

Current level of influenza activity: Low

Influenza activity trend: **Decreasing**

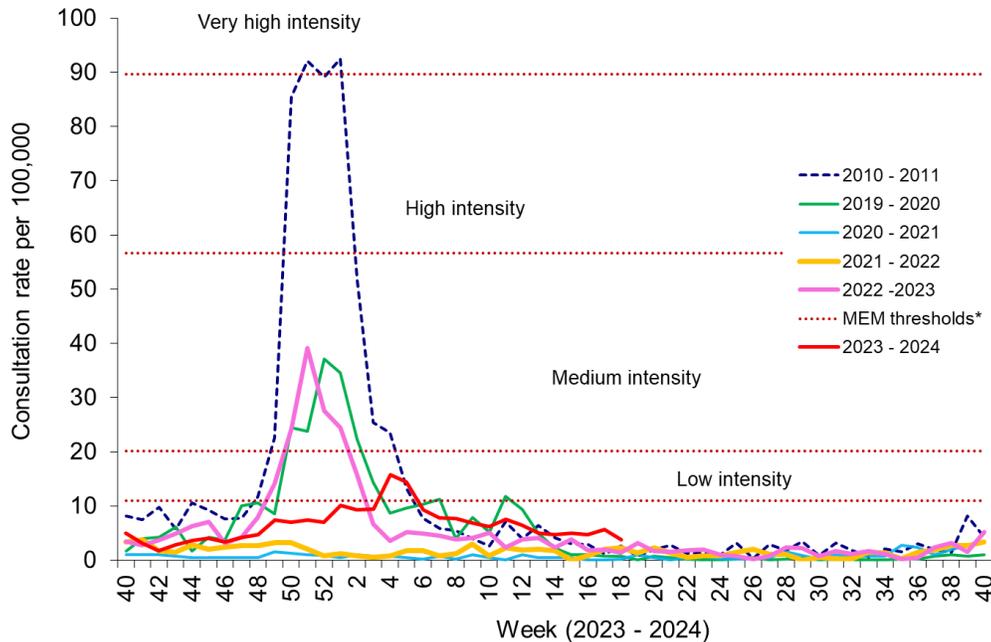
Confirmed influenza cases since 2023 Week 40: 4460 (491 influenza A(H3N2), 1013 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 2417 influenza A untyped and 539 influenza B)

During Week 18 (ending 05/05/2024) there were 42 cases of influenza confirmed. Influenza circulation is now returning to low levels. COVID-19 cases are at low levels but increased since week 16. Additionally, recent weeks have seen increases in mycoplasma, rhinovirus, adenovirus, and parainfluenza.

- The **Sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI)** in Wales during Week 18, was 3.8 consultations per 100,000 practice population (Table 1). The rate decreased compared to the previous week (5.7 consultations per 100,000. Figure 1).
- The **Sentinel GP consultation rate for Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)** was 205.9 per 100,000 practice population during Week 18 (Table 2 and Figure 3). This is an increase compared to the previous week (201.9 per 100,000). During week 18, Lower Respiratory Tract Infections increased to 76.3 per 100,000 and Upper Respiratory Tract Infections decreased to 130.3 per 100,000 compared to the previous week.
- The percentage of calls to **NHS Direct Wales** which were 'influenza-related' (cold/flu, cough, fever, headache, and sore throat) during Week 18 increased to 15.4% (Figure 13).
- During Week 18, 1,431 specimens received multiplex respiratory panel testing from patients attending hospitals. **24 tested positive for influenza (eight influenza A(not subtyped), seven influenza A(H3) and nine influenza B)**. Overall influenza test-positivity increased to 1.7% from 1.4%. In those aged under 18 positivity decreased to 1.3% from 1.6%, and in those aged over 18 it increased to 1.9% from 1.3%. In addition, there were: 264 rhinovirus, 92 SARS-CoV-2, 86 mycoplasma, 71 adenovirus, 40 seasonal coronaviruses, 35 enterovirus, 30 human metapneumovirus, 28 parainfluenza, and six RSV positive samples (Figure 5). Additionally, 346 samples from patients were tested for influenza, RSV and SARS-CoV-2 only. Of these 346 samples there were **six influenza A, seven influenza B**, 62 for SARS-CoV-2, and seven RSV. (Figure 7). Furthermore, during week 18, 65 respiratory specimens were tested from patients in intensive care units (ICU) of which none were positive for influenza (Figure 8).
- There were 52 surveillance samples from patients with ILI symptoms collected by **sentinel GPs and community pharmacies** during Week 18. Of the 52 samples, **three tested positive for influenza A (three influenza A(H3N2))**, 10 rhinovirus, six mycoplasma, four SARS-CoV-2, three parainfluenza, **two influenza B**, one adenovirus and one coronavirus as at 08/05/2024 (Figure 4).
- From all samples where influenza subtyping information was immediately available during week 18, ten were influenza A(H3), 11 influenza B and eight influenza A(not subtyped) (Figure 6). *Additional typing is carried out on all confirmed influenza A samples where typing results are not available from first-line testing, the additional information from these tests will be added to case totals after the end of the season.*
- **Confirmed RSV case incidence in children aged under 5 remains at baseline intensity levels (compared to levels before 2021)**. In week 18 there were 2.5 confirmed cases per 100,000 in this age group (Figure 9).
- The 7-day rolling sums of cases hospitalised within 28 days of an influenza or RSV positive test result in the community (or up to two days post-admission) were seven and six respectively during Week 18 (Figures 10 & 11) and 53 for SARS-CoV-2 during week 18 (Figure 12).
- During week 18, three **ARI outbreaks** were reported to the Public Health Wales Health Protection Team, two SARS-CoV-2 and one influenza A. All three outbreaks were in a residential care homes.
- According to [EuroMoMo](#) analysis, all-cause deaths in Wales were not in excess during week 17.
- As at 23/04/2024, uptake of influenza vaccination was 72.5% in adults aged 65 years and older, 39.1% in those aged 6 months to 64 years at clinical risk, 42.8% in two and three-year-old children, 61.9% in children aged four to 10 years and 49.7% in children aged 11 to 15 years (Table 3).

