



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Science Evidence Advice

Weekly Surveillance Report

23 April 2024



Science Evidence Advice (SEA)

gov.wales

Providing evidence and advice for Health and Social Services
Group on behalf of the Chief Scientific Advisor for Health

Science Evidence Advice: Weekly Surveillance Report

Top Line Summary

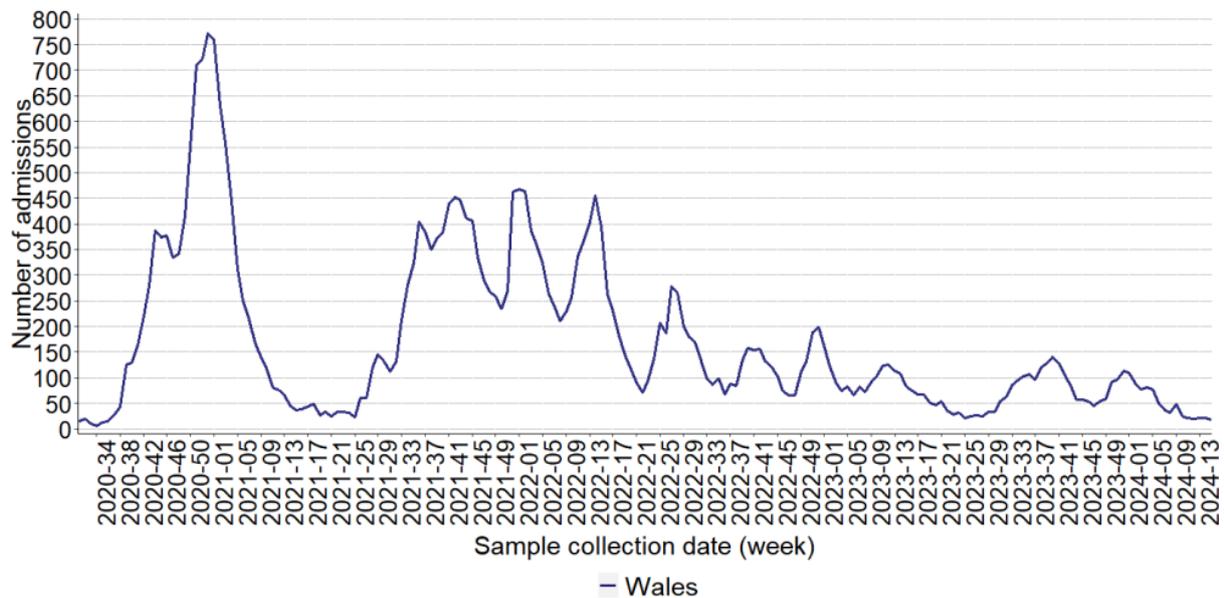
- Overall, COVID-19 infections have remained **stable** in the most recent week.
- COVID-19 hospital admissions remained **stable** in the most recent week.
- RSV activity in children under 5 years remained **stable** at low intensity levels.
- 56 confirmed cases of Influenza, a **decrease** from 97 confirmed cases the previous week.
- Whooping Cough notifications have **increased** in the most recent week.
- Scarlet Fever notifications have remained **stable** in the most recent week.

1. COVID-19 Situation Update

Overall, COVID-19 infections have remained stable in the most recent week. While not consistent across all indicators, many of the indicators remain relatively stable.

- At a national level, the weekly number of confirmed case admissions to hospital and the number of cases who are inpatients has remained stable in week 15, following a gradual declining trend in recent weeks.
- As at 14 April 2024, **98** people currently in hospital have had a positive COVID-19 test, including **2** currently in ICU (compared to **107** and **1** in the previous week).
- The all-Wales incidence as estimated using PCR episodes remains at low levels.
- The number of deaths from any cause has decreased in the latest reported data available from ONS and remains above the 5 year average.
- In the last four reporting weeks, V-23DEC-01 (Omicron, JN.1) is the most dominant variant in Wales, accounting for **95.6%** of all sequenced cases.
- There were **2** new respiratory incidents recorded in the health protection case and incident management system (Tarian) in week 15 2024, this has remained stable since the previous week. Of the respiratory incidents, both were found in residential homes.
- The proportion of calls to NHS 111 and NHS Direct related to possible COVID-19 symptoms has decreased in week 15 compared to previous weeks. GP consultations for any Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) have increased in the most recent week and consultations for suspected COVID have remained stable at low levels.
- The overall number of ambulance calls related to COVID-19 has decreased and the proportion of incidents has decreased in week 15.

