- There were **4** new respiratory incidents recorded in the health protection case and incident management system (Tarian) in week 20 2024. All 4 of the respiratory incidents were in residential homes. Across recent reporting weeks, the average numbers of Acute respiratory and COVID-confirmed incidents in care homes (recorded on Tarian) have been relatively stable when looking at these by the date of onset of the first case.
- *Please note that syndromic surveillance data from PHW is not available for week 20 due to a technical issue.* The proportion of calls to NHS 111 and NHS Direct related to possible COVID-19 symptoms decreased in week 18 compared to previous weeks. GP consultations for any Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) have been decreased in the most recent week and consultations for suspected COVID have remained stable at very low levels.

- The overall number of ambulance calls related to COVID-19 has increased but the proportion of incidents has remained stable in week 19.

Figure 1: Weekly number of admissions to all hospitals in Wales testing positive on or within 28d prior to admission, Wales (ICNET clinical surveillance software)(source: [PHW](#))



Swansea University Mid Term Projections for COVID-19

The latest available Swansea University MTPs using data up to 17 April indicate a plateau in COVID-19 non-ICU hospital admissions through May and continuing on this trajectory through to the end of June 2024. ICU admissions remain at low levels as do deaths caused by COVID-19.

Figure 2: Daily COVID-19 hospital admissions, projected to end of June 2024

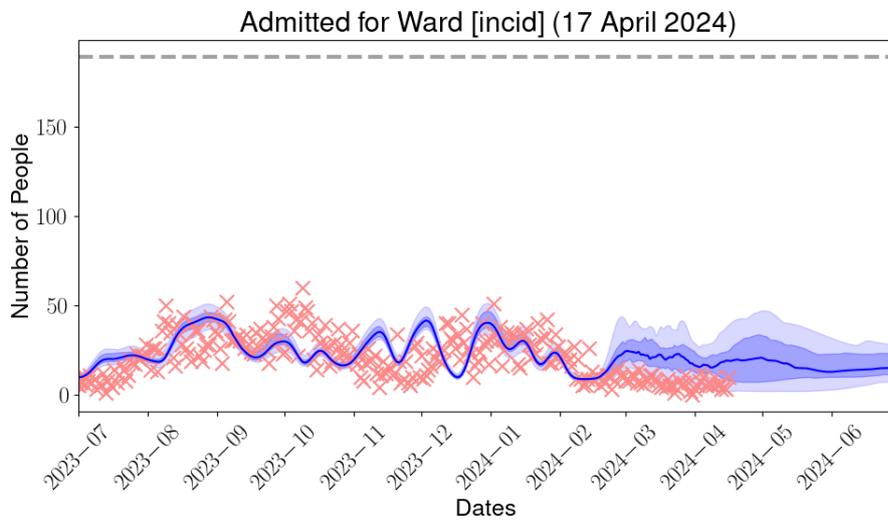


Figure 3: Daily COVID-19 ICU admissions, projected to end of June 2024

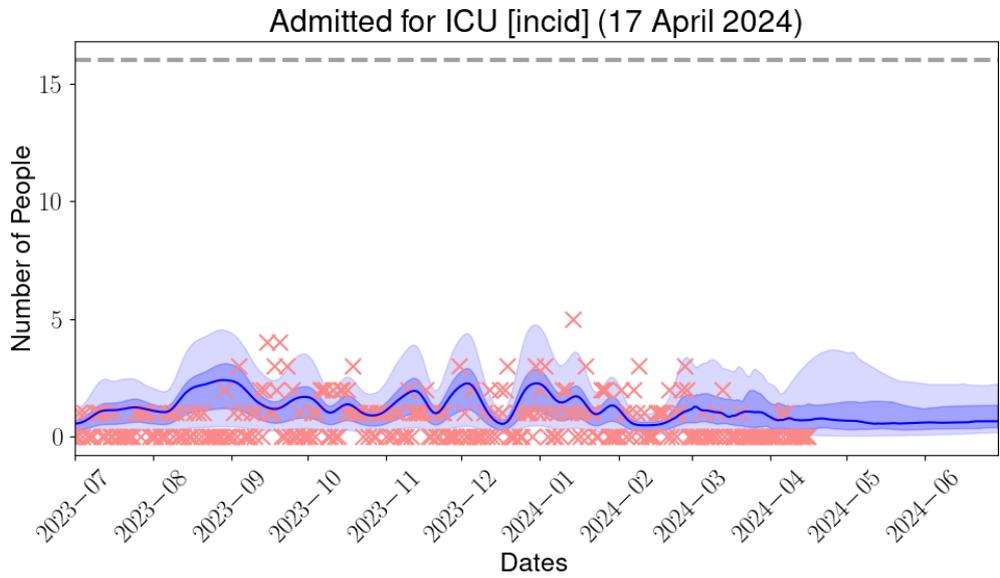
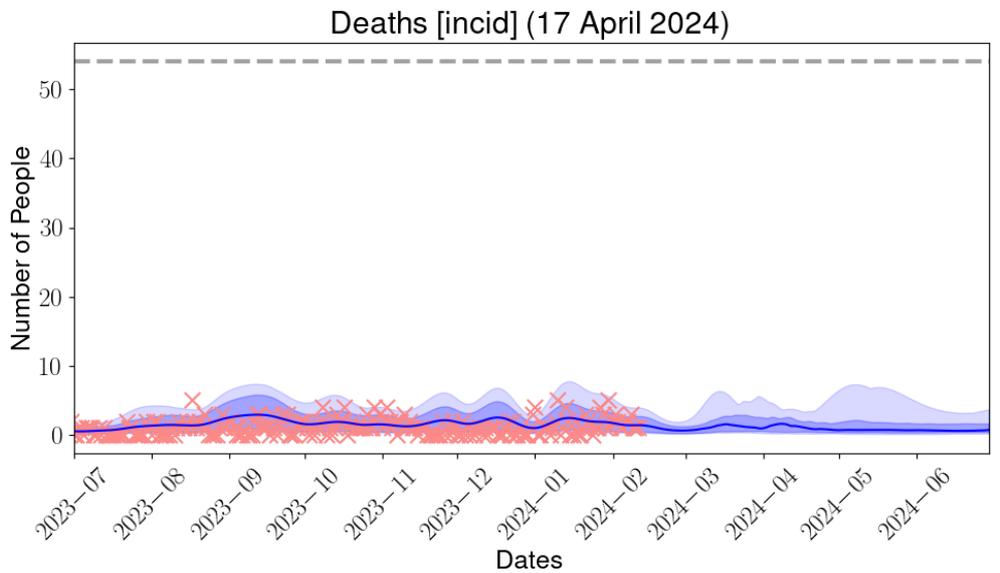


Figure 4: Daily COVID-19 deaths, projected to end of June 2024

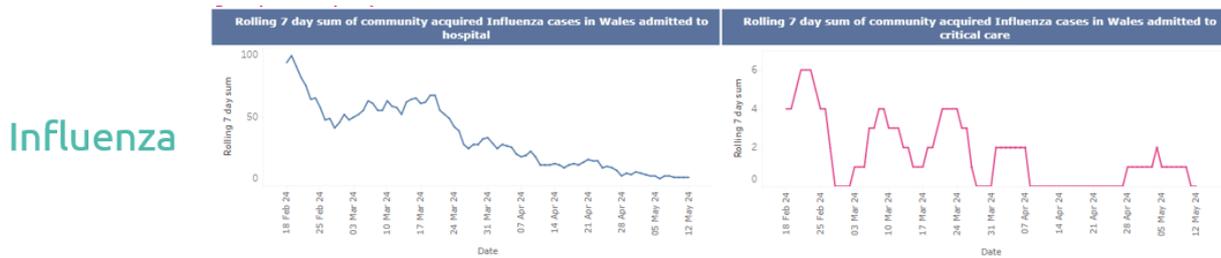


Notes: In the charts above, red crosses represent actual COVID-19 cases data. The blue line represents the central modelling estimate. The blue ribbon represents the confidence intervals, with the darker blue ribbon indicating the 25th to 75th percentiles, and the 95% confidence limits in the lighter ribbon.

