RESEARCH & SURVEILLANCE CENTRE

RSC Communicable and Respiratory Disease Report for England

Week Number / Year	Population
50 / 2025	**19,184,875**
Dates	**No. Practices**
08/12/2025 - 14/12/2025	**1,808**

Notes

All rates in this report are given per 100,000 population presenting in the week of the report. A rolling 5-year average rate is also provided as a historical comparison. Rates are provided for four regions (North, South, Midlands and East, and London). For acute respiratory infections, a breakdown by age group is also provided.

Rates are presented on a weekly basis, using ISO week numbers.

Please see page 20 for further explanatory notes on the data.

Comments

Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) remain above the seasonal average and continue to climb in all regions, page 3. ILI rates for 1-4 year olds are in the “Above very high” and ILI rates for all other age groups are in the “Medium to high” category, section E, page 5.

Virology swabbing positivity is above 25% with Influenza A and RSV the dominant circulating viruses, pages 3 and 4.

Rates of acute respiratory illness (ARI) have decreased this week in all regions and all ages. ARI rates nationally remain below the seasonal average, page 7.

Rates of COVID-19 have decreased in all age groups and in all regions, page 6.

Other comments:

• Rates of exacerbation in chronic lung disease (ECLD), page 8; ECLD – asthma exacerbation, page 9; ECLD – COPD exacerbations, page 9; URTI – Croup, page 11 are all are above the seasonal average for this time of year.

• Rates of scabies (page 16) and Herpes Zoster (page 17) remain above the seasonal average.

Seasonal Focus

In the "Change since last week" column, a change in rate of 5% to 10% is marked with a single arrow (^ or v), while a change of more than 10% is marked with a double arrow (^^ or vv). A flat line (—) indicates the rate was stable, changing less than 5%.

Region Breakdown

	Acute respiratory infections (ARI)			Influenza-like illness (ILI)			Exacerbations of chronic lung disease (ECLD)		
	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week
London	350.2	367.9	— -17.7	23.7	16.9	^^ 6.8	14.0	14.0	— 0.0
Midlands And East	436.8	433.8	— 3.0	20.0	15.2	^^ 4.8	25.1	23.5	^ 1.6
North	501.4	524.2	— -22.7	27.0	24.2	^^ 2.9	38.1	36.6	— 1.5
South	369.3	360.1	— 9.2	23.5	16.9	^^ 6.6	24.3	22.4	^ 1.9
National	**415.5**	**419.8**	**— -4.3**	**23.6**	**18.3**	**^^ 5.3**	**26.0**	**24.5**	**^ 1.5**

	Lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI)			Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI)			COVID-19		
	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week
London	77.9	84.5	v -6.6	253.3	270.1	v -16.8	0.4	0.6	vv -0.3
Midlands And East	137.0	134.2	— 2.8	282.8	284.5	— -1.7	0.8	0.6	^^ 0.1
North	164.8	172.2	— -7.3	308.9	327.5	v -18.6	0.9	0.9	— 0.0
South	120.8	117.1	— 3.6	229.7	227.9	— 1.8	0.6	0.9	vv -0.3
National	**127.7**	**128.3**	**— -0.6**	**267.2**	**274.5**	**— -7.4**	**0.7**	**0.8**	**vv -0.1**

Age Group Breakdown

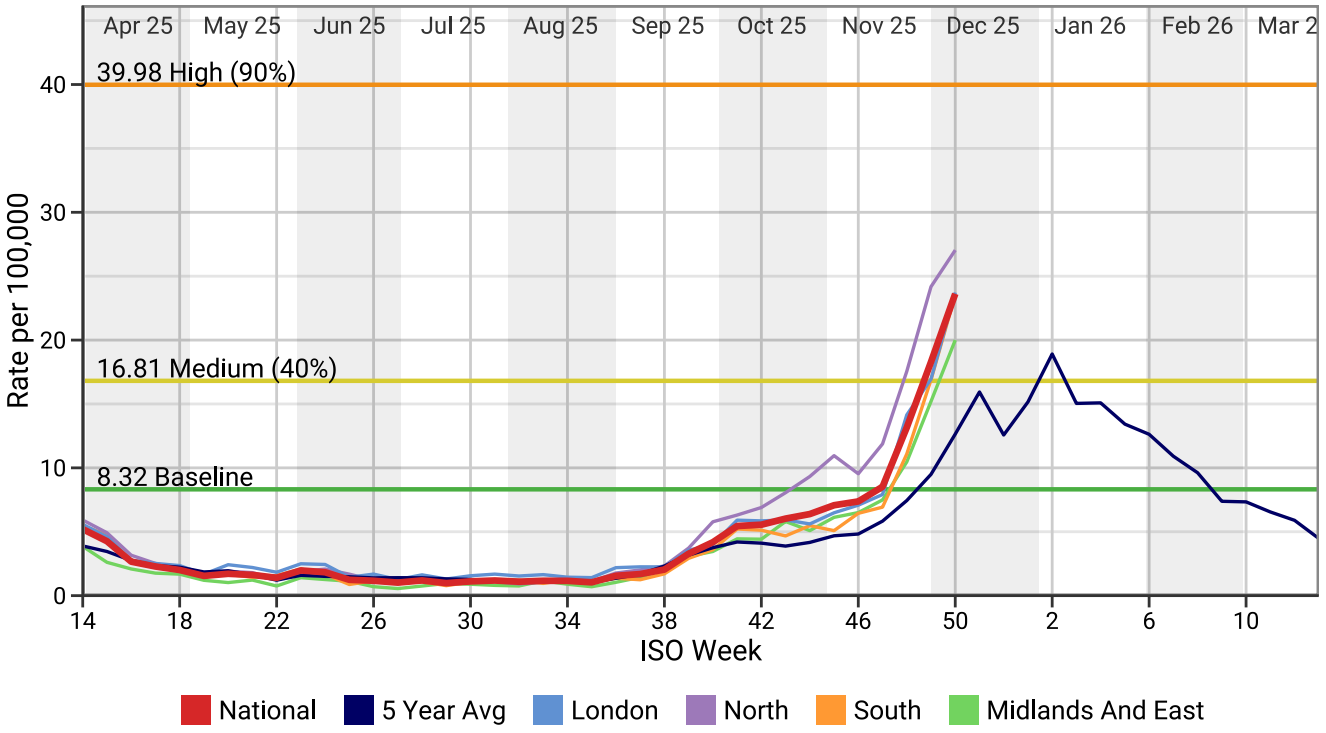
	Acute respiratory infections (ARI)			Influenza-like illness (ILI)			Exacerbations of chronic lung disease (ECLD)		
	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week
<1yr	2,050.9	2,047.5	— 3.4	53.8	37.8	^^ 16.0	0.0	0.0	— 0.0
1-4yrs	1,849.6	2,010.1	v -160.4	48.6	38.7	^^ 9.9	3.1	2.3	^^ 0.8
5-14yrs	610.6	670.1	v -59.5	26.6	25.5	— 1.1	9.8	12.2	vv -2.4
15-64yrs	284.9	278.8	— 6.1	22.2	16.9	^^ 5.3	20.7	19.4	^ 1.3
65+yrs	383.8	361.6	^ 22.2	20.1	13.5	^^ 6.6	61.7	56.7	^ 5.0
All ages	**415.5**	**419.8**	**— -4.3**	**23.6**	**18.3**	**^^ 5.3**	**26.0**	**24.5**	**^ 1.5**

	Lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI)			Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI)			COVID-19		
	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week	This week	Last week	Change since last week
<1yr	654.0	686.0	— -32.0	1,555.2	1,535.6	— 19.5	1.3	4.4	vv -3.2
1-4yrs	386.8	440.7	vv -53.9	1,616.8	1,726.3	v -109.5	0.5	0.3	^^ 0.2
5-14yrs	79.4	89.9	vv -10.5	524.1	564.9	v -40.8	0.3	0.2	^^ 0.1
15-64yrs	87.5	85.7	— 1.9	171.0	171.9	— -0.9	0.5	0.7	vv -0.2
65+yrs	224.9	216.4	— 8.4	104.7	96.5	^ 8.1	1.6	1.5	— 0.1
All ages	**127.7**	**128.3**	**— -0.6**	**267.2**	**274.5**	**— -7.4**	**0.7**	**0.8**	**vv -0.1**