Respiratory infection activity in Wales

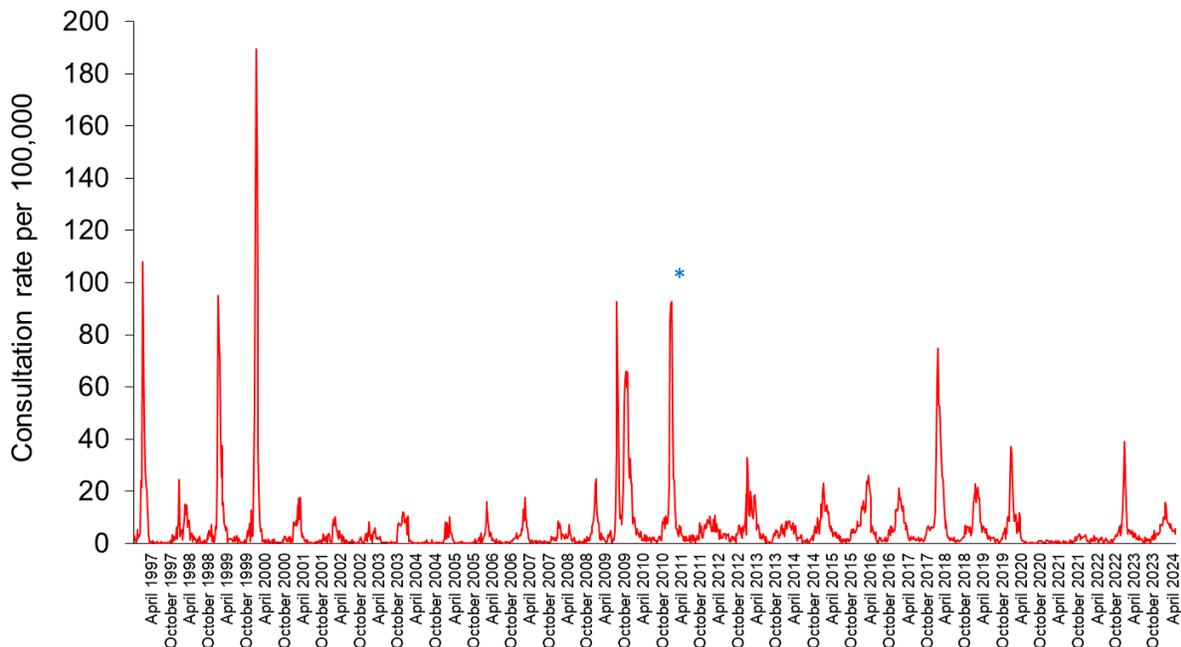
Figure 1. Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (as of 05/05/2024).



* The Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) threshold calculated for Wales ILI consultation rates is 11.1 per 100,000. MEM thresholds used in this chart are based on influenza from 2010-11 to 2018-19 seasons. Caution should be used when comparing consultation rates from March 2020 onwards to previous periods due to the changes in health-seeking behaviours brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Clinical consultations for ILI seasons are monitored from W40 to W40, the most recent data is presented in red.

Figure 2. Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (Week 50 1996 – Week 18 2024).



* Reporting changed to Audit+ surveillance system

Table 1. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ILI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 13 – Week 18 2024 (as of 05/05/2024).

Age group	13	14	15	16	17	18
< 1	0.0	0.0	0.0	32.3	0.0	0.0
1 - 4	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0
5 - 14	0.0	0.0	2.3	2.2	4.6	2.5
15 - 24	4.4	4.2	6.7	6.4	2.2	0.0
25 - 34	6.0	5.7	7.9	9.5	2.0	2.2
35 - 44	9.6	9.0	1.9	1.8	9.6	10.3
45 - 64	5.7	7.2	4.7	4.5	9.5	5.2
65 - 74	2.2	2.1	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.9
75+	6.7	0.0	8.7	4.2	2.2	0.0
Total	5.0	4.7	4.9	4.7	5.7	3.8

Table 2. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ARI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 13 – Week 18 2024 (as of 05/05/2024).

Age group	13	14	15	16	17	18
< 1	701.0	1101.8	961.2	647.9	1174.4	1077.7
1 - 4	556.2	583.3	639.0	609.6	697.4	661.1
5 - 14	236.4	249.8	327.5	276.2	315.5	329.4
15 - 24	155.4	137.4	186.3	124.8	171.1	153.7
25 - 34	139.7	147.1	172.7	139.8	152.0	168.1
35 - 44	149.1	184.2	136.9	167.8	192.9	161.4
45 - 64	130.7	154.2	179.0	129.9	145.0	150.9
65 - 74	140.0	164.2	185.6	142.9	146.6	162.9
75+	157.4	218.5	187.8	144.0	161.4	205.7
Total	171.1	195.9	212.7	174.9	201.9	205.9

Figure 3. Age-specific consultations (per 100,000) for ARI in Welsh sentinel practices, Week 18 2023 – Week 18 2024.

