



UK Health
Security
Agency

GP Out-of-Hours Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England) 2023 Week 44

Key messages

Data reported to: 05 November 2023

During week 44, GP out-of-hours contacts for acute respiratory infections increased, largely due to further increases in children aged <1 year, but remain within seasonally expected levels.

Please note that daily GP out-of-hours syndromic surveillance data were not received from 4 August 2022 until 22 April 2023 inclusive. The daily syndromic feed has now been restored. Syndromic data presented in the charts in this bulletin cover the period 22 April 2023 to the current reporting week. There are currently some technical problems with GP OOH system coverage across several regions and therefore we are currently not able to present regional charts in this report. Baselines are in the process of being reviewed.

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)	Increasing	Similar to baseline
Influenza-like illness (Figure 3)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (Figure 4)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Difficulty breathing/wheeze/asthma (Figure 5)	No trend	Above baseline
Fever (Figure 6)	No trend	Below baseline
Acute pharyngitis (Figure 7)	No trend	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)	Increasing	Above baseline
Impact of cold (Figure 12)	Increasing	Similar 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) and by age group
- 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 and by age group. Each chart includes data from April 2023:
 - 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

See main [key message](#) for update on current data quality issues.

Total contacts

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

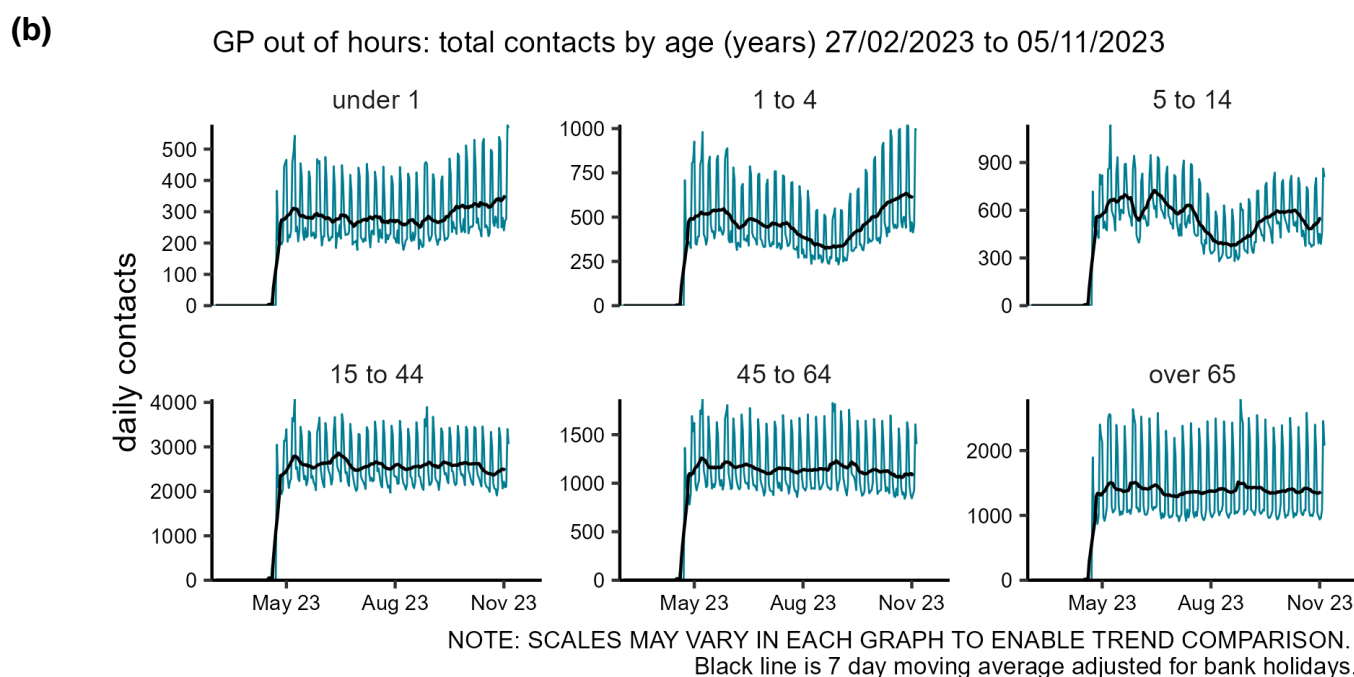
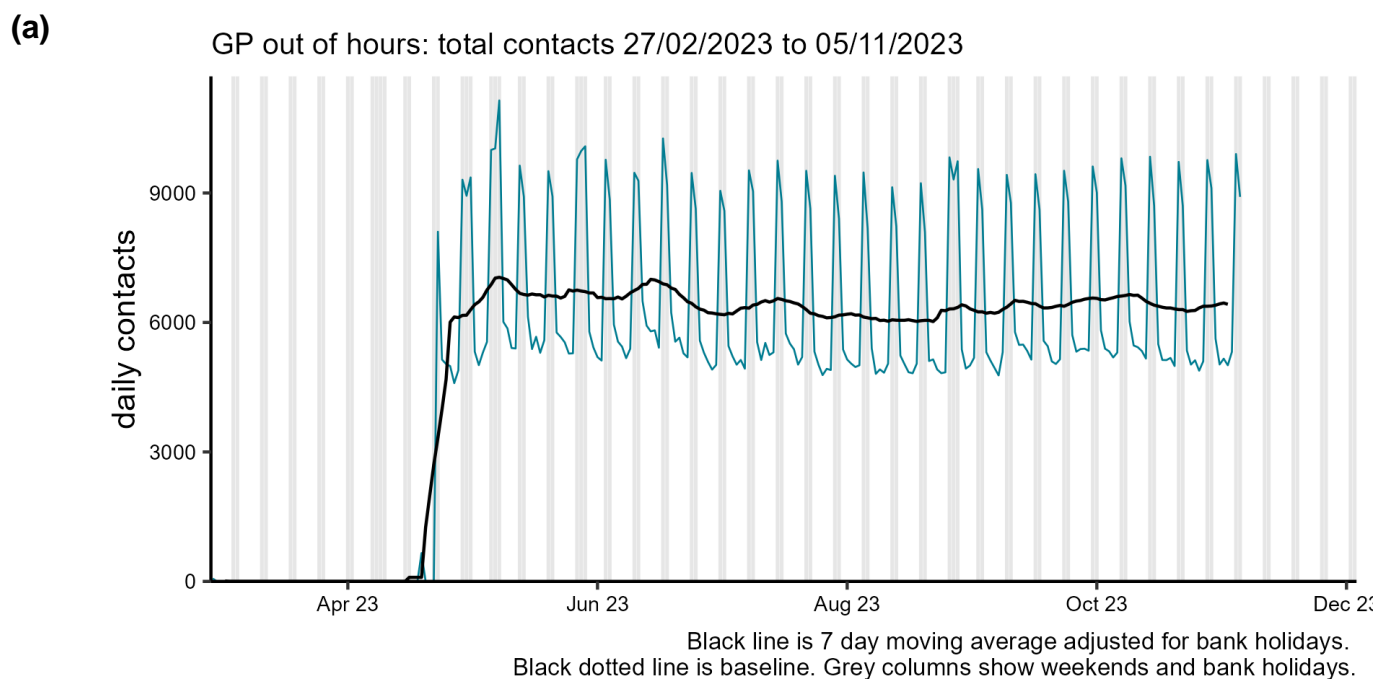


