

Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England) 2024 Week 8

Key messages

Data reported to: 25 February

During week 8, NHS 111 respiratory syndromic indicators (including cold/flu, cough, difficulty breathing and 'potential COVID-19') continued to decrease for both NHS 111 calls and online assessments. Gastroenteritis indicators decreased or remained stable during week 8.

Please note that recent updates to the NHS Pathways clinical system used by NHS 111 has affected NHS 111 difficulty breathing and 'potential COVID-19' syndromic calls and online assessments. Please see 'Data quality issues of note this week' for further information.

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

¹ trend reports on the trend seen over most recent and earlier weeks

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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 Symptom Group or Pathway) identified from both NHS 111 calls and NHS 111 online assessments respectively
 - the potential COVID-19 syndromic indicator is based on the Symptom Group in NHS 111 calls and the outcome (known as the Disposition), in NHS 111 online (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

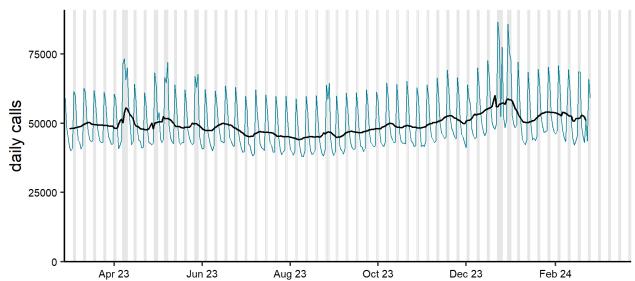
A new NHS Pathways system update (NHS Pathways Release 41) has resulted in an update to the clinical triage of certain calls and online assessments. This update has affected the number of syndromic NHS 111 calls and online assessments for the difficulty breathing and 'potential COVID-19' indicators. Due to challenges interpreting the NHS 111 difficulty breathing call indicator, it has been removed from this bulletin. NHS 111 syndromic calls and online assessments for difficulty breathing and 'potential COVID-19' indicators should be interpreted with caution.

Total contacts

NHS 111 calls

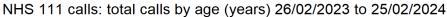
Figure 1: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

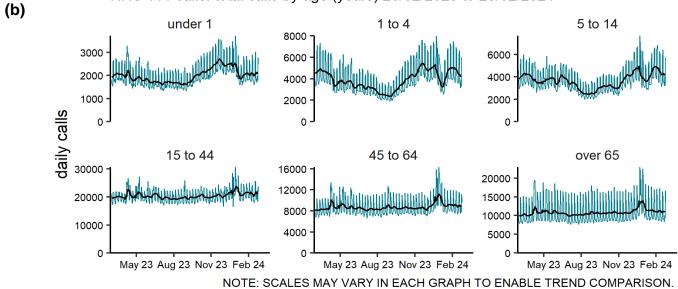




Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

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





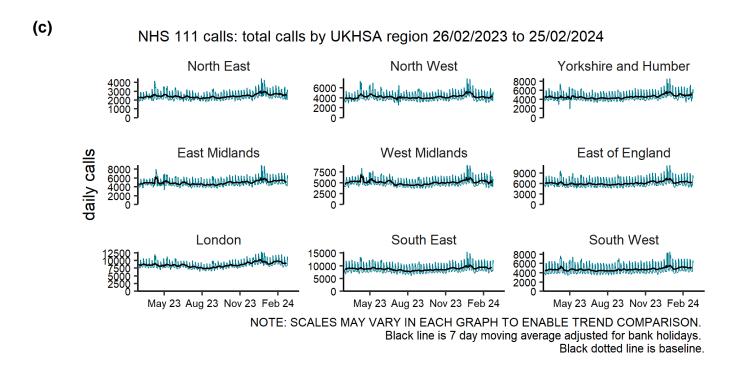


Table 2: The number of NHS 111 calls in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

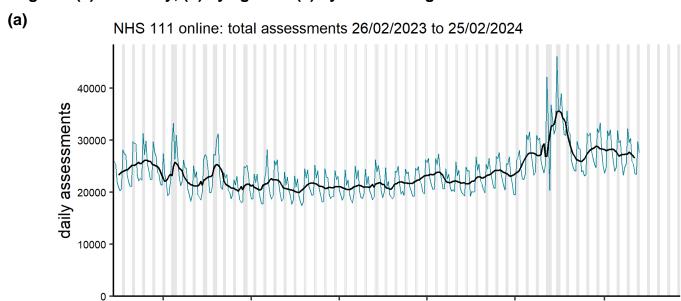
Date	Number of calls
19 February 2024	50,023
20 February 2024	46,309
21 February 2024	44,034
22 February 2024	52,199
23 February 2024	44,443
24 February 2024	67,222
25 February 2024	60,370

NHS 111 online

Apr 23

Jun 23

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.



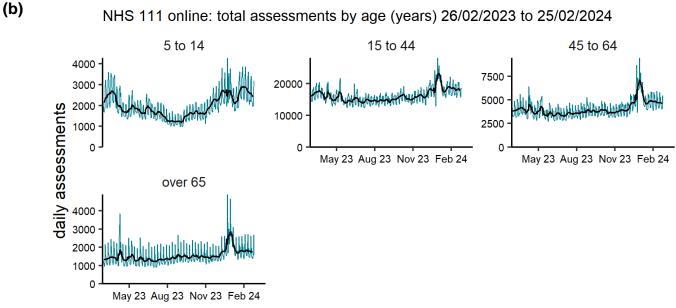
Aug 23

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

Dec 23

Feb 24

Oct 23



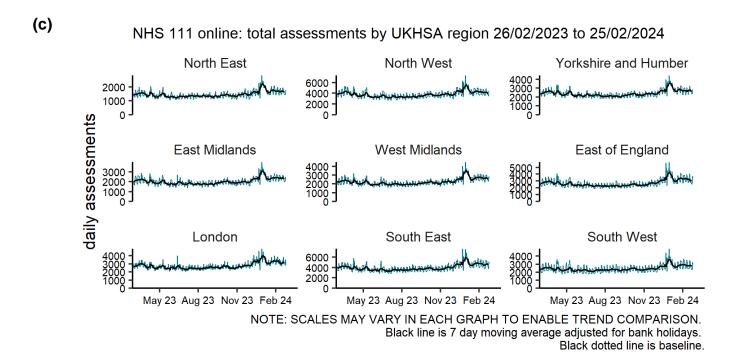


Table 3: The number of completed NHS 111 online assessments in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

