ASSOCIATION OF AMBULANCE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

National Ambulance Handover Delays – Final

Data to the end of July 2023

Published - August 21st, 2023

2. Summary and Contents

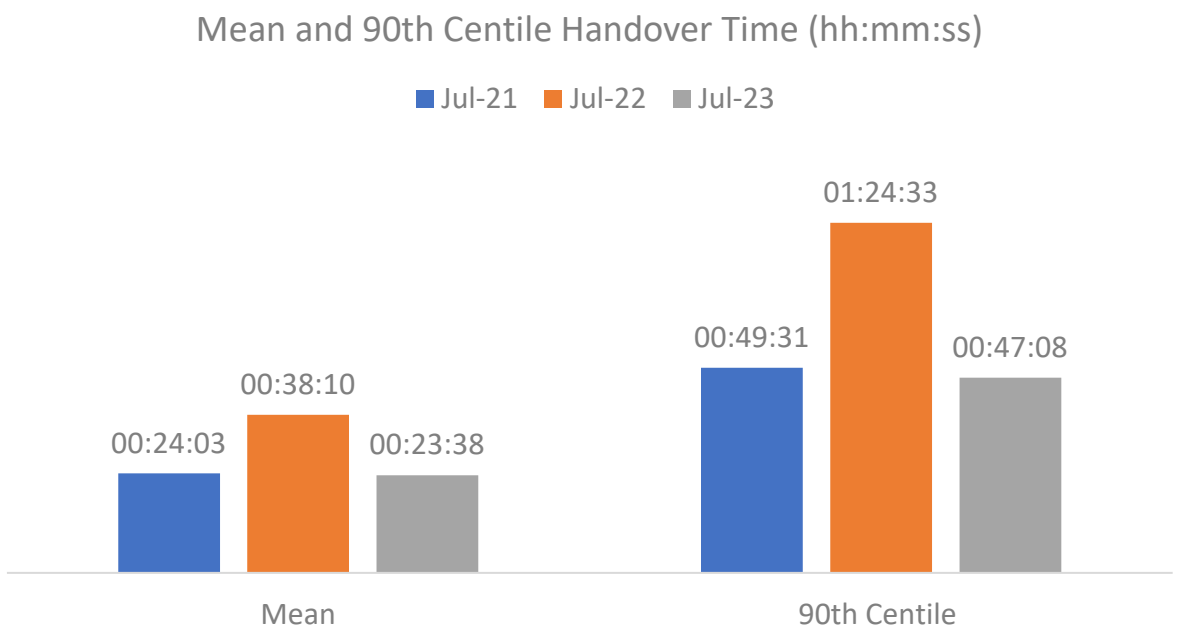
Overview: In July 2023, patient handover delays exceeding an hour decreased to reach their lowest numbers in several years, with fewer hours lost as a result. Despite this positive trend, the annualised volume of time lost remains extremely high. There were 386-thousand hours lost to two-hour plus delays in the most recent period - over ten times greater than that seen just two years ago.

Source of all data is National Ambulance Information Group (NAIG), AQI and AACE.

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

In July, the mean (and 90th centile) patient handover time was lower than the same month in both 2021 and 2022. Similarly, the proportion of handovers exceeding 15, and also 60 minutes was lower than the two previous years, the latter dropping to six-percent – less than half that seen 12-months ago.

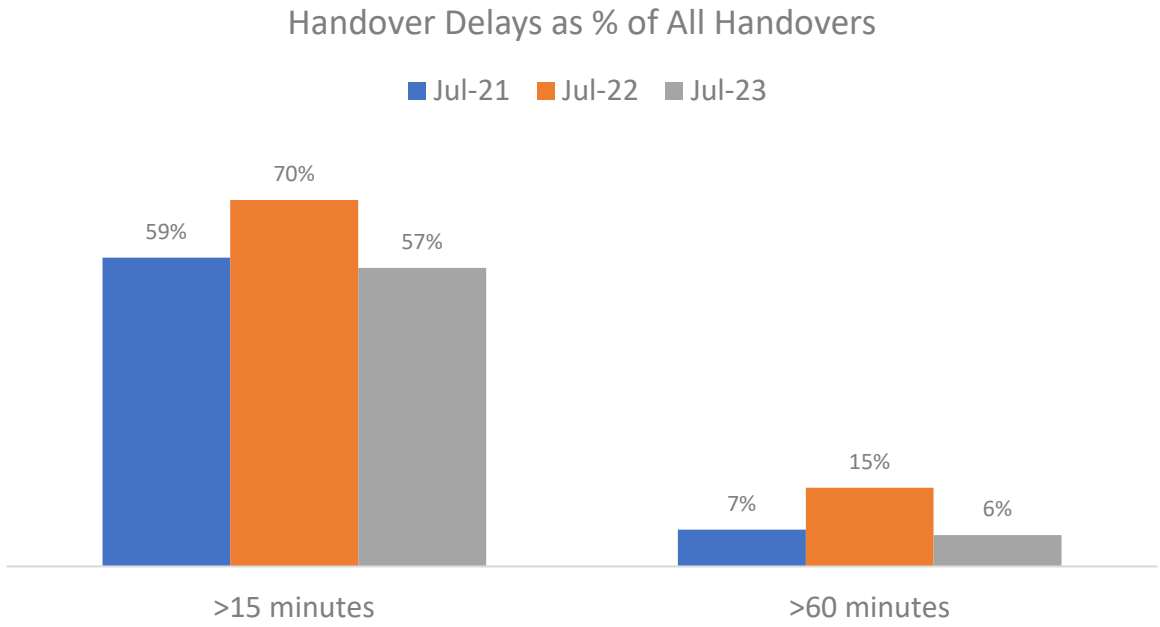
1. Mean and 90th Centile Handover Times



2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-26 seconds	-14 minutes

2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-2 minutes	-37 minutes

2. Handover Delays as a Percentage of All Handovers



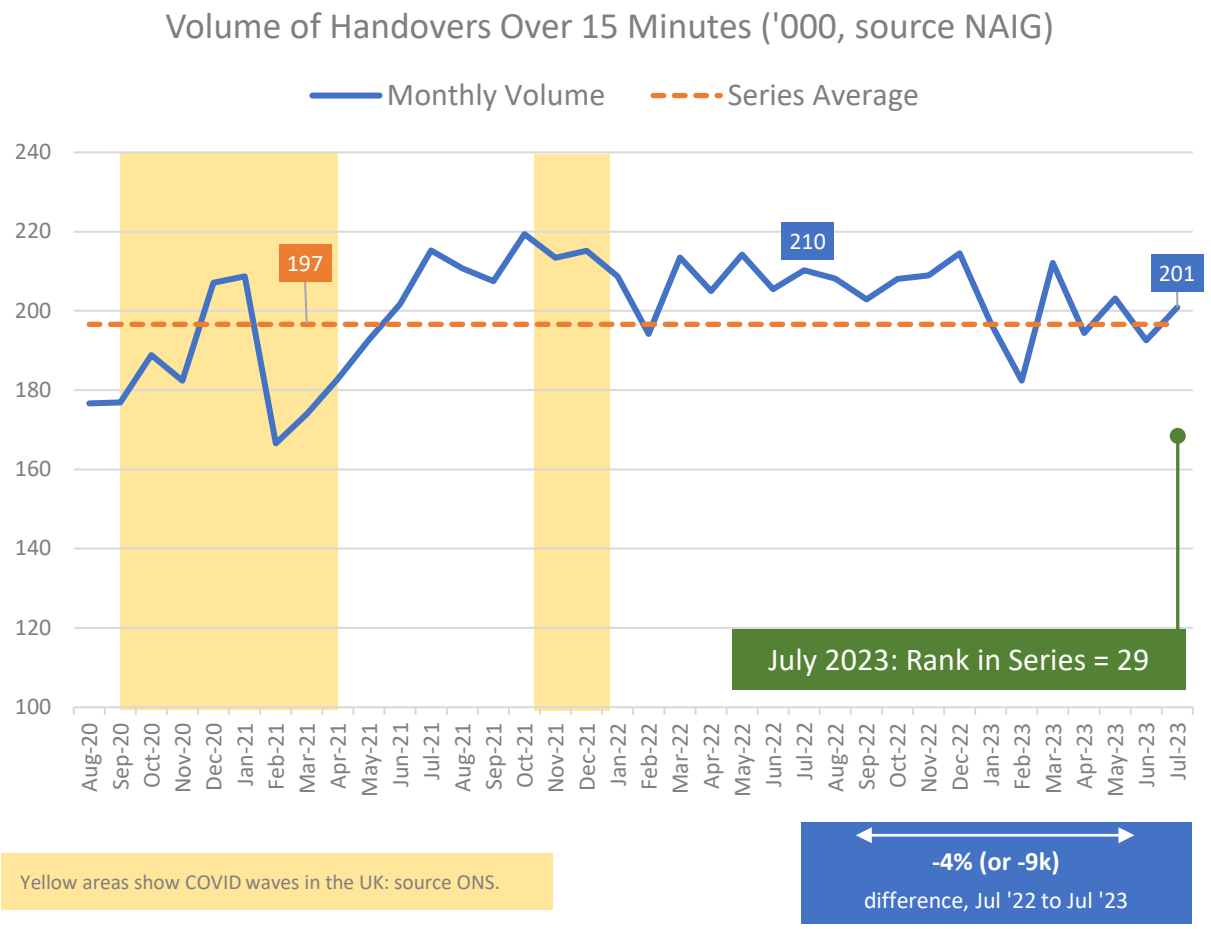
2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-2pp	-13pp