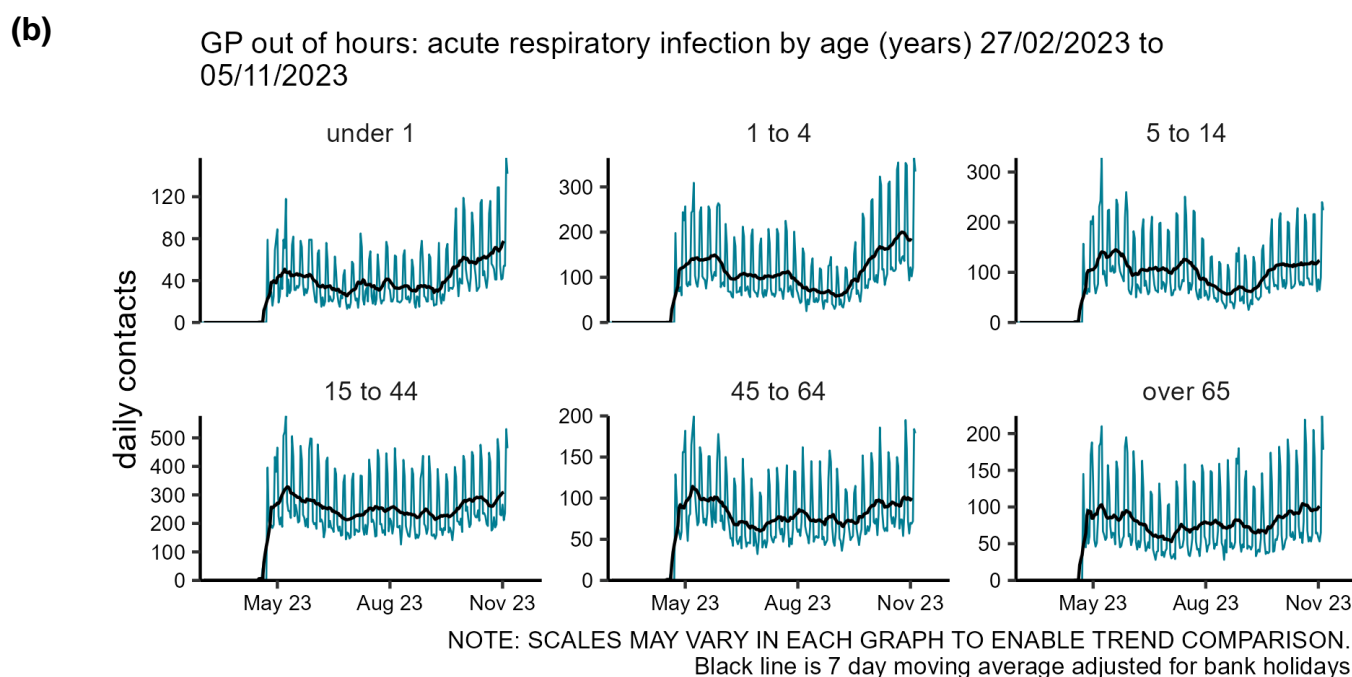
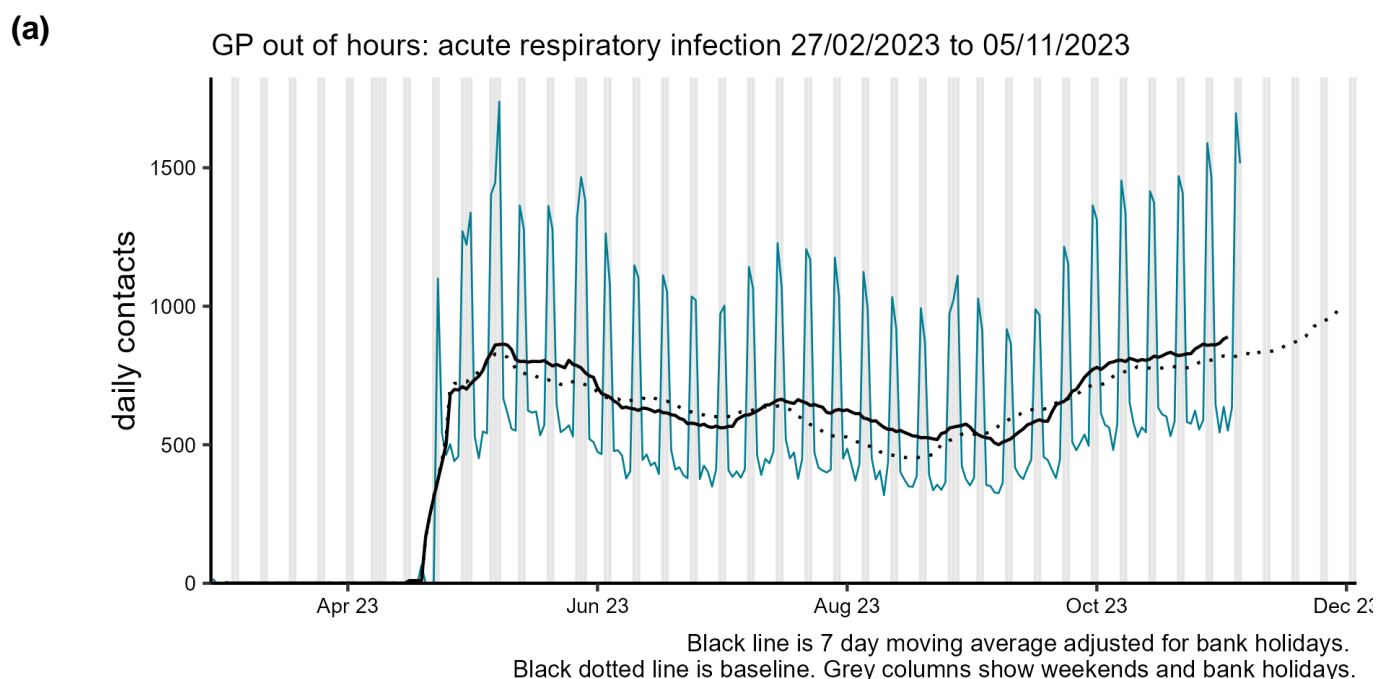
Table 2: The number of GP out-of-hours contacts in this sentinel syndromic surveillance system in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

Date	Number of contacts
30 October 2023	25,011
31 October 2023	21,582
1 November 2023	22,196
2 November 2023	22,248
3 November 2023	23,161
4 November 2023	35,399
5 November 2023	30,998

Respiratory conditions

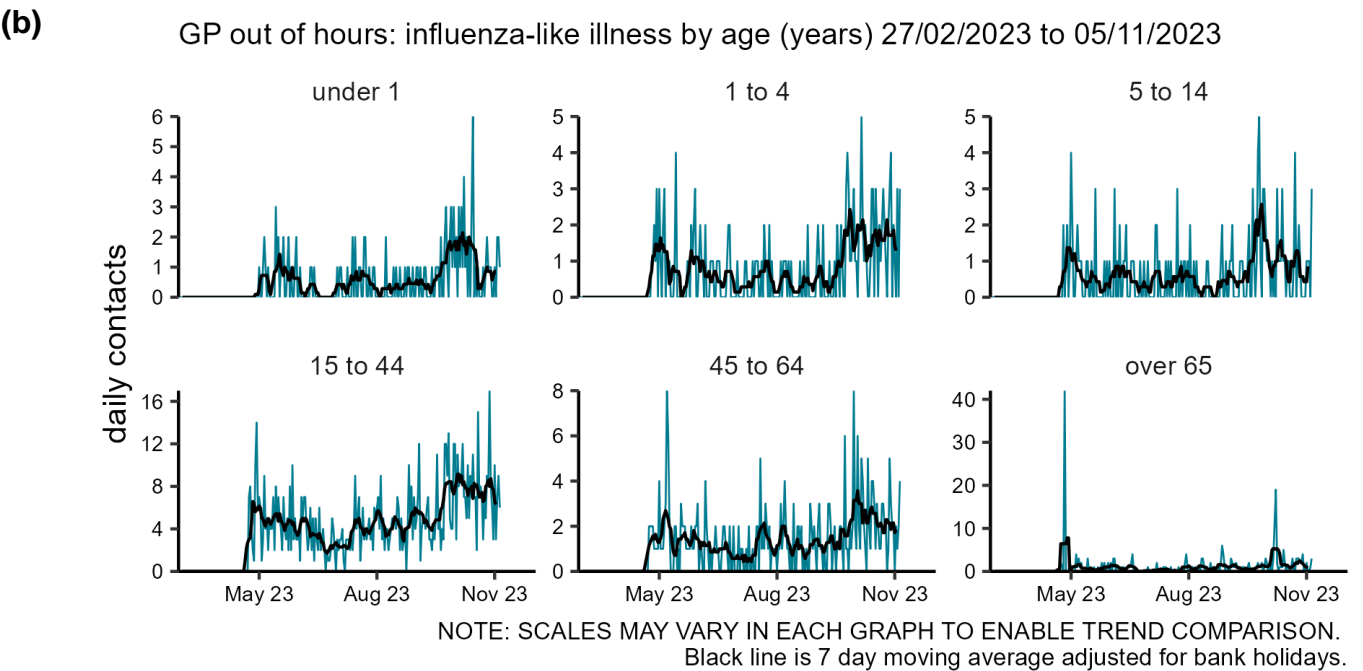
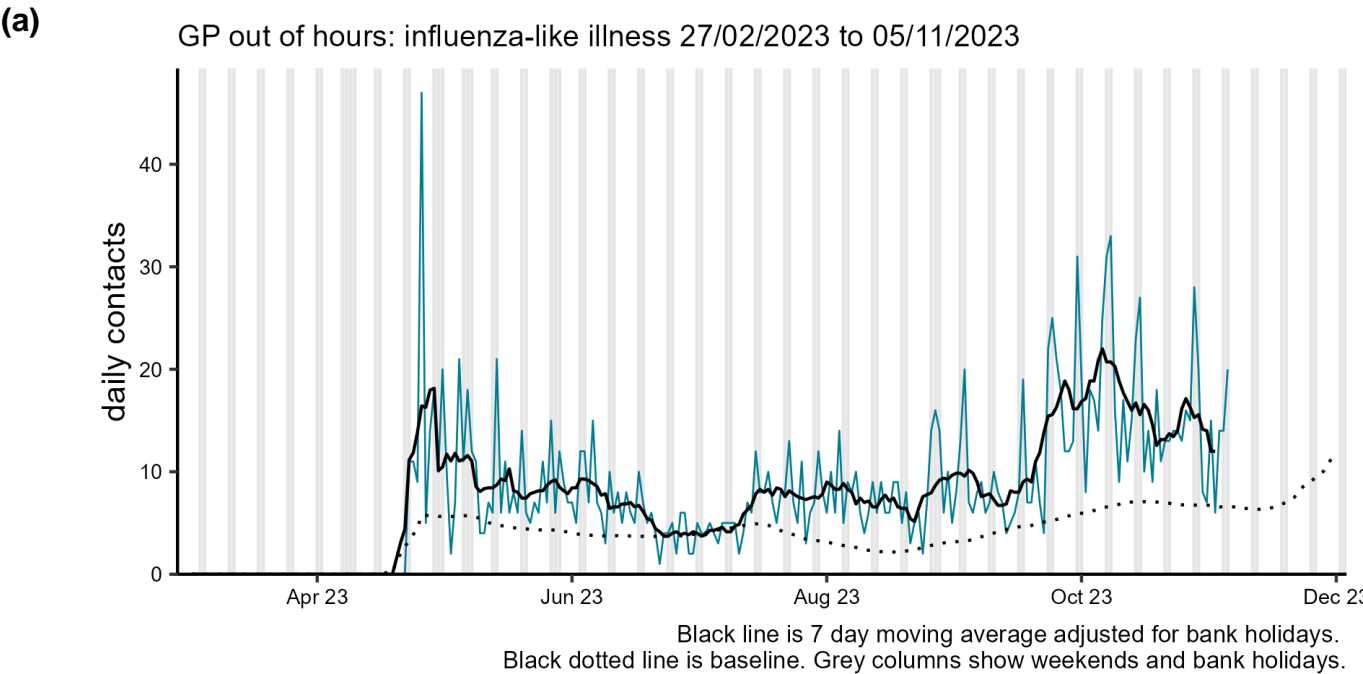
Acute respiratory infections

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 and (b) by age.



