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Wales

# **Trends in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV in Wales**

**Annual report 2024  
(Data to end 2023)**

# About Public Health Wales

Public Health Wales exists to protect and improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities for people in Wales. We work locally, nationally, and internationally, with our partners and communities.

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Public Health Wales

Number 2 Capital Quarter

Tyndall Street

Cardiff

CF10 4BZ

[www.publichealthwales.org](http://www.publichealthwales.org)

## Acknowledgements

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## Glossary of key abbreviations

<b>Anti-HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Antibody	<b>PCR</b>	Polymerase Chain Reaction
<b>ART</b>	Antiretroviral Therapy	<b>POCT</b>	Point of Care Test
<b>BBV</b>	Blood Borne Virus	<b>SWS</b>	Sexual Health in Wales Surveillance Scheme
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	<b>VL</b>	Viral Load
<b>WLIMS</b>	Wales Laboratory Information Management System	<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organisation
<b>MSM</b>	Men who have Sex with Men		

## Purpose

The Welsh Government HIV Action Plan for Wales<sup>1</sup> 2023-26 identifies five priority areas for action: prevention, testing, clinical care, living well with HIV and tackling HIV-related stigma and has committed to achieving the UNAIDS HIV 95:95:95 targets<sup>2</sup>.

This report provides information on the epidemiology, prevention and control of HIV in Wales to end of 2023. The report is aimed at policy makers, health service clinicians and planners, commissioners, criminal justice, third sector agencies and academia.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
New HIV diagnosis	New HIV diagnosis refers to all new reports of HIV diagnoses made in the UK, regardless of country of first HIV positive test (i.e. includes people who were previously diagnosed abroad). An individual's HIV diagnosis is assigned to the location of current residence regardless of where the diagnosis took place.
First diagnosis in UK	A person newly diagnosed with HIV in the UK with no previous diagnosis abroad reported.
Late diagnosis	This is defined as having a CD4 count below 350 cells per cubic millimetre within 91 days of first HIV diagnosis in the UK with no evidence of recent seroconversion via a negative HIV test within 24 months of diagnosis; or, a Recent Infection Testing Algorithm (RITA) result indicating recent infection. Proportions relating to late diagnoses are based only on individuals where a CD4 was provided.

<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government. Eliminating HIV, improving quality of life and tackling stigma associated with the virus – an action plan for 2023-26. Available at: [HIV Action Plan for Wales](#)

<sup>2</sup> UNAIDS. Fast Track: Ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Report: November 2014. Available at [UNAIDS](#).

# 1 Executive summary

## 1.1 Recovery from COVID-19 pandemic restrictions

- HIV screening and diagnosis rates fell during the COVID-19 pandemic, due to reduced access to services, laboratory capacity and staff redeployment. Screening levels have since recovered and continued to increase in 2023, exceeding pre-pandemic levels for HIV
- Rates of treatment for people either newly diagnosed with HIV or living with HIV were maintained during this period
- Wales is making good progress to meet the UNAIDS 95:95:95 targets for HIV, however, there remains work to be done.

## 1.2 Prevention

- Since 2019, more than 5,157 people have been prescribed PrEP in Wales. 2,226 people were prescribed PrEP in 2023, a 3.5% increase on 2022 and the highest number since PrEP was introduced in Wales
- PrEP continues to be most commonly used by men (97.9%) and 25-34 year olds (34.9%)

## 1.3 Testing

- Combining lab tests and home testing, 113,097 individuals were tested for HIV in 2023, a 12.8% increase on 2022 (100,246 people tested) and the highest figure since 2019.
- Most tests continue to be undertaken by females (58.0%) and those aged 25-34 (35.0%)
- Home testing accounted for 21.4% of individuals tested in 2023, evidencing the importance of service in Wales

## 1.4 New diagnoses

- There were 119 new diagnoses of HIV for those living in Wales in 2023, as of October 2024. This represents a 15.5% increase on 2022 where 103 cases were reported. This includes Welsh residents accessing services in England
- The number of new HIV diagnoses per year has been increasing in Wales since 2021 from a rate of 2.1 per 100,000 population to a rate of 3.8 in 2023. This is lower than the rate in England and Scotland (10.4 and 5.0 respectively). No equivalent data are available for Northern Ireland for this period
- The number of first new HIV diagnoses, that is those without a reported previous diagnosis overseas, has decreased since 2022 (from 3.0 to 2.4 per 100,000 population), suggesting a decrease in transmission in Wales
- Historically, where route of likely transmission was reported, most cases reported transmission through sex between men. However, since 2021 in Wales, as in the rest of the UK, the majority of cases have reported transmission through heterosexual sex
- CD4 cells are a type of white blood cell that help fight infection. In newly diagnosed HIV, a CD4 count of less than 350 indicates a late diagnosis and a count of less than 250 indicates a very late diagnosis. Where CD4 data were available (83.2% of

cases), evidence of late diagnosis was present for 31.3% of new diagnoses compared to 41.1% in 2022

## 1.5 Treatment and Care

- The prevalence of individuals living with HIV per 100,000 population was 87.4 per 100,000 population in 2023, lower than that of England and Scotland (173.4 and 92.8 per 100,000 population respectively)
- In 2023, 70.9% of individuals living with HIV in Wales were male, a reduction from 74.5% in 2022
- 2,577 (93%) individuals reported receiving ART, a lower proportion than that seen in 2022 (99%)
- Of those living with HIV and where viral load is reported, 99% reported viral load at 1000 copies/ml or below, and 97% were reported with viral load at 200 copies/ml or below indicating viral suppression

## 1.6 Mortality

- Deaths in people living with HIV were at 5-year high in 2023, with 28 deaths recorded. Further work is being carried out to understand cause of death in people living with HIV. In 2023, the majority of deaths (57%) occurred more than 12 years after HIV diagnosis

