ASSOCIATION OF AMBULANCE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

National Ambulance Data – Final

Data to the end of August 2023

Published - September 29th, 2023

2. Summary and Contents

Overview: August's data precedes the heat-wave seen at the end of summer, and is characterised by steady demand, faster call-answer times and improving response rates. For the most part response times continued to exceed their respective national standards across all categories of incident, but are notably faster than the same time last year. Patient handover delays increased in August, but not enough to negate the positive direction these trends have been moving in over the past few months – and still remain well below the levels seen in August 2023.

Section 1. Contact Volume and Call Answer Time	• There was a uplift in 999-calls answered in August reaching 770-thousand across the month. Despite this, volumes remain well below those seen in August 2022 (by 72-thousand) • The mean call answer time dropped for the second consecutive month to reach eight-seconds - the second fastest time in 2023 to-date.
Section 2. Incidents and Response Time, by Category	• Demand remained steady. The average daily volume of incidents was around 23-thousand - largely unchanged between July and August. Nonetheless, each category saw a higher volume recorded than in August 2022. • Response times improved for second consecutive month, and although continue to exceed national standards (with the exception of the C1 90th centile), all are notably faster than the same time last year.
Section 3. Incidents by Response Outcome	• Hear and treat volumes remain steady – the 83-thousand responses recorded in August was largely unchanged from July, but was eight-thousand greater than in August 2022. • See-and-treat measures increased, while conveyance to emergency departments dropped. Overall, however, face-to-face responses were higher in August 2023 than August 2022.
Section 4. Patient Handover Delays	• The mean handover time was 25-minutes in August, over ten minutes faster than in August 2022. The proportion of hour-plus handovers has halved between the two periods. • Despite these improvements, handover volumes increased between July and August – although, as with most measures reported here, they remain below their 2022 equivalents.

Source of all data is AQI August 2023 unless otherwise stated. As well as the full data set, the linked page also includes a PDF of the data spec which includes a full description of each measure used.

Section 1

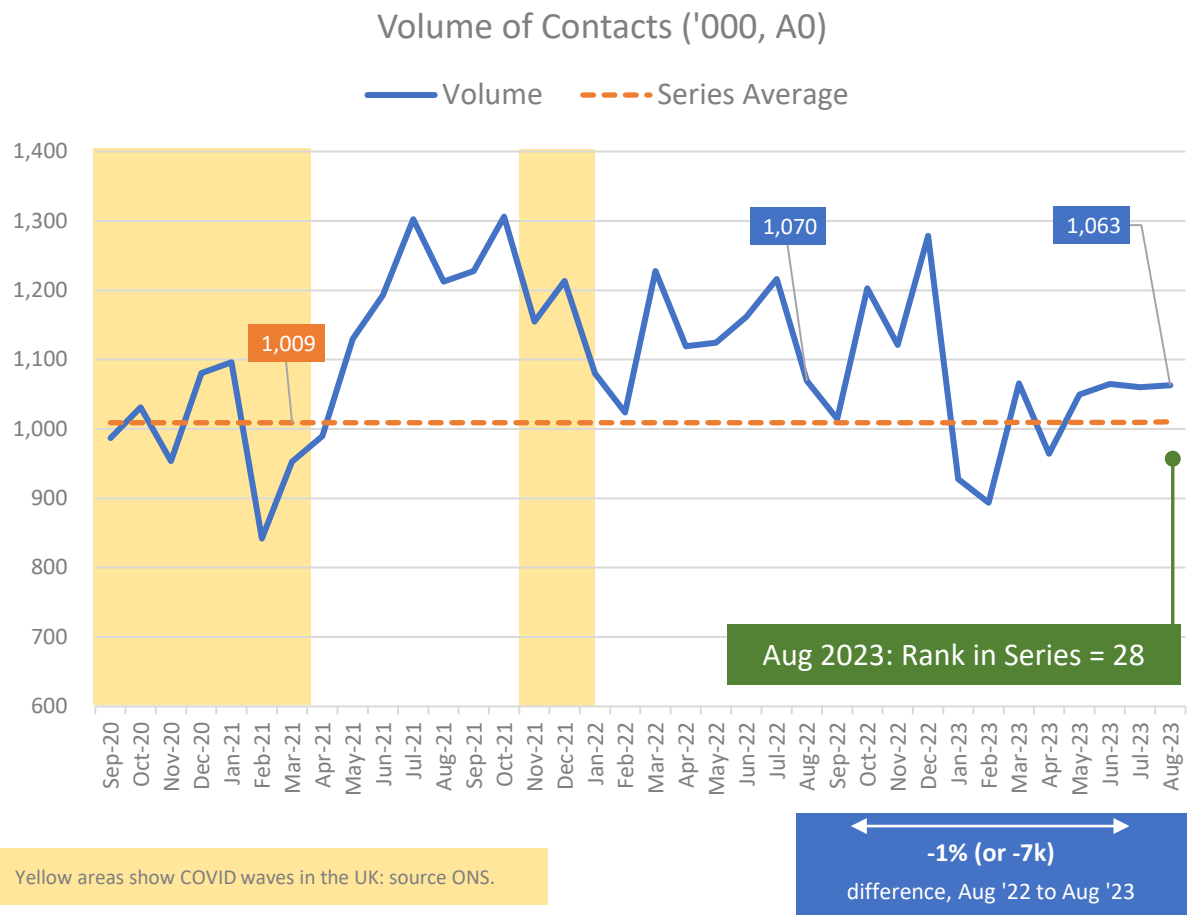
Contact Volume and Call Answer time

- Demand: Volume of Contacts
- Demand: Volume of 999 Calls Answered
- Demand: 111 Call Volumes
- Ambulance Dispositions (111 to 999 calls)
- Demand: Call Answering Time

4. Demand: Volume of Contacts to Ambulance Control Rooms (Measure A0)

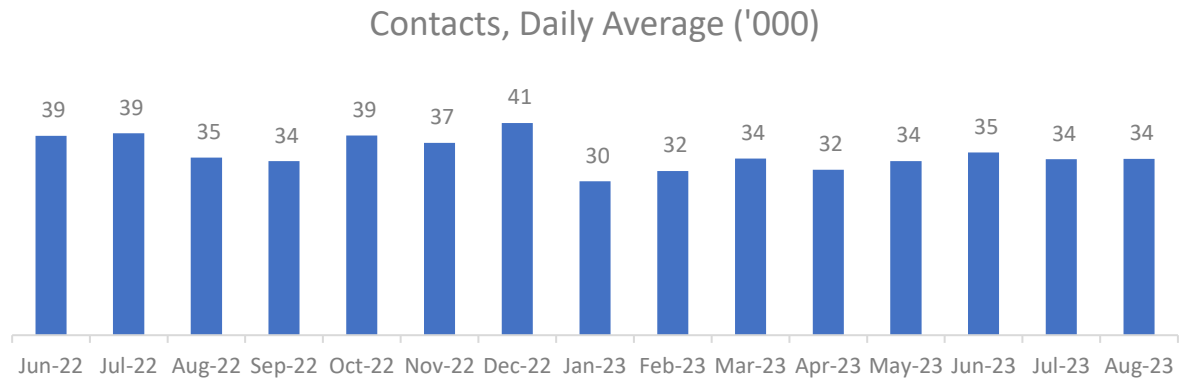
There was a month-on-month increase in contacts to ambulance controls in August, with nearly three-thousand more calls than July taking the total to 1,063-thousand, just below the August 2022's volume. Annualised data show a drop in nine-percentage points compared with last year – around 1.2-million fewer calls.

1. Monthly

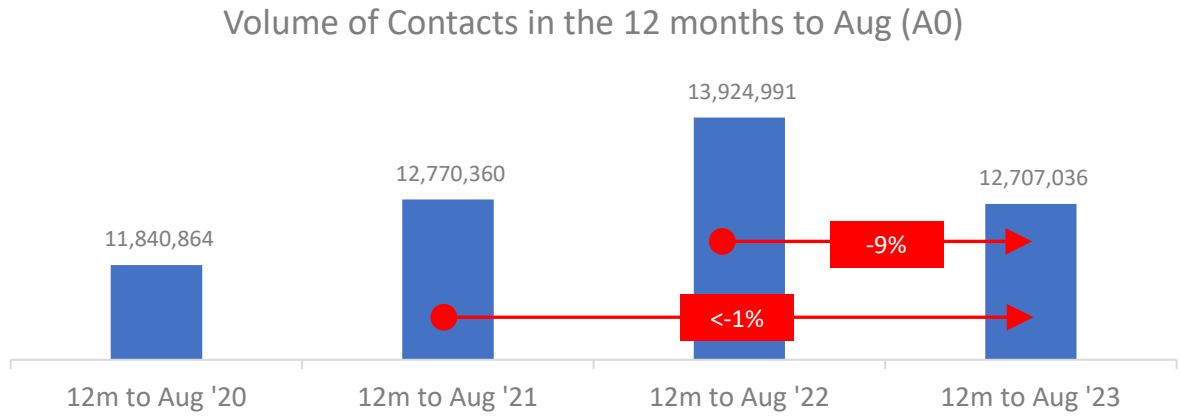


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



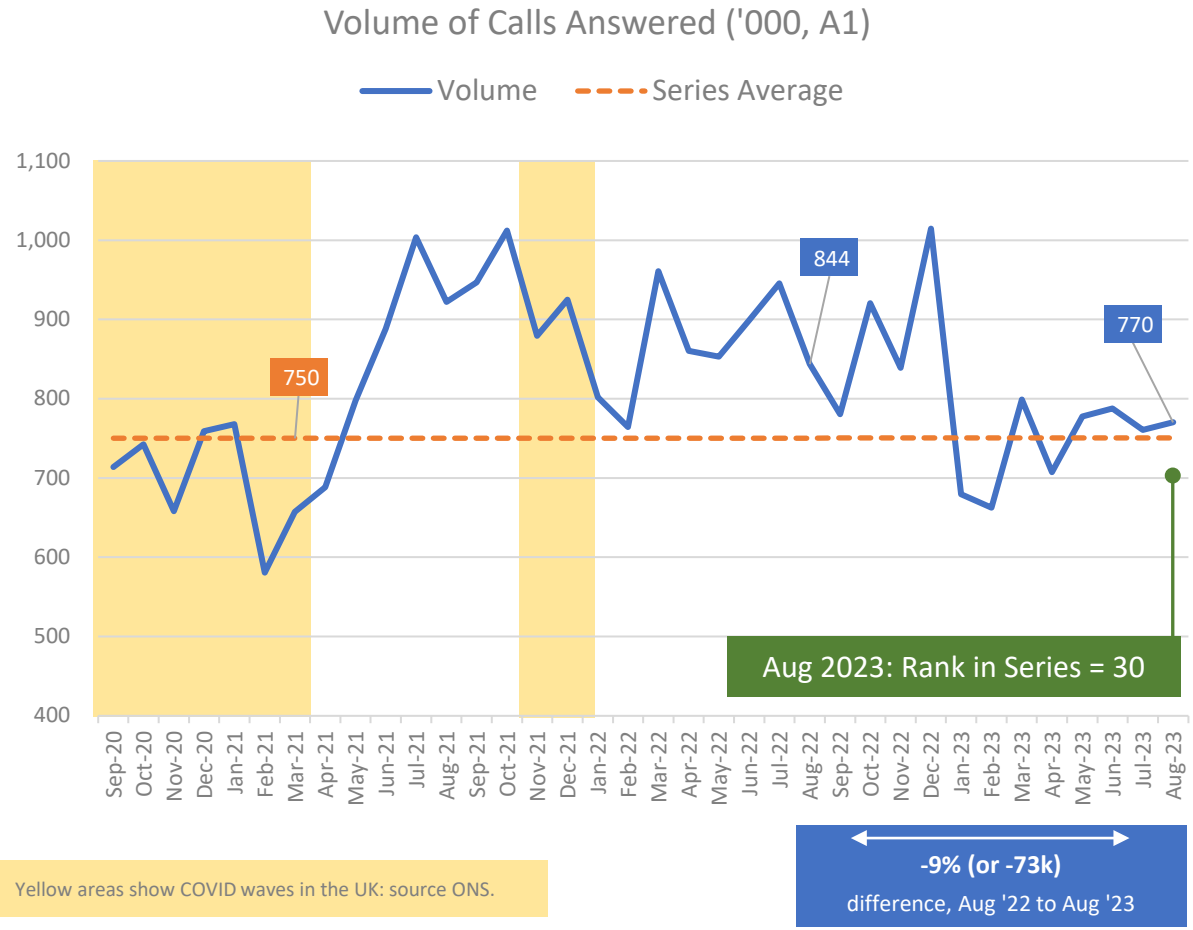
3. Annualised Data



5. Demand: Volume of 999 Calls-Answered (Measure A1)

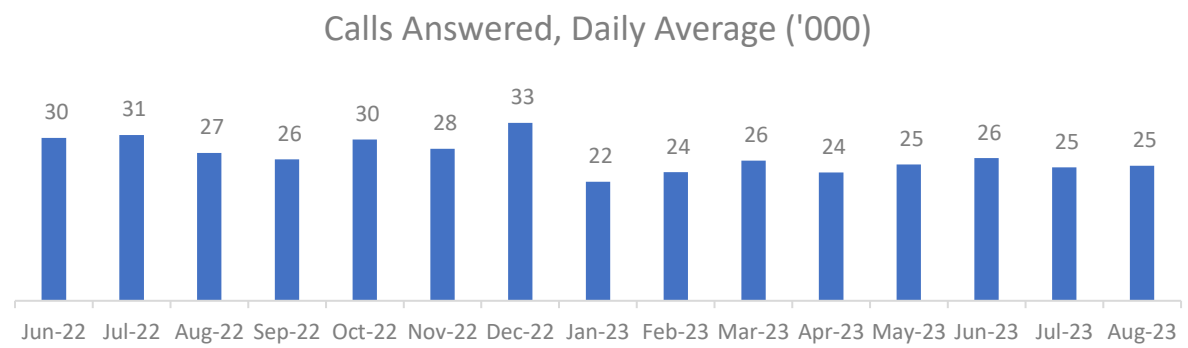
The volume of 999-calls answered increased by just under ten-thousand between July and August. Call volume has increased (albeit erratically) since February 2023, but remain below the levels seen 12-months ago by some margin.

1. Monthly

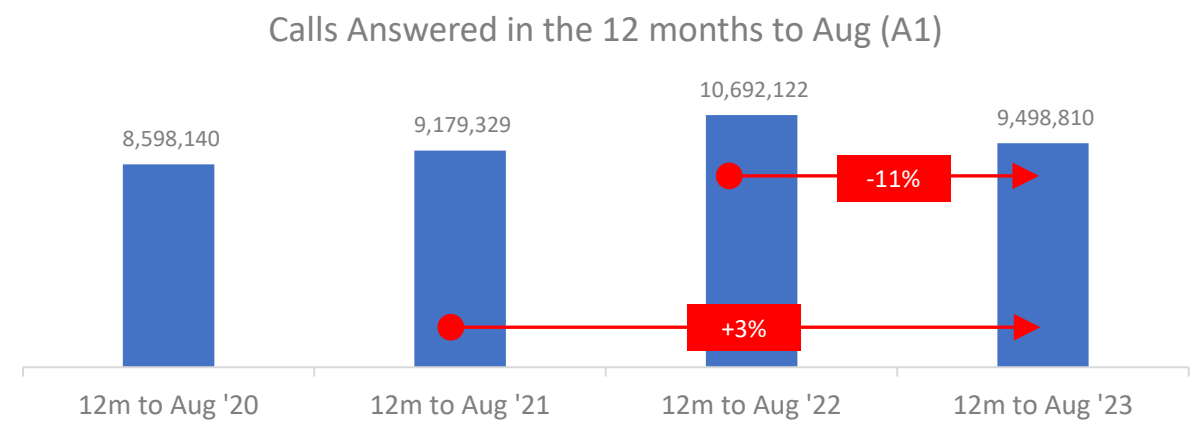


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



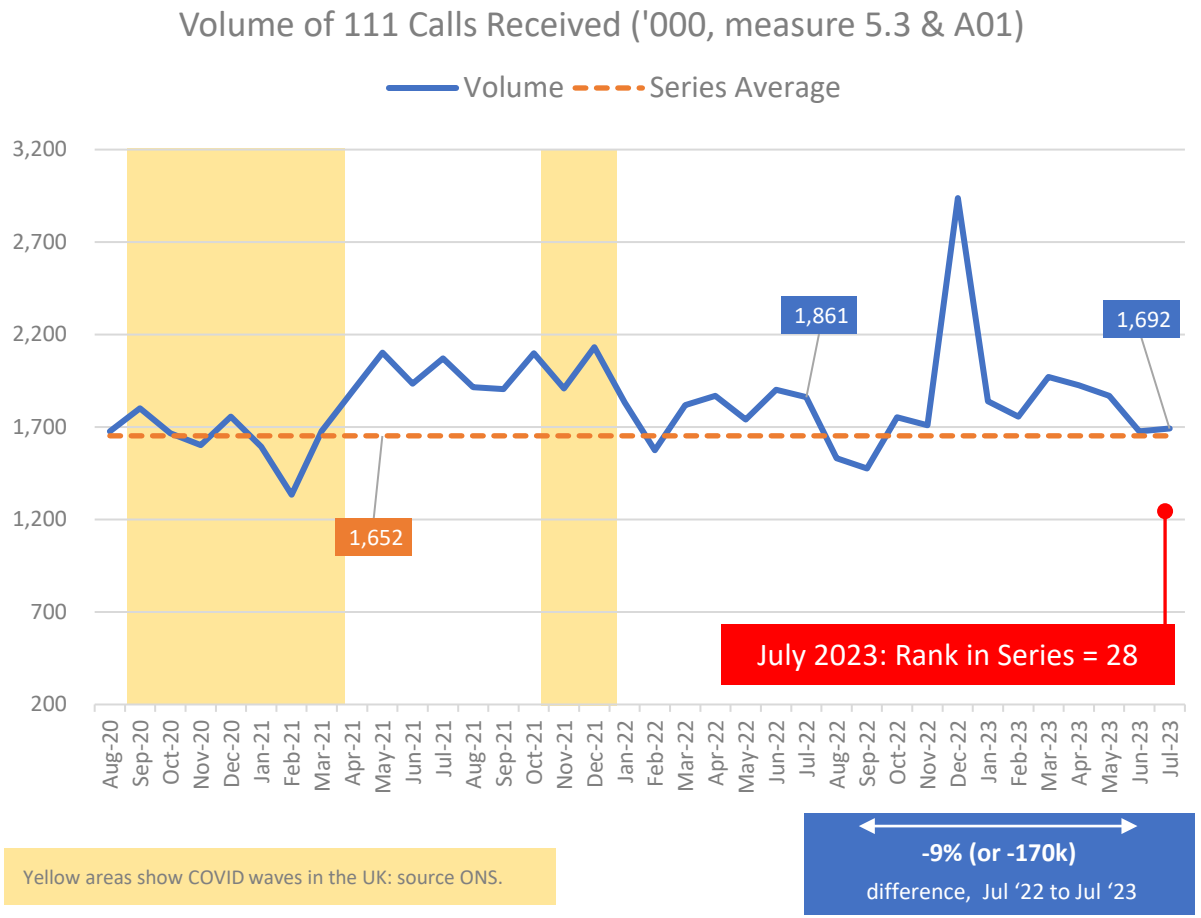
3. Annualised Data



6. Demand: 111 Call Volumes (sources NHS 111 Min Data Set to March 2021 (5.3) then IUCADC (measure A0))

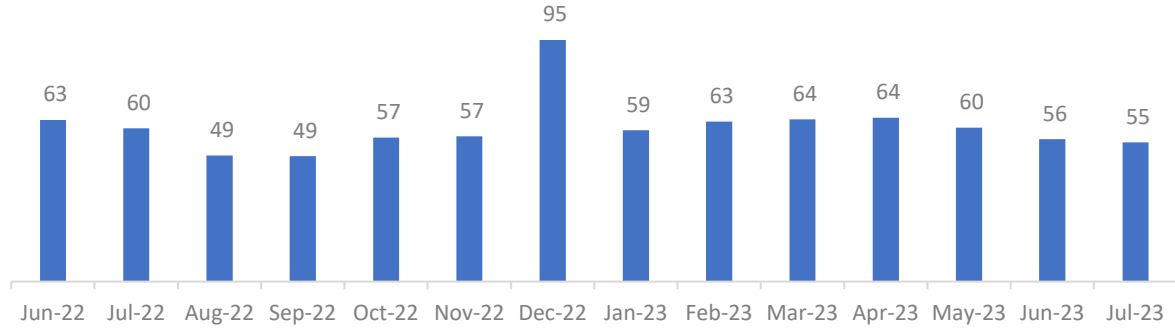
Running a month behind the AQI figures, 111-call data shows volume remained relatively steady between June and July. There were 170-thousand fewer calls in August 2023 than in August 2022, while the annualised data show a drop of around 400-thousand calls between the most recent, and previous periods.

1. Monthly

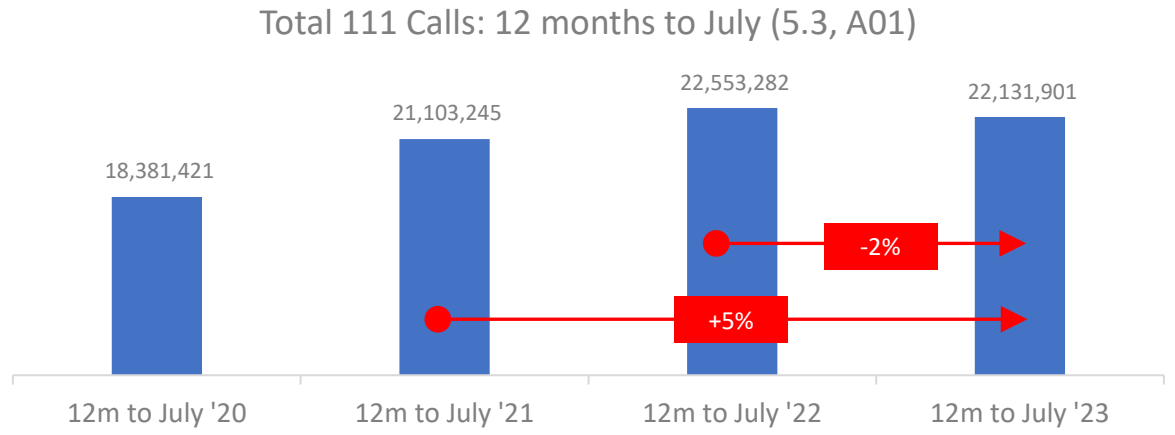


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



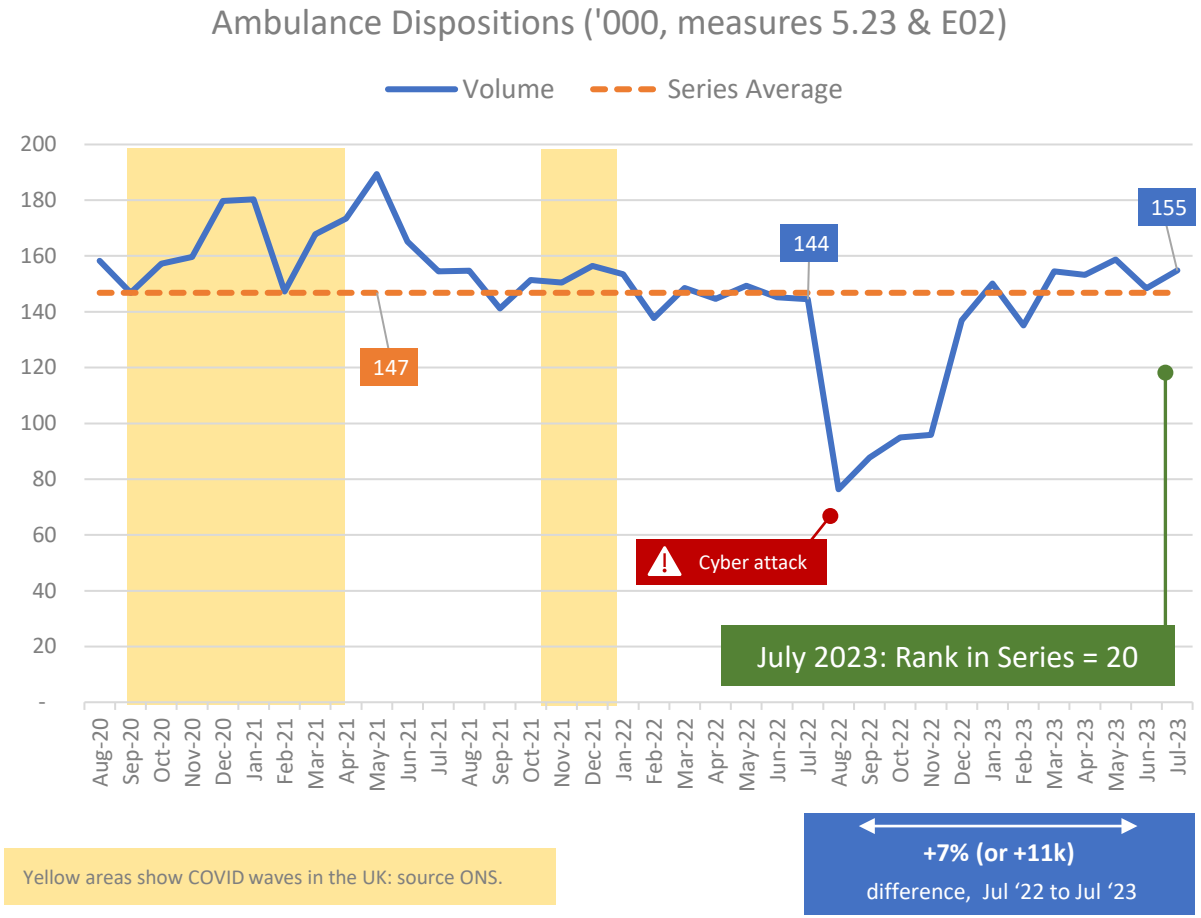
3. Annualised Data



7. Ambulance Dispositions (sources NHS 111 Min Data Set to March 2021 (measure 5.23) then IUCADC (measure E02))

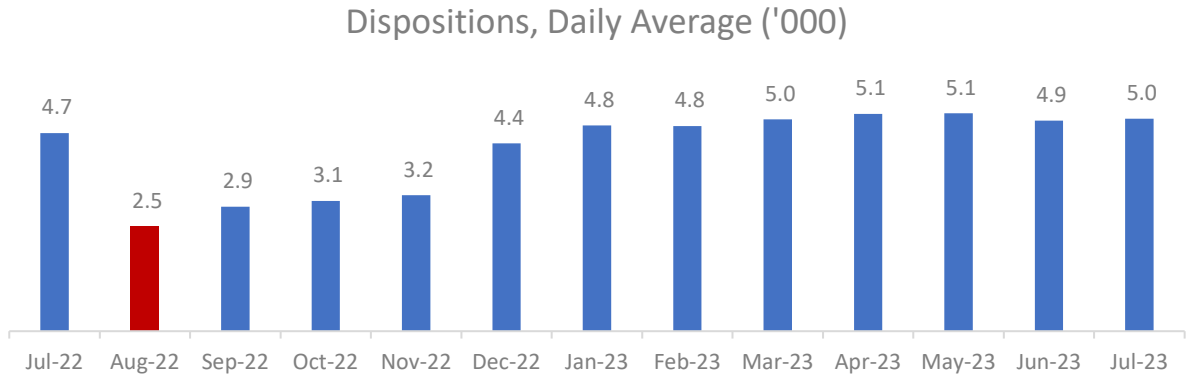
The number of 111 calls referred to the ambulance service increased in July to reach 155-thousand, 11-thousand greater than July 2022. Annualised data show a year-on-year decrease for the past three periods – although this is skewed somewhat by data disruption caused by the cyber-attack in August last year.

