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

2023 Week 49

# Key messages

**Data reported to: 10 December 2023**

During week 49, GP out-of-hours acute respiratory infection contacts increased in line with seasonally expected trends. Contacts decreased in children aged under 5 years while increasing in older age groups.

## 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**) | Increasing | Above baseline |
| Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (**Figure 4**) | Decreasing | Below 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**) | Decreasing | Above baseline |
| Impact of cold (**Figure 12**) | Decreasing | Similar to baseline |

[1] Current trend reports on the trend seen over previous weeks

# Contents

# 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.**

**(a)**



GP out of hours: total contacts 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**



GP out of hours: total contacts by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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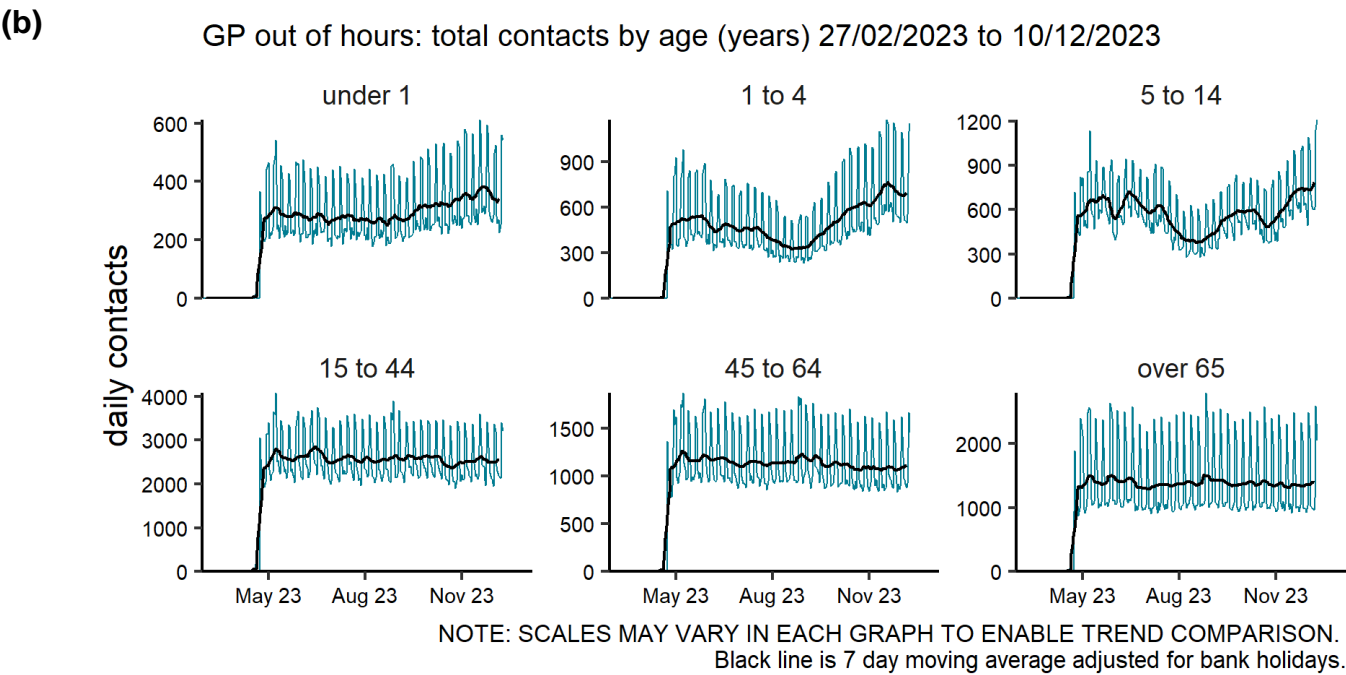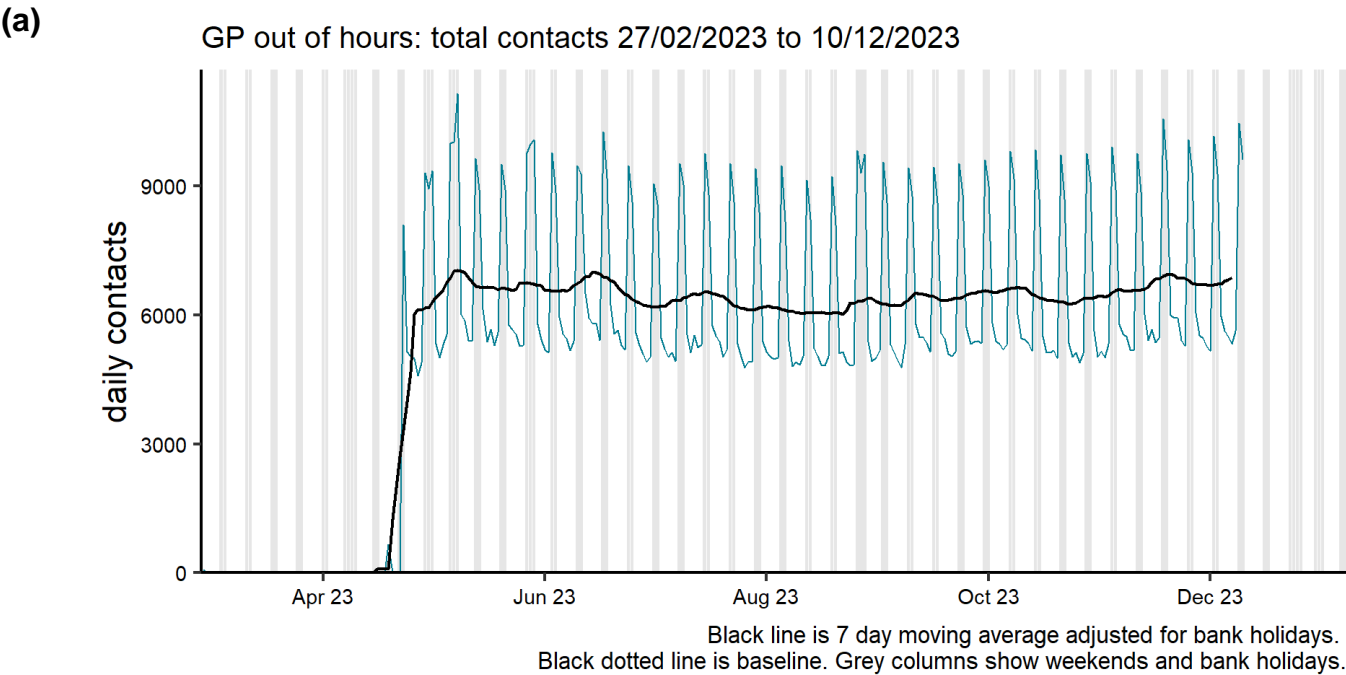Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

