



14 September 2021

Year: 2021 Week: 36

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## Key messages

Data to: 12 September 2021

During week 36, there was an increase in total syndromic calls nationally, due to increases in the North East, North West and East Midlands in particular (figures 1 & 1a).

COVID-19-like and difficulty breathing calls increased nationally, notably in the same PHE Centre areas as the increases seen in total syndromic calls (figures 2 & 3).

Baselines have been remodelled to account for changes due to COVID-19 and additional, new modelled lines have been added to the charts to represent expected levels if COVID-19 had not occurred.

A Heat-Health Watch system operates in England from 1 June to 15 September each year. As part of the Heatwave Plan for England, the PHE Real-time Syndromic Surveillance team will be routinely monitoring the public health impact of hot weather using syndromic surveillance data during this period. Heat-health watch level (current reporting week): **Level 1: Summer preparedness**  
<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/uk/heathealth/>

## Syndromic indicators at a glance:

Indicator		Calls*	Trend†	Level‡
COVID-19-like		12,698	increased	-
Difficulty breathing		13,094	increased	above baseline levels
Impact of heat or cold		40	increased	similar to baseline levels
Injuries		14,816	no trend	below baseline levels
Cardiac	Cardiac/ respiratory arrest	2,613	increased	above baseline levels
	Chest pain	11,240	increased	above baseline levels
Overdose/ ingestion/ poisoning		4,701	increased	above baseline levels
Unconscious/ passing out		9,945	increased	above baseline levels

\* Number of syndromic calls received by PHE in the reporting week

† Trend is defined as the overall activity over the last few weeks

‡ Current activity in comparison to historical baselines, which have been constructed using data from 1 January 2018

## Data summary:

Daily total syndromic counts and number of English ambulance trusts for which data is included in this bulletin.

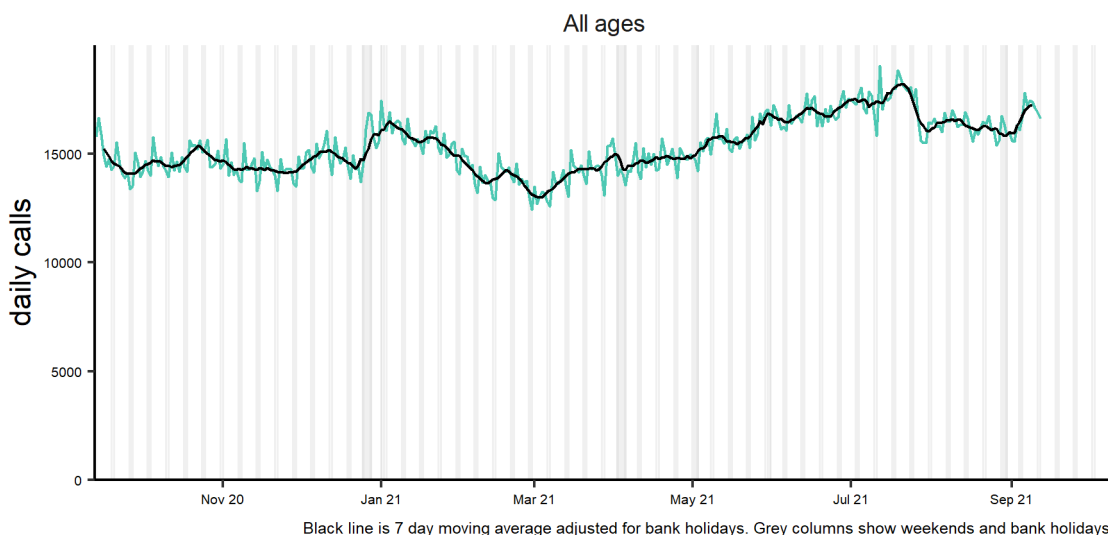
Day	Trusts*	Week 36
Monday	10	18,047
Tuesday	10	17,370
Wednesday	10	17,672
Thursday	10	17,628
Friday	10	17,264
Saturday	10	17,151
Sunday	10	16,835
<b>Total</b>	<b>(max) 10</b>	<b>121,967</b>

\* Ambulance Trusts (England) submitting daily syndromic surveillance data included in report

## 1: Total syndromic calls.

The total number of syndromic calls recorded each day, all ages, England.