Date	Number of completed assessments
19 February 2024	28,788
20 February 2024	24,703
21 February 2024	24,128
22 February 2024	22,552
23 February 2024	22,484
24 February 2024	28,325
25 February 2024	26,091

Respiratory conditions

Cold/flu NHS 111 calls

Apr 23

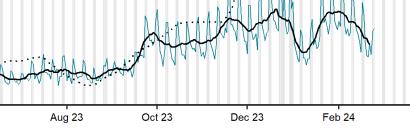
Jun 23

400

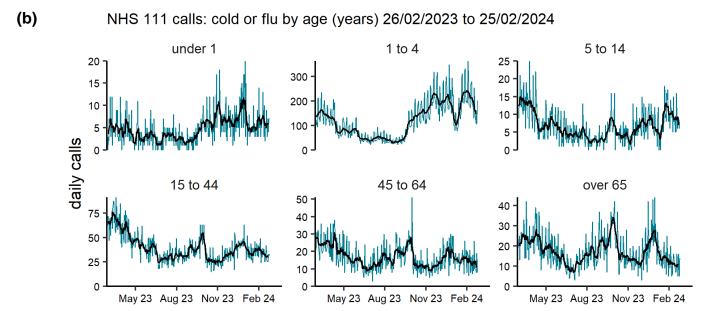
200

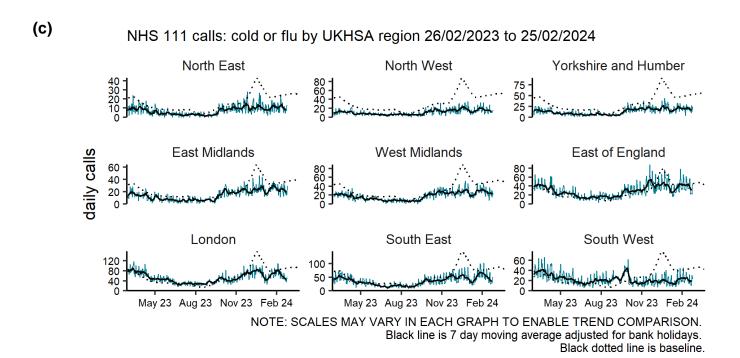
Figure 3: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cold/flu, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

(a) NHS 111 calls: cold or flu 26/02/2023 to 25/02/2024 800 600 daily calls



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



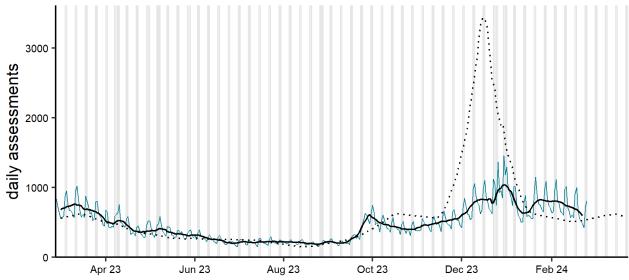


Cold/flu NHS 111 online

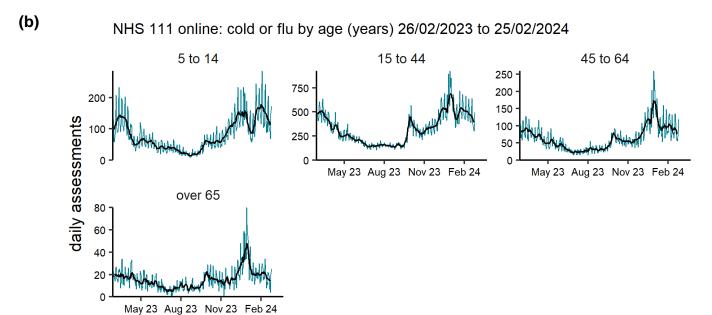
Figure 4: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for cold/flu, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

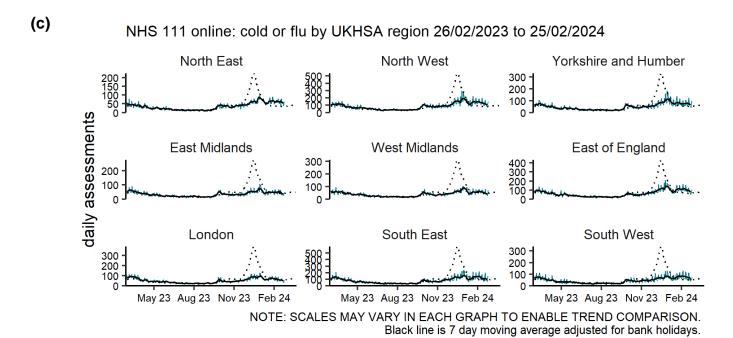
by UKHSA Region.

(a) NHS 111 online: cold or flu 26/02/2023 to 25/02/2024



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





Black dotted line is baseline.

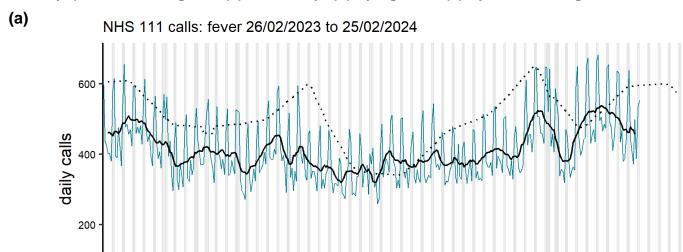
Fever NHS 111 calls

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Apr 23

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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.