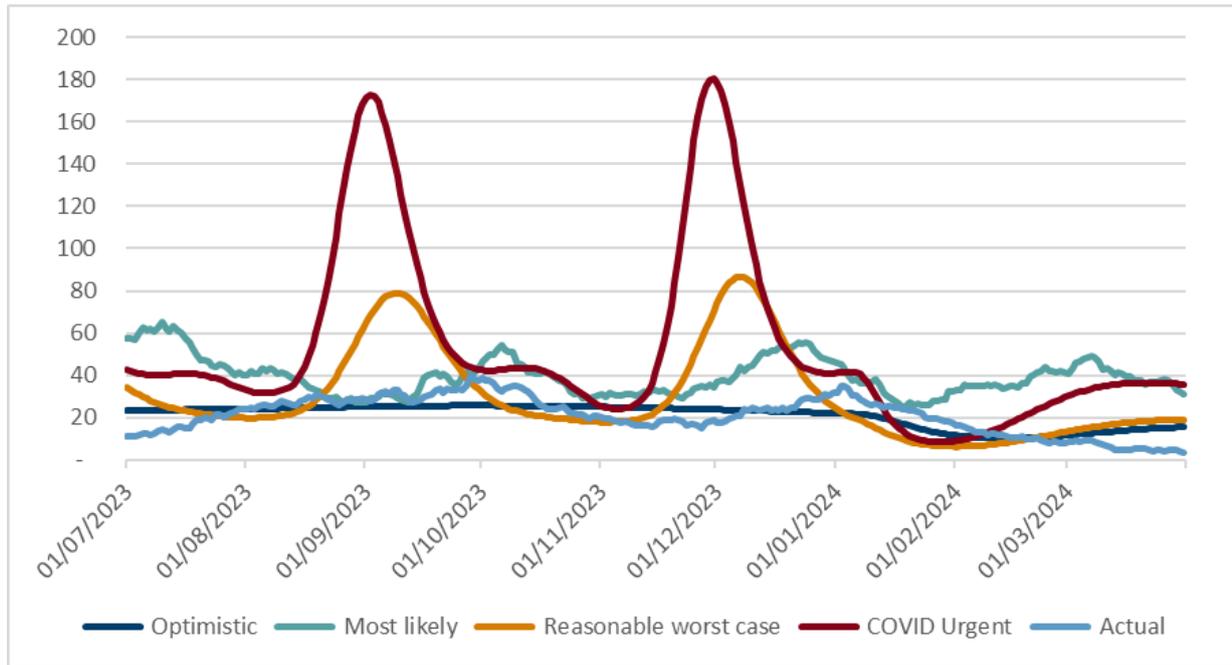
Figure 1: Weekly number of admissions to all hospitals in Wales testing positive on or within 28d prior to admission, Wales (ICNET clinical surveillance software)(source: [PHW](#))



SEA Winter Scenarios

The Science Evidence Advice (SEA) division (WG) [Winter COVID-19 scenarios](#) have been plotted against the actual COVID-19 hospital admissions data from PHW. Currently the actual data is tracking well below the ‘most likely’ scenario (which is the COVID-19 series from last Winter) and is now well below the ‘reasonable worst case’ and ‘optimistic’ scenarios developed for the Winter season. Daily hospital admissions for COVID19 are currently at their lowest rate in Wales since the start of the pandemic.

Figure 2: SEA COVID-19 scenarios vs. PHW actuals (daily hospital admissions)



Swansea University Mid Term Projections for COVID-19

The latest available Swansea University MTPs using data up to 27 March project a plateau in COVID-19 non-ICU hospital admissions through April and continuing on this trajectory through to June 2024. ICU admissions remain at low levels.

