

COVID-19 Wales Situational Report

COVID-19 Intelligence Cell: 19 May
2022

Data as at 18 May 2022 unless otherwise
specified

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COVID-19 Situation Report Summary

Indicators and case surveillance

ONS estimates that the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 80,700 people during this time (95% credible interval: 65,700 to 97,800. This equates to approximately 1 person in every 40.

PHW are not currently providing calculations of the reproduction number and doubling time for COVID-19 cases, as estimation of these values is not currently valid due to the quickly decreasing level of community testing following changes in testing policy.

Since last week, SARS-CoV-2 viral load in Wastewater has decreased across Wales. However, the signal has increased at Bangor and Monmouth. The trends in the national mean wastewater signal have become more stable following a period of decline over the last few weeks.

NHS and social care

NHS officials report that the number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) has decreased in the most recent period. However, due to changes in testing policy in healthcare settings, the reliability of data will be impacted. The total number of occupied beds in a critical care environment is 160; 6 lower than the same day last week and 8 higher than the pre-COVID-19 baseline of 152 critical care beds. Of these, 15 are COVID-19 related patients in critical care, 1 lower than the same day last week. In the two weeks ending 11 May, there were 6 reported deaths of care home residents relating to suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Children and education

In the most recent weeks, there has been a decline in both PCR positive episodes and in LFT positive episodes. A similar pattern is seen in the testing rates for this age group. Please note that the reliability of data should be interpreted with caution due to changes to testing behaviours and recent policy changes around test availability.

Variants, vaccination and population immunity

PHW report the Omicron variant continues to be the predominant variant in Wales, accounting for 95.71% of sequenced cases in the 14 days ending 17 May. During this period Omicron, BA.2 accounted for 98% of all sequenced variant cases and Omicron, BA.1 accounted for 2% of all sequenced variant cases. The COVID-19 vaccination rollout has slowed in Wales. As at 14 May 2022, 92% of people aged 12 and over had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine in Wales. Of people aged 12 and over, 4% had exactly one vaccine dose, 14% had exactly two doses, and 74% have also had a third dose or booster, so 88% have had at least 2 doses

Medium term Projections (MTPs)

The most recent Swansea University MTPs suggest that we have passed the peak of healthcare pressures and project a decline in hospital bed occupancy and ICU occupancy over the next several weeks. Current pressures in ICU and deaths are much lower than at the peak of previous waves. Deaths are projected to remain at low levels and decline slightly in May.

Key indicators

All COVID-19 indicators have decreased over the previous week.

Please note that the arrows represent a change in comparison for the last week.

	Current value (14/05/22)	Change since previous week (07/05/22 – 14/05/22 unless stated otherwise)	
		Percentage change	Value change
Test positivity (<u>7 day</u> RA)	6.7%	-26.8%	↓ (-2.4 percentage points)
Population estimated to have COVID-19 (prevalence) ¹	2.91%	-33%	↓ (-1.42 percentage points)
NHS COVID-19 Admissions ²	19	-26%	↓ (-7)
ONS deaths (<u>7 day</u> sum) ³	18	-68%	↓ (-38)
PHW deaths (<u>7 day</u> sum)	Data Unavailable from PHW		

Footnotes

1. Latest Covid Infection Survey data is taken from 01 May 2022 to 07 May 2022.
2. Seven day rolling average to the current date of confirmed COVID-19 admissions.
3. Latest ONS deaths data is to 06 May 2022 (rather than 14 May 2022) for the current value. Data to 29 April 2022 is used for the change since previous week.

Infection and Case Surveillance

ONS Coronavirus (Covid-19) Infection Survey results, 13 May 2022

The percentage of the community population with COVID-19 in Wales continued to decrease in the most recent week. For the week ending 7 May 2022, it is estimated that 2.91% of the community population had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 2.40% to 3.46%). This equates to approximately 1 person in every 35 (95% credible interval: 1 in 40 to 1 in 30), or 88,300 people during this time (95% credible interval: 72,800 to 105,300).

This compares to 1 in 45 people in England, 1 in 35 people in Scotland, and 1 in 55 people in Northern Ireland.

Long Covid

As of 6 May an estimated 1.8 million people living in private households in the UK (2.8% of the population) were experiencing self-reported long COVID (symptoms persisting for more than four weeks after the first suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) infection that were not explained by something else).

PHW Case surveillance

Note the reliability of PHW case data will be heavily impacted by changes to testing behaviours and recent policy changes around test availability.

As at 13 May 2022, the 7-day cumulative case incidence in Wales is 16.3 per 100,000 population and test positivity is at 6.9%. Case incidence is decreasing in all local authorities. The highest 7-day incidence is in Bridgend, which has 24.5 cases per 100,000. This is 50% higher than the Wales average, and 5% higher than the next LA (Ceredigion). As at 13 May 2022, case incidence is decreasing in the 90 years and over age group and is steady in other age groups.

Deaths

Using data to 6 May 2022, registered 'all-cause' deaths in Wales were 3.1% below the 5-year average. Registered 'all-cause' deaths in England were 5.3% above the 5-year average. In the week ending 6 May 2022, 9,941 deaths were registered in England and Wales. This is a decrease compared with the week ending 29 April 2022 when the number of 'all-cause' deaths registered was 12,441.

In Wales, there were 2,894 deaths registered in April 2022. This was 113 (4.1%) more deaths than the five-year average. Of the deaths registered in April 2022 in Wales, there were 166 deaths (5.7% of all deaths) due to COVID-19. Including all deaths involving Covid increases the number to 255 deaths (8.8% of all deaths).

Welsh Government Wastewater Surveillance, 27 April 2022

Since last week, SARS-CoV-2 viral load has decreased across the country. However, the signal has increased at Llyn and Eryri and Wye. The trends in the national mean wastewater signal have become more stable following a period of decline over the last few weeks.

Figure 1: ONS Infection Survey – Positivity Rates (%) Across UK Nations – 20 May 2022