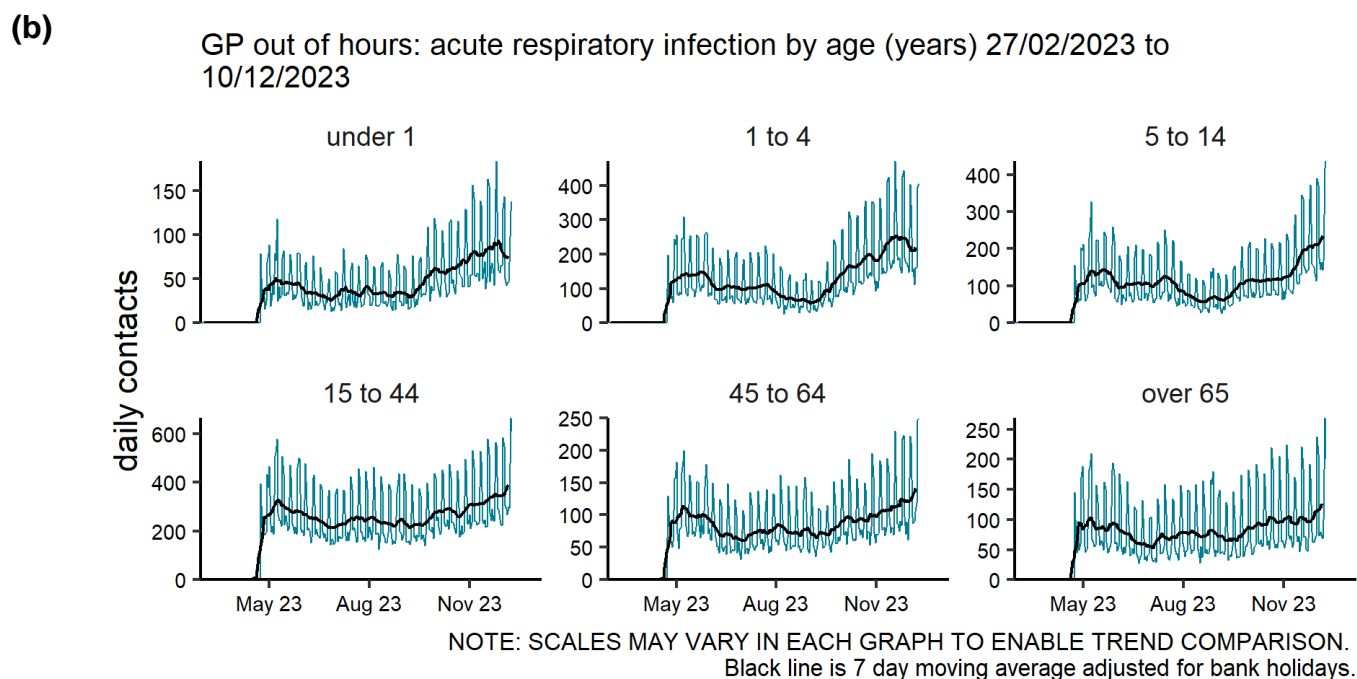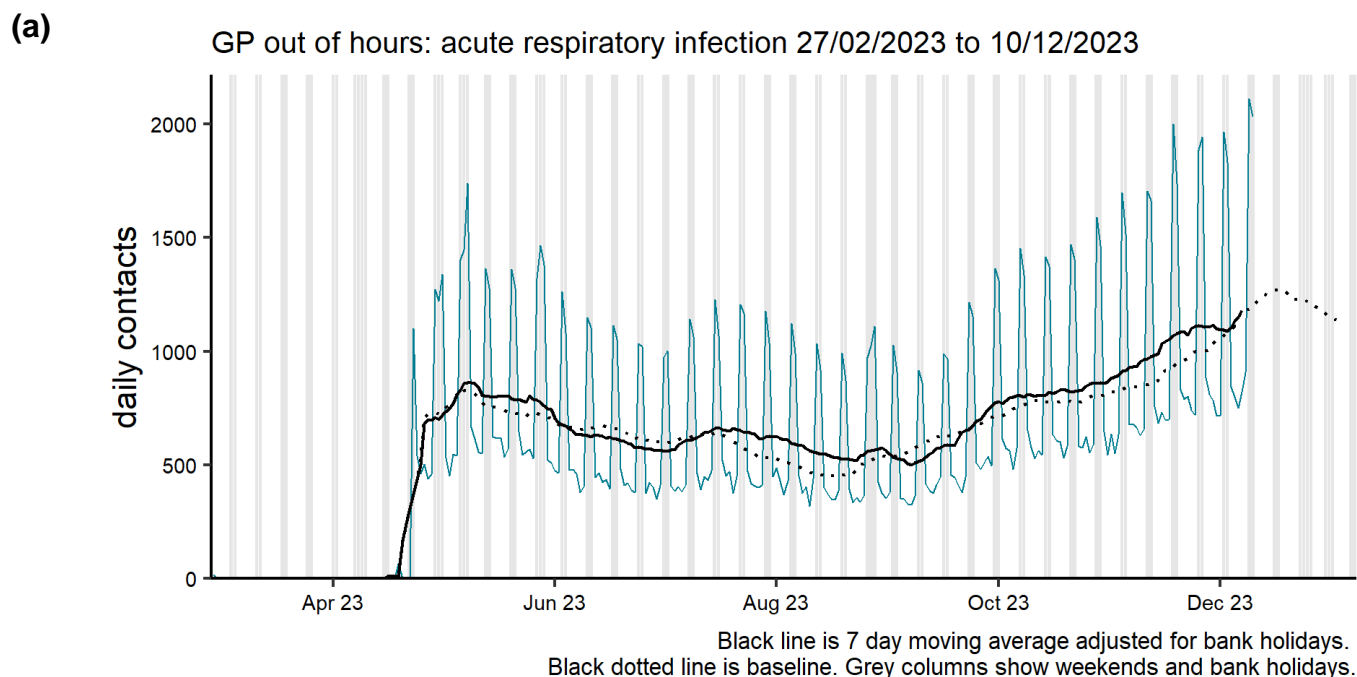**Table 2: The number of GP out-of-hours contacts in this sentinel syndromic surveillance system in England recorded each day in the most recent week.**

| Date | Number of contacts |
|---|---|
| 4 December 2023 | 27,595 |
| 5 December 2023 | 25,031 |
| 6 December 2023 | 23,574 |
| 7 December 2023 | 23,512 |
| 8 December 2023 | 24,275 |
| 9 December 2023 | 37,361 |
| 10 December 2023 | 32,898 |

# 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.**

**(a)**

GP out of hours: acute respiratory infection 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**

GP out of hours: acute respiratory infection by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

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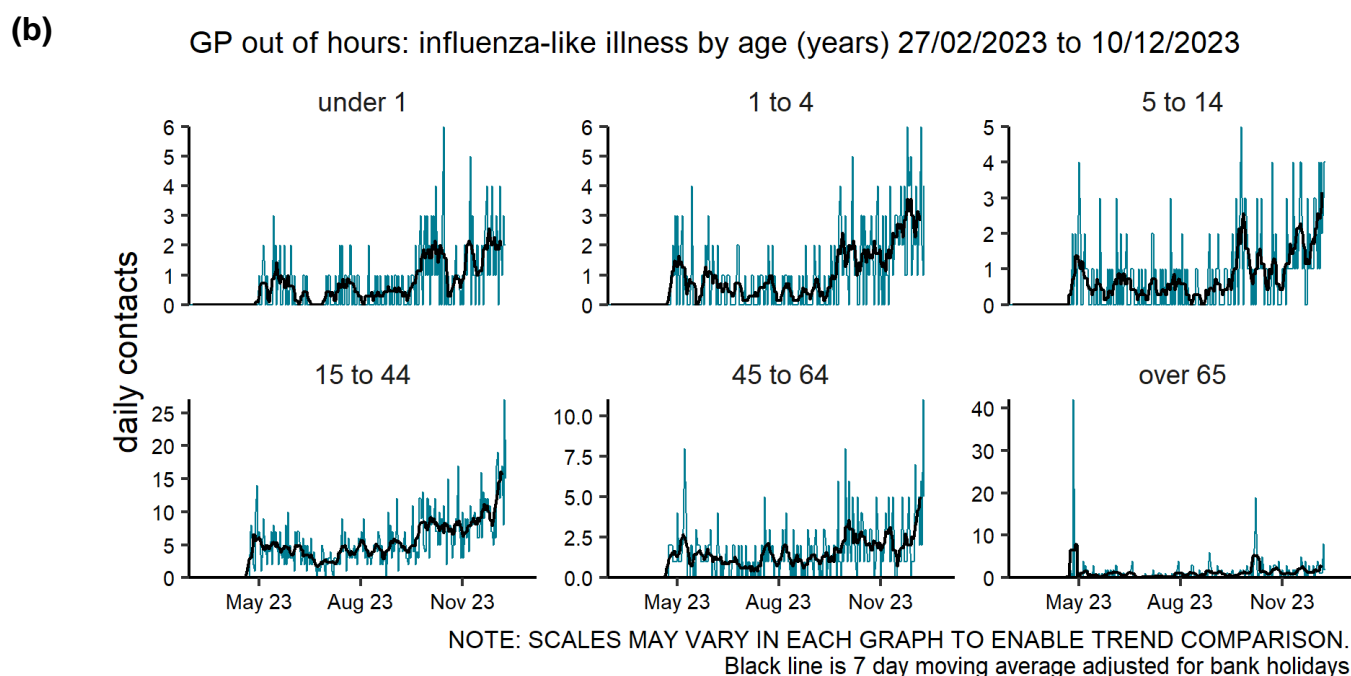
**Figure 3: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for influenza-like illness, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.**

(a)

GP out of hours: influenza-like illness 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

(b)

GP out of hours: influenza-like illness by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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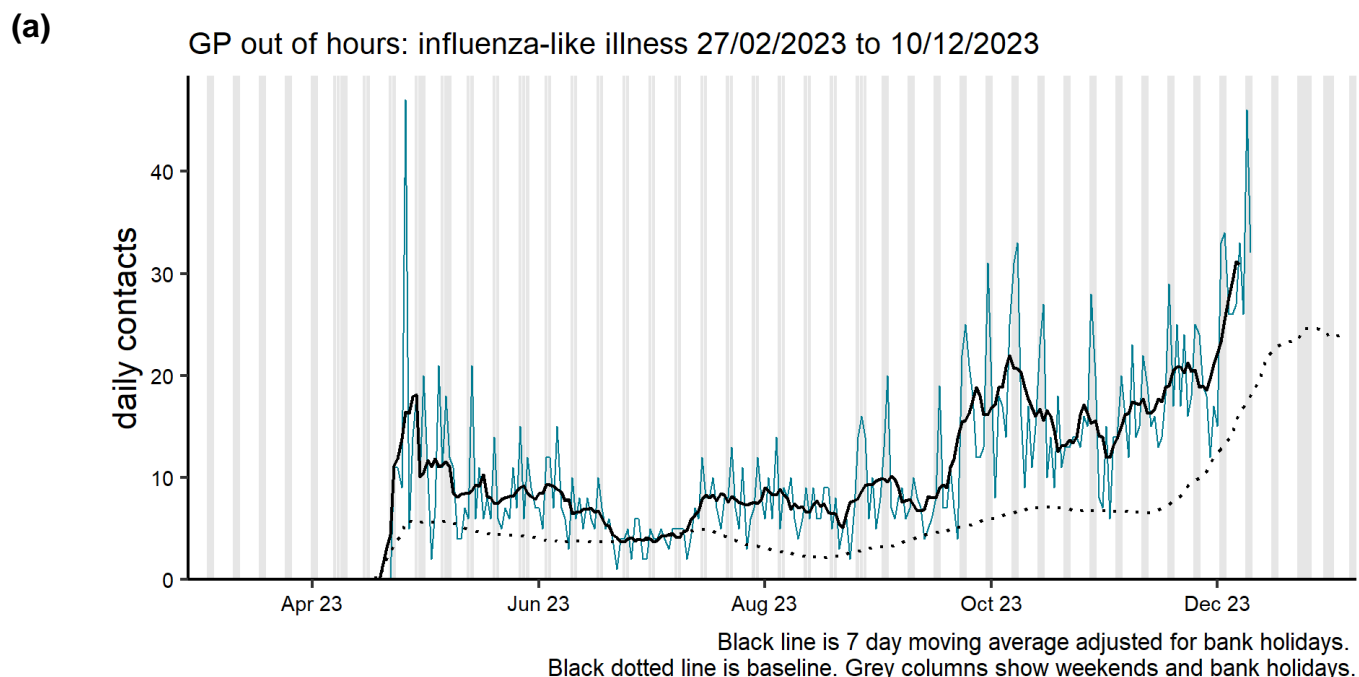Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

