

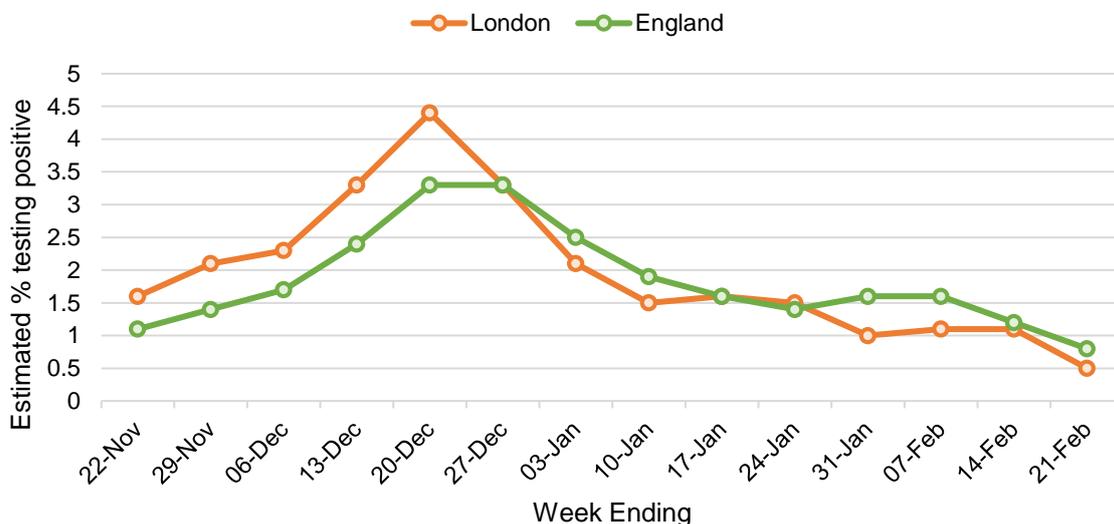
Havering Winter Infection report: February 2024

This is a summary report on those illnesses and infections that become more common in winter and place extra pressure on healthcare services. It brings together various sources of data to give an overview and provides guidance on how to reduce the risks of infection. Further detailed data will be added to this report over the winter as it becomes available.

COVID-19

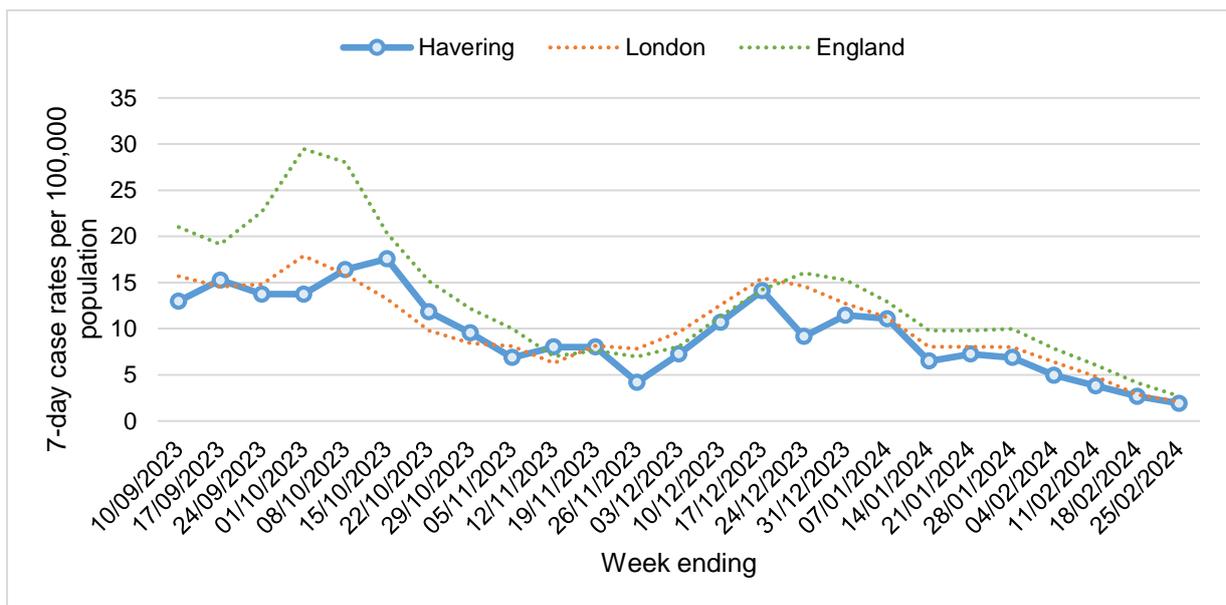
During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted the COVID-19 Infection Survey (CIS); collecting and analysing millions of swab samples and blood tests to estimate the levels of COVID-19 within the population. This winter the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has launched a new [Winter COVID-19 Infection Survey \(WCIS\)](#). Running from November 2023 to March 2024, the WCIS provides key insight into levels of COVID-19 circulating across the wider community, and assesses the potential for increased demand on health services due to changes in the way the virus is spreading, which could be driven by the arrival of any new variants. The latest ONS release from the WCIS, shows that in the week ending 21 February 0.8% of people in England tested positive, down from 1.2% in the preceding week (week ending 14 February). In London 0.5% of people tested positive in the week ending 21 February, a decrease from 1.1% the week prior. These estimates have been weighted to ensure the results are representative of the target population, as differential response rates among different demographic groups can lead to underrepresentation in the sample.

