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# Weekly Acute Respiratory Infection Report

Public Health Wales

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Report week: 03 (ending 18 January 2026)

## Headline

- Influenza activity is returning to low levels. Confirmed case numbers have decreased in the current week, as has test positivity. GP consultations for influenza-like illness decreased to baseline levels.
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is decreasing and is at medium intensity levels
- COVID-19 case numbers have remained broadly stable in recent weeks.
- GP consultations for acute respiratory infections decreased compared to the previous week.
- According to EuroMoMo method, 'no excess' of all-cause mortality has been reported in the most recent week.

## Foreword

This report replaces the previously separate weekly reports on COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory infections. It is published on a weekly basis between week 40 (October) and 20 (May) of the following year, and on a fortnightly basis during the summer period.

This report summarises the latest available information from several Public Health Wales surveillance schemes, reports on Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) and information from other sources.

Additional information is available from the links below.

- [Weekly ARI Hospital Admissions Dashboard](#)
- [EuroMOMO European mortality monitoring](#)
- [Public Health Wales Respiratory Infection Mortality updates](#)
- [COVID-19 variant summary](#)

The structure of this report is based on the surveillance pyramid (from mild to severe infection outcomes), illustrated below. Icons alongside chapter headings indicate the types of information included in the chapter.



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## High Level Summary Points

	Community infection indicators	Severe infection indicators
<b>Overall Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI)</b>	Consultations with Sentinel GPs for acute respiratory infection (ARI) decreased compared to last week.	Admissions in patients testing positive for influenza, COVID-19 or RSV decreased during week ending 18/01/2026 (2% of total admissions).
<b>Influenza</b>	<p><b>Overall, influenza activity is returning to low intensity levels.</b></p> <p>The overall proportion of samples testing positive in hospital and non-sentinel patients decreased in the most recent week to 8%.</p> <p>Consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI) with sentinel GPs decreased and are now at <b>baseline</b> intensity. Nine cases of influenza were confirmed from symptomatic sentinel GP network patients across Wales last week.</p>	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired influenza admitted to hospital decreased to 72.</p> <p>There were 220 in-patient cases of confirmed influenza, nine of whom were in critical care.</p>
<b>Influenza type breakdown</b>	<p><b>Since 2025 Week 40:</b> 4,362 total influenza cases confirmed (1,473 influenza A(H3N2), 93 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 2,772 influenza A untyped and 24 influenza B).</p> <p><b>In the most recent week:</b> 30 influenza A(H3), five influenza A(H1N1), 124 influenza A untyped and two influenza B.</p>	
<b>COVID-19</b>	<p>The overall proportion of samples testing positive remained stable at 3.8 % in hospital and non-sentinel GP practices.</p> <p>Consultations with Sentinel GPs and Pharmacies for COVID-19 decreased in recent weeks.</p>	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired COVID-19 admitted to hospital remained stable at 14.</p> <p>There were 86 in-patient cases of confirmed COVID-19, five of whom were in critical care.</p>
<b>RSV</b>	RSV incidence per 100,000 in children aged up to 5y decreased to 22.7 and is now at medium intensity levels.	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired RSV admitted to hospital decreased to 86.</p> <p>There were 168 in-patient cases of confirmed RSV, and five in critical care.</p>
<b>Other respiratory pathogens</b>	Rhinovirus remains the most frequently detected other cause of ARI, followed by Human metapneumovirus and parainfluenza.	



## 1. Community surveillance indicators

### GP Consultations

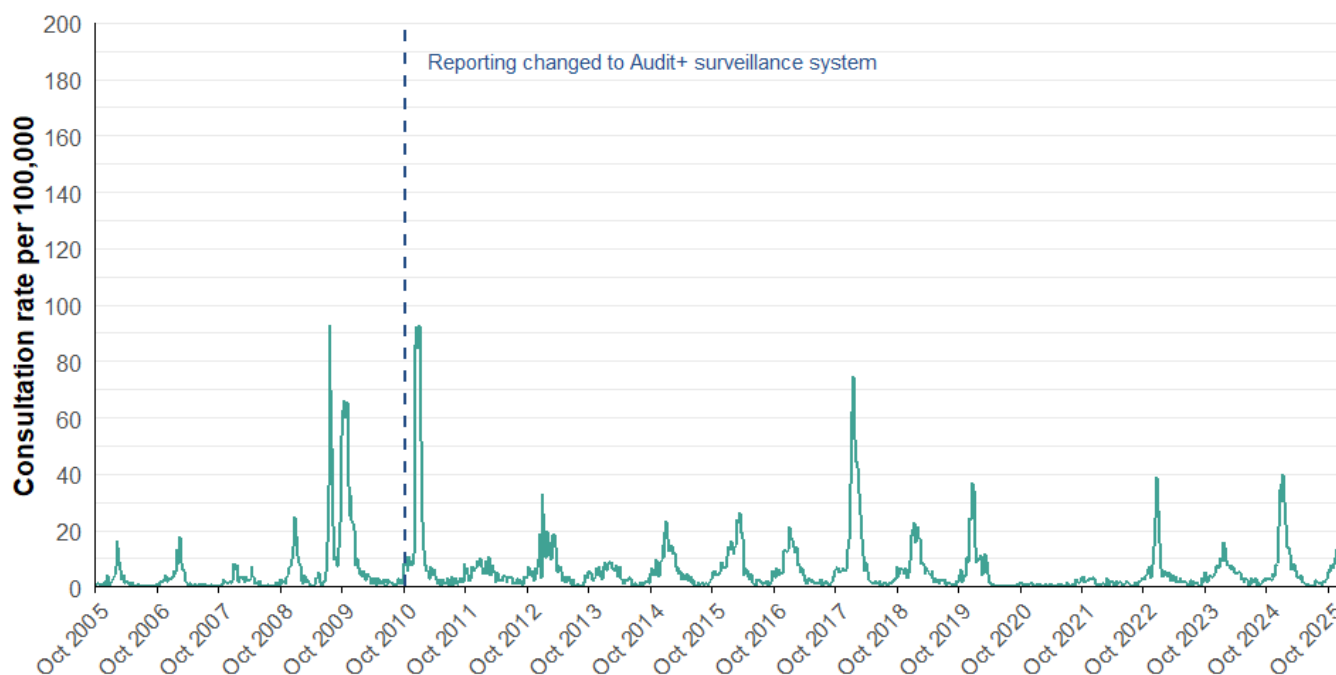
- The sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) is at baseline and the three-week trend is decreasing (Figures 1.1, 1.2).
- There were 2.9 ILI consultations per 100,000 practice population in the most recent week, a decrease compared to the previous week (10.6 consultations per 100,000).
- In the most recent week, using all available data from general practices, there were 9.3 ARI consultations per 100,000 practice population, a decrease from 14.0 in the previous week (Table 1.2). The highest rates were found in people aged under 1 year (210.1) followed by people aged 1 to 4 (111.7) and people aged 75+ (68.1) (Figure 1.4).
- Surveillance indicators for acute respiratory infections in GP consultation data in Wales are decreasing in people aged under 5 years (Figure 1.4).

### Ambulance Calls

- The number of ambulance calls recorded referring to syndromic indicators decreased from 2,047 in the previous week to 1,939 in the latest reporting week (Figure 1.5, Table 1.3).
- Calls for cardiac or respiratory arrest, chest pain, difficulty breathing were stable or decreased compared to the previous week (Figure 1.5, Table 1.3).

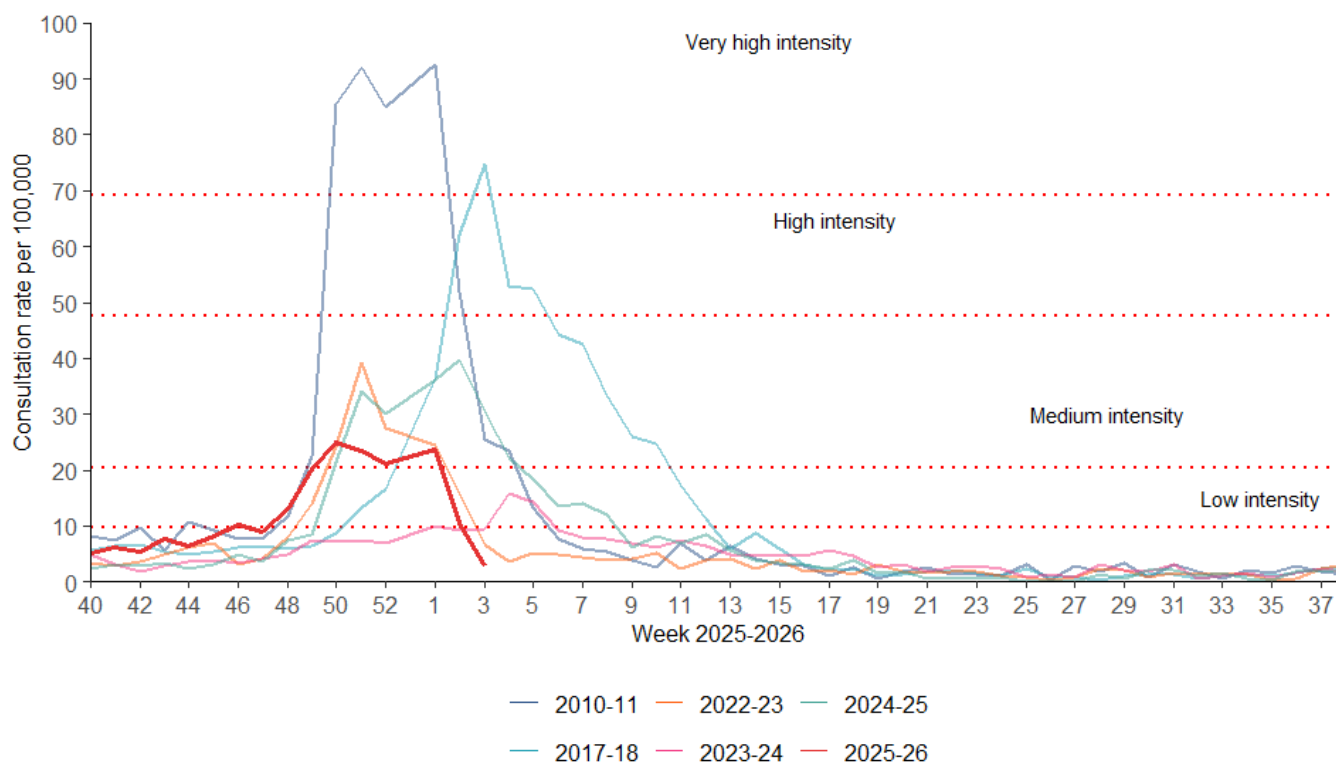
### GP consultations – Sentinel Network

**Figure 1.1.** Sentinel GP network clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population (Week 40, 2004 - Week 3, 2026).



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

**Figure 1.2.** Sentinel GP network clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population.



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

## GP Consultations - All Wales

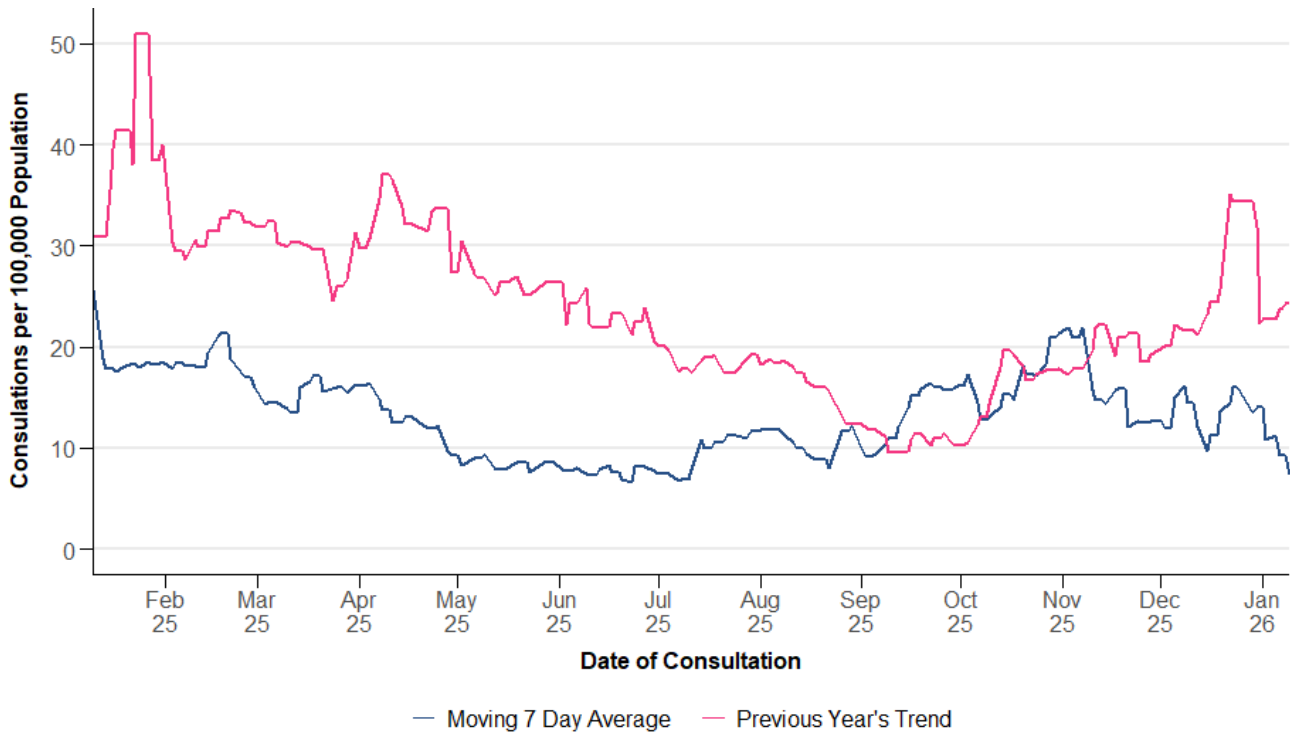
**Table 1.2.** Summary of GP consultations per 100,000 practice population in Wales, by indicator, for Week 3, 2026. This table uses all available GP surveillance data (from sentinel and non-sentinel practices).