2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-1pp	-9pp

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

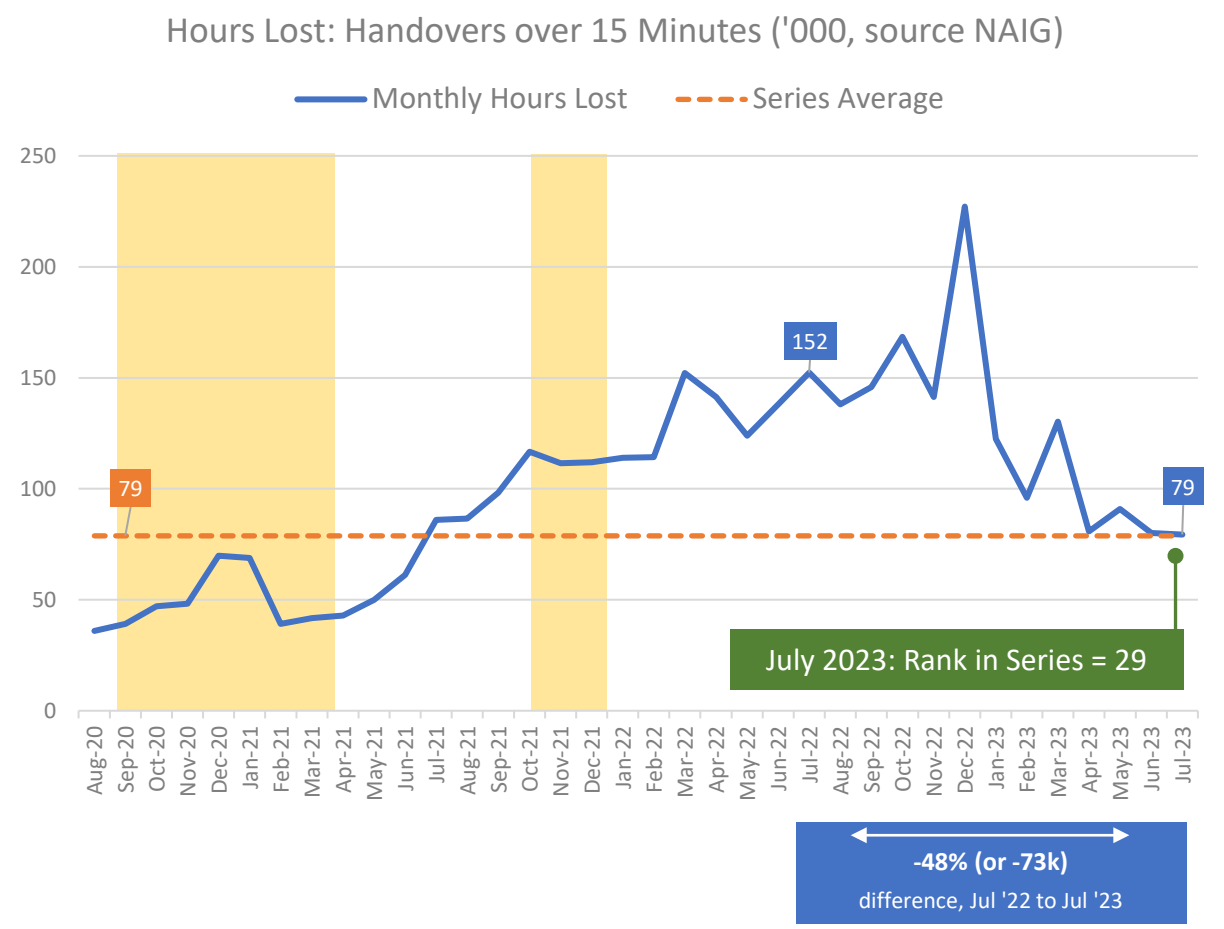
Handovers exceeding 15-minutes increased in July, but hours lost to those delays decreased. Around 79-thousand hours were lost across the month, around half the volume recorded last July - however, the annualised data (next page) show hours lost in the most recent period are more than double that seen two years ago.

1. Delays over 15 Minutes



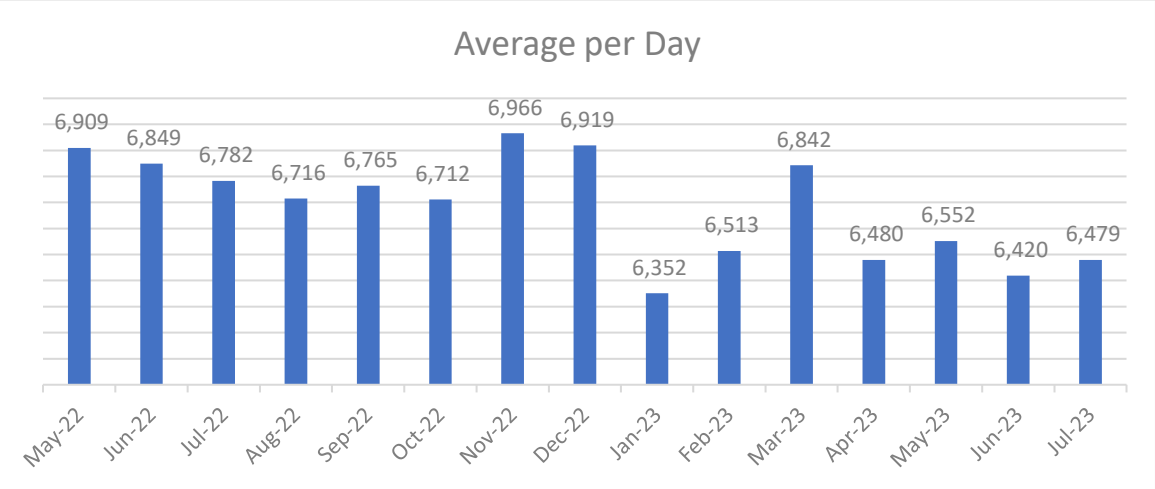
Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

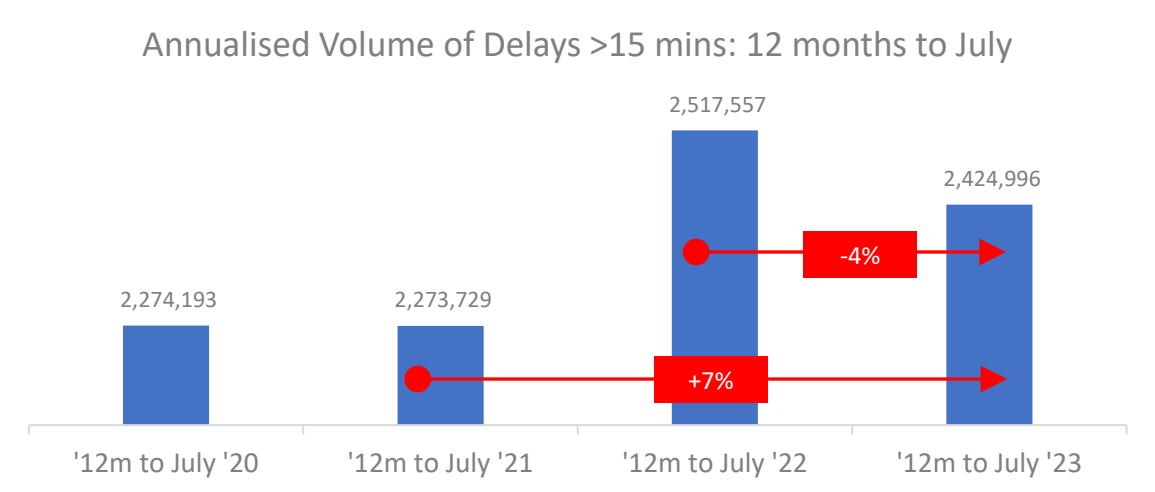
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 15 Minutes



