



UK Health
Security
Agency

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

2021 Week 51

Key messages

Data reported to: 28 December 2021

During week 51, GP out-of-hours contacts for acute respiratory infections remained stable.

Please note this bulletin includes data up to and including 28 December, including 2 bank holidays, which are expected to result in increased GP out-of-hours contacts.

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)	Decreasing	Below baseline
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (Figure 4)	No trend	Below baseline
Difficulty breathing/wheeze/asthma (Figure 5)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Fever (Figure 6)	No trend	Below baseline
Acute pharyngitis (Figure 7)	Increasing	Similar to 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)	Decreasing	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](#).

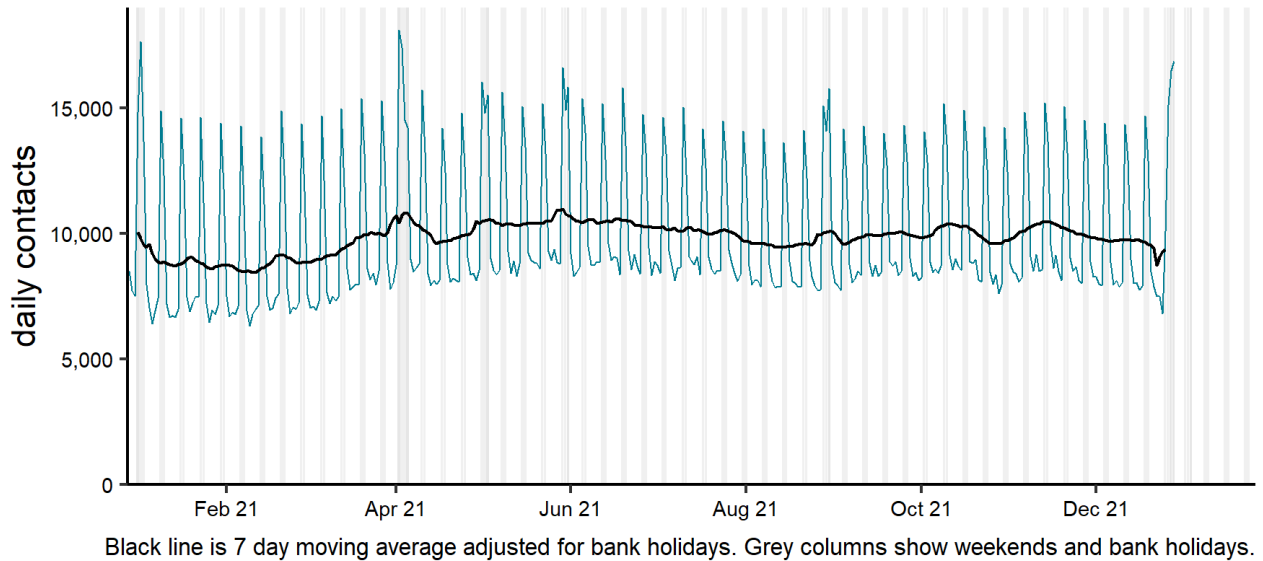
Data quality issues of note this week

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

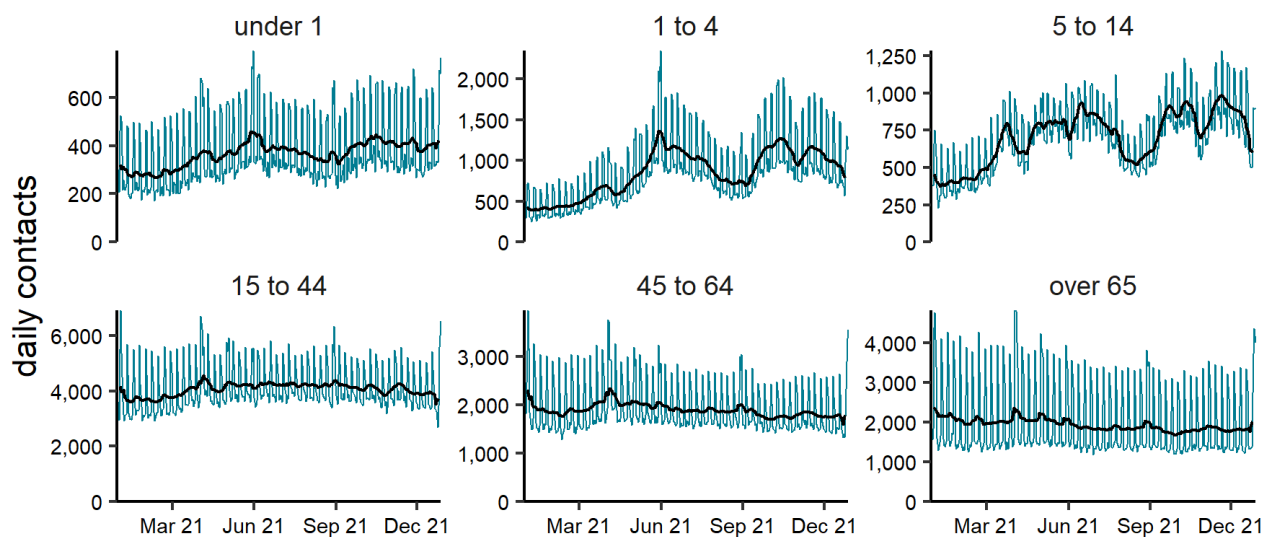
Total contacts

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.

(a) Total contacts 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

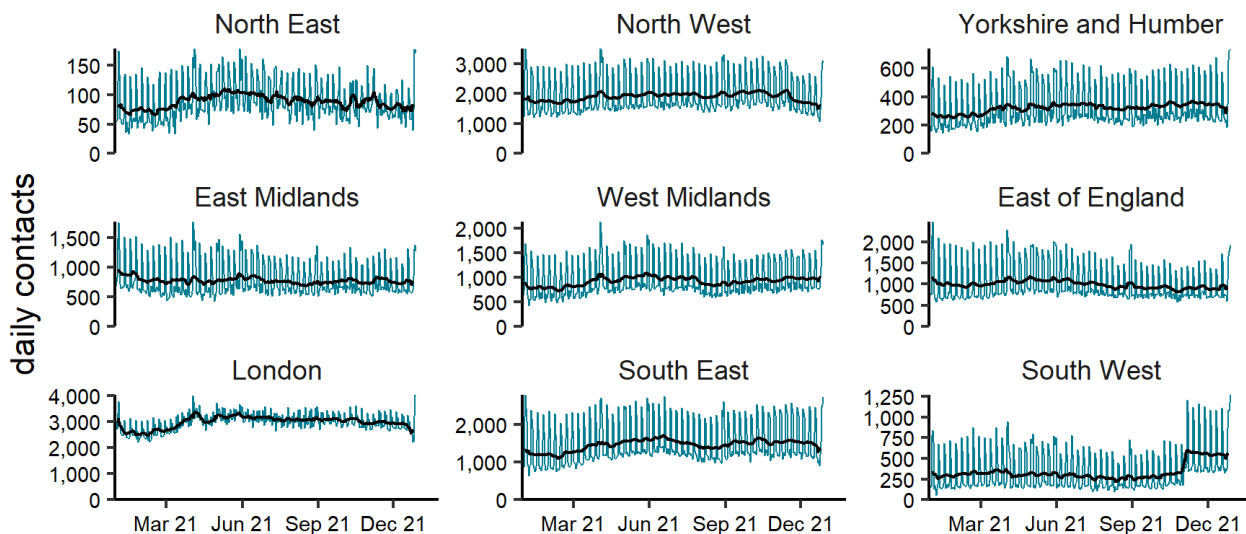


(b) Total contacts by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Total contacts by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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

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

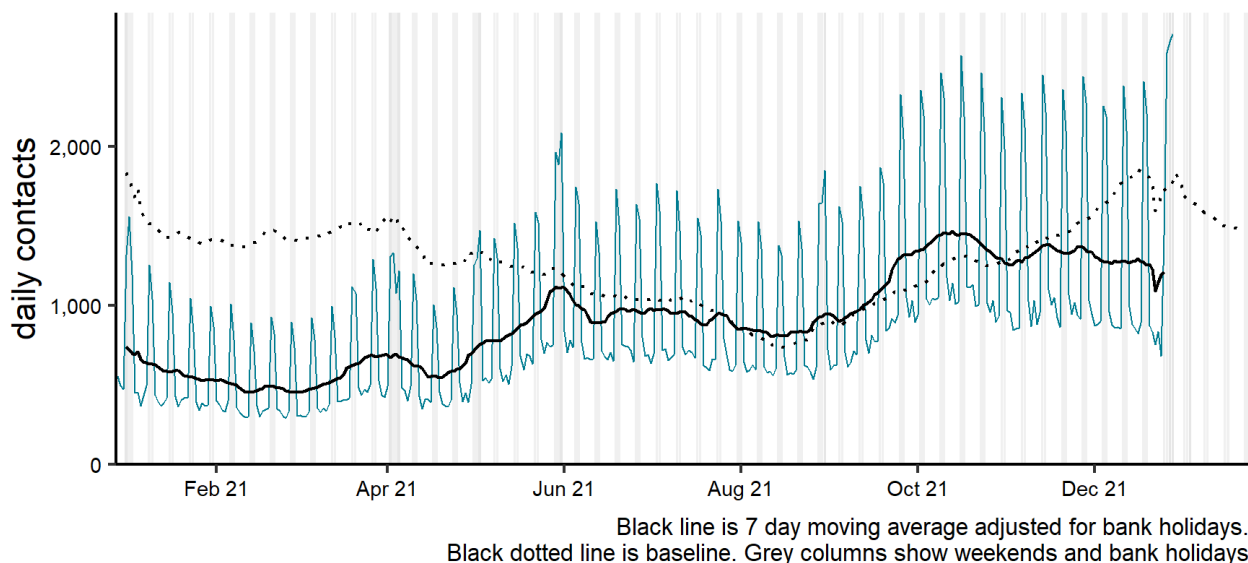
Date	Number of contacts
22 December 2021	22,262
23 December 2021	21,889
24 December 2021	20,126
25 December 2021	24,774
26 December 2021	39,136
27 December 2021	45,804
28 December 2021	44,067

