

# Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England) 2024 Week 03

# Key messages

Data reported to: 21 January

During week 3, NHS 111 calls for cold/flu and fever increased, but particularly in children aged 1-4 and 5-14 years. There were also increases observed in these age groups across other respiratory indicators. NHS 111 calls and online assessments for vomiting increased during week 3.

# 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 <sup>1</sup>	Level
Total NHS 111 calls (Figure 1)	No trend	No baseline
Total NHS 111 online (Figure 2)	No trend	No baseline
Cold/flu NHS 111 calls (Figure 3)	Increasing	Below baseline
Cold/flu NHS 111 online (Figure 4)	Increasing	Below baseline
Fever NHS 111 calls (Figure 5)	Increasing	Similar to baseline
Fever NHS 111 online (Figure 6)	Increasing	Above baseline
Cough NHS 111 calls (Figure 7)	Increasing	Similar to baseline
Cough NHS 111 online (Figure 8)	No trend	Above baseline
Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online (Figure 9)	No trend	Below baseline
Sore throat NHS 111 calls (Figure 10)	No trend	Below baseline
Sore throat NHS 111 online (Figure 11)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls (Figure 12)	Decreasing	No baseline
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online (Figure 13)	Increasing	No baseline
Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls (Figure 14)	Increasing	Similar to baseline
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online (Figure 15)	No trend	Below baseline
Vomiting NHS 111 calls (Figure 16)	Increasing	Above baseline
Vomiting NHS 111 online (Figure 17)	Increasing	Above baseline
Eye problems NHS 111 calls (Figure 18)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Eye problems NHS 111 online (Figure 19)	No trend	Below baseline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> trend reports on the trend seen over most recent and earlier weeks

# **Contents**

Key messages	2
Syndromic indicators at a glance	2
Contents	3
About this syndromic surveillance system	5
Total contacts	6
NHS 111 calls	6
NHS 111 online	8
Respiratory conditions	10
Cold/flu NHS 111 calls	10
Cold/flu NHS 111 online	12
Fever NHS 111 calls	14
Fever NHS 111 online	16
Cough NHS 111 calls	18
Cough NHS 111 online	20
Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online	22
Sore throat NHS 111 calls	24
Sore throat NHS 111 online	26
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls	28
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online	30
Gastrointestinal conditions	32
Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls	32
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online	34
Vomiting NHS 111 calls	36
Vomiting NHS 111 online	38
Seasonal environmental conditions	40
Eye problems NHS 111 calls	41
Eye problems NHS 111 online	43
Notes and caveats	45
COVID-19 syndromic surveillance	46

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Acknowledgements	47
About the UK Health Security Agency	48

# 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 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 <u>here</u>.

#### Data quality issues of note this week

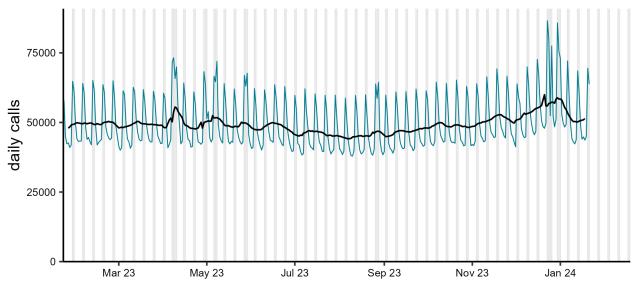
A new NHS Pathways Release has resulted in a change in the triage coding of 'difficulty breathing' calls. These changes are particularly in those regions where NHS 111 providers have adopted the first Pathways Releases (North East, East of England) and in age groups over 5 years old. Further national Pathways releases are planned in January 2024. The difficulty breathing call indicator has therefore been removed from this bulletin.

#### **Total contacts**

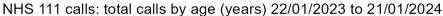
#### NHS 111 calls

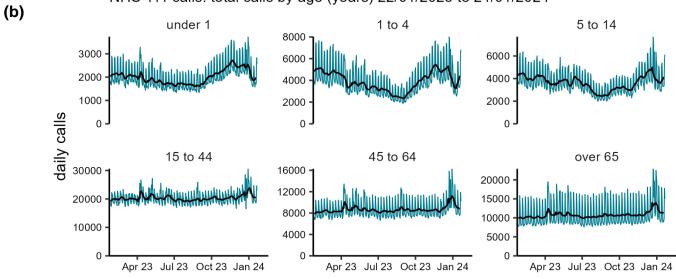
Figure 1: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.





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





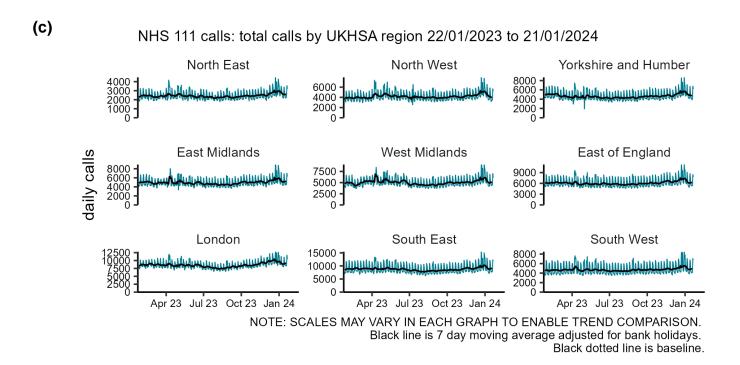
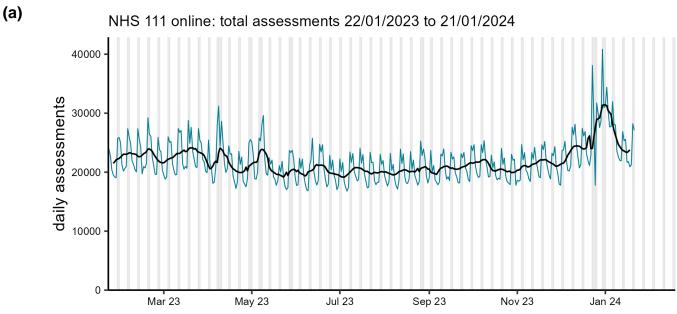


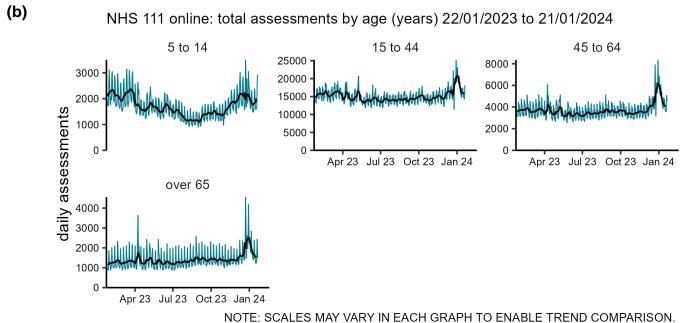
Table 2: The number of NHS 111 calls in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

Date	Number of calls
15 January 2024	51,414
16 January 2024	45,955
17 January 2024	46,755
18 January 2024	45,368
19 January 2024	46,793
20 January 2024	72,704
21 January 2024	67,084

#### NHS 111 online

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 Region.





