',trigger:"hover focus",title:"",delay:0,html:!1,container:!1,viewport:{selector:"body",padding:0}},c.prototype.init=function(b,c document.constructor&&!this.options.selector)throw new Error("`selector` option must be specified when initializing "+this.type+" on the window.document object!");for(var e=this.options.trigger.split(" "),f=e.length;f--;){var g=e[f];if("click"==g)this.$element.on("click."+this.type,this.options.selector,a.proxy(this.toggle,this));else if("manual"!=g){var h="hover"==g?"mouseenter":"focusin",i="hover"==g?"mouseleave":"focusout";this.$element.on(h+"."+this.t c.DEFAULTS},c.prototype.getOptions=function(b){return b=a.extend({},this.getDefaults(),this.$element.data(),b),b.delay&&"number"==typeof b.delay&&(b.delay={show:b.delay,hide:b.delay}),b},c.prototype.getDelegateOptions=function(){var b={},c=this.getDefaults();return this._options&&a.each(this._options,function(a,d){c[a]!=d&&(b[a]=d)}),b},c.prototype.enter=function(b){var c=b instanceof this.constructor?b:a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type);return c||(c=new this.constructor(b.currentTarget,this.getDelegateOptions()),a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type,c)),b instanceof a.Event&&(c.inState["focusin"==b.type?"focus":"hover"]=!0),c.tip().hasClass("in")||"in"==c.hoverState?void(a in this.inState)if(this.inState[a])return!0;return!1},c.prototype.leave=function(b){var c=b instanceof this.constructor?b:a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type);return c||(c=new this.constructor(b.currentTarget,this.getDelegateOptions()),a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type,c)),b instanceof a.Event&&(c.inState["focusout"==b.type?"focus":"hover"]=!1),c.isInStateTrue()?void 0:(clearTimeout(c.timeout),c.hoverState="out",c.options.delay&&c.options.delay.hide?void(c.timeout=setTi b=a.Event("show.bs."+this.type);if(this.hasContent()&&this.enabled){this.$element.trigger(b);var d=a.contains(this.$element[0].ownerDocument.documentElement,this.$element[0]);if(b.isDefaultPrevented e=this,f=this.tip(),g=this.getUID(this.type);this.setContent(),f.attr("id",g),this.$element.attr("aria-describedby",g),this.options.animation&&f.addClass("fade");var h="function"==typeof this.options.placement?this.options.placement.call(this,f[0],this.$element[0]):this.options.placement,i=/\s?a k=this.getPosition(),l=f[0].offsetWidth,m=f[0].offsetHeight;if(j){var n=h,o=this.getPosition(this.$viewport);h="bottom"==h&&k.bottom+m>o.bottom?"top":"top"==h&&k.top-mo.width?"left":"left"==h&&k.left-lg.top+g.height&&(e.top=g.top+g.height-i)}else{var j=b.left-f,k=b.left+f+c;jg.right&&(e.left=g.left+g.width-k)}return e},c.prototype.getTitle=function(){var a,b=this.$element,c=this.options;return a=b.attr("data-original-title")||("function"==typeof c.title?c.title.call(b[0]):c.title)},c.prototype.getUID=function(a){do a+=~~(1e6*Math.random());while(document.getElementById(a));return a},c.prototype.tip=function(){if(!this.$tip&&(this.$tip=a(this.options.template),1!=this.$tip.length))throw new Error(this.type+" `template` option must consist of exactly 1 top-level element!");return this.$tip},c.prototype.arrow=function(){return this.$arrow=this.$arrow||this.tip().find(".tooltip-arrow")},c.prototype.enable=function(){this.enabled=!0},c.prototype.disable=function(){this.enabled=!1},c.pr c=this;b&&(c=a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type),c||(c=new

