Epidemiology of COVID-19 Outbreaks/Clusters in Ireland – Weekly Report. Week 4, 2023

Weekly COVID-19 Outbreak Report for week ending 27/01/2023
Prepared by HPSC on 31/01/2023
Please note: Data are provisional

This report includes data extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) on 31/01/2023 up to midnight 27/01/2023.

The HPSC Epidemiology of COVID-19 Data Hub provides data on non-private household outbreaks. The Data Hub is updated weekly on Wednesdays.

Regional Departments of Public Health are currently prioritising the investigation and reporting of outbreaks in settings that benefit most from public health and clinical intervention. These settings include acute hospitals, nursing homes, community hospital/long-stay units, residential institutions, other healthcare settings and vulnerable populations. For this reason, outbreaks in other settings may be underestimated. This report focuses on these key settings/groups.
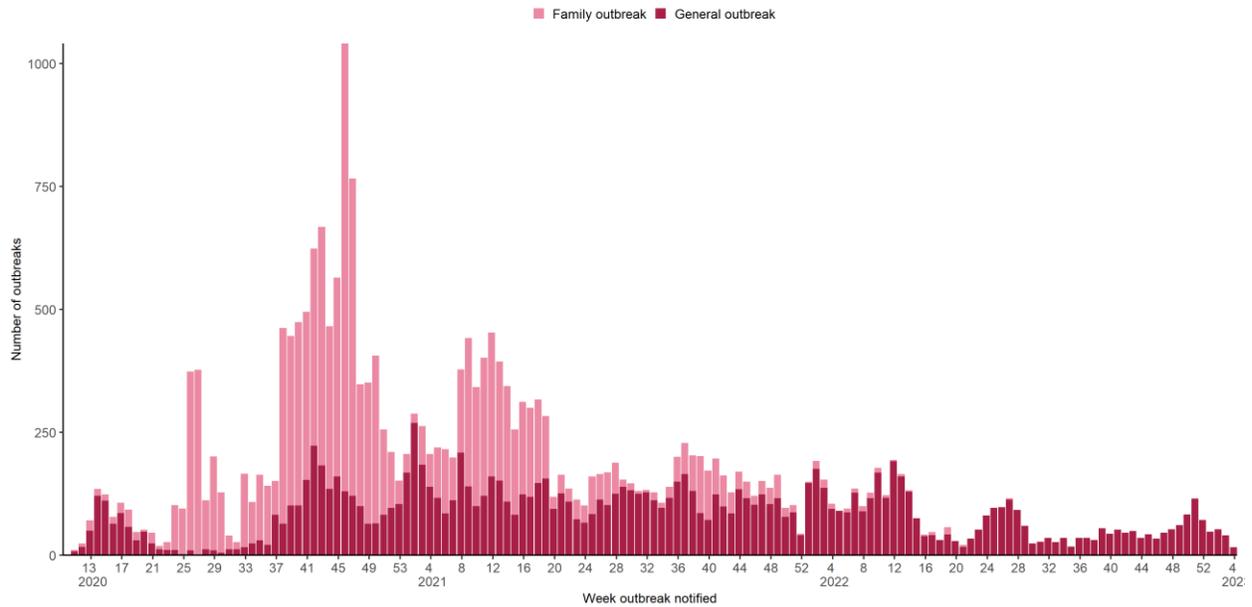
In addition, due to the surge in case numbers in early 2022 and changes in testing policy, all outbreak cases may not be linked to their outbreak on CIDR. Due to these changes, an interim measure has been applied whereby the higher number between aggregate and outbreak linked confirmed case numbers is used in outbreak settings (report pages 9-19).

Due to the cyber-attack on the HSE IT systems on 14/05/2021, CIDR was unavailable for the reporting of COVID-19 outbreaks from 14/05/2021 to the 28/06/2021. As a result, there has been a delay in reporting for many outbreaks on CIDR. To account for this, outbreak week for all outbreaks created between May 14th and October 9th 2021 is based on the following algorithm: earliest of 1. outbreak recognition date; 2. first reported date; 3. outbreak created date. Outbreak week is based on outbreak created date for all outbreaks created on or before May 13th 2021, and on or after October 10th 2021.

Please note COVID-19 outbreaks and cases are continuously validated/updated on CIDR.