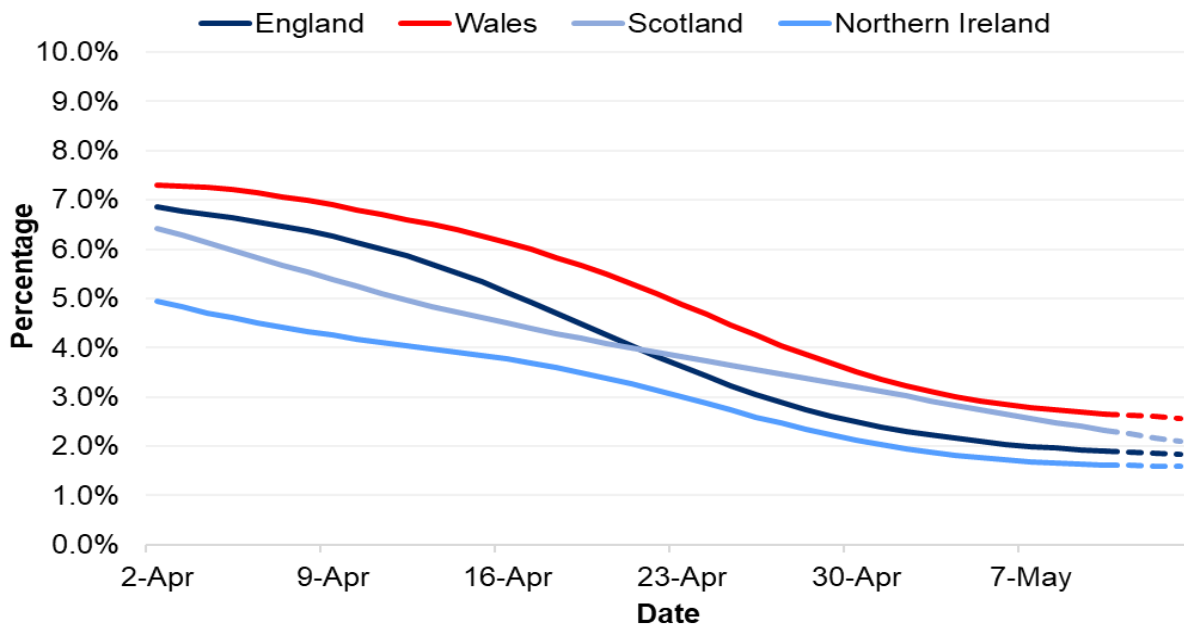


Figure 2: ONS Infection Survey – estimated % testing positive for COVID-19, Wales long term trends

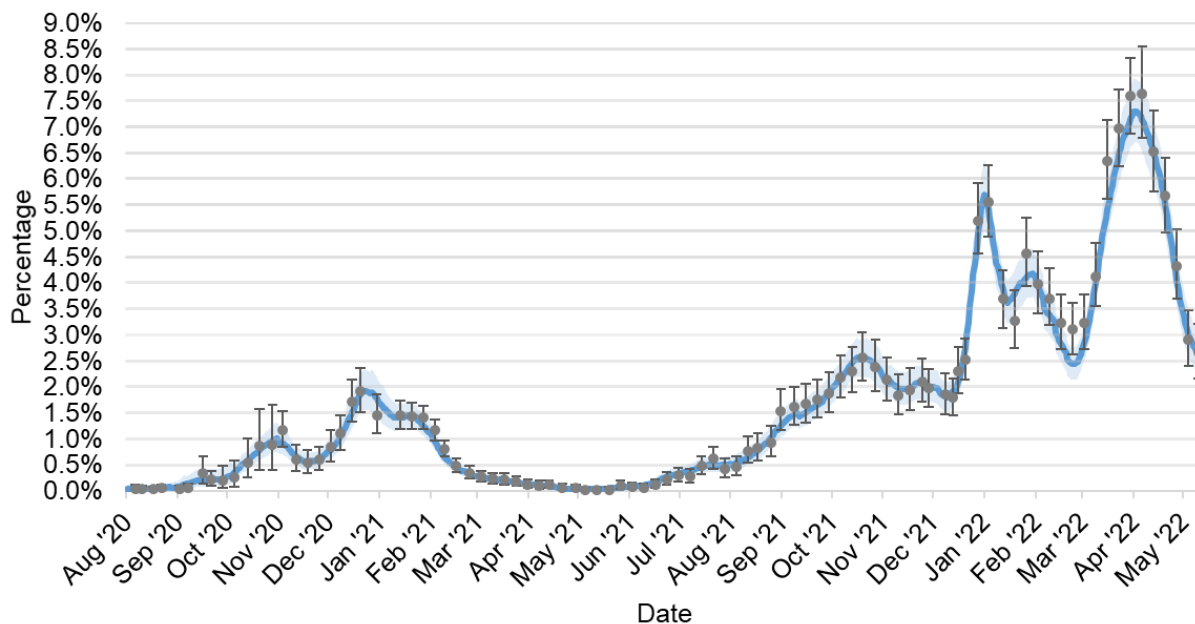


Figure 3: Confirmed cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 population in the previous 7 days, by sample date and health board

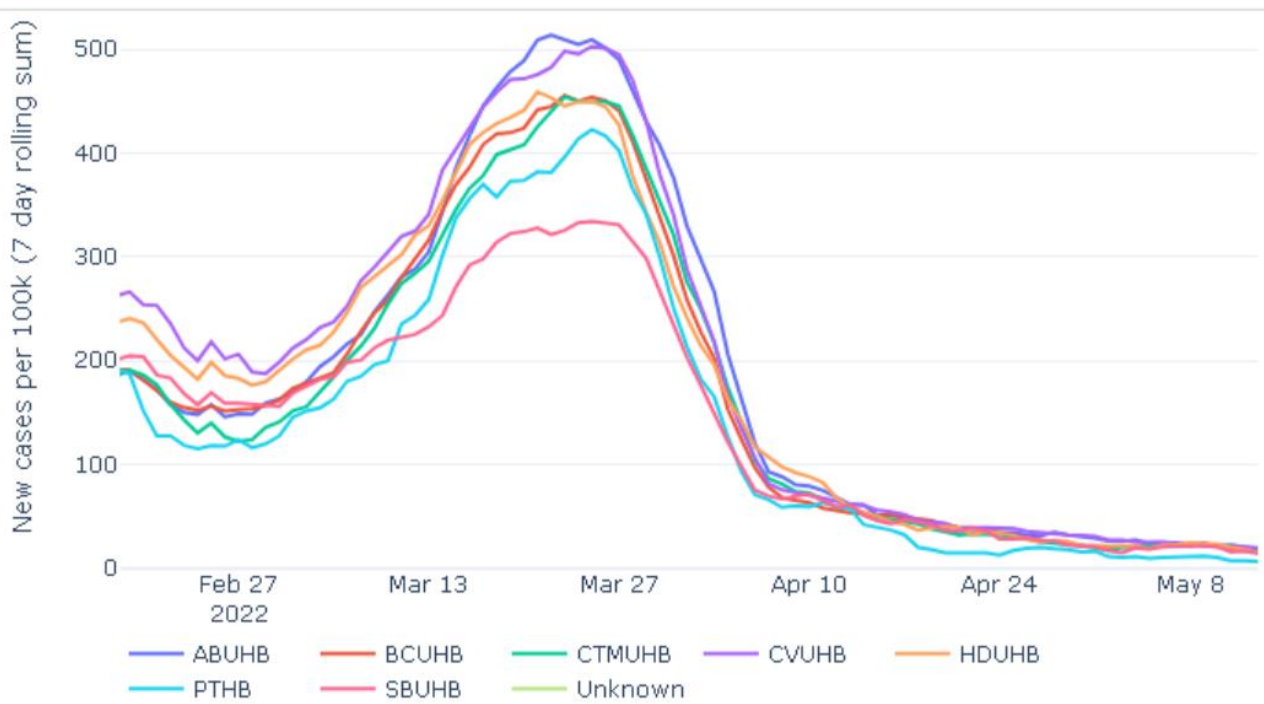


Figure 4: Confirmed cases of COVID-19 per 100,000 population in the previous 7 days, by age