Figure 3: Daily COVID-19 hospital admissions, projected to June 2024

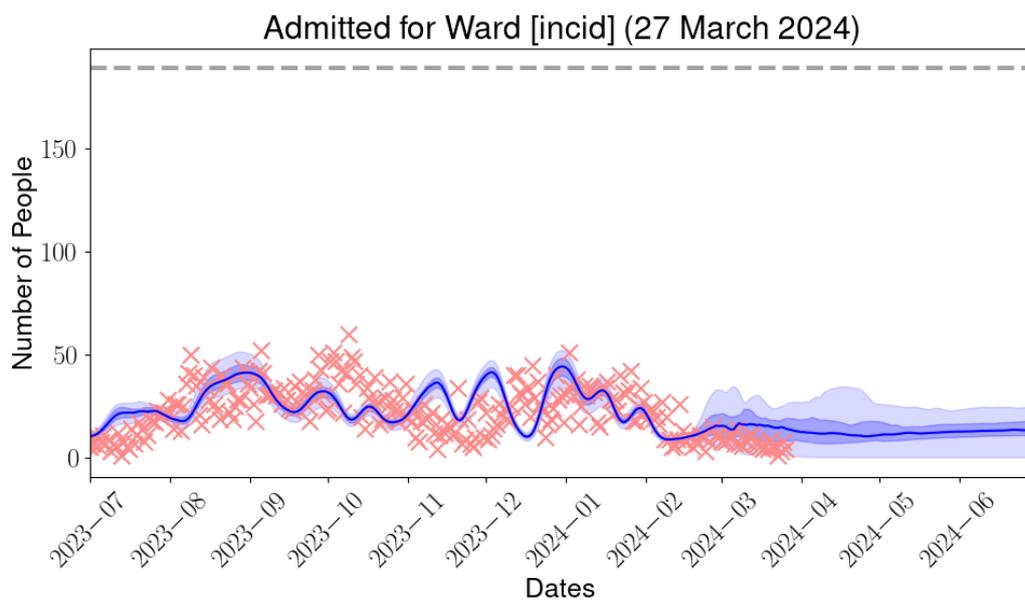
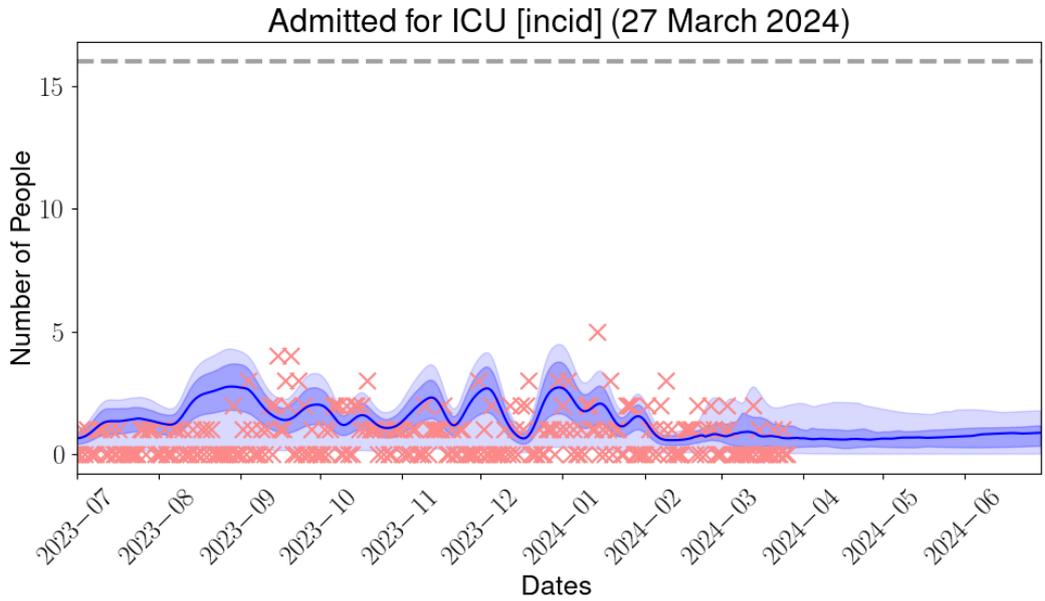


