

Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England) 2021 Week 40

Key messages

Data reported to: 10 October 2021

During week 40, NHS 111 calls and online assessments for respiratory indicators continued to increase, with NHS 111 calls for cold/flu, cough, difficulty breathing and sore throat all above expected levels. Online assessments for cough and sore throat are also above expected levels. 'Potential COVID-19' calls and online assessments increased nationally, particularly in adults 15-44 years.

Syndromic indicators at a glance

Table 1: The current trend (based on previous weeks, not only the current week) and the level (compared to the expected baseline), of each indicator included in this bulletin.

| Indicator | Trend ¹ | Level |
|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| Total NHS 111 calls (Figure 1) | Increasing | No baseline |
| Total NHS 111 online (Figure 2) | Increasing | No baseline |
| Cold/flu NHS 111 calls (Figure 3) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Cold/flu NHS 111 online (Figure 4) | Increasing | Similar to baseline |
| Fever NHS 111 calls (Figure 5) | Increasing | Similar to baseline |
| Fever NHS 111 online (Figure 6) | Increasing | Below baseline |
| Cough NHS 111 calls (Figure 7) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Cough NHS 111 online (Figure 8) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Difficulty breathing NHS 111 calls (Figure 9) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online (Figure 10) | Increasing | Below baseline |
| Sore throat NHS 111 calls (Figure 11) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Sore throat NHS 111 online (Figure 12) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Loss of taste NHS 111 calls (Figure 13) | No trend | No baseline |
| Loss of taste NHS 111 online (Figure 14) | No trend | No baseline |
| Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls (Figure 15) | Increasing | No baseline |
| Potential COVID-19 111 online (Figure 16) | Increasing | No baseline |
| Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls (Figure 17) | Increasing | Below baseline |
| Diarrhoea NHS 111 online (Figure 18) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Vomiting NHS 111 calls (Figure 19) | No trend | Similar to baseline |
| Vomiting NHS 111 online (Figure 20) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Eye problems NHS 111 calls (Figure 21) | Increasing | Sinilar to baseline |
| Eye problems NHS 111 online (Figure 22) | Increasing | Above baseline |

¹ trend reports on the trend seen over most recent and earlier weeks

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About this syndromic surveillance system

This bulletin presents data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) remote health advice syndromic surveillance system.

Syndromic surveillance can be used to:

- assess current trends
- assess current trends and levels compared to historical baselines
- compare trends between age groups/areas

Syndromic surveillance should not be used to:

- estimate total burden or number of 'cases' of a condition (see Notes and caveats)
- compare levels between age groups/areas

Fully anonymised, daily NHS 111 call and NHS 111 online assessment data are analysed and reported here, to identify and describe trends for a variety of syndromic indicators:

- syndromic indicators include groupings such as cold/flu, fever and diarrhoea
- syndromic indicators are based on:
 - symptoms (known as the Pathway) identified from both NHS 111 calls and NHS 111 online assessments
 - the potential COVID-19 syndromic indicator is based on the outcome (known as the Disposition), rather than the Pathway
- **Key messages** describes any notable trends nationally (England), by age group and/or by geographical area (based on UKHSA Centres)
- the full list of syndromic indicators reported here, along with their current level and trend, are summarised in **Table 1**
- charts are provided for each syndromic indicator, on a national basis, by age group and by geographical area (UKHSA Centre). Each chart includes a year of data with:
 - 7-day moving averages (adjusted for weekends and bank holidays) to aid in the identification of trend
 - statistical baselines (where available) to aid in the assessment of level compared to historical expectations

For further information please see the Notes and caveats section.

Previous weekly bulletins from this system are available here.

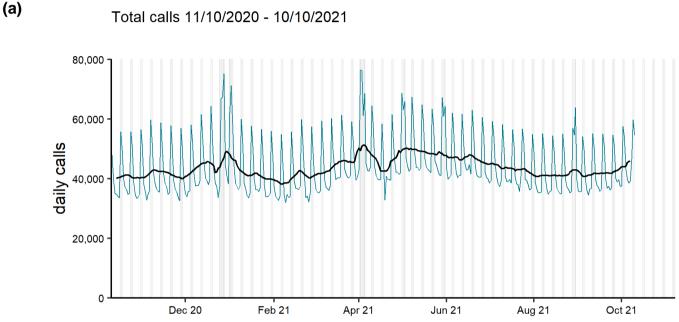
Data quality issues of note this week

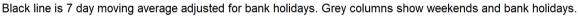
Since September 2020, call numbers in the syndromic dataset received for the North West have been lower than previously recorded, this is due to operational changes in this location.

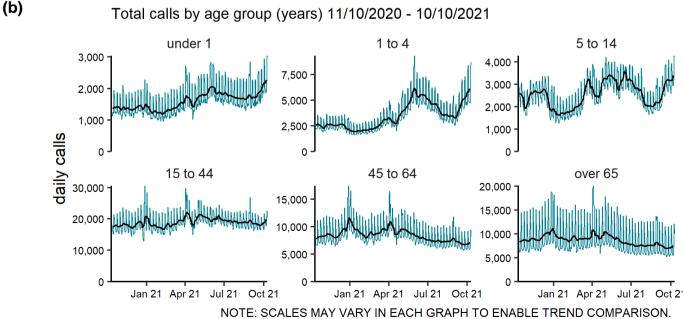
Total contacts

NHS 111 calls

Figure 1: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

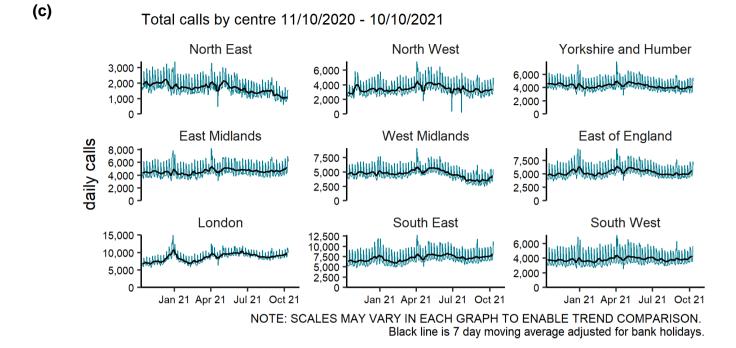


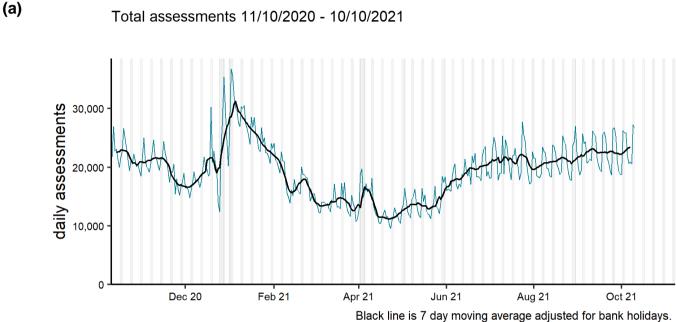
Table 2: The number of NHS 111 calls in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

| Date | Number of calls | |
|-----------------|-----------------|--|
| 04 October 2021 | 43,419 | |
| 05 October 2021 | 40,248 | |
| 06 October 2021 | 38,822 | |
| 07 October 2021 | 39,465 | |
| 08 October 2021 | 46,863 | |
| 09 October 2021 | 60,143 | |
| 10 October 2021 | 54,904 | |