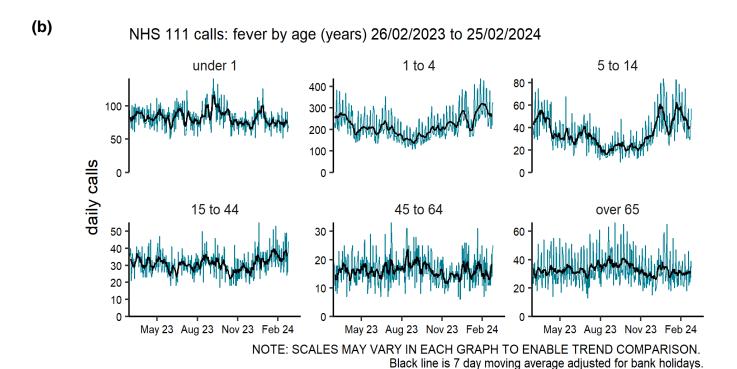


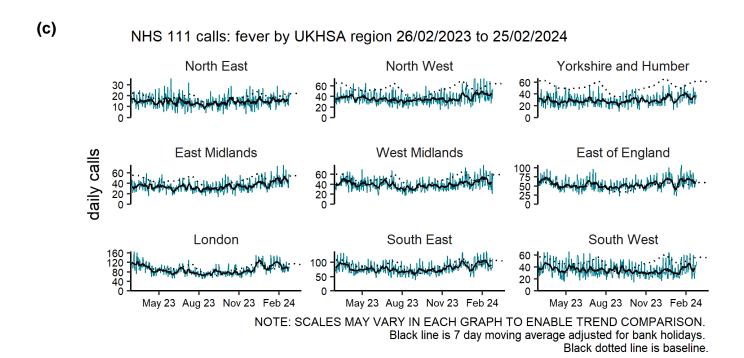
Aug 23

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

Dec 23

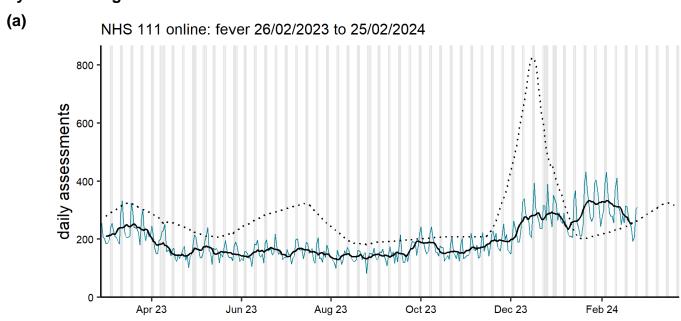
Oct 23



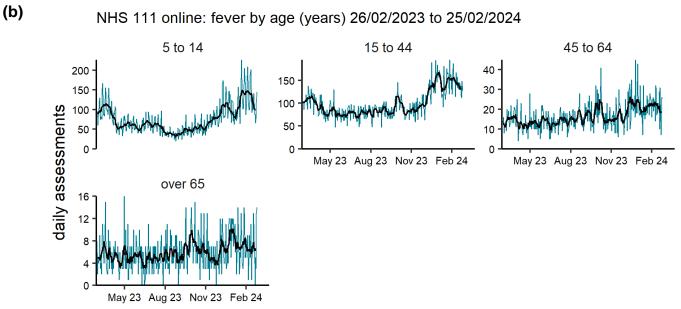


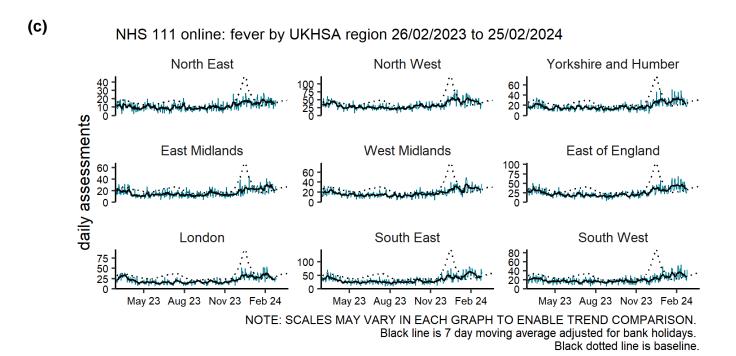
Fever NHS 111 online

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.



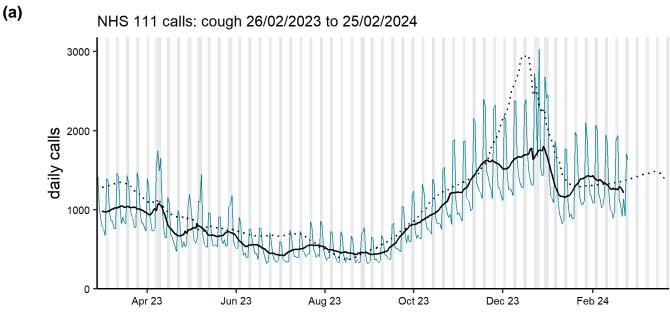
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

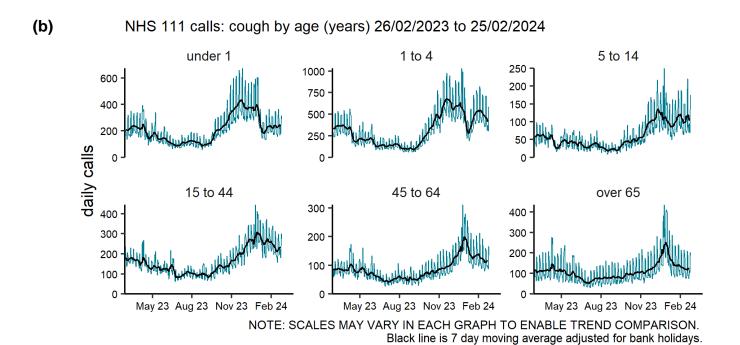


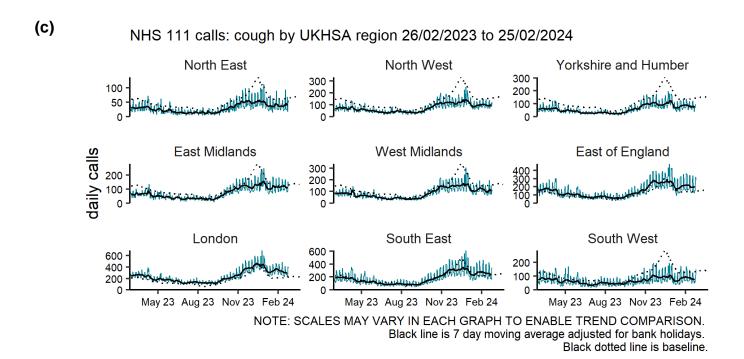


Cough NHS 111 calls

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.