Figure 4: Daily COVID-19 ICU admissions, projected to June 2024

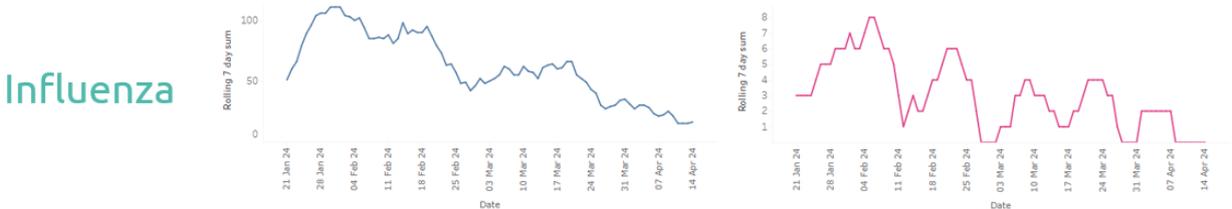


Notes: In the charts above, red crosses represent actual COVID-19 cases data. The blue line represents the central modelling estimate. The blue ribbon represents the confidence intervals, with the darker blue ribbon indicating the 25th to 75th percentiles, and the 95% confidence limits in the lighter ribbon.

2. Influenza Situation Update

Current levels of influenza are low and the overall current trend is decreasing. During week 15 (ending 14/04/2024) there were 56 confirmed cases of influenza in Wales (6 influenza A(H1N1), 31 for influenza A (not subtyped), 1 for influenza A(H3) and 18 for influenza B)

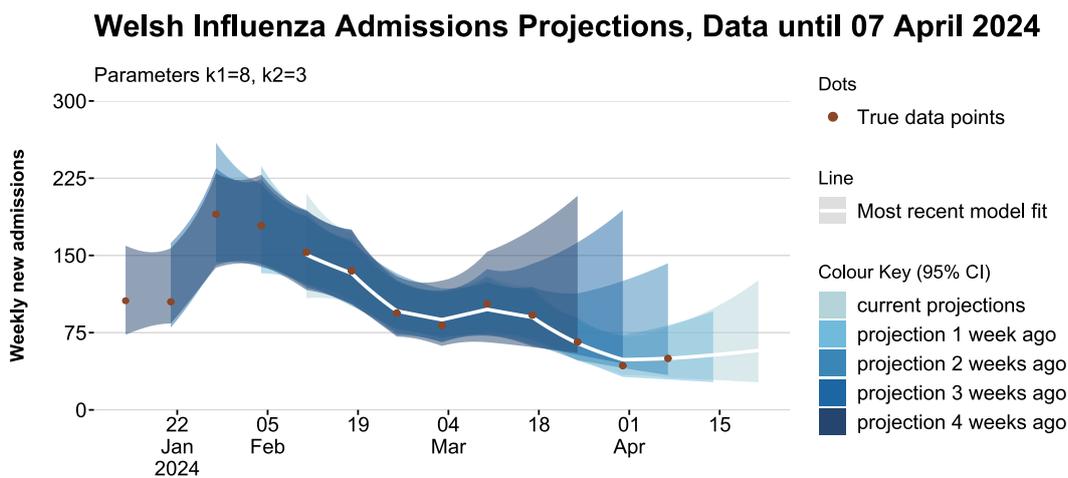
Figure 5: 7 day rolling sum of influenza case admissions to hospital in Wales (source: [PHW](#))



SEA Short term projections (STPs)

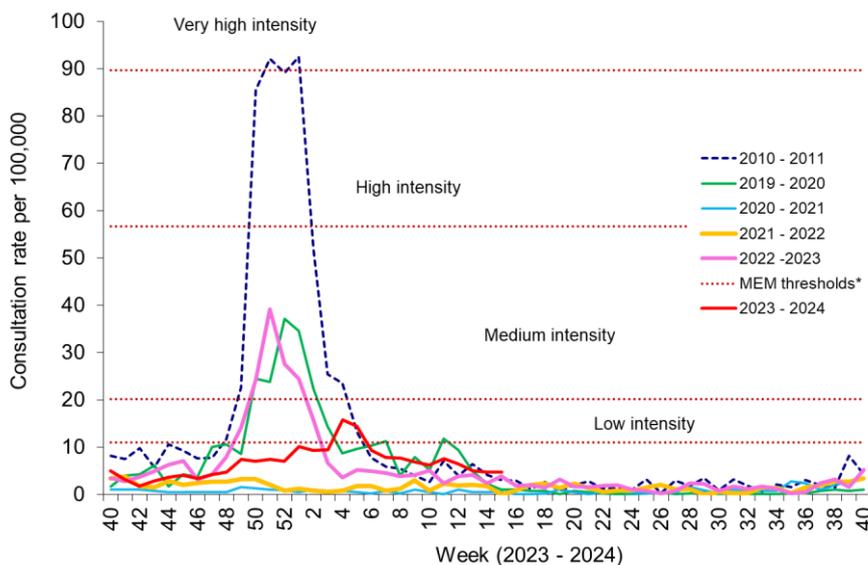
SEA have developed STPs for influenza which uses admissions data from PHW until 7 April 2024 to make short term projections for influenza 2 weeks forward (21 April 2024). The brown dots show the actual data points while the white line is the best fit from the most recent projection. The colour shadings represent the 95% confidence interval of the projections with light blue showing the most recent projection and the dark blue showing the oldest. The STPs show a plateauing in Influenza through to the end of April with a slight uptick at the end of the series.

