

Supporting Information

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SI Text

1. SI Data. 1.1. General practice (GP) consultation data. The United Kingdom (UK) Health Protection Agency (HPA) routinely utilizes GP consultation data for influenza-like illness (ILI) from two national GP surveillance networks. The Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Weekly Returns Service is a sentinel GP network covering a weekly population of approximately 900,000 (1). The HPA/QSurveillance national surveillance system covers a weekly UK population of approximately 23 million. ILI data from both of these datasets are stratified by age and Strategic Health Authority (SHA). During the pandemic (April 2009—February 2010), the HPA used daily ILI reports that were routinely collected from the HPA/QSurveillance system to help in the public health response to the pandemic (2). GP consultation data were available from information provided for HPA surveillance during the pandemic.

1.2. Virological positivity. Both the RCGP and the HPA Regional Microbiology Network (RMN) (3) provide ongoing sentinel primary care surveillance with virological monitoring. Both networks cover populations of about 400,000 in England (RMN) and in England and Wales (RCGP) (4). This monitoring involves the taking of respiratory swabs from a subset of patients consulting GPs. A PCR assay is then employed to test the swabs for influenza strains as well as other respiratory virus infections. A more complete account of the virological monitoring undertaken by these two surveillance schemes can be found in ref. 5, but together they provide data on the positivity (the proportion of samples testing PCR positive) for a particular virus together with the epidemiological information attached to each sample. During the pandemic the schemes provided an estimate of virological positivity for influenza A/H1N1pdm in patients presenting ILI at GP consultations. Swab samples were included in the data only if the time between symptom onset and testing was 5 d or less, to avoid any adverse impact of test sensitivity.

1.3. Virologically confirmed cases. Management strategies over the initial stages of the pandemic were primarily concerned with the containment of the spread of the epidemic, prior to moving into a treatment phase. The initial containment phase was a period of enhanced surveillance during which contacts of known infected individuals were traced and laboratory confirmations of the infection were obtained wherever possible. This work resulted in the generation of the FF100 and the FluZone databases (5, 6). Routine laboratory confirmations were discontinued on June 25, but we use here the data only up to June 19 to allow for the gradual cessation in the collection of this type of data.

1.4. Serological studies. The HPA runs an annual collection of serum samples for the purpose of carrying out cross-sectional antibody prevalence studies (7). Collected sera are residual samples from those submitted to microbiological laboratories for antibody testing or diagnostic screening. During the 2009 pandemic these were supplemented by further samples from biochemistry laboratories. Testing of samples collected in 2008 provided an age-specific estimate of baseline prevalence of antibodies to the A/H1N1pdm virus, giving an indication of the level of pre-existing immunity in the population. Among this baseline sample, a haemagglutinin-inhibiting antibody titer of 32 is sufficient to indicate protection against A/H1N1pdm influenza in approximately 50% of individuals (8–10), although protection is often

present in individuals with titer values ≥ 8 . Despite this uncertainty in the level of protection, assays ≥ 32 are assumed to be protective against A/H1N1pdm, though this may well be an underestimate of the preexisting immunity. During the A/H1N1pdm epidemic, further samples were submitted monthly to the HPA and tested similarly. These data have been published elsewhere (11). A geometric-mean titer value of ≥ 32 is assumed to arise as a result of recent infection, so that individuals with this titer value can be assumed to either belong to the group “protected” at baseline or to have been recently infected. A 2-wk delay between infection and seroconversion is assumed, so each individual sample is assumed to be representative of the level of infection among the population 14 d prior to the sampling date.

1.5. Further information. 1.5.1. National Pandemic Flu Service (NPFS). On July 23, the NPFS phone and Internet service was launched. This system was designed to relieve the pressure put upon the general practice network by allowing an online assessment of the suitability of patients for an antiviral prescription. If approved, patients were given a unique code that they could use to collect antiviral drugs.

1.5.2. Flusurvey. This was a web-based resource (12) for registered users to report, on a weekly basis, their experience of ILI over the course of the preceding week. The participants report any symptoms experienced and, if applicable, their subsequent health-care-seeking behavior. Participants register on an entirely voluntary basis.

In addition to the data described in the preceding subsections, information on population sizes by age group were taken from the 2008 midyear population estimates made by the Office of National Statistics (13).

2. SI Materials and Methods. 2.1. Model details. 2.1.1. The transmission model. The spread of the disease among the population is modeled using an SEIR transmission model, comprising states S (individuals susceptible to infection), E (individuals with latent infection), I (infectious individuals), and R (individuals no longer at risk of acquiring or transmitting infection). The E and I compartments are further subdivided into two substates E_1 , E_2 and I_1 , I_2 , respectively, leading to waiting times in the E and I states, which are distributed according to gamma distributions.

The transmission model (as can be seen in Fig. 2 of the main article) is governed by a time- and age-varying force of infection, $\lambda(t, a)$, and transition rate parameters σ and γ . These transition rates are related to the mean latent period, d_L , and the mean infectious period, d_I , by

$$\sigma = 2/d_L, \quad \gamma = 2/d_I.$$

The model dynamics arise as a discretization of a system of differential equations. Assuming δt small relative to the expected waiting times, σ^{-1} , γ^{-1} the difference equations corresponding to the n th time step are

$$\begin{aligned}
 S(t_n, a) &= S(t_{n-1}, a)(1 - p_\lambda(t_{n-1}, a)) \\
 E_1(t_n, a) &= E_1(t_{n-1}, a)(1 - \sigma\delta t) + S(t_{n-1}, a)p_\lambda(t_{n-1}, a) \\
 E_2(t_n, a) &= E_2(t_{n-1}, a)(1 - \sigma\delta t) + E_1(t_{n-1}, a)\sigma\delta t \\
 I_1(t_n, a) &= I_1(t_{n-1}, a)(1 - \gamma\delta t) + E_2(t_{n-1}, a)\sigma\delta t \\
 I_2(t_n, a) &= I_2(t_{n-1}, a)(1 - \gamma\delta t) + I_1(t_{n-1}, a)\gamma\delta t \\
 R(t_n, a) &= R(t_{n-1}, a) + I_2(t_{n-1}, a)\gamma\delta t,
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{S1}$$

where $t_n = n\delta t$ and $p_\lambda(t_n, a)$ is the proportion of susceptibles infected in the interval $[t_{n-1}, t_n]$. $p_\lambda(t_n, a)$ is closely linked to the force of infection and is dependent on two key quantities, the basic reproduction number of the virus, R_0 , and a time-dependent mixing matrix $M(t)$, giving the relative rates of contact between individuals in different population strata, which in this case are defined by the age groupings (seven groups: <1, 1–4, 5–14, 15–24, 25–44, 45–64, 65+). We relate these quantities through the Reed–Frost formulation for the infection hazard (14), so that

$$\begin{aligned}
 p_\lambda(t_n, a) &= \left(1 - \prod_{b=1}^7 \left[1 - p_\beta(t_n)_{a,b} R_0 \gamma / 2\right]^{I_1(t_n, b) + I_2(t_n, b)}\right) \delta t \\
 &\approx \lambda(t_n, a) \delta t.
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{S2}$$

The time-dependent matrix

$$\mathbf{p}_\beta(t) = \{p_\beta(t)_{a,b}\} = \mathbf{M}(t) / R_0^* \tag{S3}$$

is a scaled version of the mixing matrix, with R_0^* being the dominant eigenvalue of the scaled next generation matrix M^* , whose (a, b) th element is given by $M_{a,b}^* = M(0)_{a,b} N_a$, where N_a is the population size within age group a .

