

National Ambulance Handover Delays – FINAL

Data period to end January 2023

Date of Report: February 13th, 2023

2. Summary and Contents

Overview: Following unprecedented handover delays in December 2022, January 2023 saw a steep drop in longer delays, with levels nearing those of January last year. A number of factors sit alongside this decrease. First, December’s numbers were an exceptionally high starting-point. Secondly, for three of the last four years, overall handover volumes have fallen between December and January (suggesting a seasonal trend). Thirdly, January 2023 saw two rounds of industrial action, which will have influenced handover volumes. Nonetheless, many of this month’s metrics remain greater than January 2022, and – especially in the case of delays of ten-or-more hours – continue to rank among some of the highest to date. As a consequence of longer handover delays in January, a potential 30k patients experienced potential harm, with 3k of these experiencing severe harm. Additionally, the time lost to handover delays equates to just under 100k ambulance job cycles – a sixth of potential resource capacity across the month.

Page 3.
Average Handover Times and Delays as a Proportion of All Handovers



- For January 2023, the mean handover time was 33 minutes compared with 29 minutes in January 2022, but somewhat lower than the 54 minutes recorded in December.
- Handovers exceeding 60 minutes accounted for 11.5% of the total, down from 23% in December 2022 but still more than double the proportion seen in January 2021 (5%).

Pages 4 to 8.
Handover Volume and Hours Lost



- The volume of all delays exceeding 15 minutes was slightly lower than January 2022, but the volume of longer delays (those exceeding 30 minutes) was slightly higher.
- Hours lost for >60 minute handover delays halved, but despite this very steep decrease, was somewhat higher than January 2022 and nearly four-times higher than January 2021, ranking as the 10th highest to date.

Page 9.
Impact on Patients and Crew



- Using AACE’s clinical evaluation of harm resulting from handover delays as a base, an estimated 30k patients experienced potential harm as a result of >60 minute handover delays in January 2023, with 3k of these experiencing severe harm.
- Hours lost to all delays in January show the sector lost the equivalent of 98k ambulance job cycles across the month - this equates to 17% of potential resource capacity, compared with 6% at the start of 2020.

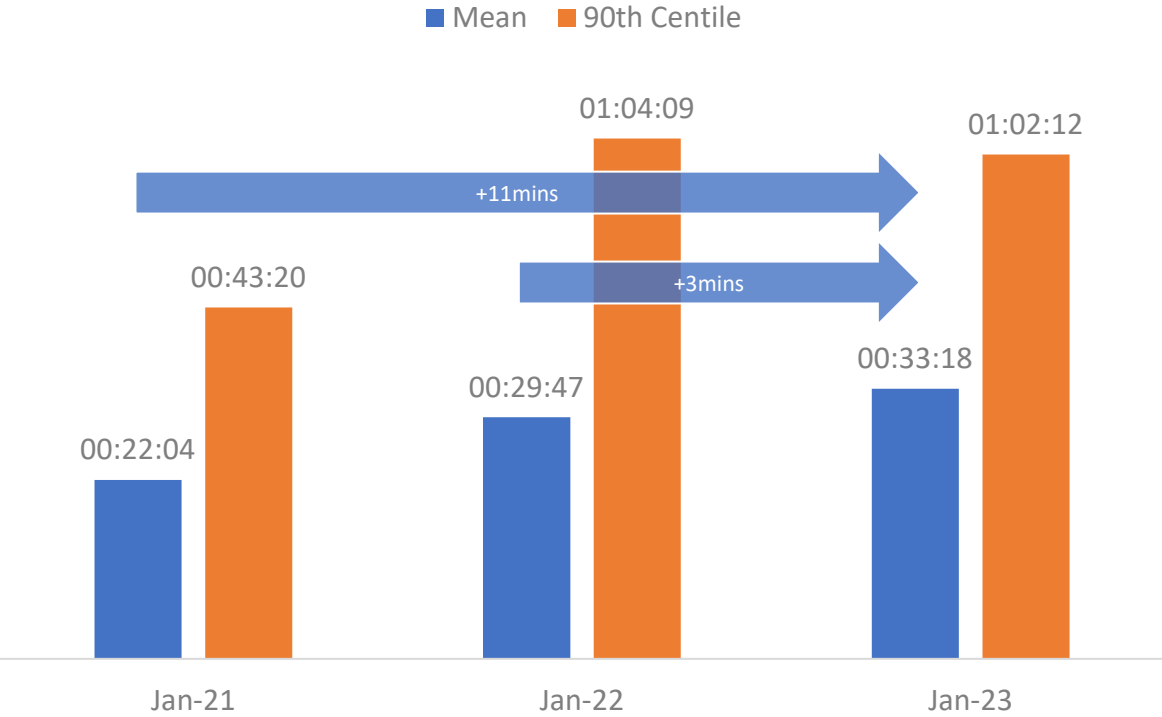
3. Average Handover Times and Delays as Proportion of All Handovers (source, NAIG)



Comparing the last three years, the mean handover time for January 2023 is slower than 2021 (by 11 mins) and 2022 (by 3 minutes). The 90th centile time is around 20 minutes slower than 2021, but 2 minutes faster than 2022. Delays of 15 minutes-or-more continue to account for just under two thirds of all handovers: those of 60 minutes or more increased from 5% in January 2021 to 11.5% in January 2023.

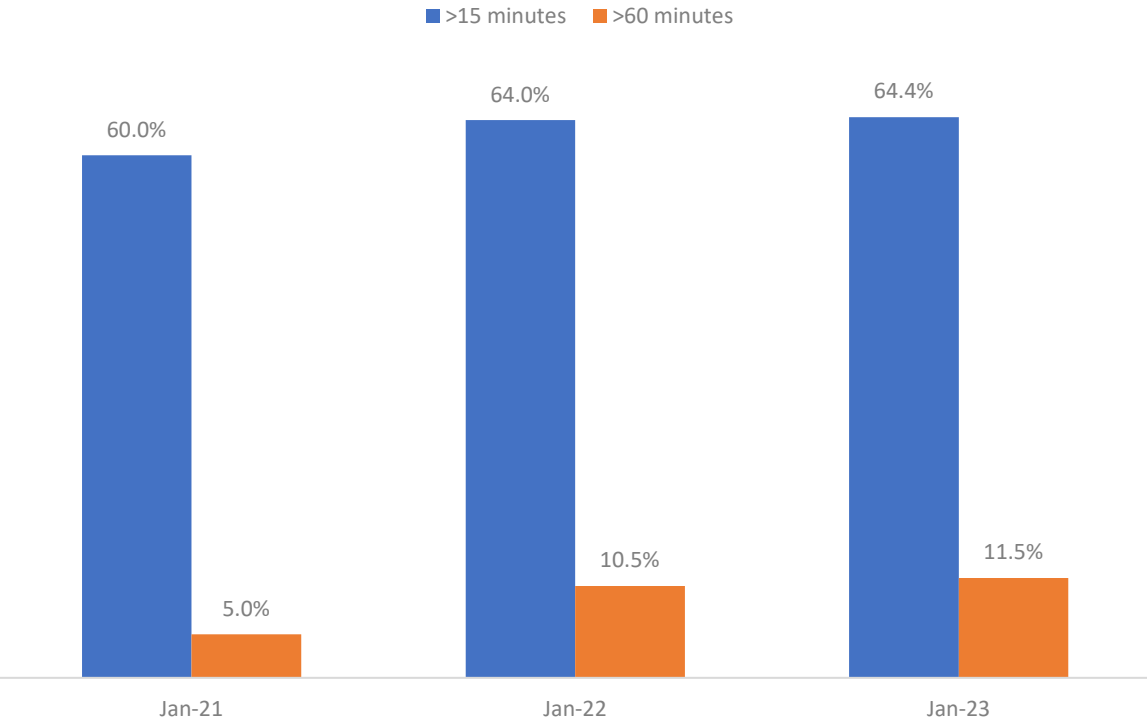
1. Mean and 90th Centile Handover Times

Mean and 90th Centile Handover Time (hh:mm:ss)