Figure 6: Influenza STPs (hospital admissions – PHW data)



There is evidence of a continued decrease in syndromic surveillance of influenza like illness (ILI) in the most recent period and this is at the low intensity level. The figure below shows this decrease to week 15 (the bright red line is the 2023-2024 influenza season).

Figure 7: Clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population in Welsh sentinel practices (source: PHW)



3. Other Infectious Diseases

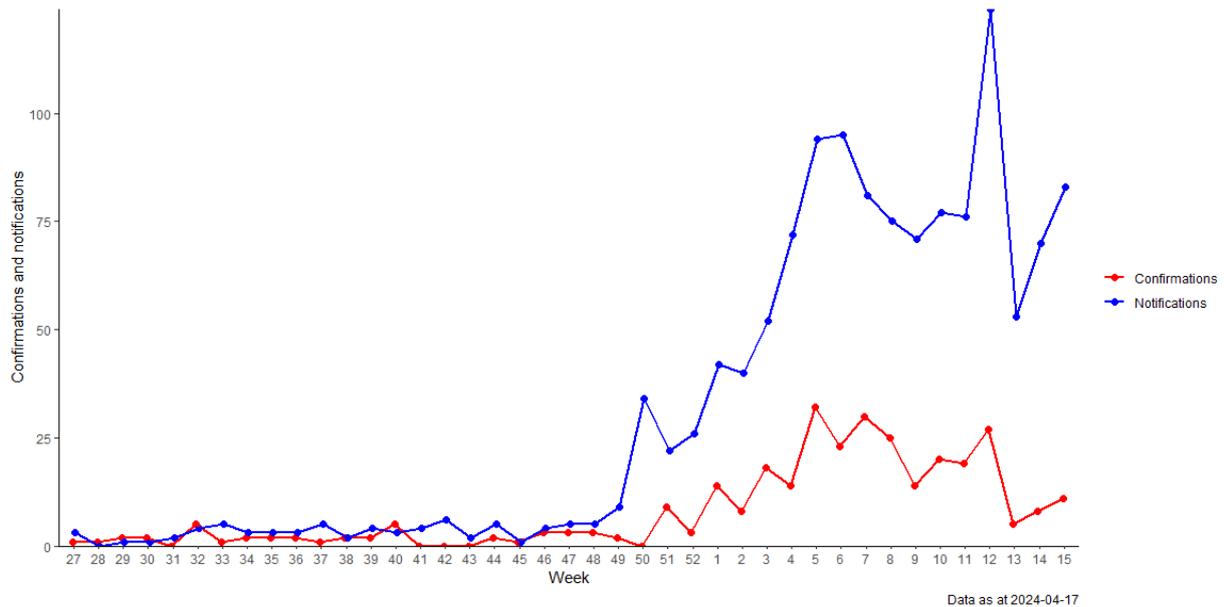
3.1 Whooping Cough (Pertussis)

Public health experts in Wales are encouraging all pregnant women and parents of babies and young children to ensure that they have had their Pertussis (Whooping Cough) vaccinations as cases in Wales show rapid increase in recent weeks.

Whooping cough has waves of increased infection every 3-4 years and in the last few weeks, notifications of whooping cough have risen sharply. Following reduced circulation in 2020-2022, current notifications are at levels not seen since 2012 and 2015. Laboratory confirmed cases have not yet risen in line with notifications but are likely to increase as test results are reported.

Figure 8 below shows that there has been a continued increase in notifications and confirmations up to the end of week 15.