If t_0 is selected to be sufficiently close to the emergence of the epidemic within the study population, then we can use as an initial condition that the occupancies of disease states E_1, E_2, I_1 , and I_2 are growing exponentially with rate ψ_r . This leads to the time-zero solution:

$$\begin{aligned}
 I_1(0, a) &= I_a^{\text{tot}} \left(1 + \frac{\epsilon\gamma\delta t}{\alpha + \gamma\delta t}\right)^{-1} & I_2(0, a) &= (I_a^{\text{tot}} - I_1(0, a)) \\
 E_2(0, a) &= I_1(0, a) \frac{\alpha + \gamma\delta t}{\sigma\delta t} & E_1(0, a) &= E_2(0, a) \frac{\alpha + \sigma\delta t}{\sigma\delta t},
 \end{aligned}$$

where $\alpha = \exp(\psi_r \delta t) - 1$ and I^{tot} is the vector of the initial number of infectious individuals in each age group. Prior to the onset of the influenza epidemic, there is some preexisting immunity within each population. If we denote the proportion of the population within age group a who have a prior immunity to A/H1N1pdm by $1 - \pi_a$, then we set $R(0, a) = (1 - \pi_a) N_a$, and $S(0, a) = N_a - E_1(0, a) - E_2(0, a) - I_1(0, a) - I_2(0, a)$.

In a development of earlier work (15), the value of the reproduction number during the initial exponential growth period has been found to be given by the relation (16)

$$R_0^{\text{init}} = \psi_r d_I \frac{(\frac{\psi_r d_I}{2} + 1)^2}{1 - \frac{1}{(\frac{\psi_r d_I}{2} + 1)^2}} \tag{S4}$$

Rather than attempting to estimate the initial infectious population size in each of the age groups, we can instead observe that if we define a quantity β to be the average daily rate of secondary infections per primary infection, then the average initial infection hazard is given by $\lambda_0 = \beta \sum_a I_a^{\text{tot}}$. Similarly, we can relate β to the reproduction number at time 0 through $R_0^{\text{init}} = \beta \sum_a N_a d_I$. Equating these expressions for β gives

$$I_+ = \sum_a I_a^{\text{tot}} = \frac{d_I \lambda_0 \sum_a N_a}{R_0^{\text{init}}} \tag{S5}$$

The individual I_a^{tot} are then determined by multiplying this sum by the eigenvector corresponding to the dominant eigenvalue of the matrix $M(0)$, scaled so that the vector components sum to 1. If this eigenvector is χ^M ,

$$I_a^{\text{tot}} = I_+ \chi_a^M \tag{S6}$$

2.1.2. Disease severity and disease reporting. The disease and reporting models (see Fig. 2 of the main article) take as input the modeled time series of the number of new infections by age. From the block of Eq. S1, this can be seen to be

$$\Delta_{\text{infec}}(t_n, a) = S(t_{n-1}, a) p_\lambda(t_{n-1}, a) \tag{S7}$$

A significant proportion of these new infections does not manifest in the form of febrile symptoms. As a result infections go undetected and will not appear in surveillance data. If θ represents the proportion of infections with associated symptoms, the number of incident symptomatic cases at time t within age group a is given by

$$\Delta(t_n, a) = \theta \Delta_{\text{infec}}(t_n, a) \tag{S8}$$

This quantity we refer to here onward as the incident number of cases.

It is assumed that each case will be reported as present in one of the datasets with some probability, independently of whether or not they contribute to any of the other datasets. If we focus on the GP consultations, we define a time- and age-varying propensity to consult as a result of symptoms to be $p_{\text{GP}}(t, a)$. Given this, we then need to consider the delay between the time of infection and the time of reporting. Such delay is made up of three components: the incubation period, i.e., the time from infection to symptoms; the waiting time from symptom onset to the health-care event; and the time taken from the event to its appearance in data, i.e., the reporting delay.

If we consider each of the intermediate steps, we have that the expected number of reported events at time t in age group a can be expressed as

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mu_{t,a} &= \sum_{k=0}^n f_{(\mu_{\text{incubation}}, \sigma_{\text{incubation}}^2)}(k, a) \sum_{l=0}^{n-k} f_{(\mu_{\text{event}}, \sigma_{\text{event}}^2)}(l, a) p_{\text{event}}(t_{n-k-l}, a) \\
 &\quad \times \sum_{m=0}^{n-k-l} f_{(\mu_{\text{report}}, \sigma_{\text{report}}^2)}(m, a) \Delta(t_{n-k-l-m}, a),
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{S8}$$

where the $f_{(\mu, \sigma^2)}(t, a)$ give the probability that a gamma random variable indexed by mean μ and variance σ^2 lies in the interval $(t, t + 1)\delta t$. Convolution over three indices is computationally very expensive and it greatly diminishes our power to run a model such as this in real-time. Here we approximate the compounded waiting time (the sum of the incubation time, time to event, and reporting times) by a single gamma distribution, the mean and variance of which are the sums of the component means and of the component variances, respectively (17). Using such an approximation, Eq. S8 reduces to a single summation

$$\begin{aligned}
 \mu_{t,a} &= p_{\text{event}}(t_n, a) \\
 &\quad \times \sum_{k=0}^n \Delta(t_{n-k}, a) f_{(\mu_{\text{incubation}} + \mu_{\text{event}} + \mu_{\text{report}}, \sigma_{\text{incubation}}^2 + \sigma_{\text{event}}^2 + \sigma_{\text{report}}^2)}(k, a).
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{S9}$$

Even with this approximation, it is this convolution that is responsible for the majority of the computational expense.

2.2. Interventions and modeling challenges. The spread of a novel influenza virus leads to changes in the way the public interacts both with each other and with the health services. In the initial stages of this epidemic, it is possible that a heightened state of alertness among the public induced a surge in the number of people presenting ILI symptoms to their GPs. In turn, throughout the treatment phase of the epidemic, government advice on the management and reporting of ILI symptoms changed as the NPFS was launched. Later on in the epidemic, the initiation of a vaccination program once again changed the way the public interacts with the health services.

We address these issues by considering relevant model parameters to be piecewise-constant over time, with change points positioned as close as possible to the behavioral change-causing event.

2.2.1. School holidays. Although the widespread closure of schools as a measure to mitigate the spread of the emergent epidemic was never enforced, the epidemic did straddle a number of school holidays including the six-week summer holiday common to all English schools. As children younger than 15 y old are key agents of transmission, it is not surprising that this led to some dying down of the epidemic in these periods. School-holiday effects upon transmission can be incorporated via the mixing matrices $M(t)$.

Initially, mixing matrices obtained from the POLYMOD (Improving Public Health Policy in Europe through Modeling and Economic Evaluation of Interventions for the Control of Infectious Diseases) study into social mixing patterns (18) were employed. This study, through presenting estimated rates of physical contact between members of the different age groups both on weekends and weekdays, provides “holiday” and “non-holiday” contact matrices to be used for periods corresponding to without and within school terms, respectively. However, these matrices were found to underplay the role of the <15 y-old age groups. This arose due to the near-simultaneous introduction of the NPFS and start of the school summer holidays. The falloff in GP consultation could therefore be attributable to either a mirrored fall in the propensity to consult or through contact patterns. Using the POLYMOD matrices alone led to an estimated drop in the $p_{GP}(t,a)$ to values orders of magnitude smaller than observed in Flusurvey (12). Parameterizing these matrices to allow for both estimation of the effect of school holidays on contact rates and the relative likelihood of transmission in infectious contacts involving adults compared to those that just involve children (see also refs. 19 and 20) leads to more plausible estimates.