2. Handover Delays as a Percentage of All Handovers

Handover Delays as % of All Handovers

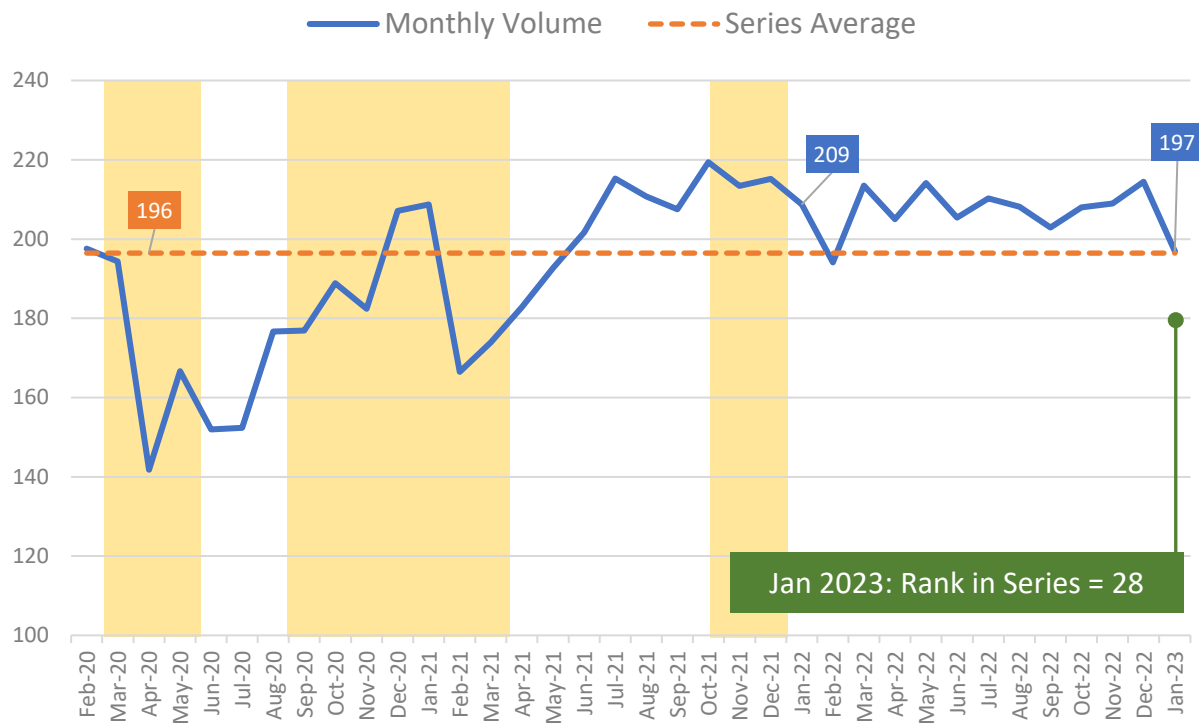


4. Patient Handover Delays over 15 Minutes (source, NAIG)

The volume of handover delays exceeding 15 minutes has decreased between December and January several times over the past few years (2019-to-2020, 2021-to-2022, but not the intermediate period). The latest data again reflect this pattern, with volume dropping around 17k to reach 197k – the second lowest in 12-months. Hours lost saw a much steeper monthly decrease with 105k fewer hours lost, taking the total to 122k (8k higher than January 2022).

1. Delays over 15 Minutes

Volume of Handovers Over 15 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)

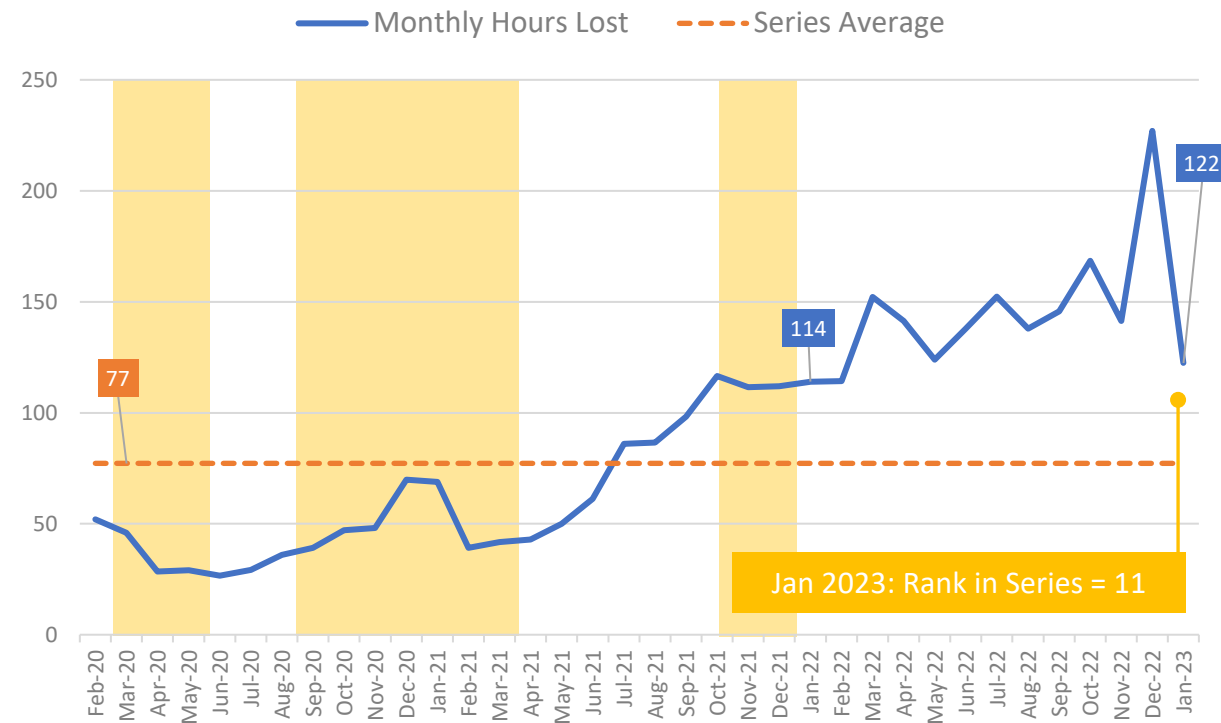


Yellow areas denote COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← -6% (or -12k) difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023 →

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 15 Minutes

Hours Lost: Handovers over 15 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)