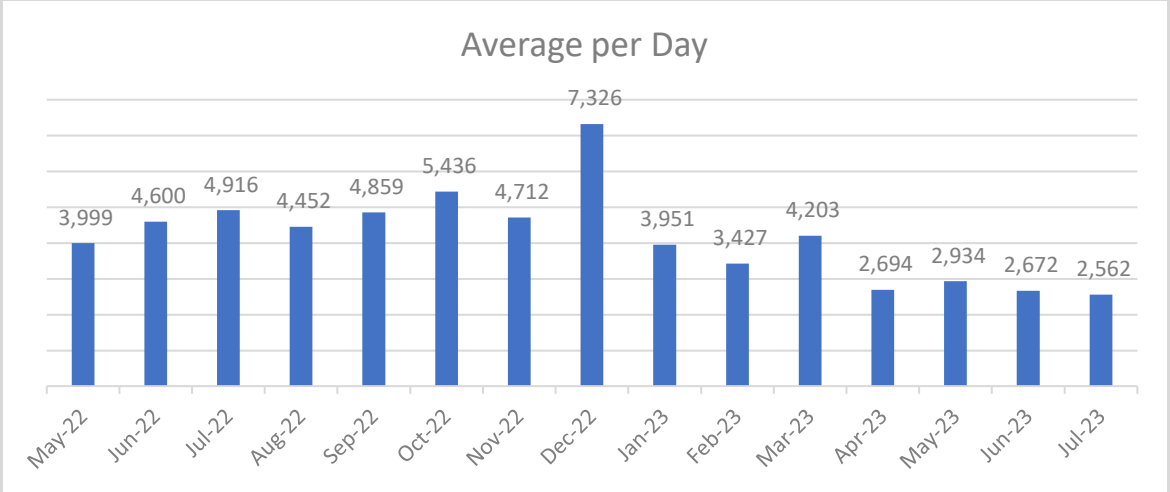
5. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >15 minute delays (source, NAIG)

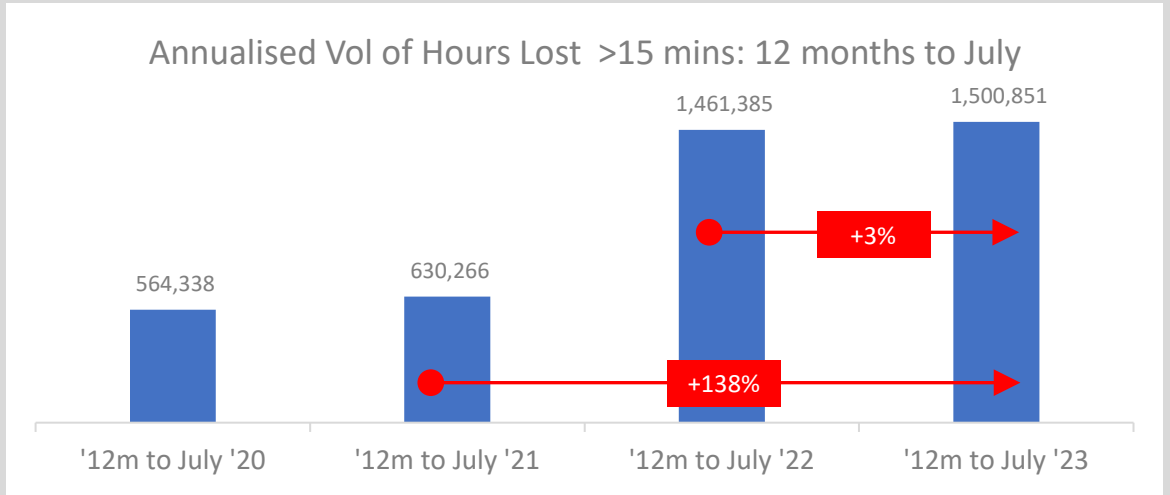
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 15 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 15 minutes

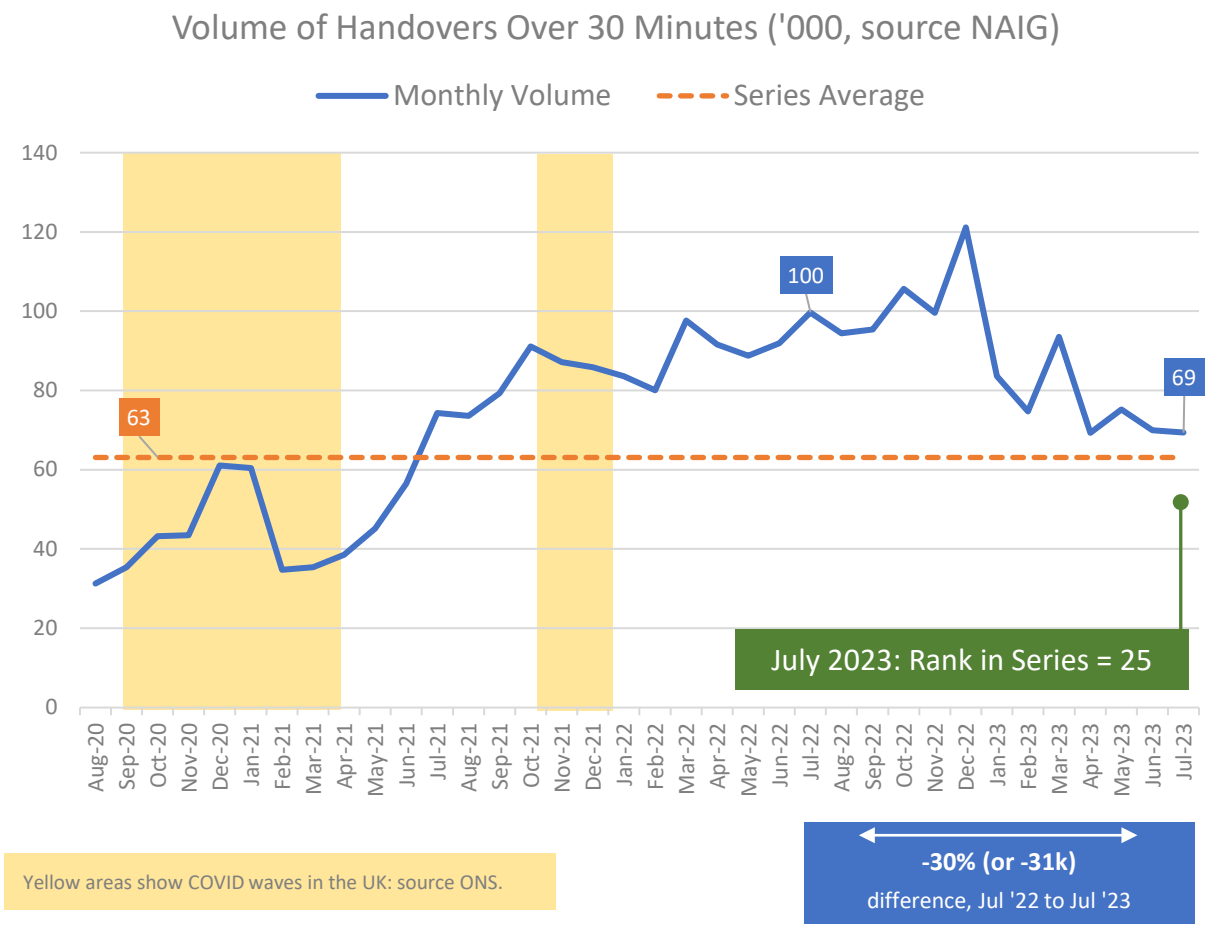




6. Patient Handover Delays over 30 Minutes (source, NAIG)

Handover delays of 30-minutes or longer decreased to its second lowest volume in two years, the lowest being April this year. Hours lost to those delays dropped to their lowest level since June 2021.