Respiratory conditions

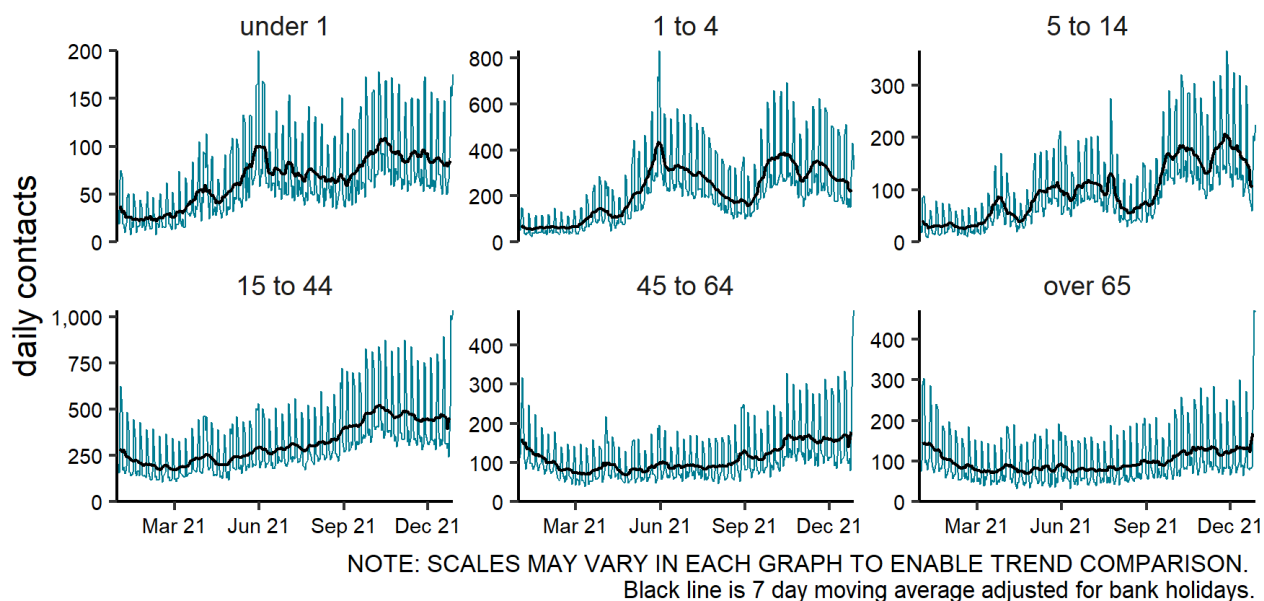
Acute respiratory infections

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.

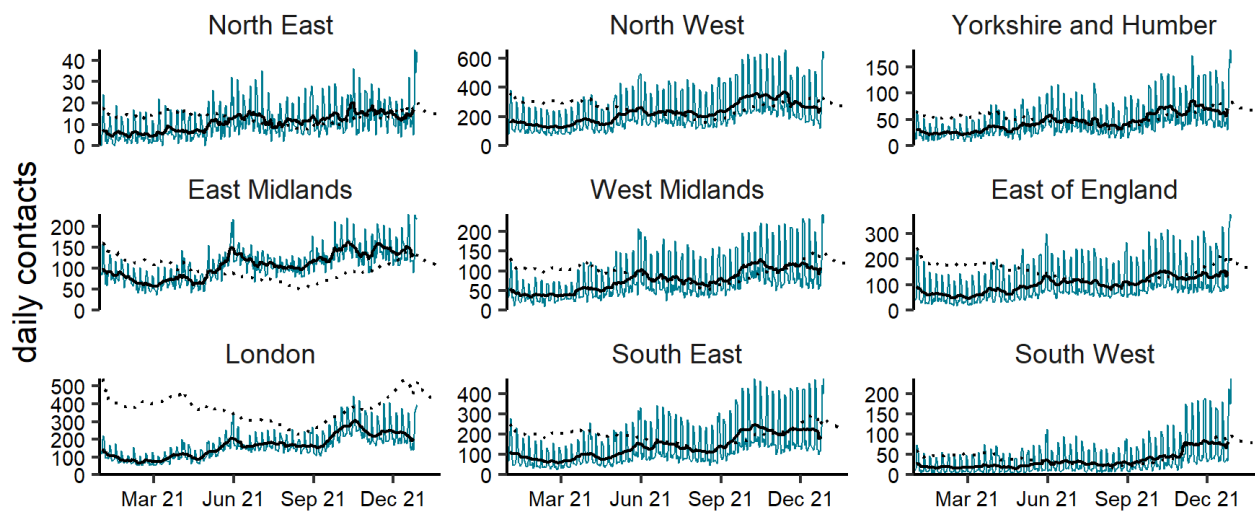
(a) Acute respiratory infection 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(b) Acute respiratory infection by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c) Acute respiratory infection by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

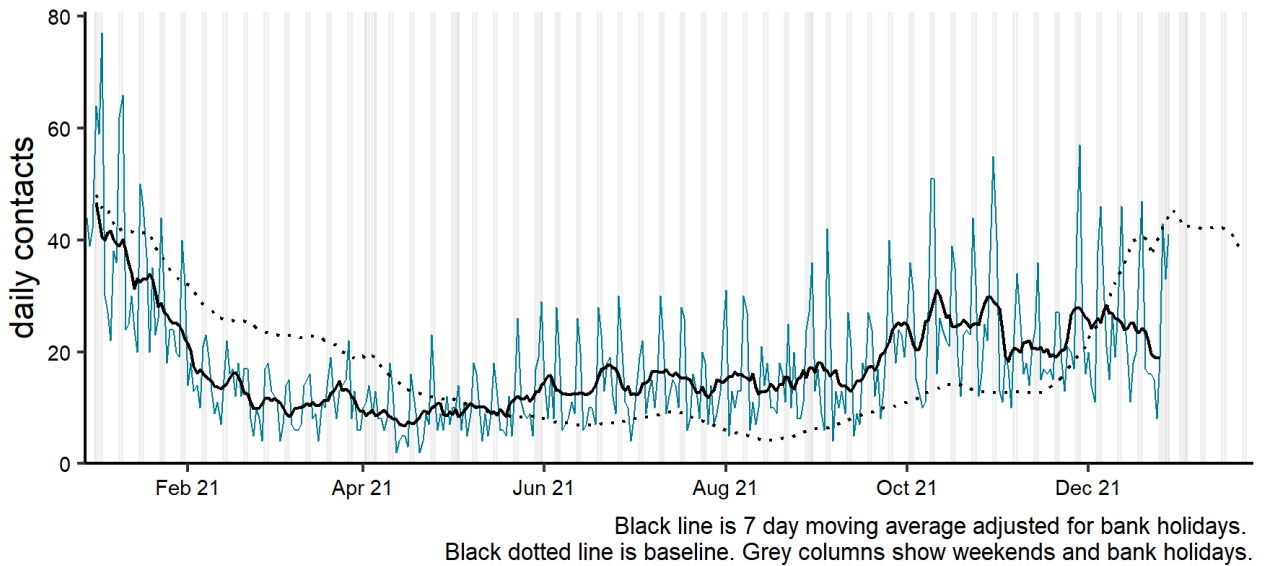


NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

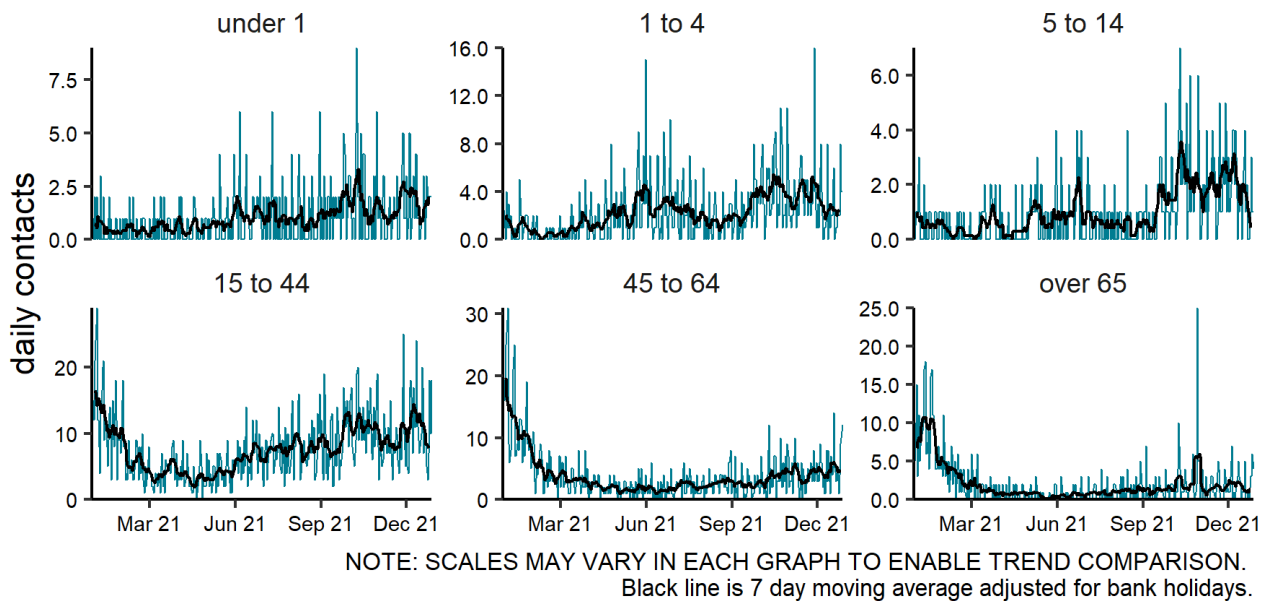
Influenza-like illness

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.