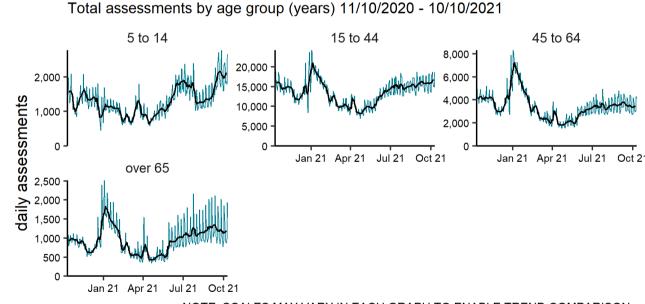
NHS 111 online

(b)

Figure 2: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

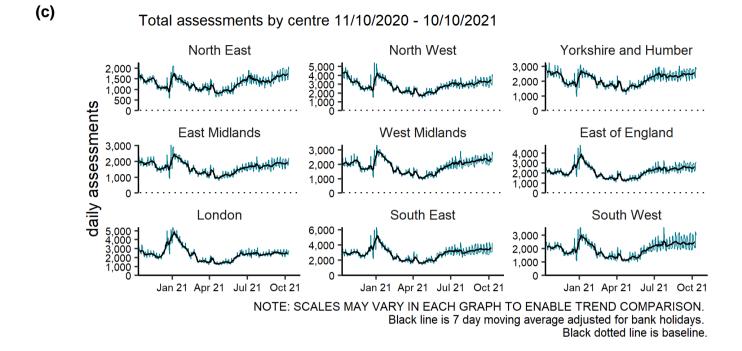


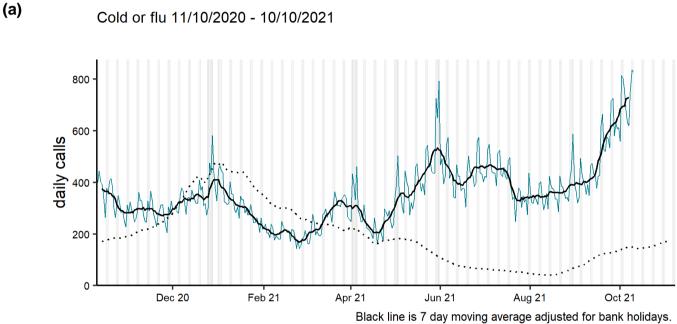
Table 3: The number of completed NHS 111 online assessments in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

| Date | Number of completed assessments |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 04 October 2021 | 25,978 |
| 05 October 2021 | 22,161 |
| 06 October 2021 | 20,747 |
| 07 October 2021 | 20,991 |
| 08 October 2021 | 20,671 |
| 09 October 2021 | 27,418 |
| 10 October 2021 | 26,867 |

Respiratory conditions

Cold/flu NHS 111 calls

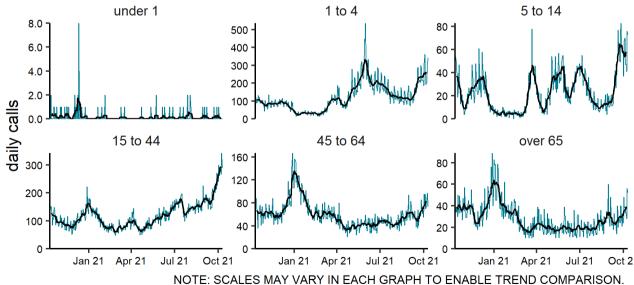
Figure 3: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cold/flu, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



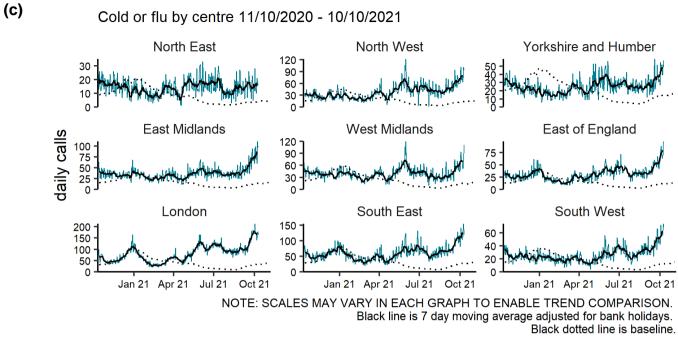
Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

(b)

Cold or flu by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

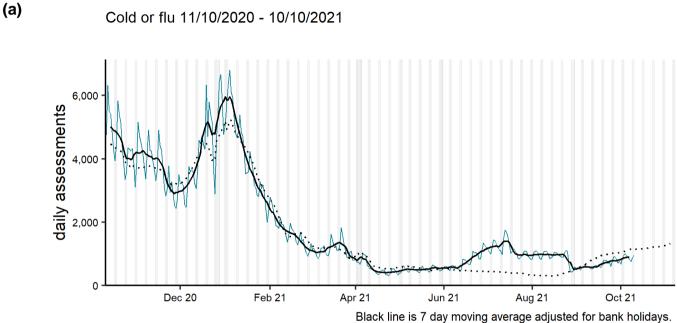


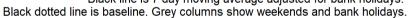
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



Cold/flu NHS 111 online

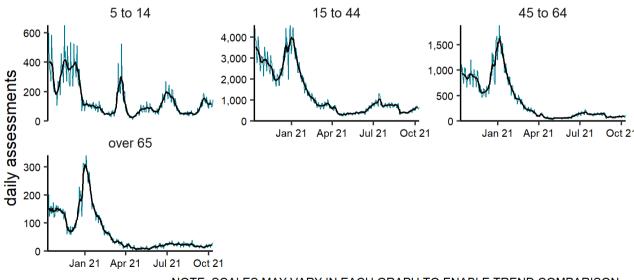
Figure 4: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cold/flu, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



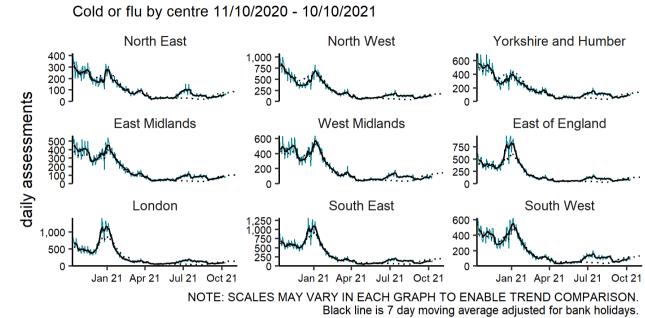


(b)

Cold or flu by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021



NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. (c)



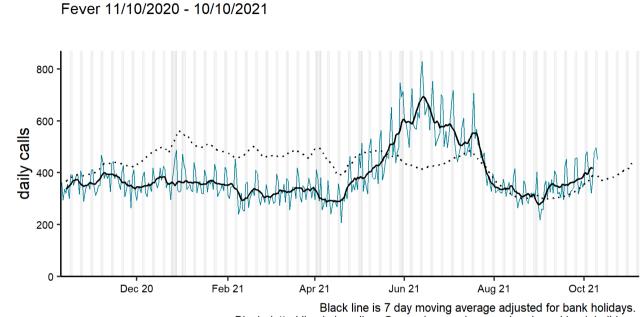
Black dotted line is baseline.