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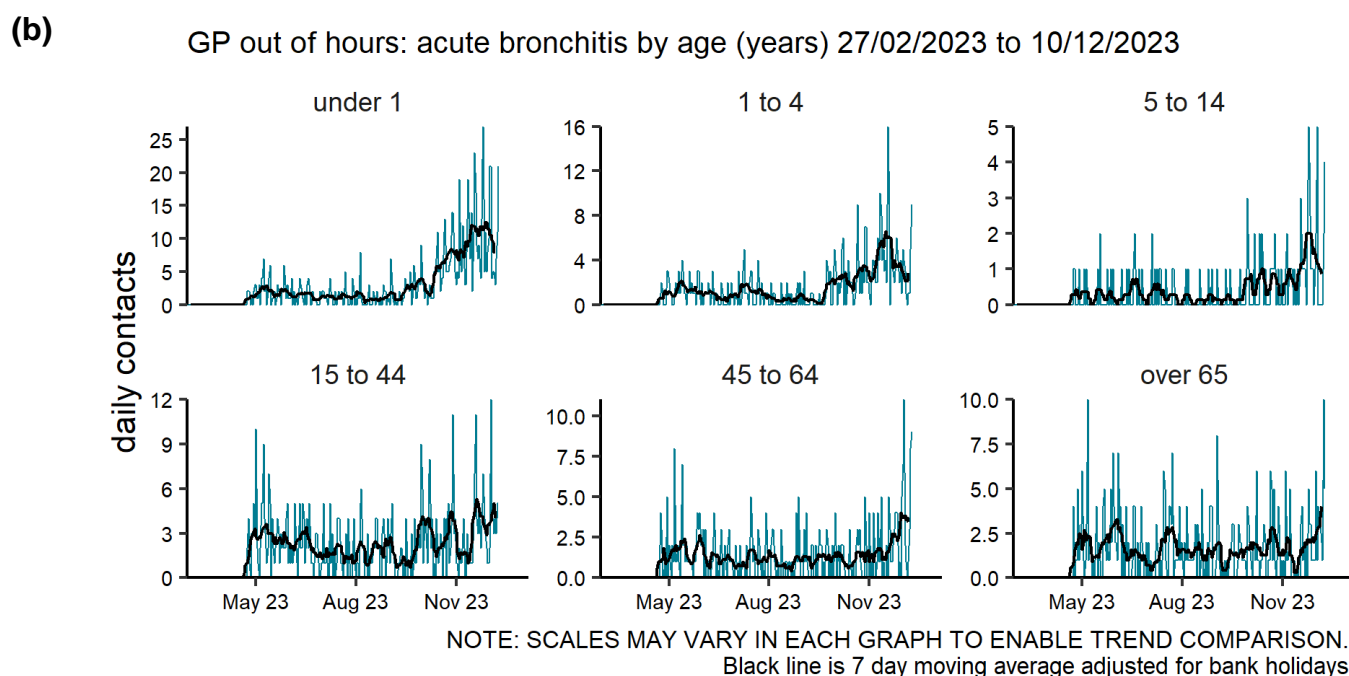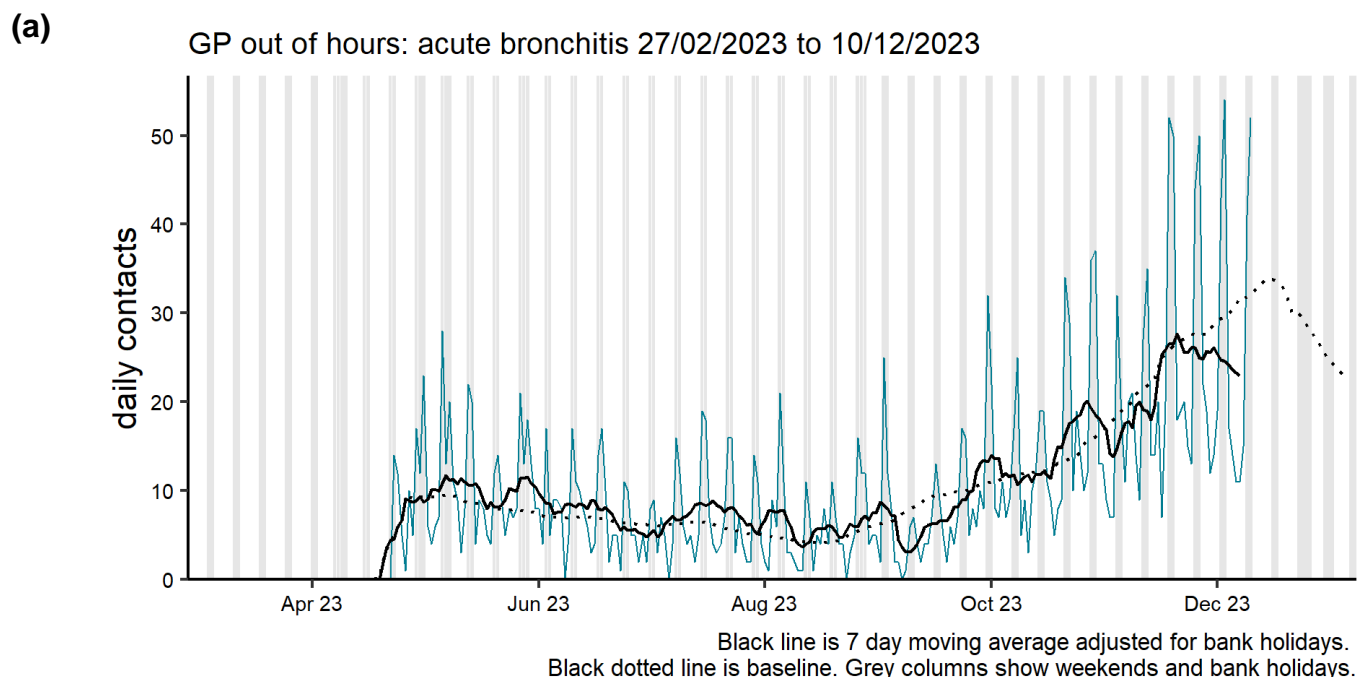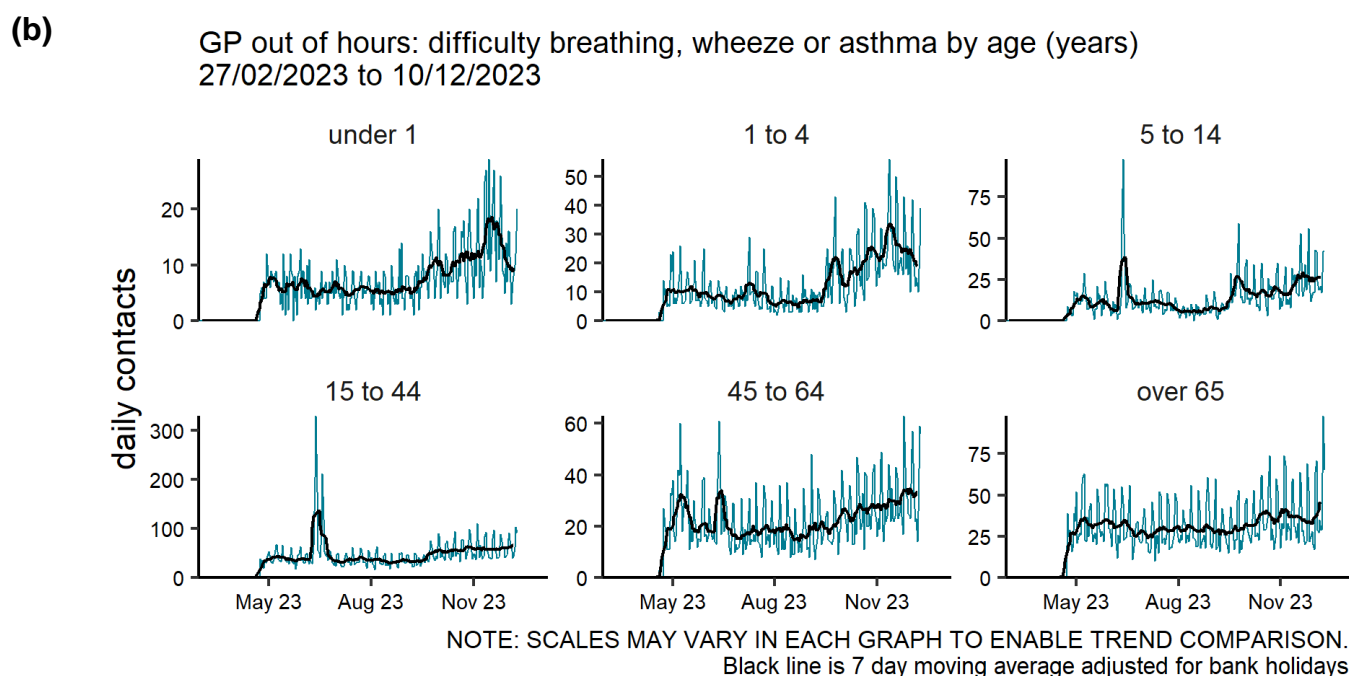
**Figure 4: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.**