Figure 8 Weekly notifications and confirmations of Pertussis/Whooping Cough in Wales in the 2023-24 season year. (Source: PHW)



3.2 iGAS and Scarlet Fever

The number of iGAS notifications are currently low, remaining at seasonally expected levels. Scarlet Fever notifications have decreased in the most recent week (week 15) as shown in the figures below (up to 14 April) with Figure 10 showing a stable picture overall for the current season (the bright red line on the chart). These notifications are now below 100 a week compared to the peak of over 800 notifications in January 2023.

Figure 9: Rolling 3 Week Average Scarlet Fever Notifications, 2014-2024, Wales (source: [PHW](#))

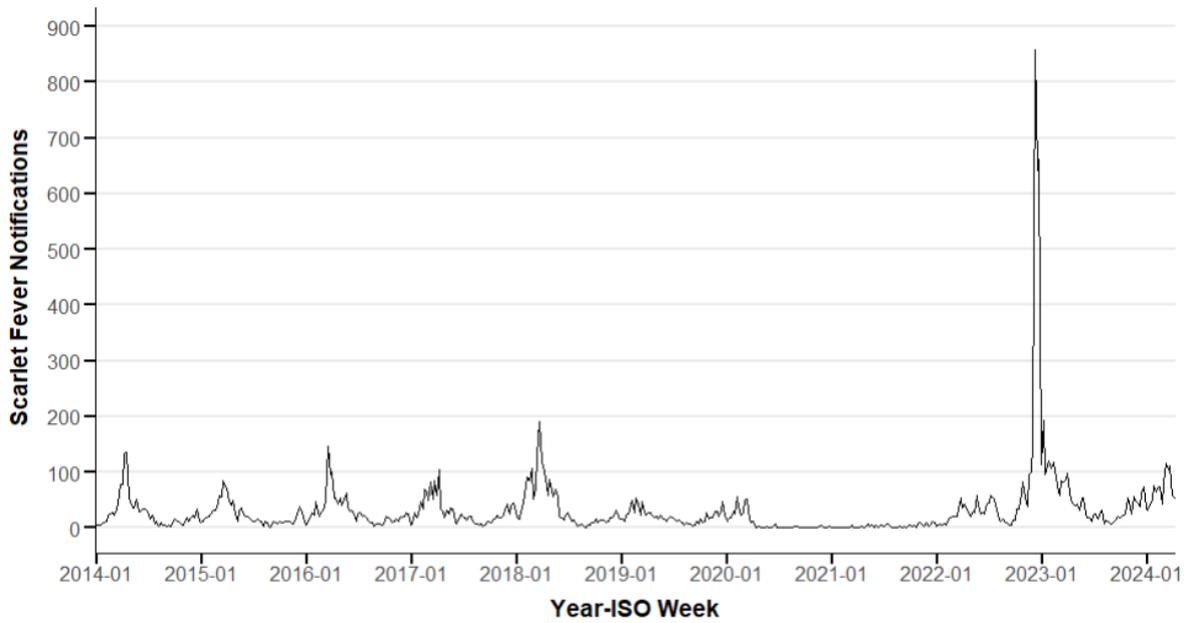
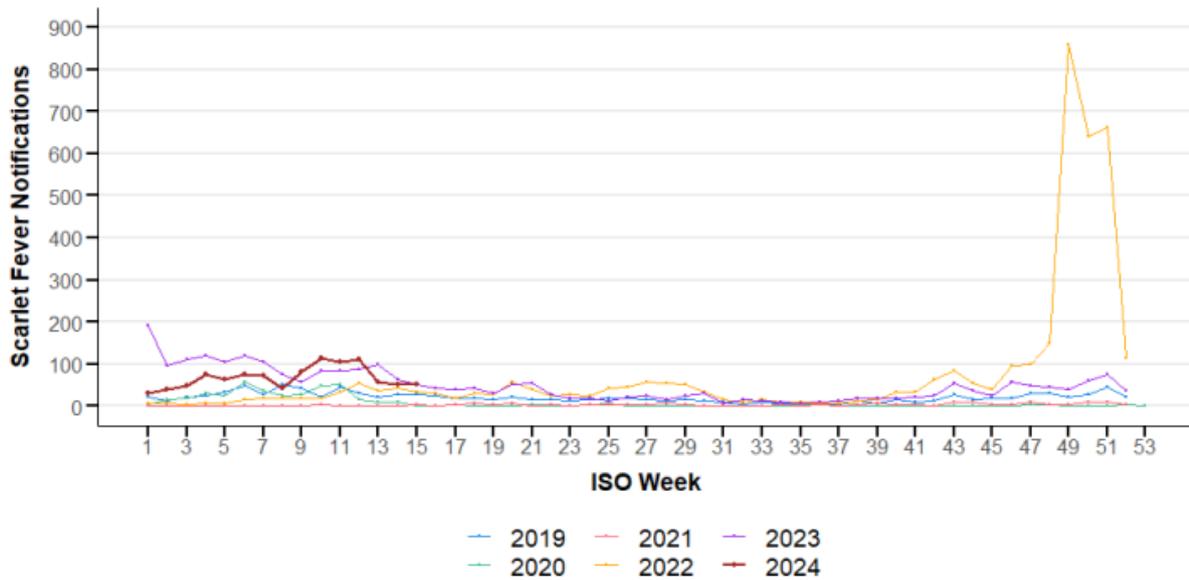