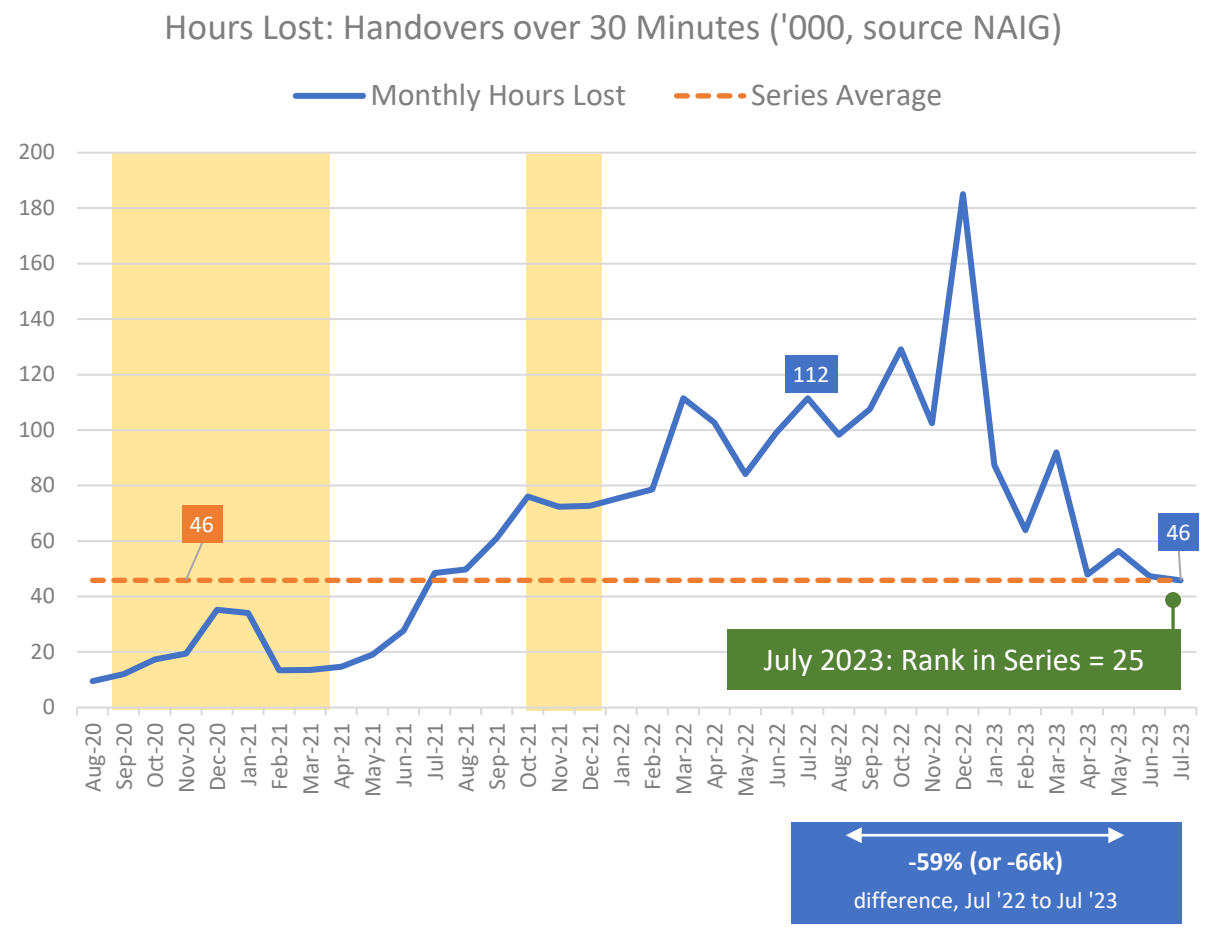
1. Delays over 30 Minutes



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

-30% (or -31k)
difference, Jul '22 to Jul '23

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 30 Minutes

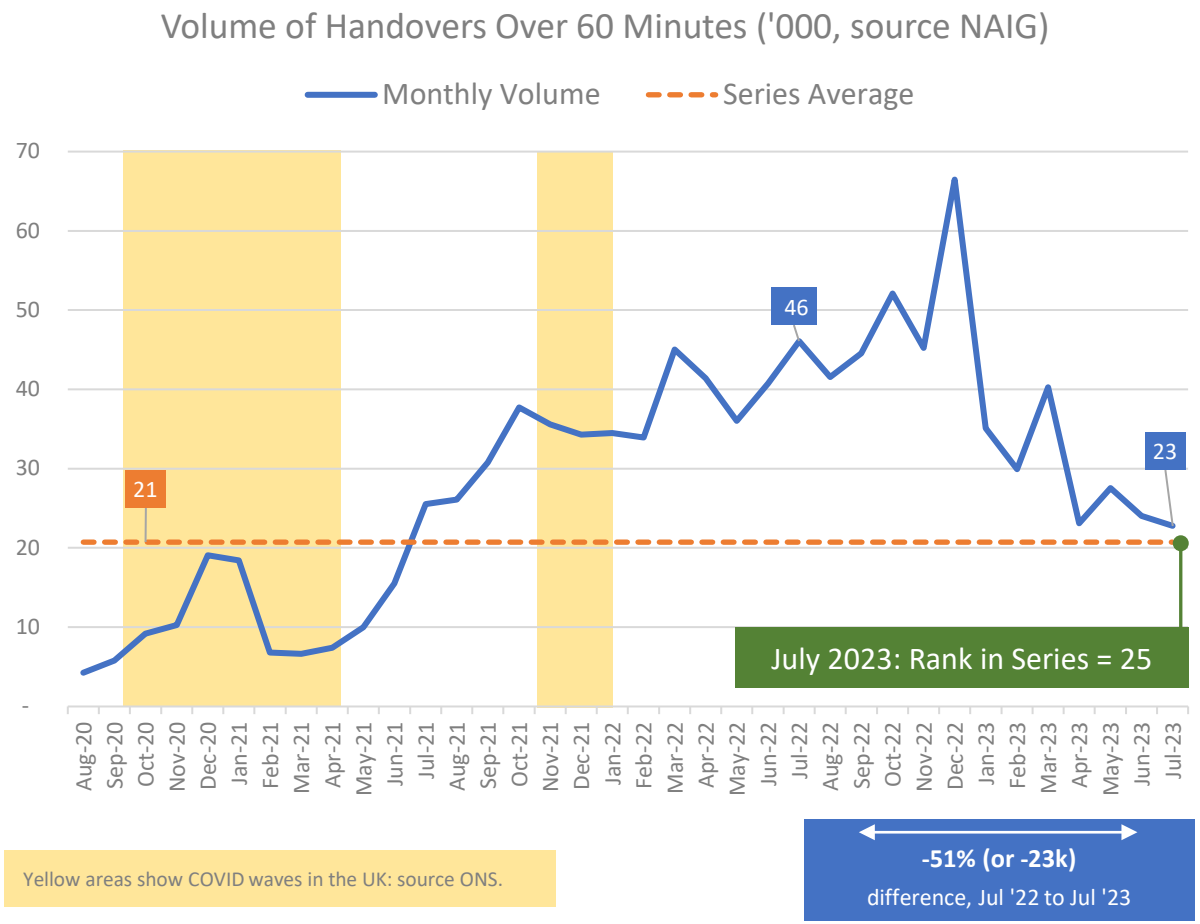


-59% (or -66k)
difference, Jul '22 to Jul '23

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

Hour-plus handover delays reached their lowest level since June 2021, as did the associated hours lost. The direction of this trend is clearly positive, although the annualised data show hours lost in the 12-months to July 2023 were more than six times greater than recorded two years previously.