← +7% (or +8k) difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023 →

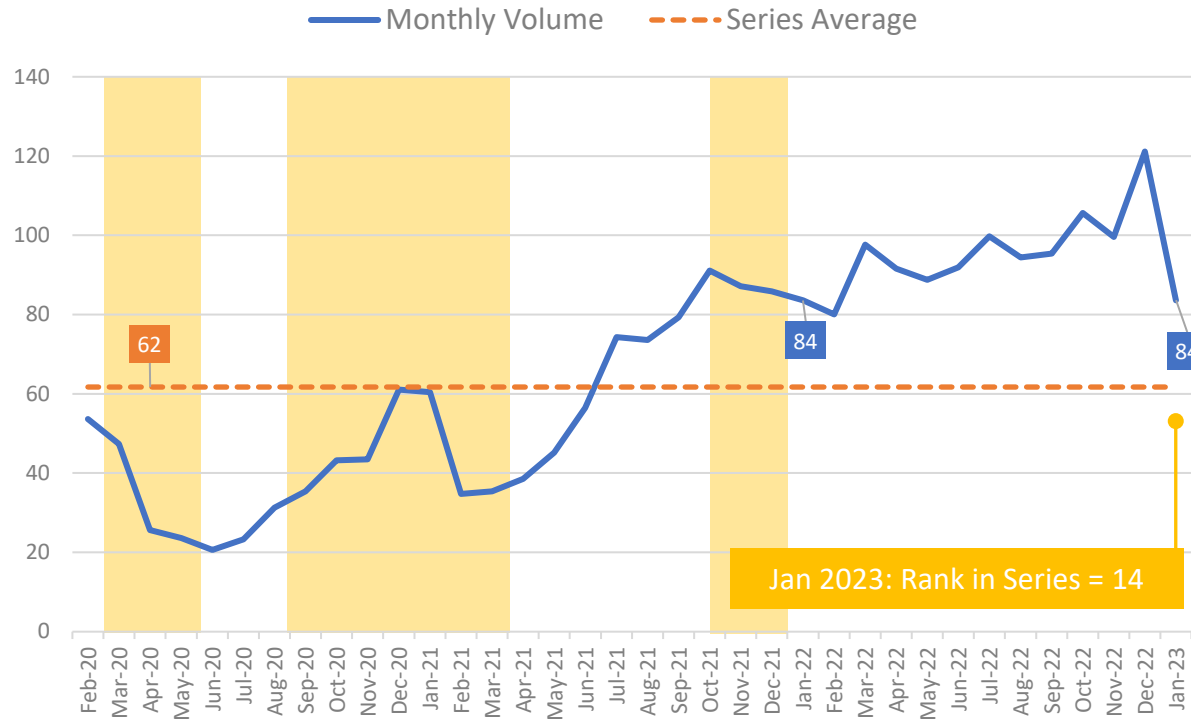


5. Patient Handover Delays over 30 Minutes (source, NAIG)

For delays of 30 minutes or longer, the volume decreased by 38k between December and January, taking the total to 84k – which is just 60 more than the previous January. Hours lost more than halved, taking the total to 87k. Despite this steep decrease, January 2023 still recorded 12k more hours lost than January 2022, and the most recent month was the 10th highest on record for this measure.

1. Delays over 30 Minutes

Volume of Handovers Over 30 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)

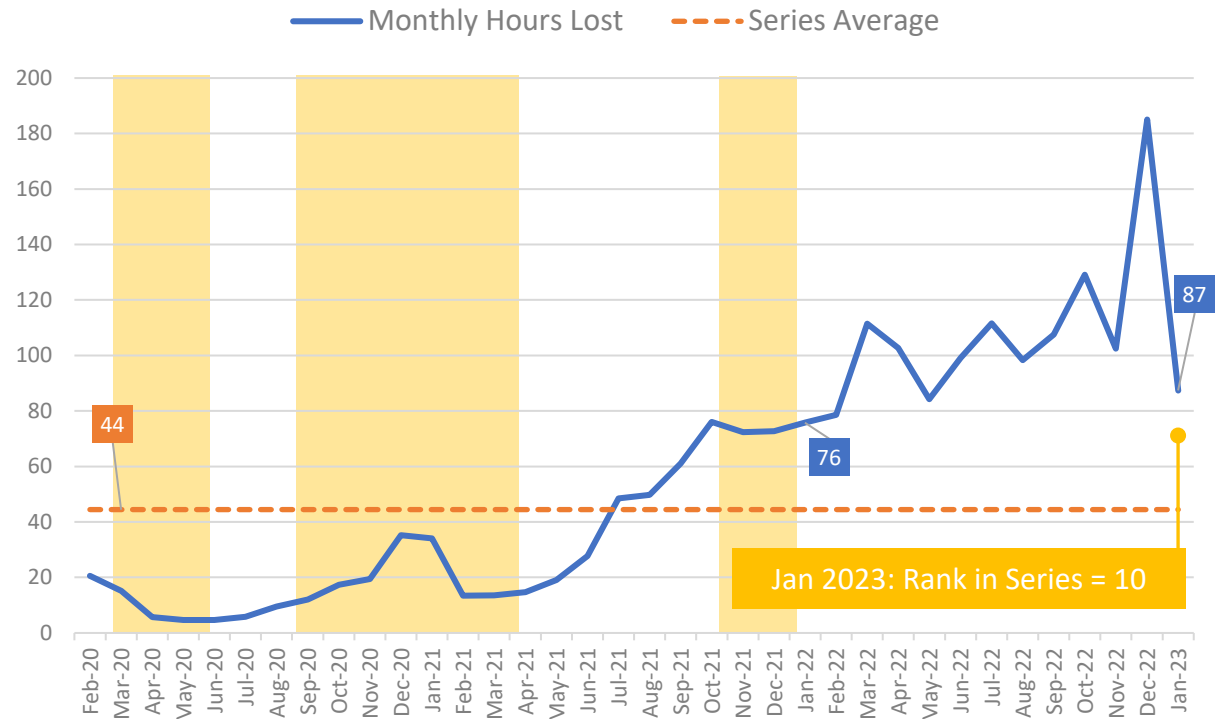


Yellow areas denote COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

<1% (or +60)
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 30 Minutes

Hours Lost: Handovers over 30 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)



+15% (or +12k)
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023



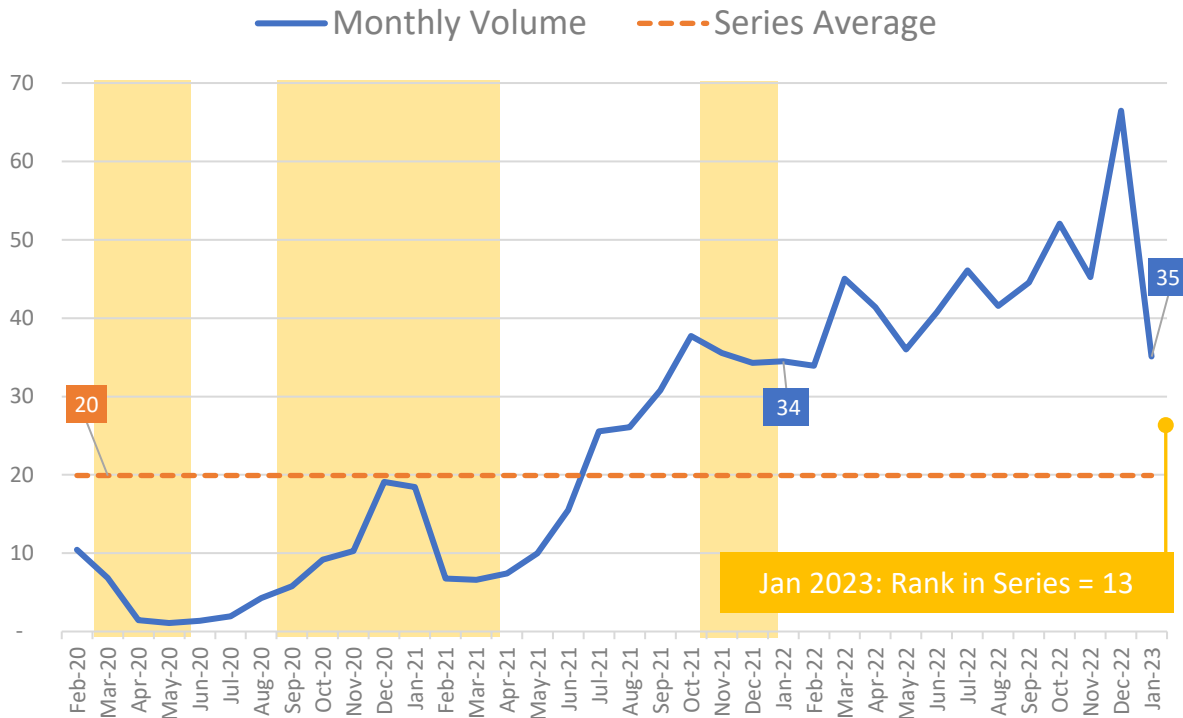
6. Patient Handover Delays over 60 Minutes (source, NAIG)

The volume of >60 minute handovers nearly halved between December and January: 31k fewer delays took the total to 35k, slightly higher than January 2022 - but 16k more than January 2021. The monthly volume of hours lost more than halved, with the total falling to 48k. Once again, despite the steep decrease, this figure was 12k more than January 2022 and nearly four-times greater than January 2021, and ranks as the 10th highest to date.