The COVID-19 outbreak definition is available in Appendix 2 of this report and on the HPSC website.

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.

Figure 1: Epi-curve of COVID-19 outbreaks in all settings notified in Ireland by week of notification and outbreak type (see technical note 5, Appendix 2) to end Week 4 2023, N=25,537. *Data source: CIDR*

Key points

25,537 COVID-19 outbreaks have been reported in Ireland since Week 10, 2020 (Figure 1, Appendix 1).

Summary from start 2023

158 COVID-19 outbreaks have been reported since the start of 2023 and key outbreak locations are as follows:

- 48 (30.4%) were reported in hospitals
- 63 (39.9%) were reported in nursing homes
- 13 (8.2%) were reported in community hospital/long-stay units
- 31 (19.6%) were reported in residential institutions
- 2 (1.3%) were reported in 'other' healthcare services
- 1 (0.6%) were reported in a range of other settings

69 outbreaks have been closed and **89** are open (See Appendix 1, Table A for breakdown of outbreaks by location and outbreak status. Note that it is common practice not to close private house outbreaks on CIDR due to the large volume of outbreaks in this category).

There have been 5 **COVID-19 and influenza** mixed outbreaks reported since the beginning of the 2022/2023 influenza season; 1 outbreak in week 48 2022 in a nursing home, 3 outbreaks in week 51 2022 in 2 nursing homes and 1 hospital and 1 outbreak in week 52 2022 in a community hospital/long-stay unit.
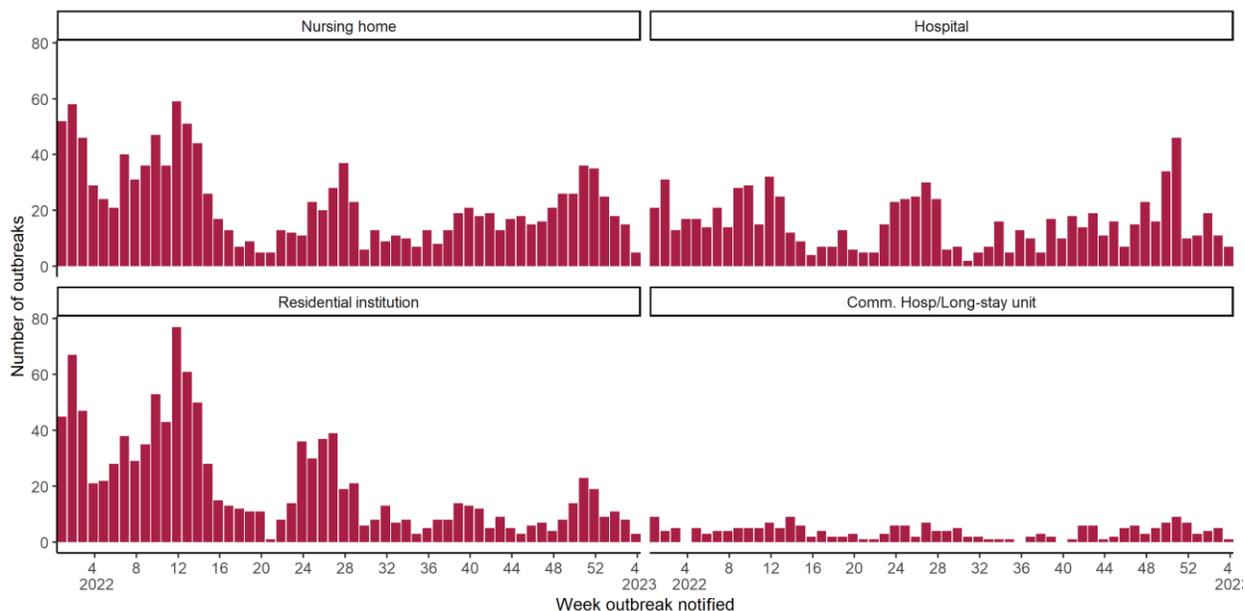
Summary Week 4 2023

In **Week 4** 2023, there were **16** COVID-19 outbreaks notified.