# 2 Prevention

## 2.1 Pre-Exposure prophylaxis for HIV

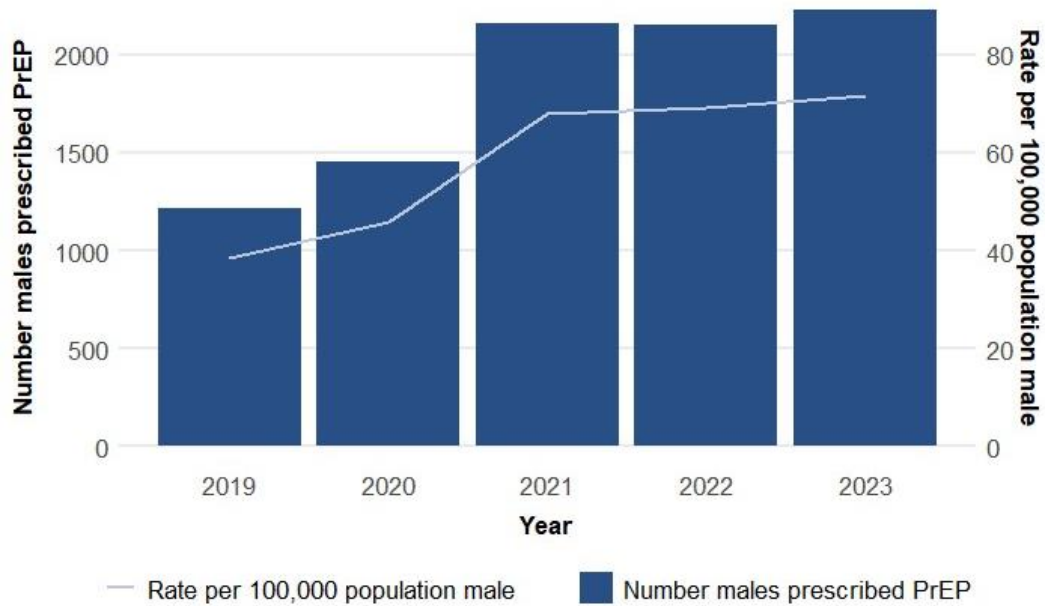
Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a medicine taken to reduce the risk of contracting HIV through sex by 99% when taken as prescribed<sup>3</sup>, was introduced in Wales in July of 2017. The increase in the use of PrEP, due to widening accessibility, coincides with the downward trajectory of new HIV cases in the UK<sup>4</sup>.

Since 2019, more than 5,157 individuals have been prescribed PrEP in Wales. The rate per 100,000 population (males) prescribed PrEP in Wales has increased more than 7-fold in the last 6 years since introduction, to 71.7 per 100,000 population (males) in 2023 as shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>3</sup> CDC (2024) HIV Basics: Prep Effectiveness. <https://www.cdc.gov/hiv/prevention/prep.html>

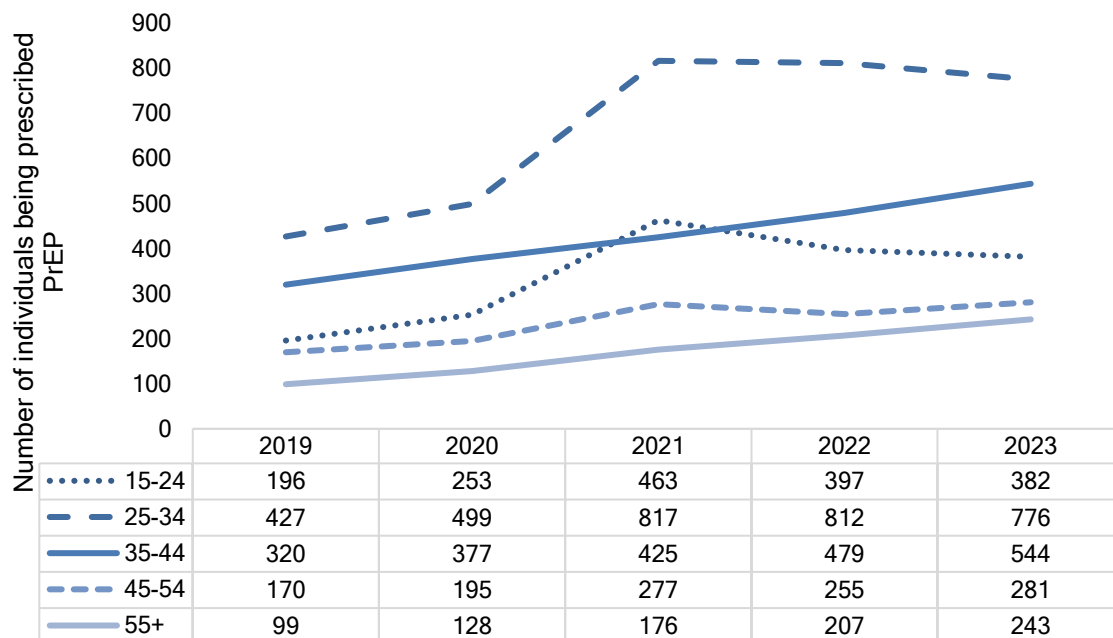
<sup>4</sup> UK Health Security Agency (2023) HIV: Annual Data Tables. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hiv-annual-data-tables>



Source: SWS

**Figure 1: Number and rate per 100,000 population (males) in Wales prescribed PrEP by year, 2019 to 2023**

Overall, the majority of individuals receiving PrEP were male (98%), most frequently in the 25-34 year age-group (35%) (Figure 2) and of White ethnicity (52%). Ethnicity was not recorded for 17% of individuals. The majority of individuals prescribed PrEP were men who have sex with men (MSM) (84%), consistent with early eligibility criteria.



Source: SWS

**Figure 2: Number of individuals prescribed PrEP, by age-group, 2018 to 2023**

Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has consistently provided the highest proportion of PrEP over the past five years (Table 1), and in the last year accounted for 44% (197.7 per 100,000 population)



**Table 1: Number and rate per 100,000 population (males) in Wales prescribed PrEP by Health Board clinic attendance and year, 2019 to 2023**

Health board clinic of attendance	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)
Aneurin Bevan UHB	233	(39.9)	218	(37.1)	264	(44.9)	358	(60.9)	379	(63.7)
Betsi Cadwaladr UHB	192	(28.0)	197	(28.6)	246	(35.8)	320	(46.6)	279	(40.3)
Cardiff & Vale UHB	439	(87.7)	709	(140.5)	1,278	(253.3)	952	(193.5)	973	(197.7)
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB	76	(16.9)	47	(10.4)	62	(13.8)	100	(22.6)	91	(20.6)
Hywel Dda UHB	54	(14.3)	49	(12.8)	30	(7.8)	42	(11.0)	46	(11.9)
Swansea Bay UHB	218	(57.4)	232	(60.8)	278	(73.2)	378	(99.5)	458	(117.5)
Wales	1,212	(39.3)	1,452	(46.8)	2,158	(69.5)	2,150	(69.2)	2,226	(71.7)

Source: SWS

### 3 Testing

#### 3.1 Testing in Wales

The number of individuals tested for HIV in sexual health clinics, primary or secondary care decreased 35% in 2020, probably reflecting COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. However, following the introduction of the BBV and sexual health Test and Post (TAP) Scheme (see section 5.3) in 2021, the number of individuals tested for HIV increased to exceed pre-pandemic levels.