2. Influenza Situation Update

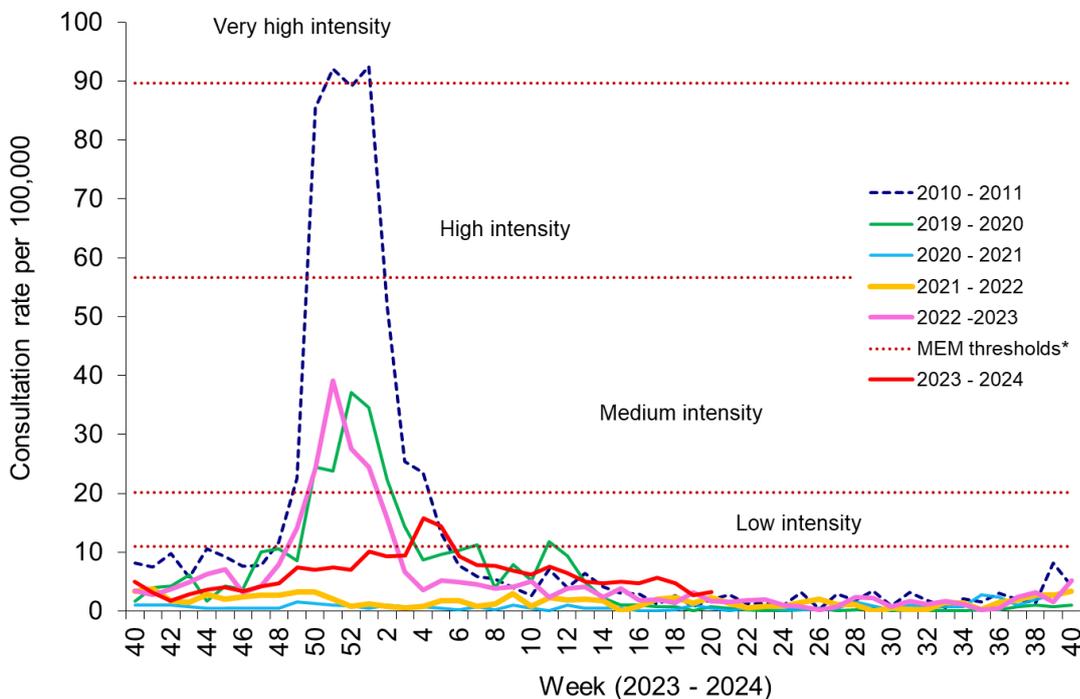
Current levels of influenza are low, and the overall current trend is decreasing. During week 20 (ending 19/05/2024) there were 33 confirmed cases of influenza in Wales (1 for influenza A(H1N1), 15 for influenza A (not subtyped), 5 for influenza A(H3N2), and 12 for influenza B).

Figure 5: 7 day rolling sum of influenza case admissions to hospital in Wales (source: [PHW](#))



There is evidence of a stable picture in syndromic surveillance of influenza like illness (ILI) in the most recent period and this is at the low intensity level. The figure below shows a decreasing trend to week 19 (the bright red line is the 2023-2024 influenza season).

Figure 6: Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (source: [PHW](#))