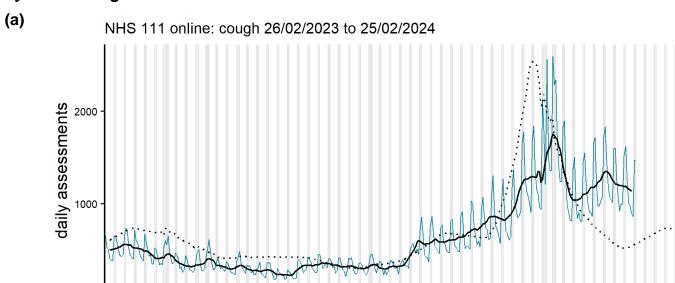


Cough NHS 111 online

Apr 23

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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.



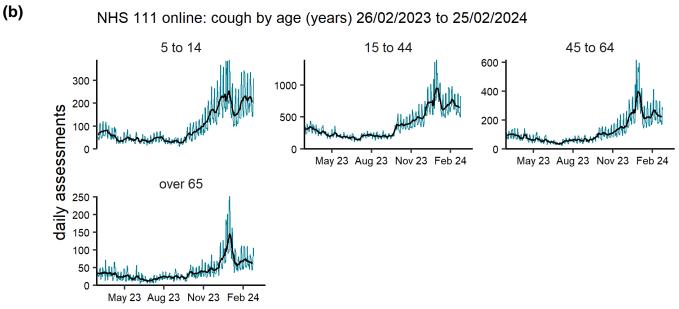
Aug 23

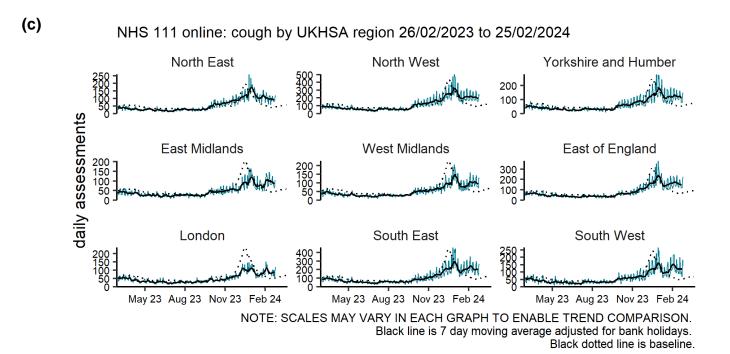
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Dec 23

Feb 24

Oct 23

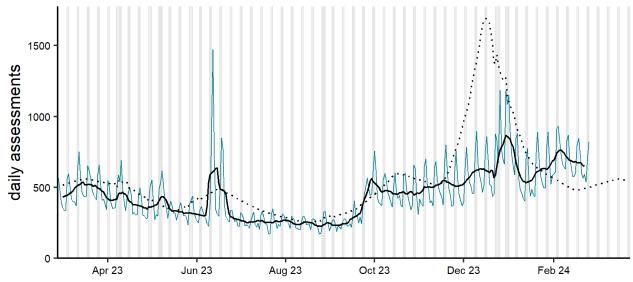




Difficulty breathing NHS 111 online

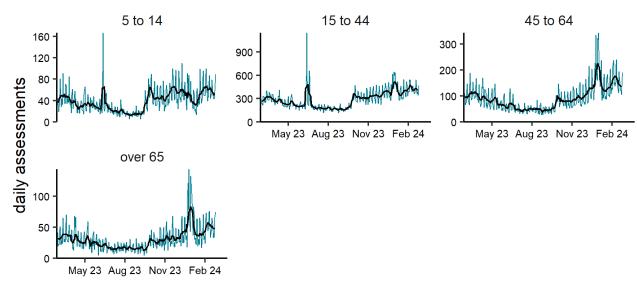
Figure 9: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for difficulty breathing, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

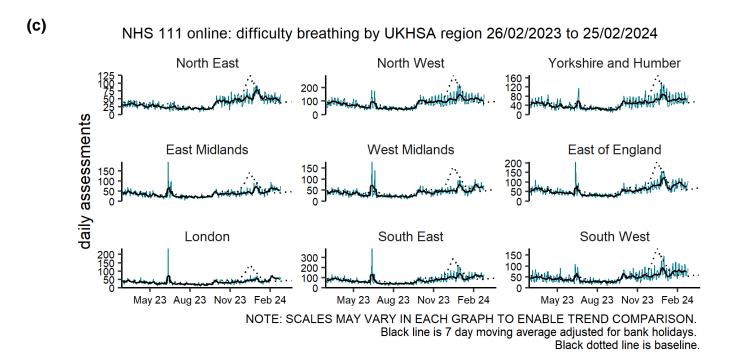
(a) NHS 111 online: difficulty breathing 26/02/2023 to 25/02/2024



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

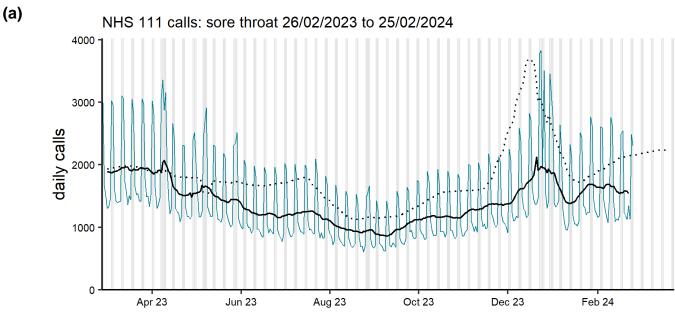
(b) NHS 111 online: difficulty breathing by age (years) 26/02/2023 to 25/02/2024