Specifically, this parameterization is achieved by considering a base matrix that we take to be the nonholiday matrix from the POLYMOD study. Denoted by M_{POLY} , the (i,j) th element of this matrix gives the rate of contact between a member of the population in age group i with someone in age group j . To move from this matrix to $M(t)$ of Eq. S3, consider the matrices A_{base} , A_{summer} , $A_{half-term}$ given respectively in Eqs. S10–S12:

$$A_{base} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & 1 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad [S10]$$

$$A_{summer} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & m_2 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & 1 & m_3 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \end{pmatrix}, \quad [S11]$$

$$A_{half-term} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 1 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & m_4 & 1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ 1 & 1 & m_5 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \\ m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 & m_1 \end{pmatrix}. \quad [S12]$$

Using the \odot symbol to indicate componentwise multiplication of matrices such that $A = B \odot C \Rightarrow A_{ij} = B_{ij}C_{ij}$, $M(t)$ is then assumed to be

$$M(t) = \begin{cases} A_{summer} \odot M_{POLY} & t \in (79,128] \\ A_{half-term} \odot M_{POLY} & t \in (23,30] \cup (177,184] \cup (233,245] \\ A_{base} \odot M_{POLY} & \text{otherwise.} \end{cases} \quad [S13]$$

The time intervals [23,30] days and [177,184] days correspond to the half-term school holidays in May and October, respectively, and these holidays share parameters with the interval [233,245], which corresponds to the Christmas holiday. The interval [79,128] days corresponds to the longer summer school holiday. Parameter m_1 features in all matrix entries corresponding to contact rates involving an adult age group (i.e., ≥ 15 y), conferring upon it the interpretation as the proportionate reduction in the probability of an infectious contact involving an adult being “effective” (i.e., leading to disease transmission) in comparison to an infectious contact involving two children under the age of 15 y.

Correspondingly, parameters m_2 and m_4 give the proportionate reduction in the contact rates among the 1–4 y age group in the summer and half-term holidays, respectively, with parameters m_3 and m_5 similarly defined for the 5–14 age group. The two holiday periods are treated differently, through the assignment of distinct parameters to allow for the possibility that people behave differently in these periods. During the summer holiday it is expected that a larger proportion of the children will spend time overseas or on some sort of prolonged vacation.

2.2.2. Changing public behavior (1): Acting on government advice.

As already discussed, it cannot be assumed that the propensity of those with symptoms of A/H1N1pdm to consult with a GP is constant within each age group over time. In particular, the issue of modeling the propensity of patients to consult with a GP is complicated further by the introduction of the NPFS on July 23. The natural effect of the NPFS was to drastically reduce the proportion of individuals who appear in the GP consultation datasets (pregnant women, children <1 y, and anyone else occupying a particular high-risk group were still advised to consult directly with a GP). To account for this we parameterize $p_{GP}(t,a)$ such that children and adults have distinct propensities to consult at all times and these are subject to two change points (see Fig. S1), the first of which is chosen to correspond to the introduction of NPFS. The second breakpoint is designed to bisect the interval between the introduction of the NPFS and the end of the dataset. Its inclusion is to allow for the possibility that the advice for patients to make the NPFS their first port of call was perhaps being

forgotten over time as people reverted to their traditional health-seeking behavior (i.e., going to the GP).

Specifically, we parameterize $p_{GP}(t,a)$ as follows:

$$p_{GP}(t,a) = \begin{cases} p_0 & a < 15 \text{ y}, t \leq 83 \text{ d} \\ p_1 & a \geq 15 \text{ y}, t \leq 83 \text{ d} \\ p_0 p_2 & a < 15 \text{ y}, 83 < t \leq 137 \text{ d} \\ p_1 p_3 & a \geq 15 \text{ y}, 83 < t \leq 137 \text{ d} \\ p_0 p_4 & a < 15 \text{ y}, 137 < t \leq 192 \text{ d} \\ p_1 p_5 & a \geq 15 \text{ y}, 137 < t \leq 192 \text{ d} \end{cases}, \quad [\text{S14}]$$

where day 84 (July 23) corresponds to the introduction of the NPFS phone line and day 137 (September 14) and day 192 (November 8) form an equal partition of the time from the NPFS advent until the end of data currently under analysis. By parameterizing in this way and constraining the p_i to take values in the range $[0,1]$, we guarantee that the propensity to consult is at a peak in the period prior to the NPFS introduction.

2.2.3. Changing public behavior (2): The worried well. In addition to the change in the health-care-seeking behavior of infected individuals with flu-like symptoms, the change in behavior of individuals suffering from symptoms derived from non-A/H1N1pdm ILI also needs to be considered. These individuals also appear in the GP consultation data, contributing a time-varying level of noise.

The data on virological positivity allow us to partition the observed ILI consultations among those that are genuine pandemic A/H1N1pdm cases and those that are not. This is done externally to our integrated model of Fig. 2 (in the main article) by modeling collateral data on positivity and GP consultation rates from other regions of England.

Joint regression models were fitted to the consultation rate and positivity data from the regions outside of London. Only regions outside of London were used, to avoid making double use of the GP consultation and virological positivity data. This joint model provides posterior means and covariance matrices for the parameters of a log-linear regression of the background consultation rate that assumes linearly independent temporal and age effects and an interaction that takes the form of a change point in the age effects at the time of NPFS introduction:

$$\log(B(t,a)) = \alpha_t + \beta_a + \mathbb{1}_{\{t > t_{NPFS}\}} \beta'_a.$$

This regression equation is imported into the integrated model, together with a multivariate normal prior distribution for $(\alpha_t, \beta_a, \beta'_a)$, which conserves the posterior means and covariances found through the external model. This allows estimation of rates of background consultation in London, which are influenced by the equivalent rates from the other regions of England.

2.3. Inference. 2.3.1. Likelihood. The GP consultation data are assumed to have a negative-binomial distribution. We parameterize the negative-binomial distribution in terms of a mean number of consultations, μ_{ta} (as found from Eq. S9) and a piecewise-constant dispersion parameter, $\eta_t > 1$, such that the likelihood component is

$$L(y_{ta}|\varphi) = \frac{\Gamma(y_{ta} + r_{ta})}{\Gamma(r_{ta})\Gamma(y_{ta} + 1)} \left(\frac{1}{\eta_t}\right)^{r_{ta}} \left(1 - \frac{1}{\eta_t}\right)^{y_{ta}} \quad \eta_t \geq 1,$$

where $r_{ta} = \mu_{ta}/(\eta_t - 1)$. The dispersion parameter η_t has one change point at the time of the NPFS launch, reflecting a fundamental modification to the surveillance system. With this parameterization, $\mathbb{E}Y(t,a) = \mu_{ta}$ and $\text{Var}(Y(t,a)) = \mu_{ta}\eta_t$.

2.3.2. Priors. Table S1 provides a near comprehensive list of the parameters that comprise the vector φ , together with their assumed fixed value or prior distribution. Parameters of the background model are omitted for brevity. The chosen time step for the model is $\delta t = 1/2$ d, which limits how small both d_I and d_L can be without invalidating approximations made in the discretization of the model dynamics. Therefore the mean infectious period is estimated over values constrained to be at least 2 d, whereas we follow ref. 19 in fixing the mean latent period to 2 d. The proportions susceptible were determined from the estimated baseline prevalence of A/H1N1pdm antibodies (11). The choice of prior for θ is based on data reported in ref. 21. The parameters of the incubation period distribution were taken from recent work on confirmed cases with identifiable exposure times (22). For the parameters governing the propensity to consult with a GP, p_i , priors were derived from (nonage specific) estimates for the United Kingdom available from the Flusurvey study (12), with some appropriate statements of uncertainty attached.

