

# National Ambulance Handover Delays – FINAL

Data to the end of October 2023

Published - November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## 2. Summary and Contents

**Overview:** Hospital handover delays increased in October 2023, with some measures – including the volume of delays exceeding thirty minutes – reaching their second highest volume to-date. Time lost to hour-plus delays has tripled since July, reaching 69-thousand in October. As a result, an estimated 37-thousand patients were exposed to additional harm while the sector lost the equivalent of 119-ambulance job cycles due to vehicles and crew waiting outside hospitals.

### Page 3.

Average Handover Times and Delays as a Proportion of All Handovers



- The average (mean) hospital handover time increased from September from around 29-minutes to 24-minutes. This is faster than October 2022 by six-minutes, but slower than October 2021 by four-minutes.
- The proportion of delays of an hour-or-longer increased from nine-percent to 13-percent between September and October. This is smaller than October last year, but two-percent greater than October 2021.

### Pages 4 and 5.

Handovers of 15-minutes and over and Hours Lost



- Handovers exceeding 15-minutes increased to 237-thousand, the second highest to date. Time lost to these delays reached 149-thousand hours, up from around 81-thousand over the summer.
- Delays of 30-minutes or longer also reached the second highest volume on record (107-thousand). This represents an increase from 69-thousand in July 2023. Hours lost to these delays has more than doubled since July, increasing from 46-thousand to 105-thousand.

### Pages 6 to 11.

Longer Handover Volume and Hours Lost



- Hour-plus delays reached 44-thousand, the seventh highest on record and double the volume seen in July 2023. Hours lost to these delays reached 69-thousand, three times greater than July.
- Over 500-patients experienced delays of ten-or-more hours in October – 11-times the volume in July 2023, and the highest number seen since January 2023.

### Page 12.

Impact on Patients and Crew



- An estimated 37-thousand patients experienced potential harm as a result of hour-plus handover delays in October 2023 – with four-thousand potentially experiencing severe harm.
- The sector lost the equivalent of 119-thousand job cycles due to delays. This is the same as 19% of potential ambulance capacity across the month – compared with five percent in October 2020.

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

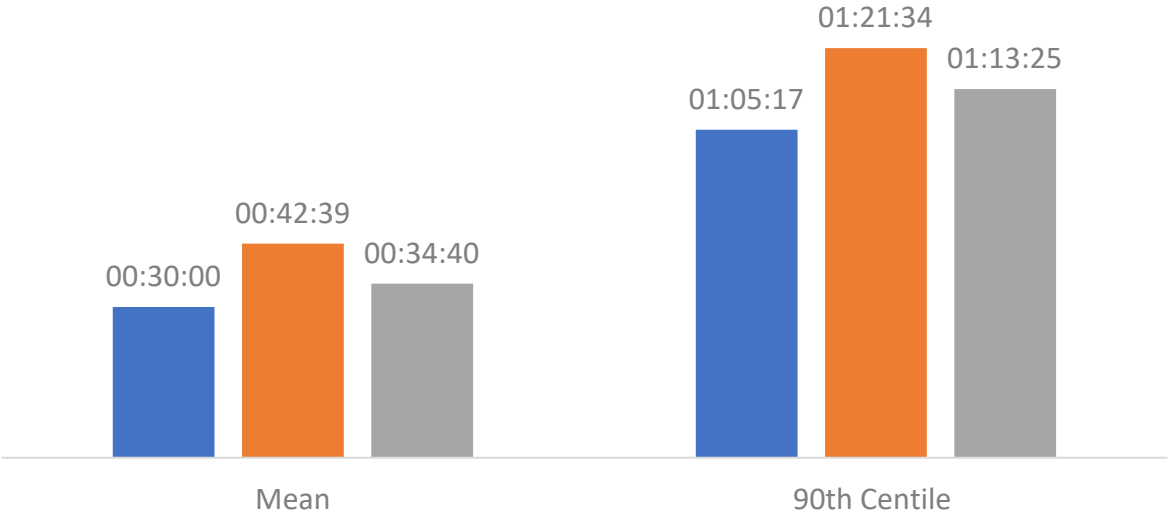


Mean (and 90<sup>th</sup> Centile) handover times for October were faster than the same time last year, but slower than in October 2021. Similarly, the proportion of handovers of an hour-or-longer was lower than 2022, but higher than 2021.

## 1. Mean and 90<sup>th</sup> Centile Handover Times

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

■ Oct-21 ■ Oct-22 ■ Oct-23



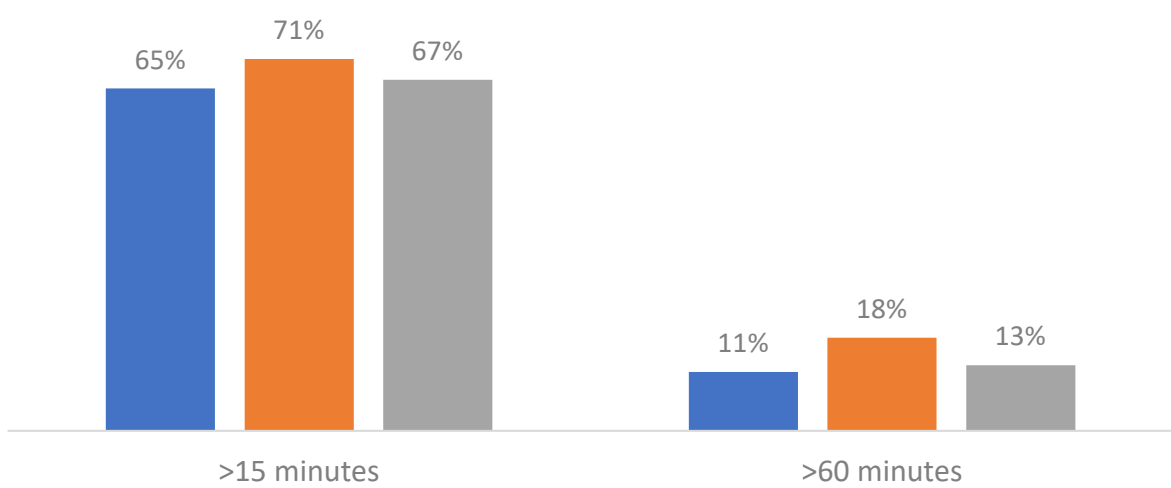
| 2021 to 2023 | 2022 to 2023 |
|--------------|--------------|
| +4 minutes   | -6 minutes   |

| 2021 to 2023 | 2022 to 2023 |
|--------------|--------------|
| +8 minutes   | -7 minutes   |

## 2. Handover Delays as a Percentage of All Handovers

Handover Delays as % of All Handovers

■ Sep-21 ■ Sep-22 ■ Sep-23



| 2021 to 2023 | 2022 to 2023 |
|--------------|--------------|
| +2pp         | -4pp         |

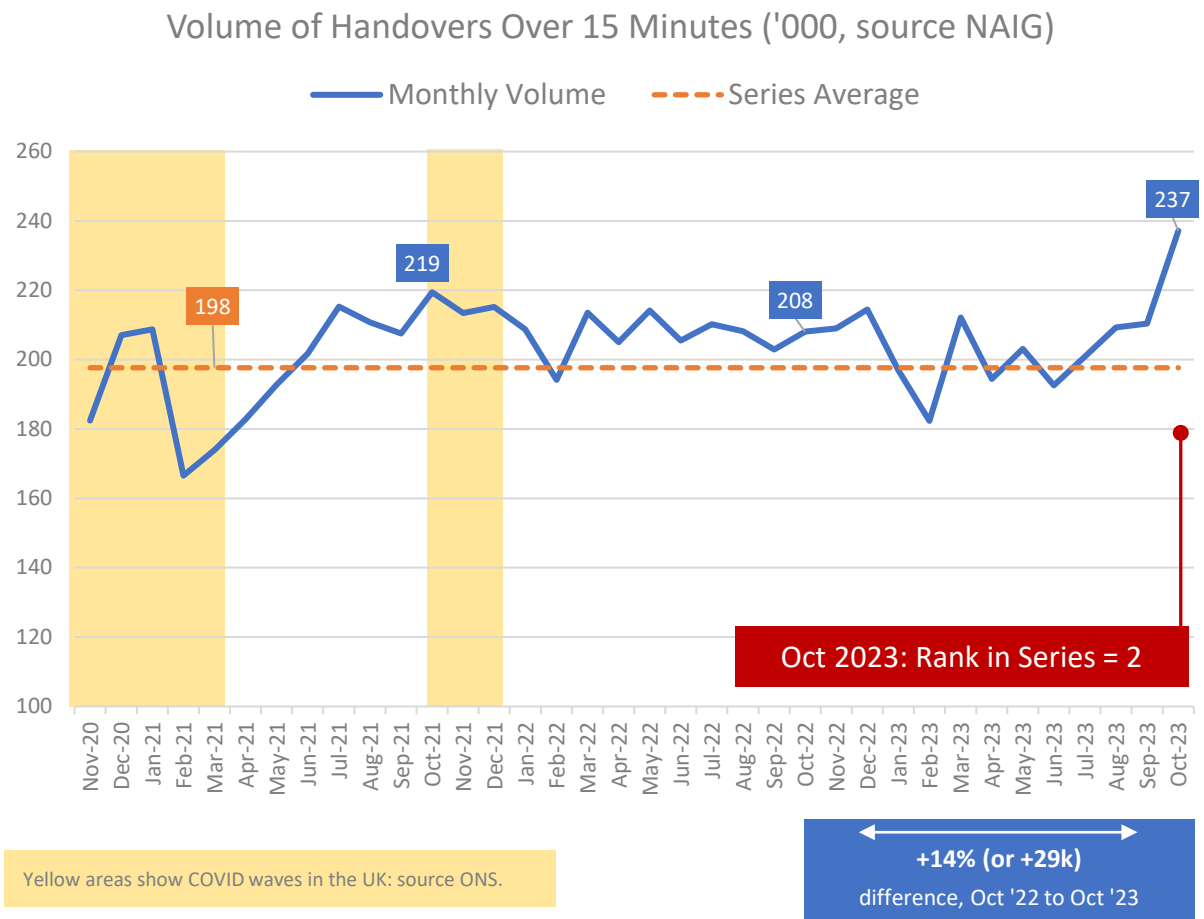
| 2021 to 2023 | 2022 to 2023 |
|--------------|--------------|
| +2pp         | -5pp         |