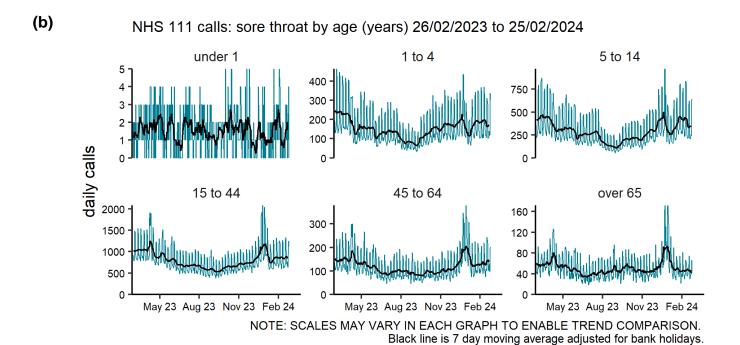


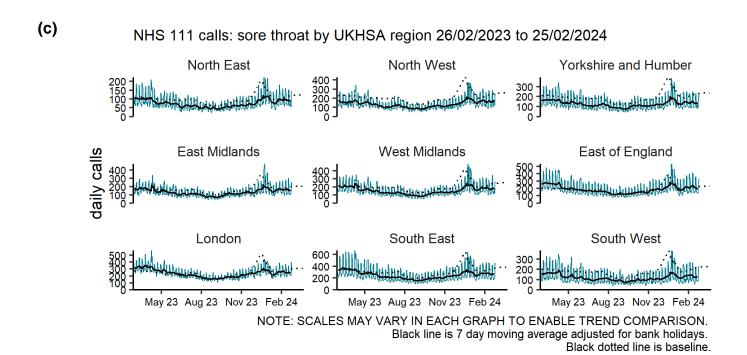


Sore throat NHS 111 calls

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.

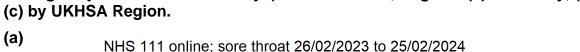


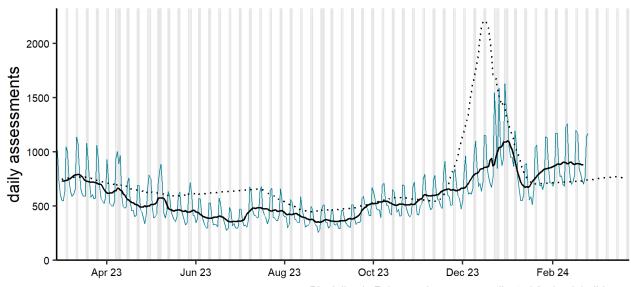




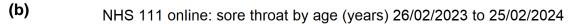
Sore throat NHS 111 online

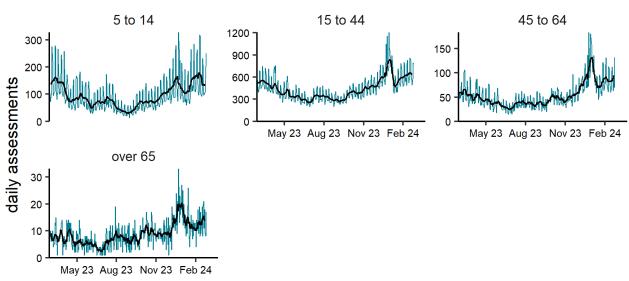
Figure 11: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for sore throat, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

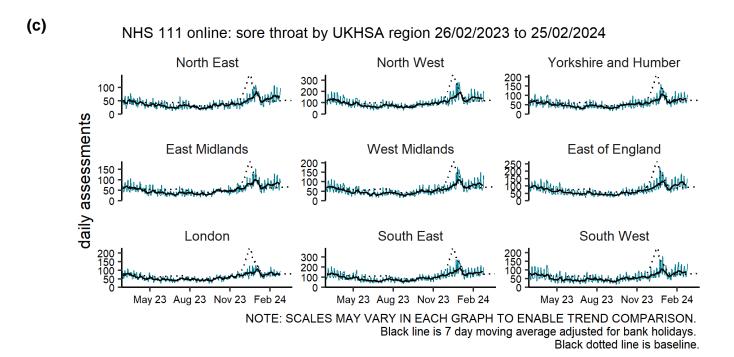




Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



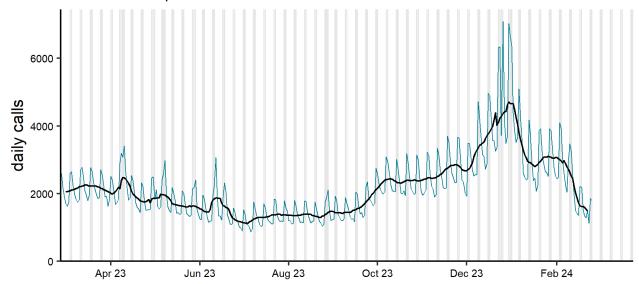


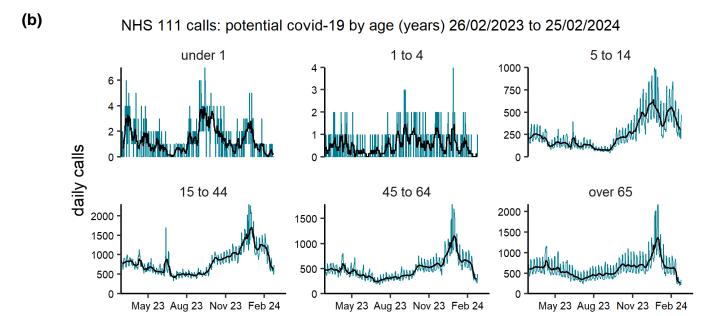


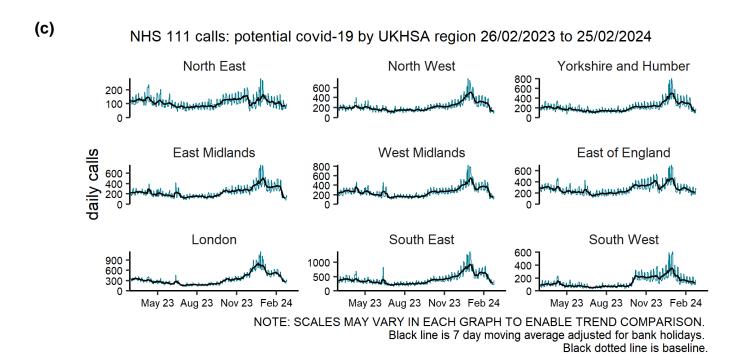
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 calls

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.