3. SI Further Results. 3.1. Goodness of fit. Fig. S2 compares the predicted age-group specific and weekly aggregated GP consultations with the observed data. The predicted consultations track the data rather well, with perhaps some overestimation of consultations during the initial epidemic growth and some underestimation around the peak of the second wave. Fig. S3 features the corresponding plot for the virological positivity data. Here, the model predicted positivity is plotted together with a 95% credible interval. The observed positivities are overlaid and should differ from the modeled positivities through binomial error. The model appears to perform well, albeit with some underestimation of the positivity in the 15–24 age group, perhaps due to the influence of the 25–44 age group, the data for which had far larger sample sizes. Of course, there is some arbitrariness introduced via the choice of age groups and any lack of fit within the 15–24 age group could be due to heterogeneity within this age group arising from the fact that this group includes a significant proportion of individuals who are still of school age. Similar within-group heterogeneity might explain the lack of fit to the serology data within this age group evident in Fig. S4, although this could also be explained through underestimation of the baseline levels of immunity within the age group. Elsewhere, the serological data seem highly plausible given the model.

3.2. Sensitivity analyses. 3.2.1. An imperfect virological test. The proportion, $q_{t_n,a}$, of GP consultations that are attributable to A/H1N1pdm at the n th time step, t_n , and within any given age group, a , is given by

$$q_{t_n,a} = \frac{\mu_{t_n,a}}{\mu_{t_n,a} + B(t_n,a)}.$$

Thus far, this proportion has been assumed to be unbiasedly informed by the virological swabbing data, with these data, $W_{t_n,a}$, taken to be distributed

$$W_{t_n,a} \sim \text{Bin}(M_{t_n,a}, q_{t_n,a}).$$

It is, however, more likely that the testing procedure is imperfect, i.e., with sensitivity less than 1. This may be due to the test itself, or perhaps, in some individuals, to the depletion of the viral load to an undetectable level over the interval from infection to swabbing (23).

Therefore, what we see is an apparent positivity, $q_{t_n,a}^*$, which relates to the test sensitivity, k_{sens} , via the equation $q_{t_n,a}^* = k_{\text{sens}}q_{t_n,a}$, assuming that specificity is equal to 1. The positivity data are assumed

$$W_{t_n,a} \sim \text{Bin}(M_{t_n,a}, q_{t_n,a}^*).$$

Intuitively, therefore, an imperfect test would lead us to expect that there is a greater number of GP consultations for A/H1N1pdm in the population than would be found through naive multiplication of the observed consultations with the observed positivity.

Table S2 displays estimates based on posterior medians (and credible intervals) for some epidemic quantities under the assumption of a perfect test, under two reasonable guesses for the sensitivity ($k_{\text{sens}} = 0.9, 0.8$) and an extreme case ($k_{\text{sens}} = 0.5$). Counterintuitively, the overall incidence actually decreases with decreasing test sensitivity, along with the average reproductive number, R_0 . Specifically, this decrease occurs in the number of infections in the second wave, as we can see that the posterior probability that the first wave has a higher peak rate of infection increases with decreasing test sensitivity. However, a decreasing infection attack rate (IAR) is accompanied by an increasing symptomatic attack rate (SAR). This arises through the proportion symptomatic increasing with decreasing test sensitivity, which more than compensates for the drop in infection rates when fitting to the GP consultation data. The model can explain the “true” positivity, $q_{t,a}$, being larger than the observed positivity, $q_{t,a}^*$, through either (i) higher levels of overall infection or (ii) a greater proportion of the infections appearing in data, due to a higher degree of symptomatic infection or to increased rates of reporting. Here, case (ii) appears to be occurring.

Of the four examples here, the posterior distribution for the likelihood takes larger values in the case $k_{\text{sens}} = 0.8$, with the extreme case performing much worse than the other three cases. Despite this, inferences do not seem to be substantially altered over the three “feasible” values of k_{sens} , so we consider them to be robust to the assumption of a perfect test.

3.2.2. Contact patterns. The symmetric matrix of mixing rates, $M(t)$ (cf. Eq. S3) is populated with values taken from the UK POLYMOD data, based on all types of contacts on weekdays, as done elsewhere (24). Even the more flexible parameterization of these matrices adopted here (Eq. S13) constitutes a strong set of restrictive assumptions. For example, what happens if the estimated POLYMOD matrices are inadequate or inappropriate for describing the patterns of infectious contacts? Furthermore, in the main text, Table 2 highlights the difficulty in estimating school-holiday effects among the 1–4 y-old age group (the posterior distribution looks very similar to the prior). If we adopt a more parsimonious parameterization, by assuming the impact of the school holidays upon the social dynamics within the 1–4 age group is identical to the impact in the 5–14 age group ($m_2 = m_3$ and $m_4 = m_5$), do we obtain substantially different inferences?

To examine these questions, we repeated the modeling exercise using instead the contact matrix derived from the UK subset of the POLYMOD data on weekend only contacts. This proved to have only an imperceptibly small effect on key estimates. Alternatively, if the constraints $m_2 = m_3$ and $m_4 = m_5$ are enforced and denoted m_3^* and m_5^* , respectively, our estimated posterior medians and credible intervals are

$$m_1 = 0.468(0.405, 0.539)$$

$$m_3^* = 0.336(0.128, 0.485)$$

$$m_5^* = 0.483(0.249, 0.755).$$

The posterior summaries presented here for m_3^* and m_5^* resemble those presented for parameters m_3 and m_5 in Table 2 (in the main text), with some slight movement toward the estimates obtained for parameters m_2 and m_4 in the main analysis. Once again, estimates of other parameters and epidemic quantities are robust to the parameterization choice. Although this choice is slightly more

parsimonious than the parameterization in the main text, with no significant loss of model fit, we prefer the main text analysis, as it is a strong a priori belief that the two age groups should be treated differently (1 y-olds and 14 y-olds will be affected in very different ways by breaks in school terms) and, again, the key inferences are left unaltered.

As inference appears robust to the precise choice of the values of the matrices $M(t)$, we further investigate the feasibility of actually estimating these values. The contact matrices are symmetric and therefore only have free entries in the upper-triangular portion of the matrix. Furthermore, $p_{\lambda}(t,a)$, as defined in Eq. S2, is independent of the scale of the mixing matrices for all values of t and a . It follows that the likelihood is similarly independent. Therefore, for identifiability, one matrix entry is assigned a fixed value, with other matrix entries corresponding to rates of mixing relative to the fixed entry. So for the 7×7 mixing matrix, we have 27 free parameters. As this is an illustrative exercise only, a bootstrap sample of contact matrices was drawn based on the UK POLYMOD data using the approach of ref. 25. Each matrix is then normalized so that the M_{33} entry is equal to 1. It is no longer possible to identify a parameter with the same interpretation as parameter m_1 , but, to factor in different rates of infectivity between adults and children, each bootstrap matrix was assigned a realization of a $U(0,1)$ random variable, and the entries corresponding to mixing rates involving adults were multiplied by this value. Based on this bootstrap sample, the means and variances for each of the 27 free matrix entries were used as the basis for gamma priors. Again, holiday effects were incorporated as previously, through parameters m_2, \dots, m_5 .

Fig. S5 plots the posterior distributions for these parameters in the form of an upper-triangular matrix. It can be seen that for many of the mixing rates, the posterior distributions are similar to the prior distributions, particularly for those parameters corresponding to at least one of the <1 and the >65 age groups. In the remaining age groups, the prior to posterior shift would appear to be toward lower values. As these rates are all measured relative to the M_{33} entry, this suggests that the POLYMOD matrices alone, even accounting for infectivity could, potentially, be underplaying the importance of disease transmission among the 5- to 14-y-old age group. Only one matrix element is inflated in moving from prior to posterior, M_{34} , giving relative rates of effective contact between the 5–14 and 15–24 age groups. However, these contacts still only occur at a posterior median of 0.272 times the rate of the within 5- to 14-y-old contacts. The second column of Table S3, which gives the estimated values for R_0 and the first and second wave attack rates, shows a higher level of total incidence in these results than in the analysis of the main text, despite a much lower estimate of R_0 . As the densities of Fig. S5 would appear to suggest, the higher total incidence is due to much higher levels of incidence in the 15–24 age group, which, compared to the child-age groups is highly populated with a supply of susceptibles that is not so easily exhausted.