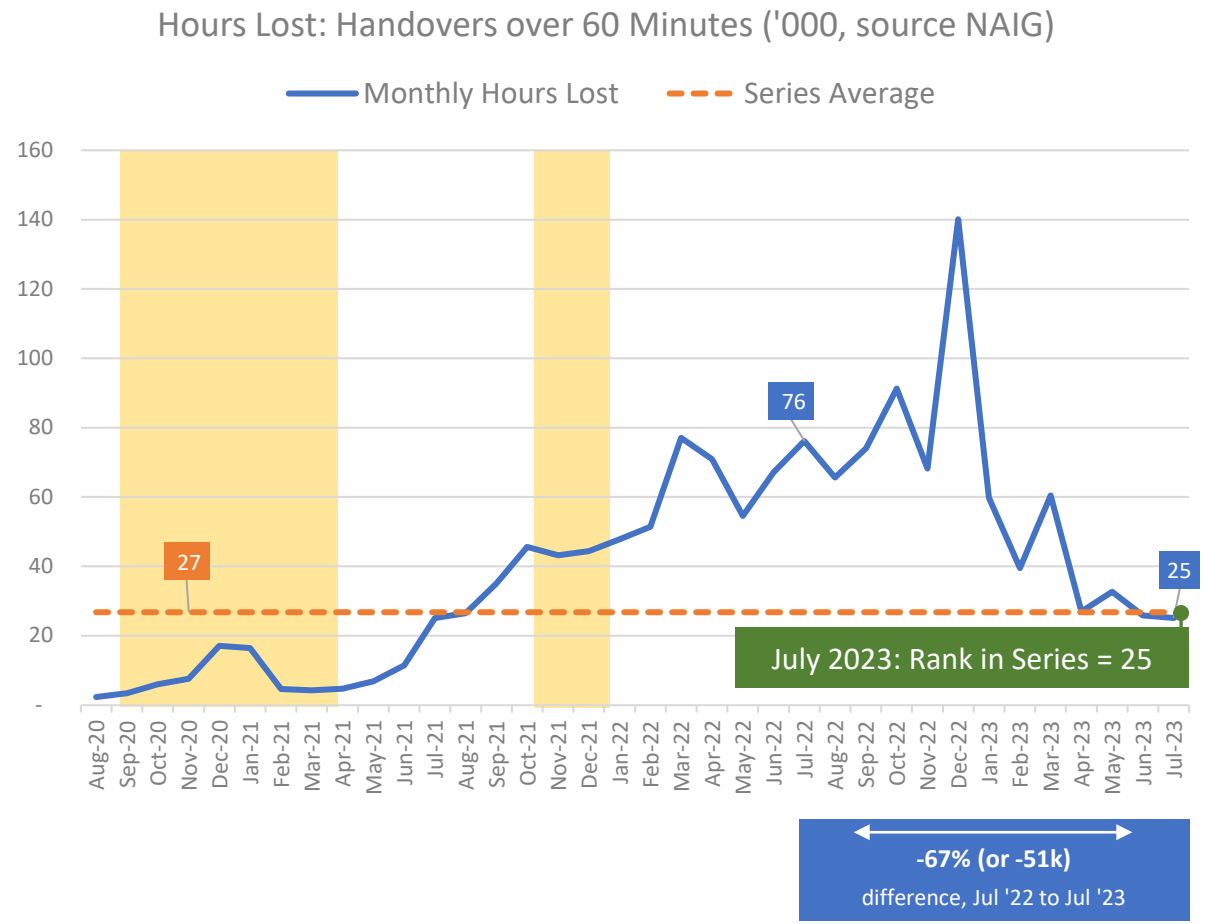
1. Delays over 60 Minutes



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

-51% (or -23k)
difference, Jul '22 to Jul '23

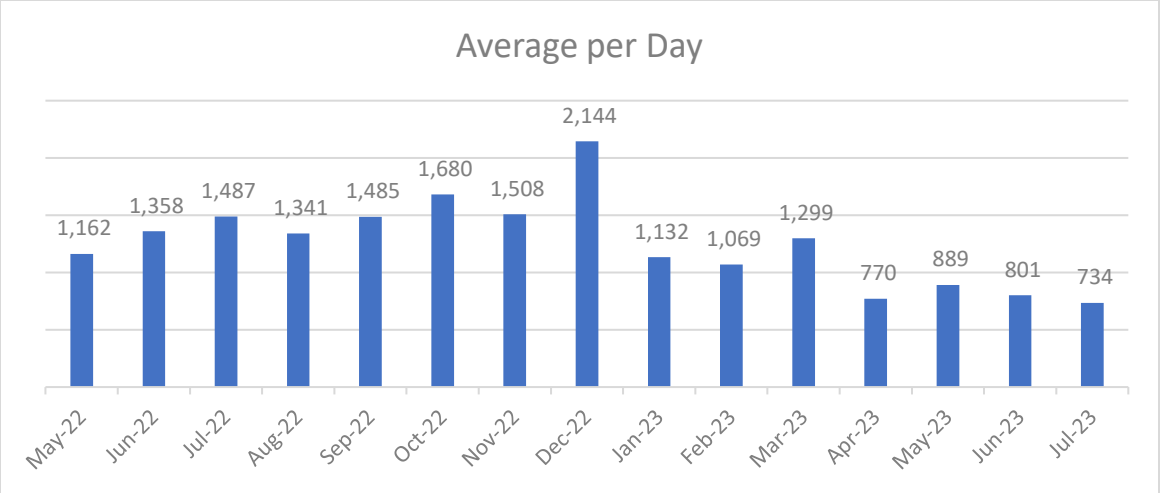
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 60 Minutes

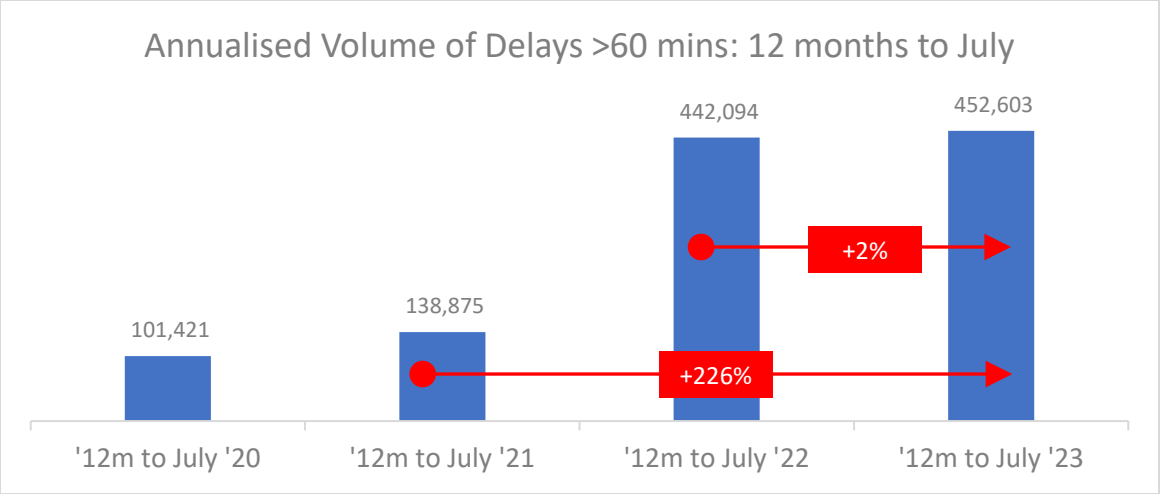


-67% (or -51k)
difference, Jul '22 to Jul '23

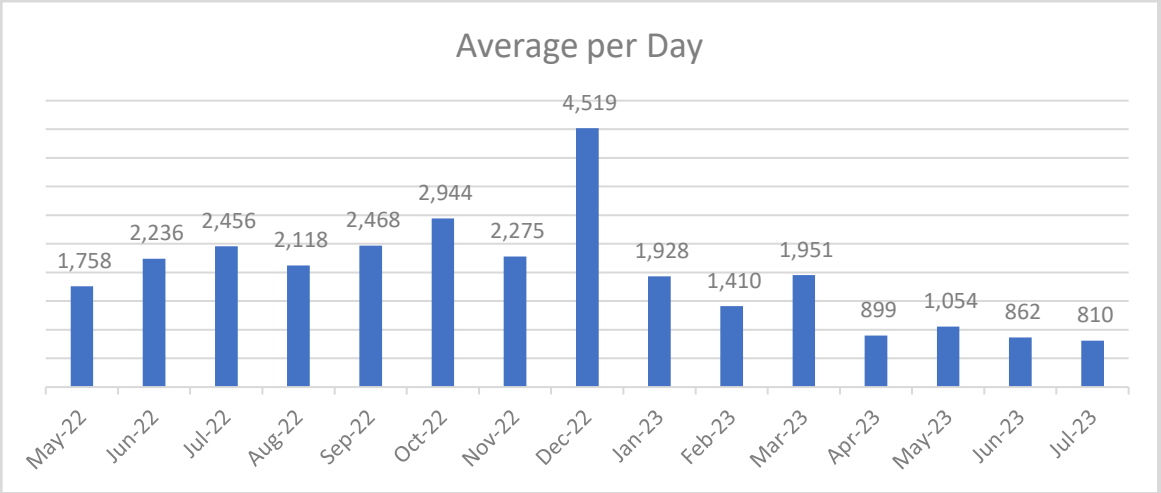
8. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >60 minute delays (source, NAIG)

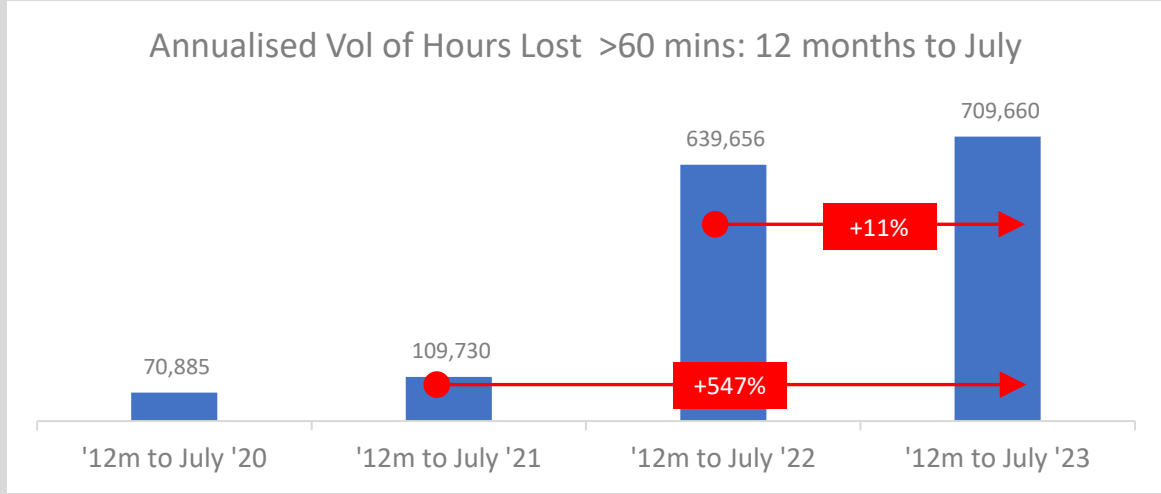
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 60 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 60 minutes

