



UK Health
Security
Agency

GP Out-of-Hours Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England)

2021 Week 50

Key messages

Data reported to: 19 December 2021

During week 50, GP out of hours contacts for acute respiratory infections and influenza-like illness remained stable nationally and at or below seasonally expected levels.

Please note: a change in syndromic data provision across the South West has resulted in an increase of OOH contacts received for this region; currently data should therefore be interpreted with caution.

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 contacts (Figure 1)	No trend	No baseline
Acute respiratory infections (Figure 2)	No trend	Below baseline
Influenza-like illness (Figure 3)	No trend	Below baseline
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (Figure 4)	No trend	Below baseline
Difficulty breathing/wheeze/asthma (Figure 5)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Fever (Figure 6)	No trend	Below baseline
Acute pharyngitis (Figure 7)	No trend	Below baseline
Gastroenteritis (Figure 8)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Diarrhoea (Figure 9)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Vomiting (Figure 10)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Chest pain (inc. myocardial infarction) (Figure 11)	No trend	Above baseline
Impact of cold (Figure 12)	Decreasing	Below baseline

¹ Current trend reports on the trend seen over previous weeks

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About this syndromic surveillance system

This bulletin presents data from the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) GP out-of-hours\ unscheduled care 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 GP out-of-hours (OOH) and unscheduled care service provider data are analysed and reported here, to identify and describe trends for a variety of syndromic indicators:

- syndromic indicators include groupings such as acute respiratory infections, fever and gastroenteritis
- syndromic indicators are based on:
 - diagnoses recorded during OOH patient contacts
 - diagnoses are based on signs/symptoms and not laboratory confirmed
 - not all contacts include a diagnosis
 - some contacts include more than one diagnosis, so may be included in more than one syndromic indicator
- **Key messages** describes any notable trends nationally (England), by age group and/or by geographical area (based on UKHSA Regions)
- 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 Region). 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.

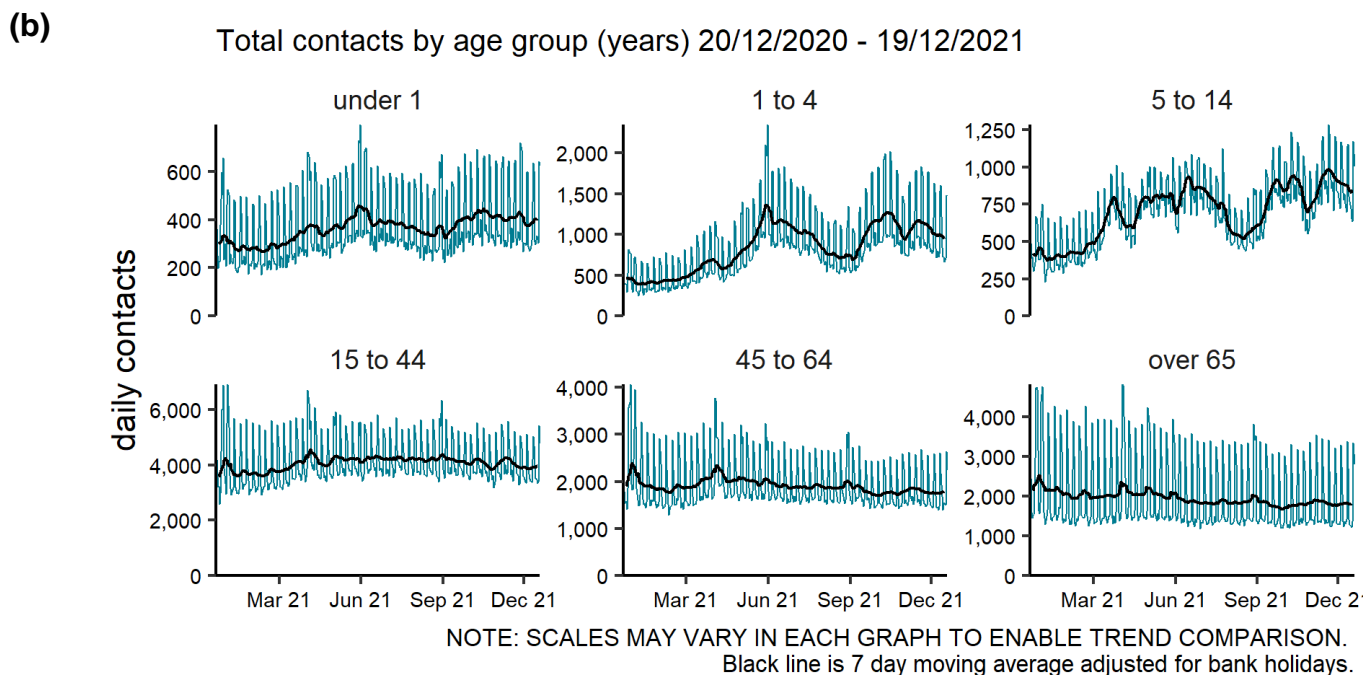
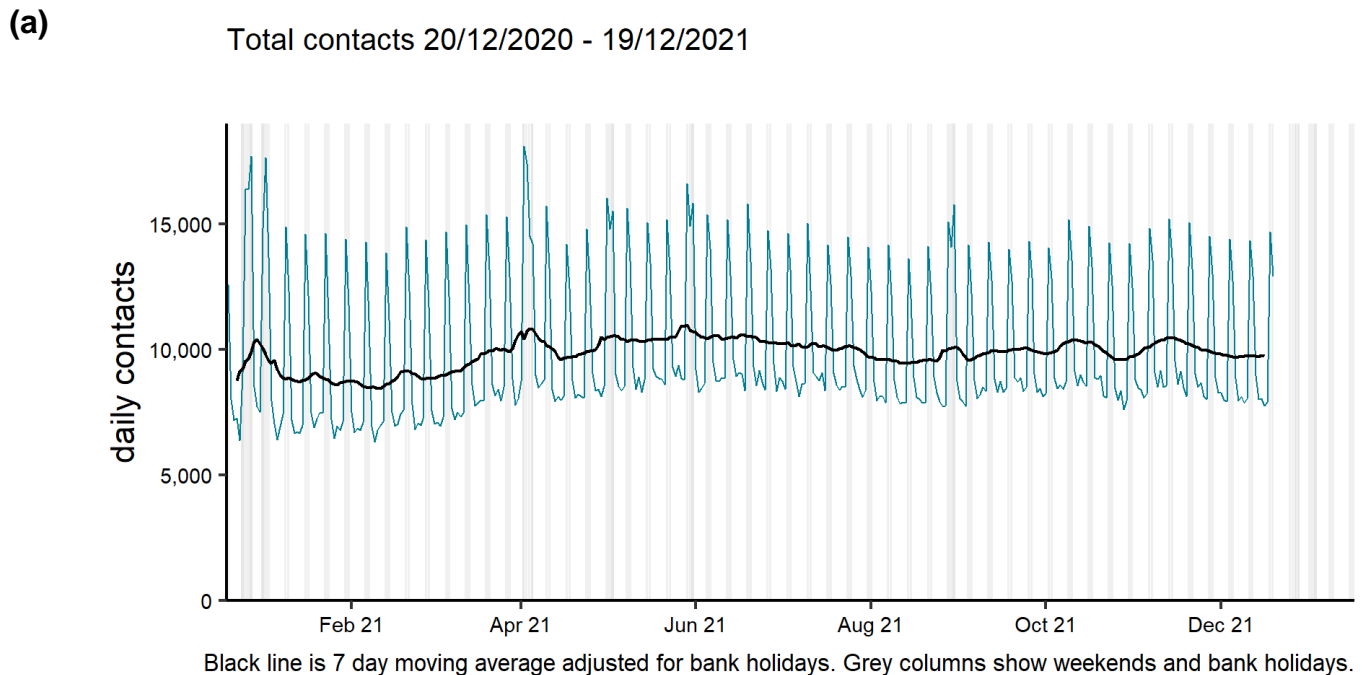
Previous weekly bulletins from this system are available [here](#).

Data quality issues of note this week

A change in syndromic data provision across the South West has resulted in an increase of OOH contacts received for this region.

Total contacts

Figure 1: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this sentinel syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



