

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey

## Results for Northern Ireland

1<sup>st</sup> June 2022

## Introduction

This report is the latest in a series of weekly publications which will detail findings for Northern Ireland from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey (CIS). The findings set out in this report relate to the most recent week of the study up to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2022. CIS aims to estimate how many people have the infection and the number of new cases that occur over a given time as well as estimating how many people have developed antibodies to COVID-19.

The survey over time will help track the extent of infection and transmission of COVID-19 among people living in private households. The sample includes people who would not necessarily have otherwise been tested, and is intended to estimate the number of current positive cases in the community in Northern Ireland, including cases where people do not report to having any symptoms.

The report has been brought forward this week in order to publish before the bank holiday. As a result, the report is shorter than the usual release and does not include analyses relating to the number of new COVID-19 infections (incidence), sub-regional positivity rates and estimates by age. Previous estimates can be found in the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey datasets](#).

## Proportion of people in Northern Ireland who had COVID-19

During the most recent week of the study (22 May – 28 May 2022), it is estimated that 24,300 people in Northern Ireland had COVID-19 (95% credible interval: 17,300 to 33,200). This equates to 1.33% of the population (95% credible interval: 0.94% to 1.81%) or around 1 in 75 people (95% credible interval: 1 in 110 to 1 in 55). This is based on statistical modelling of the trend in rates of positive nose and throat swab results.

Modelling suggests the trend in the percentage of people testing positive was uncertain in the week ending 28 May in Northern Ireland.

### Notes:

- The results in this report are provisional and subject to revision.
- As this is a household survey, the statistics refer to infections within the population living in private residential households. The figures exclude infections in hospitals, care homes and/or other communal establishments. In these settings, rates of COVID-19 infection are likely to be different.
- The estimates are based on confirmed positive test results. The remaining swabs are either negative, which are included in the analysis, or are inconclusive, which are not included in the analysis. Some swabs are test failures, which are also not included in the analysis. The impact of excluding inconclusive results on the estimates of positive infections is likely to be very small and unlikely to affect the trend.
- Ratios do not represent a person's risk of becoming infected, since risk of infection depends on a number of factors including contact with others or vaccination status. The ratios presented are rounded to the nearest 100 if over 1,000, to the nearest 10 if under 1,000, to the nearest 5 if under 100 and to 1 if under 20. This may result in credible intervals that appear to be similar to the estimated average ratio.
- The reported headline positivity estimates contain Omicron BA.2 and all other variants.

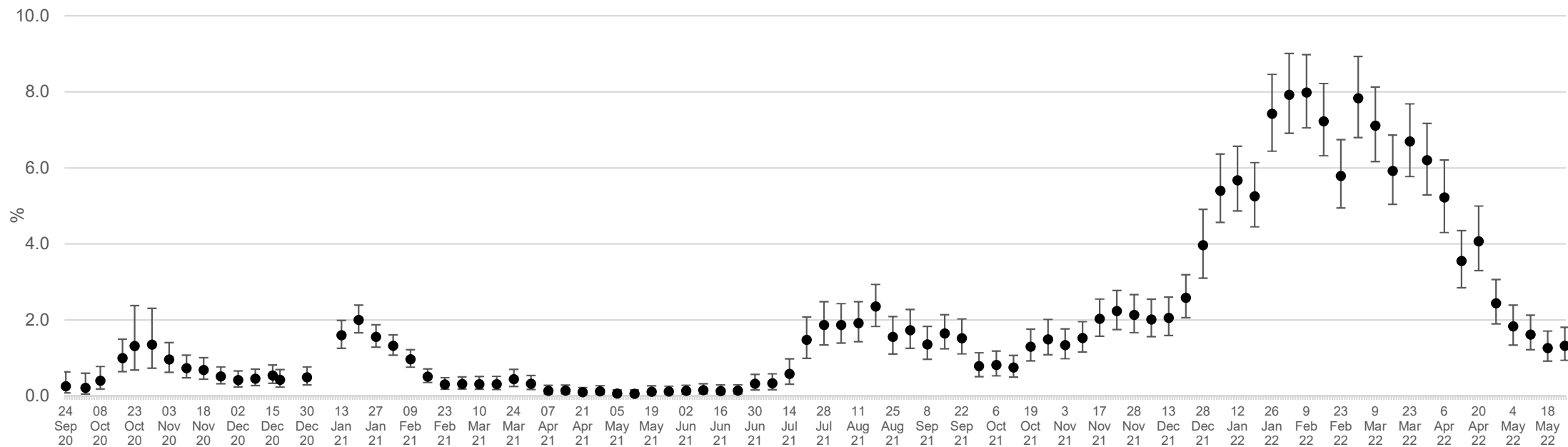
## Positivity over time in Northern Ireland