Weekly (weighted) positivity rate in London and England 16 November 2023 to 21 February 2024



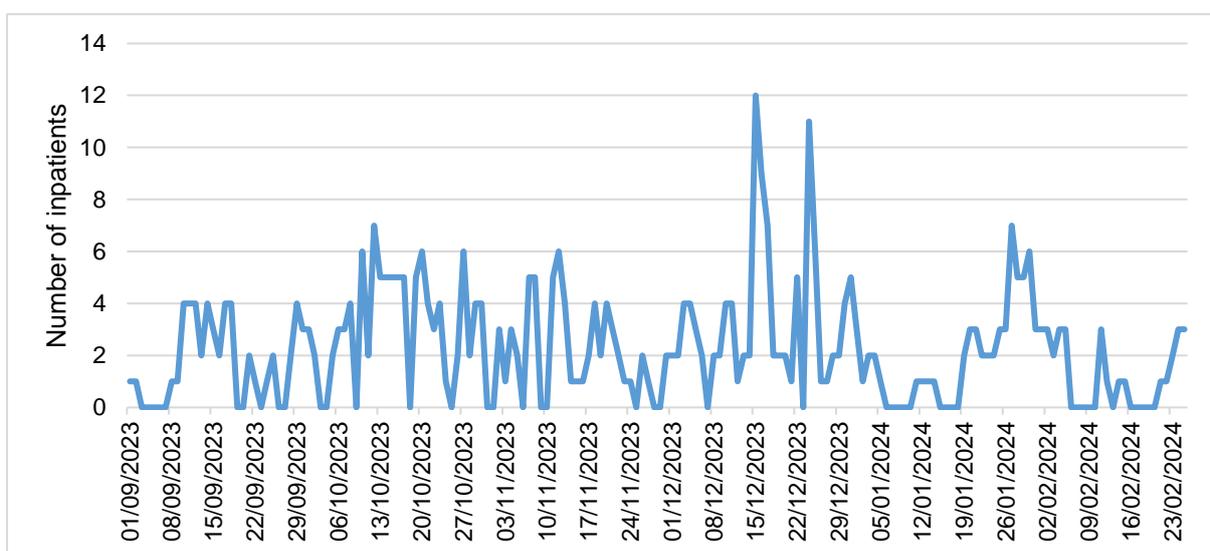
In March 2022, the Living with COVID strategy was introduced which removed the majority of pillar 2 testing (widespread drive/walk through testing and testing at home). Pillar 1 testing continued, with a focus on high risk settings, and staff working with patients who are at high risk from severe outcomes in NHS and hospice settings. In Havering the rate of cases per 100,000 people (in the rolling 7-day period) has decreased from around 7.3 per 100,000 during January to around 2.8 per 100,000 throughout February 2024. This is lower than both London and England. More information can be found from [UKHSA \(UK Health Security Agency\) at GOV.UK](#)

Weekly rate of pillar 1 COVID-19 cases in Havering, London and England 4 September 2023 to 25 February 2024



The number of COVID-19 inpatients at BHRUT Hospitals has remained low with 3 patients at 25 February 2024.