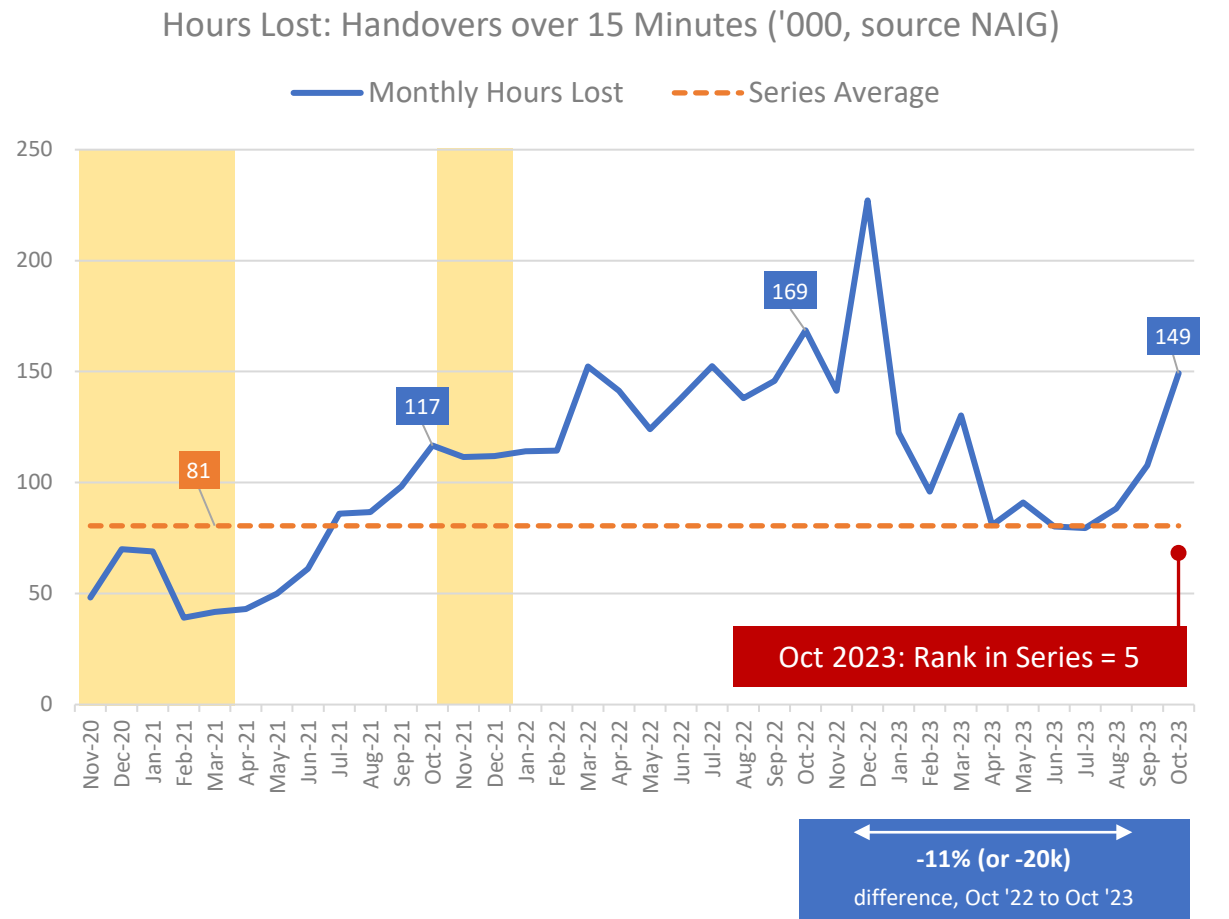
# 4. Patient Handover Delays over 15 Minutes (source, NAIG)

Handovers exceeding 15-minutes reached their second highest volume in October 2023 (the highest being December 2019). There were 237-thousand such delays across the month, resulting in 149-thousand hours lost – the latter being the fifth highest volume to-date.

## 1. Delays over 15 Minutes

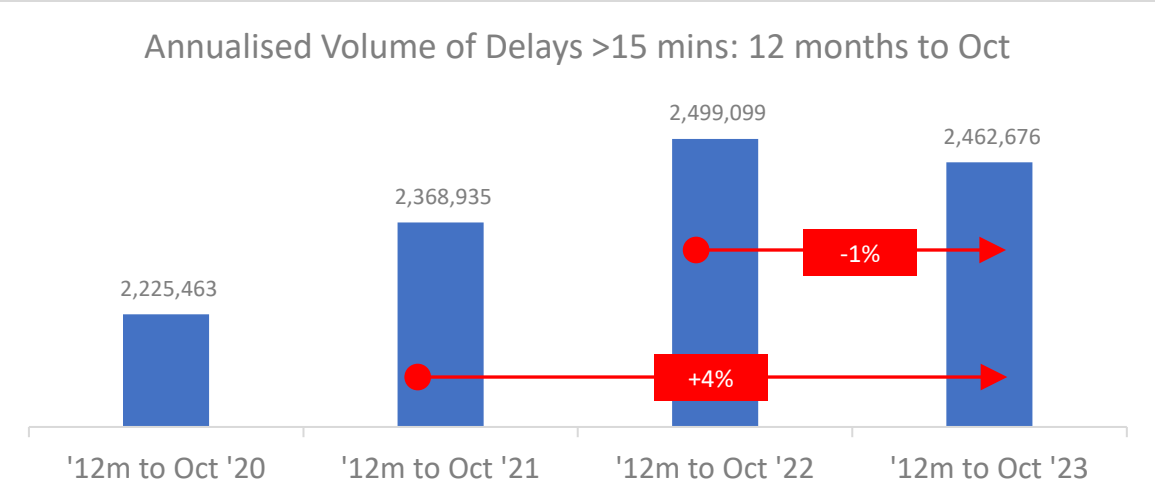
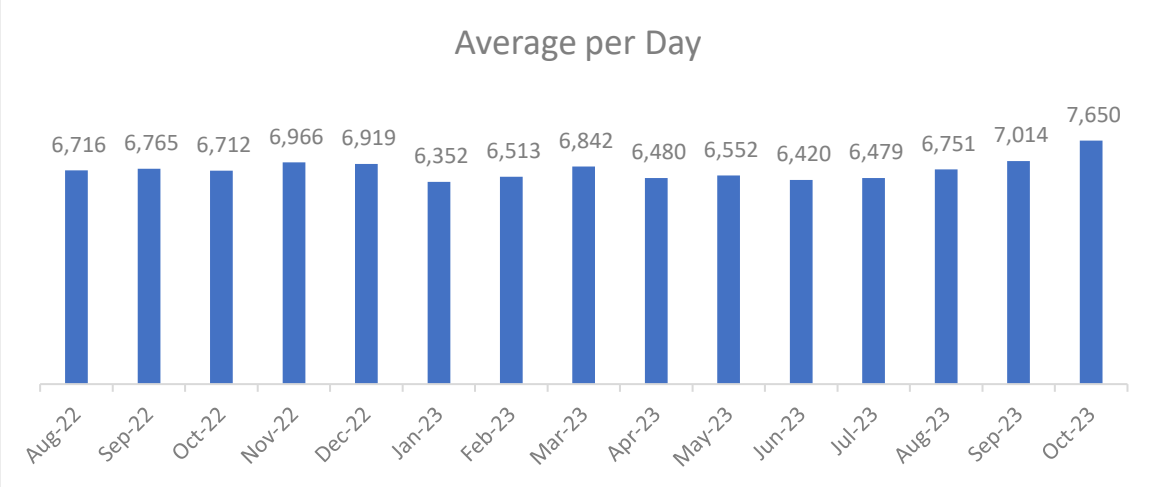