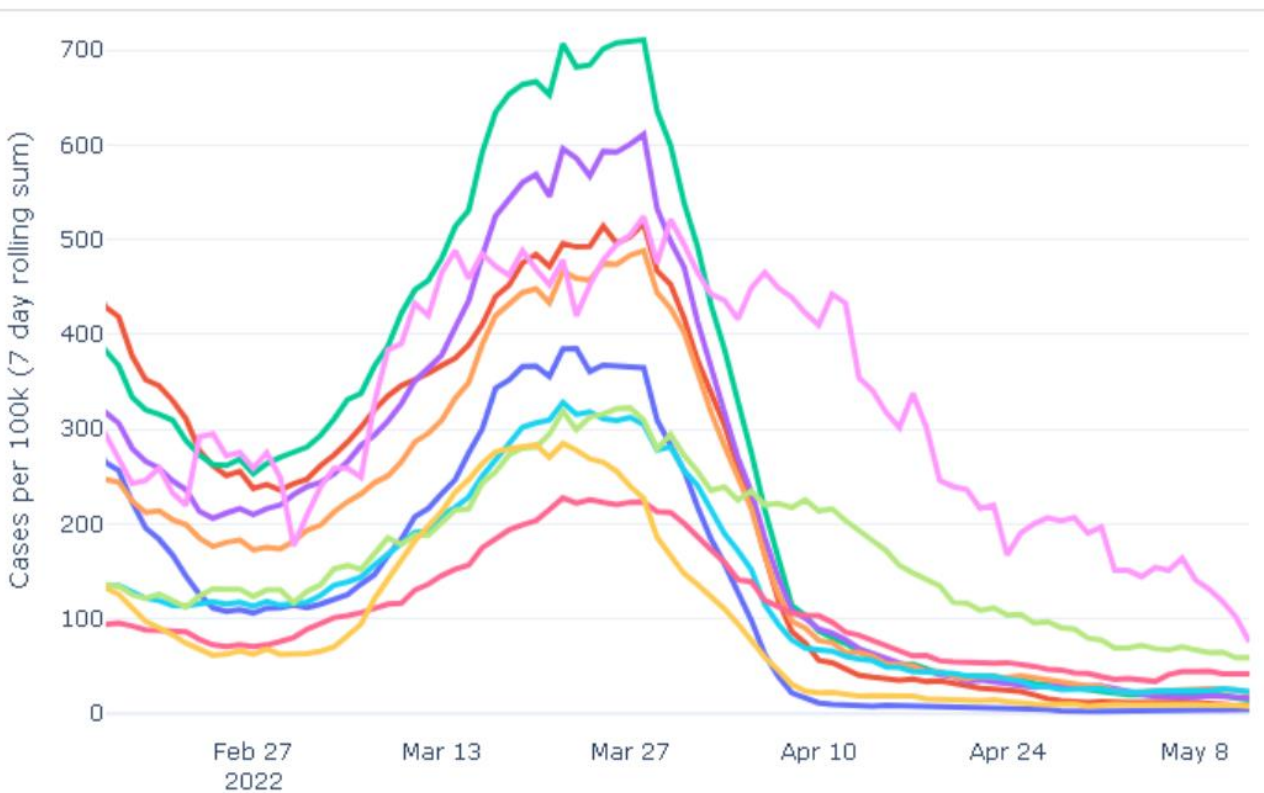


Figure 5: wastewater signal (gc/day per 100k population)

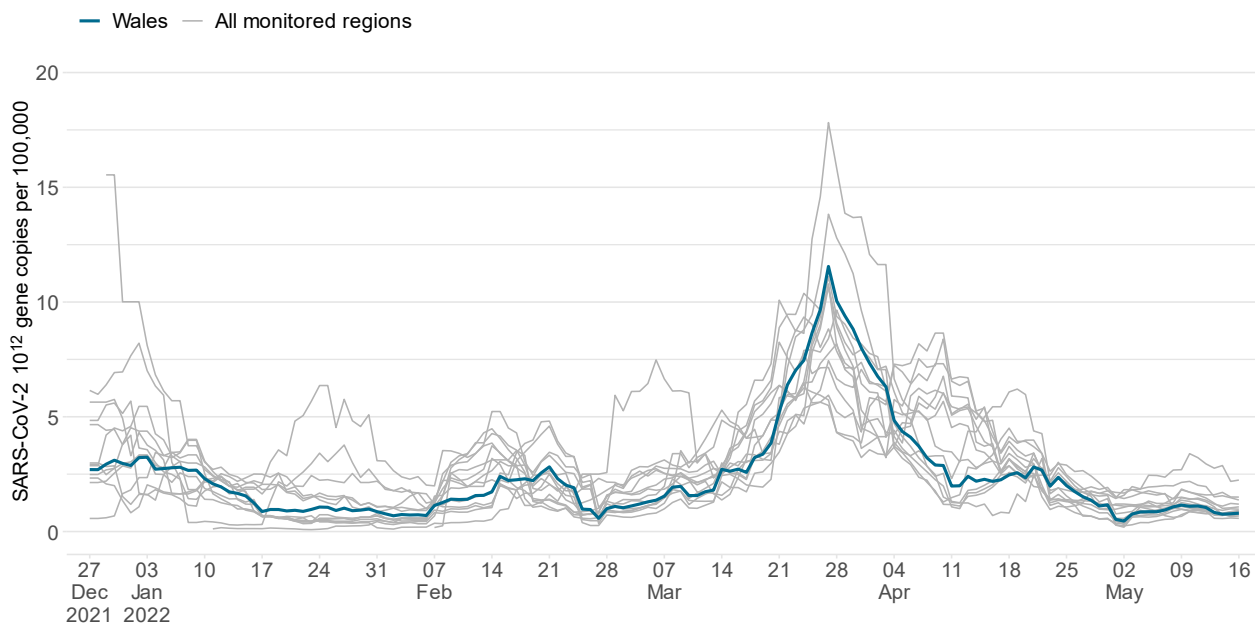
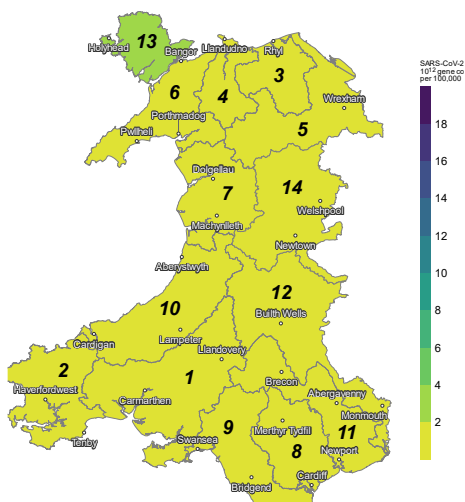


Figure 6: wastewater national heat map showing regional mean SARS-CoV-2 gc/day per 100k



NHS and Social Care

NHS Wales

The number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) has decreased in the most recent period. However, due to changes in testing policy in healthcare settings, the reliability of data will be impacted.

As at 17 May 2022, the number of COVID-19 related patients in hospital beds (confirmed, suspected and recovering) is 807; 224 (22%) lower than the same day last week and the lowest since 1 January when there were 776. Of these, 296 are confirmed COVID-19 patients; 103 (26%) lower than the same day last week.

