# Weekly report on the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland

# Week 52, 2023

**Due to the holiday period, including two public holiday days, in week 52, data should be interpreted with caution. A dip in surveillance indicators is typically observed between Christmas and New Year. Data for week 52 may not accurately reflect the epidemiological situation.**

- The epidemiological weeks in this report run from Sunday to Saturday. Please refer to the HPSC website for a complete list of epidemiological weeks with start and end dates for 2020-2023.

- Data for this report are based on cases notified on the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) up to midnight 30/12/2023. Data were extracted from CIDR system on 02/01/2024. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures.

- Data should be interpreted in the context of the current testing policy. Testing policies can affect the number and age distribution of confirmed cases notified on CIDR. Information on the current testing policy in Ireland can be found here

- **From week 47, 2023 this report uses population data from Census 2022. Rates may therefore differ from those reported previously which used population data from Census 2016.**

# Key points

**Notified confirmed cases**

- In week 52 (between December 24 and December 30 2023) there were 611 new confirmed COVID-19 cases reported on CIDR. This is a decrease of 33.4% compared to week 51 when there were 918 confirmed COVID-19 cases notified.

- The highest number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases in week 52 was in the age group of 75-84 years with 20.9% of notified cases in week 52.

**Laboratory data of SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests**

- In week 52, a total of 5,781 SARS-CoV-2 tests were performed, of which 705 (12.2%) were positive. This is an increase compared to the previous week, 51, when 11.9% were positive.

**Deaths**

- Since the start of the pandemic 9,466 COVID-19 deaths among notified COVID-19 cases have been reported on CIDR. Of these, 1 had a date of death in week 52.

**Table 1**: Summary characteristics of COVID-19 cases notified in Ireland during week 52, 2023 and 2023 to date

|  | Week 52, 2023 | | Total 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | **Number** | **Percentage** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| Total number of confirmed cases | 611 |  | 35,492 |  |
| Incidence rate of confirmed cases per 100,000 population | 11.9 |  | 689.3 |  |
| **Severe cases** |  |  |  |  |
| Number of cases hospitalised | 236* | 38.63 | 15,196* | 42.82 |
| Number of cases admitted to ICU | 0* | 0.00 | 147* | 0.41 |
| Number of deaths among confirmed cases | 2* | 0.33 | 771* | 2.17 |

*\* The number of cases hospitalised, cases admitted to ICU and deaths described in the above table relate only to COVID-19 cases who were notified during this reporting period, and where the outcome is known at the time of reporting. It does not reflect all hospitalisations, ICU admissions and deaths related to COVID-19 which occurred during the period covered by the report. It also does not reflect the final number of cases hospitalised, admitted to ICU or deaths for these cases notified during this period as the outcome may not yet have occurred, or is yet to be notified*

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# Confirmed cases of COVID-19

Since the start of 2023, a total of 35,492 confirmed COVID-19 cases have been notified on CIDR. In the past week, week 52 2023, 611 confirmed COVID-19 cases were reported on CIDR. This is a decrease of 33.4% compared to week 51 when 918 confirmed COVID-19 cases were notified. Figure 1 shows the epidemiological curve of COVID-19 cases notified in Ireland for the last one year to week 52 2023. Data since the start of the pandemic is available on the Epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland infohub.
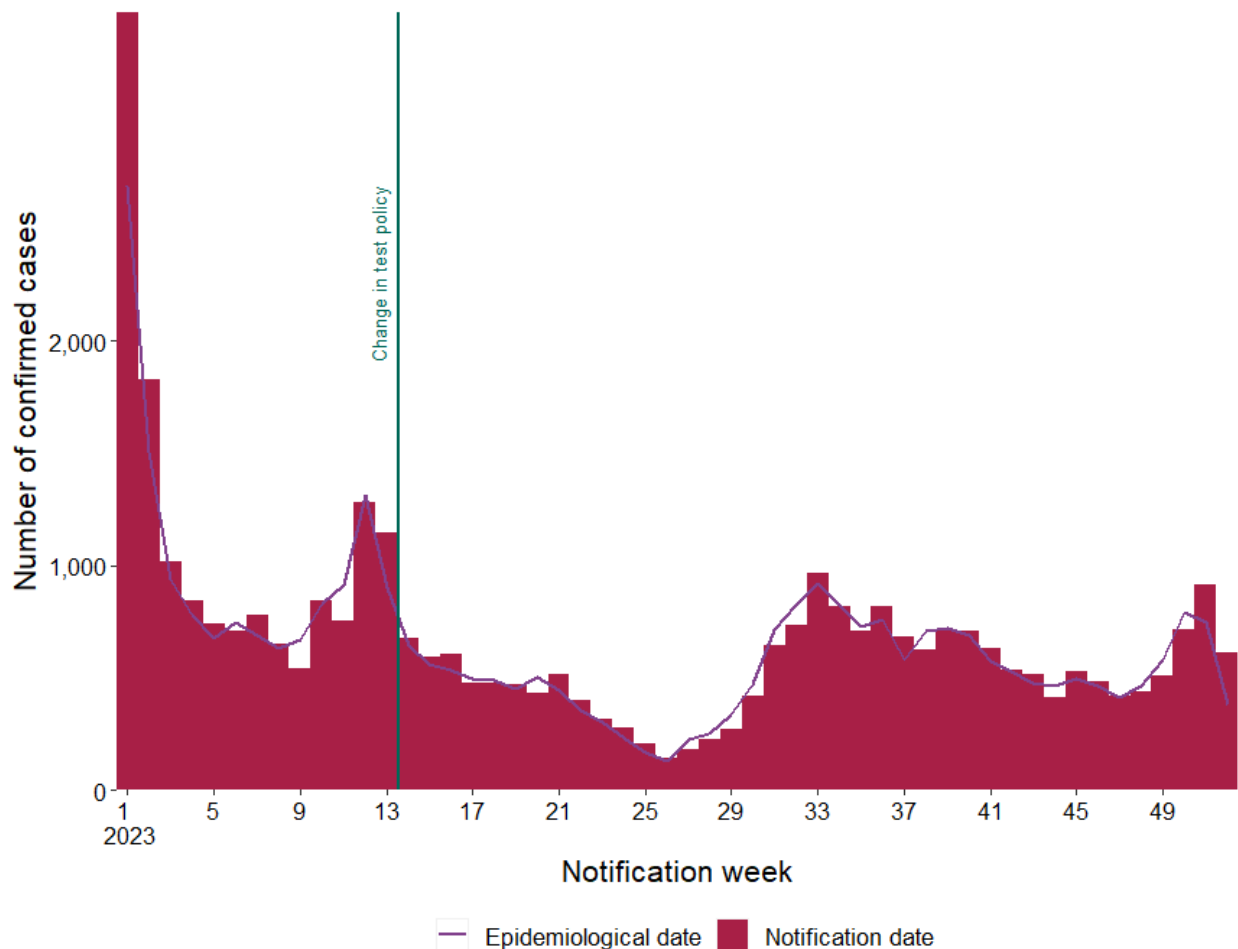