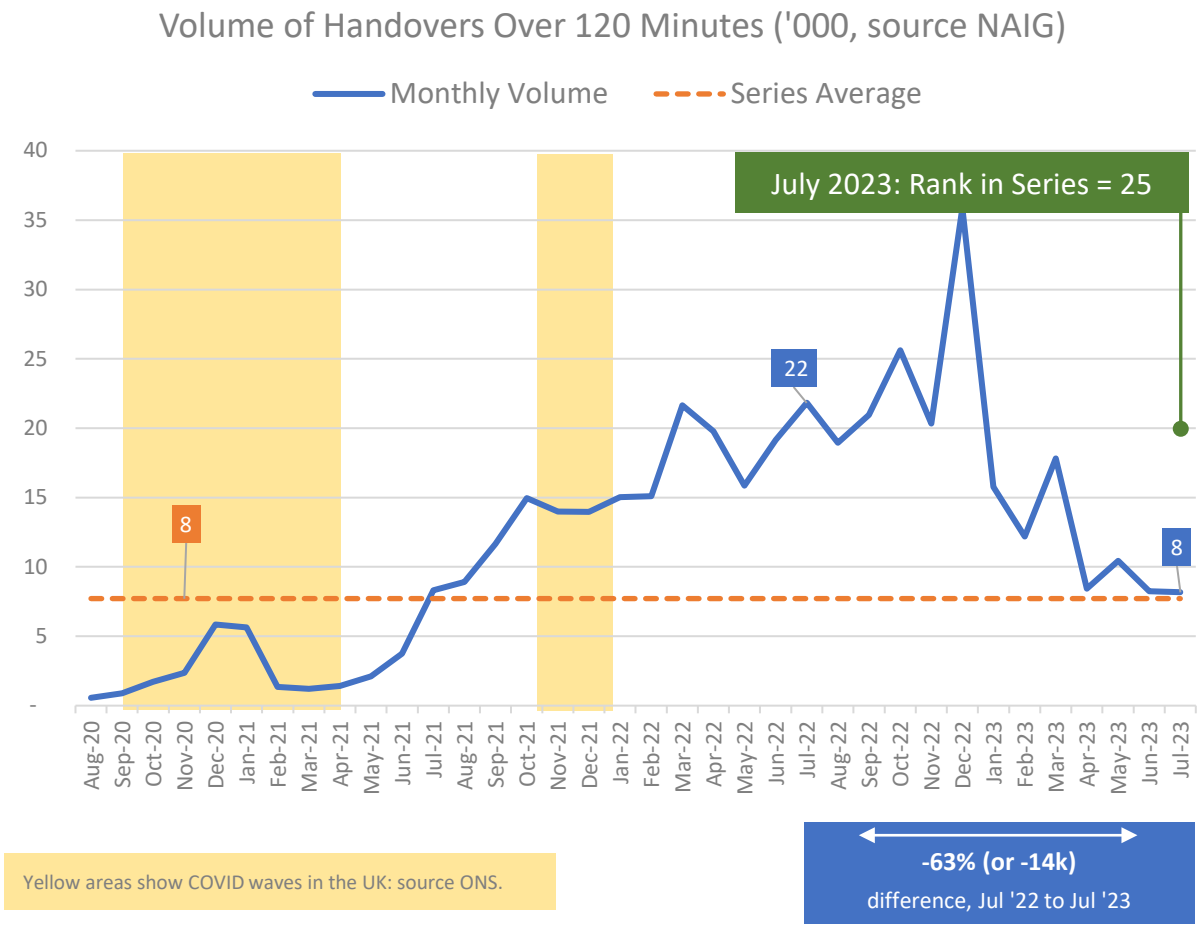




9. Patient Handover Delays over 120 Minutes (source, NAIG)

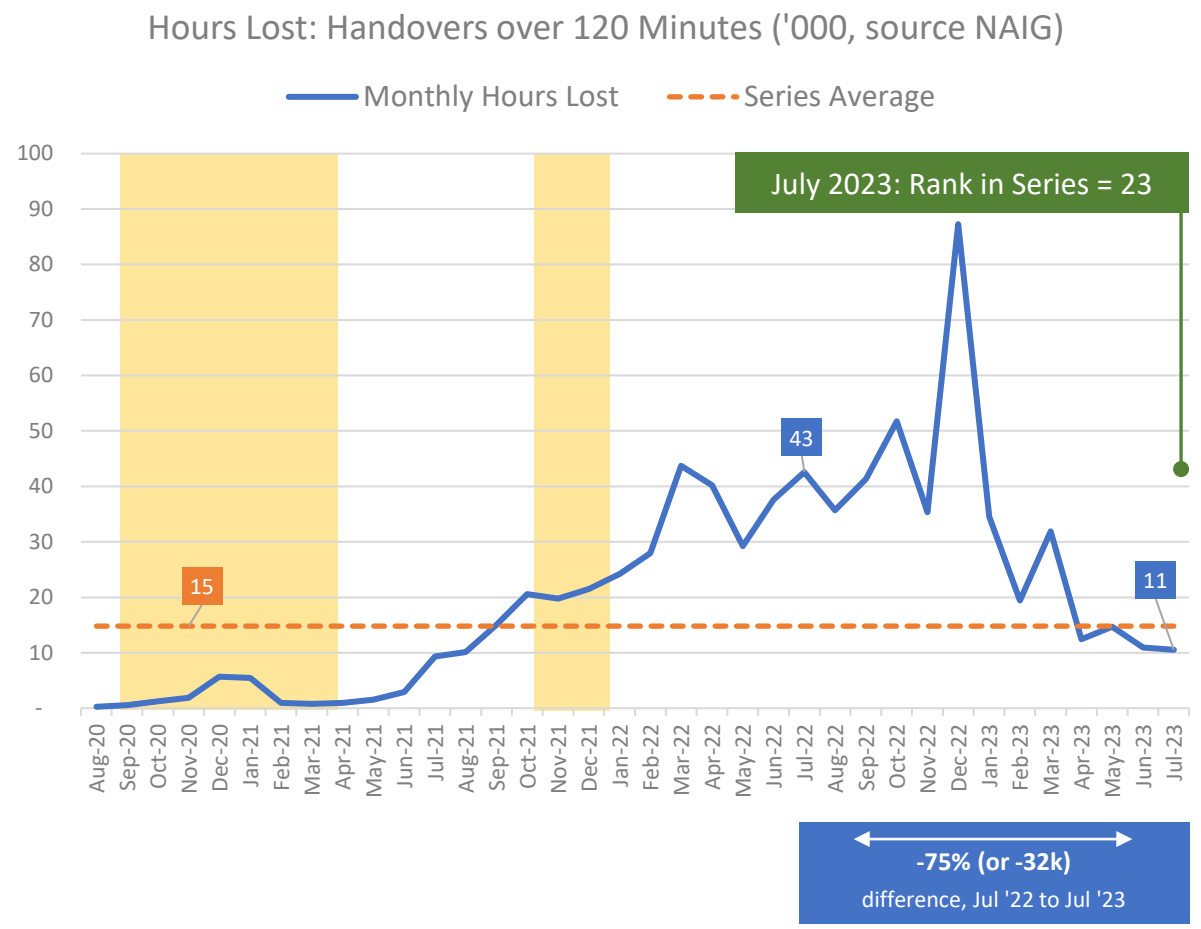
As seen with the hour-plus delays, handovers of two-hours or longer also dropped to the lowest levels seen in two years, while hours lost were at their third lowest. Again, this is positive, although the annualised data show hours lost is more than twelve-times greater than seen two years previously.

1. Delays over 120 Minutes



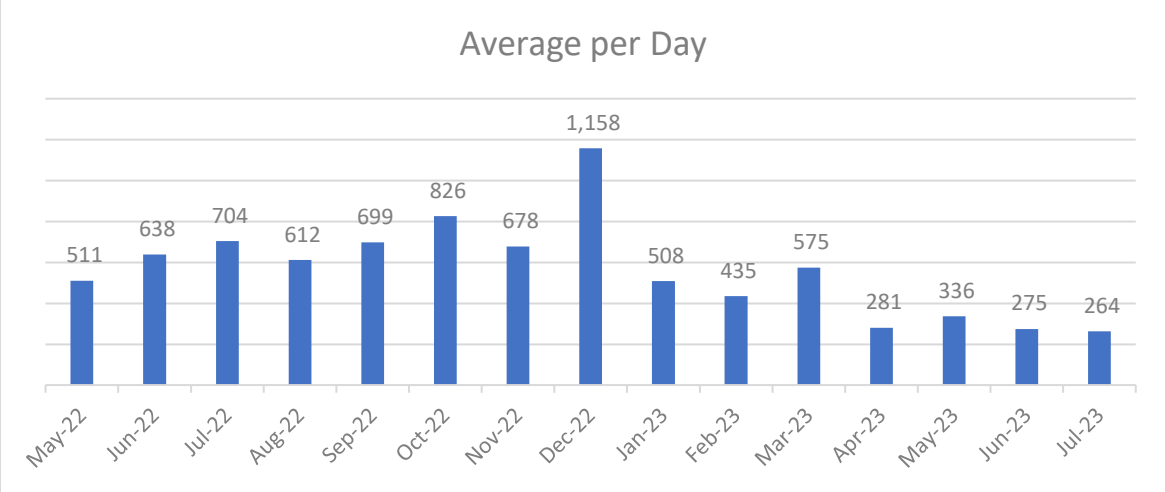
Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

