

Remote Health Advice Syndromic Surveillance System Bulletin (England) 2024 Week 16

Key messages

Data reported to: 21 April 2024

During week 16, NHS 111 acute respiratory infection calls decreased, with activity currently within seasonally expected levels. There were also decreases observed in NHS 111 online assessments for cold/flu, cough and sore throat.

Please note that recent updates to the NHS Pathways clinical tool used by NHS 111 have affected levels of certain syndromic indicators. As a result of these changes a selection of existing NHS 111 syndromic respiratory indicators have been removed from this report and replaced with a generic 'acute respiratory infections' calls indicator. Please see 'Notes and Caveats' for further information. NHS Pathways changes have also affected online assessments and the fever and difficulty breathing indicators have been temporarily removed from this report to avoid misinterpretation.

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
Acute respiratory infections NHS 111 calls (Figure 3)	Decreasing ²	Similar to baseline ²
Cold/flu NHS 111 online (Figure 4)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Cough NHS 111 online (Figure 5)	Decreasing	Above baseline
Sore throat NHS 111 online (Figure 6)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online (Figure 7)	Decreasing	No baseline
Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls (Figure 8)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online (Figure 9)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Vomiting NHS 111 calls (Figure 10)	No trend	Below baseline
Vomiting NHS 111 online (Figure 11)	No trend	Below baseline
Eye problems NHS 111 calls (Figure 12)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Eye problems NHS 111 online (Figure 13)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline

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

² see <u>Notes and Caveats</u> for information about changes to calls for respiratory complaints and the introduction of a new 'acute respiratory infection' indicator

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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

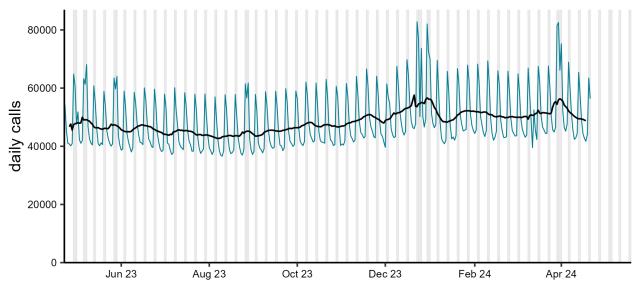
Please see the <u>Notes and Caveats</u> section about the current impact of newly released NHS Pathways system updates (NHS Pathways Releases 41 and 42) on syndromic data reporting. Selected NHS 111 calls and online assessment respiratory indicators have been temporarily removed from the report due to the ongoing impact of these changes.

Total contacts

NHS 111 calls

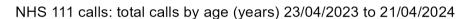
Figure 1: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (with 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) recorded in this syndromic surveillance system in England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

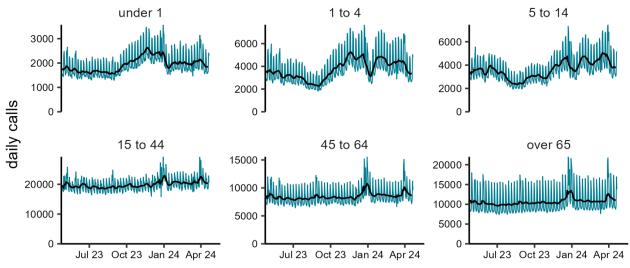




Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

(b)





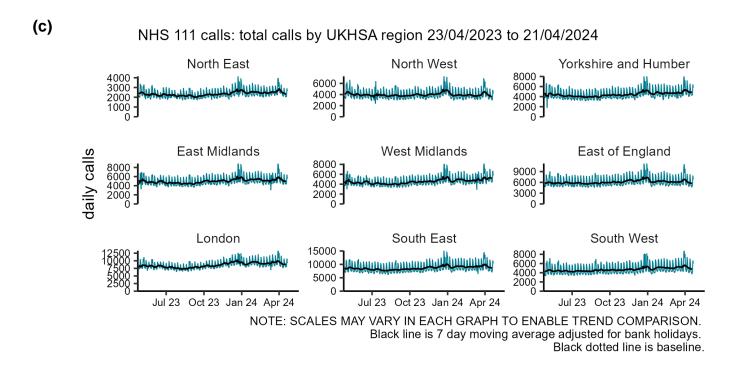
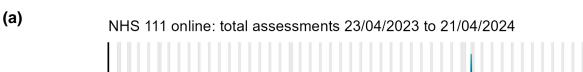


