RSC Communicable and Respiratory Disease Report for England

Week Number / Year	Population
2 / 2025	**18,689,762**

Dates	No. Practices
06/01/2025 - 12/01/2025	**1,733**

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

Presentations of influenza-like illness (ILI) are at the highest rate so far this season, and are above the historic average in most regions.

Overall, rates of acute respiratory infections (ARI, page 7) are close to unchanged from last week, remaining at or below the seasonal average. There has been a large decrease in ARI rates in children under 5 years old. However, exacerbations of chronic lung disease (ECLD, page 8) remain above the seasonal average, mainly due to asthma exacerbations (page 9).

Rates of influenza-like illness (ILI, pages 3 to 5) have increased in all regions, and are at or above the seasonal average. In all age bands, ILI rates remain above the seasonal epidemic threshold, with most groups at the medium to high level: see Table (E), page 5.

Overall rates of COVID-19 are unchanged and remain low (page 6).

This report includes a respiratory virology update: see Graph (C), page 4. RSV and influenza A (H1N1) are the predominant circulating viruses detected by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Reference Virology Laboratory.

Other comments:

- Rates of scabies (page 16) remain above the seasonal average and have increased sharply over the past two weeks, especially in the North.

Seasonal Focus

In the "Change since last week" column, a change in rate of 5% to 10% is marked with a single arrow (⌃ or ⌄), while a change of more than 10% is marked with a double arrow (⌃⌃ or ⌄⌄). 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	285.8	261.3	⌃ 24.5	21.9	15.5	⌃⌃ 6.4	16.3	14.7	⌃⌃ 1.6
Midlands And East	360.8	370.7	— −9.9	18.5	17.5	⌃ 1.0	27.0	27.5	— −0.5
North	441.6	443.5	— −1.9	24.6	22.7	⌃ 1.8	41.7	40.5	— 1.1
South	340.1	348.8	— −8.7	26.3	24.6	⌃ 1.6	27.9	29.7	⌄ −1.7
National	**359.5**	**360.7**	**— −1.2**	**23.1**	**20.6**	**⌃⌃ 2.4**	**28.8**	**28.9**	**— −0.1**

	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	88.7	86.2	— 2.4	175.6	157.8	⌃⌃ 17.7	0.7	0.6	⌃⌃ 0.1
Midlands And East	151.3	161.2	⌄ −10.0	186.3	186.9	— −0.6	0.4	0.8	⌄⌄ −0.4
North	191.9	198.1	— −6.2	214.1	212.6	— 1.6	1.1	1.1	— 0.0
South	139.9	148.0	⌄ −8.1	170.2	170.9	— −0.7	1.1	0.9	⌃⌃ 0.2
National	**145.6**	**151.7**	**— −6.2**	**185.9**	**182.6**	**— 3.3**	**0.9**	**0.9**	**— 0.0**

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	1,245.4	1,503.5	⌄⌄ −258.1	30.2	38.9	⌄⌄ −8.7	0.0	0.0	— 0.0
1-4yrs	681.5	821.4	⌄⌄ −139.9	22.0	27.5	⌄⌄ −5.5	1.0	1.1	⌄⌄ −0.1
5-14yrs	238.5	217.5	⌃ 21.0	8.2	6.1	⌃⌃ 2.1	4.1	3.3	⌃⌃ 0.8
15-64yrs	315.3	304.0	— 11.2	24.8	20.2	⌃⌃ 4.6	23.4	24.0	— −0.6
65+yrs	493.2	509.7	— −16.5	26.4	29.3	⌄⌄ −2.9	72.0	70.9	— 1.1
All ages	**359.5**	**360.7**	**— −1.2**	**23.1**	**20.6**	**⌃⌃ 2.4**	**28.8**	**28.9**	**— −0.1**

|	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	331.4	443.1	⌄⌄ −111.7	1,009.4	1,188.5	⌄⌄ −179.1	4.8	1.3	⌃⌃ 3.5
1-4yrs	104.8	154.8	⌄⌄ −50.1	617.7	730.0	⌄⌄ −112.4	0.6	0.3	⌃⌃ 0.3
5-14yrs	32.3	38.5	⌄⌄ −6.2	205.9	184.3	⌃⌃ 21.5	0.2	0.1	⌃⌃ 0.1
15-64yrs	121.2	122.9	— −1.7	165.6	154.2	⌃ 11.5	0.6	0.6	— 0.0
65+yrs	309.9	317.9	— −8.1	118.4	120.2	— −1.8	2.1	2.3	⌄⌄ −0.2
All ages	**145.6**	**151.7**	**— −6.2**	**185.9**	**182.6**	**— 3.3**	**0.9**	**0.9**	**— 0.0**

2024/25 Focus

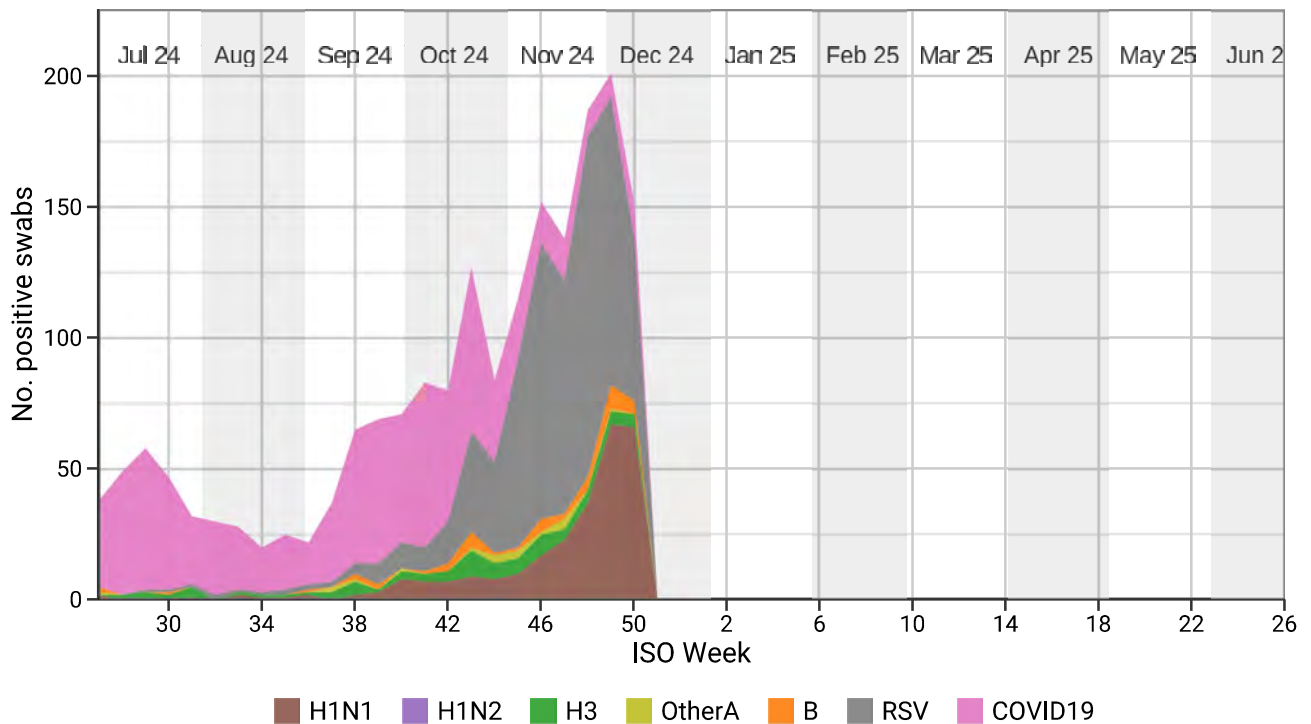## (A) Influenza-like Illness: national incidence rate by region