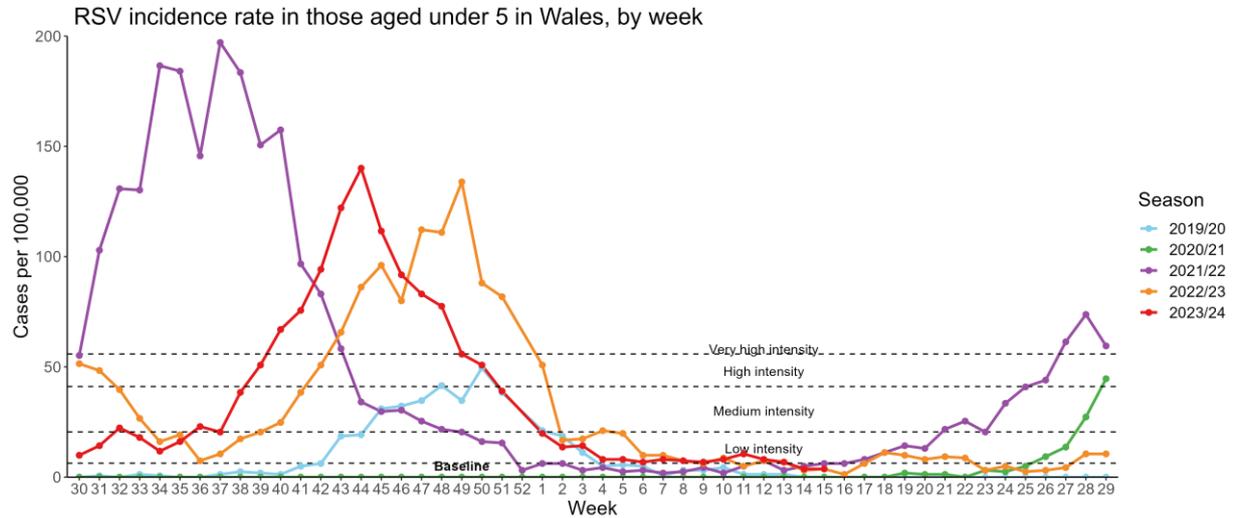
Figure 10: Rolling 3 Week Average Scarlet Fever Notifications, 2014-2024, Wales (Source: [PHW](#))



3.3 Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) update

RSV activity in children under 5 years remains stable in the most recent week and remains at low intensity levels and very close to baseline (compared to historic levels before 2021).

Figure 11: RSV Incidence Rate (source: PHW)



4. Health Board Analysis

4.1 Short Term Projections for Influenza and RSV

SEA have produced short term projections (STPs) for Influenza and RSV which can be produced at the Local Health Board unit.

The Influenza STPs uses admissions data from PHW until 7 April 2024 to make short term projections for Flu 2 weeks forward (21 April 2024). The brown dots show the actual data points while the white line is the best fit from the most recent projection. The colour shadings represent the 95% confidence interval of the projections with light blue showing the most recent projection and the dark blue showing the oldest. The STPs for Health Boards show that Influenza is showing a slight uptick in Cwm Taf, Cardiff and Vale and Swansea Bay.

Figure 12: SEA short term projections for Influenza