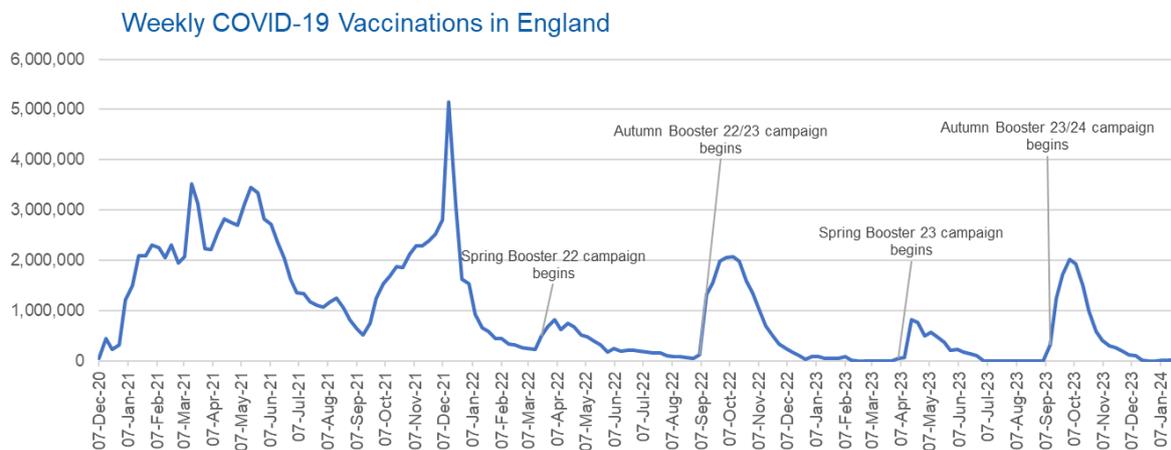
Number of daily COVID-19 inpatients at NHS BHRUT hospitals 1 September 2023 to 25 February 2024



COVID-19 vaccination remains the most effective action to take to protect against COVID-19. The NHS offers Covid-19 to individuals with severely weakened immune systems. Your need for a COVID-19 vaccine will be assessed by your GP or a specialist, who will inform you when to get vaccinated and assist you in finding a local appointment. The spring COVID-19 vaccination program for all eligible cohorts is set to begin by 22 April 2024. The NHS will contact you if your records indicate that you are eligible for a seasonal spring COVID-19 vaccine. Starting from April 2024, you may be offered a spring COVID-19 vaccine if you are aged 75 years and older, live in a care home for older adults, or are aged 6 months and older with a weakened immune system. For more information on eligibility, please contact your GP or visit the [NHS website](#).

Nationally, as of 04 February 2024, 11,835,686 autumn vaccinations have been delivered nationally, taking the total number of COVID-19 vaccinations delivered to 157,488,334. In London 1,030,787 autumn booster vaccinations have been given to date.