*Due to relatively small number of tests and low number of positives within the sample, credible intervals are wide and therefore results should be interpreted with caution.*

Modelling suggests the trend in the percentage of people testing positive was uncertain in the week ending 28 May in Northern Ireland. The official estimates of the percentage of people in NI previously testing positive for COVID-19 are set out in figure 1a while the modelled trends over time in the overall population for testing positive for COVID-19, including 95% credible intervals, are shown in figure 1b (overleaf). These estimates are calculated using a regression model which adjusts the survey results to be more representative of the overall population in terms of age, sex, and region.

### Figure 1a: Estimated percentage of the population in Northern Ireland testing positive for the coronavirus (COVID-19) on nose and throat swabs since 24 September 2020

#### Official Estimates

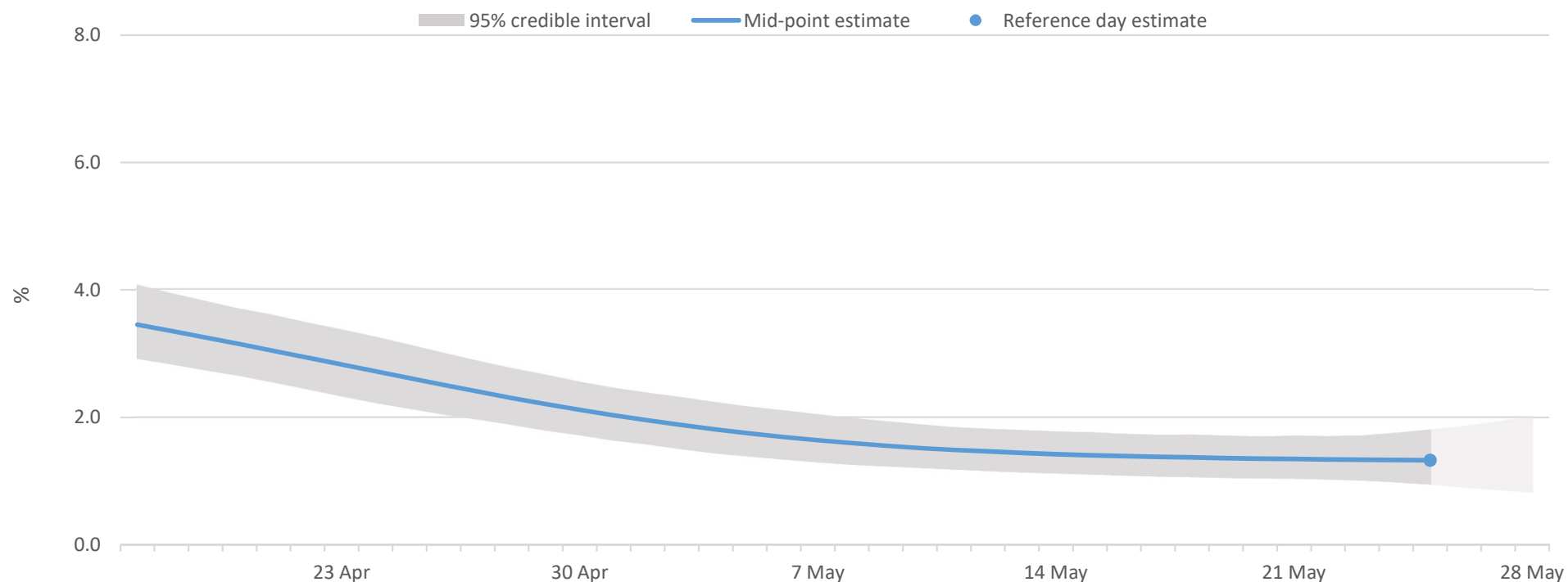


The point estimates and error bars indicated on the chart represent the official estimates reported in previous weeks based on the best information and methods at each point in time.

