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

2024 Week 33

Key messages

Data reported to: 18 August 2024

During week 33, GP out-of-hours daily contacts for 'heat or sunstroke' decreased and returned to expected levels. Daily contacts for vomiting increased particularly in age groups 15 years and older.

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**)	Decreasing	Similar to baseline
Influenza-like illness (**Figure 3**)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis (**Figure 4**)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Difficulty breathing/wheeze/asthma (**Figure 5**)	Decreasing	Above baseline
Fever (**Figure 6**)	No trend	Below baseline
Acute pharyngitis (**Figure 7**)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Gastroenteritis (**Figure 8**)	No trend	Above baseline
Diarrhoea (**Figure 9**)	No trend	Above baseline
Vomiting (**Figure 10**)	Increasing	Above baseline
Chest pain (inc. myocardial infarction) (**Figure 11**)	No trend	Above baseline
Eye problems (**Figure 12**)	No trend	Similar to baseline
Insect bites (**Figure 13**)	No trend	Below baseline
Heat or sunstroke (**Figure 14**)	No trend	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

Nothing new to report.

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 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: total contacts by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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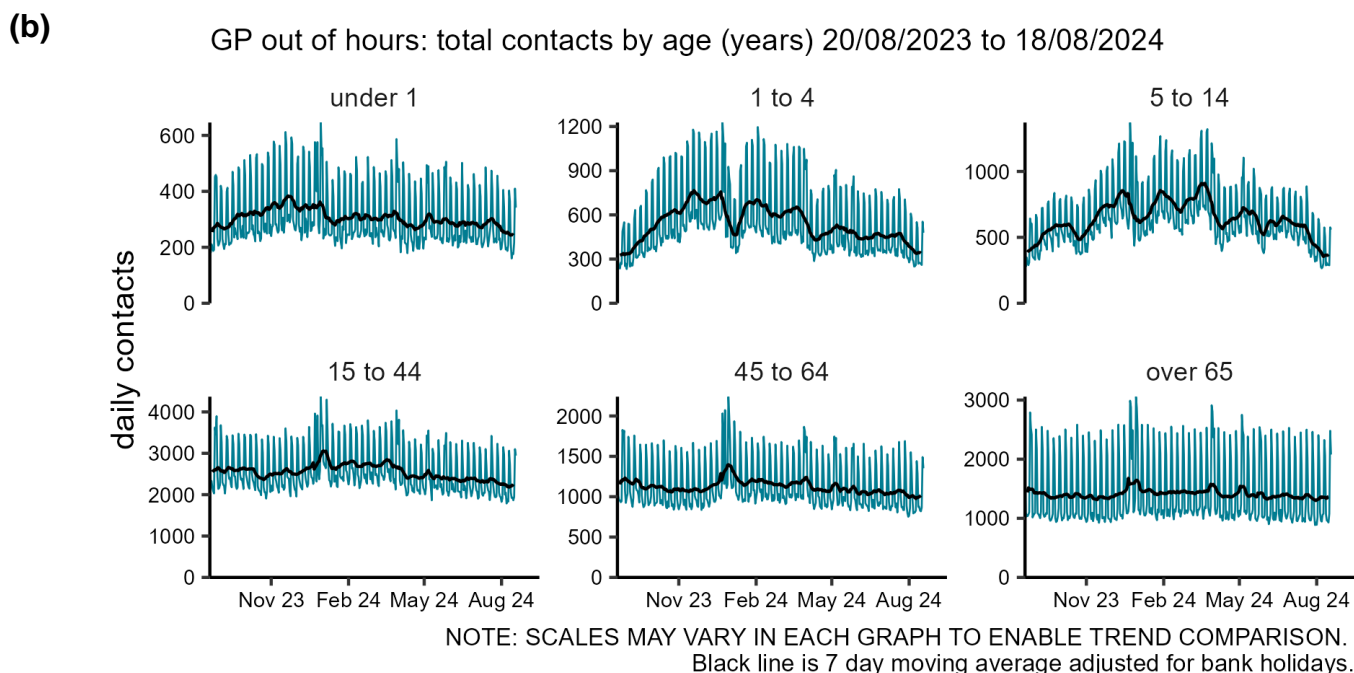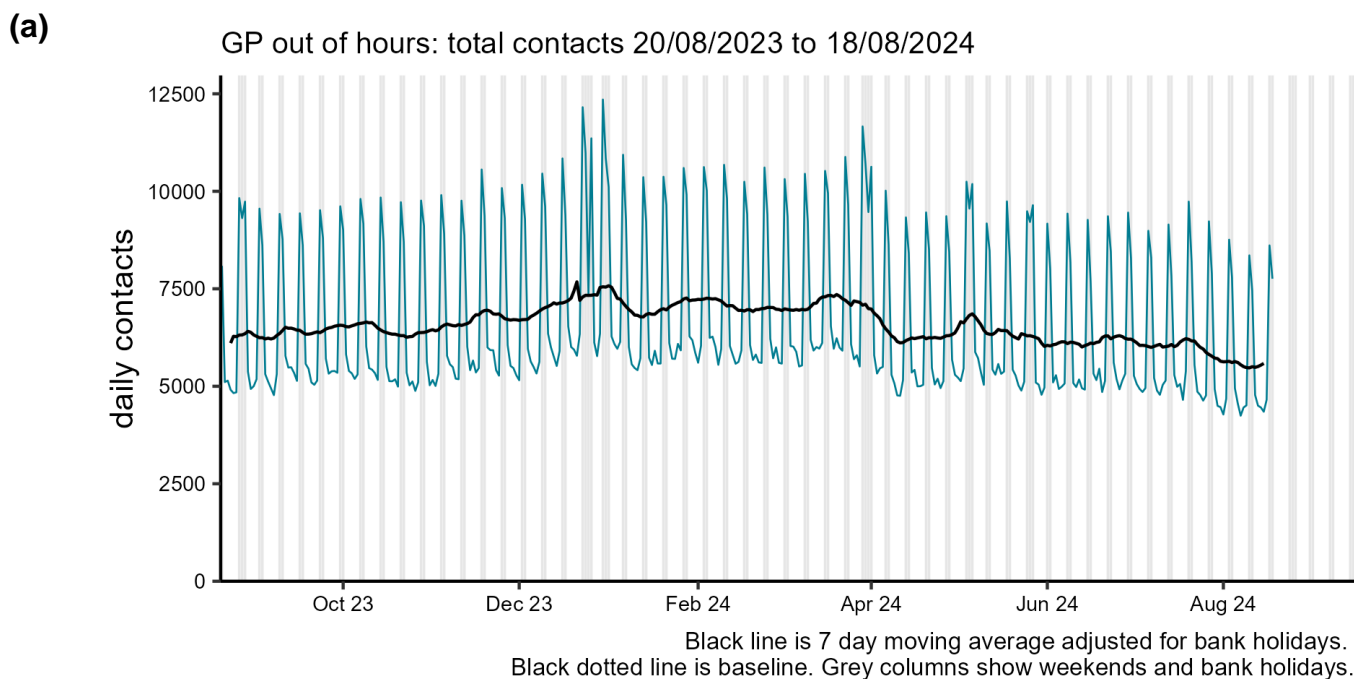Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

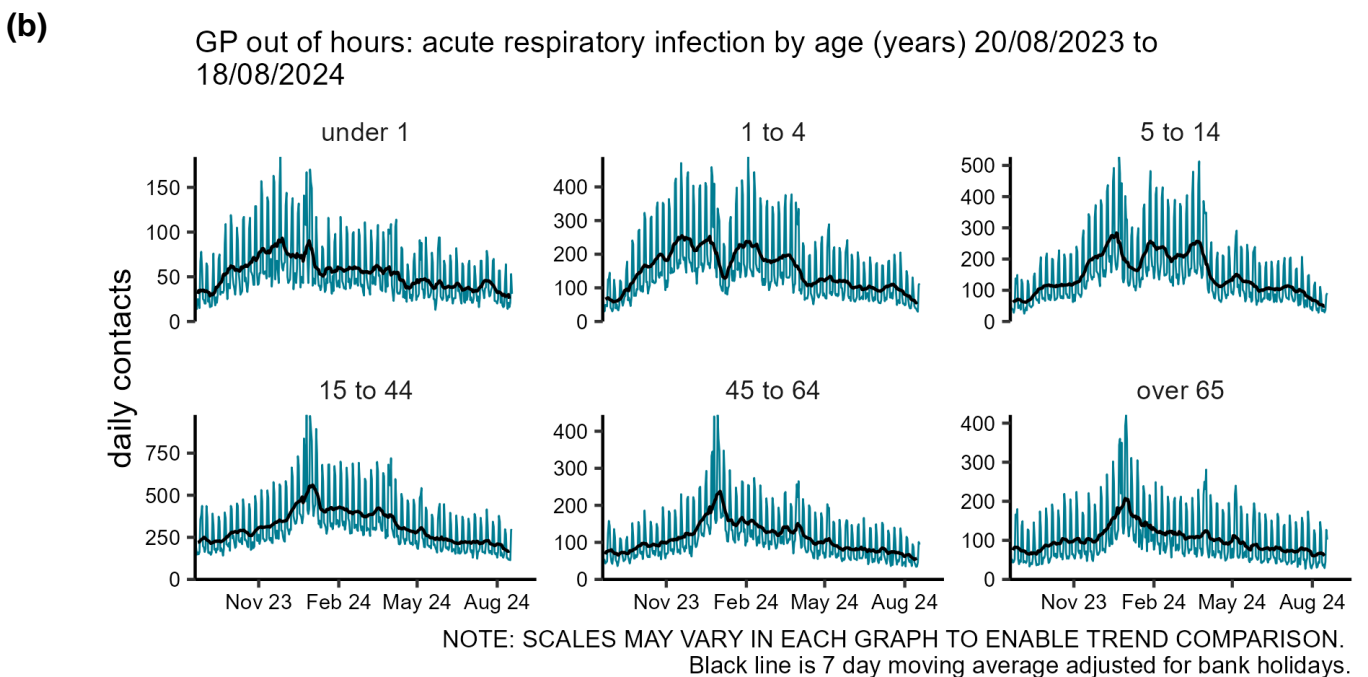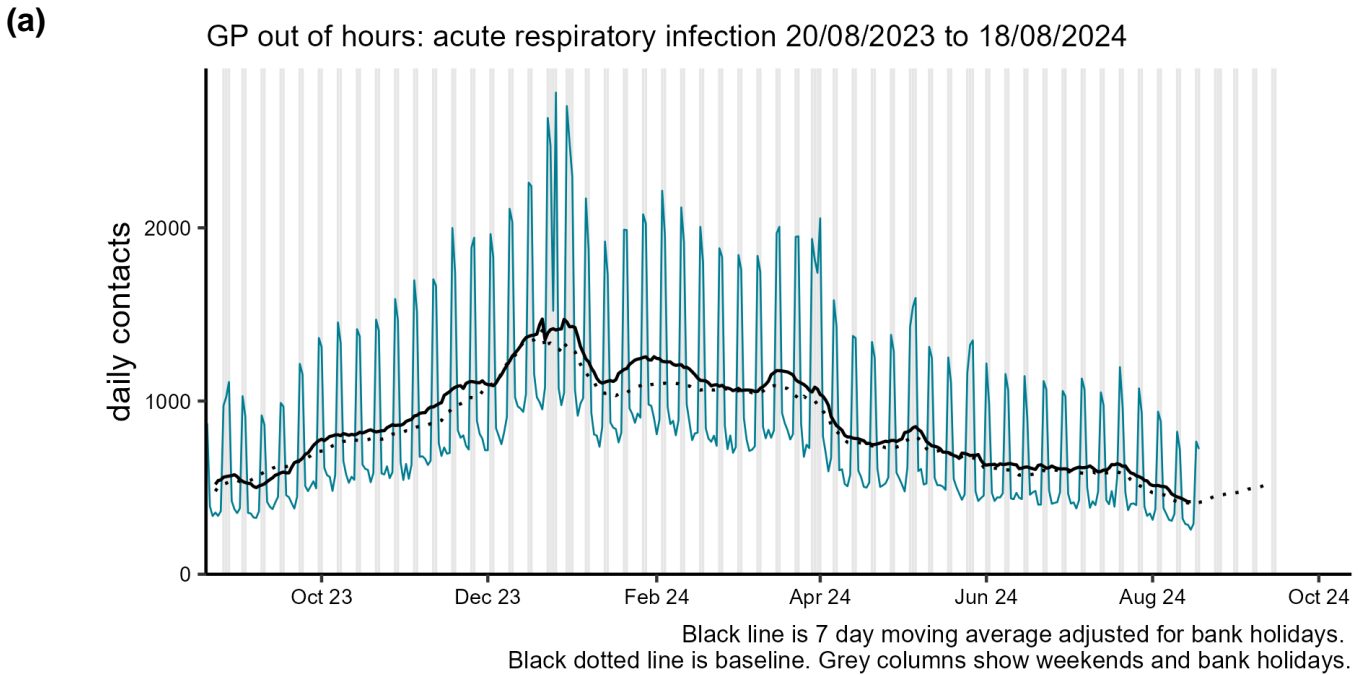**Table 2: The number of GP out-of-hours contacts in this sentinel syndromic surveillance system in England recorded each day in the most recent week.**