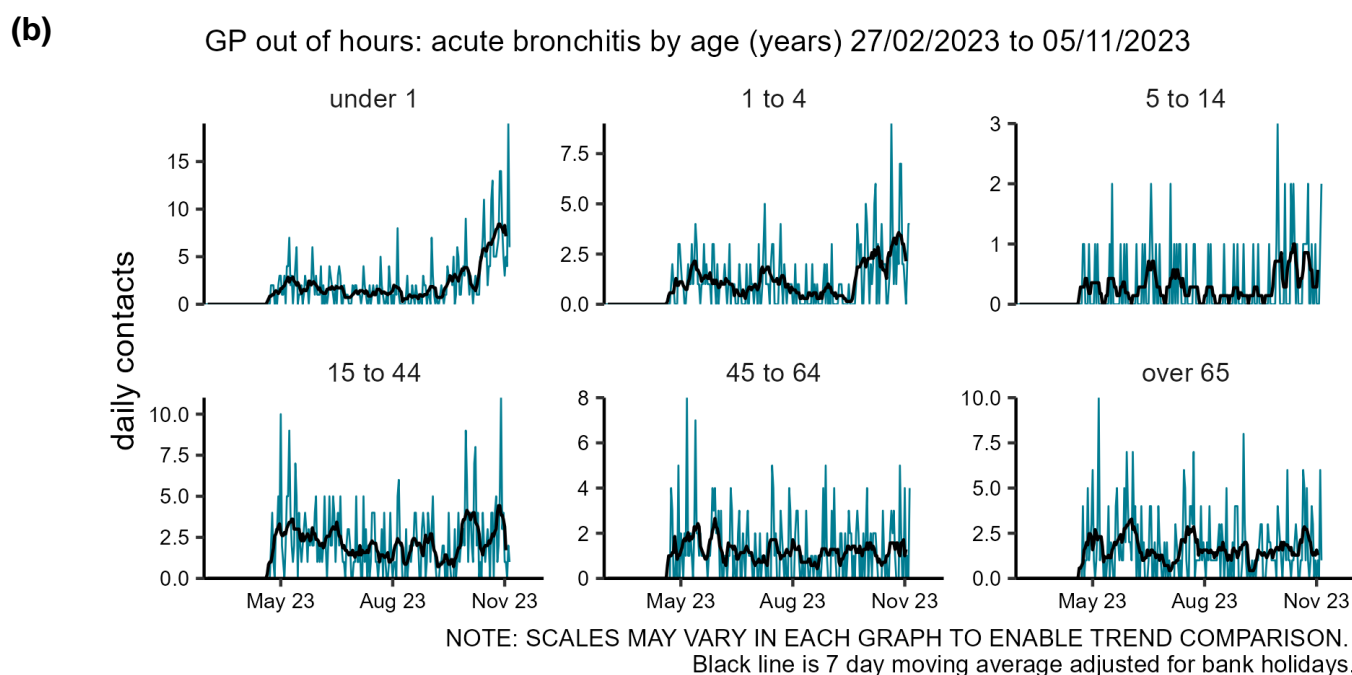
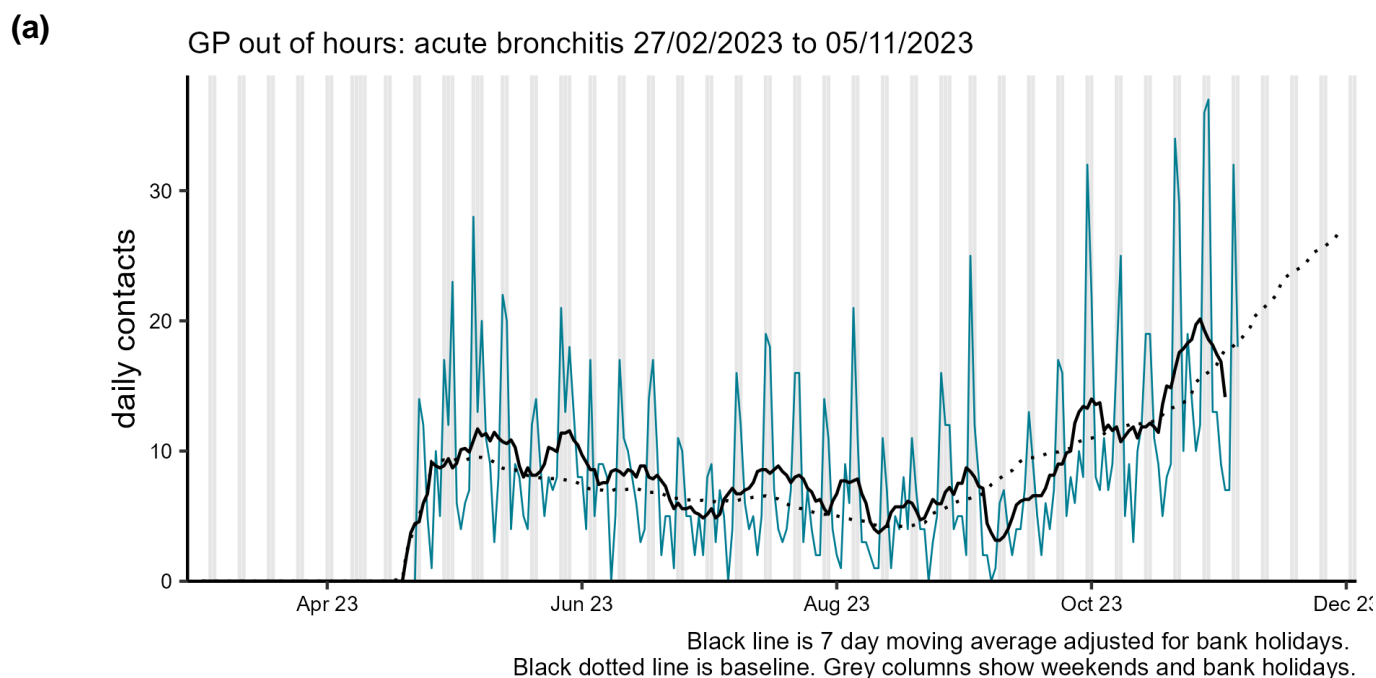
Influenza-like illness

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 and (b) by age.



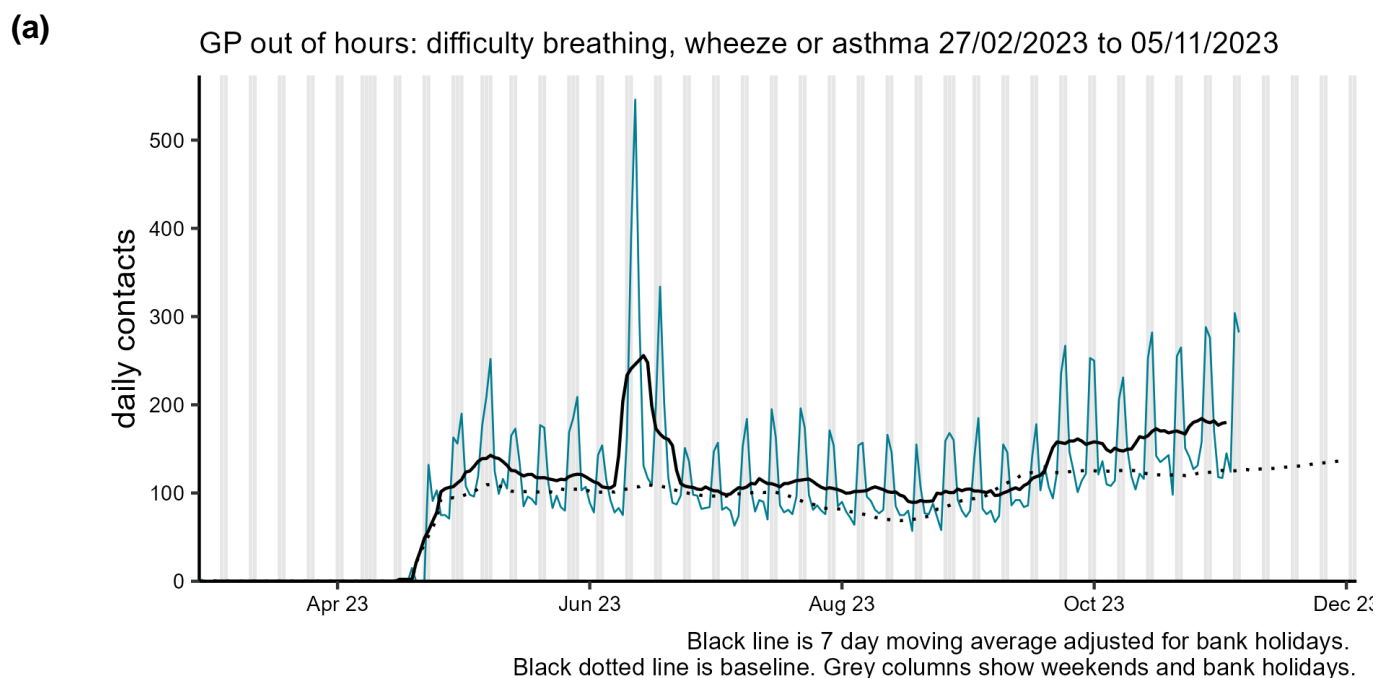
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis

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 and (b) by age.