The overall number of outbreaks notified in Week 4 2023 decreased by 25 compared to Week 3 2023. There were:

- 7 outbreaks associated with acute hospitals notified
- 5 outbreaks associated with nursing homes notified
- 1 outbreak associated with community hospital/long-stay units notified
- 3 outbreaks associated with residential institutions notified

COVID-19 Outbreaks/Clusters in Residential Facilities and Hospital settings in Ireland

A summary of COVID-19 outbreaks linked to nursing homes, acute hospitals, community hospital/long-stay units, and other residential institutions is shown in Figure 2 and in the subsequent "Focus" sections, Tables 3-5 and Figures 3-5.

Figure 2: Epi-curve of COVID-19 outbreaks in: Acute Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Community Hospitals/Long-stay units and Residential institutions notified in Ireland by week of notification, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Table 1: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks notified in Ireland by outbreak location and by week of notification 2023 N=158, and difference in number of outbreaks notified in Week 4 2023 compared to the previous week. *Data source: CIDR*

Outbreak location	Total 2023	2022 W49	2022 W50	2022 W51	2022 W52	2023 W01	2023 W02	2023 W03	2023 W04	Difference in number of outbreaks notified since last week
Nursing home	63	26	26	36	35	25	18	15	5	-10
Hospital	48	16	34	46	10	11	19	11	7	-4
Residential institution	31	8	14	23	19	9	11	8	3	-5
Comm. Hosp/Long-stay unit	13	5	7	9	7	3	4	5	1	-4
Other location	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	-1
Total	**158**	**61**	**83**	**115**	**72**	**48**	**53**	**41**	**16**	**-25**

Table 2A: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks by outbreak location and HSE-Area[1] notified in Ireland, 2023. N=158. *Data source: CIDR*

Outbreak location	HSE E	HSE M	HSE MW	HSE NE	HSE NW	HSE SE	HSE S	HSE W	Total
Hospital	17	0	1	6	6	9	2	7	48
Nursing home	16	6	5	5	5	10	9	7	63
Residential institution	10	0	1	2	12	2	1	3	31
Comm. Hosp/Long-stay unit	2	0	0	0	2	2	5	2	13
Other healthcare service	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
Other location	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	46	6	7	13	26	24	17	19	158

Table 2B: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks by outbreak location and HSE-Area notified in Ireland during Week 4 2023, N=16. *Data source: CIDR*

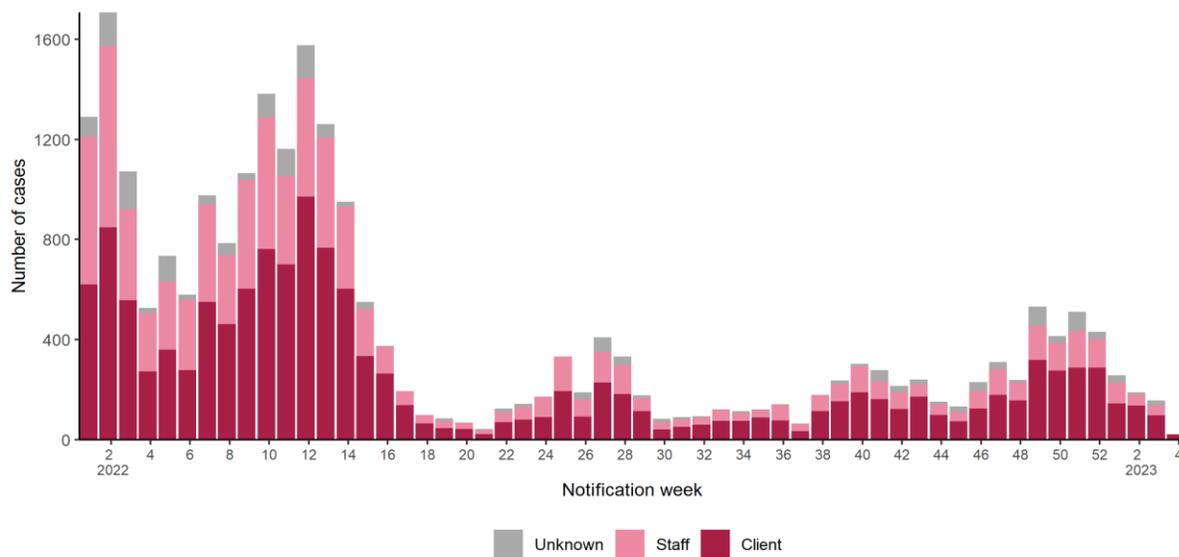| Outbreak location	HSE E	HSE M	HSE MW	HSE NE	HSE NW	HSE SE	HSE S	HSE W	Total
Hospital	4	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	7
Nursing home	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	5
Comm. Hosp/Long-stay unit	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Residential institution	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	3
Other healthcare service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other location	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	1	0	3	4	1	1	1	16