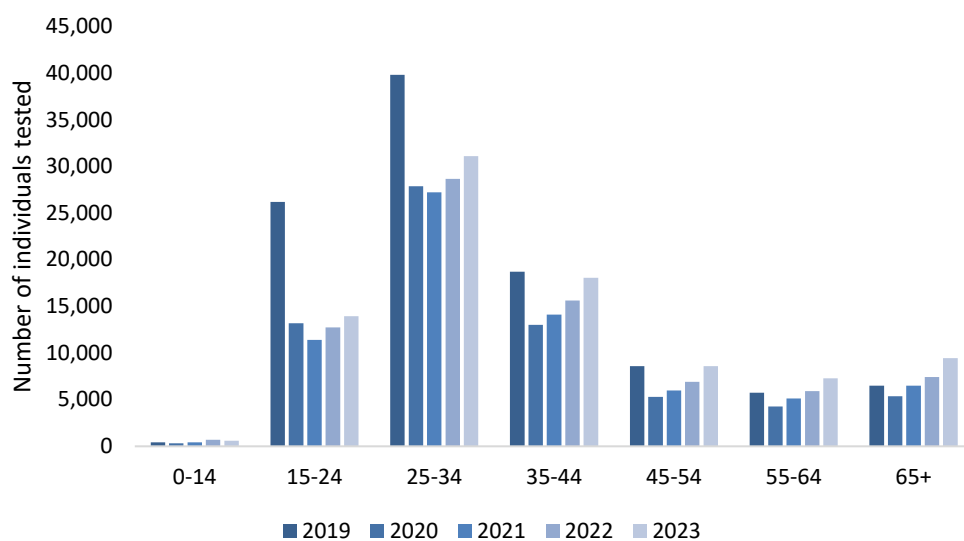
Testing completed in Welsh laboratories can be seen in Table 2. Data from the TAP scheme indicate a further 20,636, 23,743 and 24,195 individuals were tested in 2021, 2022 and 2023 respectively. In 2023, a total of 113,094 individuals in Wales were tested, the highest number since 2019.

**Table 2: Total HIV Ag/Ab tests undertaken in sexual health clinics, primary and secondary care, individuals tested, and positivity recorded by Welsh labs, by year, 2019-2023**

Year	Total tests	Individuals tested	Individuals positive	%
2019	121,903	106,163	742	0.7%
2020	78,429	69,414	552	0.8%
2021	81,516	70,699	491	0.7%
2022	91,568	76,503	670	0.9%
2023	103,830	88,899	737	0.8%

Source: WLIMS

The majority of individuals tested are within the 15-24 and 25-34 age-groups (Figure 3).



Source: SWS

**Figure 3: Number of individuals tested for HIV Ag/Ab within sexual health clinics, primary and secondary care, by age-group and year**

The number of individuals tested in each health board of residence is shown in Table 3, with the highest rate of testing being in those resident of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

**Table 3: Number of individuals tested and rate per 100,000 population for HIV Ag/Ab within sexual health clinics, primary and secondary care, by health board of residence and year, 2019-2023**

Health board of residence	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)	n	(rate)
Aneurin Bevan UHB	16,012	(2.3)	11,892	(1.7)	11,504	(1.7)	12,182	(1.8)	15,121	(2.2)
Betsi Cadwaladr UHB	20,707	(15.7)	13,946	(10.5)	13,247	(9.9)	14,517	(10.8)	18,763	(14.0)
Cardiff & Vale UHB	23,794	(6.3)	15,896	(4.2)	17,491	(4.6)	18,007	(4.7)	18,510	(4.8)
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB	13,634	(3.6)	8,196	(2.1)	8,160	(2.1)	9,913	(2.6)	11,240	(2.9)
Hywel Dda UHB	9,083	(2.1)	5,677	(1.3)	5,656	(1.3)	6,506	(1.5)	6,926	(1.6)
Powys	550	(0.1)	542	(0.1)	572	(0.1)	554	(0.1)	537	(0.1)
Swansea Bay UHB	16,817	(2.9)	9,048	(1.5)	8,700	(1.7)	10,255	(1.7)	13,884	(2.3)
Unknown	5,566		4,217		5,369		4,569		3,918	

Source: SWS

## 4 Diagnosis

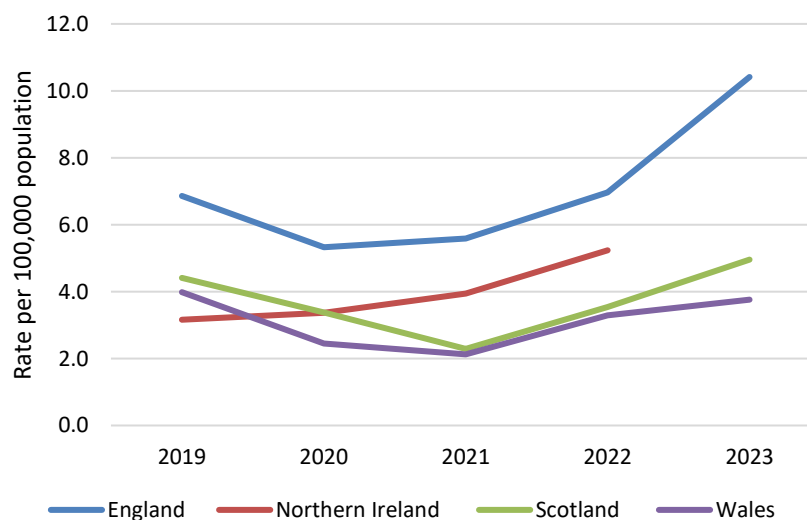
### 4.1 UK Country Comparison

The rate of new HIV diagnosis in the UK, including those first diagnosed outside of the UK, varies by UK nation (see Table 4 and Figure 4). Rates are highest in England, with fluctuating rates and trends across Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. In 2023, Wales rates increased to 3.8 per 100,000 from 3.2 per 100,000 in previous years. Incidence rates in Wales are almost a third of those recorded in England (10.4 per 100,000). The rate in Scotland is higher than that of Wales (5.0 per 100,000), as reported by UKHSA. Northern Ireland did not submit data for 2023. Increased migration in recent years have likely impacted incidence rates in the UK in 2023, with individuals moving to UK having received a diagnosis in another country.