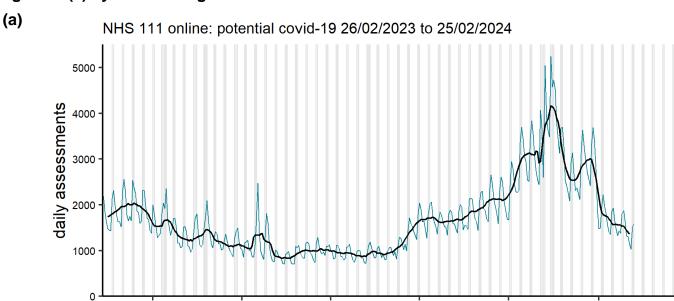


Apr 23

Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online

Jun 23

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.



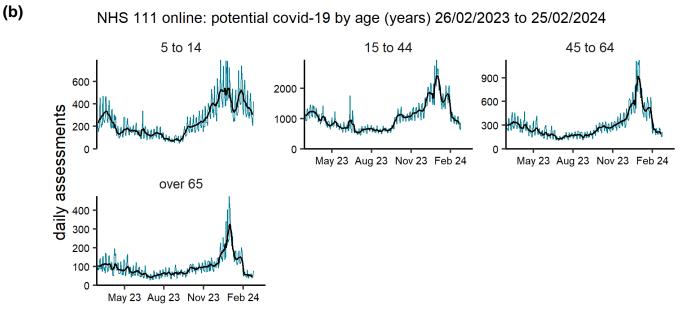
Aug 23

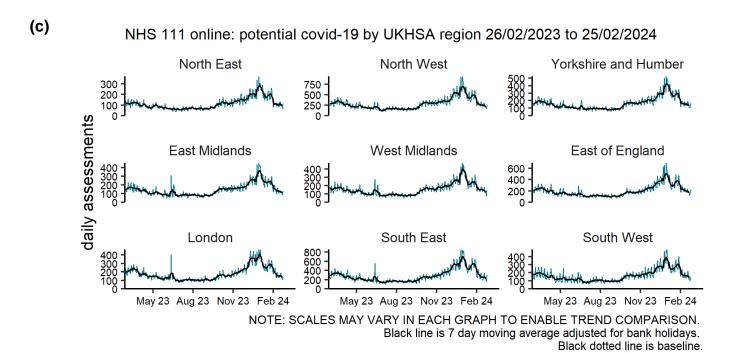
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Dec 23

Feb 24

Oct 23

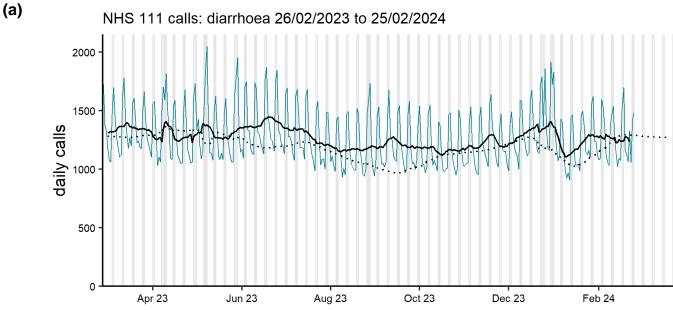


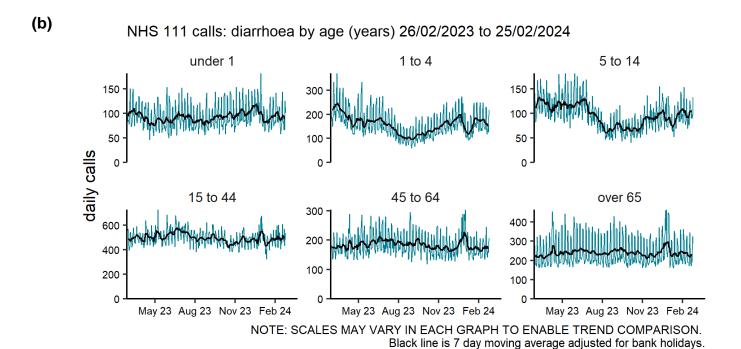


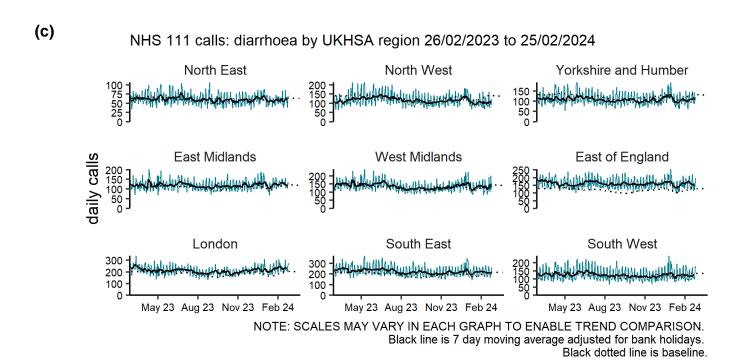
Gastrointestinal conditions

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.