[1] The former eight Departments of Public Health (HSE E, M, MW, NE, NW, SE, S, and W), have been reconfigured into six Public Health Areas (PHA; PHA A, B, C, D, E and F). Surveillance systems are currently being adapted to capture data and report by the new Public Health Areas. The former Departments of Public Health and the new PHAs correspond as follows: PHA A - formerly HSE NE and CHO 9 of the former HSE E; PHA B - formerly HSE M and CHO 7 of the former HSE E; PHA C - formerly HSE SE and CHO 6 of the former HSE E; PHA D - formerly HSE S; PHA E - formerly HSE MW; PHA F - formerly NSE W and HSE NW

Note: Data are provisional
HSE-Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Focus on COVID-19 Outbreaks in Nursing Homes and Community Hospitals

Table 3: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks and laboratory confirmed cases[2]. in nursing homes and community hospital/long-stay units in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

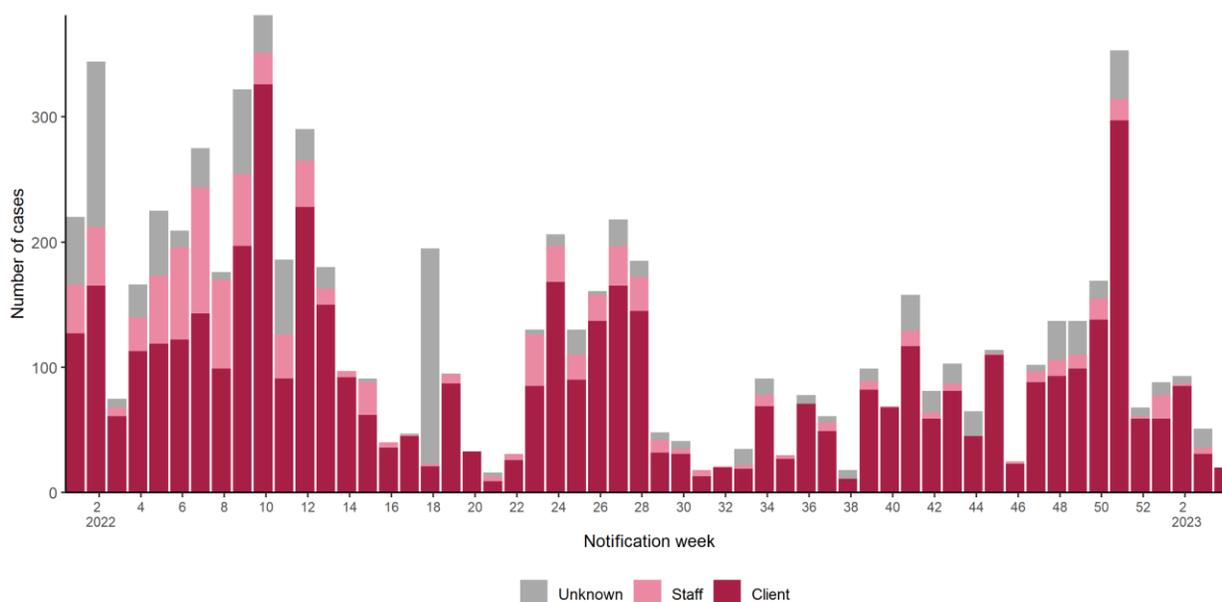| Outbreak location	Total number of outbreaks week 4	Range in number of confirmed cases# week 4	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023	Total number of open outbreaks	Range in number of confirmed cases# in open outbreaks
Nursing home	5	0 - 15	63	36	0 - 20
Comm. Hosp/Long-stay unit	1*	0	13	8	0 - 22
Total	**6**	**0 - 15**	**76**	**44**	**0 - 22**

*no associated cases as yet

Figure 3: Epi-curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks in nursing homes and community hospital/long-stay units by staff/client status and date of notification, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

