

RSC Communicable and Respiratory Disease Report for England

Key Statistics:

Week Number/Year..... 4/2021
 Week Starting - Ending..... 25/01/2021 - 31/01/2021
 No. of Practices..... 393
 Population..... 3,914,569

National (England)

- **Acute Bronchitis** : decreased from **2.9** in week 3 to **2.6** in week 4.
- **Asthma** : decreased from **9.7** in week 3 to **9.0** in week 4.
- **Common Cold** : increased from **0.4** in week 3 to **0.5** in week 4.
- **Influenza-like illness** : increased from **0.9** in week 3 to **1.0** in week 4.
- **Respiratory System Diseases** : decreased from **105.6** in week 3 to **98.5** in week 4.
- **COVID-19** : decreased from **246.3** in week 3 to **141.7** in week 4.

Regional (North, South, London and Midlands and East)

- **Acute Bronchitis** : increased from **1.3** in week 3 to **1.4** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **4.0** in week 3 to **4.6** in week 4 in the North region, decreased from **2.8** in week 3 to **1.8** in week 4 in the South region, and decreased from **2.6** in week 3 to **2.1** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Asthma** : decreased from **8.5** in week 3 to **7.4** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **10.8** in week 3 to **11.1** in week 4 in the North region, decreased from **10.2** in week 3 to **8.5** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **7.9** in week 3 to **8.2** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Common Cold** : increased from **0.6** in week 3 to **0.7** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **0.4** in week 3 to **0.8** in week 4 in the North region, decreased from **0.5** in week 3 to **0.3** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **0.2** in week 3 to **0.5** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Influenza-like illness** : was unchanged at **1.0** in week 3 and **1.0** in week 4 in the London region, decreased from **1.2** in week 3 to **1.1** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **0.8** in week 3 to **1.1** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **0.3** in week 3 to **0.5** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Respiratory System Diseases** : decreased from **82.8** in week 3 to **78.2** in week 4 in the London region, decreased from **135.5** in week 3 to **127.0** in week 4 in the North region, decreased from **96.9** in week 3 to **86.2** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **98.0** in week 3 to **102.9** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **COVID-19** : decreased from **336.9** in week 3 to **176.6** in week 4 in the London region, decreased from **243.3** in week 3 to **151.9** in week 4 in the North region, decreased from **199.0** in week 3 to **113.6** in week 4 in the South region, and decreased from **271.1** in week 3 to **157.5** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.

Comment:

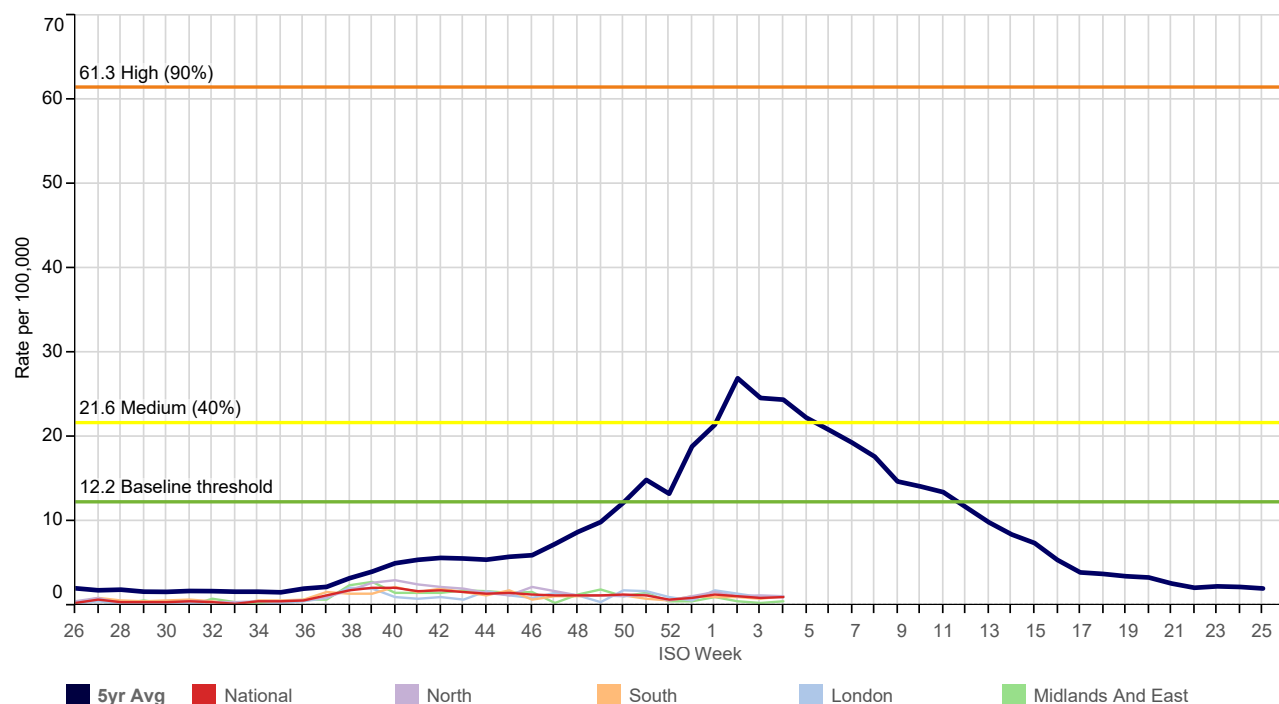
Overall presentations of respiratory diseases have decreased a little this week, and they remain below seasonal levels for this time of year. Reported COVID-19 incidence lags behind our other results as there is a delay between test and receipt of results. The fall in incidence seen this week is likely to be an underestimate of true COVID-19 incidence. Looking at the trend over the last four weeks it appears that community incidence has flattened and is now falling.

This report includes a virology update.

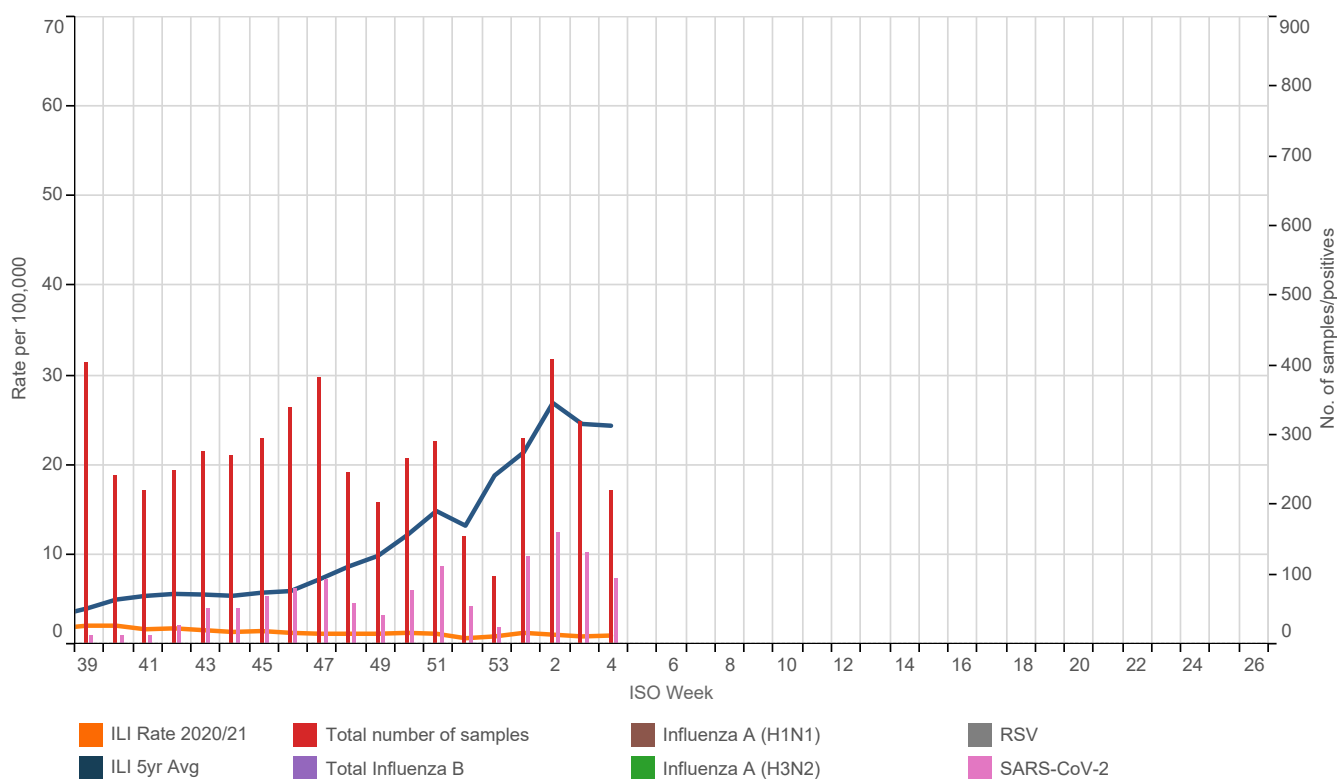
Winter Focus 2020/21

Please see page 15 for explanatory notes on the data.