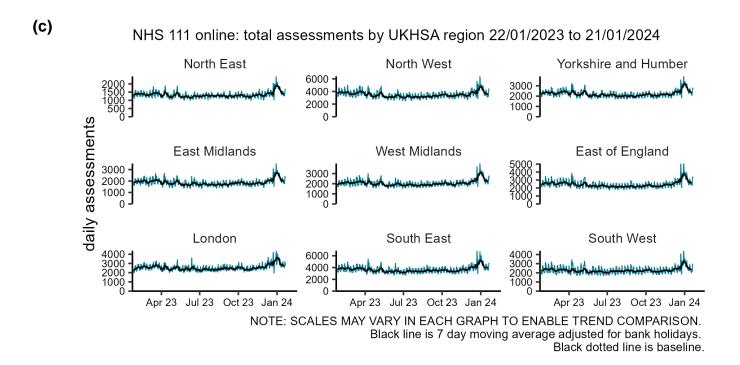


Table 3: The number of completed NHS 111 online assessments in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

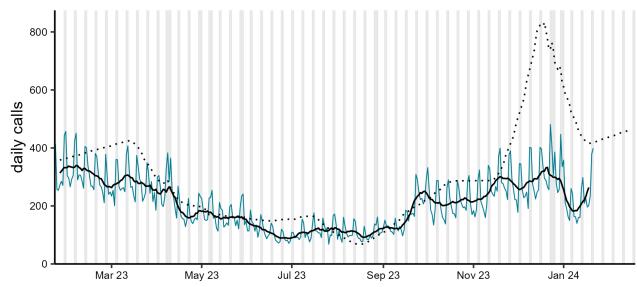
Date	Number of completed assessments
15 January 2024	25,653
16 January 2024	21,707
17 January 2024	21,811
18 January 2024	20,956
19 January 2024	21,320
20 January 2024	28,369
21 January 2024	27,203

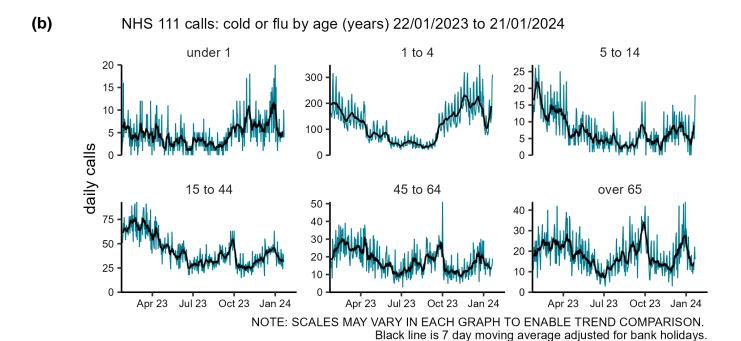
# **Respiratory conditions**

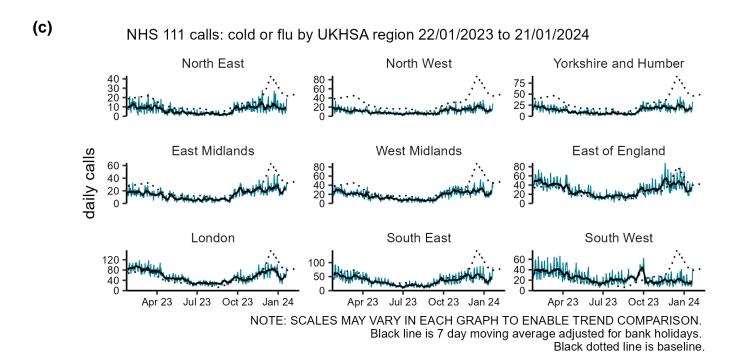
#### Cold/flu NHS 111 calls

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 Region.

(a) NHS 111 calls: cold or flu 22/01/2023 to 21/01/2024

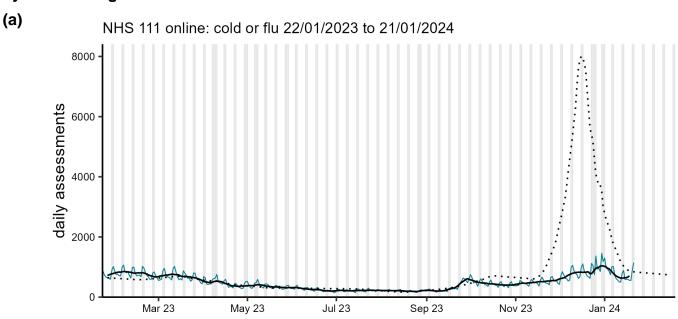




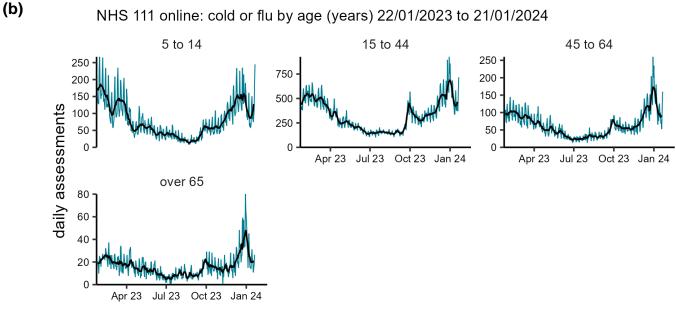


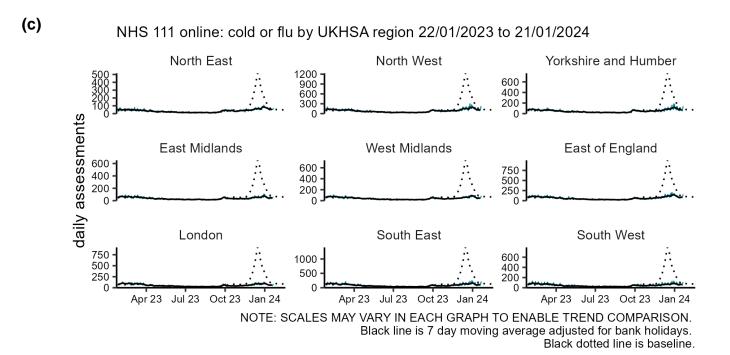
#### Cold/flu NHS 111 online

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 Region.