(a) Influenza-like illness 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

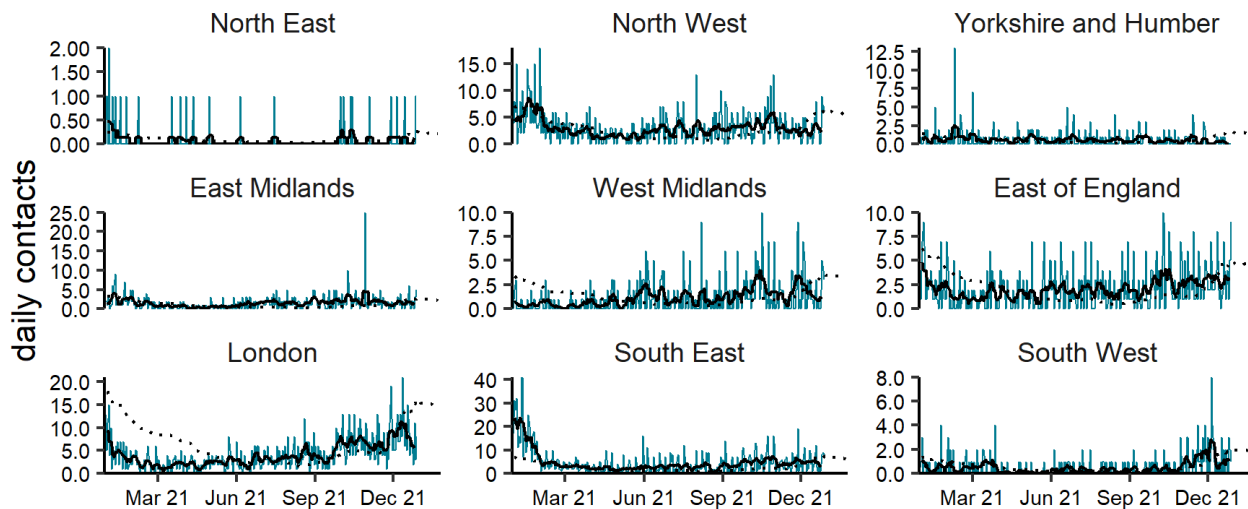


(b) Influenza-like illness by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Influenza-like illness by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

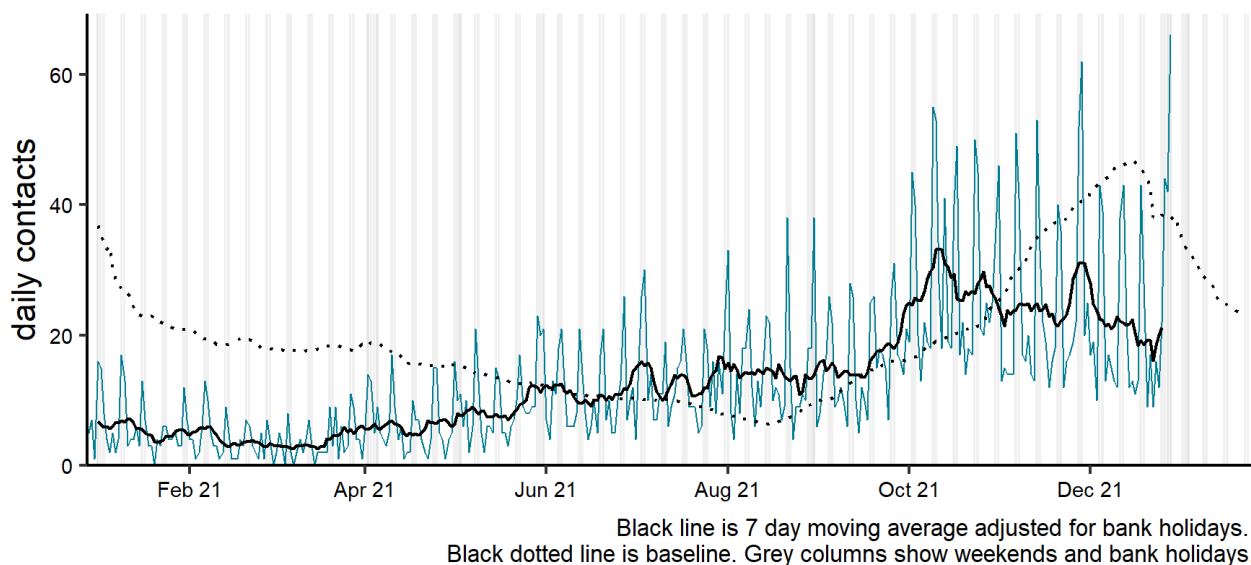


NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

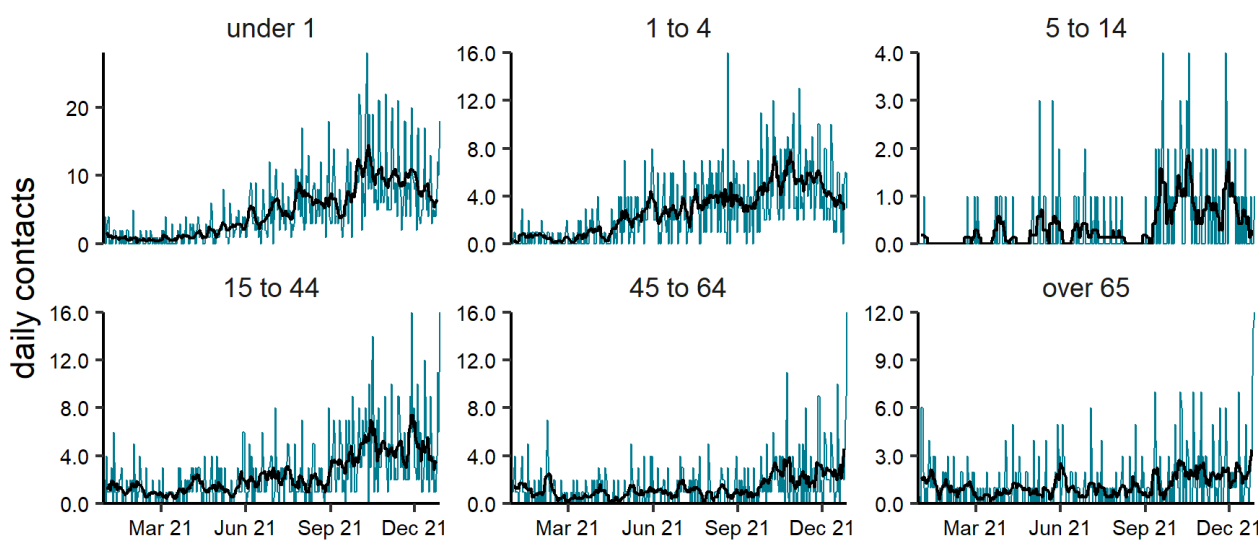
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis

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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



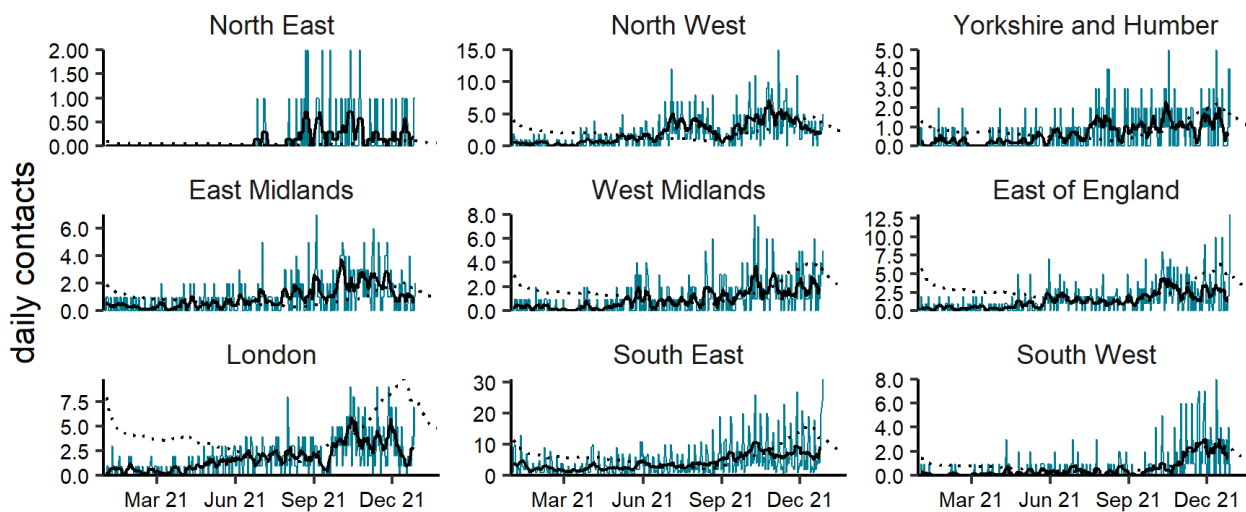
(b) Acute bronchitis by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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

(c)

Acute bronchitis by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

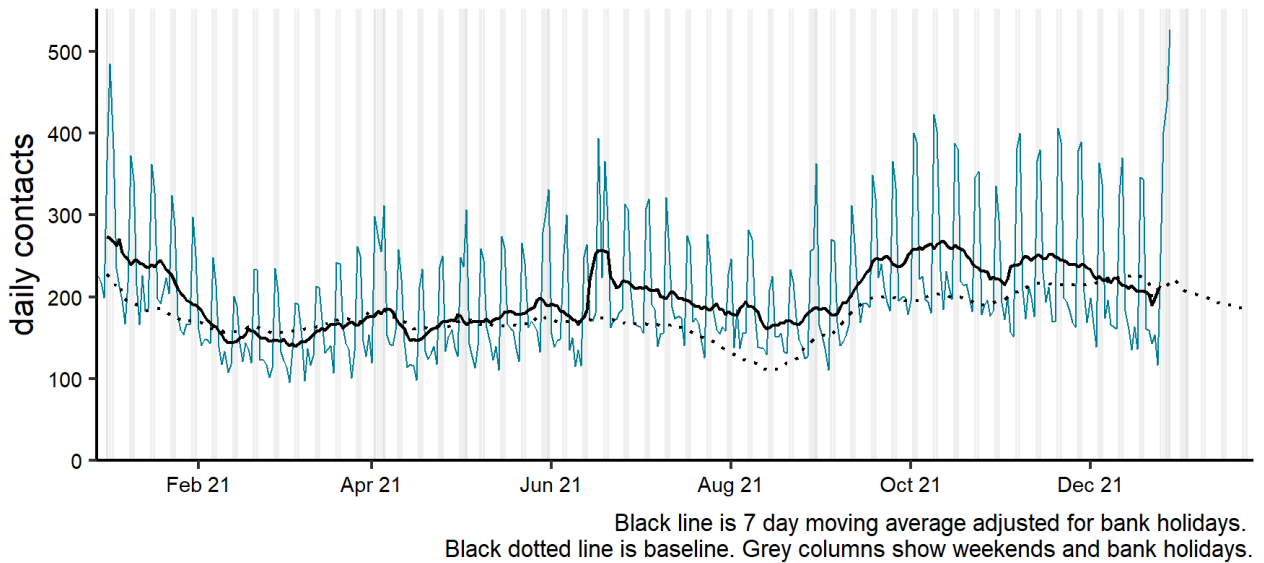


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Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