**Table 4: New HIV diagnoses reported in the UK and rate per 100,000 population, by country and year**

Country/ Region	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	New HIV Diagnoses	(Rate)	New HIV Diagnoses	(Rate)	New HIV Diagnoses	(Rate)	New HIV Diagnoses	(Rate)	New HIV Diagnoses	(Rate)
England	3,859	(6.9)	3,000	(5.3)	3,161	(5.6)	3,975	(7.0)	6,008	(10.4)
Northern Ireland	60	(3.2)	64	(3.4)	75	(3.9)	100	(5.0)	-	-
Scotland	239	(4.4)	183	(3.4)	124	(2.3)	193	(3.5)	270	(5.0)
Wales	123	(4.0)	76	(2.4)	66	(2.1)	103	(3.3)	119	(3.8)
Total	4,281	(6.4)	3,323	(5.0)	3,426	(5.1)	4,371	(6.5)	6,397	(9.4)

Source: UKHSA and Stats Wales



Source: UKHSA and Stats Wales

**Figure 4: New HIV diagnosis rate per 100,000 population, by UK country and year**

Where individuals have no evidence of a previous positive test in another country, they are classed as a first UK diagnosis. First UK diagnosis rates have possible implications for country of transmission and are therefore an important measure for evidencing the UNAIDS targets. **It is important to note that identifying a case as a first UK diagnosis is dependent on a complete HIV testing history being submitted to UKHSA on the clinical HIV report form. Assumptions may have been made where data was missing.** Incidence of first time HIV diagnoses in the UK dropped from 3.0 per 100,000 in 2022 to 2.4 per 100,000 in 2023, suggesting a decrease in transmission of HIV. The rate per 100,000 population of first HIV diagnosis recorded in the UK can be seen in Table 5.

**Table 5: Number and rates of first time HIV diagnoses reported in the UK, by country and year**

Country/Region	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	First time diagnosis in UK	(Rate)	First time diagnosis in UK	(Rate)	First time diagnosis in UK	(Rate)	First time diagnosis in UK	(Rate)	First time diagnosis in UK	(Rate)
England	2,801	(5.0)	2,222	(3.9)	2,296	(4.1)	2,451	(4.3)	2,810	(4.9)
Northern Ireland	43	(2.3)	46	(2.4)	60	(3.2)	54	(2.8)	-	-
Scotland	170	(3.1)	127	(2.3)	97	(1.8)	122	(2.2)	148	(2.7)
Wales	114	(3.7)	70	(2.3)	61	(2.0)	94	(3.0)	76	(2.4)
Total	3,128	(4.7)	2,465	(3.7)	2,514	(3.8)	2,721	(4.0)	3,034	(4.4)

Source: UKHSA and Stats Wales

## 4.2 Demographic profile of new HIV cases in Wales

In 2023, there were 119 new HIV diagnoses recorded in Welsh residents of which: 75 (63%) were male (including transgender); 44 (37%) were female (including transgender); and one person was recorded as non-binary. The majority of new HIV diagnoses were in the 35-49 age-group and those of Black African or White ethnicity (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Age, sex and ethnicity\* frequencies for residents of Wales with a new HIV diagnosis, 2019-2023**

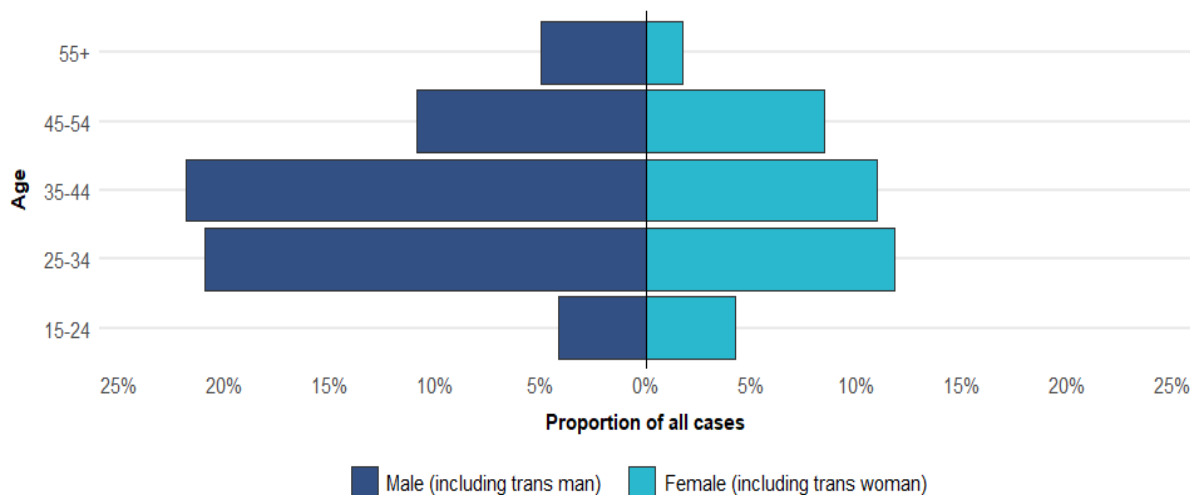
Type	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
All	123	76	69	103	119
Female	37	17	22	35	44
Male	86	59	47	67	75
0-14	<5	0	0	<5	0
15-24	6	<10	<10	<10	<15
25-34	42	28	14	24	39
35-49	44	24	28	48	55
50-64	26	12	18	22	14
65+	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
White	57	46	31	55	33
Black African	11	5	9	24	37
Unknown	42	12	20	19	40

Source: UKHSA

\*Black Caribbean, mixed and other ethnicities have been removed due to low figures

#### 4.2.1 Gender and age

In 2023, males continue to account for the majority of cases, with the majority aged between the age of 25 and 44 at diagnosis (Figure 5).