1. Monthly

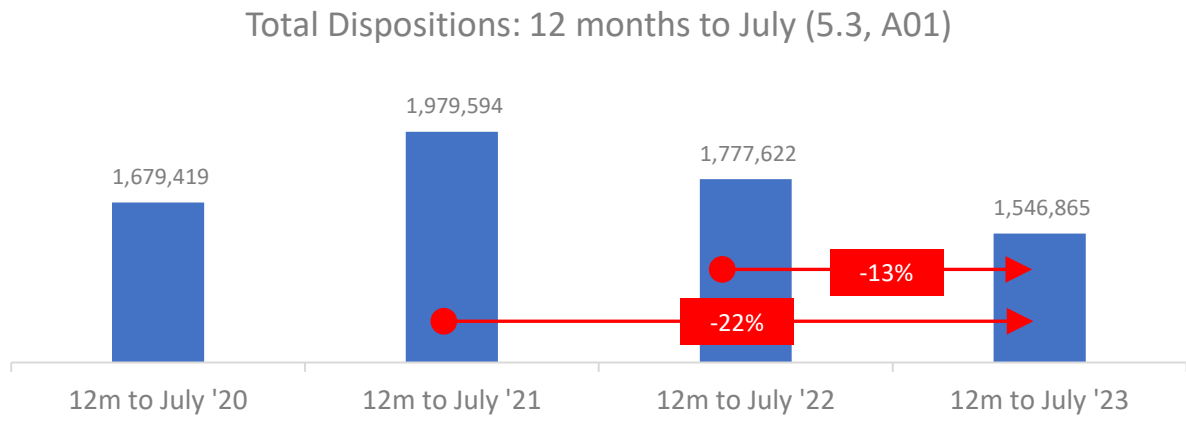


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



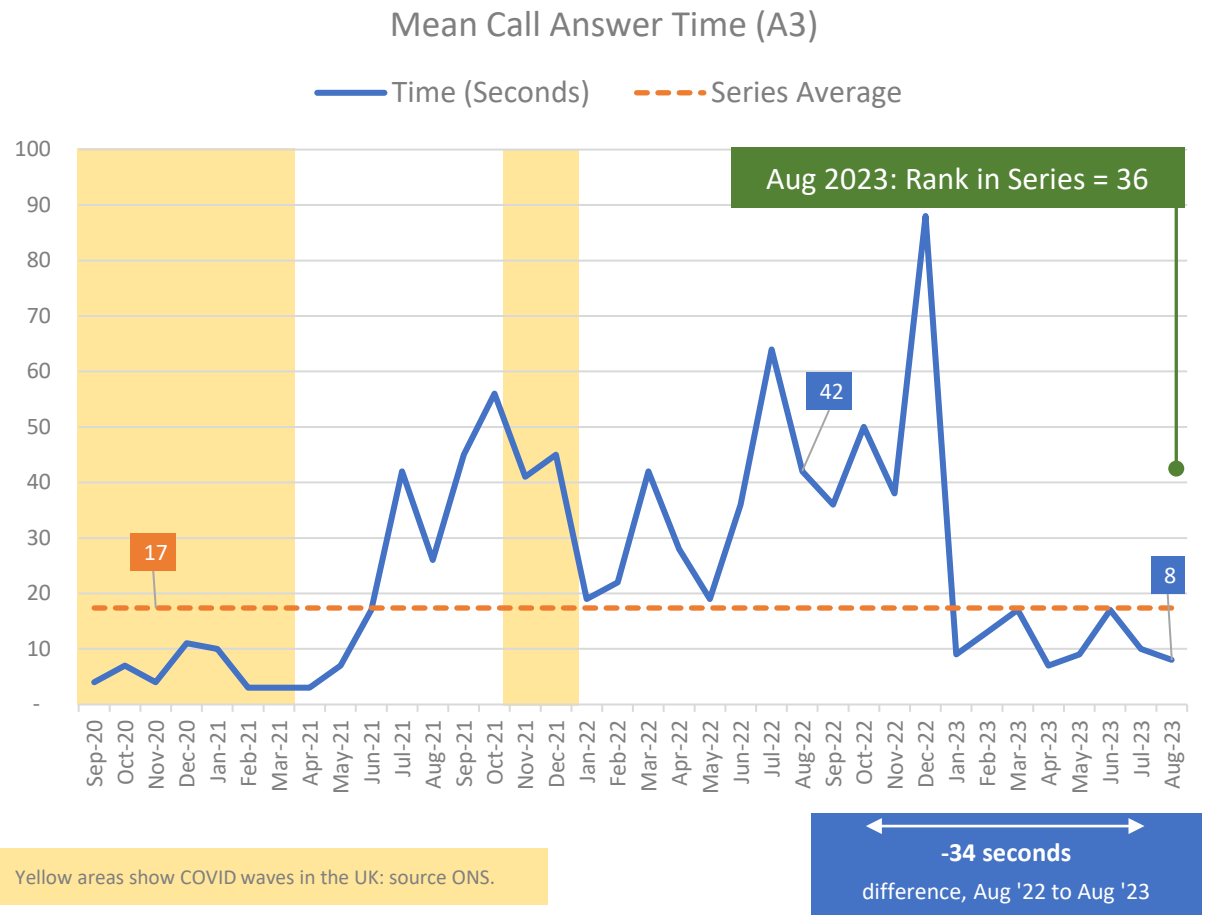
3. Annualised Data



8. Demand: Call Answer Time (999, Measures A3 and A5)

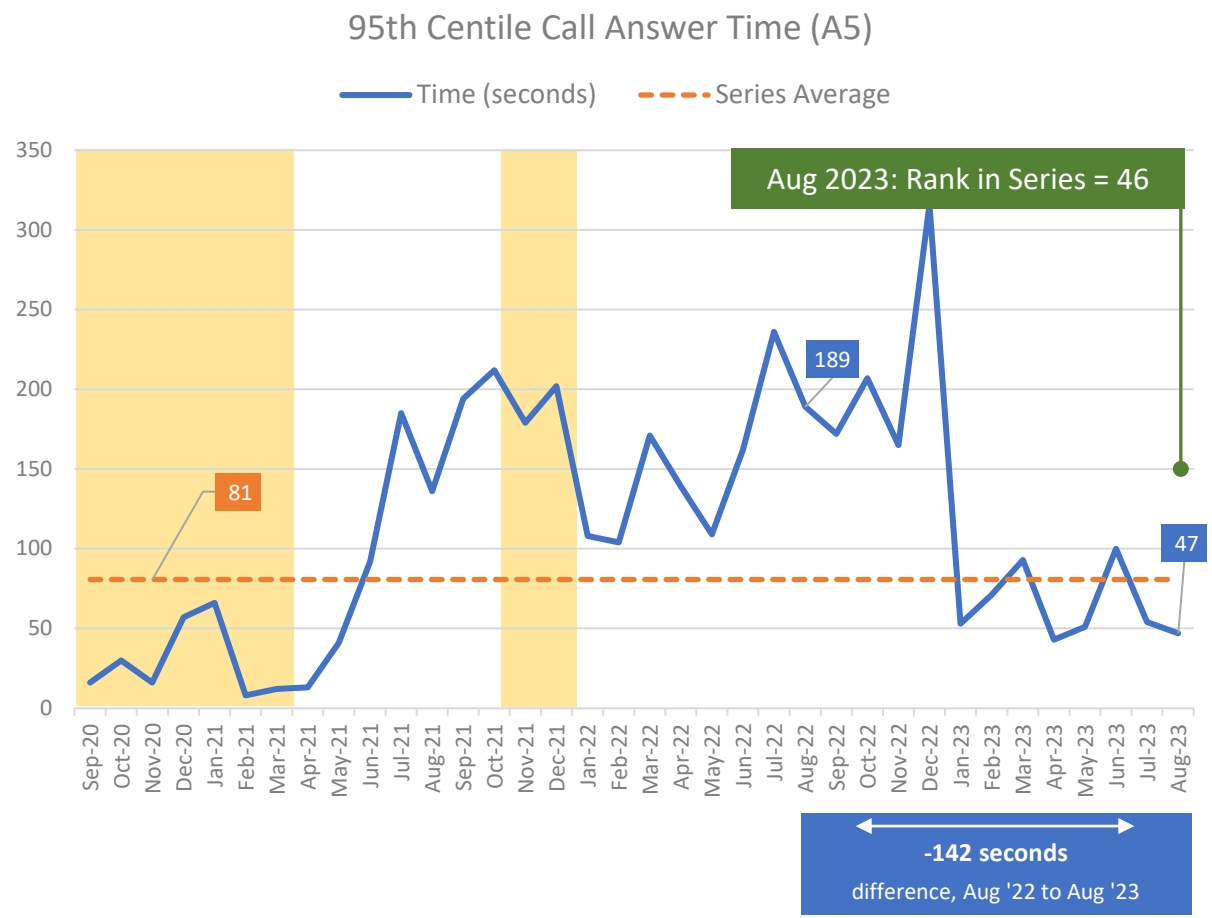
Having dropped sharply since December, both mean and 90th centile call answer times dipped again between July and August 2023. The mean reached eight-seconds, he second fastest time since early 2021 (the actual fastest being seven-seconds in April 2023).

1. Mean



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

2. 95th Centile



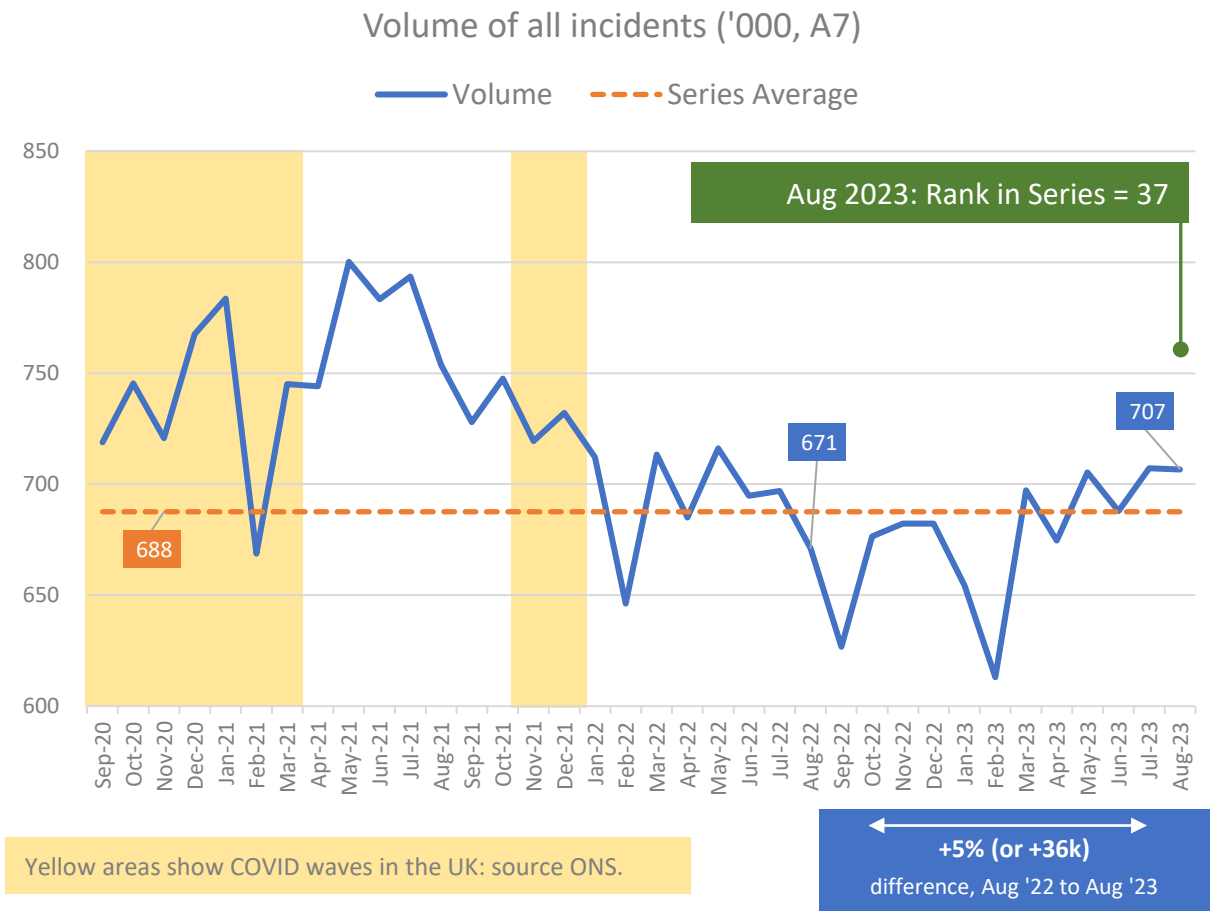
Section 2

Incidents and Response Time, by Category

10. Demand: All Incidents (A7)

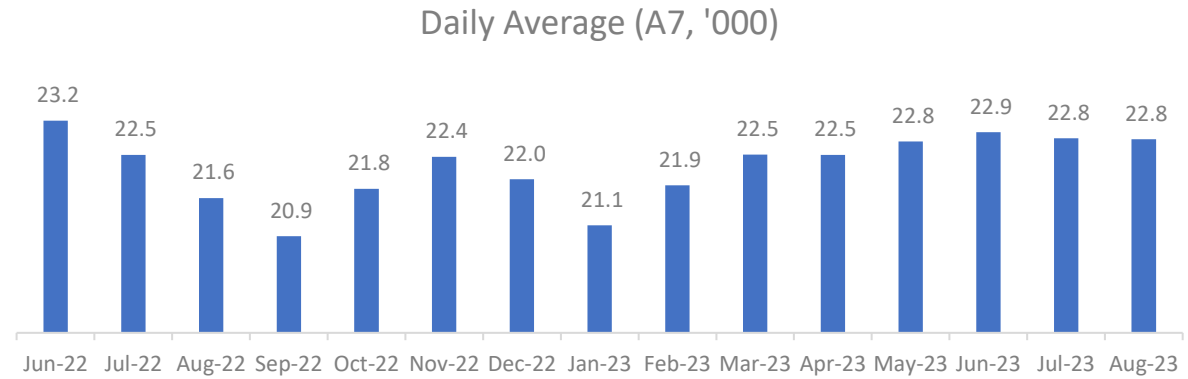
Demand was steady between July and August, the daily average showing 23-thousand incidents per day each month. August 2023's data exceeds August 2022 by 36-thousand incidents, but the annualised data show a year-on-year decrease and a drop of nearly one-million incidents between 2021 and 2022.

1. Monthly

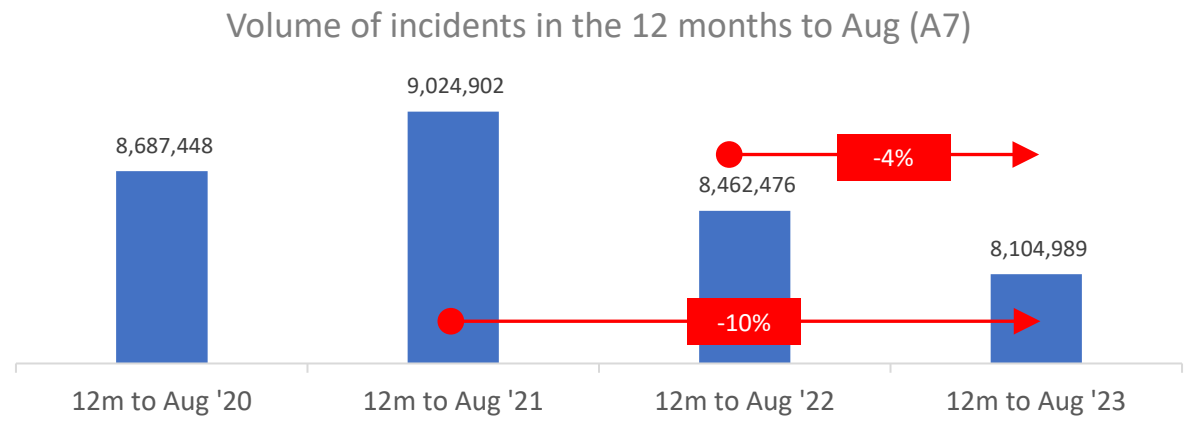


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



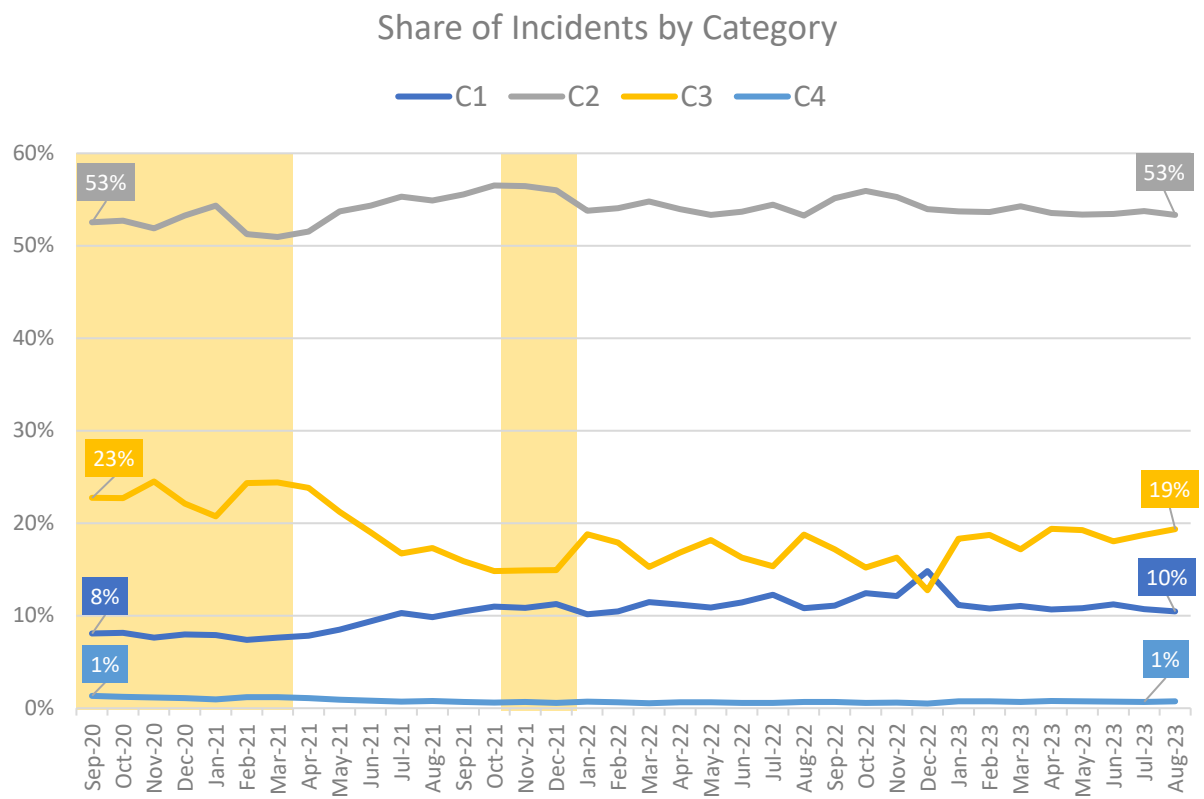
3. Annualised Data



11. Demand: Share of Incidents by Category

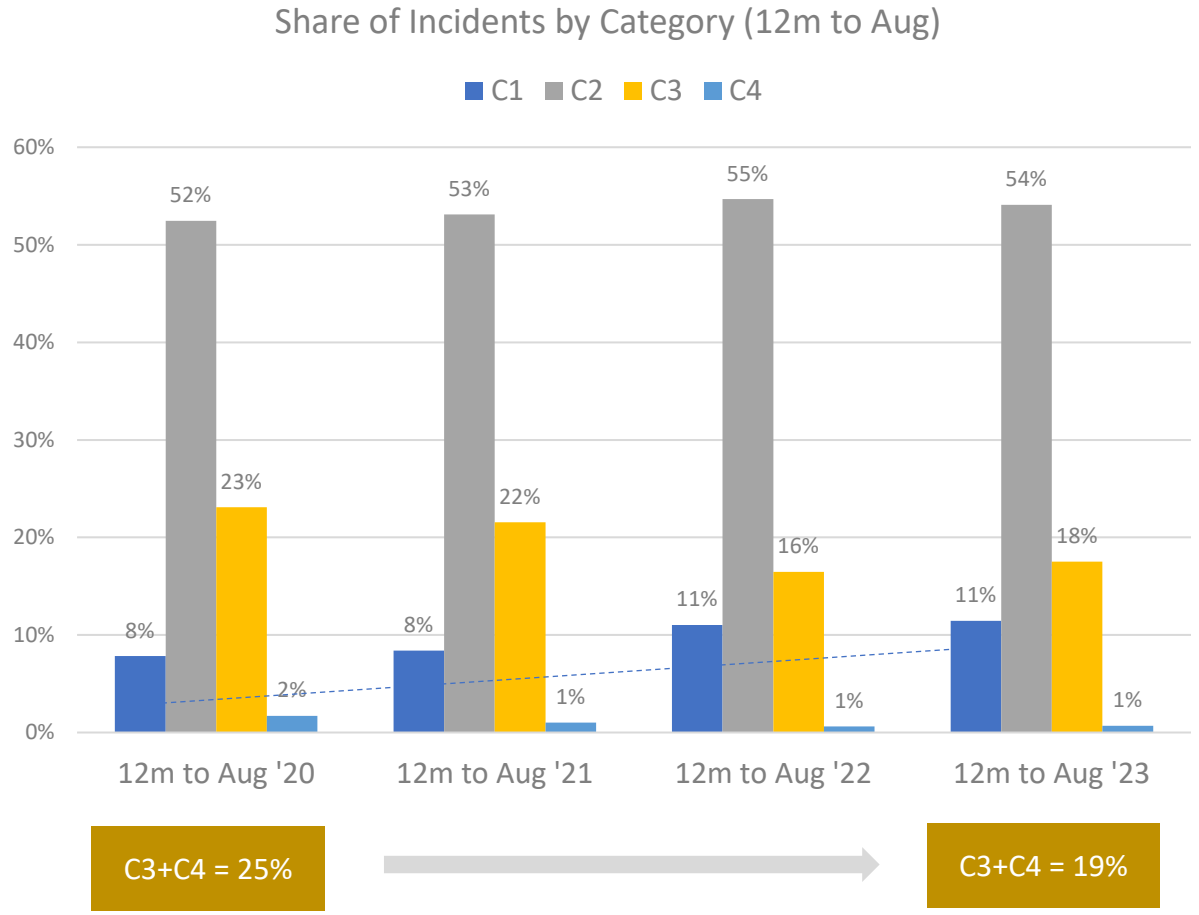
Distribution of incidents remains steady in August with Category-2 accounting for over half, and Category-1 accounting for one-in-ten. Over the past four years Category-3 and Category-4 have seen share of incidents decrease, falling from a quarter in the 12-months to August 2020 to 19-percent in the most recent period.

1. Monthly



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

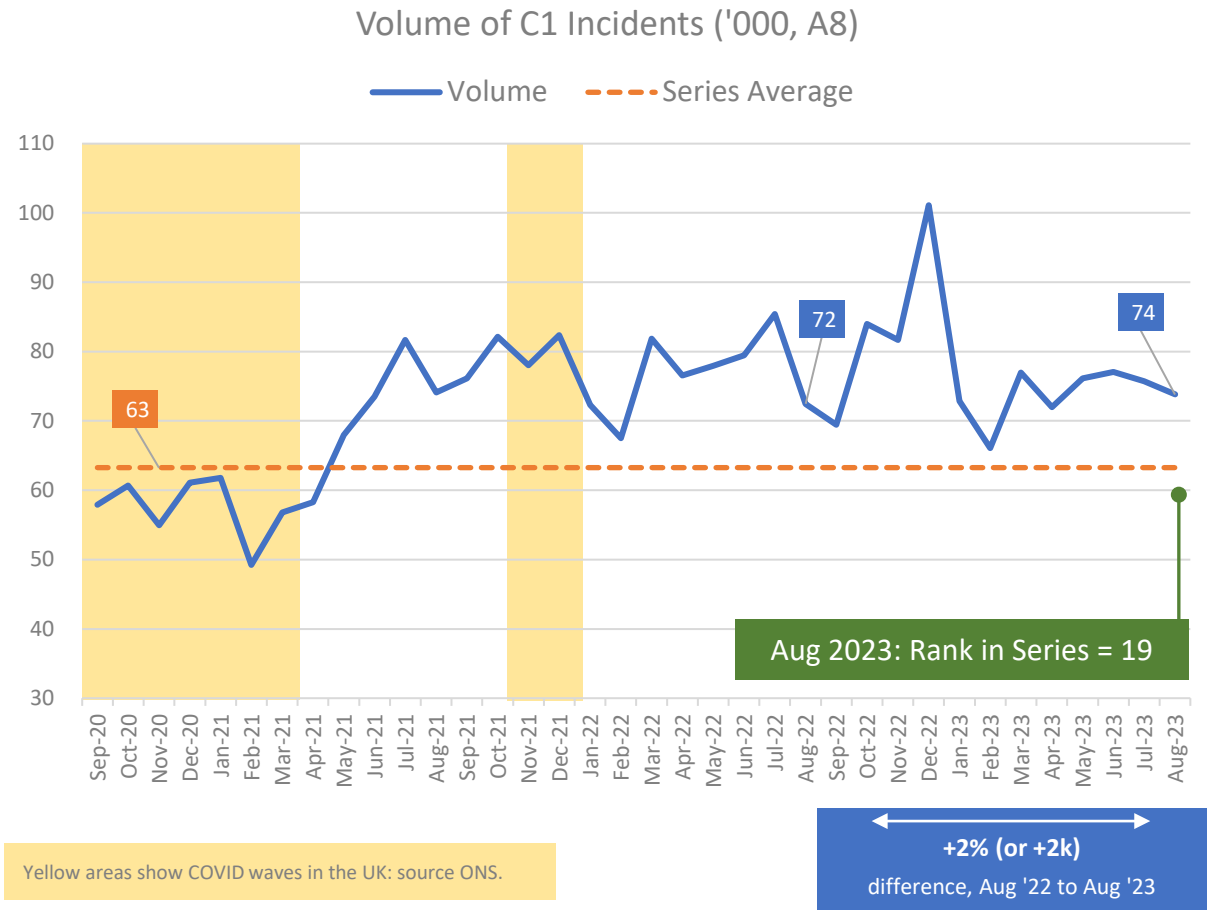
2. Annualised Data



12. Demand: Category-1 Incidents (A8)

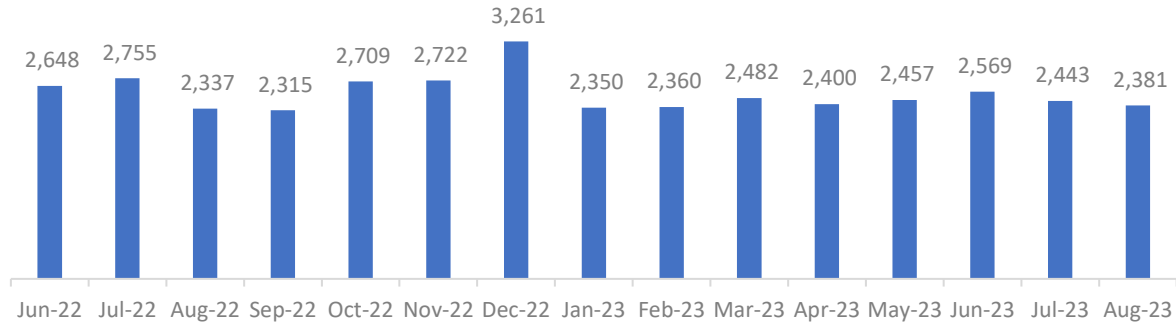
Category-1 volume dipped for the second consecutive month in August, although this decreased amounted to just 61-fewer incidents each day across England. The month returned two-thousand more incidents than in August 2022, although the annualised volume remains relatively unchanged from last period.