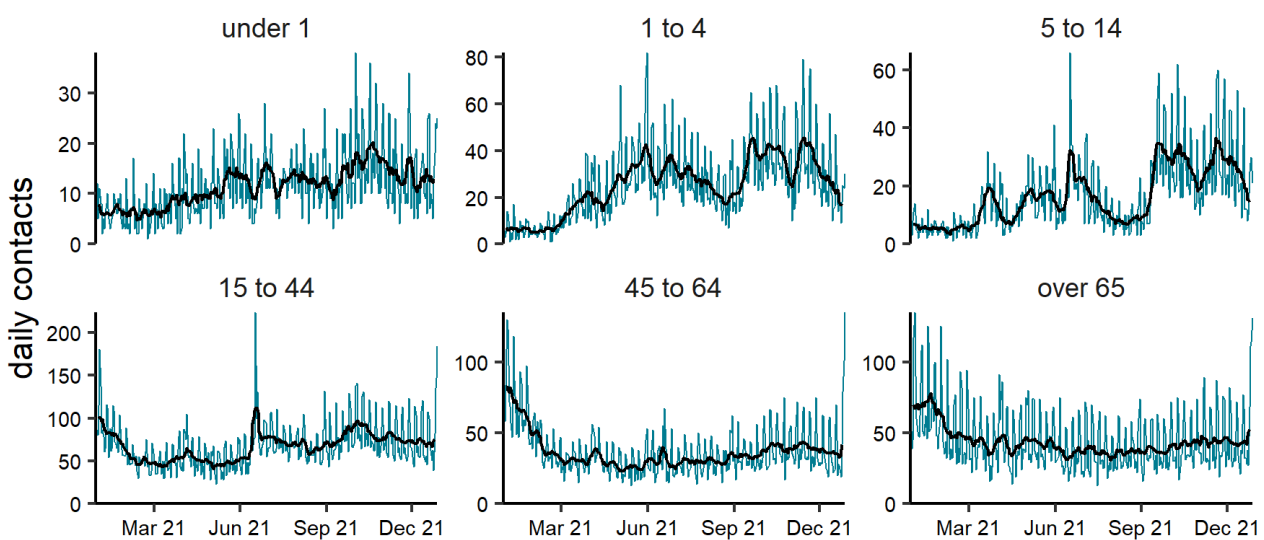
Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma

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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

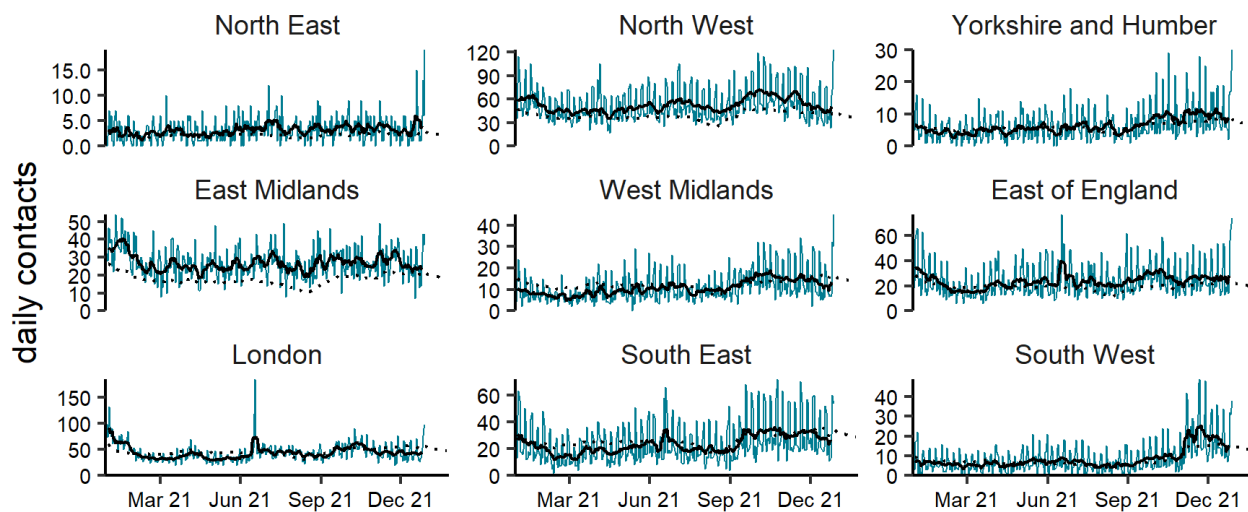


(b) Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

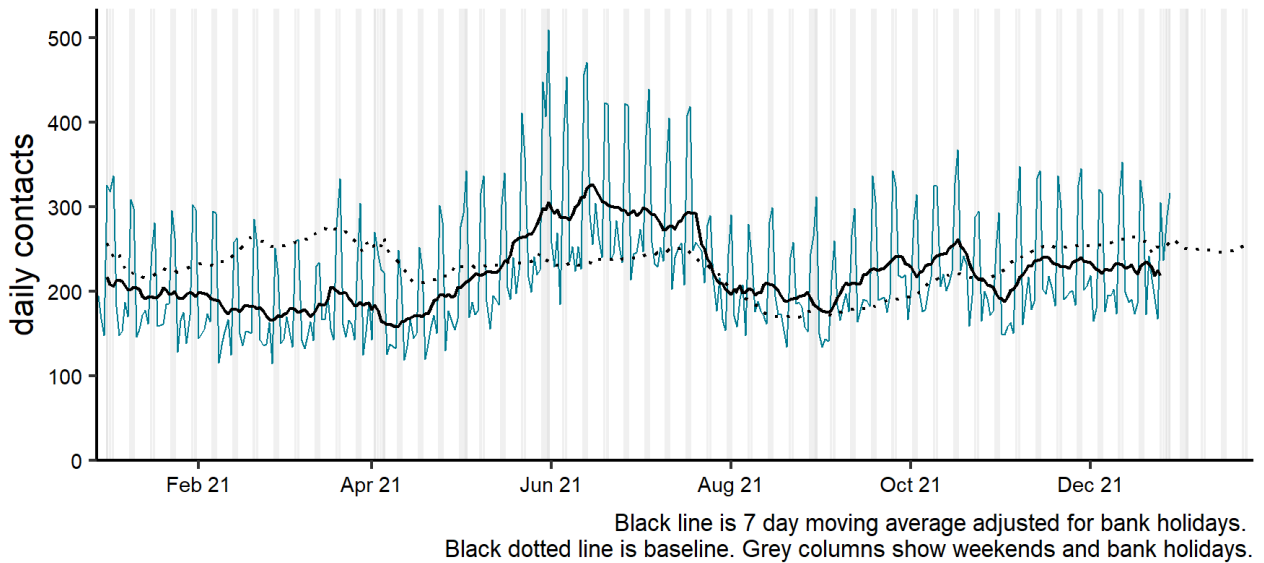


NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

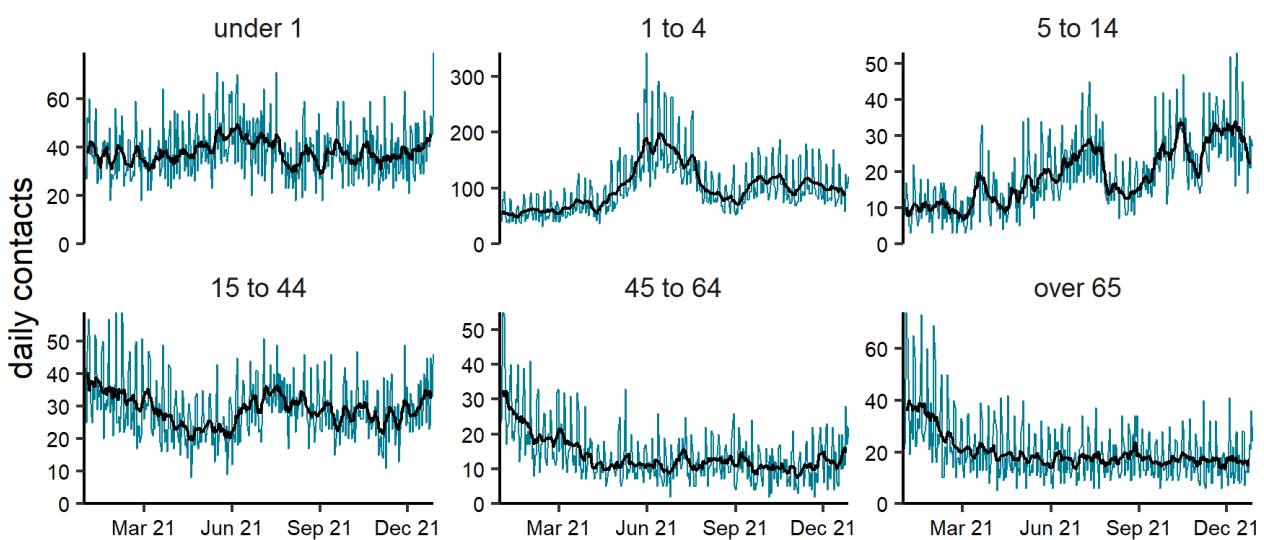
Fever

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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



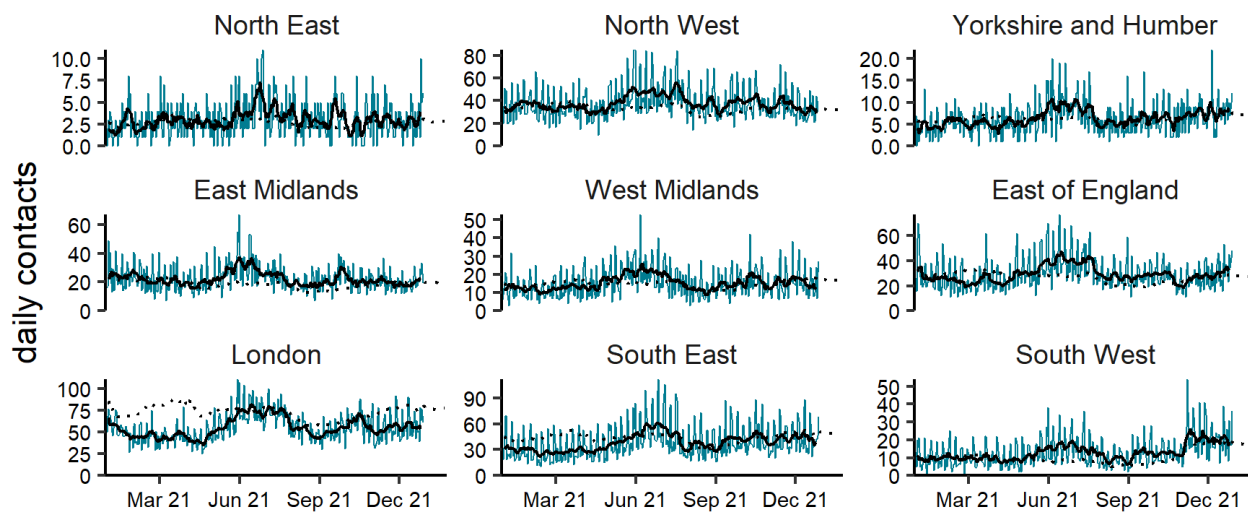
(b) Fever by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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

(c)