## 2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 15 Minutes

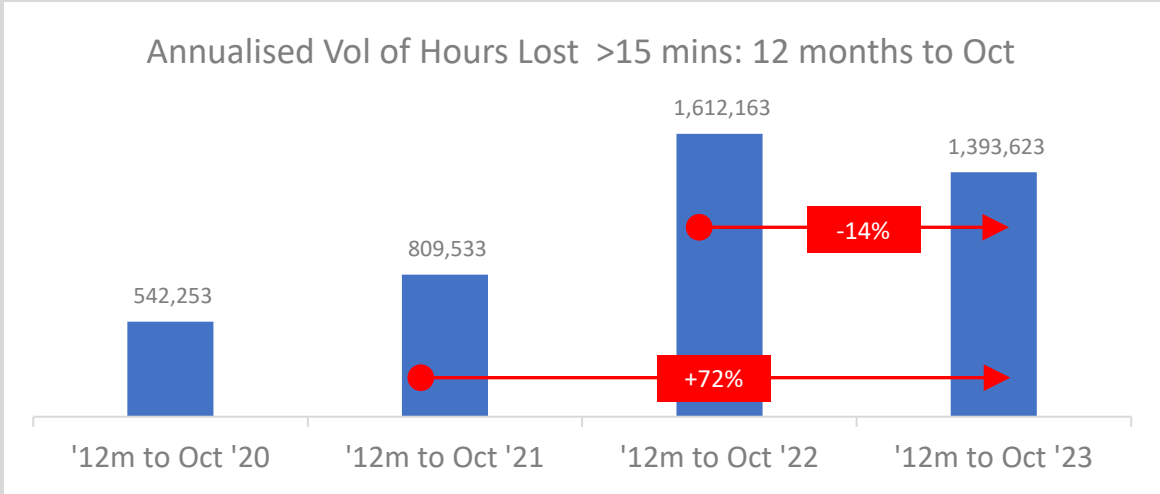
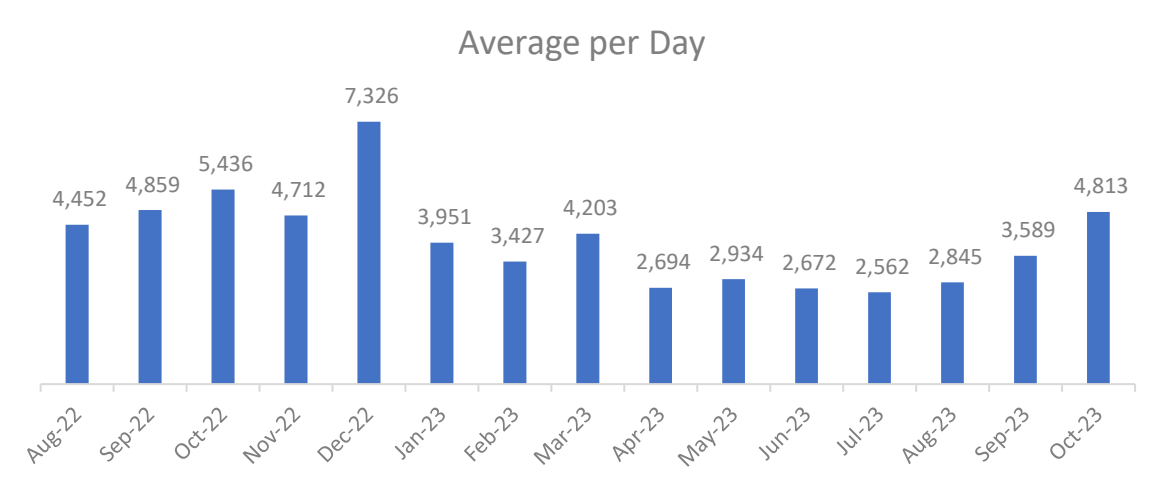


# 5. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >15 minute delays (source, NAIG)

## 1. Volume of Handover Delays over 15 minutes



## 2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 15 minutes

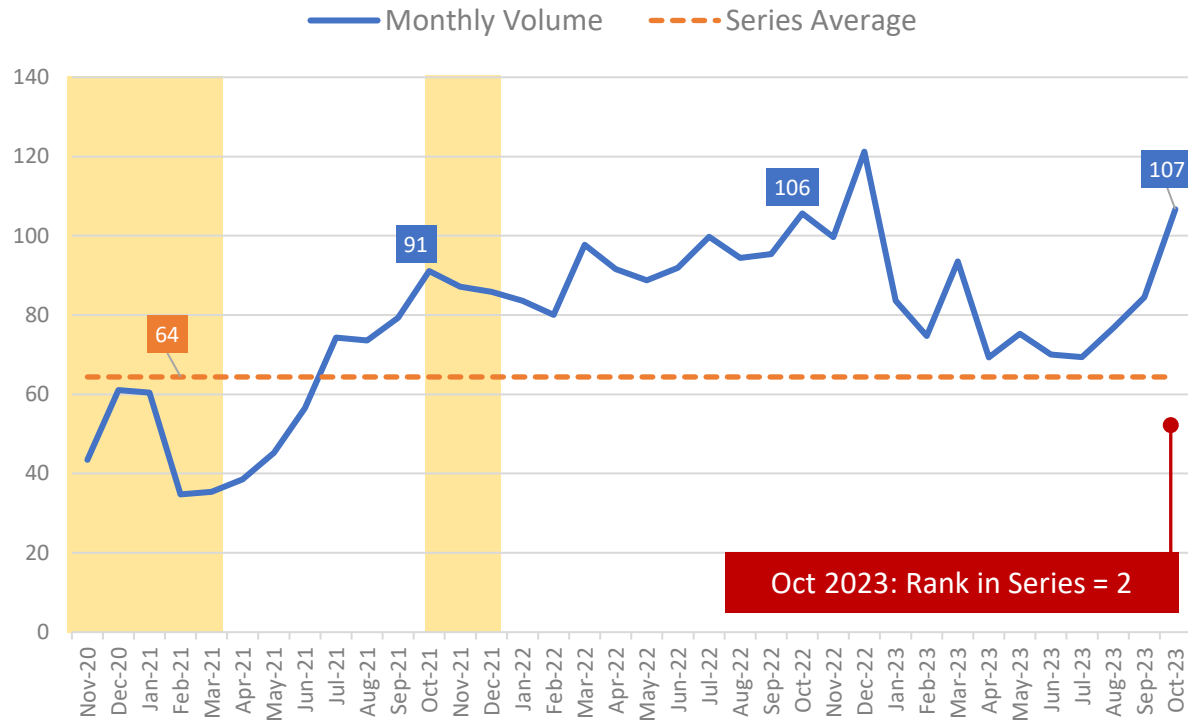


# 6. Patient Handover Delays over 30 Minutes (source, NAIG)

Handover delays exceeding 30 minutes also reached their second highest volume in October (the highest being December 2022). The 107-thousand patient handover delays in this category accounted for 105-thousand hours lost.

## 1. Delays over 30 Minutes

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

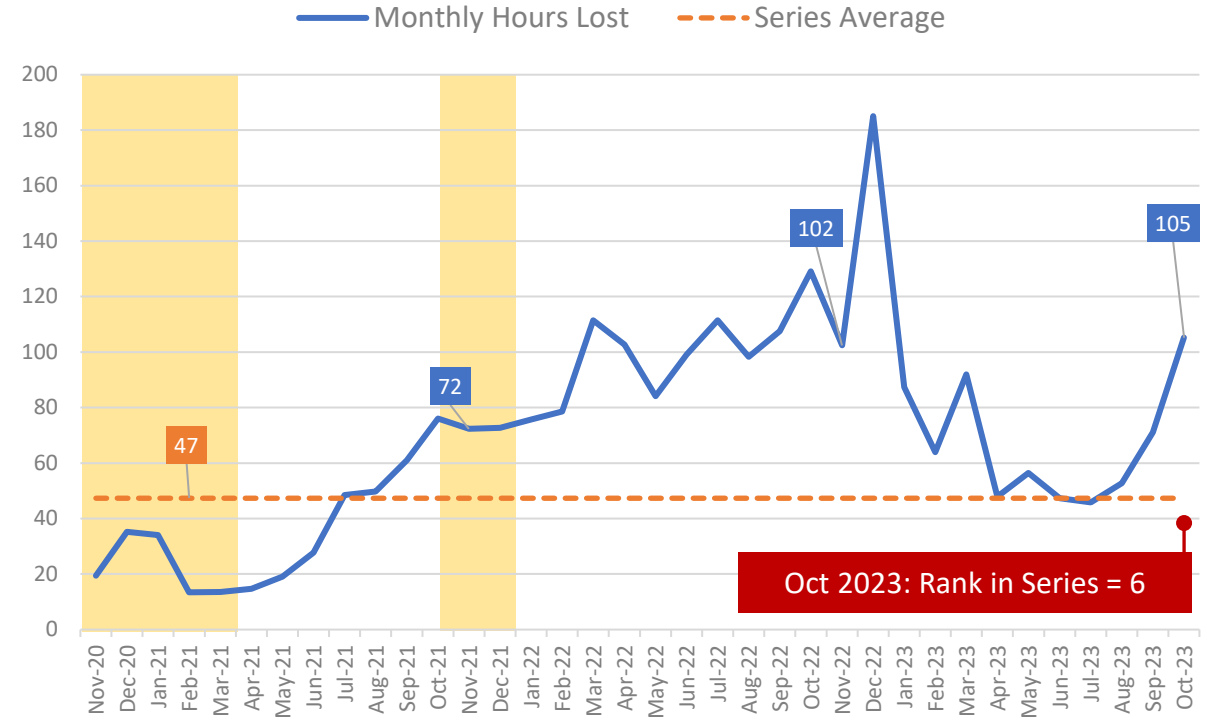


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← +1% (or +1k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →

## 2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 30 Minutes

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



← -19% (or -24k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →

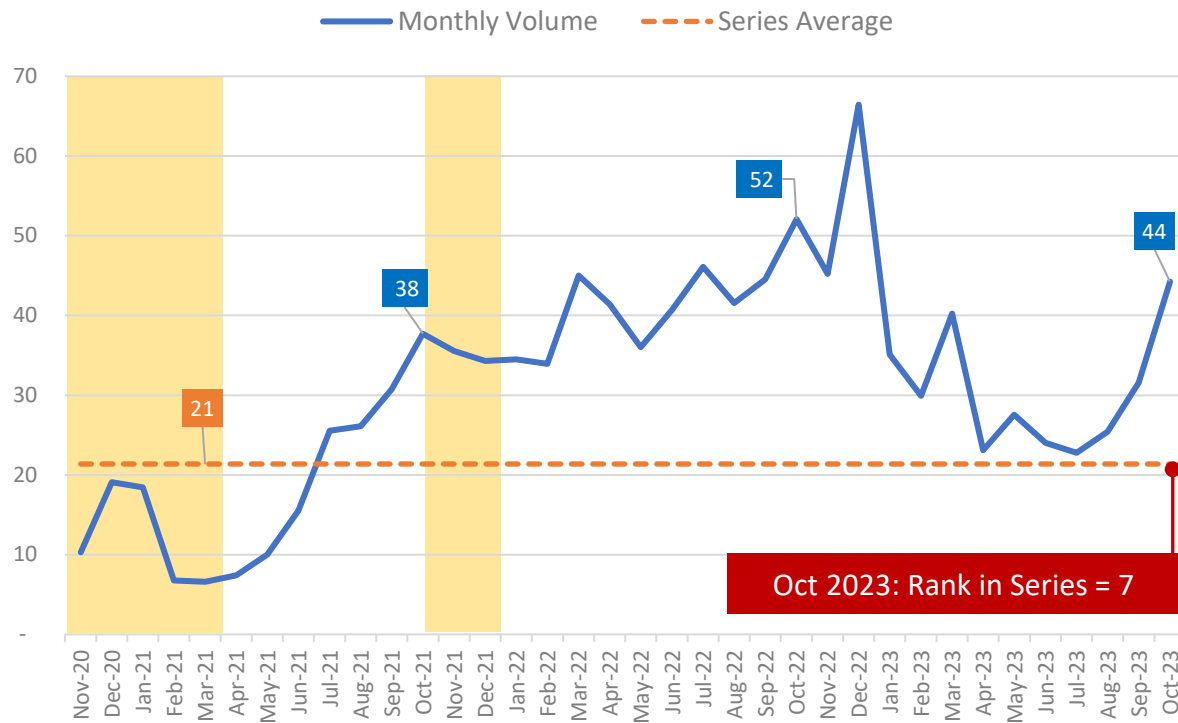


# 7. Patient Handover Delays over 60 Minutes (source, NAIG)

Hour-plus delays reached 44-thousand in October, the seventh highest number to-date, eight-thousand fewer than October 2022, but twice the volume seen in July 2023. Hours lost to these delays reached 69-thousand, again the seventh highest to-date and more than double the volume seen in July.

## 1. Delays over 60 Minutes

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

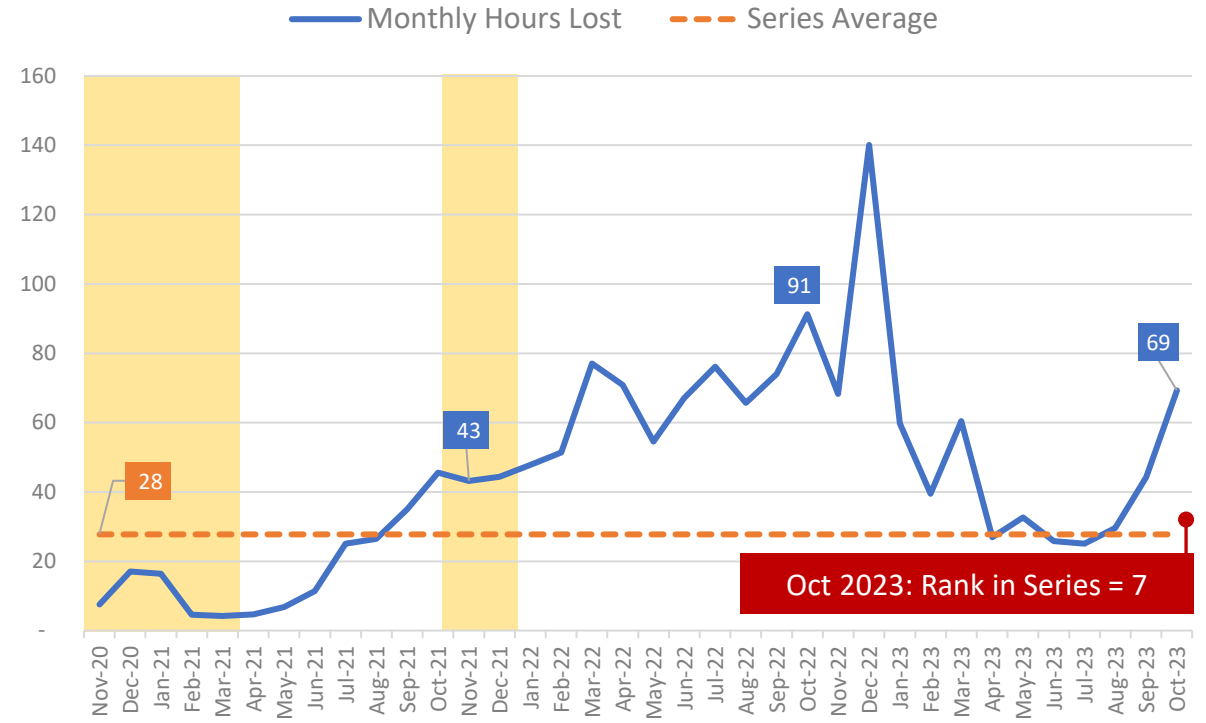


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← -17% (or -8k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →

## 2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 60 Minutes

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



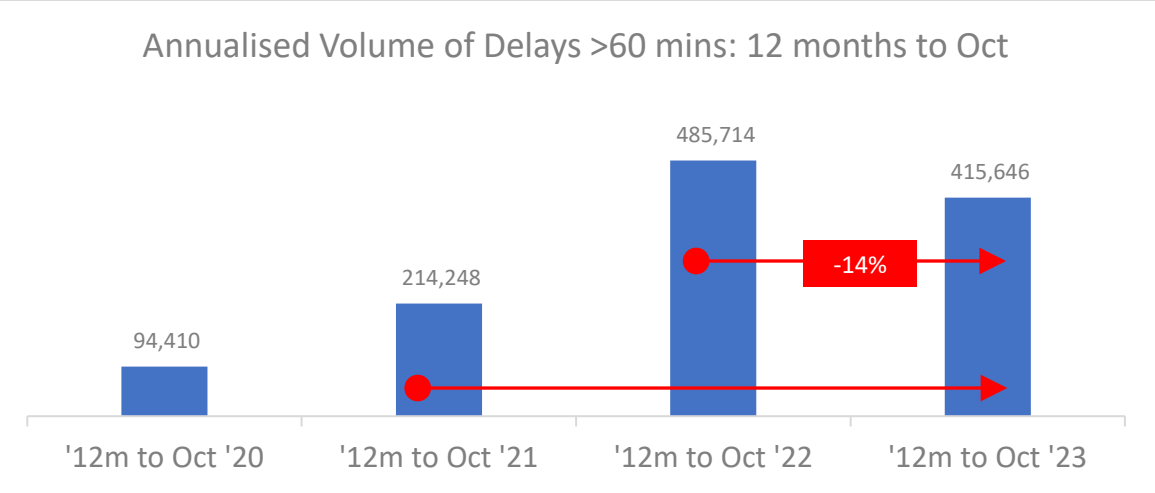
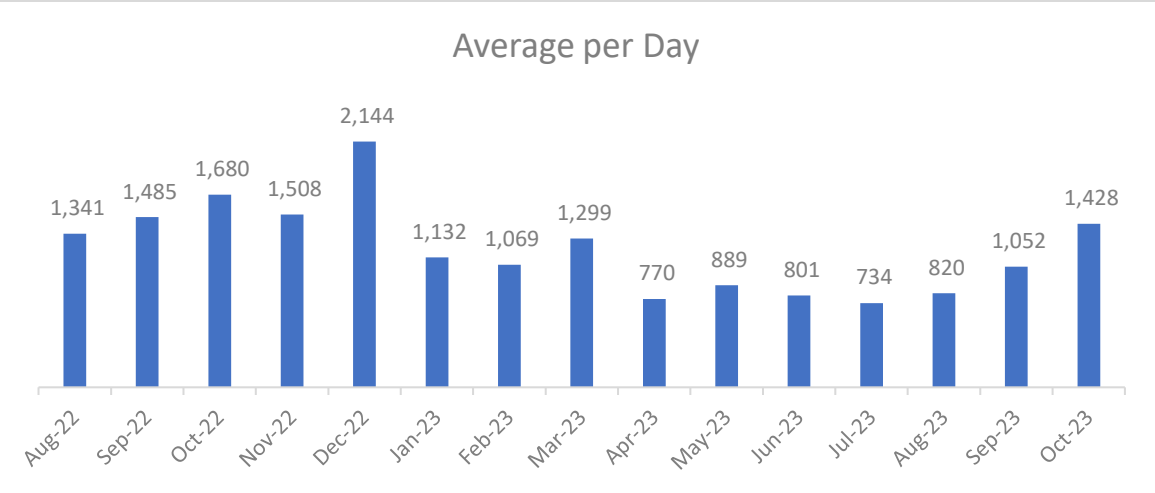
← -24% (or -22k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →



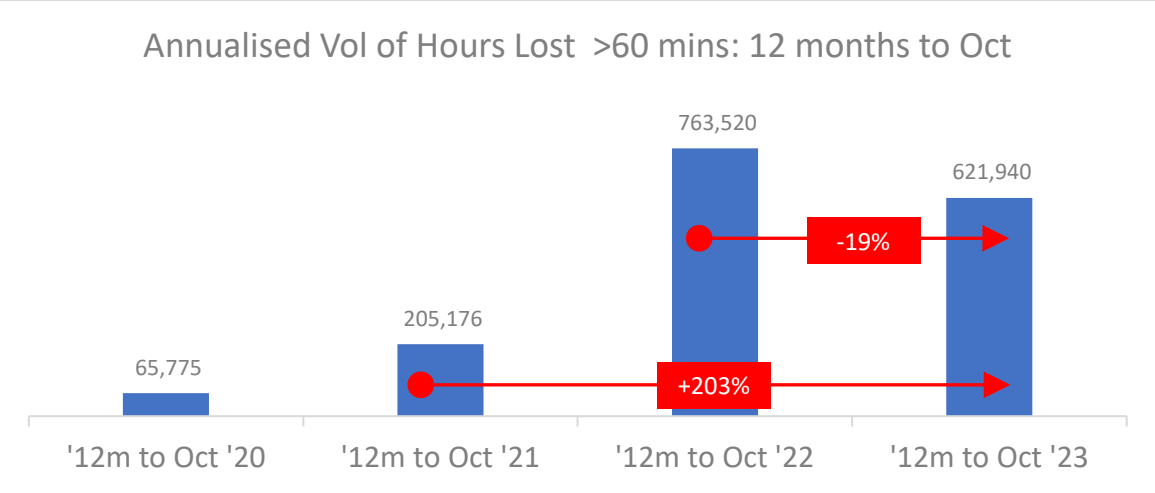
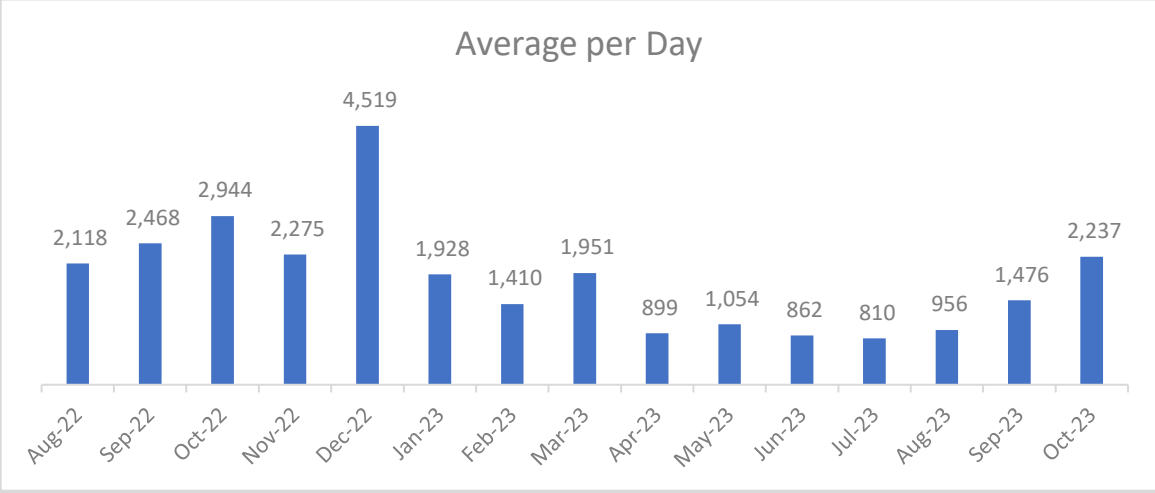
# 8. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >60 minute delays (source, NAIG)



1. Volume of Handover Delays over 60 minutes



2. Hours Lost for Handover Delays over 60 minutes





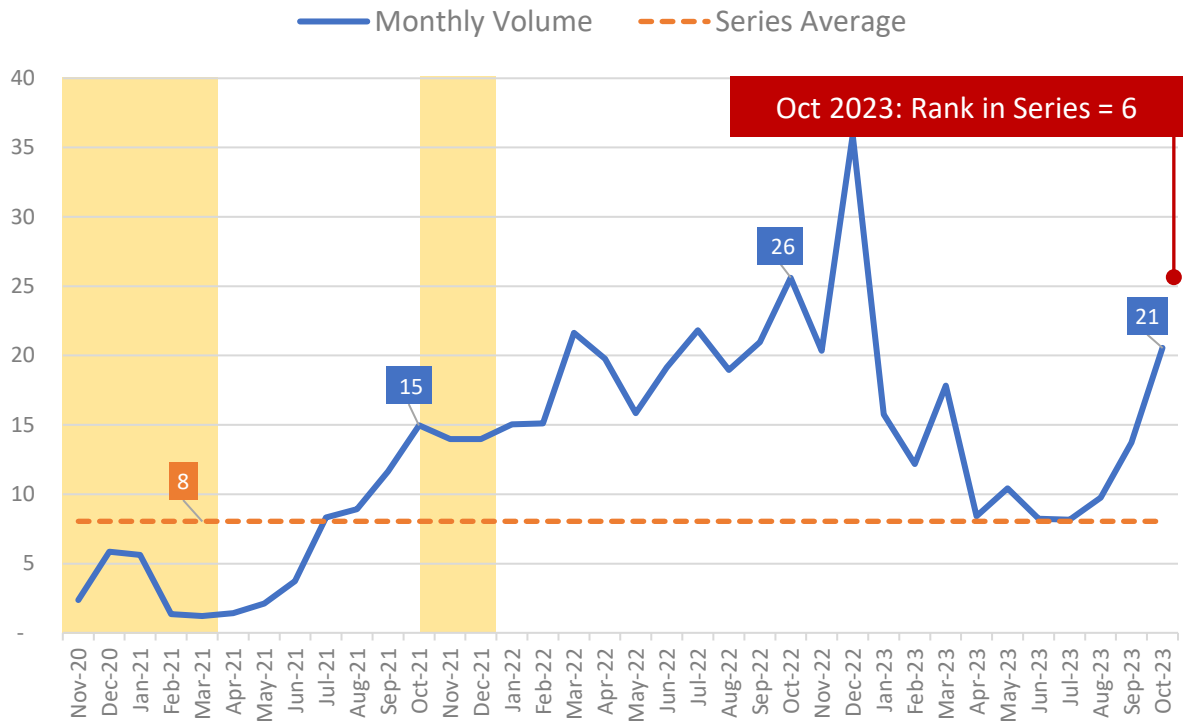
# 9. Patient Handover Delays over 120 Minutes (source, NAIG)



Two-hour delays also increased: from eight-thousand recorded in July the volume has more than doubled to 21-thousand in October with the hours lost reaching 37-thousand across the month.