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[2] Note re Tables 3-8. Due to the surge in case numbers in early 2022 and changes in testing policy, all outbreak cases may not be linked to their outbreak on CIDR. Due to these changes, an interim measure has been applied whereby the higher number between aggregate and outbreak linked confirmed case numbers is used in outbreak settings. #n/a is used where there were no outbreaks in a category or where there are no confirmed cases currently linked to any outbreak in that category (see technical note 6, Appendix 2)

Note: Data are provisional
HSE-Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Focus on COVID-19 Outbreaks in Acute Hospitals

Table 4: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks and laboratory confirmed cases in acute hospital settings in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

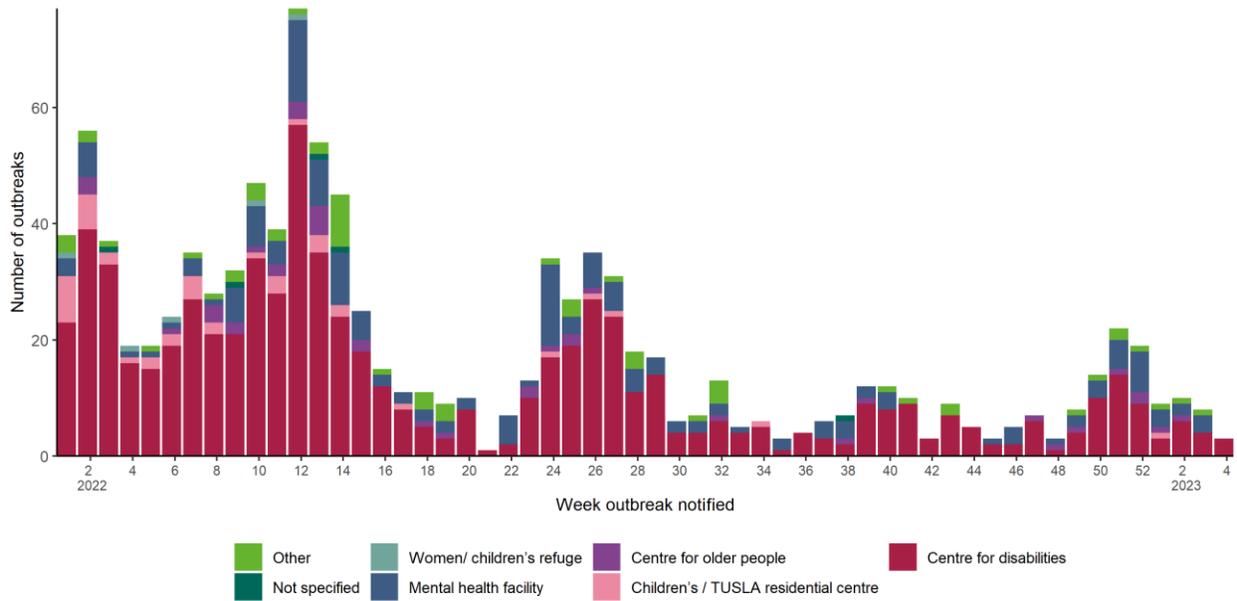| Outbreak location	Total number of outbreaks week 4	Range in number of confirmed cases# week 4	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023	Total number of open outbreaks	Range in number of confirmed cases# in open outbreaks
Hospital	7	2 - 4	48	29	0 - 11

Figure 4: Epi-curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks in hospitals by staff/client status and date of notification, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Table 5: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks and laboratory confirmed cases in residential institutions in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

Type of residential facility	Total number of outbreaks week 4	Range in number of confirmed cases# week 4	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023	Total number of open outbreaks	Range in number of confirmed cases# in open outbreaks
Centre for disabilities	3	2 - 7	16	8	0 - 7
Centre for older people	0	0	2	1	<5
Children's / TUSLA residential centre	0	0	1	0	0
Mental health facility	0	0	8	4	0 - 6
Other	0	0	3	1	<5
Total	**3**	**2 - 7**	**30**	**14**	**0 - 7**

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[3] This section focuses on the following residential settings: Centres for disabilities, Centres for older people, Children's/TUSLA residential centres and mental health facilities. Homeless services, addiction services, direct provision centres and prisons are reported in the Focus on Vulnerable Populations section.

Note: Data are provisional
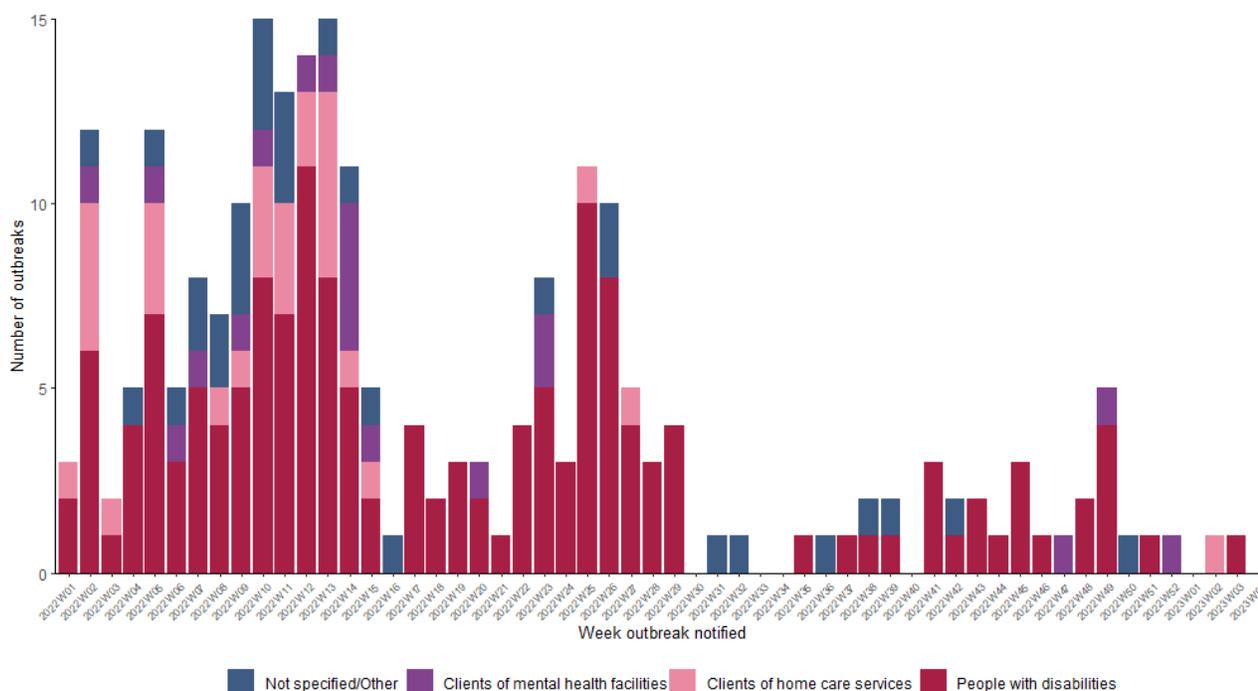HSE-Health Protection Surveillance Centre

Figure 5: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential institutions by type of residential institution in Ireland, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Table 6: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks and laboratory confirmed cases associated with other healthcare settings in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

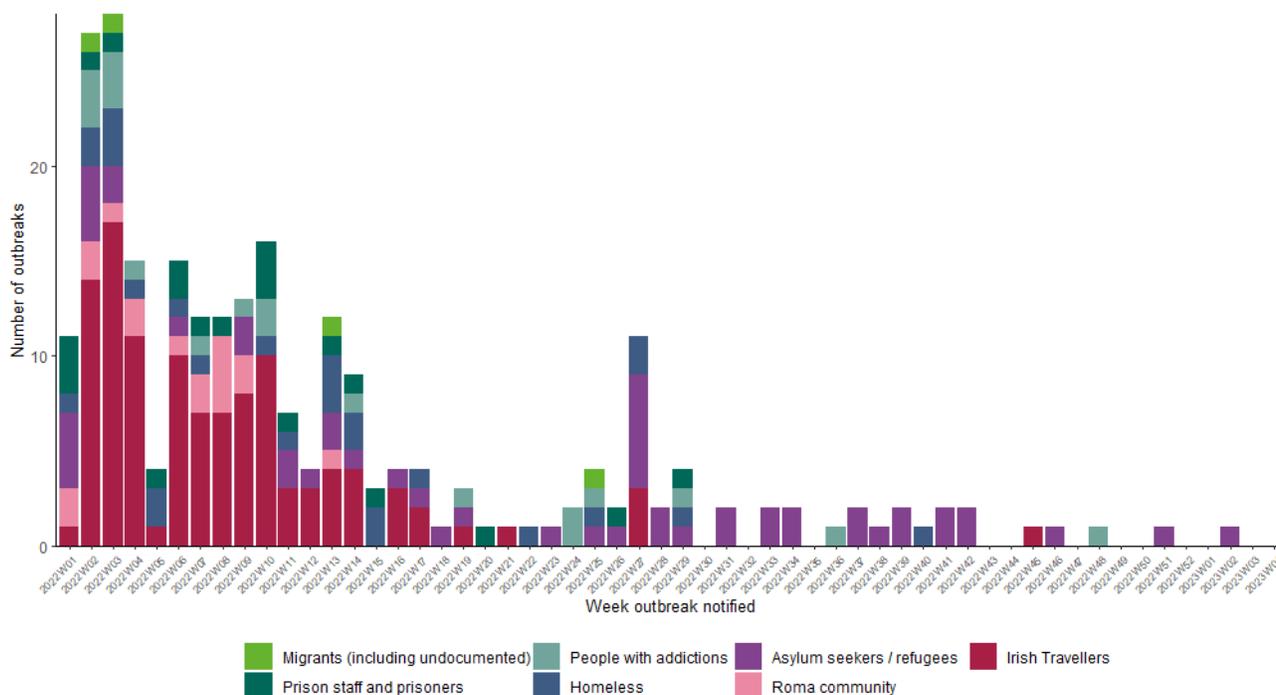| Outbreak location	Total number of outbreaks week 4	Range in number of confirmed cases# week 4	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023	Total number of open outbreaks	Range in number of confirmed cases# in open outbreaks
Clients of home care services	0	0	1	0	0
People with disabilities	0	0	1	1	<5
Total	**0**	**NA**	**2**	**1**	**<5**

Figure 6: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks in 'Other healthcare' settings by type of setting in Ireland, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Table 7: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks and laboratory confirmed cases in settings involving vulnerable populations, including: the Irish Traveller community; Roma community; asylum seekers/refugees; migrants (including undocumented); the homeless; people with addictions and; prison staff/prisoners in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

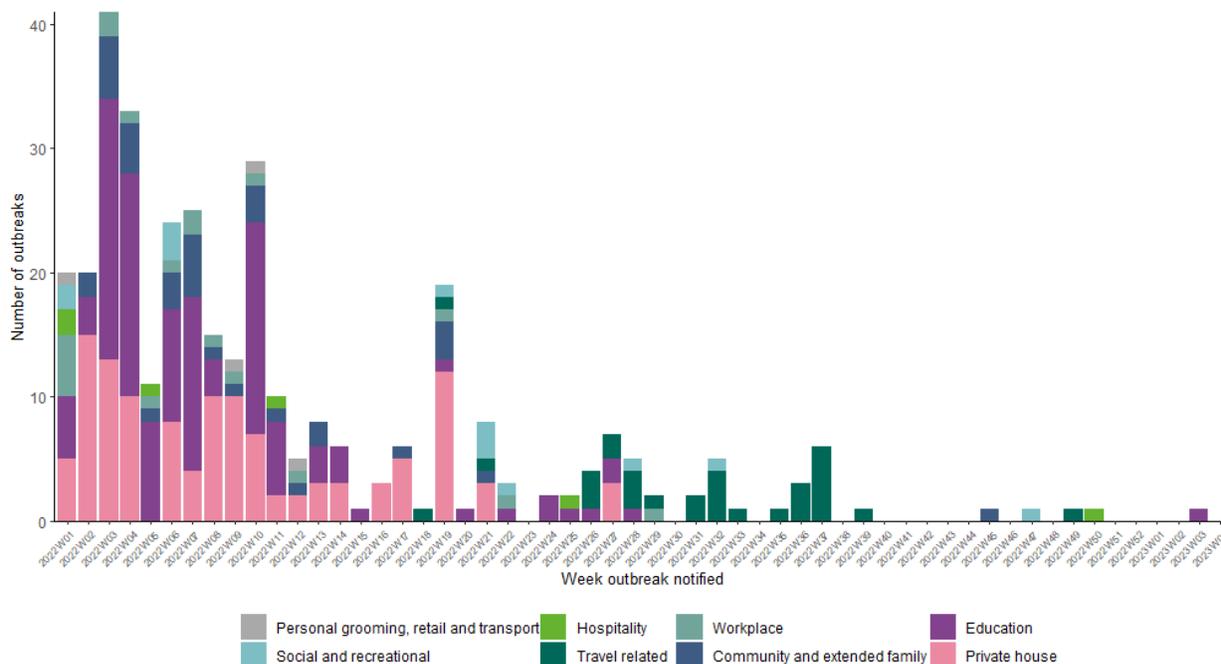| Vulnerable populations	Total number of outbreaks week 4	Range in number of confirmed cases# week 4	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023	Total number of open outbreaks	Range in number of confirmed cases# in open outbreaks
Asylum seekers / refugees	0	0	1	0	0
Total	**0**	**NA**	**1**	**0**	**NA**

Figure 7: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with other vulnerable populations in Ireland, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Focus on COVID-19 Outbreaks associated with Other settings

Table 8: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks in other settings in Ireland, 2023. *Data source: CIDR*

Outbreak location category	Total number of outbreaks since start 2023
Education	1
Total	1

Figure 8: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks in other settings in Ireland, since start of 2022. *Data source: CIDR*

Table A: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks notified in Ireland by outbreak location and closure status from Week 10 2020 to Week 4 2023, N=25,537. *Data source: CIDR*

Outbreak location	Closed	Open	Total
Comm. Hosp/Long-stay unit	307	9	316
Hospital	1,459	51	1,510
Nursing home	1,997	43	2,040
Other healthcare service	572	1	573
Residential institution	2,105	17	2,122
Childcare facility	653	0	653
School	1,395	2	1,397
University/College	68	0	68
Workplace	1,267	0	1,267
Travel related	294	12	306
Guest house / B and B	14	0	14
Hotel	112	0	112
Public house	118	0	118
Restaurant / Cafe	223	0	223
Other recreation activity	30	0	30
Sporting activity/fitness	95	0	95
Social gathering	287	5	292
Religious/Other ceremony	140	4	144
Extended family	838	117	955
Community outbreak	526	3	529
Personal grooming service	48	0	48
Transport	66	1	67
Retail outlet	388	0	388
Private house	6,839	5,377	12,216
Other	44	1	45
Unknown	5	0	5
Not Specified	4	0	4
Total	**19,894**	**5,643**	**25,537**

Appendix 2

Technical Notes

1. Data are based on statutory notifications and were extracted from the National Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures.

2. For surveillance purposes, the following COVID-19 outbreak definition is used for notifying **Confirmed**[4] COVID-19 outbreaks/clusters:

- There is a cluster/outbreak, with two or more cases of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection regardless of symptom status. This includes cases with symptoms and cases who are asymptomatic.

   OR

- There is a cluster/outbreak, with two or more cases of illness with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection (as per the COVID-19 case definition), and at least one person is a confirmed case of COVID-19.

3. This report includes confirmed and suspected COVID-19 outbreaks.

4. An "Open" or "Closed" outbreak is defined as an outbreak where the outbreak status is "Open" or "Closed" on CIDR. In order to declare an outbreak "Closed" the outbreak location should not have experienced any new cases of infection which meet the case definition for a period of 28 days (two incubation periods).

5. Outbreak type (family/general) indicates whether an outbreak is confined to a family (family outbreak) or affects members of more than one household (general outbreak).

6. The "range in number of cases" presented in Tables 3 to 8 is based on laboratory confirmed cases linked to an outbreak in CIDR. The priority is to notify outbreaks to CIDR in a timely fashion and, while every effort is made to link cases to outbreaks as quickly as possible, there can sometimes be a delay in linking cases to the outbreak. Ranges in number of cases that include "0" include outbreaks that currently have no linked cases. Data in CIDR are continuously reviewed and updated and this includes the identification and linking of outbreak-associated cases.

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[4] From September 21st 2020, suspected COVID outbreaks should be reported with the disease category 'Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI)'. If one or more cases linked to the outbreak are subsequently confirmed as COVID-19, the ARI outbreak should be reclassified to being a COVID-19 outbreak. Outbreaks of suspected COVID-19 which were notified before September 21st 2020, and met the previous COVID-19 outbreak definition should remain as COVID-19 outbreaks on CIDR. The COVID-19 case definition is detailed on the HPSC website