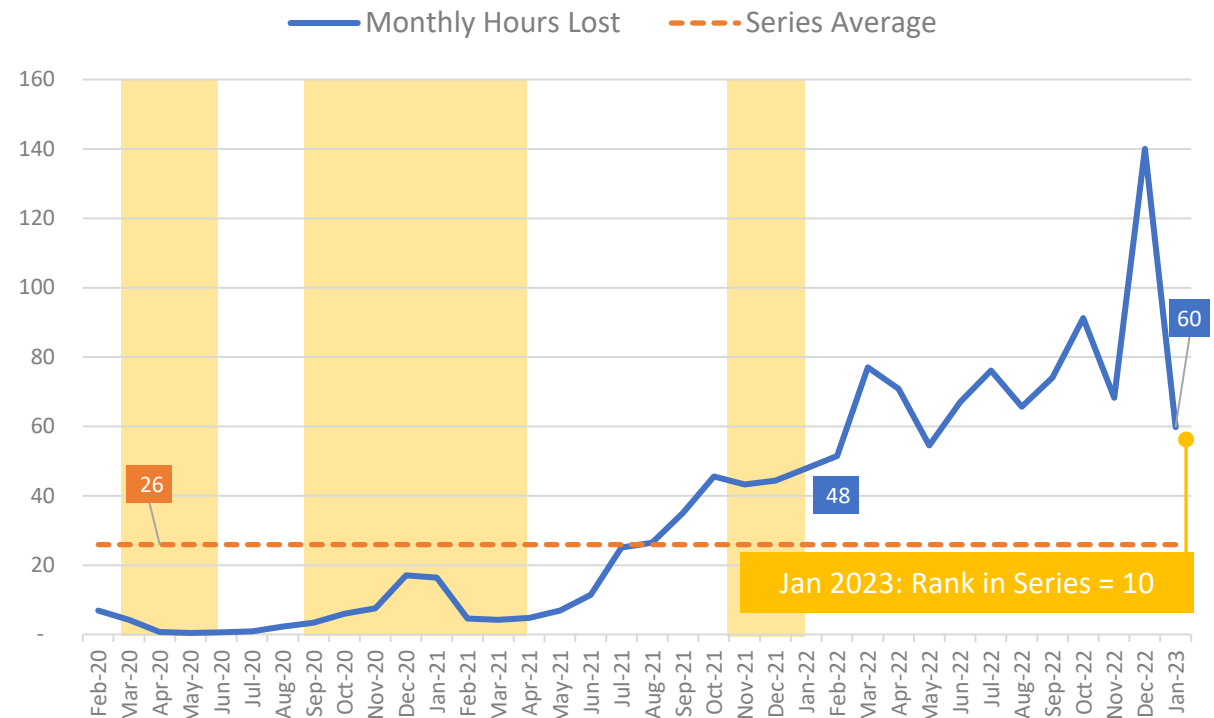
1. Delays over 60 Minutes

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 60 Minutes

Volume of Handovers Over 60 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)



Hours Lost: Handovers over 60 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)



Yellow areas denote COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← +2% (or +607) →
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023

← +25% (or +12k) →
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023

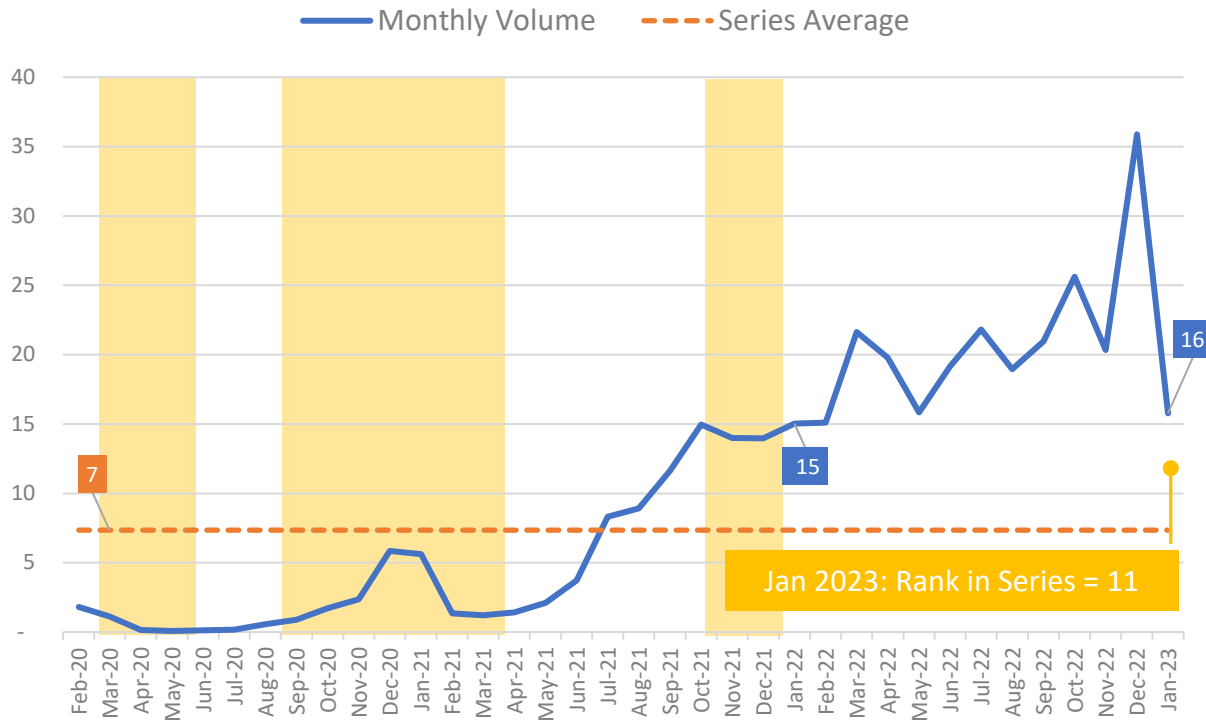


7. Patient Handover Delays over 120 Minutes (source, NAIG)

Continuing the pattern seen with other longer handovers, those delays exceeding 120 minutes halved from December to reach 16k - slightly above the number seen in January 2022. Time lost also decreased, but despite January 2023 recording just a third of the hours seen in December, the monthly total was nonetheless 43% higher than last January, and ranked as the 10th highest to-date.

1. Delays over 120 Minutes

Volume of Handovers Over 120 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)

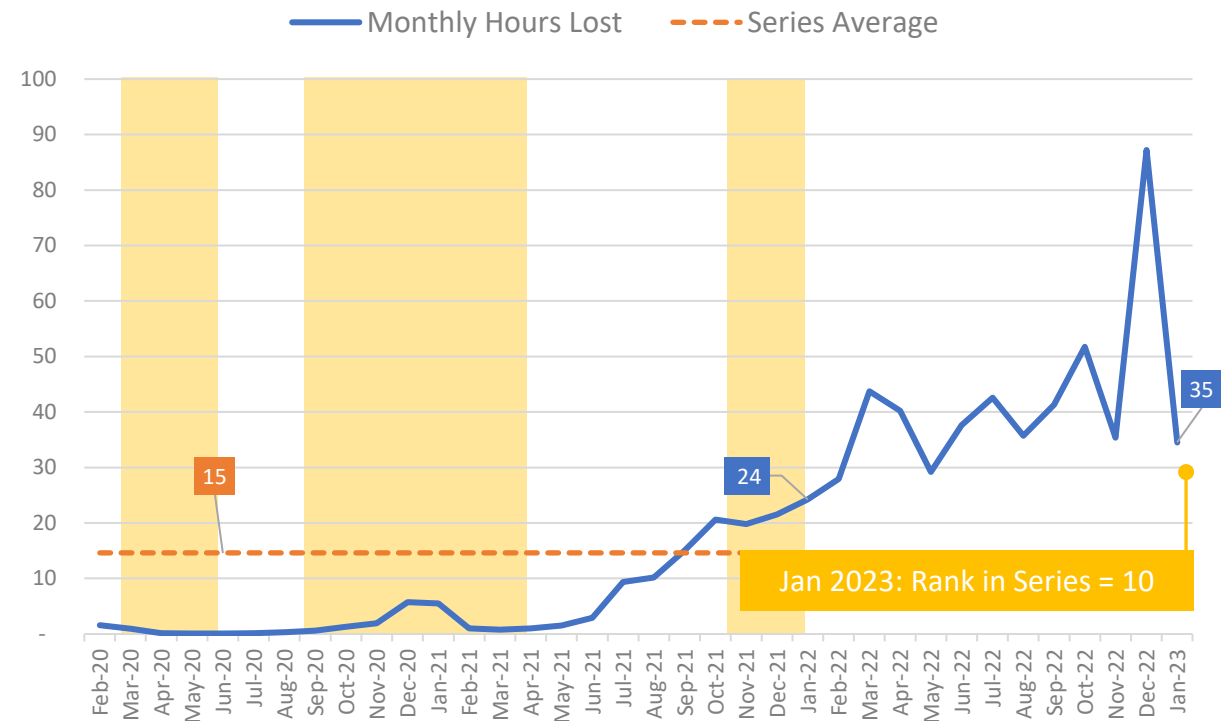


Yellow areas denote COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← +5% (or +731) →
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 120 Minutes