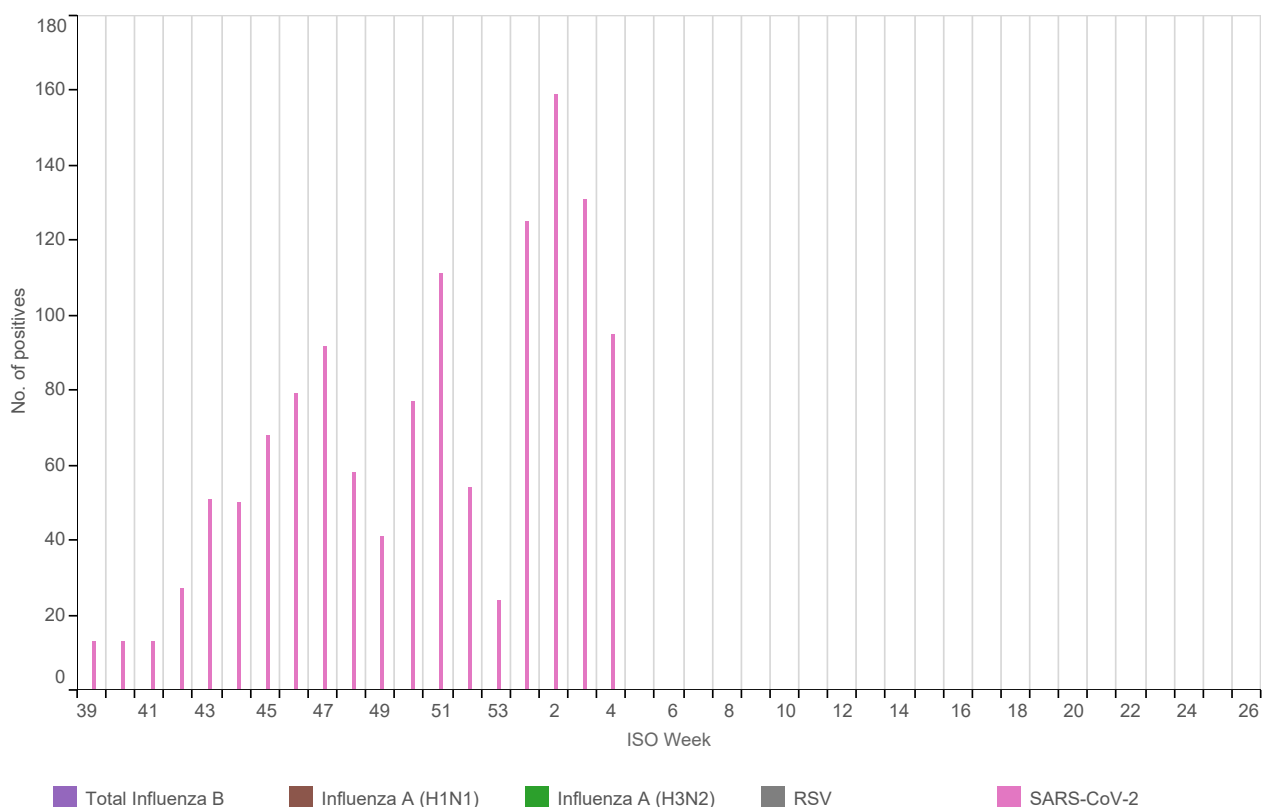
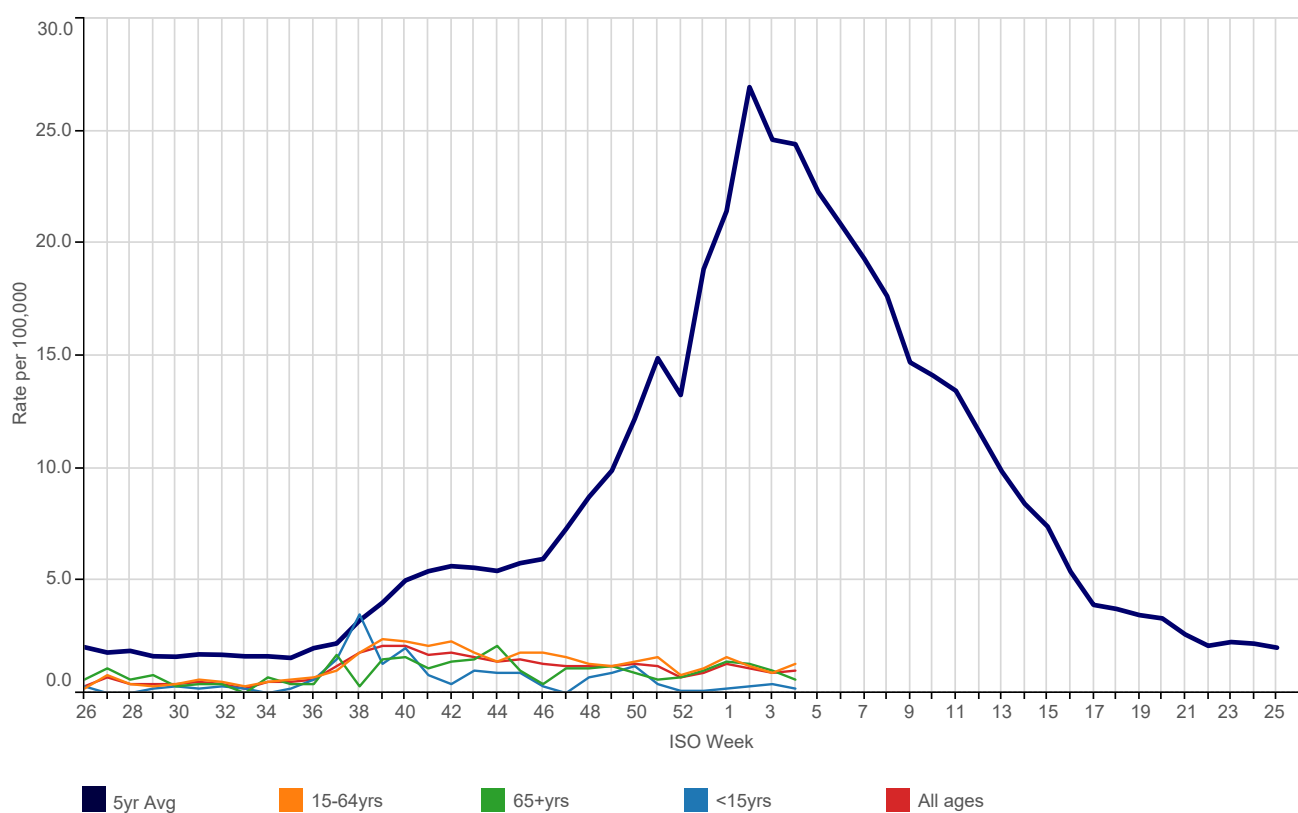
(A) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate winter 2020/21 by region*



(B) RCGP/PHE RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 Virology Swab Surveillance 2020/21*



* The rolling average line (blue) is based on 5 year historic RCGP RSC level (Graph A). The weekly virology samples displayed are offset from the ISO Week by -0.6 (Graphs B & C).

(C) RCGP/PHE RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 Virology Swab Surveillance 2020/21 by viral strain***(D) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate 2020/21 by age group***

(E) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate 2020/21 by age group*

This table shows the level of intensity of ILI by age band. MEM thresholds have been calculated separately for each age band - the ranges are shown in the table Threshold levels by age band.

Table 1	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	1	2	3	4
<15yrs	2.0	0.8	0.4	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.9	1.2	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2
15-64yrs	2.3	2.1	2.3	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.4	1.6	0.8	1.1	1.6	1.2	0.9	1.3
65+yrs	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.5	2.1	1.0	0.4	1.1	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.3	1.0	0.6
All ages	2.1	1.7	1.8	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.7	0.9	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.0
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<15yrs																		
15-64yrs																		
65+yrs																		
All ages																		

Table 2	Below Threshold ¹	Threshold to Medium ²	Medium to High ³	High to Very High ⁴	Above Very High ⁵
All Ages	<12.2	12.2 to <21.6	21.6 to <61.3	61.3 to <97.3	97.3+
<15yrs	<10.7	10.7 to <17.6	17.6 to <47.7	47.7 to <74.1	74.1+
15-64yrs	<15.0	15.0 to <26.1	26.1 to <63.4	63.4 to <93.8	93.8+
65+yrs	<11.5	11.5 to <16.5	16.5 to <37.8	37.8 to <54.5	54.5+