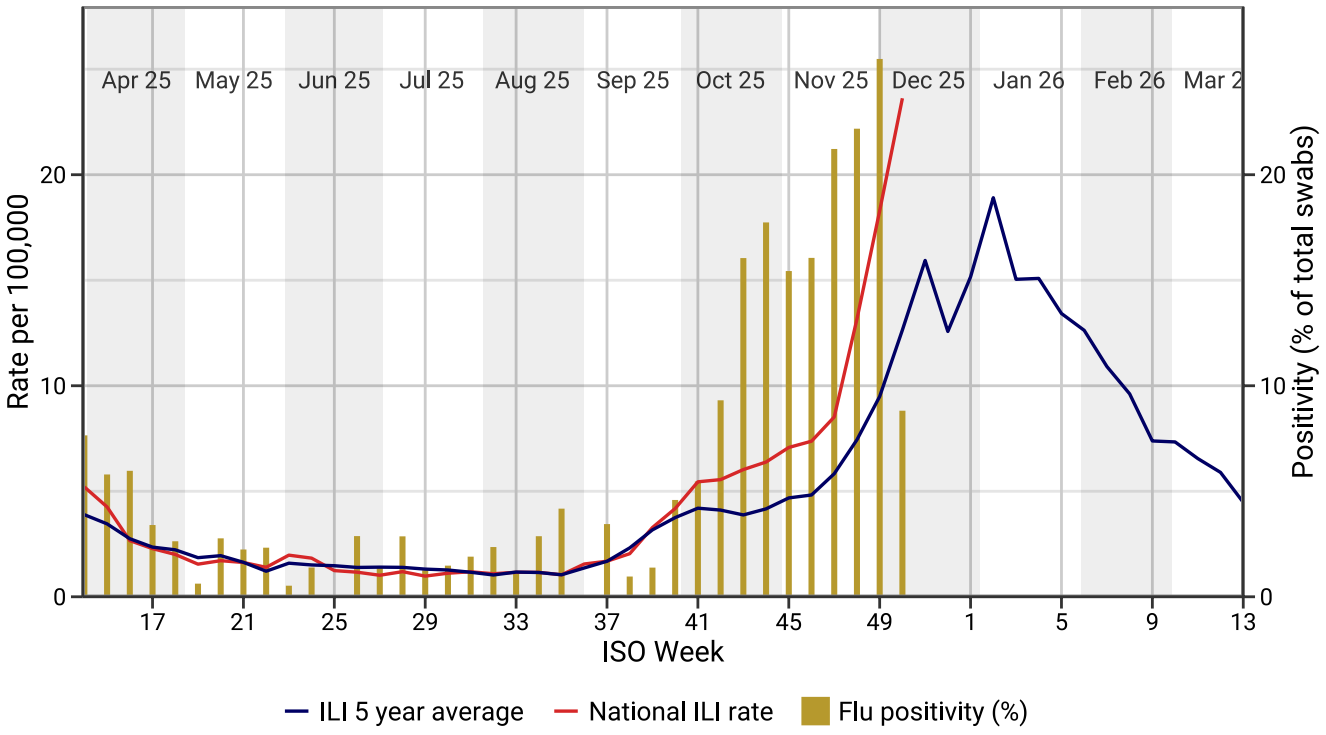
2024/25 Focus

(A) Influenza-like Illness: national incidence rate by region

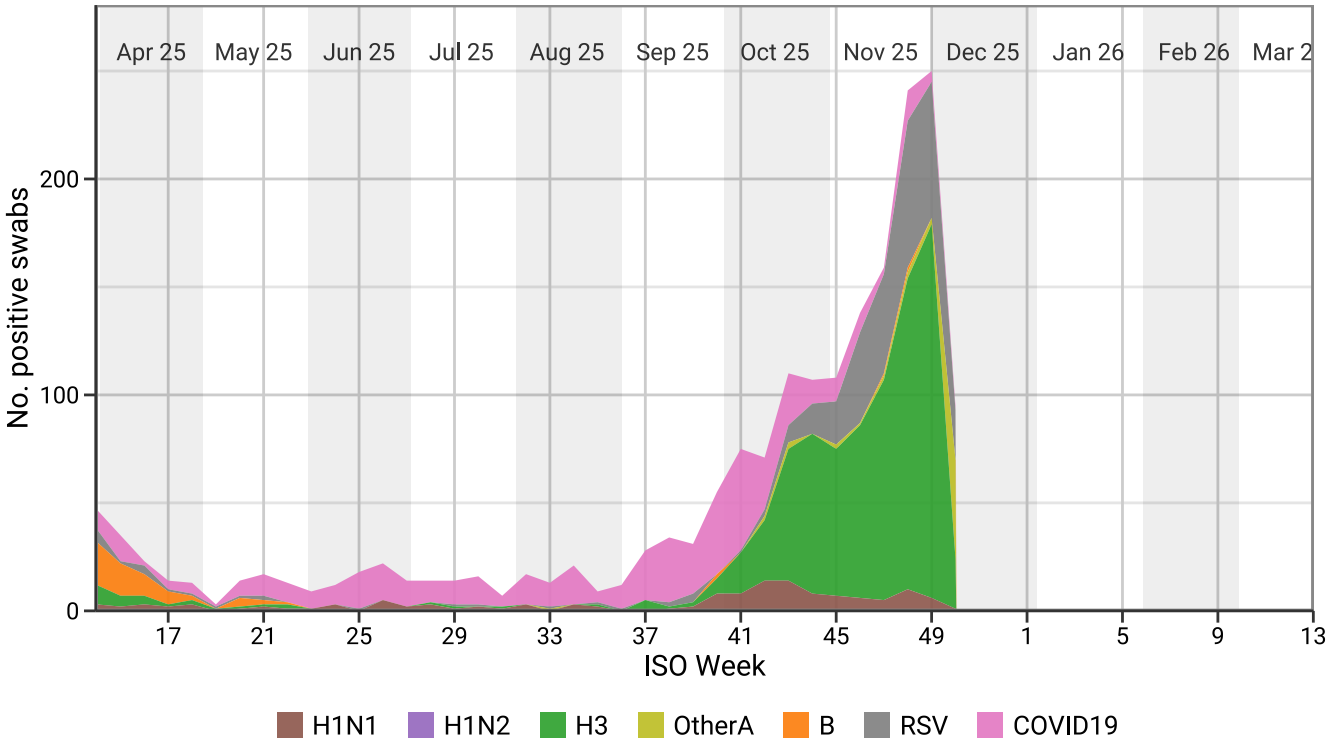
The horizontal lines in the following graph are thresholds derived from the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) model. See p20 for more information.



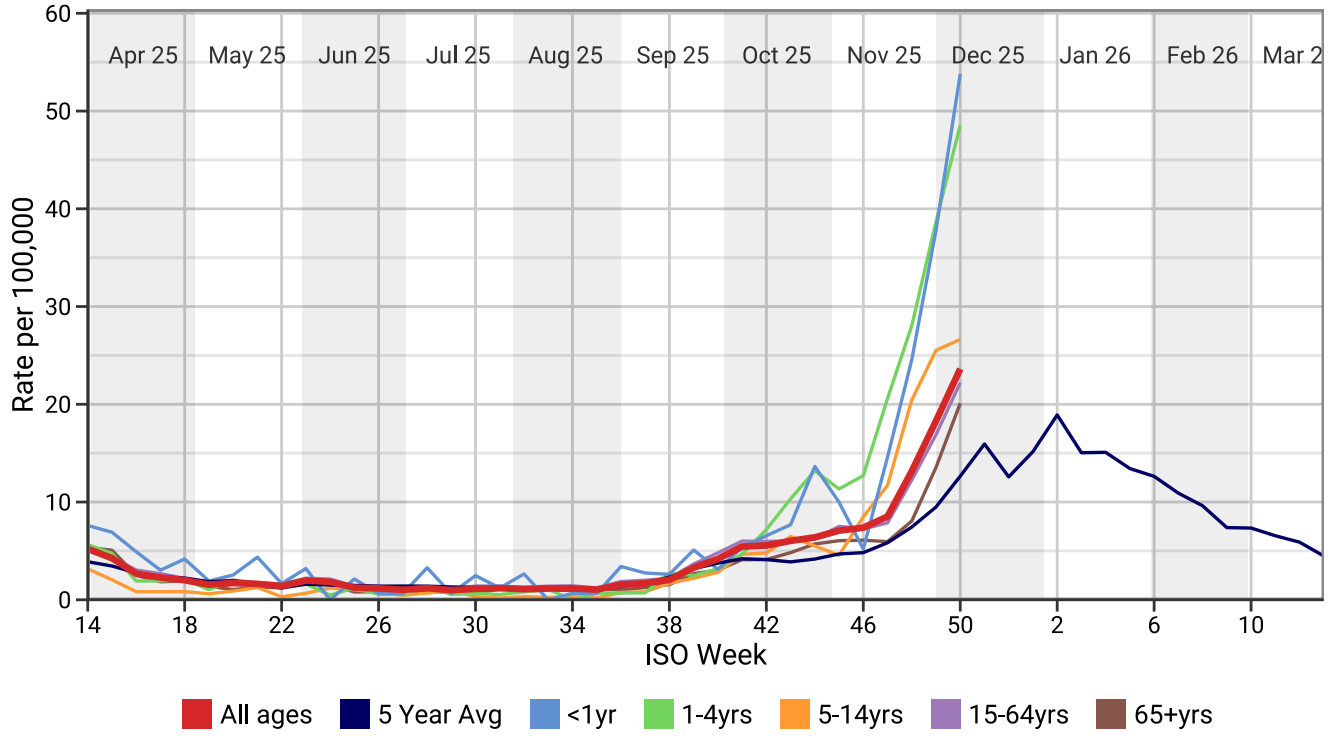
(B) RCGP/UKHSA influenza virology swab surveillance



(C) RCGP/UKHSA RSV, influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virology swab surveilance (by strain)



(D) Influenza-like Illness: national incidence rate by age band



(E) Influenza-like Illness: national incidence rate by age band

This table shows the level of intensity of ILI by age band. MEM thresholds have been calculated separately for each age band - thresholds are shown in the second table. Refer to page 19 for more information.

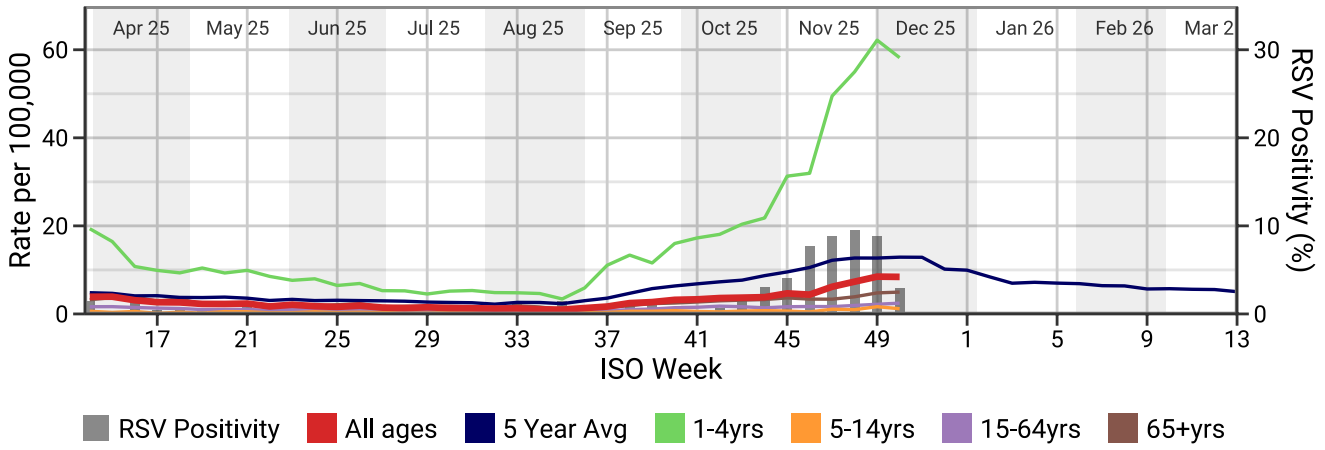
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32
1-4yrs	4.8	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.0	2.0	1.5	1.6	1.6	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.5	1.3	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8
5-14yrs	2.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.9	1.3	0.3	0.7	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.5	0.7	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.3
15-64yrs	4.4	3.0	2.7	2.2	1.8	2.0	1.7	1.6	2.2	2.1	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.3
65+yrs	5.1	2.5	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.0	1.3	1.2	2.0	1.5	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.7	0.6	1.1	0.9
All ages	4.3	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.4	2.0	1.8	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1

	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
1-4yrs	1.1	0.0	0.7	0.7	0.7	2.8	2.5	3.2	4.7	7.2	10.3	13.2	11.3	12.7	20.6	28.0	38.7	48.6
5-14yrs	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.7	0.8	1.7	2.2	2.8	4.6	4.8	6.5	5.5	4.5	8.5	11.7	20.4	25.5	26.6
15-64yrs	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.9	2.0	2.2	3.7	4.8	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.2	7.5	7.2	7.9	12.3	16.9	22.2
65+yrs	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.2	1.6	2.7	3.1	4.1	4.1	4.8	5.7	6.0	6.1	5.9	8.1	13.5	20.1
All ages	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.7	2.0	3.3	4.2	5.4	5.6	6.0	6.4	7.1	7.4	8.5	13.2	18.3	23.6

	Below Threshold	Threshold to medium	Medium to high	High to very high	Above very high
1-4yrs	<7.86	7.86 to 16.38	16.38 to 30.29	30.29 to 39.75	39.75+
5-14yrs	<5.17	5.17 to 11.83	11.83 to 29.13	29.13 to 43.38	43.38+
15-64yrs	<9.81	9.81 to 18.31	18.31 to 44.31	44.31 to 65.49	65.49+
65+yrs	<8.10	8.10 to 14.49	14.49 to 37.90	37.90 to 57.96	57.96+
All Ages	<8.32	8.32 to 16.81	16.81 to 39.98	39.98 to 58.62	58.62+

(F) Acute Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis: national incidence rate by age band

Children under 1 year old are omitted from the following graph.

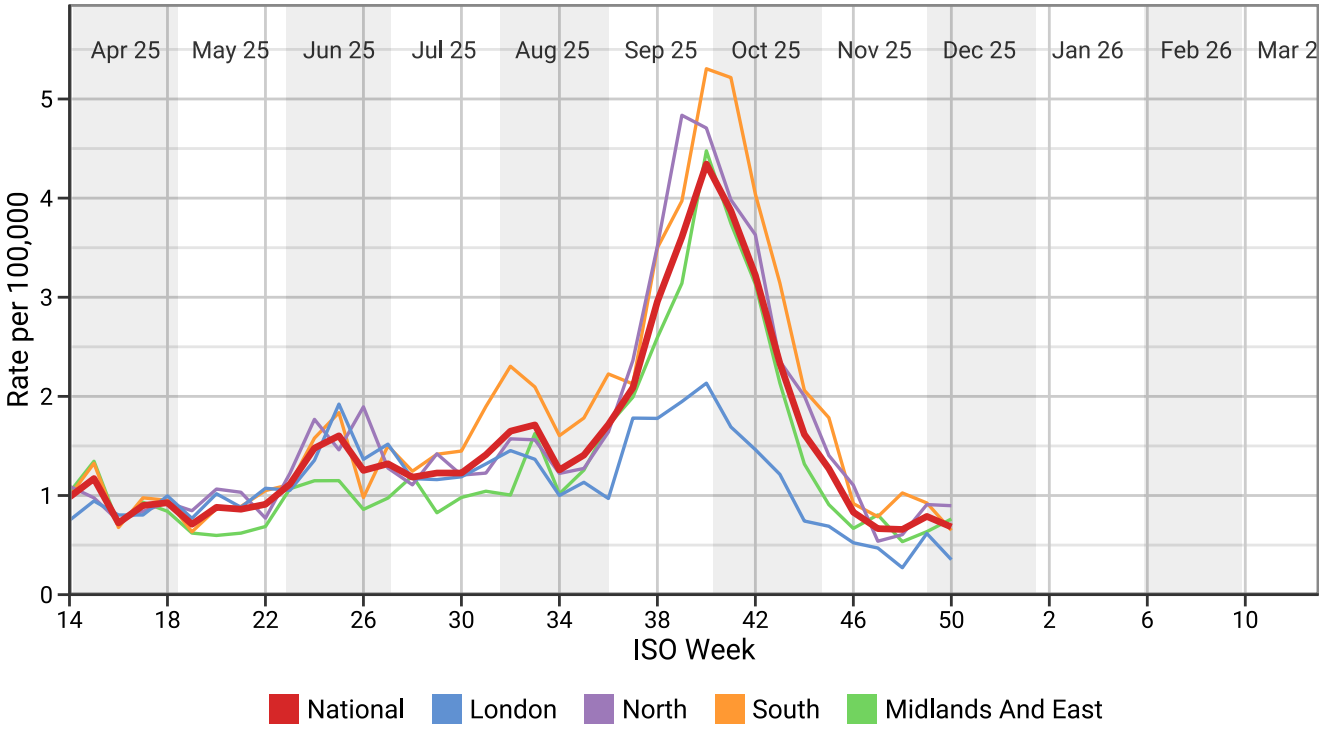


Weekly incidence rates of influenza-like illness, and acute bronchitis and bronchiolitis (per 100,000)