Hours Lost: Handovers over 120 Minutes ('000, source NAIG)



← +43% (or +11k) →
difference, Jan 2022 to Jan 2023



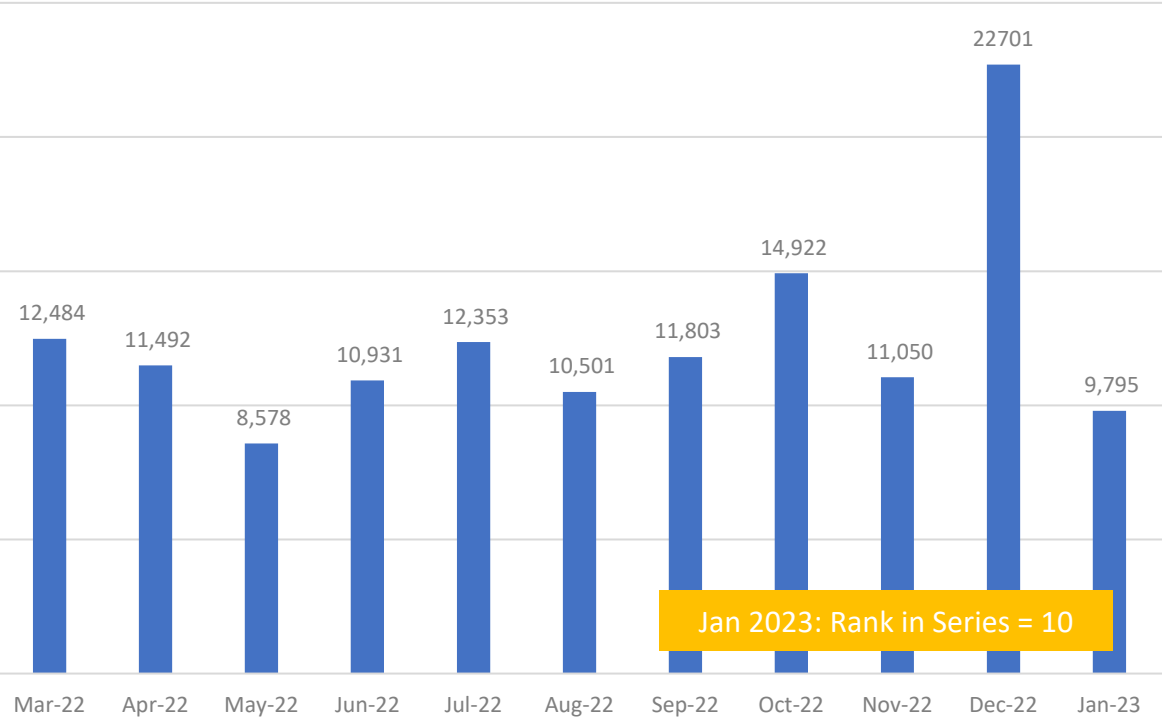
8. Patient Handovers Longer than Three Hours (source, NAIG)



The sharp month-on-month decrease seen across January's data is reflected in those delays exceeding three hours. However, as seen elsewhere, the reduced volume nonetheless leaves January 2023 as one of the top ten months to date. This was also true for the very highest category where 707 patients waited ten or more hours, the third highest monthly volume since recording began.

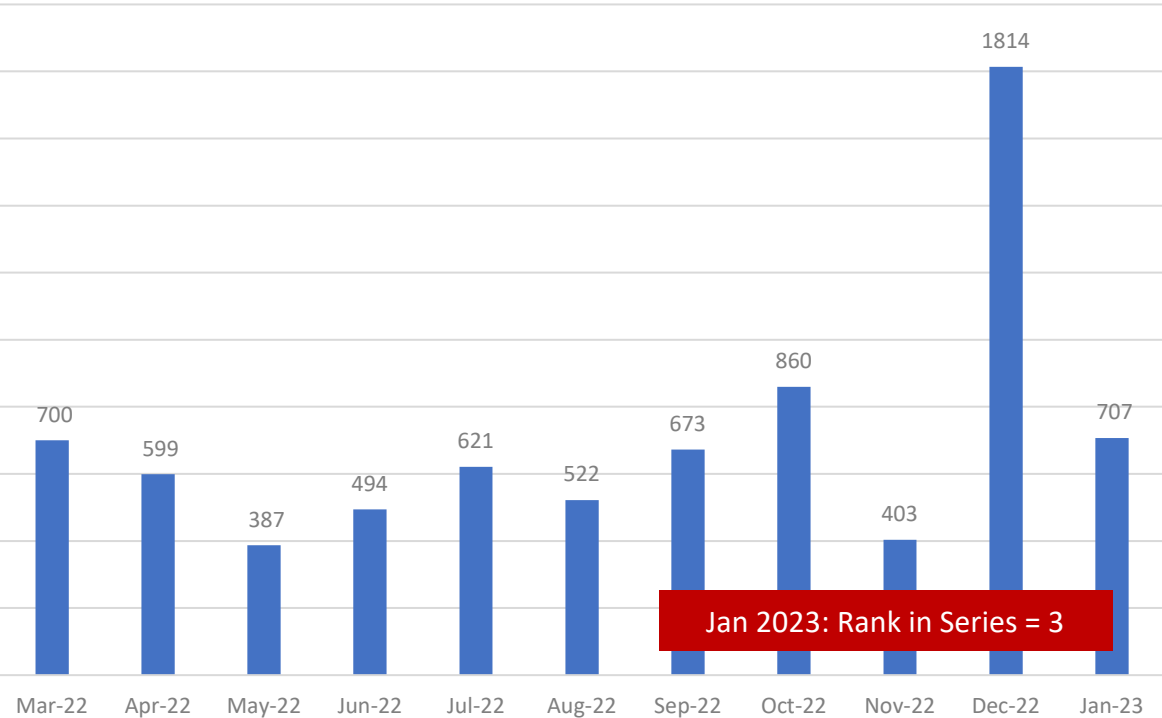
1. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Three Hours