Source: UKHSA

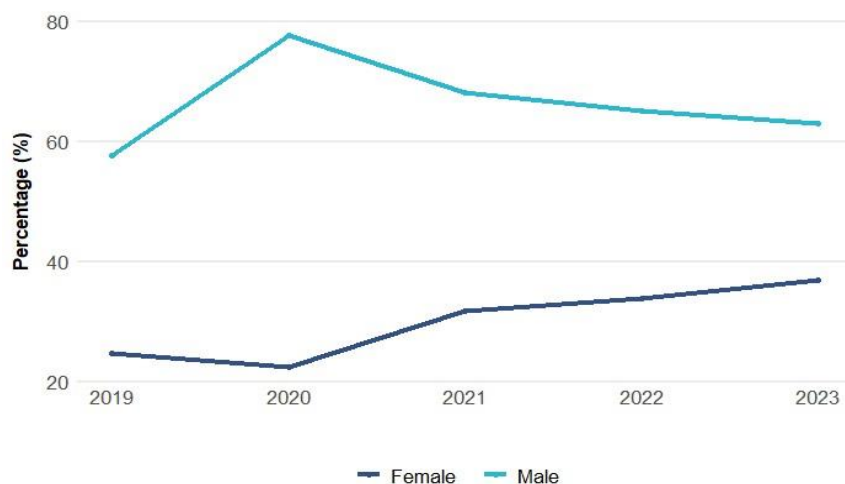
**Figure 5: Age-sex distribution of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, 2023**

The proportion of new HIV in females has been increasing since 2020 (see Table 7 and Figure 6) and is at a 5-year high in 2023.

**Table 7: Number and rate of new HIV diagnoses, by gender and year**

Gender	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)
Total	123 (4.0)	76 (2.4)	69 (2.2)	103 (3.3)	119 (3.8)
Male	86 (5.7)	59 (3.9)	47 (3.1)	67 (4.4)	75 (4.8)
Female	37 (2.4)	17 (1.1)	22 (1.4)	35 (2.2)	44 (2.7)

Source: UKHSA



Source: UKHSA

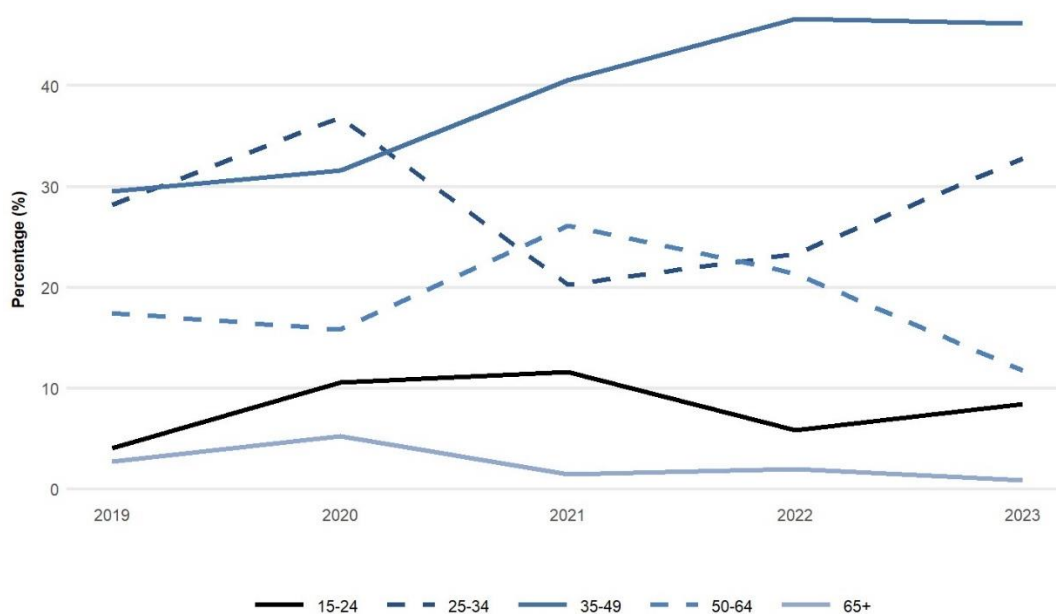
**Figure 6: Proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by gender and year**

The proportion of new diagnoses across the age-groups has varied over the past 5 years (see Table 8 and Figure 7). In 2023, the largest proportion of cases were made in 35-49 year olds. A sharp increase was seen in 25-34 year olds and a drop was seen in 50-64 year olds.

**Table 8: Number and proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by age-group and year**

Age-group	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)
Total	123 (4.0)	76 (2.4)	69 (2.2)	103 (3.3)	119 (3.8)
0-14	<5 (0.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	<5 (0.2)	0 (0.0)
15-24	6 (1.7)	<10 (2.2)	<10 (2.2)	<10 (1.6)	<15 (2.7)
25-34	42 (11.0)	28 (7.3)	14 (3.7)	24 (6.2)	39 (9.9)
35-49	44 (8.0)	24 (4.4)	28 (5.1)	48 (8.7)	55 (9.8)
50-64	26 (4.2)	12 (1.9)	18 (2.8)	22 (3.4)	14 (2.2)
65+	<5 (0.6)	<5 (0.6)	<5 (0.2)	<5 (0.3)	<5 (0.1)

Source: UKHSA



Source: UKHSA

Figure 7: Proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by age-group and year