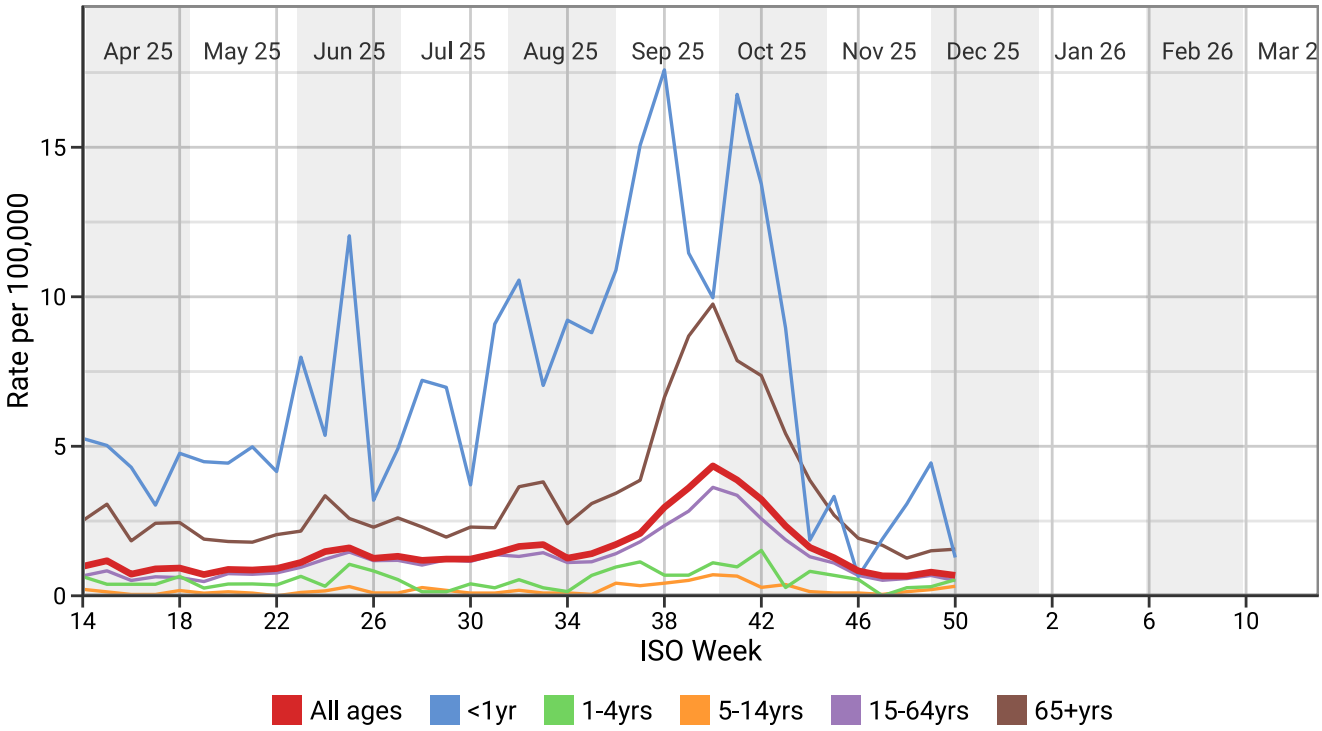
	Influenza-like illness (ILI)	ARI-Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis
<1yr	53.8	430.4
1-4yrs	48.6	58.2
5-14yrs	26.6	1.2
15-24yrs	23.2	1.4
25-44yrs	23.7	2.0
45-64yrs	19.9	3.5
65-74yrs	17.3	5.0
75-84yrs	20.1	5.0
85+yrs	30.3	4.6
All ages	23.6	8.4

	Influenza-like illness (ILI)	ARI-Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis
London	23.7	5.0
Midlands And East	20.0	8.9
North	27.0	10.2
South	23.5	8.7
National	23.6	8.4

(G) COVID-19: national incidence rate by region

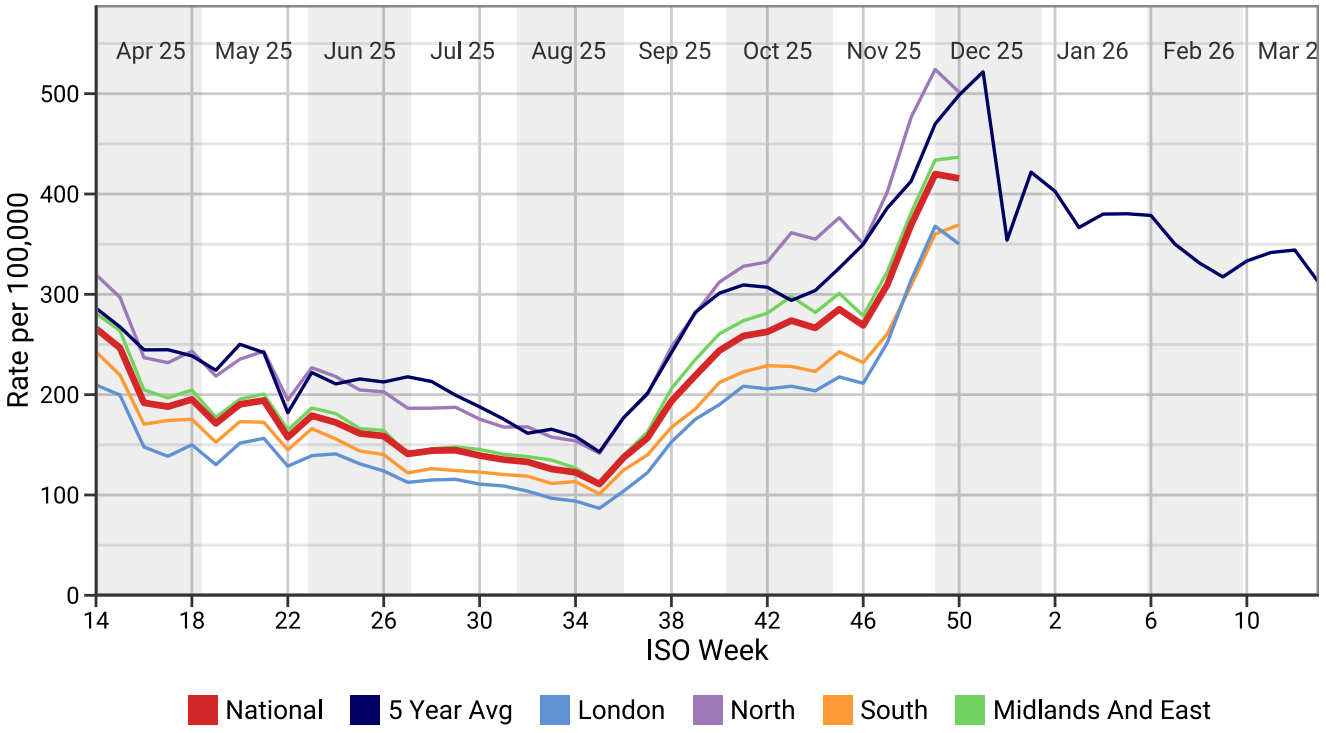


(H) COVID-19: national incidence rate by age band

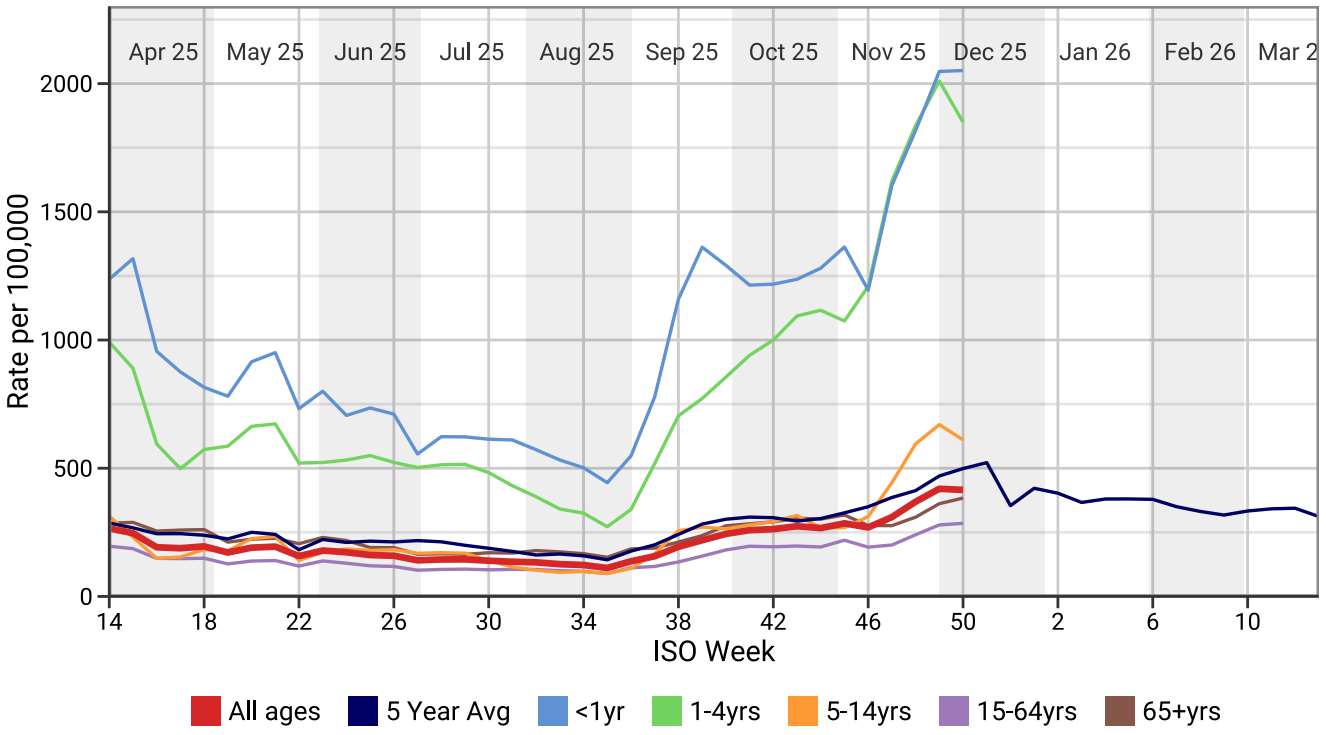


1. Respiratory Infections

(I) Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI): national incidence rate by region



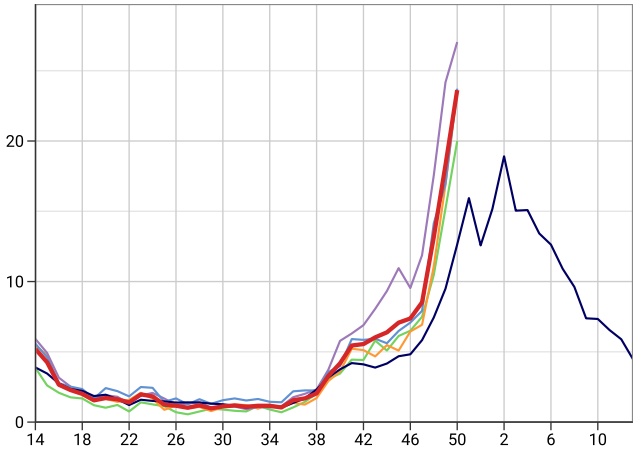
(J) Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI): national incidence rate by age band