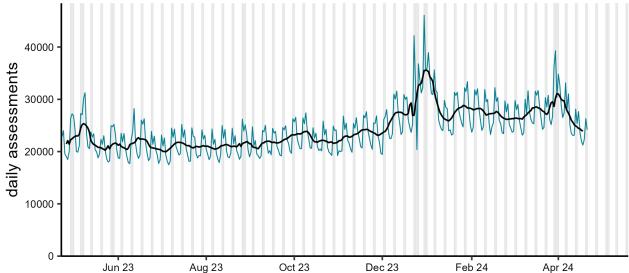
Table 2: The number of NHS 111 calls in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

Date	Number of calls
15 April 2024	49,902
16 April 2024	44,975
17 April 2024	43,191
18 April 2024	42,070
19 April 2024	44,328
20 April 2024	64,036
21 April 2024	56,846

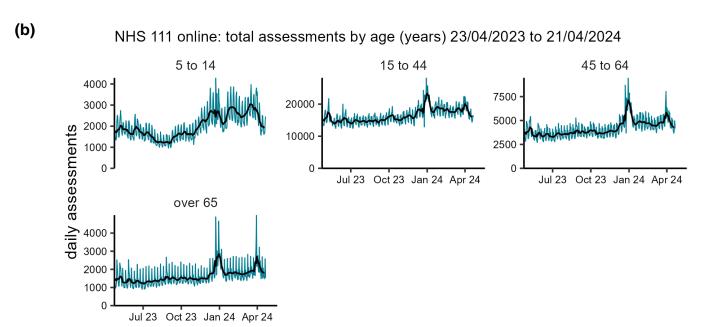
NHS 111 online

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.





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



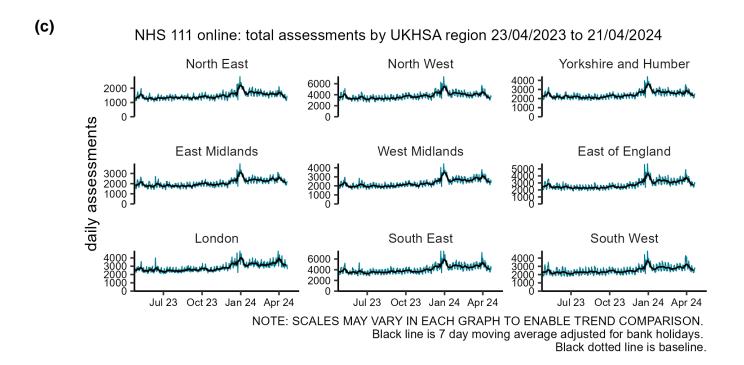


Table 3: The number of completed NHS 111 online assessments in England recorded each day in the most recent week.

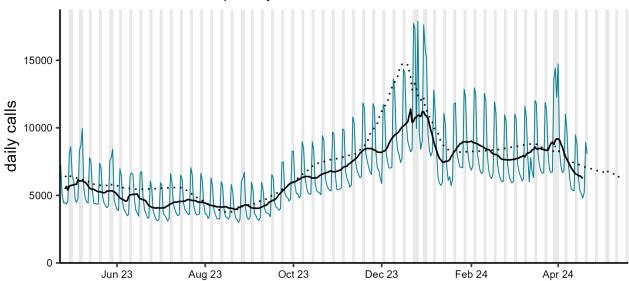
Date	Number of completed assessments
15 April 2024	26,625
16 April 2024	22,686
17 April 2024	21,160
18 April 2024	20,462
19 April 2024	21,614
20 April 2024	25,357
21 April 2024	23,115

Respiratory conditions

Acute respiratory infections NHS 111 calls

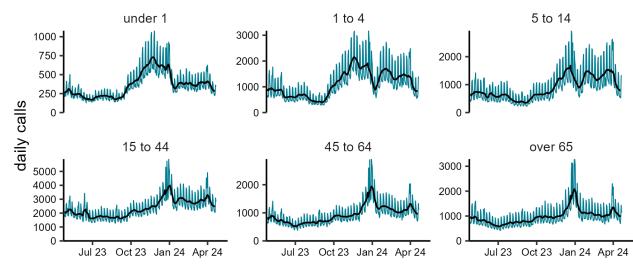
Figure 3: Daily number of NHS 111 calls (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for acute respiratory infections, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