Fever by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

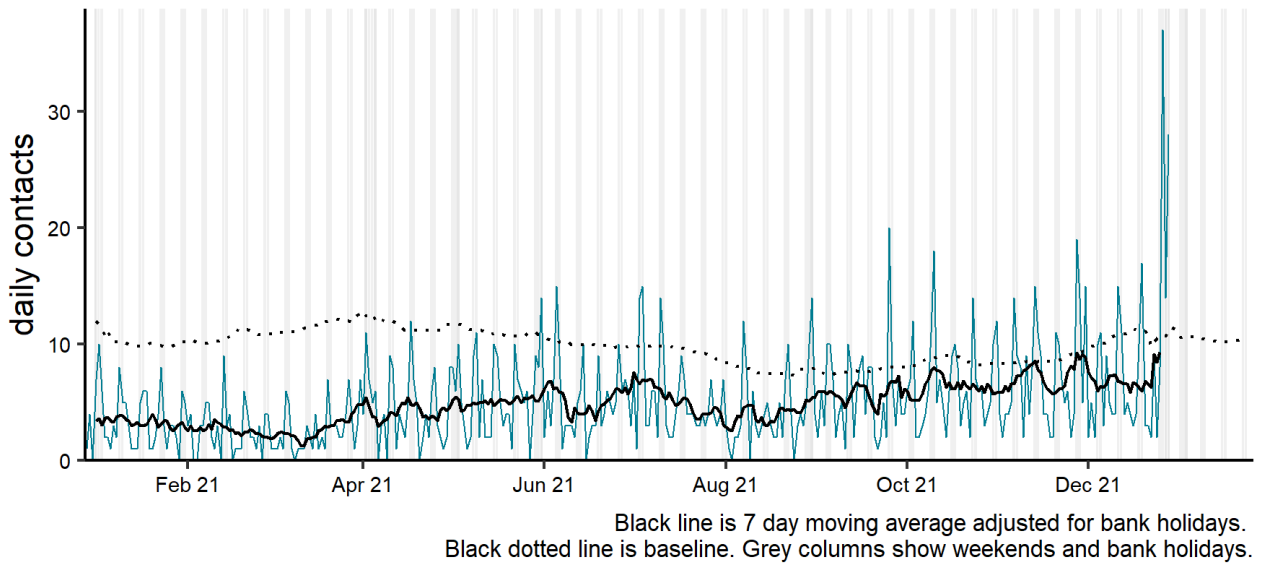


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Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
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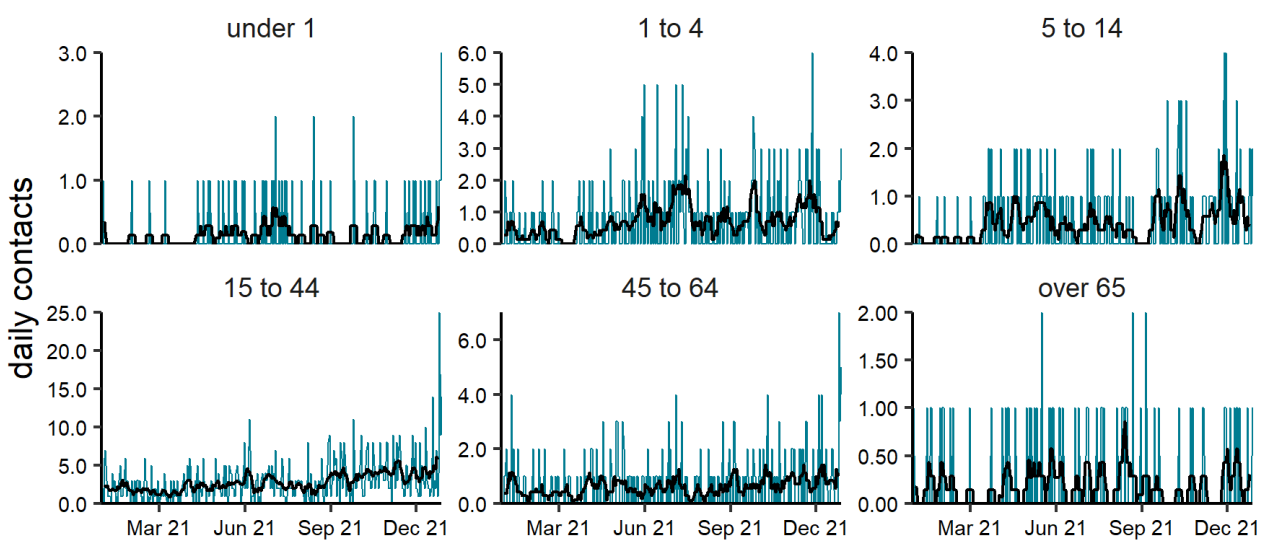
Acute pharyngitis

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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

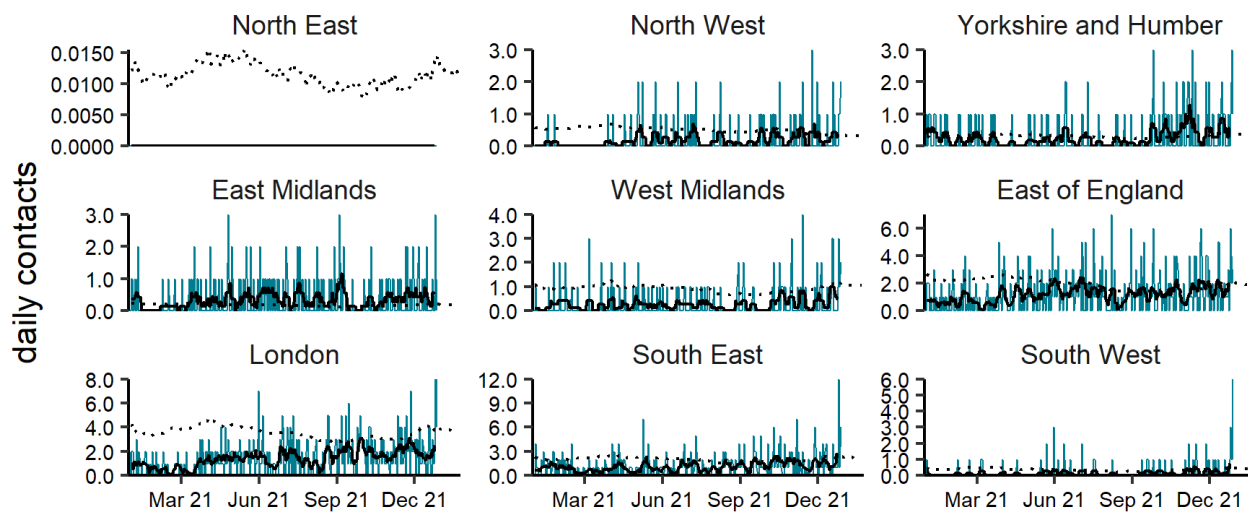


(b) Pharyngitis or scarlet fever by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Pharyngitis or scarlet fever by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



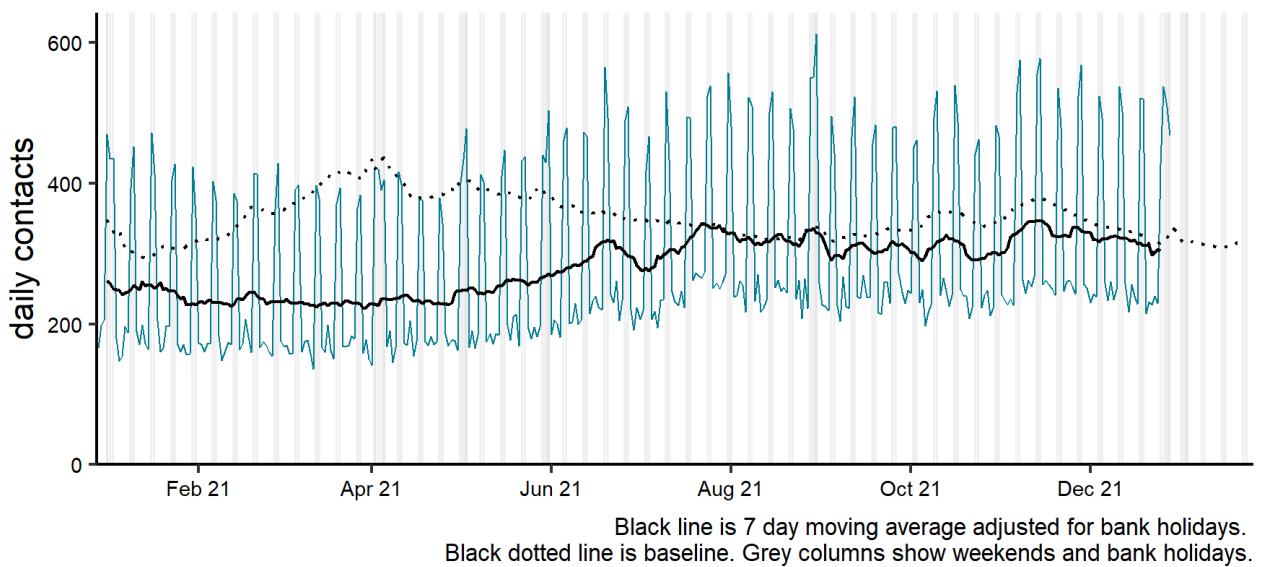
NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.
Black dotted line is baseline.

Gastrointestinal conditions

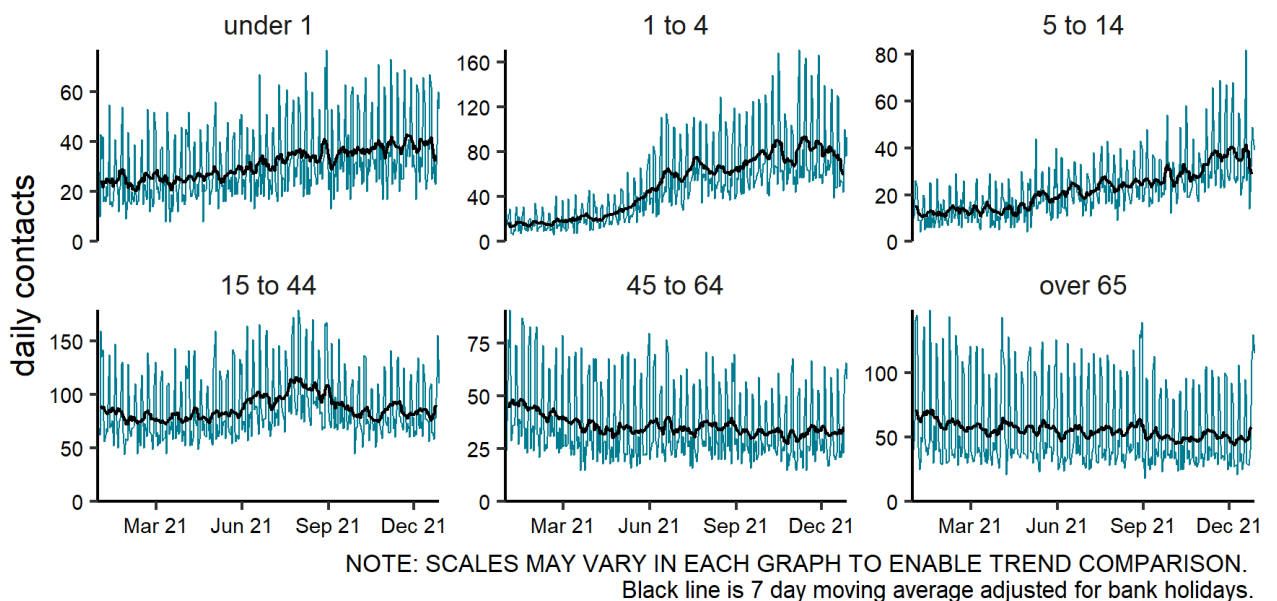
Gastroenteritis

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.