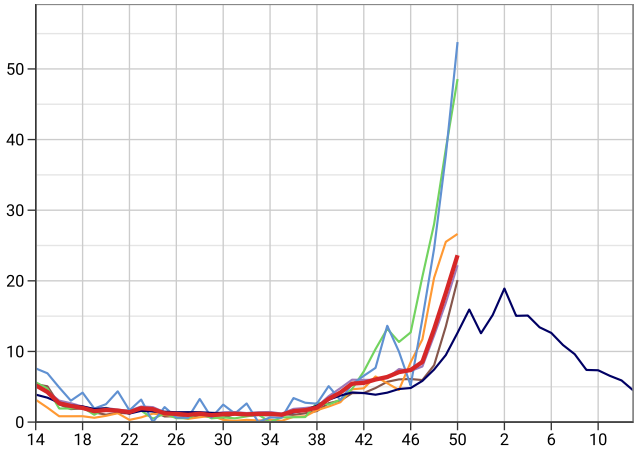
Respiratory Infections - by region

Respiratory Infections - by age band

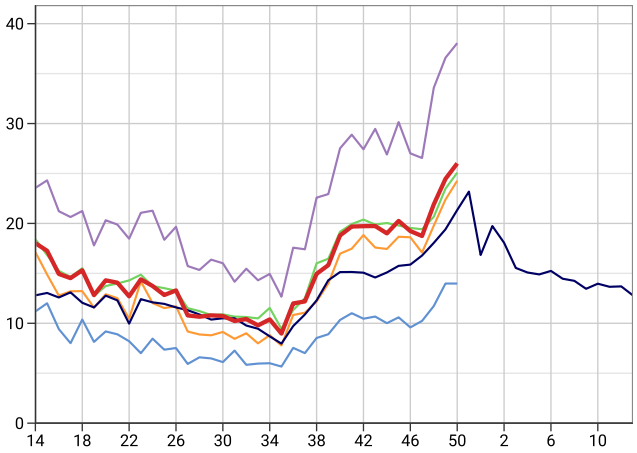
Influenza-like illness (ILI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



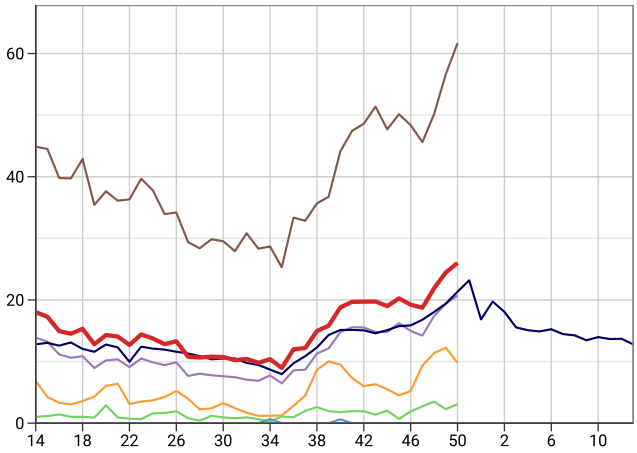
Influenza-like illness (ILI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



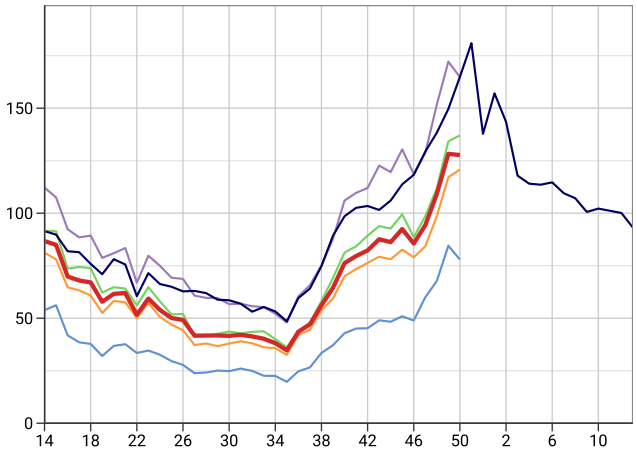
Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



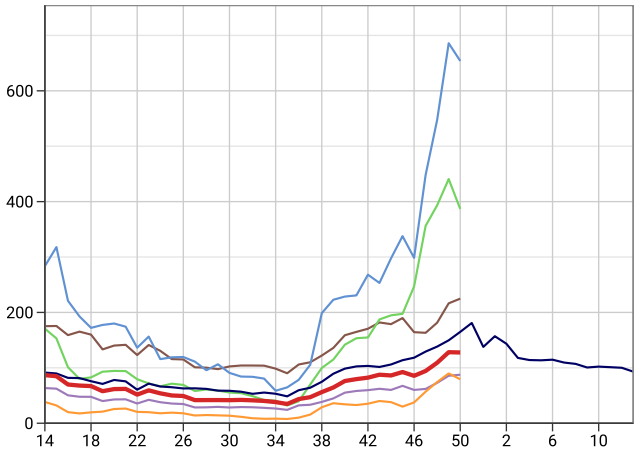
Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



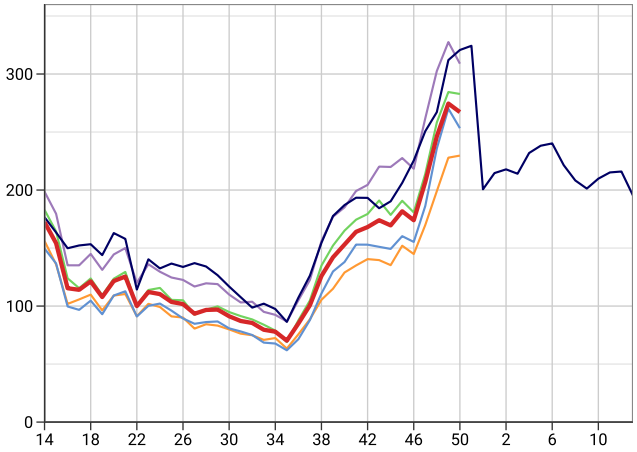
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



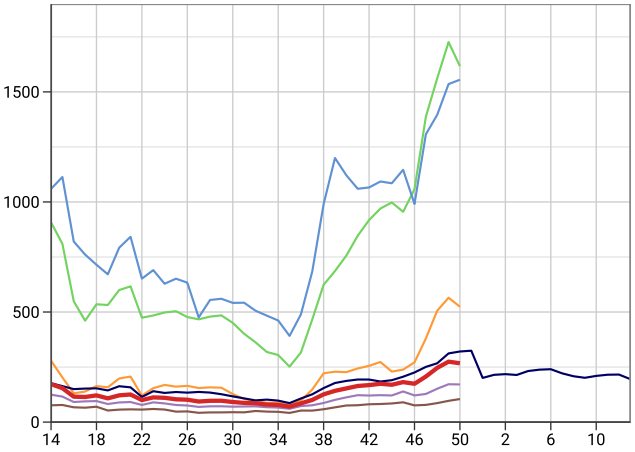
Respiratory Infections - by region

Respiratory Infections - by age band

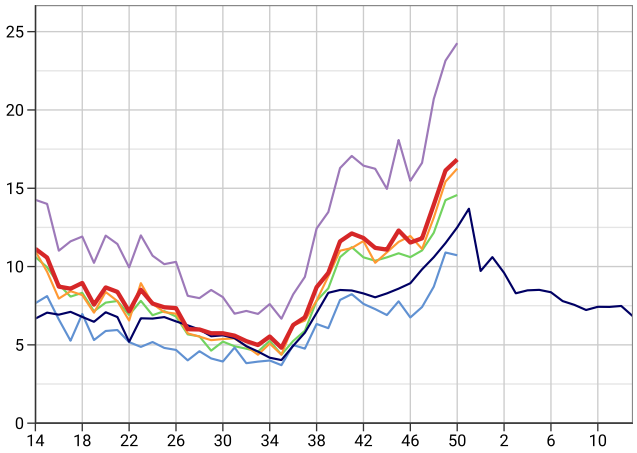
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



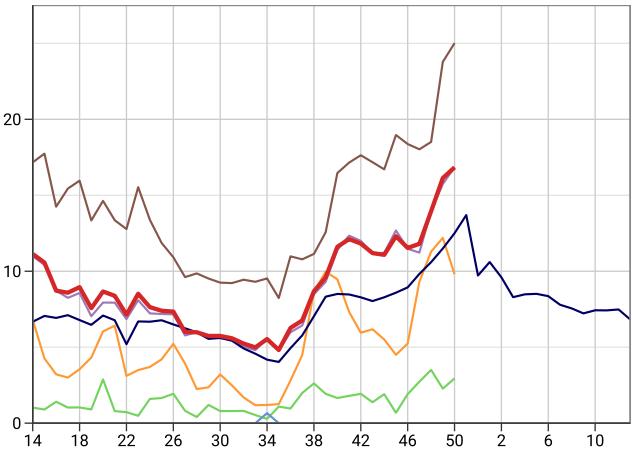
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



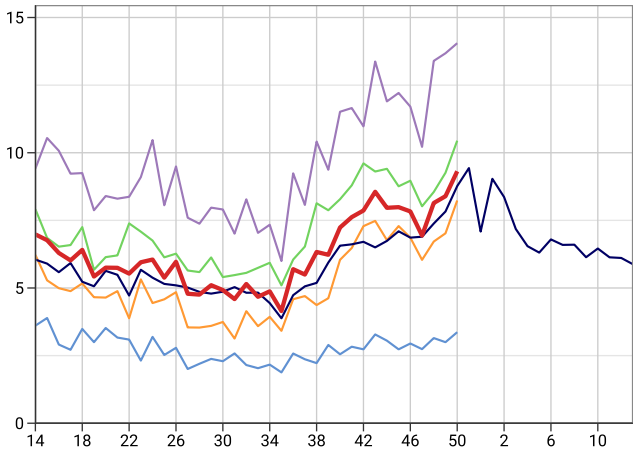
ECLD - Asthma Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



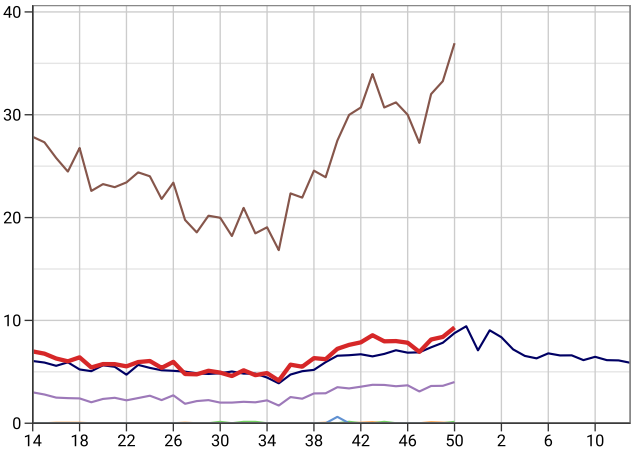
ECLD - Asthma Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



ECLD - COPD Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



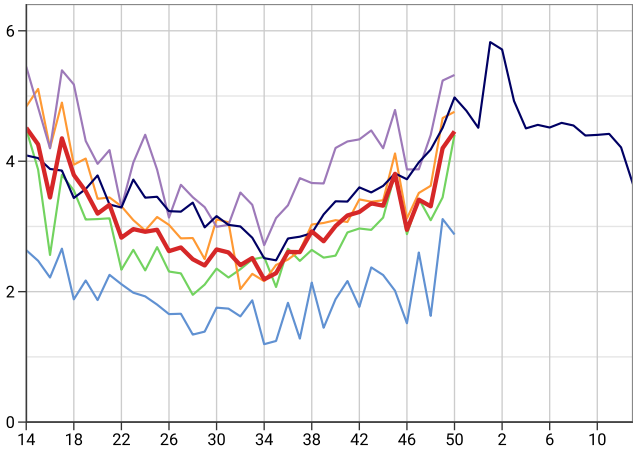
ECLD - COPD Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



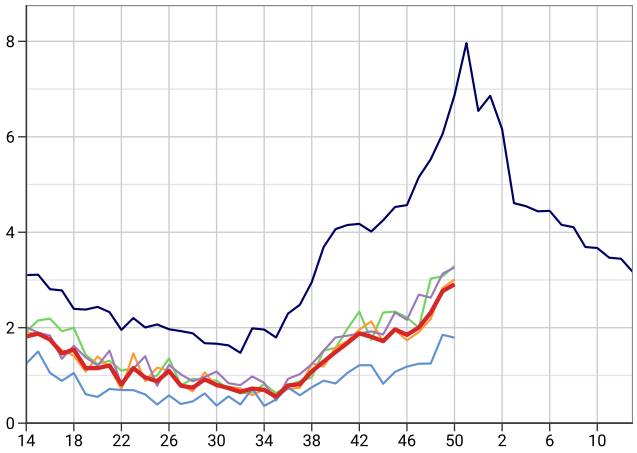
Respiratory Infections - by region

National
London
South
5 Year Avg
North
Midlands And East

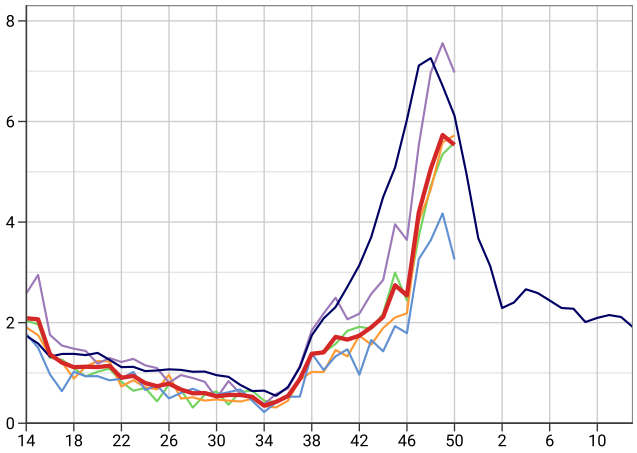
LRTI - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