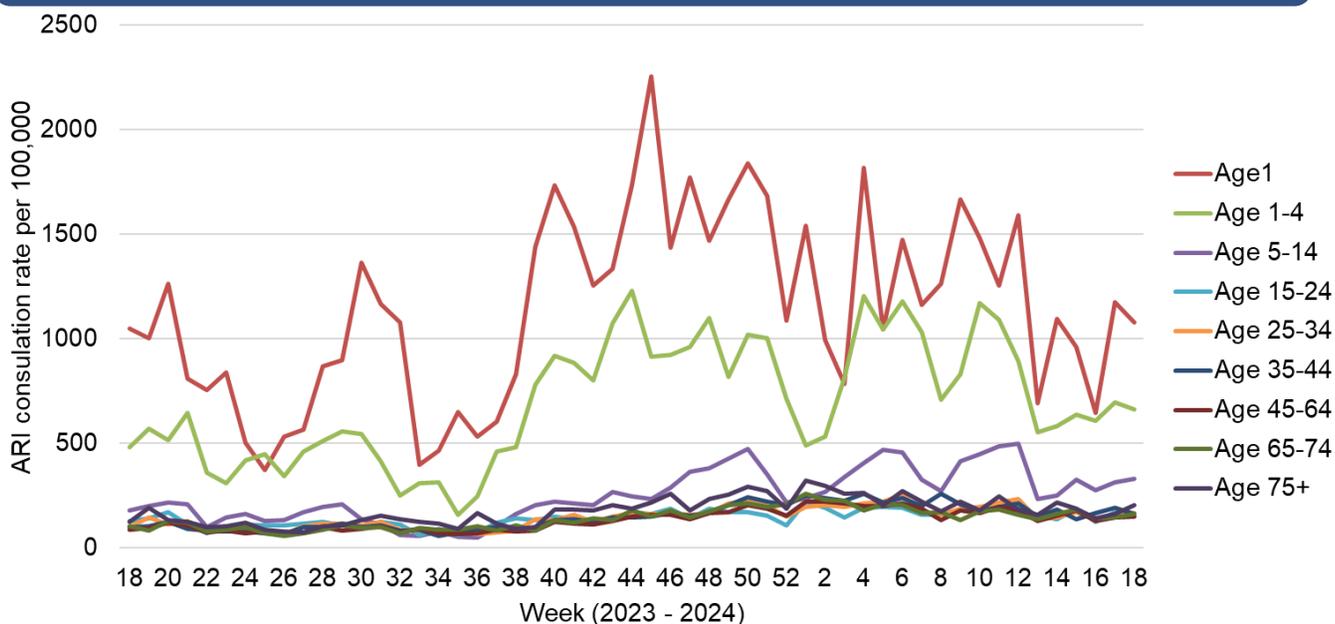
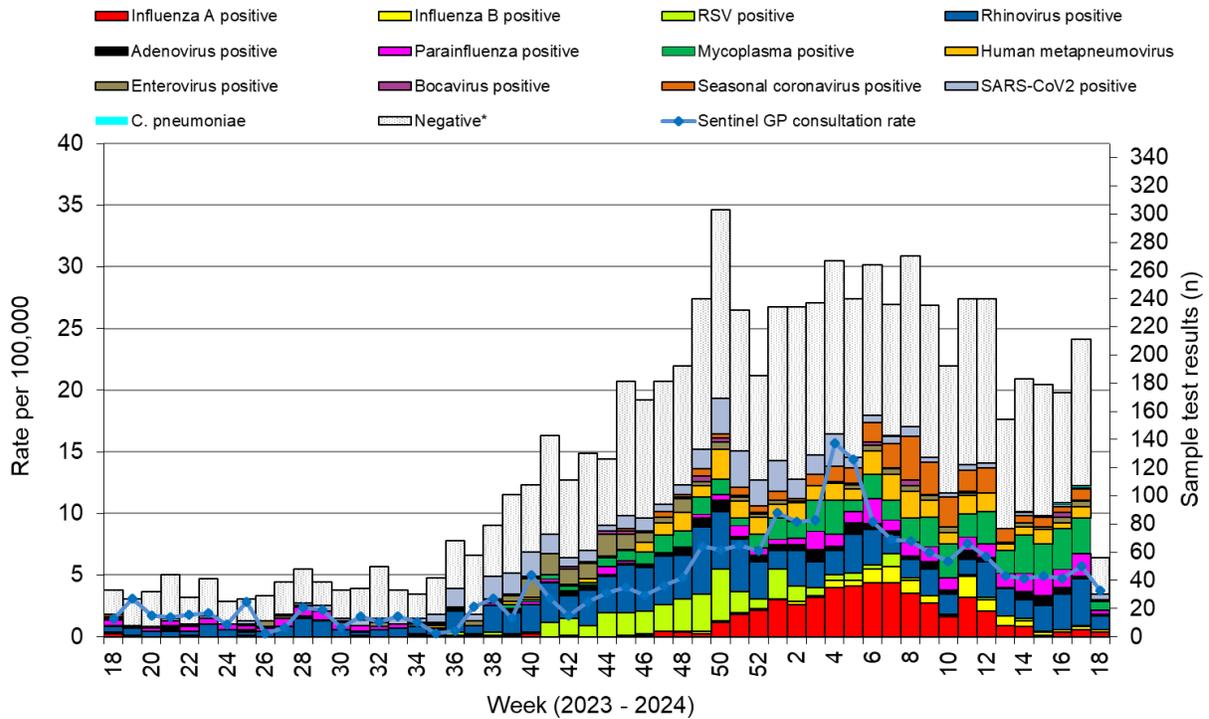
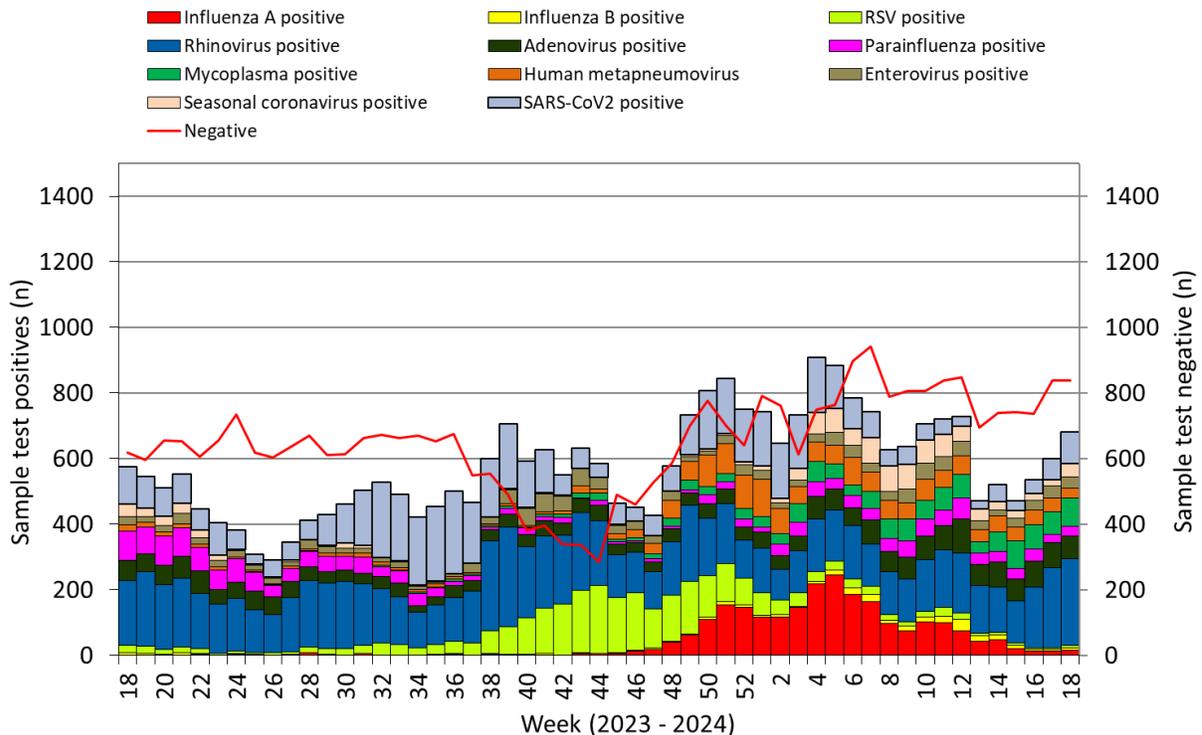


Figure 4. Specimens submitted for virological testing by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies as of 05/05/2024, by week of sample collection, Week 18 2023 to Week 18 2024.