Weekly COVID-19 Vaccinations in England 7 December 2020 to 29 January 2024

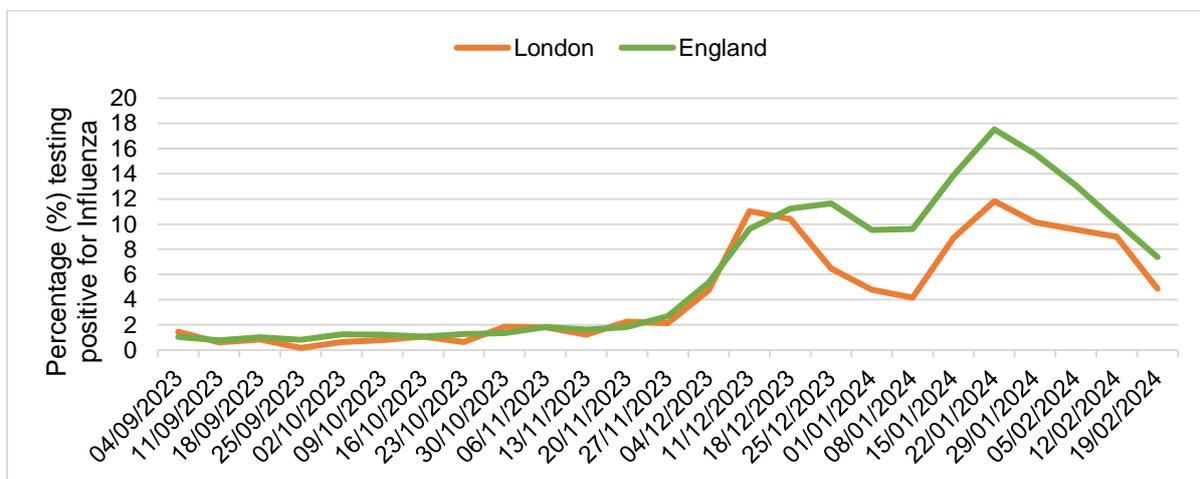


Influenza (Flu)

Influenza, commonly known as flu, is a contagious respiratory illness that typically peaks during the winter months. Monitoring flu infections during this time is important as it can be more serious for older people and those who are vulnerable, and lead to increased hospital admissions. Understanding and tracking flu patterns are vital for effective preparedness, enabling timely interventions and public health measures to mitigate the impact on both individuals and healthcare systems. Detailed weekly analysis at national and regional level can be found at [UKHSA](#). Data are currently not available at local authority level.

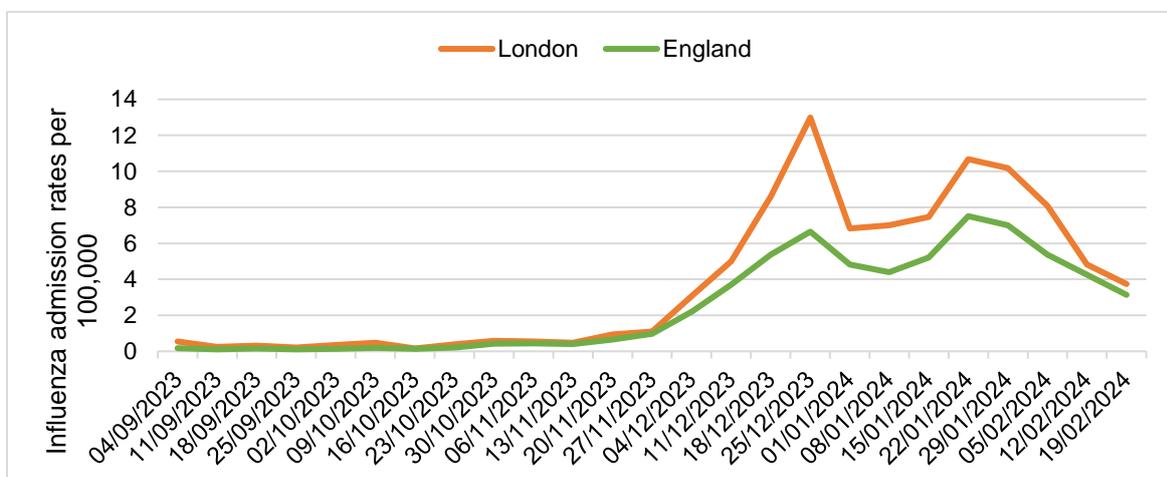
Nationally and in London, for the week of 19 February 2024 the number of cases of flu decreased (positivity rate of 4.9% in London) compared to the previous week (8.9%).

Estimated percentage of people in London and England to test positive for Influenza from 4 September 2023 to 19 February 2024