The total number of occupied beds in a critical care environment is 160; 6 lower than the same day last week and 8 higher than the pre-COVID-19 baseline of 152 critical care beds. Of these, 15 are COVID-19 related patients in critical care, 1 lower than the same day last week.

As at 17 May, of the 219 confirmed COVID patients in a general and acute hospital bed, 32 (15%) were actively treated for COVID-19. Of the 11 confirmed COVID-19 patients in a critical care bed, 8 (73%) were actively treated for COVID-19. This figure does not include patients from community hospitals, field hospitals and mental health units or patients in in Velindre NHS Trust.

Social Care

As at 11 May, 58 adult care homes in Wales have notified Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) of one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19, in staff or residents, in the last 7 days, with 176 notified in the last 20 days. There are 1,032 adult care homes and 17 adult and child care homes in total in Wales.

CIW has been notified of 2,196 care home resident deaths with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 since 1 March 2020 out of a total of 15,122 deaths during this period. This makes up 14.5% of all adult care home resident reported deaths during this period. In the two weeks ending 11 May, there were 6 reported deaths of care home residents relating to suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Figure 7: StatsWales Hospital bed occupancy of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients (7 day rolling average)

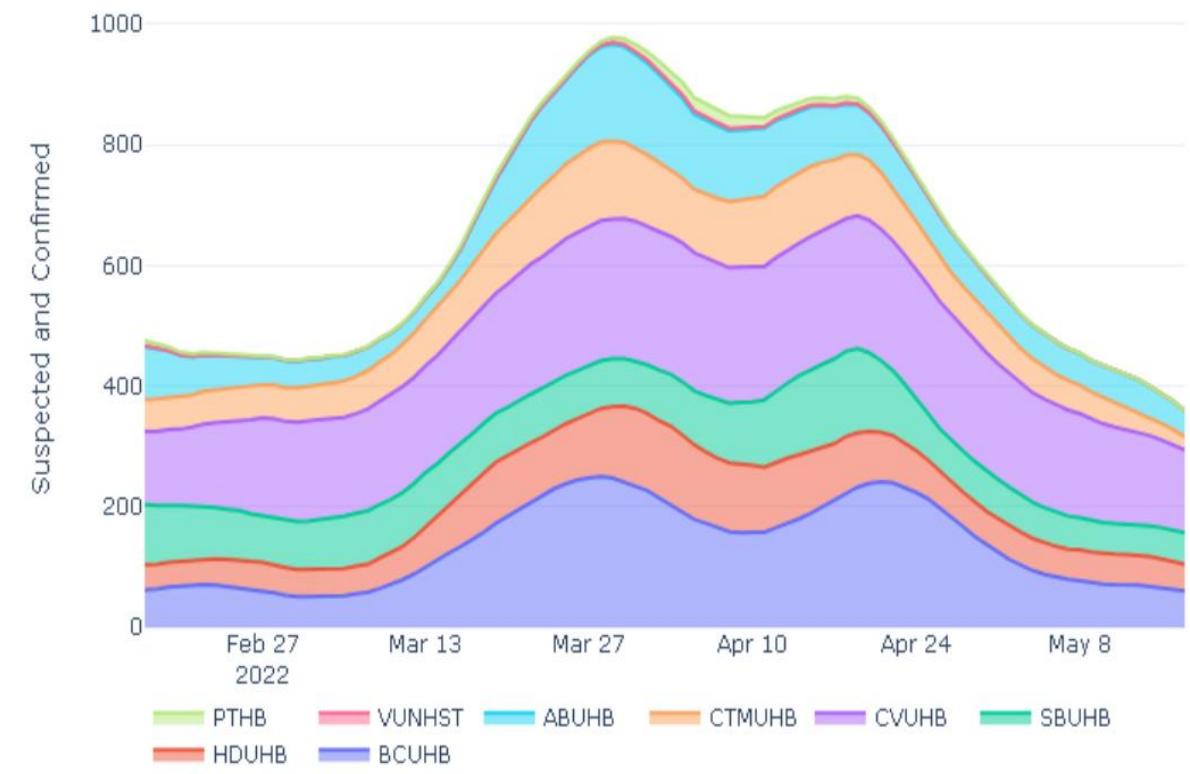


Figure 8: Stats Wales Invasive ventilated bed occupancy of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients (7 day rolling average)