this.constructor(b.currentTarget,this.getDelegateOptions()),a(b.currentTarget).data("bs."+this.type,c))),b?(
a=this;clearTimeout(this.timeout),this.hide(function(){a.$element.off("."+a.type).removeData("bs."+a.type),a
d=a.fn.tooltip;a.fn.tooltip=b,a.fn.tooltip.Constructor=c,a.fn.tooltip.noConflict=function(){return
a.fn.tooltip=d,this}}(jQuery),+function(a){"use strict";function b(b){return this.each(function(){var
d=a(this),e=d.data("bs.popover"),f="object"==typeof
b&&b;(e||!/destroy|hide/.test(b))&&(e||d.data("bs.popover",e=new c(this,f)),"string"==typeof
b&&e[b]())})}var c=function(a,b){this.init("popover",a,b)};if(!a.fn.tooltip)throw new Error("Popover
requires
tooltip.js");c.VERSION="3.3.5",c.DEFAULTS=a.extend({},a.fn.tooltip.Constructor.DEFAULTS,{placement:"
'}),c.prototype=a.extend({},a.fn.tooltip.Constructor.prototype),c.prototype.constructor=c,c.prototype.getDefa
c.DEFAULTS},c.prototype.setContent=function(){var
a=this.tip(),b=this.getTitle(),c=this.getContent();a.find(".popover-
title")[this.options.html?"html":"text"](b),a.find(".popover-
content").children().detach().end()[this.options.html?"string"==typeof
c?"html":"append":"text"](c),a.removeClass("fade top bottom left right in"),a.find(".popover-
title").html()||a.find(".popover-title").hide()},c.prototype.hasContent=function(){return
this.getTitle()||this.getContent()},c.prototype.getContent=function(){var
a=this.$element,b=this.options;return a.attr("data-content")||("function"==typeof
b.content?b.content.call(a[0]):b.content)},c.prototype.arrow=function(){return
this.$arrow=this.$arrow||this.tip().find(".arrow")};var
d=a.fn.popover;a.fn.popover=b,a.fn.popover.Constructor=c,a.fn.popover.noConflict=function(){return
a.fn.popover=d,this}}(jQuery),+function(a){"use strict";function
b(c,d){this.$body=a(document.body),this.$scrollElement=a(a(c).is(document.body)?window:c),this.options=
.nav li >
a",this.offsets=[],this.targets=[],this.activeTarget=null,this.scrollHeight=0,this.$scrollElement.on("scroll.bs.sc
c(c){return this.each(function(){var d=a(this),e=d.data("bs.scrollspy"),f="object"==typeof
c&&c;e||d.data("bs.scrollspy",e=new b(this,f)),"string"==typeof
c&&e[c]()})}b.VERSION="3.3.5",b.DEFAULTS={offset:10},b.prototype.getScrollHeight=function(){return
this.$scrollElement[0].scrollHeight||Math.max(this.$body[0].scrollHeight,document.documentElement.scroll
b=this,c="offset",d=0;this.offsets=[],this.targets=[],this.scrollHeight=this.getScrollHeight(),a.isWindow(this.$
b=a(this),e=b.data("target")||b.attr("href"),f=/^#./.test(e)&&a(e);return
f&&f.length&&f.is(":visible")&&[[f[c]().top+d,e]]||null}).sort(function(a,b){return a[0]-
b[0]}).each(function(){b.offsets.push(this[0]),b.targets.push(this[1])})},b.prototype.process=function(){var
a,b=this.$scrollElement.scrollTop()+this.options.offset,c=this.getScrollHeight(),d=this.options.offset+c-
this.$scrollElement.height(),e=this.offsets,f=this.targets,g=this.activeTarget;if(this.scrollHeight!=c&&this.ref
g!=(a=f[f.length-1])&&this.activate(a);if(g&&b=e[a]&&(void 0===e[a+1]||b .dropdown-menu >
.active").removeClass("active").end().find('[data-toggle="tab"]').attr("aria-
expanded",!1),b.addClass("active").find('[data-toggle="tab"]').attr("aria-
expanded",!0),h?(b[0].offsetWidth,b.addClass("in")):b.removeClass("fade"),b.parent(".dropdown-
menu").length&&b.closest("li.dropdown").addClass("active").end().find('[data-

```
toggle="tab"]').attr("aria-expanded",!0),e&&e()}var g=d.find(">
.active"),h=e&&a.support.transition&&(g.length&&g.hasClass("fade")||!!d.find(">
.fade").length);g.length&&h?g.one("bsTransitionEnd",f).emulateTransitionEnd(c.TRANSITION_DURATION
d=a.fn.tab;a.fn.tab=b,a.fn.tab.Constructor=c,a.fn.tab.noConflict=function(){return
a.fn.tab=d,this};var
e=function(c){c.preventDefault(),b.call(a(this),"show")};a(document).on("click.bs.tab.data-
api",'[data-toggle="tab"]',e).on("click.bs.tab.data-api",'[data-
toggle="pill"]',e)}(jQuery),+function(a){"use strict";function b(b){return this.each(function(){var
d=a(this),e=d.data("bs.affix"),f="object"==typeof b&&b;e||d.data("bs.affix",e=new
c(this,f)),"string"==typeof b&&e[b]()})}var
c=function(b,d){this.options=a.extend({},c.DEFAULTS,d),this.$target=a(this.options.target).on("scroll.bs.aff
api",a.proxy(this.checkPosition,this)).on("click.bs.affix.data-
api",a.proxy(this.checkPositionWithEventLoop,this)),this.$element=a(b),this.affixed=null,this.unpin=null,this
affix-top affix-
bottom",c.DEFAULTS={offset:0,target:window},c.prototype.getState=function(a,b,c,d){var
e=this.$target.scrollTop(),f=this.$element.offset(),g=this.$target.height();if(null!=c&&"top"==this.affixed)retu
c>e?"top":!1;if("bottom"==this.affixed)return null!=c?e+this.unpin<=f.top?!1:"bottom":a-
d>=e+g?!1:"bottom";var h=null==this.affixed,i=h?e:f.top,j=h?g:b;return
null!=c&&c>=e?"top":null!=d&&i+j>=a-
d?"bottom":!1},c.prototype.getPinnedOffset=function(){if(this.pinnedOffset)return
this.pinnedOffset;this.$element.removeClass(c.RESET).addClass("affix");var
a=this.$target.scrollTop(),b=this.$element.offset();return this.pinnedOffset=b.top-
a},c.prototype.checkPositionWithEventLoop=function(){setTimeout(a.proxy(this.checkPosition,this),1)},c.pr
b=this.$element.height(),d=this.options.offset,e=d.top,f=d.bottom,g=Math.max(a(document).height(),a(doc
d&&(f=e=d),"function"==typeof e&&(e=d.top(this.$element)),"function"==typeof
f&&(f=d.bottom(this.$element));var
h=this.getState(g,b,e,f);if(this.affixed!=h){null!=this.unpin&&this.$element.css("top","");var
i="affix"+(h?"-
"+h:""),j=a.Event(i+".bs.affix");if(this.$element.trigger(j),j.isDefaultPrevented())return;this.affixed=h,this.unpi
b-f})}};var d=a.fn.affix;a.fn.affix=b,a.fn.affix.Constructor=c,a.fn.affix.noConflict=function(){return
a.fn.affix=d,this},a(window).on("load",function(){a('[data-spy="affix"]').each(function(){var
c=a(this),d=c.data();d.offset=d.offset||{},null!=d.offsetBottom&&(d.offset.bottom=d.offsetBottom),null!=d.offs
'); $(tabs[0]).before(tabContent); // build the tabset var activeTab = 0; tabs.each(function(i) { //
get the tab div var tab = $(tabs[i]); // get the id then sanitize it for use with bootstrap tabs var id =
tab.attr('id'); // see if this is marked as the active tab if (tab.hasClass('active')) activeTab = i; //
remove any table of contents entries associated with // this ID (since we'll be removing the
heading element) $("div#" + tocID + " li a[href='#" + id + "']").parent().remove(); // sanitize the id
for use with bootstrap tabs id = id.replace(/[.\/?&!#<>]/g, '').replace(/\s/g, '_'); tab.attr('id', id); // get
the heading element within it, grab it's text, then remove it var heading = tab.find('h' + tabLevel +
':first'); var headingText = heading.html(); heading.remove(); // build and append the tab list item
```

var a = $(" + headingText + ''); a.attr('href', '#' + id); a.attr('aria-controls', id); var li = $('