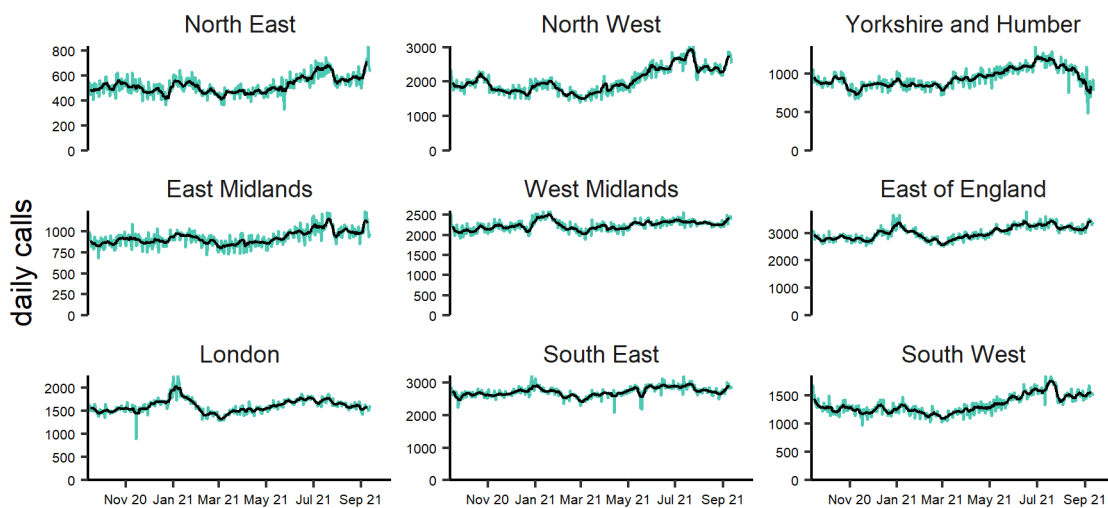
Total syndromic calls 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



## 1a: Total syndromic calls by PHE Centre.

The total number of syndromic calls recorded each day, by PHE Centre.

Total syndromic calls by PHE centre 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021

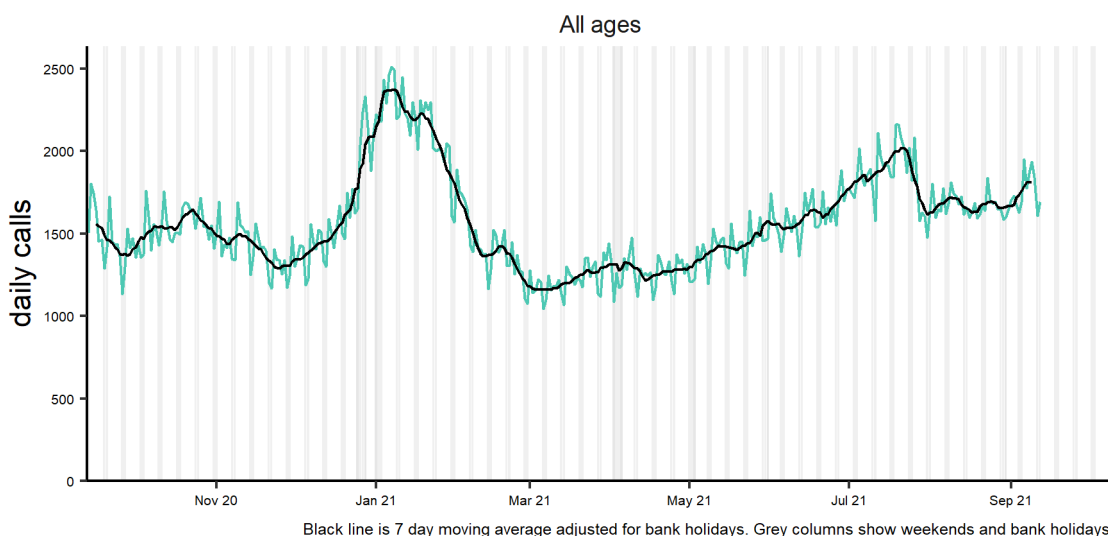


## 2: 'COVID-19-like' calls.

Daily number of calls that use the 'pandemic/epidemic/outbreak' chief complaint category, England.