Date	Number of contacts
12 August 2024	23,587
13 August 2024	21,000
14 August 2024	21,448
15 August 2024	20,250
16 August 2024	21,670
17 August 2024	31,497
18 August 2024	27,131

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 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: acute respiratory infection by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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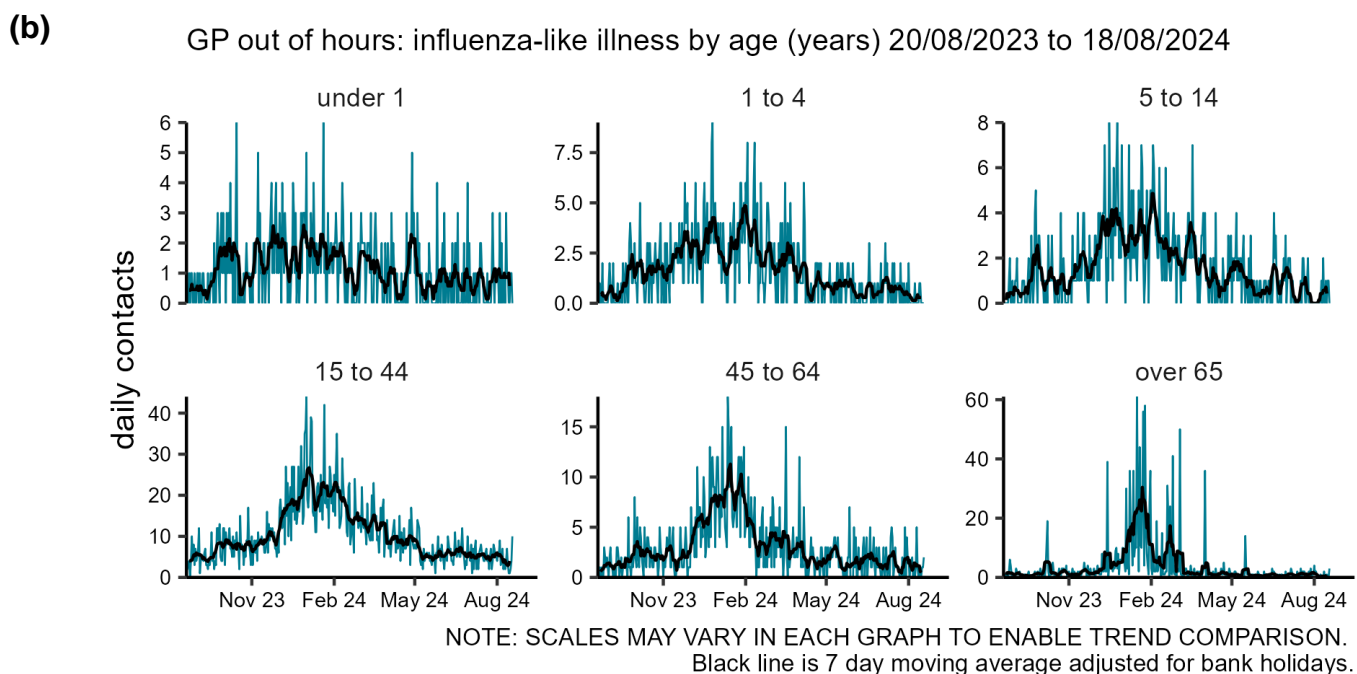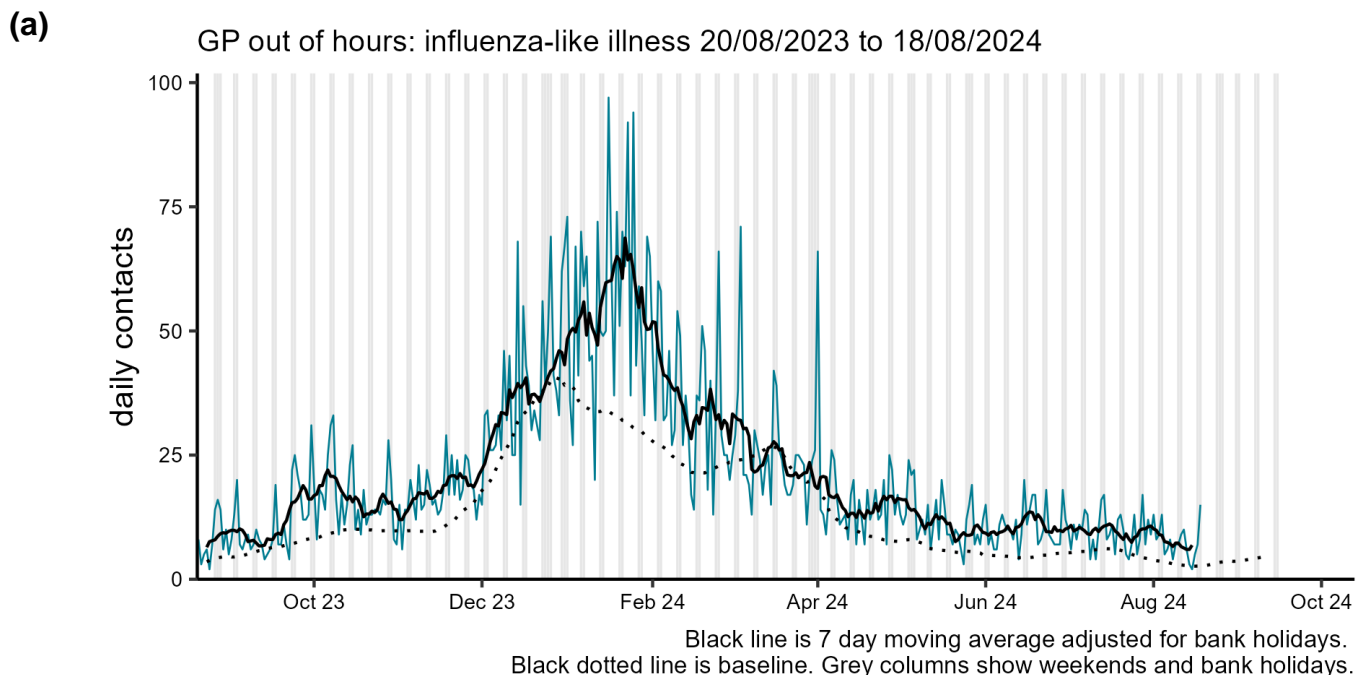
Figure 3: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for influenza-like illness, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.

(a)

GP out of hours: influenza-like illness 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: influenza-like illness by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