Figure 1a: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases by notification week and epidemiological date in Ireland between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023. The red bars represent the number of confirmed cases by notification date. The purple line represents the number of cases by epidemiological date. The dark blue horizontal lines indicate a change in test policy[1]

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[1] Since 30/03/2023 (week 13, 2023), community test centres closed and PCR testing was only performed based on clinical assessment.

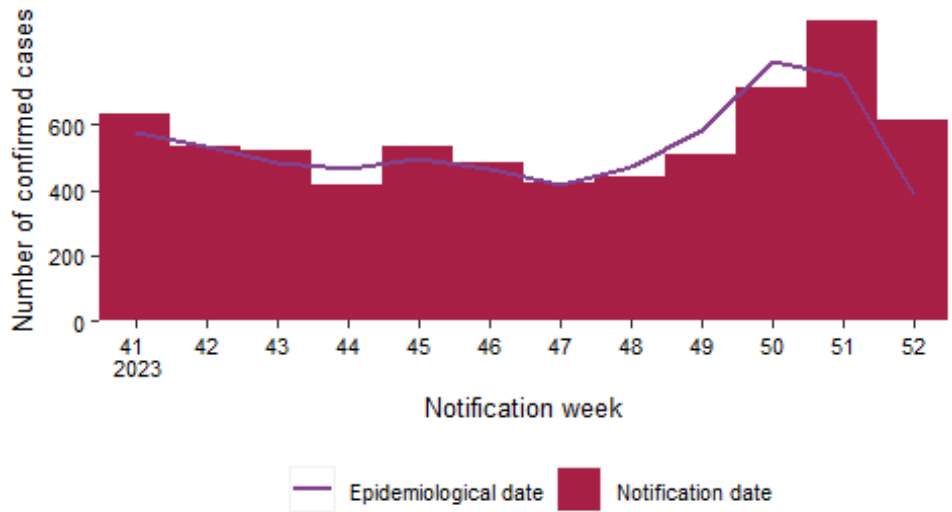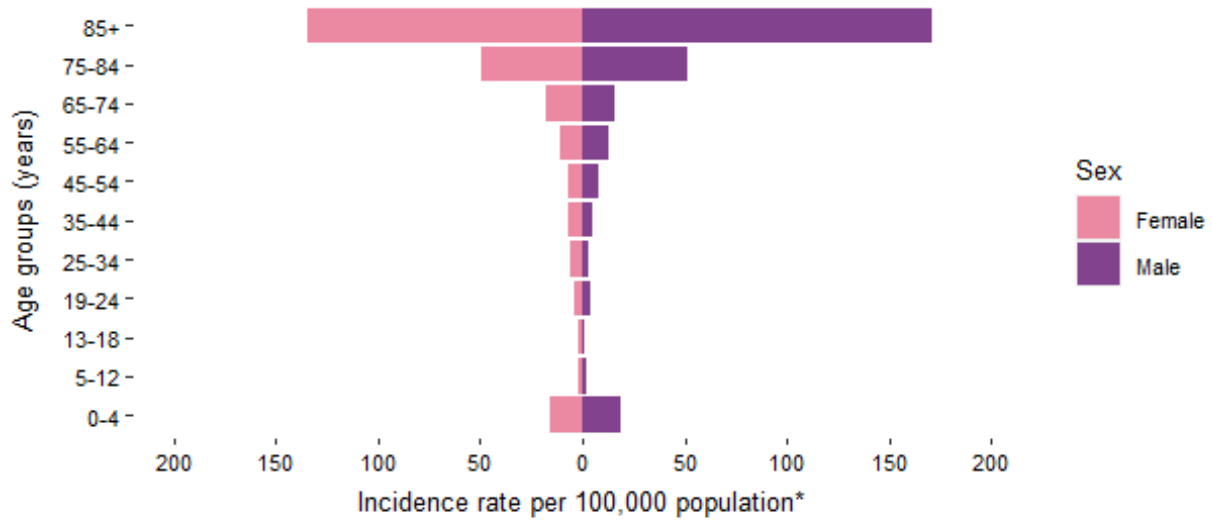Report prepared by Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Figure 1b: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases by notification week and epidemiological date in Ireland in the last 12 weeks. The red bars represent the number of confirmed cases by notification date. The purple line represents the number of cases by epidemiological date.

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## Confirmed COVID-19 cases by age and sex

**Table 2**: Summary characteristics by age and sex of COVID-19 cases notified in Ireland during week 52, 2023 and 2023 to date

| | Week 52, 2023 | | Total 2023 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Number** | **Percentage** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Males | 285 | 46.6 | 15,588 | 43.9 |
| Females | 322 | 52.7 | 19,897 | 56.1 |
| M:F ratio | 0.89 | | 0.78 | |
| **Age (years)** | | | | |
| Mean age | 60 | | 58 | |
| Median age | 69 | | 62 | |
| Age range | 0 - 98 | | 0 - 103 | |
| **Age groups (years)** | | | | |
| 0-4 | 51 | 8.3 | 1,696 | 4.8 |
| 5-12 | 11 | 1.8 | 398 | 1.1 |
| 13-18 | 7 | 1.1 | 459 | 1.3 |
| 19-24 | 16 | 2.6 | 1,083 | 3.1 |
| 25-34 | 30 | 4.9 | 3,246 | 9.1 |
| 35-44 | 45 | 7.4 | 3,952 | 11.1 |
| 45-54 | 52 | 8.5 | 3,800 | 10.7 |
| 55-64 | 69 | 11.3 | 4,000 | 11.3 |
| 65-74 | 76 | 12.4 | 4,941 | 13.9 |
| 75-84 | 128 | 20.9 | 6,914 | 19.5 |
| 85+ | 126 | 20.6 | 4,999 | 14.1 |
| Unknown | NA | 0.0 | 4 | 0.0 |