This is related to patients reporting COVID-19-like symptoms but is not a count of COVID-19 cases. **Please see the notes section for further information and caveats about this indicator.**

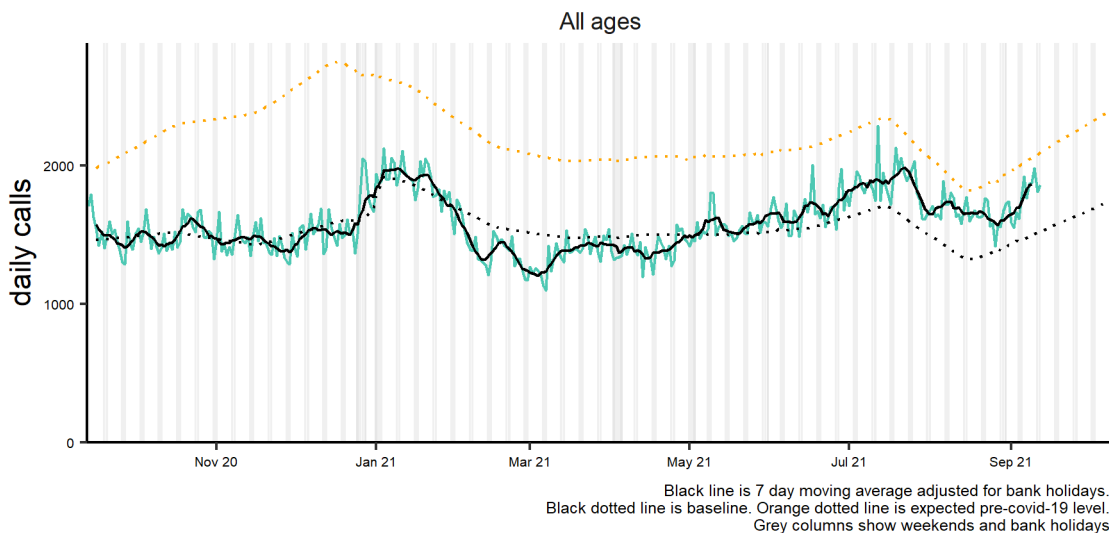
Potential covid-19 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



### 3: Difficulty Breathing.

Daily number of calls related to 'breathing problems', England.

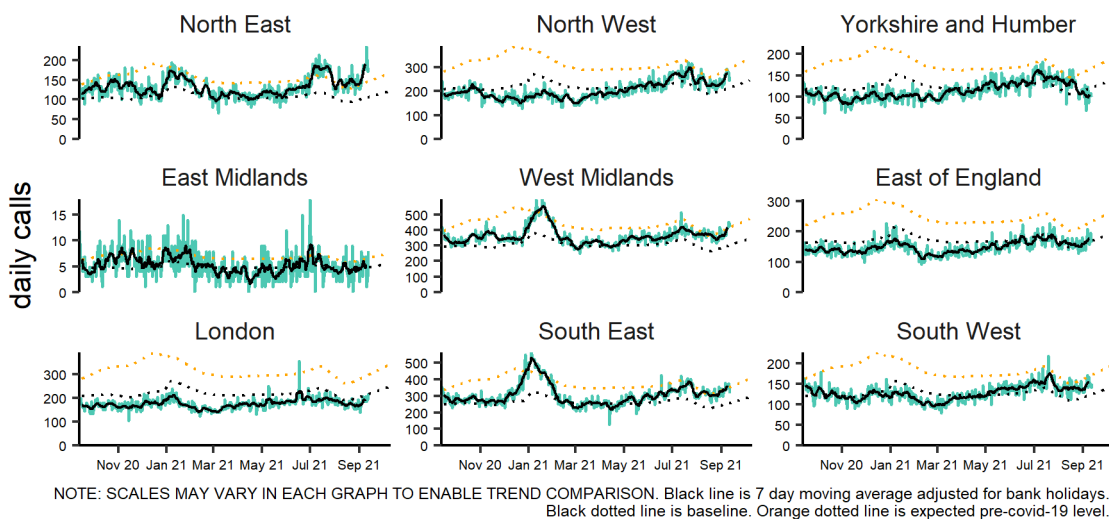
Difficulty breathing 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