## Figure 1b:

### Percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 in Northern Ireland

Modelled daily estimates



The area marked with light grey has a lower level of certainty due to lab results still being processed for this period  
Data from 17 April 2022 to 28 May 2022

Source: Office for National Statistics – Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey

#### Notes:

1. Modelled results are provisional and subject to revision.
2. All estimates are subject to uncertainty, given that a sample is only part of the wider population. Therefore, caution should be taken in over-interpreting any small movements in the latest trends. The model used to provide these estimates is a Bayesian model: these provide 95% credible intervals. A credible interval gives an indication of the uncertainty of an estimate from data analysis. The 95% credible intervals are calculated so that there is a 95% probability of the true value lying in the interval. A wider interval indicates more uncertainty in the estimate. Overlapping credible intervals indicate that there may not be a true difference between two estimates.
3. Official reported estimates are plotted at a reference point believed to be most representative of the given week. To improve stability in the modelling while maintaining relative timeliness of estimates, the official estimates that are reported here are based on the midpoint of the reference week.
4. Official estimates (Figure 1a) should be used to understand the positivity rate for a single point in time. This is based on the modelled estimate for the latest week and is the best and most stable estimate and is used in all previous outputs. The modelled estimate (Figure 1b) is more suited to understand the recent trend. This is because the model is regularly updated to include new test results and smooths the trend over time.

## Positivity across the UK

- In England, the percentage of people testing positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) continued to decrease in the week ending 27 May 2022; the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 784,100 (95% credible interval: 735,800 to 832,700), equating to 1.44% of the population or around 1 in 70 people.
- In Wales, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 continued to decrease in the week ending 28 May 2022; the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 39,600 (95% credible interval: 29,400 to 52,000), equating to 1.30% of the population or around 1 in 75 people.
- In Northern Ireland, the trend in the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 was uncertain in the week ending 28 May 2022; the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 24,300 (95% credible interval: 17,300 to 33,200), equating to 1.33% of the population or around 1 in 75 people.
- In Scotland, the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 decreased in the week ending 28 May 2022; the estimated number of people testing positive for COVID-19 was 105,900 (95% credible interval: 87,600 to 126,100), equating to 2.01% of the population or around 1 in 50 people.

*The reference week for Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland is 22 to 28 May 2022; the reference week for England is 21 to 27 May 2022.*

*Figures for the UK countries are also set out in Appendix 1*

## Appendix 1

**Table 1 Official reported estimates of the percentage testing positive for COVID-19 across the UK**

*The reference week for Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland is 22 to 28 May 2022; the reference week for England is 21 to 27 May 2022.*

Country	Estimated average % of the population that had COVID-19	95% Lower credible interval	95% Upper credible interval	Estimated average number of people testing positive for COVID-19	95% Lower credible interval	95% Upper credible interval	Estimated average ratio of the population that had COVID-19	95% Lower credible interval	95% Upper credible interval
<b>England</b>	1.44	1.35	1.53	784,100	735,800	832,700	1 in 70	1 in 75	1 in 65
<b>Wales</b>	1.30	0.97	1.71	39,600	29,400	52,000	1 in 75	1 in 100	1 in 60
<b>Northern Ireland</b>	1.33	0.94	1.81	24,300	17,300	33,200	1 in 75	1 in 110	1 in 55
<b>Scotland</b>	2.01	1.66	2.40	105,900	87,600	126,100	1 in 50	1 in 60	1 in 40

*Ratios do not represent a person's risk of becoming infected, since risk of infection depends on a number of factors including contact with others or vaccination status. The ratios presented are rounded to the nearest 100 if over 1,000, to the nearest 10 if under 1,000, to the nearest 5 if under 100 and to 1 if under 20. This may result in credible intervals that appear to be similar to the estimated average ratio.*

## Methodology

The results are based on nose and throat swabs provided by participants to the study. As well as looking at incidence overall, the survey will be used to examine the characteristics of those testing positive for COVID-19 and the extent to which those infected experience symptoms.