Fever NHS 111 calls

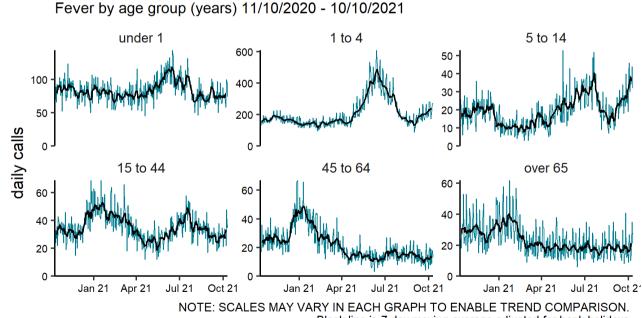
(a)

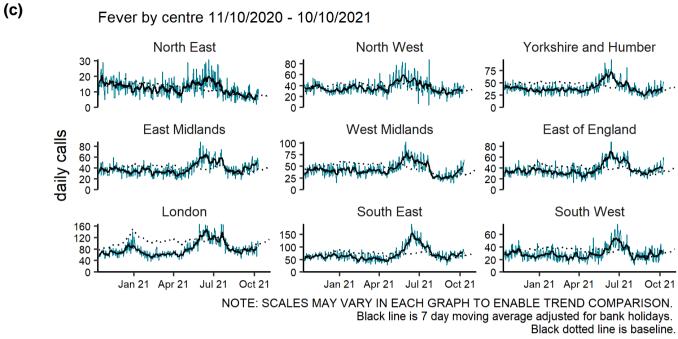
(b)

Figure 5: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for fever, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



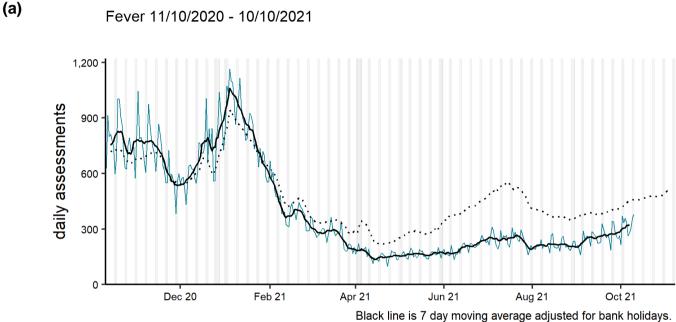
Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

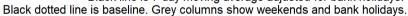




Fever NHS 111 online

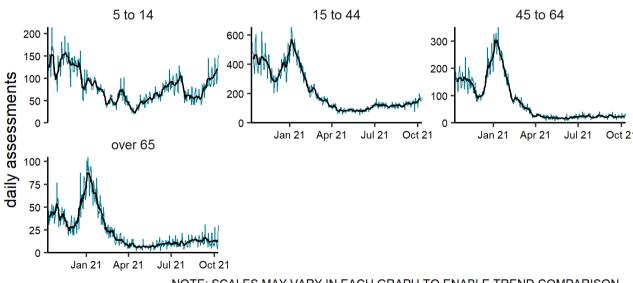
Figure 6: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for fever, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

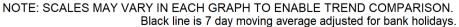


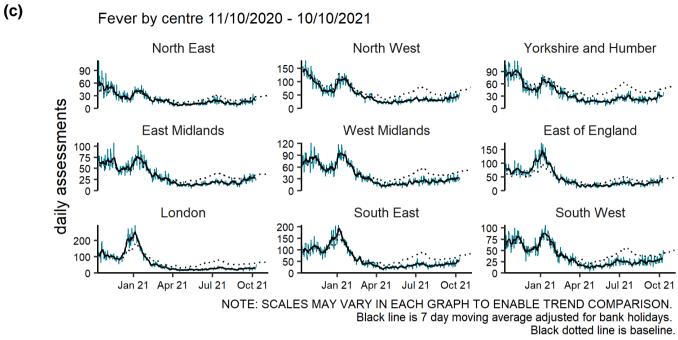




Fever by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021





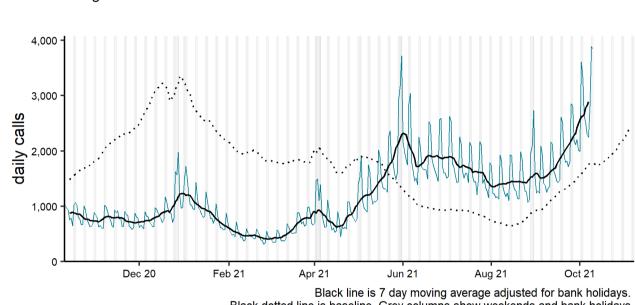


Cough NHS 111 calls

(a)

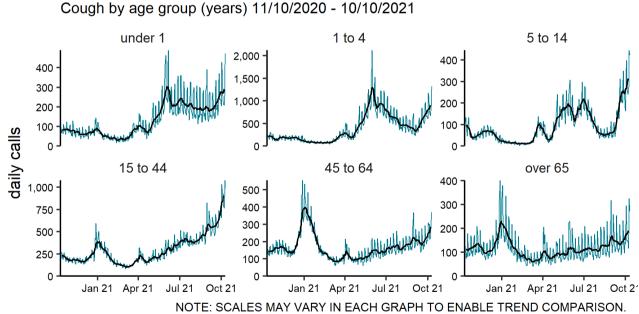
(b)

Figure 7: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cough, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

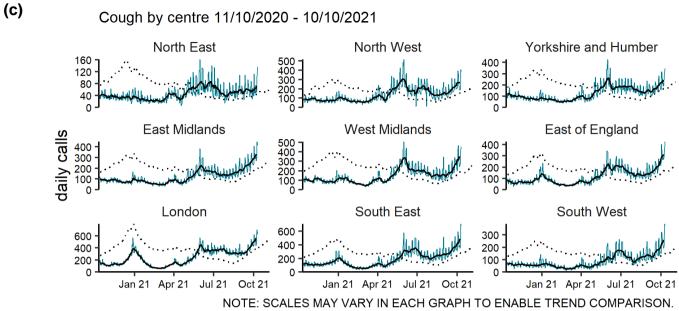


Cough 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



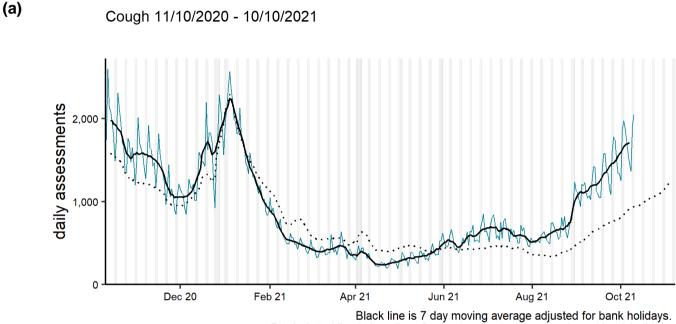
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