### 3a: Difficulty Breathing calls by PHE Centre.

Number of daily breathing problems calls by PHE Centre. Please note: very few calls of this type are recorded in the East Midlands PHE Centre.

Difficulty breathing by PHE centre 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



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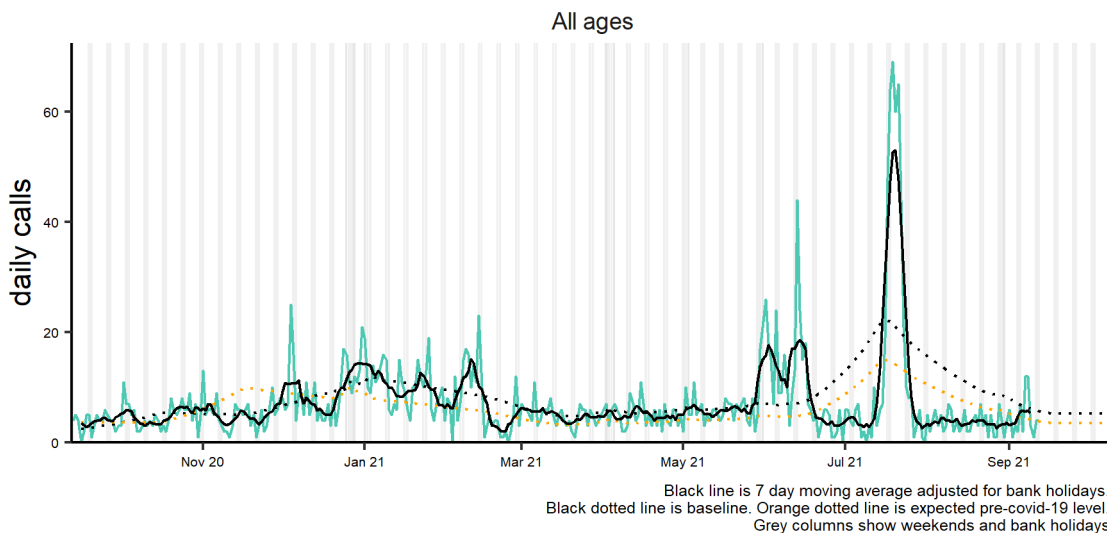
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#### 4: Impact of heat or cold.

Daily number of calls related to 'heat/ cold exposure, England.

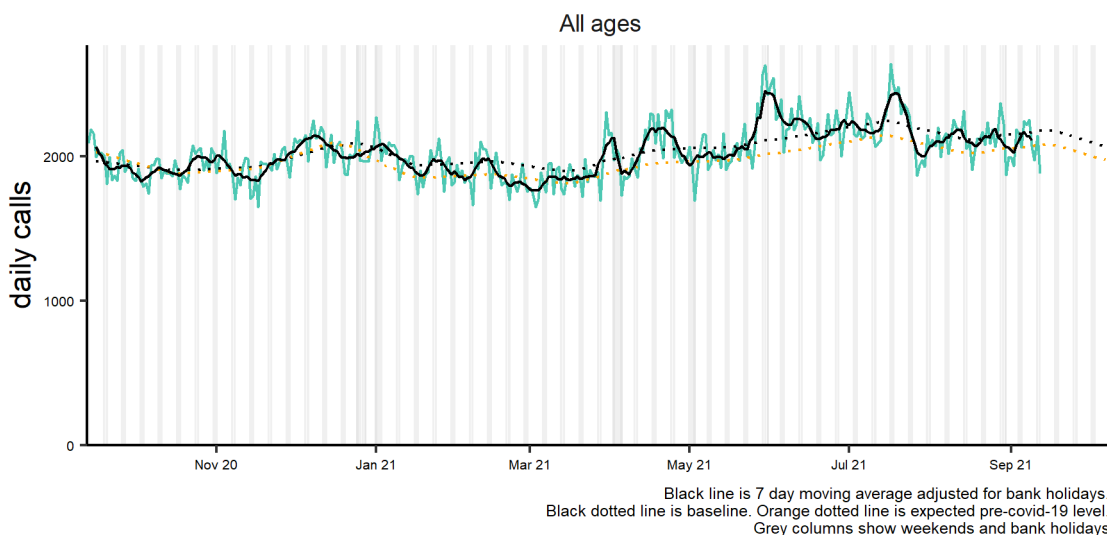
Impact of heat or cold 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