LRTI - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



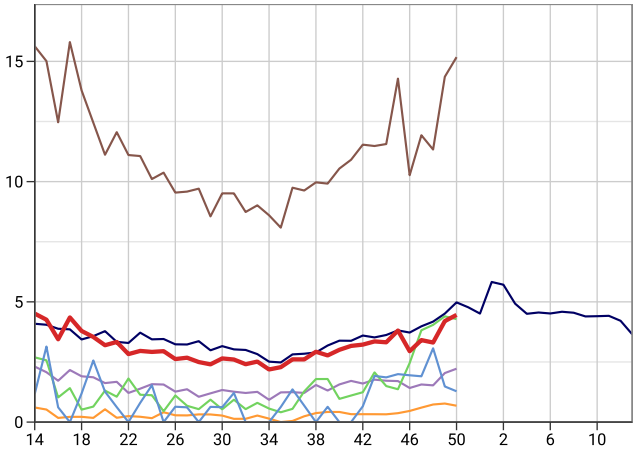
LRTI - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



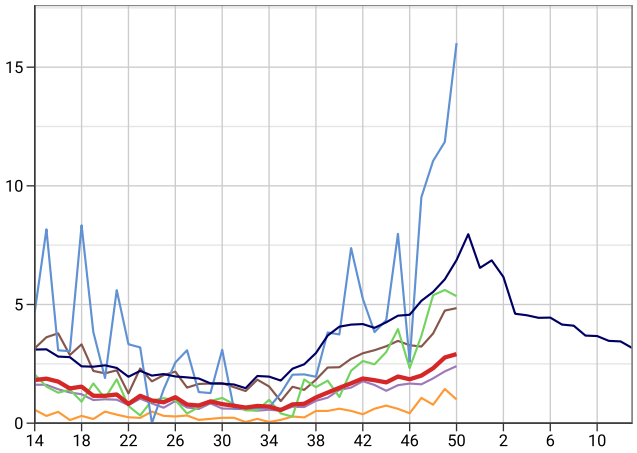
Respiratory Infections - by age band

All ages
<1yr
5-14yrs
65+yrs
5 Year Avg
1-4yrs
15-64yrs

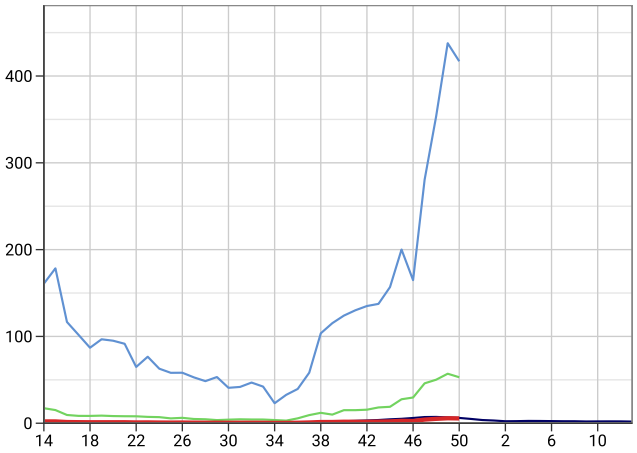
LRTI - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



LRTI - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



LRTI - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



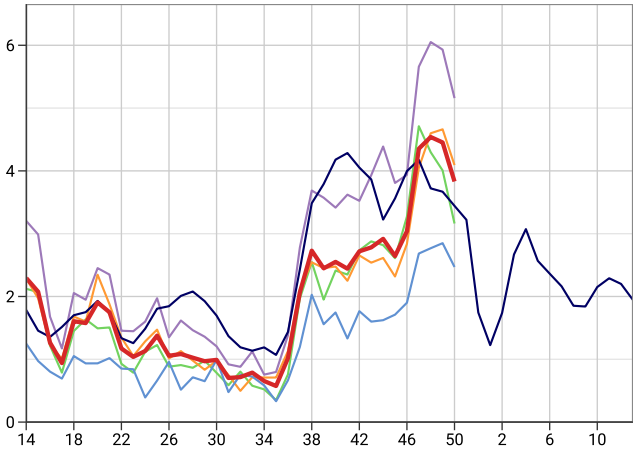
Respiratory Infections - by region

National
London
South
5 Year Avg
North
Midlands And East

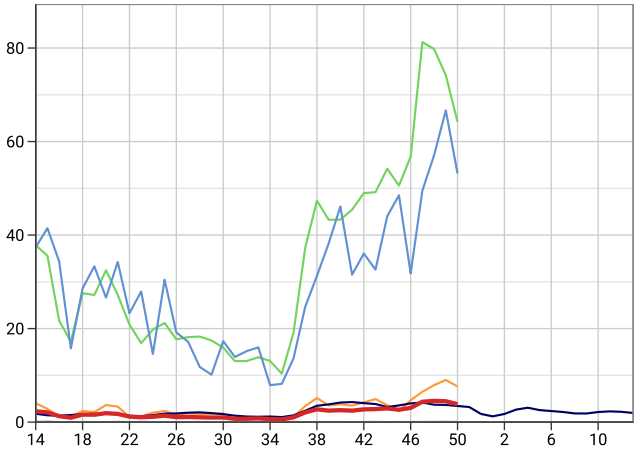
Respiratory Infections - by age band

All ages
<1yr
5-14yrs
65+yrs
5 Year Avg
1-4yrs
15-64yrs

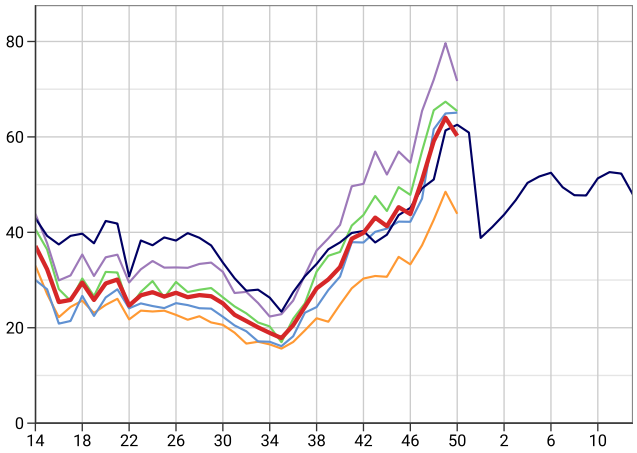
URTI - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



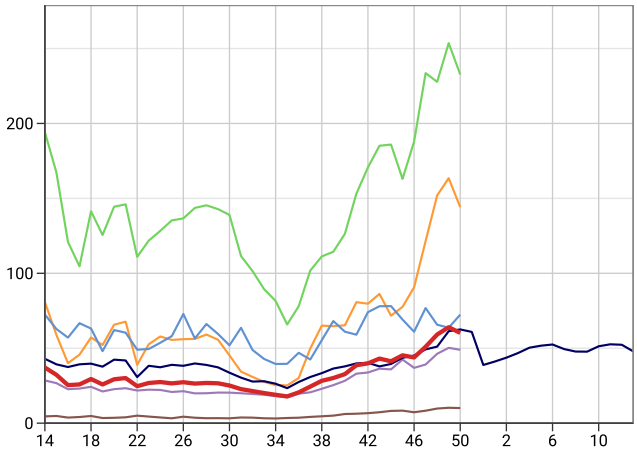
URTI - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



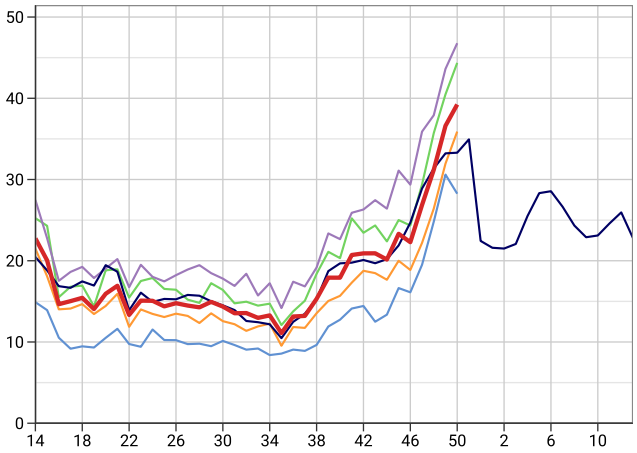
URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



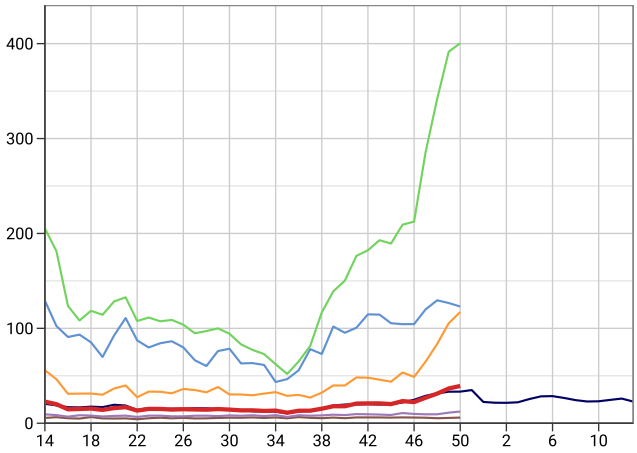
URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



URTI - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



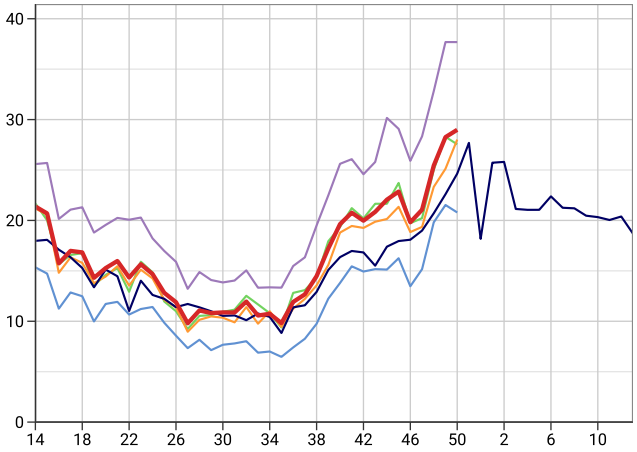
URTI - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



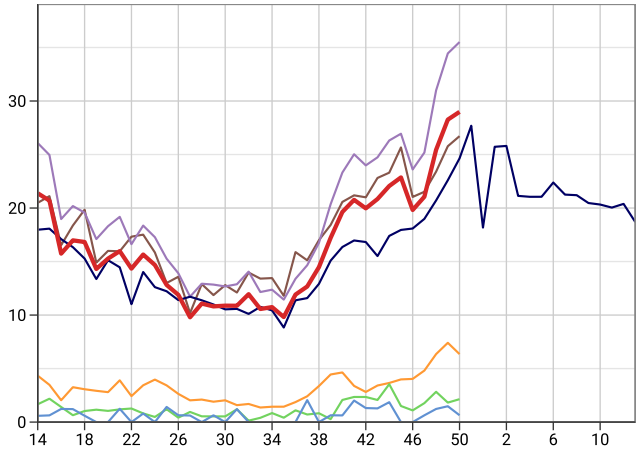
Respiratory Infections - by region

Respiratory Infections - by age band

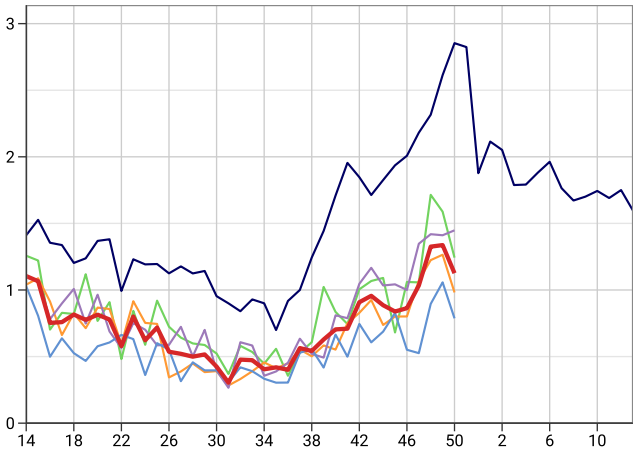
URTI - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