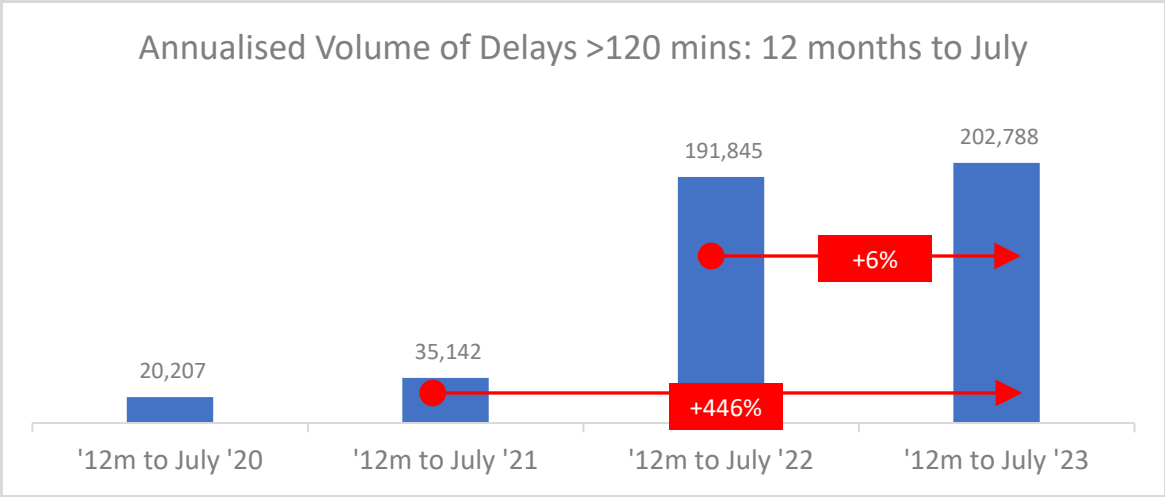
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 120 Minutes



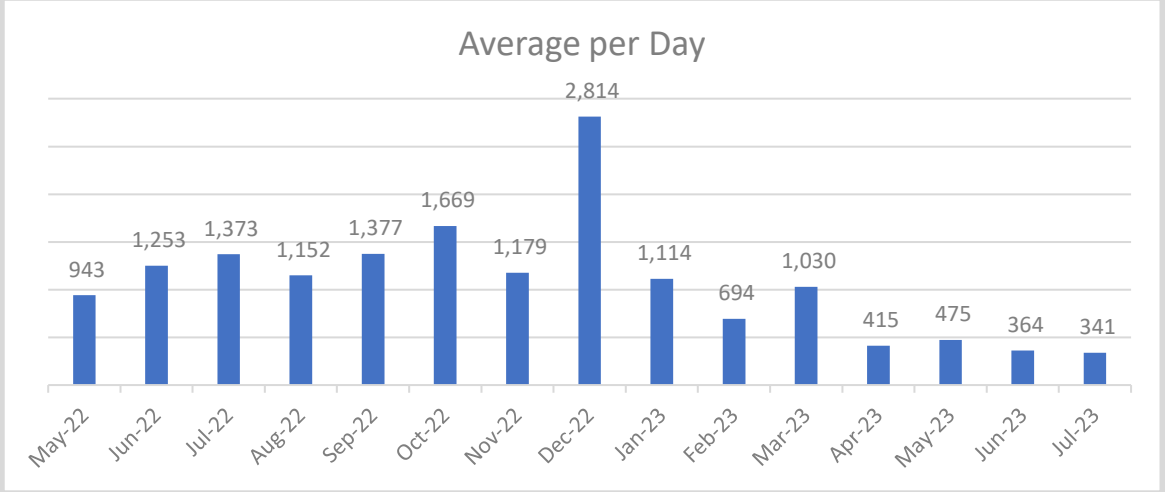
10. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >120 minute delays (source, NAIG)

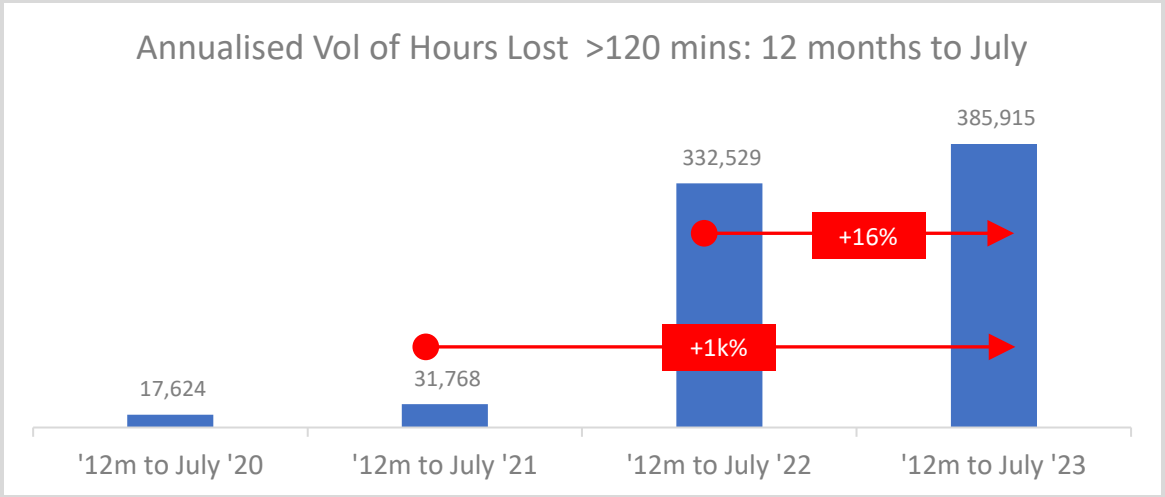
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 120 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 120 minutes