1. Monthly

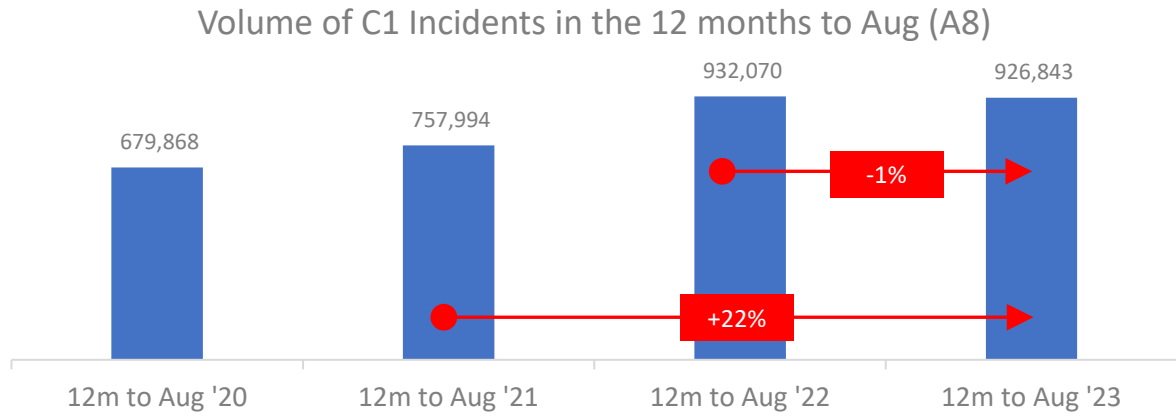


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



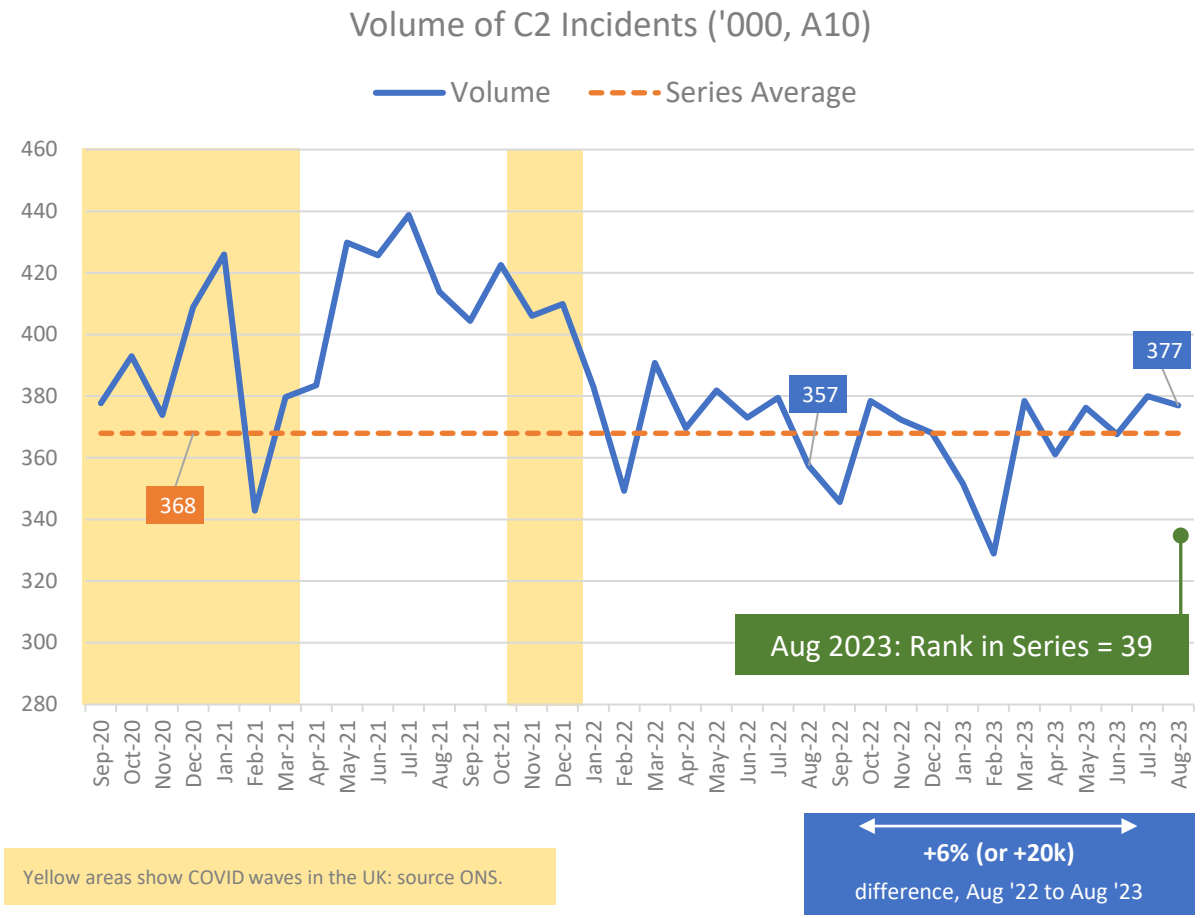
3. Annualised Data



13. Demand: Category-2 Incidents (A10)

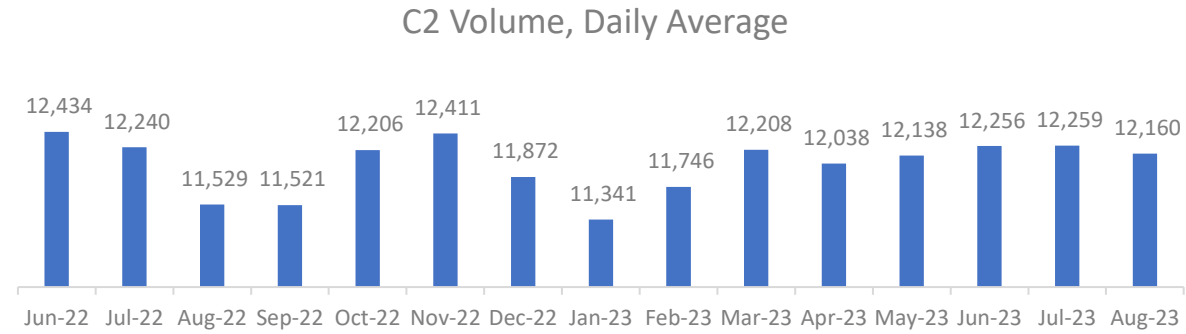
Following an increase between June and July, Category-2 volume dropped in August, with three-thousand fewer incidents across the month: nonetheless, this was greater than August 2022 by 20-thousand incidents. The annualised volume shows a drop in over 400-thousand incidents between 2021 and today,

1. Monthly

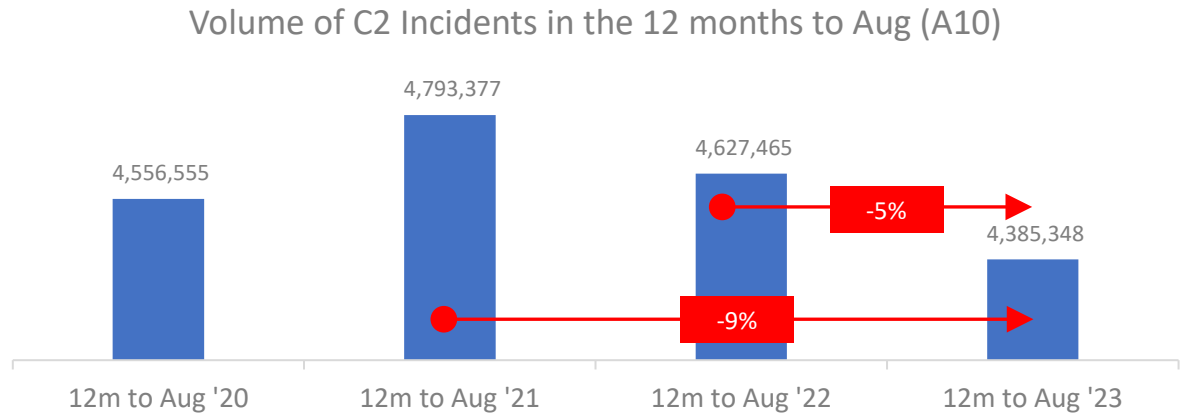


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



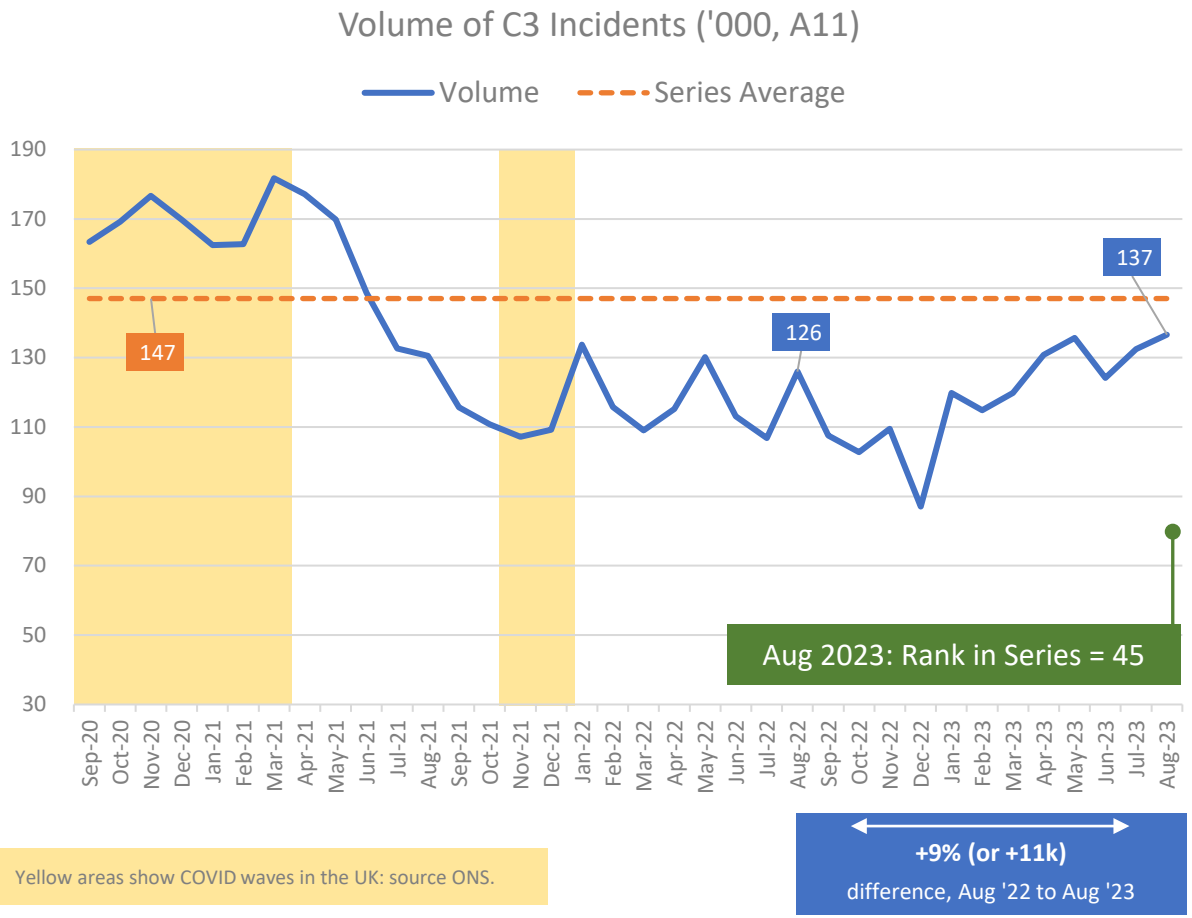
3. Annualised Data



14. Demand: Category-3 Incidents (A11)

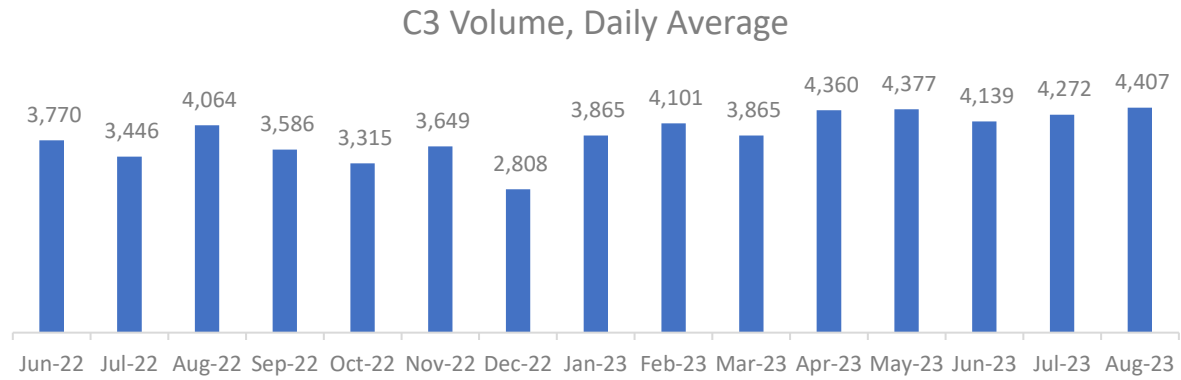
Category-3 incident volume increased for the second consecutive month, taking the total to 137-thousand, 11-thousand greater than August 2022. Following two years of consecutive decreases between 2020 and 2022, the annualised volume has increased with 28-thousand more incidents in the most recent period.

1. Monthly

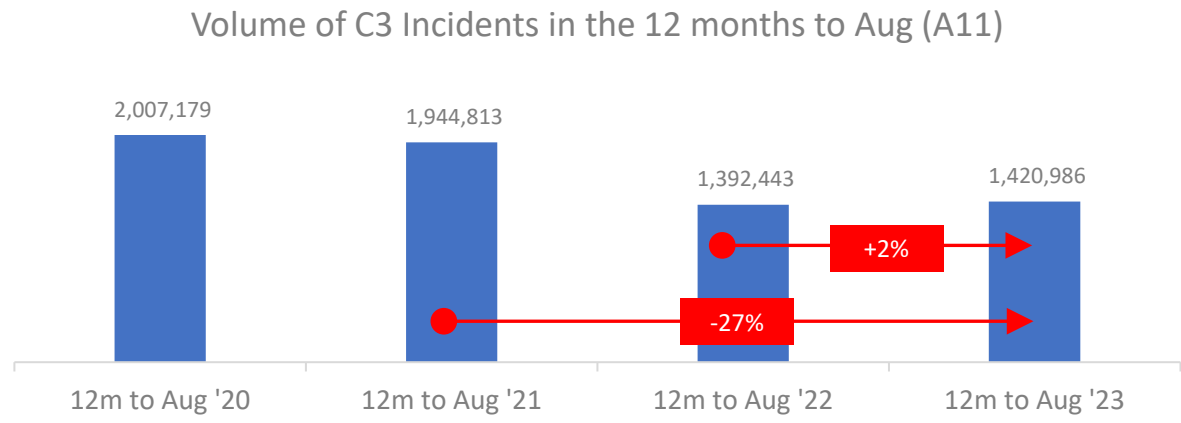


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



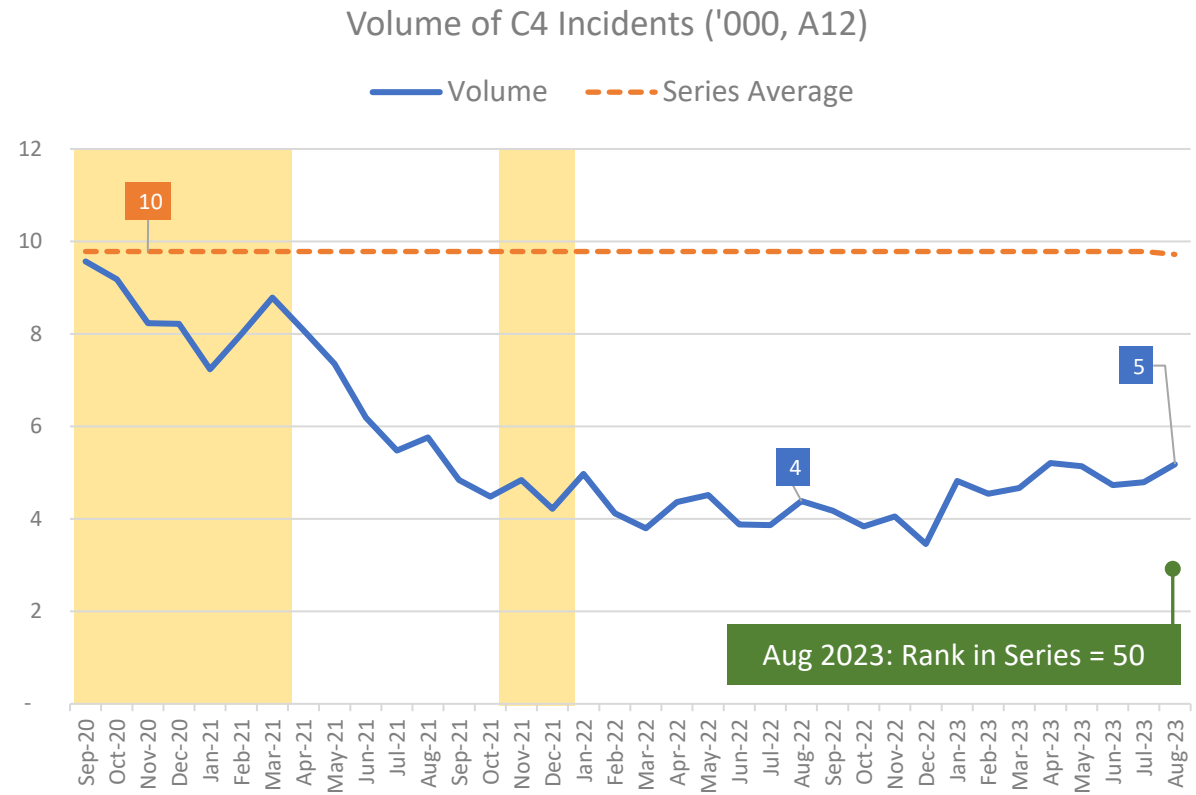
3. Annualised Data



15. Demand: Category-4 Incidents (A12)

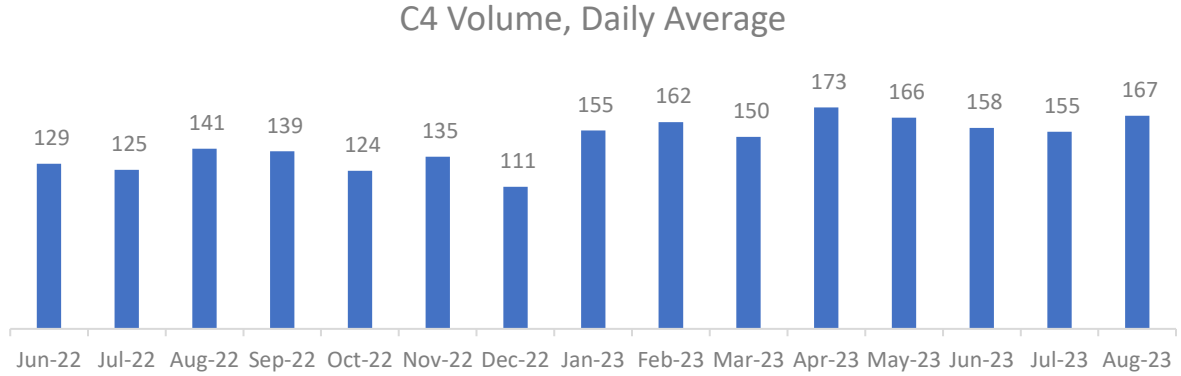
As with Category-3 incidents, Category-4 volume increased in August. At just over five-thousand, this is the third highest monthly volume in 2023 to-date, and just higher than the August 2023 figure. Once again, following a steep decrease from 2020 to 2022, the most recent annualised data show an increase.

1. Monthly

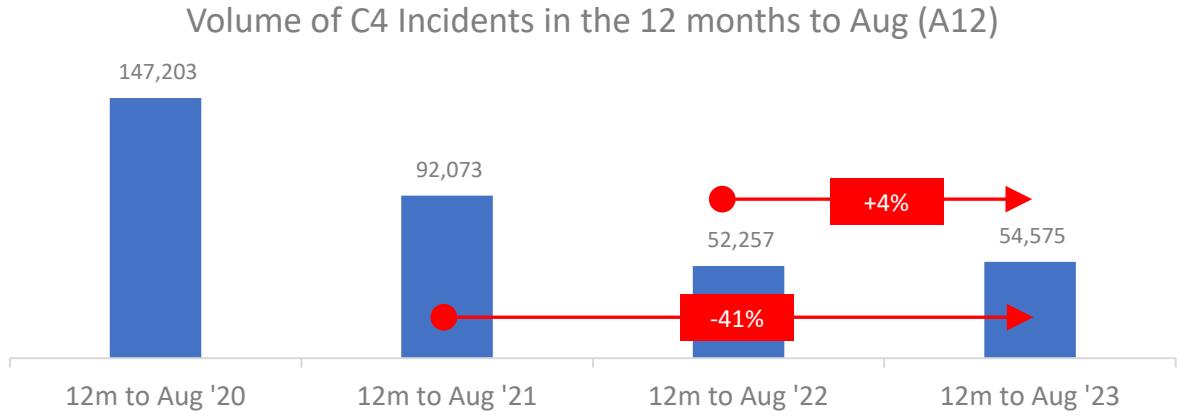


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



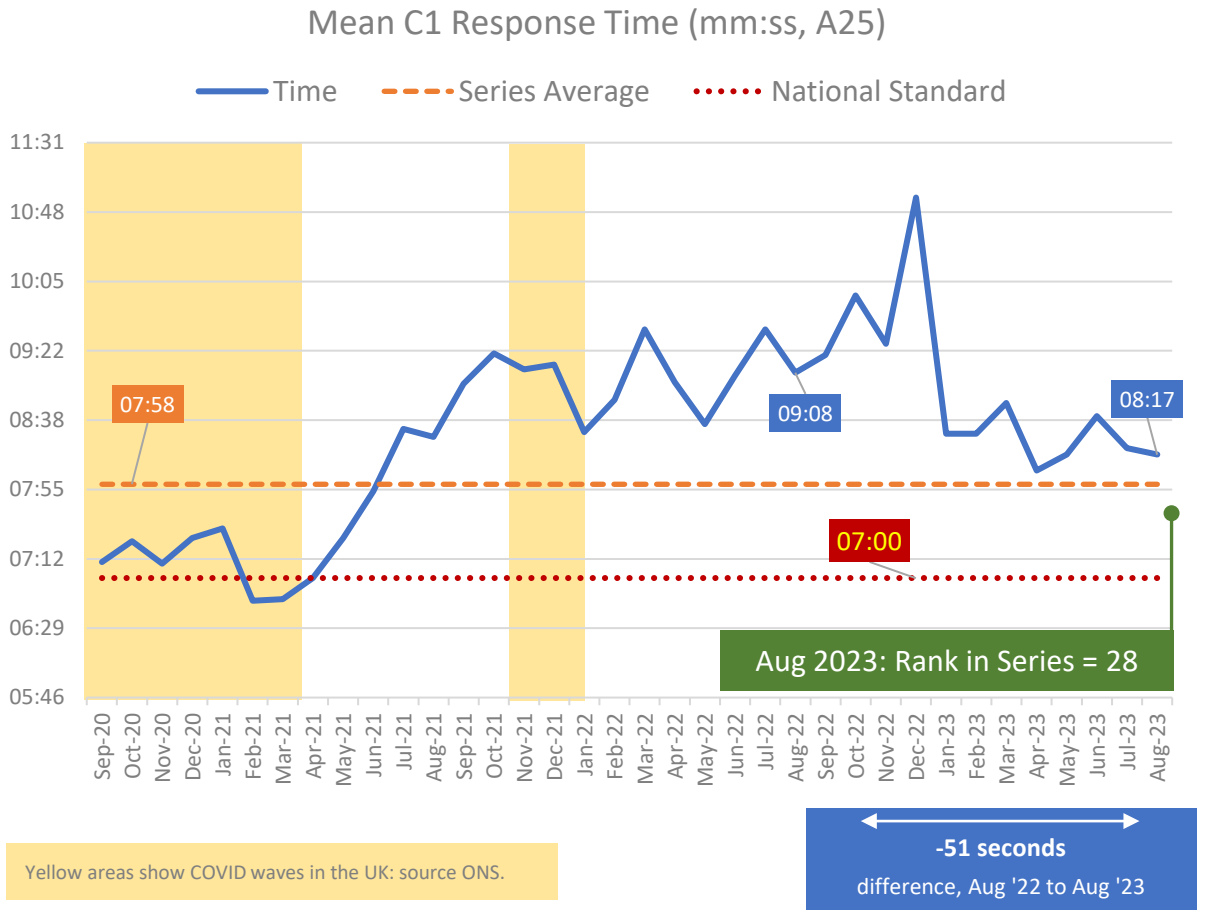
3. Annualised Data



16. Demand: Category-1 Response Times (Measures A25 and A26)

Both the mean, and 90th centile response times for Category-1 incidents decreased again in August. The mean time – although still over a minute slower than its national standard, was 51-seconds quicker than in August 2023, while the 90th centile was faster than its 15-minute standard for the fourth time in 2023.