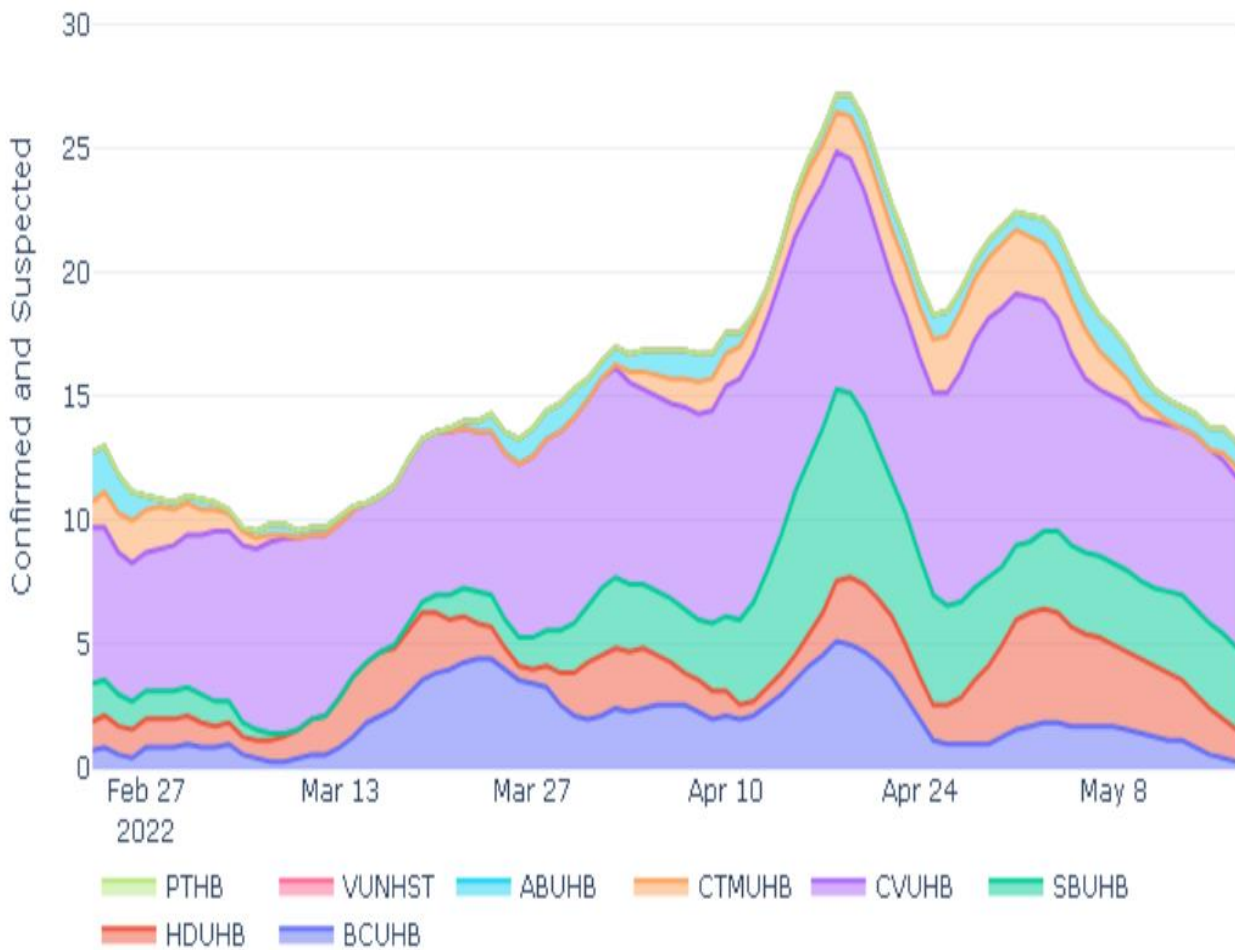
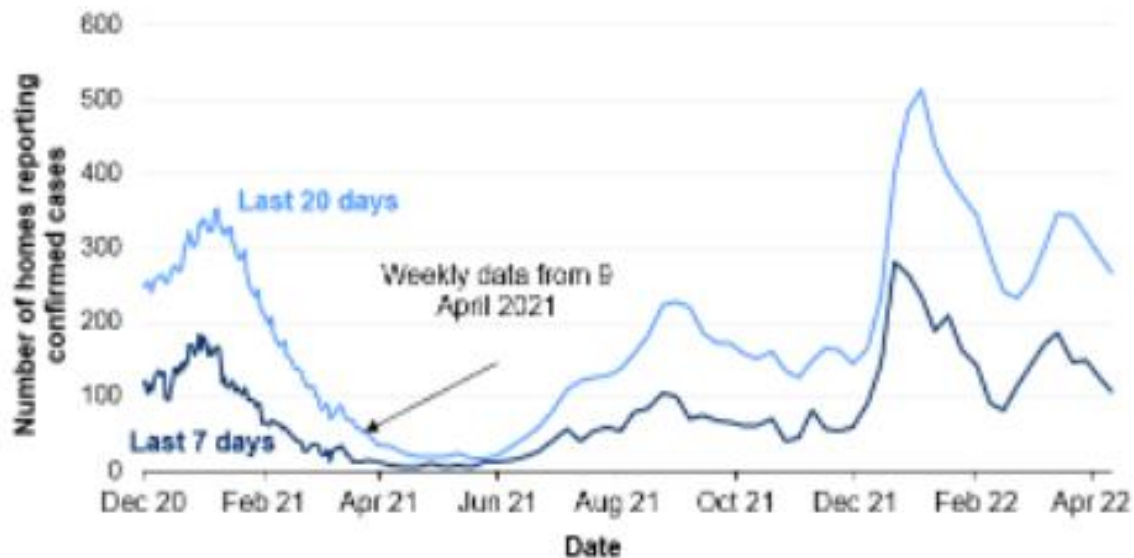
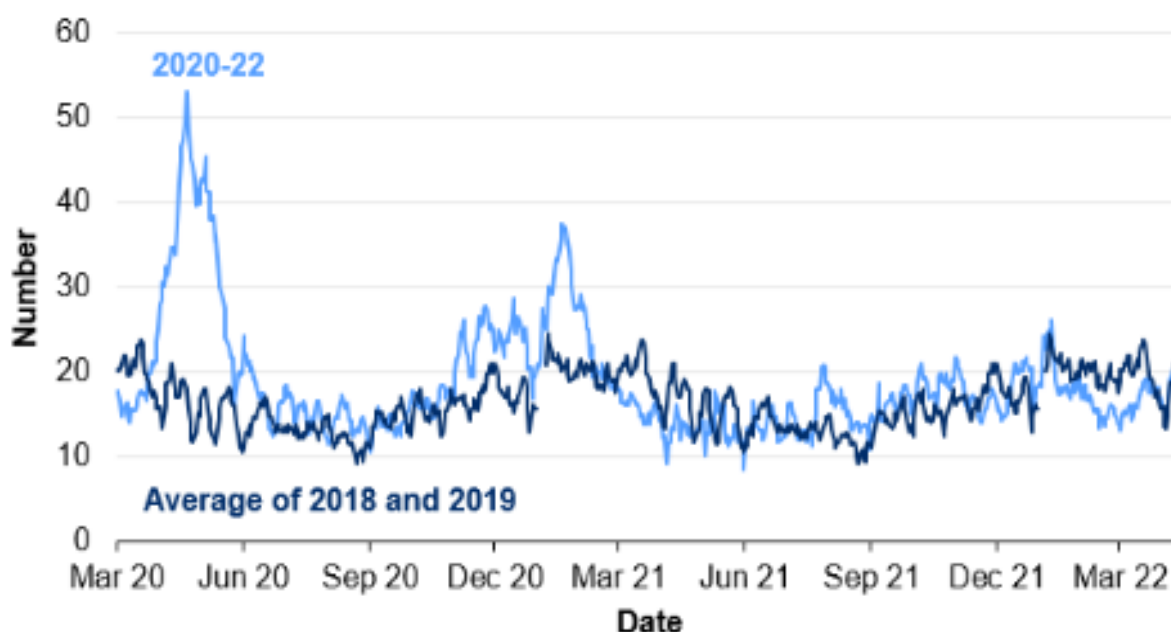


Figure 9: Number of adult care homes which have notified CIW of one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 7 or 20 days, up to 27 April 2022



Source: Notifications of Cases received by Care Inspectorate Wales

Figure 10: Deaths notified to CIW of care home residents by cause of deaths and day of notification (7 day rolling average), up to 27 April 2022



Education

Primary school aged children:

Following a rapid increase in LFT positives and a gradual increase in PCR positives since early March, the detected cases have dropped. In the most recent weeks, there has been a decline in both PCR positive episodes and in LFT positive episodes. A similar pattern is seen in the testing rates for this age group.

Secondary school aged children:

Following an increase in LFT positives and a gradual increase in PCR positives since early March, the detected cases have dropped. In the most recent weeks, there has been a decline in both PCR positive episodes and in LFT positive episodes. A similar pattern is seen in the testing rates for this age group.

This interpretation is supported by the **adjusted view of cases** in school aged children (this includes only PCR positives and those LFT positives without PCR confirmation within three days). The increase seen since early March has decreased in the most recent reporting periods.

School absence since the start of the current term:

Absence for non COVID reasons saw an increase in April, however the recent holiday periods caused a few gaps in the data. Absence for COVID reasons, is relatively low in the recent weeks, this is more marked in primary than secondary school children. - Note that gaps in the data occur around holiday periods: Spring Half term 21st to 25th February 22. End of spring term 9th April 22; start of summer term 25th April 22; May bank holiday weekend 30th April.