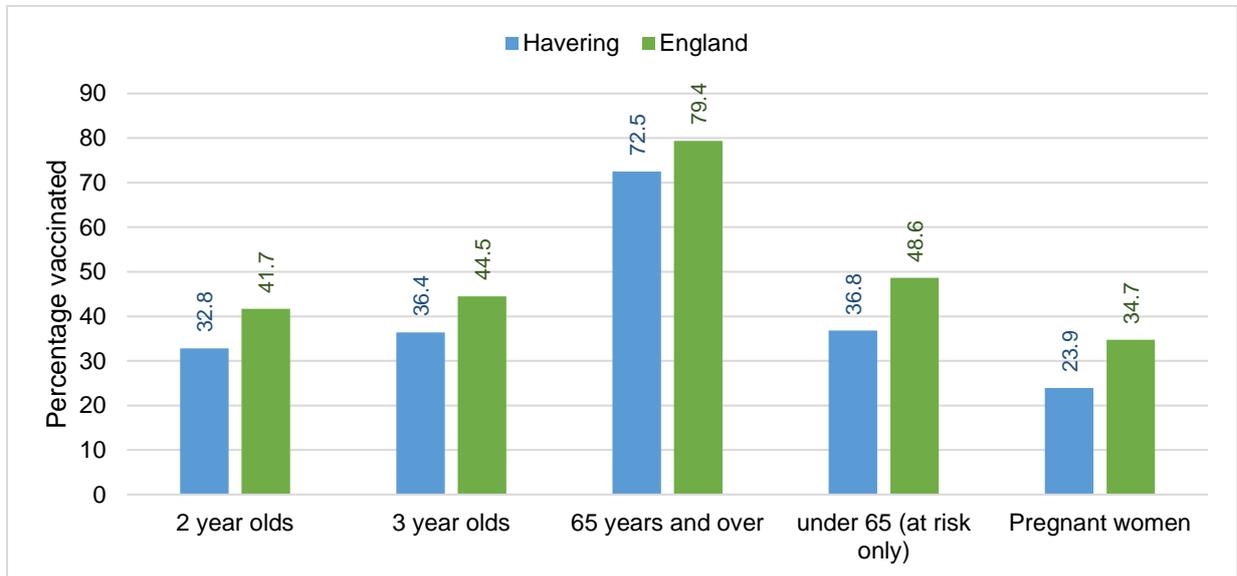
The number of people visiting A&E for flu symptoms decreased throughout February 2024 and for the week 19 February 2024 3.7 per 100,000 in London were admitted for influenza, compared to 10.7 per 100,000 mid-January 2024.

Weekly hospital admissions rate per 100,000 in London and England 4 September 2023 to 19 February 2024



So far this flu season lower numbers of all cohorts of people in Havering received their flu vaccination compared to England.

Proportion of people in Havering and England who had received their flu vaccine as of 31 January 2024