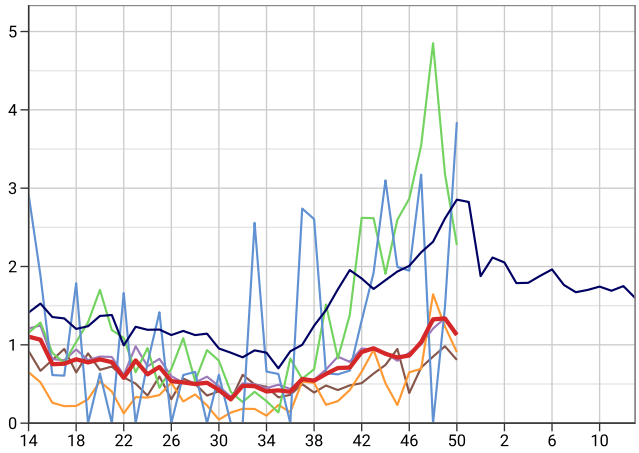
URTI - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



URTI - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



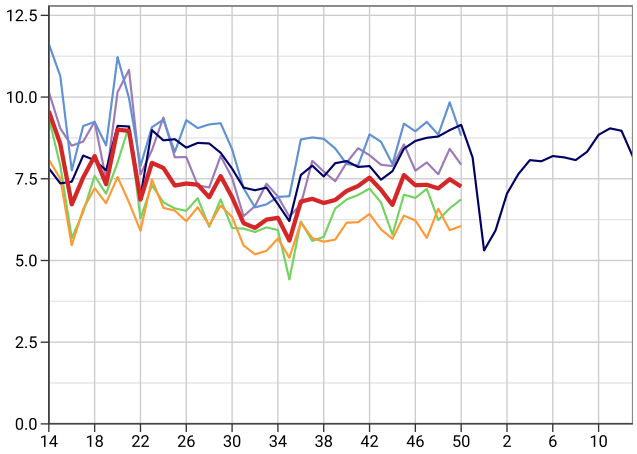
URTI - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



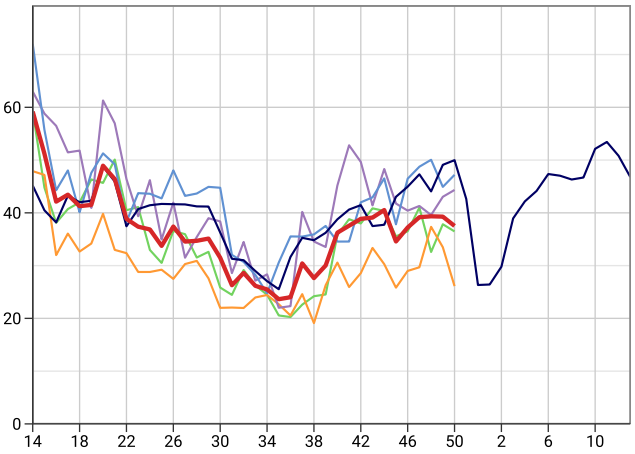
2. Water and Food Borne Disorders

National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

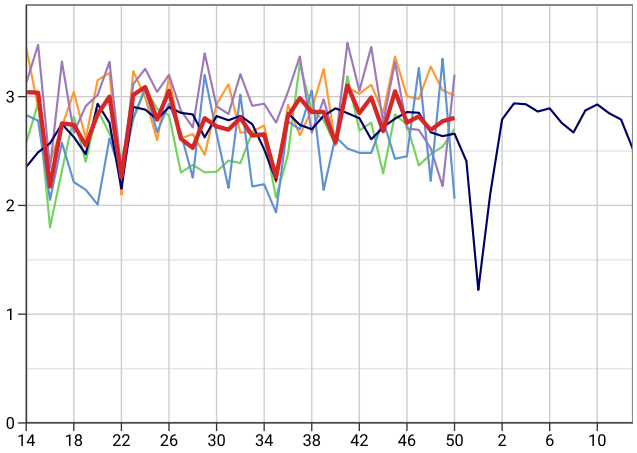
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



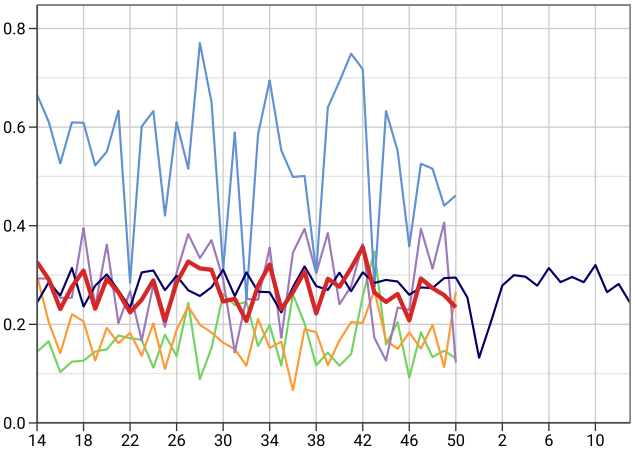
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 0-4 years) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Non-Infective Enteritis and Colitis (ICD10: K50-K52)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



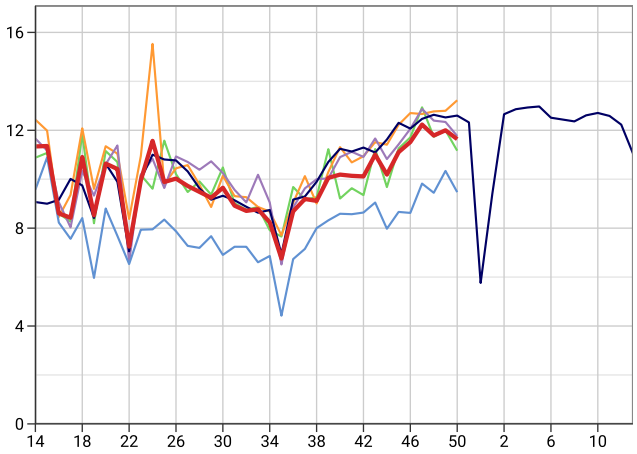
Viral Hepatitis (ICD10: B15-B19)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



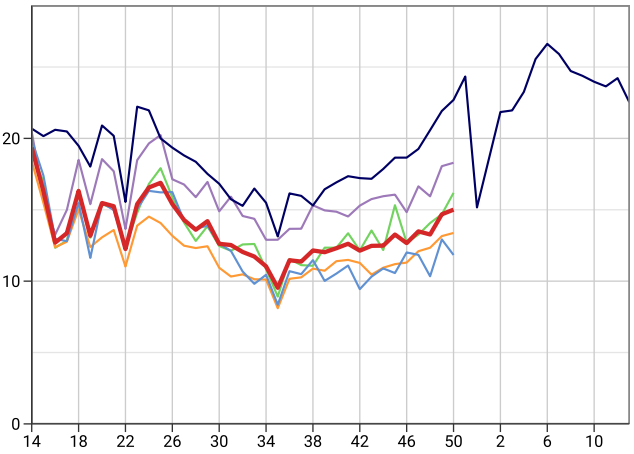
3. Environmentally Sensitive Disorders

National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

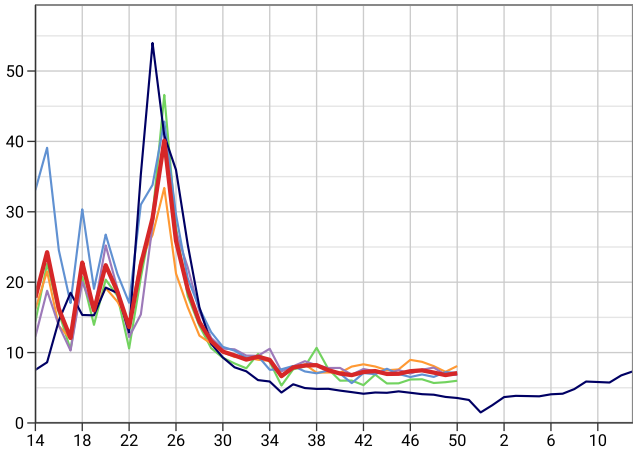
Asthma (ICD10: J45-J46)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



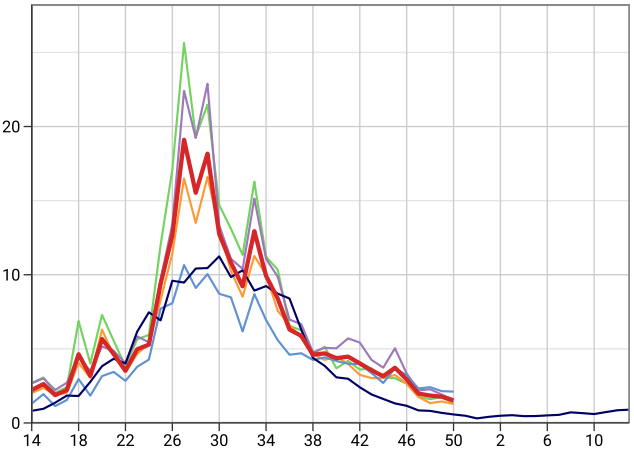
Disorders of Conjunctiva (ICD10: H10-H13)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Hayfever / Allergic Rhinitis (ICD10: J30)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



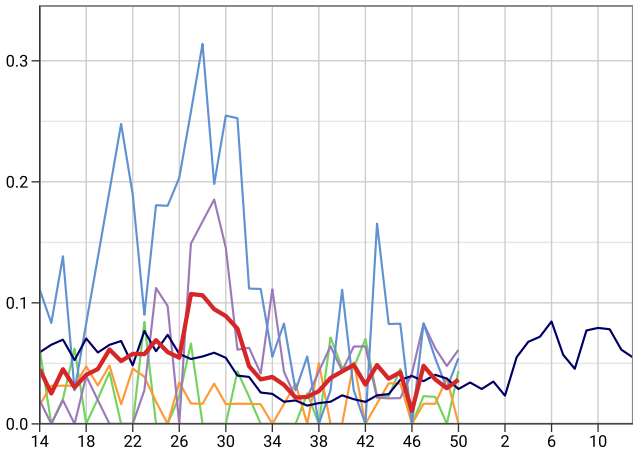
Infected Insect Bites
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



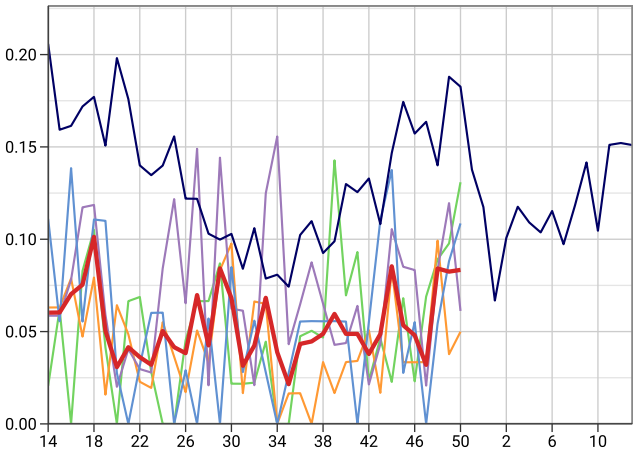
4. Vaccine Sensitive Disorders

National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

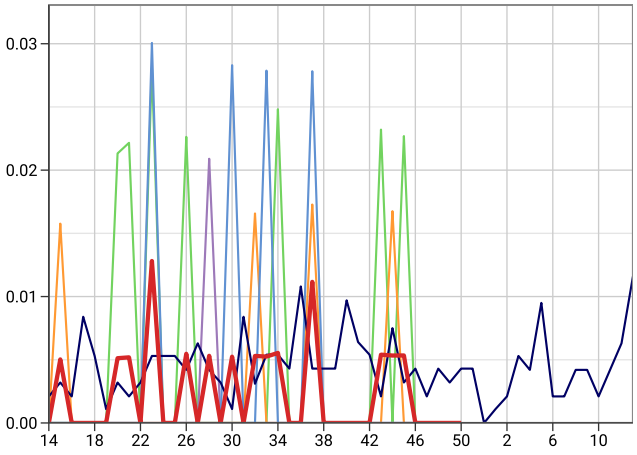
Measles (ICD10: B05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