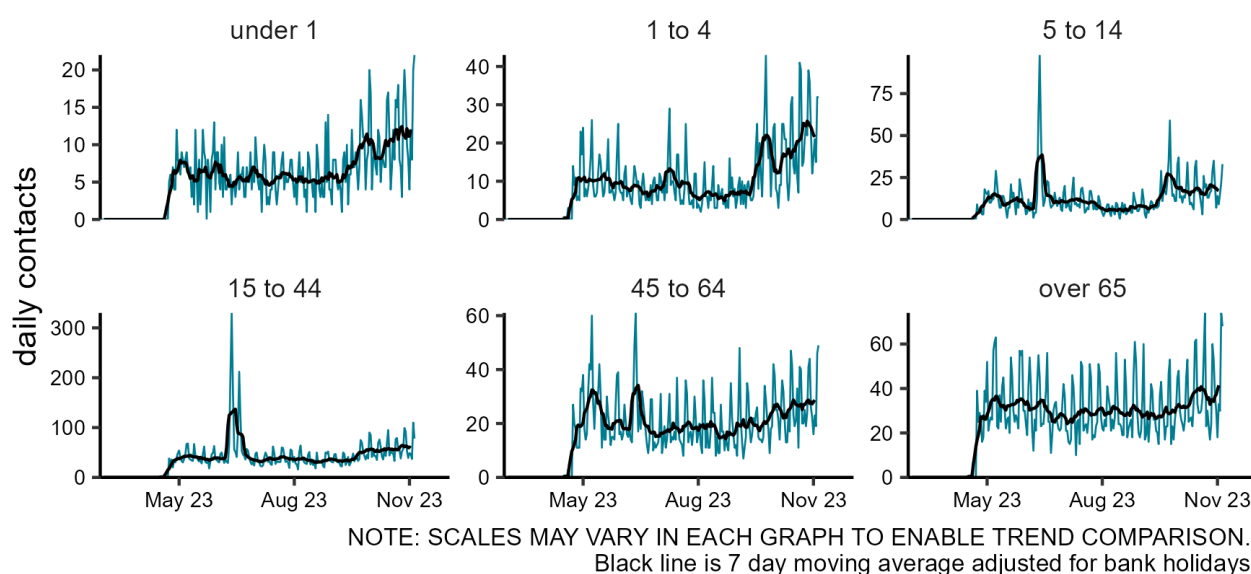


Difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma

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 and (b) by age.

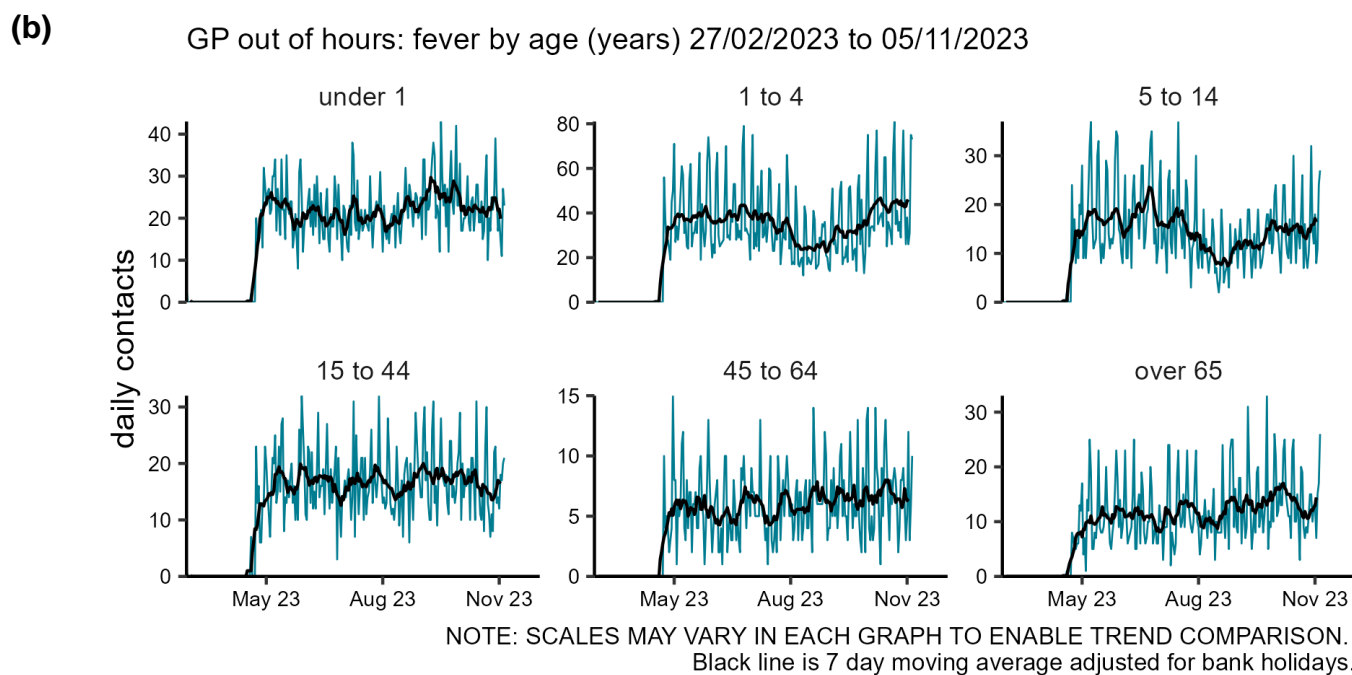
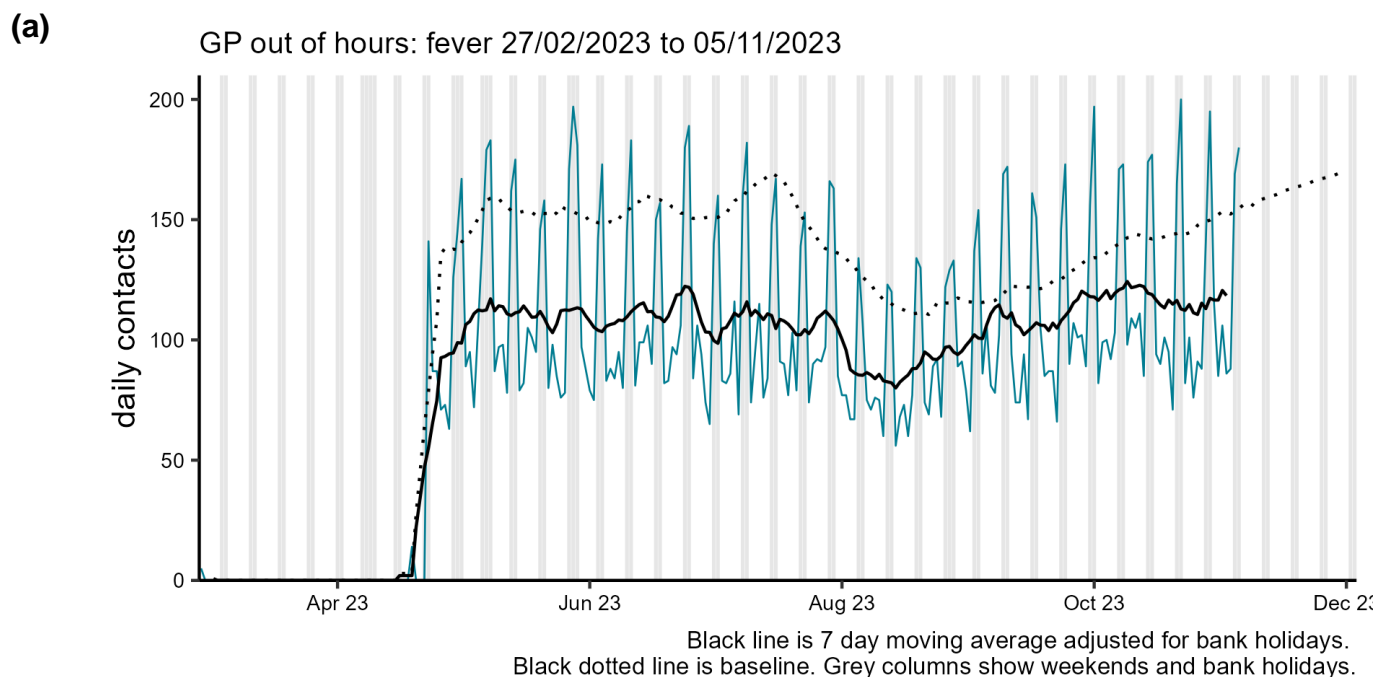


(b) GP out of hours: difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 05/11/2023