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*Excluding 0 for whom age is unknown, 0 for whom sex is unknown and 0 for whom both are unknown

Figure 2: Age and sex specific incidence rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population for current week 52, 2023
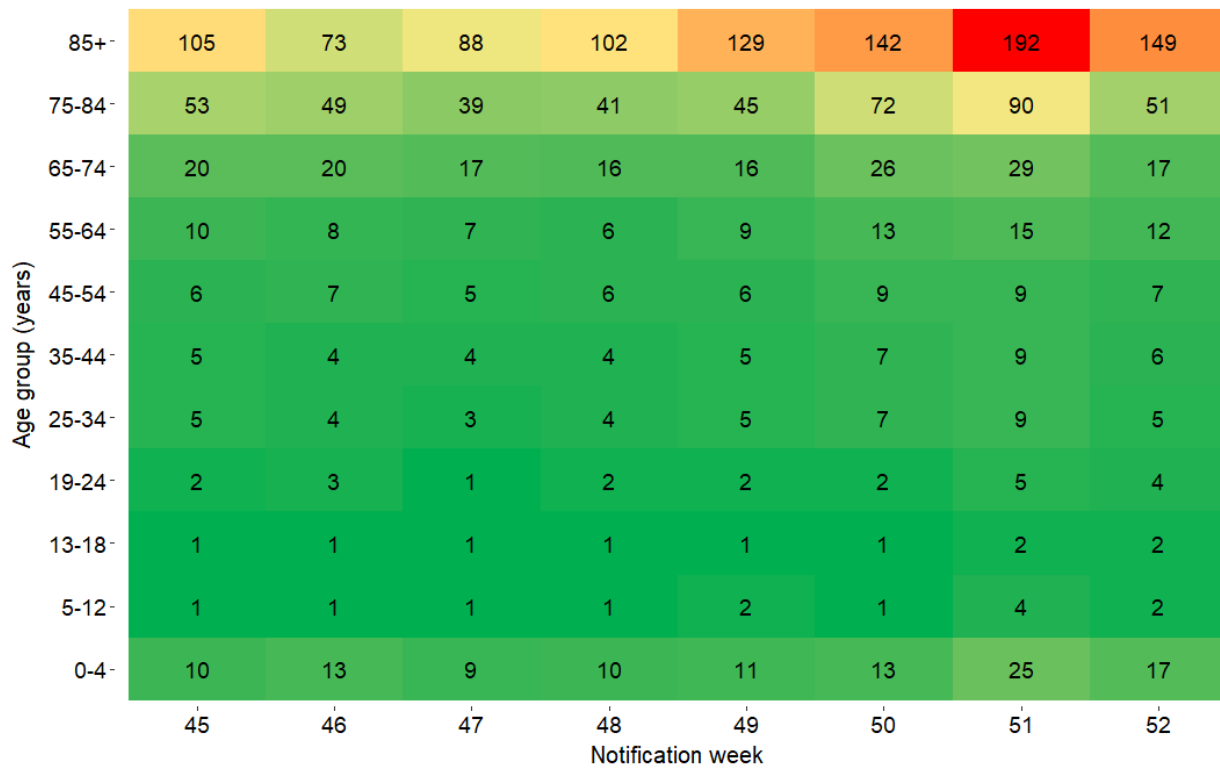


Figure 3: Heat map of weekly age-specific incidence rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population in Ireland for the last 8 weeks

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## Cases and incidence by county

**Table 3**: Characteristics of confirmed COVID-19 cases by county and descending incidence rate per 100,000 notified in Ireland, during week 52, 2023*

| County | Number of cases | Percent | Incidence rate per 100,000 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Donegal | 65 | 10.6 | 38.9 |
| Offaly | 30 | 4.9 | 36.1 |
| Cavan | 17 | 2.8 | 20.8 |
| Sligo | 13 | 2.1 | 18.5 |
| Leitrim | 6 | 1.0 | 17.0 |
| Westmeath | 16 | 2.6 | 16.6 |
| Laois | 15 | 2.5 | 16.3 |
| Limerick | 31 | 5.1 | 14.8 |
| Kerry | 23 | 3.8 | 14.7 |
| Mayo | 20 | 3.3 | 14.5 |
| Cork | 77 | 12.6 | 13.2 |
| Dublin | 185 | 30.3 | 12.7 |
| Roscommon | 8 | 1.3 | 11.4 |
| Kildare | 28 | 4.6 | 11.3 |
| Galway | 29 | 4.7 | 10.4 |
| Monaghan | 6 | 1.0 | 9.2 |
| Clare | 8 | 1.3 | 6.3 |
| Meath | 13 | 2.1 | 5.9 |
| Tipperary | 9 | 1.5 | 5.4 |
| Carlow | 2 | 0.3 | 3.2 |
| Longford | 1 | 0.2 | 2.1 |
| Wicklow | 3 | 0.5 | 1.9 |
| Wexford | 3 | 0.5 | 1.8 |
| Kilkenny | 1 | 0.2 | 1.0 |
| Waterford | 1 | 0.2 | 0.8 |
| Louth | 1 | 0.2 | 0.7 |

*\* County data may not be accurately reflected in the most recent week due to ongoing data validations*