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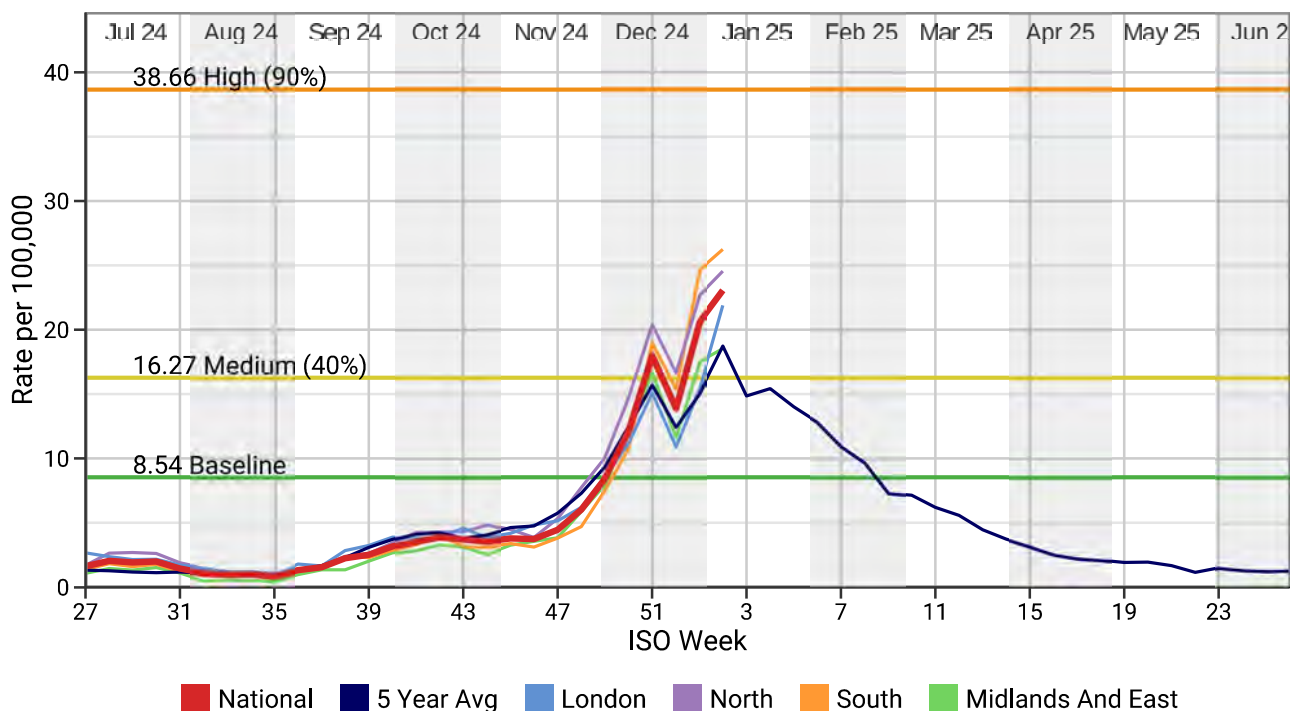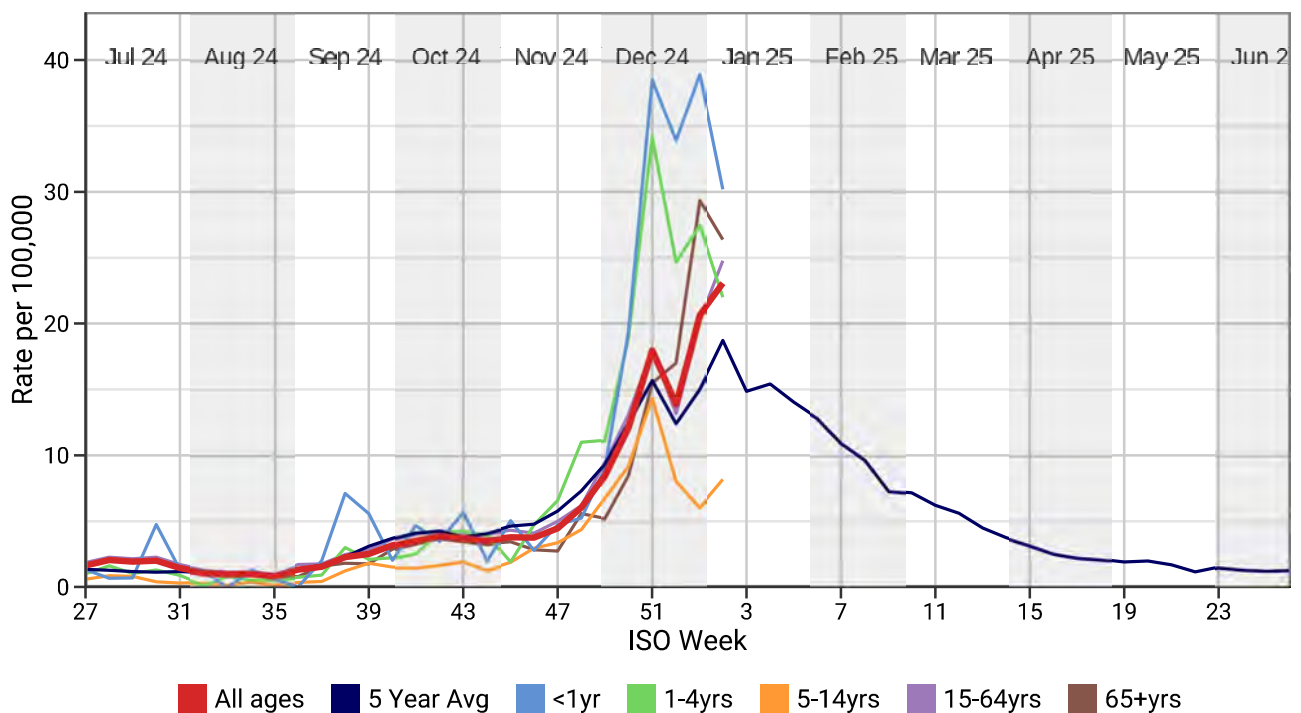

(B) RCGP/UKHSA influenza virology swab surveillance
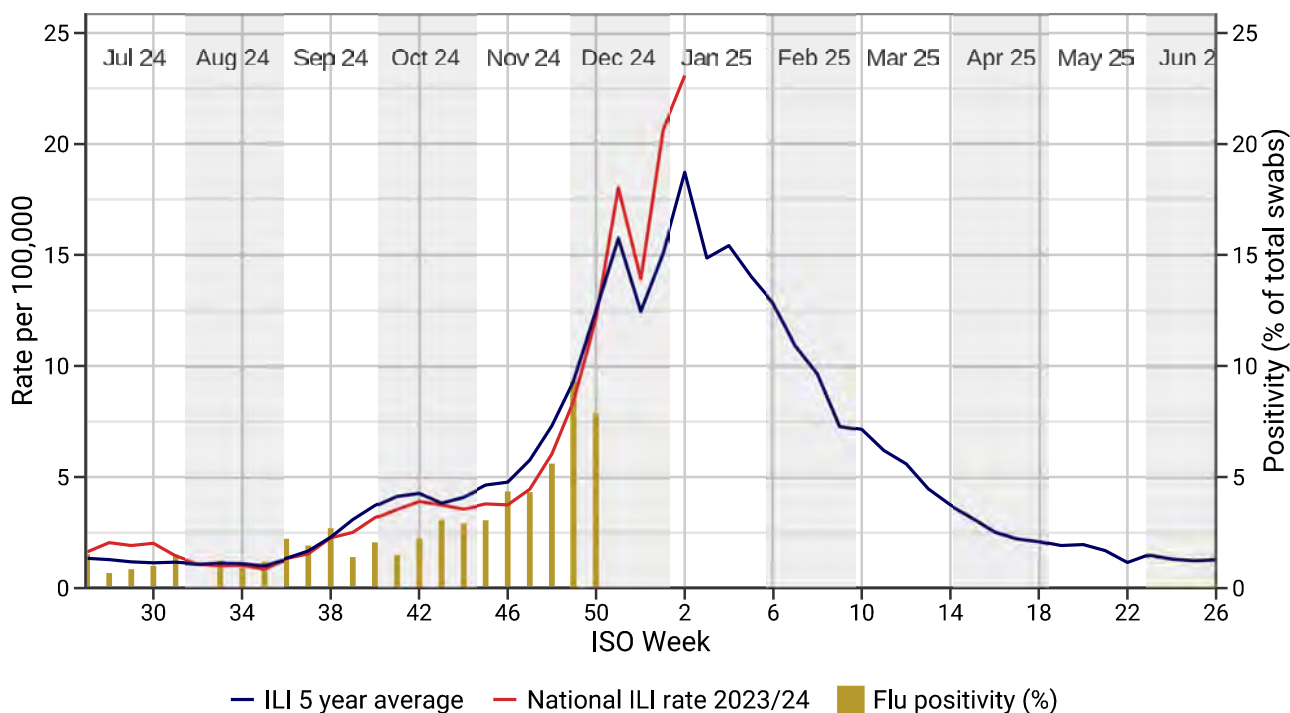
(C) RCGP/UKHSA RSV, influenza and SARS-CoV-2 virology swab surveilance (by strain)

Legend: H1N1, H1N2, H3, OtherA, B, RSV, COVID19

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

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

(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.

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
1-4yrs	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.6	1.0	1.3	0.9	0.1	0.9	0.6	0.6	0.7
5-14yrs	1.7	1.2	1.1	0.4	1.1	1.2	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4
15-64yrs	2.1	2.8	2.1	1.9	2.2	2.6	2.3	1.9	1.8	2.3	2.1	2.3	1.7	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.7
65+yrs	0.8	1.7	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.6	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.8
All ages	1.7	2.3	1.8	1.6	1.9	2.2	2.0	1.6	1.6	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.1	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.3

	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2
1-4yrs	0.9	3.0	2.1	2.2	2.6	4.2	4.3	4.0	1.9	4.7	6.6	11.0	11.1	18.9	34.2	24.7	27.5	22.0
5-14yrs	0.4	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.7	2.0	1.3	1.9	2.9	3.4	4.4	6.8	9.2	14.4	8.1	6.1	8.2
15-64yrs	1.8	2.5	2.8	3.6	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.1	5.0	6.2	9.5	13.1	18.1	13.2	20.2	24.8
65+yrs	1.6	1.8	1.7	2.9	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.4	2.8	2.7	5.6	5.2	8.5	15.5	17.1	29.3	26.4
All ages	1.5	2.3	2.5	3.2	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.7	4.5	6.0	8.5	12.1	18.0	13.9	20.6	23.1

	Below Threshold	Threshold to Medium	Medium to High	High to Very High	Above Very High
1-4yrs	<7.9	7.9 to 12.6	12.6 to 26.2	26.2 to 36.1	36.1+
5-14yrs	<5.4	5.4 to 10.7	10.7 to 26.6	26.6 to 39.9	39.9+
15-64yrs	<9.8	9.8 to 17.9	17.9 to 43.0	43.0 to 63.4	63.4+
65+yrs	<9.3	9.3 to 15.0	15.0 to 38.8	38.8 to 59.0	59.0+
All Ages	<8.54	8.54 to 16.27	16.27 to 38.66	38.66 to 56.68	56.68+