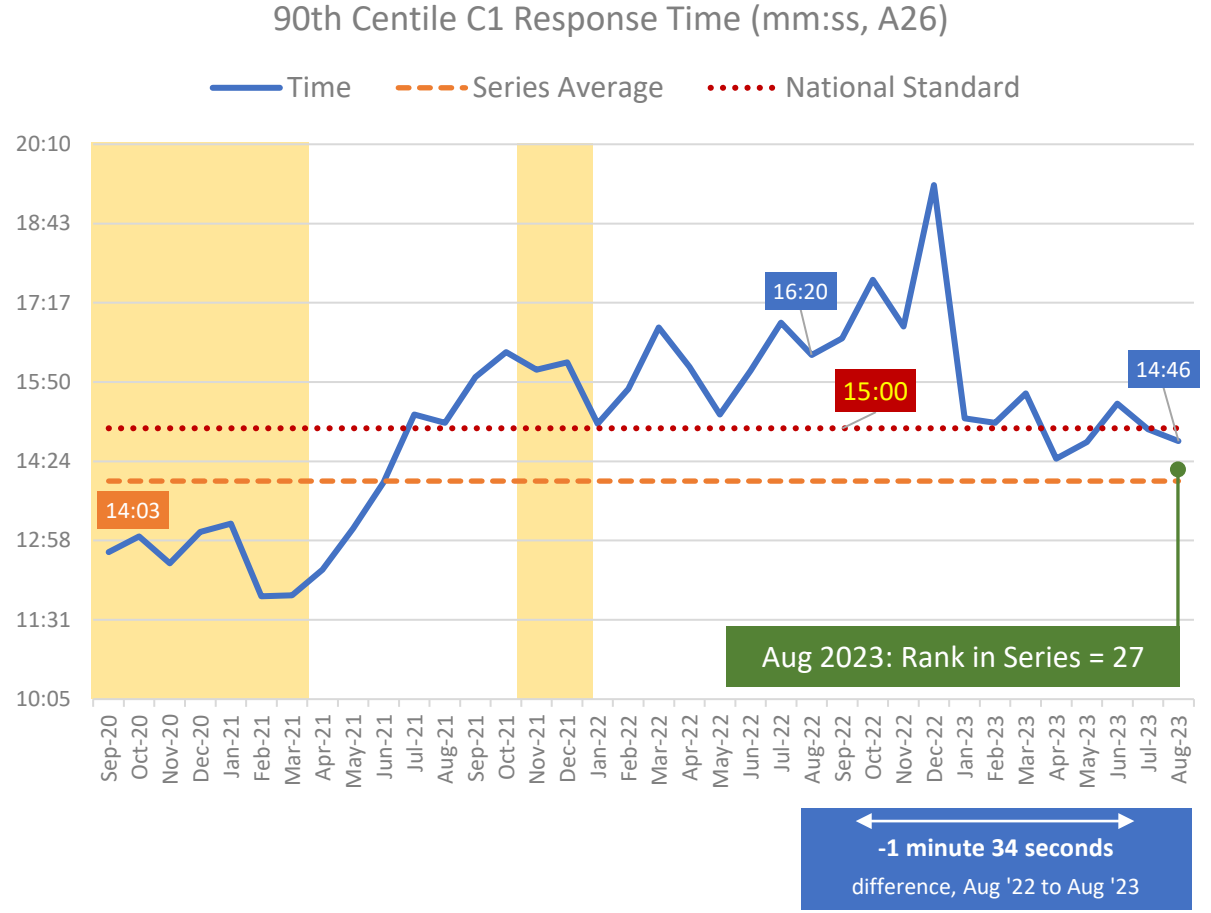
1. Mean



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

-51 seconds
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

2. 90th Centile

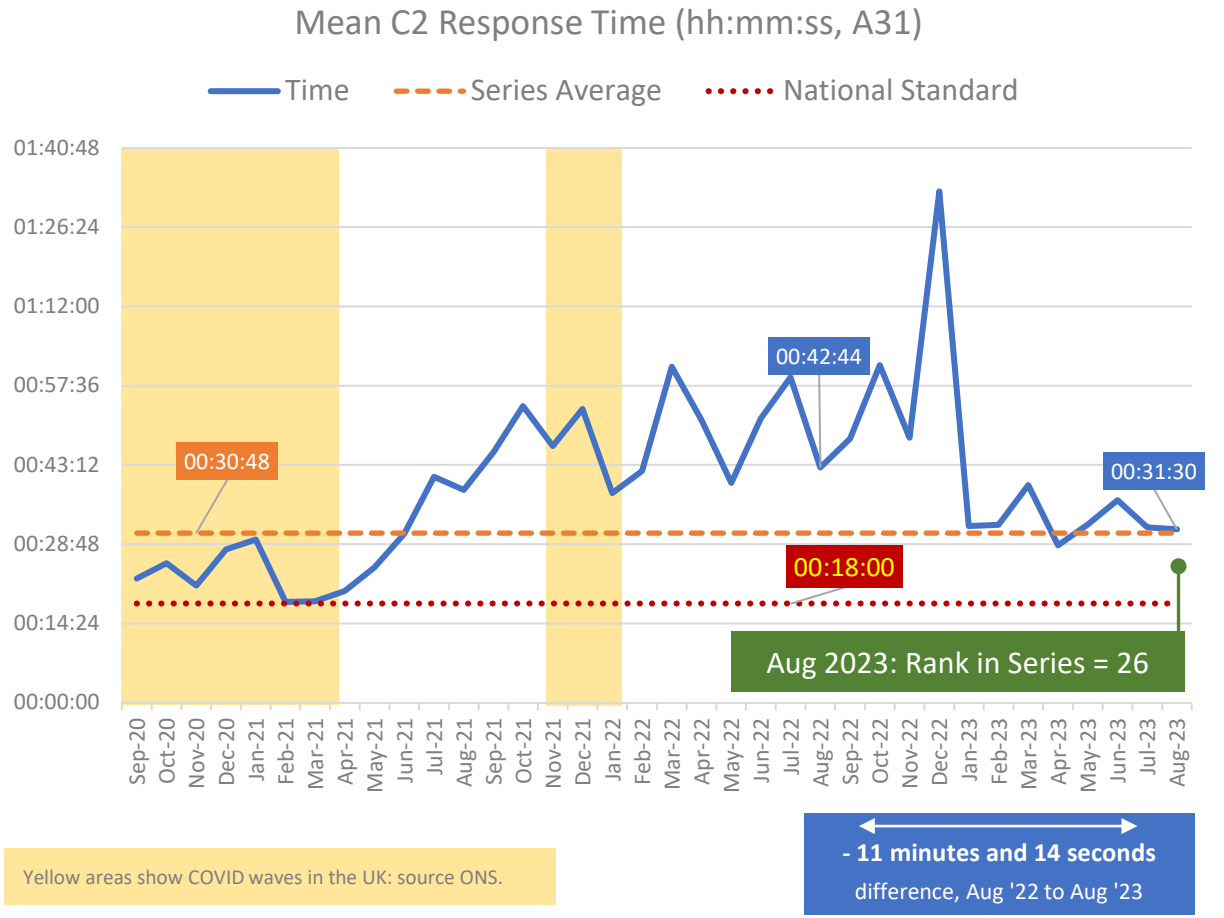


-1 minute 34 seconds
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

17. Demand: Category-2 Response Times (Measures A31 and A32)

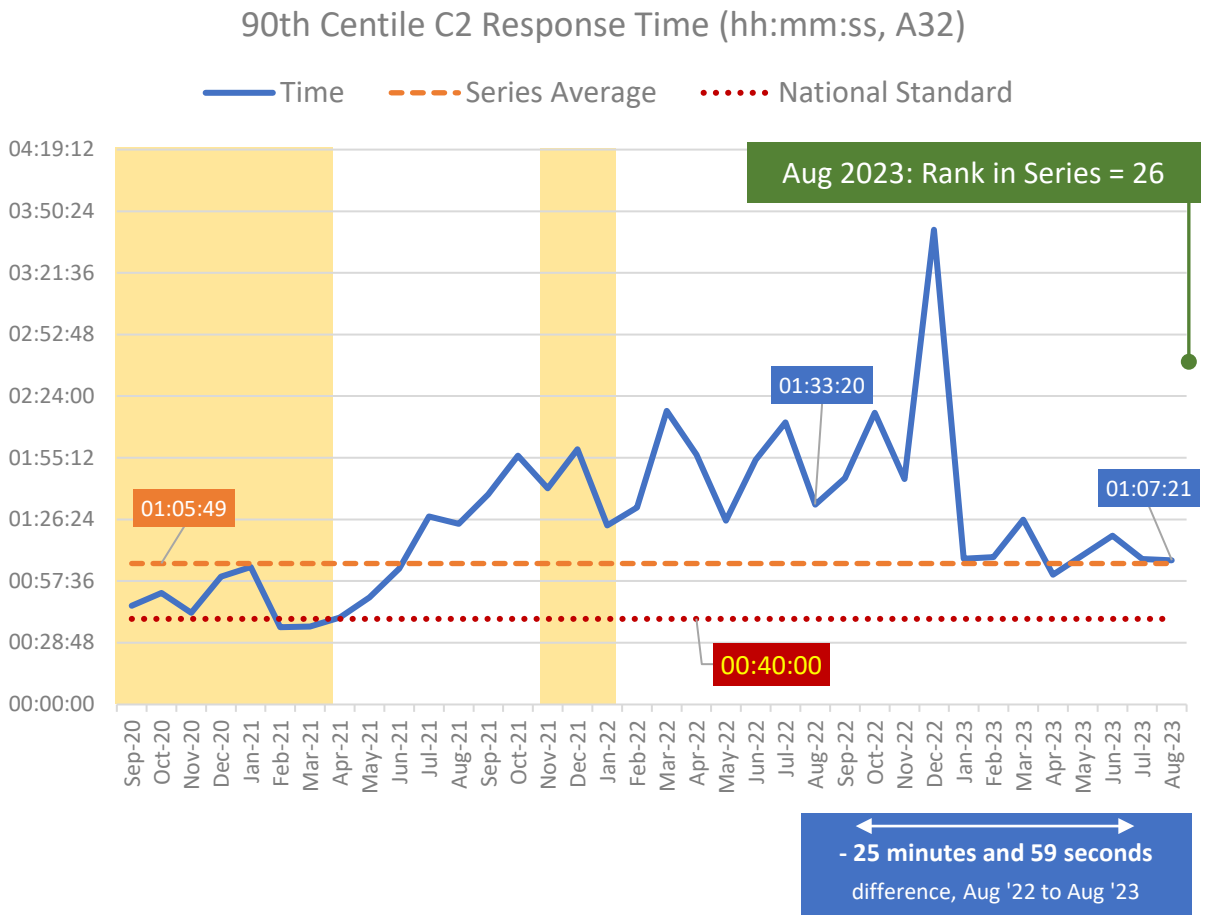
Category-2 response times were slightly faster in August than in July, but continue to exceed national standards for both mean, and 90th centile measures. That said, both measures are notably faster than their 2022 equivalent, with 2023 to-date recording some of the fastest response times since early 2021.

1. Mean



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

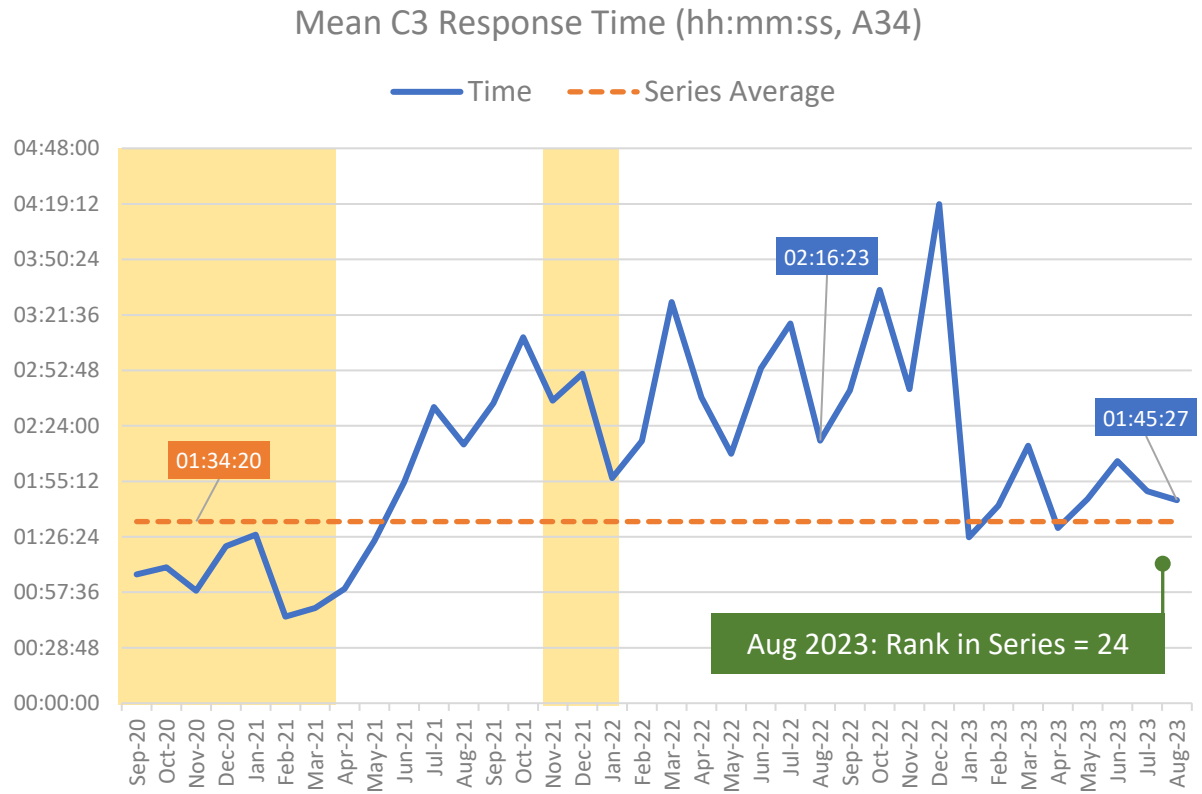
2. 90th Centile



18. Demand: Category-3 Response Times (Measures A34 and A35)

Mean Category-3 response time was faster for the second consecutive month – and over half-an-hour quicker than in August 2022. The 90th centile measure has exceeded its national standard since early 2021, but – as seen else where – has seen response times improve, compared with this time last year.

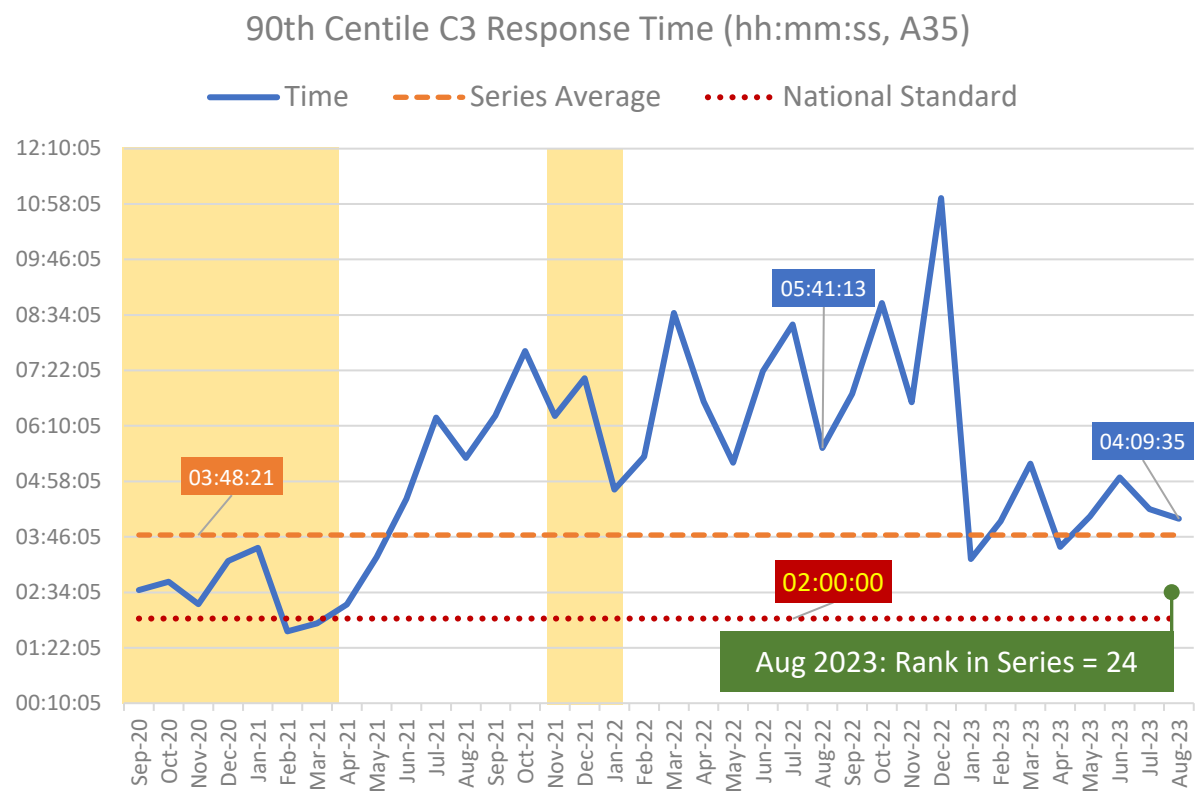
1. Mean



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

-30 minutes and 56 seconds
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

2. 90th Centile

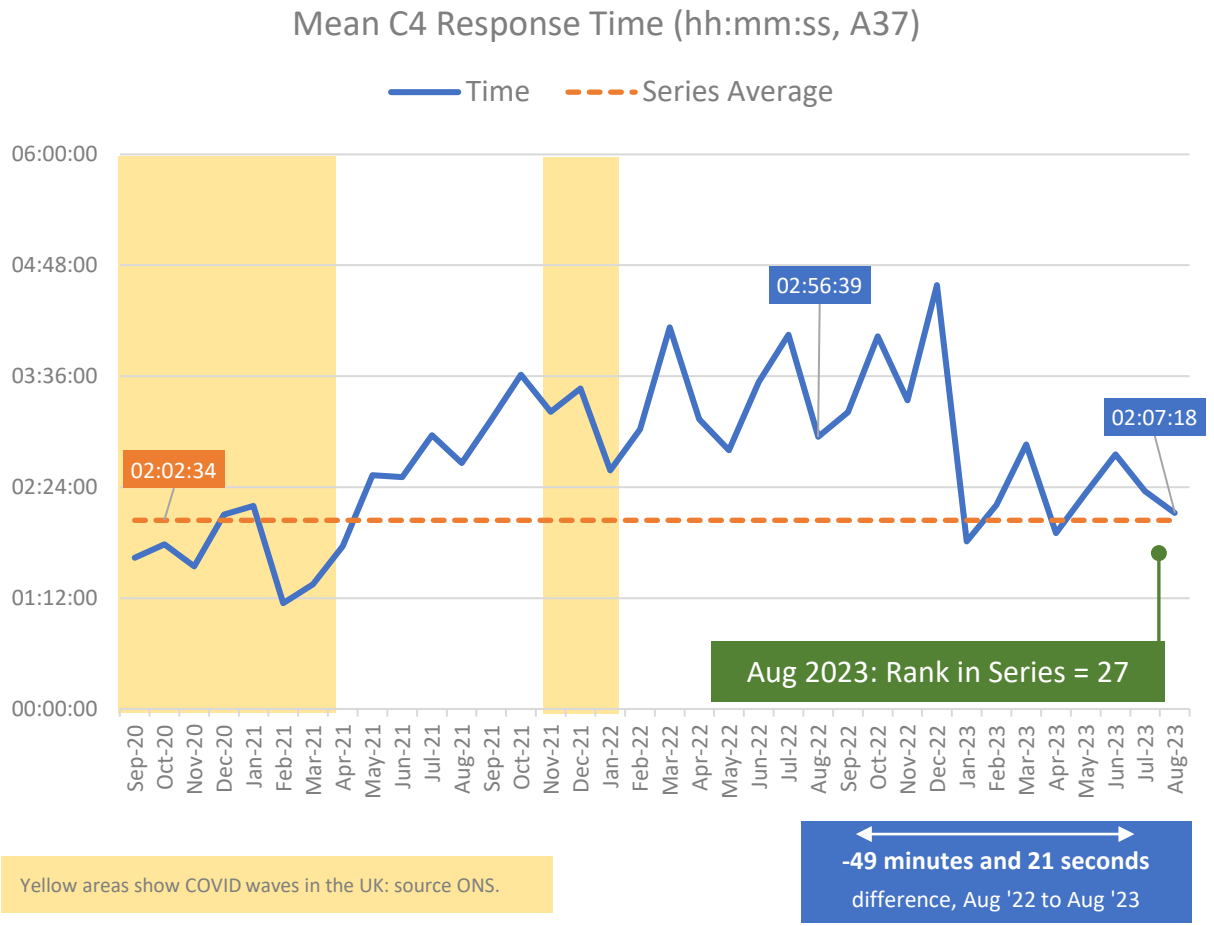


-1 hour and 32 minutes
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

19. Demand: Category-4 Response Times (Measures A37 and A38)

Category-4 response times reflect the trends seen for other Categories: both measures improved month-on-month, both recording significantly faster times than in August 2022, but both remain slower than the series average (mean) and national standard (90th centile).