## 1. Delays over 120 Minutes

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

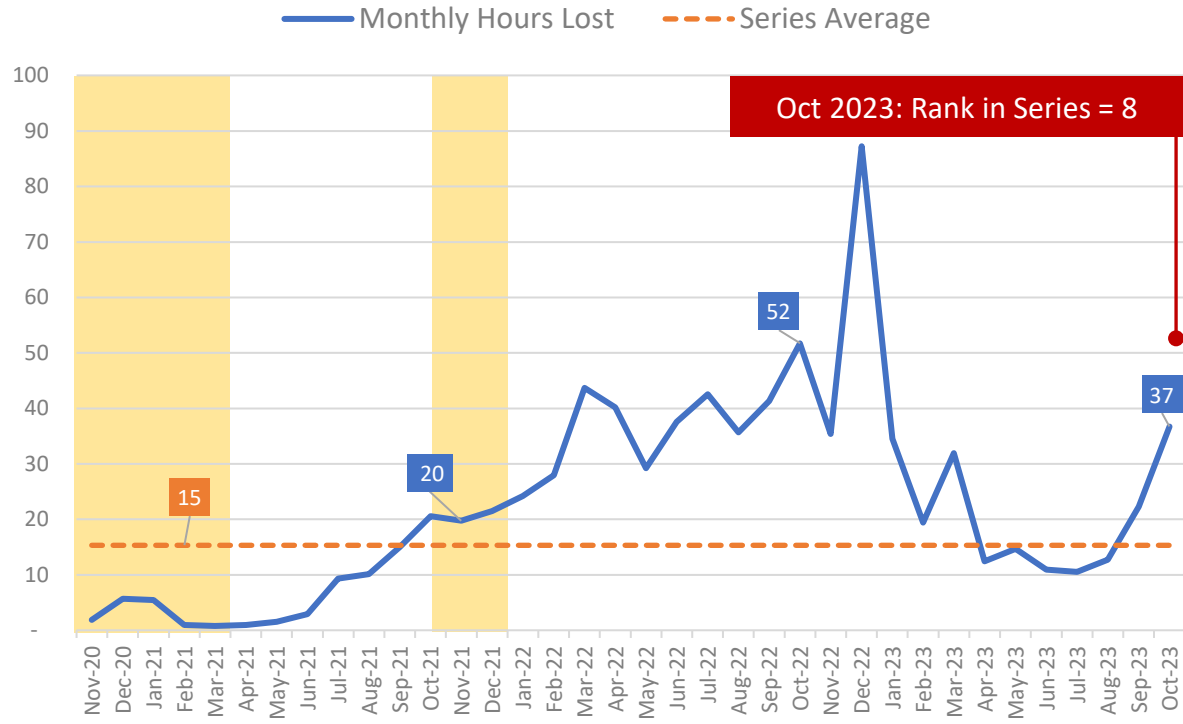


Yellow areas show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

← -20% (or -5k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →

## 2. Hours lost for Handovers Over 120 Minutes

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



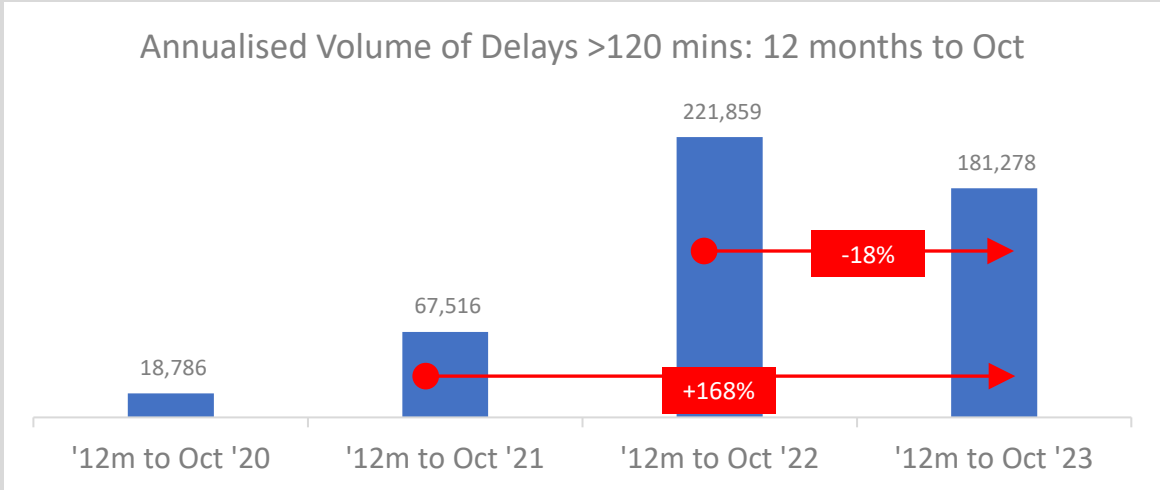
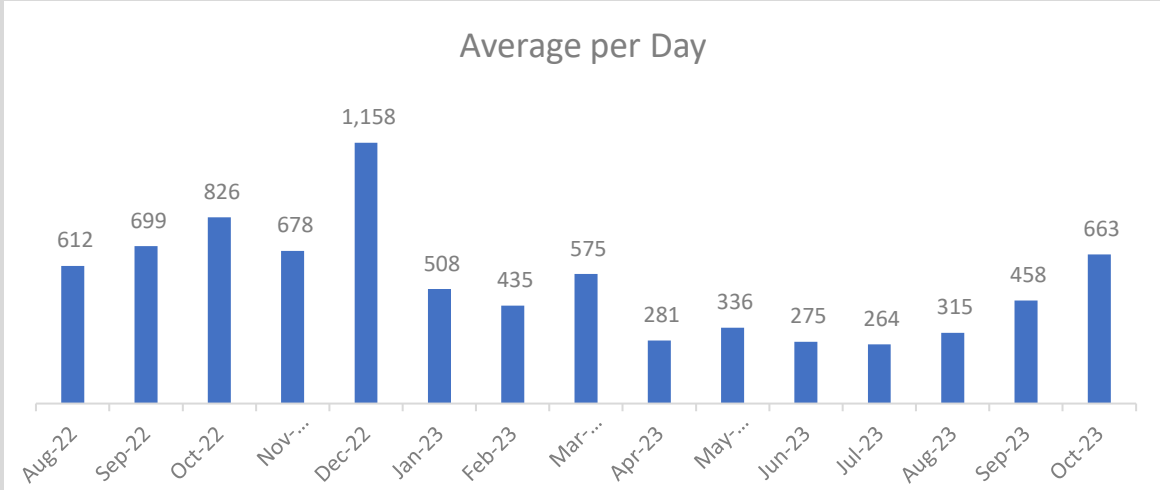
← -29% (or -15k) difference, Oct '22 to Oct '23 →



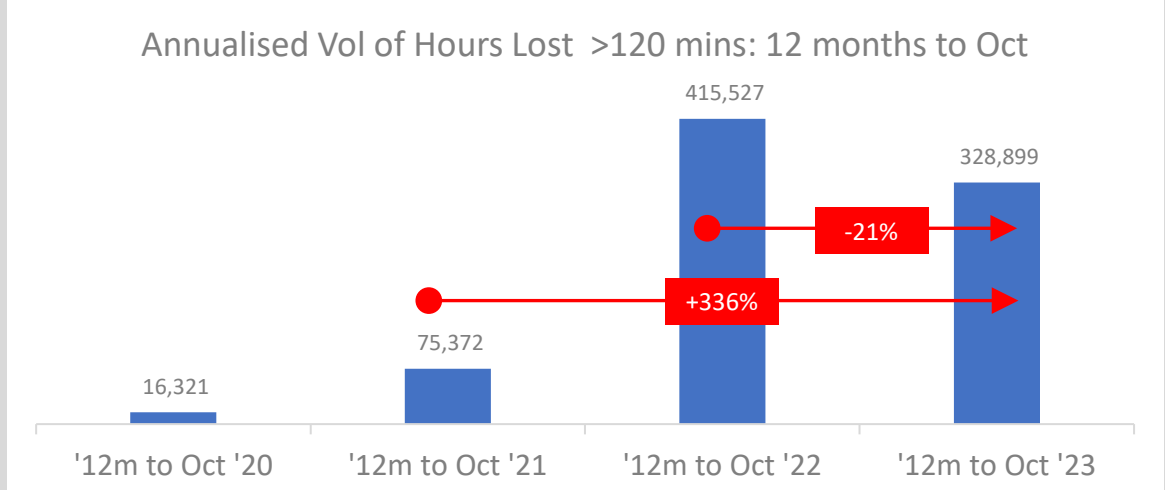
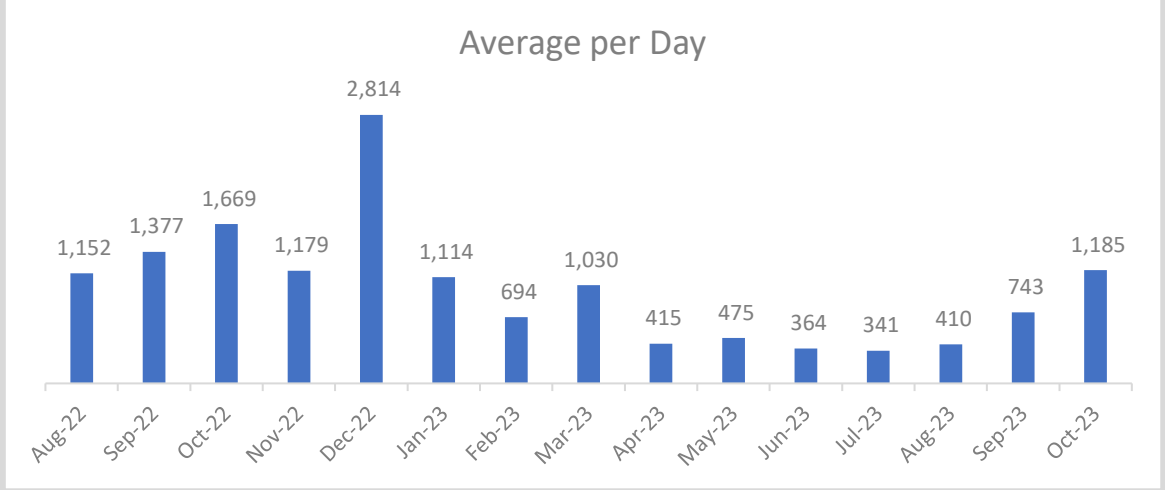
# 10. Average Daily and Annualised Data for >120 minute delays (source, NAIG)