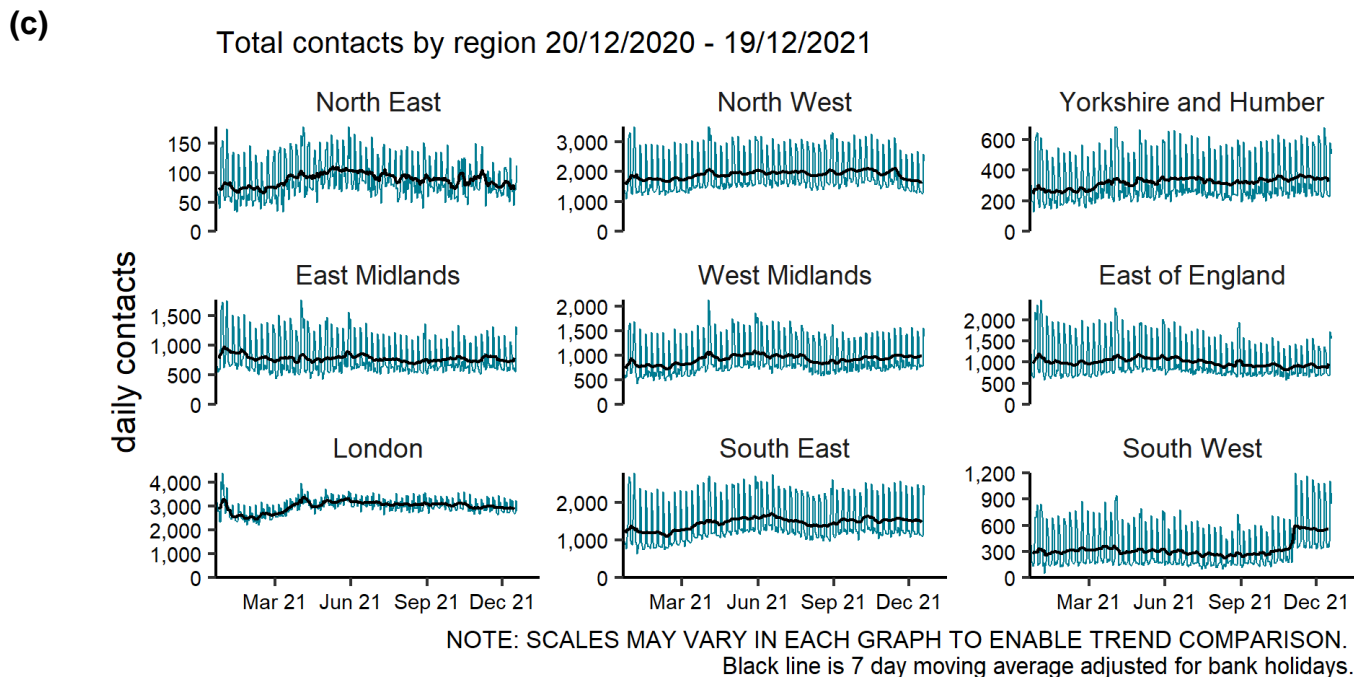


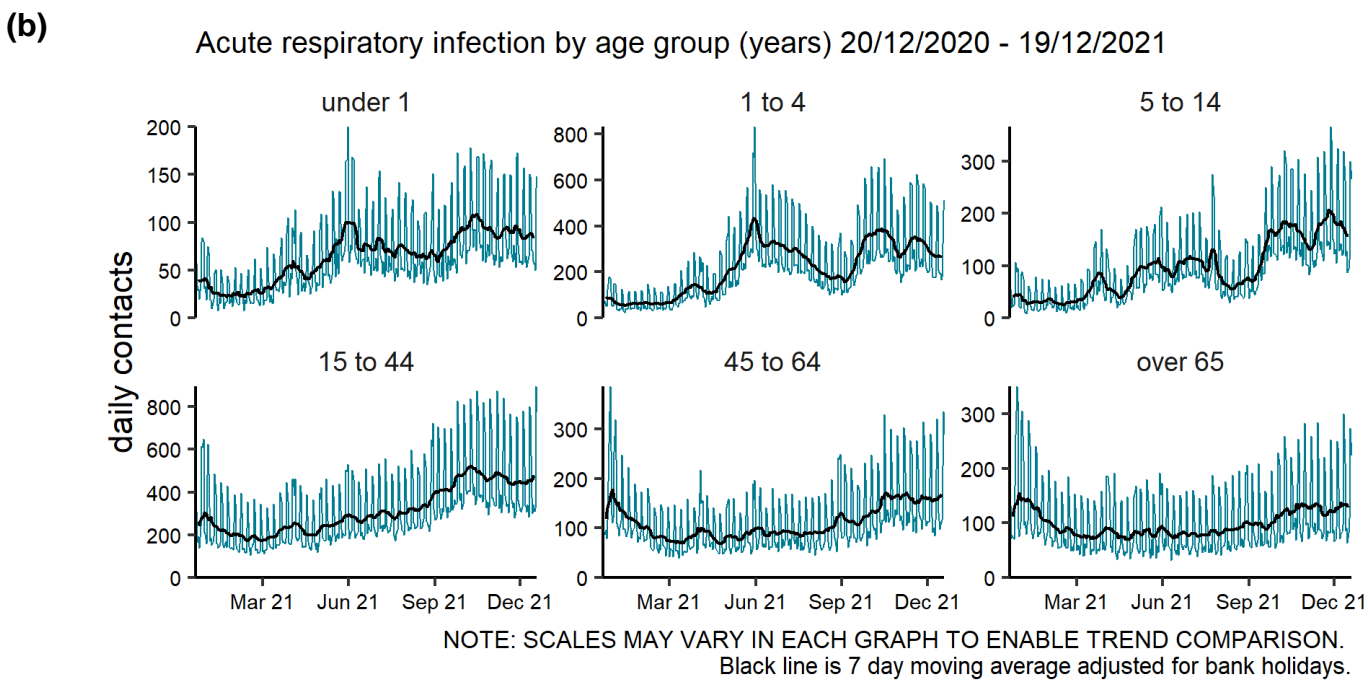
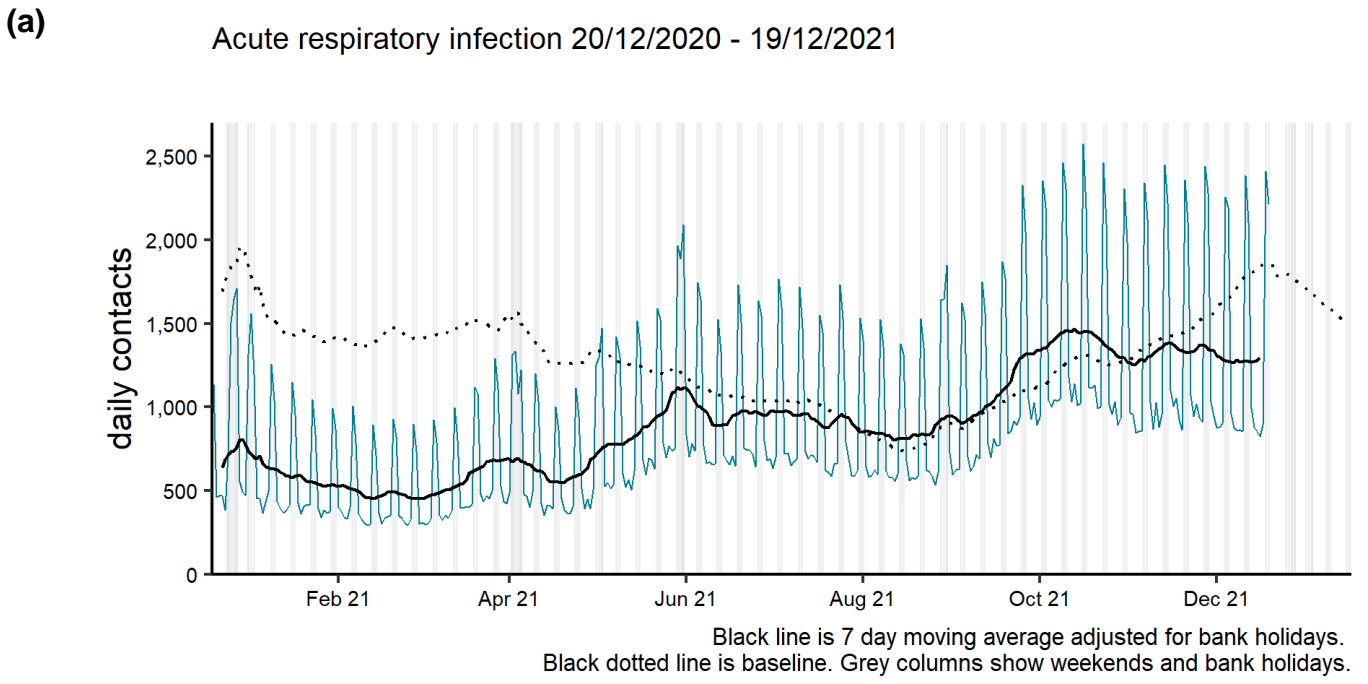
Table 2: The number of GP out-of-hours contacts in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

Date	Number of contacts
13 December 2021	26,421
14 December 2021	23,435
15 December 2021	21,989
16 December 2021	21,972
17 December 2021	23,089
18 December 2021	38,502
19 December 2021	33,115

Respiratory conditions

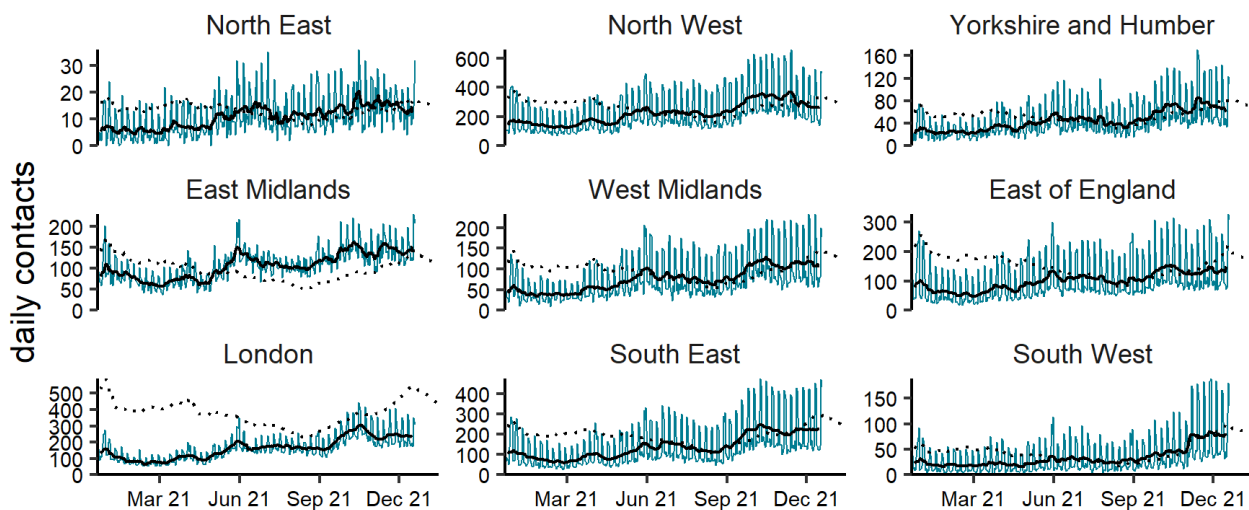
Acute respiratory infections

Figure 2: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for acute respiratory infections, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



(c)

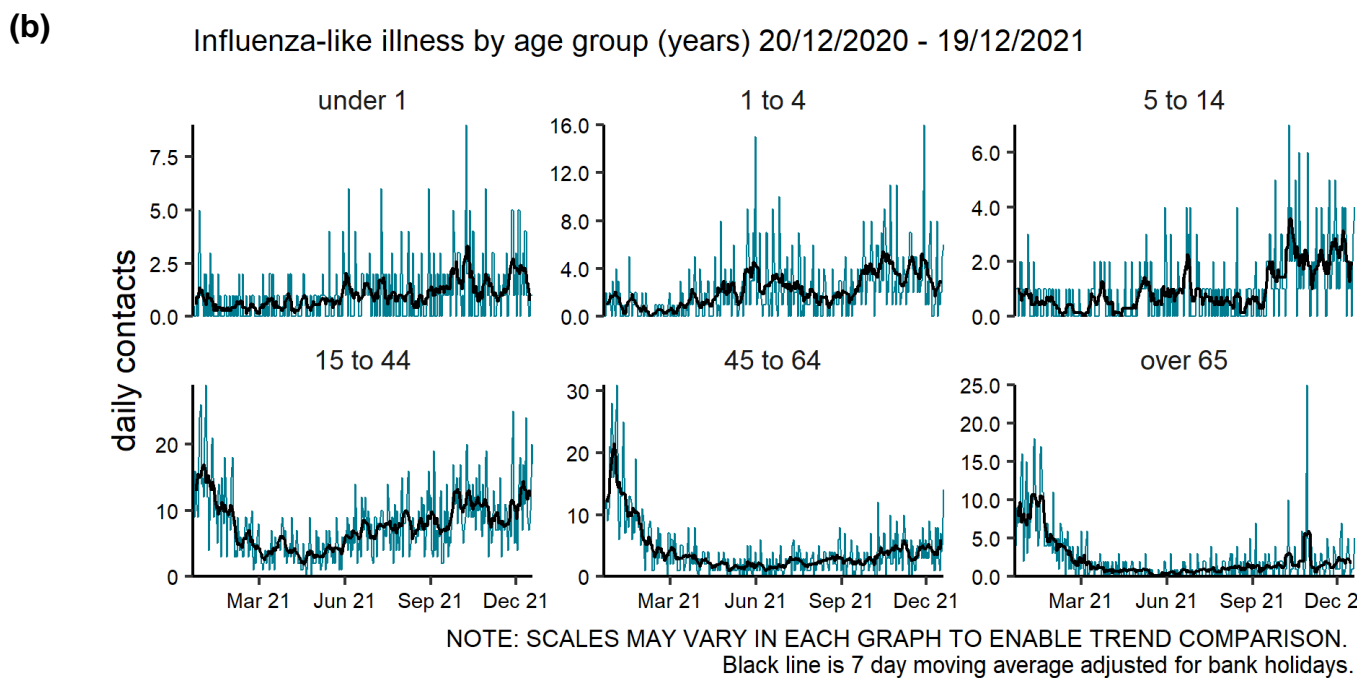
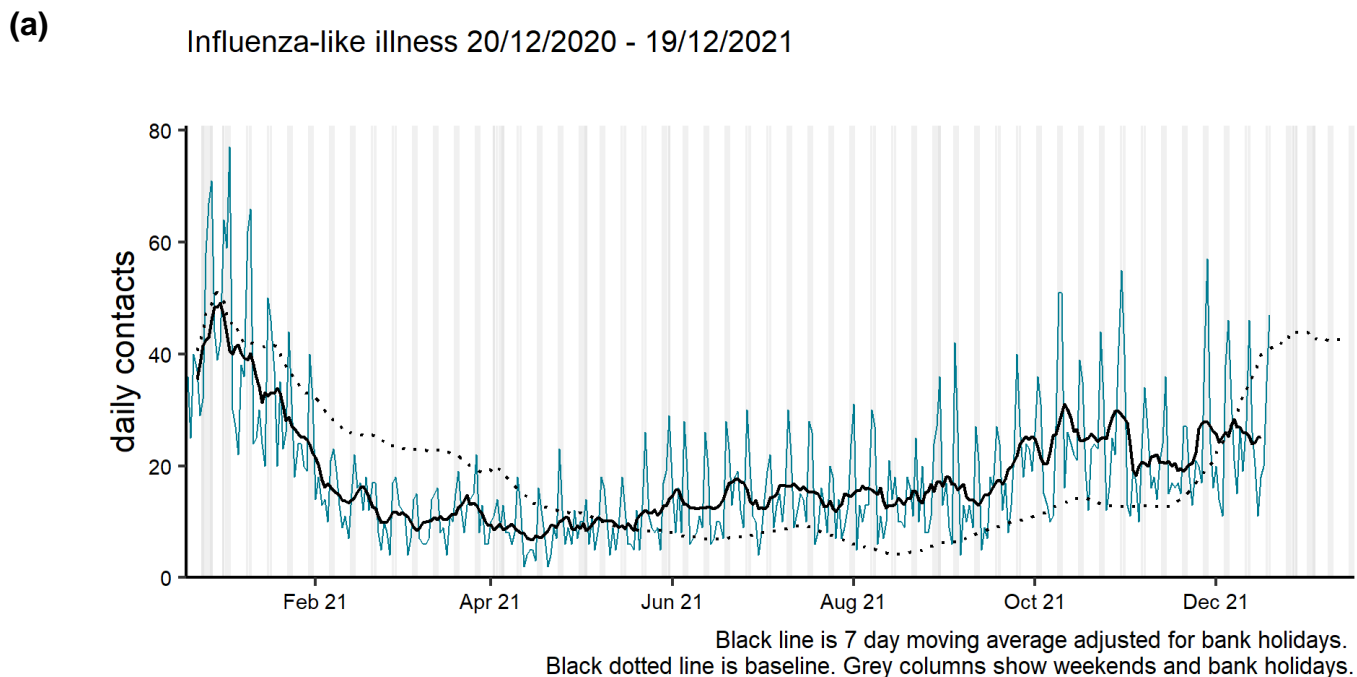
Acute respiratory infection by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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.