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Cough NHS 111 online

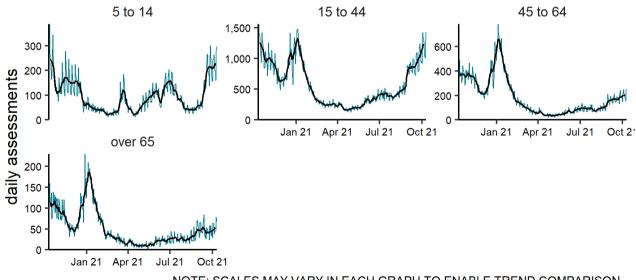
Figure 8: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cough, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



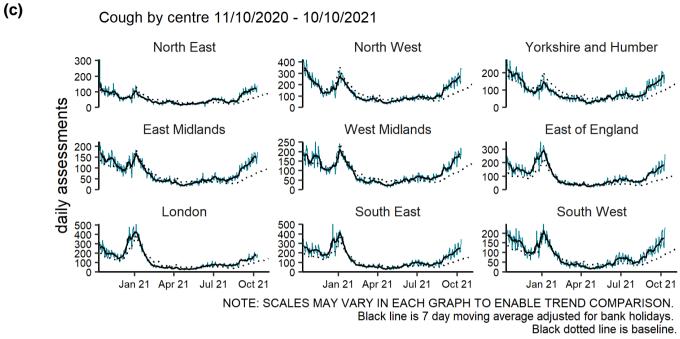
Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

(b)

Cough by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

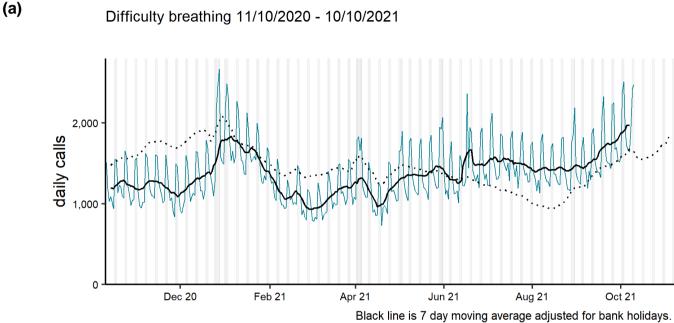


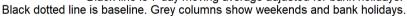
NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

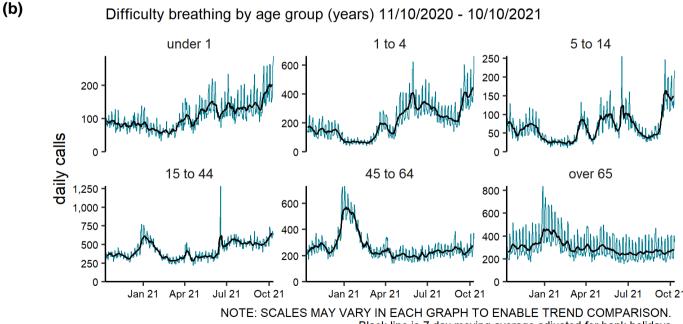


Difficulty breathing NHS 111 calls

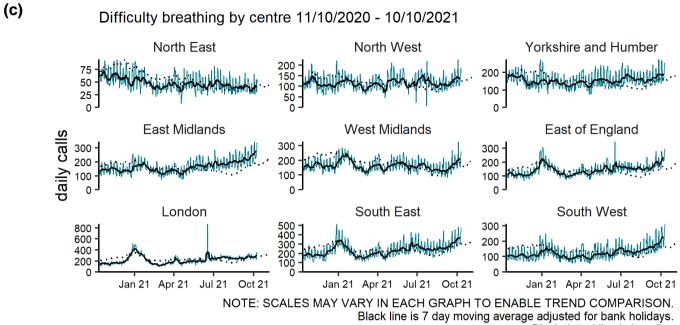
Figure 9: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for difficulty breathing, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







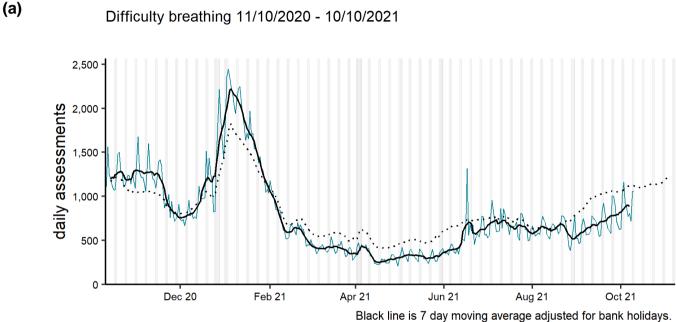
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

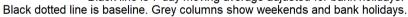


Black dotted line is baseline.

Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online

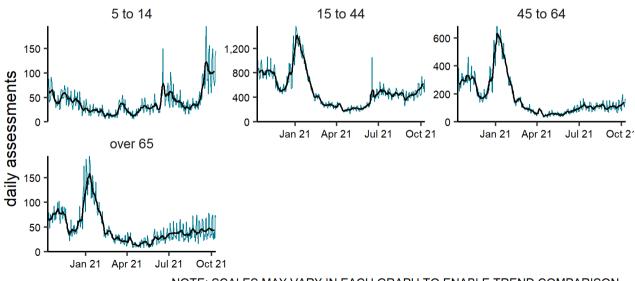
Figure 10: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for difficulty breathing, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

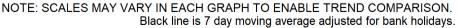




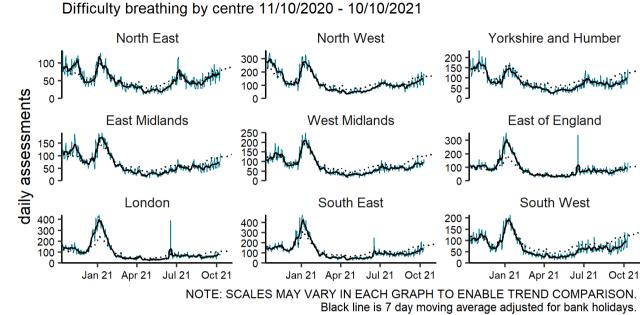
(b)

Difficulty breathing by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021





(c)

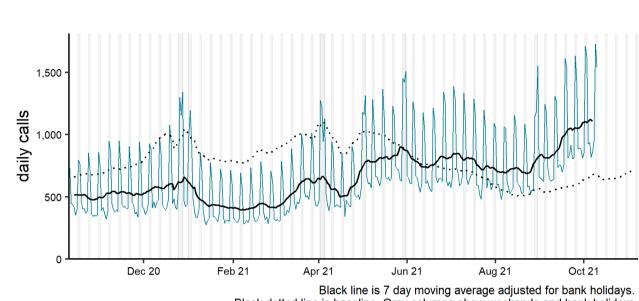


25

Black dotted line is baseline.