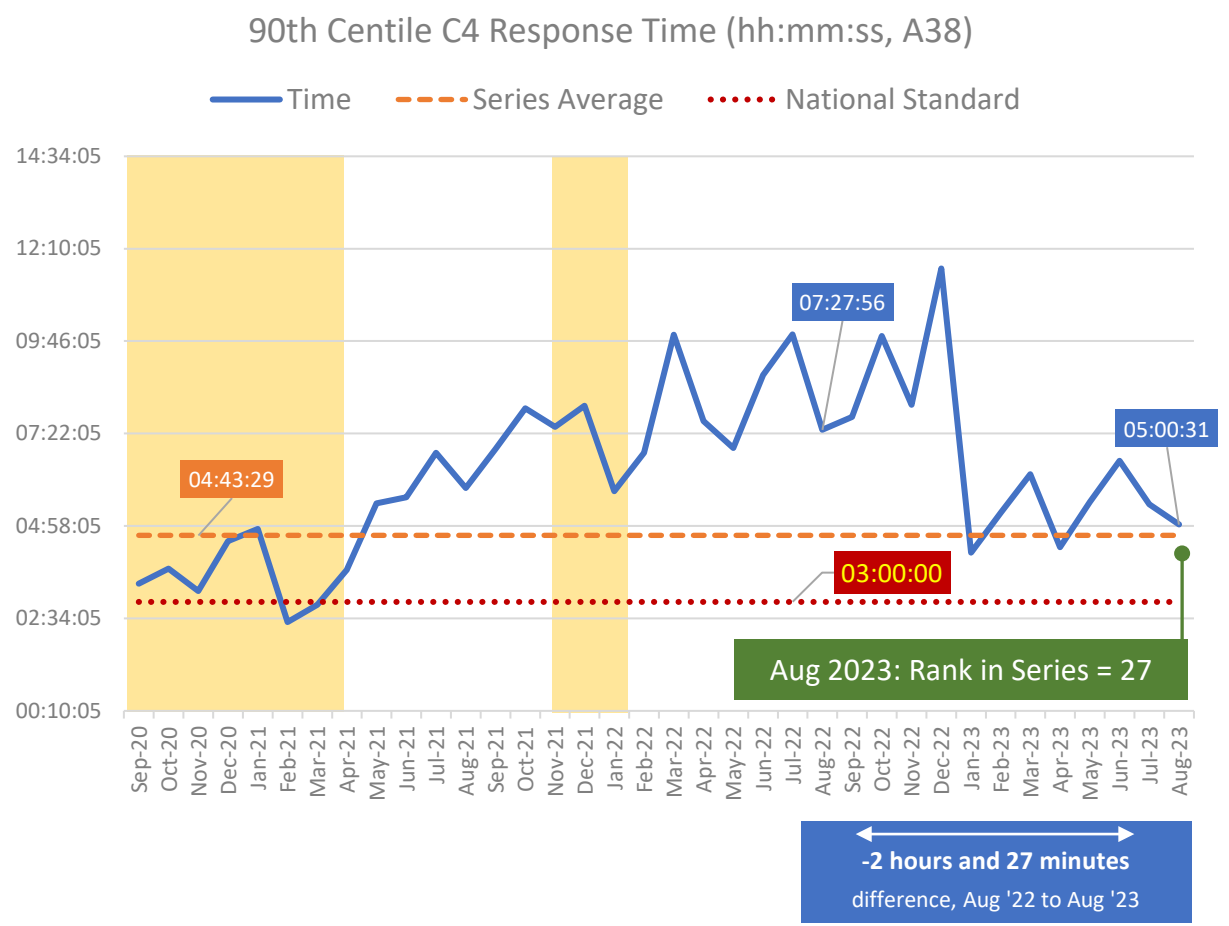
1. Mean



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

-49 minutes and 21 seconds
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

2. 90th Centile



-2 hours and 27 minutes
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

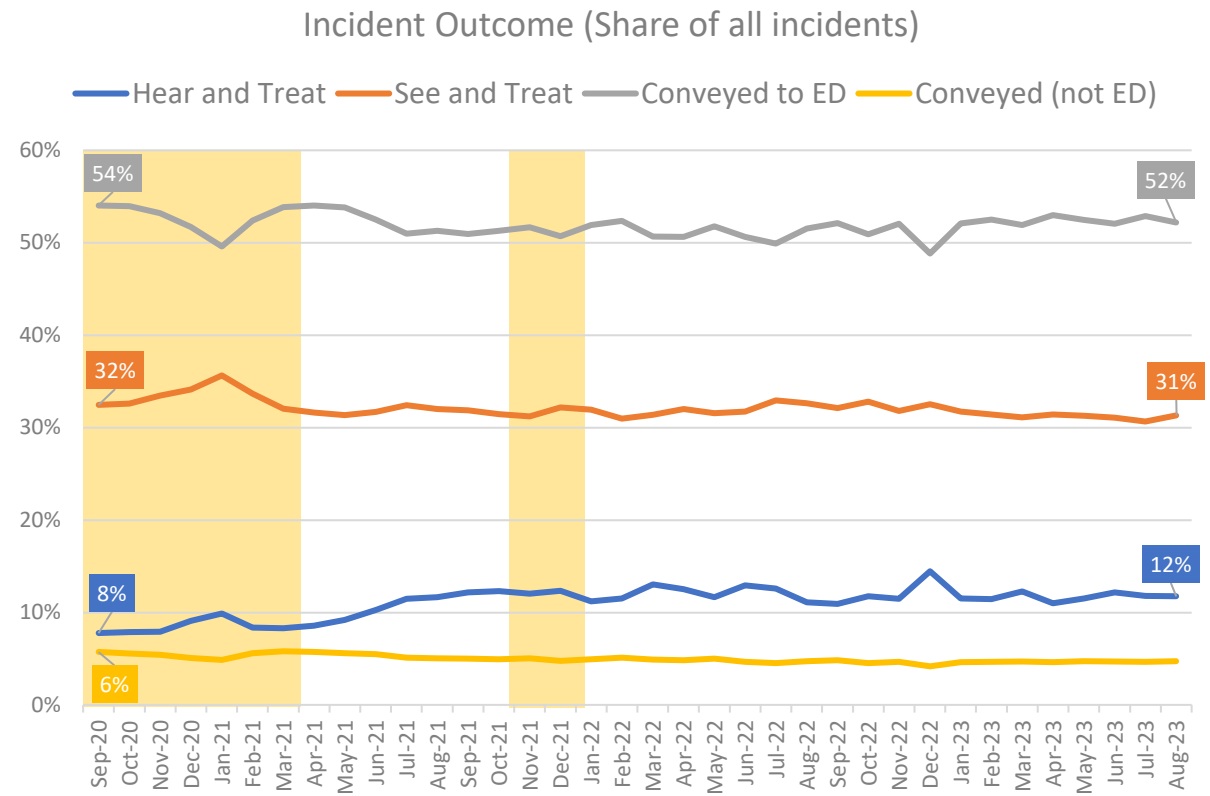
Section 3

Incidents by Response Outcome

21. Share of Incidents by Response Outcome

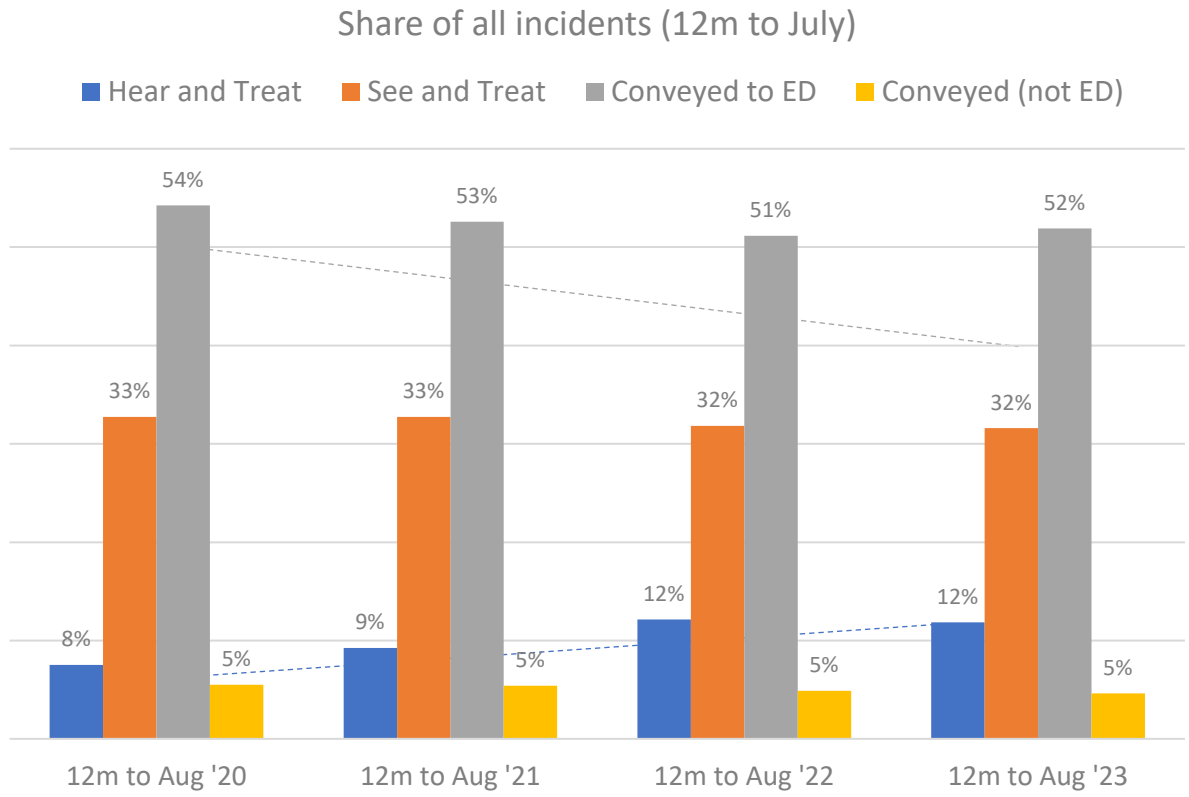
The share of incidents by response type was largely unchanged between July and August. As outlined in previous reports, the annualised data for the past four years continue to show a slight decrease in share of incidents requiring conveyance to Emergency Departments, while the Hear-and-Treat responses have grown.

1. Monthly



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

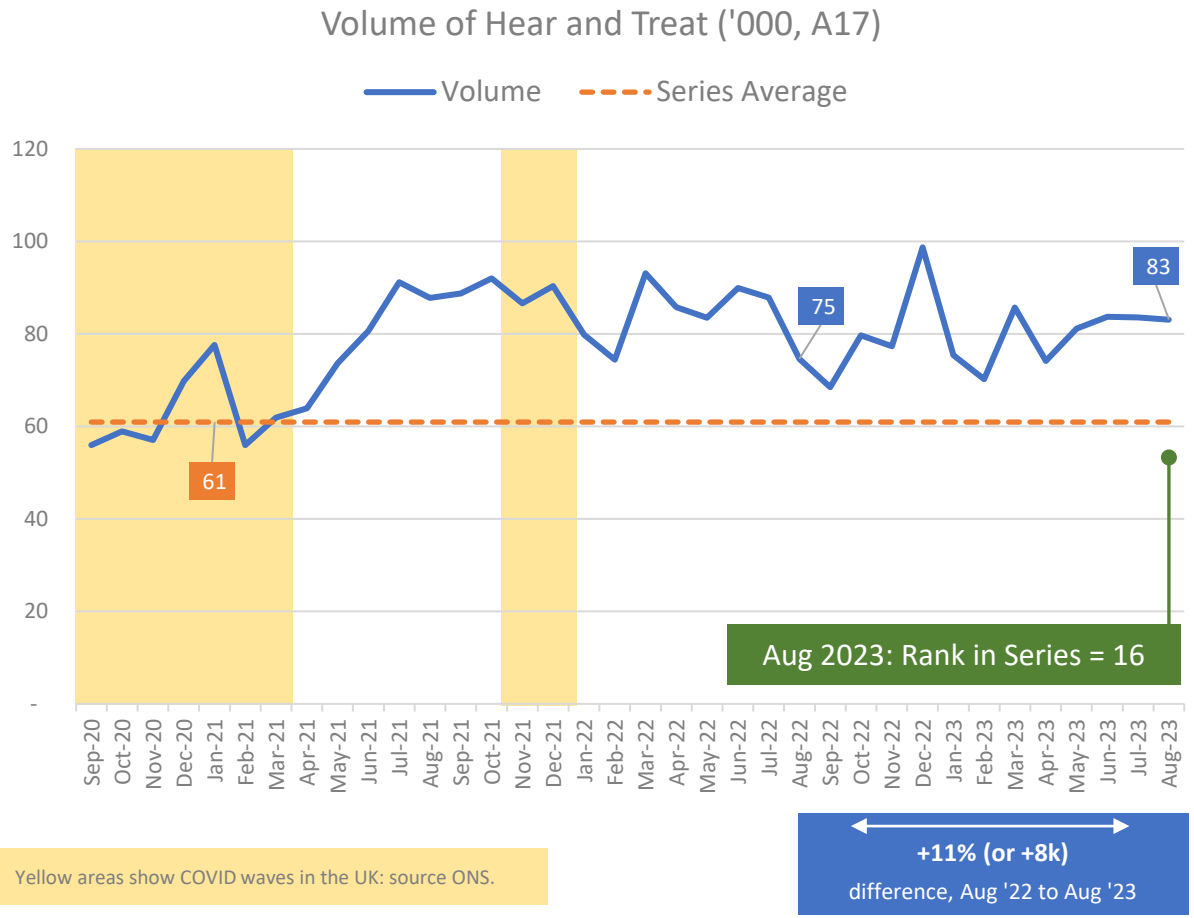
2. Annualised Data



22. Hear and Treat (measure A17)

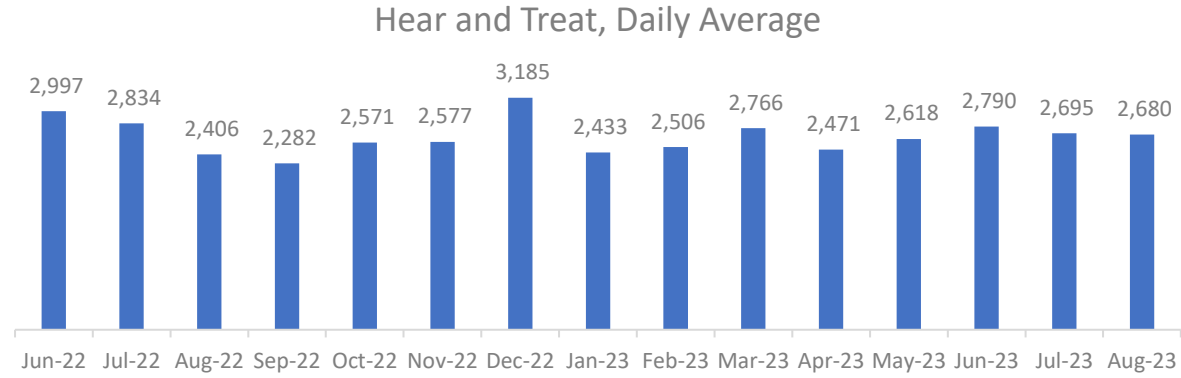
Volume of Hear-and-Treat responses remained largely unchanged between July and August, but exceed the volume recorded last August by eight-thousand. After three years of increases in the annualised data between 2020 and 2022, the most recent period sees volume dipping back below the million mark.

1. Monthly

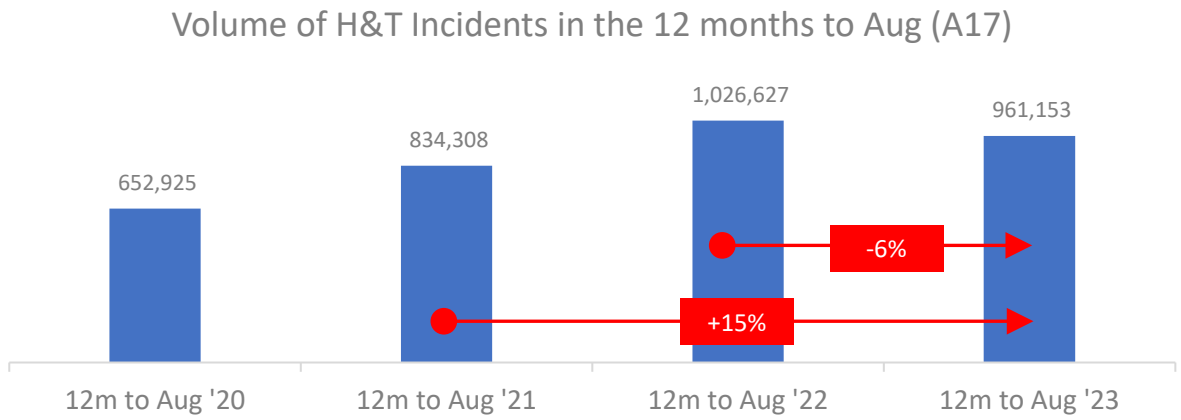


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



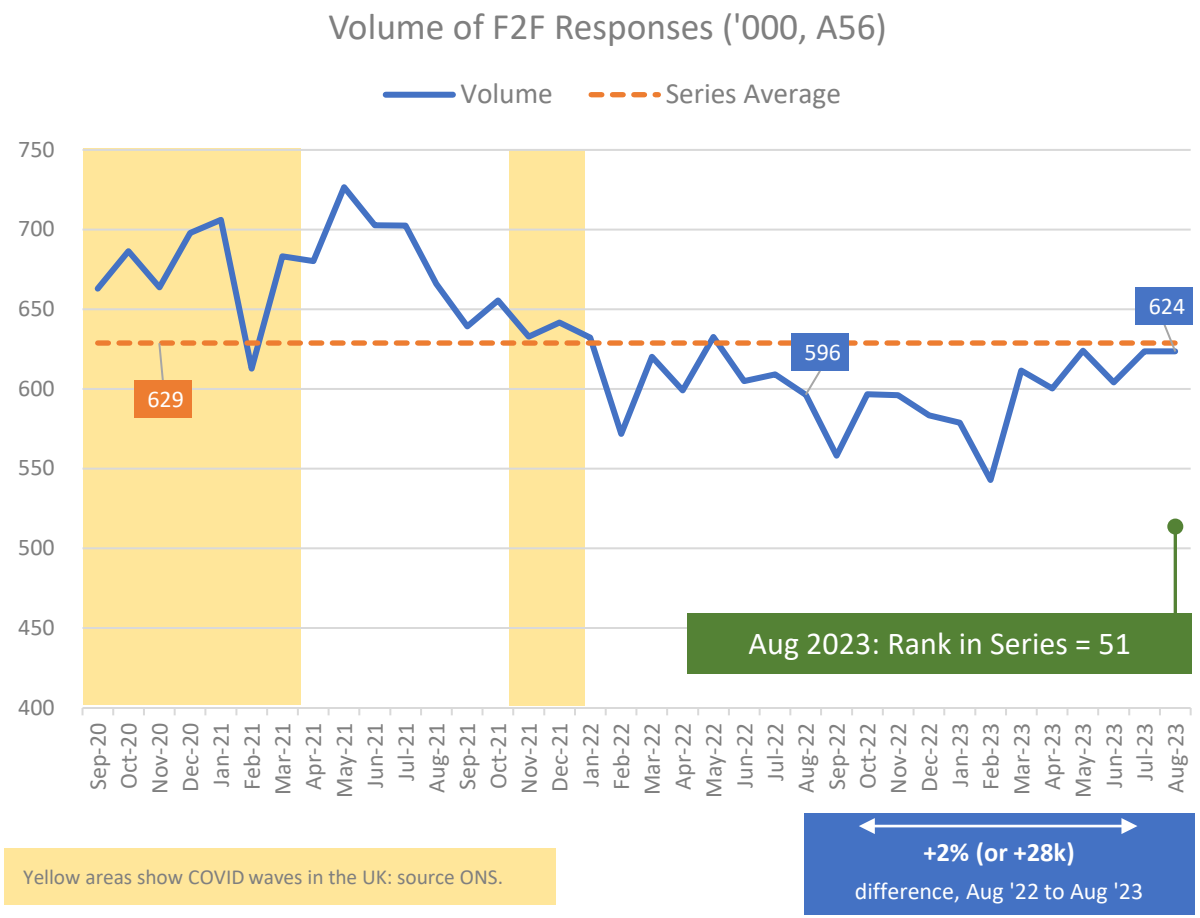
3. Annualised Data



23. Face to Face (measure A56)

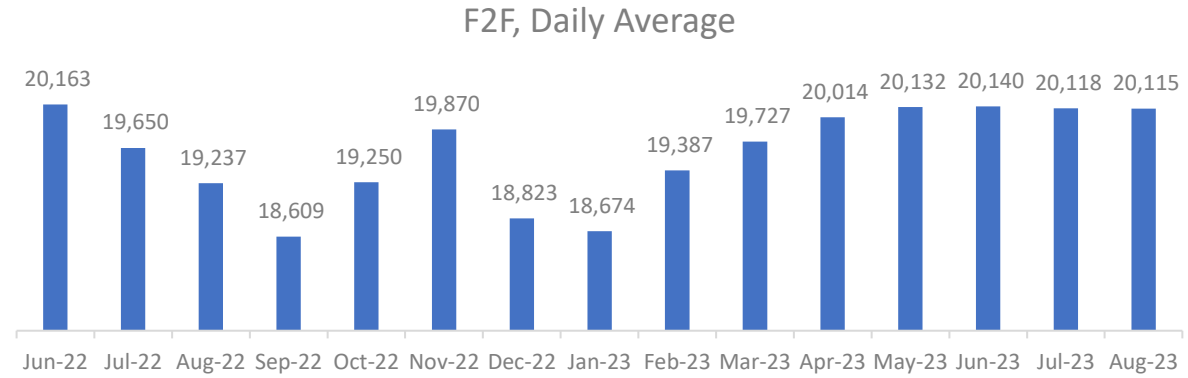
Face-to-face responses remained steady between July and August, but the most recent month exceeds August 2022 by 28-thousand incidents. Average daily volume of incidents increased steadily between January and April, but has since plateaued.

1. Monthly

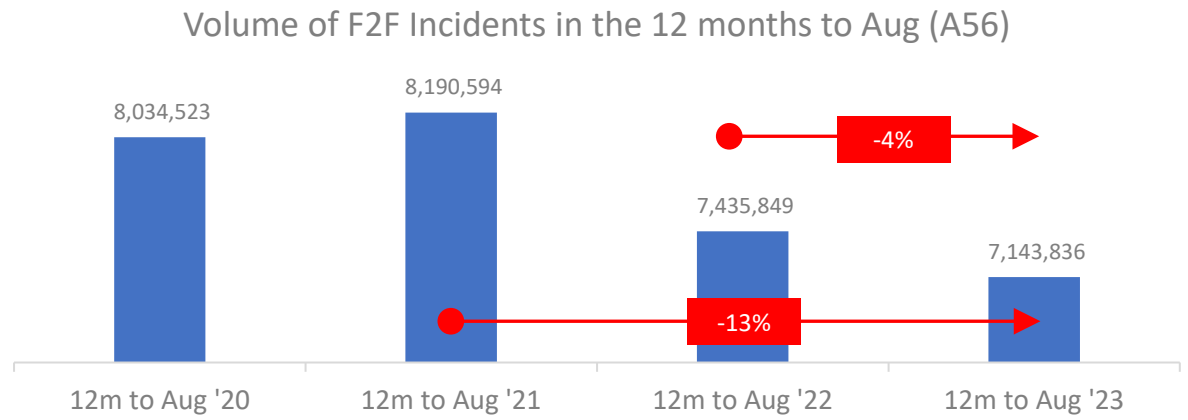


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



3. Annualised Data

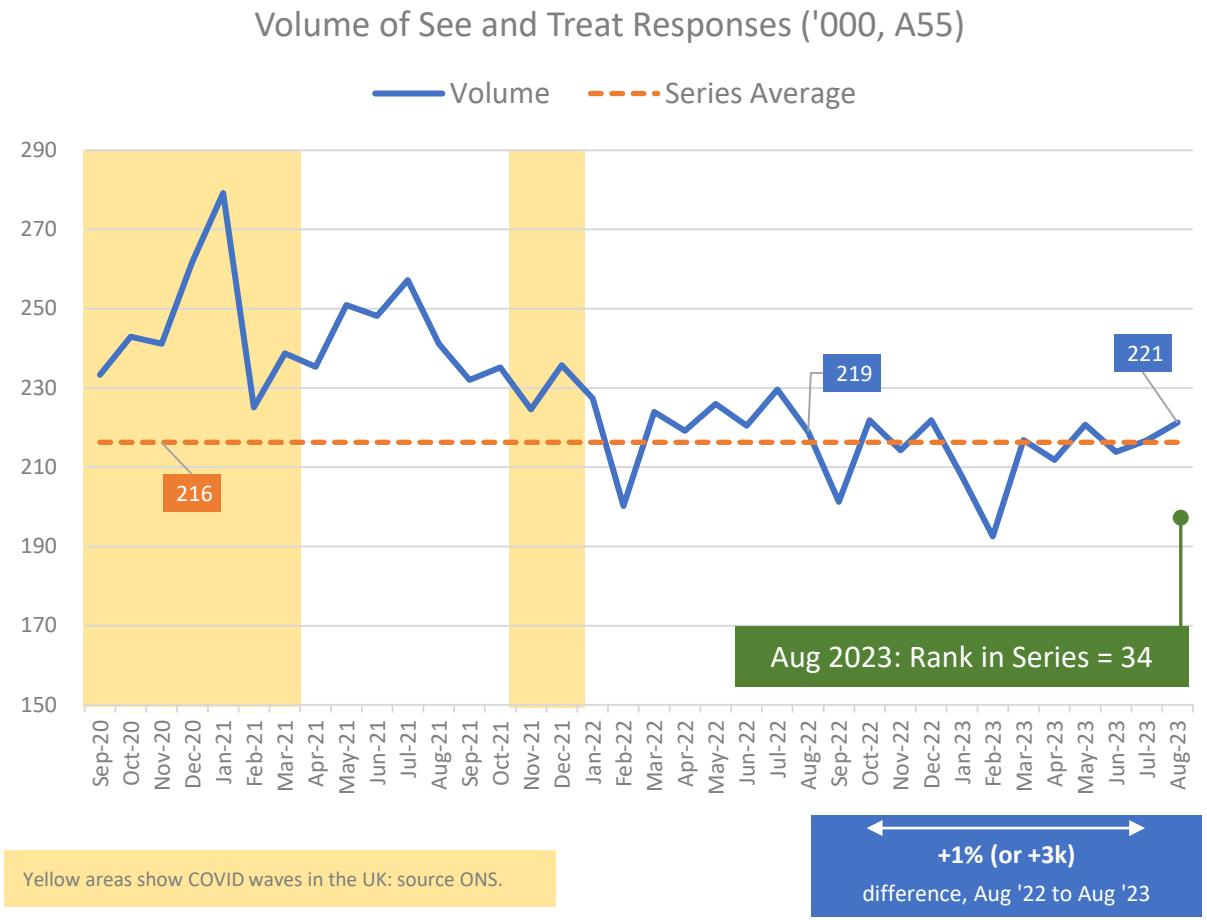


24. See and Treat (measure A55)

ASSOCIATION OF AMBULANCE CHIEF EXECUTIVES

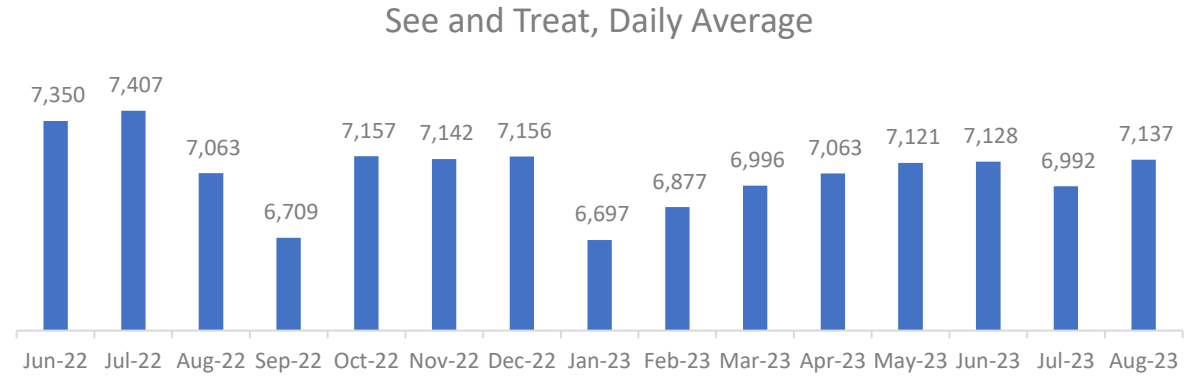
See-and-treat responses increased between July and August to reach the highest monthly volume in 2023 to-date. The annualised data, however, show a second year of shrinkage with nearly 400-thousand fewer incidents in the 12-months to August 2023, compared with the same period two years ago.

1. Monthly

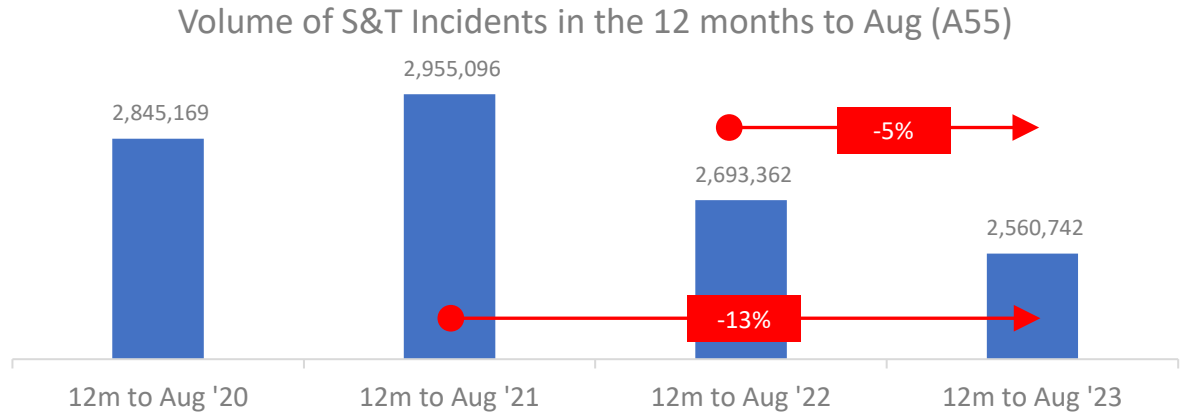


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



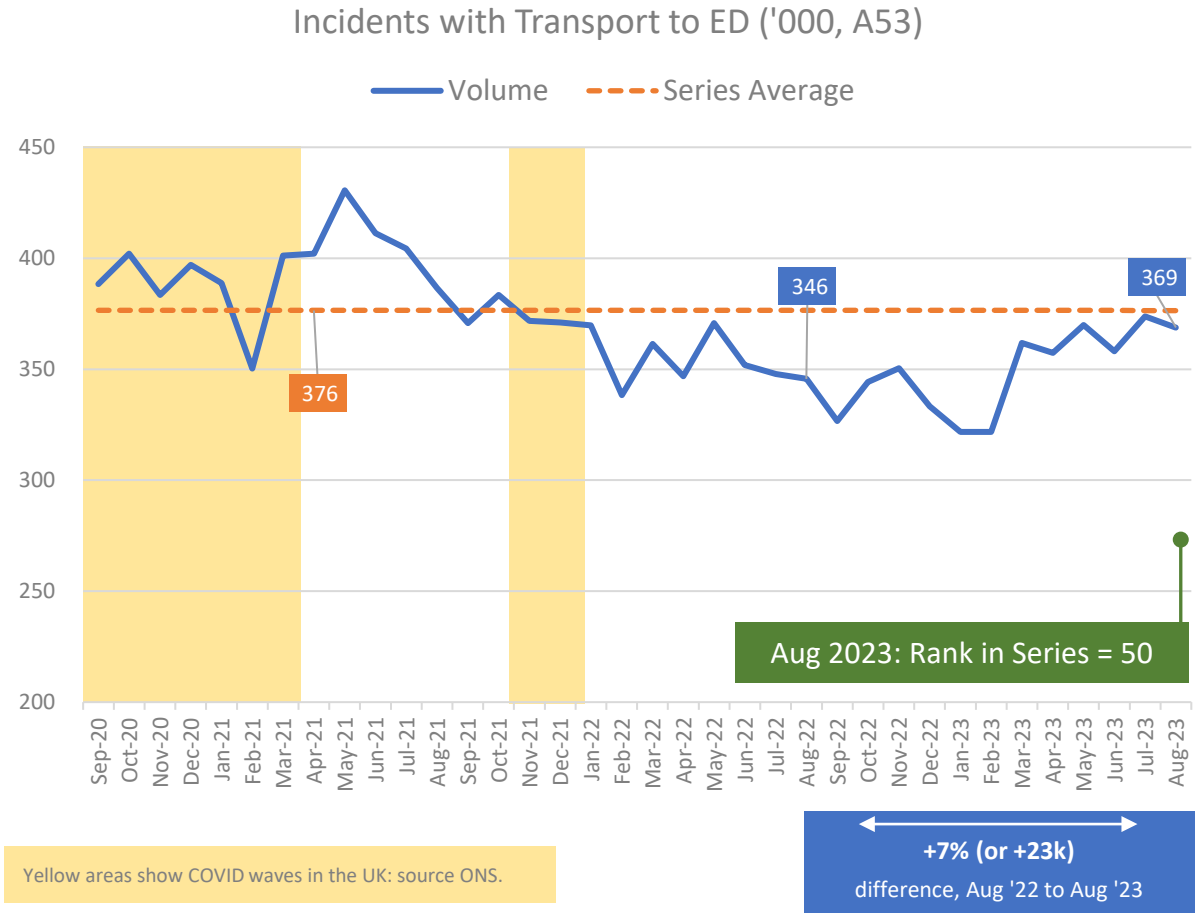
3. Annualised Data



25. Transported to Emergency Departments (measure A53)

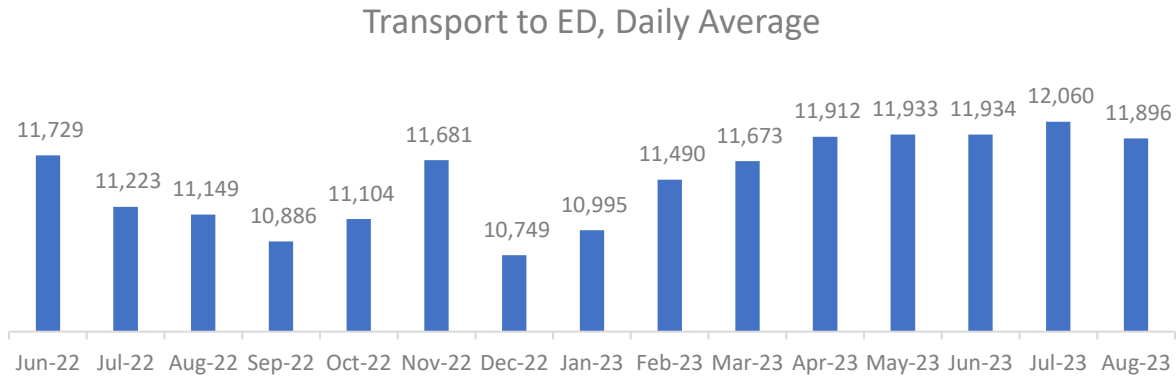
Following a six month high in July, the number of patients conveyed to emergency departments dipped in August, although the month recorded 23-thousand more of these responses than August 2023. Meanwhile, the annualised data show volume decreasing over time.

1. Monthly

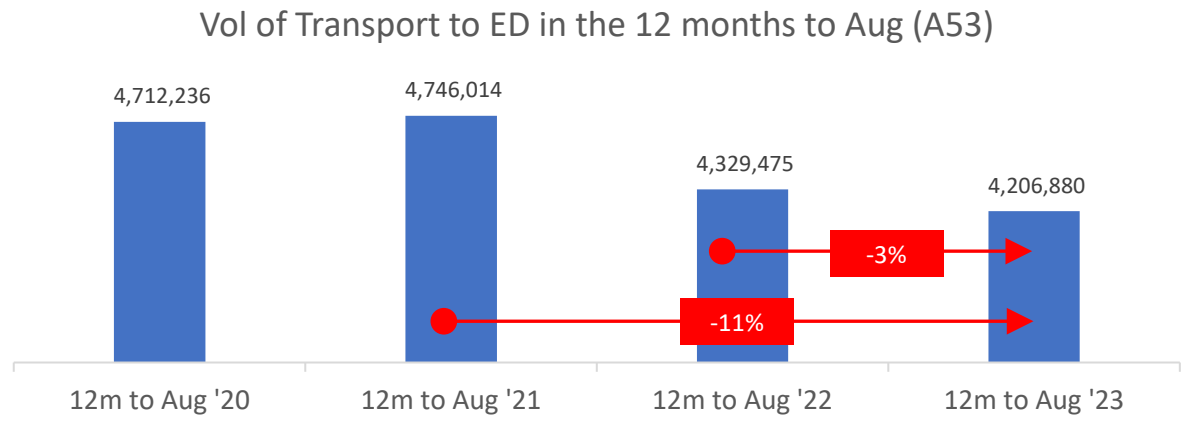


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



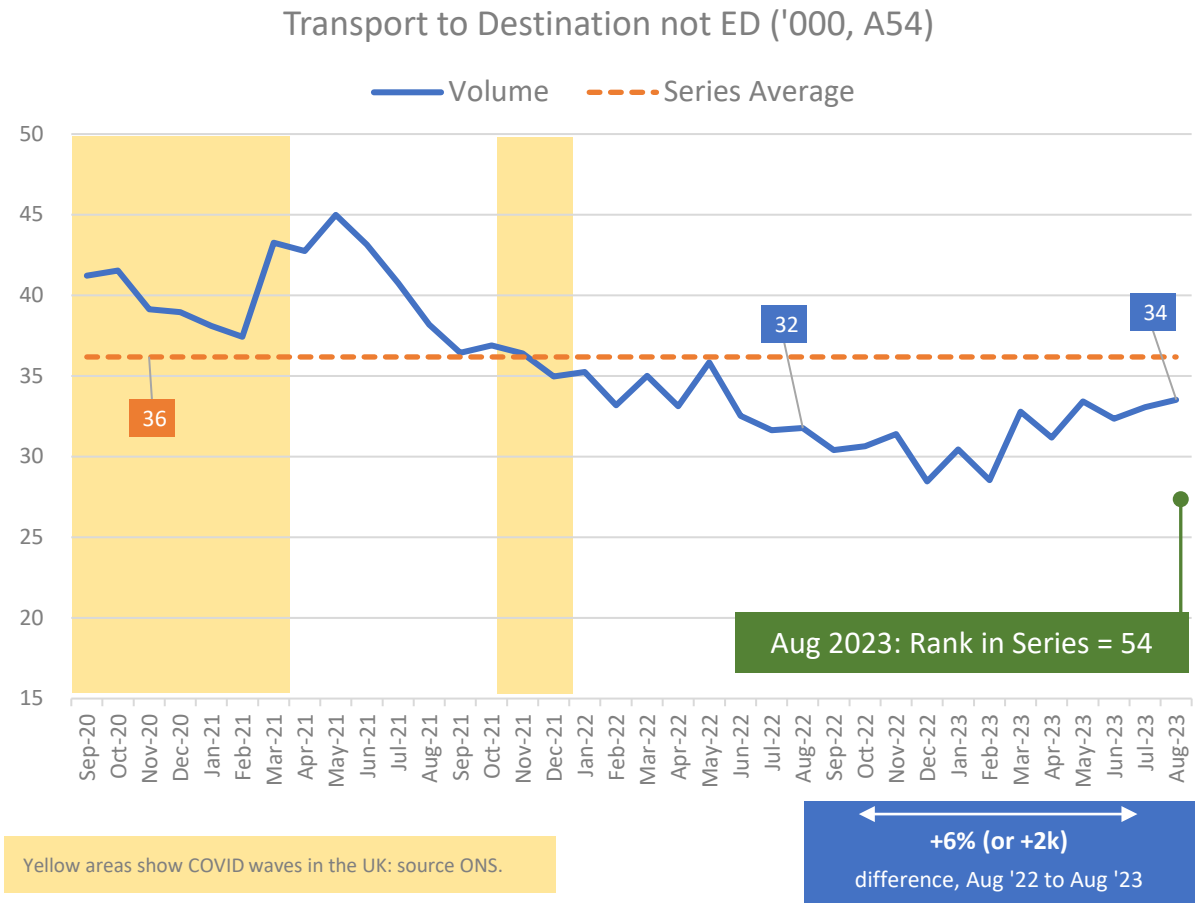
3. Annualised Data



26. Transported to Destination other than ED (measure A54)

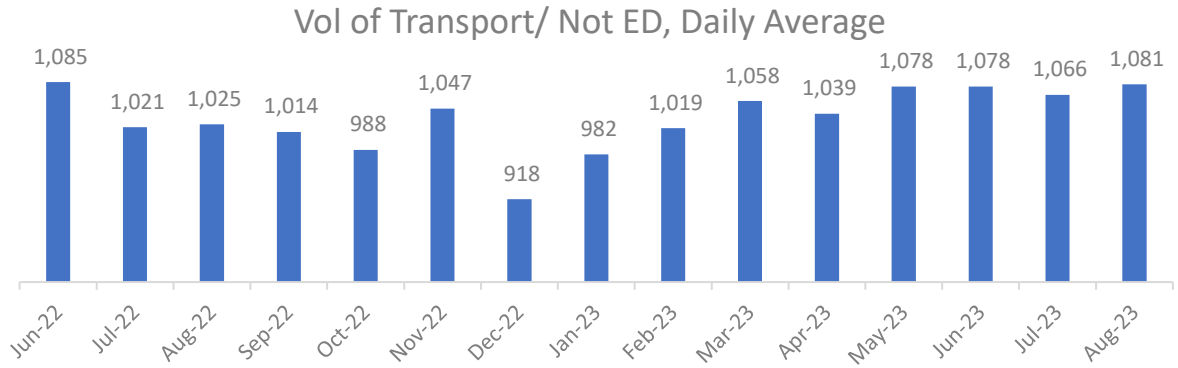
The volume of patients transported to destinations other than an ED increased slightly in August, reaching 34-thousand across the month (two-thousand more than August 2023). Again, the annualised data show a decrease in these response types over time.

1. Monthly

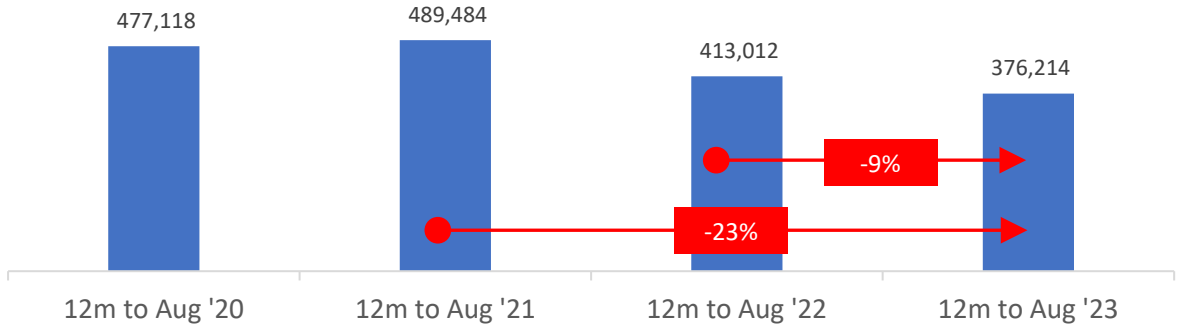


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

2. Average Daily Volume



3. Annualised Data



Section 4

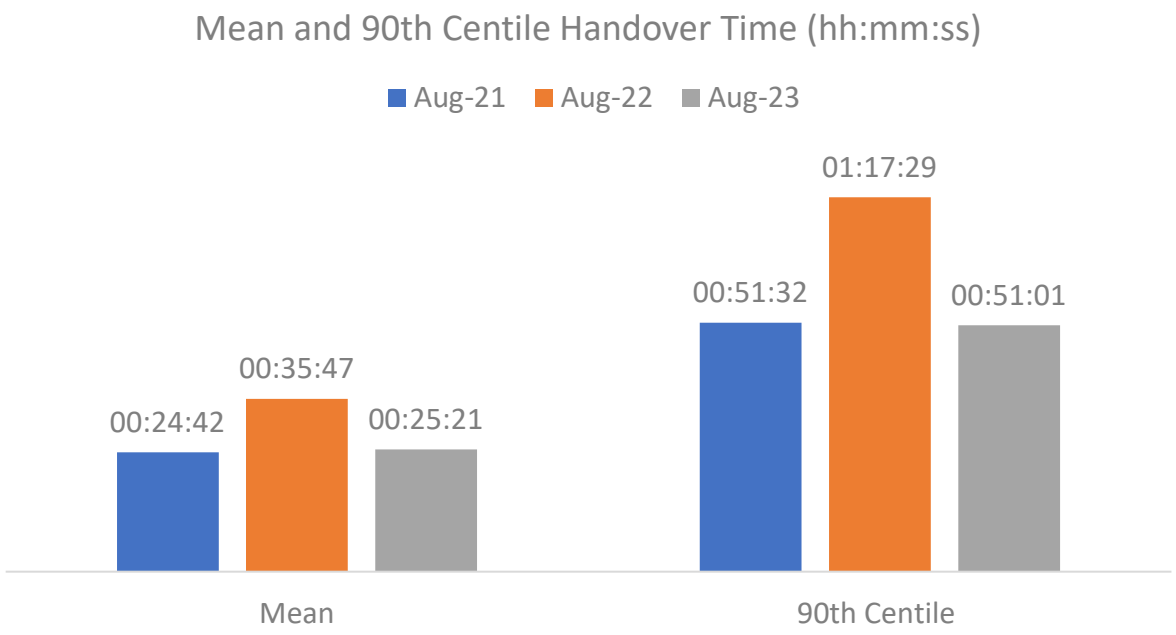
Patient Handover Delays

- Average Handover Times and Delays as Proportion of All Handovers
- Handover Delays Over 15 Minutes
- Handover Delays Over 30 Minutes
- Handover Delays Over 60 Minutes
- Handover Delays Over 120 Minutes
- Handovers Longer Than Three Hours
- Impact on Patients and Crew

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

The mean handover time in August 2023 was ten-seconds faster than the previous year – but 39-seconds slower than in 2021. Delays as a proportion of all handovers was lower than in August 2021 and August 2022 for those over 15-minutes, and for those of one hour or longer.

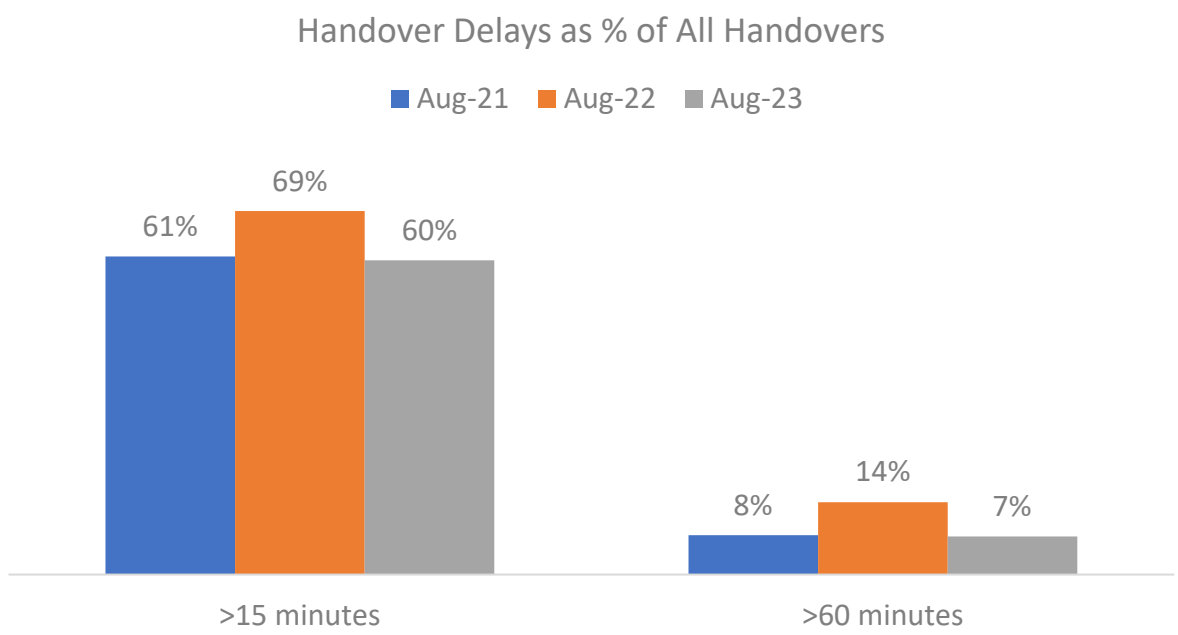
1. Mean and 90th Centile Handover Times



2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
+39 seconds	-10 minutes

2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-30 seconds	-26 minutes

2. Handover Delays as a Percentage of All Handovers



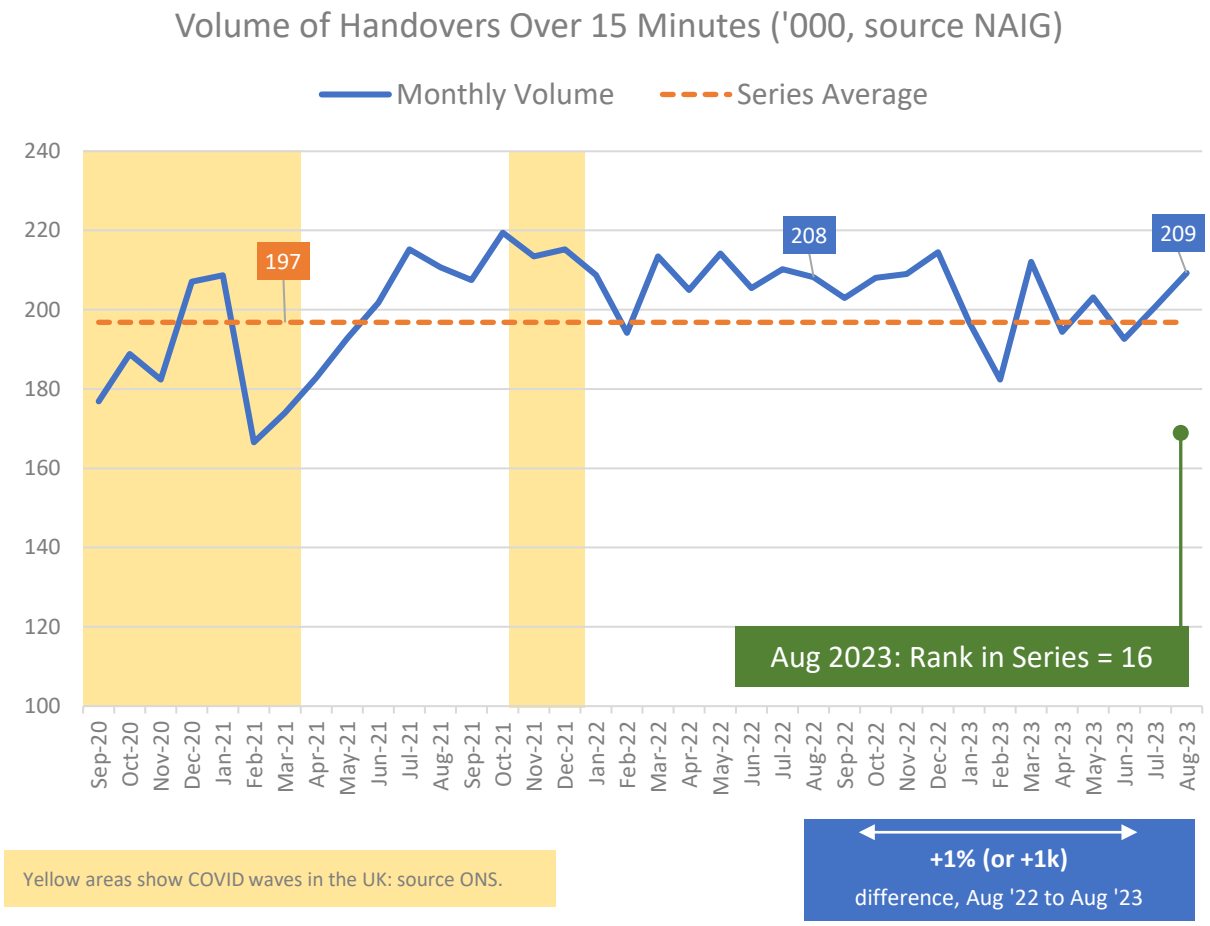
2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-1pp	-9pp

2021 to 2023	2022 to 2023
-1pp	-7pp

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

Handovers exceeding 15-minutes increased for the second consecutive month in August, reaching their second highest volume this year – and just exceeding the August 2022 total. Hours-lost to handovers also increased, but remain well below the 2022 equivalent.

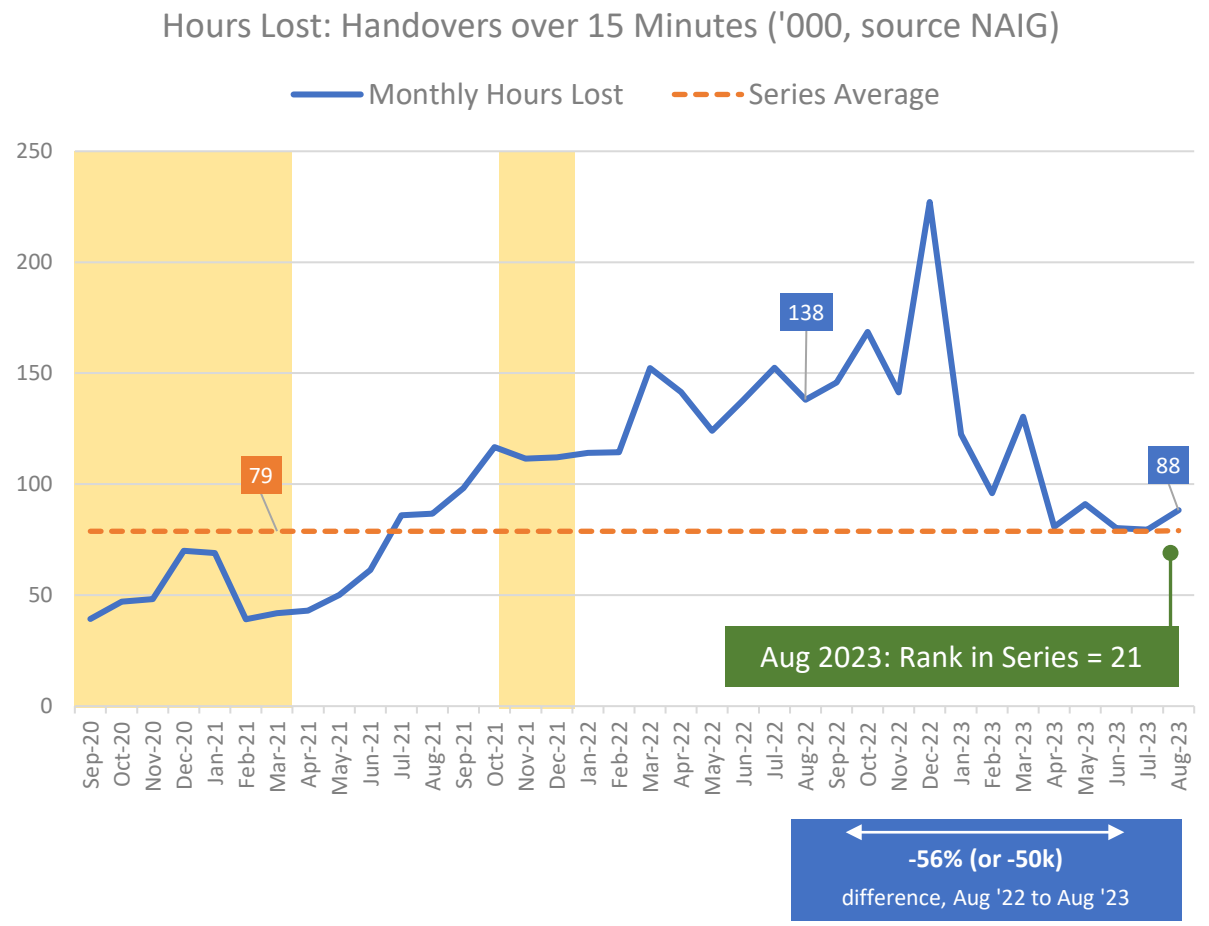
1. Delays over 15 Minutes



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

+1% (or +1k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

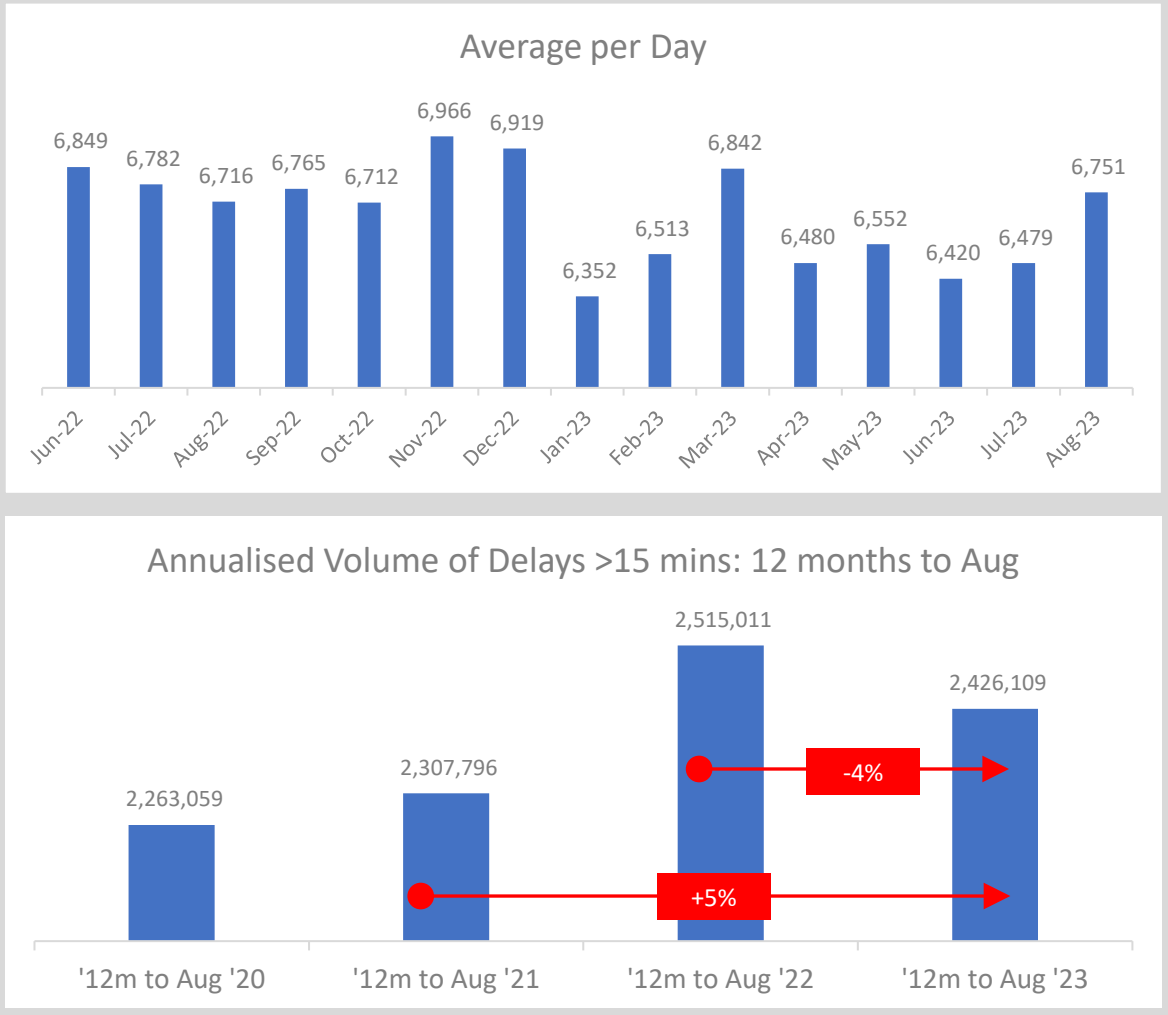
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 15 Minutes