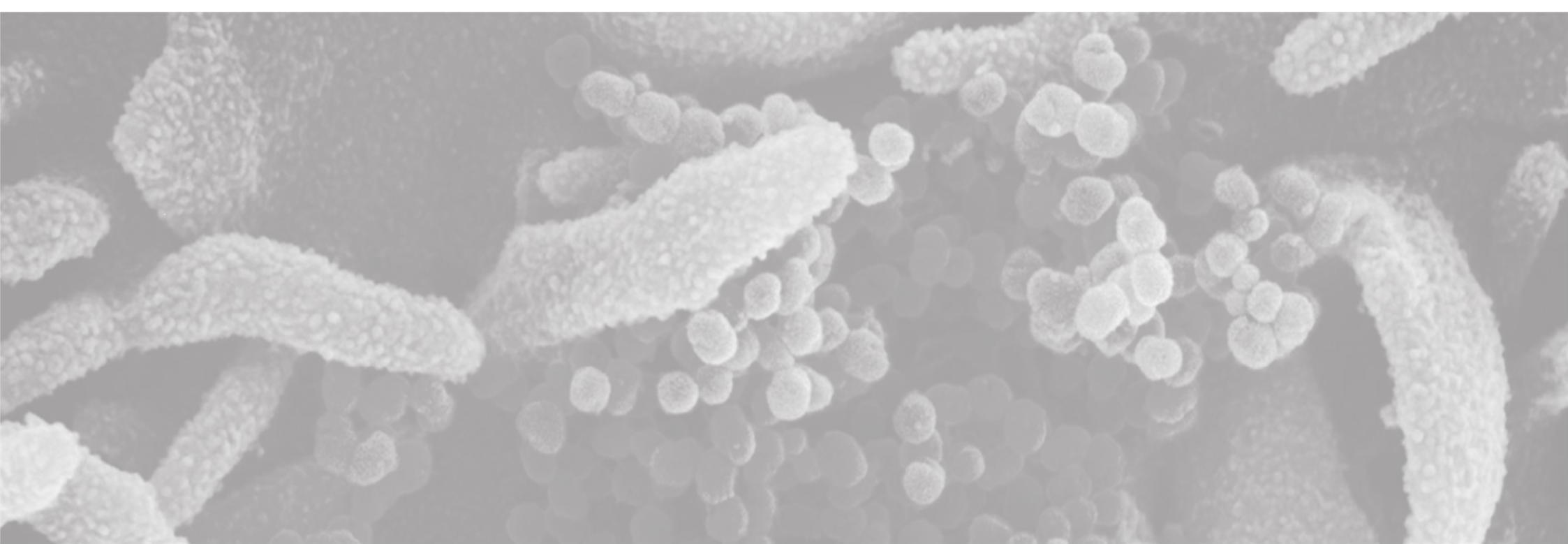
Extending the COVID-19 Infection Survey to Northern Ireland has been achieved by a collaboration between the Department of Health, Public Health Agency (PHA), Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and its various survey partners. Fieldwork commenced in Northern Ireland on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It is important to note that there is a significant degree of uncertainty with the estimates. This is because, despite a large sample of participants, the number of positive cases identified is small. Estimates are provided with 95% confidence intervals to indicate the range within which we may be confident the true figure lies.

The results are for private households only and do not apply to those in hospitals, care homes and/or other communal establishments.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) publishes [weekly statistical bulletins and references tables, including results for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland](#) on its website. Further detail for Northern Ireland is available in the ONS [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Infection Survey datasets](#).

Further information about quality and methodology can be found on the [ONS website](#).





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