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

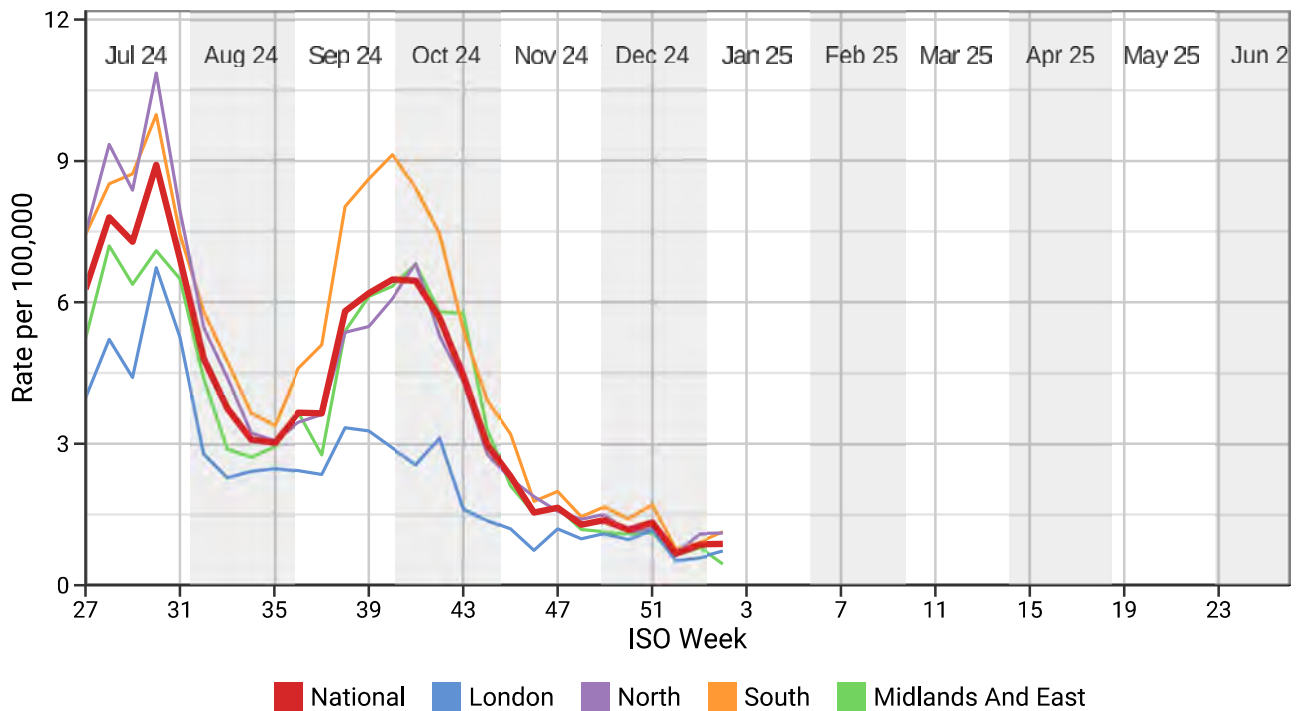Children under 1 year old are omitted from the following graph.
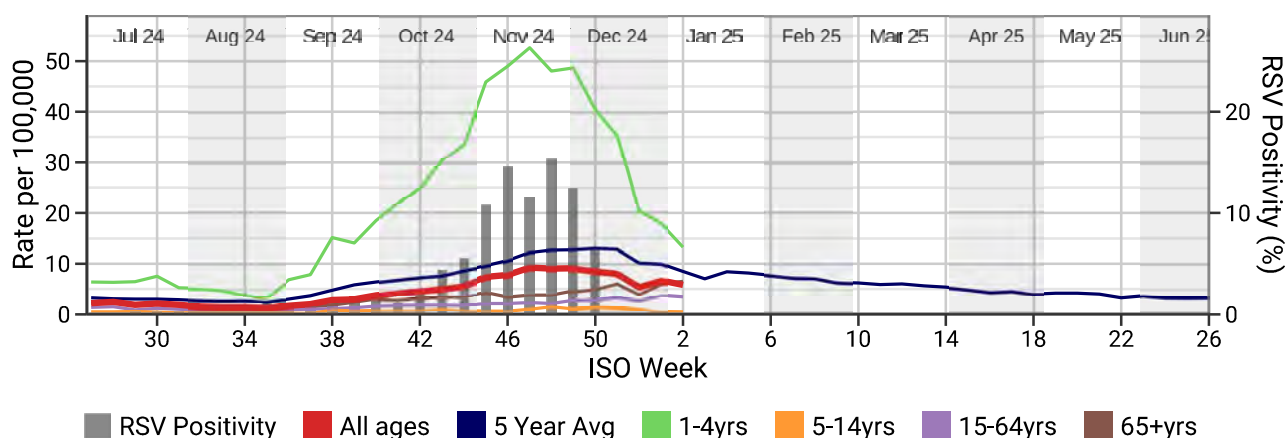
Weekly incidence rates of influenza-like illness, and acute bronchitis and bronchiolitis (per 100,000)
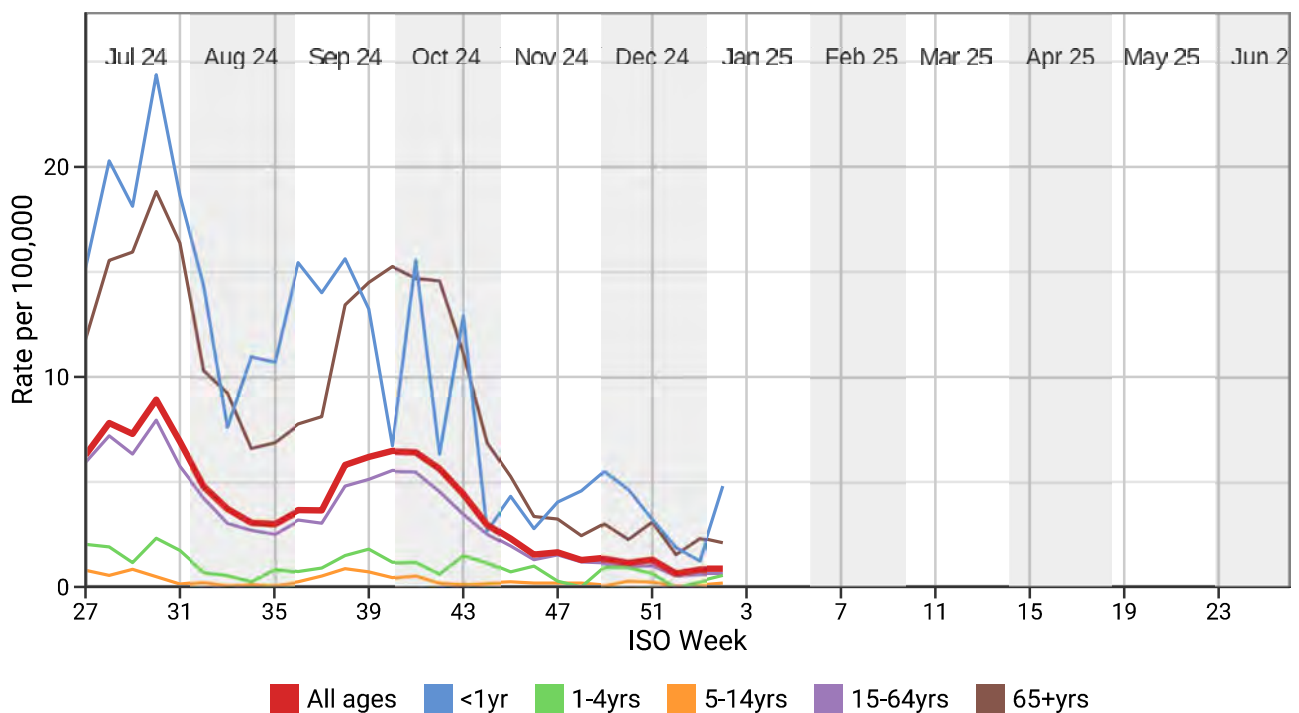
	Influenza-like illness (ILI)	ARI-Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis
<1yr	30.2	225.8
1-4yrs	22.0	13.3
5-14yrs	8.2	0.5
15-24yrs	19.6	1.6
25-44yrs	24.7	2.6
45-64yrs	27.4	5.5
65-74yrs	20.3	5.7
75-84yrs	27.9	7.1
85+yrs	43.8	7.9
All ages	23.1	5.8

	Influenza-like illness (ILI)	ARI-Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis
London	21.9	4.1
Midlands And East	18.5	6.4
North	24.6	6.7
South	26.3	5.6
National	23.1	5.8

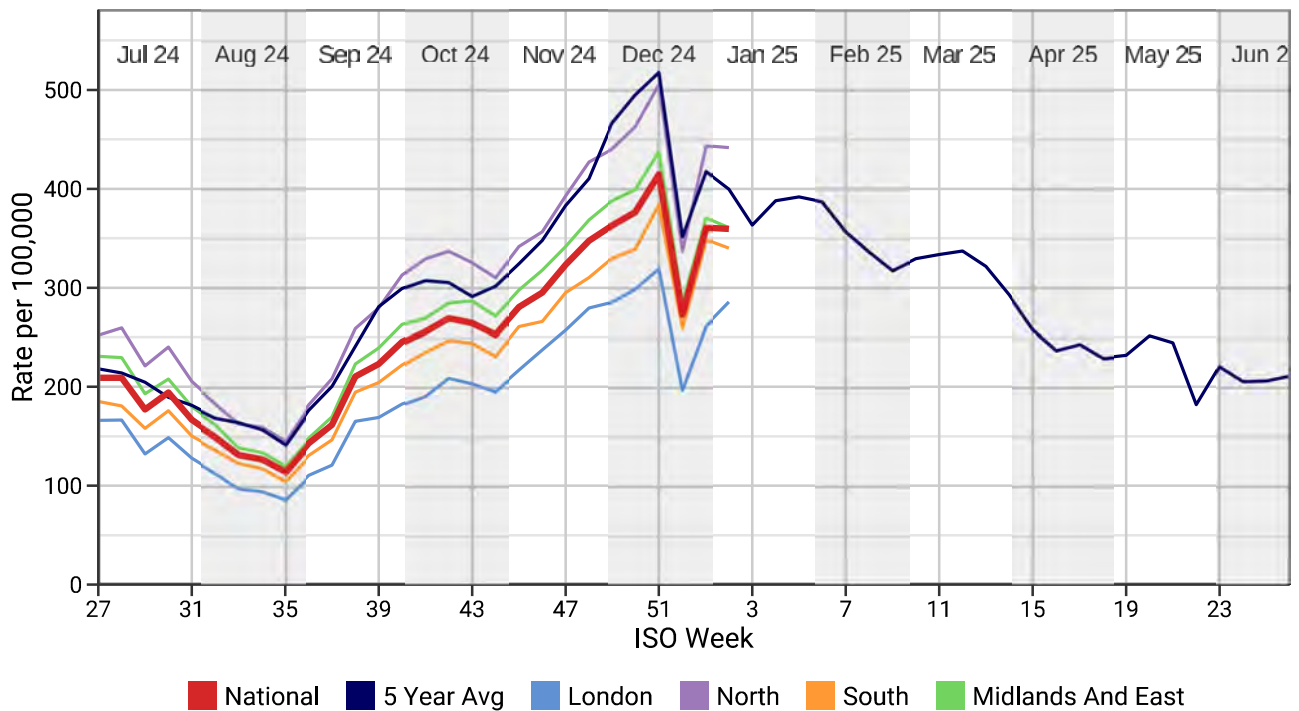## (G) COVID-19: national incidence rate by region