Threshold levels

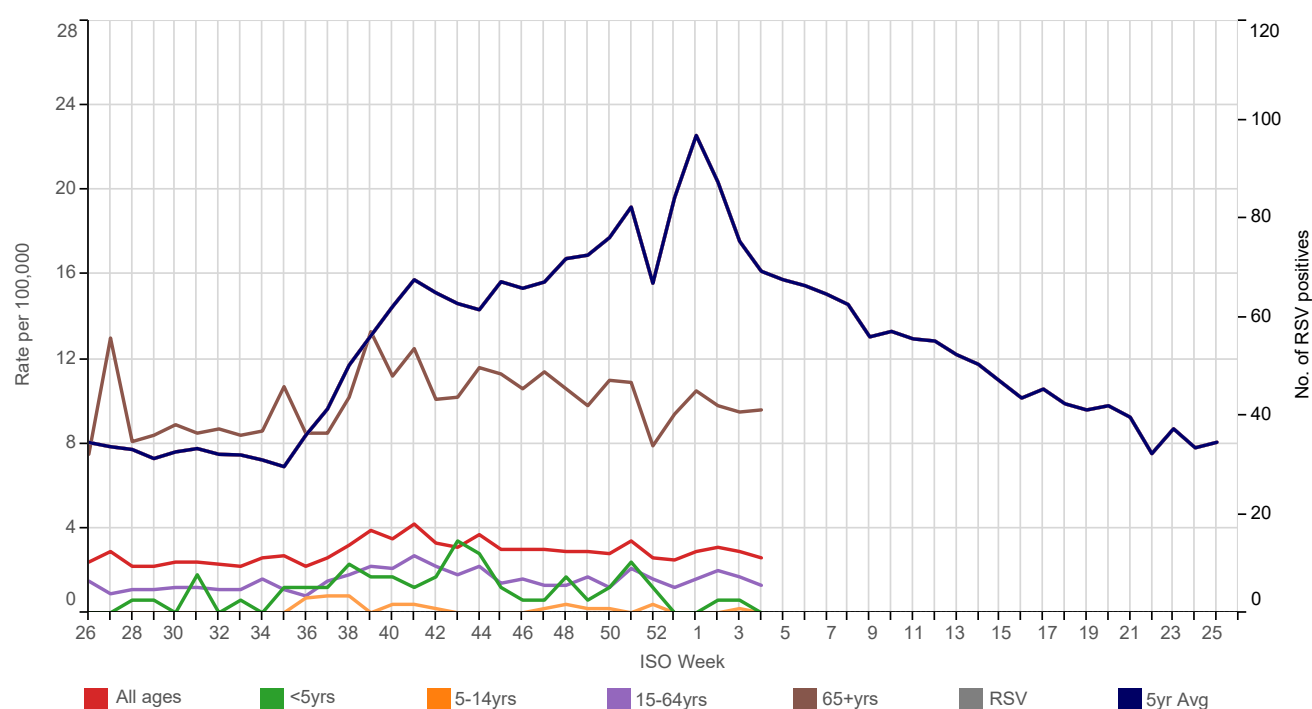
¹Below baseline threshold

²baseline threshold breach to < 40th percentile

³40th to <90th percentile

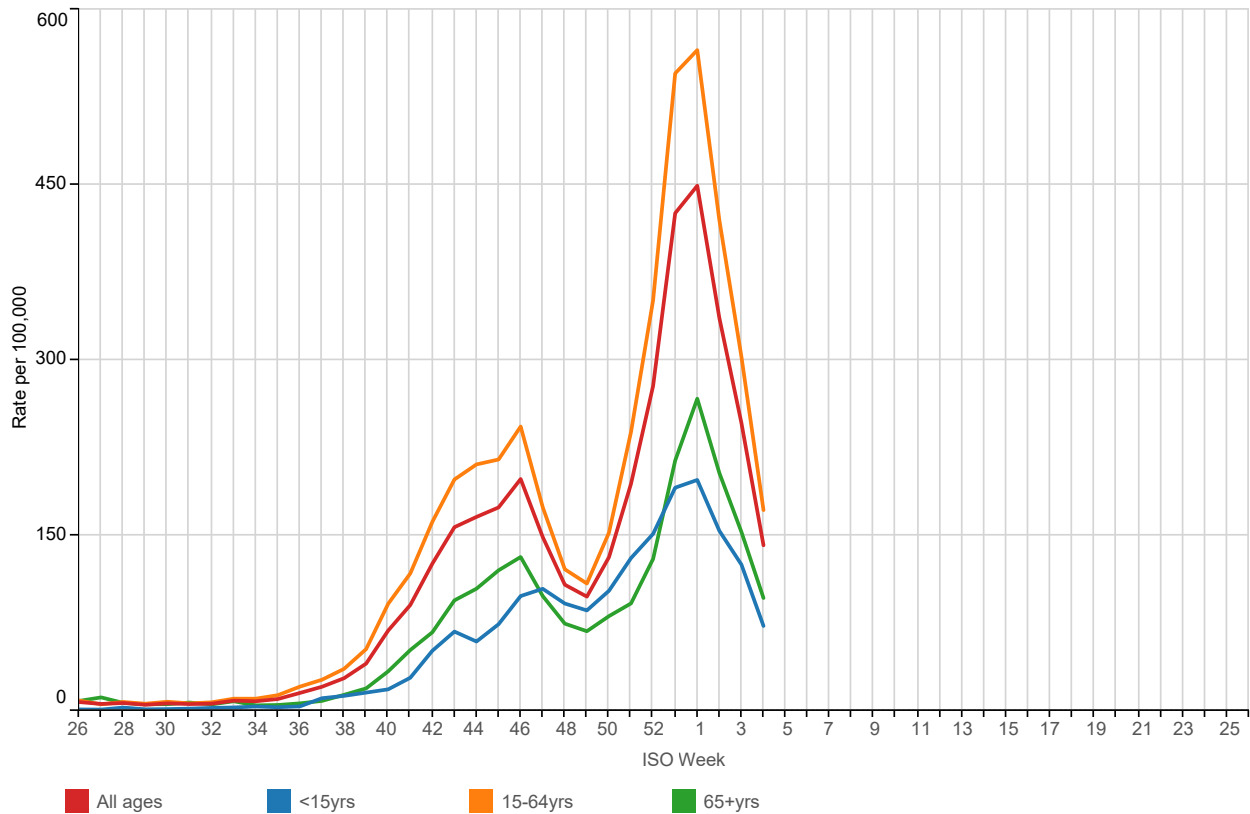
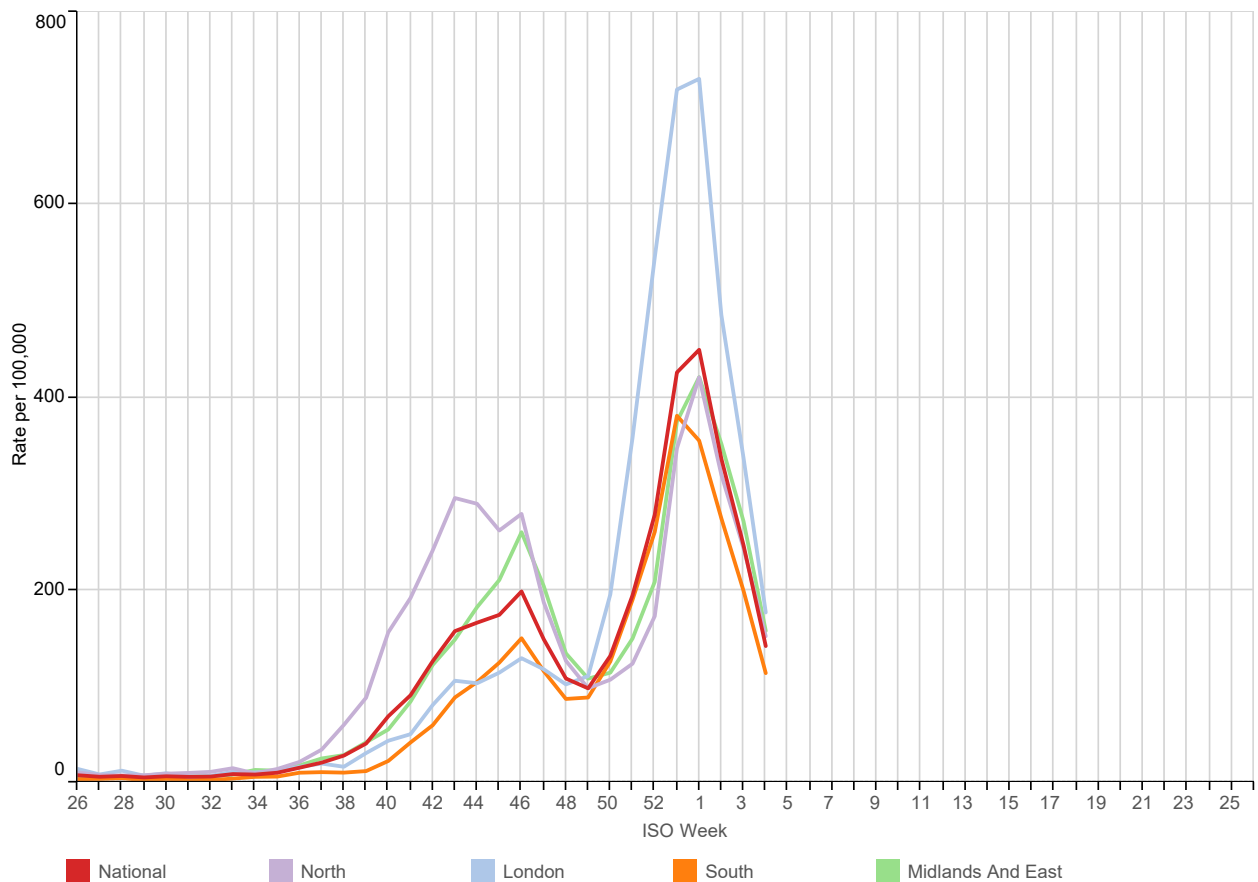
⁴90th to <97.5th percentile

⁵97.5th+ percentile

(F) Acute Bronchitis: national incidence rate 2020/21 by age group***Weekly Influenza-like illness and Acute Bronchitis incidence rates per 100,000 persons**

Influenza-like illness		Bronchitis	
<1yr	0.0	0.0	
1-4yrs	0.6	0.0	
5-14yrs	0.0	0.0	
15-24yrs	0.0	0.0	
25-44yrs	1.4	0.3	
45-64yrs	1.8	3.1	
65-74yrs	0.8	8.4	
75-84yrs	0.4	10.5	
85+yrs	0.0	11.9	
All ages	1.0	2.6	