**(a)**

GP out of hours: acute bronchitis 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**

GP out of hours: acute bronchitis by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

# 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.**

(a)

GP out of hours: difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

(b)

GP out of hours: difficulty breathing, wheeze or asthma by age (years)
27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

# 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.**
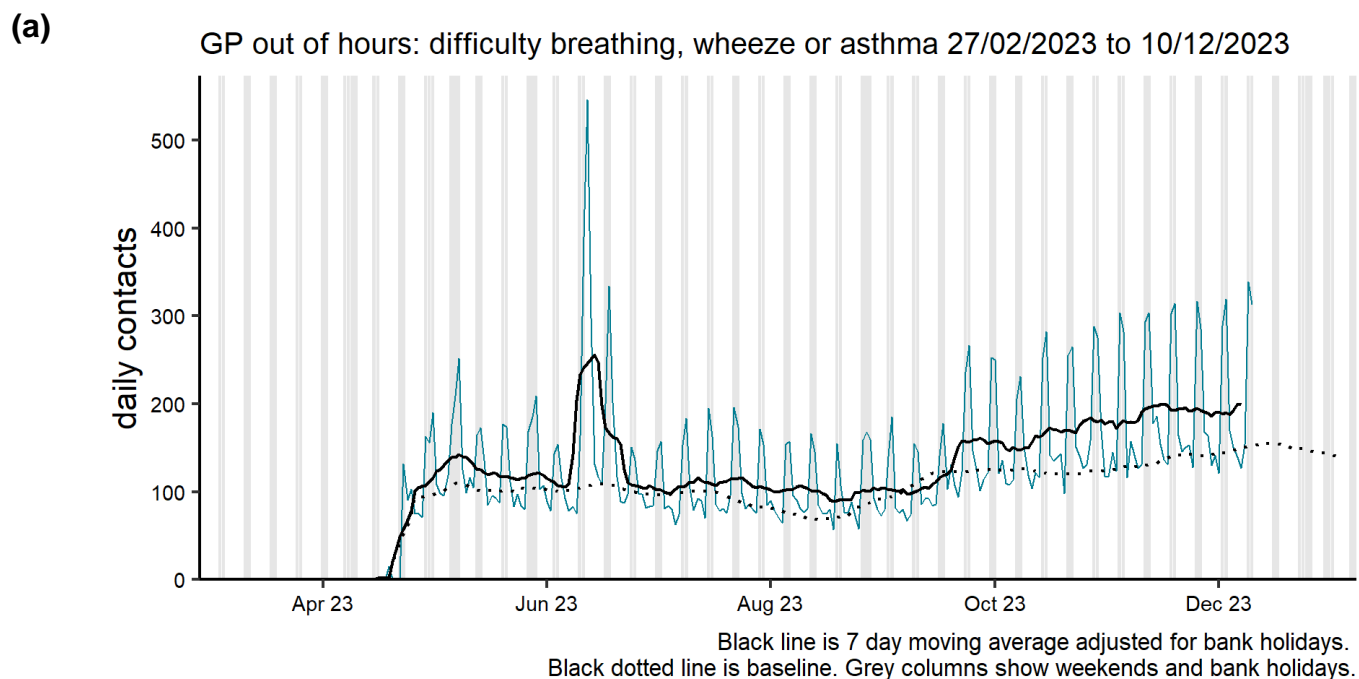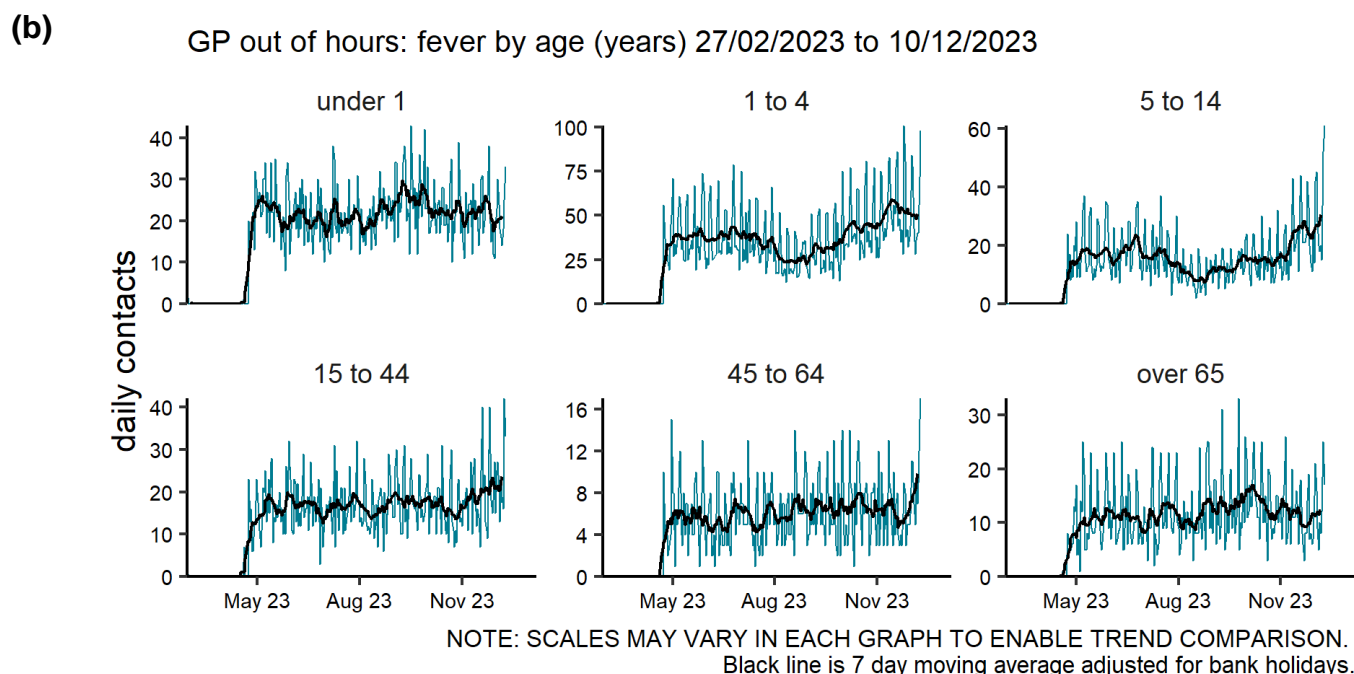
**(a)**