8

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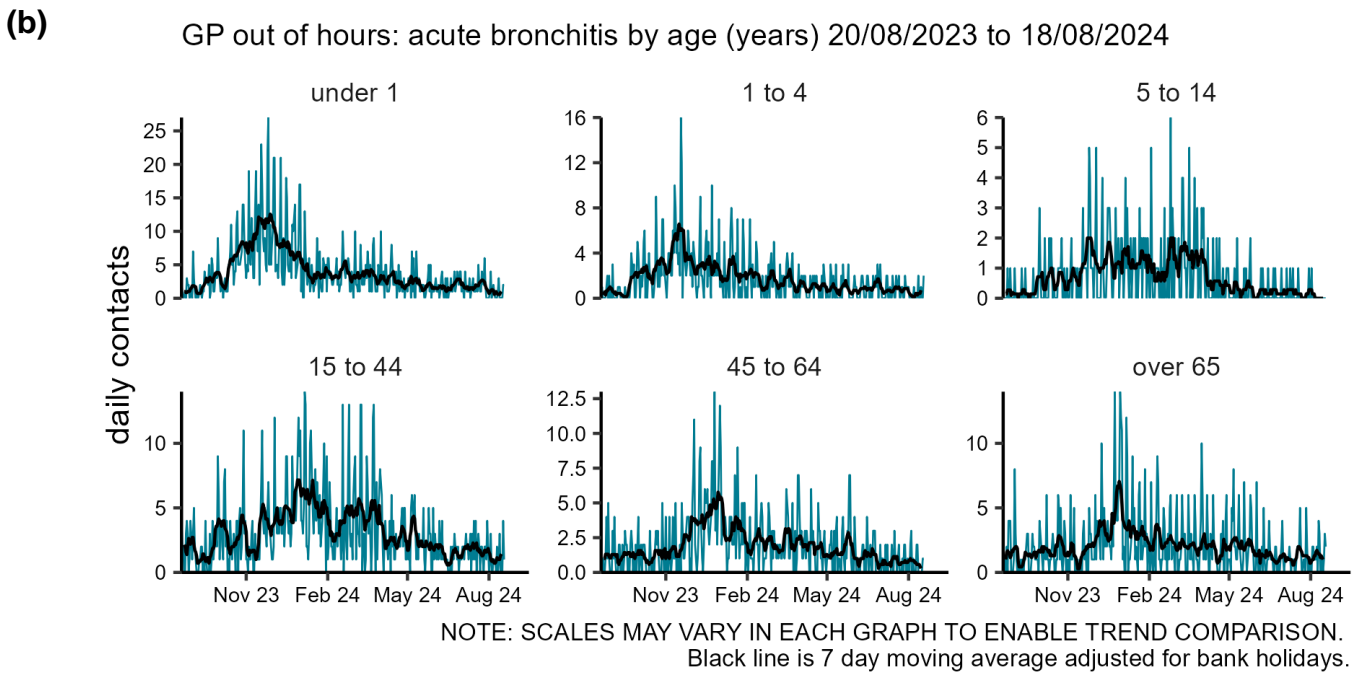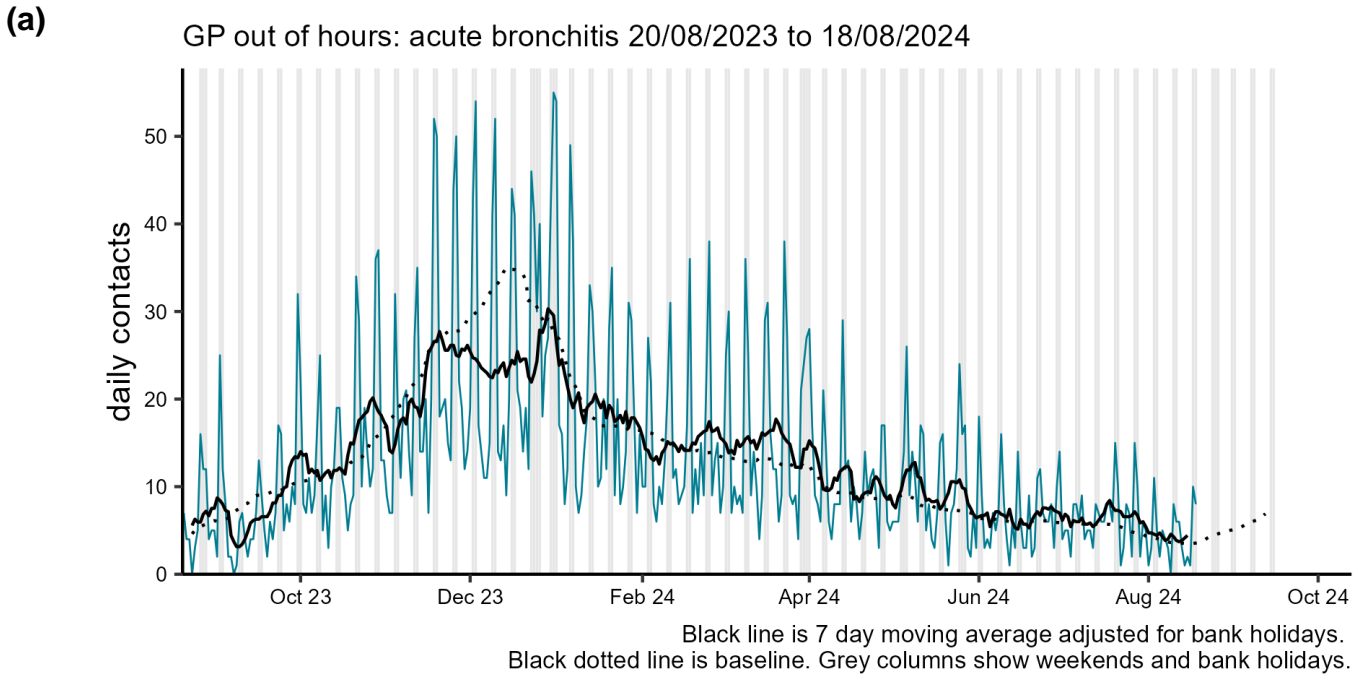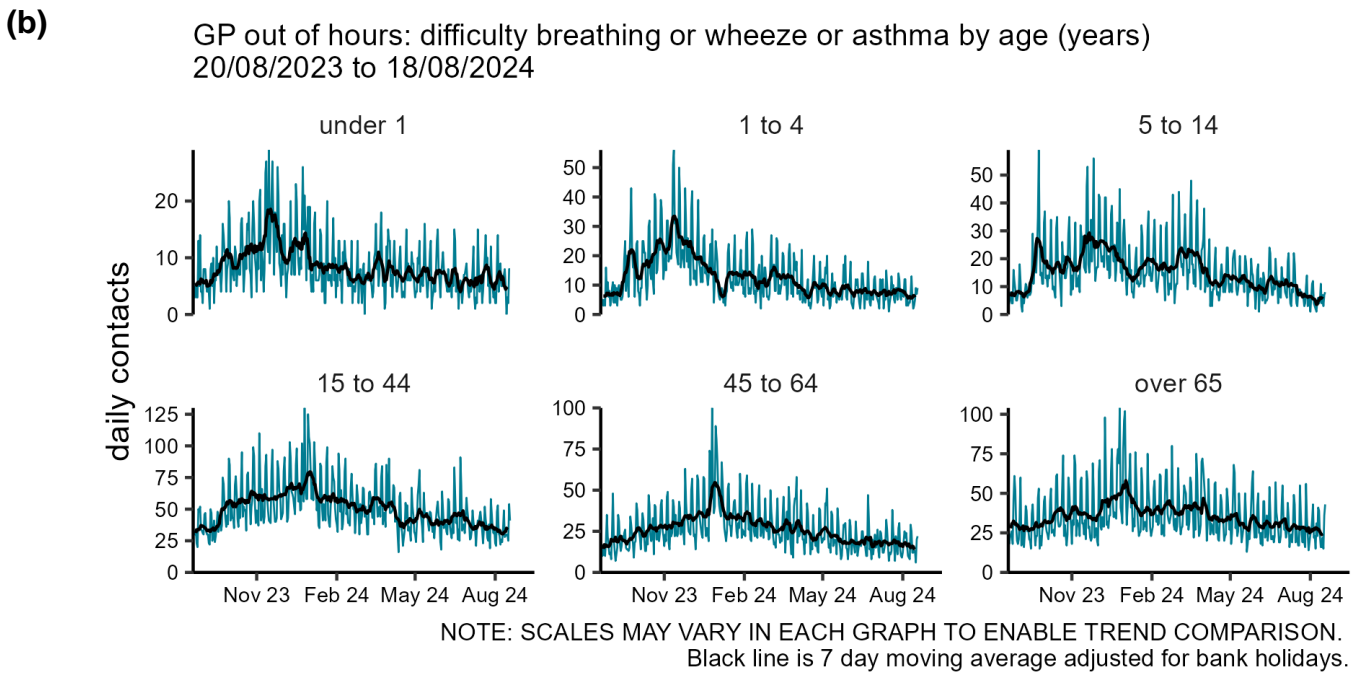
Figure 4: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.

(a)

GP out of hours: acute bronchitis 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: acute bronchitis by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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 or wheeze or asthma 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: difficulty breathing or wheeze or asthma by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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)

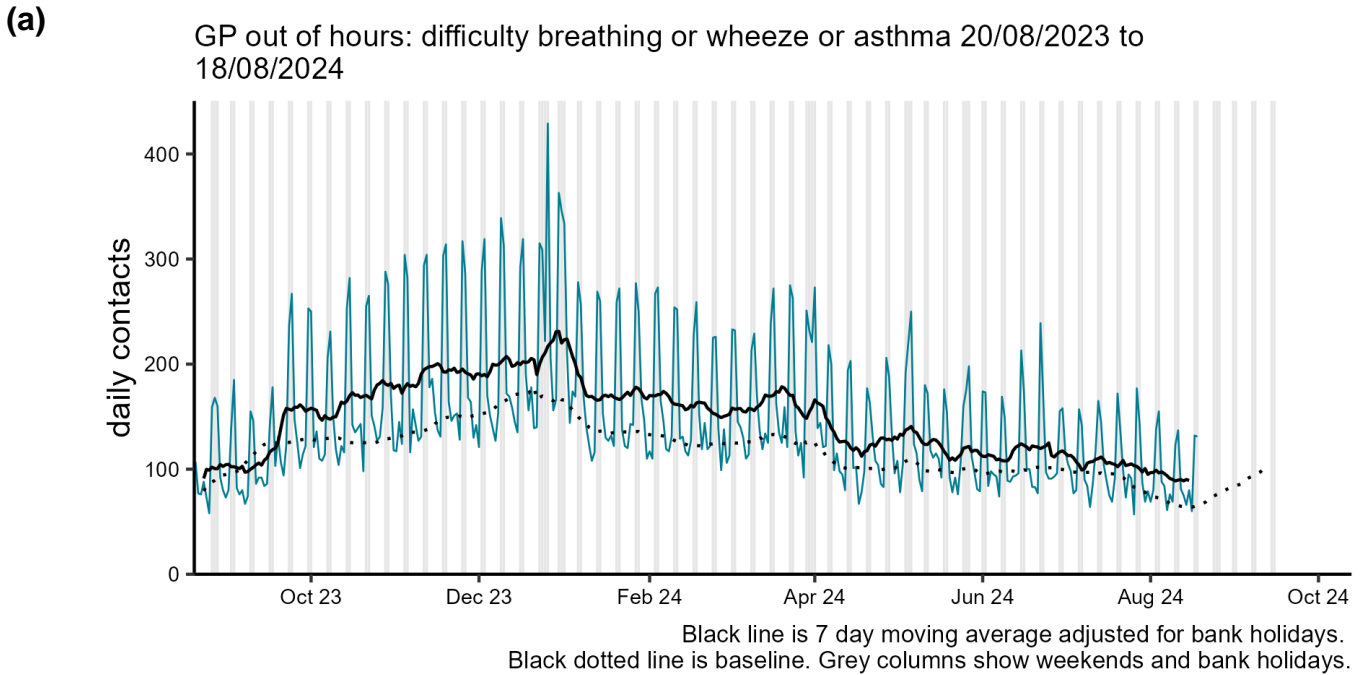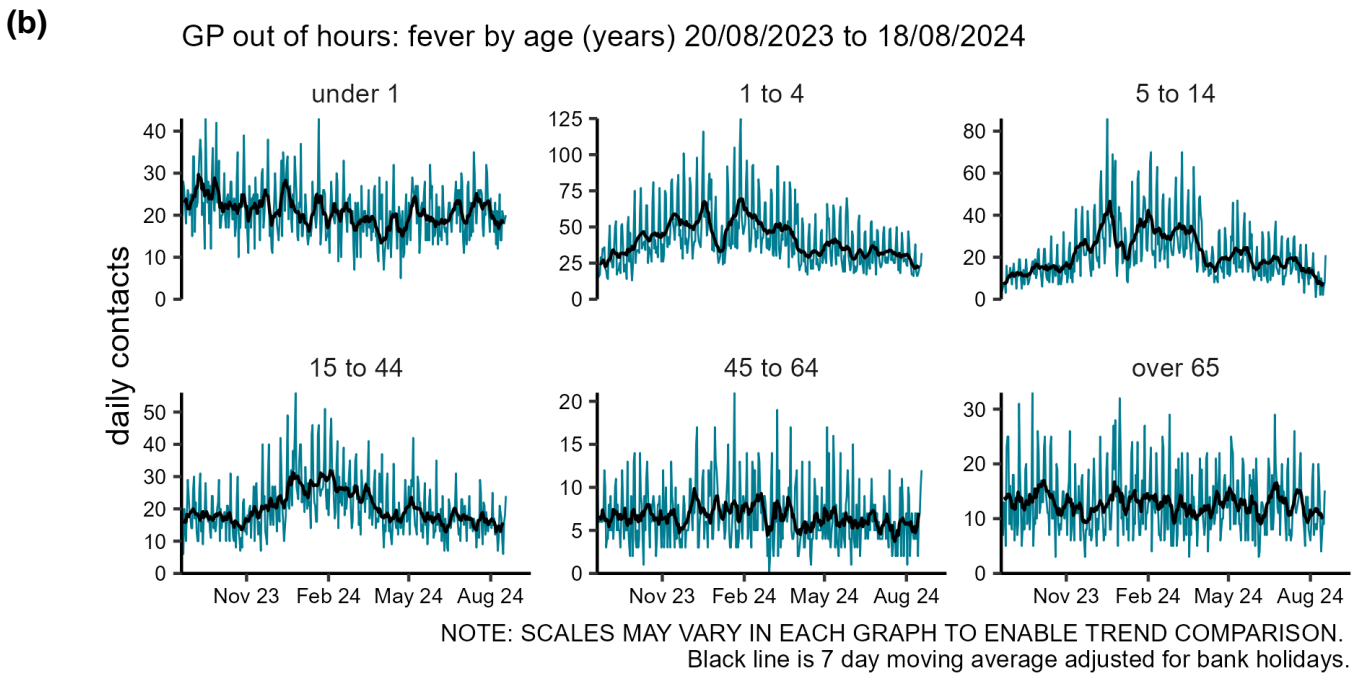GP out of hours: fever 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: fever by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