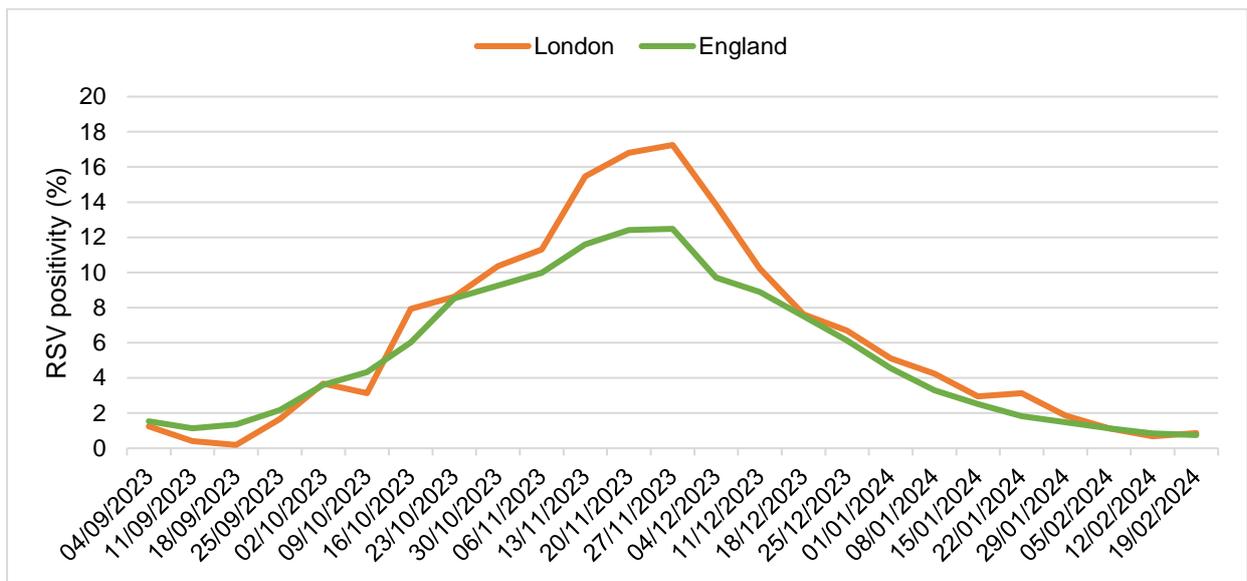


Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

RSV is a common respiratory virus that can lead to mild cold-like symptoms in adults and older children, but can cause more severe respiratory issues, especially bronchiolitis and pneumonia, in young children and infants. Data are currently not available at local authority level.

Nationally and in London, throughout February 2024 the number of cases of RSV decreased compared to the January. As of 19 February 2024 RSV positivity was less than 1%.

Estimated percentage of people in London and England to test positive for RSV from 4 September 2023 to 19 February 2024



Other respiratory viruses

In addition to COVID-19 and Influenza (flu), there are other viruses that are more common in winter. They can affect individuals of all ages, although they may cause more severe illness in children, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems. A snapshot of the national situation in is outlined in the table following. UKHSA also produces detailed information on [norovirus and rotavirus](#) as well as [influenza and other respiratory viruses](#).

Virus	Symptoms	Summary	Chart
Adenovirus	Adenovirus is a group of common viruses that can cause various illnesses, such as, the common cold, sore throat, fever, acute bronchitis (inflammation of the airways of the lungs, sometimes called a “chest cold”) and pink eye (conjunctivitis) amongst others.	Positivity increased to 2.5% as at 19 February, compared to 1.82% a month earlier (22 January)	
Human metapneumovirus (hMPV)	hMPV is a respiratory virus, discovered in 2001, which typically induces symptoms akin to the common cold or flu and can result in more severe respiratory issues, particularly in vulnerable populations.	Positivity remains high at 3.5% as at 19 February, compared to 3.7% a month earlier (22 January)	

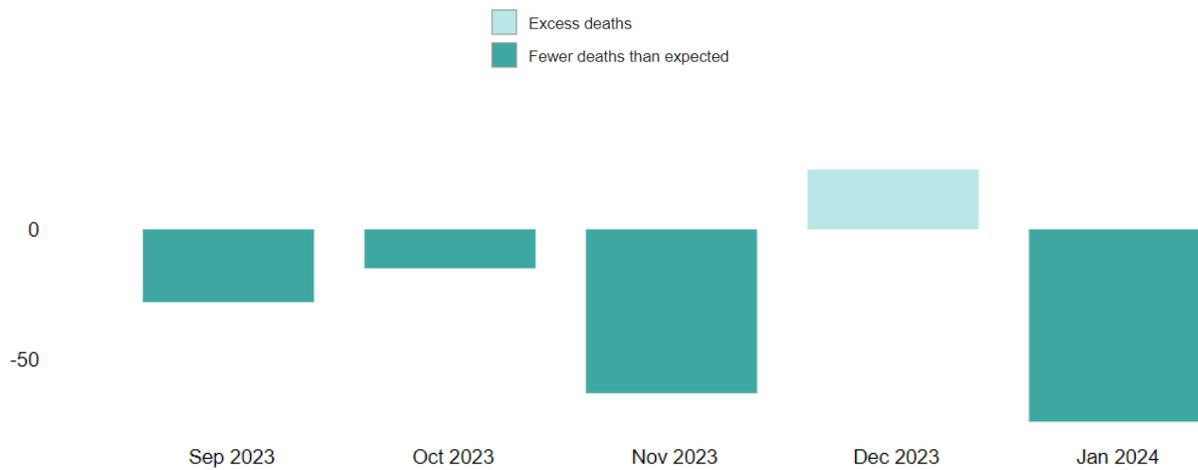
<p>Parainfluenza</p>	<p>Parainfluenza is a group of viruses causing respiratory infections, characterized by symptoms ranging from mild cold-like conditions to more severe respiratory issues such as croup or pneumonia.</p>	<p>Positivity increased to 3.3%, as at 19 February, compared to 2.9% a month earlier (22 January)</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Parainfluenza Positivity Rates (Estimated)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Year</th> <th>Positivity Rate (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr</td><td>2023</td><td>4.5</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>2023</td><td>5.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun</td><td>2023</td><td>4.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul</td><td>2023</td><td>3.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug</td><td>2023</td><td>3.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep</td><td>2023</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct</td><td>2023</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov</td><td>2023</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec</td><td>2023</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan</td><td>2024</td><td>2.5</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb</td><td>2024</td><td>3.3</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Year	Positivity Rate (%)	Apr	2023	4.5	May	2023	5.5	Jun	2023	4.5	Jul	2023	3.5	Aug	2023	3.0	Sep	2023	2.5	Oct	2023	2.0	Nov	2023	1.5	Dec	2023	1.5	Jan	2024	2.5	Feb	2024	3.3
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<p>Rhinovirus</p>	<p>Rhinovirus is a common cause of the common cold, leading to symptoms like runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, cough, and sometimes mild fever.</p>	<p>Positivity decreased to 6.9% as at 19 February, compared to 7.6% a month earlier (22 January)</p>	<table border="1"> <caption>Rhinovirus Positivity Rates (Estimated)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Year</th> <th>Positivity Rate (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr</td><td>2023</td><td>15.0</td></tr> <tr><td>May</td><td>2023</td><td>13.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun</td><td>2023</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul</td><td>2023</td><td>16.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug</td><td>2023</td><td>14.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep</td><td>2023</td><td>10.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct</td><td>2023</td><td>22.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov</td><td>2023</td><td>15.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec</td><td>2023</td><td>13.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan</td><td>2024</td><td>8.0</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb</td><td>2024</td><td>6.9</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Year	Positivity Rate (%)	Apr	2023	15.0	May	2023	13.0	Jun	2023	14.0	Jul	2023	16.0	Aug	2023	14.0	Sep	2023	10.0	Oct	2023	22.0	Nov	2023	15.0	Dec	2023	13.0	Jan	2024	8.0	Feb	2024	6.9
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Excess Deaths