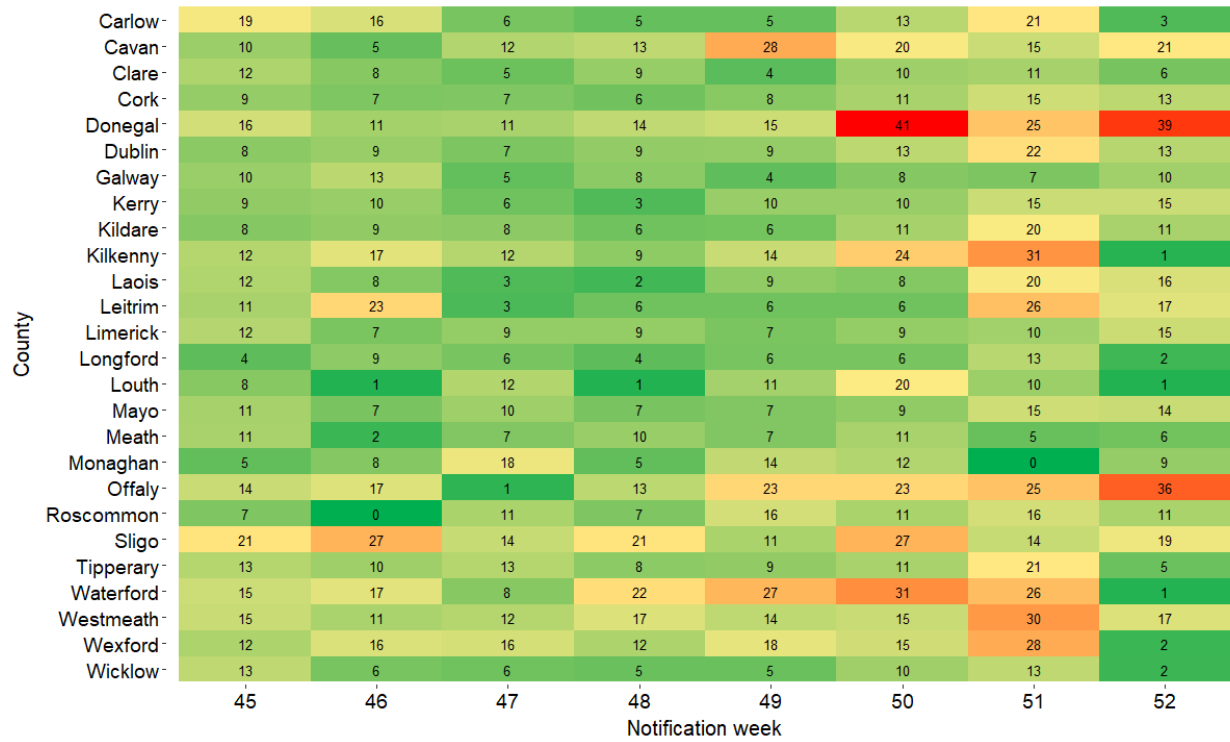Report prepared by Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Figure 4: Heat map of weekly incidence rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population, by county, notified in Ireland for the last 8 weeks

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# Hospitalisations

A total of 236 hospitalised confirmed COVID-19 cases were recorded in the latest epidemiological week, week 52 2023.



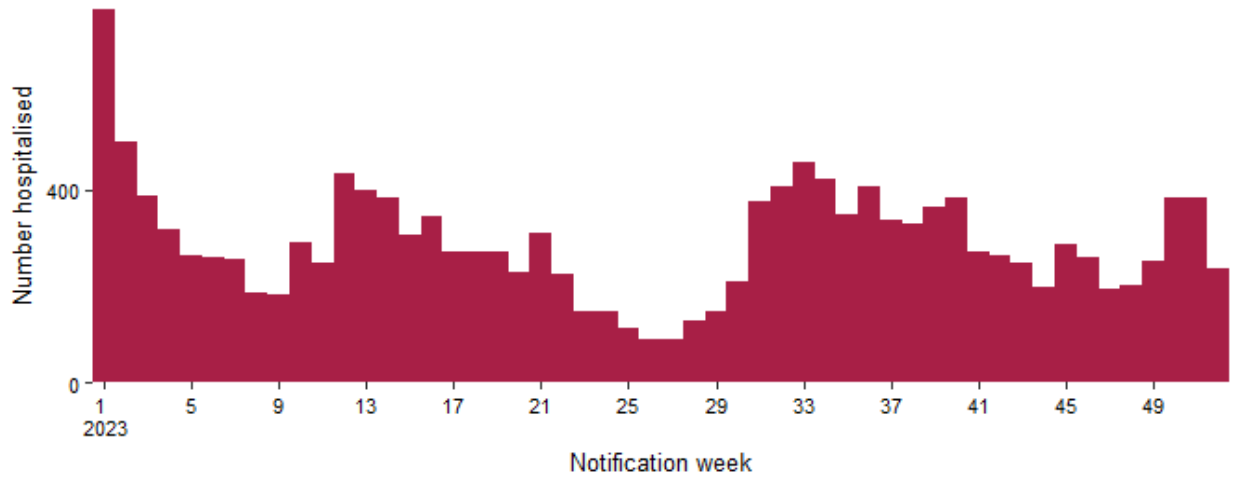Figure 5: Hospitalisations among confirmed COVID-19 cases notified on CIDR in Ireland between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023

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**Table 4**: Number of COVID-19 cases and hospital admissions by age group in Ireland for week[2] 52, 2023 based on week of notification[3]

| Age group | Week 52, 2023 | | | Total 2023 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total cases | Hospitalised cases | | Total cases | Hospitalised cases | |
| | Number of cases | Number of cases | Percentage | Number of cases | Number of cases | Percentage |
| 0-4 | 51 | 15 | 29.4 | 1,696 | 921 | 54.3 |
| 5-12 | 11 | 1 | 9.1 | 398 | 168 | 42.2 |
| 13-18 | 7 | 3 | 42.9 | 459 | 137 | 29.8 |
| 19-24 | 16 | 1 | 6.2 | 1,083 | 216 | 19.9 |
| 25-34 | 30 | 8 | 26.7 | 3,246 | 561 | 17.3 |
| 35-44 | 45 | 7 | 15.6 | 3,952 | 674 | 17.1 |
| 45-54 | 52 | 13 | 25.0 | 3,800 | 841 | 22.1 |
| 55-64 | 69 | 27 | 39.1 | 4,000 | 1,448 | 36.2 |
| 65-74 | 76 | 35 | 46.1 | 4,941 | 2,854 | 57.8 |
| 75-84 | 128 | 65 | 50.8 | 6,914 | 4,350 | 62.9 |
| 85+ | 126 | 61 | 48.4 | 4,999 | 3,026 | 60.5 |
| Unknown | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 0 | 0.0 |