11

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.
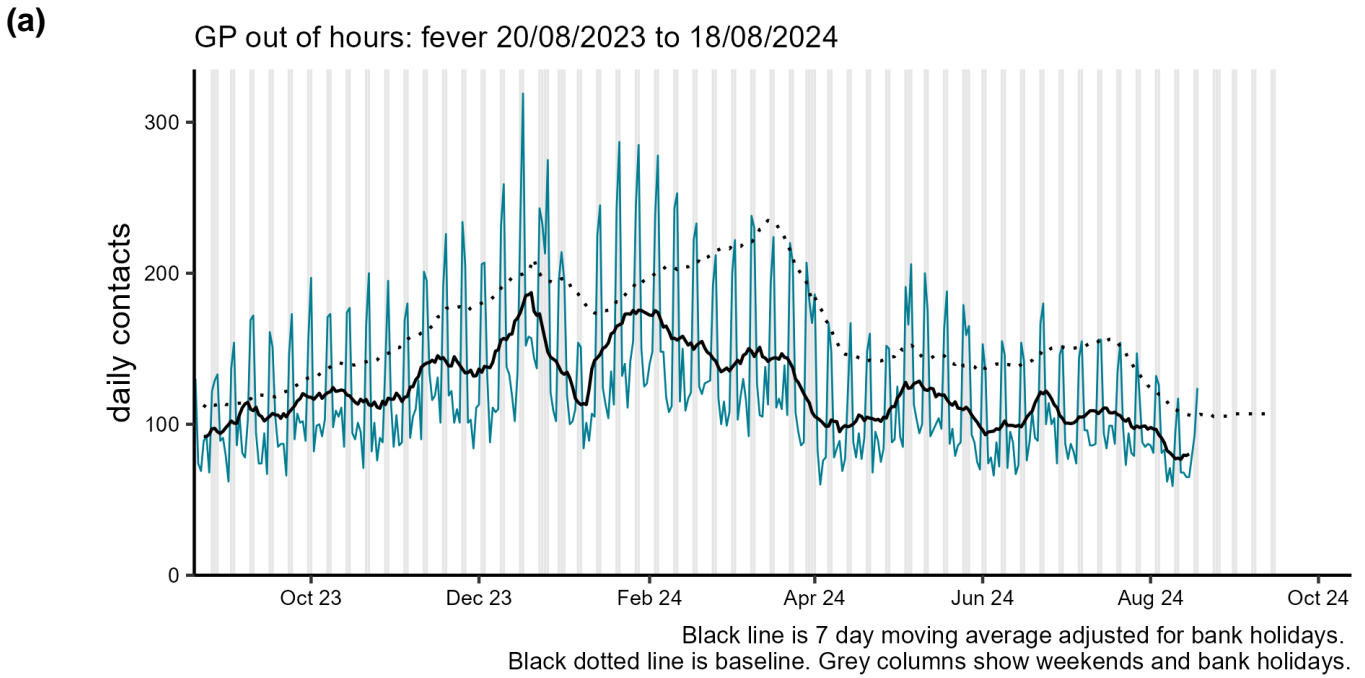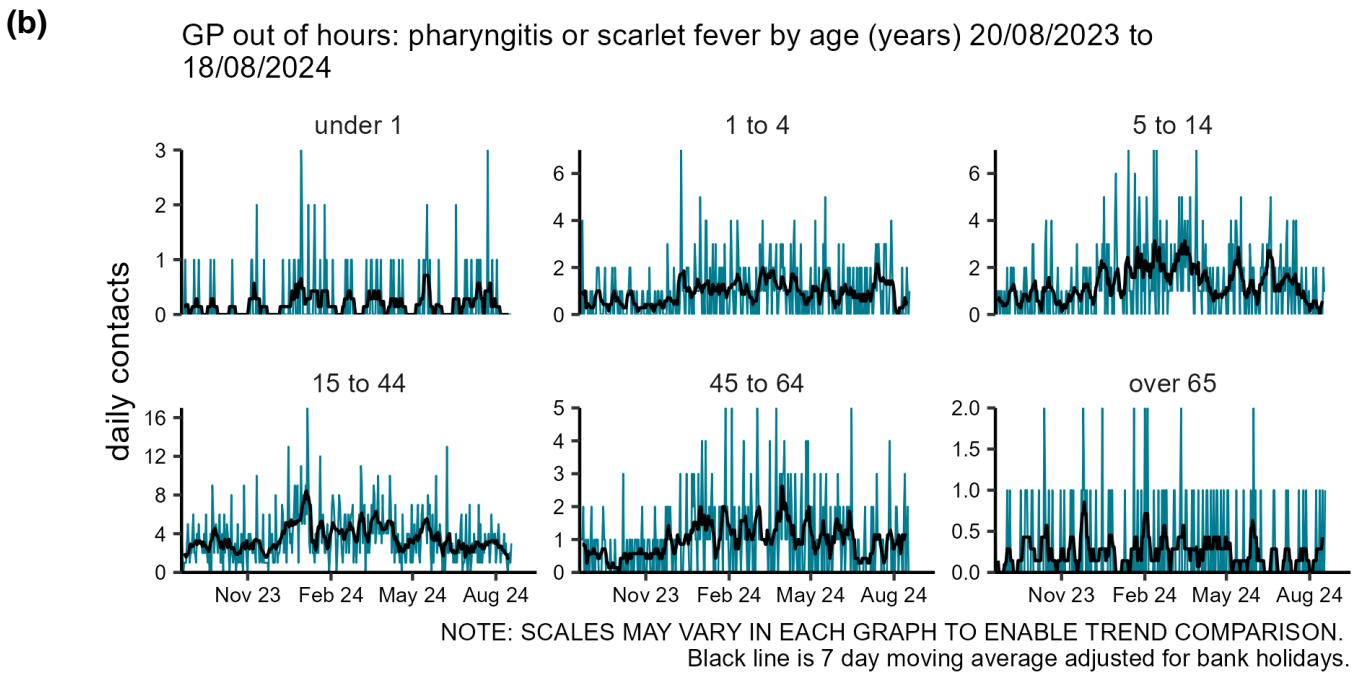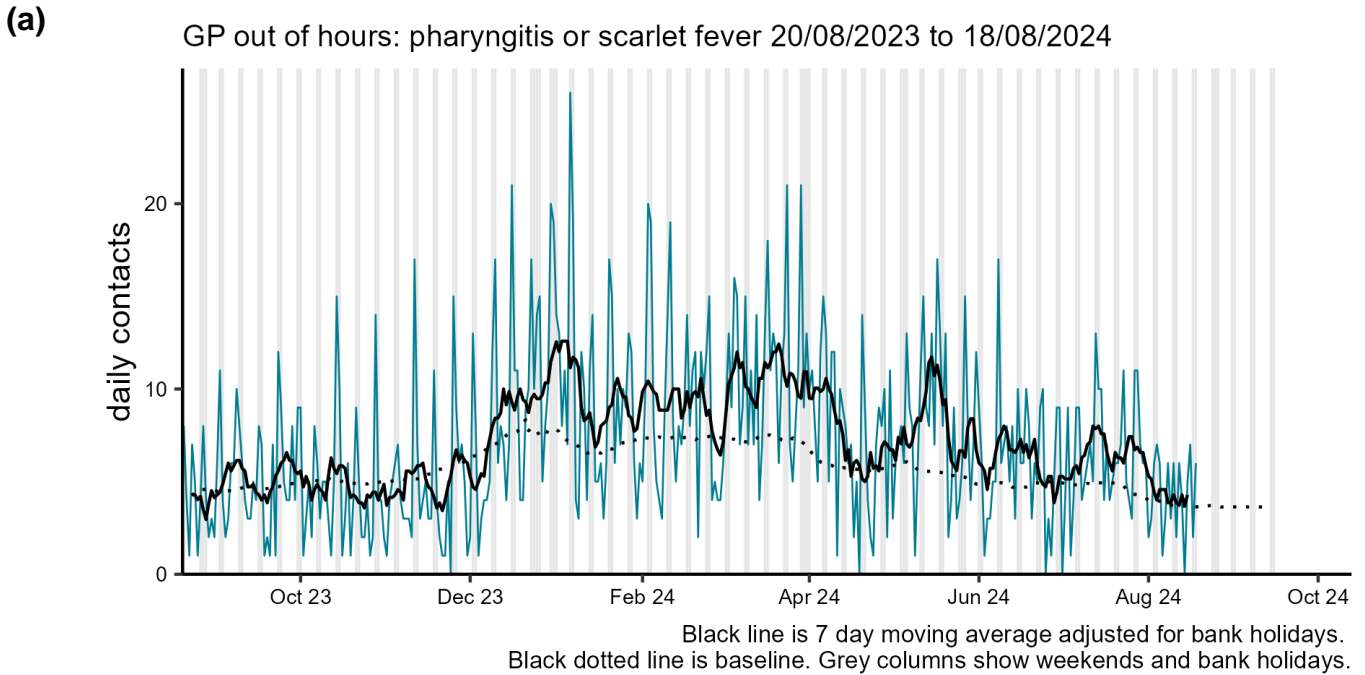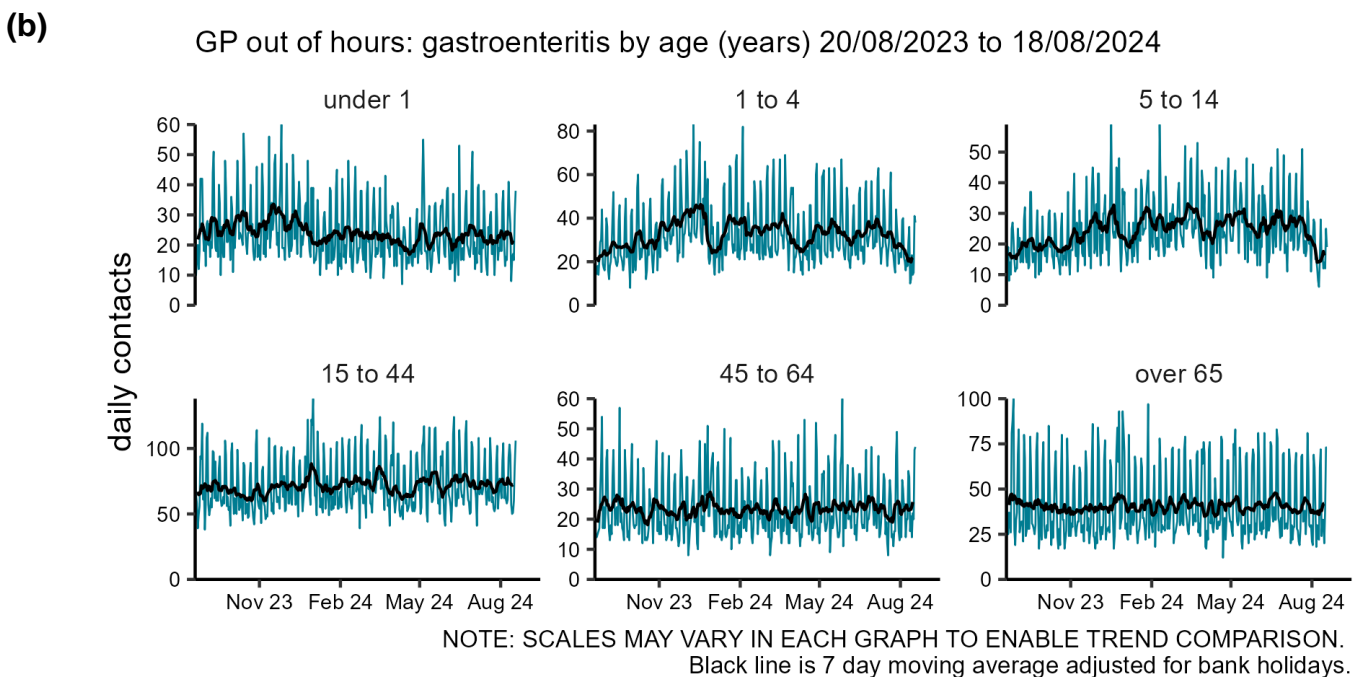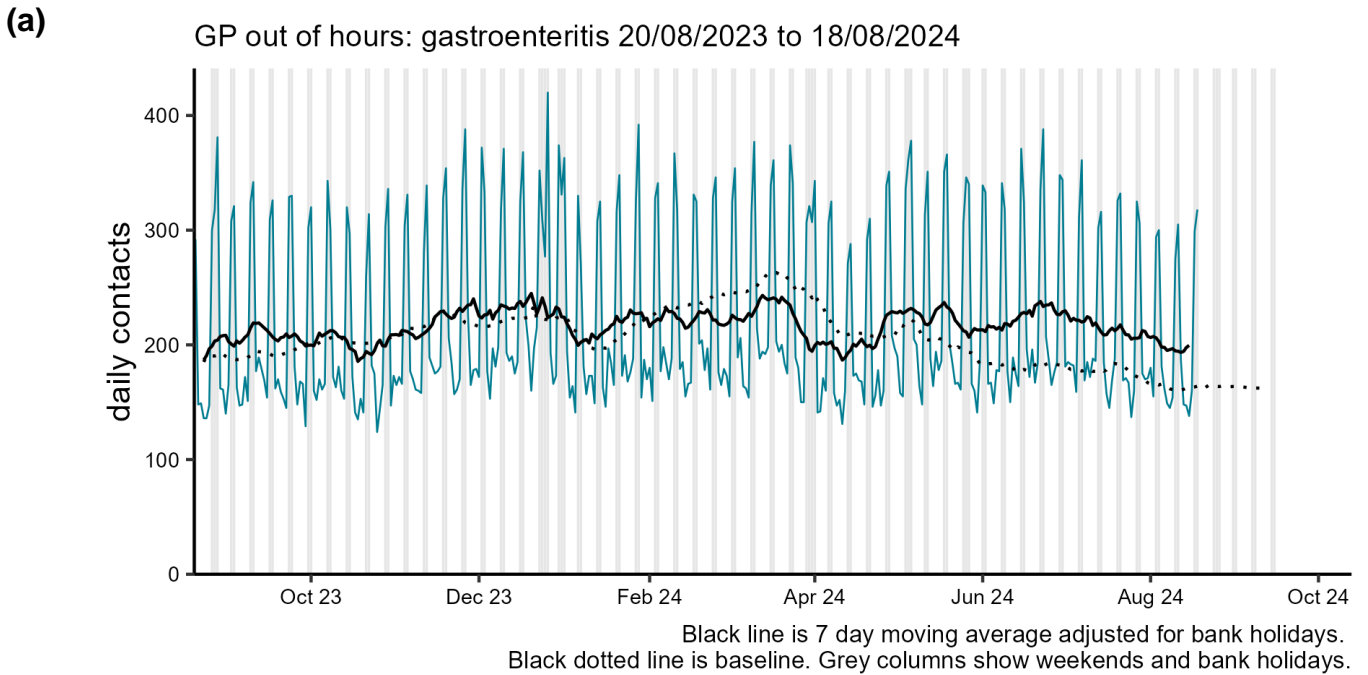
(a)