3. Other Infectious Diseases

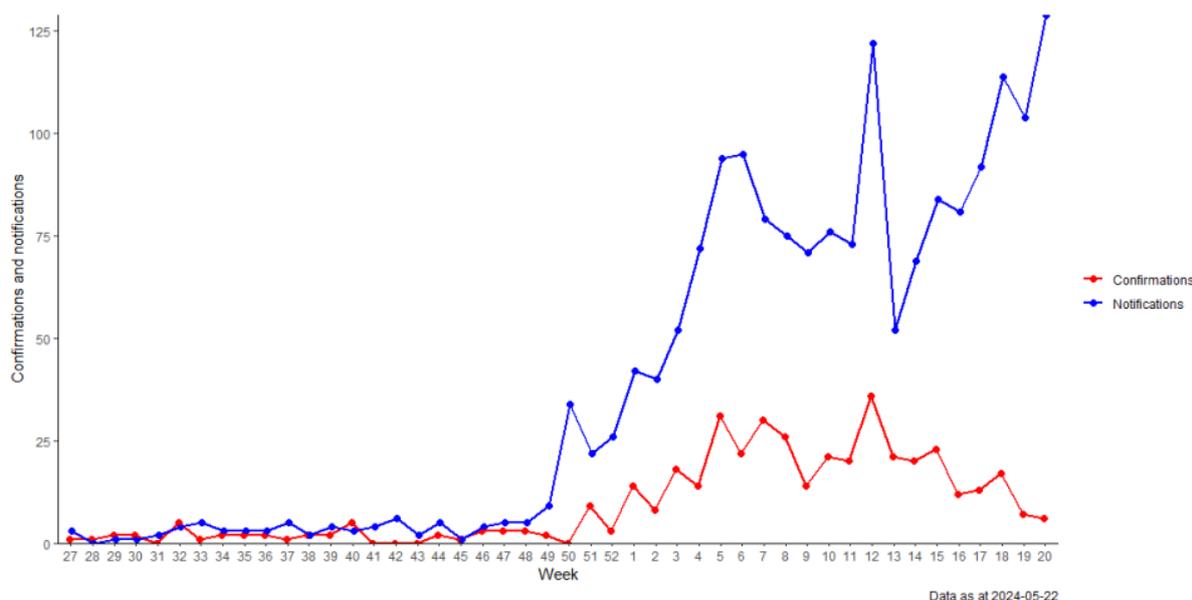
3.1 Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Public health experts in Wales are encouraging all pregnant women and parents of babies and young children to ensure that they have had their Pertussis (Whooping Cough) vaccinations as cases in Wales show rapid increase in recent weeks.

Whooping cough has waves of increased infection every 3-4 years and in the last few weeks, notifications of whooping cough have risen sharply. Following reduced circulation in 2020-2022, current notifications are at levels not seen since 2012 and 2015. Laboratory confirmed cases have not yet risen in line with notifications but are likely to increase as test results are reported.

Figure 7 below shows that there has been an increase in whooping cough notifications up to the end of week 20 following a decline in the previous week, although lab confirmations have declined slightly.

Figure 7: Weekly notifications and confirmations of Pertussis/Whooping Cough in Wales in the 2023-24 season year. (Source: PHW)



3.2 iGAS and Scarlet Fever

The number of iGAS notifications are currently low, remaining at seasonally expected levels. Scarlet Fever notifications have been in the most recent week (week 20) as shown in the figures below (up to 19 May) with Figure 9 showing a stable picture overall for the current season (the bright red line on the chart) with the latest decline in notifications also shown. These notifications are now well below 100 a week compared to the peak of over 800 notifications in January 2023.

Figure 8: Rolling 3 Week Average Scarlet Fever Notifications, 2014-2024, Wales (source: [PHW](#))