This component of the sensitivity analysis is presented here as a proof-of-principle. The choice of prior distribution is key here, due to the influence it exerts on the pattern of incidence and further study is ongoing to develop this in greater detail.

3.2.3. The propensity to consult. The piecewise-constant parameterization of $p_{\text{GP}}(t,a)$ used to obtain the results presented in the main text was one that developed over the course of the pandemic out of the necessity to maintain an adequate fit to the GP consultation data. However, the step changes involved might be considered a crude approximation to the underlying process. As a test of the sensitivity, we try two alternate models for $p_{\text{GP}}(t,a)$. Using the same breakpoints, we consider $p_{\text{GP}}(t,a)$ to be piecewise-linear over time on the logistic scale, either from $t = t_{\text{NFPs}}$ onward (model 1) or at all times (model 2). These two models require the addition of two and four new parameters, respec-

tively. Fig. S6 plots the estimated temporal evolution in the propensity to consult for the two models for the adult age groups. Post-NPFS the two plots look very similar and differ from the piecewise-constant version in that there is a decline in the consultation propensity in the interval following the day-178 breakpoint, suggesting that the consultation propensity might be mirroring the pattern of consultations rather than gradually restoring itself to some pre-A/H1N1pdm level. In the pre-NPFS interval, the influence of the peak consultation rate is evident, given that the constant propensity in model 1 is equal to the propensity in model 2 at $t = t_{NPFS}$, rather than being an average value. In model 2, the time-0 value of the propensity appears to be highly prior influenced and so there is little learning to be made here about the propensity to consult over this interval. Because of this prior influence, in model 2, the proportion symptomatic θ is estimated to be lower than in model 2, to counteract this increased propensity to consult.

3.3. Further applicability. As has been discussed in *SI Data*, the data in England was subdivided into 10 distinct regions defined by the boundaries of the SHAs. The highly localized collection of virological and serological data is such that sample sizes in each region were too small to enable accurate estimation of the epidemic in many SHAs, whereas, if monitoring at the national level, the data are unrepresentative.

Taking this into consideration, we repeated our modeling methodology for one other SHA, the West Midlands, and two further aggregated regions each consisting of four of the remaining eight SHAs, “North” and “South.” Fig. S7 plots the estimated epidemic curve for each region, whereas Table S4 contains posterior estimates for key epidemic quantities.

Fig. S7 shows that, for the two epidemics that experienced significant levels of first wave infection, London and the West Midlands, their first wave peaks occur simultaneously and at a similar height. This constitutes a depletion in the population susceptibility of the West Midlands (it has a much smaller population) that is reflected in the lower levels of incidence in the second wave. Such a distinctive two-wave pattern of infection was not obvious in the North and South, however. The South

shows some first wave activity, but the real peak in incidence rates is during the second wave. The North behaves differently again. The lack of any significant first wave of infection makes the school-holiday effects impossible to estimate—how can a reduction in incidence be estimated when there is negligible incidence?—and thus all infection takes place in one big autumn wave, although a considerable level of uncertainty is attached, possibly, in part, arising from the very low virological sample sizes in the North.

The estimates of θ in Table S4 remain reasonably consistent across all four regions; each credible interval has a large intersection with the others. London and West Midlands display comparable estimates for R_0 , whereas the North and South have much lower values. It is speculated that this may well arise as a result of the different levels of population density: The London and West Midlands regions encompass the two biggest cities in the country. Again, London and West Midlands achieve similar estimates for parameter m_1 , whereas this parameter is close to 1 for the North and South. The age profile of infected individuals is clearly more uniform in the North and South regions, which may have something to do with the bulk of infection occurring in the autumn and winter months, when older age groups are at greater risk. School-holiday effects are generally estimated with wide credible intervals and as a result, the effect of the half-term holiday (m_5) as estimated in the West Midlands would appear to be the only anomalous result here.

3.4. Serology. In the main text, *Predicting the Epidemic*, we show how the model’s ability to make convergent epidemic estimates coincides with the introduction of some serological survey data. To further understand the role and the importance of these data, and to test whether this is mere coincidence, we repeated the modeling exercise of the main text, but with all serological data removed. The 83-, 143-, 192-, and 245-d estimates are presented in Fig. S8. Here, it is only the 245-d analysis that looks like a feasible representation of the epidemic. This indicates that, although post hoc epidemic reconstruction may well be feasible, the timely availability of serological data is a requisite for real-time inference.

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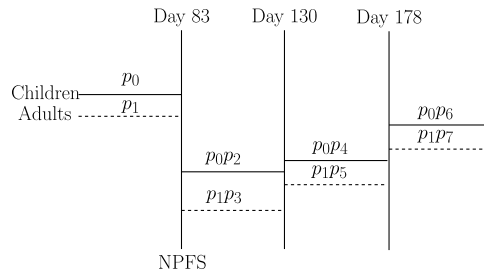


Fig. S1. Propensities to consult a GP over time given symptoms of infection with the A/H1N1pdm virus.

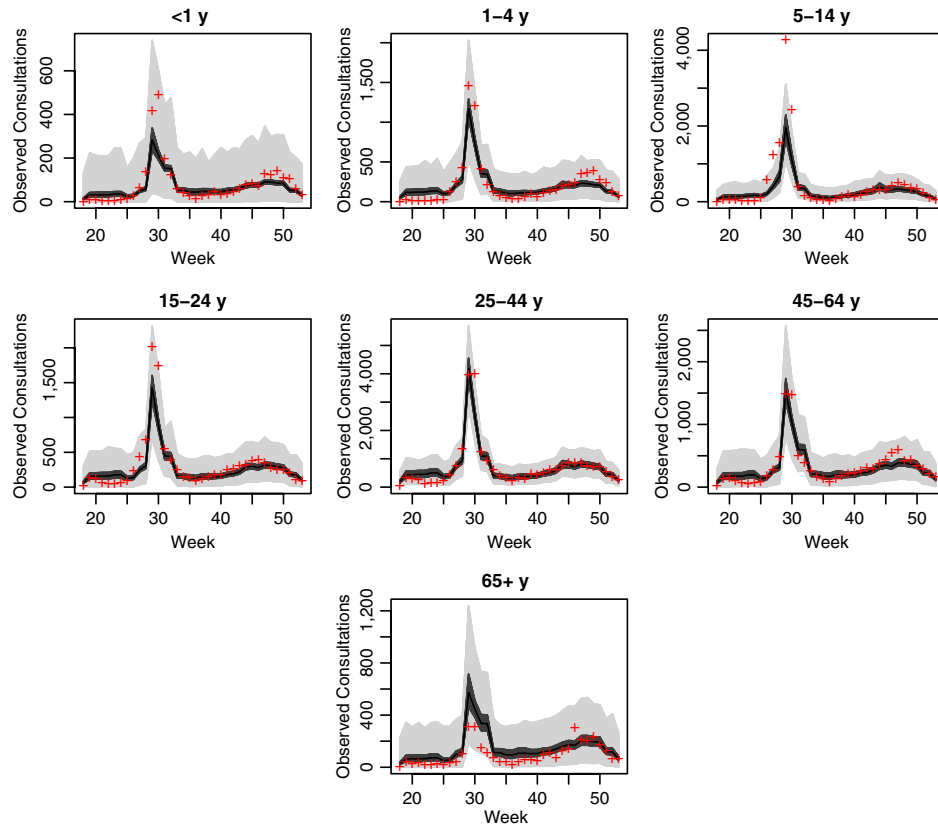


Fig. S2. Comparison of the observed GP consultation data (in red), against the expected number of consultations as predicted by the model (credible intervals shaded in black) and the attached negative-binomial error (shaded gray), which provide 95% credible intervals for the observed number of weekly consultations, by each age group in Greater London.