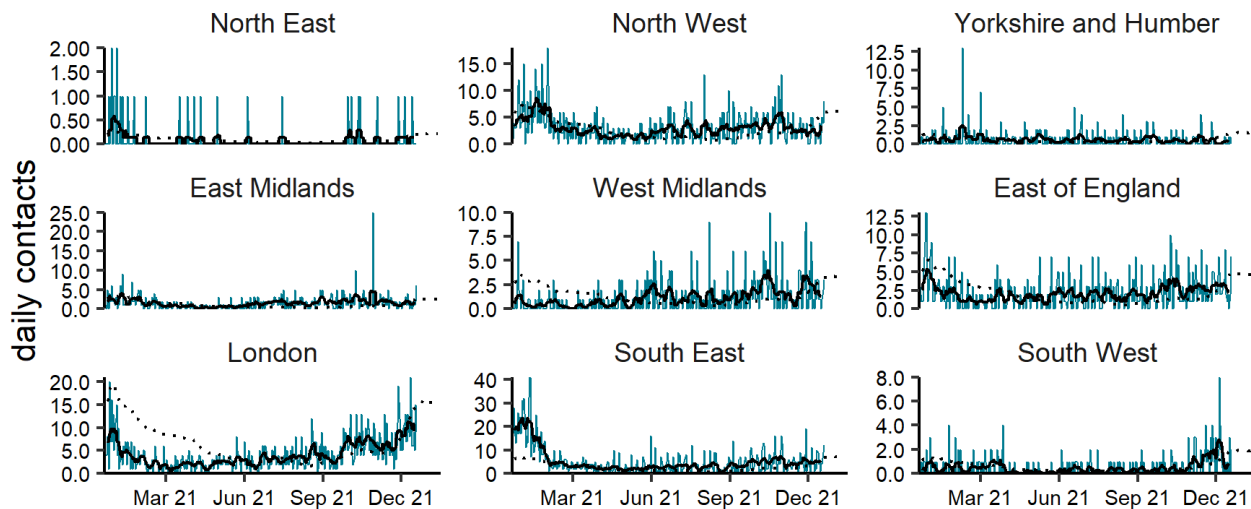
Influenza-like illness

Figure 3: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for influenza-like illness, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



(c)

Influenza-like illness by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

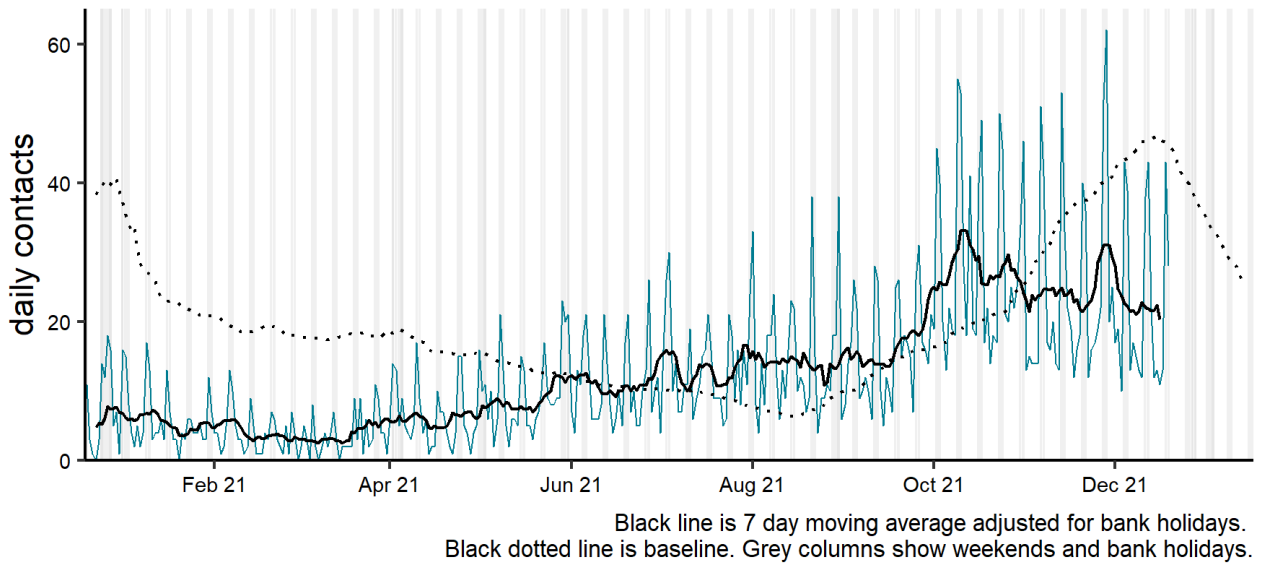


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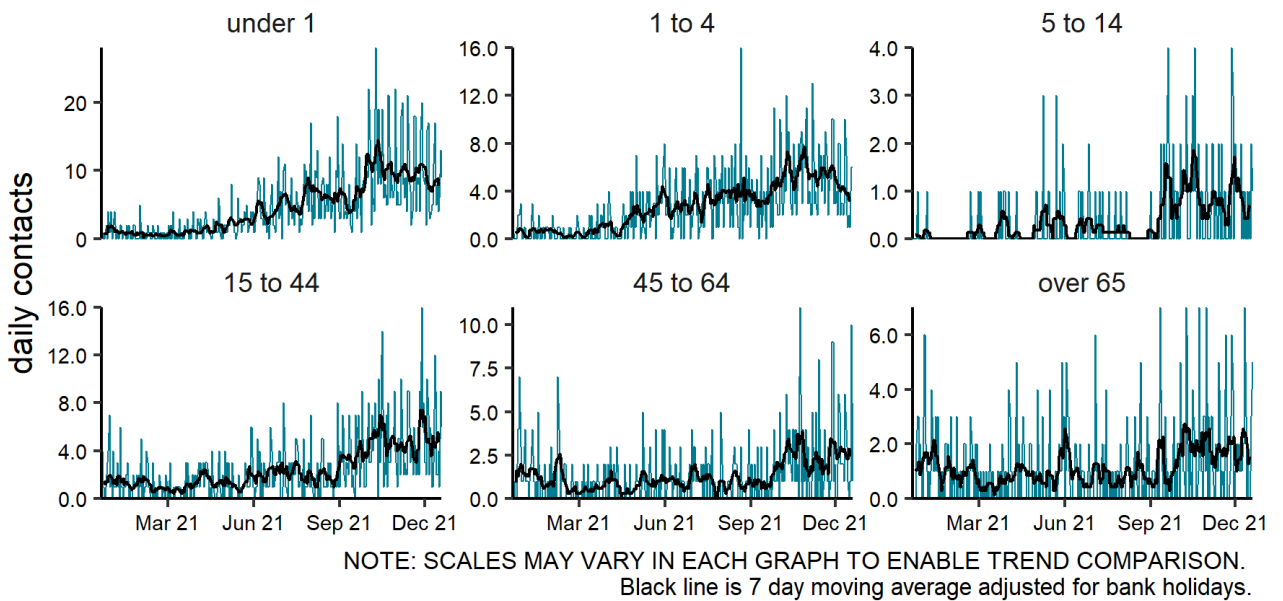
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis

Figure 4: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

(a) Acute bronchitis 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

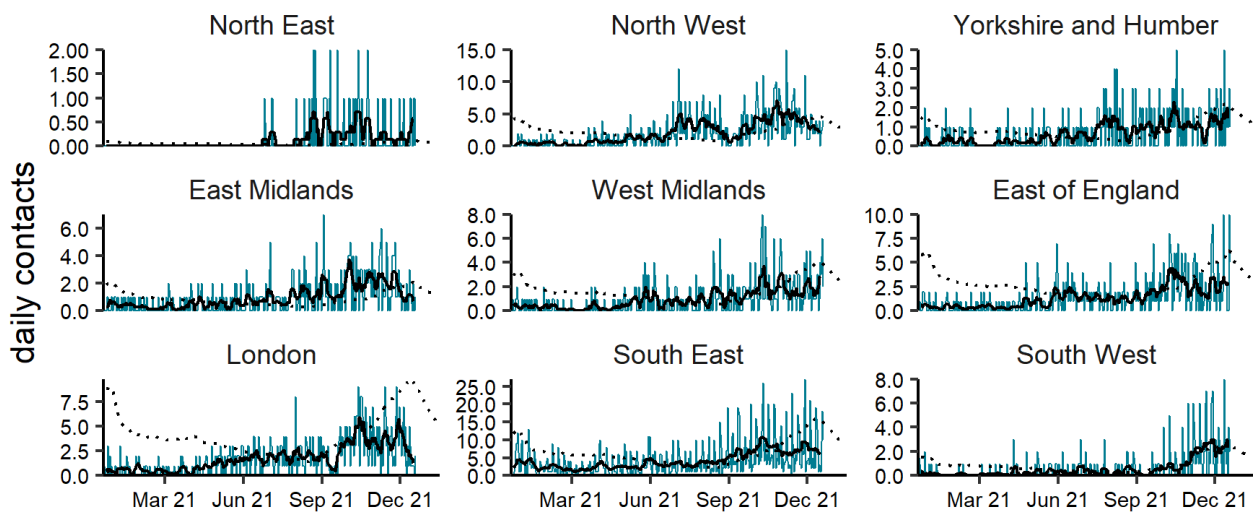


(b) Acute bronchitis by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



(c)