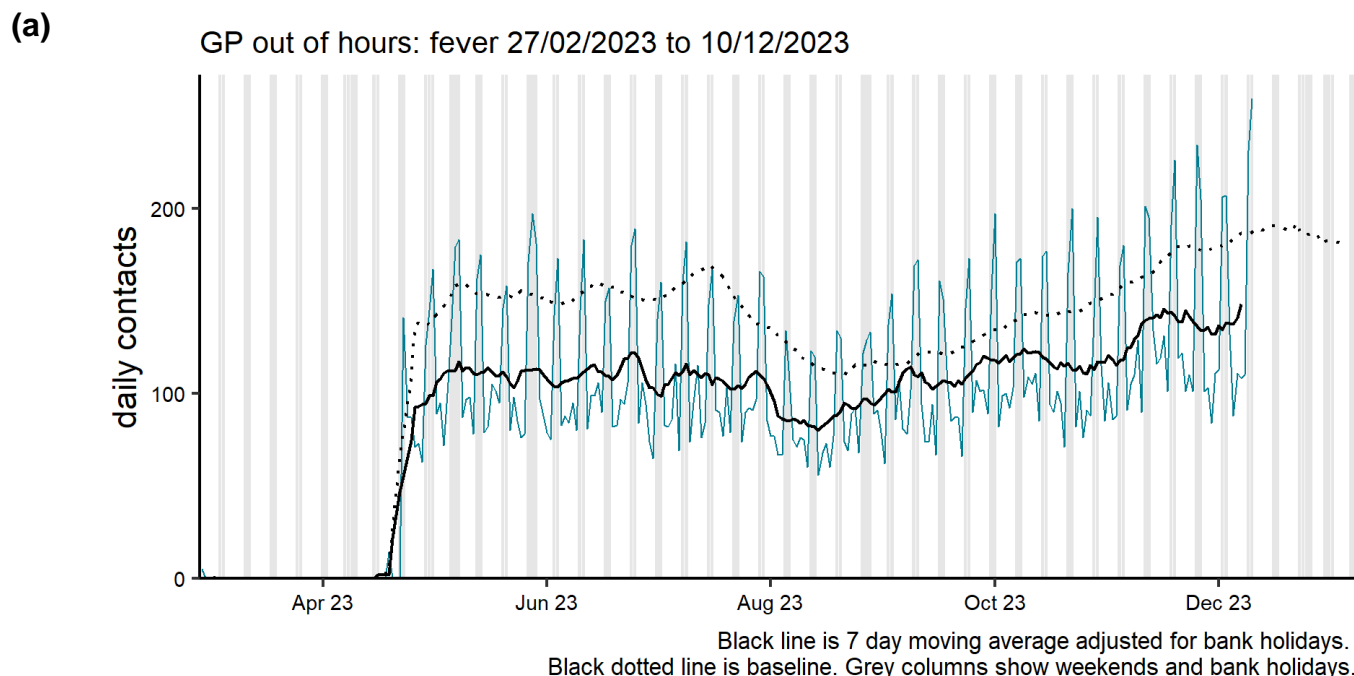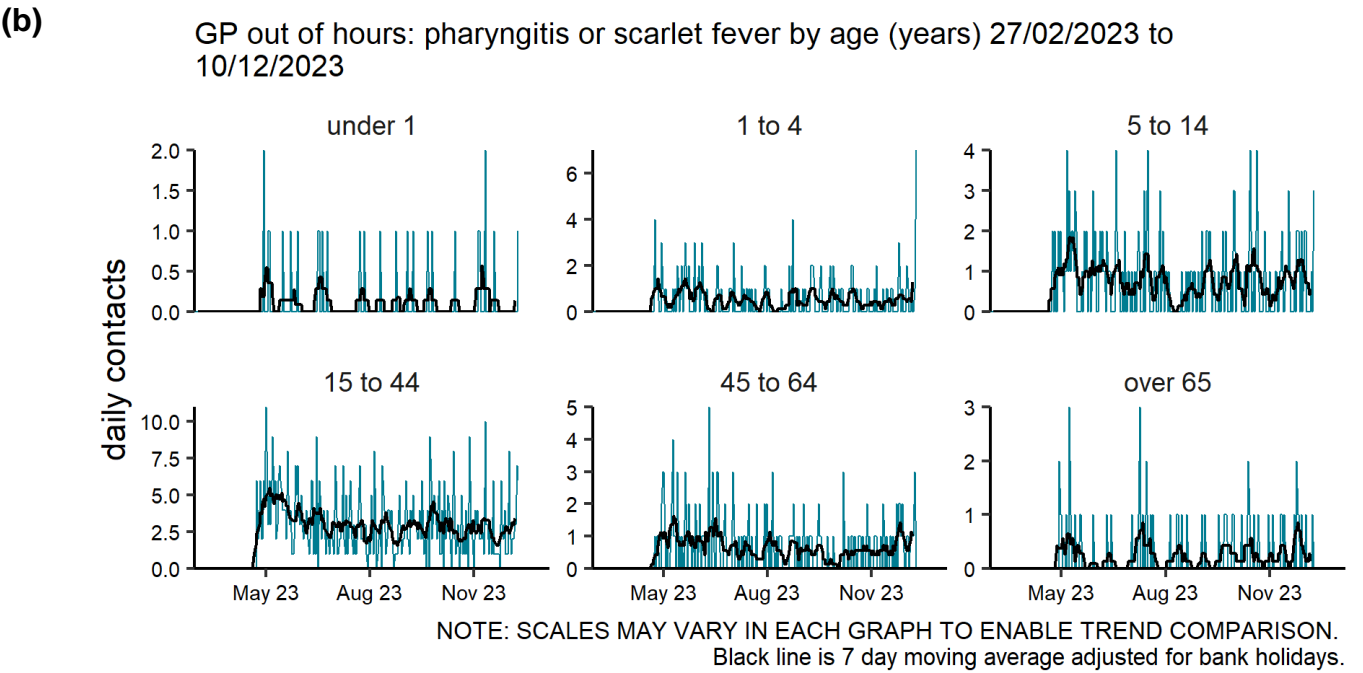GP out of hours: fever 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**



GP out of hours: fever by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

# Acute pharyngitis

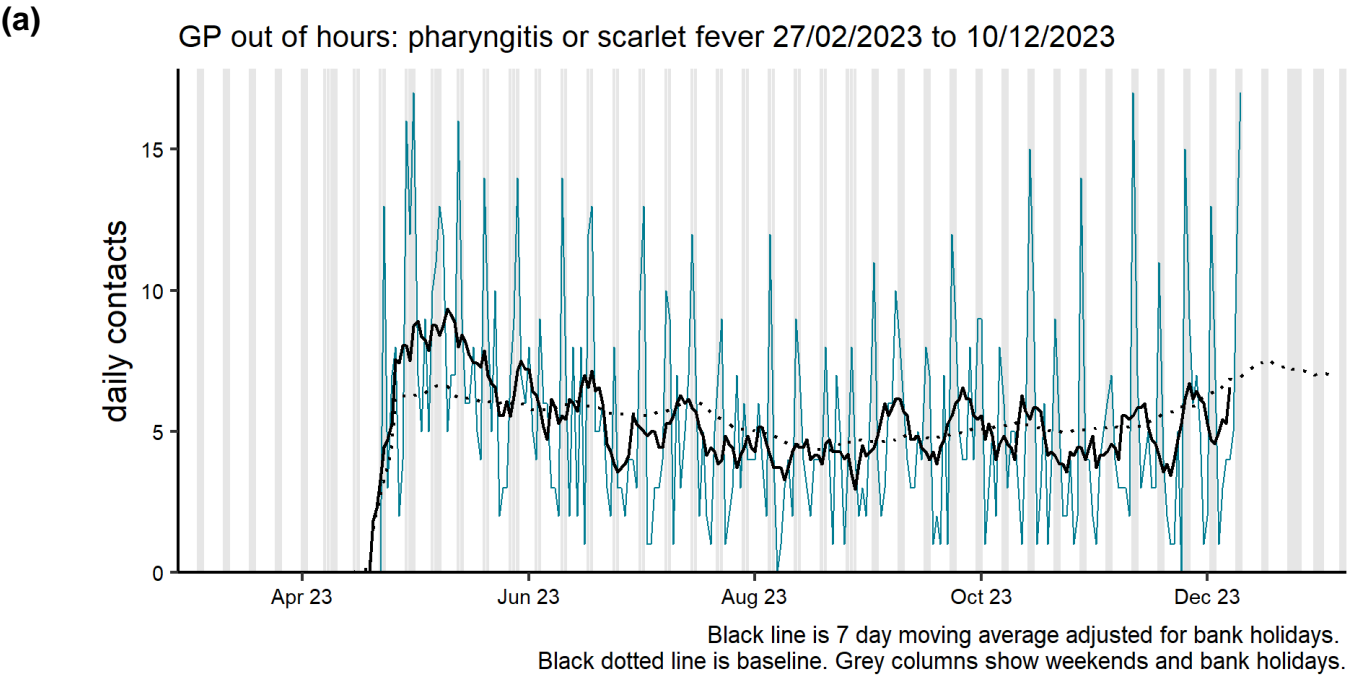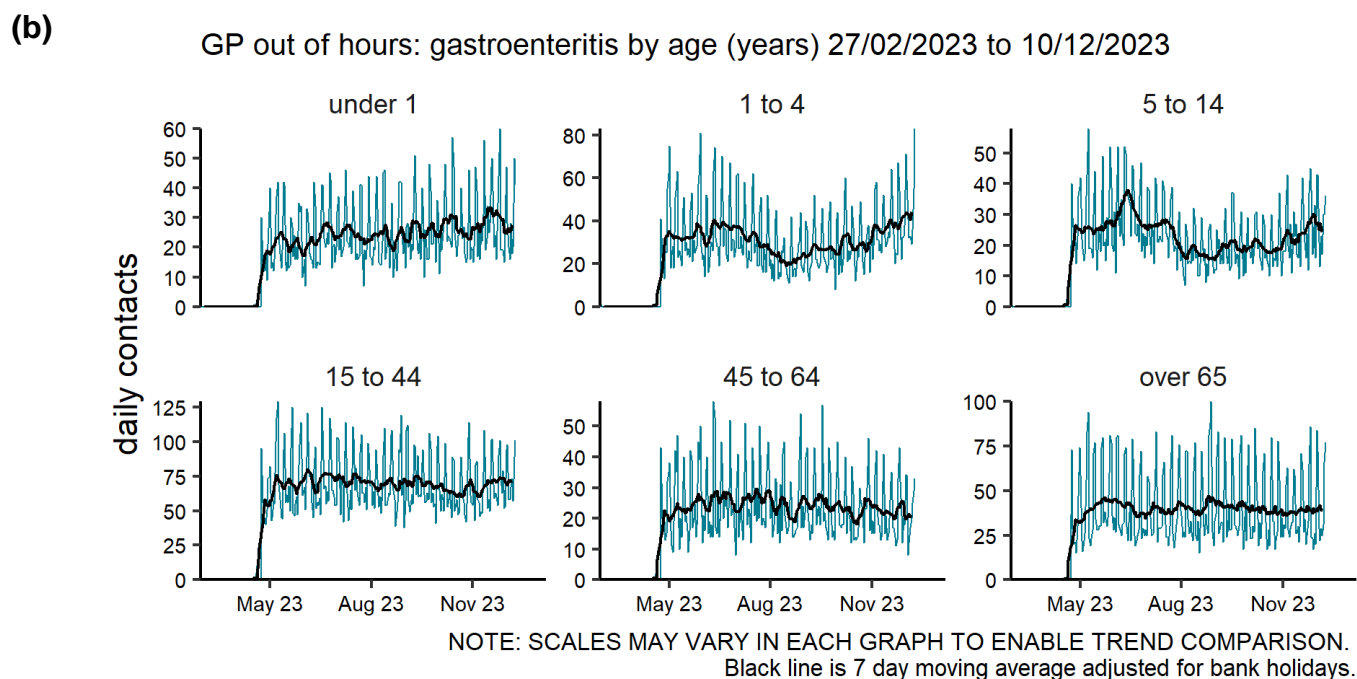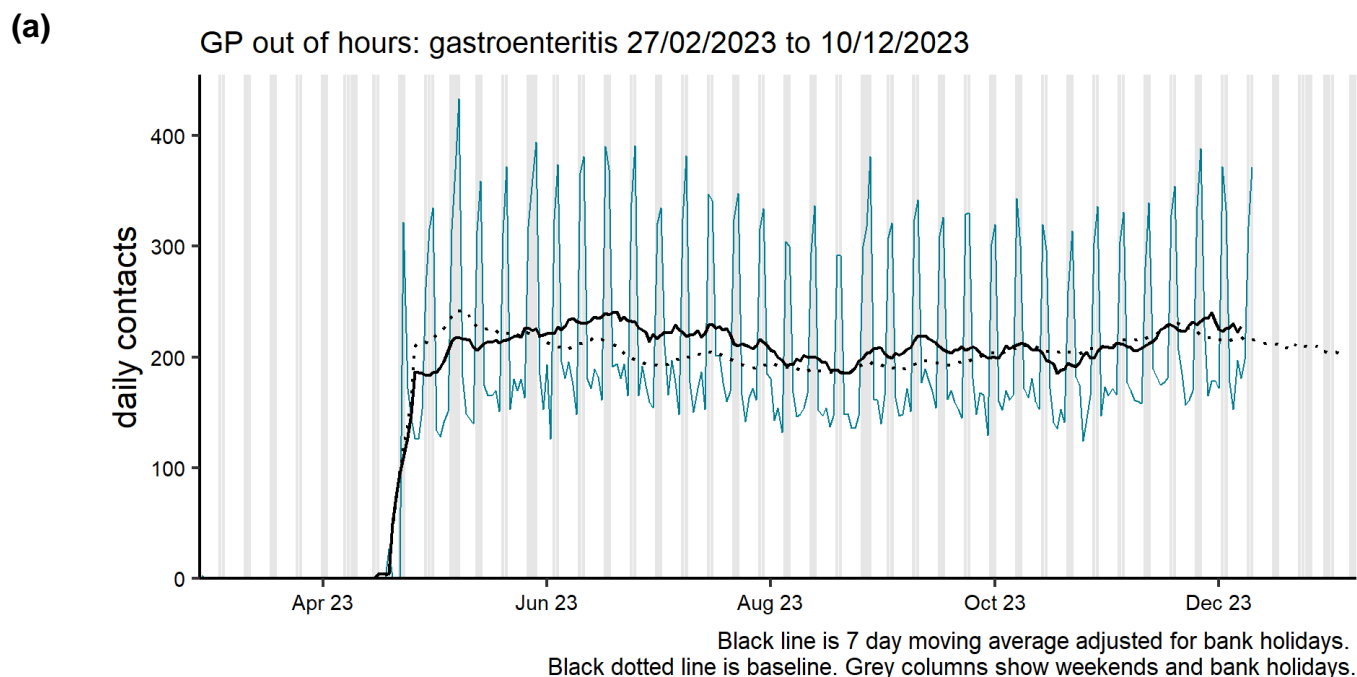**Figure 7: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays for acute pharyngitis, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.**