Monitoring excess deaths during seasonal changes, particularly in winter, helps in understanding the impact of illnesses like COVID-19 and flu on mortality rates.

The [Office for Health Improvement and Disparity](#) (OHID) calculates that in Havering from September 2023 to January 2024 there have been 157 fewer deaths than expected deaths (929 registered deaths against 1,086 expected deaths)

Monthly Excess Deaths in Havering September 2023 to January 2024



Key Messages

It is important to continue to protect yourself, your family, and those around you against winter infections, and to be particularly vigilant to protect those who are more vulnerable of more severe illness.

Some key protective actions

- If you are eligible and are able to access vaccination at this stage in the winter, get vaccinated – vaccinations give the best protection against flu and COVID-19
- If you are unwell, protect people who are more vulnerable from severe illness and do not visit hospitals or care homes
- As far as possible, limit contact with others if you are unwell.
- Check the NHS website (<https://www.nhs.uk/>) for advice on how to manage symptoms
- Remember that antibiotics do not kill viruses
- Maintain good hand hygiene through regular and thorough hand washing
- If hand wash facilities are not available, then use hand sanitizer for more protection from respiratory viruses, but remember than hand sanitizer will not protect against norovirus.
- Face coverings – consider wearing a face covering in enclosed or crowded spaces
- Let fresh air in if you are meeting up with friends and family indoors, or consider meeting up with family, friends outside
- Contact NHS 111 or your GP if symptoms worsen. If an emergency, dial 999.

For more support

Flu vaccine: <http://www.nhs.uk/book-a-flu-vaccination>

Covid-19 vaccine: <http://www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination>

Cost of living support

General information: <http://www.havering.gov.uk/costofliving>

Support with NHS costs: <http://www.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/nhs-costs>

Warm hubs: <http://www.havering.gov.uk/warmspaces>

Food banks: <http://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help>

Information and advice for Long COVID: <https://www.nelft.nhs.uk/information-and-advice-on-long-covid/>

Please note:

The data presented here are as shown on the specified website on the date given. They may be subject to amendment by NHS, UKHSA or ONS at a later date.

Contact PHI@havering.gov.uk for further information and previous data.

Last Updated: 07 March 2024