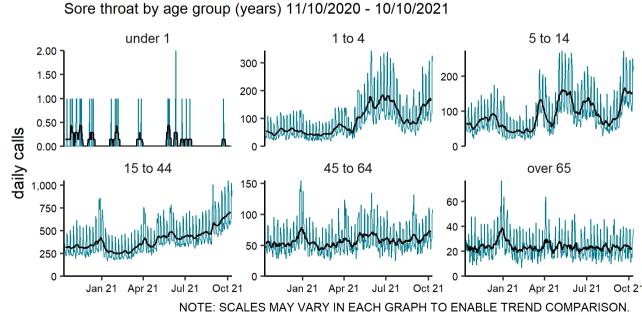
Sore throat NHS 111 calls

Figure 11: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for sore throat, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



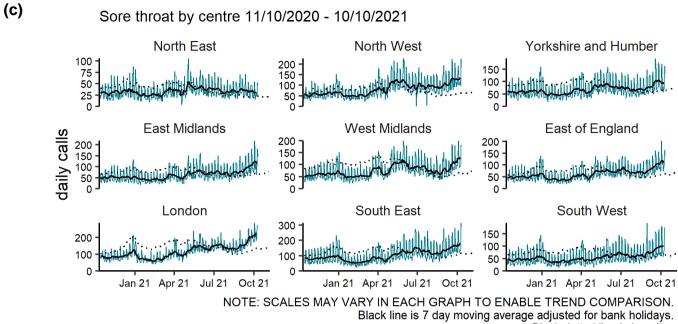
Sore throat 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

(a)

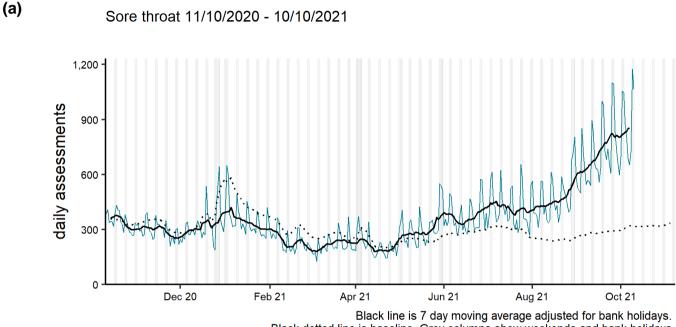


Black dotted line is baseline.

Sore throat NHS 111 online

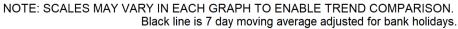
(b)

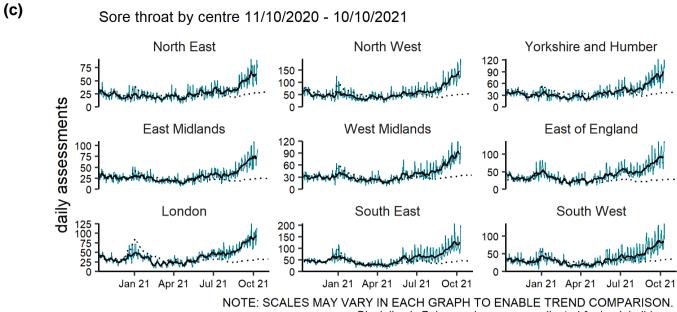
Figure 12: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for sore throat, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.





Sore throat by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021 5 to 14 15 to 44 45 to 64 150 100 750 75 100 500 50 daily assessments 50 250 25 0 0 0 Jan 21 Apr 21 Jul 21 Oct 21 Jan 21 Apr 21 Jul 21 Oct 2 over 65 15.0 10.0 5.0 0.0 Oct 21 Jan 21 Apr 21 Jul 21

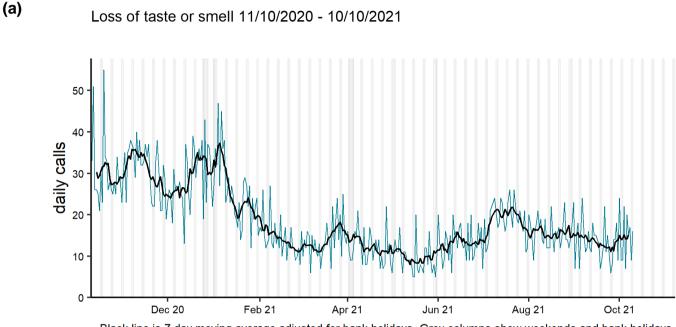




NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline.

Loss of taste or smell NHS 111 calls

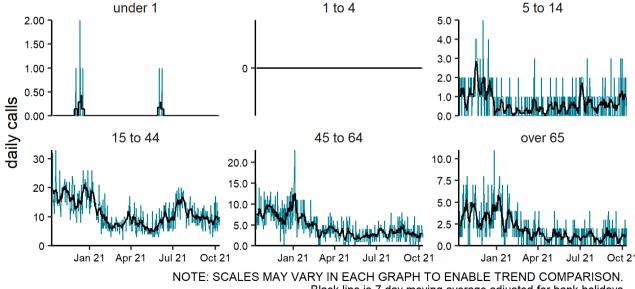
Figure 13: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for loss of taste or smell, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.



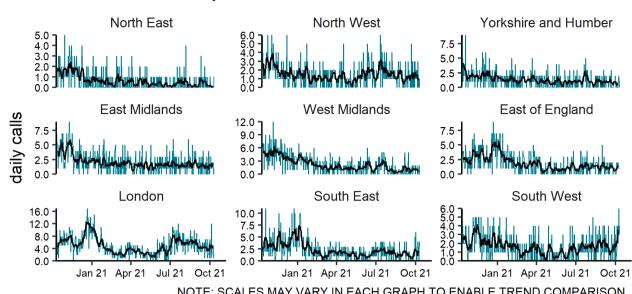
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



Loss of taste or smell by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021



(c)

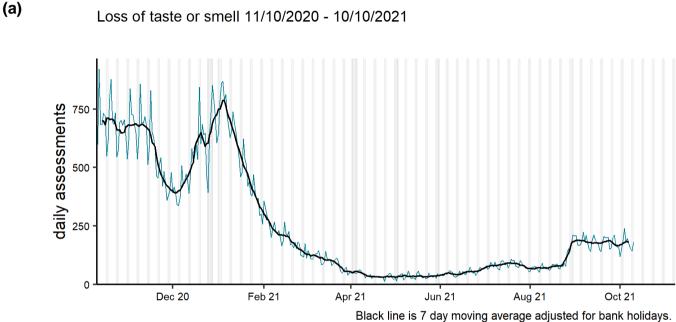


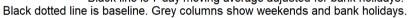
Loss of taste or smell by centre 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

Loss of taste or smell NHS 111 online

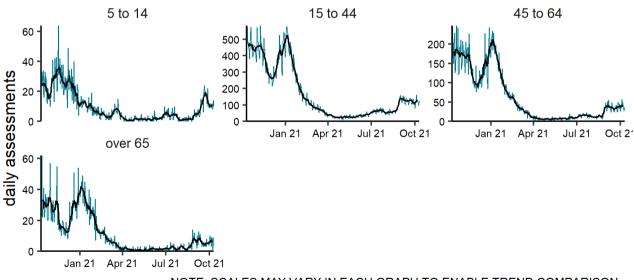
Figure 14: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for loss of taste or smell, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