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[2] Hospitalisations may be underestimated for recent weeks as the outcome may not yet have occurred or may not yet have been reported to CIDR
[3] Data are based on the date the case was notified on CIDR, and not the date of hospital admission

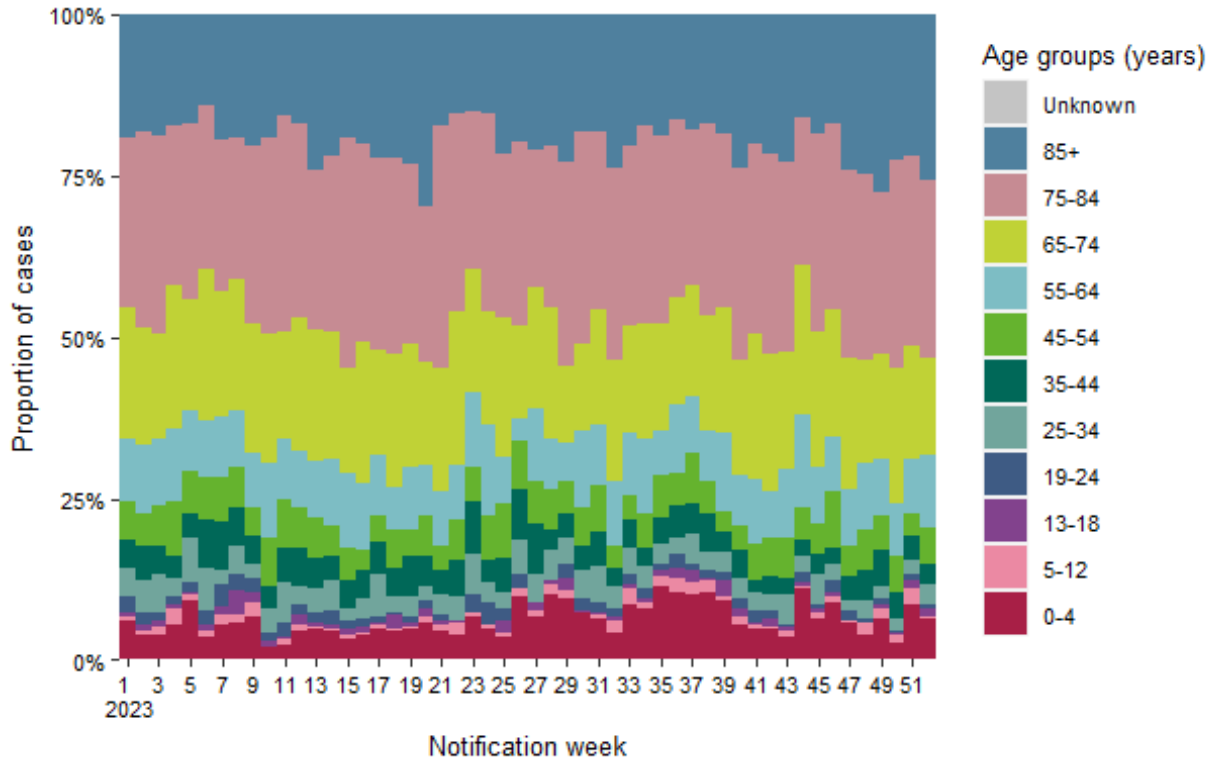Report prepared by Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Figure 6: Age distribution of hospitalised confirmed COVID-19 cases notified on CIDR in Ireland between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023
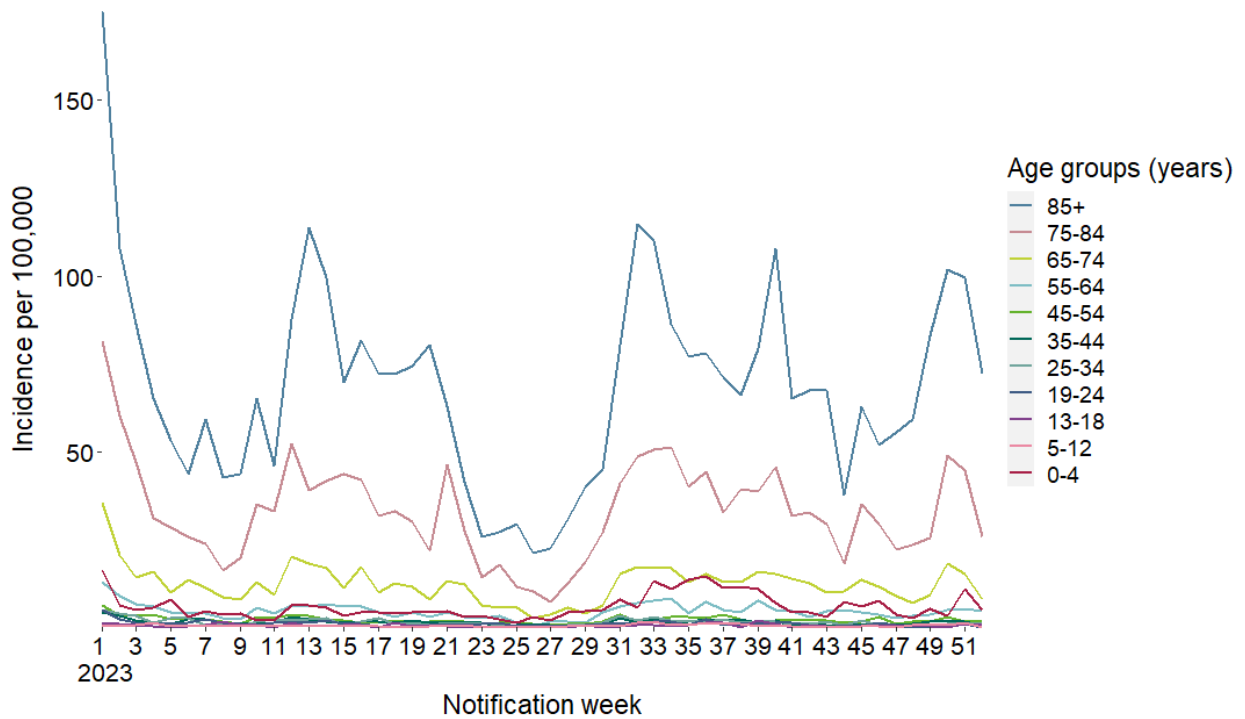