Volume of Handovers over Three Hours



2. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Ten Hours

Volume of Handovers over Ten Hours

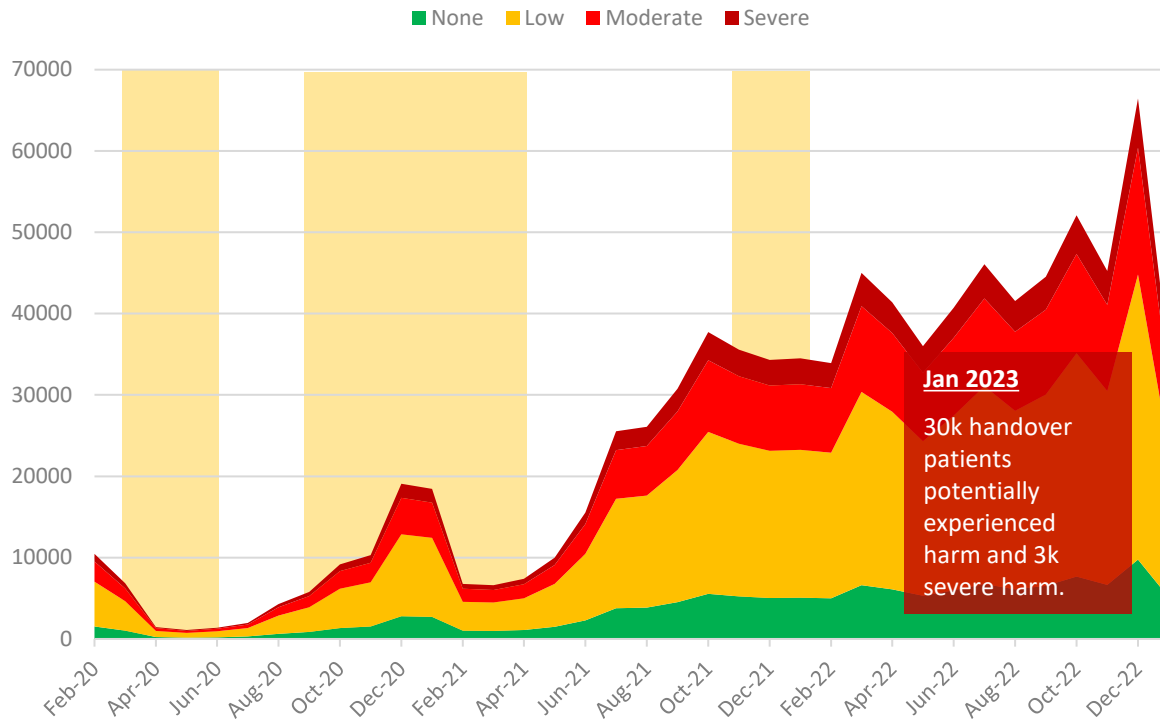


9. Impact on Patients and Crew (source, NAIG, [AQI Data](#) and [AACE](#))

Around 30k patients experienced potential harm as a result of long handover delays in January 2023, with around 3k of these experiencing severe harm*. Looking at the total hours lost to handover delays in January, the sector lost the equivalent of 98k job cycles. Using Face-to-Face incident volumes from January's AQI data, this equates to 17% of potential ambulance capacity across the month – compared with 6% at the start of 2020.

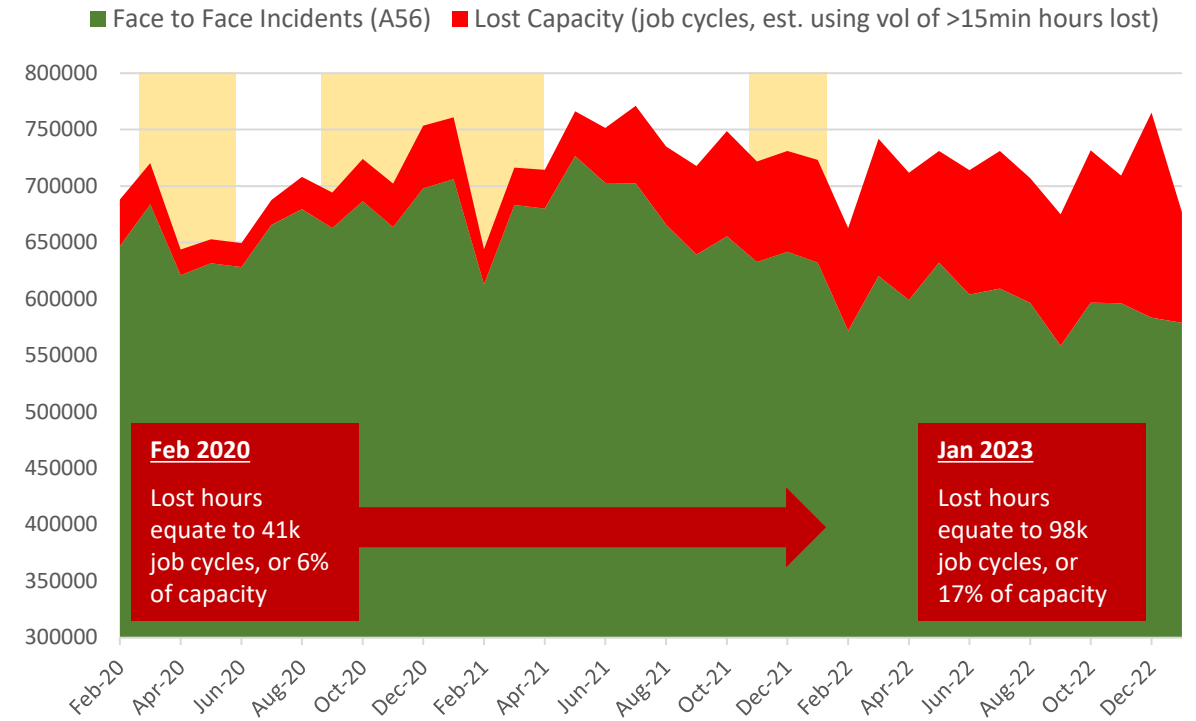
1. Estimated number of patients experiencing potential harm

Vol of >60 min handovers by estimated harm (NAIG & AACE)



2. Estimated impact of lost hours on capacity

Lost Hours and Impact on Capacity



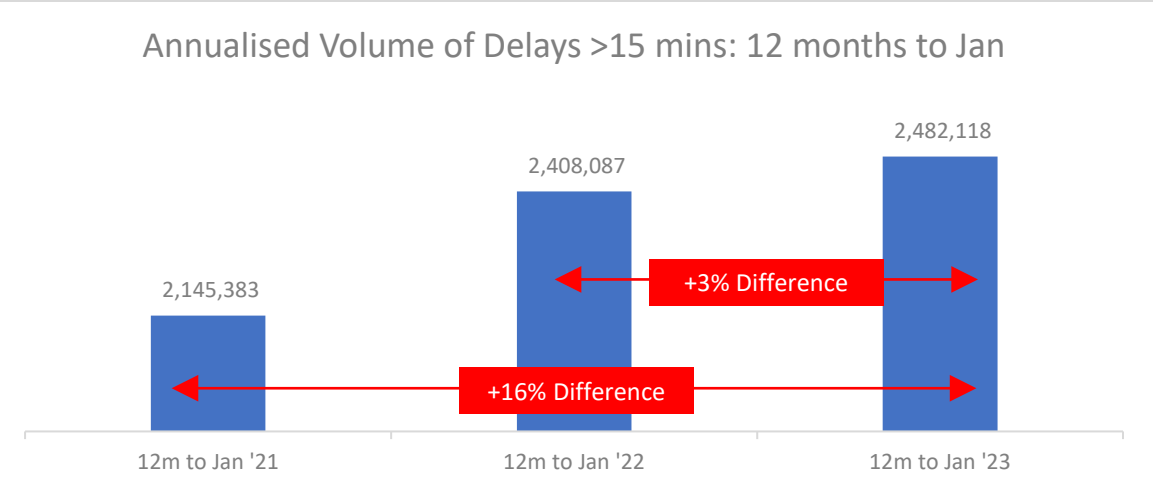
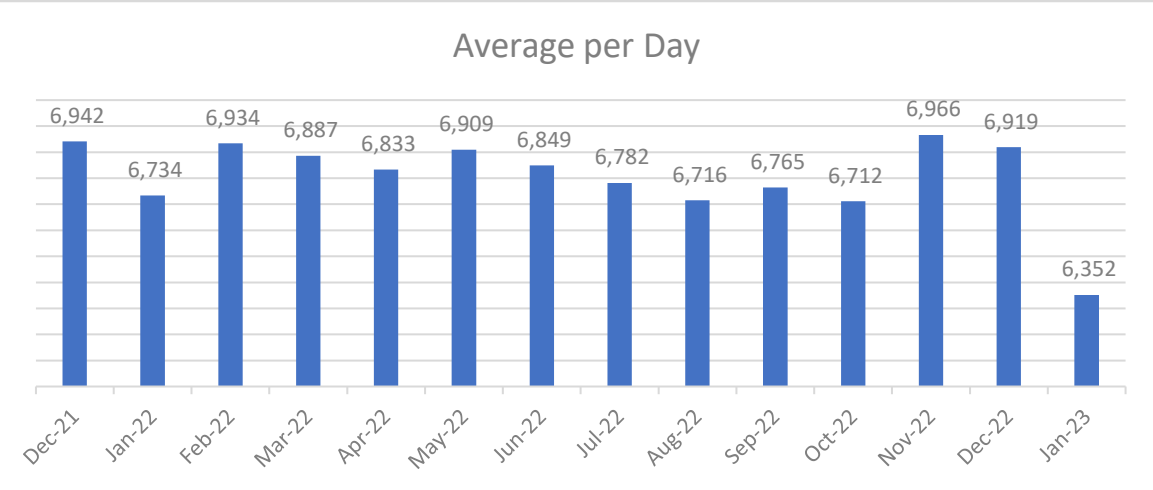
Yellow areas denote COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