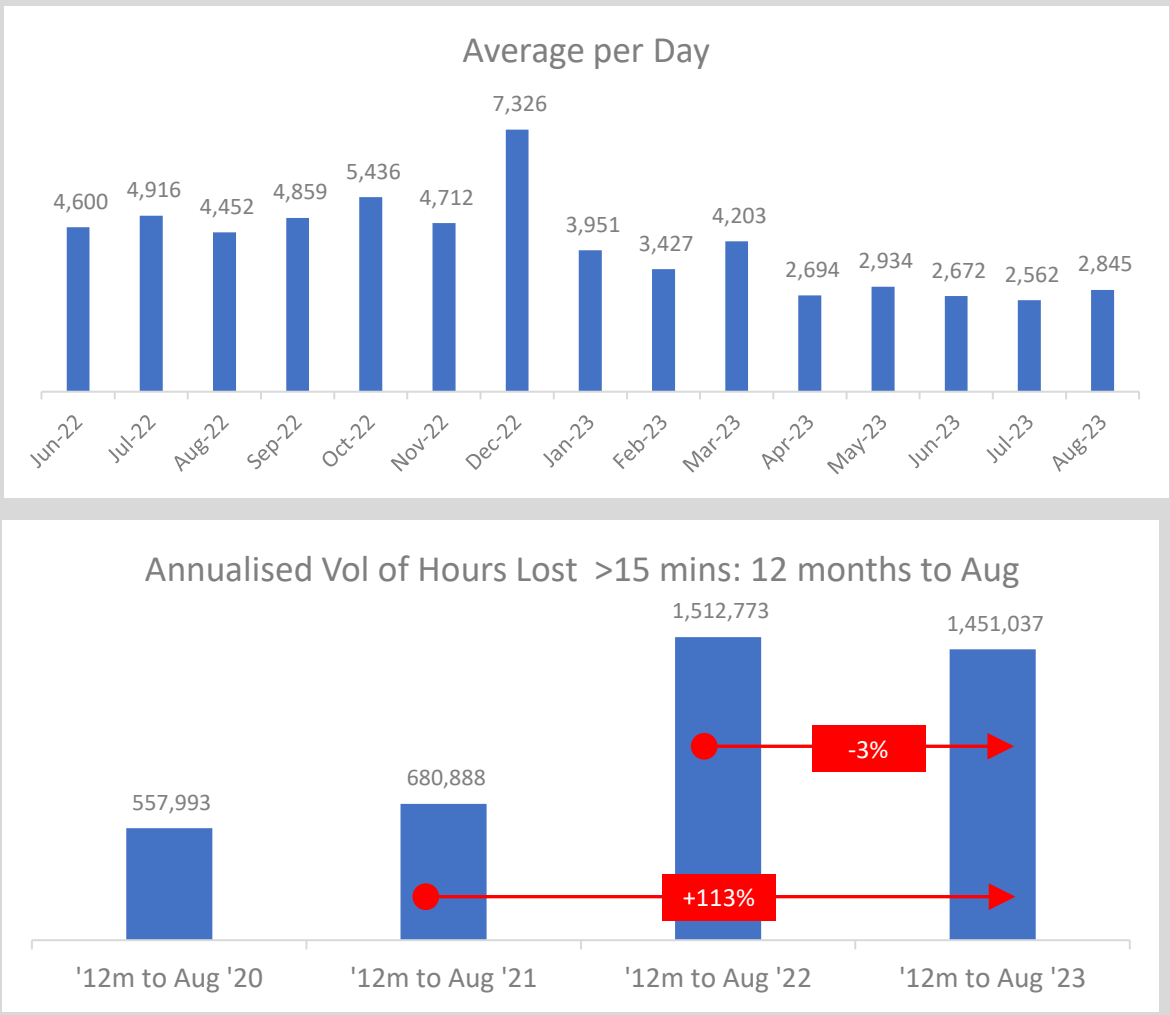
-56% (or -50k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

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

1. Volume of Handover Delays over 15 minutes



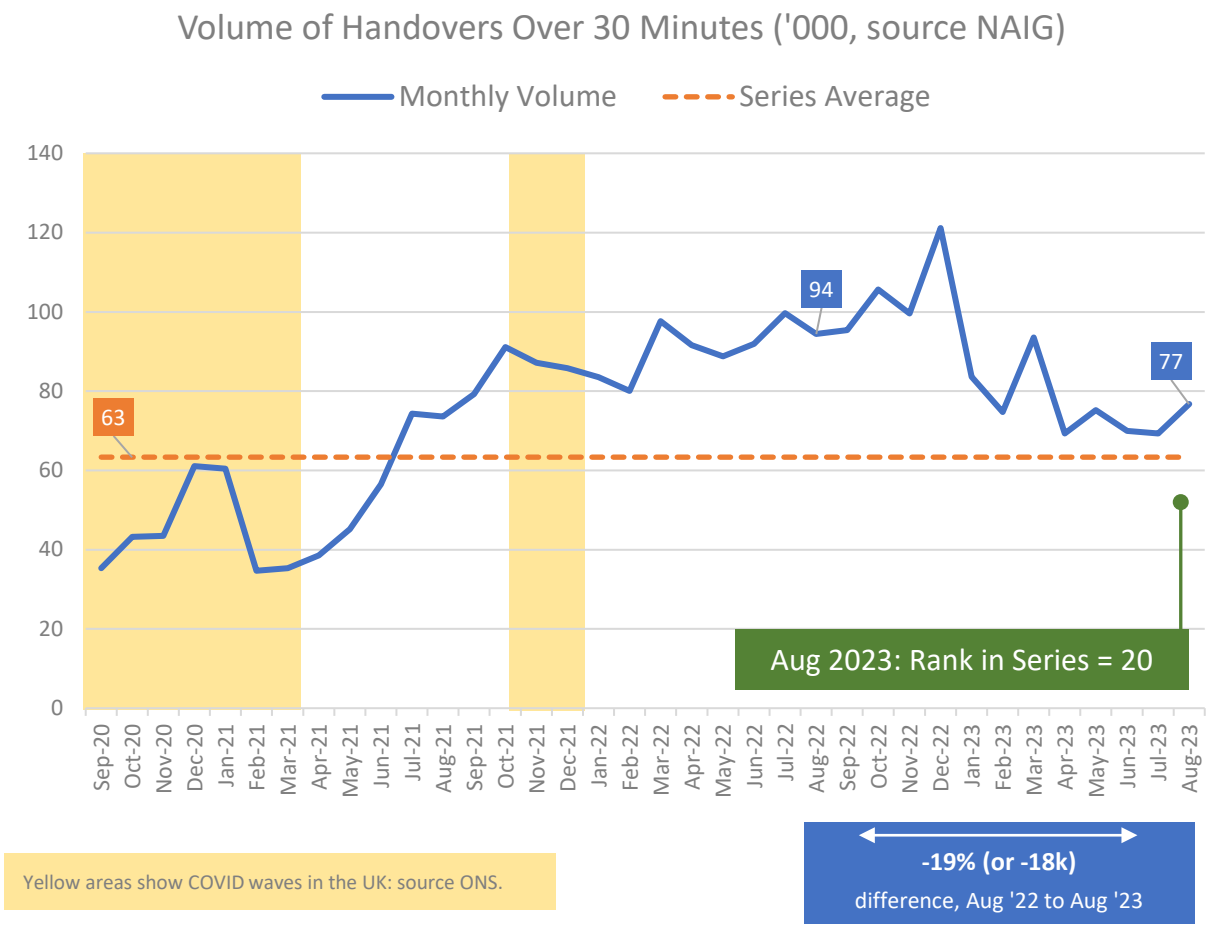
2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 15 minutes



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

Handover delays of 30-minutes or longer – and the subsequent hours lost – both increased between July and August. However, but figures remain well below those seen in August 2022.

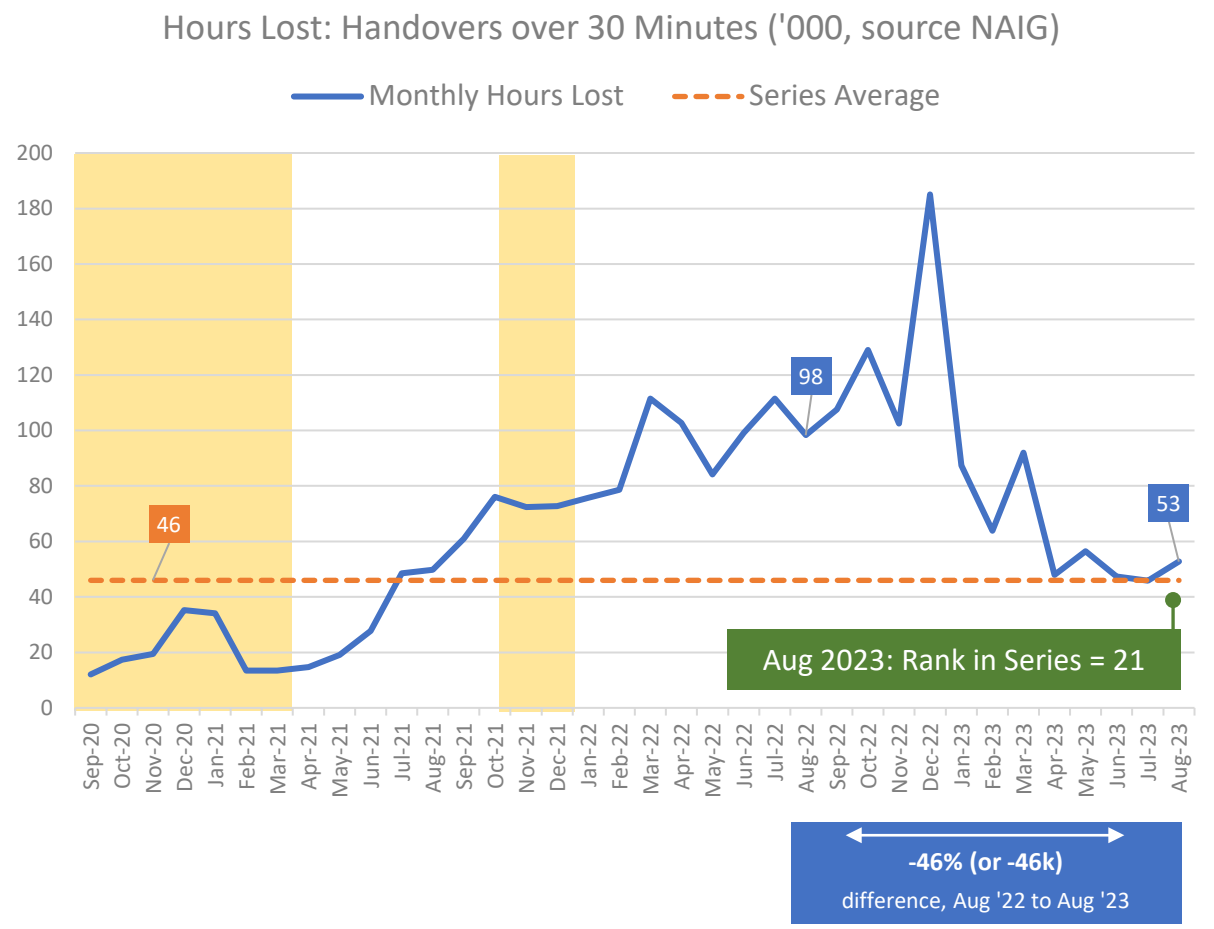
1. Delays over 30 Minutes



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

-19% (or -18k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 30 Minutes

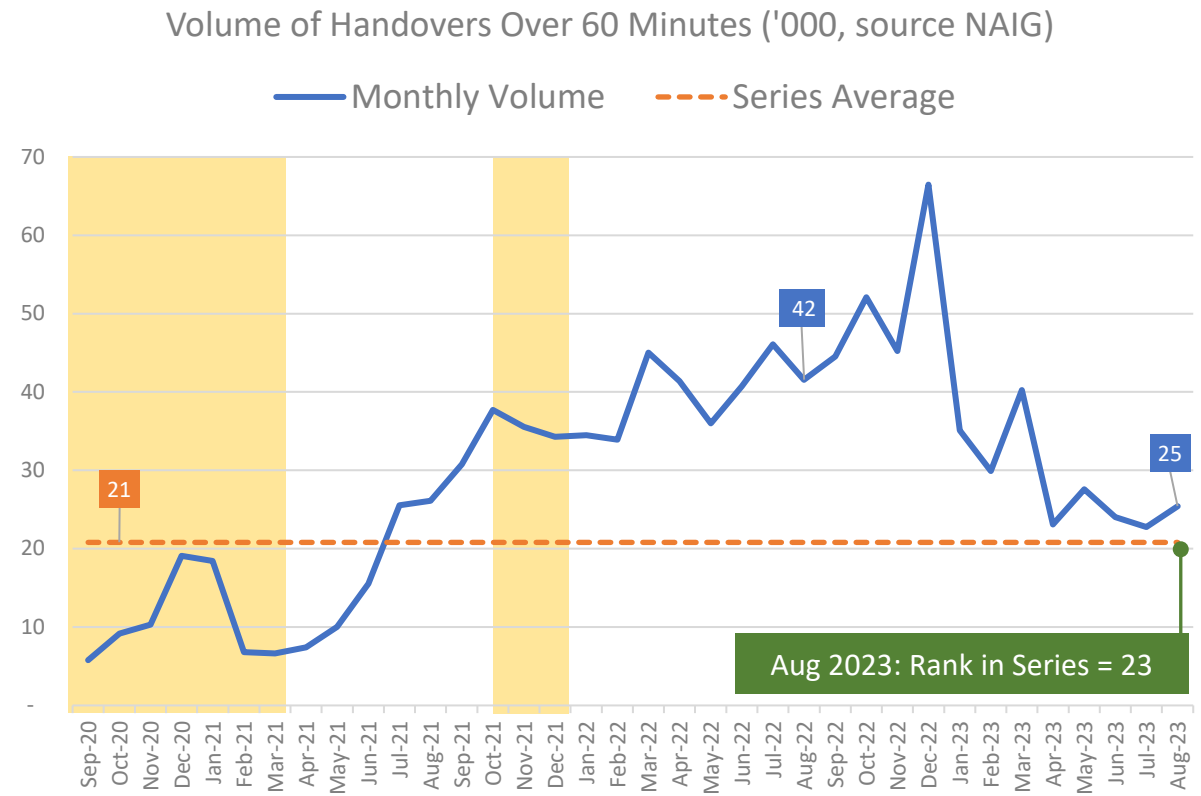


-46% (or -46k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

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

In July, hour-plus handover delays reached their lowest level since June 2021. August saw an uplift in volume (of two-thousand delays), although – again – the monthly total is significantly lower than that seen 12-months ago. Hours lost to these delays follows a similar pattern.

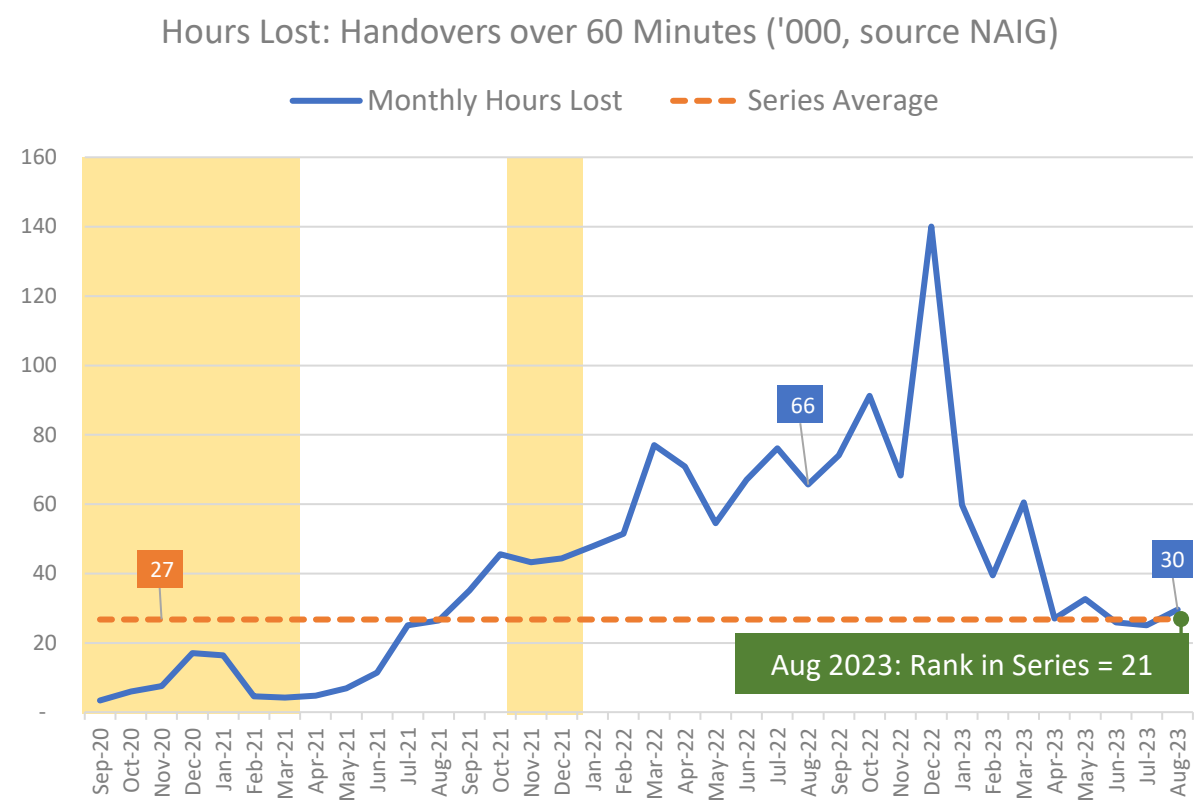
1. Delays over 60 Minutes



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

-39% (or -17)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

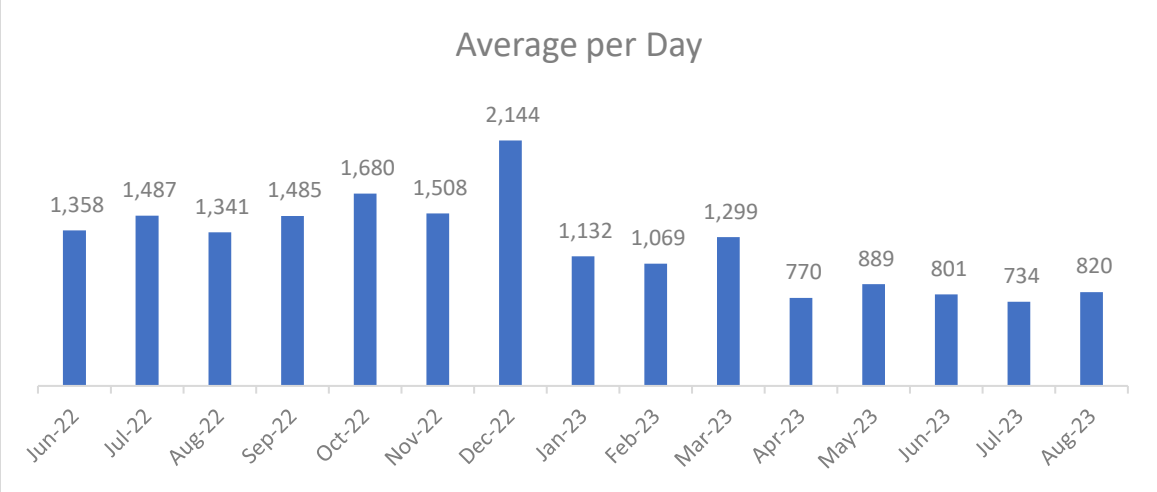
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 60 Minutes

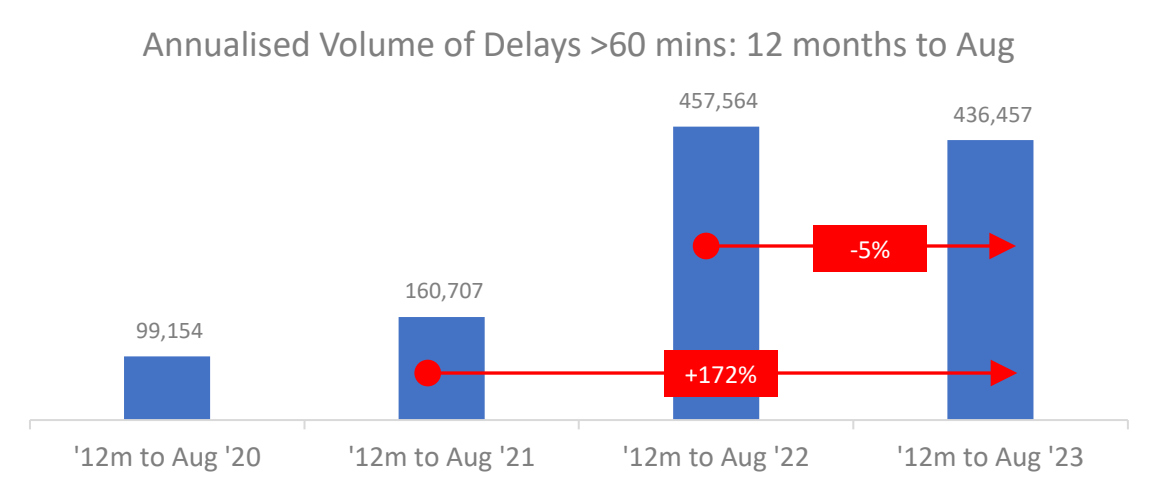


-55% (or -36k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

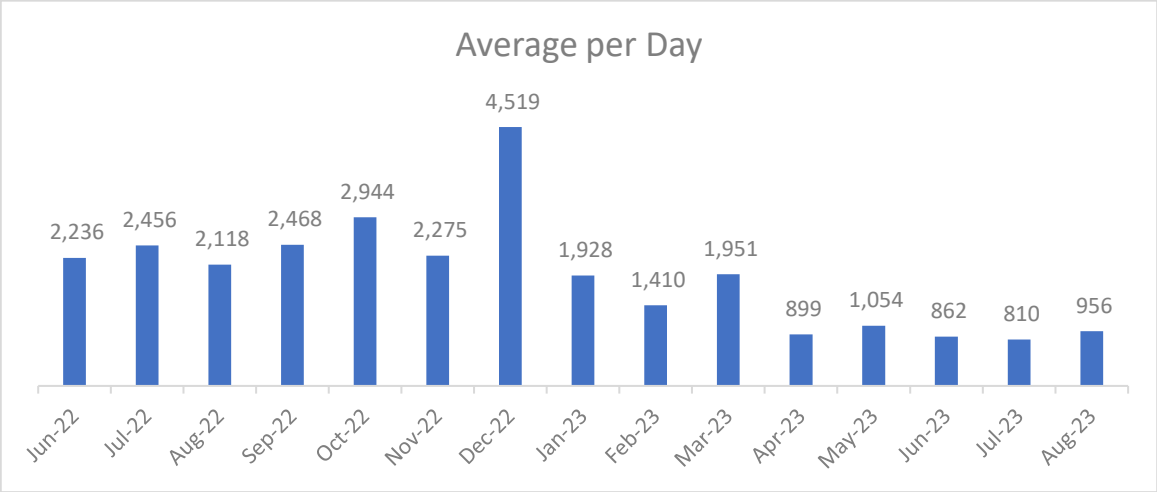
33. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >60 minute delays (source, NAIG)

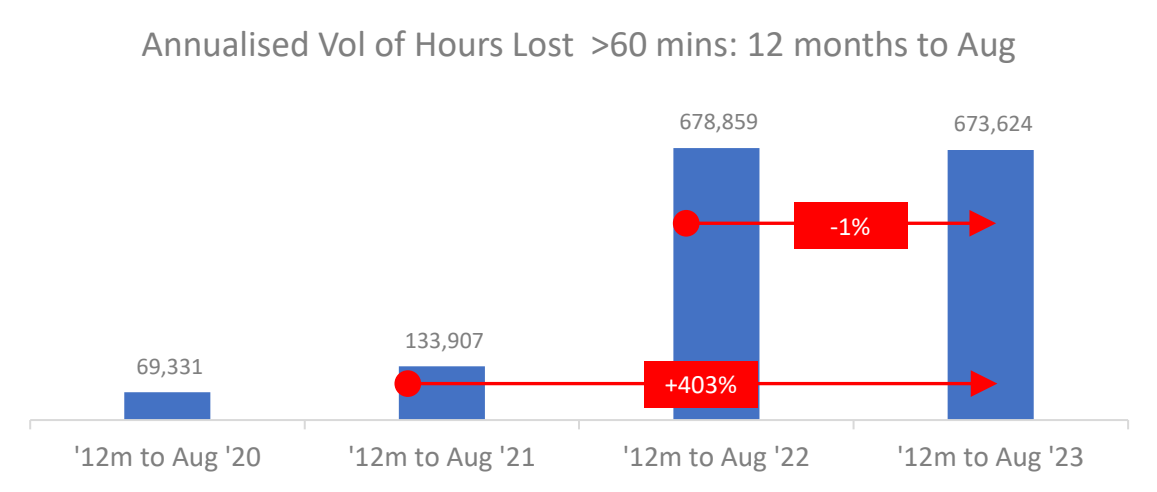
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 60 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 60 minutes

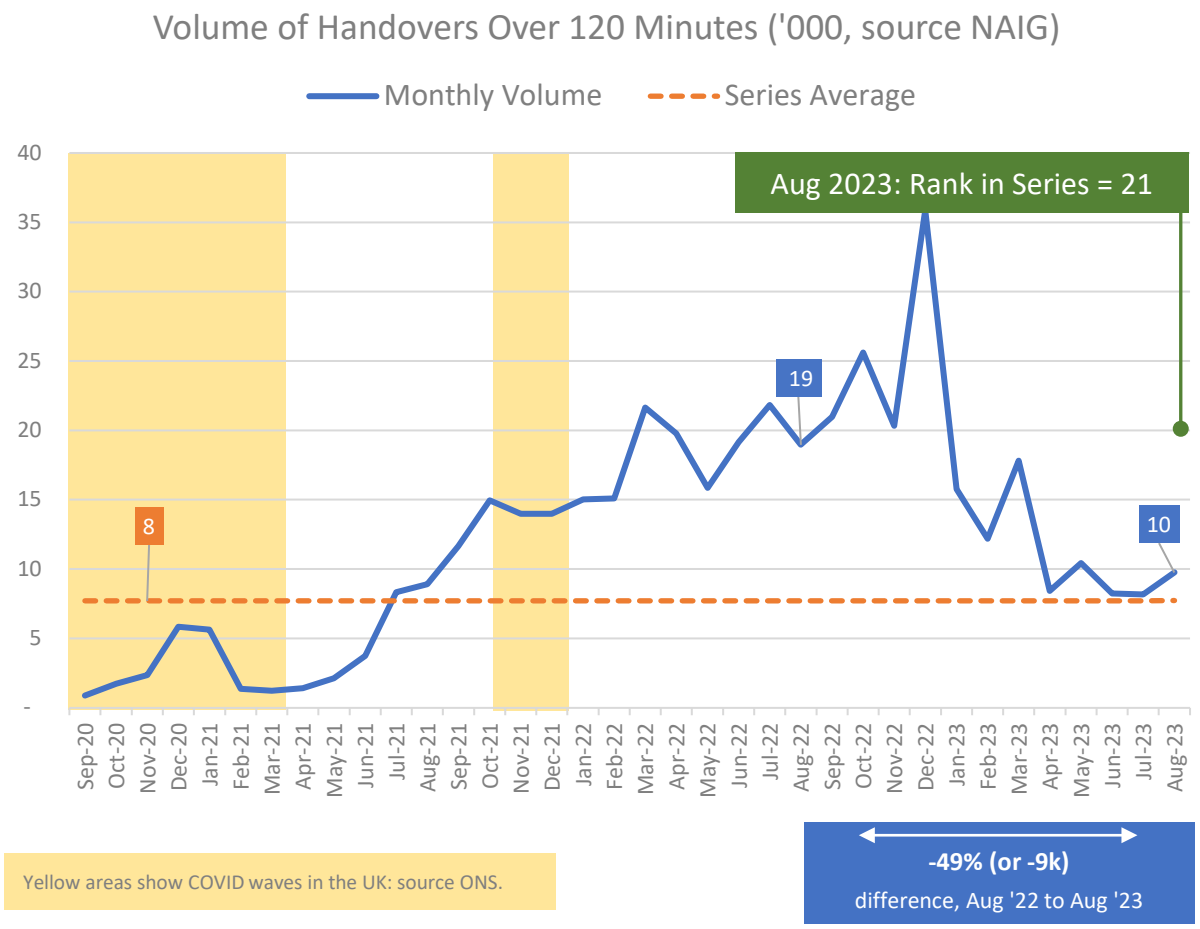




34. Patient Handover Delays over 120 Minutes (source, NAIG)

There was an uptick in handover delays of two-hours or longer in August, although both volume, and the subsequent hours lost, are well below the numbers seen last August.