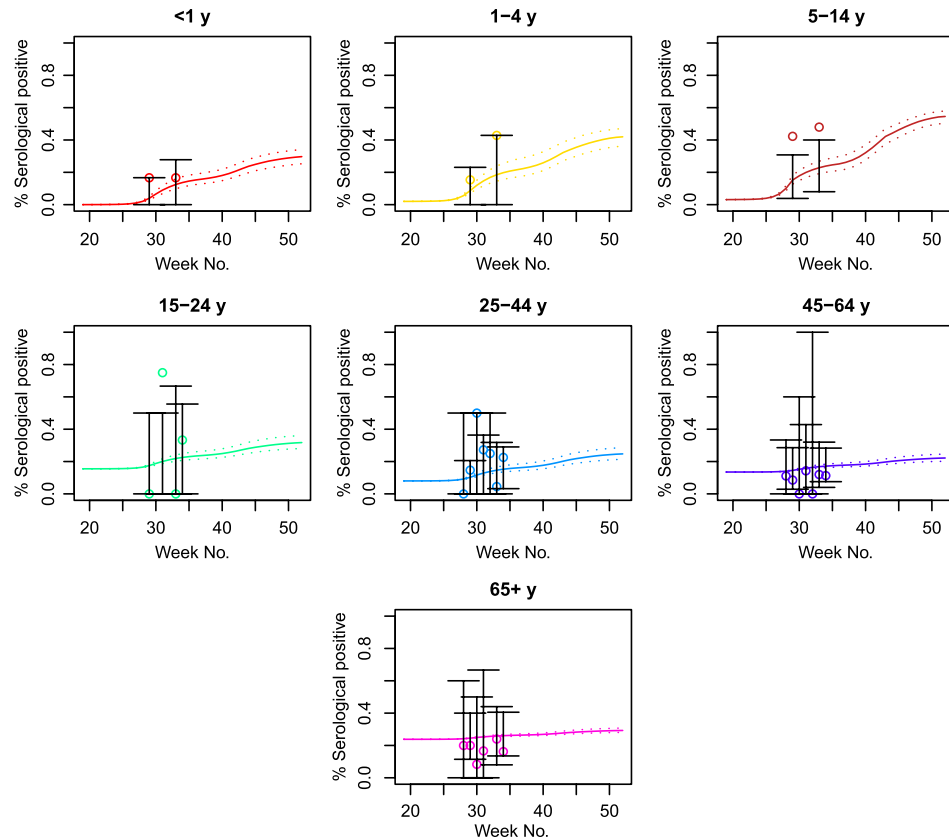


Fig. S4. Model fit to the serological positivity data, with data aggregated to weekly units. The points represent the observed weekly positivities (where samples exist); the curve represents the model-estimated positivity (together with a dashed 95% credible interval). The bars attached to each data point give credible intervals for the observed positivity under the model, conditional upon the sample denominators.

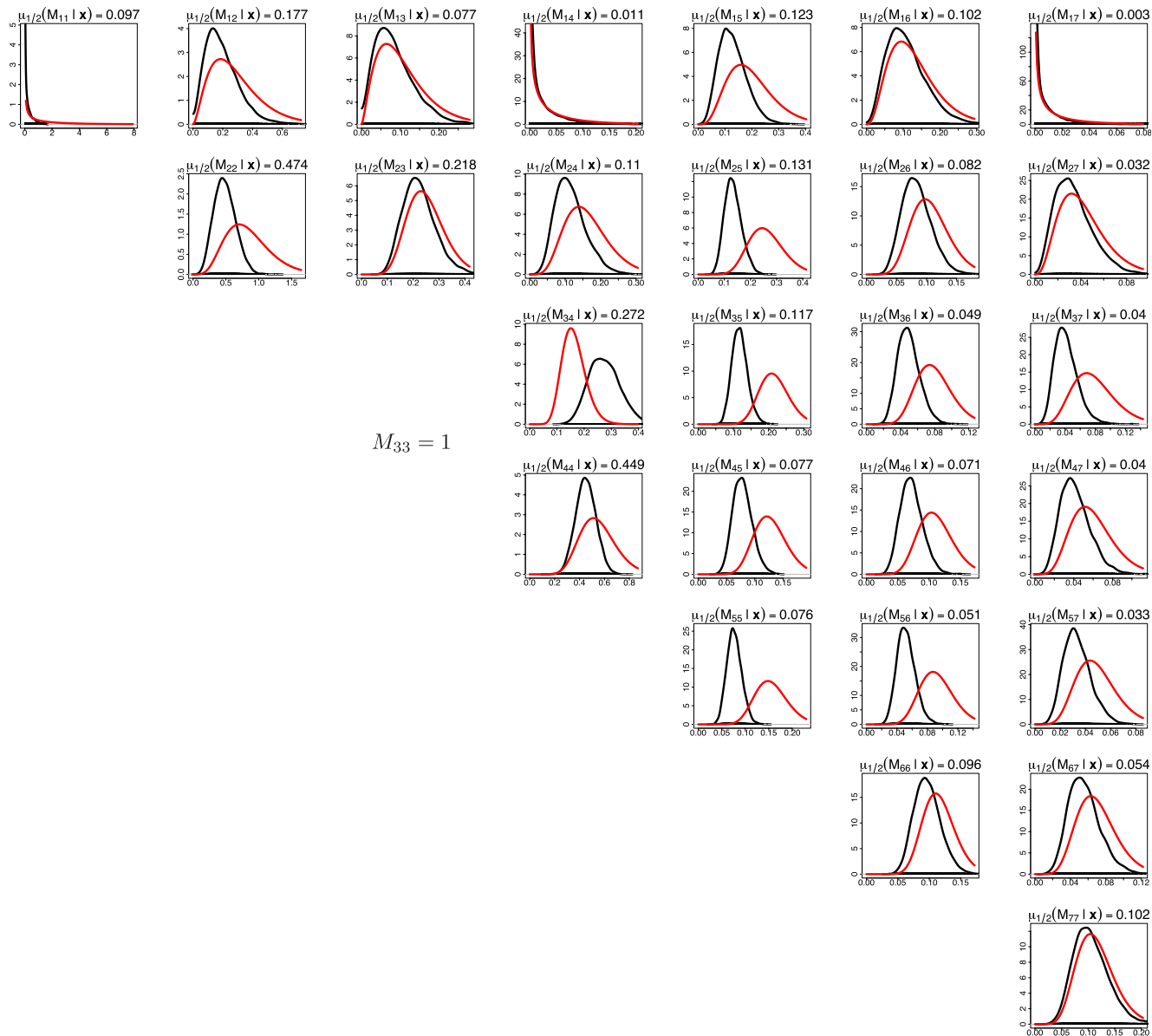


Fig. S5. Prior (in red) and posterior (in black) distributions for the parameters of the contact matrices. Posterior medians for the parameters are given in the headings of the individual plots.