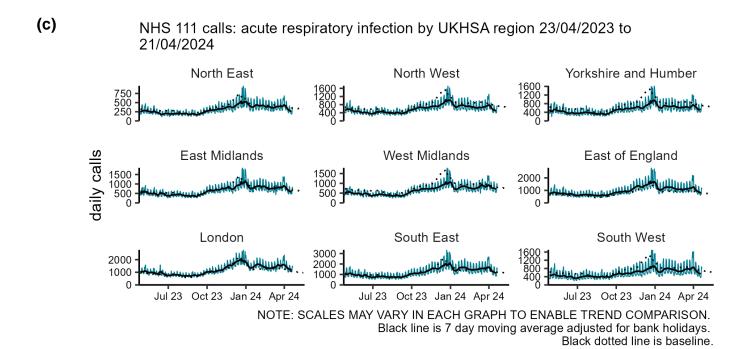




Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

(b) NHS 111 calls: acute respiratory infection by age (years) 23/04/2023 to 21/04/2024

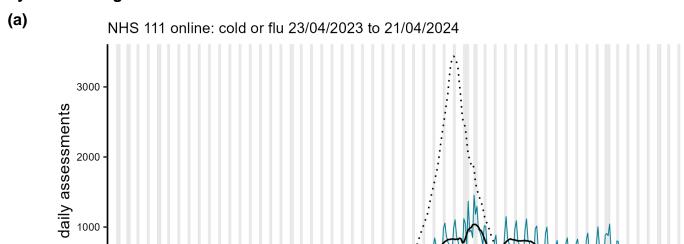




Cold/flu NHS 111 online

Jun 23

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.



Oct 23

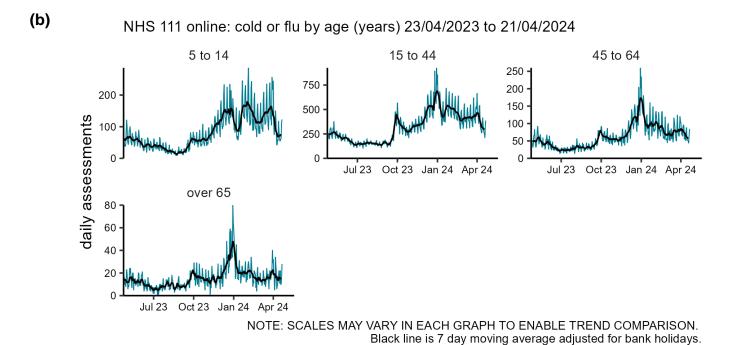
Aug 23

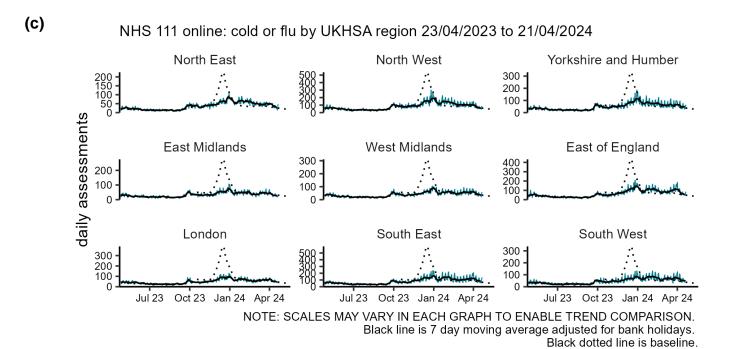
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Feb 24

Apr 24

Dec 23



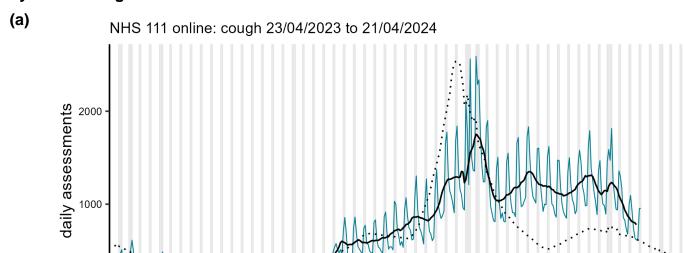


Cough NHS 111 online

Jun 23

Aug 23

Figure 5: 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.