PHW have expressed concerns around data reporting on school absence for the most recent weeks and are seeking to understand this for future reports. As a result these charts show data from a few weeks ago.

Please note that the reliability of data should be interpreted with caution due to changes to testing behaviours and recent policy changes around test availability.

Vaccination:

Vaccination rates amongst school aged children vary considerably by local authority and a considerable proportion remain unvaccinated. These rates have changed little for several weeks.

Figure 11: Confirmed PCR COVID-19 episodes per 100,000 population, by week of sample collection and age groups (children and younger people) - 16 May, 2022

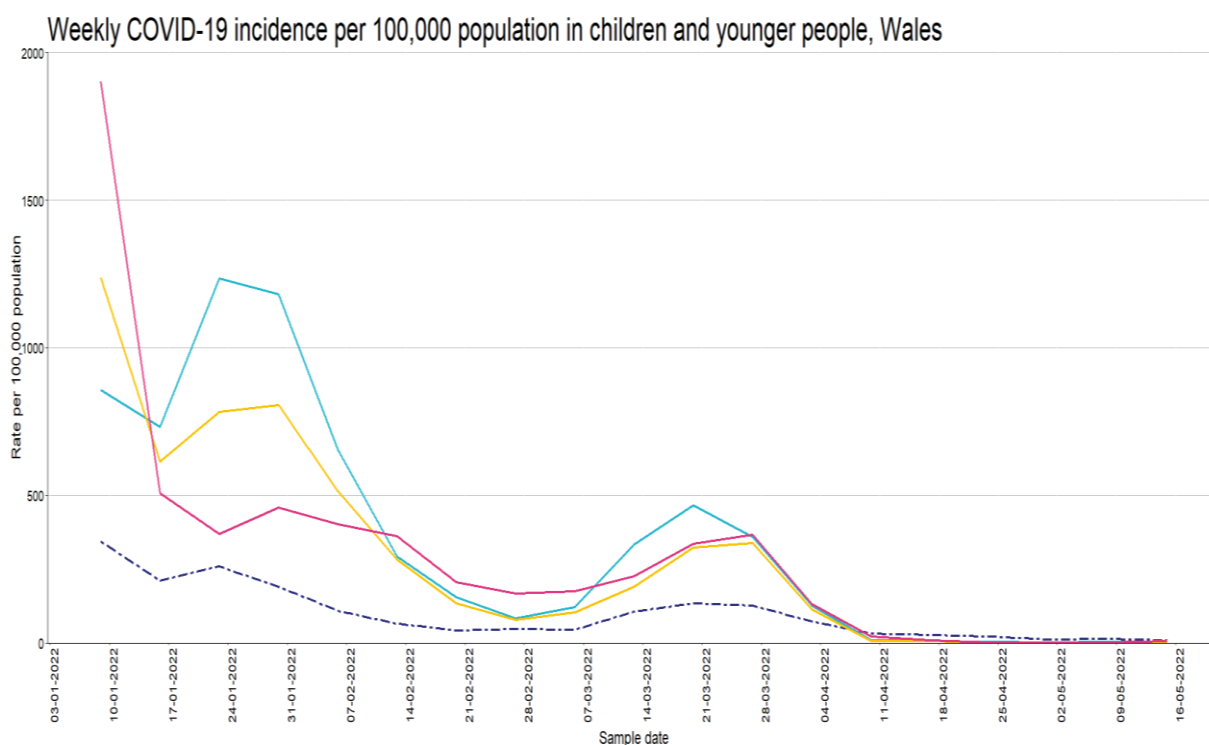


Figure 12: Confirmed Lateral Flow Test COVID-19 episodes per 100,000 population, by week of sample collection and age groups (children and younger people) - 16 May, 2022

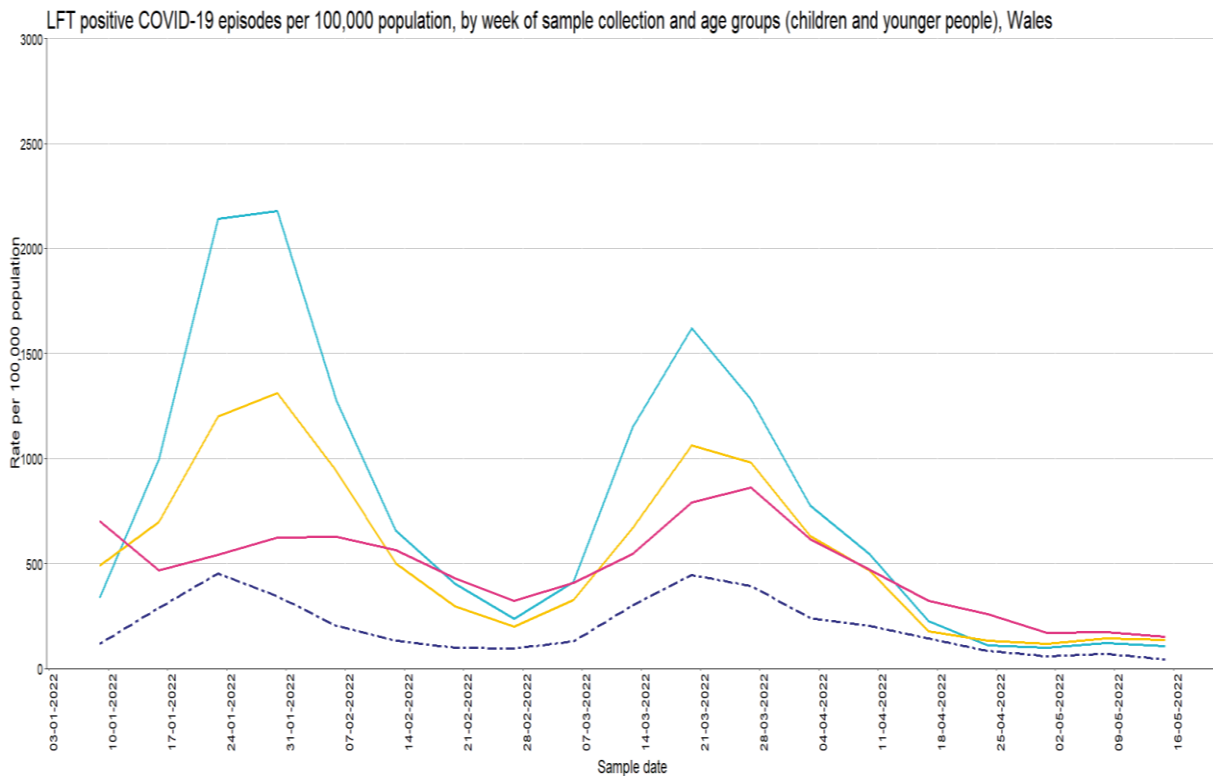
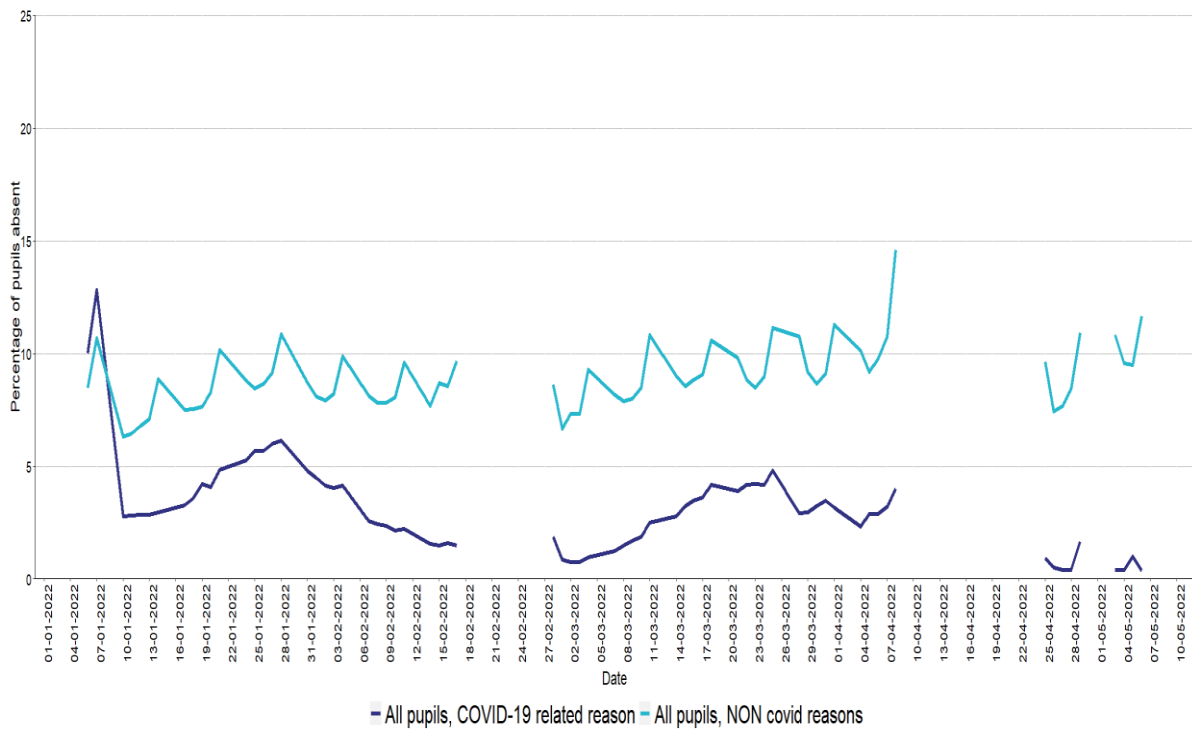