Indicator	Current Reporting Week	Preceding Week	Equivalent Period Last Year
ARI	9.34	13.98	26.79
COVID-19	0.01	0.04	2.83
LRTI	4.52	6.55	9.96
Pneumonia	0.02	0.02	0.03
Severe asthma	0.39	0.40	0.90
URTI	4.82	7.46	16.86
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.10</b>	<b>28.45</b>	<b>57.37</b>

NB: "Current reporting week" refers to the average daily rate in the current reporting week. "Preceding week" refers to the average daily rate in the preceding week. "Equivalent period last year" refers to the average daily rate in the equivalent period last year.

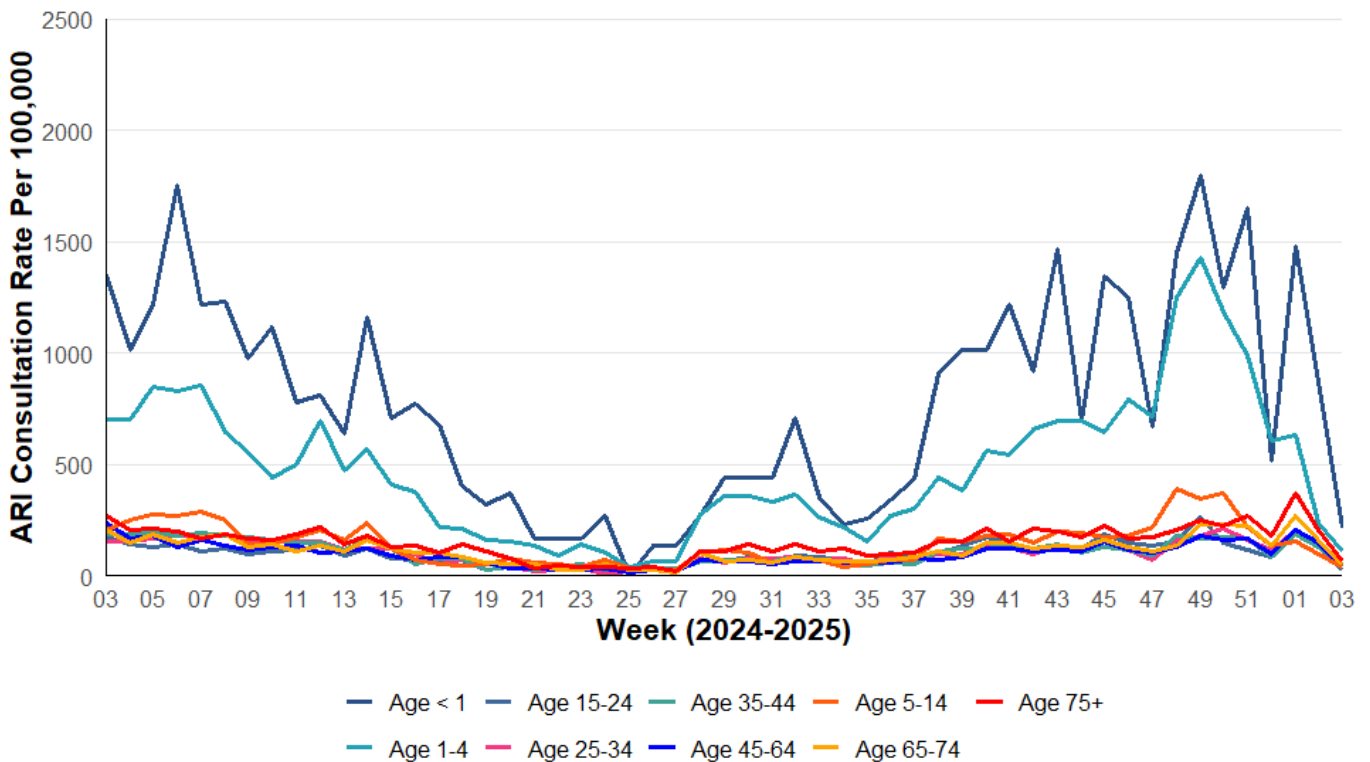


**Figure 1.3.** All Wales GP consultation rates per 100,000 practice population for Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI).



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

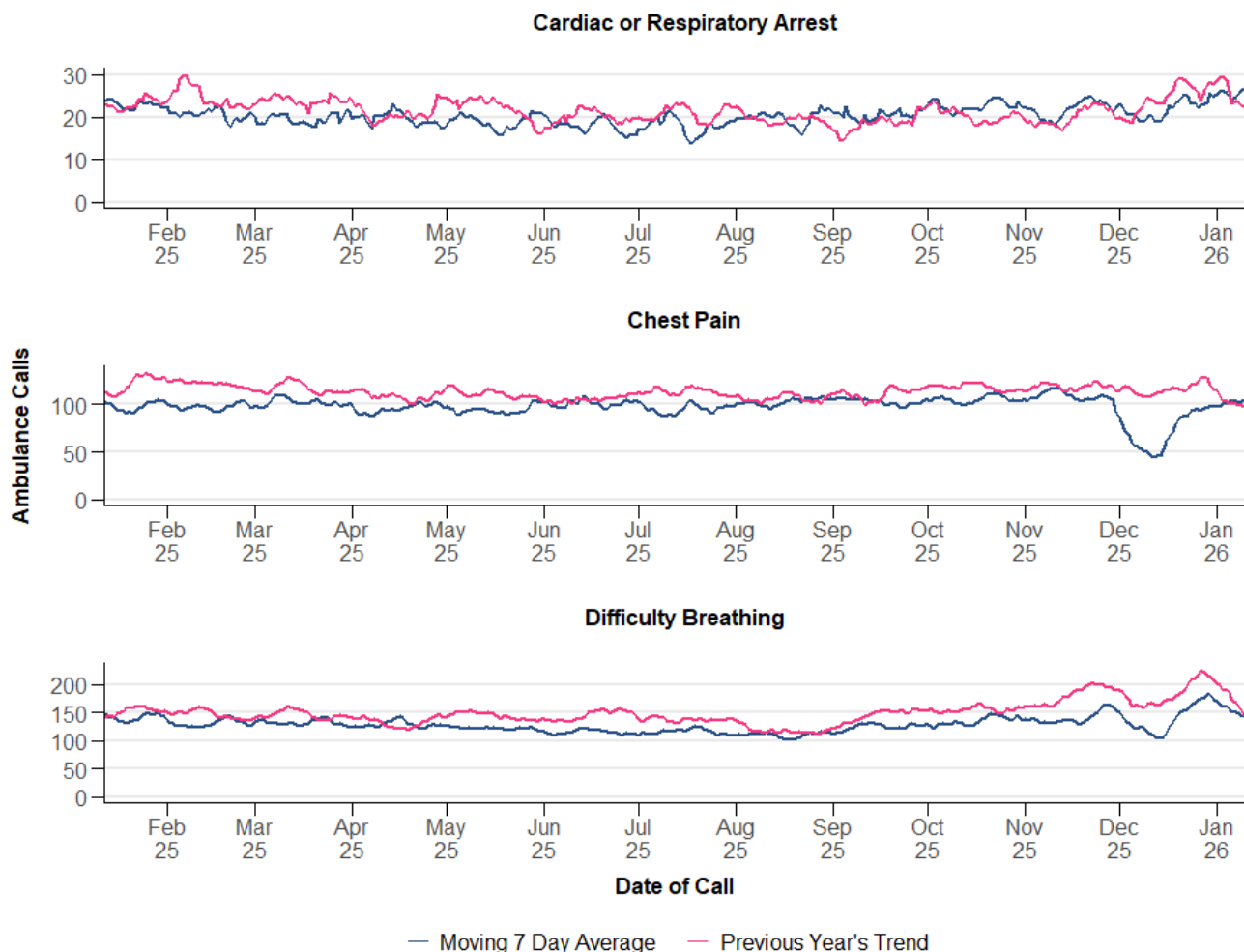
**Figure 1.4.** All Wales clinical consultation rates for Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) per 100,000 practice population, by age bands.



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

## Ambulance Calls

**Figure 1.5.** Rolling seven-day average for ambulance calls for both current and the previous year, by symptom. This summary analysis uses data provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

**Table 1.3.** Summary of weekly number of Ambulance calls, by symptom in Wales, for Week 2, 2026. This summary analysis uses data provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Indicator	Current Reporting Week	Preceding Week	Equivalent Period Last Year
Cardiac or Respiratory Arrest	179	177	199
Chest Pain	718	682	796
Difficulty Breathing	1,042	1,188	1,420
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,939</b>	<b>2,047</b>	<b>2,415</b>

NB: "Current reporting week" refers to the total number of calls in the current reporting week. "Preceding week" refers to the total number of calls in the preceding week. "Equivalent period last year" refers to the total number of calls in the equivalent period last year.



## 2. Virological Surveillance

### Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Community Pharmacy Network

- There were 154 surveillance samples from patients with ILI symptoms collected by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies during Week 3, 2026, as at 21/01/2026 (Table 2.1, Figure 2.1).
- The most commonly detected pathogens were RSV (19) followed by rhinovirus (13) and parainfluenza (10). Of the 154 tests, 55.2% were negative for all respiratory pathogens (Table 2.1, Figure 2.1).

### All Wales Datastore Respiratory Infection Testing

- There were 1,299 samples receiving multiplex respiratory panel testing, collected from patients attending hospitals and non-sentinel GPs during Week 3 (Table 2.2, Figure 2.2).
- The most commonly detected pathogens were RSV (120) followed by rhinovirus (112) and influenza A (102). Of the 1299 tests, 62.0% were negative for all respiratory pathogens (Table 2.2, Figure 2.2).

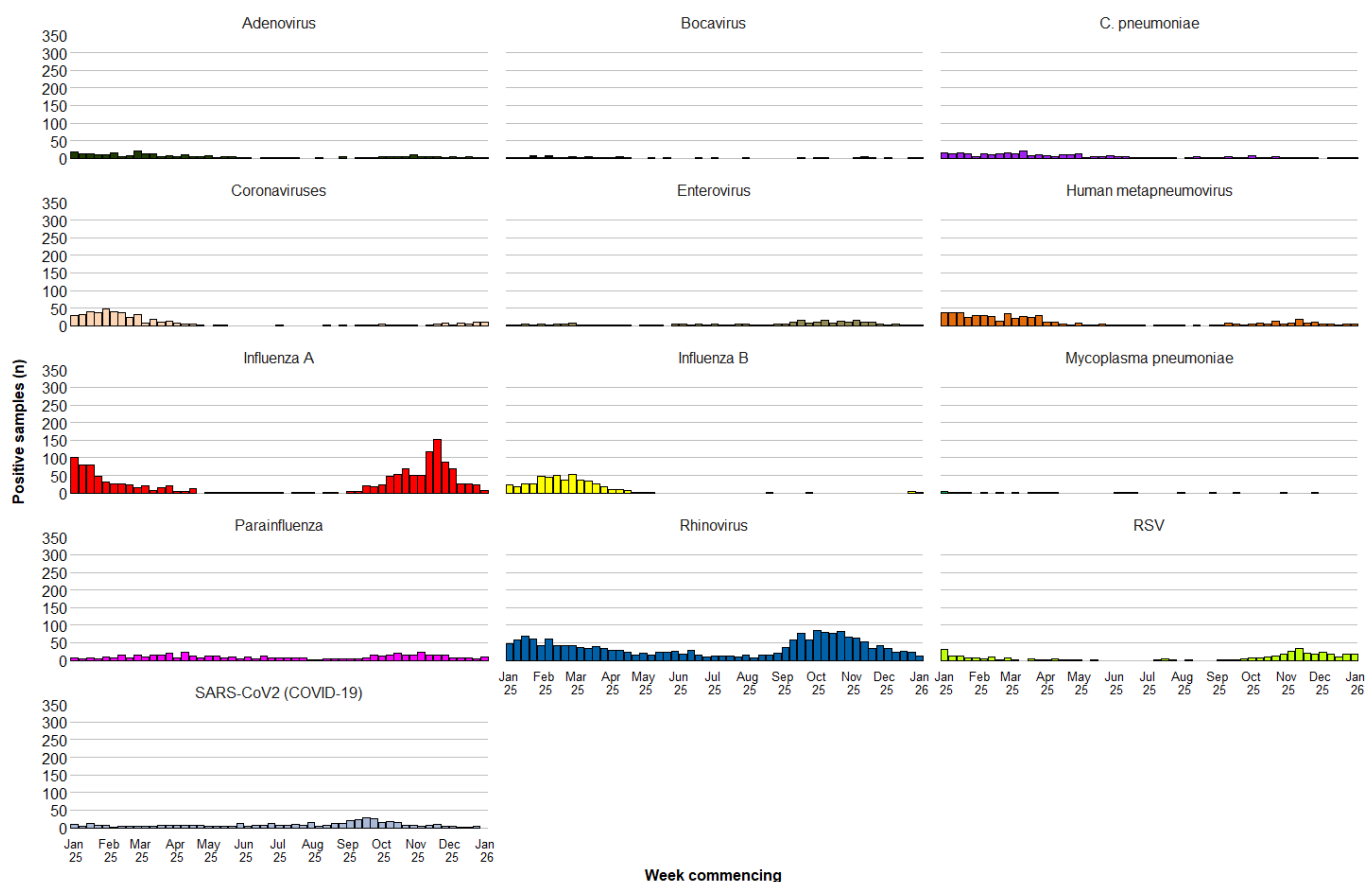
Additionally, during Week 3, 458 samples from patients were tested for influenza, RSV and SARS-CoV-2 only (Figure 2.3). Of these the following tested positive:

- 49 for influenza (49 for influenza A, zero for influenza B)
- 13 for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
- 39 for RSV

**Table 2.1:** Pathogens detected, and sample positivity for samples from symptomatic patients from the Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Pharmacy networks, Week 3, 2026.