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





#### Fever NHS 111 calls

. Mar 23 May 23

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 Region.

NHS 111 calls: fever 22/01/2023 to 21/01/2024

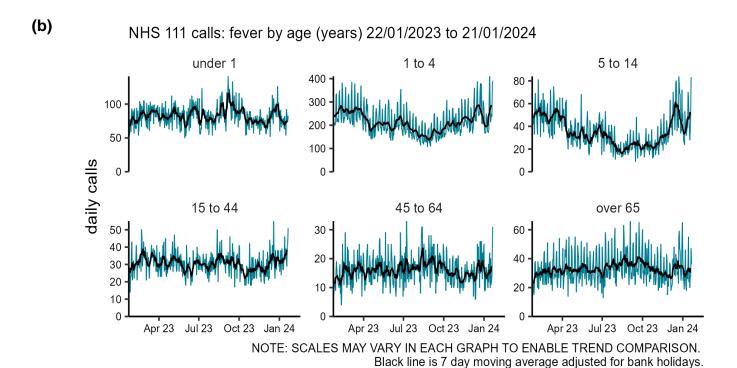
Jul 23

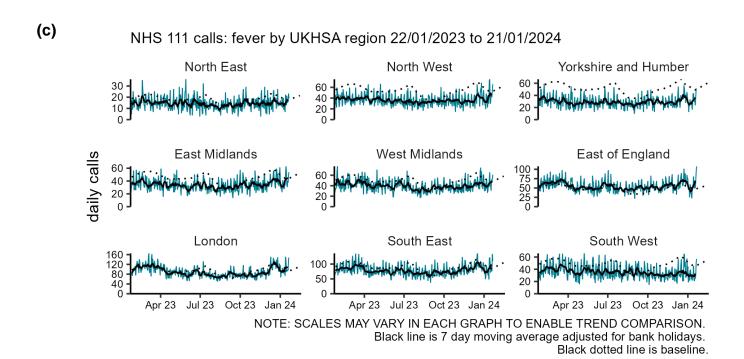
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Nov 23

Jan 24

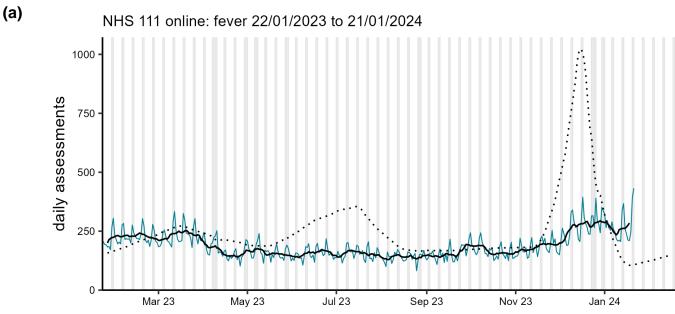
Sep 23



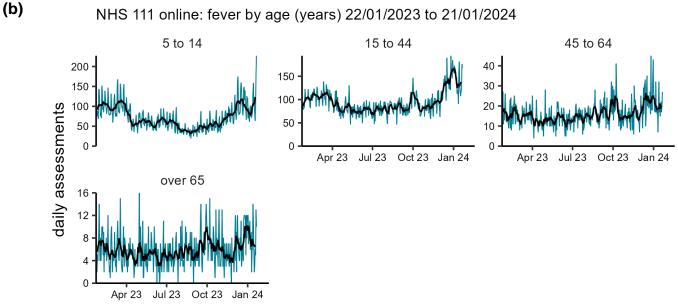


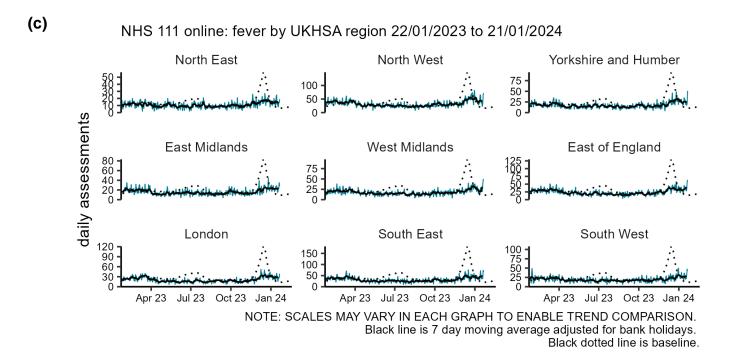
#### Fever NHS 111 online

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 Region.



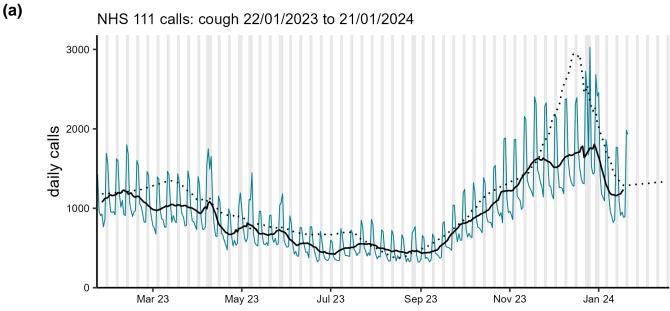
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