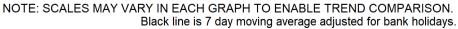




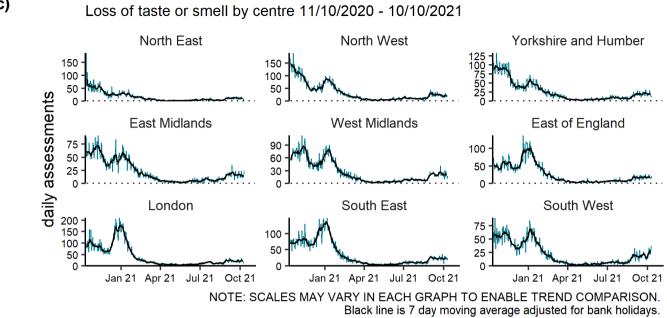
(b)

Loss of taste or smell by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021





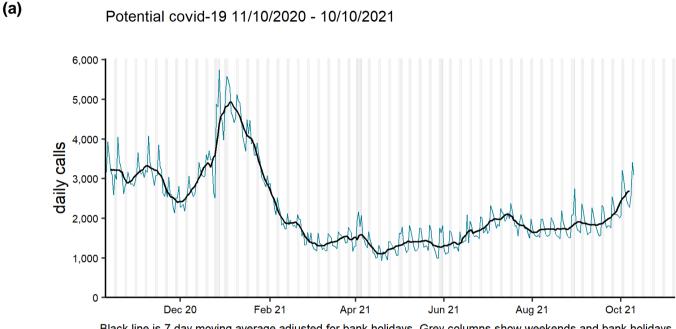
(c)

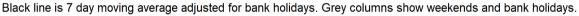


Black dotted line is baseline.

Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls

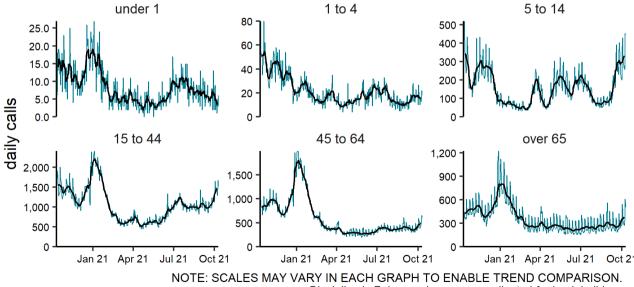
Figure 15: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for potential COVID-19, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.





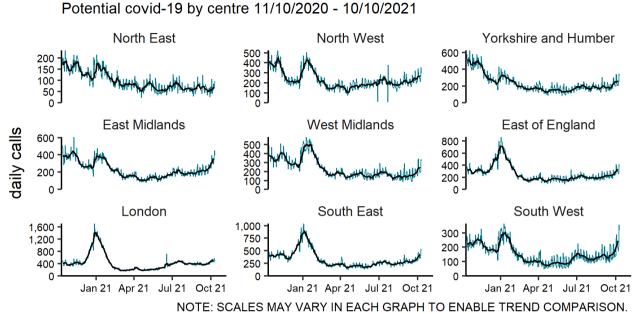
(b)

Potential covid-19 by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021



Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

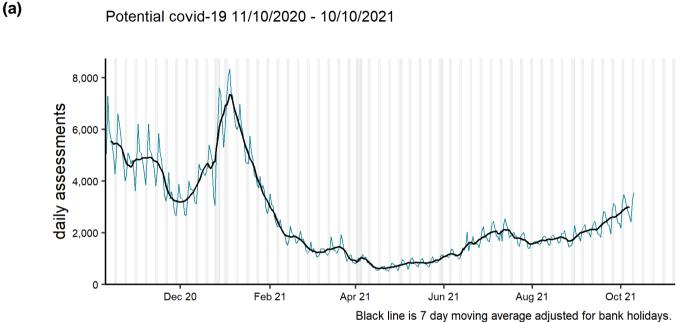
(c)



Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online

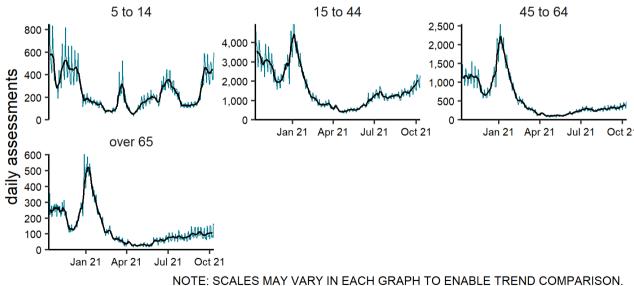
Figure 16: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for potential COVID-19, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

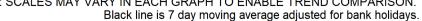


Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

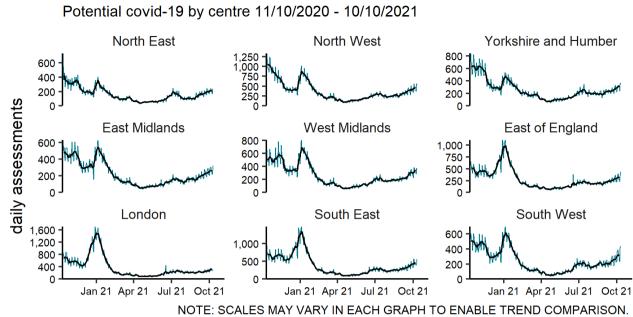


Potential covid-19 by age group (years) 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021





(c)



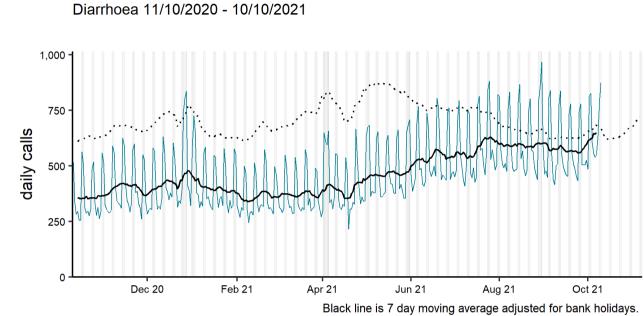
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

Gastrointestinal conditions

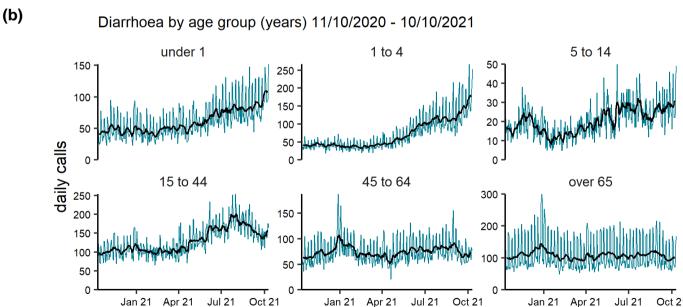
Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls

(a)

Figure 17: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for diarrhoea, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

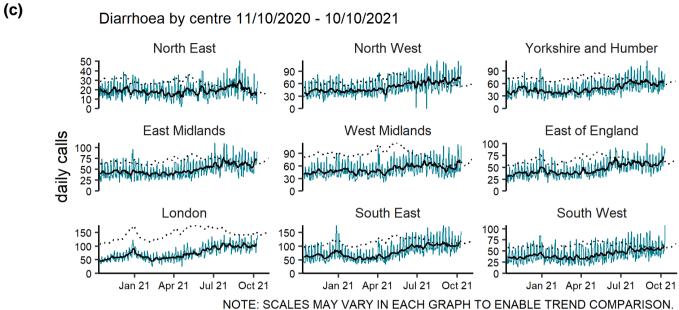


Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.

Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

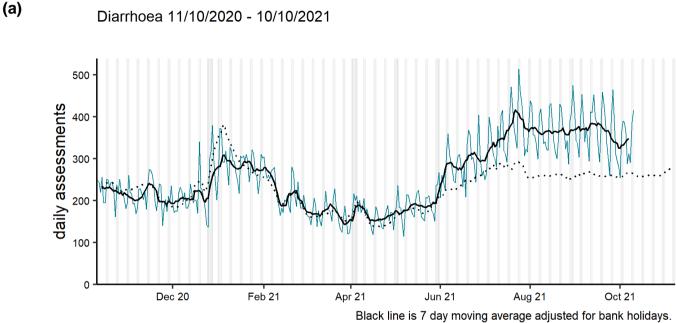


Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline.

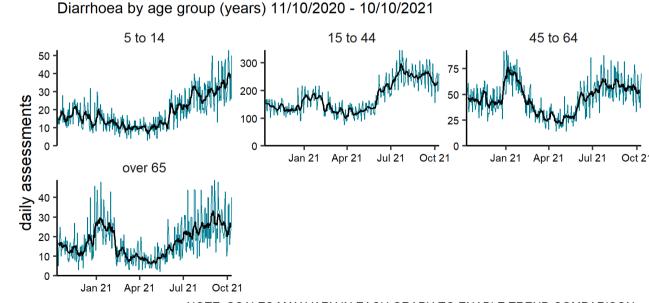
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online

(b)

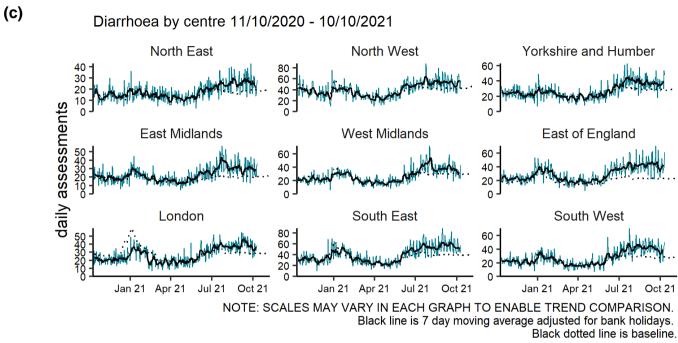
Figure 18: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for diarrhoea, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

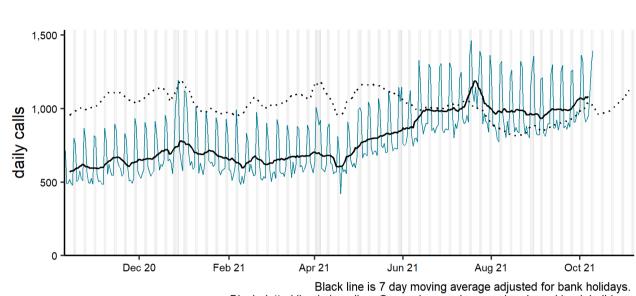


Vomiting NHS 111 calls

(a)

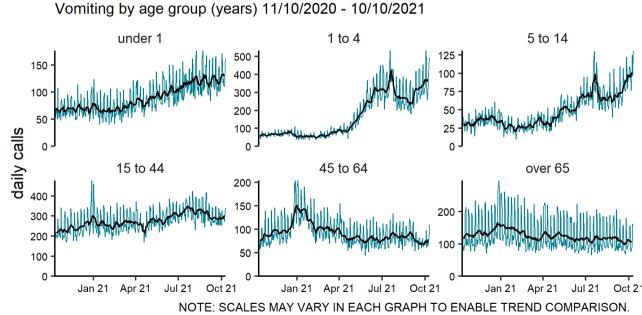
(b)

Figure 19: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for vomiting, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

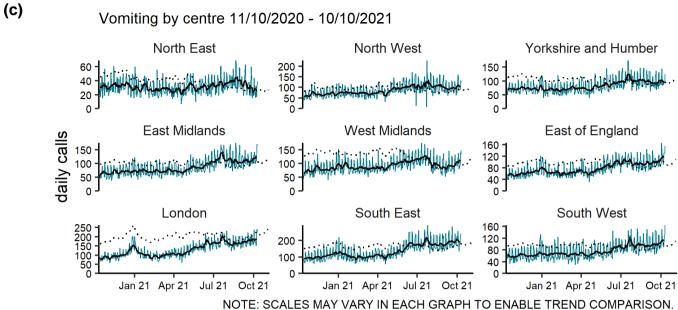


Vomiting 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

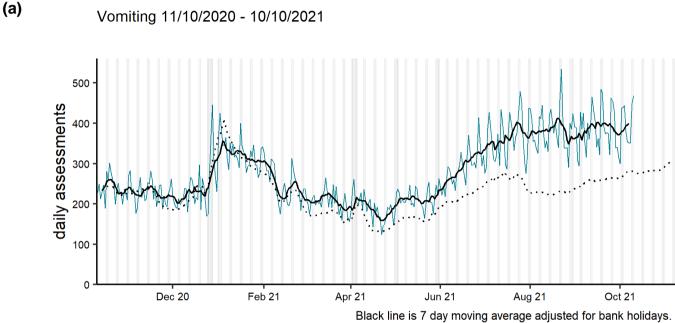


Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline.

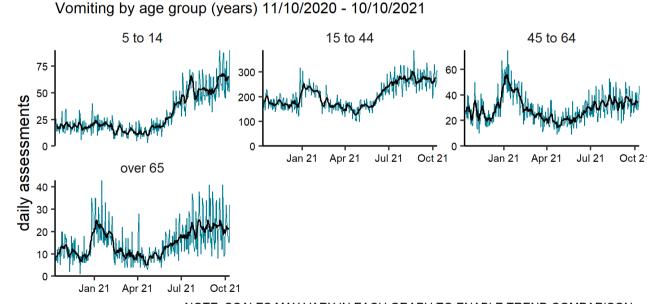
Vomiting NHS 111 online

(b)

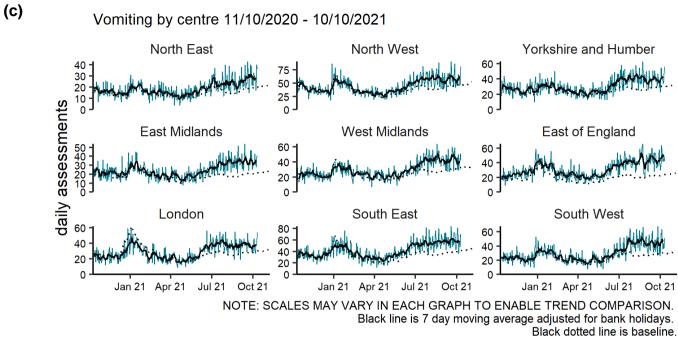
Figure 20: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for vomiting, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



Seasonal environmental conditions

During set periods of the year the Met Office operates both heat and cold weather watch systems, in association with UKHSA. Syndromic indicators are used to monitor the impact of both extreme hot and cold weather in England during these periods and will be included below (where an appropriate syndromic indicator is available).