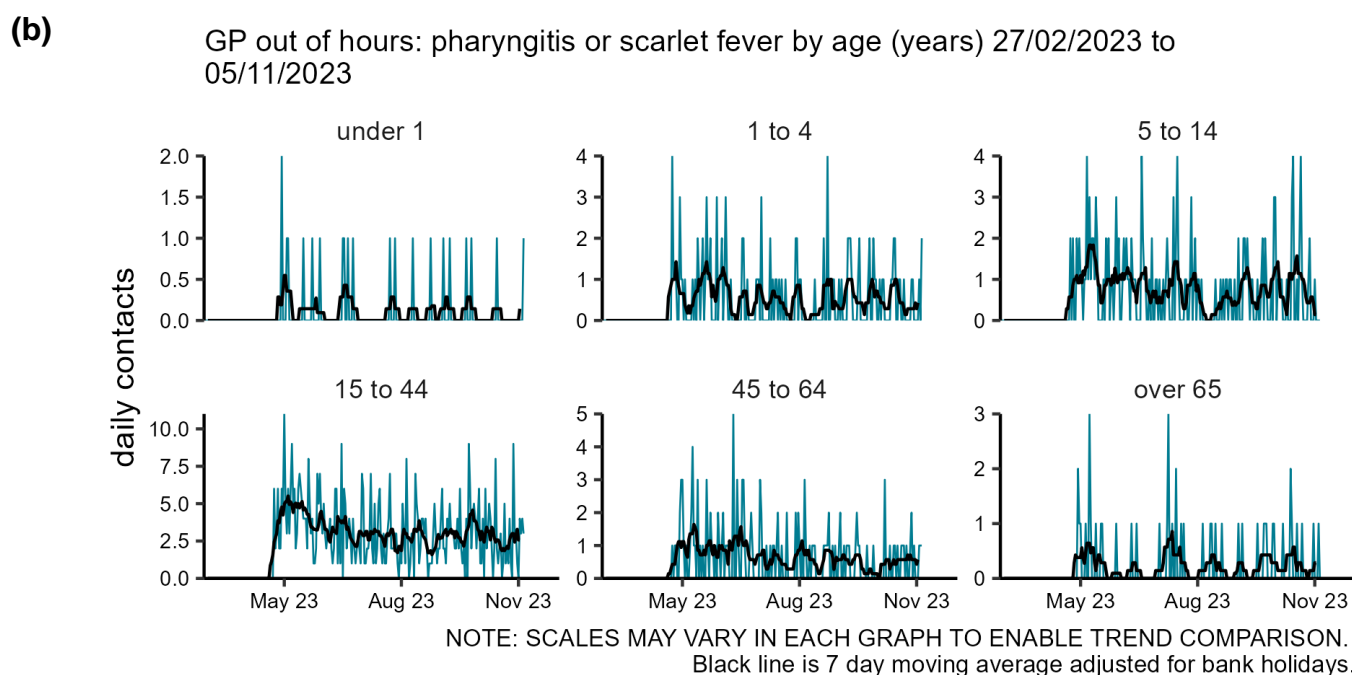
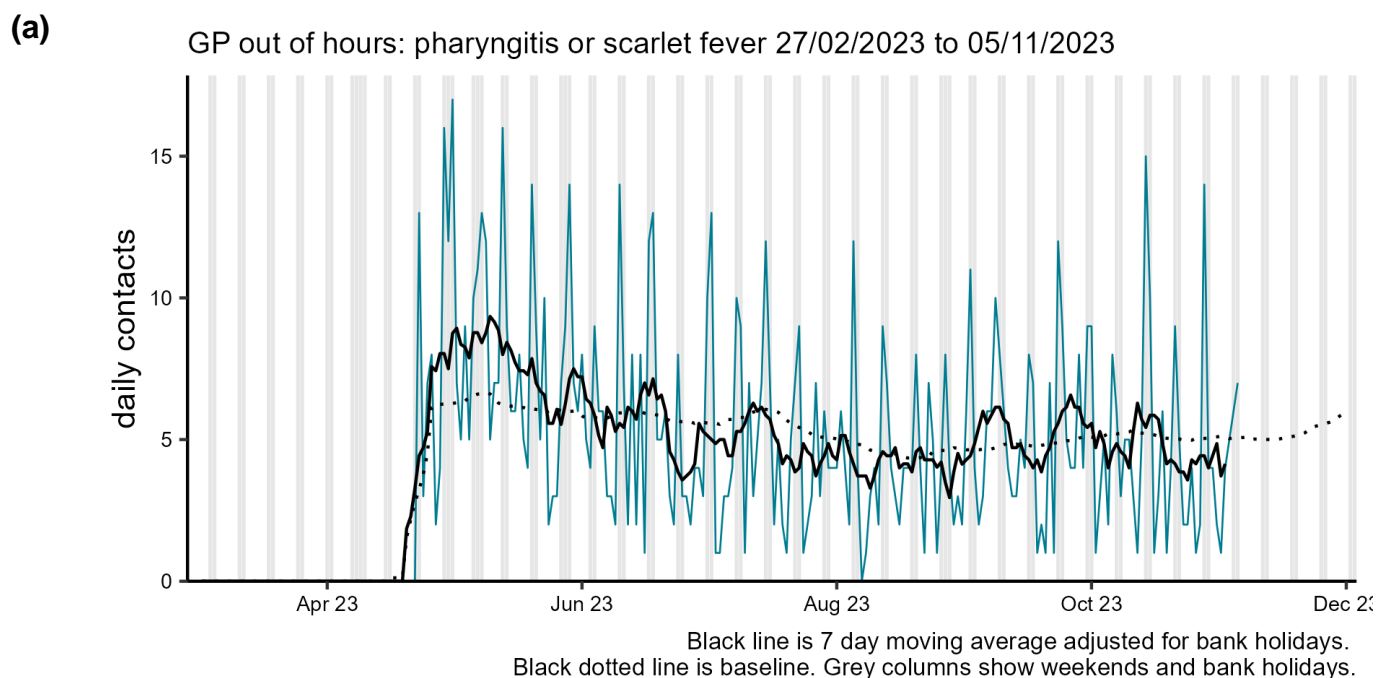
Fever

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 and (b) by age.



Acute pharyngitis

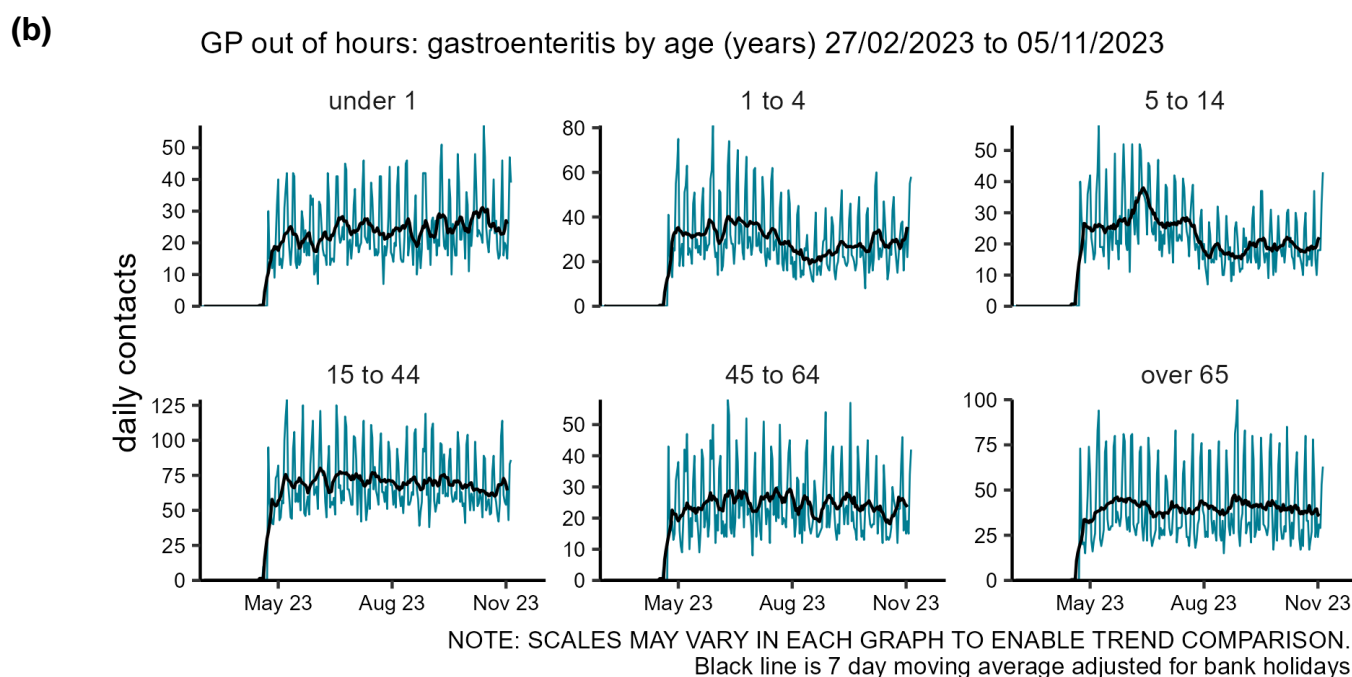
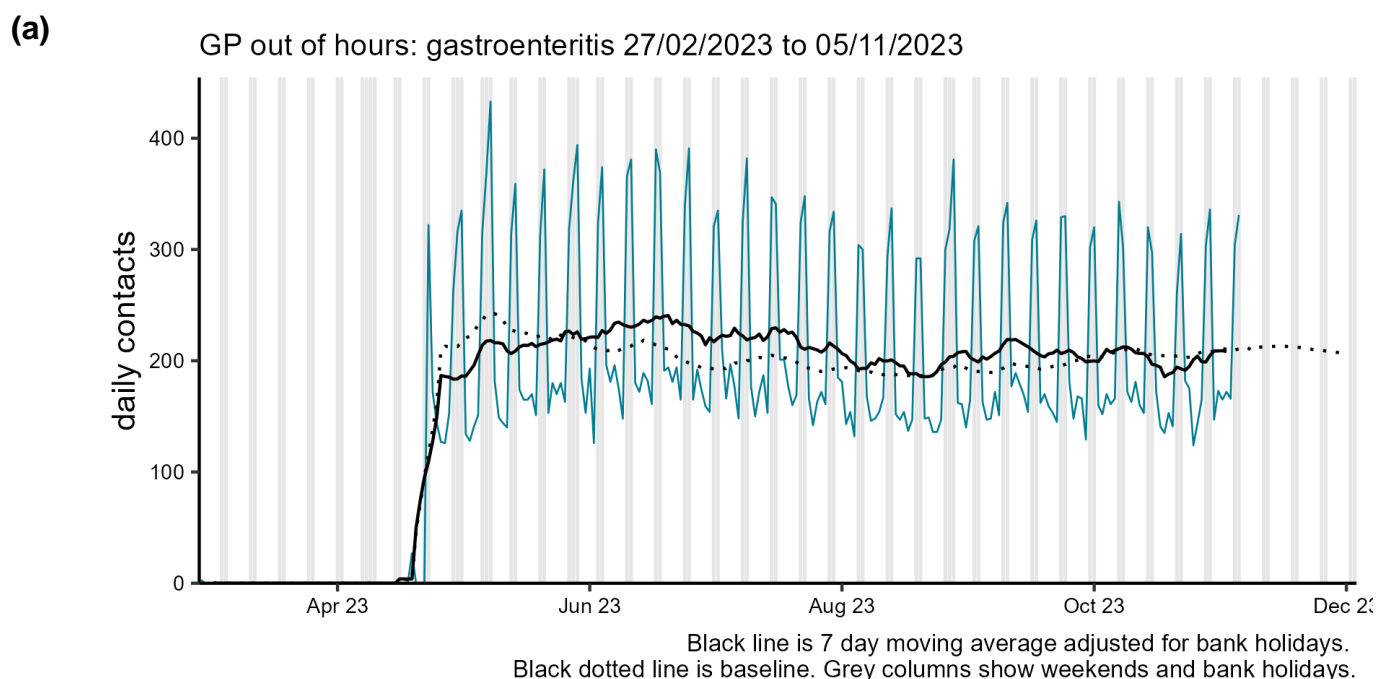
Figure 7: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays for acute pharyngitis, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.