#### 5: Injuries.

Daily number of calls related to 'falls/ back injury - traumatic', England.

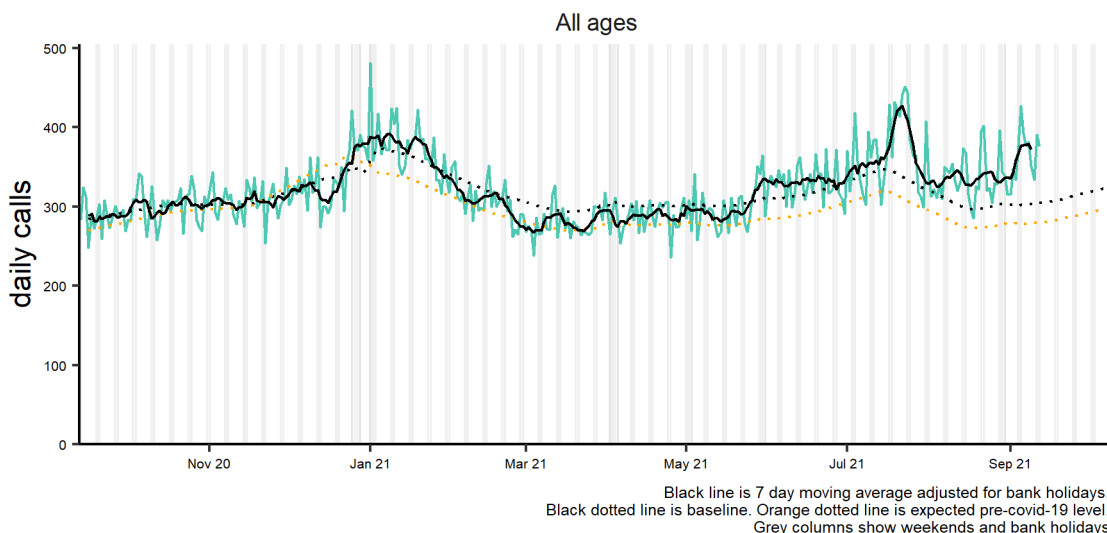
Injuries 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



#### 6: Cardiac or respiratory arrest.

Daily number of calls related to 'cardiac/ respiratory arrest', England.

Cardiac or respiratory arrest 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