Acute bronchitis by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

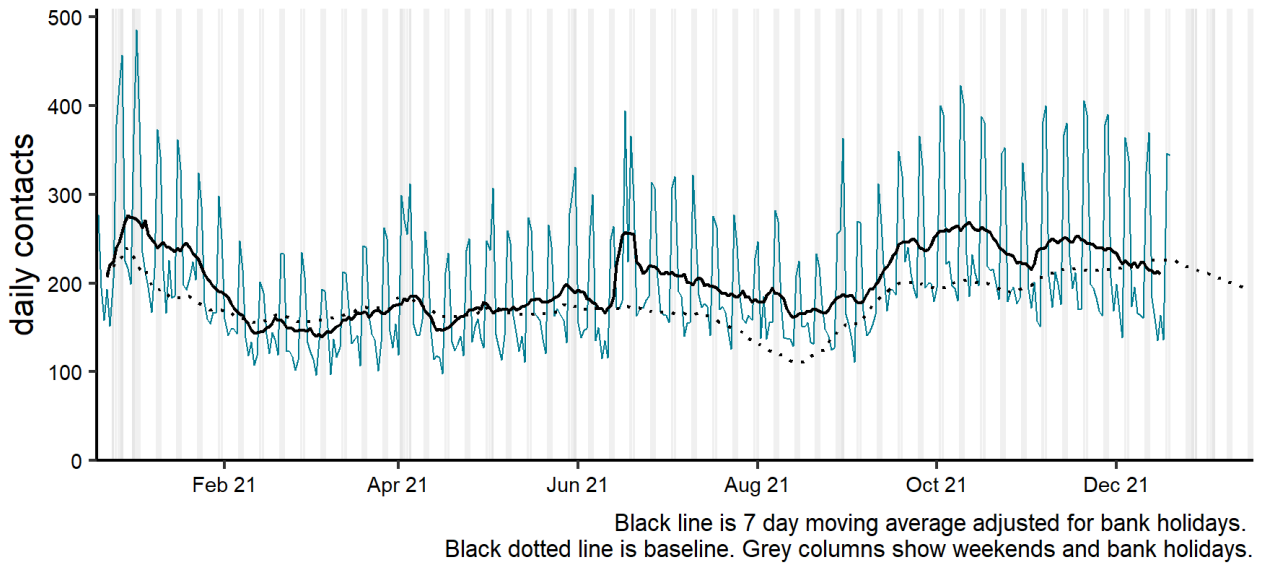


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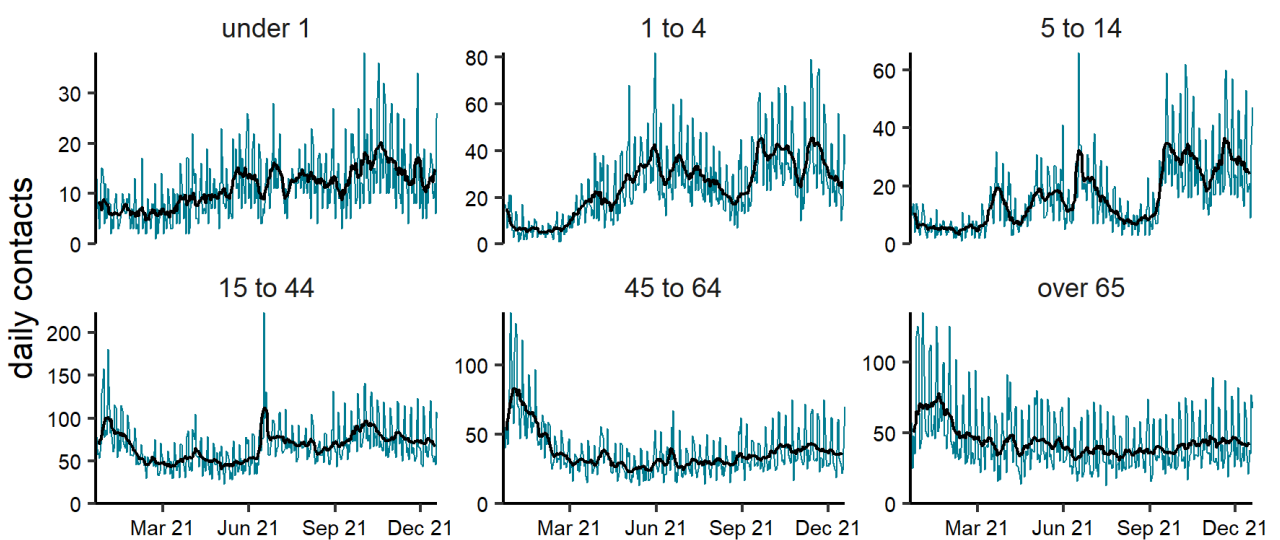
Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma

Figure 5: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

(a) Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



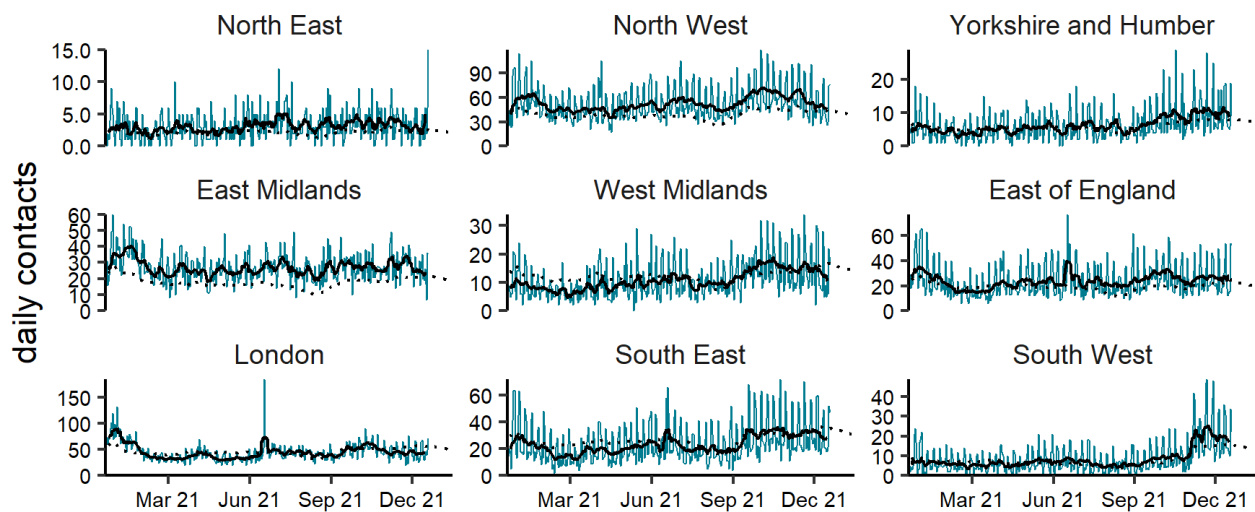
(b) Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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

(c)

Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

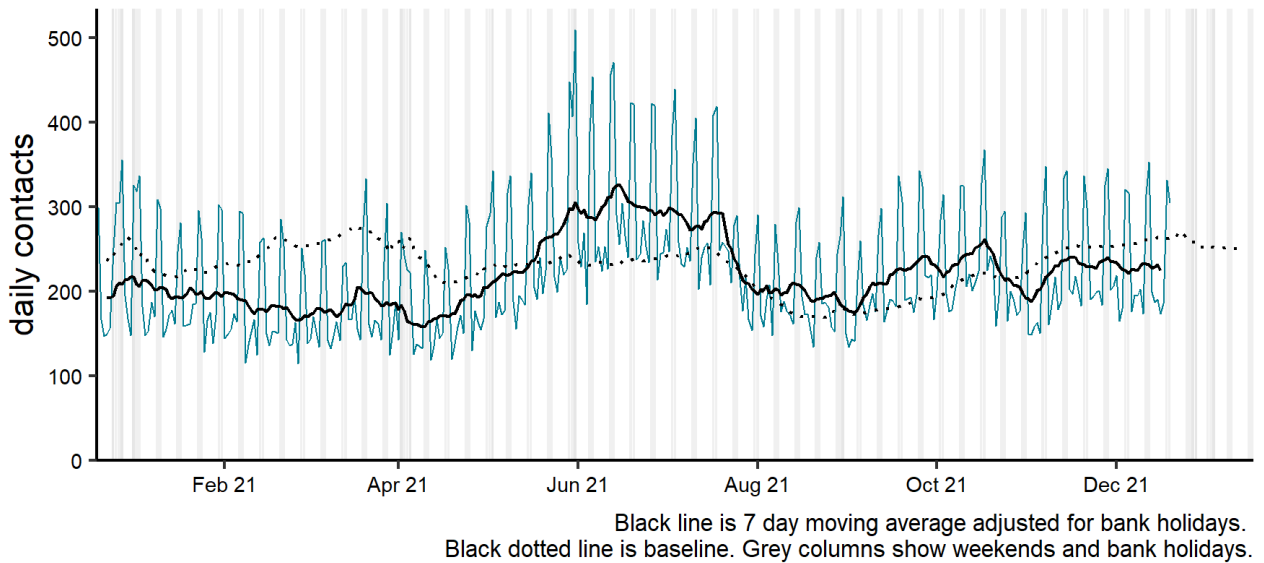


NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

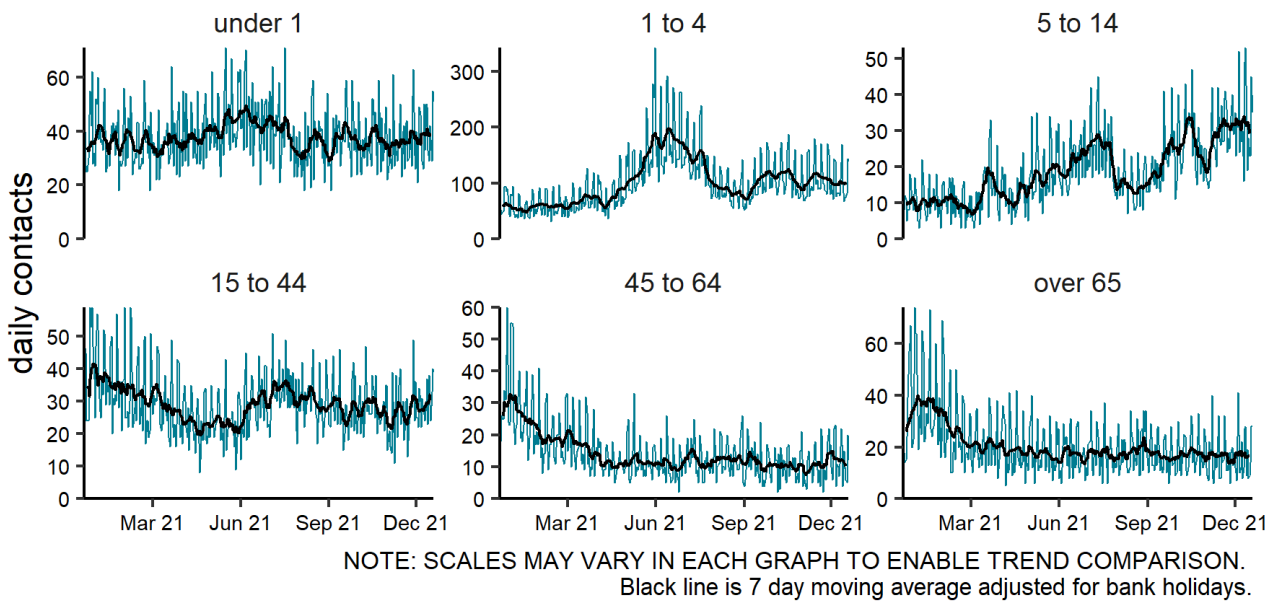
Fever

Figure 6: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for fever, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