Pathogens Detected	Count (n)	Positivity (current week)	Positivity (previous week)	Trend
RSV	19	12.3%	10.6%	Increasing
Rhinovirus	13	8.4%	14.4%	Decreasing
Parainfluenza	10	6.5%	2.5%	Increasing
Coronaviruses	10	6.5%	5.6%	Stable
Influenza A	8	5.2%	14.4%	Decreasing
Human metapneumovirus	6	3.9%	3.8%	Stable
C. pneumoniae	2	1.3%	0.6%	Stable
Influenza B	1	0.6%	3.1%	Decreasing
Adenovirus	1	0.6%	0.6%	Stable
Enterovirus	1	0.6%	1.2%	Stable
Bocavirus	1	0.6%	0.6%	Stable
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	0	0.0%	0.0%	Stable
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	0	0.0%	2.5%	Decreasing

**Figure 2.1.** Pathogens detected in samples from symptomatic patients from the Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Pharmacy networks, by week of sample collection, Week 3, 2025 to Week 3, 2026.



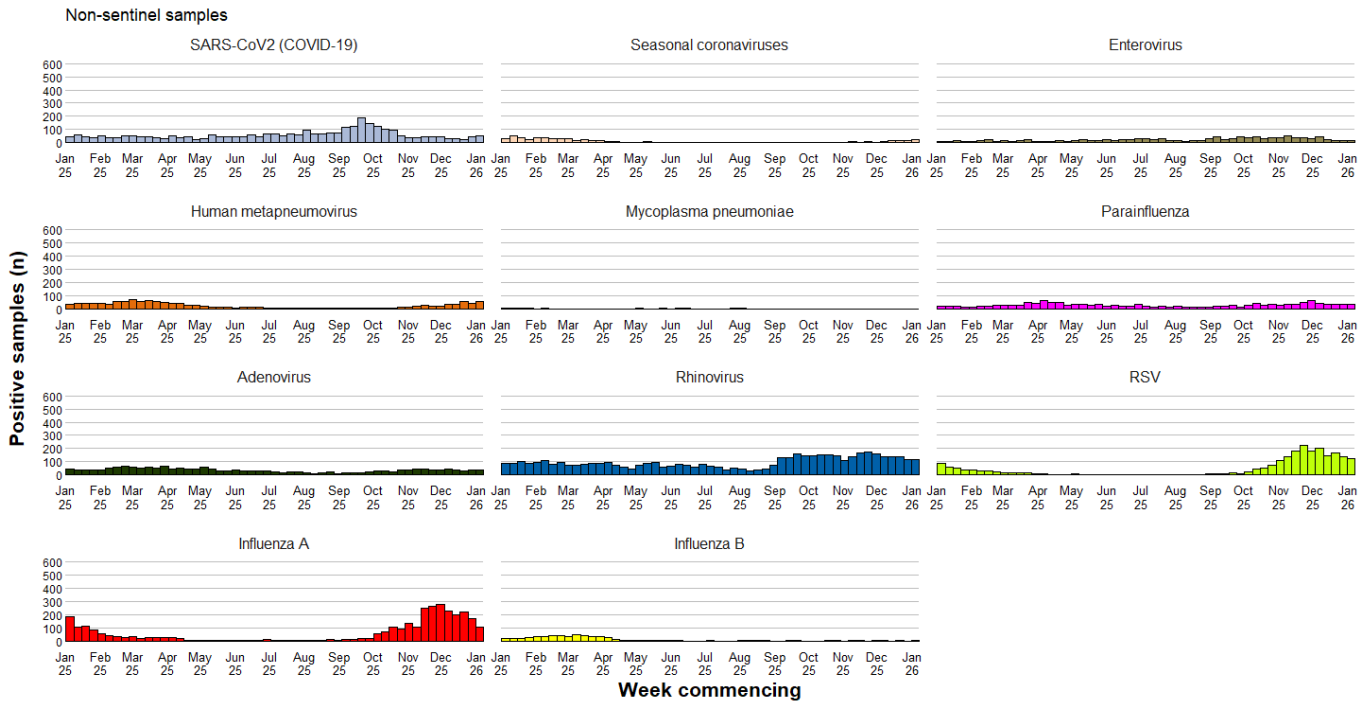
Data correct as of 21/01/2026

## All Wales Datastore Respiratory Infection Testing

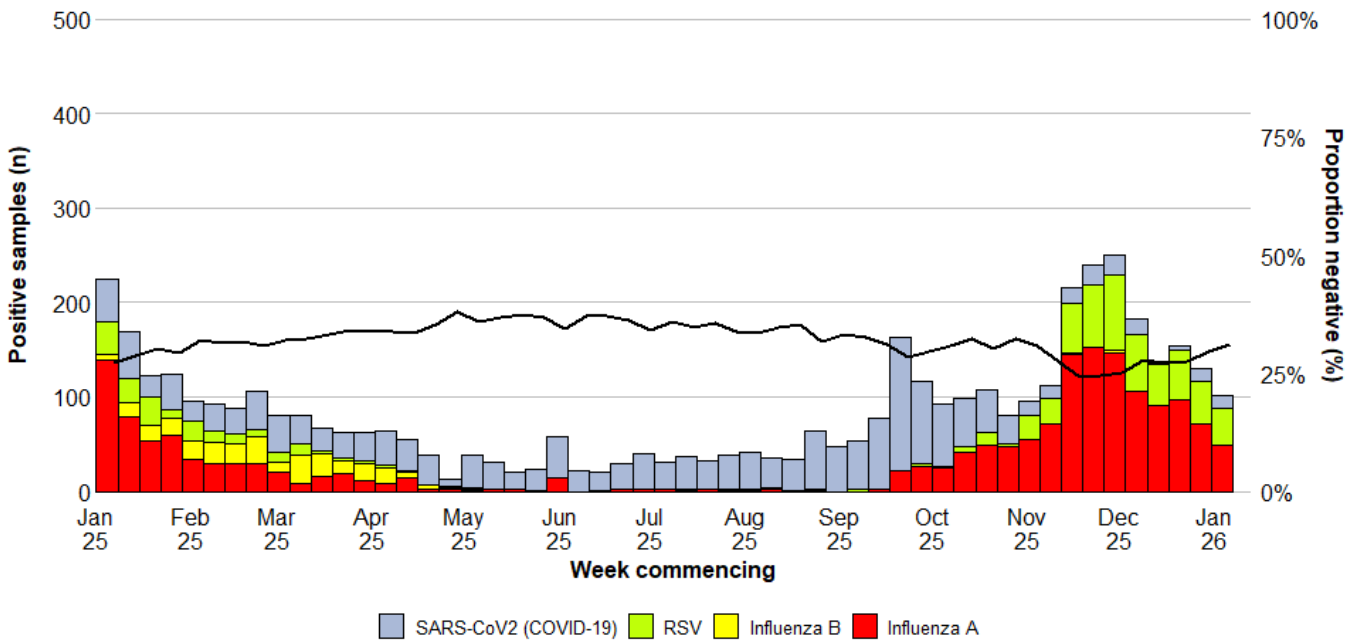
**Table 2.2:** Pathogens detected and sample positivity for samples collected from hospital and non-Sentinel GP patients, Week 3, 2026.

Pathogens Detected	Count (n)	Positivity (current week)	Positivity (previous week)	Trend
RSV	120	9.2%	10.2%	Stable
Rhinovirus	112	8.6%	8.8%	Stable
Influenza A	102	7.9%	12.5%	Decreasing
Human metapneumovirus	55	4.2%	3.2%	Stable
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	49	3.8%	3.5%	Stable
Adenovirus	34	2.6%	2.5%	Stable
Parainfluenza	32	2.5%	2.3%	Stable
Seasonal coronaviruses	21	1.6%	1.3%	Stable
Enterovirus	16	1.2%	1.1%	Stable
Influenza B	1	0.1%	0.0%	Stable
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	0	0.0%	0.0%	Stable
Bocavirus	0	0.0%	0.0%	Stable
Chlamydia	0	0.0%	0.0%	Stable

**Figure 2.2.** Pathogens detected in samples collected from hospital and non-Sentinel GP patients, by week of sample collection, Week 3, 2025 to Week 3, 2026.



**Figure 2.3.** Samples from hospital patients submitted for RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV2 testing only, by week of sample collection, Week 3, 2025 to Week 3, 2026.





## 3. Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and surveillance in hospitals

### Sentinel SARI in emergency departments

- During the previous four weeks there were 63 surveillance samples taken from SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments. The most common pathogen identified from these samples was RSV(20) followed by Rhinovirus/Enterovirus(15). Of the 63 samples collected, 31.7% were negative for all respiratory pathogens (Table 3.1).
- During this time, the proportions of symptomatic patients attending sentinel emergency departments due to acute respiratory symptoms testing positive were 14% for influenza, 0% for SARS-CoV-2 and 32% for RSV.

### Hospital in-patients

- During week ending 18/01/2026 there were 150 patients admitted to hospital with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, (49 less than the previous week), equating to 2% of all hospital admissions in that reporting week.
- At 23:59 on 18/01/2026, there were 474 patients in hospital with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, 5 less than the previous Sunday. This equates to 3% of all hospital in-patients (IPs) at that time. Of whom 69% (326) were hospital acquired (HA).

### Critical-care

- During week ending 18/01/2026 there were 7 ARI critical care (CC) admissions, (9 less than the previous week), Equating to 4% of all CC admissions in that reporting week.
- At 23:59 on 18/01/2026, there were 19 patients in CC with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, 10 less than the previous Sunday. This equates to 9% of all CC in-patients at that time. Of whom 42% (8) were hospital acquired (HA).

### Virological surveillance in ICU

- During week 3, 2026, 51 respiratory samples were tested from patients in intensive care units (ICU). Of these: two tested positive for RSV, one tested positive for Influenza and one tested positive for SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) (Figure 3.4).

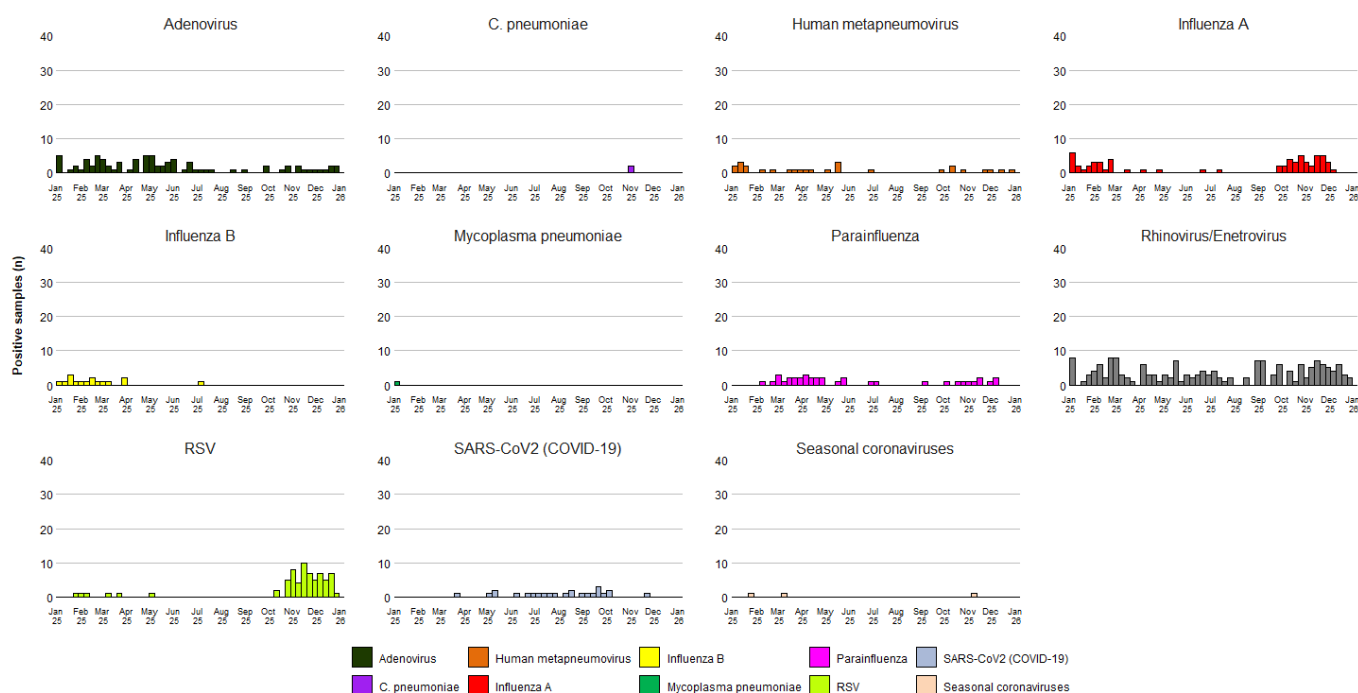
For detailed reports on surveillance of ARI in hospitals, including breakdowns by health board and age-group see: [Hospital admissions dashboard](#)

## Wales Sentinel SARI Emergency Department Network

**Table 3.1** Pathogens detected and sample positivity for samples collected from symptomatic patients presenting at participating SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments, for Week 2, 2026.

Pathogens Detected	Meeting SARI case definition in the last 4 weeks		Meeting SARI case definition in the last 12 months	
	n	%	n	%
Adenovirus	6	9.5%	82	10.0%
C. pneumoniae	0	0.0%	2	0.2%
Human metapneumovirus	2	3.2%	27	3.3%
Influenza A	9	14.3%	74	9.1%
Influenza B	0	0.0%	16	2.0%
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	0	0.0%	1	0.1%
Parainfluenza	2	3.2%	37	4.5%
Pertussis	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
RSV	20	31.7%	67	8.2%
Rhinovirus/Enterovirus	15	23.8%	172	21.1%
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	0	0.0%	24	2.9%
Seasonal coronaviruses	0	0.0%	3	0.4%
Negative	20	31.7%	386	47.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 3.1** Pathogens detected in samples collected from symptomatic patients presenting at participating SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments, for Week 2, 2026 and previous 12 months.



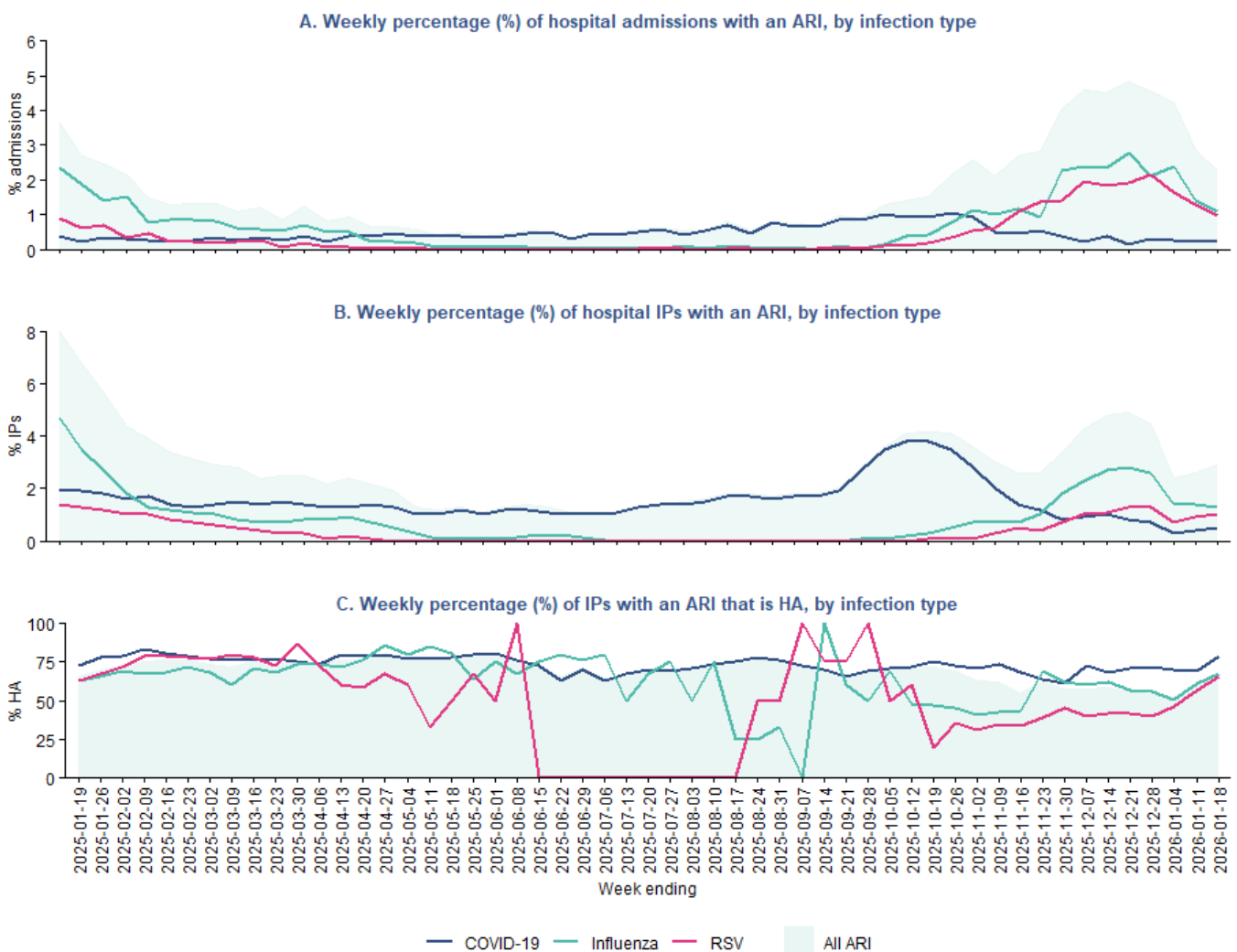
Data correct as of 15/01/2026

## Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance in Hospital In-Patients

**Table 3.2.** Hospital admissions in patients confirmed **with** COVID-19, influenza and RSV (acute respiratory infection may not necessarily be the primary cause of admission).

Infection	Hospital admissions		Hospital In-patients		
	Count	% of all admissions	Count	% of all IPs	% HA (n)
<b>COVID-19</b>	14	<1%	86	0%	79% (68)
<b>Influenza</b>	72	1%	220	1%	67% (147)
<b>RSV</b>	64	1%	168	1%	66% (111)
<b>ARI total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>69% (326)</b>

**Figure 3.2.** (A) Weekly percentage of hospital admissions where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (B) Weekly percentage of total in-patients where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (C) Weekly percentage of total number of in-patients with confirmed COVID-19, influenza or RSV where the infection was healthcare acquired.



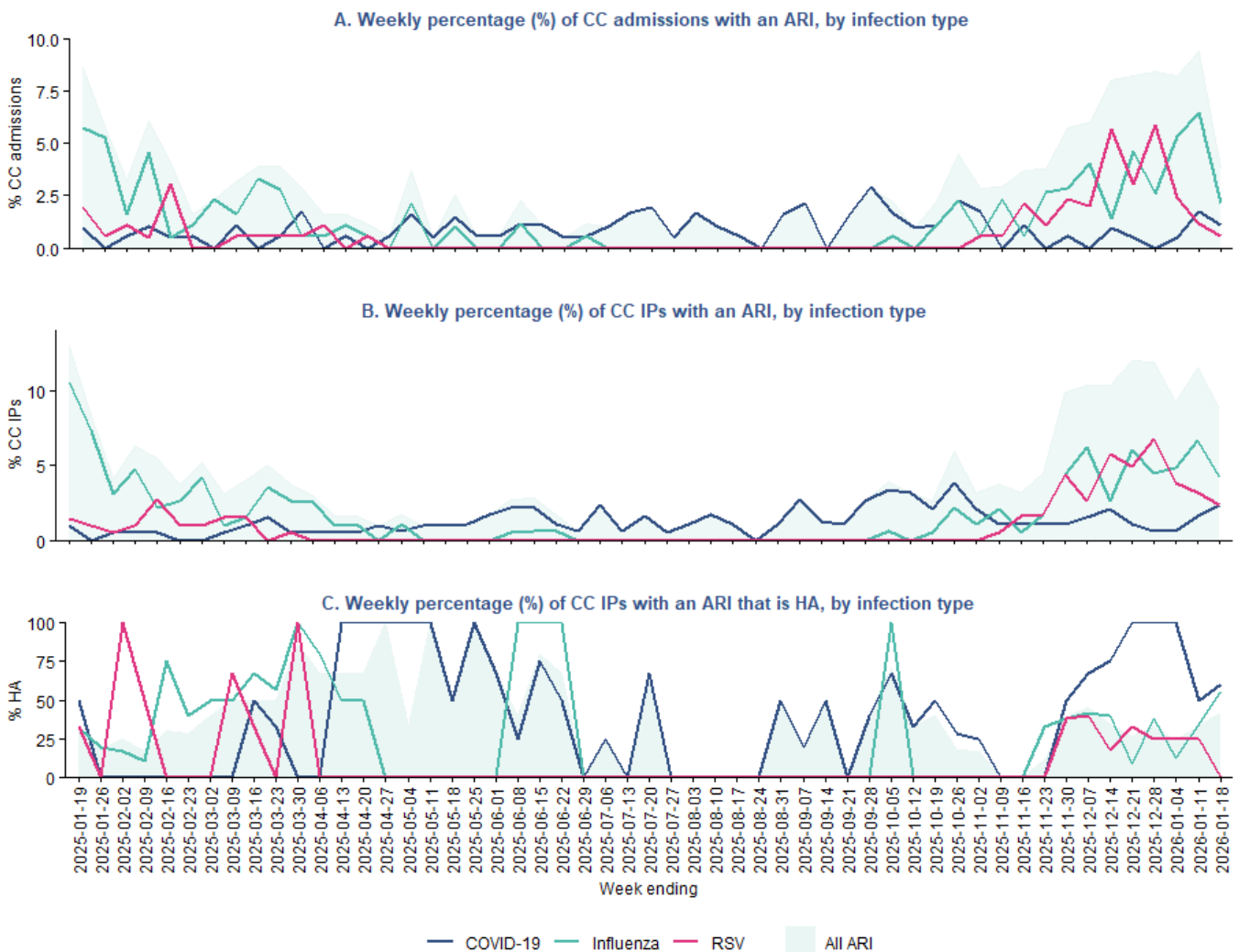
Data as of: 21-01-2026

## Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance in Critical-Care In-Patients

**Table 3.3.** Critical care (CC) admissions in patients confirmed with COVID-19, influenza and RSV (acute respiratory infection may not necessarily be the primary cause of admission).

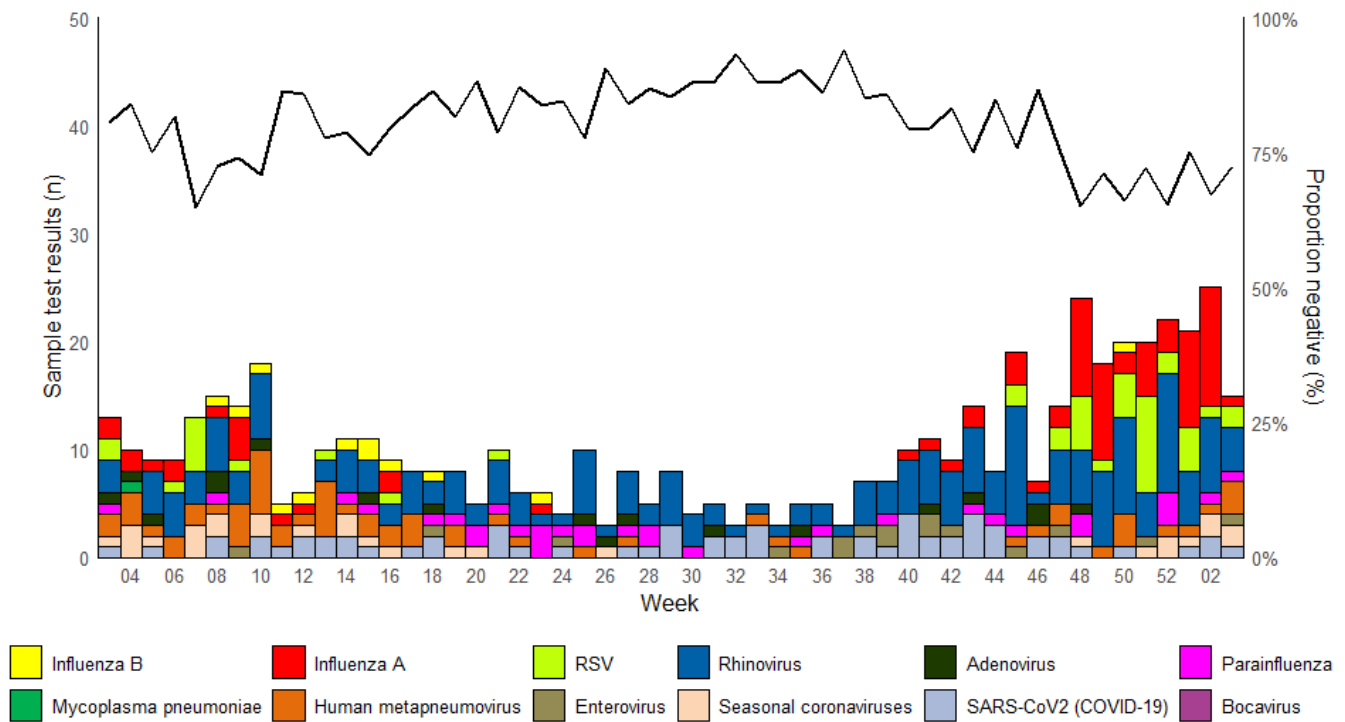
Infection	CC admissions		CC In-patients		
	Count	% of all CC admissions	Count	% of all CC In-patients	% HA (n)
COVID-19	2	1%	5	2%	60% (3)
Influenza	4	2%	9	4%	56% (5)
RSV	1	1%	5	2%	0% (0)
<b>ARI total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>42% (8)</b>

**Figure 3.3.** (A) Weekly percentage of critical-care admissions where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (B) Weekly percentage of total critical-care inpatients where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (C) Weekly percentage of total number of critical-care inpatients with confirmed COVID-19, influenza or RSV where the infection was healthcare acquired.



Data as of: 21-01-2026

**Figure 3.4.** Samples submitted for virological testing from ICU patients, by week of sample collection, Week 3, 2025 to Week 3, 2026. The black line indicates the percentage of samples which tested negative for any of the pathogens listed.