- '); li.append(a); tabList.append(li); // set it's attributes tab.attr('role', 'tabpanel'); tab.addClass('tab-pane'); tab.addClass('tabbed-pane'); if (fade) tab.addClass('fade'); // move it into the tab content div tab.detach().appendTo(tabContent); }); // set active tab $(tabList.children('li')[activeTab]).addClass('active'); var active = $(tabContent.children('div.section')[activeTab]); active.addClass('active'); if (fade) active.addClass('in'); if (tabset.hasClass("tabset-sticky")) tabset.rmarkdownStickyTabs(); } // convert section divs with the .tabset class to tabsets var tabsets = $("div.section.tabset"); tabsets.each(function(i) { buildTabset($(tabsets[i])); }); };

COVID-19 Genomics Bulletin

06 May 2026

This report describes the epidemiology of SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) variants in Northern Ireland.

The availability of SARS-CoV-2 sequencing results is affected the current COVID-19 testing policy and practice. We continue to monitor the circulating lineages detected through clinical testing and community sentinel surveillance for changes in prevalence of genomic variants and emergence of novel variants. We use intelligence from UKHSA and other public health authorities to monitor prevalence of mutations that may be associated with changes in immunity or severity.

It should be noted that date ranges in this report are different from those reported in the Respiratory Surveillance Report, available here.

Grouping of lineages into their parent lineages is subject to change, as variant definitions and lineages under monitoring are revised. Parent lineage grouping of lineages presented in this report are shown in Appendix 6.1. In all charts and tables, count of "parent lineage" refers to the count of the parent lineage and its descendants.

1 Summary

- In the 8 epidemiological weeks (26 January 2026 to 22 March 2026), 96 COVID-19 samples were sequenced in Northern Ireland.

- The current most common SARS-CoV-2 variant in Northern Ireland is BA.3.2 (VOC-21NOV-01) and descendants, with 8 sequenced samples, or 72.7% of all sequenced samples (72.7% of those with a lineage assigned) in the week commencing 23 February 2026.

- More information about prevalence and growth rates of SARS-CoV-2 lineages circulating in the UK can be found in UKHSA reports published here.

2 Current Variant View - last 8 weeks

This section summarises the SARS-CoV-2 sequencing data for Northern Ireland for the last 8 weeks of sequencing data available (26 January 2026 to 22 March 2026).

In the last 8 weeks of sequencing data, the following parent lineages and their descendants have been detected: BA.3.2, XFG, NB.1.8.1, XFG.3, BA.3, BA.2, JN.1, and LP.8.1. The number of sequenced samples can be seen in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1, and the numbers as a percentage of total sequenced samples are shown in Figure 2.2. The age group distribution by parent lineage is shown in Figure 2.3, where data are available.

Please note that numbers of sequenced samples per week may change retrospectively due to the delay in sequencing.

Recombinant refers to any lineage starting with "X" that does not fall under any other parent lineage definition.

Table 2.1. Number (Percentage) of sequenced samples fo			
Variant (parent lineage)	2026-01-26	2026-02-02	2026-02-09
V-23DEC-01 (XFG)	5 (41.7%)	4 (19%)	8 (30.8%)

Variant (parent lineage)	2026-01-26	2026-02-02	2026-02-09
V-23DEC-01 (XFG.3)	3 (25%)	0 (0)	0 (0)
VOC-21NOV-01 (BA.3.2)	4 (33.3%)	13 (61.9%)	16 (61.5%)
V-23DEC-01 (JN.1)	0 (0)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0)
V-23DEC-01 (NB.1.8.1)	0 (0)	2 (9.5%)	1 (3.8%)
VOC-21NOV-01 (BA.3)	0 (0)	1 (4.8%)	1 (3.8%)
V-23DEC-01 (LP.8.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
VOC-22JAN-01 (BA.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Unassigned (Unassigned)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Week Total	12	21	26

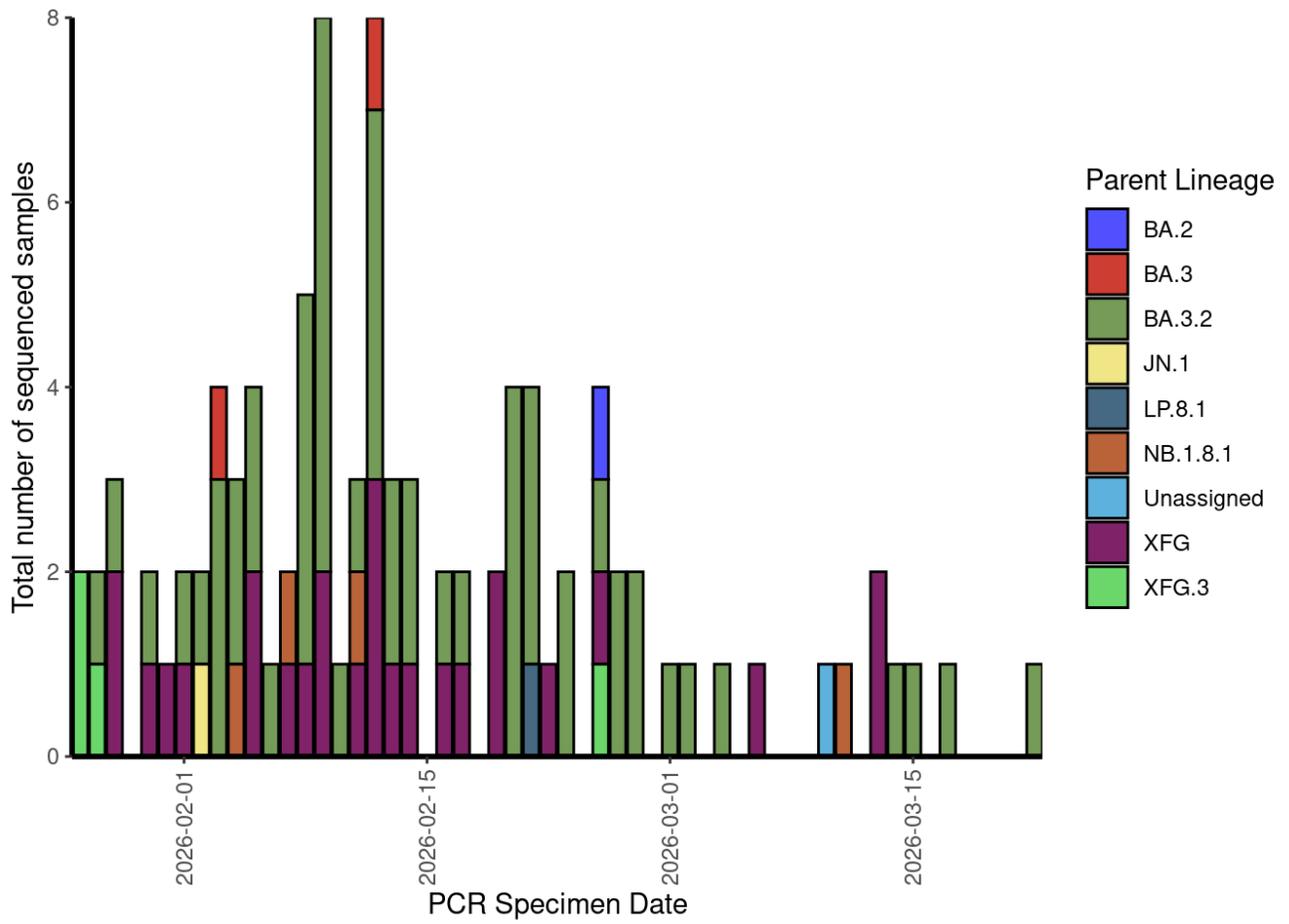Table 2.1. Number (Percentage) of sequenced samples fo

Figure 2.1: Sequenced COVID-19 cases in Northern Ireland, by parent lineage and day, for the last 8 weeks of sequencing data

Figure 2.2: Percentage of sequenced COVID-19 cases in Northern Ireland, by variant and epidemiological week, for the last 8 weeks of sequencing data
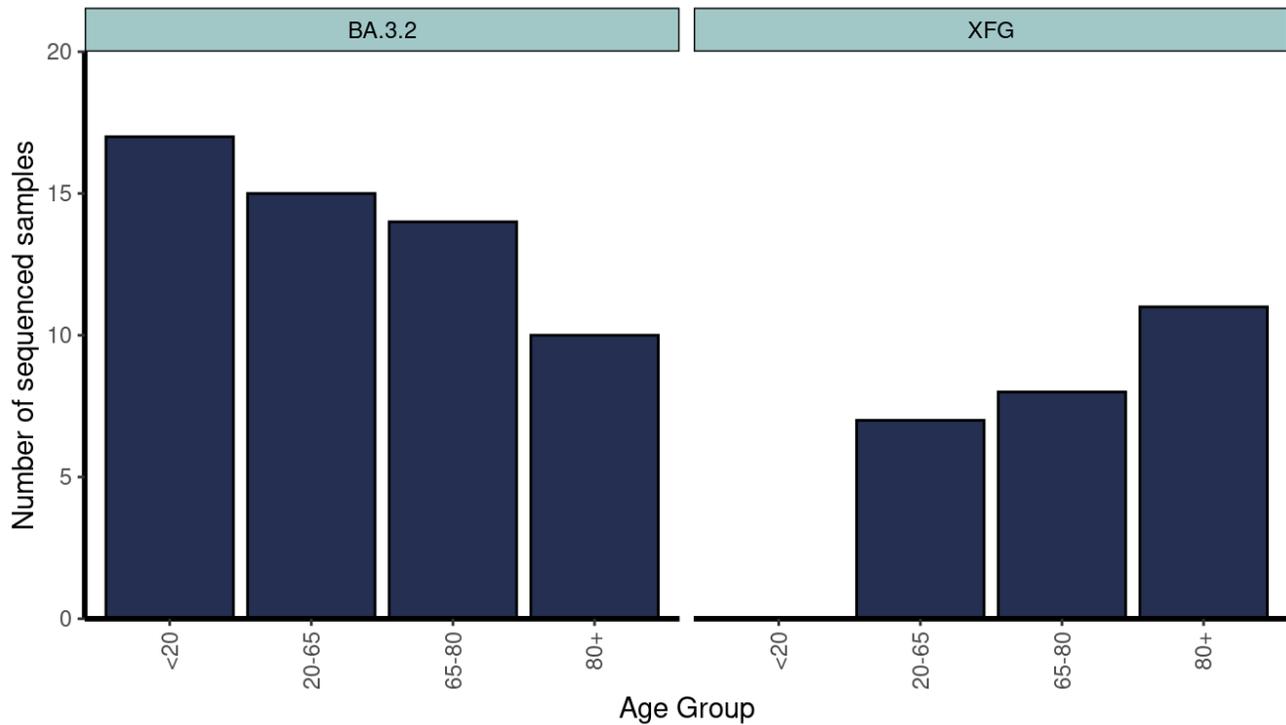
Figure 2.3: Total number of sequenced COVID-19 samples in Northern Ireland by age group, faceted by parent lineage over the last 8 weeks of sequencing data

This chart only shows counts for lineages with at least 5 sequenced samples in a given age group.

Age band information is not available for all sequences, so age band distributions should be interpreted with caution.

3 Variant View - last 12 months

This section summarises the COVID-19 sequencing data for Northern Ireland over the past 12 months (10 March 2025 to 22 March 2026).

The number of sequenced samples over the past 12 months can be seen in Figure 3.1 and supplementary Table 6.2, and the numbers as a percentage of total sequenced samples are shown in Figure 3.2. The age-sex distribution by parent lineages is shown in Figure 3.3.
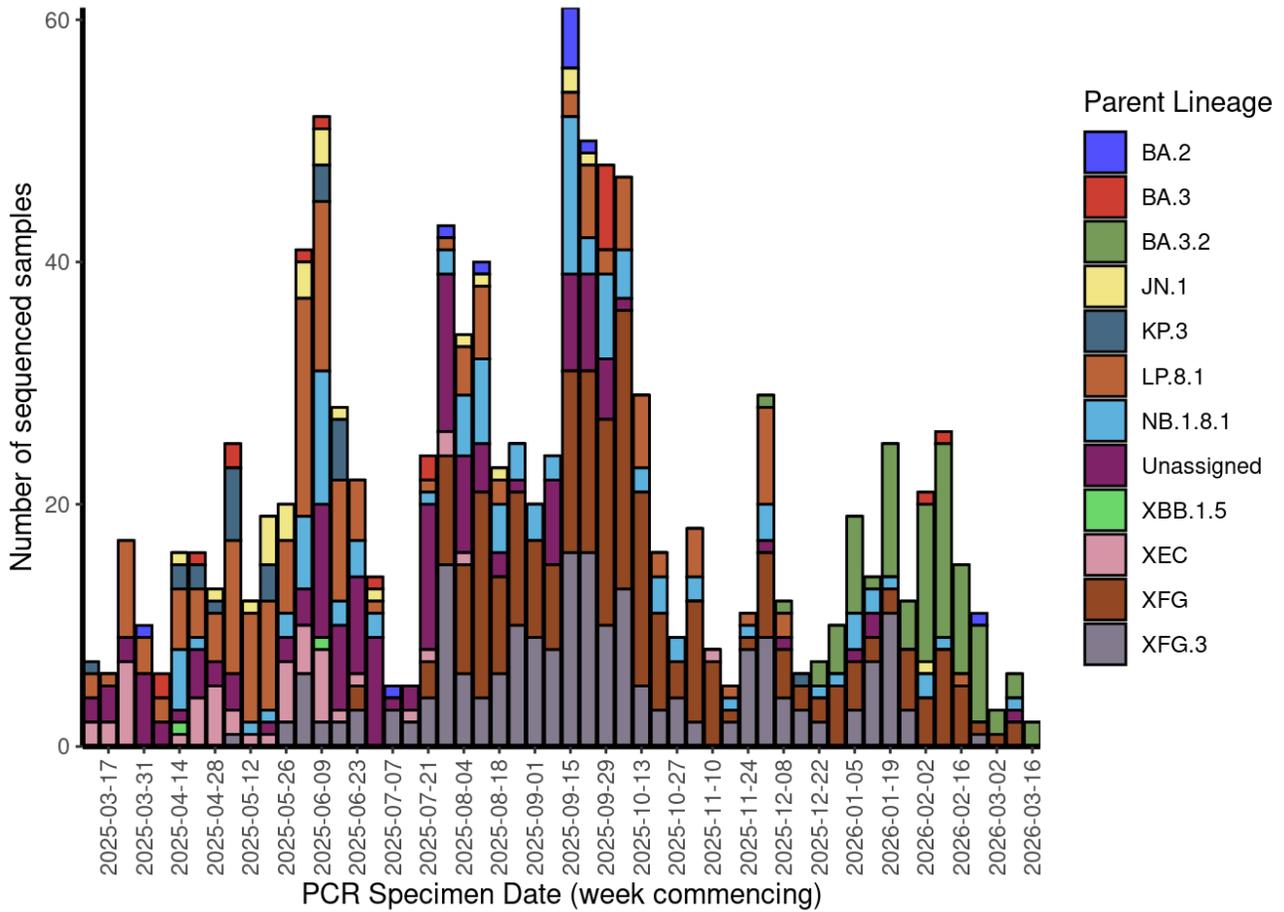
Figure 3.1: Sequenced COVID-19 cases in Northern Ireland, by variant and epidemiological week for the last 12 months