Figure 7: Incidence rate by age group of hospitalisations among confirmed COVID-19 cases on CIDR in Ireland between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023

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## ICU admissions

A total of 0 COVID-19 cases were admitted to ICU in the latest epidemiological week[3], week 52 2023.
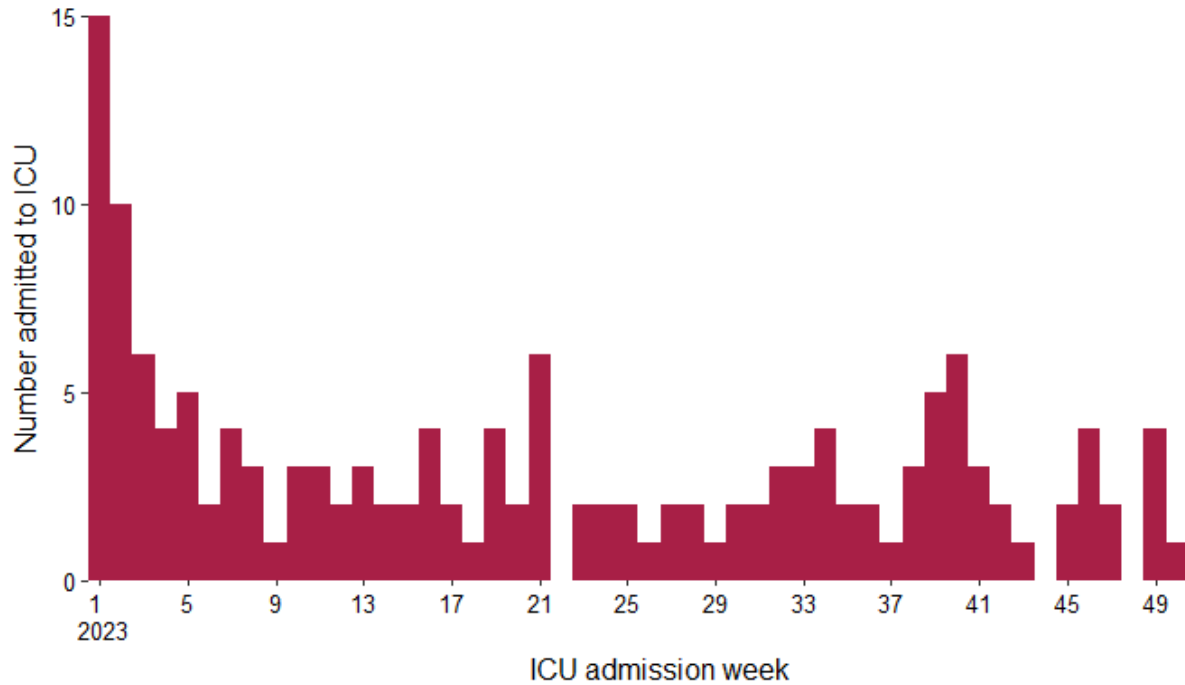


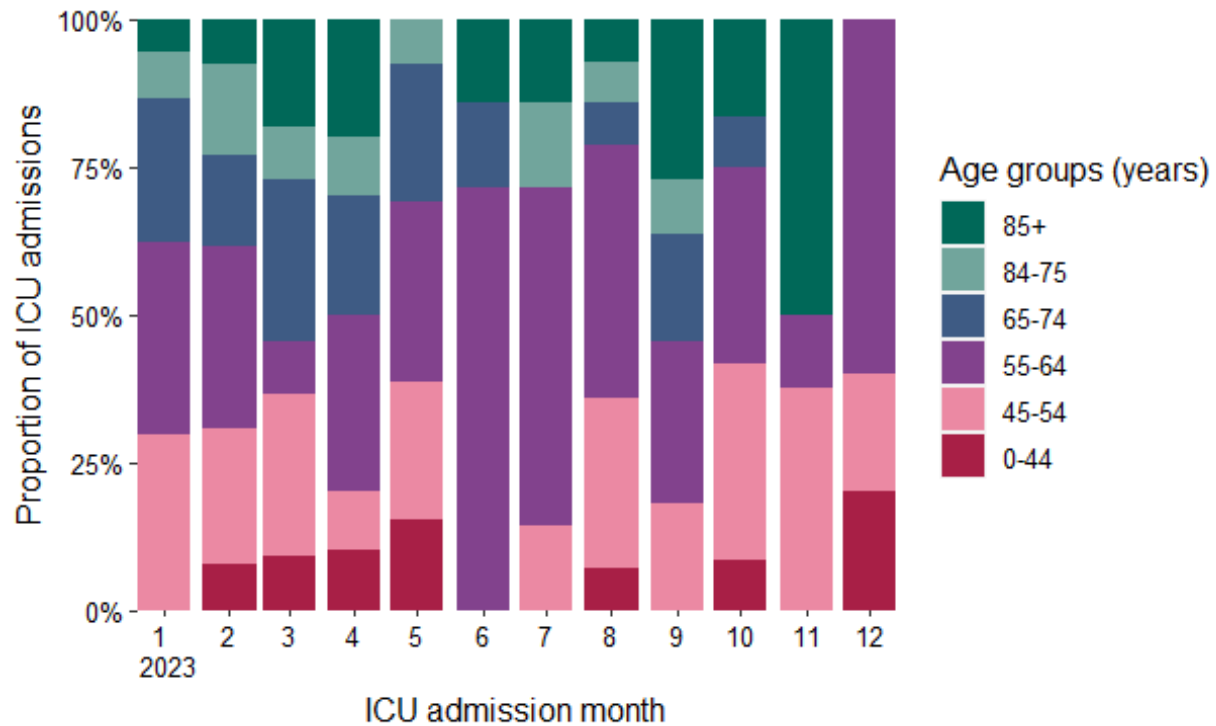Figure 8: Number of COVID-19 ICU admissions in Ireland by week of ICU admission, between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023[4]



Figure 9: Age distribution of confirmed COVID-19 cases admitted to ICU by month of admission between January, 2022 and December, 2023

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[4] Please note that most recent weeks may not yet reflect all admissions

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# Deaths

Please note the below figures and tables include all cases (confirmed, probable and possible) who have died.