* Tested negative for influenza, adenovirus, rhinovirus, RSV, parainfluenza, mycoplasma, human metapneumovirus, enterovirus, bocavirus and coronaviruses. Samples which test positive for more than one pathogen will appear more than once in the chart. **Results for the latest week will underestimate activity as not all samples will have been received, tested, and authorised at time of writing this report.**

Figure 5. Specimens submitted for virological testing for hospital patients and non-sentinel GPs as of 05/05/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 18 2023 to Week 18 2024.



This chart summarises respiratory panel test data and does not include data for patients tested SOLELY for SARS-CoV2. Combined data for tests carried out in Public Health Wales Microbiology: Cardiff laboratory, provided by Public Health Wales Microbiology Cardiff Specialist Virology Centre. This chart summarises individual test results, patients who are positive for multiple infections within a given week will appear multiple times. Samples which test positive for more than one pathogen will appear more than once in the chart.

Figure 6. Flu subtypes based on specimens submitted for virological testing by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies, hospital patients, and non-sentinel GPs, as of 05/05/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 18 2023 to Week 18 2024.

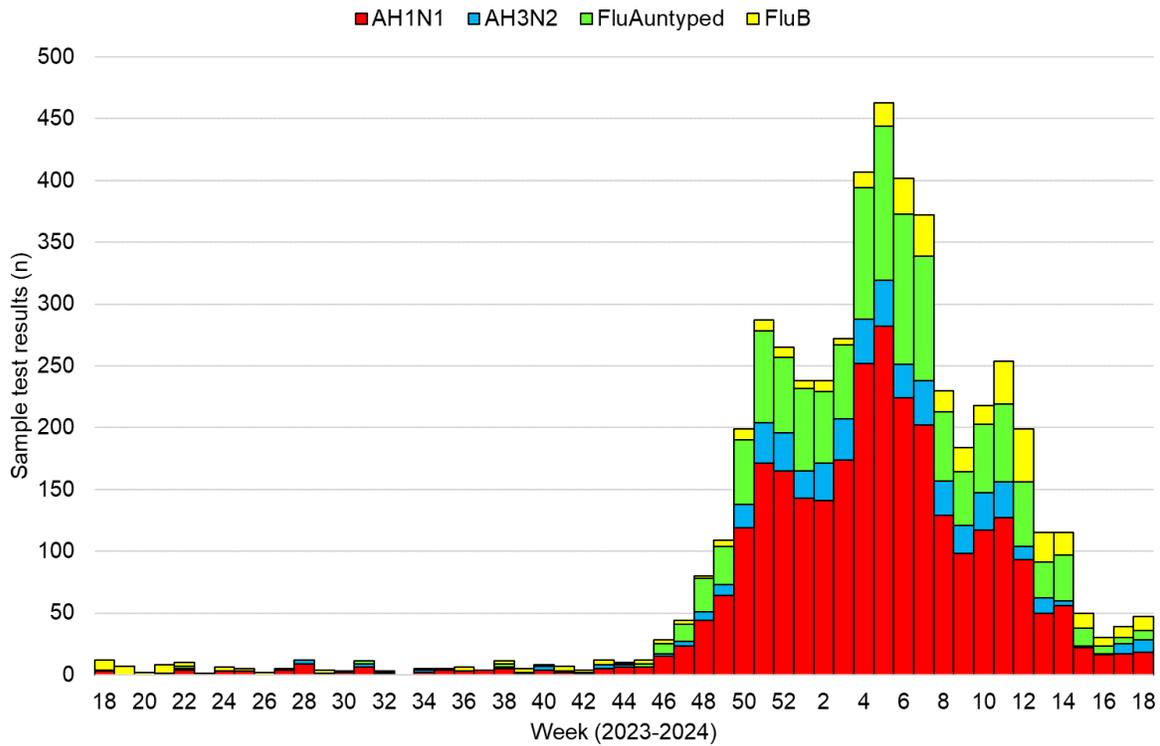


Figure 7. Specimens from hospital patients submitted for RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV2 testing only, as of 28/04/2024 by week of sample collection, Week 18 2023 to Week 18 2024.