GP out of hours: pharyngitis or scarlet fever 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: pharyngitis or scarlet fever by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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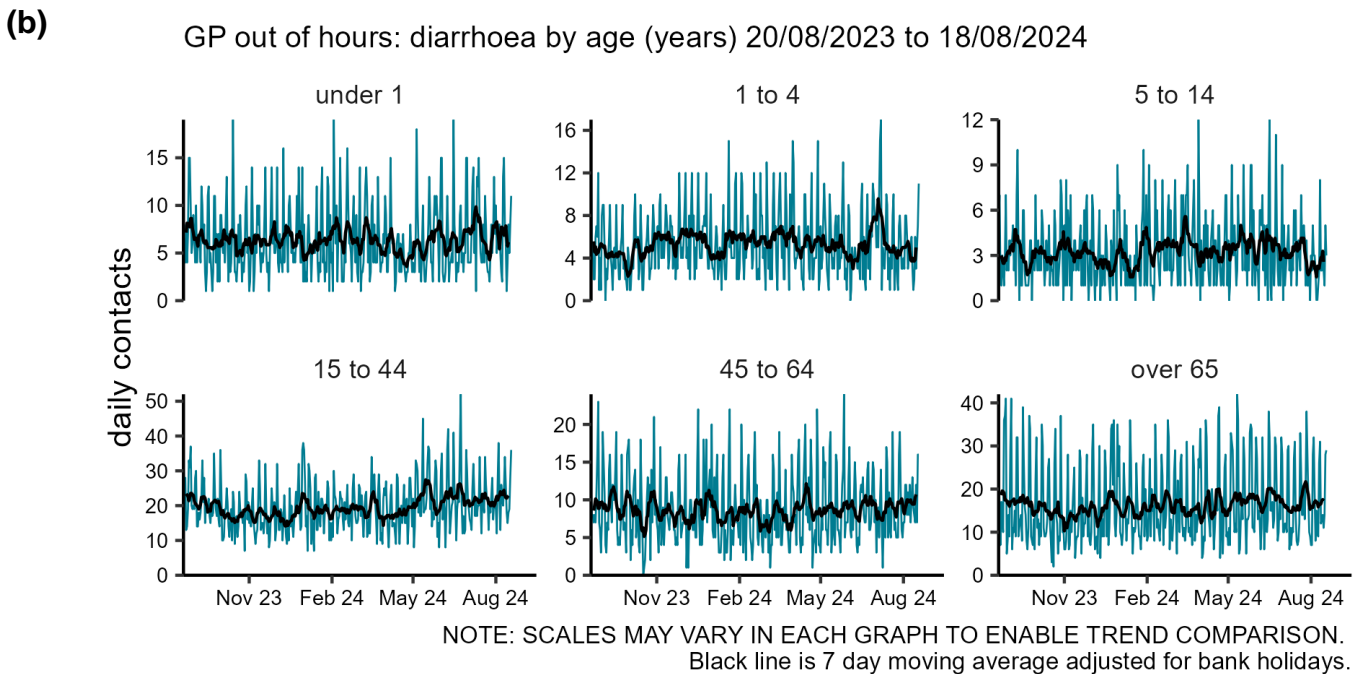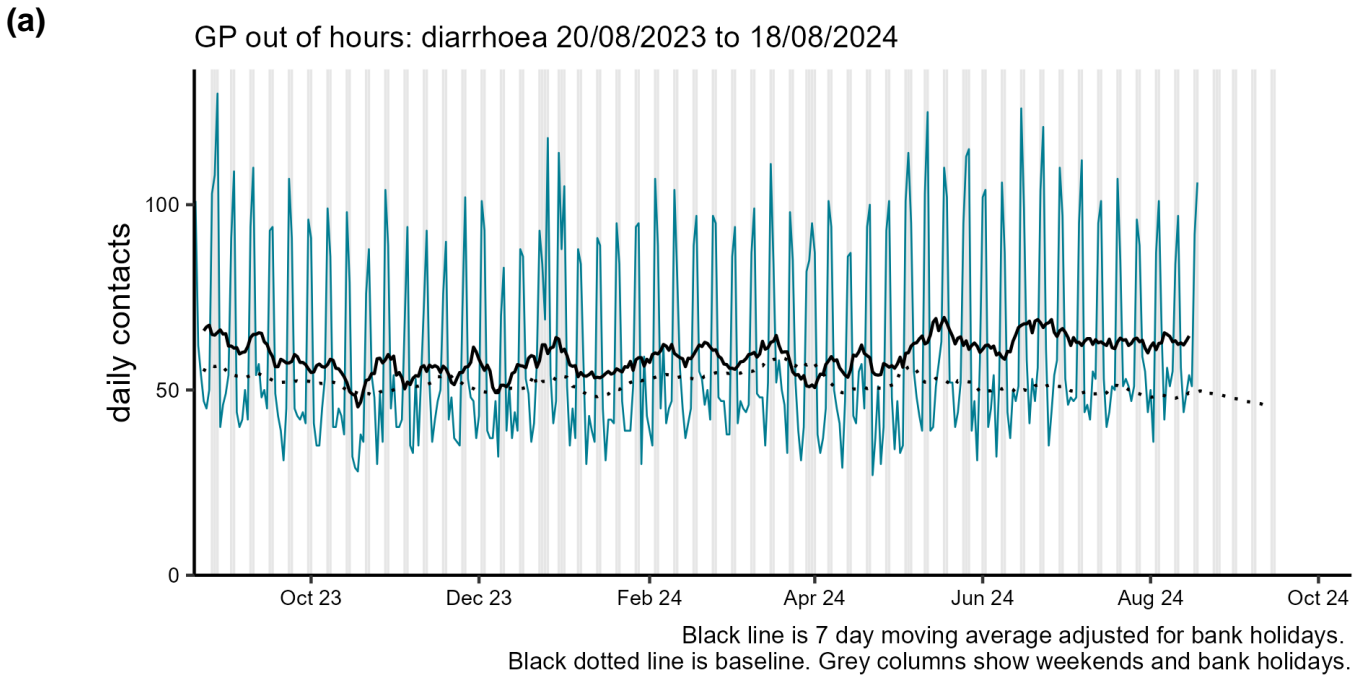
Gastrointestinal conditions