Figure 13: Percentage of pupils absent in maintained schools by reason for absence - COVID and non-COVID reason- 6 May, 2022



Data as of 2022-05-06

Figure 14: Percentage of pupils absent in maintained schools due to COVID related reasons, by school sector- 6 May, 2022



Data as of 2022-05-06

Variants, Vaccination and Immunity Status

Variant Surveillance reporting, PHW:

As at 12 May, PHW report that the current dominant variant in Wales is VOC-22JAN-01 (Omicron, BA.2) which accounted for 100% of sequenced cases in the last 14 days.

To date there have been 56,258 cases of VOC-21NOV-01 (Omicron, BA.1) and 27,465 cases of VOC-22JAN-01 (Omicron, BA.2) .

ECDC has reclassified Omicron sub-lineages BA.4 and BA.5 from Variants of Interest (VUI) to Variants of Concern (VOC)

UKHSA reports that the BA.4/5 infection severity remains as “insufficient data”.

As a result of the emergence of two Omicron subvariants, the genotyped cases have been separated out into their own category called “Omicron (NEC)” (NEC = not elsewhere classified). This category is likely to have negative weekly changes as genotyped cases are retrospectively confirmed as a specific lineage and moved into their respective categories. NEC also includes sequenced cases defined as another lineage (e.g. BA.3), or private lab cases where PHW do not have enough information to further classify the case.

Vaccination and antibodies:

The COVID-19 vaccination rollout has slowed in Wales. As at 14 May 2022, 92% of people aged 12 and over had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine in Wales and 88% had received at least two doses.

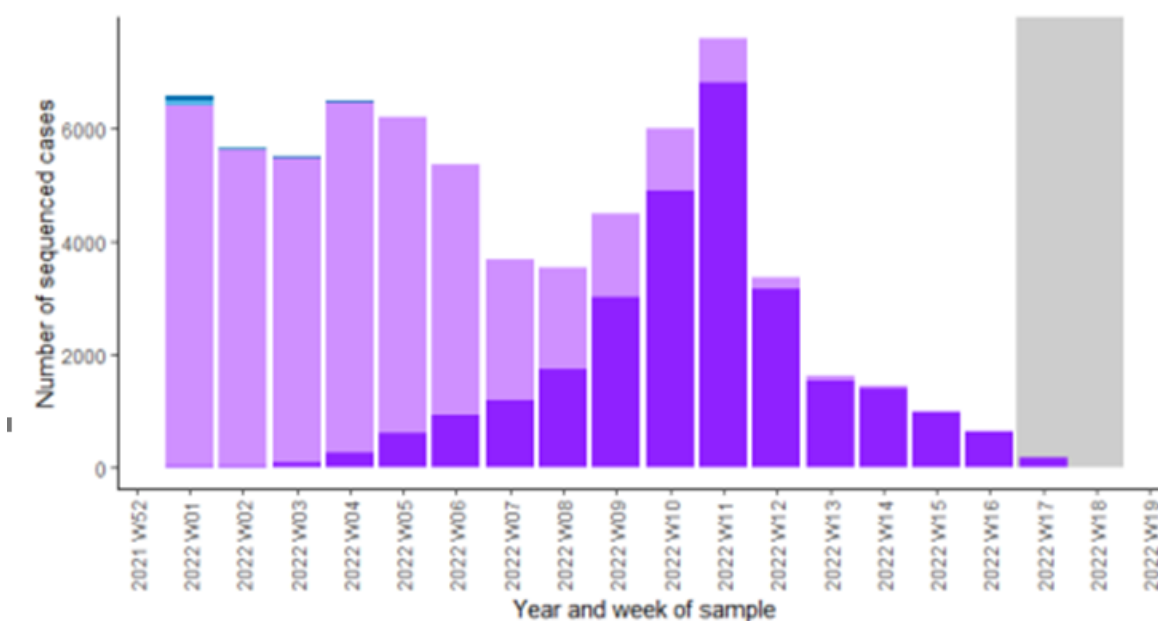
People aged 50 years and over, those in care homes, frontline health and social care workers, those aged 16 years and over with a weakened immune system and adult household contacts of immunosuppressed individuals were eligible to receive an Autumn 2021 booster. As at 14 May 2022, 72% of people aged 12 and over had received their Autumn 2021 booster, the third vaccine dose for most.¹

People aged 75 years and over, those in care homes and those aged 12 years and over with a weakened immune system are additionally being offered a Spring 2022 booster. As at 14 May 2022, 8% of people aged 12 and over had received their Spring 2022 booster.