#### 4.2.2 Ethnicity

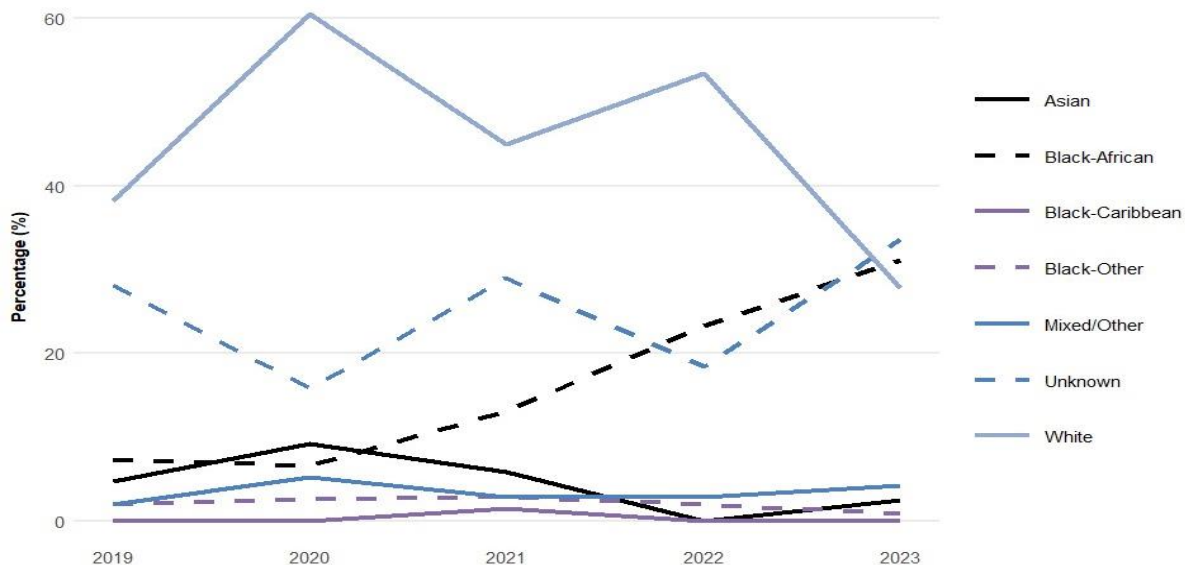
New HIV cases in residents of Wales are most frequently in those of White ethnicity (see Table 9 and Figure 8). However, in 2022, a substantial increase was seen in the proportion reporting 'Black African' ethnicity, which continued into 2023. **It is important to note that ethnicity is not recorded for a large proportion of new diagnoses and therefore care should be taken when interpreting trends by ethnicity.** The rise in incomplete or missing data for ethnicity has increased since 2022.

Table 9: Number and proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by ethnicity\* group and year

Ethnicity Group	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)
Total	123 (4.0)	76 (2.4)	69 (2.2)	103 (3.3)	119 (3.8)
White	57 (1.9)	46 (1.6)	31 (1.1)	55 (1.9)	33 (1.1)
Black-African	11 (92.5)	<10 (42.1)	9 (45.2)	<25 (120.6)	37 (185.9)
Asian	<10 (10.0)	7 (10.0)	<5 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	<5 (3.4)
Mixed/Other	<5 (6.4)	<5 (8.5)	<5 (2.7)	<5 (4.0)	<10 (6.7)
Missing data	42	12	20	19	40

\*Black Caribbean and Black other have been removed due to small figures

Source: UKHSA



Source: UKHSA

Figure 8: Proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by ethnicity group\* and year

#### 4.2.3 Region of birth

In 2023, the highest number of new HIV diagnoses were in individuals born in the Africa region (Table 10). There has been an increase in the proportion of cases reporting an African country as their country of birth (see Figure 9), which is consistent with the increase in the proportion of cases reporting Black African ethnicity. Although the proportion of individuals with an unknown region of birth is at a 5-year low, **this missing data could have a large impact on trends and therefore caution should be taken when interpreting the data.**

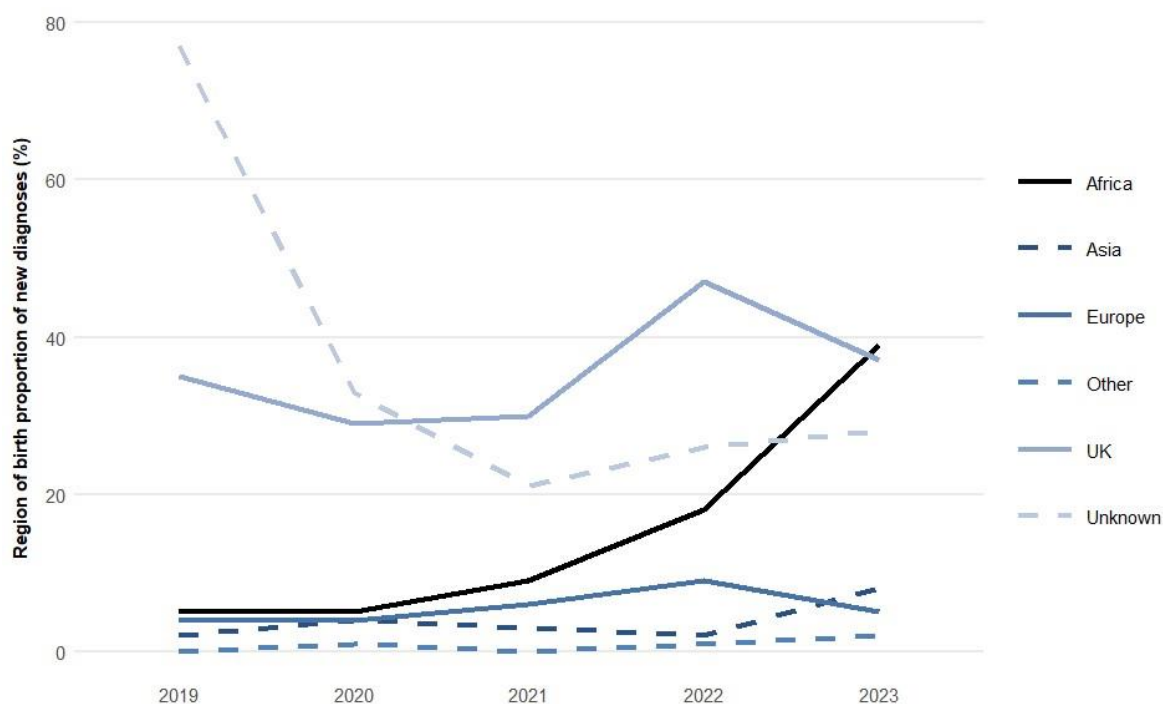
Table 10: Number and proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by region of birth\* and year

Region of Birth	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
UK	35 (28.5)	29 (38.2)	30 (43.5)	47 (45.6)	37 (31.1)
Europe	<5 (3.3)	<5 (5.3)	<10 (8.7)	<10 (8.7)	<10 (4.2)
Africa	5 (4.1)	5 (6.6)	9 (13)	18 (17.5)	39 (32.8)
Asia	<5 (1.6)	<5 (5.3)	<5 (4.3)	<5 (1.9)	8 (6.7)
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>77 (62.6)</b>	<b>33 (43.4)</b>	<b>21 (30.4)</b>	<b>26 (25.2)</b>	<b>28 (23.5)</b>

\*Other region of birth was excluded due to low figures

Source: UKHSA





Source: UKHSA

**Figure 9: Proportion of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by region of birth\* where reported and year**