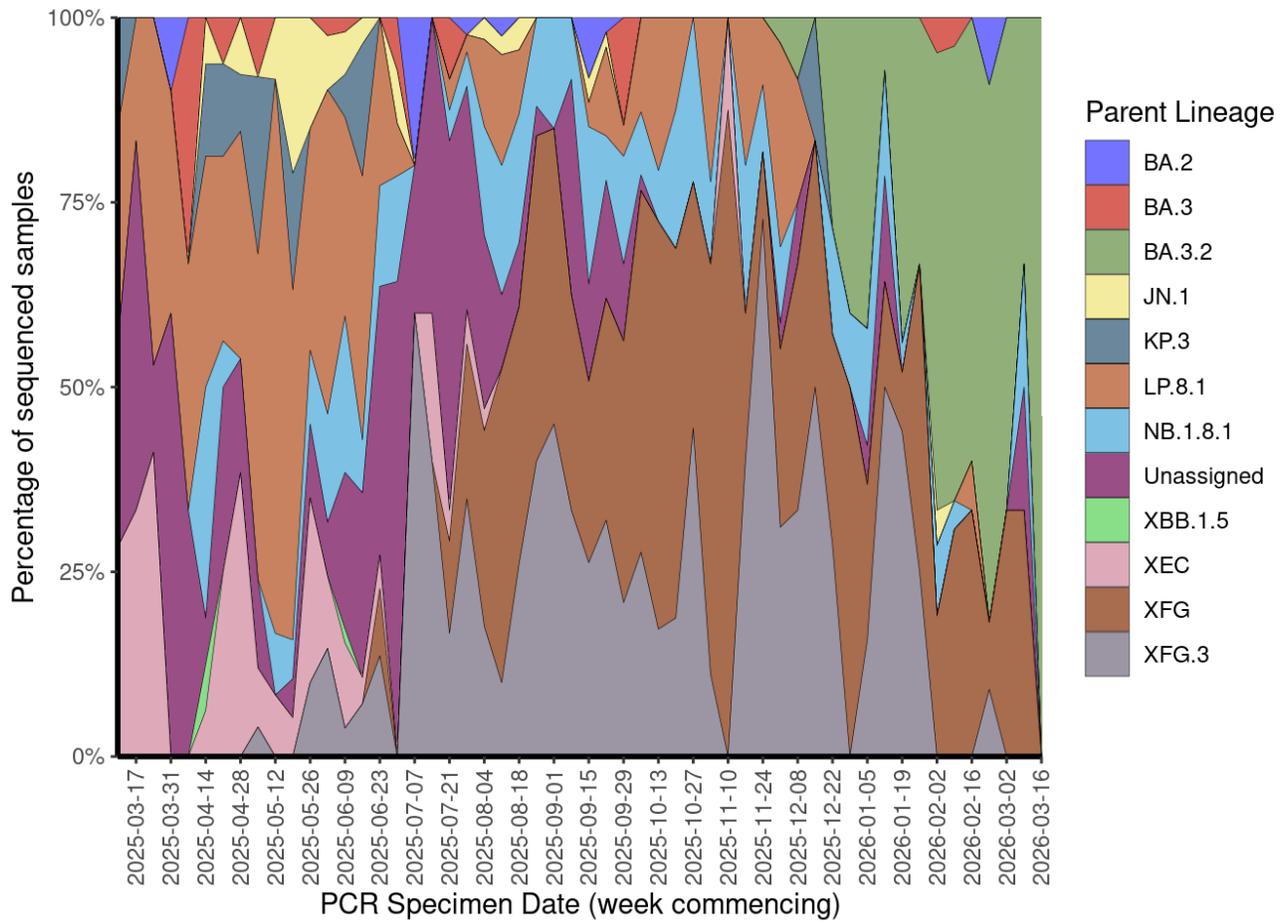
Figure 3.2: Percentage of sequenced COVID-19 samples in Northern Ireland by epidemiological week for the last 12 months
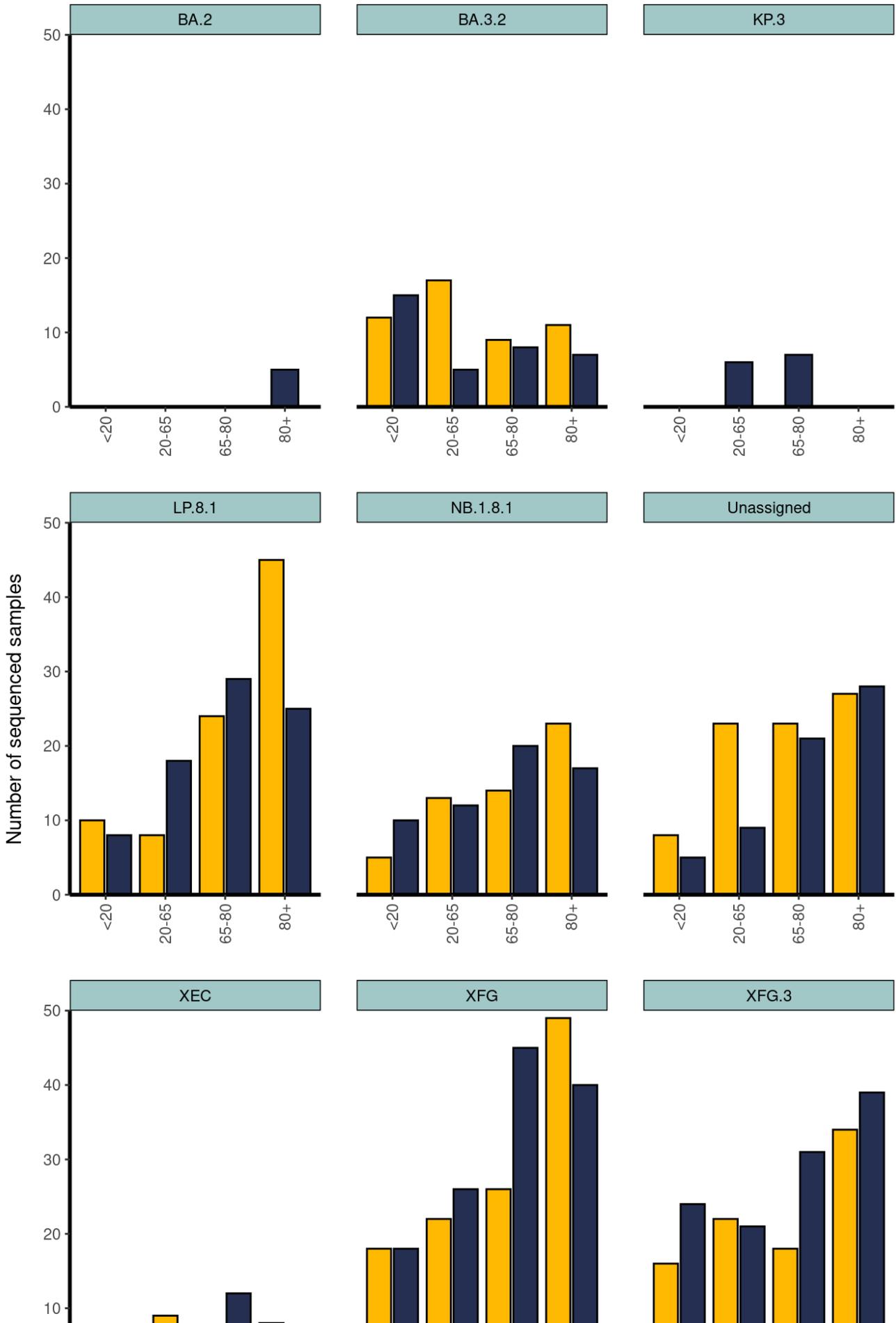
Figure 3.3: Total number of sequenced COVID-19 samples in Northern Ireland by age group and sex, by parent lineage over the last 12 months

This chart only shows counts for lineages with at least 5 sequenced samples in a given age group.

4 Percentage of Specimens Sequenced

Not all PCR samples are sequenced; sequencing can only be carried out on samples that have a sufficiently high viral load, which is largely determined by when the sample is taken during the course of the infection. Other factors affecting how many samples are sequenced include volume of sample available, sample quality, and sequencing laboratory capacity.

The number of COVID-19 positive PCR samples (sequenced and not sequenced) in Northern Ireland over the past 12 months (10 March 2025 to 16 March 2026) is shown in Figure 4.1. The percentage of COVID-19 positive PCR samples that have been sequenced in on a weekly basis over the past 12 months is shown in Figure 4.2, with 9.52% sequenced (4 week rolling average of 15.44%) in the week commencing 16 March 2026.
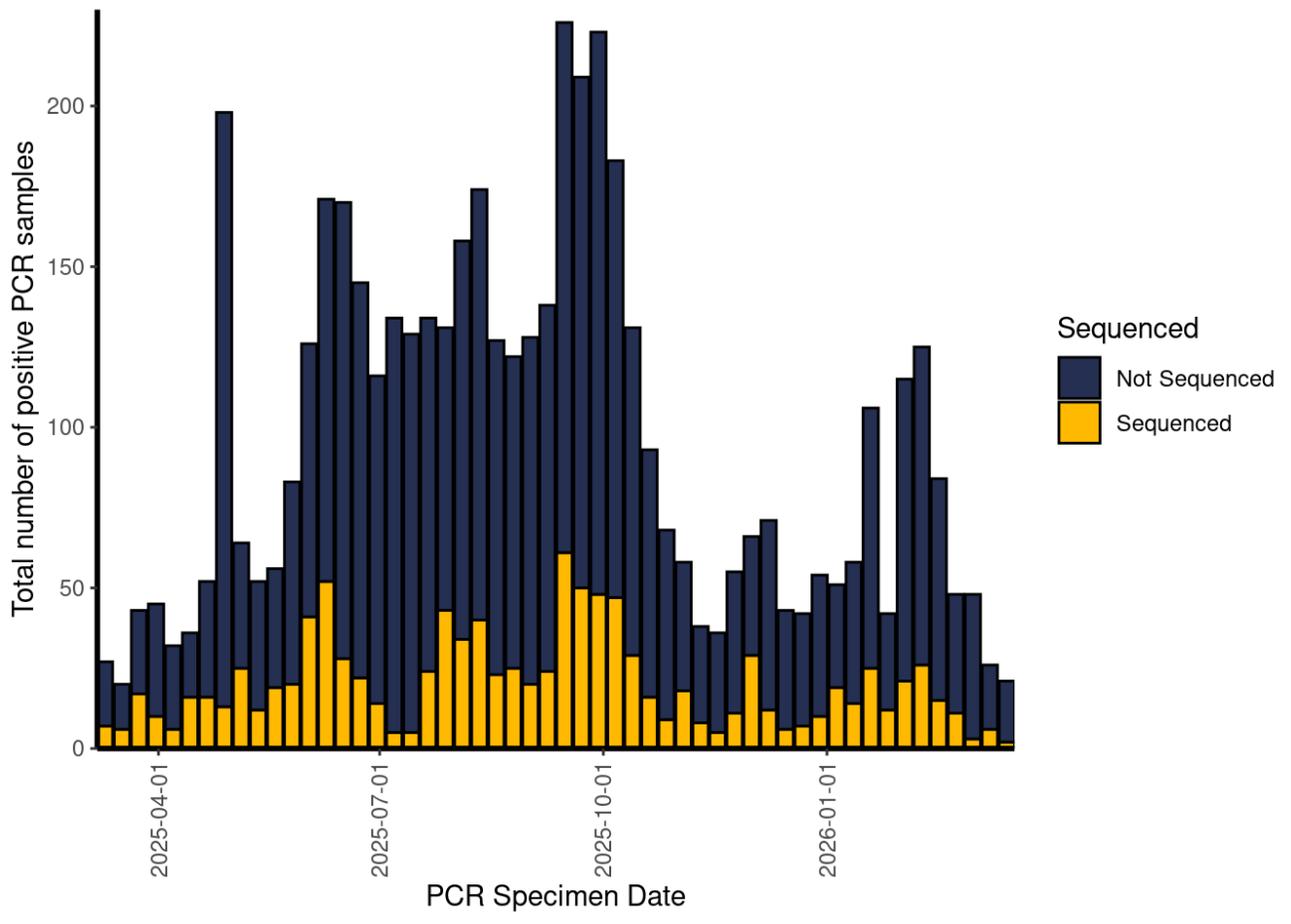
Figure 4.1: Count of sequenced and not sequenced positive COVID-19 PCR samples in Northern Ireland over the last 12 months
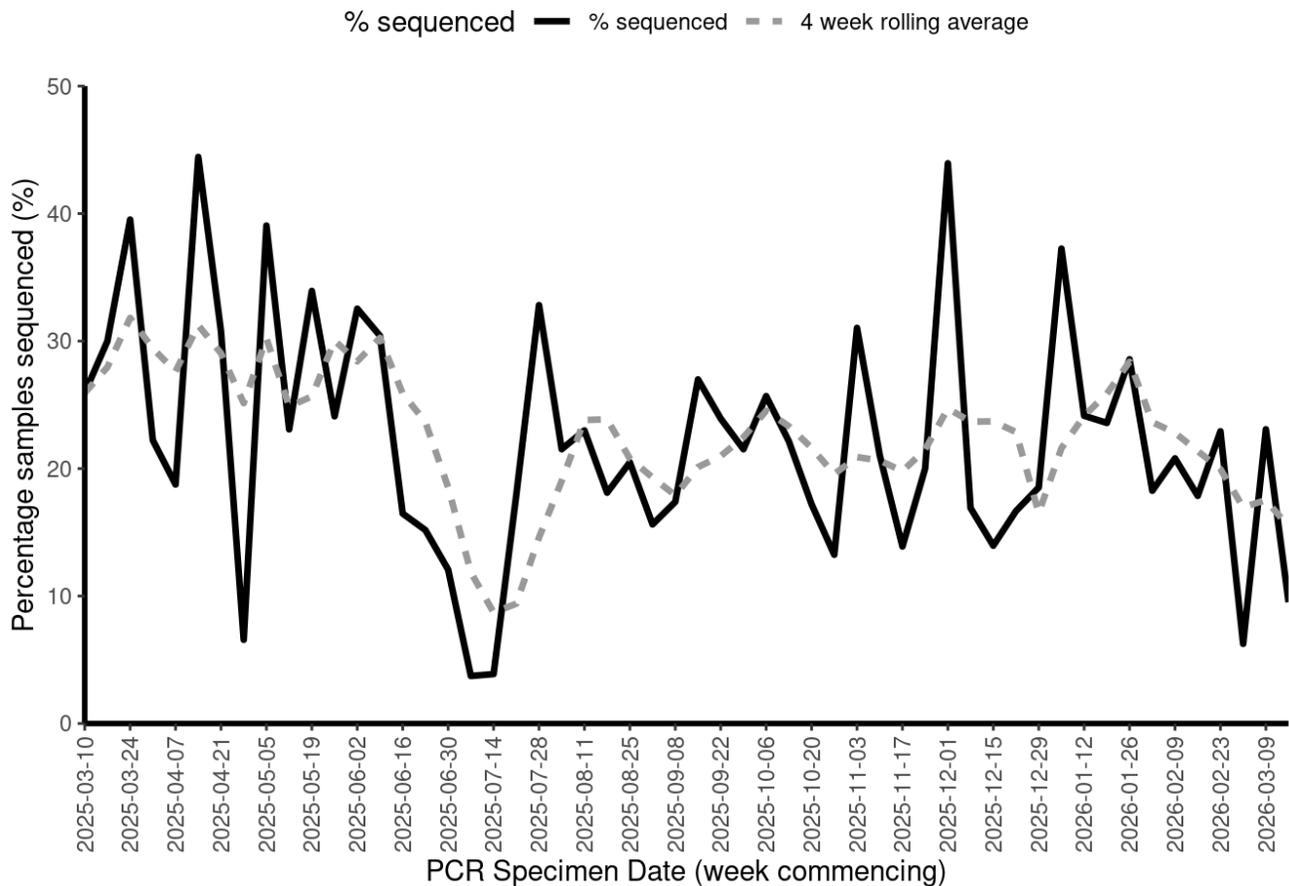
Figure 4.2: Percentage of positive COVID-19 samples sequenced in Northern Ireland over the last 12 months