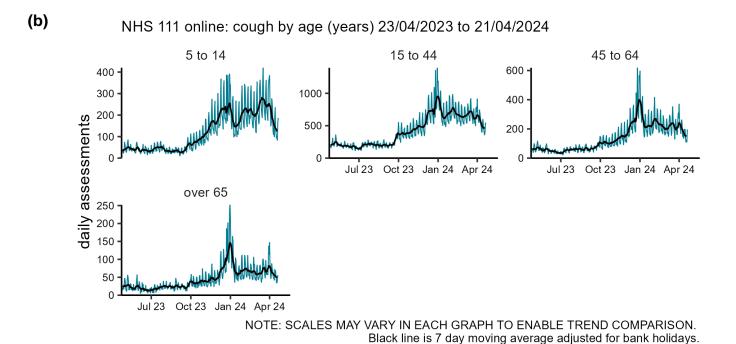
Oct 23

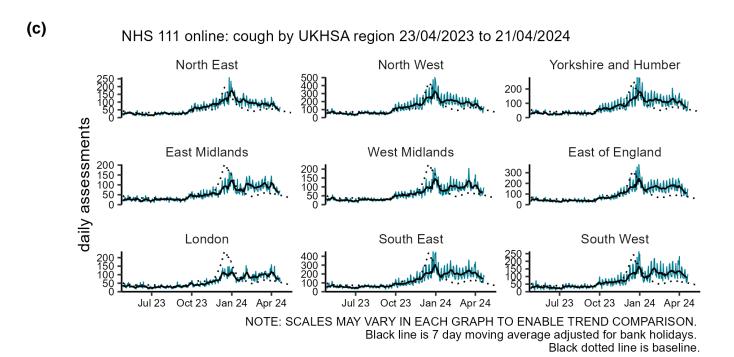
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Feb 24

Apr 24

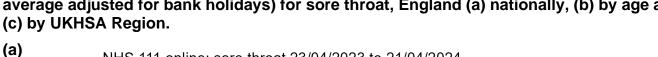
Dec 23

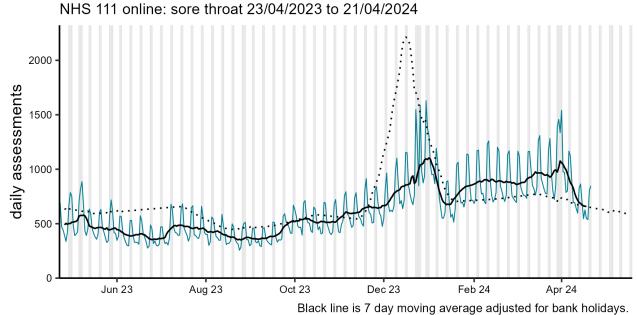




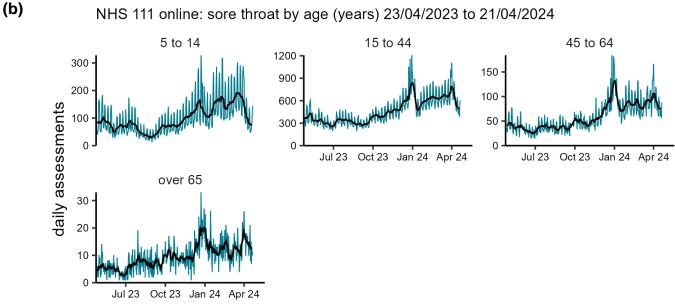
Sore throat NHS 111 online

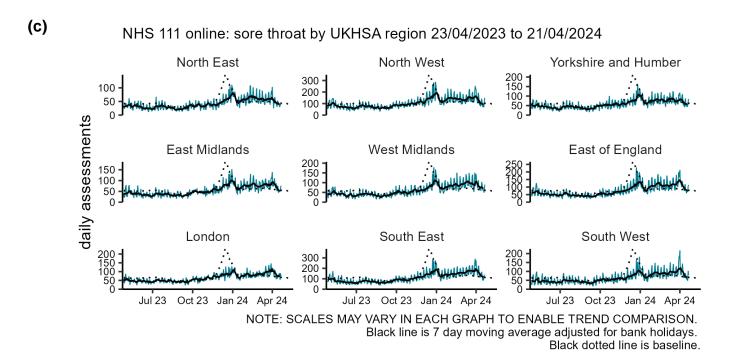
Figure 6: Daily number of completed NHS 111 online assessments (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for sore throat, England (a) nationally, (b) by age and





Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.





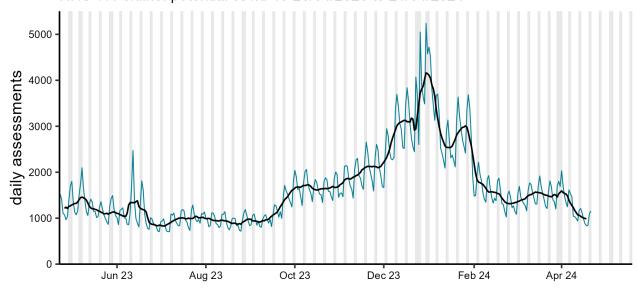
Potential COVID-19 NHS 111 online

Figure 7: 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.

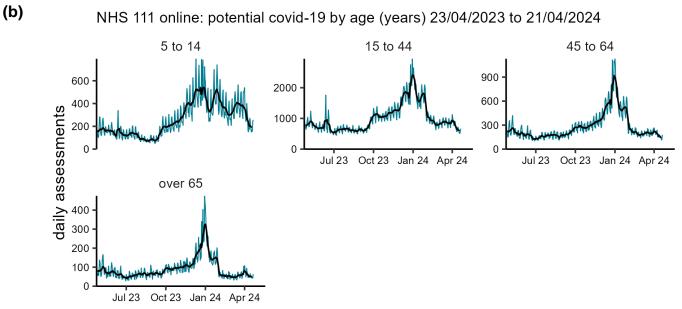
age and (c) by UKHSA Region.

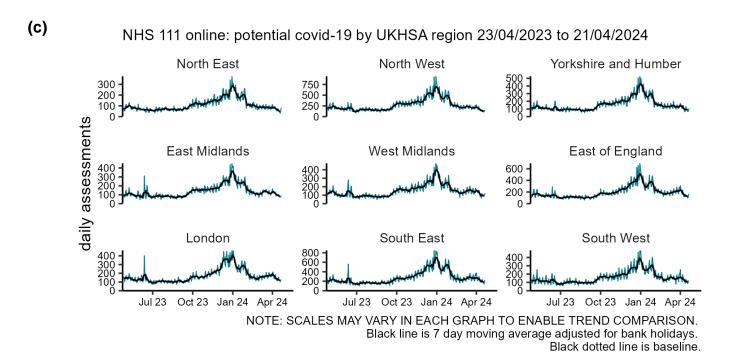
(a)

NHS 111 online: potential covid-19 23/04/2023 to 21/04/2024



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

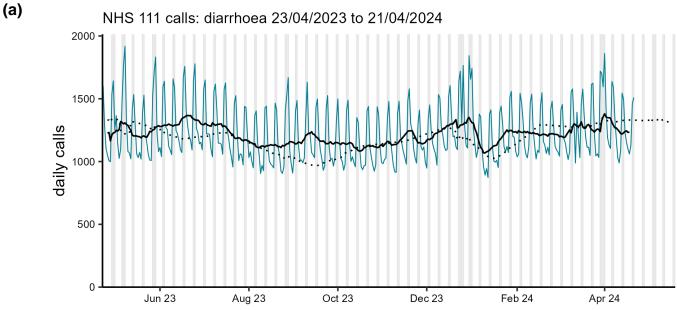




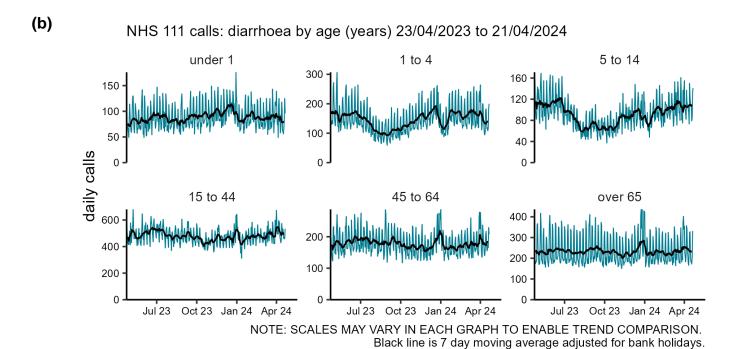
Gastrointestinal conditions

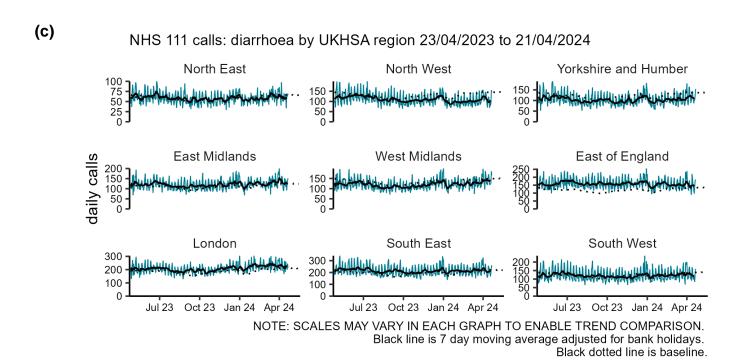
Diarrhoea NHS 111 calls

Figure 8: 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.



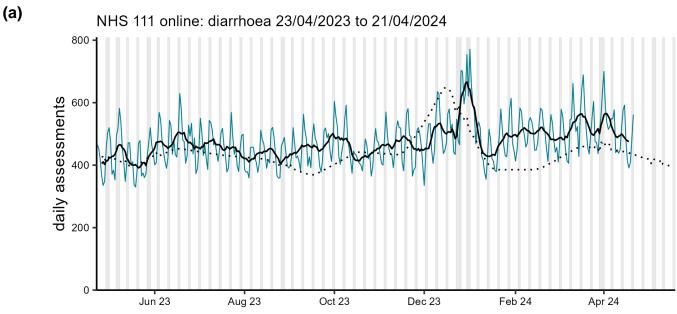
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



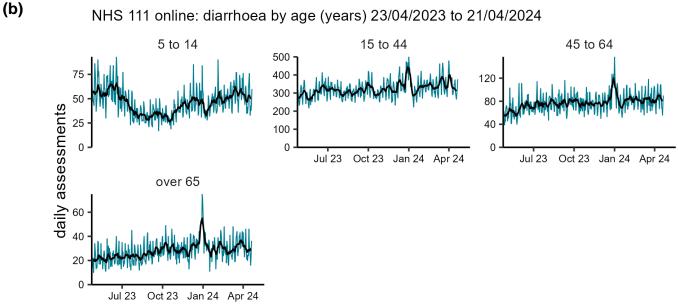


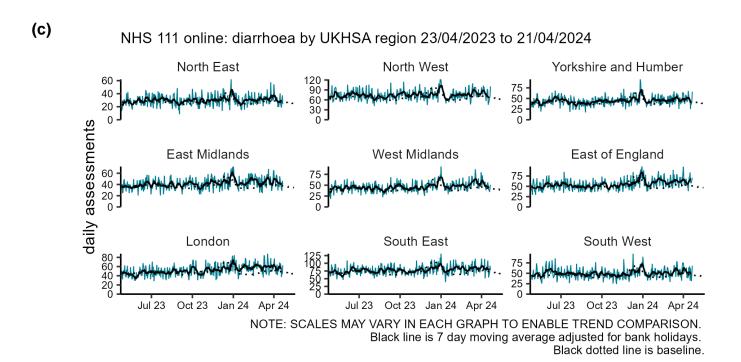
Diarrhoea NHS 111 online

Figure 9: 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.



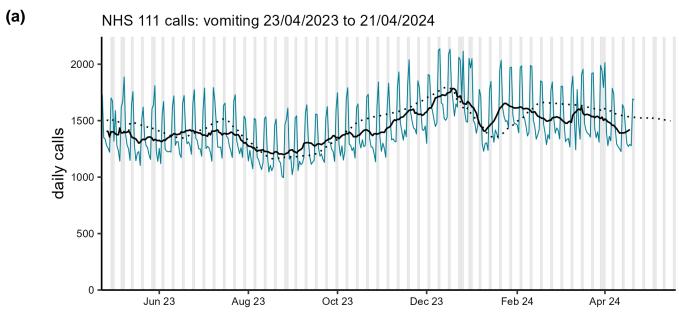
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



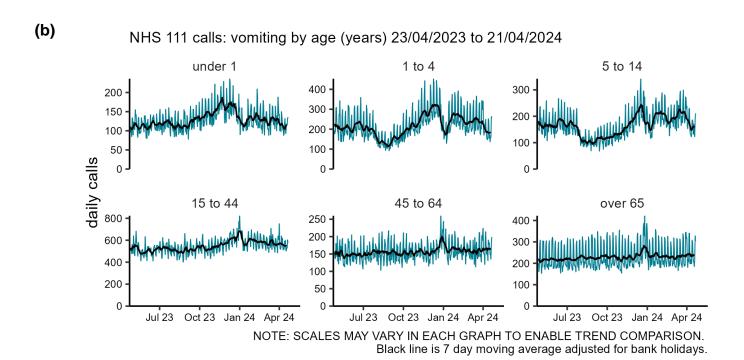


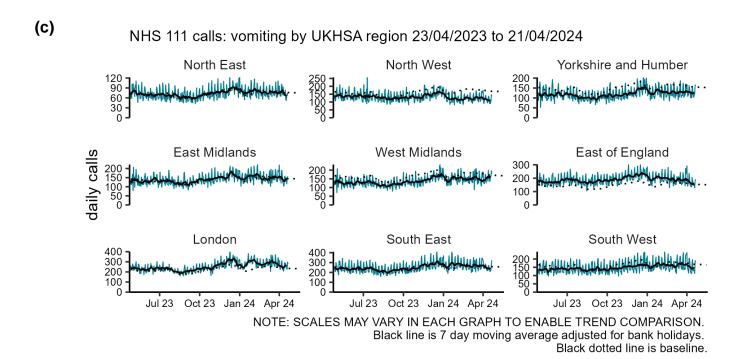
Vomiting NHS 111 calls

Figure 10: 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.



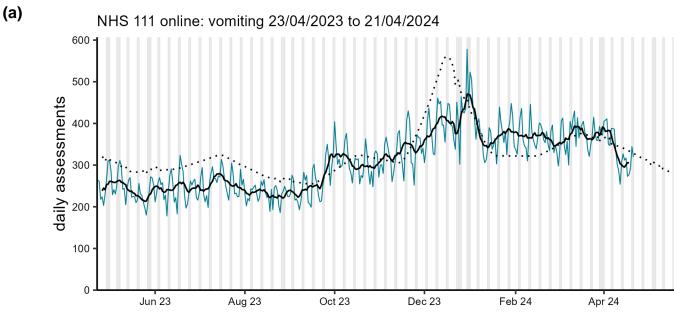
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.



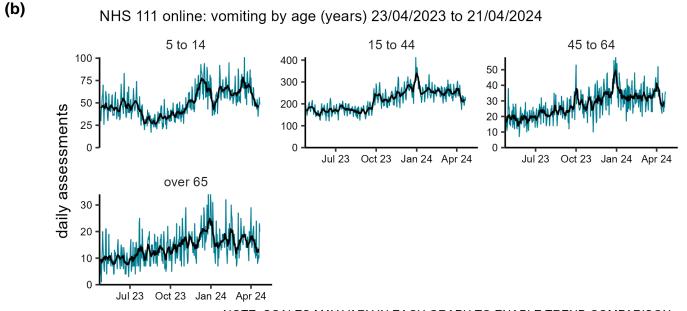


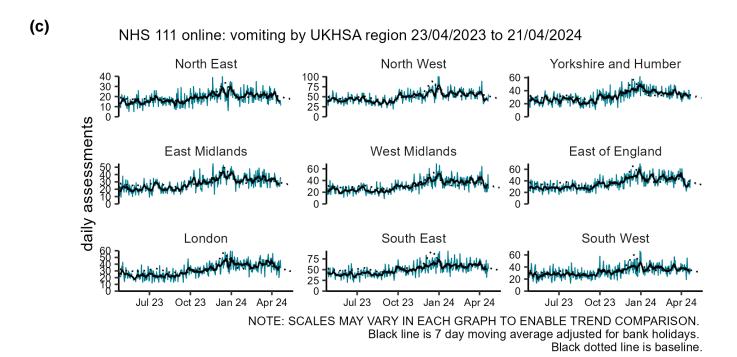
Vomiting NHS 111 online

Figure 11: 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.





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

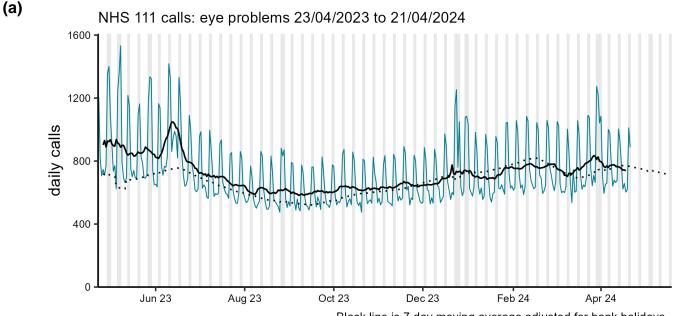
Heat-Health Alert period: 1 June to 30 September

Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

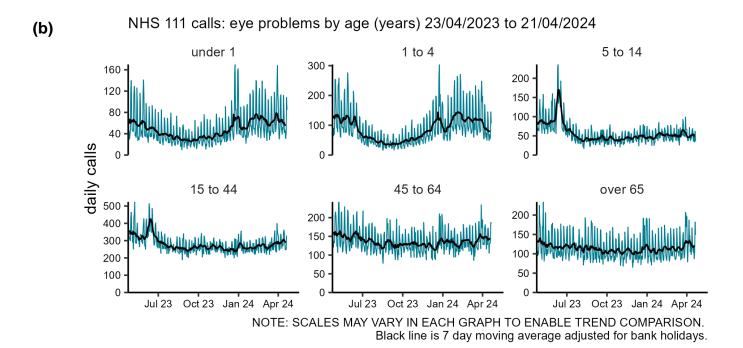
No alerts issued

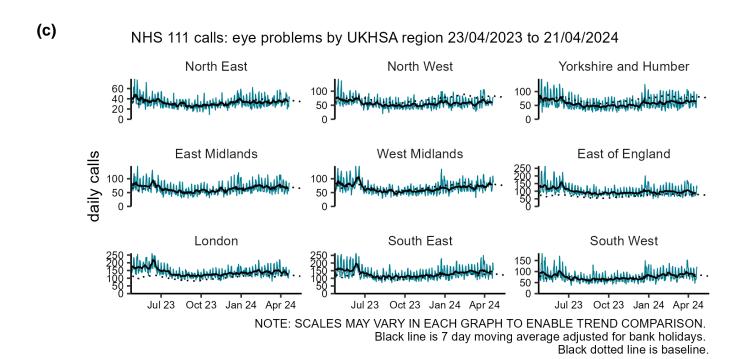
Eye problems NHS 111 calls

Figure 12: 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.



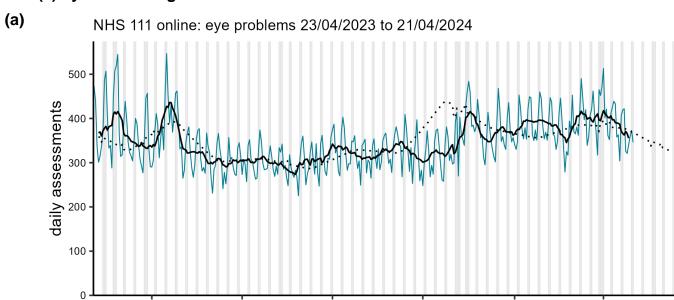


Eye problems NHS 111 online

Jun 23

Aug 23

Figure 13: 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.



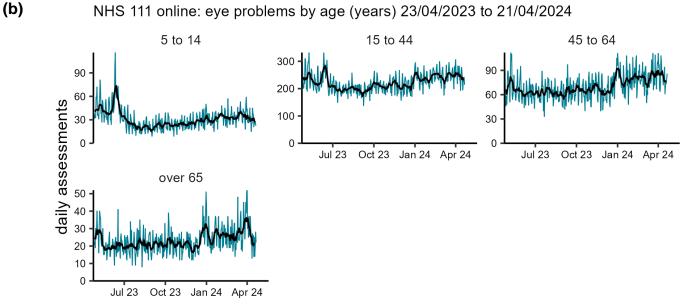
Oct 23

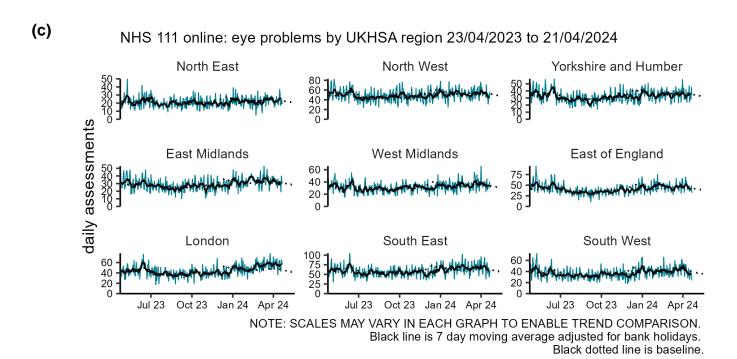
Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays. Black dotted line is baseline. Grey columns show weekends and bank holidays.

Dec 23

Feb 24

Apr 24





Notes and caveats

The following additional caveats apply to the UKHSA remote health advice syndromic surveillance system:

- during the period November 2023 to April 2024, NHS Pathways system updates
 (NHS Pathways Releases 41 and 42) have resulted in updates to the clinical triage of
 certain NHS 111 calls. These updates have particularly affected the number of
 syndromic NHS 111 calls across respiratory indicators. Due to challenges interpreting
 the NHS 111 calls, the individual respiratory indicators routinely reported in this
 bulletin have been replaced with a single 'acute respiratory infections' indicator. This
 indicator is based on a broad group of symptoms/provisional diagnoses that may be
 indicative of acute respiratory infections including, for example, influenza-like illness,
 otitis media, pharyngitis
- due to particular challenges interpreting the NHS 111 difficulty breathing online indicators and online fever indicator, these charts have temporarily been removed from this bulletin to avoid misinterpretation
- 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':
 - 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 syndromic reports before week 20 2023, when a different data repository was used for syndromic surveillance purposes. 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
- 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 <u>here</u>

COVID-19 syndromic surveillance

The 'potential COVID-19' syndromic indicator reported here for all NHS 111 data is based on the outcome of each online assessment (known as the disposition):

- 'potential COVID-19' is the only NHS 111 Online syndromic indicator that 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

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to NHS 111 and to NHS England for their assistance and support in providing the anonymised data that underpin 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 heath secure.

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

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

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