(a) Gastroenteritis 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

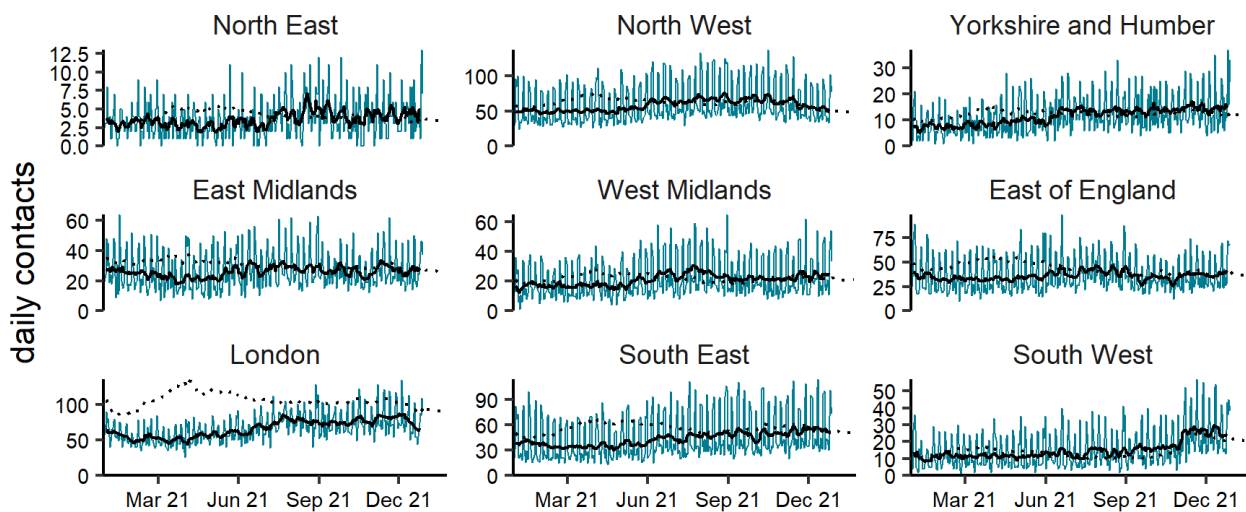


(b) Gastroenteritis by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Gastroenteritis by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

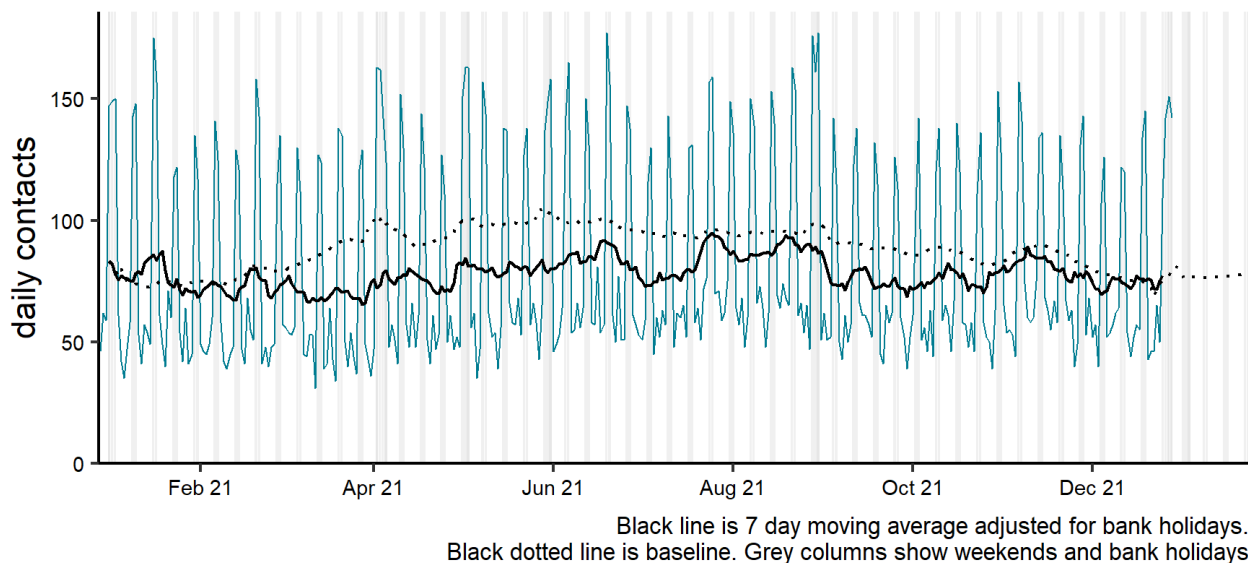


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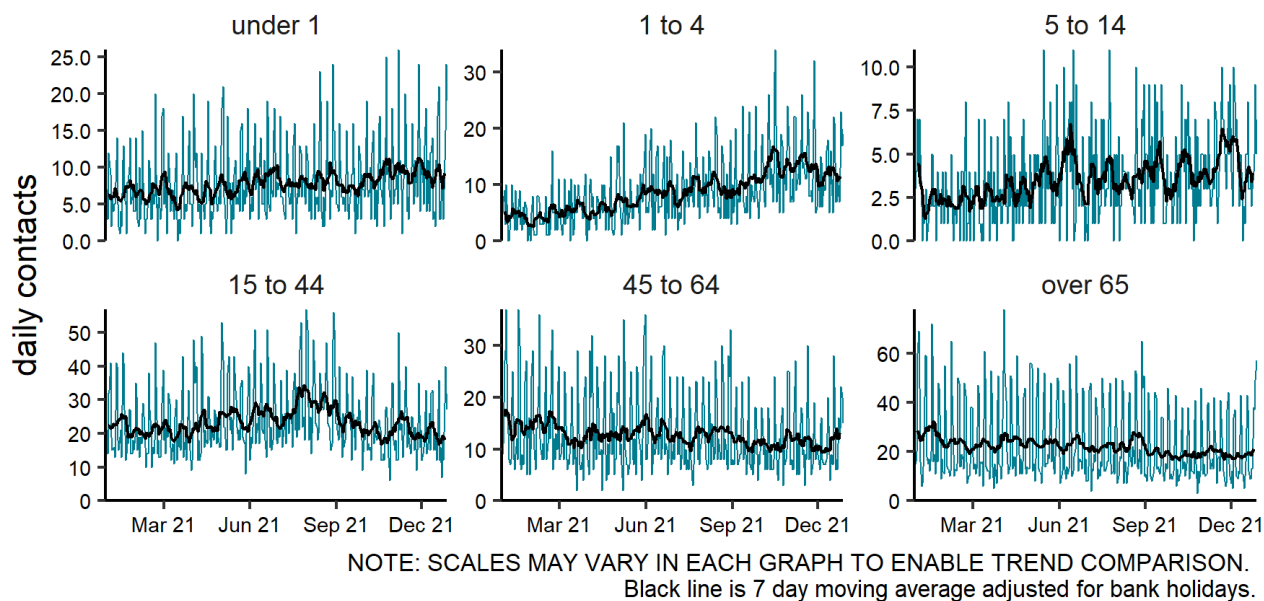
Diarrhoea

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.

(a) Diarrhoea 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

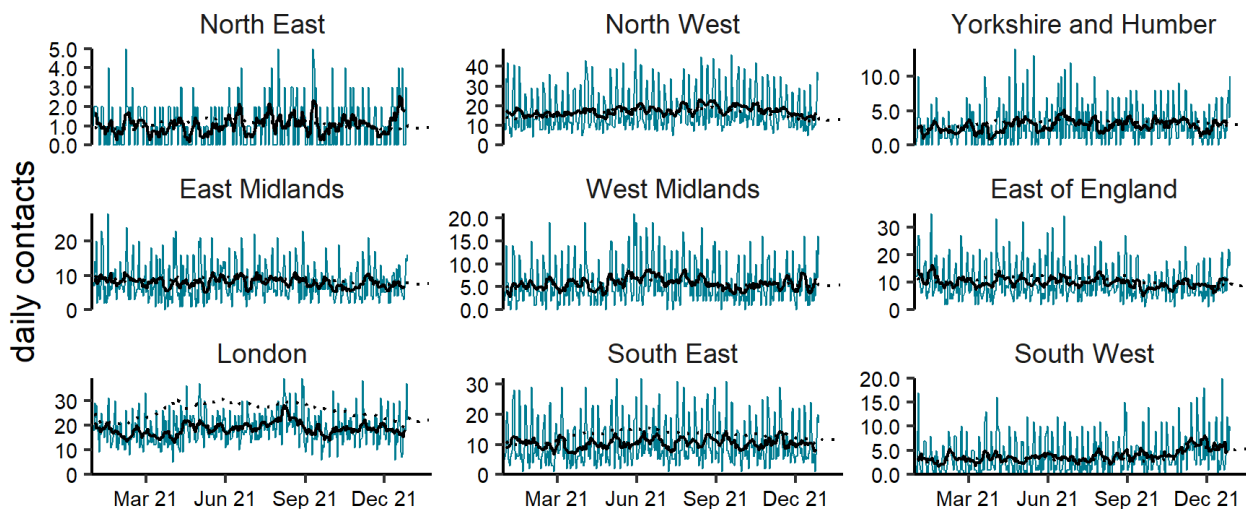


(b) Diarrhoea by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Diarrhoea by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