#### 4.2.4 Health board of residence

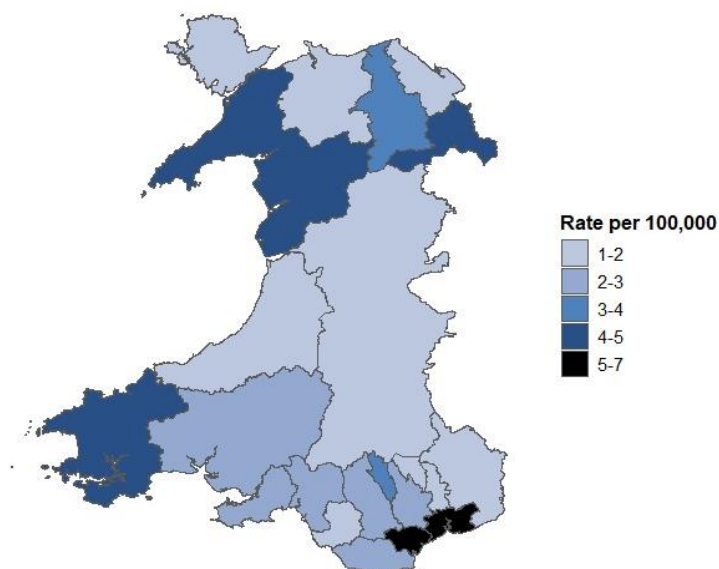
The rate of new HIV diagnoses per 100,000 population varies across Wales. For 2023, the variation in rate can be seen by Health Board of residence in Table 11.

**Table 11: Number and rate of new HIV diagnoses, by residential health board**

Health Board of Clinic Attendance	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)	n (rate)
Total	123 (4.0)	76 (2.4)	69 (2.2)	103 (3.3)	119 (3.8)
Aneurin Bevan	21 (3.6)	11 (1.9)	14 (2.4)	18 (3.0)	20 (3.4)
Betsi Cadwaladr	14 (2.0)	12 (1.7)	12 (1.7)	31 (4.5)	24 (3.5)
Cardiff and Vale	45 (9.2)	19 (3.9)	20 (4.1)	24 (4.8)	36 (6.9)
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	15 (3.4)	11 (2.5)	<10	11 (2.5)	12 (2.7)
Hywel Dda	13 (3.4)	<10	8 (2.1)	11 (2.9)	15 (3.9)
Powys	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Swansea Bay	<15	12 (3.1)	9 (2.4)	<10	<15

Source: UKHSA

When considering residential local authority (see Figure 10), the highest rate per 100,000 population were recorded in Cardiff from 2019-2023. **It should be noted that location rates**



are based on individuals' residential postcode and do not reflect site of diagnosis.

Source: UKHSA

Figure 10: New HIV diagnosis rate, by residential local authority, 2019-2023

#### 4.2.5 Patient reported probable risk of exposure

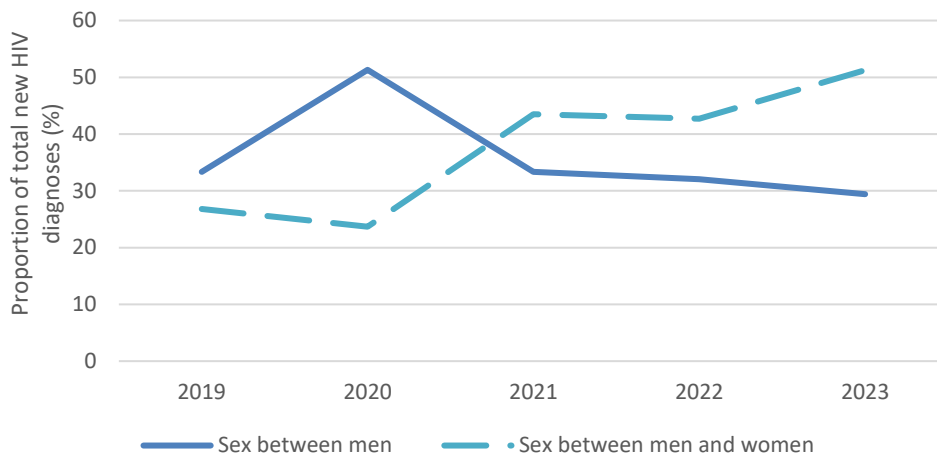
Historically, sex between men has been reported most frequently as the route of probable exposure (see Table 12 and Figure 11). However, since 2020 an increase in the proportion reporting sex between men and women has increased. This is consistent with the increase in the proportion of cases reporting female gender.

Table 12: Number of new HIV diagnoses in residents of Wales, by route of exposure\* and year 2019-2023

Probable exposure category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sex between men	41	39	23	33	35
Sex between men and women	33	18	30	44	61

\*Non-sexual exposures were excluded due to low figures

Source: UKHSA



\*Non-sexual exposures have been excluded from the graph due to low numbers

Source: UKHSA

**Figure 11: Proportion of new HIV diagnoses being made in residents of Wales, by sexual exposure\* and year**

#### 4.2.6 HIV in Pregnant Women

Surveillance of congenital HIV is currently in development in Wales.

In 2023, there were 7 cases HIV positive mothers giving birth and no infants were found to have congenital HIV.

#### 4.2.7 Late Diagnoses

Late diagnoses suggest potential missed opportunities for testing and have implications for health outcomes. Based on official statistics, in 2023, a CD4 count within 91 days of diagnosis was provided for 83.2% of new diagnoses, of which 31.3% were identified as late diagnoses (see Table 13). The number of late diagnoses increased in 2023 compared to 2022, although the proportion with a reported CD4 also increased.

**Table 13: Number and proportion of HIV diagnoses with a reported CD4 count within 91 days, and the number and proportion of late diagnoses in Wales where CD4 count was reported, by year 2019-2023**

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
CD4 count reported	74 (60.2%)	32 (42.1%)	27 (39.1%)	56 (54.4%)	99 (83.2%)
Late diagnosis reported	40 (54.1%)	16 (50.0%)	12 (44.4%)	23 (41.1%)	31 (31.3%)

Source: UKHSA

The proportion of CD4 counts reported to Public Health Wales has vastly improved in recent years and changes are not fully represented in the current official statistics. **The increased CD4 count reporting has allowed for greater certainty in the actual number of late diagnoses in Wales.**

## 5 Treatment and Care

### 5.1 People living with HIV

The total number of individuals receiving HIV care has increased from 2,374 in 2019, to 2,765 in 2023 (see Table 14). The prevalence of individuals living with HIV in Wales per 100,000 population was 87.4 per 100,000 population in 2023, lower than that of both England and Scotland (173.4 and 93.5 per 100,000 population, respectively). However, caution should be used when interpreting 2020 and 2021 rates due to the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on HIV data provision across the UK.