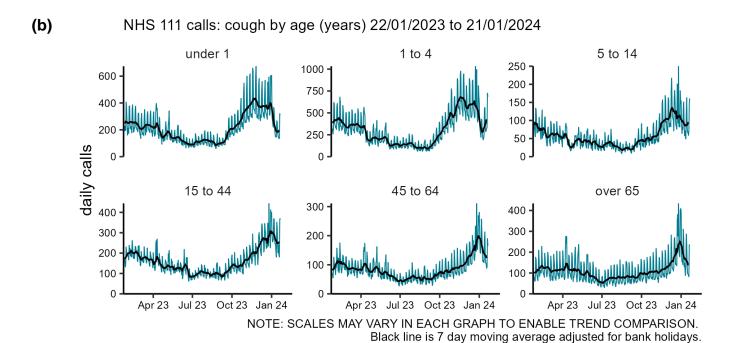


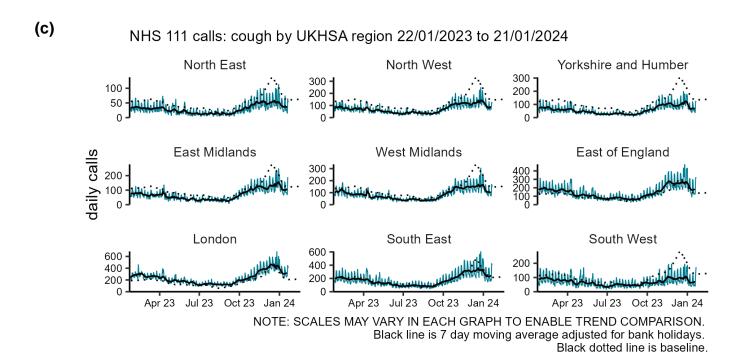


# Cough NHS 111 calls

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 Region.

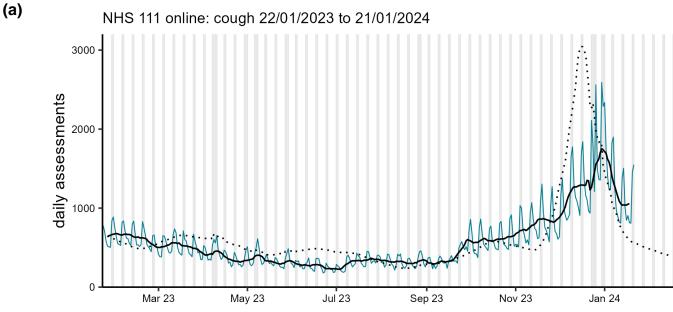




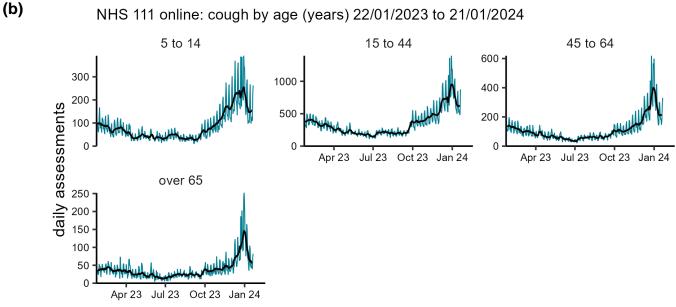


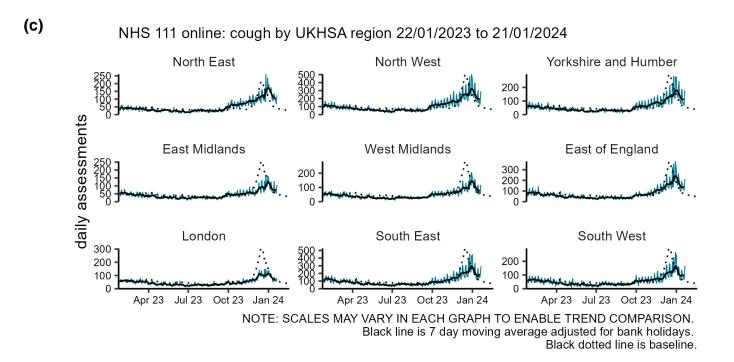
# Cough NHS 111 online

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 Region.



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



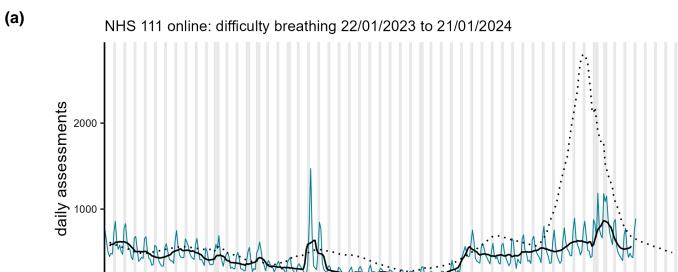


Mar 23

May 23

# Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online

Figure 9: 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 Region.



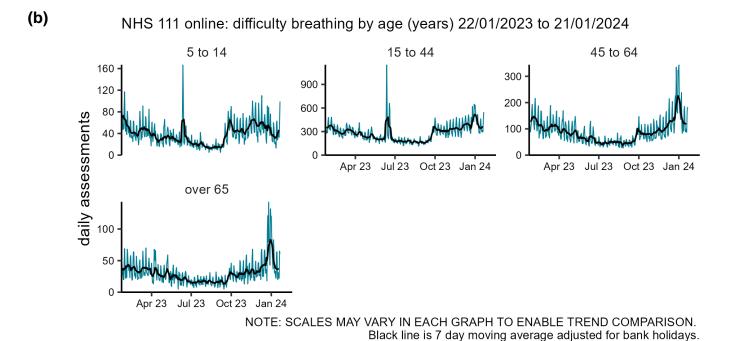
Jul 23

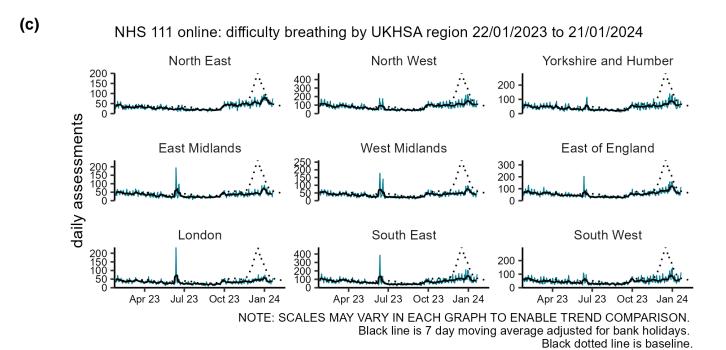
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Nov 23