Cold weather alert period: 1 November to 31 March

Heat-Health Alert period:1 June to 15 September

Weather alert level (current reporting week): Level 0 - Long-term planning

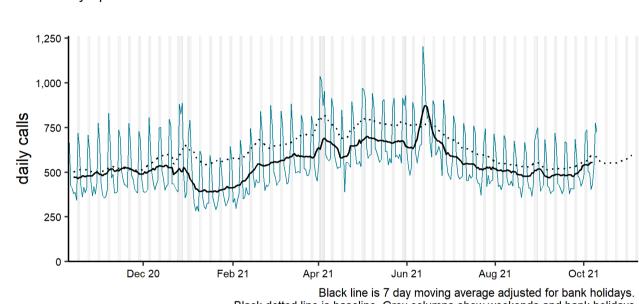
No weather watch in place

Eye problems NHS 111 calls

(a)

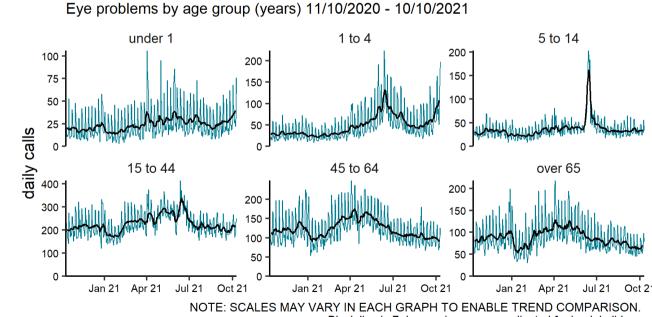
(b)

Figure 21: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.

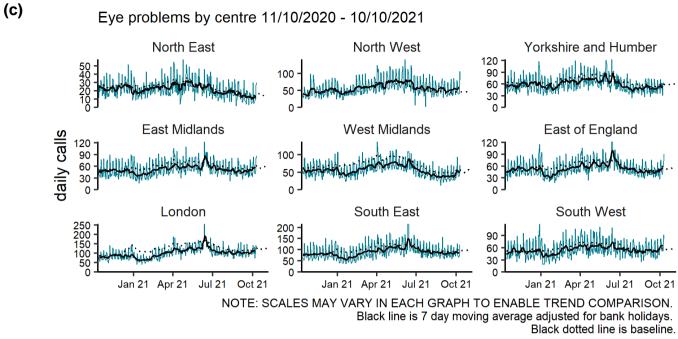


Eve problems 11/10/2020 - 10/10/2021

Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

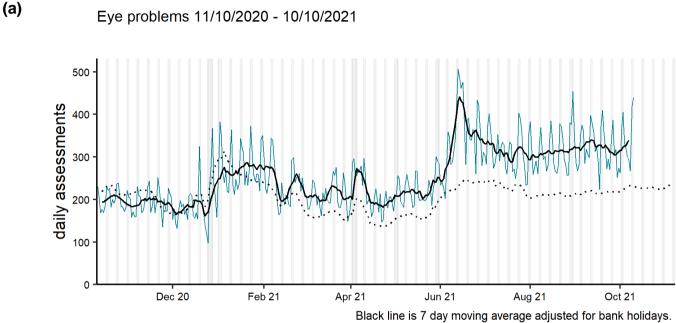


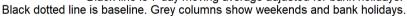
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

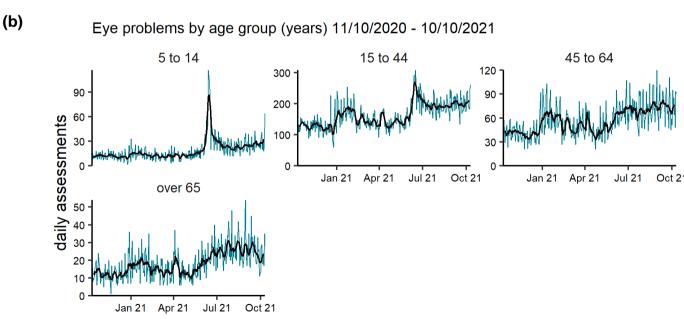


Eye problems NHS 111 online

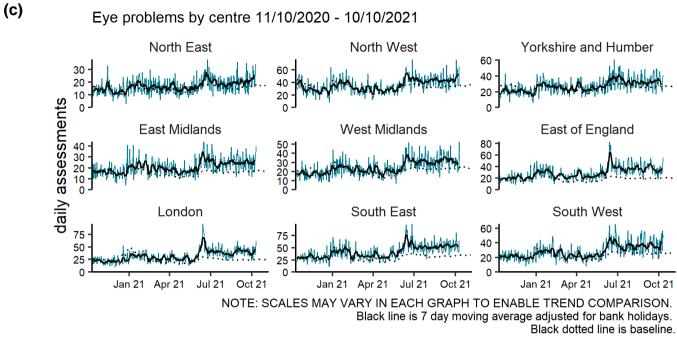
Figure 22: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Centre.







NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON. Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



Notes and caveats

The following additional caveats apply to the UKHSA remote health advice syndromic surveillance system:

- all NHS 111 syndromic trends should be interpreted with caution due to changes in national advice and guidance regarding access to health care services as well as updates and changes to service provision during the COVID-19 pandemic
- data presented should be used to monitor trends rather than numbers of 'cases':
 - NHS 111 calls data may not include the most urgent calls which are rapidly redirected to ambulance services
 - any user that launches an online assessment may access the service multiple times and can change their answers and follow multiple journeys through the online system: only complete assessments are included here
 - an individual may use both the NHS 111 online and NHS 111 telephony services; counts from the two services cannot be considered as distinct counts of individuals
 - NHS 111 online assessment data does not include children under 5 years of age
- baselines:
 - o were last remodelled May 2021
 - o are constructed from historical data since January 2018
 - o represent seasonally expected levels of activity
 - take account of any known substantial changes in data collection, population coverage or reporting practices
 - the COVID-19 pandemic period is excluded, to show seasonally expected levels if COVID-19 had not occurred
 - may be remodelled to include the impacts seen during periods of the COVID-19 pandemic if/when appropriate due to introduction of large scale public health interventions which affect NHS 111 usage
- as NHS 111 systems evolve to meet service needs, we continue to work with NHS 111 and NHS England to ensure that:
 - changes impacting on syndromic indicators reported in this bulletin are identified and accounted for as far as possible
 - changes are described in: Data quality issues of note this week
- further information about NHS 111 can be found here

COVID-19 syndromic surveillance

The 'potential COVID-19' syndromic indicator reported here for all NHS 111 data is based on the outcome of each call or online assessment (known as the disposition), not the symptom (Pathway) selected:

• potential COVID-19 is the only syndromic indicator which is based on disposition

Remote health advice syndromic surveillance system (England) bulletin

- potential COVID-19 calls and online assessments may therefore also appear in other syndromic indicators based on the Pathway of each call or online assessment
- these data are based on potential COVID-19 symptoms reported and are not based on outcomes of tests for coronavirus

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to NHS 111 and to NHS Digital for their assistance and support in providing the anonymised data that underpin this system.

About the UK Health Security Agency

The UK Health Security Agency is an executive agency, sponsored by the <u>Department of Health</u> and <u>Social Care</u>.

www.ukhsa.gov.uk

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