**Table 14: Number and Rate per 100,000 population of people living with HIV in the UK, by country and year, 2019-2023**

Country/Region	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	Individuals living with HIV	(Rate)	Individuals living with HIV	(Rate)	Individuals living with HIV	(Rate)	Individuals living with HIV	(Rate)	Individuals living with HIV	(Rate)
England	90,439	(160.8)	89,515	(158.9)	91,551	(161.9)	94,569	(165.6)	100,063	(173.4)
Northern Ireland	1,145	(60.3)	1,210	(63.7)	1,292	(67.8)	1,315	(69.0)	-	-
Scotland	4,874	(90.0)	4,879	(90.0)	5,019	(92.6)	5,220	(95.8)	5,094	(93.5)
Wales	2,374	(76.9)	2,423	(78.0)	2,453	(79.0)	2,528	(80.7)	2,765	(87.4)
Total	98,832	(148.3)	98,027	(146.9)	100,315	(149.8)	103,632	(153.3)	107,922	(158.2)

Source: UKHSA

The majority of individuals receiving care are male (70.8%); those aged 50-64; and those of White ethnicity (Table 15). **Care should be taken when interpreting the age distribution of those receiving treatment and care as individuals with previous diagnoses will continue to age.**

**Table 15: Demographic profile of those living with HIV and receiving care in Wales, by year, 2019-2023**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Total	2,374	2,423	2,453	2528	2,765
Female	543	555	560	595	637
Male	1,829	1,867	1,841	1883	1,959
0-14	7	<10	0	<5	<10
15-24	56	<50	36	<35	<35
25-34	332	326	295	272	289
35-49	960	960	949	958	1,042
50-64	839	883	944	1004	1,082
65+	180	199	229	259	314
White	1,785	1,824	1,819	1838	1,870
Black African	336	341	328	345	360
Black Caribbean	9	7	8	9	13
Black Other	36	38	39	40	40
Asian	68	70	75	78	70
Other or mixed	62	65	59	67	69

Source: UKHSA

## 5.2 Treatment and viral load

Antiretroviral therapy (ART) is used to treat HIV and reduces the viral load (VL) to a point where onward transmission is not possible. The number of individuals reportedly receiving treatment increased in 2023 (see Table 16), as expected with additional annual diagnoses, however, the proportion of individuals living with HIV on treatment decreased. The proportion of those on treatment reporting a VL increased in 2023 (91%), with the proportion of individuals with an undetectable VL remaining steady.

**Table 16: Number of individuals receiving ART, reporting a VL and having an undetectable VL, by year**

	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Receiving ART	2,353	2,420	2,436	2,509	2,577
%	99%	100%	99%	99%	93%
Reported VL	2,178	1,625	1,624	1,627	2,336
%	93%	67%	67%	65%	91%
Undetectable VL (<200 copies per ml <sup>5</sup> )	2,091	1,576	1,592	1,594	2,266
%	96%	97%	98%	98%	97%

Source: UKHSA

<sup>5</sup> Based on ECDC guidance <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu>

## 6 Mortality

In 2023, deaths in people living with HIV were the highest recorded since 2019 (Table 17), with an average of 17 deaths per year, over the past five years. Most deaths occurred in those aged 50-64. It was most common for death to occur more than 12 years after diagnosis. Further work is being undertaken to evidence trends in underlying cause of death over time and the contribution of HIV infection to mortality.

**Table 17: Number of deaths recorded in those living with HIV, by age-group and year, 2019-2023**

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	7	13	21	11	28
25-34	0	0	0	0	<10
35-49	<5	<5	<5	<5	10
50-64	<5	6	13	5	12
65+	<5	<10	<10	<5	<10

\*No deaths were reported in 15-24 year olds and have been excluded

Source: UKHSA

## 7 Data sources

The data found in this report has been collected from a number of sources, including:

- NHS Wales laboratory Information Management system (WLIMS)
- UKHSA annual data
- Sexual Health in Wales Surveillance Scheme (SWS)

Where required, population data has been sourced from the Stats Wales<sup>6</sup> mid-year population estimates 2023, which are based ONS figures.

### Laboratory Information Management Service

Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) is a computerised information system into which laboratory staff key in requests from wards, theatres, A&E, and clinics for pathology tests to be undertaken. Samples are fed through pathology analysers which are connected to the LIMS, and which pass the measurements and the results data to LIMS via dedicated interfaces. Test results are then aligned to the patients' identity by LIMS ready for use by the clinicians and their team.

The LIMS data source includes all laboratory tests undertaken in NHS Wales laboratories and as such provides information on all population in Wales.

### Clinical HIV Reporting (CHR)

Information from all people living with a diagnosed HIV infection and accessing care at NHS services in Wales are reported using the Clinical HIV Reporting (CHR) form, with England

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<sup>6</sup>[Stats Wales](#)

and Northern Ireland utilising the comparable HARS system. CHR data are published by UKHSA and used to plan services, monitor the quality of care received by patients and their clinical outcomes.

### **Sexual Health in Wales Surveillance Scheme (SWS)**

The Sexual health in Wales Surveillance scheme (SWS) introduced in 2011, collates information from the electronic patient management systems currently used within sexual health clinics in Wales. SWS provides a Wales-wide dataset that includes BBV testing and diagnostic information for individuals utilising sexual health services along with some key demographic and behavioural data for those individuals such as sex, age, ethnicity, and local authority of residence.

### **Office for National Statistics**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) provides national and subnational mid-year population estimates for the UK and its constituent countries by administrative area, age, and sex (including components of population change, median age, and population density). Population statistics for gender, age and location of residence are based on 2022 mid-year figures.<sup>7</sup> Population estimates for Ethnicity are based on the 2021 ONS census.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Office for National Statistics. Mid-2023 population estimates. [ONS mid-year population estimates](#)

<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics. 2021 census - Ethnicity, national identity and religion in the UK and non-UK born population: 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity>