

# COVID-19 Wales Situational Report

COVID-19 Intelligence Cell:  
17 March 2022

Health Protection Advisory Group:  
18 March 2022

Data as at 16 March unless otherwise specified.

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# COVID-19 Situation Report Summary

## Key points to note

**Overall cases of COVID-19 and test positivity have increased across Wales.** With the return to alert level 0 and easement of restrictions, there is a need to continue monitoring trends.

**The UKHSA consensus estimate of the reproduction number (Rt) for Wales is between 1.0 and 1.3** and a doubling time of 24 days. (as at 17 March 2022). PHW's Rt estimate is 1.3 with a doubling time of 10 days (17 March February 2022). Slide 3, Source: PHW

**Over the latest week, the number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients has increased.** This was due to an increase in confirmed and suspected patients (up 169 and 36 patients respectively) despite a slight decrease in recovering patients (down 2 patients). As at 15 March 2022, there were 1,059 COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) occupying a hospital bed. This compares to 856 (203 more occupied beds) on 8 March 2022.

**As at 12 March 2022, the 7 day rolling sum of COVID-19 deaths have decreased to 13** (a 54% drop since the previous week. Source: PHW

**As of 15 March 2022, in the most recent 7-day period Wales the number of weekly genomically confirmed Omicron cases reported to PHW has increased to 6,325** (98,736 total to date), of which +1,780 (54,164 total) were BA.1, +3,595 (8,737 total) were BA.2 and 950 (35,835 total) were 'Omicron not elsewhere classified', requiring sequencing to determine their sublineage. There were also +31 cases of Delta (106,176 total) detected. Note that this reporting also captures NEC samples from previous weeks that have since been sequenced and is therefore not a reliable estimate of weekly infections. Reporting of BA.2 prevalence to Welsh Government by PHW suggests that in the week ending 6 March 70% of cases were BA.2.

As at the week ending 06 March 2023, a total of 6,902,137 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were given in Wales and recorded in the Welsh immunisation System.

2,523,933 individuals had received at least one doses

2,393,825 individuals had received at least two doses

61,306 individuals had received three primary doses

1,923,073 individuals had received a booster dose Source: PHW

## Key indicators

All indicators have decreased over the previous week, except for the ONS COVID infection survey (prevalence) estimates where the trend is less certain.

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

	Current value (12/03/22)	Change since previous week (12/03/22 – 05/03/22 unless stated otherwise)		
		Percentage change		Value change
Confirmed case rate (rolling 7 day sum per 100k)	290	+50%	↑	(+96)
Confirmed case rate for over 60s (rolling 7 day sum per 100k)	181	+38%	↑	(+50)
Test positivity (7 day RA)	31.9%	+31.7%	↑	(+7.7 percentage points)
Population estimated to have COVID-19 (prevalence) <sup>1</sup>	3.22%	+3.87%	↑	(+0.12 percentage points)
NHS COVID-19 Admissions <sup>2</sup>	43	-8%	↓	(-4)
ONS deaths (7 day sum) <sup>3</sup>	24	-45%	↓	(-20)
PHW deaths (7 day sum)	13	-54%	↓	(-15)

### Footnotes

1. Latest Covid Infection Survey data is taken from 27 February 2022 to 5 March 2022.
2. Seven day rolling average to the current date of confirmed COVID-19 admissions
3. Latest ONS deaths data is to 4 March 2022 (rather than 12 March 2022) for the current value. Data to 25 February 2022 is used for the change since previous week.

# What is the current status of the epidemic?

The UKHSA consensus estimate of the reproduction number ( $R_t$ ) for Wales is between 1.0 and 1.3 and a doubling time of 24 days. (as at 17 March 2022). PHW's  $R_t$  estimate is 1.3 with a doubling time of 10 days (17 March February 2022). Slide 3, Source: PHW

The 7-day cumulative case incidence in Wales is 290.7 per 100,000 population and test positivity is at 31.9%.

Case incidence is increasing in all local authorities. Local authorities with the highest case incidence are Blaenau Gwent (286), Vale of Glamorgan (367.6), Gwynedd (362.9), per 100,000 population, respectively.

As at 17 March 2022, Case incidence is increasing in all age groups, currently highest in 30-39 year olds.

The second table below provides estimates of doubling and halving times based on PHW COVID-19 positive test data. The 95% confidence intervals are shown in brackets after the central estimate. An asterisk (\*) means that there are small numbers and estimates should be treated with caution. Local health board level estimates of  $R_t$  and halving times will be unstable when incidence is low.

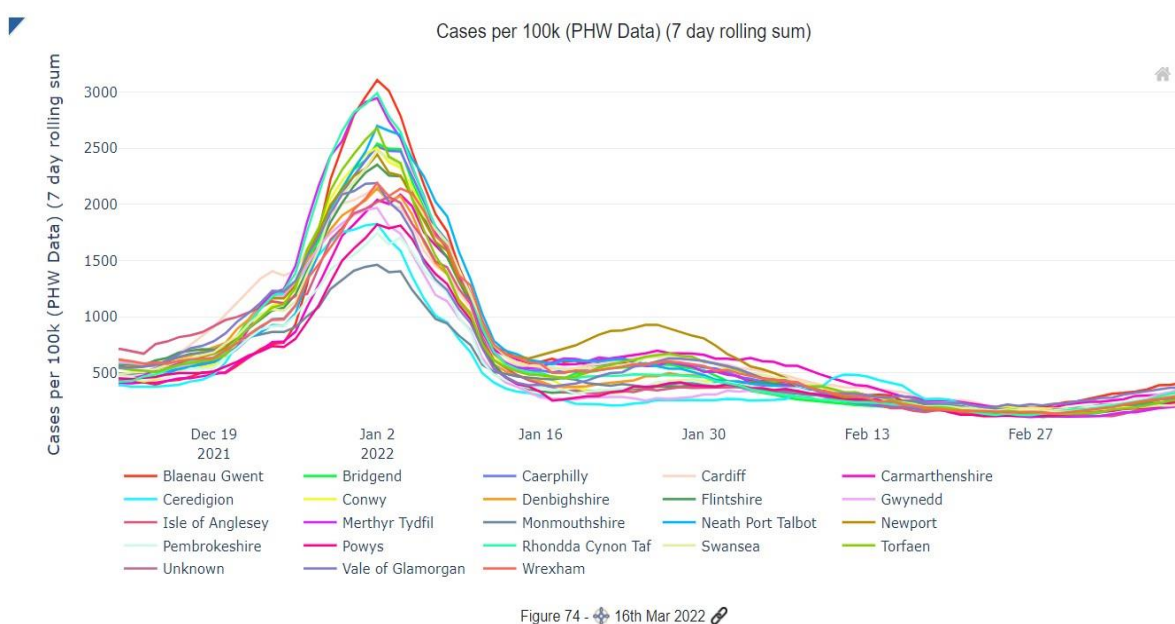
Note: all based on PCR test data only, and exclude LFT testing.

Note: all based on PCR test data only, and exclude LFT testing. **Table 1: Cases per 100,000 population**

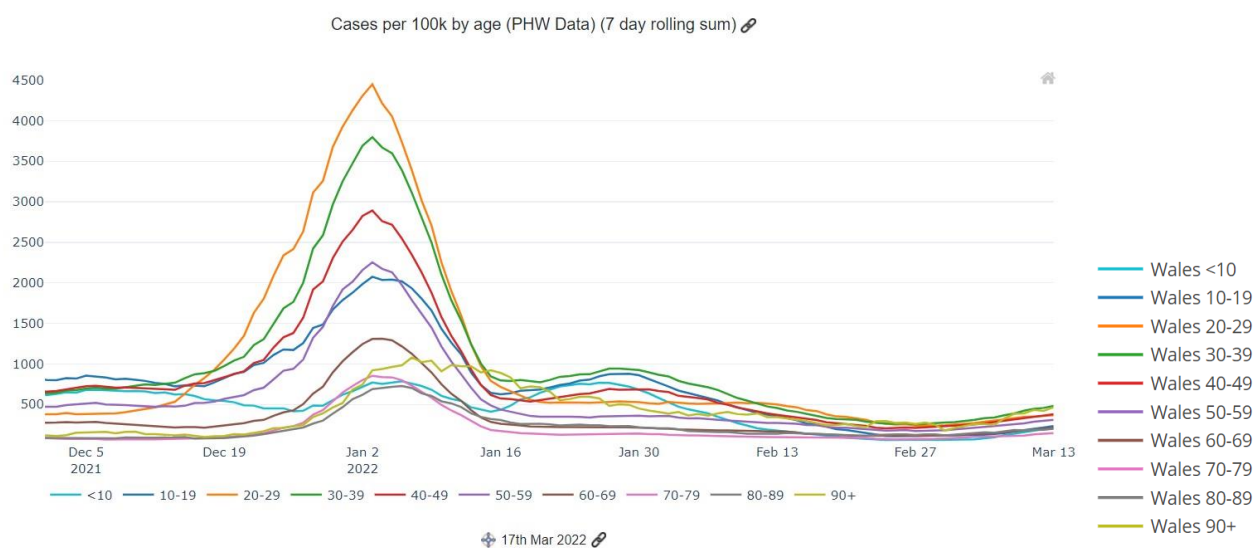
Cases per 100k 

Local Authority	Number	% of All Wales Total	Case Incidence per 100,000	Change from previous week
Blaenau Gwent	286	3.1%	409.4	41% ↑
Vale of Glamorgan	491	5.4%	367.6	33% ↑
Gwynedd	452	4.9%	362.9	90% ↑
Rhondda Cynon Taf	797	8.7%	330.3	70% ↑
Ceredigion	234	2.6%	321.9	107% ↑
Carmarthenshire	607	6.6%	321.6	33% ↑
Flintshire	497	5.4%	318.4	61% ↑
Pembrokeshire	398	4.3%	316.3	54% ↑
Cardiff	1121	12.2%	305.5	43% ↑
Wrexham	409	4.5%	300.8	59% ↑
Denbighshire	284	3.1%	296.8	52% ↑
Newport	440	4.8%	284.5	56% ↑
Monmouthshire	255	2.8%	269.6	25% ↑
Torfaen	249	2.7%	265.0	74% ↑
Caerphilly	470	5.1%	259.6	48% ↑
Powys	323	3.5%	243.9	58% ↑
Isle of Anglesey	170	1.9%	242.7	105% ↑
Neath Port Talbot	343	3.7%	239.3	27% ↑
Conwy	276	3.0%	235.5	33% ↑
Bridgend	343	3.7%	233.3	59% ↑
Swansea	535	5.8%	216.6	22% ↑
Merthyr Tydfil	126	1.4%	208.9	77% ↑
Unknown	60	0.7%	-	67% ↑
<b>Total</b>	<b>9166</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>290.7</b>	<b>50% ↑</b>

### Figure 1: Cases per 100k (PHW Data)



### Figure 2: Cases per 100k by age (PHW Data)



**Table 2: Reproduction number and doubling time (PHW methodology) PHW data by Local Health Board**

Area	All Wales	Swansea Bay UHB	CTM UHB	Aneurin Bevan UHB	Cardiff & Vale UHB	Hywel Dda UHB	Powys THB	Betsi Cadwaladr UHB
Rt (95% CI)	1.3 (1.3 to 1.3)	1.1 (1.1 to 1.2)	1.4 (1.3 to 1.5)	1.3 (1.3 to 1.4)	1.3 (1.2 to 1.3)	1.2 (1.2 to 1.3)*	1.4 (1.2 to 1.5)*	1.4 (1.3 to 1.4)
Halving time (95% CI)	10.0 (6.9 to 18.4) DOUBLING	18.0 (9.7 to 13) DOUBLING	7.6 (5.4 to 13.0) DOUBLING	9.0 (6.0 to 17.6) DOUBLING	10.8 (7.5 to 18.8) DOUBLING	10.7 (6.6 to 27.6)* DOUBLING	8.9 (6.1 to 16.9)* DOUBLING	9.2 (6.2 to 18.0) DOUBLING

# What is the situation with the NHS and social care?

Non-COVID-19 urgent & emergency pressures continue to result in high levels of hospital bed occupancy and escalation across hospital sites, with this week being another particularly challenging one across Wales. Over the latest week, the number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients has increased.

There has also been an observed increase in hospital-acquired infections in Wales since mid-January. This will result in a longer length of stay and may explain why hospital occupancy in Wales has decreased at a slower rate relative to COVID-19 admissions. The number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) fluctuates. Between late December 2021 and mid-January 2022, the number of COVID-19 related hospitalisations increased sharply, before falling back to lower levels following the Omicron wave peak.

Over the latest week, the number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients has increased. This was due to an increase in confirmed and suspected patients (up 169 and 36 patients respectively) despite a slight decrease in recovering patients (down 2 patients). As at 15 March 2022, there were 1,059 COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) occupying a hospital bed. This compares to 856 (203 more occupied beds) on 8 March 2022. Confirmed cases accounted for 648 of the total occupied beds. There are 13 patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in critical care beds in Wales. This is 151 fewer than the highest recorded figure during the pandemic. The total number of patients in critical care for both COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 stands at 169, 17 more than the 152 baseline number of critical care beds available before the COVID-19 pandemic.

There remains the potential for significant harm in the community (and our hospitals) for people with non-COVID illnesses or injuries, which continues to exceed the direct harm from COVID-19.

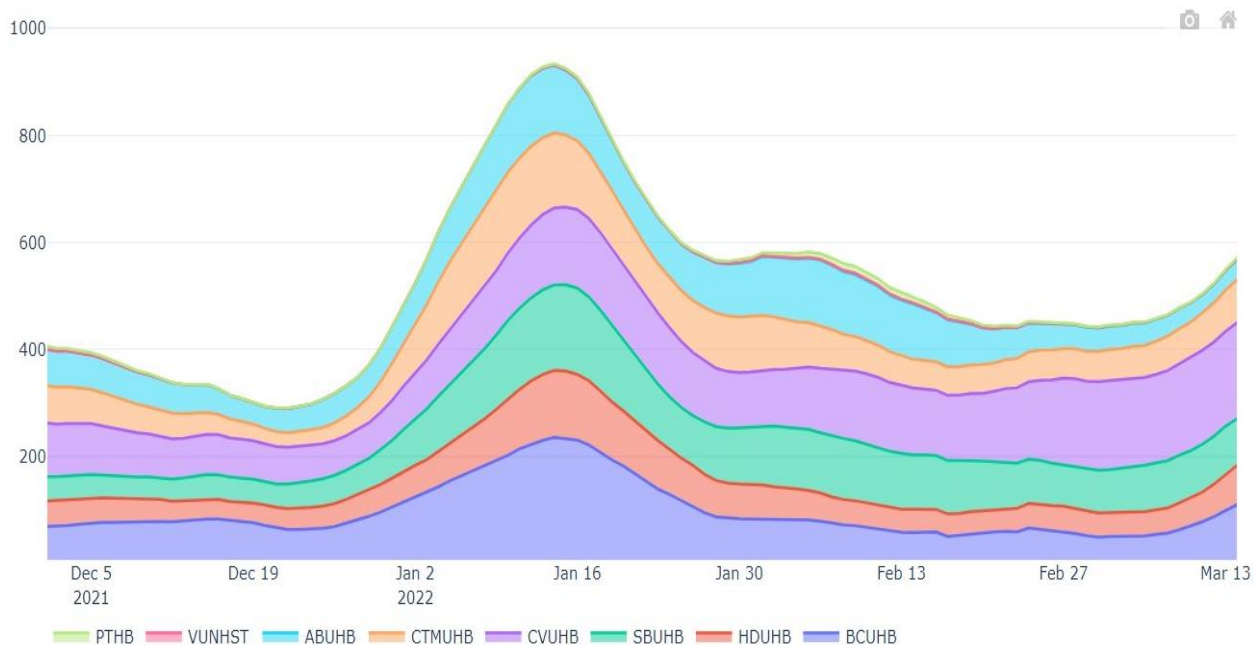
Regions report a stable picture despite reporting that there has been a recent increase in the number of care homes going into incident status throughout Wales. Care homes continue to be supported locally by local authority officers. No significant public health concerns have been raised.



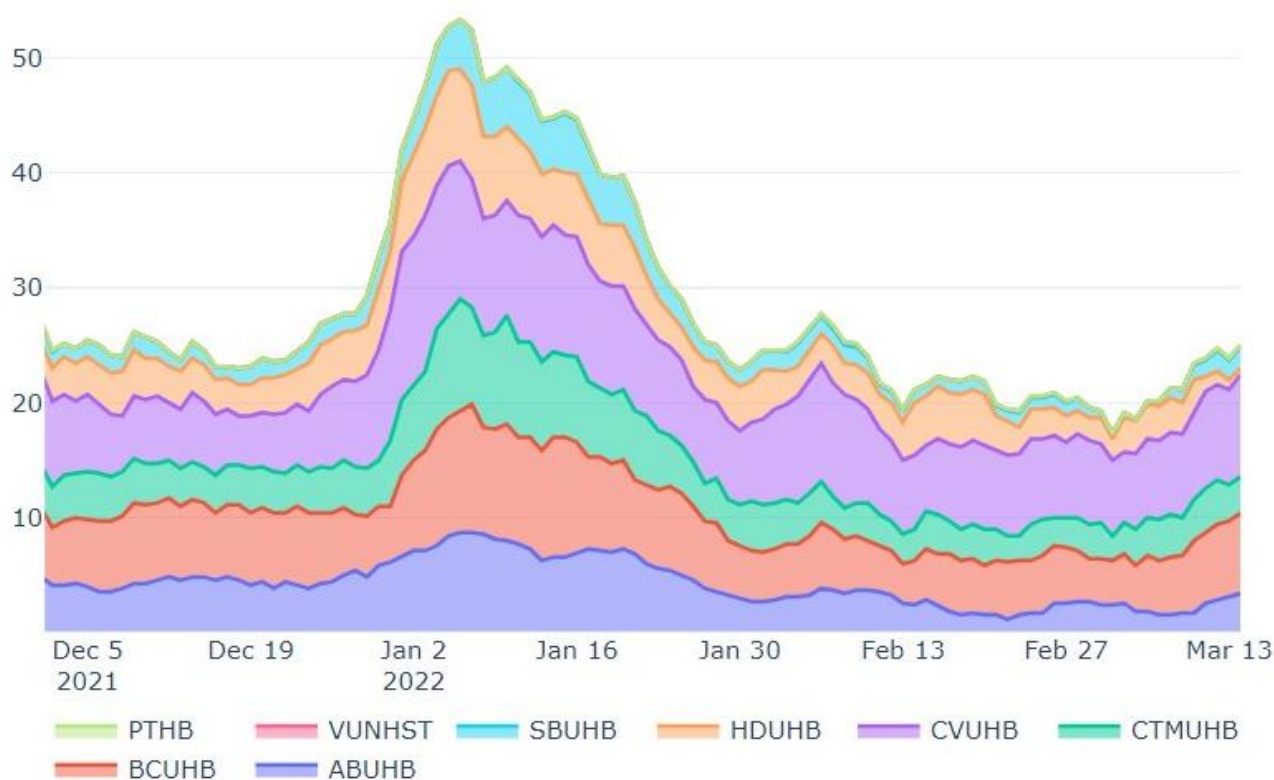
**Figure 3: Covid-19 Confirmed Hospital occupancy (7 day rolling average)**



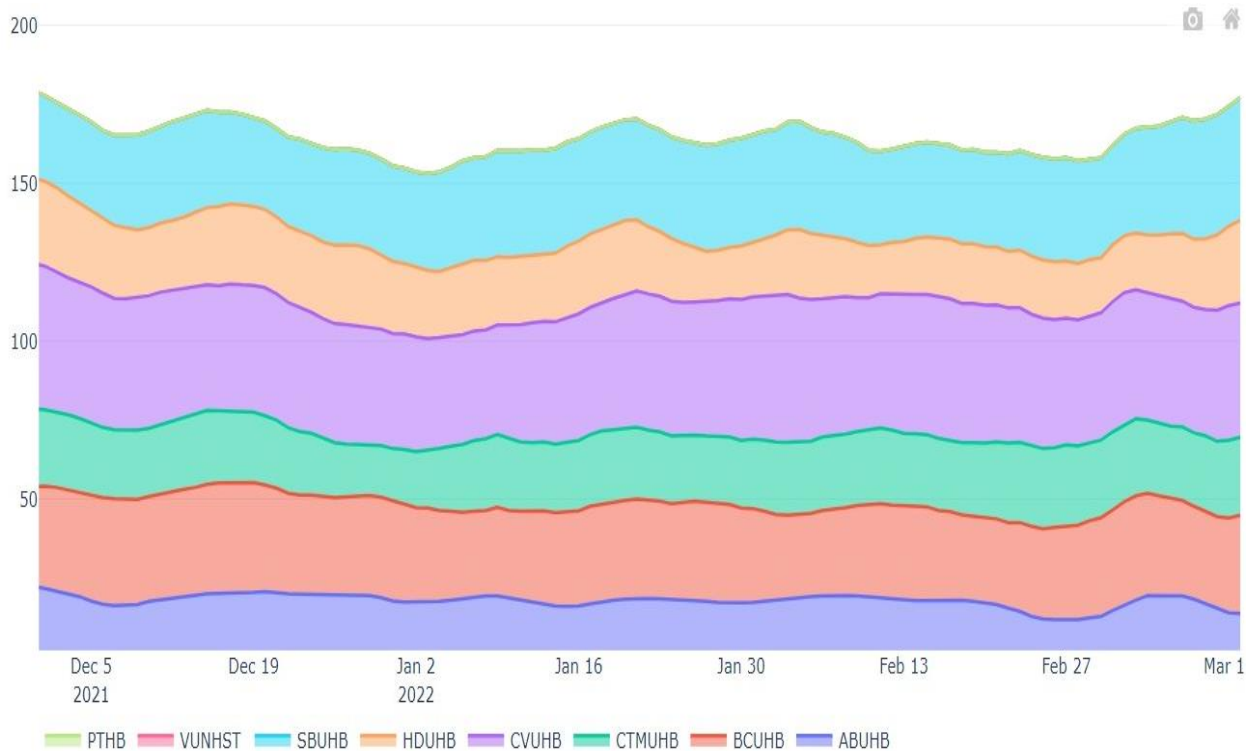
**Figure 4: Hospital bed occupancy for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients (7 day rolling average)**



**Figure 5: Hospital admissions of suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients (7 day rolling average)**



**Figure 6: Invasive ventilated bed occupancy for suspected and confirmed COVID-19 positive patients (7 day rolling average)**



# What is the situation with education, children and young adults?

## School attendance

An average of 90.0% of all pupils were in attendance in school over the week of 7 to 11 March 2022, down from 91.2% the week before. The figure for 28 February to 4 March 2022 has been revised up from 91.1%. Data for the latest two weeks is provisional.

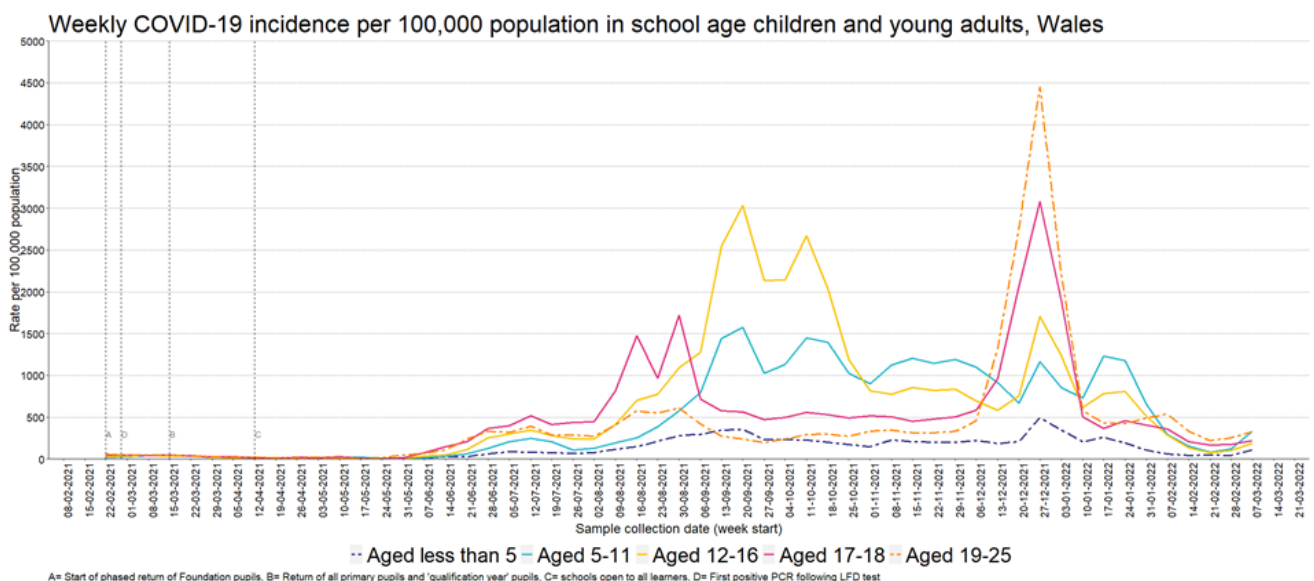
In the same time period, 1.6% of pupils were absent due to a known COVID-19 related reason, with an average of 1.9% of all primary and 1.2% of all secondary pupils absent for this reason. *Source Stats Wales, Schools in Wales*

The increased absence rates seen for special schools reflects direct feedback from these settings. Due to the specific context in which they operate it is recognised that they may be more susceptible to instances of pupil absences related to COVID-19. It is also understood that generally special schools have experienced higher levels of staff absences during the first half of the school term. Additional guidance has been provided to support this sector in recognition of this.

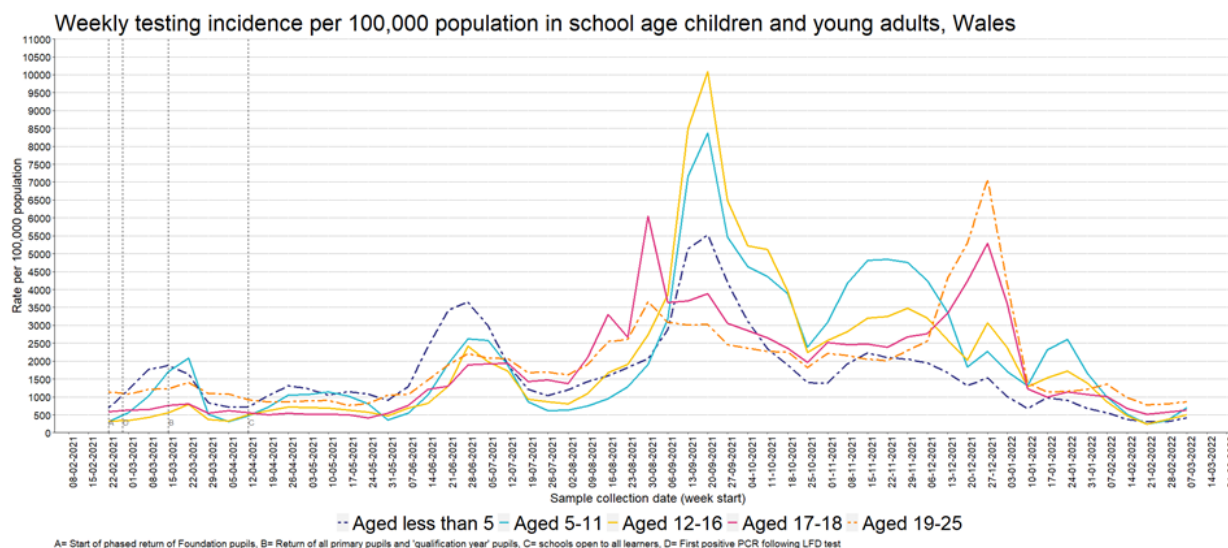
## Schools

Regions report a stable picture in educational settings despite reporting an increase in case numbers. Schools continue to make use of Welsh Government Guidance and continue to be supported by local authorities and TTP teams. There were no significant public health concerns raised.

**Figure 7: Weekly C-19 Incidence per 100k population in school aged children and young adults , Wales up to 7 March 2022**

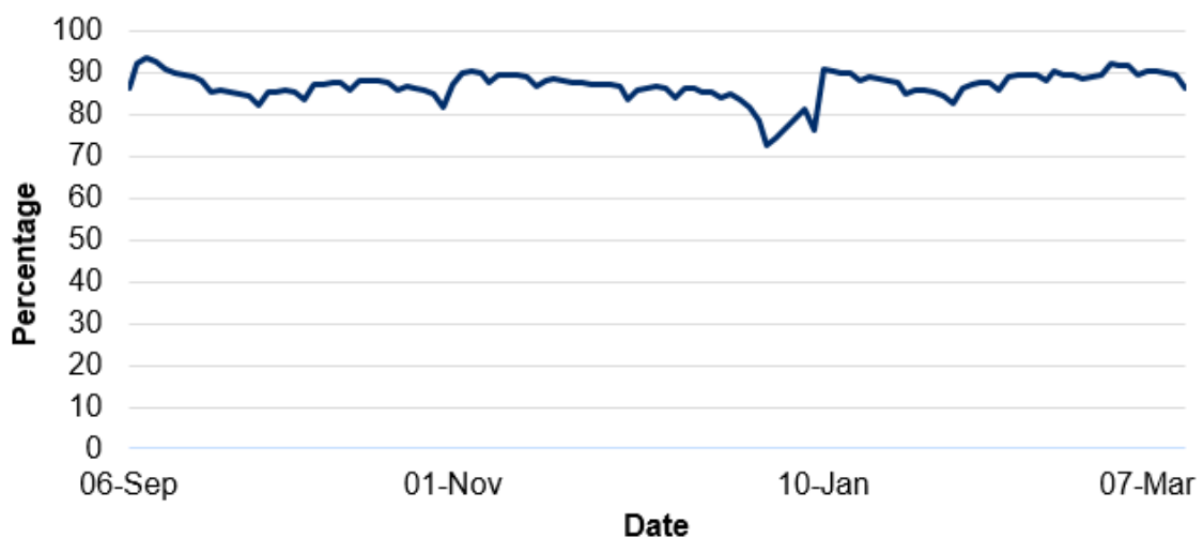


**Figure 8: Weekly C-19 PCR Testing Incidence per 100k population in school aged children and young adults, Wales up to 07 March 2022**



**Figure 9: Attendance of pupils in maintained schools by day**

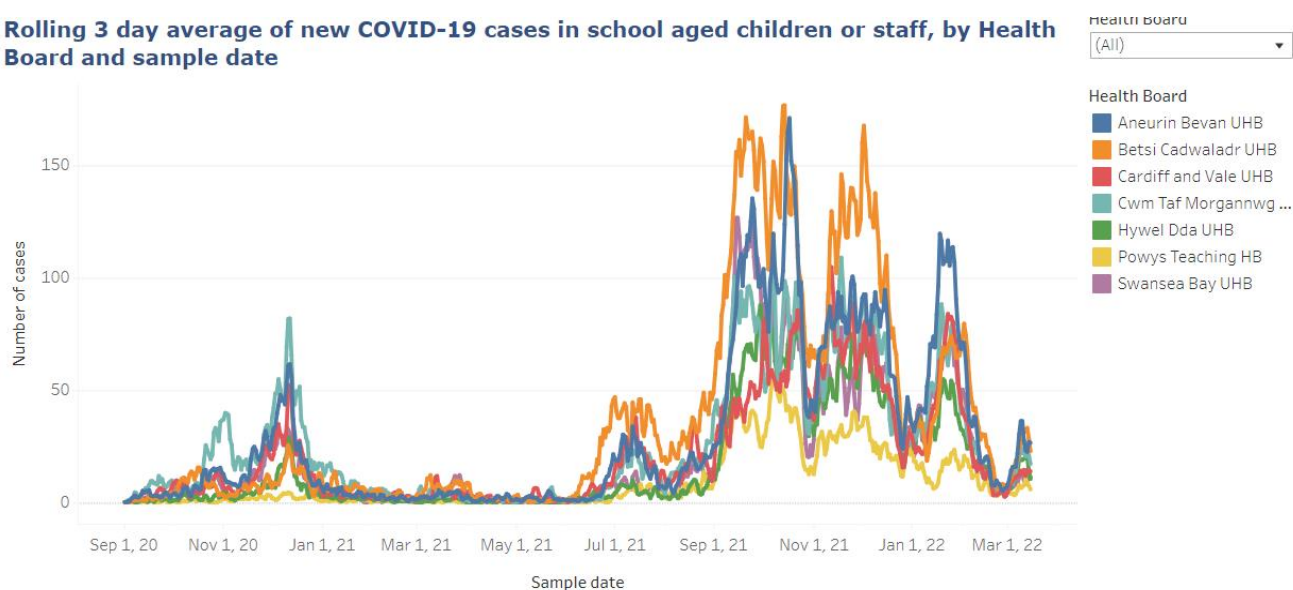
## Attendance of pupils by day, 6 September 2021 onwards



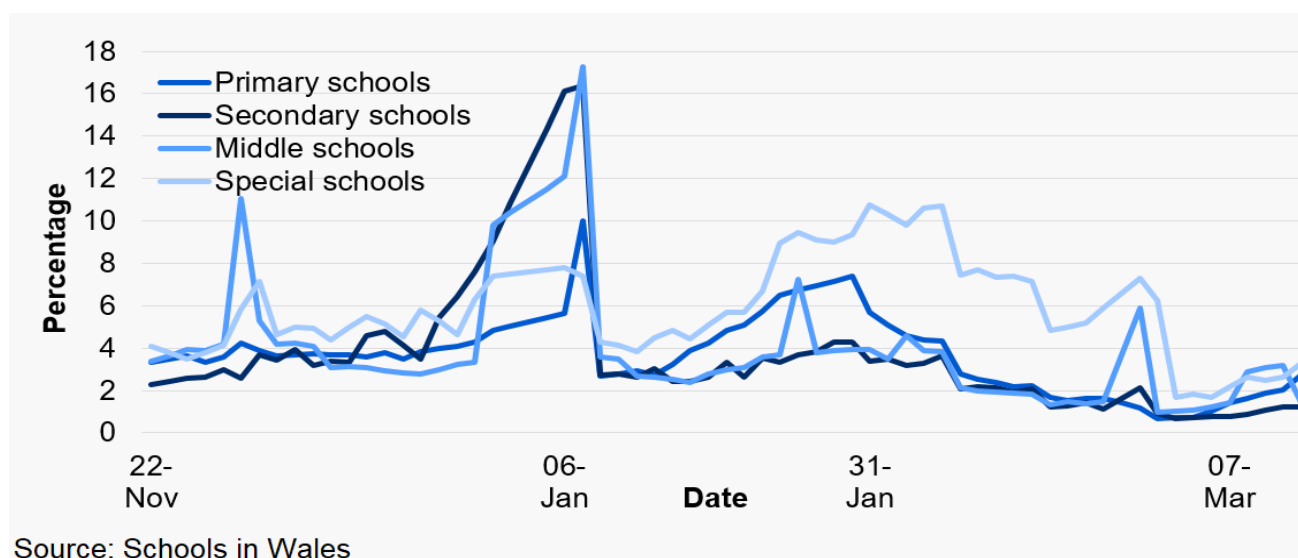
Source: Schools in Wales

**Figure 10: Rolling 3 days average of new C-19 cases in school aged children or staff linked to schools by Health Board and date of test result up to 15 March 2022**

**Rolling 3 day average of new COVID-19 cases in school aged children or staff, by Health Board and sample date**

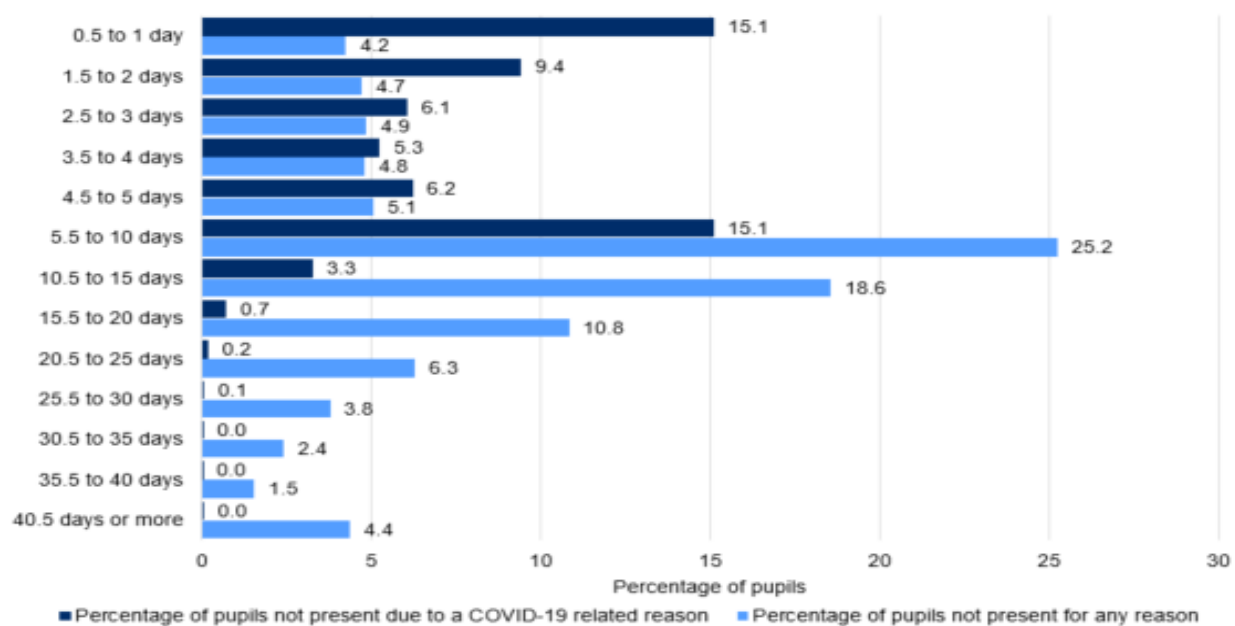


**Figure 11: Absence due to C-19 by day and phase**



Source: Schools in Wales

**Figure 12: percentage of pupils by number of days missed due to C-19 related reason and all reasons**



# Wastewater Monitoring for Covid-19

Since last week, SARS-CoV-2 viral load has dropped, but this is not consistent across all regions. The wastewater signal could indicate that the rate in which people are becoming infected has fallen or that the number of new infections has stabilised.

The trends in the national mean wastewater signal appear to have reverted to instability, with an overall decrease following last week's increase. The wastewater signal increased rapidly at Cleddau and Pembrokeshire, whilst in contrast, it was stable in Ynys Môn

For further details and analysis please refer to the Weekly Wastewater Report (17 March 2022) at [www.gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell](http://www.gov.wales/technical-advisory-cell) or contact [wastewater@gov.wales](mailto:wastewater@gov.wales)

## Regional indicator Table

indicates the number of sites within those regions that have triggered the indicators

The **High Signal Level** indicator highlights the catchment areas where the viral concentrations are high. It corresponds to a situation where the viral concentrations exceed half of the highest weekly average recorded in the previous 6 months.

The **Rapid Increase** indicator highlights the catchment areas where the viral concentrations have rapidly increased for the last week compared to the previous week. It corresponds to a situation where the weekly average of the viral concentration has increased by at least 100% since the previous week.

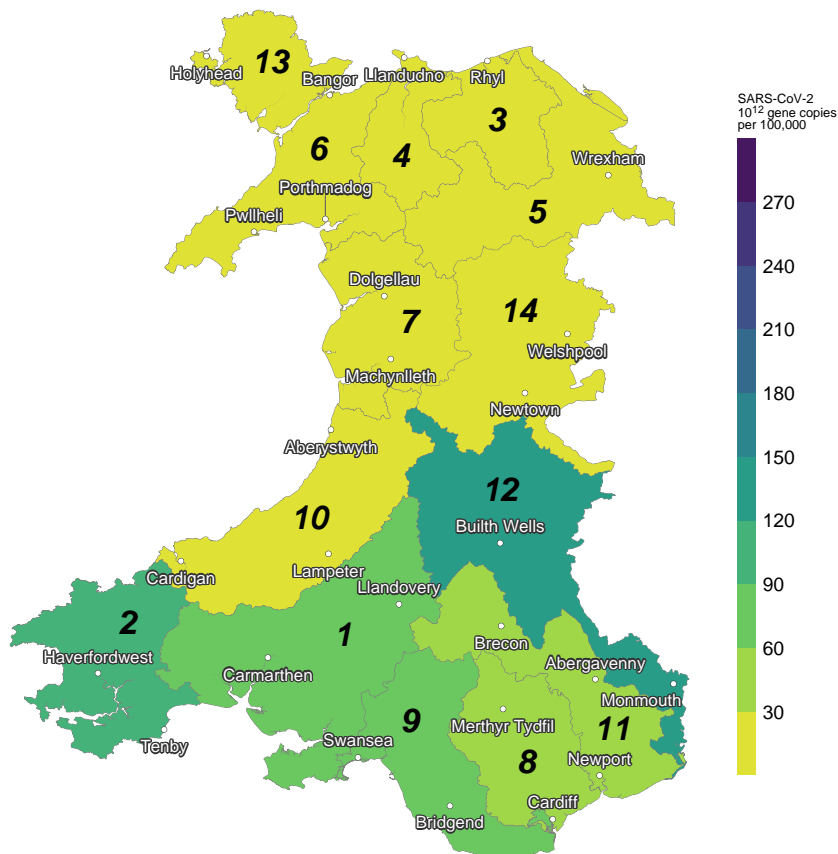
The **Increasing Signal Level** indicator highlights the catchment areas where the viral concentrations are showing signs of continuous increase. It corresponds to a situation where the weekly average of the viral concentration has increased since the previous week for at least 3 weeks in a row.

**Table 3: Waste Water Regional Indicator**

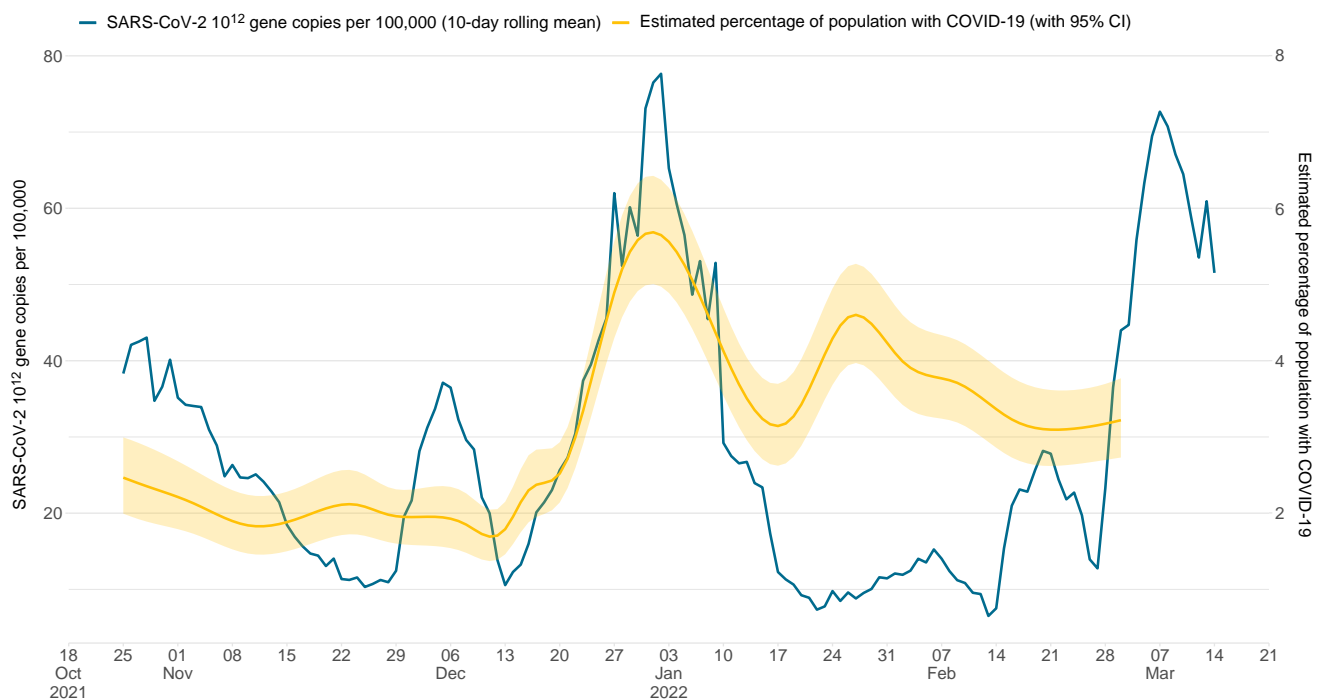
Region name	Number of sites monitored	% regional population covered	No. sites with High level signal	No. sites with Rapid increase	No. sites with Increasing trend
<b>Region 1: Carmarthen Bay and the Gower</b>	4	57	0	0	0
<b>Region 2: Cleddau and Pembrokeshire Coastal</b>	4	39	1	1	0
<b>Region 3: Clwyd</b>	2	54	0	1	0
<b>Region 4: Conwy</b>	2	82	1	1	0
<b>Region 5: Dee</b>	4	46	1	0	2
<b>Region 6: Llŷn and Eryri</b>	4	30	0	0	0
<b>Region 7: Meirionnydd</b>	3	28	1	1	1
<b>Region 8: South East Valleys</b>	2	82	0	0	0
<b>Region 9: Tawe to Cadoxton</b>	5	73	1	0	0
<b>Region 10: Teifi and North Ceredigion</b>	3	30	2	0	1
<b>Region 11: Usk</b>	4	86	3	0	0
<b>Region 12: Wye</b>	4	36	1	1	0
<b>Region 13: Ynys Môn</b>	4	37	1	0	0
<b>Region 14: Hafren Dyfrdwy</b>	3	26	0	0	1



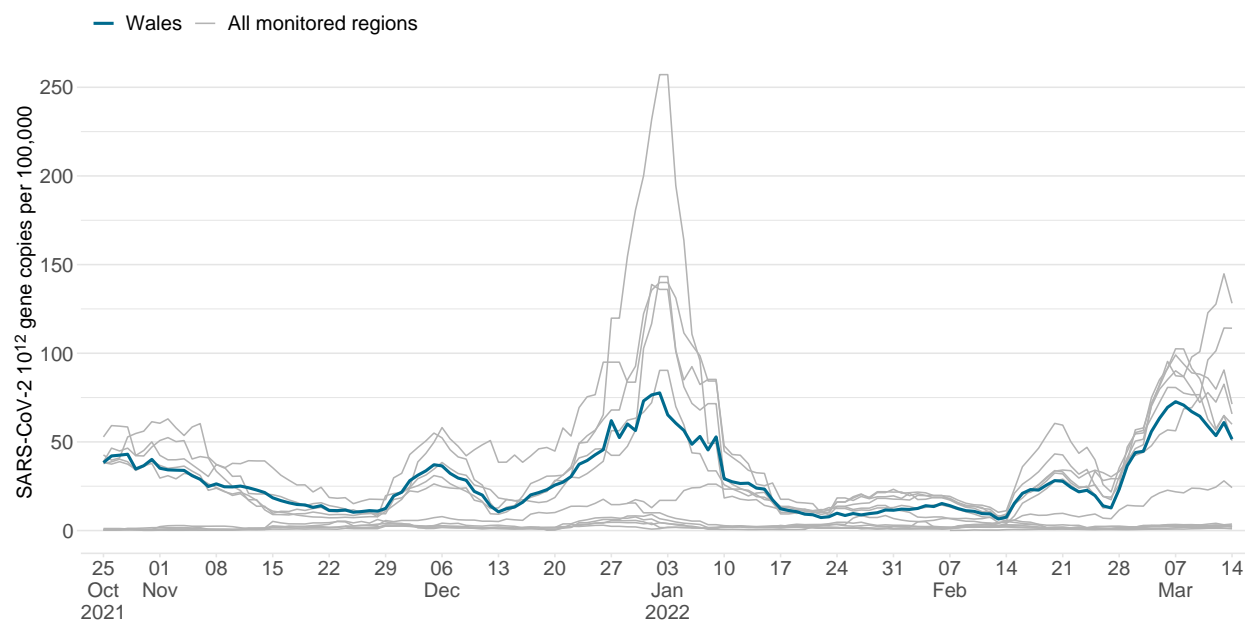
**Figure 13: Regional Heat Map indicating Site Locations. Regional SARS-CoV-2 Signal (gc/day per 100k population) Data up to 14/03/22**



**Figure 14: ONS Covid-19 Infection Survey % Population Infected vs. National Average Wastewater Signal (gc/day per 100k population) - Data up to 14/03/22**



**Figure 15: National Average Wastewater Signal (gc/day per 100k population) and Regional Average Wastewater Signal (gc/day per 100k population) - Data up to 14/03/22**



# What is the situation with arriving travellers?

There have been 399 identified travellers testing positive within 10 days of arrival (1.26% positivity), compared to 516 for the previous week (1.23% positivity) at time of reporting.