Gastrointestinal conditions

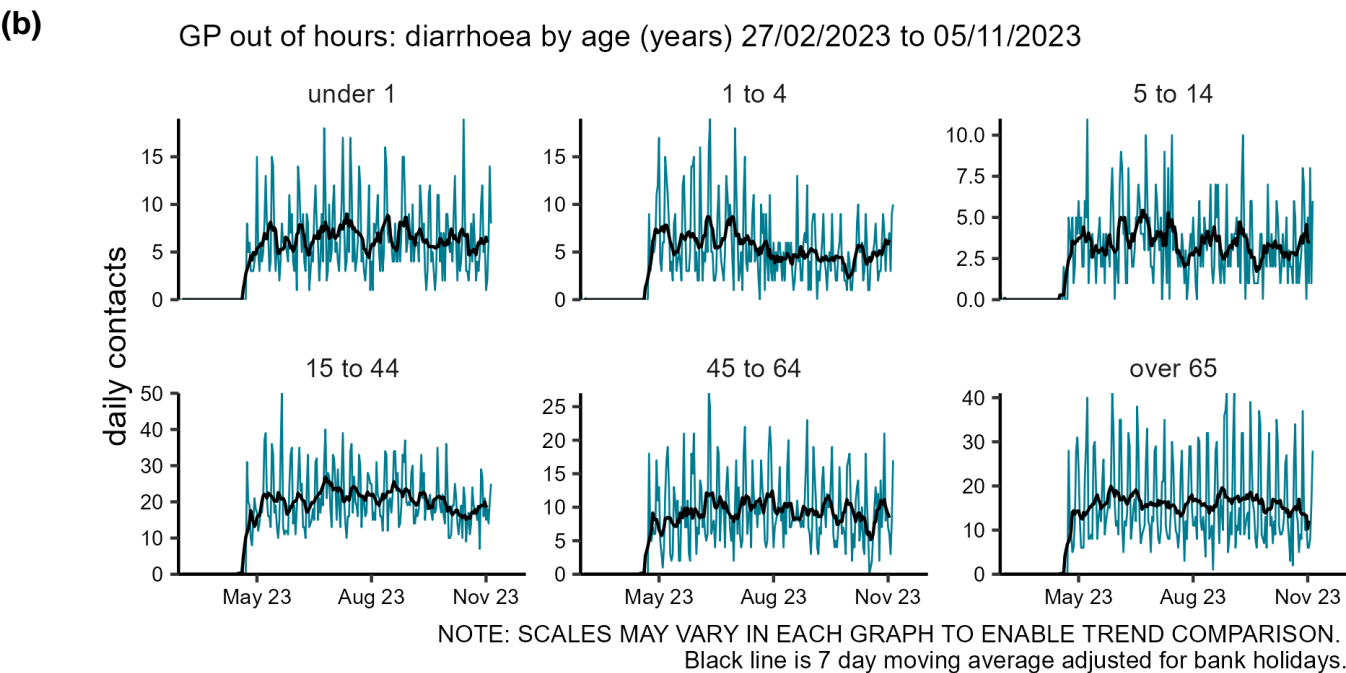
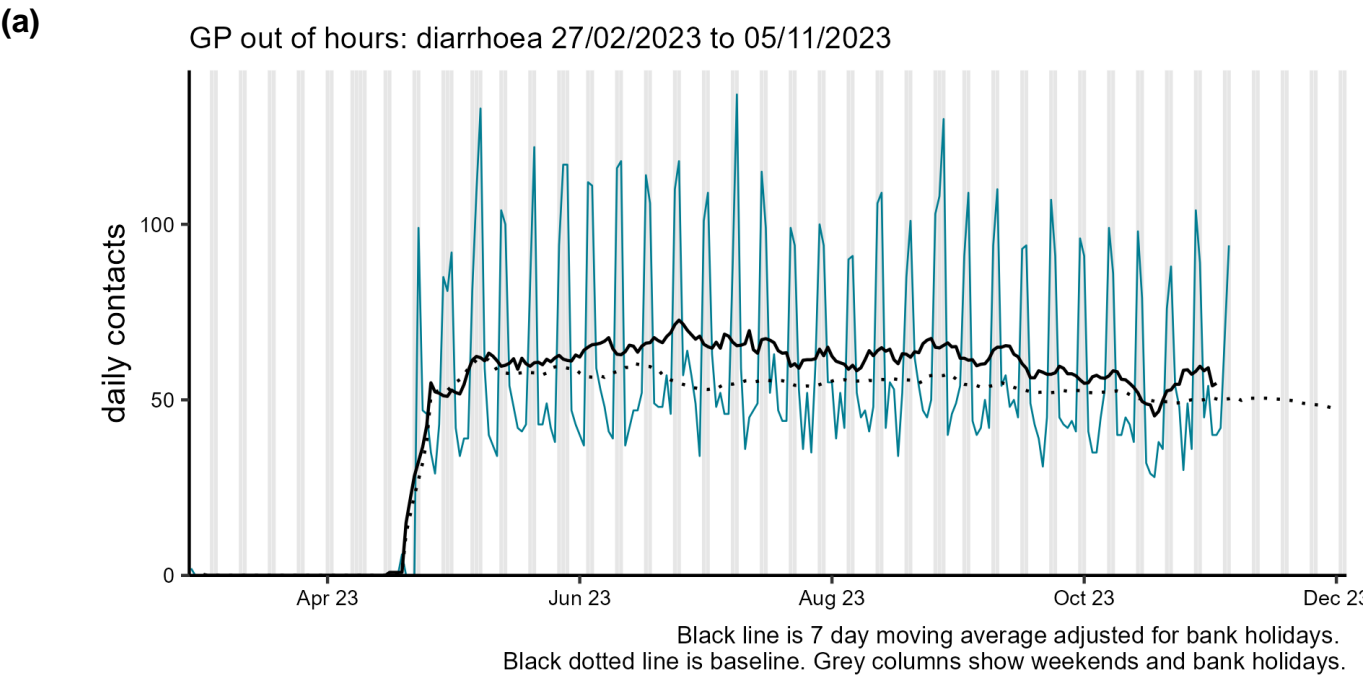
Gastroenteritis

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 and (b) by age.