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)

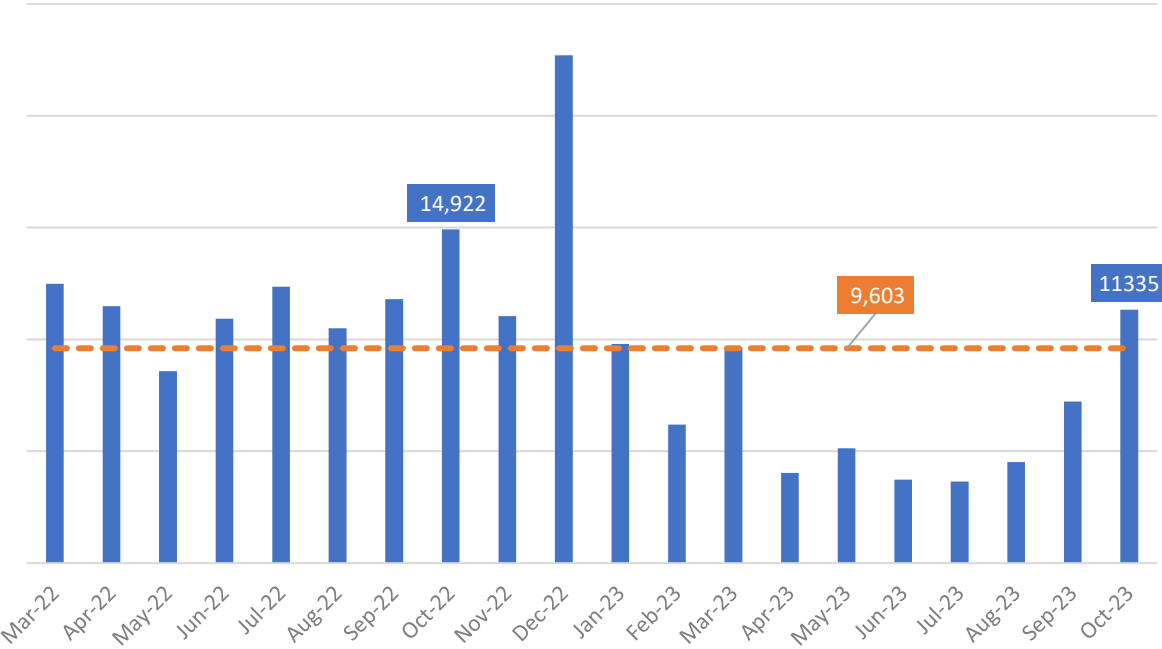


The very longest handover delays have increased in volume since the summer. In October there were over 500 patient handover delays of ten-hours or longer compared with a total of 46 in July.

## 1. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Three Hours

Volume of Handovers over Three Hours

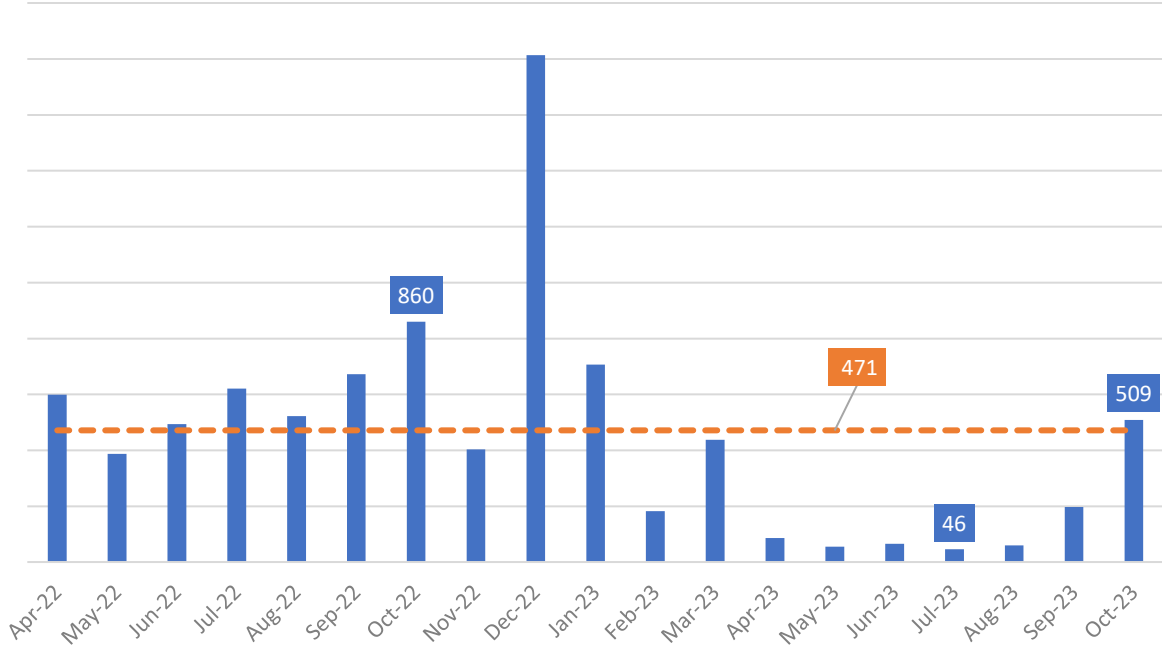
Over 3 hours Series Average



## 2. Longer Handover Delays: All Over Ten Hours

Volume of Handovers over Ten Hours

Over 10 hours Series Average



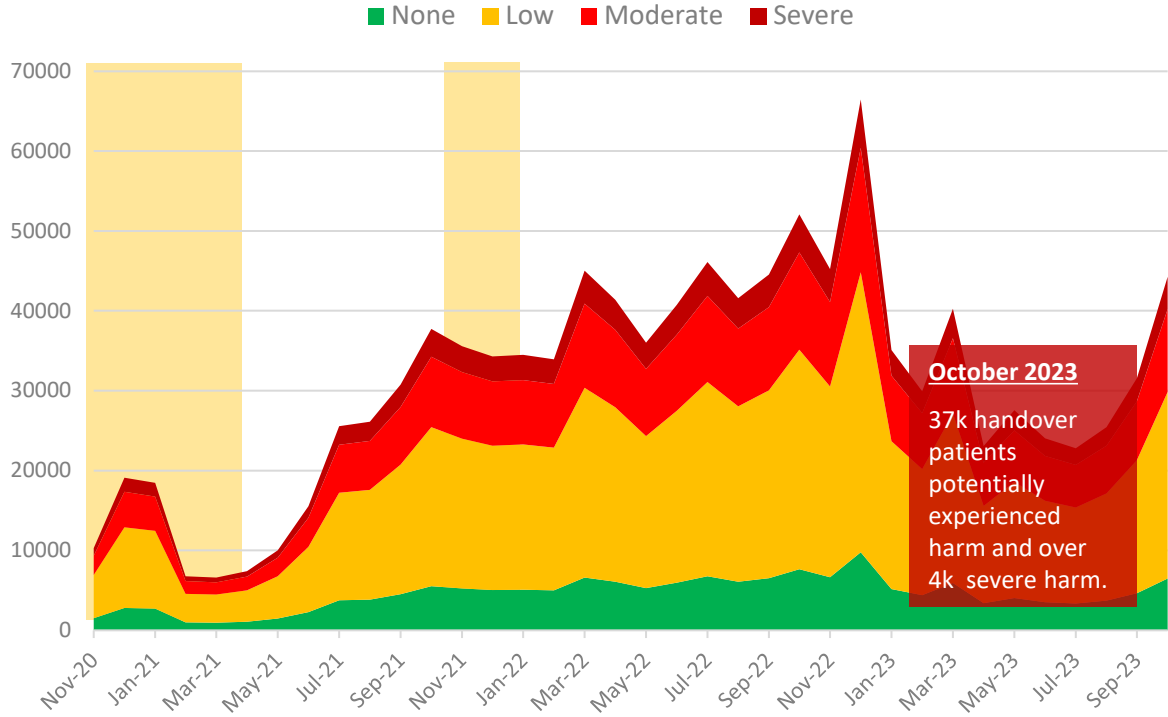
# 12. Impact on Patients and Crew (source, NAIG, [AQI Data](#) and [AACE](#))



Around 37k patients experienced potential harm as a result of hour-plus handover delays in October 2023. Over the same time, the sector lost the equivalent of 119k ambulance job cycles (where patients could have been attended). This is the same as 19% of ambulance capacity across the month – compared with five percent in October 2020.