*Estimates based on clinical review of patients waiting >60 minutes in 2021

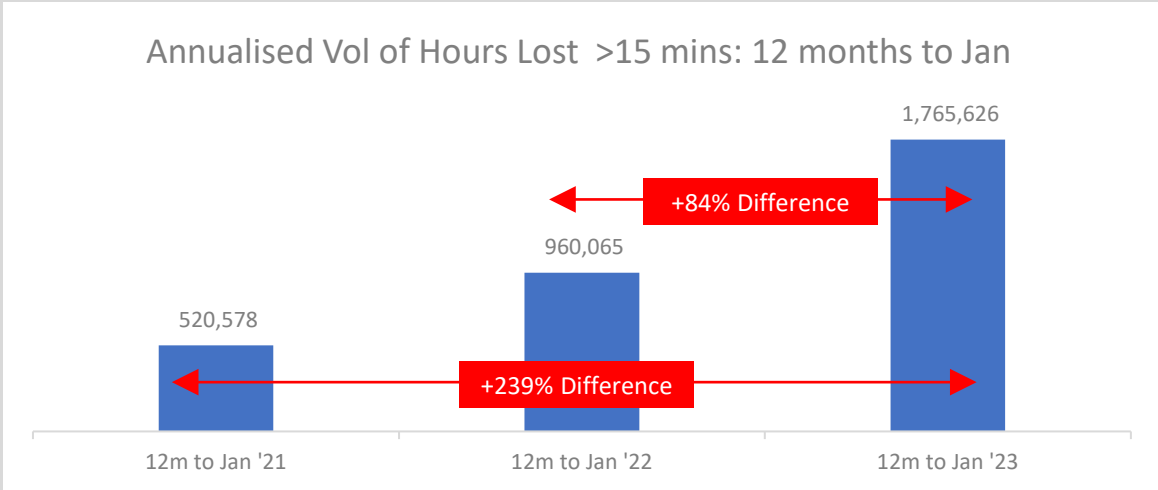
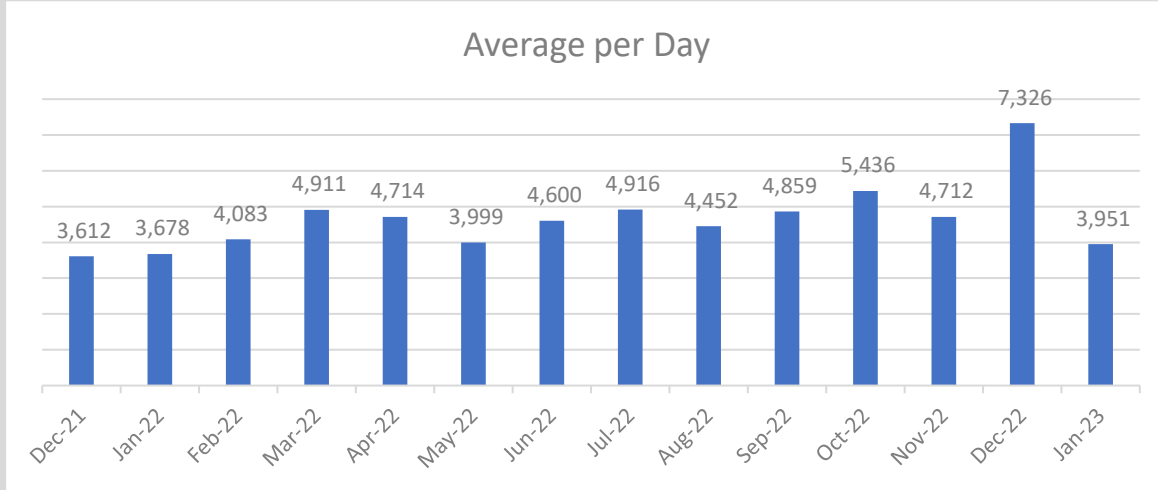


10. Appendix (i): Average Daily and Annualised Data for >15 minute delays (source, NAIG)

1. Volume of Handover Delays over 15 minutes



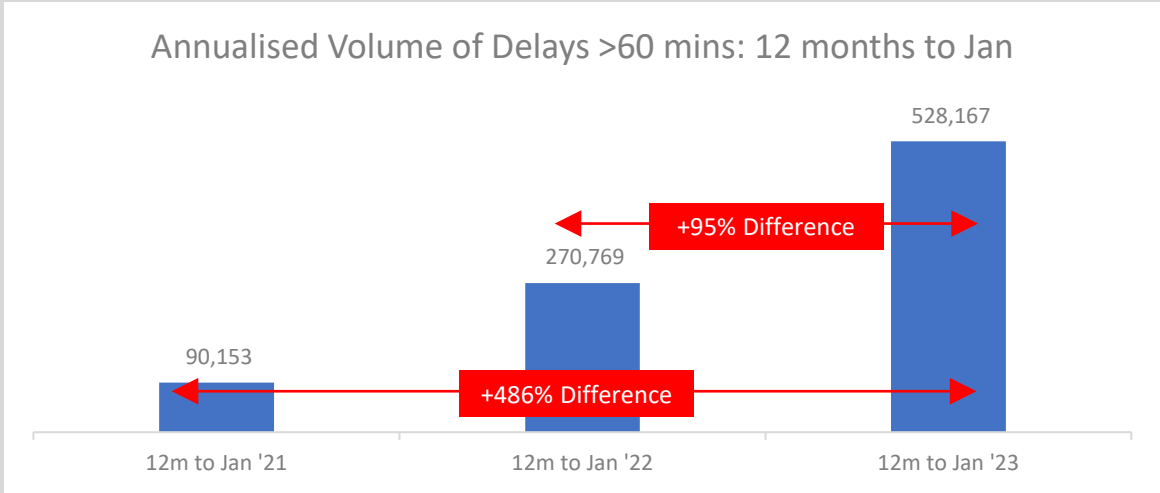
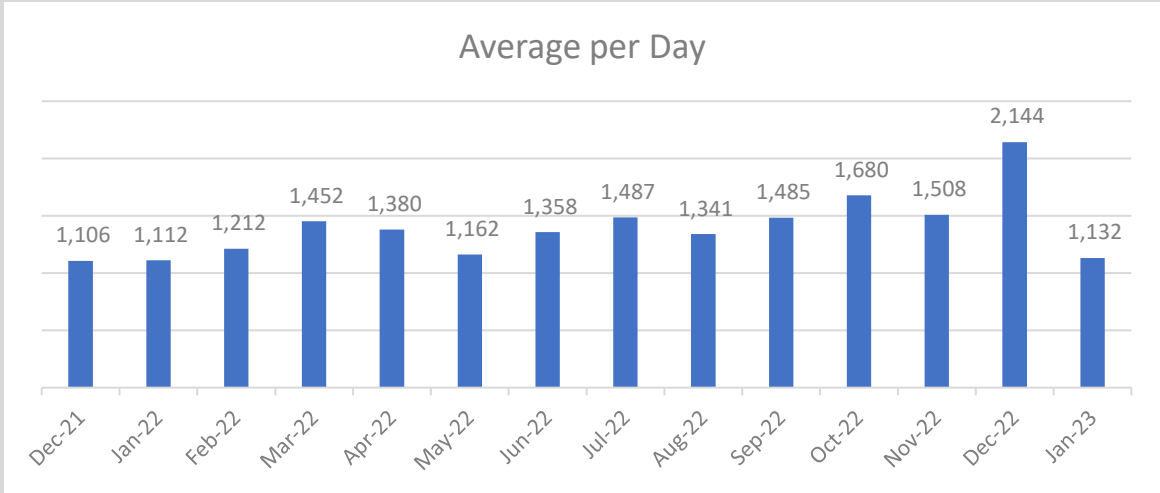
2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 15 minutes