In the week beginning 2 May 2022, the ONS COVID-19 Infection Survey estimated that 98.9% of the community population aged 16 and over in Wales had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2 above a [threshold](#) of 179 nanograms per millilitre (ng/ml).

¹Severely immunosuppressed individuals are eligible to receive an additional third vaccine dose as part of their primary vaccination course. For these individuals, the Autumn 2021 booster could hence be their fourth dose.

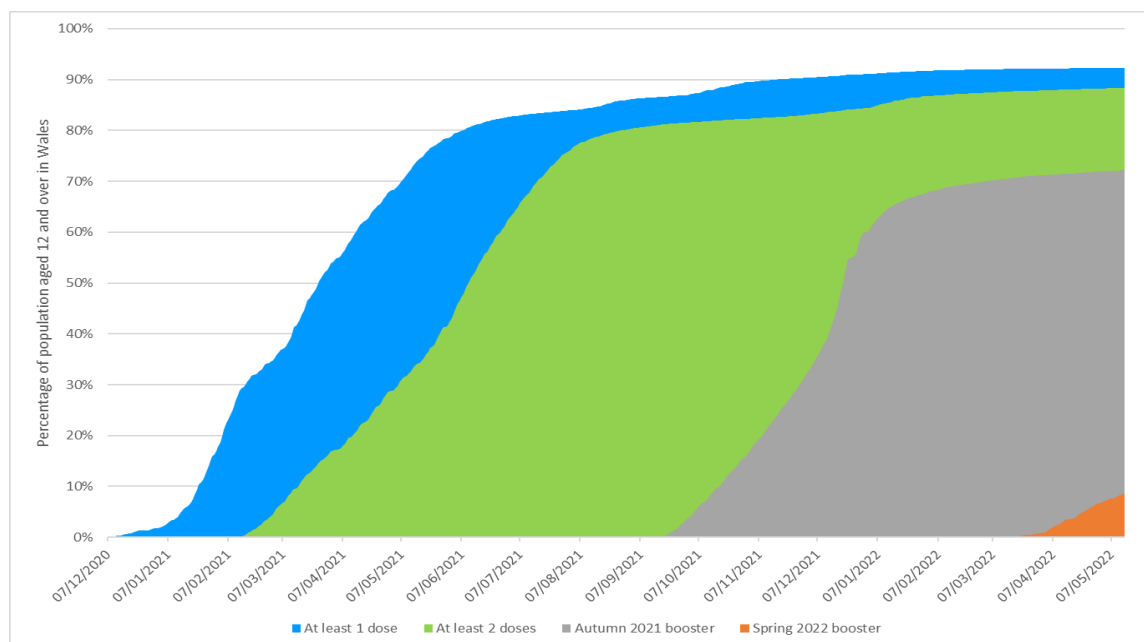
Figure 15: PHW, Epicurve of variant cases in recent weeks in Wales, data as at 5 April





Please note data in the grey shaded region should be interpreted with caution as this is indicative of a lag in sequencing data.

Figure 16: Vaccination status of individuals aged 12+



Forward Projections

*These Medium Term Projections (MTPs) are based on current trends and represent a scenario in which the trajectory of the epidemic continues to follow the trends that were seen in the data available to 22nd April. **They are not forecasts or predictions.***

Swansea University Medium Term Projections – 13 May 2022

Hospital bed occupancy is at similar levels to that in January 2022 and has been declining since mid-April 2022. The most recent MTPs from Swansea University suggest that we have passed the peak of healthcare pressures and project a decline in hospital bed occupancy and ICU occupancy over the next several weeks.

Current pressures in ICU and deaths are much lower than at the peak of previous waves. Deaths have decreased slightly in the latest week and are projected to remain at low levels and decline slightly in May.

These scenarios are recalibrated every week depending on what has happened the week before

UKHSA Combined Model Projections – 10 May 2022

UKHSA's consensus view is that the number of hospitalisations per day in Wales will decrease over the next three weeks.

UKHSA's models project the number of deaths in Wales will remain low over the next three weeks. The number of deaths in Wales is currently too small for projections to be reliable.

Figure 17: SPI-M, New hospital admissions per day, based on trends to 14 March 2022

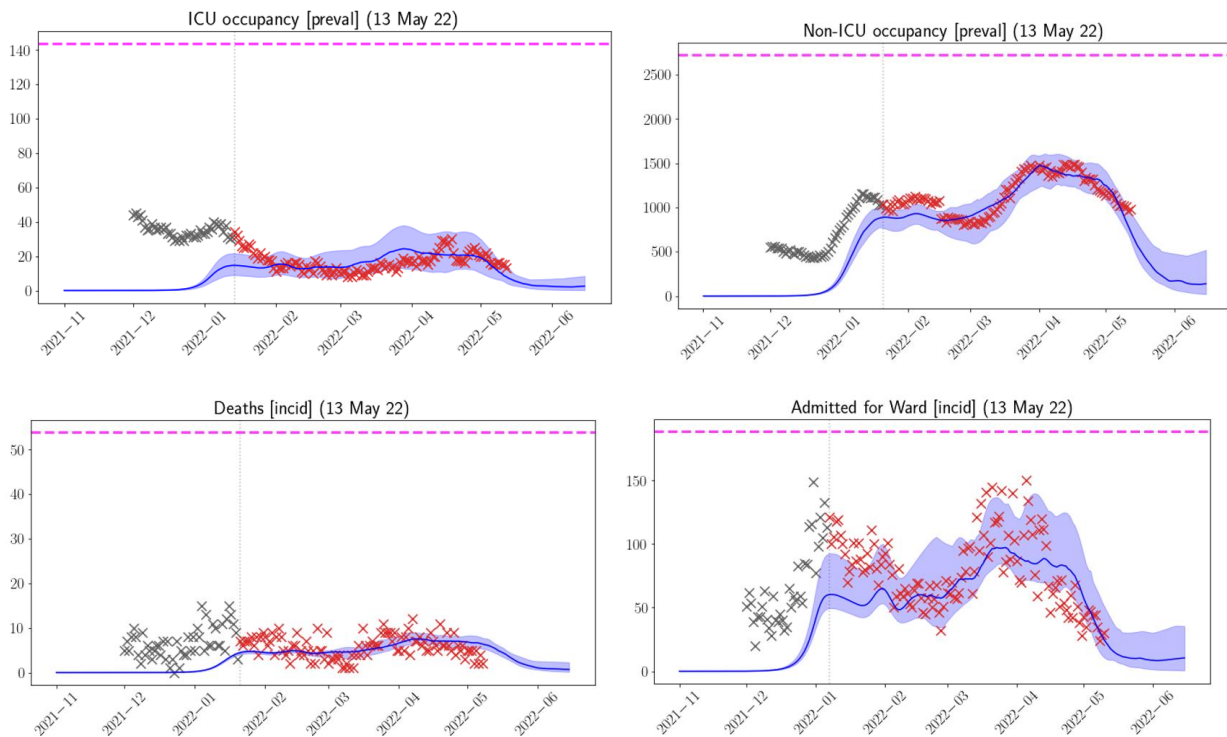


Figure 18: UKHSA, New hospital admissions per day, based on trends to 10 May 2022

Wales