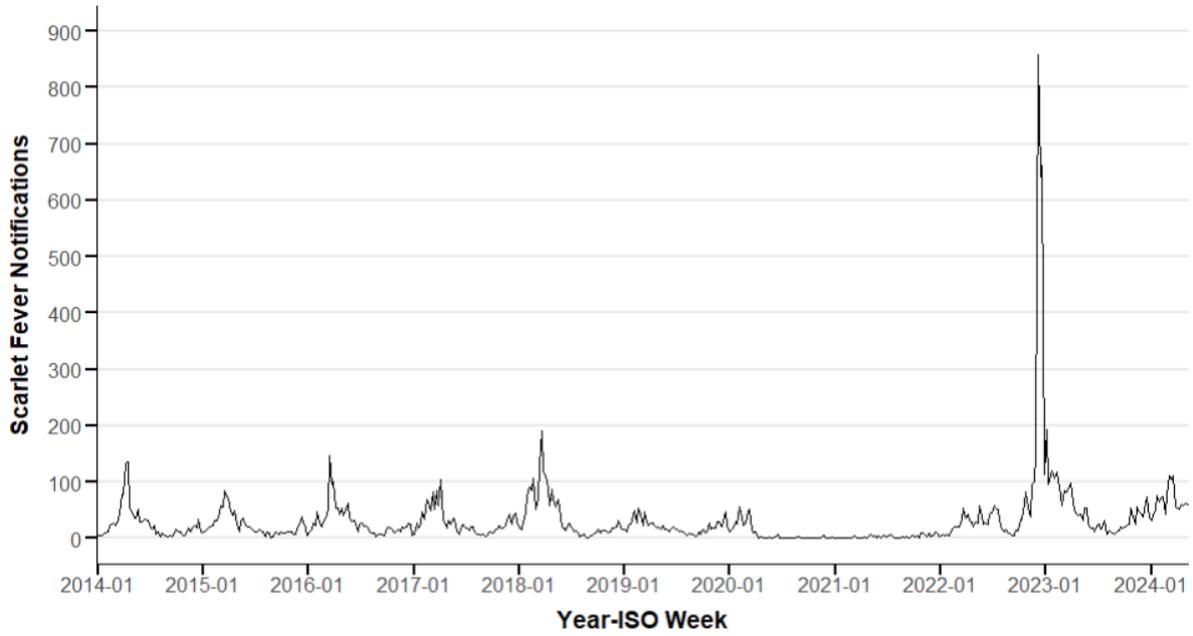
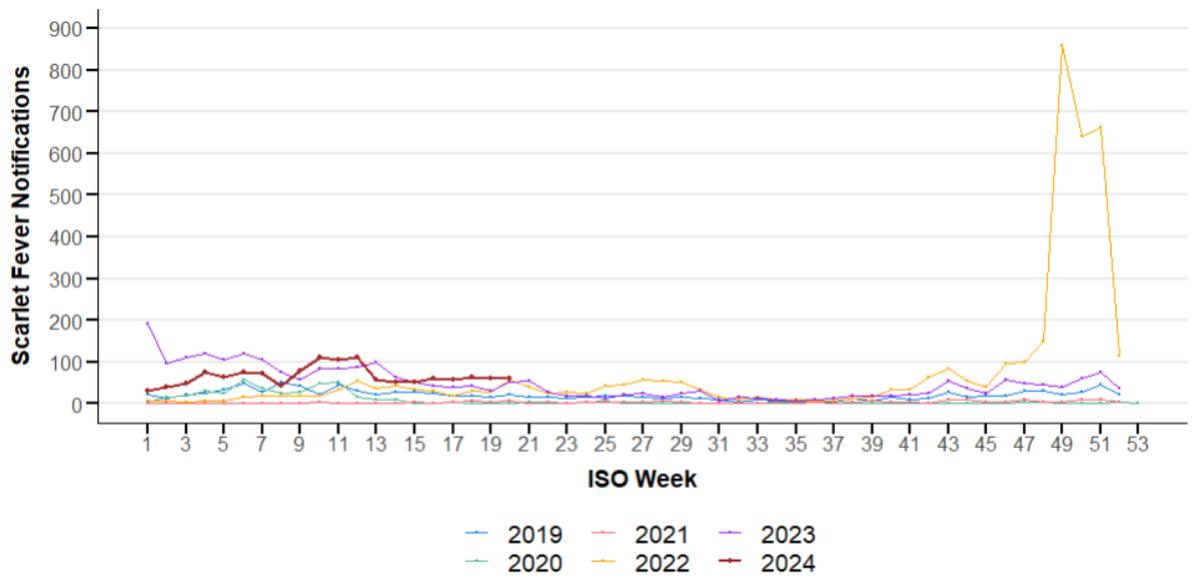


Figure 9: Rolling 3 Week Average Scarlet Fever Notifications, 2014-2024, Wales (Source: [PHW](#))



3.3 Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) update

RSV activity in children under 5 years remains stable in the most recent week and remains at low intensity levels and very close to baseline (compared to historic levels before 2021).

Figure 10: RSV Incidence Rate (source: PHW)