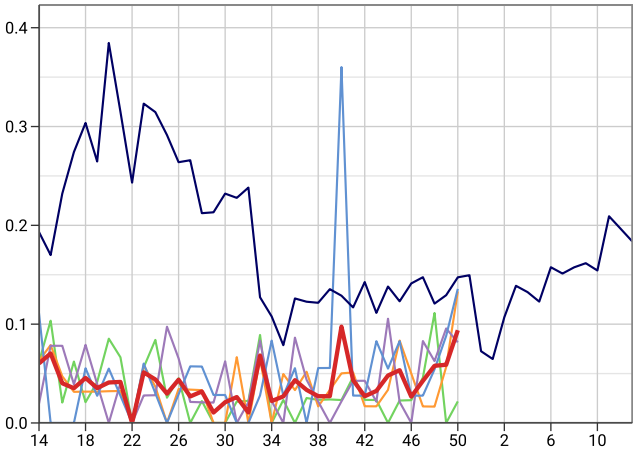
Mumps (ICD10: B26)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Rubella (ICD10: B06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



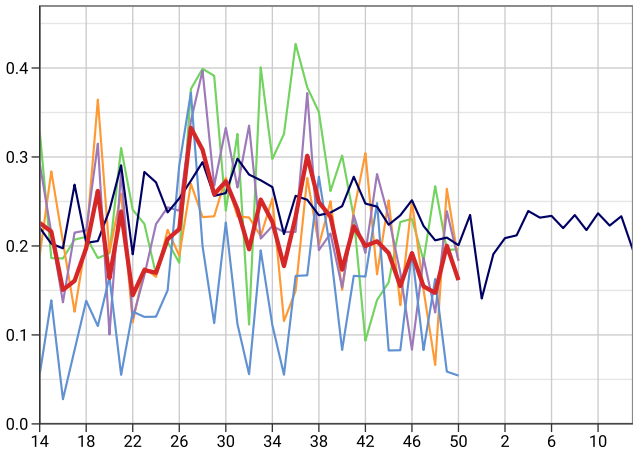
Whooping Cough (ICD10: A37)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



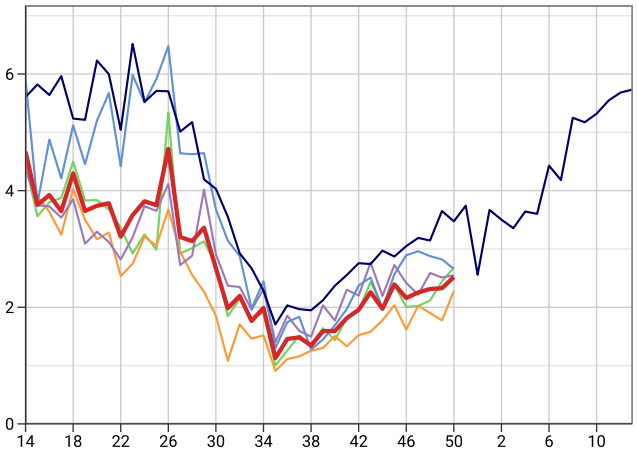
5. Skin Contagions

National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

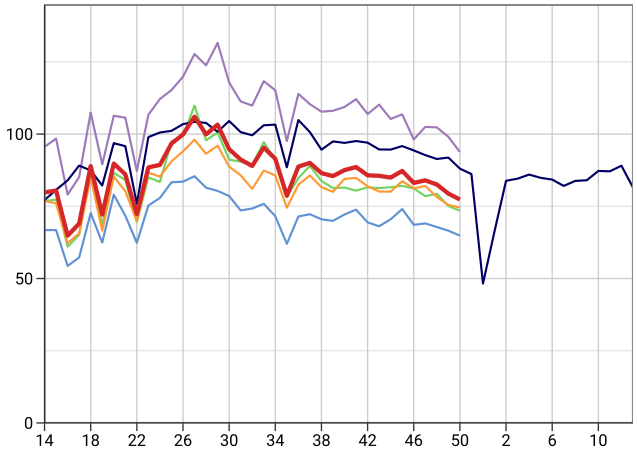
Bullous Dermatoses (ICD10: L10-L14)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



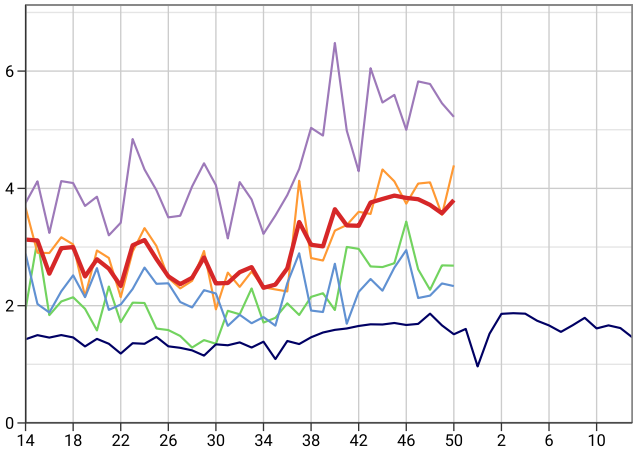
Chickenpox (ICD10: B01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



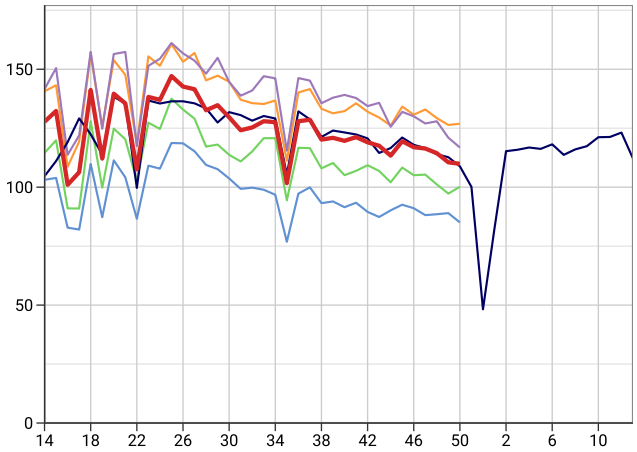
Infections of Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue (ICD10: L00-L08)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



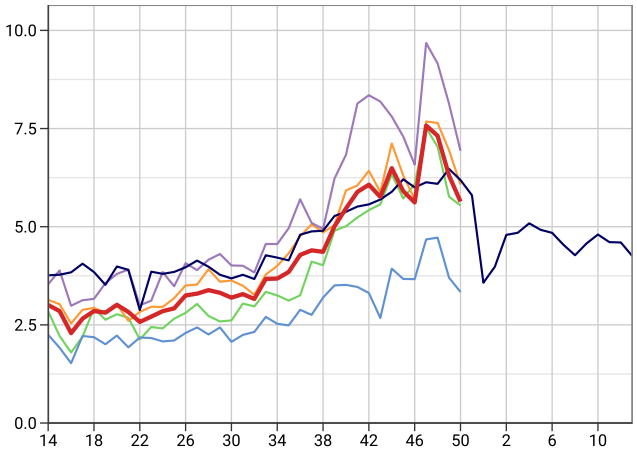
Scabies (ICD10: B86)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Symptoms of Skin & Integument Tissue (ICD10: R20-R23),
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average

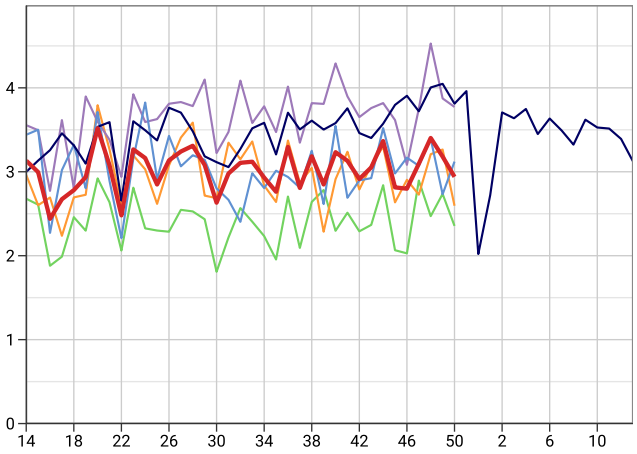


Impetigo (ICD10: L01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average

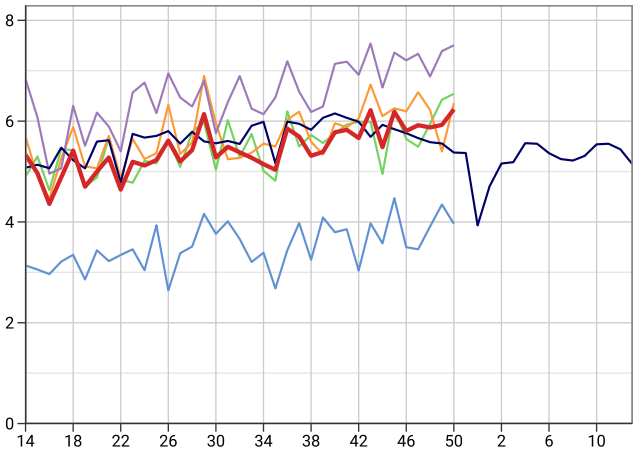


National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

Herpes Simplex (ICD10: B00)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average

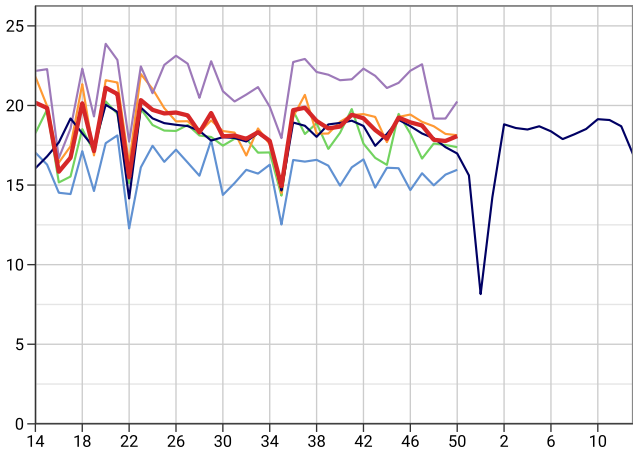


Herpes Zoster (ICD10: B02)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average

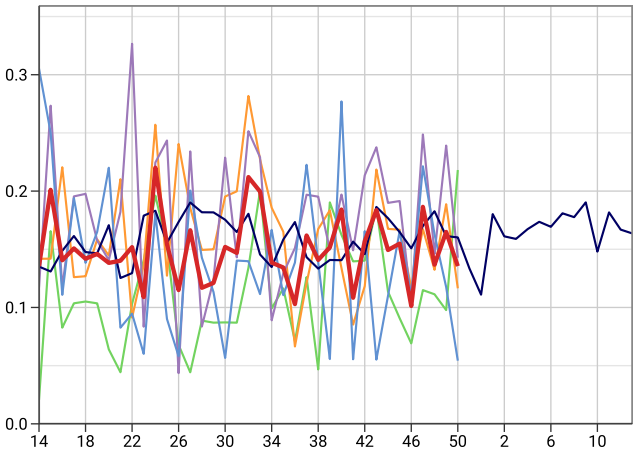


6. Disorders Affecting the Nervous System

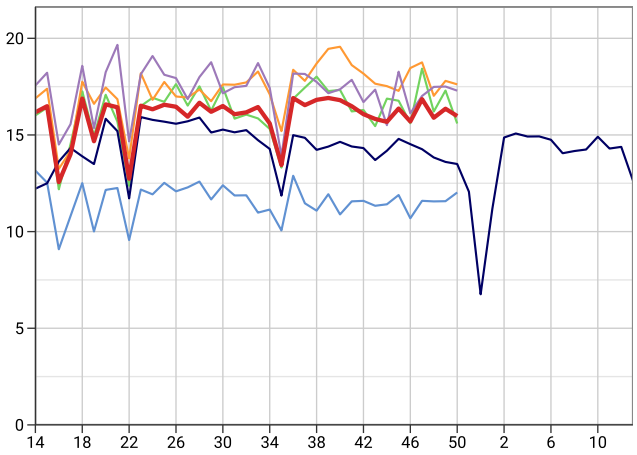
Disorders of Peripheral Nervous System (ICD10: G50-G64,G70-G72), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Meningitis/Encephalitis (ICD10: A170-A171,A390,A38-A85,A87,G00-G05), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