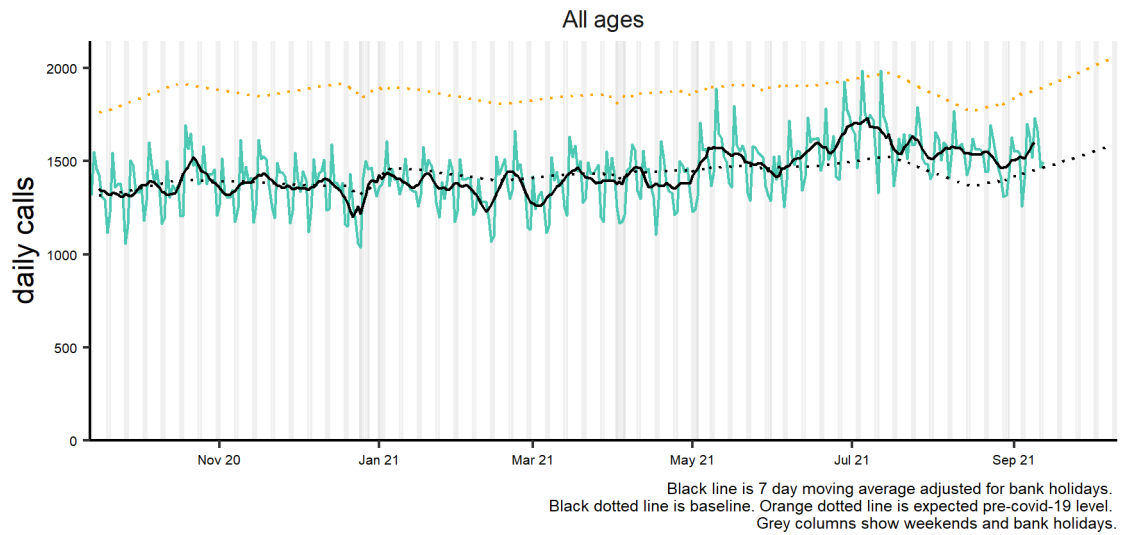
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## 7: Chest pain.

Daily number of calls related to 'chest pain', England.

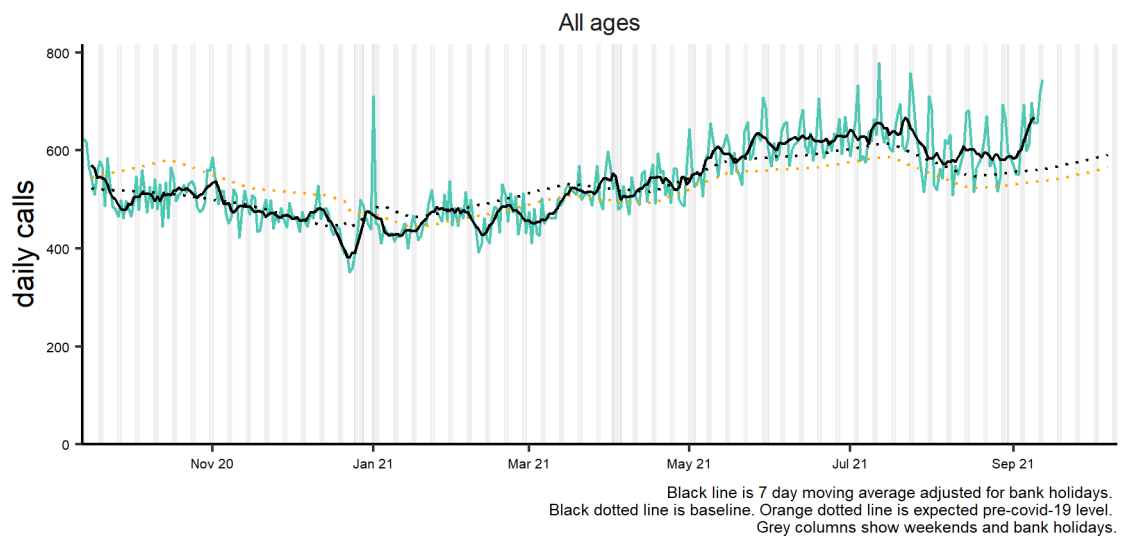
Chest pain 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



## 8: Overdose or ingestion or poisoning.

Daily number of calls related to 'overdose/ ingestion/ poisoning', England.