5 Key Definitions and Interpretation

5.1 Definitions

- Variant nomenclature - UKHSA made changes to the variant classification system from the 1st April 2022, resulting in previously assigned Variants Under Investigation (VUIs) or Variants of Concern (VOCs) to be assigned with the V nomenclature. Details of the change to the classification system can be found in Technical briefing 39 here.

- Lineage assignment algorithm - on 29th November 2022, the lineage assignment algorithm was switched from PangoLEARN to UShER for lineage counts. PangoLEARN uses a machine learning algorithm, whereas UShER uses phylogenetic placement and produces few unassigned lineages.

5.2 Interpretation of variant data

- Lineage counts for recent weeks may increase due to the time lag associated with whole genome sequencing.

- Lineage calls are subject to change following analysis of genomic sequence results, which may result in fluctuations in lineage/variant counts.

6 Appendix

6.1 Total counts by lineage for the last 8 weeks of sequencing data (26 January 2026 to 22 March 2026)

Table 6.1. Summary of variants sequenced in Northern Ireland over the past 8 weeks			
Lineage	**Parent Lineage**	**Variant**	**Sequenced cour**
BA.2	**BA.2**	**VOC-22JAN-01**	1
BA.3	**BA.3**	**VOC-21NOV-01**	2
NB.1.8.1	**NB.1.8.1**	**V-23DEC-01**	1
PQ.2.1	**NB.1.8.1**	**V-23DEC-01**	3
PY.1.1.1	**JN.1**	**V-23DEC-01**	1
RE.1.1	**BA.3.2**	**VOC-21NOV-01**	1
RE.1.1.1	**BA.3.2**	**VOC-21NOV-01**	5
RE.2.1	**BA.3.2**	**VOC-21NOV-01**	1

Lineage	Parent Lineage	Variant	Sequenced cou...
RE.2.1.1	BA.3.2	VOC-21NOV-01	22
RE.2.2.3	BA.3.2	VOC-21NOV-01	19
RE.2.3	BA.3.2	VOC-21NOV-01	1
RE.2.4	BA.3.2	VOC-21NOV-01	7
Unassigned	Unassigned	Unassigned	1
XFG.1.1	XFG	V-23DEC-01	5
XFG.22	XFG	V-23DEC-01	1
XFG.3.3	XFG.3	V-23DEC-01	1
XFG.3.4.1	XFG.3	V-23DEC-01	3
XFG.6.2	XFG	V-23DEC-01	16
XFG.6.2.2	XFG	V-23DEC-01	4
XFZ.1	LP.8.1	V-23DEC-01	1
Total	-	-	96

Table 6.1. Summary of variants sequenced in Northern Ireland over the past 8 weeks

6.2 Total counts and percentage sequenced by parent lineage for the last 12 months of

sequencing data (10 March 2025 to 22 March 2026)

Table 6.2. Summary of variants sequenced in Northern Ireland over the pa			
Parent Lineage	Variant	WHO variant name	Sequence coun
XFG	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	244
XFG.3	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	205
LP.8.1	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	167
Unassigned	Unassigned		144
NB.1.8.1	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	114
BA.3.2	VOC-21NOV-01	Omicron	84
XEC	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	48
JN.1	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	25
KP.3	V-23DEC-01	Omicron	24
BA.3	VOC-21NOV-01	Omicron	19
BA.2	VOC-22JAN-01	Omicron	11
XBB.1.5	V-23JAN-01	Recombinant	2

Print