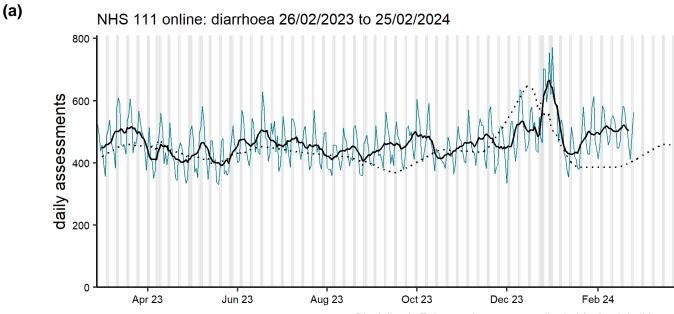




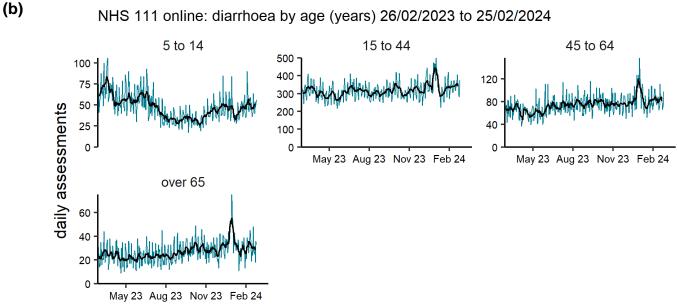


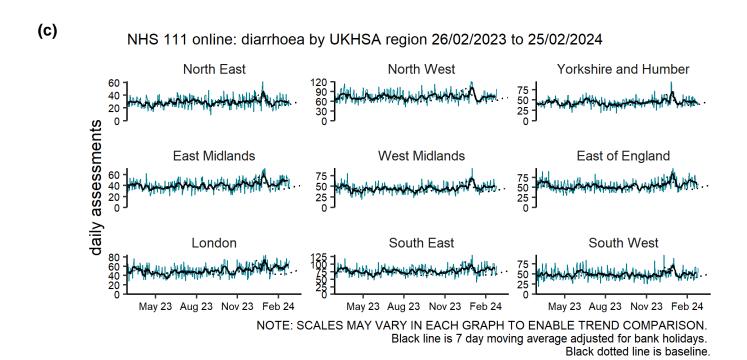
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online

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.



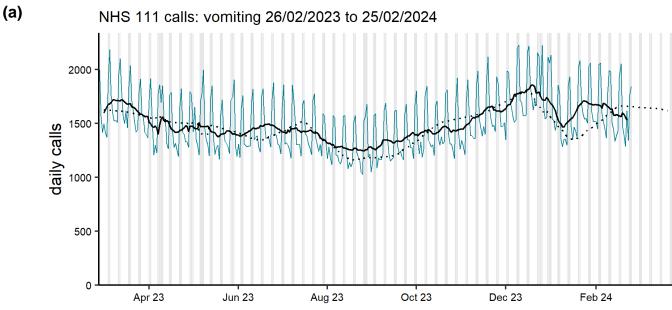
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

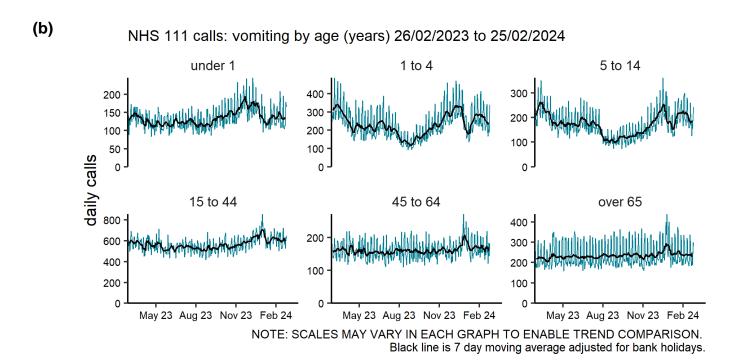


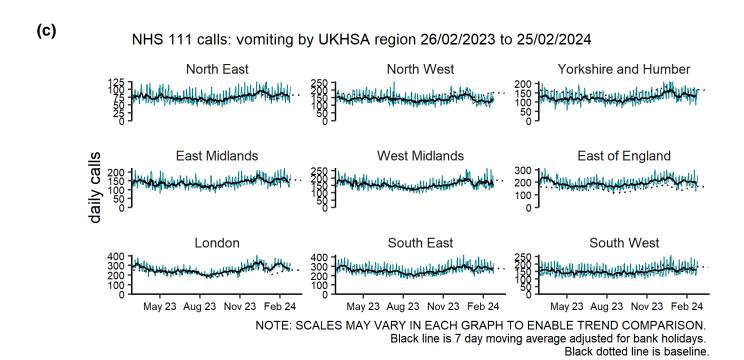


Vomiting NHS 111 calls

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.

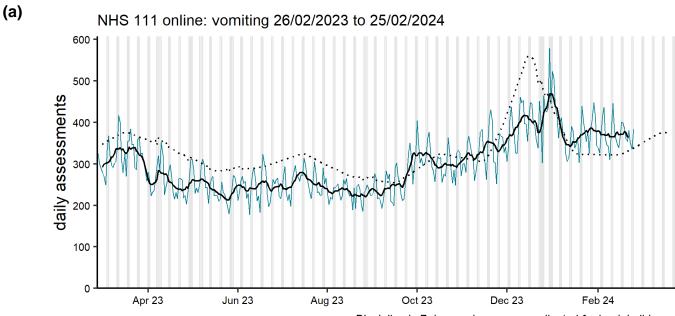




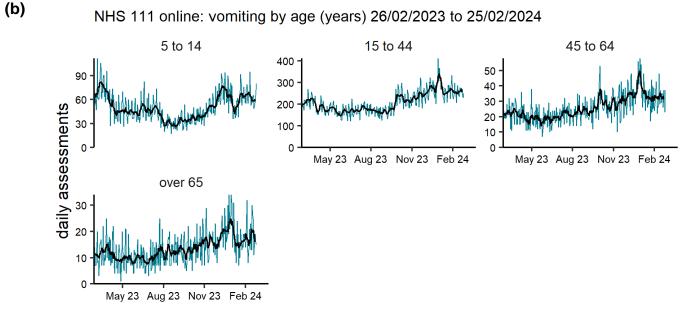


Vomiting NHS 111 online

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.

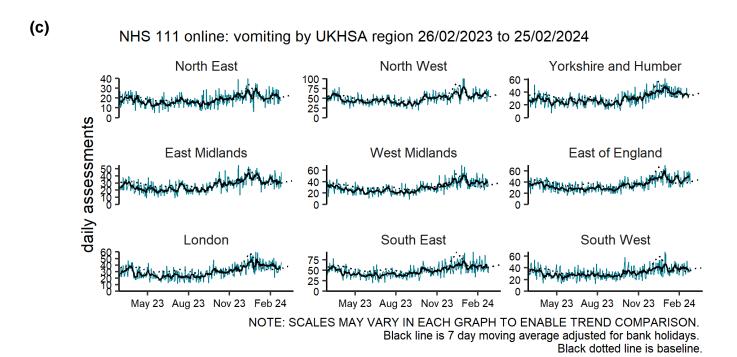


Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



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

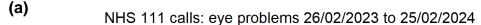
Heat-Health Alert period: 1 June to 30 September

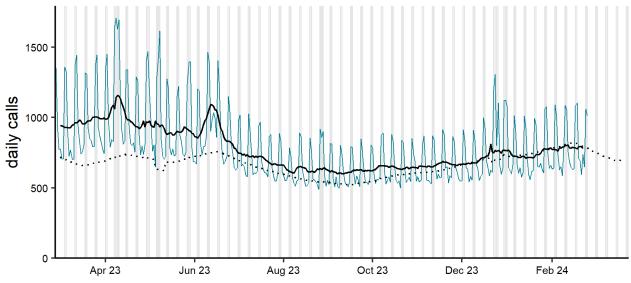
Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

No alerts issued

Eye problems NHS 111 calls

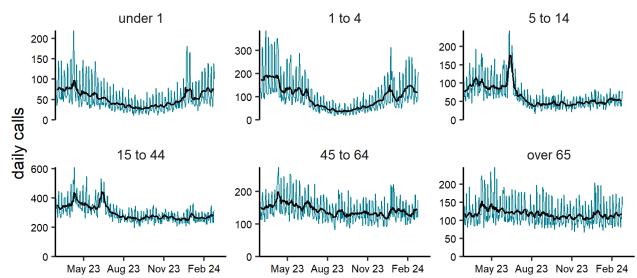
Figure 18: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.sd





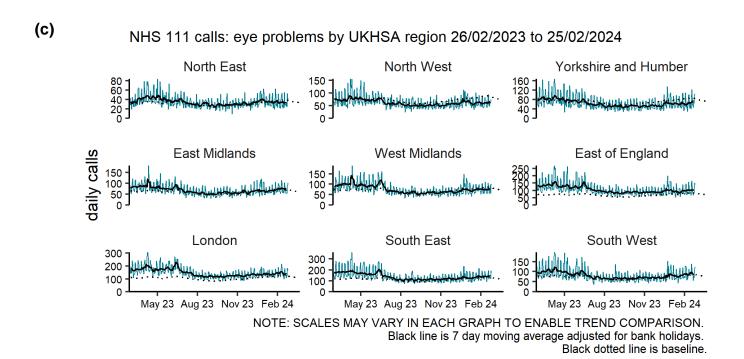
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.





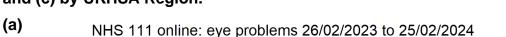
NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.

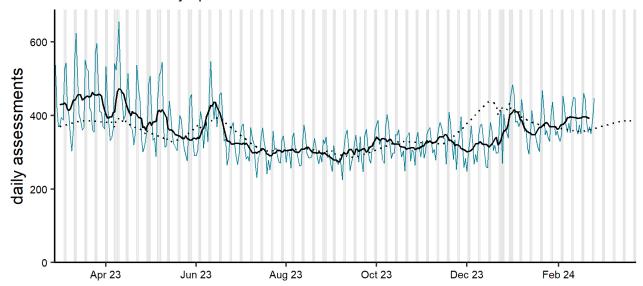
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.



Eye problems NHS 111 online

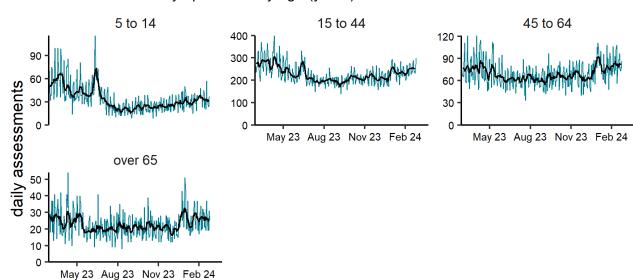
Figure 19: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.





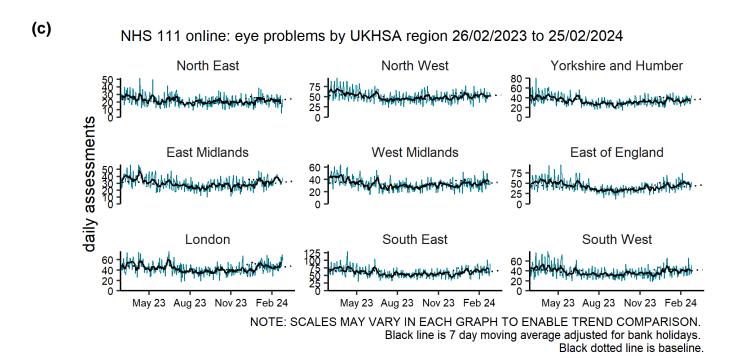
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NOTE: SCALES MAY VARY IN EACH GRAPH TO ENABLE TREND COMPARISON.

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



Notes and caveats

The following additional caveats apply to the UKHSA 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 January 2024
 - o are constructed from historical data since January 2018
 - o 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 either the symptom of each call or the outcome of each online assessment (known as the disposition):

- 'potential COVID-19' is the only NHS 111 Online syndromic indicator which is based on disposition
- 'potential COVID-19' online assessments may therefore also appear in other syndromic indicators based on the Pathway of each 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.

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

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