Legend: National, London, North, South, Midlands And East

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

Legend: All ages, <1yr, 1-4yrs, 5-14yrs, 15-64yrs, 65+yrs

1. Respiratory Infections

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

Legend: National · 5 Year Avg · London · North · South · Midlands And East

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

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

Respiratory Infections - by region

- National
- 5 Year Avg
- London
- North
- South
- Midlands And East

Respiratory Infections - by age band

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

Influenza-like illness (ILI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Influenza-like illness (ILI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
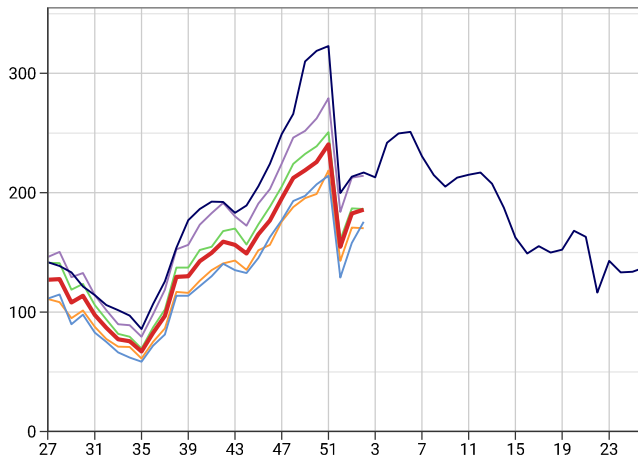

Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Respiratory Infections - by region

■ National ■ London ■ South
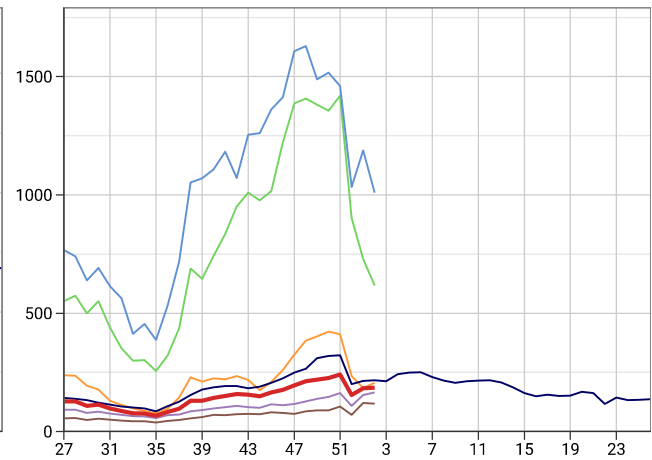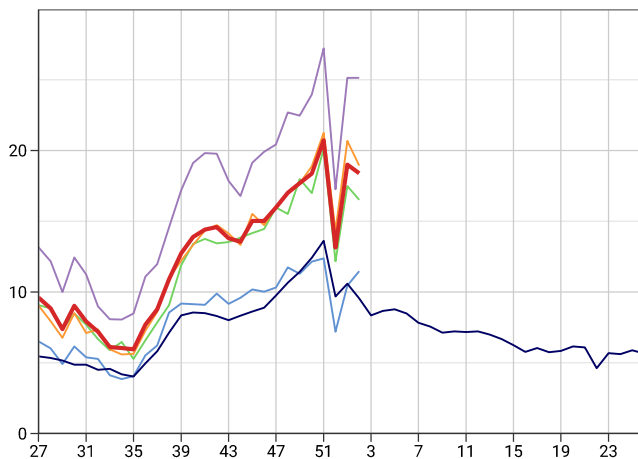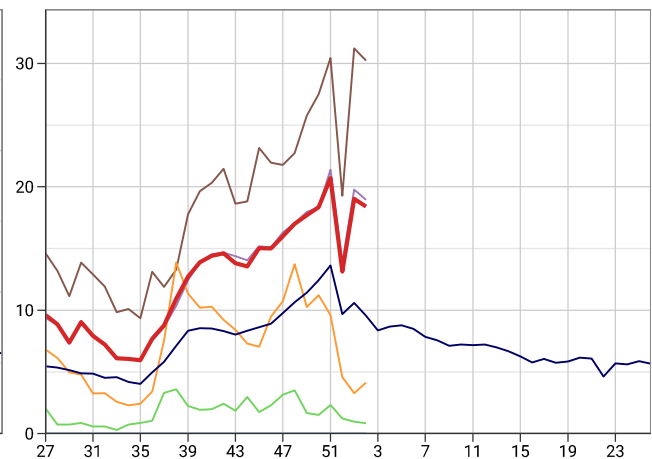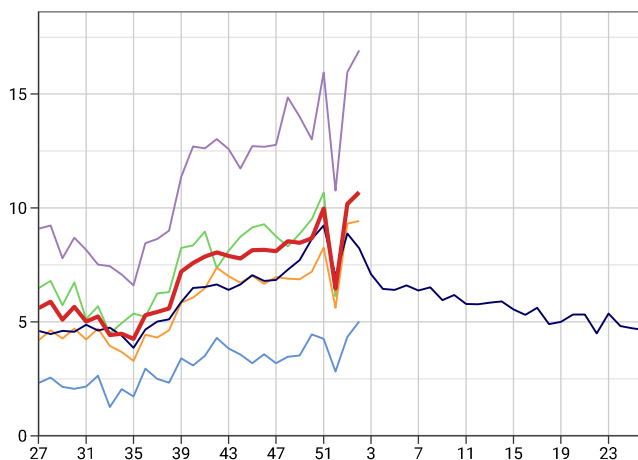■ 5 Year Avg ■ North ■ Midlands And East

Respiratory Infections - by age band

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

Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

ECLD - Asthma Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
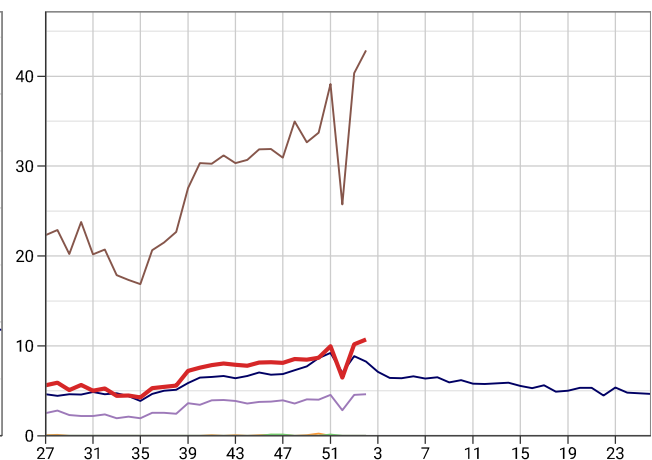

ECLD - Asthma Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

ECLD - COPD Exacerbations
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

ECLD - COPD Exacerbations
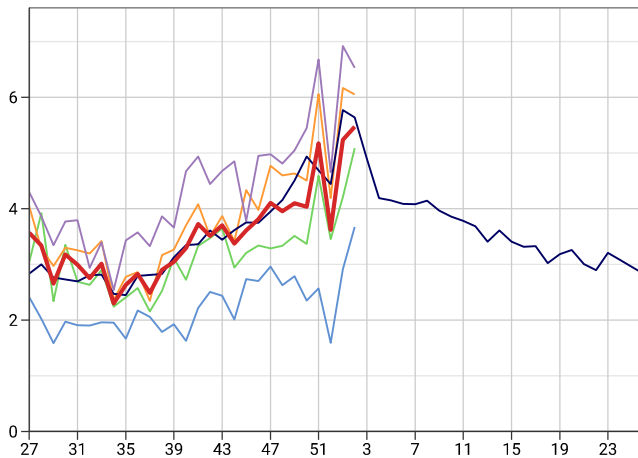Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Respiratory Infections - by region

- National
- 5 Year Avg
- London
- North
- South
- Midlands And East

Respiratory Infections - by age band

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

LRTI - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
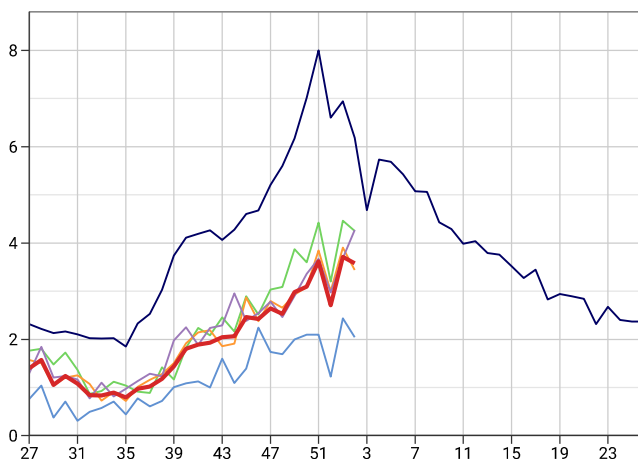

LRTI - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
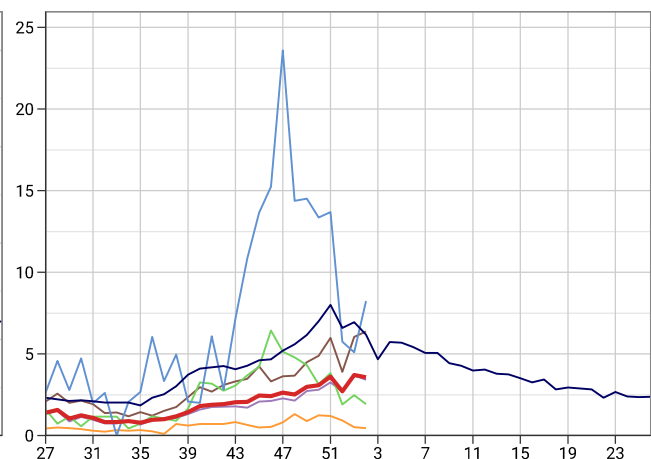