(a) Fever 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

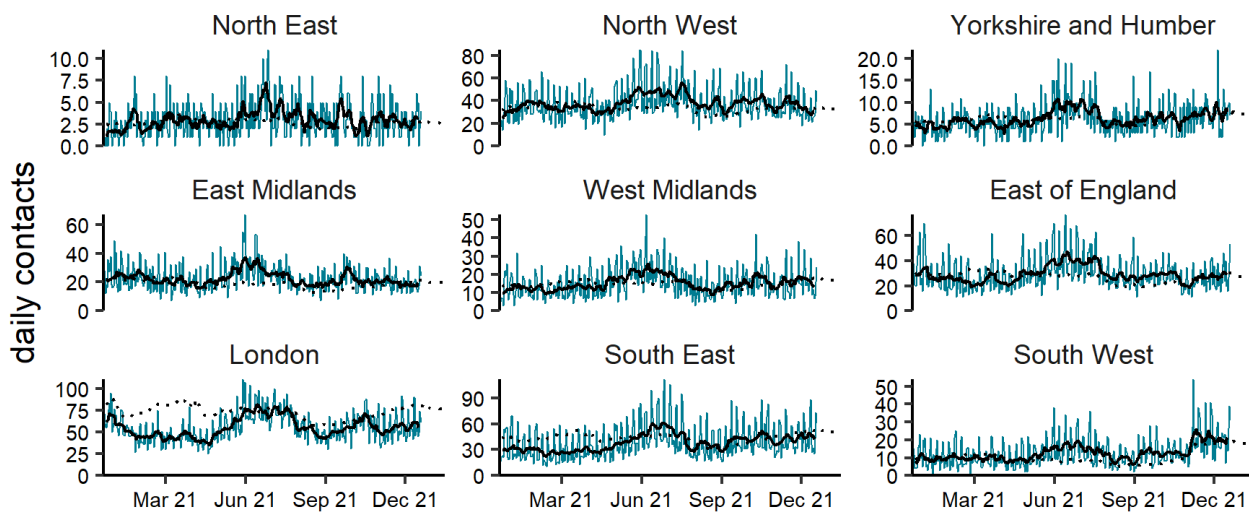


(b) Fever by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



(c)

Fever by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

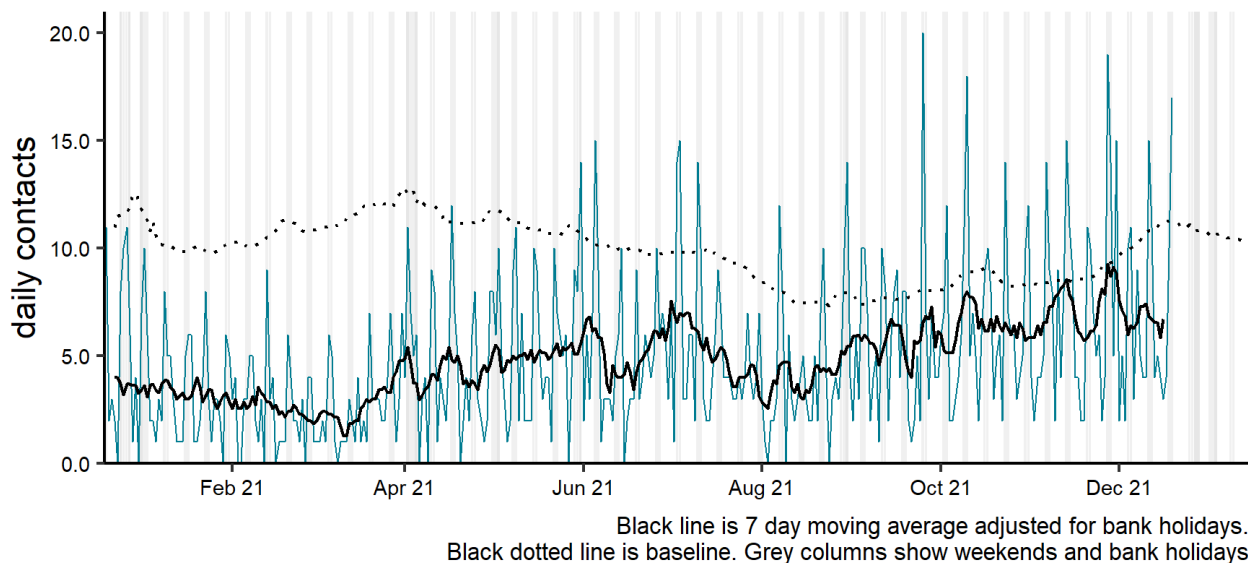


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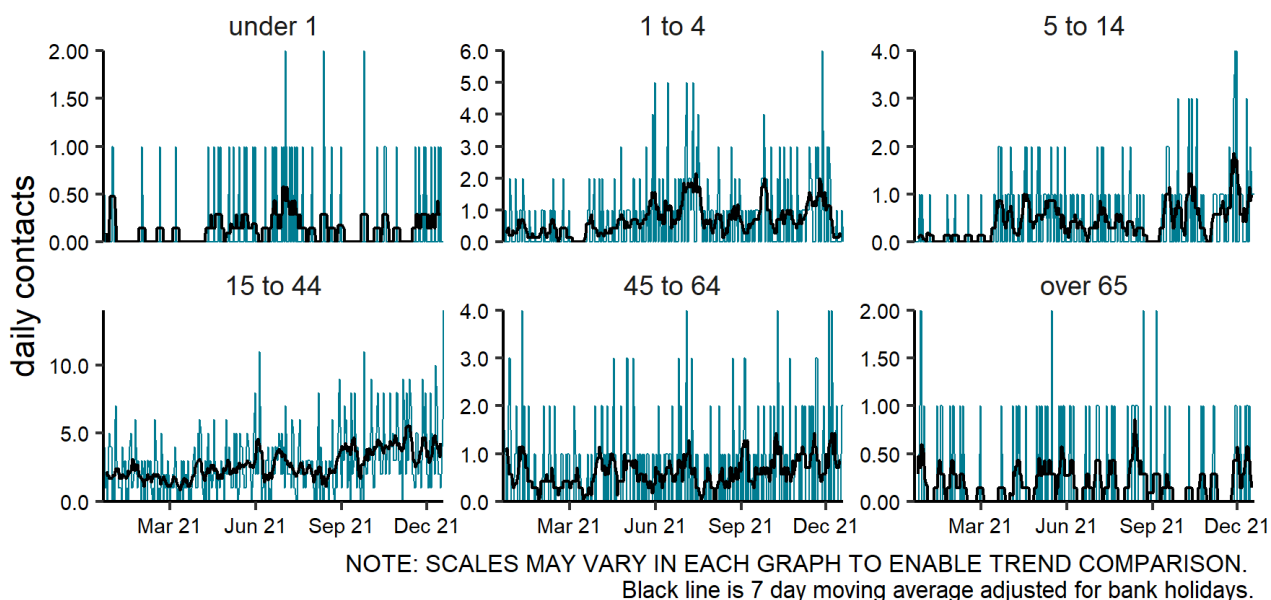
Acute pharyngitis

Figure 7: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays for acute pharyngitis, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

(a) Pharyngitis or scarlet fever 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

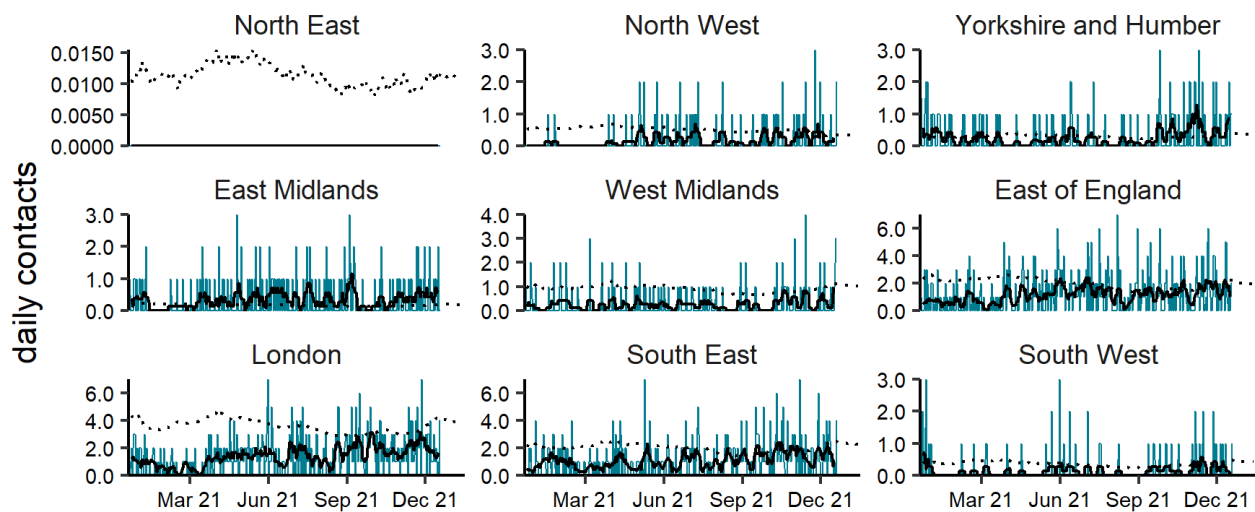


(b) Pharyngitis or scarlet fever by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



(c)

Pharyngitis or scarlet fever by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021

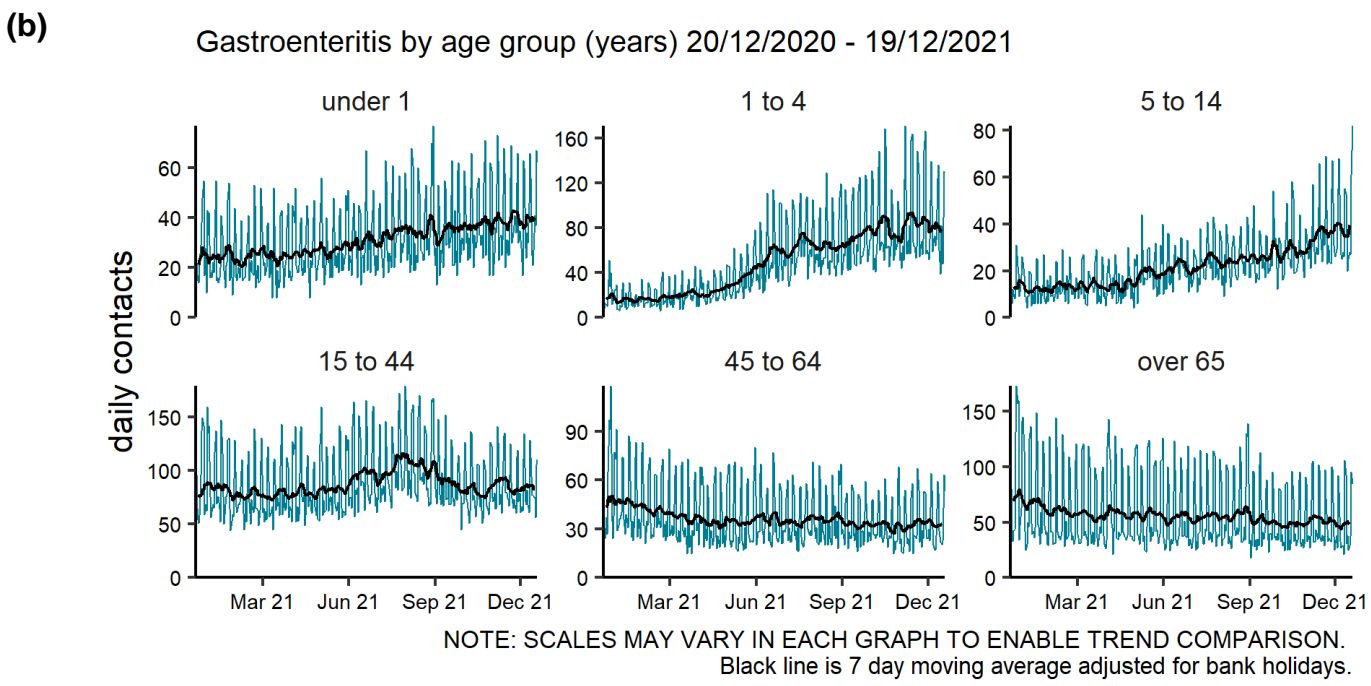
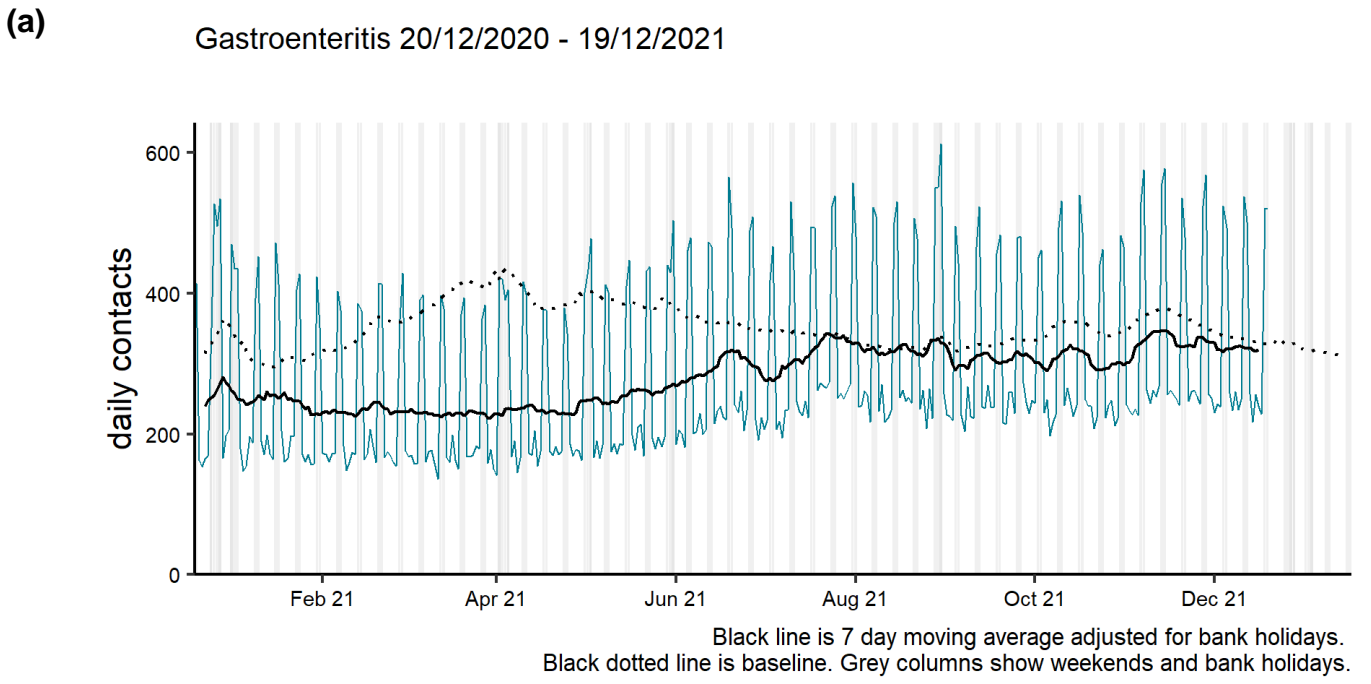


NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

Gastrointestinal conditions

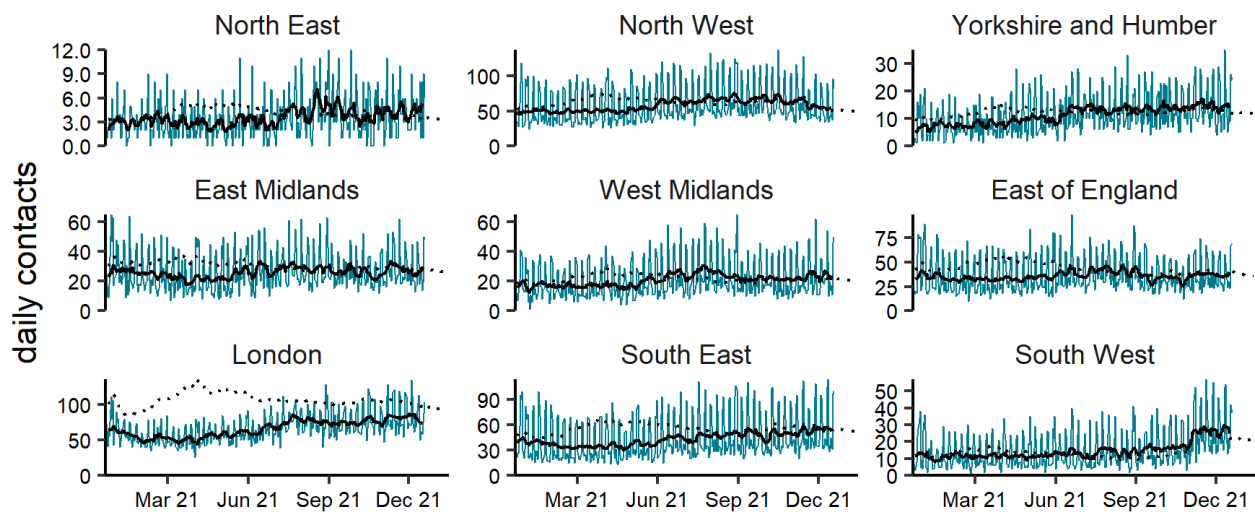
Gastroenteritis

Figure 8: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for gastroenteritis, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



(c)

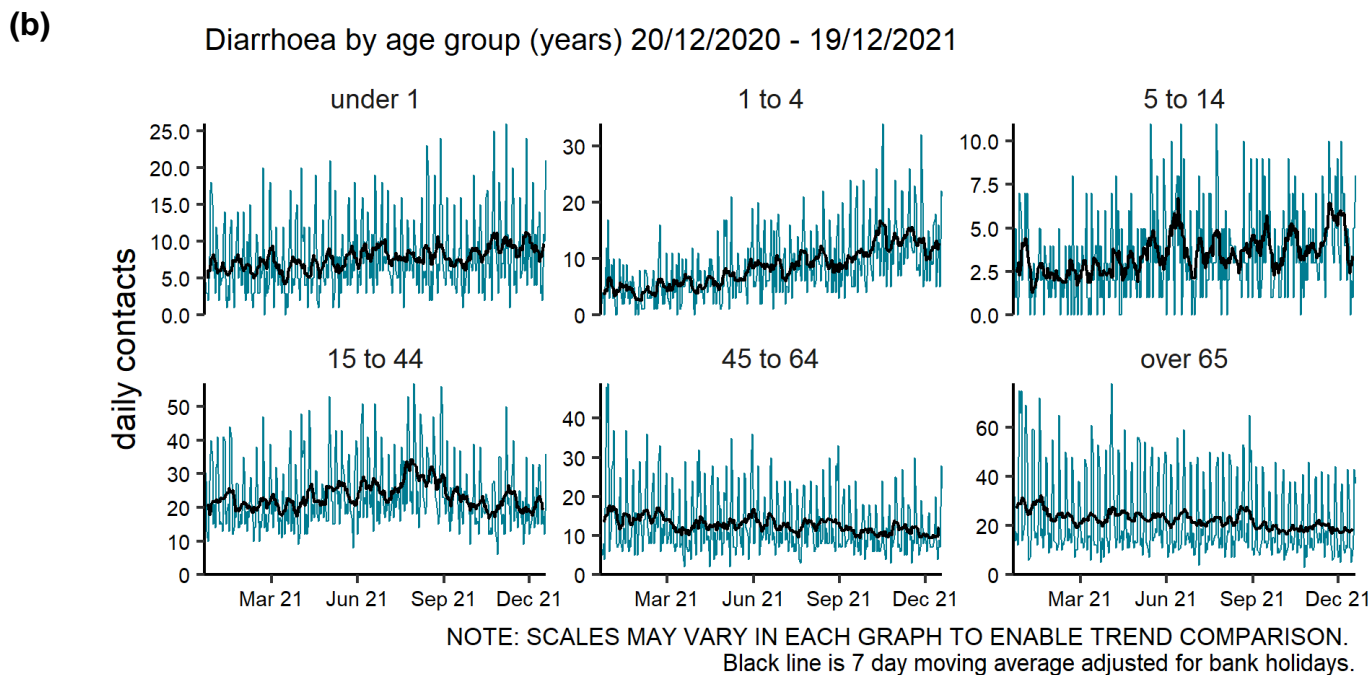
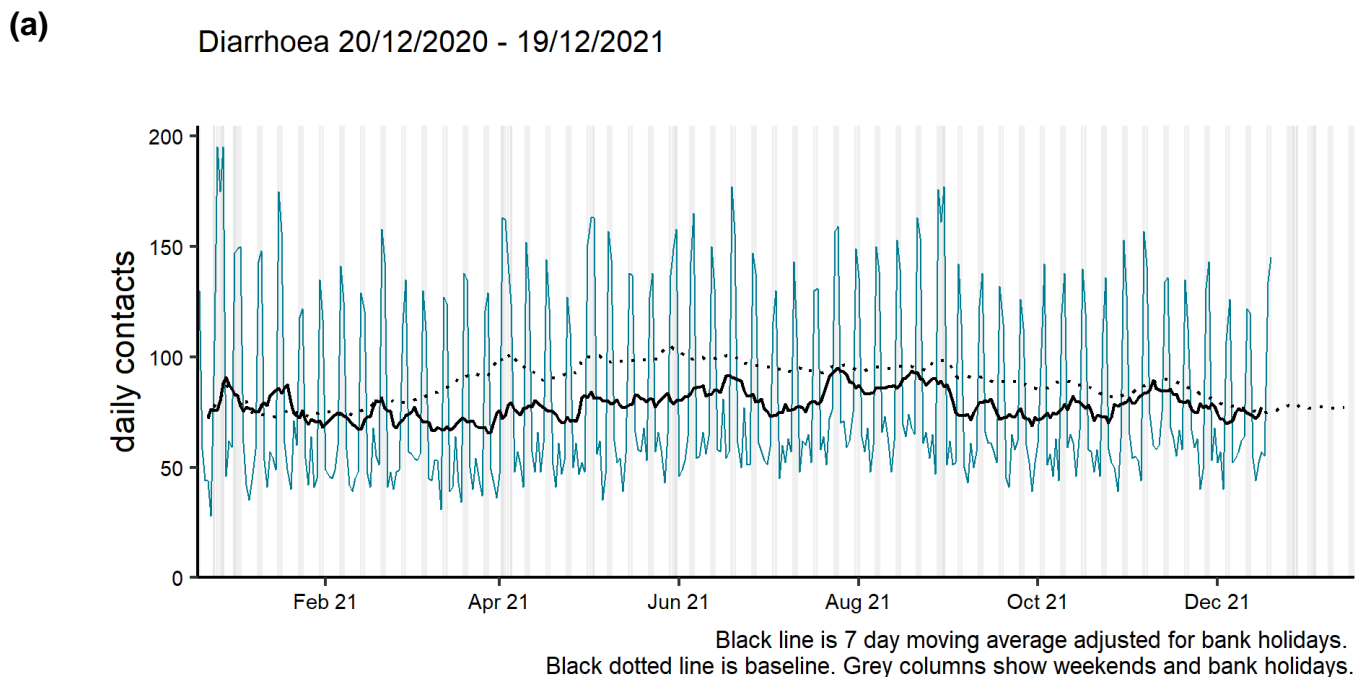
Gastroenteritis by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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.