Jan 24

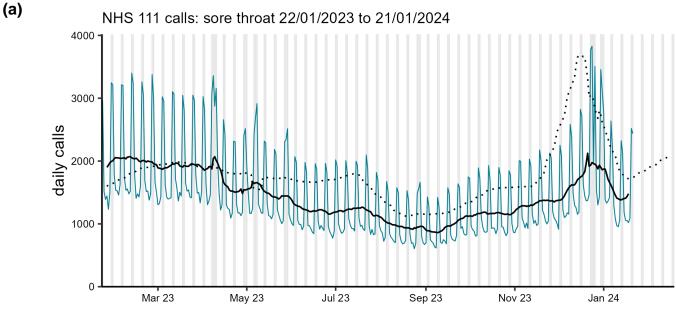
Sep 23

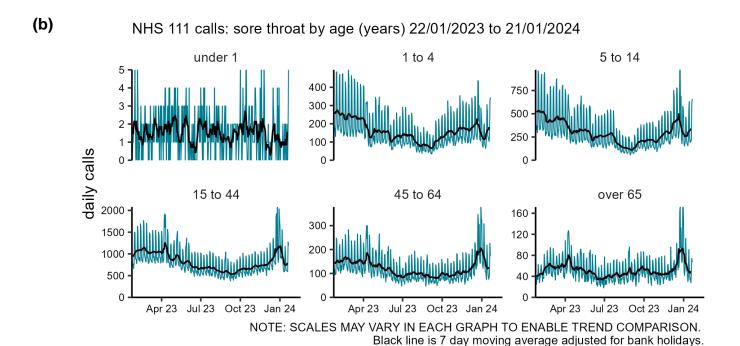


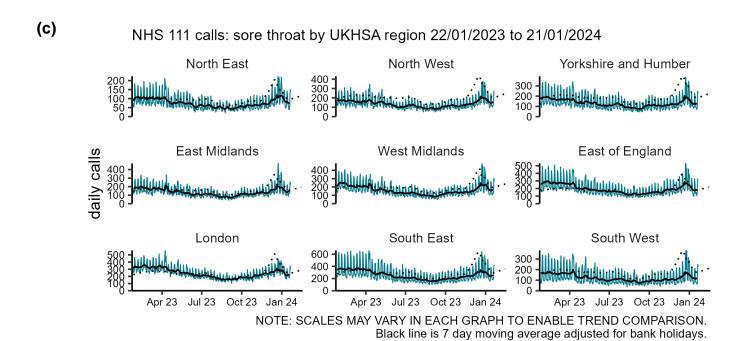


#### Sore throat NHS 111 calls

Figure 10: 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 Region.





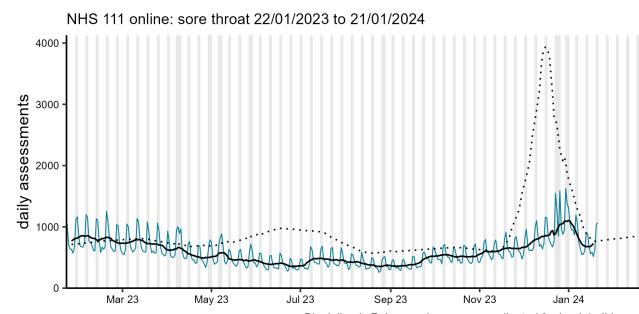


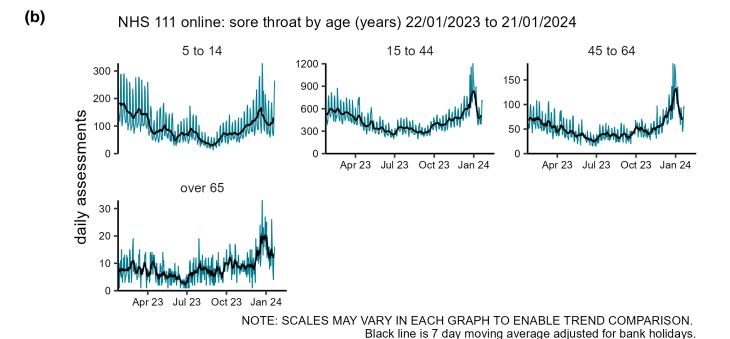
Black dotted line is baseline.

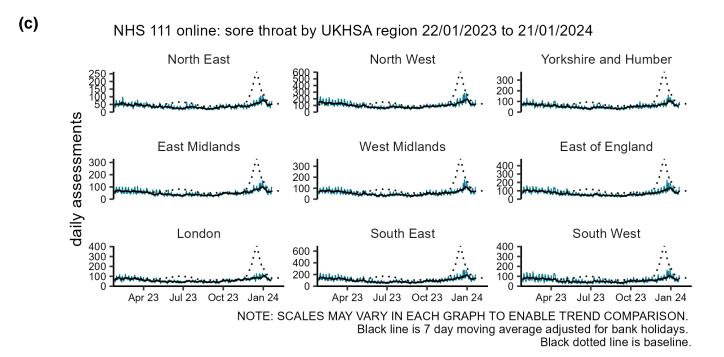
#### Sore throat NHS 111 online

(a)

Figure 11: 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 Region.