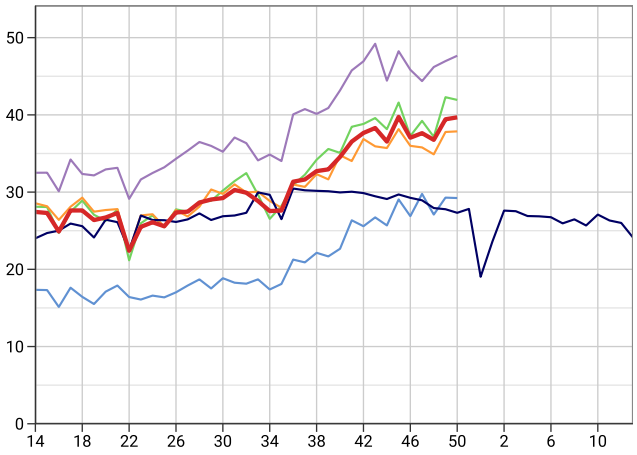
Symptoms of Nervous & Musculoskeletal Systems (ICD10: R25-R29), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



7. Genitourinary System Disorders

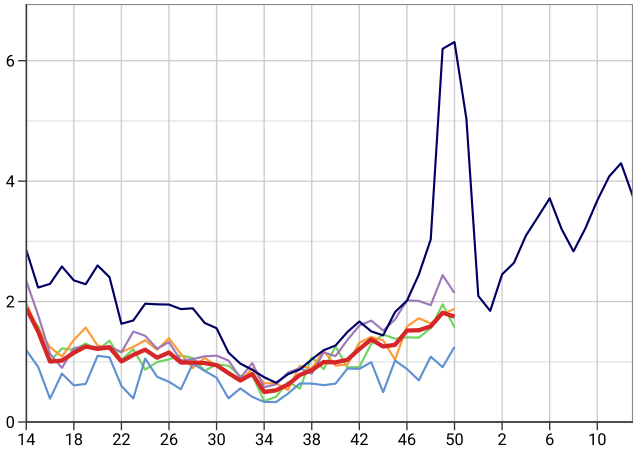
National 5 Year Avg London North South Midlands And East

Urinary Tract Infection/Cystitis (ICD10: N30,N390)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average

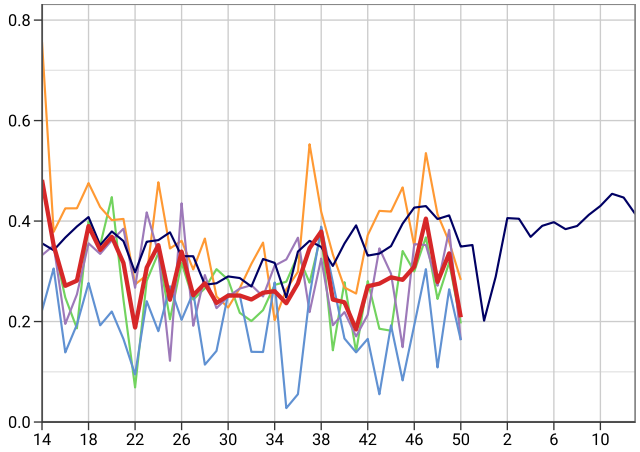


8. Other Disorders

Strep Sore Throat, Scarlatina and Peritonsillar Abscess (ICD10: A38,J020,J36), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



Infectious Mononucleosis (ICD10: B27)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2025/26 compared with 5 year average



9. Tabular Summary by Disease

	Week 47	Week 48	Week 49	Week 50
Dates	17/11/2025 - 23/11/2025	24/11/2025 - 30/11/2025	01/12/2025 - 07/12/2025	08/12/2025 - 14/12/2025
Population	18,768,267	19,012,893	16,977,774	19,184,875
Practice Count	1,784	1,795	1,639	1,808

	Week 47		Week 48		Week 49		Week 50	
Disease	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count
Acute Bronchitis	2.0	376	2.3	440	2.8	470	2.9	558
Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)	309.4	58,074	369.4	70,242	419.8	71,279	415.5	79,720
Allergic Rhinitis	7.5	1,403	7.2	1,361	6.8	1,155	7.1	1,358
Asthma	12.2	2,296	11.8	2,241	12.0	2,037	11.6	2,233
Bronchiolitis	4.2	787	5.1	961	5.7	973	5.5	1,062
Bullous Dermatoses	0.2	29	0.1	28	0.2	34	0.2	31
COVID-19	0.7	125	0.7	125	0.8	134	0.7	131
Chickenpox	2.3	423	2.3	440	2.3	395	2.5	483
Conjunctival Disorders	13.5	2,531	13.3	2,523	14.7	2,493	15.0	2,879
Croup	4.4	817	4.5	863	4.5	756	3.8	735
ECLD - COPD exacerbations	6.9	1,302	8.1	1,548	8.4	1,425	9.3	1,787
ECLD - asthma exacerbations	11.8	2,215	13.9	2,652	16.1	2,739	16.8	3,230
Exacerbations of chronic lung disease (ECLD)	18.7	3,517	21.9	4,164	24.5	4,153	26.0	4,990
Herpes Simplex	3.1	581	3.4	647	3.2	540	2.9	564
Herpes Zoster	5.9	1,111	5.9	1,117	5.9	1,006	6.2	1,196
Impetigo	7.6	1,422	7.3	1,391	6.3	1,070	5.6	1,082
Infected Insect Bites	2.0	372	1.8	351	1.8	301	1.5	292
Infectious Intestinal Diseases	7.3	1,373	7.2	1,370	7.5	1,271	7.3	1,393
Infectious Mononucleosis	0.4	76	0.3	53	0.3	57	0.2	40
Influenza-like Illness (ILI)	8.5	1,599	13.2	2,502	18.3	3,105	23.6	4,532
Laryngitis	1.0	194	1.3	252	1.3	227	1.1	216
Lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI)	94.3	17,701	109.1	20,751	128.3	21,777	127.7	24,496
Measles	0.0	9	0.0	7	0.0	5	0.0	7
Meningitis and Encephalitis	0.2	35	0.1	26	0.2	28	0.1	26
Mumps	0.0	6	0.1	16	0.1	14	0.1	16
Non-infective Enteritis and Colitis	2.8	529	2.7	512	2.8	471	2.8	538
Peripheral Nervous Disease	18.7	3,518	17.8	3,392	17.8	3,017	18.1	3,468
Pneumonia	3.4	640	3.3	629	4.2	713	4.5	855
Rubella	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0
Scabies	3.8	716	3.7	707	3.6	607	3.8	729
Sinusitis	21.1	3,952	25.4	4,837	28.3	4,798	29.0	5,561
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Infections	84.0	15,762	82.5	15,695	79.4	13,479	77.4	14,841
Strep Throat and Peritonsillar Abscess	1.5	286	1.6	302	1.8	308	1.8	336
Symptoms involving Skin and Integument Tissues	116.4	21,844	114.4	21,752	110.5	18,766	109.9	21,086
Symptoms involving musculoskeletal	16.9	3,163	15.9	3,021	16.4	2,777	16.0	3,065
Tonsillitis and Pharyngitis	51.0	9,569	59.1	11,244	64.0	10,869	60.2	11,553
Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI)	206.9	38,838	246.2	46,819	274.5	46,612	267.2	51,257
Urinary Tract Infections	37.6	7,063	36.8	6,990	39.4	6,694	39.7	7,613
Viral Hepatitis	0.3	55	0.3	52	0.3	44	0.2	45
Whooping Cough	0.0	8	0.1	11	0.1	10	0.1	18

Further Information

Focus on winter respiratory infections and infections with epidemic or pandemic infection

A key role of the RSC is to monitor conditions that cause winter pressures on the NHS, as well as provide early warnings of outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics. The RSC has been collecting data on infections since 1957, conducting sentinel surveillance since 1967 (with virology added in 1993), and serosurveillance from 2000.

Pages 2-6 of this report focus on influenza-like illness (ILI), virology data, and acute respiratory infections (ARI). ILI is the name given to clinically identified flu cases, around half of which will be due to the influenza virus (the other half will be due to other viruses).

Measuring the level of circulating influenza

The level of influenza-like illness (ILI) is reported using intensity thresholds (Graph A, page 2 and Table E, page 4). These are calculated using the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM). MEM works by identifying seasonal epidemic peaks and then calculating a baseline threshold and intensity levels based on pre- and post-epidemic rates. This provides a better measure of severity of ILI than simply comparing it to the five-year average rate.

The MEM intensity levels for ILI are defined as follows:

Threshold to Medium	Below 40% percentile
Medium to High	From 40% to below 90% percentile
High to Very High	From 90% to below 97.5% percentile
Above Very High	At or above 97.5% percentile

The MEM methodology is used by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) to standardise reporting of influenza activity.

More information about MEM can be found at:

https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22897919/

Rate of monitored conditions

Our monitored conditions are reported as the number of new cases each week per 100,000 population. We refer to this as the 'weekly incidence'. All conditions are shown with males and females combined.

The report's population, also called the denominator, is the registered population of RSC practices who share anonymised data for this report. The denominator varies weekly as patients register and deregister; additionally, a practice's data may not be included if there is an issue with data extraction.

Five-year averages

In addition to weekly incidence rates, we plot a five-year average for most conditions. Previously a ten-year average was used, but this window was shortened to reflect faster changes in seasonal variations and therefore enable a more meaningful comparison to relevant historic trends. COVID-19 pandemic years are excluded from this calculation for some conditions.

Regional rates of monitored conditions

In addition to a national rate, we present regional rates for all monitored conditions for four regions of England. The four RSC regions are aggregated NHS regions:

North	NHS North East and Yorkshire, and North West regions
Midlands and East	NHS East of England and Midlands regions
South	NHS South East and South West regions
London	NHS London region

Reporting of acute respiratory infections (ARI) by age band

In addition to regional rates, we report rates by age band for ARI. We display five age bands: those aged under 1 year, 1-4 years, 5-14 years, 15-64 years, and those aged 65 years and over. We subdivide ARI into four categories:

- **influenza-like illness** (ILI);
- **exacerbations of chronic lung disease** (ECLD), mainly asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD);
- **lower respiratory tract infections** (LRTI), including bronchitis and pneumonia;
- **upper respiratory tract infections** (URTI), including tonsilitis and sinusitis.

More information about our classification of ARI can be found at:

https://www.eurosurveillance.org/content/10.2807/1560-7917.ES.2024.29.35.2300682

About the RCGP Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC)

What we do

Established in 1957, the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC) is an internationally renowned source of information, analysis and interpretation concerning the onset, patterns, prevalence and trends over time of morbidity in primary care. The RSC provides weekly reports about health and disease: the Weekly Returns Service (WRS). The WRS has been produced since 1967, in collaboration with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and its predecessor bodies. The University of Oxford currently provides the WRS on behalf of RCGP and UKHSA.

The RSC is active in research and surveillance. In addition to the WRS, the RSC contributes data to UKHSA's Syndromic Surveillance system, and supports vaccine effectiveness studies. The role of general practice members of the RSC is set out in an annual commissioning letter.

Further information about the RSC can be found on our website:

www.rcgp.org.uk/representing-you/research-at-rcgp/research-surveillance-centre

Our data extraction process and governance

Data are extracted on behalf of the RSC from practice computerised medical record systems, twice a week by Magentus Data Management, or daily by EMIS-X Analytics (EXA).

Data are pseudonymised as close to source as possible. Data are held on secure servers at the Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences (NDPCHS) at the University of Oxford. Our systems meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Further information about the NHS England approval of the RSC's data security can be found at:

https://www.dsptoolkit.nhs.uk/OrganisationSearch/EE133863-MSD-NDPCHS

What the data is used for

The WRS monitors the number of patients consulting with new episodes of illness classified by diagnosis in England and provides weekly incidence rates per 100,000 population for these new episodes of illness. It is the key primary care element of the national disease monitoring systems run by the UK Health Security Agency.

In addition to the WRS, the data are used for other research studies. Any other uses of the data for research follow ethical approval or agreement from NIHR proportionate review, and where relevant Health Research Authority Confidential Advisory Group advice that further approval is not needed.

Get in touch

For further information about the work of the RSC, or if you would like to be included on our email notification list, please contact:

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