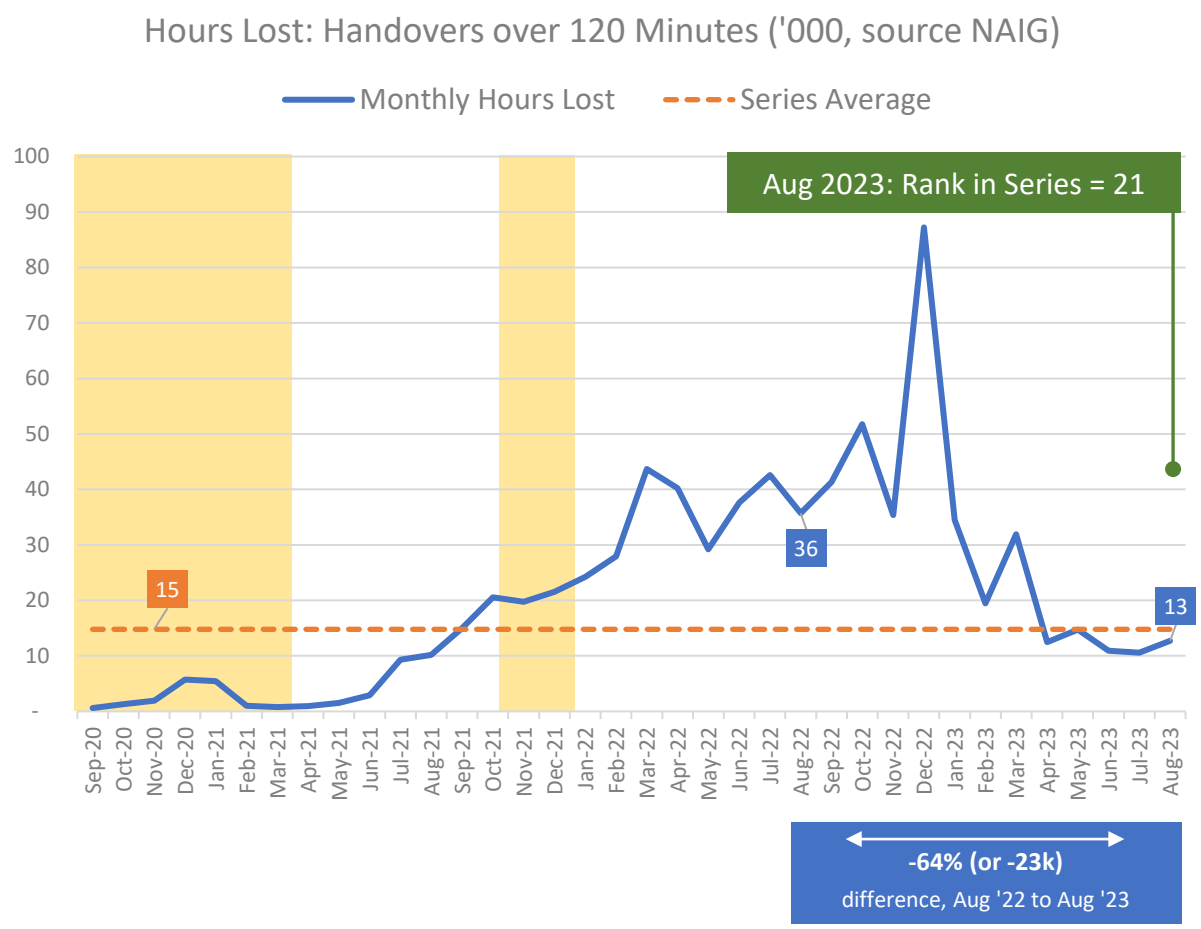
1. Delays over 120 Minutes



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

-49% (or -9k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

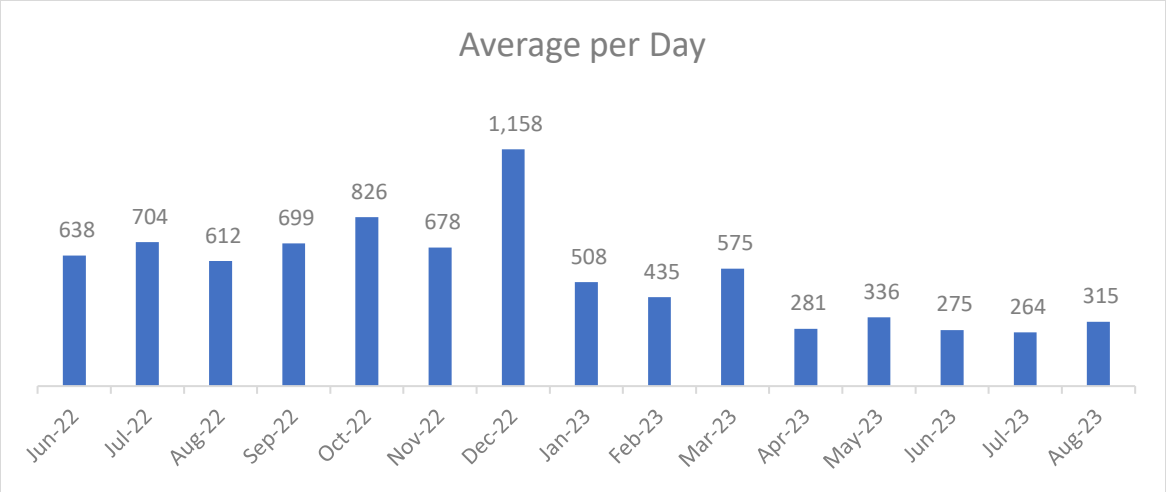
2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 120 Minutes

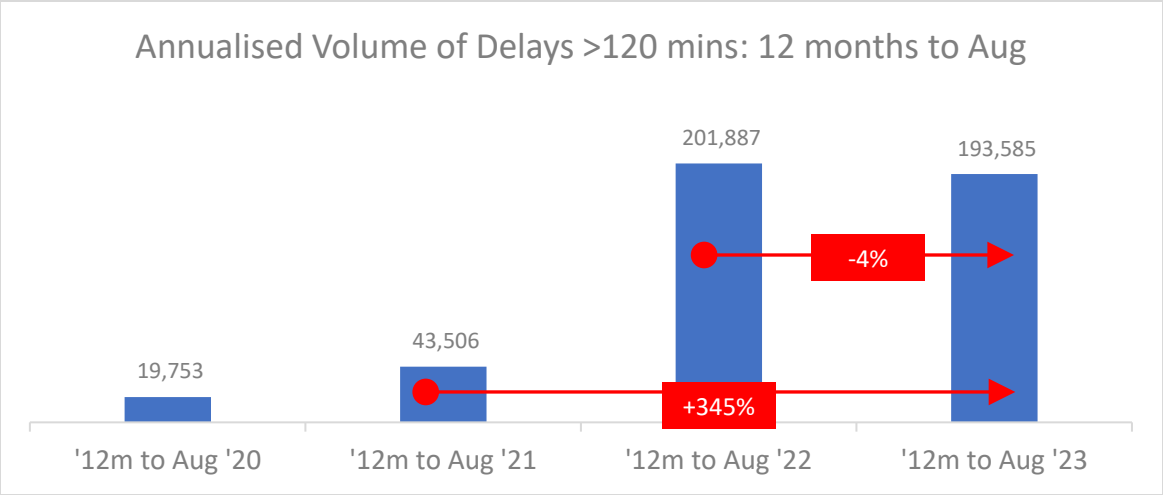


-64% (or -23k)
difference, Aug '22 to Aug '23

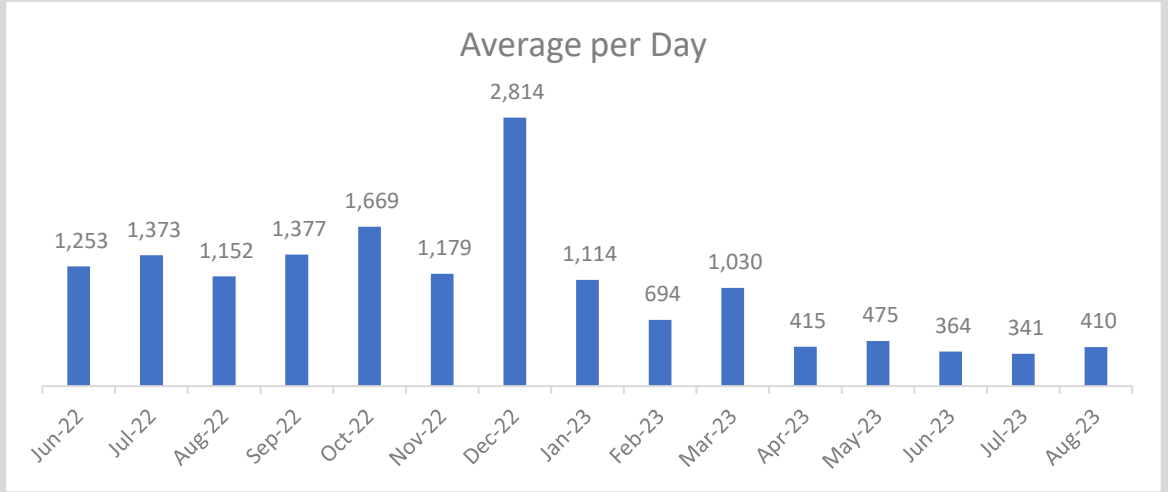
35. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >120 minute delays (source, NAIG)

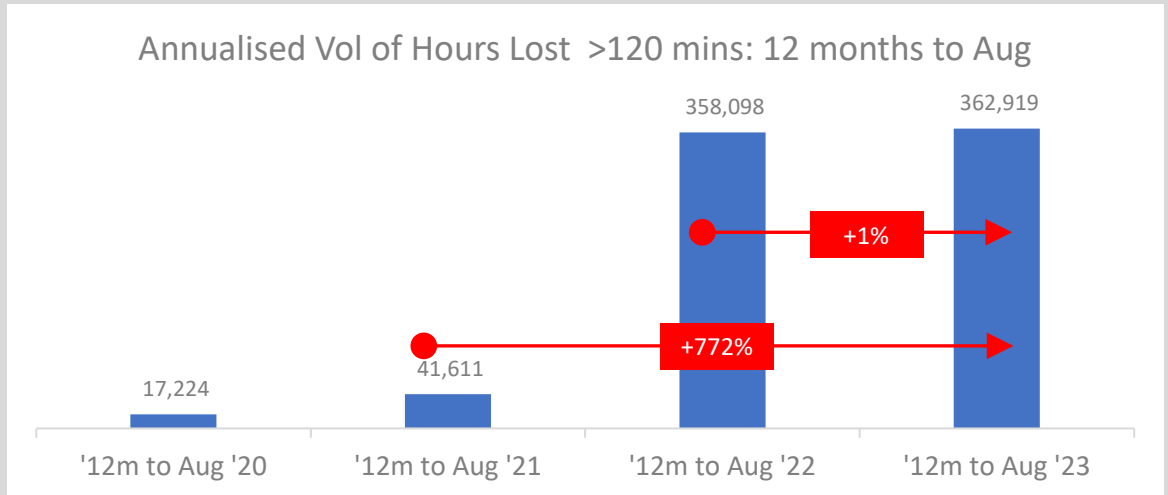
1. Volume of Handover Delays over 120 minutes





2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 120 minutes

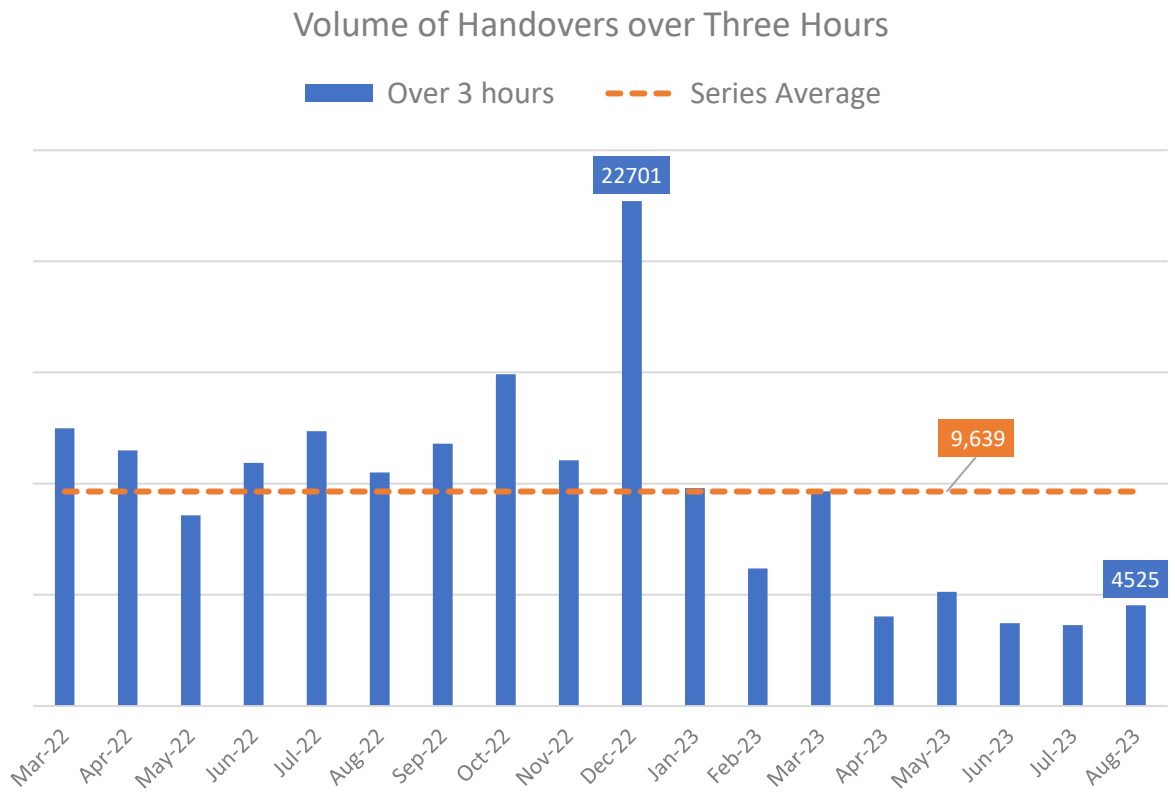




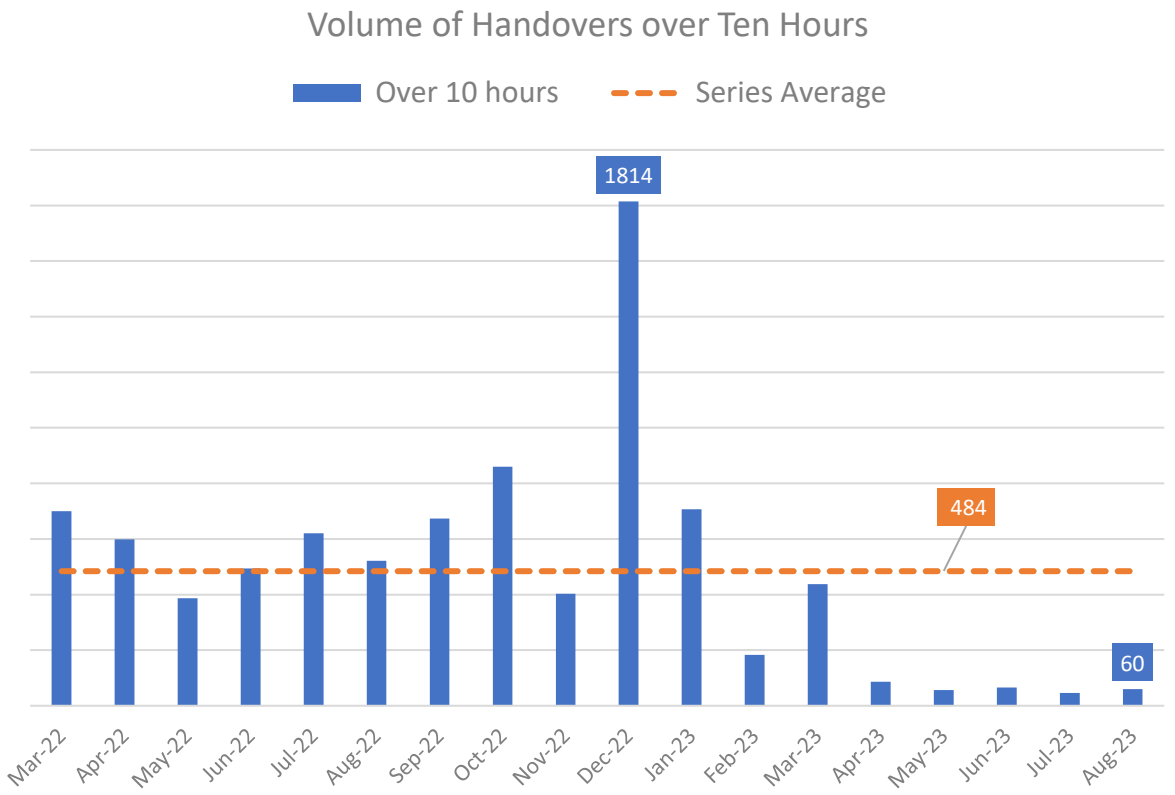
36. Patient Handovers Longer than Three Hours (source, NAIG)

As seen with the other handover delay measures, above, those exceeding three, and ten hours saw an increase in volume in August 2023 – although volumes continue to remain lower than their respective series average, and some of the lowest seen over the past two-years.

1. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Three Hours



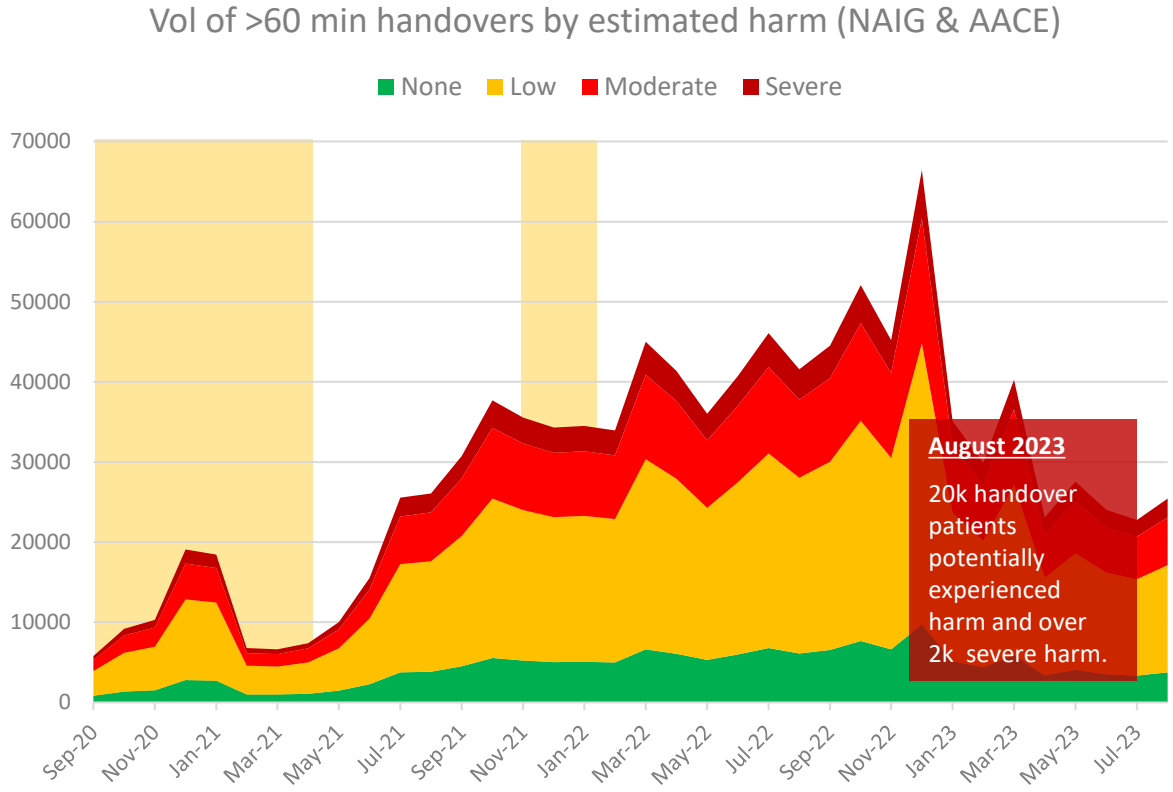
2. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Ten Hours



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

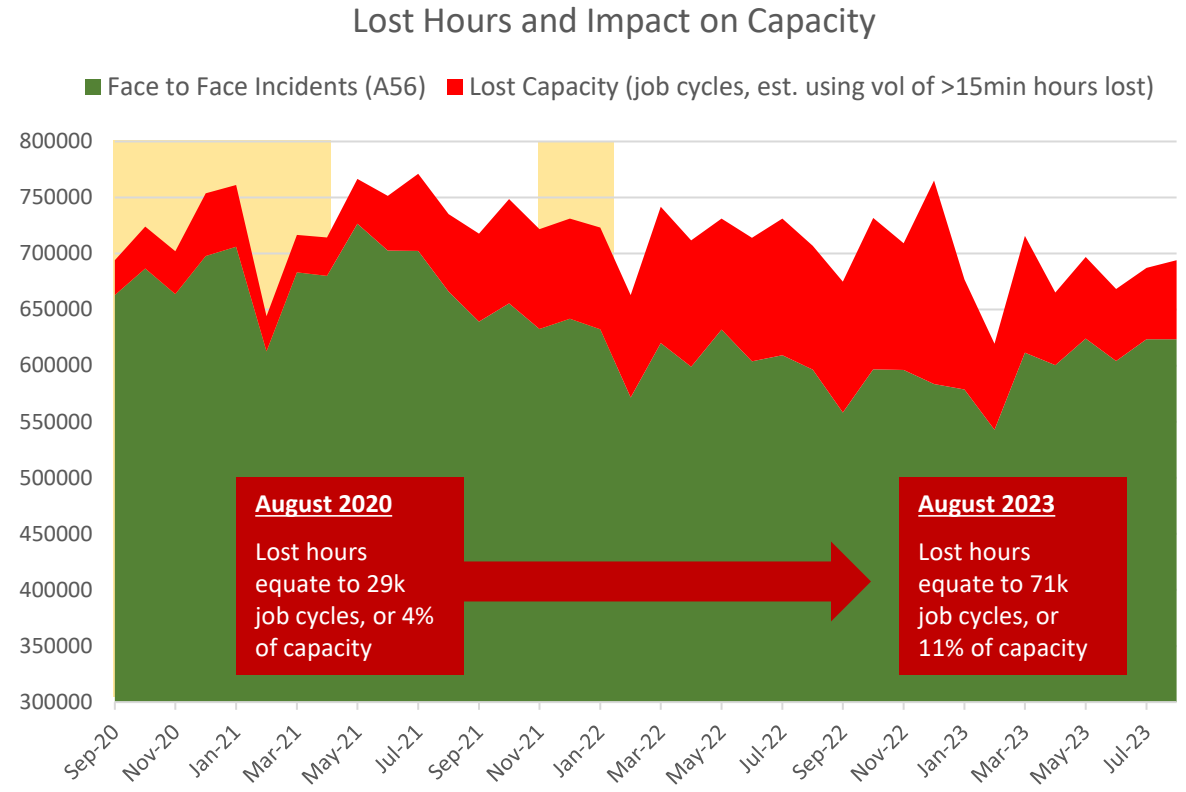
Around 20k patients experienced potential harm as a result of long handover delays in August 2023. Looking at the total hours lost to handover delays, the sector lost the equivalent of 71k job cycles. This equates to 11% of potential ambulance capacity across the month – compared with four-percent in August 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



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