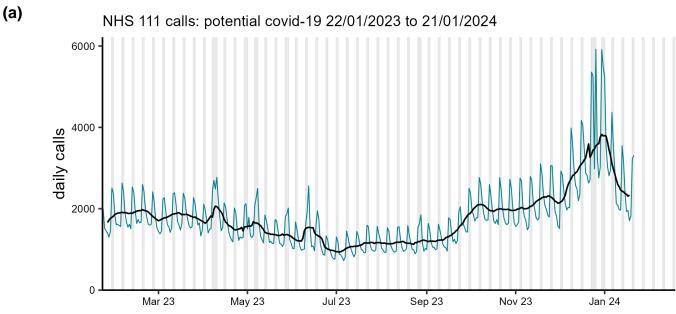


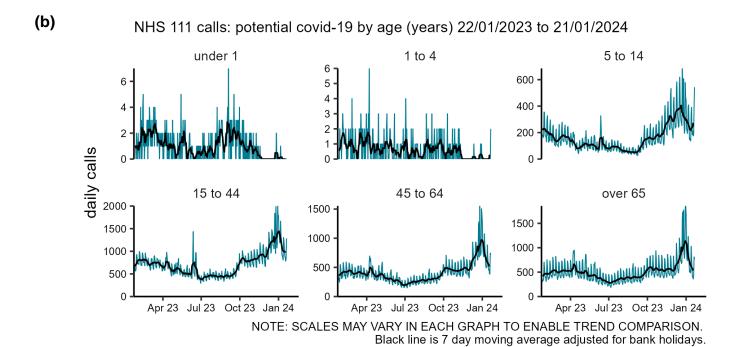


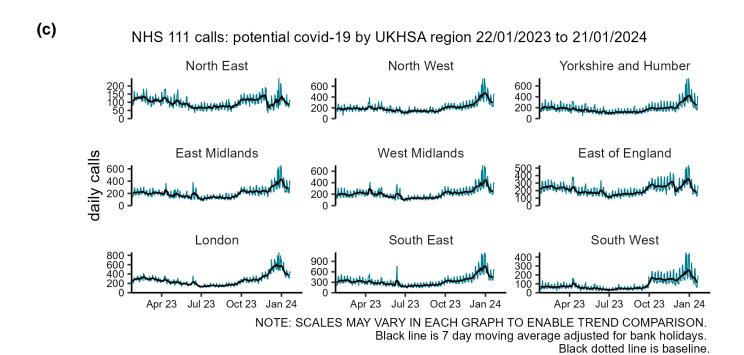


### Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls

Figure 12: 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 Region.





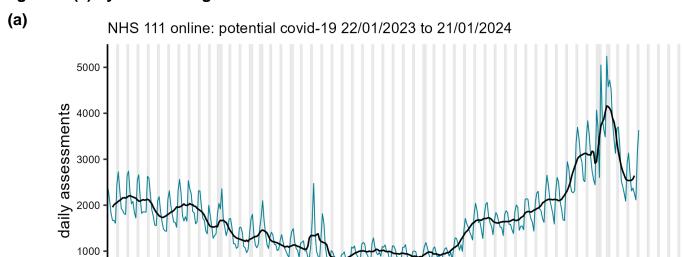


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### Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online

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Figure 13: 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 Region.



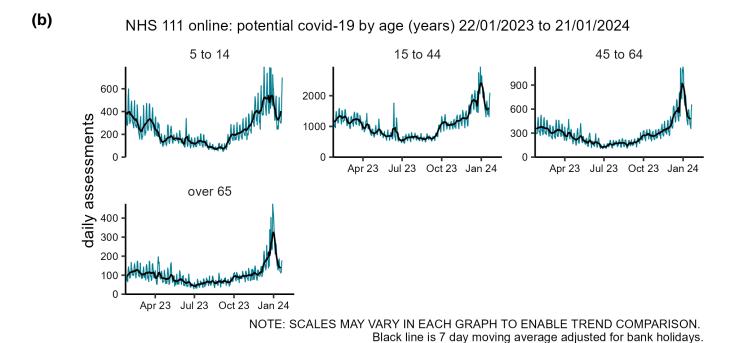
Jul 23

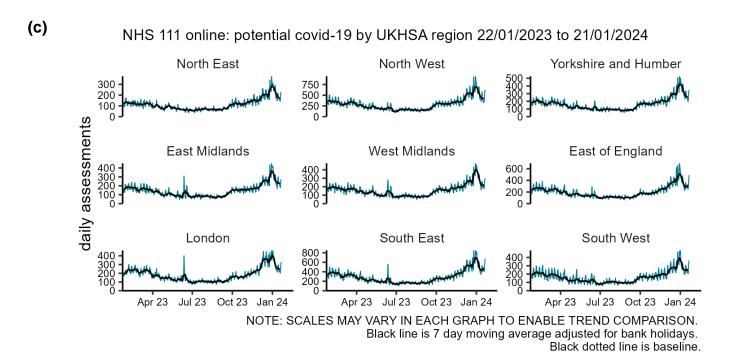
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Nov 23

Jan 24

Sep 23

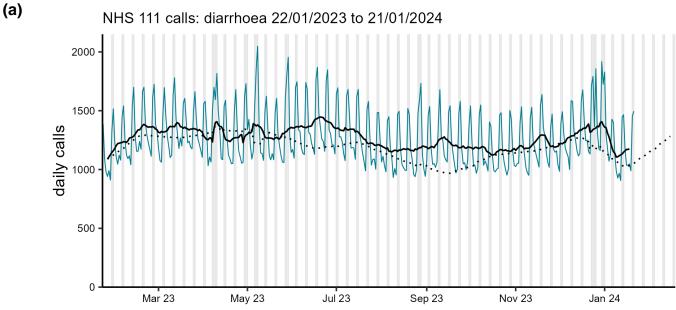


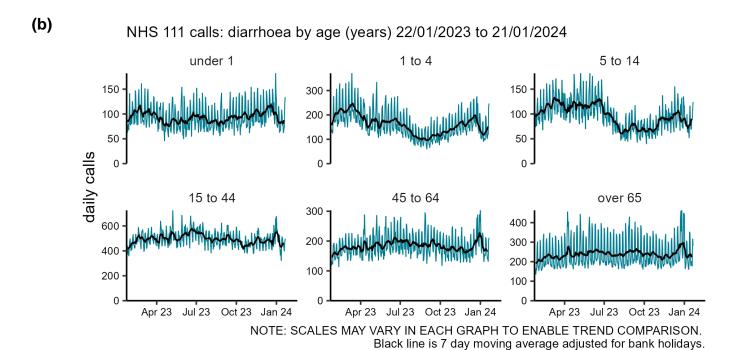


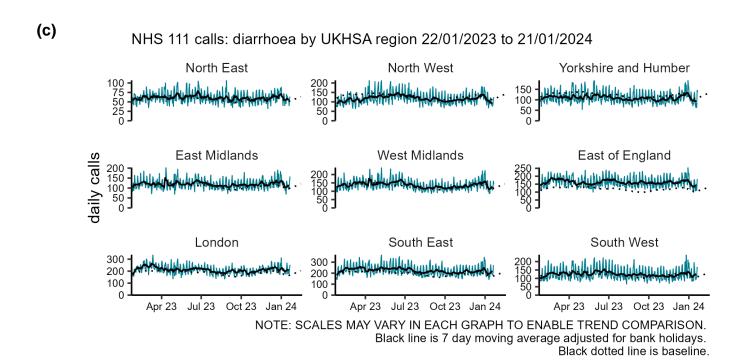
#### **Gastrointestinal conditions**

#### Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls

Figure 14: 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 Region.