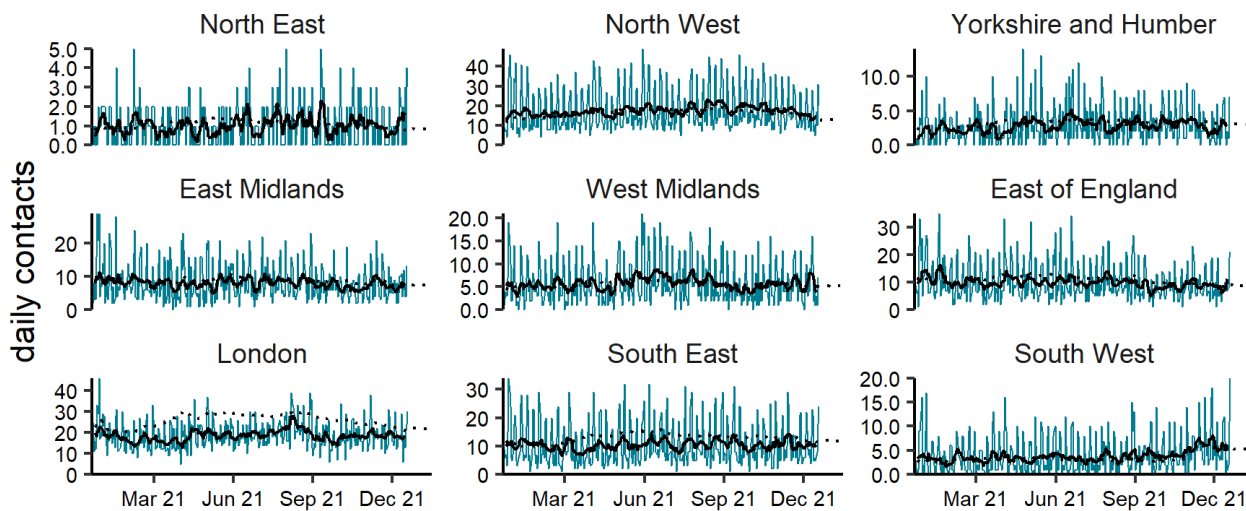
Diarrhoea

Figure 9: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for diarrhoea, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



(c)

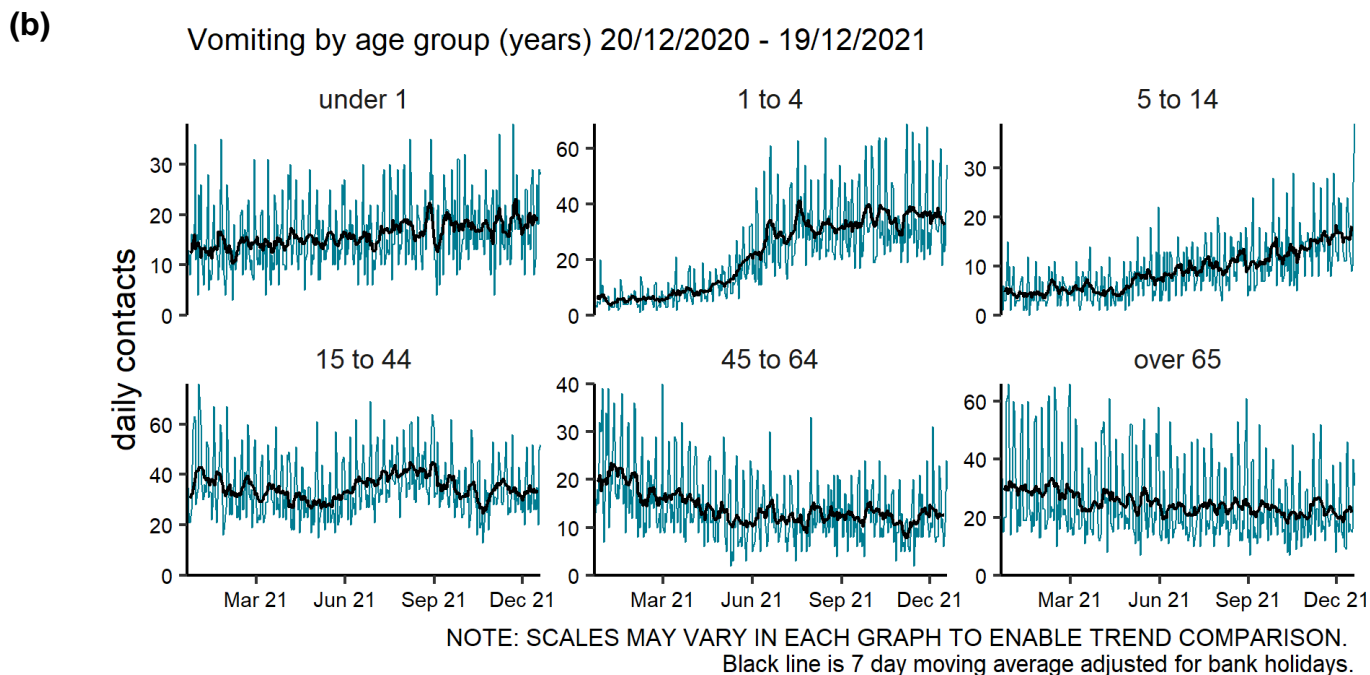
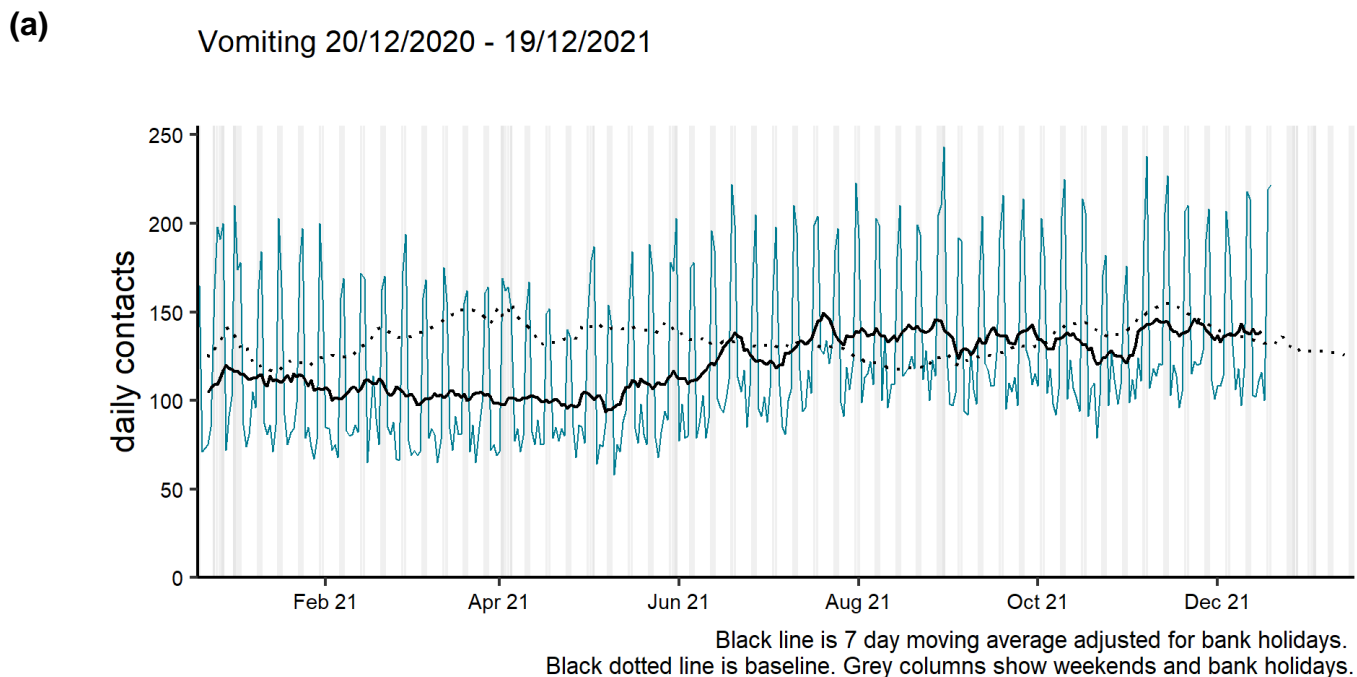
Diarrhoea by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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.

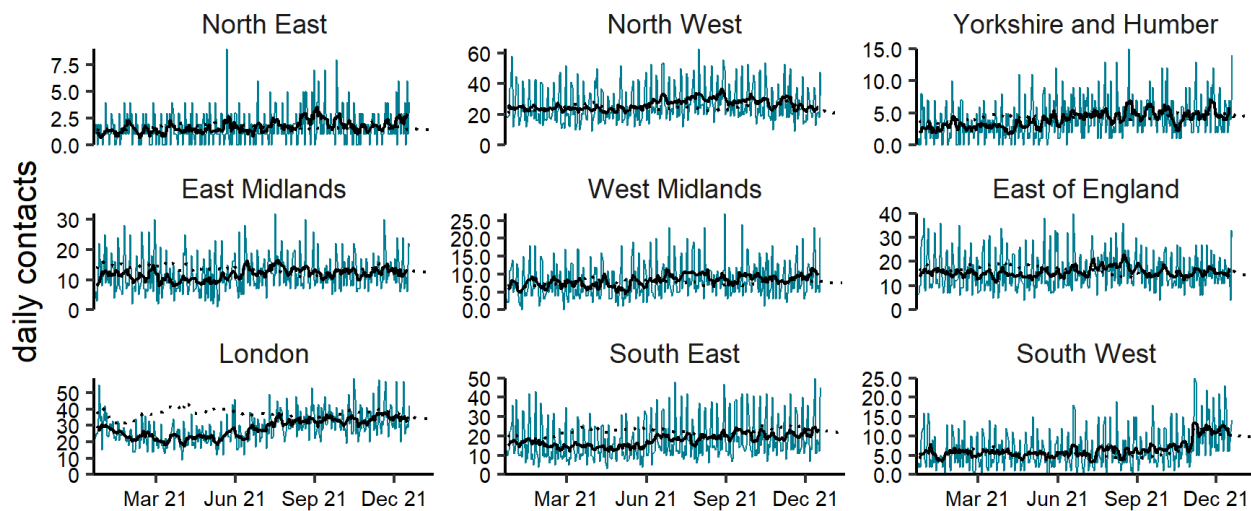
Vomiting

Figure 10: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for vomiting, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.



(c)

Vomiting by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



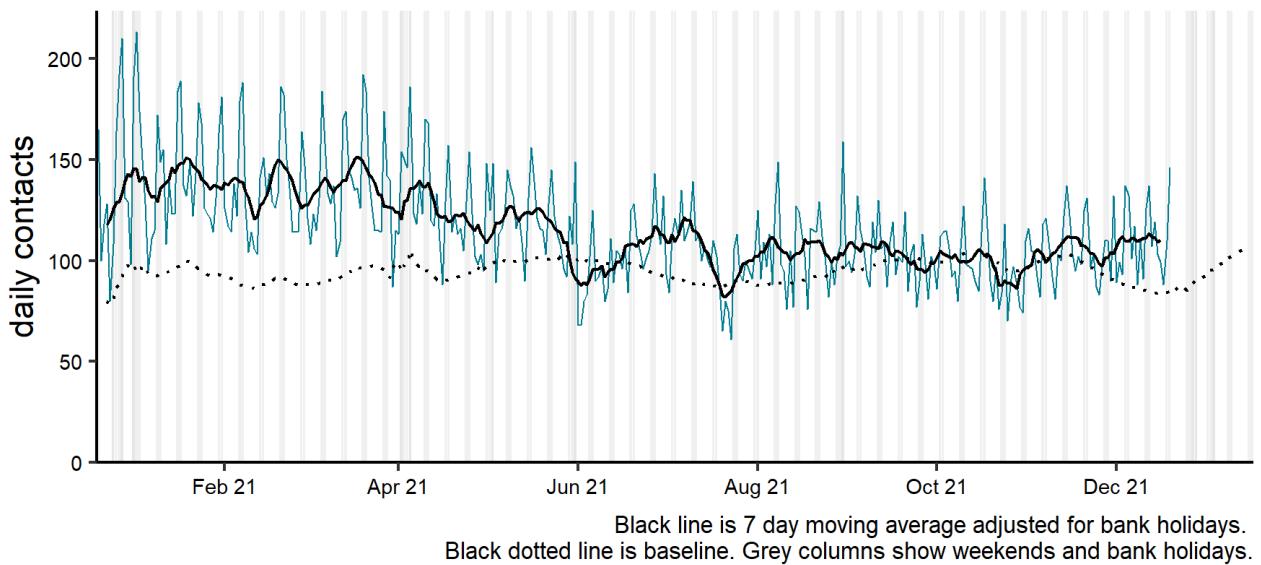
NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

