



25 September 2019

Year: 2019

Week: 38

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## Key messages

Data to: 22 September 2019

NHS 111 difficulty breathing calls continued to increase during week 38 in line with seasonally expected trends. Calls increased specifically in the 1-4 and 5-14 years age groups (Figures 5 & 5a).

## Syndromic indicators at a glance:

Indicator	Trend	Level
Cold/flu	increasing	pre-epidemic threshold*
Fever	no trend	below baseline levels
Cough	increasing	above baselines levels
Difficulty breathing	increasing	above baselines levels
Sore throat	no trend	above baselines levels
Diarrhoea	no trend	below baseline levels
Vomiting	increasing	below baseline levels
Eye problems	decreasing	similar to baseline levels

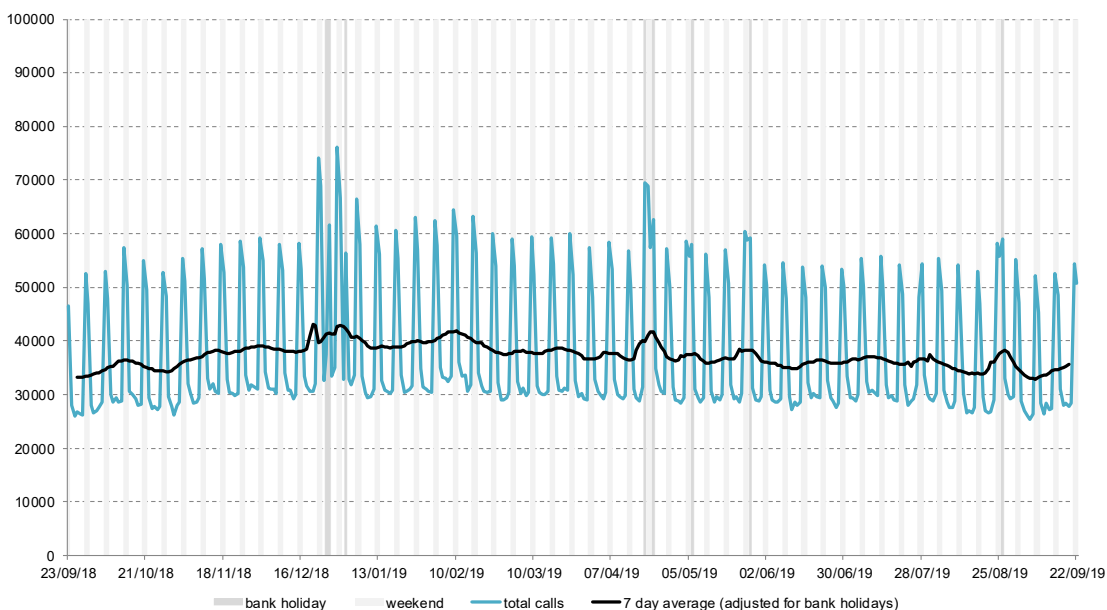
\* Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) influenza activity threshold (see notes)

## Data summary:

Year	Week	Total calls
2019	38	248,917

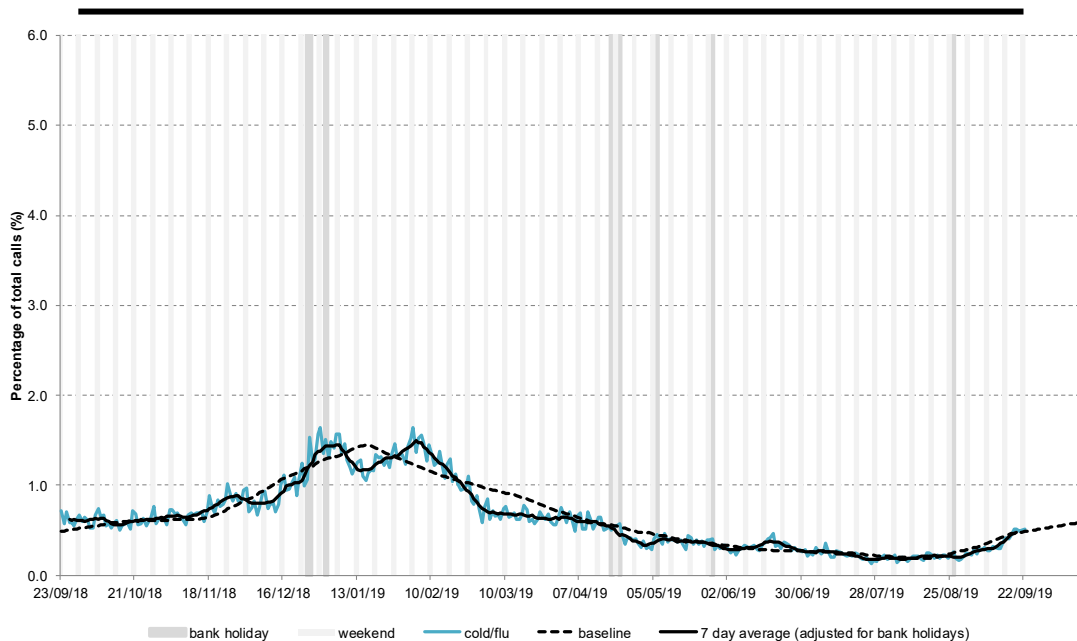
## 1: Total calls.

The total number of syndromic calls recorded each day by NHS 111.



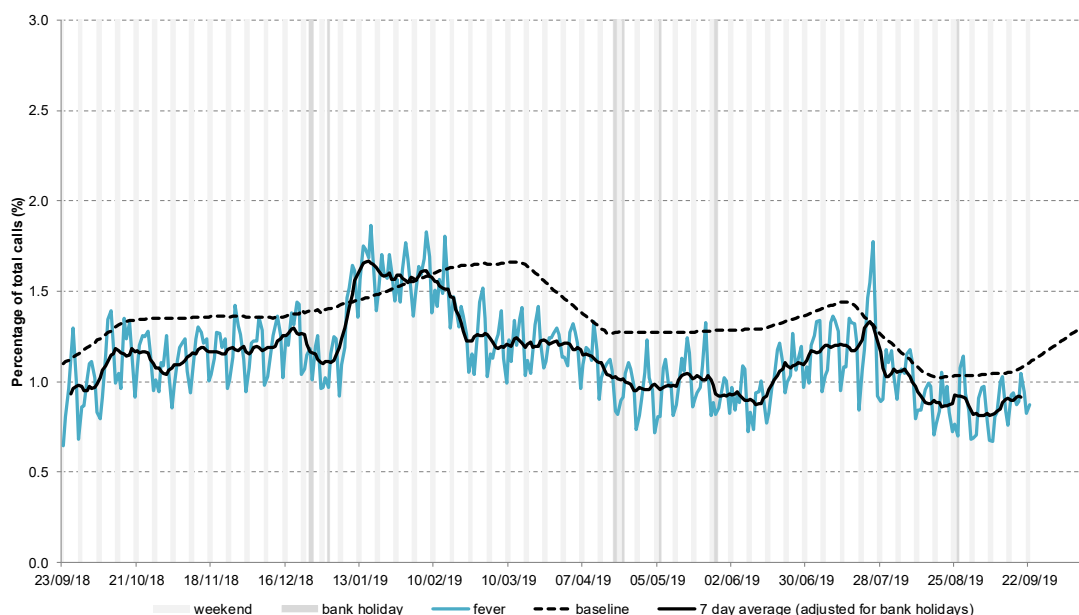
## 2: Cold/flu

Daily 'cold/flu' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



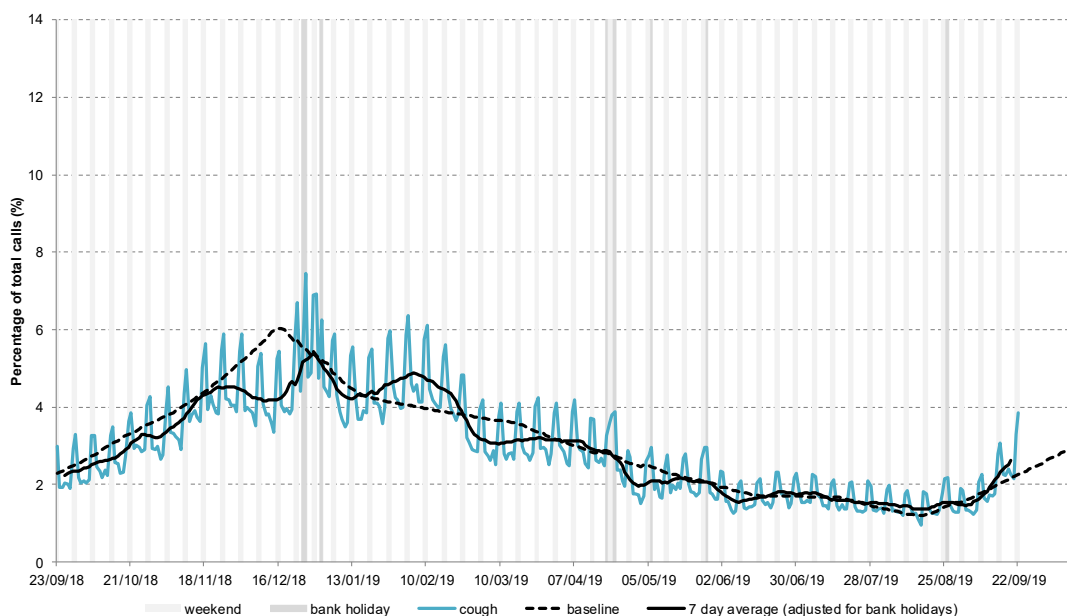
## 3: Fever

Daily 'fever' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



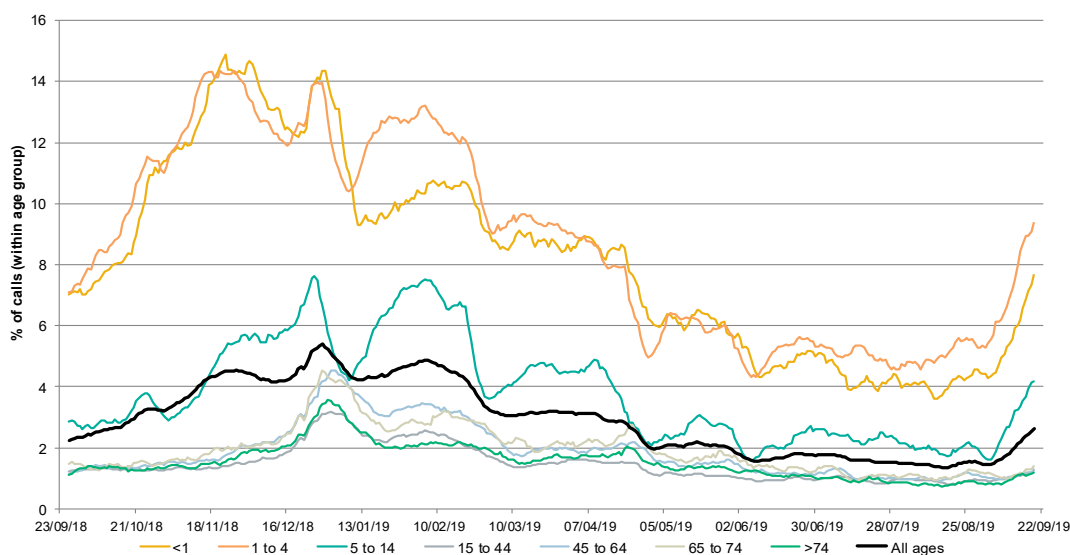
## 4: Cough

Daily 'cough' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



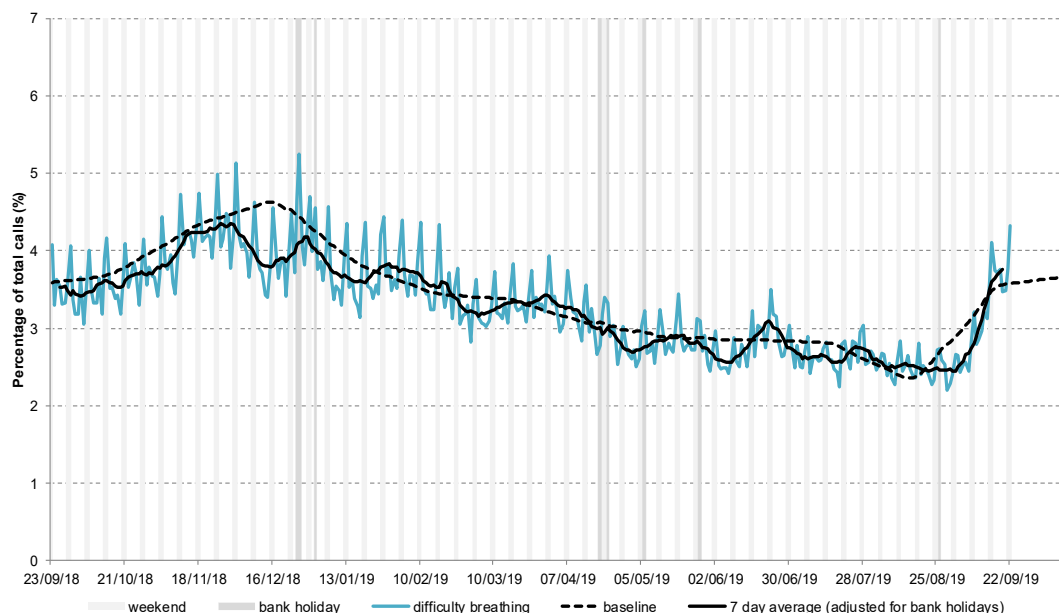
### 4a: Cough calls by age group

Cough calls as a percentage of total calls within each age group, shown as a 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



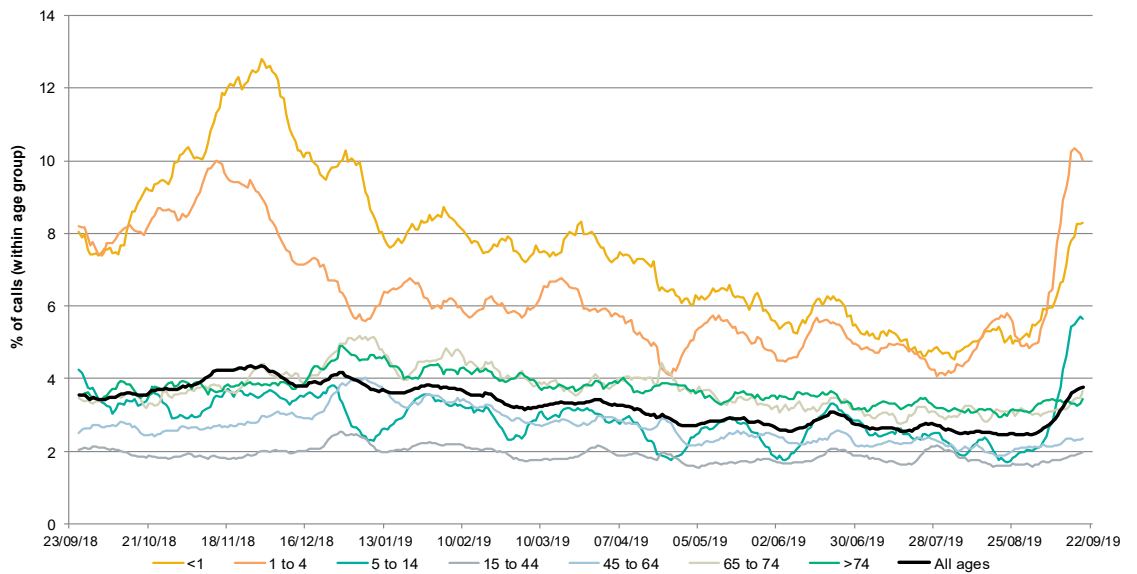
## 5: Difficulty breathing

Daily 'difficulty breathing' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



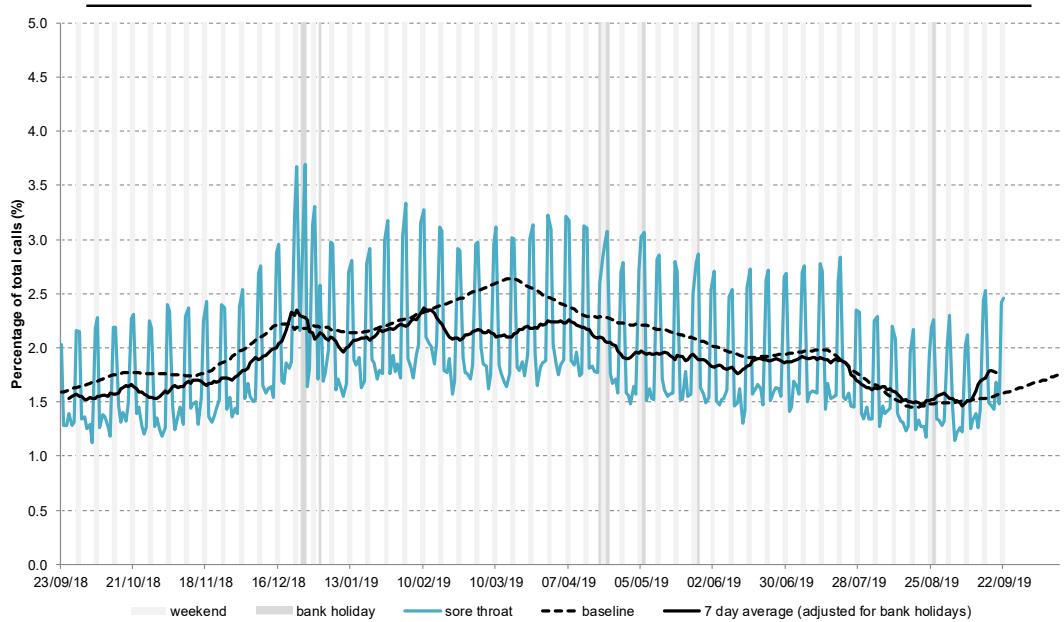
## 5a: Difficulty breathing calls by age group

Difficulty breathing calls as a percentage of total calls within each age group, shown as a 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



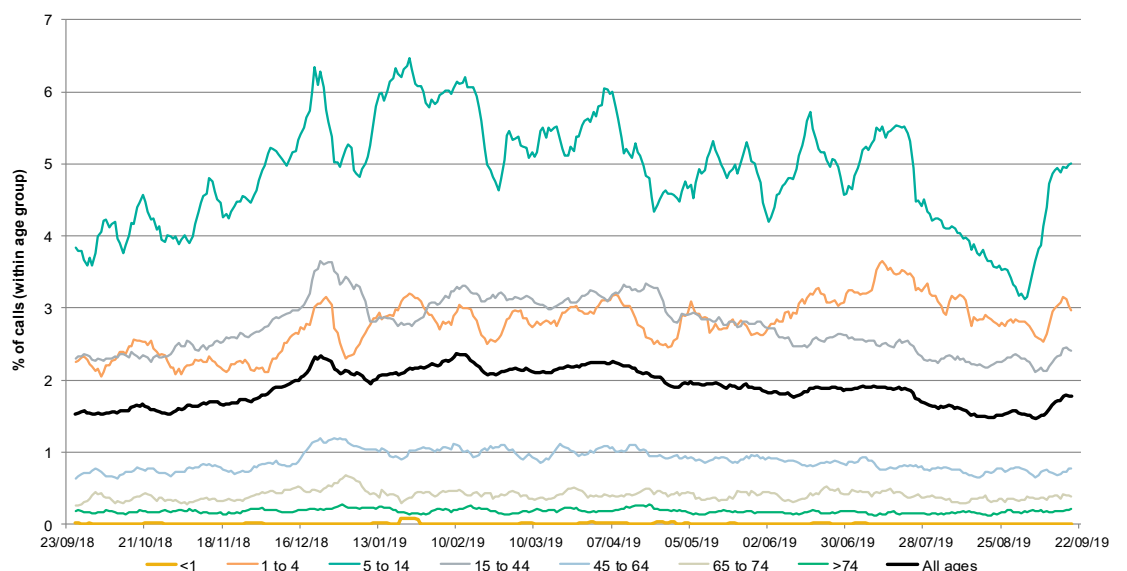
## 6: Sore throat

Daily 'sore throat' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



## 6a: Sore throat calls by age group

Sore throat calls as a percentage of total calls within each age group, shown as a 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



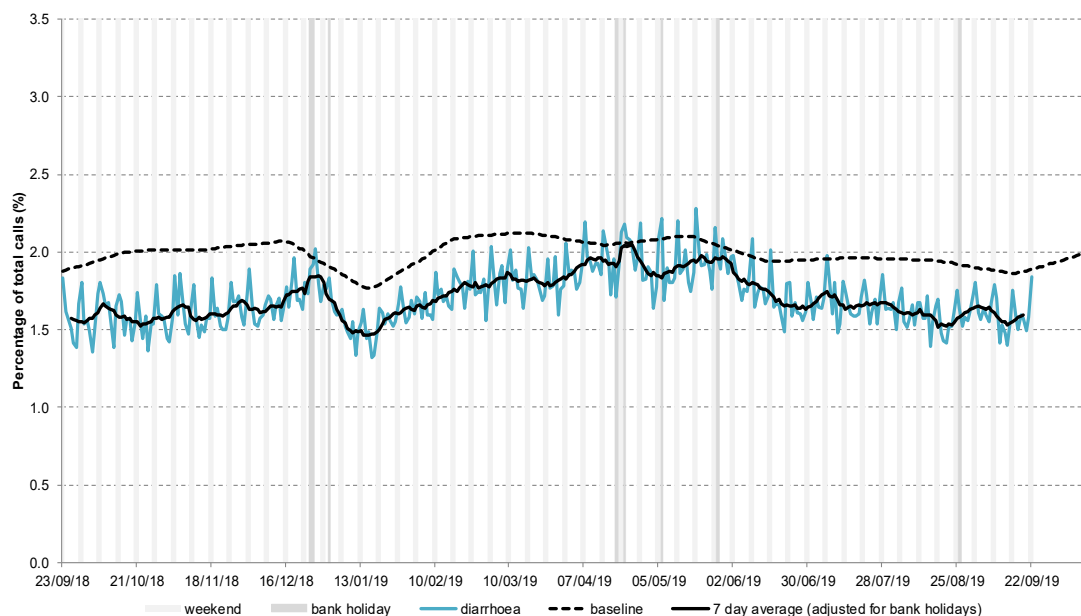
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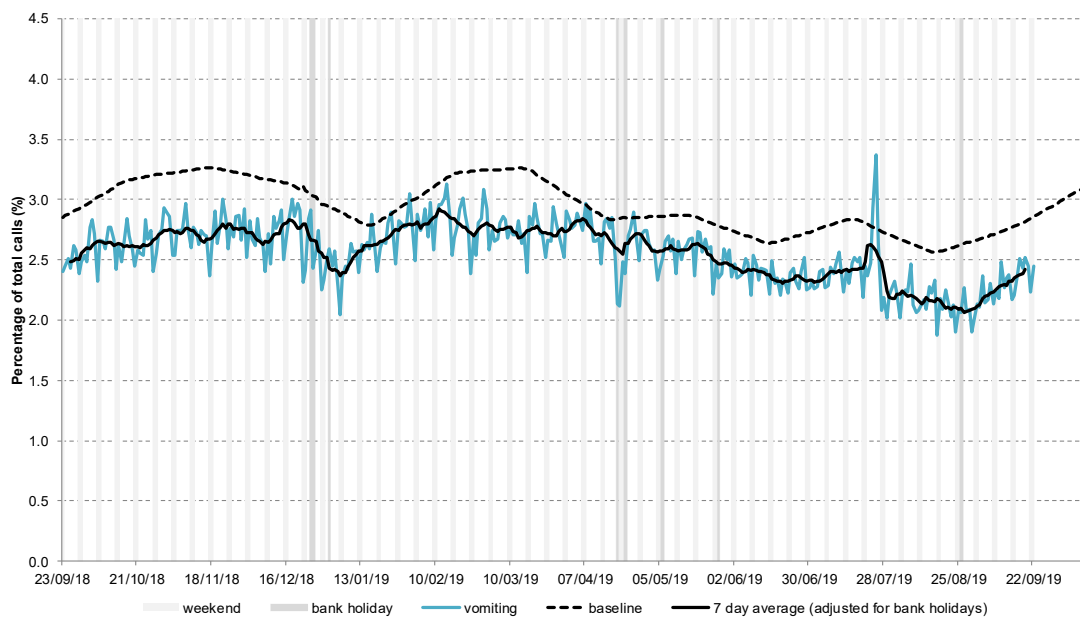
## 7. Diarrhoea

Daily 'diarrhoea' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



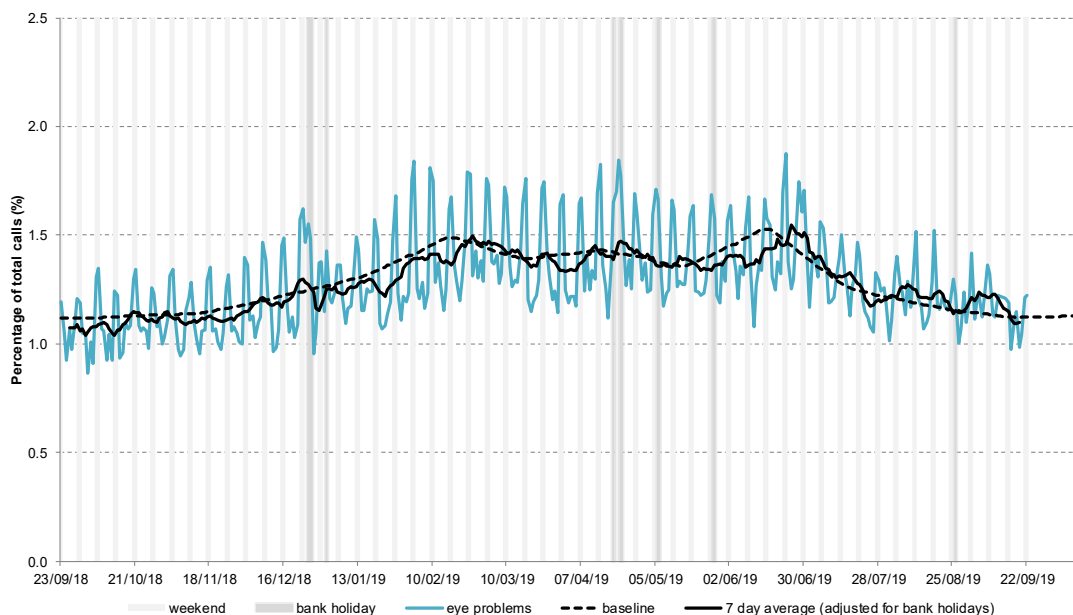
## 8: Vomiting calls

Daily 'vomiting' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



## 9: Eye problems

Daily 'eye problems' calls as a percentage of total calls. Baselines are constructed from historical data since 2013.



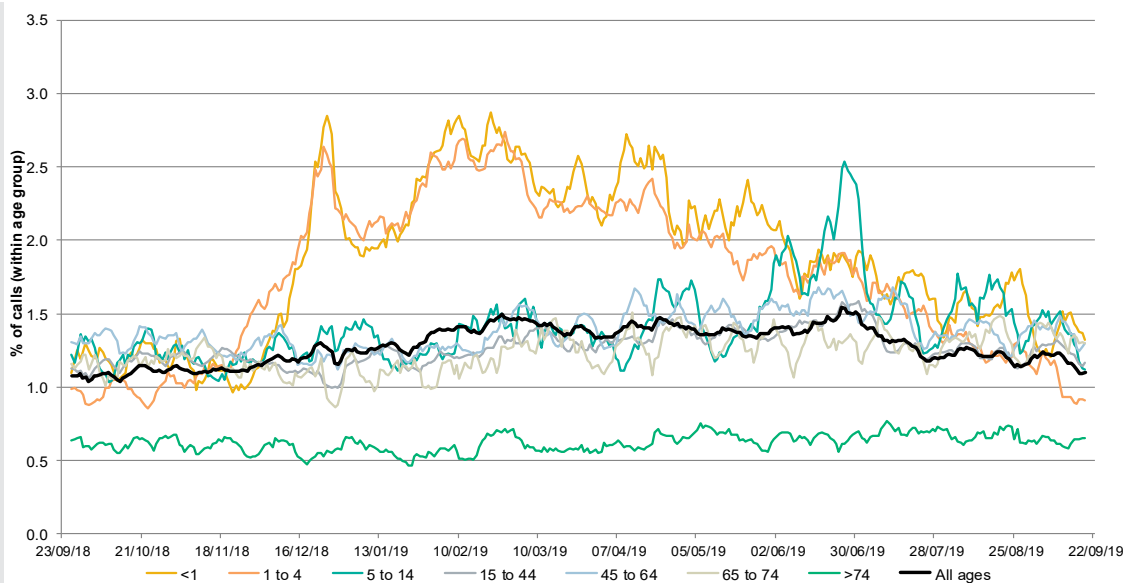
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## 9a: Eye problems calls by age group

'Eye problems calls as a percentage of total calls within each age group, shown as a 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



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## Introduction to charts:

- Weekends and bank holidays are marked by vertical **grey** lines (bank holidays **darker grey**).
- A 7-day moving average (adjusted for bank holidays) is overlaid on the daily data reported in each chart, unless specified.
- Baselines represent seasonally expected levels of activity and are constructed from historical data since September 2013. They take into account any known substantial changes in data collection, population coverage or reporting practices. Baselines are refreshed using the latest data on a regular basis.
- NHS 111 call data are analysed on a daily basis to identify national and regional trends. A statistical algorithm underpins each system, routinely identifying activity that has increased significantly or is statistically significantly high for the time of year. Results from these daily analyses are assessed by the ReSST, along with analysis by age group, and anything deemed of public health importance is alerted by the team.

## Moving Epidemic Method (MEM):

- During each winter we present Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) influenza thresholds on selected indicators.
- The moving epidemic method or MEM is a standard methodology used for setting influenza thresholds across many European nations.<sup>1</sup>
- MEM is used for NHS 111 cold/flu thresholds at a national level.
- **MEM thresholds should be interpreted using 7 day moving averages rather than daily data.**
- MEM thresholds currently use five years of historic data. The thresholds are re-calculated every year.
- 'Pre-epidemic thresholds' are used alongside other surveillance systems to identify the start of influenza circulating in the community.
- 40%, 95% and 97.5% intensity thresholds are used to identify when influenza activity moves from low to medium, high or very high.

<sup>1</sup>Vega T et al. Influenza Other Respir Viruses. 2013;7(4):546-58.

## Notes and further information:

- Further information about NHS 111 can be found at:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111/>
- The Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance bulletin can also be downloaded from the PHE Real-time Syndromic Surveillance website which also contains more information about syndromic surveillance:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/syndromic-surveillance-systems-and-analyses>

## Acknowledgements:

We are grateful to NHS 111 and to NHS Digital for their assistance and support in providing the anonymised call data that underpin the Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System.

### Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin.

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