**(a)**

GP out of hours: pharyngitis or scarlet fever 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**

GP out of hours: pharyngitis or scarlet fever by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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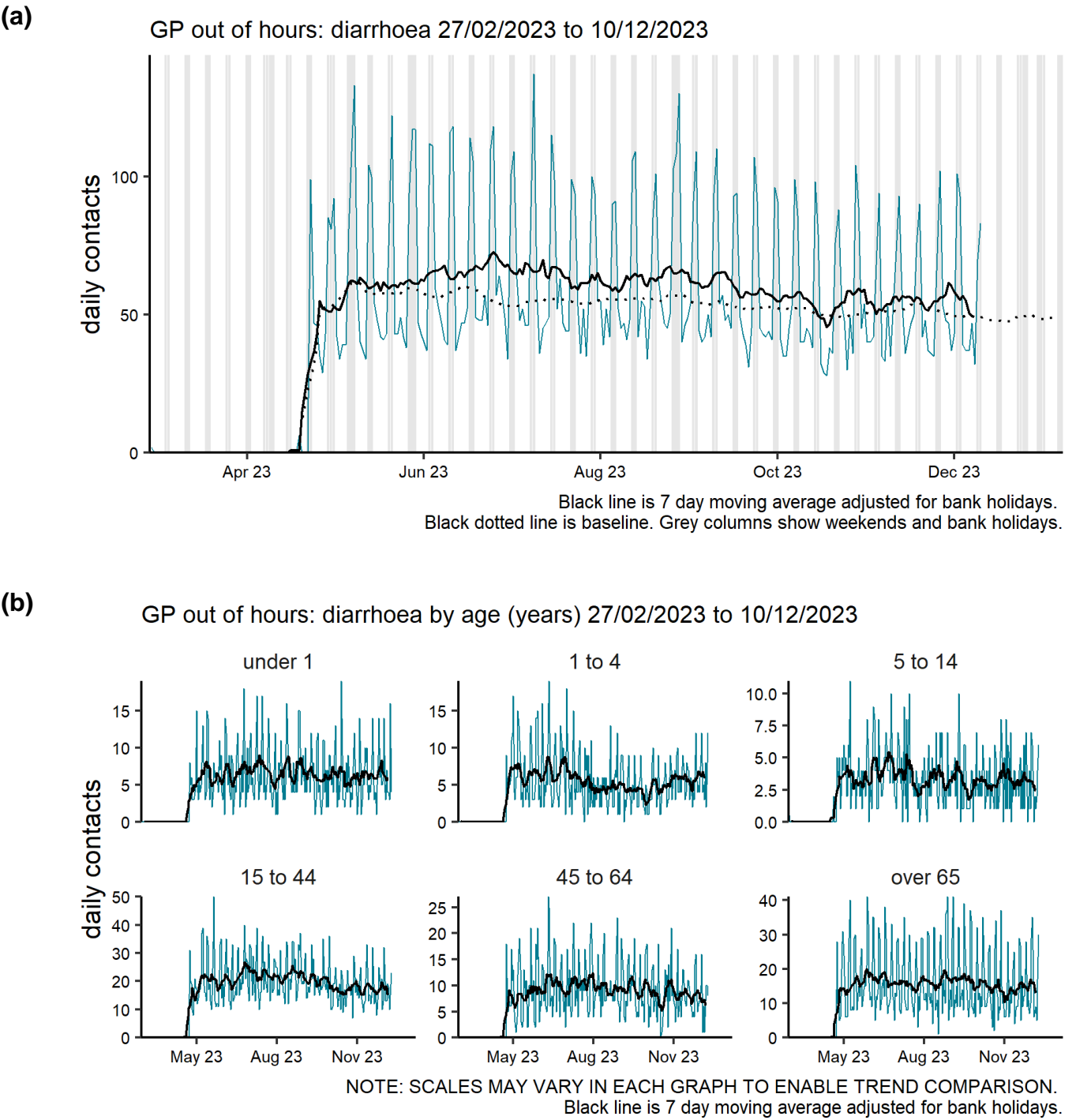
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# Gastrointestinal conditions