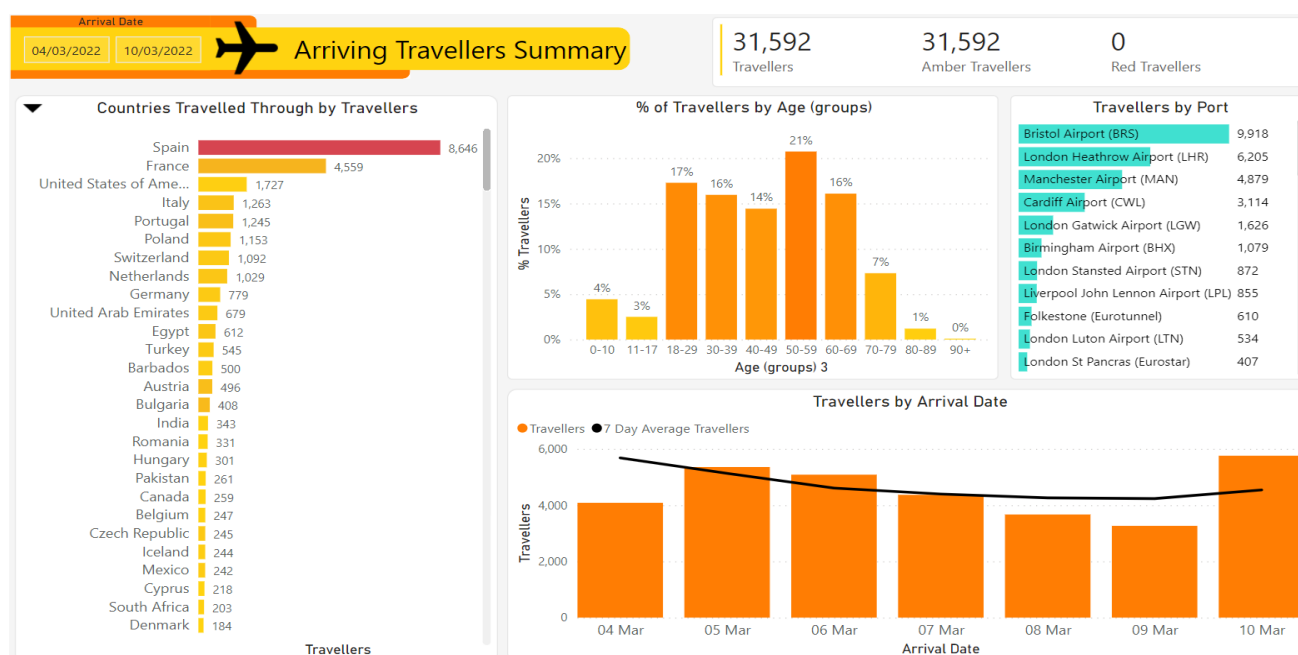
Travellers visiting / from Spain provide the highest numbers testing positive with 147 to date for the week to date (1.70% positivity rate) - compared to 145 (1.36% positivity) the previous week.

95.6% of travellers declared that they were fully vaccinated in an approved country program, compared to 96.3% the previous week.

31,592 Passenger Locator Form (PLF) submissions, compared to 41,819 for the previous week – a decrease of 24.5%.

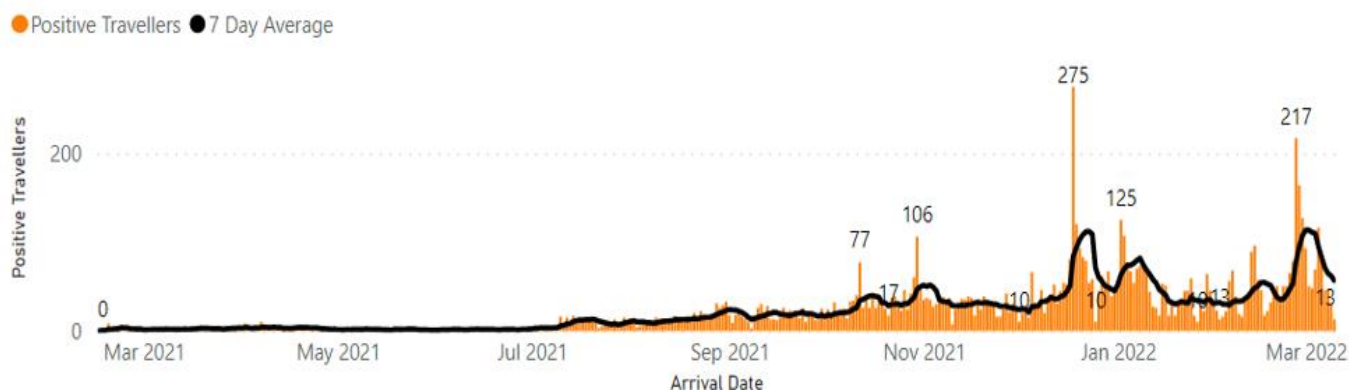
There was an increase in travellers over 60s, whilst all other age groups saw a decrease in traveller numbers compared to the previous week. Date Source: Home Office [Wales Travel Rules](#)

Figure 16: Arriving Travellers Summary

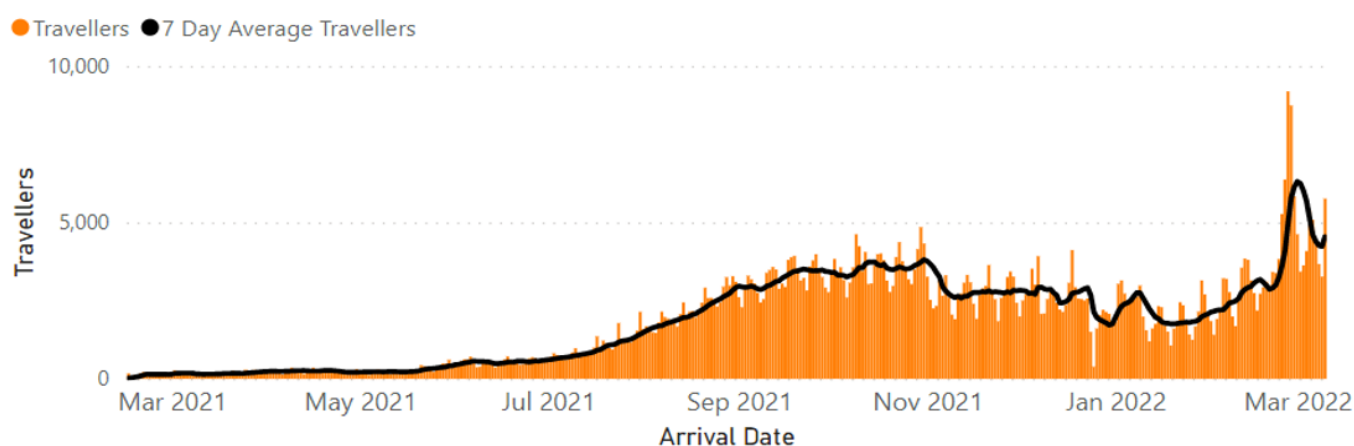


Note: Travellers may have travelled through more than one country on their journey.

**Figure 17: Positive travellers timeline**



**Figure 18: Arriving travellers timeline**



Please note that the data provided by the Home Office is derived from Passenger Locator Forms (PLF) which are self-completed by travellers. As such, data may contain inaccuracies. Due to the limitations associated with data capture and legislation, some minor discrepancies may be present in the data. Countries with 10 or less travellers have been included in the overall positive traveller total, but excluded from the Green/Amber/Red positive traveller breakdown totals for personal identifiable information purposes.

# Mobility data and UK Comparison

As of 12th March, public transport mobility decreased by 1.6 percentage points compared to previous week and stands at -34.2 % below the baseline from -32.6 % previous week.

Residential (i.e. people spending time at home) increased marginally by 0.3 percentage point compared to previous week and stands at 4.8% above the baseline from 4.5% previous week.

Retail & recreation mobility decreased by 2.3 percentage points compared to previous week and stands at -8.7% below the baseline from -7.0% previous week.

Supermarkets & pharmacy decreased by 2.3 percentage points compared to previous week and stands at 6.0% above the baseline from 8.4% previous week.

Workplaces increased marginally by 0.07 percentage points compared to previous week and stands at -18.52% below the baseline from -18.45% previous week.

The baseline for much of the data is during January to February 2020 and changes are relative to that period. It is not possible to determine if mobility is higher/lower than would have been expected prior to the pandemic as data for 2019 or earlier years is not published.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Infection Survey results, 12 February

For the week 6 to 12 March 2022, it is estimated that 4.13% of the community population had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 3.56% to 4.77%). This equates to approximately 1 person in every 25 (95% credible interval: 1 in 30 to 1 in 20), or 125,400 people during this time (95% credible interval: 108,100 to 144,900).