Cardiac conditions

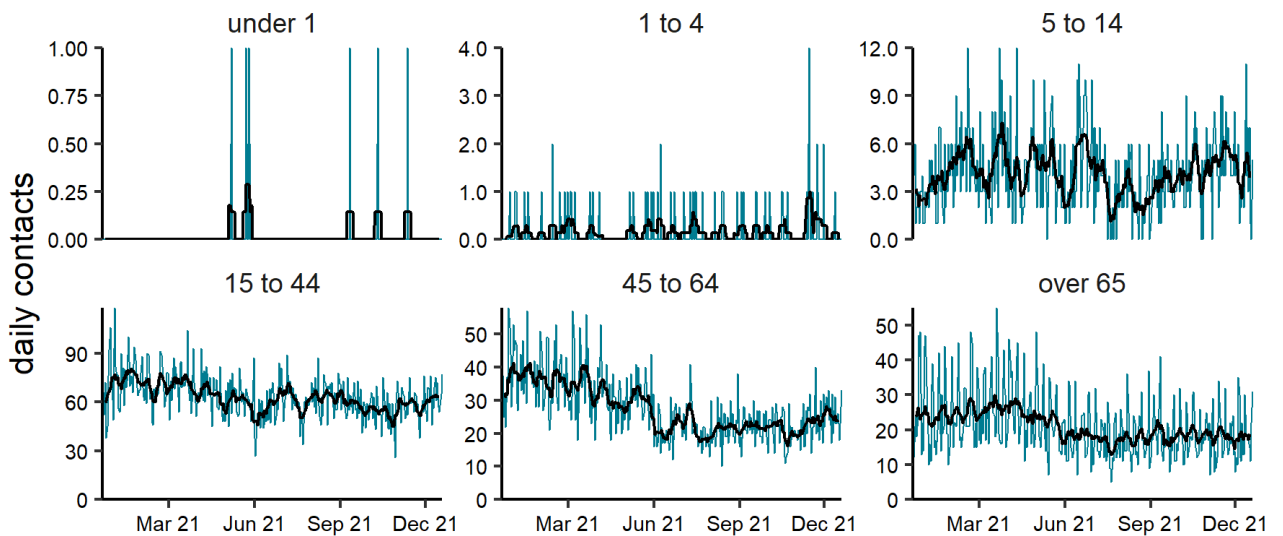
Chest pain (including myocardial infarction)

Figure 11: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for chest pain (including myocardial infarction), England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

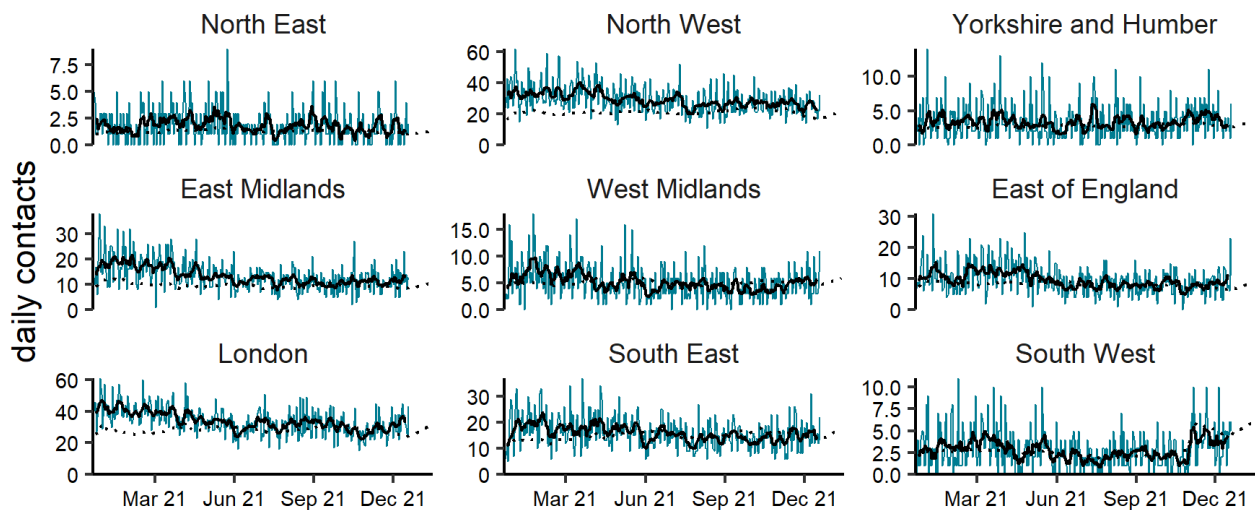
(a) Chest pain 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



(b) Chest pain by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



(c) Chest pain by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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.

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

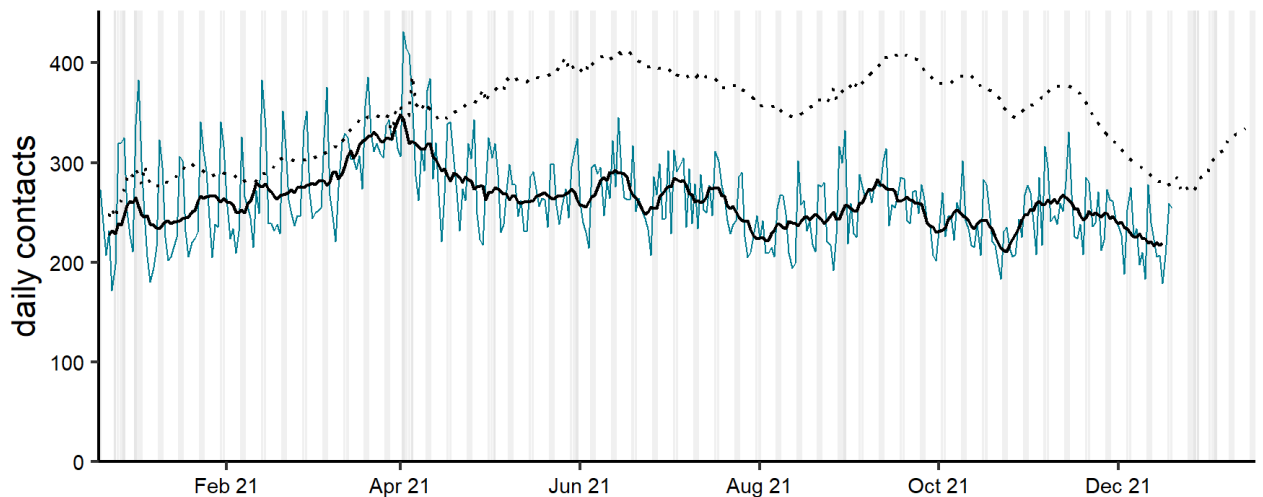
Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

Level 2 – alert and readiness

Impact of cold

Figure 12: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for impact of cold, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

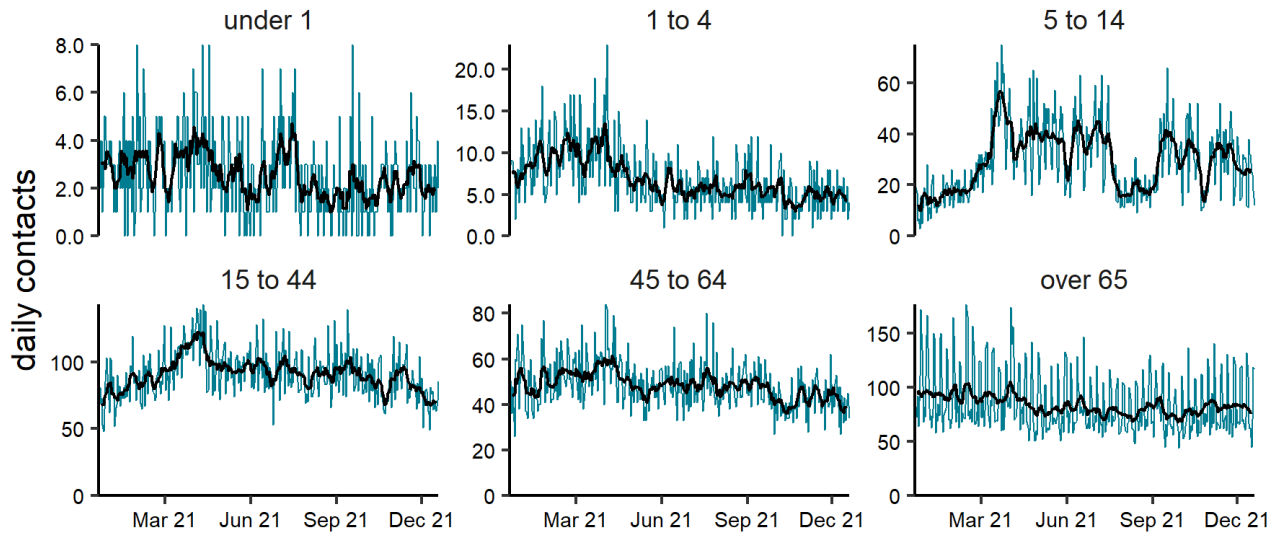
(a) Impact of cold 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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

(b)

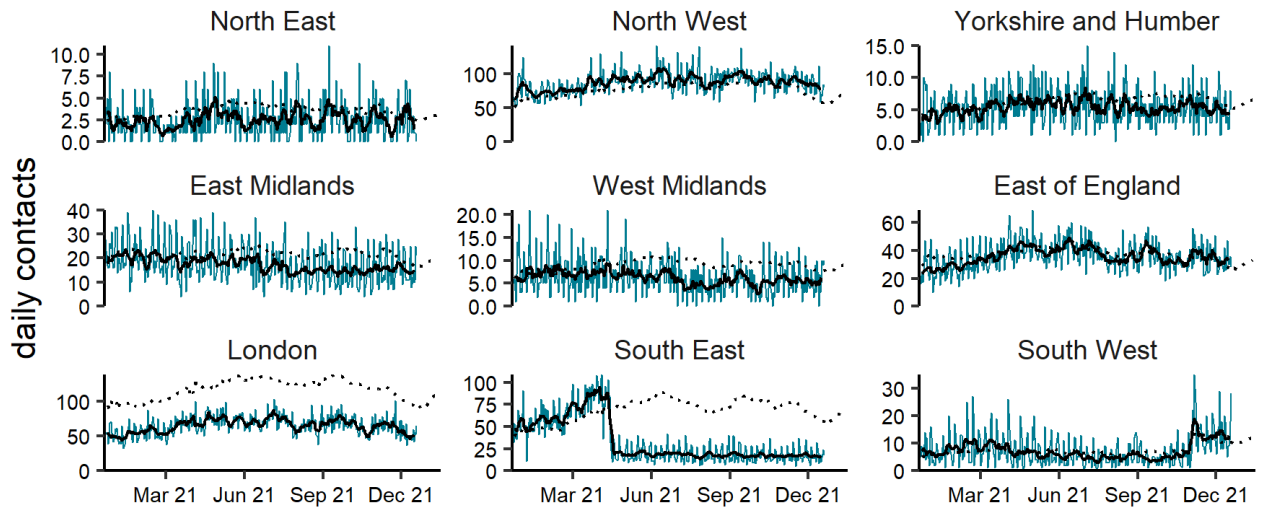
Impact of cold by age group (years) 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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

(c)

Impact of cold by region 20/12/2020 - 19/12/2021



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Black dotted line is baseline.

Notes and caveats

The following additional caveats apply to the UKHSA GP out-of-hours/unscheduled care syndromic surveillance system:

- the data presented should be used to monitor trends rather than numbers of ‘cases’:
 - this is a sentinel syndromic surveillance system; not all GP OOH service providers in England are included
 - coverage varies by location, as reflected in the numbers included in the total contacts by Region charts **above**
- some syndromic indicators are hierarchical:
 - acute respiratory infections includes:
 - influenza-like illness
 - acute bronchitis/ bronchiolitis
 - other and non-specific acute respiratory infections
 - gastroenteritis includes:
 - diarrhoea
 - vomiting
 - other and non-specific gastroenteritis
- baselines:
 - were last remodelled March 2021
 - are constructed from historical data since July 2009
 - 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 GP OOH usage

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Advanced and the GP OOH and unscheduled care service providers who have kindly agreed to participate in this system.

About the UK Health Security Agency

The UK Health Security Agency is an executive agency, sponsored by the [Department of Health and Social Care](#).

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