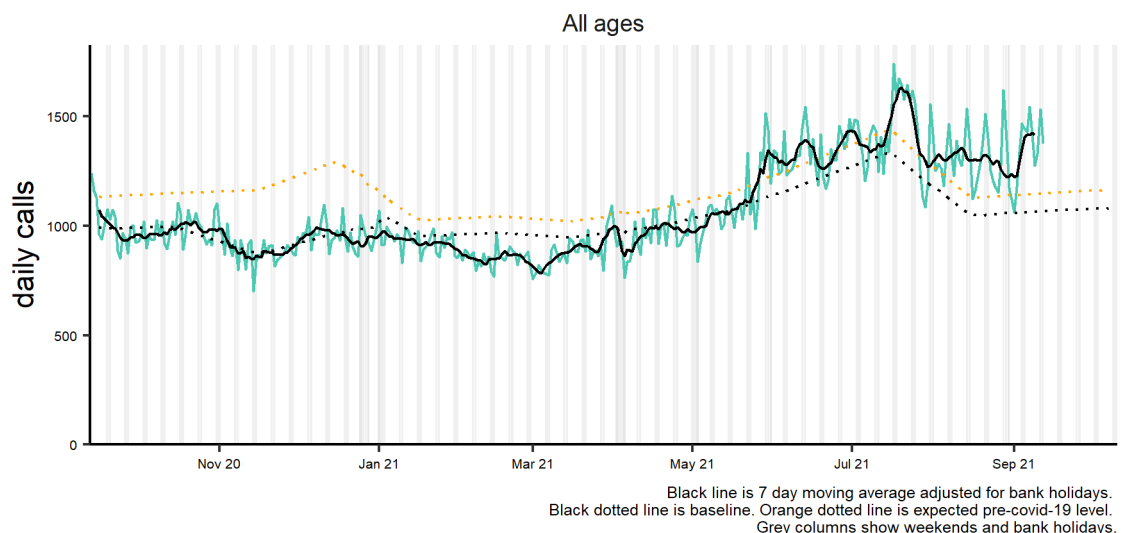
Overdose or ingestion or poisoning 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



## 9: Unconscious or passing out.

Daily number of calls related to 'unconscious', England.

Unconscious or passing out 13/09/2020 - 12/09/2021



## COVID-19-like ambulance calls:

- During March 2020 ambulance trusts started using a 'Pandemic/Epidemic/Outbreak' triage card to assess potential COVID-19 patients. Calls using this 'Pandemic' triage are now presented in this bulletin as '**COVID-19-like**' calls.
- When the Pandemic triage was introduced the number of syndromic indicator calls e.g. breathing problems decreased, reflecting the increased use of the pandemic triage.
- Please note that these ambulance calls are not an absolute count of COVID-19 cases assessed by ambulance trusts: not all ambulance trusts use the Pandemic triage card; other chief complaint categories and local codes are also used to triage potential COVID-19 patients.
- **The 'COVID-19-like' call data presented in this bulletin should therefore be used to monitor trends in calls and not numbers.**

## Introduction to charts:

- A 7-day moving average (adjusted for bank holidays) is overlaid on the daily data reported in each chart, unless specified.
- Baselines have been constructed using historical data since 1 January 2018
- Baselines have been remodelled to account for changes due to COVID-19 and the orange dotted lines are counter-factual models showing seasonally expected levels if COVID-19 had not occurred.
- National ambulance syndromic surveillance (NASS) call data are analysed by the Real-time Syndromic Surveillance Team (ReSST) on a daily basis to identify national and regional trends. A statistical algorithm underpins each syndromic surveillance 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.

## Notes and further information:

### Coverage:

- Total syndromic calls includes all calls where the chief presenting complaint can be mapped to one of the syndromic indicators monitored by Public Health England.
- Some indicators are not routinely presented in this report.
- Total syndromic calls is lower than the total number of calls received by ambulance trusts.

### Description of included NASS indicators:

- **Difficulty breathing:** persons finding it difficult to breathe.
- **Impact of heat or cold:** heat or cold exposure.
- **Injuries:** persons falling or having a back injury.
- **Cardiac or respiratory arrest:** persons who have stopped or have ineffective breathing or/and no pulse.
- **Chest Pain:** persons experiencing chest pain or chest discomfort.
- **Overdose or ingestion or poisoning:** overdoses, ingestion of a substance or poisoning.
- **Unconscious or passing out:** persons who are unconscious, not alert or fainting.

## Acknowledgements:

### We would like to thank:

- North East, North West, Yorkshire, East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London, South East Coast, South Central, and South Western NHS Ambulance Trusts for submitting anonymised, daily data to the National Ambulance Syndromic Surveillance system.
- The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives for their support in establishing NASS.

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**Produced by:** PHE Real-time Syndromic Surveillance Team

**Web:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/syndromic-surveillance-systems-and-analyses>