ONS estimates that 98,200 people in Wales had COVID-19 during this period equating to around 1 in 30 people. This compares to around 1 in 25 people in England, around 1 in 14 Northern Ireland and around 1 in 20 people in Scotland.

Source: [Office for National Statistics COVID-19 Infection Survey](#)

Figure 19: Mobility data by location of trip – Average of Welsh local authorities

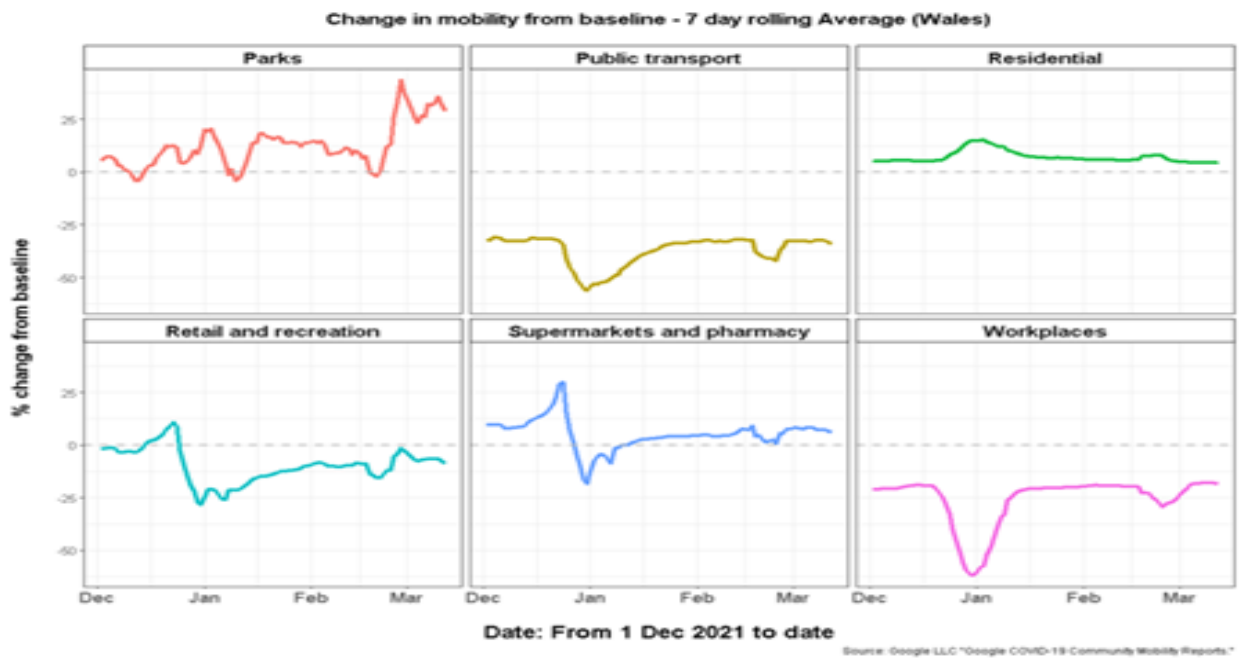
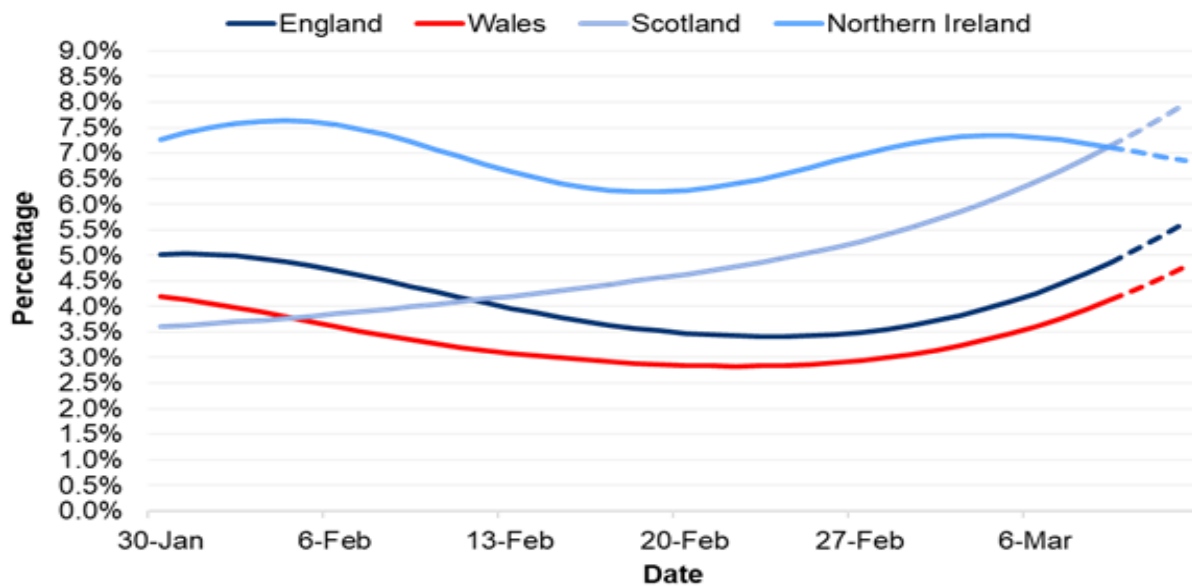


Figure 20: Positivity rates (%) across UK nations



# Vaccine and Immunity status - Omicron

As at 12 March 2022, it is estimated that 74% of people aged 12 and over in Wales had some immunity against COVID-19 infection from the Omicron variant. The lower and higher estimates of immunity are 58% and 90% of people aged 12 and over in Wales. Note that this assumes that immunity from vaccine and infection wanes after 9 months.

The COVID-19 vaccination rollout of first and second doses has slowed in Wales. As at 12 March 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, 15% had exactly two doses, and 72% have also had a third dose or booster, so 88% have had at least 2 doses.

Between 14 February 2022 and 20 February 2022, the ONS COVID-19 Infection Survey estimated that 99.4% of the community population aged 16 and over in Wales tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies.

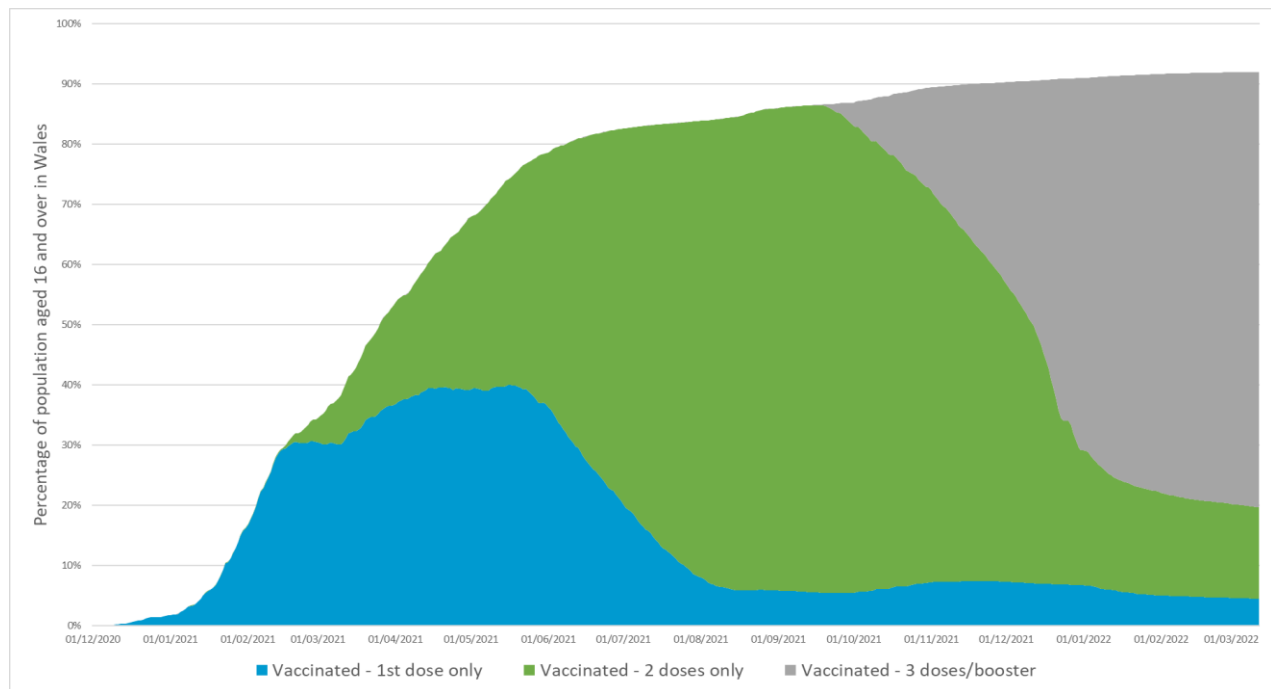
Source: ONS COVID-19 Infection Survey, PHW, SPI-M, Swansea University modelling