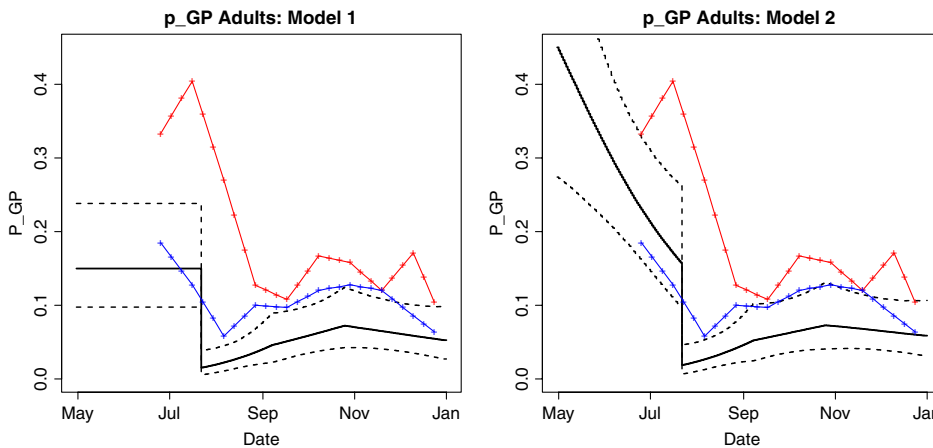


Fig. S6. Temporal evolution of the propensity to consult with a GP under the two piecewise logistic-linear models.

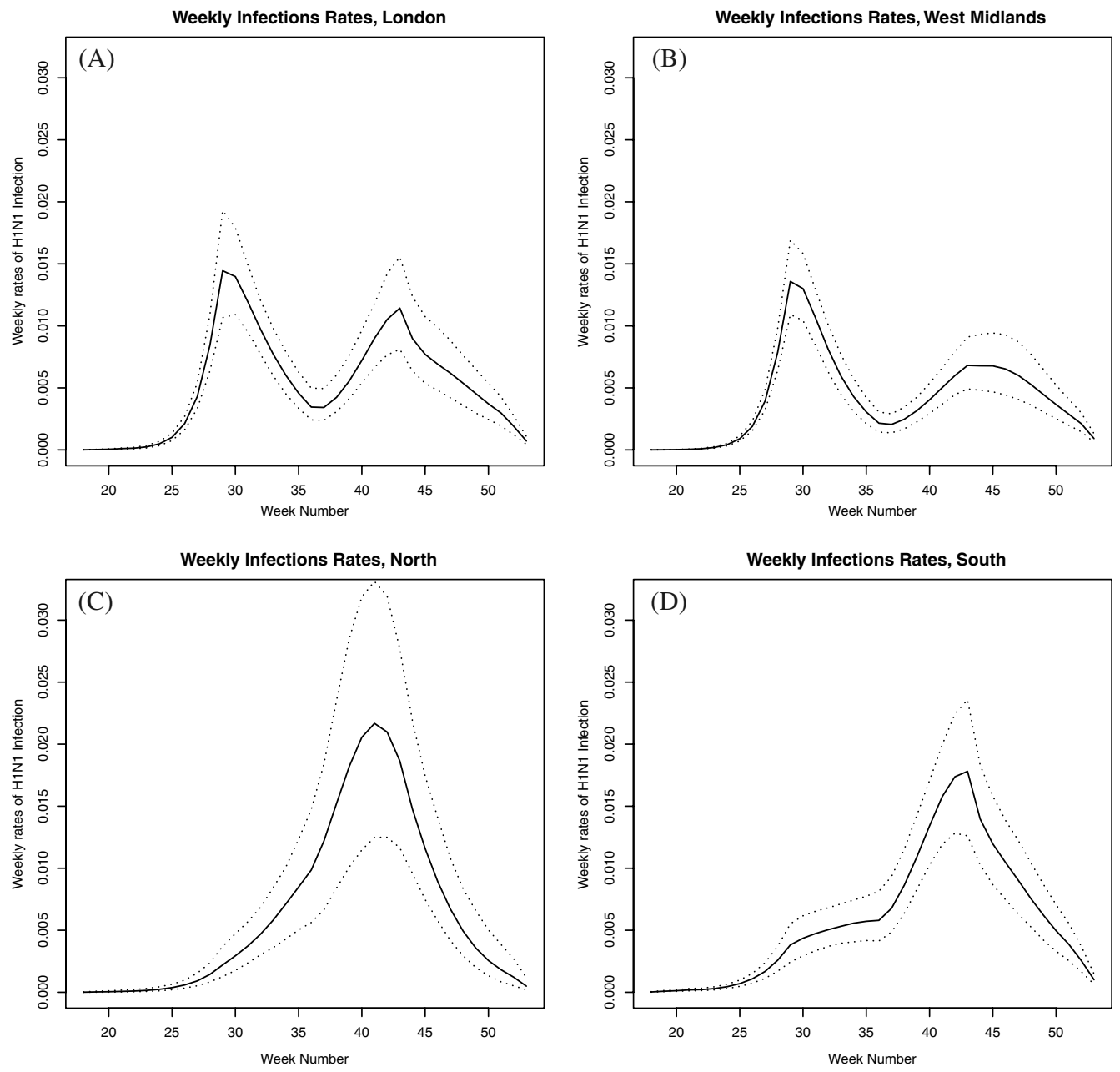


Fig. S7. Estimated epidemic curves and 95% pointwise credible intervals for the epidemic curves in the four regions: (A) London, (B) West Midlands, (C) North, and (D) South. For ease of comparison, incidence is expressed as a per capita rate.