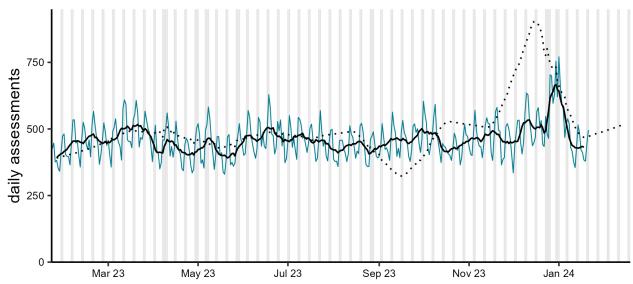




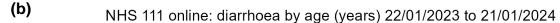
#### Diarrhoea NHS 111 online

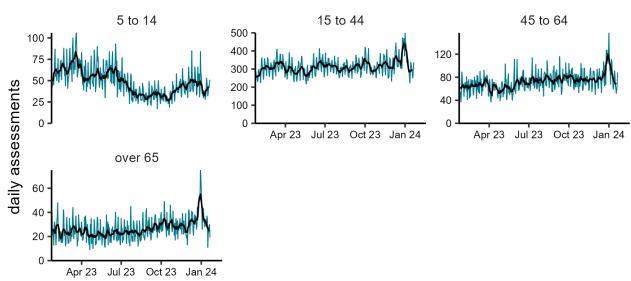
Figure 15: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for diarrhoea, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

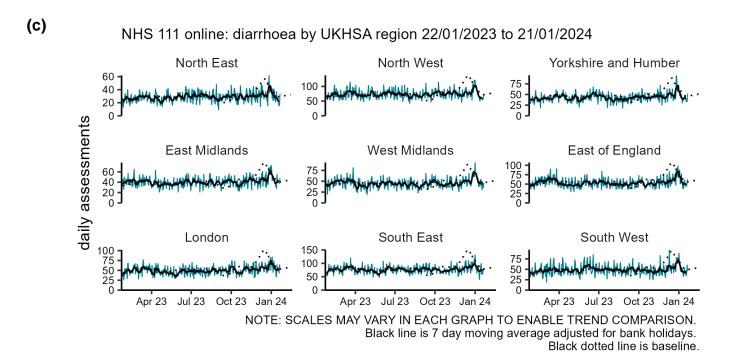




Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

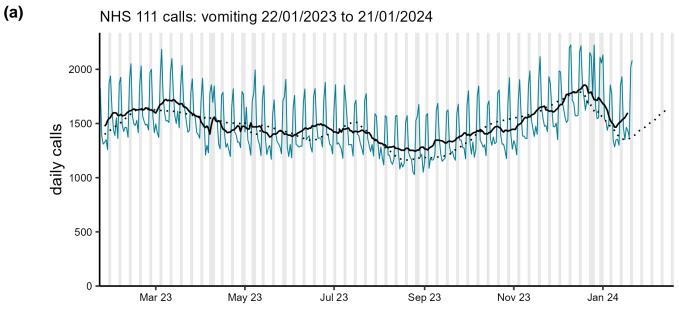


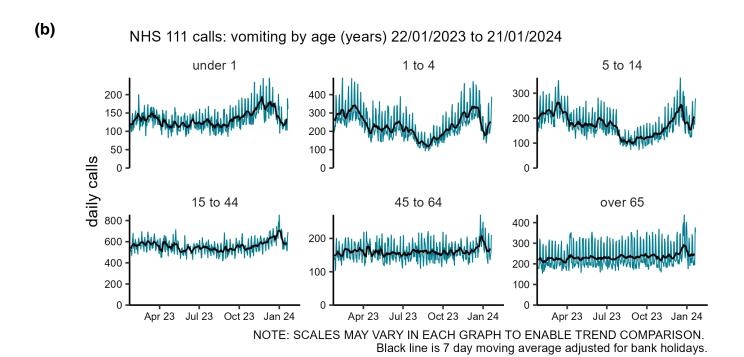


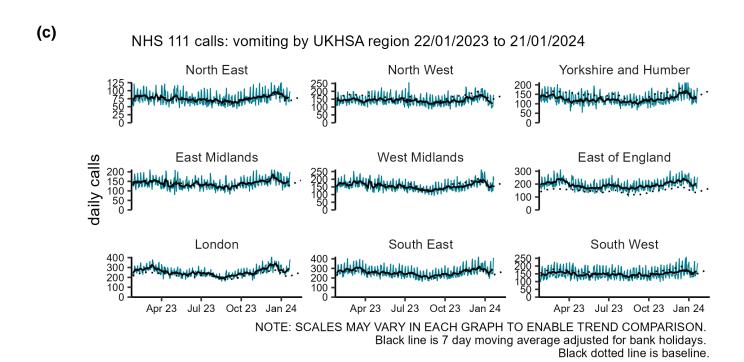


# Vomiting NHS 111 calls

Figure 16: 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 Region.

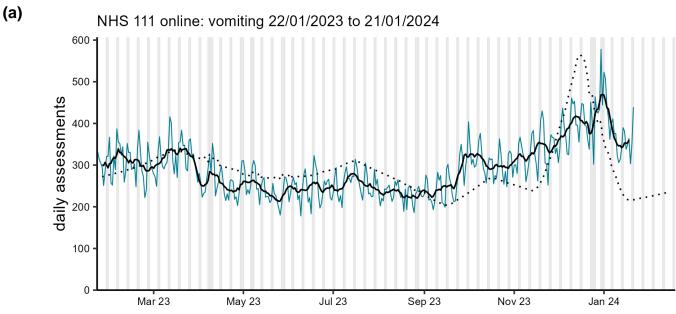




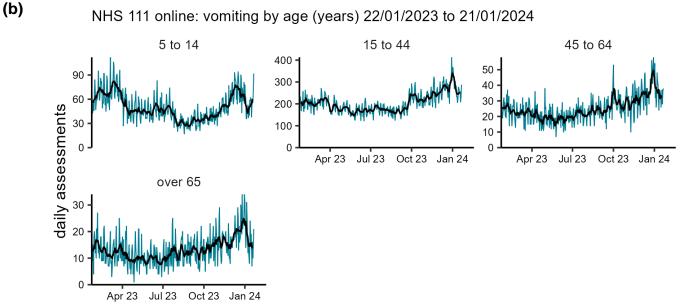


## Vomiting NHS 111 online

Figure 17: 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 Region.