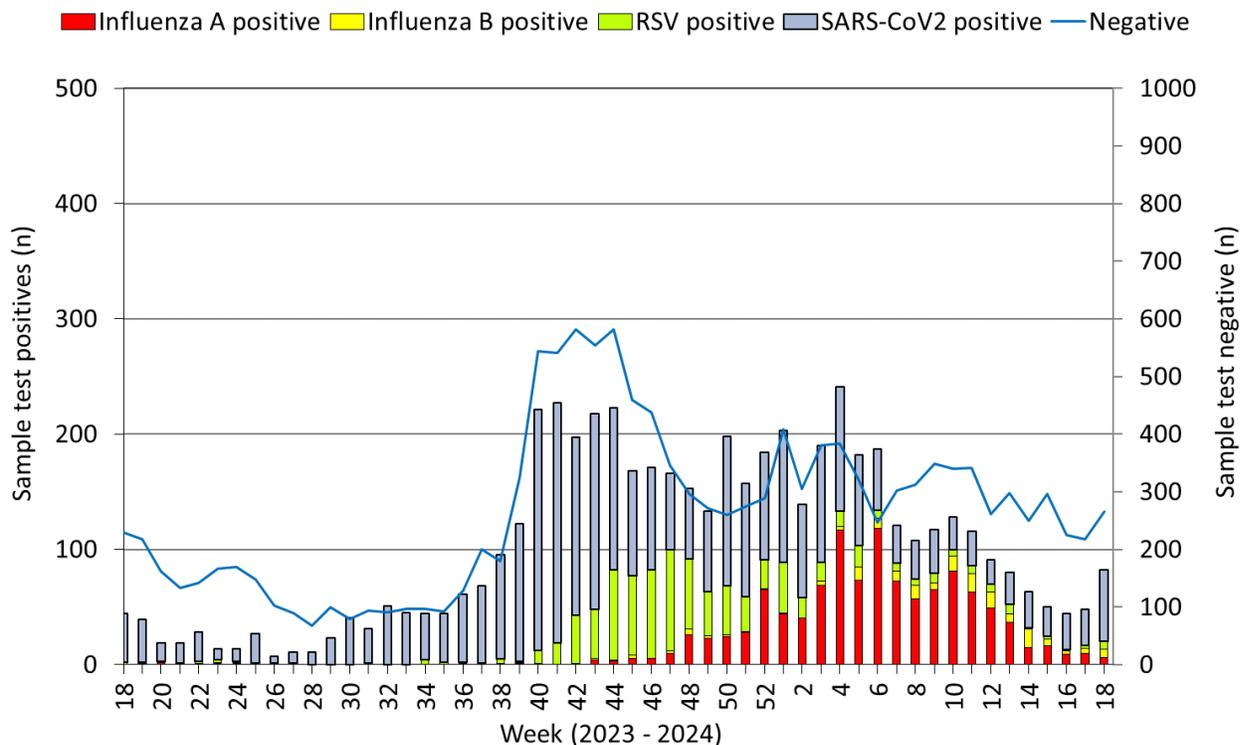
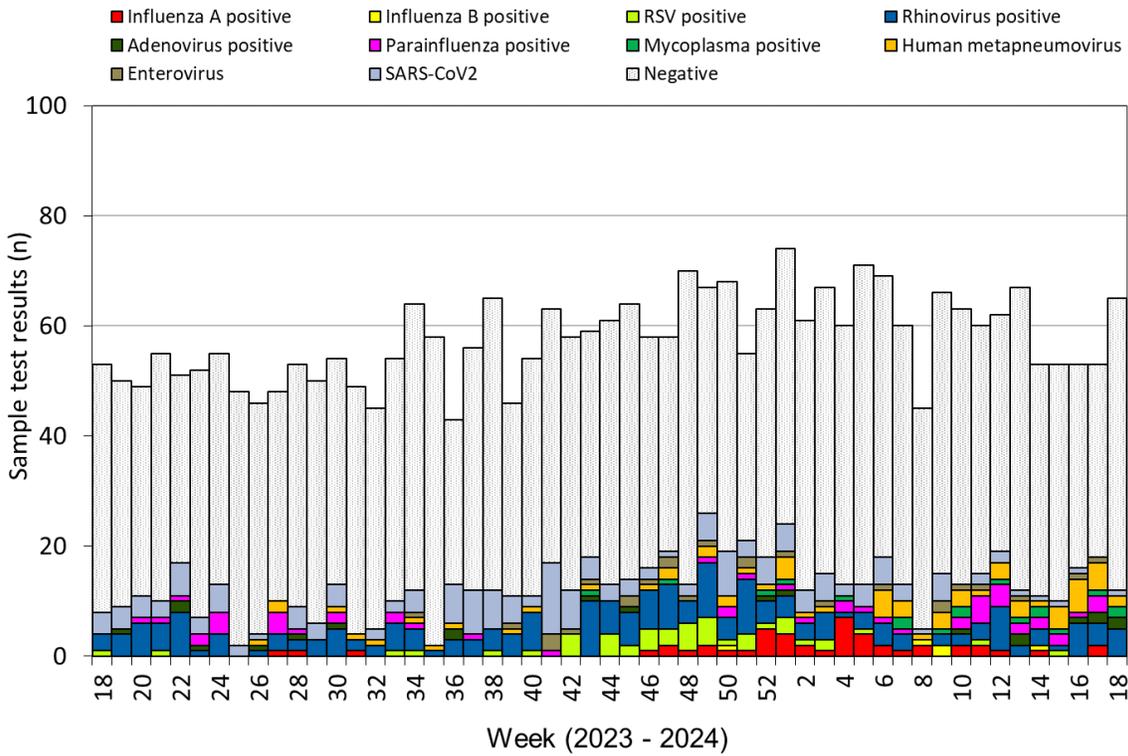
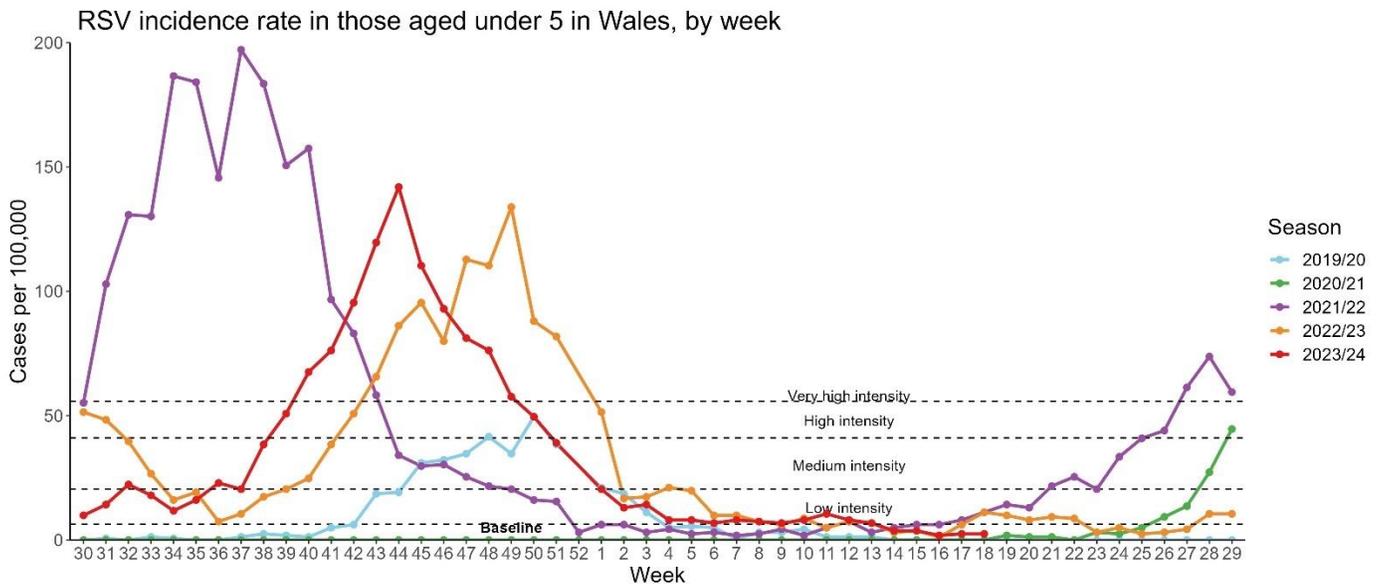


Figure 8. Specimens submitted for virological testing for ICU patients, by week of sample collection, Week 18 2023 to Week 18 2024.



This chart summarises respiratory panel test data and does NOT include data for patients tested SOLELY for SARS-CoV2. Samples which test positive for more than on pathogen will appear more than once in the chart.