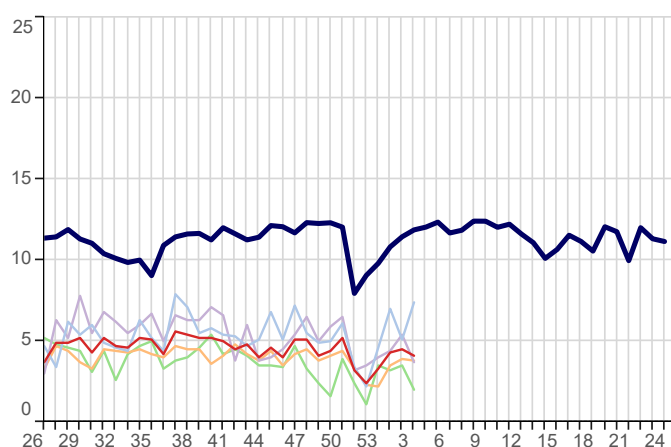
Influenza-like illness		Bronchitis	
London	1.0	1.4	
North	1.1	4.6	
South	1.1	1.8	
Midlands And East	0.5	2.1	
National	1.0	2.6	

(G) COVID-19 : national incidence rate 2020/21 by age group***(H) COVID-19 : national incidence rate 2020/21 by region***

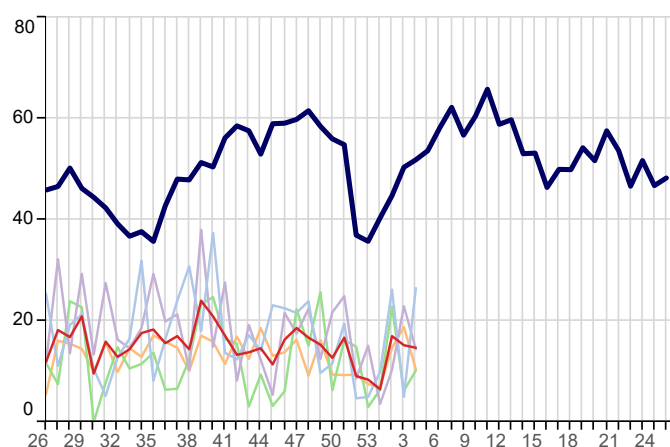
1. Water & Food Borne Disorders:

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

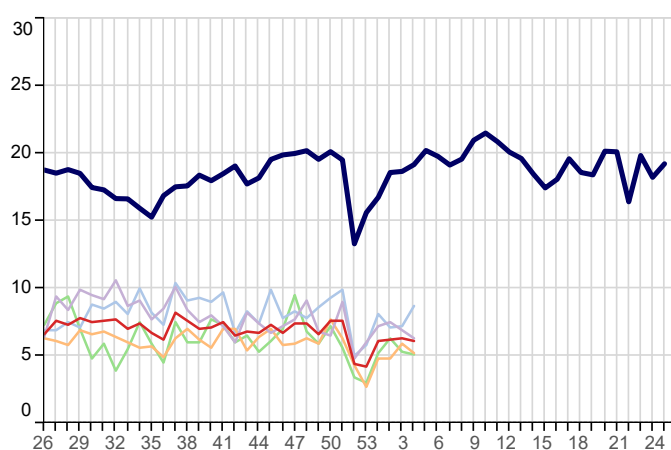
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by regions
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



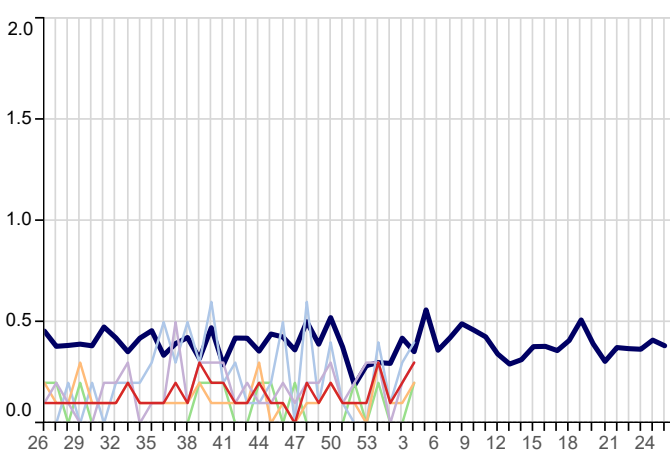
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **0-4 years**) by regions
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Non-Infective Enteritis & Colitis (ICD10: K50-K52)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



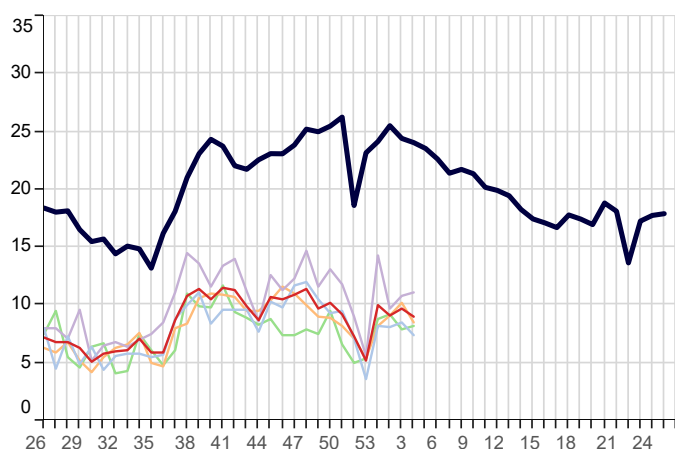
Viral Hepatitis (ICD10: B15-B19)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



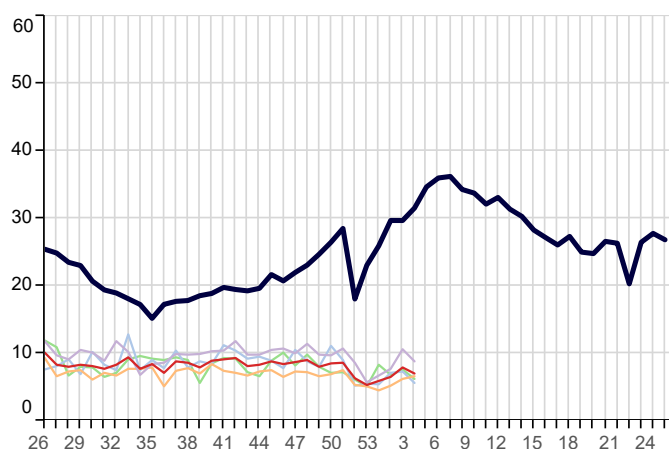
2. Environmentally Sensitive Disorders:

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

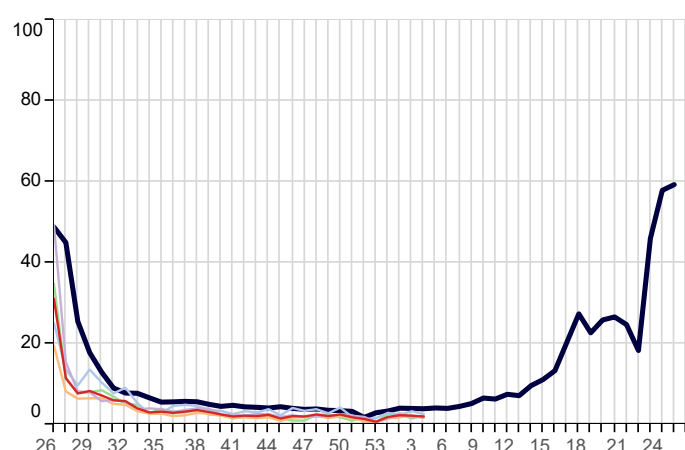
Asthma (ICD10: J45-J46)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



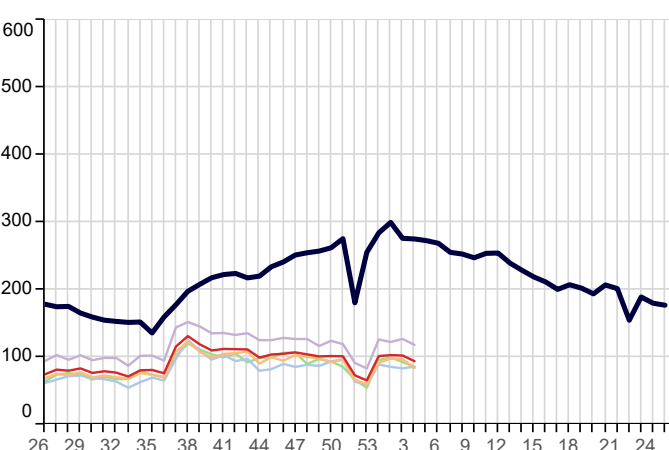
Disorders of Conjunctiva (ICD10: H10-H13)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Hayfever/Allergic Rhinitis (ICD10: J30)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



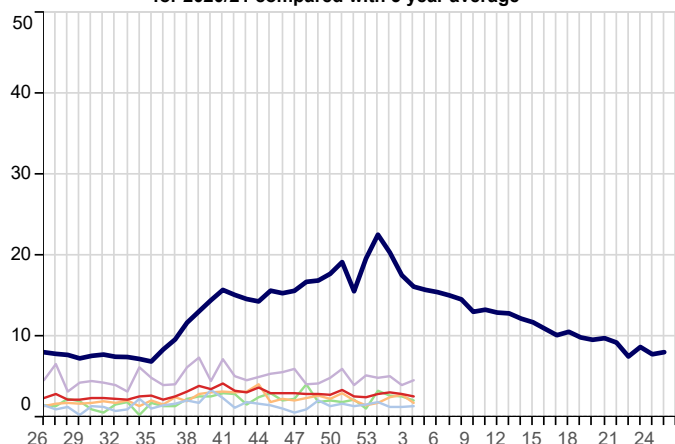
Symptoms involving Respiratory & Chest (ICD10: R05-R07,R09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