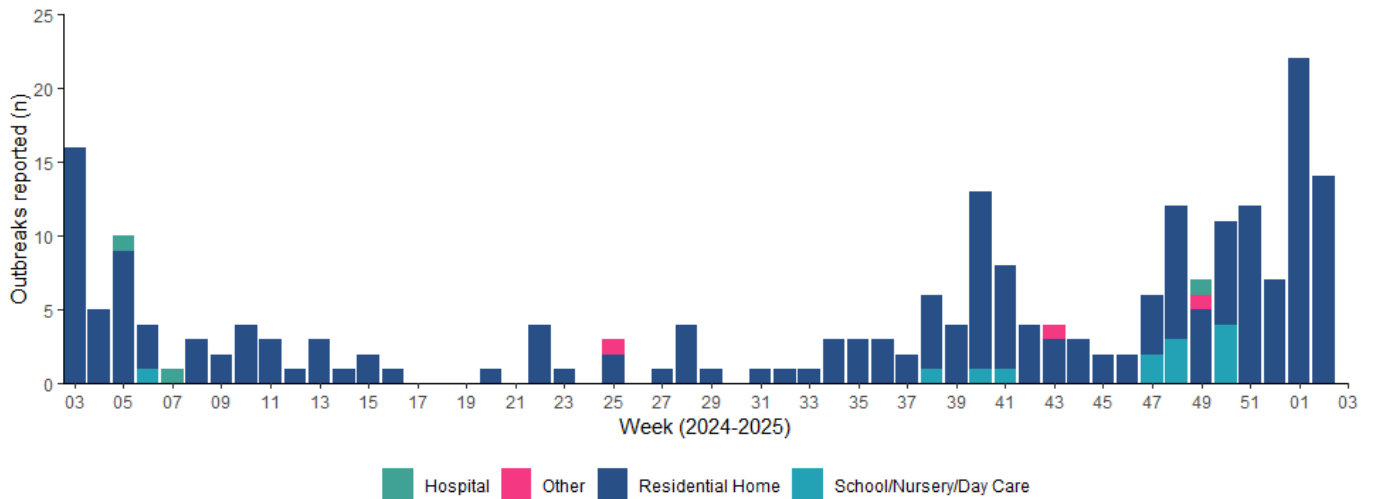


## 4. Settings-based surveillance and outbreaks

### Acute Respiratory Infection Outbreaks Reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team

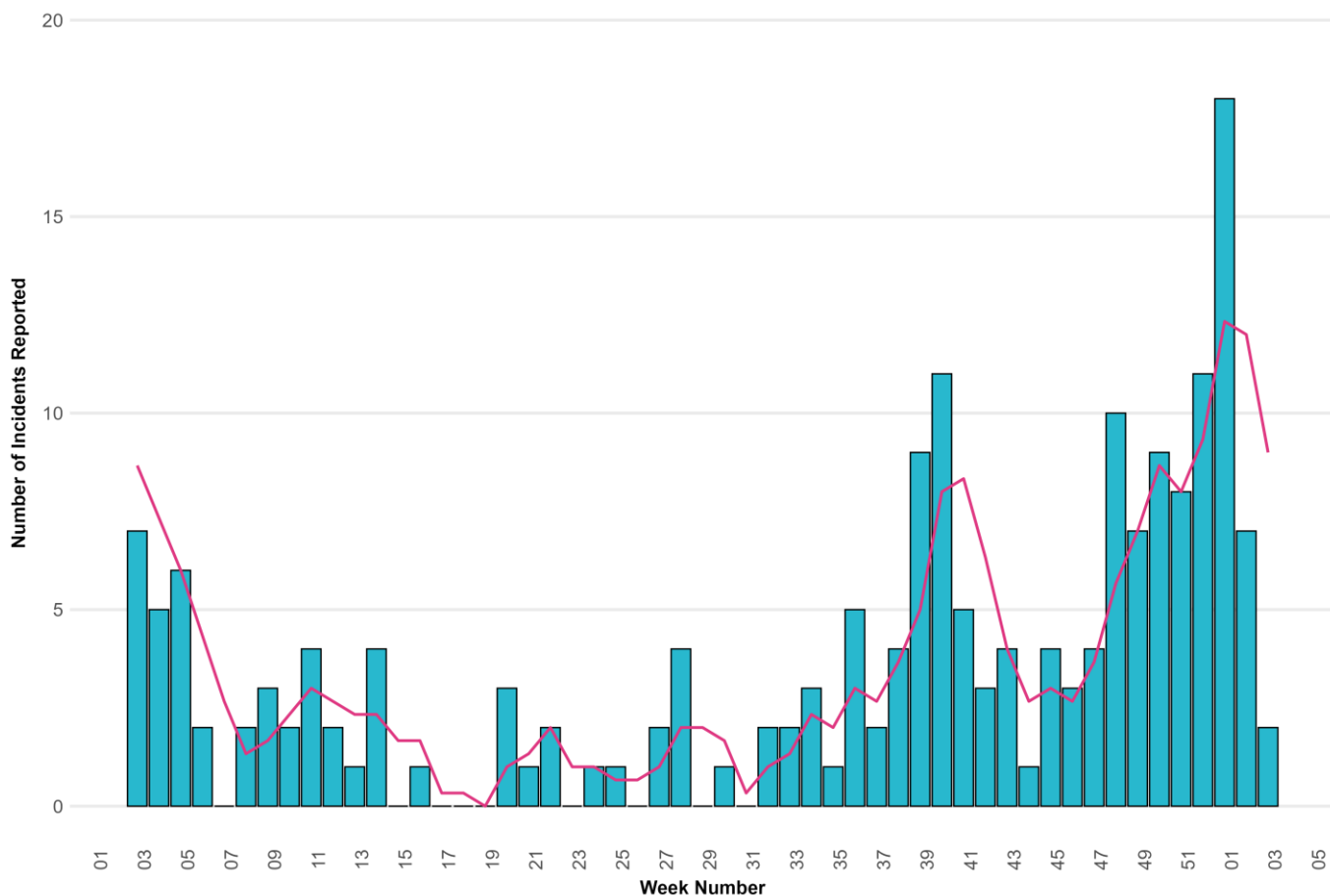
During Week 3, 2026, 0 ARI outbreaks were reported to the Public Health Wales Health Protection Team.

**Figure 4.1.** ARI outbreaks and incidents reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team, by setting and week of report. Completeness of reporting for outbreaks and incidents from schools/nurseries and other community settings is unknown.



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

**Figure 4.2.** ARI outbreaks and incidents reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team, from residential care home settings, by week of onset of first case. The three-week rolling average is shown in pink.



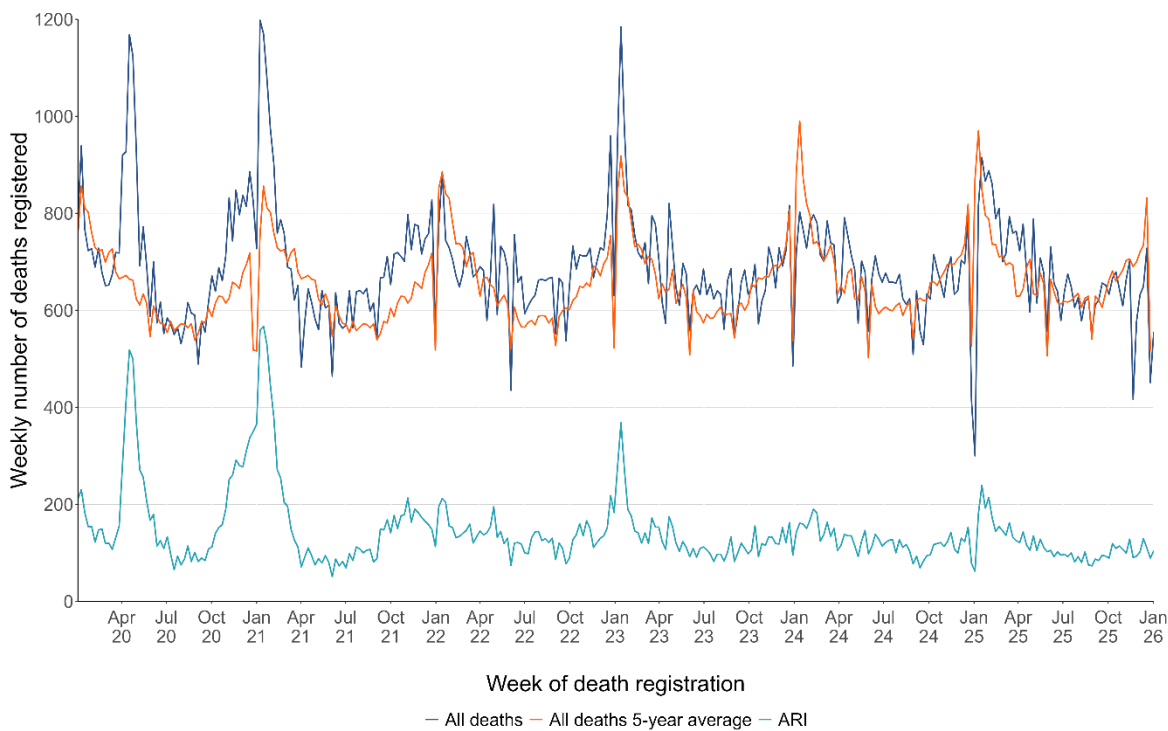
Data as at 2026-01-19



## 5. Mortality surveillance

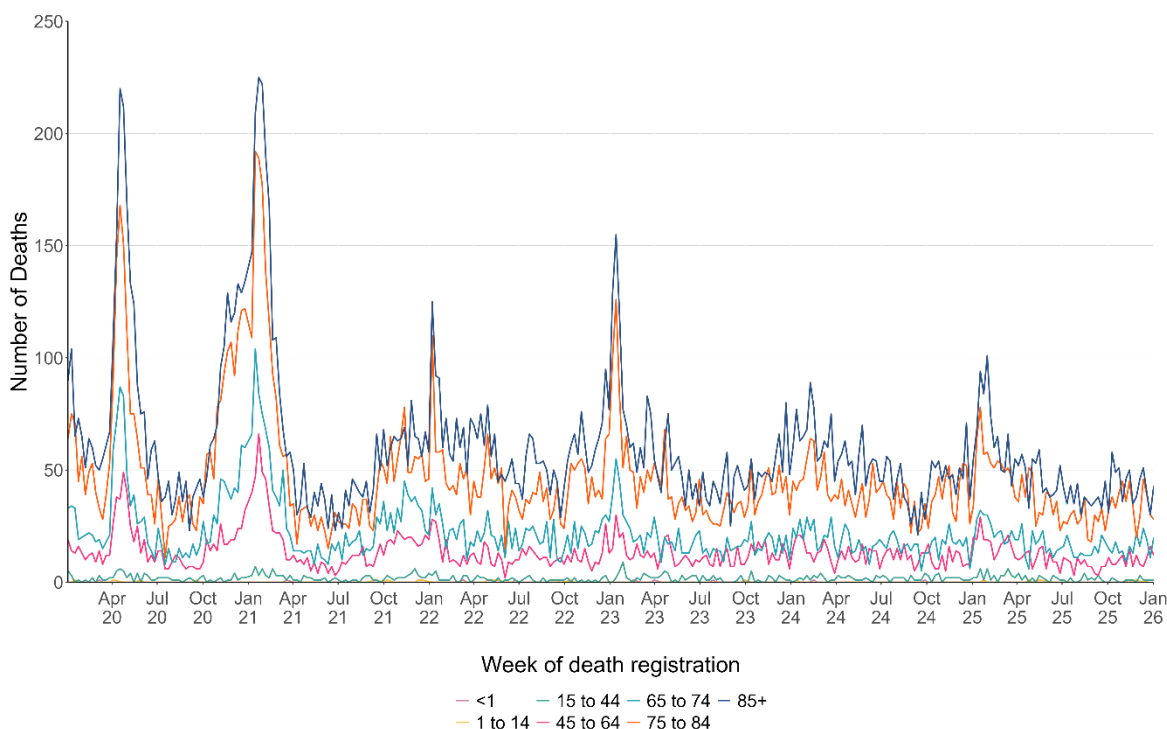
- According to European Mortality Monitoring (EuroMoMo) methods, no excess has been reported in the weekly number of deaths from all causes in Wales.
- Breakdowns of all-cause and ARI specific mortality, according to data from deaths registrations provided by the Office for National Statistics are summarised by week, age-group, setting of death and deprivation quintile of residence in Figures 5.2 to 5.4. Data for the most recent weeks in these summaries should be interpreted with caution due to potential reporting delays.
- Deaths relating to ARI have been defined using the following ICD10 codes: (J09-J22, J80, U07.1, U07.2 and J04)

**Figure 5.1.** Number of deaths registered (any cause), 5-year average (any cause) and deaths relating to ARI, by week of death registration.