A total of 1 cases had a date of death in the latest epidemiological week, 52. The mean and median age of those who died in that week was 92 years respectively.
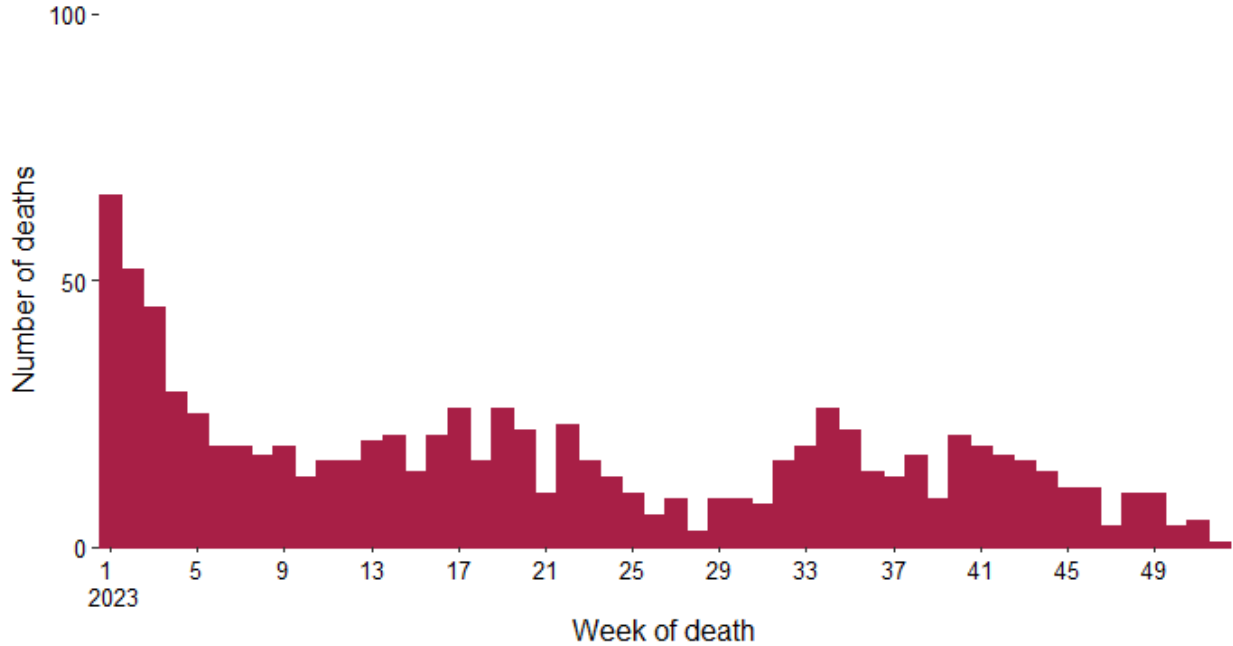


Figure 10: Total number of COVID-19 deaths notified by week of death, cases with a date of notification from week 53, 2022 to 52, 2023[5]. Date of death missing for 0 of the reported deaths

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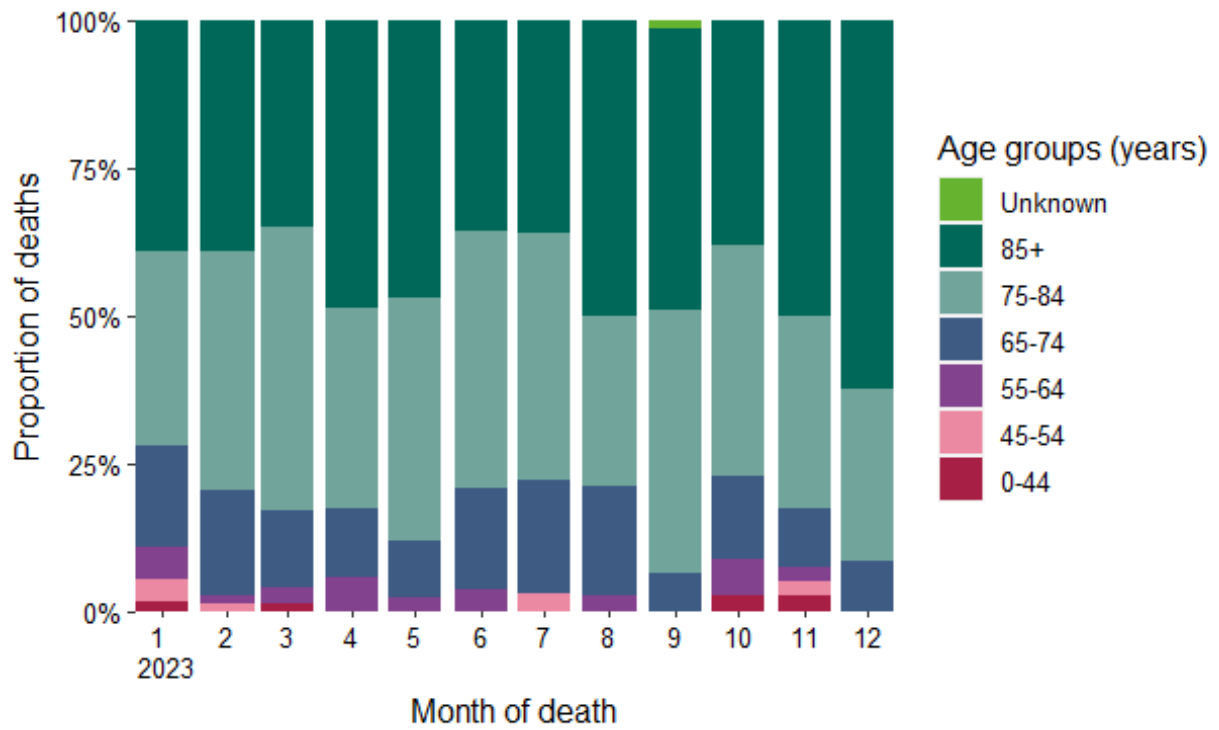[5] Please note that most recent weeks may not yet reflect all deaths