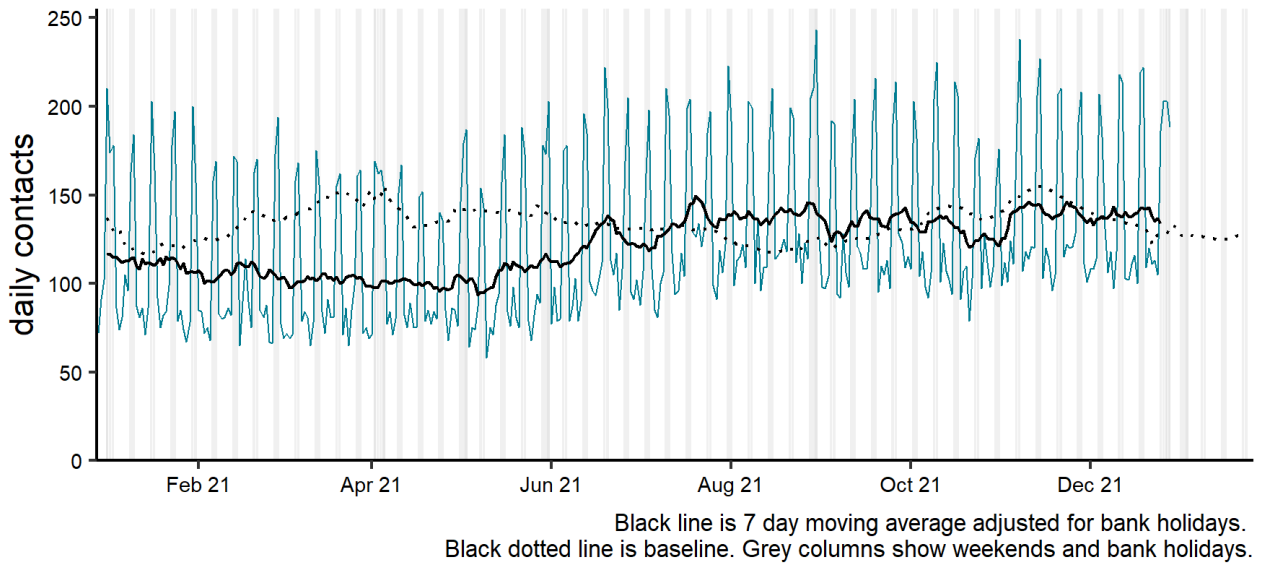


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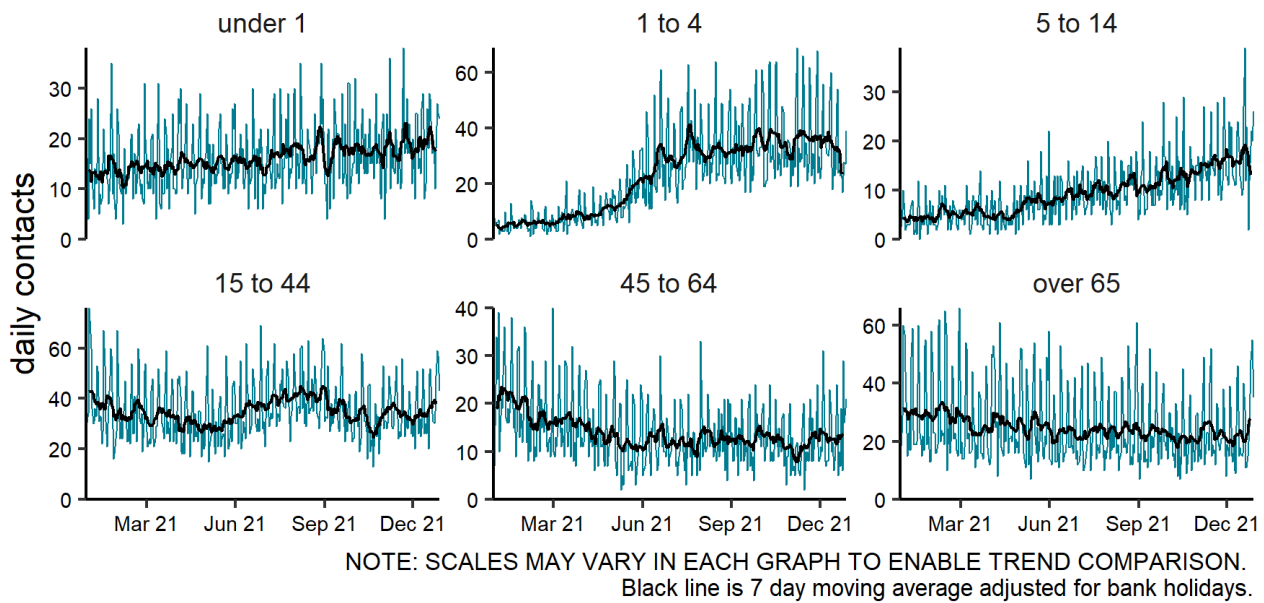
Vomiting

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.

(a) Vomiting 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

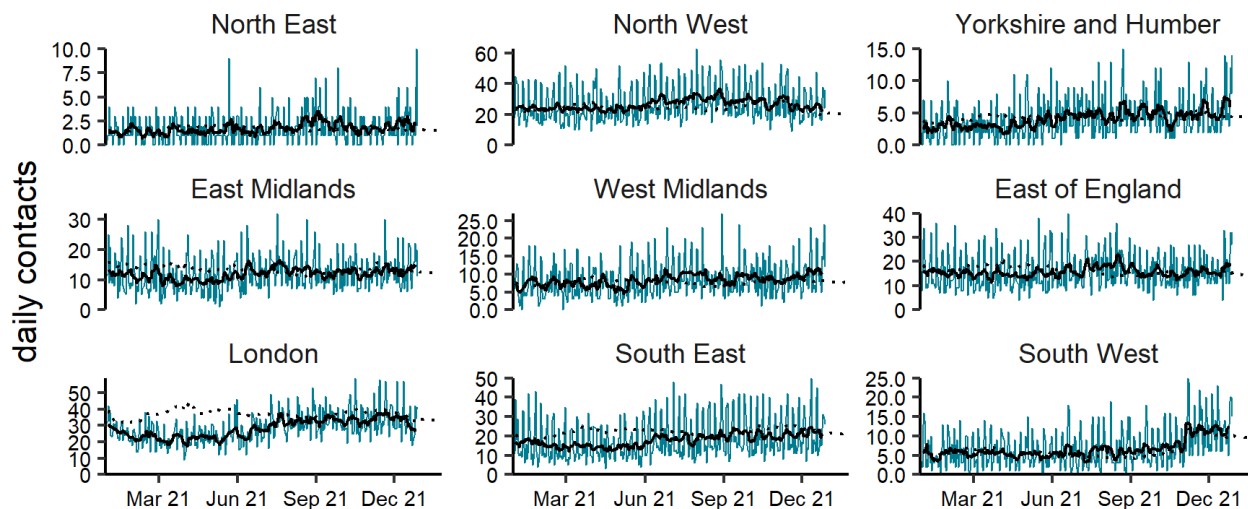


(b) Vomiting by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



(c)

Vomiting by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021

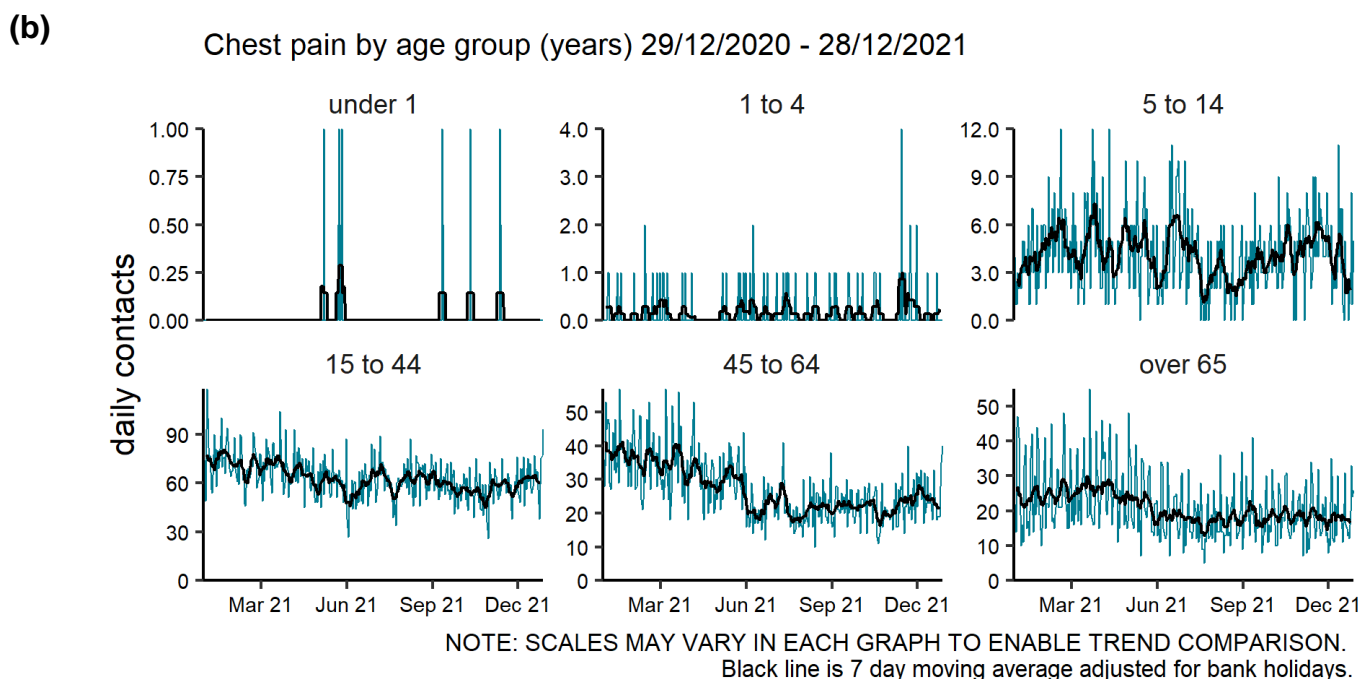
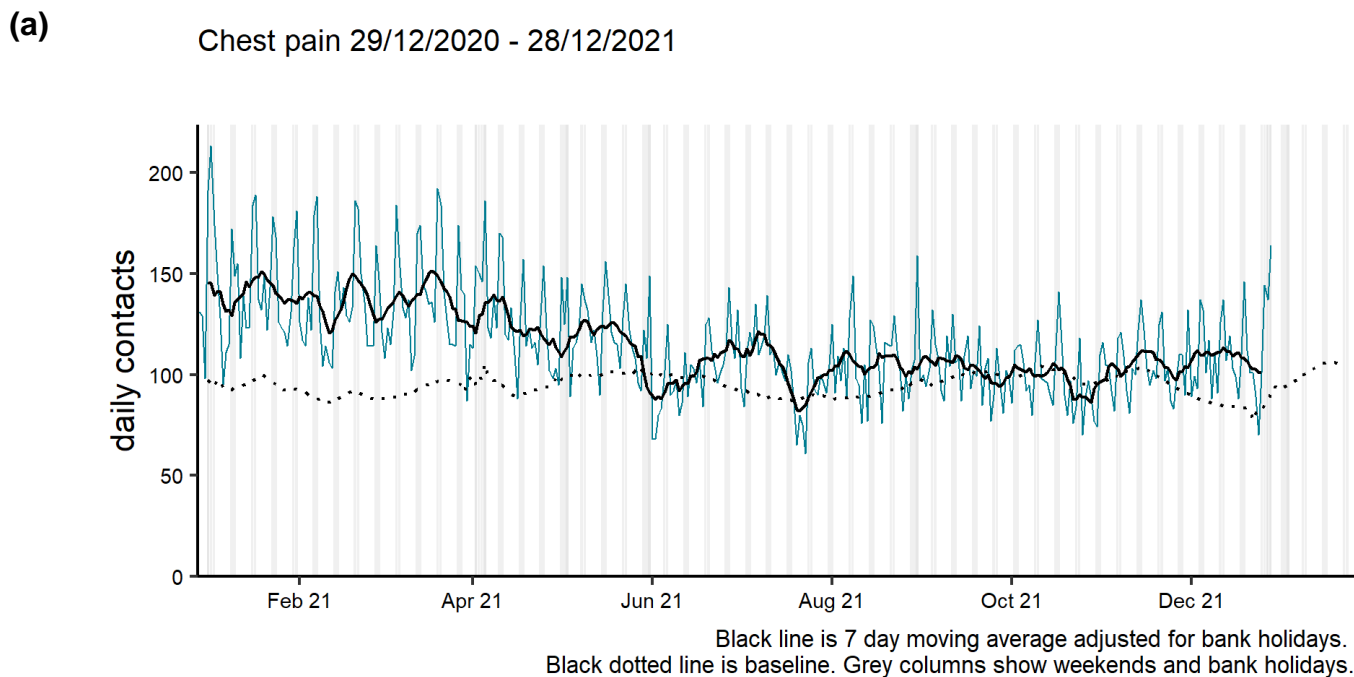