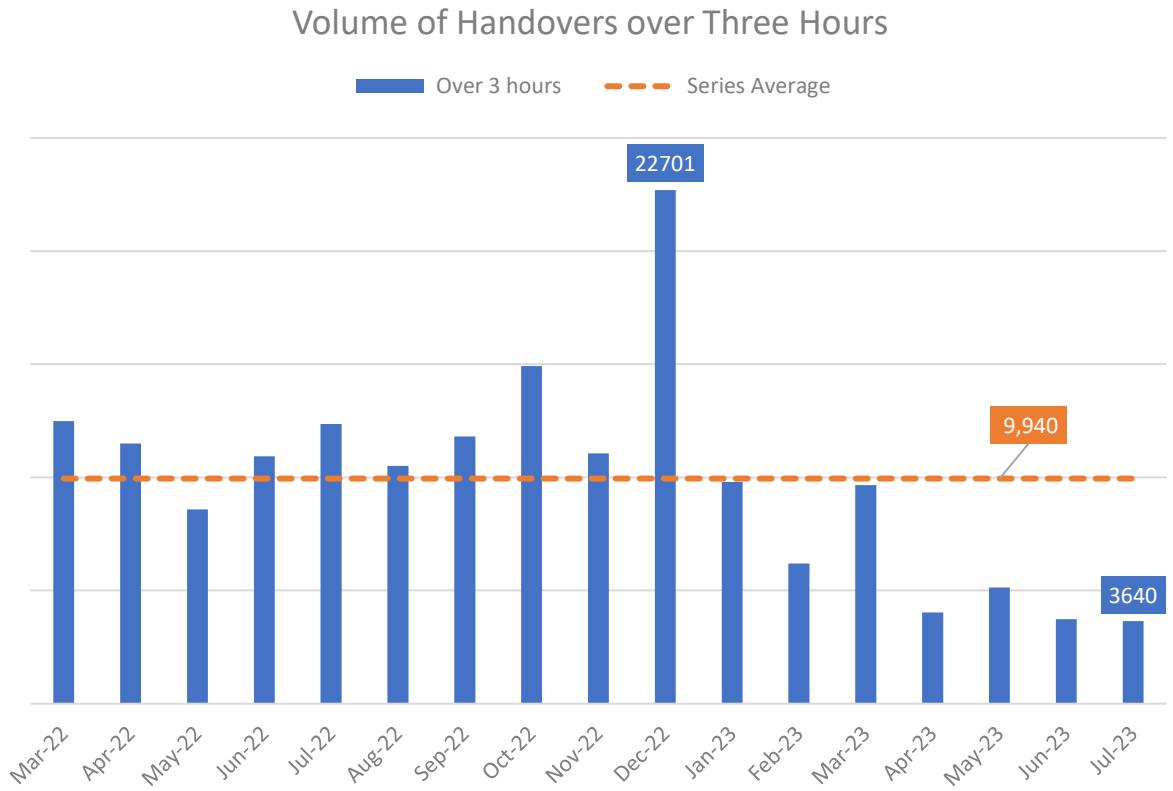




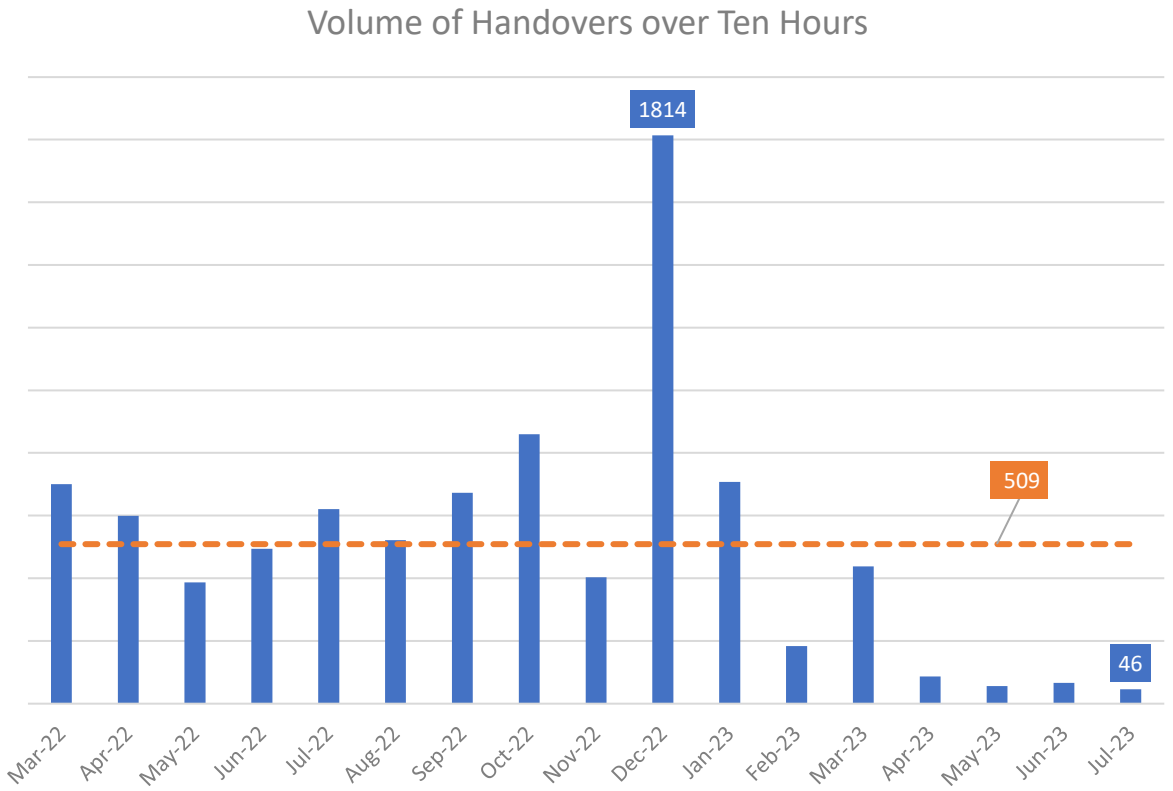
11. Patient Handovers Longer than Three Hours (source, NAIG)

The very longest delays also reached the lowest numbers seen in several years. Delays of ten-hours or more peaked at 1,814 in December 2022, but in July 2023 had decreased to 46 incidents.

1. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Three Hours



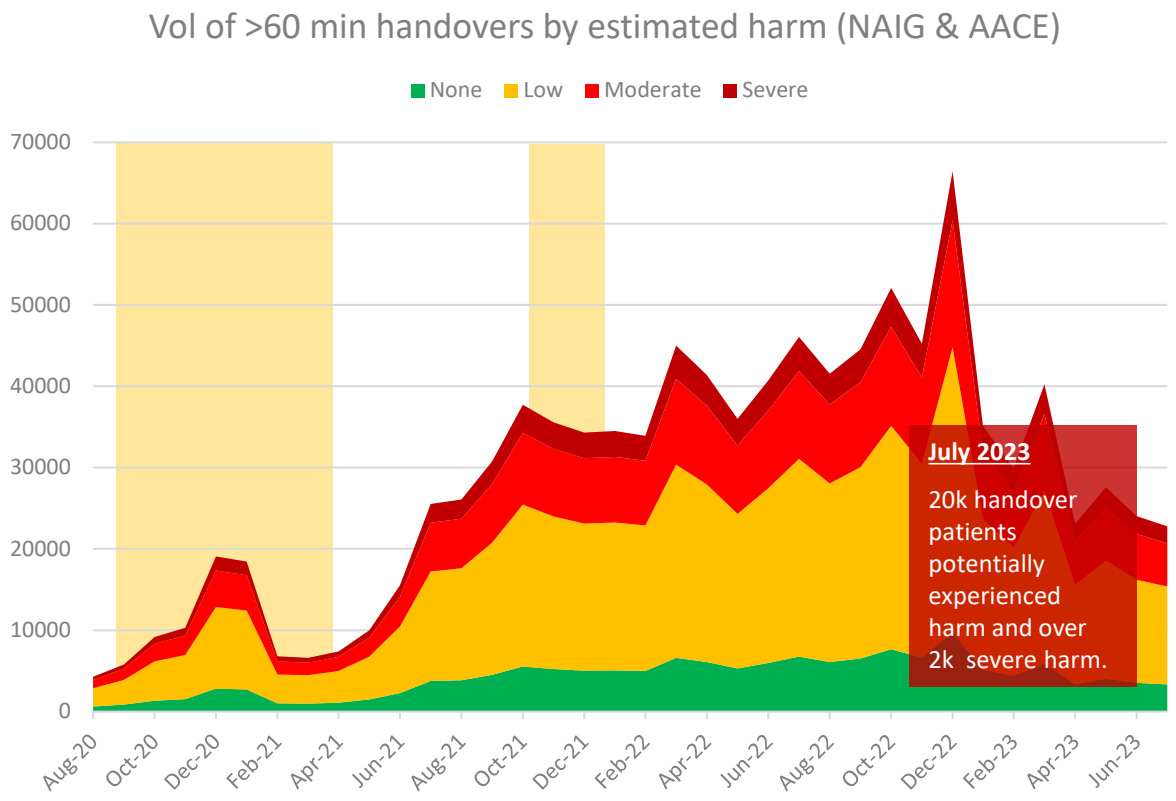
2. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Ten Hours



12. Impact on Patients and Crew (source, NAIG, AQI Data and AACE)

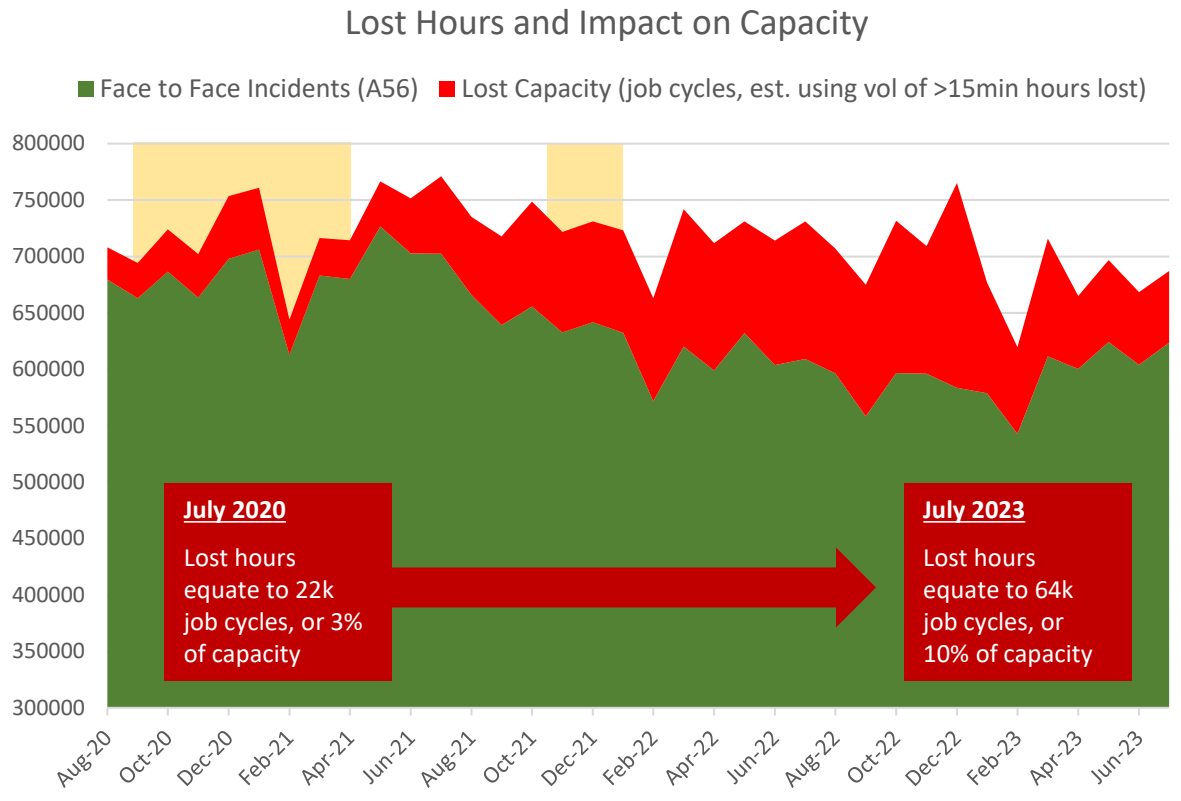
Around 20k patients experienced potential harm as a result of long handover delays in July 2023. Looking at the total hours lost to handover delays, the sector lost the equivalent of 64k job cycles. This equates to 10% of potential ambulance capacity across the month – compared with three-percent in July 2020.

1. Estimated number of patients experiencing potential harm



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

2. Estimated impact of lost hours on capacity



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