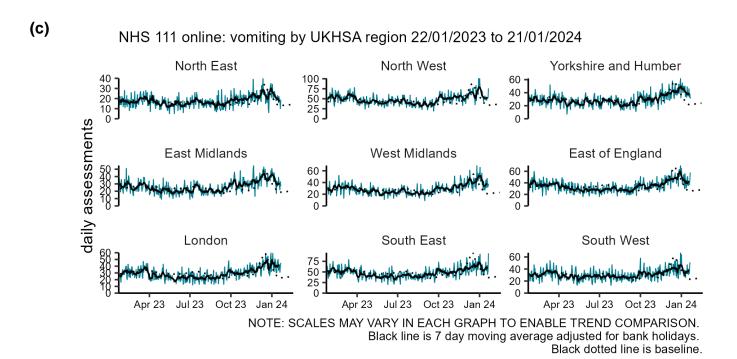


Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



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

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



#### 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

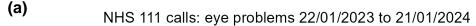
Heat-Health Alert period: 1 June to 30 September

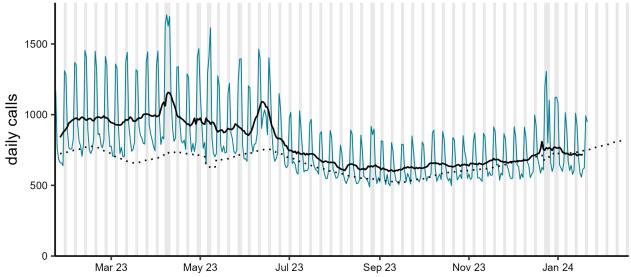
Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

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

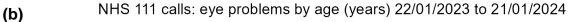
## Eye problems NHS 111 calls

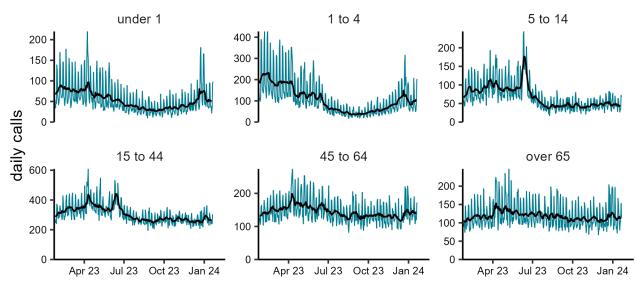
Figure 18: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.sd





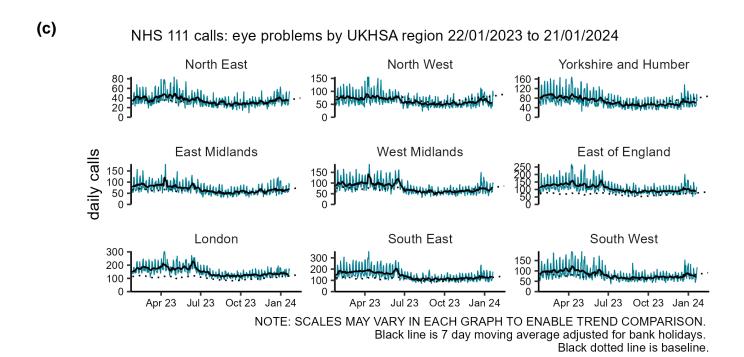
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.





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

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



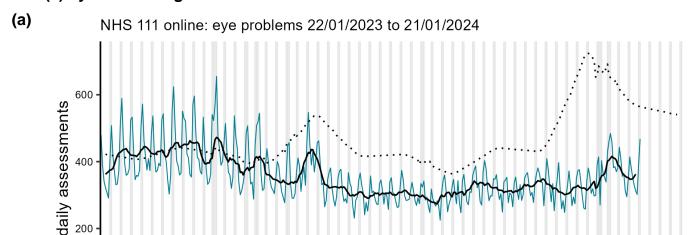
### Eye problems NHS 111 online

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Figure 19: 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 Region.



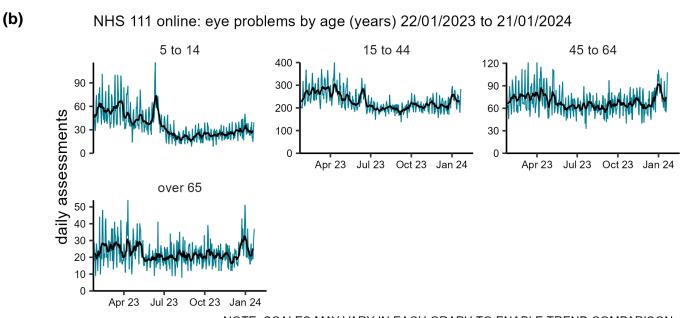
Jul 23

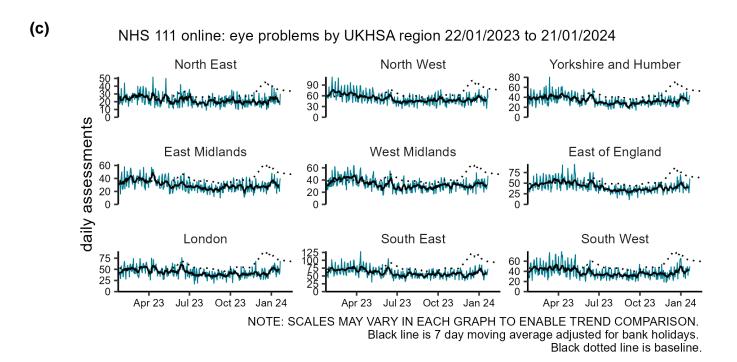
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Sep 23

Nov 23

Jan 24





#### **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':
  - commencing week 20 of 2023, NHS 111 calls are monitored using the NHS 111 Intelligent Data Tool, a repository of data on NHS 111 calls used by NHS England, UKHSA and service commissioners. The volume of calls for each syndromic indicator may be different to the call volumes presented in previous syndromic reports. This is because the Intelligent Data Tool records the Symptom Group allocated to each call following triage rather than the NHS Pathway. However, trends remain similar to those previously reported
  - 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:
  - were last remodelled May 2023
  - are constructed from historical data since January 2018
  - represent seasonally expected levels of activity
  - take account of any known substantial changes in data collection, population coverage or reporting practices and consequently may vary slightly from week to week (and will rescale) if there are substantial changes in call/online activity
    - the COVID-19 pandemic period is excluded
- 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
  - o 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
- 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

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## 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.

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