1 TAG advice on the Delta variant, published 18 June 2021

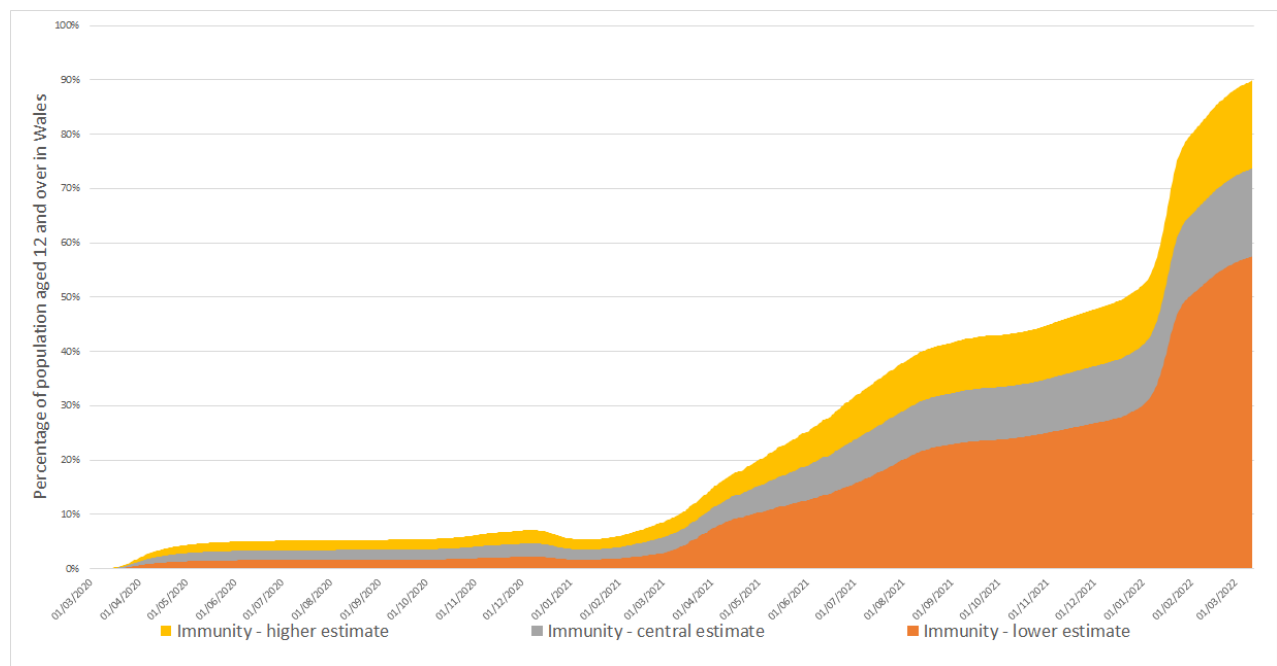
Note: The lower, central and higher immunity estimates use estimates for vaccine efficacy from SAGE (11/02

/2022) and immunity-following-natural-infection assumptions.

**Figure 21: Positivity rates (%) across UK nations**



**Figure 22: Positivity rates (%) across UK nations**





# What does the situation look like going forward?

Based on the current rates observed with current restrictions:

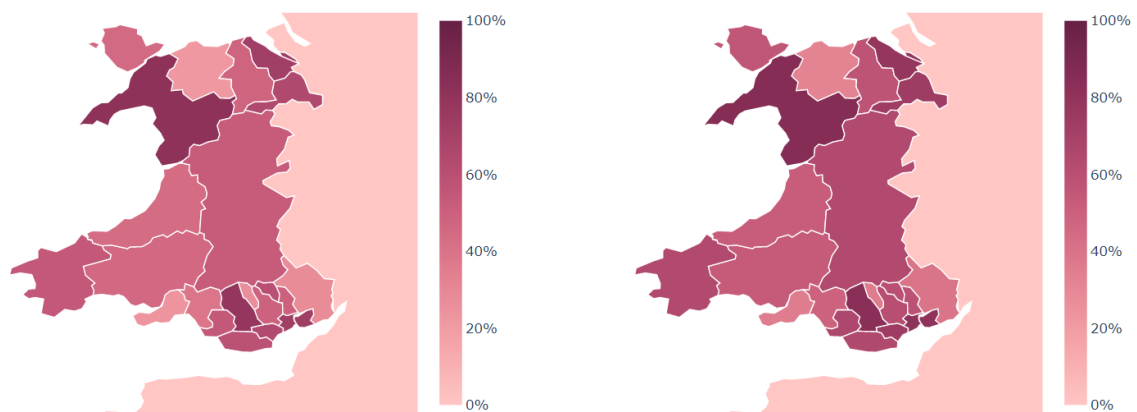
Cases (right) – if current trends continue, the probability of incidence reaching greater than 500 per 100,000 in the next two weeks is above 70% (likely) in five local authorities- Flintshire, Wrexham, Gwynedd, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Newport (Source: Imperial College London)

Hospitalisations per day (bottom right) - Projected to increase slightly.

Deaths per day (bottom left) - Due to low numbers, death estimates are not available this week

These projections are based on current trends and will not fully reflect the impact of policy or behavioural changes over the past two or three weeks, nor the potential impact of the Omicron variant. These are not forecasts or predictions.

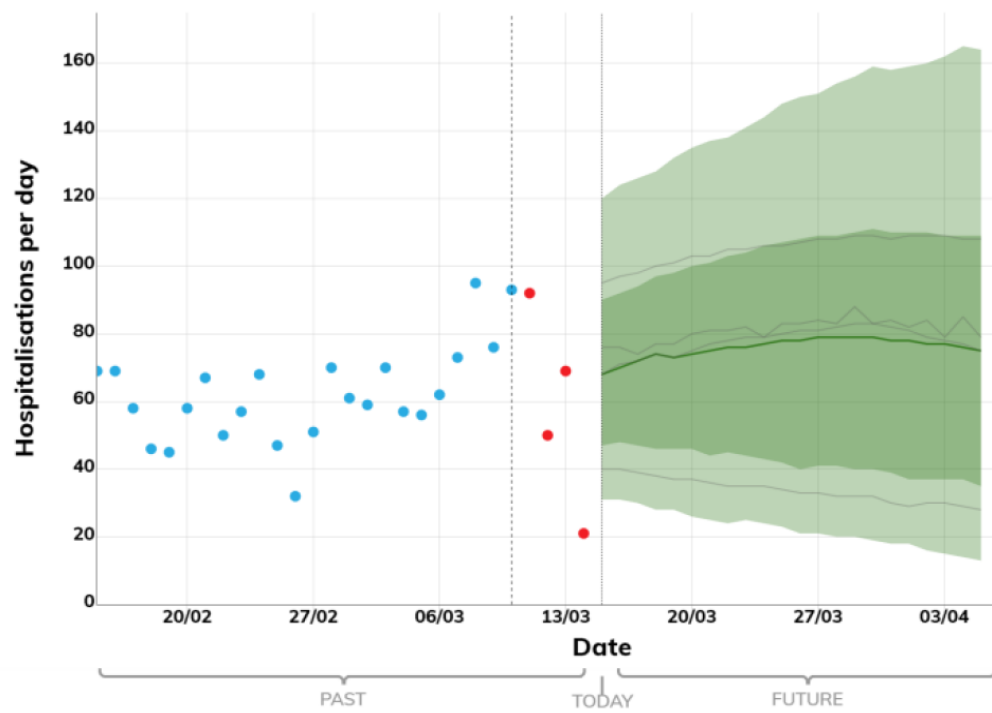
**Figure 23: Probability of greater than 500 per 100,000 cases by local authority**



Time period: 20 - 26 March

Time period: 27 March – 02 April

Figure 24: SPI-M projection of Hospitalisations per day as at 15 March 2022



# Key risks and sources

## Key risks

Area	Assessment
Transmission, incidence and prevalence	Overall cases of COVID-19 and test positivity have increased across Wales. With the return to alert level 0 and easement of restrictions, there is a need to continue monitoring trends.
NHS Capacity	Over the latest week, the number of beds occupied with COVID-19 related patients has increased. This was due to an increase in confirmed and suspected patients (up 169 and 36 patients respectively) despite a slight decrease in recovering patients (down 2 patients). As at 15 March 2022, there were 1,059 COVID-19 related patients (confirmed, suspected and recovering) occupying a hospital bed. This compares to 856 (203 more occupied beds) on 8 March 2022.
Mortality	As at 12 March 2022, the 7 day rolling sum of COVID-19 deaths have decreased to 13 (a 54% drop since the previous week. Source: PHW)
Variants	As of 15 March 2022, in the most recent 7-day period Wales the number of weekly genomically confirmed Omicron cases reported to PHW has increased to 6,325 (98,736 total to date), of which +1,780 (54,164 total) were BA.1, +3,595 (8,737 total) were BA.2 and 950 (35,835 total) were 'Omicron not elsewhere classified', requiring sequencing to determine their sublineage. There were also +31 cases of Delta (106,176 total) detected. Note that this reporting also captures NEC samples from previous weeks that have since been sequenced and is therefore not a reliable estimate of weekly infections. Reporting of BA.2 prevalence to Welsh Government by PHW suggests that in the week ending 6 March 70% of cases were BA.2.
Immunity and Vaccines	As at the week ending 06 March 2023, a total of 6,902,137 doses of COVID-19 vaccine were given in Wales and recorded in the Welsh immunisation System.  As at 12 March 2022, it is estimated that 74% of people aged 12 and over in Wales had some immunity against COVID-19 infection from the Omicron variant.
International	The proportion of travellers testing positive is generally fluctuating, with numbers remaining relatively low.

## Key Sources for this update

Technical Advisory Cell brief:

<https://gov.wales/advice-coronavirus-technical-advisory-cell>

COVID Infection Survey results:

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-infection-survey>

Public Health Wales:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection#!/vizhome/RapidCOVID-19virology-Public/Headlinessummary>

Hospital occupancy:

<https://gov.wales/nhs-beds-admissions-and-hospitalisations-during-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

Higher Education:

<https://gov.wales/positive-coronavirus-cases-reported-higher-education-institutions-wales-27-september-2020-onwards>

School attendance:

<https://gov.wales/pupils-present-maintained-schools>

UKHSA VoC Technical Briefing:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investigation-of-novel-sars-cov-2-variant-variant-of-concern-20201201>