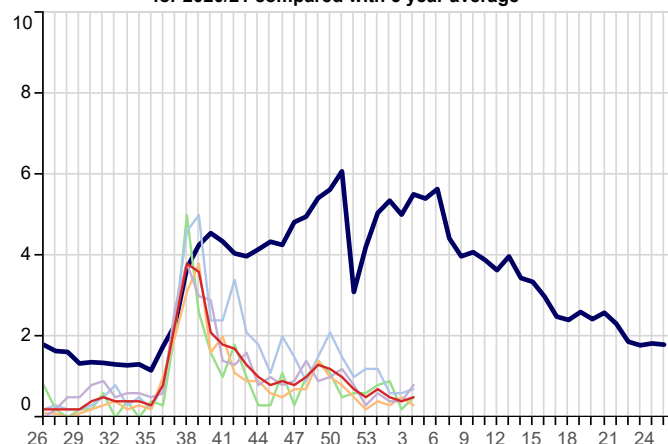
3. Respiratory Infections:

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

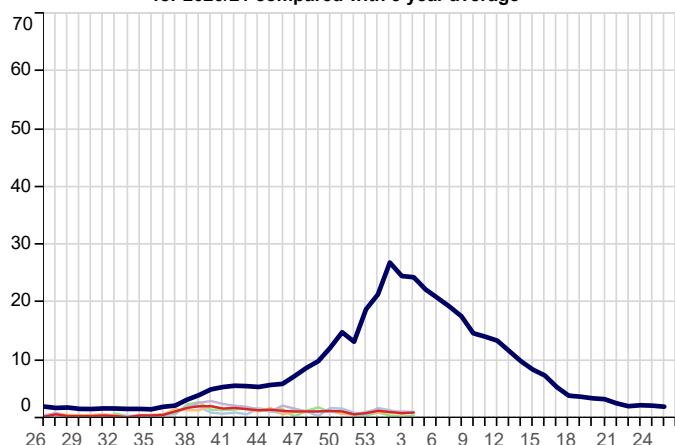
Acute Bronchitis (ICD10: J20-J21,J40)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



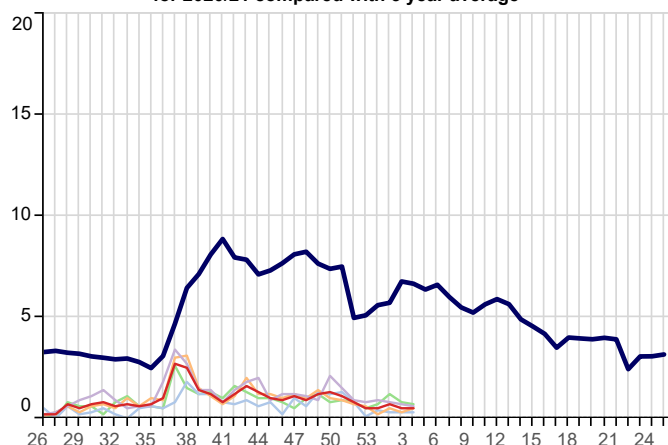
Common Cold (ICD10: J00,J06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



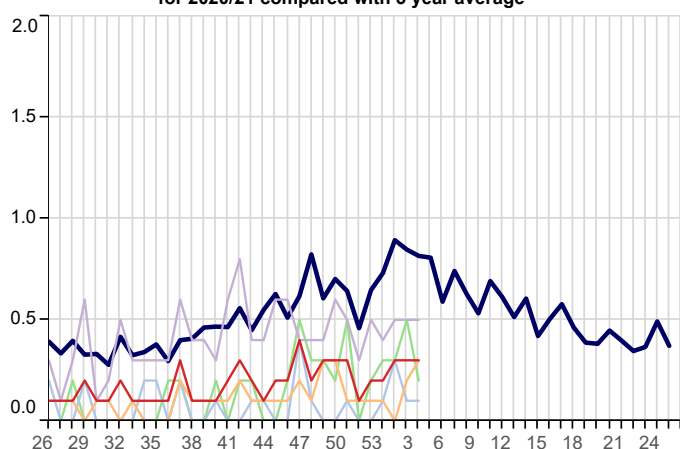
Influenza-like illness (ICD10: J09-J11)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



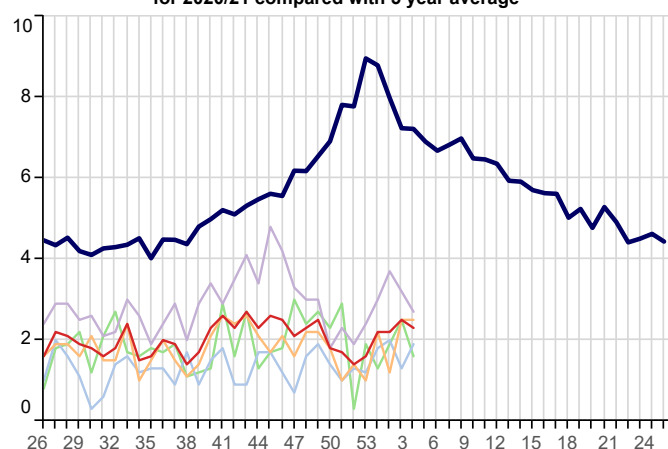
Acute Laryngitis/Tracheitis (ICD10: J04)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Pleurisy (ICD10: R091)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



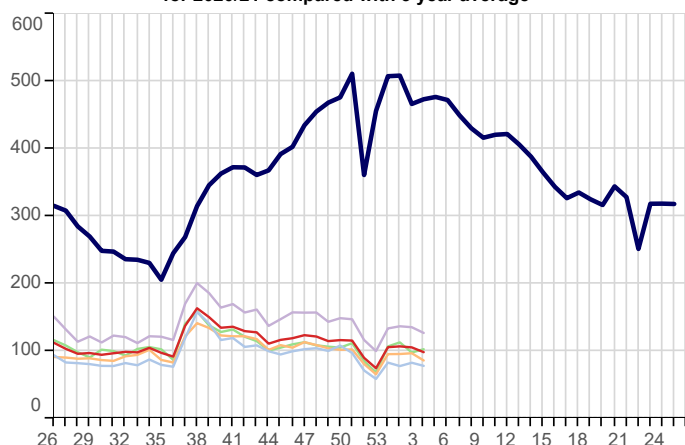
Pneumonia/Pneumonitis (ICD10: J12-J18)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



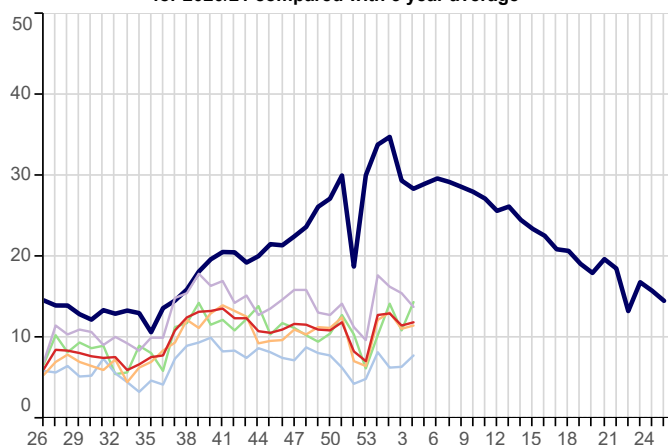
3. Respiratory Infections(Continued):

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

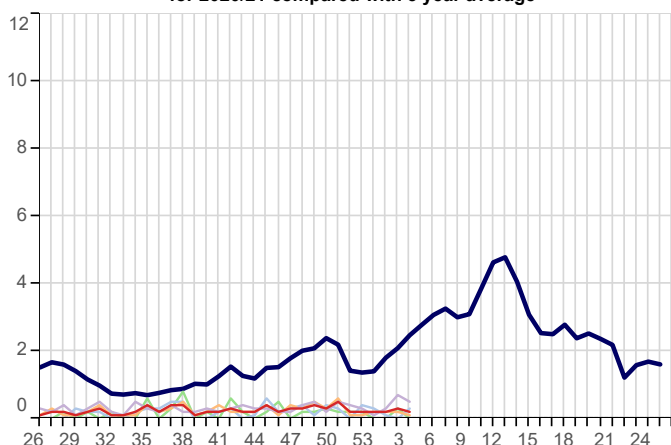
Respiratory System Diseases (ICD10: J00-J99)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



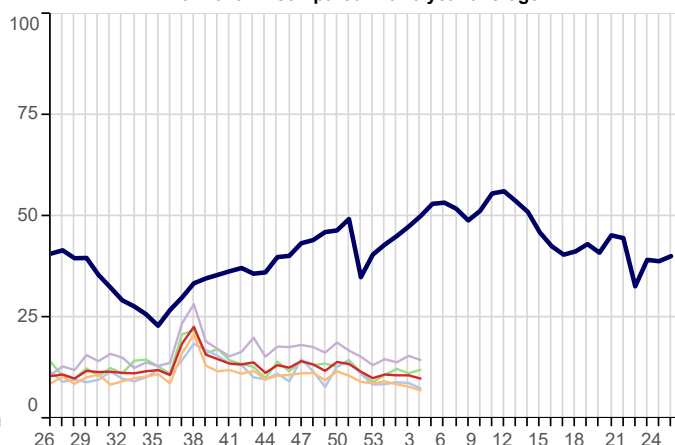
Acute Sinusitis (ICD10: J01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



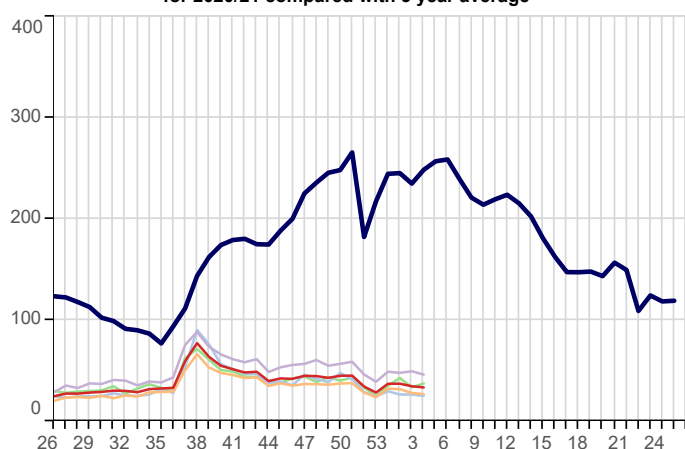
Strep Sore Throat, Scarletina and Peritonsillar Abscess (ICD10: A38,J02,J36)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



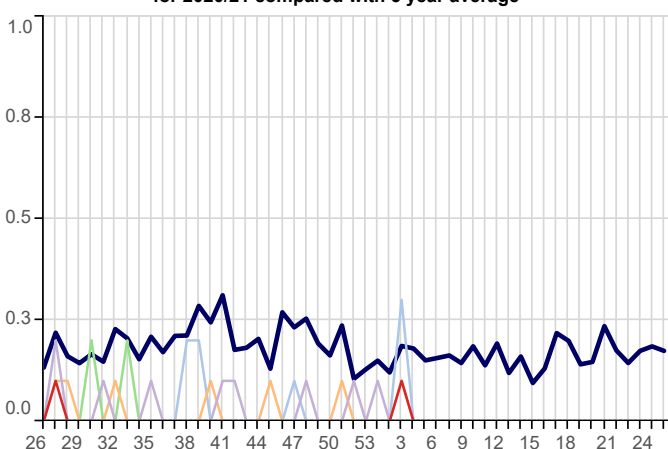
Acute Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis (ICD10: J02-J03)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)(ICD10: J00-J06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



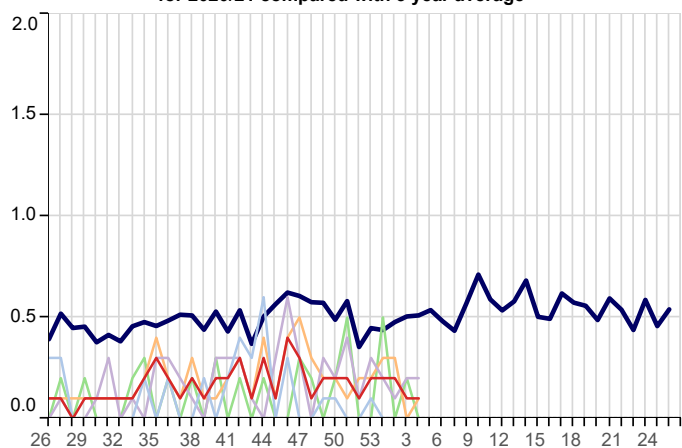
Whooping Cough (ICD10: A37)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



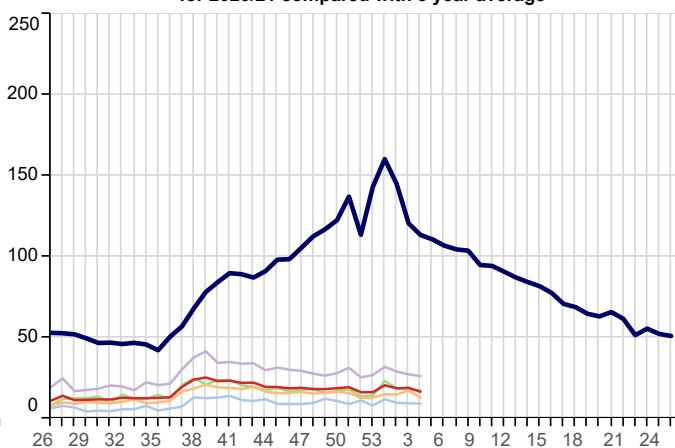
3. Respiratory Infections(Continued):

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

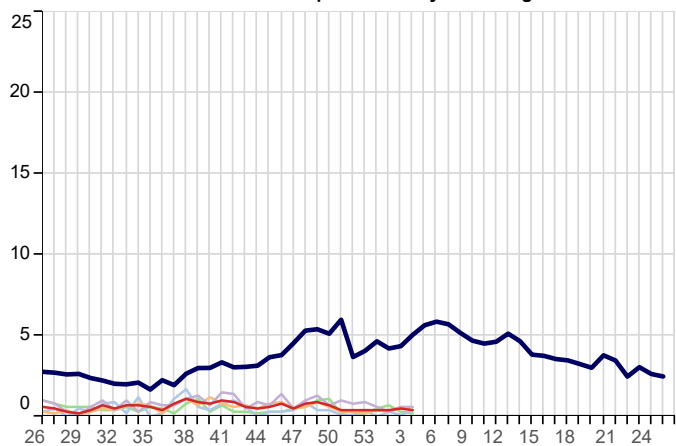
Infectious Mononucleosis (ICD10: B27)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)(ICD10: J20-J22)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



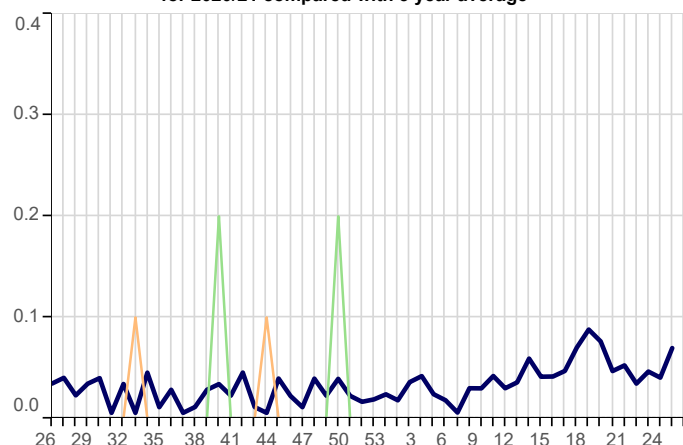
Acute Otitis Media (ICD10: H650-H651,H660,H669)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



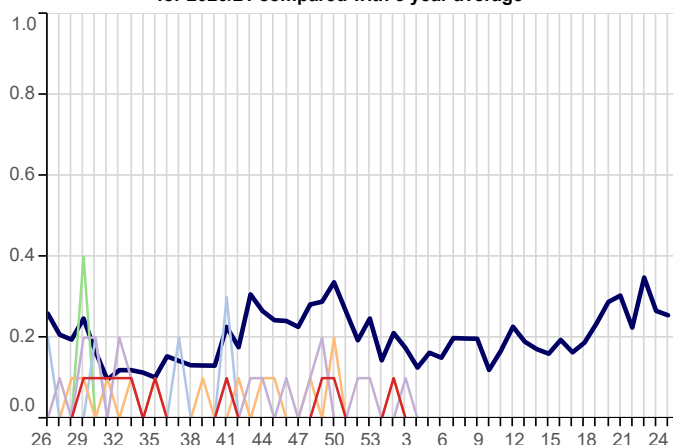
4. Vaccine Sensitive Disorders

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

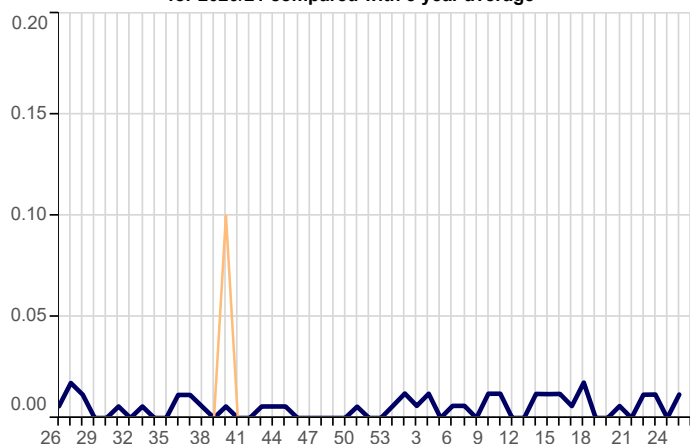
Measles (ICD10: B05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Mumps (ICD10: B26)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average

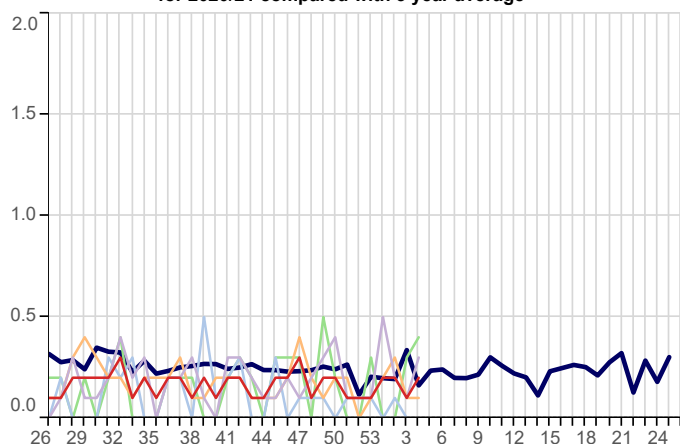


Rubella (ICD10: B06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average

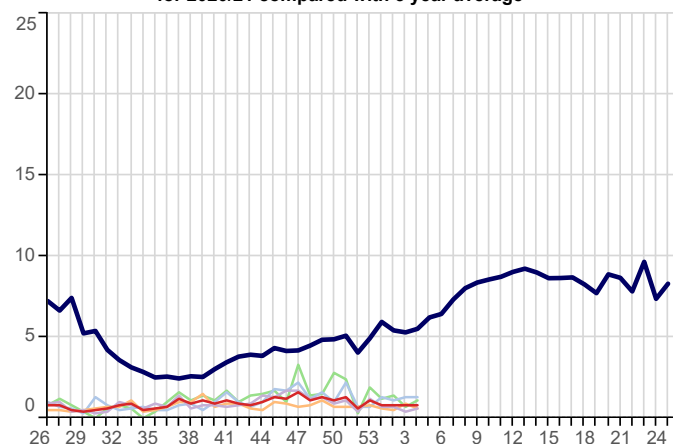


5. Skin Contagions

Bullous Dermatoses (ICD10: L10-L14)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



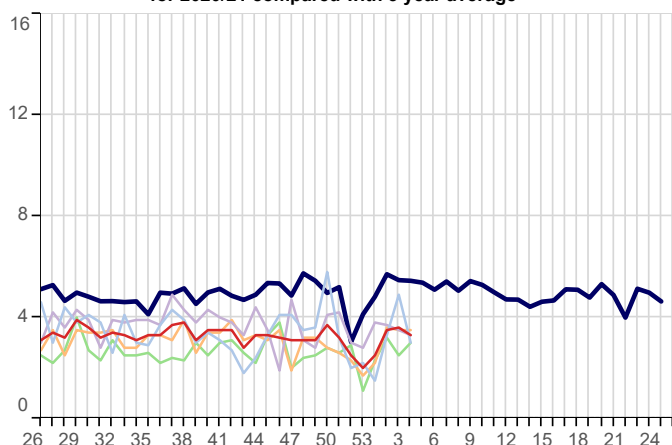
Chickenpox (ICD10: B01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



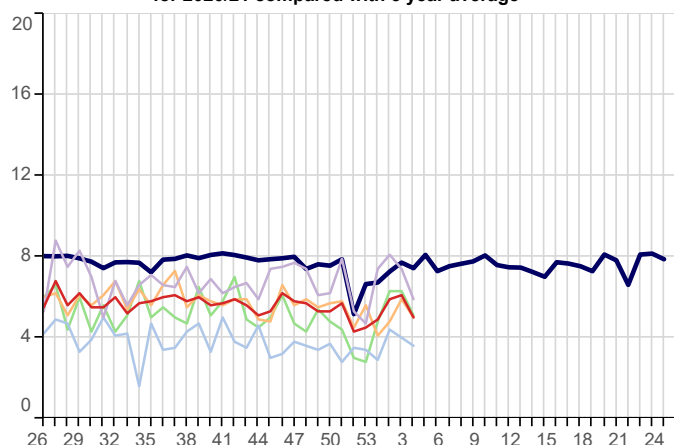
5. Skin Contagions (Continued)

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

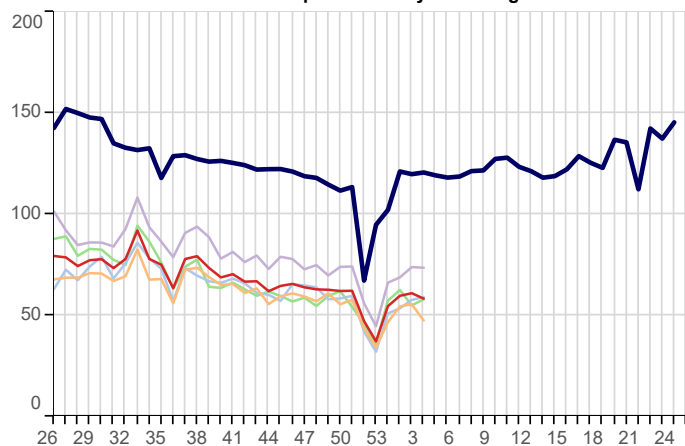
Herpes Simplex (ICD10: B00)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



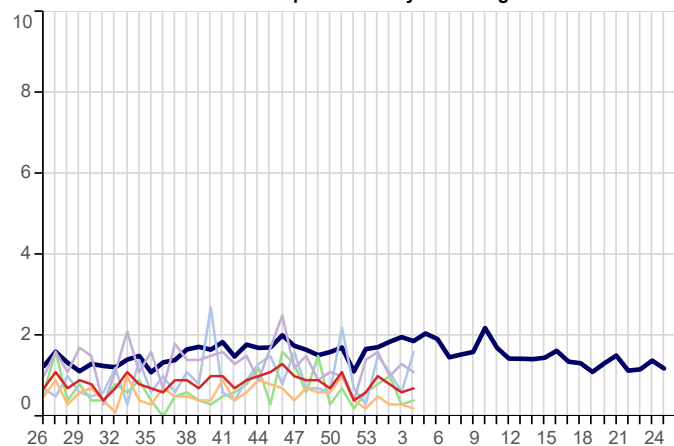
Herpes Zoster (ICD10: B02)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



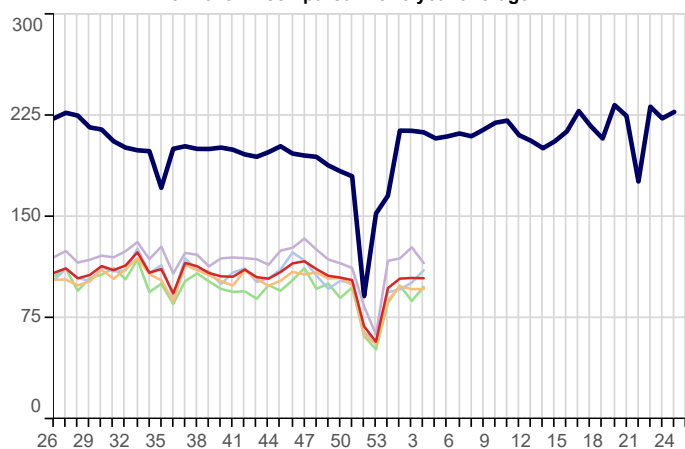
Infections of Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue (ICD10: L00-L08)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



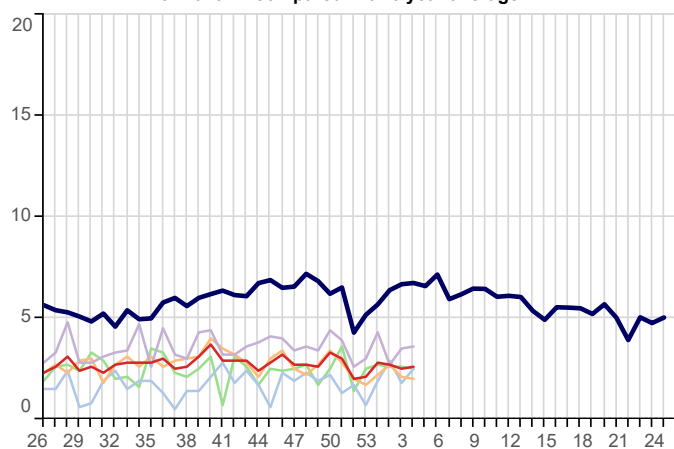
Scabies (ICD10: B86)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Symptoms involving Skin & Oth Integument Tiss (ICD10: R20-R23)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



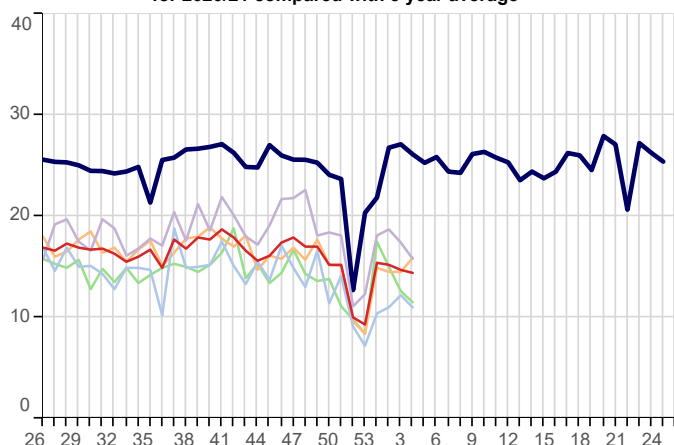
Impetigo (ICD10: L01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



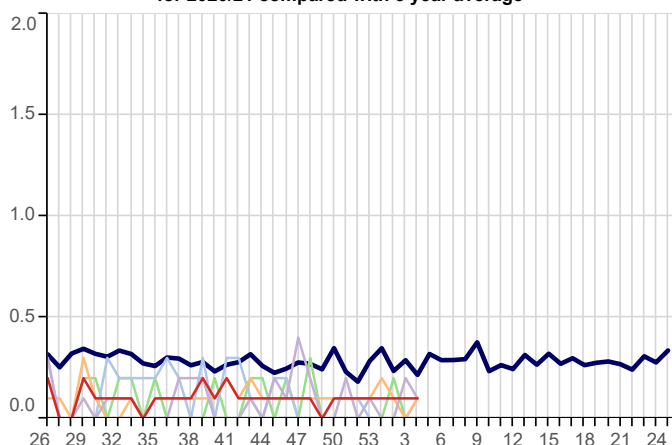
6. Disorders Affecting the Nervous System

5yr Avg National London North South Midlands And East

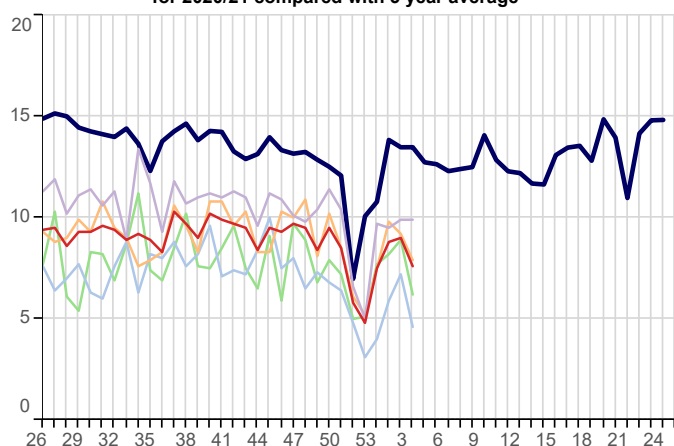
Disorders of The Peripheral Nervous System (ICD10: G50-G64,G70-G72)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



Meningitis/Encephalitis (ICD10: A170-A171,A390,A38-A85,A87,G00-G05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average

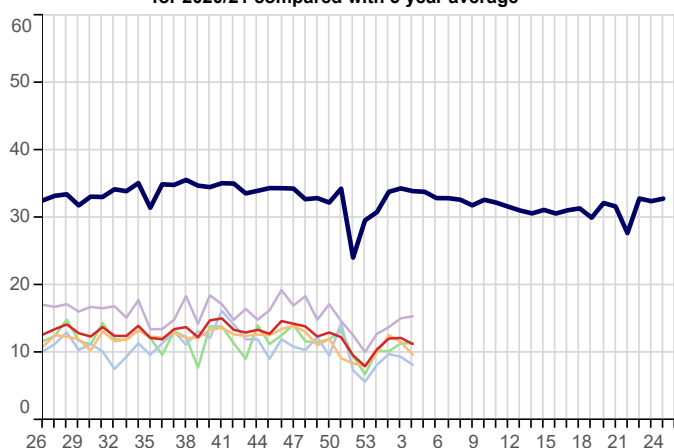


Symptoms Involving Nervous & Musculoskeletal (ICD10: R25-R29)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



7. Genitourinary System Disorders

Urinary Tract Infection/Cystitis (ICD10: N30,N390)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2020/21 compared with 5 year average



8. Tabular Summary by Disease

Disease Name	Week beginning Week ending		25/01/2021 31/01/2021		18/01/2021 24/01/2021		11/01/2021 17/01/2021		04/01/2021 10/01/2021	
	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer
Allergic Rhinitis	2.0	77	2.2	86	2.3	91	1.9	75		
Asthma	9.0	351	9.7	381	9.1	361	10.0	391		
Bronchitis	2.6	100	2.9	112	3.1	123	2.9	115		
Bullous Dermatoses	0.2	6	0.1	4	0.2	7	0.2	8		
Chickenpox	0.8	31	0.8	32	0.8	32	0.8	33		
Common Cold	0.5	21	0.4	17	0.5	19	0.7	26		
Conjunctival Disorders	7.0	274	7.9	308	6.5	258	5.9	229		
Herpes Simplex	3.3	129	3.6	141	3.5	140	2.5	99		
Herpes Zoster	5.0	196	6.1	238	5.9	234	4.9	193		
Impetigo	2.6	101	2.5	99	2.7	108	2.8	110		
Infectious Mononucleosis	0.1	3	0.1	3	0.2	6	0.2	9		
Influenza-like illness	1.0	39	0.9	34	1.1	42	1.3	51		
Infectious Intestinal Diseases	4.1	161	4.5	175	4.3	172	3.3	130		
Laryngitis and Tracheitis	0.5	21	0.5	19	0.7	26	0.5	20		
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections	16.6	651	19.0	744	18.7	741	20.6	802		
Measles	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0		
Meningitis and Encephalitis	0.1	4	0.1	2	0.1	3	0.1	3		
Mumps	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.1	2	0.0	0		
Non-infective Enteritis and Colitis	6.1	239	6.3	247	6.2	247	6.1	238		
Otitis Media Acute	0.4	17	0.5	19	0.4	14	0.4	16		
Peripheral Nervous Disease	14.4	563	14.7	575	15.2	602	15.4	602		
Pleurisy	0.3	11	0.3	13	0.3	10	0.2	9		
Pneumonia and Pneumonitis	2.3	90	2.5	99	2.2	86	2.2	86		
Respiratory System Diseases	98.5	3,856	105.6	4,143	107.1	4,246	105.9	4,133		
Rubella	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0		
Scabies	0.7	28	0.6	24	0.8	30	1.0	40		
Sinusitis	11.9	465	11.5	452	13.0	514	12.8	499		
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Infections	58.3	2,282	61.0	2,393	59.7	2,366	54.6	2,131		
Strep Throat and Peritonsillar Abscess	0.2	8	0.3	13	0.2	8	0.2	6		
Symptoms involving musculoskeletal	7.6	298	9.0	353	8.8	348	7.5	294		
Symptoms involving Respiratory and Chest	94.0	3,681	102.4	4,018	103.0	4,086	101.6	3,965		
Symptoms involving Skin and Integument Tissues	104.6	4,096	104.8	4,110	104.3	4,135	97.3	3,795		
Tonsillitis and acute Pharyngitis	9.9	387	10.7	421	10.7	425	10.9	426		
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections	33.5	1,310	34.7	1,361	37.2	1,474	37.1	1,447		
Urinary Tract Infections	11.3	441	12.2	478	12.1	481	10.5	410		
Viral Hepatitis	0.3	10	0.2	6	0.1	2	0.3	11		
Whooping Cough	0.0	0	0.1	3	0.0	0	0.0	1		
Practice Count		393		385		392		387		
Denom		3,914,569		3,922,467		3,965,768		3,900,996		

FURTHER INFORMATION:

About the report

Winter focus

The first two pages of data within this report focus on Influenza-like illness and COVID-19, in order to provide information about seasonal influenza and early warnings of any epidemic.

Rate calculation

Each weekly incidence rate is presented per 100,000 population. All presentations are for males and females, and for all age groups, unless otherwise stated.

The denominator used for this report is taken from our most recent extract of data from GP practice systems, and includes all patients currently registered with eligible practices. The denominator varies week-on-week as patients register and deregister; it may also be the case that all patients from an individual practice are excluded because of problems with the data extraction from that practice in a specific week. As stated above, patients who have withheld consent for data-sharing are excluded.

In addition to the national rate, we present data for the four NHS England regions: North; Midlands and East; South; and London.

Five-year averages

Weekly rates are set against the five-year average, calculated from data for the calendar years 2014-2018. Previously we reported against a ten-year average. The change to a five-year average was made because longer-term trends in the incidence of disease have led to weekly rates for certain diseases becoming increasingly divergent from their ten-year average. The use of five-year averages lessens this effect and enables more meaningful comparison.

Threshold calculation for Influenza-Like Illness (ILI)

We are now using the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) to calculate threshold and intensity levels for Influenza-Like Illness. MEM works by identifying seasonal epidemic peaks and then calculates thresholds and intensity levels based on the pre and post epidemic values. This allows us to report the severity of ILI against multiple thresholds, rather than a simple comparison with the five-year average as the wide variation in ILI year on year, especially during the seasonal peak, makes the average less representative.

In addition to the All Ages thresholds, we have also calculated thresholds for three age bands: those aged under 15, 15-64 year olds and those aged 65 and over. ILI incidence rates vary among different age groups, and the age-specific thresholds allow us to highlight epidemics where ILI disproportionately affects a particular age group.

This methodology is used by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to standardise reporting of influenza activity across Europe, and is also in use by Public Health England. Full details of the methodology can be found in: Vega *et al.* (2012) Influenza surveillance in Europe: establishing epidemic thresholds by the moving epidemic method. Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses 7(4), 546-558. For ease of graphical representation, the final threshold (Very High) is not included in Graph A, page 2, but it is part of Table 3, page 3.

Both the *all-ages* thresholds and the *age-specific* thresholds are shown in Table 2, page 3. Ten years of data were used for *all-ages* and *age-specific* thresholds calculation (winter seasons 2006/07- 2016/17 excluding 2009/10).

About the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC)

Acknowledgement:

Staff from the Data Science department at the National Physical Laboratory (<https://www.npl.co.uk/data-science>) assisted in the provision of and extension of the primary care national surveillance reports during the 2020 SARS-CoV-2 pandemic; as well as adding resilience.

What we do

The RCGP RSC was established in 1957, with the current name in use since 2009. The Centre 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 is an active research and surveillance unit that collects and monitors data; its most important research is the surveillance of influenza and the monitoring of vaccine effectiveness.

The RSC data and analytics hub is housed at the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre.

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

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc>

Our data extraction process and information governance

Data are extracted twice weekly from practice systems by Wellbeing data management on the RCGP's behalf. 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 RCGP data and analytics hub at the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre. Both Wellbeing data management and the University of Oxford are Registered and compliant with the Data Protection Act and fully compliant with all relevant NHS Digital data information governance best practice.

What the data is used for

The RCGP RSC has been providing reports weekly about health and disease, called the Weekly Returns Service (WRS) since 1964. 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 Public Health England. The bulletin can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/syndromic-surveillance-summary>

In addition to the WRS, the data is 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. Full details can be found on our website:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc>

For further information

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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