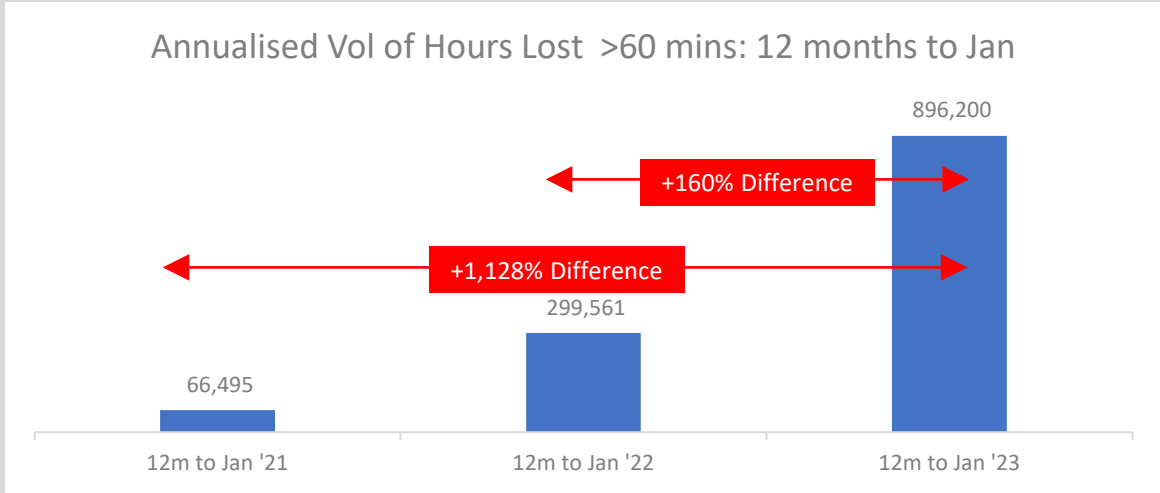
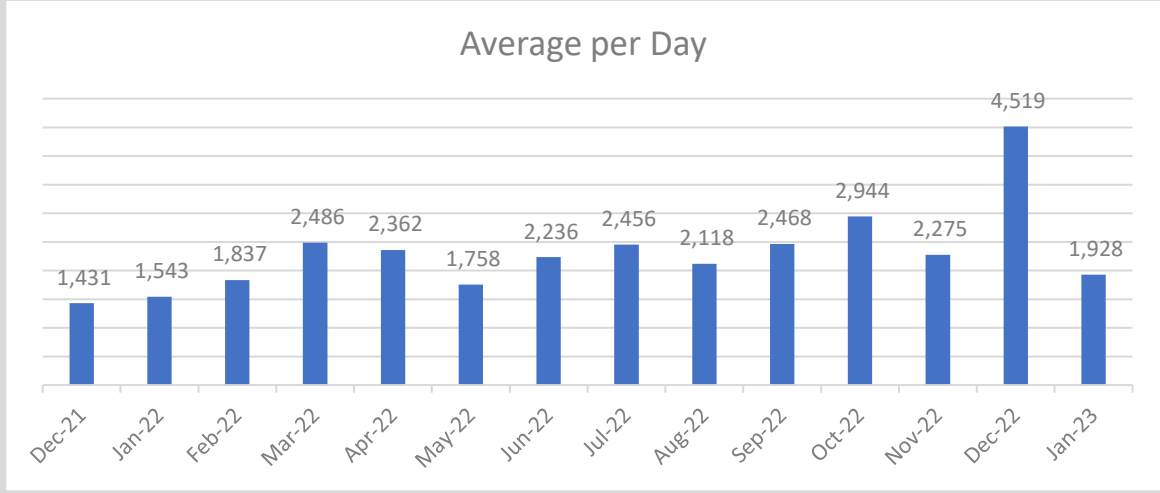
11. Appendix (ii): Average Daily and Annualised Data for >60 minute delays (source, NAIG)



1. Volume of Handover Delays over 60 minutes



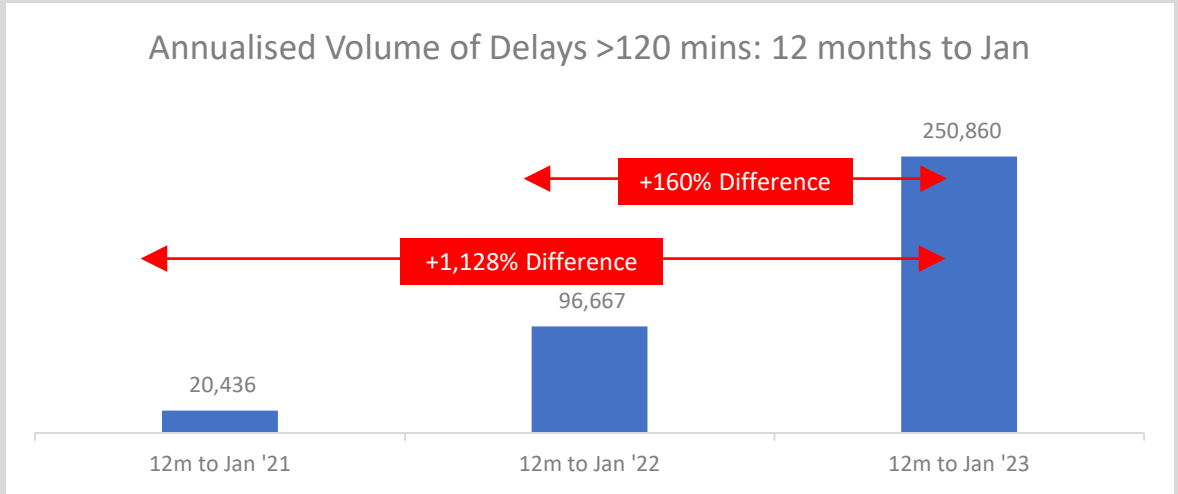
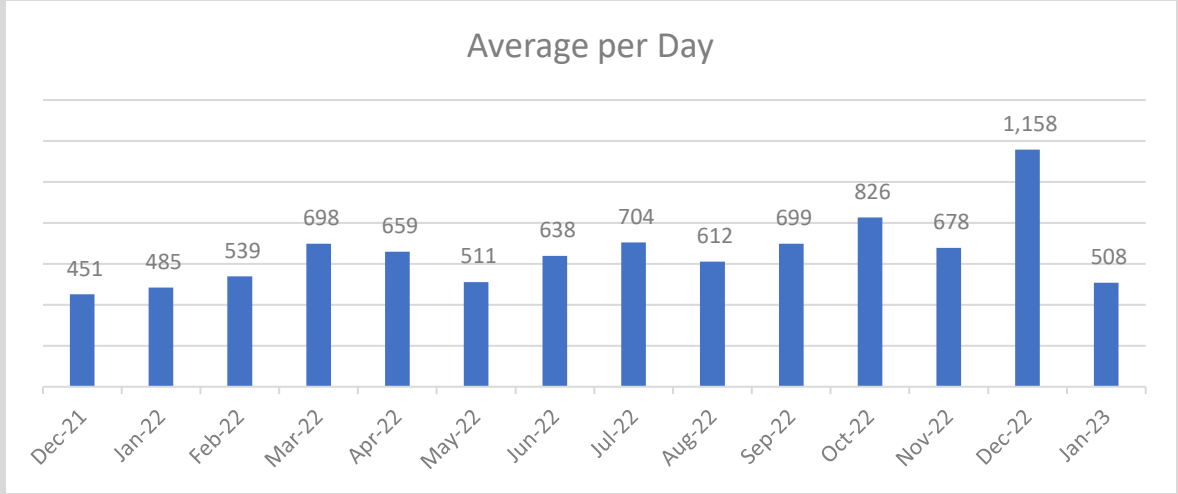
2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 60 minutes



12. Appendix (iii): Average Daily and Annualised Data for >120 minute delays (source, NAIG)



1. Volume of Handover Delays over 120 minutes



2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 120 minutes