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Figure 11: Age distribution of COVID-19 deaths notified on CIDR in Ireland between January, 2022 and December, 2023

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# Laboratory data of SARS-CoV-2 PCR tests

In week 52, a total of 5,781 SARS-CoV-2 tests were performed, of which 705 (12.2%) were positive.
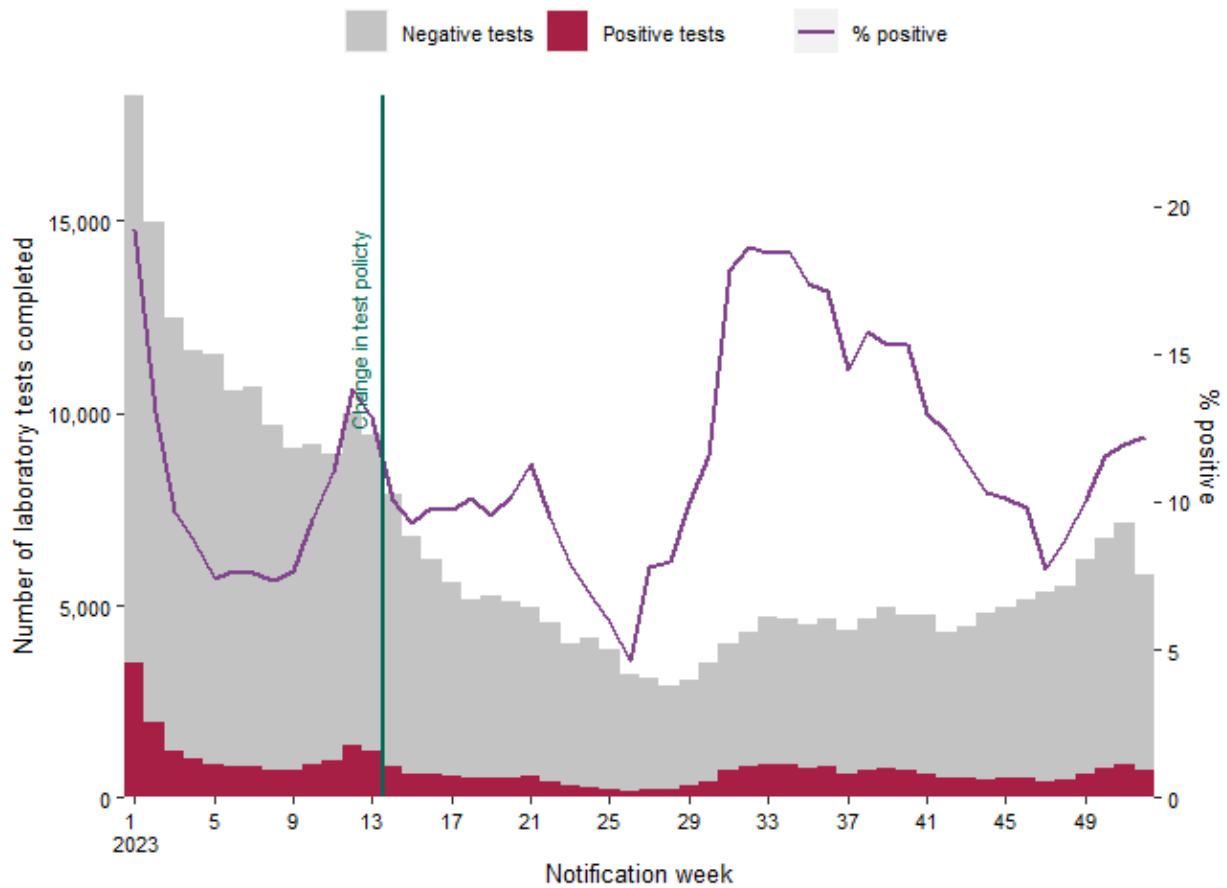


Figure 12: Number of completed laboratory tests by result and % positive tests[6] in Ireland between week 53, 2022 and week 52, 2023. Data source: Deloitte Ireland LLP[7]

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[6] Positive tests refer to all positive specimens and includes duplicates and individuals who were retested.
[7] Since 30/03/2023 (week 13, 2023), community test centres closed and PCR testing was only performed based on clinical assessment.

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# Notes

## Technical Notes

1. Data Source

Data are based on statutory notifications and were extracted from Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system and the HSE COVID care tracker. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures. Slide with Laboratory testing for SARS-CoV-2 data provided by Deloitte Ireland LLP

2. Epidemiological date

Epidemiological date is based on the earliest of dates available on the case and taken from date of onset of symptoms, date of diagnosis, laboratory specimen collection date, laboratory received date, laboratory reported date or event creation date/notification date on CIDR. By using this date rather than event creation/ notification date, adjusts for any delays in testing/notification. Further information on epidemiological dates and weeks can be found on the HPSC website.

3. Population data

Population data were taken from Census 2022. Data were aggregated into the following age groups for the analysis: 0-4 years, 5-12 years, 13-18 years, 19-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 55-64 years, 65-74 years, 75-84 years and ≥ 85 years.

## Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are extended to all those who are participating in the collection of data and reporting of data used in these reports. This includes the HSE COVID-19 Contact Management Programme (CMP), staff in ICU units, notifying clinicians, laboratory staff, public health doctors, nurses, surveillance scientists, microbiologists and administrative staff.

## Please refer to the Health Protection Surveillance (HPSC) website for

- Epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland infohub
- Outbreaks/clusters in Ireland COVID-19 weekly report
- SARS-CoV-2 wastewater surveillance programme weekly reports
- Virus variants in Ireland COVID-19 summary report
- Epidemiology of intensive care admissions in cases of COVID-19 in Ireland

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