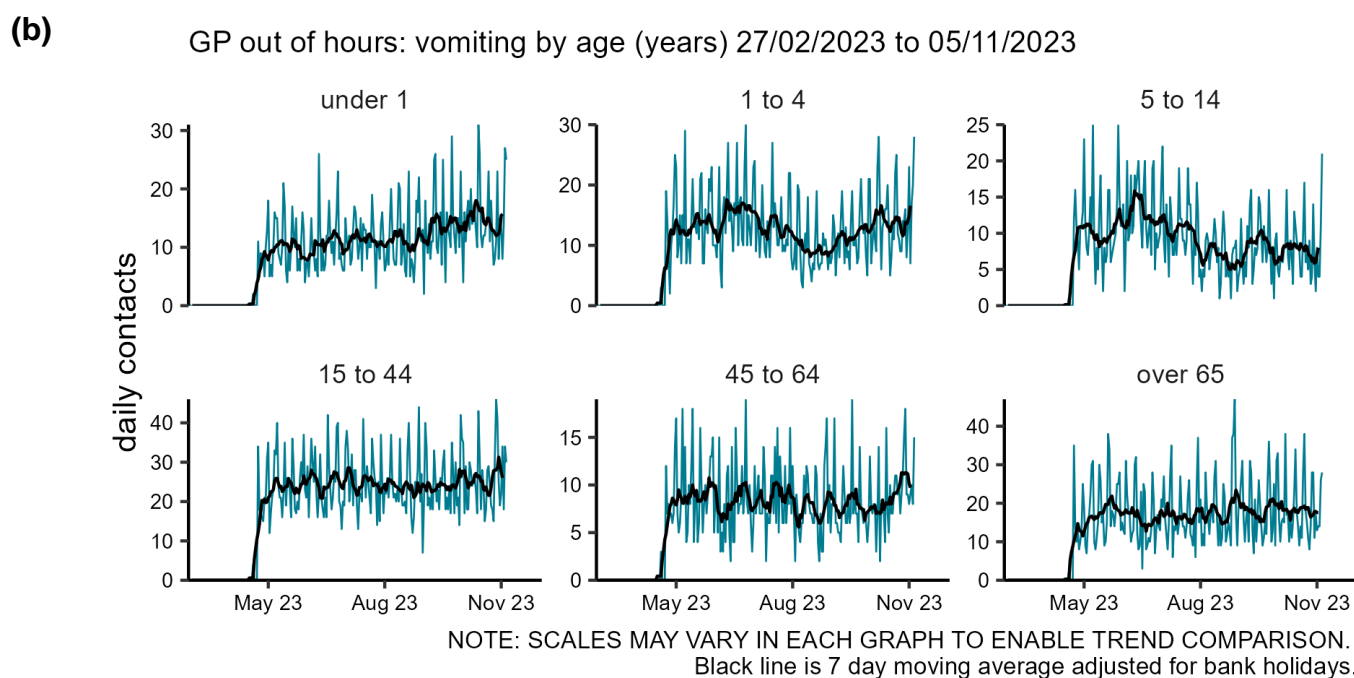
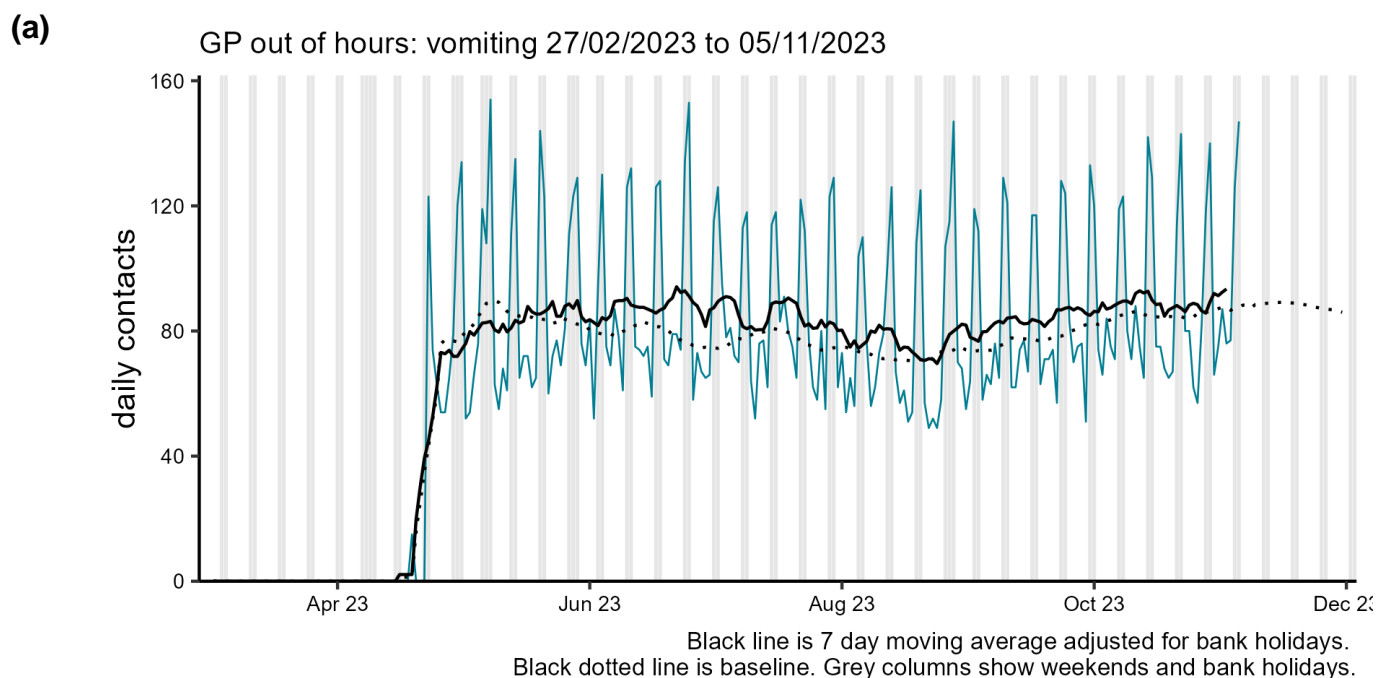
Diarrhoea

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 and (b) by age.



Vomiting

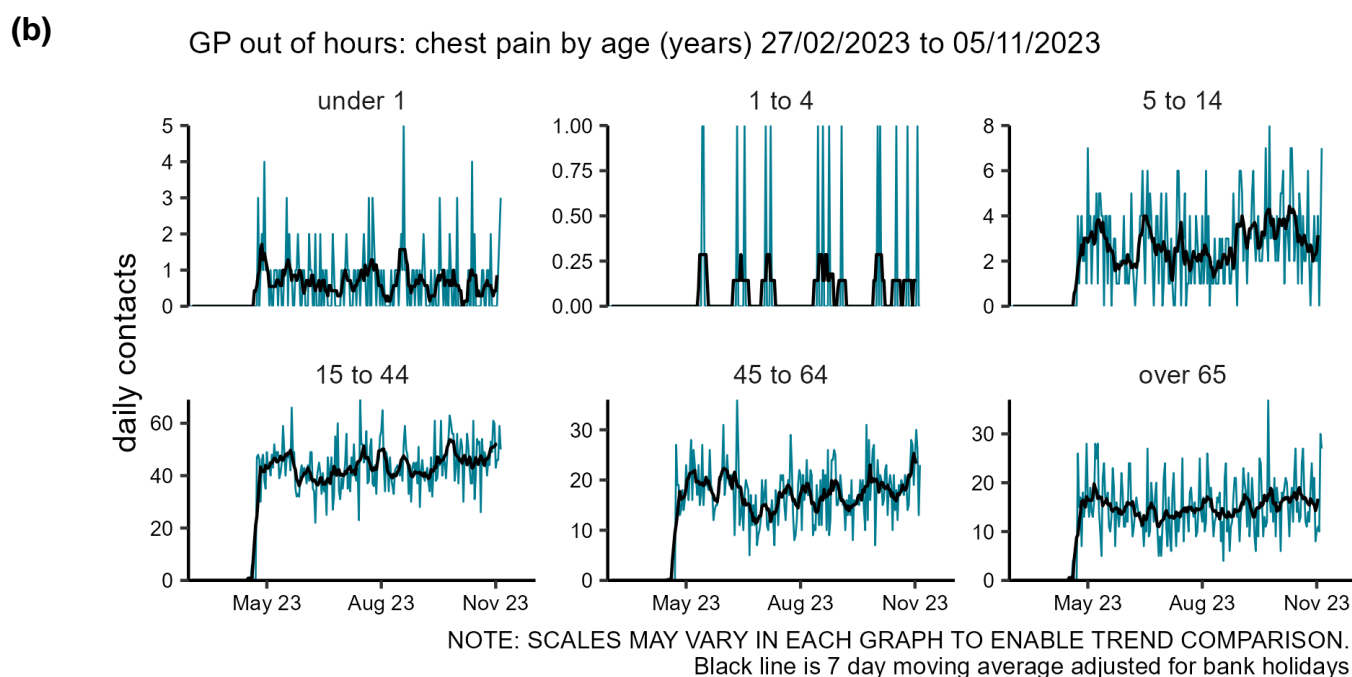
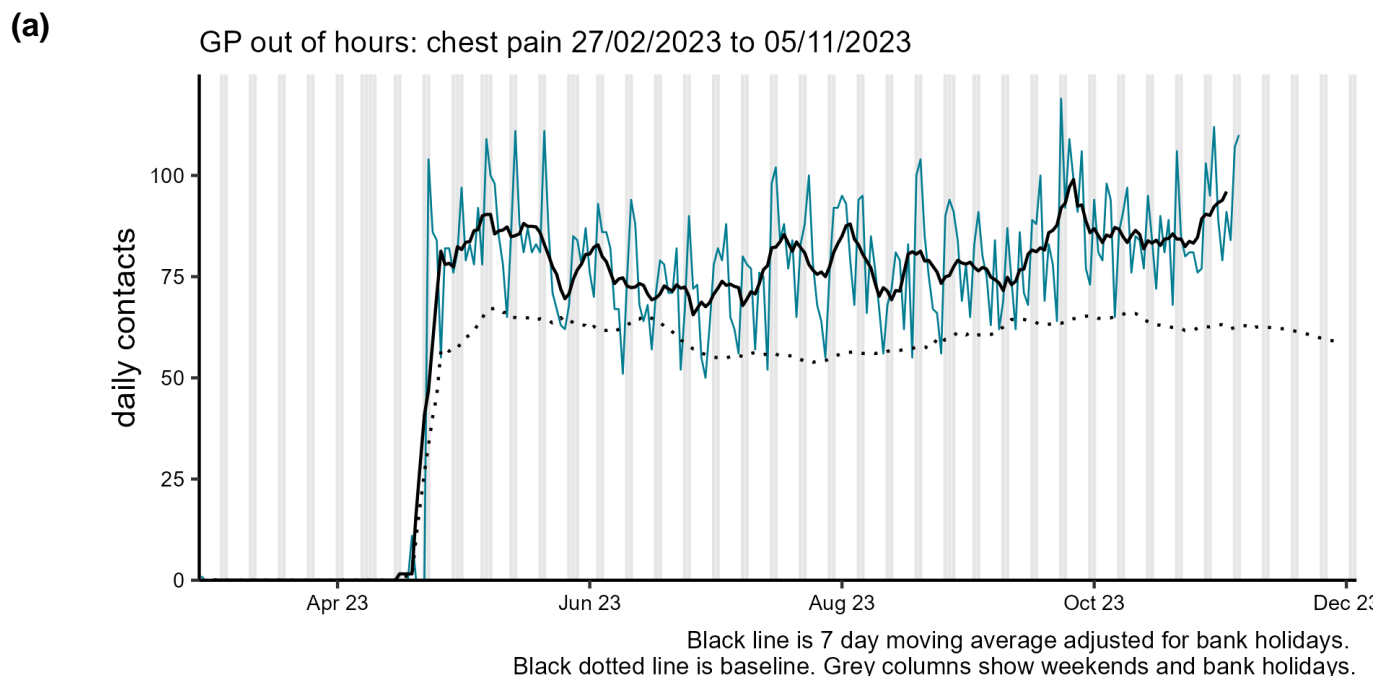
Figure 10: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for vomiting, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.