## 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.**

**(a)**



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

**(b)**



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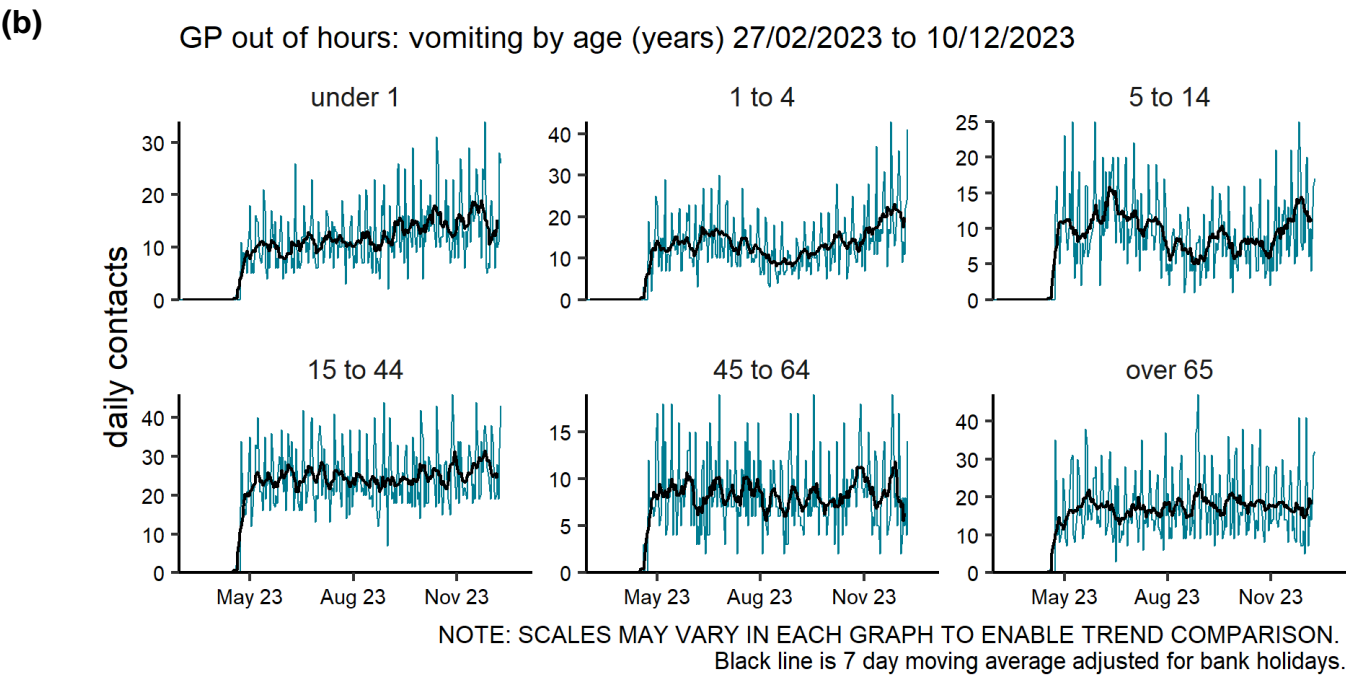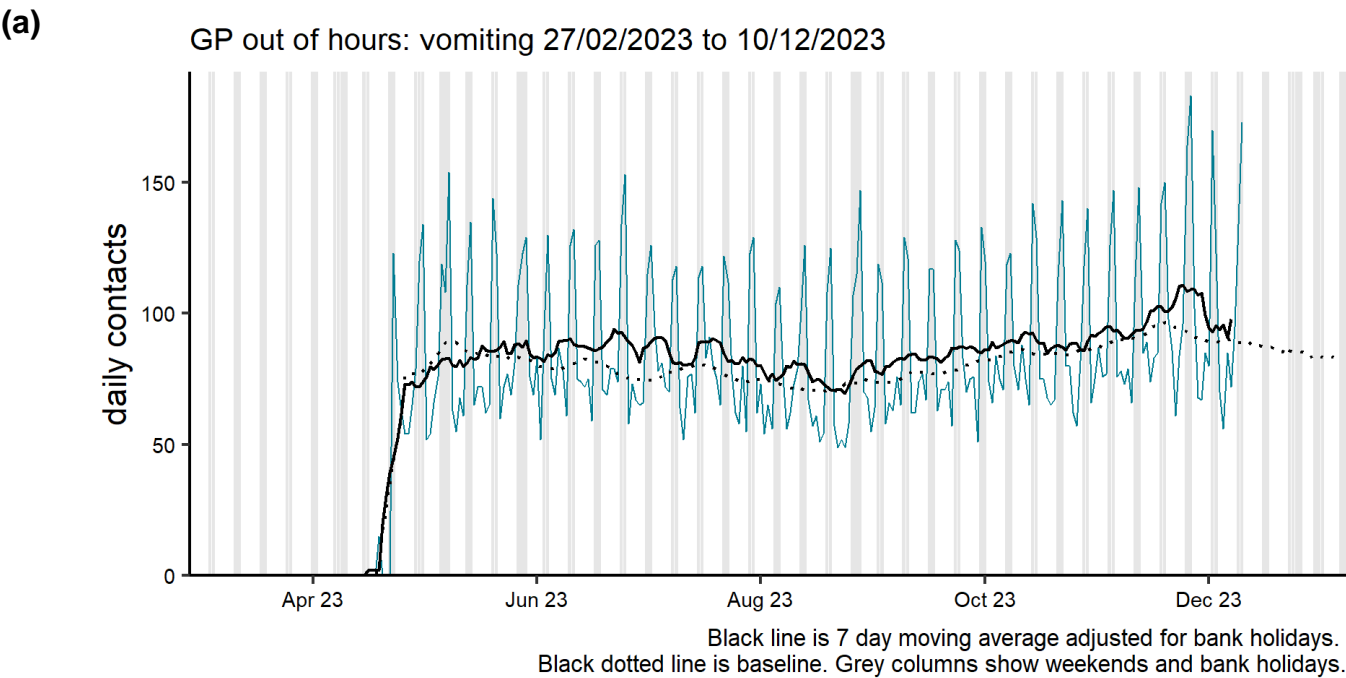Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

# 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.**

**(a)**



GP out of hours: diarrhoea 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**



GP out of hours: diarrhoea by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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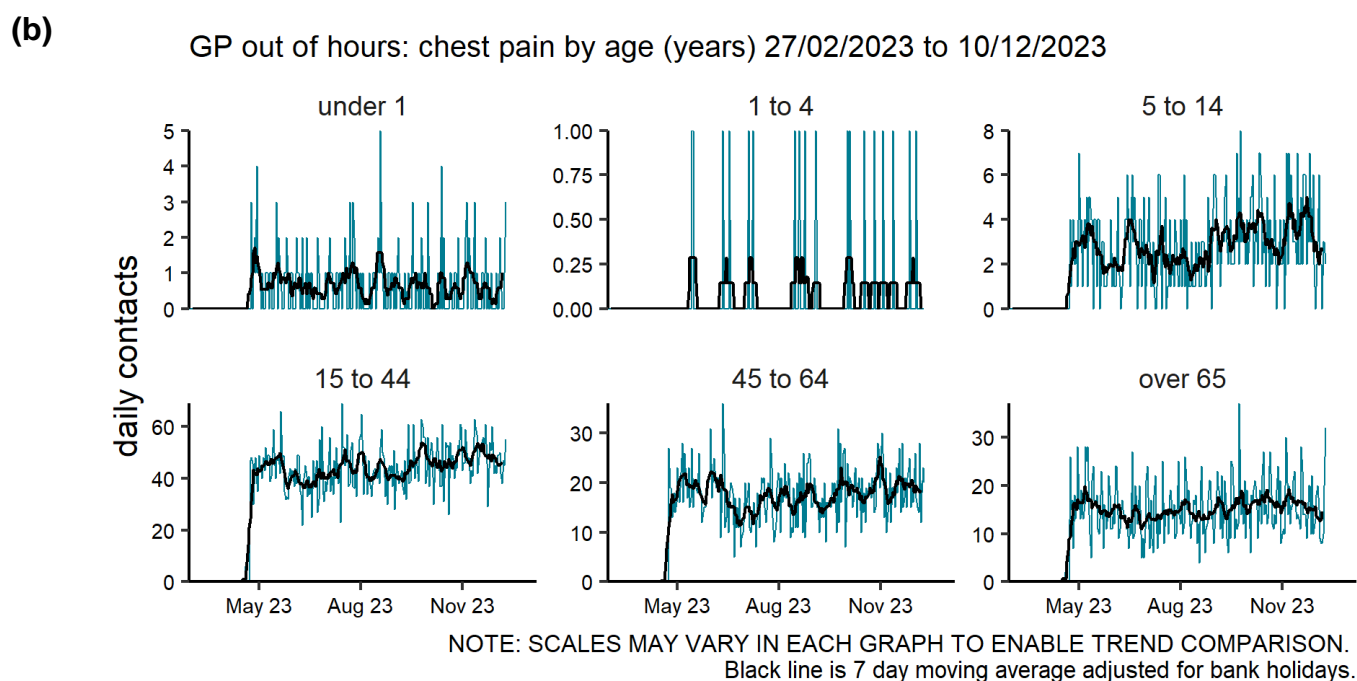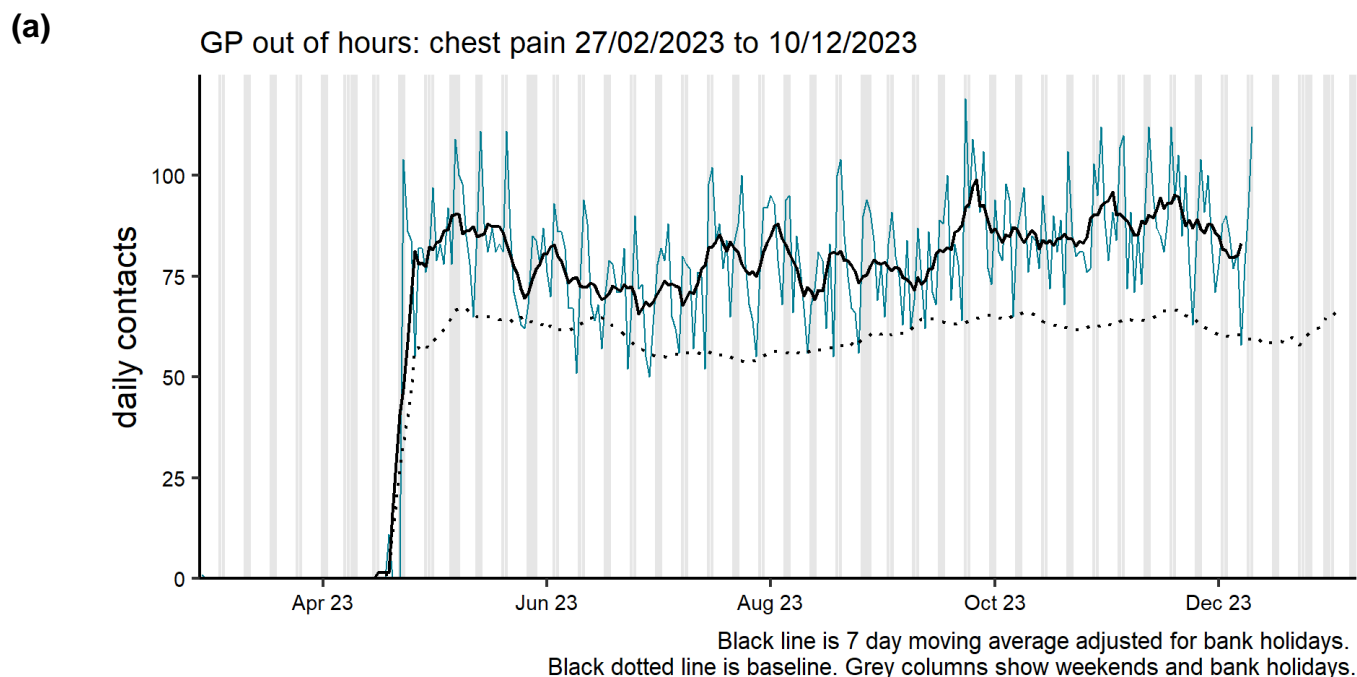Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