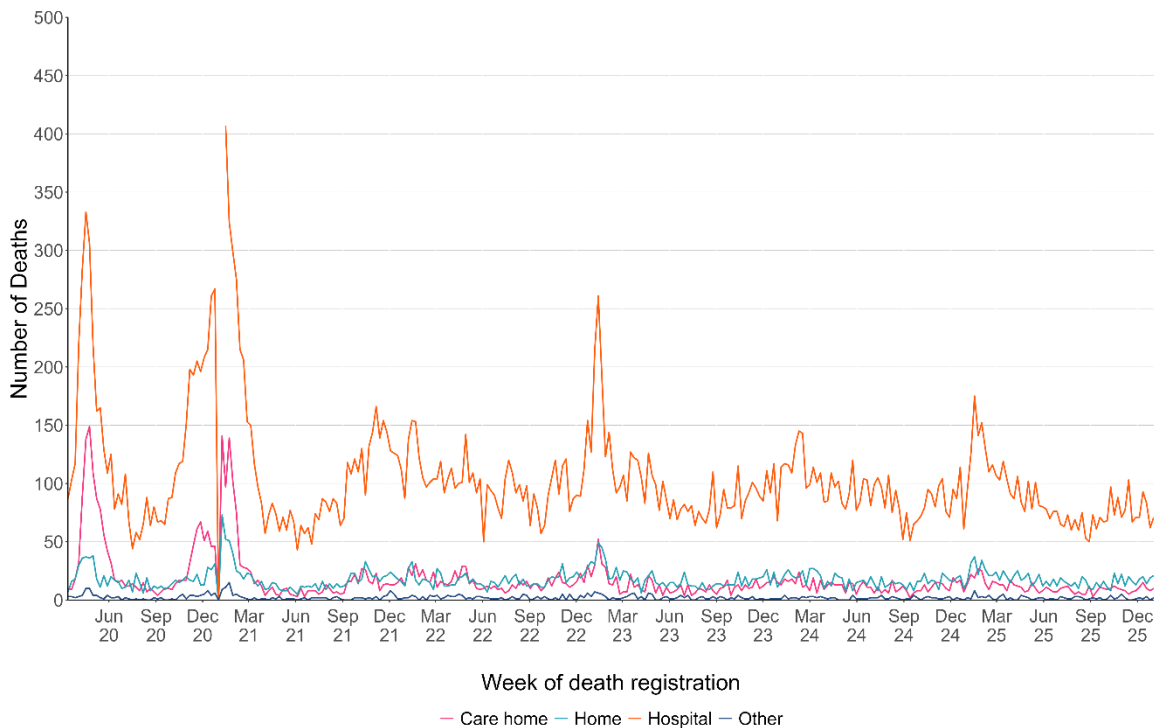
Data as of 21/01/2026

**Figure 5.2** Numbers of ARI related deaths by age-group and week of death registration.



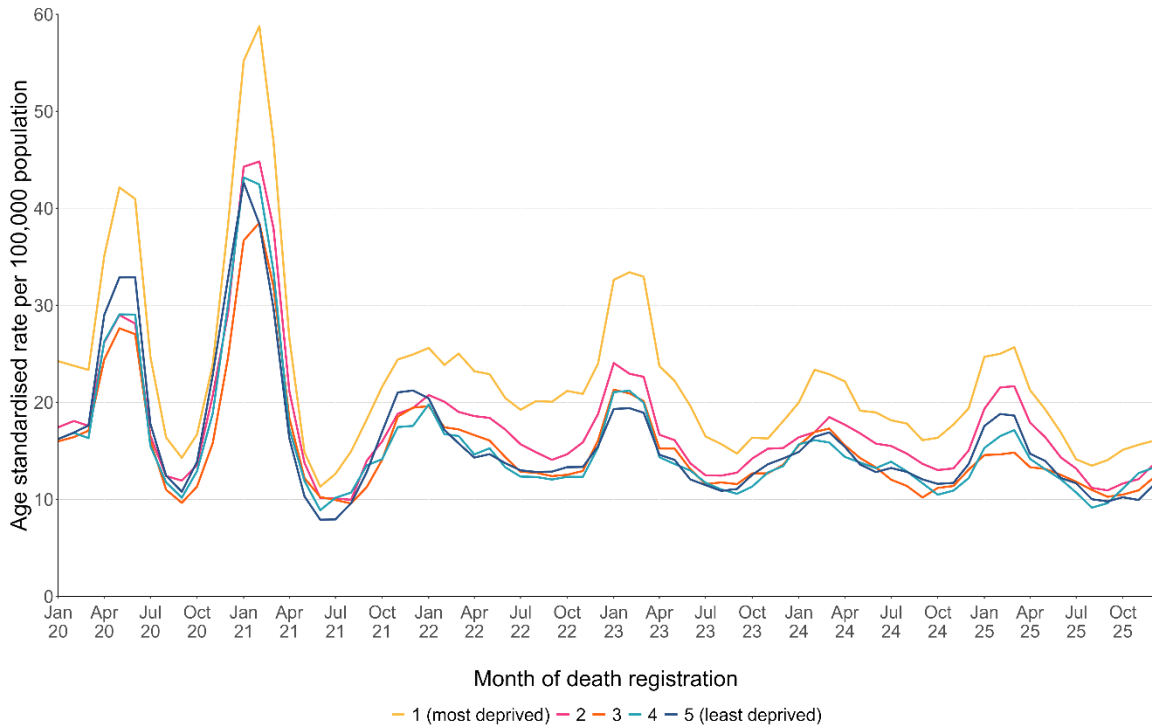
Data as of 21/01/2026

**Figure 5.3.** Numbers of deaths due to ARI, by place of death and week of death registration.



Data as of 21/01/2026

**Figure 5.4.** Numbers of ARI deaths, by quintile of deprivation of area of residence (based on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings of Lower Super Output Areas) and week of death registration.



Data as of 21/01/2026

For interactive versions of these data, including health board specific breakdowns, see: [ONS mortality dashboard](#)

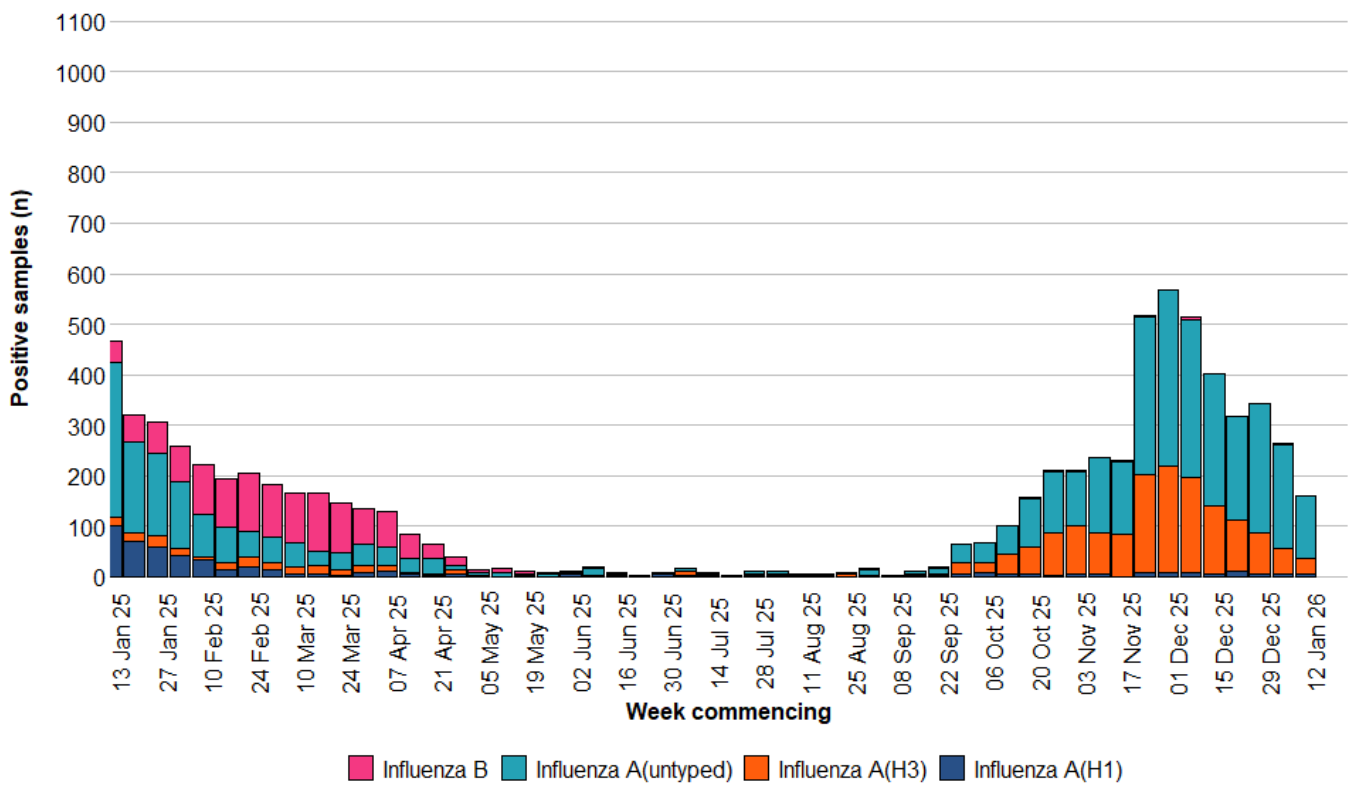


## 6. Pathogen-specific surveillance

### Influenza

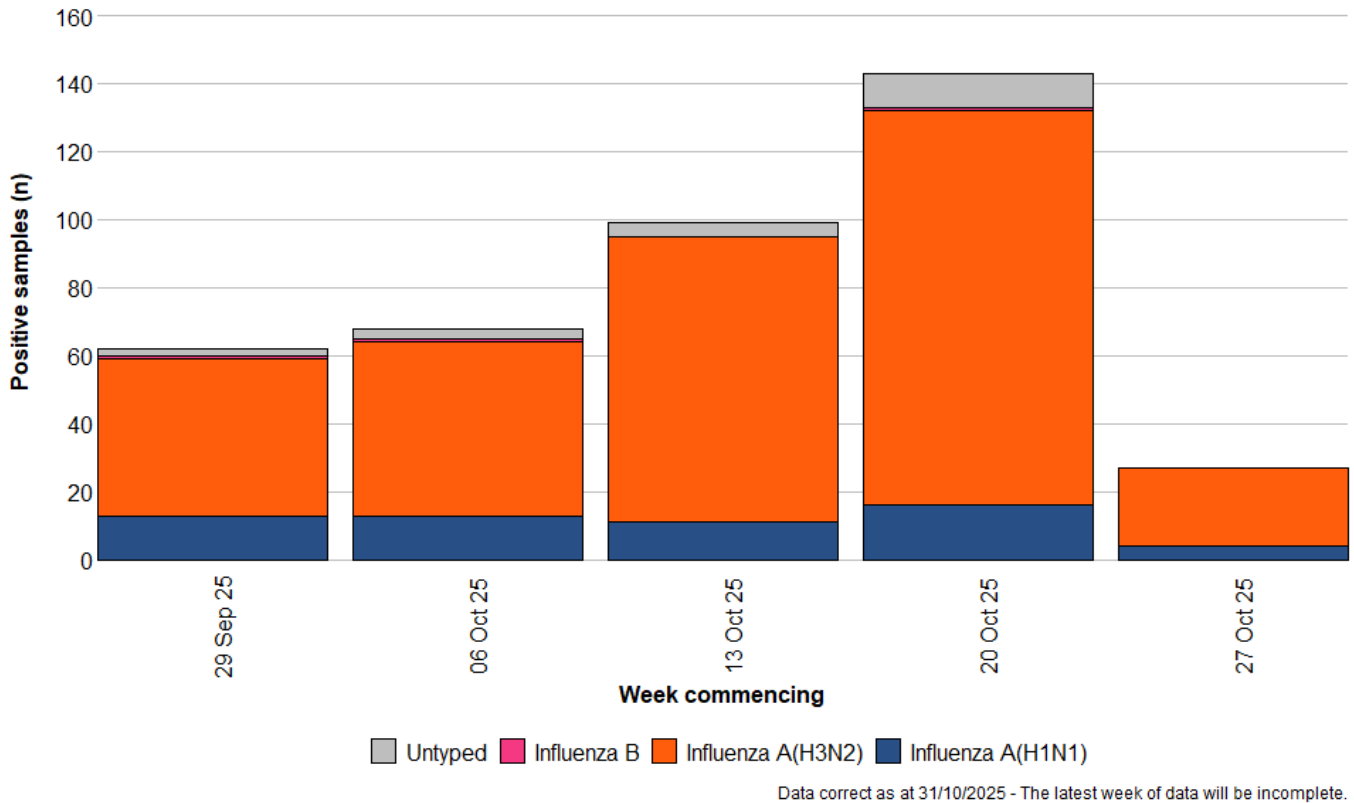
- Influenza A(H3N2) is the most commonly detected influenza subtype in Wales since Week 40 2025 (1,473 confirmed cases), followed by influenza A(H1N1) (93 confirmed cases) and influenza B (24 confirmed cases). Additionally, there have been 2,772 untyped influenza A cases.

**Figure 6.1a.** Influenza subtypes based on samples submitted for virological testing by Sentinel GPs and community pharmacies, hospital patients, and non-Sentinel GPs, by week of sample collection, Week 3, 2025 to Week 3, 2026.



Data correct as of 20/01/2026

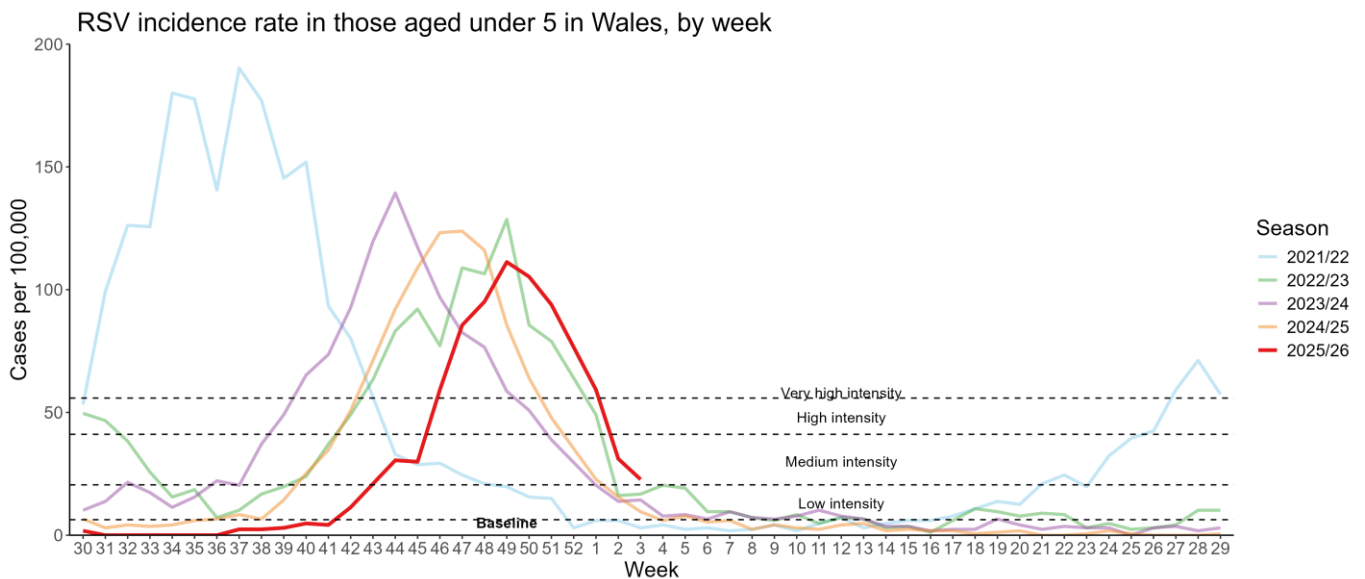
**Figure 6.1b.** Influenza subtypes based on samples referred to the Wales National Influenza Centre for typing, by week of sample collection, Week 40 2025 to Week 44, 2025.



## Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV incidence per 100,000 population in children aged under five years is currently at medium (22.7) intensity levels per 100,000 population during week 3 2026 .