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 and (b) by age.



Seasonal environmental conditions

UKHSA and the Met Office operate a weather-health alert system that includes both heat and cold weather alert periods. 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 30 September

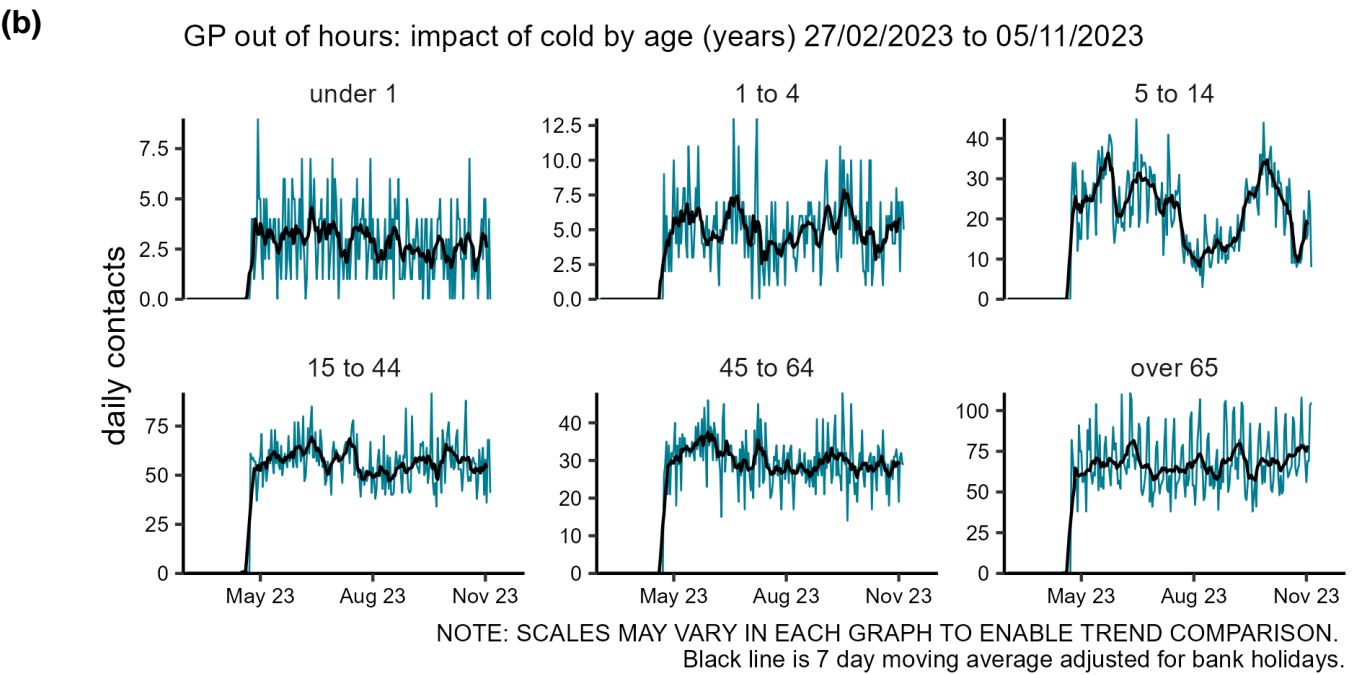
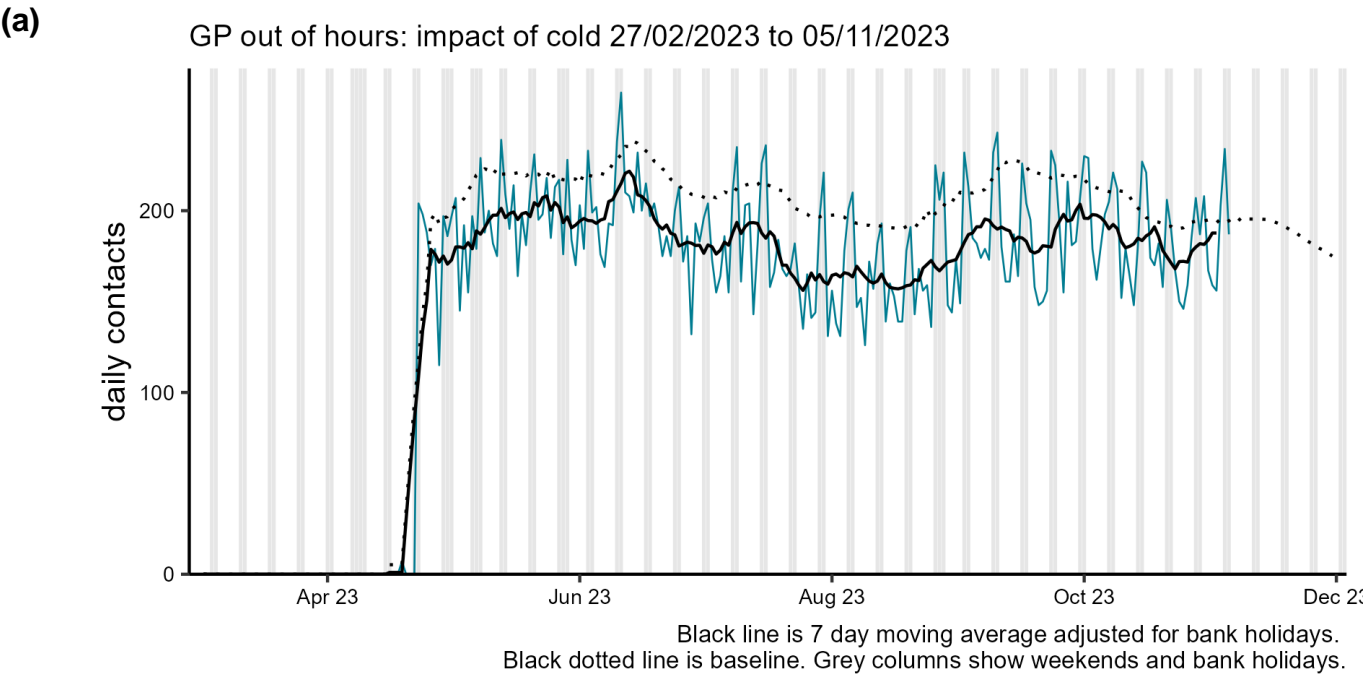
Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

No alerts issued

Cold-health alerts in place

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 and (b) by age.



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
- We did not receive daily GP out-of-hours contact data from 4 August 2022 until 22 April 2023 due to technical issues. The trends and levels presented in Table 1 of the report are based upon data received from 23 April 2023 onwards with baselines constructed from historical data as described above.
- The GP out-of-hours system coverage is currently poor across some of the UKHSA regions and therefore we are currently unable to publish data at regional level in this bulletin.

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

UKHSA is responsible for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents and other health threats. We provide intellectual, scientific and operational leadership at national and local level, as well as on the global stage, to make the nation health secure.

UKHSA is an executive agency, sponsored by the Department of Health and Social Care.

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