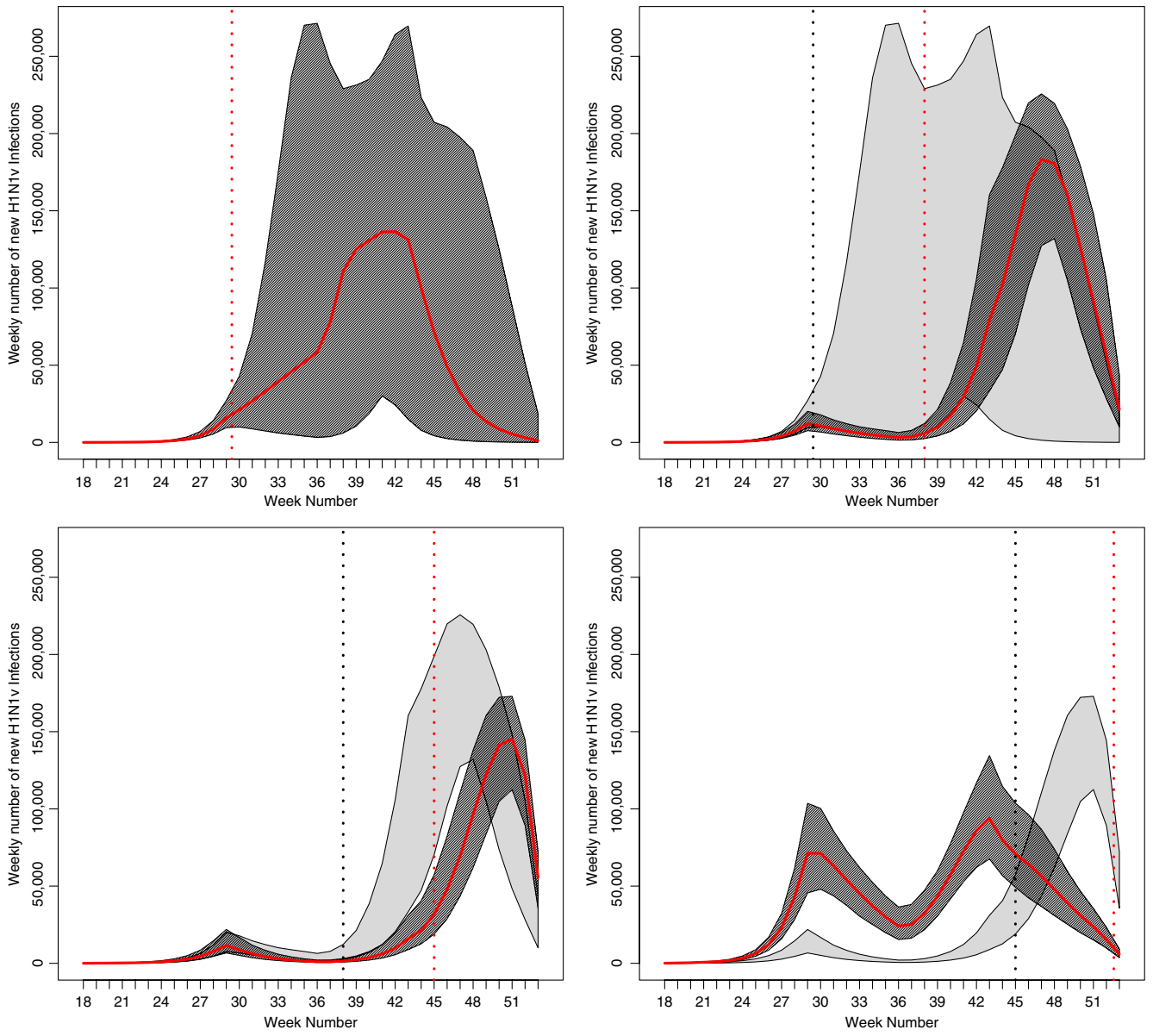


Fig. S8. Estimated epidemic curves and 95% pointwise credible intervals after 83, 143, 192, and 245 d of data excluding all serology.

Table S1. Assumed values and prior distributions for model parameters

Transmission model parameter	Prior/fixed value
Exponential growth rate, ψ_f	approximately $\Gamma(6.3, 57)$
Initial log-hazard of GP consultation, ν	approximately $N(-19.15, 16.44)$
Mean infectious period, d_i	$2 + Z$, $Z \sim \Gamma(518, 357)$
Mean latent period, d_L	2
Contact matrix parameters, m_i	approximately $U[0, 1] \quad \forall i$
Initial proportion susceptible, π_a , in age group a	$1 (< 1 \text{ y})$, 0.980 (1–4), 0.969 (5–14), 0.845 (15–24), 0.920 (25–44), 0.865 (45–64), 0.762 (65+)
Disease and reporting model parameters	Prior/fixed value
Mean (SD) of gamma distributed incubation times	1.6 (1.8)
Proportion of infections who become symptomatic, θ	approximately $\beta(32.5, 18.5)$
Proportion of cases who consult a GP, p_{GP}	$\log(p_i/1 - p_i) \sim \begin{cases} N(-0.187, 0.166) & i = 1, 2 \\ N(0.426, 0.929) & i = 3, 4 \\ N(-0.319, 0.263) & i = 5, 6 \\ N(-0.284, 0.264) & i = 7, 8 \end{cases}$
Proportion of cases lab-confirmed, p_{CC}	approximately $\beta(1.03, 2.69)$
Mean (SD) of gamma distributed waiting time from symptoms to GP consultation	2.0 (1.2)
Mean (SD) of gamma distributed waiting time symptoms to lab confirmation	6.6 (3.7)
Mean (SD) of gamma distributed reporting delay of GP consultations	0.5 (0.5)
Reporting delay of lab confirmations	0
GP consultation data dispersion parameters η_i	approximately $\Gamma(0.01, 0.01)$, $i = 1, 2$

Table S2. Posterior medians and 95% credible intervals for some key epidemic quantities under different assumed values for the test sensitivity

Parameter	$k_{sens} = 1.0$	$k_{sens} = 0.9$	$k_{sens} = 0.8$	$k_{sens} = 0.5$
R_0	1.65 (1.56, 1.75)	1.64 (1.55, 1.73)	1.62 (1.54, 1.71)	1.56 (1.49, 1.64)
θ	0.328 (0.211, 0.468)	0.354 (0.239, 0.503)	0.376 (0.253, 0.528)	0.441 (0.311, 0.594)
$\mathbb{P}^{\text{first wave}}$	0.885	0.892	0.924	0.976
IAR _{first wave} , %	8.90 (7.20, 10.9)	9.00 (7.20, 11.0)	9.00 (7.30, 10.9)	9.10 (7.50, 11.1)
SAR _{first wave} , %	2.90 (1.80, 4.30)	3.10 (2.00, 4.70)	3.30 (2.20, 4.90)	3.90 (2.80, 5.50)
IAR _{second wave} , %	10.4 (8.10, 13.0)	10.0 (7.70, 12.6)	9.80 (7.50, 12.4)	9.20 (7.00, 11.6)
SAR _{second wave} , %	3.40 (2.10, 5.10)	3.50 (2.20, 5.40)	3.60 (2.40, 5.60)	4.10 (2.80, 5.80)

$\mathbb{P}^{\text{first wave}}$ gives the probability that the peak of the first wave of infection is higher than the peak of the second wave. IAR gives the infection attack rate and SAR the symptomatic infection attack rate, with the subscripts indicating the wave of infection to which each attack rate refers.

Table S3. Posterior medians and 95% credible intervals for some key epidemic quantities under different contact patterns and propensities to consult with a GP

Parameter	Main analysis	M estimated	$p_{GP}(t,a)$ model 1	$p_{GP}(t,a)$ model 2
R_0	1.65 (1.56, 1.75)	1.58 (1.52, 1.66)	1.63 (1.55, 1.73)	1.66 (1.57, 1.75)
θ	0.328 (0.211, 0.468)	0.327 (0.215, 0.472)	0.322 (0.207, 0.459)	0.280 (0.183, 0.414)
$\mathbb{P}^{\text{first wave}}$	0.885	0.740	0.895	0.690
IAR _{first wave} , %	8.90 (7.20, 10.9)	9.60 (7.60, 11.6)	8.00 (6.20, 9.90)	7.60 (5.90, 9.40)
SAR _{first wave} , %	2.90 (1.80, 4.30)	3.10 (2.00, 4.80)	2.50 (1.60, 3.80)	2.10 (1.30, 3.10)
IAR _{second wave} , %	10.4 (8.10, 13.0)	11.7 (9.80, 13.8)	10.6 (8.20, 13.3)	11.7 (9.00, 14.4)
SAR _{second wave} , %	3.40 (2.10, 5.10)	3.90 (2.50, 5.70)	3.40 (2.10, 5.30)	3.30 (1.90, 5.10)

The table contains the analysis presented in the main text (column 1), an estimated contact matrix (column 2), piecewise-linear $p_{GP}(t,a)$. Rows have the same interpretation as in Table S2.

Table S4. Posterior medians and 95% credible intervals for some key epidemic quantities as estimated in the four disjoint regions

Parameter	London	West Midlands	North	South
R_0	1.65 (1.56, 1.75)	1.67 (1.61, 1.73)	1.43 (1.32, 1.54)	1.42 (1.35, 1.48)
θ	0.328 (0.211, 0.468)	0.416 (0.295, 0.560)	0.337 (0.214, 0.491)	0.327 (0.209, 0.477)
$\mathbb{P}^{\text{first wave}}$	0.885	0.999	0.00	0.00
m_1	0.469 (0.405, 0.539)	0.422 (0.372, 0.477)	0.949 (0.791, 0.998)	0.969 (0.870, 0.999)
m_2	0.535 (0.0395, 0.970)	0.590 (0.0408, 0.981)	0.603 (0.0391, 0.983)	0.460 (0.0207, 0.969)
m_3	0.279 (0.0323, 0.481)	0.449 (0.297, 0.550)	0.735 (0.337, 0.964)	0.454 (0.138, 0.713)
m_4	0.295 (0.0115, 0.919)	0.525 (0.0283, 0.977)	0.486 (0.0248, 0.972)	0.394 (0.0174, 0.963)
m_5	0.522 (0.276, 0.784)	0.940 (0.789, 0.998)	0.834 (0.369, 0.993)	0.284 (0.0215, 0.694)