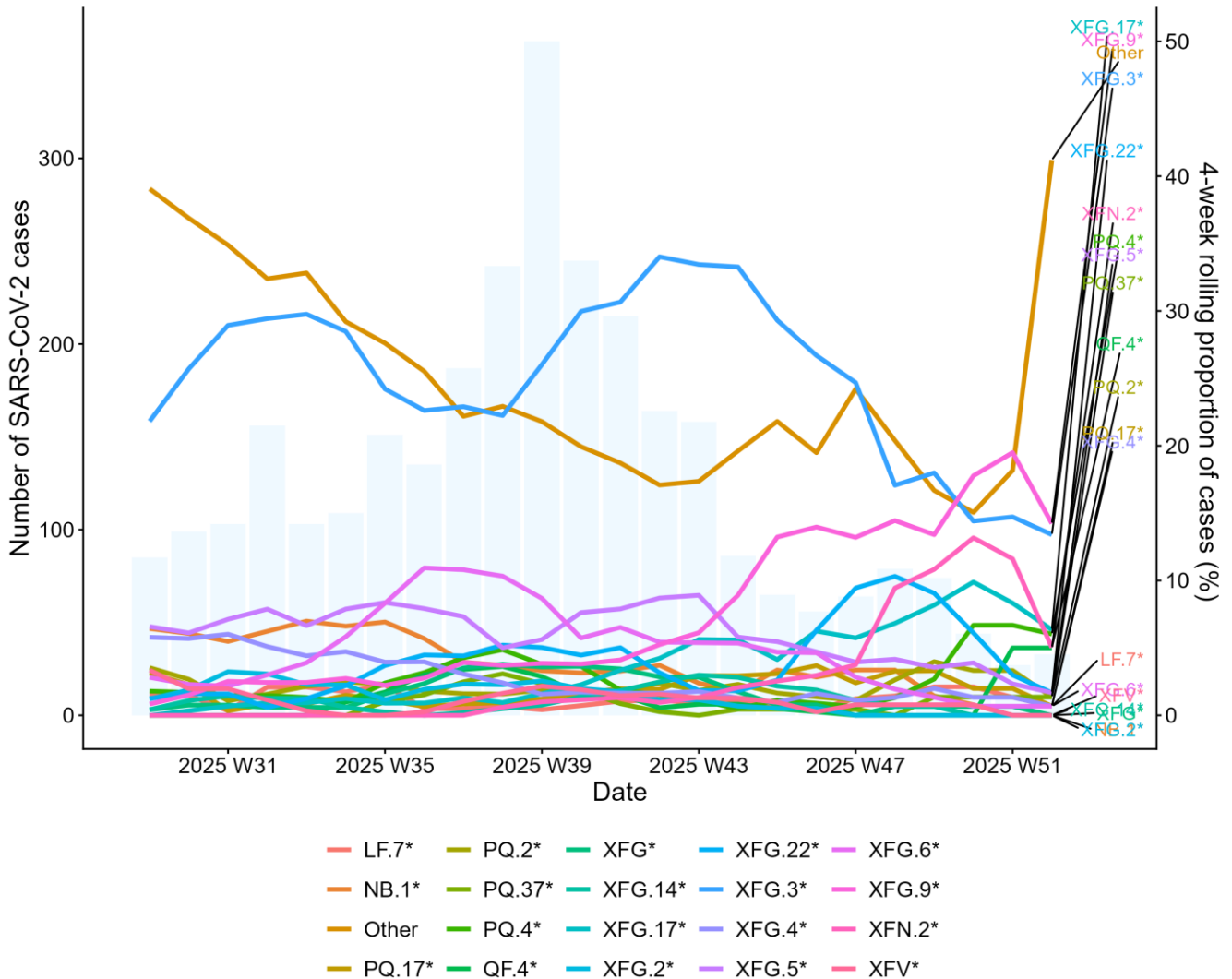
**Figure 6.2.** RSV incidence rate per 100,000 population aged under five years, Week 30 2020 to Week 3 2025.



## SARS-CoV-2 Variant surveillance

- Pango group XFG.3\* is the most frequently detected variant in Wales currently, accounting for 27.9% of sequenced cases in the previous six weeks.

**Figure 6.3.** Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 cases (bars) and the 4-week rolling average proportion of sequenced cases attributed to each Pango lineage group (lines) from residents in Wales for the past six months (2025 W17 to 2025 W41).



For detailed information on genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in Wales, please see: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection/viz/COVID-19genomicsurveillance/Summary>

## 7. Weekly winter forecasting of hospital admissions with acute respiratory infections in Wales - Week starting 19/01/2026

### Introduction

- Short-term forecasts use a modelling approach to suggest possible future trends in hospital admissions in patients with COVID-19, influenza and RSV across Wales for this and next week.
- The trends suggested in this analysis draw on recent hospital admissions and other surveillance indicators. The forecasts are designed to support planning and situational awareness during the winter season.
- All forecasts carry uncertainty, particularly when the season progresses rapidly or during holiday periods when health seeking behaviours may vary; estimates should be used alongside other sources of surveillance information in this weekly report.
- The models used to suggest these future trends are under development. Exact methods may change and are subject to an evaluation and assurance process.

### Headlines

- Estimates from our forecasts suggest that, over the next two weeks, combined admissions with COVID-19, influenza or RSV will **decrease** (confidence level: likely).
- For the week commencing **19/01/2026**, our forecasts estimate that between **92** and **187** hospital admissions with either COVID-19, RSV or influenza (median: **131**) may occur across Wales. Roughly **13%** will be for COVID-19, **45%** for influenza and **42%** for RSV. For the following week, between **64** and **188** admissions are estimated by the model.

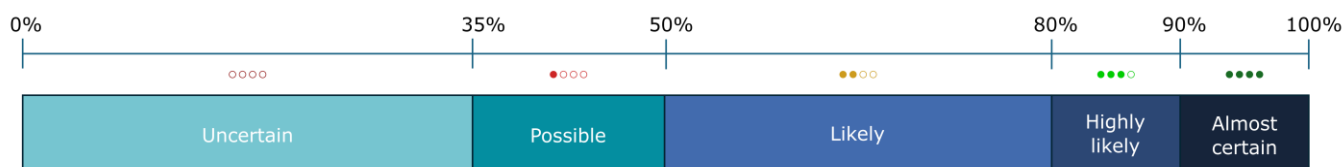
**Table 1.** Forecasted hospital admissions with COVID-19, influenza and RSV.

Infection	Observed	Admissions range (median)		Suggested two-week trend	
	Admissions last week (n) <sup>1</sup>	Week starting 19/01/2026	Week starting 26/01/2026	Trend <sup>2</sup>	Confidence <sup>3</sup>
COVID-19	14	9 – 25 (16)	8 – 27 (18)	Stable →	Likely ●●○○
Influenza	72	32 – 107 (58)	16 – 106 (38)	Decrease ↓	Likely ●●○○
RSV	64	33 – 87 (50)	20 – 96 (37)	Decrease ↓	Likely ●●○○
<b>Total</b>	150	92 – 187 (131)	64 – 188 (108)	Decrease ↓	Likely ●●○○

<sup>1</sup>Admissions are defined as individuals admitted to a hospital in Wales who tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), influenza, or RSV via PCR test within 28 days before or two days after admission.

<sup>2</sup>Trend interpretation: The suggested trend is derived from the middle scenario of all possible changes indicated by our forecast. It is calculated by comparing the previous weeks total admissions with the estimated admissions in the second week of our forecast. A stable trend is defined as a change of less than 20% or a difference of fewer than 10 admissions.

<sup>3</sup>Confidence interpretation: Confidence in the suggested trend is based on the proportion of model predictions which agree with the middle forecast scenario. See image below for confidence bands.



## COVID-19

- Estimates from our short-term forecasts suggest that, over the next two weeks, COVID-19 admissions will **remain stable** (confidence level: likely).
- For the week commencing **19/01/2026**, our forecasts estimate that between **9** and **25** hospital admissions with COVID-19 (median: **16**) may occur across Wales. For the following week (commencing 26/01/2026), between **8** and **27** admissions are estimated.
- Forecasted COVID-19 admissions are suggested to be **similar** compared to the same 14-day period in the previous year (Figure 1).

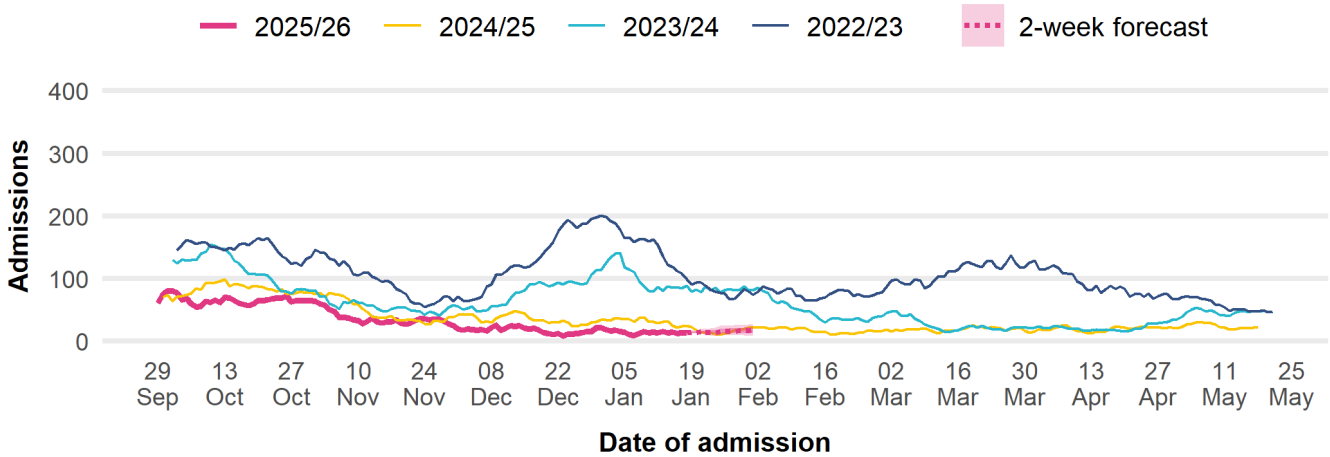
## Influenza

- Estimates from our short-term forecasts suggest that, over the next two weeks, influenza admissions will **decrease** (confidence level: likely).
- For the week commencing **19/01/2026**, our forecasts estimate that between **32** and **107** hospital admissions with influenza (median: **58**) may occur across Wales. For the following week (commencing 26/01/2026), between **16** and **106** admissions are estimated.
- Forecasted influenza admissions are suggested to be **lower** compared to the same 14-day period in the previous year (Figure 2).

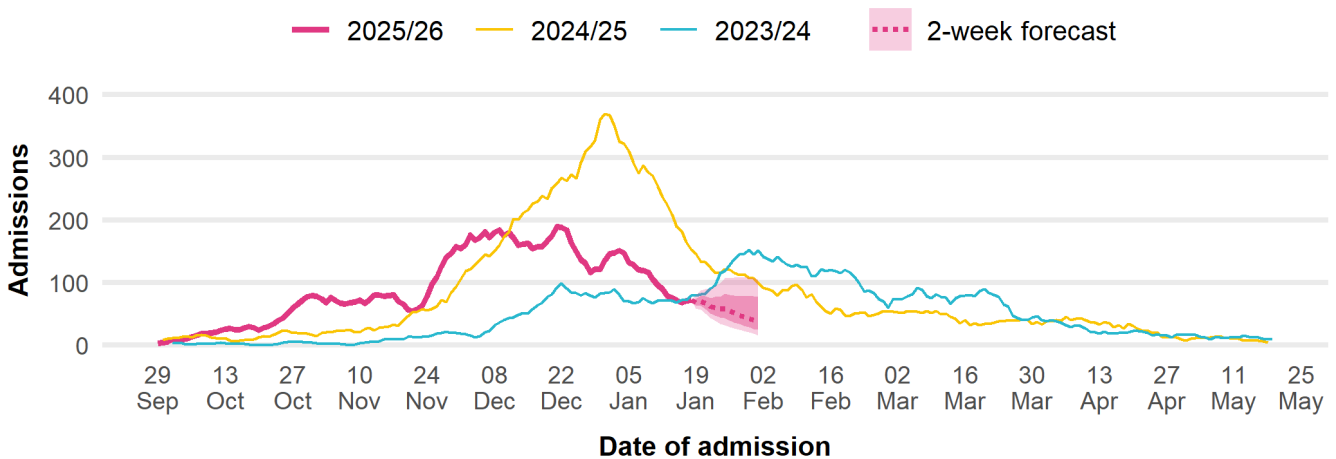
## RSV

- Estimates from our short-term forecasts suggest that, over the next two weeks, RSV admissions will **decrease** (confidence level: likely).
- For the week commencing **19/01/2026**, our forecasts estimate that between **33** and **87** hospital admissions with RSV (median: **50**) may occur across Wales. For the following week (commencing 26/01/2026), between **20** and **96** admissions are estimated.
- Forecasted RSV admissions are suggested to be **similar** compared to the same 14-day period in the previous year (Figure 3).

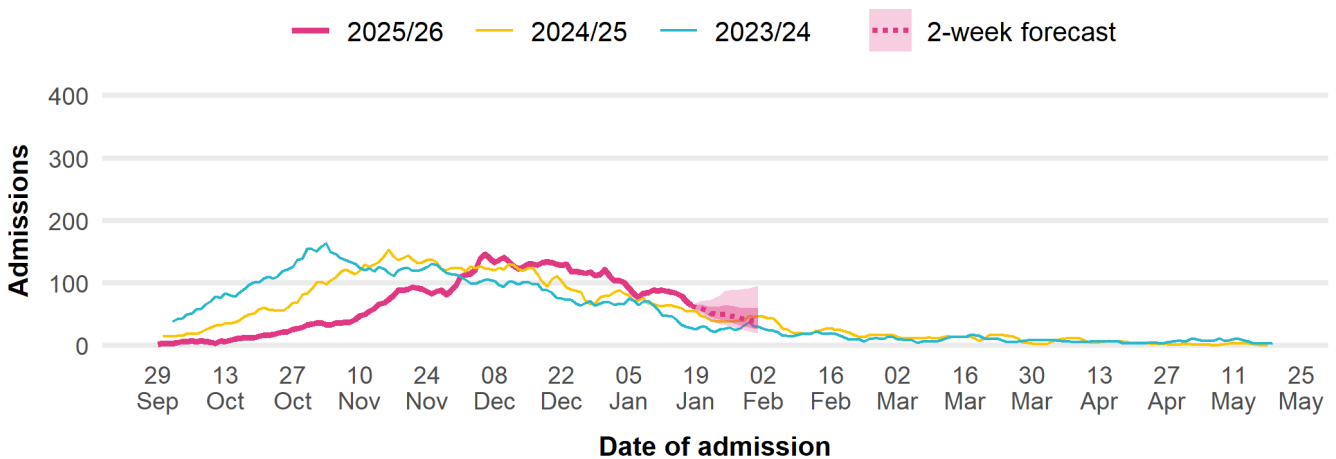
**Figure 1.** Estimates from short-term forecasts of hospital admissions with COVID-19 (7-day rolling sum) across Wales compared with reported admissions for the same date in previous years.



**Figure 2.** Estimates from short-term forecasts of hospital admissions with influenza (7-day rolling sum) across Wales compared with reported admissions for the same date in previous years.



**Figure 3.** Estimates from short-term forecasts of hospital admissions with RSV (7-day rolling sum) across Wales compared with reported admissions for the same date in previous years.



## Methodology and caveats

- **Interpretation of ranges and figures:** Any ranges reported here refer to the 80% prediction intervals (10<sup>th</sup> to 90<sup>th</sup> percentiles). The shaded pink area in the figures represents the forecast range; the lighter shade indicates the 80% prediction interval, and the darker shade indicates the 50% prediction interval. The solid lines in the figures represent reported admissions and the dashed lines represent the median forecasted admissions.
- **Methodology:** The forecasts are produced from an ensemble model which combines results from several models. Each model captures different aspects of how hospitalisations may change over time. By combining them, the ensemble approach helps balance the strengths and weaknesses of each model to provide more stable and reliable forecasts.
- **Limitations:** The forecasts may not accurately capture inflection points. Predictions further into the future are associated with higher levels of uncertainty. Variations in testing practices across health boards may lead to underestimation of true admission numbers.

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NB: Welsh Government produce short-term projections of hospital admissions associated with ARI (including both community and hospital-acquired infections). See [Communicable disease surveillance reports: 2026](#).

## 8. Influenza vaccination uptake

The 2025/26 influenza vaccination programme is underway. Information on the groups who are eligible for a free NHS Wales influenza vaccine is available from:

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

Current uptake figures in eligible groups are presented in table 8.1, these are updated on a weekly basis. Data on influenza vaccination coverage come from the Welsh Immunisation System (WIS). This is the first year that WIS has been used as the source of influenza vaccination data in Wales, and therefore caution should be used when comparing figures to previous years. Data in table 8.1 were extracted on 13/01/26 and include vaccinations given and recorded in WIS up to the end of 12/01/26. Not all data for vaccinations given will have been entered into WIS at this time, therefore the figures presented here may not be a complete for vaccinations given up to 12/01/26. Vaccination uptake figures for school-aged children are based on a combination of data from WIS in five health boards and from a Public Health Wales survey in two health boards.

**Table 8.1.** Uptake of influenza vaccination in Wales 2025/26 (as of 13/01/26)

Influenza immunisation uptake in the 2025/26 season	
65 years and older	69.1%
16y to 64y in a clinical risk group	38.6%
Children aged 2 & 3 years	43.9%
Primary school aged children (4 to 10 years)*	55.8%
Secondary school aged children (11-15 years)*	35.3%

\*Methods for calculating uptake in school aged children has changed for the 2025/26 season. Caution should be used when comparing estimated uptake to previous years, especially while school vaccination sessions are ongoing.

## 9. Early estimates of 2025/26 influenza vaccine effectiveness in the UK

- A combined study of influenza vaccine effectiveness has been conducted in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The study used a test negative case control approach to estimate the effectiveness of the current influenza vaccines at preventing hospital admissions with confirmed influenza A infections. The study included 1,379 cases of influenza and 12,364 controls, sampled from week 40 to week 47.
- The study included patients aged 2 to 17 years and patients aged 65 years and older. Limitations of early available data meant that estimation of effectiveness in adults aged 18 to 64 years was not possible at this point, but will be carried out in the coming months. Significant vaccine effectiveness was seen in both children and in older adults. Vaccine effectiveness was:
  - 71.8% (95% CI: 58.8%–80.7%) in children and adolescents aged 2 to 17 years
  - 33.5% (95% CI: 22.4%–43.1%) in adults aged 65 years and older
- Full details of this analysis, led by Public Health Scotland, are available from: <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/show-all-releases?id=102486>
- This study confirms the findings of an earlier test negative case control study carried out in England by UKHSA, where vaccine effectiveness against hospitalisation with confirmed influenza A was calculated as:



- 73.8% (95% CI: 62.8%-82.1%) for 2 to 17 year olds
  - 32.5% (95%CI: 9.6%- 50.4%) for adults aged 18 to 64 years
  - 39.0% (95% CI: 26.4%-49.7%) for adults aged 65 years and older
- Full details of this study are available from:  
<https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2025.30.46.2500854>

## 10. International Summary

### Influenza activity – UK and international summary

- GP ILI consultations remained stable at 15.0 per 100,000 in England, decreased to 24.3 per 100,000 in Northern Ireland, and increased to 14.6 per 100,000 in Scotland in Week 2, 2026.
- During Week 2, 6,609 samples tested for influenza were reported in England of which 787 were positive for influenza (596 influenza A (not subtyped), 150 influenza A (H3N2), 35 influenza A (H1N1)pdm09, and six influenza B).
- Overall, influenza positivity decreased to 11.9% in England, decreased to 8.7% in Scotland, and decreased to 12.5% in Northern Ireland in Week 2.
- UK summary data are available from the [UKHSA Influenza and COVID-19 Surveillance Report, Respiratory surveillance report | HSC Public Health Agency](#) and [COVID-19 & Respiratory Surveillance \(shinyapps.io\)](#)
- The WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported that influenza remained above the 10% positivity epidemic threshold at 33% in Week 2. Of the 37 countries and areas reporting on influenza intensity, 25 reported medium intensity or higher. Of the 36 countries and areas reporting on geographic spread of influenza viruses within a country or area, 33 reported widespread or regional distribution. There were 672 confirmed influenza virus infection detections reported from sentinel primary care, all influenza type A **Source:** European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS): <https://erviss.org/>
- Globally, influenza activity was elevated with overall positivity just under 25%, and influenza A viruses remained predominant across all zones.
- Northern hemisphere Influenza positivity was elevated (>10%) in some countries in North America and Western/Middle Africa. Percent positivity exceeded 30% in Central America & the Caribbean, Tropical South America, Northern Africa, Europe, and Western, Southern, South-East and Eastern Asia. Rising activity was reported across Central America & the Caribbean, Tropical South America, Northern Africa, Europe, and Western, Southern and South-East Asia.
- Southern hemisphere: Activity remained low overall, though isolated countries in Tropical and Temperate South America reported elevated positivity (>10%). Percent positivity exceeded 30% in single countries in Eastern Africa and Oceania. A small increase in activity was noted in a single Temperate South American country.
- Virus predominance: Among zones with elevated positivity, A(H3N2) was predominant except in Central America & the Caribbean and Tropical South America, where A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) were codominant, and in Western & Middle Africa, where A(H1N1)pdm09 predominated.
- **Source:** WHO influenza update: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/surveillance-and-monitoring/influenza-updates/current-influenza-update>
- Based on the WHO influenza laboratory surveillance information reporting (as of 21/01/2026) during Week 3 globally there were 1,534 A(H1N1), 11,879 A(H3), 39,942 A(not subtyped), 373 influenza B (Victoria) and 1,653 influenza B(lineage not determined) **Source:** Flu Net: <https://worldhealthorg.shinyapps.io/flunetchart/>

### Update on influenza activity in North America

- The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that influenza activity continues to increase during Week 1 (ending 10/01/2026). Nationally, 17,574 (18.6%) out of 94,649 specimens have tested positive for influenza in Week 01 in clinical laboratories nationwide, of these positive samples, 16,337 (93.0%) were influenza A and 1,237 (7.0%) were influenza B. Further characterisation has been carried out on 2,204 specimens by public health laboratories, and 1,476 samples tested positive for influenza A; 120 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 1,041 influenza

A(H3N2), and 52 samples tested positive for influenza B. **Source:** CDC Weekly US Influenza Surveillance Report: [FluView](#) | [FluView](#) | [CDC](#)

- The Public Health Agency of Canada reported that during Week 1, indicators of influenza activity remained high, but were either stable or decreased. 8,206 influenza detections were reported: 8,001 influenza A and 205 influenza B. **Source:** <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/respiratory-virus-surveillance/>

## Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in North America

The USA CDC reported that the RSV positivity rate remained stable in Week 1, 2026.

**Source:** CDC RSV national trends: [National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System](#) | [CDC](#)

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

- As of 21 December 2025, Saudi Arabia reported 19 MERS-CoV cases from 01 January 2025 to 21 December 2025, including 4 deaths. WHO Global Alert and Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>
- 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

- The WHO has published an updated assessment of recent influenza A(H5N1) virus events in animals and people. Currently, the global public health risk of influenza A(H5N1) viruses to be low, while the risk of infection for occupationally exposed persons is low to moderate, depending on the risk mitigation measures in place. Transmission between animals continues to occur and, to date, a growing yet still limited number of human infections are being reported. 05 July 2025: Other updates on zoonotic influenza infections and risks to humans are available from the WHO Global Alert & Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>

## 11. Notes on interpretation

**Virological surveillance** This report does not include results from Point of Care Tests (POCTs). Use of POCTs varies across Wales and so numbers and trends of respiratory pathogens should be interpreted with caution, particularly when comparing between health boards. We are working to incorporate these result into the report.

**Hospital/critical care (CC) admission:** A hospital/CC admission that involves a minimum of 1 overnight stay. N.B. Transfers to another hospitals within the same health board (HB) are counted as the same continuous inpatient stay.

**ARI hospital/CC admission:** A hospital/CC admission where the patient tested positive for an ARI infection in the community within 28 days prior to the admission date or in hospital up to 2 days after admission (where the date of admission is day 1).

**Hospital/CC inpatient (IP):** A patient admitted to hospital/CC on or before the specified date, with a minimum of 1 overnight stay who had not been discharged from hospital/CC by 23:59 of the specified date.

**ARI hospital/CC IP:** A hospital/CC IP who tested positive for an ARI in hospital or in the community within the previous 28 days. Hospital acquired (HA): An IP whose first positive ARI test was taken in hospital more than 7 days after admission for COVID-19 or more than 3 days after admission for Influenza and RSV.

**ARI outbreaks and incidents in a care home setting (fig 4.2):** Information about incidents and outbreaks is taken from the case management system used by Public Health Wales. An incident in this context refers to the way that information is recorded and organised on the case management system. Not all acute respiratory infections affecting two or more care home residents with a common exposure (an outbreak\*) will be recorded as incidents and captured in this graph. This may be because there was not a need for ongoing public health advice and therefore a different type of record was created. As a result, certain infections (e.g. influenza) may be captured more than others and the actual number of ARI outbreaks is likely to be underestimated. Figure 4.2 is therefore most useful for telling us about trends in the number of incidents over time, although trends may be affected both by changes in testing policy and by changes in how the incident management system is used. We will continue to review the impact of such changes and update our methodology or caveats as appropriate. Note that this definition is one of the traditional or epidemiological definitions of an outbreak, not all outbreaks will result in formally activating The Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan for Wales <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/the-communicable-disease-outbreak-plan-for-wales>

## 12. Statement of voluntary application of the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Public Health Wales publishes a weekly integrated respiratory infection summary. This report highlights the latest available information from a number of Public Health Wales surveillance schemes, reports and other sources on Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) in Wales.

Our publications are categorised as management information and this statement outlines the steps taken towards voluntary adoption of the Code of Practice for Statistics to ensure that our publications are high quality, useful for supporting decisions and well-respected. The code is built around 3 pillars:

- **Trustworthiness:** confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data
- **Quality:** data and methods that produce assured statistics
- **Value:** publishing statistics that support society's needs for information

### Trustworthiness

This report (and the underlying analysis) has been developed by a team of epidemiologists and analysts under the guidance of senior scientists and consultants. We work as part of a wider integrated respiratory surveillance group, which brings together expertise in virology, epidemiology, genomics and surveillance. Key information summarised in this surveillance report is routinely shared with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), World Health Organisation (WHO) and other international networks to enable international surveillance and epidemiological studies. Appropriate disclosure control methods have been considered and applied.

The report is published on a weekly basis during winter period between week 40 (October) and 20 (May) of the following year and on a fortnightly basis during the summer period. Where there are interruptions to data flows, or other technical issues affecting the production of elements of the report, we highlight in the text as appropriate. Where there are unplanned delays to publication we inform our stakeholders. We highlight key changes in the report when necessary.

### Quality

We are continuously seeking to improve the quality of our surveillance. Where possible, ARI surveillance schemes in Wales follow, or are working towards following, good practice recommendations and international guidance (e.g. the [WHO MOSAIC framework](#), using professional judgement. The surveillance team routinely consults with other UK teams and international specialists. Where there are limitations in data or interpreting data, we try to specify and continue work to address them.

### Value

This information contributes to many areas, including response to health threats, public health interventions, healthcare planning and research. There are also society benefits from making this information available, supporting transparency and providing timely access for the scientific community, public health specialists and the public. This in turn reduces the onus on our stakeholders to request information, releasing capacity or further development of our outputs. We aim to present epidemiological and virological data in meaningful and accessible ways to help meet the needs of different audiences. However, we aspire to improve in this, with improved understanding of user-needs. We have also included links to other related reports and resources to avoid duplication of data presentation.

### 13. Links to surveillance reports from other countries

Public Health Wales influenza surveillance webpage: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/weekly-influenza-and-acute-respiratory-infection-report/>

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>

NICE influenza antiviral usage guidance: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158>

England influenza and COVID-19 surveillance: National flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports: 2025 to 2026 season - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

Scotland seasonal respiratory surveillance: Publications - Public Health Scotland

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/flu vaccine/>

Advice on influenza immunisation (for intranet users) Influenza ([sharepoint.com](http://sharepoint.com))

For further information on this report, please email Public Health Wales using: [surveillance.requests@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:surveillance.requests@wales.nhs.uk)