Figure 9. RSV incidence rate per 100,000 population aged under five years, week 30 2019 to Week 18 2024.



*RSV seasons are monitored from W30 to W29, the most recent data is presented in red

ARI – Hospital admissions

Figure 10. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an influenza positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 05/05/2024.

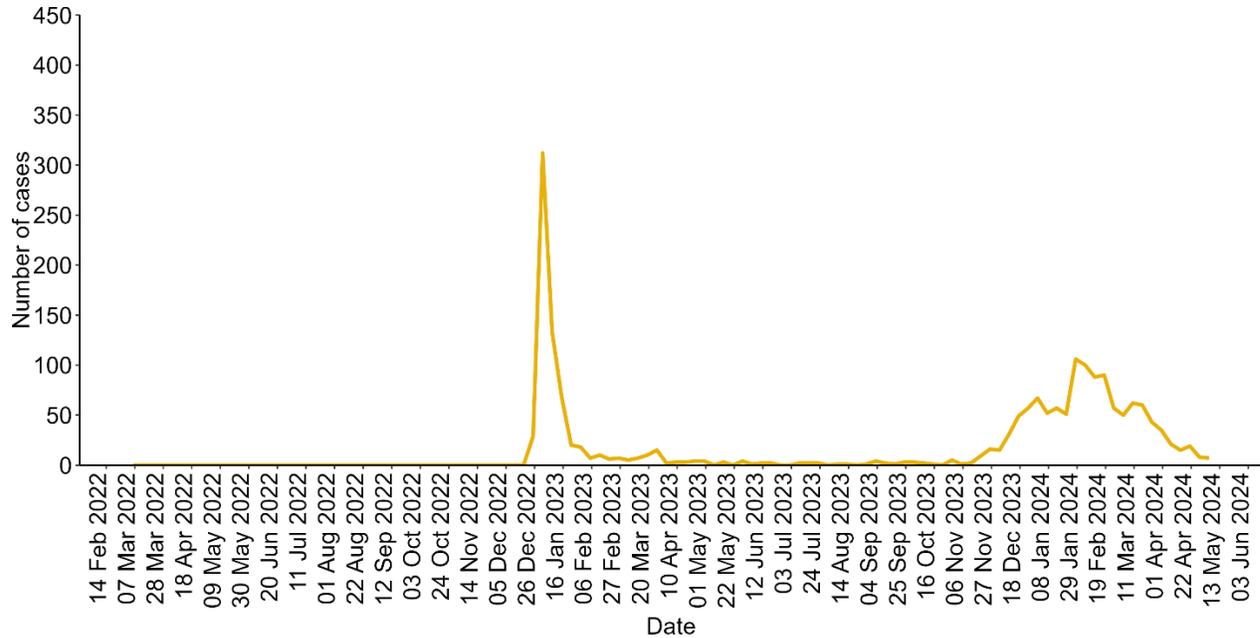


Figure 11. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an RSV positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 05/05/2024.