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)

GP out of hours: gastroenteritis 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: gastroenteritis by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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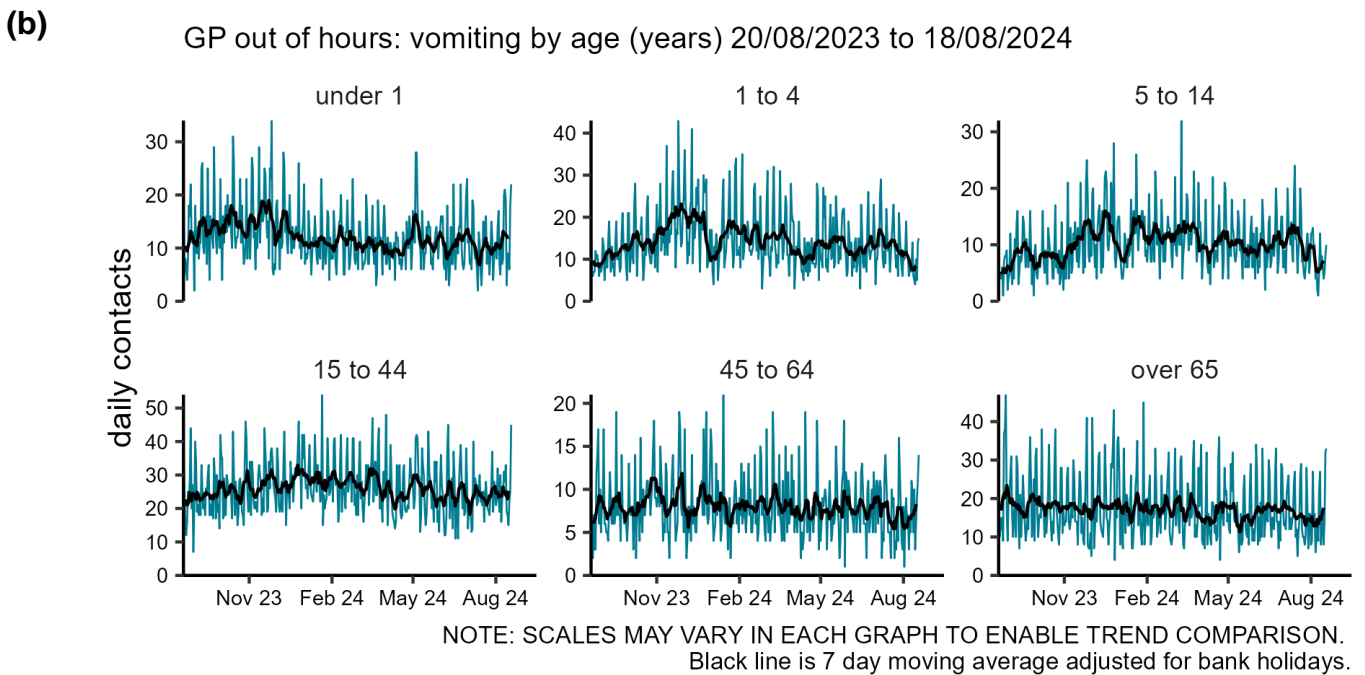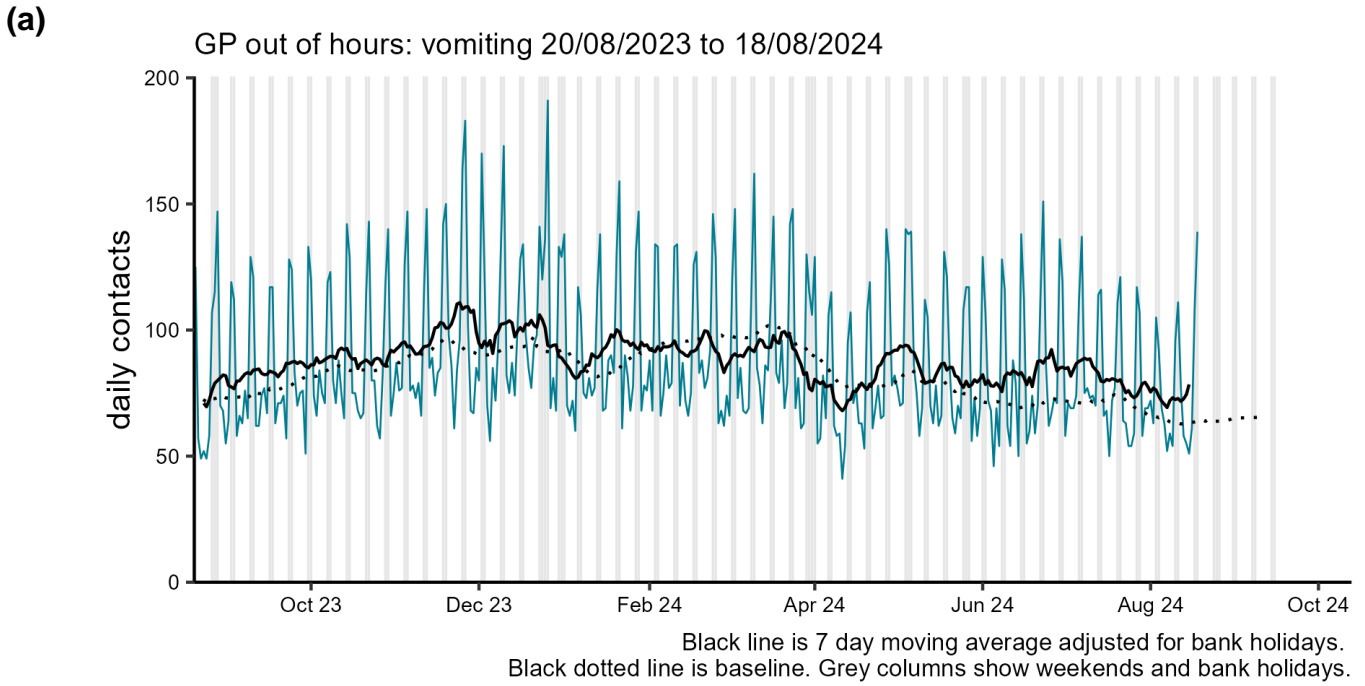Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

13

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 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: diarrhoea by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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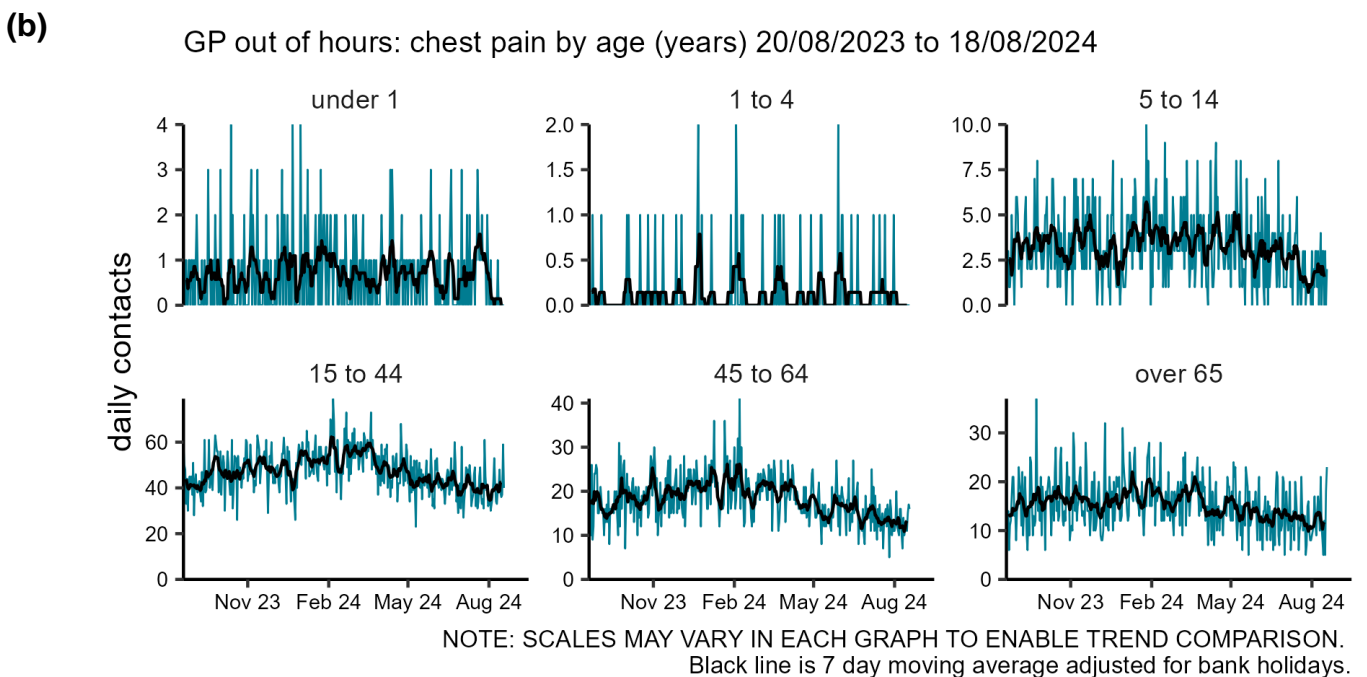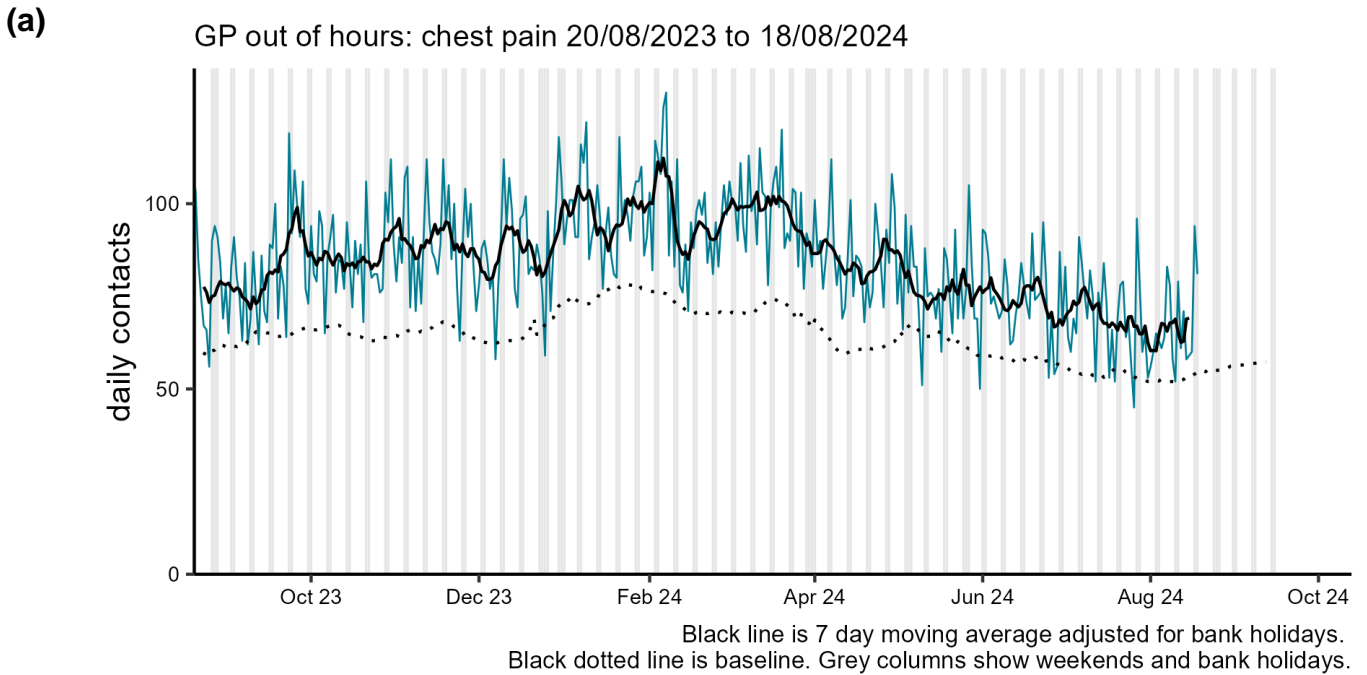Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