# 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.**

**(a)**

GP out of hours: vomiting 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

**(b)**

GP out of hours: vomiting by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

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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 and (b) by age.**

**(a)**

GP out of hours: chest pain 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

**(b)**

GP out of hours: chest pain by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023



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

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).
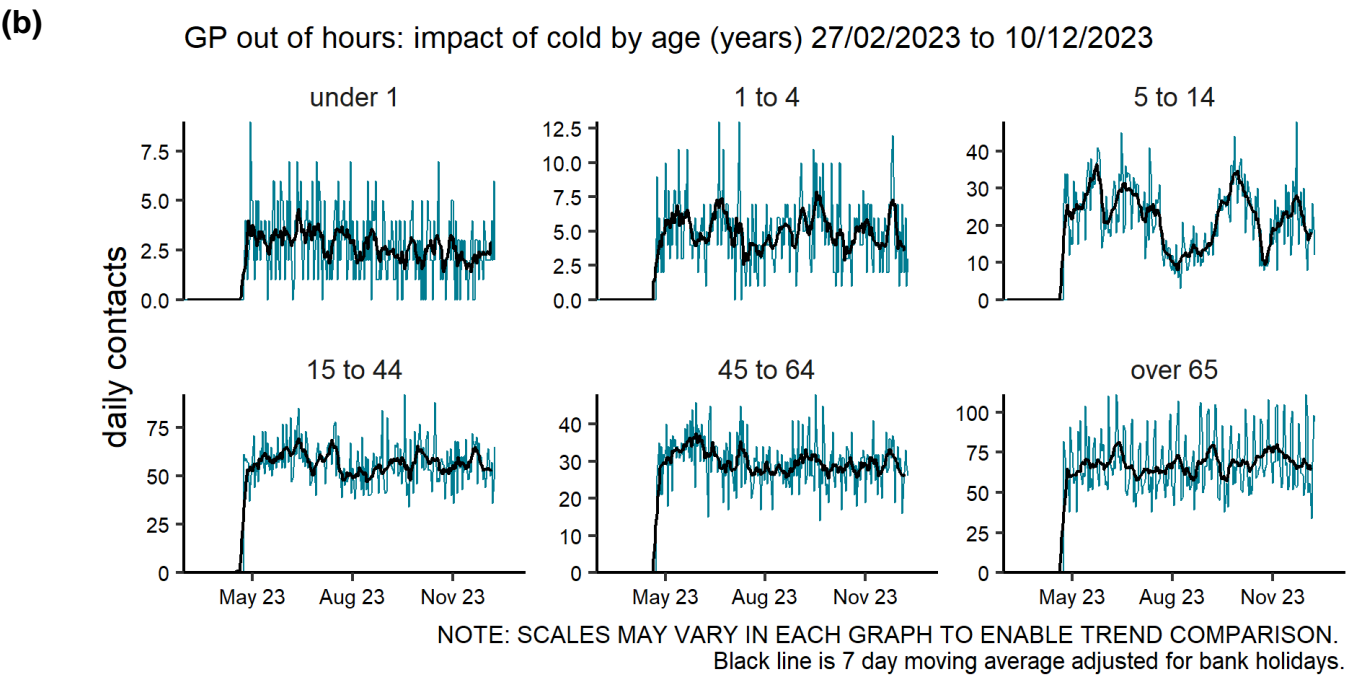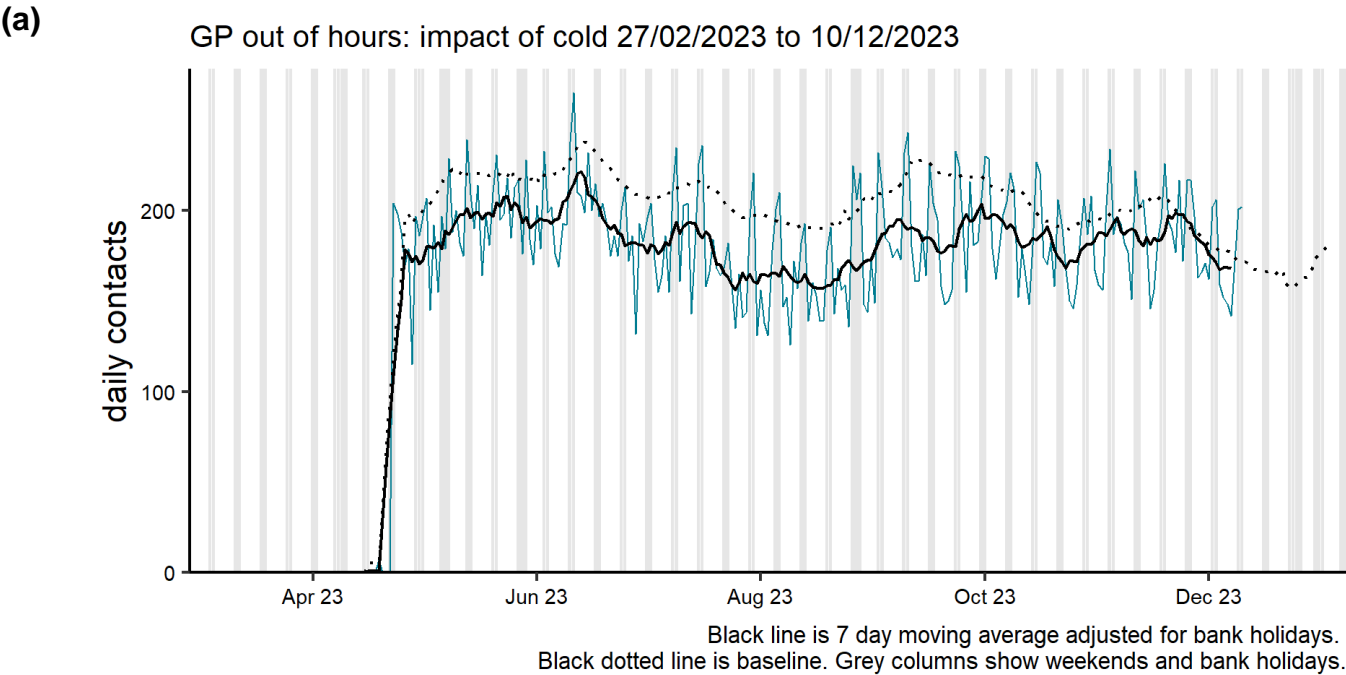
Cold weather alert period: 1 November to 31 March

Heat-Health Alert period: 1 June to 30 September

Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

**Amber alert (Enhanced cold weather response)**

# 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.**

**(a)**



GP out of hours: impact of cold 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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

**(b)**



GP out of hours: impact of cold by age (years) 27/02/2023 to 10/12/2023

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 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

# 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 heath secure.

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

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-health-security-agency

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Published: December 2023

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