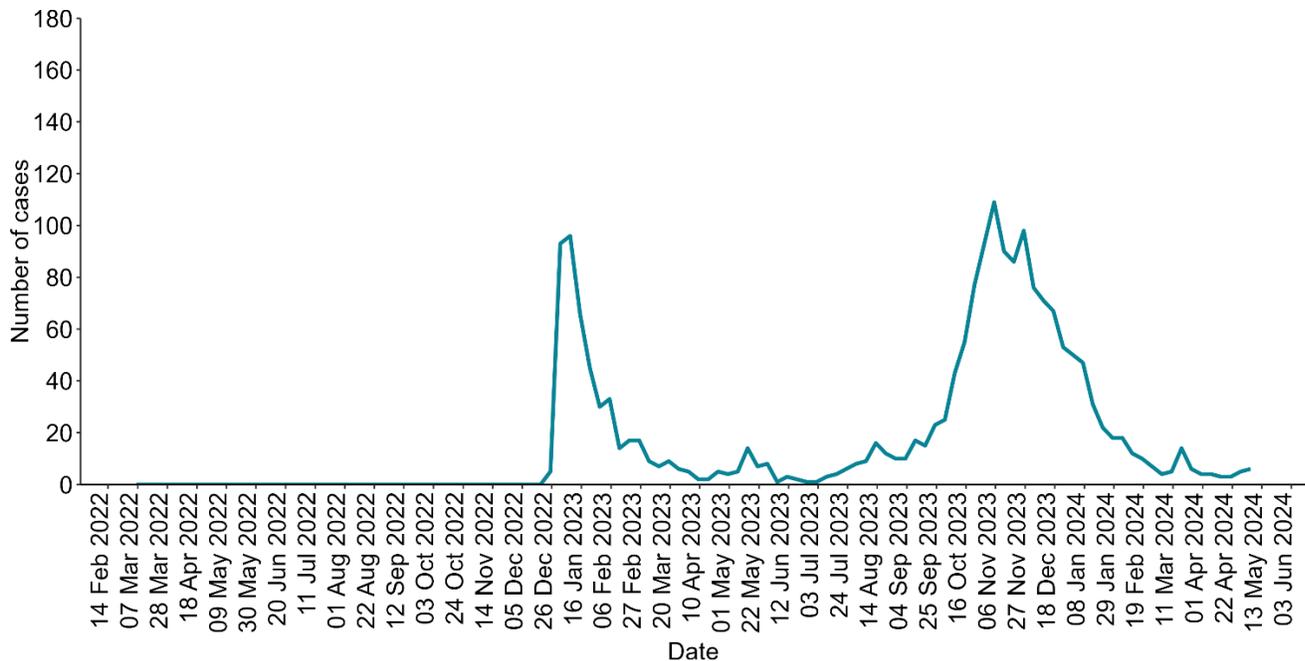
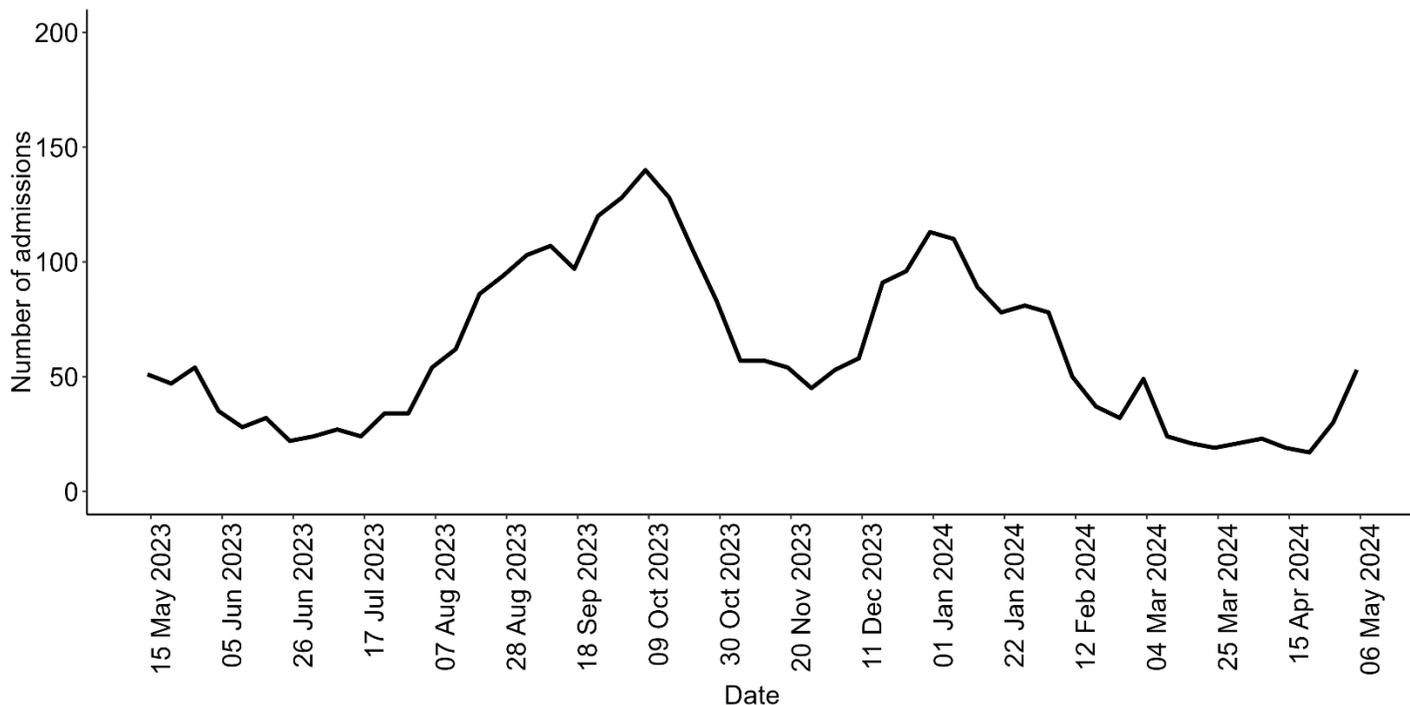
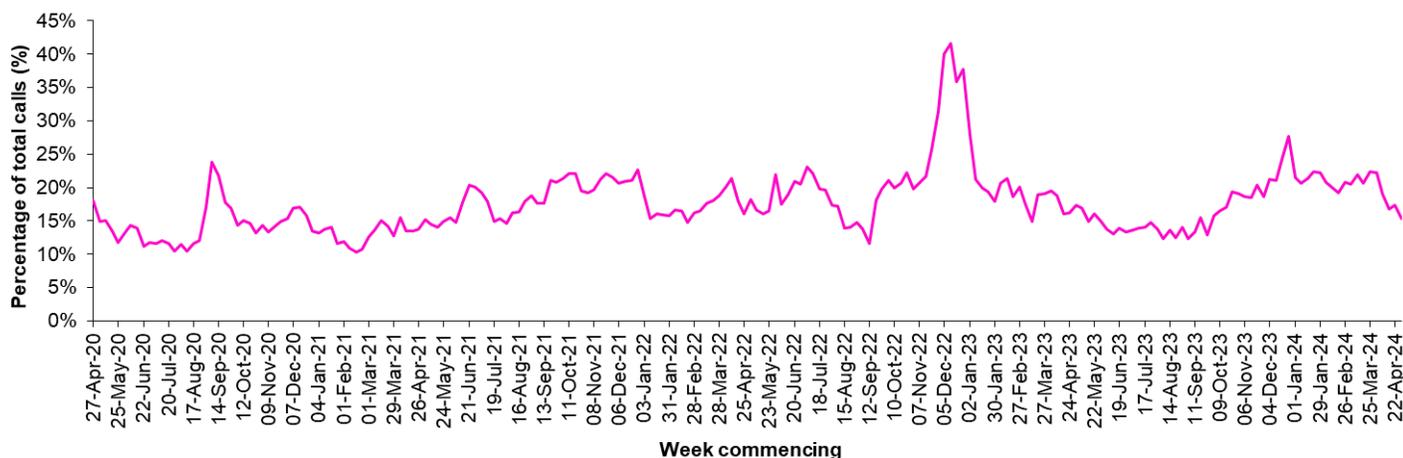


Figure 12. Seven day rolling sum of cases hospitalised in Wales within 28 days of an Covid-19 positive test result in the community (or up to 2 days post-admission), as of 05/05/2024.



Calls to NHS Direct Wales

Figure 13. Influenza related calls to NHS Direct Wales¹ (as a percentage of total calls) from Week 17 2020 - Week 17 2024 (latest data available).



¹ Data supplied by Health Statistics and Analysis Unit, Welsh Government. Flu related calls are the sum of calls recorded as 'cold/flu', 'cough', 'headache', 'fever' and 'sore throat'. Following changes to the NHS Direct calls system, including the start of the 111 pilot, there has been a change in the way in which denominator data are calculated for this chart, NHS Direct Wales now count the total number of nurse triaged calls (i.e. calls which could have symptom data recorded against them), note that 111 includes out-of-hours calls.

Influenza Vaccine Uptake in Wales

Table 3. Uptake of influenza immunisations in GP Practice patients in Wales 2023/24 (as of 23/04/2024).

Influenza immunisation uptake in the 2023/24 season	
People aged 65y and older	72.5%
People younger than 65y in a clinical risk group	39.1%
Children aged two & three years	42.8%
Children aged between four & ten years	61.9%
Children aged between 11 & 15 years	49.7%
Total NHS staff	40.8%
NHS staff with direct patient contact	40.5%

The end of season report Influenza in Wales 2019/20 is available to download and contains a full breakdown of vaccination uptake amongst eligible groups.