LRTI - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
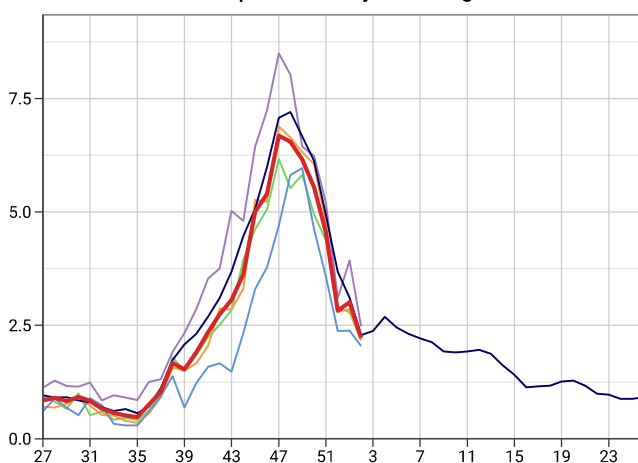

LRTI - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
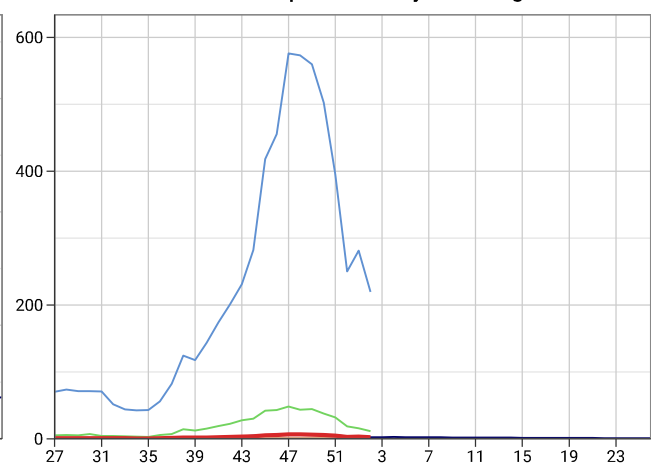

LRTI - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

LRTI - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
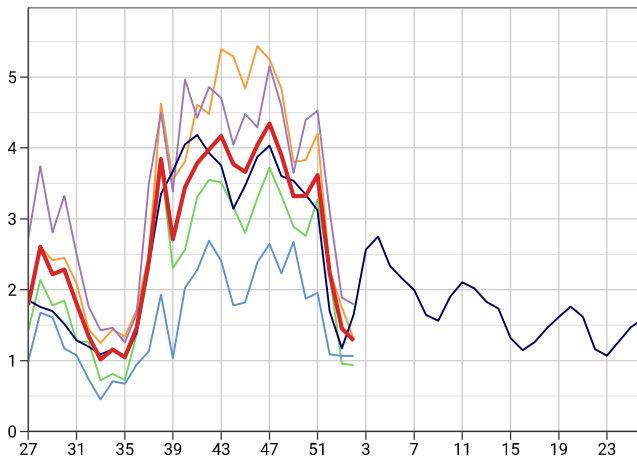
Respiratory Infections - by region

- National
- 5 Year Avg
- London
- North
- South
- Midlands And East

Respiratory Infections - by age band

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

URTI - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
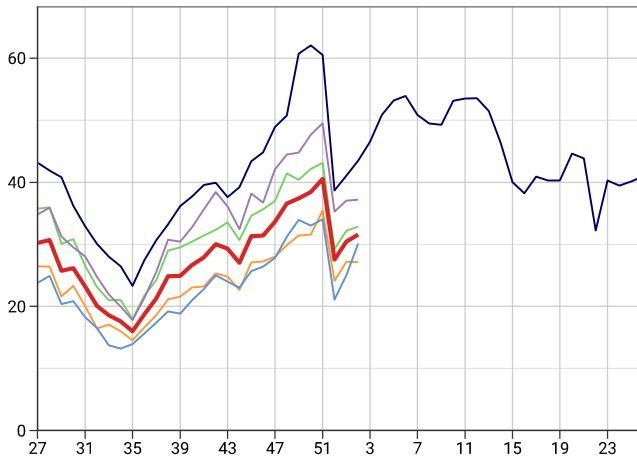
URTI - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
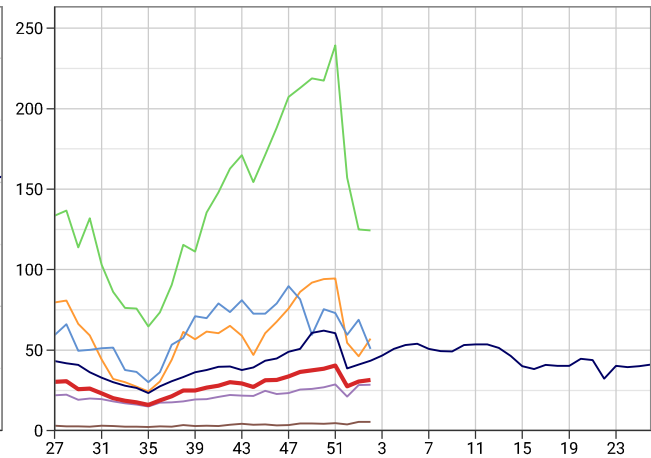

URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
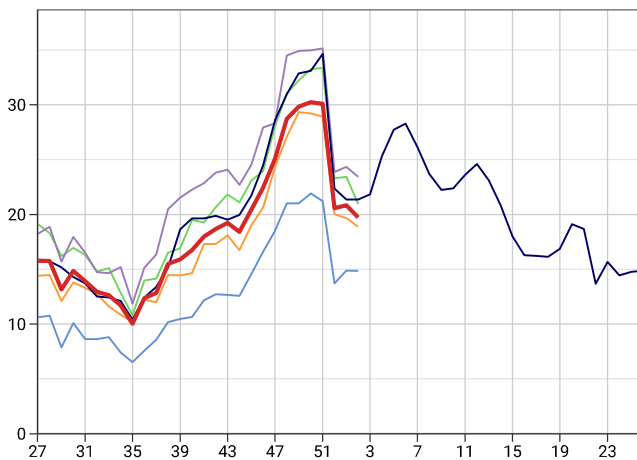
URTI - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
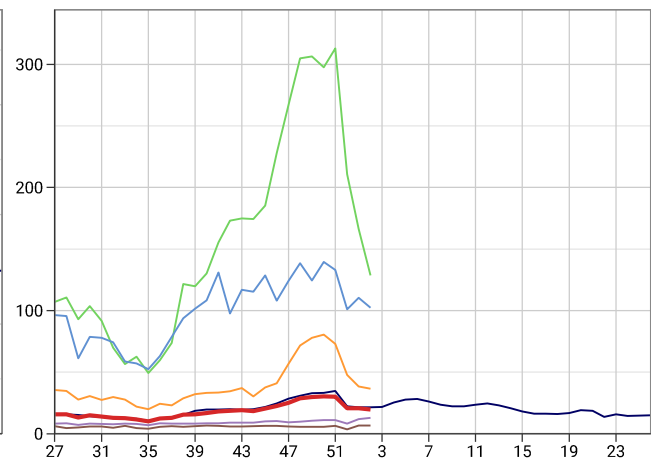

URTI - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
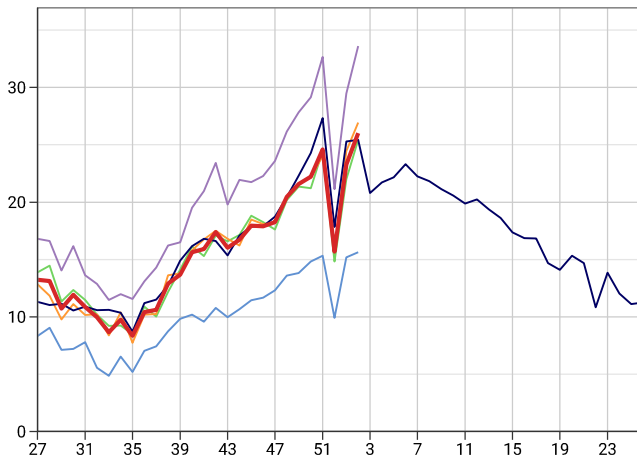
URTI - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Respiratory Infections - by region

- National
- 5 Year Avg
- London
- North
- South
- Midlands And East

Respiratory Infections - by age band

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

URTI - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

URTI - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

URTI - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
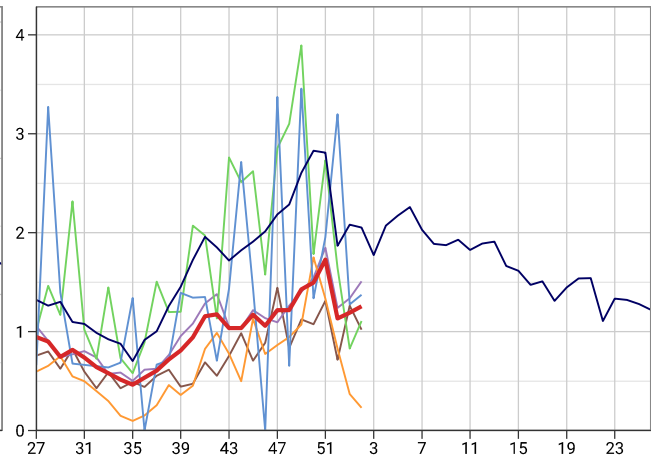

URTI - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by age band for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

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 2023/24
compared with 5 year average

Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 0-4 years) by region for 2023/24
compared with 5 year average
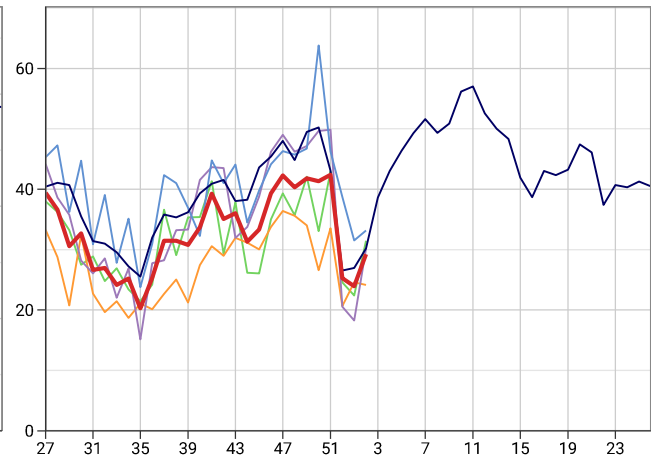
Non-Infective Enteritis and Colitis (ICD10: K50-K52)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24
compared with 5 year average

Viral Hepatitis (ICD10: B15-B19)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24
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 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
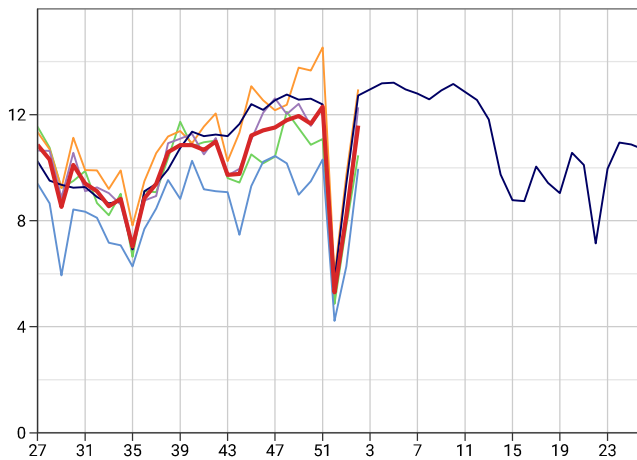
Disorders of Conjunctiva (ICD10: H10-H13)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Hayfever / Allergic Rhinitis (ICD10: J30)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
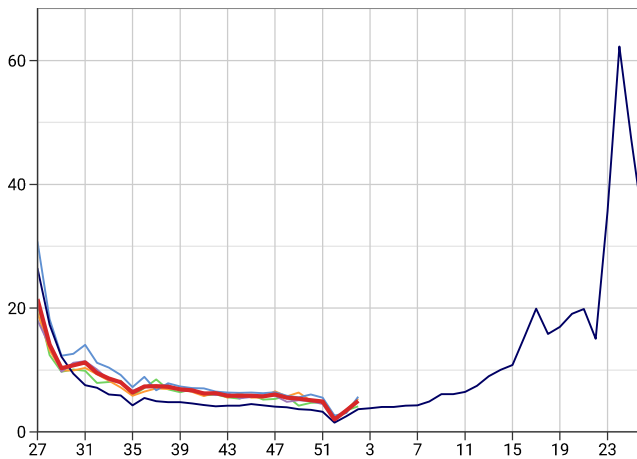
Infected Insect Bites
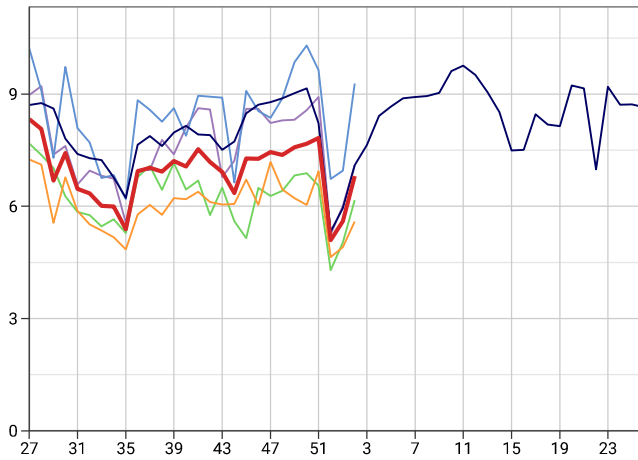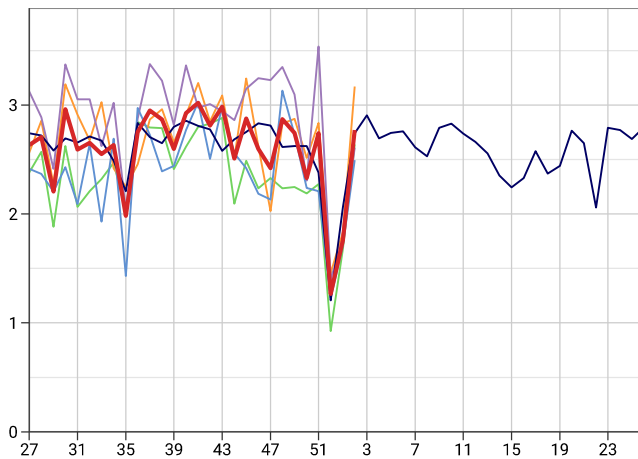Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
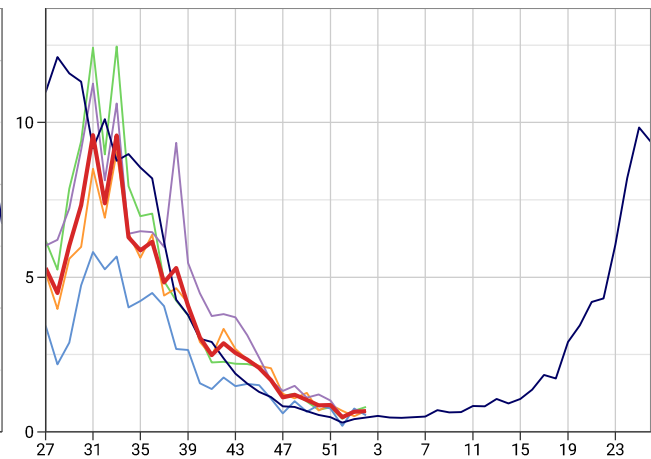
4. Vaccine Sensitive Disorders

National   **5 Year Avg**   **London**   **North**   **South**   **Midlands And East**

Measles (ICD10: B05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Mumps (ICD10: B26)
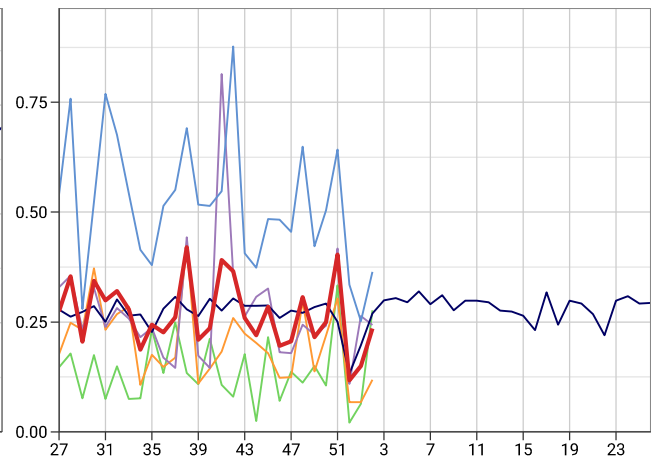Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Rubella (ICD10: B06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Whooping Cough (ICD10: A37)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 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 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Chickenpox (ICD10: B01)
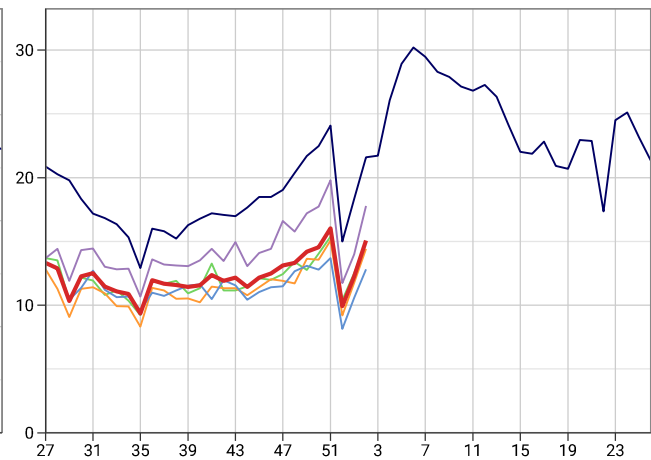Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Infections of Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue (ICD10: L00-L08)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
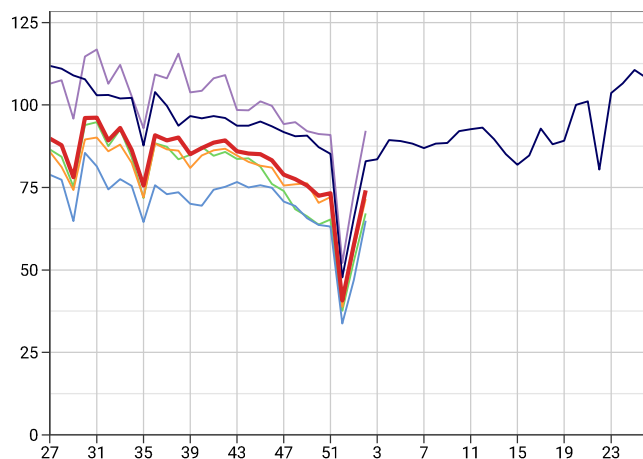
Scabies (ICD10: B86)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
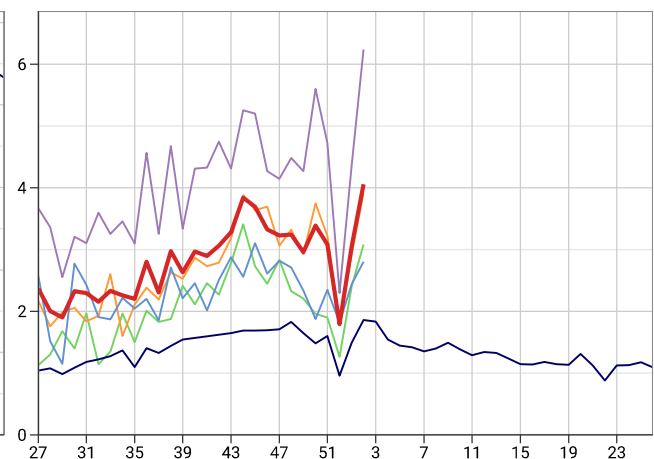
Symptoms of Skin & Integument Tissue (ICD10: R20-R23),
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

Impetigo (ICD10: L01)
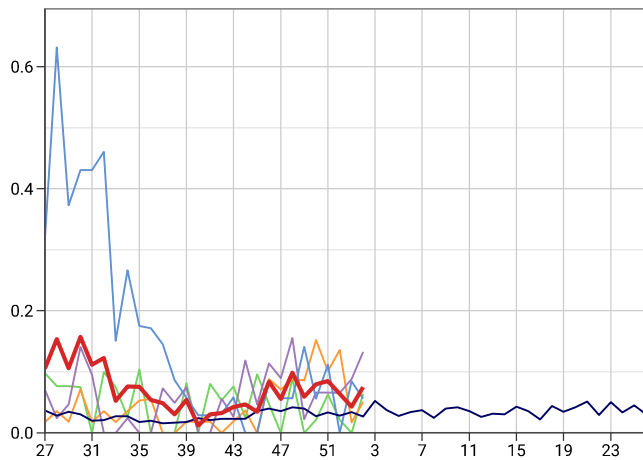Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
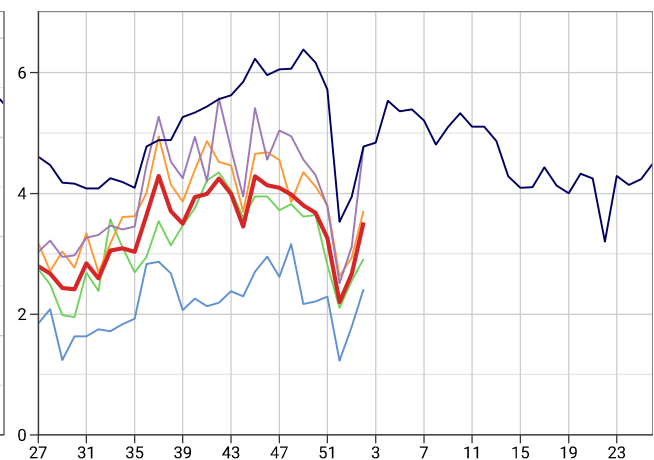
National | 5 Year Avg | London | North | South | Midlands And East
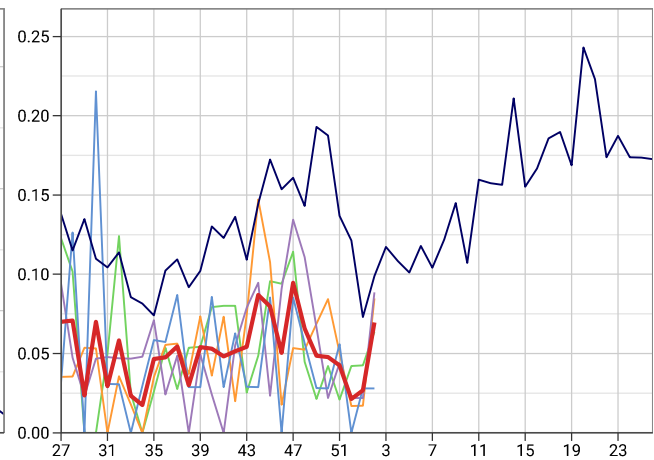
Herpes Simplex (ICD10: B00)
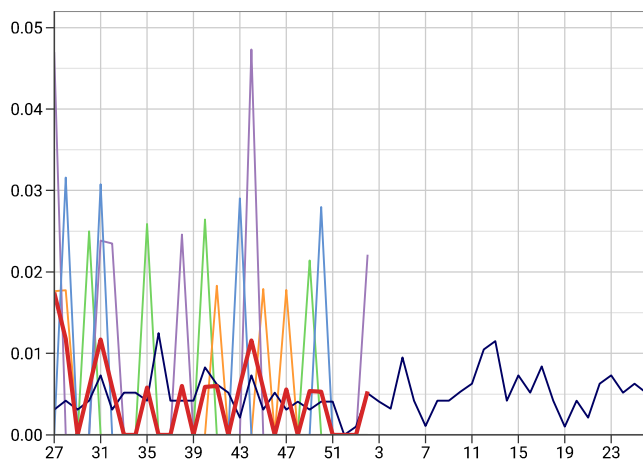Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
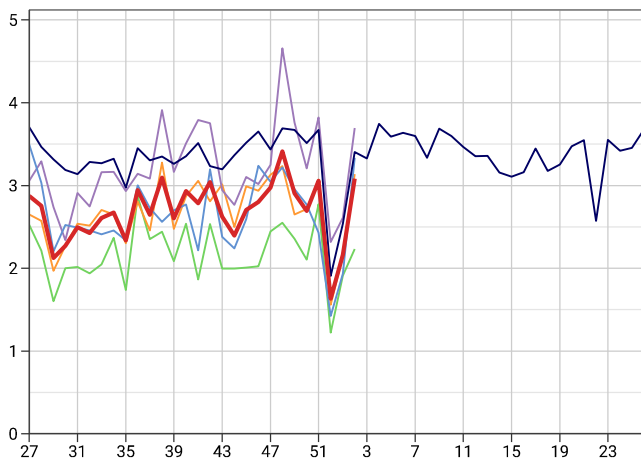
Herpes Zoster (ICD10: B02)
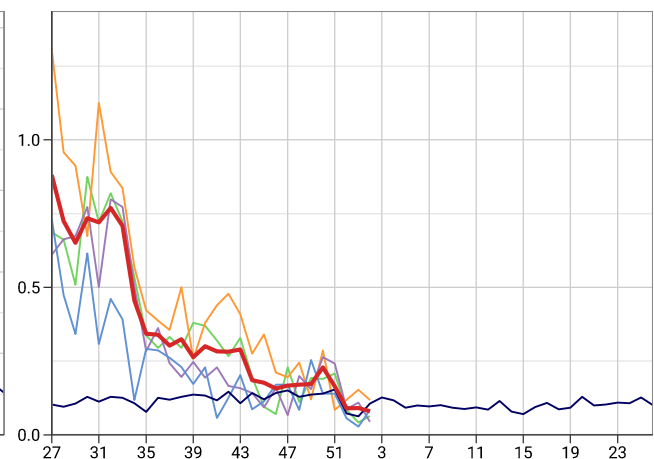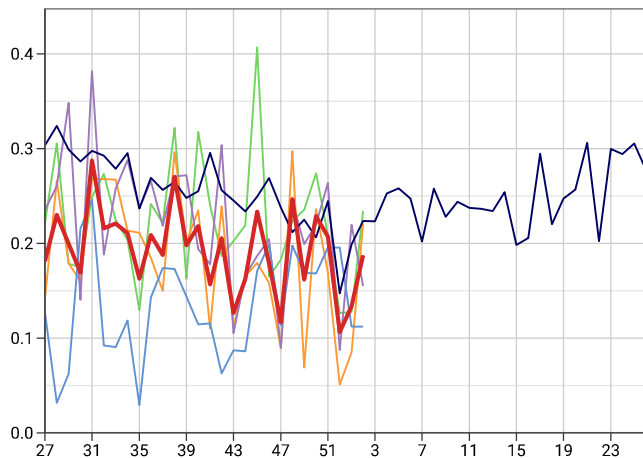Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
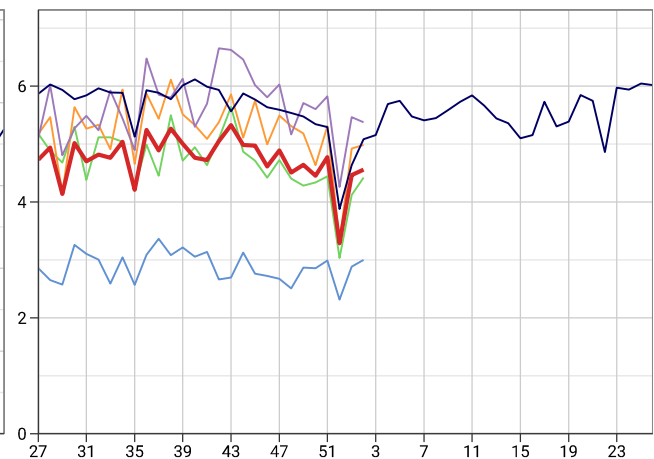
6. Disorders Affecting the Nervous System

Disorders of Peripheral Nervous System (ICD10: G50-G64,G70-G72), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
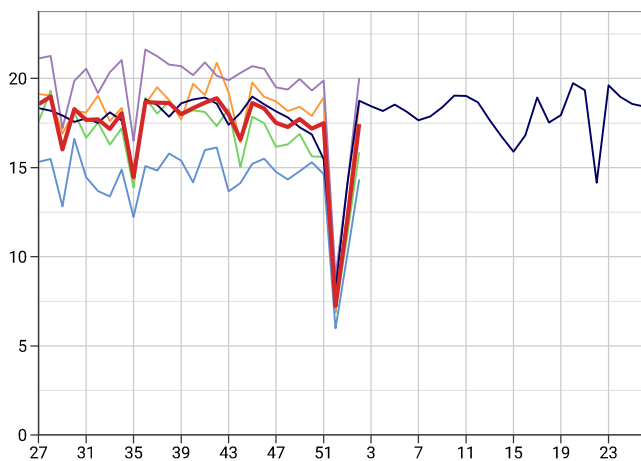
Meningitis/Encephalitis (ICD10: A170-A171,A390,A38-A85,A87,G00-G05), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
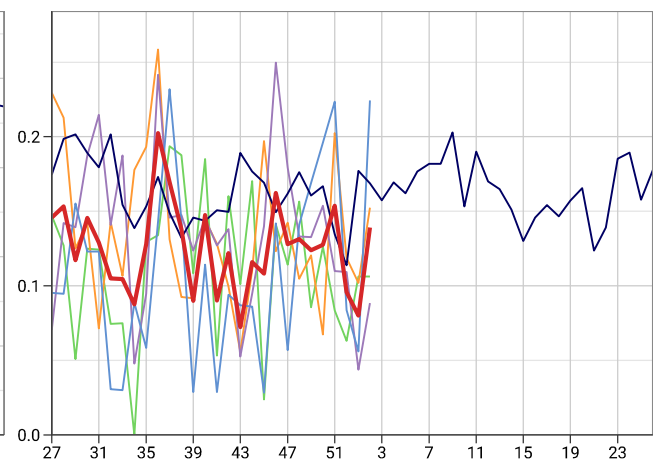
Symptoms of Nervous & Musculoskeletal Systems (ICD10: R25-R29), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
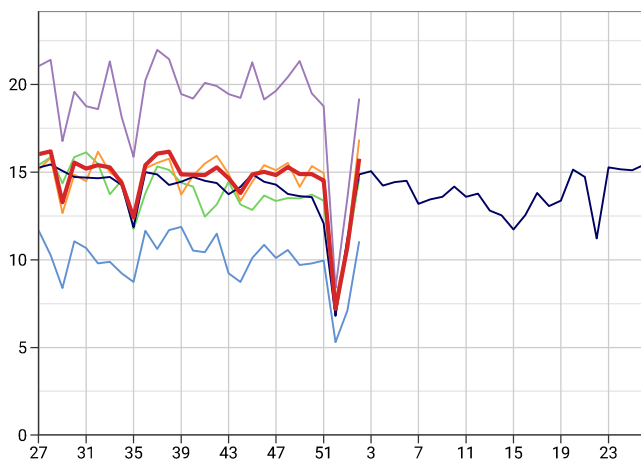
7. Genitourinary System Disorders

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 2023/24
compared with 5 year average
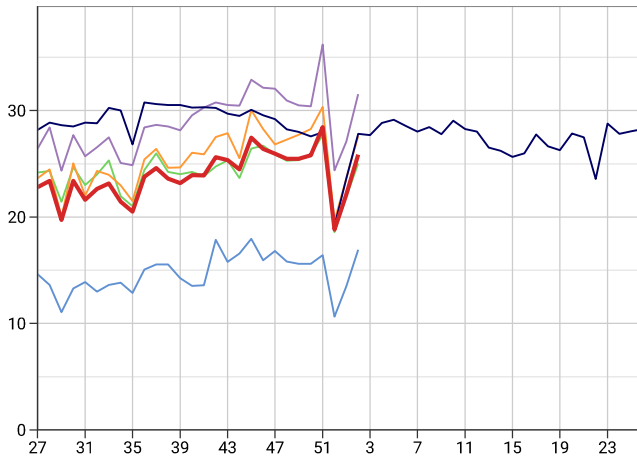
8. Other Disorders

Strep Sore Throat, Scarlatina and Peritonsillar Abscess (ICD10:
A38,J020,J36), Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by
region for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average
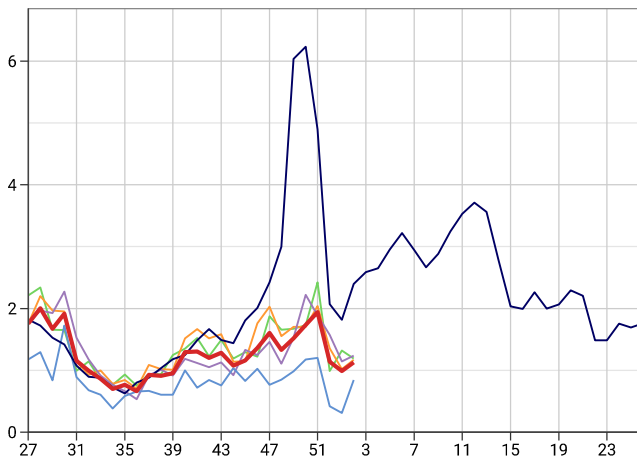
Infectious Mononucleosis (ICD10: B27)
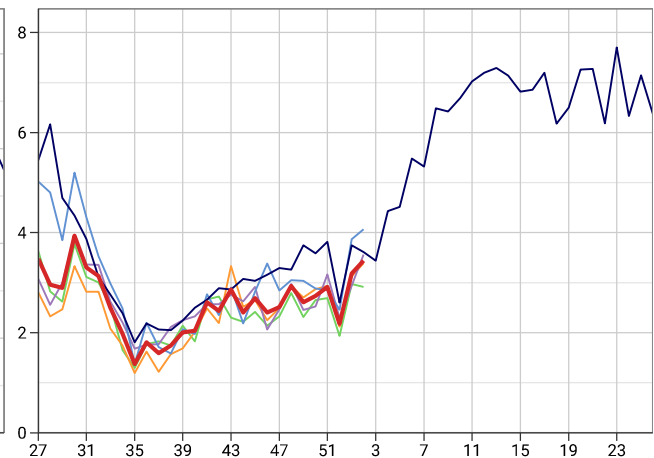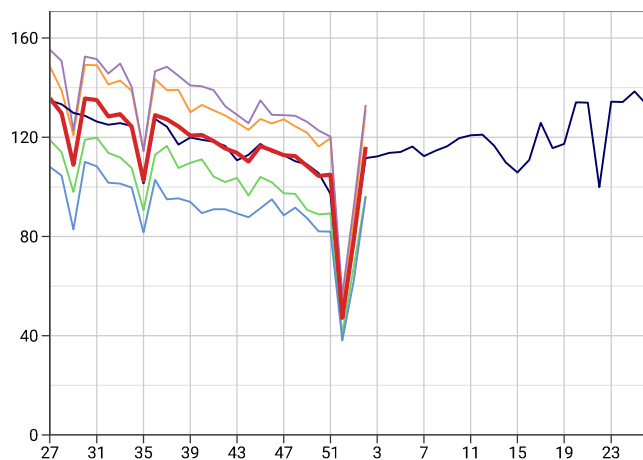Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region for 2023/24
compared with 5 year average

9. Tabular Summary by Disease
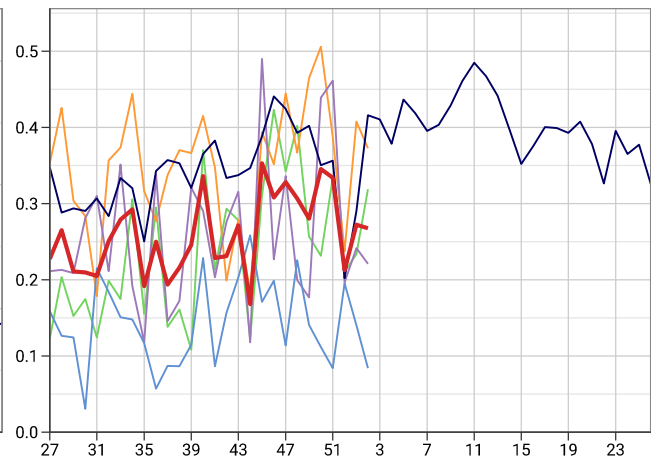
	Week 51	Week 52	Week 1	Week 2
Dates	16/12/2024 - 22/12/2024	23/12/2024 - 29/12/2024	30/12/2024 - 05/01/2025	06/01/2025 - 12/01/2025
Population	18,852,529	18,801,343	18,716,179	18,689,762
Practice Count	1,739	1,736	1,721	1,733

	Week 51		Week 52		Week 1		Week 2	
Disease	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count
Acute Bronchitis	3.6	682	2.7	509	3.7	695	3.6	669
Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI)	414.8	78,196	273.3	51,385	360.7	67,510	359.5	67,192
Allergic Rhinitis	4.9	921	2.0	378	3.4	644	5.0	938
Asthma	12.3	2,320	5.3	995	8.2	1,531	11.6	2,166
Bronchiolitis	4.5	857	2.8	530	3.0	563	2.2	415
Bullous Dermatoses	0.2	39	0.1	20	0.1	25	0.2	35
COVID-19	1.3	253	0.7	128	0.9	163	0.9	164
Chickenpox	2.9	549	2.2	410	3.2	596	3.4	643
Conjunctival Disorders	16.0	3,021	9.9	1,866	12.3	2,296	15.1	2,815
Croup	3.6	682	2.2	420	1.5	272	1.3	240
ECLD - COPD exacerbations	10.0	1,880	6.5	1,215	10.2	1,905	10.7	1,999
ECLD - asthma exacerbations	20.7	3,906	13.1	2,470	19.0	3,558	18.4	3,439
Exacerbations of chronic lung disease (ECLD)	30.3	5,706	19.4	3,655	28.9	5,409	28.8	5,381
Herpes Simplex	3.1	576	1.6	307	2.2	405	3.1	576
Herpes Zoster	4.8	900	3.3	618	4.5	836	4.6	852
Impetigo	3.3	615	2.2	414	2.7	499	3.5	658
Infected Insect Bites	0.9	163	0.5	89	0.6	121	0.7	126
Infectious Intestinal Diseases	7.8	1,476	5.1	959	5.6	1,048	6.8	1,272
Infectious Mononucleosis	0.3	63	0.2	40	0.3	51	0.3	50
Influenza-like Illness (ILI)	18.0	3,396	13.9	2,618	20.6	3,862	23.1	4,312
Laryngitis	1.7	326	1.1	213	1.2	223	1.3	235
Lower respiratory tract infections (LRTI)	153.6	28,963	104.2	19,586	151.7	28,401	145.6	27,204
Measles	0.1	16	0.1	12	0.0	8	0.1	14
Meningitis and Encephalitis	0.2	29	0.1	18	0.1	15	0.1	26
Mumps	0.0	8	0.0	4	0.0	5	0.1	13
Non-infective Enteritis and Colitis	2.7	517	1.3	238	1.8	329	2.8	518
Peripheral Nervous Disease	17.5	3,299	7.2	1,360	12.1	2,264	17.4	3,258
Pneumonia	5.2	975	3.6	681	5.2	980	5.5	1,022
Rubella	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1
Scabies	3.1	581	1.8	337	3.1	571	4.1	758
Sinusitis	24.6	4,634	15.7	2,952	23.3	4,358	26.0	4,861
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Infections	73.2	13,802	40.8	7,667	57.7	10,792	74.1	13,856
Strep Throat and Peritonsillar Abscess	1.9	366	1.1	214	1.0	185	1.1	211
Symptoms involving Skin and Integument Tissues	104.9	19,776	47.2	8,874	78.7	14,738	116.1	21,702
Symptoms involving musculoskeletal	14.5	2,737	7.2	1,355	10.7	2,008	15.8	2,945
Tonsillitis and Pharyngitis	40.5	7,640	27.6	5,181	30.4	5,693	31.6	5,904
Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI)	240.5	45,349	154.8	29,099	182.6	34,169	185.9	34,746
Urinary Tract Infections	28.4	5,362	18.8	3,537	22.1	4,140	25.9	4,835
Viral Hepatitis	0.4	76	0.1	22	0.1	28	0.2	44
Whooping Cough	0.2	31	0.1	17	0.1	17	0.1	15

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://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/acute-respiratory-infections-eueea-epidemiological-update-and-current-public-health

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). Patients who have withheld consent for data sharing are excluded from the extraction process.

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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