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 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: vomiting by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

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 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: chest pain by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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 routeinely included below (where an appropriate syndromic indicator is available).
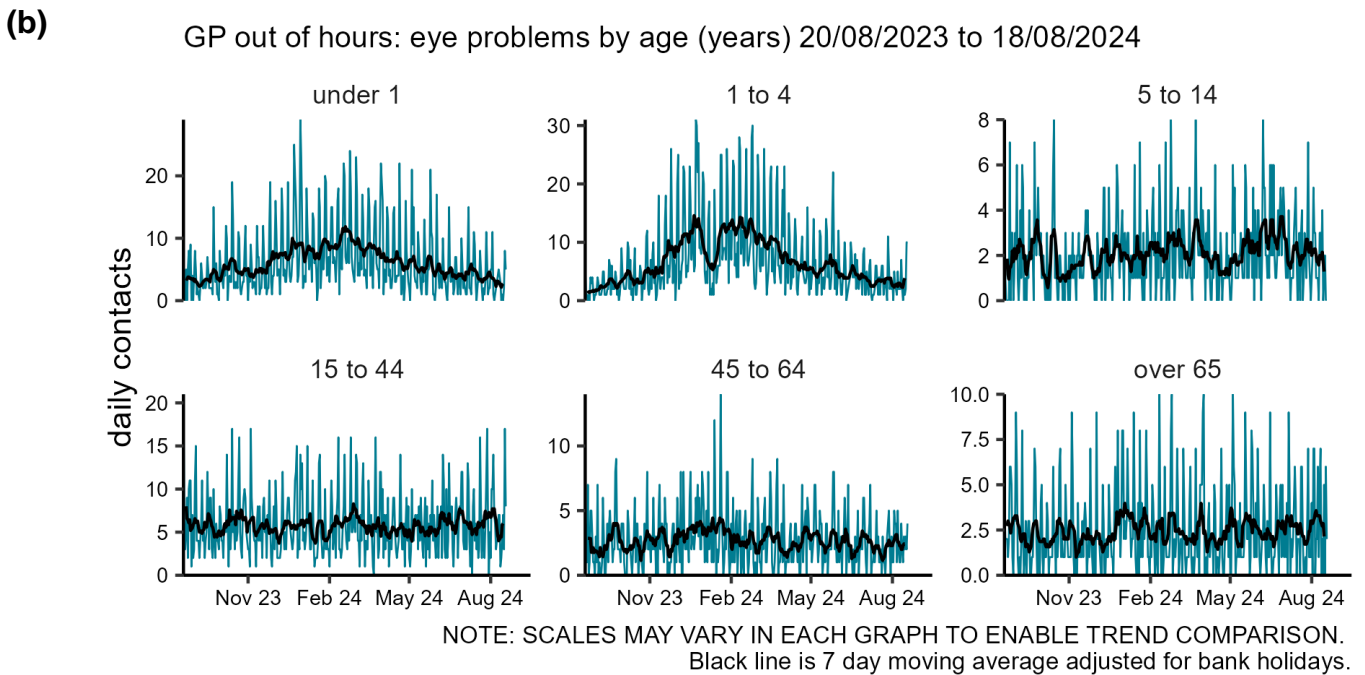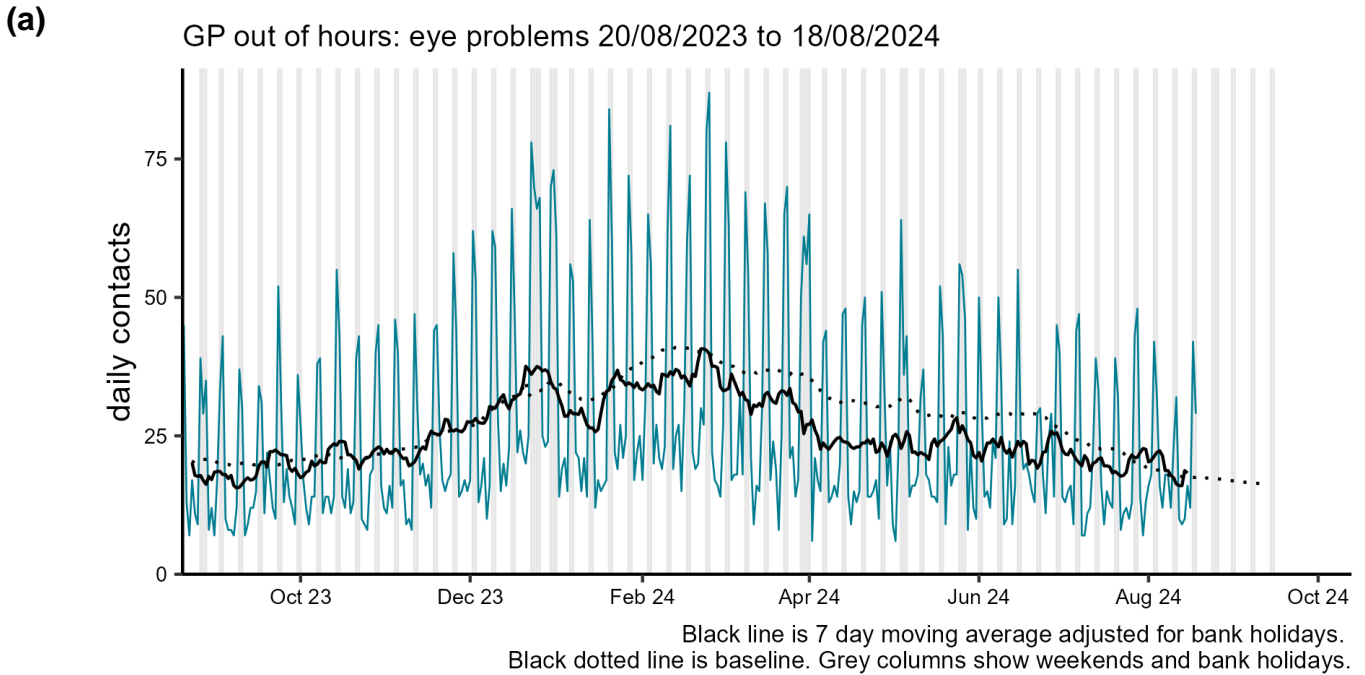
Cold weather alert period: 1 November to 31 March

Heat-Health Alert period: 1 June to 30 September

Highest weather alert level during the current reporting week:

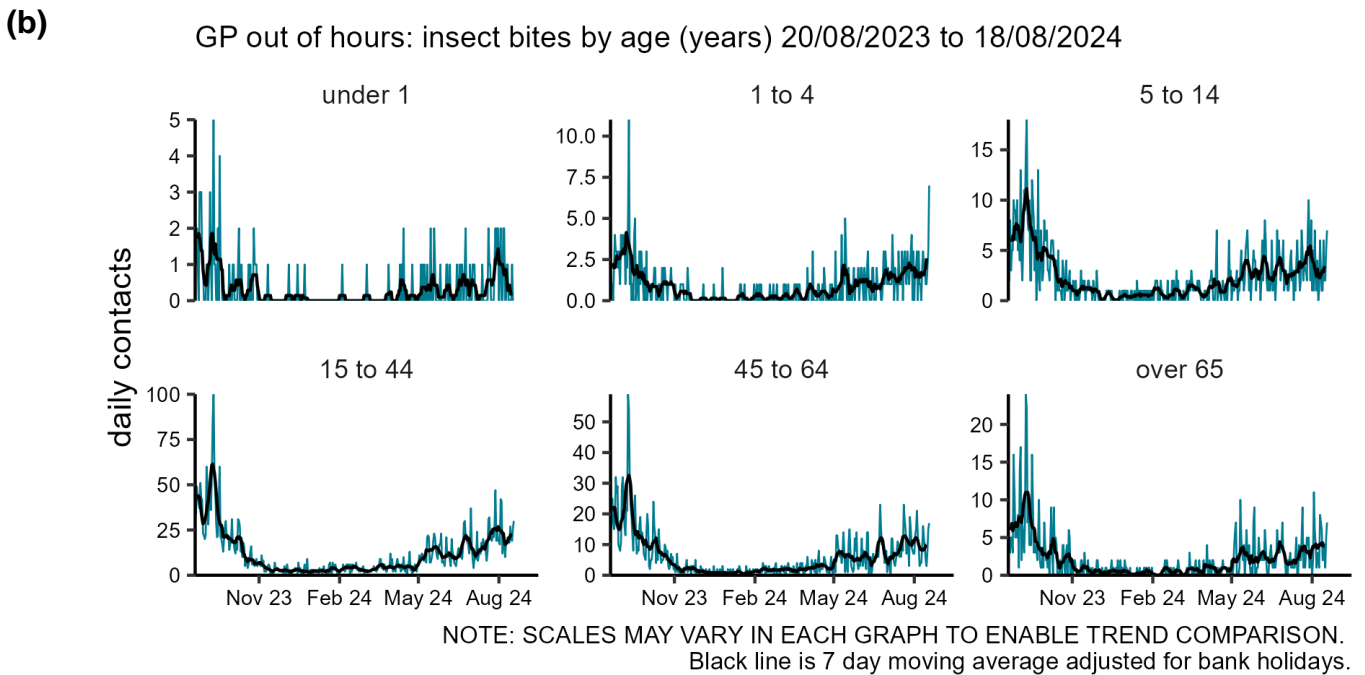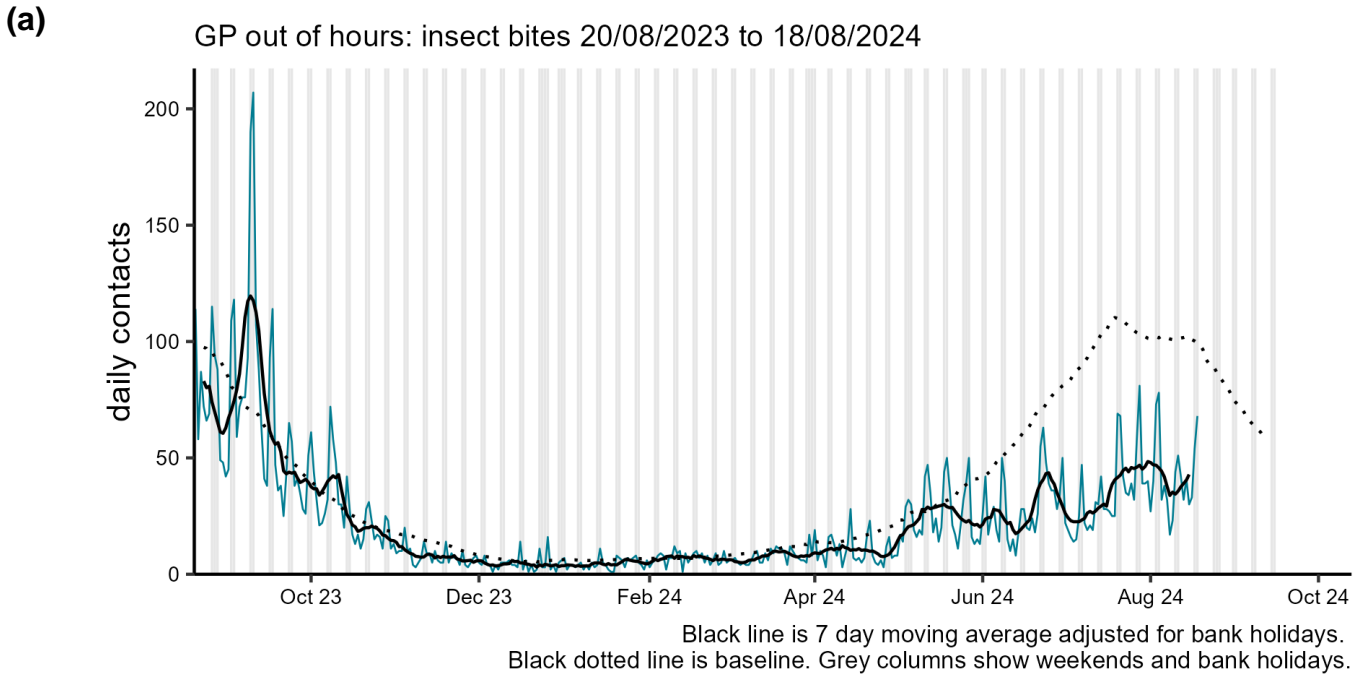**Yellow alert (hot weather response) issued.**

Eye problems

Figure 12: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for eye problems, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.

(a)

GP out of hours: eye problems 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: eye problems by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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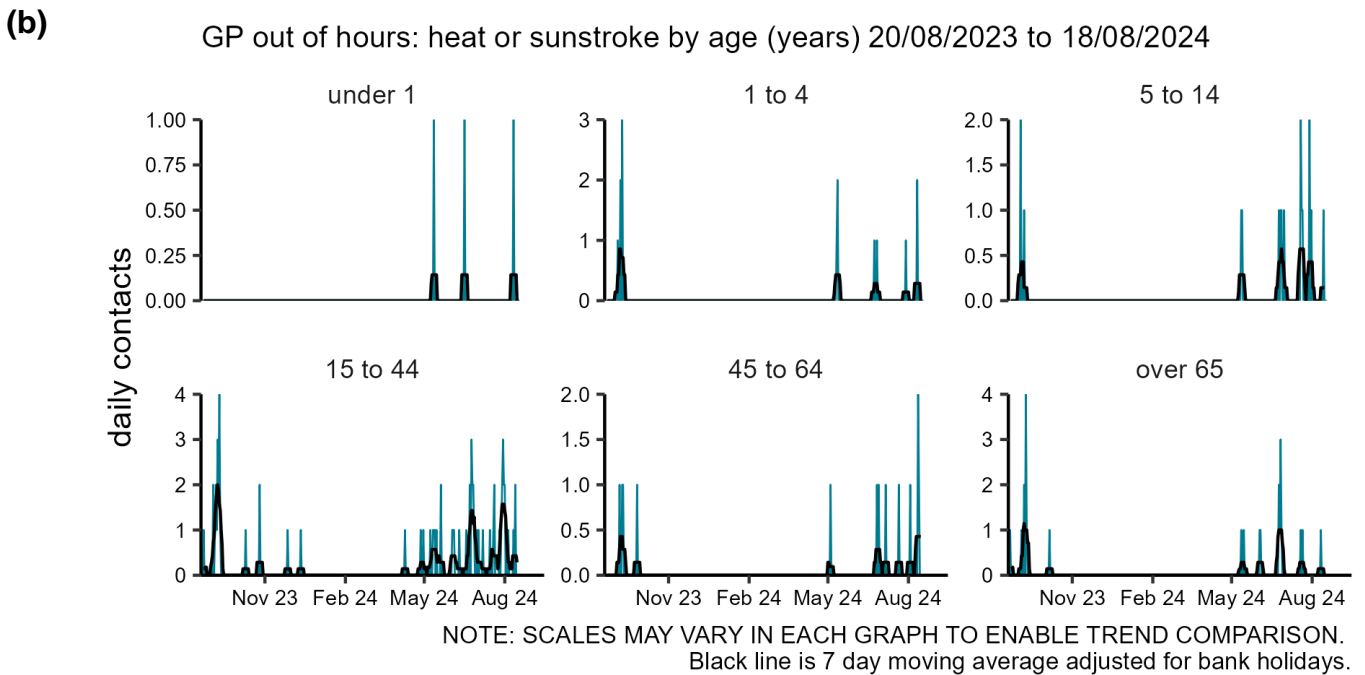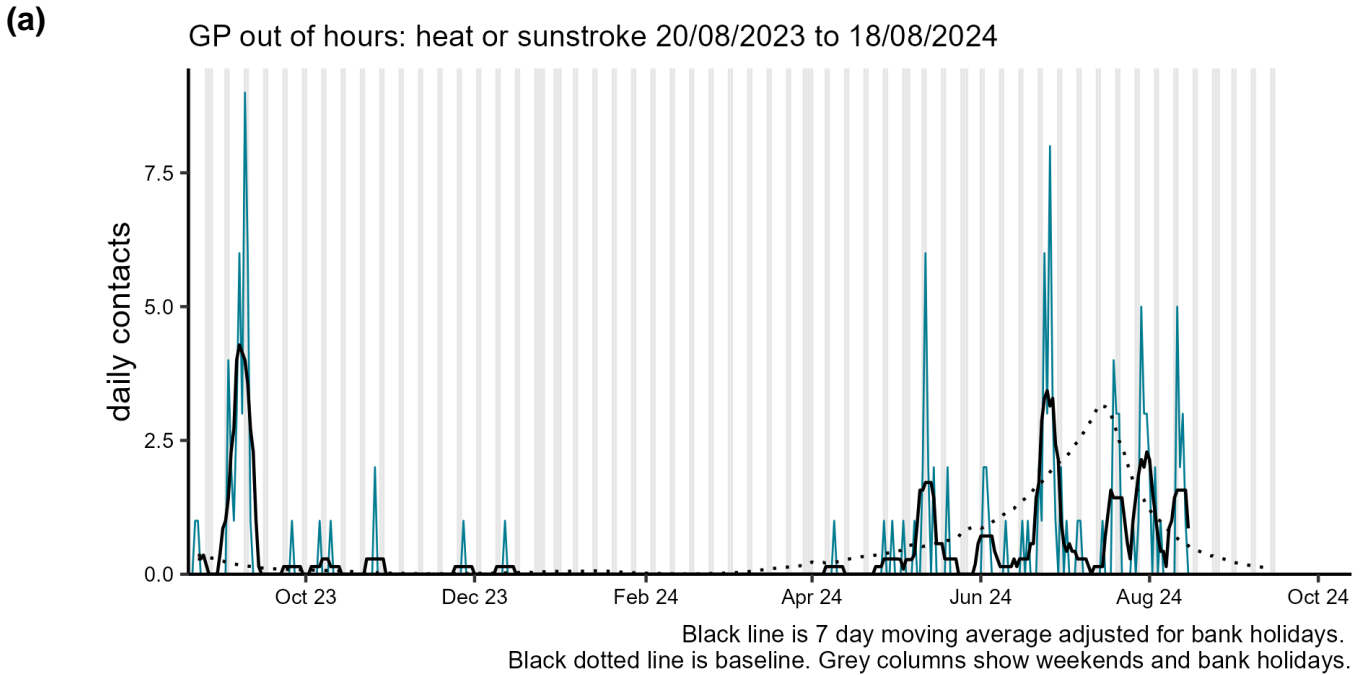Black line is 7 day moving average adjusted for bank holidays.

Insect bites

Figure 13: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for insect bites, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.

(a)

GP out of hours: insect bites 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: insect bites by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

Heat or sunstroke

Figure 14: Daily number of GP out-of-hours and unscheduled contacts (and 7-day moving average adjusted for bank holidays) for heat or sunstroke, England (a) nationally and (b) by age.

(a)

GP out of hours: heat or sunstroke 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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

(b)

GP out of hours: heat or sunstroke by age (years) 20/08/2023 to 18/08/2024

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
    - Table 2 shows total contacts which are higher than Figure 1 which shows total contacts where a clinical code is available for mapping to a syndromic indicator
- 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

Prepared by: Real-time Syndromic Surveillance Team
For queries relating to this document, please contact: syndromic.surveillan@ukhsa.gov.uk

Published: August 2024

Corporate member of Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication
339

UKHSA supports the UN
Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS