



*Flu*nomics

Snapshot: England

Assessing the impact of the 2024/2025 influenza season
on England's people, health system and economy

Developed in collaboration with Dr Marco del Riccio, MD,
Assistant Professor, University of Florence, Italy
Specialist in Public Health and Preventive Medicine

sanofi

This report has been developed and funded by Sanofi.

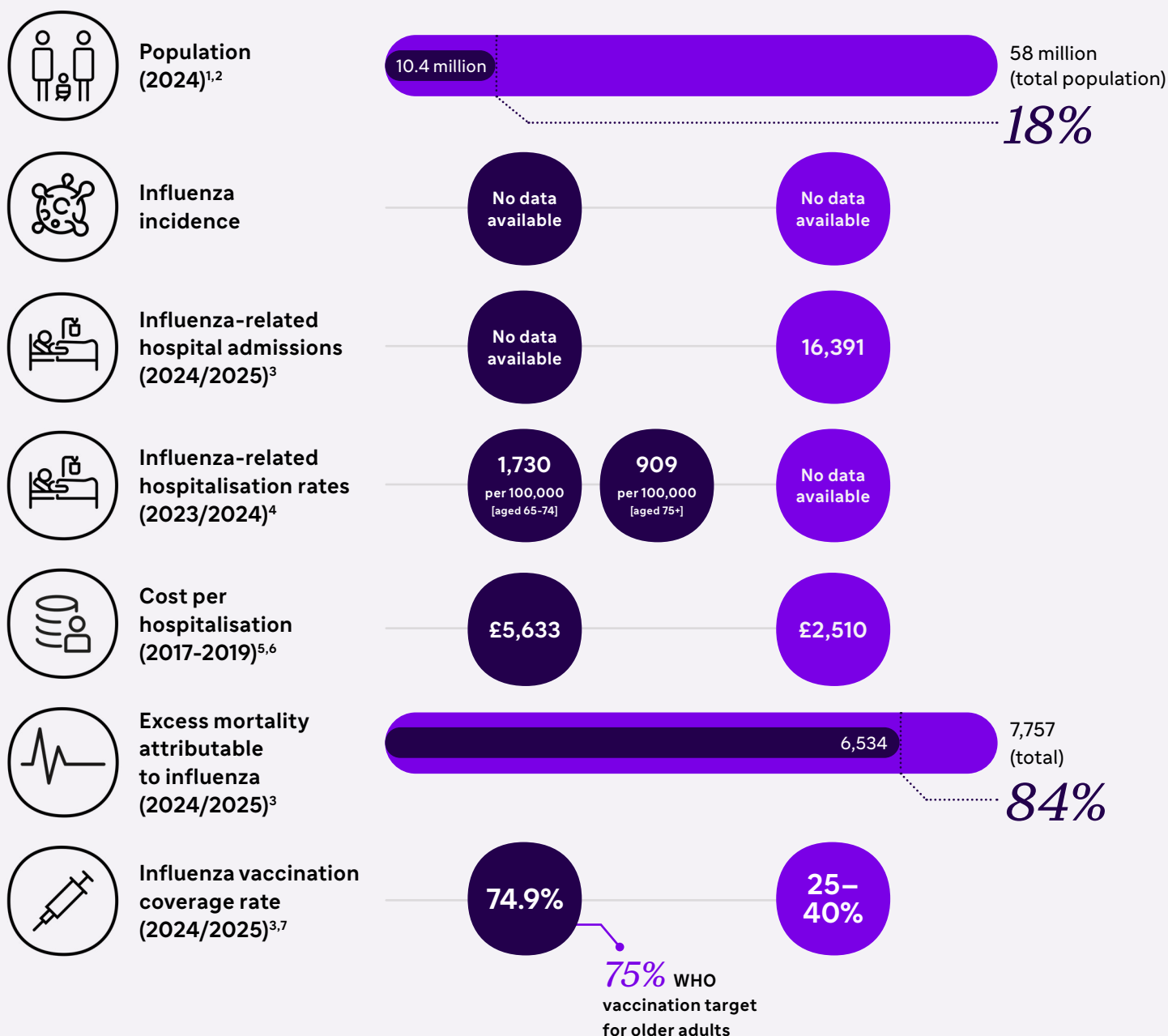
This document is intended for informational and educational purposes only.
It is not intended to promote any specific product or provide medical advice.

MAT-GLB-2506498-v1.0-10/2025

Despite having a long-established universal influenza vaccination programme, England, in the 2024/2025 season, was marked by *substantial winter system strain* where elevated excess mortality was recorded and national hospitalisation reporting remained limited. Cost per hospitalisation for adults aged 65 and older was more than *two times higher* than that for the total population. In addition to this, older adults made up *84% of excess mortalities attributable to influenza*.

Estimated influenza burden

● Adults aged 65+ ● Total population





Data and Limitations

The UKHSA did not publish total influenza case numbers for the 2024/2025 season. Available reports covered just 29 of 202 NHS Trusts (public organisations that deliver healthcare services on behalf of the National Health Service) in England, documenting *16,391 hospitalisations* — indicating that this data only accounts for approximately 15% of NHS Trusts in England.^{3,8} However, when taking into consideration that approximately 30,000 individuals were hospitalised with influenza annually between 2016 and 2020, the 2024/2025 hospitalisation numbers, for just a fraction of the total NHS Trusts in England, clearly illustrate the severity of the season.⁹

This pattern aligns with a marked increase in influenza-attributable excess mortality — reaching 7,757 deaths in England, as recorded by UKHSA using historical baselines.³ Adults over the age of 65 made up 84% (6,534) of these excess mortalities.³

The Economic Impact

Due to incomplete national reporting on hospital admissions, the total economic burden of influenza-related hospitalisations in 2024/2025 cannot be precisely determined. However, the available figures indicate a substantial rise in recent years in healthcare costs for older adults.

Based on the most recently available data from 2018, it is estimated that the average cost of an influenza-attributable hospitalisation for adults aged 65 and over was approximately *£5,633 in England*, which is twice as high as the average cost for the total population at £2,600.^{5,6}

All in all, these figures reinforce the broader economic strain placed on the NHS by influenza in older populations — particularly during high-severity seasons where under-protection persists.





Policy *Landscape*

In 2024/2025, the national influenza vaccination programme for adults in England began in October.¹⁰ This shift aimed to address concerns around waning vaccine effectiveness, ensuring stronger protection during the anticipated peak of influenza circulation.¹¹ In line with evolving international guidance, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recommended a transition to three-strain (trivalent) vaccines for the season.^{10,11}

Adults aged 65 and older were eligible for a free NHS influenza vaccine, with age-appropriate formulations available.¹² While England's influenza vaccination coverage in older adults approached the WHO target in 2024/25, the burden remained high, likely due to a combination of factors: delayed programme start, limited hospital reporting, and real-world barriers to timely protection.^{3,7,10-12} Even when coverage is high, vaccine effectiveness can wane before peak flu circulation, and older adults often face a greater risk of complications from flu-triggered exacerbations of chronic conditions—amplifying system strain despite strong policy intent.^{3,7} However, modelling from the UKHSA estimates that the 2024/2025 influenza vaccination programme averted between 96,000 and 120,000 hospital admissions due to influenza in England.³

Collating influenza data across the entire UK remains a challenge due to the devolved nature of healthcare systems in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each nation operates its own surveillance infrastructure, reporting protocols, and healthcare service structures, which can result in variations in data availability, frequency, and format.^{3,13} While England often provides the most granular and regularly updated figures, this does not always reflect trends across the UK as a whole. As such, interpreting national-level influenza burden or vaccine impact *requires careful consideration of these structural differences* and, where possible, *greater coordination in data collection and reporting across the devolved nations*. Greater alignment would enable a clearer understanding of how policy intent translates into practice and help to identify opportunities to ensure older adults receive effective, timely protection in future seasons.





References

1. Office for National Statistics. England population mid-year estimate. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/timeseries/enpop/pop> [Last accessed: October 2025]
2. Centre for Ageing Better. Our Ageing Population | The State of Ageing 2023-24. Available at: <https://ageing-better.org.uk/our-ageing-population-state-ageing-2023-4> [Last accessed: October 2025].
3. UK Health Security Agency. Influenza in the UK, annual epidemiological report: winter 2024 to 2025. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/influenza-in-the-uk-annual-epidemiological-report-winter-2024-to-2025/influenza-in-the-uk-annual-epidemiological-report-winter-2024-to-2025> [Last accessed: October 2025].
4. NHS England. Hospital Admitted Patient Care Activity, 2023-24: Diagnosis. Available at: <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/hospital-admitted-patient-care-activity/2023-24#> [Last accessed: August 2025].
5. Mattock R, *et al.* Cost effectiveness of high dose versus adjuvanted trivalent influenza vaccines in England and Wales. *J Med Econ.* 2021;24:1261-1271.
6. World Health Organization. Understanding drivers of influenza vaccine uptake. Available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/understanding-drivers-of-influenza-vaccine-uptake> [Last accessed: October 2025].
7. The King's Fund. Key facts and figures about the NHS. Available at: <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/data-and-charts/key-facts-figures-nhs> [Last accessed: October 2025].
8. de Courville C, *et al.* Secondary healthcare resource utilization and related costs associated with influenza-related hospital admissions in adult patients, England 2016 – 2020. *Expert Rev Pharmacoecon Outcomes Res.* 2024;1-13.
9. UK Health Security Agency. Flu vaccination programme 2024 to 2025: information for healthcare practitioners. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccination-programme-information-for-healthcare-practitioners/flu-vaccination-programme-2023-to-2024-information-for-healthcare-practitioners> [Last accessed: October 2025].
10. Department of Health & Social Care. JCVI statement on influenza vaccines for 2025 to 2026. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flu-vaccines-2025-to-2026-jcvi-advice/jcvi-statement-on-influenza-vaccines-for-2025-to-2026> [Last accessed: October 2025].
11. NHS. Flu vaccine. Available at: <https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/> [Last accessed: October 2025].
12. Chetty M, Moncayo G, Poletti T, *et al.* Potential Public Health Benefits of Recombinant Influenza Vaccines in Older Adults in England and Wales. *ISPOR Europe 2025, Value in Health* 28(S2): EE612.
13. UK Health Security Agency. Surveillance of influenza and other seasonal respiratory viruses in the UK, winter 2023 to 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/surveillance-of-influenza-and-other-seasonal-respiratory-viruses-in-the-uk-winter-2023-to-2024/surveillance-of-influenza-and-other-seasonal-respiratory-viruses-in-the-uk-winter-2023-to-2024> [Last accessed: October 2025].