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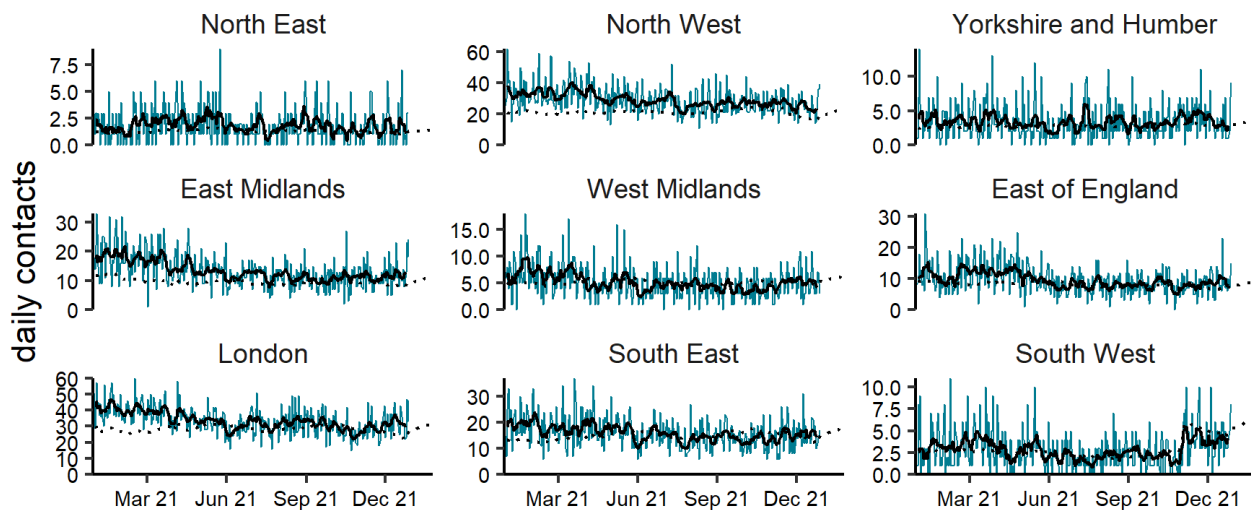
Cardiac conditions

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.



(c) Chest pain by region 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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

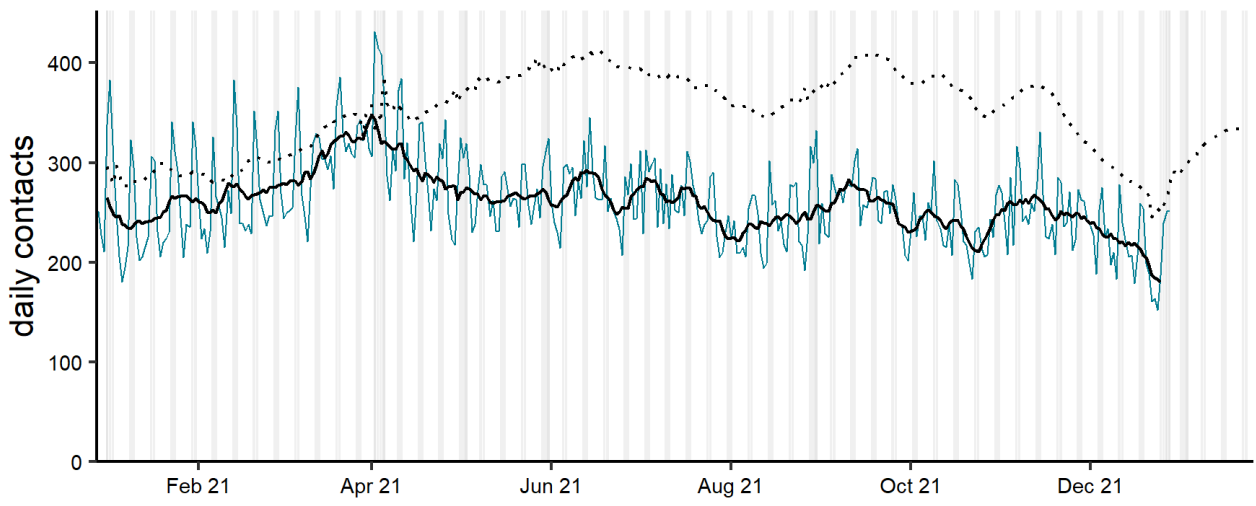
Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

Level 3 – Severe weather action

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.

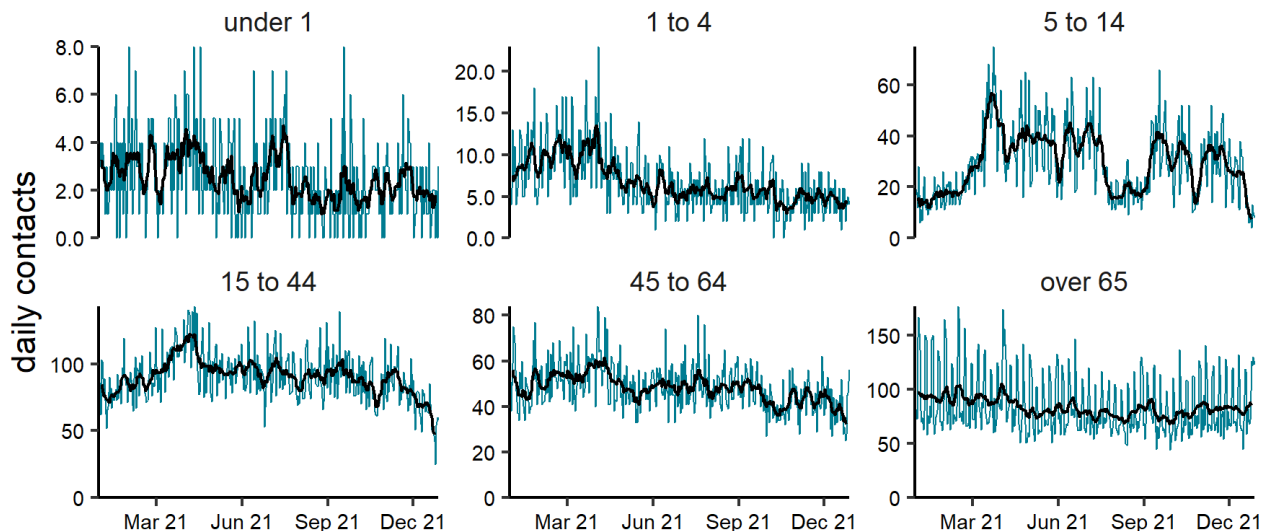
(a) Impact of cold 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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

(b)

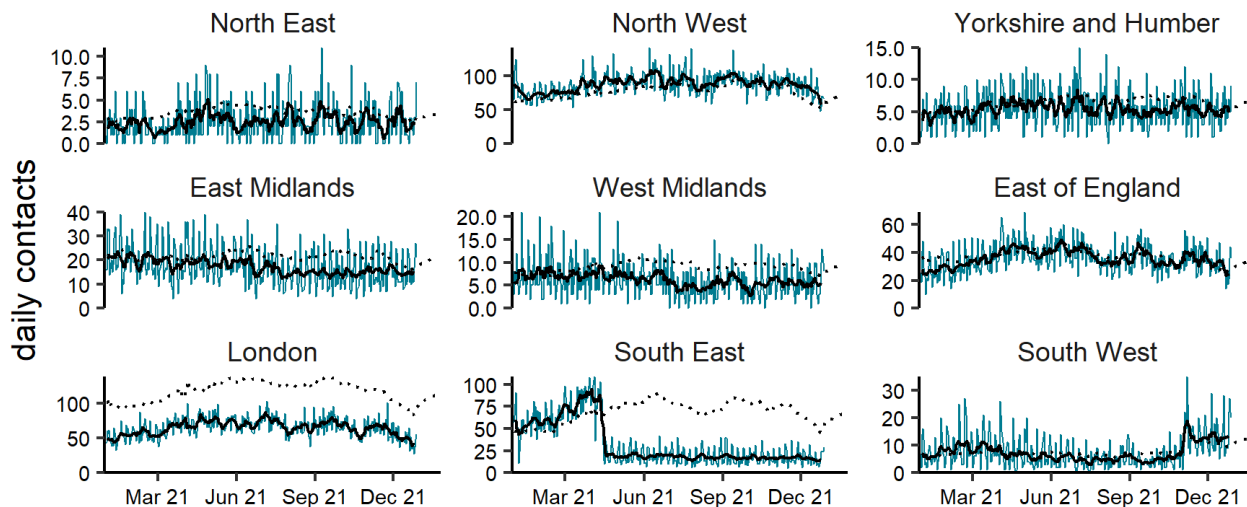
Impact of cold by age group (years) 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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 29/12/2020 - 28/12/2021



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.

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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