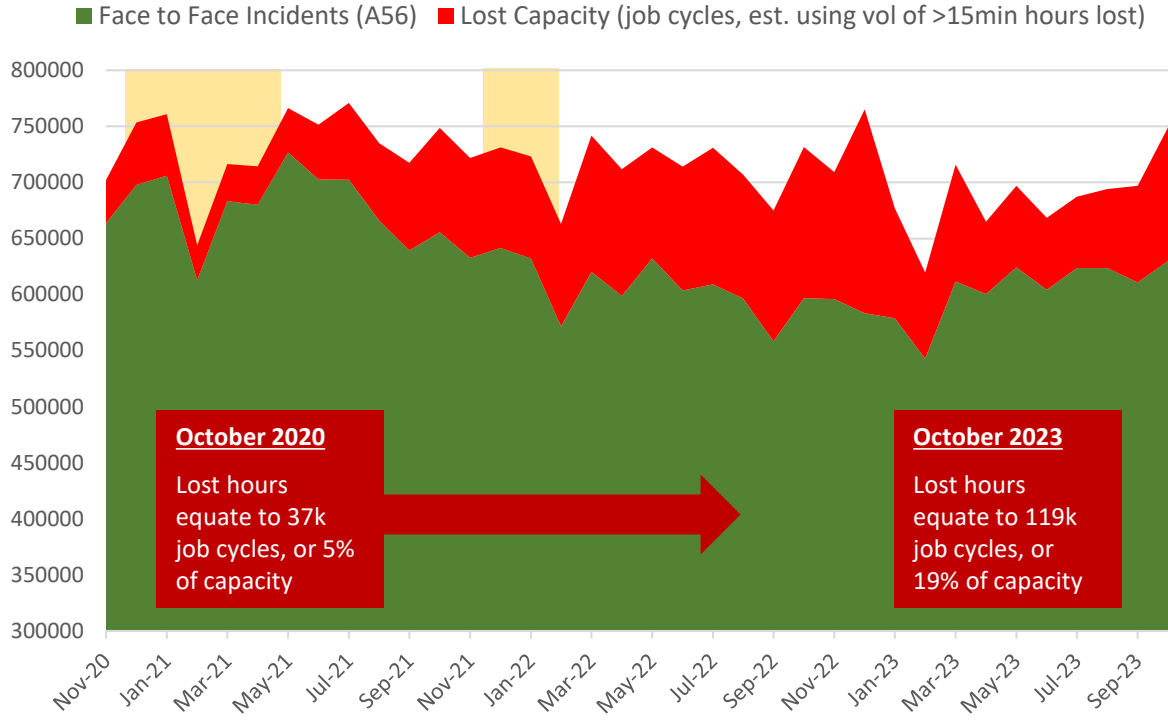
## 1. Estimated number of patients experiencing potential harm

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 show COVID waves in the UK: source ONS.

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



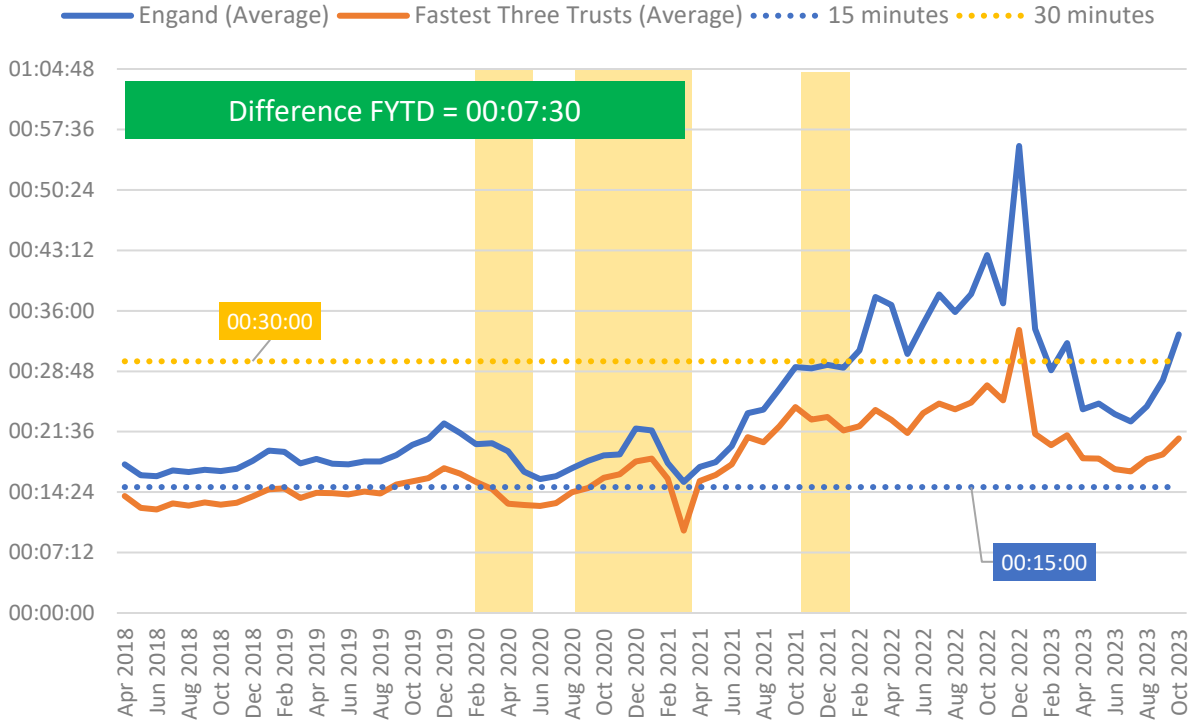
# 13. Patient Handovers – National Average vs Fastest Trusts (source, NAIG) (NEW)



For the FYTD, the average mean handover time for the “quickest” three ambulance trusts is seven-and-a-half minutes faster than the national average. Looking at the proportion of hour-plus delays, the lowest-three currently have 2% compared to a national average of 13% - and for the FYTD are six-percentage points lower.

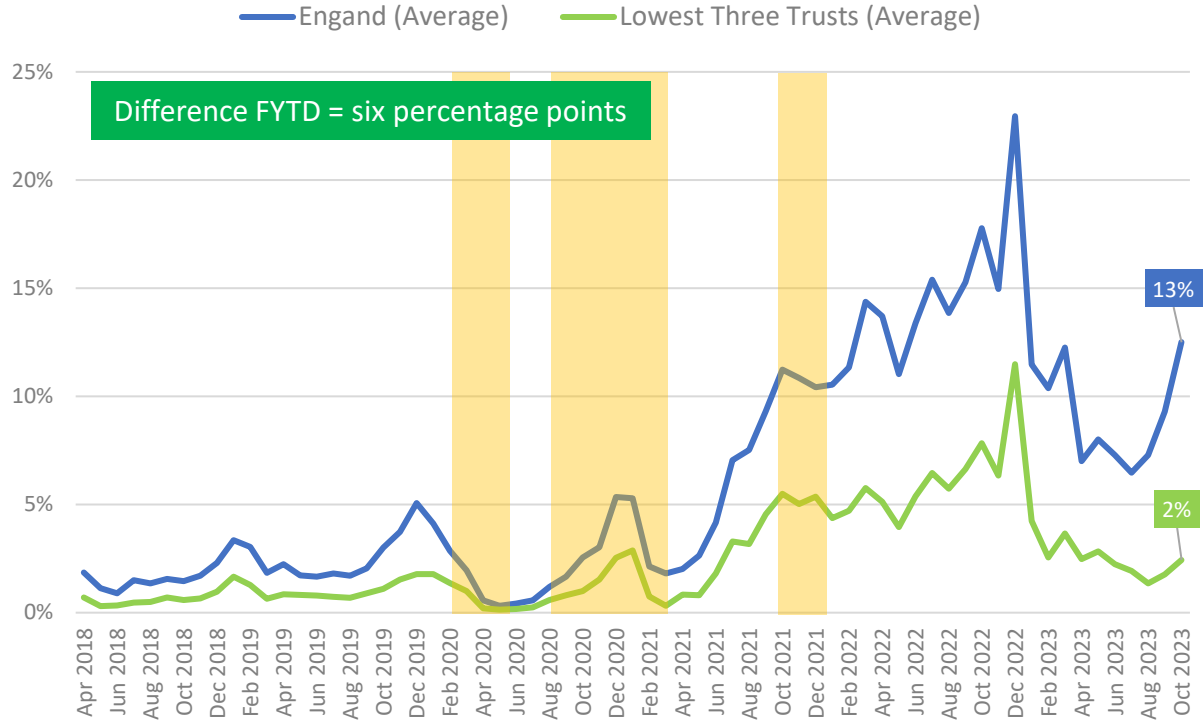
## 1. Mean handover time: England vs. average for three fastest trusts

Mean Handover Time (hh:mm:ss)



## 2. Proportion of hour-plus delays: England vs. average for three lowest trusts

Proportion of Hour-Plus Handovers



Our series of best-practice examples from hospitals with lower than average handover delays can be found by following this [link](#) to AACE’s website.