Link to report: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/annual-influenza-surveillance-and-influenza-vaccination-uptake-reports/>

Influenza activity – UK and international summary

- As of Week 17, GP ILI consultations remained stable at 2.9 per 100,000 in England and increased to 5.0 per 100,000 in Scotland.
- During Week 17, 4,459 samples testing positive for influenza were reported in England of which 114 were positive for influenza (47 influenza A(not subtyped), 32 influenza A(H3N2), 9 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, and 26 influenza B). Overall influenza positivity increased to 2.6% in England and to 2.7 per 100,000 in Scotland in week 17.
- UK summary data are available from the [UKHSA Influenza and COVID-19 Surveillance Report](#) and [COVID-19 & Respiratory Surveillance \(shinyapps.io\)](#).
- The WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported during week 17, that influenza positivity continues to decrease and has now below the 10% positivity epidemic threshold for four consecutive weeks. Of the 30 countries and areas reporting on influenza intensity, five reported medium intensity, 14 reported low intensity and the remainder reported baseline intensity. Of the 30 countries and areas reporting on geographic spread of influenza viruses within a country or area, three reported widespread, seven reported regional, one reported local, 14 reported sporadic activity and 5 reported no activity. There were 109 confirmed influenza virus infection detections reported from sentinel primary care, 79% of which were influenza B viruses.
Source: European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS): <https://erviss.org/>
- The WHO reported on 01/05/2024, based on data up to 21/04/2024 that influenza activity continues to decrease in the northern hemisphere and remains low in the southern hemisphere.
- In the Northern hemisphere some countries in Central America, Eastern Europe and the Caribbean, Western Asia, and South East Asia are reporting continued circulation. The predominant subtype is influenza A.
- In the Southern hemisphere, influenza activity remained low with a few exceptions in South America, where influenza activity increased with predominantly influenza A detections. A slight increase has been noted in some counties in Oceania. **Source:** WHO influenza update: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/surveillance-and-monitoring/influenza-updates/current-influenza-update>
- Based on FluNet reporting (as of 29/04/2024), during the period from 18/03/2024 – 31/03/2024 National Influenza Centres and other national influenza laboratories from 133 countries, areas or territories reported influenza surveillance data. The WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System laboratories tested more than 484,397 specimens during that period, of which 44,202 were positive for influenza viruses, 24,215 (54.8%) were typed as influenza A (of the subtyped influenza A viruses, 5,110 (53.3%) were influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 and 4,475 (46.7%) were influenza A(H3N2). Of the 44,202 samples testing positive for influenza viruses, 19,987 tested positive for Influenza B (45.2%). **Source:** Flu Net: <https://www.who.int/tools/flunet>

Update on influenza activity in North America

- The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that influenza activity continues to decline in most areas of the country (ending 27/04/2024). Nationally, 2,263 specimens have tested positive for influenza during week 17 in clinical laboratories nationwide, of these positive samples, 1,323 (58.5%) were influenza A and 940 (41.5%) were influenza B. Further characterisation has been carried out on 915 specimens by public health laboratories, 157 samples tested positive for influenza; 23 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 46 influenza A(H3N2), 32 influenza A(not subtyped) and 56 influenza B.
Source: CDC Weekly US Influenza Surveillance Report: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>
- The Public Health Agency of Canada reported that during week 17, influenza activity is decreasing and are within or below the expected levels typical for this time of the year. During week 17, 1,523 influenza detections were reported: 300 influenza A, and 1,223 influenza B. The percentage of ILI visits was 1.2%. **Source:** Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/weekly-influenza-reports.html>

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in North America

- The USA CDC reported that the RSV positivity rate decreased in the week beginning 20/04/2024.
Source: CDC RSV national trends: <https://www.cdc.gov/surveillance/nrevss/rsv/natl-trend.html>

COVID-19 – UK and international summary

- As of 01/05/2024, there were 3.0 new positive PCR episodes per 100,000 population in Wales, for the most recent 7-day reporting period. Latest COVID-19 data from Public Health Wales is available from: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>
- The latest UKHSA COVID-19 data summary is available from: <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>
- WHO situation updates on COVID-19 are available from: <https://covid19.who.int/>

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – latest update from WHO and ECDC

- Since the beginning of 2023 and as of 01 February 2024, a total of 2200 human cases have been reported, including 858 deaths. Overall, human infections of MERS-CoV have been reported from 27 countries, in all six WHO regions. Of the 2609 MERS-CoV cases and 939 deaths reported globally, 84% and 91%, respectively, have been reported from KSA, including these newly reported cases and deaths. (Figure 2). Since 2019, no MERS-CoV cases have been reported from countries outside the Middle East. WHO Global Alert and Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>
- Since the 05 February and as of 12 February 2024, four new MERS-CoV cases, including two fatalities have been reported by Saudi Arabia.
- Rapid risk assessments of the situation from ECDC, which contain epidemiological updates and advice for travellers and healthcare workers, are available from: <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus>
- Further updates and advice for healthcare workers and travellers are available from WHO: <http://www.who.int/emergencies/mers-cov/en/> and from NaTHNaC: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/news/237/mers-cov-update-travelhealthpro-country-pages>

Human infection with avian influenza A(H7N9), China

- The latest WHO Influenza at Human-Animal Interface summary reports that there have been no publicly available reports from China or other countries on influenza A(H7N9) in recent months, but overall risk assessments are unchanged. Previous reports are available from: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/avian-influenza/monthly-risk-assessment-summary>
The risk of international spread of avian influenza A(H7N9) is considered to be low at present. However, it is important that clinicians are aware of the possibility of human infection with animal influenza, in persons presenting with severe acute respiratory disease, while travelling or soon after returning from an area where avian influenza is a concern. WHO Global Alert & Response updates: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>

Links:

Public Health Wales influenza surveillance webpage:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=457&pid=25480>

Public Health Wales COVID-19 data dashboard:

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public Health Wales interactive report on hospitalisations in influenza and RSV cases:

<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection/viz/ARI-Hospitaladmissionsdashboard/ARIHospitaladmissionsdashboard?publish=yes>

GP Sentinel Surveillance of Infections Scheme:

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/page.cfm?orgid=457&pid=27918>

NICE influenza antiviral usage guidance:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158>

England influenza and COVID-19 surveillance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports-2023-to-2024-season>

Scotland seasonal respiratory surveillance:

<https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/publications>

Northern Ireland influenza surveillance:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/seasonal-influenza>

European Centre for Communicable Disease:

<http://ecdc.europa.eu/>

European influenza information:

<http://flunewseurope.org/>

Advice on influenza immunisation

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/fluvaccine/>

Advice on influenza immunisation (for intranet users)

[Influenza \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

For further information on this report, please email Public Health Wales using:

surveillance.requests@wales.nhs.uk